

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 16 June 2015

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: School Education - A report prepared by Audit Scotland (June 2014) on behalf of the Accounts Commission

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Committee regarding the Education Service position with regard to Audit Scotland recommendations in relation to Pupil Attainment and Wider Achievement and Improving Pupil Performance.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In June 2014 Audit Scotland published a report entitled: School Education. The report was based on an audit which assessed how efficiently and effectively Councils are using their resources to maximise pupil achievement in schools. Audit Scotland examined:

- How much Councils spend on school education and what they spend it on.
- How effectively Councils are driving forward improvements in pupil achievement.
- How efficiently Councils are using their resources to maximise pupil achievement.

- 3.2 The audit focused on primary and secondary school education in Scotland. It did not examine early years, pre-school, or special school education; independent schools; or further and higher education establishments. In addition it did not include investment or expenditure in other services that support young people in the education journey e.g. East Lothian Works, Instrumental Music Service, Country Rangers and Outdoor Learning.

- 3.3 Point 15 in Part 1 – School Expenditure of the Audit Scotland report states that it is important to note that the figures quoted within the report represent a snapshot in time. Councils started to make changes to education budgets at different times.
- 3.4 It also did not look at progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence or the quality of teaching in Scotland. It reviewed how Councils deliver education, but did not examine the role of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland or other stakeholders such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).
- 3.5 There is a range of attainment measures used within Scottish education. Audit Scotland selected ten of these to examine performance across the entire senior phase, S4-S6. The selected measures are closely aligned to the measures that Councils report to their own Education Committees.

3.6 KEY MESSAGES WITHIN THE AUDIT SCOTLAND SCHOOL EDUCATION REPORT

- 3.6.1 In 2012/13, Councils spent £4.8 billion on education services, of which £3.8 billion was spent on primary and secondary education. Around two-thirds of this expenditure (68%) was on staff costs. Councils' spending on education fell by 5% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2012/13, largely as a result of employing fewer staff. Councils' education services are likely to continue to face budgetary pressures, and they need to be alert to the potential impact of increased workloads on remaining staff. East Lothian Council was the only Council in Scotland who did not reduce their expenditure on teachers over the period 2010/11 and 2012/13.
- 3.6.2 Performance has improved against all ten of the attainment measures examined over the last decade. However, there is significant variation in attainment between individual Councils, schools, and groups of pupils; and there is a considerable gap between Scotland and the top performing countries. Current measures at both national and council level focus on the attainment of secondary pupils at S4-S6 level. There are no comparable measures available at a council and national level. East Lothian Council has a wider spread of performance between schools in the authority in terms of percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five in 2013, a figure comparable with an authority with a 'widely different' level of deprivation.
- 3.6.3 Levels of deprivation have a large influence on attainment. Some schools have achieved better attainment results than their levels of deprivation would indicate, suggesting that the gap between the lowest and highest performing schools cannot be wholly attributed to different levels of deprivation. Closing the gap in performance between schools is likely to be critical to improving overall attainment levels.
- 3.6.4 Councils that have made the most improvements have focused on areas such as developing leadership skills, and improving both teacher quality

and systems for monitoring and tracking pupil data. There are also increasing opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills for living and working in the wider world. Councils are starting to target resources to improve both attainment and wider achievement but there is scope to improve strategic planning and strengthen the role of elected members in holding education services to account.

3.7 RESPONDING TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7.1 The position paper (Appendix 1) provides the East Lothian position in relation the recommendations made by Audit Scotland in Parts 2 and 3 of the report:

- Pupil Attainment and Wider Achievement
- Improving Pupil Performance

3.7.2 Appendix 1 also details the strategies and interventions put in place to raise pupil attainment, wider achievement and pupil performance by East Lothian schools, education service staff and other services. Many of these address the recommendations of the report.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities group and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 School Education - Accounts Commission (lodged in the Members Library) and East Lothian Position Paper: School Education Accounts Commission Audit Scotland June 2014 in relation to Part 2 Pupil Attainment and wider achievement and Part 3 Pupil Performance (Appendix 1).

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DATE	20 May 2015

School Education Accounts Commission

Audit Scotland June 2014

East Lothian Position

Part 2 - Pupil Attainment and Wider Achievement

Recommendations:

1. Councils should ensure they fully understand why levels of attainment vary between their schools and different groups of pupils

- All our primary schools have effective monitoring and tracking in place e.g. INCAS, previously PIPS, to support pupil progress and to inform appropriate next steps in learning. In our Secondary schools, robust tracking and monitoring of performance is in place in S4 to S6, Whilst effective procedures have been implemented at this stage, most of our schools are still developing effective strategies from S1 to S3, and is a permanent item for discussion and action at Secondary Head Teacher meetings.

Next steps:

Many schools still need support to effectively analyse and act upon data.

Monitor tracking developments at S1 to S3 and how this informs transition to the senior phase. We have sought and implemented in one secondary school a more dynamic system which involves replacing traditional reports with more regular data and insight being sent to parents inviting and in some cases requesting a conversation or meeting about that young person's progress.

- Most primary schools track the attainment of different groups of learners and cohorts of learners in order to put appropriate support and interventions in place. Secondary school guidance teams work effectively to support learners. Support for learning teachers and support staff work in all schools to support learners needing additional support in order to achieve. Most secondary schools are introducing universal support or front line guidance to ensure all learners have a key worker with an overview of their attainment and achievement from S1.

Next steps:

Update the Education Committee, on a regular basis, the progress of developments and the impact on the attainment of different groups of learners.

Further improve the analysis of data at authority level for different schools and different groups of learners through INSIGHT and for P1 to S3.

- Through the introduction of INSIGHT, the national benchmarking tool, the focus on closing the attainment gap has encouraged schools and clusters to engage more with SIMD data at individual pupil level in order to track attainment for learners according to areas of deprivation. Benchmarking information against our comparator authority and comparator schools has raised awareness of how similar cohorts of learners are

performing elsewhere. Several clusters are beginning to use this information to track learners from 3 to 18.

Next steps:

Improve the analysis of data at authority and school level to ensure we are meeting the needs of all our learners and that we are increasingly confident that we are reducing any barriers to progress and achievement, schools to update progress by October 2015.

2. Councils should develop and implement strategies to reduce gaps in performance between the lowest and highest performing schools

- The department's Quality Assurance Service has some several years taken a proportionate approach to challenge and support in schools. Schools where there are identified concerns with attainment or where there may be capacity issues receive further support and intervention from the service and other partners such as Education Scotland, Community Learning and Development, Educational Psychologists. This session the Quality Assurance procedures have been revised in line with our vision of individual accountability for attainment and a collegiate approach in order to secure improvement. There are now regular attainment meetings with Quality Improvement Officers and groups of Head Teachers out with evaluation visits to discuss attainment in schools of a similar size and demographic. Secondary School Head Teachers have similar attainment meetings with the Quality Improvement Officer, Head of Education and a partner Head Teacher. Evaluation visits still take place but are now including Head Teachers and staff from other schools to build capacity, share practice and lead to further improvement.

Next Steps:

Review the impact of the Quality Assurance Procedures on Improvements in performance, to ascertain how best to use the limited resource available.

- The Education Department knows its schools well and undertakes activity to understand why attainment varies between the highest performing and lowest performing schools. Where there is a need identified, support and where appropriate, resource is deployed to build capacity in schools. For example, schools have been paired up to build leadership capacity in a school, Education Scotland has provided support to build capacity, funding for support such as Learning Rounds has been provided, and an additional depute has been provided to support leadership.

Next Steps:

Continue to improve analysis of data at authority level to ensure there is appropriate challenge and support for all schools through the revised Quality Assurance procedures.

Continue to ensure that individual accountability for raising attainment is understood by all staff, learners and parents and that there is individual 'buy in' to that vision.

Continue to consider new and innovative strategies to support schools and staff where improvements in attainment and achievement continues to be a concern, using good practice from within the authority and in other authorities. This should include robust monitoring and tracking.

Ensure staff and schools are held to account and that there is appropriate challenge and intervention to secure improvement.

- Improving learning and teaching for all in order to raise attainment is at the core of the Local Education Improvement and Planning Strategy. We invest in high quality staff development opportunities with a clear focus on improving learning and teaching and outcomes for learners. These include Co-operative Learning, Learning Rounds, practitioner enquiry, the numeracy academy. We have been validated for our Professional Review and Development (PRD) and Professional update procedures and this will ensure there is clarity amongst practitioners and leaders in our schools expectations for attainment/achievement and high quality learning and teaching. In addition we are securing high quality leadership and practitioner development programmes for teachers and school leaders.

Next Steps:

Continue to develop our people to ensure that there is increasing consistency in high quality learning and teaching which leads to improved outcomes for all our learners.

Continue to implement the new PRD and professional update procedures, including use of Head Teacher Conferences to discuss performance improvement.

3. Councils should work with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to develop a suite of agreed performance measures which would provide an overall picture of education attainment and achievement across Scotland

- Officers of the department attend the national ADES groups working with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government. A Quality Improvement Officer specifically attends the ADES Performance and Improvement Network where national policy about performance measures is discussed.
- We have nominated the Head of Service to sit on the National Steering Group for the new Achievement Advisers.

Next steps:

Continue to ensure officers work within the ADES forum to influence national policy and provide guidance regarding strategic developments within the authority. Ensure the new Partnership Agreement reflects the authority's priorities.

4. Councils should develop more coordinated approaches to gathering and recording information in schools and the levels of participation and the outcomes they achieve. This will help councils scrutinise performance and ensure resources are used as efficiently as possible

- The education service has a range of procedures in place to gather information relating to its effectiveness. As well as many of the evaluative activities described above, e.g. standardized assessments, tracking systems, evaluation visits, INSIGHT etc, it also regularly asks staff and pupils to give feedback about its performance. The SEE (Survey of Educational Experience) specifically asks children and young people about their experience at school. This information is analysed at school, cluster and local authority level and specific actions may follow as a direct result of the information given. In the same way the Employee Engagement survey seeks to gather information for all staff in schools. Schools and Officers at Council Level are

very proactive at reviewing the data deriving from the survey to plan developments. The Council employs a Participation Officer who actively seeks the views of Looked After and Accommodated young people and those with additional needs. The views of parents are sought in all schools. They employ a variety of methods e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, Parent Councils, open evenings etc., again this information influences whole school development work.

Next Steps:

Consider development of a further survey at S4.

Ensure that all pupil surveys are framed and reviewed within the SHANARI Wellbeing indicators.

*SEE surveys (all P6/S2 Pupils annually), Employee Engagement Survey (all schools based staff annually)

Part 3 – Improving Pupil Performance

Recommendations:

- 1. Councils should ensure education strategic documents contain clear priorities and actions that set out what is to be achieved in the short, medium and long term. Performance management arrangements should monitor outcomes and report regularly on delivery against strategic objectives, such as raising attainment among the lowest-performing pupils**

- A strategic group, the Senior Management Education Board (SMEB), has an overview of strategic priorities for education and outlines expectations for the service. The Education Local Improvement Plan and Strategy (ELIPS) has been developed by the group to provide a clear steer for all staff about expected outcomes with clearly defined actions. The strategy will feature more prominently at Education Committee.

Next steps:

Ensure the strategy is widely circulated and that accountability for delivery and the outcomes is built into quality assurance activity.

Consider recommendations to provide clear expectations for the short, medium and long term.

- Following the Inspection of Children's Services the Children's Strategic Partnership groups are working in partnership across services to identify clear shared priorities. A logic model to include long medium and short term targets is informing the planning within these groups to contribute to the Integrated Service Plan in June 2015. The groups have clearly defined lines of accountability for delivery of the Integrated Children's Services Plan in the longer term.

Next steps:

Ensure these groups are fully established in order to develop shared outcomes and inform the new Integrated Children's Services Plan.

- Shared accountability for outcomes is a focus at Head Teacher conferences and increasingly at clusters. Some clusters are developing multi-agency learning plans to improve outcomes for learners through partnership working at a local level.

Next steps:

Ensure that all clusters are working collegiately to improve outcomes for learners and that plans clearly align with the Education Local Improvement Plan and Strategy and other strategic plans.

2. Councils should review the sufficiency of information provided to education committees on attainment at S4-S6, pupil performance between P1-S3 and wider achievement. They should also ensure committees have the time and support to adequately challenge and hold to account education services

- Standardised assessment through the use of PIPs at P1, P3, P5 and P7 has been in place in East Lothian since 2008. Reports have regularly been provided at Education Committee outlining attainment information and trends at local authority level. Due to increasing concerns over the sample size for PIPs standardised assessment, a decision was taken to move from PIPs to INCAS this session. This will provide more detailed diagnostic assessments at school level.

Next steps:

Monitor how these new assessments inform tracking and monitoring of learners at school level

Ensure the committee is fully informed of changes to the standardised assessment procedures and how this relates to the reporting of attainment.

- Secondary On-Screen Curriculum Assessment (SOSCA) assessments are being introduced at S1/S2 in all secondary schools this session. This is to provide standardised assessment information over the key transition point from primary to secondary education and to support existing planning and assessment practices in secondary to ensure there is appropriate pace in learning for all learners.

Next steps:

Monitor how these new assessments inform tracking and monitoring of learners at school level

Ensure the committee is fully informed of changes to the standardised assessment procedures and how this relates to the reporting of attainment.

- All our primary and secondary schools are planning and assessing using the experiences and outcomes in Curriculum for Excellence. Progress in learning is being effectively tracked through Curriculum for Excellence levels in almost all primary schools. Effective procedures to track levels of attainment at S1 to S3 are being developed through partnership between East and Midlothian as part of the School Improvement Partnership programme. Moderation practices continue to develop within schools and across clusters to develop confidence in professional judgements about levels.

Next steps:

Continue to develop tracking of progress across learning.

Develop a co-ordinated approach to collating Curriculum for Excellence levels at authority level for P1 to S3 and consider how this could be reported at committee.

- Wider achievement is increasingly tracked in schools and is highlighted through pupil profiling and through the pupil profiles at P7 and S3. Community Learning and Development track learners wider achievement through participation in awards such as Duke of Edinburgh. INSIGHT, the national benchmarking tool, has wider achievement as a key performance measure.

Next steps:

Ensure that all schools have an approach to recording and recognising wider achievement.

Continue to ensure that wider achievement is recognised and valued as part of the reporting process.

3. Councils should consistently use the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework to benchmark their performance against other councils, and share good practice to improve educational attainment and wider achievement.

- Secondary schools and education staff are engaging with INSIGHT, the national benchmarking tool for reporting and analysing performance in national qualifications and wider achievement at S4 to S6. Working in partnership with neighbouring authorities and Education Scotland, reports are being developed to support and challenge schools to improve and to report to committee.

Next steps:

Continue to build confidence in staff at all levels to use INSIGHT to inform improvements and lead to better outcomes for learners.

Support Councilors to fully understand the changes to national benchmarking of performance and how this impacts on the reporting process.

Continue to ensure that wider achievement is recognised and valued as part of the reporting process.