

Welcome

As we start the new school session both Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning, and I want to take the opportunity to welcome you to the start of what we hope will be a great year in the life of your child's education.

It is an incredibly busy time for Scottish Education, with a number of priorities at both National and Council levels aimed at improving outcomes for all of our children and young people.

As you know, the Authority Education functions were inspected during the last session, the outcome of which resulted in 5 main areas for improvement. As an Authority however it has made us work hard to identify areas of improvement and ensure appropriate action has been taken. Staff have worked tirelessly over the last 12 months carrying out a number of actions in relation to the inspection report and new legislation brought in by Scottish Government and we hope you agree that much has been completed.

Much more still requires to be done and with your support I'm sure we will achieve our desired aspiration which is to make Argyll and Bute the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up.

The Inspection Team will return to Argyll and Bute at the end of September to evaluate our progress against the main points for action and will prepare and publish a further report.

As part of the inspection, questionnaires will be issued by Education Scotland to a range of Education Stakeholders to seek their views on Education in Argyll and Bute including you, our parents and guardians. To this end we thought it would be useful for us to let you know what has been happening within the Authority over the last 12 months to ensure you are fully briefed.

Over the course of the next few weeks another Newsletter will be issued to you, providing information on other important Education matters including:

- The Education Governance Review;
- The Education Annual Plan

We hope your children quickly settle into the new Academic Year especially those who are facing the major transitions of starting Primary or Secondary School for the first time.

Ann Marie Knowles Executive Director Community Services	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly Policy Lead for Education & Lifelong Learning
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Inspection of the Education Function of Argyll & Bute Council

Actions taken during Session 2016/17

Following publication of the report the Authority implemented an Improvement Plan in response to the main points for action.

The following section provides a summary of the actions and interventions for each area of improvement which have been put in place since the Inspection in September 2016:

1. **Significantly improve young people's attainment across the Authority:**

- We have provided a range of support to all Authority schools to assist them to take forward assessment and moderation. This includes:
 - i. Two further cohorts of Assessment and Moderation facilitators trained

- ii. New systems put in place to link schools with each other to discuss assessment and moderation
- iii. Extended the range of resources available on SALi
- iv. Planned further inset days specifically on Assessment and Moderation
- Revised approaches to quality assurance and moderation in all schools;
 - i. 10 Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs) have now been trained by Education Scotland
 - ii. Moderation exercises supported by QAMSOs in selected schools across the Authority
 - iii. Holistic assessment training has been delivered to all Assessment and Moderation Facilitators, 7 schools and 2 clusters
- Delivered a programme of professional learning aimed at raising attainment in literacy and numeracy;
 - i. A 7 stage process of implementation of Literacy across Learning in secondary has been shared with all schools
 - ii. Sharing literacy twilight sessions held in 9 of the 10 clusters
 - iii. Literacy website developed for staff, parents/carers and learners
 - iv. Literacy across Learning guidance produced, small scale distribution
 - v. Effective use of assessment to support learning delivered by Education Psychologists and Early Years Team.
 - vi. Review of guidance on *learning to read and the teaching of phonics*, resulting in the creation of the document *Early Acquisition of Literacy in Primary*
 - vii. Central training programme and individual consultation for secondary schools on Fresh Start programme
 - viii. Support for English teachers' network, sharing information from national events with all secondary Literacy Principal Teachers
 - ix. Support for the Argyll Literacy Forum twilights in each cluster area
 - x. Development of Literacy progression pathways underway, to be implemented by all schools in session 2017/2018
 - xi. *Number Talk* methodology introduced to all schools across the Authority
 - xii. Introduction of a 'Mental Agility Framework'
 - xiii. Raising attainment in literacy and numeracy programme delivered to over 550 staff members
 - xiv. Draft Gaelic literacy and numeracy guidance produced. Currently subject to consultation
- Improved the quality of transitions for vulnerable young people as they move on from secondary school to ensure positive and sustained destinations
 - i. Working Group considering post school transitions for young people with a disability Revised Area PT responsibilities to include transition support for Looked After and Accommodated children
- Taken further steps to increase the overall proportion of children and young people who achieve in line with national expectation in Literacy and Numeracy, and
 - i. School Quality improvement visits now have an increased focus on the overall levels of achievement for pupils in literacy and numeracy
 - ii. A programme of tracking and monitoring professional learning events using Click & Go in place
- Implemented revised approaches to improvement for Senior Phase pupils across all SQA examination levels.
 - i. Revised approach to SQA analysis results implemented
 - ii. Individual secondary school attainment reports used during SQA meetings

Picture taken at Dunoon Primary School's P1 Literacy Link held in January 17



2. Improve the use of data, ensuring greater rigour:

- Improved use of data by all schools to support pupils in their learning;
 - i. Schools now routinely submitting evidence of standards of achievement across all levels through teacher judgement
 - ii. Insight professional development training delivered to a range of staff to enhance their understanding and analytical use of the tool
 - iii. School reviews carried out
- Further developed approaches to Assessment and Moderation by schools;
 - i. Assessment and Moderation an agreed priority within School Improvement Plans
 - ii. Revised Standards & Quality and School Improvement Plan templates developed in consultation with Head Teachers
- Further develop support and engagement with Secondary schools to ensure increased positive, post school destinations for all Argyll and Bute leavers (Participation measures);
 - i. Curriculum planning and engagement programme delivered to all secondary schools
 - ii. Participation measure outcomes discussed as part of school quality assurance visits
- Provided increasingly effective support to schools in the use of data to benchmark progress for learners and secure further improvement;
 - i. Twilight sessions delivered across all areas including the use of data at classroom levels.
- Improved the attainment and progress of children in literacy and numeracy in P4 and P7 in line with national expectations;
 - i. Suffolk reading assessment administered and data analysed
- Continued to build upon higher levels of confidence in making professional judgements about the progress of pupils including making effective use of increasingly robust data and in developing approaches to moderation;
 - i. Learning & Development Framework 0-5 years issued to all ELC providers and childminders, which supports practitioners to track progress and benchmark data in literacy, numeracy and developmental milestones
 - ii. Twilight session delivered by the EY team to support implementation of the Learning and Development Framework and tracking progress in literacy, numeracy and developmental milestones in ELC
 - iii. Use of V-scene to communicate as a Gaelic Learning Community across the authority enabling joint planning, sharing of good practice and moderation
- Further refined the Authority approach to Standards and Quality Reporting ensuring:
 - ❖ improved and more consistent use of all available data;
 - ❖ to support more accurate Service benchmarking of progress and improvement, and
 - ❖ improve the level and frequency of performance reporting to Elected Members.
 - i. Performance reporting provided for Elected Members through an increasing range of formal Community Services Committee reports
 - ii. Data storage systems continue to be improved to increase the access to data by the Central Team to ensure data is used consistently
- Delivered a development and information programme for Elected Members to support and enhance their engagement in a broader range of scrutiny activities.
 - i. Programme plan and dates for development sessions prepared and agreed

3. Continue to improve the quality of educational provision with consistently higher levels of support and challenge from central officers and elected members:

- Progressed the review and realignment of central officer functions and responsibilities to ensure increased rigour and consistency in levels of support and challenge across all Authority schools;
 - i. Centrally deployed officers delivered increased support to schools and early years settings in a variety of curriculum areas
 - ii. Recruitment to the central team has increased capacity to support and challenge establishments
 - iii. Education Officers have a remit for no more than 15 schools resulting in regular engagement and challenge with schools

- iv. Dedicated PT for Assessment now seconded to Education to support assessment and moderation strategies
- Provided an ongoing programme of professional development for centrally deployed officers to further extend their skills, knowledge and capacity in undertaking support and challenge activities with schools;
 - i. Education Scotland provided Central Education with training on the new quality framework which has supported further improvement of self-evaluation
 - ii. School review process is developing leadership capacity to take forward self-evaluation for improvement, improved understanding of HGIOS4 leading to increased capacity when undertaking support and challenge activities with schools
 - iii. Central Education Team received ‘Model for Improvement training’ which is now being applied to measure engagement with new Education Vision and Strategy
- Re-engaged schools with National guidance on curriculum principles, entitlements and expectations to ensure effective delivery of a quality curriculum at a local level,
 - i. Literacy and Numeracy curriculum pathways and associated guidance materials developed
 - ii. Health and Well-Being currently being developed
 - iii. All 10 secondary school curriculum models evaluated
 - iv. Education Scotland supported 2 inset days to gather information on each school's progress in completing their curriculum rationale
 - v. Delivery of an Early Years Conference with the theme ‘Self Evaluation – We are on a Journey’
 - vi. Training session for all Partner Provider Managers to support with S&Q and Improvement Planning

4. Improve relationships and communication, promoting a more positive ethos amongst all stakeholders:

- Promoted and implemented a Head Teachers’ Advisory Group with the remit to improve communication, promote a more positive ethos and strengthen strategic leadership in key aspects of the work of the Authority;
 - i. Head Teacher Advisory Group appointed
 - ii. Revised approach to delivery of programme of HT (Cluster) meetings
- Ensured the ongoing provision of a range of information is issued to staff and parents to improve communication;
 - i. Increasing range of information being shared through Education Bulletins, Psychologist Newsletters, Childcare Chatter, Parent Newsletters, Head of Service Blog, Chief Executive Blog and a range of press releases
- Reviewed and updated further the Authority Parental Involvement Strategy to ensure greater engagement and communication with parents and carers;
 - i. Authority Parental Involvement Strategy being developed. Issued through Parent Councils and Head Teachers for consultation
- Identified a range of approaches to ensure that all young people are encouraged in making an effective contribution to decision making, self-evaluation and performance improvement processes at both school and Authority levels.
 - i. A range of approaches have been taken across the Authority to ensure young people are leading learning. These have included – a bespoke ‘digital leaders’ conference, the formation of the Digital Hub, Engagement of key groups of young people to support the development of an “App” for the Education Vision and Strategy Our Children, Their Future



Pictures of our digital leaders taken at the Digital Hub in Dunoon in April 2017



5. **Improve the quality of strategic leadership and direction at all levels within the Education Authority:**
- Undertaken the necessary work to ensure the preparation and publication of the revised Education Vision and Strategy: Our Children, Their Future, with a clear focus on ambition, excellence and equality reflecting local and national priorities;
 - i. Preparation of the final Strategy document, poster and pocket guides
 - ii. Official Launch of OCTF in January 2017
 - iii. HTs participated in workshop activities engaging in OCTF
 - iv. Preparation of updated Education Central Team action plan
 - v. Education Service Plan clearly aligned to Vision and Strategy
 - Improved strategic direction in a number of areas including learning and teaching and curriculum development;
 - i. Working group formed for delivery of the Authority strategic direction on Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - ii. P1 Literacy acquisition pilot. Strategy in place to implement new guidance
 - Reviewed further recruitment challenges faced by the Authority: identify potential approaches to minimize the impact of the national teacher recruitment difficulties;
 - i. Revision of Authority staffing exercise
 - ii. Liaison with Bord na Gaidhlig to allow English medium staff access to the Gaelic Immersion for Teachers (FifT) course with Strathclyde
 - iii. Further engagement with UHI to explore opportunities for the delivery of tailored initial teacher education programmes
 - Undertaken further reviews of Head Teacher appointment processes;
 - i. Revised approach to HT recruitment implemented during session 2016/17
 - Strengthened approaches to professional review processes for all Head Teachers;
 - i. Review of effectiveness of PRD processes undertaken with Head Teachers
 - ii. Review and update of PRD guidance materials
 - iii. Relaunch of PRD guidance and procedures to be taken forward during the forthcoming HT conference scheduled for November
 - Further develop the Education Authority Leadership Programmes at all levels.
 - i. Revised 2016/17 Middle Leadership programme with 8 participants
 - ii. Revised 2016/17 Argyll and Bute Leadership programme with 20 participants
 - iii. 10 into Headship candidates on 2016/17 programme with UHI
 - iv. Leadership Conference held and attended by Head of Service



Pictures taken at the official launch of Our Children, Their Future at Tarbert Academy

In Conclusion

We appreciate that the bulletin contains a significant amount of information, but hope you find this both informative and helpful. Should you require to discuss or clarify anything please contact Susan Tyre on 01369 708509

