

EDUCATION GOVERNANCE – NEXT STEPS EMPOWERING OUR TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO DELIVER EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY FOR OUR CHILDREN

Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scotland has good schools and great teachers but our ambition is to build a consistently excellent education system which delivers for all our children.

We are determined to create an education system which ensures that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, with the best range of skills, qualifications and achievements to enable them to seize the opportunity to succeed. Current evidence shows while our system has many strengths there are also weaknesses and we must improve performance.

Scotland has a proud history of providing universal education to our children. The majority of young people are performing well under Curriculum for Excellence – at least 80% of pupils are achieving third level or better in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3¹. The number of Higher passes has risen by 29.8% since 2007 and passes at Advanced Higher have risen by 42.5% in the same period². A higher percentage of young people now leave school for positive destinations than at any time on record³. The highest ever proportion of school leavers from the most deprived communities are going on to a positive initial destination – 88.7%⁴. More of our population is educated beyond school than any other European country (47.8% tertiary educated)⁵.

However, the latest results from the international study PISA⁶ found that Scotland's overall performance has declined in science and reading compared to 2012, and is unchanged in maths. Our relative performance compared to other countries has deteriorated across all three areas. Performance has measurably deteriorated in science and maths since 2006. The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) which monitored national performance in literacy and numeracy has shown a decline in numeracy (2011 to 2015) and literacy (2012 to 2016). There is still a clear gap in attainment between children from more deprived and less deprived backgrounds.

This paper sets out our work to fully deliver bold but necessary reform to Scottish education. The purpose of that reform is to drive improvement and to enable our education system to realise our ambition of excellence and equity for all.

An education system centred around children and young people

Children and young people must be at the heart of our education system. Decisions about their learning must be taken as close to them as possible by the people that they know and where they have an opportunity to influence those decisions. This is their future so they should have the right to participate and to have their views listened to and acted upon. Evidence shows that involving young people in their own learning and promoting the student voice is an important lever for school improvement⁷. We will strengthen the voice of children and young people through more effective and consistent pupil participation.

- 1 Scottish Government (2016a) *Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Level*. <http://www.gov.scot/stats/bulletins/01253>
- 2 SQA (2016) *Attainment Statistics (August)*. https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/2016-sqa-attainment-summary.pdf
- 3 Scottish Government (2016b) *Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No.6: 2016 Edition*. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/06/4523>
- 4 Scottish Government (2017a) *Initial Destinations of Senior Phase School Leavers*. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/03/2421>
- 5 Eurostat Data, *Population by Educational Attainment Level (2016)*
- 6 Scottish Government (2015) *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015: Highlights from Scotland's Results* <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511095.pdf>
- 7 Ruddick, J and Flutter, J (2004) *How to Improve your School: Giving Pupils a Voice*, Journal of In-service Education, Continuum Press

Evidence from the OECD⁸ shows that when parents are fully involved in their child's learning we see better outcomes for children, parents and schools. Research from PISA⁹ and Growing up in Scotland¹⁰, which studies a number of children and young people's lives over a period of time, shows that while many parents are engaged positively in their child's learning some parents face barriers; particularly those from poorer backgrounds. The evidence base for the importance of parental involvement has been further strengthened with the National Parent Forum of Scotland's review¹¹ of our own legislation, the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

Parents should rightly be involved in the running of their children's schools and we will support and strengthen parental engagement through enhanced parent councils. This will mean stronger duties on schools to ensure that parent councils play a full role in substantive matters such as school improvement and school policies. We will also take steps to modernise and strengthen the legislation on parental involvement to ensure that the wider parent forum – the parents beyond the parent council – can be involved in a variety of ways.

However, we recognise that a parent's most important engagement with school is about their child's education and learning that goes on in the home. Evidence from key academics such as Dr Janet Goodall¹² suggests that parental engagement in children's learning has the greatest impact on outcomes for children. As Sosu and Ellis (2014) note¹³ “*effective parental involvement programmes that have an impact on the attainment gap are those that focus on helping parents to use appropriate strategies to support their children's learning at home*”. We will also boost support to those parents who do not currently engage as much as they would want to through enhancing the availability of home-school link workers and extending family learning.

A school and teacher-led education system

The primary focus of our reform is to shape an education system to create a school and teacher-led system. Decisions that shape the education of our young people will be made in classrooms, schools and establishments by people working directly with young people.

Our policy is based on international evidence about what works and on the simple premise that the people best placed to make decisions about learning for our children are those professionals qualified to do so. The OECD considered the relationship between school autonomy and performance using evidence gathered through PISA and concluded “*At the country level, the greater the number of schools that have the responsibility to define and elaborate their curricula and assessments, the better the performance of the entire school system...*”¹⁴.

Decisions about improving learning and teaching and the funding to support these new statutory duties will rest at school level. The role of everyone else within the education system will be to support the learning that takes place in our classrooms, our schools and establishments. Each individual responsible for taking decisions in the system should consider whether it will contribute to an improvement in learning in classrooms.

8 OECD (2012) *Parental Involvement in Selected PISA Countries and Economies*, OECD Publishing Paris [http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP\(2012\)10&docLanguage=En](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP(2012)10&docLanguage=En)

9 OECD (2017a) *PISA 2015 Results (Volume III) Students' Well-being*, PISA, OECD Publishing Paris <http://www.oecd.org/edu/pisa-2015-results-volume-iii-9789264273856-en.htm>

10 Bradshaw, P, Hall, J, Hill, T, Mabelis, J, and Philo, D (2012) *Growing Up in Scotland: Early experiences of primary school*, Scottish Government, Edinburgh <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/05/7940>

11 National Parent Forum of Scotland (2017) *Review of the Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act 2006* <http://www.npfs.org.uk/2017/05/23/review-of-the-impact-of-the-2006-parental-involvement-act/>

12 Harris and Goodall (2007) *Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement Do Parents Know They Matter?* Educational Research <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6639/>

13 Sosu, Edward and Ellis, Sue (2014) *Closing the attainment gap in Scottish Education*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/education-attainment-scotland-full.pdf>

14 OECD (2011) *PISA in Focus (2011/9) School autonomy and accountability: Are they related to student performance?* <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/pisainfocus/48910490.pdf>

Focusing on the quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is the most important in-school factor in determining a child's educational outcomes. In her review of the evidence Sammons states that around 5–18% of variance in student outcomes can be attributed to schools and some studies indicate that up to 55% of the variance in outcomes can be explained at classroom level¹⁵. Graham Donaldson in his review of teacher education *Teaching Scotland's Future (2011)*¹⁶ is clear that:

“High quality people achieve high quality outcomes for children”.

We want to support teachers to achieve their full potential.

Teachers will:

- be the leaders of learning in their classrooms;
- be supported through a revolutionised offer of support and improvement;
- help develop new career pathways allowing greater opportunities for career development and progression into leadership, specialist or improvement roles; and
- be supported by streamlined professional learning so that there is a coherent learning offer to teachers.

We recognise the importance of all skilled staff working with our children and young people and we will enhance the professionalism of support staff.

Supporting leadership

The research evidence suggests that the impact of leadership on student achievement is second only to the quality of learning and teaching¹⁷. Evidence from the OECD¹⁸ shows that *“school leaders can make a difference in school and student performance if they are granted autonomy to make important decisions”*.

Responses from headteacher associations to the Governance Review consultation stated clearly that headteachers should be able to focus on their key business of learning and teaching¹⁹. We will ensure that our school leaders have the autonomy to be leaders of learning within a clear national policy framework. We will work closely with the profession and professional associations to establish a Headteachers' Charter, which sets out the new powers for headteachers. The Pupil Equity Fund has begun this journey and we are determined to give headteachers more of the powers that they need to make the biggest difference to children. We will transform the level of clear, practical support for headteachers at a regional basis – giving them all the help and advice they need to improve the curriculum, learning, teaching, and assessment.

15 Sammons, P (2007) *School Effectiveness and Equity: Making Connections*, CfBT Education Trust, Reading <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/~media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2007/r-school-effectiveness-and-equity-full-2007.pdf>

16 Donaldson, G (2011) *Teaching Scotland's Future*, Scottish Government, Edinburgh <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/337626/0110852.pdf>

17 Day et al (2011) *Successful school leadership: linking with learning and achievement: Linking with Learning* (UK Higher Education OUP Humanities & Social Sciences Education OUP).

18 OECD (2008) *Improving School Leadership*, OECD Publishing, Paris <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/improvingschoolleadership-home.htm>

19 Scottish Government (2017b) *Education Governance. Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education. An analysis of consultation responses*, Scottish Government, Edinburgh <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/the-governancereview/consultationresponses>

Headteachers already have a deep sense of responsibility and moral purpose to do the very best for the children in their care. The reforms we are proposing here are about liberating them to concentrate on learning and teaching. Where devolution of responsibility would not improve learning and teaching, then it will not happen. We will not turn headteachers into chief-administrators of their schools; they will be the leaders of learning and we will empower them to do this, with improved support and the clarity of a strong national framework.

Headteachers will:

- be the leaders of learning in their schools;
- be supported through a revolutionised offer of support and improvement;
- be responsible for raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap;
- deliver quality and improvement at school level;
- select and managing the teachers and staff in their school;
- decide on school management and staffing structure, including business managers;
- decide on curriculum content and offer;
- work with partners including local authority support staff and others to meet learners' additional support needs at school level;
- collaborate for school improvement at school, cluster and regional level;
- lead self-evaluation and improvement of school performance;
- monitor school progress and reporting; and
- manage defined and greater proportions of school funding (this will be part of the accompanying consultation on funding).

We will develop leadership pathways to enable and inspire people to become headteachers. We will ensure there is an enhanced leadership support package to develop aspiring leaders, new headteachers and experienced leaders. We will introduce a fast-track leadership route to support aspiring and talented teachers who are keen to progress. We will strengthen career pathways with new cluster leader and system leader roles, and we will ensure that headteachers have the tools they need to drive improvement.

A relentless focus on improvement

Scotland has a proud history of providing universal education to our children. Now, perhaps more than ever, a relentless focus on improvement is needed to keep up with the world changing around us. Innovations in communication, particularly in the digital world, mean that those who stand still get left behind. This change must not be seen, however, as a challenge, it is an incredible opportunity which our children are best placed to grasp.

Over the last few years, support for curriculum development and learning has become inconsistent across Scotland and it is inhibiting our ability to keep up with global trends. McKinsey's 2010 report on school systems, *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*,²⁰ observed that:

"As the school systems we studied have progressed on their improvement journey, they seem to have increasingly come to rely on a "mediating layer" that acts between the centre and the schools. This mediating layer sustains improvement by providing three things of importance to the system: targeted hands-on support to schools, a buffer between the school and the centre, and a channel to share and integrate improvements across schools".

²⁰ Mourshed, M, Chijioko, C and Barber, M (2010) *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*, McKinsey & Company, London <http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/our-insights/how-the-worlds-most-improved-school-systems-keep-getting-better>

It is delivering this support which is the second major focus of our reform. We will ensure that schools have access to excellent education improvement services. These will be focussed on supporting headteachers and teachers in securing improvement in their schools and will be provided by new regional improvement collaboratives.

Regional improvement collaboratives will:

- provide excellent educational improvement support for headteachers, teachers and practitioners through dedicated teams of professionals. These teams will draw on Education Scotland staff, local authority staff and others;
- provide coherent focus across all partners through delivery of an annual regional plan and associated work programme aligned with the National Improvement Framework;
- facilitate collaborative working across the region, including sharing best practice, supporting collaborative networks and pursuing partnership approaches; and
- be led by a Regional Director, to be appointed by the Scottish Government and to report to the HM Chief Inspector/Chief Executive of Education Scotland.

The role of the Scottish Government

The role of the Scottish Government and the various national agencies is to set national education policy and a national framework for improvement which will support a school and teacher-led system. Terms and conditions of service including pay will continue to be set at a national level. The Scottish Qualifications Authority will remain an integral part of the system.

This Next Steps paper provides Education Scotland with a significantly enhanced role and purpose. Education Scotland will have a strengthened inspection and improvement function. Inspection will be a crucial tool that supports the system-wide goal to continuously improve. Education Scotland will have a renewed focus on professional learning and leadership, providing clarity and coherence to the national landscape. Delivery via the new regional improvement collaboratives will mean that hands on advice, support and guidance can flow directly to schools to support improvement.

We will take steps to ensure initial teacher education prepares students to enter the profession with consistently well-developed skills to teach key areas such as literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Registration of the workforce will be enhanced by a new body, the Education Workforce Council for Scotland, to support the professionals and provide confidence to parents and carers.

Scottish Ministers will set national priorities in education and will continue to be accountable to Parliament for the performance of the education system. More and more, however, those priorities will be directed by the improvements that the system tells us we need to achieve. The Government will establish a Scottish Education Council, chaired by the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, to ensure a system-wide focus on improvement is delivered. Government will continue to provide funding for education provision and support.

The role of Local Government

The school and teacher-led system needs all partners, including local government to focus on their contribution to improve performance. Local authorities' role and importance is crucial and they will be democratically accountable for the services they provide to schools and centres. Schools will now have much greater responsibility for key decisions and local authorities will have a vital role to play in enabling and supporting that. There will be a new duty on local authorities to collaborate to support improvement on a regional basis. They will also be responsible for improvement through their provision of education support services, their regional collaboration, and in securing leadership in their schools.

They will oversee quality in the provision of early learning and childcare, as well as being a key provider of services. Local authority education support services will include: the supply of schools; the provision of denominational and Gaelic medium schools where required; the administration of placing and admissions procedures, including for children with additional support needs (including independent sector where appropriate); the provision of support services such as human resource functions; planning for future requirements; and securing excellent headteachers for the schools in their area. This will retain important local accountability for the supply and quality of leadership in schools in our communities. The vast majority of the funding for school education will continue to be channelled through local authorities, and they will continue to have a role in ensuring that public resources allocated for the delivery of education in Scotland are properly accounted for.

Next steps

We have set out our vision for change. Some of these changes can be delivered without legislation and we will start working with partners now to deliver these quickly. We will establish the regional improvement collaboratives, taking account of the collaboration that is already underway, and we will realign national agencies to support the regional improvement collaboratives and strengthen inspection.

We are committed to bringing forward a new Education Governance Bill to deliver those changes that require legislation. We will work closely with partners to consult on proposed legislative changes and will introduce legislation in the second year of this Parliament.

We are consulting on the development of a more consistent approach to funding to ensure that schools have a greater role in how the education budget is spent.

Some of these changes will take time and we will seek to work with partners to deliver a stronger and more empowered education system.

Ultimately, however, the evidence shows us that improvement will not be achieved as a result of changes to structures; it will come through changes in culture and practice. So we will work with the whole system to start further empowering schools and improving the offer to teachers on learning and curricular support immediately.

We have a clear purpose and ambition. We are absolutely determined to improve attainment at every level and close the attainment gap so that every child in Scotland realises their potential.



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