

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

Annual Plan & Report

**National Improvement Framework &
Reducing Inequalities of Outcome**

August 2021



The council aims to help West Lothian's children and young people make the most of their opportunities and to go on to achieve positive outcomes in their lives



WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

ANNUAL PLAN AND REPORT – NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK AND REDUCING INEQUALITIES OF OUTCOME

Plan and report prepared to meet the requirements of the Standards in Scotland's Schools
etc. Act 2000.

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1. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Education authorities must prepare and publish annual plans describing the steps they intend to take, during the planning period. The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, as amended by the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, requires Education Authorities to provide an annual progress report and annual plan setting out:-

- the improvements the Council has made to address the four key priorities of the National Improvement Framework (NIF)
- the steps the Council will take to achieve the four key priorities of the National Improvement Framework
- the steps the Council will take to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage
- the steps the Council will take to involve a wide range of stakeholders, including headteachers, pupils, teaching and non-teaching unions, and partners, in the discharge of the new statutory duty ('the Socio-Economic Duty') which requires the Council to continually consider whether the Council can do more to help those pupils impacted by socio-economic disadvantage to achieve equality of outcome, and to give due weight to the outcome of those considerations when delivering school education.
- the plan must also set out any educational benefits the authority consider will result from taking all of these steps.

The four key priorities of the NIF are:-

- to improve attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
- to close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- to improve health and wellbeing
- to improve employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations

2. INTRODUCTION – WEST LOTHIAN CONTEXT

This Plan and Report fulfil the Council's reporting obligations in terms of the Standards In Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000.

The content of the plan and report are consistent with the [Council's Corporate Plan](#) and the Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement, as well as the Education Services Management Plan and the [West Lothian Raising Attainment Strategy](#).

The content of the plan and report are also consistent with authority and school recovery plans, and actions taken to address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on education in general, and the National Improvement Framework priorities in particular.

The Plan will contribute to meeting the performance targets set in the Corporate Plan and Raising Attainment Strategy.

This consistent suite of plans and strategies focus on the Council's key strategic outcomes, aligned to the National Improvement Framework, of achieving excellence by raising the attainment of all, ensure equity through closing the gap in education outcomes between children from the most and least deprived backgrounds, and improving positive destinations.

West Lothian Council is committed to achieving these outcomes for all children and young people through [Moving Forward in Learning \(MFIL\)](#). This approach centres on collaboration and networking to achieve effective school improvement and raise attainment, supporting the principle of improvement as a shared responsibility. Collaboration strategies include practices which increase the capacity of schools and their partners to implement the changes necessary to secure improvement. West Lothian Education Services has an ongoing commitment to promoting and embedding a culture of professional collaboration within and between schools. This also extends to having a clear desire to work with, learn with and influence improvements across our Regional Improvement Collaborative, with Early Years' Partner Providers and at a national level. Well established and effective collaborations are in place, which lead to continuous improvement in West Lothian schools and early years settings.



3. ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Section 3.1 – Step to Reduce Inequalities of Outcome Experienced by Pupils as a Result of Socio-economic Disadvantage

3.1.1 Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

West Lothian is committed to ensuring excellence and equity for all children and young people. The council is committed to improving attainment for all children and young people in line with the National Improvement Framework and through the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.

West Lothian Council has been part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme since 2015 and receives funding for three schools through the Schools Programme (St Kentigern's Academy, St Thomas' Primary and Bridgend Primary), Pupil Equity Funding for all schools and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund to specifically address the 'poverty related attainment gap'.

The strategic approach to Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has secured very good processes and good progress in addressing a wide range of attainment gap issues. All schools have produced a poverty proofing statement highlighting what they do to mitigate the cost of the school day. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is also used well to alleviate costs including clothing, access to digital devices and activities to assist with physical and mental wellbeing.

Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing data analysis provides clear evidence that the use of PEF has impacted positively on the experiences of children and young people, and on reducing inequalities in both the Broad General Education and Senior Phase.

Each school produces individual Impact Plans which identify their gaps, detail their actions and ensure outcomes are measured on a regular basis. Schools continue to focus their interventions on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and more generally across learning to improve outcomes for our most disadvantaged learners.

An element of all schools' Recovery Planning for 2020/21, required the use of robust tracking and monitoring to identify and target interventions for most disadvantaged pupils in order to mitigate the impact of school closure periods. This approach enables staff to focus on children living in quintiles 1 and 2 to ensure a focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. Head teachers use data to understand which children and young people would benefit from targeted support, and to monitor and track learners' progress over time.

Officers reported to Education Executive in March 2021 the finding of Education Scotland's Local Authority Report: West Lothian 'Scottish Attainment Challenge: 2015-2020 Impact report <https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Di%8Em%7F%90>

Effective activities and interventions are responsive to parent needs, school context and community issues. There have been significant benefits observed during school closures with families receiving support with food deliveries, activities, devices, advice for finance/housing, clothing. Families have been willing to accept support from Family Support Worker due to strong relationships already established.

The delivery of remote learning, teaching and assessment was underpinned by the principle of equity, and provision was made to ensure that pupils impacted by poverty had access to appropriate resources to maximise engagement with learning and to address the poverty-related attainment gap. The year-on-year investment in infrastructure and hardware for all

schools by West Lothian has ensured that all schools are well placed to support digital learning for all pupils. Schools have continued to utilise and distribute all hardware and devices available to them to ensure pupil access for those learning in school and at home. Since August 2020, as result of the Digital Inclusion Fund, 3000 additional devices were distributed to schools to support pupils at risk of being disadvantaged by lack of access to technology at home. In addition to this, 200 identified households were provided with routers (supporting multiple devices) and a year's unlimited data to ensure all children and young people have the internet access they need to access learning.



Section 3.2 – Steps to seek and have regard to the views of stakeholders

3.2.1 Systematic approach to seeking and having regard to the views of stakeholders

West Lothian Education Services has taken a systematic approach to seeking and having regard to the views pupils, parents/carers, staff, representatives of trades unions, voluntary organisations and any other persons the authority thinks appropriate in relation to the authority's strategic decision making.

The West Lothian Parental Involvement and Engagement Framework (2018-2021) recognises that the quality of involvement and engagement that parents have with their child's learning is a key factor to ensuring successful outcomes. West Lothian schools have used a variety of existing, adapted and new approaches to engage and support parents /carers during the period of school closures and to support the return to school.

Regular and supportive communication with parents/carers has been critical during the past 12 months. To ensure clarity across all schools and promote shared understanding amongst parents/carers, schools have been provided with central communication to inform and support parents/carers. Different mediums of communication have been utilised to ensure all parents and carers can access key information, including the use of letters, videos, animations and Sway presentations. Schools personalise central communication to reach all families and strengthen existing strong relationships. Schools outlined their unique communication strategy within their individual School Recovery Plans for 2020/21 in consultation with parents/carers.

In response to the challenges of hosting traditional parents' evenings in school, all schools introduced teacher-parent video conferencing. Feedback has indicated higher level of attendance at parental consultations as a result of this new and accessible approach. As a result of the positive feedback from parents and staff, this will continue to inform school engagement plans with parents/carers in the future.

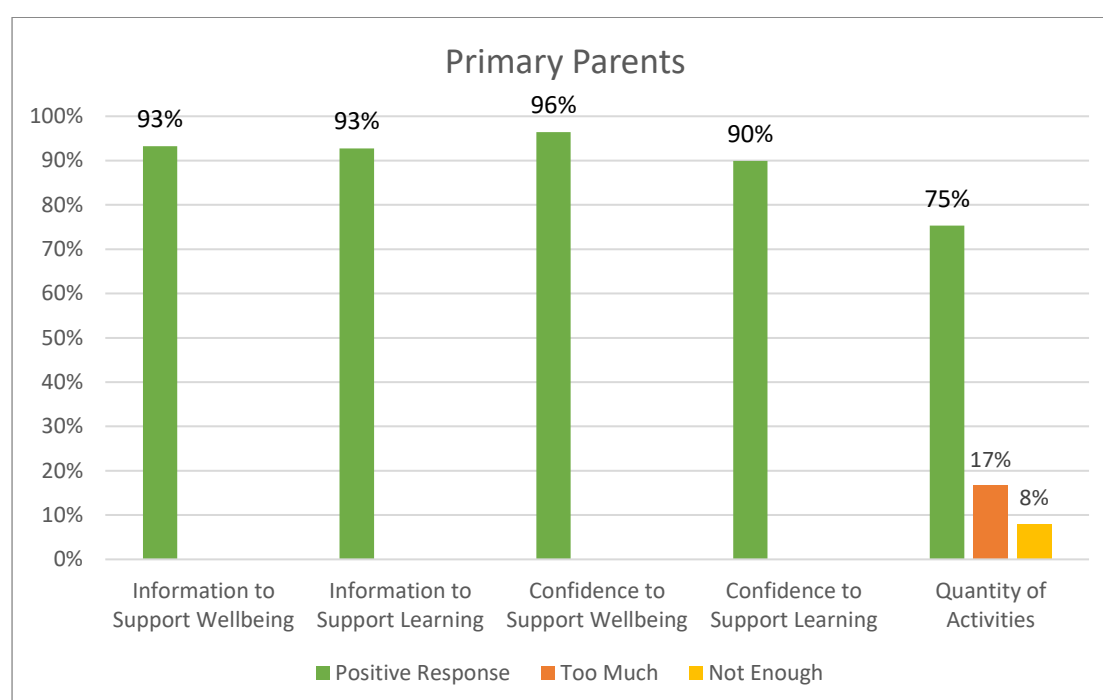
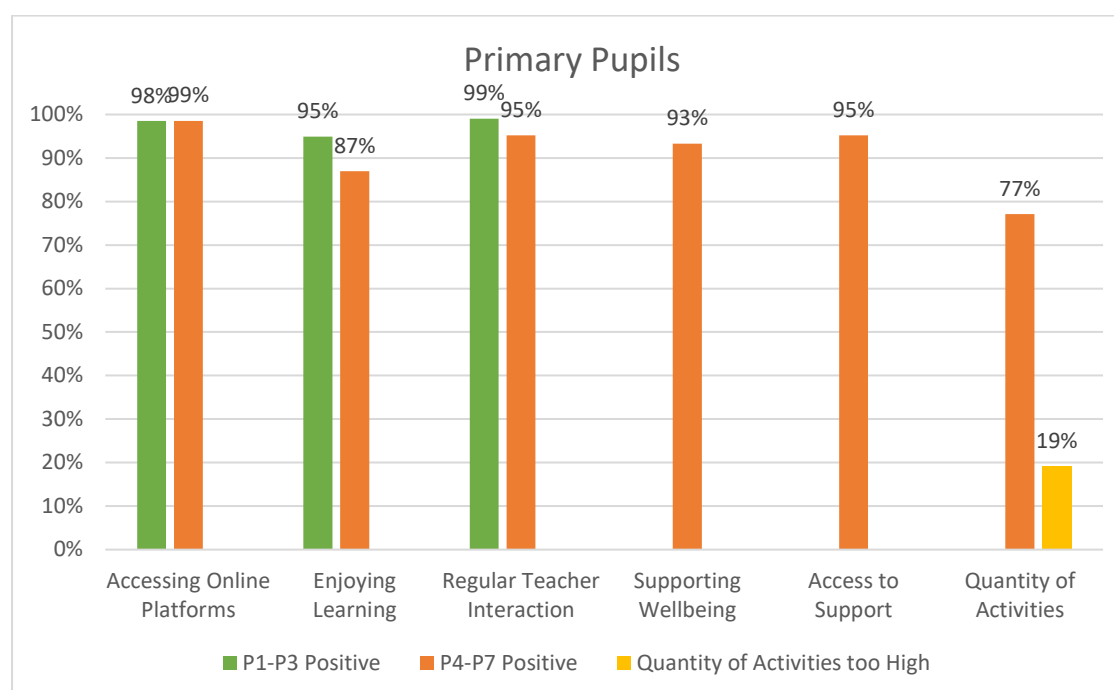
Robust tracking was in place at school and local authority levels to monitor access to home learning provision, engagement with learning and contact with families during periods of school closures. Schools worked in partnership with a range of agencies to identify and target extensive support for families. All schools issued devices to families to enable access to online learning, work collaboratively to provide stationery and other key resources to families and utilise community locations to ensure wide access to key resources. In the period of school closures, schools contacted families of identified vulnerable pupils on a weekly or fortnightly basis to respond to any support required from education or other agencies.

Learner and parent/carer surveys were issued at regular intervals to evaluate the learning provision and inform individual school plans. Feedback from surveys allowed schools and central officers to use a variety of existing, adapted and new approaches to engage and support parent/carers in their child's learning.

In January 2021, a specific learner survey was designed to capture information regarding remote learning. This included gathering information on access and confidence using digital platforms, the level of challenge and amount of learning activities provided, regularity of contact and feedback from teachers, and access to support for learning and/or wellbeing.

The parent/carer survey (January 2021) was designed to capture information regarding access to information and confidence levels in supporting their child's emotional wellbeing. The survey also gathered information regarding learning experiences, including information received, confidence in supporting aspects of learning and the quantity of learning experiences provided.

The primary survey has had 5960 pupil responses and 4033 parent/carer responses.



Key strengths identified within the primary sector include –

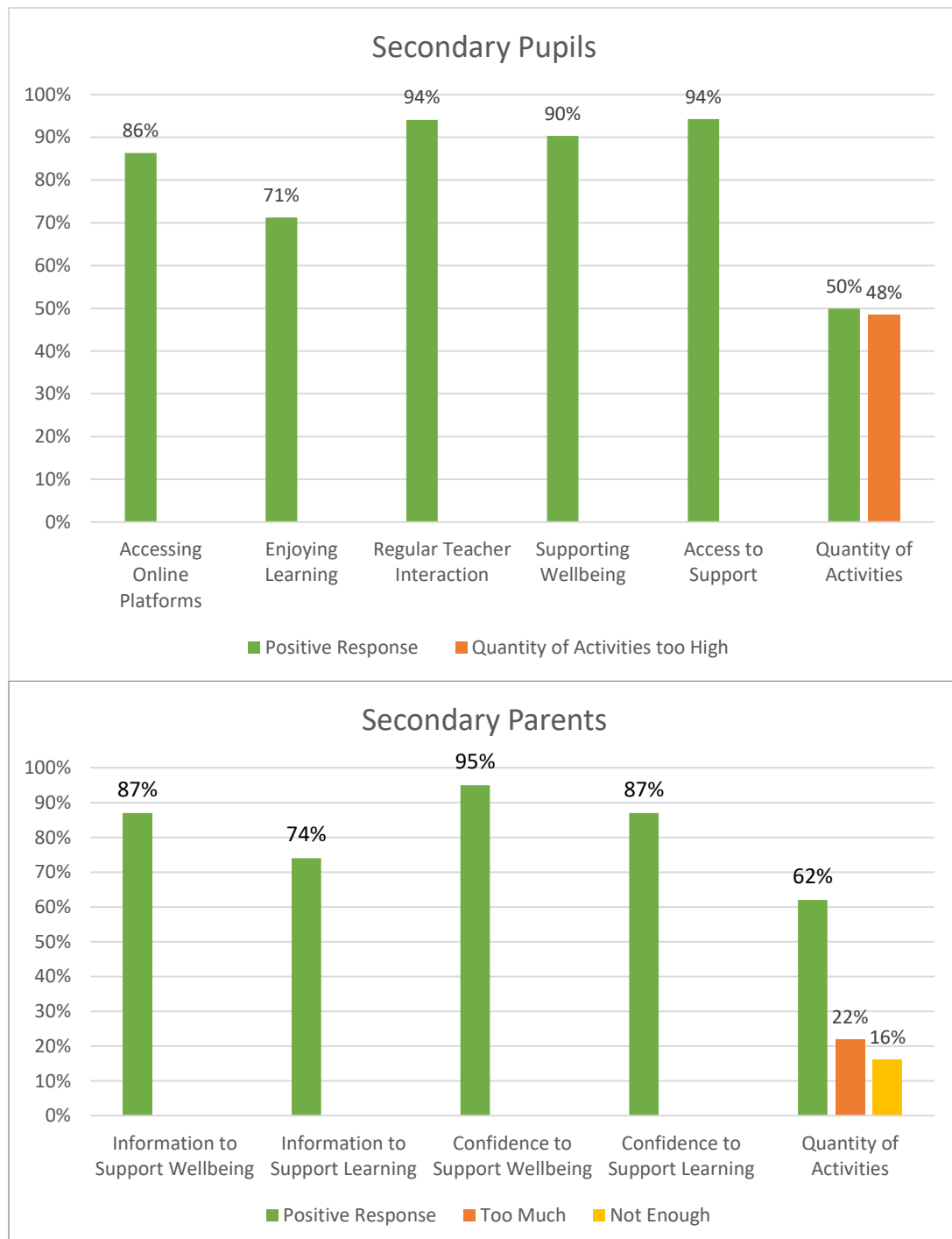
- Access to and confidence levels in using the online digital platforms is ensuring daily engagement with school staff
- High levels of learner engagement in the learning experiences and activities at all stages, following the introduction of SeeSaw for P1-P3 learners
- Regular access to support and feedback from teachers in order to progress learning
- Learning experiences are appropriately challenging for almost all learners

- Almost all learners know how to access support for their learning and/or wellbeing if required
- Parents/carers feel informed and confident in supporting their child's learning and emotional wellbeing

Area identified for further consideration –

- Almost 20% of both learners and parents/carers have responded that they feel the quantity of learning experiences/activities is too much.

The secondary survey has had 1488 pupil responses and 681 parent/carer responses.



Key strengths identified within the secondary sector include –

- Learners and parents/carers feel that remote learning is communicated clearly, resulting in increased confidence accessing and undertaking remote learning
- Learners and parents/carers feel that schools are offering a learning experience that is varied, enjoyable and at the right level of challenge
- Parents/carers feel that their child's school is responsive to concerns from home and putting in place effective interventions to break down barriers including targeted individual support.
- Online events that schools have put in place to support parents/carers have received positive feedback

Areas identified for further consideration –

- The workload demands on learners, particularly in the Senior Phase
- Explore further interventions that can be put in place to support learners' wellbeing as remote learning continues
- Continue to evolve the professional learning offer for staff to continue to deliver remote learning, teaching and assessment that is innovative, creative and meets the needs of all learners

During session 2020/21, and in response to feedback from head teachers, weekly Leadership Meetings were introduced between Headteachers and members of Education Service's Senior Management Team. This facilitated regular updates regarding school COVID-19 guidance, response to changes to senior phase qualification models, discuss all aspects to the improvement of the quality of education provision and improvements in performance. Headteachers, in turn, have ensured that staff are regularly updated on national and local developments and utilise the knowledge and experience of their staff teams to inform school improvement activities.

In April 2021, as part of the national Educational Psychology Research programme with Education Scotland, views were gathered from pupils and teachers on those aspects of remote learning that had improved the learning experience and that participant would wish to continue to access going forwards. Each school was provided with school specific data regarding their responses which could be used to inform improvement planning and the full report will be shared across schools and published as part of the national research programme.

As a result of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions throughout session 2020/21 extensive developments have taken place in the delivery of online collaborative professional learning for all staff. All staff utilised the tools access via Glow services with a particular focus on the use of Microsoft 365, Teams and Onenote. Staff were supported via extensive professional learning opportunities and a vibrant professional collaborative Microsoft Team #Digiken with almost 1100 West Lothian teachers' active participants. The development of a #Digilearn Sharepoint site with staff training materials and user experience case studies has further enhanced collaborative opportunities for staff.

The West Lothian LNCT operates in a positive and collegiate manner, with the professional associations playing a positive role in the formulation of education policy. Arrangements to consult the non-teaching unions are in place at council level. Both the teaching and non-teaching unions played an extremely constructive and positive role in assisting the authority respond to the reopening of schools in August 2020 and the response to further school closures and delivery of remote learning in January 2021, and contributed to the positive outcomes in terms of learning and teaching and health and wellbeing.

The Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel and Education Executive both have representatives of teachers and parents/carers, who can contribute to the formulation of policy, and participate in decision making of strategic issues. The Council's standing orders also allow representatives of the non-teaching unions, the senior people's forum and the voluntary sector to attend and participate in meetings of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.



Section 3.3 – Steps Taken in Pursuance of the National Improvement Framework

3.3.1 Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

The strategic approach to securing improvement in attainment has ensured very good progress.

The Central Pedagogy Team support schools to deliver high quality learning and teaching experiences which secure progression in Literacy and Numeracy across the Broad General Education (BGE). The team has a focus on providing clear and accessible guidance and support to schools' improvements in Literacy and Numeracy. This has enabled schools and through that individual practitioners to strengthen the ways in which the Curriculum Progression Pathways are reflected in practice from early level through to the end of the BGE. A key element of this work has been the digitalisation and the rapid expansion of approaches to professional dialogue and CLPL. So too, the team has created online learning spaces to motivate purposeful, agentic learning through engaging cross curricular challenges and through the use of the Progression Pathways. These spaces have evolved from the initial school closure period March to June 2020 and have been further reformed, in response to learner engagement and feedback, in January 2021

Investment in developing staff capacity and rigorous associated systems to analyse data locally and centrally, impact positively on the accuracy of teacher professional judgement and the identification of a manageable number of strategic priorities to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Robust tracking and monitoring drives improvement across all sectors.

Highly effective network structures in both Literacy and Numeracy reaching from Early Learning and Childcare to senior phase with associated Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) continue to provide strategic cohesion to improvement priorities. Investment in informing priorities has cemented strong connectivity with Regional Improvement Collaborative CLPL. Reading Schools Accreditation has been piloted very successfully and will now be offered widely across the authority.

Staff at all levels and across all sectors feel empowered to inform and contribute to strategic and local improvement priorities in both literacy and numeracy. Champion post holders in both literacy and numeracy impact positively on schools' capacity for improvement through sharing clear, key messages.

3.3.2 Improvements in children and young people's health and wellbeing

West Lothian Council values the importance of health and wellbeing (HWB) of children and young people and of all those in the educational communities to which they belong. Across all schools and early years' centres therefore, our health and wellbeing curriculum is the responsibility of all and is recognised as a core driver for closing gaps and raising attainment for all. The strategic approach to delivering improvements in HWB has secured very good progress in this area.

In session 2020/21 the HWB central development team supported schools in ensuring that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attitudes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future, as health and wellbeing is central to effective learning.

Our HWB curriculum rationale for ensuring the progression of high-quality learning outcomes for all pupils, has been significantly challenged throughout the pandemic but our schools have responded positively by reviewing our HWB rationale and activities and placing our efforts on re-focussing solely on delivering a framework for West Lothian's schools with a key message

that HWB was at the front and centre of our recovery strategy.

The core recovery plan delivered in 2020/21 consisted of 4 key stages;

Stage 1 - Self- reporting using online check-ins to ascertain pupil and staff wellbeing;

Stage 2 - Baseline data analysis through the central tracking and monitoring of all pupil wellbeing

Stage 3 - Trusted Adult Approach adopted in every school for every child

Stage 4 - Targeted and universal interventions for pupils reporting with wellbeing issues.

The success of the West Lothian recovery model was its primary purpose and focus on ensuring physical safety and mental and emotional wellbeing for all. The HWB central team guided schools through online webinars and tutorials, creating a robust HWB digital learning space for staff, with hyperlinks to excellent practice in risk assessment information, safety advice, mental health strategies and support groups, bereavement groups and links to pupil counselling service and online tutorials and live support from the HWB team.

A new West Lothian HWB tracking and monitoring system established a robust database for tracking HWB progress of pupils.

Over time, the WLC recovery model is providing all schools with a very clear rationale and framework for ensuring that almost all pupils returned to school supported, safe and ready to learn. Feedback and data from staff and pupils has been very positive and the practices developed, are now firmly established as excellent practice and remain at the centre of our strategy for HWB.

The progression of skills and attributes to promote confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and actions has been systematically planned by all schools, supported significantly by guidance from the central HWB team, through a series of exciting and innovative curriculum stories, tasks and challenges related to food and health, wellbeing indicators and physical health and education, providing valuable opportunities to develop skills in literacy and numeracy.

In response to the school counselling funding programme, The Educational Psychology Service worked in collaboration with local counselling providers to ensure that access to counselling was established across all secondary schools and for all children aged 10 years and over in the primary school sector. The council is currently working with 3 main providers across secondary schools: SMILE counselling, Therapeutic Counselling Services (TCS) and Your Space. Each school receives additional funding for 3 full days of counselling. Some schools have augmented this through the use of their devolved funding sources to increase access depending on level of need identified. Each school has its own negotiated pattern of delivery which includes a mix of 1-1 in-person / videocall counselling, groupwork, work with parents and support for staff where negotiated. This has led to increased access to services for children and young people who require this targeted intervention support. Initial impact reporting is demonstrating positive impact of services for children and young people. Formal reporting to Scottish Government commenced, jointly with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead Officer in July 2021.

The multi-agency Wellbeing Recovery Group has been used to facilitate highly effective multi-agency consideration and matching of need to services. As part of the multi-agency response to Covid-19, additional work has been undertaken in partnership with local third sector providers to provide additional supports for vulnerable children and young people who require intervention to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. The council's Inclusion and Support Service works in close partnership with third sector organisations and the Wellbeing Recovery Group to ensure appropriate and timely interventions are in place to meet identified needs of children, young people and families.

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

Good progress continues to be made in developing strategic approaches to securing sustained improvements in this area.

Both nationally and locally the restrictions imposed at the key points in the year as a result of the pandemic have had an impact on young people. The strategies and interventions which have been put in place are effective in targeting key groups of young people in West Lothian, in raising their aspirations for the future and in supporting them to attain positive destinations:

92.9% of school leavers went into a positive destination as recorded in October 2020. This was 1.9% less than in 2018/19 and places West Lothian 15th in Scotland. This was 0.3% less than our Virtual Comparator and the Forth Valley and West Lothian Collaborative and 0.5% below the Scottish Average. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the positive destinations across Scotland were impacted resulting in a decrease in the number of young people entering a positive destination. West Lothian saw a reduction of 1.9% and nationally there was a similar picture with 1.1% fewer young people entering a positive destination.

79.1% of young people who were Looked After at the point of leaving school moved into a positive destination which was 2.3% below the National Average and an increase of 5.9% on last year.

98.0% of black and minority ethnic young people moved into a positive destination. This was an increase of 5.5% from last year and 2.7% above the Scottish average.

88.4% of young people identified as having significant learning needs moved into a positive destination which was 1.2% below the National Average of 89.6%.

89.29% of young people from SIMD Quintile 1 described in the report as the most deprived 20% have gone into a positive destination. This is a 3.1% increase since 2015/16 and is above our Virtual Comparator figure of 88.0%.

The gap between the most and least deprived 20% has continued to close and is reported at 5.47% which is a considerable improvement from 2015/16 when it was 10.71%.

18.49% of young people are in employment which is above the Scottish average of 16.19%, and above our Virtual Comparator of 16.68%. There was a 1.0% increase in the number of young people participating in training and a 3.07% increase in the number entering Higher Education. There was a reduction in the number of young people entering Employment in comparison to 2018/19, but this was 2.3% above the National Average and 1.8% above our Virtual Comparator.

Due to effective implementation of the strategic plan and very close partnership working between CLD Youth Services MCMC Team, School staff, Economic Development staff and Skills Development Scotland. There were no unknown destinations.

Key strategies and interventions included:

Key Worker allocation targeted to provide increased support to secondary schools depending on need identified using their Risk Matrix. School and Skills Development Scotland staff also use this data to track, monitor and support pupils well in advance of their statutory leaving date.

The partnerships with West Lothian and Oatridge Colleges provide a wide range of high-quality options for school pupils and helps to create a successful transition from school to Higher and Further Education.

The allocation of support funding to enable each school to appoint a Developing the Young Workforce Coordinator with responsibility for improving links between the school and locally based employers continues to help influence the curriculum and link it to the world of work.

Bespoke Schools Vocational Programmes for young people who are Looked After to help support their transition into a positive destination have continued to run.

The Raising Attainment and Corporate Strategies along with Developing the Young Workforce continue to prove successful in preparing pupils from West Lothian's secondary schools to enter into a positive destination after leaving school.

The team continue to have a targeted approach and work with individual schools with respect to priority groups (LAC, ASN etc.) where there is a significant gap in performance. Regular support and guidance visits will be timetabled throughout the academic year.

The West Lothian Employability Award was adapted to allow for the pandemic. The young people can either complete the award with work experience, without work experience or with a virtual work experience.

3.3.4 Actions Taken to Mitigate Risks Associated with Pandemic in 2020-2021

As a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on school education and the possible impact that interruptions may have on the progress and attainment of children and young people in the future, the following responsive control measures were put in place.

Initial Period of Remote Learning March – June 2020:

During the initial school closure period, West Lothian Council continued to provide the following key activities and deliver positive outcomes through engagement with school leaders and directly with teaching staff through virtual platforms:

- Curriculum Recovery Maps for Health and Wellbeing (HWB), Literacy and Numeracy were developed to guide and support schools in these key areas of the curriculum. The recovery maps support the delivery of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment, providing progression pathways, practical resources and relevant professional learning.
- High quality professional learning was provided to all teaching and support staff across the Council to develop confidence and share practice in using digital tools to support learning. West Lothian's priority for raising attainment and delivering positive outcomes for all learners continued to ensure the highest quality professional learning. This supported education staff to provide remote learning that delivers the core principles of Scotland's curriculum and the four fundamental capacities remain a priority for West Lothian schools. Through structured support, our schools are provided with latest national and local resource materials and collaborative opportunities that will provide necessary professional learning to ensure effective remote learning. Professional learning for staff has continued throughout Session 2020-21.
- Tracking of contact and support for vulnerable pupils was put in place.
- Detailed guidance was provided to ensure that all schools had a 2020/21 School Improvement and Recovery Phase Plan in place by June 2020. These plans were

informed by national priorities and local, contextual data analysis of attainment and online learner engagement.

- Parent/carer information and support materials with a focus on wellbeing and supporting learning at home were created. As a result of the analysis of parent/carer surveys, key messages were shared with schools to consider for improving future online learning experiences.
- Initial tracking and monitoring of School Home Learning Engagement took place in May 2020. This gave an authority overview of the provision of home learning and the engagement taking place.
- Weekly briefing sessions were established with all headteachers across all sectors - Early Years, Primary, Secondary and ASN schools – these still continue.
- Significant investment in digital support for learners provided access to remote learning. All pupils who required devices were able to be accommodated between the purchase of 2095 additional devices and schools' own stock. Portable routers were also purchased and provided to identified families.
- A telephone support line for parents / carers was established by the Educational Psychology Service to provide support, advice and guidance regarding the mental health and wellbeing needs of their children and young people.

Return to School August – December 2020:

During the reopening of schools in August, West Lothian Council provided the following key activities to deliver positive outcomes:

- A central support and challenge model was developed which included 1:1 attainment meetings with link officers to analyse data and set clear and timeous actions; individual school meetings with the Performance Team to support understanding and interpretation of data; and bitesize professional development sessions at weekly Headteacher (HT) briefings.
- A digital focus since returning to school in August 2020 ensured that every teacher and learner in P4 –S6 had a level of confidence in using Microsoft 365 within Glow and Teams.
- West Lothian invested in an authority wide license of a digital application (SeeSaw) in response to feedback from parents to provide a tool for both in-school and remote learning for younger pupils, following the initial period of school closures. A strong focus was placed on ensuring all staff, pupils and parents/carers had a level of confidence in using SeeSaw.
- Further remote learning guidance was produced to support all schools with planning and preparation in case of further periods of remote learning. This led to an improvement in the remote learning offer during the next period ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to progress and extend their learning, interact and collaborate with their peers and work independently.
- Additional funding provided to schools for staffing and resources to target interventions to support learners.

Further Period of Remote Learning January – Easter 2021:

Key control measures during this phase included:

- An Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Remote Learning Framework was put in place to ensure a strong focus on children's health and wellbeing and high-quality learning, teaching and assessment through a play-based approach. This has ensured that each setting has analysed their tracking data, identified gaps and is providing daily experiences in literacy and numeracy to promote children's learning and development.
- Refinements to tracking and monitoring of learner engagement and progress in learning were established. In primaries, this captures an overview of learner engagement within literacy, numeracy and HWB. In secondaries, engagement was captured across the curriculum. In ASN schools, individual targets in relevant subject areas was captured.
- School learner engagement guidance was developed which provided clear standards and expectations of learning and teaching, assessment, feedback, and high-quality interactions. This ensured that schools could quickly identify the quality of learner engagement through remote learning and how to support all learners to reach their full potential.
- Experiences of remote learning through a survey to all learners and parents/carers attending primary and secondary schools was captured. The feedback provided was extremely positive in terms of the delivery of remote learning across schools identifying significant strengths due to the authority's strategic approach and consistent guidance issued to schools. Areas for consideration were identified which informed bitesize professional learning sessions.
- Guidance was developed with secondary schools regarding the SQA's Alternative Certification Model (ACM). This included regular engagement with the Head teachers, the Depute Headteacher curriculum network, Principal Teachers Curriculum and network leaders. The West Lothian approach was commended by Education Scotland following review. At all levels, staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding delivery of the ACM and felt positive about the leadership and collaboration across the authority. Additional Inservice days focused on moderation of pupils' evidence to ensure that assessment meets the national standard.
- Easter school, which supported learners in the Senior Phase, was delivered successfully in West Lothian via the national e-offer – West Lothian had the most unique user and course sign-ups in Scotland.

Full Return to School April – June 2021:

On return to school, control measures continue to be put in place:

- Weekly meetings with schools to ensure a robust understanding of expectations and attainment targets and standards.
- Work with schools to inform their own contextual analysis – in order that they can clearly identify any gaps in learning and match improvement activities accordingly
- Continual review of data in the Senior Phase in preparation for provisional results at the end of June.
- Regular high-quality interactive learning and teaching using technology or other remote methods ensure a balance of live learning and independent activity. It also

provides access to key learning which is available for learners to revisit as often as necessary.

- Additional funding has been devolved to schools to provide resources and interventions clearly identified as a result of each school's contextual analysis. Primary Nurturing Schools Leads have been allocated across all primary schools. The funding will focus on supporting the wellbeing of children through the development of the nurturing school's approach.
- Secondary Nurture additional funding has provided the opportunity for schools to look at various options of either nurture, targeted home support or literacy and numeracy recovery through support for learning.
- Additional staffing, following confirmation of Scottish Government funding, has been targeted to deliver future recovery interventions. As part of this funding, a focused Equity Team will focus on driving forward the key recommendations arising from the Equity Audit January 2021. This team will clearly define how West Lothian Council Education Services is reflecting on, recovering from and planning future renewal as it emerges from the pandemic.
- Anxiety groupwork was delivered across secondary schools by the Educational Psychology Service in order to further support those learners experiencing challenges in managing anxiety.
- Additional support is being provided for new student teachers and probationers to ensure the highest quality of learning and teaching moving forward.

Section 3.4 – Education Benefits

3.4.1 Raising attainment, building on the improving trend in National Qualifications

Attainment has been raised through focused and rigorous application of the Raising Attainment Strategy in all West Lothian Schools. The National Improvement Framework (NIF) Improvement Plan is also used to continue to drive improvement in performance.

It should be noted that, in terms of Senior Phase attainment:

- the performance of S5 students in 5+, 3+ and 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 has risen in the five year period.
- the performance of S6 students in 5+, 3+ and 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 has risen in the five year period.
- the performance of S6 students in 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 7 has risen in the five year period.

3.4.2 Expanding early learning and childcare

From April 2021, West Lothian Council increased from delivering 1000 hours to 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare to all children and families. West Lothian Council has 64 council settings and 21 Partner Providers offering flexibility and choice for parents/carers. Rigorous quality improvement activities are implemented to ensure that the council fulfils its statutory duty in ensuring all provisions, council and Partner Providers, are of a high quality.

3.4.3 Working through the Regional Improvement Collaborative to improve quality and performance

Support to improve quality and performance through the Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) has continued to develop. Networking for sharing practice within West Lothian and across the RIC has focused on improving the quality of learning and teaching. In partnership with the RIC all practitioners are being provided with a wide range of relevant and meaningful professional learning opportunities. Through the RIC, a 'data coach' has been deployed to upskill school leaders and classroom practitioners on the effective use of data to identify and inform areas for improvement at school and classroom level.

3.4.4 Empowering schools

The ability for decisions, relevant to the day to day management and provision of school education, to be made at local level has increased. We have empowered school communities through the introduction of community choices in relation to PEF funding, particularly in relation to the cost of the school day, and through improved partnership working with parent councils and the West Lothian Parent Council Forum, as detailed elsewhere in this report.

The Scheme of Devolved School Management gives flexibility to headteachers and school communities to align resources with the needs of the learners within their schools, in line with the national empowering schools agenda.

3.4.5 Planning for and delivering new schools to meet the needs of the growing population, and children and young people with additional support needs.

Access to high quality learning environments for all children and young people has improved through the ongoing programme of school expansion, refurbishment and construction, and further improvement is planned. Construction of new primary and secondary schools in Winchburgh and Calderwood has progressed significantly, with Calderwood due to open early in session 2021/22. Construction in improving the Additional Support Needs estate, with a new Cedarbank School and extension at Pinewood has also commenced, and a site confirmed for the new Beatlie School. Capital Investment has been confirmed for improvement and expansion to the primary school estate.

3.4.6 Planning for and delivering new services within schools to meet the needs of children and young people with additional support needs within their local community.

The ability of schools to support children with additional support needs within their local community was increased. Small group environments are being extended throughout the secondary sector to increase the ability of schools to support pupils with additional support needs. Further integration with social policy and new services such as counselling have contributed to modernisation.

3.4.7 Provision of Free School Meals

During the period of school closures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and throughout summer 2020, a wider group of approximately 500 vulnerable children and young people were identified. This group was provided with the opportunity to attend schools throughout the pandemic period, including when they were closed to other pupils, and this support continued during the summer holiday period.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the national and local focus shifted from provision of free school meals during the holiday period, to direct payment to the families of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals.

West Lothian Council has now made provision in the revenue budget for direct payments of £15 per pupil to continue on a sustainable basis during school holidays. This provision will result in a significant increase in support for financially vulnerable families compared to the previous model of Holiday Lunch and Activity Clubs which was provided in a limited number of locations.

3.4.8 Summer of Play

West Lothian Council delivered a structured and targeted programme of summer activities, as part of the national “Summer of Play Programme 2021”. The focus of activities was to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people.

Community Learning and Development (Youth Services) co-ordinated delivery of a programme of activities within West Lothian in collaboration with third sector partners and community groups. Provision was based on consultation with children and young people and the services provided were designed to meet their needs. The programme of activities included purchase of places from third sector or social enterprise groups that offered opportunities for vulnerable children to participate in existing activities within their local community. Small grants were made to support existing community groups offering scheduled activities over the summer period, with funding targeted towards extending places to vulnerable young people. Activities were provided across West Lothian and where any gaps in provision were identified, community capacity was supplemented, or targeted support undertaken, by Community Learning and Development Youth Services, in conjunction with other teams such as Active Schools.

Children and young people had the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities including multi-activity clubs and single focus activities through taster days and weekly camps such as dance, drama, gymnastics, golf, football, tennis, rugby, learn to swim, cooking, creative arts, outdoor adventure activities and day trips away.



4. ANNUAL PLAN 2021/22

Section 4.1 – Step to Reduce Inequalities of Outcome Experienced by Pupils as a Result of Socio-economic Disadvantage

4.1.1 Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

In Session 2021/22 West Lothian Education Services will:-

- Ensure individual School Improvement Plans are developed on the basis of the four national priorities which includes closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- Support a focused Equity Team driving forward the key recommendations arising from the Equity Audit January 2021. This team will clearly define how West Lothian Council Education Services is reflecting on, recovering from and planning future renewal as it emerges from the pandemic.
- Provide equity for all young people by providing, intensive support to a targeted number of primary schools clearly identified as a result of each school's contextual analysis, and a universal equity offer to all primary schools.
- Promote effective use of evidence-based learning, teaching and assessment practices to support equity.
- Promote the primacy of equity to all schools through effective communication, professional learning and collaboration
- Provide all staff with access to improvement support and professional learning opportunities through the introduction of a new Equity Network to ensure impact from additionality in 2021/22.
- Develop the role of Primary Nurturing Schools Leads with a focus on supporting the wellbeing of children, through the development of the nurturing school's approach throughout session 2021/22.
- Target Secondary Nurture additionality for schools to look at various options of either nurture, targeted home support or literacy and numeracy recovery through support for learning.
- Continue to focus on the analysis of the impact of Pupil Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People and Scottish Attainment Challenge, funding and measuring impact over the longer term to provide information around closing the gap in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing.

Section 4.2 – Steps to seek and have regard to the views of stakeholders

In Session 2021/22 West Lothian Education Services will:-

- Continue to regularly engage with all staff through well-established online platforms and the re-introduction of face to face engagement. This will provide a range of data to establish the support and challenge required in every school to improve outcomes for all learners.
- Build upon the effective methods of communicating with parents/carers established during the restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic.
- Continue to support Parent Councils perform their function and work in partnership with the Chair of the West Lothian Parent Forum to drive further improvements in approaches to parental involvement and engagement, resulting in an updated Parental Involvement and Engagement Framework.
- Continue to develop and implement methods of communication with other stakeholders and partners, including with Regional Improvement Collaborative

partners, to ensure continuation of the high-quality partnership and collaborative approach existing in West Lothian.

- Establish a West Lothian Pupil Voice Forum to empower pupils and young people to lead the refreshed narrative of their HWB curriculum reflecting the vision, and aspirations relevant to the context of their school and community.
- Utilise the data from parent and pupil ethos surveys to inform future priorities and ongoing activity.

Section 4.3 – Steps Taken in Pursuance of the National Improvement Framework

4.3.1 Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

In Session 2021/22 West Lothian Education Services will:-

- Build staff capacity in securing accurate assessment of learners' current progress.
- Focus on evidencing year on year improvements.
- Focus on developing family learning opportunities to support raising attainment.
- Within the LITERACY and NUMERACY plans focus on:-
 - Consistent and effective use of the WL Progression Pathways for literacy through implementation of a 'Pathways into Practice' model from early to fourth level
 - Effective use of data and high-quality assessment to ensure gaps and strengths are accurately identified and supported through universal and targeted evidence-based approaches to secure appropriate pace and challenge for all learners
 - Effective moderation practice which further strengthens the quality of all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment to include applying skills in different contexts
 - Innovative use of digital technology to maximise support for learners and parents/carers, and to strengthen professional collaboration and sharing of practice across schools and sectors.

4.3.2 Improvements in children and young people's health and wellbeing

In Session 2021/22 West Lothian Education Services will:-

- Further develop the implementation of its Nurturing Wellbeing strategy to ensure that all children and young people experience the highest levels of support through a rigorous commitment and focus on repairing, re-establishing and progressing positive mental health, relationships, routines, self-esteem and confidence to learn. An enhanced budget allocation has been provided in every school to support and provide targeted interventions and to progress health and wellbeing and nurture.
- Support all schools in reviewing their HWB curriculum, with a strong focus on building back better and stronger. Providing professional learning to support staff in their approaches to planning, evaluating and measuring success within HWB.
- Enhance opportunities for Physical activities through the curriculum, and after school clubs, providing key opportunities for children and young people at all stages to enhance skills, confidence achievement and sense of belonging/inclusion.
- Improve approaches to evaluating and measuring success within HWB reflecting more on the impact of programmes and planned interventions

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

In Session 2021/22 West Lothian Education Services will:-

- Further strengthen Developing the Young Workforce structures and the place of Skills 4.0 within the Early Learning and Childcare and primary sectors.
- Have a specific focus on agile learning pathways through the creation of a new post. This post will lead strategic improvements across the curriculum, which improve experiences and opportunities for all young people through collaboration with partners. The main driver for this is to ensure equity and provision of opportunity for all young people, with a particular focus on addressing the post pandemic challenges.
- Continue to work collaboratively with partner agencies to ensure that all Care Experienced Children and Young People are supported into positive destinations through the effective delivery of key targets outlined in the Corporate Parenting Plan.
- Continue to add value to the work currently being undertaken within schools themselves, work being done by the DYW team and college as well as building on the development of future learning opportunities afforded by the further enhancement of the West Lothian Digital Strategy.
- Support collaboration between the DYW Steering Board and senior leaders in secondary schools through 3 workstreams focusing on Vision and Communication, Shaping your Future Workforce and Learner Pathways.
- Introduce 'skills boost' training programmes with the college which align with current labour market needs e.g. health and social care, childcare, storage and warehousing and customer service/ business skills.
- Continue to develop DYW Coordinators posts in schools.
- Update and re-develop the Positive Destinations Website to meet the needs of the young people - this will also link into an App. This will allow ease of access and help to direct people to the appropriate service and support they need.
- Continue to collaborate with schools and partners on the DYW Steering Board to work with a range of organisations and stakeholders to develop and extend the provision of vocational experiences for young people.
- Education Services will liaise with Economic Development to better understand business needs in West Lothian, continue to develop strong partnerships with local businesses and ensure young people leave school with skills that equip them for the workforce.

4.3.4 Enhancing Digital Learning as a core feature of learning, teaching and assessment

In Session 2021/22 West Lothian Education Services will:-

- Continue to ensure that the well-established, authority wide interactive online learning platforms, (See-Saw) for P1-3 pupils and Microsoft Teams for P4-S6 pupils, continue to enhance efficiency, sustainability and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment.
- Further develop the technical skills of staff and pupils in developing competency in using Office 365 tools and Seesaw.
- Ensure that staff understand effective pedagogical approaches when using and applying digital tools.
- Develop an adapted version of the Moderation Cycle, demonstrating how digital can feature in all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment.
- Develop a Digital Learner Academy where short tutorial and webinars will be available for learners to complete 'module' based learning around the Office 365 tools e.g. PowerPoint, Teams

- Further support more settings to engage in the Digital Schools Award, capitalising on the progress made over the past year in the use of digital tools.

4.3.5 Planning for improvement in a new context

In Session 2021/22 West Lothian Education Services will:-

- The Quality Improvement Team, in collaboration with school-based staff, will engage in self-evaluation for self-improvement activities to inform quality improvement support and challenge to improve outcomes for all learners.
- Continue to implement measures to mitigate against identified risks and analyse data as it emerges to ensure further interventions are deployed.

Section 4.4 – Education Benefits

In Session 2021/22 West Lothian Education Services will:-

- Continue to implement the Raising Attainment Strategy, and aim to meet the targets set out within it in relation to raising attainment and closing the socio-economic attainment gap.
- Continue to implement Moving Forward in Learning to ensure school improvement. Focus will be given to promoting an agile learning culture and a refreshed curriculum narrative.
- Continue to work through the Regional Improvement Collaborative to improve quality and performance. Planned programme on Leading the Early Level through play pedagogy will focus on the four priorities of system leadership, education support and improvement through self-evaluation, professional learning, and collaboration.
- Continue to deliver 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare and review flexibility and choice through ongoing engagement with parents/carers and partner providers.
- Continue the ambitious programme of improving the quality of the learning estate in order to ensure that all pupils have access to a high-quality learning environment, including the construction of new schools to meet the needs of a growing population.
- Continue planning for and delivering new services within schools to meet the needs of children and young people with additional support needs within their local community, including increasing staff capacity within all schools.
- Build on the partnership working with community and third sector groups which underpins the Summer of Play to develop a revised model of targeted summer activities to support vulnerable children and young people in West Lothian for introduction in Summer 2022. It is anticipated that this will see a continuation of partnership working, and the empowerment of community groups to design and deliver services. This approach will complement the direct payments to be made to the families of children and young people entitled to free school meals, and embed support for the most vulnerable children and young people, making it sustainable in future years, ensuring that vulnerable children and young people can continue to be supported within their local community over the extended holiday period.



