

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the New Zealand Coat of Arms. It includes a crown at the top with four silver ferns, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: sailing ship, top-right: antelope, bottom-left: shearer, bottom-right: kiwi), and a ribbon at the bottom with the motto 'ANE FOR A'.

## **Agenda Item 6**

# **National Improvement Framework – Standards and Quality Report 2018 - 2019**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title:** National Improvement Framework – Standards and Quality Report 2018 - 2019  
**Meeting:** Education, Children and Young People Executive  
**Date:** 19 November 2019  
**Submitted By:** Director of Children's Services

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report provides details of Children's Services first Standards and Quality Report. This report is an evaluation summary of the impact of the Education Division National Improvement Framework (NIF) Plan, approved in September 2018 under the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and seeks approval from the Education, Children and Young People Executive to submit this to Education Scotland.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1 The Education, Children and Young People Executive is asked to:-**

- (i) note the report;**
- (ii) agree that the Director of Children's Services can submit the Standards and Quality Report to Education Scotland.**
- (iii) request that the Director of Children's Services publish the report on the Falkirk Council website.**

**3. Background**

National Improvement Framework (NIF)

- 3.1 The NIF for Scottish Education was launched by the First Minister in January 2016. The Framework supports the ambition to achieve excellence and equity for every child in Scotland. The NIF is updated annually. The most recent edition : National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education, Achieving Excellence and Equity, was published in December 2018.
- 3.2 The NIF is underpinned by a series of new planning and reporting duties designed to support transparency and accountability around the efforts of the Scottish Government and Education Authorities to improve educational outcomes. These legal duties, integrated into the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 through Part 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016,

will be accompanied by new statutory guidance. This provides Education Authorities with support in:

- interpreting the duties; and
- identifying the practical steps they should take in order to meet their new legal responsibilities.

- 3.3 As a Council, we are required to prepare and publish an annual Standards and Quality Report. This is our first report prepared under the National Improvement Framework and provides an evaluation summary of progress and improvements in relation to the Children's Services Education Division's NIF Improvement Plan 2018-2019.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Officers have consulted with schools and central teams in the preparation of this report.

#### **5. Considerations**

- 5.1 The Education Division has undertaken a self-evaluation exercise which has helped inform the draft report. This has helped to outline our next steps which feature directly in the Division's improvement plan, which was reported on earlier. The draft report, (Appendix 1), highlights the very good practice achieved by the Division, its early learning centres, schools and services. Evidence was drawn from various sources including:

- attainment data;
- Standards and Quality reports and visits to nurseries, schools and establishments by officers across the year;
- reports on schools and early learning centres, from Education Scotland and the Service and School Improvement Team;

- 5.2 This information was analysed and used to identify our priorities for the current academic year.

- raise attainment for every child and young person and enable them to make excellent progress through their learning journey 3-18yrs;
- improve processes to support attainment and positive destinations for Falkirk's vulnerable children and young people; and
- improve attainment and positive destinations for Falkirk's young people.

This plan is being tabled today for approval.

- 5.3 With the Education, Children and Young People Executive's approval, the Division plans to issue a summary report, via our website, to all parents and carers. The full report will also be available to be viewed online or downloaded via the Council's website.

## **6. Implications**

### **Financial**

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **Resources**

6.2 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

### **Legal**

6.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **Risk**

6.4 No risk implications have been identified.

### **Equalities**

6.5 An Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments will not be required.

### **Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

6.6 There are no implications for sustainability or environmental impact arising from this report.

## **7. Conclusions**

7.1 This Education Division Standards and Quality Report provides an excellent overview of the work of the division during the 2018-2019 academic year.

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Director of Children's Services

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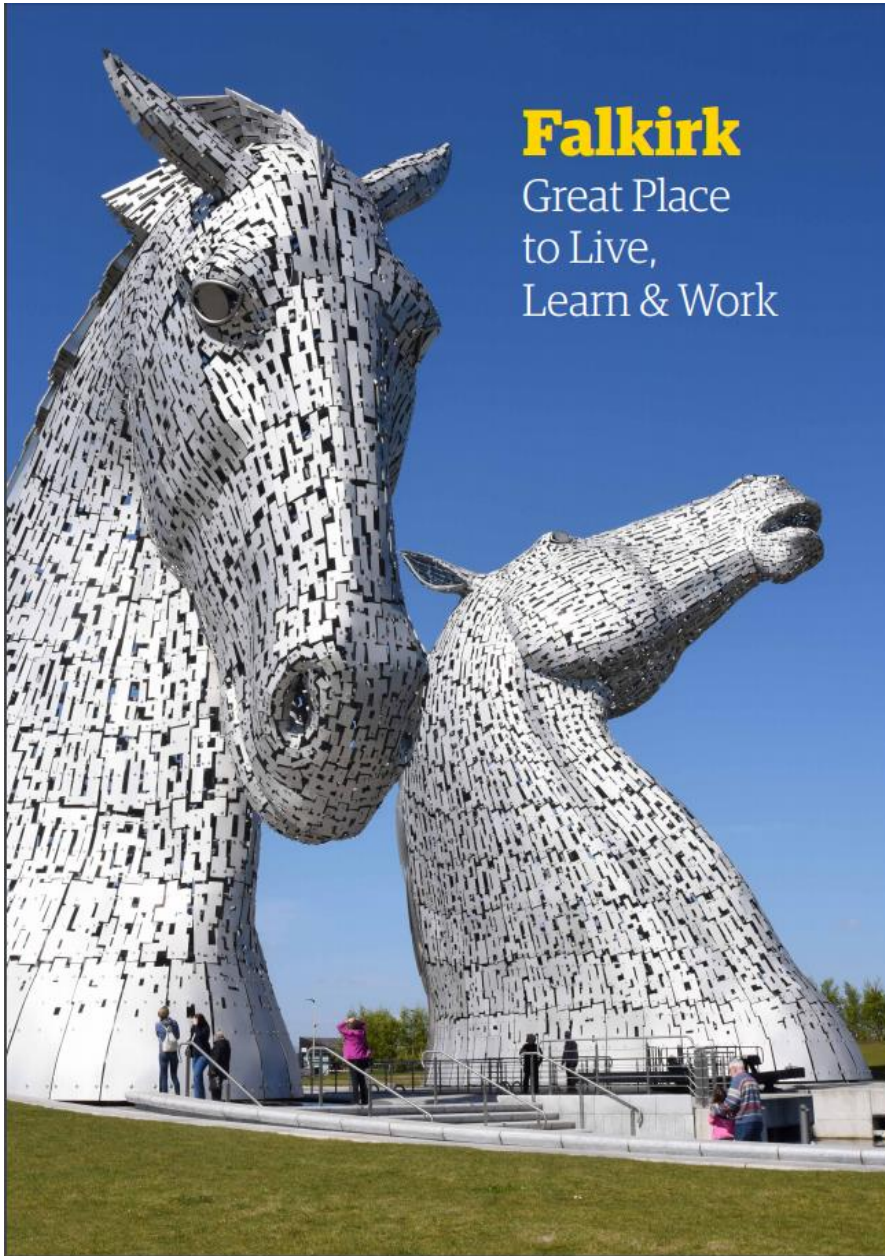
Date: 11/10/2019

### **Appendix:**

Appendix 1 - Falkirk Council, Children's Services, Standards and Quality Report 2019

### **List of Background Papers:**

None



## **Falkirk Council Children's Services**

### **Standards and Quality Report 2018-2019**



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## Foreword

Welcome to our Standards and Quality report for session 2018 -2019.

This report provides the community of Falkirk Council with the performance information needed to understand how well Falkirk is improving education across the authority. These achievements have been supported by our staff and those who work in our partnership services and agencies. This report links to the key drivers of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and also to the Education Division Improvement Plan which clearly states how Falkirk Council intends to drive forward improvements over the coming year.

The children and young people of Falkirk continue to see rewards for their hard work and endeavour. Our attainment continues to improve and overall, is at an all-time high. More young people than ever before are moving on to positive destinations after school. School attendance continues to improve and exclusions are the lowest we have recorded.

Falkirk Council's staff and partners are committed to providing our children and young people with the best possible start in life. Our commitment to quality, training and leadership is ensuring that our schools are well placed to continue to deliver high quality learning and teaching opportunities to support this.

We continue to work collegiately and in partnership with our communities to deliver the far reaching changes arising as a result of national policy. I am confident that Falkirk is well placed to meet these new challenges and maximise the benefits these afford to our children and young people.

The Education Division is fully committed to continuous improvement; Our Improvement Plan for 2018 - 2019 outlined our vision, priorities and expectations in relation to raising educational attainment and achievement for all Falkirk's children and young people. At the heart of our work is our core policy "Learning to Achieve" working in tandem with our Council of the Future vision to " Make it Happen" for all Falkirk's families. This report is structured under these objectives.



This report aims to present an objective picture of Education Division's work based on a wide range of sources. The report looks at key areas of progress and concludes with the identified areas for continued improvement for session 2019 - 2020. Progress and achievements will be summarised under three themes of:

- Raising Attainment and Achievement
- Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion
- Skills and Attributes Development

Last year continued to see unprecedented levels of national direction and expectation for local authorities and for schools. We have made progress and improvements in a climate of exceptional complexity in terms of financial challenges for local authorities and direct financial enhancement for schools through the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Overarching this, is the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework (NIF) series. This has the greatest implications for the Education Division and for schools. The NIF identifies four key priorities:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

Through the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, our Early Learning Centres (ELCs), schools and services continue to improve experiences for children, young people and families. We have been at the forefront of the development of the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative. This is adding a new dimension to our work in supporting and challenging school improvement.

The next steps outlined in the concluding section of this report will be addressed through the implementation of our Service Improvement Plan for session 2018 - 2019.

**David Mackay**

**Head of Education**





## Service and School Improvement in Context

The Education Division of Children's Services aims to support ELCs and schools to achieve the best possible standards of provision for all of our children and young people. Enjoy this short film [Live, Learn and Work in Falkirk - YouTube](#)  
Our current context is:

- 8 Mainstream Secondary Schools
- 1 Secondary School for severe and complex needs
- The Inclusion and Wellbeing Service supporting primary and secondary aged pupils with social and emotional additional needs
- One service base for primary and secondary aged pupils with hearing and visual impairment
- 48 Primary Schools
- 7 Early Learning and Childcare Centres and 2 ELC Campuses
- 46 Nursery classes

At this time within our mainstreams schools we have provision for children and young people requiring additional support as follows:

- 3 Secondary ASD provisions
- 2 Primary ASD provisions
- 2 Severe and Complex Needs Provisions ( 1 split site )
- 13 Primary Enhanced Provisions



Our early learning settings are expanding, changing and evolving to deliver the requirements of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion to 1140 hours by 2020. Since 2017 we have:

- refurbished and extended 21 nursery classes
- completed 2 new modular unit settings
- created 1 new bespoke settings
- started work on 1 new build ELC Centre

Our ELC workforce is changing and evolving. The ELC expansion to 1140 hours means increasing our workforce as well as the number of ELC settings. Education Division officers have worked in partnership with Headteachers and ELC Centre Managers to recruit:

- 84 Early Years officers
- 81 ELC Assistants
- 10 Senior Early Years Officers
- 3 Principal Early Years officers
- 3 ELC Centre Managers

We currently have 19 establishments providing 1140 hours and are on track to deliver across the authority by August 2020.



### **The Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative (FVWLric) has grown and developed.**

Over the last year, our collaborative workforce has expanded to include 12 colleagues appointed to FVWLric posts and 17 Education Scotland Link officers. Our Service and School Improvement Team officers, headteachers, depute headteachers and principal teachers and practitioners from ELC, primary and secondary have been involved in:

- Work stream groups
- Designing and delivering professional learning
- Events and information sessions

Falkirk has been a driving force in the work streams for Literacy, Numeracy, Career Long Professional Learning and ELC

During session 2018 -2019 Service and School improvement Team officers have supported and coordinated the recruitment of:

- 5 Primary HTs and 1 Secondary HT
- 8 Primary and 2 Secondary DHTs
- 10 acting /interim primary HTs
- 3 acting/ interim Secondary HTs
- 2 acting Primary DHTs
- 3 acting Secondary DHTs

There continues to be a significant turnover of senior leaders due to further promotions, retirements, early retirements and movement to FVWLric positions and Education Scotland posts.





# Learning to Achieve in Falkirk



## Population

Falkirk has a population of around 160,340. This is an increase of 210 (0.1%) since last year. We are the eleventh largest council area in Scotland. Our population has been increasing for almost 20 years, and is expected to increase to about 172,219 by 2041.



## Workforce

- Children's Services has 3,166 full-time equivalent employees as at April 2019
- 1 in 10 primary teachers is aged 55 or over
- 1 in 11 secondary teachers is aged 55 or over



## Free School Meals

- All P1-3 pupils and all pupils in special schools receive free school meals
- 17% of P4-7 pupils and 13% of secondary pupils are entitled to free school meals



## Attendance

In Falkirk' average pupil attendance is:

- 94% for primary pupils
- 91% for secondary pupils



## Literacy

- 97% of Falkirk school leavers have gained at least a level 4 award in literacy
- 86% of Falkirk school leavers have gained at least a level 5 award in literacy



## Numeracy

- 95% of Falkirk school leavers have gained at least a level 4 award in numeracy
- 77% of Falkirk school leavers have gained at least a level 5 award in numeracy



## Positive Destinations

- 95% of Falkirk school leavers enter a positive destination
- 69% of Falkirk school leavers have Higher level qualifications



## Attainment

Of P1/4/ 7/S3 pupils:

- 83% at expected level for Reading
- 79% at expected level for Writing
- 88% at expected level for Listening & Talking
- 82% at expected level for Numeracy



## Literacy

- 96% of Falkirk school leavers living in an area of deprivation have gained at least a level 4 award in literacy
- 80% of Falkirk school leavers living in an area of deprivation have gained at least a level 5 award in literacy



## Numeracy

- 92% of Falkirk school leavers living in an area of deprivation have gained at least a level 4 award in numeracy
- 67% of Falkirk school leavers living in an area of deprivation have gained at least a level 5 award in numeracy



## Positive Destinations

- 91% of Falkirk school leavers living in an area of deprivation enter a positive destination
- 52% of Falkirk school leavers living in an area of deprivation have Higher level qualifications

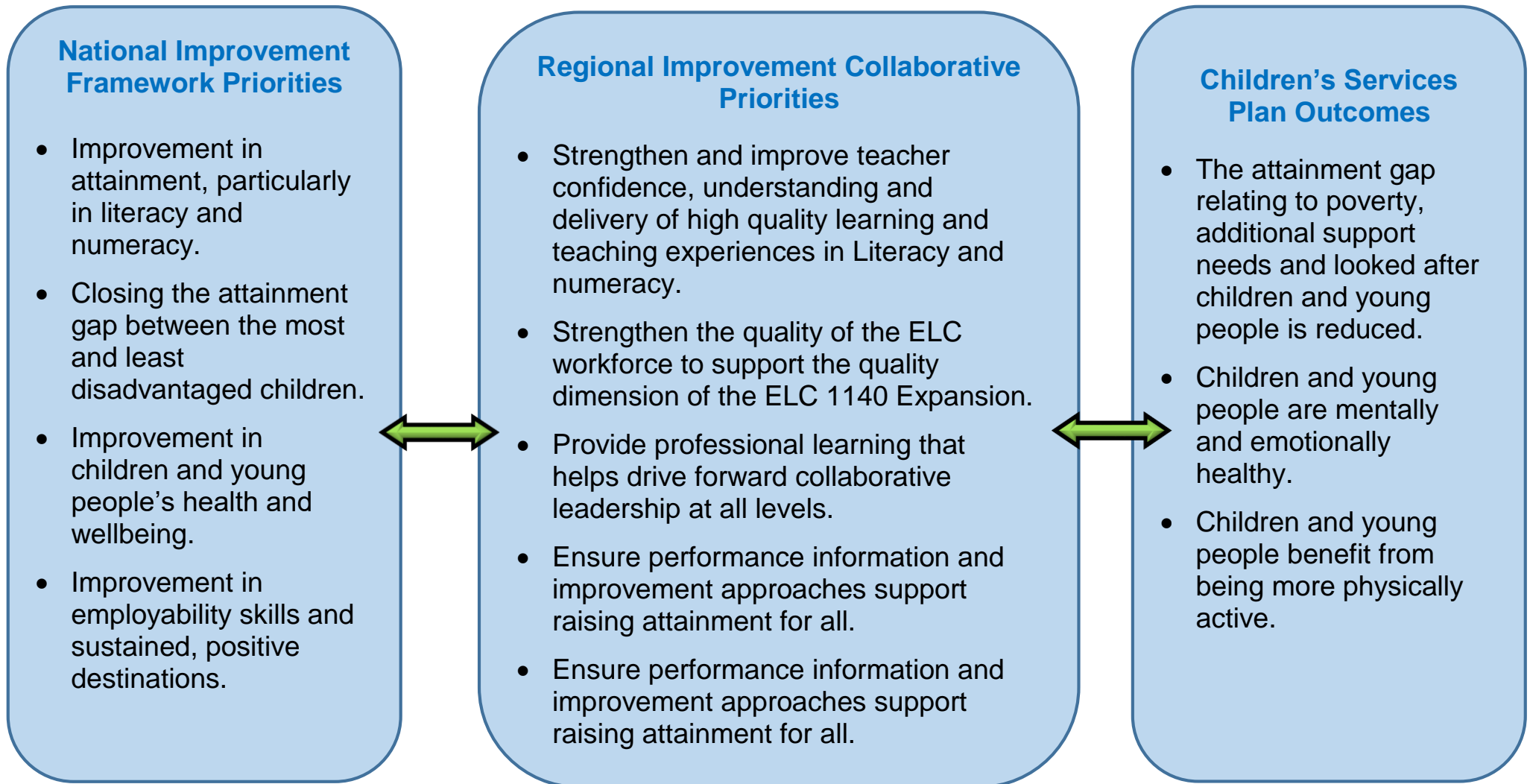


## Attainment

Of P1/4/7/S3 pupils living in an area of deprivation:

- 73% at expected level for Reading
- 67% at expected level for Writing
- 79% at expected level for Listening & Talking
- 73% at expected level for Numeracy

**Overarching Priorities for session 2018-19 were:**



## High level Improvement Activities 2018-2019

### Raising Attainment and Achievement

Raise attainment for every child and young person and enable them to make excellent progress through their learning journey 3–18yrs.:

- Schools will have progressive, coherent, well designed and innovative curriculum designs and rationales.
- Practitioners will improve the range and validity of assessment and the reliability of assessment judgements to best evidence children's progress, achievement and attainment.
- Support and challenge the requirement of effective use of performance information through intelligent use of data (Scottish average 85% achieving expected CfE levels pre intervention)
- Practitioners will use a variety of well judged, evidence based interventions for individuals and groups of learners to achieve excellence and equity.
- Highly skilled practitioners employ a variety of engaging and creative approaches to deliver rich and engaging learning experiences for all children and young people, including delivering developmentally appropriate learning on play in the early stages of primary.
- Support further the development of self-evaluation which delivers measurable improvement.
- Facilitate and support strong, collaborative leadership and teacher professionalism.

### Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

Improve processes to support attainment and positive destinations for Falkirk's vulnerable children and young people.

- Staff will have the opportunity to improve their skills through a programme of professional learning on inclusion, equality and wellbeing.
- Inclusive practice in schools will be improved by a new staged intervention policy and guidance.
- Increase the opportunities for children and young people to be educated **Closer to Home** resulting in improved outcomes.
- Increase participation in education and promote the quality for our most vulnerable children and their families.

### Skills and Attributes Development

Improve attainment and positive destinations for Falkirk's young people:

- Develop a Falkirk Council Framework for skills and attributes development 3 –18.
- Increase opportunities for learners to develop knowledge and skill in STEM subjects.
- Increase the number of and access to programmes and experiences which enable children and young people to develop skills for learning, life and work.
- Further develop the use of consortia arrangements and virtual learning to help learners build a portfolio of relevant and appropriate qualifications and experiences in the senior phase.
- Increase the number of Foundation Apprenticeships available to young people

**The remainder of this report provides information on our progress towards meeting our priorities and improvement outcomes for session 2018-2019**



## Raising Attainment and Achievement

### 2018 -2019 Service Priority:

Raise attainment for every child and young person and enable them to make excellent progress through their learning journey.

#### What did we aim to achieve in session 2018 -2019?

Practitioners will improve the range and validity of assessments and the reliability of assessment judgements to best evidence children's progress, achievement and attainment	Support and challenge the requirement of effective use of performance information through intelligent use of data.	Highly skilled practitioners employ a variety of engaging and creative approaches to deliver rich and engaging learning experiences for all children and young people, including delivering developmentally appropriate learning and play in the early stages of Primary.	Schools will have progressive, coherent, well designed and innovative curriculum rationale and models.	Support further the development of self-evaluation which delivers measurable improvement.	Facilitate and support strong collaborative leadership and teacher professionalism.
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Education Scotland's How Good is Our School? 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (HGIOS?4) describes attainment in 4 areas within the Quality Indicator of 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- Attainment over time
- Overall quality of learners' achievement

## Improving the range and validity of assessments and the reliability of assessment judgements to best evidence children's progress, achievement and attainment

The Scottish Government's (SG) 4 National Improvement Framework priorities and 6 drivers of improvement have the common theme of raising attainment and achievement, reducing inequity and improving outcomes for children and young people as they move through their learning. The SG has continued to provide additional funding directly to schools to reduce the poverty related attainment gap through Pupil Equity Funding, Scottish Attainment Challenge Schools Programme and Care Experienced Funding. Additional funding has also secured Excellence and Equity Early Childhood Educators posts (FC Pedagogues) in 8 of our Early Learning and Childcare establishments with the highest levels of need. The Service and School Improvement Team have also worked closely and effectively with our SG Improvement Advisor.

Falkirk's context creates both opportunities and challenges. Significant inequalities exist within the demographics of our local area and across our town centre, urban and rural communities. Our aim is to provide an excellent education and equitable opportunities regardless of these differences.

We have continued to reinforce our expectations set out in our Learning to Achieve Strategy that in Falkirk we all work together to:

- Identifying, collecting and sharing effective pedagogy and methodology
- Using reflective and enquiring approaches to evaluate then develop our practice and increase our impact on learning
- Analysing and making intelligent use of the data available to us when planning improvements for/by everyone
- Encouraging creativity, aspiration and innovation for/of everyone involved
- Building curriculum frameworks and pathways which progress and challenge pupils
- Designing effective assessment into our practice – formative, diagnostic and summative as appropriate
- Adopting effective processes and practices for tracking, monitoring, reporting and quality assurance at all levels
- Tackling unnecessary workload and bureaucracy at all levels
- Ensuring that pupils are actively involved in their learning and progression
- Maximising opportunities to involve parents, families, partners and the wider community
- Work collaboratively with peers and partners to share best practice and support improvement for all of Falkirk's children and young people.



Over the last session we have further developed the suite of centrally provided data shared with schools which enables them to access performance information from:

- Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Teacher Judgement Surveys (TJS) 2015 -2019 for P1, P4, P7 and S3
- Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs) 2018 and 2019
- SQA results
- Insight : Secondary Senior Phase Dashboard
- Broad General Education (BGE) Improvement Tool

Central analysis provides data from 2016 broken down by:

- Year group
- Expected CfE level for Reading, Writing, Listening, Talking and Numeracy
- Cluster - secondary school and associated primary schools (8 groups)
- Neighbourhood – primary, secondary associated by similar demographic profile (7 groups)



Schools can use this information alongside their own analysis to look at their improvements in attainment and achievement locally and nationally. This open and transparent use of data is increasing our capacity to develop robust contextual analysis which identifies key strengths as well as gaps across the Service and at individual school level.

We produced support and guidance to help schools use the information generated from the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs).

## Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

### CfE Teacher Judgement Levels



5% increase in Primary Literacy levels since 2015-16



3% increase in Primary Numeracy levels since 2015-16

- S4 learners living in an area of deprivation gaining Level 5 in Literacy has increased by 29% since 2015
- S4 learners living in an area of deprivation gaining Level 5 in Numeracy has increased by 35% since 2015
- S5 learners living in an area of deprivation gaining Level 6 in Literacy has increased by 15% since 2015
- S5 learners living in an area of deprivation gaining Level 6 in Numeracy has increased by 8% since 2015
- The poverty related attainment gap in S4 has closed by 22% Level 5 Literacy and 16% Level 5 Numeracy



### SSI Supporting Improvements in Literacy

We further developed our comprehensive menu of CLPL created with colleagues across the service – shared via Sway, email & Twitter. 10 new courses were offered, with an average attendance of 23 practitioners. With 755 of participants rating sessions as excellent.

Our Literacy Network core members met four times to share valuable practice and act as consultants and contributors to help shape literacy developments across the authority. Officers consulted secondary colleagues with responsibility for literacy and a number of initiatives to support literacy across learning have been taken forward and have been planned for session 2019 -2020 as a result of network group involvement.

The Falkirk Literacy blog has been further developed and updated regularly, and is accessible to colleagues across the Service. Falkirk Literacy Strategy was finalised and is available to schools to inform and influence their own policies and collaborative work. Bespoke assessment and conversation resources have been developed for use with pupil focus groups as part of our validated self-evaluation visits to primary and secondary schools. This provides more robust and consistent evaluation evidence of pupil's skills, and attainment in literacy from early to fourth level. As a result, pupils engaged well with the tools, practitioners found the feedback from the pupil engagement informative, and the methods employed were appropriate and unobtrusive, and they contributed to the rigour of the visit.

The Learning Resource Service now provides an e-book and e-audio lending service. This is normally delivered through membership of the public library service, but for the first time in Scotland, Falkirk Council provides it through the school library service accessible by a Glow log-in. We've received excellent feedback from schools as a result. Borrowbox has had a positive impact on pupils, especially on reluctant readers and pupils who require additional support for learning. We have also been delighted to see how many settings are using this resource for family learning and to encourage reading for enjoyment out of school, in particular, over the school holidays.

Our active users and borrowing statistics are growing. To maintain this growth we will continue to offer twilight introductory sessions and sessions in schools as required e.g. promoting the system with families. The Service and School Improvement team are working closely with the lending resource Service to further refine literacy resources. The work of the lending team is focussing specifically on raising attainment and achieving excellence and equity for all learners. Developments and support have included:

- Increasing access to e-books and e-audio;
- developing and intensifying the literacy work in ELC centres and schools;



- targeting establishments in areas of deprivation, related to School Improvement Plan priorities; and
- increasing opportunities for personal achievement with events for pupils such as the Red Book Award, as well as other opportunities through the strong partnership with local libraries and national literacy agencies such as Scottish Book Trust, Edinburgh International Book Festival and the National Poetry Library;



Falkirk has had a leading role in the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative (FVWLRIC) development of Literacy. This has involved, SSI officers, headteachers, early years, primary and secondary practitioners. As part of these developments we have worked closely with colleagues from Speech and Language Therapy and Educational Psychology. Focus for these partnerships has been:

- Early Years Vocabulary Development
- Building a Reading Culture

“Vox pop” soundbites have been created on: Box Clever, Phonological Awareness in Early Years, WL ELC Tracker, Foundations of Literacy Through Play, Word Aware and LIFT – Adult-Child Interactions.



**Quality Assurance & Moderation in Falkirk**

“Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of intelligent effort” – John Ruskin

Our Literacy Quality Moderation and Assessment Support Officers (QAMSOs) are 13 practitioners from primary and secondary schools who work across early to fourth level. Their role has been developed to support work in Falkirk and across the FVWLRIC. Our core aim has been to support schools to develop a better understanding of standards, share good practice and support effective assessment and moderation, including the development of holistic assessments and improving the validity and reliability of teacher professional judgement.

In session 2018 -2019 key work for this group has included:

- Development and support for schools to use the FC Creation of Quality Assurance and Moderation Framework which builds on the 2017 Quality Assurance and Moderation Strategy starter pack. This provided detailed guidance for schools and practitioners in their responsibility and accountability for quality assurance, moderation, self-evaluation and school improvement. All Falkirk schools and centres are expected adhere to this.
- CLPL sessions to share the Quality Assurance and Moderation Key messages - 2 taken place
- Engagement with National Moderation Events and providing support in their own settings and clusters
- Gathering evidence from schools to demonstrate high quality holistic questions, standards and achievement of a level, including a range of evidence that has already gone through school and local moderation processes
- Share key learning and messages across authority schools and centres





### SSI Supporting Developments in Numeracy

A [FC Digital Hub site](#) created and in use (through GLOW as a blog). This is the landing page for all materials related to the QAMSOs and Quality Assurance and Moderation in Falkirk, National policy, sharing of effective practice. This has improved communication for practitioners and provided a hub for sharing of local, FVWLRIC and national documentation and resources.

We developed the [FC Numeracy Pressure Points](#) to help practitioners and senior leaders to plan next steps for learners and assess improvements in learning. This important development was a response to our understanding that across Falkirk's schools, children and young people required particular key skills, knowledge and understanding to provide a strong foundation for later learning in numeracy. Without these key pressure points for real understanding, many learners could find it difficult to apply their skills in problem solving contexts and struggle to use mental agility to solve calculations in the most efficient and effective ways. It is our expectation that in all Falkirk Council schools and centres, practitioners should be using the pressure points document and we have seen evidence of their use in our School Improvement visits and VSEs.

Teacher Professional Judgement (2016/17) across the four FVWLRIC authorities indicated a fall in the percentage of children achieving First Level by Primary 4 compared to the percentage of children achieving Early Level at the end of Primary 1. Practitioners teaching in Primary 2, 3 and 4 indicated through an online questionnaire that professional learning opportunities in the following areas of numeracy would be most useful:

- Strategies for effective learning and teaching
- Use of concrete materials/resources in effective learning and teaching

In response our FC Numeracy Hub Champion/ Development Officer worked on bespoke Falkirk supports and with colleagues across the FVWLRIC. They worked collaboratively to:

- identify up to 3 schools to participate in a pilot project aimed at building staff capacity within First Level Numeracy using an embedded classroom professional learning model;
- design and deliver high quality CLPL to identified SMT and classroom practitioners;
- facilitate professional dialogue on a monthly basis to increase teacher confidence in using manipulative to help children and young people gain a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts;
- Support practitioners to administer diagnostic assessments to learners as identified by the Numeracy Hub Champions to gather data for analysis and to inform future practice and share key learning shared across the RIC;
- Establish an electronic platform for staff involved to engage in professional dialogue and share good practice around the intervention; and

