

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

Education Services

Annual Plan & Report

National Improvement Framework & Reducing
Inequalities of Outcome

August 2022



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, and an annual progress report on these plans.

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 five key priorities of the National Improvement Framework (NIF)
- the steps the Council will take to achieve the five 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 ways in which the Council will, in providing school education, encourage equal opportunities and in particular the observance of equal opportunity requirements.

The five key priorities of the NIF are:

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

2. 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.

In the National Improvement Plan Annual Report 2020-2021, West Lothian Council reported on actions taken to mitigate risks associated with the pandemic in 2020-2021 in addition to the statutory reporting requirements. The Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2022 recognises the significant ongoing impact that COVID-19 is having on the lives of everyone in Scotland and, in particular, on children and young people. This Annual Report includes a section on actions taken to mitigate risks associated with the pandemic in 2021-22, and the Action Plan 2022-23 sets out improvement actions which continue to mitigate the impact of the pandemic under each of the headings in the plan.



3. ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

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

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

There are 9 wards in West Lothian with child poverty levels (2019) ranging from 11% (Linlithgow) to 33% (Whitburn/Blackburn). West Lothian want all children to have the best start in life and acknowledge that parents often face multiple barriers to financial security. Low income, insecure employment and high costs of living can make breaking free of poverty seem impossible. Collaboration between various agencies within West Lothian are tackling this challenge (WL Child Poverty Report 2018/19).

In the year 2021-22, West Lothian were allocated £6,554,349 in total as part of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF). The breakdown of the funding streams is detailed as: £5,949,984 (Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)), £256,365 (Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)) and £348,000 (Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP)).

During the period of 1 April 2022 to 10 June 2022, attainment advisors, in collaboration with Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) local authority project leads, gathered evidence from their individual local authority regarding the SAC progress in the year 2021-22. The purpose was to provide answers to the following high level questions regarding progress and impact of next steps from the Year 5 SAC report:

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=48079> .

The full SAC Recovery and Progress 2021-22 report can be found in Appendix 1.

The report highlighted that West Lothian is committed to ensuring excellence and equity for all children and young people. It 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.

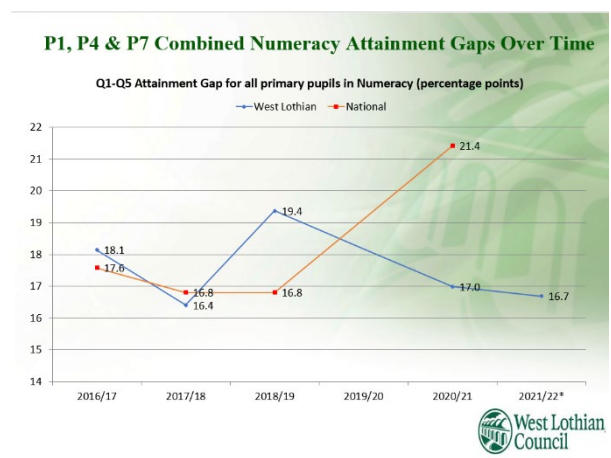
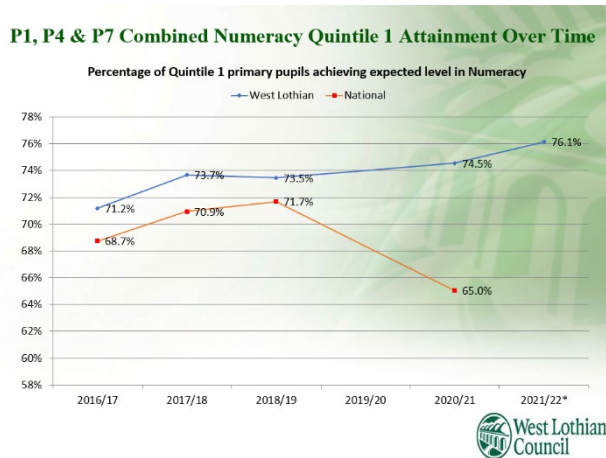
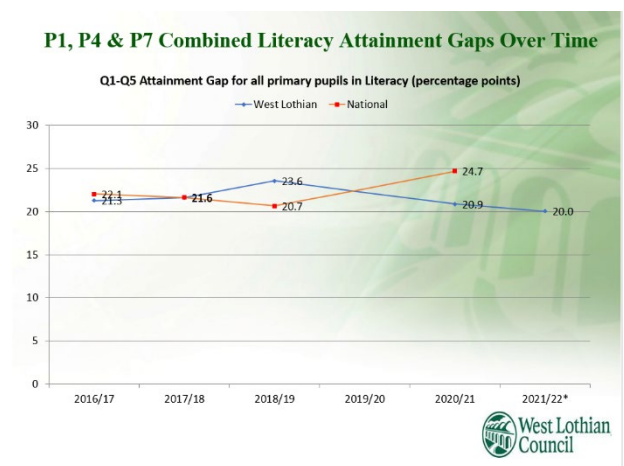
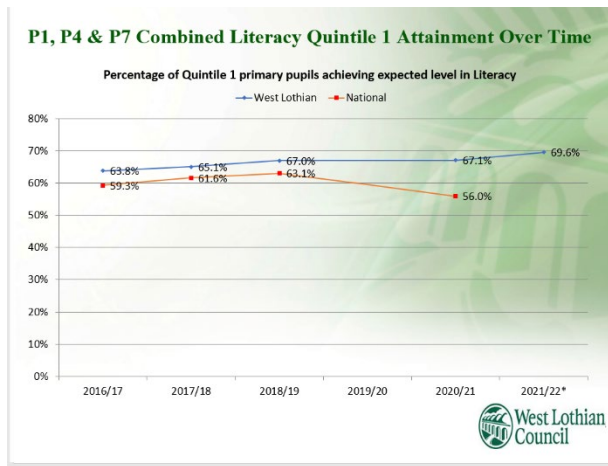
West Lothian has ensured there is a relentless focus on analysing and interpreting data to move towards closing the poverty related attainment gap in the authority. The creation of an Equity Team allows for universal and targeted (ten primary schools) approaches to be employed, by providing coaching and bespoke additional support. This training/coaching in data analysis has led to more accurate identification of interventions.

Universal support to all schools improved the use of data and quality improvement (QI) approaches to target equity. The creation and repetition of Data, Measures and Outcomes sessions ensured every school had access to sessions which explored how to 'know, address and mind the gaps' as a basis for analysis. Excellence and Equity Leads have been piloting the same approach, in Early Learning and Childcare.

Increased capacity has led to greater analysis and impactful interventions, and there is evidence in the data collected at authority level of tackling the poverty related attainment gap.

Data gathered in June 2022 highlights improvements in combined Primary performance over time – both in terms of literacy and numeracy, and in terms of improvement in Quintile 1 and closing of the poverty related attainment gap.

PRIMARY DATA:

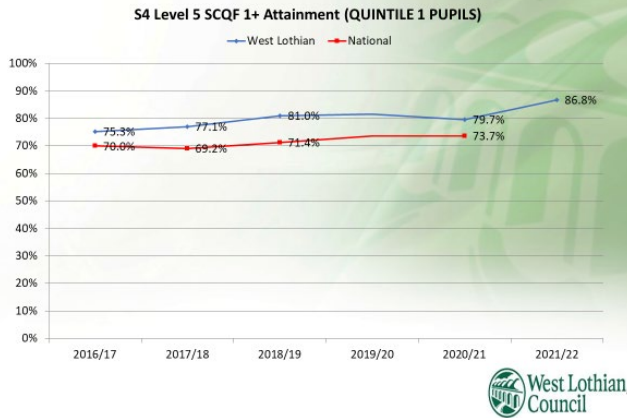


* it should be noted that data for 2021/22 is provisional

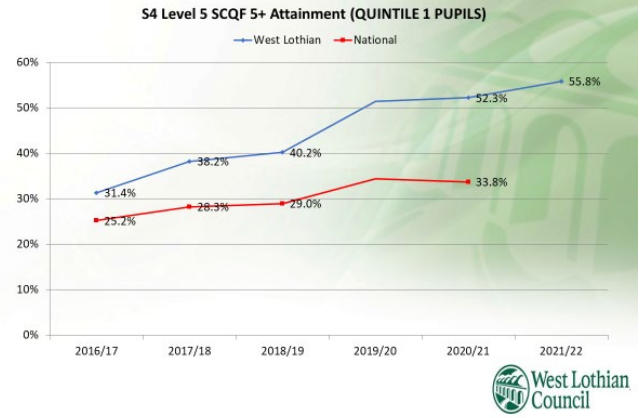
Data gathered in August 2022 for Senior Phase is overleaf – it should be noted that this data is provisional until the release of Insight in September 2022 and does not include the results of any appeals. This data is based on the full range of SCQF awards.

SENIOR PHASE DATA:

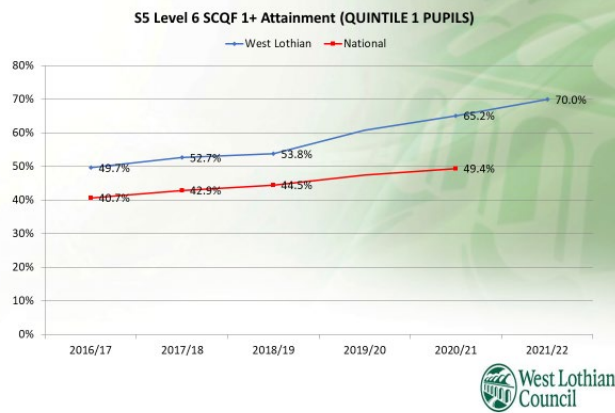
S4 Level 5 SCQF 1+ Attainment (QUINTILE 1 PUPILS)



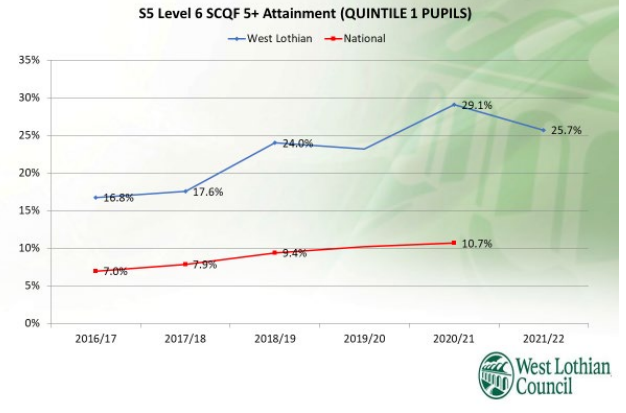
S4 Level 5 SCQF 5+ Attainment (QUINTILE 1 PUPILS)



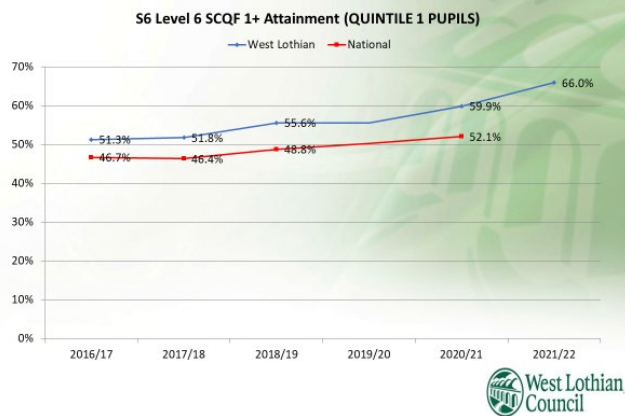
S5 Level 6 SCQF 1+ Attainment (QUINTILE 1 PUPILS)



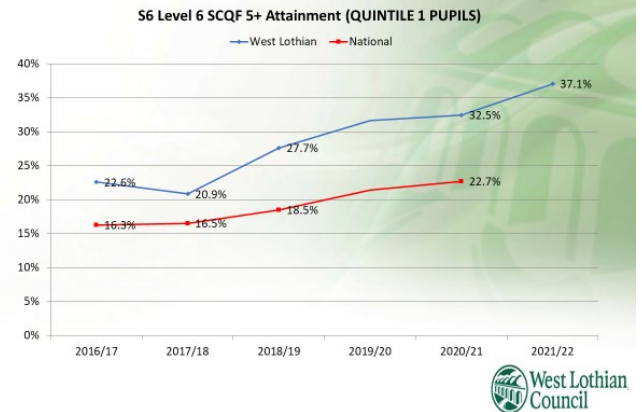
S5 Level 6 SCQF 5+ Attainment (QUINTILE 1 PUPILS)



S6 Level 6 SCQF 1+ Attainment (QUINTILE 1 PUPILS)



S6 Level 6 SCQF 5+ Attainment (QUINTILE 1 PUPILS)



The Equity Team also delivered professional learning to probationers, universal, middle/senior leaders, Champions and Support for Learning staff to ensure a consistent focus on equity.

PEF support meetings were undertaken, involving every primary head teacher in professional dialogue with the WL PEF Officer and Attainment Advisor. Advice and guidance was offered, particularly around the use of baseline models, to add rigor to each school's PEF process and ensure a more consistent approach. Key messages regarding PEF were reinforced through the newly established Equity Network and shared practice from schools. 3% of each school's PEF budget was allocated to participatory budgeting (PB). Schools have consulted with learners and parents/carers, using a variety of methods. Each school has produced a poverty proofing statement as part of reducing the cost of the school day and PB decisions have frequently aligned with action(s) identified.

Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Champions have been focusing on gap analysis with their establishments/schools and they now use a wide data set/range of tools to support them. Survey data completed by HWB Champs indicate that school staff have a better understanding of trauma, an increase in nurture interventions and Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) is increasingly being used to support HWB. Embedding of self-reporting processes and increased confidence of learners in discussing wellbeing indicators is impacting positively. The introduction of Mini Champs has increased opportunity for pupil voice and termly tracking and monitoring, using data from learners' self-evaluation, is more specifically informing next steps.

The Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) team continue to offer a holistic approach, creating individual bespoke packages to support the children and young people identified. The success of the project is being supported by multiagency working and a core focus on building and maintaining positive relationships with the young people and the adults around them.



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 of 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 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 continue to use a variety of existing, adapted and new approaches to engage and support parents /carers. In 2021-22, the focus for all West Lothian schools has been on creating bespoke communication and engagement approaches in consultation with Parent Councils and the wider parent forum.

To re-engage parents/carers, maintain connection and provide regular support and information, schools have effectively utilised a range of digital platforms including Seesaw, Skype for Business, school apps and social media. Creative examples of family engagement across ELC settings and schools have emerged and schools evaluate the impact of these on pupils' wellbeing and learning. Examples include virtual PEEP (People Learning Together) programmes in our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, virtual Literacy and Numeracy sessions in our primary schools, and virtual Curriculum Information Evenings held by Secondary Schools.

In response to the challenges of hosting traditional parents' evenings in school, schools consulted their Parent Councils and Teaching Staff on the preferred format for reporting to parents. Many schools opted to continue with teacher-parent video conferencing, with other schools opting for telephone calls. All P1-3 parents/carers continued to have access to Seesaw in session 21-22 to support learning at home and family engagement. Feedback from parents/carers and staff led to a small number of ELC settings and schools embarking on a pilot of Seesaw for profiling and to enhance parental engagement in P4-7.

West Lothian schools regularly gather the views and opinions of all stakeholders as part of the ongoing, robust self-evaluation approaches in place to support continuous improvement and inform individual school planning. This has been critical to support the return of parents to school buildings and ELC settings from May 2022. Schools and ELC settings have been innovative in their approach to welcoming and engaging parents within their unique context.

In May 2022, West Lothian Council issued parent/carer surveys to all parents, and P4-7 and S1-3 pupils to gather annual information about the performance of all schools in relation to children's wellbeing and learning.

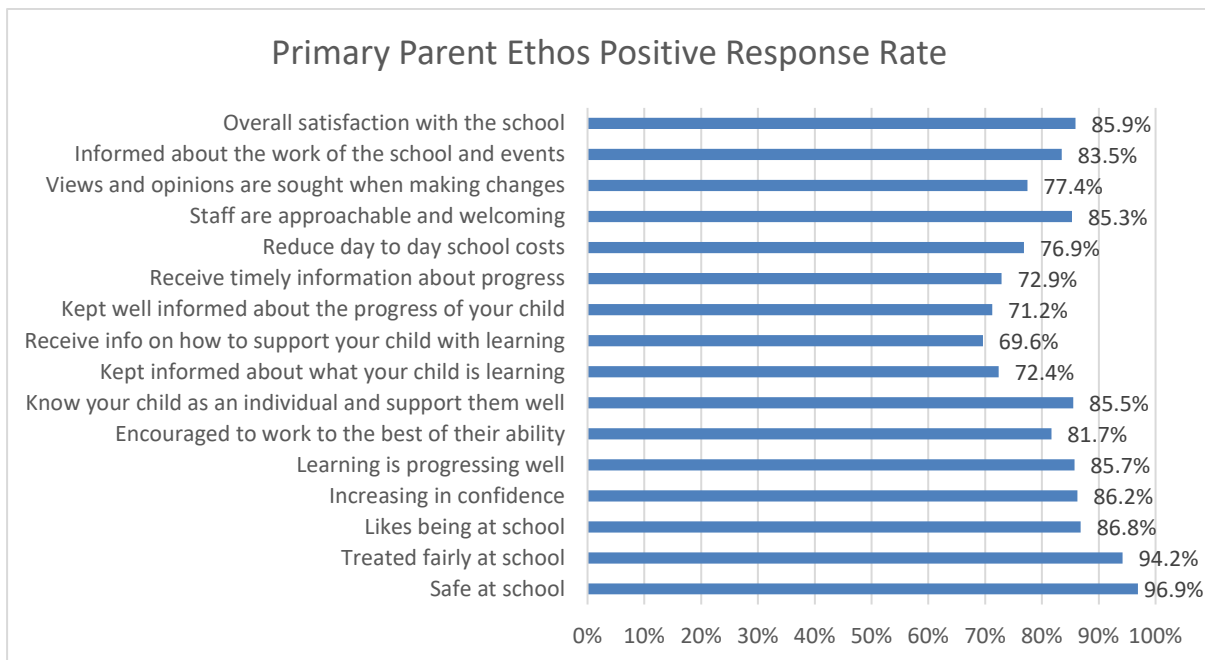
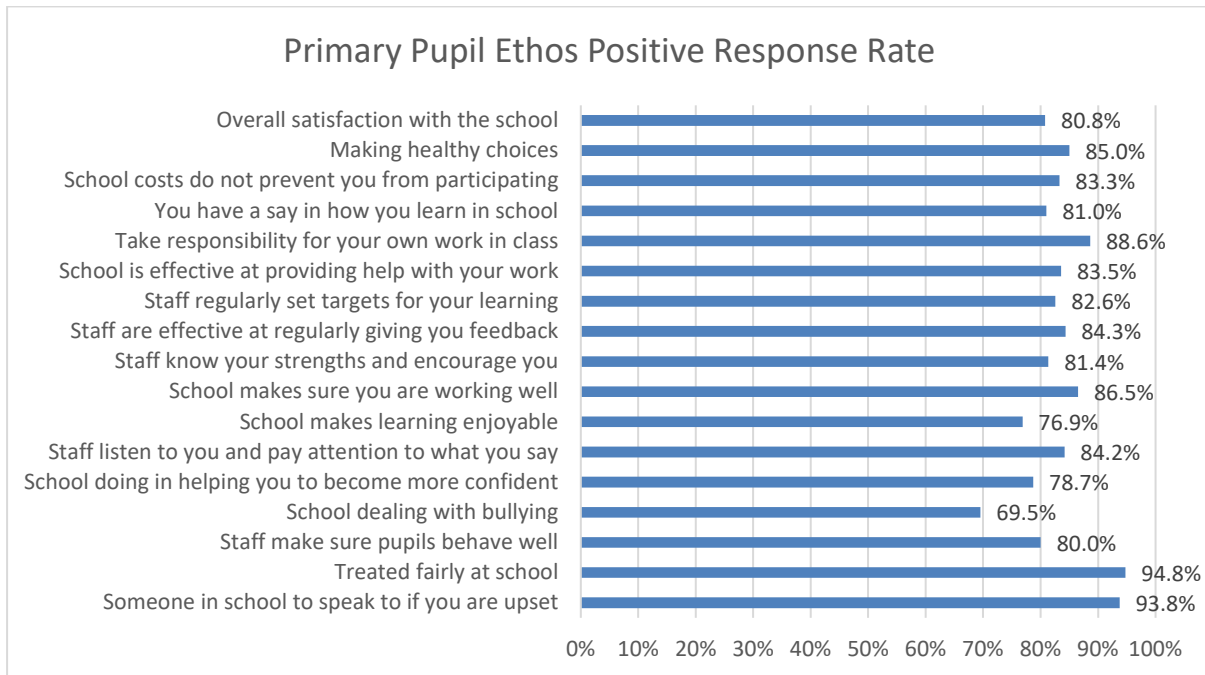
The primary surveys had 88% pupil response rate and 27% parent/carer response rate.

Key strengths identified within the primary sector include:

- Having someone in school to speak to if upset or worried
- Children's learning progressing well and children increasing in confidence
- Teachers regularly providing feedback to children on progress in learning
- Children known, supported and encouraged as individuals
- Parents kept informed about the work of the school and school events

Areas identified for further consideration:

- Providing information to parents on how to support their child's learning and the progress children are making



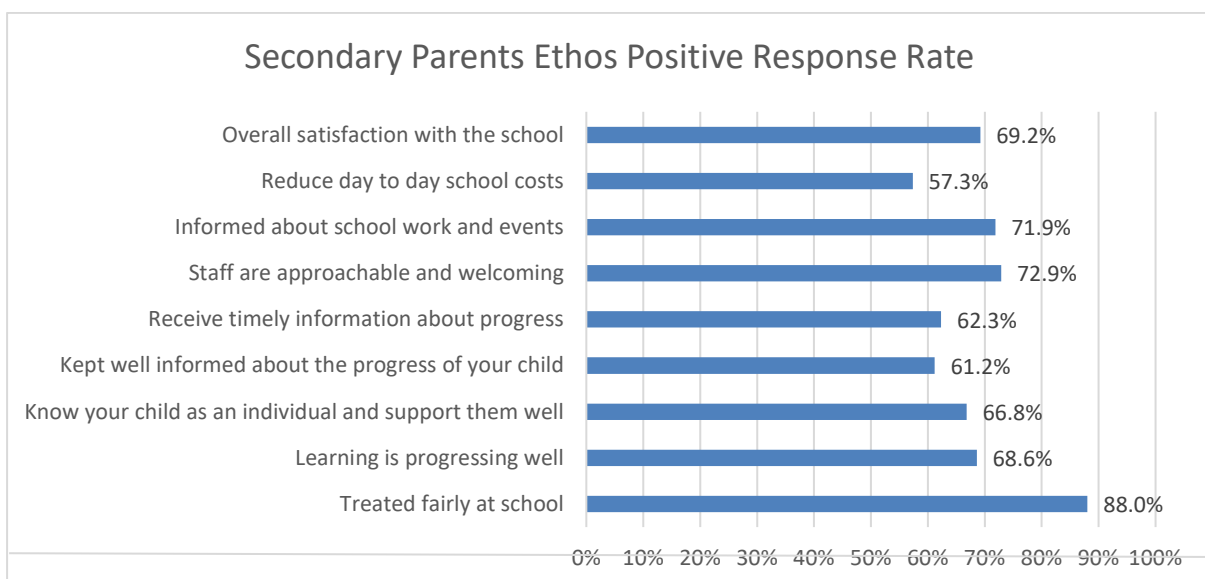
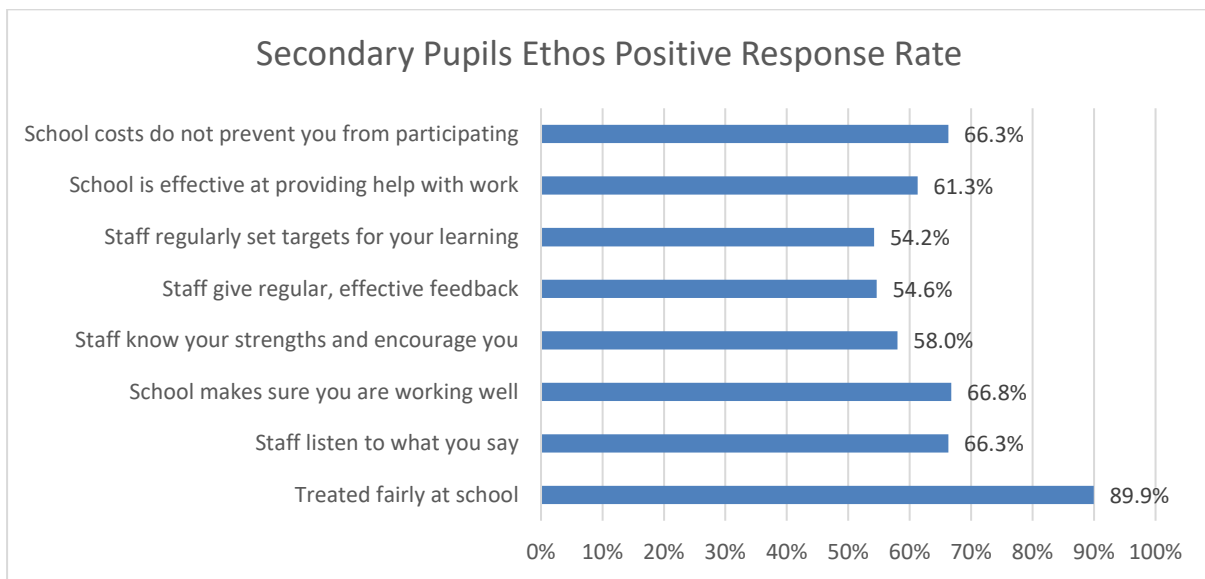
The secondary surveys had 65% pupil response rate and 25% parent/carer response rate.

Key strengths identified within the secondary sector include:

- Young people treated fairly and with respect
- Young people making progress in learning
- Staff approachable and welcome when parents have questions or suggestions
- Parents kept informed about the work of the school and school events

Areas identified for further consideration:

- Providing regular feedback to young people on their progress and how to improve
- Reducing day to day school costs
- Providing information to parents on how to support their child's learning and the progress children are making



In relation to Community Learning & Development (including Community Sports, Active Schools and Community Art services), flexible opportunities are given to all partners, participants and stakeholders to feedback information to the service as part of provision planning, during the delivery phase, and at the end of each activity and/or programme. This information gathered is used to enable continuous improvement and informs future planning processes.

The West Lothian Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (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 good progress. The Central Pedagogy Team continues to support schools well 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, professional learning opportunities and support to schools' improvements in Literacy and Numeracy.

In Session 2021-22, there has been an even greater emphasis on embedding national and local guidance, across ELC, Primary and Secondary sectors. This guidance has been supported by core Professional Learning at both strategic and practitioner levels. This work has impacted positively on pedagogy. It is also used well to inform approaches to improvements in strategic approaches to literacy and numeracy in schools.

To further strengthen approaches to leadership of curriculum development within both Literacy and Numeracy, a 'Pathways into Practice' model has been developed to ensure WL Progression Pathways are used effectively to plan and deliver high quality learning experiences and assessments. This resource has also been developed to support schools in their journey to reflect, review and refresh their curriculum rationale and pathways for literacy.

Robust tracking and monitoring of attainment and achievement continues to drive improvements in Literacy and Numeracy across all sectors. Attainment data is used increasingly more effectively within individual and associated schools to identify and address gaps in learning. Data is also used effectively by the Literacy and Numeracy Steering Groups to identify a manageable number of strategic priorities to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Digital approaches to the delivery of a wide range of professional learning have expanded significantly. These approaches support staff delivery of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Champion post holders in both literacy and numeracy impact positively on schools' capacity for improvement through sharing clear, key messages. The Champions' Network provides a rich source of evidence-based interventions and continues to 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, the health and wellbeing curriculum is the responsibility of all and is recognised as a core driver for closing gaps and raising attainment. The strategic approach to delivering improvements in HWB has secured very good progress in this area.

In session 2021-22 the HWB central development team continued to support 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. The team works together with schools to ensure Excellence and Equity through a continued focus on intensified support for nurture and health and wellbeing; ensuring that pupils felt safe, well and able to re-engage with the highest quality of learning and teaching.

The HWB curriculum rationale for ensuring high-quality learning outcomes for all pupils through the progression of the wellbeing indicators, has continued to be significantly challenged throughout the pandemic - schools have continued to respond positively by reviewing their HWB rationale and activities this year focusing on mental health, learning for sustainability, relationships and sexual health and LGBT developments to further develop and celebrate equality and diversity for all children and young people.

As part of the COVID recovery additionality, Nurturing Wellbeing Funding has provided schools with the opportunity to enhance wellbeing across schools, provide targeted interventions, raise attainment and improve practice overall.

The WLC Physical Education Physical Activity Strategy is beginning to provide all schools with meaningful CLPL, the opportunity to enhance staff confidence and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to be involved in quality learning experiences in PE and a variety of quality physical activities across the curriculum.

Opportunities for pupil voice were further enhanced this year and included 90% of schools now being registered and taking forward the Rights Respecting Schools Award and engaging with UNCRC projects and initiatives. Schools have also established Mini and Midi Pupil Champs as well as Family Champs to ensure thorough collaboration with all stakeholders.

The established West Lothian HWB tracking and monitoring system continues to provide a robust database for tracking HWB progress of pupils and is currently being enhanced to ensure that timely data is available to plan for effective targeted interventions.

The WLC recovery model centered around the Trusted Adult relationship approach continues to provide all schools with a very clear rationale and framework for ensuring that pupils are supported, safe and ready to learn. Feedback and data from staff and pupils continues to be very positive and the practices developed are now firmly established.

A recent Trauma Informed Training pilot has provided staff with more confidence in supporting all pupils through stress, trauma and to build resilience. All schools will be trained throughout the coming year and we will continue to focus on empowering pupils, staff and families to be mentally healthy.

School Counselling

In response to the national school counselling funding programme, the Educational Psychology Service has continued to work in collaboration with local counselling providers to ensure that access to counselling is embedded across all secondary schools and for all children aged 10 years and over in the primary school sector.

Each secondary 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. Additional Support Needs pupils are also supported through specific funding provided for our secondary provision for young people with social and emotional challenges. Secondary schools who support learners with complex learning needs have also been allocated funding to procure specialist counselling for young people with this learning profile.

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.

Our primary schools have access to counselling services for children aged 10 years and older

through a centrally procured service from Wellbeing Scotland. Throughout the life of the contract, Wellbeing Scotland have worked with over 500 young people across schools.

Formal reporting to Scottish Government, jointly with the Community based Mental Health and Wellbeing funding reporting takes place 6 monthly in line with Scottish Government requirements.

Wellbeing Recovery Group

The multi-agency Wellbeing Recovery Group continues to be the main point of access to services to support mental health and wellbeing needs for young people. 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.

Anxiety Supports

As part of planned programmes to support mental health and wellbeing, the Educational Psychology Service has continued to ensure that access to anxiety groupwork programmes has been in place across secondary schools this year despite the challenges of ongoing restrictions. This has resulted in groups being delivered across 5 secondary schools this year. There are plans to continue to deliver this work next session.

Support with staff and family training in this area has also been developed and delivered to a range of audiences this year. This work will be developed next year as part of the planned approach to supporting school attendance through a focus on Emotion Based School Avoidance.

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:

- 95.3% of school leavers went into a positive destination as recorded in October 2021. This was 2.4 percentage points more than in 2019-20 and places West Lothian 11th in Scotland.
- West Lothian has achieved 95.3% positive destinations. This was 0.1 percentage points less than virtual comparators and 0.2 percentage points less than the Forth Valley and West Lothian Collaborative and the Scottish Average.
- 98.0% of black and minority ethnic young people moved into a positive destination. This was the same as last year and was more than virtual comparators (96.3%) and the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Collaborative (97.3%) and 1.1 percentage points more than the Scottish average.
- 91.7% of young people identified as having additional support needs moved into a positive destination which was 1.1 percentage points less than the National Average of 92.8% but was an increase of 3.3 percentage points compared with last year.
- 93.9% 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 1.9 percentage point

increase since 2018-19 and is above the virtual comparator (92.2%), the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Collaborative (92.7%) and the National figure (92.8%).

- The gap between the most and least deprived 20% has continued to close and is reported at 2.6% which is a considerable improvement from 2015/16 when it was 10.71%
- 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, West Lothian is one of only ten local authorities to have no unknown destinations this year and only one of five local authorities to achieve this for two consecutive years.
- 24.5% of young people are in employment which is an increase of 5.9 percentage points from last year and above the Scottish average of 22.6%, and the virtual comparator of 23.5%.
- There was a reduction of 4.5 percentage points in the number of young people going to Further Education to 21.17% which mirrored the national picture.

Key strategies and interventions

- Key Worker allocation has continued to be 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 and contextualise the curriculum.
- A range of short life Schools Vocational Programmes available to students 12 months prior to them leaving school. These programmes are designed to develop their personal and employability skills and to help them with the transition from school.
- 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 West Lothian Employability Award – a customised SQA qualification designed to recognise the wider employability skills of young people in West Lothian has been adapted to allow for the issues caused by the pandemic. Young people can either complete the award with work experience, without work experience or with a virtual work experience.
- 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. Where deficits are identified support and guidance visits are timetabled.
- Schools and partners on the Developing the Young Workforce Steering Board are continuing to work with a range of organisations and stakeholders to develop and extend the provision of vocational experiences for young people as part of the Senior Phase and "Agile Learner Pathways" linking in with Labour Market needs.

3.3.4 Actions Taken to Mitigate Risks Associated with Pandemic in 2021-2022

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.

- Detailed guidance was provided to ensure that all schools had a 2021-22 School Improvement and Recovery Phase Plan in place. These plans were informed by national priorities and local, contextual data analysis of attainment and online learner engagement.
- Initial engagement of the Quality Improvement Team with all schools in 2021-22 was on Self-evaluation for Self-improvement establishing a clear focus for improvement for each individual school. Collaborative approaches to analysing school data informed the focus of all quality improvement activity.
- Support and challenge visits from the Quality Improvement Team prioritised the Health and Wellbeing of Headteachers.
- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) support visits to all schools by the WLC PEF Officer and the Attainment Advisor from Education Scotland. These focused on the importance of planning how to measure our interventions using reliable data and taking full account of the changing needs of our pupils within our learning community context.
- West Lothian's focus remains on high quality learning, teaching and assessment provision, to motivate and engage all learners to progress in their learning. Informed by attainment data and research the 2021-22 West Lothian authority priorities for all schools have remained a clear focus to ensure all learners continue to make progress in their learning.
- West Lothian authority Primary priorities for session 2021-22 have been raising combined literacy attainment, writing attainment and a relentless focus on raising attainment Quintile 1 learners.
- West Lothian authority Secondary priorities for session 2021-22 have been raising attainment for all in the BGE, closing the poverty-related attainment gap in the BGE, raising attainment for all in the Senior Phase and closing the poverty related attainment gap in the Senior Phase.
- High quality professional learning for staff has continued throughout session 2021-22 to ensure that teaching and support staff are confident in using digital tools to support learning. Our digital professional learning supports continue to ensure that every teacher and learner in P4 –S6 has a level of confidence in using Microsoft 365 within Glow and Teams.
- The support from the pedagogy team has led to improvements in pedagogy resulting in strategic approaches to planning for continuous change which impacts positively on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- The universal and targeted approaches of the equity team have led to improvements in closing the poverty related attainment gap by informing strategic planning for continuous change which impacts positively on outcomes for learners affected by poverty. This team continues to clearly define approaches to recovering from and planning future renewal emerging from the pandemic.
- Tracking and monitoring of learner engagement and progress in learning is well established in all schools. 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.

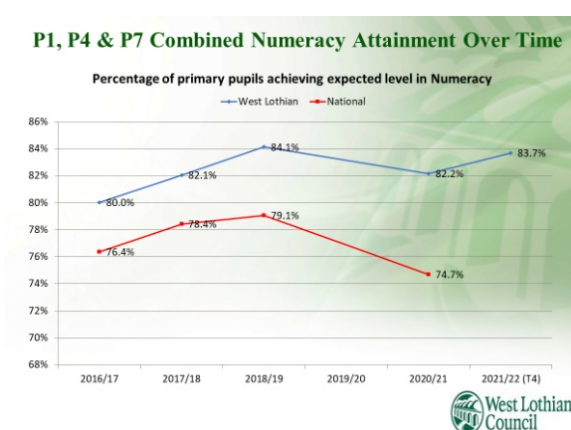
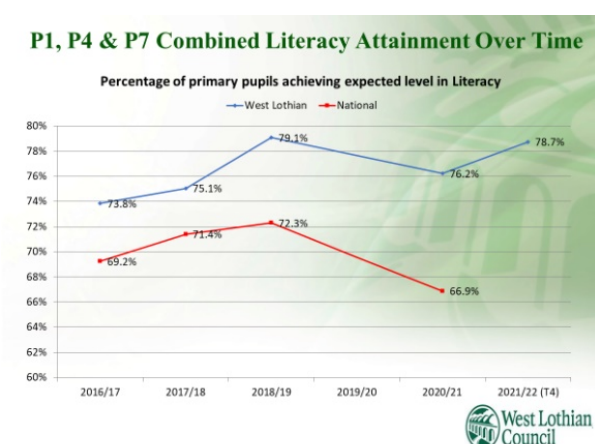
- Continual review of SQA documentation and updates in the Senior Phase took place in preparation for whichever scenario was invoked.
- West Lothian Academy allowed students to study courses virtually again this session. The different levels of courses and options has widened the curriculum and supports opportunities for young people's choices but has also opened up opportunities for those students who have had periods of working from home.
- Supported Study sessions in Secondary schools were offered virtually for most of this session. This provision offered not only support for those senior phase students who were in class but also for those at home isolating, allowing them to keep up with their studies and ask for help if required.
- Easter school was offered to all learners in the Senior Phase but also specific targeted groups were identified. As well as the academic opportunities on offer, there were opportunities for counselling, health and wellbeing activities and quiet study areas.
- National E-Learning Provision was widely accessed by West Lothian students and for the second year running West Lothian had the most unique user and course sign-ups in Scotland.
- Additional staffing, following confirmation of Scottish Government funding, has been targeted to deliver future recovery interventions.
- 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 focused 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 support was 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.

In terms of Primary attainment it should be noted that there have been improvements in both combined literacy and numeracy measures – please note that 2021/22 data is provisional:



In terms of Senior Phase attainment, it should be noted that there are improvements in all key measures compared to 2018/19. Attainment during the two years of alternative SQA arrangements are highlighted in the table below. Please note that this data is provisional until the release of Insight in September 2022 and does not include appeals outcomes. This data is based on the full range of SCQF awards.

Measure	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
S4 Level 5 SCQF 5+	48%	54%	57%	68%	68%	72%
S5 Level 6 SCQF 1+	66%	69%	71%	75%	78%	82%
S5 Level 6 SCQF 3+	46%	52%	58%	60%	63%	60%
S5 Level 6 SCQF 5+	29%	32%	41%	44%	48%	46%
S6 Level 6 SCQF 1+	66%	70%	71%	73%	76%	79%
S6 Level 6 SCQF 3+	52%	54%	58%	62%	64%	66%
S6 Level 6 SCQF 5+	38%	40%	44%	52%	52%	54%
S6 Level 7 SCQF 1+	20%	22%	21%	25%	25%	24%

3.4.2 Expanding Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard Approach (Scottish Government, 2018) requires local authorities to fulfil the statutory responsibility for ensuring families have flexibility and choice in accessing early learning and childcare and requires the local authority to be the guarantors of quality. In line with the National Standard, West Lothian Council's procurement framework has been adapted to make it more flexible for private and voluntary providers to apply to deliver funded hours and it is now open annually to new providers. In addition to the 64 local authority settings, West Lothian Council now has the following partners who deliver funded entitlement to eligible 2, 3 and 4-year-olds in West Lothian:

- 22 private provider nurseries
- 6 playgroups
- 46 childminders

The council's Early Years' team is responsible for working with local authority and Partner Provider settings to ensure high quality provision is delivered across all ELC settings to improve outcomes for children.

In session 2021-22, the central Early Years' team has supported and challenged improvement in all ELC settings through:

- Planning and delivering a comprehensive professional learning programme for all ELC managers, practitioners and Partner Providers to ensure consistent standards and expectations in ELC practice
- Facilitating a range of practitioner networks to further develop professional pedagogical practice across all ELC providers
- Delivering a robust, well planned quality assurance programme of visits to support improvement
- Supporting managers and practitioners in all ELC settings pre and post Care Inspection processes
- Providing support to settings who do not meet the National Standard to make required improvements within the mandatory 'Service Improvement Period'

A key focus of the quality criteria within Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard (Scottish Government, 2018) are scrutiny evaluations allocated through the Care Inspectorate inspection process and informed by the national evaluation document "Health and Social Care Standards". All ELC settings are required to achieve grades of 4, or above, to meet the National Standard.

In West Lothian in 2021-22:

- 100% (64) local authority settings meet the National Standard
- 86% (19) partner provider nurseries meet the National Standard

Through the implementation of ongoing, high quality support and continued professional learning opportunities, the performance of West Lothian Early Years' settings continues to improve.

Partnership working in West Lothian Council has evolved in the Early Years' sector in Session 2021-22, acknowledging the Funding Follows the Child approach. Early Years' Officers collaborated with Partner Providers to develop a vision and values for partnership working in the authority, based on developing genuine, meaningful partnerships. This resulted in the establishment of the shared vision.

To establish a culture of meaningful partnership working to ensure consistent high-quality

experiences for all of our funded children. This will be based on a foundation of honesty, transparency, trust and professional integrity.

Termly partnership meetings have been established to support ongoing engagement with all Partner Providers and there are regular opportunities for partners to participate in working groups, to ensure that our early learning and childcare offer meets the needs of all stakeholders.

Results from a recent survey found:

- 100% of partners agree partnership with West Lothian Council is positive for their setting
- 100% of partners agree that the shared vision reflects partnership working in West Lothian
- 75% of partners feel supported by West Lothian Council all of the time, 25% most of the time
- 88% of Partner Providers feel communication by West Lothian Council meets the needs of their service
- Training, support and guidance, access to WLC SharePoint, communication and advice were some of the strengths of partnership working

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

Through involvement and engagement in the Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC), direct support to practitioners has been given to develop knowledge, understanding and application of research informed approaches to transform learning, teaching and assessment. Support to improve quality and performance through the RIC has continued to develop.

Collaborative practice has led to continued collaboration of our data coaches which has ensured that workstreams, Career Long Professional Learning Opportunities (CLPL), interventions and self-evaluations are data informed. Established collaborative working on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is ensuring now and in the future that Children's Rights are central in all RIC activities. This links directly with Wellbeing and informs decision making in taking forward our Empowerment and Equalities aims.

In addition, Building Racial Literacy is currently being collaboratively developed across our RIC. Learning for Sustainability partnership working will permeate and shape many aspects of the curriculum, linking Children's Rights to a sustainable future through learning experiences which offer them the opportunity to prosper as responsible, global citizens. Building Racial Literacy is currently being collaboratively developed across our RIC. This will empower us to identify and address areas of the hidden curriculum which continue to have a negative impact on practitioners and learners.

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. School communities are empowered 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. In session 2021-22 we saw the opening of Calderwood Primary School, Cedarbank School (ASN) and the refurbishment and extension of Pinewood School (ASN). Construction at the Winchburgh site has progressed significantly with Winchburgh Academy and Holy Family Primary School due to open early in session 2022-23 and Sinclair Academy in session 2023-24. Construction to improve the Additional Support Needs estate, will continue with construction on a replacement Beatlie School beginning this summer. Capital investment has been confirmed for improvement and expansion to the primary school estate.

3.4.6 Empowering 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 now established throughout the secondary sector to increase the ability of schools to support pupils with additional support needs. Supportive professional development opportunities are available to all schools on an ongoing basis to enable school staff to continue to meet the needs of all children and young people. To aid local decision-making, schools are benefiting from greater use of data with the introduction of an ASN Planning Tool. The information in the ASN Planning Tool is further strengthening local supports for children and young people with a range of needs.

3.4.7. Community Learning & Development Contributions to National Priorities

West Lothian's Community Learning & Development (CLD) service has a particular focus on equality, inclusion, wellbeing and rights, reflecting, amongst others, the drivers within the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC). The CLD service continues to focus on closing the gap in achievement between those most disadvantaged and their peers whilst playing its part in progressing the move towards greater community empowerment. In particular, West Lothian CLD in its wider sense supports providers to work in partnership with communities to address local priorities including addressing disadvantages created by poverty.

Examples of Community Learning & Development contributions to the national priorities are:

To improve attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy:

- Develop the youth work offer to include literacy and numeracy support

To close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children:

- Expand the offer of accredited learning and wider achievement opportunities to young people through engagement in youth work.

To improve health and wellbeing:

- Continue to provide support to vulnerable children and young people throughout school

summer holidays with targeted developmental activities in some of the most disadvantaged communities in West Lothian

- Continue to offer the Me Time community-based group work mental health and wellbeing programme to young people
- Continue to provide a programme of family learning activities during summer holiday to vulnerable families and expand delivery to October and Easter holiday periods

To improve employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations:

- Continue delivery of skills development and employability support in schools and post school with a focus on vulnerable and disengaged young people

To support attendance and attainment in the senior phase for disengaged young people:

- Development of a family learning offer which will take a whole family approach (parent, young person and younger siblings), enabling parents to better support their children's learning.

3.4.8 Get Into Summer 2022

West Lothian Council delivered a structured and targeted programme of summer activities, "Get into Summer 2022", to embed support for the most vulnerable children and young people within their local community over the holiday period. The programme of activities was designed to support vulnerable children and young people in West Lothian, complement direct payments made to families of children and young people entitled to free school meals, and provide the additionality of the "Get Into Summer 2022" programme to be accessed by a wider population of families across West Lothian.

Community Learning & Development colleagues worked with schools, Social Policy, Regeneration, Anti-Poverty and third sector colleagues to plan an extensive summer programme. This planning process involved all providers both consulting with key stakeholders and using experience from the "Summer of Play 2021" to inform the programme. This exercise evidenced that providers had listened to the views of children, young people and families and had designed activities that were relevant and met need. Through wider engagement the opportunities for 2022 had been enhanced with, for example, specific activities for BAME and children and young people with disabilities. Children and young people had the opportunity to participate in an excellent range of activities including multi-activity clubs, as well as single focus activities through taster days and weekly camps such as dance, drama, gymnastics, golf, football, swimming, cooking, creative arts, STEM activities and day trips away.

The extensive programme supported participation from every Ward across West Lothian. All activities were open to children and young people from across West Lothian with all provision under the banner of "Get Into Summer 2022" funded by West Lothian Council and the Scottish Government provided free of charge. Participation in all activities were monitored throughout the programme to establish individual needs-led transportation requirements. A quality assurance framework and schedule was also established to ensure evaluation outcomes were reportable after the summer period including information to inform future plans.

4. ANNUAL PLAN 2022-23

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 2022-23 West Lothian Education Services will:

- Ensure a continued focus on improvement in progress for Quintile 1 learners.
- Adopt a partnership approach to the Scottish Attainment Challenge Refresh through the establishment of a steering group which will oversee the planning and impact of the 3 focus areas for the Scottish Attainment Challenge/Attainment Scotland Funding: Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), Care Experienced Children & Young People and Strategic Equity Funding. This group will establish a number of collaborative projects which will focus on improving outcomes in specific targeted areas including care experienced young people, attendance, additional support needs.
- Ensure individual school improvement plans are developed on the basis of the five amended national priorities which includes closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- Continue to focus on the analysis of the impact of Pupil Equity Funding and measuring impact over the longer term to provide information around closing the gap in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing supported by a new planning, monitoring and evaluation tool for PEF. This will help clear identification of poverty-related gaps, including attainment, in each school and measure the impact of the work employed to address them. This will involve monitoring of progress three times a year.
- Continue to provide equity for all children by providing intensive support to a targeted number of primary schools clearly identified as a result of each school's contextual analysis. The team will also provide a universal equity offer through the effective promotion of evidence-based 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 Equity Network to ensure impact from additionality.
- Implement processes for schools to review their poverty proofing statements in order to demonstrate impact on learners which will be shared with the Anti-Poverty Team.
- Work with colleagues in Housing and other partners to reduce Youth Homelessness.
- Ensure all West Lothian planning takes full consideration of children & young people voice in decision making in all aspects of SAC Refresh, sustainability, self-evaluation and context.

Scottish Attainment Challenge Annual Plan:

As part of the stretch aim process all schools will be encouraged and supported to set their own stretch aims in relation to the Quintile 1 vs Quintile 5 gap in attainment and attendance. Stretch aims will be in line with the core set indicated in the Attainment Scotland Fund documentation. Final stretch aims and associated interventions will be contained within the Annual Scottish Attainment Challenge Plan which is to be submitted to Scottish Government by the end of September. Progress with this will be highlighted to elected members throughout the session.

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

In Session 2022-23 West Lothian Education Services will:

- Continue to regularly engage with all staff through well-established online platforms and as well as face to face engagement. This will establish the support and challenge required in every school to improve outcomes for all learners.
- Build upon our learning of the role of digital communication during the pandemic, to continue to support schools to develop flexible, inclusive and responsive communication methods.
- Continue to support schools and Parent Councils to strengthen the role and impact of Parent Councils, 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 utilise the data from parent and pupil ethos surveys to inform future priorities and ongoing activity.
- 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.
- Continue to ensure that children and young people's voice and participation is at the heart of decision making and strategic direction within schools and across the authority in line with the UNCRC - making sure there are opportunities to be actively involved in decisions that affect them at all ages and stages of development.
- 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.

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 2022-23 West Lothian Education Services will continue to focus on securing and evidencing year on year improvements in attainment in both Literacy and Numeracy through a continued emphasis 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.
- Continued use of data and high-quality assessment effectively 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.
- Embedding of effective moderation practice which further strengthens the quality of all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment to include applying skills in different contexts.
- Promotion of 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.

There is a commitment to continue to promote and support the 'Pathways into Practice' model to ensure that Progression Pathways are used even more effectively, across all sectors, to plan and deliver high quality learning experiences and assessments. Professional learning opportunities will be provided to support all staff to make best use of

the Literacy and Numeracy Sharepoint spaces.

Plans are in place to complete and promote use of pupil-friendly Progression Pathways and to promote and support parental engagement and family learning through use of 'Family Learning package'.

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

In Session 2022-23 West Lothian Education Services will:

- Provide Trauma Informed Training for all schools to continue to increase staff confidence and pupil regulation and resilience.
- Provide schools communities with a suite of stress and anxiety supports.
- Continue to support all schools in reviewing their HWB curriculum, with a strong focus on learning for sustainability and outdoor learning.
- Continue the PEPAS Strategy to 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.
- Continue to empower staff by providing support for their wellbeing.
- Work with partners to continue to develop the Children and Young People's mental health strategy.
- Have a focus on how mental health and wellbeing impacts on the priority area of school attendance and engagement.
- Have a focus on school bullying policies and approaches in line with the Positive Relationships Policy.
- Have a continued commitment to ensuring access to counselling services across all schools.

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

In Session 2022-23 West Lothian Education Services will:

- Further strengthen Developing the Young Workforce structures and the role of Skills 4.0 within the Early Learning and Childcare and primary sectors.
- Continue the development of the Agile Curriculum pathways with a clear focus on the key labour market intelligence areas for West Lothian.
- Co-create aspects of the curriculum with partners, which will improve experiences and opportunities for all young people - the main driver for this is to ensure equity and provision of opportunity for all young people.
- 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.
- Continue to enhance and support collaboration between the DYW Steering Board and senior leaders in secondary schools with the creation of a Senior Phase Curriculum Partners Group.
- 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 DYW Co-ordinators posts in schools to drive improvements.
- Promote the newly relaunched Positive Destinations website with all stakeholders to help signpost young people who are about to leave school to the appropriate support services. Further develop the website by adding an ASN specific section for young people and their parents/carers.
- 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.
- Continue to 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 2022-23 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 the use of Office 365 in GLOW tools and Seesaw
- Ensure that staff understand effective pedagogical approaches when using and applying digital tools through ongoing, high quality CLPL opportunities
- Further strengthen the use of the digitally focused moderation cycle to ensure a digital first approach to planning, learning, teaching and assessment
- Further develop the West Lothian Digital Illustration to ensure a shared understanding of high-quality use of digital tools in school.
- 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.
- Work collaboratively with IT Services to ensure the digital infrastructure and network design, fully meets the requirements for effective learning, teaching and assessment
- Continue to expand the West Lothian Academy to provide the opportunity for virtual courses supporting pathways from Levels 4 to 7.
- Further develop staff understanding and efficiency in using digital tools to support inclusive pedagogy and additional assessment arrangements for students with support needs.
- Expand the use of OneNote in secondary schools.

4.3.5 Planning for improvement in a new context

In Session 2022-23 West Lothian Education Services will continue to drive improvement as follows:

- The Quality Improvement Team will play a key role in driving the implementation of the Raising Attainment Strategy, through effective quality improvement activities, which will include validated self-evaluation. The team will also carry out individual and

collective school attainment reviews, engaging school leaders in the forensic analysis of performance data to inform improvements and interventions.

- As HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) resumes a scrutiny programme of inspections for academic year 2022-23, the Quality Improvement Team will support schools and settings to use the quality frameworks and quality indicators (QIs) for their own self-evaluation and planning for improvement within How Good Is Our School? (4th Edition) and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?
- The core function of the Performance Officer is to provide the Quality Improvement Team and schools with support in the management, analysis and intelligent use of data to support improvements in key indicators of performance. The Quality Improvement team will also support improvements in Early Learning and Childcare in Council establishments and funded providers.

Section 4.4 – Education Benefits

In Session 2022-23 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. A new Raising Attainment Strategy will then be written for the next 5-year period.
- Continue to implement Moving Forward in Learning to ensure school improvement. Focus will continue to be given to promoting an agile learning culture and a refreshed curriculum narrative and this will be aligned to the national improvement priorities
- Continue to work through the Regional Improvement Collaborative to improve quality and performance.
- 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 “Get Into Summer 2022” to develop a model of targeted activities throughout the year to support vulnerable children and young people in West Lothian. It is anticipated that this will see a continuation of partnership working, and the empowerment of community groups to design and deliver services.
- Development of a family learning offer which will take a whole family approach (parent, young person and younger siblings), enabling parents to better support their children’s learning and improve employability skills for adults.
- Delivery of skills development and employability support in schools and post school with a focus on vulnerable, disengaged young people and those at risk of homelessness.

APPENDIX

West Lothian Scottish Attainment Challenge Progress Report 2021-2022



Scottish Attainment Challenge: Recovery and Progress Report on 2021-22

West Lothian Council

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

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Section 1

1.1 : Introduction

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was established to promote equity in education by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a focus on closing the poverty -related attainment gap. It is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child. It focuses on improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Reducing educational inequity and closing the poverty-related attainment gap is a long-term strategy which aims to impact on societal culture and thinking. On the 23 November 2021 the Cabinet Secretary announced the expanded mission statement, included below, of the refreshed SAC.

To use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.

This report will look at the progress and impact of next steps as outlined in the local authority SAC: 2015-20 Impact Report. Leadership is recognised as a key driver of the success of any school or early learning and childcare (ELC) setting therefore the report will also take a closer look at Leadership – Governance and Management in relation to the SAC. Also reflected in this report are the local authority's next steps / future priorities in raising attainment and reducing educational inequity for all of Scotland's children and young people.

1.2: Approach used

During the period of 1 April 2022 to 10 June 2022, attainment advisors, in collaboration with Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) local authority project leads, gathered evidence from their individual local authority regarding the SAC progress in the year 2021-22. The purpose was to provide answers to the following high-level questions regarding progress and impact of SAC:

1. What progress has the local authority made with regards to the next steps outlined in the SAC: 2015-20 Impact Report and what impact has this had?
2. Questions from SAC self-evaluation toolkit on leadership – governance and management:
 - To what extent are local authority decision-making structures clear and transparent to all stakeholders?
 - In considering our approaches to planning, to what extent do we ensure that our plans are straightforward, clear and distinctly focused on equity?
 - How effectively do our quality assurance processes provide support and challenge, and empower schools, to focus on equity?
 - To what extent are we considering and ensuring long-term sustainability as part of our planning to achieve equity?
 - How effectively do we keep our elected members and other stakeholders informed about progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
 - How do we ensure that there is sufficient scrutiny by elected members of the Scottish Attainment Challenge work in the local authority and schools? Does this include the full range of work including Pupil Equity Funding and Care-Experienced Funding?

At the time of educational recovery, to what extent:

- *Do we ensure that our plans are straightforward, clear and distinctly focused on recovery?*
- *Do we keep our elected members and other stakeholders informed about the impact of Covid-19 on the most disadvantaged learners and progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap?*

3. What are the next steps / future priorities for the SAC?
-

1.3: Local Authority Context

West Lothian is committed to ensuring excellence and equity for all children and young people. It 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.

In West Lothian there are 11 secondary schools (11910 pupils), 68 primary schools (15278 pupils), and 64 ELC settings/nurseries (2658 pupils). West Lothian also have 6 ASN schools and whilst they do not have a university, further and adult education facilities are provided at West Lothian College based in Livingston.

Three schools were identified as SAC schools in West Lothian, two primary and one secondary. Each school identified a key contact within the school for all SAC related discussions and reporting. The Attainment Advisor (AA) works closely with them and provides advice, challenge and support.

There are 9 wards in West Lothian with child poverty levels (2019) ranging from 11% (Linlithgow) to 33% (Whitburn/Blackburn). West Lothian want all children to have the best start in life and acknowledge that parents often face multiple barriers to financial security. Low income, insecure employment and high costs of living can make breaking free of poverty seem impossible. Collaboration between various agencies within West Lothian are tackling this challenge (WL Child Poverty Report 2018/19).

In the year 2021-22, West Lothian were allocated £6,554,349 in total as part of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF). The breakdown of the funding streams is detailed here £5,949,984 (Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)), £256,365 (Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)) and £348,000 (Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP)).

1.4: Executive Summary from Year 5 Report

Key strengths identified:

- the use of data to inform school improvement planning
- raised awareness of the importance of equity
- tracking and monitoring teacher professional judgement

Next steps included:

- Continue to focus on measuring impact over longer term through interpretation/analysis of data, as this will provide information around closing the gap in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing
- Continue to focus on the analysis of the impact PEF, CECYP and SAC funding is having on children and young people living in poverty
- Continue to encourage the use of the well-being tool as part of the return to school from the COVID-19 closure period. This will allow the data collated throughout the year to show the progress pupils are making, e.g. after interventions have been put in place by the schools
- Continue to focus on clearly defined outcomes to enable progress and impact to be measured for children and young people who have experienced care

Section 2

2.1: Progress and impact of next steps from Year 5 Report

West Lothian has ensured there is a relentless focus on analysing and interpreting data to move towards closing the poverty related attainment gap in the authority. The creation of an Equity Team allows for universal and targeted (ten primary schools) approaches to be employed, by providing coaching and bespoke additional support. This training/coaching in data analysis has led to more accurate identification of interventions.

Universal support to all schools improved the use of data and quality improvement (QI) approaches to target equity. The creation and repetition of Data, Measures and Outcomes sessions ensured every school had access to sessions which explored how to 'know, address and mind the gaps' using the Bernhardt model as a basis for analysis. Excellence and Equity Leads have been piloting the same approach, in ELC.

Increased capacity has led to a more analytical stance and there is evidence in the data collected at authority level that they are closing the poverty related attainment gap:

- P1,4,7 combined literacy data for Quintile 1 vs Quintile 5 indicates the gap is decreasing from 23.5% in 18/19 to 20.8% in 20/21 – closing the poverty related attainment gap by 2.7%
- P1,4,7 combined numeracy data for Quintile 1 vs Quintile 5 indicates the gap is decreasing from 19.3% in 18/19 to 17% in 20/21 – closing the poverty related attainment gap by 2.3%

The Equity Team also delivered CLPL to probationers, universal, middle/senior leaders, Champions and Support for Learning staff to ensure a consistent focus on equity.

PEF support meetings were undertaken, involving every primary head teacher in professional dialogue with the WL PEF Officer and AA. Advice and guidance was offered, particularly around the use of baseline models, to add rigor to each school's PEF process and ensure a more consistent approach. Several case studies exemplifying interesting and impactful PEF interventions, across all sectors in WL, have also been collated. Key messages regarding PEF were reinforced through the newly established Equity Network and shared practice from schools. 3% of each school's PEF budget was allocated to participatory budgeting (PB). Schools have consulted with CYP and parents/carers, using a variety of methods. Each school has produced a poverty proofing statement as part of reducing the cost of the school day and PB decisions have frequently aligned with action(s) identified.

HWB Champions have been focusing on gap analysis with their establishments/schools and they now use a wide data set/range of tools to support them. Survey data completed by HWB Champs indicate that school staff have a better understanding of trauma, an increase in nurture interventions and Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) is increasingly being used to support HWB. Embedding of self-reporting processes and increased confidence of learners in discussing wellbeing indicators is impacting positively. The introduction of Mini Champs has increased opportunity for pupil voice and termly tracking and monitoring, using data from learners' self-evaluation, is more specifically informing next steps.

The CECYP team continue to offer a holistic approach, creating individual bespoke packages to support the CYP identified. The success of the project is being supported by multiagency working and a core focus on building and maintaining positive relationships with the young people and the adults around them.

2.2: Leadership – Governance and Management

West Lothian decision-making structures are clear and transparent to all stakeholders, e.g. PEF guidance incorporates the Scottish Government advice as well as details around procurement, corporate policy, etc.

There are various reports to council members though a variety of routes: the Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDSP), which is chaired by the Executive Councillor for Education with elected and non-elected committee members, scrutinise any new policies by education services and also school attainment which includes Quintile 1, FSM and LAC. The Education Executive, which is chaired by the Executive Councillor for Education approve local policy and local plans, for example the NIF report and plan.

On an annual basis any relevant education reports are summarised, and progression plans are submitted and discussed with councillors. The SAC 5-year Impact Report was shared with the Education Executive Committee in June 2021 and there is regular reporting to elected members regarding the use of, and outcomes, of Attainment Scotland Funding to ensure there is transparency for all.

The Local Authority Raising Attainment Strategy has a specific focus on equity and the report is shared with PDSP as well as members of the Executive Management Team for the Council. Through attainment reporting, reporting on CECYP progress and positive destinations, there is a clear path of information sharing in place. Panel and committee members will request more information about specific areas, for example, LAC, PEF, SAC and officers will locate and report information at future meetings as required.

During the COVID-19 pandemic there were additional reports to councillors on a frequent basis with regards to educational updates in line with the education recovery plan, e.g. COVID-19 digital support, impact on children and young people and their families, attendance, SQA approaches etc. in line with national guidance.

In addition, all head teachers report to the Education Quality Assurance Committee (EQAC) where elected members scrutinise performance of individual schools, including PEF plans and secondary head teachers attend their own Local Area Committees with local councillors.

Moving forward there will be one West Lothian plan shared with Committee members which will encompass any funding streams under the SAC Refresh. High level plans will continue to form part of the annual NIF report and plan.

Section 3

3.1 : Progress towards setting Stretch Aims and implementing the SAC refresh

Several discussions have taken place between the authority and the Attainment Advisor towards setting stretch aims and implementing the principles of the SAC refresh. An internal WL SAC Refresh Group (new Schools Programme) has been set up internally involving key officers with lead roles directly influencing schools and establishments. For example, the Equity Team, Additional Support Needs officer, PEF officer, Primary Quality Improvement Manager, Attainment Advisor and Finance Officer are all represented on this group. The LA has a Secondary Quality Improvement, Strategic Partnerships & Equity Lead (SQISPE) who oversees the internal group as well as the newly established SAC Refresh Partnership Steering Group which aims to bring all key services round the table to tackle the challenges around child poverty, homelessness, care experience d, attainment, attendance, etc. There are seven initial key collaborative project groups all of whom will support each other to achieve the stretch aims being set by the authority. The SQISPE Lead and the Attainment Advisor will both be involved in the steering and project groups to ensure a relentless focus on tackling poverty and inequity for our CYP.

Alongside this the Equity Team have been instrumental in designing and sharing a draft PEF Planning tool for all schools to use. This will help to support the clear identification of poverty-related gaps, including attainment, in each school and measure the impact of the work employed to address them. It will also support and maximise the use of PEF funding effectively to deliver the most appropriate approaches for children and young people impacted by poverty. It will support engagement with partners, e.g. Social Policy, Youth Homelessness, Community Learning and Development, Cost of the School Day, etc. to ensure added value from PEF and further develop approaches to tackling the poverty-related attainment gap. Moving forward it will also ensure children, young people and their families can become more involved in decision making and evaluating the impact of PEF.

As part of the stretch aim process all schools will be encouraged and supported to set their own stretch aims in relation to the Quintile 1 vs Quintile 5 gap in attainment and attendance. Other stretch aims will be in line with the core set indicated in the Attainment Scotland Fund documentation.

3.2 : Next steps

The Secondary Quality Improvement, Strategic Partnerships & Equity Lead (SQISPE), supported by central team officers and identified project leads will co-ordinate, develop and report on the following next steps at key points in the year. Advice, guidance and support will also be provided by the Education

Scotland Attainment Advisor as and when required, and together they will track and monitor impact of each collaborative project.

- Establish a West Lothian Partnership SAC Refresh Partnership Steering Group with agreed outcomes to ensure a line of sight across services with a focus on improving outcomes for CYP impacted by poverty
- Use the logic model planning tool, where appropriate, to support robust and reflective planning discussions
- Develop key collaborative projects to tackle the poverty related attainment gap, e.g. Equity Team, Secondary Attendance Focus Group and Care Experienced Children & Young People group
- Ensure West Lothian planning takes full consideration of children & young people voice in decision making in all aspects of SAC Refresh, sustainability, self-evaluation and context
- Ensure a robust and rigorous PEF planning process is in place through the development of a new PEF planning tool, for implementation in 2022-23, supported by training and support sessions by the Equity Team. This will involve monitoring of progress three times a year
- Ensure a continued focus on improvement in progress for Quintile 1 learners

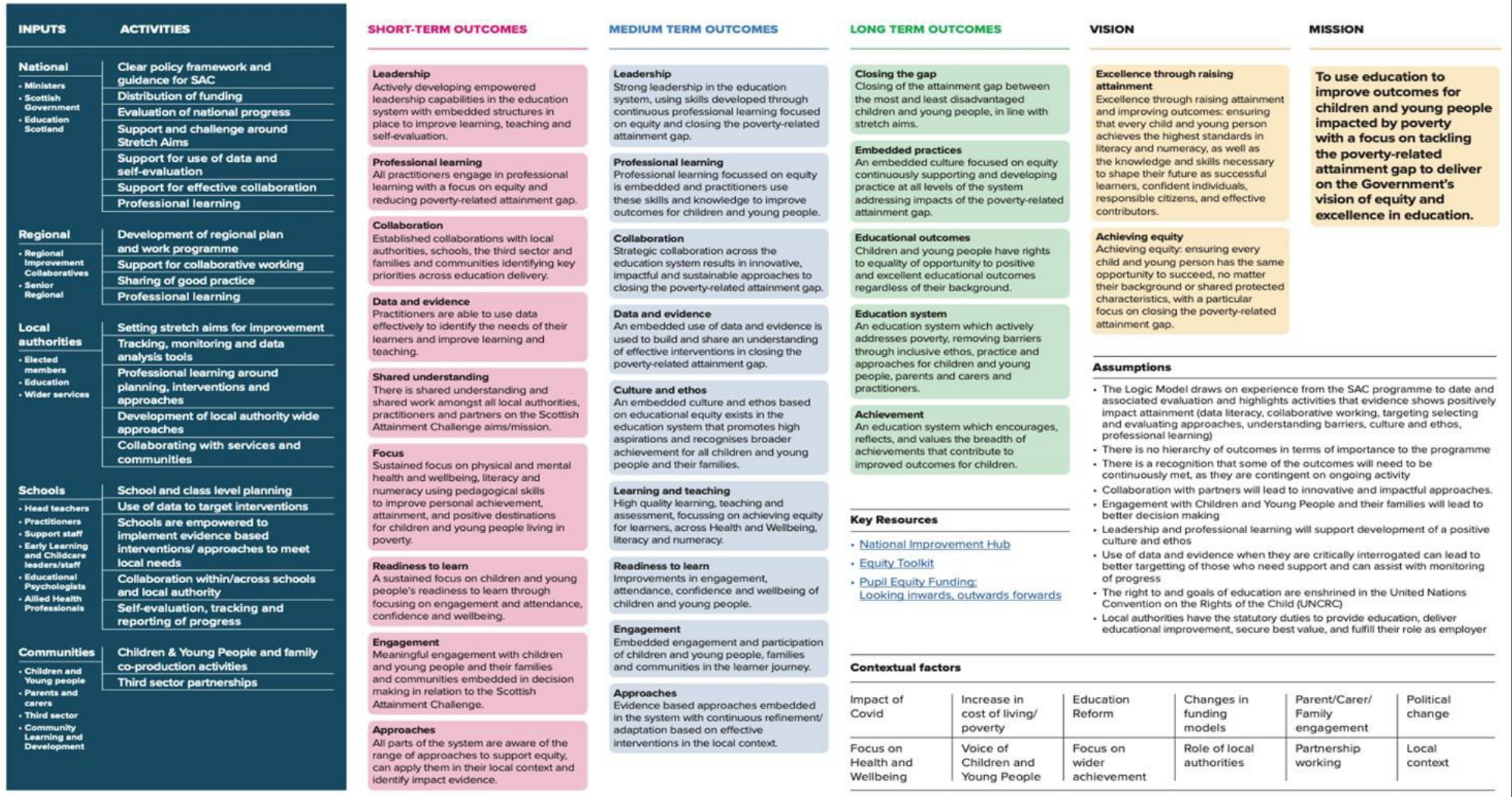
Section 4

4.1 : Glossary

Term/ acronym	Meaning
AA	Attainment Advisor
ACEL	Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level
ASF	Attainment Scotland Fund
BGE	Broad General Education
CECYP	Care experienced children and young people
ES	Education Scotland
Insight	Insight is a benchmarking tool designed to help bring about improvements for learners in the Senior Phase (S4-S6). The system is updated twice annually, around September for attainment results and February for school leavers' data.
LA	Local authority
PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
NIF	National Improvement Framework
RIC	Regional Improvement Collaborative
SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SEF	Strategic Equity Funding
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SNSA	Scottish National Standardised Assessments
SRA	Senior Regional Advisor

Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change

The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model



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