

# Aberdeenshire NIF Improvement Plan 2022-2023

## Achieving Excellence and Equity

Session 2022-2023



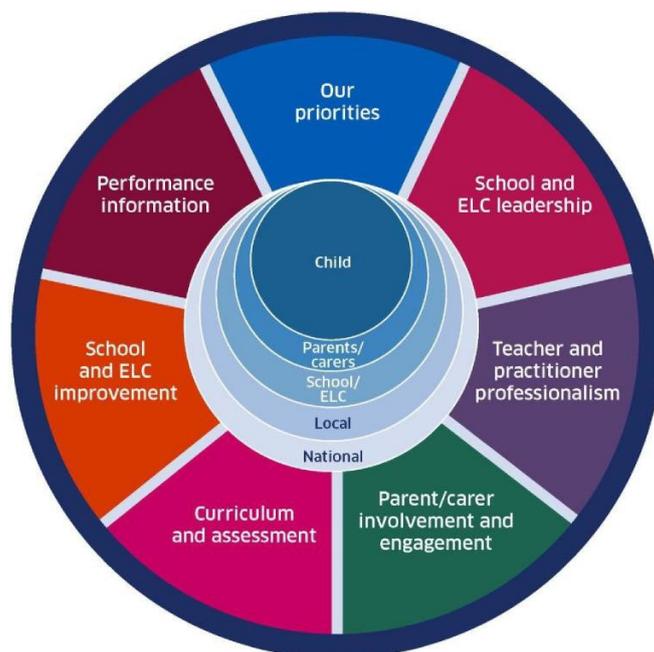
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## Introduction

*“Working together for fairer and better lives”*



This plan sets out clearly our key objectives and priorities for the coming academic year in pursuit of excellence and equity for our learners. From national key messages on Scottish education, it is clear that our aim is to:

“deliver both excellence in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering equity so that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed, regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs. We will **respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of every child and young person** to ensure they are incorporated fully across the Scottish education system.”

The National Improvement Framework has developed from having four key priorities in 2021 to five in 2022. These five priorities are:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.
  - Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing.
  - Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.
  - Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.
  - Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
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These themes of the NIF all remain hugely important in our improvement journey in Aberdeenshire and all will be interwoven and connected to other plans and drivers, including our [Children's Services Plan](#) and our plans for Early Learning and Childcare and our Community Learning and Development plan to name but three.

Given the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the publication of several recent reports on Scottish Education, our NIF Plan takes on even greater significance. Young people have continued to face challenging circumstances during session 2021-2022. Whilst the curriculum has continued to be delivered, at times virtually, not all young people have been able to engage as well as we would have wished for. To that end, it is essential that we have the right supports in place and the correct focus for all our work in this new school session. There will continue to be a need to focus on the important areas of curriculum, learning and teaching and assessment, but ensuring the views of learners are considered alongside their health and wellbeing will require a much greater prominence in the year ahead too, as every individual's experiences of the pandemic will have been quite different.

Given the efforts colleagues have had to make to respond to Covid-19, this NIF plan has not had the usual scrutiny at political level we would normally aspire to achieve locally ahead of publication. To that end, and given the fluid nature of our current context, this plan will be subject to regular monitoring and review to ensure it remains fit for purpose and responsive to our new operating context.

This new year is a pivotal one for ECS, as we continue to adapt and find new ways of working in pursuit of our improvement objectives. We are confident that colleagues across ECS will continue to rise to these challenges to ensure improved outcomes for our young people.

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## Aberdeenshire Education Priorities 2019/2022



**Expected Outcomes:** based on the above priorities in a context of commitment to ensuring wellbeing, inclusion, and equity:

- All young people feel included, supported and successful in their learning
  - All young people attain and achieve to their maximum potential
  - All schools are aware of expectations and suggested actions that will have greatest impact on securing positive outcomes for all young people
  - All schools feel supported in providing the highest quality service that is shaped by these priorities
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## Section 1 - Review of Progress and Identification of Next Steps

### Education Recovery

From March 2020 children and young people across Aberdeenshire, as with the rest of Scotland, have faced a period of significant change and ongoing disruption in their learning as a result of the COVID19 pandemic.

Across our service, staff have continued to be flexible in their approach and adapt to the different circumstances they have been faced with. Our Service has had a continued focus on supporting children and young people in their learning and wellbeing.

Going forward, we wish to capitalise and build on some of the innovation and positive outcomes which emerged despite the ongoing challenges faced. We are committed to doing all that we can to support all children and young people to overcome any challenges they face and make the best possible progress.

**Early Learning and Child Care** – Across Aberdeenshire we have rolled out 1140 hours. A focus has continued to develop practice to ensure high quality provision across early learning and child care settings. Revised Quality Assurance processes have been developed and investment has been made to support an increased focus on literacy and numeracy as well as taking forward Outdoor Learning as a priority.

**Health and Wellbeing** - Health and wellbeing, including mental health, has been foremost in our consideration when developing our response to the pandemic, and will continue to be a priority as we move into the renewal phase.

**Supporting Learning and Attainment** – All the evidence tells us that children and young people benefit from learning within schools, and alongside their peers. Our primary aim throughout this challenging time has been to ensure schools have remained low-risk, open and welcoming to staff, children and young people during the pandemic. Risk assessments have been continually updated and we have supported our schools to remain open, even when faced with significant staffing challenges. We have also ensured we have contingency plans in place for these times when staffing challenges mean some learners could not attend school.

**Ensuring Equity** – Aberdeenshire continues to focus on excellence and equity for all learners. Schools continue to receive Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support identified learners. As well as this in the coming years our authority will also access Strategic Equity Funding which will be used to take forward stretch aims that have been developed to improve outcomes from an evidence base approach.

**Additional Support Needs** – Across Aberdeenshire, a full review of how we support pupils with Additional Support needs is underway, considering both the local context we find ourselves in as well as national reviews including the [Review of Implementation of Additional Support for Learning](#) (ASL Review published in 2020.)

**National Qualifications** – Despite the ongoing disruption faced throughout 2021-2022 session national examinations have gone ahead and a strong set of results has been delivered for young people across Aberdeenshire.

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**Supporting Positive Destinations for Children and Young People** – This has been an area of focus across Aberdeenshire over recent years. From evidence we continue to broaden the learner pathways for young people across Aberdeenshire.

As we move forward into session 2022-2023 this plan will detail our achievements from session 21-22 and clear planning for continued improvement in line with the National Improvement Framework documentation.

## Improvements in Attainment (particularly literacy and numeracy)

(Review of agreed actions from NIF Plan 21-22)

### *Strategy for High Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment for all Aberdeenshire Schools*

This work has been completed. Initial feedback from schools on site created and documentation has been very positive. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Executive Group have planned for an official launch of all tools on 31/8/22. This launch involved a high-profile guest speaker. The group have also planned for world renowned speakers Shirley Clarke and Mark Burns to deliver training sessions to all schools during In-service days in session 22-23. A follow up professional learning offer is also planned. It is expected all schools across Aberdeenshire will have an agreed approach to what constitutes high quality learning, teaching and assessment in their school by the end of session 22-23. Quality Assurance of this will take place during session 22-23.

### *Assessment and Moderation*

Due to the ongoing challenge with staffing and the pandemic, this work was paused and re-started in August 2022. However, across our authority we ensured staff were able to complete a 7-week training offer from Education Scotland with over 100 school staff participating across Aberdeenshire. Feedback from this has been very positive and from the evaluation carried out by Education Scotland there is improved confidence in this area of our work.

A Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) CLPL event took place in March 2022 to share all tools that are available to support schools and provide the opportunity for colleagues to share practice. This event included St Fergus School sharing the significant amount of work that has been undertaken to support assessment and moderation. Feedback was very positive in relation to this. Following this professional learning event, a Microsoft form was issued to consider what would be appropriate next steps. Evidence from this will be used to finalise planning for the professional learning offer which will be in place for session 22-23.

In line with evidence from our ACEL return, a sampling exercise will take place in session 22-23 to support the validity and reliability of our assessment in Writing across our authority.

### *Implementation of 1+2 Programme*

Mechanisms have been established for information sharing and the promotion of best practice through the Aberdeenshire Primary Languages Portal hosted on GLOW and these have been promoted through regular emails to Languages Ambassadors, and through social media channels. All Aberdeenshire staff benefit from high quality professional learning opportunities available through collaboration with regional and national partners, Northern Alliance and SCILT (Scotland's Centre for Languages), and Open University. Ongoing provision will be available in session 2022-23.

### *Effective Analysis of Data for Improvement*

From ACEL Data collated for P1, P4 and P7 it is noted that, despite the interrupted learning for all learners, the majority of learners achieved appropriate levels in both literacy and numeracy. (Further detail in Appendix A)

Senior phase data shows improved pass rates at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher when compared with 2020. However, with the circumstances of the alternative certification model, caution should be exercised in any comparison of results.



### *Development of Digital Technologies*

During the 2021-22 session extensive planning work was undertaken to support the future of digital technology within our school settings. This includes a comprehensive professional learning offer to all schools for session 22-23 which was issued in June 2022. A project charter has been developed and approved by the Service Transformation Board.

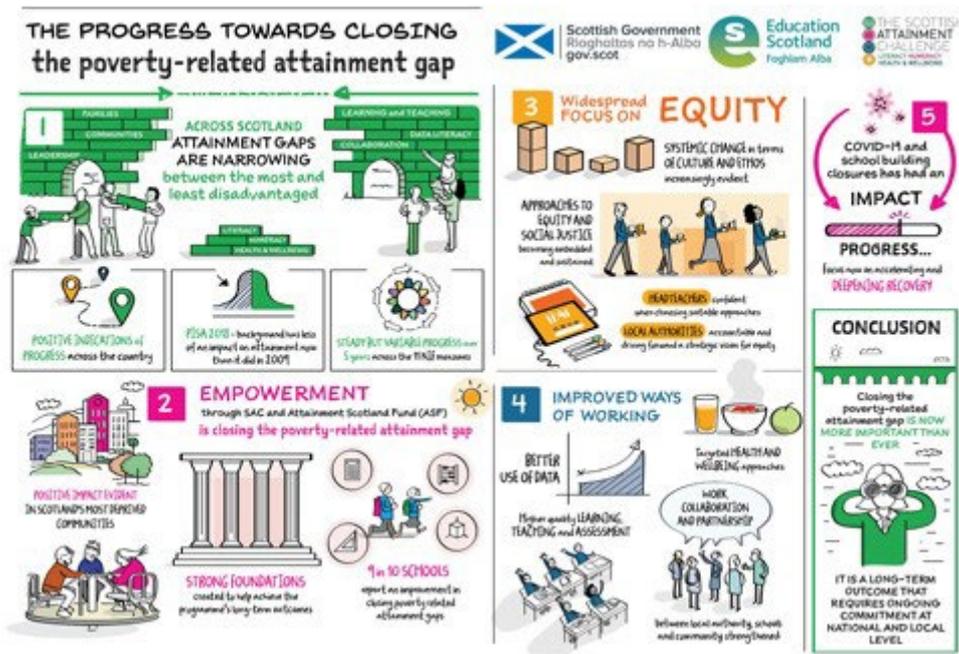
The learning with technology team have been rebranded to Love Learning Team and the launch took place in September 2022.

A website to support the development of professional learning and digital pedagogy has been created and launched in August 22. The team have also been considering how our current infrastructure will support the potential of the roll out of 1 to 1 devices within our schools and are scoping the work required for this to be implemented. The team have piloted 1-2-1 iPad use in schools with a focus on both pedagogy and infrastructure requirements and challenges. This pilot will continue through 22-23 session. Alongside this a Chromebook pilot will also be run in session 2022-2023.



## Closing the Gap Between the Most and Least Disadvantaged Children

(Review of agreed actions from NIF Plan 21-22)



### Targeted Support – Best Value Audit

This work is ongoing. Despite challenges faced with staffing due to the pandemic in this area, a number of supports have been offered to schools in these areas. This includes:

- Supporting analysis of data to inform improvement.
- Sharing of tools to support assessment and evaluation.
- Sharing of practice from schools within this area.

Feedback from professional discussions which took place during the ADES (Association of Directors of Education in Scotland) Collaborative Improvement Event suggests this work is having an impact at school level. Further evaluation and planning to continue this work has taken place and from the feedback received a plan for session 22-23 has been created.

### *Framework of Targeted Interventions to Support Social and Emotional Needs*

Roll-out of identified evidence-based interventions commenced in 2021-22 and will continue next session.

An online framework has been developed by ICT and schools have been consulted. It was launched to all schools in September 2022.

Core training for Pupil Support Workers has been established and staff have been consulted in relation to core training for various school-based disciplines through ASN Review focus groups.

Schools are being consulted on core training for various school-based disciplines through the ASN Review focus groups.

### *Single Agency Education Assessment and Intervention Planning Processes*

Education contributed to multi-agency GIRFEC improvement work during 2021-22. Single agency GIRFEC improvement work will be taken forward by the Child Protection and GIRFEC in Education Group in 2022-23.

Positive progress is being made to secure consistent practice:

- Education Child Protection training pathways have been developed and staff consultation on this is underway.
- Work is ongoing with multi-agency partners to develop guidance for embedding the voice of the child in child's plan processes
- Co-ordinated Support Plan training has been developed, and briefings are being prepared for all schools to access.
- The suite of education child's planning documentation being reviewed, with an initial focus on Risk Assessments.



### *Promotion of Inclusion and Reducing Exclusions.*

The draft policy on this was presented to ECS Committee in June 2022. Our Promoting Inclusion and Reducing Exclusions in Educational Establishments Policy is now live and has been shared with all schools. Guidance has also been issued to all schools. The Policy and Guidance outline the procedures for Aberdeenshire educational establishments to follow to reduce the need for exclusion through the promotion of inclusion. The guidance defines clear protocols that schools must follow when considering, initiating and managing all aspects of the exclusion process.

### *Health and Wellbeing Progression*

Mental Health Toolkit for schools has been developed based on Education Scotland Whole School approach to Mental Health Resource. This has been piloted with schools in 2021-22 and will be launched early 2022-23.

A Mental Health progression framework will now be developed in consultation with schools.

### *Review and Development of Provision to Support Inclusive Practice across Aberdeenshire*

To promote inclusive practices across Aberdeenshire we have piloted a CIRCLE resource. Recommendations from this pilot was presented to our leadership team at the start of session 2022-2023 to take this development forward and roll out agreed approaches across Aberdeenshire. ASN ALDO courses for new Head Teachers are under development to support the development of practice in this area.

Minimum training recommendations for PSAs are under development.

Whole school inclusive practice working groups are ongoing to take this action point forward. Groups have been established in the following areas: Dyslexia, Autism, Nurture, Trauma informed, multi-cultural schools and Inclusive Communication.

### *Strategic Review of Enhanced Provision/Community Resource Hub Model*

During session 21-22 an ASN survey was issued to all schools. A survey was also issued to parents. Focus group meetings have taken place with all 32 enhanced provision schools and all 14 community resource hubs. Focus groups have also taken place with a range of other agencies. The next step is to carry out pupil focus groups. All evidence from these groups will be analysed to inform next steps in our Aberdeenshire wide ASN review.

## Improvements in Health and Wellbeing

(Review of agreed actions from NIF Plan 21-22)

**Making it accessible**

Identifying key messages around the indicators linking to the experiences and outcomes can provide a useful aid for children and young people.



 <p><b>Nurtured</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having adults I can talk to</li> <li>• Feeling I belong</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Active</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being active</li> <li>• Learning outside</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuing my achievements</li> <li>• Agreeing learning targets with adults</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Respected</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling valued</li> <li>• Getting praise and encouragement</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking after my body and mind</li> <li>• Feeling loved and trusted</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Responsible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing care and respect</li> <li>• Learning to make good choices</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling safe</li> <li>• Having adults I trust</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Included</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling part of my nursery/ school</li> <li>• Feeling listened to</li> </ul>

### UNCRC – Development of Practice across Aberdeenshire

As a result of well-attended professional learning events for school leaders and teachers held in session 2021-22 across Aberdeenshire there is increased confidence in relation to the future incorporation of UNCRC.

Consistency of messaging is secured through our Aberdeenshire annual update presented in all schools in August.

Consistency is further supported by

- The creation of a SharePoint site for staff to access resources.
- Resources for Early Years and policy updates are shared with schools and placed on SharePoint for ease of access.
- Briefing sessions at Area level and with leaders from different services within the authority.
- Lead officers have created an action plan which is regularly reviewed in relation to progress and ensures consideration is given to national updates of information.

*Guiding Schools and Settings to Engage with Aberdeenshire's Health and Wellbeing Progression Framework.*

The [Aberdeenshire Progression Framework for Health and Wellbeing \(2015\)](#) sets out a clear progression for knowledge and understanding and related skills, from the Curriculum for Excellence and associated significant aspects of learning, which are:

Mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing.

Planning for choices and changes.

Physical education, physical activity, and sport.

Food and Health.

Substance Misuse.

Relationships, sexual health, and parenthood.

The progression framework sets out a continuum of learning through CfE Early Level to the end of the BGE (Broad General Education) (Third/Fourth Levels). The progression framework is intended to assist teachers in their learning and teaching approaches as they plan curriculum and assess evidence of learning.

The Framework was reviewed during 2020-21 in collaboration with School Leaders to more effectively meet the needs of Aberdeenshire Schools and support a consistent approach across Aberdeenshire. The new format will be piloted with schools in 2022-23.

*Engage in Relevant Action Planning and Developments in Response to the Scottish Government's 'Mental Health Strategy 2017-27'. In particular these will relate to 'Prevention and Early Intervention'*

A mental health training framework which sets out how capacity will be built across the multi-agency workforce to appropriately support the mental wellbeing of children and young people has been developed. LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management) training has now been delivered in Fraserburgh, Banff, Portlethen, Banchory and Inverurie. The roll-out of Scottish Mental Health First Aid training was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the license does not permit virtual delivery.

Aberdeenshire School Counselling Service was launched in September 2020 and a 2-year strategy was implemented to build capacity within the service. There are currently 2 qualified counsellors in post, and 10 trainee counsellors, who will qualify in December 2022.

A school holiday counselling listening service was established for YP aged 14 years+

Two digital mental health services were launched in June 2022 – Kooth for age 11-18 years, and Togetherall for age 16+ years.

In relation to implementing a strategy to achieve a trauma informed and responsive multi agency workforce, the "informed" level training was launched in June 2022. School specific training in this area will be delivered in session 2022-2023.

*Engage in Relevant Action Planning and Developments in Response to the Scottish Government's 'Mental Health Strategy 2017-27'. In particular these will relate to 'Prevention and Early Intervention'*

Going forward SHINE have been commissioned to carry out a mental health survey with secondary school pupils.

Across Aberdeenshire nature-nurture practitioners have been established in almost all clusters to further support early intervention and prevention.

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## Improvement in Employability Skills, and Sustained, Positive Post-School Destinations

(Review of agreed actions from NIF Plan 21-22)

*Development of the DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) Curriculum Offer including Embedding the Career Education Standard Entitlements 3-18 and the Further Development of BGE Pathways and Foundation Apprenticeships in the Senior Phase.*

An Aberdeenshire DYW Project Board has been set up to support work in this area. They meet twice a year to consider progress and identify next steps.

Positive feedback was received from Education Scotland on the development of DYW curriculum.

Further strategic development of the 3-18 DYW curriculum on hold due to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) review. Once the review is published our strategic developments will be aligned to address these outcomes.

CLPL (Career Long Professional Learning) support sessions planned jointly with SDS to support CES and other strategic development areas.

Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) have been highly successful and continue to be developed. Over 820 pupils have started a FA course through the Aberdeenshire delivery model in June 22.

Work is being carried out to ensure pupils have clearer pathways into MAs (Modern Apprenticeships) and other work opportunities. More FAs than ever have secured jobs, MAs this year.



### **Skills Development** – Embedding Skills for Learning, Life and Work (**Metaskills**) and Skills Profiling

DYW/FA Team focus on supporting roll out of skills/meta-skills development ensuring capacity to lead change.

3-18 Skills update and guidance was issued to all schools in May 22 with appropriate resources to support. Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) meta-skills delivery, including pupil feedback, was reviewed, and analysed to inform wider 3-18 roll out.

Level 6 FA resources have been developed to support meta-skills delivery at Level 6 FAs.

Partnership working with Skills Development Scotland has taken place at a national level to support the development of meta-skills from 3-18.

### *DYW and FA Partnership Development, including Partnership with Employers*

Across Aberdeenshire a set of data has been developed which captures employer engagement allowing better planning for FAs.

HMIE Employer Focus group held and established working model for future events.

Three Employer Forums have been held for Business/Health and Social Care/Children and Young People.

Forums have been run for all employers in June 22 as induction and support for employers re the FA.

WPU (Work Placement Unit) summarised findings to share with various stakeholders. Also posted on LinkedIn. Newsletter also created and shared.

All SVQ providers are asked to meet regularly (monthly) with the Employer. This now forms part of induction.

WPU have created spreadsheet to share with SVQ assessors to allow monitoring of mentor involvement and sessions on this in new induction process for providers and employers.

More formal SVQ assessor meeting mentor/employer on observation visits.

WPU are regularly seeking out new employers and following leads including the greater use of social media and contacts.

Aberdeenshire Fleet Services now involved with all Automotive FAs.

All Hospitality FAs have had site visits with employers.

Positive feedback has been received from parents in FA survey

Review of parental marketing materials and new marketing materials produced to be shared with all.

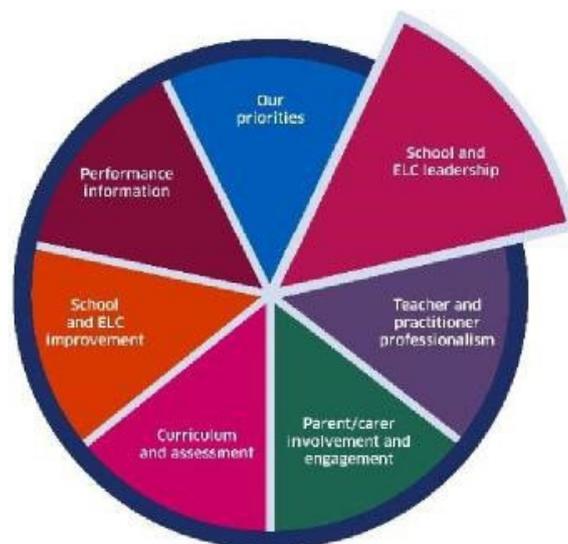
## School and ELC Leadership

### What is this?

The quality and impact of leadership within schools and ELC settings – at all levels and roles.

### Why is this important?

Leadership is recognised as a key driver of the success of any school or ELC setting. Leaders at all levels who are empowered and collaborative, and who empower others to take ownership of their own learning and teaching in a collaborative way, have a strong track record of ensuring the highest quality of learning and teaching.



## Progress and Achievements

During session 2021-2022:

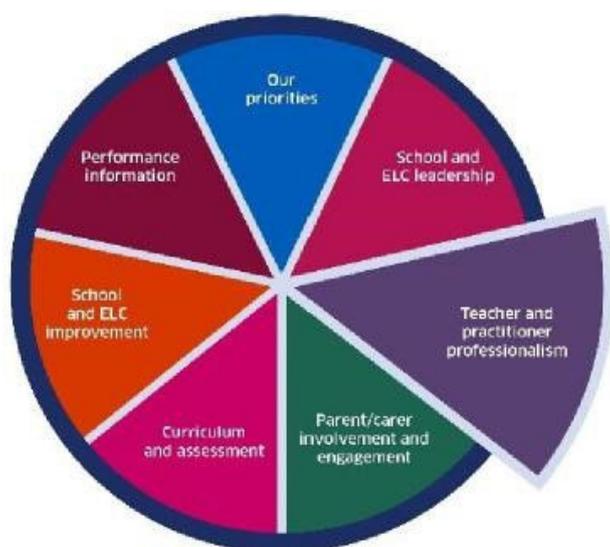
- Twenty-one members of staff completed the national learning programme, Into Headship. Five participants completed the national, Excellence in Headship programme.
- We continued to develop our Collaborative working practices through re-establishing the Work of Self-Improving Schools trios – over 100 schools are involved in this programme.
- Our authority took part in a collaborative learning event with both ADES and Education Scotland. This involved a strategic look at the key area of how we use data to improve within our Primary School sector. Over 25 HTs and senior leaders took part in this review which culminated in a report outlining key strengths and areas for improvement.
- Work has begun on the implementation of UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) across Education and Children's services ensuring all parts of our Service are aware of and considering UNCRC in all areas of their work. Schools across Aberdeenshire are considering how they develop leadership opportunities for young people as the plan for improvement.

## Next Steps

In session 2022-2023 we will:

- Use evidence from the Collaborative Event with ADES and Education Scotland to ensure a clear and consistent offer of support and challenge to all schools across Aberdeenshire.
  - Reinstate self-improving school Validated self-evaluation programme with a focus on self-evaluation, pedagogy, and practice.
-

## Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism



### What is this?

Teacher and practitioner professionalism demonstrates the overall quality of the teaching workforce in Scotland and the impact of their professional learning on children and young people's progress and achievement.

### Why is this important?

The quality of teaching is a key factor in improving children and young people's learning and the outcomes they achieve. Access to high quality early learning and childcare can make a huge difference to children's lives, particularly when they are growing up in more

disadvantaged circumstances. Evidence shows that universally accessible and high quality ELC (Early Learning and Childcare) helps to provide children with skills and confidence to carry into school education and is a cornerstone for closing the poverty related attainment gap between children from the most and least deprived communities. The single most important driver of high quality in a child's ELC experience is a dedicated, highly skilled and well-qualified workforce.

## Progress and Achievements 2021-2022

Within Early Years there has been a focus on developing quality assurance processes and audits to ensure appropriate self-evaluation for improvement is in place across all settings.

A learning, teaching and assessment executive group have developed a toolkit for all schools to develop their practice in ensuring high quality learning experiences for all young people. This toolkit was shared with HTs for feedback in March 2022 and from there an official launch has been planned for session 2022-2023.

Throughout this session there has been a significant level of support given to all probationers, looking at key areas of practice.

Our HT Induction programme has restarted following the pandemic giving support to all newly appointed school leaders.

Throughout this session a pilot project was carried out across two clusters in response to the Best Value report for Aberdeenshire. This involved ongoing professional learning and discussion to strengthen approaches to reducing the poverty related attainment gap. (Particular focus on two clusters where majority of Aberdeenshire pupils live in SIMD 1 and 2.)

Throughout the session there has been an ongoing support offer to develop practice linking to the principles of nurture. This has been led by our educational psychology Service.

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## **Next Steps**

In Session 2022-2023 we will:

Ensure our professional learning offer to all schools is shared through the development of a resource which all schools can access.

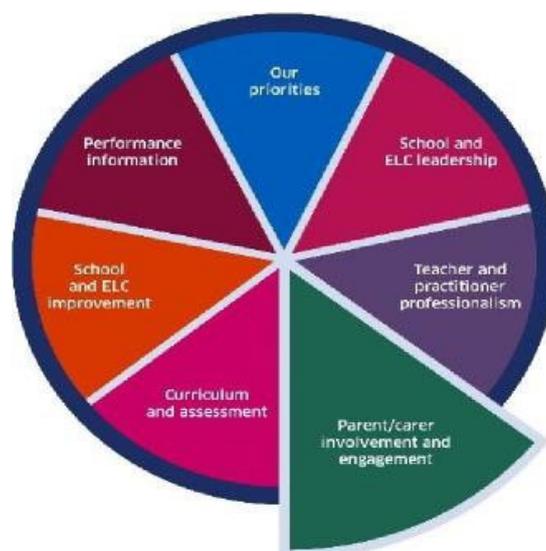
Our toolkit around high quality learning, teaching and assessment will be launched with all schools in August 2022. A series of support events with very high-profile speakers from education is planned for during session 2022-2023.

All schools will have access to a comprehensive offer from our Love Learning team to support the development of Digital pedagogy.

## Parent/Carer involvement and engagement

### What is this?

This covers parental and family engagement in the learning of children and young people, as well as parental involvement in the life and work of school. Parental engagement focuses on ways in which parents, carers and families can best be supported to develop the skills and confidence to engage in, and encourage, their children's learning in school and in everyday life. Schools and partners can play a vital role in supporting families to do this effectively and with confidence.



### Why is this important?

Research shows that when parents and carers engage in their children's learning, and when children and young people live in a supportive home learning environment, it improves their attainment and achievement. Where high quality personalised communication between schools and ELC settings and parents/carers takes place, relationships are strengthened. This supports parents and carers to engage more with their child's learning

## Progress and Achievements

During session 2021-2022:

We worked in collaboration with a neighbouring authority to develop a suitable questionnaire to issue to all parents/carers. Questions included the opportunity for parents/carers to share thoughts on communication, learning from the pandemic and other areas of school life. Feedback from this survey will directly impact on our parental involvement and engagement strategy for Aberdeenshire.

A parental Involvement and Engagement strategy group has been established to support the strengthening of family and school relationships.

As schools opened to visitors again, we worked to develop consistent guidance for schools around visitors and volunteers within our schools.

Support with technology was ongoing for our families and those pupils who were at risk of digital exclusion were supported by the issuing of a device from the Love Learning team.

## Next Steps

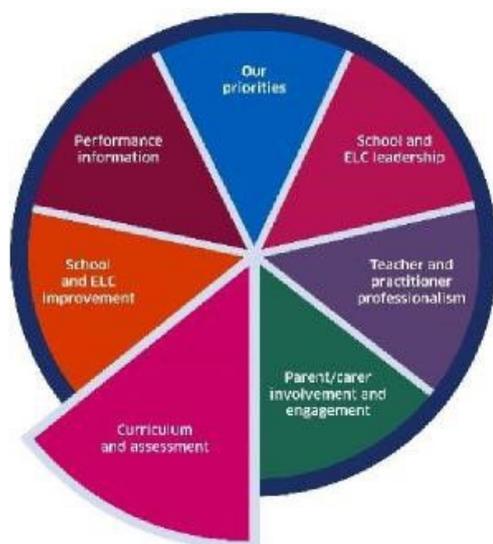
A professional learning offer supporting parental engagement and involvement has been shared with all schools.

As a launch to work in this area for this session Janet Goodall (Consultant with Connect Scotland) will lead a professional engagement event to share both academic research as well as current practice in parental engagement for all schools to access.

Following the analysis of the survey from May 2022, findings will be used to develop the Aberdeenshire parental engagement and involvement strategy.

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## Curriculum and assessment



### What is this?

This includes a range of evidence on what children and young people learn and achieve throughout their education and how well this prepares them for life beyond school, for example ACEL (Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels), skills, qualifications and other awards. It also includes curricular improvement to reflect the key links between curriculum and assessment and so this driver includes many of the actions in response to the OECD recommendations.

### Why is this important?

We need to ensure the curriculum remains coherent, appropriate and effective. We also need to know the size of the attainment gap at different ages and stages, across

Scotland, to take the right action to close it.

## Progress and achievements

As schools entered the recovery phase from the pandemic a focus was placed on literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing. Ongoing advice was required for all school around contingency planning as challenges with staff linking to the pandemic continued for the majority of session 2021-2022.

A focus has been placed on the priority of improving learning, teaching and assessment with the development of a toolkit to support all schools.

Extensive work has been undertaken to develop approaches to support the use of technology to enhance learning. A professional learning offer for session 2022-2023 has been shared with all schools in June 2022.

Despite the continued challenges of the pandemic work around the development of practice within moderation continued with over 100 practitioners engaging in professional development sessions led by Education Scotland.

## Next Steps

In line with Scottish Attainment Challenge data has been analysed to develop appropriate Stretch aims for literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing.

A comprehensive professional learning offer has been shared with all schools to support the development of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment.

A professional learning offer around digital technology has also been shared with all schools for session 2022-2023. Evaluations of this programme of work will support the identification of appropriate next steps.

A professional learning offer will be shared with all schools in October 2022 which will further improve the validity and reliability of teacher professional judgement within the broad general education and build on existing moderation practices, including the support from existing Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSO).

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## School and ELC Improvement

### What is this?

The overall quality of education provided by each school and ELC setting in Scotland and its effectiveness in driving further improvement.

### Why is this important?

School and ELC improvement focus on the quality of education, including learning, teaching and assessment, as well as the quality of the partnerships that are in place to support children and young people with their broader needs. These are the essential elements to raise attainment for all children and young people and close the poverty related attainment gap.



### Progress and achievements

All schools were supported to develop their recovery planning with a clear focus on literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing. Exemplars of planning to support recovery were shared to support improvement planning processes.

Power Bi Reports were shared with all schools to support the identification of improvement priorities.

Additional funding has been devolved to schools to provide resources and interventions clearly identified as a result of each school's contextual analysis.

To support families to access more of the funded entitlement to early years education an extra term for enrolment has been added.

Staff in Early Years setting are accessing professional development through a variety of different programmes including the National Induction Programme.

Ongoing, funding for developing outdoors in the early years has been provided to settings through the sustainability grant process.

### Next Steps

QIO/QIM Schools team are developing a more consistent approach to support and challenge for all schools across Aberdeenshire through a universal, targeted and intensive approach.

Early Years team are also developing support and challenge through a universal, targeted and intensive approach.

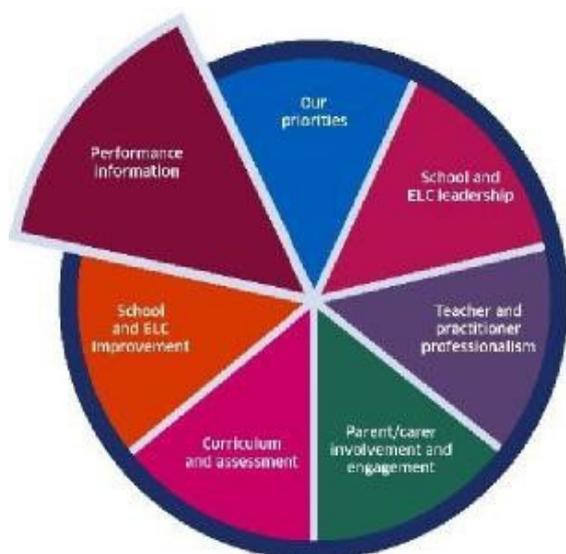
A priority for session 2022-2023 is for all schools to use the support offered by the toolkit provided and the professional learning offer to ensure they have a shared understanding across their individual school as to what constitutes high quality learning, teaching and assessment.

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Across the Early Years all provisions will have access to an Early Years handbook to further promote high quality practice.



## Performance Information



### What is this?

All the information and data we need to get a full picture of how well Scottish education is improving. We will gather and analyse the data collected from each of the other key drivers of improvement.

### Why is this important?

Evidence suggests that we must build a sound understanding of the range of factors that contribute to a successful education system. This is supported by international evidence which confirms that there is no single measure that will provide a full picture of performance. We want to use a balanced range of measures to evaluate Scottish education and take action to improve.

## Progress and achievements

Throughout this session we have continued to develop our use of Power Bi to support all schools with analysis of data to drive forward improvement.

Through our Best Value project, a specific focus has been placed on offering support and professional discussion around identification of pupils for targeted support.

A termly review of actions identified within our previous NIF planning supported the ongoing review of progress for identified areas.

## Next Steps

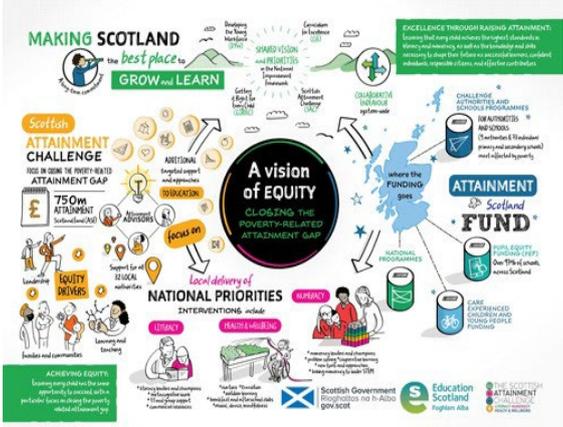
Continue to develop and support school in their analysis of data to consider the attainment and achievement of different cohorts of learners at individual school level.

Further develop Power Bi approaches to consider Senior phase data and how this system can be used to support effective analysis of data at this stage.

Consider the use of research and evidence-based practice to support all schools to take forward and support the priorities outlined in our Stretch Aims.

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## Scottish Attainment Challenge and Strategic Equity Funding



As an authority we remain committed to tackling the poverty related attainment gap. The Scottish Government has re-affirmed the importance of this through their refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Programme. The programme aims to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty. To support this here has been the introduction of Strategic Equity Funding (SEF). This funding is directed to resources, activities and approaches focussed on learners, which will lead to improvement in literacy, numeracy and support health and wellbeing. To have appropriate planning for this fund, all local authorities are required to develop Stretch Aims based on the analysis of all relevant contextual data available within our authority. These aims are to be based around literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing. As a result of all analysis undertaken our Stretch aims for session 22-23 have been finalised and can be seen below and within the documentation submitted to Scottish Government.

### Core Stretch aims A and B

#### National Core Stretch aim: ACEL Primary Literacy and Numeracy

	National core stretch aim			
	ACEL Primary – Literacy – P1, P4 and P7 combined			
	Overall level	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 5	Gap (Q1 – Q5)
Current level (2021/22)	66%	52%	71%	19%
Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23	72%	60%	73%	13%
Improvement (percentage point)	6 p.p.	8 p.p.	2 p.p.	6 p.p.

	<b>National core stretch aim</b>			
	<b>ACEL Primary – Numeracy – P1, P4 and P7 combined</b>			
	<b>Overall level</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 1</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 5</b>	<b>Gap (Q1 – Q5)</b>
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	77%	66%	81%	15%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	81%	72%	82%	10%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	3 p.p.	6 p.p.	1 p.p.	5 p.p.

**Sub – measures for Stretch aims A and B****Primary ACEL – Writing and Numeracy – P4 and P7**

	<b>Sub measure - stretch aim</b>			
	<b>ACEL Primary – Writing – P4</b>			
	<b>Overall level</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 1</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 5</b>	<b>Gap (Q1 – Q5)</b>
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	70%	60%	73%	13%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	73%	63%	74%	11%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	3 p.p.	3 p.p.	1 p.p.	2 p.p.

	<b>National core stretch aim</b>			
	<b>ACEL Primary – Writing – P7</b>			
	<b>Overall level</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 1</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 5</b>	<b>Gap (Q1 – Q5)</b>
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	70%	62%	75%	13%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	72%	65%	76%	11%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	2 p.p.	3 p.p.	1 p.p.	2 p.p.

	National core stretch aim ACEL Primary – writing – P4		
	Overall level	Pupils entitled to FSM	Gap (FSM - Non FSM)
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	69%	47%	22%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	72%	54%	18%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	3 p.p.	7 p.p.	4p.p.

	Sub measure - stretch aim ACEL Primary – Writing – P7		
	Overall level	Pupils entitled to FSM	Gap (FSM- Non FSM)
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	67%	56%	11%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	71%	62%	9%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	4 p.p.	6 p.p.	2 p.p.

	Sub measure - stretch aim ACEL Primary – Numeracy – P4		
	Overall level	Pupils entitled to FSM	Gap (FSM- Non FSM)
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	76%	52%	24%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	79%	59%	19%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	3 p.p.	7 p.p.	5 p.p.

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	Sub measure - stretch aim		
	ACEL Primary – Numeracy – P7		
	Overall level	Pupils entitled to FSM	Gap (FSM- Non FSM)
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	72%	56%	16%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	75%	61%	14%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	3 p.p.	5 p.p.	2 p.p.

### Comments:

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy across Aberdeenshire has been close to the national average. This leads us to consider our support and challenge agenda to secure further improvement moving forward. From consideration of statistics from 2016 to 2021, it would appear that the gap is closing between Quintiles 1 and 5 over time for both literacy and numeracy.

When writing as an aspect of literacy is considered as an individual area, over time this has been area requiring development across Aberdeenshire. It also requires some support and challenge by way of moderation processes, ensuring there is a shared level of understanding on what constitutes a level in BGE. This has led to the Sub measures around writing which have been added to our targets for session 2022-2023.

On reviewing data across the BGE it is evident that across Aberdeenshire our pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) do not perform as well as year groups on the whole and also in most cases do not perform as well as pupils in Decile 1 and 2. This gives us a clear agenda for improvement which has led to the creation of sub measures for this cohort of pupils.

The targets set for levels of attainment are in line with previous rates of attainment over previous years.

The targets will contribute over the medium term to closing the attainment gap for Aberdeenshire.

Schools will be issued with the levels of attainment that would 2016-2017 be required for our authority to achieve its stretch targets.

Aberdeenshire will review approaches to setting stretch aims from session 2022-2023 to ensure appropriate medium term aims are ambitious but achievable going forward.

Literacy P1/4/7 combined	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018=2019	2020-2021
<i>Aberdeenshire Average</i>	67%	70%	71%	66%
<i>SIMD Quintile 1</i>	39%	50%	52%	52%
<i>SIMD Quintile 5</i>	72%	76%	76%	71%
<i>Attainment Gap</i>	<b>33%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>19%</b>

Numeracy P1/4/7 combined	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018=2019	2020-2021
<i>Aberdeenshire Average</i>	76%	79%	80%	77%
<i>SIMD Quintile 1</i>	64%	63%	71%	66%
<i>SIMD Quintile 5</i>	80%	83%	84%	81%
<i>Attainment Gap</i>	<b>16%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>

### Core Stretch Aims C and D

**National Core Stretch aim: Leavers achieving 1 or more at SCQ Level 5 and 6**

	National core stretch aim 1 or more at SCQF level 5			
	Overall level	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 5	Gap (Q1 – Q5)
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	92.4%	69.4%	96.1%	26.7%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	93%	75%	96.5%	21.5 %
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	0.6 p.p.	5.6 p.p.	0.4p.p.	5.2p.p.

	<b>National core stretch aim 1 or more at SCQF level 6</b>			
	<b>Overall level</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 1</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 5</b>	<b>Gap (Q1 – Q5)</b>
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	68.6%	20.8%	79.1%	58.3%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	69%	25%	79.5%	54.5%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	0.4 p.p.	5.2 p.p.	0.4 p.p.	3.8p.p.

**Comment:**

As the schools in Quintile 1 are accounted for in only 2 areas, the calculation of the overall gap is of limited value in driving improvement. It is evident however, that in general, the attainment gap will be closed by ensuring significant improvement in those two areas.

**Core Stretch aims E**

**Participation measure (Proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland)**

	<b>Core plus stretch aim – Participation measure</b>			
	<b>Overall level</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 1</b>	<b>SIMD Quintile 5</b>	<b>Gap (Q1 – Q5)</b>
<b>Current level (2020/21)</b>	93.1%	79.3%	95.6%	16.3%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	94%	83%	96%	13%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	0.9 pp	3.7 p.p.	0.4 p.p.	3.3 p.p.

**Core plus Stretch aims****Level 6 presentation at S5. (3+)**

	<b>Core plus stretch aim – Participation measure %S5 Level 6 presentation - 3+</b>
	<b>Overall level</b>
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	58.6% (2021)
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	60%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	1.4%

**Positive Destinations****Initial Destination of School Leavers**

	<b>Core plus stretch aim – Positive Destinations</b>
	<b>Overall level</b>
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	96.2%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	97%%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	0.8 PP

**Average Tariff Points**

(Pathways, including Foundation Apprenticeships)

	<b>Core plus stretch aim – Average Tariff points (including Foundation Apprenticeship work)</b>
	<b>Overall level</b>
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	50%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	60%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	10 P.P.

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**Comment:**

Across Aberdeenshire a very successful approach to Foundation Apprenticeships programme has been developed. From the outset, the Aberdeenshire FA team wanted to have in place a measure which focused on the impact that successfully completing an FA would have on overall attainment and so we designed this measure:

*“the difference in annual tariff points achieved by leavers who successfully completed a Level 6 FA compared with the annual tariff points score of all Aberdeenshire leavers, expressed as a percentage of the annual tariff points score of all Aberdeenshire leavers”*

**Core Stretch aims F****National Core Stretch aim: Wellbeing**

	National core stretch aim					
	Wellbeing: School attendance					
	Overall level	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 5	Gap (Q1 – Q5)	Pupils entitled to FSM	Care Experienced
<b>Current level (2021/22)</b>	92.3%	88%	93%	5 %	87%	88%
<b>Stretch aim to be achieved 2022/23</b>	94.0%	90%	93.5%	3.5%	90%	90%
<b>Improvement (percentage point)</b>	1.7 p.p.	2 p.p.	0.5 p.p.	1.5 p.p.	3 p.p.	2 p. p.

**Comment:**

From analysis of SQA level data there can be correlation drawn between attendance at school and performance which contributes to our attainment gap within Aberdeenshire.



Action plan 2 – Improvement in children and young people’ health and wellbeing.

Actions	Intended Impact/Outcome	Evidence	Timescale	Accountable Team

Action Plan 3 – Closing the gap between most and least disadvantaged children and young people.

Actions	Intended Impact/Outcome	Evidence	Timescale	Accountable Team
<p>Best Value Audit – Continue with targeted support to schools in Fraserburgh and Peterhead with the to ensure improved outcomes and closing of the poverty related attainment gap.</p>	<p>Peterhead and Fraserburgh Schools further develop practice in the following areas leading to successful outcomes for learners and a closing of the poverty related attainment gap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective analysis of data to identify trends, areas for improvements, including consideration of the performance of specific cohorts of pupils (FSM, Care Experienced amongst others)</li> <li>• Planning and implementing targeted interventions based on evidence (including use of PEF)</li> <li>• Monitoring and tracking of planned interventions</li> </ul>	<p>Self-evaluation completed by schools demonstrating increased confidence.</p> <p>Improved outcomes for young people.</p>	<p>Session 22-23</p>	<p>KMD and DS</p>
<p>Create action plans and implement in line with Stretch aims set by local authority.</p>	<p>Stretch aims for session 22-23 are met.</p>	<p>Data from ACEL, SQA and other identified sources.</p>	<p>Session 22-23</p>	<p>VAD/KMD</p>

Action plan 4 - Improvement in skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

Actions	Intended Impact/Outcome	Evidence	Timescale	Accountable Team

## Action plan 5 - Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy.

Actions	Intended Impact/Outcome	Evidence	Timescale	Accountable Team
Improve the validity and reliability of teacher professional judgement for literacy and numeracy through QAMSO support offer to all schools. This will include sampling as well as sharing practice in key areas of the moderation cycle.	The validity and reliability of teacher professional judgement within the broad general education improves and all schools can access appropriate support to build on existing moderation practices.	Evaluation of QAMSO input Attainment data.	22-23	KMD
Carry out the developments to meet agreed Stretch aims for Aberdeenshire for session 22-23. (See Stretch aims documentation)	The ambitious yet achievable targets set out in the Stretch Aims report are met and as a result the gap between the least and most disadvantaged pupils decreases in both literacy and numeracy.	Data in line with agreed stretch aims	22-23	VD/KMD
Through toolkit developed and high quality CLPL offer ensure all schools have access to appropriate support to develop their consistent approach to high quality learning, teaching and assessment.	All schools will have developed a shared understanding and agreed statement as to what constitutes high quality learning, teaching and assessment for their school.  Improved outcomes in school inspection data, specifically under Quality Indicator 2.3  Improved outcomes for all pupils.	Evidence of agreed statements shared with QIM/QIO team.  Inspection data  Attainment Data	22-23	KMD/DS and LTA Executive group.
Implement consistent offer of support to all schools through universal, targeted and intensive approaches.	All schools to receive appropriate support and challenge to ensure continuous improvement.  Improved attainment  Improved inspection outcomes	SQUIPs  Inspection data  Attainment data	22-23	QIM/QIO Team

Actions	Intended Impact/Outcome	Evidence	Timescale	Accountable Team
	Improved Self-evaluation gradings for core quality indicators			

**GLOSSARY**

ACEL	Achievement of CFE Level
ADES	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
ASL	Additional Support for Learning
ASN	Additional Support Needs
BGE	Broad General Education
Bus	Business
CES	Career Education Standards
CFE	Curriculum for Excellence
CLPL	Career Long Professional Learning
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CYP	Children and Young People
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce
ECS	Education and Children's Services
ELC	Early Learning and Childcare
FA	Foundation Apprenticeship
FSM	Free School Meals
GIRFEC	Getting it Right for Every Child
HSC	Health and Social Care
HT	Head Teacher
LIAM	Let's Introduce Anxiety Management
MA	Modern Apprenticeship
NIF	National Improvement Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
PSA	Pupil Support Assistant
QAMSO	Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer
SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
SCILT	Scotland Centre for Languages
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SEF	Strategic Equity Funding
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WPU	Work Placement Unit
YP	Young People