

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL****Lifelong Learning Committee****11 March 2015****SCHOOL EDUCATION ACCOUNTS COMMISSION JUNE 2014****Report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Accounts Commission Audit Scotland report on "School Education" published in June 2014. It also sets out a range of proposals for improvement in relation to the recommendations it made which were designed to help Councils achieve value for money.

**1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

- 1.1 The Accounts Commission Audit Scotland Report on "School Education" published in June 2014 provided an assessment of how efficiently and effectively Councils are using their resources to maximise pupil achievement in schools. It examined how much Councils spend on school education and what they spend it on. It considered how effectively Councils are driving forward improvements in pupil achievement, and how efficiently they use their resources to maximise this. It also made recommendations for improvements to help Councils achieve value for money. Some of the key points made in the report are:
- 1.1.1 School education accounts for a significant proportion of local government spending, and a number of important changes to education in terms of national guidance and expectations have taken place in recent years, such as the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).
  - 1.1.2 There had been no independent evaluation of how much Councils spend on education and what this delivers in terms of improved attainment and wider achievement for pupils.
  - 1.1.3 The national Accounts Commission report on School Education (June 2014), prepared by Audit Scotland, assessed how effectively and efficiently Councils used their resources to maximise pupil achievement in schools from 2010 to 2013.
  - 1.1.4 The audit focussed on primary and secondary school education in Scotland. It did not examine pre-school, special or independent schools; nor did it include further and higher educational establishments.

## **2. ACCOUNTS COMMISSION KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 All Councils should ensure they fully understand why levels of attainment vary between their schools and different groups of pupils, and Councils should develop and implement strategies to reduce gaps in performance between the highest and lowest performing schools.
- 2.2 Councils should continue to work with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to develop a suite of agreed performance measures which would provide an overall picture of educational attainment and achievement across Scotland. They should also review the sufficiency of information provided to education committees on attainment at S4-S6, as well as pupils performance between P1-S3 and on the range of wider achievement activities offered in schools.
- 2.3 Committees should have the time and support to adequately challenge and scrutinise performance and to ensure resources are being used as efficiently as possible. Councils should consistently use the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework to compare their performance against other Councils, and share good practice to improve educational attainment and wider achievement.
- 2.4 Education strategic documents should contain clear priorities and actions that set out what is to be achieved in the short, medium and long term.
- 2.5 Councils should fully assess the potential long-term impact on attainment and wider achievement of budget reductions. There should be monitoring and acting on the impact of revised working practices and staff reductions across all affected groups (eg teachers, administrative staff, classroom assistants) and how this impacts on staff wellbeing.

## **3 PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL – CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 In Perth and Kinross Council, we have a range of processes and mechanisms by which we record, track, monitor and report on pupil attainment and achievement. Education Services recognises, however, that there is room for improvement in this.

What follows is a brief summary of some of the ways in which we plan for and report on pupil attainment and achievement.

- 3.2 The Evidence2Success (E2S) programme is focused on improving outcomes for all children and young people in Perth and Kinross, by enhancing the planning, resourcing and delivery of approaches to prevention and the earliest interventions for all young children and people accessing universal services across Perth and Kinross. E2S is also further developing the effectiveness of targeted services for those children and families with specified need. ([Report No 14/461](#) refers to this in detail).

- 3.2.1 Improving teacher quality is also key to improved outcomes for learners. We are now in the second year of our partnership working with Tapestry to further develop teacher learning communities, which provide enhanced professional learning opportunities that improve the quality of learning and teaching in all schools. We now have 75 teacher learning communities across all schools in Perth and Kinross.
- 3.2.2 Perth and Kinross Council have introduced guidelines on a system of Professional Update, recommended by the General Teaching Council Scotland, which ensures that all teachers are assisted in updating their skills and can confirm that they have maintained the high standards required of a teacher in our schools. ([Report No 14/221](#) refers to this in detail).
- 3.2.3 Action research, led by the Educational Psychology Service, is currently being undertaken with a small number of schools, with a view to better understanding why levels of school engagement can be low and to identify appropriate interventions to increase the levels of positive engagement.
- 3.2.4 The revised Headteacher Leadership and Induction Programme develops the promotion of leadership at all levels, and builds capacity amongst school leaders to effectively lead and manage change and improvement.
- 3.2.5 Education Services have systems in place for monitoring and tracking attainment through the School Improvement Framework. This includes Standards and Quality reports as well as Learning and Achievement visits. Attainment in Perth and Kinross schools has continued to show improving performance over the past 3 years.
- 3.3 Perth and Kinross Council participated nationally in the development of **Insight**, an online benchmarking tool. The **Insight** tool allows schools to benchmark against schools in their local authority, nationally and against their 'virtual comparator school' made up of similar pupils from across Scotland who have similar needs and backgrounds.
- 3.3.1 New measures reported by the recently launched Scottish Government **Insight** tool show that the secondary sector performs strongly in improving literacy, numeracy, post-school participation as well as attainment across the deprivation spectrum. ([Report No 14/459](#) refers to this in detail).
- 3.3.2 There is also a continuing upward trend in progress for primary pupils in P4 and P7 across Perth and Kinross. Most pupils in P4 continue to make good progress at First Level or beyond in Writing and almost all with Mathematics, Reading, Listening and Talking. At P7, most pupils made good progress at Second Level or beyond in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Listening and Talking. ([Report No 14/13](#) refers to this in detail).

- 3.3.3 Education Services have currently undertaken an audit of wider opportunities offered to young people, and a summary report has been shared amongst schools. All primary and secondary schools share information about the range of wider achievement activities that are offered in their annual Standards and Quality reports.
- 3.3.4 Perth and Kinross Active Schools also regularly gather and analyse data across the authority on participation in school activities.
- 3.4 The Lifelong Learning and Scrutiny Committees receive a range of reports for purposes of scrutiny of educational provision such as School Attainment, Extended Learning and Achievement, Standards and Quality, Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland.
- 3.4.1 In Perth and Kinross, we have recently started to benchmark our performance against our comparator authorities in Education Scotland inspection reports. This data is now being included in the service Standards and Quality Report. This information is also shared with the headteachers of all schools.
- 3.5 Education Services strategic documents such as the Education Services Plan currently contain clear priorities and associated outcomes.
- 3.5.1 School Standards and Quality reports provide information for parents and carers about progress made in relation to their planned outcomes.
- 3.6 The budget setting process requires all budget executive summaries to include a statement about the impact of potential budget reductions on customers, service users and staff.

## **4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Accounts Commission focused its report on the key areas that improve outcomes for learners.
- 4.2 It reported that the most effective Councils are starting to target resources to improve both attainment and wider achievement. They are improving teacher quality, fostering leadership skills and developing systems for monitoring and tracking pupil data. In these Councils there are also increasing opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills for learning, life and work.
- 4.3 In light of the information in the report, Education Services has identified key areas for further development and improvement:
- Supporting schools in developing a coherent system of monitoring and tracking attainment and wider achievement from 3-18; and
  - Ensuring schools increase their use of research to inform practice, policy and strategy.

4.4 It is recommended that the Lifelong Learning Committee:

- (i) Notes the Council's current position in relation to the key recommendations contained within the report;
- (ii) Approves the suggested key areas for development and improvement (Appendix 1); and
- (iii) Instructs the Executive Director to bring an update report in a year's time.

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**Approved**

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>None</b>
Workforce	<b>None</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>Yes</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>n/a</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>n/a</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Risk</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>Yes</b>
External	<b>No</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>Yes</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan /Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

This report relates to Objective No (ii).

#### Corporate Plan

1.2 This section should set out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and

- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No (ii).

- 1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Change and Improvement.

## 2. Resource Implications

### Financial

- 2.1 The proposal will be financed within existing Education and Children's Services revenue budget.

### Workforce

- 2.2 n/a

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 n/a

## 3. Assessments

### Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties. The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken in relation to this report can be viewed clicking [here](#).

This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

However, no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

### Sustainability

3.3 n/a

### Legal and Governance

3.4 n/a

3.5 n/a

### Risk

3.6 n/a

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

4.1 Heads of Education Services, ECS Extended Management Team, C&CS and JNCT (through leader of the Teacher's side).

### External

4.2 n/a

## **5. Communication**

5.1 The findings from this report have been shared with Education and Children's Services Extended Management Team. If approved, the key areas for development will form part of Education Services Improvement Plan.

## **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

In preparing this report the Accounts Commission June 2014 "School Education" was referred to.

[http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2014/nr\\_140619\\_school\\_education.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2014/nr_140619_school_education.pdf)

## **3. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Audit Scotland Report on School Education



## Audit Scotland Report on School Education

Accounts Commission Key Recommendation	Perth and Kinross current position	What are we doing to improve?	Timescale
<p><b>Councils should:</b></p> <p>Ensure they fully understand why levels of attainment vary between their schools and different groups of pupils, and should develop and implement strategies to reduce gaps in performance between the highest and lowest performing schools.</p>	<p>Education Services have systems in place for monitoring and tracking attainment through School Improvement frameworks, Standards and Quality reports as well as Learning and Achievement visits.</p> <p>Data is collated centrally and includes information beyond attainment and achievement in schools eg resourcing, pupil attendance and SIMD profiles.</p> <p>E2S has informed understanding and is improving the planning, resourcing and delivery of prevention and intervention services for all young children and people accessing universal services across Perth and Kinross.</p> <p>Currently there are strategies designed to improve teacher quality, develop leadership, improve the current systems for monitoring and tracking pupil data, increase parental involvement and develop pupil motivation and engagement.</p> <p>Headteacher/Depute Headteacher/Principal Teacher Development Days, Curriculum Improvement Network meetings, practitioner enquiry groups as well as ongoing analysis of data, both at school level and centrally, further support professional learning and curriculum developments across schools in Perth and Kinross.</p>	<p>Increase the use of research to inform practice, policy and strategy at school and authority level. Educational Psychologists will support schools to review their own situation, relate to evidence base and design appropriately targeted strategies and interventions.</p>	<p>Session 15/16</p>

Accounts Commission Key Recommendation	Perth and Kinross current position	What are we doing to improve?	Timescale
<p><b>Councils should:</b></p> <p>Continue to work with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to develop a suite of agreed performance measures which would provide an overall picture of educational attainment and achievement across Scotland.</p> <p>Review the sufficiency of information provided to education committees on attainment at S4-S6, pupils performance between P1-S3 and wider achievement.</p>	<p>Perth and Kinross Council participated nationally in the development of INSIGHT, an online benchmarking tool, which is designed to help bring about improvements for pupils in the senior phase.</p> <p>The Lifelong Learning and Scrutiny Committees receive a range of reports for purposes of scrutiny of educational provision such as School Attainment, Extended Learning and Achievement, Standards and Quality, Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate.</p> <p>Education Officers provide briefings and advice for elected members as and when required.</p>	<p>Continue to develop the use of INSIGHT across all our secondary schools and create guidance in collaboration with schools on the tracking, recording and monitoring of wider achievement.</p> <p>Continue to enhance communication and information sharing with our NHS colleagues to help improve outcomes for identified children.</p>	<p>Session 15/16</p>
<p>Ensure committees have the time and support to adequately challenge and hold to account education services.</p> <p>Consistently use the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework to compare their performance against other councils and share good practice to improve educational attainment and wider achievement.</p>	<p>The Lifelong Learning and Scrutiny Committees receive a range of reports for purposes of scrutiny of educational provision such as School Attainment, Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Extended Learning and Achievement, and Standards and Quality.</p> <p>In Perth and Kinross we have recently started to benchmark our performance against our comparator authorities in Education Scotland inspection reports and this data is now being included in the service Standards and Quality Report. This information is also shared with the headteachers of all schools.</p>	<p>Continue to explore further opportunities for involvement of Committee members to help improve outcomes for learners in Perth and Kinross.</p> <p>Increase opportunities to learn from other councils that have achieved very good results for the lowest 20% for 2013.</p>	

Accounts Commission Key Recommendation	Perth and Kinross current position	What are we doing (should we doing) to improve?	Timescale
<p><b>Councils should:</b></p> <p>Develop more co-ordinated approaches to gathering and recording information on the range of wider achievement activities offered in schools, including the levels of pupil participation and the outcomes they achieve. This will help councils to scrutinise performance and to ensure resources are being used as efficiently as possible.</p>	<p>Education Services have currently undertaken an audit of wider opportunities offered to young people and a summary report has been shared amongst schools.</p> <p>All primary and secondary schools share information about the range of wider achievement activities that are offered in their annual Standards and Quality reports. Many schools also include Wider Achievement awards in their school ceremonies.</p> <p>Active Schools also regularly gather and analyse data across Perth and Kinross on participation in school activities.</p>	<p>Help schools develop a coherent system of monitoring and tracking attainment and wider achievement 3-18. Any relevant data from this would then be included in reports to Committees.</p>	<p>Session 15/16</p>
<p>Ensure education strategic documents contain clear priorities and actions that set out what is to be achieved in the short, medium and long term.</p> <p>Performance management arrangements should monitor outcomes and report regularly on delivery against strategic objectives such as raising attainment among the lowest performing pupils.</p>	<p>Education Services strategic documents such as the Education Service Plan currently contain clear priorities and associated outcomes.</p> <p>Standard and Quality reports record against strategic objectives, and the collation of attainment data as well as the tracking and monitoring systems, inform interventions and trends.</p>	<p>Increased use of Education Services toolkits for evaluating the curriculum and significant aspects of learning.</p>	

<b>Accounts Commission Key Recommendation</b>	<b>Perth and Kinross current position</b>	<b>What are we doing to improve?</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p><b>Councils should:</b></p> <p>Fully assess the potential long-term impact on attainment and wider achievement of budget reductions.</p> <p>Monitor and act on the impact of revised working practices and staff reductions across all affected groups (eg teachers, administrative staff, classroom assistants) on staff wellbeing by, for example, monitoring sickness absence levels and through specific questions in staff surveys.</p>	<p>The Budget review group process requires all budget executive summaries to include a statement about the impact of potential budget reductions on customers, service users and staff.</p> <p>A pilot project promoting staff mental well-being has been introduced in one Local Management Group and staff absence rates – both teacher and single status - have reduced as a direct result.</p>	<p>Review any budget cuts to determine level of impact on most vulnerable in school communities, for example, children and young people requiring additional support.</p> <p>A report will be submitted to SMT regarding the rolling out of the well-being pilot programme promoting mental health to a further 3 Local Management Groups across Perth and Kinross.</p>	<p>Session 15/16</p>