

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

26 September 2024

Report by Director of Education

WEST PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE:
IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024 - 2025

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To inform East Renfrewshire's Education Committee of the contents of the West Partnership's Improvement Plan 2024 - 2025

RECOMMENDATION

2. Education Committee is asked to approve the report.

BACKGROUND

3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) were established in 2017 as a national initiative to bring about improvement for all schools in Scotland. They are intended to bring together local authorities and Education Scotland, facilitating collaborative working and providing educational support to practitioners.
4. The Glasgow City Region Education Improvement Collaboration, known as the West Partnership brings together authorities from across the Glasgow City Region; East Renfrewshire is a member of the West Partnership.
5. Education Committee noted the progress of the West Partnership and the contents of its Improvement Plan in September 2023 and a further update was provided in April 2024.
6. An evaluative report on the progress with the implementation of that plan is the subject of another paper to this Education Committee.

REPORT

7. The Partnership is required to produce an annual improvement plan which outlines the vision, purpose and key activities of the collaborative for the year ahead. The West Partnership Improvement Plan 2024 - 2025 (Appendix 1) sets out the key areas for collaborative action to bring about improvement across the Glasgow City Region.
8. Education Committee should note that the plan captures those areas where collaboration between the partners will be beneficial. Not all schools or local authorities will participate in all activities, but the plan sets out the partnership's offer to schools, based on what stakeholders have indicated they would benefit from.

9. As such the plan does not replicate or duplicate the individual local improvement plans of each partner authority, but enhances our own efforts to support and challenge schools to improve.
10. Over the past session, a comprehensive range of engagements with key stakeholders took place, complementing the ongoing evaluation activity; giving a clear set of qualitative and quantitative data to ensure the 2024-25 Improvement Plan meets the needs of practitioners and officers across the West Partnership.
11. Taking account of all consultation to date, there is clear consensus that existing programmes and activity are broadly meeting the needs of officers and practitioners across the West Partnership. It is suggested most programmes continue, following review and in some cases, augmentation.
12. The three main workstreams will continue to be: Wellbeing for Learning; Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement; and Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment. The Partnership will work closely with local authorities, as well as with colleagues from Education Scotland, to achieve key objectives set out for each workstream.
13. The approach towards Specialist Networks that was introduced in 2022-23 will continue. These Specialist Networks meet with a common purpose to enhance the work of the local authorities in themed areas such as curriculum, additional support needs and digital learning. East Renfrewshire is benefitting from the collaboration and support from the networks.
14. A revised Plan on a Page has been included which attempts to more clearly articulate: vision, values, purpose and priorities of The West Partnership.
15. Following the Cabinet Secretary announcement to cease funding for regional improvement collaboratives in March 2025, a new collaborative framework has been agreed across the West Partnership. Transition activities will take place to ready the system to support ongoing collaboration by this point.
16. The 2024-25 Improvement Plan was considered at the last Glasgow City Region Education Committee on 17 September 2024 with the recommendation that each Council area approves the report through its own local governance arrangements.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

17. The Scottish Government made £6 million of funding available nationally to support the work of RICs for financial year 2023/24. In 2024-25 only 50% of this funding has been made available; in 2025-26 no funding will be made available by the Scottish Government for RICs.
18. The West Partnership has been provided with the same funding in 2023-24 as 2022-23, a total of £1,515,500. In 2024-25 the West Partnership's funding is £757,750.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

19. In recent years, Education Scotland has facilitated a peer review process, leading to a report on progress which is presented to the Cabinet Secretary. This has not taken place this session.

20. The six Senior Partnership Officers (SPO), of the RICs, or their equivalent, met for a day in June 2024 to undergo a peer review discussion. Challenge and feedback was offered to all SPOs. The West Partnership collaborative framework for 2025 was noted as the most complex and extensive across the RICs.

RECOMMENDATION

21. Education Committee is asked to approve the report.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
26 September 2024

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Appendix
1. West Partnership Improvement Plan 2024-25

The West Partnership

Improvement Plan 2024-25

**Equity, Excellence
& Empowerment**



GLASGOW
CITY REGION
Education

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INTRODUCTION

As the Regional Lead Officer, I am pleased to introduce the West Partnership Improvement Plan which sets out our priorities and key activities in 2024-25 and how we will continue to support a networked learning system going forward.



In our plan last year we set out to strengthen our collaborative working and increase the number of staff and learners benefitting from our shared endeavours – our focus was on ensuring impact in all of our playrooms and classrooms. Our Evaluation Report 2023-24 highlights the very good progress we have made as a partnership in improving learners' experiences, attainment and achievement across the 8 Local Authorities. For example, over the last 12 months, over 10,000 practitioners accessed professional learning opportunities provided by the West Partnership, an increase from around 4,500 the previous year. As a result, we reached at least 24% of all practitioners with 643 schools and 266 ELC centres benefiting from our professional learning. Of the staff engaging with our offer, 86% reported that an increase in their knowledge or confidence.

The impact of these leadership and curricula achievements permeates into our pupil-focused indicators, with a record 96.8% of school leavers entering a positive destination. The percentage gap between our 20% most deprived and 20% least deprived school leavers who enter a positive destination is also at a record low of 4.2%. In addition, we have continued to see an increase in the percentage of primary pupils (based on P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving the expected levels in literacy and numeracy to 74.5% and 81.1% respectively, in both cases above the latest national values. At the same time, there has also been a small decrease in the primary attainment gap between our Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 learners in both literacy and numeracy. The evidence is clear, by working in partnership, collaborating across our authorities we are able to add value, enhance our own individual efforts and achieve outstanding results.

As we look forward, challenges do exist as we seek to continue to collaborate, learn from one another and provide support for practitioners across the partnership. Our challenge, is to ensure that we focus on the priorities and programmes that will add the most value and that we prepare the networks well to support collaborative activity in 2025-26 once the Scottish Government funding has ceased.

To support this transition the Improvement Plan is structured around our three main workstreams - Wellbeing for Learning; Leadership Empowerment and Improvement; and Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment. It continues to be underpinned by our values of equity, excellence and empowerment and reflects three strategic drivers of improvement ensuring we:

1. Foster collaboration on a variety of levels;
2. Provide professional learning and specialist network opportunities for practitioner which increase knowledge, understanding, confidence and deliver improvement; and,
3. Stimulate change to practice, impacting positively on children, young people and their families.

The West Partnership Improvement Plan enables each of us to look beyond our own establishment and local authority to foster a culture of collaboration, learning and innovation that empowers and enables our children and young people to achieve and flourish. In doing so, we will continue to work in partnership with colleagues from Education Scotland and other Regional Improvement Collaboratives to achieve our key objectives and continue to improve outcomes for all our staff and learners.

Mark Ratter, Regional Lead Officer, West Partnership

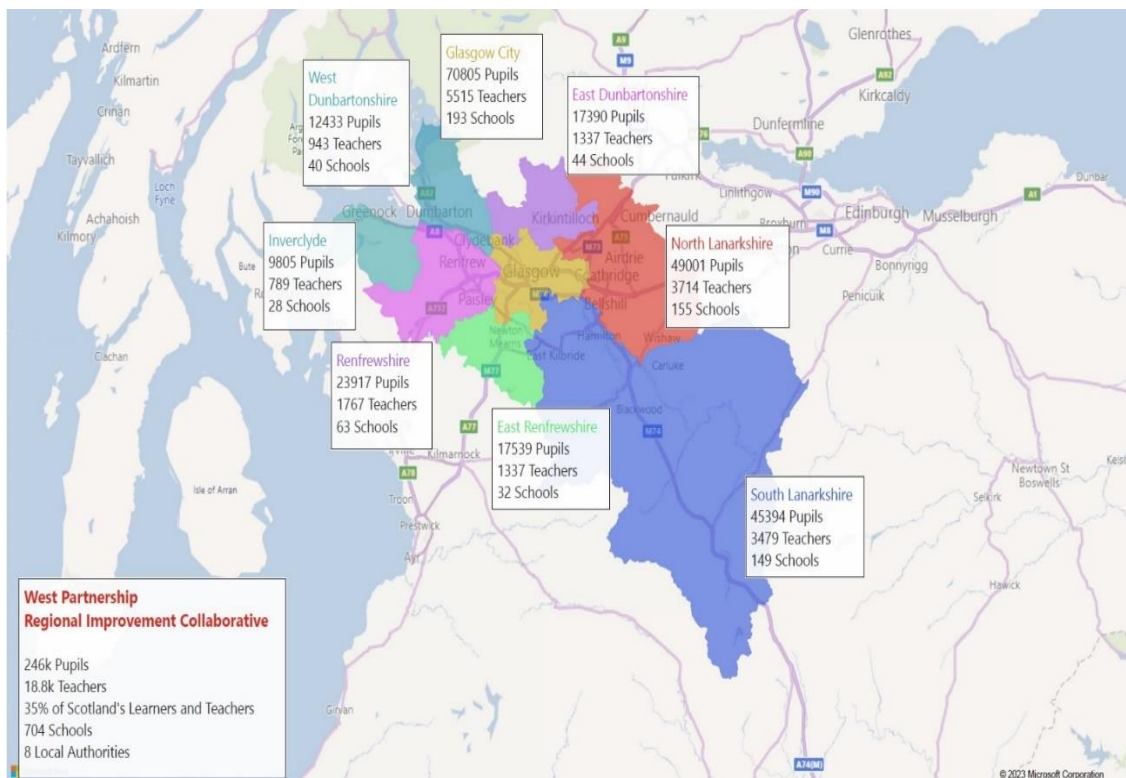
WEST PARTNERSHIP VISION AND CONTEXT

The West Partnership has a clear vision: to embed the values of equity, excellence and empowerment in everything we do, building a collaborative, networked learning system to improve learning experiences and increase attainment for every learner across the region.

The West Partnership sets an ambitious and aspirational agenda to close the poverty-related attainment gap (equity) and improve attainment and achievement for all (excellence). By creating the conditions for authentic empowerment, the ownership of change can be shifted and enable all staff to take collective action to deliver this ambitious vision.

As the largest of Scotland's Regional Improvement Collaboratives, with approximately one third of Scotland's school population, to truly deliver sustainable improvement, change needs to be driven collectively. This means ensuring that every stakeholder is empowered to address the needs of each individual learner, design experiences which will enthuse and engage them and support them to lead their own learning. This will in turn, lead to improvements in learners' achievements and attainment.

In the West Partnership, building collective agency to improve results and supporting individuals to work together to secure what they cannot accomplish on their own is a key focus. Our purpose, therefore, is to establish and facilitate networks of professionals to work collaboratively to achieve our vision of equity, excellence and empowerment.



GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES

CONTEXT

The West Partnership (WP) Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) has been established since 2018 and received Scottish Government funding to support the staffing and resourcing of a core team who plan, facilitate and evaluate the work of the RIC. In November 2023, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced the intention to taper funding for the six RICs during the 2024-25 financial year. Thereafter, funding from Scottish Government will cease. This has prompted an early and thorough evaluation and review of programmes, networks and structures, to identify what can add the most value during the 2024-25 year of tapered funding. We have also considered how the remaining core team support local authority colleagues and collaborative activity beyond Scottish Government funding.

REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES

The West Partnership core team and directors have taken time to review and reflect on the effectiveness of the existing governance and operational structures, to ensure the Partnership continues to operate efficiently, while adding value to the provision of the eight partner local authorities. Changes to the structures were identified as necessary due to several key factors:

- The reduction of Scottish Government funding to 50% of the previous year's grant;
- The reduction of the personnel in the WP Core Team, from 15 full and part time officers to 7;
- The demanding financial context in local authorities and implications for staffing; and
- The changing role of Education Scotland and its relationships with regional activity.

For the year 2024-25, it has been agreed that the following structure will support ongoing regional collaborative activity:

West Partnership Board

- 8 Directors / Chief Education Officers
- Senior Partnership Officer
- Professors Chapman and Donaldson, Glasgow University

Wellbeing for Learning Workstream	Leadership, Empowerment & Improvement Workstream	Curriculum, Learning Teaching & Assessment Workstream
----------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------

Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Support and Challenge	Finance Group
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Central Officer / Practitioner Reference Groups*

*A range of practitioner reference groups have been established in the last year. These will be strengthened and augmented to allow the continued activity of the partnership and to ensure the work stays as close to the learner as is possible.

WEST PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The West Partnership Board (the Board), has responsibility for the strategic overview of the work of the West Partnership, with overall responsibility for the development and delivery of the West Partnership Improvement Plan, including overall responsibility for the finance and resources for the Partnership.

The Board is made up of the Director of Education/Chief Education Officer of each of the eight partner authorities which make up the West Partnership. In addition, the Board is advised by the West Partnership's Senior Partnership Officer and has professorial representation from the University of Glasgow. Staff supporting the work of the West Partnership also attend by invitation.

Specific, identified Board members link with each workstream as sponsors, and have responsibility for the strategic direction of that workstream and for reporting to the Board on its progress. Workstream Lead Officers support Board members with this work and provide leadership for all aspects of the operational activity of the workstream including: planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting.

FINANCE GROUP

The West Partnership Board continues to be supported very well by the Finance Sub-Group. The Finance Group meets quarterly and includes senior representatives from all eight local authorities, providing additional rigour and accountability, as well as streamlining financial procedures across the partnership. They also provide advice on staffing and other resource issues, as required. The partnership is supported further by a local authority finance officer who advises and assists with the operational management of the grant award from the Scottish Government.

THE WEST PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY MODEL

THE WEST PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Our approach within the West Partnership is underpinned by the development of a Networked Learning System; a system that enables collaboration, encourages 'connectedness' and supports practitioners at all levels. Our work is built around collaborative learning and practitioners are supported to develop ways of working together that are effective and build upon well-established research based models of delivery.

The work of the West Partnership is predominantly delivered through the structure of three key workstreams, each led by a Workstream Lead Officer (WLO), seconded to work with The West Partnership core team.

For 2024-25, the three workstreams continue to be:

- Wellbeing for Learning;
- Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement; and
- Curriculum and Learning, Teaching & Assessment.

These workstreams provide 'umbrella themes' for the programmes and activity of the West Partnership. Regular opportunities are provided to link the work of the workstreams and ensure connectivity and cohesion.

THE ROLE OF THE WEST PARTNERSHIP CORE TEAM

A small core team, led by the Senior Partnership Officer, has been appointed to lead and facilitate the West Partnership Improvement Plan. This team has reduced in size by more than half for the coming year, to reflect the tapered Scottish Government funding. They work collaboratively to ensure that the Improvement Plan is based on strong self-evaluation, implemented timeously, rigorously evaluated and reported upon to the Board. Impact on leaders, practitioners and, most importantly, on learners is paramount and rigorously measured. They ensure that all activities and opportunities for colleagues across the collaborative, provide added value to what is on offer both locally and nationally.

THE ROLE OF CENTRAL OFFICERS, TEACHERS AND PRACTITIONERS

There is clarity that all colleagues who support learning across the eight connected local authorities are defined as The West Partnership, and not simply the core team. As such, all central officers, teachers and practitioners networking & sharing, collaborating and changing practice together are working towards the values and purpose of The West Partnership. A primary function of the core team is to provide systematic and supported opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues. The West Partnership Improvement Plan provides opportunities for colleagues to co-create programmes and activities, as well as participate in those planned and delivered by the core team. This provides a unique setting for collaboration, builds capacity and grows connection, all leading to our vision of a networked learning system. In the coming year, the role of central officers and practitioners will also strengthen and grow further as we plan for 2025-26, when the collaborative work of the partnership no longer receives Scottish Government funding.

SPECIALIST NETWORKS

Specialist Networks, comprise of representatives from across the eight local authorities, and meet with a common purpose and remit.

Each Specialist Network creates its own short action plan containing 2-3 priorities which have been self-generated from existing local authority focus areas. This allows the work of the West Partnership to support ongoing local authority priorities, avoiding additional workload for central officers. The West Partnership core team support this collaborative approach to overtaking the action plan. The WLOs are responsible for supporting evaluation and reporting on progress and impact as part of governance procedures. This work is also supported by the partnership's data officer.

Specialist Networks have been reviewed and again been planned across all three workstreams. Some additional networks have been requested from central officers which are already producing fruitful discussion and change.

The groups planned for 2024-25 include networks for:

Gaelic Officers and HTs	ASN HTs	Senior Inclusion Officers
Community Learning & Development Officers	Home Education Officers	English as an Additional Language Co-ordinators
Literacy Officers	Assessment Co-ordinators	Maths Officers

Over the course of 2024-25 session, changes to the strategic and operational model used to support the work of the partnership will take place. The role and purpose of Specialist Networks, may also change and grow. These changes will be made collegiately with those involved and the Board.

DEVELOPING THROUGH CONSULTATION

The West Partnership remains committed to ensuring that it reflects the views and ambitions of the workforce, parents and learners across the eight partner authorities to achieve our vision of equity, excellence and empowerment.

The West Partnership is home to over one third of Scotland's school population, with more than 25,000 headteachers, teachers and support staff working in around 1000 schools and early learning centres, in some of Scotland's most diverse and challenged communities.

Taking account of the on-going pressures on stakeholders, the West Partnership has had to be flexible and agile in its approach to stakeholder engagement as part of the improvement planning process. While regular evaluations are undertaken at the end of professional learning sessions or programmes, a programme of forensic self-evaluation was undertaken during 2023-24 following the announcement of tapered funding. It has been even more important than ever to identify what is working well and adding value, to allow us to effectively streamline the WP offer.

The Senior Partnership Officer and three Workstream Lead Officers spoke with a wide range of stakeholders and undertook a series of self-evaluation activities to allow a set of scenario planning documents to be created. These were explored in depth by the Directors of Education / Chief Education Officers during a development day, at a number of Board meetings, and for the basis of the Improvement plan for 2024-25 and beyond.

Feedback has been synthesised, analysed and shared with the Board and the Glasgow Regional Education Committee. It informs the plan for session 2024-25.

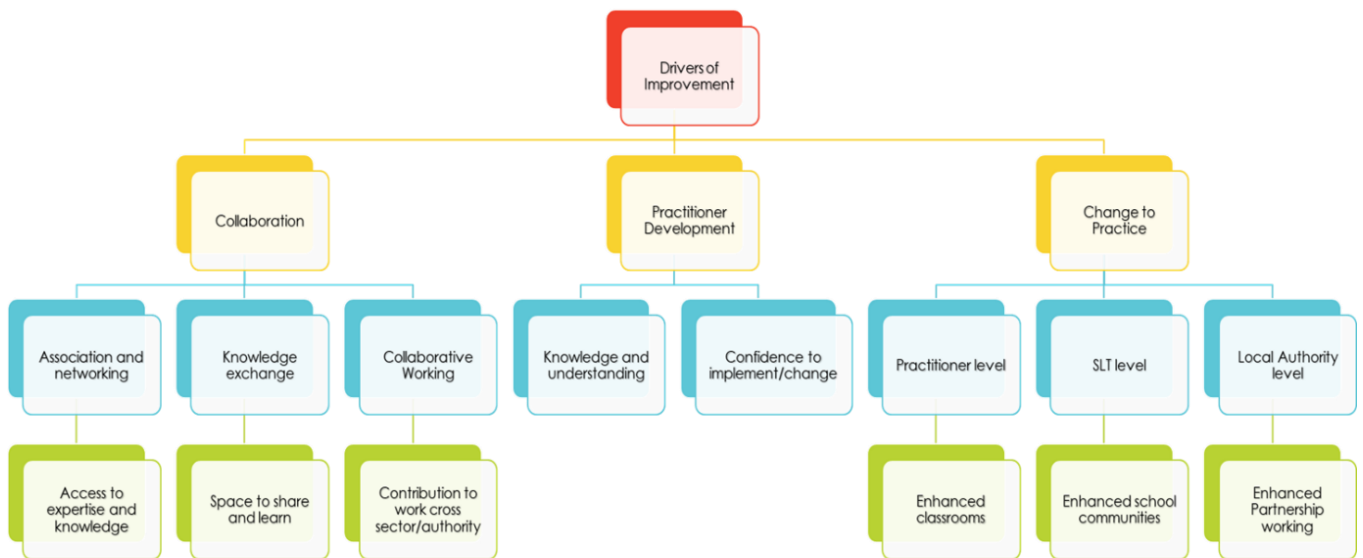
EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Evaluating and Reporting Lead Officer retained overall responsibility for evaluating and reporting on the progress and impact of the West Partnership's Improvement Plan during 2023-24.

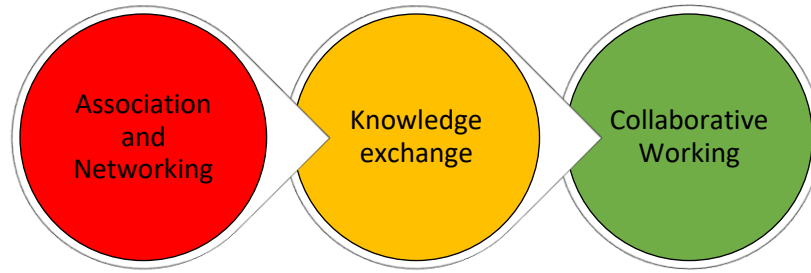
This work, supported by the data officer, is crucial in supporting the West Partnership to evaluate its activities and programmes, as well as using the quantitative and qualitative evidence to identify future priorities. Regular highlight and evaluation reports include updates on the progress and impact of each workstream, as well as more holistic evaluations. Tools to systematically evaluate the quality of West Partnership professional learning events / programmes, and the important longer term impact on participants and learners allow us to gather evidence to demonstrate the added value of collaboration.

To assist in this process, workstream planning processes focus more acutely on outcome-based planning and reporting, not only on progress, but specifically on impact in the classroom or playroom. Evaluation strategies and approaches planned by the Workstream Lead Officers at the start of each professional learning session/ programme, ensure appropriate and robust evidence is gathered systematically and evaluated.

From exploring qualitative feedback data from our professional learning, collaborative enquiry, and specialist networks this session, the Partnership's work is now conceptualised as being driven by three holistic drivers:



The first driver, collaboration, is at the heart of the partnership's work. As such, collaborative working and the exchange of expertise and practice around our system is a key mechanism for improvement and also a broad term which captures interactions that differ in depth. From exploring our qualitative feedback data from our professional learning, collaborative enquiry, and specialist networks, the partnership's collaboration is conceptualised as occurring on a three-point continuum. The continuum is based on the available data and is presented below:



The continuum, with three overlapping concepts, is designed to describe the different ways in which collaborators interact. The partnership provides a range of opportunities which differ in terms of how 'deep' collaboration is. As such, this continuum is not intended to be a scale from 'ineffective' to 'most effective', but instead one that recognises different levels of collaboration as a positive.

The development of these drivers allow the partnership to report more effectively, more holistically and to crystallise the key purposes of the West Partnership's work.

The West Partnership continued to engage the services of the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change, University of Glasgow (ROC), as external evaluators during 2023-24 and external research was carried out by ROC. It offered insight into the progression of the West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative. The extremely positive, evidence-based findings and recommendations in the report, have been discussed fully by the West Partnership core team and the Board and have influenced the Improvement Plan for session 2024-25.

CRITICAL INDICATORS

Critical indicators tell us if we are having an impact on the system. Last session we made a number of small changes to better link our critical indicators to our values as a Regional Improvement Collaborative. We strengthened our commitment to equity through the addition of a few key measures. These related primarily to the poverty-related attainment gap, which we had included in previous evaluation reports but not formally through our critical indicators. To demonstrate our commitment to The Promise, we also included new measures on looked after young people.

West Partnership Critical Indicators 2018-2023

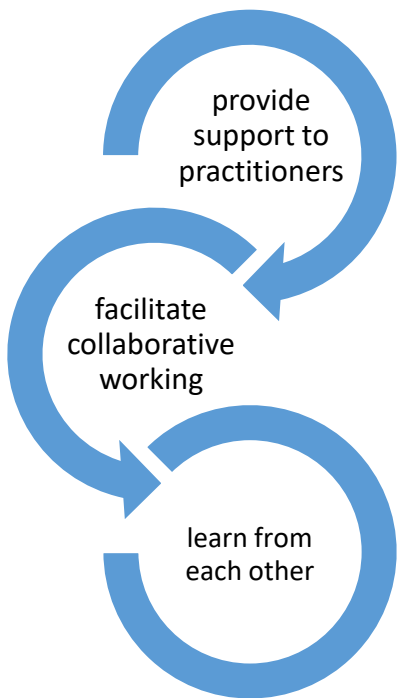
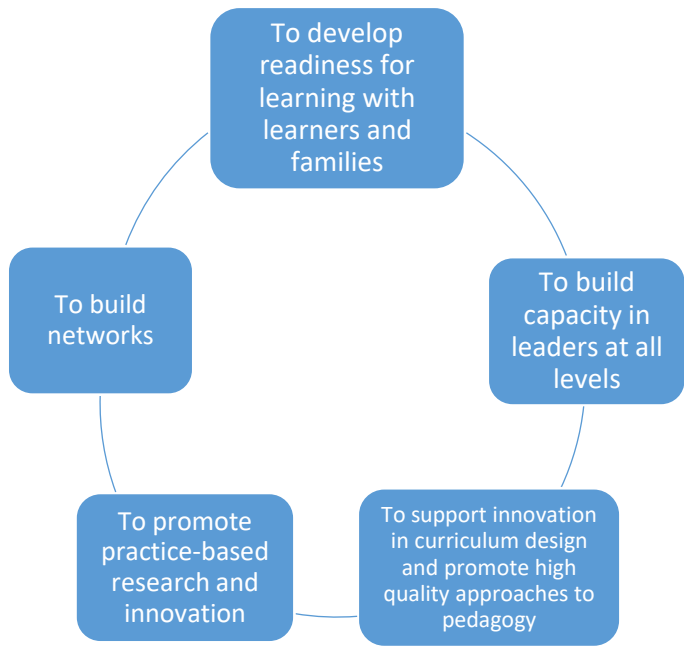
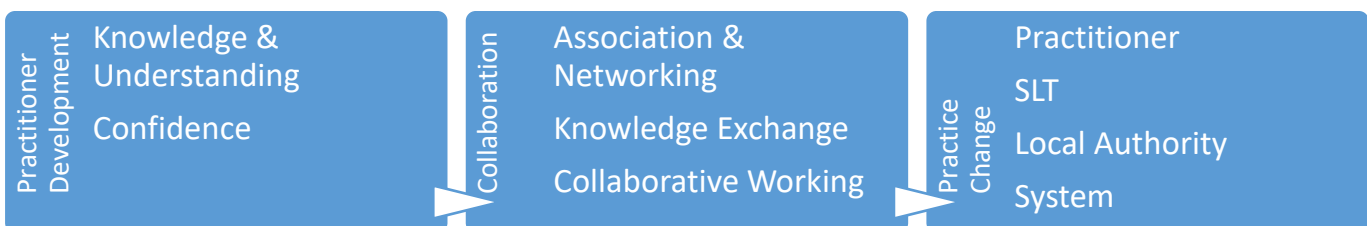
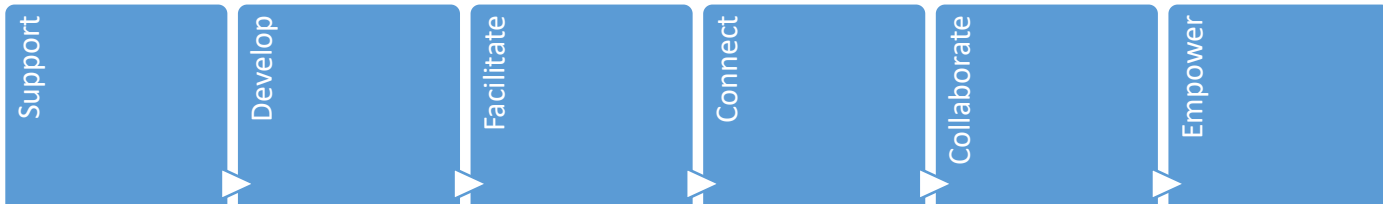
Indicators	Excellence, Equity or Empowerment	2018- 19 Value	2019- 20 Value	2020- 21 Value	2021- 22 Value	2022- 23 Value
% of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in literacy (based on reading, writing and talking and listening)	Excellence	73.0	**	69.7	72.4	74.5
% of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in numeracy		80.3	**	77.3	79.6	81.1
% of leavers achieving 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		69.3	70.4	72.8	69.4	68.1
% of leavers achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		38.3	42.1	44.3	41.5	40.6
% of leavers achieving SCQF Level 5 or better in literacy		82.6	83.1	84.6	82.7	82.3
% of leavers achieving SCQF Level 5 or better in numeracy		69.2	70.8	72.8	71.3	71.5
Primary Attendance Rates		94.2	N/A	93.4	N/A	91.7
Secondary Attendance Rates		90.3	N/A	88.4	N/A	87.4
Initial School Leaver Destinations (Positive)		95.2	93.6	95.8	96.3	96.8
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in literacy	Equity	22.4	**	26.1	22.6	22.5
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in numeracy		17.5	**	21.7	18.3	18.2
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 leavers achieving 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		39.6	36.9	34.8	33.4	32.6
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 leavers achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		48.1	42.5	44.0	44.7	43.1
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 leavers achieving SCQF Level 5 or better in literacy and numeracy		34.7	35.7	34.4	34.0	33.5
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 leavers entering initial positive destinations		4.8	6.6	5.1	4.2	3.5
% of looked after school leavers achieving 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		N/A	N/A	29.8% ¹		N/A
% of looked after school leavers achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		N/A	N/A	8.9%		N/A
Number of Practitioners accessing professional learning opportunities provided by the West Partnership		Empowerment	TBC	3185	3137	4467
Percentage of practitioners reporting an increase in their knowledge following participation in West Partnership activities	NA		NA	85.1	85.3	85.8
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for leadership of change	73		*	*	91	81 ²
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for learning, teaching and assessment	71		*	*	88	85 ³

¹ In 2023 the West Partnership board agreed to include two measures which look specifically at the outcomes of looked after children. As this is a smaller population within the West Partnership, these values will only be updated biannually, with 2 years of data combining to form a more reliable sample. As such, the latest data is a combination of 20/21 and 21/22 academic sessions.

² Based on 31 inspections taking place between June-23 to July-24

³ Based on 65 inspections taking place between June-23 and July 24

The West Partnership Plan on a Page 2024-25

<p>Our Vision:</p> <p>By building a networked learning system, improve the learner experience, attainment and achievement across the West Partnership.</p>	<p>Our Values:</p> <p>Equity Excellence Empowerment</p>
<p>Our Purpose:</p> 	<p>Our Priorities:</p> 
<p>Our drivers:</p> 	
<p>To achieve our priorities, we will:</p> 	

WEST PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY MODEL

KEY ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMMES 2024-25

Wellbeing for Learning	
Programmes / Activities	Specialist Networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping Trauma IN Mind –CAR - Inclusion in Mainstream – series - Attendance – CAR - Inclusive Practice in Early Learning and Childcare Settings • UNCRC (by sector) • Youth Participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young Leaders of Learning - Youth Participation Training • Families and Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youthlink Scotland Enquiries - Family Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASN Headteachers • CLD Lead Officers • Senior Inclusion Lead Officers • PSE Secondary Officers • Home Education Officers • Attendance • Rights Education
Leadership, Empowerment & Improvement	
Programmes / Activities	Specialist Networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking About Headship • Improving Our Classrooms • Improving Our Schools • Improving Our Departments / Faculties • FOCUS tool and CLPL • Delivering Mentorship • Leadership of Learning Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Officers (led by Evaluation Officer)
Curriculum, Learning, Teaching & Assessment	
Programmes / Activities	Specialist Networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary BGE Curriculum • Primary Curriculum • Spotlight on Effective Practice • Pedagogy Partnerships • Tracking and Monitoring • Assessment and Moderation • WEST OS and Digital Pedagogy • Research on Impact of 1140 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and Moderation • ASN Assessment and Moderation • Literacy • Numeracy • Early Years • EAL • Gaelic