

Item: 5

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 29 March 2023.

Raising Attainment Strategy.

Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the Raising Attainment Strategy 2023-2026.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That the purpose of the Raising Attainment Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, which identifies the clear next steps and identified actions in raising attainment across the authority, is to ensure that robust plans are in place to continue to meet both the Council and the Scottish Government's vision to ensure that every child in Orkney can fulfil their potential.

2.2.

That the Raising Attainment Strategy details the significant work already undertaken to address previously low attainment returns in the Broad General Education resulting in improved outcomes.

2.3.

That the Raising Attainment Strategy pulls together relevant local and national key documents and plans clearly defining what continuing actions will be undertaken during the period of the Strategy to meet national and local expectations and commitments in raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

It is recommended:

2.4.

That the Raising Attainment Strategy 2023-2026, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

3. Background

3.1.

In 2019 Orkney's Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) were lower than the national average, and in most measures, rated amongst the lowest

levels of attainment in Scotland. The evidence of the local context and the low poverty rates, coupled with the high pass rates of the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) results, indicated that this was an anomaly. A significant amount of work was undertaken to address this by Education Service officers, supported by the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, as detailed in the Strategy attached as Appendix 1.

3.2.

Changes to the Scottish Attainment Fund has brought additional funding to the local authority and schools. Orkney receives funding via the:

- Strategic Equity Fund – local authorities are allocated funding to be used strategically to support authority-wide programmes.
- Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) – schools are allocated funding. Headteachers are responsible for the planning and implementation of the spending of PEF.
- Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund – local authorities are allocated funding to be jointly managed by the Education Service and Orkney Health and Care.

3.3.

The Pupil Equity Fund was introduced in 2017 to support schools to address the equity gap for children and young people. This funding is based on the number of children and young people in schools in eligible for free school meals. Not all schools in Orkney benefit from this funding.

3.4.

Local authorities are required to demonstrate the impact of all three funding streams and to reduce inequity. In Orkney, it must be ensured that the pace of change accelerates so that no child or young person is disadvantaged, and that equity lies at the heart of the educational experience for all. The current data identifies a significant gap in the combined attainment for children and young people in receipt of FSM, or who have experienced care, compared to their peers. The actions in this strategy have a particular focus in trying to reduce this gap.

3.5.

The Council, supported by the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, has a duty to report to the Scottish Government on the use and impact of the three funding streams.

4. Raising Attainment Strategy

The purpose of the Raising Attainment Strategy 2023-2026, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, is to ensure that robust plans are in place to continue to meet both the Council and the Scottish Government's vision to ensure that every child in Orkney can fulfil their potential. The National Improvement Framework has six National Improvement Drivers. Key actions under each of the drivers have been identified. In

addition, the Strategy has two clear outcomes which link to the Council's National Improvement Framework: Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan 2022/23, which was recommended for approval by the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee on 7 September 2022:

- Raising Attainment for All – Striving for Excellence.
- Closing the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Striving for Equity.

5. Equalities Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

6. Links to Council Plan

6.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Thriving Communities.

6.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to Priority 3.6 – Review the policy and provision for staffing, curriculum and financial management of our schools to ensure resources are most effectively targeted at 'raising the bar and closing the gap'.

7. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of Community Wellbeing.

8. Financial Implications

8.1.

There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

8.2.

The funding streams for each of the 3 areas for year 2022/23 is as follows:

- Pupil Equity Fund: £249,805.
- Strategic Equity Fund: £100,000.
- Care Experienced Children and Young Person's Fund (including a carry forward from 2021/2022): £34,031.

9. Legal Aspects

There are no financial implications for Orkney Islands Council arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

10. Contact Officers

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Raising Attainment Strategy 2023-2026.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.



Orkney Islands Council

Education Leisure and Housing

**Raising Attainment Strategy
2023 - 2026**

Version Control

| Document Reference. | Revision. | Issue Date. | Reason for Issue. | Reviewer. | Sign. |
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National and Local Context

Background

In 2015 the Scottish Government set an improvement agenda for Scottish schools called the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#) with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The Attainment Scotland Fund was established.

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan was first published in 2015, is updated annually and sets out a clear vision for Scottish Education based on delivering Excellence and Equity. The national mission was refreshed in 2022:

- to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.
- support education recovery, increase pace of and reduce variation in progress.

In April 2022 the [Scottish Attainment Challenge: Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress](#) (the Framework) was published. The Framework supports schools, local authorities and others across the education system to support educational recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and increase progress in improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.

The Framework also outlined changes to the distribution of the Attainment Scotland Fund. Initially, the Attainment Scotland Fund provided additional funding to local authorities which had high levels of deprivation. These were referred to as Challenge and Schools Programme authorities. As part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge refresh, this funding was replaced by the Strategic Equity Fund and saw all local authorities benefiting from this funding stream.

Orkney receives funding via the:

- Strategic Equity Fund – local authorities are allocated funding to be used strategically to support authority-wide programmes.
- Pupil Equity Fund– schools are allocated funding. Headteachers are responsible for the planning and implementation of the spending of Pupil Equity Fund.
- Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund – local authorities are allocated funding to be jointly managed by the education service and Orkney Health and Care.

The Pupil Equity Fund was introduced in 2017 to support schools address the equity gap for children and young people. This funding is based on the number of children and young people in schools in receipt of free school meals. Not all schools in Orkney benefit from this funding.

The Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund was introduced in 2018 to enable local authorities, as corporate parents ([Good Parenting Plan](#)), to make strategic decisions around how best to improve the attainment of those who have experienced care.

Local authorities are required to demonstrate impact of all three funding streams and to reduce inequity. In Orkney we must ensure that the pace of change accelerates so that no child or young person is disadvantaged, and that equity lies at the heart of the educational experience for all.

The Scottish Government has set a requirement for all local authorities to set stretch aims from 2022-2023. The Framework outlines the expectations on local authorities in setting their stretch aims. These will support improvement in outcomes and reducing the poverty-related gaps in:

- achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy combined and numeracy combined).
- the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 based on the “Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations” publication.
- the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 based on the “Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations” publication.
- the proportion of 16–19-year-olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland.
- a locally identified aim for health and wellbeing, to be measured using local datasets.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge funding programmes dovetail with the [Getting it Right for Every Child](#) and the [Curriculum for Excellence](#) keeping children and young people at the centre. Rights for children and young people have been further enhanced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which was passed in a Bill in the Scottish parliament in 2021.

The journey so far

In 2019 Orkney’s Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels were lower than the national average, and in most measures, rated amongst the lowest levels of attainment in Scotland. Our evidence of the local context and the low poverty rates, coupled with the high pass rates of the Scottish Qualification Authority results, indicated that this was an anomaly. A significant amount of work was undertaken to address this by local authority officers, supported by the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor. The following steps were introduced:

- Tracking statements were developed and agreed for Broad General Education levels.
- Targets were set for P1/P4/P7 and S3 in literacy and numeracy.
- Predicted levels were introduced and required to be submitted three times a year by Head Teachers to Education Service officers.
- More regular tracking and monitoring meetings were introduced between Head Teachers and Teachers and between Head Teachers and Education Service officers and or the Attainment Adviser.
- Development of Orkney’s Broad General Education tracking toolkit began and continues to evolve.
- Professional learning was provided to support the development of teachers’ professional judgements resulting in growing confidence among teachers.

- Local Authority and Attainment Adviser engagement with Head Teachers and Teachers improved confidence and skills in understanding and using data.

Aims and purpose of this strategy

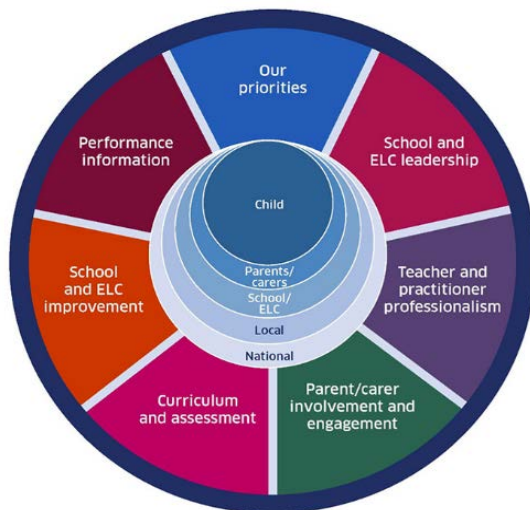
In Orkney we strive to [Work Together for a better Orkney](#). In April 2021, the Council adopted the national vision, “We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential” from The Promise. This attainment strategy aims to deliver the Scottish Government’s strategy of ‘Excellence and Equity in Education’ so that every child and young person can fulfil their potential.

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that we have robust plans in place to continue to meet both our and the Scottish Government’s vision and that every child can fulfil their potential. The [National Improvement Framework](#) has six National Improvement Drivers. We have identified key actions under each of the drivers. In addition, this Raising Attainment Strategy has two clear outcomes which link to the [Orkney Islands Council Education Service Plan](#).

- Raising Attainment for All – Striving for Excellence.
- Closing the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Striving for Equity.

National Improvement Framework

To inform our strategy we have identified the following key actions using the National Improvement Framework Drivers.



School and Early Learning and Childcare Leadership

Leaders at all levels will empower others to take ownership of their own learning and teaching to ensure the highest quality. We will:

- Collaborate with teams to develop consistency and sharing of good practice.
- Signpost leadership pathways for professional learning, encouraging leadership at all levels.

Teacher and practitioner professionalism

Children and young people should experience high-quality learning and teaching. We will:

- Provide high-quality professional learning opportunities to create a dedicated, highly skilled and qualified workforce.

Parent/carer involvement and engagement

When parents and carers engage in their child's learning journey then outcomes are better for children. We will:

- Ensure that schools and settings continue to reach out and engage with families in ways that suits families best.
- Families will be supported by working in partnership with partner agencies and the third sector.

Curriculum and assessment

What children and young people learn and achieve throughout their education affects how prepared they are for their future. We will:

- Listen and value the opinions of the children and young people.
- Ensure that we offer a broad, relevant and coherent curriculum.

We will use assessment data to inform our knowledge of children and young people's progress to provide opportunities for challenge and support.

School and Early Learning and Childcare improvement

Schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings will reflect and evaluate the quality of education. We will:

- Use the appropriate evaluation frameworks e.g. the Care Inspectorate's 'Quality Framework' and Education Scotland's 'How Good is our School?' and 'How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?' publications to drive improvement outcomes.
- Produce robust improvement plans which are outcomes and measures based.
- Focus on improvement planning which will tackle closing the equity and poverty gap.
- Provide 1140 hours of high-quality provision rated as good or better as assessed by the Care Inspectorate.

Performance Information

We will:

- Interrogate qualitative and quantitative data through use of our tracking and monitoring systems ensuring that gaps are identified and appropriate improvement actions taken.
- Support schools to set robust and aspirational targets for pupils in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing (attendance), contributing towards the local authority stretch aims.
- Early Learning and Childcare settings will use their data to ensure clear monitoring and tracking of children's progress including identifying and planning for children who are not making good progress.

Attainment Strategy

Raising Attainment for All – Striving for Excellence

| Sector | Activities |
|---|---|
| All primary and secondary schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional learning to improve teaching and learning experiences. • Provide professional learning to continue to develop confidence in teachers' professional judgement and increase consistency of expectation. • Create opportunities for collaboration and sharing of good practice. • Effectively use a range of assessment data to inform children and young people's progress. • Develop a robust system to track individualised targets. • Impact will be clearly tracked through outcomes and measures planning. |
| All schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All points of transition are planned and tracked effectively to ensure continuity of learning. • Relaunch of the Realising Ambition document to support schools to develop high-quality play experiences in P1, which build on the children's prior learning. |
| Early Learning and Childcare settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring high-quality provision of professional development opportunities which lead to impactful changes in practice. Provide opportunities to engage in mini research projects. • Ensure that all early learning and childcare managers and practitioners consistently implement the early learning and childcare 'Securing Children's Progress' guidance • Ensuring ongoing recruitment and growth of the workforce to enable full accessibility of 1140 hours. |
| Broad General Education (primary and Early Learning and Childcare settings) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Broad General Education tracking toolkit is maintained regularly and developed where needed. • Robustly track attainment using the BGE toolkit to identify trends and gaps. • Further develop tracking and monitoring across the service. |

| Sector | Activities |
|--|--|
| All secondaries and junior high school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the capacity of the secondary guidance network across all the JHS and secondary schools in Orkney, leading to consistency of procedures and processes and better outcomes for young people. |
| BGE secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and track the progress of S3 learners. • Develop robust BGE tracking from S1-S3. • Review the BGE curriculum across all schools and establish next steps in line with local context and national guidance. • Reinvigorate Interdisciplinary Learning. |
| Senior Phase | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the curriculum model for Senior Phase in line with the local context and new national guidance. • Continue to develop Literacy and Numeracy beyond S4. • Continue to use Senior Phase tracking framework to monitor progress and plan interventions. |
| Orkney College | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the curriculum offer supports attainment at the Senior Phase. |

Closing the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap: Striving for Equity

Research by Professor John McKendrick has demonstrated that there are children in Scotland living in poverty, even in the most affluent areas. Two thirds of those classed as poor live outside deprived areas.

The impact of poverty is wider than the work of the schools. [Orkney's Child Poverty Strategy 2022-2026](#) reported that in 2021, 467 children were living in relative poverty and 390 children were living in absolute poverty, which equates to 13.1% and 10.9% respectively of children in our local authority area. Concerningly, this is thought to be underestimated.

Orkney currently uses the data from children in receipt of free school meals (FSM) to inform targeted activities. Further work is being undertaken to explore how the data from the UK's Children In Low Income Families index (CiLiF) can better inform our understanding of the number of children and families who may be currently living in poverty in Orkney.

Planning and implementation of the use of the [Pupil Equity Fund](#) will support the six priority family characteristics as identified by the Scottish Government:

- Lone parent families.
- Minority ethnic families.
- Families with a disabled adult or child.
- Families with a young mother (under 25).
- Families with a child under one.
- Larger families (3+ children).

Our current data identifies a significant gap in the combined attainment for children and young people in receipt of Free School Meals or who have experienced care as compared to their peers.

In mitigating the impact of the poverty and equity gap, we intend to focus on the following activities which link to the Education Service plan themes of Inclusion and Wellbeing, Learning and Achievement and Systems and processes.

| | |
|---|--|
| All schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring that tracking approaches capture the progress of children and young people in receipt of FSM and or are care experienced are monitored and targeted interventions are established where and when required.• At all transition points targeted interventions where required will support vulnerable children and young people and their families.• Ensure that all staff have an awareness of the cause and impact of poverty on children and young people and their families. |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| All schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor attendance rates and provide support to those at risk of or with attendance lower than 95%. |
| Early Learning and Child Care settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded places will be available for all children aged 3 years, those children not yet starting school or 2-year-old children if eligible. |
| BGE Primary 1 to Secondary S3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Equity Funding is planned using a measures and outcomes framework to measure impact. |
| Senior Phase | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that young people move on to positive destinations post school. |
| Orkney College | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise opportunities for young people to participate in the senior phase offer at Orkney College, seeking to overcome geographical and other barriers. |

Stretch Aims 2022 - 2023

Core Stretch Aims 2022 - 2023

| | P1 | P4 | P7 | P1/4/7 Combined |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Reading | 88% | 81% | 85% | 85% |
| Writing | 86% | 75% | 80% | 80% |
| Listening and Talking | 93% | 91% | 92% | 92% |
| Literacy | No targets set | | | 75% |
| Numeracy | 89% | 81% | 84% | 85% |

Senior Phase

| | |
|--|-----|
| Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more passes at SCQF Level 5 based on "Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations" publication. | 95% |
| Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more passes at SCQF level 6 based on "Summary Statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations" publication. | 68% |
| Participation measure: proportion of 16-19 years olds participating in education, employment or training based on Annual Participation Measures produced by Skills Development Scotland. | 95% |

Health and Wellbeing

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Attendance | 95% |
|------------|-----|

Plus Stretch Aims

| Free School Meals P1-7 | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Reading | 60% |
| Writing | 47% |
| Listening and Talking | 70% |
| Numeracy | 54% |

Care Experiences Children and Young People P1-7

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Reading | 37% |
| Writing | 26% |
| Listening and Talking | 51% |
| Numeracy | 29% |

Strategy Monitoring

The Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, the Head of Education and Service Improvement Team will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to track and monitor in-year progress.

Progress towards stretch aims will be monitored through the Education Service quality assurance process.



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

| 1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed. | Raising Attainment Strategy |
| Service / service area responsible. | Education |
| Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details. | Morag Miller |
| Date of assessment. | 3 March 2023 |
| Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly). | New |

| 2. Initial Screening | |
|--|--|
| What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan? | This attainment strategy aims to deliver the Scottish Government's strategy of 'Excellence and Equity in Education' so that every child and young person can fulfil their potential. |
| Is the function / policy / plan strategically important? | No |
| State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how. | All children and young people with a focus on ensuring positive outcomes for them. |
| How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan? | HT and relevant partners consulted in the development of this plan. |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p> | <p>The strategy details the actions we intend to take towards the Scottish Government's aim towards raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.</p> <p>This government's mission is <i>to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.</i></p> |
| <p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.</p> | <p>Much in this strategy is designed to focus on interventions to mitigate against the impact of poverty.</p> |
| <p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?</p> | <p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).</p> |
| <p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>2. Sex: a man or a woman.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>5. Pregnancy and maternity.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>6. Age: people of different ages.</p> | <p>Strategy focused on children and young people</p> |
| <p>7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>8. Caring responsibilities.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>9. Care experienced.</p> | <p>Yes – focus on improving outcomes for children and young people who have experienced care.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| 10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships. | No |
| 11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not). | Possibly if this also includes other issues, eg socio-economic disadvantage |
| 12. Socio-economic disadvantage. | Yes - focus on trying to minimise the poverty-related attainment gap. |

3. Impact Assessment

| | |
|---|---|
| Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed? | Different stretch aims have been set for different cohorts of young people. |
| How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts? | The strategy is focused on the actions required to minimise the negative impacts. |
| Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require? | Policy to be accepted |

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

| | |
|---|--|
| Is further work required? | No. |
| What action is to be taken? | Policy to be presented to committee |
| Who will undertake it? | MM |
| When will it be done? | 29 March 2023 |
| How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans). | Annually through reporting on the funding specifically in this area. |

Signature:



Date: 3.3.23

Name: MORAG MILLER

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at hrrsupport@orkney.gov.uk