



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

**TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER, 10:00am
VIA HYBRID SYSTEM**

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Committee Members Present:

Councillor Bennett
Councillor Bruce (remote)
Councillor Dugdale – Convener
Councillor Findlay (remote)
Councillor Gilbert (remote)
Councillor Hampshire
Councillor McFarlane
Councillor McIntosh (remote)
Councillor Ritchie
Councillor Yorkston
Mr S Gilmour-Jack (remote)
Reverend Sheridan (remote)

Council Officials Present:

Ms L Brown - Executive Director of Education and Children's Services
Ms N McDowell - Head of Education
Ms H Barnett – Head of Corporate Support (remote)
Ms J Boyle – Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Inclusion
Ms A Cameron – Service Manager – Early Years and Childcare
Ms B Skirrow - Principal Officer (Education Service)
Ms J Allen - Communications Adviser
Mr N Trussler – Quality Improvement Officer, Education
Ms A Harrison – Principal Education Psychologist
Ms J Fraser – General Manager, Children's Services (remote)
Ms K Haspolat – Quality Improvement Officer, Education
Ms L Ayton – Principal Officer, Equity & Inclusion
Mr A Stewart – Quality Improvement Officer, SEIC

Teachers Present:

Ms J Mackinnon – Head Teacher, Dunbar Primary School
Mr B Moody – Head Teacher, Athelstaneford & Dirleton Primary School
Mr S Brown – previous Head Teacher, Athelstaneford Primary School & Acting Head Teacher, Yester Primary School
Ms D Mercer – Head Teacher, Campie Primary School
Mr P Reynolds – Head Teacher, Ross High
Ms S Skinner – Head Teacher, Longniddry Primary School

Clerk:

Ms L Gillingwater
Ms F Currie

Other Elected Members present:

Apologies:

Councillor Menzies

Councillor Trotter

Declarations of Interest:

None

Prior to the commencement of business, the Clerk advised that the meeting was being held using the Council's hybrid system and 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 congratulated Bev Skirrow on her appointment as Service Manager for Strategy and Operations and highlighted East Lothian was a finalist in three categories with regards to Wallyford Learning Campus; Client of the Year, Inspiring Learning Spaces and Project of the Year at the Learning Places Awards.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON 18 JUNE 2024

The minutes of the Education Committee meeting of 18 June 2024 were approved as an accurate record. Councillor Ritchie asked for her attendance to be added to the minute.

2. EDUCATION SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, 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 2023/24 and identification of key priorities planned for sessions 2024/25.

Ms Nicola McDowell, Head of Education reported the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 places a duty on the Education Authority to annual prepare and publish a report on it's success in meeting the objectives set out in the most recently published Education Local Improvement Plan. She drew Members attention to the work completed by the Education Service to review progress from last session as a method of self-evaluation as well as officers and peer Head Teachers completing reviews of school standards, quality reports and school improvement plans to ascertain where further improvement is required. Ms McDowell confirmed the focus for session 2024/25 continues to be "Back to Basics – a Relentless Focus on Equity and Excellence" with plans for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to continue to be amalgamated into school improvement plans to ensure a holistic approach to improvement planning, specifically relating to raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Ms McDowell highlighted the aim of the Education and Children's Services Directorate to continue to develop an integrated service that seeks to get it right for all our children. She also noted the key successes, provided a summary of progress and drew Members attention to the next steps and priorities which are based on the five priorities from the last school session, matching those of the National Improvement Framework. Ms McDowell asked Members to note that while over the last three years priorities have been based on recovery, it is now recognised recovery is the new normal therefore a new year three planning cycle has begun. To support continuous improvement linked to inspection, review and self-evaluation outcomes, the priorities for the next three years will be focussed on the key inspection quality indicators; 2.2 Curriculum, 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment, 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion and 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement.

Councillor Hampshire asked how the Education Service will deliver their plan given the financial challenges the Council is facing. Ms McDowell confirmed affordability is always taken into consideration when building the plan and as a service they work hard to deliver their priorities within the budget they have. She confirmed the priorities reflect the Council's three refreshed priorities which the service is very committed to, in particular the first two which is ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council through the delivery of approved savings and transforming the way services are delivered as well as targeting resources on statutory services to focus on children at the highest risk and those most in need.

Responding to a question from Councillor Bennett, Ms McDowell stated the service made sure to engage with a wider range of stakeholders in terms of improvement planning and explained the template used within schools to do their own improvement planning required them to detail how they were consulting with stakeholders whether that is parents/carers, children and young people, parent councils or a range of professionals. All the information gathered in those forms is then amalgamated to ensure it feeds into the wider service improvement planning process.

Ms McDowell, Mr Nick Trussler, Quality Improvement Officer and Ms Jennifer Boyle Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Inclusion continued to answer questions from Members providing information on work that had been undertaken to strengthen the pupil voice, the Stand Up and Be Counted Library Service and how young people from the LGBTQ community have participated in helping to create the Gender Recognition Statement. Ms Boyle confirmed the statement was not yet ready for Committee and this would be brought at a later stage when it was finalised.

Councillor McIntosh asked for more information on the Test of Change Project and the impact it will have on young people now that this has completed. Ms Anita Harrison, Principal Educational Psychologist explained there were five National Test of Change sites where the NHS and Education combined to look at ways of making the pathways easier for children, young people and their families to navigate. This included work on the clinical assessment aspect and developing a range of supports and resources for children and young people to support their mental health and wellbeing. Ms Harrison noted the Test of Change project came to an end in March 2024 and a full and robust report was then provided to the Scottish Government which feedback will be provided on. She added that the Education Service will look at how they can take forward learning from the project to focus on training for staff in schools and a broader range of support for children and young people with a single point of access. She added that as part of the report provided to the Scottish

Government, a consultation took place with families asking them what areas they would like to see further support, which included; specific social groups and opportunities, support to access existing social opportunities, post diagnosis support, parenting groups and stay and play facilities. Ms Harrison highlighted the NHS are interested in looking at tech to reduce waiting times for the assessment process and have been linked with a professor at Glasgow University to take this idea forward. She confirmed all five sites included in the project provided a report to the Scottish Government and these will be summarised with feedback provided to COSLA and the Scottish Government Joint Strategy Board in December.

Responding to further questions from Councillor McIntosh, Ms Harrison explained there are a range of offers within the department such as the Educational Psychology Service would look to provide an assessment and advice around strategies and supports and the mental health and wellbeing single point of access would provide supports and indirect interventions for children and young people who had a difficult time learning within the school setting. She added the Education Outreach Team would also support young people to continue with their educational progress and attainment within a variety of flexible, creative ways. Ms McDowell stated a lot of work is being done on attendance within schools with Educational Support Officers visiting Head Teachers and senior staff on a regular basis. She confirmed a further report on attainment would be coming to Committee in March and she would be happy to provide more information on attendance and ways the team are engaging with children and their families to support them in attending school in some way.

Councillor Gilbert asked if current financial constraints have had any negative impacts on the plan. Ms McDowell stated affordability was at the forefront of minds when creating the plan to make sure the priorities put forward can be achieved within the budget available to the department. She added at the moment there is no perceived negative impact on the plan, but future updates will be provided to Committee on the progress being made.

Responding to questions from Councillor Findlay, Ms Karen Haspolat, Quality Improvement Officer provided an update on the numeracy and mathematics work that has been undertaken within schools in East Lothian which included a key focus on numeracy assessment, numeracy pedagogy and putting in place frameworks along with tracking children's attainment through nursery and supporting their transition into primary one. She added that a refresh of the curriculum was happening across Scotland with a national response to improvement being overseen by the Mathematics Board. Ms Haspolat confirmed she is a member of that board therefore anything happening nationally will be used to support East Lothians own strategy. She was happy to provide the data on S3 pupils to Councillor Findlay following the meeting.

Councillor Bruce noted that the combined literacy attainment of P1, P4 and P7 pupils showed East Lothian sitting below the national average and asked what work had been done to improve this. Ms McDowell reported work was currently being done on strengthening systems to track pupil progress and on teacher judgement. She explained pupils in P1, P4 and P7 do not sit tests to show the level they are working at, and this is instead based on teacher judgement therefore work is underway to ensure moderation with staff across schools, sectors and stages to make sure decisions on children's progress is accurate. Ms McDowell confirmed due to this work the baseline is now correct and we should be on the road to showing raised attainment and progress towards stretch aims and she is hopeful to report on these improvements in March. Responding to a follow up question from Councillor Bruce,

Ms McDowell stated in some cases we had underreported on where our attainment was sitting.

Responding to questions from Councillor Yorkston, Ms McDowell provided information on how the department takes account of national and local expectations when developing the progress report and improvement plan including the National Numeracy Group, using the ADES networks to hear from colleagues across Scotland about what other local authorities are doing, visiting other areas to see their good practice, meeting regularly with our Senior Regional Advisor from Education Scotland and our inspection link to discuss inspection results and action plans. She added that through ADES the Heads of Service across Scotland have been put into groups with other local authorities of a similar demographic to support and challenge each other with their improvement priorities and attainment. Ms McDowell confirmed that other local authorities have visited schools within East Lothian as well as staff from here visiting other local authorities.

Councillor Hampshire thanked the team for bringing the improvement plan to Committee and thanked all staff within schools throughout East Lothian. He noted the difficulties the department faces to deliver actions within the plan due to the current financial situation but praised their ability to still deliver a quality education service. Councillor Hampshire highlighted the work being done on children's health and well being within schools and thanked staff for the work being done around this.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Ms McDowell for her report and was heartened to know work on strengthening the representation of pupil voice was being done to allow as many diverse voices to be heard in each school setting. She welcomed the success and progress being made and valued the development of priorities being on a three cycle but still updated annually as it showed the department were being responsive to changes. Councillor Dugdale looked forward to the report from the Scottish Government on the work undertaken within East Lothian to contribute towards the national knowledge of our neurodiverse learners.

Decision

The agreed to:

- i) Note the overall positive progress made by the Education Service in delivery of the Council's Plan, the Education Progress and Improvement Plan 2023/24 and the priorities within the National Improvement Framework.
- ii) Note the steps being taken to secure continuous improvement in session 2024/25.
- iii) Approve the Progress Report and Improvement Plan 2024/25 (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.

A roll call vote was carried out for the approval of the Progress Report and Improvement Plan 2024/25. This was approved unanimously.

3. CHILDRENS SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to provide an update to Committee about the Children's Services Business Plan 2023-2026, which sets out the key priorities for the service. The Plan was reviewed and refreshed in September 2024 to ensure it aligns to the new Council priorities.

Ms Jennifer Fraser, General Manager – Children’s Services reported the reviewed plan sets out the vision, aims and operating principles within the service and is aligned with the shared ambition of East Lothian’s Children’s Strategic Partnership and Children’s Service Plan. She noted the key successes which included; an increase to East Lothian’s fostering fee, new Family Support and Outreach Service and a new Parent Partner Scheme. She made Members aware that despite the significant increase in demand for services and complexity, the Signs of Safety practice approach to working alongside families and the commitment to meeting the Promise had resulted in a reduction of children requiring accommodation. Ms Fraser highlighted the key outcomes, ongoing pressures and risks within Children’s Services and noted the five priority outcomes of the Business Plan;

- We will ensure our practice and our service prevents the need for children and young people to leave their family where this is safely possible;
- We will build capacity in our internal care resources;
- We will bring children and young people back to East Lothian from external placements;
- We will embed the systemic approach to self-evaluation, performance management and quality assurance and;
- We will have a sufficient, confident, skilled, supported workforce.

She added the service was confident that the plan includes the right actions to meet the Promise, support the Belonging to East Lothian approach, and to ensure that children and young people have the best chance to remain safely within their families and communities when this is possible.

Councillor Ritchie asked to hear more about the Family Support and Outreach and had there been any feedback from this service. Ms Fraser confirmed the Outreach Programme was specifically for families who required more intensive support as it was available seven days a week which is not something the service had been able to offer consistently before. She noted that this service has stopped a number of children from being accommodated and there was now a seamless referral process for crisis check-in support for weekend high risk and positive outcomes have been reported from referrals being received at the right time. Ms Fraser stated there had been an unanticipated level of demand for post-adoption support referrals which have made up 25% of referrals to the outreach team so this is something the adoption and kinship team will be looking at more closely going forward. She explained the key focus of the service at the minute is for social workers to identify families who require the level of support as you can see an escalating picture through their history so the timing for intensive intervention is crucial to having the biggest impact as well as using the team to build relationships with children who have a plan to return home parallel with parenting support to enable the best chance of a return home being sustainable.

Responding to a follow-up question from Councillor Ritchie, Ms Fraser confirmed there was no direct work done with community organisations but the service did work collaboratively with Connected Communities and Families Together East Lothian to complete early intervention work whereas the outreach service is for children who are at significant risk of harm and require crisis intervention which is why there is a tiered approach for intervention at different levels for families to access when they need it.

Councillor Yorkston asked why the service felt like there was a need for a restructure and redesign to take place. Ms Fraser explained that in terms of data more children were being accommodated than before and felt weren’t set up in a way to allow practice in line with The Promise and became a focus and changing needs of children and families. She added that the family support service required clearer

timelines and oversight, children and families were not getting support from right part of service due to blocks and certain things within the service needed to be brought into line with national priorities as well as more focus on youth justice due to increasing demand and risk in particular areas.

Responding to a further questions from Councillor Yorkston, Ms Fraser reported for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people a daily fee was received from home office to provide housing, clothing, education, living costs and staff to support them but often the daily fee does not cover all their needs. She explained this part of the service had grown considerably over the last few year and discussions were ongoing between the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Home Office to address this.

Councillor McIntosh asked for an explanation about the red, amber and green colouring on the action plan. Ms Fraser explained the RAG rating was helpful for monitoring and monthly business meetings and Performance and Care Governance meetings in terms of the actions. She noted the red action mentioned in regard to the Promise was because the Brightspot survey had suffered technical issues.

Responding to follow up questions from Councillor McIntosh relating to formal and informal kinship care and self-directed support payments, Ms Fraser confirmed financial support was offered to those families following the informal route to gain a Section 11 which removes a child from being formally looked after. She advised Members these children would continue to receive the same support, financially, practically and emotionally as children who were in formal kinship care placements. Ms Fraser explained informal kinship arrangements are not classed looked after and accommodated so are not subject to same review process and not in hearing system and they would not be eligible for through care and after care support. She reported that it had been identified challenging for families in current climate to employ their own PA's therefore it was the duty of the service to think of alternatives to that so work with adult services is in the early stages.

Councillor Dugdale asked what we are doing to look after the wellbeing of staff. Ms Fraser reported this field was challenging and management were aware of the impact of stress and burn out on the work force therefore changes had been made to supervision procedures with more focus on support and development. She confirmed adjustments had also been made to the personal review and development process with the addition of a Keeping Well section and the in most recent staff survey social work scored highly for development opportunities and reported staff felt supported and confident which was good reassurance for the service.

Councillor Ritchie commended the really important work of supporting families as this was key to delivering on The Promise and was encouraged to see focus on increasing capacity and that staff are supported and equipped to meet the needs of children especially in light of budget pressures. She added The Promise and delivering on it for our children and young people was one of the most important things we can be doing as a Council so was pleased to see this report brought to Committee.

Councillor Hampshire highlighted the significant reduction in children and young people who were looked after and accommodated and in residential care since 2023 which resulted in a reduction in cost to the service however, they remained under huge pressure financially due to demands increasing every year. He thanked staff for all they do with limited budget but made it clear the service needed urgent new funding due to the harm that can come to children unless resource and support is

available. Councillor Hampshire once again thanked staff for the plan in front of us and for the work they do protecting children and young people across East Lothian.

Councillor McIntosh thanked the staff for the plan and was pleased to see work over the years come to fruition. She also thanked the Champions Board who also input into this work to ensure the voice young people is embedded into it. Councillor McIntosh noted a celebration event for the Champions Board was taking place next Wednesday at Queen Margaret Union and encouraged all to attend.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Ms Fraser and everyone else who worked to achieve all the service does. She highlighted the range of work to support children and families in East Lothian and the demand on services always increasing and complexity of need is greater than ever has been before but even with this being the service have achieved a reduction in number of children and young people who are looked after and accommodated. Councillor Dugdale made Members aware of the recent joint inspection which showed the effectiveness of multiagency approaches to help to meet needs of children, families and young people earlier and noted these innovations take work, time and highly motivated, dedicated staff and all of this is done while also keeping an eye on budgets.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the overall positive progress made by Children's Services and key success to date.
- ii. Note the newly aligned Children's Services Business Plan 2023-26 (Appendix 1).

4. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF DUNBAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

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 Dunbar Primary School.

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 to evaluate the quality of provision at Dunbar Primary School. She noted Dunbar Nursery Class was not part of the inspection process as it was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within 18 months of the school inspection.

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 Dunbar Primary School as a result of the inspection.

Ms Haspolat reported the summary of inspection findings could be found within the report and highlighted Dunbar Primary School secured gradings of 3 or satisfactory for all quality indicators inspected in the school. 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 was delighted the hard work of staff had been recognised.

Councillor Hampshire asked what supports had been provided by the authority since the inspection. Ms Haspolat confirmed support and challenge were provided to the school pre and post inspection and it has been agreed as part of a service level agreement that the Quality Improvement Officer, Council officers, Head Teachers, other senior leaders and partners such as Education Scotland would continue to offer this support. Ms Haspolat has worked with senior leaders and staff within the school around their understanding of their data and moderation, both of which were areas for improvement identified during the inspection. She noted the school Education Support Officer had been involved in developing and supporting an action plan for the school. Ms Jacqui Mackinnon, Head Teacher at Dunbar Primary School confirmed they had received a huge amount of support pre and post inspection from the whole department which she and staff were extremely appreciative of as well as support from other Head Teachers from matched schools to discuss best practice. She gave specific thanks to Ms Haspolat for her ongoing support and highlighted the benefit to the school of the Pedagogy Team.

Responding to a follow up question from Councillor Hampshire, Ms Mackinnon stated responses from parent questionnaires were low and parent council meetings were poorly attended but parents would always attend events ran by their children and the school wanted to capitalise on this therefore a series of events have been run over the year to allow children to bring an adult from their life into school so they can be educated on how the school is educating children on numeracy so it ties back into the improvement plan. She noted the parent council has now gone from 8 members to 42 after support from Leanne Ayton and Bev Skirrow and this helps provide constant dialogue between the school and the community and the three school priorities all have a parental focus to them. Ms Mackinnon explained if there have been any issues raised by parents, once resolved staff look at how this experience can be used to shape our future.

Responding to a question from Councillor Yorkston, Ms Haspolat explained there is a rolling programme for quality improvement programmes but there is also a service level agreement with each school in East Lothian, so support and challenge is negotiated with Head Teachers and Quality Improvement Officers. She noted post pandemic the Quality Improvement Team have embarked on an ambitious review programme with primary and secondary schools and where reviews were carried out in partnership with each school using various review models to reflect the different context and positions schools.

Councillor Dugdale asked how the key strengths in leadership has continued to develop and how this is supporting improvements within the school. Ms Mackinnon confirmed the Senior Leadership Team had been restructured so the role of the Depute Head Teachers has been changed to improve the relationship between them and pupils and they are responsible for the attainment and support of each child within their campus to allow for smoother transition.

Councillor Hampshire thanked Ms Mackinnon and her staff within the school for their hard work and felt confident the improvements stated within the report would be carried out. He highlighted Dunbar was a strong community and with parental support he felt the school will go from strength to strength.

Councillor Dugdale also thanked Ms Mackinnon for attending today and answering questions from Members and thanked Ms Haspolat for her report. She highlighted

the key strengths from the report and felt reassured after hearing about the work being undertaken for the areas of improvement.

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 (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- iii. 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.
- iv. Note the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team and progress made since the inspection.

5. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION REPORT OF ATHELSTANEFORD 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 Athelstaneford Primary School and Nursery Class.

Mr Nick Trussler, Quality Improvement Officer for Education noted the inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS? 4) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC?) quality indicators for nursery class inspections to evaluate the quality of provision at Athelstaneford Primary School and Nursery and Early Years provisions.

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 main findings of the inspection team and a summary of the schools capacity to improve the quality of its own work which meant inspectors would not return to Athelstaneford Primary School as a result of the inspection.

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

Mr Trussler confirmed he would continue to work closely with the Head Teacher and staff to provide professional advice and support and challenge in the areas for improvement. He assured Members that the Education Service was confident in the plans for continued improvement for the next session in the primary school and was delighted the hard work of staff had been recognised.

Councillor Bennett asked if Mr Trussler could expand on how the Education Service learns from Education Scotland's inspections and how does it use the findings to effect change and improvements across schools. Mr Trussler explained the Quality Improvement Team considers outcomes from a range of inspections even wider than East Lothian to identify effective practice and there are several Head Teachers who are Associate Assessors and support Education Scotland inspections nationally which allows for inspection learning across schools by supporting our own school review programme and sharing non-school specific learning with associated colleagues at associated school group and team level. He also provided an example of how East Lothian has taken learning and applied this to the quality assurance processes used within their schools by the use of quality assurance calendars.

Responding to a question from Councillor Dugdale, Mr Trussler explained post inspection Head Teachers and staff will review their current school improvement priorities and actions against the findings of inspection to support schools to rationalise current improvement focuses and prioritises these moving forward and confirmed Mr Brown and Mr Moody had collaborated to do this. Mr Moody confirmed most of the actions put in place by himself and Mr Brown had been implemented and they had revisited plans to include a clear focus on assessment and these plans were discussed regularly with teachers.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Mr Trussler for his report and thanked Mr Moody and Mr Brown for their attendance at Committee. She noted the many strengths from the report highlighting the children within the nursery and primary school have an understanding of their rights and their voices being heard.

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 (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- iii) Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 3).
- iv) Note that because of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will not make a follow-up visit in connection with this inspection.
- v) Note the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team and progress made since the inspection.

6. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF CAMPIE 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 Campie Primary School and Nursery Class.

Mr Nick Trussler, Quality Improvement Officer for Education noted the inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS? 4) quality indicators for primary inspections and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC?) quality indicators for nursery class inspections to evaluate the quality of provision at Campie 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 main findings of the inspection team and a summary of the schools capacity to improve the quality of its own work. He stated although most findings were satisfactory across primary classes these were graded as weak across Early Learning and Childcare. The overall grading across the primary school and nursery classes means inspectors will return to Campie Primary School as a result of this inspection within 12 months.

Mr Trussler reported the summary of inspection findings could be found within the report and highlighted Campie Primary School secured gradings of 3 or satisfactory for all quality indicators inspected in the school and 2 or weak for all quality indicators

within the nursery class. Mr Trussler highlighted the key strengths and areas for improvement found during the inspection.

Mr Trussler confirmed he would continue to work closely with the Head Teacher and staff to provide professional advice and support and challenge in the areas for improvement. He assured Members that the Education Service was confident in the plans for continued improvement for the next session in the primary school and was delighted the hard work of staff had been recognised.

Councillor McFarlane asked since the inspection in April what improvement changes had been implemented and what impact have these had. Mr Trussler since the inspection and before the publication of the report, he and senior leaders had reviewed the summary of inspection findings and drafted an improvement plan for 2024/25 to reflect the main improvement priorities identified in the inspection letter to parents. He confirmed this plan had been shared with staff within the primary school and nursery classes. Mrs Mercer, Head Teacher Campie Primary School reported the implementation of the quality assurance calendar has led to an improvement in teachers planning, the quality of experience and outcomes for children and an increased professional dialogue around the curriculum. She added a great deal of time had been spent identifying support needs across the school, reorganisation of support staff, quality input from the Pedagogy Team, developing Pupil Leadership Groups inline with the Rights Respecting School programme and the school are expected to receive their gold award by the end of the session. Mrs Mercer noted parents and carers now receive a weekly update on what is happening around the school which includes school improvement and Google Classroom is now being updated weekly so all parents and carers have a forum where they can read about their childrens learning as well as the relaunch of the Campie Code and Campie Way and the introduction of the Zones of Regulation. Ms Alison Cameron, Service Manager – Early Learning and Childcare reported she and Mr Trussler had been working alongside Mrs Mercer and her team to look at the service level agreement from an early learning and childcare perspective to focus on four key quality indicators from How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare; Leadership of Change, Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion and Securing Childrens Progress. She added an identified Educational Support Officer is leading on this work who is joined by Quality and Equity Leads to work across the nursery with the team. Ms Cameron explained so far this term the early learning and childcare central team have provided training on the four refreshed building high quality and foundations documents; Environment, Observations, Planning and Learning Stories with the initial focus being on developing high quality curricular observations linked to meaningful planning. She provided Members with further information on the work of the Quality and Equity Leads, the Senior Early Years Practitioner and the Education Support Officer within Campie Nursery. Ms Cameron stated as an Early Learning and Childcare Team they would continue to provide advice, support and challenge on evaluation of judgments on all quality indicators and give guidance and support where required.

Responding to questions from Councillor McIntosh, Ms Cameron stated the Council have to ensure they are meeting their legislative responsibility particularly under safeguarding to make sure all personal plans are in place for children and ensuring equity and inclusion are at the forefront of everything. She added one of the main points have been to support staff to understand how to support children with specific needs or who may become dysregulated and also to ensure the Childs Planning Framework is up to date and strategies are documented to support all children who need them within the setting. Ms Cameron confirmed it was absolutely critical to have all processes followed and that they are documented especially within a nursery setting due to the number of practitioners working with children therefore they need to be

ready. available and understand the needs of children and can only do that if communicating clearly through the child's plan and also with parents.

Councillor McIntosh also asked if we were satisfied or has there been a risk that any child has been placed at risk of harm due to there not being full safeguarding processes in place. Mr Trussler explained as part of inspections the quality indicator for safeguarding and wellbeing is looked at and as a result of the inspection process there were a range of factors which were highlighted during inspection, and these were addressed, and a solution put in place. He added since the beginning of this school session the school has received support from our Educational Support Officer for Child and Public Protection to carry out a full review of the quality indicator on safeguarding and some small improvements have been highlighted and identified so the team are extremely confident that the concerns raised during the inspection have been addressed, the practice has been improved and children are indeed safe and well while in school.

Responding to a question from Councillor Ritchie, Mr Trusser confirmed the Quality Improvement Team provided two reviews to the school prior to the inspection, one in session 2021/22 and then again in 2022/23 which provided additional evidence to senior leaders regarding the areas for priority in terms of improvement and a measure of impact of improvement at that time. He added that additional resource was allocated in terms of enhanced quality improvement support and additional learning support from the Pedagogy Team as well as learning visits from Senior Leaders and the Quality Improvement Team to see the impact upon learners' experiences and outcomes.

Councillor Bennett asked how the Education Service was supporting the school to take improvements forward. Mr Trussler stated additional time from the Pedagogy Team was allocated last term and once again this term to support improvements in terms of planning for teaching, learning and assessment. Mrs Mercer confirmed she has received a lot of support from the Quality Improvement Team since she has been in post and although work has started on the improvement plan this will be done over a three year period but for the remaining part of this session the school will continue to look at the development of play pedagogy in primary one and two, improving the way staff track and monitor the teaching of phonics in primary one and two and a number of staff have been trained in cooperative learning strategies which will be used in the classroom and then these teachers will become the leaders to roll out this learning to staff across the school. She added some staff have been involved in the national improvement work on writing and remaining staff will have received this training by February 2025.

Councillor Hampshire thanked Mrs Mercer and staff for all they are doing at the school, and he was hopeful the improvements being made within the early years facility will bring it in line to where it needs to be, and future improvements will be seen at the school.

Councillor Dugdale noted the significant strengths mentioned within the report and the work underway to address the areas requiring improvement.

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 (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- iii) Note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class (SIF) (Appendix 3).

- iv) Note that because of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will make a follow-up visit in connection with this inspection within 12 months of the publication of the inspection report.
- v) Note the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team and progress made since the inspection.

7. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS (ASN) FUNDING

A report was submitted by the Executive Director – Education and Children’s Services to seek the Committee’s approval for the proposed changes to the allocation of funding to support children and young people with ASN.

Jennifer Boyle, Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Education reported the current system of funding for ASN comprises of Predictable and Exceptional Needs. Predictable Needs is based on the school role and free school meal entitlement and Exceptional Needs is made via the submission of a Child’s Plan to an annual panel to assess and moderate if the child or young person needs are complex and enduring, if granted exceptional needs are assessed as either low, medium or high and this correlates to a number of ASN Auxiliary hours of support. She explained the current system particularly considers those with a free school meal entitlement or those whose needs are exceptional which is too narrow a definition due to the landscape of additional support needs changing rapidly across Scotland with a significant increase in the number of children and young people with additional support needs. Mrs Boyle stated from 2014 to 2023 the number of children with additional support needs in East Lothian had risen by 84% and the profile of needs has changed, most predominantly in social and emotional needs and those associated with the autistic spectrum disorder. She explained this is due to improved awareness and recording of children and young people with additional support needs, socioeconomic factors such as the cost of living crisis, rising levels of poor mental health and the global 2019 pandemic as well as advances in medicine and neonatal care have improved infant survival rates. Ms Boyle confirmed the policy and legislative approaches to meeting additional needs were not changing and East Lothian was committed to getting it right for every child through our Child Planning Framework and to continue efficiency and effectiveness of ASN funding allocations a working group of school leaders and central staff had been established, led by herself. She drew Members attention to the current constraints the working group found with the current funding system, and they have agreed a set of principles which should underpin the allocation of a revolved additional support needs funding system and provided information on what the new system of funding for ASN would offer. Ms Boyle noted the proposed new model of funding would assume the same overall level of funding as that which is currently available therefore it would be possible that there would be increases and decreases to the funding of individual schools which is also true for the current system, however, to mitigate against significant swings, a smoothing effect would be applied for the first three years of transition to the proposed new system.

Councillor McIntosh asked if funding for special schools or units would be allocated the same way. Ms Boyle confirmed the allocation of funding to specialist provisions is and would continue to be separate and the proposal discussed today was for mainstream school settings only.

Responding to questions from Councillor Ritchie, Ms Boyle explained there had not been a distinct funding stream from the Scottish Government to address needs of ASN children within schools however a range of funding streams into schools and education system which do meet the needs of children with ASN. She added within her own

service schools receive an allocation of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) based on the number of children entitled to free school meals as poverty is recognised as a factor that gives rise to additional support needs, funding under the Scottish Attainment Challenge for ensuring attainment of children who are care experienced and the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) which looks at closing the poverty related attainment gap. Ms Boyle also provided information on the work of the Early Learning and Childcare and Educational Psychology Teams which also support children and young people with additional support needs. She confirmed that all factors are individual, and modelling had been undertaken to look at individual children to see what they would receive under the current system and what they may receive later and made Members aware all current funding streams were guaranteed until 2025/26. Ms Boyle explained that the proposed model would break the direct relationship between the funding a child gets and would be more about what a school will receive in totality.

Councillor Findlay asked if the new model, or any major elements of it, had been used in other local authority areas and what had the outcomes been. Ms Boyle reported Midlothian were also currently looking at a model similar to the proposed but at the moment she would be unable to provide an update on the evaluation of its impact but confirmed other local authorities were looking to move to a data led approach.

Ms Boyle continued to answer questions from Members, providing information on the percentage breakdown of children with social and emotional additional support needs and children who are on the autistic spectrum and confirmed the Council's legislative duties around ASN funding would not change even if the proposed model was approved.

Councillor Yorkston thanked all staff who had been involved in developing the proposed plan as given the large number of children it would be supporting it is vital to get the correct resource in place and he hoped this would be a good step forward in achieving that.

Councillor Dugdale commented on the huge amount of thought and consideration that had gone into the proposed plan and thanked everyone involved for their work on it. She noted meeting the needs of learners and making sure the allocation of ASN funding is a key component and therefore welcomed the report and the plans for transition to the new system and looked forward to future updates on how this was working.

Councillor Ritchie echoed the comments already made and was excited about East Lothian taking a leading role in changing how we look to allocate ASN funding and meeting children's needs.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i) Approve the proposed changes to the principles for the allocation of funding for children and young people with ASN.

A roll vote was carried out and Members unanimously agreed to approve the proposed changes to the principles for the allocation of funding for children and young people with ASN.

8. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024-2028

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Childrens Services to ask Committee to approve the East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2024-2028 (Appendix 1) together with the abbreviated document East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2024-2028 Summary Document for Parents (Appendix 2).

Leanne Ayton, Principal Officer, Equity & Inclusion reported the Parental Engagement Strategy was launched in 2017 to aim to ensure all parents and carers are encouraged and supported to engage as partners in their children's learning and to become involved in the life of the school. The strategy also ensure the department continue to build on good practice and create further opportunities for our parents and schools to work together. She made Members aware the strategy was reviewed over 2023/24 with the main objectives being; to assess the effectiveness of the strategy and to determine whether our schools are delivering parental engagement effectively. A short life working group was formed to gather views from parents, parent councils, pupils and schools to evaluate the impact of the six strands of the strategy and once analysed school specific reports were shared with head teachers and parent councils to identify areas of strength or development and an authority wide report was shared with East Lothian parent council members which showed good practice across the county. Ms Ayton asked Members to note as the review received mostly positive responses the strategy was deemed to be working well and has therefore not assumed any significant changes and instead only minor amendments have been made. The effectiveness of the strategy will again be evaluated at the end of 2028 and the team will continue to work with schools, parents and parent councils as required over this period.

Councillor Yorkston asked why there was a such a delay on the first Parental Engagement Strategy being issued. Ms Ayton explained there was a review of the Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act 2006 in 2017 conducted by the National Parent Forum of Scotland and around that time school boards became parent councils and it was recommended duties and powers related to parental engagement in children's learning should feature as a more prominent aspect of legislative framework and that parental involvement officers should be identified to take forward this work and the Parental Engagement Strategy was launched following this.

Responding to a question from Councillor Ritchie, Ms Ayton provided examples of good parental engagement including intergenerational groups and East Lothian Works Parental Workshops.

Councillor Dugdale asked for more information regarding the consultation that took place to update the strategy. Ms Ayton explained the school was approached for volunteers to make up a good selection of stakeholders for their views and they met numerous times to discuss what they wished to achieve from the review and as a group compiled questions, we thought best evaluated the effectiveness of the six strands of the strategy. These were then distributed to parents, schools, parent councils and pupils where responses were examined and identified themes were reported to head teachers and parent councils as well as forming an authority report.

Councillor Hampshire welcomed the report and the intergenerational groups as this had benefits to the older people as well as the pupils and strengthened the feeling within the community.

Councillor Dugdale noted the significant engagement with our parents, parent councils, schools and pupils and as a result no major changes were required to the strategy which was a testament to our work with parents across all schools and she would encourage all parents and carers to get involved as much as they can with their childs school.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i) Approve and adopt the East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2024-2028 (Appendix 1). A copy of the Strategy will be provided to all schools in East Lothian, out Partner Providers – Early Learning and Childcare Settings and our Parent Councils. The Strategy will also be available on East Lothian Council’s website.
- ii) Approve and adopt the East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2024-2028 Summary Document for Parents (Appendix 2). A copy of the Summary Document will be provided to all schools in East Lothian, our Partner Providers – Early Learning and Childcare Settings and our Parent Councils.

A roll call vote was carried out and Members unanimously agreed to approve and adopt both the East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2024-2028 and the East Lothian Council Engagement Strategy 2024-2028 Summary Document for Parents.

9. HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENTS

A verbal report was given by the Head of Education to inform the Committee of the Head Teacher appointment made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

Nicola McDowell, Head of Education reported that Mrs Carol Colville had been appointed the preferred candidate for the Head Teacher post at Stoneyhill Primary School following the announcement of current Head Teacher, Kate Whitley will retire at Christmas. She noted Mrs Colville had spent most of her career at Stoneyhill starting as class teacher, then principal teacher and deputy head teacher and no one could fault her commitment to the school and the community and was delighted with her new appointment.

Councillor Dugdale welcomed Mrs Colville to her new position and thanked all parents and pupils who are involved in the recruitment process.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the Head Teacher appointment.

Signed

Councillor Fiona Dugdale
Convener of the Education Committee

DRAFT

REPORT TO: Education & Children’s Services Committee

MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025

BY: Executive Director – Education & Children’s Services

SUBJECT: Attendance Update

2

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Committee on work to support the school attendance of children and young people and progress towards closing gaps in attendance figures for vulnerable learners.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the initiatives in place to support children and young people to attend school and the impact of this work.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The National Improvement Framework (NIF) has seven strategic outcomes. These include the expectation that children and young people will experience the benefit of school and that there will be improved attendance with increased engagement in learning and a culture of dignity and respect for all. This aspiration is embedded in our approaches.
- 3.2 Contextually, it is important to note that there is a national concern about reduced levels of attendance in schools. This has been an issue particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. The reasons for this are multi-faceted but include the impact of poverty and increased anxiety amongst the school aged population.
- 3.3 Within this context it is incumbent on local authorities and schools to employ rigorous, creative and transformational approaches. It is also imperative that education works closely with partners from other services to provide appropriate supports, in line with GIRFEC principles.

- 3.4 A data informed approach to attendance is underpinned by monthly equity and inclusion trackers which provide schools with key attendance data. This supports early intervention. The *East Lothian Council Raising Attainment Strategy* sets out a stretch aim for each school to improve attendance.
- 3.5 Schools across East Lothian use a variety of strategies to promote good attendance and support those who are struggling to attend school. This includes whole school nurturing approaches and more targeted interventions including breakfast clubs, walking buses and bespoke timetabling. Expectations for tracking and monitoring attendance are outlined in our Attendance policy. This policy has been commended by Education Scotland and featured in their publication: *Improving Attendance: Understanding the Issues*.
- 3.6 Schools can also seek support from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) for individual children and young people and to carry out action research, particularly in relation to emotional based school avoidance.
- 3.7 The new approaches to Additional Support Needs funding, which was approved by Committee on 19 November 2024 makes provision for children and young people struggling to attend school. This will take effect from August 2025.
- 3.8 Child Planning Framework–Locality Teams (CPF-LTs) are now established across all localities and an integral part of our approaches to GIRFEC. Almost all children and young people who are referred to CPF-LTs have, or are, experiencing degrees of difficulty with attending school. This forum promotes multi-agency solutions to support attendance and the wider attainment and achievement of children and young people.
- 3.9 Families Together East Lothian (FTEL) provides outreach support which directly and indirectly impacts on school attendance. This includes promoting effective bedtime and morning routines, managing a household and linking in with the school to support conversations with families and young people.
- 3.10 The Equity & Inclusion Education Outreach Service has now been established for six months. Children and young people can be referred to this service when support more bespoke than what school can traditionally offer is required. This may include children and young people who are struggling to attend school for reasons of mental or physical illness or who have experienced an interruption to their learning and need help to bridge this gap.

3.11 The table below provides attendance rates for specified groups of children and young people since 2022/23.

% Attendance Rates (August to January)

Cohort Type	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	24/25 +/- pp change on 23/24
All Pupils	89.7	90.3	92.2	+ 1.9 pp
ASN	85.3	86.7	89.5	+ 2.8 pp
FSM	82.6	83.1	85.8	+ 2.7 pp
Q1	85.3	86.6	87.7	+ 1.1 pp
Care Exp	83.8	84	88.8	+ 4.8 pp

MONITORING AND REVIEW

3.12 Comparative attendance data between periods August – January 2023/24 and August–January 2024/25 shows an increase of 1.8% for all children and young people and an increase of: 2.7% for those with additional support needs, 2% for those entitled to free school meals and 1.1% for those learners living in quintile 1.

3.13 The percentage of persistent absentees, which is defined as having 10% or more missed school sessions, is below the national average and has decreased 0.6% in session 2023/24 compared to 2022/23.

3.14 Since its inception the Equity & Inclusion Education Outreach Service has received 78 referrals for individual children and young people. Of these referrals, 79 National Qualifications have been achieved and a further 142 units contributing to National Qualifications have been achieved. The service has also worked in 23 different schools to provide additional support.

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

AUTHOR'S NAME	Jennifer Boyle
DESIGNATION	Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Inclusion
CONTACT INFO	E-mail – jboyle@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	18 March 2025

REPORT TO: Council Committee for Education

MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025

BY: Executive Director - Education and Children's Services

SUBJECT: Education Scotland Inspection of Preston Lodge High School

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Preston Lodge High School

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 School (SIF) (Appendix 2).
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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 school inspections to evaluate the quality of provision at Preston Lodge High School.

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

HGIOS?4:

1.3 Leadership of change

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

3.5 Inspection Findings

Preston Lodge High School was inspected during October 2024. A letter to parents and carers summarising the key findings was published on 21st January 2025. It should be noted that the local authority's rigorous quality improvement processes had already identified the same issues as identified by the inspection team and were working with the school.

The quality indicators were evaluated as follows:

Preston Lodge High School	
Quality Indicator	HGIOS?4
1.3 Leadership of change	Weak
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Satisfactory
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Weak

3.6 Key Strengths

- Strong relationships between staff and young people create a calm learning culture where young people are proud of their school. Individual staff support young people well to achieve in many aspects of school life.
 - Inspectors noted that the headteacher has established a strong and positive culture across the school. As a result, most young people and staff are happy, proud of their school and feel valued.
 - Young people feel a real sense of belonging in school. Staff understand well the local community and the context in which young people live. The school's values of achievement, happiness and respect are used well to promote the importance of good relationships across the school. Staff know young people and their families well. As a result, relationships across the school are respectful and positive.
 - Individuals and groups of staff lead on areas such as sustainability, school musicals and the school rugby club. Staff work well to provide positive experiences and skills for young people through these clubs.
 - Staff work well with a range of partners to support young peoples' achievements. Organisations such as the Pennypitt Trust and the Bridges Project help a few young people to gain valuable life skills. Whilst contributing to their local community, young people exercise responsibility thorough volunteering and helping others. Local community and development youth work staff provide a helpful bridge between school and community. They work closely with guidance teachers, supporting young people less engaged with school. A few young people gain Saltire, Youth Achievement and Dynamic Youth awards.
- Partners, together with pupil support staff work well to provide individualised provision for young people who require targeted support. This helps young people to improve their wellbeing and to feel included and engaged in school.
 - Staff have well established processes to plan to meet the needs of young people requiring targeted support through child's planning meetings. Staff work together, supported well by partners, to address barriers to learning resulting from the learning environment, family circumstances, health needs and social and emotional factors.
 - Senior leaders recently reviewed the physical environments for young people who are supported beyond the classroom environment. The nurture and inclusion spaces support a minority of young people to feel included, engaged and involved. As a result, a few young people attending these spaces feel more

confident to attend school. Young people who attend the inclusion space are positive about planning for their reintegration to mainstream classes.

- In the Enhanced Learning Provision, young people enjoy mutually respectful relationships with all staff and each other. Young people are treated with dignity and know they are valued members of the school community. As a result, young people feel safe. They are confident to speak out and express their opinions. This supports young people well to develop their social skills with adults and other young people throughout the school. Young people are supported effectively to be active participants in decisions which affect them.
- Staff work well together to support almost all young people into positive destinations beyond school.
 - Almost all young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 attained significantly lower or much lower than national figures, however moved onto a positive destination. The majority of young people leave school to go on to higher or further education. Less than half go to employment and a few to training opportunities.

3.7 Areas for Improvement

- The headteacher should lead and develop a clear overview of all areas of the school. He needs to put in place effective methods for gathering evidence to identify the school's own strengths and areas for improvement. This should lead to clear priorities for improving the school and these should be agreed with staff, parents and young people.
 - The headteacher and senior leaders have developed a revised School Improvement Plan in response to the findings of the school inspection. The revised School Improvement Plan has a focus on key priorities with timed, measurable outcomes.
 - The remits of the senior leadership team have been refreshed with clear roles and responsibilities for improvement aligned to the school priorities. The Quality Improvement Service is working alongside members of the senior leadership team in a support and challenge role to secure improvement.
 - The headteacher is working with senior leaders and the school's Quality Improvement Officer to improve approaches to self-evaluation and quality assurance clearly focused on impact on learners. This includes professional learning for staff and developing more collaborative approaches to self-evaluation involving all stakeholders.
- Senior leaders should ensure a whole school focus on providing tasks and activities which are set at the right level of difficulty for all young people. This should help ensure all young people's learning needs are met more effectively. All staff should work together to raise attainment for

all young people from S1 to S6.

- The DHT and the school's Learning and Teaching group are leading the development of the Preston Lodge Learning Promise to establish shared expectations for high quality learning and teaching in every lesson.
- Work is underway to establish a greater understanding of the barriers to meeting learners needs in lessons to inform professional learning.
- A review of school datasets has taken place with support from the Management Information System officers to improve tracking and monitoring across Broad General Education and Senior Phase.
- A whole school policy to standardise and improve approaches to interventions is being developed to improve attainment and further involve parents and carers in supporting their young people.
- An audit of assessment and moderation practice has started to develop a new Preston Lodge Assessment and Moderation strategy and to support staff professional learning.
- Senior leaders should review the programmes of learning from S1 to S3 to ensure that young people access their full entitlements.
 - A refresh of course choice principles and processes has taken place to provide personalisation that ensures all students receive their full BGE entitlement. A very clear expectation has been set that all Senior Phase students should be fully coursed.
 - The DHT is leading a curriculum review to create positive pathways for more learners. There is an expectation that this will be in consultation with stakeholders.
- Senior leaders need to develop a clearer overview of the purposes and effectiveness of existing support provisions. This includes improving attendance at school for identified young people.
 - Revised systems and processes for monitoring and improving attendance have been established and implemented in line with the East Lothian Attendance policy. A school attendance team has been set up with clear roles and responsibilities for monitoring attendance ensuring appropriate interventions and follow-up.
 - The clarification of the purpose and effectiveness of inclusion spaces is taking place with a clearer focus on learning targets within high quality learning plans.

3.8 The school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mrs Karen Haspolat 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. It is acknowledged that it can take longer than a year to demonstrate improvements in attainment, particularly in the senior phase. However, the school Senior Leadership

Team and the Quality Improvement Team will work to evidence progress across all areas for improvement identified in the inspection in readiness for the follow-up visit by Education Scotland.

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 inspection report on Preston Lodge High School (Appendix 1) and Summary of Inspection Findings (Appendix 2).

AUTHOR'S NAME	Karen Haspolat
DESIGNATION	Quality Improvement Officer
CONTACT INFO	Email: khaspolat@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	17 February 2025

21 January 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Preston Lodge High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- Strong relationships between staff and young people create a calm learning culture where young people are proud of their school. Individual staff support young people well to achieve in many aspects of school life.
- Partners, together with pupil support staff work well to provide individualised provision for young people who require targeted support. This helps young people to improve their wellbeing and to feel included and engaged in school.
- Staff work well together to support almost all young people into positive destinations beyond school.

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

- The headteacher should lead and develop a clear overview of all areas of the school. He needs to put in place effective methods for gathering evidence to identify the school's own strengths and areas for improvement. This should lead to clear priorities for improving the school and these should be agreed with staff, parents and young people.
- Senior leaders should ensure a whole school focus on providing tasks and activities which are set at the right level of difficulty for all young people. This should help ensure all young people's learning needs are met more effectively. All staff should work together to raise attainment for all young people from S1 to S6.
- Senior leaders should review the programmes of learning from S1 to S3 to ensure that young people access their full entitlements.
- Senior leaders need to develop a clearer overview of the purposes and effectiveness of existing support provisions. This includes improving attendance at school for identified young people.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#). 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 Preston Lodge High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	weak
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	weak
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

[Preston Lodge High School | Inspection Report | 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 one year 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.

Frances E. Graham
HM Inspector

Summarised inspection findings

Preston Lodge High School

East Lothian Council

21 January 2025

Key contextual information

School Name: Preston Lodge High School
Council: East Lothian
SEED number: 5556139
Roll in Sep 2022: 1086

Preston Lodge High School is a six-year non-denominational school, serving the communities of Cockenzie, Port Seton, Prestonpans, Longniddry, Blindwells and the surrounding areas. Preston Lodge High School is part of the Preston Seton and Gosford associated schools group (ASG), along with Preston Tower (Formerly Prestonpans), St Gabriel's RC, Longniddry, and Cockenzie Primary Schools. The Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) supports 14 young people from S2 to S5. All young people supported in the ELP also access learning in mainstream areas of the school at some point during the school week.

Preston Lodge High School underwent a period of significant disruption between December 2022 and February 2024 due to issues with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete in part of the building.

The headteacher has been in post for 15 years. He is supported by three Depute Headteachers (DHT).

Attendance is generally below with the national average.

The exclusion rate is generally below the national average.

In September 2023 12.3% of pupils were registered for free school meals and 8.9% of pupils live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

In September 2023 the school reported that 56.6% of pupils had additional support needs (ASN).

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher has established a strong and positive culture across the school. As a result, most young people and staff are happy, proud of their school and feel valued.
- The headteacher led the school sensitively during recent challenges relating to the school building. Staff and young people worked well together taking a solution focused approach to the issues they faced. Staff then built on this experience to develop a project based approach to teaching and learning for young people currently in S1. Staff now need to put in place rigorous self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures to ensure clear, measurable outcomes for young people. As yet, there is no clear evidence of the impact of this approach on learning and attainment.
- Staff, along with the school community established the current school vision and aims many years ago. These are well known across the school and are displayed widely. The values of respect and being happy are evident in most behaviours and relationships. The headteacher plans to review the vision and aims to better reflect the current school context. Staff should ensure the views of parents and young people are integral to the planned review.
- Staff are working towards many different priorities across the school. The large number of priorities in the school improvement plan (SIP) is leading to a lack of clarity amongst staff. There is not yet a clear strategic overview of the work of all staff, for example in the changes to the curriculum. The headteacher needs to work with staff, parents and young people to ensure they are involved in developing a more realistic and time planned set of improvement priorities. These need to be streamlined, achievable and trackable. School priorities need to reflect the current context of the school and raising attainment should be a central focus of school improvement.
- Many key areas of improvement for the school remain at an early stage of development. As a result, there is inconsistent practice across the school. The headteacher and senior leaders need to review their roles and responsibilities and apply a robust and coordinated approach to strategic leadership across all areas of the school.
- Most middle leaders work well together. They exemplify aspects of positive leadership and work well to lead and support staff in faculties. Middle leaders are empowered to lead the three long-established whole-school working groups; health and wellbeing, strategic learning and teaching, and raising attainment. Almost half of teachers are involved in one of these groups. These groups work well individually and support teachers in their daily practice. However, the work of the groups is not yet clearly linked to outcomes for young people or to current whole-school priorities for improvement. Senior leaders now need to ensure these groups work better together to ensure greater consistency across the school.

- Individuals and groups of staff lead on areas such as sustainability, school musicals and the school rugby club. Staff work well to provide positive experiences and skills for young people through these clubs.
- Senior leaders have established a culture of teacher enquiry across the school. Individual staff are encouraged to take responsibility for improving aspects of their practice. Most teachers are involved in relevant professional learning activities and are empowered to develop their classroom practice. Teachers have developed helpful enquiries based on their class needs. A few of these are being developed more fully across faculties. Senior leaders now need to support a more strategic whole-school approach to this professional development. This should enable the outcome of teacher enquiries to link to school priorities, staff development and ultimately to increase attainment for all young people.
- Staff gather evidence either individually or in departments to identify areas of their work that require improvements. In a few departments, middle leaders seek pupil views on the learning experience and use the evidence to shape curriculum planning. The range of data used to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning needs to be broader. Senior leaders need to ensure thorough self-evaluation sits alongside planning for school improvement. Self-evaluation activities should involve all young people, staff and parents. This should then lead to priorities that reflect the school context better. The current review of the curriculum for example, could take more account of the views of young people. The headteacher and senior leaders need to ensure processes for quality assurance are used to refine and improve all improvement areas across the school. This will help to streamline the work of staff and ensure a clear focus on improving outcomes for young people.
- A few young people contribute to the life of the school through various leadership roles. such as pupil council, library leaders, 'Rights Respecting' team and S6 committees. Young people, through the pupil council, are beginning to use 'How Good is OUR school?' to reflect on approaches to learning and teaching. Young people value the opportunities to be mental health ambassadors and sports ambassadors. As a result, a few young people feel empowered to make a difference and affect change in their school community. Leadership for young people now needs to be developed across all year groups in order to improve young people's role in moving the school forward.
- The Parent Council are consulted on the SIP. The role of the Parent Council should be developed more fully. Parents should be supported to play a more active role in deciding what the school needs to do to improve. Moving forward, it is important to involve parents in reviews of activities which are in development, for example, the current approach to teaching and learning in S1, and the 'Home Room'.
- Senior leaders understand how the priorities for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) prepare young people for skills for learning, life and transition into the world of work. However, there is no clear vision within the SIP to incorporate these priorities into learning and teaching. There is no overall strategy or skills framework for DYW to help communicate these priorities to staff, young people and partners. Without a clear strategy for DYW, senior leaders are unable to reflect on or measure the progress made with implementing these priorities.

In the ELP:

- Senior leaders have a shared understanding of how they would like to improve the ELP. In recent years they have moved the ELP to a different classroom within the school. The new, larger classroom, which is near to an outside space, provides opportunities for young people to learn in different areas within the room. In recent years, senior leaders have taken an important

step in helping young people in the senior phase attain National Qualifications (NQs).

- Senior leaders have developed a distinct vision for all support for learning across the school. The vision for support for learning does not yet make clear the role of staff in the ELP in contributing to school improvement. Senior leaders develop an annual curricular area improvement plan (CAIP). The CAIP references improvement priorities within the ELP. The CAIP does not yet place sufficient importance on the development of the unique context of the ELP. Senior leaders need to prioritise the development of a curriculum, which meets all young people's needs more effectively and takes greater account of national expectations. They need to review the school's vision for the ELP to ensure improvement priorities reflect more accurately important developments, which require attention. Senior leaders should work closely with the local authority to ensure the ELP focusses more effectively on supporting young people to make improved progress in their learning.
- Senior leaders are creating a culture of continuous improvement within the ELP. All staff are highly ambitious for young people. As a result, they seek out opportunities for young people to improve their learning across the school and within the wider community. Senior leaders have introduced a tracking and monitoring tool to measure young people's progress. Senior leaders now need to develop this approach further to help them evaluate how effectively young people attain as they move through the school. Senior leaders need to increase the pace of change to ensure improvement priorities are identified and acted upon with greater expediency. Overall, senior leaders need to develop a more strategic approach to self-evaluation and improvement within the ELP.

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

- Strong relationships between most staff and young people support a nurturing environment across the school. Young people value the positive relationship they have with staff. They are respectful of their teachers. Staff's focus on engagement and motivation of young people, together with the efforts to create a nurturing and inclusive environment, are leading to improvements in the behaviour of most young people.
- Almost all teachers use the 'Preston Lodge Learning Cycle' with the aim of improving consistency in classroom practice and in experiences for young people. This includes sharing and reviewing the purpose of learning. The 'Preston Lodge Learning Cycle' is currently being reviewed. Senior and middle leaders now need to ensure that this review results in improved consistency by teachers in planning lessons as well as in developing high quality learning and teaching. This should lead to environments for learning where all young people are enthused, motivated and leading their own learning.
- In a few subject areas teachers demonstrate strong practice in learning and teaching. Where this is most effective, young people engage in learning that is well-paced, active and challenging. In these subject areas, teachers provide regular feedback that enables young people to understand their next steps in learning and to make good progress. Senior leaders should create opportunities for this practice to be spread more widely across the school.
- The majority of young people participate well in their lessons and contribute positively in class. In most lessons teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils and revisit this at the end of the lesson. A minority of lessons are too teacher-led and the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers should develop further opportunities for young people to be sufficiently challenged and to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The majority of teachers plan lessons well and use tasks and resources appropriately to engage and motivate young people. In a majority of lessons, however, teachers do not take enough account of young peoples' needs and prior experiences. As a result, planned learning activities, teaching styles and resources are not differentiated to meet the needs of all young people. Senior leaders should ensure that current plans for a whole-school focus on improving differentiation are taken forward timeously in order to meet the needs of all young people.
- Within the S1 'Home rooms' teachers are developing their practice of project-based learning. This does not yet include opportunities for young people to learn effectively across all curriculum areas. Senior leaders have identified the need for close collaboration across curriculum areas to ensure the appropriate planning, assessment and reporting of young people's learning experience.

- In a few lessons, teachers use questioning well to check for understanding. This helps young people have a clearer understanding of what they are learning. However, this practice is inconsistent. Teachers should improve questioning techniques with a focus on higher-order thinking skills to promote deeper thinking.
- A few teachers use digital technology effectively to enhance the learning experience of young people. All teachers should develop opportunities for young people to benefit from this practice.
- A minority of teachers are skilled in the use of formative assessment strategies to check for young people's understanding. A few teachers, for example, systematically use 'show-me' boards and targeted open-ended questioning. Senior leaders and teachers are well-placed to share these approaches through professional learning with all staff. This should support further progress and understanding of how these strategies positively impact young people.
- Teachers access a range of information systems which provide detail of young peoples' backgrounds and needs for example. The 'Attainment Hub' provides data linked to levels of achievement and attainment. A minority of departments used these systems, primarily in the senior phase, to develop their own approaches to tracking and monitoring. All teachers should now use whole school information more consistently to inform planning of learning, teaching, and assessment to better meet the needs of all young people. Senior leaders are planning to support teachers by raising awareness of the current 'Planning for Purpose' documentation.
- Teachers in a few departments use a range of data well to make their professional judgements of achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level. Too many teachers are not yet fully confident in making assessment judgements in the broad general education (BGE). Teachers across the school recognise that their understanding and use of moderation activities to support improved, robust and reliable assessment judgements is an improvement priority. Senior leaders need to ensure teachers benefit from activities within, across and beyond the school to improve the reliability of teachers' professional judgements of achievement of a CfE.

In the ELP:

- All staff develop and maintain positive relationships with young people. Young people enjoy their lessons and almost all engage well with their learning. Young people come to school each day motivated and eager to learn. They enjoy learning most when lessons provide them with appropriate levels of challenge.
- All young people enjoy learning in mainstream classrooms. Young people particularly enjoy lessons in music, craft and design and home economics. All teachers who work with young people from the ELP are considerate and kind when speaking to each young person. Most teachers' explanations of young people's learning are clear. This helps young people know what they are learning.
- Young people's learning experiences are enriched by a range of activities in the local community. These include visits to care homes, local shops and outdoor learning centres. Teachers should continue to explore how they use the school campus to provide interesting real-life contexts for learning. This includes developing further how they use digital technologies to support young people's engagement.
- Teachers plan lessons, which almost all young people find interesting. However, in too many lessons all young people from S2 to S5 undertake the same task. Planned learning does not yet take sufficient account of each young person's individual skills, abilities, interests or needs. Lessons need to build progressively on young people's prior learning. Young people should be afforded the opportunity to study within a well-planned BGE prior to moving onto the senior

phase. This should include teachers being supported to differentiate lessons more fully to take greater account of each young person's skills and abilities.

- Senior leaders work closely with colleagues in the ASG to support their understanding of each young person's skills and abilities prior to them attending the ELP. This helps teachers plan effective transition processes. As a result, young people settle well into the ELP. Teachers assess young people's progress at key points throughout the school year. For example, they use spelling and reading assessments to evaluate young people's progress in literacy. Teachers comment on how well young people complete tasks using the terms developing, consolidating and secure. However, assessment does not yet inform planned learning effectively. Teachers need to be supported to develop further their approaches to assessment and moderation. This should help improve their understanding of national standards.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff liaise effectively with colleagues in the ASG to support the pastoral transition of young people to secondary school. Senior leaders and teachers should explore closer collaboration to ensure more effective continuity and progression in learning.
- Senior leaders should address factors limiting young people's access to their full entitlement to the BGE. Learning in the BGE is planned primarily around third and fourth level experiences and outcomes. Young people in S1 spend approximately a third of their school week in a 'Home Room' with learning focussed on literacy, numeracy and project-based learning. In its current format, the S1 'Home Room' initiative is at an early stage of development. Senior leaders should keep under review the balance of learning in the course of each day to ensure young people experience their entitlement to a full BGE. Staff should now look to gather systematically robust evidence on the quality and consistency of the learning experience. Senior leaders should also monitor the impact of the reduction of teaching time across all curriculum areas as a result of the time allocated to the Home Room.
- The 'Learning skills' programme is currently delivered within S1 social subjects and within the S2 "School's of..." programme. Chess, supported by the Preston Lodge learning Foundation, has been introduced as an additional subject as part of developing thinking skills in S1 and S2. Young people experience learning across eight curricular areas in S2. In S2 and in S3, young people add to their experiences through the "Schools of..." programme. Senior leaders should now evaluate the impact of all initiatives on young people's interest levels as well as attainment outcomes.
- In S3, young people follow a core curriculum with an additional element of specialisation. Staff should continue to monitor young peoples' chosen curriculum to ensure that it retains breadth. Young people can modify their learning pathway as they enter the senior phase. Senior leaders should explore further how gaps in prior learning due to choices made in S3 are addressed.
- In the senior phase, young people build on prior learning and interests through a range of planned learning pathways. At S4, the majority of young people elect to follow seven courses, reducing to five programmes of study in S5. Young people are encouraged to access wider achievement opportunities within the school and beyond. A broad-based curriculum in the senior phase provides accredited courses of study to reflect young peoples' needs, interests and career aspirations. Young people benefit from clear planned progression pathways including a number of skills for work related opportunities, such as Foundation Apprenticeships and National Progression Awards. Young people access the Young Applicants in School's Scheme to widen their study options. These are delivered effectively in school and in partnership with a range of providers including East Lothian Works, college and other partners including the Open University. In almost all subject areas, young people have the opportunity to build on their learning with more advanced programmes of study.
- Senior leaders should reflect on the delivery of religious and moral education to ensure compliance with the statutory requirement of a coherent programme from S1 to S6. Similarly senior leaders should ensure young people in the BGE access their full entitlement to study modern languages in line with the Scottish Government's 1+2 languages policy.
- The school library serves as a central multi-purpose resource. It provides young people with a welcoming educational and social setting. The library provides young people with easy access to resources including a range of media and genre that support personal research and

independent study. A few pupil librarians led a review of library stock to ensure that reading materials are appropriately diverse and meet the needs of all young people. A range of activities including clubs and themed events cater well for young people's interests.

- Teachers have not yet embedded DYW priorities into the BGE or senior phase curriculum. Teachers have limited awareness of support materials for DYW and do not routinely link classroom activities with skills for learning, life and work. Teachers should ensure that as they continue to develop the learning experiences for young people across the school, they take cognisance of the DYW priorities and of Career Education Standards to enhance the curriculum.
- Strong community links and partnership with a range of educational providers support the development of young people and supports them in their transition beyond school. Out of class activities including DYW related visits, accredited Duke of Edinburgh's and Dynamic Youth awards, as well as in-school volunteering widen the educational experiences of learners. Young people develop an awareness of the needs of others, their local community and beyond through projects and charity related activities.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and the Parent Council work together closely to improve outcomes for young people across the school. The Parent Council and the wider parent forum identify strongly with Preston Lodge Learning Foundation and is an important and valued school resource.
- Increasing parental engagement already features within the current school improvement plan. Staff recognise the importance and advantages of regular ongoing communication with parents and carers. They acknowledge that this is an area to improve. Information on the different aspects of school life are shared through, for example, weekly updates, the school website, young peoples' progress reports. Parents appreciate the weekly newsletter on the life of the school. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop further channels of communication to ensure all parents are consulted on issues and developments. Senior leaders should engage the wider body of parents more in the strategic decision-making processes.
- The majority of parents would like more detailed information on the nature of learning and advice given to their child on for example course choices. This will help parents know better how to support their child's learning. Most parents are comfortable in raising an issue or a question with staff. Senior leaders should ensure that concerns raised are explored fully and work with parents to address the needs of young people facing challenges to their wellbeing and development.

2.1 Safeguarding

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Young people feel a real sense of belonging in school. Staff understand well the local community and the context in which young people live. The school's values of achievement, happiness and respect are used well to promote the importance of good relationships across the school. Staff know young people and their families well. As a result, relationships across the school are respectful and positive.
- All staff have a basic understanding of the principles of 'Getting It Right For Every Child'. Pupil support staff have started to collect wellbeing data for young people. This is helping them identify young people who require support to improve their wellbeing. As a result, most young people know staff care about their wellbeing and their progress.
- Supported by the Preston Lodge Learning Foundation, the breakfast café ensures that all young people can access a healthy breakfast at the start of the school day. This enables a few young people to benefit from a safe and nurturing start to the school day.
- Teachers, in consultation with young people, recently reviewed the personal and social education (PSE) curriculum. This now includes a greater focus on relationships, sexual health and parenthood, and mental health. Staff also introduced a Mental Health and Wellbeing award at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 for young people in S5. As a result, young people are gaining a better understanding of healthy coping strategies. Staff should continue to review the PSE curriculum with young people to ensure that it remains relevant to their needs and interests and builds on prior learning.
- Staff have well established processes to plan to meet the needs of young people requiring targeted support through child's planning meetings. Staff work together, supported well by partners, to address barriers to learning resulting from the learning environment, family circumstances, health needs and social and emotional factors. Young people's learning needs are identified appropriately within their learning plans. Senior leaders should ensure that the learning targets within learning plans are high quality. Targets should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely. This should help staff to measure better young people's progress and support young people's understanding of their own progress.
- Senior leaders recently reviewed their approaches to recording and monitoring attendance for all young people. For a few young people, effective community partnerships are improving their attendance at school. Too many young people attend school on a part-time basis. Senior leaders should ensure regular and timeous reviews for all young people currently attending school on a part-time basis. More effective planning is required to develop clear targets for young people to support them in their learning. Senior leaders acknowledge that ongoing close

monitoring of attendance data, and subsequent actions, is required in order to reduce the number of daily absences.

- Support for learning staff deliver professional learning to teachers to develop teachers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in providing universal support. The impact of this professional learning is not consistent across the school. Support for learning staff provide teachers with information on young people's learning needs and strategies to support their progress in learning. These strategies are not routinely used to plan appropriate learning activities to meet the needs of all young people who require additional support. An important next step for senior leaders is to quality assure these strategies. Senior leaders also need to ensure that these strategies are used effectively by class teachers to plan and deliver appropriate learning activities.
- All staff have benefited from professional learning in restorative and trauma informed approaches to support better behaviour. This has resulted in most young people behaving well in classes and feeling listened to and respected by staff. Staff and young people use a range of interventions to address incidents of bullying. Recently, a few senior pupils have been trained as 'Mentors in Violence Prevention' to support younger pupils. Staff have improved their approaches to recording incidents of bullying behaviour. As planned, senior leaders should retain an overview bullying incidents to ensure timely actions are taken, recorded and closely monitored.
- Senior leaders recently reviewed the physical environments for young people who are supported beyond the classroom environment. The nurture and inclusion spaces support a minority of young people to feel included, engaged and involved. As a result, a few young people attending these spaces feel more confident to attend school. Young people who attend the inclusion space are positive about planning for their reintegration to mainstream classes. An important next step is for senior leaders to review the learning experiences within the targeted spaces to support young people more effectively in their learning and attainment.
- Staff and partners provide effective support to young carers and care-experienced young people. Young carers' entering S1 benefit from workshops within the ASG at the point of transition. As a result, barriers to their progress are being reduced. It is important that teachers continue to track and monitor the progress of young carers and care-experienced young people.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Staff liaise effectively with colleagues across the associated primary schools to support the wellbeing needs of young people as they transfer to secondary school. A personal passport which contains pertinent, individual information, accompanies young people as part of their transition from P7 to S1. S6 buddies support young people well during these times. As a result, young people feel safe and supported during the move from P7 to S1.
- Young people, as part of the 'Rights Respecting' group, are increasing awareness of children's rights from the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child. Young people are at the early stages of developing a rights charter.

- Staff encourage young people to value diversity and challenge discrimination. The S6 equalities committee, for example, is leading a range of relevant activities across the school. These include 'Show Racism the Red Card' and 'Anti-bullying week'. A few young people lead assemblies focused on diversity, for example during Black History Month. This helps most young people increase their knowledge and awareness of different cultures and ethnicities. A few teachers are embedding opportunities for young people to explore and discuss issues relating to diversity and discrimination. Staff should continue to plan learning experiences which enable young people to discuss diversity and challenge discrimination.

In the ELP:

- Young people enjoy mutually respectful relationships with all staff and each other. Young people are treated with dignity and know they are valued members of the school community. As a result, young people feel safe. They are confident to speak out and express their opinions. This supports young people well to develop their social skills with adults and other young people throughout the school. Young people are supported effectively to be active participants in decisions which affect them.
- Teachers support young people appropriately to develop their understanding of their body and how this changes as they grow. This is developing young people's understanding of their wellbeing. Staff are at the early stages of developing their use of the language of the wellbeing indicators. They should continue to embed this language more fully in their practice. This will help young people have a wider knowledge of their wellbeing and to understand what actions they can take to improve their own wellbeing. Teachers should continue with plans to develop the school's outdoor space to support young people's wellbeing.
- Young people's individual targets are captured in an individualised education programme. These are reviewed regularly. Parents and, where appropriate, young people are involved in creating and agreeing targets. Young people's individual targets focus mostly on progress in curricular areas. Teachers should consider how young people's targets could be more individualised. This could support teachers to evaluate young people's progress against individualised targets relevant to each young person and their family. Where appropriate, young people are considered for a co-ordinated support plan.
- All young people access lessons in mainstream classrooms at some point throughout the school week. A few young people enjoy learning in mainstream classes alongside their peers. Young people in the ELP attend school assemblies and take part in school shows. This helps them feel included in the wider life of the school. All young people are members of the 'Rights Respecting' group. This enables them to share their thoughts on how well the school is taking forward actions to uphold their rights. Teachers should build on this work by considering how young people from the ELP are represented on the pupil council.

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

- Senior leaders are concerned about a significant number of young people for whom absence from school is an issue. Staff recognise the impact this has for these young people and are working closely with young people and their families to address this. Identified staff track and monitor attendance of young people. Specific areas within the school have been developed to encourage young attend school more regularly. This is improving attendance for a few young people. Staff are at the early stages of developing systems and processes to track and monitor effectively those young people who attend school, but do not attend class. Senior leaders need to be more rigorous in tracking and monitoring young people who attend school on a part-time basis.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- Between 2016/17 and 2022/23, most young people achieved third CfE level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. At fourth CfE level, less than half young people achieve literacy and numeracy. Young people generally do not make sufficient progress in literacy or numeracy throughout the BGE.
- As a result of ongoing professional learning and collaboration, teachers' professional judgements of achievement of a level are becoming more robust and reliable across all curricular areas. Senior leaders should continue to enable and encourage teachers to work together within and across departments, as well as beyond the school to ensure their professional judgements of achievement of a CfE level are more reliable.

Senior phase

Leavers

Literacy

- Almost all young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved literacy at SCQF level 4 or better. This is significantly much higher than the virtual comparator (VC) from 2019/20 to 2022/23. The majority of young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved SCQF level 5 or better in literacy, in line with the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Less than half achieved this at SCQF level 6, in line with the VC.

Numeracy

- Most young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better. This is significantly higher than the VC from 2019/20 to 202/23. The majority of young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 achieved the unit award at SCQF level 5 or better. This is significantly higher than the VC from 2021/22 to 202/23. Attainment at SCQF level 6 is generally significantly lower than the VC.

- In each of the last five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23 very few young people leave school with no literacy or numeracy qualification at SCQF level 3 or better.

ASN

- Almost all young people who require additional support with their learning achieve literacy at SCQF level 4 or better. Most young people who require additional support with their learning achieve numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better.

Cohorts

Literacy

- At S4, by S5 and by S6 there is no consistent improvement at SCQF level 5 or better. In the latest year, 2023/24, performance is significantly higher than the VC. By S6, performance at SCQF level 6 or better shows an improvement over the last three years.

Numeracy

- At S4, the majority of young people achieved SCQF level 5 or better. This is significantly higher than the VC. There is a wide discrepancy between young people achieving success in the course award and unit passes at S4, by S5 and by S6 that needs improved. Attainment in numeracy improved overall at SCQF level 6 by S5 and by S6, to being in line with VC, in 2023/24.
- Staff in the mathematics department should continue to explore the differences between those achieving numeracy through units compared to course awards to ensure all young people are attaining as highly as possible. Teachers have introduced new courses in numeracy in order to improve attainment. Too many young people are currently being presented for both SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 mathematics, and for qualifications in both mathematics and applications of mathematics.

Attainment over time

BGE

- Currently staff in each curriculum area record effort, behaviour and progress in the BGE in different ways. Teachers use a range of identified strategies, interventions and supports to help young people make progress. Teachers are at the early stages of tracking and monitoring progress across all curriculum areas throughout the BGE. As a result, senior leaders are unable to demonstrate improvements in attainment over the BGE.
- All teachers need to understand better and implement literacy and numeracy approaches as a responsibility of all.

Senior phase

Leavers

- Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, when using complementary tariff points, the attainment of young people leaving school has broadly been in line with the VC.
- Attainment improved for the lowest attaining 20% of young people who require additional support from 2019/20-2022/23. The middle attaining 60% of young people who require additional support declined from 2020/21 to 2022/23. For the highest attaining 20% of young people who require additional support attainment improved from 2019/20 to 2021/22 before declining in 2022/23.

Cohorts

- At S4 based on S4, attainment for the lowest attaining 20% of young people improved in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to being significantly higher than the VC. The middle attaining 60% and

highest attaining 20% of young people attained generally in line with the VC, however has declined in recent years.

- By S5 based on S4, attainment for the lowest attaining 20% of young people is in line with the VC from 2020/21-2023/24. The middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people is often significantly lower than the VC. In 2023/24 attainment was significantly lower than the VC for both groups of young people. Attainment for the lowest 20% and middle 60% shows a decline in recent years, in line with the VC.
- By S6 based on S4, attainment for all groups is significantly lower than the VC from 2019/20-2021/22. This improved to in line with the VC in 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- At S4, there are a high number of dual presentations. Almost a third of young people are presented for both National 4 and National 5 qualifications in one subject. A fifth of young people are presented for two qualifications in two subjects. This is above the VC. This is often linked to the number of no awards at National 5.
- Senior leaders have developed a whole school tracking system which enables them, and teachers, to track and monitor the progress and attainment of individuals, groups and cohorts of young people. Staff should continue to develop this and to improve the use of data to more accurately and reliably inform young people of their working and target grades. This should lead to improved correlation between the expected and actual attainment of young people.

Breadth and depth

- The percentage of young people attaining 1 or more, to 4 or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better at S4 is in line with the VC from 2021/22 – 2023/24. At SCQF level 5A or better the percentage of young people attaining one or more to five or more qualifications is significantly lower than the VC from 2021/22 to 2023/24.
- By S5, the percentage of young people attaining 2 or more, to 4 or more awards at SCQF level 6C or better is significantly lower than the VC in 2023/24, having been in line with the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. By S5 the percentage of young people attaining 2 or more, to 5 or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better is in line with the VC in 2023/24, having been below the VC in 2022/23 for two or more, or three or more awards.
- By S6 the percentage of young people attaining 2 or more to 5 or more awards at SCQF level 6A or better, is below the VC in 2023/24, having been in line 2022/23. By S6 the percentage of young people attaining one or more awards at SCQF level 7A is in line with the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This declined to being below the VC in 2023/24. By S6 the percentage of young people attaining two or more awards at SCQF level 7A is in line with the VC from 2019/20 to 2023/24.
- A minority of young people achieved qualifications equivalent to SCQF level 6, such as Social Services: Children and Young People, in 2023/24.
- Senior leaders should now focus on the quality and quantity of qualifications young people attain, to improve attainment for young people.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Staff work well with a range of partners to support young peoples' achievements. Organisations such as the Pennypitt Trust and the Bridges Project help a few young people to gain valuable life skills. Whilst contributing to their local community, young people exercise responsibility

thorough volunteering and helping others. Local community and development youth work staff provide a helpful bridge between school and community. They work closely with guidance teachers, supporting young people less engaged with school. A few young people gain Saltire, Youth Achievement and Dynamic Youth awards.

- There is a strong focus on sports, with many young people gaining local recognition in competitions. A few young people complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, mostly at bronze and silver level. This helps them develop resilience and an awareness of themselves when working with others. Young people confidently describe the skills they are learning by being part of the school pipe bands. They are becoming more confident, motivated and recognise their role in a team. Many young people play in the band both locally and nationally.
- Young peoples' achievements are celebrated regularly through assemblies and the weekly 'PLus' newsletter. This helps build a culture of pride across the school community. As planned, staff should systematically collect and track all young people's participation and achievements. This will enable staff to identify those who may be at risk of missing out from those valuable opportunities.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. Staff have a strong commitment to ensuring equity for all young people. This is evident from the focus on supporting the cost of the school day. The Preston Lodge Learning Foundation supports staff and young people well through, for example, funding the pre-loved uniform scheme and supporting access to trips and activities.
- Staff, across the school, recognise the whole school commitment to raise attainment for young people who reside in areas of greatest disadvantage. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 there has been an inconsistent but negative trend in complementary tariff points for school leavers residing in these areas. Staff have now increased supports for this group of young people. This has led to a few improvements within these cohorts, particularly at S4. Staff should continue to develop and expand the impact of this work.
- Almost all young people who left school between 2018/19 and 2022/23 attained significantly lower or much lower than national figures, however moved onto a positive destination. The majority of young people leave school to go on to higher or further education. Less than half go to employment and a few to training opportunities.

In the ELP:

- The small number of young people at each phase within the ELP renders comparison of cohorts or groups invalid. The current lack of differentiation between the BGE and senior phase, and the insufficient data on young people's progress contributes further to the difficulty in evaluating young people's progress. From evidence gathered, a minority of young people are making satisfactory progress from prior levels of learning. The majority of young people are not making sufficient progress in their learning. Most young people are capable of achieving more.
- All young people in S2 and S3 spell and write a range of words appropriate to their age and ability. They develop their ideas to write creative stories and read appropriate texts to gather information. Young people use their questioning skills effectively when interviewing guests into the ELP class. Teachers should continue to support young people to make improvements against all aspects of literacy.

- All young people in S2 and S3 add and subtract single- and two-digit numbers. They identify odd and even numbers to twenty. Young people use their knowledge of money to purchase goods. Teachers should continue to support young people to improve their numeracy skills.
- Teachers do not yet have effective processes in place to evaluate young people's progress over time. Since session 2022/23 all young people in the senior phase attain NQs across a range of curricular areas up to SCQF level 4 or better. The majority of young people are capable of achieving more qualifications at a higher level. Senior leaders need to develop robust processes to assess and evaluate young people's progress across the BGE and senior phase. Teachers need to have a greater focus on raising attainment for young people to ensure they achieve as best they can.
- Young people are developing skills and contributing to their school community through a range of activities in school and with partners. Young people develop confidence in new and unfamiliar settings by taking part in outdoor learning activities such as equine therapy and kayaking. Teachers should explore how young people can be accredited more widely for their achievements.

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: Council Committee for Education

MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025

BY: Executive Director - Education and Children's Services

SUBJECT: Education Scotland Inspection of Yester Primary School and Nursery Class

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Yester 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 because of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will not make a follow-up visit in connection with this inspection.
- (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 Yester Primary School and Nursery Class.

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

HGIOS?4:

- 2.1 Safeguarding (not graded or reported)
- 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

HGIOELC?:

- 2.1 Safeguarding (not graded or reported)
- 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- 3.2 Securing Children’s Progress

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 to demonstrate progress with the NIF priorities and drivers for improvement. This progress is reported annually by the Scottish Government.

3.4 Inspection Findings

Yester Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected during December 2024. A letter to parents and carers summarising the key findings was published on 28 January 2025.

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	Good
Early Learning and Childcare	HGIOELC?	2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Satisfactory
		3.2 Securing children’s progress	Good

3.5 Key Strengths

The following key strengths were noted by inspectors during inspection:

- Children are confident, able and articulate. They are well behaved and keen to learn. They enjoy talking about their learning and are proud of their school and nursery. This is underpinned by the following practices:
 - Almost all children demonstrate well the school values of included, supported and successful in their actions throughout the school day.
 - Most children are well-behaved, respectful and polite, and show effective levels of cooperation when working together.
 - Most children use digital devices confidently to support their learning and develop their digital technology skills. Staff use online platforms successfully to record and share children's learning and achievements with their parents.
 - Staff recognise the importance of outdoor and play-based approaches to engage children in their learning. Staff have developed a progressive outdoor learning plan from P1 to P7. These opportunities motivate children to engage in their learning.
 - In nursery, all practitioners help children interact positively with each other. They offer support to children as they learn to express and understand their feelings.
 - In nursery, children demonstrate independence as they get ready for outdoors and enjoy free flow play to the outdoor areas. Children have access to a good range of digital technologies to support in their learning both indoors and outdoors.
 - Teachers involve children in planning their learning by gathering their views on what they already know and what they would like to find out.
- All staff know children and families very well. They have created a calm, inclusive learning environment across the school and nursery. Children feel cared for and happy as a result. This is underpinned by the following practices:
 - All nursery practitioners and almost all teachers have established calm and purposeful learning environments, which help children to focus on their learning. Displays are well presented and used by children to support learning.
 - In almost all primary lessons there are positive relationships between adults and children. Staff and children work collaboratively to promote and develop children's rights. In most classes, children have developed individual class charters linked to children's rights.

- Children make good progress in literacy and numeracy across the school and nursery. This is underpinned by the following practices:
 - In nursery, all practitioners work well together to extend their understanding of the needs of children who require additional support with their learning. This consistent approach ensures children are supported well to engage and play alongside their peers.
 - Nursery practitioners offer quality interactions and most use open-ended questions successfully to support children in developing their thinking. Practitioners promote equity well through their supportive and inclusive ethos. They provide sensitive, regular and valued support and advice. They know and understand the needs of children and families very well.
 - In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning well with children. In a few lessons, children co-construct what they need to achieve and do to be successful. Teachers use clear explanations and instructions effectively to help children to understand their learning.
 - The majority of teachers use questioning appropriately to check children's understanding and to recall key information. A few teachers use highly skilled questioning to enhance and extend further children's understanding of their learning.
 - In the majority of lessons, teachers provide activities for children which are clearly structured. Teachers use praise well and provide supportive verbal feedback. Teachers use plenary sessions to share examples of good work to encourage and support children's learning.
 - Teachers use a range of assessment data to measure the progress children are making in literacy and numeracy. This includes standardised and ongoing class assessments.
 - Teachers have undertaken moderation work with colleagues from other schools to develop a shared understanding of expected standards, particularly in numeracy. This session they are focussing on writing.
 - Teachers meet with the headteacher termly to discuss the progress of individual children in literacy and numeracy. They analyse standardised assessment data to support their professional judgements of children's projected levels of attainment.
 - The headteacher and teachers plan appropriate universal and targeted supports for individuals and small groups to address barriers to learning, and address the challenges faced by families and the potential barriers to learning caused by economic disadvantage.

3.6 Areas for Improvement

Below are the main areas identified for improvement and subsequent actions that have been taken, or are planned for, to facilitate continued improvement in these areas:

- Staff should continue to develop approaches to delivering consistently high-quality learning, teaching and assessment for all children across the school and nursery. These should include opportunities for children to take increasing responsibility in leading their learning. The following actions are now planned to address this area of improvement:
 - The acting headteacher and staff have revisited the positive relationships policy to support greater consistency in the use of strategies and approaches to respond to low-level disruptive behaviour.
 - The headteacher continues to support teachers to apply the school's agreed lesson standard to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching across all classes.
 - Staff CAT sessions will focus on areas within these standards which are not consistently observed during teaching and learning.
 - All staff will be provided with opportunities to observe high quality teaching and learning in other settings. This has already taken place for our Senior Early Years Practitioner.
 - The recently refreshed Nursery Improvement Plan addresses the key areas for development including greater utilisation of responsive planning to allow children to lead on their learning.
- Staff should use information gathered through assessment to plan and provide a broad range of meaningful activities and experiences across all curricular areas. They should ensure all learning is planned at the right level of difficulty to enable all children in the school and nursery to make the best possible progress. The following actions are now planned to address this area of improvement:
 - All teachers have engaged in moderation activity to understand how they are planning for assessment. We will soon develop a shared, consistent approach to assessment across the school.
 - Quality Assurance, Moderation and Assessment calendar and processes to be refreshed to ensure that assessment is best informing planned learning experiences throughout the year.
 - Early Years team to participate in training on high quality planning and assessment with colleagues from the North Berwick ASG at the February In-Service.
 - All Teachers to have engaged in the CYPIC writing programme by the end of the session. This will provide teachers with training on effectively utilising data to lead learning.

- School to work with colleagues across the Haddington ASG and STG to improve professional judgement and confidence in evidencing that children have achieved the level at the appropriate time.

3.7 The school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mr Nick Trussler continues to work closely with the Acting Head Teacher and staff to provide professional advice, guidance, professional learning, support, and challenge in the areas for improvement outlined in Section 3.6.

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 Yester Primary School and Nursery Class Report (Appendix 1) and Summary of Findings Primary School (Appendix 2), Summary of Findings Nursery Class (Appendix 3).

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DESIGNATION	Quality Improvement Officer
CONTACT INFO	Email: ntrussler@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	14/02/2025

28 January 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In December 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Yester 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.

- Children are confident, able and articulate. They are well behaved and keen to learn. They enjoy talking about their learning and are proud of their school and nursery.
- All staff know children and families very well. They have created a calm, inclusive learning environment across the school and nursery. Children feel cared for and happy as a result.
- Children make good progress in literacy and numeracy across the school and nursery.

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

- Staff should continue to develop approaches to delivering consistently high-quality learning, teaching and assessment for all children across the school and nursery. These should include opportunities for children to take increasing responsibility in leading their learning.
- Staff should use information gathered through assessment to plan and provide a broad range of meaningful activities and experiences across all curricular areas. They should ensure all learning is planned at the right level of difficulty to enable all children in the school and nursery to make the best possible progress.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) 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 Yester Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

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

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

[Yester Primary School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. East Lothian Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Victoria Morgan
HM Inspector

Summarised inspection findings

Yester Primary School

East Lothian Council

28 January 2025

Key contextual information

Yester Primary School and Nursery is a non-denominational school set in the rural village of Gifford in East Lothian. It serves the local community of Gifford and surrounding areas. At the time of the inspection there were 147 children in the school organised across seven classes. There are 25 children attending the nursery. Almost all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 6. Across the school, 26% of children have additional support needs. Approximately 7% of children receive free school meals. Attendance is above the national average. There have been no exclusions in the last four years.

There have been recent changes in the senior leadership team. The substantive headteacher, who took up post in October 2020, is currently on secondment to another school. The acting headteacher and acting principal teacher have been in post since September 2024. The principal teacher has 0.9 full-time equivalent teaching commitment.

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

- All staff know children and their families very well and promote a positive and supportive ethos across the school. Almost all teachers have established calm and purposeful learning environments, which help children to focus on their learning. Displays are well presented and used by children to support learning. Almost all children demonstrate well the school values of included, supported and successful in their actions throughout the school day.
- Across the school, almost all children are happy, motivated and engage well in their learning. In almost all lessons there are positive relationships between adults and children. Staff and children work collaboratively to promote and develop children's rights. In most classes, children have developed individual class charters linked to children's rights. Most children are well-behaved, respectful and polite, and show effective levels of cooperation when working together. Staff respond to and support any children who present with low-level disruptive behaviours using a range of approaches to help children focus on their learning. The headteacher and staff should revisit the positive relationships policy. This should support greater consistency in the use of strategies and approaches to respond to low-level disruptive behaviour.
- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning well with children. In a few lessons, children co-construct what they need to achieve and do to be successful. Teachers use clear explanations and instructions effectively to help children to understand their learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers support children to make connections with prior learning and identify the skills for life, learning and work that they are developing. The majority of teachers use questioning appropriately to check children's understanding and to recall key information. A few teachers use highly-skilled questioning to enhance and extend further children's

understanding of their learning. The headteacher and staff have recently developed a shared lesson standard. It is important that the headteacher now supports teachers to apply the agreed standard to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching.

- In the majority of lessons, teachers provide activities for children which are clearly structured. In the majority of lessons, learning is too teacher-led and resource based. Across the school, a minority of children require a brisker pace of learning and increased challenge. When given opportunities to lead and direct aspects of their learning, children respond well. However, too often children are passive in their learning experiences. Children would benefit from greater opportunities to be independent and active in their learning. Teachers should provide further opportunities for all children to be more active participants and to take a greater lead in learning.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers use praise well and provide supportive verbal feedback. Teachers use plenary sessions to share examples of good work to encourage and support children's learning. In a minority of lessons, children are developing skills and confidence in assessing their own learning and that of their peers. Teachers' written feedback to help children improve their work and identify next steps is not yet of a consistently high quality. Teachers should review how they can increase, and be more consistent in, the use of formative assessment strategies to support children to make the best possible progress.
- Most teachers use interactive whiteboards well to display instructions and to present information to children. Most children use digital devices confidently to support their learning and develop their digital technology skills. For example, children access websites and online resources independently to support their learning. Older children confidently create short animations using digital applications. Staff use online platforms successfully to record and share children's learning and achievements with their parents.
- Staff recognise the importance of outdoor and play-based approaches to engage children in their learning. Staff have developed a progressive outdoor learning plan from P1 to P7. All classes have at least one visit, across the school year, to the community woodlands where they develop many skills. For example, children build dens, make fires and look after the environment. These opportunities motivate children to engage in their learning. The headteacher should support teachers to identify opportunities for children to learn outdoors more regularly. This should support greater progression in outdoor learning skills.
- Staff are developing approaches to play pedagogy well at the early level. They have reviewed the learning environment to provide improved learning spaces, including construction and role play areas. They plan activities that take children's views and interests into account. Staff's ongoing engagement with professional and collaborative learning should support the development of play further. This should support staff to ensure play experiences become integral in learning.
- Teachers use a range of assessment data to measure the progress children are making in literacy and numeracy. This includes standardised and ongoing class assessments. These approaches are outlined in an assessment calendar. The headteacher and teachers should review when children undertake specific assessments across the year. This should support teachers to make more effective use of assessment data to plan learning that is set at the right level of difficulty for all children.
- Teachers have undertaken moderation work with colleagues from other schools to develop a shared understanding of expected standards, particularly in numeracy. This session they are focussing on writing. Teachers should continue to engage in moderation activities with

colleagues within the school and across other schools. This will support them to develop their confidence in applying national standards accurately when assessing children's progress in learning across all curricular areas.

- Teachers plan children's learning across a range of timescales. Teachers use local authority progression pathways to plan children's learning across all curricular areas. They link these to the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and national Benchmarks. Teachers involve children planning their learning by gathering their views on what they already know and what they would like to find out. Teachers need to plan more clearly for different groups within the class. This should enable all children to make appropriate progress in their learning.
- The headteacher and staff track and monitor children's attainment and progress across the school, including for identified groups of children such as those impacted by poverty. The headteacher should now refresh the current tracking system to capture this valuable information in one place. This will support all staff to identify more accurately children's ongoing progress and where attainment could be accelerated.
- Teachers meet with the headteacher termly to discuss the progress of individual children in literacy and numeracy. They analyse standardised assessment data to support their professional judgements of children's projected levels of attainment. The headteacher and teachers plan appropriate universal and targeted supports for individuals and small groups to address barriers to 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.

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

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Most children at P1, P4 and P7 achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence levels for literacy and numeracy. At first and second level, a few children achieve beyond expected levels. A significant minority of children across the school could achieve more and would benefit from further challenge in their learning to enable them to make better progress.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning, make good progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- At early level, children listen purposefully to instructions. They answer simple questions about texts well to show their understanding. At first and second level, children express their ideas and opinions confidently. They are aware of techniques such as varying pace and tone and the use of eye contact to engage the listener. At second level, children enjoy taking part in class debates, making arguments for and against interesting issues such as, 'should children be allowed to bring phones to school?' Across the school, a few children need to develop further their skills in taking turns and contributing at an appropriate time when engaging with others.

Reading

- At early level, children use picture cues appropriately to support their understanding of different texts. They are developing their skills in using their knowledge of sounds, letters, patterns to read words. At the first and second level, children explain well the difference between fact and opinion. They are aware of a range of genres and talk with confidence about their favourite authors. Children read well with fluency and expression, appropriate to their age and stage. At first and second level, children should now develop their understanding of how writers use a range of techniques to engage readers. This includes the repetition of ideas and use of rhetorical questions.

Writing

- Across all stages, most writing is presented clearly, legibly and is well organised. At early level, children have well-planned opportunities to write independently as they engage in a range of play, imaginative, and real-life contexts. Children are learning to form letters correctly. They are developing confidence in spelling familiar words correctly. At first level, children identify features of imaginative, functional, and personal writing well. Children use

adjectives correctly to enhance their writing. They should develop further their skills in using relevant and interesting vocabulary as appropriate to the context. At second level, children create successfully a range of short and extended pieces of writing for different purposes. They have opportunities to draft, edit and redraft their writing. At second level, children need to develop further their use of vocabulary and language to engage the reader. For example, alliteration, similes, and metaphors.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, children develop number skills through play activities. They recognise successfully numbers to 20 and add and subtract within 10 with increasing confidence. At first level, children add and subtract accurately three-digit numbers. They are less confident in recognising numbers to 10,000. At second level, children add and subtract larger numbers with confidence, rounding and estimating numbers to solve simple problems. They are developing their understanding and use of fractions, decimals and percentages. At first and second level, children would benefit from more regular opportunities to use newly learned numeracy skills to solve more complex problems.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children create simple symmetrical patterns through art activities well. At first level, children create patterns confidently using one and two lines of symmetry. At second level, children reflect symmetrical patterns successfully across four quadrants. Across the school children identify confidently two-dimensional shapes appropriate to their age and stage. At second level, children identify and describe the properties of a range of three-dimensional objects using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They have a secure understanding of angles. They name and measure accurately a variety of angles.

Information handling

- At early level, children create independently tick charts, bar graphs and pictograms. At first and second level, children collect, organise and display data confidently using a range of charts, graphs and diagrams. They should further develop their ability to analyse and draw conclusions from a range of data.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher monitors and tracks children's progress and attainment over time in literacy and numeracy. Most children sustain good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. As a next step, the headteacher should ensure tracking meetings identify children who would benefit from further challenge in their learning. This will ensure attainment for children working beyond expectations increases over time.
- Attendance is above national and local authority levels. The headteacher monitors the attendance of children to identify those who are falling below 90% attendance. They work closely with children and families to plan individual interventions to improve attendance as required. This is helping to retain positive levels of attendance across the school.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children experience a wide range of activities both in the school and community including sports, music and outdoor experiences. They are proud of their achievements and are beginning to identify and describe the skills they are acquiring through their activities. Children's achievements are acknowledged and celebrated in a variety of ways. These include through weekly assemblies, online platforms and school displays. Staff record children's

participation in wider achievement opportunities. They are beginning to plan interventions to support children at risk of missing out.

- Children in P7 lead a range of lunch time clubs including arts and craft, dance, mini-games and draughts club. The clubs reflect children's interests. Senior pupils fulfil successfully roles as Junior Road Safety Officers, house captains and buddies for younger children. They explain with confidence the leadership skills they are developing as a result. As planned, the headteacher and staff should extend leadership opportunities to younger children. This will increase the number of children actively contributing to school improvement priorities.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural and economic context of the school community. Staff recognise the challenges faced by families and the potential barriers to learning caused by economic disadvantage. They ensure financial constraints do not prevent any child from engaging in opportunities for learning and achievement. Families benefit from a range of approaches offered to them. For example, the school's clothing bank provides free high-quality school uniforms. The headteacher is proactive in promoting and accessing supports discreetly for families such as signposting and accessing specific funding to support individual families.
- The Parent Council are active in their fundraising to support the reduction of the cost of the school day. For example, all classes have a free school trip. As a next step, the headteacher should work with children, parents and staff to develop a cost of the school day policy. This will ensure that all children have further opportunities for equity.
- The headteacher uses the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) appropriately to provide additional support and regular practice of literacy and numeracy skills to close gaps in learning. Additional staff, funded through PEF, deliver interventions for targeted children, including a one-to-one phonics intervention. The headteacher and staff, should now more clearly measure the impact of these interventions. This will support them in determining whether PEF funded interventions are helping to accelerating progress and reduce the poverty related attainment gap.

Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher consults with staff on the use of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). They should now consider how to involve parents/carers in planning and evaluating the use of PEF.
- All classes have welcoming library areas. There is also a well-resourced whole school library. Children talk positively about having opportunities to read for pleasure. They would benefit from regular planned opportunities to access and use the school library. This should develop further children's library skills and support them to have access to a wider range of reading materials.
- All children receive two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) each week. Teachers use a local authority framework for PE to support planning and progression in learning experiences.
- All children learn French appropriate to their age and stage of development. Teachers use the local authority progression pathway effectively to develop children's knowledge and skills in French. The headteacher recognises the need to develop a more consistent approach to the teaching of a second language in P5 to P7. This will help ensure children experience their full entitlement to 1+2 modern languages.
- Children receive religious and moral education through planned learning opportunities to learn about different religious beliefs. Children participate in religious services with the local church.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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

Yester Primary School Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

28 January 2025

Key contextual information

Yester Primary School Nursery is located in the school building. The rural nursery is situated in the village of Gifford, East Lothian and serves Gifford and the surrounding villages of Garvald, Morham, Bolton and Long Yester. It comprises of a playroom and toilet area. The playroom has a kitchen/snack area and direct access to an outdoor play area.

Yester Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a service to 20 children aged between three years up to primary school age. At the time of inspection 25 children attended the nursery, 16 four-year-olds and nine three-year-olds. The nursery operates three models of attendance between 8.15 am – 4.30 pm, 48 weeks per year.

The acting headteacher has been in post since September 2024 and has overall responsibility for leadership within the nursery. He is supported by a senior early years practitioner, one full-time and one part-time early years practitioner and one early years support worker.

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

- All practitioners demonstrate well the nursery values and are caring and nurturing. They have established positive relationships with children and parents. Practitioners respond to children's needs in a planned, individual manner. As a result, children feel valued, confident and happy. The majority of children engage well with their play and show sustained engagement. Practitioners now need to ensure that all children experience appropriate pace and challenge in their learning to sustain and extend their engagement. Practitioners should provide more learning opportunities that require children to discover and investigate using real life and open-ended resources.
- Practitioners work well together to extend their understanding of the needs of children who require additional support with their learning. This consistent approach ensures children are supported well to engage and play alongside their peers. Practitioners help children interact positively with each other. They offer support to children as they learn to express and understand their feelings. As a result, children are kind and caring towards each other during play.
- Practitioners offer quality interactions and most use open-ended questions successfully to support children in developing their thinking. They are responsive to children's needs and interests. Practitioners should extend ways that children's experiences and play can offer greater levels of challenge and opportunities. Practitioners capture children's learning in their individual journals including practitioner's observations, children's comments, and interesting photographs. Children access these frequently, talking confidently and in detail about their learning and how much fun they had. Practitioners should enhance how they obtain and

record children's views and opinions across the nursery. Children demonstrate independence as they get ready for outdoors and enjoy free flow play to the outdoor areas. Children have access to a good range of digital technologies to support in their learning both indoors and outdoors. For example, they take photographs to capture learning and plan for future experiences in the woods. Staff should provide additional opportunities for children to lead their own learning to further develop their skills.

- Practitioners know individual children well as learners. Practitioners capture and document children's engagement in learning experiences across a range of curricular areas. They record observations of individual children's learning in their personal learning journals. Practitioners should continue to ensure that observations consistently capture children's significant learning to identify the skills they are developing. Parents contribute to children's learning journals when they visit for termly stay and play sessions.
- Practitioners make use of opportunities available to them to meet to discuss children's experiences and learning and plan learning across the curriculum. Children would benefit from a better balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated play to enrich children's overall experiences. Practitioners use local authority tracking and monitoring tools to track children's learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners should continue to increase their confidence using these tools to identify the progress children are making since starting the nursery. The leadership team and practitioners should now work together to streamline the way they track children's progress. They should meet more regularly to discuss children's progress and achievement and find time to meet together.

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.

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

- Children are making good progress in early language and communication. Most children use a range of vocabulary to express themselves and answer questions confidently about their learning. They listen very well to adults and each other and have a positive attitude to books. They enjoy stories being read to them. A few children enjoy creating their own stories, which they confidently share using detailed drawings. Children mark make in a range of contexts including making posters and using digital technology. Practitioners should now increase children's progress in literacy by offering support and provoking interest in areas such as early phonics and pre-reading skills.
- Most children are making good progress in mathematics and numeracy. Most children can identify and recognise confidently numbers from zero to 10. The majority of children use one-to-one correspondence well to count a given number of objects to 10. A few recognise numbers to 20. Children use a wide variety of measurement and positional language in physical activity, using loose parts and block play. Most children are confident in linking personal events and daily routines to time sequences. They show an interest in shapes and match and sort by colour, size and shape. Most children regularly recognise pattern in a variety of learning contexts.
- Most children make good progress in health and wellbeing. They learn to manage risk when outdoors. Almost all children develop gross motor skills well, such as running, balancing and climbing during visits to the woods. They develop their fine motor skills successfully through threading, transient art and skilled use of the interactive white board. Most children are confident in hygiene routines and understand the importance of brushing their teeth and washing their hands indoors. They are encouraged to develop respect and responsibility for the care of toys and resources within their environment. Practitioners creatively and sensitively focus on supporting children to understand their qualities and uniqueness. Practitioners should ensure more regular opportunities for children to be independent at snack and lunch times.
- Practitioners celebrate children's successes and achievements through regular and appropriate praise and encouragement. They discuss these individually and in groups linked to the nursery values characters, to ensure children recognise their success. Children's achievements are recorded in their folios, monthly newsletters and through a secure social media site. Building on this, the team should seek ways to develop children's skills further through early leadership and citizenship opportunities within the local community.

- Practitioners promote equity well through their supportive and inclusive ethos. They provide sensitive, regular and valued support and advice. They know and understand the needs of children and families very well.

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: Council Committee for Education

MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025

BY: Executive Director - Education and Children's Services

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

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland revisit 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 that because of the improvements noted in the summary of inspection findings, Education Scotland will not make any further visits in connection with this inspection.
- (iii) Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team.

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 the improvement work, based on the outcomes of the previous inspection in September 2023, and the impact this has had upon learners.

3.2 During the revisit inspection, inspectors used the improvement outcomes from the school's previous inspection to evaluate the quality of improvement work undertaken and the impact that this has had upon improved outcomes for learners.

3.3 At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes are published in a letter to parents and carers summarising the quality and impact of the school's work in addressing the key areas for improvement identified in the initial inspection. This letter provides a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to continue to improve the quality of its own work.

3.4 Inspection Findings

Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class was initially inspected during September 2023. A letter to parents and carers summarising the key findings was published on 21st November 2023, and indicated that the following improvements were required:

- 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.

Wallyford Primary School and Nursery Class were revisited in October 2024, with a letter to parents being published on 17th December 2024. The letter to parents illustrated several improvements under each of these priorities. Inspectors were confident that the progress made evidenced increased capacity within the school to improve.

3.5 Key Strengths

3.5.1 *Teachers should continue to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy -*

- Teachers have made a positive start in raising children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. The overall quality of attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved since the original inspection in September 2023.
- The attainment data for 2023-24 shows that the majority of children in P1, P4 and P7 achieved nationally expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing and numeracy. The overall percentage of children who achieved nationally expected levels in literacy increased from 48% to 57% and in numeracy the percentage increased from 57% to 67%.
- Teachers' professional judgements of children's achievement of a CfE level are now more accurate. This is as a result of the professional learning provided by the headteacher and local authority. Current tracking shows that attainment is predicted to continue to improve over

the next year.

3.5.2 *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 -*

- Overall, staff have made strong progress in improving the quality of learning and teaching. Practitioners in the nursery now make better use of the extensive indoor areas to offer a broad range of experiences.
- Across the nursery, most practitioners have improved the quality of their interactions with children. They now ask children more open-ended questions and encourage children to talk about their learning which extends their thinking.
- Across the school, staff know children very well and there are caring and respectful relationships between adults and children. This is supporting most children to engage well in learning.
- Senior leaders provide stable effective leadership and support that has enabled teachers to make significant positive changes in their approaches to learning and teaching.
- All teachers have engaged meaningfully in a range of high-quality professional learning to improve approaches to learning and teaching. This includes play pedagogy, numeracy and writing, resulting in improved professional confidence and quality learning experiences for children.
- All teachers are highly reflective practitioners and welcome opportunities to discuss, share and improve their practice. Senior leaders have prioritised teacher professional learning, focussing on improving learning and teaching and this is impacting positively on children's experiences and outcomes.
- The Head Teacher prioritises time to allow teachers to observe colleagues' teaching resulting in a growing consistency of learning and teaching across the school.

3.5.3 *Teachers and practitioners should use information gathered through assessment opportunities to match better the tasks and activities to children's needs and abilities.*

- Overall, practitioners and teachers have made positive progress in using information gathered through assessment opportunities to better match the tasks and activities to children's needs and abilities.
- The nursery leadership team have worked effectively with practitioners to improve approaches to planning and assessment for children. They have provided professional learning on how to assess children's learning through high-quality observations.

- In school, senior leaders created a calendar that outlines clearly for teachers which assessments will be carried out at certain times of the year. Senior leaders, supported by local authority officers, provided professional learning for staff focused on effective assessment approaches, including formative, summative and diagnostic assessment.
- Teachers' improved focus on planning and assessment is evidenced in the majority of lessons. Teachers now use information from formative and summative assessments to plan and provide tasks set at the right level of difficulty for most children. Where teachers plan for groups and use more creative learning and teaching approaches, there is a positive impact on children's engagement and progress.
- Teachers have engaged in regular, planned moderation activities, both as a staff team and with other local schools. This, together with a range of formative and summative assessment approaches, is leading to staff having greater confidence in their teacher professional judgements about children's achievement of national standards.

3.5.4 *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.*

- There has been strong progress in the development and use of effective tracking and monitoring approaches.
- The headteacher has improved the effectiveness of the school's approaches to tracking and monitoring children's learning in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing needs. She has worked very well with teachers to develop their confidence in analysing and using tracking and monitoring data to plan improvements in learning and teaching.
- Teachers now use the tracking system effectively to record children's attainment and to predict how well children will progress. This is supporting them well to ensure that the majority of children attain and achieve as well as possible.
- The headteacher meets with teachers termly to review the progress and attainment of all children and to plan next steps in learning. Children with additional support needs are identified and interventions are put in place to support their learning.
- Accurate attainment data is only available from 2023-24 onwards. As robust attainment data is gathered over a longer period, the headteacher should be well placed to better evidence the progress of groups of children.

3.6 The school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mr Nick Trussler will continue to work closely with the Head Teacher, leadership team and staff to provide professional advice, guidance, professional learning, support and challenge.

Additional support has been provided from the Pedagogy Team from January to March 2024 to support identified improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.

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).

AUTHOR'S NAME	Nick Trussler
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DATE	14 February 2025

17 December 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Wallyford Primary School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and East Lothian Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Teachers should continue to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Teachers have made a positive start in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. The overall quality of attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved since the original inspection in November 2023. The headteacher is supporting teachers well to improve how they gather and use data to understand better children's attainment. Teachers' professional judgements of children's achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level are now more accurate. This is as a result of the professional learning provided by the headteacher and local authority. Children at all stages across the school are making better progress in their learning.

Whilst attainment is improving, there remains scope to raise further the attainment of all children. The headteacher and teachers need to continue to focus on improving the quality of learning, teaching and assessment to improve attainment more quickly. This should help to ensure that all children are achieving their potential and making the best possible progress.

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.

Overall, staff have made strong progress in improving the quality of learning and teaching. Practitioners in the nursery now make better use of the extensive indoor areas to offer a broad range of learning experiences. Children now experience more open-ended learning which better meets their interests and needs in both playrooms. Children now have access to better quality materials that encourage them to mark make. Practitioners have increased the quality of mathematics resources across the nursery. These improvements are now supporting children to make better progress in their learning.

Most practitioners have improved the quality of their interactions with children. They now ask children more open-ended questions and encourage children to talk about their learning which extends their thinking.

Across the school, staff know children very well and there are caring and respectful relationships between adults and children. This is supporting most children to engage well in learning.

Senior leaders provide stable, effective leadership and support that has enabled teachers to make significant positive changes in their approaches to learning and teaching. As teachers develop and embed these approaches, children are beginning to make better progress in learning, particularly in reading and writing.

Senior leaders and staff reviewed and adapted the environments for learning to better meet the needs of children. This includes, for example, the newly developed P1 classroom, the school library, play spaces and calm zones throughout the school. Children access these spaces to play, regulate their emotions or work independently or in small groups. This is supporting children's engagement well and they are now more independent in learning.

Teachers have engaged in a range of meaningful professional learning to improve their approaches to learning and teaching. For example, they have learned new skills to improve their approaches to learning and teaching through play, writing and numeracy. As a result, teachers are more confident in planning and teaching in these areas. Most children now experience high-quality play environments across the early level which support them to be curious and engage in their learning. Children are also more motivated to write and have a clearer understanding of how to improve their learning. These improvements to learning and teaching are impacting positively on children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Most children now engage well in their learning. At times, a few children continue to become distressed or overwhelmed in class. Staff are skilled in supporting these children to manage their emotions. Senior leaders now need to improve further the planning for children who require additional support with their learning to ensure their needs are better met.

As planned, staff should continue to develop high-quality learning and teaching approaches and embed these consistently across the school and nursery. This will support all children to make the best possible progress in learning.

Teachers and practitioners should use information gathered through assessment opportunities to match better the tasks and activities to children's needs and abilities.

Overall, practitioners and teachers have made positive progress in using information gathered through assessment opportunities to better match the tasks and activities to children's needs and abilities.

The nursery leadership team have worked well with practitioners to improve approaches to planning and assessment. They now make better use of quality observations to inform their planning of learning. Practitioners use their weekly huddles to share information about children's learning with each other more effectively. This is helping to ensure that all staff are more aware of children's needs and can address these better during free flow play.

Senior leaders, supported by local authority officers, provided teachers with professional learning on effective assessment approaches. As a result, teachers have a deeper

understanding of how to use assessment to plan learning. Teachers now use information gained from assessments more effectively to plan and provide tasks set at the right level of difficulty for most children. As a next step, senior leaders should continue to work with all teachers to improve the consistency of planning across the school.

Teachers have engaged in regular planned activities to agree the standard of children's work, both as a staff team and with staff in other local schools. This is leading to staff having greater confidence in their professional judgements about children's achievement of national standards.

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.

There has been strong progress in the development and use of effective tracking and monitoring approaches.

The headteacher has improved the effectiveness of the school's approaches to tracking and monitoring children's learning in literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing. She has worked very well with teachers to develop their ability to use assessment information confidently to inform their teaching. Most teachers now have a clear understanding of children who are on track, those who need further support and those who are exceeding expectations in learning. They are now beginning to plan better learning that meets the needs of children as a result.

Teachers use the tracking system effectively to record levels of attainment and to predict how well children will progress. This is supporting them well to ensure that the majority of children attain and achieve as well as possible. The headteacher meets with teachers termly to discuss the planning of learning and to review the progress and attainment of all children. Children with additional needs are identified and interventions are put in place to support learning. Senior leaders and teachers need to continue to review the effectiveness of interventions through careful monitoring of children's progress. This should ensure that outcomes for learners are improved.

The headteacher is at the early stages of measuring the progress children make over time and the impact interventions have in closing attainment gaps. As more accurate information about children's attainment is gathered, she should be well placed to evidence better the progress of particular groups. She should also be able to demonstrate better how the pace of closing attainment gaps is increasing.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. East Lothian Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Denise Penman
HM Inspector

REPORT TO: Education & Children's Services Committee
MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025
BY: Executive Director – Education & Children's Services
SUBJECT: Fostering in East Lothian

6

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update to Committee about fostering in East Lothian. Increasing our capacity to provide high quality foster care is a key strategic priority of children's services and this report will provide an overview of the current position, success and challenges.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to:
- i. Note the current position in relation to recruitment and the early indications of increased enquiries.
 - ii. Note the action Elected Members can take to support foster care recruitment in East Lothian.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Under Section 22 of The Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009, East Lothian Council operates as a fostering agency. This requires the council to appoint a fostering panel which has a statutory responsibility to consider and review the case of every foster carer and prospective foster carer referred to it by the local authority.
- 3.2 The fostering panel, amongst other decisions, must make a recommendation about whether a prospective foster carer is suitable, or continues to be suitable to be a foster carer. Once approved, the person, or people, become approved East Lothian Council foster carers.
- 3.3 When a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and it is not safe for them to remain in the care of their parent/s, children's services will always seek to find suitable extended family options to provide safe and loving care in the first instance. When there are no suitable family members available, we will seek a suitable East Lothian Council foster

care placement as this type of care is the closest to a family setting as possible for the child.

3.4 In response to the difficulty recruiting foster carers in East Lothian and in recognition of the value placed on this important role, in March 2024, Cabinet approved an increase to the foster carer fee paid in East Lothian.

3.5 One year on, it is important to review the current position and explore how we can further improve our capacity.

CURRENT DATA

3.6 The following table shows that there has been a reduction in the number of foster carers and in the number of children living with foster carers since December 2020. Additional foster carers were recruited during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the emergency COVID-19 assessment legislation. Unfortunately, only one person approved during this time is still fostering.

	Full time foster carers	Support care /short breaks foster carers	Number of children living with an East Lothian foster carer
December 2024	46	12	53
December 2023	44	7	46
December 2022	51	6	67
December 2021	51	11	57
December 2020	51	6	64

3.7 In line with our commitment to keep The Promise, East Lothian continues to see a reduction in the number of children who require to be looked after and accommodated (legal definition and not chosen language) out with their family. We continue to prioritise keeping children at home when they are safe and loved. If this is not possible, we will always explore extended family options and are pleased to see an increase in kinship arrangements being supported. Social workers continue to be creative in their ways to keep children in their own homes and communities and it is positive to see this reflected in our recent data.

3.8 The figures of children moving into foster care in the table below does not reflect the number of placements that were not possible to make due to the needs of individual children and young people.

Number of children moving into East Lothian foster care per calendar year:					
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
35	32	12	19	19	12

3.9 In 2023, we recognised that the number of placement breakdowns and moves for children in foster care was increasing and a new approach to matching children to carers was required to address this. While some moves can be positive for children, such as the identification of a permanent placement or to be reunited with siblings, some moves are unplanned and distressing. In 2020, 20 children and young people had a placement move which was an all-time high for the service.

3.10 The fostering service has reviewed and refreshed their approach to pre-placement planning for children and young people to ensure that all information about the child is shared and understood as well as a detailed plan about how a child is supported to move to foster care. The multi-agency team will anticipate what the child might need in different circumstances and are proactive with additional support the carers may require. It is promising to see a significant decrease in moves for children in foster care with five moves in 2023 and nine in 2024. This figure is regularly reported and scrutinised at the Performance and Policy Review Committee.

FOSTERING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

3.11 It is well understood in fostering services that only a small amount of people who make an enquiry about fostering, go on to become registered foster carers. The assessment process includes preparation groups and a home study process that can take up to twelve months to complete. Due to the length of time it takes to complete the full process, it is not yet possible to see the full impact of the fostering fee increase. However, this is the first year for some time that we will need to run three preparation groups within one year, a clear sign that the position is improving.

Number of enquiries versus number of people approved as foster carers:				
Year	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Enquiries	28	29	34	27
Number of foster carers approved	3	3	4	8 in the home study and preparation phase

3.12 Having paid for recruitment campaigns on local radio and press with little impact, we are focusing on the use of Facebook and a monthly information drop-in to encourage people to begin the conversation about fostering. This streamlined approach was started in September 2024 but is already resulting in a noticeable increase in enquiries. The plan is to extend our use of social media through other platforms at no cost. A previous lamppost wrap campaign is another proven method of attracting enquiries and this is used by many other Local Authorities. Unfortunately, this is not universally supported within the Council, but we hope that this position can be revisited in the near future.

- 3.13 Current East Lothian foster carers welcomed the fee increase and we know that word of mouth within the community has led to carers working for private agencies seeking to move their registration to East Lothian. East Lothian have also approved foster carers who had originally enquired with a neighboring Local Authority. After their assessment they started caring for a nine-year-old girl and this situation is progressing towards becoming a permanent arrangement.

Current challenges

- 3.14 While we remain keen to recruit foster carers for children and young people of all ages, there are two key areas which we would wish to highlight:
- The fostering service continues to find it challenging to recruit foster carers who have the skill set to look after teenagers. The current carers who look after teenagers are excellent and most fostering placements will transfer to continuing care placements meaning the young person can stay in their home for longer. While this is positive for the young person and it is practice, we wish to encourage, it means we are less able to offer new young people a family setting when they require care. Some young people who could be cared for in foster care if a space was available are instead moving to a residential, group living environment. This is not always in their best interests and can affect their outcomes.
 - The number of asylum-seeking young people moving to East Lothian via the Home Office National Transfer Scheme continues to increase. We have tried to recruit dedicated carers for this group of young people, but this has not been possible. Our current cohort of foster carers can be reluctant to offer a placement due to the lack of information we receive about each young person, and this makes it impossible to consider important matching factors, particularly when there are other children in the household. There can be additional complexities such as cultural differences and we are keen to hear from people who would be willing to receive dedicated support to care for this cohort of young people.

PRIORITIES FOR 2025 / 2026

- 3.15 The fostering service is aiming to run three preparation groups this year and have a target to exceed last year's recruitment. This feels possible if enquiries continue to remain steady. Other key priorities for this year include:
- Broadening our social media presence and reach with support from East Lothian's communications team.
 - Further focused recruitment campaigns to attract people who have an interest in caring for young people seeking asylum.
 - To improve the involvement of foster carers and care experienced young people in our recruitment processes.

- Remain connected to national developments in foster care recruitment to ensure East Lothian can benefit from this new targeted approach.

3.16 Committee members are well placed to support foster care recruitment, and we particularly appreciate social media posts being shared amongst varied networks. We continue to try and keep pace with neighboring Local Authorities and are aware that some have increased their own fostering fees in recent months. During 2025, we will consider a new proposal for incremental rises in fees and allowances to ensure we make fostering an attractive career option for those with the skills and values we require.

3.17 Our fostering community in East Lothian provide exceptionally high standards of care to babies, children and young people and this is evident in the passion and commitment shown by carers and the outcomes achieved. The fostering service is a pivotal part of children’s services, and we are grateful for the support of the Committee and Elected Members in supporting recruitment and championing fostering in East Lothian as a rewarding and valued career.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not adversely 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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DATE	26 February 2025

REPORT TO: Education & Children’s Services Committee
MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025
BY: Executive Director - Education and Children’s Services
SUBJECT: Home to School Transport Policy

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Committee approval to approve the refreshed Home to School Transport Policy (Appendix 1).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To seek Committee approval and adopt the refreshed Home to School Transport Policy, noting the legislative context (Appendix 1). A copy of this Policy will be available on East Lothian Council’s website.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This Policy outlines the legislative obligations for home to school transport on East Lothian Council. The aim is to ensure safe, efficient and equitable transportation for all eligible children and young people, supporting access to education across the local authority.

Section 51 of The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a duty on local authorities to make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of conveyance without charge for the whole or part of the journey between home and their catchment school for children and young people who live more than walking distance, measured by the nearest available route. “Walking distance” means, for a child under the age of eight, more than two miles from their catchment school, and for children and young people aged eight to sixteen more than three miles from their catchment school.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009 amendment outlines the expected provision of ‘adequate and efficient’ support that should be in place for children and young people with additional support needs. Within East Lothian, the Child and Young Person’s Planning

Framework is used to identify, assess, and plan for the provision of support that is required.

- 3.2 Since this Policy was last reviewed, a number of relevant changes have taken place such as the introduction of Scottish Government funded Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel. This Policy is dependent on the continuation of this Scottish Government Funded scheme.

The number of children and young people with additional support needs has also increased in this timeframe and this refreshed Policy clarifies our position on applications for transport assistance from children and young people requiring enhanced transport.

This Policy has been refreshed and is now clearer for stakeholders to understand and for Officers to apply. It has been updated with consideration for today's family dynamics. The content of the Policy has not changed, the terminology has been refined and/or simplified but the principles in the policy not significantly revised.

- 3.3 A process of dialogue on this refreshed policy was undertaken involving Education and Transport Officers and East Lothian Council's Legal Team.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 3.4 East Lothian Council's Head of Education and Officers from Transport and Education will review this Policy annually.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The implementation of this refreshed Policy will ensure the Council complies with legislation and there is clear and transparent guidance on eligibility.

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.
- 5.2 A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment screening was completed. The subject of this report does not impact on Children's Rights under UNCRC.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – None
- 6.2 Personnel – None

6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Home to School Transport Policy 2025 (Appendix 1).

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Education

Home to School Transport

DRAFT POLICY 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the provisions and criteria for home to school transport within East Lothian Council. The aim is to ensure safe, efficient and equitable transportation for all eligible children and young people living in East Lothian, supporting access to education across the local authority.

Section 30 of The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a duty on parents to provide an efficient education for their child or young person, suitable to the child or young person's age, ability and aptitude, either by sending them to a public school or by other means.

Section 51 of The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a duty on local authorities to make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of conveyance, without charge, for the whole or part of the journey between a child or young person's home and their catchment school, for children and young people residing in their area.

Section 42 of The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows local authorities a reasonable excuse for not making such arrangements for children and young people who live within walking distance of their school, measured by the nearest available route. "Walking distance" means, for a child under the age of eight, more than two miles from their catchment school, and for children and young people aged eight to sixteen, more than three miles from their catchment school.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009 amendment outlines the expected provision of 'adequate and efficient' support that should be in place for children and young people and young people with additional support needs. Within East Lothian, the Child and Young Person's Planning Framework is used to identify, assess, and plan for the provision of support that is required. See [GIRFEC in East Lothian \(google.com\)](#) for more information.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act (UNCRC) was introduced by the Scottish Government and received Royal assent in January 2024 and is intended to support, embed and extend children's rights in Scotland. In bringing in the Act, listed public bodies are required to recognise, respect and promote children's rights in what they do. To work towards facilitating these rights within East Lothian, and to 'not act incompatibly' with the Act, East Lothian Council has committed to completing Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRIWA) on all new legislation and policy that impact children. See [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act](#) for more information.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

a. Walking Distance

Local authorities must ensure that children and young people of school age (5-16) do not have to walk more than the defined walking distances appropriate to their age between their home and their catchment school. "Walking distance" means, for a child under the age of eight, more than two miles from their catchment school, and for children and young people aged eight to sixteen, more than three miles from their catchment school. In such circumstances, the local authority must make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of transport for the whole or part of the journey. The distance from home to school is taken to be from the garden gate (or if there is not a garden, from the front door of the home) to the nearest school gate. The route that is measured is the shortest practicable route for a pedestrian.

The child or young person's home address is defined as the main contact's address registered with their school. This address is where the child resides either permanently or for the majority of their time; this is usually the address in receipt of Child Benefit. It is not within the Council's remit to determine which address is the child's main address but there must be a clearly established main address in all cases.

Transport, if eligible, will be granted to and from one address only. Transport will not be granted to more than one address whether this is the address of a parent, childminder or other relative.

There is a duty on local authorities, where the requirements of eligible children and young people have been met, to allow any vacant places on a vehicle used for transport to be used by other children or young people. As this is about efficient use of resources rather than a duty to provide the transport, local authorities have the option to charge the parent for allocated or offered vacant places.

There is no duty on local authorities to provide transport if the child or young person is attending a non-catchment school (including a specialist provision) as a result of a Placing Request made by a parent, or the child or young person.

There is no duty on local authorities to provide home to school transport as part of an education hosting arrangement with another school. A "hosting arrangement" is where a pupil is placed at another mainstream school (host school) other than the one at which the pupil is enrolled (base school) for a defined period of time, following a Child Planning Meeting.

This policy is subject to regular review, with the most recent version published on the council's website. Should you require this in another format please contact educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk.

Where transport is awarded, the Council will confirm the specific arrangements which will be put in place. Arrangements can include:

- Scottish Government funded Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel passes

- local authority season tickets on public service routes.

Contract buses will be arranged, with taxis used only in exceptional circumstances.

b. Unsafe Walking Routes

There will be instances where the local authority concludes that the route children or young people would have to walk to school, accompanied as necessary, is unsafe. In that situation transport will be provided even if the distance falls short of the defined walking distance. Local authorities may confirm "recommended walking routes" which the Council's Roads and Transport Officers consider safer routes to and from school. These routes will form part of any consideration or application of this policy.

Safety is determined assuming the child or young person will be walking with a responsible adult. Factors which may be considered in determining safety include:

- type and volume of traffic,
- width of carriageway,
- presence of footpaths,
- lighting,
- crossing facilities,
- age of the child or young person,
- existence of public bus services,
- high bankings and
- wooded areas.

While these common safety factors are taken into consideration, the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily indicate that free transport will be offered. For example, where a suitable public bus service exists, parents and carers whose children and young people do not qualify for free transport on grounds of distance have the option to choose this and use the Scottish Government funded Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel as an alternative to walking.

Walking routes will be reviewed regularly and where a route is subsequently deemed to be safer, transport will cease, and parents will be notified. Similarly, if a route is subsequently deemed unsafe, transportation may be offered.

c. Medical Conditions

i. Catchment School

Long term

Where the child or young person has an existing medical condition which means they are unable to utilise standard free transport, an application for transport will be made by the Named Education Contact to hometoschool@eastlothian.gov.uk. Any request will include details of the condition and specific need(s) to be met which will be held securely on file in the form of a 'travel passport'. Such needs can include:

- a harness,

- special or bespoke seat,
- tail lift vehicle,
- or the provision of a passenger assistant.

Transport provision will be reviewed regularly and at minimum once per year with the Named Education Contact.

For children and young people with very specialised needs, such as children or young people requiring emergency medical assistance or medication, the relevant Childs Plan will make recommendations to ensure these needs are met whilst travelling to and from school.

Where the child or young person lives within the defined walking distance of their catchment school, the standard method of transport to school is considered when assessing whether transport is required to be provided by the Council. For example, if the parent would normally have transported the child or young person to school by car, the presence of a medical condition will not necessarily warrant an application for transport assistance. Similarly, if the parent and child or young person lives within the defined walking distance, an application for transport will, in most circumstances, not be warranted.

Short term

In the event of a child or young person experiencing a short-term medical condition meaning they are unable to use their usual method of transport to school, a Vacant Place, if one is available, may be offered for up to six weeks. This would be offered in circumstances where the family has no other means of transporting the child or young person to school. See Vacant Places section 7 of this Policy. An application for transport should be made by the Named Education Contact to hometoschool@eastlothian.gov.uk.

This offer does not extend to the illness of a parent or other family member who may ordinarily support the child or young person to travel to school. Any applications for short term transport assistance will, however, take into account children and young people who are adversely affected by the disability of a member of their immediate family, on a case-by-case basis (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 1995 Section 23 (2)).

ii. Non-catchment Mainstream School

In exercising their right to choose to place their child or young person in a non-catchment school, parents will be responsible for transporting their child or young person to that school.

Where a child or young person has been placed in a non-catchment school by the local authority, catchment rules apply.

In some instances, after the child or young person starts attending a non-catchment school, medical conditions can develop which, were this their catchment school, would entitle the child or young person to assistance with transport. In such cases,

the Council will provide up to six weeks of suitable transport to allow time for parents and carers to arrange longer-term provision.

If transport is deemed to be required for up to six weeks, this will be facilitated by means of Scottish Government funded Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel passes or season tickets on public service routes / contract buses. Individually arranged transport will only be offered in exceptional circumstances if this is the only option available or suitable.

d. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

i. Mainstream

Many children and young people with additional support needs are able to make use of standard free transport. In determining a requirement for individual transport for children or young people with additional support needs registered in mainstream catchment schools who live more than the defined walking distance from school, enhanced transport provision will only be considered when supported in a relevant Childs Plan.

ii. Specialist Provisions

Where a child or young person is enrolled in a Specialist Provision as a result of a Placing Request, parents are responsible for transporting their child or young person to that school. The Council is not obligated to offer home to school transport except for independent or grant aided schools. Where a child or young person has been placed in any non-catchment school by the local authority, catchment rules apply.

Enrolment in a Specialist Provision or the presence of additional support needs does not necessarily mean a child or young person is eligible for home to school transport. Where additional support needs exist and transport is sought, an application for transport should be made by the Named Education Contact to hometoschool@eastlothian.gov.uk. Requests should include the need(s) to be met, such as a harness or provision of a passenger assistant.

These arrangements apply to children and young people who live more than the defined walking distance from their school and whose additional support need means that they are unable to utilise standard free transport, as supported in a relevant Childs Plan.

Where the child or young person lives within the defined walking distance of their catchment school, the standard method of transport to school is considered when assessing whether transport is required to be provided by the Council. For example, if the parent would normally have transported the child or young person to school by car, the presence of a medical condition or additional support need will not necessarily warrant an application for transport assistance. Similarly, if the parent and child or young person lives within the defined walking distance, an application for transport will, in most circumstances, not be warranted.

Enhanced transport provision will be considered within the relevant Childs Plan, which will make recommendations to address travel related needs.

e. Additional categories

In addition, the following additional criteria applies:

- Children and young people who have been permanently excluded or removed from their catchment school and placed elsewhere by the Council. Transport will, in the first instance, be by means of Scottish Government funded Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel passes or season tickets on public service routes. Failing the availability of these, contract buses will be arranged, with taxis offered only in exceptional circumstances. This offer does not extend to an education hosting arrangement with another school. A "hosting arrangement" is where a pupil is placed at another mainstream school (host school) other than the one at which the pupil is enrolled (base school) for a defined period of time, following a Child Planning Meeting.
- Children and young people residing in Council housing relocated outside of catchment areas due to house fire/flood/extreme damage. Any arrangement made in such a situation will be reviewed after 8 weeks.
- Care Experienced children and young people, on commencement of a long-term Looked After placement will be provided with 6 weeks of transportation between school and that placement, funded by Social Work. This is to promote and encourage stability and success of the placement. Any arrangements made in such a situation will be reviewed after 6 weeks, with the option of extending that transport for up to 6 months, funded by Education. Any extended travel provision beyond that point will be reviewed at the subsequent Looked After and Accommodated Review. Travel will be by means of Scottish Government funded Young Person's (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel passes or season tickets on public service routes in the first instance. Should a taxi or passenger assistant be deemed necessary, this will be provided by Social Work.
- Children or young people resident in temporary accommodation alongside their families who have been added to the homeless register. Applications can be made for transport for the child or young person to the school at which they are enrolled, until the family is offered permanent accommodation. Should that permanent accommodation be in a different catchment area, transport to the original school will stop and will be considered afresh in the new catchment area.
- Children or young people who have had their catchment school temporarily changed due to a school mothballing will be offered transport for the duration of the mothballing, subject to meeting the normal distance criteria.

3. SEPARATED PARENTS

The child or young person's home address is defined as the main contact's address registered with their school. This address is where the child resides either permanently or for the majority of their time; this is usually the address in receipt of Child Benefit. It is not within the Council's remit to determine which address is the child's main address but there must be a clearly established main address in all cases.

Transport, if eligible, will normally be granted to one address only. However, there may be exceptional circumstances in the case of a child or young person's additional support need where transport from both parents' addresses is necessary. Additional transport provision in these exceptional circumstances will be considered with reference to the child's needs and family circumstances, on recommendation from the team around the child or young person (TAC), including the Named Education Contact. It will be at the discretion of the Council to assess whether additional transport provision is justified and what this provision will be. If granted, in the event of any change to scheduled arrangements, parents are required to give adequate notice of no less than one term for consideration of a new transport request. The Council makes no guarantee that any new schedule would result in equivalent transport arrangements.

4. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Where a child or young person does not qualify for home to school transport, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that the child or young person travels to and from school safely. This may include personally escorting the child or young person or ensuring that another responsible person does this. The illness, working arrangements, financial position, or any personal circumstances of the parents are not considered in determining whether a child or young person qualifies for home to school transport. Consideration, however, may be given to children and young people who are adversely affected by the disability of a member of their immediate family, on a case-by-case basis (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 1995 Section 23 (2)).

Where a child or young person is enrolled in a school via a Placing Request, transport will not be granted, and parents will be responsible for transporting their child or young person to that school.

5. PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF POINTS

School transport is not required to be a door-to-door service. Local authorities may require children and young people to walk to and/or from a central pick-up/drop-off point. Any pick-up/drop-off point would be no further from the child or young person's home than the defined walking distance applicable for a child or young person of that age.

Parents are responsible for making arrangements for their child or young person's travel to and from pick-up/drop-off points. The Council will take appropriate measures to ensure that pick-up/drop-off points are safe and accessible.

Door-to-door service may be provided in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis, for example to children and young people with medical conditions which prevent the child or young person from accessing the pick-up/drop-off points.

Requests to pick up from or merge one child or young person's transport with transport from another child or young person's address on the same route, or from

any address that is not the established residence of the child or young person will be refused. Requests to amend transport routes should be sent to hometoschool@eastlothian.gov.uk and include full details of any request. Drivers should not be approached to vary transport routes or arrangements at any time.

6. OTHER SCHOOL TRANSPORT PROVISION

In addition to home to school transport, Education transport provision can additionally extend to certain activities necessary to support the curriculum. Such activities may include:

- P5 swimming lessons if the pool is more than one mile from school
- Adjusted timetables during examinations
- School to college transport for children and young people under school leaving age where there are no suitable public service buses. Pupils may have to make more than one change of transport.
- Transport may be provided to support curricular progression only available at an alternative school within the local authority, such as Higher courses. Individually arranged transport such as a taxi or bespoke bus will only be provided if Scottish Government Funded Young Person's (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel pass routes are unavailable.

7. VACANT PLACES

Section 51 of The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a duty on local authorities when meeting the transport requirements of eligible children and young people to allow any Vacant Places in vehicles used for transport to be used by other children and young people. This duty applies when a space in a vehicle is available and there will be no additional cost incurred by the Council.

The Council will not provide a larger vehicle than is necessary to meet the requirements of those who are eligible, nor will vehicles deviate from the specified route, in order to meet the requirements of children and young people who request Vacant Places.

Vacant Places are offered on request, on a first come, first served basis, to hometoschool@eastlothian.gov.uk from parents or carers of children and young people who do not qualify for home to school transport where:

- a vehicle providing home to school transport has a Vacant Place, and
- no expense falls upon the Council in acceding to the request (Education Scotland Act 1980 Section 51).

It should be borne in mind that, should an eligible child or young person come along who requires it, the place is no longer considered vacant and will be withdrawn from the pupil occupying it on a Vacant Place basis.

In the event that more Vacant Places are requested than are available, priority shall be given:

1. To those attending their catchment school over those attending an alternative school by parental choice.
2. Amongst those attending their catchment school, to those who live furthest away.
3. Amongst those attending an alternative school by parental choice, to those who live furthest away.

A Vacant Place must be reapplied for each academic year. The granting of a place in a previous year does not guarantee a place will be granted in any subsequent years. The granting of a place to one sibling does not guarantee a place will be granted to other siblings.

A Vacant Place may be withdrawn **at any time** if an eligible child joins the route. This may be at short notice; every effort is made to give notice of the withdrawal of any places offered. There is no legal right of appeal of the withdrawal of a Vacant Place allocation. In such situations the Council will make every effort to offer an alternative transport arrangement. However, if none are available, no offer will be made. The priorities above will be used to determine which Vacant Place would be withdrawn to accommodate eligible children.

Some contracted transport routes carry defined and required unoccupied space for safety reasons and should not be viewed as available capacity. Officers cannot discuss the individual needs of other service users, children or young people for reasons of confidentiality, and the decision of the Officer is final in determining the safety of travel. There is no legal right of appeal of the refusal of a Vacant Place. Please see our website for more information on how to make a comment or complaint to the Council.

8. GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION

The Council will provide transport in the form of contracted buses from central pick-up points in East Lothian to Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce or the Gaelic Provision of James Gillespie's High School, both in Edinburgh.

In the case of a child or young person's additional support needs, enhanced transport provision will only be considered on recommendation from the team around the child or young person (TAC) including the Named Education Contact when supported in a relevant Childs Plan.

9. TRANSPORT PROVISION

Home to School Transport is managed by Transport Services on behalf of the Education Department. Transport Services remit includes:

- Securing home to school transport for those children and young people who qualify for such transport in the most economic and environmentally efficient way.
- Advising the Head of Education on matters connected with home to school transport practice or policy, and the implications of any proposed change in that practice or policy.

a. Modes of Transport

Transport is encouraged to be by means of Scottish Government funded Young Person's (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel passes as far as possible. Where required, the Council will provide season tickets on public service routes, school buses or contracted services. In certain circumstances, transport may be provided by taxis or minibuses, in particular for children and young people with specific medical or additional support needs.

In cases where families feel their child or young person is not ready to have the freedoms of national free travel, the child or young person's card can be programmed with only the Council home to school transport programme. This means the child or young person will still have access to their funded home to school transport, but not the wider national network. Requests for restricted route availability can be requested via email to hometoschool@eastlothian.gov.uk.

All school transport contracts for buses, minibuses and taxis are awarded by competitive tender. Operators are required to provide evidence that they hold the necessary licences and insurances prior to any contract award.

In the event of any complaint concerning the condition of a school transport vehicle or the operation of a school service, Transport Services will investigate and respond. Should an operator be found to be in breach of contract, financial penalties can be applied. After a second written warning of any breach, a contract may be terminated by the Council. In the event of a serious offence (e.g. operation without appropriate licence or insurance) a contract may be terminated immediately. All drivers and Passenger Assistants on the Council's contracted home to school transport routes are appropriately checked via Disclosure Scotland.

In vehicles of 16 passenger seats or fewer, only one child or young person is allocated to each seat and a seatbelt must be provided for and used by every child or young person (Motor Vehicle Construction & Use Regulations 1997). In vehicles of 17 passenger seats or more that are fitted with seatbelts, the required capacity is estimated on the basis of one child or young person per seat. Public services buses or buses that are contracted by the Council but licenced under public service specification are not required legally to have seatbelts.

b. Time Constraints and Determination of Routes

Transport Services is responsible for determining the optimum network of routes and the best form of all home to school transport and for the allocation of individual children or young people to these routes. Routes are arranged to serve more than one school wherever possible and scheduled for normal travel conditions.

There is a general presumption in favour of using public service buses where these are available at suitable times. This will;

- Support the use of Scottish Government funded Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel
- Maximise support for a comprehensive network of public transport in East Lothian
- Allow individual children and young people the flexibility to travel on alternative services throughout the day
- Encourage better behaviour on East Lothian buses providing a service to adult fare paying passengers and children and young people
- Minimise the use of additional vehicles in East Lothian to safeguard and protect the environment.

Where no suitable public service buses are available, children and young people may be allocated to contracted school buses, minibuses, private hire taxis or Council-owned transport.

Where there is no other option of transport, for example if a family is living outside any established route, a parental mileage allowance may be offered. The mileage rate is paid at East Lothian Council's public services rate (currently 45p per mile). Mileage rates are not individually negotiable. A parent shall not be asked to include the children and young people of any other family.

Normally, school transport is timed to arrive no more than 20 minutes and no less than 5 minutes before the start of the school day. Transport is scheduled to be waiting 10 minutes before the end of the school day where possible, and to leave no more than 20 minutes after the end of the school day. There are exceptions at specific schools due to the nature of the school site.

Children and young people in primary schools will normally share transport with their associated secondary schools unless it is more cost effective to provide separate transport for them.

c. Tickets and Passes

Secondary school children and young people travelling on public service buses for home to school transport are encouraged to register for Scottish Government funded Young Person's (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel, as this affords them the benefit of free national travel.

For safeguarding reasons and to allow capacity monitoring, children and young people travelling on contracted home to school bus services will receive a pass which is programmed for their individual journey only and cannot be used on any other route or any other time than the prescribed route. Passes will be checked by

drivers and misuse of passes will be deemed to be in breach of the guidelines on conduct and behaviour (see section 10b Conduct and Behaviour). Home to school bus passes are issued by Transport Services. Replacements for lost passes are subject to a charge, currently £5. This cost is subject to annual review.

10. CONDUCT AND SAFETY

a. Safety Measures

Transport Services will ensure that all vehicles used for school transport meet safety standards and that drivers are appropriately vetted, trained and licenced.

Passenger Assistants will only be provided in school transport to meet the additional support needs of a child or young person or group of children and young people on that vehicle. Such provision will be required following recommendation from the team around the child or young person (TAC) including the Named Education Contact (NEC). Passenger Assistants are normally supplied by the Contractor.

Passenger Assistants for Care Experienced children who are being transported at the request of the Social Work Department, are provided and paid for separately by Social Work.

b. Conduct and Behaviour

All children and young people using home to school transport are expected to demonstrate their school values and behave as they would were they in school. This includes behaving respectfully towards drivers, fellow passengers and staff; wearing seatbelts where they exist; having consideration for the vehicle by not littering or vandalising; remaining seated whilst the vehicle is in motion; following the instructions of the driver and staff.

Guidelines issued to Drivers emphasise their prime responsibility is the safety of the vehicle on the road but also requests their co-operation in reporting any concerns about a child or young person's behaviour.

Unacceptable conduct on school transport will be reported to Transport Services who will liaise with schools. Schools will involve parents in the process at an early stage and warnings and/or sanctions will be based on the severity of the incident.

In cases of repeated or serious misconduct that may endanger others and/or seriously distract the Driver, the Council reserves the right to withdraw the transport either temporarily or permanently. Parents will be notified in advance, and alternative arrangements will need to be made by the parent or carer.

11. APPLICATION AND APPEALS PROCESS

a. How to Apply

Parents must apply for home to school transport through their school office. Applications will be reviewed by Transport Services based on the eligibility criteria.

Eligibility for transport assistance will be reviewed annually. Parents must report any changes in circumstances that might affect eligibility.

b. Appeals

If an application is refused, parents or carers may appeal the decision (not applicable for Vacant Places decisions). Appeals must be submitted in writing to educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk within 30 days of receiving the decision, stating the grounds for the appeal. A review panel will consider the appeal, and the decision of this panel will be final. Please see our website for more information on how to make a comment or complaint to the Council.

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be monitored regularly to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant legislation. It will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or local circumstances.

REPORT TO : Education & Children’s Services Committee

MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025

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 2025/26

8

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek Committee approval of reserving places for incoming catchment pupils at the schools detailed in 2.1 for session 2025/26.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree to hold in reserve places for incoming catchment pupils for session 2025/26 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 1 and Primary 7. 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	2	2	2	2
Campie Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
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	2	2	2	2
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 Gabriel's RC Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
St Martin's RC Primary School	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Stoneyhill Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Wallyford Primary School	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Windygoul Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
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.

School	Number of reserved places per class
Blindwells Primary School	3
Craighall Primary School	3
Elphinstone Primary School	3
St Mary's RC Primary School	2

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

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	200	5	220	5
Knox Academy	180	8	180	8
Musselburgh Grammar School	160	6	150	6
North Berwick High School	200	8	200	8
Preston Lodge High School	260	6	210	6
Rosehill High School	160	8	150	8
Ross High School	240	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.

School	Maximum number of places in S3 including reserved places	Number of places reserved in S3	Maximum number of places in S4 including reserved places	Number of places reserved in S4
Dunbar Grammar School	220	5	220	5
Knox Academy	180	6	180	6
Musselburgh Grammar School	150	6	150	6
North Berwick High School	200	6	180	6
Preston Lodge High School	240	6	240	6
Rosehill High School	150	6	100	6
Ross High School	220	5	260	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 2025/26:

- 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 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

AUTHOR'S NAME	Leanne Ayton
DESIGNATION	Principal Officer – Equity & Inclusion
CONTACT INFO	Tel: 01620 827485 Email: layton1@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	19 February 2025

REPORT TO: Education & Children’s Services Committee

MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025

BY: Executive Director - Education and Children’s Services

SUBJECT: Roll Capping in East Lothian Secondary Schools – Session 2025/26

9

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek Committee approval of the S1-S4 intake levels for East Lothian secondary schools for Session 2025/26.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree a maximum intake level in S1-S4 for session 2025/26 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	200	220	220	220
Knox Academy	180	180	180	180
Musselburgh Grammar School	160	150	150	150
North Berwick High School	200	200	200	180
Preston Lodge High School	260	210	240	240
Rosehill High School	160	150	150	100
Ross High School	240	220	220	260

- 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 2025 – 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 2025/26 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	180	205	201	207	169	135	1097
Knox Academy	170	165	174	163	136	81	889
Musselburgh Grammar	154	134	135	142	124	122	811
North Berwick High School	180	188	179	168	187	144	1046
Preston Lodge High School	244	191	215	217	148	101	1116
Rosehill High School	140	134	138	88	77	N/A	577
Ross High School	222	210	213	251	166	124	1186

3.6 The total roll includes pupils who are expected to transfer to S1 in August 2025 and the number of pupils expected to move up into S2 and so on, to S6. Wallyford Learning Campus will not have S6 pupils in session 2025/26, only S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5.

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 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

AUTHOR'S NAME	Leanne Ayton
DESIGNATION	Principal Officer – Equity & Inclusion
CONTACT INFO	Tel: 01620 827485 Email: layton1@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	19 th February 2025

REPORT TO: Education & Children’s Services Committee
MEETING DATE: 18 March 2025
BY: Executive Director - Education & Children’s Services
SUBJECT: Head Teacher Appointments

10

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek Committee approval of the Head Teacher appointments made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the undernoted Head Teacher appointments (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Following shortlist interviews, the following Head Teacher appointments are intimated (Craighall Primary School - Appendix 1 and Blindwells Primary School - Appendix 2):

School	Appointee	Commencement Date	Previous Post and School
Blindwells Primary School	Gemma-Rose Lansdown	21 April 2025	Head Teacher Leith Walk Primary School
Craighall Primary School	Jamie Wilson	6 May 2025	Head Teacher Morebattle and Yetholm Primary Schools, Scottish Borders

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

AUTHOR'S NAME	Nicola McDowell
DESIGNATION	Head of Education
CONTACT INFO	Email:- nmcdowell1@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	19 February 2025

Department of Education & Children's Services

POST: HEAD TEACHER

SCHOOL: CRAIGHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The undernoted candidate was called for shortleat interview for the above post on **7 February 2025**, in John Muir House, Haddington, East Lothian.

Candidate 1: *Jamie Wilson*

Following the shortleat interview the Appointment Panel unanimously agreed/~~took a vote/by a majority decision/on the casting vote of the Chairman~~ (*delete as appropriate*), to appoint:

Name *JAMIE WILSON*

Signed: *[Signature]*
Head of Education

Date: *07.02.25*

Department of Education & Children's Services

POST: HEAD TEACHER

SCHOOL: BLINDWELLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

The undernoted candidate was called for shortleat interview for the above post on **17 February 2025**, in John Muir House, Haddington, East Lothian.

Candidate 1: Gemma-Rose Lansdown

Following the shortleat interviews the Appointment Panel unanimously agreed/~~took a vote/by a majority decision/on the casting vote of the Chairman~~ (delete as appropriate), to appoint:

Name Gemma-Rose Lansdown.

Signed: 
Head of Education

Date: 17.02.25