



**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
29 MAY 2019**

SUBJECT: RAISING ATTAINMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

**BY: ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR (EDUCATION AND SOCIAL
CARE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of actions to raise attainment in Moray's schools.
- 1.2 Secondary Head Teachers will be in attendance at Committee along with the Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) lead and can answer any questions Councillors may have.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (D) 1 of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to exercising the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee scrutinises and otherwise notes the report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 3 April 2019 the Committee received a report on leaver attainment as released in the March update in Insight (paragraph 7 of the minute refers). Members requested further information on the actions being taken in each secondary school to raise attainment.
- 3.2 The Council is committed to Education and Social Care's vision of being 'Ambitious to Achieve Excellence Together'. To achieve this ambition the 2018-21 Strategic Plan for Schools and Curriculum Development has six key improvement priorities, namely:-

Raise attainment and achievement
Learning and Teaching
Curriculum
Self-evaluation for self-improvement
Supporting learners
Leadership at all levels

- 3.3 All the priorities interrelate with each one influencing the other. In order to raise attainment there is a clear vision, values and curriculum rationale to meet the needs of all learners in a local context, leadership at all levels and a relentless focus on learning and teaching. This is underpinned by reflection at all levels and a drive to improve. National priorities are clear and this strategy, along with improvement actions provides an ambitious plan and improvement agenda to meet these priorities.
- 3.4 All secondary schools are therefore charged with improving attainment as a key priority, albeit with the many challenges of a period of unprecedented change at a time of public sector financial constraint.
- 3.5 In all eight secondary schools, attainment meetings take place annually after the August senior phase results are released. These meetings have changed in format each year with the 2018 ones being led by Secondary school leadership teams where they presented their data to their Quality Improvement Officer (QIO), as well as the lead QIO for Senior Phase Curriculum/Raising Attainment, the Head of Schools and Curriculum Development (HoSCD) as well as a peer leader(s) from another school. All schools were visited during September and October 2018 to allow maximum time to implement agreed improvements as well as to dovetail with planned school departmental attainment reviews. (**Appendix 3**)
- 3.6 An overview and arrangements were therefore shared with all the secondary schools (**Appendix 1**) with a clear focus identified;

Areas of strength
Areas for improvement
Actions

All eight schools were encouraged to look at key measures and to make use of challenge questions from “How Good is Our School?4” to assist them in self-evaluation for self-improvement, to raise standards in future. In addition, the schools were asked to complete a proforma which resulted in clearly identified Raising Attainment strategies which include any Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) interventions (**Appendix 2**).

- 3.7 The focus for the attainment discussions was viewed positively by Headteachers and Officers alike. All meetings had been well planned and prepared for. All peer reviewers found the experience very supportive and also useful including taking ideas back to their own schools as well as further discussions taking place. There was a lot of supportive challenge in questions being asked and equally all schools were honest in their appraisal of what was going well and what needed to improve.

- 3.8 All schools were asked to come up with predictions for attainment in August 2019 which were to be revisited in follow-up meetings after Spring Insight data was available.
- 3.9 In addition to analysing and predicting the Senior Phase attainment results, all schools were asked to provide early indication of Achievement of a Level (ACEL) data for attainment in the Broad General Education (BGE). Schools were encouraged to consider their strategies to improve the robustness of teacher judgements as well as improving attainment in terms of progress over time in achieving Curriculum for Excellence levels. Expectations for this are in **Appendix 2**. This is the first year we have asked for this data and therefore it is experimental and for some schools not as robust as it will come to be with continued discussion and confidence.
- 3.10 The process of gathering early indications of ACEL has allowed QIOs to scrutinise predicted levels, to look at predictions against trend data and historical data and to allow for additional challenge or follow up in terms of discussion with headteachers regarding any concerns or increases/decreases which require additional information to be provided. Headteachers have reported that they have found this exercise very useful and it has allowed them to be more targeted in terms of discussions regarding individual pupils as well as link their tracking and monitoring meetings around the time for the data to be reported. Using this information and data from Scottish National Standardised Assessments, they are better placed to plan targeted interventions for pupils to achieve expected levels.
- 3.11 The clear strategy for Moderation across Moray along with the Tracking and Monitoring spreadsheet are resulting in the majority of schools having more robust and reliable data on pupil attainment. School inspection feedback also informs us that almost all schools inspected this session have robust teacher judgement evidence.
- 3.12 In April and May 2019, follow up attainment meetings are planned in all secondary schools. This year they have been led by the HT and local members have been invited so that they are involved in the discussions. Again a number of officers have attended these.
- 3.13 School staffing has been an ongoing concern for some time and has a significant impact on the amount of subjects being offered in secondary schools as staffing levels within departments. Constant change or the absence of staff can have a major impact. In secondary schools almost all senior leaders have had a teaching commitment over the last year.
- 3.14 Capacity within Schools and Curriculum Development has been highlighted on numerous occasions and its impact on how well the improvements will be implemented as well as on the ability to support and challenge schools to improve. To support the eight schools with the improvement agenda, vacant Education Support Officer (ESO) posts have been reviewed as follows:-

- ESO Learning and Teaching
- ESO Curriculum
- ESO Health and Wellbeing

4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The contents of this report relate to Priority 2 – ‘Ambitious and confident children and young people’.

(b) Policy and Legal

Raising attainment is a key priority of the Scottish Government as part of the National Improvement Framework. Moray Council has a duty each year to report on progress to meet national priorities and to provide evaluative evidence of improvement which informs the National Improvement Framework annual report.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d) Risk implications

Staffing in secondary schools has been a significant issue for a number of years. The ability to improve attainment requires stable staffing in order to generate year on year improvement.

(e) Staffing implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property issues arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities

None arising directly from this report

(h) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education and Social Care, Quality Improvement Officers, Headteachers, Human Resources Manager, Paul Connor, Principal Accountant, Morag Smith, Senior Solicitor, Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer, Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) Union side joint chair and the Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council, through the work of this Committee, is committed to improving the educational achievements of its young people by challenging and supporting schools in their activities to raise attainment.**

Author of Report: Vivienne Cross (Head of Schools and Curriculum Development)

Background Papers:
Ref: