



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

**TUESDAY 10 JUNE, 10:00am
VIA HYBRID SYSTEM**

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Committee Members Present:

Councillor Bruce
Councillor Bennett
Dugdale – Convener
Councillor Findlay
Councillor Gilbert
Councillor Hampshire
Councillor McFarlane
Councillor McIntosh
Councillor Menzies
Councillor Ritchie
Councillor Yorkston
Mr S Gilmour-Jack
Rev D Hamilton
Rev J Sheridan

Council Officials Present:

Ms N McDowell - Head of Education
Ms L Byrne – Head of Children’s Services
Ms A Hood – Team Manager, Education & Employability
Mr N Trussler – Quality Improvement Officer, Education
Ms J Boyle – Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Inclusion
Ms A Ingham – Education Support Officer
Ms K Weir – Senior Officer, Early Years
Ms A Cameron – Service Manager – Early Years and Childcare
Ms B Skirrow - Principal Officer (Education Service)
Ms J Allen - Communications Adviser
Mr A Stewart – Quality Improvement Officer, SEIC
Ms A Harrison – Principal Education Psychologist

Teachers Present:

N/A

Pupils Present:

Finlay Thomson – Dunbar Grammar School
Lynette Bell– Dunbar Grammar School
Amy Chatwin – Preston Lodge High School
Delta Sym – Preston Lodge High School

Other:

Lynsey Davidson – Skills Development Scotland

Clerk:

Ms M Scott
Ms E Barclay

Other Elected Members present:

N/A

Apologies:

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 five years from the date of the meeting.

The Clerk recorded attendance of committee members by roll call.

Councillor Dugdale welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee, particularly welcoming Reverend Douglas Hamilton, the new religious rep from the Church of Scotland, Lynsey Davidson attending from Skills Development Scotland and pupils from Dunbar Grammar and Preston Lodge high School, Finlay, Lynette, Amy and Delta.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON 18 MARCH 2025

The minutes of the Education Committee meeting of 18 March 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

2. SCHOOL UNIFORM GUIDANCE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to allow the S2 and S3 stakeholder group to outline their school uniform proposals based on Scottish Government Guidance, and their consultation process and to note the East Lothian School Uniform Guidance (appendix 1) created by East Lothian pupils in consultation with a range of stakeholders and based on Scottish Government Guidance.

Ms Abby Ingham, Education Support Officer reported this guidance was created in response to the Scottish Government's School Uniform and Clothing Guidance for Schools and Education Authorities 2024 paper and in light of the UNCRC Incorporation Scotland Act 2024. She set out the purpose of the guidance and highlighted the focus on promoting attendance and inclusion in school through fair and equitable dress code which adhered to the principles of GIRFEC. Ms Ingham outlined the consultation process which was extensive and included pupils from every school in East Lothian who agreed on principles; Affordable, Comfortable,

Inclusive, Equitable, Practical and Sustainable. She stated if approved the guidance would be released in August 2025 with schools using it whenever they are creating or updating their own uniform guidance. Ms Ingham drew Members' attention to section 5 of the report which contained a table schools would use in consultation with the whole school community to ensure all issues raised under the agreed principles were addressed and planned for. She added the challenge questions came from the Scottish Government guidance and the ideas of children and young people who helped to create the document. Ms Ingham thanked the children and young people of East Lothian who worked together to create the guidance and found their hard work, insights and desire to contribute to their school communities inspiring.

Responding to questions from Councillor Gilbert, Amy explained it was felt important for pupils to be involved in the decisions made as they know from personal experience of wearing the uniform what changes would be welcomed, Ms Ingham hoped the guidance was supportive of the six principles as it was clear and provided challenge questions to consider all ideas so they could adapt that to suit what works best for them. Lynette stated that she believed the new uniform guidance would help attendance and not cause a barrier as it was more comfortable, especially for pupils with sensory issues. Delta stated exceptions could be made for personal circumstances and also provided information on the preloved uniform options available within schools which was all free for pupils to collect. Ms Ingham explained this guidance was for schools to use when they were updating or creating new guidance, and it was agreed with pupils that this guidance shouldn't be updated too frequently so parents and carers are able to have one clear set of guidance to follow.

Councillor Hampshire asked why what pupils wore to school made such a difference to their school experience. Lynette stated being in school uniform can cause severe discomfort for some pupils due to health conditions and also some pupils do not feel comfortable changing within changing rooms for PE classes as they are cramped and busy. She said school uniform should be something comfortable and practical for that specific day at school.

Councillor McIntosh asked what balance was given between a school uniform and young people being able to express their individuality. Finlay confirmed that topic came up during discussions and it was agreed a general policy could be reached allowing flexibility between schools. Amy stated being able to still express yourself seemed to depend on the school as at Preston Lodge it was not mandatory to wear a jumper with the school logo, but this was the case at some other schools.

Pupils continued to answer questions from Members. Lynette explained schools want to implement a form of uniform policy to prepare pupils for future career environments, but they wanted to ensure it was affordable and practical for everyone. Delta stated her primary school uniform was very relaxed compared with high school and Lynette found the material of primary school clothes better with more range and adaptability. Finlay made Members aware it wasn't well known between pupils that there was a grant for uniform, but he felt a lot of pupils would feel comfortable speaking to their parents to receive this if it was required and Delta shared information on the pre-loved uniform stating it was mentioned in the weekly school newsletter and could be claimed anonymously through one teacher and did not have to be done through parents.

Councillor Menzies asked what the Council was doing to encourage more schools to ensure pre-loved items were an option and how could Members help facilitate that more. Ms Ingham stated this guidance referenced pre-loved items of clothing and

wanting schools to consider that when they are thinking about uniform policy. She also highlighted the work being done on the cost of the school day.

Responding to a follow up question from Councillor Menzies, Amy said she would like the policy to be rolled out as soon as possible with Lynette explaining Dunbar Grammar had just implemented a new uniform policy and some students could be buying these new clothes that it would be helpful to look at what schools have just introduced new policies recently and create timelines based on that to allow newly purchased clothes to be worn down first. Ms Ingham echoed Lynette's point and confirmed reasonable timeframes would be set out with each school. Ms Nicola McDowell, Head of Education added that as the young people present today represented themselves so well at Committee, she would like to invite them to also present to Head Teachers as the more young peoples voices are heard, the more influence they can have on decisions being made within their schools.

Councillor Ritchie asked how all the information from different schools was pulled together to form the guidance presented today. Lynette confirmed there were different opinions raised from different schools, but they used mind maps to look at those differences and similarities to come to a final decision.

Councillor Menzies thanked Ms Ingham for her report and Lynette, Finlay, Amy and Delta for their help with the report and for attending Committee. She stated their insight proved why we should have the voices of young people in every decision for young people and made the pupils aware they had advocated for there to be pupil voice within every school.

Councillor Hampshire stated young people being involved in the consultation and decision about uniform would make it stronger and he hoped Head Teachers would appreciate the work that had been done by those young people.

Councillor Ritchie said as she regularly asks about UNCRC it was great to see it in action and she was very grateful to staff, officers, teachers and the young people who helped facilitate this guidance.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Ms Ingham for her work on this report and stated it was the first time young people had brought their own paper and answered questions at Committee. She thanked the pupils for their work and consultation that they had done across all schools to arrive at this guidance and highlight the importance of pupil voice. Councillor Dugdale noted she was really impressed by the depth and consideration given to all sorts of aspects of uniform and was really interested to see affordability and comfort being the two highest priorities. She noted the importance of further discussions on where the views and voices of young people can be incorporated into the work of this committee.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

Note the East Lothian School Uniform Guidance (appendix 1) created by East Lothian pupils in consultation with a range of stakeholders and based on Scottish Government Guidance.

3. NATIONAL THEMATIC INSPECTION

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to inform the Education and Children's Services Committee of the findings and

recommendations of the East Lothian Thematic Inspection and the National Thematic Inspection of Local Authorities by Education Scotland.

Ms Nicola McDowell, Head of Education reported in June 2024 His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education announced a National Thematic Inspection of Local Authorities in Scotland, the focus of which was how local authorities support schools to continue to improve. Inspectors visited all 32 local authorities to learn what was working well, challenges and improvements that needed to be addressed to ensure effectiveness across Scotland. She drew Members' attention to section 3.4 of the report which detailed the visits to local authorities, the engagement with senior officers and central teams to hear about local priorities and approaches to quality assurance and school improvement. There was also engagement with head teachers, school leaders, teachers, representatives of professional associations, elected members and chairs of parent councils. Ms McDowell noted there was no engagement with children or people in any authority and early years was not a focus of the inspection. She also highlighted the recommendations from the National Report and the specific finds and recommendations for East Lothian.

Ms McDowell reported she was delighted East Lothian had been recognised for two specific practices that inspectors thought were worth sharing more widely; self-improving schools and quality assurance of child protection and safeguarding. She also noted the areas for improvement; enhanced evaluative writing skills for head teachers and precision and targeted support for schools where attainment is not yet strong enough. Ms McDowell made Members aware that the school visit programme for 25/26 had now been strengthened to ensure more support for those schools requiring improvement and school reviews would be more targeted to need.

Ms McDowell provided comparative analysis of East Lothian versus national findings and shared challenges in education authorities across Scotland, the main concern being budget cuts and fiscal challenges.

Councillor Hampshire asked how we were going to be able to meet the noted improvement challenges with the financial constraints the Council was facing. Ms McDowell confirmed the fiscal challenges were taken into account and the team have made sure that planning was proportionate to the budget they have. She noted the evaluative writing was done through the South East Improvement Collaborative which upskilled the central team to be able to support schools and they were working with resources they had and building on their own capacity within their team to deliver rather than looking out with the out with the authority at extra cost. Ms McDowell confirmed the Quality Improvement Officers were changing the way they worked to take recommendations into consideration and were looking at a programme of RAGing schools so they can target their time more appropriately.

Responding to a question from Councillor Bruce, Ms McDowell stated there was a very comprehensive system of reviewing schools which had now been done at every school in East Lothian. She said this would allow for a far more proportionate approach to how thematic reviews were done in the future and to target supports. Ms McDowell confirmed the evaluative writing training that was delivered to head teachers would form part of the self-improving school system.

Councillor McFarlane asked if there would be further local authority inspections. Ms McDowell stated we were awaiting further information from Education Scotland as they were working with ADES and Scottish Government to look at what further inspections of local authorities would look like. She added that she welcomed further inspections as the feedback allows us to continue to improve and, in the meantime,

East Lothian would continue to work with their quad group of Argyle and Bute, Moray and Angus Councils to work collaboratively to support and challenge each other.

Responding to a question from Councillor McIntosh, Ms McDowell explained the support of Quality Improvement Officers and Education Support Officers had an impact on attainment and achievement as they use equity trackers and discussions with Head Teachers to focus on the young people who may not be attending school or achieving, for whatever reason. She added this report focused on the work of the central team and senior leaders in schools to support and challenge each other to continue to improve.

In a follow up question, Councillor McIntosh asked how the recommendation of improving the evaluative writing for Head Teachers would improve the learning environment for children. Ms McDowell explained the evaluative writing would support Head Teachers to make sure they have measurable outcomes in their improvement priorities to drill down into that exactly needs to improve in our schools to improve the outcomes of our young people. She added they would look specifically at the attainment data at different levels and stages within schools and at different targeted groups to make sure they have a measurable outcome and can challenge each other on a regular basis to make sure these are achieved at the end of the year.

Ms McDowell continued to answer questions from Members. She provided information on the level of resource it took for inspections to be completed and confirmed when further information was provided to her from Education Scotland this would be shared at Committee. Ms McDowell also made Members aware that pupil leadership groups were a part of many East Lothian schools and pupil voice would continue to be a priority within improvement plans. She highlighted work was being done by Education Scotland on how to share best practice across Scotland. She was confident East Lothian had a very good cross-section of Head Teachers represented as associate assessors.

Councillor Ritchie commented it was reassuring to hear there were no surprises within the report, that teams were all working on improvements and there was capacity within teams to take those improvements forward. She added this showed our self-evaluation was where it needed to be and thanked all staff who were involved in the inspections.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Ms McDowell for her report, all staff, parents and carers who contributed to the inspection and highlighted the two practices inspectors shared more widely. She felt reassured that the areas highlighted for improvement had already been acted on and thanked staff responsible for this. Councillor Dugdale drew out comments from inspectors on the strong collaborative relationships between school leaders and local authority officers which was built on mutual trust and respect.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the findings and recommendations of the East Lothian specific Thematic Inspection (appendix 1) and the National Thematic Inspection of Local Authorities by Education Scotland (appendix 2).
- ii. Note the actions taken with regards to the recommendations made.
- iii. Note the comparison between the national and local findings.
- iv. Note that East Lothian's Self-Improving Schools System has been cited in the National report as an example of good practice.

4. RAISING ATTAINMENT UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to update the Committee on the progress towards raising attainment for all learners and closing the gap for the most disadvantaged children and young people.

Mr Alistair Stewart, Quality Improvement Officer (Secondary) drew Members' attention to the key strategic action in the creation of Principal Teachers of Equity which began on a pilot basis in 2023/2 and under the joint leadership of Head Teachers and the Quality Improvement Manager of Equity and Inclusion they have been identified as a key driver for improvement during annual secondary attainment reviews. These Principal Teachers track, monitor and identify interventions for young people impacted by poverty and care experienced young people and now had access to monthly equity trackers to target interventions to ensure senior phase learners most at risk could be found and supported and noted further improvements had been made with data support extended to include centrally provided in year tracking tools for all secondary schools covering broad general education as well as the senior phase. He highlighted the key successes, summary of progress and next steps and drew Members' attention to progress made in P1, P4 and P7 numeracy and noted East Lothian Council's back to basics approach with excellent learning, teaching and assessment identified as a key lever for raising attainment. Mr Stewart provided information on the Q1, Q5 attainment gap and steps being taken to identify solutions in those areas to ensure all learners left school with at least five qualifications however it was advised that caution is made with regards to those effected by the amendments to assessments caused by COVID. He noted East Lothian Council's continued work to ensure care experienced young people were supported to achieve therefore this cohort was tracked separately.

Councillor Yorkston asked what actions were going to be taken to reduce the poverty related attainment gap within literacy. Mr Stewart stated there had been improvements achieved in attainment in P1, P4 and P7 combined and also made within S3 achievement of third level. He added the service continued to focus on the learning, teaching and assessment through the use of the literacy strategy, laying foundations for future achievement of SCQF Level 5, utilising tracking and monitoring systems and ensuring that data was used to better effect and targeting resources. In addition schools were also working to ensure a positive presentation policy was taken to ensure young people were recognised at the highest level of their potential attainment.

Responding to a questions from Councillor McIntosh, Mr Stewart stated over the last three years there was no correlation between attainment results and the leavers date however he believed she was right to note the impact of COVID on the cohort as they progress through school. He added the best approach was to have accurate data to know young people on an individual level to ensure we are getting it right for every child and he noted data had been enhanced to ensure there was an accurate picture of learners' progress. He highlighted the Positive School Leaver Destinations report was following on the agenda which would answer Councillor McIntosh's questions regarding positive progress made by young people after leaving school. He added in his role he worked alongside East Lothian Works looking at transitions and recently a review was carried out on the 16 plus awards which showed areas of very strong practice but also areas that can be improved upon. Alison Hood, Team Manager – Education and Employability added that EL Works had a dedicated school to college transitions officer who worked with pupils pre-identified by the school, to support a successful transition to college. She noted work was also being done with Edinburgh College, Skills Development Scotland and their career advisors to ensure that

transitions are sustained, and young people can move onward to a positive destination.

Mr Stewart continued to answer questions from Members, providing information on the approaches used to ensure improvement of attainment outcomes for care experienced leavers and how regular planned approaches of reviewing data allowed for the support and challenge of secondary schools. He also made Members aware of the collaborative work of the Principal Teachers of Equity to lead sessions and share good practice. Mr Stewart confirmed data showed there was a correlation with regards to attainment and deprivation however the attainment gap referred to quintile one versus quintile five, so the intention was not to raise attainment at a whole level for all learners but to ensure greater progress for those who are in the lower Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Councillor Menzies was heartened to hear about the work going on and see great strides in some areas. She suggested the introduction of an information tracker to prevent further full reports having to be submitted to Committee to free up some time for officers.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Mr Stewart for his report and highlighted the importance of responding to data on attainment which shows we are making progress on closing the attainment gap. She acknowledged the challenges children faced at important stages in their development and education due to restrictions in response to the pandemic and the important of closing the poverty related attainment gap. Councillor Dugdale added officers were going all they can to implement interventions to give every child and young person the support and confidence to flourish and thrive.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

Note the progress and next steps identified towards raising attainment for all learners and closing the poverty related attainment gap and the data summary of key measures provided in appendix 1.

5. POSITIVE SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS 2023/24

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to update the Committee on the current School Leaver Destination Return report (SLDR) and Participation Measure, including an overview of the interventions implemented to sustain and improve East Lothian Council (ELC) positive destinations.

Alison Hood, Team Manager – Education and Employability provided Members with information on the positive destinations of school leavers between winter 2023 and summer 202 and noted East Lothian's participation measure decreased to 94.6% but remained above the national average of 92.7%. She highlighted a reduction in the gap between most and least deprived areas and an increase in positive statuses across all age ranges from 16 to 19.

Lynsey Davidson, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) provided highlights of the 2023/24 academic year which included the highest return of school leavers in the past five years, the highest levels of young people entering Higher Education and Training in the past three years, above national average levels of young people entering employment as an initial destination and an increase in 'unemployed not seeking' young people from 14 to 37. She also informed Members of the 2024

highlights of the Annual Participation Measure which included the overall 94.6% participation rate for 4612 individuals in East Lothian which was the highest rate in five years and East Lothian had less unconfirmed young people than the national average.

Responding to questions from Councillor Hampshire, Ms Hood reported in terms of tracking and monitoring of 16 year olds, there are very close connections as they have just left school but by the time young people reach 18 or 19, they could have had multiple transitions in and out of work. She added this cohort was further complicated as anyone claiming Universal Credit would be recorded as a claimant but may have had periods of employment whilst being in receipt of Universal Credit. It was fair to say statistics for that age group were harder to unpack. Ms Hood also provided information on work being done by the Local Employability Partnership to look at external grant funding that comes into East Lothian to best support young people into employment.

Councillor Yorkston asked how the external funds were being used to support employability not just for school leavers especially given the financial constraints the Council was facing. Ms Hood reported that the Bridges Project in Musselburgh, Interwork, the Amisfield Preservation Trust and Heavy Sound had all received grant funding. Funding for painting and exploring the arts was also used as a therapeutic intervention for individuals who are not ready to enter the workplace and require additional support to build skills such as self-confidence and self-worth. She added they continued to look at key performance indicators, data through the SDS portal and DWP to ensure the services we procured were meeting the needs and aligned with labour market intelligence.

Responding to a question from Councillor McIntosh, Ms Hood stated the work of East Lothian Works and Skills Development Scotland was not time limited so both services would work indefinitely with individuals, assuming they wished to continue engaging. She added that all participants had personal plans which were worked up between the designated officers from retrospective organisations and the client themselves. Ms Hood reported EL Works used a management information system called Helix, which covered the whole of the south east region, to track individuals if they move geographic area and shares which employer they've gone to, the hours they are working and if they are with a real living wage or national living wage employer.

Councillor Menzies asked if we were moving away from gendered outcomes as previously there had been a tendency to look at the beauty industry for young women and construction for young men. Ms Hood did not have statistics to hand but was happy to provide them post meeting. She provided an example of work undertaken by EL Works which targeted young females to visit Torness Power Station. The visit was to showcase the sector and their apprenticeship programme. Ms Hood confirmed all those applying for spaces on EL Works managed programmes and school college partnerships courses were considered on individual suitability and not on gender.

Responding to further questions from Councillor Menzies, Ms Hood confirmed if individuals between age 16-19 were identified as not being in a positive destination, then they would be contacted by text or phone by Skills Development Scotland. If they could not be reached, then staff from EL Works and SDS would be deployed for a joint visit to the young persons home and if they are not available then a pre-prepared letter would be dropped off. She said this approach had been really successful as it often allowed officers to meet parents who were encouraged by the

support offered. Ms Hood also confirmed that both outcomes and interventions were reported to the Scottish and UK Government.

Councillor Ritchie asked how we compared national figures and if the Scottish-wide definition of a positive destination was the same as what we used locally. Ms Hood stated the definitions used in East Lothian were exactly same as the definitions used by the Scottish Government.

Responding to a second question from Councillor Ritchie, Ms Hood explained the decision making process for individuals was person-centred, so it was right for them at that point in their life and journey. She referenced the 16 plus meetings which happen at various points throughout the year across all secondary schools where multi-agencies come together to discuss individuals of particular concern. Ms Hood stated all school college partnership offers were delivered equally and equitably across the seven schools, occasionally with a pilot being trialled in one or two schools first.

Councillor Dugdale asked if Ms Davidson could expand further on the impact of poor mental health on young people who are unemployed not seeking. Ms Hood reported that statistical return of unemployed not seeking covered the economically inactive and unavailable due to health which included young people with caring responsibilities, people with disabilities or people taking time out to travel. She added they were beginning to see mental health issues in young people filter through from the pandemic which is why the strength of the 16 plus network and early identification was so important.

Councillor Hampshire welcomed an excellent report and raised the importance of giving every young person the opportunity to get into employment. He noted this was not about trying to stop people receiving benefit but instead about the great opportunity in life to find positive employment. Councillor Hampshire thanked all staff involved in this work and congratulated them on a huge achievement.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Ms Hood and Ms Davidson for their report and recommended everyone read it as it showed the variety of opportunities and destinations for our young people. She noted the shadow of COVID showing an impact on mental health but thanked all EL Works staff and partners for their work to support young people through that and into positive destinations. Councillor Dugdale was heartened to see the number of young people engaging in Foundation Apprenticeships and highlighted the number of young people achieving awards in construction crafts with The Ridge and at Wallyford Learning Campus, the school to college partnership and the parental employability scheme. She noted it wasn't just about jobs but also about enabling young people to find areas which excite them and where they can excel which was evident with young people engaging when they were ready. Councillor Dugdale welcomed an inspirational report which she was pleased to have at Committee.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

Note the significant proactive work currently underway to support improved outcomes for learners leading to positive destinations.

6. SUSTAINABLE HOURLY RATE FOR FUNDED PROVIDERS DELIVERING EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IN EAST LOTHIAN FOR 2025/26

A report was submitted by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services to note the sustainable hourly rate paid by East Lothian Council to Early Learning and Childcare (EL&CC) funded providers in the private and third sector, to delivery funded early learning and childcare for 2025/26 and to agree to delegate authority to the Head of Education to review and approve future sustainable hourly rate changes.

Kelly Weir, Senior Officer – Early Years reported East Lothian Council had a legal duty to ensure that a statutory amount of early learning and child care was available for each child delivered through a variety of funded providers. She drew Members' attention to the increased rates from £8.12 to £8.42 for eligible two year olds and from £6.65 to £6.90 for three to five year olds from the 1st of April 2025 as well as a 3.75% uplift applied to the 24/25 rate to enable funded providers to pay early learning and child care workers delivering funded hours at least £12.60 per hour. Ms Weir confirmed this increase had been met from Scottish Government funding and the staff costs were assumed to account for 75% of the sustainable rate. She explained the proposed local hourly rate would be reviewed using Scottish Government and COSLA guidance using a cross data collection exercise of the current rates charged by private nursery providers and benchmarking against neighbouring local authorities. Ms Weir stated the hourly rate must be affordable and sustainable to the Council whilst enabling funded providers to pay employees the real living wage, reinvest in their service and provide high quality early learning and child care and any increase in costs would need to be met from the early years budget for 25/26 as no additional funding was available.

Councillor Hampshire asked for an indication of the non-staffing elements and asked if all of that would come from the Council's budget. Ms Weir confirmed a data collection exercise was being undertaken at the moment and as part of that providers are being asked to detail their property costs, supplies and services, admin costs and external service charges such as a care inspectorate fees. She explained this information would then be analysed along with finance colleagues to look at if an increase or change was required to the 25% of the rate. Ms Weir added when preparing the Early Years budget a slight increase was included within it in preparation for this piece of work base on the inflation rate at that time.

Responding to a question from Councillor McFarlane, Ms Alison Cameron, Service Manager – Early Years and Childcare reported they had continued to build on their relationship with the improvement service to understand the community needs, especially as being a very fast growing local authority. She confirmed East Lothian Council was absolutely committed to supporting all families and those most vulnerable as the eligibility for a two year old place was based on family income and reported in April 2025 the two year old provision was moved to the new purpose built early learning and child care setting at Rosehill Campus which allowed an increase in capacity from 10 to 20 children. Ms Cameron added there would also be capacity to support eligible two children within the new Blindwells and Craighall campuses and high quality documentation had been further developed to support consistent practice across all settings, whether local authority or funded providers which included a transition refresh to the transition documentation to better understand the two year old children within our communities to best understand their needs and actively work to support everyone family. Ms Hood explained they were working with information from the Improvement Service to identify families who are eligible and to work actively with other services such as East Lothian Works, Families Together East Lothian and Volunteer Centre East Lothian to maximise the support offered to children and families.

Councillor Bruce asked how the new sustainable rate for East Lothian compared to other local authorities. Ms Weir did not have the data for this year yet but confirmed a

lot of other local authorities would be in a similar position to East Lothian and going through the same exercise. She provided data from the previous year which showed East Lothian as tenth for three to five year olds in private nurseries, seventh for eligible twos within private nurseries, eighth for three to five year olds for our child minders and fifth for our eligible two child minders and confirmed as soon as this years data was available it would be shared with Members.

Responding to questions from Councillor Bruce, Ms Weir explained the whole rate process was under review and from 2026/27 there would be new Scottish Government Guidance. She confirmed the 75% and the 25% would be delegated to the Head of Education to allow her to make decision on an annual basis about any increase or review of the rate. Ms Cameron added that all decisions would be in conjunction with finance colleagues and the convener of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

Councillor Yorkston asked what levels of engagement had been undertaken with funded providers before reaching the sustainable rate proposed. Ms Cameron explained work started last year with finance colleagues to engage in data collection exercises as a trial to adjust and adapt and feedback to colleagues around changes to make data collection processes as realistic as possible. She added funded providers were keen to provide data as if they don't then we were not going to have a true and accurate reflection and could not keep our commitment of doing the best for children within East Lothian. Ms Cameron stated the rate had to be affordable and sustainable to the Council and to ensure our funded providers paid their employees the real living wage and reinvest in their service.

Responding to a question from Councillor Ritchie, Ms Weir stated one of the changes through the Scottish Government and COSLA have agreed that from April 2026 there can be no different rate for any funded providers, and this was already the case in East Lothian. She added a lot of focus was on private nurseries as they have higher costs, and we have to make sure its an equal rate for everybody and last year useful information was provided from childminders so that will be continued again this year.

Councillor McIntosh asked how the current number of registered child minders compared to previous years. Ms Weir confirmed there had been a bit movement, some child minders retiring and new ones registering so the number had remained static, but they continued to actively encourage children minders through the onboarding process. Ms Cameron added in the last couple of weeks they had engaged with economic development to have a very clear pathway into onboarding for child minders to become early learning child care providers, so they are aware of the process and what they need to build into their business plan right from the very beginning.

Responding to a question from Councillor Menzies, Ms Cameron explained we need to ensure all of our cost collection and data measures are transparent so that we can continue feedback loops to funded providers and child minders. She added East Lothian Council was completely committed to a provider neutral service and to understand that regardless of where our children go for early learning and childcare, it has to be the very best and stated all data collection, data handling and decision making would be open and transparent.

Councillor Hampshire thanked officers for the report and highlighted the difficulties and challenge Early Years within East Lothian had faced. He stated he was comfortable with the recommendation within the report and felt giving the Head of Education a 10% margin of change to the rate was acceptable as if changes were made to the rate, it

was her own budget that would be under pressure, and she would have to make savings elsewhere.

Councillor Bruce appreciated Councillor Hampshire's comments, but he did not agree and stated he was not comfortable giving away the Committee's rights or his own rights as a Councillor to determine what the change to the rate would be and thought there should be larger consideration around our financial position and where funds should be invested so he would not be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Menzies said Councillors had to be mindful that they have an obligation to the rights of staff to ensure they are being treated fairly and paid well and that by extension goes to those we contract in for services with the decision making part being part of the larger financial situation whether this was done by Councillors or officers. She added if we were unable to get good quality childcare in place then we could not have a sustainable and thriving county as parents would not be able to work there would be supporting the recommendations as it streamlined the process and made it easier for everyone concerned.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Ms Weir and Ms Cameron for their report and raised the importance of early learning and childcare in all aspects of family life and employment. She stated the rate must be sustainable to the Council in terms of budget but also allow providers to be sustainable and support the payment of the real living wage and for them to provide high quality early learning and child care in line with national standards therefore she would be supporting the recommendations.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i) Note the increase in the sustainable hourly rate paid by East Lothian Council to Early Learning and Childcare (EL&CC) funded providers in the private and third sector, to deliver funded early learning and childcare, from 1 April 2025 as per section 2.5 of the report.
- ii) Note the further local review of the sustainable rate paid by East Lothian Council to Early Learning and Childcare (EL&CC) funded providers in the private and third sector, to deliver funded early learning and childcare, by August 2025 as per section 3.6 of the report.
- iii) Agree to delegate authority to the Head of Education to review and approve future hourly rate changes (increase or decrease) up to the value of 10% in consultation with the Convener of the Education and Children's Services Committee and the Head of Finance and in line with Scottish Government and COSLA guidance. The Members Library will be updated accordingly going forward.
- iv) Note the funding commitment from Scottish Government to allow local authorities to uplist their 2024/25 rates by a minimum of 3.75% to support the financial sustainability of Early Learning and Childcare and fulfil the shared commitment to delivering Fair Work policies.

A roll call vote was carried out on recommendation iii):

For (8): Councillors Bennett, Dugdale, Hampshire, McFarlane, McIntosh, Menzies, Ritchie, Yorkston

Against (2): Councillors Bruce and Findlay

Abstentions (1): Councillor Gilbert

Therefore, on a majority vote, the recommendations were carried.

7. PREVENT IN EAST LoTHIAN

A report was submitted by the Executive Director – Education and Children's Services to provide information and assurance to Committee about our local processes around Prevent.

Lindsey Byrne, Head of Children's Services stated Contest was the national counterterrorism strategy which aims to reduce the risk from terrorism in the UK and Prevent was one of the four key strands with an aim to stop people being drawn into terrorism and allows agencies to intervene at the first signs that a person may be susceptible to radicalisation. She highlighted the UK wide developments in what type of interest and behaviours were now considered under Prevent and made Members aware of the East Lothian Prevent Delivery Group which oversees local implementation of the Prevent Duty for Scotland and ensure East Lothian's workforce has sufficient training in Prevent and knows how to identify someone who may be susceptible to radicalisation regardless of their beliefs or ideology. Ms Byrne noted herself as the Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the Council and she would explore any concerns further and if appropriate would begin the referral process. She said it was important to note staff do not need to be experts in the Prevent processes as they would be fully supported. Ms Byrne made Members aware of East Lothian's well established Prevent Multi-Agency Panel Process (PMAP) which was convened, chaired and administered by Council staff and therefore must ensure there are enough senior members of staff trained and able to support the risk assessment of complex situations alongside multi-agency partners with the support of two Home Office Prevent Advisors for Scotland. She noted Prevent had become an area requiring continuous learning with regular conferences, specialist training models and national benchmarking exercises which whilst positive, could become a challenge to meet all training and development demands which balancing other public protection and service delivery requirements. Ms Byrne was confident the Council was in a strong position to respond to the developing national guidance and would continue to work with the Prevent Delivery Group to ensure tight leadership and oversight of the Prevent agenda in East Lothian.

Responding to questions from Councillor Bruce, Ms Byrne explained in the sphere of Prevent a concerning view would be someone who has a view that is considered extreme and aligned with causing significant harm as a way to further the cause of that view which would be the definition of terrorism. She added the whole purpose of risk assessment is not only understanding the person's view but also their capabilities to cause harm in order to advance it. Ms Byrne reported there were balanced systems in place to fully risk assess whether someone's views had the potential to cause significant harm to others and if they did not then it wouldn't be suitable for them to be considered under Prevent as it has a clear focus on trying to identify those who are susceptible to potential radicalisation with a view to causing harm therefore, she was confident people would not be brought into that space if it was not appropriate to do so. She also confirmed that when talking about harm this could be physical harm, mental harm or both and explained not everyone who writes something mean on social media would fall under the umbrella of Prevent as there was a distinct connection between the persons views and behaviour and their susceptibility to be brought into terrorism as a result of views and behaviours.

Councillor Hampshire asked how we work with our teachers to ensure they are picking up anything within a class and providing advice and support to make a young person understand the direction they are moving in is wrong. Ms Byrne stated part of the issue

around Prevent was that children and adults have access to really concerning spaces online with no geographical boundaries to who could be affected. She added part of the Prevent Delivery Group's focus was about ensuring everyone in East Lothian, the entire workforce, multi-agency partners and our own staff within the Council had access to a suitable level of training which is slightly different based on your level of interaction with members of the public. Ms Byrne made Members aware there had been an increase in teachers noticing things within their classrooms and having conversations with young people regarding particular interests that could be risky, therefore training was key and also making sure people know they do not need to be experts in Prevent but if there is something of note to discuss it with her or another Prevent colleague.

Responding to a question from Councillor McIntosh, Ms Byrne stated the term misogyny was aligned with some of the specific ideologies that we are concerned about, particularly the involuntary celibate movement which has extreme misogyny at its heart so even though misogyny would not be a standalone item it is certainly an undertone in some ideologies.

Councillor Gilbert asked if it was just teachers who were receiving the Prevent training or if other groups would also receive it. Ms McDowell confirmed all members of education staff have been trained on the mandatory module through LearnPro and children and young people also receive training on Prevent through the curriculum.

Responding to a question from Councillor Menzies, Ms Byrne said there was no typical background or specific ideology of people who come in to Prevent but there were commonalities such as a sense of lack of belonging, people who are struggling to find who they are but there was no specific social or economic background that would suggest they were more likely to be referred to Prevent.

Councillor Dugdale asked if East Lothian had received any additional resource by the Government to meet the demand of Prevent. Ms Byrne said there had been no additional resources within local authorities to manage this area of development, but some local authorities have created focused and dedicated Prevent posts within their teams. This is not the case in East Lothian and Prevent is managed within existing workloads and staff cohorts. She added the Government was expanding the national resource available to us with two home office advisors which was great but did generate more work in the Prevent area.

Councillor Hampshire commented that although terrorism is not something that is thought about daily in East Lothian the threat of it was growing across the UK ever year and as a Council, we have a duty to make sure staff are as well prepared as possible and to look out for any situations that could arise within East Lothian.

Councillor Dugdale thanked Ms Byrne for the report and for the collaborative work across a number of agencies and was reassured that the Home Office Prevent Advisors had observed East Lothian Prevent as a multi-agency panel and provided positive feedback. She highlighted the importance of knowing who to report concerns to reassured by the training and support for staff across the Council and schools to ensure everyone can be vigilant.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i) Note the content of the report.

- ii) Note the confidence in our multi-agency processes to support people who may be susceptible to radicalisation.

Signed

Councillor Fiona Dugdale
Convener of the Education Committee

DRAFT

COMMITTEE:	Education & Children’s Services Committee
MEETING DATE:	18 November 2025
BY:	Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	Youth Vision Youth Work Strategy 2026-2029
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve and adopt the East Lothian Youth Vision, a co-produced three-year strategy for Youth Work from 2026 to 2029 that reflects current and emerging youth work priorities.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report including the extensive consultation and engagement carried out with young people.
- 2.2 Approve the Youth Vision as East Lothian’s Youth Work Strategy 2026-2029 (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Note that the governance of the Youth Vision will sit with the East Lothian Partnership through the Community Learning and Development Partnership.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Each local authority is required to consult on and publish Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership plans every three years. These plans should contain specific information on the provision of CLD in the local authority area, including youth work provided by both the local authority and third sector partners as outlined in The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013: Guidance for Local Authorities.

3.2 National Youth Work Context

There are three essential and definitive features of Youth Work practice, highlighted by YouthLink Scotland's *'The Nature and Purpose of Youth Work'*.

- Young people choose to participate
- Youth work builds from where young people are
- The young person and the youth worker are partners in a learning process

Source: Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work, 2024 YouthLink Scotland <https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Statement-on-the-Nature-and-Purpose-of-Youth-Work.pdf>

3.3 National Youth Work Outcomes

The seven youth work outcomes describe the key overarching impacts of youth work:

Outcome 1: Young people build their health and wellbeing

Outcome 2: Young people develop and manage relationships effectively

Outcome 3: Young people create and apply their learning and describe their skills and achievements

Outcome 4: Young people participate safely and effectively in groups and teams

Outcome 5: Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control

Outcome 6: Young people grow as active citizens, expressing their voice and enabling change

Outcome 7: Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

Source: YouthLink Scotland, National Youth Work Outcomes & Skills Framework

Evidenced Impact of Youth Work

- 3.4 Youth work delivers wide-reaching benefits - not just for young people, but for communities and the economy. Research commissioned by YouthLink Scotland shows that every £1 invested generates at least £7 in value, highlighting its strong return and lasting impact. Amongst the growing body of research two Scottish studies (2018 & 2020) highlight the powerful role of youth work. Both reports found that youth work provides a safe, supportive environment where young people:

- Build confidence and life skills
- Form trusted relationships with youth workers
- Feel valued, respected, and listened to
- Make positive choices and handle challenges
- Develop new skills and friendships

These findings show a consistent and compelling picture of Youth Work as a vital space for personal growth, learning and emotional support.

Source: YouthLink Scotland, see background papers.

East Lothian Context

3.5 Youth Work improves the life chances of children and young people. In East Lothian, services and organisations working with communities are committed to improving the life chances of all children and young people, while reducing existing inequalities. Youth work plays a key role in achieving these priorities. By building trusted relationships between young people and with supportive adults, youth work creates safe spaces where young people feel heard, included, and able to access help. It supports both educational and personal development, helping to improve engagement, and achievement. By encouraging positive peer and community connections, youth work helps young people build resilience, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging—reducing the risk of long-term challenges such as poor mental health, involvement in crime, or unemployment. The Youth Vision Strategy was co-developed by young people, youth organisations, East Lothian Council, and key partners. A Young People’s Advisory Group (YPAG) worked with professionals to consult peers and draft the Youth Vision.

The Youth Vision contributes to the priorities in the East Lothian Plan, East Lothian Partnership Poverty Plan, Children and Young People’s Services Plan, Corporate Parenting Plan, CLD Partnership plan, Raising Attainment Strategy and GIRFEC framework in East Lothian.

This is the overview of the East Lothian Youth Vision 2026-2029 ‘Plan on a Page’.

3.6 **Youth Vision:** Young people in East Lothian are safe, heard and included.

Strategy Goals:

1. Children and young people feel safer in their communities
2. Children and young people’s ideas and experiences will be heard, listened to and acted upon
3. Children and young people feel included in their communities

Outcomes:

1. Children and young people report feeling safer and more supported in their communities through youth work experiences and relationships with trusted adults.
2. Children and young people in East Lothian report that their views are heard, listened to and acted upon.

Opportunities for children and young people's ideas to shape decision making will be strengthened.

3. Children and young people feel a stronger sense of inclusion and wellbeing through inclusive youth work opportunities and access to helpful information in their communities.

Impact will be measured through a range of evidence for example youth work surveys, case studies, participation data, volunteering opportunities and number of youth awards.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: None
- 5.2 Human Resources: None
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None
- 5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken, and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

x

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	YES
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	YES
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	YES
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	YES
Storage/collection of personal data	NO
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Youth Vision, Youth Work Strategy 2026-2029 (Appendix 1).

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work

<https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Statement-on-the-Nature-and-Purpose-of-Youth-Work.pdf>

YouthLink Scotland, National Youth Work Outcomes & Skills Framework

<https://www.youthlink.scot/education-skills/youth-work-outcomes-skills>

YouthLink Scotland, Scottish Parliament Election 2021 The Report Resilient, Resourceful, Reimagined and Recognised A manifesto to support Scotland's youth workers and young people

https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Manifesto-Report_FINAL.pdf

The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Scotland, YouthLink Scotland, 2018 https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-Universal-Youth-Work-in_Scotland.pdf

The Impact of Universal Youth Work, Edinburgh 2020, YouthLink Scotland https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-Universal-Youth-Work-in_Edinburgh.pdf

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

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Designation	Head of Communities and Partnerships
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	28 October 2025

East Lothian Partnership

YOUTH VISION



Youth Vision Strategy 2026-29

SAFE HEARD INCLUDED

Welcome to our Youth Vision 2026-29

Youth Work is amazing! It brings so many kinds of people together and helps children and young people make friends, try new things and feel more involved in our community. There is lots of brilliant youth work happening across East Lothian. We want to celebrate this and continue to grow our support for young people through youth work

Young People's Advisory Group

Cover photo © Dylan MacFadden

The East Lothian Youth Vision is a three year strategy for Youth Work - from 2026 to 2029. Our vision is for Youth Work to help ensure young people in East Lothian are **safe, heard and included**.

The strategy was developed by young people, Youth Work organisations, East Lothian Partnership, and East Lothian Council. It explains how we aim to deliver positive impacts for young people using our resources effectively.

Each year, we'll create an **impact report**, to celebrate youth work and to measure progress by sharing stories, achievements and challenges.



@ Leo Hackett and Dylan MacFadden

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Introduction to Youth Work

Youth Work improves the life chances of children and young people

In East Lothian, services and organisations working with communities are committed to improving the life chances of all children and young people, while reducing existing inequalities. Youth work plays a key role in achieving these priorities. By building trusted relationships between young people and supportive adults, youth work creates safe spaces where young people feel heard, included, and able to access help. It supports both educational and personal development, helping to improve engagement, and achievement. By encouraging positive peer and community connections, youth work helps young people build resilience, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging—reducing the risk of long-term challenges such as poor mental health, involvement in crime, or unemployment.

What is Youth Work?

Youth Work is an informal education practice that supports young people’s social, emotional and educational development. It can be adapted across a variety of settings, and typically engages with young people within their local community. YouthLink Scotland

There are 3 essential and definitive features of Youth Work practice, highlighted by YouthLink Scotland’s *The Nature and Purpose of Youth Work*.

- **Young people choose to participate**
- **Youth work builds from where young people are**
- **The young person and the youth worker are partners in a learning process.**

YouthLink Scotland created the **National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills framework**. Young people are at the core of youth work delivery with the Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework detailing the seven overarching outcomes of youth work. These set out how youth work can contribute to improving life chances of children and young people. We use this in East Lothian to guide our youth work practice.ⁱ

Evidenced Impact of Youth Work

Youth work delivers wide-reaching benefits — not just for young people, but for communities and the economy. Research commissioned by YouthLink Scotland shows that **every £1 invested generates at least £7 in value**, highlighting its strong return and lasting impact.ⁱⁱ

Amongst the growing body of research **two Scottish studies (2018 & 2020) highlight the powerful role of Youth Work**. Both reports found that youth work provides a **safe, supportive environment** where young people:

- **Build confidence and life skills**
- **Form trusted relationships with youth workers**
- **Feel valued, respected, and listened to**
- **Make positive choices and handle challenges**
- **Develop new skills and friendships**

These findings show a consistent and compelling picture of Youth Work as a vital space for personal growth, learning and emotional support.ⁱⁱⁱ

What Guides Our Youth Work?

The Youth Vision is underpinned by and supports several key policies and approaches, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), The Promise, a trauma-informed approach and the Lundy Model of Participation.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The incorporation of the UNCRC into Scottish law is helping children and young people see their rights recognised in meaningful ways. In East Lothian, youth work plays a vital role in making these rights a reality. By fostering inclusive environments where young people are heard, respected and actively involved in decisions that affect them, youth work bring the principles of the UNCRC to life.

Trauma Informed and Responsive Practice

Safety, trust, collaboration, choice and empowerment are the principles that underpin trauma informed and responsive practice.^{iv} Youth work providers are committed to embedding this approach, it's about understanding and responding to young people's needs by building relationships, creating safe spaces where people can connect, providing choices and working collaboratively to build on young people's strengths. A trauma informed approach will make sure our youth work services are open and accessible to all.

The Promise

The Promise is Scotland's commitment to children, young people and their families that every child grows up loved, safe and respected. Youth work plays a vital role in fulfilling this vision by building trusted relationships, offering safe spaces, and empowering young people to develop their voice, confidence, and potential. Together, The Promise and youth work create a foundation for lasting change—where young people are not only heard but are central to shaping the services and communities that affect their lives.

The Lundy Model of Participation

The **Lundy Model of Participation**, developed by Professor Laura Lundy, helps adults support children and young people to express their views and have those views taken seriously. It focuses on four key elements:

- **Space:** Children and young people must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their right to participation. We use this model in East Lothian to help improve how we listen to and act upon what children and young people tell us.
- **Voice:** Children and young people must be supported to express their views freely and in their own way.
- **Audience:** Adults must actively listen to what children and young people say.
- **Influence:** Children's and young people's views must be acted upon, with clear feedback showing how their input made a difference.^v

Tackling Child Poverty

We contribute by offering youth work opportunities that are either free or low-cost. As part of our youth work and holiday programmes we provide healthy food to support wellbeing. Through trusted relationships with children, young people, and their families, youth workers help sign post to other services offering support in the community.

East Lothian Youth Vision 2026-29

Plan on a Page - Our East Lothian Youth Work Strategy.

Our Vision for Youth Work

Young people in East Lothian are **safe, heard and included.**

Goals

Safe

Children and young people feel safer in their communities

Heard

Children and young people's ideas and experiences will be heard, listened to and acted upon

Included

Children and young people feel included in their communities

Outputs [The Youth Vision will include these Actions]

- Provide welcoming spaces for children and young people to connect, express themselves, and have fun.
- Youth workers will continue to build relationships, offering guidance and information to help children and young people make safe, informed decisions.

- Create and strengthen inclusive opportunities for young people to express their views.
- Build the capacity of adults and decision-makers to actively listen and respond meaningfully to young people's views

- Celebrate and recognise the achievements and contributions of young people in the community
- Children and Young people and youth workers co-design inclusive activities to reflect needs and interests.

Measuring Impact – Examples of how evidence is gathered

- Youth work surveys and Case studies
- Feedback from young people, youth workers, and stakeholders
- Data on youth work attendance, participation, and session delivery
- Number of peer leadership and volunteering opportunities
- Number of youth awards and certificates achieved
- Wider community impact – school surveys, police reports etc.

Young people involved in developing the Youth Vision shared how youth work supports them to feel safe, heard, and included. Definitions are in line with GIRFEC wellbeing indicators.^{vi}

Goal 1 - SAFE

Children and young people feel safer in their communities

Children and young people told us:

Youth Work takes us away from different environments where we might not be safe and offers a space for us to go where there are adults we trust.

Adults need to take young people's safety seriously. We need the police, education, parents, politicians to help improve safety for young people.

In a youth centre you can find out your own mind, explore who you are. Passions you have, you can follow without feeling judged. Youth workers listen to what you like and help you explore this.

Since it is getting dark in the evenings my mum lets me stay out later because I am in youth club.

Definition of Safe – Youth work creates environments where young people feel secure, nurtured and listened to.

How we know Youth Work makes a difference:

Building Trust and Safety Through Outreach Youth Work in Haddington

In response to concerns about young people's safety, Haddington youth workers undertake outreach youth work at the weekends, engaging with young people on the streets and in the park. The regular presence of the outreach youth workers helps build trust with young people in public spaces, especially those who don't attend youth clubs. They offer a wide range of advice including staying safe and looking out for friends.

These interactions can also lead to more in-depth conversations about mental health, self-harm and suicide, with youth workers guiding young people to specialist support. Now reaching up to 150 young people in one evening, the outreach team plays a key role in ensuring young people are seen, heard and supported.

Feeling Safer and Reconnecting with School – Specialist Youth Work through North Berwick Youth Project

North Berwick Youth Project's wellbeing walks continue to make a big impact. This year, youth workers supported 51 young people during the school day, helping them improve their mental health and wellbeing. One young person shared how weekly walks with their youth worker became a turning point:

"School wasn't working for me and I felt low and isolated. Meeting my youth worker every Tuesday gave me someone to talk to and helped me feel less alone. She helped me build confidence, make friends, and feel more like myself again. Without her, I'd probably still be stuck at home."

This support helped her feel safer, more connected, and ready to re-engage with school life. A Guidance Teacher at North Berwick High School, added:

"Their simple referral system and weekly check-ins with a thoughtful youth worker do so much good. Our young people are so positive about the support. Thanks NBYP!"

Our plan to achieve Goal 1

Goal 1 – SAFE Outcome:

Children and young people report feeling safer in their communities through youth work experiences and relationships with trusted adults

Context: This outcome contributes to the following national and local priorities:

National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework:

Outcome 1. Young people build their health and wellbeing

Outcome 2. Young people develop and manage relationships effectively

Outcome 4. Young people participate safely and effectively in groups and teams

Outcome 5. Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control

Young people will gain skills in how to look after themselves, learn to make decisions, communicate, solve problems and build positive relationships.

National Community Learning and Development (CLD) Outcomes:

1: CLD participants have increased skills and knowledge

2: CLD participants have improved mental health and wellbeing

Local Priorities:

Youth work in East Lothian will continue to provide low- or no-cost opportunities for children and young people in their communities, supporting families impacted by poverty (*East Lothian Poverty Plan*). To help build strong, resilient communities where people feel respected and supported (*East Lothian Plan*), we will offer inclusive, community-based wellbeing activities in safe spaces, led by trusted adults (*Children and Young People's Services Plan*). Working in partnership with families and other services, we are committed to ensuring that care-experienced young people and young carers have equal opportunities to take part, be active, and thrive through youth work (*Corporate Parenting Plan*).

Outputs

- 1.1 Sustain a youth work offer to ensure children and young people have access to trusted, caring adults.
- 1.2 Provide welcoming spaces for children and young people to connect, express themselves, and have fun.
- 1.3 Youth workers will continue to build relationships, offering guidance, support, and information to help children and young people make safe, informed decisions.
- 1.4 Create and promote opportunities for children and young people to influence decisions that affect their safety.
- 1.5 Young people and partners work together to celebrate achievements of children and young people and challenge negative stereotypes.
- 1.6 Workforce development on Trauma Responsive Practice.

Measuring Impact

- The number of safe, inclusive spaces for Youth Work created or maintained.
- SEE Survey results show increase in how safe young people feel in their communities.
- Reductions in anti-social behaviour.
- Youth work surveys capturing young people's feelings of safety.
- Feedback from young people, youth workers and stakeholders around National Youth Work Outcomes identified for this goal.
- Case studies show how youth work helps young people take part in decisions about their safety.
- Feedback and case studies on youth celebrations.
- Workforce development data

Goal 2 - HEARD

Children and young people's ideas and experiences will be heard, listened to and acted upon

What children and young people told us:

I think being heard is a key aspect of youth work. I feel heard when I can give my opinion, and someone really listens.

I'd be up for trying to speak to politicians. Speaking directly to them would be a way to make a change.

Groups of young people could come together and talk about how we could make things better.

Young people's views need to be listened to. We have ideas for the things that need to be improved or changed.

Definition of Heard – Young people are encouraged to share their views, and those views are respected and taken seriously.

How we know Youth Work makes a difference:

Young Carers heard and valued

Since April 2023, the **Young Carers Advisory Group** in East Lothian has empowered 11–16-year-olds to shape the support they receive. Meeting each school term, members have: Designed the service logo, co-created holiday programmes, produced website videos, consulted peers on key issues, advocated for a **Carer ID card**, engaged with professionals and decision-makers, represented the service at events like the **Scottish Young Carers Festival**. One member now chairs the group, and several have become **Young Carer Ambassadors**, leading assemblies and running school lunch clubs.

"Being part of this group has boosted my confidence. I've taken on leadership roles and helped make things better for other young carers, their families, and schools." — Group Member

Recharge Youth Reps

*We're the **Recharge Youth Reps**—12 to 14-year-olds who meet weekly at **Recharge Youth Centre** in Tranent. We help shape what happens at Recharge and come up with ideas to improve our community.*

We've volunteered at Fa'side Community Kitchen, run fundraising events, and made an animation about children's rights and life in East Lothian. We've even spoken to councillors about things that matter to us—like parks, lighting, school, and places to hang out.

Being part of the group has helped us learn more about our community and the issues that affect it. Most of us feel more confident now and are better at speaking up for what we believe in.

Recharge also runs youth forums for ages 15–18 and is looking to establish an S1 – S2 group soon. The youth forums will work together, offering peer support to help each other on their participation journey.

Our plan to achieve Goal 2

Goal 2 - HEARD Outcomes:

Children and young people in East Lothian report their views are heard, listened to and acted upon. Opportunities for children and young people's ideas to shape decision-making will be strengthened.

The **Lundy Model** helps shape outcomes and outputs for this goal.

Context: These outcomes contribute to the following national and local priorities:

National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework:

Outcome 6. Young people grow as active citizens, expressing their voice and enabling change

Outcome 7. Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

Young people will gain skills in organising and planning, leadership and communication, teamwork and creating change.

National Community Learning and Development (CLD) Outcomes:

1: CLD participants have increased skills and knowledge

2: Community groups have strengthened their capacity to address their own priorities and make decisions about their own communities.

Local Priorities: To work toward the vision of an East Lothian free from poverty the youth work sector will continue to work in partnership towards a shared vision of equality and equity. Continuing to adapt to the needs of children and young people, through listening to and acting upon the voice of lived experience from children and young people (**East Lothian Poverty Plan**). By upholding good practice participation, the youth vision will support young people to be strong, resilient and respected and able to share their views and take part in opportunities to shape decision making (**East Lothian Plan**). Youth Vision supports the priorities of the **Children and Young People's Services Plan** and the **Corporate Parenting Plan** by committing to Children's Rights and using good practice participation to empower children and young people to address issues, design solutions and shape services.

Outputs	Measuring Impact
2.1 Continue to provide safe environments with supportive people to help children and young people developing confidence as active citizens (Space).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of safe, inclusive spaces for Youth Work created or maintained.• Youth work surveys capturing young people's feelings on being heard, and able to influence change.
2.2 Create and strengthen inclusive opportunities for young people to express their views (Voice).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEE Survey results show increase in number of young people involved in decision-making in communities.
2.3 Build the capacity of adults and decision-makers to actively listen and respond meaningfully to young people's views (Audience).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numbers of youth participation opportunities.• Feedback from young people/youth workers/stakeholders around National Youth Work Outcomes identified for this goal.
2.4 Establish clear feedback loops to show how young people's input has influenced decisions and share examples of impact to build trust and transparency (Influence).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case studies highlight decisions influenced by children and young people.
2.5 Promote and share good practice in participation with decision makers, partners and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of professionals and decision-makers trained in youth engagement.

Goal 3 - INCLUDED

Children and young people feel included in their communities

What children and young people told us:

To feel included we need options for us, as young people, this could be more mental health support or help to find work or more free places to go. We want the same opportunities as other people get.

In youth club I feel I can be myself. It feels like stigmas are abolished here - where all people can feel included - LGBTQ, transgender people, ethnic minorities.

Volunteering at youth club helps me feel included.

Through youth work I now feel kinder. We have planned fundraisers and the skills I have built here have benefited the community. I have used them in other groups through teaching and mentoring younger people.

Definition of Included – Young people have help to overcome inequalities and are valued members of their communities.

How we know youth work makes a difference:

Amber's Peer Mentoring Story – Bridges Project

Bridges Project's Listening Peers programme supports young people aged 13–25 through peer mentoring. Trained Mentors, young people with lived experience themselves, offer one-to-one support and help others feel heard, included and empowered. Amber was referred at 14, facing bullying, poor mental health and a difficult home life. Receiving mentoring support was life-changing for Amber:

"I felt that my Mentor just got me. She completely understood me, more than anyone had done in the past. She also talked about her own experiences, which made me trust her more. If I didn't have Bridges Project, I genuinely don't think I would have been here."

Amber has now become one of Listening Peers' most prolific Mentors herself, giving back by supporting other young people to thrive.

Growing and Changing use their voices and experiences to create change

Growing and Changing is a group of five young people from Prestonpans who've faced challenges like poverty, bereavement, and additional support needs. Their experience of hardship led to further inequalities in the local community and in school and made them feel different from their peers.

Over the past year, they've built a strong peer support group and established that they want to use their voices and experiences to create change for the better for other young people experiencing hardship.

They've launched a campaign called **What Makes a Supportive Person**. They've gathered views from over 250 children and young people across East Lothian to influence how adults work with young people.

They've hosted events, met with NHS professionals, councillors, and other decision-makers, and are already working on impact; hoping to influence East Lothian Council job descriptions based on their campaign findings and incorporation of their findings into training and support for youth workers.

Growing and Changing also have plans to make a film and are working towards their **Saltire Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards and Participative Democracy Certificates**^{5,2}

Our plan to achieve Goal 3

Goal 3 Outcome:

Children and young people feel a stronger sense of inclusion and wellbeing through inclusive youth work opportunities and access to helpful information in their communities.

Context: This outcome contributes to the following national and local priorities:

National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework:

Outcome 1. Young people build their health and wellbeing

Outcome 3. Young people create and apply their learning and describe their skills and achievements

Outcome 7. Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

Young people will gain skills in leadership and communication, teamwork, creating change and organising and planning.

National Community Learning and Development (CLD) Outcomes:

1: CLD participants have increased skills and knowledge

2: CLD participants have improved mental health and wellbeing

Local Priorities: Youth Vision contributes to children and young people's stronger sense of inclusion in their communities and increased wellbeing. This builds resilience, community mindedness and young people's ability to prosper supporting the priorities of the **East Lothian Plan**. The Youth Vision supports the work of the **Raising Attainment Strategy** in closing the poverty related attainment gap; by providing informal education opportunities to young people to building their learning, skills and confidence and opportunity to volunteer and gain accreditation and awards within and out with formal education settings. Youth work, through person centred practice, safeguarding and child protection procedures works within the **GIRFEC framework in East Lothian**, contributing to children's wellbeing (**Children and Young People's Services Plan**).

Outputs

- 3.1 Children and Young people and youth workers co-design inclusive activities to reflect needs and interests.
- 3.2 We will support young people to manage their wellbeing through youth work.
- 3.3 Provide access to and share information about local supports and opportunities for children and young people.
- 3.4 Create opportunities for young people to support their peers.
- 3.5 Offer youth work opportunities that enable volunteering and achievement.
- 3.6 Celebrate and recognise the achievements and contributions of young people in the community.

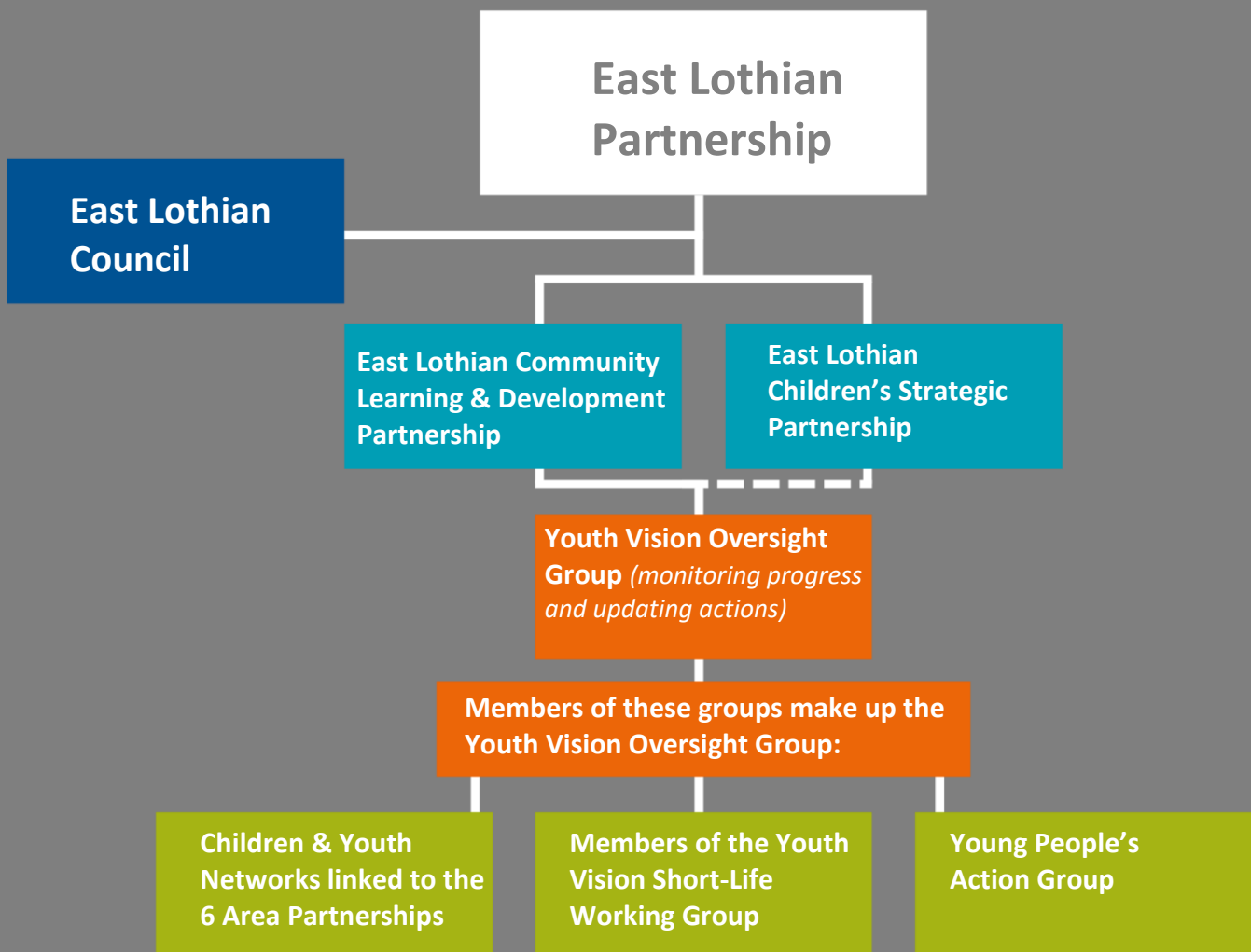
Measuring Impact

- Data gathered on youth work attendance, participants, sessions.
- Youth work surveys capturing young people's feelings on inclusivity of youth work offer.
- Youth work surveys capturing young people's feelings on managing their wellbeing through youth work opportunities and information shared.
- SEE Survey results show increase in number of young people able to get mental health information in East Lothian.
- Feedback from young people/youth workers/stakeholders around National Youth Work Outcomes identified for this goal.
- Number of peer leadership, volunteering opportunities and awards offered and competed.
- Case studies on achievements and celebration work with young people.

Governance of the Youth Vision

Governance of the strategy will be overseen by East Lothian Community Learning and Development Partnership, reporting to the East Lothian Partnership.

The Youth Vision Oversight Group will publish an annual impact report highlighting achievements and challenges. This will be shared with children and young people, their families and key partners.



Next Steps

Continue to Support High-Quality Youth Work in East Lothian

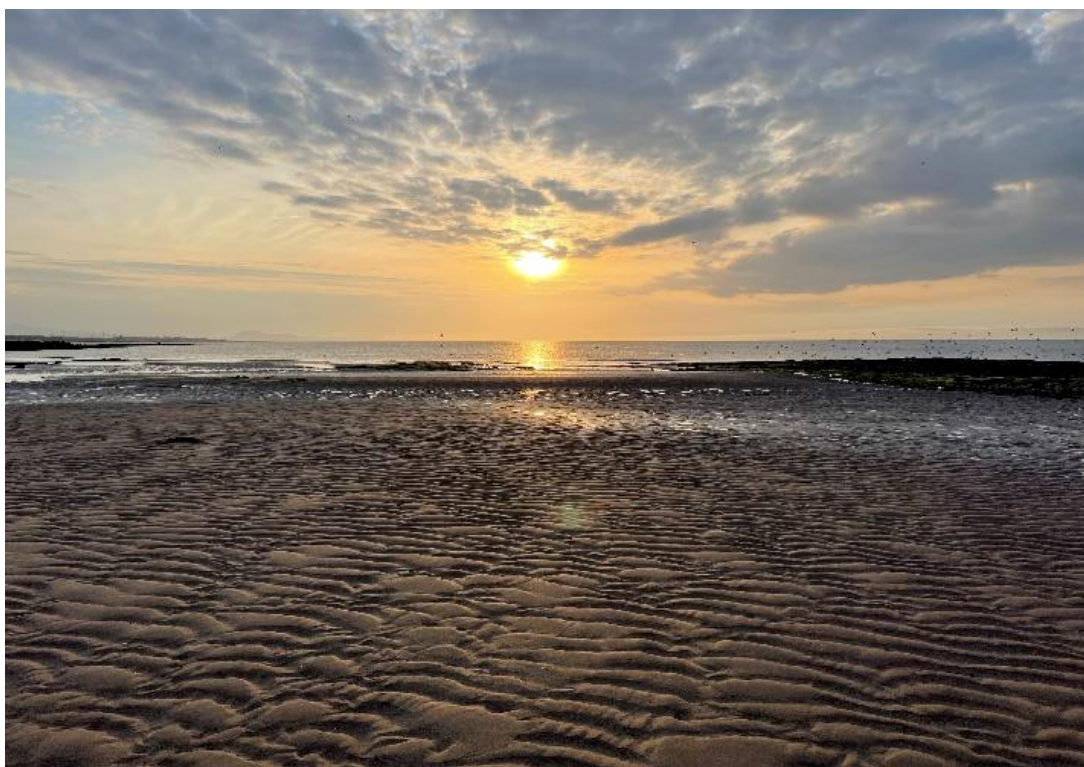
In East Lothian, our youth work is guided by the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work and the CLD Competences and Code of Ethics set by the CLD Standards Council.^{vii} These frameworks help us stay grounded in good practice and strong values. We work closely across teams, organisations, and local areas—sharing ideas, learning, and what works well. This joined-up approach helps us plan strategically and to react, when possible, to emerging issues. Young people get consistent, high-quality support wherever they are.

Sharing the Purpose and Impact of Youth Work

The Youth vision will be used as a springboard to strengthen communication about the purpose and impact of Youth Work. We will share this document, our plan on a page and a creative version of the Youth Vision with children, young people, parents and partners. Through our three key goals, safe, heard and included we will continue to celebrate and recognise the achievements and contributions of young people in the community.

Working Together for Improvement

The Youth Vision can only be achieved by working together. Establishing a strong working group of young people and key partners will help us stay focused by creating and reviewing a shared action plan each year. By doing this, we can track progress and make sure we're delivering on our goals. Each year, we'll produce a Youth Vision report with key data and real-life examples to show how we're meeting our goals. This work will be led by a subgroup of the CLD Partnership and shared with the wider strategic partnerships to keep everyone informed and involved.



How we developed our Youth Vision Strategy

The Youth Work Strategy was co-developed by young people, youth organisations, East Lothian Council, and key partners. A Young People's Advisory Group (YPAG) worked with professionals from 2021–2022 to consult peers and draft a Youth Vision, which was refined and approved in 2025.

Youth Voice Highlights

Initial Work:

- 6 young people made up the YPAG - The Young People's Advisory Group; young people aged between 12 and 24 played a major role in the development of this strategy.
- 85 young people in 2022 took part in an online survey about their communities.

2025 Engagement:

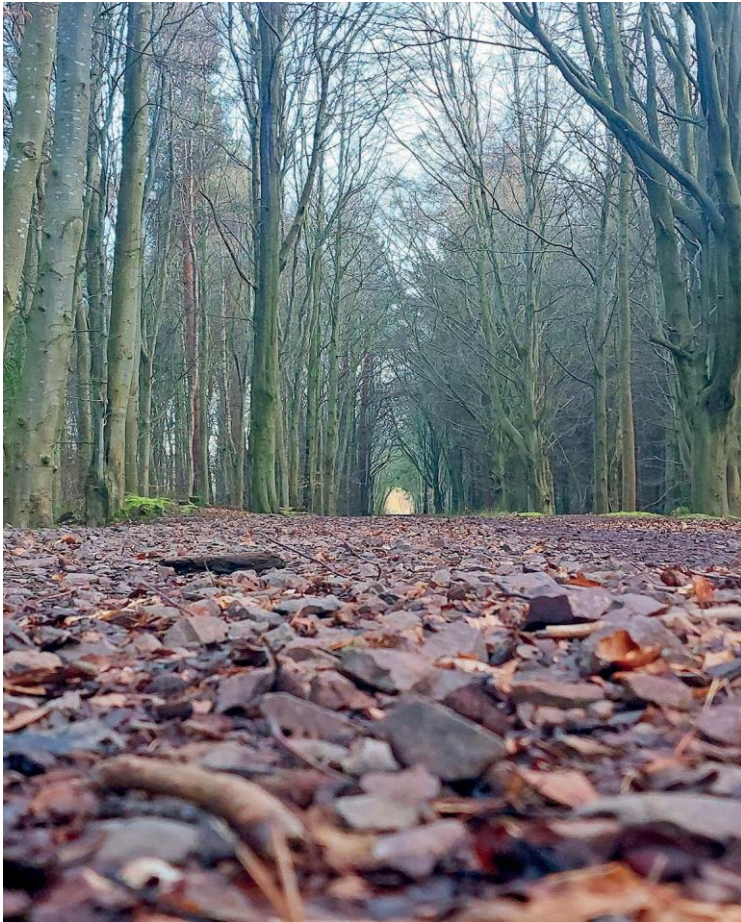
- 99 children and young people voted and commented on the Youth Vision's goals, based on YPAG priorities and GIRFEC wellbeing indicators.
- 117 secondary pupils participated in Scottish Youth Parliament sessions and a related consultation on community needs.
- 2,819 pupils took part in 2024/2025 Student Evaluation of Experience (SEE) Survey; 1059 in P6, 963 in S2 and 797 in S4. Their feedback on community-based wellbeing indicators shaped the Vision.
- 74 young people participated in the Autumn 2025 public consultation, leading to final revisions.

Partner Involvement

- 29 partners attended an event in February 2025 to help refresh the Youth Vision.
- 17 professionals joined a Short Life Working Group to co-produce the final strategy.
- 42 adults (youth workers, parents and carers, partners) participated in the Autumn 2025 public consultation.

Supporting Data Sources

- East Lothian by Numbers, 2022
- East Lothian Poverty Profile, 2025
- NHS Lothian Public Health Survey, 2023
- Young Scot BIG Survey Report, April 2024
- East Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan Consultation, 2025.
- East Lothian Education, Student Evaluation of Experience (SEE) Survey 2024/2025



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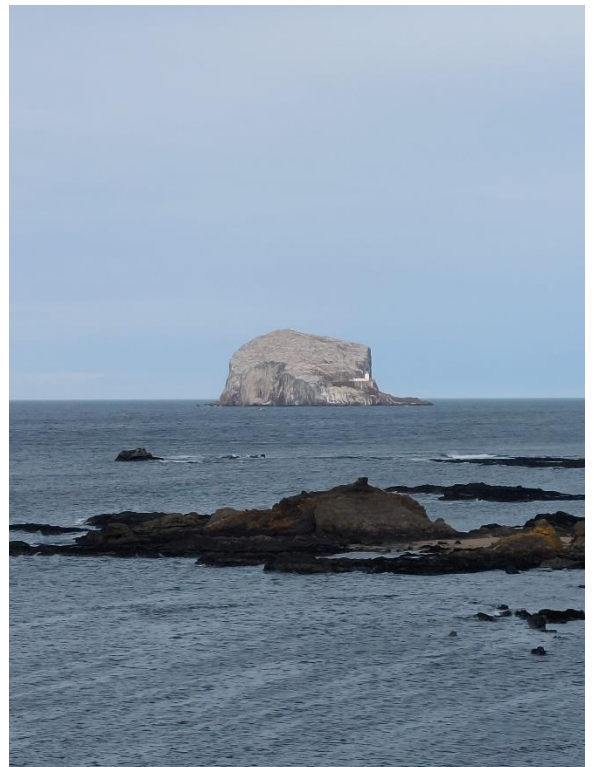
© Leo Hackett

YOUTH VISION PHOTOGRAPHY GALLERY

WINNERS: Leo Hackett | Dylan MacFadden SECOND: Oliver Rhodes
THIRD: Arwen Hopkins | Ayesha Norton COMMENDED: Mariana Leyden



@ Mariana Leyden



@ Ayesha Norton



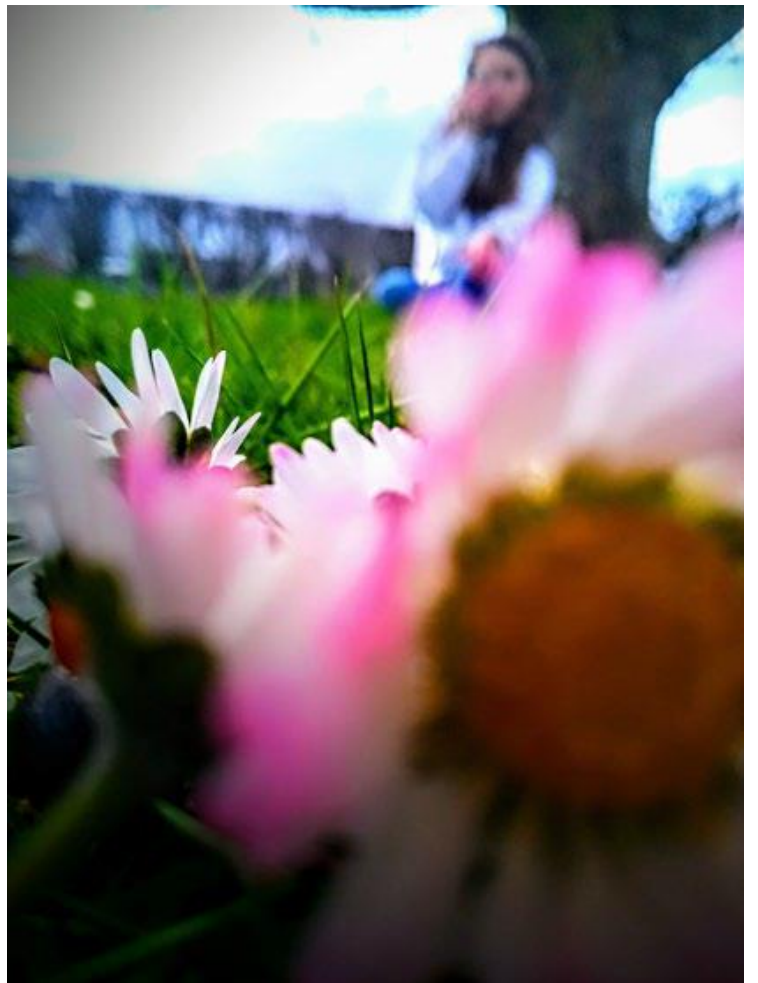
@ Oliver Rhodes



© Oliver Rhodes



© Dylan MacFadden



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Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank all the young people, and the following organisations and teams involved in the development of the Youth Vision, including those who took part in the public consultation. Their contributed time, insight, and expertise have helped shape a document that reflects the needs and aspirations of young people.

East Lothian Council Services involved:

Connected Communities, Education & Children's Services, Housing, Library Service, Young Carers Service, Arts Service, Sports Development/Active Schools, Safer Communities Team

Recharge Youth Centre: <https://rechargefranet.org.uk/>

Circle <https://circle.scot/>

Bridges Project <https://bridgesproject.org.uk/>

North Berwick Youth Project <https://www.northberwickyouthproject.org.uk/>

Can-Do <https://www.can-do.scot/>

Choose Play <https://elpa.org.uk/chooseplay-training/>

Who Cares Scotland? <https://www.whocarescotland.org>

Volunteer Centre East Lothian <https://www.volunteereastlothian.org.uk/>

NHS Lothian Public Health <https://services.nhsllothian.scot/publichealth/>

Police Scotland <https://www.scotland.police.uk/>

Links to related strategies

Local Context: Youth Work contributes to East Lothian's Strategic Outcomes

East Lothian Children and Young People Services Plan:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/31411/children_and_young_people_services_plan_2023-2026

East Lothian CLD Partnership Plan:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/34610/community_learning_and_development_partnership_plan_2024-27

The East Lothian Plan 2017-27 (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan):

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/22812/the_east_lothian_plan_2017-27

East Lothian Partnership, Poverty Plan Priorities for Tackling Poverty 2024-2028:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210705/elp_poverty_plan

East Lothian Partnership, Corporate Parenting Plan 2024-27

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/31781/east_lothian_corporate_parenting_plan_2020-2023

Area Partnership Plans

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210567/your_community/12397/area_partnerships_in_east_lothian

Raising Attainment Strategy

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/14312/decrease_in_poverty-related_attainment_gap

References

ⁱ Youth Link Scotland, National Youth Work Outcomes & Skills Framework

<https://www.youthlink.scot/education-skills/youth-work-outcomes-skills>

ⁱⁱ Youth Link Scotland, Scottish Parliament Election 2021 The Report Resilient, Resourceful, Reimagined and Recognised A manifesto to support Scotland's youth workers and young people

https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Manifesto-Report_FINAL.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Scotland, Youth Link Scotland, 2018

<https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-Universal-Youth-Work-in-Scotland.pdf>

and The Impact of Universal Youth Work, Edinburgh 2020, Youth Link Scotland

<https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-Universal-Youth-Work-in-Edinburgh.pdf>

^{iv} National Trauma Transformation Programme

<https://www.traumatransformation.scot/>

^v Laura Lundy, the Lundy Model of Participation

<https://participationpeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Compressed-PP--Lundy-Model-Explained-2.pdf>

^{vi} Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/wellbeing-indicators-shanarri/>

^{vii} CLD Standards Council Scotland

<https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/resources/standards-and-benchmarks/national-occupational-standards/youth-work-nos/>

Versions of this information can be provided in Braille, large print, audiotape, or your own language.
For assistance please call: **01620 827 827**
British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via www.contactscotland-bsl.org

Contact us

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COMMITTEE:	Education & Children' Services Committee
MEETING DATE:	18 November 2025
BY:	Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan 2025/26
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's approval of the Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan on key improvement priorities achieved for session 2024/25 and identification of key improvement priorities planned for session 2025/26.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the overall positive progress made by the Education Service in delivery of the Council's Plan, the Education Progress and Improvement Plan 2024/25 and the priorities within the National Improvement Framework.
- 2.2 Note the steps being taken to secure continuous improvement in session 2025/26.
- 2.3 Approve the Progress Report and Improvement Plan 2025/26 (Appendix 1).
- 2.4 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.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places a duty on the education authority to annually prepare and publish a report on its success in

meeting the objectives set out in the most recently published Education Local Improvement Plan.

- 3.2 The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 amended the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 placing new duties on education authorities relating to the preparation and publication of annual plans and reports linked to the National Improvement Framework.
- 3.3 Plans for the use of Pupil Equity Funding 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.
- 3.4 The Education Service has reviewed progress from last session as part of a range of ongoing methods of self-evaluation. In addition, officers and peer Head Teachers have reviewed school standards and quality reports and school improvement plans in order to ascertain where further improvement is required.
- 3.5 The focus for session 2025/26 continues to be '**Back to Basics- a Relentless Focus on Equity and Excellence.**'
- 3.6 The aim of the Children and Communities Directorate is to continue to develop an integrated service that seeks to get it right for all of our children, living and learning in East Lothian through the actions taken across our service areas and in our schools, and to improve the quality of the experiences we provide for children, young people and families in East Lothian.

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

- 3.8 Our three priorities from last school session, matching the key HMIE inspection Quality Indicators, encompassed our aspirations for continuous universal and targeted improvement while taking into account evaluation of outcomes from last session.

3.9 **Priority 1: 2.2 Curriculum and 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

Evaluation of progress of this priority can be seen on pages 7-28 of the Plan. Key successes include:

- our approaches to consulting and capturing the voice of young people through current practices such as school reviews and the annual SEE survey
- use of the Rights Respecting School Award to support pupil leadership and voice, supported by both central team members as well as a network of 41 RRSA Leads
- an increase in the number of Gold Award schools from 1 to 4, Silver Awards from 8 to 16 and Bronze Award schools from 17 to 21, from June 2023 to June 2024

3.10 **Priority 2: 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion**

Evaluation of progress of this priority can be seen on pages 28-44 of the Plan. Key successes include:

- a new Health and Wellbeing Framework which provides progressive learning programmes for learners aged 3-18
- delivery of ten training sessions to ensure knowledge and understanding of statutory guidance and policy with regards to health and wellbeing

3.11 **Priority 3: 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement**

Evaluation of progress of this priority can be seen on pages 45-48 of the Plan and will be outlined in detail in the Raising Attainment Report at November Education and Children's Services Committee.

3.12 **Priorities for Session 2025/26**

East Lothian's improvement priorities take cognisance of the Council's revised priorities and are based on the vision of the National Improvement Framework.

3.13 The priorities reflect that the stretch aims are central to our agenda of raising attainment, with our collective ambition being to make steady and sustained progress in overall attainment over the 3 years of the plan's duration.

3.14 While the local authority and individual schools will continue to be required by law to submit an annual standards and quality and improvement plan, our overarching priorities will be created on a 3-year cycle and will be updated accordingly on an annual basis.

3.15 To support continuous improvement linked to inspection, review and self-evaluation outcomes, our priorities for the next 3 years will be focused as follows:

Priority 1: 2.2 Curriculum and 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Priority 2: 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

Priority 3: 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

3.16 These priorities can be seen in detail on pages 52-64 of the plan.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance: None

5.2 Human Resources: None

5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None

5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken, and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Education Service Progress and Improvement Plan 2024/25 (Appendix 1)

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Education Service Progress and Improvement Plan 2024/25 (Appendix 1)

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

Name	Nicola McDowell
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Tel/Email	Nmcdowell1@eastlothian.gov.uk
Date	27 October 2025

Head of Service Approval

Name	Nicola McDowell
Designation	Head of Education
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	27 October 2025

Education Progress and Improvement Plan

Session 2025/26



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	Appendix 2 Stretch Aims and Plan for Use of Strategic Equity Funding

Introduction

Across East Lothian we are ambitious for our children and young people and working together, we will support them to be confident, resilient and to achieve within their schools and wider communities. Working in partnership with Children's Services, we aim to ensure everything we do starts with the child and family and builds the right support and services around them.

Working together, we:

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

Our approaches will ensure that we support our children and families to have the very best start in life and that they can go on to have fulfilling lives, better health and living longer. Our vision and values also align closely with the Key Priorities in the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education 'Achieving Excellence and Equity' (*Scottish Government, January 2016*) [National Improvement Framework \(NIF\) - Schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/nif-schools/pages/introduction.aspx) and Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education [Introduction - Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/delivery-plan-for-scotland/pages/introduction.aspx) (*Scottish Government, June 2016*):

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

We will continue to have a relentless focus on equity and excellence. We all work together to Get it Right for Every Child and to ensure that all our children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

This Progress Report highlights our evaluation of Education priorities from 2024/25 and also sets out our improvement priorities for Session 2025/26.

Context of East Lothian

The mid-year 2024 population estimates published by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) in August 2025, show East Lothian had an estimated population of 115,180, a further 1.2% increase on the previous year, and an increase of 12% since 2014. This is the second highest percentage change in Scotland over that period with Scotland's overall population increasing by 4.0%. The Under 15 age group accounted for 17.6% of the overall population in East Lothian and has increased by 7.1% since 2014 with the school rolls in East Lothian increasing by 10.3% from 13,716 in 2014/15 to 15,124 in 2024/25. East Lothian's population is projected to increase by 7.2% (*Data Source: 2018 based population based NRS projections*) to 113,403 in 2028, compared to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole, though this could be an under-estimation. This is the 2nd highest projected increase in Scotland. East Lothian Council's Education Service school roll projections, which take into account local policy such as new housing developments, show a further 3% increase for the P1 to S6 pupil population between 2024/25 and 2028/29 (based on the 2024-pupil census roll) and an overall increase of 10% by 2034/35.

In 2024/25 there were:

- 8,391 pupils in East Lothian Council's 34 primary schools (2 opening August 2025 and 2 mothballed)
- 6,733 pupils in 7 secondary schools
- 2,416 children aged 3-5 years accessing early learning and childcare across 30 council settings, 12 partner nurseries, 1 community group and 23 childminders
- 91 Eligible 2s accessing early learning and childcare across 4 council settings, 12 partner nurseries, 1 community group and 6 childminders
- 37.8% of all pupils had an additional support need
- 2.1% of all pupils were recorded as care experienced
- 5.2% of pupils were recorded as living in the 20% most deprived areas compared with 19.3% in the 20% least deprived areas
- the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) increased to 15.0 from 14.6 in 2024/25
- the average primary class size reduced from 22.2 in 2023/24 to 21.6 in 2024/25
- 78% of our primary school buildings were reported as in 'good' or 'satisfactory' condition
- 100% of our secondary school buildings were reported as in 'good' or 'satisfactory' condition

Further information on our services and teams is contained in Appendix 1.

Progress during session 2024/25 with our priorities

The next section of this report describes the progress made with our main priorities between August 2024 and June 2025. It sets out what we have achieved and areas where further progress is needed. In the second section of the report, we set out our key priorities for session 2025/26 which take account of our progress to date, what the data is telling us and our proposed actions. This reflects year 2 of a 3 year plan.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 [Statutory Guidance: Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance/standards-in-scotland-s-schools-etc-act-2000/) places duties on education authorities in relation to the delivery of school education and having due regard to reduce inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. This Act requires education authorities to prepare and publish an annual report setting out the steps taken to secure improvements in education provision and outcomes set out in the National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan and those identified by the Council. The Scottish Government expects every education authority to prepare and submit a National Improvement Framework Plan and Progress Report by the end of September, annually.

This Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan continues to take account of the priorities set out in the Scottish Government's 2025 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan <https://www.gov.scot/publications/2025-national-improvement-framework-improvement-plan/>, East Lothian Children and Young People's Services Plan [Children and Young People's Service Plan 2023-2026 | Children and Young People's Service Plan 2023-2026 | East Lothian Council](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210592/community_planning/11857/the_east_lothian_plan_2017-27) and the East Lothian Council Plan https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210592/community_planning/11857/the_east_lothian_plan_2017-27

The focus for session 2025/26 continues to be '**Back to Basics- a Relentless Focus on Equity and Excellence.**'

Our aim is to continue to develop an integrated service that seeks to get it right for all of our children, living and learning in East Lothian through the actions taken across our service areas and in our schools, and to improve the quality of the experiences we provide for children, young people and families in East Lothian.

Overall, we are pleased with the progress made to deliver on most of the key priorities and objectives set out in the Education Progress and Improvement Plan. Quality Frameworks such as How Good is Our School? (4th edition) [How good is our school? \(4th edition\) \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/how-good-is-our-school-4th-edition/) and How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare [How good is our early learning and childcare? \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/how-good-is-our-early-learning-and-childcare/) continue to support the Education Service to benchmark our service provision, including feedback from our key stakeholders.

We continue to make use of a range of data and evidence to inform progress made with current priorities and inform future areas for improvement, including:

- Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate reports on schools and services
- school reviews
- attainment and achievement data, including Local Government Benchmarking Framework data

All of our most up to date data and projections are contained within the Raising Attainment Strategy which was approved at Education Committee in March 2024, along with our stretch and core plus aims within our Scottish Attainment Challenge plan.

New data is not yet available. ACEL (Curriculum for Excellence) data will be published in December 2025, and Insight data will be published in February 2026. We are not permitted to share this data until that time.

Education Service Improvement Priorities 2024/25: Evaluation of Progress and Next Steps

PRIORITY 1

2.2 Curriculum

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

In 24/25 we aimed to:

Strengthen, align and raise awareness of 3-18 strategies to ensure articulation and a strong focus on raising attainment and quality learning and teaching

- Raising Attainment Strategy
- Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Literacy Strategy
- Numeracy Strategy

Evaluation of Progress

Raising Attainment Strategy

See Priority 3

Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy

Since approval in May 2023, substantial progress has been made with the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy. The strategy was broken down into 4 main priorities. Below are the areas of development in each of these key actions. [see action plan here.](#)

Priority 1 - Digital Literacy of Staff

- ✓ Further development and streamlining of EduHub as well as the launch of the Learning Library has ensured easy access to resources, policies and CLPL opportunities for staff.
- ✓ Substantial work has been completed to ensure access to more applications on Chromebooks to enhance opportunities of creativity online. Adobe Express and Book Creator have been successful additions to primary classrooms.
- ✓ Widespread delivery of Chromebook Accessibility training to support staff learners with accessing technology.

Priority 2 - Digital Infrastructure

- ✓ Learning, Connected will provide 1:1 devices to all secondary learners, with primary schools to enhance ratios to a baseline of 1:2.
- ✓ Completion of upgraded Wi-Fi network across all schools.
- ✓ New web-filter system has been installed across all managed devices. This provides schools with transparency around online behaviours. This also provides IT teams with the ability to ensure safer browsing environments for learners.
- ✓ Availability of Teams for all schools as part of the O365 rollout, with continued access to other apps in the future.

Priority 3 - Digital Learning & Teaching

- ✓ Established the 'Digital Community' working group to explore new tools and devices and provide feedback on developments.
- ✓ Explored and tested a range of tools to support learners completing digital exams. Continued work on this is required and a working group has been established.
- ✓ Several pilot projects have been undertaken in nurseries, primary and secondary settings to assess impacts and assist future planning.
- ✓ Sanderson's Wynd Primary School have been engaging in a case study focusing on Digital Learning and Teaching. [Click here to find out more.](#)
- ✓ The annual Game Jam saw record numbers of primary aged learners engage in this IDL project, with over 2500 learners participating, over 350 online games were created.

Priority 4 - Digital Distance Learning

- ✓ The establishment of the Learning Library not only acts as a CLPL platform but one in wo build online offers for learners. This is currently being explored by Alistair Stewart and a group of DHT's.
- ✓ The Learning Library has been utilised to offer learners access to 'Virtual Learning Lessons' supporting staff and learners understand the new tools they have available and how these can be implemented across curricular areas.
- ✓ We have begun to explore how courses can be offered in virtually across all schools, with Google Workspace and the Learning Library being used.

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy

Implement the 3-18 Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy, ensuring every learner experiences high quality learning and teaching through a focus on:

- data driven evidence
- national expectations
- research-based pedagogical practice

In session 2022/23, 57% of schools evaluated their performance as good or better for QI 2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment. In session 2023/24, 71% of schools evaluated their performance as good or better for QI 2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment. In session 2024/25, 71% of schools evaluated their performance as good or better for QI 2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment. As part of the QUAD, rubrics for QI 2.3 have been introduced to further develop a shared understanding of standards for high quality teaching, learning and assessment to strengthen quality assurance, inform professional learning and further improve practice.

Play Pedagogy

In 2024/2025 the Play Leadership Group continued to lead play pedagogy in East Lothian. Primary 1 and 2 practitioners were invited to attend 4 x 2 hour professional learning sessions with a member of their SLT. Senior leaders across all primary schools also completed an STG task to support their ongoing self-evaluation of play pedagogy in their setting. Twenty-five schools participated in the sessions involving 78 practitioners. Feedback from the sessions has had a positive impact with practitioners who participated last session sharing positive changes to their practice and leading learning. Evaluation information on this priority can be found in the 24/25 Pedagogy Team evaluation:

Evaluation of Progress

Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy

Since approval in May 2023, substantial progress has been made regarding the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy. The strategy was broken down into 4 main priorities, below outlines areas of development in each of these key actions, [see action plan here.](#)

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sa-fF7jizM-vpLO8CHXuxwKU3I7jNFkt/view?usp=sharing>

Assessment and Moderation

A programme of professional learning to further develop an 'Asset-based approach' to assessment and moderation has been developed with a focus on developing knowledge and skills of middle leaders across primary and secondary schools. This has been led by school senior leaders and has developed a toolkit for moderation to be taken forward in schools by middle leaders in session 2025/26. This work underpins the local authority priority to raise attainment through further developing a shared understanding of national standards using the CfE benchmarks, creating a framework and resources to support effective assessment and moderation in schools and focusing on what learners can do to demonstrate achievement rather than gaps in learning.

Curriculum Rationale, Design and Making

All schools have continued to engage in ongoing development of curriculum rationale, curriculum design and curriculum making. A majority of school leaders (23) have reported curriculum rationales have been developed as a school community and are grounded in commitment to securing children's rights and wellbeing. A majority of schools have engaged with East Lothian's Our Aspirational Curriculum Toolkit. Six professional learning sessions for school leaders were provided from September - December 2024 to support curriculum development. Attended by school leaders from 10 schools, attendees all reported the sessions were relevant and increased knowledge and understanding. School leaders stated, 'feeling positive about next steps in process', 'I have a clearer plan for my next steps' and 'I'm keen to build our curriculum plan with an eye on assessment and tracking to ensure it gives us information that is useful to support learners.' A suite of 5 professional learning videos and accompanying toolkits, hosted on East Lothian's learning library, have been created to support anytime, anywhere learning.

All schools have engaged in professional learning sessions to support knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC). School leaders feedback that the CIC process is welcomed and is based on a sound rationale. Opportunities were identified to align the Broad General Education to the Senior Phase, strengthening middle leadership and a realising greater balance between knowledge and skills in the curriculum. Leaders identified concern over the lack of clarity to date and recognised the challenge in capacity realising this change process will require.

Literacy Strategy

Good progress has been made against both strategic measures.

Measure 1: *For P1-4-7-S3 Literacy ACEL (Progress and Achievement), ensure 85% or more of East Lothian Schools track ACEL progress at 70% of learners or better as 'on track' at key points of the year (e.g. 'Good' or better – November / 'Very Good' or better – May).*

P1-4-7-S3 Combined (All Schools)	'On Track' Literacy - % of Schools Tracking at 70% of Learners or better
June 2024 ACEL – 70% or better	67%
Stretch Aim	85%
December 2024 Tracking (Good Progress or Better)	28%
May 2025 Tracking (Very Good Progress or Better)	83%
June 2025 ACEL – 70% or better	68%

The above data evidences:

- a 55% improvement in terms of the % of schools between December 2024 and May 2025 tracking 70% or more of their learners as ‘on track’ to achieve CofE Literacy (83% of all schools). The May 2025 measure (83%) was in line with the stretch aim of 85% of schools.
- a 1% increase in the number of schools recording Literacy ACEL at 70% or better in June 2025 compared to June 2024.

(NB - the 2025 stretch aim was based on a total of 42 schools. At the end of session 2024-25, there were 41 schools whose data was collected, and which the above measures are based upon).

Measure 2: For P1-4-7-S3 Literacy ACEL (Progress and Achievement), ensure 34% or more of East Lothian Schools track ACEL progress at 80% of learners or better as ‘on track’ at key points of the year (e.g. ‘Good’ or better – November / ‘Very Good’ or better – May).

P1-4-7-S3 Combined (All Schools)	‘On Track’ Literacy - % of Schools Tracking at 80% of Learners or better
June 2024 ACEL – 80% or better	26%
Stretch Aim	34%
December 2024 Tracking (Good Progress or Better)	8%
May 2025 Tracking (Very Good Progress or Better)	58%
June 2025 ACEL – 80% or better	45%

The above data evidences:

- a 50% improvement in terms of the % of schools between December 2024 and May 2025 tracking 80% or more of their learners as ‘on track’ to achieve CofE Literacy (58% of all schools). The May 2025 measure (58% of schools) was above the stretch aim of 34% of schools.
- a 19% increase in the number of schools recording Literacy ACEL at 80% or better in June 2025 compared to June 2024.

(NB - the 2025 stretch aim was based on a total of 42 schools. At the end of session 2024-25, there were 41 schools whose data was collected, and which the above measures are based upon).

% ACEL Data – All Pupils			
P1 – P4 – P7 – S3	2024	2025	Improvement
Reading	80%	82%	2%
Writing	76%	79%	3%
Listening & Talking	86%	87%	1%
Literacy	73%	77%	4%

(NB - the 2025 data is based on a total of 41 schools. The 2024 data is based on a total of 42 schools).

Strategy Impact:

When compared to June 2024, the data in the table above further supports the evaluation of both strategic measures of improvement in ACEL Literacy for P1-4-7-S3 stages in June 2025. Measure 1 evidences that the % of schools recording ACEL Literacy for 70% of learners or better remained consistent compared to June 2024. In June 2025 there was a significant increase of 19% of schools recording appropriate ACEL for 80% of learners or better (45% of schools in June 2025 compared to 26% in June 2024 - or an increase of eight schools). Therefore, the data supports the view that in June 2025, improved numbers of pupils achieved the appropriate CfE Literacy level in the majority of East Lothian schools when compared to June 2024. This improvement again relates to improved validity and reliability of professional judgements of teachers, and the impact of work in schools focusing on assessment and moderation of progress within a level and achievement of a level. The significant improvements in Writing attainment in National Improving Writing Programme schools has also been a contributory factor (see below).

National Improving Writing Programme

Very Good progress has been made against both strategic measures.

Measure 1: By June 2025 to achieve 140 trained teachers across 73% of primary schools.

Session	New Schools to NIWP		Established Schools Cascading Practice		Session Total	
	Number of Schools	Number of trained Staff	Number of Schools	Number of trained Staff	Schools	Trained Staff
2022-23	9	31	N/A	N/A	9	31
2023-24	7	19	5	13	12	32
2024-25	9	35	12	38	17	73
Project Total	25	85	17	51	N/A	<u>136</u>

The data above evidences that the number of actual NIWP trained teachers across three years of the programme stands at 136. This was in line with the stretch aim of 140 by June 2025. A survey of trained practitioners indicates that almost all practitioners have continued to use the quality improvement methodology to support learners' progress in Writing. A few practitioners have also applied their professional learning in relation to quality improvement to other curriculum areas.

There are now 71% of East Lothian primary schools with at least one practitioner trained in the National Improving Writing Programme pedagogy. Most trained practitioners teach at the Primary 3 to Primary 7 stages, but a few teachers have used the methodology at Primary 2. Across the Primary 3 to Primary 7 of all NIWP schools there were 5639 primary pupils in 2024-25. There has been a significant improvement in ACEL Writing at both Primary 4 and Primary 7 stages for 2024/25 compared to the same measure for June 2024:

- Primary 4 First Level Writing ACEL: 5.9%-point improvement
- Primary 7 Second Level Writing ACEL: 3.3%-point improvement
- Primary 1-4-7 (Combined) Writing ACEL: 3.9%-point improvement

Measure 2: *Achieve the stretch aim of a 2.5% improvement or better in June 2025 in the achievement of First Level Writing at P4 stage across all NIWP schools (69% to 72% of P4 learners across Cohort 1-4 schools)*

The data below evidences improvements in First Level Writing ACEL across all NIWP schools compared to the same measure in June 2024.

NIWP Cohort	Average Writing ACEL June 2024 – Primary 4 First Level	Average Writing ACEL June 2025 – Primary 4 First Level	ACEL Writing % Improvement 2024 vs 2025 – Primary 4 First Level
All Cohort 1-4 NIWP schools	66.5%	74.7%	8.2%
Non NIWP schools and Cohort 5 and 6 NIWP schools	76.3%	77.4%	1.1%
Difference	-9.8%	-2.7%	7.1%
ALL SCHOOLS	69.8%	75.8%	6.0%

The above data reflects the following evaluative points in terms of Primary 4 ACEL at First Level Writing:

- In June 2025, across Cohort 1-4 schools where NIWP practice was developed, there was an 8.2% points improvement recorded compared to June 2024
- In June 2025, across non-NIWP schools and Cohort 5 and 6 NIWP schools, there was a recorded improvement of 1.1% points at First Level ACEL Writing compared to June 2024.

- When comparing ACEL June 2024 with June 2025, the rate of improvement at First Level Writing ACEL was greater in NIWP schools compared to non-NIWP schools (+7.1% points).
- Across all East Lothian schools, First Level Writing ACEL improved by 6.0% points compared to June 2024.

(NB - the 2025 data is based on a total of 41 schools. The 2024 data is based on a total of 42 schools).

Numeracy Strategy

Good progress has been made against both strategic measures.

Measure 1: *For P1-4-7-S3 Numeracy ACEL, ensure 80% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 70% of learners or better achieved.*

P1-4-7-S3 Combined (All Schools)	'On Track' Numeracy - % of Schools Tracking at 70% of Learners or better
June 2024 ACEL – 70% or better	70%
Stretch Aim	80%
December 2024 Tracking (Good Progress or Better)	38%
May 2025 Tracking (Very Good Progress or Better)	88%
June 2025 ACEL – 70% or better	88%

The data above evidence improvement in terms of the % of schools tracking 70% or more of their learners as 'on track' to achieve CofE Numeracy between December 2024 and May 2025 and realisation of the measure stretch aim (+10%). In June 2025, there were 88% of East Lothian schools recording Numeracy ACEL for 70% of learners or better. This was an improvement of 18% of schools (+6 schools) compared to June 2024. This was 8% points above the stretch aim of 80% of schools

(NB - the 2025 stretch aim was based on a total of 42 schools. At the end of session 2024-25, there were 41 schools whose data was collected, and which the above measures are based upon).

Measure 2: *For P1-4-7-S3 Numeracy ACEL, ensure 54% or more of East Lothian Schools track ACEL progress at 80% of learners or better achieved (additional 3 schools)*

P1-4-7-S3 Combined (All Schools)	'On Track' Numeracy - % of Schools Tracking at 80% of Learners or better
June 2024 ACEL – 80% or better	44%
Stretch Aim	54%
December 2024 Tracking (Good Progress or Better)	18%
May 2025 Tracking (Very Good Progress or Better)	48%
June 2025 ACEL – 80% or better	56%

The data above evidences improvements in terms of the % of schools tracking 80% or more of their learners as 'on track' to achieve CofE Numeracy between December 2024 and May 2025. The stretch aim for this measure was not realised (-6%). In June 2025, there were 56% of East Lothian schools recording Numeracy ACEL for 80% of learners or better. This was an improvement of 12% of schools (+4 schools) compared to June 2024. This was 2% points above the stretch aim of 54% of schools. *(NB - the 2025 stretch aim was based on a total of 42 schools. At the end of session 2024-25, there were 41 schools whose data was collected, and which the above measures are based upon).*

% ACEL Data – All Pupils			
P1 – P4 – P6 – S3	2024	2025	Improvement
Numeracy	78%	81%	3%

Numeracy Strategy Impact:

When compared to June 2024, the data in the table above further supports the evaluation of both strategic measures of improvement in ACEL Numeracy for P1-4-7-S3 stages in June 2025. 2025 levels of Numeracy ACEL were 81% and demonstrate an improvement on 2024 levels.

Measure 1 data evidence shows that the % of schools recording ACEL Numeracy for 70% of learners or better improved by 18% of schools to 88% compared to 70% in June 2024 (an increase of 6 schools).

In June 2025 there was an increase of 12% of schools recording appropriate ACEL for 80% of learners or better (56% of schools in June 2025 compared to 44% in June 2024 - or an increase of four schools).

Therefore, the data supports the view that in June 2025, improved numbers of pupils achieved the appropriate CfE Numeracy level in the majority of East Lothian schools when compared to June 2024. This consistency relates to improved validity and reliability of professional judgements of teachers, and the

impact of work in schools focusing on assessment and moderation of progress within a level and achievement of a level, including improvement work in the use of diagnostic assessments led by our Pedagogy Team.

Early Years: Literacy and Numeracy Tracking

In EL&CC we have extended the curricular tracking and Progress and Achievement pilot to 4 schools (Sanderson's Wynd, Preston Tower, Wallyford and Musselburgh Burgh) with the lowest SIMD in the authority. During this process demand for a consistent tracking model saw wider distribution of the pilot materials available to all settings both in the local authority and PVI sector. In addition to the pilot schools, the Early Years team supported settings in exploring the right tracking option for them, and in the implementing of this with Senior Leadership and/or staff teams. The majority of local authority settings have introduced this over 24/25 and are continuing to embed this. EL&CC Education Support Officers collaborated with the Education Information and Research Team to provide access to an equity tracker page for EL&CC for settings who choose to use SEEMiS P&A. To complement curricular tracking, developmental overviews have been made available to all settings with a focus on offering an alternative to paid assessments for practitioners to understand and track children's developmental progress and provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for all children. Most settings are accessing this resource to support children with additional support needs.

Measure 1:

ELCC Stretch aim for 24/25

- Literacy – 71% on track
- Numeracy – 79% on track

Measure 2:

- 100% of pilot schools hold Progress and Achievement (P&A) meetings between SLT and EL&CC key workers. 75% of pilot schools have recorded on track data for Literacy and Numeracy for Early Level (EL&CC).
- In 75% of pilot settings, SLT hold data around nursery attainment which is available through curricular tracking and P&A. The expansion of the availability of the curricular tracking and P&A access over 24/25 has enabled all settings to access methods of collecting nursery attainment data. The accuracy of data held, could be improved through the moderation of professional judgement to ensure reliable data detailing progress through Early Level.

Next Steps

Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy

- ✓ Deliver the Learning, Connected project, ensuring support for staff, learners and families.
- ✓ Establish a business case that supports the review of current licensing for Google Workspace and outlines the benefits of investment.
- ✓ Review the allocation and condition of devices in primary schools to ensure baseline ratios of 1:2 and devices are fit for purpose.
- ✓ Complete ongoing Chrome Tablet pilots in nurseries, review feedback and plan for next steps.
- ✓ Provide centralised support for the Digital Schools Award with a focus of having all school registered and aware of the support framework.
- ✓ Review and test 'Natural Reader' as the preferred software for digital exams, have this available before prelims and gather feedback.
- ✓ Engage secondary schools as part of the Digital Community, having representation from all settings.
- ✓ Review user engagement on the Learning Library and ensure 75% of staff have registered and accessed the platform.
- ✓ Ensure all Central Education Teams have been supported with Learning Library contributions.
- ✓ Provide staff with over 250 offers on the Learning Library.
- ✓ Work closely with Promethean to begin migration from Activ Inspire to Activ Suite, starting with the new build schools.
- ✓ Ensure 30% of schools have a pupil digital leader programme using [Digital Leaders Scotland Frameworks](#).
- ✓ Full completion and review of learner/staff experiences related to courses offered virtually.

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy

- As part of the self-improving schools approach, develop the use of the QI 2.3 rubric for learning, teaching and assessment across STGs to:
 - Ensure a shared understanding of high-quality Learning and teaching within and across schools
 - Provide explicit next steps to improve quality of learning and teaching to inform professional learning and QA processes.
 - Strengthen evaluation of QI 2.3
- Continue to develop professional learning informed by self-evaluation that meets the needs of our practitioners including in person professional learning aligned to the service priorities, online resources as part of the learning library, universal and targeted professional learning from the Pedagogy Team, professional research and reading.
- Further support effective pedagogical approaches in Play Pedagogy, Assessment and Moderation, Planning learning, teaching and assessment in the BGE S1 to S3.

- Strengthen leadership of learning and teaching through a professional learning programme for senior and middle leaders as part of the strategic leadership days for session 2025/26.
- Continued support and challenge provided to schools developing their curriculum, including rationale as well as development of design and making stages.
- Further develop professional enquiry to support improvements in learning teaching and assessment and ensure a shared ownership for improvements in outcomes.
- Continue to engage with Education Scotland as part of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, providing support and guidance to schools as well as determining strategic response and direction.
- Development of a curriculum self-evaluation toolkit utilising the QI 2.2 rubric for curriculum.
- Further development of East Lothian's SCOT Group curriculum strategic plan.
- Identification of priority work streams with oversight by the SCOT Group.
- Align East Lothian's Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy and Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy

Literacy Strategy:

- Through enhanced use of Accelerated Reader and National Standardised Assessment data sources, provide additional support and challenge to schools to further enhance the tracking of Reading attainment and the impact of school-based interventions.
- To further support the planning of teaching, learning and assessment by trialling the enhanced ELC Writing Frameworks across a pilot group of schools to gather feedback on further adaptations required before rolling out in 2026-27.
- To develop a professional learning programme to support learner progress in Reading at Early Level. This work will be in partnership with Education Scotland National Improvement Programme.
- To deliver National Improving Writing Programme to seven East Lothian schools who are yet to engage with this professional learning (Cohort 7). To support a further 7 schools who have experienced NIWP to spread practice through their involvement in the national CYPIC training offer.
- To consider appropriate supports to schools in developing their approaches to assessing pupil progress and attainment in "Understanding, Analysing and Evaluating"
- To further embed the 'Reading Schools' initiative across East Lothian schools to support the development and improvement of 'Reading for Enjoyment' for all our learners.

Numeracy Strategy:

- When released, support schools to embed new national Mathematics technical frameworks into planning, learning, teaching and assessment.
- Develop a programme of professional learning to support schools to engage with and embed the new technical frameworks.
- Establish a test of change involving 6 Primary Schools with attainment gaps at second level numeracy to inform approaches to the East Lothian Numeracy Improvement Programme and raise attainment.
- Focus on numeracy within a context and multi-step problems within professional learning to improve stretch and challenge at 1st and 2nd level Numeracy.
- Further develop approaches to moderation of Numeracy providing guidance and professional learning for schools.

Early Years: Literacy and Numeracy Tracking

- Understand and develop the accuracy of attainment data held through moderation of professional judgement, supported by curriculum training available on the learning library and EL&CC training website.
- Develop a HWB tracking model to support practitioner's requirement to track Literacy, Numeracy and HWB, and provide consistency across the authority including PVI.
- Build a robust overview of developmental progress evidenced through developmental snapshots will allow us to track gaps and enable the identification of where interventions from partners agencies in the community can support families with children birth – three to provide early intervention.
- Enable SEEMiS access for EL&CC ESOs to monitor attainment data and equity dashboards to allow analysis of data, to support and challenge settings to ensure positive outcomes for all children.

Develop a 3-18 Health and Wellbeing Strategy

***Implement the updated Health and Wellbeing Curriculum (secondary focus)**

Evaluation of Progress

East Lothian's Revised Health and Wellbeing Curriculum Framework has been fully imbedded across all secondary schools. The revised framework extends across Early to Fourth Level, as well as providing guidance for Senior Phase. The framework incorporates the national RSHP curriculum resource and, in Early to Second level, God's Loving Plan, meeting the needs of East Lothian's Roman Catholic schools. The Health and Wellbeing Framework was launched with Primary Schools in September 2024, with the expectation that all schools plan for implementation from August 2025. Learners responding to the annual Student Experience Evaluation (SEE Survey) reported 80% or more positive responses to health and wellbeing curriculum questions. This is an increase of 1.6 percentage points on the 2023-2024. The Health and Wellbeing curriculum was identified as a positive example of practice within two school reviews during academic year 2024-2025.

A majority of secondary schools are tracking and monitoring health and wellbeing with a range of systems in place. Secondary schools reported that systems remain under development and that further development is required to ensure that information gathered is meaningfully used to improve learner experiences and outcomes. A majority of learners responding to the SEE survey responded positively to questions relating to reporting concerns to staff, and this increased by 4 percentage points in secondary schools from 2023-2024.

Most secondaries have delivered the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme during 2024-2025 and 33 staff were trained to further strengthen the programme. Feedback from a sample cohort (17) S6 learners who undertook the MVP training reported most learners felt more confident talking to others about violence against women and girls and a majority reported feeling confident to teach S3 learners about gender-based violence prevention.

Next Steps

- An evaluation of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum in secondary schools will be undertaken to gather feedback on the relevance and impact of the framework. This will include engaging with all stakeholders, with a significant focus on pupil voice.
- Development of an East Lothian Health and Wellbeing tracking and monitoring system.
- MVP programme in 6 secondary schools.
- Pilot of Equality Safe at Schools programme in one secondary.
- A minimum of two primary schools engaging in the Education Scotland early intervention gender-based violence prevention programme.

Implement the 3-18 Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy, ensuring every learner experiences high quality learning and teaching through a focus on:

- data driven evidence
- national expectations
- research-based pedagogical practice

Evaluation of Progress

Measure 1: 80% of ELCC CI (23/24) achieving 4 or above (How Good is Our Care, Play and Learning)

Measure 2: All ELCC nurseries will be evaluated as GOOD or better (How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare) for QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

60% of EL&CC, across local authority and PVI, achieved a grading of 4 or above in How Good is Our Care, Play and Learning and 50% achieved Good or better in QI 2.3 in How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare. We have now put in place data collection measures to capture and track quality progress over time for both Care Inspectorate Inspections and HMIE Inspections across the totality of EL&CC in East Lothian. We have moved from a scrutiny model to a Self-Improving Schools model, in line with our primary and secondary colleagues, and delivered training to our PVI settings to support this. The development and launch of our suite of Early Years Building High Quality Foundations guidance is now available in all settings to support observations, planning, environment, and learning stories. Following an Early Years Service Review, we now have eight Quality and Equity Leads to model and scaffold practice in settings to support improvement planning.

Measure 3: Stretch Aim: 85% East Lothian schools or more evaluated as 4 or better for QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Standard and Quality Reports, validated through school quality assurance, school reviews, HMIE inspections.

Next Steps

- Continued engagement in the National Curriculum Improvement Cycle
- Develop Learning for Sustainability Strategy
- A series of self-directed training clips will be developed to support practitioners to further develop their knowledge of CfE in Early Years.
- School and Setting Leaders will be invited to engage in Pedagogical Leadership for Early Learning and Childcare Leaders delivered in partnership with Education Scotland.
- Implement reviews with PVI settings to quality assure self-evaluation.

- Implement Early Years Building High Quality Foundations guidance documentation in tracking, personal plans and interactions.
- Develop peer collaboration within the Self-Improving Schools model across EL&CC.
- Implement the new Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors and align this to both the ELC school and PVI review process.

Across priorities for Session 2024/25, have a clear focus on improving the delivery of the BGE, particularly in S1-3 through:

- high quality learning experiences
- transition in learning
- robust tracking and monitoring of S1- S3 attainment data
- personal support

Evaluation of Progress

Measure:

85% East Lothian schools or more evaluated as good or better for 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

High quality learning experiences:

School reviews and inspections have highlighted the need for improvement in learning teaching and assessment, with a focus on the S1-S3 Broad General Education. In response to this, a pilot professional learning programme was designed and developed by three STG secondary schools to provide targeted support to curriculum middle leaders and a selection of Support for Learning and Inclusion Principal Teachers in developing their skills in effective assessment of learning and teaching and instructional coaching techniques. This researched-based programme was designed and implemented by secondary deputy head teachers and the programme was attended by 24 secondary curriculum middle leaders. Feedback from the programme evidenced a deepened understanding of planning, assessment, and learner experience through practical observation and discussion. All participants reported the sessions achieved their aims, with a majority identifying improved knowledge and understanding of learning, teaching and assessment. Participants also

reported increased confidence in challenging practice through leadership and highlighted the need for improvements in quality assurance practices. Following the success of this programme, the sessions will be further developed and extended across all secondaries during session 2025-2026.

Transition in learning:

A pilot project involving an Associated School Group within the Prestonpans area ran during session 2024-2025 to develop a shared understanding of a learner's journey in numeracy from P6 S3, with a focus on how assessment is planned for and evidence is gathered. The pilot took an asset-based approach and aimed to improve the curriculum planning, pedagogy and assessment of numeracy. Whilst the project remains at an early-stage, initial feedback has highlighted 100% of practitioners surveyed are using benchmarks to support judgements; however, there is inconsistencies in the use of resources, the pedagogy used, and the assessment judgements made. Continuation of the pilot within the ASG will aim to increase consistency, raise standards and improve numeracy outcomes.

A baseline audit of school leaver planning was completed in session 2024-2025 across all secondary schools following a 1.79 percentage point decrease in East Lothian SLDR. The audit found examples of effective practice in the tracking of anticipated leave dates and the use of targeted interventions to meet the needs of those most at risk of a negative destination. However, areas for improvement were also identified. Working in collaboration with Skills Development Scotland, a strategic plan will be developed to support transition planning for leavers, with a focus on those most at risk. This will include the establishment of a short-life working group alongside targeted interventions to provide support and challenge to schools.

Robust tracking and monitoring of S1- S3 attainment data:

In the majority of secondary schools, there has been Quality Improvement Team engagement with middle leaders to focus on the development of:

- professional knowledge and understanding of Curriculum for Excellence principles and practice
- the role of assessment in planning progressive learning experiences within BGE
- the range of assessment evidence to be used to inform professional judgement of learner progress against CfE Benchmarks in terms of breadth, challenge and application of learning
- The tracking of learner progress using Progress and Achievement

Through planned BGE attainment reviews, most schools have demonstrated an improved awareness of the CfE principles and have built on their understanding and use of BGE assessment evidence to underpin professional judgement of learner progress.

The data below evidences consistencies between June 2024 and June 2025 attainment of Third Level at S3.

S3 Third Level	Reading	Writing	Talking and Listening	Literacy	Numeracy
June 2024	85.5	84.3	86.8	83.4	85.5
June 2025 (Indicative)	86.1	85.7	86.1	84.6	85.2
Improvement (2024 vs 2025)	+0.6	+1.4	-0.7	+1.2	-0.3

The data below evidences improvements between June 2024 and June 2025 attainment of Fourth Level at S3.

S3 Fourth Level	Reading	Writing	Talking and Listening	Literacy	Numeracy
June 2024	53.8	52.1	52.1	50.2	59.0
June 2025 (Indicative)	58.5	57.1	59.1	53.9	61.1
Improvement (2024 vs 2025)	+4.7	+5.0	+7.0	+3.7	+2.1

Quality Improvement scrutiny from QIOs suggests that further work is required to ensure greater validity and reliability of assessment evidence used to support professional judgement of learner progress at BGE.

Personal support:

Curriculum rationale & evidence of personal pathway planning – consider Literacy & Numeracy pathways

Recent national reports, including the Muir and the Hayward Reports, state that ‘personal support is integral to curriculum design and delivery’ and that this is reflected in curriculum design principles as well as personal learning planning. In line with national trends, East Lothian Council also has a growing number of young people with ASN and schools are responding accordingly. All secondary school reviews carried out 2023-2025 were inclusive of recommendations for improvement. Evidence of effective practice was found and highlighted examples where ‘teachers make use of a range of media and resources to support learning’ and ‘learning visits (evidenced) digital technology is used to support individual learners’. Recommendations included ‘creating a climate for learning through carefully considered universal approaches to support inclusion across all classes including Circle’ and that consideration is made as to ‘how class teachers use data to plan learning which provides an appropriate level of challenge and support for learners’. The examples of positive practice and recommendations for next steps provide a baseline for taking this work forward in 2024-2026.

Next Steps

High Quality Learning Experiences

- Establishment of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Depute Head Teacher leadership group
- Extension of Middle Leaders effective assessment of learning and teaching and instructional coaching programme

Transitions in Learning

- Baseline P7 – S1 transition learner experience and impact assessment
- Continuation of P6-S3 ASG numeracy pilot
- A Positive Destinations Strategic Plan will be developed

Robust tracking and monitoring of S1- S3 attainment data:

- further work with Middle Leaders to provide support and challenge in leading teacher professional learning in relation to the principles and standards relating to Curriculum for Excellence
- work with Senior and Middle Leaders to:
 - further develop and support BGE approaches to planning of learning, teaching and assessment at BGE (with a focus on Literacy and Numeracy across the curriculum),
 - ensure tracking of learner progress is against Benchmarks
 - Quality-assure accuracy of schools' monitoring rate of learner progress towards achievement of Third and Fourth Level CfE

Personal Support

- Continued development of curriculum rationale, design and making inclusive of personal support
- A strategic plan for personal support will be developed

Engage with the recommendations of the Hayward Review

Evaluation of Progress

The establishment of a secondary Depute Head Teacher Curriculum Leadership Group has led to developments in the senior phase curriculum that are reflective of the local market intelligence in employment pathways. Training has been provided to support school leaders in the use of the 16+ Data Hub to inform curriculum planning, and an example of good practice has been shared with all head teachers. Secondary pupils will be able to access a new SCQF Level 5 qualification in Health and Social Care. This course will prepare learners for a pathway into the health social care sector and work is underway to introduce an SCQF Level 6 course for 2026-2027. Working in partnership with Edinburgh College, a pilot National Certificate in Build Environment SCQF L6

will run in 2025-2026 providing learners with a pathway into professional careers within the construction industry. A pilot Advanced Higher Business Management Digital Consortium has been developed and introduced to allow young people to access a wider curriculum learning offer learning remotely from their school without the need to travel. This pilot will be evaluated during the course of 2025-2026 and consideration will be made as to extending this model further to include more courses. Enhanced alignment of the common school day has allowed for collaboration between two schools to deliver a newly introduced Foundation Apprenticeship in IT: Hardware.

Next Steps

- continued engagement with Education Scotland to inform and support the national Curriculum Improvement Cycle
- continued Enhanced Common School Day
- further enhanced use of data, including local market intelligence, Data Hub and attainment data in to inform curriculum design
- introduction of NC Built Environment
- introduction of L5 Health and Social Care pathway
- introduction of FA IT: Hardware
- pilot AH Business Management Digital Consortium, including review and feedback leading to assessment of further extension of digital consortium offer.

PRIORITY 2

3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

In 2024/25 we aimed:

Through the Belonging to East Lothian initiative, develop an integrated Early Intervention Service to:

- provide bespoke supports for children and young people at risk of disengagement from Education, to ensure our children and young people get the support they need, when they need it, through the development of the Education Outreach Team
- strengthen the Child Planning process and the work of the Locality Teams
- rationalise referral routes and processes for early intervention services
- Whole Family Wellbeing Funding: implement preventative whole family support measures (parent/carer engagement and family learning)

Evaluation of Progress

Child Planning Framework

- Creation of new Child Planning Framework documentation.
- Training delivered to over 100 members of staff to support implementation.
- Over 95% of staff agreed / strongly agreed with the following statements about the new documentation:
- *I have an improved understanding of East Lothian's Child's Planning Framework.*
- *I have a clearer understanding of the language that should be used when writing plans within the Child Planning Framework.*
- *I understand how to take the knowledge gained from this training and apply it within my setting.*
- *I believe that the planned changes to the child planning framework will have a positive measurable impact for staff, children and young people and their families.*

Child Planning Framework- Locality Teams (CPF-LTs)

- 128 Children and Young People have been presented to CPF-LTs during school year 2024/25.
- Of the 128 children and young people, 10% were subsequently referred to Children's Services. Alternative supports and planning was put in place for the other 90% of children and young people at the additional level. This aligns with the principle of early intervention and meeting needs outwith targeted interventions.
- An evaluation of CPF-LTs was undertaken in June 2025. Of those professionals attending:
- *82% felt that the CPF-LT provided an opportunity for discussion and a solutions orientated approach to a 'great extent'.*
- *73.9% stated that the process helps to identify next steps for children and young people to a 'great extent'.*
- The following benefits of CPF-LTs were identified:
- *Needs are being met in a multi-agency way 63%*
- *Being able to discuss and collaborate with colleagues 87%*
- *Information and links to outside agencies and third sector partners 80.4%*
- *Reassurance from colleagues in attendance 63%*
- *Challenge to ensure all supports have been explored and all processes have been followed 60.9%*
- *One of the CPF-LT chairs commented that the CPF-LTs are: "a real support for transition. Getting to know all of the cluster heads better and knowing about some of the new cohort way ahead of time has been really valuable."*

Additional Support Needs (ASN) Funding

- Approval was given by Education & Children’s Services Committee in November to change the allocation of funding to support children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN). This is in recognition of the growing numbers of those with ASN and the changing nature of needs. Underpinned by the SEEMiS Risk Register, the funding allocation to schools is based on a wide range of needs including, but not limited to: poverty, care experience, child protection, English as an additional language and having child planning in place.
- Audit processes have been established to measure the impact of this funding from session 2025/26.

Equity & Inclusion, Education Outreach Service

- The service was established during school year 2024/25. Whilst referrals were building, the service provided in school support. In this time the service supported the attainment of 115 qualification and an additional 142 national qualifications units. Impact statements were gathered from school colleagues about this aspect of the service:
 - *“pupil struggled to come into school until working one-to-one with Education Outreach Officer. He is very grateful and keen to keep achieving.”*
 - *“The class and the children have been significantly more settled and we continue to make good progress. The children’s pace of learning is improving considerably.”*
 - *“input was invaluable and enabled the learner to be supported in school and to make progress. The family expressed their sincere thanks to the outreach team for their support in making their child’s transition here a success.”*
- The service received a further 177 referrals to work with individual children and young people over the course of school year 2024/25. Each child / young person working with the service is supported to achieve a SMART target related to their attainment and our local authority stretch aims. Of these learners 78% achieved their target. Therefore demonstrating measurable impact of the service.
- On a sliding scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, *87.6% of learners rated their experience with the service as 9 or 10. 96.8% of learners felt the service supported them to achieve their target. 87.1% of learners felt the service helped them to feel more at ease / happier in their learning.* Some comments from learners included:
 - *“It helped me to feel more confident about learning.”*
 - *“It was fun and encouraged me to enjoy learning again.”*
 - *“My tutor broke the maths down well so it made it easier to understand.”*
- The feedback from parents and carers was also encouraging. On a sliding scales of 1-10, 10 being the highest, *95.8% rated the service as a 9 or 10. 95.8% of parents / carers felt that the service supported their child to achieve their target and same percent felt that the service helped their child to become more confident in their learning.* Some comments from parents / carers included:
 - *“Child came home after every session full of praise that he learnt a lot.”*
 - *“Outreach has made him more comfortable with learning he has really blossomed with confidence as well.”*

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

Deaf Support Services

- This service has expanded to meet growing needs and now has a Principal Teacher supported by a Class Teacher and two Communication Support Workers. The service supports 81 children and young people.
- In addition to this, the service has delivered training on BSL and Deaf awareness across our schools.
- The staff are working to further develop their proficiency in BSL through further study and qualifications.

Young Carers Service

- To further raise the profile of Young Carers, the service delivered school staff briefings, awareness raising assemblies and in-class workshops. In 2024/25 an additional 270 children / young people registered with the service. Of these children and young people, 73% requested a Young Carers’ Statement.
- In session 2024/25, 89% of the existing Young Carers’ statements which were reviewed 89% noted achievement of children and young people’s personal goals.
- 468 young carers have taken up the offer of free access to local leisure services.
- The service facilitated 33 events for children and young people to attend during the school holidays.

Specialist Provision Estate

- To meet the needs of the growing population of children and young people with complex and enduring additional support needs and to support *Belonging to East Lothian* there has been an expansion to the specialist provision estate.
- Since 2023 the capacity of the estate has increased by 45% to provide an additional 77 spaces.

Supporting Neuro affirming Practice

Bespoke Training Programmes

- The Educational Psychology Service delivered a series of bespoke training programmes for key teams within Education & Children’s Services:
 - The Mental Health and Wellbeing Service (3 sessions)
 - The Education Outreach Team (3 sessions)
 - Families Together East Lothian / Social Work Intake and Assessment Team/ Pre – School Home Visiting Team (1 session repeated = 2 sessions)
- Examples of content covered includes:
 - Information on ND conditions
 - Masking/Conforming to Neurotypical Norms
 - Environment First
 - Making Learning Meaningful
 - Thinking Styles
 - Perspective Taking
 - Stress Systems / Seek to understand distress
 - Strategies, Tools and Resources
 - How to support ND families
 - Sharing Good Practice
- Pre and post measures demonstrated improvements across the following measures for all participants:
 - Feeling well equipped to support pupils with neurodivergent (ND) conditions
 - Feeling knowledgeable about ND conditions
 - Knowing how to adapt practice for working with pupils with ND conditions
 - Feeling confident about working with pupils with ND differences
- The following qualitative statements were gathered from participants:
 - How The Learning Will Be Taken Forward
 - *Use of the NAIT framework/documents*
 - *Use of a Nurturing & Trauma Informed Approach*
 - *Having a better understanding of other services will support multi-agency working*
 - General Feedback
 - *These inputs were so well thought out and helpful for me personally and for my work.*

- *I really appreciate you tailoring the sessions to areas we as a team have identified.*
- *The information and resources that were shared are much appreciated.*
- *Really informative sessions. Thank you for allowing a lot of the time to be discussion based.*
- *It was a really interesting and engaging course.*
- *I feel lot more confident now, Thank you.*
- *The services from the EPS service have been so informative. Being able to pull on their knowledge to support the development of the Education Outreach Service has been invaluable. We look forward to working together again in the future.*
- *A huge thank you to the Educational Psychology Services team—please keep up the amazing work! Your ethos, care, and compassion is truly heart-warming and inspiring.*

Training– Review of CLPL ASD Level 2 Course

- The EPS, Equity and Inclusion Service and Allied Health Partners have reviewed the current CLPL Level 2 ASD Training offer and have created a new neuroaffirming CLPL Level 2 ND training programme for secondary teachers. The content reflects current research and thinking around neurodivergent conditions and associated approaches for supporting young people. The programme is based on a framework of professional learning that involves learning through collaborative interaction and the provision of opportunities for dialogue and critical reflection to foster good practice and ensure high quality experiences for CYP.

Website

- The EPS are represented on the Pan Lothian ND Steering Group and 2 related subgroups focusing on:
 - Referral Pathways
 - Communication and Engagement
- The work in these groups will support the review and revision of the education department's online information and resources relating to ND.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Service (MHWBS) – Supports for CYP and Families

- A range of ND specific services have been recently commissioned. Service delivery will carry over into 2025-26. Below is a brief outline of the services and the progress to date:
 - **EPIC** – online webinars and individual support sessions for parents and carers of 5–12-year-olds that focus on executive functioning. The programme will provide for 36 families, 6 groups with 6 parents in each group. Initial advertising immediately filled all available spaces for the duration of this programme. 2 of the 6 groups have completed the programme, with the majority of participants having completed the majority of the webinars. Initial feedback:

"I found the discussion around memory very interesting. [My child] struggles academically and will often not engage and we are trying to find out why and I had not considered memory before."

"I liked having the opportunity to discuss my son's own personal needs rather than a group setting, I felt more confident doing this. "

" (online on-demand resources) I liked how you could access the resources in 3 different ways to meet your needs."

- **Choose Play** – facilitated whole family play sessions with indoor and outdoor play for CYP and a space for parents to access peer support. The first quarterly report is due in July 2025.
- **Team United** – multi-sport camps during the holiday periods for 10–15-year-olds. 2 camps have taken place. 43 spaces were taken up over the camps, with an average attendance rate of 84%. All children reported enjoying the camp. The majority made a new friend, most learnt a new skill, and everyone reported leaving with a smile on their face.

"It helps me make new friends."

"Football camp gets me out the house."

"Keeps me active & fit".

- **Salveson Mindroom** - post diagnostic individual support to explore different aspect of neurodiversity. The service supports the exploration of what the diagnostic outcome means for the CYP, using a holistic strengths-based approach. This service started in June.
- 2 Mental Health Youth Workers have been trained in delivering the 'Body Project', a group work approach for young people that looks to challenge and change cultural ideals and pressures around body image.

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding: implement preventative whole family support measures (parent/carer engagement and family learning)

Families Together East Lothian (FTEL): Early Intervention Outreach Service (referral based): voluntary 1:1 early intervention family outreach support where families can self-refer by contacting FTEL directly or be referred in by other agencies to receive support to improve and facilitate independent, sustainable management of concerns around daily life. From August 2024 to June 2025, our data shows that:

- 260 families were supported across East Lothian. This included 174 new referrals, with 86 families referred prior to Aug 2024 whose support continued into 24/25 year)
- In addition to the above, Parent/Carer Support Offers included a wide range of informal groups and drop-ins across East Lothian for parents/carers to speak to FTEL without a referral and receive advice, reassurance, signposting, peer support, and support with forms. This Included: Library drop-ins, Parent Space, Parenting Toolbox sessions, Raising Children with Confidence, Mobile Drop-Ins. There was a total of 430 contacts with families at these offers.
- Children and Young People (C&YP) Support Offers (combination of referral and non-referral) involved a selection of offers for C&YP to receive direct support in areas such as anxiety, grief, peer support, navigating relationships, and ensuring safety of their personal belongings. Specifically, this included: LIAM (referral), Seasons for Growth (referral), No Worries (non-referral but identified CYP), Bike Maintenance (non-referral) From these offers, 214 direct contacts with C&YP.
- Joint offer with Salveson Mindroom (non-referral): drop-in advice sessions for parents/carers with a neurodivergent child saw 26 parents/carers being directly supported.
- Salveson Mindroom (commissioned): offering 1:1 support to 15 families whose children have ASN.
- Peep Training for practitioners across East Lothian to support family play and interactions saw 18 practitioners trained in Antenatal course, with 20 practitioners trained in Learning Together Programme to develop family group work.

We continue chart the journey of every family using Blossom Tool to celebrate progress and work together to identify next steps, either through Mid Intervention support or careful signposting to another agency. 100% of families who provided feedback said that the support they received was what they had expected and had helped their family. Some comments included:

- It was more than what was expected. Which I am very pleased with. The help was not only with my younger ones. The support was also extended to my boys as well. with ongoing issues in school and with rebellious behaviour at home with one of my sons. The support and encouragement help me a lot. Which is appreciated.
- Our FOW was fantastic-she had lots of ideas and information regarding opportunities in our local area (that I would have never heard about otherwise). She was also caring and knowledgeable and took the time to get to know the whole family. I know my son was sad when our time came to an end. I'll miss our chats too!
- Yes, we appreciate every help knowing I am a single mum of 4. The information and directions and advice was very important. Which help me to keep on track.
- 100%. she pointed us in the right direction for services, and it felt like she really cared about my son. She took calls and emails after the service ended and just generally went above and beyond!
- I think everyone in a similar situation would benefit massively. Even just to be able to talk about concerns openly is extremely helpful!

Next Steps

Child Planning Framework

- Delivery of two quality assurance workshops in session 2025/26. A minimum of 90% of attendees will report increasing confidence through attending.

Child Planning Framework- Locality Teams (CPF-LTs)

- To maintain referral rates as 2024/25 as a minimum.
- For all children and young people presented to have a clear action identified and implemented in response to meeting their wellbeing needs.

Additional Support Needs (ASN) Funding

- Implementation of audit processes with all schools able to demonstrate achievement of measurable outcomes for children with ASN.

Equity & Inclusion, Education Outreach Service

- To maintain referral rates as 2024/25, as a minimum with all learners achieving their SMART target associated with working with the service.

Deaf Support Services

- For all staff to be working towards or have achieved the level 3 British Sign Language qualification.
- Development of a Deaf Support page on EduHub for children/ young people, parents/ carers and school staff to be able to access information, resources and links to other services.

Young Carers Service

- Sign the Young Carers Covenant for East Lothian Council to further demonstrate commitment to Young Carers and meeting their needs.
- With the DHT for Equity & Inclusion, implement 'Carefest' week in October 2025. All participants should note positive impact from participating.

Specialist Provision Estate

- To continue to develop the estate to meet the needs of learners identified through the Education Resource Group.
- To undertake Child Protection and Safeguarding audit visits with all provisions to ensure consistency of best practice.

Quality Assurance for Care Experienced Designated Members of Staff

- Launch East Lothian Council’s Care Experienced Self-Evaluation Toolkit. Trial this with a minimum of five schools all of which to report positive impact for processes, supports and outcomes for children and young people with care experience.

Supporting Neuroaffirming Practice

- Review and revise the current web-based information and resources using the ND Steering Group framework as a point of reference.
- Deliver and evaluate the new CLPL ND training offer with a view to widening the offer to other staff cohorts.

MHWBS – Supports for CYP and Families

- Ongoing review and evaluation of the current services including the addition of a pre-school version of the online webinars for parent and carers which will be rolled out in 2025-26.
- Piloting the ‘Body Works’ programme within our secondary settings.

Whole Family Well-being

- Integrate FTEL and WFWF supports into Belonging to East Lothian.

All schools should progress their journey with Rights Respecting Schools, with a minimum expectation of achieving Bronze by March 2025

Undertake a review of service wide policies to ensure UNCRC principles are considered and included as key drivers:

- ensuring compliance with Included, Engaged, Involved suite of policies to ensure all children and young people are safe, supported and included
- ensuring policies are equitable, consistent, lean, coordinated, co-designed with relevant partners, and learner centred

3-year plan for development of UNCRC will be developed

Evaluation of Progress

All East Lothian Schools are on the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) framework. East Lothian schools have made progress in incorporating the UNCRC into school leadership, curriculum and learning using the UNICEF RRSA programme. During the course of 24-25 21 schools have gained a RRSA accreditation award with 4 schools achieving Bronze or Bronze Re-accreditation, 12 schools achieving Silver and 4 schools achieving Gold. This progress has led to 26% of East Lothian schools awarded Bronze Award accreditation, 56% Silver Award accreditation and 18% Gold Award accreditation. This work has been supported by the development of online resources to support schools.

Through the annual Student Experience Evaluation 85.5% of learners reported that they had learned about their rights under the UNCRC presenting a 4.1 percentage point increase on 2023-2024. Learners reported this was strongest in primary, with P7 learners reporting 94.7% a positive and 79.9% across S2 & S4 combined. Although a majority of learners (56.3%) reported they were involved in their school's Rights Respecting School Award work, further work is required to ensure an increased proportion of learners are actively engaged. S2 & S4 learners reported a 3.9 percentage point increase on 2023-2024 leading to 43.1% reporting involvement and P7 learners reported an increase of 4 percentage points on 2023-2024 leading to 78.3% of learners reporting a positive response. Whilst this likely reflects the different learning context of the primary and secondary schools, this is also reflective of the proportionate progress made by primary schools in developing the UNCRC within the curriculum.

Learner focus groups form a key component of all school reviews. In most of school reviews the Rights Respecting Schools Award was identified as a feature of good practice and there was clear evidence of learners' knowledge of the UNCRC. Most learners responding to review surveys reported their school helps them understand and respect other people and a majority learners reported a positive response when asked if their school takes their view into account. Reviews also highlighted rights in evidence in classroom practice in most schools. A strong culture of rights and learner voice used to inform curriculum planning and approaches to learning were highlighted in reports.

The target to have all schools at Bronze level by March 2025 has now been achieved level.

To date, the progress of schools is:

- No schools unregistered or just at registration stage
- 10 schools Bronze- 26%
- 22 schools Silver- 57%
- 7 schools Gold - 18%
- 74% of East Lothian schools at Silver and Gold. At the end of the funding period from Scottish Government (March 2025) roughly 42% of Scottish schools were at Silver or above
- Every school has a named RRSA/ UNCRC lead or leads.
- Comments were gathered from children and young people. These included:
 - *"I like how we learn about our rights and it means that the teachers listen to us and it makes the school feel kind."*

- *“I feel listened to and I see small, continual changes happening because of my ideas.”*
- *“Our school is inclusive. We get to be independent and learn about things we want to.”*
- A class teacher said:
- *“There is a sense of security across the school. The UNCRC has a universality- everyone can relate to it. It feels equal across younger and older children. We want children to come into our school and feel happy safe and secure and the bedrock to this is rights. It is across all cohorts of children and staff. We are currently trying to extend that sense and ethos to parents and visitors.”*

Pupil Consultation Group – Uniform Guidance

- A group of young people from each secondary school was formed to create new school uniform guidance in response to guidance from the Scottish Government. This was presented to Education & Children’s Services Committee in June 2025.
- The young people’s views about being part of this group were gathered. They stated:
- 71% felt confident/ very confident about how able they were to make a difference.
- 83% felt confident/ very confident about what to do to make changes in their local community.
- 88% felt confident/ very confident about their rights.
- 92% felt confident/ very confident that adults would listen to them.
- 96% felt confident/ very confident about what to do to make changes in their school.
- The pupils said of the time they spent in the Consultation Group:
- *“I liked seeing other people’s points of view represented from other schools.”*
- *“The best parts of the group have been meeting others from different schools and finding out they have similar issues to us. Another part was meeting the primary school children and getting everyone’s voices heard.”*
- *“I loved getting the opportunity for your voice to be heard, and the opportunity to make a difference.”*
- *“We got to lead the primary school children and get them to share their views like how we shared our views... the adults listened to us.”*

Included, Engaged and Involved Policy Suite

In light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) becoming part of Scots law through the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, key policies are being reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with the new legal framework. This reflects our commitment to upholding children's rights.

- Each policy update demonstrates:
- Clear alignment to specific UNCRC articles
- Increased emphasis of the importance of meaningful collaboration with children and young people.
- Updates also aim to reflect best practice across the local authority and reinforce our commitment to promoting, protecting, and fulfilling children's rights in all aspects of service delivery. By embedding a rights-based approach, we aim to create consistent, child-centred policies that uphold the dignity and wellbeing of every child.

Next Steps

Rights Respecting School

- Review of Rights Respecting Schools and the UNCRC principles within schools
- Revise 3 year plan for development of UNCRC

Gender Statement

Included, Engaged and Involved Policy Suite *

- To publish refreshed policies on Child Protection & Safeguarding, Additional Support for Learning, Attendance, Respect: Anti-Bullying and Relationships.
- To deliver 23 'in a nutshell' sessions to school staff at all levels to support understand and application of these policies. All attendees to report improved confidence in their application and supporting learners.

Review and develop the professional learning offer to continue to develop a trauma informed and skilled workforce, able to adapt to emerging needs.

- The creation and delivery of a CLPL Trauma Programme for primary and secondary teachers
- Trauma / Regulation training for other professional groups
- Conduct a school staff survey to provide a needs analysis for Suicide Prevention to generate data and a related action plan

Evaluation of Progress

CLPL Trauma Programme for Primary and Secondary Teachers

- The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) & Project Manager for Person Centred/Trauma Informed created and delivered a ‘*Stress, Regulation & Trauma*’ training programme for primary and secondary teachers aimed to develop participants’ skills, knowledge and practice. The programme comprised 5 x 2.5 hours sessions across the school year, using an implementation framework to enable assessment of participants’ readiness and ability to plan and deliver within their school context.
- 16 teachers enrolled in the programme.
- Pre and post measures showed that participant’s self-rating of their knowledge and understanding of the topic increased from a mean of 5.7 to a mean of 7.8 on 10-point scale.
- Data from the final session showed:
 - Most participants reported that the course ‘very much’ deepened their understanding of stress
 - Most reported being more confident in recognising the signs of stress/ trauma
 - All reported being more knowledgeable about how to support children/ young people impacted by stress/ trauma
- Qualitative feedback on the most useful aspects of the programme:
“Book was excellent. Sharing ideas. Signposting resources.”
“Strategies to use with children. Specific questions to ask to reflect on what could be done. Opportunity to discuss with colleagues.”
“I found the last session helpful as it helps me to see what the next part is and how to move forward in implementation at school.”
- Examples of actions implemented or planned as a result of the programme:
 - One school focussing on regulation, using movement breaks and the development of a pack to support the development of regulated classrooms with the aim of creating more consistency across the whole school. 4 x CAT sessions for the whole school staff planned for next session.
 - Another school focussed on staff wellbeing to in turn support regulation within school through setting up a dedicated wellbeing space, including a staff library. They plan to provide related training sessions for support staff next session.

Online learnPro Modules

Education Staff have access to a suite of non-mandatory online modules designed to build an understanding of the key principles and subsequently support the skill development of trauma informed and responsive practice:

- Introduction to Understanding Trauma Informed Practice
- Trauma Skilled (4 modules from the National Trauma Transformation Programme)

Module	Numbers Completed
Introduction to Trauma Informed Practice (ELC)	71 (37 primary, 28 secondary & 6 central/peripatetic)
Trauma Skilled	8 (2 primary & 6 secondary)
Total	79

Mental Health and Wellbeing Service (MHWBS) – Suicide Prevention

- A survey issued to schools in October 2024, for all staff (teaching and support staff) was designed to gather local information on the presenting context and staff needs. There were 133 responses from both primary and secondary school staff. The results highlighted the mental health challenges faced by CYP and the experiences of the staff supporting them. It clearly identified the need for training to support the acquisition of further knowledge, skills and confidence building. This was subsequently offered and delivered across the year.

Training offered was on 2 levels:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

A comprehensive 2-day course. 2 courses were provided. 32 staff completed the training (20 education staff and 12 staff from partner agencies.)

- Most participants gave the training the maximum rating score.
- Almost all said they would recommend the training to others.
- All participants reported the training had helpful practical application.
- Participants provided the following feedback:
 - *An utterly fantastic CPD that could literally contribute to saving lives.*
 - *I support young people who have shared thoughts of suicide in my role. However, until now, I have not had a clear idea of how to do this in a clear, confident manner. I now feel that I have a framework to use, vocabulary to use and advice about how to capitalise on glimmers of hope they may share.*
 - *I found this to be one of the best trainings I have attended. I found it extremely helpful to have a workable guide to help me through the different stages. I feel confident to use this in both my professional and personal life.*
 - *This was an absolutely fantastic workshop and one of the best CPD's I have ever attended. Not only has it expanded my knowledge, but it has also given me confidence and practical ways forward to use not only professionally, but personally as well.*

- Crisis Handling Awareness Training (CHAT)

A 3.5 hrs training course. 4 courses were offered. 37 education staff completed the training.

- Almost all staff providing feedback rated the course content positively.
- Participants provided the following feedback on what they valued:
 - *I enjoyed the vibe of the course and the ability to chat with others in the breakout rooms. I liked the fact that given the emotive subject there was someone on hand for any attendees to leave in the knowledge that they would receive a check in from a fully trained professional.*
 - *It was practical with good strategies that can be used in the moment.*
 - *The information was clear and concise and is easy to follow through with in practise.*
 - *I felt with the nature of the course that the facilitator was able to talk to the group in a way that was helpful and approachable*
 - *The discussion with colleagues and receiving the slides and resources so that you can go back to them once you have had time to process the content.*

- **Equity & Inclusion Service - Career Long & Professional Learning (CLPL) Offer**

CLPL sessions delivered to support, teaching and promoted staff throughout the year. Of the staff who attended:

- *Almost all staff agreed / strongly agreed that content was useful and supportive of their development in their current role.*
- *Almost all staff agreed/ strongly agreed that the content would be beneficial to them in working with and supporting children and young people.*

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Return**

All schools completed and submitted a Child Protection and Safeguarding return.

This was noted as excellent practice in the local authority Thematic Inspection by education Scotland.

All schools received feedback and next steps on their return to ensure continuous improvement with almost all, 89%, of schools participating in a child protection and safeguarding audit visit by the Equity and Inclusion service.

- **Equity & Inclusion, Education Outreach Service**

The Educational Psychology Service delivered a series of CLPL sessions to the Outreach Officers.

The Officers have also participated in a professional reading cycle on Trauma Informed Practice and the service has developed a Trauma Informed Roadmap.

As a result of these sessions all officers reported increased confidence in responding to the needs of pupils in a trauma informed way. The evidence referenced above also attests to the impact of this.

Next Steps

CLPL: Trauma, Stress and Regulation

- To use the data, evaluative measures and feedback from 2024-25 to shape the offer for 25-26.

MHWBS – Suicide Prevention

- To explore potential baseline training levels for schools and options for a rolling programme of suicide prevention training for staff.
- Extend the current online bereavement resources to include a 'Suicide Prevention' section with a related roll-out event for schools.

Equity & Inclusion Service - Career Long & Professional Learning (CLPL) Offer

- See * above.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Return

- To develop a bespoke audit visit template for specialist provisions. To use this across all provisions to highlight good practice and the identification of clear next steps.

PRIORITY 3

3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

In 24/25 we aimed to:

Implement the Raising Attainment Strategy with a key focus the stretch aims.

Strengthen approaches to tracking and monitoring attainment, achievement, attendance and exclusion of targeted groups to be able to demonstrate impact of targeted interventions.

Focus on children and young people:

- who are most affected by poverty
- who are care experienced
- with additional support needs

Evaluation of Progress

Tracking and Monitoring

- Equity & Inclusion trackers are now embedded in approaches to tracking and monitoring all children and young people and particularly those impacted by poverty, care experience and with additional support needs. Education Support Officers meet with their link schools on a regular basis to provide support and challenge.

Depute Head Teacher for Equity and Inclusion

- The remit of the DHT for Equity and Inclusion has been strengthened to include strategic lead for children and young people with care experience. The DHT has regular meetings with schools which includes the Principal Teacher of Equity to maximise on supports available through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. These meetings allow for the early identification of children and young people with care experience who are off track with their learning or need additional support.
- The Outreach service recruited a further two outreach workers during session 2024/25 to provide expedited support directly to these learners.

Exclusions

- Indicative exclusion data for 2024/25 indicates that exclusions have reduced for all children and young people with the most significant decrease for children and young people living in quintile 1.
- The stretch aims to reduce the gap in exclusions for children and young people living in quintiles 1 and 2 has been exceeded, based on indicative data.

Attendance

- Indicative data indicates that the total attendance for East Lothian schools exceeded the stretch aim for the year.
- This data also indicates that closing the attendance gap for learners with care experience exceeded the stretch aim and is the lowest it has been in five years.

- Creation of an 'Attendance' section for schools on EduHub containing research, supports and resources for professionals, parents/carers and young people. <https://sites.google.com/edubuzz.org/eastlothianeduhub/enabling-learning/attendance>

Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Internal Audit

- Approaches to SAC were audited and a report presented to Audit and Governance Committee in June 2025. The report provided substantial assurance in the areas of: policies and processes for administering SAC, performance reporting on the impact of SAC and the governance framework for the effective monitoring of the funding.

Next Steps

- Achievement of stretch aims in the Raising Attainment Strategy for 2025/26.
- Further work with secondary schools to support the application of evidence-based approaches and implementation methodologies to support the raising of attainment.

Work closely across services and third sector partners to reduce the cost of the school day and mitigate the impact of child poverty.

Evaluation of Progress

Cost of the School Day Working Group

- A working group was established in 24/25. As result an East Lothian 'Cost of the School Day' accreditation has been devised to be shared with all schools in session 2025/26.

Next Steps

Cost of the School Day Accreditation

- To launch the accreditation and have a minimum of 50% of schools engaging with it in session 2025/26.

Key Priorities of the National Improvement Framework

The National Improvement Framework (NIF) sets out the vision and priorities for Scottish education that have been agreed across the system, and the national improvement activity that needs to be undertaken to help deliver those key priorities and can then be used to support and inform improvement planning at regional, local authority and establishment level. This year, the NIF has been informed by the challenges for the whole education system in dealing with the health, social, and educational impacts of COVID-19.

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

The drivers of improvement in the outcomes achieved by children and young people through education are:

- School and ELC leadership
- Teacher and practitioner professionalism
- Parent/carer involvement and engagement
- Curriculum and assessment
- School and ELC improvement
- Performance information

The improvement priorities below reflect these national drivers, along with the requirements of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress and local priorities arising from robust self-evaluation.

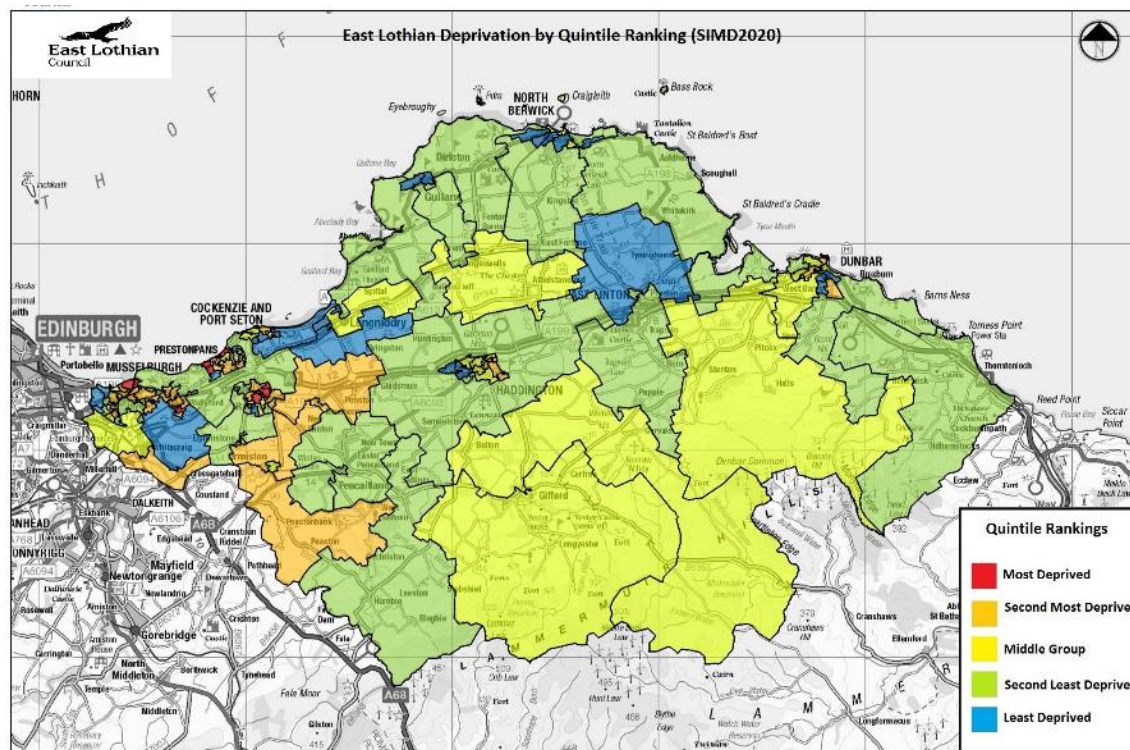
Closing the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap in East Lothian

East Lothian is made up of one hundred and thirty-two data zones across six wards. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 showed that eight of these data zones fall within the most deprived (quintile) 20% of areas in the whole of Scotland.

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

The [East Lothian Council Plan 2022-2027](#) | [East Lothian Council](#) is based around three overarching objectives adapted in response to the three fundamental challenges we face, and this Education plan is reflective of these objectives.

- **Ensure the financial sustainability of the Council through the delivery of approved savings and transforming the way we deliver services.**
- **Target resources on statutory services and focus on the highest risks and those most in need.**
- **Deliver key infrastructure, economic development and environmentally sustainable projects within available council resources and maximising external funding.**



The percentage of children and young people aged 0- 15 in low-income households after housing costs (one of the key indicators of child poverty) decreased from **24.5%** (or 4,808) in 2019/20 to **18.9%** (or 3,640) in 2020/21 (from 22.7% or 4,392 in 2018/19).

The percentage of children and young people aged 0- 15 in low-income households after housing costs (one of the key indicators of child poverty) increased to **21%** in 2021/22 from **18.9%** in 2020/21. This is below the Scottish average of 24% but shows the significant impact of the cost of living crisis on family incomes.

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

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

- recognise the impact that poverty can have on the wellbeing, attainment and achievement of children and young people and are **rigorous in our approaches to mitigate this**.
- are ambitious for all of our children and young people and it is our collective endeavour to **maximise on their school experiences and opportunities**.
- use **robust tracking and monitoring procedures** to allow for the early identification of children and young people who are at risk of underachieving and put appropriate interventions in place.
- **work collegiately** and with partners to provide support and help for children and young people where required.
- recognise the **positive impact that gaining qualifications and achievements** has on the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people and seek to maximise on these opportunities.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge Refresh

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Refresh builds on the evidence of key publications including: the Scottish Government and Education Scotland's five-year report on progress toward closing the poverty related attainment gap; the Equity Audit, the Audit Scotland Report on educational outcomes and the OECD review.

This supports East Lothian Council to accelerate progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

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

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

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

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

Underpinned by The Promise <https://thepromise.scot/change-programme-one-pdf.pdf>, the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund is a targeted resource provided to local authorities to support care experienced children and young people from birth to the age of 26. The funding is provided to local authorities and aims to improve the educational outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

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

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

To provide consistency of tracking and monitoring, stretch aims for the attainment and attendance of care experienced children and young people have been set for session 25/26. These can be seen in Appendix 2.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure the financial sustainability of the Council through the delivery of approved savings and transforming the way we deliver services.</i> • <i>Target resources on statutory services and focus on the highest risks and those most in need.</i> • <i>Deliver key infrastructure, economic development and environmentally sustainable projects within available council resources and maximising external funding.</i> 		
2.2 Curriculum 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement
<p>Strengthen, align and raise awareness of 3-18 strategies to ensure articulation and a strong focus on raising attainment and quality learning and teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising Attainment Strategy • Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy • Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy • Literacy Strategy • Numeracy Strategy <p>See each strategy here: East Lothian EduHub - Enabling Learning (google.com)</p> <p>Develop a 3-18 Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>*Implement the updated Health and Wellbeing Curriculum (secondary focus)</p> <p>Updated HWB resources can be found here: East Lothian EduHub - Health and Wellbeing (google.com)</p>	<p>Through the Belonging to East Lothian initiative, develop an integrated Early Intervention Service to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide bespoke supports for children and young people at risk of disengagement from Education, to ensure our children and young people get the support they need, when they need it, through the development of the Education Outreach Team • strengthen the Child Planning process and the work of the Locality Teams • rationalise referral routes and processes for early intervention services • Whole Family Wellbeing Funding: implement preventative whole family support measures (parent/carer engagement and family learning) 	<p>*Implement the Raising Attainment Strategy with a key focus the stretch aims.</p> <p>Strengthen approaches to tracking and monitoring attainment, achievement, attendance and exclusion of targeted groups to be able to demonstrate impact of targeted interventions.</p> <p>Focus on children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who are most affected by poverty • who are care experienced • with additional support needs <p>See Raising Attainment Strategy here: East Lothian EduHub - Enabling Learning (google.com)</p>
<p>*Implement the 3-18 Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy, ensuring every learner experiences high quality learning and teaching through a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data driven evidence • national expectations • research-based pedagogical practice <p>*Across priorities for Session 2024/25, have a clear focus on improving the delivery of the BGE, particularly in S1-3 through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high quality learning experiences • transition in learning • robust tracking and monitoring of S1- S3 attainment data • personal support <p>Pedagogy supports can be found here: East Lothian EduHub - Pedagogy (google.com)</p>	<p>*All schools should progress their journey with Rights Respecting Schools, with a minimum expectation of achieving Bronze by March 2025</p> <p>RRSA information can be found here: East Lothian EduHub - UNCRC and Rights Respecting Schools Award (google.com)</p> <p>Undertake a review of service wide policies to ensure UNCRC principles are considered and included as key drivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring compliance with Included, Engaged, Involved suite of policies to ensure all children and young people are safe, supported and included • ensuring policies are equitable, consistent, lean, coordinated, co-designed with relevant partners, and learner centred <p>3 year plan for development of UNCRC will be developed</p>	<p>Work closely across services and third sector partners to reduce the cost of the school day and mitigate the impact of child poverty.</p> <p>See East Lothian Council's Poverty Strategy here: ELC East Lothian Poverty Plan 2021_2023.pdf</p> <p>See CPF-LT Guidance here: GIRFEC in East Lothian - Multi-agency Forums (google.com)</p>
<p>Engage with the recommendations of the Hayward Review</p>	<p>Review and develop the professional learning offer to continue to develop a trauma informed and skilled workforce, able to adapt to emerging needs.</p>	

East Lothian Education Priorities Session 2025/26 – Year 2 of 3 Year Plan

Priority 1

2.2 Curriculum

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Back to Basics- a Relentless Focus on Equity and Excellence

High Level Actions	Lead Person Timescale	Baseline Measures	Expected impact and measurable outcomes for learners
<p>Strengthen, align and raise awareness of 3-18 strategies to ensure articulation and a strong focus on raising attainment and quality learning and teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Strategy Year 3 2025-26 • Raising Attainment Strategy • Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy • Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy • Numeracy Strategy 	<p>KH NT AS AC DR</p> <p>September 2025 – May 2026</p>	<p><u>Literacy Strategy:</u> Measure: % of East Lothian Schools report ACEL ‘on track’ progress at 70% of learners or better for P1-4-7-S3 Literacy Baseline June 2023– 52 % (22 schools out of 42) Baseline June 2024 – 67% (29 schools out of 43) Baseline June 2025 – 66% (27 schools out of 41)</p> <p>Measure: % of East Lothian Schools report ACEL ‘on track’ progress at 80% of learners or better for P1-4-7-S3 Literacy Baseline June 2023– 21 % - 9 schools out of 42) Baseline June 2024 – 33%- 14 schools out of 43) Baseline June 2025 – 44% (18 schools out of 41)</p> <p>National Improving Writing Programme – Baseline Measures: June 2024: 68 NIWP trained teachers in 45.5% of East Lothian primary schools.</p>	<p><u>Literacy Strategy:</u> By June 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For P1-4-7 ACEL Literacy, ensure 69% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL ‘on track’ progress at 70% of learners or better (28 out of 34 primary schools) • For S3 Literacy ACEL (Third Level), ensure 85% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 70% of learners or better. • For P1-4-7 Literacy ensure 50% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 80% of learners or better achieved (17 out of 34 primary schools) • For S3 Literacy ACEL (Third Level), ensure 71% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 80% of learners or better. <p>National Improving Writing Programme – By June 2026: Ensure there are 180 NIWP trained teachers across 79% of primary schools (27 out of 34 primary schools) or better.</p>

		<p>June 2025: 136 NIWP trained teachers in 71% of East Lothian primary schools.</p> <p>Measure: First Level Writing at P4 for NIWP schools</p> <p>Cohort 1 and 2 schools: June 2022: 56% of P4 learners June 2023: 66% of P4 learners June 2024: 65% of P4 learners June 2025: 71% of P4 learners</p> <p>Cohort 3 and 4 schools: June 2023: 72% of P4 learners June 2024: 75% of P4 learners June 2025: 80% of P4 learners</p> <p>Cohort 5 and 6 schools: June 2024: 77% of P4 learners June 2025: 79% of P4 learners</p> <p>Cohort 7 schools: June 2025: 74% of P4 learners</p> <p>ALL NIWP Schools: June 2025: 75% of P4 learners</p> <p>All Non-NIWP Schools June 2025: 81% of P4 learners</p> <p>Across all primary schools attainment of First level Writing improved: June 2022: 62% of P4 learners June 2023: 69% of P4 learners June 2024: 69% of P4 learners June 2025: 75% of P4 learners</p> <p>Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy</p>	<p>Stretch aim of a 3% improvement or better in June 2026 in the achievement of First Level Writing at P4 stage across all NIWP schools (75% to 78% of P4 learners across Cohort 1-7 schools).</p>
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	<p>Baseline June 2024 – 12% of schools Curriculum Rationale ‘fully realised’ Baseline June 2025 -</p> <p>Early Years: Literacy and Numeracy Tracking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress & Achievement (P&A) for 3-5 years available to all settings. • Baseline June 2025 ELCC ‘on track’ attainment data from pilot setting • N4 Literacy and English – 62% N5 Literacy and English – 64% • N4 Numeracy – 61% N5 Numeracy – 71% • In the four settings, all children have a record of P&A attainment in place. • In the four settings, Early Years staff are tracking Literacy and Numeracy to establish ACEL data baseline. <p>Numeracy Strategy: <u>Primary Schools:</u> Measure 1: % of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 70% of learners or better for P1-4-7 Numeracy Baseline June 2024 – 67% (24 schools out of 36) Baseline June 2025 – 88% (30 schools out of 34)</p> <p>Measure 2: % of East Lothian Schools track ACEL progress at 80% of learners or better achieved for P1-4-7 Numeracy Baseline June 2024 – 39% (14 schools out of 36) Baseline June 2025 – 56% (19 schools out of 34)</p>	<p>90% of schools (37) will have a fully realised curriculum rationale by June 2026</p> <p>Early Years: Literacy and Numeracy Tracking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELCC Stretch aim for 25/26 • Literacy – 74.6% on track • Numeracy –82.4% on track • The majority of ELCC settings will have a record of P&A attainment in place for Early Level. In these settings, all Early Years staff will track Literacy and Numeracy to establish 'on track' data baseline. • In each setting, SLT will hold accurate data around Early Level attainment supported by moderation of professional judgement by EYPs and teachers. <p>Numeracy Strategy: <u>Primary Schools:</u> Measure 1: For P1-4-7 Numeracy ensure 79% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL ‘on track’ progress at 70% of learners or better achieved (27 out of 34 primary schools)</p> <p>Measure 2: For P1-4-7 Numeracy ensure 47% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 80% of learners or better achieved (16 out of 34 primary schools)</p>
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		<p><u>Secondary Schools:</u> Measure 1: % of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 70% of learners or better for S3 Numeracy Baseline June 2024 – 86% (6 schools out of 7) Baseline June 2025 – 86% (6 schools out of 7)</p> <p>Measure 2: % of East Lothian Schools track ACEL progress at 80% of learners or better achieved for S3 Numeracy Baseline June 2024 – 71% (5 schools out of 7) Baseline June 2025 – 71% (5 schools out of 7)</p>	<p><u>Secondary Schools:</u> Measure 1: For S3 Numeracy ACEL (Third Level), ensure 85% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 70% of learners or better achieved (6 schools out of 7)</p> <p>Measure 2: For S3 Numeracy ACEL (Third Level), ensure 71% or more of East Lothian Schools report ACEL progress at 80% of learners or better achieved (5 schools out of 7)</p>
<p>Implement the updated Health and Wellbeing Curriculum (secondary focus) Updated HWB resources can be found here: East Lothian EduHub – Health and Wellbeing (google.com)</p>	AS	<p>Baseline – 2023-2024 2 secondaries delivering Young Minds Matter recourse within PSE 2024-2025 - All secondaries delivering Young Minds Matter 2 school reviews identified HWB curriculum as positive examples of practice 2023/2024 - 75% positive responses to S2 & S4 SEE survey health and wellbeing curriculum questions 2024/2025 - 80% positive responses to S2 & S4 SEE survey health and wellbeing curriculum questions</p>	<p>All secondary and primary schools delivering the updated Health and Wellbeing curriculum framework (PSE) All secondary schools will engage with National MyWoW profiling tool to support Planning for Choices and Changes 84% or more positive responses to S2 & S4 SEE survey health and wellbeing curriculum questions</p> <p>Development of an East Lothian Health and Wellbeing Tracking Tool</p>
<p>Develop a 3-18 Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p>	AS	New priority	<p>Strategy is developed in collaboration with a range of practitioners, communicated to all schools and feedback requested. All secondary schools will meet the requirements of the Equally Safe Delivery Plan</p>
<p>Implement the 3-18 Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Strategy, ensuring every learner experiences high quality learning and teaching through a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> data driven evidence national expectations 	KH NT AC AS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62% of ELCC across Local Authority and PVI, CI (24/25) achieving 4 or above (How Good is Our Care, Play and Learning) HMIE The three ELCC settings inspected by Education Scotland in 2024 – 25 and were evaluated as Satisfactory or Good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of ELCC settings will be evaluated as GOOD or better against new Quality Framework in QIs related to Learning, Teaching and Assessment for CI and HMIE.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring policies are equitable, consistent, lean, coordinated, co-designed with relevant partners, and learner centred <p>3 year plan for development of UNCRC will be developed</p>			<p>consultation with , and evaluate of the impact of policy change upon children and young people. 3 year plan for UNCRC, including: UNCRC bedded within the curriculum Sustainable model for RRS Award within schools Pupil Voice & Leadership guidance and self-evaluation toolkit CONSIDERATION OF POLICY & SYSTEMS</p>
<p>Review and develop the professional learning offer to continue to develop a trauma informed and skilled workforce, able to adapt to emerging needs.</p>	<p>JB/SB AH</p>		

Priority 3

3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

Back to Basics- a Relentless Focus on Equity and Excellence

High Level Actions	Lead Person Timescale	2023-24 Baseline Measure	Expected impact and measurable outcomes for learners
<p>*Implement the Raising Attainment Strategy with a key focus the stretch aims.</p> <p>Strengthen approaches to tracking and monitoring attainment, achievement, attendance and exclusion of targeted groups to be able to demonstrate impact of targeted interventions.</p> <p>Focus on children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who are most affected by poverty • who are care experienced and accommodated • with additional support needs <p>See Raising Attainment Strategy here: East Lothian EduHub - Enabling Learning (google.com)</p>	<p>JB AH KH NT AS AC</p>	<p>SLDR 2022/23 cohort was 96.3% (0.7% increase on 2021/22)</p> <p>SLDR 2023/2024 cohort was 94.5 (-1.93 decrease on 2022-2023)</p> <p>Annual Participation Measure for 2023 was 96.1% (2.8% increase on 2022)</p> <p>Stretch Aim baselines to be confirmed with publication of data. Anticipated baseline in RA strategy:</p> <p>ACEL Literacy: All 68% Gap 20%</p> <p>ACEL Numeracy: All 76% Gap 21%</p> <p>1+@5 or more: All 87.7% Gap 29%</p> <p>1+@6 or more: All 65.5% Gap 49%</p> <p>Exclusion Rate: All 19.6 Gap 47.8</p> <p>ACEL (S3) Literacy: All 82% Gap 18%</p> <p>ACEL(S3) Numeracy: All 84% Gap 29%</p> <p>5+@1 or more: All 89.7% Gap 28%</p>	<p>2023-2024 APM stretch aim: 96.4%</p> <p>2024-2025 APM stretch aim: 96.6%</p> <p>96.6% Target</p> <p>ACEL Literacy: All 71% Gap 18%</p> <p>ACEL Numeracy: All 79% Gap 19%</p> <p>1+@5 or more: All 89% Gap 26.5%</p> <p>1+@6 or more: All 67.1% Gap 46.5%</p> <p>Exclusion Rate: All 18.9 Gap 45.1</p> <p>ACEL (S3) Literacy: All 84% Gap 16%</p> <p>ACEL(S3) Numeracy: All 86% Gap 27%</p> <p>5+@1 or more: All 91.3% Gap 26%</p>

		<p>5+@5 or more: All 58.3% Gap 47%</p> <p>1+@6 or more: All 60.1% Gap 51%</p> <p>Literacy L5: All 82.1% Gap 24%</p> <p>Numeracy L5: All 71.1% Gap 36%</p> <p>Attendance to be confirmed with publication of data. The figures based on the RA strategy assume:</p> <p>Primary 93.5%</p> <p>Secondary 87%</p> <p>Early Years: Literacy and Numeracy Tracking</p> <p>72% of children from the pilot school are in Q1 or Q2 with no children in Q5. Gap between LA stretch aim and setting now established.</p> <p>ELCC – Baseline June 2024 ELCC ‘on track’ attainment data from pilot setting</p> <p>Q1</p> <p>Literacy – 0%</p> <p>Numeracy – 25%</p> <p>Q2</p> <p>Literacy- 58%</p> <p>Numeracy – 54%</p>	<p>5+@5 or more: All 60% Gap 41.5%</p> <p>1+@6 or more: All 61.2% Gap 48.5%</p> <p>Literacy L5: All 83.6% Gap 21.5%</p> <p>Numeracy L5: All 72.9% Gap 32.5%</p> <p>Primary 93.9%</p> <p>Secondary 88%</p> <p>Achievement of Early Level by end of P1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2022-23: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literacy: -100% point gap (Q5 performed better than Q1) ▪ Numeracy: 0% point gap (All Q1 and Q5 pupils achieved Early Level) ▪ 2023-24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literacy: +67% point gap (Q1 performed better than Q5) ▪ Numeracy: 0% point gap (All Q1 and Q5 pupils achieved Early Level) ▪ The gap between Q1 and the LA stretch aims 23/24 for Literacy is -55% and for Numeracy is -36%. ▪ 24/25 ▪ Stretch Aims for Q1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy – 59% Numeracy – 65%
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			<p>Early Years: Literacy and Numeracy Tracking</p> <p>4 ELCC settings will have baseline PRAG data by June 2025</p>
<p>Work closely across services and third sector partners to reduce the cost of the school day and mitigate the impact of child poverty.</p> <p>See East Lothian Council's Poverty Plan here:</p> <p>ELC East Lothian Poverty Plan 2021_2023.pdf</p> <p>See CPF-LT Guidance here:</p> <p>GIRFEC in East Lothian - Multi-agency Forums (google.com)</p>	<p>JB/CI</p>	<p>Update baseline and expected impact</p> <p>No baseline, new priority.</p>	<p>A new East Lothian Council Cost of the School Day Award will be created based on nationally identified good practice. 75% of schools will achieve this in session 24/25.</p>

Glossary

ACEL	A Curriculum for Excellence Level	NIF	National Improvement Framework
ADES	Association of Directors of Education Scotland	NPA	National Progression Award
ASG	Associated Schools Group	NWIP	National Writing Improvement Programme
ASL	Additional Support for Learning	PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
BGE	Broad General Education	PRAG	Poverty Related Attainment Gap
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	PSE	Personal and Social Education
CECYP	Care Experienced Children and Young People	QAMSO	Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence	QIO	Quality Improvement Officer
CLPL	Career Long Professional Learning	RFA	Request for Assistance (from Educational Psychology)
CPF-LT	Child's Planning Framework Locality Teams	RRSA	Rights Respecting School Award
CRIA	Children's Rights Impact Assessment	RSHP	Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce	SCOT	Strategic Curriculum Oversight Team
EAL	English as an Additional Language	SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
ELCC	Early Learning and Childcare	SEE	Student Engagement Evaluation Survey
ELW	East Lothian Works	SEF	Strategic Equity Fund
EPS	Educational Psychology Service	SEIC	South East Improvement Collaborative
ESO	Education Support Officer	SIP	School Improvement Plan
GIRFEC	Getting it Right for Every Child	SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
HGIOURS	How Good is OUR School?	SPA	Single Point of Access
HWB	Health and Wellbeing	SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
IMS	Instrumental Music Service	SQR	Standards and Quality Report
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender	STG	School Team Group
LIAM	Let's Introduce Anxiety Management	ToC	Test of Change
MHYW	Mental Health Youth Worker	UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Appendix 1

Background Information: Our service and teams

East Lothian Council's Education Service has the following responsibilities:

- Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment
- Early Learning and Childcare
- Education Management and Review
- Quality Improvement and Service Planning
- Schools Services Support
- Instrumental Music Service
- Physical Activity and Outdoor Learning
- Additional Support Needs and Education Psychology Services
- East Lothian Works

Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivers the statutory duty to provide ELCC to eligible 2 year olds and children from the term after their third birthday. In East Lothian this can be provided in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 32 early learning and childcare settings within primary schools• 2 Tots and Teens/early learning & childcare provision within secondary schools• 48 funded providers (12 private nurseries, 35 childminders and 1 community group)
School Years	Delivers the statutory duty to provide primary and secondary education through provision in 34 primary schools (2 opened August 2025 and 2 mothballed) and 7 secondary schools.

Additional Support Needs	<p>Delivers the statutory duty to ensure additional support needs are met through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusive practices and support in all schools; • specialist provision in 3 mainstream primary schools and 3 mainstream secondary schools; and • specialist professionals supporting children and young people who require additional support.
Quality Improvement Team	<p>Delivers the following services to fulfil the duties set out in statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support and challenge of schools to improve the quality of education; • support for quality assurance and self-evaluation; • support for the development of the curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment; • liaison with national and local organisations and bodies; and • development of local policy, including policy informed by National Policy, relating to education.
Educational Psychology Service (EPS)	<p>The EPS service delivers the following service making use of sound research evidence to support teaching, learning and the overall wellbeing for children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultation • assessment • intervention • training • research
<u>Instrumental Music Service (IMS)</u>	<p>The IMS deliver free high quality instrumental music tuition in 7 secondary schools and 33 primary schools. A team of 23 instructors deliver weekly lessons, support SQA learning and offer a broad range of ensemble and performance opportunities. String tuition may start at Primary 5 and percussion at Secondary 1. All other tuition is offered from Primary 6 onwards. In 23/24, 1719 young musicians received instrumental music lessons through the service.</p>

<p>Education Strategy and Operations Team</p>	<p>Delivers the following services, including those required to fulfil duties set out in statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic resource planning; • strategic planning and delivery of career long professional learning; • leadership development; • support for newly qualified teachers, student teachers and supply teachers; • recruitment of education service staff; • national and local policy relating to education; • support for the use of assistive technologies; • development of the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy; • support for financial stewardship in all schools; • the use of technology to enhance learning and teaching, online services and learning portals; • specialist physical education, music and drama provision; • school management information systems and processes; • data analysis and performance; • pupil placement and admissions; • school estate projection planning; • staffing allocations; • scheme of devolved school management; • support for parental involvement and engagement through promotion of school parent councils; • Improved employee relations through collaborative working with Trades Unions.
<p>East Lothian Works</p>	<p>East Lothian Works, East Lothian’s employability hub, brings together all employability-related services under the East Lothian <i>One Council Approach</i>. East Lothian Works is the central point of contact for employment advice, training and skills development, working in partnership with a number of external partners including Queen Margaret University, Napier University, The Edinburgh College, Skills Development Scotland and Job Centre Plus. Its main focus is an employability support and intervention service.</p>

Appendix 2

SEF Core Stretch Aims

	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels LITERACY P1,4,7			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	66	51	73	22
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	68	55	75	20
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	71	59	77	18
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	77	67	85	18
Improvement (%)	11	18	12	4

The Stretch Aims identified for ACEL literacy 25/26 were revised to reflect the progress made and to improve the alignment to the national comparator data for this measure by 25/26. Indicative data suggests that the overall stretch aim for 24/25 will be exceeded.

	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels NUMERACY P1,4,7			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	74	57	81	23
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	76	61	82	21
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	79	65	84	19
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	83	69	88	19
Improvement (%)	9	12	7	4

The Stretch Aims identified for ACEL numeracy 25/26 were revised to reflect the progress made and to improve the alignment to the national comparator data for this measure by 25/26. Indicative data suggests that the overall stretch aim for 24/25 will be exceeded. Indicative data suggests attainment for learners in quintile 1 & quintile 5 will exceed the 24/25 stretch aims.

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

The Stretch Aim identified for this measure will result in East Lothian Council being broadly in line with our Virtual Comparator by 25/26. Attainment at level 5 is a strong focus in each of our secondary schools and supported by our Principal Teachers of Equity.

	The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 (All Awards)			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	58.8	21.4	77.2	55.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	65.5	33	82	49
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	67.1	36	82.5	46.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	69	39	83	44
Improvement (%)	10.5	17.6	5.8	11.7

The Stretch Aim identified for this measure will result in East Lothian Council being broadly in line with our Virtual Comparator by 25/26.

	The proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, employment or training			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	96.1	91.5	98.9	7.4
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	94.4	91.9	99.1	7.1
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	96.6	92.2	99.1	6.9
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	95.7	94.7	98	3.3
Improvement (%)	-0.4	3.2	-0.9	4.1

The stretch aim for this measure was amended for 25/26. The overall and quintile 5 stretch aims were reduced following below target progress. Following strong progress the quintile 1 stretch aim was increased. This represents a significant reduction in the Q1-Q5 gap, if achieved.

	Overall School Exclusions			
	Overall levels rate	SIMD Quintile 1 rate	SIMD Quintile 5 rate	Gap (Q1-Q5) rate
Baseline	21.1	58.4	7.7	-50.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	20.3	55.5	7.7	-47.8
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	19.6	52.7	7.6	-45.1
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	18.9	47	7.5	-39.5
Improvement (per 1000 pupils)	2.1	8.3	0.2	-8.1

Data for 2023-24 shows that school exclusions increased overall to a rate of 22.6 per 1000 pupils, above last year's baseline rate of 21.1 and the stretch aim for 2023/24. The rate for the Q1 cohort (65.0 per 1000) and the Q5 cohort (11.2 per 1000) was also above the baseline and stretch aim with the gap between Q1 and Q5 increasing to 53.8 per 1000 pupils.

SEF Core Plus Stretch Aims

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

Indicative data suggests that the 24/25 stretch aims for both 84% for overall levels and the gap between learners in quintile 1 and 5 of 18% will be met.

	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels NUMERACY S3			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	84	60	91	31
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	84	63	92	29
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	86	66	93	27
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	88	79	94	15
Improvement (%)	4	9	3	6

Indicative data suggest that the 24/25 stretch aims for both quintile 1 of 66% and the gap between learners in quintile 1 and 5 of 27% will be exceeded.

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

The Stretch Aim identified for this measure will result in East Lothian Council being broadly in line with our Virtual Comparator by 25/26. Indicative data suggest that the 24/25 stretch aim for quintile 1 and the Q1-Q5 gap will be exceeded.

	The proportion of school leavers attaining 5 or more passes at SCQF level 5 (A-C)			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	53.3	17.9	73.1	55.2
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	58.3	29	76	47

Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	60	35	76.5	41.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	62	41	77	36
Improvement (%)	8.7	23.1	3.9	19.2

In line with the Audit Scotland Report *Improving Outcomes for Young People Through School Education* raising we wish to continue to track and monitor this outcome closely. This stretch aim will bring us in line with our Virtual Comparator by 25/26.

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

Although the core stretch aims measure this outcome for All Awards by 25/26, we wish to maintain tracking and monitoring of this stretch aim at A-C as a signal of our ambition for young people and to maintain consistency in SEF tracking from 22/23 to this new tracking period.

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

The attainment of Literacy at level 5 is a focus in each of our secondary schools and supported by the work of the Principal Teachers of Equity.

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

The attainment of Numeracy at level 5 is a focus in each of our secondary schools and supported by the work of the Principal Teachers of Equity.

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

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

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

Indicative data for 2024/ 25 suggests that primary school attendance overall is 93.9% and secondary school attendance is 90.2% overall.



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COMMITTEE:	Education & Children’s Services Committee
MEETING DATE:	18 November 2025
BY:	Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	Fostering in East Lothian
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To share the Fostering, Adoption and Kinship Care annual report 2024/2025 with the Education and Children’s Services Committee.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the dedication and resilience of East Lothian’s caring community, acknowledging the life changing difference they make to our children and young people.
- 2.2 Note the wide range of work undertaken by the fostering, adoption and kinship care workforce and their commitment to keep The Promise.
- 2.3 Note the Fostering, Adoption and Kinship Care annual report (Appendix 1)

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 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.

- 3.2 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 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.
- 3.3 In some families, long term risks of significant harm mean that permanent, alternative care is required for children. Assessing and recruiting adoptive families in East Lothian ensures we are able to match children with safe, loving and permanent homes when this is absolutely necessary.
- 3.4 Whether a child lives with kinship carers, foster carers or are adopted, it is crucial that all carers are robustly assessed to ensure they are the best people to provide the highest level of care. It is equally important that carers are then consistently supported to ensure that they remain able to adapt as the child's needs change as they get older.
- 3.5 The importance of having dedicated, skilled social workers who truly understand the complexities of caring for children who have experienced adversity and trauma is outlined throughout the report. During the year, the teams have been developing their practice in a range of areas including:
- The introduction of a dedicated play therapy service for children, supporting the exploration of their experiences in a trauma-informed, safe and nurturing environment.
 - A new child-centred approach to planning transitions for children.
 - The launch of the Parent Partner scheme to provide practical, relationship-based support for adoptive families with limited local support networks.
 - The pilot for a first concurrent adoption placement which can minimise the moves for a baby and offer greater stability from the start of a child's life.
- 3.6 Ensuring that children receive the highest standards of care in safe, loving families remains the absolute priority for children's services and this report provides an overview of the range of work that makes this possible.

Current Data

- 3.7 The annual report shows a range of data, and it is important to acknowledge that behind every statistic is real people, living real lives that for a range of reasons have required social work involvement. We share this data with sensitivity to illustrate the crucial work in this area.

3.8 It is positive to note that at this point there has not been a significant reduction in the number of East Lothian foster carers this calendar year despite six families terminating their registration in 2024/2025. There has been a steady increase in approvals and a positive increase of children who are being supported in local family placements. This is a result of the impact of the fostering fee increase in 2024 as well as a steady increase of enquiries because of consistent social media messaging. The team hope to build on this success and aim to hold a record number of preparation groups next year.

	Full time foster carers	Support care / short breaks foster carers	Number of children living with an East Lothian foster carer
October 2025	45 (plus four pending approval)	11	56
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

Foster care figures 2020-2025

3.9 The annual report outlines the work of the fostering, kinship care and adoption panels who sit throughout the year to provide essential governance to all legal processes surrounding the recruitment and review of the caring community. Panels consist of highly skilled and experienced practitioners and people with lived experience who give their time to ensure that children in East Lothian are well cared for. Children's Services are extremely grateful for panel member's commitment and are always happy to hear from people who are considering applying to sit on a local panel.

3.10 Particular highlights of the data include:

- The reduction in use of independent foster care agencies, allowing more children to remain close to their communities.
- Evidence that more siblings are being placed together when this is assessed as beneficial.
- An increase in kinship carers being approved at panel, demonstrating the commitment to keeping children within their extended families whenever this is possible.

Expanding our carer community

- 3.11 We welcome the continued support of elected members in promoting foster care and adoption recruitment, and we particularly appreciate social media posts being shared amongst relevant networks. We continue to try and keep pace with neighbouring Local Authorities and are aware that some have increased their own fostering fees in recent months.
- 3.12 The service continues to find it challenging to recruit foster carers who are interested in and 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.

Looking ahead

- 3.13 The dedicated services that support fostering, kinship care and adoption will continue to develop their approach in line with national policy and legislation and continuing to improve the way that feedback is used to shape service development and social work practice. The teams will continue to expand their digital recruitment strategy to enhance visibility and encourage engagement.
- 3.14 The caring community in East Lothian provides 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 supporting social work teams are a pivotal part of children's services, and we are grateful for the support of the Committee and Elected Members in supporting recruitment, acknowledging the complexity of work in this area and championing caring in East Lothian.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: None
- 5.2 Human Resources: None

5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None

5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken, and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

7.1 Adoption and Kinship Care annual report (Appendix 1).

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Adoption and Kinship Care annual report (Appendix 1)

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

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Date	28 October 2025

Head of Service Approval

Name	Lindsey Byrne
Designation	Head of Children's Services
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	yes
Approval Date	30 October 2025

FOSTERING ADOPTION & KINSHIP CARE

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2024 / March 2025



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Welcome

We are delighted to present this year's Fostering, Adoption, and Kinship Care Annual Report, celebrating the incredible dedication, compassion, and resilience of our team and wider caring community.

This year, Children's Services sustained safe, local and loving care while reducing reliance on external provision. We strengthened our in-house fostering and therapeutic capacity, scaled kinship support, and introduced innovations such as the concurrency pilot and the Parent Partner scheme. We evidenced performance improvement in areas including recruitment, placement stability and panel business, with a clear focus on trauma-informed, relationship-based practice.

Our service has continued to develop in response to the evolving needs of children, young people, and families across East Lothian.

This report highlights the collaborative efforts of our dedicated team, and the carers who play a vital role in providing stability and care. Together, this reflects a strong, coordinated approach to delivering high-quality support across fostering, adoption, and kinship services.

The Fostering Team

The fostering service is supported by a highly skilled and dedicated team of social workers and senior practitioners. Their collective experience, professionalism, and commitment to children and families continue to be the foundation of the service's success.

The fostering team continues to manage a diverse and demanding caseload, including foster carer recruitment, foster carer assessments, foster carer reviews, presentations to fostering panel, foster carer training and support, and leading the fostering duty service. The team offers a wealth of knowledge to the service, ensuring that every assessment, placement, and support intervention is delivered in a trauma informed manner, with care, insight, and a strong focus on positive outcomes.

Overview and trends

Over the past year, we have observed a continuation of key trends within fostering services. Notably, there has been a reduction in the number of new foster placements, as well as a decline in the use of independent agency placements. This shift aligns with the aspirations of *The Promise*, which prioritises supporting families to keep children safely within their own homes or extended family networks. The increased use of kinship care and a focus on early intervention are likely contributing factors to the reduced demand for foster placements.

We are pleased to report that, in nearly all cases, placements have been made using East Lothian's own foster carers. Only two independent agency placements were required, both involving children already placed with agency carers and moving to carers they had an existing relationship with. Minimising the use of external agencies helps maintain community connections and school placements, which are vital for stability and continuity.

Referrals for short break placements have remained consistent with previous years, as has the number of referrals later withdrawn due to changes in need. However, demand for residential placements has increased, and sourcing appropriate options continues to be a significant focus for the team.

There have been several positive developments worthy of note. In almost all cases, we successfully kept siblings together, and the number of placement moves (8) remains significantly lower than the peak of 20 in 2020. This improvement reflects better matching processes and the introduction of pre-placement planning meetings for all planned moves.

We have also seen a rise in referrals for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). Of the eight requests received, only one resulted in a foster placement, with two young people placed in residential care. Several referrals did not progress, either due to young people choosing not to come to Scotland or the lack of suitable placements. Recruiting carers for UASC remains a challenge, particularly given the limited information available at the point of referral, which makes it difficult for carers to assess suitability.

Fostering/Kinship/ Adoption Services	2024/2025 (FY)
Adoption placements achieved	3
Foster Care Placements achieved	12
Foster Care Placement Moves (carer– carer)	8
Emergency respite foster care achieved	0
Placed with External Foster Carers (out with East Lothian)	2
Carer holiday respite/carers emergency respite	62
Recurring respite (for a child in foster care)	2
Recurring respite (for a child living with family)	1
Outreach (family supported by a foster carer during daytime).	4
Residential Placements	18
Continuing Care/Young Adult placement	11
Resource requested not available	0
Resource requested not available (supervised contact)	0
Resource requested not available (childcare for kincarers)	0
Requests for placement/service withdrawn	66
Kinship Care Assessment/ Approval's	13
Stepparent /Non-Agency Adoptions	2
Post adoption support (new requests)	9

UASC referrals	8
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¹ 4 of which were short break placements

² Of 16 full-time and short break placements made only one sibling group was being placed separately

Fostering recruitment

Enquiries	Preparation Groups	Foster carer/Nominated carer approval
32	3	11

We have focused our recruitment methods on Facebook posts and a monthly drop-in as the primary methods of recruiting new foster carers. This stripped back approach only started in September 2024, but is already paying dividends, with a noticeable increase in enquiries citing social media as the reason for coming forward. Whilst we hope attendance at the drop-in continues to improve, other enquirers have mentioned having seen the drop-in advertised online, which again suggests that our improved online presence is making a difference.

More traditional methods are also proving beneficial, in particular, word of mouth. We have had several people contacting us who are foster carers with other Local Authorities or private agencies who, having spoken to our foster carers, have decided to transfer to East Lothian Council.

The increase in our foster carer fees in April 2024 has been a significant factor in encouraging foster carers to transfer from other agencies to ourselves. The increase in fees may also have encouraged people to consider fostering as an alternative to their current employment.

With this number of enquiries, we have been able to run three preparation groups in the last financial year. We have co-facilitated these groups with a neighbouring Local Authority.

Of course, not every enquiry results in a new foster carer. We were however able to approve eleven new foster carers and nominated carers (families known to and nominated by a foster carer to offer short break and outreach to children in their care) in the last financial year (see fostering panel information) and most of these carers already have placements. We also have four foster carer assessments started in this financial year, which will be completed later in 2025.

In terms of further marketing, we plan to extend our use of social media through other platforms which will come at no additional cost. We are also currently developing our own bespoke website for the fostering, adoption and kinship service, recognising that when this model has been adopted by other Local Authorities, this has generated an increase in enquiries. We remain keen to use lamppost wraps around the county, as this is a proven method of recruitment and used by a number of other local authorities.

We were also involved in the Scottish Government’s National Foster Carer recruitment campaign. Whilst at this point, there has been limited impact on increase of volume in recruitment enquiries, we give cognisance, along with our Scottish Government and other local authority colleagues, that we are still at an early stage in this process, and that a positive impact may still be realised from this campaign. The Scottish Government are currently considering repeating this national campaign, which we will be again participate in.

Adoption and Kinship Services Overview

As with the fostering service, the adoption and kinship service is delivered by a highly skilled and dedicated team of social workers and senior practitioners. Their collective experience, professionalism, and commitment to children and families continue to be the foundation of the service’s success.

The adoption and kinship team continues to manage a diverse and demanding caseload, including kinship assessments, adoption assessments, post-adoption support, and contributions to the fostering duty service. The team brings a wealth of knowledge to the service, ensuring that every assessment, placement, and support intervention is delivered with care, insight, and a strong focus on positive outcomes.

The growing volume of kinship assessments—14 completed in 2024–25 compared to 9 in the previous year—has placed significant pressure on the team, often requiring cross-team collaboration to manage workload effectively.

In addition to delivering core services, the team provides a range of ongoing supports to adoptive families. Regular bulletins are issued throughout the year, offering training updates, guidance, and practical resources tailored to the needs of adoptive parents. A variety of support groups are also facilitated, including:

- **Therapeutic-themed sessions**, offering a safe space for reflection, shared experiences, and emotional support.
- An **Under-5s group**, designed to support families in the early stages of adoption, with a focus on attachment, play, and early development.

These initiatives reflect our commitment to sustaining meaningful, responsive, and relationship-based support for adoptive families at every stage of their journey.

The team also delivers adoption preparation groups and undertakes step-parent adoption assessments, linking and matching, panel participation, concurrency planning, and pre-placement meetings. These areas have all shown steady growth in recent years. To reduce reliance on external agencies and enhance sustainability, the team is also expanding its internal therapeutic capacity, supporting complex assessments and interventions in collaboration with partners such as Children First, KCASS, and Adoption UK. This integrated approach reflects a commitment to delivering high-quality, trauma-informed support tailored to the needs of children and families.

Kinship care service

East Lothian Council is committed to keeping families together whenever possible, and we work to improve the long-term outcomes for all children. Kinship care is considered the first option when parents cannot provide the care that a child requires.

We work in partnership with other agencies to support kinship carers because we want to keep children safely together with their families wherever possible. We know that providing care can be challenging and exhausting and that we must scaffold our kinship families with support as much as possible.

The kinship care service has continued to grow over the past year, reflecting the increasing importance of kinship care within our wider support framework.

Kinship care support service

We continue to work in close partnership with Children First to deliver East Lothian's kinship support service. To ensure the service remains responsive and accessible, it is delivered through a co-designed, tiered model of support that adapts to the changing needs of children and families. This flexible approach allows for both self-directed and practitioner-led engagement, ensuring families receive the right level of support at the right time.

The model provides three levels of support: Level 1 offers information and signposting; Level 2 provides light-touch support and access to group sessions; and Level 3 delivers intensive, regular support for families with more complex needs. Group activities remain a core element of the service, with a range of geographically and thematically focused groups delivered throughout 2024–25—many of which were co-designed with kinship carers and children.

In addition to local support, all families are offered access to the Children First Financial Wellbeing Service, which provides advice on income maximisation, debt, and budgeting, as well as the Children First Support Line, a year-round digital helpline offering whole-family support. This integrated model ensures that kinship families receive holistic, accessible, and meaningful support.

Adoption Assessments and Family Matching

Recruiting and assessing adoptive families remains a vital part of our work, ensuring children from across the country, who are assessed as requiring permanent care, can be matched with safe, permanent, and loving homes. In 2024–25, we successfully approved three adoptive families and were also able to match four children with families. This reflects our continued commitment to finding the right families for children, regardless of geography, and highlights the national reach and impact of our adoption service.

Concurrency adoption pilot

This year, we were pleased to pilot our first concurrency adoption placement—a significant milestone for our service. In a concurrency placement, a baby is placed with prospective adopters at birth while parallel planning continues. This approach is designed to minimise the number of moves that a child experiences in early life, offering greater stability and continuity of care. Research shows that outcomes for babies in concurrency placements are significantly improved, particularly in terms of attachment and emotional development. We look forward to building on this pilot and exploring how concurrency can become a more established part of our adoption pathway.

Post-Adoption Support

Post-adoption support continues to be a vital and demanding aspect of our service, as we work alongside adoptive families navigating a range of complex and evolving needs. Over the past year, we have been exploring new and flexible approaches to enhance the support we offer. This includes the introduction of therapeutic services tailored to individual family circumstances, as well as trialling self-directed, funded support packages. These initiatives aim to ease pressure on families and promote positive, sustainable outcomes for both children and their caregivers.

Launching the Parent Partner scheme

This year, we were proud to launch East Lothian’s parent partner scheme, a new initiative designed to provide practical, relationship-based support to adoptive families who may be facing ongoing challenges with limited support networks. The scheme introduces *parent partners*—individuals who are either experienced adoptive parents or professionals working directly with children and young people, such as social workers, family support workers, or teachers.

Parent partners are trauma-informed and trauma-responsive, with a strong understanding of the complex experiences many adopted children have faced. After a short assessment process and registration under fostering regulations, parent partners are approved through

the adoption panel. They begin by building trust with the family and child, gradually progressing to offering short periods of respite, including day visits and, eventually, overnight stays.

This innovative model aims to reduce stress for adoptive families, promote stability, and improve outcomes for children by offering consistent, trusted support from someone who truly understands their journey.

Since launching the scheme, we have successfully recruited and matched our first parent partner with an adoptive family—an arrangement that has worked extremely well and demonstrated the value of this model in practice. Building on this success, we are now exploring the potential to extend the scheme to include kinship and foster carers. This development would allow more families to benefit from consistent, trauma-informed support, helping to reduce stress and promote stability for both carers and children.

Panels/Governance

Our permanence, adoption, and fostering panels play a vital role in ensuring robust decision-making and high standards of care. These panels manage complex and often life changing business and rely on highly skilled administrative support to ensure they are run efficiently and effectively.

Permanence/adoption panel

Our permanence panel members come from a variety of backgrounds currently including social work, adoptive parents, Children’s Panel and independent members.

Recommendations of appointment to the panel are made by the Panel Co-ordinator to the Agency Decision Maker, with panel chairs and members being supported by regular training and annual reviews.

The panel’s role is to ensure there are comprehensive assessments and review of permanent carer applications, matching arrangements and to consider permanent care plans for children. The panel makes recommendations which are passed to the Council’s Agency Decision Maker, who will ratify and endorse, or otherwise, the recommendations received from the panel. The Decision Maker is required to make a decision within 14 days of the panel date.

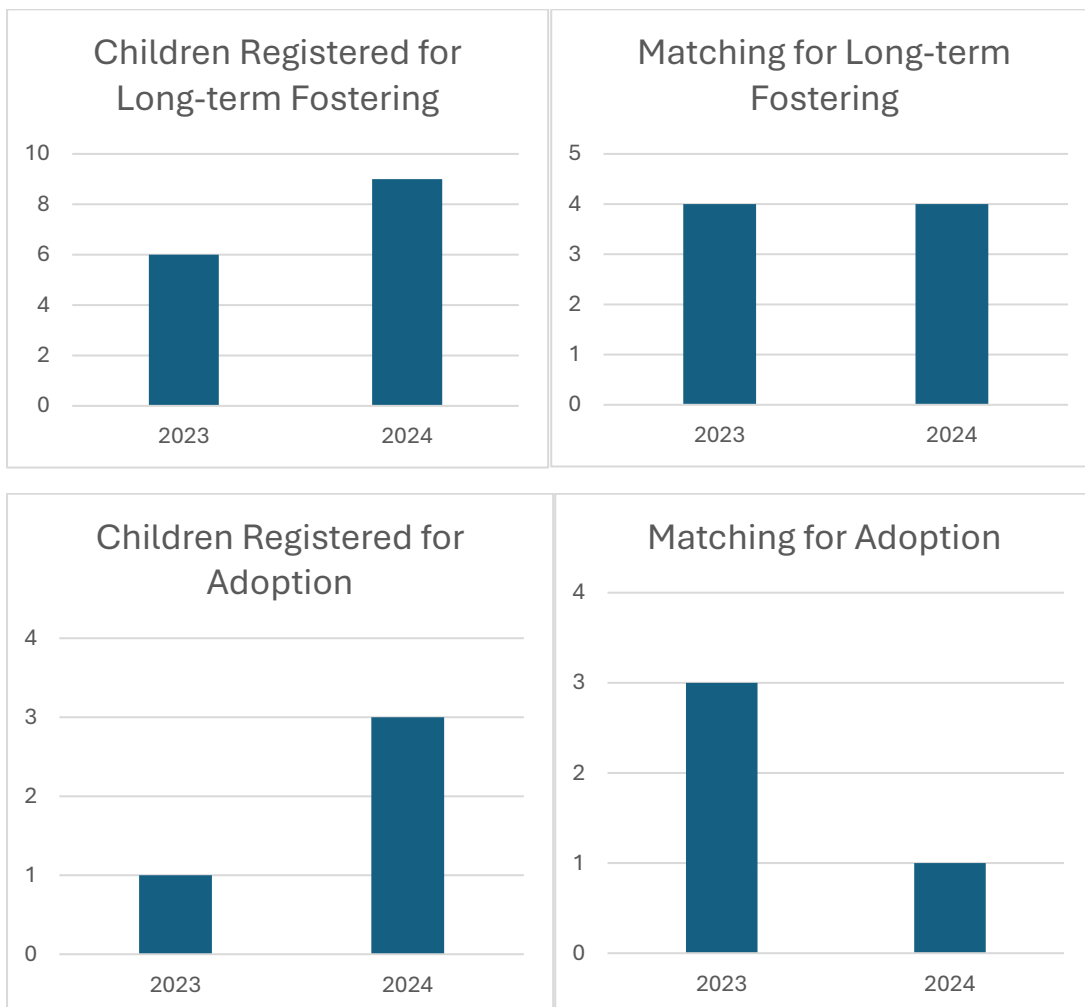
East Lothian Council follow the practice of inviting birth parents to permanence registration panels and during the year April 2024 to March 2025 birth parents attended on six out of nine occasions which represents an attendance rate of 66.6%

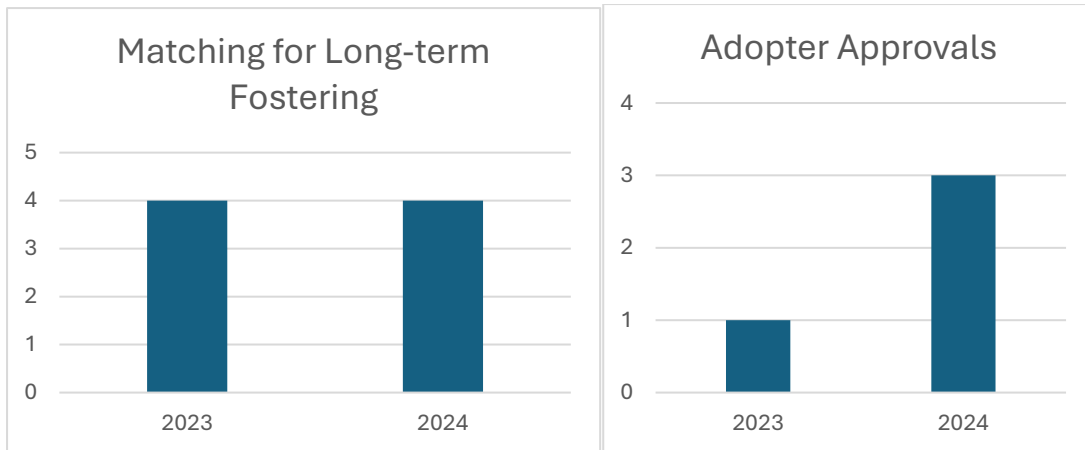
Between April 2024 and March 2025, the permanence panel met on 19 occasions.

Permanence panel business April 2024 to March 2025

- 3 children were registered for Adoption
- 9 children were registered for permanent fostering placements
- 1 child was matched with prospective adopters
- 4 children were matched with permanent fostering families
- 3 Adopters were approved
- 1 Permanent foster carer approval
- 3 Adopters were reviewed

Permanence Panel Business Graphs April 2023 to March 2024 and April 2024 to March 2025





Fostering panel

Members of East Lothian Council’s fostering panel come from a variety of backgrounds including Housing, service development, retired social workers, nursery education and other local authority social workers and foster carers. We have three fostering panel chairs who manage the meetings on a rota basis. Recommendations of appointment to the panel are made by the Panel Co-ordinator to the Agency Decision Maker, with panel chairs and members being supported by regular training and reviews.

The fostering panel make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker in relation to:

- Foster carer approvals, reviews and termination of approvals.
- Continuing carer and host family approvals.
- Share the Care approvals and reviews.

Foster carers are initially reviewed by the panel 12 months after their approval date and then every two years thereafter, or when there is a request to change the remit of their approval.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, the fostering panel met on 15 Occasions.

Fostering panel business April 2024 to March 2025

11 Foster Carer/Nominated Carer Approvals

14 Foster Carer Reviews

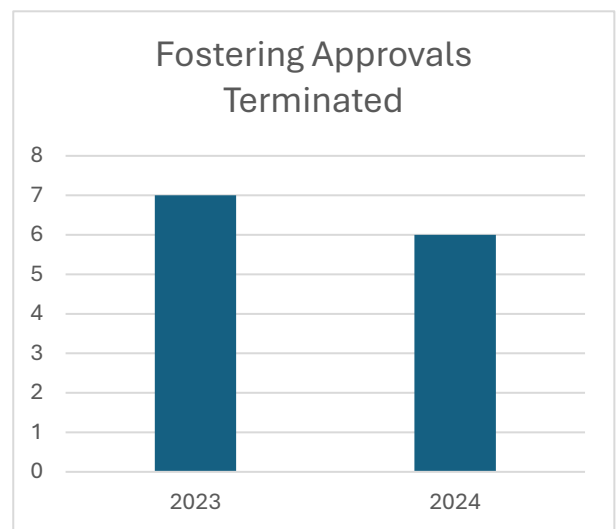
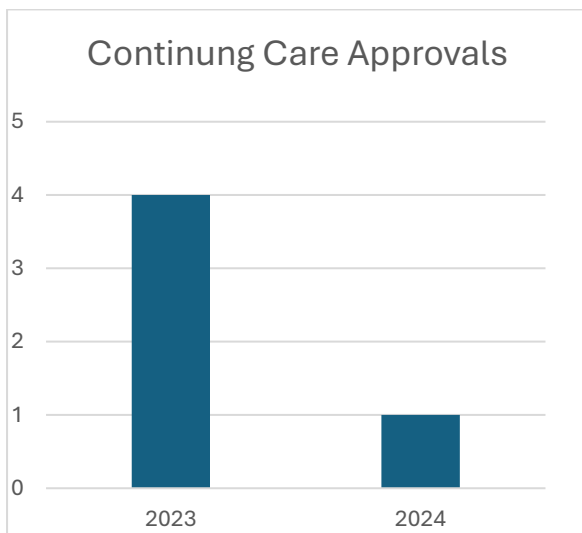
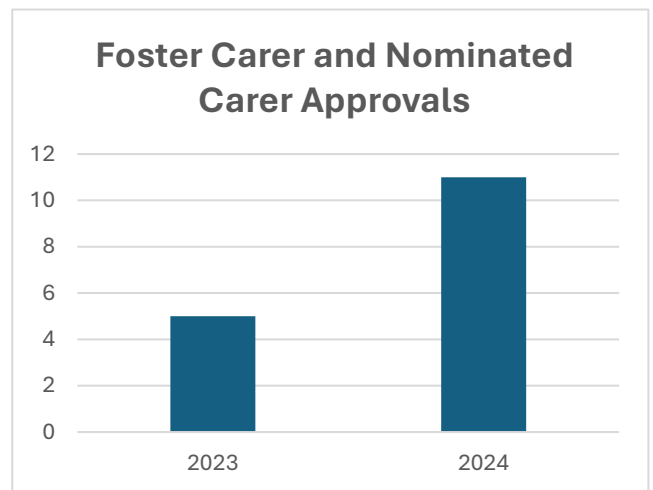
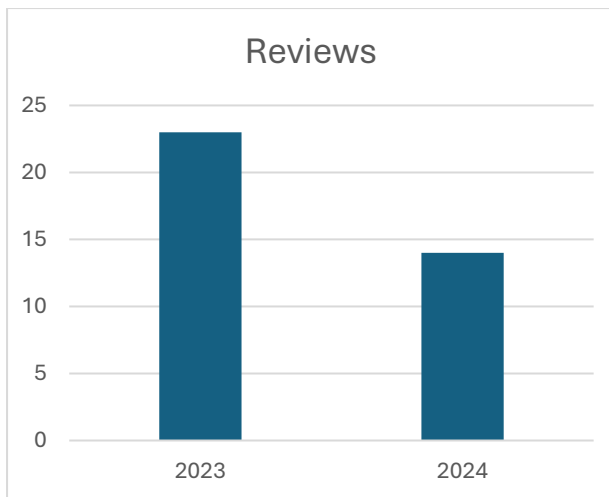
6 Foster Carer Terminations

2 Share the Care Reviews

4 Share the Care Terminations

1 Continuing Care Approval

Fostering Panel Business Graphs April 2023 to March 2024 and April 2024 to March 2025



Permanence/adoption and fostering panels also have business and management meetings, which are held on a twice-yearly basis and are chaired by the panel co-ordinator. These forums allow the opportunity to discuss and address any process issues, practice developments, as well as providing an important quality assurance function.

Continuing Care in Scotland

Continuing Care offers young people who are/were previously looked after, the right to remain in their placement until they are 21 years of age. Between April 2024 and March 2025, one fostering placement was converted to continuing care, and this brought the total to 11 young people in continuing care placements being offered by our foster carers as of 31st March 2025. Remaining in their care placement is the best outcome for these young people, as it provides them with stability and ongoing support and removes the pressure for them to leave care before they are ready for independent living. It does, however, inevitably impact on the number of fostering placements we have available for other children. During the last 12 months, six young people moved on from continuing care to independent living situations, however, many of our carers continue to offer them ongoing support.

Kinship care panel

The East Lothian Council kinship care panel benefits from the diverse expertise of its members, who bring a wide range of professional backgrounds to the role. The panel includes experienced social workers currently serving within children's services, as well as representatives from valued third sector organisations. Leadership of the panel is shared by two dedicated chairs, who facilitate meetings on a rotational basis to ensure consistency and collaborative decision-making.

The kinship care panel make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker in relation to:

- Kinship carer approvals, reviews and termination of approvals.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, the kinship care panel met on 13 Occasions, up from 9 in the period 2023/24.

Kinship care Panel Business April 2024 to March 2025

13 kinship care panels & 13 kinship carer approvals.

Integrated Practice Across Fostering, Adoption, and Kinship Services

Improving transitions for children

One of the key areas of development this year has been improving the experience of children transitioning between placements. This important work has been led by a senior practitioner in the fostering team, who has pioneered a new, child-centred approach to planned moves. Leadership in this area has been instrumental in shaping a more thoughtful and trauma-informed process and the team presented this work at a national social work conference.

The new approach includes the introduction of a matching proforma to improve placement matching, as well as pre-move planning meetings for all planned transitions. These changes aim to reduce the number of placement moves, support children in processing feelings of loss, and help them stay connected to their personal journey and the important people within it.

This initiative is grounded in research and best practice, which highlight that one of the most distressing aspects of care is the experience of broken attachments. By improving how we support children through transitions, we aim to reduce this sense of impermanence and promote greater emotional security and self-esteem. Written guidance for carers is currently in development to support the implementation of this model.

Therapeutic work

The team remains dedicated to enhancing our in-house therapeutic provision, with a clear focus on building sustainable, trauma-informed support for children and young people. By strengthening our internal capacity, we aim to reduce reliance on external providers—delivering more consistent care while also achieving potential cost efficiencies.

Enthuse - play therapy service

This year marked a significant milestone with the launch of our in-house play therapy service. A family support worker in the team has qualified as play therapist and now works primarily with adoption, kinship, and foster families, providing therapeutic support to 13 children and young people between September 2024 to September 2025. The service, based at a local primary school, offers a safe and nurturing environment where children can explore their experiences through evidence-based therapeutic play.

This development reflects our ongoing commitment to expanding trauma-informed, relationship-based support within the community, and to building on the strengths and skills of our existing team.

Therapeutic Life Story Work

A key milestone this year has been the training of four social workers in the Richard Rose Model of Therapeutic Life Story Work. Workers are now actively engaging with children and young people across the service, helping them make sense of their experiences and build stronger emotional resilience.

Support Groups:

BUSS® LEAPlets: Supporting Early Development Through Play

In 2024, the fostering, kinship, and adoption teams secured funding from the Social Workers' Educational Trust to implement the BUSS® (Building Underdeveloped Sensorimotor Systems) LEAPlets® program—an early year's intervention designed to support children under six whose early development may have been disrupted.

LEAPlets® is an 11-week, play-based group intervention that promotes secure attachment and supports children's physical, sensory, and emotional development. The program structure includes:

- Week 1: A preparatory session for parents and carers.
- Weeks 2–11: Joint sessions involving children and their caregivers.

The intervention focuses on three foundational sensorimotor systems—vestibular (balance and movement), proprioceptive (body awareness), and tactile (touch and sensory processing)—which are critical for children's ability to engage in learning, social interaction, and emotional regulation.

We are proud to have launched Scotland's first LEAPlets group in January 2025, supporting children aged 2.5 to 4.5 years. Sessions were delivered under the supervision of the BUSS® founder. Participating families reported increased awareness of their children's developmental needs and observed notable improvements in confidence, engagement, and enjoyment among the children.

Building on the success of the initial group, the teams plan to deliver two LEAPlets cohorts annually. The program will continue to welcome families from fostering, adoptive, and kinship backgrounds, contributing to a broader strategy of early intervention and developmental support within permanence services.

Neurodiversity carer support groups

Since January 2025, two dedicated carer-led support groups have been established to meet the growing needs of carers supporting neurodiverse care-experienced children. These groups—one for foster carers and adopters, and one for kinship carers—offer a structured yet informal space for open dialogue, peer support, and shared learning.

Facilitated discussions are guided by feedback from carers and enriched by contributions from guest specialists. Topics to date have included neurological functioning and identity development, with future sessions planned on neurodiversity in girls, educational advocacy, sensory processing, and inclusive communication strategies.

Attendance remains strong, with 10–16 carers participating in each session, either online or in person. These groups reflect a collaborative and responsive approach to supporting carers navigating the complexities of neurodiversity.

Children’s activity group

In January 2025, the teams launched a dedicated children’s activity group aimed at strengthening relationships among care-experienced children and young people. The group provides a welcoming and inclusive space for children from fostering, adoptive, and kinship backgrounds to connect, build friendships, and—where possible—spend time with siblings in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

Monthly events have included a variety of creative, active, and nature-based experiences such as:

- Baking sessions
- Trampoline Park visits
- Easter crafts and egg hunts
- Woodland walks
- A beach day outing

Each event has been well attended, with participation ranging from 10 to 25 children. Feedback from both children and carers has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the value of shared experiences in fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Planning is underway for the remainder of the year’s events, with a continued focus on inclusive, fun, and relationship-building activities. The group has not only supported the development of peer relationships among children but has also fostered connections among carers, contributing to a broader network of support within East Lothian’s caring community.

Training and Support Across Fostering, Adoption, and Kinship Services

We remain committed to investing in the development, wellbeing, and resilience of our foster carers, as well as the broader network of kinship and adoptive families.

Listening and responding to foster carer feedback

In October 2024, a Foster Carer Consultation was held to gather views on training provision. In response, several key improvements were implemented:

- A dedicated fostering team Facebook group was established to share upcoming training opportunities.
- A colour-coded training calendar was introduced to clearly highlight mandatory training and support advance planning.
- Training sessions were scheduled with carers' needs in mind—avoiding school holidays, splitting courses across multiple days, and offering sessions during school hours where possible.
- A blended approach was maintained, offering both in-person and online training to ensure accessibility and flexibility.

Expanding access to core training

Carers expressed a need for more frequent access to mandatory training. In response, three children's services colleagues were identified and trained as facilitators for Team Teach, a programme designed to equip carers with strategies for managing challenging behaviour with confidence and care. These facilitators will also oversee re-accreditation, monitor training expiry dates, and offer consultation where needed.

Team Teach has been incorporated into the 2025 training calendar and will be delivered regularly throughout the year.

Building practical skills

In addition to behavioural support, First Aid training is now being offered to ensure carers are equipped with essential emergency response skills. These developments reflect our ongoing commitment to building a confident, well-supported, and knowledgeable caring community.

Strengthening partnerships and expanding training opportunities

In March 2025, East Lothian children's services renewed its memberships with the Association for Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Scotland (AFKA) and CoramBAAF. These

partnerships continue to provide valuable access to free, high-quality training courses for carers, supporting their ongoing learning and development.

Additionally, Penumbra has delivered both in-person and online training sessions focused on self-harm awareness. These sessions have been well-received by carers, who found the content informative and supportive in helping them better understand and respond to the needs of the children and young people in their care.

This year, we were also pleased to offer funded places for carers on the *Care Excellence Programme* delivered by Richard Rose THEiA. This comprehensive five-day online training course equips carers with essential knowledge and skills in areas such as child development, attachment, the impact of trauma, Therapeutic Life Story Work, caring for children with complex trauma, self-care, and managing vicarious trauma.

We are actively encouraging all carers to take part in this valuable learning opportunity, which supports their ongoing development and enhances the quality of care provided to children and young people across our services.

In January 2025, post-approval training for foster carers was successfully re-established, marking a renewed commitment to continuous learning and support. This training is co-facilitated in partnership with Midlothian Council's fostering team, promoting collaboration and shared expertise across local authorities.

Training opportunities have been extended to foster carers, adoptive parents, and kinship carers, ensuring a consistent and inclusive approach to supporting all members of the caring community in their vital roles.

Improving engagement with post-approval training and online learning

Whilst post-approval training for carers was successfully re-established in January 2025, attendance has unfortunately been lower than anticipated. Currently delivered in-person at Danderhall, Midlothian, the sessions have been offered at varied times—including evenings and during school hours—to accommodate different schedules. However, these efforts have not significantly improved uptake.

In response, we are actively evaluating ways to increase participation. Potential improvements include offering a hybrid model that combines in-person and online delivery, as well as hosting sessions at a more accessible East Lothian venue to better meet carers' needs.

In parallel, the *LearnPro* platform has been revamped to enhance user navigation and accessibility. While we've seen an encouraging increase in the number of foster carers registering on the platform, completion rates for training modules remain low. We are exploring further strategies to support carers in engaging with and completing online learning, ensuring they can access the knowledge and tools they need in a flexible and user-friendly format.

Upcoming training opportunities

A comprehensive training programme has been developed to support the ongoing learning and development of foster carers, kinship carers, and adoptive parents throughout the year. The schedule reflects a commitment to equipping carers with the knowledge and skills needed to respond to the complex needs of the children and young people they support.

2025 training schedule

- **January:** Record Keeping and Report Writing
- **February:** Trauma-Informed Practice
- **March:** The Impact of Substance and Alcohol Misuse
- **April:** Self-Harm Awareness (delivered by Penumbra)
- **May:** Understanding and Responding to Sexual Behaviour Problems
- **June:** Advocacy, the UNCRC, and Participation Opportunities for Young People (facilitated by Who Cares? Scotland)
- **August:** The Impact of Domestic Abuse
- **September:** Continuing Care and Transitions to Adulthood
- **October & November:** Topics to be confirmed, ensuring responsiveness to emerging needs and carer feedback

This programme reflects our commitment to delivering relevant, timely, and evidence-based training that supports carers in providing safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate care.

Enhancing trauma-informed training through co-production

We are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of our mandatory training programme, with a particular focus on *Trauma-Informed Practice*, *Brain Development*, and *Self-Regulation*. While recent training delivered by Cyrenians on *Understand, Communicate and Resolve* was positively received, our evaluation highlighted the opportunity to develop a more tailored approach. As a result, we have committed to designing a bespoke training programme in collaboration with foster carers, ensuring it reflects their lived experiences and practical needs.

This new initiative is being developed in partnership with East Lothian Council's senior project officer (person centred/trauma informed) and the Educational Psychology team, with the aim of creating a holistic, trauma-informed framework. A foster carer focus group will be established to support co-production, and we hope to introduce co-facilitation of training sessions by foster carers in the longer term—recognising the unique value of their insight and experience.

As part of our induction and first-year training pathway, carers are expected to complete the following core modules:

- **Child Protection Awareness and Response – Level 1**
- **Adult Support and Protection – Level 1**
- **Paediatric First Aid** (for those caring for children aged 0–12)
- **Emergency First Aid** (for those caring for children and young people aged 12+)
- **Team Teach – Level 1**
- **Trauma-Informed Practice – Level 1**
- **Trauma-Skilled Practice – Level 2**

This evolving programme reflects our commitment to delivering high-quality, responsive training that empowers carers and strengthens outcomes for children and young people.

Conclusion

We believe that across the fostering, adoption and kinship care service, we have continued to positively develop our practice in accordance with relevant legislation, local and national policies, the assessed needs of the children, young people, carers and families with whom we are working alongside, within a trauma informed and therapeutic manner.

In the coming year, we will focus on continuing to expand our digital recruitment strategy, including the launch of a dedicated service microsite to enhance visibility and engagement.

We will embed the transitions guidance fully into practice, supported by the publication of carer-facing tools. Parent Partner support will be upscaled across both kinship and fostering pathways, while hybrid learning uptake will be increased through targeted completion goals for LearnPro.

We will also broaden our therapeutic supports to all carers and reduce external expenditure by investing in in-house provision, delivering more sustainable support for children and families.

We are proud of the innovative training programmes, strengthened partnerships, and trauma-informed practices that have taken root this year with regards to supporting all children, young people and carers. Most importantly, we are proud of the children and young people at the heart of everything we do—whose voices, experiences, and futures continue to inspire us.

Thank you to everyone who plays a part in this vital work.



Versions of this leaflet can be provided in Braille, large print, audiotape, or your own language. For assistance please call: **01620 827 827** British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via **www.contactscotland-bsl.org**

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COMMITTEE:	Education & Children’s Services Committee
MEETING DATE:	18 November 2025
BY:	Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	Belonging to East Lothian: An Overview
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the latest phase of Belonging to East Lothian, an East Lothian approach which focuses on prevention and early intervention for children, young people and families.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are recommended to note the report.

3 BACKGROUND

Belonging to East Lothian Phase 1

- 3.1 Over recent years, considerable work has been undertaken to support the needs of East Lothian’s children, young people, families and communities. This has included the work of the Transforming Services for Children Board, the Redesign of Children’s Services and work undertaken across Education and Children’s Services to ensure better integrated working that provides the right support at the right time.
- 3.2 The first phase of ‘Belonging to East Lothian’ began in early 2023. The Transforming Services for Children Board approved a renewed focus on Early Intervention and Prevention as a result of continued concern about the complexity of needs of our children and young people, the continued rising demand in both education settings and for statutory social work and reports that parents and communities were struggling to provide support.

- 3.3 As a result of learning from a number of other local authorities it was agreed that the focus needed to be on supporting our children and young people to remain in their own communities and to look to the existing supports that were available and that could help with the rising demand.
- 3.4 This has led to a wide range of supports and services being developed within the Council and with partners, along with a stronger focus on bringing young people placed in external residential care, back to East Lothian when this is in their best interests. This requires a joint approach from social work, education and housing to ensure that the right resources are available locally to meet individual need.
- 3.5 As a result of the work to date there has been a reduction in the number of children and young people who are looked after and accommodated and a reduction in the number of young people in external residential care.

Current Position

- 3.6 Prevention and early intervention continue to be prioritised nationally including in the 2025-26 Programme for Government, Scotland's Population Health Framework and Scotland's Public Sector Reform Strategy, which notes that "prevention can dramatically cut demand for expensive acute or crisis services with a median return on investment of more than 14:1. Focussing on prevention can make services easier to plan and afford."
- 3.7 Locally, rising levels of demand, particularly in relation to complex needs continue to put pressure on Council services. While there are a wide range of services available aligned to early intervention and prevention, there is a need to continue to transform services, processes and practice in the interests of East Lothian's families and communities, to ensure provision is fit for purpose and meeting current need.
- 3.8 With the development of new strategic plans including the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (East Lothian Plan) and the Children's Strategic Partnership Plan there is also an opportunity to try to simplify and better align the large number of policies, plans and frameworks the Council and East Lothian Partnership is required to produce, in order to streamline governance and reporting and reduce the risks of duplication and/or gaps.

Belonging to East Lothian Phase 2

- 3.9 In order to drive forward a whole system redesign of prevention and early intervention services, a temporary 'Strategic Lead – Prevention' post has been created, for an initial period of 12 months, funded from the Council's Transformation Fund.
- 3.10 The post will lead on delivering the cultural transformation required to deliver an effective model of prevention and early intervention as part of the Council's Prevention and Early Intervention agenda 'Belonging to

East Lothian', incorporating and sustaining the work undertaken to date on Whole Family Wellbeing.

- 3.11 The post will also lead on the development, implementation, and on-going evaluation of whole system change which focusses on prevention, early intervention and long-term sustainability. This will include empowering multi-disciplinary teams to develop, implement, and take account of learning from a range of improvement projects designed to help find more preventative and person-centred ways of addressing the challenges facing our residents, families and communities.
- 3.12 It is intended that this work will lead to the development of a target operating model for prevention and early intervention in East Lothian.
- 3.13 The work is at a very early stage and updates will be brought to members on a regular basis along with the plan for delivery which will include measurable outcomes.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: Funding has been approved from the Transformation Fund to enable the creation of the temporary post. Further funding may be required to enable development of new resources or services. External funding will be sought wherever possible.
- 5.2 Human Resources: The post has been created through a service review and an existing Service Manager seconded to the post. Backfill arrangements have been put in place.
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None.
- 5.4 Risk: None.

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken, and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a



corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

Should any changes to existing services or structures be proposed as a result of this work, those would be subject to completion of an integrated impact assessment.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Programme for Government 2025 – 26:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2025-26/>
- 8.2 Scotland's Population Health Framework:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-population-health-framework/>
- 8.3 Scotland's Public Reform Strategy:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-public-service-reform-strategy-delivering-scotland/>

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

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Date	07 October 2025

Head of Service Approval

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Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	24 October 2025

COMMITTEE:	Education & Children’s Services Committee
MEETING DATE:	18 November 2025
BY:	Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	Education Scotland Inspection of Campie Primary School and Nursery Class
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland re-visit inspection of Campie Primary School and Nursery Class.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Note the key strengths identified by the Inspection Team and progress made since the inspection.
- 2.3 Note that because of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will not make a follow-up visit in connection with this 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 Campie Primary School and Nursery Class.

The focus for the revisit inspection was to evaluate the progress made by the school against the areas for improvement identified in the initial Education Scotland inspection report published in August 2024 (Appendix 2). These were:

- i. Senior leaders in the school, with support from the local authority, must ensure that they understand and comply with all statutory duties and responsibilities that are applicable to their role in managing the nursery.
- ii. Senior leaders, with support from the local authority, must improve the strategic leadership of the school and nursery by implementing rigorous and consistent quality assurance processes. This will help them to improve the quality of children's learning and experiences across the school and nursery.
- iii. Senior leaders, teachers and practitioners need to develop further their approaches to improving the overall quality of children's learning experiences across the school and nursery. This will help to ensure that all children make the best possible progress in their learning.
- iv. Teachers and practitioners need to improve how they plan and assess children's learning. This will help them to make more reliable judgements on children's progress in the school and nursery, based on national standards.
- v. Senior leaders need to ensure that additional funding is used more effectively and that the impact of interventions is monitored more closely. This will help to close the attainment gaps and accelerate children's progress in learning.

3.2 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.

3.3 Inspection Findings

The Education Scotland letter to parents, published on 30 September 2025 (Appendix 1) provides a detailed report of the progress made against each of the areas for improvement (outlined in 3.1 above). A summary of these improvements is outlined below:

- i. **Compliance with all statutory duties and responsibilities -**
The school and nursery have made positive progress towards meeting this action point.

- ii. **Improve the strategic the leadership of the school and nursery by implementing rigorous and consistent quality assurance processes** - The school and nursery have made positive progress in addressing this area for development.
- iii. **Develop further their approaches to improving the overall quality of children’s learning experiences across the school and nursery** - The school and nursery have made positive progress in addressing this area for development.
- iv. **Teachers and practitioners need to improve how they plan and assess children’s learning** - The school and nursery have made positive progress in addressing this area for development.
- v. **Senior leaders need to ensure that additional funding is used more effectively and that the impact of interventions is monitored more closely** - The school has made steady progress towards addressing this action point.

Education Scotland are confident that the school has made positive and steady progress since the original inspection and that the school has the capacity to continue to improve. As a result of the findings of this inspection, Education Scotland will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Not applicable

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance: None

5.2 Human Resources: None

5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None

5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an ‘X’ in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the

X

environment and sustainability; the Council’s role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council’s website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1 - The Education Scotland letter to parents, published on 30 September 2025

Appendix 2 - The Education Scotland letter to parents, published on 27 August 2024

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

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Head of Service Approval

Name	Nicola McDowell
Designation	Head of Education
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	29 October 2025

30 September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In August 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Campie Primary School and Nursery Class. 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. 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.

Senior leaders in the school, with support from the local authority, must ensure that they understand and comply with all statutory duties and responsibilities that are applicable to their role in managing the nursery.

The school and nursery have made positive progress towards meeting this action point.

All staff are clear about the revised remits of the senior leadership team. A depute headteacher (DHT) now has overall responsibility for the nursery and early years classes. She supports the two senior Early Years Practitioners and practitioner team in leading and managing the nursery. Local authority staff are regular visitors to the nursery, supporting the team with their improvement agenda. This has included professional learning opportunities and supporting staff to access and use local and national guidance.

Senior leaders and the nursery team have taken effective steps to ensure all appropriate and relevant statutory duties are adhered to in nursery practice and processes. Staff now ensure that all records and files are stored appropriately. They review nursery practice and procedures during regular team meetings. Staff ensure that all medication is labelled and stored as required by guidance. The designated DHT should continue to support all practitioners as they develop their skills and knowledge of relevant legislation and statutory duties.

Senior leaders, with support from the local authority, must improve the strategic leadership of the school and nursery by implementing rigorous and consistent quality assurance processes. This will help them to improve the quality of children's learning and experiences across the school and nursery.

The school and nursery have made positive progress in addressing this area for development.

Local authority staff have introduced the practitioners in the nursery to the most relevant and up-to-date local authority support materials and guidance. As a result, the team is developing a shared understanding of the purpose and nature of self-evaluation as a key feature of improvement. Practitioners discuss their work and children's experiences at regular meetings. The pace of change has been brisk and challenging. Senior leaders and

practitioners recognise the need to continue to develop and embed the newly established processes to ensure and sustain consistently high-quality approaches across the playroom.

The DHT and local authority team have introduced regular monitoring of the work of the nursery. They observe play and learning, engage with practitioners about their practice, and provide written feedback. The nursery team know the children and their families very well. They are learning to adapt guidance and advice to meet the needs of children in their unique setting. Across the playroom children experience increasingly appropriate learning and childcare, both indoors and in the two outdoor spaces. Senior leaders should ensure the nursery team is included in whole school improvement priorities, and that staff participate in the professional learning on offer. Practitioners should also begin to include children and parents in evaluating the nursery experience.

Senior leaders now systematically monitor children's work, observe learning and teaching and review teachers' planning. They provide staff with specific feedback about areas of strength and development needs across the school. Teachers have benefited from professional learning provided by the local authority pedagogy team and feedback from local authority officers. They are now clearer about what is working well and what they need to focus on to achieve consistently high-quality learning and teaching across the school. Moving forward, senior leaders should build on this and focus their observations of learning more explicitly on key aspects for improvement.

Senior leaders work with teachers to identify the most important priorities for improvement. The improvement plan is clear and has specific outcomes. Senior leaders have ensured that all teachers take an active role in taking forward improvement initiatives. This has included work on the development of a lesson framework. Staff collectively review progress of the school improvement plan. This whole-school approach ensures that improvement work is more collaborative and that all teachers are now more aware of the progress that is being made. Senior leaders provide effective strategic leadership and support for teachers to ensure achievement of the intended outcomes. They now need to build leadership capacity across the school and further develop teachers' ownership of the school improvement agenda.

Senior leaders ensure that support staff are given appropriate training opportunities to assist them in their duties. Support staff feel valued and respected in their roles and work closely with teachers to provide consistency of approach for children. Support staff are well placed to now take on leadership responsibilities to contribute to the school improvement agenda.

Children across the school now take a more active, well-planned and frequent role in leading change and improvement. Senior leaders initiated the 'Collaboration Crew' as the main context for pupil leadership. This provides opportunities for all children, supported by staff across the school, to take part in multi-stage groups to share their views on and take forward initiatives. Children also take on leadership of a range of lunchtime clubs, which are supervised by staff. Older children also plan and lead weekly online assemblies for the whole school. Children have provided feedback on how effectively the school community shares and celebrates achievements. Senior leaders should now build on this and ensure that all children are empowered to provide meaningful and regular feedback on school improvement, with a specific focus on learning and teaching.

Senior leaders inform the Parent Council about the school improvement agenda and the use of additional funding. They now need to engage in more meaningful consultation with the Parent Council and wider parent form about the rationale for change and provide them with more opportunities to be actively involved in this process.

Senior leaders, teachers and practitioners need to develop further their approaches to improving the overall quality of children’s learning experiences across the school and nursery. This will help to ensure that all children make the best possible progress in their learning.

The school and nursery have made positive progress in addressing this area for development.

Senior leaders and local authority staff have taken prompt action to improve the learning environment in the nursery. Children benefit from improved resources and high-quality equipment. The environment supports children to play together. The playroom is now print rich. For example, children playing at the water tray are supported to develop their vocabulary around capacity using clear labels around the space.

Staff are developing their skills in quality interaction with children. They are increasingly confident in using questions to promote curiosity and assess children’s understanding. Practitioners are becoming more skilled in engaging with children during play to enhance children’s learning. They take care to promote health and wellbeing across the playroom. Senior leaders should continue to support all practitioners to develop skills in high quality interaction and questioning. Moving forward children would benefit from increased opportunities in well planned learning and play using digital tools.

Senior leaders and teachers have taken practical steps to ensure that transitions between sessions are well managed. Children show increased independence and responsibility when moving between activities. As a result, available learning time is being used to better effect. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to monitor this and ensure that these approaches are embedded and sustained across the school.

Teachers have worked together to agree on a consistent structure for lessons. They now need to implement this fully and evaluate how it is being used, making changes as required. This will help to further increase the consistency and quality of approaches to learning and teaching at all stages.

In literacy and numeracy, teachers match learning to children’s needs effectively in most lessons. They now need to consider how they provide appropriate levels of support and challenge across the curriculum to help children make the best possible progress in all aspects of their learning. Teachers help children to understand the purpose of lessons and how they will be successful. They now need to support children to develop further their understanding of their own progress and help them to self- and peer assess with increased accuracy.

Teachers increasingly provide children with regular and helpful verbal feedback on their progress during lessons. The quality of written feedback in jotters is improving but is variable, both across the school and across the curriculum. Senior leaders and teachers should now

work together to share effective practice and ensure that all children benefit from regular high quality written feedback on their work.

Teachers at the early stages have reviewed learning environments and resourcing and engaged in relevant professional learning about how children learn through play. Children have regular access to play activities that are linked to their learning in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to use space available within the school to allow access a wider range of resources and maximise further approaches to learning through play.

All children across the school now benefit from regular, well-planned opportunities to learn outdoors. The school community have worked effectively together to audit and improve the outdoor environment. Senior leaders should now take forward plans to ensure that every child receives an entitlement to outdoor learning at regular intervals across their time in school, in addition to accessing responsive outdoor learning.

Across the school, teachers now encourage children to make links between their learning and real-life contexts. For example, children recognise that percentages are used when measuring the charge available in electronic devices and they use the local environment as a stimulus for artwork. Children also increasingly make relevant links across the curriculum. Teachers should continue to build on this positive practice and make it a consistent and embedded feature of all children's learning experiences.

Senior leaders and staff have reviewed and refreshed the 'Campie Way'. This sets out the shared expectations for behaviour inside and outside the building. Children have responded positively to this consistent approach. Whilst individual children still experience dysregulation, overall, the ethos in the school is calmer and more settled. Staff manage children's behaviour with increased confidence and success as a result of their participation in relevant professional learning. The number of exclusions has decreased, and senior leaders monitor closely the use of part-time timetables.

Senior leaders record allegations and investigations of bullying in alignment with local and national guidance. They offer opportunities for children to learn about the importance of diversity, equality and respect through assemblies and work on children's rights. Children access multi-cultural books and resources and learn about inclusion, race and religion through the Religious and Moral Education and the Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood curriculum. Senior leaders now need to build on this and work closely with the whole school community to successfully address concerns about bullying behaviour, including that which is racially motivated.

Teachers and practitioners need to improve how they plan and assess children's learning. This will help them to make more reliable judgements on children's progress in the school and nursery, based on national standards.

The school and nursery have made positive progress in addressing this area for development.

Practitioners have adopted local authority planning approaches since the original inspection. Local authority staff have supported professional learning in planning and assessment.

Improved planning is leading to higher quality experiences for children and a deeper understanding of observation and assessment. Moving forward, senior leaders and practitioners need to involve children and parents in planning learning and play.

Practitioners observe learning and record this in children's learning stories. Practitioners are beginning to use the information more effectively to consider next steps and provide enhanced learning for children. Senior leaders and practitioners should take forward plans to utilise fully a newly developed nursery tracking system in the new session. This will help them to monitor accurately children's progress across the early level curriculum.

Practitioners support children with additional support needs well. They liaise effectively with parents to discuss learning and wellbeing issues. Where appropriate, a few children have personal learning plans and / or positive support plans. The nursery team works well with a range of partners who support families and practitioners to assess and meet the needs of children who may need extra help. Senior leaders and local authority staff should continue to support practitioners as they develop their skills in assessment and recording.

Senior leaders should now ensure increased opportunities for nursery and P1 classes to engage with each other. This would support continuity for the children and promote smooth transitions. It would also offer increased opportunities for staff in P1 and the nursery to share practice.

Senior leaders and teachers are at the early stages of developing and implementing a whole school approach to assessment. Teachers currently use a wide range of assessments but their application of these is inconsistent. Senior leaders should continue to provide support to help teachers to utilise assessment information more effectively to inform their planning.

Senior leaders, and local authority staff, have provided teachers with helpful professional learning on moderation. This is helping to increase the reliability of professional judgements about children's level of attainment. Teachers should now engage in further moderation activities outwith their own school to build on this.

Senior leaders and teachers audited the approaches to planning across the school and agreed on a shared format. Planning now covers all areas of the curriculum and clearly indicates how learning will be assessed. Teachers identify how learning will be matched to children's abilities in literacy and numeracy. They should now extend this to all areas of the curriculum and identify how they will provide support and challenge for individual children as required.

Senior leaders review carefully the progress of individuals, groups and cohorts. This includes children who have English as an additional language (EAL) and children who have low attendance. Senior leaders and teachers discuss children's progress at attainment meetings and plan support interventions as appropriate. They now have a clear overview of the progress children are making through Curriculum for Excellence levels. As a next step, senior leaders need to support teachers to increase their skill and confidence in analysing a wide range of assessment data and evaluate robustly the impact of targeted interventions.

Attainment has improved since the original inspection and teachers' professional judgements about children's progress and attainment are more reliable. Almost all children at P1 achieve

national levels of attainment in reading, writing and talking and listening. Almost all children at P4 achieve in reading and most achieve in writing and talking and listening. Most children at P7 achieve in talking and listening and most achieve in reading and writing. Most children at P1, P4 and P7 achieve national levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Senior leaders need to ensure that additional funding is used more effectively and that the impact of interventions is monitored more closely. This will help to close the attainment gaps and accelerate children’s progress in learning.

The school has made steady progress towards addressing this action point.

Senior leaders increasingly analyse and use data to identify gaps in the attainment, attendance and participation of children who face barriers to their learning. Senior leaders use this information to plan supports, both internally and through the effective use of partnership working. Senior leaders are gathering evidence of impact for individuals. They now need to evidence more clearly the impact that this work has on reducing the overall attainment gap for cohorts of children.

Teachers are aware that the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) plan includes the appointment of a principal teacher to oversee the development of nurturing approaches and work with identified children. They are unsure of the supporting detail or the specific interventions that are planned to help improve attendance and raise attainment. Senior leaders should ensure that all stakeholders, including staff, parents and children, are consulted more fully about the proposed focus for the PEF allocation.

What happens next?

The school has made positive and steady 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.

M. A. Speirs
HM Inspector

27 August 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In April 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Campie 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.

- Across the school and nursery there is a warm and welcoming ethos. Staff and children are proud to be members of the school community.
- Children in the school and nursery are friendly, polite and articulate. At the primary stages, they know their school values well and can relate them to real-life experiences.
- Senior leaders and teachers have worked together effectively to improve approaches to teaching writing at the primary stages. As a result, writing outcomes for children are improving.

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

- Senior leaders in the school, with support from the local authority, must ensure that they understand and comply with all statutory duties and responsibilities that are applicable to their role in managing the nursery.
- Senior leaders, with support from the local authority, must improve the strategic leadership of the school and nursery by implementing rigorous and consistent quality assurance processes. This will help them to improve the quality of children's learning and experiences across the school and nursery.
- Senior leaders, teachers and practitioners need to develop further their approaches to improving the overall quality of children's learning experiences across the school and nursery. This will help to ensure that all children make the best possible progress in their learning.
- Teachers and practitioners need to improve how they plan and assess children's learning. This will help them to make more reliable judgements on children's progress in the school and nursery, based on national standards.
- Senior leaders need to ensure that additional funding is used more effectively and that the impact of interventions is monitored more closely. This will help to close the attainment gaps and accelerate children's progress in learning.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four 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 Campie Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary stages	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
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
Leadership of change	weak
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	weak
Securing children's progress	weak
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: [Details | Find an inspection report | Find an inspection report | Inspection and review | Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with East Lothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 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.

M. A Speirs
HM Inspector

COMMITTEE:	Council Committee for Education
MEETING DATE:	18 November 2025
BY:	Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	Education Scotland Inspection of Stenton Primary School
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Stenton Primary School.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the content of the Education Scotland letter (Appendix 1) published on 4 November 2025.
- 2.2 Note the key strengths of the school identified by the Inspection Team.
- 2.3 Note the Summary of Inspection Findings (Appendix 2) detailing strengths and recommended future developments.
- 2.4 Note that because of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will not make a follow-up visit in connection with this inspection.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Inspection Model

The inspection team used the How Good Is Our School 4? (HGIOS4?) quality indicators for primary inspections to evaluate the quality of provision at Stenton Primary School.

Education Scotland carried out a long model inspection to report on the impact of the life and work of the school using the quality indicators below and evaluate this against the [How good is our school \(4th edition\)](#) [Appendix 3: The six-point scale](#):

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Good
2.1 Safeguarding and child protection	Not evaluated – reported directly to Headteacher and Local Authority
2.2 Curriculum	Not evaluated – see Summary of Inspection Findings for further details
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
2.7 Partnerships	Not evaluated – see Summary of Inspection Findings for further details
3.1 Improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Satisfactory

Further details regarding the evaluation of each quality indicator can be found in the Summary of Inspection Findings (Appendix 2).

3.2 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 1.3, 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.

3.3 Inspection Findings

The Education Scotland letter to parents, published on 4 November 2025 (Appendix 1) provides a summary of recognised strengths of the school and recommended focuses for continued improvement.

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

- i. The insightful leadership of the headteacher in identifying the school's strengths and areas for development. She has a clear vision to improve outcomes for children and their families.

- ii. The positive, supportive and nurturing school ethos created by staff. Children have a strong belonging in their school because of the high-quality interactions and support provided by staff. As a result, children's emotional and wellbeing needs are met well.
- iii. Highly effective partnership working with families, partners and the local community. Staff work very closely with partners, families and the local community to provide additional experiences that support children's learning well.
- iv. Children who are curious, happy and confident. They have an enthusiasm for learning and are proud of their school.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and the school's Quality Improvement Officer at the end of the inspection process:

- i. The headteacher should continue to support staff to improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching. Staff need to develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching that leads to improved outcomes for all children.
- ii. Staff need to work together to streamline and agree effective approaches to planning and assessment. This should include planning learning experiences that are better matched to the needs and interests of all children.
- iii. The headteacher should work with staff to improve the accuracy of their judgements of children's progress and attainment. Staff should review now the use of assessment data against national standards to provide greater clarity and accuracy of children's attainment and progress.

Education Scotland 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.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Not applicable

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance: None

5.2 Human Resources: None

5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None

5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken, and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1 - The Education Scotland letter to parents, published on 4 November 2025.

Appendix 2 - The Education Scotland Summary of Inspection Findings, published on 4 November 2025.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

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Date	01.10.2025

Head of Service Approval

Name	Nicola McDowell
Designation	Head of Education
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	6 November 2025

4 November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In September 2025, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Stenton Primary School. 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.

- The insightful leadership of the headteacher in identifying the school's strengths and areas for development. She has a clear vision to improve outcomes for children and their families.
- The positive, supportive and nurturing school ethos created by staff. Children have a strong belonging in their school due to the high-quality of interactions and support provided by staff. As a result, children's emotional and wellbeing needs are met well.
- Highly effective partnership working. Staff work very closely with partners, families and the local community to provide additional experiences that support children's learning well.
- Children who are curious, happy and confident. They have an enthusiasm for learning and are proud of their school.

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

- The headteacher should continue to support staff to improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching. Staff need to develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching that leads to improved outcomes for all children.
- Staff need to work together to streamline and agree effective approaches to planning and assessment. This should include planning learning experiences that are better matched to the needs of all children.
- The headteacher should work with staff to improve the accuracy of their judgements of children's progress and attainment. Staff need to review the use of assessment data against national standards to provide greater clarity and accuracy of children's attainment and progress.

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 Stenton Primary School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
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: [Find an inspection report | Find an inspection report | Inspection and review | 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.

Judith Reid
HM Inspector

Summarised inspection findings

Stenton Primary School

East Lothian Council

4 November 2025

Key contextual information

Stenton Primary School is a non-denominational rural school situated in the village of Stenton in East Lothian Council. There are 22 children in the school. Due to a fall in the school roll last session, all children are now taught in a primary one to seven multi-composite class. There have been staffing changes over recent months. The senior leadership team consists of a headteacher and an acting principal teacher. The headteacher started as acting headteacher in April 2025. She was appointed as headteacher in August 2025 and has responsibility for another small school in East Lothian. At the time of inspection, the multi-composite class was taught by a temporary teacher. Almost all children live in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile six. Across the school, 22% of children require additional support with their learning. There are no children in receipt of free school meals.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

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 staff team, led effectively by the headteacher, have swiftly established supportive and collaborative working relationships across the school. Children benefit from positive relationships with all staff and with each other. Last session, in collaboration with all stakeholders, the school's vision, values and aims were refreshed. As part of this process, staff ensured these were reflective of the school's unique context. Staff work together effectively to promote the school vision, 'learn together in a safe, happy and empowering community'. The new values of respectful, kind, confident, empowered and creative are shared across the community and clearly understood. Staff and children added a new value entitled 'inclusive', after recent learning about neurodiversity. All children articulate the values confidently and enjoy receiving achievement awards based on their demonstration of these values which are celebrated at weekly assemblies. Staff and children are proud of their achievement in gaining a silver award for their work around developing children's rights. The school values underpinned by children's rights support positive interactions and relationships and provide a solid basis for continuous improvement.
- The headteacher has shared a clear vision for continuous improvement. She has gained the confidence and trust of staff, children, partners and parents swiftly and successfully. In addition, she has made a positive start to creating a culture of shared responsibility where all staff and children are integral to leading change. Staff leadership is at an early stage of development however, all staff are enthusiastic to embrace this vision and to improve outcomes for children. The headteacher should now look at ways to increase opportunities for more staff to lead school improvement priorities. She should continue with plans to develop professional enquiry-based approaches to support staff in making improvements in their practice. All staff undertake enthusiastically professional review opportunities to identify individual plans that reflect their own needs and those relating to school improvement priorities.

- Since taking up post, the headteacher has been proactive in identifying the needs of the school. She has reviewed the strategic priorities for the school well and created a streamlined plan for the next three years. This is ensuring that improvement priorities are appropriate, and the pace of change is manageable. Staff should make sure going forward, there is a central focus on providing consistently high-quality learning and teaching experiences that meets the needs of all learners. In addition, staff need to identify clear and measurable criteria that will support them more effectively to identify progress with school improvement activity.
- The headteacher is supported ably by the positive and collegiate staff team. This session, they have identified accurately three high level priorities for improvement. These include improving approaches to meeting the needs of individual children and the use of universal approaches to support learners. This is particularly important as children are now learning in a P1 to P7 multi-composite class. The third area identified is to increase the use of data and moderation more effectively to support teachers' professional judgements of attainment. The headteacher should continue to work with staff to ensure the pace of change leads to improvements for all children.
- The headteacher has developed a clear collegiate calendar which identifies activity planned across the year. This includes opportunities for professional learning and dialogue to support staff with improvement priorities. Staff are well supported to implement identified change that result in improvements to children's outcomes. The headteacher has identified collaborative opportunities to work with colleagues in their partner school to support improvement in areas such as moderation, professional learning and planning. Staff should continue to strengthen these partnerships further to embed a shared understanding of highly effective practice.
- The headteacher has also identified and aligned key activity planned to monitor school improvement priorities, in particular, the quality of children's experiences and outcomes. This is demonstrated in the school collegiate calendar. This activity includes the use of focus groups of children, regular informal walkthroughs around the school, shared learning observations and professional dialogue around planning, tracking and monitoring. The headteacher, to improve learning further, needs to include children as part of the monitoring process and widen quality assurance activity further, to activities such as jotter monitoring. This will ensure increased triangulation of experiences and provide increased rigour to self-evaluation activity, leading to greater clarity about progress with school improvement priorities. The headteacher, as planned, should continue to develop and embed the school's learning and teaching toolkit to provide clear and precise advice to staff as to high quality learning and teaching.
- Staff are at the early stages of formalising children's opportunities to lead school improvement work. All children have opportunities to contribute their views informally as part of their learning experiences and during assemblies. The headteacher and children have used 'How Good is OUR School' to reflect on a few aspects of school life. The headteacher and staff should now strengthen and formalise approaches used to gather children's views. In addition, they should support children to understand the impact their views are having on improving the school. A few children plan and lead lunch clubs such as, a nature club and older children enjoy their roles as reading buddies. The headteacher should continue with plans to create a Pupil Parliament to promote and facilitate the voice of children. This will support children to develop leadership skills, build their confidence and be more actively involved in school improvement.
- All staff have an in-depth understanding of the school community and their unique context. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) well to provide additional staff who facilitate targeted support for children with barriers to their learning. She should now ensure increased robustness around engaging with all stakeholders as to the use and impact of PEF. In addition, staff should evaluate more effectively the impact of planned interventions to identify which are having the biggest impact on children's progress.

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

- The headteacher and staff work together effectively to create a positive, welcoming, inclusive and nurturing ethos for children and families. As a result, staff support children well to learn in a caring and kind environment. All staff have created well-organised and welcoming learning spaces. All staff model positive relationships effectively and all interactions between staff and children reflect well the school values and children's rights. Relationships between staff and children are very positive as a result. Most children are respectful of each other and, supported by staff, they manage occasional conflict between one another effectively.
- Most children demonstrate a positive attitude to all aspects of school life. Most children work well in groups or pairs however, a minority of children require support to work independently. This minority of children find engaging in class discussion and staying focussed during teaching inputs and independent tasks challenging. Consequently, this is impacting negatively on the learning of their peers. Most children feel staff encourage them to do the best they can, however, staff need to now raise their expectations of all children's behaviour. This should result in a calmer, quieter classroom with increased levels of engagement and less low-level behaviours being seen.
- The headteacher has shared a helpful and comprehensive learning and teaching toolkit and a clear lesson model to demonstrate her expectations of high-quality learning and teaching. This provides staff with a shared understanding of the key aspects they should be implementing in daily lessons. She should continue to use this to support further improvements to the quality and consistency of learning and teaching.
- All staff provide clear explanations and instructions to support children to undertake learning activities. Staff share effectively the purpose of the lesson with children and discuss with them how they can be successful in their learning. Teachers make clear links to prior learning which supports children well to develop their understanding and build on learning from previous lessons. In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding and to recall key information. In a few lessons, teachers use questioning skilfully to support and extend children's thinking and curiosity. Consequently, most children are making progress in developing their higher order thinking skills. As planned, the headteacher and staff should continue to reflect using the toolkit and lesson model to achieve a shared understanding of the key features of high-quality lessons. Their agreed approach should be reflective of their unique context.
- Staff use digital technology well, such as the interactive whiteboard, to support their teaching. Children access digital devices regularly to support and enhance learning independently. This includes children who require additional support with their learning. For example, they play games to consolidate their learning, learn about coding and programming, and research and

present information using software. The headteacher should now create a clear and progressive digital learning pathway to guide staff in identifying appropriate learning for every child. Teachers should use this to support their planning and ensure children develop digital skills progressively across all stages.

- Staff have created spaces to support younger children to learn through play. However, staff are at the very early stages of providing rich play experiences that facilitate children to consolidate and deepen their learning. As they develop their skills in play pedagogy, staff should now engage with national guidance. In particular, they should review their use of spaces and provide an appropriate balance of adult-initiated and child-led experiences. These experiences will allow children to develop and apply their skills and knowledge in contexts of interest to them. In addition, staff should look at ways to extend this approach to allow all children to develop independent enquiry skills appropriate to children's age and stage.
- Staff use national and summative assessments to gather information on children's progress. Staff are at the early stages of using the outcomes of assessments to support planning for children's next steps in learning. The headteacher has progressed with plans to support staff to use assessment data, such as national standardised assessments, as part of their monitoring and tracking processes. This is supporting staff well to make better use of this data to inform their planning. The headteacher should work with staff now to create an assessment calendar that identifies key assessments and timescales for completion across different stages in the school. This will support staff to implement and use assessment materials more robustly. In addition, staff should use the outcome of all assessments to meet the needs of all children more effectively. Staff should review approaches to ensure appropriate pace and challenge for all children. The headteacher should provide professional learning to support teachers to develop a shared understanding of high-quality assessments when planning for learning and teaching. This will ensure children have opportunities to apply learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Older children are beginning to use agreed steps to success to support them to self and peer assess their learning. Staff should continue to model how to peer and self assess effectively to refine these skills in all curricular areas. Teachers provide oral and written feedback to support children to identify strengths and next steps, particularly in writing. Staff should now look to improve the quality of the feedback offered to support children to identify their strengths and to create targets for improvement.
- Teachers plan with reference to local authority frameworks for all curricular areas over different timescales. However, staff should now continue to streamline approaches to ensure greater clarity of the experiences and outcomes being planned for. Staff need to now ensure clear evaluations of planning to inform their next steps. Teachers plan well for children who require additional support with their learning and need to now involve children more in planning and evaluating their learning. All staff should ensure children achieving beyond expected levels are appropriately challenged in their learning.
- Teachers have engaged enthusiastically in moderation activity across their associated schools' group, most recently in writing. The headteacher has plans to work with the small schools' network and their partner school to develop moderation activity further. This session they plan to moderate approaches to planning across multi- composite classes. This should support teachers to plan learning experiences which are set at the right level of difficulty to ensure all children accelerate their progress.

- The headteacher meets with staff termly, using a new useful tracking system to monitor children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher is aware that teachers' judgements of attainment would be supported further by a more rigorous approach to the use of all data gathered. She has introduced this as part of the revised tracking process. She should continue to build staff confidence in using a range of data effectively.
- Staff are at the early stages of monitoring the impact of interventions. The headteacher and staff need to continue with plans to evaluate all interventions used to support children. This will allow them to identify which interventions are having the greatest impact on raising children's attainment. This should include using this data to identify gaps in learning clearly and to plan next steps to support these.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff use the local authority frameworks to guide them as they plan. Teachers plan experiences and outcomes across a range of different subjects. Staff encourage children to offer suggestions on how and what they learn which supports children to make connections across the curriculum. The headteacher has identified the need for well-planned, progressive pathways across all curricular areas. Once established, these should support teachers to plan learning activities progressively.
- Children from P1 to P7 learn French. Staff should now plan more progressively to allow children to build on their prior learning in French. The headteacher should now ensure that children receive their entitlement to the 1+2 modern languages programme.
- All children receive two hours of high-quality physical education each week which has a clear focus on developing skills. Staff use the community hall to support this.
- All children follow a programme of religious and moral education at all stages of the school. Most children engage well in developing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions alongside developing their own beliefs and values. Partners from the local church support staff to deliver religious education and observance. These partners support the delivery of assemblies, visit classes and support visits to the local church.
- Parents supported the development of the playground to enhance the facilities for children. They have worked with a mental health charity to build a mud kitchen as requested by the children. Staff make use of the school grounds and the local area routinely to offer learning opportunities out with the classroom. Staff have benefitted from local authority training in outdoor learning and support from a teacher-in-residence for a block of six weeks. Teachers should continue to develop a skills pathway to ensure outdoor learning is planned progressively and embedded in children's learning experiences.
- Children choose books enthusiastically from the well-stocked class and school libraries that provides a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Library books are organised according to difficulty and children use this to help them select books appropriately. Children are eager to select new books and thoroughly enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Teachers work effectively with colleagues at all stages of transition to support children well as they come to school from early years settings or move on to secondary school. At P1, staff work flexibly with families to organise joint visits for classroom experiences and work with the settings to share information. At P7, staff ensure there are experiences with their partner school prior during the session. For example, children join physical education lessons for a block and participate in a shared residential experience. Children requiring additional support with their learning benefit from enhanced engagement programmes with secondary schools to support them as they move on from P7.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- School staff communicate well with parents through regular newsletters and through online platforms. In addition, parents are given regular opportunities to discuss their child's learning through parents' meetings and shared learning events.
- Staff ensure that positive relationships are a central feature of supporting parental engagement. Most parents report that their child likes being at school and feel their child is making progress. Most parents say they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or challenges and the school takes their views into account.
- Almost all parents feel they are kept well informed by the work of the Parent Council. Almost all families are represented on the Parent Council and most feel encouraged to be involved in their work. The Parent Council have been highly successful in raising funds to support children's experiences through activity such as the community art show and Christmas Fayre. Their successful fundraising has supported improvements to the school grounds and outdoor learning experiences as well as subsidising trips for all children such as to the pantomime.

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, 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 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

- Children and staff enjoy positive and caring relationships. Staff use their knowledge of the context of the school and families to support children effectively. As a result, children experience a very supportive culture and ethos. Across the school, most children demonstrate respectful behaviours. Over recent years there have been no incidents of exclusion. Staff support a few children well to regulate their emotions when they find situations challenging. Staff adapt learning environments well to ensure that classrooms are not overstimulating. They develop scripts for children which help staff to respond in a consistent way to support children. All classrooms have quiet, calm areas which children use confidently. These strategies are ensuring children settle to learn in class.
- Children's understanding of their rights, and the need to respect the rights of others, has been enhanced through the whole school focus on the United Nations Charter for the Rights of the Child. Children are very proud of their recent accreditation for their work on understanding their rights. Staff and children have developed a school charter to promote and develop their understanding of inclusion and respect. This is supporting children well to have a good understanding of their rights and those of others.
- Almost all children are developing their understanding of wellbeing through assemblies and surveys. Children talk positively about how they have opportunities to share with staff how they are feeling through emotional check-ins and wellbeing surveys. Children know that staff identify and act on any concerns shared. Children feel staff care for them and trust that adults will listen if they are worried or upset. Staff should now track children's progress in health and wellbeing. They should use this information now to identify, record and evaluate the supports offered.
- Most children benefit from a health and wellbeing curriculum that supports them in leading a healthy lifestyle. Children understand and articulate the importance of healthy eating and how this contributes to their ability to learn. This understanding is developed further through children's engagement in growing produce in the school playground, which is then cooked in school. Staff link this work well to children's literacy and numeracy learning in class. Staff follow national advice and guidance effectively to support children to learn about relationships, sexual health and parenthood. As a result, children develop knowledge and skills in all aspects of health and wellbeing well.
- Most children feel staff help them to make informed choices to improve their physical health. Most children engage successfully in a range of physical activities supported by community and sports partners. For example, older children participate in bowling lessons which leads to an annual community competition. Staff offer lunchtime clubs for children, such as football and tennis, which is helping them to develop skills in teamwork.

- The headteacher ensures that all staff have ongoing professional learning on wellbeing, neurodiversity and improving children's learning environments. This is helping all staff to be patient, consistent and caring in their approach to supporting children. As a result, children are more engaged in their learning and able to access more areas of the curriculum. Staff have introduced a common emotional framework to help support children with their self-regulation. Children speak positively about this framework which helps them to describe their emotions confidently. Staff should continue to develop this successful work to support all children to manage their emotions independently.
- Staff fully understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities to ensure positive outcomes for children. All staff have up-to-date training relating to safeguarding and child protection. The headteacher ensures that all safeguarding procedures are in place and revised as required. She monitors this well as part of their annual quality assurance activity. The headteacher ensures partners are aware of their responsibilities and the school's approaches to ensuring children's safety. This includes sharing what to do if they have concerns about a child's wellbeing. As a result, children's wellbeing needs are met well.
- All staff know children and families very well. Staff work with partners effectively to enhance the support they offer to children. The headteacher has created a useful overview for the whole school to identify the needs of all children. Staff generate children's plans well where they identify appropriate targets and actions. Staff should now ensure plans are reviewed and evaluated regularly to clearly identify the progress children have made. This will help staff to ensure all children make appropriate progress in their learning and wellbeing. The headteacher should ensure the inclusion of parent and child perspectives within plans. This will strengthen children's ownership of their targets.
- Children benefit from the school's effective partnerships with external agencies and the community. Partners speak very positively about how staff engage with them to implement considered support for children. For example, paired reading sessions are organised weekly which is having a positive impact on children's confidence in reading aloud. Staff should continue to develop their engagement with partners to support further the learning and wellbeing needs of all children.
- Senior leaders monitor incidents and allegations of bullying well and take positive steps to mitigate these. Staff respond timeously to incidents to resolve them. Going forward, staff should discuss and respond quickly to any concerns from children. This will ensure children are fully aware that their voice has been listened to.
- 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.
- Children are developing their awareness, understanding and appreciation of different religious beliefs and cultures. Staff promote and develop this understanding through class work and school assemblies. Most children have a clear understanding of inclusion and discuss this as one of their school values. Children describe how they support each other in the school and are aware that children need different support at different times. Staff should continue to strengthen children's knowledge about equalities, diversity and inclusion through well-planned and progressive opportunities. This should help to support children to feel able to better recognise and challenge discrimination and intolerance when it arises.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

- The school roll comprises of a small number of children across P1 to P7. As a result, attainment and progress will be expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Across the school, a majority of children are on track to achieve nationally expected levels of attainment. A minority of children across the school are capable of making greater progress and require more challenge in their learning. Most children with additional support needs make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.
- Senior leaders recognise the need to improve the accuracy of teacher professional judgements about children's attainment levels. Teachers should continue to develop their use of assessment and engage in regular moderation to improve the reliability of judgements.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, a few children make good progress, and a majority of children make satisfactory progress in literacy and English. However, a majority of children could be making better progress. Staff should ensure they increase pace and challenge for all children.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, a minority of children could improve their skills in listening to the views of others.
- Most younger children listen to others well and use eye contact appropriately. All younger children hear and say single sounds, blends and rhyming words well. Most older children show respect for the views of others in discussions. They ask and respond well to different types of questions for example, literal and evaluative questions. Most older children enjoy presenting to their peers but would benefit from opportunities to learn more about debating skills.

Reading

- Across the school, children have a positive view of reading and there is a strong culture of reading for pleasure. They select books from the school library and are provided with many opportunities to read.
- Most younger children read simple sentences with confidence and expression. They read from left to right and use simple punctuation to support reading with expression such as when reading speech. They talk confidently about their favourite books and rhymes. Most older children read fluently using appropriate expression and pace. They use decoding skills well to read unfamiliar vocabulary. Almost all older children identify their favourite authors and books

confidently and explain their reason for these preferences. Most older children describe confidently the differing features of fiction and non-fiction texts. They describe accurately the features of books such as characters and setting. They would benefit from exploring the plots of texts.

Writing

- Across the school, all children benefit from regular experience of writing through a wide variety of genres. They describe their learning about settings and characters confidently. Staff should now ensure children improve their writing and presentation skills.
- Younger children write simple sentences using a capital letter, finger spaces and a full stop. They use their knowledge of letter sounds and blends well to attempt to write unfamiliar words. Most older children have a strong understanding of a range of punctuation and grammar and explain confidently how they would use these in their writing. A majority of older children use a wide range of vocabulary very effectively, to suit a variety of genres such as persuasive vocabulary. Older children need greater opportunity to develop their skills in writing poetry.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. A minority of children would benefit from further challenge to ensure they make the best possible progress.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children count forwards and backwards confidently. They double and half numbers to 20 accurately. They would benefit with further work on naming and using coins up to £2. They identify simple o'clock times but are not confident in relating these to their day. Children have a strong understanding of place value. They demonstrate this well across the various CfE levels observed. Children identify accurately coins and notes to £20 and choose different combinations to pay for items. They need to develop their ability to work out change accurately. Older children have a sound knowledge of fractions and percentages. They calculate perimeters accurately but need support to calculate area. They complete word problems confidently using the correct calculations. They are less confident in rounding numbers to two decimal places.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children name two-dimensional (2D) shapes but are not confident in naming common three-dimensional (3D) objects. As children progress, they successfully identify 2D shapes and 3D objects. A next step would be to describe the properties of 3D objects. Children identify lines of symmetry within a shape confidently. They are less confident in identifying right angles. Older children calculate a range of angles and should now work on identifying missing angles.

Information handling

- Children at all stages interpret information well from a range of graphs and diagrams appropriate to their stage and accurately extract key information from these diagrams. Older children use the language of probability appropriately to describe the likelihood of events happening. Children at both first and second levels would benefit from using digital technologies to develop their data handling skills further.

Attainment over time

- School attendance is 95% and has been consistently above the national average over previous sessions. Senior leaders track attendance and late-coming closely and act promptly. They work closely with families when issues arise and put in place interventions to support individual children. This is having a positive impact on improving attendance.

- Staff track children's attainment in literacy and numeracy termly. Overall, school data shows that most children make expected progress as they move through the school. However, this data is not accurate for all children. The headteacher should now develop approaches further to improve the gathering of accurate data for all children. The headteacher has plans in place to ensure more robust tracking and monitoring of attainment to ensure that all children make the best possible progress. These new processes should help staff to record all attainment accurately and better identify gaps in children's learning. Staff should ensure they track children's attainment and progress in learning across all curricular areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements both in and out of school are valued and celebrated at assemblies. Staff praise children who display the school values and children talk proudly of this recognition. Last session, most children participated in a club during the school day. Older children are keen to organise clubs linked to their interests at lunchtime and a few children have started clubs for their peers. These clubs are enabling children to demonstrate communication and collaboration skills. The headteacher and staff now need to track all children's achievements and the skills they are developing to ensure equity of opportunity for all children. This should ensure that no child is missing out and that children's skills are being developed in a thorough way.

Equity for all learners

- All staff understand the context of their school well. Families benefit from the link created with a local supermarket which supports the provision of school uniform. In addition, staff store pre-used uniforms in good condition in school. Staff encourage parents to use these resources to support recycling and reduce the financial burden on families.
- The headteacher uses the school's PEF allocation to provide additional staffing and resources to support children to improve their attainment in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher has a clear rationale for the use of PEF. Staff now need to measure and evaluate more effectively the impact of PEF interventions in closing identified gaps in children's attainment. This will help demonstrate more robustly which supports are having a positive impact on accelerating children's progress in attainment and achievement.

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.

COMMITTEE: Education & Children’s Services Committee

MEETING DATE: 18 November 2025

BY: Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities

REPORT TITLE: Head Teacher Appointments

REPORT STATUS: Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

2.1 Note the undernoted Head Teacher appointments (Appendix 1, 2 and 3).

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Following interviews, the following Head Teacher appointments are intimated Innerwick Primary School & Stenton Primary School, Appendix 1, St Martin’s RC Primary School, Appendix 2 and Campie Primary School, Appendix 3:

School	Appointee	Commencement Date	Previous Post and School
Innerwick Primary School & Stenton Primary School	Amy Kay	27 June 2025	Depue Head Teacher, Gullane Primary School
St Martin’s RC Primary School	Claire Palmer-Fairbairn	16 September 2025	Depute Head Teacher (The Hub) Sanderson’s Wynd Primary School
Campie Primary School	Debbie Mercer	1 October 2025	Head Teacher Yester Primary School

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance: None

5.2 Human Resources: None

5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None

5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix 1 (Innerwick and Stenton Primary School), Appendix 2 (St Martin's RC Primary School) and Appendix 3 (Campie Primary School)

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Name	Nicola McDowell
Designation	Head of Education
Email	nmcdowell@eastlothian.gov.uk
Date	8 October 2025

Head of Service Approval

Name	Nicola McDowell
Designation	Head of Education
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	30 October 2025

Department of Education & Children's Services

POST: HEAD TEACHER

**SCHOOL: INNERWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL & STENTON PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

The undernoted candidates were called for interview for the above post on 18 June 2025, in John Muir House, Haddington, East Lothian.

Candidate 1: *Name redacted*

Candidate 2: Amy Kay

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 - Amy Kay

Signed: *Nicola McDowell*
Head of Education

Date: 18 June 2025

Department of Education & Children's Services

POST: HEAD TEACHER

SCHOOL: ST MARTIN'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The undernoted candidates were called for interview for the above post on 19 June 2025, in John Muir House, Haddington, East Lothian.

Candidate 1: *Name redacted*

Candidate 2: C Palmer-Fairbairn

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 – C Palmer-Fairbairn

Signed: *Nicola McDowell*
Head of Education

Date: 19 June 2025

Department of Education & Children's Services

POST: HEAD TEACHER

SCHOOL: CAMPIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The undernoted candidate was called for interview for the above post on 11 September 2025, in John Muir House, Haddington, East Lothian.

Candidate : D Mercer

Following the 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: D Mercer

Signed: *Nicola McDowell*
Head of Education

Date: 11 September 2025