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| Report To: | Education and Communities Committee | Date: | 2 November 2021 |
| Report By: | Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development | Report No: | EDUCOM/44/21/RB |
| Contact Officer: | Ruth Binks | Contact No: | 712761 |
| Subject: | Education Update Report - Overview of National and Local Initiatives | | |

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update on national and local initiatives related to the education remit of the Education and Communities Committee

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides updates on the following:

- Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) update on SAC 2
- OECD's desk based review of assessment and qualifications approaches
- Health and wellbeing and Parental involvement census
- Regional Improvement Collaborative Evaluation report 2020-21
- Regional Improvement Collaborative Improvement Plan 2021-22
- Education Reform Consultation
- Inverclyde Children's services plan
- Future of Secondary Gaelic Medium Education in Inverclyde

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked

- to note the contents of this report
- agree that officers continue to explore options for Gaelic medium secondary education for pupils currently attending Whinhill Primary School

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities and
Organisational Development

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The future of the Scottish Attainment Challenge

Current funding arrangements for individual Scottish Attainment Challenge programmes have been allocated up until the end of 2021/22. This includes the addition of a PEF premium to support recovery.

As previously reported to this committee [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021](#) was published in March 2021. This report presented the evidence of progress towards achieving the ambition over the period of the parliament 2016-2021. In doing so it also acknowledges the disruptive and detrimental impact of COVID-19.

The main conclusions were that the poverty-related attainment gap is closing, but this remains a complex and long-term endeavour. Equally, while there are positive indications of progress, there are also variations in the pace of that progress across the country and that the impact of COVID-19 has placed further pressure on the gap.

Work has been underway at a national level to develop evidence based options for a refreshed SAC programme – SAC 2. The aim is to agree the revised SAC in the autumn and implement this from session 2022/23.

4.2 OECD's desk based review of assessment and qualifications approaches

The OECD published Professor Stobart's desk-based review of assessment and qualifications approaches, alongside options for Scotland to consider in September 2021. The link to the report can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/news/national-qualifications-and-assessments/>

Professor Gordon Stobart, who was appointed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), considered approaches taken around the world as part of his work.

Possible options include:

- the development of a Senior Phase qualification system based on a combination of teacher assessment and exams
- the simplification of S4-5 assessment by “de-cluttering” the historical diet of exams
- the increased use of online exam resources and oral presentations as an assessment format
- the inclusion of pupils views in decisions around assessment
- enhancing the role of vocational qualifications

These suggestions will be considered as part of a wider conversation with learners, teachers, parents and others on how Scotland's qualifications and assessment system can best evolve in line with the curriculum and society of today.

4.3 Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Census and Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census

Both the Health and Wellbeing and Parental Involvement and Engagement Censuses are proceeding in the current school year. The national implementation groups continue to meet regularly, working collaboratively to support implementation. Currently the Implementation Groups are working to ensure all the governance documentation is in place to allow data collection.

4.4 Regional Improvement Collaborative Evaluation report 2020-21

This report which can be accessed at <https://www.westpartnership.co.uk/resources/>

details progress over the academic year 2020-2021 towards achieving each of the associated target outcomes and expected impacts as detailed in the West Partnership Improvement Plan for 2020-2023. The report captures the progress of the three main West Partnership workstreams, even when taking into account the significant challenges that all education staff have faced during the course of another extraordinary school session.

Throughout the report, there are strong examples of how the Partnership is supporting authorities to improve attainment and achievement for all, while closing the poverty related attainment gap. Included in the report are case studies showcasing aspects of work which have supported the work of authorities. Where possible, attainment and senior phase data has been updated to demonstrate the progress of learners in the Partnership.

Some highlights include The West Online School (West OS) which was created to provide a bank of high-quality learning videos that could support practitioners and learners both inside and outside of the classroom. Inverclyde was at the forefront of the development of this resource, producing and using many of the videos to support learning.

The report was considered and endorsed at the last Glasgow City Region Education Committee on 24th August 2021 with the recommendation that each council area considers the report through its own local governance arrangements.

4.5 Regional Improvement Collaborative Improvement Plan 2021-22

The Partnership is required to produce an annual improvement plan linked to a three-year planning cycle which outlines the vision, purpose and key activities of the collaborative for the year ahead. The plan can be found at <https://www.westpartnership.co.uk/resources/>. Over the past session, a comprehensive range of engagements with key stakeholders took place and the feedback, as well as evaluation data, contributed to the development of the Improvement Plan.

This year, there are three main workstreams established to support and add value to the work of authorities. These are: Wellbeing for Learning; Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement; and Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment. The Partnership will work closely with local authorities, as well as with colleagues from Education Scotland and the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change, to achieve key objectives set out for each workstream.

A renewed format will be introduced for the work of some of the West Partnership networked groups. These Specialist Networks meet with a common purpose to enhance the work of the local authorities in themed areas such as curriculum, additional support needs and digital learning. Renfrewshire are benefitting from the collaboration and support from the networks.

A revised Plan on a Page has been included this session which attempts to more clearly articulate: vision, values, purpose and priorities of The West Partnership. As the Partnership moves into a new 3-year planning cycle at the end of this session, there is an intention to develop this work further.

The plan was considered and endorsed at the last Glasgow City Region Education Committee on 24th August 2021 with the recommendation that each council area considers the plan through its own local governance arrangements.

4.6 Education reform consultation

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced on 22 June 2021 the intention to replace the SQA and consider a new specialist agency for both curriculum and assessment while also taking forward reform to Education Scotland, including removing the function of inspection from the agency. Professor Ken Muir, University of West of Scotland, was appointed to act as an independent advisor to the Scottish Government to consider and advise on the implementation of the reform that will consider all functions currently delivered by both SQA and Education Scotland.

The consultation will run from 30 September until 26 November 2021.

More information can be found here:

<https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/independent-education-reform-review/>

4.7 Children's Services Plan 2020-23

The Inverclyde Children's Services Plan 2020/23 was approved by the Alliance Board in June 2021. It has been developed by the Inverclyde Children's Services Partnership and establishes four priority themes for the Partnership. These themes have been agreed based on a comprehensive Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA), along with other associated strategies, which helped to identify the needs of children, young people and their families in Inverclyde. The four priority themes are summarised below:

1. To improve outcomes for children and families by developing a strong professional base with high quality multi-agency approached throughout a child's experience
2. The promotion of a whole community approach to understanding mental health, wellbeing and the impact of trauma.
3. To reduce the inequalities of health and educational outcomes linked to deprivation.
4. To further improve outcomes, including attainment, for care experienced children, young people and their families.

A Delivery Plan has been developed setting out the actions and performance measures associated with the delivery of the priority themes. The full Inverclyde Children's Services Plan, including the SNA and Delivery Plan, can be accessed using the link below.
<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/support-for-children-families/joint-childrens-services-planning/draft-children-s-services-plan-2020-23>

4.8 Future of Secondary Gaelic Medium Education in Inverclyde

Whinhill Primary school has a very strong and well respected Gaelic unit and nursery class. Pupils from the school wishing to continue Gaelic into secondary education currently put a placing request into Glasgow Gaelic school. Inverclyde Council still provides transport for pupils attending the Gaelic school, whilst some other Councils have opted not to do so. Initially, for the academic year 2020/21 Glasgow Gaelic School turned down the placing requests from Inverclyde, although subsequently the school accepted them. As Glasgow Gaelic school continues to expand – it is highly likely that the school will not be able to accommodate placing requests in the future.

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for a local authority to provide secondary Gaelic, Education services are extremely keen for the pupils to continue in Gaelic medium. One solution could be to provide Gaelic teaching through a unit in one of our secondary schools. The service have sought advice from Education Scotland about what this might look like and they have provided examples of the standards for high quality Gaelic medium education.

Glasgow Gaelic School is unique in that it has only Gaelic medium pupils. Across the country Gaelic medium in secondary is usually delivered in units attached to schools. This is for a variety of reasons including the difficulty of getting staff to teach in Gaelic and also because the experience for pupils has to be of a high quality with access to the full curriculum.

Initial discussion with the parents of Whinhill Primary School Gaelic pupils have taken place to explore the possibility of a unit in a secondary school in Inverclyde. As part of the discussion, the parents also asked Education Services to meet with Argyll and Bute and explore the possibility of pupils attending the Gaelic Unit linked to Dunoon Grammar and is being explored.

It is safe to say that the parents would prefer that Inverclyde build or renovated a brand new school for Gaelic medium and to explore the Scottish Government capital fund available to do this. This is not an option that the service would recommend pursuing in the first instance. This is because any Gaelic provision would need to provide a high quality experience and curriculum for pupils.

It is of no certainty that the service would even be able to staff a Gaelic unit within a secondary school and we would wish to embark on any undertaking with the confidence that we can provide a high quality experience for Gaelic alongside the entitlement to a full curriculum.

Glasgow are open to us working with the Gaelic school to support a unit if this is an option the Council wish to pursue and officers are in dialogue with Argyll and Bute to explore the same. Officers will explore options for the short, medium and longer term of Gaelic secondary education in Inverclyde and bring a further report back to the January Education and Communities Committee.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

5.1 There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | Budget Years | Proposed Spend this Report | Virement From | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| N/A | | | | | |

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | With Effect from | Annual Net Impact | Virement From (If Applicable) | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| N/A | | | | | |

Legal

5.2 N/A

Human Resources

5.3 N/A

Equalities

5.4 Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

| | |
|---|--|
| X | YES (for the Children's Services Plan) |
| | NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required |

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

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|---|--|
| | YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed. |
| X | NO |

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

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|---|---|
| | YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. |
| X | NO |

Repopulation

5.5 N/A

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Initial consultation has taken place with parents of pupils attending Gaelic Medium at Whinhill primary school

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A