

## Key messages for schools from HM Chief Inspector of Education: August 2017

As we start school session 2017/18, here are three key messages that I want us to focus on as a profession as we work to deliver excellence and equity for all children.

### Embed Curriculum for Excellence

Use the [definitive guidance for Curriculum for Excellence](#) published in August 2016 as you work with colleagues to plan learning for the term and year ahead. This is the definitive guidance on implementing CfE and strong progress has been made streamlining approaches to planning. National standards have been set out clearly in the [Benchmarks](#). The statement empowers you to spend your time on what matters most: planning and delivering the highest quality of learning, teaching and assessment.

### Streamline Assessment

Plan assessment as part of learning and teaching rather than as a 'bolt on'. Teachers' professional judgement on children's progress and the achievement of curriculum levels in literacy and numeracy should be based on a range of assessment evidence and [moderated](#) with colleagues. Most of this evidence is normal classwork, discussion with children or observation. From August 2017, use the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs) to support professional judgement. SNSAs are very helpful, short focused assessments of specific aspects of Curriculum for Excellence literacy and numeracy. They cannot be used alone to confirm judgements of achievement of a level, and should not be used for that purpose. Use SNSAs in P1, P4, P7 and S3 at a time which suits the needs of your children. Use the results diagnostically to help you plan next steps in learning for individual children and groups. The introduction of the SNSAs is a good time to review and where necessary reduce the assessment burden on children. For many children, switching to the SNSAs will mean a significant reduction in the time they spend on standardised assessment. In secondary schools effective assessment helps teachers be sure that learners are achieving the standards expected at third and fourth curriculum levels. This will provide a robust basis on which to make choices for national qualifications in the senior phase, and at the appropriate levels.

### Close the poverty-related attainment gap

There is a very strong sense of momentum across Scotland through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Schools making the best progress are:

- clearly **defining** what the poverty-related attainment gap looks like in their setting;
- using SIMD and tracking data to **identify and review** the progress of children living in poverty;
- **planning** additional activities, interventions and resources to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy to ensure all children can achieve Curriculum for Excellence levels in line with national expectations; and
- continually **evaluating** the impact on children's progress and attainment and taking further action where needed.

Use Pupil Equity Funding to provide additional activities, interventions or resources to support literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for identified children. There needs to be a clear rationale for the interventions and strategies that you select. Evidence on what works is available [here](#).

Graeme Logan: HM Chief Inspector of Education (interim)