

## Driving Excellence and Equity: Advice on School Improvement Planning 2017/18

The purpose of this advice is to support schools in considering the National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities and drivers when developing their school improvement plan. The four key priorities of the NIF are:

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

### **Effective, collaborative self-evaluation is at the heart of improvement planning and reporting**

As outlined in *How good is our school? Fourth Edition* (HGIOS?4) effective school improvement planning is a continuous process of considering what is working well and what needs to improve. The following key principles should be considered:

- ensure that you collaborate with parents and carers, community partners and your local cluster to develop and evaluate the improvement plan;
- take an evidence-based approach, including careful analysis of data on children and young people's progress to plan targeted interventions;
- focus on a small number of key priorities which can be implemented as part of your collegiate working time agreement and aim to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy; and
- consider both the local context and the NIF priorities when developing a plan that works for your children and young people.

Collectively, schools, parents, communities and partners share a wealth of data and information about children and young people's successes and achievements. Through joint analysis of a wide range of data you should take specific action to support those groups or individuals who require targeted interventions. This is essential to achieve excellence and equity for all learners and close attainment gaps which may exist in your school.

Moderation of teacher professional judgement of children's progress is an important feature of highly-effective self-evaluation. Schools should clearly identify arrangements for internal and external moderation of teacher judgement, using a wide range of evidence, based on a consistent and shared understanding of standards within Curriculum for Excellence levels.

### **Developing a manageable, measurable annual improvement plan**

An effective improvement plan will consist of a small number of well-considered priorities, expressed as measurable and achievable outcomes for learners. Your local authority will give you further advice on this including the format of the plan.

The school improvement plan should include the following:

- observable, measurable outcomes which focus on learning, achievement and wellbeing;
- priorities clearly linked to NIF drivers and HGIOS?4 quality indicators (QIs);
- clearly identified responsibilities for implementation and methods of change, linked to named individuals or teams;
- clear deadlines which ensure priorities are achieved within intended timescales and take account of working time agreements;

- clear planning for how the Pupil Equity Funding (if relevant) will be used to provide targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to close the poverty related attainment gap; and
- measures of success which include performance data, quality indicators and stakeholders' views.

More information on Pupil Equity Funding will be available from January 2017.

The delivery of the improvement plan should be discussed and agreed with staff as part of their collegiate hours within the working time agreement. The plan should be a working document which is regularly reviewed. Schools should use the plan to monitor progress towards achieving the identified outcomes and improvements, based on valid and reliable evidence.

### **Creating an annual standards and quality report**

Schools must provide an annual standards and quality report, as a record of progress with their annual improvement plan, and defining the local and NIF priorities for the coming year.

The annual report should ensure that:

- progress towards NIF drivers and local priorities is communicated clearly and briefly;
- evaluation of the impact of the school's actions to improve excellence and equity, and achieve positive outcomes for all children and young people is clear;
- strategies which have been successful in engaging children and young people, staff, parents and the wider community are highlighted;
- evaluations for the following QIs are provided: 1.3 Leadership of Change; 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment; 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion, 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement; any other relevant QIs linked to improvement work; and
- an overall evaluation of the school's capacity for continuous improvement is stated.

An example of how this could be set out in a 'bureaucracy-light' way which is aligned to the NIF is provided overleaf.

The annual report should be shared in an accessible way with all stakeholders to support a clearer understanding of the key factors giving rise to inequalities, what is working and what needs to improve. It is a public document which should be available to anyone who requests it. The local authority should use the information contained in each school's annual report to collate and share self-evaluation evidence in relation to the NIF with the Scottish Government.

### **Further links and advice**

Schools should actively engage all stakeholders in planning, evaluating and reporting on school improvement to ensure shared ownership. Further advice on the involvement of parents and carers can be accessed through the [Engaging Parents and Families](#) toolkit.

Well-developed local Community Learning and Development (CLD) partnerships provide strong support for schools' self-evaluation and improvement planning, helping to make connections to the local authority CLD plan and to priorities which are based on the needs of local communities. [Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement](#) (VOICE) provides further prompts to strengthen community engagement.

The [National Improvement Hub](#) is a strong source of information on education research and best practice.

EXAMPLE outline format for school standards and quality report which is aligned to the NIF

***For illustrative purposes only***

<p><b>Context of the school:</b></p> <p>Including some or all of the following: school vision, value and aims; local contextual issues; Scottish Attainment Challenge involvement; factors affecting progress (e.g. staffing changes/issues); and outcomes from authority review/inspection etc.</p>
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Review of progress for session 2016-17

<b>School priority 1: raising attainment in numeracy</b>	
<p><u>NIF Priority</u> <b>Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.</b></p> <p><u>NIF Driver</u> <b>Assessment of children’s progress</b></p>	<p><u>HGIOS?4 QIs</u> <b>3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</b></p>
<p>Progress and impact:</p>  <p>Next Steps:</p>	

<b>School priority 2: creating a culture of collaborative leadership at all levels</b>	
<p><u>NIF Driver</u> <b>School leadership</b></p>	<p><u>HGIOS?4 QIs</u> <b>1.3 leadership of change</b></p>
<p>Progress and impact:</p>  <p>Next steps:</p>	

**Key priorities for improvement planning 2017-18**

What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

NIF quality indicators

Quality indicator	School self-evaluation	Inspection evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change		
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment		
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion		
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement		