

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2014 at 9.30 AM.

COUNCILLORS:

Jim Blackwood
Dennis Goldie
Gerry Goldie
Linda Gow
Adrian Mahoney
Craig Martin (Convener)
Dr Craig R Martin
Alan Nimmo
Robert Spears

**REPRESENTATIVES
OF RELIGIOUS
BODIES:**

Hector Cairns
Margaret Coutts
Rev Michael Rollo

CO-OPTEES:

Fiona Craig (Teacher Representative)
Martin Craigen (Parent Representative)
Margaret Smith (Teacher Representative)

OFFICERS:

Nick Balchin, Principal Educational Psychologist
Elaine Costello, Integration Support Manager
Nigel Fletcher, joint acting Director of Education
Arlene Fraser, Committee Services Officer
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Gary Greenhorn, joint acting Director of Education
Mark Meechan, Community Learning & Development Manager
Anne Pearson, Curriculum Support Manager
Elliot Roy, Graduate Trainee
Richard Teed, Senior Forward Planning Officer

EE26. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Nicol and Ross Nixon (Pupil Representative).

EE27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

EE28. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Education Executive held on 9 September 2014 was approved.

EE29. REPORT BACK FROM CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CHANGE ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Education Executive considered a report by the joint acting Director of Education detailing the outcome of the formal public consultation exercise which had been undertaken in accordance with the regulations set out by the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010.

The Education Executive had agreed in April 2014 (ref EE6) to carry out a consultation on the proposal to make changes to the Falkirk Council Admissions Policy and that the results of the consultation be reported back to the Education Executive, with appropriate recommendations.

The report set out, in detail, a summary and analysis of the outcome of the consultation and highlighted the Council's responses to the main issues raised. The report also outlined the proposed transitional arrangements to assist families to continue with the education they had chosen for their children without financial and geographical disadvantage.

Councillor Nimmo, seconded by Councillor Martin moved that:-

- (1) the response to the consultation be noted;
- (2) the proposed changes to the Admissions Policy as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be agreed, and
- (3) that the transitional arrangements for non-RC baptised pupils that have older siblings already enrolled at the same denominational primary school be introduced to cover primary 1 enrolments in August 2015 and August 2016.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed the motion.

EE30. REVIEW OF INCLUSION AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The Education Executive considered a report by the joint acting Director of Education which sought approval to adopt a new approach to inclusive education within Falkirk schools. This proposal would require an extensive review of current provision, as well as a programme of consultation and workforce development.

The report set out the key aims of the review, the key principles of an inclusive education, together with the statutory duty placed on Councils to make provision for additional support needs of all children for whose education it is responsible. Information was also provided on how Education Services proposed to undertake the review of inclusion and additional support needs.

This followed a presentation from the Council's Principal Educational Psychologist which outlined proposals for redesigning the current provision in order to better meet the needs of children and young people in Falkirk, and improve their outcomes.

Decision

The Education Executive noted the report and agreed:-

- (1) the key principles of Inclusive Education as outlined in Section 2 of the report;**
- (2) that Education Services progress the Review of Inclusion and Additional Support Needs as outlined in Sections 5, 6 and 7 of the report, and**
- (3) that the joint acting Director of Education Services brings a further update report to a future meeting of the Education Executive showing the progress made.**

Councillor D Goldie left the meeting after conclusion of the previous item.

EE31. FALKIRK COUNCIL 1+2 LANGUAGES STRATEGY

The Education Executive considered a report by the joint acting Director of Education presenting the Council's draft 1+2 Languages Strategy for approval and submission to the Scottish Government.

The Council was required by the Scottish Government to develop its own strategy with regard to the implementation of 1 + 2 Languages. The report detailed the "ring fenced funding" from the Scottish Government and how this had been utilised for session 2013/14 and 2014/15 to allow the strategy to be taken forward.

The meeting adjourned at 10.40 a.m. as Councillor Spears had taken ill during the debate. The meeting reconvened at 10.50 a.m., with all members present as per the sederunt with the exception of Councillors Spears.

At 11.00 a.m., members and officers stood to observe a 2 minute silence to mark Remembrance Day.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed the draft 1+2 Languages Strategy, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report for submission to the Scottish Government.

EE32. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013: GUIDANCE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Education Executive considered a report by the joint acting Director of Education which summarised the key issues set out in Guidance in relation to the Community Learning and Development (CLD) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, together with an overview of how actions would be taken forward.

The Regulations place two obligations on the Council, which are (i) to ensure that the need for CLD provision within the Council area is assessed, and (ii) to publish a 3 year plan by 1 September 2015 setting out what CLD provision the Council will make, how it will co-ordinate provision with other providers, what action the other providers intend to take during the period of the plan and what needs will be unmet. It also sets out 4 key policy goals for CLD and recommends developing a 3 year plan which addresses these key policy goals.

The report also detailed how Education Services plan to take forward the 4 key policy goals and proposed that Falkirk Community Learning and Development Partnership take the lead, whilst working with partners and learners, in developing the 3 year plan.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed:-

- (1) to note the key policy goals as set out in the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 and the new Guidance (as detailed in Section 2.1 of the report);**
- (2) to endorse the plan, as detailed in Section 3 of the report, to take forward the development of the 3 year plan, and**
- (3) to receive a further update report detailing the progress made in developing the plan in due course.**

EE33. VALEDICTORY REMARKS

The Convener stated that Nigel Fletcher, acting joint Director of Education, would be retiring in December and today was his final Education Executive. He thanked Mr Fletcher on behalf of the Education Executive and the Council for his contribution to the work of Education Services, and commended his commitment to education services in the area throughout his career and wished him well in his retirement. The Executive also heard from Councillor Nimmo, portfolio holder for Education, who thanked Mr Fletcher for his years of service not only as an officer, but latterly as acting Director of Education and wished him a long and happy retirement. Other members of the Executive also expressed their thanks and good wishes to Mr Fletcher.

Mr Fletcher thanked members for their kind words and support shown over the years.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE TO 600 HOURS PER ANNUM
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 3 FEBRUARY 2015
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Education Executive and seek further approvals in regard to the implementation of the expansion of early learning and childcare provision to 600 hours for:

- **Phase 1** - 3 and 4 year olds
- **Phase 2** - 2 year olds whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits.

This provision is being introduced to fulfill our statutory obligations under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

2. PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE (3 and 4 year olds)

2.1 Further to the update provided on 9 September 2014, Education Executive is asked to note:

- a. **Additional Early Years Campuses** - Resources have been allocated to establish additional Early Years Campuses in 3 Wards to meet the strategic aim of providing extended places in all Wards by the end of school session 2015-16.

Table 1 Establish additional early years campuses		
Ward	School	Estimated Completion Date
Ward 1 Bo'ness & Blackness	Kinneil Primary School	June 2015
Ward 8 Lower Braes	St Margaret's Primary School	June 2015
Ward 5 Bonnybridge & Larbert	Bonnybridge Primary School	Easter 2016

The estimated completion dates for Kinneil Primary School and St Margaret's Primary School have been extended due to the prioritisation and delivery of other educational projects but they will still be available before the end of this academic year.

- b. **Increase Places in Existing Early Years Centres** - Capital and revenue funding has been allocated to increase baby, toddler and 3 and 4 year old provision during session 2015-16 in:
- i. **Ward 4 (Carse/Kinnaird/Tryst)** - Although initial proposals planned to do this on-site at Larbert Day Nursery, professional and technical advice received regarding the site suitability has led us to consider an alternative location. We will provide a further update to Education Executive on our findings, including costs.
 - ii. **Ward 6 (Falkirk North)** - Our next priority will be to review the options around ensuring adequate provision is available in this Ward. This will involve considering provision at the Woodburn Nursery and Queen Street Nursery School sites.
- c. **Increase Capacity in Existing Nursery Classes in Primary Schools**
- i. **Ward 5 (Bonnybridge & Larbert)** - As part of the planned extension to St Joseph's Primary School a new nursery wing is being provided. This wing will allow the school to increase current capacity from 30:30 to 40:40. A contribution towards this, using available Phase 1 capital funding is being considered.

2.2 **Outdoor Learning and Play** - Daily access to quality outdoor spaces which provide challenge, promote creativity and facilitate opportunities to connect with nature are essential. Given we have increased the internal capacity of many of our early years establishments we are currently assessing the quality of the outdoor spaces. This ensures all of our children can fully appreciate the benefits of outdoor learning and play, examples of how we could invest resources would be:

- Enlarging current play area
- Fencing alterations and security
- Storage facilities
- New play equipment
- Outdoor clothing provision
- Curriculum resources

2.3 **Admissions Policy** - The current Early Years Admissions Policy prioritises places in nursery classes for catchment children while retaining scope for children living outwith the catchment area to be accommodated where capacity is available.

Places cannot currently be reserved to accommodate children who move into the catchment during the session. At present if no nursery spaces are available then these children are allocated a place in an early years setting outwith their catchment school.

It is proposed therefore to review the Early Years Admissions Policy to consider if we can increase the availability of nursery places for children from the local catchment area by:

- Introducing a reserved place policy (similar to that for primary and secondary schools).
- Setting appropriate tolerance levels for when we would increase the nursery class capacity to meet increased catchment area demand.

- 2.4 **Provision for 2 year olds** - The Act includes for the provision of 600 hours early learning and childcare for 2 year old children who are either looked after or the subject of a Kinship Care Order.

Social Work Services are responsible for providing support to these families. Education Services have made places available for Social Work to accommodate the needs of these children.

- 2.5 **Review of Current Provision:** As approved by Education Executive on 4 February 2014, Education Services will ascertain parents' views and experiences of the new provision for 3 and 4 year olds (Phase 1). This informal consultation will be undertaken by Easter and the findings will be reported back to Education Executive in due course.

3. PHASE 2 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE (2 year olds)

- 3.1 **Implementation Strategy** - Consistent with the Phase 1 Implementation Strategy, Education Executive approved that provision for these 2 year olds is made available in each Ward by:

- Extending our current infrastructure.
- Increasing staffing to meet the increased capacity.
- Purchasing places from voluntary sector placing.

- 3.2 **Provision** - The current position in regard to provision in each Ward is as follows:

Table 2 **2 year old provision in each Ward**

Ward	Provided by:	Available from	Projected demand 2014-15
Ward 1 Bo'ness & Blackness	Purchased places from Barnardos	In place now	18
Ward 2 Grangemouth	Rannoch Nursery (install modular accommodation)	Easter 2015	31
Ward 3 Denny/Banknock	Denny Nursery (install modular accommodation)	Easter 2015	22
Ward 4 Carse/Kinnaird/Tryst	Inchlair Nursery School (internal modifications)	In place now	17
Ward 5 Bonnybridge & Larbert	Bonnybridge Primary School (install modular accommodation)	Easter 2015	15
Ward 6 Falkirk North	Purchased places from Creche Matters & Aberlour	In place now	39
Ward 7 Falkirk South	Camelon Nursery (install modular accommodation)	Easter 2015	26
Ward 8 Lower Braes	Laurieston Primary School (internal modifications)	January 2015	14
Ward 9 Upper Braes	Purchased places from One Parent Families Scotland	In place now	14
TOTAL			196

3.3 Currently Education Services have received around **60** enquiries from families who are seeking this provision. We are working with these families to help both confirm their eligibility and to establish where the most suitable placement would be.

3.4 Education Executive is asked to note and approve the following change of locations:

- **Ward 2** - Provision will now be at Rannoch Nursery rather than Beancross Primary School.
- **Ward 3** - Provision will now be at Denny Nursery rather than Denny Primary School.

Note: Reason for Change

In both cases the reason for this is to reduce the risk of us not having enough space within the school grounds to allow us to accommodate future capacity expansion needs at these schools.

3.5 The estimated completion dates for installation of the modular accommodation in Wards 2, 3, 5 and 7 will now be Easter 2015, to take account of design, procurement and installation needs. In the meantime short-term places will be offered as required utilising the voluntary sector or other available capacity elsewhere.

3.6 **Staffing** - The 12 additional staff have now been recruited.

4. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 **Additional Revenue and Capital Funding Received** - All of the proposed changes within this paper will be funded from the additional revenue and capital funding that has been provided:

Table 3		Additional Funding £000	
		Revenue	Capital
• Phase 1 (3 & 4 year olds)	2014-15	1,559	918
	2015-16	2,265	901
• Phase 2 (2 year olds)	2014-15	478	1,149
	2015-16	1,404	1,093

4.2 The Scottish Government has now confirmed additional capital funding of £1.093m (2 year olds) for 2015/16.

5. EQUALITIES AND POVERTY ASSESSMENT

5.1 There is no change to the previously reported assessment.

6. NEXT STEPS/WAY FORWARD

6.1 To support the ongoing implementation of Phases 1 and 2 we will require to:

3 and 4 year olds - (Phase 1)

- Establish 3 additional early years campuses, in Wards 1 and 8 before the end of this session and in Ward 5 during school session 2015-16 (section 2.1a).

- Develop further proposals for increasing capacity within Ward 4 (section 2.1b(i)).
- Reassess the need to improve our outdoor play and learning infrastructure (section 2.2).
- Review the Early Years Admission Policy (section 2.3).
- Progress a follow up consultation (section 2.5)

2 year olds - (Phase 2)

- Complete the installation of modular accommodation in Wards 2, 3, 5 and 7 by Easter 2015 (section 3.4).
- Offer alternative short-term places where needed in the meantime either through the voluntary sector or utilising available capacity from elsewhere within our early years provision (section 3.4).
- Confirm how the additional 2015-16 capital funding (section 4.2) will be utilised.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Education Executive are asked to note the:

- (i) implementation position as detailed in Sections 2 and 3; and
- (ii) financial position as detailed in Section 4.

7.2 Education Executive are asked to agree the:

- (i) review of the Early Years Admission Policy as set out in section 2.3;
- (ii) change of locations as detailed in section 3.3; and
- (iii) next steps/way forward set out in Section 6.

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Joint Acting Director of Education

Date: 20 January 2015

Contact Officer: Kenny McNeill, extension 6652.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

**Subject: IMPACT OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY STRATEGIES IN
FALKIRK COUNCIL SCHOOLS**
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 3 FEBRUARY 2015
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper reports on the progress made by Falkirk Council's primary and secondary schools in implementing its Literacy and Numeracy strategies.
- 1.2 The Literacy Strategy was introduced in November 2013 and has now been revised in light of ongoing evaluation. It was developed in response to Education Services' determination to adopt a policy of Zero Tolerance to Illiteracy, based on an awareness that a lack of ability to read is the main cause of children and young people not being able to access the curriculum, leading in turn to disaffection. The strategy aims to improve children's access to their learning and to give young people the best opportunities in achieving positive destinations on leaving school.
- 1.3 The Numeracy Strategy was introduced in September 2014 and, similar to the Literacy Strategy, will be adapted over time in light of ongoing evaluation. The purpose of the Numeracy Strategy is to raise standards of numeracy across Falkirk from pre-birth to adulthood.
- 1.4 The introduction of standardised testing in session 2011-12 in Primary 1, 3, 5 and 7 and in S2 in secondary schools has enabled performance in literacy and numeracy to be measured each session. In 2013-14, it further allowed trends to be identified over the three sessions since its introduction.

2. MEASURING PROGRESS IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

- 2.1 The programme of standardised testing in Falkirk Council schools, which has been in place since session 2011-12, has enabled primary and secondary schools, as well as officers at the centre, to gain an increased awareness of attainment in literacy and numeracy. An explanation of the standardised testing programme is detailed in Appendix 3.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LITERACY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Literacy Strategy is driven by eight work streams as outlined in Appendix 1. These embrace the need to promote lifelong development of literacy in children, young people and adults.

3.2 There has been positive progress with all work streams. Some examples of this are:

- Secondary schools have each identified a member of staff to be literacy co-ordinators, whose role is to help departments to encourage teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum. Literacy is now formally assessed as part of SQA National 4.
- An extensive range of partner agencies has been identified to help in promoting literacy in the Falkirk Council area. Education Services is creating a literacy 'hub' with other authorities (North Lanarkshire, Stirling, Moray and Clackmannanshire Councils) thereby promoting Falkirk as a place where literacy is a core area for development. A wide range of partners is involved in schools to promote literacy.
- Parents are seen as key partners in developing their children's literacy as well as, where appropriate, their own. Family involvement is a key priority and we are engaging through Twitter accounts, Falkirk Council's YouTube Channel, leaflets, etc. Falkirk Council's work has been noted as an example of good practice by the Scottish Government's Raising Attainment team.
- In schools, a very high uptake of professional development-related courses has been recorded, with a major conference planned for January 2015 which, it is hoped, will draw together all who contribute to literacy in Falkirk.
- Progress is also illustrated and supported by the Literacy Strategy Blog <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/LiteracyStrategy/>

4. IMPACT OF THE LITERACY STRATEGY

- 4.1 Reading in P1 - Standardised tests over the three sessions from 2011-12 show that the Value Added (the difference between test results at the start of the session and those at the end) has fallen progressively over the three-year period from 26% of pupils having gained better than average Value Added in 2012 to 21% in 2013 and to 18% in 2014. The focus at early level has been on the teaching of phonics and this is evident in CEM results. A training need has been identified for early level staff in relation to skills needed in the teaching of reading. An early level mobilisation team has been set up and currently looking at providing CPD in this area. Good practice has been gathered and support materials have been produced. Pupils' performance in Phonics improved, however. Strong Phonics development in P1 is closely linked to effective long-term development of Reading.
- 4.2 Reading in P3, P5, and P7 - Performance in Reading at these stages shows year-on-year improvement from 2011-12.

- 4.3 The average standardised scores for Reading in Falkirk Council primary schools were as follows:

	Falkirk Council Primary Schools – Attainment in Reading		
	P3	P5	P7
2011-2	103	103	93
2012-3	103	103	94
2013-4	104	104	95

Pupils at P3 and P5 have scored consistently above the UK standard and showed improvement against the rest of the UK in session 2013-14. Pupils in P7, while scoring below the UK standard of 100, have shown steady improvement since 2011-12.

- 4.4 Reading in S2 - The Value Added between P7 and S2 over the three years is exactly in line with that of other Scottish schools.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NUMERACY STRATEGY

- 5.1 As with the Literacy Strategy, the Numeracy Strategy comprises a series of eight workstreams, as outlined in Appendix 2. The Council is part of a Numeracy Hub providing links to three other local authorities, allowing joint working in terms of sharing research and professional dialogue. School Cluster working has also been identified as an important contributor to realising the strategy. Again, working with parents is seen as a key factor in improving numeracy.

6. IMPACT OF THE NUMERACY STRATEGY

- 6.1 Mathematics in P1 - Standardised tests over the three sessions from 2011-12 in P1 show overall stability in Mathematics. The percentage of pupils gaining more than average Value Added has returned in 2014 to the same level as in 2012 (ie 22%) having dipped in the intervening year to 18% in 2013. The percentage of pupils gaining significantly more than average Value Added is now the highest to date and is 3% better than in 2012-13.

- 6.2 Mental Arithmetic and Mathematics in P3, P5 and P7 - Both Mental Arithmetic and Mathematics are tested using standardised tests. Following extensive work in schools since 2011-12 to improve pupils' Mental Arithmetic, attainment has improved significantly as shown in the table below. Performance in P3 is now above the UK standard of 100. While performance in Mathematics remains static in P5, that of P3 and P7 has shown improvement over the three sessions.

Falkirk Council Primary Schools – Attainment in Mental Arithmetic and Mathematics						
	Mental Arithmetic			Maths		
	P3	P5	P7	P3	P5	P7
2012	95	93	80	102	95	87
2013	97	93	81	102	95	87
2014	102	98	89	103	95	88

The recent focus on teaching the strategies to support effective mental arithmetic skills has led to an improvement in mental maths scores in CEM. Teachers have deliberately shifted the focus to this area with a view to pupils being able to transfer these skills through to Maths as it is essential the building blocks of mental arithmetic are embedded. This also supports pace and challenge.

- 6.3 Mathematics in S2 - The Value Added between P7 and S2 over the three years is exactly in line with that of other Scottish schools. Mental Arithmetic is not measured in standardised tests at S2.
- 6.4 Primary schools are using a range of active methods including Big Maths and online sources such as Mangahigh. Good practice is being shared across clusters, including sharing of resources. This is drawing the attention of other local authorities throughout the UK. Members of staff from St Bernadette's RC Primary School and St Joseph's RC Primary School staff are working with the publisher of Big Maths as leaders of learning.
- 6.5 Mathematics teachers in secondary schools are engaging in professional development on active learning methodologies in numeracy and mathematics.
- 6.6 Partner agencies include Andrell (publisher of Big Maths), Education Scotland, Library Resources for Schools and neighbouring authorities.

7. GENDER EQUALITIES

- 7.1 As per the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy, there is no marked difference in attainment by gender.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 The revised Literacy and Numeracy strategies run from 2014-17 and will be adapted according to changing circumstances, eg:
- (i) the increased focus in SQA National qualifications on Literacy skills;
 - (ii) the time required for development of Literacy and Numeracy to filter through Early Years, primary stages and S1 to S3; and
 - (iii) increasing confidence among learners in transferring their Literacy and Numeracy skills across all areas of the curriculum. Primary schools are making good progress in helping learners to transfer skills in Reading and Numeracy.
- 8.2 In line with the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy we are engaging, in a variety of ways, with a range of partners. For example our work with the Early Education and Childcare Department of Forth Valley College to establish a shared approach with students who have placements in Falkirk establishments and who may become permanent staff.
- 8.3 Schools have access to the Professional Learning Resource Falkirk Council is also part of a Numeracy Hub which includes Moray, Aberdeenshire and Highland Councils, ie cross-authority collaboration in practice, with the ultimate aim of being part of a national numeracy hub. Falkirk Council will be nominating a representative to lead within the soon to be established virtual national numeracy hub.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 **That Education Executive agree the updated strategies for both Literacy and Numeracy.**

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Joint Acting Director of Education

Date: 20 January 2015

Contact Officer: Tony Bragg, ext 6653

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

Falkirk Council Education Services' Literacy Strategy 2014-17

Zero Tolerance to Illiteracy

Falkirk Council's literacy strategy is informed by the Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan and shares its vision to raise literacy standards for all and to improve outcomes and life chances for the people of Falkirk.

Rationale

“Improvements cannot be confined to a particular sector or point in a learner's journey. Literacy development starts from birth. Early years settings and schools develop children and young people's basic and advanced literacy skills and in adulthood the on-going development of literacy skills helps to advance personal achievements, employment prospects and participation in society.” (Literacy Action Plan, 2010, Scottish Government)

Falkirk's vision is for our children, young people and adults to be able to read, write, listen and talk, allowing them to reach their full potential, to engage fully in 21st Century society, to access lifelong learning and actively engage in meaningful employment.

The purpose of our literacy strategy is to guide us as we raise standards of literacy from early years to adulthood. This strategy recognises that language development begins pre-birth, when the foundations are laid on which language continues to develop throughout our lives.

The strategy demands innovative approaches to partnership working. It invites services, agencies and families to raise the bar in terms of what all our children, young people and adults can achieve. This reflects recommendations from the Literacy Commission (December 2009):

- adopting zero tolerance of illiteracy;
- sharing best practice to meet the literacy needs of children;
- prioritising early years to tackle the socio-economic effect on learning;
- moving beyond the basic literacy to higher order literacy skills.

The development of high levels of literacy in Falkirk will support the achievement of the ambitions set out in 'One Council, One Plan' Falkirk Council Corporate Plan 2012-2017, specifically the aspirations to:

- further develop a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy;
- continue to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our citizens and communities;
- increase our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination.

This strategy runs from 2014-2017 and will evolve in response to national, local and individual contributions and challenges.

Delivering the strategy

8 work streams make up the 2014-17 strategy:

1. Embed active literacy in every school
2. Maximise Early Years contribution
3. Further develop Literacy Across Learning in the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase
4. Involve families
5. Work with partners
6. Analyse data and act on findings
7. Deliver intelligence based professional learning experiences at school, cluster and authority levels
8. Populate and review the strategy support tool

Teams, involving a range of officers, school based staff, partners, parents, children and young people as required, will be set up to deliver each of the work streams.

1. Embed active approaches to literacy in every school

Active Literacy will be the main approach to the teaching of literacy. It will be supported by a diverse range of methodologies including 21st century technology. Recent HMIe school inspections have recognised the strength and impact of active literacy on children's progress. Barriers to learning are addressed through an inclusive approach, where individual additional support needs are identified and supported in line with best practice.

The foci for session 2014-2015 for learners aged 3-18:

- the development of reading skills
- confidence and the ability to transfer these skills across a range of learning experiences
- a significant improvement in literacy achievement.

2. Maximise Early Years contribution

We recognise the importance of literacy skills from pre-birth: the on-line literacy strategy support tool enables practitioners to effectively support and enhance the development of literacy skills for all early years children. Practitioners will work together across Early Level, using active methodologies and strategies to support the achievement of developmental milestones. In session 2014 – 2015 the focus is emergent reading at Early Level.

3. Further develop Literacy across Learning in the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase

Roll out active literacy in all secondary schools:

- Make use of local and national guidance
- Support exploration of strategies and techniques
- Team teaching to demonstrate innovative practice in action
- Curriculum Support Officers will consult with Secondary Schools in relation to literacy across learning

4. Involve families

Families play a crucial role in the development of children and young people's learning from the early years of playing, talking and sharing books through to providing support for exams and wider learning. It is important to respond to parents/carers as individuals and work from a growing understanding of their needs.

Education staff and partners will have the required skills and knowledge to support learners and their families in the promotion of literacy.

5. Work with partners

Positive contributions that are made by a wide range of services and agencies to promote literacy and support literacy development. In the current financial climate, it is crucial that there is effective partnership working to share resources to challenge poor literacy across society.

Each individual's journey will be different according to need and will involve their family and a range of universal and specialist services and partner agencies. To maximise impact in relation to literacy development:

- Falkirk Council services will define specific team roles and responsibilities
- Partner agencies will share their literacy plans on the strategy support tool

6. Analyse data and act on findings

Analysis of available and relevant data will support and challenge all to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. It will identify trends, inform direction of travel and professional learning needs. Findings will be communicated, actions taken and impact from changes made to all stakeholders.

From the outset, there will be an ongoing evaluation of the Literacy Strategy. All staff will engage in professional dialogue and reflection based on a shared understanding of literacy development and a shared vision of their aims for children, young people and families. This continuous process of self-evaluation will support identifying the agenda for improvement.

This focus will include close analysis of:

- School improvement plans
- Validation visits
- Ongoing professional dialogue
- Pupil/parent voice
- Current and prior assessment data
- Feedback from professional learning events, the literacy networks etc.

7. Further develop professional learning experiences at school, cluster and authority level

The professional learning programme aims to support **all** staff who have a role in eliminating illiteracy. This goes beyond 'courses' and could include:

- Support networks which ensure regular engagement in professional dialogue and keeping up to date with new developments
- Partnership working with Education Scotland relating to literacy eg delivering and receiving training, contributing to and learning from national advice

- Co-creation of support for schools who are addressing literacy skills in their school improvement plans
- Access to training materials online via Falkirk Council's You Tube channel to enable 24/7 access

The professional learning programme is informed by:

- Consultation with Head teachers, managers, staff , partners and professional associations
- Research
- Evaluations of courses
- The ERD process

8. Populate and review the strategy support tool

The literacy strategy statement is supported by an on-line literacy strategy support tool, <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/LiteracyStrategy/>. The tool aims to raise awareness of the provision that exists within and out with the formal education sector, providing an overview of roles and responsibilities, action plans, identifying gaps in literacy provision and offering links between services and agencies to offer a better understanding of how they impact on literacy and encourage meaningful cross sector working to benefit the learner.

Falkirk Council's Numeracy across Learning Strategy 2014-2017

Zero Tolerance to Innumeracy

Curriculum for Excellence national guidance makes it explicit that every teacher/practitioner should look for opportunities to develop young people's numeracy skills across all areas and at all levels of learning. 'This reflects the importance that the Scottish Government places on these crucial skills, which unlock learning in other areas of the curriculum and are therefore vital for success in learning, life and work in the modern world and workplace. ([Scottish Government](#))

'All teachers have responsibility for promoting the development of numeracy. With an increased emphasis upon numeracy for all young people, teachers will need to plan to revisit and consolidate numeracy skills throughout schooling.'

Building the Curriculum 1

Falkirk Council's numeracy strategy is informed by the Principles and Practice paper and shares its vision to raise numeracy standards for all and to improve outcomes and life chances for the people of Falkirk.

Rationale

"Numeracy is a skill for life, learning and work. Having well-developed numeracy skills allows young people to be more confident in social settings and enhances enjoyment in a large number of leisure activities."

Numeracy across learning: principles and practice

Our working definition of numeracy is number based skills needed by everyone regularly as they go about their daily lives. Numeracy is not only a subset of mathematics; it is also a life skill which permeates and supports all areas of learning, allowing young people access to the wider curriculum.'

Numeracy across learning: principles and practice

The purpose of our numeracy strategy is to raise standards of numeracy from early years to adulthood. This strategy recognises that numeracy development begins pre-birth, continues throughout our lives to lay the foundation for the development of numeracy.

The development of high levels of numeracy in Falkirk will support the achievement of the ambitions set out in 'One Council, One Plan' Falkirk Council Corporate Plan 2012-2017, in particular, the aspirations to 'further develop a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy,' 'continuing to improve the health, safety and well-being of our citizens and communities' and 'increasing our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination.'

This strategy runs from 2014-2017 and will evolve in response to national, local and individual contributions and challenges.

Delivering the strategy

8 work streams make up this strategy:

1. Embed Active Numeracy in every school
2. Maximise Early Years contribution
3. Further develop Numeracy Across Learning in the Broad General Education (3-18) and the Senior Phase
4. Involve families
5. Work with partners
6. Analyse data and act on findings
7. Deliver intelligence based professional learning experiences at school, cluster and authority levels
8. Populate and review the strategy support tool

Teams, involving a range of officers, school based staff, partners, parents, children and young people as required, will be set up to deliver each of the work streams.

1. Embedding Active Numeracy in every school

Numeracy is fundamental. It unlocks learning; it improves life chances, health and well-being.

Learning through play and Active Numeracy will be a singular and all-encompassing methodology for the teaching of numeracy within nurseries and schools.

A diverse range of additional approaches and methodologies will be encouraged that complement and reinforce Active Numeracy, including 21st century technology.

Barriers to being numerate is addressed through an inclusive approach, where individual additional support needs are identified and supported in line with best practice. The identification of individual needs is integrated in practice within the education for all children. Within this contextualised approach, individual additional support needs are identified and addressed. This will include well known barriers such as learning difficulties or differences and non-attendance.

Active numeracy approaches are being supported in establishments in a variety of ways. These approaches support the needs of a range of stakeholders, including teachers, support for learning teachers and assistants. The professional learning programme for active numeracy aims to support teachers who are new to the stage, as well as those who wish to develop their knowledge further. Support networks ensure teachers are regularly engaging in professional dialogue and keeping up to date with new developments. Education Scotland supports Falkirk Council in terms of numeracy training courses, advice and running conferences. Bespoke support is provided to schools who are addressing numeracy skills in their school improvement plans. More training materials are being provided online via Falkirk Council's You Tube channel in order to enable 24/7 access. The professional learning programme is informed by consultations with Head teachers, evaluations from courses and discussions with colleagues.

3. Maximise Early Years contribution

We recognise the importance of numeracy skills from birth: the online numeracy strategy support tool enables practitioners to effectively support and enhance the development of numeracy skills for all early years' children. Practitioners will work together across Early Level, using active methodologies and strategies to support the achievement of developmental milestones.

4. Further develop Numeracy Across Learning in the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase

- Roll out active numeracy in all establishments
- Make use of local and national guidance
- Support exploration of new strategies and techniques
- Team teaching to demonstrate innovative practice in action

5. Involve families

Families play a crucial role in the development of children and young people's learning from the early years of playing, talking and counting through to providing support for exams and wider learning. It is important to respond to parents/carers as individuals and work from a growing understanding of their needs.

Education staff and partners will have the required skills and knowledge to support learners and their families in the promotion of numeracy.

6. Work with partners

Positive contributions that are made by a wide range of services and agencies to promote numeracy and support numeracy development. In the current financial climate, it is crucial that there is effective partnership working to share resources to challenge poor numeracy across society.

Each individual's journey will be different according to need and will involve their family and a range of universal and specialist services and partner agencies. To maximise impact in relation to numeracy development:

- Falkirk Council services will define specific team roles and responsibilities
- Partner agencies will share their numeracy plans on the strategy support tool

7. Analyse data and act on findings

Analysis of available and relevant data will support and challenge all to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. It will identify trends, inform direction of travel and professional learning needs. We will communicate the findings, actions taken and impact from changes made to all stakeholders.

This focus will include close analysis of:

- School improvement plans
- Validation visits
- Ongoing professional dialogue
- Current and prior assessment data (eg CEM and SSLN)
- Feedback from professional learning events, numeracy networks etc.

8. Further develop professional learning experiences at school, cluster and authority level

The professional learning programme aims to support *all* staff who have a role in raising attainment in numeracy. This goes beyond ‘courses’ and could include:

- Support networks which ensure regular engagement in professional dialogue and keeping up to date with new developments
- Partnership working with Education Scotland relating to numeracy eg delivering and receiving training, contributing to and learning from national advice
- Co-creation of support for schools who are addressing numeracy skills in their school improvement plans
- Access to training materials online via Falkirk Council’s You Tube channel to enable 24/7 access

The professional learning programme is informed by:

- consultation with Head teachers, managers, staff , partners and professional associations
- research
- evaluations of courses

9. Design a strategy support tool

The numeracy strategy statement is supported by an on-line numeracy strategy support tool, <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/NumeracyStrategy/> The tool aims to raise awareness of the provision that exists within and out with the formal education sector, providing an overview of roles and responsibilities, action plans, identifying gaps in numeracy provision and offering links between services and agencies to offer a better understanding of how they impact on numeracy and encourage meaningful cross sector working to benefit the learner.

STANDARDISED TESTING IN FALKIRK COUNCIL SCHOOLS

Whose programme of standardised tests is used?

The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM), run by Durham University, is contracted to Falkirk Council Education Services to provide standardised tests in P1, 3, 5 and 7, and in S2.

What are the advantages of the CEM programme?

Tests in P3, 5, 7 and S2 are administered at the end of each session, allowing teachers and managers in schools, and Education Officers to compare and analyse rates of progress in:

- individual pupils
- groups of pupils
- whole classes

The performance of individual schools can also be compared to that of other schools within similar catchment areas of the Council.

Pupils in P1 are tested at the start of each session as well as at the end so that, following the end-of-session testing, pupils' progress can be measured and analysed.

How are tests administered?

All tests are taken by pupils on computer under the administration of their class teacher or, in some schools, by a member of the management team.

The tests ensure that pupils are set challenging questions but the software adjusts these to ensure to ensure that pupils are not subjected to undue pressure by being asked to answer large numbers of questions that are beyond their capabilities.

Results are returned to the school and to Education Services staff from CEM, usually within 48 hours of the tests being taken.

How are tests standardised?

Results from P1 and S2 tests are standardised against the expected performance of children across Scotland.

Results from the P3, 5 and 7 tests are standardised against the expected performance of children across the United Kingdom.

What is tested?

Tests in P1 measures performance in Reading, Mathematics and Phonics.

Testing in P3, 5, and 7 measures performance in:

- Reading (broken down into Comprehension, Spelling, Word Recognition and Word Decoding [the meanings of words])
- Mathematics (broken down into basic arithmetic; problem solving; shape, position and money; and data-handling)
- Mental Arithmetic

Testing in S2 measures performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science.

What is 'Value added' and what does it tell us?

The improvement in pupils' performance over time, as measured in standardised tests, is known as 'value added'.

In 2014, the Council was able, for the first time, to see the 'value' that was 'added' by schools by comparing pupils' performance in 2011-12 with that of the same pupils in 2013-14.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: THE SQA RESULTS SERVICE - CHANGES IN 2014
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 3 FEBRUARY 2015
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In previous years, Falkirk Council Education Services has reported each August to Education Committee on SQA attainment in its secondary schools. Subsequently, SQA performance information was updated each January to take into account of post-Appeals results and was also reported to Education Committee. This updated post-Appeals information was provided by the Scottish Government and included national performance figures as well as those relating to comparator authorities.
- 1.2 This updated information is no longer available. A new benchmarking tool, Insight has been introduced by the Scottish Government to reflect Curriculum for Excellence performance indicators. Insight does not use the same comparator authority methodology as was used in previous years. Although comparator authority data will no longer be available, Insight creates a 'virtual' comparator authority against which comparison will be made in future reports.
- 1.3 The performance information which was reported to Elected Members in August 2014 was, instead, sourced from schools management information systems. This does not give benchmarking information that allows comparison with comparator authorities.
- 1.4 Further, the 'traditional' Appeals process has also been replaced in 2014 by the SQA's new Results Service, as detailed below (Section 2). This reflects the rigour in the SQA's procedures, which has been enhanced with the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence-based assessments. This enhanced rigour has led to a considerable decline in the number of results which were felt to be unjust.
- 1.5 The number of referrals to the new Service in 2014 was, consequently, approximately one-seventh of the number of Appeals typically submitted in previous years (233 in 2014 as opposed to 1541 in 2013). The percentage of successful referrals was also reduced from previous years, reflecting the improved quality of the SQA's marking procedures.
- 1.6 This has resulted in no change to the Council's attainment data following the referrals to the Results Service when compared to the results published in August 2014.

1.7 For reference the results remain as shown in the tables below, which were initially reported to Education Executive in August 2014.

1.8 The figures are quoted as a percentage of the appropriate S4 roll.

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
By the end of S5:							
1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	Falkirk	39	44	44	47	49	50
	Scotland	41	43	45	47	49	50
	CAs	40	42	43	46	47	N/A
3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	Falkirk	21	25	24	27	27	29
	Scotland	23	25	26	27	29	30
	CAs	21	23	24	25	26	N/A
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	Falkirk	8	12	9	13	13	14
	Scotland	11	11	12	13	14	14
	CAs	9	9	10	11	12	N/A
By the end of S6:							
3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	Falkirk	30	31	35	35	38	38
	Scotland	31	33	35	37	38	39
	CAs	29	32	33	35	36	N/A
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	Falkirk	17	20	24	23	26	26
	Scotland	21	22	24	26	27	26
	CAs	18	21	21	23	24	N/A
1 or more awards at SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher) or better	Falkirk	11	13	16	14	17	16
	Scotland	14	15	16	16	17	17
	CAs	13	15	15	16	16	N/A

The table below gives a brief analysis of how the 2014 S5 and S6 results compare with previous years.

	Comparison with last year	Comparison with 5 years ago	Comment
1 or more Highers by end of S5	1% higher than last year	11% higher	Highest recorded performance
3 or more Highers by end of S5	2% higher than last year	8% higher	Highest recorded performance
5 or more Highers by end of S5	1% higher than last year	6% higher	Highest recorded performance
3 or more Highers by end of S6	Equal to last year	8% higher	Highest recorded performance
5 or more Highers by end of S6	Equal to last year	9% higher	Equals the highest recorded performance
1 or more Advanced Higher by end of S6	1% lower than last year	5% higher	2nd highest recorded performance

2. SQA RESULTS SERVICE FROM 2014 ONWARDS

- 2.1 The SQA's new Results Service, introduced in 2014, replaces the previous appeals procedure and covers all SQA Levels from National to Advanced Higher.
- 2.2 Previously, Appeals were submitted for pupils who had not attained the expected result for a given subject and at a given level in instances where, in the school's view, there was sufficient evidence to justify a higher result. As well as classwork, schools also relied for such evidence on preliminary examination papers ('Prelims').
- 2.3 From 2014 onwards, the SQA provides Post Results Services.

These comprise two Results Services:

Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service

This service supports candidates who have been unable to attend to take an examination, or whose performance in an examination may have been affected by an incident beyond their control, eg bereavement or a medical condition. This service is only available prior to publication of the results. There is no charge for this service. (See below regarding charges for Post Results Services.).

Post-Results Service

This service operates after candidates receive their exam results. If a school or college is concerned by a candidate's result and believes the final mark does not reflect expectations then they can request a priority marking review (if a candidate's place in further or higher education depends on the outcome of the review), clerical check or a marking review of the exam paper and other externally assessed components, such as a portfolio. Results of such reviews can lead to a result either remaining the same, being raised or being lowered.

If the original grade remains unchanged following the check/review, the school or college will be charged for this service.

3. TOTAL NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR CLERICAL REVIEW AND MARKER CHECK IN 2014

- 3.1 The total number of requests made by Falkirk Council secondary schools for Clerical Review and Marker Check in 2014 was 233, of which 45 were successful. In all cases, the changes led to an improved result for the pupils concerned.

4. COST OF UNSUCCESSFUL REQUESTS TO FALKIRK COUNCIL

- 4.1 As yet, the SQA have not submitted notification to Falkirk Council of the costs resulting from unsuccessful requests. As the number of unchanged results cannot be split between Clerical Checks and Marker Checks (for which there are different charges), an estimate is not possible.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Education Executive note the changes to the SQA Results Service.

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Joint Acting Director of Education

Date: 20 January 2015

Contact Officer: Alex Black, ext 6630.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: REVISION OF THE FALKIRK COUNCIL PUPIL COUNCIL
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 3 FEBRUARY 2015
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There have been ongoing discussions throughout 2013/14 with young people to explore the effectiveness and purpose of the current Falkirk Council Pupil Council
- 1.2 The outcome of the discussions highlighted the need for changes. Young people wanted a greater voice to influence policy and decisions, involve a broader range of young people and help inspire and empower young people in a way that could lead to change.
- 1.3 The new approach, Youth Ambassadors (YAs), is designed to enhance how we go about developing the four capacities as set out in Curriculum for Excellence:
- Effective Contributors
 - Responsible Citizens
 - Confident Individuals
 - Successful Learners

2. YOUTH AMBASSADORS

- 2.1 The Youth Ambassador programme will replace the Falkirk Council Pupil Council. The aim is to give YAs a voice on decisions that affect them and issues they care about. The YAs will work as part of a team with other young people from Falkirk's secondary schools to:
- Represent young people from across the authority.
 - Discuss and take action with regards to pupil concerns.
 - Influence policies and strategies relating to young people.
 - Identify topics and issues locally, regionally and nationally that are important and relate to young people.
 - Incorporate GIRFEC framework through contributing and delivering events and initiatives which will enhance and support the health and wellbeing of young people.

3. EXPECTATIONS

- 3.1 All YAs are expected to attend 5 meetings per year. All members will be expected to fully participate and contribute to the team. YAs will be creative in how they take forward their role and take ownership of their education experience and influence others.

As part of the team there will be the following roles:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary

It is proposed that the Chair and Vice Chair will become the pupil representatives on the Education Executive. The representatives are presently nominated by the Pupil Council.

4. BENEFITS

4.1 This change will offer the participants further opportunities to:

- Represent the voice of young people at authority level as part of a regional team.
- Extend YAs' experience which will aid job and further education applications.
- Learn more about their rights, entitlements and responsibilities.
- Develop leadership skills.

5. NATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 In partnership with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Council, Falkirk will pilot this as part of the ongoing Forth Valley Creative Learning Project.

5.2 The programme is supported nationally by Education Scotland who are impressed with our innovative approach to pupil voice. We will work with Education Scotland to stream any events and talks through Glow, allowing young people across Scotland to participate.

5.3 Youth Ambassadors will enable Education Scotland to deliver their priorities relating to reaching young people through Glow and developing pupil voice.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Education Executive is asked to agree:

- (i) the implementation of the Youth Ambassador programme; and
- (ii) that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Youth Ambassadors team will become the pupil representatives on the Education Executive.

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Joint Acting Director of Education

Date: 20 January 2015

Contact Officer: Gayle Martin-Brown, ext 1966.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL