



Giving Children and Young People the Best Start in Life

Summary

In February 2015, the Scottish Government launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the £750m Attainment Scotland Fund. The aims are to provide targeted support to increase the educational attainment and outcomes of children in Scotland's highest concentrated areas of deprivation. North Ayrshire Council is making very good progress towards improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap, evidenced by improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Our work in raising attainment and achievement is currently focused on the following areas, designed to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and to give our children and young people the best start in life:

- Improving learning and teaching through the establishment of a Professional Learning Academy;
- Creating nurturing schools;
- Developing and maintaining good mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- Supporting enhanced family learning;
- Developing and embedding quality leadership at all levels; and
- Developing data literacy skills in our staff to support targeted improvements.

Our progress as a local authority has been benchmarked against the other eight challenge authorities and through Education Scotland's inspection process. North Ayrshire is one of five local authorities to receive an evaluation of Very Good or better through inspection and a range of our approaches are highlighted as good practice in the recently published summary of inspections of all nine Challenge Authorities.

Future planned activities include the following:

- Use quality assurance and measuring impact as the basis for decision-making;
- Consider workforce planning implications;
- Consult with schools and strengthen links between Scottish Attainment Challenge & Pupil Equity Fund;
- Develop sustainable, in-house expertise and resources; and
- Explore partnership funding.

We will also:

- Continue to offer a range of targeted programmes and twilight training opportunities for practitioners with a focus on Additional Support Needs, literacy, numeracy, pedagogy, STEM and creativity.

- Enhance partnership working with other education authorities in the South West Education Improvement Collaborative in relation to professional learning.
- Further embed Nurture across early years, primary and secondary establishments through targeted nurture groups and whole school training.
- Continue to offer a range of targeted counselling support to primary and secondary schools across the authority and deliver initiatives, interventions and programmes within universal services.
- Develop role for school data coaches to drive use of data in classroom-based improvement planning.
- Launch a new leadership development framework which provides a range of leadership development opportunities to primary and secondary school practitioners to enhance their leadership capacity.
- Continue to deliver and measure the impact of family learning programmes in areas of highest deprivation.

A further three areas of transformation are being progressed:

- We will reduce the number of children and young people who are in external placements out with the local area and improve the range of early intervention supports which prevent young people being educated and accommodated eternally;
- Integrated locality teams to support children and young people in their local area, with a range of services working together to ensure the best outcomes possible; and
- Integration of Education and HSCP early years services in localities.

