

**To:** **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

**On:** **21 January 2021**

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**Report by:** **Director of Children's Services**

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**Heading:** **Scottish Attainment Challenge End of Year Report**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. This purpose of this report is to inform the Education and Children's Services Policy Board of the progress made in relation to the Scottish Attainment Challenge as part of revised end of year reporting arrangements.
  - 1.2. Renfrewshire became one of nine challenge authorities in 2016. The overall aim of the Attainment Challenge is to close the poverty-related attainment gap.
  - 1.3. As part of the grant requirements, a bi-annual report is submitted to Scottish Government which outlines progress towards three long-term outcomes. The outcomes are to improve learning and teaching, improve health and well-being and to close the poverty-related attainment gap.
  - 1.4. This session has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging we have ever experienced. The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has been profound, and presented us with unparalleled challenges. The school and early learning and childcare closures in March 2020, resulted in significant changes in working practices and routines.
  - 1.5. Despite these challenges however, very good progress has been made and workstreams have successfully adapted and continue to deliver high quality, evidence-based approaches which are having a positive impact on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the health and wellbeing of Renfrewshire children and young people.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note the contents of the report.

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### **3. Background**

- 3.1. There are five main work-streams within the Attainment Challenge. These are data analysis, learning and teaching, families and communities, leadership and care experienced children and young people.
- 3.2. In recognition of the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the resultant closure of schools since late March, the Scottish Government adjusted the reporting process and requested an update on the mid-year academic report which was submitted in March 2020 rather than requesting the completion of a separate template.
- 3.3. This report will summarise the key messages from the end of year report.

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### **4. Progress**

- 4.1. As a result of Covid-19, there has been no update to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) data which is used centrally to analyse improvements in attainment and achievement in the broad general education (BGE). However, our qualitative evidence continues to demonstrate the strong impact that the Attainment Scotland Fund approaches, including Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), is having on improving learning and teaching, health and wellbeing and raising attainment for all while closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 4.2. The percentage of 2018/19 Renfrewshire school leavers in a positive destination is 95%. This is an increase of 2 percentage points since 2017/18 and an increase of 4 percentage points over 5 years.
- 4.3. The attainment gap in the percentage of school leavers achieving SCQF level 5 in literacy and numeracy has continued to decrease. The gap has reduced by 14 percentage points in both literacy and numeracy since 2014. This reduction in the size of the gap is due to strong increases in attainment of children and young people living in the 20% most deprived areas.
- 4.4. Excellent progress has been made this year with regards to health and wellbeing. All Renfrewshire schools are engaged in the Renfrewshire Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA) to support emotional and social wellbeing and every school has adopted a health and wellbeing approach or model. This year, three schools achieved the SEL Worldwide Model School Status (PATHS awards) in recognition of their outstanding commitment to social and emotional learning in their school:
  - Bishopton Primary and Early Years Class
  - St Margaret's Primary and Early Years Class
  - Todholm Primary and Early Years Class
- 4.5. Our Local Education Recovery Plan, Build Back Better, was developed to support all establishments with the return to school. At the heart of this plan is health and wellbeing. As part of a national scrutiny exercise, Education Scotland noted that there was "a clear focus on ensuring wellbeing of children, young people and staff". Our approach to recovery has also been showcased on the National Improvement Framework (NIF) hub.

- 4.6. The SAC Development Officer team were a valuable resource during a very challenging and unprecedented time for schools. The team worked collaboratively and responsively to ensure that high quality learning and teaching continued to be a priority during lock-down. A range of digital literacy and numeracy resources were developed and shared across schools to support engagement and participation.
- 4.7. The Families and Communities workstream has provided on-going essential and valuable support during lock-down particularly around supporting and responding to mental health and wellbeing and parental engagement. In particular, a suite of trauma-informed resources based on RNRA ('Nurturing Wellbeing to Build Back Better') was developed. A Coping During Covid Helpline was set-up to support parents, children and young people who are experiencing wellbeing difficulties due to the impact of COVID-19.
- 4.8. Despite the pressures and challenges faced by staff, we continued to build capacity and leadership development during lock-down through a range of professional learning opportunities at all levels. Staff leadership programmes were completed remotely and participation rates were high.
- 4.9. All teams supporting care experienced children and young people have used a range of innovative approaches to ensure continued engagement throughout the lockdown period, impacting positively on the wellbeing of the young people and their families. Access to suitable ICT equipment has been provided as required to enable engagement with online learning and any other virtual support being offered from organisations.
- 4.10. Targeted support was provided to groups of children and young people during lock-down from a range of teams including Transition Teachers, Inclusion Support Assistants SPACE workers and Aberlour Mentors.
- 4.11. Finally, strong governance arrangements and processes enabled the Attainment Scotland Fund programme to be integrated into recovery planning and to ensure that outcomes and impact continued to be tracked and monitored.

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## Implications of this report

1. **Financial**  
None
2. **HR and Organisational Development**  
None.
3. **Community/Council Planning**

Our Renfrewshire is fair	- <i>The appendix details a range of activities which reflect local community planning themes</i>
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	- <i>The appendix details a range of activities which reflect local community planning themes</i>

Working together to improve outcomes

- *The appendix details a range of activities which reflect local community planning themes*

**4. Legal**  
None.

**5. Property/Assets**  
None.

**6. Information Technology**  
None.

**7. Equality and Human Rights**

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

**8. Health and Safety**  
None.

**9. Procurement**  
None.

**10. Risk**  
None.

**11. Privacy Impact**  
None.

**12. Cosla Policy Position**  
Not applicable.

**13. Climate Risk**  
None.

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## List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper 1: None.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Lauren Johnston, Project Manager, 0141 618 4023, [lauren.johnstone@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:lauren.johnstone@renfrewshire.gov.uk).

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**Children's Services**

LJ/KO

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