

Scottish Attainment Challenge



Local Authority
Examples of
Good Practice
in Improving
Outcomes for
Children and
Young People
Impacted by
Poverty

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1. Introduction

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 with the ambition of closing the poverty related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most deprived communities. It has evolved significantly over time. What began with targeted support to selected authorities and schools has expanded into a national model of targeted support that reaches across the whole country, with Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) issued to the vast majority of schools, and Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) and Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) funding going to all 32 local authorities.

This report focuses specifically on the SAC funding allocated to local authorities—SEF and CECYP—which together support councils to tackle the impacts of poverty on children and young people’s attainment.

	Strategic Equity Funding	Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding
What is this fund?	Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) is shared by all 32 local authorities to invest in strategic approaches to achieve the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, with a clear focus on delivering equity through improving outcomes for learners impacted by poverty.	The Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (CECYP) is a targeted resource provided to local authorities and aims to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people experiencing care
How is it allocated?	Strategic Equity Funding is distributed equitably based on Children in Low Income Families data	Funding is provided to local authorities annually to support care experienced children and young people at a figure of £1,225 per looked after child aged 5-15, as outlined in the Children’s Social Work Statistics Scotland

1. Introduction (cont)

On 1 September 2025 the Scottish Government, Education Scotland (ES) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), held a national conference for all Directors of Education and colleagues from local authority central teams. This was an opportunity to mark 10 years of the SAC programme, reflect on the impact SAC has had over the past decade and to bring local authority directors and central teams together, alongside colleagues from SG, ES and ADES to share impactful practice and look ahead, reflecting on how best to continue work to close the poverty related attainment gap.

In terms of sharing practice, 15 local authorities shared their work at the national conference with the remaining 17 local authorities subsequently submitting to Scottish Government their own examples of impactful practice.

This document draws together examples of the range of work supported by the Scottish Attainment Challenge that is taking place in local authorities – including some specific examples in individual schools – across the country to improve outcomes for children and young people experiencing poverty and/or children and young people experiencing poverty.

Some clear themes have emerged in how this funding has been used and the approaches taken by local authorities. These are summarised in the sections that follow.

Thank you to all local authorities for their contributions to this document and for their continued work to close the poverty related attainment gap.



2. Summary of Key Themes

Effective practice across Scotland

Launched in 2015, the Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to help close the poverty-related attainment gap through targeted investment in schools across Scotland's 32 local authorities. The overview below outlines **six key areas of intervention** demonstrating effective practice and impact across the system using Strategic Equity Funding and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding, based on the examples contained in this document.

These organisers provide the framework shaping improvement across the system:

- Learning and Teaching
- Leadership
- Families and Communities

1. Attainment & Professional Learning

Focus: Investment in pedagogical practice and targeted literacy and numeracy approaches



Common approaches

- Writing improvement programmes
- Specialist literacy and numeracy support
- Leadership development

Outcomes

- Narrowing poverty-related attainment gaps at P1, P4 & P7
- Greater consistency across schools
- Increased teacher confidence

2. Attendance & Engagement

Focus: Specialist roles to address attendance and disengagement



Common approaches

- Family-focused support workers targeting non-attendance
- Place-based locality strategies
- Nurture-based interventions

Outcomes

- Improved attendance trajectories
- Stronger family trust
- Increased engagement with learning

3. Data-Informed Improvement

Focus: Systematic use of data and evidence to target resources effectively



Common approaches

- Use of dashboards and tracking tools
- Analysis of P1, P4 and P7 attainment data to inform Strategic Equity Funding

Outcomes

- More targeted support in areas of highest deprivation
- Improvements in P1, P4 and P7 poverty-related attainment measures

4. Wellbeing & Nurture

Focus: Supporting children's health, wellbeing and readiness to learn



Common approaches

- Trauma-informed practice
- Therapeutic and wellbeing support

Outcomes

- Improved self-regulation
- Reduced exclusions
- Stronger engagement with education

5. Whole Family Approaches

Focus: Addressing poverty-related barriers beyond the school gates



Common approaches

- Welfare advice services
- Family learning
- Community partnerships

Outcomes

- Increased parental engagement with education
- Increased financial support for families
- Barriers to attendance reduced

6. Targeted Support for Care Experienced Young People

Focus: Personalised support to improve engagement, attainment and destinations



Common approaches

- Dedicated staff or mentors
- Enhanced tracking of pupils experiencing care
- Alternative pathways

Outcomes

- Improved attendance and sustained engagement
- Improved attainment
- Higher rates of positive destinations

2. Summary of Key Themes (cont)

Across all 32 local authorities, several recurring themes emerge in how councils have been using SEF, PEF and CECYP funding to close the poverty-related attainment gap. These generally align with the existing three organisers – or levers for change – of the Scottish Attainment Challenge as set out in [Education Scotland's Interventions for Equity diagram](#):

- Learning and Teaching
- Leadership
- Families and Communities

It is clear to see that local authorities across Scotland are using their Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) and Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) Funding to drive strategic, system level improvements in learning and teaching. Many councils are embedding sustainable pedagogical and leadership capacity through the use of self-evaluation frameworks and structured professional development. There is a clear focus on improving literacy and numeracy, with every authority highlighting targeted interventions in these areas, frequently supported by high quality professional learning to strengthen classroom practice.

Leadership development is also a prominent area of investment. Many of the examples put forward by local authorities for this document show that councils are working to develop consistent, data-driven and evidence-informed practice, supported by the wider use of dashboards and tracking systems at school, cluster and authority level. There is a clear focus on long-term sustainability, with authorities deliberately aiming to avoid over-dependence on temporary posts and instead establishing enduring models that build capacity within schools and across local systems.

The examples also show that local authorities are prioritising work with families and communities. This is in recognition that for children and young people, engagement, belonging and wellbeing – as well as readiness to learn – are fundamental to closing the attainment gap. Attendance and wellbeing have become key areas of focus, with strengthened multi-service and multi-agency partnership approaches emerging across the country, with examples of work spanning education, social care and community learning and development services and wider community partners to deliver integrated and holistic support for children, young people and their families. Further, some councils are combining multiple funding streams alongside SEF, such as Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to work towards shared objectives.

The following section of this report contains unedited examples from all 32 local authorities demonstrating what they report to have been impactful approaches, which can be used as a resource for local authorities to learn from each other.

3. Local Authority Submissions



4. Aberdeen City

Aberdeen City Council Youth Work, Family Learning and Financial Inclusion through Partnership Forums

Description

We recognised that many of the issues faced by children begin in early childhood and wanted to get ahead of the root cause to help build more sustainable change in the longer term. Many of the stresses and strains impacting families are financial/poverty related and there is an overwhelming body of research to confirm the benefits of early intervention. Research supported our aim to grow a strong, collaborative, universal offer of support for children and families in their own communities to provide both the primary prevention and early intervention necessary to improve outcomes and reduce the number of cases which escalate to more targeted or intensive support. We believed a more responsive universal offer would enable us to ensure that we:

- Make best use of resources
- Offer children, young people, and families access to support quickly, preventing the escalation of need
- Use collaborative and creative approaches to address and meet needs

Directing funding through the established Partnership Forums in each of our Associated School Groups we aimed to:

- Provide youth work allocation across all ASGs to support those at risk of disengaging from around P6 upwards with a remit around engagement, substance misuse and supporting wellbeing.
- Provide a Family Learning allocation across all ASGs with a particular (although not exclusive) focus on primary and a remit on linking with families to support family learning in its widest sense and promote resilience in parents and families.
- Improve access to financial inclusion services to improve knowledge and uptake of benefit entitlements and provide help to families to manage problem debt.

Planned Outcomes:

- Improved outcomes for children, young people and families impacted by poverty
- Improved collaboration to maximise impact for children and young people, avoid duplication of services and ensure clear signposting to services best placed to support
- Create sustainability and lasting impact through developing capacity of staff and improving resilience of families
- Improved understanding of entitlement, uptake of benefits and management of problem debt

Impact and relevant data:

- Delivery through Partnership Forums has led to more coordinated approach and more effective use of resources
- Staff in each of the services have an increased awareness and understanding of the role, challenges and opportunities for joined up working with other services

- Evidence of increased school attendance and engagement
- Positive feedback from all stakeholders
- Reduction in duplication and appropriate support for services which are already stretched
- Significant financial gains for families, increased benefit claims and successful benefit challenges
- Increased number of families receiving support to manage debt

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Youth Workers, Family Learning Workers and improved access to financial inclusion services were originally established for session 2021/22 as part of the Education Recovery Grant and have continued to be supported by SEF funding and, in previous years, The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund as this work sits alongside the Family Support Model. This resource has a clear remit for early intervention and to target those children, young people and families most at risk of disengaging from education.

SEF Funding	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Aberdeen City	£473,825	£638,079	£955,190	£1,272,300

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5. Aberdeenshire

Review of Pupil Wellbeing Worker - Support for Attendance – Fraserburgh Cluster

Description

Background

Across the Fraserburgh cluster it was recognised that attendance was an area requiring improvement. The cluster created a Pupil Wellbeing Worker role to increase attendance, providing targeted support to identified pupils and their families. The role is carried out by two part time staff who work together to provide a full-time role across the Fraserburgh cluster.

School leaders complete a referral to access this support. Referrals are reviewed by Head Teachers from the cluster, alongside the wellbeing workers, giving consideration to all evidence provided.

Interventions tailored to the needs of pupils and their families are agreed and planned for. All interventions are reviewed on a 6-8 weekly basis to ensure that they are being reviewed for impact.

Pupil Wellbeing Workers are key in providing support and guidance to pupils and their families. They work directly with families supporting them on a one-to-one basis at times and also signposting to further supports available. They also offer universal support through open evenings for all parents to attend to support and promote attendance across the cluster.

Planned Outcomes:

- Improve attendance for identified pupils across the cluster.
- Identify the cause of poor attendance or late coming to school and offer tailored support to support pupils and their families.

Number of Pupils Supported:

- Over 50 pupils across the cluster have received targeted attendance support.
- One school within the cluster: 17 pupils supported in the last year, all now showing improved attendance.
- There are approximately 30 pupils supported at any given time and this is reviewed every 6-8 weeks.

Key Activities Delivered by Pupil Wellbeing Workers (PWWs):

Morning Pickups:

- Start at 8:00 AM, collecting pupils for breakfast club or arrival before start of the school day.

Home Visits & Parental Engagement:

- Discuss attendance challenges, routines, and barriers (e.g., pupil refusal, parental struggles).
- Offer tailored support strategies relevant to the individual pupils and their families.

Flexible Meeting Options:

- Home visits, meetings outwith school environment in local community facilities, evening drop-in sessions.

Pupil Support:

- Working with pupils in school to address some of the reasons for their poor attendance, for example anxiety or peer relationships.
- Helping pupils to understand the importance of good attendance and timekeeping for their social and emotional wellbeing as well as the impact on their attainment and achievement.

Additional Support Offered

Wellbeing Activities:

- Meditation, acupuncture, and signposting to external services for strategies.

Impact and relevant data:

Impact

- Almost all pupils supported have shown improvement in their attendance, there is a reduction in late coming and evidence of improved engagement whilst at school.
- Despite a very small number of individual pupils continuing to experience challenges with their attendance, their time in school is more successful, giving a very positive base to work from.
- Over the last year, a number of pupils have transitioned to not requiring any further support, whilst maintaining gains in their attendance and engagement in school.
- Drop-in sessions have created support groups, described by parents as a “lifeline.”
- Parents now connect independently for mutual support.
- Community building - Informal parent groups formed, enhancing resilience and shared problem-solving.

Parent Feedback:

- Very positive – Evaluations have placed an emphasis on the emotional support and practical help they have received.
- Drop-in sessions highly valued for flexibility and community connection.

Pupil Feedback:

- Very positive feedback from pupils who have shared the support has been very helpful, beyond the target of attending school.

Strengths

- Holistic approach addressing both logistical barriers and social/emotional factors.
- Strong parental engagement and creation of sustainable support networks.
- Evidence of improved attendance and ongoing monitoring showing sustained progress.

Areas for Development

Data Tracking:

- Formalise metrics demonstrating improvement: baseline attendance vs. post-intervention, duration of support, and long-term trends from this.

Sustainability:

- Consider further opportunities for promoting attendance at a cluster-wide level

Scalability:

- Sharing practice across the authority, in particular strategies that have been successful (e.g., parent networks, drop-ins).

Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF: £49,000 (including all oncosts)

1.0 FTE Pupil Wellbeing worker

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6. Angus

Approaches to improving attendance: Engagement Officers

Description:

Angus is a diverse local authority with 51 primaries and 8 secondaries, including a mix of urban and rural contexts and large and small schools. There are three themes underpinning our commitment to delivering excellence and equity for all: Angus Cares, Angus Learns and Angus Improves. Progress is measured annually against targets within each theme, detailed in the [Angus Education Plan 2022-2027 \(AEP\)](#), which is informed by local and national data. To achieve the ambitions set out in the AEP, Angus Council strategically pool the strands of Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding to maximise the capacity for improvement across connected policy areas, including The Promise and Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2030; achieving Best Value. This encourages sectors to increase collaboration and partnership working in their unique contexts to achieve the Vision set out in the National Improvement Framework (NIF).

Rationale:

Attendance statistics present a relatively positive picture overall, however an attendance gap remains between sectors and there is a poverty-related gap of 6.6%. Furthermore, there is a focus on improving attendance for care experienced learners below 85%. In partnership with social work and schools, the role of the Engagement Officer (EO) was established in 2023. The purpose of the EO role was to work within and beyond schools in targeted localities to improve outcomes for learners with care experience and/or with socioeconomic barriers. This remains a key priority of the AEP.

There are four EOs line managed by a resource worker who undertakes additional duties including:

- School support as required for those establishments who do not have a designated EO
- Funding applications
- Attendance at authority/national networking forums e.g. Planet Youth, community planning partnership
- SW/CE link

The overarching rationale for this intervention is to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap through improved attendance for identified groups and increase positive outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

Learner Profiles

EOs liaised with school staff using a range of data and information to identify 80 learners across four establishments in session 2024-25 who required support to improve their attendance and engagement. Out of this figure, 44 learners lived in SIMD quintile 1 and 17 were care experienced. Through discussions with young people, families and staff, barriers to attendance were identified and addressed in 1-1, group and family sessions. These barriers included:

- Confidence/Resilience
- Self Regulation
- Participation & Engagement

- Violent incidents
- Generational negative view of school

An additional group of potentially vulnerable P7 learners was identified and were supported with a variety of activities to provide early intervention e.g.

- Additional visits to the secondary school during term time
- Drop-in visits during holidays to familiarise learners with the building when it's less busy
- Regular meetings with the secondary based EO to build strong relationship before S1

Planned Outcomes:

2024-25 Angus Education Plan Targets/Stretch Aims:

- Increase the proportion of care experienced children and young people who live at home, and those with previous care experience who attend school more than 80% of the time.
- Attendance at primary school will be 93-94%.
- Attendance at secondary school will be 88.5-89.5%.

Overarching outcomes:

- Improved attendance
- Increased engagement, participation
- Raised attainment

EOs contribute to improving outcomes for individual children and young people through:

- Positive relationships and targeted interventions, working with families to build trust, rapport and remove personal, emotional and socioeconomic barriers to education.
- Early intervention - working in close partnership with school staff, using a data informed approach, to support families before reaching crisis point
- Financial signposting and support, e.g. reducing food poverty at key points throughout the year, support with benefit forms etc
- Holiday provision – work effectively with third party providers to provide a continuum of support and engagement out with term time, further developing connections with families, and supporting friendship groups, including at points of transition
- Participating in development and delivery of planned programmes and individual 1-1 activities where required to help young people develop essential skills for life and work
- Support children and young people to access provision from other partner services and agencies where appropriate
- Promote equity and equality for all by ensuring that their individuality, confidentiality, privacy, choice and rights are respected at all times

Impact and relevant data:

Measures/Evidence included:

- Quantitative data e.g. % attendance increase, improved reading scores, NSAs

- Qualitative Data - confidence, enjoyment, attainment, improved relationships gathered through Leuven scale, pre/post surveys, etc
- Impact statements from targeted group of learners, parents, staff
- Case Studies

Sample evidence:

- Attendance - 52/80 (65%) of learners who worked with the EOs improved their attendance over the session
- Care Experienced example - of the 8 CE learners supported in one of our primary schools:
 - 5 learners increased attendance to over 85% by the end of the session
 - 2 learners had 100%, having had 52% and 78% prior to the EO involvement
 - 1 learner increased attendance from 16%- 40% throughout the session with work ongoing
- All families and learners involved spoke very positively about support from the EO and referenced the relational element, describing the 1-1 and group sessions as “a safe space to talk.”
- Almost all learners in the P7 - S1 transition group had a positive start to S1 and check in regularly with the EO
- More families across the 4 schools accessed welfare rights and food vouchers
- Parent surveys, pupil feedback and individual case studies highlight the positive impact the early intervention work of the EOs has had on young people. Parents report the service has positively impacted their child’s wellbeing with their child feeling more included and less anxious. The service has also improved links with the school.
- All learners surveyed said they felt strongly supported by the engagement officer and that she understood their needs.

Parent Quotes:

“The service has been fantastic in the way it operates. We had tried everything to encourage our son into school, but this is the only thing that has worked.”

“My child would not have continued to attend school without this service”

“This service has been a rock to my daughter's wellbeing. It has been invaluable”

“It’s been helpful to have insight from the EO when discussing some areas of concern”

Attainment Scotland Funding (2024-25):

SEF – £107,000

Care Experienced CYPF – £107,000

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7. Argyll and Bute

Working in partnership to develop a Communication Supportive Environment for Children with Complex Communication Needs

Description:

Focus Group affected by poverty / barriers to learning:

Pre-verbal communicators with additional support needs in Learning Centre

Context:

Priority Family type – additional financial demands placed on families who have children with disabilities

- many families have given up working to care for their child or taken less hours or a lesser job
- higher living costs - specialist equipment including personal care items, specific food items, cost of continual laundry
- poverty of experience - many activities are not accessible to many pupils with disabilities, or they have travel to access ones specifically designed. In addition going on outings can be challenging due to transport difficulties and dependent on how the child will cope with that change. Some of the activities that are specifically designed for those with ASN can be costly or have extensive wait lists

Project Aim:

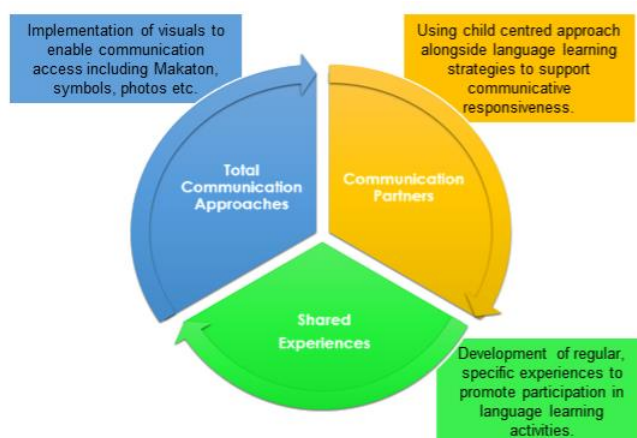
10 month collaborative PEF funded project working in partnership with Speech and Language therapy in creating a communication-friendly environment that promotes understanding of unique needs, reduces communication barriers, and enhances communication experiences and opportunities for all

through:

- establishment of existing practice
- design and delivery of professional development to build sustainable capacity in staff
- evaluation of impact in developing the communication friendly environment

Planned Outcomes:

Focus of the training and coaching was on promoting educators' knowledge, skills and confidence across three main areas:



Impact and relevant data:

Methodology / Measures

Three methods were used pre and post intervention to measure and evaluate the aims and outcomes

Rating scale for each strategy in the *Communication Environment Observation Checklist* ranged from:

None → Some → Good → Enhanced

Methods	Description
1:1 semi-structured interviews	Pre-project : To establish priorities and the intervention focus of the professional development, carried out by the author. Post-project: To identify perceived change using questions mapped to the Kirkpatrick Evaluation model, carried out by a SLT.
Self-Evaluation Rating Scale and Questionnaire	Each member of the team sharing their perceptions of the communication environment
Communication Environment Observation Checklist (CEOC)	A blind observer recorded evidence of staff using 45 strategies across three areas: Total Communication), Shared Experiences) and Communication Partners.

Outcomes / Impact

Quantitative – data from the CEOC used pre and post under each of the three areas of focus

Qualitative – feedback was gathered from educators which strengthened the evidence of impact

All of the data measures showed positive progress and gains in the communication environments in the areas of total communication, communication partners and shared experiences. Specific feedback about particular children with non-verbal profiles highlighted increases in intentional communication and the active use of total communication approaches to initiate and communicate wants and needs.

Conclusion

The findings highlighted the fundamental importance of empowering forward-facing professionals by not only imparting knowledge but also by enabling behaviour change and confidence to develop through follow-up training with modelling, coaching, and hands-on delivery. This has led to sustainable improvement in practice to improve outcomes for some of our most disadvantaged learners.

The partnership provided a model of good practice and the outcomes that can be achieved when education and health commit to a longer-term vision of working in collaboration for children and young people with complex language and learning needs.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Pupil Equity Funding - £22,048

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8. City of Edinburgh

Enhancing Outcomes Through Collaborative Professional Practice

Description

Edinburgh's population is notably diverse, with significant variation in demographics. The proportion of pupils with an additional support need is currently 52%, which exceeds the national average of 37.1% (Scottish Government, 2024). Across the authority, the characteristics of individual school populations differ substantially. For instance, the average SIMD score in our secondary schools' ranges from 2.1 to 9.3, highlighting a broad spectrum of deprivation and affluence. Our strategy for raising attainment through SAC funding reflects our commitment to meeting the needs of our wide range of learners. In our session today, we will give a brief overview of our strategic approach to meeting our stretch aims in literacy and numeracy, in addition to our processes for allocating SEF funding to ensure maximum impact.

Planned Outcomes:

Our Edinburgh imperatives are:

- People & Progress
- Inclusion
- Curriculum
- Building Cultural and Social Capital

Impact and relevant data:

- Increased attainment over time in literacy in numeracy
- Narrowing of attainment gap over time in almost all measures
- Increased expertise and capacity in schools and across learning communities
- Consistent Literacy and Numeracy strategy across the estate
- Successful implementation of a universal Pupil Tracking tool using a consistent language of learnin to track and measure learner progress

Attainment Scotland Funding:

This presentation focussed on the use of SEF funding at Local Authority level. Edinburgh was allocated £1,274,381 for session 2023/34 and this increased to £1,907,719 in session 2024/25.

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9. Clackmannanshire

Readiness for Learning (R4L) in Clackmannanshire

Description

The trauma-informed Readiness for Learning (R4L) approach has been embedded and extended as a result of SEF funding allocation.

- The local authority recognised that in Clackmannanshire a considerable number of children live in areas of higher deprivation, and that closing the poverty-related attainment gap required not only academic interventions but also attention to wellbeing, environment and neurodevelopmental factors.
- The EPS noted that many children were affected by adversity (trauma, attachment issues, stress) and that traditional schooling supports did not always address the underlying issues of *learning readiness*. The R4L framework was designed to bring together various strands — nurture, trauma awareness, the physical/sensory environment, executive function skills — into one coherent model
- It also seeks to give school staff “permission to do things differently” in the classroom and in environment design, acknowledging that children may come with different starting points and needs.

For practitioners: It means considering not just *what* is being taught, but *how* the learner’s brain, regulation, sensory needs and environment are impacting their capacity to engage. The R4L framework offers tools, training, and a lens for that.

For schools: Adopting R4L implies whole-school commitment: professional learning for all staff, physical/sensory environment checks, embedding trauma-informed practice, tracking outcomes, and aligning policies and systems.

For learners: The goal is that more children will come to the classroom prepared to learn (i.e., regulated, supported, in an environment that enables them), and that gaps in attainment will reduce because the foundational barriers (stress, trauma, regulation) are addressed.

For system and policy: It aligns with wider ambitions around equity, closing the poverty-related attainment gap, and creating nurturing, inclusive learning environments.

It is now being extended into Childcare Services as Readiness for Caring (R4C) to support the commitment to Keep The Promise, utilising the trauma-informed workforce funding from Scottish Government.

SEF funding has supported a more intensive model of service delivery within the Educational Psychology Service, allowing for a greater depth of case work with children and their families to support improved outcomes.

Planned Outcomes:

- Embed R4L and R4C approaches across education and childcare settings.
- Provide enhanced relational support for pupils with additional needs and care-experienced learners.
- Increase staff capacity and confidence through a range of trauma-informed CLPL opportunities
- Deliver specialist therapeutic interventions for pupils experiencing severe trauma symptoms.

Impact and relevant data:

- Early evaluation showed that in R4L classrooms: pupils made statistically significant gains in executive function skills.
- Educational Psychology Service:
 - 567 new referrals supported (ratio: 1 EP per 149 pupils) from Aug 2024 – June 2025.
 - Support for establishments to develop bespoke support packages for individual pupils.
 - Enhanced support for 31 care-experienced pupils in out-of-authority placements, enabling access to specialist educational experiences - success criteria include reintegration into education and progression to National 5 qualifications and further education.
- CLPL (Trauma-Informed Practice):
 - Around 1500 hours of CLPL activity has been accessed between Jan – Dec 2024. This included training at the trauma-skilled level for probationer teachers, school transport escorts and social workers.
 - High satisfaction reported; qualitative feedback indicates positive changes in practice.
 - The R4L training package is currently being refreshed and updated with new modules due to be launched by summer 2026, including a new series on understanding neurodevelopmental differences.
 -
- Intensive Therapeutic Service (ITS):
 - Specialist EMDR therapy provided for pupils with severe PTSD symptoms which are affecting their ability to access education
 - Outcomes include improved school attendance and increased engagement in extracurricular activities.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) resources have been allocated to support relational approaches, trauma-informed training, and specialist therapeutic interventions for the most complex learners.

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10. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) Pathways

Àrd-sgoil MhicNeacail | The Nicolson Institute

Description

Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) Pathways is a mentoring service which is focused on providing targeted support to individuals and groups of pupils in school. Within the Nicolson Institute there is a referral process which Guidance teachers can use to refer young people to the service. In our school MCR pathways offers group work and individual mentoring.

The vision for MCR pathways is: Our aim is to help young people unlock their potential no matter their circumstances

In The Nicolson Institute the MCR Pathways programme is specifically aimed at young people in our school whose families are affected by poverty. This is one strand which supports ambition, aspirations and pupil wellbeing. Pupils who are Care Experienced also benefit from this resource.

Planned Outcomes:

The aims of the programme are to:

- Prevent disengagement from school
- Provide one trusted adult for young people
- Provide a safe environment for young people to go to if they need it
- Support young people with social skills
- Support young people with aspirations and ambitions post-school
- Develop skills for work
- Support wellbeing through breakfast and lunch clubs

Impact and relevant data:

The MCR Pathways coordinator has been instrumental to the success of the programme. She plays a crucial role in recruiting mentors and ensuring that they are trained. MCR mentors commit to mentoring their pupil for one hour per week. The positive impact of the programme is in part due to the success of the matching of the volunteer mentor with the young person, based on shared experiences and interests.

Sixty-eight young people are currently being supported through MCR Pathways, including 18 for group work in S1, 8 for group work in S2 and 22 being mentored. Since January, 37 mentors have signed up to the programme and 13 mentors are currently being introduced and coming on board. This is an incredible level of community support that continues to grow each month with more enquiries and interest from adults wanting to get involved. Being a small community, the number of adults involved and becoming involved in the community is testament to the supportive community culture and demonstrates improvements in the culture in our school community.

In terms of other pupil engagement, attendance at breakfast club varies from between 20–35 young people each morning. Lunch clubs are busy with typically 30–35+ young people accessing

support. Breaktime drop-in can have up to 45–50 young people. The feedback from the young people has been extremely positive.

There is good partnership working across the programme with Community Learning and Development staff helping support the busy lunch clubs, and our Care Experienced Young People staff helping to ensure any vulnerable young people are being seen by professionals and partners in school or in the local community.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

The total SEF allocated to this project covers the cost of the MCR Pathways coordinator – approx. £35,000 per year.

Contact details:

A Graham – QIO - agraham@cne-siar.gov.uk

J Cairns – Headteacher - jcairns1z@gnes.net

M Francombe – Deputy Headteacher(SAC) - mfrancombe2w@gnes.net

Emma Macleod – MCR Pathways Coordinator - emacleod1t@gnes.net

11. Dumfries and Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway- Framework for Inclusion- nurture approaches supporting pupils to be 'present, participating and achieving'

Description

The inception of Framework for Inclusion was a 'Change Programme' for ALL, moving away from 'Transforming Additional Support for Learning' whereby

Our priority is to provide the best start in life for all our children. Our vision is that together we will realise ambition, excellence with equity and equality. We will deliver this by developing inclusive learning communities, where all our children & young people are present, participating, achieving and supported.

Universal support for schools

A sense of belonging was identified as a prerequisite for genuine inclusion.

All schools identified an Inclusive Practice Lead who undertook three days training led by Nurture UK. This was followed by a whole staff training staff session focusing on Inclusive Practice and Nurture approaches. Four Inclusive Practice PTs are aligned to all schools to further support their development and implementation of Inclusive Practice and nurture approaches. The Inclusive Practice PTs created a self-evaluation toolkit based on the Circle Framework which staff were asked to complete, and this informed an individual report for each school identifying areas of strength, next steps and signposting to local and national professional learning.

Targeted support for schools

Based on deprivation data, four Clusters were identified, and a Nurture Teacher was appointed to each to develop and support nurture approaches in schools. This involved delivering a range of nurture projects with pupils as well as supporting staff to develop approaches to nurture. This work was reviewed after year one and a further four clusters/areas were identified using attendance, exclusion and RfA data. Schools were required to identify support from the Nurture Teachers via a [suite of resources](#) based on the needs of pupils and data from previous assessments and interventions.

Planned Outcomes:

- Increased sense of belonging, pupil attendance and engagement.
- Increase practitioner awareness and confidence in developing inclusive practice and nurture approaches.
- Potential for future need will decrease.

Impact and relevant data:

Universal Inclusive Practice Training Feedback

Following Universal Inclusive Practice Training, please read the statements below and score on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being that it has really enhanced your understanding.

1 2 3 4 5

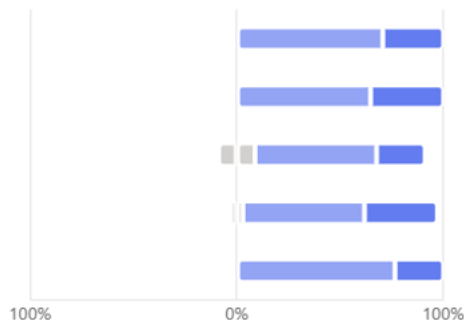
I have greater understanding of the adversity and trauma children and young people experience.

I have greater understanding of how ACES and trauma impact the children and young people we work with.

I have greater understanding of how the six principles of nurture can be used to support an inclusive learning environment.

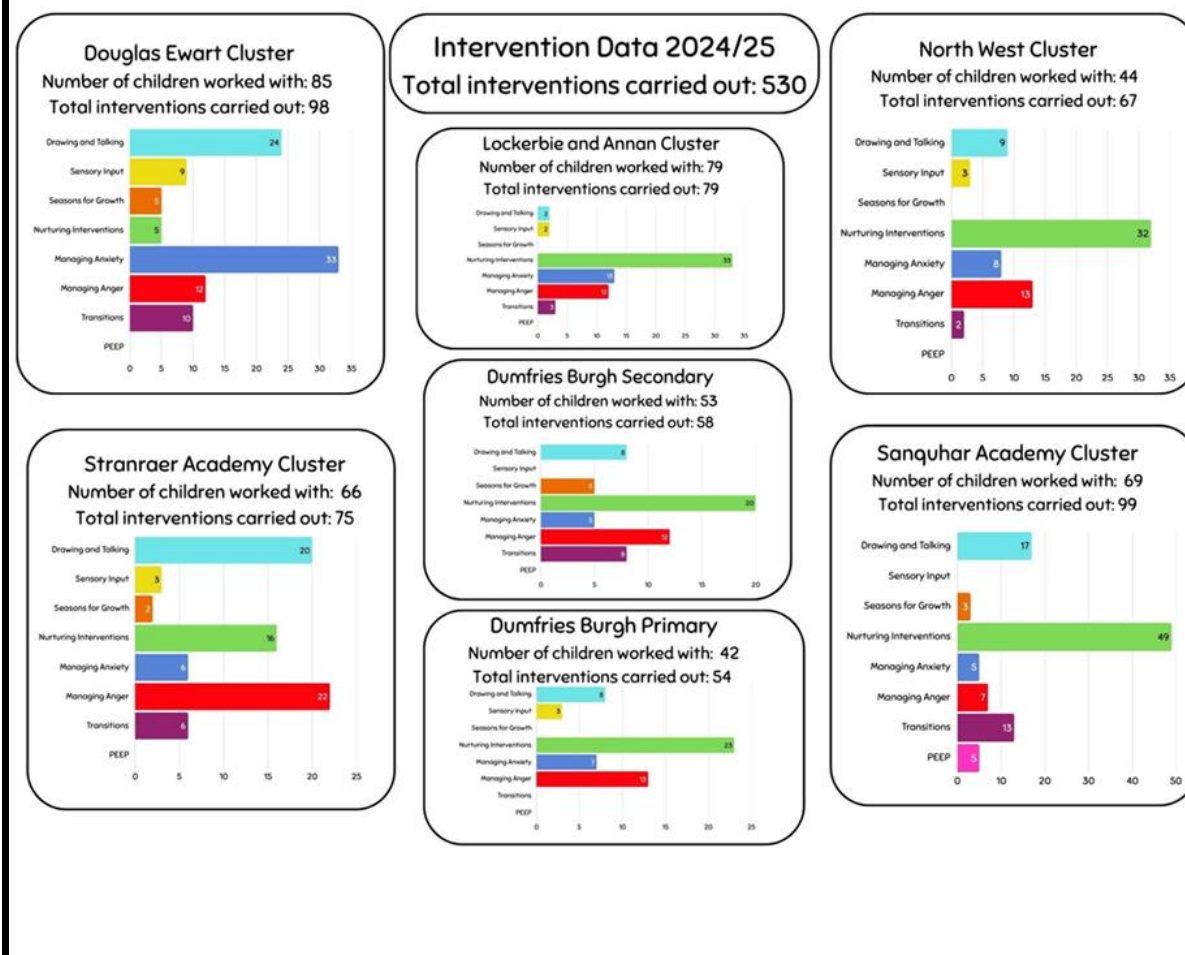
I feel confident in identifying next steps for my inclusive practice journey.

I feel more confident in supporting my own wellbeing.



Currently, 68% of schools have used the whole school Inclusive Practice Self Evaluation Toolkit which has generated an action plan.

Nurture Teacher Data and Feedback



Pupil Post Intervention Assessment

Responses collected from 179 pupils.

47%

of children felt
more **confident**

37%

of children felt
less **worried or anxious**

44%

of children felt
less **angry**

43%

of children felt
calmer

42%

of children felt
their **behaviour** had
improved

53%

of children felt
happier

62%

of children felt more
supported

58%

of children felt more
nurtured

60%

of children felt
that they had a **trusted**
adult they could talk to

School Feedback

Comments from Head Teachers and Class Teachers
in our cluster schools...

"Service is tailored specifically to child's needs. A lot of effort made to build a relationship with the child being targeted."

"The children who have attended nurture have shown an improvement in class in their ability to cope and have all got strategies that they use. They all look forward to attending the group and I think having this time helps them get through the week."

"A huge level of flexibility has been demonstrated by the Nurture Service when working with our school."

"A consistent nurture teacher has meant the pupils know when they will get their time with the adult 1-1 each week. Our teacher is very good at letting the children know of any changes to her timetable in advance of the sessions."

"It had a very good impact on the child I referred and the parent has also commented on this many times which is brilliant."

"Nurture teacher has been very knowledgeable and built up good relationships with all involved and consulted to get the correct intervention for the students."

"There are a range of nurture interventions available, and clarity in the SWAY about what support can be offered, means we can better select pupils we feel will benefit from the support."

"The children are developing skills in resilience, emotional regulation and a broader sense of metaskills and how to apply them."

"Learners who engage with the nurture service understand they are there to benefit themselves. This is achieved by working closely with the member of staff. They see this as a time to reflect, and understand how they can improve on certain barriers that may be in the way of them coming into school/feel nervous in class."

"Being able to spend 1:1 time with pupils, or in a focused group each week. Professionals that have been trained in specialised skills to help our pupils in distress."

"Supporting children's emotional needs where school can't."

Pupil Feedback

Comments from some of the children we have worked with...

"The best thing was learning how to deal with my anger."

"I wish it lasted longer than 12 weeks. I want you to be at Garlieston every day."

"I feel as though things are much better, and I know how to cope with my anxiety. My dad thinks I am coping better in situations that used to make me feel distressed. I feel more confident, less worried and anxious, calmer, better behaved, happier and more supported. These sessions have made me learn more about myself."

"Seeing Miss Weir is the best thing about Nurture. She's my 'School Mum' and I love the days she is in school. I love the stories and games we do together."

"I've learned some things that help my anger."

"I enjoy that we have been talking about feelings and friendship. It helps me because I feel emotional and depressed, but this made me feel less depressed."

"There are too many good things to choose from. I feel more confident and definitely less worried."

"It makes me happy when Mrs Blain gets me from class."

"I have enjoyed being in a calm environment with my peers, all sharing a similar feeling of anxiety. I just wish that there was more time to work together."

"The nurture sessions have made me feel happier and more supported. I now have someone I can talk to."

"I feel like it has helped me a lot to learn to walk away and don't argue back. It helps to talk to someone."

"It has helped me a lot to talk about how I'm feeling and my anger. I feel more confident. Mrs McConnachie is the adult I have told my head teacher in my Child's Plan Meeting I will talk to if I am feeling sad."

"I have loved coming to Drawing and Talking with Mrs McConnachie and am so sad it's ending. I wish it could go on forever."

Parental Feedback

"L has been in a good frame of mind and recently did a podcast about his Gaelic Experience and was very confident through the whole process. To me that's progress."

"K loved spending time with Miss Reid and always looked forward to seeing her. She was always talking about her. K was a lot more calm during the time she spent with Miss Reid but then when the block finished she was sad she wasn't getting her anymore."

"I feel the sessions have been beneficial in helping A to cope with his ongoing stress and anxiety. He has learned some techniques he can use when he is feeling anxious. Unfortunately, nothing lasts forever and I know spaces are limited but A would definitely benefit from more sessions if the opportunity ever arises."

"My child was really keen to chat about her nurture sessions, she found them very positive, and it was lovely for her to have a safe space to chat to someone about her worries."

"J has thoroughly enjoyed his time being supported by Ashley and J said it makes him feel calmer. When taking a meltdown at home he seems to come out of it quicker than before."

"She looked forward to her nurture and felt happier and safe again at school so has improved her attendance."

"H was positive about his nurture sessions and I was grateful for the opportunity for him to participate in the anxiety intervention. It helped him to recognise emotions within himself and gave him language to talk about them."

"My child has enjoyed the sessions and talks about the Anger Gremlin at home."

"O loves these classes as she struggles to find common ground with her peers, this has bolstered her confidence dealing with her peers."

"E was really keen to chat about her nurture sessions, she found them very positive and it was lovely for her to have a safe space to chat to someone about her worries. Kirsty went to great lengths to build up a positive and trusting relationship and I'm really grateful for that."

"Thanks for your support and working with my son. Your help and engagement with him has taught him different ways to deal with stuff that might happen."

"My daughter discussed her sessions regularly and expressed how much she enjoyed these sessions."

"My child was positive about his nurture sessions, and I was grateful for the opportunity for him to participate in the anxiety intervention. It helped him to recognise emotions within himself and gave him language to talk about them. Kirsty made great efforts to get to know him and his interests and I'm really grateful for her time and dedication."

Building Capacity

At Calside Primary, Lisa met with a few teachers to build capacity with Sensory Needs. They discussed how sensory circuits could be developed in the communal area outside some classrooms. This could be used as a regulation tool to enable children to be engaged and ready for learning. She provided some training and information, as well as a range of resources which she added to the school's nurture Team. She collated this training on a Sway so that they could refer to this at a later date.

Nicola has provided guidance on setting up a new nurture area at Rephad Primary.

At Belmont and Stranraer Academy, she was requested to assess pupils for sensory needs and in turn provide training and ongoing support to SLAs on delivering sensory circuits.

At St Josephs, she has been identifying resources/strategies to support pupils with ADHD and or sensory processing difficulties within the classroom. A written report was provided suggesting environmental adjustments and appropriate resources.

A nurture room was set up at Elmvale to accommodate 5 morning sessions to be supported by the Nurture Service and Inclusion Service. A learning assistant shadowed the running of the nurture room to be able to run it in the future.

Kirsty has supported staff with carrying out Boxall Profiles, interpreted the results, then recommended strategies to implement.

She introduced the sensory assessment to teachers in most of her schools and supported them to make environmental adjustments to all learners in the class who struggle with sensory processing. She has worked closely with a learning assistant to build her capacity in understanding sensory processing and needs. The learning assistant shadowed then co-delivered a sensory group following the pupil's sensory diet, created her own sensory circuits plan and developed her own resources to meet other pupils' needs. She is now delivering sensory circuits independently throughout the week.

She has worked in partnership with the Inclusion Support Team to meet the needs of two Stage 4 pupils to deliver an alternative curriculum to meet their needs to ensure they stay in school.

At Penninghame Primary School, Anna is creating resource packs to upskill teachers and learning assistants on Sensory Processing Difficulties. The resource packs she is creating will give the teachers environmental adjustments, targeted activities and whole class activities to ensure there is a universal approach to nurture.

She has supported several learning assistants to understand sensory circuits and has created plans for them to use with identified children.

Anna also helped to deliver the Universal Inclusive Practice training at Belmont Primary School.

Carina supported the nurture learning assistant at Locharbriggs School. They were in the first stages of starting a nurture room. She shared resources, and allowed the learning assistant to shadow her during a session.

Carina also delivered a self-regulation intervention at the Inclusive Practice Lead training day.

Ashley delivered Boxall training sessions and materials for school staff and provided ongoing Boxall support. She also spent a block of time in a BGE nurture classroom, supporting and offering advice on areas such as planning, assessment, differentiation, learners specific needs and how to create a nurturing environment. During visits, time was spent modelling a relational approach and being responsive to what was happening in the room.

Ashley has also created an Infant Nurture Programme for a primary school to use, and is currently creating and delivering a bespoke multi-generational PEEP programme where pupils from BGE Nurture Classroom will support as "helpers" in the sessions.

Nurture Teacher PEEP Case Study



Acrobat Document

Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF Funding-

2 x 1.0FTE Inclusive Practice PTs- £152,570 (inc on costs)

7 x 1.0FTE Nurture Teachers- £588,720 (inc on costs)

Contact details:

Karen Bryden- Quality Improvement Manager - Karen-Anne.Bryden@dumgal.gov.uk

Lisa Henderson- Inclusive Practice PT - Lisa.Henderson@dumgal.gov.uk

Robert Dickson- Inclusive Practice PT - Robert.Dickson@dumgal.gov.uk

12. Dundee City

Dundee City Council Pedagogy Team

Description

The Pedagogy Team, established in 2019, works in partnership with Dundee schools to promote excellence and equity in learning and teaching, with the overarching aim of raising attainment for all learners.

Our approach is rooted in continuous evaluation, ensuring that targeted support is informed by impact measures and robust assessment tools. We prioritise building capacity through research-informed professional learning that is empowering and fosters teacher agency. This is achieved by creating opportunities for collaboration and networking, strengthening practice and driving sustained improvement.

The team has introduced a professional learning standard aligned with Education Scotland's National Model. This development was driven by two key factors: the previously low engagement with professional learning and practitioner feedback on the existing offer.

The shift to this new approach was delivered through a structured two-step process.

- Step one involved introducing e-learning modules focused on pedagogical professional learning. These modules are designed to align with the National Model for Professional Learning, deepening participants' knowledge and understanding in their chosen areas.
- The content builds on previously developed core training, updated with current research where relevant, and incorporates principles from Education Scotland's Facilitation Guide planning tool. Grounded in Knowles' (1980) Theory of Andragogy, the approach recognises that adults learn best when content is relevant and self-directed, fostering autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Kennedy's (2014) Spectrum of CPD Model emphasises that transmissive learning does not lead to teacher autonomy, whereas self-initiated learning promotes deeper understanding and growth (Rogers, 1969).
- Each e-learning module is interactive, featuring quizzes, reflection activities, and video clips. Designed for flexibility, modules take approximately 20 minutes to complete and are divided into manageable sections to support cognitive load considerations (Sweller, 1988).
-
- Alongside the e-learning modules, the team will deliver in-person sessions focusing on the remaining two elements of the National Model for Professional Learning: learning through collaboration and learning through enquiry.

Learning Networks

- Practitioners who lead in specific curriculum or pedagogical areas—or those seeking to develop expertise—are invited to attend in-person sessions. These sessions provide collaborative spaces where, at times, local and national specialists share current research and practical insights. Participants also have opportunities to showcase effective practices and connect with like-minded colleagues, fostering professional dialogue and shared learning.
- Specific Professional Learning for Writing and Project-Based Learning
- Two professional learning opportunities aligned with the Standard for Professional Learning are
- currently available: the National Improving Writing Project (NIWP) and Project-Based Learning

- (PBL). Each programme integrates all three components of the National Model—learning through
- enquiry, collaboration, and individual study—within a single course.
- Practitioners participating in NIWP were identified in partnership with the attainment advisor, using
- ACEL data for Primary 3 cohorts, as the primary focus for improvement is at First Level. Practitioners involved in PBL registered through the local authority’s professional learning portal.
-
- These two in-person professional learning courses also align with the requests around the focus of
- professional learning that is required across the city.
- Enquiry-based learning is delivered through in-person sessions facilitated by the Pedagogy Team.
- Practitioners can choose from two GTCS-accredited courses—one focused on reading and the
- other on conceptual understanding in numeracy—or opt for an e-learning module on enquiry
- methods. After completing the module, participants receive tailored support to apply these methods
- in an area of their choice.
- This offer also includes access to a professional reading library and expert guidance from the
- Pedagogy Team on using measurement tools and conducting data analysis.

Planned Outcomes:

The Creation of a Dundee Standard for Professional Learning

A Professional Learning suite that is based on the three components of the National Model.

- Learning that deepens knowledge and understanding
- Learning through collaboration
- Learning through an enquiring stance

This approach will promote the long-term sustainability of the professional learning development team.

National Improving Writing Programme

To increase the level of attainment, specifically at first level, across the city.

Stretch aim - By June 2025 68% of P4 pupils will have achieved first level in writing. - Baseline 50%

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

To upskill staff in using a PBL approach to planning inter-disciplinary learning. This is accompanied by an offer from V&A Dundee to work on the Street’s Ahead project.

Impact measures will be gathered using MS forms evaluations, these will focus on:

- Increase in knowledge, skills and confidence in the area of learning of the participants
- Organisational support required

- Changes the practitioner plans on making
- The knowledge and skills in action
- Data analysis

Impact and relevant data:

Impact Data for the creation of a Dundee Standard for Professional Learning

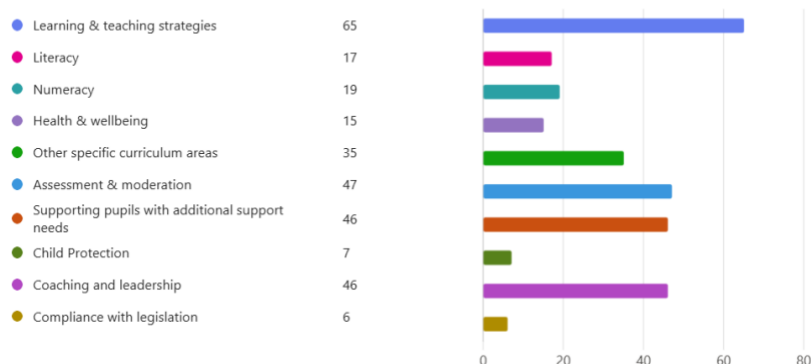
DCC Pedagogy Team data collated from in-person sessions on offer.

Year	Number of Participants to in-person Professional Learning
22/23	180
23/24	340*
24/25	158

*This increase is in part due to a course that was offered as study leave for participants.

DCC Feedback on Professional Learning Required.

17. My CLPL needs focus on (0 point)



DCC Data collected on participants undertaking E-Learning courses.

E-Learning Module	No of participants
Learning to Read	34
Learning to Read Using RWI	34
Reading to Learn	55
Dual Coding	30
Learning Intentions and Success	39
Learning for Sustainability	1
Retrieval Practice	23
Effective Questioning	28
Feedback	8
Differentiation	8
Exploring Spelling & Vocabulary	7
Developing Numeracy & Mathematical Thinking	7
Introduction to Numeracy in Dundee	6

Assessment Approaches	8
An Introduction to Enquiry	5
Collegiate Working Practice	19
The Dundee Standard for Developing a Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum	29
Total for 25/26 as of Nov 25	341

Example of feedback from participants involved in in-person professional learning.

Core CLPL Title	Learning to read	Building a Cooperative Classroom 2	Building a Cooperative Classroom3
Number of participants	45	12	11
No. of Evaluations	30	3	2
% > increased confidence	79%	87%	90%
% > increased knowledge	81%	87%	90%
% > increased skills	80%	87%	90%
% > enquiry (Q10)	81%	93%	80%
%> collaboration (Q12)	85%	93%	80%

Impact data for the National Improving Writing Programme

Stretch aim - By June 2025 68% of P4 pupils will have achieved first level in writing. - Baseline 53%

Actual data – By June 2025 78% of P4 pupils in the schools involved achieved first level in writing.

The graph below compares attainment growth between two groups of primary schools:

Blue line: The 10 schools participating in the National Improving Writing Project (NIWP).

Green line: The remaining 23 schools that did not participate.

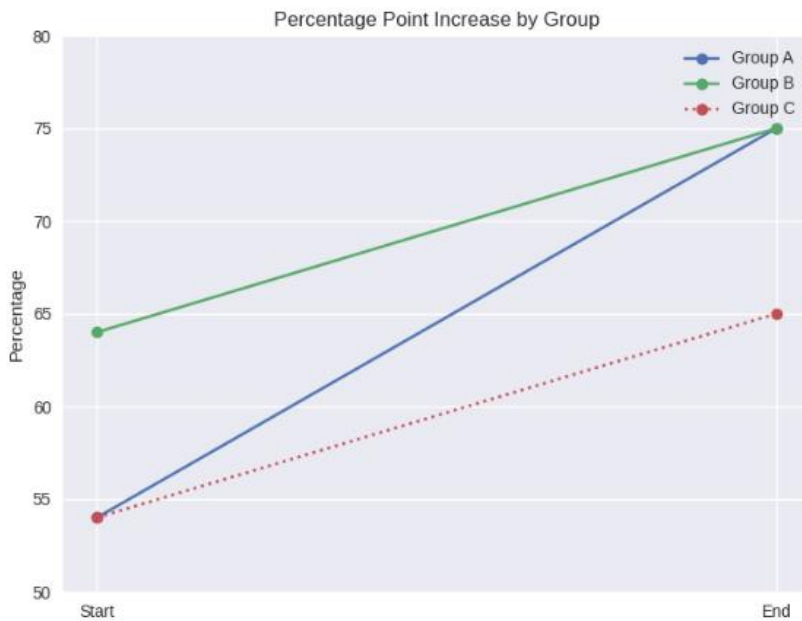
Initially, the 10 NIWP schools had the lowest writing attainment in the city, with only 53% of learners predicted to achieve First Level writing by the end of Primary 4, compared to 64% in the other 23 schools.

The red line represents the projected attainment for the NIWP schools if they had progressed at the same rate as the non-participating schools.

Final results:

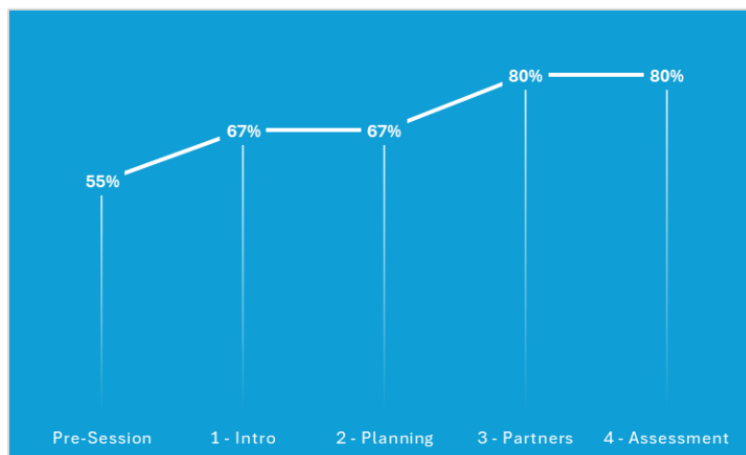
NIWP schools achieved a 39% growth percentage point increase, matching the attainment level of the other 23 schools.

Overall, 76% of learners across Dundee achieved First Level writing by the end of Primary 4.



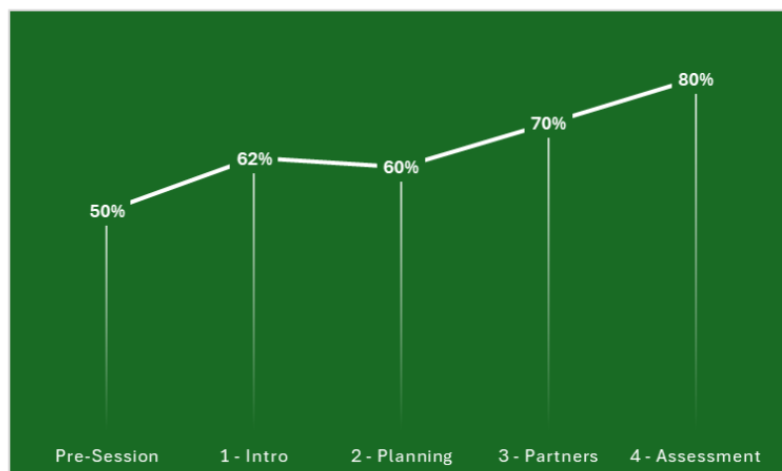
Impact data for Project-Based Learning (PBL)

How confident are you in your understanding of the core principles of PBL?



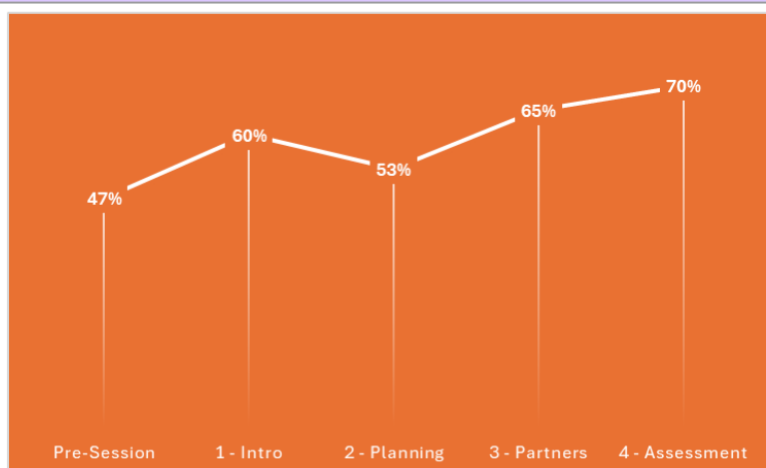
Participants felt their confidence in understanding PBL had increased by 25% between the initial evaluation and the final input. This is a 45% point increase in confidence.

How confident would you be in delivering a PBL approach at this point?



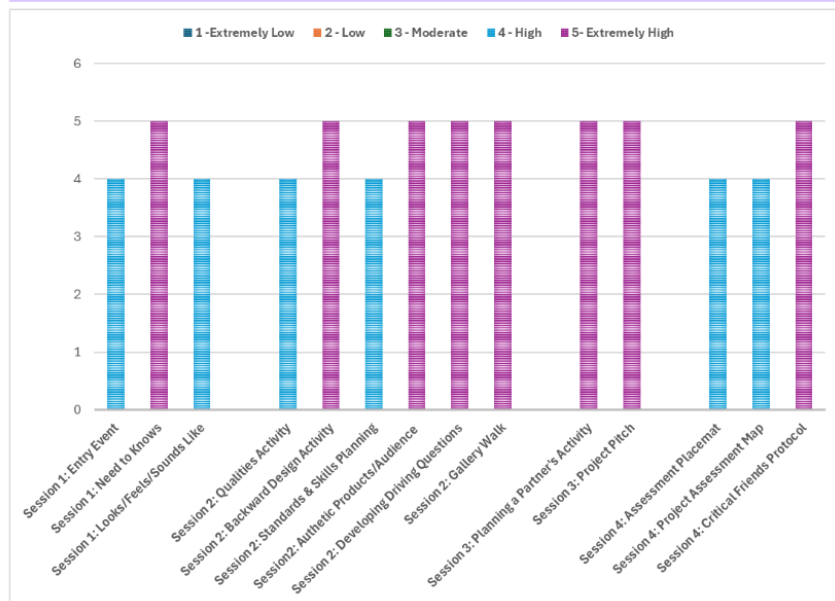
Participants felt their confidence in delivering PBL had increased by 30% between the initial evaluation and the final input. This is a 60% point increase in confidence.

How confident would you be in sharing this professional learning with others?



Participants felt their confidence in sharing the professional learning around PBL had increased by 23% between the initial evaluation and the final input, a 49% point increase.

How engaged were participants in the activities across the PBL training programme?



Participants were consistently demonstrating **high or extremely high** levels of engagement in all activities across the 4 sessions.

57% of activities were observed as 'extremely high' engagement.

Methodology: Observations carried out by Pedagogy Team using Leuven Scale of Engagement during each session (1-4)

Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF

Contact details:

Pedagogy Team DHT Jodi Barclay
Jbarclay566@dundeeschools.scot

13. East Ayrshire

East Ayrshire Council: Driving Pedagogical Reform: A Whole-System Approach to High Quality Learning and Teaching

This session will focus on our journey towards high quality learning and teaching through developing and embedding pedagogical reform across Literacy and Numeracy through effective use of SAC / SEF resources to ensure improved outcomes for all learners including those at greatest risk of missing out. A focus on collaborative practice underpinned by quality assurance strategies has ensured continued improving outcomes for our learners.

Description

Shift in culture:

- Starting point was a myriad of approaches to delivering the literacy and numeracy curriculum
- Development of shared literacy progression pathways and toolkits to enhance understanding of progression and embedding appropriate assessments
- Targeted professional learning for teachers on inclusive evidence-based strategies in literacy and numeracy, alongside peer coaching and classroom modelling to build confidence
 - Understanding Number Programme (Lynda Keith then EAC)
 - East Ayrshire Active Literacy Programme (NLALP then EAC) & Communication Friendly Environments Programme

Impact:

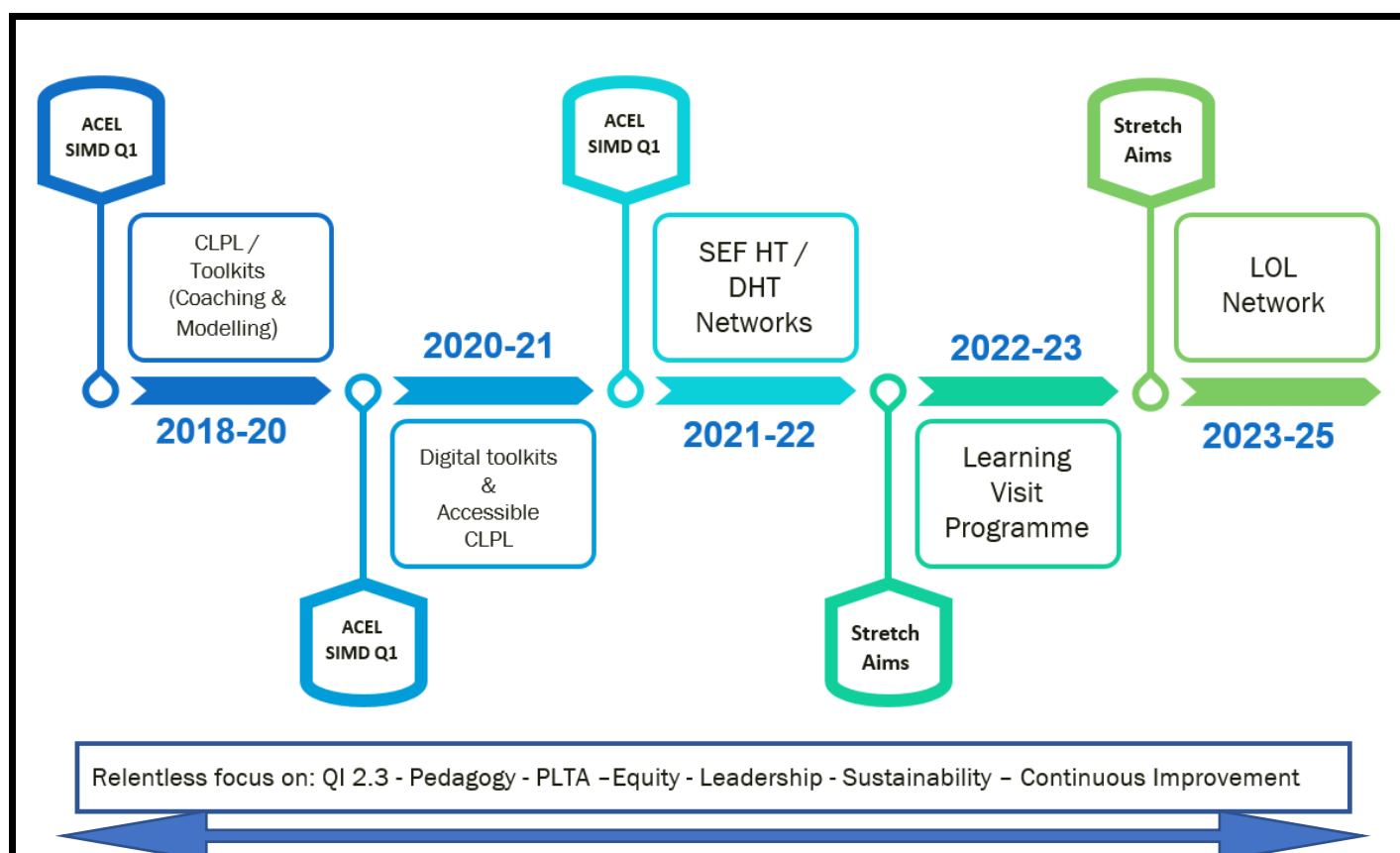
- Development of shared learning, teaching and assessment standards across EAC
- Improved outcomes for learners across EAC in Literacy and Numeracy evidenced in performance data

Strengthening Leadership:

- HT SAC/SEF events training / evaluations
- Analysis of S&Q / SIPs
- Numeracy / Literacy Networks : Leaders supporting ongoing pedagogical change across schools
- QA strategies (Data outcomes): Results reviews moving to education group focus on granular basis
- QA strategies (PLTA outcomes): Learning Visits (2023 - present), classroom observations (2017-2023)
- Systematic support and challenge through education groups / professional networks
- Leaders Of Learning programme, description and highlights (extending QAMSO network)
- Emphasis on working towards sustainability across the system

Impact:

- Shared responsibility for continuous improved outcomes for all learners
- Improved outcomes for learners at all levels
- Effective use of data to inform improvement and next steps in **our** learning



Planned Outcomes:

- Improved HMI's inspection outcomes across all QI's
- Development of high quality learning, teaching and assessment standards
- Increased teacher confidence / efficacy
- Create frameworks and toolkits shared through an accessible digital platform which supports consistent delivery and engagement in high quality learning and teaching
- Sustainable pedagogical improvement and consistency of approaches in literacy and numeracy
- Improved attainment for all learners across ACEL measures (including stretch aims and closing the gap)
- Improved moderation and quality assurance processes designed to ensure that assessments are fair, consistent and robust
- An increase in collaborative planning of targeted interventions for all learners including those at risk of missing out
- Effective use of ACEL data to inform improvement and next steps

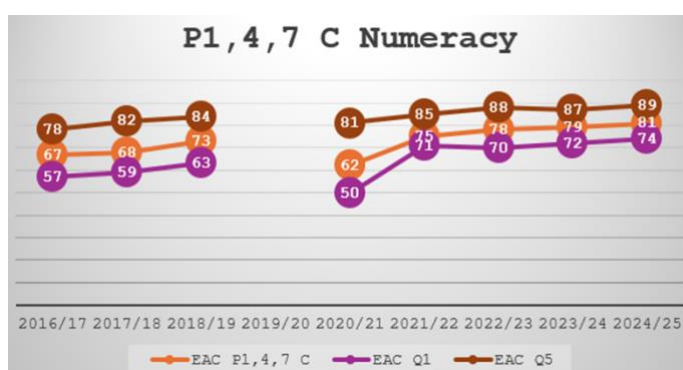
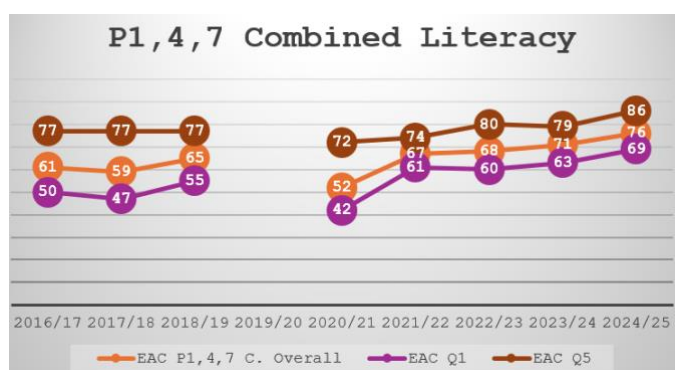
Impact and relevant data:

Leaders of Learning Programme (LOL): Delegate Comments:

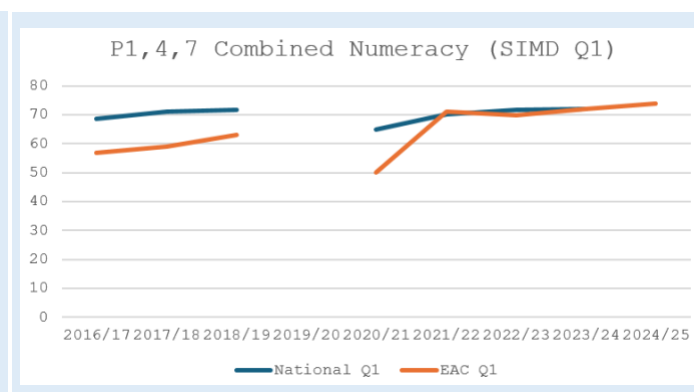
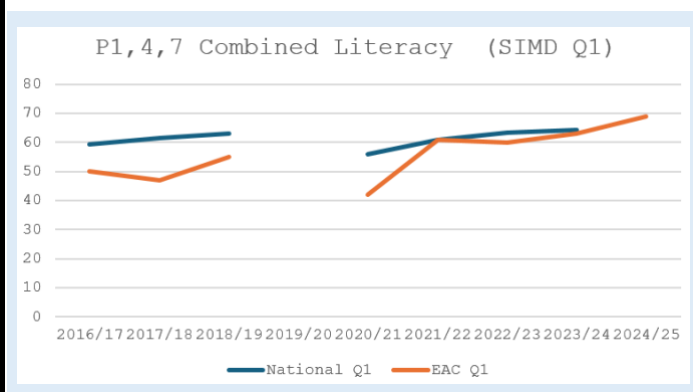
- 'The staff involved in LOL led sessions to further improve the effective use of feedback. The Leaders of Learning CLPL has built and deepened the staff's use of feedback within their lessons. Effective feedback is evident during jotter audits, lesson observations and when speaking to the children – they know how to improve and can explain this during learning walks.'

- 'One of our teaching staff took part in East Ayrshire's Leaders of Learning Programme. This provided her with the opportunity to attend meetings with other schools to interpret policy and set expectations, lead collegiate sessions within our school to collaborate with staff about how we implement this practice, and seek staff's views and professional opinions around developing sustainable approaches within the school.'
- 'All teaching staff participated in the 'Leaders of Learning' professional enquiry organised by the local authority, which centred on QI 2.3 Learning and Teaching and QI 2.4 Personalised Support. Our Leader of Learning attended CLPL sessions led by central officers, and subsequently presented to the teaching staff. These sessions encouraged critical thinking and provided opportunities for professional dialogue and sharing practices.'

ACEL data: 2016-2025 (EAC P1,4,7 Combined Literacy; EAC P1,4,7 Combined Numeracy: Overall, SIMD Q1 & SIMD Q5)



ACEL data: 2016-2025 (EAC P1,4,7 Combined Literacy; EAC P1,4,7 Combined Numeracy: National Q1 v EAC Q1)



Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF: Staff to coach and model pedagogies 2017-2022: Literacy & Numeracy: Approx.: £1,925,000

SEF: Resources to support pedagogical change 2017-2024: Literacy & Numeracy: Approx.: £370,000

Funding levels designed to move towards a sustainable model; i.e. Funding to support programmes 2024-25 and beyond: Minimal.

Contact details:

Mr Lindsay Bull: lindsay.bull@eastayrshire.org.uk

Mr Robert McCallum: robert.mccallum@eastayrshire.org.uk

14. East Dunbartonshire

IMAGINE Improvement Strategy

Excellence for all driven by a relentless focus on the Pedagogical Core.



Description

Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Funding has been integral to the East Dunbartonshire Council Education Service focus on ensuring clear vision, values and aims across all priorities and workstreams whilst always striving for new, innovative ideas to continually improve the life chances for learners and the professional development of all staff.

In Session 2024/2025 East Dunbartonshire Education Service conducted a comprehensive consultation with all stakeholders to review the Vision, Values and Aims of the service.

The visual representation of the Vision, Values and Aims was carefully considered. The symbolisation of mind, knowledge, growth, and success is at the heart of the concept. The graphic combines the brain representing critical thinking; the light bulb as a symbol of ideas and innovation; the heart as a symbol of care, compassion and emotional intelligence; the open book as the traditional symbol of knowledge and learning and finally the laurel symbolising growth, harmony and aspiration.



The new Vision for the Education Service '**Excellence for All** - A commitment to excellence, equity and inclusion that empowers all children and young people to succeed in learning and life' combined with the carefully chosen values of **respect, courage, creativity, fairness and trust** encapsulate the skills, actions and values expected for all our staff, children and young people.

Underpinning our commitment to continuous improvement for all, five aims were identified as overarching priorities. These aims are measured against the Education Service Plan (ESP) priorities to ensure a key focus on improving outcomes for all.

A governance board for the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) is composed of strategic leaders from the central team, quality improvement officers and finance officers. There is also a headteacher representative and the attainment advisor (AA).

During Session 2024-2025, the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Plan was reviewed and updated by the board with adjustments made to align with local area priorities and it is informed by data-driven insights. All planning has a clear focus on ensuring the vision of 'Excellence for all' is driven by a relentless focus on the Pedagogical Core. Sustainability has been central to these decisions, with a focus on building long-term capacity while providing necessary targeted supports to drive efforts to close the poverty-related attainment gap (PRAG).

To drive forward continuous improvement, the Education Leadership Team consulted with central officers and headteachers to design a new improvement strategy (IMAGINE). Building on existing strengths, this new improvement strategy is providing a structured framework to streamline approaches, ensuring ongoing developments within education and outcomes from continuous self-evaluation are effectively integrated into establishments across the Education Service.



The IMAGINE Improvement Strategy emphasises excellence, equity, and addressing the PRAG as well as other data driven improvement factors which have shown to negatively impact on children and young people's progress at school. The Education Service Plan (ESP) has been revised to reflect clear outcome measures in line with the updated national improvement framework (NIF). This will promote a cohesive, aligned effort to drive improvement, integrated within the broader Education Service.

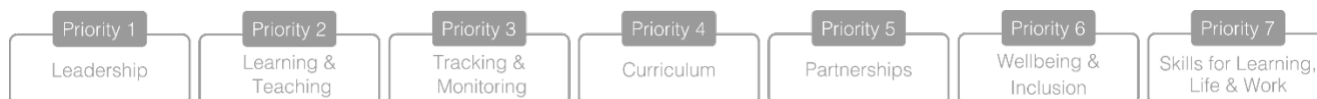
The IMAGINE Improvement Strategy is grounded in the importance of leadership at all levels, driving positive change and transformation. Education Services is committed to the overall success of the strategy, focussing on developing and empowering the leadership of staff at all levels, enabling them to drive forward continuous improvement across all establishments.

We believe that by working together as a close team, we can collectively lead more effectively, ensuring all our children and young people meet their full potential in education and beyond. For this reason, *all* schools and early years centres are represented in the IMAGINE leadership strategy.

Planned Outcomes:

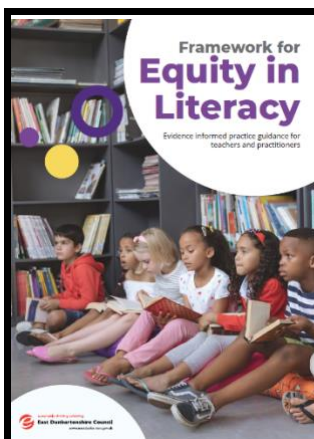
The IMAGINE Strategy forms the Education Service Plan (ESP) 2025 – 2028 with encapsulates the carefully identified SAC Fund Priorities. All progress is reported in line with East Dunbartonshire Council's Corporate Reporting Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

Our comprehensive IMAGINE Strategy spans Early Years and Childcare (EYC), Primary and Secondary Education, including Skills for Learning, Life and Work. **It is supported by seven key strategic priorities: leadership, learning and teaching, tracking and monitoring, curriculum, partnerships, wellbeing and inclusion and skills for life, learning and work.**



Strategic Equity Funding Officer

Effective use of data is a strong feature of our Education Service and SAC Planning. There are clear approaches to support schools to self-evaluate and quality assure the work of schools. A quality improvement manager led the creation of helpful electronic data tracking tools at primary and senior phase levels. This was enhanced by the appointment of a Strategic Equity Funding Officer. As a result, at primary level, data can be disaggregated on a school-by-school basis by stage, gender and demographic. At senior phase level, the data tool allows analysis of attainment by school, subject, level and stage. Schools use the analysis tool to work collaboratively to share



good practice across the Education Service. Senior school leaders use the data and analysis to support robust conversations at school and departmental level to challenge ongoing improvements in performance. Local authority officers discuss the data sets with senior school leaders in focused attainment meetings. These tools help local authority officers and senior school leaders to identify trends in performance, analyse areas of strength and potential areas for improvement. This has contributed to improved transparency and is promoting enhanced collaboration across schools.

As part of the IMAGINE Improvement Strategy key staff are currently scoping options to introduce a live data tracker. This will further enhance our data informed approaches and ensure a standardised approach to tracking and monitoring, empowering schools to analyse their data more effectively, and to address attainment gaps with greater precision. It will also enable central officers to access live data and continue to provide appropriate high-quality support and challenge.

Education Support Officers (ESO)

ESOs for literacy, numeracy, learning and teaching play a key part in the continued focus on targeted support and capacity building, ensuring evidence -based approaches have a sustainable impact.

A detailed analysis of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) data identified individual children not achieving national standards in Literacy. In response, targeted literacy support and interventions have been implemented with a specific focus on closing the (PRAG). From the five primary schools identified, two have received support from the literacy ESO to discuss strategies and support learners who are not making expected progress in literacy. Skills in observing and identifying learning gaps through the analysis of existing assessments have also been enhanced. Additionally, three primary schools received tailored literacy training aligned with their school improvement plans. As a result, teacher confidence in teaching literacy increased. This was evidenced by positive feedback. A further 15 primary schools have received advice and support on all aspects of literacy, with early feedback indicating positive effects on schools' understanding of literacy pedagogy.

The Literacy ESO plays a key role in the Literacy Strategic Group, which continues to develop the refreshed Literacy Strategy. This updated strategy will incorporate both the Framework for Equity in Literacy and the new Digital Literacy Hub. Additionally, the revised Supporting Specific Learning Difference (Dyslexia) guidance will be aligned with the broader Literacy Strategy for schools. This updated guidance is being refined to better reflect the Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit and the National Pathway for the Identification of Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties.

The Framework for Equity in Literacy is designed to help teachers and practitioners identify the most effective interventions and approaches to raise attainment for all learners and narrow poverty related attainment gaps. To support this, the Literacy ESO has delivered training to all Depute Head Teachers, all primary practitioners, and both Principal Teachers and Support for Learning staff in secondary schools, ensuring consistent and effective use of the framework across all settings.

In parallel, the Literacy ESO is leading a practitioner group in the development of a digital Literacy Hub. This interactive tool will provide guidance to support self-evaluation, progression in literacy, access to current research and resources, and professional learning opportunities. Ultimately, the Hub will enhance learning and teaching and help raise attainment in all areas of literacy.

A detailed analysis of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) data identified individual children not achieving National Standards in Numeracy and Mathematics. In response, targeted numeracy support and interventions were implemented with a specific focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap (PRAG). Session 2024/25 attainment data showed 6 schools below national average across more than 2 curricular areas and stages. The Numeracy Development Officer is providing support to 6 schools and plans are in place for 3 the schools to receive targeted Professional Learning, in order to better support targeted interventions and improve teaching and learning. The Numeracy Equity Framework is in process of being developed to provide practical, research informed interventions and teaching support that will complement the existing strategy and better support children with additional support needs. This will also incorporate our revised Dyscalculia guidance– in progress in collaboration with our Educational Psychologist team and in line with the new national working standard.



In addition, 5 out the 6 schools identified have had staff attend training on STEMSPACE to improve teaching and learning around Spatial Reasoning which has been shown to raise attainment. Authority wide 18 schools have engaged, and the programme seeks to close the gap in this area of maths between the least and most advantaged giving access to high quality spatial reasoning activities where children from disadvantaged backgrounds might not necessarily have access to such activities.

In line with the Literacy Hub, plans are in place to develop a Numeracy Hub. The aims to build an online numeracy community where teachers can access and share high – quality resources and professional learning.

Learning and Teaching

The newly devised Learning and Teaching Self-evaluation Toolkits, and accompanying guidance documents, have been developed for use by practitioners of all levels across EDC Schools. The toolkits can be used in conjunction with existing self-evaluation processes and will aim to support schools when reflecting on six identified areas of highly effective practice. Aligning directly with the HIGIOS framework, the toolkits not only support consistency and rigour in self-evaluation but also empower schools to take ownership over their improvement journey with clarity and confidence. A full programme of Professional Learning is being offered for local authority practitioners for 2025/26 that align with the self-evaluation toolkits.



Learning and Teaching Thematic Review

A review of learning and teaching practices across the authority is being planned for 2025/26 to support improvement planning. To establish this work, analysis of school inspection findings where undertaken, focussing on HIGIOS Quality Indicator 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment. This research identifies key features of higher evaluations in this area and highlights common strengths and effective practices that can be shared and adapted in our own context, supporting strategic planning.

Secondary Learning Festival 2024

The second annual Learning Festival brought together all secondary school teachers in Boclair Academy and showcased pedagogy through a programme of interactive workshops, with teachers engaged as learners. The 2024 event provided 34 inter-active workshops, planned and led by teachers drawing together expertise in learning from across schools. Leadership of learning through collaborative professionalism is a powerful force in developing teachers' agency and is supporting continual improvement across all our secondary schools.

Virtual Service Development Officer

Scrutiny of all children and young people's data has shown that in addition to the PRAG, Additional Support Needs (ASN) is a significant attainment factor across all EDC schools.

The role of a Virtual Service Officer will shortly be recruited with the primary goal of improving outcomes for those children who are currently Looked After or previously Care Experienced. In line with The Promise and the Whole Family Wellbeing outcomes, the role will strive to close the PRAG. In developing strong relationships with children, young people, their families and partners the Officer will co-ordinate accessibility for care experienced and vulnerable learners with regards to their education, ensuring where best possible education revolves around the needs of the child. Our Youth Development Workers in all secondary schools are integral to support communication and improvements between home, school and the young person at the centre.

In providing supportive, creative solutions and options, the aim is to promote attendance and achievement with well-planned targeted interventions – for example: locality based satellite provisions to enable those more anxious learners to become more involved and engage in their community, and a more accessible outreaching provision instilled in relationships to boost confidence and resilience in re-accessing education provision and/or experiences out with the school building.

Youth Development Workers

Youth Development Workers remain in all secondary schools including our specialist school Woodland View. Their focus is on supporting health and wellbeing, learner engagement, wider achievement, and positive destinations for all those engaging. This support is given to all pupils who require intervention, especially those who are care experienced. The specialist Care Experienced Teacher remains in our secondary school with the highest CE numbers. The teacher supports and tracks class engagement, attendance, wellbeing, attainment and wider achievement, which is evidenced through school evaluation processes.

MCR Pathways

MCR Pathways Mentoring through MCR Pathways begins in S3 when a young person is matched with a volunteer mentor who they meet weekly in school. The success of our programme is directly linked to the sophistication of the match made between volunteer mentor and young person, based on shared experiences and interests. Pathways Coordinators' in-depth knowledge of each young person and their context enables them to make purposeful, successful matches leading to improved outcomes for our young people. Their knowledge is forged over two years of group work. Group work is led by the Pathways Coordinator who delivers centrally planned sessions focused on themes: Getting to Know You, Health and Wellbeing, Relationship and Team Building, Resilience, Skills for Life and Work, Community and preparing for Mentoring.

Impact and relevant data:

The Literacy and Numeracy Quality Improvement Officers, in collaboration with the Attainment Adviser and Data Analysts, have identified six key schools that serve the majority of children living in Quintile 1. Strategic Equity Funding has been allocated to deliver targeted support based on identified needs. This focused approach, alongside the implementation of Reading Recovery and Maths Recovery programmes, is contributing to improved attainment. Early indications from 2024/25 data shows progress in narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap.

When comparing attainment statistics for Q1 and Q5 cohorts for P1,4 and 7 combined, in session 2023/24 the poverty related attainment gap in literacy was 31% and 22% in Numeracy. From our data analysis, nine schools were identified for targeted support. Throughout academic session 2024/25, there was a forensic focus on children residing in Q1, and how pupil equity funding was being targeted effectively. Professional Learning was also offered in order to better support attendance and raise attainment.

Early analysis shows that improvements have been made in closing the poverty related attainment gap. Literacy PRAG across P1,4 and 7 is now 23.3% and combined Numeracy PRAG is 17.9%, meeting our authority stretch aims for 2025/26. Targeted schools will continue to be supported in order to make a further reduction.

Scottish Qualification Results in East Dunbartonshire remain strong for pupils across our eight secondary schools.

For S4 at Nat 5, pass rate % has increased by 5.5% to 81.3% for Q1 pupils since 2023. Q1 pupils gained the highest number of A passes over the last 3 years (39.5%)

In S5 & S6 young people who have 3 or more attainment factors have had the highest percentage pass rate of 74.2% while our schools have significantly increased presentation numbers. 29% of these young people gained an A pass last year.

ALL EDC SECONDARY SCHOOLS CURRENT YEAR	S4 Pupils			S5 Pupils			S6 Pupils	
	5+ Level 3	5+ Level 4	5+ Level 5	1+ Level 6	3+ Level 6	5+ Level 6	3+ Level 6	1+ Level 7
2023 BI	86.0	85.5	66.8	77.8	62.3	40.2	29.8	34.7
2024 BI	87.2	86.3	66.1	77.7	58.9	36.7	32.6	37.6
2025 BI	92.9	92.3	67.0	81.7	60.5	39.4	31.8	38.0
Change from 2024 BI to 2025 BI	5.7	6.0	0.9	4.0	1.6	2.7	-0.8	0.4

Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF Grant award for 2024 – 2025 for East Dunbartonshire Council was £398,191.

Contact details:
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15. East Lothian

Equity & Inclusion, Education Outreach Service, East Lothian Council

Description:

The remit of the Equity and Inclusion Education Outreach Service is to provide educational support to identified children and young people.

The support provided is closely aligned with the stretch aim measures in East Lothian Council's Raising Attainment Strategy. To ensure the efficacy of the intervention of the service, all referrals must be accompanied by a SMART target agreed for the child or young person.

Typically, children and young people are referred to the service when a support more bespoke than what the school can offer is required. This may include children and young people who are struggling to attend school for reasons of mental or physical illness or who have experienced an interruption to their learning and need help to bridge this gap.

There must be clear evidence in the planning documentation for the child or young person that a range of supports and strategies, at school level, have been implemented and evaluated prior to referral to the service. There must also be clear evidence that the school has referred to the range of support services available to them such as the Child Planning Framework - Locality Team.

The service is not standalone and does not subsume the planning and delivery of education for children and young people. The service works in close partnership with the child or young person's school to deliver the curriculum set by the school.

In line with the principles of *Belonging to East Lothian*, it is assumed that the service will work with children and young people on a short to medium term basis.

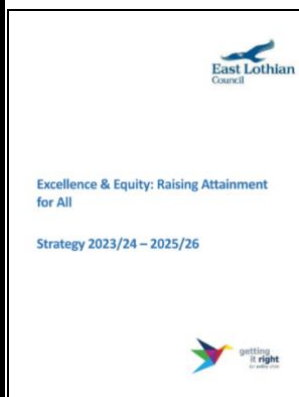
Planned Outcomes:

The support provided is closely aligned with the stretch aim measures in East Lothian Council's Raising Attainment Strategy. These are for:

Care Experienced Attendance
Care Experienced ACEL Literacy
Care Experienced ACEL Numeracy
Care Experienced 5 or more passes at level 1, or above
Care Experienced Exclusion

ACEL Literacy
ACEL Numeracy
1 or more passes at SCQF level 5
1 or more passes at SCQF level 6
Participation
Exclusions
Level 3 Literacy
Level 3 Numeracy

5 or more passes at SCQF level 1, or above
5 or more passes at SCQF level 5 (A-C)
1 or more passes at SCQF level 6 (A-C)
Literacy, level 5
Numeracy, level 5
School Attendance



[Raising Attainment Strategy 23 - 26](#)

To ensure the efficacy of the intervention of the service all referrals must be accompanied by a SMART target agreed for the child or young person.

[Equity and Inclusion Education Outreach Team Guidelines](#)

Impact and relevant data:

Outreach Service Data for 2024/25:

Initial 'in school' work supported the attainment of 115 National Qualifications and an additional 142 National Qualification unit passes.

There was a further 177 referrals to work with individual children and young people. Of these learners, 78% achieved their associated SMART target.

From Learners:

On a sliding scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, 87.6% of learners rated their experience with the service as 9 or 10. 96.8% of learners felt the service supported them to achieve their target. 87.1% of learners felt the service helped them to feel more at ease / happier in their learning. Some comments from learners included:

- “It helped me to feel more confident about learning.”
- “It was fun and encouraged me to enjoy learning again.”

From Parents / Carers:

On a sliding scales of 1-10, 10 being the highest, 95.8% rated the service as a 9 or 10. 95.8% of parents / carers felt that the service supported their child to achieve their target and same percent felt that the service helped their child to become more confident in their learning. Some comments from parents / carers included:

- “This has been an absolute game changer for my daughter who was really lost with schoolwork due to long absences mostly health related. Outreach has given her confidence, and she has gained qualifications which has flipped her attitude to school. she is now hungry to learn and gain more qualifications. Officer absolutely got her back on track, I am so grateful for this service.”
- “Amazing service so glad it was available to child. I think without this she may have just left school with no qualifications, but she is now going to stay on for 5th year.”
- “Outreach transformed child’s ability to engage with education from virtually zero to being highly engaged and ready to learn. Child’s experience with Officer has been transformational and I don’t use that word lightly.”

Indicative East Lothian Council Data, 2024/25

At National 5 level the attainment gap narrowed for students living in the most disadvantaged and least disadvantaged areas by 8pp from 19pp in the previous year to 11pp this year. Higher level saw the gap narrow to 13pp (from 21pp) while Advanced Higher recorded the largest difference from 21pp in 23/24 to 7pp this year.

Young people gained more qualifications in 24/25 than the previous year (2757 candidates achieved 14,365 awards compared with 2679 candidates/ 13,964 in 23/24).

Attainment Scotland Funding:

For 2024/25:

SEF £793,182
CECYP £162,925

Contact details:

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Jennifer Boyle, Quality Improvement Manager jboyle@eastlothian.gov.uk

16. East Renfrewshire

A Strategic Authority-Wide Approach to Numeracy and Mathematics Improvement – East Renfrewshire Council

Description:

ERC's Numeracy & Mathematics Strategy (2023-26) sets out three main areas (attainment and achievement, learners' experiences and stakeholders) and aims to raise attainment, close equity gaps and build sustainable capacity. The strategy aligns with Curriculum for Excellence, ERC's Strategic Equity Funding Plan (2022-26) and takes cognisance of the National Thematic inspection report (Multiplying Skills, Adding Value) and the National Response to Improving Mathematics (NRIM) summary report. It considers a range of evidence including the ADES approach to Collaborative Improvement model which supported the Education Department to reflect on practice and review progress and impact of the previous strategy (2018-21), to look outwards and learn from other LAs across Scotland.

The Collaborative Improvement visits took place in March 2022 and this supported our approaches to self-evaluation and improvement, provided an effective way to share learning and promote partnership working across LAs and allowed us to evaluate key questions agreed, establish key strengths and next steps in numeracy and mathematics and produce the refreshed strategy for 2023-26. It provided a collaborative leadership opportunity that had a common focus on learning and improving outcomes and provided us with clear direction and a plan for improvement.

The refreshed strategy sets out 5 key aims to improve. These include outcomes and reduce inequalities, attainment and achievement in numeracy and maths, approaches to learning, teaching and assessment through high quality professional learning, real-life skills of pupils, school leavers and adults and opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning. It also sets out what we expect to see as a result of the key aims. Each of the three main areas sets out the expected outcome and impact and the associated activities we plan to do to bring about the improvement. It also provides an overview of how we will report on progress and measure success.

The department's Strategic Equity Fund Plan identifies numeracy and mathematics as one of the key themes as part of our theory of change to tackle the poverty related attainment gap. We have developed a strategic framework to support learning progression across our schools and settings. There are three levels within the framework – *Supported*, *Guided* and *Independent*. We use data and evidence gathered through our quality assurance activity to inform this framework and allocate resource from the central team where it is needed most. For example, when a school or setting is identified to receive targeted support through the '*Supported*' level of the framework headteachers collaborate directly with the Quality Improvement Team to inform planning using developed guidance to support. This collaboration at the planning stage is vital and we ask headteachers to consider key indicators including attainment, attendance, participation, engagement and inclusion prior to the planning process with the Quality Improvement Team, Principal Teachers and where appropriate, Education Scotland Attainment Advisor.

We now have 2 centrally-based Principal Teachers of numeracy and mathematics within the wider improvement team who work closely with a range of our schools and settings and provide professional learning opportunities, high-quality modelling and team teaching which has resulted in increased practitioner confidence and improved learner outcomes. Our professional learning offer

is informed by data analysis, and practitioner feedback. We have a universal offer across sectors and a more bespoke offer dependent on need. Some of the areas of focus have included: Bar modelling, CPA approaches, Number Talks, Playful Maths, Mathematical Mindsets and Developing Numeracy Rich Environments.

There are numeracy and mathematics champions in all our educational establishments. The Principal Teachers chair their network meetings 4 times throughout the academic session where they are provided with updates and key messages at national, local and regional levels, professional learning opportunities and opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practice. Two of these network meetings provide opportunities for colleagues across sectors (3-18) to collaborate and learn together.

For the past 2 academic sessions, we have undertaken staff and learner attitudinal surveys which have supported with our understanding of staff confidence in this curricular area and pupil's enjoyment and this will continue to provide us with a rich source of evidence to inform our next steps. Evaluations indicate an increased staff confidence as a result of professional learning sessions offered and increased pupil enjoyment with the curricular area.

The Principal Teachers provide an annual impact summary report and we use this detailed overview to inform our next steps for improvement aligned to the ERC Local Improvement Plan, our numeracy and mathematics strategy and the Strategic Equity Fund Plan. As part of our ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our improvement work we meet regularly with the wider improvement team and engage in self-evaluation activity where we evaluate impact and progress. We also established a SEF Governance Board who meets regularly throughout the year to provide progress updates on the identified workstreams and we identify and plan our next steps which informs our future self-evaluation and quality assurance activity.

Planned Outcomes:

We aim to:

- share the journey of improvement within numeracy and mathematics at local authority level;
- provide an overview of what is working well and the impact of interventions;
- give detail about the strategic framework (Supported, Guided and Independent) for schools and settings;
- explain approaches to Strategic Equity Funding and Quality Assurance; and
- provide overview of next steps.

Impact and relevant data:

The education department and all educational establishments undertake annual self-evaluation activities which are summarised in the Standards and Quality reports. These reports include data that measures performance and provides information on the progress made and impact of the actions taken to secure the outcomes outlined in the strategy and its three main areas.

For more information see the [N&M Strategy](#) and the most up to date [NIF Report](#) and [SEF Progress Report](#).

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Strategic Equity Funding (approximately £135,000)

Contact details:

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Quality Improvement Manager

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17. Falkirk

Three-Tiered Approach to Attendance

Description

Falkirk Council Education Services has created a Family Inclusion Team to increase attendance across schools, targeting pupils experiencing poverty related barriers to learning who have below 80% attendance. The team supports tier 2 and 3 attendance needs with 51 – 80% attendance and 0 – 50%, allowing schools to focus on learners with above 80% attendance. The majority of the time poor attendance is a symptom with the cause being more complex due to a number of factors. The Family Inclusion Team work directly with pupils and families to identify the cause of poor attendance, build quality relationships and increase supports and services where required. Interventions are short to medium term, with the team working directly with pastoral school teams, social work, housing and third sector. In addition to supporting children and young people, the team also work directly with pupils who are Care Experienced and engagement and attainment is being adversely impacted.

Staff are allocated to clusters across the authority, with schools in our most deprived areas the priority. Allocations are split based on poverty need, with our most deprived cluster being allocated the highest number of staff, creating tailored support for intervention and an early years prevention model.

Family Inclusion Workers are key in supporting families, building resilience, developing quality relationships and signposting for further and wider support. The team is part of a wider partnership across schools and communities to increase wellbeing, achievement and attainment. These roles are allocated to settings based on data held and is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure maximum impact.

Planned Outcomes:

Decrease in absence for relevant pupils with attendance rate below 80%. Pupils receive direct support over an 8-12 week period (longer if required), to identify cause and needs, plus create programmes of engagement. By the end of the intervention pupils are back in school, positively engaging in education with a timetable suited to their needs, with appropriate support.

Improved relationships with families and schools, creating stronger understanding of the impacts of poverty and the vital role schools play in reducing barriers, creating support and improving attainment. To improve processes across Falkirk to develop a shared understanding of the importance of attendance. This should support all children, young people and their families to have a genuine sense of belonging in their learning community which leads to improved engagement and motivation.

To ensure that practitioners fully understand the needs of all children and young people and use this effectively to plan relevant experiences across all curricular areas. At the same time, we want to ensure that relevant and current information is routinely used by all establishments to support decisions around curriculum development and developing way of improving this in identified schools with a clear focus on children living in poverty.

Impact and relevant data:

- Increased engagement with families, Family Inclusion Team, schools, social work and third sector.
- Improved data for those with under 80% attendance, impacted by poverty. The programme has only been running for 8 months, but we have seen direct positive impact on pupils attendance, support and engagement.
- Improved partnership working across services, with the team a key part of support with other services such as Social Work.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF: £451,814 (34% of SEF budget)

10.7 FTE Inclusion Workers, working across mainstream and ASN primary and secondary and Early Years

Intervention budget to provide direct support and resources for families and increase engagement during school holiday time.

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18. Fife

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap in Literacy and Numeracy

Description

Fife Quality Improvement Programmes

In Fife, Quality Improvement has been used to provide practitioners with a structured approach to driving classroom improvements. The quality improvement programmes focus on specific techniques to enhance data use, rigorously test change ideas, measure impact effectively and actively engage learners in the process. The programmes are designed to support practitioners in consistently implementing high quality learning, teaching and assessment through the use of improvement methodology.

In the 2024-25 academic session, four Quality Improvement Programmes ran.

- Fife QI Writing Programme Wave 11 (Sept 2024-Feb 2025) Wave 12 (January 2025 – May 2025)
- Fife QI Reading Programme Cohort 3 (Sept 2024– Feb 2025)
- QI Numeracy - Woodmill High School Cluster (Sept 2024– Feb 2025)
- In recent years, Fife Education Service has tested and expanded learning across a large number of primary schools; building an evidence base and change theory to improve attainment, close the poverty related attainment gap and promote equity.
- The Fife QI Programmes in Writing, Reading, and Numeracy not only improved outcomes for children but also boosted teacher confidence.

Cluster Raising Attainment Principal Teacher

As part of our strategy to close the poverty-related attainment gap in Literacy and Numeracy in Fife, we recruited 12 Principal Teachers to support specific clusters of schools. These highly skilled professionals, drawn from various schools, bring a wealth of experience, including leading change in classroom and school settings. Their primary focus is on improving outcomes for children and young people by addressing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Schools were identified using the following criteria:

- Number of pupils identified as being off track/ risk of becoming off track (Data from PowerBi, Progress, HT, discussions with EM/QIOs)
- Number of pupils impacted by poverty including hidden poverty (census information, conversations with HTs, discussions with EM/QIOs)
- Opportunity to build capacity within the staff team (Discussions with HT, EM/QIOs)

The Principal Teachers:

- Work alongside cluster school leadership teams to support the closing the gap agenda, as guided by the identified priorities within these schools. This includes supporting classroom practitioners to embed specific aspects of pedagogy, using data effectively to monitor impact, promoting and supporting assessment and moderation activities at both school and cluster level.
- Lead, develop and support professional learning activity in Writing, Reading, Numeracy and QI Methodology in line with Fife's core approaches.
- Collaborate with and report on progress to Education Support Officers, Quality Improvement Officers and Education Managers to inform strategic evaluations at local authority and national level.
- Model high quality learning, teaching and assessment to staff across schools and clusters.
- Use improvement methodology to measure impact.
- Support effective transition from P7-S1 and support moderation activities across clusters.
- Support schools to analyse their NSA data.

Planned Outcomes:

Literacy and Numeracy

- Improved outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy P4/P7
- Reduced poverty related attainment gap in P4/7
- Increase in teacher confidence to deliver high quality learning, teaching and assessment in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Increase in teacher confidence to use data to effectively target interventions and to have the tools to measure impact on learners.
- Support effective transition from P7-S1.
- Support spread of Conceptual Understanding of Numeracy Approach in targeted clusters with secondary PTCs.

Impact and relevant data:

Fife Quality Improvement Programmes

As a result of the four completed QI programmes, 37 schools have led over 39 improvement projects impacting 1301 learners. Among these, 228 learners live within SIMD 1&2, and 410 learners had additional support needs.

QI Numeracy

Reach: 270 pupils.

The percentage of participating pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 67.78% in Sept 2024 to 73.7% in May 2025, a gain of 5.92%.

The overall attainment gap for the cohort reduced from 33.45% in Sept 2024 to 27.69% in May 2025, a reduction of 5.81%.

The percentage of participating EAL pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 64.29% in Sept 2024 to 83.71% in May 2025, a gain of 21.42%.

The percentage of participating ASN pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 47.42% in Sept 2024 to 58.76% in May 2025, a gain of 11.34%.

QI Writing Wave 11

Reach: 342 pupils

The percentage of participating pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 61.99% in Sept 2024 to 71.51% in May 2025, a gain of 9.52%.

(Sept 2024 data based on n=342, May 2025 n=337)

QI Writing Wave 12

Reach: 342 pupils

The percentage of pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 64.05% in Feb 2025 to 69.79% in May 2025, a gain of 5.74%.

Attainment for P4 pupils increased from 48.61% in Feb 2025, to 65.28% in May 2025, a gain of 16.67%.

The overall attainment gap for the cohort reduced from 39.08% in Feb 2025 to 34.06% in May 2025, a reduction of 5.02%.

QI Reading

Reach: 271 pupils

The percentage of pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 81.55% in Sept 2024 to 83.03% in May 2025, a gain of 1.48%.

SEF Funded Cluster closing the gap PT

9 Clusters – Writing

The percentage of pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 61% in Sept 2024 to 74% in May 2025, a gain of 13%.

2 Clusters – Numeracy

The percentage of pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 68% in Sept 2024 to 75% in May 2025, a gain of 7%.

4 Clusters – Reading

The percentage of pupils projected to meet or exceed the expected CfE level increased from 69% in Sept 2024 to 79% in May 2025, a gain of 10%.

Attainment for P7 pupils increased from 79.76% in Sept 2024 to 83.33% in May 2025, a gain of 3.57%.

The overall attainment gap for the cohort reduced from 28.57% in Sept 2024, to 4.76% in May 2025, a reduction of 23.81%.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Cluster Raising attainment PT's £872,316
QI Coaching Support £110,000

Contact details:

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19. Glasgow City

Leadership for Equity

Description

As part of the enhancing senior leadership programme, a DHT CONNECT collaborative learning and support network was designed to provide practical support for DHTs across the sectors to execute their remits for improving excellence and equity for all learners. The sessions provide direct input from authority SAC leads and quality improvement staff within the city as well as input from the attainment advisor and guest speakers from partner agencies. It provides a network for DHTs to share, collaborate and support each other, placing empowerment at the heart of the programme as key content for development is identified by the DHT group.

Planned Outcomes:

Improved knowledge and skills on how to identify, plan and deliver interventions for children and young people affected by deprivation, to support increasing attainment.

Improved understanding of developments within learning and teaching.

Enhanced evaluation of classroom experience within literacy and numeracy.

Impact and relevant data:

Quantitative data illustrates enhanced understanding from pre and post questionnaires.

Approaches advocated are reflected in HMle reports

Qualitative data demonstrates enhanced confidence from DHTs in actioning remits.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF incorporated into the overall funding for the professional learning academy within the workstream of Enhancing Senior Leadership.

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07740682574

20. Highland

Improving attendance across Highland Secondary Schools

Description

Highland Council has prioritised improving attendance in secondary schools as part of its strategic plan. Attendance rates have historically been lower than in primary schools, with challenges in areas of high deprivation. A range of evidence-based interventions has been implemented, supported by Strategic Equity Funding (SEF). Initially, an Attendance Officer focused on five secondary schools with the lowest attendance levels. Data indicates positive progress, with clear improvements in attendance across targeted schools. However, further work is required to sustain these gains and address persistent challenges. Next steps include continuing rigorous monitoring and targeted interventions, sharing effective practice across all secondary schools, strengthening partnerships, and exploring national campaigns to reinforce the importance of attendance.

Planned Outcomes:

- Increase overall secondary attendance rates
- Target support for schools with the poorest attendance, particularly those in high-poverty areas
- Address barriers such as emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), transport issues, and family circumstances
- Build positive relationships and engagement through alternative curriculum and outreach programmes

Impact and relevant data:

Overall secondary attendance across Highland improved from **86% to 86.8%**, reflecting positive progress. Targeted interventions in schools with the poorest attendance have delivered measurable gains:

- **Invergordon Academy:**
 - ASN pupils in S3/S4 improved from **78% to 80.81%**.
 - EAL pupils in S3/S4 improved dramatically from **75% to 89%**.
 - Small test of change for SIMD1 pupils increased attendance from **77.7% to 85.1%**.
- **Alness Academy:**
 - Targeted S4 cohort (15 pupils) showed mixed results, but **half sustained or improved attendance**, with some pupils increasing from **65–75% to over 85%**.
 - Highest improvement recorded: **+7.59% (75.68% → 83.27%)**.
- **Dingwall Academy:**
 - Overall attendance improved from **85.8% to 86.56%** (target 86.5%).
 - Pupils with attendance above **80% increased from 863 to 902**.
 - Pupils with attendance above **90% rose from 592 to 651**.
 - Targeted early intervention for **S1–S3 pupils (70–90% attendance)** through supportive conversations with parents/carers and pupils.
 - Introduced **S3 Girls' Attendance Support Group**, meeting weekly with positive engagement and outcomes.
 - Developed a **mini attendance-focused teaching block** during House Tutor time to raise awareness and understanding of attendance data.

These examples demonstrate how targeted, data-driven interventions with the support of attainment challenge funding can transform outcomes for learners.

Raising Attainment in Writing across Highland

Description

Over the last three years, 37 schools have participated in the National Improvement in Writing Programme (NIWP), with a further 38 schools joining in session 2025/26. This initiative, led by Education Scotland in collaboration with CYPIC, is a system-level approach involving senior officers and headteachers trained as facilitators. Highland Council has provided strong support, including SEF-funded Literacy Development Officers to develop resources and professional learning. Gaelic Medium schools and classes are also engaged.

Regular feedback from teachers and headteachers highlights **increased enjoyment in the teaching of writing**, and many learners report **greater enjoyment in writing activities**. Next steps would be to extend the methodology beyond First Level to Early and Second Levels, with interest in rolling out to secondary teachers (BGE) supported by ASF Funding.

Planned Outcomes:

- Raise attainment in writing for pupils in participating Highland schools
- Increase teacher competence and confidence in planning for improvement and using data
- Narrow the poverty-related attainment gap in writing
- Extend the methodology beyond First Level to Early and Second Levels, with interest in rolling out to secondary teachers (BGE)

Impact and relevant data:

- Average **27.5% increase** in ACEL data compared to predicted levels for participating classes
- Since 2021: **P1 +12%, P4 +13%, P7 +19%, overall +14%**
- National Improving Writing Data – P4 First Level:
 - Cohort One: Predicted **66%** → Actual **79%**
 - Cohort Two: Predicted **23%** → Actual **74%**
 - Cohort Three: Predicted **52%** → Actual **74%**
 - Cohort Four: Predicted **51%** → Actual **67%**
- Schools initially focused on First Level are now spreading the process and methodology to Early and Second Levels, and effective practice sharing has been highlighted at headteacher meetings.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Strategic Equity Funding: allocations 2022/2023 to 2025/2026				
Local authorities	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026 final
Highland	£895,005	£895,005	£1,280,783	£1,705,987

Contact details:

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21. Inverclyde

Driving equity and improvement: the use of data to inform support and challenge to schools

Description:

Inverclyde Council's Education Services have developed their use of data over many years. A robust, data-informed approach, aimed at improving outcomes for all learners, with a particular focus on those in SIMD Quintile 1 (Q1), has evolved since becoming a SAC authority in 2015. The approach stems from a clear rationale for change, enhancing the data offer to support service improvements and measuring the impact of these changes; the latter being a key focus. Central to this is the evolution of data dashboards as key tracking tools, enabling targeted analysis and the setting and tracking of Stretch Aims to monitor progress between Q1 and Q2–5.

The Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) has facilitated ACEL tracking at both school and local authority levels, shared across Family Groups. Alongside this, the ongoing development of a clear Improvement Framework has ensured that both Heads of Establishment and the Quality Improvement team, have a sharp eye on the data over time, as well as from term to term, supporting a proportionate approach to the support and challenge being offered beyond the universal offer.

The emerging and evolving work of the QUAD is also supporting the Quality Improvement team to learn from others, further enhancing and developing the approach being taken, in order to sharpen again our support and challenge, with a revised version of the Improvement Framework being in place for 2025/26.

Strategic Educational Outcomes

1. Narrow the Attainment Gap Between Q1 and Q2–5 Learners

- **Outcome:** Achieve measurable improvements in literacy and numeracy attainment for learners in SIMD Quintile 1
- **Success Indicator:** Year-on-year progress in ACEL data and Stretch Aim tracking, with a focus on sustained improvement over five-year trends.

2. Embed a Culture of Data-Informed Improvement Across All Establishments

- **Outcome:** Ensure all schools and early years settings consistently use data dashboards and the Improvement Framework to inform planning, interventions, and self-evaluation.
- **Success Indicator:** Increased confidence and competence among heads of establishment and staff in using data to drive improvement, evidenced through validated quality indicators and feedback.

3. Strengthen Collaborative Practice

- **Outcome:** Enhance professional learning and shared practice across Family Groups and through QUAD collaboration, leading to more effective support and challenge.
- **Success Indicator:** Documented examples of practice improvement and innovation resulting from inter-establishment collaboration and external learning.

4. Ensure Proportionate and Impactful Support and Challenge from the Quality Improvement Team

- **Outcome:** Deliver targeted support and challenge based on robust data analysis, ensuring that interventions are timely, proportionate, and responsive to need.
- **Success Indicator:** Positive evaluations from establishments on the effectiveness of support, alongside improved outcomes in targeted areas and revised Improvement Framework implementation.

Impact and relevant data:

Through the effective use of the evolved data strategy, developing a deeper understanding of both establishment and local authority context, increased confidence is evident from Senior Leaders regarding the decision-making process for improving outcomes for children and families leading to increased accuracy of self-evaluation.

The alignment of the Peer review process with the evolution of the data strategy has led to rigorous interrogation of data in its widest sense, ensuring increased accuracy and validation. The Peer Review process has ensured quality practical professional learning for senior leaders either as part of the reviewing team or the establishment being reviewed. Increased transparency has improved professional dialogue focusing on improvement, increasing attainment and achievement.

The QUAD work has resulted in the service revising and changing its approach to the annual achievement meeting from Aug 25, developing it to be even more rigorous.

1. Impact is evidenced through five-year data trends showing improved Q1 attainment in literacy and numeracy
 - LGBF data sets
 - Scottish Government - Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2023/24
 - Inverclyde Council Educational Outcomes Elected Members Briefing Presentation 2023/24
2. External validation of establishment quality indicators
 - Almost every establishment has had a Peer Review over the last 3 years - Summary Feedback Report available and has informed our CLPL calendar for 2025/26
 - 7 HMIE Validated Inspections since resumption of inspection
 - 8 care Inspectorate Validated Inspection
 - Peer Review Process Evaluation Report (Inverclyde Council S&Q 24/25)
 - Improved %s of establishments evaluating at good for 3.2 and increasingly very good.
3. Positive feedback from senior leaders and Education Officers.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF data Leads over the past 5 years:

20/21 - £40,000

21/22 - £40,000

22/23 - £60,000

23/24 - £30,000

24/25 - £30,000

Total = £200,00 approx

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22. Midlothian

Numeracy Development in Saltersgate Special School		
Description Saltersgate is Midlothian’s only Special Educational School. The school provides meaningful learning experiences for 106 learners from the ages of 4-18 with a range of complex additional support and access to learning needs. PEF has supported the introduction of assessment software which tracks both attainment and wider achievement. The new assessment system has helped teachers understand and recognise numeracy development from its earliest stages. The system, alongside the school curriculum map and high quality CLPL, is ensuring breadth of numeracy teaching and highlighting children and young people’s achievement in numeracy which should provide a pathway to senior phase achievement.		
Planned Outcomes: Planned outcomes in response to HMle recommendations (June 2023) - Improve moderation opportunities with a focus on progress in learning - Introduce a whole school tracking system - Revise curriculum to build on prior learning - Improve senior phase attainment		
Impact and relevant data: Examples below show impact of whole school numeracy progress, using the Analysis module in Connecting Steps, the whole school tracking system implemented in 2024. Progress in areas of Numeracy from August 2024 to November 2025		
Number and Number Process	Fractions, Decimals & Percentages	Measurement
↑19.39% Numeracy & Mathematics - N, M & M (Number & Number Processes)	↑8.80% Numeracy & Mathematics - N, M & M (Fractions, Decimals & Percentages)	↑4.93% Numeracy & Mathematics - N, M & M (Measurement)
Examples below show impact from personalised planners (August 2024 to April 2025): 88% of learner Milestones targets were met 96% of learner Numeracy targets were met		

The number of learners who were described as “not making progress” has significantly reduced while the number of learners who are now making expected progress is sustained.

Teacher professional judgement of progress	October 2024	December 2024	April 2025
Expected	68	98	98
Exceeding	7	2	3
Not making progress	33	10	7
Not assessed	2	2	1

Further impact measures:

- Reintroduction of moderation within Saltersgate and across Midlothian Complex Needs settings using the tracking tool to support discussion
- Increased learner progress and achievement leading to increased Senior Phase achievement
- CLPL and tracking has helped teachers understand and recognise numeracy from its earliest developmental stages. Real - life contexts of numeracy are embedded - children are learning through play about numeracy concepts
- Pace and Challenge improvements through realistic, personalised targets and planned differentiated activities
- Improved data quality and professional dialogue at transitions

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Connecting Steps software - £8000

Les Staves Numeracy CLPL - £1550

Numeracy Resources develop learning through concrete resources and digital platforms - £3200

Contact details:

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23. Moray

The use of Strategic Equity Funding to improve outcomes for children and young people, focussing on ensuring equity and tackling poverty-related attainment gaps through collective agency

Strategic Equity Funding | Moray | Striving for Equity – Bidding for Success

In Moray, Strategic Equity Funding has been fully allocated to schools following a participatory bidding, application and review process since 2022/2023 to support individual and groups of schools to fund resources, activities and approaches focussed on learners impacted by poverty. This is in order to progress improvements in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and wider factors including attendance, engagement and participation in school and learning aligning to our Stretch Aims in Moray. Following central Strategic Planning with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor at start of session 2022/2023, the importance of partnership working in order to support improvement for identified children and young people through collective agency was considered key, particularly where schools working together with a range of services, including third sector and community groups would tackle identified gaps most effectively. It was considered that our schools, working closely with their communities and holding extensive knowledge of their children and young people were best placed to maximise impact of any additional funding. Similarly, links with other local services including Social Work, CLD and school partners could be strengthened further through partnership working, knowing children and families well through existing 'on the ground' relationships in place.

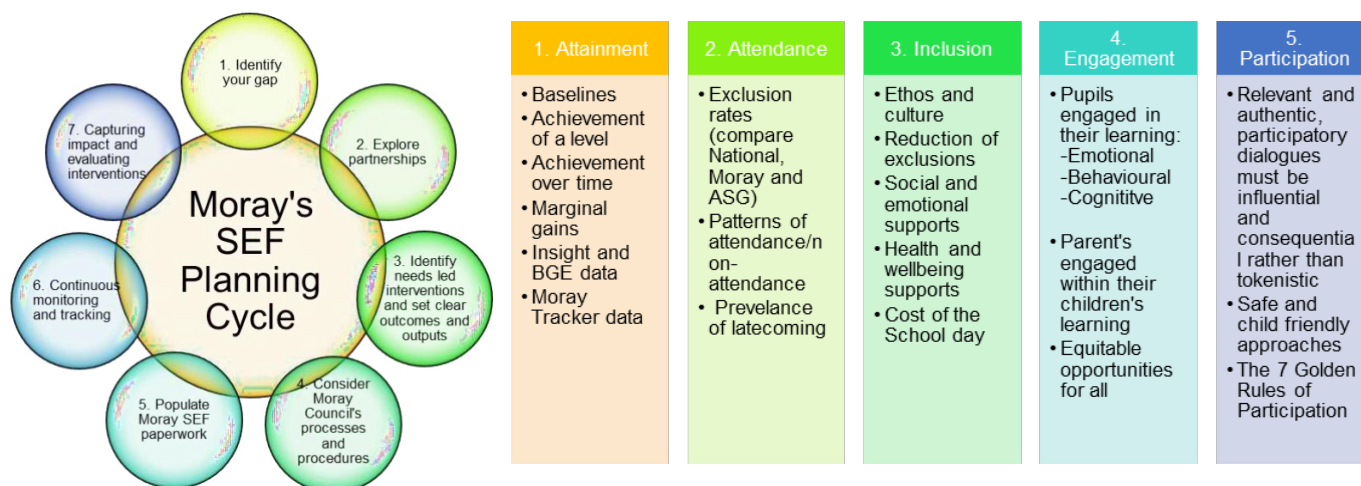
In developing bids for SEF funding, schools were asked to consider the six priority family groups as well as wider poverty markers, to ensure maximum impact of funding requested:

- Family non-engagement
- Aspirations(of staff, pupils and parents)
- Impact of being in a service family
- Rural poverty
- Poverty of experience
- Poverty of aspiration
- Intergenerational poverty
- Fuel poverty
- Food poverty
- Situational poverty
- In work poverty
- Early development–'readiness for school'
- Language skills/EAL
- Home life such as recent parental separation or managing long term illness
- Young Carers
- LAAC
- Health and wellbeing concerns
- ASN/SEBN



Following identification of issue(s) to be addressed in striving for equity for the target group of children and their families, schools were asked to work through the Moray SEF Planning Cycle based on analysis of local evidence and data. It was made clear that any activity bid for through SEF was additional to core activities in school and evidence led in terms of what is known to be effective in raising attainment and improving outcomes for children affected by poverty, including any interventions to reduce the cost of the school day.

Working closely with our Attainment Advisor, Moray's SEF Planning Cycle – similar in approach to what schools were used to through Moray's PEF Planning Cycle – was advocated to schools when bidding for SEF funding through the Application Process. In consideration of partnerships and interventions, schools were further asked to consider five key indicators when exploring their SEF plan: attainment, attendance, inclusion, engagement and participation.



A SEF Application form was created to support schools in bidding for funding with further support provided by the Attainment Advisor, QIM and central officers in completion. Exemplification was also provided in order to support funding applications from schools.

Moray Council SEF Application

Academic Year: 2025-26

Name of School/ASG: []

Amount of SEF applied for: []

Lead Person: This is your opportunity to evidence who funding is needed and how you have triangulated the data to evidence a gap.

Diagnostic data and analysis: []

Who have you consulted with to develop your plan? []

What quality assurance processes will be embedded to support the development and implementation (As part of this section, please populate the timeline on page 3) []

Key indicator(s) to be addressed: []

Proposed intervention(s) to address the gap: []

Planned outcomes: []

Measures of impact on: []

Links to Moray stretch: []

EXAMPLE: A small support worker will be employed to undertake a parallel support process with the school staff. The support worker will be offered within school and in the home to explore and understand the situations that are contributing to pupils late coming. Initially, 10 families have been identified from across the ASG. Supportive, solution focused action plans will be developed in collaboration with parents and pupils. Additional resources will be offered to all identified to help intervene late coming. Age and stage appropriate interactive materials will be developed to support this and virtual sessions will be provided to school staff. This will be supported by a training workshop to capture discussions/reflections. From this a good practice guidebook will be developed for professionals to share tools and resources that can be used and to ensure continuity in how the ASG manages late coming.

EXAMPLE: This resource will help to ensure the professional expertise is progressing of pace with their roles and accountability for links agreed from the outset.

Accurate predicted spend should be captured here. It is strongly advised to populate this section in collaboration with the Finance officer.

Outcomes will be captured throughout the year via the measures. This is an opportunity to appropriate data and evidence the impact (or not) that your project of interventions has achieved. This is also a space to capture if your plan had to be amended or adjusted to meet emerging needs.

Every SEF project will be asked to provide at least one case study to showcase interesting practice and or learning. Feedback from pupils, teachers, parents and school staff should be sought, as well as the data that you have collected to evidence impact.

Our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor also provided bespoke support for individual schools in relation to SEF applications as well as virtual twilight sessions for Head Teachers/SEF leads. A number of schools were also approached based on local authority data and intelligence to consider bid application and submission due to context and poverty markers identified through self-evaluation. SEF participatory bidding opens in January of each year, closing in early March. Following receipt of all bids, review is undertaken and all bids are scored and reviewed supported by the Attainment Advisor and reviewed by a central panel based on a range of criteria. Schools are notified of SEF success in March of each year, with feedback provided including any additional considerations or additions requested.

Moray SEF Monitoring form 2025/2026		Moray SEF Monitoring form 2025/2026	
Quality assurance processes:	Quality assurance processes are embedded to support the development and implementation of SEF plans. This can be either internal or external. Involve peers or senior leaders. A realistic timeline of planning and delivery has been provided.		
Financial Governance:	Costings are accurate and proposed spend is clearly additional to core provision.		
Outcome of SEF Application			
Has funding been agreed:			
If so is the full amount being awarded:			
If not why:			
Name and position of decision makers:			
Date:			

Internal Monitoring Form	
Academic Year	2025-2026
Name of School/ASG	
Amount of SEF applied for	£
Date Received	

Principles for planning for Strategic Equity Funding in Moray		Evidence
Collaborative:	Engagement with children, families, communities, staff and partners has taken place via the planning process.	
Evidence informed:	Plans are based on data and a clear understanding of local communities has been provided. Data includes local & national quantitative and qualitative data and reference to research including SAC Logic Model.	
Setting ambitious and STAN outcomes:	Outcomes are: - Specific – what will change and for whom? - Timed – by when? - Aligned to the gap it is trying to address - Numeric – by how much? They are ambitious to achieve long term goals of closing the poverty related attainment gaps and linked to Moray's stretch aims.	
Measuring progress:	Regular tracking and monitoring has been considered, and is evidenced in the proposal and reflected in the timeline.	
Evaluative:	Plans have aims and measures which will evidence impact. This process will support staff to adapt, adapt, abandon or amplify the SEF approach/intervention as the project evolves.	

SEF projects are overseen by the central team, with ongoing support, challenge and scrutiny in relation to SEF planning, progress, outcomes and measures. SEF funding has been fully devolved to school based projects year on year since session 2022/2023, with top-up funding provided to existing SEF projects where applicable based on additional bids for funding. Termly monitoring is undertaken as well as end of year impact reporting and case study collation (as highlighted through NIF Self-evaluation report in September each year). Driver diagrams were also populated ensuring impact alignment with the mission of SAC and local Stretch Aims. SEF projects funded to date are as follows:

Buckie Associated Schools	Lossiemouth Associated Schools	Elgin High School
Positive transitions team (P5-Secondary) linking with Buckie Community High School. Focussing on improving attendance, participation and attainment of identified pupils through partnership working	Strengthening attendance, engagement, participation and attainment of identified children and young people through enhanced parent and family engagement, whole family support and targeted intervention	Equity teaching team to lead pupil attainment interventions and achievements including literacy and numeracy; wellbeing team to support participation and engagement in school including maximising positive attendance
New Elgin Primary School	Forres Associated Schools	St Sylvester's/East End Primary Schools
Strengthening participation, engagement, attendance and attainment of identified groups, youth engagement activities, strengthening interventions, attendance and wider achievement tracking/monitoring	Improving attendance, lateness and participation in school through targeted interventions and approaches with identified children, young people and families. Family support work and targeted intervention approaches	Support for wellbeing, participation and engagement in school through targeted support and intervention for identified children, linked to closing poverty related markers and strategically planned supports led by DHT
Linkwood Primary School	Elgin Academy	Moray Attend to Achieve
Working in partnership to address poverty related attainment gaps for identified children and families, through family support and interventions, reducing barriers to attendance, engagement and participation in learning/parental engagement	Improving attendance of identified young people through targeted interventions and safeguarding, using evidence-led approaches to identify young people at risk and home-school link support to increase positive attendance and school engagement/participation	Improving attendance of identified schools across Moray through targeted policy approaches and development of interventions – links with home and school with focus on equity and achievement for all, increasing participation and engagement in learning

Planned Outcomes:

At local authority level, Stretch Aims were set as noted through the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress. In reviewing bids submitted, level of ambition to reducing poverty and wider related attainment gaps was key to ensuring improvement in literacy, numeracy, attendance, exclusions and wider measures. Planned outcomes of the various funded SEF projects in line with Stretch Aims for identified measures included the following:

- Improved school attendance and engagement
- Strengthened engagement and participation in learning; reduced exclusions (Secondary)
- Enhanced wellbeing and whole family support through planned approaches
- Improved attainment: BGE ACCEL Literacy, Numeracy, Senior Phase Leaver measures
- Improved post-school destinations (APM) for identified groups of young people
- Enhanced community partnerships and approaches to support and intervention models

Core Stretch Aims	Core Plus Stretch Aims
P1/P4/P7 ACCEL Literacy combined	S3 ACCEL Literacy (3 rd level and above)
P1/P4/P7 ACCEL Numeracy combined	S3 ACCEL Numeracy (3 rd level and above)
Leavers: 1+ @ SCQF level 5 (Insight – All SCQF Measure)	Leavers: 1+ @ SCQF level 4 (Insight – All SCQF Measure)
Leavers: 1+ @ SCQF level 6 (Insight – All SCQF Measure)	Leavers: 5+ @ SCQF level 1 (Insight – All SCQF Measure)
Annual Participation Measure 16-19 year old participation	P4 Literacy (Writing) (1 st level)
HWB – LA Identified Attendance (All) – Primary Attendance (All) – Secondary	Secondary Exclusions (Number of incidents)

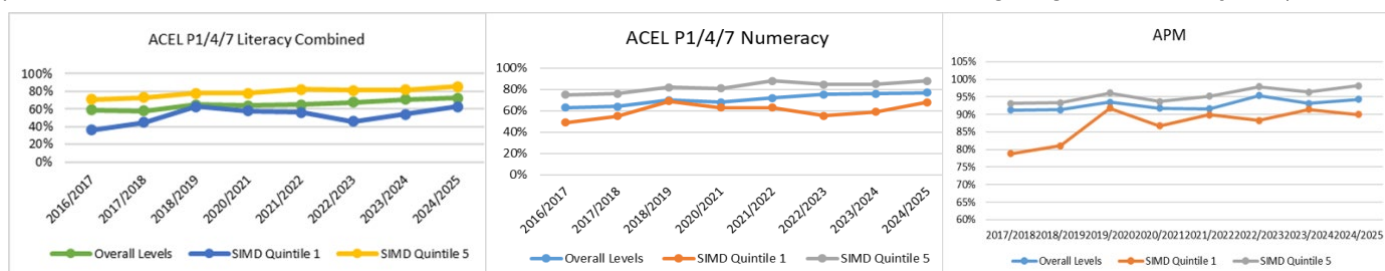
Impact and relevant data:

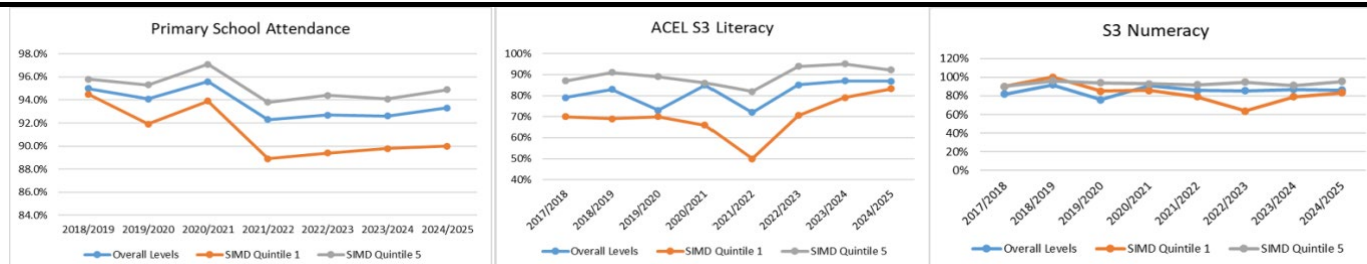
Impact through SEF projects to date has been far reaching with individual schools reporting through End of Year Progress Reports and Case Studies. In order to capture outcomes and measures, each year in Moray's National Improvement Framework Self-evaluation, case studies from SEF projects are also captured. This is reported to our Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee in September each year (please see: [CMIS > Council and Governance > Meetings](#) "Additional Meeting Documents" at bottom of page, "Background Paper – Education National Improvement Framework – Draft Progress Report and Self-evaluation 2024_2025" page 12 (Buckie ASG SEF), page 28 (New Elgin SEF), page 41 (Lossiemouth ASG SEF) and page 103 (Elgin High School SEF).

All projects have a focus on equity, increasing participation and engagement, and inclusion. We use a range of local and national datasets to review emerging themes and trends. All projects have used appropriate local and national data to develop baselines and have SMART outcomes. This reflects national and local authority guidance and priority groups. Successful collaboration is taking place within some projects where education colleagues are also working in partnership with Community Learning and Development staff. Youth awards are being used in the majority of projects as part of targeted interventions to recognise and celebrate wider achievement and pupil success.

Recognising and celebrating wider achievement is positively impacting wellbeing data captured via the Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile (GMWP). Wider ACCEL attainment data and further assessments show narrowing of identified attainment gaps, particularly in Primary linked projects. Session 2025/2026 has resulted in approval of additional SEF projects. Additionally, six existing projects have received continued/supplementary funding to expand their reach and enhance impact.

Two case studies in session 2024/2025 were accepted for National submission and feature as part of the National Attendance workstream that is showcasing interesting practice. Attendance continues to be an area where positive outcomes are realised, with overall progress outlined as below in our most recent internal monitoring of Stretch Aims with SEF funded projects contributing to overall improvements (examples provided below for some core measures to illustrate impact aligning to SEF projects):





Involvement of schools in wider projects including CYPIC P4 Writing programme and linking-in with wider PEF funding/plans further extends reach of SEF funding. This is further realising improved outcomes for identified individuals and groups of children and young people as we continue on our overall raising attainment journey aligning to our wider service priorities and plans looking ahead.

Attainment Scotland Funding:



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24. North Ayrshire

North Ayrshire Council: Professional Learning Academy – Strategic Approach to Tackling the Attainment Gap

North Ayrshire Council Education Service Professional Learning Academy (PLA) was established in February 2015, funded through the Attainment Scotland Fund. Over the past decade, it has continuously evolved to respond to a range of challenges and changes, including shifts in learner demographics, significant reductions in local authority funding, the impact of COVID-19, and ongoing curricular developments. While our strategic vision has adapted to reflect these changing circumstances, our core objective has remained steadfast: to improve educational attainment and outcomes for learners in areas of highest deprivation, and to narrow the poverty-related attainment gap between the most and least advantaged pupils.

The PLA team, comprising eight class teachers and a senior leadership team, implements a clear strategic vision focused on raising attainment. As a Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funded initiative, our approach is multifaceted, combining data-informed literacy and numeracy interventions—primarily targeted at schools within SIMD 1 and 2—to support improved outcomes for learners. In addition, we provide pedagogical and leadership professional learning opportunities for practitioners across North Ayrshire, spanning early years to secondary education and including support staff. These programmes are designed to foster continuous professional growth and ensure that practitioners remain aligned with current educational research and thinking. Our approach is firmly grounded in both local and national educational priorities.

Planned Outcomes

The PLA's planned outcomes are to offer system-wide professional learning that is responsive and bespoke to the need of all learners; to develop leadership capacity and to support the development and dissemination of good practice.

Raise Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

To support the goal of raising attainment in literacy and numeracy, the PLA works in partnership with North Ayrshire Council's Education Scotland Attainment Adviser to deliver targeted 9-week intervention programmes. These are implemented across the academic year in selected schools, based on identified need.

Consistent Approach to Learning and Teaching Across all NAC Schools

To promote equity of provision and experience for all learners, the PLA team has developed research-informed literacy and numeracy frameworks for Early, First, and Second Levels. These frameworks are designed to help teachers support learners at their individual stages of progress. The PLA also provides training and guidance to both teaching and support staff, ensuring they can confidently and effectively use the frameworks in their daily practice.

All teachers and associated professionals are considered leaders of and for learning

The PLA team works in close collaboration with schools to deliver targeted, bespoke professional learning that is tailored to each school's unique context and improvement priorities.

The PLA has strengthened classroom practice and improved learner engagement. Its strategic focus on equity and collaboration has helped close the poverty-related attainment gap, ensuring that all learners—regardless of background—have access to high-quality education and opportunities to succeed.

[illegible]

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25. North Lanarkshire

Improving Writing through Non-fiction Literacy, Learning for Sustainability and Interdisciplinary Learning.

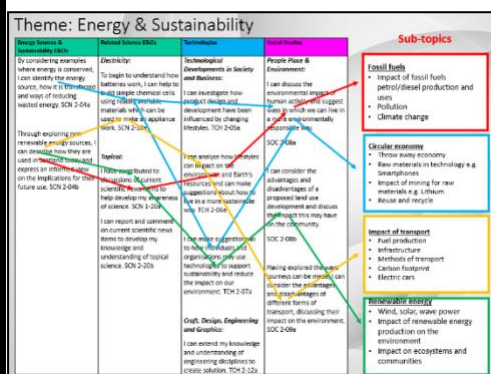
Description:

The Non-Fiction Literacy and Interdisciplinary Learning pilot aimed to improve persuasive writing in second-level pupils through an interdisciplinary approach combining literacy, science, and sustainability. Six schools initially participated, expanding to 38 schools and over 500 pupils across three phases (Oct 2024–June 2025). Pupils engaged with curated non-fiction resources, digital tools, and cooperative learning strategies, alongside retrieval practice techniques to reinforce knowledge and skills. The theme of climate change provided a real-world context for collaborative research, discussion, and writing.

North Lanarkshire currently has 59.5% of pupils living within SIMD Quintiles 1&2. The schools selected for the pilot had an average of 57.5% of pupils within these deciles. Five of the pilot schools had over 70% of pupils in Q1&2 and all but one school had at least 40% of pupils in these categories.

- The aim of the project was to support North Lanarkshire's stretch target of:
 - 77% of pupils achieving literacy benchmarks at P1, P4, and P7, and
 - 69.4% of pupils within SIMD Q1 achieving literacy benchmarks.

Assessment evidence from the pilot gathered through a targeted interventions group (TIG) for each participating school with pupils selected based on attainment data and SIMD data.



A video was produced in partnership with Education Scotland to highlight this project and can be viewed here: [Non-fiction Pilot v2.mp4](#)

Planned Outcomes:

- Enhance pupils' non-fiction reading, writing and discussion skills.
- Improve persuasive writing attainment against national benchmarks.
- Increase knowledge and understanding of climate change and sustainability through high-quality, interdisciplinary learning.
- Build staff confidence in interdisciplinary pedagogy.
- Promote engagement through collaborative and differentiated learning.

- Support pupils in Q1&2 through providing rich and relevant contexts for writing and reducing the attainment gap.

Impact and relevant data:

Writing Improvement:

- 82% of pupils achieved more persuasive writing benchmarks.
- Overall quality of writing improved for over 90% of pupils.
- All pupils in the TIG groups identified as Q1&2 showed improvement in the quality of writing and all but one pupil increased the number of benchmarks achieved.
- All pupils in the TIG groups regarded as 'not on track' showed improvement in the quality of writing and 83% pupils increased the number of benchmarks achieved.

Knowledge Gains:

- 88% reported increased understanding of climate change; 92% felt better equipped to write about the topic.

Staff Development:

- Confidence in pedagogy rose from 6.2 to 8.9; climate knowledge from 6.0 to 8.9.

Qualitative Feedback:

- Pupils described the project as “fun, interesting, and important.”
- Teachers noted improved engagement, literacy skills, and cross-curricular connections.

Equity Impact:

- All pupils in Q1&2 and those previously “not on track” showed improvement.

Next Steps:

- The project is currently being piloted at primary 4 and Third Level with the aim of developing a progressive programme from P4 – S2 to support literacy and highlight key themes of Learning for Sustainability and address the P4.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

This project was developed by the North Lanarkshire Learning Hub Education Support Officers for Literacy, Curriculum and Sustainability and Pedagogy Principal Teacher (Literacy). These posts are funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Contact details:

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The Learning Hub

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North Lanarkshire

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26. Orkney Islands

Pupil Engagement Team

Description

The two biggest schools within Orkney pooled their resources to create a new team in partnership with the Community Learning and Development Service. Known as the Pupil Engagement Team (PET), the team provides targeted support for children, young people, and families from P1-S3 who are at risk of disengagement or non-attendance, in line with the criteria for the Pupil Equity Fund.

Planned Outcomes:

In both schools, youth workers provide wider engagement opportunities before, during and after the school day, such as

- a breakfast bar
- a soft start option for young people who feel unable to go directly to class themselves
- confidence building spaces and programmes
- individual and/or targeted group support sessions which are led by the young people, supported by the youth worker, and can include:
 - activities to develop or enhance social, emotion and inter-personal skills
 - improve wellbeing, attendance
 - opportunities to achieve wider accreditation through youth awards

As part of their role, both youth workers also offer support to the wider family. This can include offering low level wellbeing support, building confidence to engage with the school and signposting to alternative support organisations.

Impact and relevant data:

The most comprehensive measure for success in the first year was the level of engagement from the young people and schools and the positive interactions and outcomes for the children, young people and their families. Numerous clubs and groups were trialled in each school as a means of identifying universal and targeted support opportunities.

“Engaging families is crucial to establishing and maintaining good attendance with our children. The PET engage with families that, due to various factors, may be reluctant to engage with school staff. We have noted that trusting relationships develop that include a parental openness that is less forthcoming usually. This inevitably impacts on the positively on the school relationship. Using PEF to invest in this partnership is bringing a new approach to engaging our children and families. It has opened a new route for children who are struggling with their engagement and enjoyment of school and provides a different type of support from that that the school can ordinarily offer. In our school and family meetings, children and parents are reporting to us that they are thrilled with having the support of the PET team. While quantifying the impact is more difficult at this early phase, I have no doubt that we will see impact in our wellbeing and engagement data as time moves on.” - Papdale Primary School Head Teacher

“The Soft Start every day has been amazing! Starting each day in a small group, has really transformed some of our pupils’ experiences! Some personal gentle encouragement, having a

space which feels safe and comfortable has meant that some of our most socially challenged young people start their day in a way that gives them the wherewithal to carry on all day. Breakfast Club has also made such a difference. Knowing that they can get a nutritional start here means that their brains are ready for learning.” - Guidance Manager, Kirkwall Grammar School

Attainment Scotland Funding:

This project was funded through the Strategic Equity Fund and the Pupil Equity Fund from Kirkwall Grammar School and Papdale Primary School.

Contact details:

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27. Perth and Kinross

Volunteer Tutor Organisation – Learning Hubs					
Description:					
The first PKC Learning Hub launched on 8 November 2023. From November 2024 there have been after-school Learning Hubs at Riverside and Letham Primary Schools. These are supported by senior pupils from Perth Grammar School and Perth Academy respectively. There is a very good dynamic in each setting, with children excited and ready to learn after the school day. The feedback from all parties is excellent with improvements noted in literacy, numeracy, confidence, and resilience. Letham Primary School has 10 children on the roll with an average weekly attendance of 9. Of these, 5 children are care experienced and all of the care experienced children in the school were considered initially. Riverside Primary School started with a roll of 10 and has reduced to 7 (due to school and home moves) with an average attendance of 5. All the referred children are care experienced. Enrolment and attendance rely heavily on family engagement during the referral process and the Head Teachers review attendance and new referral opportunities regularly. Learning resources were coordinated by VTO staff in collaboration with the school's Raising Attainment Teacher and included maths jotters with bespoke learning alongside personalised 'Big Maths' learning. 'Stile' literacy resources were also used to encourage reading and understanding of text with self-correcting puzzle tiles. Times tables games, educational quiz games and books provided additional variety. The annual progress surveys took place in March to gather feedback from pupils, senior pupils, and schools. The table below summarises this year's feedback.					
Planned Outcomes:					
- Improvement in Literacy for the care-experienced pupils attending - Improvement in Numeracy for the care-experienced pupils attending - Improved self-confidence for care-experienced pupils					
Impact and relevant data:					
Feedback Survey Responses	Improved Literacy	Improved Numeracy	Softer Skills		
Primary Pupils	100%	100%	All primary pupils knew where to turn for help and support with learning.	All primary pupils felt more motivated .	All primary pupils felt more confident .

School	100%	100%	95% primary pupils seemed more resilient – the 5% were resilient already.	95 % pupils seemed more motivated .	95 % pupils seemed more confident .
Senior Pupils	100%	100%	All the senior pupils felt supported as tutors and felt more confident as individuals.	All primary pupils seemed more motivated .	All pupils seemed more confident .
Attainment Scotland Funding: Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding Contact details: Promise Improvement Lead – Elaine Watson Elainewatson@pkc.gov.uk					

Title: <i>Inclusion Practitioner at Crieff Primary School</i>
Description: The Inclusion Practitioner role was introduced in response to a clear need for targeted support to address poor attendance, low engagement, and barriers to learning among a group of vulnerable pupils. Baseline data showed that some children were persistently absent or disengaged from learning even when present, often due to complex social, emotional, and family-related challenges. Staff observed increasing emotional regulation difficulties, low resilience, and strained peer relationships, all of which were impacting classroom learning and wellbeing. Family engagement was also limited for some pupils, further hindering progress.
Planned Outcomes: The role, funded through PEF, was designed as a flexible, responsive intervention aimed at building relationships, improving attendance, and supporting wellbeing, while being adaptable to meet pupils' needs as they change.

The role is embedded in the daily life of the school and works collaboratively with the Senior Leadership Team, Class Teachers, and Pupil Support Teachers (PPSTs) to lead a dedicated Inclusion Project.

This project supports targeted pupils through carefully planned learning environments with a strong focus on health and wellbeing, and real-life skills. Pupils receive tailored support that helps build resilience, self-esteem, and coping strategies, essential for success in school and in life.

Impact and relevant data:

The Inclusion Practitioner plays a key role in family engagement, providing regular communication with home to build positive, supportive relationships. Their input in multi-agency meetings ensures that pupils needs are clearly understood and addressed holistically.

By delivering highly targeted support, responding flexibly to emerging needs, and maintaining close links with families and wider support services, this role demonstrates how PEF can be used to close the attainment gap through inclusive and responsive practice.

Since the introduction of the Inclusion Practitioner role at Crieff Primary School, the school has seen a measurable and meaningful improvement in outcomes for targeted pupils. Over the past two years, attendance among identified pupils has increased by an average of 10%, demonstrating the effectiveness of the personalised, relational approach in re-engaging children who were previously at risk of school refusal.

Pupils who had previously withdrawn from learning have also shown increased participation and confidence through regular involvement in Life Skills groups.

Staff observations and pupil feedback highlight improved emotional regulation, more positive peer interactions, and a stronger sense of belonging within the school community.

Attainment Scotland Funding: Pupil Equity Funding covers staff costs.

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28. Renfrewshire

Keeping Equity on the Agenda in Renfrewshire

Description

Renfrewshire has been a Challenge Authority since 2017, with a strong track record of implementing high-quality, evidence-based approaches and interventions aimed at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. In this session, colleagues will share our journey, highlighting what has worked well—particularly in numeracy and literacy—and outlining the next steps for our programme.

Planned Outcomes:

This short film offers a broad overview and reflective insights into the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) programme in Renfrewshire.

Our overarching aim is to raise attainment and improve outcomes for all while closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Impact and relevant data:

Presenters will explore the most impactful elements of the SAC programme, focusing on themes such as:

- Leadership
- Professional learning
- The pivotal role of teachers
- Cross-service collaboration
- The influence of the hidden curriculum

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Renfrewshire's Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) allocation:

Year	SEF Allocation
2022/23	£3,749,496
2023/24	£2,940,992
2024/25	£2,132,488
2025/26	£1,323,984

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29. Scottish Borders

Scottish Borders Council – SEF Cluster Model: Empowering Localised Decision-Making to Improve Outcomes

Description

- Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has developed a locality cluster-based Strategic Equity Funding model grounded in subsidiarity and empowered leadership. The model places decision-making at cluster level, recognising the diverse rural context across the region and enabling schools to develop localised responses to poverty, attendance barriers and attainment challenges.
- The approach strengthens system-wide improvement, aligns SEF activity to staged intervention, GIRFEC and cluster governance, and supports increased innovation, flexibility and responsiveness for Headteachers.

Planned Outcomes:

- Improved outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty, particularly those in SIMD Q1 and those entitled to FSM.
- Empowered cluster leadership, enabling more agile and context-specific deployment of SEF.
- Strengthened systems, processes and governance to support consistent decision-making, QA and reporting across clusters.
- Enhanced attendance, engagement and wellbeing, with targeted support for Q1 primaries and high-need clusters.
- Increased collaboration within and across clusters, including shared approaches, peer support and multi-agency partnership working.
- Improved senior phase outcomes, particularly for learners experiencing disadvantage.
- Develop leadership capacity, especially in clusters with higher levels of deprivation through additional DHTs and cluster leadership roles.

Impact and relevant data:

Attendance Improvements (24/25)

- Improved combined attendance overall and for FSM in Burnfoot, Langlee and Philiphaugh – the three Q1 primary schools supported through enhanced leadership SEF investment.
- Cluster-level attendance impact shown across multiple clusters, with improvements in both SIMD Q1 and FSM cohorts.

Attainment & Engagement

- Senior Phase improvement trends reflected in increased attainment at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6
- Enhanced use of data, transitions support and partnership working contributing to improved outcomes, especially for vulnerable learners.

Cluster SEF – Local Impacts

Examples include:

- **Teviot Cluster 24/25:** Targeted wellbeing and family support through the Teviot and Liddesdale Together Hub; emerging positive impacts in engagement, attendance and family confidence.
- **Eyemouth Cluster 24/25:** Attendance and engagement work showing early improvements through enhanced pastoral and targeted interventions for transitions.

- **Berwickshire Cluster 24/25:** Early signs of improved participation and outcomes linked to cluster-planned SEF activity.

Softer Impacts Reported Across Clusters

- Improved family confidence and relationships, reduction in stigma, increased access to support.
- Stronger collaborative planning, shared professional learning and increased consistency of practice.
- Cluster empowerment enabling flexibility and innovation, with stronger accountability structures.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Enhanced Q1 Primary School Leadership

- Additional DHTs at **Burnfoot, Langlee, and Philiphaugh**, covering **41% of all primary-aged children in SIMD Q1** and **17% of all FSM children** across the authority.
- This leadership investment has contributed to improved attendance and targeted SEF deployment.

SEF Cluster Approach

- Funding devolved to clusters to design localised, context-sensitive interventions.
- Focus on subsidiarity, improved decision-making, increased responsiveness and stronger community alignment.
- Clear governance including reporting, QA, impact monitoring and multi-agency oversight.

SEF Burnfoot Partnership HT Pilot

- Investment in a seconded HT to lead cluster-based improvement through the Burnfoot Partnership model.
- Evidence of improved attendance, engagement and wraparound support for families.

System-wide Improvement Alignment

- SEF integrated with:
 - The Progress Over Time reports
 - Updated cluster QI frameworks
 - New SIP/SIR templates
 - Stretch Aims processes
- High pace of change over the last 3 years supported by SEF, contributing to improved system outcomes

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Equity & Inclusion Lead Officer

Scottish Borders Council

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30. Shetland Islands

The use of Strategic Equity Funding to support Literacy and Numeracy attainment for young people accessing an alternative curriculum

Description

Shetland Islands Council receives £100,000 of Strategic Equity Funding on an annual basis. Around 30% of this is allocated to a part time teacher who works with young people who are accessing a bespoke curriculum through the Bridges Project.

The Bridges Project supports young people aged between 14-19 years who live throughout Shetland. At Bridges we offer a timetable of classes, courses and activities that aim to improve confidence, self-esteem, motivation, employability skills and qualifications. This assists young people to overcome barriers in order to move into employment, training or further education.

The support offered can include:

Regular one-to-one contact with their assigned support worker.

Classes which consist of group work, accreditation, social and emotional wellbeing, career-based learning, online courses and remote learning.

Volunteering Opportunities.

Work Experience.

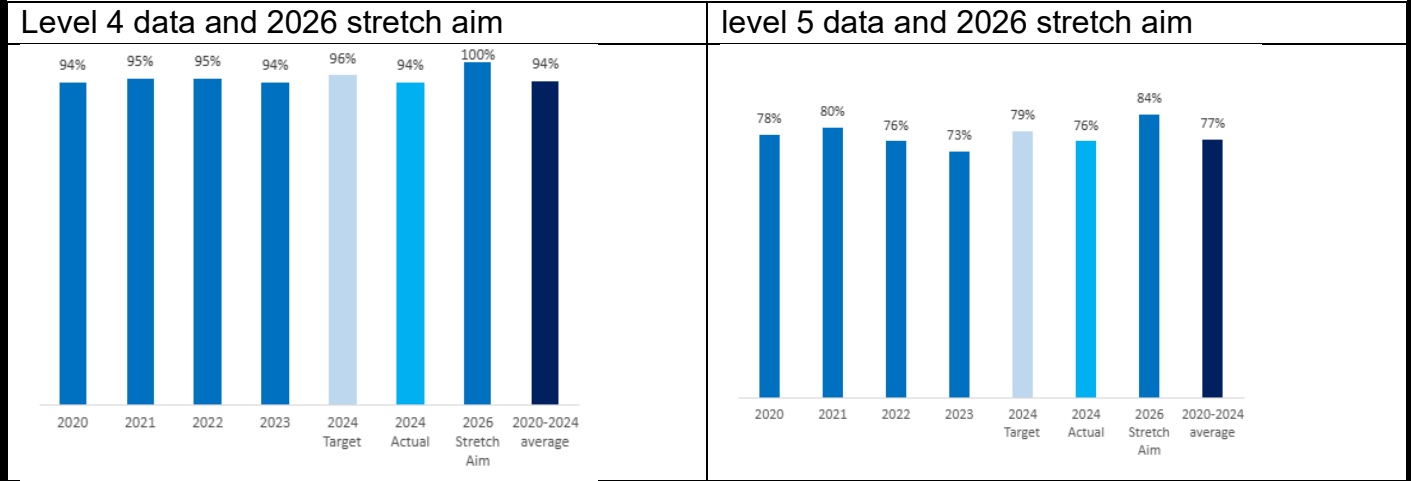
The support offered includes working together to develop an individual plan which will highlight the young person's goals and how they will be supported to achieve them. Bridges use a holistic approach with the young person, family and other professionals involved. Bridges offers support to young people who are on the school role but require a different learning environment to enable them to achieve their academic goals and promote life-long learning.

Bridges is part of the Employability Pathway and offers young people programmes such as Steps to Employment and the Shetland Employer Recruitment Incentive, both are local authority schemes. Young people may also be eligible to claim £30 a week through the Educational Maintenance Allowance.

Planned Outcomes:

By February 2027, all school leavers will achieve no less than level 4 literacy and numeracy* and most school leavers will achieve no less than level 5 literacy and numeracy.

School Leaver Literacy and Numeracy Attainment is a Core+ indicator within our plan called The Ambition – Excellence and Equity for Shetland's Learners. The Bridges Project Teacher contributes to this particular senior phase outcome.



*Shetland Islands Council recognises that, for a few learners, the level 4 literacy and numeracy ambition is not appropriate.

Impact and relevant data:



- Performance in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 4, 2024 is greater than your Virtual Comparator
- Performance in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 5, 2024 is greater than your Virtual Comparator
- Performance in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 4, 2023 is much greater than your Virtual Comparator
- Performance in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 5, 2023 is much greater than your Virtual Comparator
- Performance in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 4, 2022 is much greater than your Virtual

Comparator

Performance in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 5, 2022 is much greater than your Virtual Comparator

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Strategic Equity Funding – in the region of £30,000k from a total budget of £100,000.

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31. South Ayrshire

South Ayrshire Reads: A strategy to develop confident and skilled readers in South Ayrshire with a lifelong love of reading and the confidence to access all aspects of education, culture and society.

Description

South Ayrshire Reads is an ambitious, focused, long-term plan to effectively develop the reading skills of all learners in a consistent, sustainable way through high-quality pedagogy. Our strategy prioritises relevant professional learning designed to support all education staff to implement best practice through a culture of shared knowledge, collaboration and enquiry.

Our priority is to raise attainment in literacy and significantly reduce the literacy attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people in South Ayrshire.

Our strategic aims are:

- To develop confident and skilled readers with a lifelong love of reading and the confidence and tools to access all aspects of education, culture and society.
- To support and develop education staff to implement best practice through a culture of shared knowledge, collaboration and enquiry.
- To promote implementation of excellent reading curricula and planning in schools and early years centres which prioritise best practice, challenge and adapted teaching for children with additional support needs.
- To gather, use and analyse data effectively to drive change and improvement in children's reading skills, reading confidence and reading attainment.

Planned Outcomes:

Our strategic outcomes are aligned to The Scottish Attainment Challenge outcomes:

Leadership: all education staff are supported and empowered to develop their practice to ensure we create a strong corps of effective and knowledgeable Reading Leaders and practitioners.

Professional Learning: all education staff, regardless of role, will complete training and enquiry to develop their knowledge of best practice around how children learn to read and how these skills develop as they mature.

Collaboration: colleagues in education will regularly have opportunities to share practice, ideas and collaborate with colleagues and stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally.

Closing the Gap: our aim is to significantly reduce the reading attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people in South Ayrshire.

Educational Outcomes: All education staff will have significantly increased levels of knowledge, understanding, confidence and capacity to develop excellent reading skills in all learners and to provide appropriate, tailored and adapted experiences to ensure full inclusion.

Impact and relevant data:

- Improved early level reading attainment for Q1 schools after two years of South Ayrshire Reads collaboration and input.
 -
- Narrowing of early level Q1vQ5 reading attainment gap over two years.
 -
- Improved Reading attainment for all in South Ayrshire over three years.
- Improved Early Years literacy milestones data.
- Almost all Head Teachers involved in SAR collaboration have seen an increase in learner participation and enjoyment with reading and reading-related learning.
- Almost all Head teachers involved in SAR collaboration have seen an increase in learner attainment and achievement with reading and reading-related learning.
 -
- All Head Teachers involved in SAR collaboration report that their teaching staff is more confident to teach reading.
- Most of our schools are involved in their Reading Schools accreditation journey.
- The majority of our schools are involved in their Communication Friendly Environment accreditation journey.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

SEF or CECYP? Approx level of funding if available

£1.5million share of South Ayrshire Strategic Equity Funding

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32. South Lanarkshire

VCPA: Developing Numeracy across South Lanarkshire

Description:

South Lanarkshire Council has successfully implemented Attainment Scotland Funding (ASF) as part of the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) to enhance numeracy and mathematics outcomes for learners.

The local authority has embedded a culture of equity, supported by targeted interventions, professional learning, and data-informed practices. South Lanarkshire continues to strengthen practitioner confidence and capacity in delivering high-quality numeracy and mathematics lessons, with a clear focus on raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

This project has developed over several years, continually adapting to address the varied needs of our schools and Early Years establishments. In South Lanarkshire, we recognise that the journey through the curriculum is as significant as reaching its outcomes. Our 3-18 approach to numeracy has been shaped by our ongoing commitment to evaluation and reflection, allowing us to refine strategies that support both establishments and practitioners. Targeted implementation in selected equity test of change schools has demonstrated that embedding numeracy practices throughout the whole school leads to the greatest learner progress. This approach has enabled a transition from centralised Maths recovery training for individual practitioners across different schools to whole-school training accompanied by tailored follow-up support.

The development of our Whole School Professional Learning offer VCPA (Verbal, Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract) gives whole staff teams an opportunity to take part in high quality professional learning sessions to develop confidence and understanding in teaching numeracy. Our professional learning offer delivered by our trained VCPA Practitioners and central development officer now goes beyond CLPL sessions. It includes improvement planning support, outcome and measure guidance, data support and tailored follow-up such as modelled lessons, team teaching, focus groups, and quality assurance visits.

Targeted schools who have a high percentage of decile 1 and 2 learners receive extra support, while all schools can access universal planning materials and numeracy pathways on our Numeracy Online hub.

Planned Outcomes:

Improve pupil attainment and engagement in numeracy and mathematics.

Our aim is to significantly reduce the numeracy attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people in South Lanarkshire.

Build teacher confidence and consistency in numeracy pedagogy.

Practitioners will complete professional learning to develop their knowledge of best practice around how children develop through the developmental stages of number sense and conceptual understanding of numeracy concepts through the use of visual, concrete, pictorial, and abstract pedagogies.

Develop a sustainable model of professional learning and support improvement planning.
To use our trained practitioners to build capacity and deliver training to whole school staff teams. Providing a robust professional learning offer which supports leadership of improvement planning, the use of data and also delivers bespoke classroom follow up support.

Strengthen planning and assessment practices across schools.

To deliver South Lanarkshire support materials for planning and assessment that offer comprehensive, universal assistance for numeracy pedagogy across all establishments via an online curriculum hub.

IT'S SLC Curriculum: Numeracy Strategy

South Lanarkshire's Curriculum, where the journey is just as important as the destination.

We support all of our establishments to deliver high quality learning and teaching in Numeracy and Mathematics.

1 High Quality Professional Learning, our SLC Numeracy 1, 2, 3:

Our numeracy curriculum strategy is built upon increasing practitioners' knowledge and understanding in teaching Numeracy.

- 1) Clear learner pathways, support staff in planning and tracking. Numeracy co-ordinators share good practice and new resources and approaches.
- 2) CLPL offer is based on Maths Recovery, it uses the Verbal, Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract pedagogy and the developmental stages of number sense, all of which are informed and research-based methodologies. We also offer Number Talks support and fluid grouping training.
- 3) Newly developed 'Effective Learning & Teaching in Numeracy & Mathematics' suite of PowerPoint for Early, First and Second Level has been created. This gives all staff within SLC access to pedagogy support which can be used in the classroom, all accessed in the numeracy hub.

2 Professional Learning

3 Classroom Support Materials

A Data Intelligent Schools:
Our attainment strategy is supporting schools to become data intelligent, this informs improvement planning, numeracy curriculum development and learner interventions planned.

C Family Learning: Multiply
The Multiply project supports staff to work with parents/carers to become confident in numeracy and help support pupils at home.

D Building Capacity Across SLC
We are building capacity by investing in practitioners to become Maths Recovery trainers, allowing CLPL to be delivered in schools to large groups of staff. Further work to support assessment in Numeracy will also be undertaken.

IMPACT
Raised attainment, highly engaged learners and increased staff confidence in teaching numeracy.

The plan ahead

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Inspiring learners, Transforming learning, and Strengthening partnerships

IT'S SLC Curriculum: Closing the Numeracy Gap

South Lanarkshire's Curriculum, where the journey is just as important as the destination.

We are working with our establishments to close the gap in numeracy, putting our approaches to equity under the magnifying glass

1 High Quality Professional Learning, our SLC Numeracy 1, 2, 3:
Our Numeracy Curriculum strategy is built upon increasing practitioners' knowledge and understanding in teaching Numeracy.

2 Improvement Planning: Using Data to drive Improvement
Improvement planning samples help exemplify outcomes and measures and how to plan improvement over the course of a session. The SLC Fact, Story, Action approach supports schools with targeted intervention and measuring success.

3 Bespoke Follow Up Support in Schools and Measuring Impact with an equity Lens
Central support follow up for targeted to schools with high levels of deprivation. Support includes: Team Teaching, modelled lessons, staff drop ins, focus groups with pupils and case study quality assurance visits.

Numeracy Equity: In Focus

IMPACT

- Improved Numeracy Attainment for our Decile 1 and 2 Learners
- Increased staff confidence in teaching numeracy
- Learners who can demonstrate conceptual understanding using VCPA
- Positive feedback from HMIs where these approaches are embedded.

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Inspiring learners, Transforming learning, and Strengthening partnerships

Impact and relevant data:

Embedded Equity Culture:

South Lanarkshire Council is nationally recognised for its strong equity-focused ethos, underpinned by strategic deployment of specialist staff and targeted school-level initiatives. This embedded culture of equity ensures that every learner is supported to succeed, with a particular focus on those most affected by poverty.

Professional Learning:

With the support of Strategic Equity Funding (SEF), South Lanarkshire has delivered career-long professional learning in numeracy, empowering practitioners, and school leaders with enhanced skills in data use, improvement planning, pedagogy, and leadership. This investment in teacher development is yielding tangible results across the authority.

- 100% of practitioners reported increased confidence and knowledge from numeracy professional learning.
 - Pedagogy confidence: 44% extremely confident, 45% very confident, 11% somewhat confident.
 - Planning & delivery confidence: 25% extremely confident, 61% very confident, 14% somewhat confident.

Test of Change Schools:

The VCPA (Verbal, Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract) approach was intensively developed with four Test of Change schools during 2024–25. These schools are now exemplars of embedded numeracy practice, demonstrating:

- Positive Impact found in our 4 Test of Change Schools, with early indications showing numeracy attainment for these schools is above the South Lanarkshire average.
- In the test of change schools identified, Quintile 1 learners are performing above authority average.
- 3 out of 4 test of change schools showed improvement in Quintile 1 attainment from 2023/24 to 2024/25.
- Classroom Observations have supported quality assurance of this approach: we found that the VCPA pedagogy and resources are integral to teaching and learning across these schools who have invested in SLC professional Learning for numeracy.
- Levels of high engagement from almost all Quintile 1 learners, noted during observed lessons.

The Maths recovery and VCPA approach has also been subject to external validation:

Two Test of Change schools received positive HMIE inspection feedback:

“Overall, children’s progress in numeracy and mathematics is good.”

“Staff have focused successfully on improving children’s knowledge and skills in numeracy over the last four years.”

Attainment Scotland Funding:
£600,000 over 4 years

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33. Stirling

Working Better Together in Stirling

Description

Introduction of Strategic Equity Funding offered an opportunity to think differently about how we as an education service were supporting children, young people and families impacted by poverty.

Having seen a range of approaches at school level using PEF based on individual school context, we wanted to shift to a more holistic approach by working across services.

We were aware that a range of funding streams had similar outcomes in relation to supporting our most vulnerable children, young people and families. A multi-agency 'Working Better Together' group was formed, with a view to ensuring meaningful collaboration which maximises impact.

Following a mapping exercise, gaps were identified and a more connected approach to improving attendance and engagement was developed and is being implemented.

Planned Outcomes:

- Improved outcomes for children, young people and families impacted by poverty
- Improved collaboration to maximise impact for children and young people
- Ensuring best use of various funding streams
- Avoiding duplication
- Build sustainability and lasting impact
- Developing capacity of staff

Impact and relevant data:

- Needs analysis has led to a more co-ordinated approach
- Agreement on shared outcomes and areas of focus, reducing duplication
- Effective use of resources - wider reach due to pooling funding
- Increased awareness and understanding of the work of different services
- Access to additional funding opportunity following identification of gaps
- Development of Engaging Learners Service - supporting attendance and engagement of children and young people, leading to:
 - o Improved school attendance and engagement
 - o Increased attainment and positive destinations for young people involved with Engaging Learners Service
- Extension of approach to other identified areas, including positive destinations

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Rather than a SAC initiative, this is a way of working across services which makes best use of funding including, in session 24/25 SEF (£439,653) and CECYP (£166,698).

The mapping exercise considered SAC funding alongside other funding streams, including Whole Family Wellbeing funding, Noone Left Behind funding and Community Mental Health funding, School Counselling funding.

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34. West Dunbartonshire

Improving Outcomes: High quality learning, teaching and assessment

Description

- **Analysis of data and feedback from monitoring highlighted the need to strengthen leadership of improvement, with a particular focus on literacy, numeracy, and health & wellbeing.**
Evidence from data identified strong practice within schools, which informed the creation of school improvement partnerships. These partnerships were designed to reduce the attainment gap through collaborative enquiry. Teachers and leaders worked together to investigate practice, test interventions, and share evidence of strategies that successfully supported attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- Professional learning on equity-focused interventions, underpinned by research, led to the adoption of effective teaching and learning strategies to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy. The professional learning programme focused on:
 - Early and effective intervention
 - One-to-one tuition
 - Cognitive Guided Instruction
 - Concrete–Abstract–Pictorial approach in numeracy
 - Stages of Arithmetical Learning
 - Word Aware
 - Reciprocal Teaching
 - Incredible Years Classroom Management
 - Nurture Principles
 - Visible Learning
- All schools engaged staff in training, implementation, and evaluation of these equity-focused interventions. The local authority deployed a robust improvement programme to monitor the impact of professional learning on classroom practice and outcomes for children and young people.

Planned Outcomes:

Raised attainment for our most disadvantaged children and young people
Consistent high quality practice in all schools
Sustainable model of improvement (teacher led and leader led improvement groups)

Impact and relevant data:

Primary ACCEL attainment 2016/17-2023/24

Attainment has increased in numeracy and across all literacy components at P1, at P4 and at P7. In 2022/23 attainment recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic with levels of attainment in all but one area (listening and talking at P7) surpassing 2019 levels.

2024 compared to 2017 (pp)	L&T	Reading	Writing	Literacy	Numeracy
P1	+1	+3	+10	+9	+4
P4	+3	+2	+3	+3	+6
P7	+11	+13	+16	+14	+14

Secondary ACEL attainment 2017/18-2023/24

Attainment has increased in numeracy and across all literacy components at third and fourth levels. By 2023/24 attainment at both levels had surpassed 2019 levels in numeracy and across all literacy components.

2024 compared to 2018 (pp)	L&T	Reading	Writing	Literacy	Numeracy
S3 Third Level	+2.3	+4.9	+5.6	+10.6	+2.6
S3 Fourth Level	+14.6	+13.1	+13.3	+9.4	+6.1

Attainment Scotland Funding:

£1m

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35. West Lothian

West Lothian Partnership Projects

Description:

There are 7 projects, all initiated three years ago, which are partly funded through SEF, with two also receiving additional funding from CECYP. The projects are now entering their fourth year and include: the Equity Team, INSPIRE Learner Pathways, CECYP Level Up, CECYP Level Up Plus, Attendance, ACEL Literacy/Numeracy, Cost of the School Day, and Mentors in Violence Protection. Regular partnership meetings are in place, enabling services and project leads to share developments across the authority, with relevant actions, data, and events referenced as appropriate. The overarching aim of these projects is to strengthen collaboration across authority services to better support children and young people throughout their educational journey. By working in partnership, we can maximise impact and ensure a more coherent approach to equity and achievement.

Each project is underpinned by baseline data from the previous year and includes structured mid-point and end-point updates for monitoring and reporting. In addition, projects outline planned interventions, provide progress updates in January and May, and set out sustainability goals and next steps. Given the priority placed on the voices of children and young people in West Lothian, each project also incorporates a dedicated section on pupil engagement, alongside planned actions involving families and communities.

West Lothian has already shared its progress and approach with colleagues across Scotland, with particular reference to the work of the Equity Team, Attendance, and Cost of the School Day initiatives. In addition, the authority has contributed to the numeracy strand of an upcoming Scottish Government report. For the purposes of today's discussion, we will focus on two further projects: INSPIRE Learner Pathways and CECYP Level Up Plus. Details of each project and contact details are available.

Planned Outcomes:

The CECYP Level Up Plus project aims to support enhanced tracking and monitoring of attainment, attendance, and positive destination data, while working in partnership to improve post-school outcomes. A key focus is on pupil engagement. The project also seeks to expand wider achievement opportunities through bespoke support packages. In the primary sector, it enhances tracking and monitoring processes to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, working closely with the Equity Team and utilising PEF resources, CECYP approaches, and professional learning. Strong links are also being developed with Early Years to achieve full CE data concordance with Social Policy.

The INSPIRE Learner Pathways programme is being developed to support pupils at Continuum of Support Level 3 who are at risk of disengagement and negative destinations. The model is built on four interconnected strands - Education, Industry, Community, and Therapeutic input - offering a holistic 100% provision tailored to individual needs.

Impact and relevant data:

CECYP Level Up Plus has the following end-of-year data, reported in May 2025, demonstrating progress (albeit small numbers):

- S4 achieving SCQF Level 5 Literacy – increased from 45.7% in 2022/23 to 48.7% in 2024/25
- S4 achieving SCQF Level 5 Numeracy – increased from 28.3% in 2022/23 to 43.6% in 2024/25
- Leavers achieving 1+ SCQF Level 6 awards – increased from 59.5% in 2022/23 to 64.9% in 2024/25

- School leavers entering a positive destination – increased from 66.7% in 2021/22 to 89.19% in 2023/24

INSPIRE Learner Pathways demonstrates that to date, 88 pupils have been supported through INSPIRE to ensure their entitlement to education is being met. The programme has enabled young people who might otherwise have entered full-time alternative provision to sustain engagement in mainstream education. Twenty school leavers have been identified for progression into positive destinations through the Propel and Inspiring Futures programmes.

The programme has had a significant impact on inclusion and engagement. Of the 21 young people currently on the pathway, 90.5% have remained in mainstream provision, with only 9.5% (2 pupils) transitioning out—both of whom continue to engage with INSPIRE with the aim of returning to mainstream. Importantly, 99% of young people identified as at risk of exclusion have remained in school, supported through enhanced relationships and tailored provision. Feedback demonstrates consistently positive experiences. All young people (100%) reported that they feel supported through INSPIRE, while parental feedback (100%) confirms that families have experienced enhanced levels of support and provision for their children.

Attainment Scotland Funding:

Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)	£5,465,280
Strategic Equity Funding (SEF)	£1,189,567
Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP)	£284,143

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