



**East Lothian**  
Council

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
EDUCATION & CHILDRENS SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER, 10:00am  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITIES**

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**Committee Members Present:**

Councillor Bennett  
Councillor Bruce  
Councillor Dugdale  
Councillor Hampshire  
Councillor McFarlane  
Councillor McIntosh  
Councillor Menzies  
Councillor Ritchie  
Councillor Trotter  
Councillor Yorkston  
Ms G Gillan (EIS)  
Rev G Sheridan (External Rep)

**Council Officials Present:**

Ms L Brown - Executive Director of Education and Children's Services  
Ms N McDowell - Head of Education  
Mr N Craik-Collins - Education Service Manager  
Ms B Skirrow - Principal Officer (Education Service)  
Ms J Allen - Communications Adviser  
Ms J Boyle – Quality Improvement Officer (Equity)  
Ms A Cameron – Service Manager – Early Years and Childcare  
Ms L Byrne – Head of Children's Services, Children's Wellbeing  
Mr N Trussler – Quality Improvement Officer, Education  
Ms K Haspolat – Quality Improvement Officer, Education  
Ms A Hood – Team Manager, Education & Employability

**Teachers Present:**

Ms D Crossan – Head Teacher, Humbie & Saltoun Primary School  
Ms L Davies – Head Teacher, St Martins Primary School  
Ms D Mackenzie – Head Teacher, Windygoul Primary School  
Ms S Skinner – Head Teacher, Longniddry Primary School

**Clerk:**

Ms M Scott, Committee Officer  
Ms R Crichton, back-up clerk

**Other Elected Members present:**

Councillor A Forrest

**Apologies:**

Councillor J Findlay

Councillor N Gilbert

**Declarations of Interest:**

None

Prior to the commencement of business, the Clerk advised that the meeting was being held remotely in accordance with the Scottish Government's guidance on physical distancing; that the meeting would be recorded and live streamed; and that it would be made available via the Council's website as a webcast, in order to allow public access to the democratic process in East Lothian. She stated that the Council is the data controller under the Data Protection Act 2018; that data collected as part of the recording would be retained in accordance with the Council's policy on record retention; and that the webcast of the meeting would be publicly available for up to six months from the date of the meeting.

The Clerk recorded attendance of committee members by roll call.

Councillor Dugdale extended a welcome to the Head Teachers who were present at the meeting.

**1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON 20 JUNE 2023**

The minutes of the Education Committee meeting of 20 June 2023 were approved.

**2. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF HUMBIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Humbie Primary School and Nursery Class.

Ms Karen Haspolat, Quality Improvement Officer for Education noted the inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?) for inspections of Nursery and Early Years provisions to evaluate the quality of provision at Humbie Primary School and Nursery Class.

At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes were published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. The letter provided a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work which meant inspectors would not return to Humbie Primary School as a result of the inspection.

Ms Haspolat reported the summary of inspection findings could be found within the report and highlighted Humbie Primary School secured gradings of 4 or good for both quality indicators inspected in the school, and in the nursery class both related quality indicators were graded as 5 or very good. Ms Haspolat highlighted the key strengths and areas for improvement found during the inspection.

Ms Haspolat confirmed she would continue to work closely with the Head Teacher and staff to provide professional advice and support and challenge in the areas for improvement. She assured Members that the Education Service was confident in the

plans for continued improvement for the next session in the primary school and nursery classes and was delighted the hard work of staff had been recognised.

Councillor Hampshire welcomed the excellent report however noted the children in the nursery class would benefit from more opportunities for independence at snack and lunch and time. He asked what plans were being put in place to allow for this. Mrs Debby Crossan, Head Teacher at Humble Primary School at the time of the inspection explained steps had already been taken within the nursery to make sure learners had more chances for independence as they now serve themselves water, fruit and salad at snack and lunch time and are more involved in choosing their own snacks. The children also help picking food off websites and help unpack and put away shopping when it is delivered.

Councillor Yorkston asked what the challenges were for a small school like Humble to look at and share effective practice with colleagues within and out with the school. Ms Haspolat gave an overview of some of the opportunities provided to schools for sharing their practice out with their school. Mrs Crossan added Humble has worked closely with Saltoun Primary School as she was also the Head Teacher there and have also worked within their School Team Group to allow staff to go out and observe practice within other schools as well as have staff from other schools visit Humble. Mrs Crossan stated through this staff are building positive relationships to look at and improve practice as a two way process.

Ms McDowell and Mrs Crossan responded to further questions from Members. They provided information on why Humble Nursery had been mothballed and the approaches being developed to improve the teaching of reading within the school.

In response to a second question from Councillor Dugdale, Mrs Crossan explained the wellbeing work was continued after the impact of covid and the school have used the RHSP website to make sure what is delivered is correct and appropriate at the time. She added the Zones of Regulation had been introduced to help children recognise and talk about their emotions and begin to build strategies on hold to deal with them and see how they are feeling can impact them as a learner. Mrs Crossan also summarised some of the more targeted approaches the school has taken.

Councillors Trotter, Hampshire and Dugdale all welcomed the positive report and thanked Mrs Crossan and her staff for their excellent work.

#### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1).
- ii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Primary School and Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- iii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 3)
- iv. Note that Education Scotland are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- v. Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on a positive inspection and on the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team.

### **3. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF SALTOUN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Saltoun Primary School and Nursery Class.

Ms Karen Haspolat, Quality Improvement Officer for Education noted the inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?) for inspections of Nursery and Early Years provisions to evaluate the quality of provision at Saltoun Primary School and Nursery Class.

At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes were published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. The letter provided a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work which meant inspectors would not return to Saltoun Primary School as a result of the inspection.

Ms Haspolat reported the summary of inspection findings could be found within the report and highlighted Saltoun Primary School secured gradings of 4 or good for both quality indicators inspected in the school and nursery class. Ms Haspolat highlighted the key strengths and areas for improvement found during the inspection.

Ms Haspolat confirmed she would continue to work closely with the Head Teacher and staff to provide professional advice and support and challenge in the areas for improvement. She assured Members that the Education Service was confident in the plans for continued improvement for the next session in the primary school and nursery classes.

Councillor Hampshire asked what actions were being taken to challenge the higher achieving children in their learning. Ms Haspolat reported having good assessment evidence in place for teachers to be able to plan high quality learning and teaching for all learners which includes differentiation in lessons through questioning, support and tasks. Mrs Debby Crossan, Head Teacher of Saltoun Primary School at the time of inspection said staff have been looking at how to stretch more able learners with personalised approaches and encourage learners to challenge themselves as well as through their learning with projects and looking at how and where they can use this information.

Mrs Crossan responded to further questions from Members. She gave information on what the school had been doing to promote the children's emotional and mental wellbeing including how they were helping to prepare the P7 pupils for their move to high school. Mrs Crossan also gave an update on work the children have done to personalise their learning.

Councillor Trotter welcomed the report and congratulated Mrs Crossan on her staff on the positive result. He said as a local Member he was pleased to see two small schools performing so well.

Councillor Dugdale echoed Councillor Trotter's comments and highlighted the positives of outdoor learning, the sense of team work from the report and the focus on health and wellbeing.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1).
- ii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Primary School and Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- iii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 3)
- iv. Note that Education Scotland are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- v. Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on a positive inspection and on the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team.

#### **4. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF LONGNIDDRY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Longniddry Primary School and Nursery Class.

Ms Karen Haspolat, Quality Improvement Officer for Education noted the inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?) for inspections of Nursery and Early Years provisions to evaluate the quality of provision at Longniddry Primary School and Nursery Class.

At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes were published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. The letter provided a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work which meant inspectors would not return to Longniddry Primary School as a result of the inspection.

Ms Haspolat reported the summary of inspection findings could be found within the report and highlighted Longniddry Primary School secured gradings of 5 or very good for all four quality indicators inspected in the school and 4 or good for three quality indicators and 5 or very good for 1 quality indicator in the nursery class. Ms Haspolat highlighted the key strengths and areas for improvement found during the inspection.

Ms Haspolat confirmed she would continue to work closely with the Head Teacher and staff to provide professional advice and support and challenge in the areas for improvement. She assured Members that the Education Service was confident in the plans for continued improvement for the next session in the primary school and nursery classes.

Sheona Skinner, Head Teacher at Longniddry Primary School responded to questions from Members. She gave information on what the school and nursery were doing to meet the areas for improvement highlighted within the report and noted these had already been identified in the school self evaluation and review process . It was noted there was now a stable staff team within the nursery with a strong lead in the new Senior Early Years Practitioner and Centre Manager who was helping to continue to lead improvements. Ms Skinner also explained the nursery gave opportunities to all members of staff to add to the plans for learning as they observe the children play and the Senior Early Years Practitioner compiles a planning document for the next cycle. Ms Skinner reported the nursery has moved to a 3 week planning cycle which is working really well as allows for all staff to be involved in the planning process and the change in the nursery hours and model has allowed for more protected time to have high quality discussions amongst staff. Staff also work

with the Early Years Team from the centre to constantly try to improve and look at next steps for learners and not put a ceiling on what that learning looks like as some learners are already reading and counting.

Councillor Forrest asked all the Head Teachers how having a thorough understanding of the needs of children and families has helped with parental engagement with their school. Ms Skinner reported at Longniddry Primary School herself and the depute head teacher have a visible presence across the school and know all their learners from the nursery through to P7. She explained the school has an open door policy so parents know they can approach staff with any concerns and staff also communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding improvement plans for the school, which parents/carers are involved in. The school has a child friendly School Improvement Plan so the children are involved in detailing what the priorities should be and evaluate those on an ongoing basis which are then tied in with home learning activities so staff are being transparent with parents and carers about their child's next steps. Ms Skinner explained the school also have open mornings for parents and carers and they take a collaborative approach so parents are aware the school know all their learners well and this helps to drive forward improvement.

In response to questions from Councillor McIntosh, Ms Skinner reported the Eco Club was an example of the children leading learning as 4 pupils wrote to BBC News Round and were filmed as part of what they were driving forward for Climate Club. She added that the children share their passion with keeping our environment tidy with their own class and also at school assemblies. Ms Skinner noted the Climate Club was not linked to an official Eco Group but it is part of their whole school approach and it links in with the schools global goals and sustainability. She also gave Members an overview of the pupil led 'Bubbles Beat Balloons' campaign that the school took part in during lockdown. Ms Skinner explained she was clear with Education Scotland that a second language had not yet been introduced as the focus following lockdown and covid had been on literacy, numeracy and children's overall health and wellbeing. Ms Skinner stated it is looking likely the second language will be sign language as a new learner is joining the school who has a hearing impairment and staff feel it would be a great language for everybody in the school to be able to sign to ensure they are fully inclusive for the new pupil.

Ms McDowell, Ms Alison Cameron, Service Manager for Early Years and Childcare and Ms Skinner answered further questions from Members. Ms McDowell confirmed East Lothian Council do not need to wait on Education Scotland completing an inspection to evaluate the current model and change practice and this is something Ms Cameron, Service Manager for Early Years and Child Care has been looking at closely with her team. Ms Cameron confirmed they are under close review of all settings and continue to work with the improvement service to look at models of delivery in Early Learning and Childcare as a delivery of hours and not place. The team look at feedback from reviews, care inspections, Education Scotland inspections and taking into account the views of staff, children, parents and carers to see what is the best way the entitlement can be delivered. Ms Cameron reported last year changes were made to 6 out of 18 48-week settings and there will be further changes in light of feedback received. She added there is currently a consultation open for parents and carers across East Lothian to comment on the delivery of Early Learning and Child Care which will be collated and help to continue to improve the service. Ms Skinner gave an update on the schools rights respecting journey and explained how the teachers plan for children to learn about their rights including home learning and assemblies.

As a local ward Member Councillor Bruce congratulated Ms Skinner and her staff as well as parents and children of Longniddry for the positive report and noted how respected Longniddry Primary School is within the community.

Councillor Yorkston also congratulated Ms Skinner on a very impressive report and added he thought it was heartening the school had already identified the areas they wanted to improve on before the inspection had taken place. Councillor Yorkston said he is aware of the positive relationship the school has with the community as a whole and the emphasis the school put on children having a voice. He was very pleased about the suggestion of sign language being taught in the school for the pupil who will be joining in January and also for the overall benefit to everyone in the school and community. Councillor Yorkston highlighted the challenges that had been faced at Preston Lodge and thanked the work of all the primary schools to try and accommodate the timetable for the new S1's.

Councillor Dugdale echoed the congratulations of other councillors and highlighted the highly effective leadership of the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher. She was pleased to hear the Head Teacher inspired learning and that children's rights were so well embedded within the school.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1).
- ii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Primary School and Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- iii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 3)
- iv. Note that Education Scotland are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- v. Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on a positive inspection and on the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team.

## **5. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF ST MARTIN'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of St Martin's RC Primary School and Nursery Class.

Ms Karen Haspolat, Quality Improvement Officer for Education noted the inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?) for inspections of Nursery and Early Years provisions to evaluate the quality of provision at St Martin's RC Primary School and Nursery Class.

At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes were published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. The letter provided a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work which meant inspectors would not return to St Martin's RC Primary School as a result of the inspection.

Ms Haspolat reported the summary of inspection findings could be found within the report and highlighted St Martin's RC Primary School secured gradings of 4 or good for both quality indicators inspected in the school and nursery class. Ms Haspolat highlighted the key strengths and areas for improvement found during the inspection.

Ms Haspolat confirmed she would continue to work closely with the Head Teacher and staff to provide professional advice and support and challenge in the areas for improvement. She assured Members that the Education Service was confident in the plans for continued improvement for the next session in the primary school and nursery classes.

Councillor Bennett asked for more information on the leadership roles children have within the school. Lauren Davies, Head Teacher at St Martin's RC explained the main leadership roles the children take part in are the house and vice captains, rights respecting school committee team, the eco team and learning leaders. She highlighted the P7 pupils have specific roles which included working with the youngest learners as part of a buddy scheme, they established a school library, they have a fundraising team and junior road safety officers. Ms Davies explained the learning leaders team consists of pupils from P1 to P7 and they work with her to evaluate and improve the school curriculum. She gave an update on the work the team had carried out over the last year and highlighted the critical feedback the children gave was agreed with by staff. This session the team have decided to focus on interdisciplinary learning within the school and linking that with pupil personalisation and choice.

Responding to a follow up question from Councillor Bruce, Ms Davies noted writing had been on the school improvement plan for a few years and the school has engaged with a lot of professional learning opportunities and the next steps were to focus on the tools for writing as staff had realised some pupils were not experiencing success and that had been identified as the significant barrier to them being on or off track in terms of their learning and attainment. She explained this session staff have been engaging with the National Writing Programme and has been targeted across every class and have identified the first focus point for their learning and teaching. Ms Davies said the children continue to show a strong sense of enthusiasm about their writing and they like having data shared with them so they understand where they are within their learning and their goals.

Ms McDowell, Ms Haspolat and Ms Davies answered further questions from Members. Ms Haspolat gave an overview of what was being done at an authority level to tackle the possible barriers for improvement going forward. Ms Davies noted there were no barriers at present but prior to her joining the school in 2019 the barriers came from staffing inconsistencies and provided information on how the current staff team have tackled this with a core focus being on building capacity and sustainability of all staff within the school so it is not just a select few members of staff who have all the information. Ms McDowell explained there is a robust approach to evaluate how schools use their Pupil Equity Fund and Ms Davies confirmed the Pupil Equity Fund had been spent for this session but and there was a small group consultation around how the money should be spent however this year she will be looking at how the parent and learner involvement can be increased.

Councillor Dugdale welcomed the report and highlighted the positive areas around children's leadership and all the strengths identified within the report. She congratulated Ms Davies and her team for their work.

## **Decision**



The Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1).
- ii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Primary School and Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- iii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 3)
- iv. Note that Education Scotland are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- v. Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on a positive inspection and on the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team.

## **6. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF WINDYGOUL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Windygoul Primary School and Nursery Class.

Ms Karen Haspolat, Quality Improvement Officer for Education noted the inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?) for inspections of Nursery and Early Years provisions to evaluate the quality of provision at Windygoul Primary School and Nursery Class.

At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes were published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. The letter provided a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work which meant inspectors would not return to St Windygoul Primary School as a result of the inspection.

Ms Haspolat reported the summary of inspection findings could be found within the report and highlighted Windygoul Primary School secured gradings of 4 or good for both quality indicators inspected in the school and nursery class. Ms Haspolat highlighted the key strengths and areas for improvement found during the inspection.

Ms Haspolat confirmed she would continue to work closely with the Head Teacher and staff to provide professional advice and support and challenge in the areas for improvement. She assured Members that the Education Service was confident in the plans for continued improvement for the next session in the primary school and nursery classes.

Councillor Menzies asked if there were any barriers to prevent further improvement within Windygoul Primary School and what the benefits have been to pupils and staff from engaging in outdoor play and ELPA. Ms Dianne Mackenzie, Head Teacher at Windygoul Primary School reported the school has and will continue to look for potential barriers and come up with the best ways to get around them by looking at what is best for the learners and community. She explained it had been a wonderful opportunity for pupils and staff to look at play in its widest sense to let children's voices shine through as they had a major part to play in all the developments across the school. Ms Mackenzie gave an update on how staff were using more play opportunities and how the Principal Teacher was looking at more outdoor learning throughout the school as staff have seen the positive impact for all learners.

Ms Mackenzie continued to answer questions from Members. She gave information on the children's opportunities to read for pleasure and how this has impacted their attainment and made Members aware of the work Windygoul has done to teach pupils of all ages sign language within the school. Ms Mackenzie explained the sign along leaders introduce new signs to the school during assembly so through the week all staff and pupils can use them through the school community. She confirmed she would be more than happy to link up with Longniddry Primary to look at how they can move forward together.

Councillor Menzies stated these reports show that schools within East Lothian know how to continue improving and that should be celebrated. She gave a huge thanks to Ms McDowell and the whole team, the Senior Leadership Teams at every school and in particular Ms Davies and Ms Mackenzie as they are both Head Teachers of schools in her ward.

Councillor Dugdale welcomed the positive report and highlighted the mention of the warm and inclusive environment across the nursery, school and Woodside and all the celebrations of success. She congratulated Ms Mackenzie, the school and the whole education service as a whole.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1).
- ii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Primary School and Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- iii. Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 3)
- iv. Note that Education Scotland are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- v. Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on a positive inspection and on the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team.

### **7. EDUCATION SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/24**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services to seek the Committee's approval of the Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan on key improvement priorities achieved for session 2022/23 and identification of key improvement priorities planned for session 2023/24.

Nicola McDowell, Head of Education presented the report drawing Members attention to the focus for 2023/34 of Back to Basics – A Relentless Focus on Equity and Excellence. She outlined the key successes, summary of progress over the last year and the next steps specifically highlighting the three recovery focussed priorities of Curriculum, Inclusion and Wellbeing and Leadership. Ms McDowell reported The Scottish Attainment Challenge will continue to provide support for children and young people through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF); the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (CECYPF) and the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) and plans for the use of these funds are detailed in the Progress and Improvement Plan. She confirmed the service will also continue to implement the required actions in the five priority areas set out in the National Improvement Framework across the key drivers for improvement. Ms McDowell concluded by saying while there continued to be significant challenges for the education service they remained very ambitious for the

children and young people and their progress and achievement and she hoped this plan reflected the commitment to this.

Councillor Hampshire welcomed the report and congratulated the team on their excellent work and asked if everything detailed in the report will be achievable given the financial situation the Council is in. Ms McDowell said there is no doubt the financial challenges East Lothian Council is facing will have an impact on the education service but as a team they remained committed at looking how best to deliver the service in the most efficient way and remain ambitious for the children and young people and very committed to getting it right for every child. Ms McDowell explained in formulating the report the team were very mindful of the challenges to ensure that we remained realistic and have the resources available to us and kept that in mind when putting together the priorities.

Ms McDowell and Jennifer Boyle, Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Inclusion answered further question from Members. She made Members aware has delivered a Learning Estates Strategy which was recently approved at Council and as part of that a Learning Estate Improvement Plan is also being formulated which will allow the service to prioritise what needs to be done to school buildings using a decision making map. Ms McDowell explained the condition and suitability facts were important and they would lead discussion on what needed to be done to facilities to make sure they were suitable for purpose. Ms Boyle gave an update on how the department was mitigating and supporting the impact of children experiencing poverty and other adversity including the use of the Strategic Equity Fund which has allowed for the implementation of key staff within leadership roles in secondary schools and Family Support Workers within primary schools. Ms Boyle noted this year the funding had increased so another four schools were able to be supported by Family Support Workers and have committed to establishing Child Planning Framework Locality Teams to provide a forum for other agencies to come together and look at the children facing the most challenge.

Councillor Ritchie asked if Ms Boyle could expand on the work the Family Support Workers are doing and the impact this was having. Ms Boyle said because of the data systems set up with monthly tracking she was already able to see positive impact these staff members were having on attendance and attainment.

In response to questions from Councillor McIntosh, Ms McDowell stated the best person to respond about the CAMHS waiting lists would be Ms Harrison, Principal Educational Psychologist and therefore it would be best for this question to be answered offline. In terms of children who find school difficult to attend, Ms McDowell reassured Members the focus on attendance is not on shaming people but understanding why children and young people aren't able to attend school. She explained there are robust reasons why children are not able to attend school which is allowing the department to target resources in the right direction and can support them to be able to come to school, or be educated in whatever way is most appropriate for them. Ms Boyle added that targets for attendance are at school level and not individual level and recognise the inability to attend school as an additional support need which would mean meetings with the family and looking to put bespoke supports in place.

Ms Boyle and Mr Neil Craik-Collins, Education Service Manager continued to answer questions from Members. Ms Boyle provided information on why specific targets are set in relation to the attainment gap. Mr Craik-Collins stated there had been no update from the Scottish Government on any increase to the funding of Foundation Apprenticeships and at the moment all funding is frozen so he did not anticipate any

further funding coming forward. He explained the current contract is rolling so the Council would receive the current numbers we already have but have not received any news on an uplift to enable significant increase in programmes. Mr Craik-Collins reported at present there were 179 pupils on Foundation Apprenticeships and next year he would anticipate real demand in the secondary curriculum for further Foundation Apprenticeships due to the pilot project at Preston Lodge. He Craik-Collins confirmed the completion rates were above 95% with 100% positive destinations.

Gail Gillan, EIS asked about the increase in the pupil teacher ratio. Ms McDowell confirmed the increase was very minimal and we try very hard in East Lothian to manage class sizes and deliver the most efficient service by having robust discussions with Head Teachers, Quality Improvement Officers and with central staff to look at role projections for individual schools. She explained East Lothian has some very large and very small schools and reassured Ms Gillan the size of classes is managed very carefully to ensure pupils get the best experience. Bev Skirrow, Acting Service Manager for Strategy and Operations provided information on how the Strategy and Operations Team currently monitor the class organisation within East Lothian and how they will improve this going forward by holding working groups to look at staffing profiles which will include Head Teachers, Ms Gillan and other representatives from finance, HR and procurement.

Ms McDowell, Ms Boyle and Mr Craik-Collins continued to answer questions from Members relating to flexible learning pathways and the success of MyPass Art Therapy. Ms McDowell confirmed flexible learning pathways had been a key focus for a number of years to ensure we meet the needs of all individual children. She explained children have a range of needs there are a range of pathways they can take as its not feasible to expect every child to be in a classroom all day managing the same as every other child. Mr Craik-Collins provided information on the work he has been doing in secondary schools on flexible curriculum pathways which includes traditional exam based routes and providing opportunities for work based learning and industry experience. He noted there are currently Foundation Apprenticeships available in Business, Accountancy, IT Software, Social Services – Children and Young People and Scientific Technologies all which have highly successful outcomes. Ms McDowell noted the evaluation of the art therapy service falls under the Educational Psychologist who was unable to attend Committee therefore Ms Boyle made Members aware of the process of intervention work with children and highlighted the work the new Locality Teams will be doing to ensure they have the correct supports in place for each children and their family. She explained that the outcomes are tracked and monitored closely to look for possible gaps.

Councillor Hampshire welcomed the excellent report covering all levels of education and which identifies the improvements and the problems within our education service. He added that East Lothian has seen a 25% growth in population which has resulted in a massive expansion of our education estate which means 54% of the overall Council budget is invested in education and the increase in the grant East Lothian Council is receiving is not meeting with the growth we are delivering. Councillor Hampshire highlighted the pressures on the Council as a whole and how this will have a direct impact on the education service and children and young people unless they receive an additional grant. He made it clear East Lothian Council will continue to do everything they can to ensure the education service can continue to deliver for every child through the many available pathways. Councillor Hampshire thanked all the education staff for their hard work.

Councillor Menzies agreed with Councillor Hampshire's comments. She highlighted the positive of hearing of the outcomes for the children and young people within East Lothian and found it heartening to hear of children as individuals and not stats. Councillor Menzies thanked Ms McDowell and her team for their hard work and being ahead of the curve.

Councillor Dugdale highlighted the work on the Foundation Apprenticeships, support for young carers, use of the Strategic Equity Fund, Locality Frameworks and all the individual responses to questions asked at today's Committee. She thanked all staff within the education service for their creative and caring approach to the work that they do.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note:

- i. Note the overall positive progress made by the Education Service in delivery of the Council's Plan, the Education Progress and Improvement Plan 2022/23 and the priorities within the National Improvement Framework.
- ii. Note the steps being taken to secure continuous improvement in session 2023/24.
- iii. Approve the Progress Report and Improvement Plan 2023.24 (Appendix 1).
- iv. Note that this Progress Report and Improvement Plan has been submitted to the Scottish Government in draft, in line with the Local Authority's statutory duty pending Committee approval.

## **8. HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENTS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services to inform the Committee of the Head Teacher appointments made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

Nicola McDowell, Head of Education reported the new Head Teacher appointments since the last Committee;

Steven McBride, previous Acting Head Teacher for St David's RC Primary School was appointed as the Head Teacher for Elphinstone Primary School on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

Helen Gardyne, previous Head Teacher for Ormiston Primary School was appointed as the Head Teacher for Haddington Primary School on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023.

Lorna McCallum, previous Head Teacher for Acting Head Teacher for St Margaret's RC Primary School has been appointed as the Head Teacher for Loretto RC Primary School and will start on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Sarah Morgan previous Head Teacher for Pencaitland Primary School was appointed as the Head Teacher at Ormiston Primary School on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023.

Councillor Dugdale congratulated the new Head Teacher's on their appointments. She also thanked all Parent Council Members and pupils for their time to take part in these recruitments.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the Head Teacher appointments.

Signed

.....

Councillor Fiona Dugdale  
Convener of the Education Committee

DRAFT

**REPORT TO:** Council Committee for Education

**MEETING DATE:** 19 March 2024

**BY:** Executive Director, Education and Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Education Scotland Inspection of Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class

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2

## **1 PURPOSE**

1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to: -

- (i) Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1).
- (ii) Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Primary School (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- (iii) Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 3).
- (iv) Note that as a result of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will make a follow-up visit in connection with this inspection within 12 months of publication of the inspection report to allow more time for the school to make necessary improvements.
- (v) Note the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team and progress made since the inspection.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Inspection model**

The inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?) for inspections of Nursery and

Early Years provisions to evaluate the quality of provision at Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class.

- 3.2 Inspectors use the following selected quality indicators (QIs) to report on the outcomes of their three day short inspection model using a six-point scale ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory:

**HGIOS?4:**

- 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

**HGIOELC?:**

- 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- 3.2 Securing Children’s Progress

- 3.2.1 At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes are published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. This letter provides a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school’s capacity to improve the quality of its own work. This is published along with the summary of inspection findings (SIF). The SIF is a professional report and summarises the findings from all the evidence gathered during the inspection. This document is intended to be used by staff in progressing school improvement.

**3.3 National Improvement Framework**

As part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the reporting procedures for the National Improvement Framework (NIF) have been placed on a statutory footing. The evaluations of QIs 2.3 and 3.2 feed directly into the evidence base for the NIF in order to demonstrate progress with the NIF priorities and drivers for improvement. This progress is reported annually by the Scottish Government.

**3.4 Inspection Findings**

Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected during September 2023. A letter to parents and carers summarising the key findings was published on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023. It should be noted that the local authority’s rigorous quality improvement processes had already identified issues and were working with the school. This inspection confirmed our views.

- 3.4.1 The quality indicators were evaluated as follows:

Sector	Quality Assurance	Quality Indicator	Grade
Primary 1-7	HGIOS? 4	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
		3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Weak
Early Learning and Childcare	HGIOELC?	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
		3.2 Securing children’s progress	Satisfactory



### 3.5 Key Strengths

- Senior leaders and staff across the school and nursery who know children and families very well. They are caring and supportive of children and each other. Across the school, staff build strong, positive relationships and ensure a nurturing environment for all children:
- Inspectors noted that the Head Teacher was appointed in August 2023, and that she is assisted by two deputy headteachers and a principal teacher. Inspectors noted the impact of her leadership across several areas.
- Children experience a positive and caring ethos at Wallyford Primary School.
- All staff consistently embody the school values in their daily interactions. They encourage children to be compassionate, collaborative, and persistent in their learning efforts.
- Teachers maintain a welcoming and reassuring atmosphere in almost all lessons. They frequently refer to the school values to help children focus during lessons.
- The headteacher and staff rightfully acknowledge the importance of periodically revisiting and updating the school's values with both children and families.
- The headteacher has identified the need to develop a more consistent approach to planning learning, teaching & assessment across the school.
- The effective collaboration between staff at the school. Teachers work well together to share planning, resources, and creative ideas. They are committed to developing their practice to improve outcomes for children:
- Teachers from the same stage collaborate to plan lessons and create resources. Teachers at individual stages have developed some effective ways to plan learning for children across the curriculum.
- Staff support most children well to work independently, in pairs and in groups. Teachers encourage children to support each other in the completion of tasks.
- Almost all teachers make sure that children are calm and focused on the set task at the start of lessons. The majority of teachers use a variety of teaching approaches well, such as linking learning to real-life contexts and capitalising on children's interests.
- Teachers are beginning to make use of a variety of school guidance to help them structure lessons. The 'Wallyford Way' provides a constructive blueprint for structuring high-quality lessons.
- Teachers incorporate clear explanations and instructions and use effective questioning to extend children's thinking in the majority of lessons.

- Senior leaders and staff are committed to play-based learning and have recently devised a framework to embed a shared approach in all four P1 classes. Staff are enthusiastically engaging with national practice guidance to support their understanding of play.

### 3.6 Areas for Improvement

- Teachers should continue to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- To ensure professional judgements of pupil progress are more robust, Senior leaders, the school's Quality Improvement Officer, and the authority's Pedagogy Team and Early Years Team have engaged staff in professional learning to further develop practitioner confidence in the use of a range of assessments, data, and moderation activities.
- Compared to previous academic sessions, the current tracking of pupil progress across P1 to P7 indicates predicted improvements in pupil attainment and achievement in Literacy and Numeracy by June 2024.
- Teachers and practitioners should continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the nursery and school. This will support children to make the progress they are capable of.
- Teaching staff at key stages are using quality improvement methodology as part of the National Improving Writing Programme to support improvements in the quality of learners' experience of writing across the curriculum.
- The local authority Pedagogy Team are providing professional support and challenge to teachers and senior leaders to ensure:
  - planning is tailored to the pupils in each class.
  - all teaching staff have a clear understanding of the Lesson Cycle and most use this consistently to inform their approach to the teaching and learning of all pupils.
  - all teaching staff are clear on where their learners are in relation to the local authority curriculum frameworks and can effectively use these to guide planning decisions for all pupils.
  - the confidence and competence of all teaching staff has increased in the pedagogical areas of differentiation and questioning to better support the breadth, depth, and application of pupil learning.
- The local authority Early Years Team continue to support Nursery staff and leaders to improve the quality learning engagement and interactions, and planning, tracking, and monitoring of learner progress, as outlined in Appendix 3 – Nursery Summary of Inspection Findings.
- Teachers and practitioners should use information gathered through assessment opportunities to match better the tasks and activities to children's needs and abilities.

- Senior leaders now need to develop and use more effective tracking and monitoring approaches. This should help them to measure the progress children make over time and the impact interventions have in closing attainment gaps.
- The Head Teacher and Depute Head Teachers have developed and established an internal tracking system for the purposes of improving the accuracy and reliability of tracking and monitoring of pupil progress.
- All teaching staff are using this system to support their professional judgement of pupil progress, and to ensure that the impact of planned interventions to support pupils' learning are evaluated effectively.

3.7 The school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mr Nick Trussler continues to work closely with the Head Teacher, leadership team and staff to provide professional advice, guidance, professional learning, support, and challenge in the areas for improvement outlined in Section 3.7.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

## **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Education Scotland report on Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class Report (Appendix 1) and Summary of Findings Primary School (Appendix 2), Summary of Findings Nursery Class (Appendix 3).

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Nick Trussler
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Quality Improvement Officer
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:ntrussler@eastlothian.gov.uk">ntrussler@eastlothian.gov.uk</a>
<b>DATE</b>	20 February 2024

21 November 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In September 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Senior leaders and staff across the school and nursery who know children and families very well. They are caring and supportive of children and each other. Across the school, staff build strong, positive relationships and ensure a nurturing environment for all children.
- The effective collaboration between staff at the school. Teachers work well together to share planning, resources and creative ideas. They are committed to developing their practice to improve outcomes for children.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from East Lothian Council.

- Teachers should continue to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers and practitioners should continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the nursery and school. This will support children to make the progress they are capable of.
- Teachers and practitioners should use information gathered through assessment opportunities to match better the tasks and activities to children's needs and abilities.
- Senior leaders now need to develop and use more effective tracking and monitoring approaches. This should help them to measure the progress children make over time and the impact interventions have in closing attainment gaps.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

## Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>weak</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Securing children's progress</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale</a>	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Inspection and Review | Education Scotland](#)

### What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings, we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with East Lothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 12 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with East Lothian Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Denise Penman  
HM Inspector

# Summarised inspection findings

Wallyford Primary School

East Lothian Council

21 November 2023

## Key contextual information

Wallyford Primary School serves the communities of Wallyford village and the Pinkie Mains area of Musselburgh in East Lothian Council. The school is a member of the Musselburgh Associated Schools Group (ASG) with pupils transitioning to Rosehill High School.

This area is a rapidly expanding community within East Lothian and as a result there is a significant increase of families with children moving into the area. The school moved to a new school building in 2019 to meet the needs of the growing school roll. There are large playgrounds and outdoor spaces. The school roll is currently 456.

The 18 classes this session comprise of a mix of single stream and composite. There is a Nursery Class. There have been significant changes in the leadership team over recent years. The headteacher has been in post since August 2023. She is assisted by two depute headteachers and a principal teacher.

In September 2022, the minority of P6 and P7 children were registered for free school meals. This is above the local and national average. In September 2022, the minority of children lived in quintile one of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), around half lived in quintile two and the minority lived in quintile five. The school received £129,850 Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) this session.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Children experience a positive and caring ethos at Wallyford Primary School. Almost all children are polite and respectful to adults and visitors to the school. The majority of children feel that they are respected by their peers. Across all classes, there are positive interactions between staff and children and children and their peers.
- All staff consistently embody the school values in their daily interactions. They encourage children to be compassionate, collaborative, and persistent in their learning efforts. Most children regularly make responsible choices and treat their peers with respect. Teachers maintain a welcoming and reassuring atmosphere in almost all lessons. They frequently refer to the school values to help children focus during lessons. The majority of children understand these values well and can articulate the significance of teamwork and helping others.
- The headteacher and staff rightfully acknowledge the importance of periodically revisiting and updating the school's values with both children and families. This ensures that the values remain relevant to the evolving community and are fully grasped by everyone, ultimately enhancing outcomes for children.

- A few children across the school are beginning to contribute to the life of the school through their participation in the Rights Respecting Pupil Group. The headteacher recognises the importance of ensuring that all children are offered leadership opportunities to support them to develop their skills for learning, life and work.
- Most children are motivated and engage well with their learning. Staff support most children well to work independently, in pairs and in groups. Teachers encourage children to support each other in the completion of tasks. Children should now be given greater choice and opportunities to lead their learning. This will allow them to take greater responsibility for their learning and become more independent learners.
- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is used to raise attainment in literacy by providing extra teaching support to improve children's phonic skills, reading fluency and comprehension. Children across first level visit other classes to develop their reading skills. As this approach streams children by current attainment levels, staff should carefully consider the effectiveness of this in meeting the needs of all learners.
- Almost all teachers make sure that children are calm and focused on the set task at the start of lessons. The majority of teachers use a variety of teaching approaches well, such as linking learning to real-life contexts and capitalising on children's interests. The majority of children could work at a brisker pace. Teachers should ensure that all tasks and activities are purposeful and designed to ensure all children make good progress in their learning. All teachers need to ensure that learning is set at the right level of difficulty for all children. Senior leaders should now work collaboratively with staff to maximize learning time and ensure all children progress at an appropriate pace.
- Teachers are beginning to make use of a variety of school guidance to help them structure lessons. The 'Wallyford Way' provides a constructive blueprint for structuring high-quality lessons. In most lessons teachers successfully share the purpose of learning and use a few strategies to check children's understanding. Teachers incorporate clear explanations and instructions and use effective questioning to extend children's thinking in the majority of lessons. As planned, senior leaders should review and update this document to ensure improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders and staff are committed to play-based learning and have recently devised a framework to embed a shared approach in all four P1 classes. Staff are enthusiastically engaging with national practice guidance to support their understanding of play. Recent staff training has led to environmental changes at P1. There is now an open area where children from different class groups can learn and play together with carefully selected resources. This is increasing children's choice and giving them more options for independent play. Staff have adapted the routines of the school day to provide more play-based learning opportunities. Senior leaders have planned further professional learning, which should inform how staff interact with and observe children learning through play.
- Teachers from the same stage collaborate to plan lessons and create resources. In most classes, children apply their learning effectively by completing practical tasks after whole-class tuition. Children often have the chance to choose creative resources to reinforce their developing skills. In a few instances, children receive the same instructions before selecting their difficulty level. These students would benefit from individualised explanations and personalised tasks to maintain consistent difficulty levels across activities.
- Teachers at individual stages have developed some effective ways to plan learning for children across the curriculum. The headteacher has identified the need to develop a more consistent



approach to planning learning across the school. The majority of teachers do not yet consistently include assessment in their planning for learning and teaching. Senior leaders and teachers should use results from assessments to plan children's next steps in learning. They should use assessment information to better monitor and track children's progress. This will support planning of subsequent learning and will allow children to better understand the progress they are making.

- The school is in the early stages of working with partners from their ASG to plan moderation and professional learning activities. This should support a greater understanding of national standards within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Teachers would benefit from further moderation opportunities within the school to develop their range of assessments. As a next step, teachers should use the generated data they hold about children's levels of attainment to improve their understanding of their collective areas for improvement. This will help them make more effective professional judgements to evidence children's progress.
- Senior leaders have revised the format of meetings they hold with teachers to discuss children's progress. Although at the early stages, this is helping senior leaders build a more comprehensive profile of children's needs across the school. The process supports staff to identify and monitor the progress of children who need additional support. Teachers use visual timetables in every classroom, and they review and update children's individual education plans regularly. This is helping to meet the needs of children who require additional support for learning.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is weak. In session 2022-2023, a majority of children at P1 and P4, and a minority of children at P7 achieved expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy.
- Data provided by the school is based on teachers' professional judgements. Senior leaders should build the confidence of teachers in their use of a range of assessments, data, and moderation activities to ensure professional judgements are robust. Teachers would benefit from engaging more closely with National Benchmarks to ensure they have a rigorous approach to assessing children's attainment and achievement and closely monitor progress. This should ensure professional judgements are reliable and contribute to plans to raise attainment.
- Overall, levels of attainment in literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics are inconsistent. Too few children are making progress in line with expected national standards. The school does not have sufficient data to indicate accurately the progress of children with additional needs or barriers to learning.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy and English is weak. The majority of children do not make sufficient progress from prior levels of attainment.

#### Listening and talking

- The majority of children who have achieved early level listen well to their teachers and follow instructions. The majority of these children are less confident at using new vocabulary and phrases in different contexts. The majority of children who have achieved first level contribute relevant ideas to discussions. The majority of children at both early and first levels need to develop skills in listening to others' contributions and in taking turns. A minority of children working at second level are confident in discussing topics. All children need to develop their skills in a variety of contexts and for different audiences.

#### Reading

- The majority of children who have achieved early level can use known sounds to attempt unfamiliar words. Children working at first level need to build confidence in finding information in texts to learn new things. The majority of children who have achieved first level can read aloud with fluency, expression and confidence. The majority of these children can answer literal comprehension questions, but are less confident at explaining the key features of texts. A minority of children working at second level successfully skim texts to identify purpose and

main ideas. Most children need to develop their knowledge of techniques used to influence the reader, for example word choice and emotive language.

- Across the school children would welcome regular access to the school library. This would support learners to further develop their knowledge of different authors and access a wider range of texts.

## **Writing**

- The majority of children who have achieved early level can spell familiar words and attempt to write at least one sentence using full stops and capital letters. All children who have achieved early level need further consolidation to convey ideas and information in different ways. The majority of children who have achieved first level present writing in a clear and legible way and successfully use a range of conjunctions. Most children need to develop their skills further in planning and organising ideas. A minority of children working at second level use paragraphs and punctuation effectively. Most children are not yet skilled in writing in a range of genres.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Too few children make good progress from previous levels of attainment.

## **Number, money and measure**

- The majority of children who have achieved early level accurately find missing numbers to 20. They can count backwards from 20. They need to consolidate applying addition and subtraction skills to pay the exact value for items to 10p. The majority of children who have achieved first level can write, order and sequence numbers within a thousand. They are less confident at multiplying whole numbers by 10 and 100. A minority of children working at second level successfully round numbers to the nearest 1000, 10,000 and 100,000. Children working at second level need more opportunity to consolidate their understanding of the relationship between fractions and decimals. Across all stages children need to develop their mental agility skills and apply these skills in a range of real-life word problems.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- The majority of children who have achieved early level recognise and describe common two-dimensional shapes. They are less confident sorting three-dimensional (3D) objects according to simple criteria. The majority of children who have achieved first level use compass points to provide directions. They are not yet able to describe properties of 3D objects. A minority of children working at second level accurately use mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles. Most children working at second level need to develop further their knowledge of complimentary and supplementary angles to calculate the size of missing angles.

## **Information handling**

- The majority of children who have achieved early level use tally marks to organise information. They display information on simple pictorial displays linked to their classroom rewards. The majority of children who have achieved first level use bar charts and Venn diagrams to display information. A minority of children working at second level use line graphs and bar graphs to display information. Children across the school need further opportunities to use ICT to enhance their learning in data handling.

## **Attainment over time**

- Senior leaders acknowledge that robust tracking of attainment and progress over time is at an early stage and have rightly identified this as an important area for improvement. Staff do not yet track and monitor children's progress sufficiently well to give an accurate indication of how

children are progressing across the curriculum. As planned, senior leaders need to take prompt action to develop approaches to gathering data on children's progress. They should ensure rigour in using this data to inform and evaluate interventions. In addition, they should identify trends in children's attainment over time, for example, with particular cohorts of children.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Staff celebrate achievements through assemblies, online platforms and social media. Children have a few opportunities to achieve in a number of different areas. For example, 'Glee Club,' 'John Muir Award' and the 'Awesome Programme.' Senior leaders are working with partners to develop a wider range of after school opportunities. Children are not yet able to identify the skills they develop as a result of their achievements. Staff should help children to identify the skills they develop. This will help children to recognise and reflect on their achievements and progress. Staff should also track children's participation in clubs and activities. This will help identify those at risk of missing out.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff have a good understanding of the socio-economic background of all children. Senior leaders should now take forward their plans to identify the most disadvantaged learners and target resources more effectively.
- PEF has been invested in a variety of interventions aimed at raising attainment in literacy and in reducing the cost of the school day. For example, assisting the targeted funding of children to participate in the P7 residential trip. These approaches are not yet impacting positively on the attainment of all learners. Staff should consult more widely on how best to invest PEF. Senior leaders need to ensure that they monitor and gather robust evidence on interventions and measure the impact on outcomes for all children. They need to ensure that their approaches to improving equity result in raised attainment for all learners.

## Other relevant evidence

- Most children benefit from high quality, progressive lessons in physical education (PE) from a specialist PE teacher. These lessons do not always amount to two hours per week. As planned, senior leaders should ensure that all children receive two hours of PE provision per week.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

# Summarised inspection findings

Wallyford Primary School Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

21 November 2023



## Key contextual information

Wallyford Primary School Nursery is located in purpose-built accommodation within the school building. Each of the four spacious playrooms includes toilets and a fully fitted changing room. The four playrooms have shared access to a large indoor open area and an extensive outdoor garden. The newly appointed headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. A depute headteacher and a nursery manager both have a 0.3 full time equivalent commitment to the nursery. A senior early years practitioner, 11 early years practitioners and three early years support workers make up the staff team. In the last two years, changes in the staffing have included 12 practitioners new to the nursery. Children can access their 1140 hours by attending for two full days (Monday/Tuesday or Wednesday/Thursday), and every second Friday. The nursery is open from 8.15 am to 5.45 pm. Parents can choose three different drop-off times and three different collection times each day. However, the majority of parents opt for 9am-3pm to match the primary school day. As a result, many children are not receiving their full entitlement of time.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Almost all children are happy and settled. Staff support children well who are new to the nursery to help them become familiar with their new environment. A majority of children engage well with the experiences which staff provide. Staff encourage children to make choices in their play. Practitioners have developed positive and nurturing relationships with children and are highly responsive to their wellbeing needs. The calm and supportive environment enables children to explore freely and grow in confidence.
- Children have free-flow access from playrooms to the outdoor environment. Practitioners have developed well-resourced outdoor spaces which promote children's learning and development. Children engage in activities enthusiastically and have space and time to explore open-ended natural materials. They access the tool bench, play tennis and use loose parts to develop their physical skills.
- Practitioners provide interesting learning spaces within the playrooms. However, patterns of staff deployment, where staff are allocated to particular areas, occasionally lead to missed opportunities to develop and extend children's learning. Where practice is best, staff interactions include open-ended questions, explanations and rich vocabulary which support children's learning. This good practice is not consistent across the playrooms.
- Staff mostly plan across all the curriculum areas in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) at early level. Staff should now make more effective use of all the spacious indoor accommodation to offer children a broader range of experiences, including activities involving digital technologies. This additional breadth will avoid duplicating activities across rooms and better support children's curiosity, skills in observation, creativity and investigation.

- Practitioners use a wide range of approaches to assess children’s learning. However, they are not yet fully effective in using this valuable information to plan future learning and next steps for children. The quality of staff’s observations is inconsistent, with varying quality and approaches, and their records do not fully capture evidence of children’s learning. Senior leaders recognise that practitioners would benefit from further support and guidance.
- Practitioners meet regularly to plan children’s learning and discuss their interests. Staff are gaining in confidence in gathering information for children’s learning folders. Although the playrooms have identical play spaces and planning arrangements, there is scope to ensure that learning contexts more closely recognise and match children’s ideas and interests.
- Practitioners currently use an online tracking system to record assessments of children’s broad progress through CfE early level experiences and outcomes. There is scope to review and refine the current approaches to observation, planning, tracking and monitoring. This will be more manageable for staff, supporting them to personalise learning and teaching to meet each child’s unique learning needs.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning and development. A significant number of children are ready for greater challenge in their learning in literacy and numeracy.
- Most children listen well to adults and to simple instructions. They enjoy talking to their friends and discussing their play activities together. Most children show interest in books and enjoy developing a story of the week using 'small world characters.' A majority of children can recognise their name in print, and a few are beginning to write it. Practitioners should offer more exemplars at the writing area to encourage children's skills further. They should make more use of simple non-fiction books across the nursery areas. This will encourage children to use books to find information and help them develop ideas in their play spaces.
- Children are developing their awareness of number and early mathematical concepts through play activities and daily routines. Most are learning to sort, count and match sets of objects. They explore concepts of 'heavier than' and 'lighter than' using balance scales. Children would benefit from access to a wider range of mathematical materials, including timers, calculators, money and solid shapes. This would support them to develop their knowledge and understanding of a wider range of mathematical concepts.
- Children are progressing well in their understanding of health and wellbeing. Regular emotional 'check ins' help children to identify their feelings. Practitioners support children to use a range of strategies to manage more challenging emotions calmly. While a majority of children play well together, a minority need additional support to form friendships, share resources and cooperate with others. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through celebrating a range of events on the nursery calendar.
- Practitioners should introduce more planned interventions at the end of the day to support children to refocus their energy and sustain their interest. Children participate in a dental health project and are aware of how to brush their teeth correctly. They enjoy helping to make vegetable soup and bread for snack time. They benefit from fresh air and exercise in the outdoor area. Children enjoy balancing on wooden beams, throwing and catching balls, and using a range of wheeled toys which is developing their gross motor skills successfully.

- Staff observe children at play and record evaluative comments. They add photographic evidence to their notes and include these in each child's learning story. Staff are not yet using assessment information to plan next steps for groups and individuals, or to track children's progress over time. Staff are aware of the need to recognise, record evidence and celebrate children's achievements more effectively. As an important part of children's development, staff should involve them more in talking about themselves as learners and help them to set their own simple learning targets.
- Staff know children and families well and share a good understanding of any challenges they may be facing. They work effectively with specialist agencies to ensure children and families are well supported.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

**REPORT TO :** Education & Children’s Services Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 19 March 2024

**BY:** Executive Director, Education and Children’s Services

**SUBJECT:** Reserving Places in Schools for Catchment Pupils Who Move into the Catchment Area during the Academic Year 2024/25

**3**

**1 PURPOSE**

1.1 To obtain Committee approval for reserving places for incoming catchment pupils at the schools detailed in 2.1 for session 2024/25.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree to hold in reserve places for incoming catchment pupils for session 2024/25 in the following schools:

**i. Primary Schools**

We recommend that the Committee reserve the number of places detailed below in each year group between Primary One and Primary Seven. The class organisation may be a mixture of non-composite and composite classes.

School	Number of reserved places per stage						
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Aberlady Primary School	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Campie Primary School	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Cockenzie Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Dunbar Primary School	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
East Linton Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Gullane Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Haddington Primary School	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Law Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Letham Mains Primary School	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Longniddry Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Loretto RC Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Macmerry Primary School	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Musselburgh Burgh Primary School	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ormiston Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Pencaitland Primary School	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Pinkie St Peter's Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sanderson's Wynd Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
St Martin's RC Primary School	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Stoneyhill Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Wallyford Primary School	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Windygoul Primary School	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yester Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

We recommend that the Committee reserve the number of places detailed below in each class within the school.

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of reserved places per class</b>
Blindwells Primary School	ALL*
Craighall Primary School	ALL*
Elphinstone Primary School	3
St Mary's RC Primary School	2



Stenton Primary School	2
West Barns Primary School	2
Whitecraig Primary School	2

\*All available places within the school are reserved for incoming catchment pupils

## ii Secondary Schools S1 and S2

We recommend that the Committee reserve the number of places as detailed in the table below.

School	Maximum number of places in S1 including reserved places	Number of reserved places in S1	Maximum number of places in S2 including reserved places	Number of reserved places in S2
Dunbar Grammar School	220	5	220	5
Knox Academy	180	8	180	8
Musselburgh Grammar School	150	6	140	6
North Berwick High School	200	8	180	8
Preston Lodge High School	210	6	240	6
Rosehill High School	160	8	160	8
Ross High School	220	5	220	5

## iii Secondary Schools S3 and S4

We recommend that the Committee reserve the number of places as detailed in the table below.

<b>School</b>	<b>Maximum number of places in S3 including reserved places</b>	<b>Number of places reserved in S3</b>	<b>Maximum number of places in S4 including reserved places</b>	<b>Number of places reserved in S4</b>
Dunbar Grammar School	220	5	220	5
Knox Academy	180	6	180	6
Musselburgh Grammar School	150	6	160	6
North Berwick High School	180	6	200	6
Preston Lodge High School	240	6	210	6
Rosehill High School	100	6	120	6
Ross High School	260	5	240	5

Details of the factors considered when determining the appropriate number of reserved places for both primary and secondary schools are detailed in 3.2.1 of the report.

- 2.2 We request that the Committee delegate any changes to the number of places held in reserve to the Head of Education in consultation with the Education Convener, should the number of pupils requiring a place at the school significantly increase or decrease.

### **3 BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Acts and regulations**

The Education (Scotland) Act 1996 Placing Requests Part IV: Section 33, allows education authorities to reserve places for incoming pupils into catchment areas of schools. This has helped education authorities to manage their schools and prevent them being at capacity at commencement of an academic year, and furthermore enabling them to accommodate incoming catchment pupils at their catchment schools when they move into the area during the academic year.

Section 28A (3A) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended) provides a general principle that, “so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents”. This is what we strive to do, whilst also ensuring that we can accommodate new pupils in their catchment schools.

Acceptance of a placing request for a child who is resident out with the catchment area of a specified school could prevent the education authority from retaining reserved places:

- at the specified school, or
- in relation to any particular stage of education at the school.

It is for this reason that the education authority may refuse to grant a placing request that would impact on the ability to reserve places in schools.

Section 28A (3C) of the 1980 Act notes that “reserved places” means those “places (not exceeding such number or, as the case may be, such percentage of places at the school or relating to a particular stage of education as may be prescribed by regulations) as are in the opinion of the education authority reasonably required to accommodate pupils likely to become resident in the catchment area of the school in the period from the time of consideration of the placing request up to and during the year from 1 August to which the placing request relates”.

Therefore, when establishing the number of reserved places required for a school, we have to consider the likely number of pupils becoming resident in the catchment area of the school during the coming academic year. We analyse various factors when deciding how many places should be reserved. These are detailed in Sections 3.2.1 to 3.2.3.

## **3.2 Factors influencing the decisions on reserving places**

3.2.1 The following factors have to be considered for both primary and secondary schools when we are determining the appropriate number of reserved places that are likely to be required for pupils moving into the catchment area of the school during 2024/25:

- a) The proposed level of capping at the school and number of expected pupils
- b) Local development plans
- c) Current and planned house builds within those plans
- d) Projected school rolls
- e) Projected migration into the catchment area
- f) Information about reserved places from previous years
- g) School capacities
- h) Information known to us, for example, about families moving into the area before/after commencement of the academic year.

3.2.2 For secondary schools, where it has been identified that reserved places are likely to be required, we propose that a minimum of one place be reserved for every 30 pupils (rounded to the nearest 30 where the class intake has been capped). Pupils are timetabled in secondary schools in groups of 20 for practical classes and 30 for non-practical classes. In addition, rooms in schools are only furnished to accommodate a maximum of 30 pupils per non-practical class. The factors noted above shall then be

considered to confirm whether this number is reasonable and reflects the number of pupils likely to become resident in the catchment in the coming academic year. The number of reserved places can then be increased or decreased accordingly. This method allows an immediate number of reserved places to be identified and then adjusted to ensure it fairly reflects both the education authority's requirements and the legislation.

3.2.3 The number of reserved places can be affected by pupils moving into and out of East Lothian, late applications and pupils being withdrawn from schools. This can mean the demand for places in a school for pupils in the catchment area can change before the academic year begins. The number of reserved places in this report reflects our current understanding of the likely number of pupils that we think will be in each catchment area or moving into it during the next academic year. Should some of the reserved places at schools not be required or the situation change, the Committee is asked to delegate any increase or decrease in reserved places to the Head of Education, who will consult with the Convener. If the reserved places detailed in this report are agreed by the Committee, they will be protected for incoming catchment pupils. If it is not possible to reserve all these places before the academic year begins, then we still intend to protect them so that they are there as reserved places for catchment pupils who come in during the year. Committee members will be contacted where changes to reserved places are made in their wards.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications in this report.

## **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Fiona Brown
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<b>DATE</b>	19 February 2024



**REPORT TO:** Education & Children’s Services Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 19 March 2024

**BY:** Executive Director, Education and Children’s Services

**SUBJECT:** Roll Capping in East Lothian Secondary Schools – Session 2024/25

**1 PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Committee to approve the S1-S4 intake levels for East Lothian secondary schools for Session 2024/25.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree a maximum intake level in S1-S4 for session 2024/25 in the schools listed below. The reasons for this are set out in section 3.

School	Maximum S1 intake level	Maximum S2 intake level	Maximum S3 intake level	Maximum S4 intake level
Dunbar Grammar School	220	220	220	220
Knox Academy	180	180	180	180
Musselburgh Grammar School	150	140	150	160
North Berwick High School	200	180	180	200
Preston Lodge High School	210	240	240	210
Rosehill High School	160	160	100	120
Ross High School	220	220	260	240

- 2.2 We request that the Committee delegate any changes to the maximum intake level in S1 – S4 to the Head of Education in consultation with the Education Convener, should the number of pupils requiring a place at the school significantly increase or decrease.

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The main principles for managing secondary school rolls in East Lothian are to:
- provide high quality education at local schools for local pupils;
  - ensure equality of resources throughout East Lothian;
  - commit to a real choice of education inside our schools and not between our schools.
- 3.2 As an education authority, East Lothian Council has to manage public funds and ensure a balanced education service across the authority in terms of expenditure and resources. This is partly managed by agreeing to limit the overall school roll for a school or to limit the number of pupils in one specific year. This is commonly referred to as “capping”.
- 3.3 When considering how to cap school rolls, East Lothian Council as an education authority must look at all its schools and available resources. We also consider the total population of children who require places in our secondary schools and how many of those are within each catchment area. We consider how each school will manage its resources and we then balance that with other schools’ situations to ensure that resources are shared evenly throughout East Lothian, thereby avoiding unreasonable public expenditure.
- 3.4 Limiting the number of pupils that the school can admit each academic year allows schools to timetable and employ a suitable number and category of teachers. In general, capping will support appropriate and early organisation for schools to meet their pupils’ needs for a high level of education. Capping prevents detrimental impacts on pupils’ education and ensures effective and efficient management of resources by the authority.

**Note:** Practical classes, such as science subjects, are set in multiples of 20 pupils in secondary schools. Non-practical classes are set in multiples of 30 pupils and those classrooms are furnished to accommodate a maximum of 30 pupils. Where a limit has been set for S1 roll, this has been calculated in multiples of 20 and 30, as per practical and non-practical class maximum.



### 3.5 S1 August 2024 – School Roll

Based on the number of pupils expected in S1 and the current S1-S5 pupils progressing into S2-S6, the pupil numbers for next session 2024/25 are expected to be:

School	<u>S1</u>	<u>S2</u>	<u>S3</u>	<u>S4</u>	<u>S5</u>	<u>S6</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Dunbar Grammar	205	201	202	198	188	139	1133
Knox Academy	170	174	161	159	126	83	873
Musselburgh Grammar	142	132	139	154	213	129	909
North Berwick High School	192	172	173	191	167	163	1058
Preston Lodge High School	200	216	218	197	150	90	1071
Rosehill High School	140	137	89	92	N/A	N/A	458
Ross High School	205	213	251	223	163	112	1167

3.6 The total roll includes pupils who are expected to transfer to S1 in August 2024 and the number of pupils expected to move up into S2 and so on, to S6. Wallyford Learning Campus will not have S5 and S6 phase pupils in session 2024/25, only S1, S2, S3 and S4.

3.7 The process is complex owing to pupils moving to and leaving East Lothian, late applications, and pupils choosing private schools. We consult with Head Teachers regularly and consider the statistics and information that we collate to decide on appropriate recommendations for the S1 intake. This has informed our capping recommendation, set out in 2.1 above.

3.8 Reserved places must also be considered as part of the roll for secondary schools and a separate report has been completed for this.

## 4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications in this report.

## 5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## 6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - None
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Fiona Brown
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Principal Officer, School Admissions and Planning
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	Tel: 01620 827415 Email: <a href="mailto:fbrown@eastlothian.gov.uk">fbrown@eastlothian.gov.uk</a>
<b>DATE</b>	19 February 2024

**REPORT TO:** Education & Children’s Services Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 19 March 2024

**BY:** Executive Director, Education and Children’s Services

**SUBJECT:** Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All. Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26

**5**

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**1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To seek the Committee’s approval of the draft raising attainment strategy: Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All. (Appendix 1).

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- i. Approve the draft raising attainment strategy: Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All. Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26. (Appendix 1)
  - ii. Note the steps being taken to ensure raising attainment for all learners and closing the poverty related attainment gap in sessions 2023/24; 2024/25 and 2025/26.

**3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a statutory duty on Scottish Ministers to review and publish the National Improvement Framework (NIF). This plan is designed to deliver the overarching aims of excellence for all through improved attainment and equity through closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 3.2 National data shows that East Lothian remains relatively less deprived than other local authorities. However, these estimates do not take account of the learners who come from families who: live in rented accommodation in higher decile areas; live in hidden poverty or survive by working multiple jobs.

- 3.3 To mitigate the impact of the poverty, we have equity principles which guide our authority wide approach to support our learners to reach their full potential.
- 3.4 Through the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), East Lothian Council receives three main funding streams to support vulnerable learners. These are the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund and the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF).
- 3.5 PEF is paid directly to school based on the number of learners registered for free school meals. PEF guidance has been developed to ensure robust approach to planning and evaluation of associated interventions.
- 3.6 The Care Experienced Attainment Fund is provided to local authorities to improve educational outcomes for learners with care experience. This fund provides for a designated Education Support Officer to support, track, and monitor individual learners. Stretch aims for the attainment and attendance of care experienced learners have been set for session 2023/24 and detailed in the strategy.
- 3.7 The SEF is allocated to all local authorities to invest in their approaches to closing the poverty related attainment gap. To measure the impact of the SEF, there are core and core plus stretch aims for 2025/26 with annual iterations. There are six core stretch aims prescribed by the Scottish Government and an additional eight core plus aims that are set by East Lothian Council.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 3.8 To provide Head Teachers with their progress towards stretch aims, schools are provided with their data on a monthly tracker report. This data facilitates support and challenge discussion with central officers.
- 3.9 East Lothian Council reports on its progress towards stretch aims through the Education Progress and Improvement Plan. This is published annually and shared with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, and East Lothian Council Education & Children's Services Committee.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no policy implications in this report.

## **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## 6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - none
- 6.2 Personnel - none
- 6.3 Other - none

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All. Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26 (Appendix 1)

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<b>DATE</b>	19 March 2024

**APPENDIX 1**

# **Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All**

## **Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26**



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# 1 Introduction

East Lothian Council is committed to providing the best education service in Scotland through a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. We aim to ensure East Lothian's children, young people and families are confident and resilient, and fully included as valued contributors within their schools and communities. To do this we:

- share common values, approaches, behaviour and a strong commitment to do the very best for East Lothian's children and young people;
- are ambitious for our children and young people;
- promote and prioritise early intervention and prevention;
- take a relationship-based approach with each other, our children, young people and their families promote creativity and innovation and
- want East Lothian to be an inclusive place to live and learn.

The purpose of this document is to outline our strategy to raise the attainment of all in achieving excellence and to ensure equity by closing the poverty related attainment gap.

## 2 National Improvement Framework (NIF)

The National Improvement Framework for Education and the Curriculum for Excellence supports the commitment of East Lothian Council to ensure improving attainment and achievement for all children and young people.

### 2.1 NIF Priorities

The Education (Scotland) Act 2016, places a statutory duty on Scottish Ministers to review the NIF and publish an updated plan on an annual basis. This plan supports and informs our improvement planning in East Lothian Council.

The NIF priorities are:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.



## 2.2 NIF Drivers

Six drivers, of equal importance, have been identified in the NIF as contributing to continuous improvements in our education system. These are:

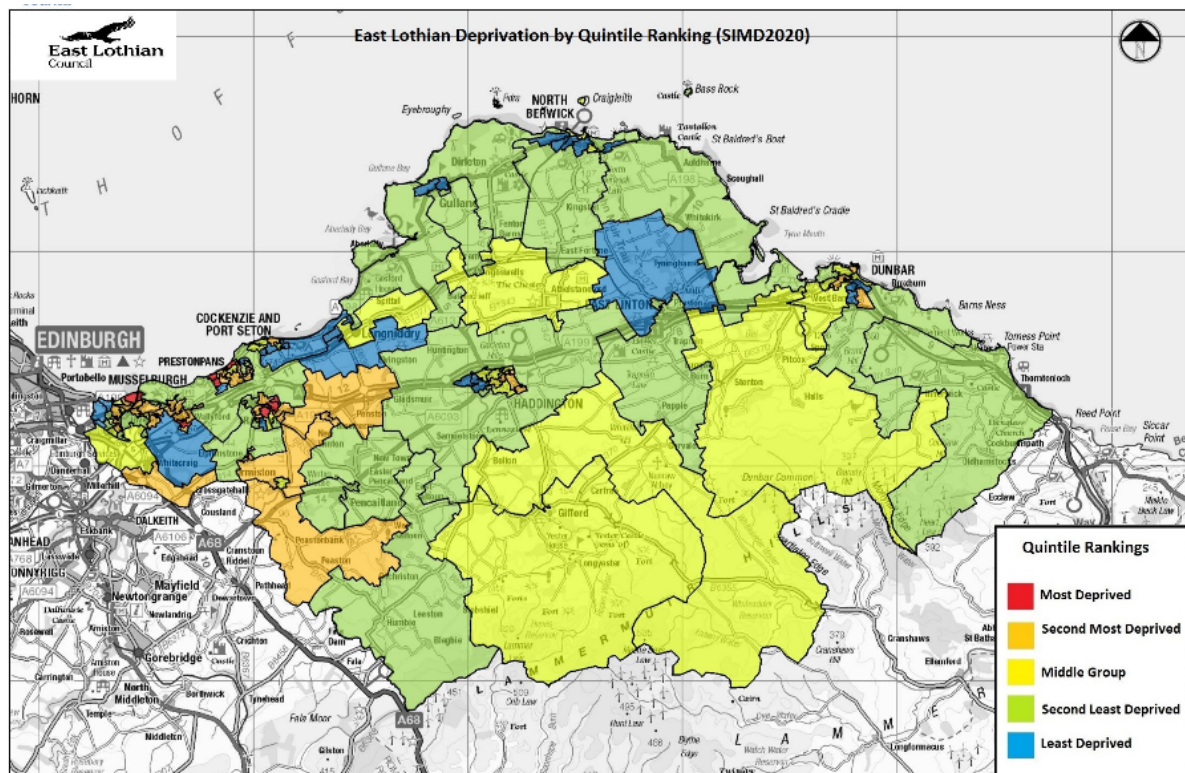
- School and Early Learning and Childcare leadership;
- Teacher and practitioner professionalism;
- Parental/carer involvement and engagement;
- Curriculum and assessment;
- School and Early Learning and Childcare improvement and
- Performance information

## 3 Context of East Lothian Council

### 3.1 Socio-Economic Context

East Lothian is made up of 132 data zones across 6 wards. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 showed that 8 of these data zones fall within the most deprived (quintile) 20% of areas in the whole of Scotland.

This is illustrated in the graphic below of data zone SIMD 2020 deprivation ranking by quintile in East Lothian:



The Council’s 2017-22 Council Plan and the Partnership’s 2017-2027 East Lothian Plan share the overarching objective of: **reducing inequalities within and across our communities**. The [Council’s 2022-2027 Plan](#) continues to hold this objective to **Reduce Poverty & Inequality**: Supporting our communities to deal with the growing levels of poverty and inequality.

### 3.2 Child Poverty in East Lothian

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 shows that East Lothian remains relatively less deprived than other Scottish local authorities, with the majority of East Lothian falling into the least deprived of the SIMD (26 of the 132 data zones in East Lothian are in the least deprived quintile 4). This is a conservative estimate, and many families live in private lets or rented accommodation in higher decile areas, living in hidden poverty, and surviving by working multiple jobs. <sup>1</sup>

The following table summarises the extent of child poverty in East Lothian:

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019 /20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
<b>% / No. of children &amp; young people in low-income households</b>	22.7% / 4,392	24.5% / 4,808	18.9% / 3,640

<sup>1</sup> [East Lothian Child Poverty Action Report 2020 22 \(3\).pdf](#)

### 3.3 Improvement Priorities

East Lothian Council's approaches ensure that we support our children and families to have the very best start in life and that they can go on to have fulfilling lives, better health and living longer.

We have a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All and work together to Get it Right for Every Child and to ensure that all our children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

To mitigate the impact of the poverty, we have **equity principles** which means that we:

- recognise the impact that poverty can have on the wellbeing, attainment and achievement of children and young people and are **rigorous in our approaches to mitigate this**.
- are **ambitious** for all our children and young people and it is our collective endeavour to **maximise on their school experiences and opportunities through our curriculum and coursing**.
- use **inclusive** approaches to **broaden the parameters of success** for children and young people.
- use **formative and summative assessment processes** to fully understand and support children / young people's progress and attainment.
- use **robust tracking and monitoring procedures** including **school attendance** to allow for the **early identification** of children and young people who are **at risk** of underachieving and put appropriate interventions in place.
- use **moderation** to inform our approaches to supporting attainment.
- **work collegiately** and with partners to provide support and help for children and young people where required.
- recognise the **positive impact that gaining qualifications and achievements** has on the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people and seek to **maximise** on these opportunities.

## 4 Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)

### 4.1 SAC Overview

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Refresh builds on the evidence of key publications including: the Scottish Government and Education Scotland's five year report<sup>2</sup> on progress toward

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-report-progress-2016-2021/>

closing the poverty related attainment gap; the Equity Audit<sup>3</sup>; the Audit Scotland Report on educational outcomes<sup>4</sup> and the OECD review<sup>5</sup>.

This will support East Lothian Council to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The SAC will provide support for children and young people through the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF); the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (CECYPF) and the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF).

East Lothian Council will consider the totality of Attainment Scotland Funding (Strategic Equity Funding (SEF), Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) & Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) funding) and work collaboratively with partners to evidence closing the attainment gap for our most vulnerable children and young people.

## 4.2 Pupil Equity Funding PEF

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is additional funding allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Scottish Government has committed to this funding from 2017/18 to 2025/26.

Schools will receive £1,225 in 2023/24 for each child in P1 to S3, or equivalent, who is registered for free school meals under national eligibility criteria. The allocations are fixed for the duration of the funding.

In line with Education Scotland's *Pupil Equity Fund: National Operational Guidance*<sup>6</sup> which advises Local Authorities to issue specific complementary guidance about how PEF will operate locally, East Lothian Council issued PEF Operating Guidance to all school in April 2023.

## 4.2 Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund

Underpinned by The Promise<sup>7</sup>, the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund is a targeted resource provided to local authorities to support care experienced children and young people from

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/impact-assessment/2021/01/equity-audit-deepening-understanding-impact-covid-19-school-building-closures-children-socio-economically-disadvantaged-backgrounds-setting-clear-areas-focus-accelerating-recovery/documents/equity-audit/equity-audit/govscot%3Adocument/equity-audit.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/improving-outcomes-for-young-people-through-school-education>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/bf624417-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/bf624417-en>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2023/06/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/documents/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/govscot%3Adocument/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://thepromise.scot/change-programme-one-pdf.pdf>

birth to the age of 26. The funding is provided to local authorities and aims to improve the educational outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

Through this fund, the post of an Education Support Officer for Care Experienced Children and Young People has been created (ESO CEYP). This role supports environments where care experienced learners will feel more settled, motivated, and resilient to ensure a better experience at school. This, in turn, will help to improve attendance, educational outcomes, and contribute to better life chances.

ESO CECYP is a senior member of education staff in a local authority who works at a strategic level, but not in a physical school building. ESO CECYP will support, track and monitor children and young people as if they attended a single school, however, children and young people will remain on their school roll.

To provide consistency of tracking and monitoring, stretch aims for the attainment and attendance of care experienced children and young people have been set for session 23/24. These are

#### 4.2.1 Stretch Aims

<b>School Attendance (Primary)</b>	Non-Care Experienced Levels %	Care Experienced %	Gap%
Level (22-23)	93	91.3	1.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	93.5	92.3	1.2
Improvement	0.5%	1%	0.5%

<b>School Attendance (Secondary)</b>	Non-Care Experienced Levels %	Care Experienced %	Gap %
Level (22-23)	86.1	77.1	9
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	87	80	7
Improvement	0.9	2.9	2

<b>ACEL Literacy (P1,4,7)</b>	Non-Care Experienced Levels %	Care Experienced %	Gap %
Level (22-23)	66.8	27.8	39
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	68	32.8	34
Improvement	1.2	5	5

ACEL Numeracy (P1,4,7)	Non-Care Experienced Levels %	Care Experienced %	Gap %
	Level (22-23)	74.5	27.8
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	76	32.8	41.7
Improvement	1.5	5	5

Leavers Attainment 5+@1, or more	Overall %	Care Experienced ( <i>Looked After on Insight</i> ) %	Gap %
	Level (21-22)	89.4	65.2
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	89.7	68.7	20.7
Improvement	0.3	3.5	4

### 4.3 Strategic Equity Fund (SEF)

Strategic Equity Funding is allocated to all local authorities to invest in approaches to close the poverty related attainment gap. Funding is based on Children in Low Income Families data. The allocation for East Lothian Council is:

2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£200,009	£397,793	£595,488	£793,182

To measure the impact of the SEF, there are associated 'core' and 'core plus' stretch aims for 2025/26 with annual iterations. The tables below illustrate the stretch aims for all children and young people and those living in quintiles one and five. There are also stretch aims for children and young people living in quintiles two, three and four. These are detailed in each school's Equity Tracker which are published on the first Friday of the month via Google.

#### 4.3.1 SEF Core Stretch Aims

All local authorities in Scotland are required to set core stretch aims in relation to:

	<b>Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels LITERACY P1,4,7</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	66	51	73	22
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	68	55	75	20
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	71	59	77	18
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	74	63	79	16
Improvement (%)	8	12	6	6

	<b>Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels NUMERACY P1,4,7</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	74	57	81	23
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	76	61	82	21
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	79	65	84	19
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	82	69	86	17
Improvement (%)	8	12	5	6

	<b>The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 (All Awards)</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	84.8	60.7	93.2	32.4
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	87.7	67	96	29
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	89	70	96.5	26.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	90.8	73	97	24
Improvement (%)	6	12.3	3.8	8.4

	<b>The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 (All Awards)</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	58.8	21.4	77.2	55.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	65.5	33	82	49
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	67.1	36	82.5	46.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	69	39	83	44
Improvement (%)	10.2	17.6	5.8	11.7

	<b>The proportion of 16–19-year-olds participating in education, employment, or training</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	96.1	91.5	98.9	7.4
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	96.4	91.9	99.0	7.1
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	96.6	92.2	99.1	6.9
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	96.9	92.5	99.2	6.7
Improvement (%)	0.8	1	0.3	0.7

	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing - Overall School Exclusions</b>			
	Overall levels rate	SIMD Quintile 1 rate	SIMD Quintile 5 rate	Gap (Q1-Q5) rate
Baseline	22.1	58.4	7.7	-50.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	19.6	55.5	7.7	-47.8
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	18.9	52.7	7.6	-45.1
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	18.3	50.1	7.5	-42.6
Improvement (%)	3.8	8.3	0.2	-8.1



### 4.3.2 SEF Core Plus Stretch Aims

East Lothian Council has also set core plus stretch aims in relation to:

	<b>Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels LITERACY S3</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	76	65	84	19
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	82	71	89	18
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	84	75	91	16
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	87	79	93	14
Improvement (%)	11	14	9	5

	<b>Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels NUMERACY S3</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	84	60	91	31
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	84	63	92	29
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	86	66	93	27
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	88	69	94	25
Improvement (%)	4	9	3	6

	<b>The proportion of school leavers attaining 5 or more passes at SCQF level 1 (All Awards)</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	89.4	67.9	95.4	27.6
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	89.7	68	96	28
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	91.3	71	97	26
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	93.2	74	98	24
Improvement (%)	3.8	6.1	2.6	3.6

	<b>The proportion of school leavers attaining 5 or more passes at SCQF level 5 (A-C)</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	53.3	17.9	73.1	55.2
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	58.3	29	76	47
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	60	35	76.5	41.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	62	41	77	36
Improvement (%)	8.7	23.1	3.9	19.2

	<b>The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more passes at SCQF level 6 (A-C)</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	55.7	19.6	75.3	55.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	60.1	26	77	51
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	61.2	29	77.5	48.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	63.2	32	78	46
Improvement (%)	7.5	12.4	2.7	9.7

	<b>The proportion of school leavers attaining Literacy at SCQF level 5</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	78.3	53.6	90	36.4
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	82.1	68	92	24
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	83.6	71	92.5	21.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	85.5	74	93	19
Improvement (%)	7.2	20.4	3	7.4

	<b>The proportion of school leavers attaining Numeracy at SCQF level 5</b>			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	66.1	41.1	83.1	42
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	71.1	48	84	36
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	72.9	52	84.5	32.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	74.6	56	85	29
Improvement (%)	8.5	14.9	1.9	13

Each school will also have an individual stretch aim for pupil attendance. This is based on the following sliding scale:

<b>Individual School Attendance 22/23</b>	<b>Minimum Annual Increase (23/24, 24/25 &amp; 25/26)</b>
Above 95%	Maintain
90-95%	0.5%
85-90%	1%
80-85%	1.5%

<b>Total ELC Figures</b>	<b>22/23 Rate</b>	<b>23/24 Stretch Aim %</b>	<b>24/25 Stretch Aim %</b>	<b>25/26 Stretch Aim %</b>
Primary	93	93.5	93.9	94.2
Secondary	85.9	87	88	89
Total	90	90.7	91.4	92

Each school's equity tracker will contain details of their attendance baseline and associated stretch aim.

#### 4.4 Tracking and Monitoring

To provide Head Teachers and key members of the senior and extended leadership teams with their progress towards stretch aims, on the first Friday of each month individual school equity trackers will be updated and shared via Google.

Equity trackers will be populated centrally by the Information and Research team to provide progress for individual schools.

The equity trackers will provide data which will facilitate support and challenge discussion with relevant central team link staff including the Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Inclusion, Quality Improvement Officers and Education Support Officers.

Progress towards stretch aims will also be captured in Education Scotland's Tri-annual reporting to the Scottish Government.

#### 4.5 Governance and Reporting

East Lothian Council will report on progress towards our stretch aims through our Education Progress Report and Improvement Plan. This is published annually and shared with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and East Lothian Council Education Committee.

**REPORT TO:** Education & Children’s Services Committee  
**MEETING DATE:** 19 March 2024  
**BY:** Executive Director, Education & Children’s Services  
**SUBJECT:** Head Teacher Appointment

**1 PURPOSE**

1.1 To inform the Committee of the Head Teacher appointment made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the following Head Teacher appointment.

**3 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The following Head Teacher appointment is intimated: -

School	Appointee	Commencement Date	Previous Post and School
Gullane Primary School	Steven Wood	19 April 2024	Gorebridge Primary School and Early Learning Centre

**4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

**5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

**6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Financial – None

6.2 Personnel – None

6.3 Other - None

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Nicola McDowell
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Head of Education
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	Email:- <a href="mailto:nmcdowell1@eastlothian.gov.uk">nmcdowell1@eastlothian.gov.uk</a>
<b>DATE</b>	8 February 2024

**REPORT TO:** Education and Children's Services Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 19 March 2024

**BY:** Executive Director, Education and Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Belonging to East Lothian

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7

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To update Committee on the progress of the joint work across Education and Children's Services to meet the needs of our children and young people within East Lothian and where possible in their own communities, and to seek to avoid having care and Education needs met outwith the authority.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to:
- i. Note the overall positive progress made by Education and Children's Services to avoid placements outwith the authority and meet the needs of our young people within East Lothian
  - ii. Note the planned joint next steps.

**3. BACKGROUND**

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- 3.1 Children's Services provide statutory children's social work interventions for children, young people and their families in East Lothian.

Our joint work with Education focusses on early support and our commitment to the Promise is evident as we support more children to belong in their families and communities. This is shown in the gradual reduction of children becoming looked after which has reduced from 237 in 2020/2021 to 166 in January 2024.

- 3.2 For a number of years, referrals to children's social work have increased and while less children are requiring care out with their family, the needs of children and young people have grown in complexity and risk since the COVID-19 pandemic. We are pleased with our Promise focused

developments, however, there continues to be some children and young people who cannot remain safely with their family.

- 3.3 Due to local resource challenges, this has resulted in more children and young people requiring an external fostering or residential placement. This is expensive and there is clear evidence that external placements do not always result in positive outcomes for the majority of children. Especially as they become separated from their family, networks, and communities.
- 3.4 Our vision to improve outcomes for children and young people underpinned the whole service redesign of Children's Services undertaken in 2020/2021. This involved a complete restructure of children's social work to ensure that the right staff were in the right place to reduce the number of children who require care out with their families. In turn, we believed that this would reduce the demand for external placements.
- 3.5 In line with The Promise, we are able to evidence that despite month-on-month referral increases, Children's Services has reduced the number of children who are looked after and we have slowed down the rate of children moving into external residential care. We are also steadily bringing young people back to East Lothian.
- 3.6 Children's Services are working closely with the Education service to strengthen our Belonging to East Lothian approach. We need to ensure that there are sufficient care and Education opportunities for children who cannot reside safely with their families and acknowledge there are a number of interlinking factors impacting the availability of such resources:
- Local and national fostering recruitment crisis.
  - National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
  - Local and national housing crisis, including lack of supported accommodation for care experienced young people.

## **EDUCATION**

- 3.7 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was felt by all children and young people but particularly by those experiencing social and economic disadvantage.
- 3.8 This, coupled with the effects of the current cost of living crisis, has resulted in a small yet significant proportion of children and young people who are struggling to attend school or engage in prolonged periods of meaningful learning when there.
- 3.9 Our approaches to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) in East Lothian Council are robust and through the Child Planning Framework, children and young people are able to access a range of supports at



school level and at wider local authority level through such provisions as the Single Point of Access, the Educational Psychology Service and Exceptional Needs funding.

- 3.10 We are also able to provide supports through partnerships with third sector providers.
- 3.11 Whilst these supports are effective at meeting the needs of most children and young people, there are some children and young people for whom they are having limited impact.
- 3.12 The reasons for this are complex and in many cases understanding this complexity requires a high level of expertise and multi-agency perspectives.
- 3.13 In these cases, the solutions are often not to be found in trying to access additional supports for a child or young person but rather in a multi-agency, solutions orientated dialogue and the formulation of SMART targets to improve wellbeing.
- 3.14 Continuous self-evaluation and our commitment to keeping The Promise, along with the ambitions set out in East Lothian's Corporate Parenting Plan to ensure that families are supported to stay safely together at home, have identified Early Intervention and as a key objective of the Transforming Services for Children Programme. As a result, in early 2023, a short life working group was created. This group brought together a number of Council and partner services working with children, young people and families across the authority.
- 3.15 Through this self-evaluation and joint-working, a Child Planning Framework – Locality Team (CPF–LT) pilot was created covering the Preston, Seton and Gosford area of East Lothian.

### **KEY SUCCESSES, SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS**

- 3.16 Children's Services continue to use Signs of Safety as our practice model. This is a strength and safety led approach to support families to find their own solutions to problems, using detailed safety planning and networks of support.
- 3.17 Driven by The Promise, the Children's Services workforce is actively changing the way we deliver social work and there is evidence of significant practice changes, allowing more risks to be managed in local communities.
- 3.18 We continue to develop our outreach service and have three workers available flexibly over seven days to support children, young people and families at risk of breakdown.

- 3.19 We have commissioned Action for Children to deliver a new intensive outreach project for young people at risk of external or secure care. This is also available over seven days and has already resulted in positive early results in preventing accommodation.
- 3.20 We have worked closely with finance and will be presenting a report to Cabinet in March 2024 to seek approval for an increase to the East Lothian fostering fee. If approved, we will relaunch our fostering recruitment campaigns with a view to attracting more local people with the skills to look after our most vulnerable children.
- 3.21 We are piloting a new approach to provide supported accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People. Two properties are being developed with visiting support. This will free up three vacancies in Lothian Villa and provide a more suitable and needs led care approach for the young people seeking asylum.
- 3.22 Housing and Children's Services are reviewing and refreshing our supported accommodation offer across East Lothian to ensure that we have enough capacity to support young people moving on from care and for young people at risk of homelessness. This will allow young people to have appropriate, supportive options when they are ready to leave care and avoid children remaining in care placements longer than they need to.
- 3.23 Children's Services are fully committed to meeting the needs of children and young people within their own communities. We will continue to focus on preventing accommodation when children are safe and loved and increasing the capacity of internal care resources so that children can remain in their own communities.
- 3.24 Working alongside Education is an essential part of Belonging to East Lothian. Our joint efforts to increase placements, services and support for children and young people will help us to improve early intervention and ensure sufficient local resources for the small number of children who require significant, targeted support. Our joint efforts to improve early intervention and prevention are also a crucial component of Belonging to East Lothian.
- 3.25 CPF-LTs are an integral part of East Lothian Council's approach to GIRFEC through the Child Planning Framework. They are part of a continuum of support to facilitate multi-agency, solutions orientated discussions around the wellbeing of identified children and young people.
- 3.26 The CPF-LT draws on the multi-agency expertise and capacity within the locality. This includes, but is not limited to, senior school leaders, Children's Services colleagues, youth work partners and Education Support Officers with expertise in inclusion and wellbeing. It is not a resource allocation group.

- 3.27 The CPF-LTs work in partnership with children and young people and their parents/carers to ensure: choice, full agreement with and understanding of the process and that their views are actively sought and form an integral part of all discussions and the ensuing recommended targets.
- 3.28 It is anticipated that children and young people referred to their CPF-LT will be at the additional level of the Child Planning Framework.
- 3.29 There are also referral criteria including children and young people having active child plans and having had a minimum of two child planning meetings. This is to ensure that the CPF-LT does not replicate existing GIRFEC mechanisms but provides a continuum of support at the right time.
- 3.30 Through tracking and monitoring procedures, data collected about the nature of the individual referrals will inform patterns of need and provide quality assurance around the Child Planning Framework.
- 3.31 To complement the work being undertaken in the Preston Seton Gosford area by Connected Communities, this locality was selected as the first locality to pilot the CPF-LT. The first meeting of the CPF-LT was in April 2023.
- 3.32 To ensure consistency of membership and the richness of discussions, meeting dates are arranged one year in advance. CPF-LT meetings will take place every eight weeks during term time.
- 3.33 An initial evaluation of the process at Preston Seton Gosford was undertaken and the following strengths were noted:
- general consensus that the model and processes are effective
  - the opportunity to bring people together for purposeful multi-agency discussions
  - greater awareness of community supports available
  - an important part of the early intervention and prevention strategy (now known as Belonging to East Lothian)
  - improving understanding of patterns of need and where to target resources
  - a supportive structure for staff to ensure that they are not 'missing anything' in meeting the wellbeing needs of their most vulnerable learners
  - the administrative support funded through the Strategic Equity Fund is critical to ensuring the good order of the process
  - helps to inform Children's Services about possible referrals and levels of thresholds for support
  - the thresholds for referral to the CPF-LT (active Child & Young Person plan, minimum of two child planning meetings and referrals to services such as Single Point of Access) are considered appropriate

- 3.34 To date CPF-LTs, have now also been established in Tranent and North Berwick, with plans to expand to the remaining localities before summer 2024.
- 3.35 During the school session 2023/24 all locality areas will be supported to establish their own CPF-LT. These will be established on a rolling programme to support a ‘test of change’ model which allows for learning and refinement of the process.
- 3.36 Further work is planned to develop supports specifically relating to children and young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The reporting of performance and the planning for improvement is a statutory duty placed on the education authority. The annual publication of a Progress Report and Improvement Plan demonstrates the Council’s commitment to fulfilling this duty.

#### **5. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

#### **6. RESOURCE IMPLICATION**

- 6.1 Financial – none
- 6.2 Personnel - none
- 6.3 Other - none

#### **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

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<b>DATE</b>	19 March 2024