



Item: 7

Education, Communities and Housing Committee: 1 April 2026.

Raising Attainment Strategy.

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

1. Overview

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the Raising Attainment Strategy for members' approval.
- 1.2. In 2019, Orkney's Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) were lower than the national average, and in most measures, rated amongst the lowest levels of attainment in Scotland. The evidence of the local context and the low poverty rates, coupled with the high pass rates of the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) results, indicated that this was an anomaly. A significant amount of work was undertaken to address this by Education Service officers, supported by the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor. Appendix 2 evaluates the progress made against the initial Raising Attainment Strategy 2023-2026.
- 1.3. The Scottish Attainment Fund has brought additional funding to the local authority and schools. Orkney receives funding via the following funds:
 - Strategic Equity Fund – local authorities are allocated funding to be used strategically to support authority-wide programmes.
 - Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) – schools are allocated funding. Headteachers are responsible for the planning and implementation of the spending of PEF.
 - Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund – local authorities are allocated funding to be jointly managed by the Education Service and Orkney Health and Care.
- 1.4. The Pupil Equity Fund was introduced in 2017 to support schools to address the equity gap for children and young people. This funding is based on the number of children and young people in schools eligible for free school meals. Not all schools in Orkney benefit from this funding.
- 1.5. Local authorities are required to demonstrate the impact of all three funding streams and to reduce inequity. In Orkney, it must be ensured that the pace of change continues to accelerate so that no child or young person is disadvantaged,

and that equity lies at the heart of the educational experience for all. The current data identifies a gap in the combined attainment for children and young people in receipt of Free School Meals, or who have experienced care, compared to their peers. In Orkney, this gap has narrowed slightly across most measurable areas, however, the gap remains significant. The actions set out in this strategy place a strong emphasis on further reducing this gap and improving outcomes for such learners.

- 1.6. The Council, supported by the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, has a duty to report to the Scottish Government on the use and impact of the three funding streams.
- 1.7. The purpose of the draft Raising Attainment Strategy 2026-2029, attached as Appendix 1 of this report, is to ensure that there is robust guidance and plans in place to continue to meet both the Council and the Scottish Government's vision to ensure that every child in Orkney can fulfil their potential. The National Improvement Framework has six National Improvement Drivers. Key actions under each of the drivers have been identified. In addition, the attached Strategy has two clear outcomes which link to the Council's National Improvement Framework: Orkney Islands Council Report and Plan 2025/28, which was approved at the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee on 12 November 2025. These are:
 - Raising Attainment for All – Striving for Excellence.
 - Closing the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Striving for Equity.[S
- 1.8. The draft Strategy details the significant work already undertaken to address previously low attainment returns in the Broad General Education resulting in improved outcomes.
- 1.9. The draft Strategy pulls together relevant local and national key documents and plans, clearly defining what continuing actions will be undertaken during the period of the Strategy to meet national and local expectations and commitments in raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Approve the Raising Attainment Strategy 2026-2029, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

1. **Financial** - There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report.
2. **Legal** - The Council's Raising Attainment Strategy operates within principal legislative basis of the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000*, which places legal duties on education authorities to plan and deliver education in a manner that promotes equity and reduces inequalities of educational outcome.
3. **Corporate Governance:** Not applicable.
4. **Human Resources:** Not applicable.
5. **Equalities** - Much in this strategy is designed to focus on interventions to mitigate against the impact of poverty. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.
6. **Island Communities Impact:** An Island Communities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 4 to this report.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our Communities.
 - Developing our Infrastructure.
 - Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - Cost of Living.
 - Sustainable Development.
 - Local Equality.
 - Improving Population Health.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk:** Not applicable.
10. **Risk:** Not applicable.
11. **Procurement:** Not applicable.
12. **Health and Safety:** Not applicable.
13. **Property and Assets:** Not applicable.
14. **Information Technology:** Not applicable.

- 15. Cost of Living:** Actions within closing the poverty related attainment gap: Striving for Equity are designed to reduce poverty over time by inspiring attainment. Consequently, there are links relating to the cost of living.

Background Papers:

[Scottish Attainment Challenge](#)

[National Improvement Framework](#)

[Strategic Equity Fund](#)

[The Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund](#)

[Getting it Right for Every Child](#)

[Curriculum for Excellence](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[Work Together for a Better Orkney](#)

[The Curriculum Improvement Cycle \(CIC\)](#)

[Care Inspectorate's 'Quality Framework'](#)

[Orkney's Child Poverty Strategy 2022-2026](#)

[Cost of the school day](#)

[SAC Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Raising Attainment Strategy 2026-2029.

Appendix 2: Review of Progress.

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 4: Island Communities Impact Assessment.



Education, Communities and Housing

Raising Attainment Strategy 2026 - 2029

Version Control

Document Reference.	Revision.	Issue Date.	Reason for Issue.	Reviewer.	Sign.
ES/RAS	00.	3 May 2023.	New Policy.	Service Manager (Primary Education)	
ES/RAS	01.		Revised Policy	Service Manager (Primary Education)	

Contents

National and Local Context	4
Background	4
Aims and purpose of this strategy	5
National Improvement Framework	6
School and Early Learning and Childcare Leadership.....	6
Teacher and practitioner professionalism.....	6
Parent/carers involvement and engagement.....	6
Curriculum and assessment	7
School and Early Learning and Childcare improvement.....	7
Performance Information	7
Attainment Strategy.....	8
Raising Attainment for All – Striving for Excellence.....	8
Closing the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap: Striving for Equity.....	10
Stretch Aims 2025 - 2026.....	12
Core Stretch Aims 2025 – 2026	12
Senior Phase	12
Health and Wellbeing	12
Plus Stretch Aims	13
Strategy Monitoring	14

National and Local Context

Background

In March 2023, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee approved the Raising Attainment Strategy 2023-26. It was based on the improvement agenda for Scottish schools called the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#) with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The Attainment Scotland Fund was established.

The [National Improvement Framework](#) and Improvement Plan was first published in 2015, is updated annually and sets out a clear vision for Scottish Education based on delivering Excellence and Equity. This was recently refreshed in January 2026. The current ambitious vision for Education in Scotland:

- Excellence through raising achievement and improving outcomes: ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards they can.
- Achieving equity: ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed.

The Framework also outlines that building on the £1 billion investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge over the 2021/22 – 2025/26 parliamentary term, they will invest up to £200 million in 2026/27 to continue the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme for a further year, providing certainty of support for schools and local authorities beyond the Scottish Parliamentary elections. This will enable continued targeted local support to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap

Orkney receives funding via the:

- [Strategic Equity Fund](#) – local authorities are allocated funding to be used strategically to support authority-wide programmes.
- Pupil Equity Fund – schools are allocated funding. Headteachers are responsible for the planning and implementation of the spending of Pupil Equity Fund.
- Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund – local authorities are allocated funding to be jointly managed by the education service and Orkney Health and Care.

The Pupil Equity Fund was introduced in 2017 to support schools address the equity gap for children and young people. This funding is based on the number of children and young people in schools in receipt of free school meals. Not all schools in Orkney benefit from this funding.

[The Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund](#) was introduced in 2018 to enable local authorities, as corporate parents to make strategic decisions around how best to improve the attainment of those who have experienced care.

Local authorities are required to demonstrate impact of all three funding streams and to reduce inequity. In Orkney we must ensure that the pace of change accelerates so that no child or young person is disadvantaged, and that equity lies at the heart of the educational experience for all.

The Scottish Government has set a requirement for all local authorities to set stretch aims until June 2026 and in Orkney this would be something that would be continued beyond that date as we have seen the value in setting ambitious targets in raising attainment for all. The Framework outlines the expectations on local authorities in setting their stretch aims. These will support improvement in outcomes and reducing the poverty-related gaps in:

- achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy combined and numeracy combined).
- the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 based on the “Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations” publication.
- the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 based on the “Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations” publication.
- the proportion of 16–19-year-olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland.
- a locally identified aim for health and wellbeing, to be measured using local datasets.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge funding programmes dovetail with the [Getting it Right for Every Child](#) and the [Curriculum for Excellence](#) keeping children and young people at the centre. Rights for children and young people have been further enhanced by the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) which was passed in a Bill in the Scottish parliament in 2021.

Aims and purpose of this strategy

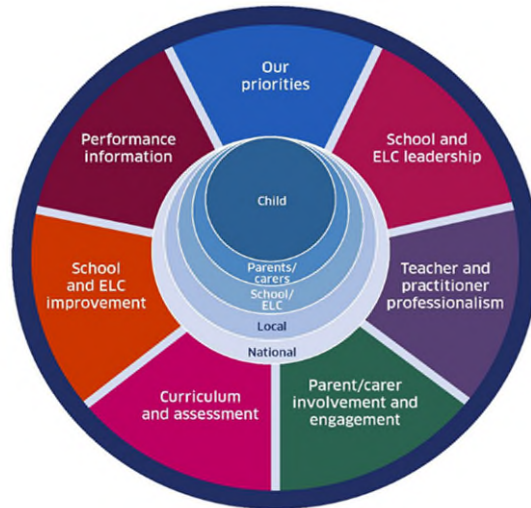
In Orkney we strive to [Work Together for a Better Orkney](#). The 2023-2028 Council Plan sets out how we will deliver our ambitions for Orkney’s future. This attainment strategy aims to deliver the Scottish Government’s strategy of ‘Excellence and Equity in Education’ so that every child and young person can fulfil their potential.

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that we have robust plans in place to continue to meet both our and the Scottish Government’s vision and that every child can fulfil their potential. The [National Improvement Framework](#) has six National Improvement Drivers. We have identified key actions under each of the drivers. In addition, this Raising Attainment Strategy has two clear outcomes which link to the Orkney Islands Council Education Service Plan.

- Raising Attainment for All – Striving for Excellence.
- Closing the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Striving for Equity.

National Improvement Framework

To inform our strategy we have identified the following key actions using the National Improvement Framework Drivers.



School and Early Learning and Childcare Leadership

Leaders at all levels will empower others to take ownership of their own learning and teaching to ensure the highest quality. We will:

- Collaborate with teams to develop consistency and sharing of good practice.
- Signpost leadership pathways for professional learning, encouraging leadership at all levels.
- Embed Professional Review and Development to ensure career progression across Education.

Teacher and practitioner professionalism

Children and young people should experience high-quality learning and teaching. We will:

- Provide high-quality professional learning opportunities to create a dedicated, highly skilled and qualified workforce.

Parent/carer involvement and engagement

When parents and carers engage in their child's learning journey then outcomes are better for children. We will:

- Ensure that schools and settings continue to reach out and engage with families in ways that suits families best.
- Families will be supported by working in partnership with partner agencies and the third sector.

Curriculum and assessment

What children and young people learn and achieve throughout their education affects how prepared they are for their future. We will:

- Listen and value the opinions of the children and young people.
- Ensure that we offer a broad, relevant and coherent curriculum.
- Effectively implement the [refreshed curriculum](#) ensuring continuous review and improvement of teaching and learning.
- Use assessment data to inform our knowledge of children and young people's progress to provide opportunities for challenge and support.

School and Early Learning and Childcare improvement

The [Care Inspectorate's 'Quality Framework'](#) supports quality improvement in early learning and childcare (ELC) settings.

This rights-based framework provides a holistic approach to assessing care, play, and education. It contains quality indicators which support reflection. These can help settings to identify practice that works and areas that need improvement ensuring that children are:

- safe and protected from harm.
- cared for and able to thrive.
- offered high-quality learning and development opportunities.

Schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings will reflect and evaluate the quality of education. We will:

- Use the appropriate evaluation frameworks to drive improvement outcomes.
- Produce robust improvement plans which are outcomes and measures based.
- Focus on improvement planning which will tackle closing the equity and poverty gap.
- Provide 1140 hours of high-quality provision rated as good or better as assessed by the Care Inspectorate.

Performance Information

We will:

- Interrogate qualitative and quantitative data through use of our tracking and monitoring systems ensuring that gaps are identified and appropriate improvement actions taken.
- Support schools to set robust and aspirational targets for pupils in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing (attendance), contributing towards the local authority stretch aims.
- Early Learning and Childcare settings will use their data to ensure clear monitoring and tracking of children's progress including identifying and planning for children who are not making good progress.

Attainment Strategy

Raising Attainment for All – Striving for Excellence

Sector	Activities
All primary and secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority officers and school leaders to continue to provide relevant and targeted professional learning to improve teaching and learning experiences and to keep up to date with current pedagogy. • Local authority officers and school leaders to provide professional learning opportunities to continue to develop confidence in teachers' professional judgement and increase consistency of expectation across the authority. • Local authority officers and school leaders continue to create opportunities for collaboration and sharing of good practice. • School leaders and teachers to effectively use a range of assessment data to inform children and young people's progress and share best practice. • School leaders and teachers to develop a robust system to track individualised targets.
All schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and nursery leaders to ensure that all points of transition are planned and tracked effectively to ensure continuity of learning. • Local authority officers, school leaders and nursery managers to continue to drive the 'Realising Ambition' document to support schools to develop high-quality play experiences in P1, which build on the children's prior learning.
Early Learning and Childcare settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority officers and nursery managers to continue ensuring high-quality provision of professional development opportunities which lead to impactful changes in practice. Provide opportunities to engage in mini research projects. • Ensure that all early learning and childcare managers and practitioners consistently implement the early learning and childcare 'Securing Children's Progress' guidance. • Ensuring ongoing recruitment and growth of the workforce to enable full accessibility of 1140 hours.
Broad General Education (Primary and Early Learning and Childcare settings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority officers to develop a more robust Broad General Education tracking toolkit. • Local authority officers and school leaders to further develop tracking, moderation and monitoring across the service.

Sector	Activities
All secondaries and junior high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority officers and school leaders co-create and implement a clear Information Sharing Policy across the Junior High Schools, KGS and the College to ensure consistent, secure and timely transfer of relevant learner information, supporting effective transition, wellbeing and attainment.
BGE secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority officers and school leaders to continue to develop and implement a robust BGE tracking tool from S1-S3. • Local authority officers, school leaders and teachers to review the BGE curriculum across all schools and establish next steps in line with local context and national guidance, considering the refreshed curriculum improvement cycle.
Senior Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders to develop the curriculum model for Senior Phase in line with the local context and new national guidance with support from Local authority officers. • School leaders and teachers to continue to develop Literacy and Numeracy beyond S4. • School leaders and teachers to continue to use Senior Phase tracking framework to monitor progress and plan interventions.
UHI Orkney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders to continue to ensure that the curriculum offer supports attainment at the Senior Phase. • Local authority officers and school leaders to improve transition processes and strengthened information sharing through the co-creation of a Senior Phase Transition Policy. This will include aligned tracking of learner progress, consistent with secondary approaches, to ensure continuity and coherence across settings.

Closing the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap: Striving for Equity

Research by Professor John McKendrick has demonstrated that there are children in Scotland living in poverty, even in the most affluent areas. Two thirds of those classed as poor live outside deprived areas.

The impact of poverty is wider than the work of the schools. [Orkney's Child Poverty Strategy 2022-2026](#) reported that in 2021, 467 children were living in relative poverty and 390 children were living in absolute poverty, which equates to 13.1% and 10.9% respectively of children in our local authority area. Concerningly, this is thought to be underestimated.

Orkney currently uses the data from children in receipt of free school meals (FSM) to inform targeted activities. Further work is being undertaken to explore how the data from the UK's 'Children In Low Income Families' index (CiLiF) can better inform our understanding of the number of children and families who may be currently living in poverty in Orkney.

As a local authority, we also consider how the plans for the use of Strategic Equity Funding will support the six priority family types identified by the Scottish Government as being at highest risk of experiencing child poverty:

- Lone parent families.
- Minority ethnic families.
- Families with a disabled adult or child.
- Families with a young mother (under 25).
- Families with a child under one.
- Larger families (3+ children).

Our current data identifies a gap in the combined attainment for children and young people in receipt of Free School Meals or who have experienced care as compared to their peers. However, it is important to note that this gap is narrowing.

In mitigating the impact of the poverty and equity gap, we intend to focus on the following activities which link to the Education Service plan themes of Inclusion and Wellbeing, Learning and Achievement and Systems and Processes. Central to this work is our ongoing commitment to continuing to narrow the poverty-related attainment gap, ensuring that all learners are supported to achieve equitable outcomes regardless of their socio-economic background.

Sector	Activities
All schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders to ensure that tracking approaches capture the progress of children and young people in receipt of FSM and/or are care experienced and are monitored, and targeted interventions are established where and when required. Local authority officers to monitor and support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders to support transition points targeting interventions where required to support vulnerable children and young people and their families. • School leaders to continue to raise awareness with all staff, ensuring that they have an awareness of the cause and impact of poverty on children and young people and their families. Local authority officers support and offer 'Cost of the School Day' sessions.
All schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority officers and school leaders to continue to monitor attendance rates and set sector specific realistic but ambitious targets.
Early Learning and Child Care settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority officers and nursery managers will ensure funded places will be available for all children aged 3 years, those children not yet starting school or 2-year-old children if eligible.
BGE Primary 1 to Secondary S3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders to continue to plan for Pupil Equity Funding using a measures and outcomes framework to measure impact. Local authority officers to support and monitor.
Senior Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders to ensure that young people move on to positive destinations post school.
UHI Orkney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College senior leadership to maximise opportunities for young people to participate in the senior phase offer at UHI Orkney, seeking to overcome geographical and other barriers.

Stretch Aims 2025-2026

Core Stretch Aims 2025-2026

The progress made in addressing our overarching aim of achieving the highest outcomes for all, especially those most disadvantaged by poverty, will be measured through our Stretch Aims. These are national measures which have been developed to mark the progress being made in addressing key priorities over time. These are purposefully ambitious and agreed locally through robust, evidence-informed self-evaluation, supported and challenged through professional dialogue with Education Scotland. These will be evaluated between June 2026 and February 2027 in line with national publication of data.

	P1/4/7 Combined
Literacy	86%
Numeracy	91%

Senior Phase

Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more passes at SCQF Level 5 based on “Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations” publication.	95%
Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more passes at SCQF level 6 based on “Summary Statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations” publication.	68%
Annual participation measure.	
Participation measure: proportion of 16-19 years olds participating in education, employment or training based on Annual Participation Measures produced by Skills Development Scotland.	97%

Health and Wellbeing: Attendance

		Stretch aim	Improvement
Health and wellbeing: Attendance		2025/26	
(e)	Primary	95%	2.4pp
	Secondary	95%	7.3pp
	Reduce the number of children and young people with attendance of less than 70% from 3.2% of the total pupil population to 1.5% over 3 years.	1.5%	1.7pp

Plus Stretch Aims

Reduce the gap in literacy and numeracy combined between children and young people in P1-7 eligible for free school meals against those who are not.							
	Annual Trajectory						Improvement
	2023/24		2024/25		2025/26		
Literacy P1-7 Combined	29-25%	12-8pp	27-21%	13-6pp	25-17%	16-8pp	12pp
Numeracy P1-7 combined	21-17%	9-5pp	19-13%	13-7pp	17-9%	17-9pp	13pp

Reduce the gap in literacy and numeracy combined between children and young people in P1-7 who have experienced care against those who have not.							
	Annual Trajectory						Improvement
	2023/24		2024/25		2025/26		
Literacy P1-7 Combined	47-42%	8-3pp	44-35%	15-6pp	41-28%	22-9pp	16pp
Numeracy P1-7 combined	47-42%	9-4pp	44-35%	16-7pp	41-28%	23-10pp	17pp

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels				
	Annual Trajectory		Stretch Aim	Improvement
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
Literacy Combined				
S3 3 rd Level	82-86%	86-88%	94%	12pp
S3 4 th Level	59-61%	61-64%	66%	7pp
Numeracy				
S3 3 rd Level	89-93%	93-94%	95%	11pp
S3 4 th Level	66-70%	70-72%	74%	8pp

	Annual Trajectory		Stretch Aim	Improvement
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
Breadth of Attainment in S4				
Proportion of S4 pupils attaining 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 5 based on Insight (all SCQF Awards)	66-67%	67-69%	70%	4pp
Proportion of S4 pupils attaining Level 4 literacy	90-92%	93-94%	95%	5pp
Proportion of S4 pupils attaining Level 5 literacy	79-80%	80-81%	82%	3pp
Proportion of S4 pupils attaining Level 4 numeracy	88-92%	89-93%	94%	6pp
Proportion of S4 pupils attaining Level 5 numeracy	50-65%	66-70%	70%	10pp

Strategy Monitoring

Progress will be monitored annually and will feed into the education service report and plan.

Progress towards stretch aims will be monitored through the Education Service quality assurance process.

Attainment Strategy - Review of Progress 2023 – 2026

Raising Attainment for All – Striving for Excellence

Sector	Activities	Progress
All primary and secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional learning to improve teaching and learning experiences. • Provide professional learning to continue to develop confidence in teachers' professional judgement and increase consistency of expectation. • Create opportunities for collaboration and sharing of good practice. • Effectively use a range of assessment data to inform children and young people's progress. • Develop a robust system to track individualised targets. • Impact will be clearly tracked through outcomes and measures planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development was delivered to all school staff across the authority, focusing on high-quality learning and teaching. As a result, each school developed its own bespoke High-Quality Learning and Teaching Toolkit tailored to its specific context. • School preparation for inspection and self-evaluation sessions to strengthen professional reflection and readiness. • Facilitated moderation at school, cluster and authority levels to increase consistency, reliability and shared standards in assessment. • Improved attainment outcomes, with measurable progress in narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. • Strengthened the School Improvement Plan (ScIP) by introducing clearer outcome measures and a sharper focus on impact.
All schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All points of transition are planned and tracked effectively to ensure continuity of learning. • Relaunch of the Realising Ambition document to support schools to develop high-quality play experiences in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking processes are more effectively embedded and all settings review children's progress at key stages in the year. There are good examples of effective approaches to transition arrangements into P1 to support continuity of learning at this stage however, work is

Appendix 2

Sector	Activities	Progress
	<p>P1, which build on the children's prior learning.</p>	<p>still needed to ensure that all schools and settings are engaging in best practice approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A P1 course has been written and delivered based on Realising the Ambition and other best practice approaches. A comprehensive set of support materials has also been developed to support practice. Practice in P1 settings has evolved as play pedagogy becomes more purposeful and well planned.
<p>Early Learning and Childcare settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring high-quality provision of professional development opportunities which lead to impactful changes in practice. Provide opportunities to engage in mini research projects. • Ensure that all early learning and childcare managers and practitioners consistently implement the early learning and childcare 'Securing Children's Progress' guidance • Ensuring ongoing recruitment and growth of the workforce to enable full accessibility of 1140 hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new courses have been developed for delivery to early years practitioners: mathematical learning and language and literacy development. The mathematics course has been delivered three times and has had a positive impact on practice, extending the breadth of maths experiences provided to children and practitioner understanding of mathematical development. • An independent consultant has supported practitioners to explore slow pedagogy, ensuring depth in learning and three settings engaged in small scale research projects to explore aspects of this practice. • Recruitment continues to be a challenge, in particular, in rural areas and in senior posts. Lack of capacity in the early years team due to covering vacancies has impacted on the delivery of the leadership pathway.

Appendix 2

Sector	Activities	Progress
Broad General Education (Primary and Early Learning and Childcare settings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the Broad General Education tracking toolkit is maintained regularly and developed where needed.• Robustly track attainment using the BGE toolkit to identify trends and gaps.• Further develop tracking and monitoring across the service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tracking toolkits are well maintained across primary schools• Attainment advisor and LA Officers support tracking and raising attainment.• As ELC section above.

Sector	Activities	Progress
All secondaries and junior high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the capacity of the secondary guidance network across all the JHS and secondary schools in Orkney, leading to consistency of procedures and processes and better outcomes for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new guidance teachers have been appointed on Stronsay and Westray (Westray not in post yet). • All 3 isles teachers were invited in the guidance teacher network on the February in-service day. • The KGS guidance team is visiting the JHSs as part of their transition plan.
BGE secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and track the progress of S3 learners. • Develop robust BGE tracking from S1-S3. • Review the BGE curriculum across all schools and establish next steps in line with local context and national guidance. • Reinvigorate Interdisciplinary Learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior Highs have introduced the BGE tracking system to monitor progress in Literacy and Numeracy, strengthening consistency and oversight across the Broad General Education phase. • JHSs will transition to full tracking through SEEMiS, ensuring that attainment and progress data — including SQA results in S3 and S4 — is accessible to KGS staff to support continuity and informed planning. • School leaders and staff are keeping abreast of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.
Senior Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the curriculum model for Senior Phase in line with the local context and new national guidance. • Continue to develop Literacy and Numeracy beyond S4. • Continue to use Senior Phase tracking framework to monitor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum model remains under development and will continue to evolve in line with the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC), ensuring alignment with national direction and local priorities.

Appendix 2

	<p>progress and plan interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All tracking and monitoring processes are currently managed through SEEMiS, with statistical attainment data available from INSIGHT
UHI Orkney	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the curriculum offer supports attainment at the Senior Phase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The work to ensure the curriculum offer fully supports attainment in the Senior Phase is at an early stage of development



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a proposal or changes by anticipating the consequences and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

Should you have any questions or wish for your draft EqIA to be reviewed by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, please contact OD@orkney.gov.uk.

1. Identification of the Proposal or Change

Name of proposal or change being assessed.	Raising Attainment Strategy.
Responsible Service and Directorate.	Education, Communities and Housing – Morag Miller.
Date of assessment.	February 2026.
Is the proposal or change existing? (Please indicate if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	Updated strategy.

2. Primary Information

What are the intended outcomes of the proposal or change?	This attainment strategy aims to deliver the Scottish Government’s strategy of ‘Excellence and Equity in Education’ so that every child and young person can fulfil their potential.
Is the proposal or change strategically important?	Strategic plans include major investment plans, new strategic frameworks or plans such as annual budgets, locality plans or corporate plans. Where a proposal is identified as strategic, evidence relating to socio-economic impacts and inequalities will be required in the relevant section No

State who is or may be affected by this proposal or change, and how?	All children and young people with a focus on ensuring positive outcomes for them.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this proposal or change?	Head Teachers were consulted in the development of the draft strategy (05/02/25) and all feedback was taken on board.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking.	The strategy details the actions we intend to take towards the Scottish Government's aim towards raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. This government's mission is: <i>'to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.'</i>
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	Much in this strategy is designed to focus on interventions to mitigate against the impact of poverty. Cost of the school day SAC Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress
Could the proposal or change have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?	Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons:
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No.

4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No.
6. Age: people of different ages.	Strategy focused on children and young people.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No.
8. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Possibly if this also includes other issues, eg socio-economic disadvantage.
9. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No.
10. Caring responsibilities	No.
11. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Yes - focus on trying to minimise the poverty- related attainment gap.
12. Care experienced	Yes – focus on improving outcomes for children and young people who have experienced care.

3. Impact Assessment

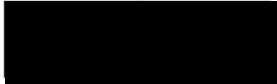
Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Different stretch aims have been set for different cohorts of young people.
Does the analysis above identify any potential negative impacts?	Yes, The strategy is focused on the actions required to minimise the negative impacts.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Strategy to be accepted.

4. Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Please complete the following action plan where you have identified any differential impacts or potential negative impacts in Section 3 of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Impact Identified	Action to be taken	Owner	How will it be monitored	Date Action to be completed

5. Sign and Date

Signature:	
Name:	Morag Miller
Date:	11 March 2026

Island Communities Impact Assessment


Raising Attainment Strategy


Preliminary Considerations	Response
Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.	This Strategy is based on the improvement agenda for Scottish Schools called the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that we have robust plans in place to continue to meet both our and the Scottish Government's vision and that every child can fulfil their potential.
Step 1 – Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Response
What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?	This attainment strategy aims to deliver the Scottish Government's strategy of 'Excellence and Equity in Education' so that every child and young person can fulfil their potential.
Do you need to consult?	No
How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy or service?	N/A
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	N/A
Is the policy, strategy or service new?	Strategy
Step 2 – Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Response
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	N/A
Do you need to consult?	No
How does any existing data differ between islands?	N/A
Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?	No

Step 3 – Consultation	Response
Who do you need to consult with?	N/A
How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?	N/A
What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?	N/A
What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?	N/A
Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?	N/A
Step 4 – Assessment	Response
Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?	No
Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?	No
How will you address these?	N/A
<p>You must now determine whether in your opinion your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community, which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).</p> <p>If your answer is No to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required and you can proceed to Step 6.</p> <p>If the answer is Yes, an ICIA must be prepared and you should proceed to Step 5.</p> <p>To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as different levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)? • Are these different effects likely? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these effects significantly different? • Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the Scottish mainland or between island groups? 	
Step 5 – Preparing your ICIA	Response
In Step 5, you should describe the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service:	
Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it.	
Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	
Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Stage 6 – Making adjustments to your work	Response
Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	No
Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	No
Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?	N/A
Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	No
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	N/A

How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?	N/A
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	N/A
Step 7 – Publishing your ICIA	Response
Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?	Yes
Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?	No
Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	Attached as an appendix to the report going to committee
Who will signoff your final ICIA and why?	James Wylie – Director Education, Communities and Housing

ICIA completed by:	Katie Lucas
Position:	Quality Improvement Officer – Achievement and Attainment
Signature:	
Date complete:	11 March 2026

ICIA approved by:	James Wylie
Position:	Director
Signature:	
Date complete:	11 March 2026