

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 21 June 2022

BY: Executive Director for Education and Children's Services

SUBJECT: Improving Outcomes for All – Raising Attainment Strategy Update

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the work underway across Education and Children's Services to improve outcomes for all, through raising attainment and achievement and reducing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 1.2 This report also gives some high level messages about the impact of recovery work upon pupil attainment in East Lothian schools in response to COVID-19 related school closures in previous years and the related ongoing challenges presented this current school session 2021-22.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - (i) Note the contents of this report and the positive impact of recovery work in East Lothian schools on achievements of East Lothian learners.
 - (ii) Note the key successes, areas of progress and actions being taken by schools and the Education Service to improve pupil attainment during the current school session 2021-22.
 - (iii) Note the key areas of focus and priorities within the Raising Attainment Strategy for 2022-23 to support a relentless focus on improving outcomes for all across East Lothian schools.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In recent years, East Lothian Council schools and Education Service have had a strong focus on improving pupil attainment for all learners. School improvement plans and the service improvement plans have referenced these priorities and actions, and a summary of the key priorities for 2021-

22, along with supporting data, were approved by Education Committee in November 2021.

3.2 School education is fundamental to ensuring positive long-term outcomes for young people and it impacts on Scotland's economy and society. The Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework (NIF) clarifies the vision for education in Scotland as:

- Excellence through raising attainment: ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.
- Achieving equity: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

3.3 **Broad General Education - Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL)**

3.3.1 From June 2016, East Lothian schools collated pupil attainment data for key stages in the Broad General Education (P1, P4, P7 and S3) on an annual basis. This is a requirement of the National Improvement Framework. As a result of school closures from March to June 2020, Scottish Government announced that the collation of this data would not be possible for June 2020. Whilst aspects of the national collation of this ACEL data resumed in June 2021, this was only for P1, 4 and 7. At the time, Scottish Government advised that data should not be collected for pupils in S3 or those with additional support needs in special schools. For June 2022, schools will report on ACEL for P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils once more.

The purpose of this data is to track, monitor and inform future improvements across schools in relation to pupil attainment. This data is based on the professional judgement of teachers of the overall progress made by a learner through Curriculum for Excellence levels in Literacy and Numeracy at the key stages as outlined above.

3.3.2 Throughout this current session, East Lothian schools and the Education Service's Quality Improvement Team have engaged regularly with live attainment data from SEEMiS Progress and Achievement in order to monitor pupil progress across the Broad and General Education from Primary 1 to S3. As a result, schools have made use of this to interrogate pupil progress data and to accurately identify where attainment gaps occur and the potential reasons for these. This level of data analysis has allowed many schools to regularly review and evaluate the impact of planned interventions for groups and individual pupils, and has informed the strategic allocation of resources in order to better meet the learning needs of identified pupils.

3.3.3 Robust challenge discussions with Head Teachers during QIO Quality Improvement visits and Associated School Group (ASG) Meetings indicate that schools have made good progress towards recovering from the impact

of the pandemic, and that significant progress has been made by schools during this session towards addressing the impact of the pandemic period upon pupil attainment and achieving combined June 2022 attainment targets for Literacy and Numeracy. Finalised data will be collected by Scottish Government in August, and will be published in December.

3.4 Senior Phase Attainment June 2021

- 3.4.1 As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic in 2019/20, the 2020 national examination timetable was cancelled and externally assessed SQA qualifications at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher were instead awarded based on centre estimated grades.

The Alternative Certification Model (ACM) was developed for National 5 courses, in response to the Deputy First Minister's announcement on 7 October 2020 of the cancellation of National 5 exams. Following the cancellation of Higher and Advanced Higher exams on 8 December 2020, it was decided that the ACM would be expanded to cover Higher and Advanced Higher, as well as National 5.

Due to this change in the assessment and awards process, SQA results for 2019/20 and 2020/21 cannot be directly compared to those in previous years and cannot be used to directly demonstrate school or authority improvement compared with previous years.

However, the ACM attainment data can be used to compare East Lothian schools with their Virtual Comparator and with National measures for June 2021.

- 3.4.2 The measure for East Lothian school leavers achieving 5 awards or more at SCQF level 5 or better was in line with both virtual comparator schools and the national average for June 2021.

The measure for East Lothian school leavers in a positive initial destination was in line with virtual comparator schools and above national average.

The measure for school leavers achieving qualifications in literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 5 or better was in line with the national average.

Attainment levels for East Lothian pupils at Senior Phase for session 2020-21, based on the Alternative Certification Model, indicate that these were in line with virtual comparator schools and with national averages.

3.5 Next Steps 2022-23

- 3.5.1 East Lothian schools will continue to have a relentless focus on raising attainment at both the Broad General Education and at Senior Phase. Based on their quality assurance and self-evaluation data, all schools will align their improvement priorities for 2022-23 with the Education Service's improvement priorities of:

- Curriculum - Meeting the Needs of All
- Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion
- Leadership

School improvement priorities will also be aligned to the refreshed National Improvement Framework (Scottish Government).

3.5.2 The Quality Improvement Team will continue to offer support and challenge to schools in the areas of quality improvement, self-evaluation, data literacy, curriculum development and continued improvements in teaching and learning. Schools will be supported to develop their use and interrogation of data further to plan, implement and evaluate targeted interventions to address identified gaps in pupils' attainment.

3.5.3 The Education Service has established a Pedagogy Team, consisting of five Principal Teachers of Pedagogy, who are supporting continued improvements in teaching and learning in some East Lothian schools. The level and type of support is identified in an individual school's service level agreement and reflects the school's capacity for improvement in response to the school's own self-evaluation, or as a result of findings from inspection or authority review.

3.6 Raising Attainment Strategy Progress

3.6.1 Despite the significant disruption to education since March 2020, a considerable amount of work was undertaken during school session 2020-21, to develop our Raising Attainment Strategy for East Lothian schools. Head Teachers used data tools to analyse attainment data over time and to identify key barriers to pupil attainment. Having undertaken significant analysis, the key priorities and areas of focus identified were:

- Overall attainment at Primary 1 (Early Level)
- Attainment in writing in the Broad General Education
- The gender-based attainment gap
- The poverty related attainment gap

3.6.2 In 2021-22, work streams aligned to each of these barriers began collaborative work across schools, based on practitioner enquiry approaches, to develop classroom based interventions designed to address one of these specific barriers to learning. Unfortunately, this work was inconsistent for the period October 2021 to March 2022 due to the impact of COVID related staff absences and the subsequent capacity of schools to support this. However, several practitioners were able to continue this intervention approach, and were supported by the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC – Scottish Government) and Education Scotland in aspects of quality improvement to underpin their intervention projects. The content and outcomes from these intervention projects will be shared with schools before the end of this session, both in person at a twilight drop-in and in digital format on the service's EduHub space. This will allow them to reflect on good practice and use this to drive forward continued improvements in their own contexts.

3.6.3 Last session, schools interrogated their attainment tracking data to identify which attainment barrier best described their 'attainment gap' and to plan appropriate targeted interventions to address these during 2021-22. The

Quality Improvement Team provided regular support and challenge to schools during this session to evaluate the impact of these interventions upon the attainment of targeted pupils.

As a result of the improvements in the quality of data informed interventions at school level, and the increased opportunities for professional collaboration, support and challenge, there are early improvements in each of the identified 'barriers to learning' for targeted pupil groups. This is emerging at both individual school level and at local authority level to indicate that pupil attainment levels are beginning to show improvement and returning towards pre-pandemic levels compared to the June 2021 measure.

3.7 Scottish Attainment Challenge

3.7.1 The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was established to promote equity in education by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. It is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child. It focuses on improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Reducing educational inequity and closing the poverty-related attainment gap is a long term strategy which aims to impact on societal culture and thinking. On the 23 November 2021 the Cabinet Secretary announced the expanded mission statement, included below, of the refreshed SAC:

“To use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.”

3.7.2 East Lothian Council's PEF allocation from April 2017 to March 2020 was £4,695,360. It also received the CECYP allocation equalling £332,400 between April 2019 and March 2020. In February 2020, 10.6% of P4-S6 pupils in East Lothian Council schools were registered for Free School Meals, an increase of 1.1 percentage points on the previous year. At the same point, 4.2% of pupils lived in Quintile 1 while 21.3% of pupils lived in Quintile 5. 1.4% of all pupils in East Lothian schools were recorded as being Care Experienced. In measuring poverty related gaps in East Lothian it should be noted that the numbers of pupils living in Quintile 1 is significantly less than those living in Quintile 5.

3.7.3 East Lothian Council's PEF allocation for 2022-23, based on the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge is approximately £2,175,124. This is based on:

- PEF allocation to schools: £1,775,025
- Care Experienced Young People Fund: estimated £200,000
- Strategic Equity Funding to local authority: £200,099

A short life working group will plan for the use of Scottish Equity Funding which over a four year period will give East Lothian almost £2M.

3.7.4 All East Lothian schools are supported by our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and the Quality Improvement Team in the planning of Pupil Equity Fund resourced interventions. The interrogation and analysis of school based data and information provides schools with the opportunity to ensure that PEF resource is allocated in a targeted way to address individual pupils' barriers to attainment and wider achievement, and to address the poverty related attainment gap.

3.8 **Progress with Reducing Inequalities - Key Successes and Next Steps**

3.8.1 In order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategy and school based interventions in reducing inequalities for pupils in SIMD Quintile 1, the Quality Improvement Team and Head Teachers have been able to regularly use live data and information to monitor in detail the attainment of this cohort of pupils.

3.8.2 During this current session, the ongoing analysis and evaluation of this data shows that East Lothian schools have reduced inequalities and improved outcomes for Quintile 1 pupils overall as a result of targeted interventions. Key measures to support this evaluation show that the average attendance rate for all Q1 pupils has remained consistently positive throughout the current session. The percentage of Quintile 1 pupils making good or very good progress in literacy and numeracy within the Broad General Education has continued to improve during this session. For June 2021, achievement levels for Q1 Senior Phase pupils, in terms of total tariff points, was higher than virtual comparator schools.

3.8.3 To further support the reduction in inequalities for pupils, and maintain a relentless focus on raising attainment next session, schools will focus on ensuring that their curriculum offer meets the needs and aspirations of all learners and provides the opportunity for pupils to achieve their potential.

Schools will also have a commitment to further develop professional knowledge, understanding and application of statutory guidance and policies to ensure a universal commitment to inclusive and equitable practice.

The Education Service is committed to the further development of learner voice at school and authority level to develop the potential of pupil leadership and to ensure that the UNCRC Rights of the Child are intrinsic to future policy development and service provision.

3.8.3 **Case Studies** – A case study from Pinkie St Peter's Primary School and Sanderson's Wynd Primary School and provides an overview and information relating to two Pupil Equity Fund interventions that have had a positive impact upon reducing inequalities for targeted pupils and have been lodged in the Members Library.

4 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial –
Total PEF allocation to schools for 2022/23: £1,775,025
Care Experienced Young People Fund for 2022/23: estimated £200,000
Strategic Equity Funding to local authority for 2022/23: £200,099
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Case Studies – Pinkie St Peter’s Primary School and Sanderson’s Wynd Primary School have been lodged in the Members Library.

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