

Department of Corporate and Community Services

Deputy Chief Executive: Caroline Innes BSc (Hons)

Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park, Giffnock, East Renfrewshire, G46 6UG

Phone: 0141 577 3000 Fax: 0141 577 3834

Website: www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Date: 28 January 2022

When calling please ask for: Jennifer Graham and John Burke, 0141 577 3016

E-mail: jennifer.graham@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk; john.burke@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

TO: Councillors A. Lafferty (Chair), C. Merrick (Vice Chair), Provost J. Fletcher, and Councillors C. Bamforth, T. Buchanan, D. Devlin, C Gilbert, J. McLean, and G. Wallace; Dr F. Angell, Ms D. Graham, Ms M McIntyre and Mr D Morris.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Education Committee will be held on **Thursday, 3 February 2022 at 10.00am.**

The agenda of business is as listed below.

CAROLINE INNES

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DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Please note this is a virtual meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
2. **Declarations of Interest.**
3. **Draft Standards and Quality Report 2020-2021 – Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 3 - 46).**
4. **Draft Local Improvement Plan 2022-2025 - Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 47 - 58).**
5. **Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy - Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 59 - 84).**
6. **Education Reform Consultation - Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 85 - 112).**

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7. **Gaelic Medium Education: Outcome of a Request for an Assessment - Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 113 - 118).**
8. **Report on the East Renfrewshire Additional Support for Learning Review - Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 119 - 134).**
9. **Scheme of Devolved School Management - Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 135 - 178).**

For information on how to access the virtual meeting please email jennifer.graham@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk and john.burke@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

A recording of the meeting will also be available following the meeting on the Council's YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/eastrenfrewshire/videos>

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE3 February 2022Report by Director of EducationDRAFT STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2020 - 2021**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To inform elected members of the proposed contents of the Education Department's annual Standards and Quality Report for school session 2020 - 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Members are asked to:

- a) Comment on the content and quality of the annual Standards and Quality Report; and,
- b) Invite the Director of Education to make any amendments and take the necessary steps to produce and issue copies of the report for stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

3. Under the terms of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 education authorities have a duty to produce and publish annually a Local Improvement Plan which details how it and its schools and services will continuously improve, and, based on this plan, a Standards and Quality Report detailing how it has sought and achieved improvements in provision.

4. The local improvement plan, upon which this report is based, was approved by the Education Committee in January 2020 and reflected the National Outcomes for Education, the Council's Community Plan; the department's contributions to the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan 2020 – 2023. The plan lists the expected outcomes and impact and is organised under the department's vision statement "*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*". The draft Standards and Quality Report reflects the three key themes of the vision and evaluates the action taken and the improvements achieved as a result.

5. The draft Standards and Quality Report provides evidence of the progress the department and ELC settings and schools have made in supporting all learners, with a particular focus on inequalities of outcome experienced by our more disadvantaged children and young people. The report also sets out the improvement we have made towards the four national priorities as set out in the National Improvement Framework (NIF).

REPORT

6. The department has undertaken a self-evaluation exercise which has informed the draft report. This evaluation has helped to outline our next steps which will be fed into the next Local Improvement Plan that is the subject of a separate report to Education Committee. The draft, takes into consideration the continued challenges that Session 2020-21 offered East Renfrewshire's residents, families, children, young people, council staff and leaders alike as we adjusted to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular it reflects the period of national lock down and school closures.

7. The draft included as Appendix 1, highlights the very good and excellent standards and practice achieved by the department, its schools and services during these difficult times and is offered as a public record of some of the activities which were undertaken during the last school session, and their impact on stakeholders.

8. Evidence for the Standards and Quality Report is gathered annually through a range of activities designed to provide support and challenge to schools and centres. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence for the 2020-21 report was limited to the following sources:

- performance and questionnaire data
- thematic reviews by Education Scotland and the Quality Improvement Team on remote learning
- reports on Early Learning and Childcare Centres by Care Inspectorate Scotland
- school and service improvement plans and Standards and Quality Reports
- SGS Customer Service Excellence review (CSE)
- evaluations of professional learning activities.

9. Following feedback, the format of the 2020 - 2021 report has again been designed to provide a more concise, visual and high level summary of the progress made in implementing the 2020 - 23 Local Improvement Plan.

10. With committee approval, the Department plans to issue the report electronically to all parents of children attending an East Renfrewshire school or Early Learning and Childcare Centre. A limited number of copies of the published report will also be available in all libraries, education, sports and cultural centres and Council buildings, and will also be available to be viewed online or downloaded from the Council's website.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no financial or efficiency implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Members are asked to:

- a) Comment on the content and quality of the annual Standards and Quality Report; and,

- b) Invite the Director of Education to make any amendments and take the necessary steps to produce and issue copies of the report for parents.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 February 2022

Convener Contact Details

Councillor A. Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities

Tel: 0141 577 3108

Report Author

Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement)

Tel: 0141 577 3204

Janice.Collins@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendices

1. Draft Standards and Quality Report 2020 - 2021

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Standards and Quality Report 2020-21



Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences

Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences



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EVERYONE
ACHIEVING

EVERYONE
ATTAINING





East Renfrewshire Council continues to provide the highest quality services for all residents. This Standards and Quality Report shows the progress made in achieving our expected outcomes and impact in the past year. Evidence for this report is gathered by the Quality Improvement Team who support schools and services in carrying out self-evaluation. External evaluation is carried out by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate who, in engaging with our schools and centres, commented very favourably on the practice they observed.

Session 2020-21 continued to offer new challenges for East Renfrewshire's residents, families, children, young people, council staff and leaders alike as we adjusted to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The strength of our team working and our capacity to adapt, collaborate and support each other has taken on new significance in this context. The flexibility of our schools and services in implementing online delivery models to provide continuity of learning for our children and young people, and the wider support for children, young people and families provided by the department throughout many changes to education provision over the last year, are testament to the commitment of staff at all levels to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our learners, in all circumstances. The council's values of ambition, kindness and trust are clearly evident throughout this report. The Education

Department remains fully committed to meeting the needs of the General Equality Duty, as outlined by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, through eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

This Standards and Quality report is a tribute to the many outstanding achievements of East Renfrewshire's Education Department, its schools and services and the progress made in the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence in session 2020-21.

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Alan Lafferty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Councillor Alan Lafferty,
Convener for Education and Equalities





The Education Department's vision of Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences is at the heart of our work as we seek to provide the highest quality education and services to children, young people and adults within East Renfrewshire. This report is structured under this vision and details progress during session 2020-21 towards each of the target outcomes and impacts detailed in the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan for 2020-23. This report also clearly demonstrates the progress we have made towards the four national priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.

A commitment to improving children and young people's health and wellbeing is at the core of all aspects of the education department's work. This report outlines the many ways in which children and young people in East Renfrewshire are being supported through enriching, engaging experiences which will help them to become healthy, active and confident citizens.

Our aim for every young person to leave school and go on to further or higher education, employment or training is being realised through the excellent standards achieved by our senior pupils in the Scottish Qualifications Authority examinations and the continuing development and success of our vocational programme. The work outlined in this report evidences the department's relentless focus on increasing equity for learners, mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and families, and reducing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Through the self-evaluation activities which have informed this report, the department has identified next steps in achieving our vision. These will be taken forward over the next three sessions through implementation of our Local Improvement Plan 2021-24. The strong culture of collaboration and empowerment within the department, together with the high ambitions and standards we set for ourselves, combine to create a very high capacity for continuous improvement.

I am deeply committed to providing the very highest standards of education and care to allow every child, young person and resident in East Renfrewshire to enjoy the fullest benefits of lifelong learning. I am delighted to lead the department as we work together to deliver our vision and strive to achieve excellence and equity for all.

Mark Ratter

Mark Ratter,
Director of Education



Background Information

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About the Education Department

In 2020-21, East Renfrewshire Council's Education Department provided an education service through seven secondary schools, twenty-four primary schools, of which thirteen have nursery classes, nine family centres and one school for children and young people with additional support needs. The Education Department also has responsibility for Adult Learning and Facilities Management.

About the Standards and Quality Report

The Standards and Quality Report details the progress made towards achieving the outcomes and impact set out in the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan 2020-23. The Local Improvement Plan is organised under the Education Department's vision of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences* and has a clear focus on outcomes and impact on learners, parents and carers, staff and the community.



Evidence for the Standards and Quality Report is gathered annually through a range of activities designed to provide support and challenge to schools and centres. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence for the 2020-21 report was limited to the following sources:

- performance and questionnaire data
- thematic reviews by Education Scotland and the Quality Improvement Team on remote learning
- an Education Scotland review of the Alternative Certification Model
- reports on Early Learning and Childcare Centres by Care Inspectorate Scotland
- school and service improvement plans and Standards and Quality Reports
- SGS Customer Service Excellence review (CSE)
- evaluations of professional learning activities.

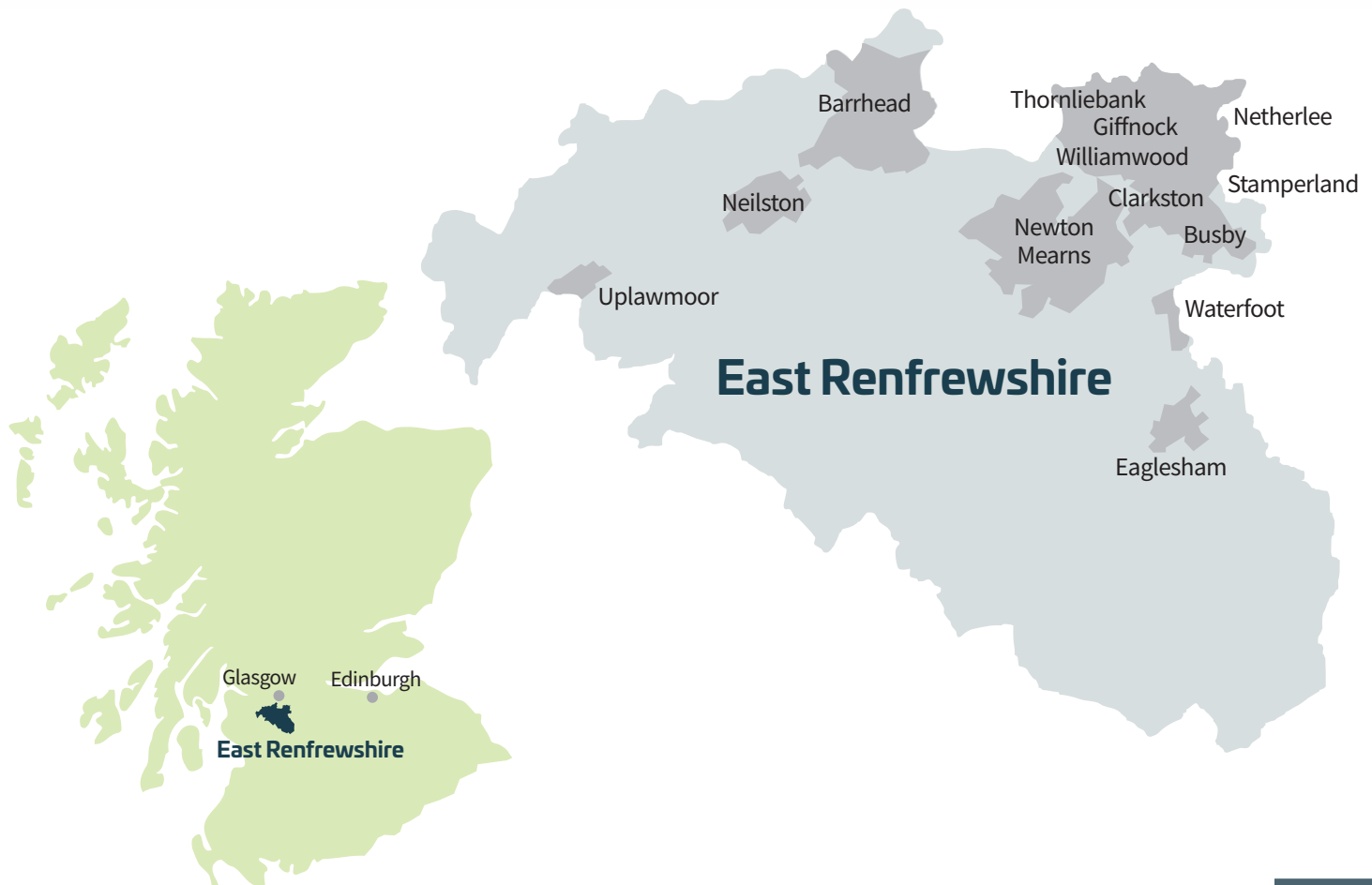
This report is also informed by:

- the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan
- the Scottish Government's wellbeing indicators: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included
- the Scottish Government's 2020 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan
- the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The results of this self-evaluation will be used to plan the next steps, which will be incorporated into the next Local Improvement Plan.



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East Renfrewshire

Everyone Attaining

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NIF Priority 1: Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy

East Renfrewshire continues to advance equity and excellence as demonstrated through a wide range of local and national attainment measures. Our children and young people achieve exceptionally high standards of attainment throughout the broad general education and senior phase.

Senior Phase Attainment

Pupils across East Renfrewshire excelled in SQA qualifications with once again another year of outstanding results. These achievements are a tribute to the hard work of pupils, who have also been very well supported by staff and parents.



79% of S4 pupils attained 5 or more awards at National 5 or better, the second highest in East Renfrewshire's history

50% of S5 pupils attained 5 or more awards at Higher, the highest ever



73% of S5 pupils attained 3 or more awards at Higher, the highest ever



At Advanced Higher, S6 pupils achieved the area's highest ever proportion of one or more awards



St Luke's High recorded its best ever performance for the proportion of S4 pupils attaining 5 or more awards at National 5 since 2016

Barrhead and St Ninian's High schools achieved their second highest ever results for the proportion of S4 pupils attaining 5 or more awards at National 5, whilst Williamwood High school pupils continued to perform strongly with 85% of pupils attaining this measure



Barrhead High and Woodfarm High schools had their best ever performance of S5 pupils gaining 5 or more Highers

Eastwood, Mearns Castle, St Ninian's and Woodfarm High schools recorded their highest ever levels of S6 pupils attaining 1 or more awards at Advanced Higher.



School staff and Education Department personnel worked together to deliver the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) developed by SQA for 2021, in line with SQA and Scottish Government guidelines, ensuring that all learners and parents were kept informed throughout the process. East Renfrewshire's approach to the ACM was evaluated by Education Scotland who commended the level of rigour and collaboration across schools to share effective and validated assessment tools.

Curriculum for Excellence

Following the phased reopening of schools in March 2021 after a second period of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the secondary sector was engaged in applying the Alternative Certification Model for senior phase pupils. As a consequence of this change to SQA certification and the resulting demands on teaching staff, Scottish Government did not gather teacher professional judgements of pupil progress in the Broad General Education for S3 pupils in 2021. Data for this cohort of learners was not gathered locally or nationally in 2021. This means that data was not gathered for S3 in two consecutive years due to the summer term school closures in 2020.

In 2020-21 almost all pupils in P1, P4 and P7 combined, achieved the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level of attainment in the Broad General Education as measured by teacher professional judgements of progress in reading and in talking and listening, with most pupils attaining the expected level in numeracy and writing. The proportions of East Renfrewshire pupils in P1, P4 and P7 combined achieving the expected level in these curricular areas, are significantly higher than the latest published national proportions (2018-19).

Teacher professional judgements

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021*	ERC 3 year average target 2018-19 to 2020-21	National 2018-2019
% Attaining or Exceeding Expected Levels – Reading	90.7	N/A	90.3	90	80%
% Attaining or Exceeding Expected Levels – Writing	88.4	N/A	87.4	89	75%
% Attaining or Exceeding Expected Levels – Talking & Listening	94.5	N/A	94.1	94	86%
% Attaining or Exceeding Expected Levels – Numeracy	90.7	N/A	89.9	92	79%

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Moderation

Quality assurance and moderation remained a key focus throughout 2020-21. The department worked in partnership with schools to adapt approaches to sharing standards, in order to continue to support establishments and practitioners with learning, teaching and assessment.

122 Moderation Facilitators attended training in September 2020 focused on a range of themes including national expectations and key messages, the Moderation Cycle and the Moderation Hub, and approaches to supporting school and cluster moderation. 111 moderation facilitators from primary and early years settings also undertook refresher training. The programme of CLPL offered was highly evaluated and comments indicate a continued appetite for professional learning on the various aspects of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle.

99% of responses indicated that participants felt equipped to take forward moderation within their establishments,



with 94% indicating that their confidence in the process of moderation had improved.

Assessment and moderation activity for secondary practitioners focused on the Alternative Certification Model and provided excellent opportunities for practitioners to engage in ongoing high quality dialogue linked to effective assessment approaches in the senior phase. Through these opportunities, staff are continuing to build their confidence in making accurate professional judgements about learners' progress.

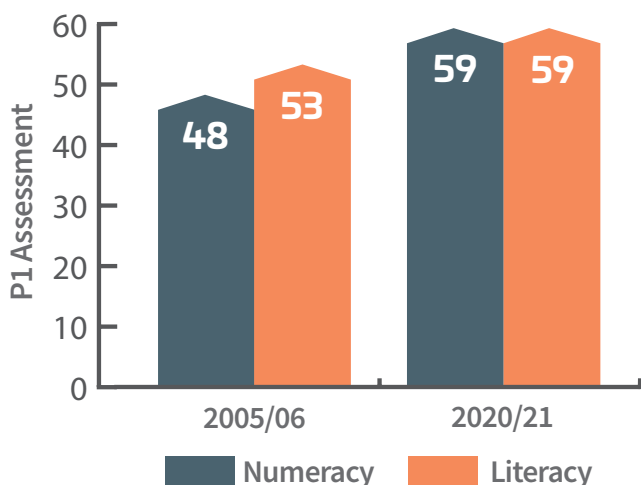
“Most settings and schools have developed opportunities for moderation of remote learning experiences to ensure consistency and a shared understanding of standards and expectations across departments, year groups and the school. In best practice there has been a cluster approach to sharing standards enabling all to see the potential and possibilities within remote learning.”

How Effective is our Remote Learning?, February 2021

Statistics from the 2020-21 questionnaires showed that 92% of teachers agreed that they engaged regularly in effective moderation activities that decided standards and expectations, a decrease of 4% compared with 2019-20. Almost all teachers continued to agree that they were aware of their school's strategies for raising attainment for all and used information and data effectively to reduce inequalities in children's and young people's outcomes.

Baseline Performance

Primary schools assess the literacy and numeracy skills of all pupils following entry to P1 so that children's progress over time can be closely monitored to support their learning. From 2005-06, when the P1 baseline assessment was introduced in its current format, to 2020-21, the average raw score in numeracy has increased from 48% to 59% and in literacy it has increased from 53% to 59%; this has remained consistent over most recent years.



Literacy Strategy

Progress towards the outcomes of the Literacy Strategy has continued despite some restrictions in activities due to infection control. Where possible, Reading Recovery was delivered in primary schools to identified individual children. To address the needs of wider groups of children, East Renfrewshire programmes Daily Literacy Learning (DLL) and Together Raising Attainment in Literacy (TRAIL) were introduced in ten schools. These interventions have led to an increase in children previously assessed as non-readers or emergent readers now being considered to be reading at or beyond age-expected levels.

Training for Pupil Support Assistants in Together Better Readers (TBR) has again provided a framework for PSAs to support the reading of older children in primary schools and young people in secondary schools. Further training for Supporting Reading in the Classroom has also been developed and delivered.

A virtual Literacy Locker was created to support staff and stores all relevant materials for the development of literacy. This includes videos which can be used for staff development, to ensure that training can take place at times convenient to practitioners. Similarly, a Literacy Library has been established for parents including videos for parents on how to support their child's literacy development. Initial feedback from parents who have accessed this resource has been particularly positive about the 'stay at home' suite of resources, which supports parents to develop their literacy skills at home.



Numeracy & Maths Strategy

In 2020-21 the range of professional development activities narrowed in order to protect staff time and capacity to adapt to the ongoing pandemic. Nevertheless, we continued to provide relevant and meaningful opportunities for staff to progress in their skills and understanding in key areas of numeracy and mathematics.

In collaboration with Education Scotland a small suite of workshops relevant to key priorities was developed for all practitioners to access throughout the session. Trained Maths Champions across all establishments in the Early Learning & Childcare and Primary sectors participated in a series of workshops led by Education Scotland, linked to key areas. Maths Champions were also supported through network meetings which focused on the use of digital technologies. These learning opportunities were highly evaluated by participants and further equipped school staff to support delivery of this area of the curriculum during remote learning.

The West Partnership Maths Group arranged the fourth annual conference for practitioners across the eight local authorities, which was held virtually this session. The accessibility of the online platform allowed over 500 participants to attend a variety of workshops on offer, focusing on raising attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

"This session has resulted in me learning several new approaches and activities that I can utilise in the classroom to ensure that I cater for all the pupils."

Primary Maths Champion

NIF Priority 2: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

Equity is at the heart of East Renfrewshire's education strategy and attainment results reflect the work of teachers to vigorously support all pupils. The department has rigorous and highly effective approaches to monitor and track the equity of provision for young people across our schools.

The analysis of outcomes for children and young people in the key equity groups is a central feature of our approach to self-evaluation and quality improvement. The Education Department and schools use data regularly to raise awareness, monitor progression, build leadership capability and capacity, plan improvement activities, and set targets.

Raising the bar and closing the gap

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) can be used to identify children and young people who live in the most deprived areas in Scotland. Nationally, we compare the performance of key equity groups against overall performance to measure and monitor the poverty related attainment gap.

While overall SQA attainment has significantly increased, attainment evidence also demonstrates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the positive progress made by East Renfrewshire schools in closing the poverty related attainment gap over recent years.

Developmental milestone data in 2020-21 demonstrates that the proportion of children residing in SIMD 1-3 properties achieving their milestones on entry to P1 decreased significantly by 9 percentage points, from a previous recorded high of 74% in 2019-20 (following a 4 year trend of improvement); this is the lowest recorded value for each of the last 5 years.

Meanwhile the proportion of children achieving their milestones residing in decile areas 4-7 and 8-10 has increased or remained relatively consistent over the same period, with 81% and 85% of children respectively attaining the measure. This indicates a greater impact from COVID-19 on those children residing in less affluent areas.

2020-21 analysis shows that the gap in the average S2 standardised assessment scores between pupils residing in SIMD 1-3 and SIMD 8-10 increased from last year, in both maths and reading, by 5 and 4 percentage points respectively. This follows a previous decreasing trend in the attainment gap between these groups of learners.

The poverty related attainment gap for S4 pupils attaining five or more awards at National 5 has reduced for the third consecutive year and is now at the lowest level ever in East Renfrewshire.

The gap between the performance of the most deprived and least deprived learners achieving 5 or more to 9 or more National 5 qualifications at A grade in S4 has increased to its highest level in the last three years.

The percentage of S4 pupils with cumulative Insight point attainment scores of 263 or fewer (equivalent to eight "Pass" awards at National 4) increased from 5.2% in 2018-19 to 6.4% in 2020-21; the current value is likely to reduce further once all non SQA awards are included in the Insight Data.

Free Meal Entitlement

The proportion of young people with free meal entitlement (FME) in S4 attaining 5 or more SCQF level 5 awards decreased in 2020-21 by 4% to 51%. The proportion of S5 learners entitled to free meals achieving 3+ and 5+ Higher A-C awards increased by 7% and 9% respectively in 2020-21 compared with 2019-20.



Looked After Children and Young People

There were 13 S4 Looked After young people at the start of the examination diet in the 2020-21; 14 in 2019-20, 9 in 2018-19 and 19 in 2017-18. The percentage of looked after pupils achieving awards in English and Mathematics at National 3 or better increased by 13% to 92% in 2020-21; all looked after pupils achieved 5 or more awards at National 3 and 92% achieved 5 or more awards at National 4. There was a significant increase in the percentage of looked after pupils achieving 5 or more awards at National 5 to 38%.

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Pupil Equity Funding

East Renfrewshire schools were allocated a total of £1,353,017 in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) from Scottish Government for session 2020-2021. Head teachers developed PEF plans detailing how each school's funding would be used to provide targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to close the poverty related attainment gap.

Due to COVID-19, Scottish Government relaxed the guidance on Pupil Equity Funding to enable local authorities and Head Teachers to provide support that best meets the needs of their communities during the pandemic. The majority of schools allocated a proportion of their funding to provide emotional support to help children deal with the emotional impact of the pandemic and re-engage in their learning.

Most primary schools continued to use a proportion of their PEF allocation to implement Reading Recovery. All primary schools who adopted this intervention reported significant improvements for all children who participated, particularly in relation to children's reading ages. Ongoing assessment and focused tracking provided detailed information on pupil progress throughout the course of the intervention. A few schools also utilised PEF funding to implement additional literacy interventions such as Daily Literacy Learning (DLL).

At individual school level, improvements reported by Head Teachers included the following:

- Attainment in reading and mathematics as measured by standardised test scores
- Reading age of pupils, reading comprehension skills, basic decoding skills and spelling
- Improvement in attendance
- Pupil motivation, engagement, confidence and self-esteem
- Pupil participation in extra-curricular opportunities
- Digital skills and confidence amongst children and young people as well as staff.

Raising Attainment and Achievement

As part of the Education Department's annual improvement planning and reporting cycle, all schools and centres evaluate their performance against key quality indicators from *How Good Is Our School? 4* and *How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?*. The Quality Improvement Team work together with heads of establishments to ensure that self-evaluation is rigorous and takes account of a wide range of evidence gathered from diverse sources and involving all stakeholders. In 2020-21, 100% of schools continued to evaluate their progress as 'good' or better for raising attainment and achievement. 42% were evaluated as 'very good' and 4% as 'excellent'.



Responding to COVID-19

Throughout session 2020-21 the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on all education settings. The department continued to offer regular practical guidance and support to head teachers and school staff to help keep schools and nurseries as safe as possible for the wellbeing of all.

Staff across the Education Department also continued to work closely with a range of internal and external partners on both our response to the pandemic and the ongoing recovery. This included weekly liaison and planning meetings between Educational Psychology, Social Work and Health and Social Care Partnership (HSPC) staff to coordinate support for vulnerable children and young people and their families. Close co-operation between Education and HSPC colleagues has also ensured that key services such as youth counselling have continued to be available.

With the announcement of school and nursery closures in late December 2020, the department worked to ensure that emergency key worker provision would be in place for children and young people due to start back after the Christmas holidays. An online application process was set up and distributed to families, enabling schools and nurseries to quickly identify demand and allocate provision to those who required it most.

Building on the progress made during the first period of school closure in 2020, the department also worked to support more vulnerable families by ensuring that continuing in-school provision could be offered. Throughout the closure period, up to 1600 children per day continued to attend school or nursery and in this way continued to access learning experiences and wellbeing support.

Early Learning and Childcare Strategy

Throughout the session the new Early Years Tracking Tool was used effectively by almost all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to record children's progress in learning and development. Practitioners reported that the tool was supporting them to:

- plan next steps for children
- ensure support and challenge for children who need it and
- respond to any gaps in learning
- engage in professional dialogue within settings and across sectors.

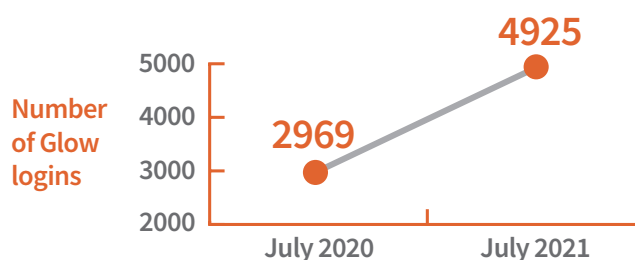
"The tracking tool helps to inform my planning as a teacher. It is a visual way of seeing where children are and what their next steps could be."

Early Years Practitioner

Public health guidance had an impact on the range of resources and opportunities available to children in early years settings and primary one classrooms. Practitioners quickly adapted the learning environments to ensure that children continued to have high quality experiences whilst maintaining the necessary restrictions, such as operating in smaller 'bubble' groups. As a result children were supported to continue to progress in their learning as they returned to education and ELC settings in August 2020. During the second period of closure from January 2021 a range of meaningful and appropriate learning ideas were shared with children and their families so that learning could continue at home.

In addition to remote learning for children, a wide range of remote learning opportunities was made available for practitioners working in the early years. Digital media were used to ensure training was available for staff 'on demand' and supported practitioners to plan developmentally appropriate experiences in response to each child's prior learning. Outdoor Learning was a particular focus within professional learning experiences as practitioners sought to maximise opportunities for outdoor play and experiences, in order to limit transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Data on practitioner engagement with the department's Early Years Glow Group showed that the number of views increased by 66% between July 2020 and July 2021.



Early Years Action Plan

A new Early Years action plan was developed with partners across the council and the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), with a focus on responding to the pandemic and ensuring that services work together to help families who need them most. The action plan forms part of the new Integrated Children's Services Plan and includes the following critical activities:

- Delivering effective parenting support that helps families
- Raising awareness of staff to ensure they are able to identify signs of child poverty and trauma linked to COVID-19 and are well informed about referral pathways
- Targeting resources to ensure they are deployed to support prevention and early intervention
- Targeting resources to ensure children most likely to be impacted by poverty benefit from them
- Improving the health outcomes for vulnerable children and families through collegiate partnership working.



Parenting support

Parenting support continued online throughout the year with a virtual Psychology of Positive Parenting (PoPP) group. 72 families registered with PoPP online and 76% of these reported improvements in their child's behaviour by the end of the programme. The online support led to increased participation by male carers when compared with face to face groups. In addition all parents could access universal parenting support online through the national Solihull Approach offer:

- Understanding pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby
- Understanding your baby
- Understanding your child
- Understanding your teenager's brain.

137 families in East Renfrewshire registered online and took part in the learning on offer which supported them to develop a greater understanding of children and parenting at different stages of development.

1140 Hours

The Education Department has successfully implemented almost all of elements of the 1140 Expansion, with the exception of the provision of free meals for all children attending early learning and childcare (ELC). A programme of minor works at existing ELC centres to facilitate the provision of meals to children during their session was delayed due to the pandemic. These were taken forward in early 2021 so that every child can receive a free hot meal from August 2021, regardless of their attendance pattern.

In recognition of the circumstances the department continued to provide free food for children most in need. This offer was advertised in family centres and targeted towards those who would be entitled to a free school meal if attending school.

Despite delays and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department delivered the commitment to provide 1140 hours of funded childcare by August 2020, a year ahead of the statutory duty to do so.

Early Learning and Childcare Consultation

A consultation was carried out with parents in autumn 2020 to seek their views on the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision available and to help shape the department's next steps. Within the consultation parents were asked to rate how well their child's current allocation meets the ELC needs of their family. 80% of respondents stated that their needs were met well, very well or extremely well, demonstrating a high level of overall satisfaction with the delivery of 1140 hours of ELC.

Respondents were keen to note that East Renfrewshire Council was delivering 1140 hours despite the difficulties associated with the pandemic and were appreciative of the expansion and modernisation work being carried out in settings. Families also reported that the new hours suited their work and family life, relieving financial pressures and reducing the amount of time grandparents were being asked to provide childcare. They recognised the high quality of early learning and childcare that their children received in both local authority and funded provider settings where their children were thriving.

“Well done on providing the additional hours in these circumstances. It has made a huge difference to my family.”

Parent

Adherence to advice on COVID-19 control measures, combined with the need to provide interim placements where nursery buildings were delayed, has meant that very few families have been able to purchase additional hours since August 2020. The department will re-introduce the facility to purchase additional hours, where space is available, through Parent Pay from August 2021, while also ensuring compliance with any on-going guidance from Public Health Scotland.

All nursery places are allocated using the published priorities with a ballot being held where demand exceeds space available. In session 2020-21 88% of families were allocated their first choice of setting with 72% also receiving their first choice of model.





Between 2016-17 and 2019-20, there had been a steady increase in the percentage of children achieving their developmental milestones within the least affluent communities, SIMD deciles 1-3. However, the most recent data shows a reversal in this trend with the achievement gap of those from the most affluent, SIMD 8-10, and least affluent, SIMD 1-3 residencies, increasing from 14% in 2019-20 to 20% in 2020-21.

This data also reflects the findings of Public Health Scotland’s report, The Impact of COVID-19 on Child Development, which found that COVID-19 infection control measures have had a profound impact on 2–4 year old children in Scotland.

A possible reason for this shift is the period of time children did not attend nursery during the first period of school and nursery closures (March 2020 to June 2020). Young children learn and develop best in social contexts and the period of closure brought isolation for many. Primary schools are aware of this impact and additional resources have been targeted to support children and young people with their learning and recovery.

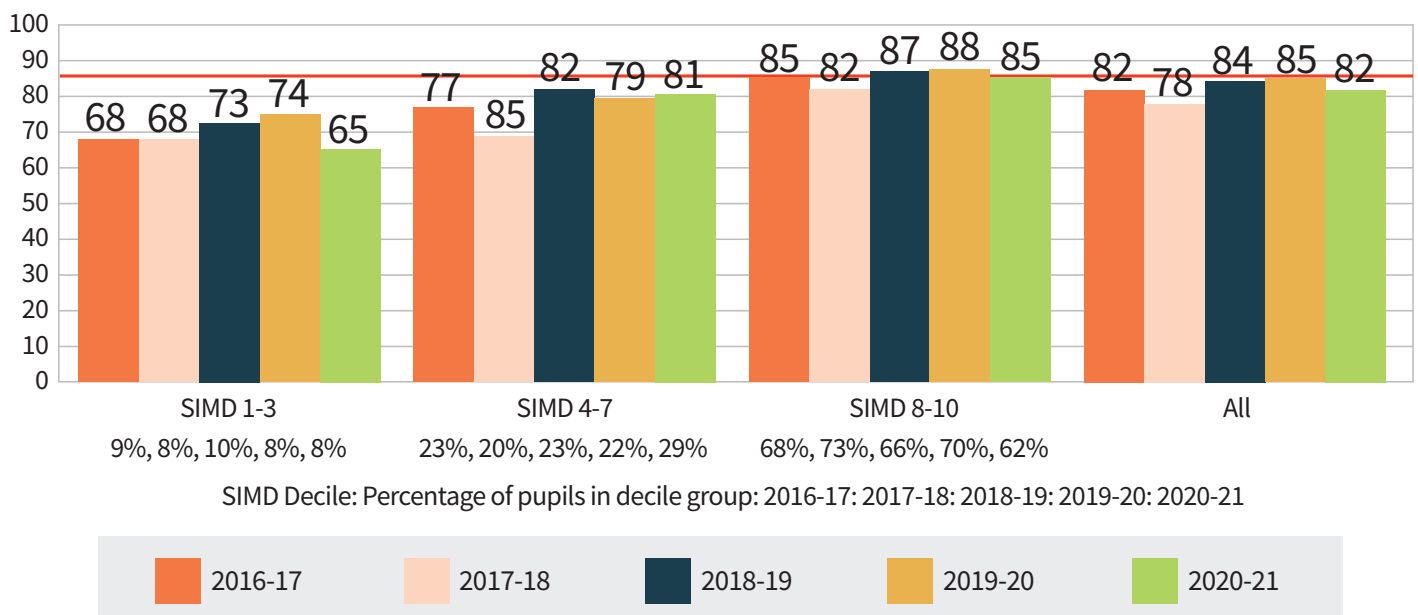
A Baseline Assessment has been in place since 2005-06 to assess children’s attainment in literacy and numeracy on entry to Primary 1. In contrast to the Developmental Milestones, overall performance in literacy and numeracy remained consistent with previous years.

The poverty measured attainment gap, using SIMD as a characteristic, has increased from 9 points in 2019-20 to 13 points in 2020-21 for numeracy, and reduced slightly in literacy from 16 points in 2019-20 to 15 points in 2020-21.

Developmental Milestones

Since 2013-14 data has been gathered on the percentage of children achieving the expected levels of development on entry to Primary 1. The following developmental components are assessed: Social, Emotional, Attention, Speech, Expressive Language, Receptive Language, Communication, Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills and Behaviour.

Developmental Milestones: History: by SIMD 2016-17 to 2020-21



What are we going to do now?

- Review, update and implement Numeracy and Mathematics and Literacy Strategies
- Continue to provide high quality professional learning opportunities for all staff and moderation facilitators
- Support and challenge schools to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements, the target-setting process and improved learning and teaching, particularly for key equity groups
- Support quality, coherence and progression across early level learning and teaching
- Implement the Integrated Children's Services Plan
- Continue to build capability and capacity of senior staff and teachers in schools and centres in the use of tracking and monitoring tools, including Insight, SNSA, the BGE Benchmarking Tool and Early Years Tracking Tool, and the ability to interpret data and identify areas of need for individuals and groups of learners
- Support and challenge schools to improve outcomes for identified groups through effective use of Pupil Equity Funding, with a particular focus on recovery, learning loss and equity
- Review the impact of COVID-19 on collaborative partnerships and support schools to continue with School Improvement Partnerships and other learning partnerships in the current context.

Everyone Achieving

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A CLPL calendar produced by the education department signposted practitioners to relevant professional learning. 93% of attendees of CLPL facilitated by the Quality Improvement Team and Educational Psychology Service who completed evaluations rated courses as good or better in terms of impact.

During session 2020-21, 23 teachers were engaged in Masters level (SCQF level 11) learning with the University of Strathclyde and Glasgow Caledonian University. There was a particular focus in these courses on educational leadership and professional inquiry.

An Aspiring Head Teachers programme was developed and recruitment has taken place for the first cohort, who will participate over the course of session 2021-22.

Support for the development of the Early Learning and Childcare workforce continued with 5 practitioners receiving funding to undertake BA in Childhood Practice.

Despite the physical restrictions in place throughout 2020-21, learners, staff members and partners continued to demonstrate a wide range of achievements as well as a determination to ensure opportunities continued to be available for all children, young people and adult learners to succeed. Through a variety of creative solutions such as blended vocational education programmes, remote professional learning and online parent meetings, stakeholders were supported to pursue their learning goals in a variety of innovative ways.

Leadership

Leadership is crucial in developing high expectations and ambitions for pupils. We continued to support schools to develop leadership opportunities for staff at all levels, for example through local authority Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) courses, Masters Level Learning and the Into Headship programme, and by working with schools to further develop approaches to distributive leadership.

In 2020-21, 100% of schools continued to self-evaluate their performance as 'good' or better for leadership of change. 84% were 'very good' or better, with 13% 'excellent'.

Professional Learning

Between August 2020 and June 2021, 222 courses were facilitated by the Quality Improvement Team and Education Psychology Service. Training programmes focusing on Literacy, Numeracy, Digital Skills and Health and Wellbeing have significantly increased the confidence of practitioners to improve learning, teaching and assessment. During the period of school closures from January to March 2021 training courses were streamlined to focus on supporting practitioners to deliver high quality learning experiences remotely. Throughout the session there was a relentless focus on supporting recovery by developing strategies to promote learners' health, wellbeing and resilience.

Evaluations of courses facilitated by the Quality Improvement Team demonstrated that almost all attending staff felt confident that their participation would lead to a positive impact on learners. Increasingly our schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings are sharing their professional learning across and beyond their clusters.

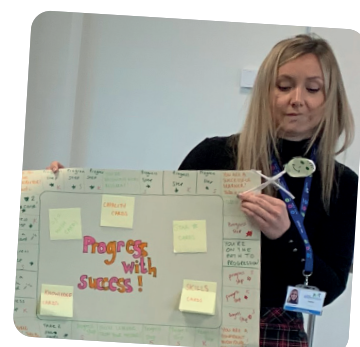
"At this review, you were able to evidence a strong customer focus in relation to training and development. Your Continued Professional Development (CPD) provision has largely moved online whilst maintaining very high levels of satisfaction. Attendance at CPD courses has increased due to the greater accessibility of online training and whilst staff were working remotely."

Customer Service Excellence Evaluation Report, March 2020

Newly Qualified Teachers

A total of 73 primary and 78 secondary probationer teachers successfully completed their one-year Teacher Induction Scheme placement in June 2021 and achieved the GTCS Standard for Full Registration.

A new and comprehensive probationer handbook was produced which provided detailed guidance for probationer teachers and their school supporters. Probationer teachers were well supported in their schools and through an authority-wide training programme facilitated by the Education Department. In a survey conducted in June 2021, almost all probationer teachers agreed that the induction provided by the local authority, including the handbook, was helpful. Almost all agreed that they had been well supported by their supporter and felt well supported by the local authority.



Compassionate and Connected Communities

Compassionate and Connected Communities is a professional learning resource that complements existing whole-school nurturing approaches and provides more targeted support to staff. It aims to contribute to practitioners' understanding and practice around supporting those who have experienced trauma or adversity. A model of practitioner inquiry is used to enhance reflective practice and skills development, and practitioners are encouraged to undertake collaborative action research to further develop their knowledge and skills.

The pilot phase of Compassionate and Connected Communities, led by the Educational Psychology Service, began in the summer term of 2020-2021 with participants from six schools. In response to a local needs analysis, the content of the first module focused on Staff Wellbeing. This work supported the authority's approach to the recovery phase as the department sought to address the challenges brought about by the pandemic, as well as the resulting additional pressures on school staff.

Initial feedback from participants was very positive and all schools involved committed to taking the initiative forward in 2021-22. Each school successfully identified key priorities for their own unique context and all participants were able to link their participation in Compassionate and Connected Communities to local and school improvement priorities. Participants were able to engage in reflective discussion throughout all sessions and adapted very well to the move to online delivery.

"CCC ties in so well with everything we are focusing on just now and moving into next session (and longer term) as well."

Participant, Compassionate and Connected Communities



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Improving Our Classrooms

Improving Our Classrooms (IOC) continued to provide a programme of high-quality professional learning placing classroom practitioners at the heart of school improvement. Members of the Quality Improvement Team worked in partnership with the West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative to provide this professional learning opportunity for identified practitioners in the primary sector.

The programme focuses on:

- high quality self-evaluation at classroom level leading to improved learning and teaching
- data-informed targeted interventions
- improved attainment and achievement
- equity and excellence for all children and young people.

Taking account of physical restrictions due to COVID-19, a pilot of a digital model took place from February to June 2021. All teachers were provided with a mentor who supported them throughout the programme. Eleven East Renfrewshire teachers completed the programme and submitted a Case Study of Improvement.

"Undertaking the IOC course has greatly impacted my professional development and classroom practice. I feel much more confident in identifying priorities to raise attainment and have already implemented various strategies into my classroom. The weekly webinar topics have been extremely insightful and have allowed me to reflect much more accurately on the experiences which I provide for my learners."

Participant, IOC Cohort 2

Creative Skills

National arts and early years organisation Starcatchers delivered their Creative Skills staff training programme in four early learning and childcare settings. This training for the early years workforce was adapted to be delivered outdoors through a blended approach of in-person training supported by online reflective practice and mentoring. Participants were able to share what they had learned with colleagues, and following the training reported feeling more confident in supporting their peers to develop their own creative skills and improve opportunities for children to be creative.

Self-evaluation and External Review

Self-evaluation and external review are essential tools used to develop and sustain the ethos of high expectations and achievement in every East Renfrewshire education school and centre. Throughout 2020-21 the department supported establishments to adapt their approaches to evaluating performance, to reflect the changing circumstances and locations in which learners, families and other stakeholders were engaging with services.

There were fewer opportunities for education practitioners to engage in self-evaluation activities in 2020-21, as schools and settings focused on meeting the needs of learners and families in a rapidly changing context. In questionnaires 85% of teachers stated that they were actively involved in the school's on-going self-evaluation, 9% less than in 2019-20; 82% said that they have opportunities to be involved in agreeing priorities for the school, 8% less than in 2019-20.

Based on experiences during the first period of school closure in spring 2020, all schools and centres worked throughout autumn 2020 to develop contingency planning for any further school closures. This enabled a swift transition to remote learning to take place following the announcement of the second period of school closure from January to March 2021. Digital methods of gathering feedback from children and families enabled schools and settings to swiftly evaluate how well these plans were meeting learners' needs and make adjustments as necessary to ensure all learners were well supported to learn at home.

During this period the department also worked with schools to audit remote learning provision, collecting a range of data and intelligence in order to understand the variety of approaches to remote learning across the authority area and plan for continued improvement to services.

The resulting report, 'How Effective is our Remote Learning', provided an overview of effective practice and evaluated the quality of provision across the key areas of engagement and wellbeing, learning, teaching and assessment, and self-evaluation for self-improvement. The report also identified a number of areas for improvement which were taken forward through ongoing school improvement activities with support from the Quality Improvement Team.

"52% of respondents rated online learning experiences as excellent, 43% as very good and 5% as good."

Arthurlie Family Centre, Family Questionnaire, February 2021

External review activities were paused by Education Scotland in 2020-21 to allow schools and centres to prioritise recovery and re-engagement. The department participated in two national engagement exercises led by Education Scotland, focused on Remote Learning (February 2021) and the Alternative Certification Model (April 2021). In feedback from both exercises, the quality of ongoing communication and engagement with all stakeholders was noted as a particular strength of the department's practice.

In questionnaires, 92% of parents and carers and 83% of learners said they were satisfied with their child's school overall.



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

A pupil from Williamwood High School was nominated for the Clarkston Young Person of the Year award for her positive contribution to her community through her voluntary work and by championing positive mental health.

Languages Leaders Network

A network of primary school staff with leadership responsibility for Modern Languages participated in a series of professional learning activities focused on curriculum design, inter-disciplinary learning approaches, and digital approaches to supporting foreign language learning. The sessions supported lead staff to promote quality language learning experiences in their establishments and across clusters. In evaluations, languages leaders noted a positive impact on their understanding of effective approaches to delivering Modern Languages and on their ability to facilitate dialogue with colleagues about effective practice in their establishments and clusters.

Working in cluster groups, staff evaluated the upper primary school Modern Languages curriculum collaboratively and identified new themes and contexts for learning to be developed in session 2021-22. An Education Development Officer was recruited to support languages leaders and schools with this moving forwards as all schools work to fully embed Scottish Government's 1+2 Approach to Language Learning by 2022.



School leaver destinations

School leaver destinations remain consistently high and above the national average. Initially in 2019-20 overall 96.2% of leavers were in a positive destination, such as higher education, further education, employment, training and voluntary work. The school leavers follow-up survey by Skills Development Scotland, which is undertaken 6 months after the initial survey, indicated that 96.4% of leavers were in a positive destination.

East Renfrewshire had the highest proportion of school leavers entering higher education across all local authorities in Scotland in 2019-20. 68.9% of young people went on to higher education in 2020, an increase of 1.7% in comparison to 2018-19 and well above the national average of 44.2%.

In addition, the latest participation data (2021) indicated that 97.2% of ERC 16-19 year olds were participating in education or training, well above the national figure of 92.2% and the highest result for mainland LAs.



STEM Strategy

The Education Department Science, Technologies, Engineering and Maths Strategy and associated action plan continued to be progressed in 2020-21. The principal aim of the strategy is to build capacity and support the development of our staff's skills as well as developing and sustaining greater partnership working across our establishments, with partners in further and higher education, related industries and other organisations promoting a wide range of STEM activities. Good progress was made with taking forward the actions detailed within the strategy.

In partnership with Scottish School Education Resource Centre (SSERC) a group of teachers from across East Renfrewshire's schools continued to take part in SSERC's 'Sustain and Extend' professional development programme in 2020-21. The group arranged and helped to deliver a series of STEM professional development events, delivered remotely online, which were open to all staff and which had national and international attendees. All sessions were very well attended and positively evaluated.

In November 2020, St Joseph's, St Clare's, Our Lady of the Missions and St Cadoc's primary schools and Glenwood Family Centre achieved Education Scotland's 'STEM Nation Award'. The award programme celebrates, promotes and builds effective practice in STEM education with a focus on: Leadership in STEM; Family and Community STEM Learning; STEM Partnership Working; STEM Curriculum and Learner Pathways; and Equity and Equality in STEM.

NIF Priority 4: Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people



Vocational Education

Vocational education continued to contribute to the achievement and attainment of young people in the senior phase and support them to develop skills for work. The range of vocational opportunities on offer provided high quality opportunities targeted to meet the broadest range of pupil needs, with courses ranging from SCQF Levels 1 to 8.

The progress of our young people is closely monitored to ensure successful outcomes for every young person undertaking a vocational course. This tracking is possible due to the support of college partners and training providers who work in partnership with us to maintain pupil progress and intervene when appropriate, offering further support as required.

The number of Foundation Apprenticeship courses available for our young people has increased over recent years to include more frameworks across a broader range of sectors and more shorter-duration courses. The number of pupils participating in the senior phase vocational programme significantly increased in the five year period from 2015-16 to 2019-20. In session 2020-21, physical restrictions and changes to course delivery resulted in fewer young people participating in vocational courses. 346 young people were enrolled in senior phase vocational courses, a decrease of 38% compared with 2019-20.

Despite the impact of restrictions during 2020-21, mitigations in response to the pandemic including online learning and staggered attendance, allowed young people to continue to engage positively in vocational learning and pursue their chosen pathways. Over the past three years, the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF Level 5 or Level 6 has increased from 21.2% to 28.3% (Level 5) and 10.9% to 15.8% (Level 6). The national figures for both measures are 17.1% and 8.4% respectively.

The vocational facilities at Barrhead High School continued to provide excellent opportunities for young people, with partners and staff across the local authority accessing facilities to support children and young people, parents and wider council staff.

Vocational learners participated in the department's Customer Service Excellence Review in March 2020. Following focus groups with learners and parents the assessor noted:

- the accessibility of support and advice for young people engaging with vocational courses, as well as their parents and carers
- the promptness of information and updates about changes to services during the COVID-19 pandemic
- the positive approaches in place to involve learners in planning their pathways.



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

A pupil from Eastwood High School piped round local care homes every Friday, Saturday and Sunday during school closures. His performances were very much appreciated by the community and he was a nominee for East Renfrewshire Citizen of the Year in 2020.

Adult Learning Services

During 2020 – 2021, Adult Learning Services transformed service delivery to meet the needs of local adult learners. All team members trained as Digital Champions through Connecting Scotland and created online learning provision for adult learners with digital access. The Connecting Scotland programme provided 44 families and individual residents with a digital device, connectivity and ongoing support to engage with learning and services online. For those without digital access, and those who didn't want to engage online, distance learning opportunities ensured the service remained inclusive.

The team worked to ensure that over 80 shielding residents had the necessary digital skills and knowledge to access key services. As a result residents were able to access priority shopping slots, arrange medicine deliveries and engage with learning opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge.

The team also worked with 155 adult learners to provide a range of tailored learning opportunities, enabling them to make progress towards their learning goals and stay connected with their family, friends and local community. Courses included English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), Adult Literacies, Learning for Work and Personal Development programmes.

SQA accredited courses moved online in partnership with local colleges. 14 adult learners gained an SQA ESOL qualification in partnership with Clyde College, and a further 14 gained SQA qualifications at SCQF Level 4 in partnership with West College Scotland across a range of employment-focused courses.

The service supported 59 adult learners with online employability learning programmes, representing an increase in the number of adults referred from the Department of Work and Pensions and an increase in referrals for residents who have been made redundant. This involved digital and technical support to learners, providing digital advice on creating and editing CVs, searching for jobs online, accessing training and finding learning opportunities. With improved confidence and employability skills, all learners felt confident enough to apply for jobs. Adult learners progressed to a range of positive destinations including volunteering roles, apprenticeships, further education, and paid employment.



Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy

Good progress has been made with the actions outlined in the department's Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy, with an increased pace of improvement resulting from the focus on digital learning and teaching during the pandemic. Of particular note is the number of establishments successfully achieving the national Digital Schools Award. Digital Schools Awards Scotland is a national awards programme accredited by Education Scotland which aims to promote, recognise and encourage a whole-school approach to the use of digital technology in primary and secondary schools. By June 2020 overall 92% of primary schools, Isobel Mair School and 71% of secondary schools had achieved a Digital Schools Award. An increasing number of schools are now applying for the Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety (CRIS) badge, with three schools already having achieved this award.

“Everyone has rallied round to support each other and ensure equity of provision for all pupils. Teachers have provided learning experiences through Teams, made videos and also engaged children in whole school events, e.g. P7 transition events. They have been creative in their efforts to engage pupils and parents, and have been extremely successful in their endeavours.”

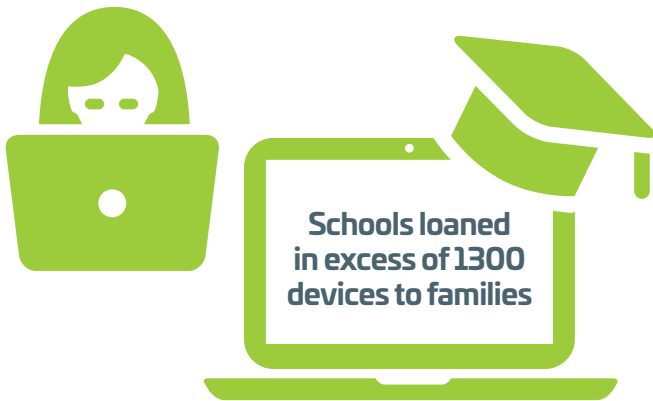
Mearns Castle High School, Digital Schools Award Validation Report, October 2020



Supporting Online Learning

Schools and centres continued to make very good use of the productivity tools available through Glow in order to support learning and teaching, including to support remote learning during the period of school closure. As a result, there has been an improvement in the confidence and ability of pupils and staff to utilise these tools. Glow logins by teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students continued to be amongst the highest of all Scottish local authorities. Teaching staff made very effective use of a range of websites and apps such as Mote, Thinglink and Jamboard in order to engage learners, encourage collaboration and provide meaningful feedback.

During session 2020-21, the Education Department provided 700 Chromebooks to schools. During school closures from January to March 2021, schools loaned in excess of 1300 devices to families in order to support them to engage with remote learning. The devices increased equity by facilitating digital access for all learners. Feedback from families was extremely positive, with many commenting on the high level of support they received with IT-related issues from school staff.



“The developing digital culture throughout the school is being strategically and purposefully cultivated. The digital tools can be the difference between inclusion and exclusion for learners at Isobel Mair School and thankfully they fully exploit all the additional digital support tools at their disposal to ensure all learners are included and thriving.”

Isobel Mair School, Digital Schools Award Validation Report June 2021

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Convener’s Awards for Outstanding Achievement

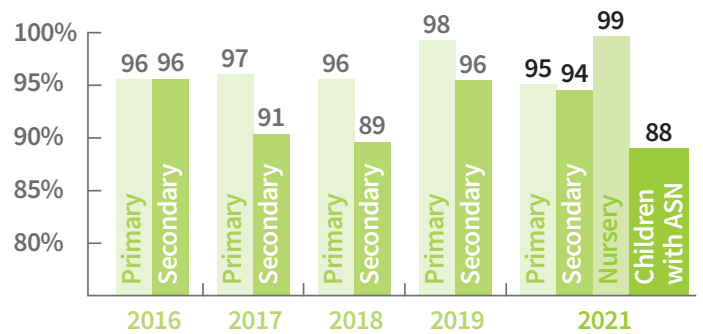
The annual Convener’s Awards were celebrated with an online event in May 2021. 36 young people and groups from across the authority were recognised for their outstanding achievements in various fields such as sports, creativity, community service and advocacy.



Citizens’ Panel

Through the 2021 Citizens’ Panel Report, East Renfrewshire residents surveyed about their levels of satisfaction with the quality of service provided were very positive about the services provided by the Education Department. The report shows that primary and secondary education were the two highest rated council services in the survey. 95% of respondents rated primary education as good or very good; this figure was 94% for secondary education. Further analysis within the report showed that education continued to be one of the top reasons for respondents choosing to live in East Renfrewshire.

% Rating Education as Good / Very Good



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

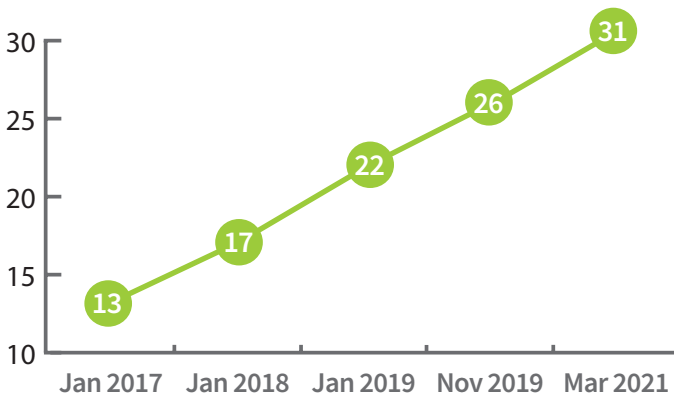
A pupil from Barrhead High School who is a member of the Children and Young People’s Panel on Europe worked with the panel during lockdown to create a report titled ‘Young Brexit Voices: It’s Our Future Too’ about the sort of country children and young people want to live in as the UK leaves the EU.



Customer Service Excellence

In March 2021 the Education Department undertook an assessment by SGS Customer Service Excellence and achieved a continued award of the Customer Service Excellence Standard. The report recognises the department’s continuing commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified the service as Fully Compliant against all criteria, with 23 areas of Good Practice and a further 31 areas of Compliance Plus, which are ‘behaviours or practices which exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as an exemplar to others.’ The number of areas of Compliance Plus had increased from the previous assessments in January 2017, January 2018, January 2019 and November 2019, when there were 13, 17 and 22 and 26 respectively.

31 Areas of Compliance Plus



“There is a well-established and very strong corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in your organisation actively support this... There were numerous examples evidenced of where the evolving needs and preferences of customers were taken account of and directly influenced service improvement and delivery.”

Customer Service Excellence Evaluation Report, March 2021



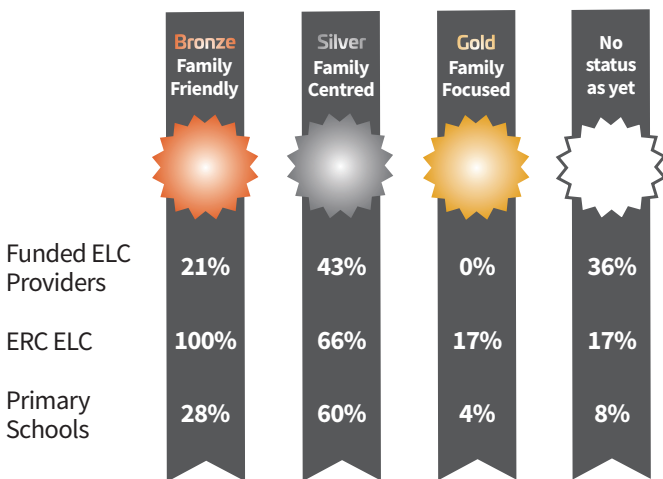
OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

A pupil from Mearns Castle High School who is a 3D printing enthusiast used his own printer to make face shields to support the NHS and the local community. After initially distributing a small number to local NHS workers, he then fundraised £4500 to purchase materials and went on to produce over 2000 face shields. These were donated to the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice, local hospitals, care homes, surgeries and pharmacies. Surplus money was donated to the Beatson Cancer Charity, the Royal Children’s Hospital and the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice. The newly purchased printers were later donated to his school.

Parental Involvement and Engagement

Despite public health restrictions which meant that parents could not enter school buildings, schools and settings continued to successfully engage and involve parents in their children's education. A wide range of digital media were used to ensure effective and on-going communication, including voice and video calls, remote learning provision, blogs, social media and school apps.

All our establishments continue to strive to offer excellent services for families as they continue their journey towards Gold Family Focused accreditation. The Family Centred Approaches framework was reviewed to support a digital approach to accreditation and highlight the work schools and settings had undertaken in engaging children and families remotely. This resulted in one family centre and one nursery class achieving Gold Family Focused status and a nursery class being re-accredited at Gold. In addition, this new online process enabled the first primary school to achieve Gold accreditation before the end of term.



Parent Councils were effectively supported through the Parent Council Chairs' Forum. This ensured that Chairs had up-to-date information about the Education Department's plans in response to, and recovery from, the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. In June 2020, we asked parent councils to invite the parent forum at each school to share their questions and worries about the return to school in August. 608 questions were received and were answered at the Parent Council Forum by the Education Leadership Team. Frequently Asked Questions were shared with Parent Council chairs so that they could feed back to the parent forum of each school with information and reassurance.

Members of the Quality Improvement Team worked in partnership with University of the West of Scotland to raise awareness and upskill key staff in supporting parents from diverse groups in their settings. Equalities Coordinators and Parental Involvement Coordinators participated in a series of training sessions, supporting them to pro-actively work to increase representation and participation of parents from all communities.

"I feel that communication between staff and myself has improved during the response to the pandemic. I now feel I am more in touch with what my child is actually doing at nursery than I was previously. My child is loving being back at nursery, and very much enjoying the facilities in the new building."

Parent, Busby Nursery Class Gold Family Focused Accreditation Review

Responding to COVID-19

During the period of school closure from January to March 2021 all schools implemented systems for monitoring online attendance and engagement, which enabled them to effectively target additional support towards pupils who were experiencing difficulties with learning at home.

Almost all pupils in East Renfrewshire participated in remote learning either at home or in the school hub setting, with an overall engagement level of 95% across all Early Learning and Childcare settings and primary, secondary and special schools in January 2021. All settings and schools used attendance and participation data to understand patterns of engagement and implement follow-up interventions, including phone calls home and offers to attend school hubs.

Working in partnership with East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, schools were able to continue to promote achievement and participation through physical activity. The Active Schools Team were proactive and responsive in the context of frequently changing restrictions placed on physical activity, supporting primary teaching staff to deliver physical activities outdoors and providing a wide range of linked professional learning.

Active Schools also supported school hubs during lockdown and provided targeted support for children who found it difficult to re-engage in learning following lockdown. As a result, all schools were able to offer a wide variety of quality opportunities to participate in physical activities to promote recovery and re-engagement in learning.



What are we going to do now?

- Continue to offer challenge and support to all schools and services to achieve consistently high standards
- Support schools to continue to improve learners' experiences and outcomes by implementing the CLPL framework and sharing approaches to professional inquiry across our schools and centres, including through Research Hubs
- Review, update and implement a revised leadership strategy
- Continue to develop and deliver a range of SQA accredited courses to meet the needs of adult learners while ensuring the mode of delivery is effective and safe
- Continue to work in partnership with schools and with ERC Culture and Leisure Trust to ensure all young people have high quality opportunities for wider achievement and that wider achievements of all pupils are recognised in school
- Review, update and implement the STEM and Digital Learning and Capacity Strategies
- Implement the updated Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy 2021-24.

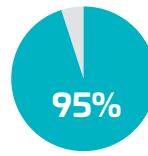
Excellent Experiences

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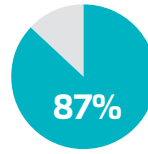
Throughout session 2020-21 the Education Department responded to rapidly changing circumstances in order to support our schools, centres and partners to offer excellent experiences for children, young people and families.

“Whole setting approaches ensure that rights underpin the curriculum and are embedded in learning and teaching. We are developing learner participation across school life; pupils benefit from a range of positive outcomes and most believe they are given the opportunity to influence what and how they learn.”

‘Children’s Rights in East Renfrewshire’, April 2021



95% of teaching staff and child development officers stated that children and young people had the opportunity to lead their own learning



87% of school pupils agreed that staff expected them to take responsibility for their own learning



Virtual String Orchestra

Unable to rehearse together in person due to COVID restrictions, our string orchestras moved online, with over 160 Primary 5 – S6 string pupils, from across the authority, signing up to take part in weekly Google Meet rehearsals and virtual performances throughout 2020/21.

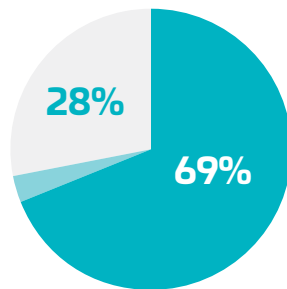
Our Senior Virtual String Orchestra produced video performances for the 2021 Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Holocaust Memorial Day and for the first ever Scottish String and Orchestra Festival, for which they received a Gold Plus award for their performance.

Weekly online rehearsals not only enabled our young musicians to learn new repertoire, develop skills in playing along to backing tracks and how to record and upload audio/video tracks, but also provided an opportunity for the pupils to see and interact with peers from across the authority.

Virtual Nature School

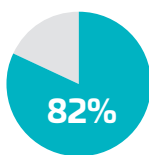
Ten early learning and childcare settings took part in the Scottish Government funded Virtual Nature School initiative, which aims to benefit children and families by providing expert guidance on learning and play in an outdoor environment. Virtual Nature School is a non-profit programme created in response to the needs of children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result children across these settings had enhanced outdoor learning experiences, and images shared via social media were promoted nationally providing inspiration for colleagues around the country to promote learning with children outdoors.

In 2020-21, 100% of schools self-evaluated their provision as ‘good’ or better for learning, teaching and assessment. 69% were evaluated as ‘very good’ and 3% as ‘excellent’.

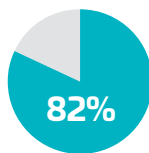


Questionnaire Data

In responses to questionnaires:



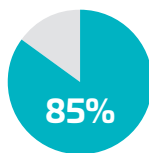
82% of parents and carers of children at school agreed that they received helpful feedback about how their child is learning and developing



82% of parents and carers of children in ELC settings agreed that their child was making good progress at the setting



99% of teaching staff stated that they gave children and young people regular feedback which helped them to progress



85% of school pupils agreed that the feedback they received on their work helped them to improve their learning

Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools

Pupils from East Renfrewshire primary schools continued to develop as global citizens by taking part in 'Discovering China' online classes provided jointly by the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools (CISS), Scotland's Centre for Language Learning (SCILT) and national online learning platform E-sgoil.

'Discovering China' lessons were facilitated by teachers live streaming directly from China, enabling learners to continue to learn Mandarin Chinese, engage with other cultures and develop their international understanding despite the restrictions in place throughout the session. The online sessions were positively evaluated by participating schools, all of whom are continuing to learn Chinese online in 2021-22 combined with a return to in-person support from our Chinese Exchange Teacher.



Support for Parents

Online parent sessions were delivered by East Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service to 184 parents during March 2021. The aim of the sessions was to build capacity amongst parents and carers to support children and young people's wellbeing during the second period of lockdown.

Views obtained from participants prior to the sessions highlighted concerns about the impact of the pandemic on their children's emotional, behavioural and physical skills, on their relationships, and on their ability to access learning. This informed the content of the sessions, which focused on raising awareness of the impact of the pandemic on children and young people and on strategies and resources to meet their needs.

Online evaluations were completed by participants immediately following the sessions, and follow-up interviews were carried out with two participants. Analysis indicated that the sessions had provided participants with reassurance and useful information and strategies to support their children.

"I can see the difference in A since working with you, it's been a vital support. It's been great for the family all round."

Parent/Carer Participant, Online Parent Sessions

NIF Priority 3: Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

Healthier Minds

Healthier Minds works alongside primary and secondary schools to facilitate the delivery of mental wellbeing support services to children, young people and their families.

The Healthier Minds team met on a weekly basis and was attended by regular representatives from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, social work, youth counselling, educational psychology and the Family Wellbeing Service. The best possible supports and routes for provision were agreed based on the individual needs of the child or young person.

The Healthier Minds website has whole range of information and support for staff members, pupils and families to access directly, including recovery specific resources, in recognition of how challenging the last year has been for many people. The website continued to evolve in response to feedback from children, young people and their families to offer a support hub for those seeking more information on self-help, support or local services.

From January to mid-June 2021 the hub received 204 referrals, resulting in 71 referrals to youth counselling, 64 to the Healthier Minds Team and 69 continuing with existing services or recommended to engage with further services. The Healthier Minds team bridges the gap between current service provision and a new systemic model of individual and family support, which will be introduced from autumn 2021.

A Diversity Action Plan was developed in August 2020 to outline the Education Department's strategy for increasing the diversity and representation of all stakeholders engaging with, and providing, education services.

Equalities Coordinators worked collaboratively during September and October 2020 to develop a self-evaluation tool for promoting culturally inclusive learning environments. Coalition for Racial Equality (CRER) supported practitioners and parents to deepen their understanding of the experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, further develop their own racial literacy, and consider effective practice to promote equality and inclusion in schools and centres. This work supported schools and centres to include actions focused on improving equality and representation in their school and centre improvement plans from August 2021.

School Equalities Coordinators met online termly to undertake professional learning and share practice to promote equality. A range of partners from Education Scotland, universities and third sector organisations provided awareness-raising professional learning inputs for the network, which were very positively evaluated by participants. 47 members of school and centre leadership teams attended network meetings throughout the session and these were very positively evaluated by participants.

From March to May 2021 the network focused on tackling child poverty and reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and families on low incomes. Professional learning delivered by Public Health Scotland, Child Poverty Action Group and members of the Quality Improvement Team, supported establishments to understand the changing socio-economic context in East Renfrewshire as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and plan effective strategies to support families on low incomes. As a result, a sub-group was established to audit the Cost of the School Day in 14 establishments across East Renfrewshire during session 2021-22. This work will provide evidence to inform the department's Local Child Poverty Action Plan moving forwards.

"I found this session to be very informative and felt it provided both insight and practical support in tackling these issues. Our school launched a Diversity & Equality Team in February... The inputs and guidance to date have hugely helped us in paving the way for this and the response from staff, parents and families has been huge."

Participant, Equalities Coordinators Network Meeting



Widening Participation

All secondary schools worked in partnership with Glasgow University to support eligible young people into higher education through the Top-Up, Reach and Access to a Career programmes. Through the widening access programmes young people from targeted groups can engage in a range of learning activities to enhance their self-study skills and preparedness for higher education. Successful participants are eligible for adjusted offers for university courses. The programmes, which had previously been delivered in person in high schools by visiting university tutors, moved online in autumn 2020.

56 young people completed widening access programmes in 2020-21 through a range of webinar-based, tutorial-based and independent learning activities. As a result, 47 East Renfrewshire young people were eligible for adjusted offers to enter a wide range of higher education courses in Autumn 2021. This represented 84% of the young people who completed their programmes last session.

Pastoral care staff from all secondary schools took part in professional learning led by the Glasgow University team on the range of support that can be provided for vulnerable groups of pupils through widening access programmes, including those who are care experienced or young carers.

UNICEF Rights Respecting School Awards

Almost all schools and early learning and childcare centres are engaged in the Rights Respecting School Award accreditation process, with 12 currently at Gold level. During assessment visits to East Renfrewshire schools, a number of key strengths were noted including:

- strong pupil voice
- a positive ethos where relationships are based on mutual respect
- a focus on mental health and wellbeing
- leadership teams' desire to help every child succeed.

The education department worked in partnership with UNICEF to provide professional learning for key staff in schools and early learning and childcare centres which explained the accreditation process and made links to the expectations of the proposed UNCRC Bill.

The department also worked with partners across the council and HSCP to complete a report which demonstrates our successes as a council in promoting and upholding children's rights and outlines where we can improve. The report contains case studies which highlight sector leading work in Woodfarm High School and Isobel Mair School.

"The Inclusive Support Team and Isobel Mair School, along with partners from Children's Services, worked with D's family to support his return to school, initially on a part-time basis. This helped D realise that the familiar life of the school community was still available to him... For D, his right to express his views have been promoted and supported, leading to positive benefits for him and his family."

**'Children's Rights in East Renfrewshire',
April 2021**



Nurturing Approaches

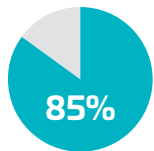
Establishments continued to develop nurturing approaches to support learners' wellbeing as the foundation for their learning. 54% of primary schools reported having a dedicated nurture room in 2020/21.

A range of professional learning opportunities continued to be available and provided opportunities for practitioners to develop and share ideas, activities and resources to translate the theory behind Nurturing Approaches into practice. Sessions on 'Using Nurture Principles and Trauma Informed Practice as a Framework for Recovery' were attended by 38 primary and early years staff from 18 establishments across the authority and were very positively evaluated by participants.

"As an ASN Co-ordinator this has really helped me to examine how I deal with a number of individuals/situations and what else I could be doing to support them. I will also ensure that key points which I found helpful are shared with staff across school."

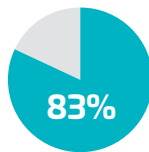
Participant, Learning Centre Practitioners' Network

During the pandemic, and in particular during periods of school closure, the department provided support and advice to schools and early learning and childcare centres to ensure that vulnerable learners were given the highest level of support to engage with key school staff in school hubs and through remote learning. We also communicated very effectively with colleagues in the council's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSPC) and third sector partners during this period, to ensure that children and young people who needed additional support to engage with learning received this. Statistics gathered from questionnaires in 2020-21 showed that:



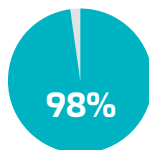
85% of parents and carers agreed that their child receives the help they need to do well

83% of parents and carers of children at school agreed that the school really knows their child as an individual



98% of teachers and child development officers stated that children and young people were provided with experiences which met their learning needs

98% of teachers and child development officers considered that children and young people are engaged in their learning.



Children's Plan

A new Children's Plan 2021-23 was developed in partnership with HSPC. The plan sets out the vision for children, young people and families for the three years ahead, and demonstrates our shared commitment to supporting them achieve the best possible outcomes.

We continued to work to identify more young carers and to improve the support we provide for them. Our Young Carer Schools Group led an awareness raising session for school staff where we launched the young carer education toolkit produced by the Carers Trust and shared best practice from some of the schools who are part of the schools group. Another event was held to mark Young Carers Action Day, celebrating the achievements of our young carers and sharing their lived experiences.

21 schools have engaged with the Young Carer development worker. There has been a significant increase in the number of carers being identified by schools and being supported by the Carers Centre as a result of this activity over the last two years, from 28 in September 2018 to 126 in September 2020.

As a result of this success the department was invited to share its practice at a national conference facilitated by the Carers Trust in March 2021. Funding has been extended to June 2022 for the Young Carer development worker who supports schools by providing assemblies, workshops and drop-in sessions for pupils, as well as training for staff.

Exclusion Rates

Our schools continue to use strategies to promote positive, nurturing and supportive relationships with our children in order to manage behaviour in a proactive and person-centred manner.

In 2020-21, two temporary exclusions were made in the primary sector resulting in an exclusion rate of 0.2 exclusions per 1000 pupils; this is the first time any pupils have been excluded in the primary sector since 2016-17. East Renfrewshire compares very favourably to the national value of 8.1 incidents per 1000 pupils (latest published data for 2018-19). The primary sector achieved its 3-year average target for the period 2018-19 to 2020-21, set at 0.3 incidents per 1000 pupils with a final value of 0.07.

In 2020-21 there was a decrease in exclusions in the secondary sector to 2.3 incidents per 1000 pupils, down from 4.6 in 2019-20, the third consecutive reduction since 2017-18 and the lowest exclusion rate ever recorded. This performance compares very well with the national figure of 39.6 incidents per 1000 pupils (latest published data for 2018-19). After 3 years, the secondary sector achieved its 3-year average exclusion incidents target (2018-19 to 2020-21) of 5.0 incidents per 1000 pupils with a rate of 4.5. The secondary sector achieved the 3-year average target in the last 2 years with values of 4.6 and 2.3 per 1000 incidents; in 2018-19 the rate was 6.8.

Exclusions of pupils from within our Care Experienced community was 8.5 per 1000 Care Experienced pupils in 2019-20. This is the same value as in 2019-20 and maintains the lowest rate recorded since 2014-15.





Attendance

Overall attendance in the Primary Sector reduced in the first year of the pandemic from 96.3% in 2018-19 to 95.6% in 2019-20, then increased to 96.8% in 2020-21. This was the highest value recorded in this sector over the past five years. Similarly, in 2020-21, this sector recorded the highest values for both male and female attendance (96.8%); and recorded no gender gap this year. The reduction in attendance noted in the first year of the pandemic (2019-20) was a direct result of learners moving from very high (>98%) and high (>95%) attendance bands to medium (>90%) and low (>85%). Conversely, in 2020-21, the proportion of learners in the highest band (>98%) increased significantly from an average of 41% pre-pandemic to 54.8% in this year. The proportion of learners in the exceptionally low band remained relatively stable throughout the five year period.

Attendances within the Secondary Sector are calculated for S1-S5 only. Overall attendance in the Secondary Sector reduced in the first year of the pandemic from 93.9% in 2018-19 to 93.0% in 2019-20, then increased to 94.3% in 2020-21. This was the highest value recorded in this sector over the past five years. Similarly, in 2020-21 this sector recorded the highest values for both male (94.4%) and female (94.1%) attendance, and for the overall attendance of learners entitled to free school meals (89.6%). Similarly, the attendance of each SIMD quintile followed the same trend over the past three years, with the attendance of those learners in quintiles 1 to 5 reducing in 2019-20 before returning to higher than pre-pandemic values in 2020-21.

Anti-bullying

The annual anti-bullying return shows there were 51 recorded bullying incidents in 2020-21. The three-year average number of incidents is 48.

Incidents and alleged incidents of racist behaviour remained low across both primary and secondary establishments. Those which did occur were dealt with sensitively and appropriately with restorative approaches.

In questionnaires:

- 85% of pupils agreed that they had someone in their school they could speak to if they are upset or worried by something
- 79% of pupils agreed that the school looks after their mental health
- 85% of parents of school children agreed that the school supports their child's emotional wellbeing; 95% of parents with children in early learning and childcare settings agreed with this
- almost all staff (96%) indicated that children were treated fairly and with respect by staff, with almost all (90%) children agreeing with this. Almost all staff (96%) also indicated that children and young people were encouraged and supported to treat others with respect; almost all pupils (96%) agreed that other pupils treated them with respect.

Child Protection

The Education Department had very effective arrangements in place in relation to safeguarding. A multi-agency child protection audit identified areas for improvement in individual settings. Child protection coordinators' awareness and understanding of issues such as child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and Prevent was supported and enhanced by their participation in child protection coordinator meetings, led by the Quality Improvement Team and the council's Lead Officer for child protection, and through attendance at multi agency public protection training events.

An updated Child Protection briefing presentation was produced and shared with schools for use with all staff during in service days. Senior and pastoral care staff in schools and across East Renfrewshire participated in professional learning in the Signs of Safety approach to Child Protection, which has been welcomed by the local Child Protection Committee.

Almost all pupils (92%) reported that they felt safe in school and almost all staff (99% of teaching and support staff) said that they understand how to apply the school's procedures relating to child protection and safeguarding.

40

Mentors in Violence Prevention

Mentors in Violence Prevention is a peer mentoring programme that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence. It addresses a range of behaviours including name-calling, sexting, controlling behaviour and harassment, and uses a 'by-stander' approach where individuals are not looked on as potential victims or perpetrators, but as empowered and active bystanders with the ability to support and challenge their peers in a safe way.

In May 2021, staff from four secondary schools (Barrhead, St Luke's, Woodfarm and Williamwood High Schools), along with partners from Police Scotland, East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Community Learning and Development, Women's Aid and Rape Crisis, participated in Mentors in Violence Prevention training, facilitated by Education Scotland. These staff then took on the role of trainer, training volunteer senior pupils to become mentors, with further training planned for the remaining three secondary schools to join this programme in session 2021-22.





Learning for Sustainability

The Education Department worked with a range of third sector organisations and partners including West of Scotland Development Education Centre (WOSDEC), Keep Scotland Beautiful and Sportscotland to promote and support Learning for Sustainability as a prominent feature of the curriculum. Following a number of professional learning sessions for staff, an Eco Schools Forum was established and staff met termly to share resources and best practice.

Staff worked in partnership with the Environment Department to consult with pupil leaders from all primary schools via Pupil Council meetings. Pupil leaders shared some of their best experiences in learning about climate change and provided feedback to the Environment Department on the priorities of their draft Climate Strategy.

Busby and Neilston Primary School pupils took part in a project with Zero Waste Scotland on their Managing our Waste campaign. Pupils designed 100% recyclable recycling mascots. Most schools and early learning and childcare centres (29) had a current Green Flag Award in 2020-21. Most schools also held a Sportscotland School Sport Award, with 20 schools currently accredited at Gold level.



Responding to COVID-19

East Renfrewshire was provided with Scottish Government funding to help improve the wellbeing of children and young people over the summer period through the 'Get Into Summer' programme. Education Department staff worked with colleagues across children's services to coordinate and deliver holiday activities and experiences, integrating food and wider family support where needed, and targeted at low income families as well as children and young people particularly affected by the impact of the pandemic.

An estimated 2211 children and young people had first-hand experience of Get Into Summer activities. Parents and carers reported benefits to wider families as a result of removing the need for them to provide child care and lunch over the summer period. A wide range of vulnerable groups of children and young people were sensitively targeted to encourage participation.

Evaluations of the wide range activities provided show that the programme led to many positive outcomes for children and young people from target groups, including:

- increased time playing with other children
- increased time spent outdoors
- increased physical activity, leading to improvements in mental and physical wellbeing
- reduced stigma due to removal of certain financial barriers to participation, leading to happier children and young people
- increased sense of belonging to local community
- reduced parental stress.



Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

A pupil survey was undertaken to better understand the impact of Covid-19 on the mental wellbeing of children and young people in P6-S6 across the local authority, and to provide further evidence for how best to respond to their mental wellbeing needs. The research was developed by the Educational Psychology Service in collaboration with the Healthier Minds Service. A total of 2956 responses from 25 establishments were received.

This research indicated that most young people had coped well with lockdown, with the most common feelings being fine/ok (39%), bored (22%) and happy (12%). The majority of those who responded 'bored' were in younger year groups and additional data suggests that not seeing friends and not getting to go to clubs/groups contributed to this feeling. A small percentage reported that they felt mostly anxious and sad.

The results also suggested that lack of social interaction with friends and family was the most challenging aspect for the majority of young people. Around 20% of pupils were worried about changes to their friendships.

With regards to returning to school after lockdown, the most common response across all stages was fine/ok (36%). The most common positive aspect about lockdown was spending more time with family (45%), followed by learning new hobbies and skills (30%). Many pupils also indicated that spending more time with their pets was a positive feature of lockdown (28%). The qualitative feedback amongst senior pupils indicated that for a small percentage it was a time of self-discovery and growth, and that they had enjoyed the opportunity to focus on themselves.

Overall, the data suggests that social connection was important for supporting the majority of young people's mental wellbeing, in particular talking to friends. Listening to music was also a common strategy, particularly for senior pupils. Physical strategies such as spending time outside, regular exercise and having a routine were also reported as important.

The results of the research were shared across the department and used to inform discussion about how to further support the mental wellbeing needs of our children and young people moving forwards.



Investment

Despite the significant financial impact of the response to the COVID 19 pandemic across education services, a combination of factors including early management action to avoid any non-essential spend, additional Scottish Government funding and periods of school and centre closures resulted in an underspend against budget of 1.3%.

Ongoing efficient use of resources is evidenced by continued above average performance in terms of cost per pupil place.

Supported by Scottish Government funding, schools benefitted from additional recovery teaching and support staff as well as enhanced cleaning to ensure all settings remained COVID safe environments for learning. Funding also supported our most vulnerable pupils both in terms of the provision of devices during periods of remote learning and the ongoing provision of free school meals during periods of closure, self-isolation and school holidays. A Winter and Spring hardship payment was also made to support these pupils. £100 payments per child were paid directly to families, ensuring that they had additional support when children and young people were at home over the holidays.

In addition, ahead of the winter holidays the Council paid an additional £25 to all children and young people in receipt of a School Clothing Grant to help families with the cost of essential winter clothing.



Facilities Management

During the period of school closure from January to March 2021, the Facilities Management team provided over 200,000 free school meal packs delivered to learners' homes on a weekly basis, alongside a full service provision of janitorial, cleaning and catering in the hubs. Services were then re-established in all schools, with enhanced cleaning regimes remaining in place to support infection control measures.

The team played a key role in supporting the opening of new early learning and childcare centres, with establishments ready to provide free lunches to all of our early learners, as well as all primary 1 to primary 4 pupils, ahead of August 2021.





Early Years Expansion

The main phase of our early years expansion was dependent on the construction of new facilities that were planned to be available for August 2020, comprising:

- a new family centre within the grounds of Eastwood Park
- two new build larger replacements for Busby and Eaglesham primary school nursery classes
- two new build family centres on the sites of Crookfur and Overlee pavilions
- a new extension at Cross Arthurlie Primary School to establish a nursery class.

Despite delays almost all of the new settings began to welcome children between December 2020 and April 2021, with the exception of Overlee Family Centre which opened in August 2021. A small extension at Carolside Primary School Nursery Class was also completed by December 2020.

Contingency measures were deployed to mitigate the impact of the delay to the infrastructure programme. This included reducing choice and flexibility, limiting the purchase of additional hours and making greater use of outdoor space.



Modernisation

The Learning and Leisure in Neilston project, which will include new build replacements for Neilston Primary, St Thomas's Primary and Madras Family Centre, progressed well with the design now finalised following consultation with pupils, staff and the wider community.

An extension of facilities to temporarily increase the planning capacity at St Ninian's High School was made, honouring commitments made when changing school admissions arrangements.

parentsportal.scot

Online Services

The department has continued to develop a range of digital processes for customers, and this has proven beneficial in relation to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents Portal has improved the digital relationship between schools and families over recent years since its initial launch in 2019-20. Schools have continued to promote Parents Portal with families and during 2020-21 the department sought to expand the opportunities for use, with pilots of online consent forms and parents evening bookings proving very successful ahead of a wider rollout planned over the course of the next session.

Building on the success of the online school admissions process, in January 2021 the department launched a new early years application process, enabling families to apply for 1140 hours of early learning and childcare digitally for the first time. In addition to improving the efficiency of internal processes, the online application has proven very popular with families with almost 90% of all applications now being received through this method.

What are we going to do now?

- Expand and enhance the Healthier Minds Service to ensure it supports children, young people and families with Additional Support Needs
- Create and support opportunities for secondary schools to provide nurturing interventions through targeted and whole-school approaches
- Implement the recommendations from both the National ASL review and the department's ASN review
- Support schools and the Instrumental Music Service to develop flexible approaches to delivery of instrumental music tuition
- Implement the recommendations of the Review of the 1+2 Languages Strategy
- Develop a Social Justice Strategy and Action Plan
- Implement the Learning for Sustainability Strategy
- Provide guidance and support on the most up to date pedagogical research and practices (0 – 18 years), including the assessment of children's progress
- Develop a clear vision for Developing the Young Workforce, including an increase in the different curriculum pathways and vocational opportunities available for our learners
- In partnership with colleagues across the Council, continue to implement The Promise, our Corporate Parenting Policy and the GIRFEC refresh
- Continue to work in partnership to maintain an enhanced level of support with regard to the reduction of teacher workload and bureaucracy within school
- Continue to seek investment to improve the learning environment for all our children and young people and expand provision as required
- Continue to empower our schools and ELC settings, to align their resources to the delivery of the department's vision and to support the recovery of pupils and staff as part of the Building Back Better and Fairer framework.



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Faodar am pàipear seo fhaotainn ann an Gàidhlig agus ann an cruthan eile mar ann an clò mòr agus Braille. Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, feuch gun cuir sibh fios gu Customer First air 0141 577 3001 no post-d gu customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

इस सूचना-पत्र मे उल्लेखित सूचना यदि आप हिन्दी अनुवाद मे चाहे तो कृपया सम्पर्क करे।

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ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਦਿਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਇਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ اس لیفلیٹ میں درج معلومات کا ترجمہ اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو ہم سے رابطہ کریں

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE3 February 2022Report by Director of EducationDRAFT LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022 - 2025**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to seek elected member approval for the Education Department's draft Local Improvement Plan 2022 - 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Elected members are asked to approve the attached draft Local Improvement Plan 2022 – 2025.

BACKGROUND

3. Members will be aware of the previous Local Improvement Plan 2021 – 2024. The Standards and Quality Report 2020 – 2021, provides an indication of the next steps the department, its services and schools will take to improve continuously over the next few years.

4. The draft Local Improvement Plan takes full account of the East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership Community Plan, the Fairer East Ren Plan and Locality Plans, the department's contributions to the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan 2022 – 2025 and the department's strategy Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire. Links to the National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities and drivers have been incorporated into the plan. Cognisance has been taken of the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Building Back Better and Fairer Framework and the West Partnership Improvement Plan which sets out the areas that the eight Local Authorities will collaborate on regionally to offer schools opportunities to improve.

REPORT

5. The draft Local Improvement Plan is designed to give an indication of the department's key areas for improvement over the next three years and is updated annually to take account of changing priorities. The draft plan is included as Appendix 1.

6. The expected outcomes and impact are organised under the department's vision statement of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences* and have been reviewed and amended to reflect the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and the results of the department's ongoing self-evaluation.

7. The plan has a clear focus on improving outcomes for all our learners and the impact we expect to have on the experiences of the children, young people and adults who attend our schools and use our centres and services. In line with the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 the plan also sets out how we will address the inequalities of outcomes that exist for different equity groups and how we will achieve the priorities associated with the NIF.

8. High level areas for improvement are outlined and give an indication of the priorities for development and the activities the department, schools and services will take to make the necessary improvements in the quality of provision. This includes addressing the specific challenges brought about by COVID-19. It is expected that the authority will negotiate and work with managers and head teachers to use each service's / school's own self-evaluation, the information gathered through external evaluations and the Local Improvement Plan to identify priorities for inclusion in their own improvement plans.

9. The department evaluates its progress annually to identify strengths in current provision and areas where further improvement is required. The self-evaluation and evaluations of services and schools by the department's Quality Improvement Team, Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate and Customer Service Excellence help to identify steps which need to be taken to secure continuous improvement.

10. The timescale for the implementation of the plan is school sessions 2022 – 2023 to 2024 – 2025. The department will continue to report on the progress it has made with its Local Improvement Plan and the progress made in implementing the department's strategy, *Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire* through the annual standards and quality report.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

11. The department will direct funding from its delegated budget to support the improvement agenda as outlined in the draft local improvement plan.

CONSULTATION

12. Under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 education authorities are required to consult with pupils, staff, parents and all other interested parties on their priorities for improvement for the ensuing year. To this end, and following approval by elected members, the department will issue the appended draft plan to all schools, parent councils, service managers and partners to gather the views of all stakeholders. Thereafter, the plan will be amended as appropriate, finalised and issued to schools, services and stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

13. Elected members are asked to approve the attached draft Local Improvement Plan 2022 – 2025.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 February 2022

Convener Contact Details

Councillor A. Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities

Tel: 0141 577 3108

Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

Report Author

Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement)

Tel: 0141 577 3204

Janice.Collins@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendix

1. Local Improvement Plan 2022 - 2025

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Local Improvement Plan 2022-2025

East Renfrewshire Council Education Department



Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences



A message from Councillor Alan Lafferty

As the convener for education and equalities, I am very pleased to introduce the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan for 2022 – 2025. The continued commitment by East Renfrewshire Council to deliver the highest quality services for its residents is evident for all and throughout my tenure as convener, I will continue to do my utmost to ensure this continues to be the case for Education Services.

The department's vision statement *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences* captures our aspirations and expectations for all learners and customers. It outlines our ongoing commitment to supporting everyone including staff, to realise their potential whether they work in or go to one of our schools, ELC settings or services and to achieving the National Improvement Framework priorities.

This Local Improvement Plan outlines the key outcomes we will be working to achieve in the next three years and the activities we will continue to undertake as we respond to the specific challenges brought about by Covid-19. This outcome focused approach will help us ensure that the services we provide have a meaningful impact on the children, young people and adults who use our ELC settings, schools and services. It will also ensure we deliver the outcomes in East Renfrewshire's Community Plan in partnership with all our users and those with an interest and stake in education.

I commend the improvement plan to you and invite parents, carers and all our other partners to work with the staff in our schools and services in securing the outcomes and impacts identified in the plan.

Councillor Alan Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities

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Introduction to Local Improvement Plan for 2022–2025

On an annual basis the Education Department's Quality Improvement Team and service managers carry out an extensive audit to identify strengths in our current provision and areas where further improvement is required. The department's progress with the impact and outcomes listed in the Local Improvement Plan 2020 – 2023 is detailed in the Department's Standards and Quality Report 2020 – 2021 which is available on the Council's website or from libraries, Council offices and schools. This revised Local Improvement Plan reflects the areas for improvement identified through this annual process, and will reflect the timescale of an academic year i.e. will guide improvements for the next three school sessions 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25.

The outcomes and impact, together with the high level areas for improvement, have been updated and are organised under the department's vision statement *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*. They clearly link to the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2022, the department's contributions to the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan 2021 – 2024 and the department's Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire. Cognisance has been taken of teacher workload with a further reduction in the number of activities planned over the three year period. The Local Improvement Plan 2022 - 2025 provides schools and services with a framework for improvement.

The plan has a clear focus on improving outcomes for all our learners and the impact we expect to have on the experiences of the children, young people and adults who attend our schools, ELC settings and use our services. The plan also sets out how we will continue to respond to the impacts on learners associated with Covid-19 and inequalities of outcomes that exist for different equity groups. Collaboration within schools, across schools and with colleagues from the West Partnership will be vital in delivering the priorities set out in this plan. Threaded throughout the plan is a clear commitment towards support, recovery and renewal as we continue to build back better and fairer.

I am confident that this Local Improvement Plan reaffirms our commitment to continuous improvement to ensure we maintain our provision of the highest quality learning and services and continue to achieve outstanding performances.

Mark Ratter, Director of Education

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/department-performance-information

Using this Local Improvement Plan

The Local Improvement Plan outlines the high level areas for improvement for all services and schools and is informed by the Department's Outcome Delivery Plan which details the targets and indicators that will be used to measure the impact of our work. This is illustrated in the diagram on page 4, included in which is the Council's Corporate Vision Statement, the Strategic Outcomes that relate directly to the services the Education Department provides and the connection between national and local plans. Links between the National Improvement Framework priorities and drivers have been incorporated into the plan. The West Partnership Improvement Plan 2021-22 sets out the areas that the eight Local Authorities will collaborate on regionally to support and challenge establishments to improve.

The plan lists the expected outcomes and impact under the headings of the departmental vision statement. It contains a list of high level areas for improvement and outlines the actions we will take over the next three years to achieve the expected impact and outcomes. The list is extensive but it is not intended that each school or service should include every strand, or even every Key Area, in its improvement plan for the next three years. In 2022-23 we know that the focus for all establishments will continue to be on recovery and renewal. The purpose of this Local Improvement Plan is to help and guide individual settings, schools and services in planning for improvement, not to prescribe what those improvements should be or how they should be taken forward.

There are a number of steps which each setting, school, cluster of schools or service should take in planning for improvement:

- Engage in an ongoing process of self-evaluation for improvement using the relevant Quality Framework e.g. How good is our school? or How good is our early learning and childcare? Account should be taken of recent evaluations resulting from an inspection by Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate or a review by the Education Department's Quality Improvement Team
- Schools and services should prepare a Standards and Quality Report, which reflects the Education Department's guidance on reporting and summarises the results of the self-evaluation and progress with implementation of the School Improvement Plan
- Identify aspects of performance in which improvement is necessary. Give due weight to major strategic initiatives, local and national, for example the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education and Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire
- Collaborate with all stakeholders to identify priorities for the improvement plan and the expected impact and outcomes
- Manage teacher workload by focusing on a small number of key priorities which can be implemented and take account of working time agreements
- Draw up a list of the action points to be taken to bring about the desired improvements. This list should also give an indication of the likely timescale and the member(s) of staff who will be responsible for leading on each area where a need for improvement has been identified
- The impact made in bringing about the desired improvements should inform the self-evaluation process and be reported in the annual Standards and Quality Report
- Involve the authority's Quality Improvement Team at each stage in planning for improvement.

The authority has an important role to play in planning for improvement:

- Working with individual settings, schools and services in their evaluation of performance and provision
- Assisting the school or service to identify the areas for improvement in the next cycle
- Ensuring that the school's or service's improvement plan reflects local and national priorities
- Supporting the improvement agenda through appropriate continuing professional learning activities including learning partnerships
- Monitoring progress through Transition Reviews, Collaborative Improvement Visits and other aspect and thematic reviews.

East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership – Community Plan

The Community Planning Partnership’s vision for East Renfrewshire is:
An attractive and thriving place to grow up, work, visit, raise a family and enjoy later life.

Key Strategic Outcomes (as related to the services delivered by the Education Department)

- All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed
- East Renfrewshire residents are healthy and active and have the skills for learning, life and work.

Fairer East Ren Plan

Focus on closing the gap:

- Child poverty is reduced
- Improved employability
- Moving around (transport)
- Improving positive mental health and wellbeing
- Reducing social isolation and loneliness and increasing safety.

Locality Plans

Community led approach, developed for:

- Arthurlie, Dunterlie & Dovecothall
- Auchenback.

Locality Plans in development:

- Neilston
- Thornliebank.

Education Department Outcome Delivery Plan

Intermediate Outcomes, Indicators and Targets
An indication of how we will measure our contributions to the delivery of the Community Plan, Fairer East Ren and Locality Plans.

East Renfrewshire Local Improvement Plan

Outcomes and Impact: Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences Activities which will improve the quality of service delivery and the experiences of our children, young people and adults.

National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2021

Vision

- **Excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and
- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Four Priorities

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

Six Drivers of Improvement

- School Leadership
- Teacher Professionalism
- Parental Engagement
- Assessment of children’s progress
- School Improvement
- Performance Information.

West Partnership Regional Improvement Plan

Vision: Equity, Excellence and Empowerment

Workstreams: Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement, Wellbeing for Learning and Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

Our vision is one of **Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences**. We believe that this vision can and will be realised through the commitments signalled in this plan and reinforced by the actions taken in our early years settings, schools and services to improve the quality of the experiences we provide for the children, young people, adults and families of East Renfrewshire. Our target outcomes and expected impacts in the next three-year cycle will be:



Everyone Attaining

National Priorities

Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

NIF Drivers	Expected Outcome / Impact (what we will measure and report on)	Activities (what we will do to bring about improvement)
<p>Assessment of Children's Progress</p> <p>Teacher Professionalism</p> <p>School Improvement</p> <p>Parental Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to be the highest performing mainland council area as measured by national examinations for school leavers • Improved attainment in the senior phase • Be the highest performing mainland council area as measured by Curriculum for Excellence levels • Improved literacy and numeracy attainment throughout the years of the broad general education • An improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people • An increase in the percentage of schools evaluated as 'good' or better for raising attainment and achievement • An increase in activities which support prevention and early intervention, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities • An improvement in the percentage of young children reaching all of the expected developmental outcomes on entry to primary school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and challenge schools to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements, the target-setting process and improved learning and teaching, particularly for key equity groups • Continue to build capability and capacity of senior staff and teachers in schools in the use of tracking and monitoring tools, including Insight, SNSA and the BGE Benchmarking Tool and the ability to interpret data and identify areas of need for individuals and groups of learners • Support and challenge schools to improve outcomes for identified groups through effective use of resources (including Pupil Equity and Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding), with a particular focus on recovery, learning loss and equity • Review, update and implement Numeracy and Mathematics and Literacy Strategies • Support quality, coherence and progression across early level learning and teaching.

Everyone Achieving

National Priorities

Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

NIF Drivers	Expected Outcome / Impact (what we will measure and report on)	Activities (what we will do to bring about improvement)
<p>Assessment of Children's Progress</p> <p>Teacher Professionalism</p> <p>School Leadership</p> <p>Parental Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ethos of high expectations and achievement in every school and service • A culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement in all schools and services • A skilled and confident workforce • A culture of professional enquiry in all establishments • An increase in the percentage of schools evaluated as 'good' or better for leadership of change • A further improvement in school leaver destinations • An increase in the number of pupils, school leavers and adults with well-developed employability skills • An increase in the percentage of pupils agreeing they have opportunities to celebrate personal achievements • A consistently high satisfaction level of residents engaging with our services • Higher levels of parental engagement with improved communication, collaboration and consultation in their children's learning and in the life of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support schools to continue to improve learners' experiences and outcomes by implementing the CLPL framework and sharing approaches to professional inquiry across our schools and centres, including through Research Hubs • Review, update and implement a revised leadership strategy • Continue to develop and deliver a range of SQA accredited courses to meet the needs of adult learners while ensuring the mode of delivery is effective and safe • Continue to work in partnership with schools, ERC Culture and Leisure Trust and others to ensure all young people have high quality opportunities for achievement that are recognised and celebrated in school • Implement the updated Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy 2021 – 2024 • Review, update and implement the STEM and Digital Learning and Capacity Strategies.

Excellent Experiences

National Priorities

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

NIF Drivers	Expected Outcome / Impact (what we will measure and report on)	Activities (what we will do to bring about improvement)
<p>Assessment of Children's Progress</p> <p>Teacher Professionalism</p> <p>Parental Engagement</p> <p>School Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A curriculum which enables all children, young people and adults to be successful, confident, responsible and effective in school, their work, their community and internationally • An increase in the percentage of schools evaluated as 'very good' or better for learning, teaching and assessment • Learners' experiences support them to develop their personalities, talents, mental, spiritual and physical abilities to their potential • An increase in opportunities for young people to develop knowledge, understanding and the skills for life and active participation in a global multicultural society and Scotland's place in it • A culture based on Getting It Right For Every Child • Partnership arrangements which ensure that all pupils experience a smooth transition from nursery to primary, primary to secondary and from secondary school to a positive and sustained destination • Practices and experiences which ensure that the needs of children, young people and adults are identified and addressed • Maintain and where possible improve upon the already low exclusions and high attendance rates in our schools, especially for looked after children • Maintain and where possible reduce the number of children and young people reporting they experience bullying and/or racist behaviour • A positive culture in health and wellbeing in every school and service • Resources which lead to improvements for learners and service users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to empower our schools and ELC settings, to align their resources to the delivery of the department's vision and to support the recovery of pupils and staff as part of the Building Back Better and Fairer framework • Expand and enhance the Healthier Minds Service to ensure it supports children, young people and families including those with Additional Support Needs • Implement the recommendations from both the National ASL review and the department's ASN review • Provide guidance and support on the most up to date pedagogical research and practices (0 – 18 years), including the assessment of children's progress • Develop a clear vision for Developing the Young Workforce, including an increase in the different curriculum pathways and vocational opportunities available for our learners • Develop and implement a Social Justice Strategy • Implement the recommendations of the Review of the 1+2 Languages Strategy • Support schools and the Instrumental Music Service to develop flexible approaches to delivery of instrumental music tuition • Implement the Learning for Sustainability Strategy (Get to Zero) • Continue maximising efficiency opportunities and planning ahead for further budget reductions • In partnership with colleagues across the Council, continue to implement The Promise, our Corporate Parenting Policy and the GIRFEC refresh • Continue to work in partnership to maintain an enhanced level of support with regard to the reduction of teacher workload and bureaucracy within school • Continue to seek investment to improve the learning environment for all our children and young people and expand provision as required.

Appendix 1

National Outcomes (where Education makes a major contribution)	East Renfrewshire Community Plan	Five Capabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed • We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure start to their lives and are supported to succeed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention • Community Engagement • Data, evidence and benchmarking • Modernising how we work • Digital.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation • Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens • We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity • Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Renfrewshire residents are fit and active and have the skills for learning, life and work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention • Community Engagement • Data, evidence and benchmarking • Modernising how we work • Digital.



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Faodar am pàipear seo fhaotainn ann an Gàidhlig agus ann an cruthan eile mar ann an clò mòr agus Braille. Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, feuch gun cuir sibh fios gu Customer First air 0141 577 3001 no post-d gu customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

इस सूचना-पत्र में उल्लेखित सूचना यदि आप हिन्दी अनुवाद में चाहे तो कृपया सम्पर्क करें।

如果您想得到该资料所含信息的译文，请联系：

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਇਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ اس لیفلیٹ میں درج معلومات کا ترجمہ اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو ہم سے رابطہ کریں

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE3 February 2022Report by Director of EducationPARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of the report is to update Elected Members on the approaches taken to meet the duties outlined in The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 in East Renfrewshire schools between 2018 and 2021 and seek approval for the Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy, 2022 - 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Education Committee is asked to:
- note and comment on the findings of the report (Appendix 1)
 - approve the Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy, 2022– 2025 (Appendix 2)
 - ask the Director of Education to support all educational establishments to implement this strategy.

BACKGROUND

3. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, aimed to ensure that parents are; involved with their child's education and learning, welcomed as active participants in the life of the school, and encouraged to express their views on school education generally and work in partnership with the school.

4. The Act requires local authorities to prepare a strategy document setting out their policies for parental involvement which cover their duties to:

- involve parents in their own child's education, and that provided by a school to its pupils generally;
- give advice and information to parents in respect of their own child;
- promote the establishment of Parent Councils in schools and support their operation; and,
- establish a complaints procedure for their duties under the Act.

5. The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education details the key drivers identified by the Scottish Government to secure educational improvement. Parental engagement is identified as a main driver and is described as a way for parents, carers, families and schools to work together to support children's learning.

6. In addition to developing a new strategy for 2022-2025 (Appendix 2), a report has been included to highlight the key achievements and identified next steps (Appendix 1) based on the current strategy 2018-2021.

REPORT

7. The report in Appendix 1 outlines the impact of the Education Department's Parental Involvement Strategy 2018-2021 which contributes to East Renfrewshire Council's Population Outcome:

All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed.

2.1 Residents have the right skills, learning opportunities and confidence to secure and sustain work.

2.3 Children and young people raise their educational attainment and achievement and develop the skills they need.

8. Key strengths identified in the report include:

- All schools have consistent procedures to ensure parents regularly receive information about their child's strengths, next steps for learning, progress and achievements.
- Solihull Approach Foundation Training was introduced in November 2019 to supplement the success of the Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP). This evidence based model enables professionals to support the emotional health and well-being of children and families.
- The Equity and Excellence Lead and Family Link Officer have been trained in the PEEP Learning Together Programme approach. This has enhanced their skills in building positive relationships with families by; recognising strengths, strengthening what they are already doing and understanding that every parent or caregiver has great potential.
- Each year the Education Department seeks the views of parents from across East Renfrewshire to contribute to our on-going self-evaluation. Encouragingly the questions regarding Parent Councils show a higher level of satisfaction than the national data gathered through the PIE Census and reported in the NIF Plan for 2021.
- CLPL was provided for both Parental Involvement and Equalities co-ordinators in partnership with the University of the West of Scotland. The aim was to raise awareness of barriers to participation, such as unconscious bias, and support schools to be more inclusive by actively promoting and supporting diversity amongst their Parent Councils.

9. The East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) Parental Engagement and Involvement strategy 2022-25 aims to build on the next steps identified in the report. In particular:

- Improve professionals understanding and skills in parental involvement, parental engagement and family learning;
- Improve children's attainment and achievement;
- Strengthen parental involvement and representation in the life and work of schools and early years settings;

- Reduce barriers which limit the involvement and engagement of specific groups of parents.

10. The strategy includes a range of critical indicators, these will be used to measure the impact of the activities carried out over the next three years.

11. The Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Education Department, with progress reported to the Education Committee on an annual basis through the department's and schools' Standards and Quality Reports.

CONSULTATION

12. This strategy is the result of consultation with parents, head teachers and other related agencies.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

13. Any financial related matters relating to this paper will be met from the department's devolved budget. Schools have the autonomy to support family learning, learning at home, parental engagement and involvement using Pupil Equity Funding where this is a priority for the targeted pupils in their school. The refreshed Devolved School Management Scheme recognises the need to consult with the all stakeholders on budget matters and notes that moving forward schools should consider a greater use of Participatory Budgeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. Education Committee is asked to:

- note and comment on the findings of the report (Appendix 1)
- approve the Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy, 2022– 2025
- ask the Director of Education to support all educational establishments to implement this strategy.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 February 2022

Convener Contact Details
Councillor A. Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities

Tel: 0141 577 3108

Report Author
Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity)
Tel: 0141 577 3253
Siobhan.McColgan2@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A: Parental Involvement Report
Appendix B: Driver Diagram

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILREPORT ON THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2018-2021**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to give an update on the approaches taken to meet the duties outlined in The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 in East Renfrewshire schools between 2018 and 2021. The report outlines the next steps which will be taken forward in the Parental Involvement Strategy 2022-2025.

BACKGROUND

2. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, aimed to ensure that parents are; involved with their child's education and learning, welcomed as active participants in the life of the school, and encouraged to express their views on school education generally and work in partnership with the school.
3. The Act requires local authorities to prepare a strategy document setting out their policies for parental involvement which covers their duties to:
 - involve parents in their own child's education, and that provided by a school to its pupils generally;
 - give advice and information to parents in respect of their own child;
 - promote the establishment of Parent Councils in schools and support their operation;
 - establish a complaints procedure for their duties under the Act.

This report outlines the impact of the Education Department's Parental Involvement Strategy 2018-2021 which contributes to East Renfrewshire Council's Population Outcome:

All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed.

2.1 Residents have the right skills, learning opportunities and confidence to secure and sustain work.

2.3 Children and young people raise their educational attainment and achievement and develop the skills they need.

REPORT

4. The Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy 2018-2021 had a range of aims and critical indicators:

Aims:

- Ensure that parents are provided with the information and support that they need to be involved and engaged in their child's learning;
- Improve professionals understanding and skills in parental involvement, parental engagement and family learning;
- Improve children's attainment and achievement;

- Strengthen parental involvement and representation in the life and work of schools and early years settings;
- Reduce barriers which limit the involvement and engagement of specific groups of parents.

Critical Indicators

- % of parents responding positively regarding levels of engagement in their children's learning (Education Department's parental questionnaire Q12);
 - Evaluations of professional learning opportunities provided to staff;
 - % of establishments with family learning strategies / programmes;
 - % schools with a Parent Council / Early Years Settings with a Parent Group;
 - % of educational establishments achieving Family Friendly Accreditation at bronze or above;
 - % of parents responding positively in the department's parental questionnaire regarding:
 - I feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions &/or a problem (Q14);
 - I am kept informed about the work of Parent Council &/or parent association (Q15);
 - I feel encouraged to be involved in the work of Parent Council &/or parent association (Q16).
5. The Education Department updated the questions used in annual parental questionnaires in 2018, in response to changes made by Education Scotland in the questions used for school inspection and the introduction of a the national Parental Engagement and Involvement Census. This enables the department to compare local and national data more accurately. As such, Question 12 listed above was replaced with two new questions which take the place of the associated critical indicator:
- a) The school takes my views into account when making changes;
 - b) The school gives me advice on how to support my child's learning at home.

Ensure that parents are provided with the information and support that they need to be involved and engaged in their child's learning

6. Parental satisfaction with schools in East Renfrewshire is consistently high and compares favourably with national data, gathered through the National Improvement Framework (NIF). Almost all (94%) of parents responding to our annual questionnaires over the last 3 years told us that they are satisfied with their school, whereas the NIF data for session 2019/20 shows satisfaction levels of 84%. Similarly 95% of parents in East Renfrewshire would recommend their school to other parents, whereas only 81% of parents would do so nationally. The very high levels of customer satisfaction at various levels of service delivery were consistently commended in the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) annual reviews which noted that these high levels continue to improve over time.
7. East Renfrewshire Council maintains an easily accessible and regularly updated website which features a section on Schools and Learning. This site links directly to each establishment's website ensuring that parents can quickly find information about their child's school. All schools update their handbooks each year with increasing involvement of parents and pupils to ensure that they contain the necessary legislative information and are easy to read. An audit of school handbooks was carried out in 2019 which showed that all schools described the opportunities provided for parents to become involved in their child's learning and the life of the school within their handbooks as well as important

aspects such as the curriculum and support for pupils. In addition to being available on the school web site handbooks are also available in hard copy format.

8. School websites provide a plethora of information for parents with most establishments including a useful dedicated section for parents within their websites. In a few schools the websites can be hard to navigate and information on a desired topic is not always easily to find. The majority of schools use individual class blogs to share children's experiences with their parents and have made greater use of digital technologies, such as Google Classroom and See Saw to support learning at home since March 2020. All schools have active social media accounts which they use effectively to share learning and achievements, in some examples there is clear evidence of two-way communication with parents sharing learning and achievements from home. A few schools have started to use school apps to support communication with parents and provide a wide variety of information in a convenient and user-friendly way. Email contact lists, group call text system and parent pay have all been successfully implemented to facilitate simple, fast and efficient communication with parents enabling schools to reduce, and in some cases, eliminate, the amount of paper-based communication they distribute. This increased digitisation ensured effective communication and continued access throughout closure periods providing adaptive and responsive customer focussed services.
9. The Education Department, Head Teachers and school staff work effectively together to ensure that they give advice and information related to their own child's learning in a manner consistent with the authority's duties under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act. This includes information and advice for parents who wish to educate their child at home. In our annual questionnaires, most parents with children who attend school in East Renfrewshire tell us that they receive helpful feedback about how their child is learning and developing at school and that they get advice from the school on how to support their child's learning at home. This has been exemplified during Education Scotland Inspections since 2018. For example, In Giffnock Primary School it was noted that the strong partnerships with parents had supported parents to deepen their understanding of children's learning in school. Examples given included opportunities for parents to share learning in class, and see first-hand, approaches children use to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and digital learning. Children who are digital leaders had also supported parents to understand the breadth of digital learning in school and experience a range of tools and apps in use. This approach enabled parents to reach a better understanding of the digital skills children regularly learn and apply and have high expectations for children's digital literacy.
10. All schools have consistent procedures to ensure parents regularly receive information about their child's strengths, next steps for learning, progress and achievements. These procedures had to be dramatically revised during the pandemic when it was not possible to allow parents into schools and settings. Digital technologies and telephone calls were used extremely well to ensure that schools could continue to host curriculum events and individual parent consultations in a safe and meaningful way. Throughout the periods of remote learning parents were given specific advice and information on their child's learning providing a valuable opportunity to re-affirm the role of the parent as co-educator with teachers actively seeking the views of parents on their child's progress in learning, taking these into account and valuing the learning that took place in the home.
11. The Education Department consulted with Parent Council Chairs regarding their departmental plans for both remote learning, and the return to school in August 2020 and February 2021. Following periods of school closure parents were worried about staffing, relationships, transitions, attendance, safety, outdoor provision and the curriculum, in particular arrangements for Health and Wellbeing. Presentations to parent council chairs addressed these concerns giving detail of the approaches taken and support being

provided. As a result Parent Councils had the information they needed to work in partnership with head teachers to reassure parents in their own schools. The Director of education also wrote to all parents at key points to advise them of the arrangements, supports and mitigations that would be in place. Consultation was recognised as a strength of the Education Department in the 2021 CSE assessment which noted that ‘Even during the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for delivery of services and changes over time, at pace, you were to demonstrate an ethos of consultation.’

12. The Education Department evaluated the remote learning offer in February 2021 and found that the majority of ELC settings and schools had formally sought parental feedback in relation to their approaches to remote learning through focus groups, questionnaires, online forms, and commendably adapted their policies and approaches in response. In addition, all ELC settings and schools had developed remote learning policies/guidance which reflected National and Local advice on the subject. In best practice this guidance set out clear expectations for staff around the structure of the school day, the entitlement to live engagement and progressive learning experiences, availability of support, stipulations around frequency of small group meets as well as whole-class, balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning, pedagogical approaches and the range of resources and activities and apps to be utilised on a daily/weekly basis. Most schools consulted with pupils and parents in the creation of these policies with the majority devising parent / carer friendly versions. It was found that very good systems were in place in almost all schools to involve parents/carers in their child’s remote learning resulting in positive feedback from parents on the support being offered.
13. East Renfrewshire’s Psychological Services also provided excellent resources to support families with the Covid-19 pandemic. These include the [Healthier Minds](#) resource which focusses on managing anxiety, building resilience, transition and recovery, coping with bereavement and loss. Pupils and parents reported that these resources provided very effective during the period of school closure. Further support was offered through online parent sessions designed to build capacity amongst parents and carers to support children and young people’s wellbeing during the second period of lockdown. Views obtained from participants prior to the sessions highlighted their concerns about the impact of Covid on their children’s emotional, behavioural and physical skills, and on their relationships and ability to access learning. This informed the content of the sessions which focused on raising awareness of the impact of Covid on children and young people and on strategies and resources to meet their needs. The sessions were attended by 184 families and analysis of evaluations indicated that the sessions had provided the participants with reassurance and useful information and strategies.
14. Prior to the pandemic, all family centres and most schools had introduced Stay and Play sessions within the early years, enabling parents to see first-hand what their children are learning within their playroom or classroom. These were especially well attended at points of transition such as children moving into Primary One. The public health restrictions in place since March 2020 required leaders and practitioners to develop innovative ways to support parents’ understanding of what learning looked like in nursery and in school settings. A range of media and software such as narrated PowerPoints, videos, Thinglink and Sway were used very well and were positively received by parents. This was particularly important for families where their child was starting nursery, primary school or secondary school for the first time and helped to establish the positive ethos which is usually transmitted through in-person events. In the inspection of St John’s Primary School in November 2019 parents reported that they particularly appreciated the sensitivity of the school in making bespoke arrangements for children as they move from nursery into P1 and from P7 into secondary school. This included the extensive involvement of parents at times when children may feel anxious about the change.

15. Parents continue to be involved in and supported throughout the process of offering additional support to their child through the Getting It Right for Every Child approach. Additional Support Needs Co-ordinators in schools ensure that parents' views are accurately captured and reflected within each child's wellbeing plan. Rigorous monitoring by the school, and the local authority, ensures that parents have been listened to carefully and their wishes have been heard, understood and taken into consideration. In June 2021 an online consultation was undertaken with parents whose children require additional support for learning. 575 responses were received representing all Secondary schools and most (84%) primary schools. 58% of the respondents told us that a plan was in place to support their child, of these the majority (74%) agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the plan and it accurately reflects their child's/young person's needs. The same proportion agreed that their views were taken into account when the plan was created.

Improve professionals' understanding and skills in parental involvement, parental engagement and family learning

16. Every school and early years setting in East Renfrewshire has a named Parental Involvement Co-ordinator who leads on this area within their school. Support and professional learning have been provided for this group enabling them to develop and devise guidance and approaches to family learning, learning at home, parental engagement and parental involvement within their own school communities. This has contributed to the increasing number of schools developing Family Centred Approaches across East Renfrewshire.

17. The Family Centred Approaches (FCA) Framework was launched in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings in 2012 and was extended to Primary Schools in 2014. The full roll out to Secondary Schools was interrupted due to the pandemic, however the framework for Secondary Schools is now available for implementation by this sector which will help to address the national findings of the 2018/19 NIF report which identified the need to improve parental engagement and involvement in Secondary Schools. To date, four ELC settings and one primary school have been validated with the highest level of Gold Family Focused accreditation. The majority of schools and settings have achieved Silver Family Centred status and are now going for gold, whilst a few have achieved Bronze Family Friendly status and are working towards silver. New establishments such as Maidenhill Primary School and Overlee Family Centre have begun the process to achieve Bronze accreditation in recognition of their early successes in welcoming families and developing positive relationships in a brand new school community. The continuous improvement of the Family Centred Approaches framework was highlighted as an area of 'compliance plus' in the 2019 CSE annual review which commended the way in which we have continued to develop and provide training about the framework and monitor its effectiveness.

18. The views of families are an integral component of achieving Gold Family accreditation. To date 98% of parents responding to the FCA Gold questionnaire strongly agreed or agreed that they were offered opportunities and information to support their child's learning within the home. One parent recently highlighted how much this support was valued during the pandemic: *'We had a very difficult year with Covid shielding and my child couldn't attend nursery yet the staff didn't forget her. They contacted and arranged to zoom and kept in touch. That touched our hearts they cared even more for her and us even though not visible.'* In another setting the qualitative data highlighted the opportunities families had enjoyed prior to the pandemic: *'Although it is a large nursery the children know all the staff and vice versa. I like that parents can be very much involved with the nursery experience e.g. taking part in outings, coming into nursery to help with various activities*

etc. Have always found the nursery to be engaging with myself as a parent and my kids look forward to attending every day.'

19. In addition to parents' views, those of staff are also gathered during FCA Gold accreditation. In these settings, 99% of staff strongly agreed or agreed that their leadership team supports them to undertake CLPL that builds their capacity to work effectively in partnership with families: 'I have been involved in a wide range of activities that support and promote family friendly practice. I have had leadership opportunities using the fun friends programme (in partnership with an educational psychologist) and Children's Places (in conjunction with Save the Children).'
20. A wide range of professional learning opportunities are offered by the education department each year to support aspects of parental engagement and involvement. Professional learning has also been provided for specific groups of staff. An optional session for Newly Qualified Teachers has been developed as feedback showed that engaging with parents had not been fully explored during Initial Teacher Education which led to a lack of confidence in communicating and interacting with parents individually or in larger groups. Head teachers and aspiring leaders have benefitted from sessions delivered in partnership with Connect on "Working with your parent council", feedback showed that after the session participants were more aware of their roles and responsibilities in supporting their Parent Council as defined by the Parental Involvement Act (Scotland) 2006. Support has also been provided for key personnel in schools to improve their communication with parents making it more user friendly by avoiding jargon and using 'plain English' and enhancing use of social media to share information with families and invite two-way communication. As a result more families are sharing posts directly with schools celebrating learning and achievements from home.
21. Training on the common core of skills and knowledge for the children and young people's workforce is now embedded in our annual CLPL programme reflecting and complimenting the Family Centred Approaches framework. Evaluations show that staff value this training and find it to be thought provoking and insightful. Staff who participated reported that this training enhanced their self-reflection around their values both as individuals and staff teams. They told us that the training allowed them to focus more on celebrating successes with families and staff rather than on weaknesses helping them to develop increasingly strength based approaches. In settings where staff have participated in this training they are now embedding the approaches in practice by using the Common Core Skills as part of their staff induction process.
22. Connecting with Parents CLPL has been part of our annual CLPL offer since 2017 reaching 119 staff to date. Participants report that this training has led to improvements in their ability to listen to parents in a non-judgemental way and help parents to explore and overcome uncertainty and anxiety about making a change, for example in their approaches to parenting or supporting their child's education. Participants also report increased self-assurance and awareness around eliciting change talk to support parents to feel empowered and respected, enabling them to make their own choices and set their own goals.
23. Solihull Approach Foundation Training was introduced in November 2019 to supplement the success of the Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP). This evidence based model enables professionals to support the emotional health and well-being of children and families. Three practitioners have now been trained to deliver Solihull Approach Foundation Training to a range of professionals working in East Renfrewshire. The initial focus has been on those ELC practitioners working with families in our most disadvantaged communities as demographic data gathered through PoPP and the Family First team showed that there was a greater need in these areas for this type of support. So far fifty

practitioners have completed this training. Evaluations received immediately after the training showed that all of the participants found the learning highly relevant to their role. The greatest reported benefit of participation in Solihull training was the improvement practitioners identified in their own skills in observing and interpreting parent-child relationships which enabled them to intervene earlier and offer suitable supports to parents. Participants also reported that they were now more effective in supporting parents to process their emotions, including anxiety and distress, to help restore the parent's capacity to think clearly, this has been particularly important for adults during times of high stress and throughout Covid-19. There has been an increase in the number parents across East Renfrewshire undertaking Solihull Parenting online courses as a result of practitioners' effective sign posting which provides a pathway to more formal engagement in PoPP groups.

Improve children's attainment and achievement

24. Progress on priorities associated with the National Improvement Framework was reported to Education Committee in September 2021. This included detailed information about the attainment in literacy and numeracy and the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people. Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) which reports the proportion of children who attain the expected levels of progression in reading, writing, talking and listening and numeracy at the P1, P4, P7 and S3 year stages was not collected for academic year 2019-20 as a result of Covid-19 whilst in 2021 the Scottish Government made the decision not to gather progress levels for those pupils in S3, given the ongoing demands on the secondary sector regarding the alternative certification model for national qualifications. The data collected for East Renfrewshire's schools for academic year 2020-21, whilst already submitted to the Scottish Government, is still to be confirmed and published. At the P1, P4 and P7 year stages in 2020-21, early data shows that:
- a) children's levels of progression in the Broad General Education in 2020-21 remains significantly above the national average in 2018-19 (last year recorded);
 - b) in 2020-21 the proportion of children attaining the expected level of progress in reading, writing and numeracy is the lowest recorded since 2016-17, whilst in talking and listening the proportion achieving is the lowest recorded since 2017-18, albeit performance remains high across all curricular areas;
 - c) the greatest decrease in attainment since 2016-17 is at the P1 year stage.
25. In 2018 the Scottish Government made a commitment to increase support for evidence-based family learning programmes in order to embed this in the early learning and childcare support for families facing disadvantage and reduce the attainment gap. They provided training for each local authority in the Peep Learning Together Programme which aims to give practitioners the confidence to effectively support parents to make the most of everyday learning opportunities and improve their child's communication and learning through play. The Equity and Excellence Lead and Family Link Officer have been trained in this approach which has enhanced their skills in building positive relationships with families by; recognising strengths, enhancing what they are already doing and understanding that every parent or caregiver has great potential. This new approach was tested over the summer in 2021 with 12 parents from across the Barrhead community. A combination of online resources and face to face outdoor engagement was used with targeted families. Feedback from parents was positive and highlighted what they had gained from the experience that would help them to support and improve their child's learning: *'We've had a great few weeks attending the programme and it's opened my mind to how much children learn from the environment around them.'*, *'I hadn't realised that there was so much meaning behind nursery rhymes - positional language for example. As a result I've been emphasising these things to my girls more often.'*

26. Equity is at the heart of East Renfrewshire's Education strategy and attainment results reflect the work of teachers to vigorously support all pupils. The department has rigorous and highly effective approaches to monitor and track the equity of provision for young people across our schools. The analysis of outcomes for children and young people in key equity groups is a central feature of our approaches to self-evaluation and quality improvement. The department uses data regularly to raise awareness; monitor progression; build leadership capability and capacity; plan interventions and improvement activity; and set targets. Over the last three years the majority of primary schools have used a proportion of their Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide increased opportunities for parental engagement and family learning in their efforts to raise attainment for key equity groups. Many of the supports for literacy, such as the Reading Café at Our Lady of the Missions, Read and Relax at St John's, paired reading at St Clare's or the drop in support café and Bookbug sessions at Eaglesham were impacted by the public health restrictions caused by the pandemic. However, a few schools were able to adapt their plans to support remote learning and learning at home using digital media.
27. In Mearns Primary an online reading club, Mearns Bookshelf, was introduced in March 2021. Although, this project is fairly early in its conception, initial data from parental surveys has been very positive with 75% of respondents agreeing that their child's participation in the 'Mearns Bookshelf' project had had a positive effect on their child's enjoyment of reading. 70% of respondents reported that their child was now reading more regularly at home for pleasure and that these sessions were increasing in length. Prior to the project, 48% of children were managing to read on five days or more, this rose to 91% of participants after participation in the project. A similar trend was noticed with the length of reading sessions. Prior to the project, only 39% of children were reading for 20 minutes or more. Since participating in the project 87% of children have now achieved this target. This is extremely pertinent as, according to research, reading for more than 15 minutes per day is required for advancement in literacy skills. 74% of parents surveyed also felt that their child had shown an improvement in their reading fluency and accuracy. Parental feedback has been extremely positive: *'This has been brilliant at increasing self-reading. My child always loved reading bedtime stories together but she didn't regularly chose to read herself. We have noticed a huge improvement in her reading since starting the bookshelf club. This whole concept with the website and the challenges is just perfect for this age group. Thank you!'* Targeted support was given to those families whose children fit the criteria for PEF, as a result 70% of these pupils joined the project for the summer book challenge and for session 2021-2022.
28. In Carlibar Primary the focus was on digital inclusion with 112 Chromebooks being distributed to families. Families with more than 1 sibling given multiple devices and 5 Families were provided with a MIFI box for internet access. The data gathered by the school during periods of remote learning showed that the provision of digital technology reduced the poverty related barriers identified families were experiencing when accessing home learning remotely and as a result pupil engagement in online learning increased. Where digital access continued to be a barrier to engagement for families, a Hub place was taken up to promote regular engagement. This work was further supported by Digital Champions within Adult Learning who supported families to engage with learning and services online.
29. Some schools used their PEF funding to target support for children and their families to develop approaches to learning in maths and numeracy. Prior to lockdown Carlibar Primary held successful family learning sessions for parents of targeted children in Primary 2. Parents were shown how to use concrete equipment to support children to develop a deeper understanding of number sense and awareness, adding and subtracting. The teachers modelled how to play everyday games in a way to benefit the pupils' numeracy skills for example, through questioning or by giving the pupils the time they needed to work

it out themselves. Parents were provided with resources and 'help sheets' in order to continue working on the skills at home. As a result of this intervention parents reported increased confidence with supporting their child and a greater understanding of the need for concrete materials in learning maths. They gave children more time to complete the activities rather than rushing them and started to play more logic/maths games as a family. It was evident that parents continued working with their child at home as all children made progress in their understanding of basic adding, subtracting and number awareness which were areas highlighted as concerns. The class teacher reported an increase in pupil confidence and a more resilient attitude when learning new concepts. Busby Primary also had a focus on maths and numeracy; teaching videos to support families at home were created, focussing on key skills of division, multiplication, addition and subtraction in response to parental feedback during periods of remote learning. Drop in support sessions for parents were launched online, but these were not as well attended as hoped, as targeted parents often could not join them due to working hours or family circumstances.

30. Health and wellbeing was a high priority for PEF funding in a number of schools across East Renfrewshire, with a particular emphasis on the Barrhead community. In this area most schools employed staff to support family wellbeing using services such as Children First and Save the Children's Families Connect programme. In Cross Arthurlie Primary parents felt that they were more able to support their child's learning at home as a result of their engagement with Families Connect. In Carlibar Primary, feedback was positive from both pupils and parents: Child - *'Before our family fought a lot but now it is much nicer and we get along much better.'* Parent/Carer - *'it's been great having someone calling to check how X is getting on and helping us through giving us the Chromebook and stuff. Especially with the schools being closed and everything that's going on just now'*
31. The success of this programme was also mirrored in feedback from participants at St John's Primary where the children loved having their families come into school, while parents commented on the benefit of having one-to-one time with their child at the workshops. For some, this extended into a change at home where they gave more quality individual time to each of their children. This group of parents also felt that the programme provided new insights into ways of learning which resulted in increased play-based learning at home. By providing them, and the children, with new ways to engage with each other and express themselves, parents felt they had a better understanding of how feelings impact on how children learn and they reported that they were more patient as a result. Teachers also saw an increase in confidence, particularly amongst participating parents who were far more reticent to begin with. As the weeks progressed, parents became a support system for each other, often benefiting from reciprocal learning.
32. St Luke's established a Home Cook School family learning programme which helped young people and their families develop skills for learning, life and work. The success of this programme was demonstrated through high levels of participant engagement and long term changes in the families' approach to healthy eating.
33. Schools across the authority responded to the needs of their community of families when planning interventions to support health and wellbeing. In Kirkhill for example, the additional staff employed through PEF enabled them to support children who had experienced bereavement or loss through the Seasons for Growth programme. This gave children the vital support they needed to talk about the challenging circumstances they faced both at school, and at home with their wider family. Parents reported that this helped them talk with their child about their experiences and feelings in relation to bereavement, parental separation and adoption. Comments from parents highlighted a range of benefits for children, including being happier and making friends with others in the group.

34. Our Lady of the Missions established a Resilience Group for targeted children from P1-7 in 2019-20 and continued to offer support throughout the periods of remote learning. Materials were sent home to parents to help them support their children and a Google Classroom was facilitated which allowed pupils to access resources to support their emotional wellbeing during this challenging period. Evaluations showed that all pupils who were part of the group enjoyed it with almost all reporting an improvement in their resilience. Almost all participants felt that the strategies they had learned helped them and that they had benefited from knowing that others felt the same way they did. Parents also valued the support from the Resilience Group with almost all reporting that it had helped their child in managing their emotions and provided strategies that they could use at home when overwhelmed or stressed. Health and Wellbeing Kit bags were also developed to provide targeted support for pupils at home as part of the school's home lending system enabling the pupils to continue to support their emotional literacy.
35. Reading Recovery, and a range of associated supports, have been introduced in all Primary Schools through East Renfrewshire's Literacy Strategy. Training has been provided for a range of staff, with many schools using their PEF funding to enhance their approaches to Reading Recovery. Parental feedback which was sought by a range of schools has been universally positive with reported benefits such as; their child's attitude to literacy improving, increased reading for pleasure at home, measurable progress made by children and increased confidence of children in their own reading. Parental workshops on literacy have also been offered across the sectors which have increased parents' confidence in supporting their child's literacy at home. The Principal Teachers of Literacy, who lead the Reading Recovery programme, also developed a range of materials including leaflets and videos to help show parents how they can support their children in the various aspects of Literacy at home. A dedicated parent friendly 'Literacy Library' hosts all of these materials along with other helpful resources and links to 'Adult Learning', which were particularly beneficial during the periods of remote learning.
36. Every year since 2016, every pupil in Primary 2 and Primary 3 has received a bag to support learning at home through the Read, Write, Count programme run by the Scottish Book Trust. The bags provide a great opportunity for schools to build relationships with parents and strengthen links between home and school learning. Prior to the public health restrictions on access to schools, most establishments held parental workshops or gifting events to share the bags and give tips to support learning at home as highlighted by Education Scotland in the HMIE inspections of both Giffnock and St Mark's Primary in 2018. When this has not been possible online sessions and resources have been shared to maximise the impact of the bags on children's learning at home.
37. During 2020 – 2021, many parents were supported by the Adult Learning Services which was transformed to meet the needs of local adult learners. The team trained as Digital Champions through Connecting Scotland and this programme provided 44 families and individual residents with a digital device, connectivity and ongoing support to engage with learning and services online. 155 adult learners were supported by providing them with a range of tailored learning opportunities enabling them to make progress towards their learning goals and stay connected with their family, friends and local community. Courses included a range of ESOL, Adult Literacies, Learning for Work and Personal Development programmes

Strengthening Parental involvement and representation in the life and work of the schools and early years settings

38. The Education Department provides very effective support to Parent Councils and has facilitated the establishment of Parent Councils in new schools such as St Clare's and Maidenhill to ensure that every school has a functioning Parent Council. Further support

has been delivered through our supportive partnership with Connect. The Education Department pays for Connect membership for all Parent Councils, which includes insurance cover, thereby reducing the financial burden on individual parent groups. Connect have also provided useful and informative sessions for parents exploring the different roles of key members of a Parent Council and effective meeting strategies. Those who attended found that these sessions supported them in their positions and enabled them to develop their own role, and the work of their parent council as the experience of direct learning meant that they no longer had to rely on 'the way we've always done things'. Connect also provide a vital source of information, resources and advice on the few occasions when any issues arise.

39. Parent Councils have been well supported by attendance at Parent Council Chair Forums which occur four times a year. These events continued throughout the pandemic, moving online to facilitate continued engagement with parents and provide a valuable opportunity for the department to consult with this representative group of parents on important policies and matters such as the Covid-19 response, ASL review and approaches taken to SQA assessment in the last two years. At these meetings the local authority National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFSS) representative is provided with a regular opportunity to liaise with Parent Councils, bringing to their attention matters of national interest or inviting them to share their views and participate in relevant national consultations. Throughout the pandemic the NPFSS representative sought the views of parents for consideration by the national emergency response group and provided feedback on any issues raised.
40. The Education Department has continued to provide support and training for Parent Council chairs and Parent Council members involved in the recruitment and selection process for HT and DHT posts. This training is consistently well received and valued by the parents who welcome the opportunity to be involved in recruitment of senior leaders within their child's school.
41. Parents have also been supported to participate in the ongoing work of schools and centres to promote equality and inclusion. The Parent Equalities Forum has continued to meet three times per year. Forum meetings focus on a range of equality issues identified as priorities through collaborative self-evaluation with school/centre Equalities Coordinators. Recent forum meetings have included awareness raising presentations to parents from third sector organisations and local authority officers who work with schools on themes such as children's rights, child poverty and race equality. Via the forum parents have also been consulted on the Council's approaches to key issues such as uniform policy and anti-poverty strategies, with their views then informing next steps in policy development. Forum meetings are now held online and this has resulted in a significant increase in attendance over the last 18 months.
42. Each year the Education Department seeks the views of parents from across East Renfrewshire to contribute to our on-going self-evaluation. Encouragingly the questions regarding Parent Councils show a higher level of satisfaction than the national data gathered through the PIE Census and reported in the NIF Plan for 2021.

Question	NIF data	ERC 3 year average 2018-2021
I am kept informed about the work of Parent Council and/or parent association (Q15)	78%	85%
I feel encouraged to be involved in the work of Parent Council and/or parent association (Q16)	75%	76%

This positive view of Parent Councils was exemplified in the HMle inspection of St Ninian's High School where the Summarised Inspection Findings noted the key role of the Parent Council in supporting the school including a few parents who had gained a good understanding of the day-to-day work of the school through observing learning and teaching. The inspection at St John's Primary in 2019 also found "a very active and supportive Parent Council who feel involved in the life and work of the school. They represent the parent body well, providing feedback to them on important school matters."

43. Parent Councils were invited to share an evaluation survey with the Parent Forum in their school focusing on the partnership between the school, the Parent Council and the parent forum. 234 responses were received, of which 202 were completed as an individual and 21 were completed on behalf of the parent council, this represented at least one response from 86% of Secondary Schools and 68% of Primary Schools. Most respondents (80%) indicated that parent council meetings were friendly and welcoming, with the majority (66%) agreeing that the Parent Forum know what the Parent Council does. The majority of respondents (74%), knew how to contact the Parent Council with a smaller proportion (53%) having a standard email address for this purpose. Where comments were made, the majority of these were positive, for example: *"Our Parent Council is pro-active and have taken on a number of key issues which have been brought to them by Parents and are a representation of Parents and Carers involved with the school. The school have been supportive and willing to discuss all matters which are raised by the Parent Council."* However there were also a significant proportion (35%) of comments which conveyed the view that many parents are unsure about the role of the Parent Council; *"Honestly haven't heard hide nor hair about a parent council, bar them asking for donations. Couldn't tell you what they actually do."* A few respondents made negative comments; *"Parent Council exists but suggestions from parents to school are often met with a no with little consideration or true collaboration, not allowing parents to feel empowered or valued."* This echoes the national picture described in the 2021 NIF plan which stated that there is a need nationally to improve communication from Parent Councils to the Parent Forum.
44. Education Scotland had provided training for Parental Involvement Co-ordinators and head teachers in 2017 to support collaborative approaches to self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Annual questionnaire data showed a fairly positive local picture, however there is scope for improvement in this area.

Question	NIF data	ERC 3 year average 2018-2021
The school takes my views into account when making changes	59%	65%

Based on the national data, the NIF plan for 2021 noted that "there is room to improve parents involvement in decisions and strategies from the outset." The Parent Council Survey also highlighted scope for improvement locally with only 60% of respondents stating that the parent council helped to draft the School Improvement plan, 48% helped to draft the school handbook and 56% helped to decide how Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) should be spent. In addition, a few comments were made specifically in relation to PEF funding:

- *"PEF spending is communicated to PC but we do not help to decide PEF spend."*
- *"I think the school has a pretty firm idea on PEF money before the parent council gets involved?"*
- *"Unsure as to whether the school receives PEF."*

The recent OECD report also highlighted the need for greater collaboration, consensus, co-design, partnership and empowerment for all stakeholders in Scottish education. Encouragingly, when inspecting Giffnock Primary in 2018 Education Scotland noted that the school and the Parent Council do offer parents the opportunity to discuss the school improvement plan and key priorities for the session.

45. Throughout the pandemic schools and family centres have developed their approaches to using digital technology for communication and consultation with parents and families. The Education Department's review of remote learning highlighted areas of good practice so that schools could learn from each other with IT co-ordinators and the Principal Teacher – Digital Schools providing valuable support for practitioners across the sectors. In turn, schools provided helpful videos and resources for parents to help them use the digital technology at home, this comment from the Parent Council survey typifies the appreciation of parents in this regard: *“Massive effort from the school with Saturday schools on google classroom with a variety of topics such as arts, technology and cooking during lockdown to help families at home, workshops on homework, meet the teacher has been online to help families.”*
46. As detailed throughout this report, the Education Department has continued to support schools effectively and achieve high levels of compliance plus from an annual assessment by CSE. The latest report in April 2021 recognises the department's continuing commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified 31 areas of 'Compliance Plus', 'behaviours or practices which exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as an exemplar to others.' The number of areas of compliance plus had previously increased over the course of annual assessments from 17 in 2018, to 26 in 2019.
47. The CSE assessment in 2021 verified that the Education Department was again able to demonstrate that we effectively analyse customer feedback and complaints and take appropriate actions to fully understand the feedback, learn from any mistakes and implement corrective actions and improvements where appropriate. Schools and family centres also do this at a local level. By monitoring complaints as a department we ensure that learning takes place and opportunities for continuous improvement and the spreading of Good Practice are not missed. We have developed a positive relationship with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) who provided senior members of central staff with very good training to support them in undertaking Stage Two investigations, this was further complemented by training for leaders in schools in dealing effectively with frontline (Stage One) complaints.

Reduce barriers which limit the involvement and engagement of specific groups of parents

48. The Education Department is committed to listening to parents. Regular meetings are held with parent forums, such as the Equalities Forum, to encourage full involvement of the parent groups in shaping policy and ensuring that these rights are promoted. A commitment was made in the Parental Engagement strategy to establish diversity champions in each cluster to encourage and reduce barriers to parental engagement for specific groups of parents. CLPL was provided for both Parental Involvement and Equalities co-ordinators in schools in partnership with the University of the West of Scotland to raise awareness of barriers to participation, such as unconscious bias, and support participants to facilitate open conversations in their settings which would support a group of diverse parents to take on this voluntary role. Support was given so that schools could make effective use of Education Scotland's Engaging Parents and Families Toolkit to evaluate diversity in their own setting. Feedback from both parents and schools showed

that they would prefer to have small groups of parents working together in each school, rather than the cluster model which had been proposed. Each school is now taking this area forward within their school improvement plans as they continue to address equalities, diversity and anti-discrimination and respond to global issues.

49. In 2020/21 Our Lady of the Missions took this focus on diversity and developed a range of strategies to engage the diverse range of individuals within the school community. This included developing an audit 'Celebrating Diversity, Culture & Faith' where almost all pupils and families shared more about their identity in terms of family tradition and history. The results of this survey highlighted the diversity of families present within the school, and gave valuable insight to the perspectives, beliefs and views of these parents with regards to culture, equality, religion and background. The results of the audit led to the formation of a 'Diversity & Equality Team' with members including Senior Leaders, Teaching Staff & Parents representing many of the groups within the school including members of the Asian community. Monthly meetings took place which helped to build stronger communication with members of the Asian and wider community. This team promoted increased dialogue between the school and parents around the key goals and strategies of inclusion, equality and diversity within the school. In May 2021, the team led a Parent Forum to feedback on the discussions which had been taking place, and hear in turn from the wider parent body. In addition, the school also launched a range of interventions to promote & celebrate diversity in 'fun' and 'light' ways to reach a wider range of families and were successful in engaging many pupils and families in school life through, for example, the Around the World Cooking Challenge. During Remote Learning, surveys & questionnaires were carried out by the Parent and Pupil Council in order to identify any support (e.g. bilingual, digital, etc.) that families required. The Bilingual Assistant engaged in weekly check-ins with all parents and carers of EAL and Bilingual pupils, particularly focusing on pupils identified as requiring support through the parent and pupil surveys or through lack of engagement. The Bilingual Assistant also met directly with these pupils weekly through Microsoft Teams to offer further support.
50. The allocation of bilingual support workers was reviewed in 2019 to ensure this additionality was more effectively deployed to meet the needs of bilingual learners. Bilingual assistants are now deployed in 14 family centres and schools across East Renfrewshire to meet the needs of local communities. This has been supplemented in a few schools through use of PEF funding for a range of supports for children and parents who use English as an additional language with a focus on black and minority ethnic families. These supports include initiatives such as Bilingual Rhyme time for P1-3 in Our Lady of the Missions and the Community Café at Woodfarm High School. In St Cadoc's Primary a need had been identified to develop stronger relationships with EAL families to improve family involvement and engagement. Prior to the public health restrictions, regular home visits and school drop-in sessions were introduced, deploying bilingual support assistants to provide support to assist with language and cultural barriers. The weekly drop-in sessions enabled families to visit the school to have a chat, this helped to improve school links and increased participation in school life, advice and support was also available for parents with a particular focus on literacy development and positive behaviour management.
51. In St Mark's Primary School a Polish speaking member of staff was employed through PEF. This member of staff translates parental letters and provides a link between home and school for Polish speaking parents who use English as an additional language. The school reports that this improved communication with the Polish community has allowed all families to be included in their children's learning in a more meaningful way. Parents reported pupils feeling more settled and comfortable in school due to being able to communicate in their first language with a member of staff. This approach was developed across the school with teaching staff who speak second languages (Spanish and Urdu)

working closely with other EAL pupils and their families. This support continued through lockdown with regular phone call check-ins and support with remote learning.

52. The CSE annual assessments recognised the quality of the systems in place across our schools and settings to identify seldom heard and disadvantaged customers and to engage and involve them in their child's education and the wider work of the school, and Education Department. The work that has been done with customers (including parents) to develop insight about their specific needs and preferences and prioritise these was highlighted as exceptional. The proactive steps taken to engage and consult with those parents who find it more challenging to engage with traditional school-based consultation methods was also commended, particularly as there was evidence to show how services had been tailored in meaningful ways to meet the needs of these individuals.

NEXT STEPS

53. A new parental engagement strategy has been developed for 2022 – 2025, see Appendix 2. This takes account of the areas identified throughout this report where there is scope for further improvement. The critical indicators have been updated to reflect the questions included in the national Parental Engagement and Involvement census which will be an important source of data. The focus of the new strategy is on three main areas which are highlighted in Scotland's Action plan for Parental Engagement and Involvement: Learning Together, which was published in 2018, after the formulation of our previous strategy.

- Collaboration: we will expand opportunities for ALL parents to collaborate at all levels within our education system;
- Communication: we will improve the ways we communicate with ALL parents and families;
- Consultation: we will support consultation with parents in a variety of ways to fulfil our statutory duties and shape our services.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

54. Any financial related matters relating to this paper will be met from the department's devolved budget. Schools have the autonomy to support family learning, learning at home, parental engagement and involvement using Pupil Equity Funding where this is a priority for the targeted pupils in their school

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Appendix 1 Sources of evidence for self-evaluation

Looking Inwards:

The following evidence was reviewed from all schools and family centres (where relevant):

- Handbook
- Website
- Twitter feed
- Standards and quality report
- School improvement plan
- PEF reports

Centrally held documentation

- Family Centred approaches data
- Minutes of meetings: Parental Involvement Co-ordinators, Parent Council Chairs Forum, Head Teacher meetings
- Parent consultations – ASL review, ELC
- CLPL programme and evaluations
- Annual Questionnaire data
- Parent Council Survey
- Details of recruitment and selection training dates for parents
- Parental Involvement Co-ordinators Teams site
- Complaints data
- SPSO training
- Customer Service Excellence reports
- Departmental reports to Education Committee

Looking Outwards:

<https://www.oecd.org/education/scotland-s-curriculum-for-excellence-bf624417-en.htm>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/2021-national-improvement-framework-improvement-plan/pages/5/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/learning-together-scotlands-national-action-plan-parental-involvement-parental-engagement/>

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/engaging-parents-and-families-a-toolkit-for-practitioners/>

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/family-learning-report-full-document.pdf>

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/ParentalEngagement/EEF_Parental_Engagement_Guidance_Report.pdf

https://www.connect.scot/application/files/9316/0552/1005/Connect_Back_at_School_Parent_Carer_Survey_Report_FINAL_2020.pdf

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-review-impact-scottish-schools-parental-involvement-act-2006-joint-interim-progress-report-2019/>

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Appendix 2

Definitions

Child/Children: When the plan refers to "children" or "child" it means a person under the age of 18.

Parent/s: The term "parents" means anyone with parental responsibilities and others who care for or look after children or young people. The plan acknowledges that individual family units will comprise a wider range of people who might also contribute to a child's learning at home experiences. Although the plan is titled a 'parental' involvement and engagement plan, there are a wide variety of parenting roles. The plan recognises the important role of grandparents, kinship carers, foster parents, wider family (uncles, aunts, cousins) and separated parents. The term "parents" and "parents and carers" are therefore used interchangeably throughout this plan.

Parental Involvement: Parental involvement describes the ways in which parents can get involved in the life and work of the early learning and childcare setting or school or the ways that parents can get involved in "schooling". Parental involvement includes activities such as parental representation in the development of policies, improvement plans and key decisions. It can include involvement in the life and work of the establishment, for instance through volunteering opportunities. Parental involvement can also include help with homework or keeping track of children's work and on-going, two-way communication between home and school or early learning and childcare setting.

Parental Engagement: Parental engagement is about parents' and families' interaction with their child's learning. It can take place in the home, at school or in the community. Where it takes place is not important. The important thing is the quality of the parent's engagement with their child's learning, the positive impact that it can have and the interaction and mutual development that can occur as a result of that interaction.

Family Learning: Family learning encourages family members to learn together as and within a family, with a focus on intergenerational learning. Family learning activities can also be designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children's learning. 'Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience and challenge educational disadvantage' (Scottish Family Learning Network, 2016)

Learning at Home: Learning at home is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of organised or active learning activities

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AIM	Outcome	Our contribution	Critical Activities
	<p><i>We will know we are making good steps along the way WHEN....</i></p> <p>Parents provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for their families.</p>	<p><i>So we need to ...</i></p> <p>Communicate – we will improve the ways that we communicate with ALL parents to ensure that they are provided with the information and support that they need to be involved and engaged in their child's learning.</p>	<p><i>By.....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using National Improvement Framework (NIF) Parent Communication principles to support school and central staff to improve communication with parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simplicity and clarity • transparency • relevance • partnership • flexibility and adaptation • timeliness • Supporting establishments to evaluate and update school handbooks and websites to reflect the NIF principles above • Providing training for staff and Parent Councils on safe and effective use of social media • Supporting Parent Councils to improve communication with the parent forum • Supporting establishments to develop approaches for effective communication with non-resident parents • Providing parents with information about UNCRC to raise awareness of children's rights. • Improving approaches to communication with parents of bilingual learners, utilising the Supporting Bilingual Learner's guidance • Responding to all parental enquiries and complaints in line with ERC Customer Care Standards and Complaints Handling Policy and ensuring that all parents know what to expect when communicating with their child's establishment or the education department • Maintaining, monitoring and analysing complaint data to improve service. • Providing communication that fulfils the NIF principles to all parents at every stage of the application, allocation and admissions process for ELC and schools, EMA, school transport and Home Education • Refreshing East Renfrewshire's 'Reporting to Parents Guidance' to reflect the work of the Curriculum, Learning and Teaching groups and follow the NIF principles. • Rigorously monitoring the questionnaire and performance data to inform of school trends and issues • Sharing good practice in using technologies as identified through school's responses to the challenges of Covid-19 • Signposting services that offer a range of supports for parents such as Adult Learning, Family First, Healthier Minds
	<p>Critical Indicators</p>		
	<p>% of parents responding positively to parental questionnaires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would recommend the school to other parents • I am satisfied with the school • The school staff are approachable. • My child's school helps me understand my child's rights. • The school keeps me well informed about my child's progress in a way I can understand. • The information I receive from the Parent Council is useful. • How satisfied are you with the communication you get from the school to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information on what your child is currently learning about - information on how your child is progressing with their learning - information on ways to help your child continue learning at home - general information about the school 		

AIM	Outcome	Our contribution	Critical Activities
<p>SOA 1: All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure start to their lives and are supported to succeed.</p>	<p>Parents provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for their families.</p>	<p>Collaborate – we will expand opportunities for ALL parents to collaborate at all levels within our education system</p>	<p>By.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and supporting greater diversity in Parent Councils • Supporting establishments to ensure that all parents can have their views represented through their diversity champions and by developing approaches which focus on 'What matters to you?', not 'What's important to us.' • Supporting and challenging establishments to develop their approaches to Family Learning, Parental Engagement and Involvement and volunteering in response to the latest public health guidance • Continuing to provide key CLPL for practitioners, including NQTs, which support relationship based approaches with parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with Parents • Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the "Children's Workforce" in Scotland • Self-evaluation using Education Scotland's Engaging Parents and Families Toolkit. • Solihull Approach Foundation training • Family Centred Approaches – Going for Gold • Supporting schools and Parent Councils to develop approaches to effective collaboration with parents in planning and decision making with a focus on school improvement planning and PEF funding • Engaging with the National Parent Forum • Providing Recruitment and Selection Training for Parent Councils. • Supporting partnership with Connect by providing group membership & free training opportunities. • Increasing targeted opportunities for Family learning through e.g. Peep programme led by the Excellence and Equity Lead and Family link Officer and ESOL group with adult learning.
	<p>Critical Indicators</p>		
	<p>% of parents responding positively to parental questionnaires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school provides me with useful information about how I can help my child learn at home. • My child's school offers a selection of Family Learning activities such as events and workshops. • The cost of participating in school activities and events is affordable. • % of ELC settings and primary schools achieving Family Centred Approaches Accreditation at Gold. • % of Secondary schools achieving Family Centred Approaches Accreditation at Bronze or above 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting with parents who choose Home Education for their children to gain better insight of their needs and preferences to represent the local position more accurately in national discussions • Consulting with parents in 2022 and 2024 in regard to Early Learning and Childcare provision in East Renfrewshire thereby fulfilling our statutory duty • Involving parents in the implementation of UNCRC in East Renfrewshire • Participating in the Scottish Government Parental Involvement and Engagement census and analysing the data to focus on the views of under-represented groups
	<p>% of parents responding positively to parental questionnaires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school asks for my views about my child's learning. • The school takes my views about my child's learning into account. • The school seeks my views and opinions on school policies. • My views help to decide priorities in the School Improvement Plan. 		

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

3 February 2022

Report by Director of Education

EDUCATION REFORM CONSULTATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To update Education Committee on the Council's response to the Scottish Government Education Reform consultation.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Education Committee is asked to note and approve the East Renfrewshire response and agree that the response be homologated.

BACKGROUND

3. In response to the OECD reports [*Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future*](#) and [*Upper-Secondary Education Student Assessment in Scotland: A Comparative Perspective*](#) the national Education Reform consultation was published on 30 September and ran until 26 November 2021.

4. The Education Reform consultation, led by Professor Ken Muir, was designed to seek views of stakeholders and inform the recommendations relating to the future shape of Scotland's national education agencies, Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualification Agency (SQA). The process will conclude with an independent report by Professor Muir to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills in early 2022.

REPORT

5. On 11 November 2021 Education Committee noted that the changes to Scotland's national education agencies is likely to have significant implications for education in East Renfrewshire. The Committee also noted the Education Department was holding a number of forums during the consultation period to seek the views of East Renfrewshire stakeholders including:

- Elected members and members of Education Committee;
- Community Learning and Development;
- Head Teachers;
- Staff groups including representation from the LNCT;
- Parent Council Chairs;
- Quality Improvement Officers; and,
- Head Boys and Girls.

6. Views from the meetings held were used to form the response by East Renfrewshire to the consultation.

7. As the next meeting of the Education Committee was not until after the consultation ended it was agreed to establish a short term working group to consider the responses from stakeholders, and to finalise and submit a response on behalf of the Council. It was also agreed that the final response would be submitted to the next meeting of the committee for homologation.

8. The working group consisted of the Convener (Councillor Lafferty) Leader of the Council (Councillor Buchanan) and Leader of the Conservative Group/Education Spokesperson (Councillor Wallace). The group met on 23 November 2021 to discuss the Council's draft response to the consultation.

9. The Council's response to the Education Reform consultation was submitted on 26 November 2021, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1.

CONSULTATION

10. As set out in paragraph 5 the response reflects the views of key stakeholders.

11. Professor Muir also engaged with and sought feedback from a wide group of stakeholders including ADES and COSLA.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no financial implications relating to this paper

RECOMMENDATION

13. Education Committee is asked to note and approve the East Renfrewshire response and agree that the response be homologated.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 February 2022

Convener Contact Details
Councillor, Alan Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities

Tel: 07812214366

Report Author
Mark Ratter, Director of Education
Tel: 0141 577 8635
Mark.Ratter@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Background Papers

1. Education Scotland and the SQA: Consultation
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-review-education-scotland-scottish-qualification-authority-professor-kenneth-muir/documents/>
2. Education Committee Report: Education Reform Consultation, 11 November 2021

https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/7094/Education-Committee-item-03-11-November-2021/pdf/Education_Committee_item_03_-_11_November_2021.pdf?m=637716158088870000

Appendices

East Renfrewshire Council Response to Education Reform Consultation

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Education Reform

Consultation on behalf of Professor Ken Muir, University of the West of Scotland and Independent Advisor to The Scottish Government

Respondent Information Form

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response. To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy: <https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual, group or an organisation?

- Individual
 Group
 Organisation

If responding as an individual or group, which of the following best describes your role in the education system?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Carer | <input type="checkbox"/> Child / Young Person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher / Lecturer / Practitioner | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School / Centre Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> National Agency Officer |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority / Regional Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer / Industry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please state: | |

If responding as an individual or group, which of the following best describes your sector?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early years | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary (Further / Higher Education) |

Full name or group name

East Renfrewshire Council

Organisation name
(if applicable)

Phone number

0141 577 3000

Address

211 Main Street
Barrhead
East Renfrewshire

Postcode

G78 1SY

Email

educationresponse@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response.

Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)
- Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, in the analysis report.

We may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
- No

Consultation Questions

SECTION 1 – VISION

As an introduction to the questions which follow in this consultation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

1.1 The vision for Curriculum for Excellence reflects what matters for the education of children and young people in Scotland.

- Strongly Agree**
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

1.2 What do you think should be retained and/or changed?

East Renfrewshire recognises the significance of engaging with this consultation and as such we have sought views from a range of stakeholders including: pupils, staff, parents and elected members to enable us to submit this response. Through this engagement there was a continued commitment by all stakeholders to the vision for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

East Renfrewshire schools are clear that their curricular framework and structure must deliver the six national entitlements. In order to deliver these entitlements our education establishments have worked together as a community to establish their vision, values and aims which are underpinned by the department's vision statement of Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences. Within the authority there is evidence from internal and external quality assurance activities of many strong features in both the leadership of CfE and in the impact of CfE on learners' experiences, attainment and achievement.

However although our stakeholders believe that the vision is still very much relevant, evidence suggests it was never fully understood or effectively implemented across the wider system. The space and flexibility to implement CfE was quickly filled by competing agendas and policies, therefore the clear intent and policy agenda for the curriculum became diluted. At that time the educational landscape was not conducive to empowerment or teacher agency and capacity and confidence of staff to deliver was not fully supported. This climate led to the vision not entirely being realised and as a direct consequence learners' did not receive their full entitlements, especially as children and young people progressed from the Broad General Education (BGE) to the Senior Phase (SP).

Although in East Renfrewshire our schools develop Senior Phase curriculum frameworks that provide a range of learning pathways designed to meet the needs of all learners, whether aspiring to achievements at SCQF level 1 or SCQF level 7, young people highlighted that once the choice of learning pathway was decided, the actual curriculum and pedagogical approaches are driven entirely by course specifications determined by awarding bodies rather than be provided by the continuation of the rich, pupil-centred experiences within the BGE. Our staff also commented on their fulfilment when teaching the BGE versus the restrictions within the SP.

Almost all our stakeholders highlighted the missed opportunities and the forgotten agenda of the vision, including the holistic objective of developing the four capacities in our children and young people. They believe these were never fully explored, became superficial and not properly explained or embedded in the curriculum. Our young people also commented that the capacities were more explicit in the primary sector but were almost forgotten by the time they moved to secondary school and the senior phase. All our stakeholders as part of this engagement believed the capacities were still very much relevant, even within the arena of the global pandemic, however they emphasised the real opportunity to revisit these along with a refreshed, decluttered and non-convoluted narrative, to enable an empowered system to progress within a clear, coherent and understood policy environment. A refresh would provide an opportunity to link with other current policy changes such as UNCRC and the recent Additional Support Needs (Morgan) Review.

All our stakeholders were resolute in their views that there is no need for whole system change, more a need for a refreshed narrative that would take into consideration the last 10 – 15 years, and to align this with consideration of where we are now, nationally and globally. Specifically, there is value in exploring Mental Health and Wellbeing. Our Community Learning and Development colleagues also highlighted the need to focus on critical thinking and judgement, especially in the context of social media. Again, in engagement our stakeholders emphasised the need to be trusted and involved in decision making around the curriculum, with Head Teachers feeling empowered at a local level to deliver this vision and a curriculum in the Broad General Education (BGE) and varied learner pathways in Senior Phase (SP) based on the needs of their individual communities, however they didn't feel the autonomy was there beyond the local authority as they highlighted the continually changing national agenda, with many (and at time conflicting) national policies and plans that are not necessarily aligned to the CfE. For example the Pupil Equity Funding, Scottish Attainment Challenge and National Improvement Framework. A feeling that CfE was being forgotten was expressed.

Within the actual curriculum, key areas to explore would include coherence and pedagogical approaches of 3 to 18, the role of knowledge, application of skills, progression pathways and how we consistently assess progress at each stage. Our stakeholders again emphasised the need to include all within the system to ensure understanding, trust, autonomy and accountability. A concern around the pace of change was also expressed, with a plea that any proposed changes would be within a timescale that did not impact negatively on system capacity and would allow any proposed change to be adequately embedded and assimilated.

SECTION 2 - CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

2.1 Curriculum for Excellence provides a coherent progression in the journey of learners (3-18 and beyond) that gives them the best possible educational experience and enables them to realise their ambitions.

- Strongly Agree*
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

2.2 Please share what you believe currently contributes to a coherent progression.

In engagement, our head teachers highlighted the disconnect between the Broad General Education (BGE) and Senior Phase (SP) and how that impacts on coherent progression from 3 to 18, however they felt strongly that it would be wrong to focus only on the challenges from 15 to 18 as there is much to be proud of in East Renfrewshire within the BGE.

Our head teachers highlighted how our schools in East Renfrewshire collaborate within clusters (associated early years, primary, secondary and special schools), planning together to design a curriculum which provides a coherent and progressive pathway through the experiences and outcomes (Es & Os). A success of this approach is how it supports transition at key points and across sectors and ensures attainment, achievement and experiences are progressive and continuous. However our pupils, staff, parents and elected members asked the question around how progress across the four capacities is valued, assessed and recognised, with a few stakeholders describing how the four capacities are the ideal vehicle to bring about that holistic development of the whole child from 3 – 18, maintaining a focus on *who you are going to be, rather than what you are going to be*. Stakeholders admitted that although the capacities were around for some time prior to the framework, they were almost forgotten as people focused on content. The reason provided by most staff for this was the sense of responsibility and the fact the measures of success were not aligned to the four capacities, but focussed on the more traditional attainment measures. That said, our stakeholders, in particular our parents expressed a concern that future measures of success would have to be well thought out, reliable, valid and comparable, and that the *'baby was not thrown out with the bathwater.'*

Our head teachers also raised that CfE was badged as an opportunity for teachers to declutter an already crowded curriculum, make meaningful links across curricular areas and provide real and relevant learning experiences. They highlighted the success of this approach in East Renfrewshire, and how they were provide with the autonomy (and accountability) within a local authority structure. They were therefore confident that this can work, however they stated the amount of Es & Os and the lack of preparation and implementation time at a national level meant that teachers did not have this agency for long, before additional layers and guidance were produced, making it very difficult for teachers to navigate and apply the intended flexibility and autonomy to their curriculum. Our stakeholders also described how high quality interdisciplinary learning, where learners have the opportunity to apply their learning in a real and meaningful way and indeed be able to truly develop the outcomes as described within the four capacities and the skills for learning, life and work has become diminished as other factors have crowded the arena.

Overall our stakeholders were supportive of the rationale of staggering of levels across sectors (ELC and primary) believing they enabled the continuous learning agenda, however a few of our head teachers felt this opportunity was lost between other sectors (primary and secondary) where for the typical pupil the end of second level and the beginning of third coincides with the end of P7 and beginning of S1. They felt that this could lead to a glass ceiling for more capable students with a summative assessment approach to determining children's progress/capability at transition point as well as possible duplication of learning for some pupils. Similarly the transition from fourth level to SP has many unintended consequences including the danger that the S3 experience does not truly reflect the philosophy or the pedagogy of the BGE. Our secondary head teachers also felt strongly about the distortion between children's experiences of the fourth level within the BGE and the beginning of national qualifications at SCQFL5, where for many subjects the pathway is not aligned or progressive. Indeed in many cases fourth level within the BGE is regarded as being more challenging than SCQFL5 courses of study.

2.3 Please share ideas you may have to improve learner progression across stages and sectors.

As described in 2.2 above, in the main it has worked well for the Broad General Education (BGE) in East Renfrewshire, with the collaborative approach between clusters of schools serving the same community. However there remains challenge between the BGE and Senior Phase (SP), in particular the detrimental impact on the continuity of learners' experiences. A review of key transition stages in the context of the design principles and the delivery, assessment and recognition of young people's achievements across the four capacities, should be undertaken to ensure true alignment between these phases and the knowledge and skill content of the 3 – 18 curriculum.

The Scottish Government's proposal to increase non class contact time for teachers could provide a platform for collaboration and continued professional dialogue across the system, thereby enabling staff to improve learner progression and consistency of experiences for pupils however it must also be highlighted that the reduction in class contact time should not be to the detriment of learners in its implementation.

3.1 In practice, learning communities are empowered and use the autonomy provided by Curriculum for Excellence to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners.

- Strongly Agree*
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

3.2 Please share ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance this in future.

The empowerment agenda is powerful, and the need to strengthen the middle welcomed, however as recognised by the OECD report, the middle has been swamped by the continuous and changing national priorities and strategies. Therefore there has been too much change in the system, leaving an uncertainty and a lack of clarity. This doesn't create the correct culture and conditions for empowerment at any level.

Our head teachers as part of this engagement, highlighted the demand placed on schools in relation to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), particularly around their arrangements for curriculum, planning, assessment and reporting in schools. They reported the lack of clear guidance at a national level and their disappointment at the refreshed narrative that was produced by Education Scotland. They did however state that at a local authority level, East Renfrewshire had been proactive in providing support and guidance that minimised workload demands for staff and tackled bureaucracy in their schools, and the provision of clear strategic direction in taking forward Curriculum for Excellence had resulted in a planned and coherent approach. They believed that there was a strong and mutual trust between the local authority and schools, built upon respectful relationships. They also highlighted the well-developed skills framework, the moderation arrangements and the high quality professional learning. Moving forward it is important that relationships between other agencies reflect the strength that exists within East Renfrewshire and adds value.

Our stakeholders also expressed that although there is definitely autonomy within the system, the balance with accountability and external influences deteriorates as children and young people progress through the system, consequently the scope to truly design a curriculum specific to your context and community diminishes.

4.1 The creation of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency will help to address the misalignment of curriculum and assessment as outlined in the OECD report¹.

- Strongly Agree*
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

4.2 Please share your views of the potential advantages of establishing such an Agency.

It is challenging to comment on this question as the purpose of this agency has yet to be explored. If it is to simply replace the existing agency (SQA) then it is difficult to determine the advantages to this.

Any new agency should be independent, transparent, consultative and show strong leadership across the system to maintain a National Standard. It should focus on the curriculum aspect of its role not just assessment in isolation. If it truly looked at both then this would be a potential advantage.

4.3 Please share your views of the potential disadvantages of establishing such an Agency.

¹ [Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future | en | OECD](#)

As identified earlier by our stakeholders, there is a real risk we throw the *'baby out with the bathwater'*, and don't retain the many strengths within the existing agency (SQA). All functions of this agency should be explored to ensure that good practice is not lost, or those currently successfully working in partnership receive a diminished service.

It is important that any new agency has a clear remit which includes the requirement to align the objectives of the Broad General Education with the curriculum and approaches to assessment in the Senior Phase.

It is difficult to further comment without having a full understanding of what the whole system looks like. If introduced this agency would need to talk to and collaborate with others within the system. Our secondary head teachers believe the agency should add value, continuity and consistency but they emphasised the need for trust and credibility.

5.1 The full breadth of existing SQA qualifications² play an important part of the curriculum offered by secondary schools.

- Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

5.2 Please identify the main factors, if any, that support a broader range of SQA qualifications being included in the curriculum in secondary schools.

Learners' needs vary from school to school and as such it is important that the curriculum on offer is broad and inclusive to all. All our stakeholders emphasised their commitment to children and young people accessing the right pathway.

In East Renfrewshire, there is parity of esteem, with our schools' design of the curriculum providing flexible learning pathways which has resulted in improved outcomes for young people. These pathways support children and young people to build on prior learning and ensures appropriate progression for all learners. Schools offer a wide range of courses in the senior phase, they review these on a regular basis to ensure they support pupil needs and lead to improved outcomes. Our vocational programme takes account of the latest Labour Market Information and delivers a significant number of courses, ranging from SCQF level 1 to level 8, to a considerable number of students including those undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships across a range of frameworks. The courses are delivered in partnership with colleges, universities and employers, allowing pupils to develop skills in their chosen subject as well as valuable experience to help them in the world beyond school. This autonomy to work with key stakeholders to design a broad range of accredited courses, including academic and vocational qualifications is welcome by pupils, parents and staff alike. Our strong partnership with Skills Development Scotland complements our approaches. The Council's approaches to the delivery/support of vocational courses by external agencies ensures that no other academic studies delivered by schools are detrimentally impacted in anyway, allowing a genuine varied learner pathway, which values academic and vocational qualifications equally.

² [Explore our qualifications - SQA](#)

Although within East Renfrewshire a wide and varied learner pathway offering is in place, the skills for life, learning and work agenda has progressed at a faster pace and as such, the time is right to review the offer as part of the secondary curriculum. It is however important that these qualifications operate within the same currency and are truly intended to provide breadth and choice and not a two tier system. Insight and the LGBF play a role in this, potentially hindering schools and Local Authorities from introducing a broader range of qualifications. It will be important moving forward that we ensure that pupil achievements in the senior phase are appropriately recognised.

5.3 Please share any ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance the role of a broader variety of qualifications in the curriculum in secondary schools.

As part of this engagement exercise, all stakeholders highlighted how East Renfrewshire had enhanced the range of pathways and qualifications available in our 7 secondary schools. This included systematically developing our Senior Phase (SP) offer over a period of time. However, although delivered in partnership it was felt that there is scope for further collaboration between key partners, in particular those in Further and Higher Education.

Our pupils explained during this engagement exercise that their choices are often determined by entry requirements, and that at the moment some pathways don't hold the same value as others. They understand the need for prerequisite experience however they challenged the historical nature of this. Our staff also discussed how structures and timetables in the SP had many restrictions caused by the need for young people to access specific subjects within a set period of time.

We would welcome wider national debate, involving all key stakeholders, using the criteria reflected in the Stobart review, on the purpose and principles for Scotland's curriculum, assessment and qualifications system. We would however suggest that any further recommendations from this consultation are not agreed prior to this whole system approach to improvement. As described by our stakeholders, we cannot take forward 2 recommendations in isolation of the other 10, nor did they think it appropriate we create another set of recommendations from the existing 2.

There is a need to debate how the curriculum meets the current national and global context and how we measure success as part of a national measurement framework. As mentioned above Insight and LGBF will have to be reviewed to reflect any changes. The action plan created by the Scottish Government in response to the Additional Support Needs (Morgan) Review also outlines the development of a measurement framework for learners with complex Additional Support Needs. It is important that this is considered at the same time as any other changes to national measures.

6.1 Technologies are fully and appropriately utilised as a support for curriculum and assessments.

- Strongly Agree*
- Agree*
- Neither Agree/Disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly Disagree*

6.2 Please share any comments you may have on the use of technologies to support curriculum and assessments, and what could be done to deliver improvements.

Although not currently universally in place, our stakeholders recognised the great potential in further developing the use of technologies to support curriculum and assessment, and they emphasised the significant role technologies played in the recent global pandemic. Although it could never replace or provide all the benefits that attending school does, it did allow teachers to explore the potential of using such tools not only to offer remote learning and teaching but also to enhance learners' experiences on their return to school. The development of West OS and East Renfrewshire's Video Vault was recognised by staff as a valuable support and our pupils could describe how it provides reinforcement and support when learning key concepts and ideas.

Our stakeholders, however were keen to point out that there is a danger that an over reliance on technology could diminish pedagogical practices, with young people clear that they still want that interactive face to face session with teachers.

Exploration of technologies to support assessment would be welcomed, however the process of using technologies should not overtake the purpose of assessment and the part it plays as part of learning and teaching. Exchanging a paper based assessment for one which is presented in exactly the same way online may improve the management of assessment, however this will not add anything to the experience of learners or the ability to assess and recognise wider skills, knowledge and abilities. The use of digital approaches for the purpose of assessment must truly consider how assessment approaches can change to assess not only curricular knowledge and skills, but wider skills and abilities; learning from others who use digital assessment as described within the Stobart review could be used to support any changes, including the previous SQA pilots of online assessment and the current use of Scottish National Standardised Assessments.

From East Renfrewshire's point of view a move to this approach would need to have a clear strategic plan, with the correct and ongoing investment at a local authority level. This includes an investment in infrastructure, devices and professional learning of the workforce. Our young people and staff described the frustration when things don't work because of insufficient bandwidth, or how devices and technologies can quickly date. There also needs to be consideration of the assumptions made during the pandemic regarding accessibility, not limited only for key equity groups, with a focus on both devices and the appropriate ongoing connectivity being available. Therefore any such investment be universal and on an ongoing basis, to ensure up to date technologies are in place and at a national level, providing equity across the system.

7. Please share any additional comments you have on curriculum and assessment.

East Renfrewshire welcomes the national focus on curriculum and assessment. There is a strong commitment from our stakeholders to use the evidence gathered nationally to effectively implement locally. They believe the local approach is working well and as previously noted, they are very receptive to a refresh but question the need for any complete overhaul. The current capacity within the whole system needs to be considered prior to any decisions on change, in particular the pace of change for pupils, staff and parents. There is no stability within the current system, with all feeling the challenge of policy and initiative overload, against a backdrop of recovering from a global pandemic. Change needs to be an improvement and given time to embed and impact measured. A strategic, coherent approach combined with ownership of all improvement agendas needs to be in place, i.e. NIF, SAC 2, GIRFEC, The Promise, etc.

At a national level, it is important that any agenda moving forward doesn't become overly weighted towards assessment in the Senior Phase. It needs to focus on curriculum, and assessment as part of learning and teaching. With this in mind, consideration needs to be given to the national professional learning offer required to support systematic change.

Overall our staff, parents and elected members are committed to their role in effectively implementing CfE, with the ongoing support of the Local Authority and the Regional Improvement Collaborative. They believe CfE is effectively implemented within East Renfrewshire but would welcome the potential to collaborate with any new improvement agency.

SECTION 3 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

8.1 There is clarity on where the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence lie.

- Strongly Agree*
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

8.2 Please indicate where you think the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence should lie.

A fundamental challenge of having a clear strategic direction for Curriculum for Excellence is that there are multiple policy makers across the 3 – 18 agenda, including within the Scottish Government, where we have the Children and Families and the Learning Directorates. Education Scotland's and SQA's role and guidance further blurs the strategic direction. This coupled with the tension between the empowerment agenda and national directives has left East Renfrewshire stakeholders feeling that the original messages and guidance around the curriculum and empowerment have been diluted and in parts tokenistic.

If we truly want an empowered system we should move away from a top down model and create and develop an approach that has teacher ownership at the heart of curriculum design. To do this we need to have consistent strategic leadership at a national level, joined up policy decisions, clear reference to curriculum and improvement, the correct balance between autonomy and accountability, streamlined reporting and clarity between advice and policy.

Within East Renfrewshire the strategic approach to the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence has included the development of policies and guidance designed to provide a framework of improvement for schools, however, these have not been overly prescriptive. Our staff don't feel this can be said about the national approach, sighting incidences of where their autonomy has been challenged by external national agencies, despite their evidence of impact and outcomes for their learners. Our head teachers could provide further examples where they've felt judgement has been unfairly made for no other reason than they are not following the route that national agencies would prefer.

Our stakeholders would welcome strategic direction and a national framework for them to effectively implement, alongside the guidance, support and challenge provided by Local Authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives. Although the review by OECD and its recommendations are well received, schools and LAs need to be involved in setting our own strategic direction and not be heavily reliant on external review. This bottom up approach would enable this and support the strategic direction, implementation and the ongoing evaluation of CfE at a national level. This would allow the Curriculum and Assessment Board or equivalent to have a clear role with agreed responsibilities not only for strategic direction and framework but for ongoing continuous evaluation of national progress and CfE impact.

9.1 There is clarity on the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

- Strongly Agree*
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

9.2 Please share which aspects of the support currently provided by national agencies and other providers is working well.

Our head teachers believe the current structure and organisation within Education Scotland is not adding sufficient value to the current system. Teachers no longer recognise them as a relevant or consistent resource that supports improvement, with Local Authority and Regional Improvement Collaboratives being referenced as the drivers for improvement within the system.

This was particularly true during the recent period of school closures where East Renfrewshire's schools felt that Education Scotland's response to supporting them was out of tune with the work of schools at that time. This may be in part due to the detached approach between Local Authorities and Education Scotland that is in place now with the removal of Area Lead Officers. This post was valued in the system and led to a deep and shared understanding and knowledge between both parties. Our head teachers and departmental staff also reported as part of this consultation that the shift from improvement to scrutiny by Education Scotland during the pandemic did little to negate their view that the agency truly understood the challenges facing education at that time. Although the reviews were referenced as sharing of good practice, stakeholders believed them to be unsupportive, adding to workload and stress.

An area that stakeholders did speak positively about during this time was the opportunity for scrutiny and improvement teams of Education Scotland to work together to provide professional learning opportunities for school staff. Almost all staff participating highly evaluated the learning and expressed a wish for further opportunities.

The reasoning behind the amalgamation of HMIE and Learning Teaching Scotland has never achieved the desired outcomes and impact. There is a sense that there is confusion about where Education Scotland fit within the system. Stakeholders stated a sense of tension between scrutiny and locality teams and did not think they fulfilled the role required by a national agency.

9.3 Please indicate where you think greater clarity is needed in relation to the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs / requests for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

There needs to be a review of all the national inputs, agendas and layers that the current national agencies contribute to and whether they bring support and structure to the vision of Curriculum for Excellence and / or if they support improvement within the system. Many stakeholders within East Renfrewshire were unclear of the purpose or impact of some of the layers and roles within Education Scotland, for example National Improvement Framework Advisors, Attainment Advisors, Senior Regional Advisors. They believed the numerous roles contributed to the fragmentation of the agency.

10.1 There is clarity on where high quality support for leadership and professional learning can be accessed to support practitioners.

- Strongly Agree*
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

10.2 Please share any comments you may have on support for leadership and professional learning.

The General Teaching Council (GTC) supports professional learning by providing a range of opportunities. There is room for further collaboration across agencies, in particular between Initial Teacher Education (ITE), GTC, SG and ES. There is a sense that the system is not talking to each other and that there is no system wide improvement agenda for leadership and professional learning. The Professional Leadership and Learning (PLL) function of Education Scotland in part supports the leadership and professional learning across the system. Our staff feel that it has a clear role and makes a strong contribution to supporting and developing leaders and ensuring that the national standard for head teachers is accessible. They also collaborate with higher educational establishments to ensure staff across the system have a range of professional development opportunities. These opportunities are highly evaluated by school staff. However the PLL appears to work in silo from the other functions of Education Scotland preferring to deliver “discrete” types of learning and not taking advantage of the intelligence or improvement agenda to design and deliver professional learning opportunities to support with leadership of curriculum and assessment. In preparation for change we need to build the capacity of staff. All agencies with this remit must collaborate to ensure that a needs analysis identifies the professional learning required to create a state of readiness for education reform. It is important however that any offer for professional learning continues to add value and is not a duplication of professional learning that is already on offer through the RICs or local authorities.

11.1 There is sufficient trust with all stakeholders, including children, young people, parents & carers, so they are genuinely involved in decision making.

- Strongly Agree*
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

11.2 Please share any ideas you may have on how trust and decision making can be further improved.

Overwhelmingly our stakeholders reported that they feel trusted and empowered to make decisions and bring about improvement. They spoke about the ethos of trust that exists in East Renfrewshire, and how staff feel comfortable learning from mistakes and are encouraged to take initiative; within a consistent framework. Our head teachers are

empowered to take forward learning and teaching in their schools within broad local authority guidelines which have been written collaboratively by head teachers and education department officers. As a result, teachers have the autonomy to design the curriculum and lead improvement based on evidence-based research and an understanding of their school community. This approach has undoubtedly contributed to the overall sense by East Renfrewshire's stakeholders that Curriculum for Excellence has delivered for our learners.

Our stakeholders, however recognised that not all levels of the system are empowered, therefore the trust and decision making is stronger in some partnerships than others. The lack of strategic direction and clear roles and responsibilities within the national system also impacts on the trust and decision making. There needs to be a collaborative approach to the improvement agenda, with all stakeholders involved in any reform or pending national debate on curriculum design.

We must take this opportunity to rebuild system wide relationships, improve communication, focus on excellence and equity and align to other priorities such as GIRFEC, UNCRC and the Promise.

12.1 Independent inspection has an important role to play in scrutiny and evaluation, enhancing improvement and building capacity.

- Strongly Agree*
 Agree
 Neither Agree/Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

12.2 Please give examples of how you would like to see scrutiny and evaluation being carried out in future.

An external independent agency with responsibility for scrutiny and evaluation is the preferred way forward. This will bring professional respect to the agency as well as providing public reassurance and regulation.

Moving forward, however scrutiny needs to be different. The model and language around inspection should be reviewed. Nationally we need to look outwards and forwards focussing on how quality is assured within an empowered system. Stakeholders expressed a desire to feel connected to the process, demonstrating the difference between local authority inspections and Education Scotland led scrutiny. Although our stakeholders are pragmatic about the six point scale, they strongly felt that the professional dialogue around visits should be strengthened with less emphasis on gradings, and more focus on building the capacity to improve. The model should be agile, nimble and evolving so that it supports self-reflection and internal accountability. The scrutiny body also has to be relevant and connected to all levels of the system, therefore the role of Associate Assessors is vital. Each local authority should have a significant number of Associate Assessors across all sectors who can support the process. Associate Assessors should bring a different range of experiences to the process, for example departmental staff with responsibility for quality assurance activity at authority level should be considered alongside senior leaders in schools.

Our Community Learning and Development (CLD) stakeholders also believe the consistency and transparency of how inspection models and Quality Improvement (QI)

Frameworks are used/deployed during cycles of inspection needs to be strengthened, citing examples of how definition or interpretation of QIs can change during a national inspection cycle.

Serious consideration needs to be taken of the cluttered scrutiny landscape in ELC. With two self-evaluation frameworks and two scrutiny bodies there is a risk of over scrutiny and conflict of interest. The Scottish Government's Children and Families and the Learning Directorates must streamline and simplify the process and ensure that it is the same agency that scrutinises education across 3 – 18.

13. Please share any additional comments on roles and responsibilities in Scotland's education system.

Although there is a strong appetite for change if it brings about improvement there is a risk that the current capacity within the system is not taken into consideration. The continued impact of Covid-19 at all levels presents a risk for the success of reform, therefore all stakeholders must be engaged and involved in the process and listened to when deciding on an appropriate pace. This is relevant not only to the context of this consultation but all 12 recommendations detailed in the OECD report and accepted by the Scottish Government. Local authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives can play a vital role in helping respond to these recommendations and ultimately bringing about improvement for all learners but they must be involved and truly empowered in order to do so.

In doing so there also should be strong cognisance of the statutory duties and functions of the Local Authority and the devolved responsibilities. The opportunity to collaborate over a refreshed shared agenda would be welcomed by East Renfrewshire Council.

SECTION 4 - REPLACING THE SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY AND REFORMING EDUCATION SCOTLAND

Removing Scrutiny (Inspection and review) from Education Scotland

14. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example what form should this agency take)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example the development of a new national approach to inspection including alignment with other scrutiny functions)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example whether the independence of the inspectorate could be jeopardised by change)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To be recognised as a credible and professionally respected agency, the scrutiny body must operate independently. They must have autonomy to challenge and support across the system, maintaining a focus on ensuring that children and young people have the best possible learning experiences. They should scrutinise, evaluate and analyse findings, providing information which will support the national agenda for improvement. They should feed into national debates but not take on the agenda of others and remain independent throughout. b) The language and model associated with scrutiny needs to change to allow all stakeholders to feel connected to the process. Currently our stakeholders do not feel this is the case. Our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) staff also raised a concern regarding the current scrutiny process for ELC establishments. This has to be addressed as currently nurseries have 2 self-evaluation frameworks with 2 sets of quality indicators, and head teachers with a nursery class as part of their primary school have 3. Our head teachers report this increases workload, bureaucracy and confusion as there is sense of real tension between Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate. Given a choice our head teachers would prefer to be aligned to education standards rather than care and would prefer to have the same self-evaluation framework as schools. c) Although the rationale for having the improvement body and scrutiny body within one agency was convincing, the reality has been different. That said we don't want to go back to a scrutiny agency that operates in silo, they must contribute to system wide improvement by collating evidence and data around performance and shining the light on where the national improvement should focus. d) A clear, transparent and collaborative approach will support reform. Autonomy with accountability is required with the prerequisite that the inspectorate undertake internal and external self-evaluation (e.g. peer evaluation) on a cyclical basis. This could involve stakeholders from across the system and partners from other scrutiny regimes. e) There is a genuine risk if you change one part of the system without aligning or exploring the other changes, therefore a careful plan on how this should take place is required, |
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taking into consideration the timescale for the implementation of the other agreed 12 recommendations of the OECD report.

Further Reform of Education Scotland

15. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on how the functions currently housed in Education Scotland could be reformed.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example which functions should continue to sit within a reformed Education Scotland, and are there any functions which could be carried out elsewhere)
- b) the opportunities reform could present (for example should more prominence be given to aspects of Education Scotland's role)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example disruption of service to education establishments and settings)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

- a) Where Education Scotland sits in the current system is unclear. There is limited unity of purpose between the scrutiny, improvement and professional learning bodies within the agency, consequently our stakeholders do not regard them as a support at this time. The current structure is vast and the creation of locality teams has brought layers and uncertainty about who is actually leading and making decisions. The main function should be to drive and support the vision for the curriculum.
- b) The current role and responsibilities of Education Scotland requires clarity, until this is clear it is challenging to identify opportunities.
- c) The pandemic has presented an opportunity for us to look at things differently, engagement and involvement has been limited over the past 2 years, therefore the risk is low.
- d) A clear identify and purpose to ES.
- e) Again we would urge caution that we don't implement significant change without fully considering the actions required to implement the other 12 recommendations from the OECD report.

Replacing SQA

16. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example could a function be carried out elsewhere)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example should more prominence be given to an aspect of SQA's role)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example loss of income, confusion as to system of awards in Scotland)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

- a) There has to be a clear remit and purpose to any replacement agency with a focus on adding value. We cannot run the risk of replacing like with like. Improvement is needed around leadership, communication and transparency, however we must also take into consideration the current strengths in this system, not just at school level, but across Community Learning and Development, Adult Learning, Further Education, etc.
- b) The integrity and validity of national qualifications is crucial. Our stakeholders emphasised that this must be maintained irrespective of the lead agency. We are aware of the historical concerns, including the challenging relationships, however moving forward there is an opportunity to learn from mistakes and develop a suite of assessments that support the curriculum, align with pedagogical approaches and recognise the wider holistic achievements of all children and young people. There should be consideration given to how Scotland recognises and celebrates the wider achievements of young people, such as the development of the four capacities, and to how this should be certificated. Any developments in this area must be accompanied by significant communication and work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the credibility and value of such certification and to avoid the failing of previous attempts at such non-certificate recognition, such as the S3 profile of learning; this requires a change in what society considers as success.
- c) There is a real opportunity to significantly enhance approaches to assessment, using digital technologies to do so. The use of technology should not simply be to replicate paper based approaches in a digital form. The use of technology can provide a greater opportunity to assess wider skills and attributes which young people are developing as a consequence of curriculum for excellence. Examples of approaches used in other countries as described within the Stobart report can and should be considered. However this is an opportunity for Scotland to be forward thinking and innovative in what and how it assesses.
- d) Disconnect within the system is a concern where the agency works in silo and doesn't consider the impact on pupils and teachers in terms of workload and bureaucracy, nor take cognisance of the changes to curriculum. We cannot make the same mistake of the "*tail wagging the dog*". Stakeholders in East Renfrewshire would like reassurance that assessment will come after the national debate on curriculum. The credibility of national qualifications must also remain so that there is a consistency, coherence and comparability across the nation.

- e) Involving all stakeholders in professional dialogue to ensure that any changes are fully considered.
- f) Changes should not be made until the curriculum agenda is clear, therefore the role of the new agency should be clear along with reassurance on the interim approaches to delivery of national qualifications.

Considering the Establishment of a new Curriculum and Assessment Agency

17. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example are there alternative models for this reform?)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example what should the role of the new agency be?)
- c) the risks associated with any reform
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

- a) Our stakeholders are disappointed that the suggestion of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency has been made without full consideration or collaboration with them. It is disappointing that the opportunity to discuss the OECD recommendations with those in the system was not further explored, therefore there is a tension that reform will continue to be a top down model.
- b) There is a real opportunity for assessment to sit as part of learning and teaching and curriculum. This potentially presents the opportunity to truly have a coherent curriculum from 3 – 18.
- c) As previously detailed we have a pattern around quick changes which are not improvements, therefore the role and responsibilities of this agency need to be fully explored with opportunities for co-production across the system on determining the role and responsibilities.
- d) Dialogue and consideration of the landscape required for change prior to any decisions.
- e) The system needs to be ready for change, therefore timescales need to be considered within the current context. A clear timeframe must be agreed and shared and the professional learning opportunities aligned. Pupils and parents must be fully engaged and involved and communication must be informative, honest and reassuring.

If you have any additional comments and suggestions relating to this consultation, please send them to EducationReform@gov.scot

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE3 February 2022Report by Director of EducationGAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION: OUTCOME OF A REQUEST FOR AN ASSESSMENT**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To inform Education Committee of the outcome of a request for an assessment of the demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education in East Renfrewshire and seek approval for the proposed approach to the full assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Education Committee is asked to:
- a. note and comment on the contents of the report and the outcome of the initial assessment; and,
 - b. following completion of the full assessment and in line with the statutory guidance, delegate to the Director of Education the decision to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education in August 2023.

BACKGROUND

3. Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) takes the form of immersion, i.e. children experience all their learning in the early years of primary school (Pr. 1 - 3) through the Gaelic language. Thereafter, immersion continues but in Pr. 4 – 7 English is introduced, while Gaelic remains the predominant language of the classroom.

4. At present East Renfrewshire Council does not make such a provision but supports families who wish such an experience for their children, and are successful in being granted a placing request to schools in neighbouring local authorities, through provision of transport. We do likewise for children or young people who wish to access specialist provision such as The Dance School of Scotland in Knightswood Secondary in Glasgow.

5. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) and establishes a process by which parents can request Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) from their education authority.

6. [Statutory guidance](#), issued by the Bòrd na Gàidhlig came into force on 1 February 2017, Part 1 of which sets out the steps education authorities must take to assess demand on receipt of a request for GME.

7. Under the legislation and statutory guidance parents of children under school age, and who have not yet started to attend a primary school, have the right to request an assessment of the need for GMPE from the education authority in which the family resides. Any request

must also set out or be accompanied by evidence of demand for GMPE from parents of other children resident in the same education authority area and who will commence primary school in the same year group as the specified child. An initial assessment should be completed within a 6 week window; a full assessment allows 10 weeks for the local authority to undertake and report on the exercise.

8. A parental request may also contain evidence that there is demand for GMPE from parents of other children under school age, who are resident in the same education authority area and have not yet begun to attend a primary school, but who will commence primary school in a different year group to the specified child.

9. When an education authority receives a parental request made under the 2016 Act, it must designate the geographical area in relation to which it will undertake its assessment of the need for GMPE referred to as a 'GMPE assessment area'.

10. The threshold for an obligatory full assessment under the 2016 Act is that an education authority is satisfied that there is demand in the GMPE assessment area from the parents of at least five children who are resident in the GMPE assessment area and all in the same pre-school year group; the specified child should be counted in this total.

11. In April 2017, the Education Department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE in East Renfrewshire for her child. After carrying out the initial assessment, the department concluded that there was not the potential need for GMPE as the threshold for a full assessment had not been met. As a result no further action was taken.

REPORT

12. On 27 October 2021 the department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE in East Renfrewshire for her child, known as the 'lead child', who is due to start primary school in August 2023. Included in the request were the names of a further 13 children across a range of year groups, whose parents had expressed an interest in GMPE for their children.

13. The department wrote to each parent included in the request for assessment, inviting them to complete a proforma confirming their wish for GMPE for their child. Given the Council's small geographical area, the designated GMPE assessment area was defined as the whole of the geographical area of East Renfrewshire.

14. The department received 11 positive responses, including that of the lead child, by the deadline of 8 December 2021. The breakdown of numbers for each year group is as follows:

Year Group P1 Starting	Number of Positive Responses
2023 - 24	5
2024 - 25	2
2025 - 26	3
2026 - 27	1

15. As such the threshold of five children in any one year group is met. The demand for 2023-24 is higher than the previous request in 2017 and above the current existing demand i.e. around 2 per stage.

16. Where any education authority determines that there is a potential need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area, it has two possible options, it can:

- carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area; or
- without carrying out a full assessment, exercise its discretion to take such steps as are necessary to secure the provision of such GMPE as it considers appropriate in the GMPE assessment area.

17. The department decided to carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE. The statutory guidance requires that *'when carrying out a full assessment an education authority must have regard to a list of mandatory matters, and must decide to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so'*.

18. As part of the full assessment process the department has notified and sought the views of Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant and the National Parent Forum of Scotland.

19. In addition as part of the full assessment the department needs to take account of the statutory guidance on Gaelic education and will consider the following factors:

- Views provided by statutory consultees (listed in paragraph 18);
- Initial assessment information in relation to demand;
- Existing GMPE provision in adjacent authorities and the availability of access;
- Access to GMPE in East Renfrewshire from children in other Local Authorities;
- Accommodation;
- Costs;
- Teachers – including potential availability within East Renfrewshire and the potential to recruit; and,
- The East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan.

20. The department has written to all parents whose names were provided as part of the request and indicated that we are carrying out a full assessment. We have also posted the outcome of the initial assessment on the Council's website as per the statutory guidance.

21. The full assessment must be completed by 16 February 2022. There is an expectation that the education authority publishes this report on its website within this timeframe. This report must set out the reasons for any decision with reference to the mandatory factors set out in paragraph 19.

22. There is a presumption, described in the guidance as *'an effective entitlement to GMPE'*, that if there is sufficient demand an education authority will *'secure the provision GMPE unless it is unreasonable to do so'*. The guidance is clear that an education authority cannot take or justify a decision not to provide GMPE on the basis of a single factor, for example, accommodation.

23. Where an education authority decides to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area, it must take the necessary steps to secure the provision as it considers appropriate and within reasonable timescales. Should the department decide to progress with the provision of GMPE it would then undertake a statutory consultation regarding admission arrangements.

24. The full assessment process will allow the Education Department to seek views from statutory consultees, consider the statutory factors set out paragraph 19 and determine

whether there is sufficient demand for GMPE. Should the statutory consultees be in favour of establishing GMPE provision and there be sufficient evidence of demand, then the authority would be required by The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to progress with the establishment of GMPE from August 2023. Should the Education Department not proceed at that stage and the decision was challenged, then advice from legal services has indicated that we would be unsuccessful if we tried to defend this position.

25. As the next meeting of the committee will not be until after the full assessment process is completed and a decision required, it is proposed that Education Committee delegate to the Director of Education the decision regarding whether to establish GMPE in August 2023. This decision would need to take account of the full assessment process, evidence of demand and the statutory guidance.

CONSULTATION

26. As set out in paragraphs 18 and 19 the full assessment will reflect the views of the statutory consultees.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

27. The financial and efficiency matters relating to this paper will be taken into account when carrying out the full assessment.

CONCLUSION

28. The education department has received a second request for Gaelic Medium Primary Education under the 2016 legislation and statutory guidance. The response from parents met the nationally set threshold of five preschool children per year group. The department is now undertaking a full assessment of the potential need for GMPE in East Renfrewshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

29. Education Committee is asked to:

- a. note and comment on the contents of the report and the outcome of the initial assessment; and,
- b. following completion of the full assessment and in line with the statutory guidance, delegate to the Director of Education the decision to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education in August 2023.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 February 2022

Convener Contact Details
Councillor, Alan Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities

Tel: 07812214366

Report Author
Mark Ratter, Director of Education

Tel: 0141 577 8635

Mark.Ratter@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Background Papers

Gaelic Medium Education: Outcome of a request for an assessment; Education Committee Report 21 June 2017

https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/3348/Education-Committee-Item-04-21-June-2017/pdf/Education_Committee_-_Item_04_-_21_June_2017.pdf?m=637387236221730000

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE3 February 2022Report by Director of EducationREPORT ON THE EAST RENFREWSHIRE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR
LEARNING REVIEW**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To inform Education Committee of the results of the East Renfrewshire Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Education Committee is asked to:
 - a) note and comment on the findings of the ASL review; and,
 - b) approve the authority's action plan to address the agreed recommendations for improvement.

BACKGROUND

3. A [National Review](#) of the implementation of additional support for learning in schools was carried out by Angela Morgan in 2020 and subsequent [National Action Plan](#) was published in 2021. It considered the implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation and how this is applied to practice across authorities.

4. In response to the National Review, the Education Department has undertaken a review of ASL within East Renfrewshire. The aim of the review was to consider how we can provide high quality support to children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) to ensure that the East Renfrewshire Education Department vision of Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences is realised.

5. Key priorities of the review included:

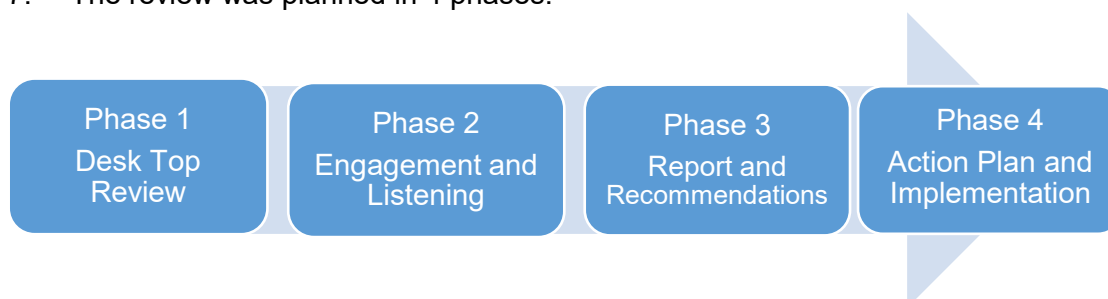
- Support the implementation of recommendations of the Angela Morgan Review – *All Our Children and All Their Potential*;
- Identify service gaps and barriers and recommend potential solutions in relation to ASL provision within ERC establishments;
- Plan and develop an ERC Additional Support for Learning Action Plan;
- Ensure that children, young people, and families are engaged in reviewing, planning and evaluating ASL in ERC.

6. The review considered 4 main themes:

- Vision and Values: Interpretation of Additional Support Needs;

- Curriculum and Attainment;
- Specialist Provision and Specialist Services;
- Relationships between Schools, Children and young people and parents and carers.

7. The review was planned in 4 phases:



REPORT

8. The desk top analysis included a review of relevant literature and an analysis of ASN data from all establishments across the authority. The key findings from the desk top review include:

- 23% of school-aged children have a recorded ASN in East Renfrewshire – this is lower than the national figure given in the Morgan ASL Review;
- There is a link between economic and social disadvantage and the incidence of recorded ASN across schools in ERC and more boys than girls are recorded as having an ASN;
- Literacy difficulties/dyslexia, ASD/Social Communication Needs, Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs and English as an Additional Language are the most frequently recorded ASN;
- There is an increasing number of children and young people who require access to specialist services and as a result there is growing pressure on the capacity of these services.

9. During the listening and engagement phase, over 350 staff members and key partners, 600 parents and carers and focus groups of children and young people were consulted with.

10. Key findings from the listening and engagement phase highlight that East Renfrewshire has many skilled and dedicated professionals who embrace the principles of inclusion and work tirelessly to ensure children and young people with additional support needs are supported to reach their potential. Some staff however, expressed concerns and anxiety about the level of support in their establishment and their ability to meet the needs of some children and young people.

11. Parents/carers were asked to comment on various issues related to ASL and their responses were more positive than negative in all areas. Where school staff have inclusive values, families recognise it, appreciate it and believe it to make the difference. However, there was also a number of concerns highlighted in areas including communication, relationships, allocation of support and staff understanding of specific needs such as Autism.

12. Children and young people were mostly very positive about their experiences, they spoke of feeling supported and safe. Some areas for development they highlighted included wanting more challenge and the need for others to have a greater

understanding of their additional support needs and strategies in place to support them.

13. Based on the finding of the review, a number of recommendations have been identified. These recommendations are listed in the Executive Summary and have been grouped into the following 4 categories:

- Vision
- Culture and Climate
- Specialist Provision
- Career Long Professional Learning

14. A draft ASL Action Plan (Appendix B) has been created to take account of the recommendations and links to the National Action Plan have been incorporated. Steering Groups (Appendix 3) have been identified in order to take forward the identified actions including timescales for implementation and resources required.

15. The ASL Governance Group will evaluate progress to identify strengths and further actions needed in the implementation of the ASL Action Plan. The self-evaluation and evaluations of services and schools by the department's Quality Improvement Team, Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate and Customer Service Excellence will help to identify impact.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

16. The timescales for implementing any increases in the capacity of specialist provision will be dependent on the identification of any related efficiency savings within the department's existing budget and/or the approval of any spending pressures submitted as part of the annual budget setting process.

CONCLUSION

17. Similar to that of national trends, the number of children recorded as having additional support needs is increasing in East Renfrewshire and the complexity of needs is also increasing. The prevalence of child poverty has contributed to rises in learners requiring additional support for social, emotional and behavioural needs.

18. Professionals, parents/carers and children and young people have expressed a need for the upskilling of staff in order to adequately equip them with the knowledge, skills and understanding to best support children and young people with an additional support need within mainstream setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. Education Committee is asked to:

- a) note and comment on the findings of the ASL review; and,
- b) approve the authority's action plan to address the agreed recommendations for improvement.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 February 2022

Convener Contact Details

Councillor A. Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities

Tel: 0141 577 3108

Report Author

Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity)
Tel: 0141 577 3253
Siobhan.McColgan2@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A: Executive Summary
Appendix B: Action Plan
Appendix C: Implementation Diagram

East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department
Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Review: Executive Summary
December 2021

Aims, Nature and Scope of the Review

The rationale for Additional Support for Learning (ASL) is set in a national context following the publication of the [National Review](#) of ASL and subsequent recommendations made through the [National Action Plan](#). The purpose of ERC's review of ASL is to consider how we can provide high quality support to children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) who attend specialist provision whilst also providing enhanced ASN provision in our mainstream schools through sharing of specialist knowledge, training and resources to ensure that the East Renfrewshire Education Department vision of Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences is realised. Fundamental to this will be making improvements within existing resources and funding. Key priorities of the review include:

- Support the implementation of recommendations of the Angela Morgan Review – *All Our Children and All Their Potential*;
- Identify service gaps and barriers and recommend potential solutions in relation to ASL provision within ERC establishments;
- Plan and develop an ERC Additional Support for Learning Action Plan;
- Ensure that children, young people, and families are engaged in reviewing, planning and evaluating ASL in ERC.

In order to gather evidence the Review Team:

- Carried out an in depth desktop analysis, including a review of the relevant literature and an analysis of ASN data from all establishments across the authority;
- Consulted with more than 350 teachers and support staff involved in the delivery of ASN provision;
- Met with Head Teachers, ASN Co-ordinators and Educational Psychologists;
- Engaged with more than 600 parents and carers of children and young people with ASN who attend specialist provision or mainstream schools in East Renfrewshire;
- Consulted with and listened to views of key partners
- Established ASN pupil focus groups to ensure that the voices and experiences of children and young people were key to informing and implementing the actions and recommendations made as a result of this review.

The review considered 4 main themes:

- Vision and Values: Interpretation of Additional Support Needs;
- Curriculum and Attainment;
- Specialist Provision and Specialist Services;
- Relationships between Schools, Children and young people and parents and carers.

The review was planned in 4 stages, 3 of which are contained in this summary. The table below, outlines the stages:



Key Findings from Phase 1: Desk Top Review

- ASN Overviews and SEEMiS highlight approximately 23% - 28% of school-aged children have a recorded ASN in East Renfrewshire – this is lower than the national figure given in the Morgan ASL Review;
- There is a link between economic and social disadvantage and the incidence of recorded additional support needs across schools in ERC;
- The percentage of a school population with a recorded ASN can vary very widely between schools. There appears to be more consistency in the recording of ASN within secondary schools;
- The number of individuals recorded with ASN rises through primary school and then remains fairly stable at secondary school;
- More boys than girls are recorded as having an ASN – this is in keeping with national data;
- Literacy difficulties/dyslexia is the most frequently recorded ASN – this may be because schools find this to be the most straightforward ASN to identify, record and address;
- Excluding literacy difficulties/dyslexia, ASD/Social Communication Needs, Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs and English as an Additional Language are the most frequently recorded ASN. Social, Emotional and Behavioural needs is likely to include a large number of individuals whose primary need is in relation to mental and emotional wellbeing;
- Almost all young people who are recorded as having an additional support need move on to a positive leaver destination;
- The review highlighted many strengths of existing specialist services and provision, however, it also highlighted the increasing number of children and young people who access such resources and the subsequent growing pressure on capacity of such services;
- Over the past 3 years 37 children and young people have been supported via SEBN Outreach Support Service. Of those 16% have gone on to receive further support from Carlibar Communication Service/WCSS and 24% to educational provisions out with East Renfrewshire Council. There are significantly more boys receiving support from behaviour outreach than there are girls; 81% of children and young people being supported are male;
- There has been a significant increase in children requiring input from the Sensory Support Service and new referrals for both Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) are likely to follow this trend of increasing numbers. Currently there are 146 children and young people who are being supported for their HI with 71 receiving support for VI;
- The additional support needs of children attending Carlibar Communication Service (CCS) have changed over time with children presenting with increasingly more complex social communication needs that require full time continued support within Carlibar Communication Centre (CCC). There continues to be significantly more P1 children requiring a placement within the CCC than there are P7s moving on either to secondary school, Williamwood Communication Support Service or Isobel Mair. This places pressure on the capacity of the CCC in supporting children who require

specialist support and in turn highlights future pressures that will be placed on WCSS. In the past 5 years, 73 P1 children have been given a placement in the CCC whilst only 25 P7 children have left;

- There are currently 43 young people who attend Williamwood Communication Support Service and of those, just under two thirds have transitioned from Carlibar Communication Centre. This session 3 young people moved on from WCSS, however following a similar trend to CCC, there were significantly more children joining in S1 than there were leaving;
- In the past 10 years the number of children who are enrolled at Isobel Mair School (IMS) has increased by over 50%. Detailed analysis of the school roll in IMS indicates an increasing number of families have moved into the authority area with the specific aim of accessing the school. Currently 31% of pupils attending IMS moved into the school from another local authority.

Key Findings from Phase 2: Engagement and Listening

Staff:

- Most staff who responded to the consultation highlighted their commitment to supporting children with ASN within their home setting. However, there is a small minority of school leadership and staff who do not fully understand the principles of inclusion and presumption of mainstream and this is recognised by children and young people and their parents and carers;
- The majority of staff surveyed recognise that there is a lot of extra support in place for children and young people with ASN within East Renfrewshire and are aware of the specialist provision, support and resources available and know how to seek support from colleagues as appropriate. However, most staff also identified increased staffing as a key priority, with almost all suggesting that more PSAs and specialist staff across all sectors would lead to improvements;
- All staff highlighted the importance of professional learning in order to understand and meet the needs of pupils with ASN and the majority of those who responded have received appropriate professional learning which has impacted on their ability to meet the needs of pupils with ASN;
- Some respondents highlighted the importance of a more flexible curriculum as having the potential to improve experiences for children and young people with ASN, recognising the importance of outdoor learning for example and broader opportunities for successful attainment and achievement beyond SQA;
- Some PSAs highlighted that they don't feel recognised or respected within the system for the role that they play. This is evidenced through more than half of the PSA respondents highlighting that they are not involved in contributing to wellbeing plans and target setting.

Pupils

- Almost all pupils at mainstream primary and secondary schools who participated in the various focus groups stated that they like going to school with some highlighting they would not change anything about their school. All specifically mentioned enjoying spending time with their friends and teachers. A few said they liked learning new things and enjoyed being challenged;
- Pupils within specialist provisions said they liked being with their friends, playing outside, learning life skills, and topics such as sport, music and art. Most said that there was nothing they did not like about their school;
- Pupils at mainstream and special schools, generally feel included in all aspects of school life including by their peers, teachers and friends. They feel included both within and out with the school building;

- The children and young people who participated in the focus groups shared the importance of schools taking an individualised approach depending on their specific needs in order to put the best support in place;
- A few highlighted the importance of making sure other children and parents understand what it is like for children who have an additional support need;
- A few pupils in mainstream schools said they did not always feel involved in the life of the school and want their school to do more to include them. '*Sometimes I feel like I am invisible*'.

Parents/Carers

- Responses were much more positive than negative in all areas;
- Almost all parents/carers said they feel their child/young person is treated fairly and with respect;
- Most parents/carers believe staff know their child/young person as an individual;
- The majority of parents/carers believe that their children get extra support with their learning and/or wellbeing when they need it;
- The majority of respondents reported they are happy with the information they receive from their child's school. However, communication was highlighted as an area that needs to be improved. This included communication between school and parents, with children and young people and between staff within schools and at points of transition;
- Most parents/carers reported that their child's school made "reasonable adjustments" to enable their child to participate in school activities, whilst the majority agreed this was the case out with school and on residential trips;
- There was a strong opinion and concern that many Head Teachers, teachers and pupil support assistants do not have the appropriate training, knowledge or skills to provide appropriate support for children and young people with an additional support need. Whilst feedback related to all areas of additional support needs, comments predominantly related specifically to supporting children and young people with neurodevelopmental difficulties;
- During the review there were many examples of excellent partnerships between school and home and it was recognised that this joint working is often what makes the difference in ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people;
- Some parents and carers reported a belief that at times schools did not recognise the value of their knowledge of their own child and urged schools to be open and willing to listen to their views in terms of the best approaches to support their children and young people. Where parents and carers had positive experiences, they highlighted the value of school staff listening to them and taking them seriously, enabling trust to be developed;
- Some parents and carers highlighted a frustration around the length of time it took for their child or young person to be diagnosed and the feeling of having to 'fight' for a diagnosis. There was also a call for greater support given after diagnosis, with some parents reporting they felt unprepared, alone and unsure of how best to support their child;
- A few parents and carers highlighted a concern that there can be a reduction in aspiration or ambition for those with additional support needs to achieve to the best of their abilities. Some parents/carers highlighted that the recording and measuring of achievements and success did not align to suit children with additional support needs.

Key Recommendations

1. Develop an ERC ASL vision for success (and interpretation of Inclusion) with the involvement of children and young people, parents and carers and staff, based on the principles of the UNCRC and ensure this vision is communicated to all stakeholders and partners;
2. Review how we measure and celebrate the achievements and success of children and young people with additional support needs in line with national developments;
3. Develop effective systems to ensure consistent recording and moderation of ASN needs at school and authority level;
4. ASL to be fully included in the ERC review of the Curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all learners;
5. Implement trauma informed practices and nurturing approaches across all schools and early years establishments, underpinned by relationship-based approaches;
6. Redesign and extend SEBN Outreach Service to support behaviour and wellbeing including support for emotionally based school avoidance and enhanced nurture provision;
7. Develop provision to meet the wellbeing and learning needs of high school pupils with non-attendance and social and emotional needs;
8. Review support in place for EAL learners and guide schools to engage with 'Supporting Bilingual Learners' and undertake professional learning on how best to support EAL learners;
9. Review Sensory Support Service provision to address increasing demands in terms of numbers and emerging requirements including CLPL needs;
10. Increase the current capacity of specialist provision through expanding the specialist services across the authority;
11. Undertake consultation with stakeholders regarding the specialist services of CCC and WCSS and creation of a Communication Support Service Specification ensuring consistency across service provision;
12. Review staffing within specialist provision to ensure equity of resources and appropriate support in place;
13. Review current transport arrangements and update ERC School Transport Policy to ensure children and young people receive their entitlement to education;
14. Through engaging with CLPL and continually reviewing their vision, values and aims, senior leaders ensure ASN provision in schools is underpinned by values driven leadership;
15. Continue to develop and evaluate a CLPL Inclusion Programme for teachers, CDOs and PSAs to support inclusion of all learners;
16. Support school leaders to review the role of PSA including guidance on how classroom teacher and pupil support assistant roles interact and complement each other and how PSAs are allocated;
17. Involve children and young people and parents and carers in the refresh of ERC GIRFEC Framework in light of refreshed national guidelines;
18. Schools should continue to work in partnership with parents to develop approaches to promoting positive relationships and communication around ASN;
19. In partnership with children and young people and parents/carers, update the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy including seclusion and restraint guidelines which take account of national guidelines currently being produced.

The authority will disseminate the findings of the review and will share the good practices identified. The Quality Improvement Service will devise an action plan to address the recommendations outlined above and will work closely with settings and schools across the authority to support them to make the necessary improvements to practice.

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East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department
 Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Review: Draft Action Plan

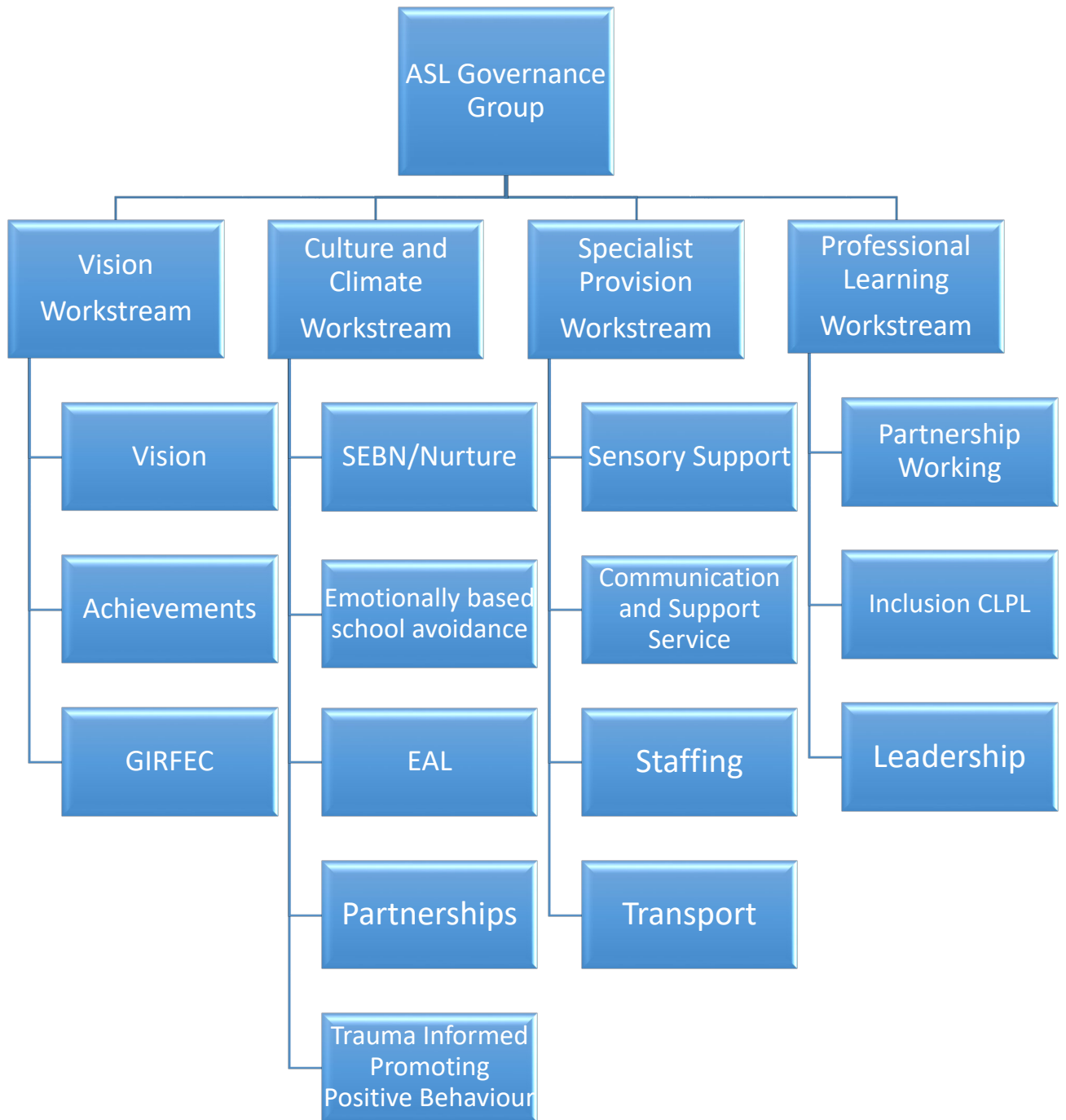
Recommendations	Link to Morgan Review	Themes
1. Develop an ERC ASL vision for success (and interpretation of Inclusion) with the involvement of children and young people, parents and carers and staff, based on the principles of the UNCRC. Ensure this vision is communicated to all stakeholders	1.1 1.2	Working Group: Vision Develop ERC Vision for Inclusion which incorporates the national vision for ASL learners and outlines high aspirations for all learners Learners with ASN achievements are recognised and valued through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of how we celebrate achievements and success • Implementation of national measures for achievement • Incorporating approaches into Vision Paper
2. Review how we measure and celebrate the achievements and success of children and young people with additional support needs in line with national developments	6.1 1.2	Effective transitions in place to support learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Transitions policy/guidance in light of national update • link with CLPL working group to develop Transitions CLPL • Review of Vocational options for pupils with ASN and support provided in selecting pathways
3. Develop effective systems to ensure consistent recording and moderation of ASN needs at a school and authority level	2.1	Curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Design should have inclusion at heart • Effectiveness of planning and assessment to meet the needs of children and young people
4. ASL to be fully included in the ERC review of the Curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all learners	1.2	Consistent language used to record and value ASL learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review narrative of ASL and use strengths based language • Understanding and recording of needs
16. Involve children and young people and parents and carers in the refresh of ERC GIRFEC Framework in light of refreshed National Guidelines	8.2 8.1	Systems and practice in place to ensure we get it right for every learner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIRFEC Refresh Documents used to inform and support GIRFEC Approaches • Implement recommendations of review of CSPs • Update of Child Protection Guidance in line with new National Guidance and The Promise • Children’s Rights approach embedded within GIRFEC Framework

		Working Group: Culture and Climate
5. All schools and ELC implement trauma informed practices and nurturing approaches at a whole school level, underpinned by relationship-based approaches	5.1 7.1	<p>Develop nurturing/Trauma informed practice to support learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit 'How Nurturing is Our School' • CLPL linked to nurture and Trauma Informed Practice • Trauma informed practice champions support and challenge schools <p>Clear rational for and access to specialist support in place to meet the needs of learners requiring support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of SEBN Service • Develop Service Specification • Create Enhanced Nurture Base • Develop CLPL Programme <p>Develop strategies and supports for Emotionally Based School Avoidance to ensure learners are supported to be present in school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Support Base • Develop School Guidance • Develop CLPL Programme • Establish suite of Online Resources • Provide Family Wellbeing Support <p>EAL Learners are supported through review and development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum to ensure it reflects all learners • Learning, Teaching and Assessment approaches take into account pedagogy to support EAL learners • Review Staffing Structure • Implementation of EAL Guidance • Design CLPL Programme • Looking outwards and learning from other Authorities on best practice in supporting EAL Learners
6. Redesign of SEBN Outreach Service to include behaviour and wellbeing support including support for emotionally based school avoidance and enhanced nurture provision	5.1 7.1	
7. Review of support in place for EAL learners and guide schools to engage with 'Supporting Bilingual Learners' and undertake professional learning on how best to support EAL learners	4.1 5.1	
17. Schools work in partnership with parents to develop approaches to promoting positive relationships and communication around ASN	6.1 7.1	
18. In partnership with children and young people and parents/carers, update the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy including seclusion and restraint guidelines which takes account of national guidelines currently being produced	7.1	<p>Develop partnerships with specialist parent groups including ERDA, ER National Autistic Society, ER Autism Collective, NDCS, Enable which will lead to improved relationships, communication, collaboration and peer support</p> <p>Review and Implementation of policy, procedure and supports for promoting positive behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma Informed Practice approach to behaviour management • In partnership with parents/carers and children and young people, create Seclusion and Restraint Guidance based on National Policy • Re-launch and upskill in BSS strategies

8. Review of Sensory Support Service provision to address increasing demands in terms of numbers and emerging requirements	4.1 5.1	<p>Working Group: Specialist Provision</p> <p>Learners with sensory impairment needs are met through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using National Sensory Impairment Partnership guidance, undertake review of staffing models • School/ELC support staff engage with CLPL including British Sign Language and use of braille to ensure children and young people are able to fully access the curriculum and benefit from social experiences <p>Capacity and stakeholder experience of specialist provision meets the needs of learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share results of Specialist Provision audit • Consult with stakeholders around models of specialist support • Good practice visits to other authorities • Undertake options appraisal of different models to increase capacity of specialist provision • Develop implementation programme to increase capacity • Create Specialist Provision Specification Guidance outlining rationale and delivery models for different specialist provisions <p>Staffing of ASL specialist provisions is consistent in meeting learners needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of completed audit of staffing in CCC/WCSS/IMS/Sensory Support/SEBN Outreach • Use of guidance to inform staffing structures and grading of staff • Develop Staffing Returns for specialist support services <p>Transport offers best value whilst ensuring learners with ASL are supported to be present in school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of models of transport for CCC/IMS/WCSS/pupils with ASN in mainstream/placements out with authority • Consultation with stakeholders • Review of legislation • Streamline transport models • Creation of ASL Transport Policy
9. Undertake consultation with stakeholders regarding the specialist services of CCC and WCSS and creation of a Communication Support Service Specification ensuring consistency across service provision	4.1 6.1	
10. Increase the current capacity of specialist provision through expanding the specialist services across the authority		
11, Review of staffing within specialist provision to ensure equity of resources and appropriate support in place	4.1	
12. Review of current transport arrangements and update ERC School Transport Policy to ensure children and young people receive their entitlement to education	4.1	

13. Senior leaders ensure ASN provision in schools is underpinned by values driven leadership	3.1	<p>Working Group: CLPL</p> <p>Inclusive principles developed through focus on values driven leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive values incorporated into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Leadership CLPL Programmes ✓ PSA CLPL Programme ✓ NQT Induction • ERC ASL Vision informs cluster/school • Audit of policy/standard circular to ensure guidance and procedure in line with values of inclusion
14. Continue to develop and evaluate a CLPL Inclusion Programme for teachers, CDOs and PSAs to support inclusion of all learners	5.1	<p>All staff are supported to develop values, understanding and skills in meeting needs of ASN learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion CLPL Programme developed in incorporate CLPL needs highlighted throughout the report • Link with national bodies/3rd sector organisations eg. NDCS, ERNAS etc to support with training and CLPL. • Monitor uptake and measure impact
15. Support school leaders to review the role of PSA including guidance on how classroom teacher and pupil support assistant roles interact and complement each other	5.2	<p>Consistent understanding of role of PSA ensures better experiences for learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Guidance to be published on role of PSA used to inform school actions

East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department
Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Review: Overview of Governance
Workstreams and Working Groups



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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE3 FEBRUARY 2022Report by Director of EducationSCHEME OF DEVOLVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform elected members of the collation and publication of the Education Department's Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme and to inform of a proposed change to the DSM with regards to carry forward from underspend of an establishment's devolved budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Education Committee is asked to note:
- i. note the DSM scheme will be presented to Cabinet for approval in due course; and,
 - ii. note the publication of the Education Department's Devolved School Management Scheme in accordance with national guidance.

BACKGROUND

3. Devolved School Management (DSM) was introduced in 1993 by the then Scottish Executive requiring councils to devolve 80% of school budgets to Head Teachers in order to enhance and improve the management of resources at school level. DSM provides Head Teachers and schools with the autonomy and flexibility to ensure financial decisions, which reflect local and national priorities and are in keeping with the establishments improvement planning, are made at the most appropriate level - closest to the children and young people. Early years facilities also operate under DSM.

4. Budgets within DSM are only one part of the overall financial management of the Education Department and it is important to recognise that there is a strong relationship between devolved and non-devolved budgets in maintaining a sound and robust financial strategy for the department and the Council.

5. Since 1993 the DSM scheme guidance and policy has evolved to reflect the changing landscape within which schools operate. Such changes include policy, procedural, legislative and the economic and financial climate, as well as greater levels of autonomy afforded to Head Teachers with respect to the Education Reform agenda and more specifically the Head Teachers' Charter.

6. Most recently, Cabinet approved a change to the Education Department's DSM scheme in January 2018 which reflected the objectives of the Education Reform agenda, allowing Head Teachers to carry forward any annual underspend in devolved school budgets up to a maximum level of 2% of the school's DSM budget net expenditure. This enhanced flexibility in school budgets allows Head Teachers to plan better for educational improvement

strategies over a longer period of time and for wider budgetary planning, including targeted savings.

7. Nationally, the original DSM scheme guidance was reviewed in 2006 and again in 2012, taking account of the changing economic and financial climate for both Local Authorities and the Scottish Government. In June 2017 the Scottish Government consulted on changes to DSM as part of the wider "Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education" consultation.

8. In 2019 following extensive stakeholder engagement, the Scottish Government and COSLA updated the DSM principles, building on and enhancing the foundations and principles of the 2012 guidance. The updated DSM principles are:

- Subsidiarity and Empowerment;
- Collaboration;
- Accountability and Responsibility;
- Clarity and Equity.

9. These principles align with the National Improvement Framework aims of excellence through raising attainment, improving outcomes and achieving equity. The principles also fully endorse those proposed in the Fair Funding consultation:

- support excellence and equity - ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed;
- be fair - placing the needs of all children and young people at the centre;
- be simple, transparent and predictable – ensuring the costs of delivering education can be easily understood and explained and that schools are able to manage and plan ahead with certainty;
- deliver value for money – ensuring that every penny spent is used effectively.

10. The 2019 guidelines were issued by Scottish Ministers under section 13 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 (the 2000 Act) and was issued to Local Authorities in relation to their functions under Section 8 of the 2000 Act in relation to delegation schemes.

REPORT

11. The updated guidance produced by the Scottish Government and COSLA is clear in the expectation that local authorities and schools continue to work in a transparent and open manner, consulting and collaborating with all stakeholders when planning for school improvement and the use of devolved budgets. The updated guidance is also clear in that all local authorities are to publish and make freely available their DSM schemes, including any details of how the allocation of devolved budgets or staffing is determined, by 1 April 2021 – this date was extended to 1 April 2022 as a consequence of Covid. There is also a clear expectation that schools similarly share details of their approaches to allocation of resources from DSM budget with all relevant stakeholders.

12. The 2019 guidance was accompanied by a DSM scheme framework which local authorities were strongly encouraged and recommended to use when creating their own DSM scheme. By each local authority publishing its DSM scheme in accordance with the prescribed DSM framework this: harmonises how schemes are published; introduces an element of

common understanding for users; provides increased clarity and transparency to stakeholders; aids peer review; and supports benchmarking.

13. In accordance with the principles of DSM and the National Improvement Framework, the budget devolved to a school in any financial year should be targeted at the priorities in the School's Improvement Plan and should be for the benefit of current pupils; within East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) the general principle is held that today's resources should be for today's pupils.

14. The East Renfrewshire DSM details the Education Department's current approaches to DSM budget management and the roles, actions and responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

15. In addition, following consultation with stakeholders, a single amendment is proposed to the carry forward rule for DSM budget underspend and DSM reserve.

16. Currently, educational establishments can carry forward annually up to a maximum of 2% of their DSM budget to DSM reserves, in the case where the school has a DSM budget underspend at the end of the financial year. The 2% maximum is consistent with the approach taken by the majority of other local authorities where the reserve limit is generally a maximum of 2 to 2.5%.

17. However unlike other local authorities which do not have a time limit on the use of DSM budget carried forward, educational establishments within East Renfrewshire can only hold funds in reserve for a maximum of 3 financial years.

18. Any annual underspend greater than 2% of an establishment's DSM budget or any DSM reserve which remains after 3 financial years is returned to the Council's General Reserve fund. In addition, individual school budget underspends can only be carried forward to a school's DSM reserve in the case where the Education Department's budget is in an underspend position at the end of the financial year.

19. The current carry forward process is regarded as complex to administer and is regarded as not providing suitable flexibility to Head Teachers for financial planning in future years, including planning for targeted savings.

20. A change designed to simplify the scheme is proposed, whereby establishments could hold up to a maximum of 6% of their annual DSM budget, aligning with the current practice of a cumulative reserve maximum of 6% (3 years of 2% reserves), and the removal of the maximum three year threshold. Where an establishment's DSM reserve is greater than a maximum of 6% of the establishment's budget at the end of the financial year (31 March), any additional underspend DSM budget will be returned to the Council's General Reserve.

21. The proposed change would continue to align with the current annual 2% reserve amount, will simplify the DSM carry forward policy and reduce the administrative burden, and will provide establishments with greater flexibility for future financial planning.

CONSULTATION

22. In producing the current iteration of the DSM scheme, the Education Department formed and consulted with a DSM Working Group which consisted of stakeholders from across the education spectrum of East Renfrewshire Council including:

- Representatives of Heads of Early Learning and Childcare establishments;
- Representatives of Head Teachers of the primary, secondary and special sectors;
- Education Department Head of Education Services;
- Professional bodies representing teachers and local government staff;
- Representative of Business Support Managers;
- Human Resources Business Partner;
- Finance Business Partner.

23. Initial consultation focussed on a small number of themes from the DSM. The Education Department will continue to consult with the DSM working group on an ongoing basis, meeting regularly to consider other themes of the DSM and to make any proposals for changes where it is deemed to benefit the management of resources at school level.

24. In accordance with the national guidelines the Education Department will formally review the published DSM scheme every three years with the DSM Working Group. The department may also review its scheme with a peer local authority, or through the Regional Improvement Collaborative.

25. Where changes are proposed to the scheme by the DSM Working Group which are considered to be required in advance of the three-yearly cycle or to recognise any local authority policy decisions which may have a consequential impact on the scheme, such changes will be presented to Education Committee for noting and Cabinet for approval.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

26. There are no financial or efficiency implications of the collation and publication of the Education Department's DSM scheme. The proposed amendment to the DSM carry forward does not introduce new or additional funding to educational establishments. The proposal for the school DSM reserve to be a maximum of 6% broadly aligns with the current scheme which allows schools to carry forward up to 2% annually on a rolling three year period.

27. Establishments will continue to be afforded the flexibility to plan for longer term priorities in line with their three-year School Improvement Plan whilst also ensuring that today's resources are used to support today's children.

RECOMMENDATION

28. It is recommended that the Education Committee note:

- i. note the DSM scheme will be presented to Cabinet for approval in due course; and,
- ii. note the publication of the Education Department's Devolved School Management Scheme in accordance with national guidance.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 February 2022

Convener Contact Details

Councillor, Alan Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities Tel: 0781221436

Report Authors

Mary Docherty, Education Resources Senior Manager
Tel: 0141 577 3314
Email: mary.docherty@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Performance & Provision)

Tel: 0141 577 3229

Email: joe.mccaig@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1

East Renfrewshire Council: Devolved School Management Scheme

Background Papers

Devolved School Management Guidelines and Framework: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/devolved-school-management-guidelines/documents/>

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East Renfrewshire Council

Devolved School Management Scheme – Effective from 1 April 2022

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1 Introduction

1.1 Devolved School Management – Background

Devolved School Management (DSM) was introduced in 1993 to enhance and improve the management of resources at school level. DSM provides Head Teachers and schools with the autonomy and flexibility to ensure decisions are made at the most appropriate level. This DSM scheme will provide Head Teachers with clear information about which areas of expenditure are delegated to them and will set out how the Council funds schools, and the accountability and responsibility for financial decisions

The original DSM guidance was reviewed in 2006, and again in 2012, taking account of the changing economic and financial climate for both Local Authorities and the Scottish Government. In June 2017 the Scottish Government consulted on changes to DSM as part of the wider "Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education" consultation.

In 2019 the Scottish Government in agreement with Fair Funding Reference Group, updated the DSM principles, building on and enhancing the foundations and principles of the 2012 guidance. The updated DSM principles are:

- Subsidiarity and Empowerment;
- Collaboration;
- Accountability and Responsibility;
- Clarity and Equity.

These principles reflect the National Improvement Framework aims of excellence through raising attainment, improving outcomes and achieving equity. The principles also fully endorse those proposed in the Fair Funding consultation:

- support excellence and equity - ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed;
- be fair - placing the needs of all children and young people at the centre;
- be simple, transparent and predictable – ensuring the costs of delivering education can be easily understood and explained and that schools are able to manage and plan ahead with certainty;
- deliver value for money – ensuring that every penny spent is used effectively.

The budget devolved to a school in any financial year should be targeted at the priorities in the School's Improvement Plan and should be for the benefit of current pupils; within East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) the general principle is held that today's resources should be for today's pupils.

1.2 East Renfrewshire Council

East Renfrewshire is situated to the south of the City of Glasgow. It covers an area of 67 sq miles (174 sq km). The north of the area comprises the urban areas of Giffnock, Newton Mearns, Clarkston, Thornliebank and Barrhead. Each of these settlements has a distinctive character. There is also an extensive rural hinterland to the South, within which, the villages of Uplawmoor, Neilston, Waterfoot and Eaglesham area are located. Approximately 15 per cent of the area is urban and 85 per cent rural. The Lavern Valley area includes the settlements of Barrhead, Neilston and Uplawmoor. The Eastwood area includes Busby, Clarkston and

Williamwood, Eaglesham and Waterfoot, Giffnock, Netherlee and Stamperland, Newton Mearns and Thornliebank.

In the latest mid-year 2020 estimates, the population of East Renfrewshire was 96,060, and the overall population of the area is expected to rise. This has implications for many services that cater for a broad section of the public, including education. East Renfrewshire is one of Scotland's most ethnically and culturally diverse areas with significant Muslim and Jewish communities.

Although East Renfrewshire is a relatively prosperous area, it does have pockets of deprivation. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is an accessible tool for understanding deprivation. East Renfrewshire has the highest percentage of data zones of all the Scottish Local Authorities classed as being in the 20% least deprived in Scotland. Seven of the 122 data zones (population units) in East Renfrewshire are classed as being within the 20% most deprived in Scotland, this represents 6% of data zones in East Renfrewshire. They are located within Barrhead, Auchenback and Neilston. Two of the data zones are classed as being within the 10% most deprived in Scotland and one of these is classed as being within the 5% most deprived. Reducing inequalities arising from socioeconomic disadvantage is a corporate priority. The Council, along with partners across sectors, use a 'locality' approach in these areas of East Renfrewshire. This means all those responsible for providing services and looking after assets are thinking about the unique challenges; are taking a whole neighbourhood view; and are planning together, with the people who live there, to support inclusive growth and thriving places.

1.3 Education within East Renfrewshire Council

The delivery of high quality educational experiences within East Renfrewshire's establishments is led, directed and overseen by the Council's Education Department.

East Renfrewshire Council is recognised throughout Scotland for the quality of its education provision and the high performance of its schools and early learning and childcare establishments. The Education Department's objective of ensuring high quality experiences for all children and young people leading to excellent outcomes for all learners, regardless of socio-economic background, and closing any and all attainment gaps, is clearly defined in *Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire*¹ and its vision statement:

Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving, Through Excellent Experiences

Such success has contributed to a growth in the number of children and young people attending educational establishments as a consequence of inward migration to existing and new housing stock and successful placing request applications from non-East Renfrewshire residents.

With such demand for education within the local authority and following the introduction of new legislation such as the expansion of early learning and childcare, the Council has recently expanded its learning estate with the development of a joint faith primary school campus and non-denominational primary school and the creation of 6 ELC centres. The Council continues to work hard to ensure the best possible learning environments for children and young people

¹Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire:
<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/Advancing-Excellence-and-Equity-in-Education-in-East-Renfrewshire>

to support establishments to provide excellent learning experiences and is continually evaluating and improving its learning estate to ensure these ambitions are met.

As of December 2021, East Renfrewshire Council currently provides education across:

- 9 family centres providing early learning and childcare;
- 24 primary schools (10 of which have an accompanying nursery class providing early learning and childcare);
- 7 secondary schools;
- 1 special school providing education for children with additional support needs.

Whilst the educational estate is varied, almost all establishments are located in residential town areas with the exception of one school classified as rural. As recorded in the school pupil census, school rolls range from 66 to 868 in the primary sector and from 632 to 1837 in the secondary sector; the Council has traditional school buildings over 100 years old to modern award winning design schools. The Council provides the choice of denominational and non-denominational education and is proud to manage the only Jewish faith school in Scotland, which is uniquely located at a faith school joint campus.

Further details of the Council's education estate can be accessed via the Council's website².

1.4 Pupil and Staff Numbers

The funding which the Council receives from the Scottish Government to provide education closely links to pupil numbers, teacher numbers and deprivation indices. Similarly the funding allocated to each educational establishment in accordance with the scheme of devolved school management also takes cognisance of pupil roll and required management and staffing full time equivalents and pupil demographic attributes. The number of pupils and staff FTE recorded within the annual school pupil census in September 2021 is detailed below:

Sector ³	Pupil Numbers	Teaching Staff FTE
Primary	9,309	620
Secondary	7,949	665
Special	134	35
Central	-	2
Total	17,392	1322

In addition to the staffing FTE for those members of staff registered with The General Teaching Council for Scotland recorded in the above table, educational establishments are also allocated staffing budget for local government employees such as administration staff, Pupil Support Assistants and Child Development Officers etc.

1.5 The role of the Parent Council

The Parent Council is a group of parents selected by the Parent Forum of a school to represent their views. Parent Councils have an important role to play in school improvement by ensuring that the parental perspective is represented and taken into account.

²Our schools: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/our-schools>

³ Data taken from the school/pupil census 2021:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-census-supplementary-statistics/>

The Parent Council helps create an environment where all parents know that their views matter and where they feel confident and comfortable putting them forward. They work on behalf of all parents to discuss educational matters that are of importance to all. They do not get involved in individual matters relating to children or staff in the school.

Parent Councils:

- Work in partnership with the school to decide on the key priorities to take forward;
- Provide a voice for parents in schools and in their local authority on issues that are important to them;
- Improve the school's understanding of how to engage parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school;
- Support the school to develop strong home/school partnerships;
- Communicate regularly with the Parent Forum to both hear their views and keep them informed;
- Support improvement by discussing the school's strengths and areas for development from a parental perspective;
- Help make links with the wider community;
- Capture the unique and varied skills, interests, knowledge and experience that parents can offer.

The Education Department's Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy⁴ aims to strengthen parental involvement and representation in the life and work of schools and early years settings so that parents have the information and support required to allow them to contribute to the community and improve the attainment and achievement of all learners.

Further details and resources for parent councils can be found on the Education Scotland website⁵.

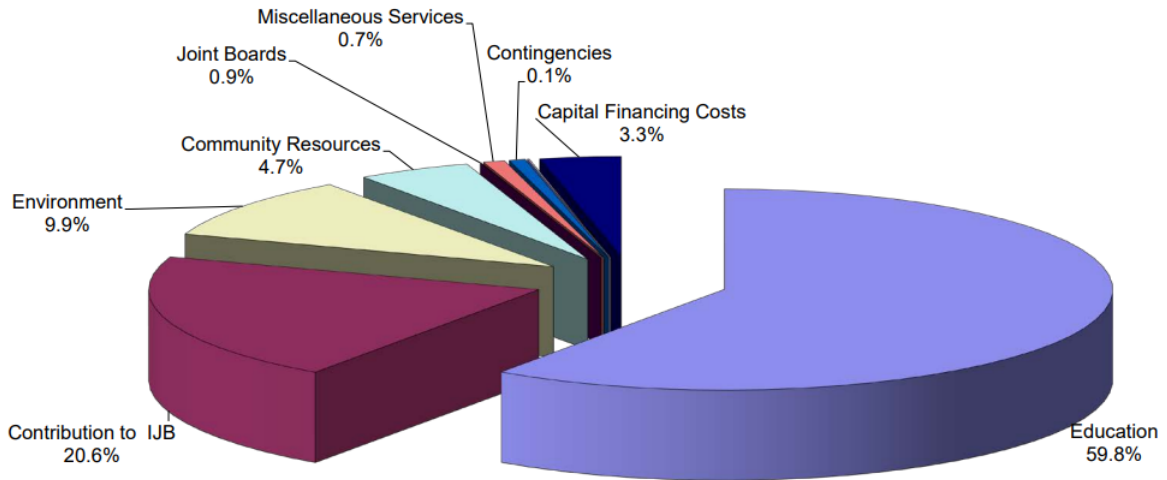
2 Budget Overview

Each year the Council undertakes the annual budget setting process for the allocation of Revenue Budget to each of the Council's departments. The Education Department is the largest department accounting for 59.8% of the Council's budget (2021-2022) equating to a total net expenditure of £157,882,000; this includes distributed budget to East Renfrewshire Council's Leisure Trust.

⁴ Parental Engagement:
<https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/parent-engagement>

⁵ Education Scotland Parentzone:
<https://www.education.gov.scot/parentzone/getting-involved/parent-councils/about-parent-councils>

2021/22 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET BY DEPARTMENT



Each year details of the revenue budget allocated to the Education Department is set out in the Detailed Revenue Estimates Report⁶ by the Council's Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer). The distribution of the Education Department's budget includes:

ELC	Schools (Primary, Secondary and Other)	Special Education
Psychological Services	Transport (Excl Special)	Clothing
Administration & Support	Cleaning and janitorial Services	Catering Services
School Crossing	Culture and Leisure Services	
Patrollers		

It is important to note that DSM procedures set out the rules and principles in which schools operate in normal circumstances. However in exceptional circumstances, for example the impact of changing financial circumstances during the course of a financial year requiring measures to be taken to ensure the department's overall expenditure is controlled, it may be necessary to temporarily amend the rules of DSM. Any such decisions are at the discretion of the Director of Education and discussed with the Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer) and Chief Executive. Head Teachers would be advised of such intent as early as possible, with the implications of such a decision clearly identified and explained. Any such necessary action would be reported to Cabinet as part of the regular budget monitoring process.

⁶ Detailed Revenue Estimates Report:
https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/4760/Council-item-04-15-March-2021/pdf/Council_item_04_-_15_March_2021.pdf?m=637510756152430000

3 Areas of Expenditure to be Devolved

Whilst Head Teachers have maximum flexibility to manage their budgets, there are areas of expenditure that are generally not considered suitable for devolution. The reasons for this may include, but are not limited to areas:

- outside the influence of a Head Teacher;
- that are too bureaucratic;
- which have unacceptable levels of risk;
- where there are benefits from economies of scale;
- which require professional expertise;
- overly complex by their nature.

Further detail of the budgeted areas devolved and not devolved to schools is included in [Appendix A](#).

4 The Scheme in Detail

4.1 Financial Regulations

Financial Regulations are an integral part of the stewardship of Council Funds. Adhering to the regulations ensures that all financial transactions of the Council are conducted in a manner of openness, integrity and transparency. The regulations form a significant part of the Corporate Governance of the Council and apply to every member and employee of the Council or anyone acting on its behalf.

The allocation of DSM budget to schools is mainly formulaic and is calculated on the basis of school roll demographics, educational needs of children and young people, as well as any other local/national initiatives. This approach ensures a fair, objective and transparent approach to the delegation of school budgets. A summary of the formulae used for devolved budget lines is included in Appendix B.

Further details of the Council's financial regulations and other relevant policies/procedural guidelines are available on the Council's intranet⁷.

4.2 Best Value Principles

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 introduced a statutory framework for Best Value for local authorities. The Best Value duties set out in the Act are:

- to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance (while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost); and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirement and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- to achieve break-even trading accounts, subject to mandatory disclosure
- to observe proper accounting practices

⁷ERC Financial Regulations: <http://intranet.erc.insider/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=11444&p=0>

- to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of functions.

In addition, Best Value guidance has been in place since 2004, identifying the characteristics of Best Value to help local authorities develop arrangements to demonstrate continuous improvement in their performance.

In recognition of the changes since 2004 to the environment in which local authorities deliver services, a multi-agency steering group was tasked with reviewing and refreshing the guidance, which was published in March 2020. The steering group endorsed the continuing relevance of the substance of the original guidance, but felt that it should be revised to reflect the current public service landscape in Scotland, with an increasing emphasis on citizens and personalised services, a focus on outcomes, and the need for innovation in designing public services for the future. The steering group also identified the need for synergy and alignment, so far as possible and appropriate, between the statutory guidance and the guidance on Best Value in public services, which applies to public bodies that are accountable to the Scottish ministers.

The revised guidance produced by the steering group reflects the priorities that it identified. It replaced the previous guidance that was published in 2004, which comprised both the statutory guidance by Scottish ministers and supporting guidance by the then Best Value Task Force, so that all the relevant guidance is now contained in this single document. The guidance document is available on the Scottish Government website⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-value-revised-statutory-guidance-2020/>

Within East Renfrewshire Council, Best Value is defined as 10 characteristics which are used to ensure we offer the best quality service available. The 10 characters are:

- Commitment and leadership;
- Responsiveness and consultation;
- Sound governance arrangements at strategic, financial & operational levels;
- Sound management of resources;
- Use of review and options appraisal;
- Competitiveness, trading and the discharge of authority functions;
- Accountability;
- Joint working;
- Sustainable development.

Further details on how the Council assesses the quality of its services and plans to make improvements in this area, as well as further details of the independent bodies which inspect our services, are available on the Council's website⁹.

4.3 Local Authority Commitment to Devolved School Management

An empowered system is one built on mutual trust, cooperation and highly effective communication. In an empowered system Head Teachers and local authorities are partners, each contributing and supporting each other and respecting the different role each plays.

⁸ Best Value: revised statutory guidance 2020: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-value-revised-statutory-guidance-2020/>

⁹ East Renfrewshire Council: Best Value: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/best-value>

As senior officers of the Local Authority, responsible for the leadership and management of the service provided to children, young people and their families, Head Teachers are accountable to both their employer and to their learning community for the leadership and management of education within their setting. Head Teachers' responsibility extends to the resources within their delegated budget. The areas of budget which are devolved and not devolved to Head Teachers was recently consulted upon with the Council's DSM working party and is detailed in [Areas of Expenditure to be Devolved](#).

The Education Department of East Renfrewshire Council recognises the importance of empowering Head Teachers to make key decisions regarding the best use of resources to ensure the highest level of experiences and outcomes for learners. Head Teachers are closest to the educational experience of children and young people and understand the particular context of the learning community best.

The Local Authority has statutory responsibility for the provision and improvement of education in the area. This includes contractual and financial obligations that interact with, and can be dependent upon, decisions made at school level. The Local Authority can intervene in a school level decision if a statutory, contractual or financial obligation would be breached. Clear processes and mutually respectful and supportive relationships should be in place to minimise the need for such intervention.

This guidance document was created using the Education Department's various discrete policies and guidance documents which were previously developed following consultation with education leaders. Furthermore, a DSM working group was convened to consider elements of the current Devolved School Management scheme approaches in accordance with the national Devolved School Management Guidelines and Framework documents. The working group consists of a wide spectrum of education stakeholders so as to ensure that the document is fit for purpose for all, including:

- representatives for Head Teachers of early years, primary, secondary and special settings;
- Human Resources officer;
- teaching and local government trade union representatives;
- representative of Business Support Managers;
- Education Department Head of Education Services;
- Finance Business Partners.

On an ongoing basis the DSM Working Group will meet at regular points in the academic year to consider the different themes detailed within the national DSM guidelines and associated framework and where appropriate will propose changes to the Council's DSM scheme where deemed to benefit the management of resources at school level.

4.4 School Expenditure Within Wider Strategic Planning

On an annual basis the Education Department's Quality Improvement Team and service managers carry out an extensive audit to identify strengths in the department's current provision and areas where further improvement is required. The department's progress towards the impact and outcomes listed in the Local Improvement Plan is detailed in the Department's Standards and Quality Report.

Within East Renfrewshire Council, the Education Department works in partnership with Head Teachers and other partners to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and their families. In East Renfrewshire Head Teachers are empowered to lead their school's improvement journey and are best placed to assess their readiness to move on and determine a realistic pace in which to do so. They also have the autonomy and flexibility to make decisions on the best use of financial resources which are devolved to establishments in order to ensure that decisions and improvements are made closest to the learner wherever possible. This allows the application of knowledge of local needs in order to ensure best outcomes for learners, whilst maintaining participation as part of a collaborative learning community with other schools and the Local Authority. Head Teachers are responsible for the use of financial resources within their school.

Empowered schools require both strong and distributive leadership, working in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the wider community. Head Teachers are expected to be able to manage a fair, equitable and transparent devolved budget that meets the needs and priorities of the school and local community and should ensure that they collaborate with learners, parents / carers, teachers and their representatives, support staff, and partners in identifying, taking forward and evaluating priorities and the expected impact and outcomes for their improvement plans.

Each year Head Teachers regularly reflect upon rigorous evidence-based self-evaluation of performance, including analysis of a wide range of data on children and young people's progress, to plan and identify the actions the establishment will take to improve experiences and service delivery / provision and raise attainment and achievement. This is recorded as part of the School Improvement Plan and also takes into consideration recent evaluations resulting from an inspection by Education Scotland or a review by the authority's Quality Improvement Team.

When identifying aspects of performance in which improvement is necessary, due weight should be given to major strategic priorities, locally and nationally. In particular, account should be taken of the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan which includes clear links to: the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan; the department's contributions to the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan; the department's Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire policy; and most recently the department's position paper on Building Back Better and Fairer in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In constructing the school improvement plan, Head Teachers will be challenged and supported in their thinking by the Education Department's Quality Improvement Team and other senior officers.

Each year all establishments will clearly, succinctly and evaluatively consider the progress towards overtaking the objectives of the annual improvement plan and the impact made in bringing about the desired improvements, in the form of a Standards and Quality Report. The Standards and Quality Report will describe how the establishment is doing, how does the establishment know it is progressing and what the next actions will be to further improve.

4.5 Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) and Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers (LNCT) Agreements

Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) is a tripartite body comprising members from teaching organisations, Local Authorities, and the Scottish Government. The principal purpose of the SNCT is to negotiate collective agreements on salaries and conditions of service that assist the development of a highly skilled and motivated teaching profession.

The SNCT requires there to be a Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) in every council. LNCTs have been given the powers to vary certain conditions of service and to reach agreement on a range of matters not subject to national bargaining¹⁰.

Where a local agreement supersedes an existing national condition, that existing condition should be removed; all local agreements must be reported to the SNCT for information and placed on the SNCT web site¹¹.

East Renfrewshire LNCT Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers (JNCT) operates in a climate of collegiality where the views of all representatives are valued, respected, and fully considered. Whilst the LNCT does primarily provide a mechanism for bargaining and negotiating procedures between the council and the signatory unions, whereby relevant conditions of service can be determined for all appropriate staff, it is also a forum at which either side will raise matters pertaining to the operation of the Education Department and anything which has implications for teachers in their working environment. LNCT has a number of standing items such as Education Committee, teacher workload and any current matters of concern. Furthermore the LNCT also has an agreed work plan which allows both sides to contribute to that programme of work. The constitution of the East Renfrewshire LNCT JNCT is available on the SNCT website¹².

Head Teachers are required to operate within the agreed national SNCT terms and conditions for all staff who come under this scheme, and to operate within any amended devolved conditions of service as agreed by LNCT. The Pay and Conditions of Service for teachers and associated professionals employed by Scottish Councils is set out in the SNCT Handbook of Conditions of Service. The SNCT handbook is available on the SNCT website.¹³

Head Teachers are regularly advised of any amendments to staff conditions of service or operating procedures by a representative of the management side of the LNCT, whilst it is the responsibility of the trade unions who make up the joint union side to advise their members accordingly.

4.6 Publication availability

The DSM scheme will be published on the East Renfrewshire Council intranet. A summarised version of this scheme of devolved management will be made available to the

¹⁰ SNCT Devolved Matters to LNCT https://www.snct.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Part_4

¹¹ LNCT Agreements: <https://www.snct.org.uk/lncAgreements.php>

¹² ERC LNCT JNCT: https://www.snct.org.uk/library/107/East_Renfrewshire_LNCT-01_JNCT_Local_Framework_Agreement.pdf

¹³ SNCT website: <http://www.snct.org.uk>

public via the Council's website, to which a link will be provided via all education establishment's websites.

4.7 Available training

In a rapidly changing world, it is essential that leaders and managers are equipped with the skills to adapt to the evolving needs of schools and their communities. Leadership development is a key area on the national policy agenda in Scottish education and there is a strong commitment to the development of leadership at all levels.

The East Renfrewshire Head Teacher Induction Programme is designed to support recently appointed Head Teachers with balancing the demands of the job with their own personal and professional learning and development. The programme includes familiarisation with East Renfrewshire Council and Education Department policies and practices, but also offers opportunity to: meet with colleagues; learn from experienced Head Teacher colleagues; meet key staff of the department; consider the practical elements of leading a school; consider best practice; and build a network of support.

The Head Teacher Induction Programme aims to:

- Provide new Head Teachers with appropriate professional learning and development to enable participants to be effective senior leaders in school, cluster and the Education Department, with a focus on and bringing about improvement in outcomes for learners;
- Support Head Teachers to continually improve as leaders of learning;
- Provide a pathway for Head Teachers which enables them to progress as effective leaders, mentors and coaches and; and,
- Develop a cohort of confident, capable and knowledgeable leaders who continually strive for improvement in our service and can inspire the next generation of school leaders.

The Head Teacher induction programme focuses on leadership and management, focussing on strategic and operational aspects which will relate to effective management of the school's devolved budget. The Head Teacher Induction Programme has a more explicit focus on certain aspects of operational leadership, including: Budget and Finance; The Building Responsible Person; and Working with Trade Union Partners.

Within the induction programme of professional development for new Head Teachers, training sessions are provided by officers of the Education Department's Budget Team relating to the Council's devolved school management scheme and practices.

Additionally, training has and can be provided to Head Teachers on an ad hoc basis when requested and documentation, guidance and policies are available via the Council's website.

Head Teachers are supported in their cluster by a Business Support Manager (BSM) who oversees the school's budget and provides advice and guidance on all financial and human resource management matters. In response to consultation there is a desire from both experienced and newer Head Teachers for further training to be provided in finance/budgeting matters.

The centrally based Budget Unit team meets regularly with BSMS to offer support and any required appropriate training in financial matters. The Budget Unit team will work collaboratively with BSMS to prepare a programme of ongoing professional development for Head Teachers and appropriate school leaders on areas of financial management which have been identified. Budget Unit staff and Business Support Managers will deliver specific training in these areas to Head Teachers from across the Council, which will be accessible

via the Council's professional development platform, East Renfrewshire CPD Manager. This training will allow Head Teachers to be better informed in financial management matters and will allow Head Teachers to share their knowledge with school senior and middle leaders, other school budget holders and if appropriate, parents and pupils. A consultation on training requirements will be undertaken to direct the offer of professional development opportunities.

Furthermore, budget 'drop-in' engagement sessions will be arranged to allow HTs to meet informally with other colleagues across the Council at pertinent points in the year, following feedback from consultation. This will allow the sharing of best practice and experience.

4.8 Consultation and Engagement

In accordance with the Empowering Schools and Education Reform agenda of 2019, the introduction of the Head Teachers' Charter was to empower Head Teachers in decisions on curriculum design, improvement, school staffing structures and appointments, working collaboratively with their local authority, staff and parents, and with due regard to employment law and supporting guidance. Education Scotland identifies eight key partners who should work together in an empowered system to improve outcomes for children and young people. An empowered system is one that grows stronger and more confident, working in partnership to lead learning and teaching that achieves excellence and equity for all learners. Empowerment and collaboration for improvement happens at all levels in an empowered system.



In an empowered system Local Authorities add value by enabling key decisions to be made by those who are closest to the educational experience of children and young people, and who best understand the particular context of the learning community. The Head Teacher is responsible for making such decisions in partnership with their learning community – staff, learners, parents and other partners. In all localities Head Teachers and Local Authorities should work in partnership with children, young people and their families to take decisions which reflect the local context. Mutually supportive and respectful relationships should be in place and maintained in order to maximise effective collaboration. Head Teachers should lead collaborative, evidence-based decision-making whilst recognising that they are an integral part of a wider education and children's services system and open to constructive support and challenge by the Local Authority and their colleagues.

With regards to making best use of school resources, Head Teachers should:

- Manage a delegated budget in a fair, equitable and transparent way, supported by the Local Authority and a fair, transparent and equitable local Devolved School Management Scheme.

- Play an active role in designing and reviewing recruitment and staffing approaches, both for their own school and for the wider authority
- Be empowered to design a staffing structure which best supports the school's curriculum and leadership requirements, working within their delegated staffing budget and supported by their Local Authority and SNCT/LNCT agreements and guidance

Where appropriate, short life working groups are organised by the Education Department in order to work collegiately to create new/update policy. Such recent examples include: changes to teaching staff recruitment processes; the determination of allocated school management and support staff budgets and; the redesign of the model for management and pupil support structure in the primary sector. Staffing budgets determined by the Education Department's staffing formulae are fully delegated to Head Teachers, allowing autonomy for Head Teachers to have flexibility in their staffing and management structures which best suit the needs of the school community. Education Department staff support Head Teachers to ensure that implementation of management and staffing structures are in accordance with appropriate financial and SNCT/LNCT agreements¹².

The Education Department meets regularly with representatives of the parent body via the Parent Council Chairs, using these opportunities to share information and consult on budgetary and financial matters as appropriate. Similarly the Education Directorate meets with the Pupil Council Chairs and also shares information and consults on budgetary matters as and when it is appropriate.

Head Teachers are expected to consult with staff, the Parent Council, pupils and wider community on budgetary matters as appropriate, which may include areas such as staffing, resources, professional learning for staff and experiences and outcomes for learners which focus on raising attainment for all whilst closing any poverty related attainment gaps.

Head Teachers should make arrangements for sharing and discussing local school decisions, budget and resource allocations with staff groups and wider stakeholders as appropriate. It is recommended that at school level this includes methodology and distribution of budgets and resources.

A local DSM Consultative Group should be established including representatives from both teaching and other staff groups within each establishment as a forum for engagement and consultation on budget matters throughout the year.

Further requests for budgetary information is provided by the Education Department and educational establishments when requested.

Moving forward East Renfrewshire's schools should consider a greater use of Participatory Budgeting¹⁴ processes where appropriate.

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is part of a movement which has grown up across the world over the last thirty years which is helping to strengthen and deepen deliberative democracy, supporting high quality decision-making with public funds and rebalancing power. Over the last decade there has been interest, energy and investment across Scotland in PB as part of a broader commitment to democratic and community renewal and tackling inequalities. The 2021 revised Framework Agreement¹⁵ sets forward the joint ambition for mainstream

¹⁴ Participatory Budgeting: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/participatory-budgeting/>

¹⁵ Participatory Budgeting Framework: https://www.cosla.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/26234/COSLA-SG-Participatory-Budgeting-Framework-Agreement-June-2021.pdf

Participatory Budgeting to be an essential part of recovery and renewal from the pandemic. Furthermore, by implementing Participatory Budgeting, schools will support and reinforce the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4.9 Transparency

The Education Department will engage with members of the DSM working group on an ongoing basis to consider the DSM guidance and any changes which are required. Further details are included in [section 4.17](#).

Annually details of the revenue budget allocated to the Education Department is outlined in the Detailed Revenue Estimates Report¹⁶ by the Council's Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer), which provides a comprehensive analysis of the various elements which contribute to the overall department's revenue estimate at sector and service levels, and is available on the Council's website¹⁷. Furthermore the Council annually publishes its updated long term Capital Investment Strategy¹⁸ which provides details of the Council's long term capital ambitions including the learning estate strategy, as well as the Councils' ten year General Fund Capital Plan¹⁹ which provides details of the planned capital investments programme for the coming year along with figures for future years so that long term capital investment plans and their associated financial impacts can be recognised. Planned education estate capital investment is detailed in these plans.

Following approval of the revenue budget at Council level, officers within the department work collaboratively with accountancy colleagues to allocate the Education Department budget to all cost centres ensuring Head Teachers and other budget holders have access to the detailed budget under their control by the start of the financial year. The full functionality of the corporate financial system Integra, is used across the department and schools in this regard. AS previously indicated, Head Teachers share this information with the DSM Consultative Group, Parent Council and others as appropriate; further requested budgetary information is provided when requested. Further details are included in [section 4.8](#). Details of the how DSM budgets are allocated is included in [Appendix B](#).

Business Support Managers will produce variance reports each accounting period and will present these to the Head Teacher for consideration. This will allow the Head Teacher and periodically the DSM Consultative Group, to consider:

- Comparison of actual expenditure against budget levels;
- Identify and agree actions to meet savings targets each year;
- To consider spending trends / patterns highlighted (e.g. teachers' absence cover) in order that corrective action may be taken; and
- Draw attention to areas of the budget which merit special consideration for forward planning which may also result in further consultation with wider stakeholders.

¹⁶ Detailed Revenue Estimates Report: https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/4760/Council-item-04-15-March-2021/pdf/Council_item_04_-_15_March_2021.pdf?m=637510756152430000

¹⁷ Budget Setting 2021/22: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3552/Detailed-2021-22-budget-set-for-East-Renfrewshire>

¹⁸ Capital Investment Strategy: https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/4761/Council-Item-05-15-March-2021/pdf/Council_Item_05_-_15_March_2021.pdf?m=637510756156430000

¹⁹ General Fund Capital Plan: https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/4762/Council-item-06-15-March-2021/pdf/Council_item_06_-_15_March_2021.pdf?m=637510803544330000

Additionally, within each school a copy of the school fund procedures manual (SC23) should be made available to all who administer the school fund and it is each member's responsibility to ensure they are aware of and act in accordance with the circular. The Council's Internal Audit team also support schools to consider areas for improvement in regard to financial management with periodic reviews of school practices and subsequent recommendations where required.

In July 2021, the Scottish Government removed charges for music tuition as well as core curricular charges for such areas as ingredients for home economics, materials for technical studies and trips to the theatre associated with drama qualifications. However charges will still exist for such matters as extra-curricular activities, school uniform, school trips etc, wherever possible these should be detailed at the start of the school year in each school's handbook, or highlighted in the school's website on an ongoing basis.

Educational establishments across East Renfrewshire should continue to consider the cost of the school day for pupils, and actions and strategies which can be implemented to ensure that the cost of the average school day for a child is as low as possible. Careful consideration should be given to the use of resources to support children in their experiences where financial hardship is a barrier, with specific consideration to the use of awarded funds to support such actions, such as the Pupil Equity Fund and Scottish Attainment Challenge. These actions will support the closing of the poverty related attainment gap, raising the attainment and achievement of children and young people from the most deprived areas.

The Council provides a free school meal to all primary school children across the P1-P5 stages. Plans are being made for the extension of free school meal provision to all children across the primary sectors over the remaining period of the current parliament. Any parent/carer who requires financial assistance for school meals or school clothing, or young people requiring support in the form of Education Maintenance Allowance, can find more details on the Council's website²⁰.

4.10 Local Priorities

4.10.1 Community Planning Partnership²¹

East Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership (CPP) works for and with communities to ensure everyone has the best possible quality of life. East Renfrewshire CPP is made up of a range of organisations, with the Community Plan in place for a 10 year period. It sets out the activities and outcomes to make East Renfrewshire fairer and reduce inequalities.

4.10.2 Fairer East Ren Plan²²

This is our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan as required under the Community Empowerment Act. It focuses on reducing inequality across groups and communities in East Renfrewshire. The plan has 10 year outcomes, with 1 and 3 year targets, where we can make the biggest difference to people's lives. Each outcome area will have a detailed strategy, published separately.

²⁰ Educational Grants: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3792/Educational-grants>

²¹ Community Planning Partnership Plan: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/community-planning-partnership>

²² Fairer East Ren Plan: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/fairer-east-ren>

4.10.3 Outcome Delivery Plan²³

The Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) is a 3 year plan, updated annually, which focuses on our activities, performance measures and targets. It also explains what we're doing to ensure delivery of the agreed local outcomes.

4.10.4 The Education Department's Local Improvement Plan and Standards and Quality Report²⁴

As noted in [section 4.4](#), on a yearly basis the Education Department's Quality Improvement Team and service managers carry out an extensive audit to identify strengths in the department's current provision and areas where further improvement is required. The department's progress with the impact and outcomes listed in the Local Improvement Plan is detailed in the Department's Standards and Quality Report.

The Local Improvement Plan outlines the high level areas for improvement for all services and schools and is informed by the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan which details the targets and indicators that will be used to measure the impact of our work

The plan has a clear focus on improving outcomes for all our learners and the impact we expect to have on the experiences of the children, young people and adults who attend schools and use centres and services.

4.10.5 Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

The Education Department has as its vision 'Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences' and is committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for its children and young people, ensuring they have developed the skills they need for learning, life and work. It is responsibility of everyone to ensure that East Renfrewshire's children and young people are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. This will enable them to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.

The GIRFEC approach is based on solid foundations. There are ten core components and a set of values and principles which bring meaning and relevance at a practice level to single agency and multi-agency working across the whole of children's services.

The GIRFEC approach is about how practitioners across all services for children and adults meet the needs of children and young people, working together where necessary to ensure they reach their potential. It promotes a shared approach and accountability that:

- builds solutions with and around children, young people and families;
- enables children and young people to get the help they need when they need it;

²³ Outcome Delivery Plan

https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/5827/Outcome-Delivery-Plan-2021-24/pdf/ODP_2021-24_for_web.pdf?m=637620337256900000

²⁴ Local Improvement Plan & Standards and Quality Report

<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/department-performance-information>

- supports a positive shift in culture, systems and practice;
- involves working better together to improve the life chances for children, young people and families.

Further details of East Renfrewshire's approaches to GIRFEC can be found on the Council's website²⁵ with further information on the underpinning principles, available in the United Nations publication *UNCRC: The Foundation of Getting it Right for Every Child*²⁶.

All East Renfrewshire staff fulfil the role of Corporate Parent. As a Corporate Parent, East Renfrewshire Council works collaboratively with other agencies such as the Scottish Government, NHS and Emergency Services to provide the same level of care, support, security and opportunities to children and young people as an effective and supportive parent would. They have a responsibility to do what is needed to make sure children and young people are properly cared for, safe, healthy and encouraged to succeed. In addition a Champions Board oversees key decisions regarding support to our care experienced children and young people. The Champions Board consists of children and young people and key decision makers in the Council. Decisions by the Council on education spending are made in a collegiate and transparent way with due regard to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

There are some specific legislative duties required to be undertaken by East Renfrewshire Council, such as assessing children's needs in order to support children to be successful in their education or to determine what children and young people need to be happy and healthy at home. It is then the Council's responsibility to identify actions which it can undertake to provide further support.

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) reflects East Renfrewshire Council's key local outcomes:

- All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure start to their lives and are supported to succeed;
- East Renfrewshire residents are fit and active and have the skills for learning, life and work.

4.10.6 Planning for East Renfrewshire's Future²⁷

This information allows us to better plan for the future and will inform key decisions on policy. The council regularly updates and refines the information in this report as more up-to-date information becomes available.

4.11 Staffing Structures

East Renfrewshire Council's school teaching staff budget allocation process commences in January each year with the completion of the P1 catchment application and the P7-S1 transfer

²⁵ ERC GIRFEC: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/meetinglearnerneeds/girfec-guidance/>

²⁶ UNCRC The Foundation of Getting it Right for Every Child: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/public/meetinglearnerneeds/uploads/sites/16100/2018/08/UNCRC-The-Foundation-of-Getting-it-Right-For-Every-Child-SG.pdf>

²⁷ East Renfrewshire: Planning for the Future Report https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/688/Planning-for-the-future-2019/pdf/Planning_for_the_future.pdf?m=63737153930620000

processes. The information from the catchment application processes, along with current school roll analysis, allows the Education Department to project the school roll for each establishment for the commencement of the following academic year.

The allocation of staffing budget for primary school teaching staff is calculated on the basis of a school's roll and the classification of classes determined as being required to meet demand. With regards to best value principles, the most efficient classification for a primary school is determined by the Education Department and shared with Head Teachers who have the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed classification. Once confirmed, a primary school's designed classification must only be altered following agreement with the Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision); this ensures that the Education Department and school are aligned with regards to the number of places available within a school and at each stage, in order to manage future catchment and placing request applications. In allocating teaching staff budget, consideration is also given to other factors, for example, non-class contact time and staff absence cover.

The allocated budget for management staff and pupil support teachers to primary schools is determined using a formulaic approach which takes into consideration:

- the projected school roll for the following academic term;
- any associated nursery class provision; and
- demographic information relating to the school's cohort such as the proportion of children with additional support needs, the proportion of children residing in areas of low social and economic affluence as determined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and ethnicity.

Further details of the allocation of teaching staff budget to primary schools is included in Appendix B.

Secondary schools are allocated a fixed amount of full time equivalent staffing budget which is then increased on the basis of each school's projected roll for the next academic year, which takes account of school leavers at S4-S6 year stages and the new S1 intake. Additional budgeted staffing allocation is made to each school for other teaching staff based on equity, i.e. additional support needs, behaviour support and language support. Although staffing budgets are allocated to secondary schools, it is not prescriptive in determining the total teaching FTE or the promoted structure within the school. Head Teachers have flexibility, within available resources, to determine the appropriate staffing structure to meet the needs of pupils. Head Teachers in the secondary sector have autonomy (in keeping with SNCT and LNCT agreements) to determine the staffing required within their school to meet the curricular demands of the school community; this supports Head Teachers, in partnership with stakeholders, to deliver a curriculum which meets the needs of the learners within the school community. Head Teachers do have flexibility with regards to the senior and middle management structure (including faculty composition) within a school and the allocation of management time to staff. When considering staffing composition and the design of the curriculum to be delivered, Head Teachers must take a holistic view of the possible implications of such staffing changes with regards to children and young people's entitlements and to ensure a breadth of curricular areas and progression is catered for. Furthermore, any management structure changes may have wider implications with regards to the factors highlighted in other areas of this DSM scheme. Therefore when considering any changes to management structure a business case which details the current and proposed management structure and rationale/benefits of such a change (along with budgetary implications) should be undertaken and submitted to the school's pastoral Head of Education Services for further

consideration. The pastoral Head of Service will work with the Head Teacher to ensure that any management structure changes do not have a wider consequential impact.

With the aim of allowing a flexible approach and recognising the very individual and specialised needs of the Council's special school, the delegated budget is constructed in a different way from primary and secondary schools. Rather than applying a formulaic model, staffing budgets are allocated on a needs basis which supports the school's flexibility to target areas of particular need, all the while ensuring appropriate legislation, such as pupil-teacher ratios for children in the special sector, are adhered to.

Following the annual school pupil census collection, which takes place in September each year, a review of the allocated staffing budget is made using the actual school roll data published by the Scottish Government annually in December/March.

Promoted posts within East Renfrewshire Council are job sized using the Council's job sizing toolkit. The toolkit takes consideration of various factors such as roll, levels of responsibility, nursery class, specialist units and demographic information. The whole establishment data which contributes to promoted post job sizing, is monitored on an ongoing basis to determine if a trigger for re-evaluation has been met.

Staffing budget is also devolved to Head Teachers for other local government employees such business support staff, pupil support assistants and child development officers etc; Appendix B provides a summary of how these budgets are allocated.

Across East Renfrewshire there are seven clusters of schools comprising of a secondary school and associated primary schools and early learning and childcare establishments, with one cluster also having a special school as part of its community. Each cluster is allocated a Business Support Manager whose role it is to:

- Advise Head Teachers on the processes and procedures of DSM;
- Finance and budgetary control;
- Assist with property and facilities management issues;
- Contracts and supplies provisions;
- Be aware of and ensure adherence to all appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- Provide guidance on efficiency savings;
- Any other associated DSM duties.

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, supported by Business Support Managers to ensure effective management of financial and other resources for learning and teaching. This includes ensuring effective budgetary control.

4.12 Legislative and Contractual Requirements

Although staffing budgets are devolved to schools, East Renfrewshire Council is the employer and all major conditions of service continue to be negotiated at national level via the SNCT, and with those devolved to LNCT determined locally.

Within the devolved scheme, schools must adhere to SNCT/LNCT agreements in areas such as class sizes, staff structures, length of the school day etc.

Where finances (grant awards) have been allocated to the local authority or schools, where restrictions on the use of the award exist, it is the responsibility of the local authority and

schools to ensure that the allocated funds are used for this specified purposes and that any reporting of outcomes be completed and submitted to the awarding body.

In accordance with the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, education authorities must have due regard to the need to carry out school education functions in a way designed to reduce inequalities of outcome for those pupils experiencing them as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, where:

- an education authority is making a decision of a strategic nature about the carrying out of its functions relating to school education;
- an education authority is considering what steps to take to implement such a decision.

The duty applies to all children in early learning and childcare education and those in receipt of primary or secondary education provided by an education authority, including those placed in an independent or grant aided school by an education authority, and covering education delivered in partnership with colleges, employers and Community Learning Development Partners. When making decisions of a strategic nature, the Education Department must fulfil its requirement for due regard by seeking and having regard to the views of various stakeholders.

The Education Department, schools and ELC centres take a wide range of decisions relating to individual learners and other day-to-day operational matters within the establishments they operate, including the support required to overcome barriers to children's learning without the need for consultation. The Education Department will consult with appropriate stakeholders on high level strategic decisions which influence the way in which education is provided across the Council. The Education Department and education establishments will frame local policies within strategic decision making processes. Therefore, strategic decisions can ultimately impact on the operational matters within individual schools and classrooms.

4.13 Staff Resources

Head Teachers across East Renfrewshire are actively engaged in designing the recruitment process for teaching staff across the Council. Head Teachers are consulted on current arrangements and changes which can be made to improve the processes. Procedures on the processes for recruitment of teaching staff (promoted & un-promoted) is a matter devolved to LNCT and as such, Head Teachers may also be consulted by their trade union representatives on the LNCT. East Renfrewshire's LNCT 19 agreement details the processes of recruitment for staff in accordance with SNCT and must be followed at all times by Head Teachers when recruiting.

There are currently robust procedures in place to ensure that schools are provided with the resources and support required to meet the needs of all learners. This includes processes and specialist groups for considering allocation of additional resources, including staff, such as:

- Early Years Interventions Group
- Education Resource Group
- Inter-Agency Consultative Group
- Annual PSA audit and allocation

- Healthier Minds Referral Hub
- Staffing structures which take account of equity

Bilingual Support Assistants are allocated to schools in accordance with the language acquisition level of the pupils. Furthermore, if a Head Teacher believes that the school has not been allocated appropriate levels of bilingual support assistant time, a referral system is in place whereby Head Teachers can request additional support which will be considered by the Quality Improvement Officer with responsibility for Equalities.

Other services such as Teachers of the Deaf (TOD), Prevention and Intervention Officer Support and Outreach Service are supports which are allocated by the direction of the Educational Psychology Team and the Education Resource Group.

Pupil Support Assistants (PSA) are allocated to schools on the basis of need. Schools are asked to submit annually details of pupils who require additional support, their wellbeing level and support hours requested. The allocation of PSA support is undertaken by Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) and the Quality Improvement Officer (ASN) on an equitable needs basis.

Educational Psychologists are allocated on a cluster basis. If a school wishes a child to be added to the Ed Psych caseload they need to complete a referral form. Ed Psych has an allocation board where they review referrals and sometimes it is not the school cluster Education Psychologist who is allocated as there may be someone who has been trained in a specific intervention who is more suitable.

The Educational Psychology Service is committed to realising the Education Department's vision of 'Everyone Attaining Everyone Achieving Through Excellent Experiences' and to *Getting It Right* for all children and young people in East Renfrewshire. The service strives to provide the community with a high quality, accessible service that applies evidence-based psychology to improve experiences and outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people and families.

Further details on East Renfrewshire's Educational Psychology Service is available on the service's website.²⁸

4.14 Professional Support teams, functions and transparency

Details of staffing budget allocated to schools as part of the DSM for support staff such as local government employees and Business Support Managers is included in previous sections of this DSM scheme.

Council Department	Functions Supported
Education Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All educational matters (early years, school and adult learning), pedagogy, curriculum, quality improvement and self-evaluation; • Educational Psychology;

²⁸ East Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service:
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/PsychologicalService/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance analysis; • Local and national priorities and initiatives; • Legislative matters; • SEEMIS school management information system • Administration; • Human resources in partnership with corporate colleagues; • Risk and Health & Safety; • Budgeting, staffing and financial matters, including DSM in partnership with corporate colleagues; • Early years, school admissions and placing requests; • School transport; • Complaint handling; • Parental engagement; • Consultation.
Facilities Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janitorial services; • Catering services; • Cleaning services; • School crossing.
Environment/Property Technical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education estate/building repairs and maintenance; • Support with new school estate; • Grounds maintenance.
Health and Social Care Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social work functions to support children and families.
Corporate and Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All aspects of HR including recruitment, supply staff etc.; ○ IT services; ○ Public Relations/Communications
Chief Executive's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support with Legal issues; ○ Accountancy; ○ Internal Audit ○ Support with procurement.

4.15 Budget underspend / overspend

East Renfrewshire Council recognises that a range of factors need to be considered in determining the optimum model for the devolvement of budgets to schools to ensure that best value is achieved and to empower Head Teachers to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Following discussions with Head Teachers in 2017/2018 on budgetary matters and in particular with regard to savings requiring to be achieved, Head Teachers indicated that they would rather decide themselves how they deal with a reduction in their school budgets. Providing Head Teachers with the ability to carry-forward unspent devolved budget, recognising that the academic year runs from August-June, transcending the financial year-end of 31 March, provides Head Teachers with greater budget flexibility and maximises best value to align with the School Improvement Plan, recognising that expenditure commitments operate on an academic year and not on a financial year basis. In order to facilitate this approval was granted for the establishment of a DSM Reserve for each school/centre.

The Education Department is clear that budget devolved to a school in any financial year should be targeted at the priorities in the School's Improvement Plan and should be for the benefit of current pupils. Head Teachers must therefore ensure that all carry forwards are planned and should not be used as a means of setting aside resources for the future with no identified plans for the carry forward. All carry forwards must be entirely used within a three year period aligning with the School Improvement Plan and its timeframe.

Head Teachers in East Renfrewshire have the facility to carry forward underspent devolved school management resources only. In determining if any underspend can be carried forward the following condition must be met:

- the overall Education Department budget (excluding central support recharges and the service payment to East Renfrewshire Council Leisure Trust) is underspent (as verified by external audit of the annual report and accounts of the Council).

Provided the above condition is met, Head Teachers on behalf of schools are able to carry-forward a proportion of unspent DSM budget into the DSM reserve subject to the following threshold:

- the maximum amount held in each school/centre DSM Reserve at the end of the financial year is no greater than 6% of the total devolved budget for that financial year

The actual carry-forward into the DSM Reserve each year is calculated by determining the overall variance on the school/centre DSM budget as part of the year-end procedures and is overseen by Accountancy colleagues.

Where a school's underspend would lead to an overall DSM reserve balance greater than the maximum 6% allowable of the school's budget at the end of the financial year the excess funds are returned to the Council's reserves.

Where an overspend occurs, the shortfall in budget will be deducted from the school's DSM budget via an increased savings target in the following financial year and the Head Teacher will be required to provide an action plan to evidence how they will deliver a balanced budget by the end of that same financial year. If a school's DSM budget outturn position is unreasonably or persistently overspent, despite strong budget monitoring and support, then such action could be considered by the Director of Education as grounds for disciplinary action.

4.16 Virement

Virement is defined by CIPFA as “the transfer of an underspend on one budget head to finance additional spending on another budget head in accordance with the Financial Regulations”. In effect virement is the transfer of budget from one main budget heading (employee costs, supplies and services etc) to another, or a transfer of budget from one service to another.

Prompt and well controlled virement is crucial to budget management and in-year planning. Within East Renfrewshire, Head Teachers may vire funds. Virements up to the limits detailed in Appendix B are at the discretion of the Head Teacher, without the need for further external reference, albeit discussion will take place with the school’s Business Support Manager and may be discussed with other stakeholders where appropriate. If funds are being vired for the purpose of meeting required savings, there is no limit to the amount of funds which can be vired.

Virements will only be processed by the central budget unit when savings are clear on financial systems at the point the virement is requested. When savings are expected to be made after this point, further evidence will be required to the workings of the projected savings. Further details relating to virement under the DSM scheme include:

- Following relevant consultation via the local DSM Consultative Group any approved virement of funds from one expense head to another must be properly recorded and actioned;
- Virement of funds applies to devolved expense heads only;
- Adherence to legislation and national agreements on conditions of service;
- Virement must not create additional overall future budget liability. One off savings or additional income should not be used to support recurring expenditure or to create future financial year commitments for increased expenditure, including full year effects of decisions made part way through a year, for which budget provision may not be available in future years;
- The financial cost of any variance to the promoted and unpromoted staffing structure must remain within allocation and effective school management must be ensured;
- Virement may not be possible on any grant allocated budget lines until conditions of the grant have been fully met.

4.17 Review, methodology and Stakeholders

The DSM scheme will be subject to a formal 3-yearly review involving stakeholders and a peer Local Authority if appropriate and will be published following Education Committee/Cabinet approval of the scheme. Ongoing review of the scheme will take place in the intermittent years between publications with various stakeholders, reviewing key areas/themes on an ongoing basis.

Any minor changes which are required during intermittent years will be presented to the Education Leadership Team for consideration and approval, and the scheme updated and republished. More significant changes can also be made during intermittent years however these changes will require to be presented to Education Committee/Cabinet.

5 Appendices

5.1 Appendix A: Budget Areas Devolved / Non-Devolved to Schools

Budget Category	Devolved	Not Devolved
Staff Costs	✓	
Property Costs (Inc Insurance) - with the exception of the following lines :-		✓
Cleaning and Hygiene Supplies	✓	
Furniture and Fittings	✓	
Other Property costs	✓	
Transport Costs - with the exception of the following lines:-		✓
Consortium Transport	✓	
Supplies and Services - with the exception of the following lines :-	✓	
PFI/PPP costs		✓
School Meal Costs		✓
Cash Uplift Costs		✓
Third Party Payments - SQA Costs	✓	
Corporate Support Services		✓
Income - with the exception of the following line :-		✓
Easter School income	✓	
Management Information System (SEEMIS)		✓
School Clothing Grants		✓
Education Maintenance Allowance		✓
Music Instruction, Other Visiting Teachers (LA Employed)		✓
Parent Council Expenditure		✓
Premature Retirement Costs		✓
Health and Safety		✓

5.2 Appendix B Summary of Devolved Budget Lines

Budget Category	Description	Basis of Allocation of Resources to Schools	Amount of School Virement Level per Financial Year (1st stage) £	Comments
Staff Costs	Teaching Staff Salaries (Including Promoted Staff Structure)	Approved staffing formulae for ELC, Primary and Secondary schools and approved needs based allocation for Special schools and other specialist provision.	Total of £20,000 for Basic Pay + Average NI and Super and App Levy rates for the financial year.	Virements to clear savings are exempt from 1st stage virement threshold. Virements over and above £20,000 Basic can be approved at Head of Service level. When this is required the 2nd stage budget journal template should be completed and submitted for Head of Service approval detailing the spending plan. Following approval by the Head of Service the virement can be processed via the Integra financial system.
	Teaching Staff Salaries - Easter School	Budget formulae based on S4, S5 and S6 school roll	See Comments	Depending on applicable charging policy, Easter School income should be taken into consideration, any overspend must be covered by the school, similarly any underspend virement is permitted.
	Probationers Basic	Subject to annual bid and allocation of posts/funding from Scottish Government. Bids and allocation of fully funded posts subject to approval of the Education Leadership Team.	Nil	Where applicable part-funded via school's core teaching staff budget. Note ERC's financial settlement assumes a minimum number of part-funded probationer posts for primary and secondary sector each year.
	Devolved Replacement Teaching budget	Number of days per FTE allocated to each school	Up to 20% of original budget	Teaching Staff Salaries rules apply in terms of savings exemption and restriction of virements until grant conditions are met. Absence cover arrangements are subject to variation by local LNCT agreement.
	Teaching Staff Travel	Primary and Secondary Schools - allowance per FTE	Up to full budget amount	

Business Support Staff	Approved staffing formulae for business support staff based on number of pupils on school roll and SMID % for school.	£5,000 basic pay in total for all Local Government Staff groups + Average NI, Super and App levy rates for the financial year.	Virements to clear savings are exempt. If further virements over and above £5k basic are required then the 2nd stage virement process should be followed. When this is required the 2nd stage budget journal template should be completed and submitted for Head of service approval detailing the spending plan. Following approval by the Head of Service the virement can be processed via the Integra financial system.
Early Years centres (excluding business support/PSAs etc)	Per annually approved staffing model required to maintain staffing ratios based on projected number of children each year and preferred delivery model.		
Pupil Support Assistants	ASN allocation based on school roll and individual ASN levels within school Behaviour Support allocation within secondary schools		
School Technicians	Approved staffing formulae in secondary schools based on roll banding and the allocation of various Technicians to each Secondary School		
Social Justice Manager	Agreement with Head Teacher and Education Leadership Team.		
Bus Escort	Supervisory Asst as part of staffing formulae. Bus escorts in special sector as approved		
Modern Apprentice	Part of approved Business Support staffing formulae in secondary schools - 1 FTE per school.	Nil	

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Property Costs	Cleaning & Hygiene Supplies	An allowance per pupil based on projected school roll at August following start of financial year. Specialist provision receive a fixed amount only.	£5,000 or up to full budget if lower amount.	Purchase of janitorial and additional cleaning hygiene supplies. Budget adjusted for PFI schools given covered by contract.
	Furniture & Fittings	An allowance per pupil based on projected school roll at August following start of financial year plus a fixed amount for primary and secondary only. Specialist provision receive a fixed amount only.	Up to full budget amount	
	Other Property Costs	ELC family centres only - variable fixed amount depending on age profile of children attending.	Up to full budget amount	
Transport Costs	Pupil Transport Consortium	Allocation as per Head of Service	Up to full budget amount	Budget for transport costs of pupils travelling to other educational establishments for studies
Supplies and Services	Purchase Equipment (office)	Fixed amount per school plus an allowance per pupil on projected school roll at August following start of financial year. An additional fixed amount for schools with roll over 1,200 pupils at August following start of financial year. For ELC - no fixed amount provided.	£5,000 or up to full budget if lower amount.	
	School Library books	Fixed amount per primary school. Fixed amount per secondary school plus an allowance per pupil on projected school roll at August following start of financial year	Up to full budget amount	

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	Materials (Classroom resources)	Fixed amount per school plus an allowance per pupil on projected school roll at August following start of financial year. SMID is taken into account in the formula for this expense head. ELC and Special - allowance per child/pupil based on projected roll at August following start of financial year.	Up to full budget amount if allocating to departments within school under same expense head, otherwise £5,000 or up to full budget if lower amount.	
	Printing & Stationery	Fixed amount per school, plus an allowance per pupil on projected school roll at August following start of financial year. For ELC - no fixed amount provided.	Up to full budget amount	
	Telephones	Fixed amount per school, plus an allowance per pupil on projected school roll at August following start of financial year. In addition fixed amount for line rental based on lines per establishment.	Up to full budget amount	
	Postages	Fixed amount per school, plus an allowance per pupil on projected school roll at August following start of financial year. For ELC - no fixed amount provided.	Up to full budget amount	
	Television Licences	Based on cost of TV Licence and allocated to relevant centres only.	Up to full budget amount	
	School Activities	Fixed amount per school, plus an allowance per pupil on projected school roll at August following start of financial year.	£5,000 or up to full budget if lower amount.	

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	Outdoor Education	Fixed amount per school plus a formula based on school roll with deprivation (PEF) incorporated.	Nil	
	Work Experience Travel & Subsistence	Transport allowance per S4 pupil based on projected school roll at August following start of financial year.	Up to full budget amount	
	Support for Quality Education Experiences	Allowance per pupil on projected school roll & Teachers FTE (primary and secondary) at August following start of financial year. ELC - fixed amount and allowance per pupil. Special - allowance per pupil.	£5,000 or up to full budget if lower amount.	To enhance curriculum within schools
	Framework For Learning Resources	Allocation to Special sector only as per Head of Service / Quality Improvement Officer (QIO)	£5,000	
	Devolved Efficiency Savings / Managed Savings	Budget savings allocated pro-rata to teaching staff budget for primary and secondary schools. Fixed efficiency saving amount for ELC and Special	N/A	Negative Budget Entitlement, virement required to clear savings target
Third Party Payments	Scottish Qualifications Authority	Allocation based on number of presentations	Nil	Budget provided for all eligible pupils

5.3 Appendix C: Staffing Allocation (Teaching & Management): Primary and Secondary Schools

Staffing Formula – Primary Sector

FTE by Class - 1.11 FTE allocated for every class to be formed (i.e. 1 FTE teacher plus associated non-class contact time). *An annual exercise is undertaken to project pupil roll and classification for each school taking account of class size legislation and any accommodation restrictions.*

PLUS

FTE allocation for nursery class (where appropriate)

PLUS

Management time FTE based on the following roll band model

BAND	SCHOOL ROLL INCLUDING NURSERY	HT	DHT	PT	MGT TIME ²⁹
1	0-100	1	0	0	1
2	101-209	1	0	1	1.2
3	210-309	1	1	0	1.5
4	310-419	1	1	1	1.7
5	420-519	1	1	2	1.9
6	520-629	1	2	1	2.2
7	630-729	1	2	2	2.4
8	730-839	1	2	3	2.6
9	840+	1	3	2	2.9

MANAGEMENT TIME (FTE)	
HT	1.0
DHT	0.5
PT	0.2

²⁹ Note In addition: PT allocation for equity (average SIMD); PT allocation for large nursery classes

PLUS

FTE allocation for cover (equates to 3% of class and management FTE total).

Note this is separate from devolved replacement teaching budget allocation.

PLUS

Allocation of Pupil Support Teachers – 1 FTE per school plus further allocation in recognition of levels of:-

- ASN
- SIMD (1-3)
- Ethnicity

Total additionality in terms of Pupil Support ranges from 1.0 FTE to 1.9 FTE

PLUS

Allocation of additionality to support particular priorities e.g. improvement in the attainment of the lowest performing 20% of pupils or recovery/building back better following the COVID pandemic.

Such additionality is dependent on funding being made available either locally within ERC or ring-fenced via the Scottish Government.

Staffing Formula – Secondary Sector

Roll entitlement FTE = (Fixed element of 9.7 FTE plus per pupil tariff of 0.0611) X 99%

PLUS

Specific agreed additionality in respect of:-

Equity/Raising attainment of lowest performing 20% of pupils

Behaviour support

ASN

Reduced class sizes for English and Maths

Recovery/Building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic

Bi-lingual support