

School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP) Guidance



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1. **Introduction and Aims**

The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on education departments to deliver services aimed at narrowing the attainment gap through improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people. The related National Improvement Framework 2016, with the vision of delivering excellence and equity in equal measures within the education system builds on the strong foundations provided by the Getting it Right for Every Child approach, Early Years Collaborative, Curriculum for Excellence, Scotland’s School for the Future; National Youth Work Strategy; Youth Employment Strategy and Teaching Scotland’s Future to target and focus efforts to improve further. This framework has the priorities of improving attainment, closing the attainment gap, improving children and young people’s mental health and improving the employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations. The synergies and interconnections across the key drivers of school leadership, teacher professionalism, parental engagement, assessment of children’s progress, school improvement and performance information, are essential to enable continuous improvement.

The School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP) is a collaborative school improvement strategy that promotes new ways of working across classrooms, schools and local authorities to tackle educational inequality. Data and collaborative enquiry are used to innovate, test and refine new approaches to tackle the attainment gap, which should be viewed within the broader context of attendance, attainment, exclusion/inclusion, engagement and participation. The programme is a natural extension of Curriculum for Excellence and, importantly, aligns with and reinforces a number of key educational policies and programmes including Curriculum for Excellence, Teaching Scotland’s Future, the SCEL Fellowship Programme and Raising Attainment for All. All of these are underpinned by the same key concepts of co-production, professional learning and enquiry.

The School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP) is a solution-focused approach to raising attainment with a focus on innovating to tackle educational inequality. It draws on the wealth of international educational research and practice demonstrating that the most effective school improvements are locally owned and led by teachers and school leaders working in partnership and collaboration with like-minded professionals. The partnerships aim to develop a shared commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. Research evidence indicates that well supported partnerships can lead to significant and sustained improvement, including raised attainment.

In the spirit of action research, the programme aims to encourage staff to learn from each other, experiment with their practice and monitor and evaluate change. School Improvement Partnerships are an action research programme involving a process of collaborative enquiry which creates leadership opportunities and professional learning.

1. **Core Principles**

The core principles that underpin this programme are:

* Partnership working across schools and local authorities with a focus on exploring specific issues relating to educational inequity.
* The use of action research and evidence to identify key challenges, experiment with innovative practices and monitor developments.
* The creation of leadership opportunities and professional learning of staff at all levels.
* A commitment to reciprocity and mutual benefit to all involved.
* The development of arrangements to support long-term collaboration and new approaches to capacity building.
* Explicit links to strategic improvement planning in schools and local authorities.
* The involvement of a diverse range of partners.

1. **Key features of effective school improvement partnerships**

* Targeting achievement (attendance, attainment, exclusion/inclusion, engagement, participation) of a small key group of learners.
* Understanding the importance of context and local ownership.
* Using evidence to inform practice.
* Teachers leading change through professional enquiry research.
* Learning from similarity and diversity.
* Moving practice and expertise around the partnership.
* Building relationships and networks across the cluster and authority.

1. **What is professional enquiry?**

Professional enquiry is a 'finding out'or an investigation with an approach that can be explained or defended. The findings can then be shared so it becomes more than reflection or personal enquiry. It is usually undertaken within the practitioner’s own practice/ context or in collaboration with others.

Effective professional enquiry requires practitioners to:

* Be confident and open to challenge
* Have risk taking attitudes
* Question their own understandings, assumptions, beliefs and practices
* Engage with theory, literature and research

Enquiry tends to be least successful when they simply seek to prove/test ‘best practices’, make claims about ‘what works’ and/or test or implement latest initiatives. Enquiries without probing the deeper questions about the nature and purpose of the enquiry run the risk of being superficial and may become a 'tick box' exercise

When carried out effectively, practitioner enquiry can: lead to professional development and changes in pedagogy and curriculum; enable teachers collaboratively to develop the curriculum; improve the use of research findings and drive educational change.

**What is collaborative enquiry?**

Collaborative enquiry is where a group of practitioners share a common research question which can be 'investigated' through different lenses to enhance knowledge creation.

1. **What is research?**

Research is the systematic and objective analysis and recording of controlled observations that may lead to the development of generalisations, principles, or theories, resulting in prediction and possible control of events.

Or simply, a scientific way of answering questions and testing hypothesis, in order to:

* Investigate existing problems and situation
* Provide solutions to problems
* Construct or create new procedures or systems
* Review existing knowledge
* Generate new knowledge

1. **School Improvement Partnership Methodology**

Within the School Improvement Partnership Programme, a range of improvement methodologies can be used, with the single aim of addressing educational inequity through collaborative approaches to system improvement. Key findings across the partnerships highlight the positive impact such methodologies can have in promoting collaborative approaches and improving educational outcomes.

Lesson study is a collaborative professional development process that allows for an in depth exploration of an individual lesson in ways that enable participants to enhance their own and their pupils’ learning.

As well as the lesson study approach, collaborative action research and instructional rounds have been utilised within the national school improvement partnership programme. The plan, do, study, act model for improvement has been commonly used within the early years collaborative.

East Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service, in partnership with the Quality Improvement Team, have developed guidance that aims to support the work of the school improvement groups in order to assist the planning, delivery and evaluation of interventions to improve outcomes for vulnerable learners (Appendix 1). This eclectic model for improvement is summarised below:

* **Phase One -**  Performance information analysis and outcome focused planning
* **Phase Two -** Exploring and understanding the target group’s performance
* **Phase Three -** Intervention and Evaluation Planning
* **Phase Four -** Implement Intervention
* **Phase Five -** Evaluation and Reflection

1. **Roles and responsibilities**

**Role of Practitioner**

* Collaborate with head teachers to analyse data and identify a small group of vulnerable learners to target intervention.
* Work in partnership with SIP practitioners to design, implement and evaluate interventions.
* Complete methodology/written paperwork.
* Engage learners and parents in gathering data to understand the importance of context and family context.
* Explore research to inform practice based intervention.
* Participate in learning rounds with practitioners observing and analysing impact of different teaching practices on pupils.
* Share outcomes/findings with learners, parents, staff and authority.
* Contribute to authority quality assurance processes as required.
* Apply your skills in enquiry to professional dialogue in your school and across your cluster.

**Role of Head Teacher**

* Collaborate with practitioners to analyse data and identify a group of individuals to focus intervention.
* Negotiate time to allow practitioner opportunity to fully engage with School Improvement Process.
* Encourage and support practitioners to be creative and innovative through engagement with research and collaborative enquiry.
* Provide opportunity for practitioners to share their findings.

**Role of Education Development Officer, Quality Improvement Team and Educational Psychology Service**

* Actively contribute to the work of each partnership encouraging creativity and innovation.
* Contribute to professional discussion regarding child development and effective learning and teaching.
* Support schools to identify vulnerable groups of learners through data analysis.
* Support the implementation of action research methodology.
* Facilitate the identification of effective evaluation measures.
* Signpost and where required access relevant research.
* Contribute to meeting the professional learning needs of teachers.
* Develop links with Universities.
* Facilitate the sharing of best practice across partnerships.
* Develop and implement quality assurance processes.

1. **Further Reading (please click on hyperlinks below)**

**Legislation/Policy**

[Education Scotland Act 2016](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/8/contents/enacted)

[The National Improvement Framework 2016](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/01/8314/downloads)

[Quality and improvement in Scottish education 2012-2016](https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/about-inspections-and-reviews/principles-and-frameworks/Quality%20and%20improvement%20in%20Scottish%20education)

[Education Scotland: School Improvement Partnerships](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/partnerships/schoolimprovementpartnershipprogramme/intro.asp)

**Research**

[Education Scotland Improvement Hub](https://education.gov.scot/improvement)

[Education Endowment Foundation (school age)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/toolkit-a-z);

[Education Endowment Foundation (early learning)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/early-years/);

[Scottish version of the Education Endowment Foundation’s Learning and Teaching Toolkit](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/Education-Endowment-Foundation.aspx)

[LGiU Scotland](http://www.lgiuscotland.org.uk/?s=attainment+gap&post_type=briefing)

[The Sutton Trust](http://www.suttontrust.com/)

[Interventions for Equity](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/Interventions-for-Equity.aspx)

[Interventions for Literacy](http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/)

[Review of Family Learning](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/Review-of-Family-Learning.aspx)

**Improvement Methodology**

[Lesson Study](https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/Lesson_study_tcm4-870853.pdf)

[Collaborative Action Research](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CAR_tcm4-870851.pdf)

[Instructional Rounds](https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/Instructional_rounds_tcm4-870852.pdf)

[Plan, Do, Study, Act](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/earlyyearsmatters/t/genericcontent_tcm4829102.asp)

**Appendix 1**

**East Renfrewshire School Improvement Partnerships Methodology**

The following guidance aims to support the work of school improvement partnerships in order to assist the planning, delivery and evaluation of interventions to improve outcomes for vulnerable learners.

**Diagram 1: Methodology Overview**

**Braidbar, Cross Arthurlie, Giffnock and Thornliebank**

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| **Phase One: Performance Information Analysis and Outcome Focussed Planning** |
| **Step One: Analyse pupil performance information** |
| Through analysis of pupil performance information identify a *small* group *(4-6)* of **vulnerable** learners to target in order to improve outcomes (attendance, attainment, exclusion/inclusion, engagement, participation).  Target Group:  Asian, Pakistani male and female readers in Primary 5. All have achieved First Level and are working on Second Level.  Number of Pupils:  Six  Detail the rationale for selection (SIMD, gender, LAC, ethnicity, lowest performing 20%):  Ethnicity |
| **Step Two: Identify SMART outcomes for the target group** |
| Following intervention, what improvements would you expect to see? *It might be helpful to review these outcomes following completion of phase 2.*  Expected SMART outcomes (attendance, attainment, exclusion/inclusion, engagement, participation):   * Increased confidence * Increased motivation in reading * Increased resilience when tackling texts * Improved comprehension skills * Ability to use a wider range of strategies to interrogate text * Ability to apply reading strategies across the curriculum * Higher levels of attainment * Increased parental engagement |

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| **Phase Two: Exploring and Understanding the Target Group’s Performance** |
| **Step One: Explore the strengths of and pressures on your target group** |
| What are the factors that impact (positively/negatively) on this identified group of learners? You may want to consider the following (please note these are examples and not an exhaustive list).   * School learning environment – e.g. expectations of pupils, staff/pupil relationships, peer relations, quality and deployment of teaching and support staff, pedagogy, parental engagement * Parental factors – e.g. engagement with pupils learning, relationships with school staff, value for education, parental educational experiences, parental physical, mental and cognitive health, parenting skills * Pupil factors – e.g. SHANARRI, Aspirations for future, motivation for learning, pupils physical, emotional/mental and cognitive health, pupil involvement in their learning |
| Strengths/positive factors:   * Expectation of pupils * Motivation for learning * Pupil involvement in their learning * Sense of achievement   Pressures/negative factors:   * Poor performance in reading * Lack of confidence in reading ability * Lack of motivation to read * Lack of parental engagement with some of the group * Lack of cultural support for reading out with school |
| **Step Two: Evaluating the significance of the factors identified** |
| Consider ways in which you can test (confirm/disprove) the significance of the factors outlined (e.g. existing school information, research evidence, assessment, professional enquiry, questionnaires, focus groups).  Confirmed strengths/positive factors:   * Myself As Learner Scale (MALS) questionnaire * Professional Enquiry – reading strategies * Use of research evidence –  ***Meeting the Needs of Bilingual Learners (Guidance for Senior Managers),*** *ERC Guidelines*   ***Learning and Teaching Strategies to Support Bilingual Learners,*** *ERC Guidelines* ***Attainment comparison between Asian/ Pakistani young people and other groups****, Jennifer Hunter, EPS, ERC*  ***Cultural Capital*** *– Bourdleu’s Concept*  ***Rhyme and Alliteration*** *– (Bradley, 1988c, Bradley & Bryant, 1983, Ellis & Large, 1987)*  ***Journeys into culturally responsive teaching*** *– Julie McAdam*  ***Is synthetic phonics teaching helpful to bilingual learners?*** *National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum*   * Assessment data   *Baseline from P1*  *Developmental Milestones from P1 Standardised Assessments from P3*  *On-going assessment*   * Pre and post assessment * Parental questionnaire * My World Triangle Assessments   Confirmed pressures/negative factors:   * Implementation of reading strategies * Ongoing assessment * Assessment data * My World Triangle Assessments   **Helpful Tip**   * Appendix 1 may be helpful in recording the above information |

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| **Phase Three: Intervention and Evaluation Planning** |
| **Step One: Identifying evidenced based interventions through research/professional enquiry** |
| Through professional enquiry and reviewing the research literature, explore relevant evidence based interventions?  Based on research papers, “Engaging Boys with Reading” by Louise Copus and “Me Read? No Way! A Practical Guide to Improving Boys’ Literacy Skills by Ontario Education, we discussed the best methods of intervention to improve motivation and interest in reading. As a group, we decided to allow target pupils to take on a leadership role and work with pupils from P3.  What evidence based interventions could you implement to address the identified pressures of the target group?   * Choice of text * Leadership of activities * Digital technology   What actions could you take to build on the identified strengths of the target group?   * Modelling * Collaboration * Social Interaction * Use of technology   Are there areas where the evidence base for improvement is weak?  No  **Helpful tips:**   * multifaceted interventions tend to be the most successful (i.e. they target child, family and school/class factors) * consider other groups that are performing well despite similar ‘risk factors’ and how can you learn from their success |
| **Step Two: Action Planning** |
| Research question/s (no more than 2 or 3):  Does giving leadership responsibilities to learners enhance motivation in reading?  What are you going to do?   * Target pupils have been selected by headteachers * Select P3 pupils in collaboration with P3 teacher * Issue letter to P3 and P5 parents * Complete Motivation for Reading Questionnaire with P5 pupils * Model skills for reading with P3 pupil * Select a text and target pupils prepare an activity to go with chapter/pages selected * Target pupils work with P3 pupil to read and complete activity * Repeat over a six week period * Create book reviews using digital technology to share with cluster schools * Complete motivation for Reading Questionnaire with P5 pupils   What are the timescales - When are you going to do it? How long are you going to do it for?   * Choose P3 pupils week beginning 29th January 2018 * Issue letter to parents week beginning 5th February 2018 * Complete Motivation for Reading Questionnaire and model skills for reading lesson week beginning 12th February 2018 * Session 1 of intervention week beginning 19th February 2018 for six weeks, with final session week beginning 26th March 2018 * Complete Motivation for Reading Questionnaire week ending 29th march 2018   Who is going to be involved?   * P5 pupils Braidbar Primary School * P5 pupils Giffnock Primary School * P6 pupils Thornliebank Primary School * P6 pupils Cross Arthurlie Primary School * Selected P3 pupils from each school   How will the intervention be evaluated in the short and long term?  Pre and post Motivation for Reading Questionnaire  Do you intend to have a control/comparison group (i.e. a group of pupils who have similar needs who do not receive the intervention but take part in the pre and post evaluation for comparison purposes)?  No  **Helpful tips/reflective questions:**   * A research question is a clear, focused, concise and arguable question around which to centre your research. * What are the resource implications? * Do you need to plan CLPL? * What might get in the way of the intervention being successful? If possible, how are you going to avoid this? * Do you need to plan time for pre and post information/data gathering and analysis? * Appendix 2 may be helpful to plan the actions required to implement your intervention |

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| **Phase Four: Action (Implement intervention)** |

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| **Phase Five: Evaluation and Reflection** |
| **Step One: Measuring impact and outcomes** |
| Following evaluation of the intervention (as planned in phase 3):  What impact has the intervention had?   * The intervention has had a positive impact as agreed by all of the schools involved. * Children were eager to participate and looked forward to preparing and taking part in each session. * Majority of P3’s have enjoyed taking part in the sessions too and made this vocal to their reading buddy * Pupils have enjoyed motivating others in reading. * Enjoyed leadership and creating activities for buddies to enjoy. * A parent of Primary 3 commented that their child had really enjoyed being with their Primary 5 buddy. * Pupil said that they didn’t want to go to an appointment as they wanted to do the buddied reading. * Pupil vocalised that they are more confident to read aloud * Pupil stated that they enjoy reading * Pupil said that their voice changed as they become more confident * Child said that they managed to read harder books because they were reading to a younger child * Child said that they enjoyed being with a younger pupil. * Based on the data we have received the SIPP intervention as a whole has been successful and increased the motivation for reading. In particular 2 schools highlighted curiosity and challenge as areas with statistically significant improvement post intervention.   Have the SMART outcomes been achieved? Please describe.   * The purpose of intervention was to improve interest and motivation and this in turn will lead to the SMART outcomes being achieved long term. |
| **Step Two: Critical Reflection** |
| What have you learned?   * Developed ICT skills * Collaborate with other practitioners * Worked well together as a group ( teachers and staff) * Learned how to focus research and make sure research backs up what we do. * Learned what motivates children to read. * Pupil voice is really important when making decisions about their learning. * Creating a purpose to the reading helped to engage pupils. * Working with younger children gave confidence and purpose to what they were doing. * Broke down barriers and allowed for a nurturing environment.   What went well?   * Children very motivated * Buddies responded well * Children self evaluating through photos and discussion. This happened naturally for the children * Range of activities were extensive * Problem solving * Regular meeting with other teachers. * The qualitative data revealed that pupils in all schools enjoyed the experience and wanted to continue it for a longer period of time.   What didn’t work so well?   * Time: Not long enough with only 30 minutes a session * The children not always knowing the correct level to choose (pitched too high or too low).   Is there anything that could have been done better?   * Time to work on SIPP * No budget for resources * Be more informed on how to conduct research * Having log ins to access research documents and knowing how to do that. |
| **Step Three: Planning for Improvement** |
| What are you going to do now?   * More involvement from management to make sure that the sessions can be done each week with minimal disruptions. |

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| **Factor impacting on performance** | **Is the factor at the level of the school/ class, parent or pupil** | **Is the factor a strength/positive or pressure/negative factor** | **What will you do to test the significance of the factor?** | **Tick if factor is confirmed** |
| Motivation for learning | Pupil | Pressure | Pupil focus group  Parental questionnaire |  |
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**Phase Two: Exploring and Understanding the Target Groups Performance**

**Phase Three: Intervention and Evaluation Planning**

**Action Plan**

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| **Research question/s** | | | |
| **List the actions/tasks needed to implement the intervention and evaluation** | **By Whom** | **When** | **Where** | | **Notes/Comments** |
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