


School education

Self-assessment checklist for elected members



Introduction

- 1.** The Accounts Commission published its national report, *School education*, on 19 June 2014. One of its key findings was that elected members could do more to scrutinise and challenge the performance of education services in delivering improved educational attainment and achievement.
- 2.** This self-assessment checklist is intended to support elected members to hold education services to account by setting out the key issues to be considered and asked of officers. While we recognise that the circumstances of individual councils are likely to be different, requiring specific questioning, we consider that the checklist captures the type of issues which are generic to every council.
- 3.** The checklist is likely to be of most use to members of committees with responsibility for education, although should be of general interest to all elected members. Elected members should consider each issue listed and decide which statement most accurately reflects their current situation. This approach will help enable them to identify what actions need to be taken in partnership with officers.
- 4.** Copies of the [national report \(PDF\)](#)  are available to download.

Self-assessment checklist for elected members

The first set of questions are intended to allow elected members consider their understanding of the role of education services and their knowledge of the key issues affecting education in their council areas.

Questions for elected members to consider	Assessment				Further action required
	No action needed	No but action in hand	Yes but needs improving	Yes working well	
Do I have a good understanding of the council's education strategies and improvement plans, especially in relation to attainment and wider achievement?					
Do I have a good understanding of the changing education environment, including legislative changes and policy developments (such as Curriculum for Excellence), and how they affect my council?					
Do I have a good understanding of the impact of deprivation on educational attainment within my council? Do I know what other factors affect pupil performance in my council area and what the council is doing to address these?					
Do I have access to, and take up, appropriate education-related training and development opportunities?					

The second set of questions are intended to allow elected members to consider the planning and performance reporting of education services, and how they seeks to learn from others.

Questions for elected members to consider	Assessment				Further action required
	No action needed	No but action in hand	Yes but needs improving	Yes working well	
Planning education services					
Does the council have a clear education strategy and improvement plan which clearly sets out:					
• the most important priorities for improvement					
• specific actions to be taken to raise attainment levels					
• the intended outcomes for pupils and other stakeholders					
When considering future education budgets, is the committee with a remit for education provided with adequate information to allow it to consider the likely impact on attainment of proposals to increase or reduce education spend?					
Performance reporting					
Do I have access to, and take up, appropriate education-related training and development opportunities?					
Does the committee receive regular (at least annually) performance reports on:					
• pupil attainment during the senior phase (S4-S6) (ie, exam results)					
• pupil performance during the broad general education phase (P1-S3), for example standardised test results or the number of pupils meeting expected levels in literacy or numeracy through the CfE Framework					
• wider achievement, for example the types of awards and programmes being offered, including the level of participation and achievement?					

Questions for elected members to consider	Assessment				Further action required
	No action needed	No but action in hand	Yes but needs improving	Yes working well	
<p>Do performance reports on pupils' attainment and wider achievement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable comparisons of performance to be made between individual schools and over time 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide commentary on performance against expectations and any resulting action to be taken? 					
<p>Does the committee receive regular (at least annually) reports on education outcomes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress against the council's own key performance measures for education 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> whether specific strategies and interventions to raise attainment and achievement have succeeded 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> whether wider achievement awards and programmes add value in terms of developing pupils skills for living and working in the wider world? 					
Learning from others					
Does the council make best use of the performance information available through SOLACE Benchmarking Framework to understand variation in practice and share learning?					
Does the council seek to share best practice and learn from others, for example are they involved in the School Improvement Partnership Programme?					