

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 classroom, 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. 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 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)

[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/);

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

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

**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**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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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