

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**  
**Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**  
**Date: 10 NOVEMBER 2015**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**1. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE OF PAPER**

1.1 This report seeks to provide the Education Executive with:

- An outline of what the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) is and what its aims are.
- Children's Services plans for school involvement in the related Schools Programme.

**2. WHAT IS THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE?**

2.1 The First Minister launched the SAC in February 2015. It aims to focus and accelerate targeted improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in specific areas of Scotland and to raise attainment and reduce educational inequality for children and young people.

2.2 The SAC is set within the context of Curriculum for Excellence and aims to build on the range of initiatives and programmes already in place to target improvement in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. It recognises that children and young people from lower-income families do significantly worse at all levels of the education system than those from better off homes and that there is a significant gap between those living in Scotland's least and most deprived areas.

2.3 An Attainment Scotland fund has been set up which will have an overall funding package of £100m over four years (2015-2019).

2.4 Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) seven Education Authorities were identified as having the highest concentration of primary aged pupils living in areas of multiple deprivation. As part of the first phase of the SAC, funding of £12.9m was allocated to Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbarton.

**3. THE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME**

3.1 The SAC also includes the Schools Programme which was officially launched on 1st October 2015. This Programme, will initially work with 57 specific primary schools identified as having 70% of their pupils living in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

- 3.2 These schools are supporting pupils and families from communities which are facing some of the greatest challenges. The schools will take a key role in implementing, supporting and spreading practice of what works to raise attainment, ambition and aspirations.
- 3.3 Within the Falkirk Council area **Langlees Primary School** has been identified as one of these primary schools.

#### **4. SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION AUTHORITIES**

##### **3.1 Access to an Attainment Advisor**

All Education Authorities will have direct access to an **Attainment Advisor** appointed by Education Scotland. The Advisor will work collaboratively alongside local authority staff to provide support and challenge on priorities related to the SAC.

It is estimated that the Attainment Advisor will spend approximately 70 days per year working with Falkirk Council's Children's Services. This joint collaborative work is expected to commence before the end of 2015.

##### **3.2 Access to the National Hub**

A National Hub will provide access to a virtual centre of educational expertise to support Education Authorities with this initiative.

##### **3.3 Partnership Working**

Inter-authority improvement partnerships will be established to share learning practices with priorities aligned to the Scottish Attainment Challenge/Schools Programme.

##### **3.4 Funding**

It is expected that funding of **£20k to £80K** per year for four years will be allocated to each of the identified Schools Programme schools to accelerate improvement by scaling up successful activity and supporting innovation.

#### **5. EXPECTATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY/IDENTIFIED SCHOOL**

- 5.1 Education Executive should note that Falkirk Council are expected to submit an outline improvement proposal to Scottish Government in November 2015.
- 5.2 In Falkirk's case it is expected we will use available evidence and analysis of data to identify, prioritise and implement a range of strategies to:
- improve the attainment levels in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for primary school children who live in deprived areas;
  - target and encourage parents and carers to engage more fully with their child's learning and the life of the school;
  - evaluate, assess, monitor, track and report on progress throughout the four year development period; and
  - engage in national events and support the development of the National Improvement Framework.

5.3 Our planning process is underway and is structured as follows:

Phase 1: Preparing the ground

Where are we now?

What are our key challenges?

What would success look like?

Phase 2: Exploring the evidence

How do we exploit internal and external knowledge?

What further evidence do we need?

What new insights do we have?

Phase 3: Testing change

What changes do we need to make?

How do we lever and embed change?

How do we know we have made a difference?

## **6. PROPOSED USE OF RESOURCES WITHIN FALKIRK SCHOOLS**

6.1 It is Children's Services view that to affect a wider more positive change we plan to identify another two schools who have a large number of children in the lowest 3 SIMD bands. Our initial plans seek to identify improvement strategies around all 3 schools that ensures we develop a sustainable approach that can be agreed and adopted for use in other schools and clusters to address the attainment gap.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 The Education Executive is asked to:

- (i) note the aims of the new Scottish Attainment Challenge;
- (ii) agree that The Director of Children's Services develops and submits a bid to the Scottish Government as outlined in Section 6.1; and
- (iii) request that The Director of Children's Services develops a strategy designed to begin to address the attainment gap and that an update report on progress is submitted to the Education Executive at a later date.

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**Director of Children's Services**

Date: 27 October 2015

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## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL