

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL



# EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024-25



# EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024-25

## 1. FOREWORD

In the Scottish Borders we have one simple vision; to make Scottish Borders the best place in the world to teach and learn.

Scottish Borders Council are a forward thinking, ambitious authority committed to transforming the way we deliver our Education Services and well placed to ensure that all our children and young people continue to benefit from living and growing up in the Scottish Borders. We want all our young people and staff to grow and develop into high skilled, happy and healthy global citizens. Our Inspire Learning programme harnesses the latest technology, curriculum innovation, new learning environments and high quality professional development to ensure that learning across our region is mobile, personal, collaborative and excellent.

We are continuing a new education delivery model which is empowering school leaders to foster collaboration within their local communities, working alongside the collective expertise and creativity of colleagues to deliver positive outcomes for all the children and young people in the Scottish Borders. In an empowered system school leaders are partners within the Local Authority and contribute and support each other, respecting the different role each plays. We are doing this while maintaining a strong focus on early intervention and prevention, building resilience and supporting children, young people and families to develop the skills and capabilities that enable them to navigate the challenges of modern life.

**Justin Sinclair**  
Chief Education Officer



# EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024-25

## 1. INTRODUCTION

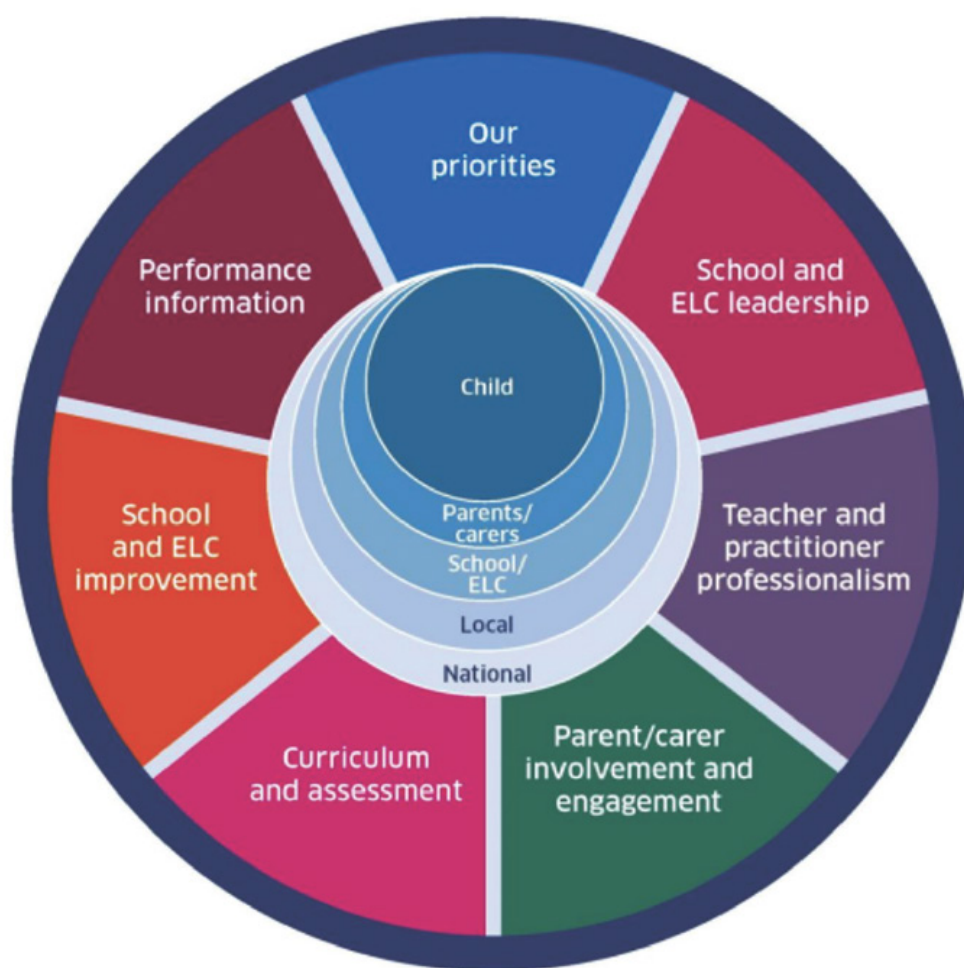
The National Framework drivers for improvement underpin the strategic priorities outlined below and give a clear direction across all aspects for service improvement.

**The key drivers which inform our Improvement Plan are:**

- School and Early Learning and Childcare Leadership
- Teacher and practitioner professionalism
- School and Early Learning and Childcare improvement
- Curriculum and Assessment
- Performance Information

**The National Improvement Framework 2023 (NIF) requires each local authority to prepare and publish annual plans and reports describing the steps they intend to take each academic year to reach each of the five strategic priorities below:**

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- Improvement in children's health and wellbeing
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for young people



The Scottish Borders Education Service Improvement Plan does not sit in isolation. It is informed by SBC's Council Plan April 2024 and the Children and Young People's Services Integrated Plan.



## EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024-25

### 3. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our Education Service Improvement Plan sets out the key strategic improvement priorities for our schools and settings for session 2024-25 based on the evidence presented in The Standards and Quality Report 2023-24. This reporting and planning process allows us, through rigorous self-evaluation, to identify areas where we are performing well and areas that still require further improvement.

#### PRIORITY 1

**Develop high quality learning, teaching and assessment that leads to improved levels of attainment (including the posterity related gap) and achievement for all in our schools and settings through continued development of;**

- Pedagogy and practice : year 2 of SBC Way
- Curricular programmes and learner pathways
- Digital skills for all
- Tracking and monitoring

#### PRIORITY 2

**Develop inclusive practice with a focus on universal and targeted provision in all schools and settings through continued development of;**

- Inclusive, nurturing practice and promotion of wellbeing
- Universal and targeted supports for all learners

#### PRIORITY 3

**Ambitious development of leadership at all levels with an emphasis on knowing and understanding the standard. It will include a new pathway for accelerated promotion**

## DELIVERY OF A NEW EDUCATION MODEL

In the Scottish Borders, we are revolutionising our current approaches and continuing to deliver Education by focusing on building leadership capacity, creating an environment that encourages innovation and ultimately a self-improving service.

We are adopting our “Team around the Cluster” approach to deliver positive outcomes for all children and young people in the Scottish Borders.

We are enabling all colleagues to gain a broader understanding of the entirety of our education service delivery process and developing flexible skill sets. It is fostering a culture of continuous professional learning and learning together. Through our model of using Communities of Practice (COP) we are promoting less silo working and improving open communication. We are harnessing the diverse perspectives and expertise of “OneTeam” across our Education officers and school practitioners to drive innovation and improve outcomes.

All schools are engaging with the #SBCway, aligning current practices with the authority-wide approach. The #SBCway is supporting all schools to further advance priorities



## EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023-24

# 4. SBC STRETCH AIMS 2023-26

Local authorities were required to submit stretch aims for 2025/26 with annual trajectories to Scottish Government as part of statutory plans and reports. Specific 'core' and optional 'core plus' stretch aims are to be submitted for improving outcomes for all while closing the poverty-related attainment gap, these should be both ambitious and achievable within local contexts.

**These include:**

### CORE STRETCH AIMS

- a. Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy at primary 1, 4 and 7 combined; and numeracy at primary 1, 4 and 7 combined);
- b. The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF level 5 based on Insight (All SCQF Awards) information;
- c. The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF level 6 based on Insight (All SCQF Awards) information;
- d. The proportion of 16-19 olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland;
- e. A locally identified aim for health and wellbeing; attendance in primary and secondary.

### CORE PLUS STRETCH AIMS

- f. Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy at S3 and numeracy at S3);
- g. The proportion of school leavers in an initial positive destination based on Insight information;
- h. Attendance of care experience learners in primary and secondary;
- i. the proportion of care experienced school leavers attaining 5 or more award at any SCQF level based on Insight (All SCQF Awards) information.

Stretch aim development has involved collaboration and dialogue with cluster lead headteachers, education officers, and all headteachers. Schools have collaborated in clusters to set core and core plus stretch aims for every school and clusters have set additional stretch aims to suit their context. School stretch aims have been used to corroborate our local authority aims to ensure consistency and clarity.



# CONTENTS

## EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024-25

1. FOREWORD	3
2. INTRODUCTION	5
3. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	7
4. SBC STRETCH AIMS	9
5. ACTIONS	13

## CORE STRETCH AIMS

CORE: ACEL P1 P4 P7 LITERACY COMBINED				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY	OVERALL LEVELS	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 performance	75 - 76%	60 - 62%	87 - 88%	27 - 26pp
2024/25	76 - 78%	62 - 68%	88 - 89%	26 - 24pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	80%	74%	89%	15pp
CORE: ACEL P1 P4 P7 NUMERACY COMBINED				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY	OVERALL LEVELS	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 performance	80 - 81%	63 - 65%	88 - 89%	25 - 24pp
2024/25	81 - 82%	65 - 69%	89 - 90%	24 - 2pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	83%	75%	91%	16pp
CORE: SCHOOL LEAVERS ATTAINING 1 OR MORE AWARD AT SCQF LEVEL 5 (ALL SCQF)				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY	OVERALL LEVELS	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 performance	88.5 - 89.5%	72.5 - 74.0%	97.6 - 98.0%	25.1 - 24.0pp
2024/25	89.5 - 90.5%	74.0 - 77.0%	98.0 - 98.5%	24.0 - 22.5pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	91%	82%	98%	16pp
CORE: SCHOOL LEAVERS ATTAINING 1 OR MORE AWARD AT SCQF LEVEL 6 (ALL SCQF)				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY	OVERALL LEVELS	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 performance	64.9 - 66.0%	32.5 - 36.5%	85.7 - 86.5%	53.2 - 50.0pp
2024/25	66 - 68%	36.5 - 42%	86.5 - 87.5%	50.0 - 47.0pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	72%	50%	88%	38pp
CORE: ANNUAL PARTICIPATION MEASURE (16-19 – EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, OR TRAINI				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY	OVERALL LEVELS	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 performance	95.6 - 96.0%	87.1 - 88.5%	98.3%	9.3 - 10pp
2024/25	94.2 - 95.5%	89.5 - 91.0%	87.8%	9.0 - 9.3pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	96.5%	92.5%	98.0%	5.5pp
CORE HWB: ATTENDANCE - PRIMARY				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY	OVERALL LEVELS	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 performance	93.3 - 94.0%	89.7 - 91.0%	95.4 - 95.8%	5.7 - 4.8pp
2024/25	94.0 - 95.0%	91.0 - 92.5%	95.8 - 96.2%	4.8 - 3.7pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	95.5%	95.0%	96.5%	1.50pp
CORE HWB: ATTENDANCE - SECONDARY				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY	OVERALL LEVELS	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 performance	89.2 - 90.0%	84.5 - 87.0%	90.9 - 91.5%	6.4 - 4.5pp
2024/25	90.0 - 91.5%	87 - 90%	91.5 - 92.5%	4.5 - 2.5pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	93.5%	92%	94.5%	2.5pp

## CORE PLUS STRETCH AIMS

CORE PLUS: ACEL S3 - 3RD LEVEL LITERACY COMBINED				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY OVERALL LEVELS		SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 Performance	85.5 – 87.0%	72.5 – 80.0%	93.8 – 94.5%	21.3 – 14.5pp
2024/25	87.0 – 89.5%	80 – 83%	94.5 – 95.5%	14.5 – 12.5pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	92%	85%	97%	12pp
CORE PLUS: ACEL S3 – 3RD LEVEL NUMERACY COMBINED				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY OVERALL LEVELS		SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 Performance	85.5 – 87.0%	80 – 82%	93 – 94%	13 – 12pp
2024/25	87.0 – 89.0%	82 – 84%	94 – 95.5%	13 – 12pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	92%	86%	97%	11pp
CORE PLUS: SCHOOL LEAVERS IN AN INITIAL POSITIVE DESTINATION				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY OVERALL LEVELS		SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
2023/24 Performance	96.7 – 97.0%	93.8 – 94.2%	99.2%	5.5 – 5.0pp
2024/25	97.0 – 97.5%	94.2 – 95.0%	99.3%	5.0 – 4.3pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	98%	96%	99.5%	3.5pp
CORE PLUS: CARE EXPERIENCED ATTENDANCE – PRIMARY				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY OVERALL LEVELS		CE	NON-CE	GAP (CE – NON-CE)
2023/24 Performance	93.3 – 94.0%	88.0 – 90.5%	93.4 – 94.1%	5.4 – 3.6pp
2024/25	94.0 – 95.0%	90.5 – 92.5%	94.1 – 95.1%	3.6 – 2.6pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	95.5%	95%	95.6%	0.6pp
CORE PLUS: CARE EXPERIENCED ATTENDANCE – SECONDARY				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY OVERALL LEVELS		CE	NON-CE	GAP (CE – NON-CE)
2023/24 Performance	89.2 – 90.0%	84.1 – 86.0%	89.3 – 90.2%	5.2 – 4.2pp
2024/25	90.0 – 91.5%	86.0 – 89.0%	90.2 – 91.7%	4.2 – 2.7pp
2025/26 Stretch Aim	93.5%	92%	93.7%	1.7pp
CORE PLUS: CARE EXPERIENCED SCHOOL LEAVERS ATTAINING 5 OR MORE AWARDS AT ANY SCQF LEVEL (ALL SCQF)				
ANNUAL TRAJECTORY		CARE EXPERIENCED		
2023/24 Performance		64.7 – 70%		
2024/25		70 – 78%		
2025/26 Stretch Aim		90%		



# EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024-25

## 5. ACTIONS

### NEXT STEPS IDENTIFIED FROM 2023-24 STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT:

- Continue to support and challenge schools to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements and target setting for all cohorts of learners
- Continue to build capability and capacity for senior leaders and staff in schools in understanding the national standards and expectations for improvement
- Support secondary schools to engage in curriculum innovation ensuring programmes and pathways align with Curriculum for Excellence and appropriate recommendations from the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment
- Continue our expectations for literacy, numeracy and HWB framework through developing the #SBCWay
- Focus on ensuring policies and practices are grounded in current legislation and well understood and schools are supported to ensure success of all learners
- Support and challenge schools to improve outcomes for identified groups of children and young people with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap
- Support schools to make best use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding to close the poverty related attainment gap
- Continue to ensure a commitment to nurture and progress rollout of targeted nurture bases
- Continue to empower senior leaders through adopting the cluster approach to empowerment
- Develop a new leadership model of pathways for all aspiring and current leaders
- An SBC Outdoor learning Strategy will be developed.
- A Play Pedagogy Strategy will have been developed.
- All schools and settings will demonstrate improved inclusive, nurturing practice and promote wellbeing.

## EVIDENCE WE WILL GATHER:

- Attainment and ACEL Data
- Insight Data
- Quality Improvement Framework activity evaluations of core Quality Indicators
- National Standard gradings – Care Inspectorate Quality Framework/HMIE
- Standards and Quality Reports and Improvement Plans
- SEEMIS Data around children and young people with an Additional Support Need
- Collated survey data including annual questionnaire of pupils, parents and staff, Glasgow Motivation Wellbeing Profile
- SEEMIS data – Bullying and Equalities

## SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Increase in attainment outcomes across all ages and stages in accordance with core stretch aims.
- The number of establishments evaluating themselves as good or better on 2.3 and 3.2 will have increased.
- All schools and settings will evidence improvement in the application of nurture principles in QI 3.1. and young people will experience nurture more consistently
- The number of establishments evaluating themselves as good or better for QI 3.1 will increase.
- All school and settings will evidence improved practice in line with their revised Positive Relationship and Anti Bullying Policy.
- All schools will have evidence to track wellbeing of children and young people, including the use of the Glasgow Motivational Tool so we have comparable data across the authority.
- Staff will have a greater understanding in how to best meet the needs of all learners including neurodivergent learners in their classroom practice
- Parent workshops on Nurturing Approaches will be delivered in all clusters
- High levels of staff engagement in professional learning
- Cluster based approaches are agreed to support service delivery in ASN, ELC and family support

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