

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of meeting, held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on Thursday 21 August 2025.**

**Present:**

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Chair)  
Councillor Tony Buchanan  
Councillor Kate Campbell  
Councillor Katie Pragnell (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Gordon Wallace

Ms Fiona Gilchrist  
Mr Des Morris

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

(\*) indicates remote attendance

**Attending:**

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance); Joe McCaig, Head Of Education Services (Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) and Lesleyann Burns, Democratic Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Ben Harrison, Depute Head Teacher, Mearns Castle High School and Julie Neil, Depute Head Teacher, St Mark's Primary School.

**Apologies:**

Councillor Owen O'Donnell, Colm Merrick and Dorothy Graham.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1286.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**SPOTLIGHT ON LEADERSHIP**

**1287.** The Director of Education invited the Depute Head Teachers to give a presentation on the Aspiring Leadership course that they had both undertaken.

Both Depute Head Teachers expressed the view that the course was of great value to their learning and development and felt supported throughout by their Head Teachers and mentors.

1236

They both embraced the 360 feedback that they received from colleagues and felt that this course strengthened their leadership skills, it allowed them to be more self-aware and confident and felt that this was a great investment in their leadership development. One of the benefits of the course is that it has expanded their peer network. It was felt that this had benefited the schools as well as the communities.

Members questioned the challenges that leadership brought and whether the Depute Head Teachers would feel supported once they became Head Teachers. Both agreed that it could be challenging to give difficult messages but noted the importance of relationships and strong values, they both confirmed that they thought they would feel supported by the Education Leadership Team as they already see this in place with current Head Teachers.

## **SQA VERBAL UPDATE**

**1288.** The Head of Education Service (Quality Improvement and Performance) gave an update on the SQA results that had been achieved in 2025 and reflected that there had been record breaking achievements at S4 along with very strong Higher and Advanced Higher results.

She reflected that the results were down to the dedication and resilience of all the pupils, supported exceptionally well by staff and parents, as national research had shown the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted significantly on children and young people's learning. It was confirmed that more detailed outcomes of the results would be presented at the next Education Committee.

Members commended the work of teaching staff, parents as well as the children and young people and expressed the view that the results were a credit to all involved.

## **PROGRESS REPORT ON PRIORITIES ASSOCIATED WITH NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK**

**1289.** The Committee considered a report updating them on the Education Department's progress implementing priorities associated with the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education.

The report explained that the department evaluated its progress annually to identify strengths in current provision and areas where further improvement was required. Evidence gathered from the self-evaluation and evaluations of services and schools by the department's Quality Improvement team, Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate were used to identify steps which were required to be taken to secure continuous improvement.

A range of activities designed to provide support and challenge to schools and centres generate self-evaluation evidence, some of which was used for the NIF ERC Summary 2024-25 and included evidence in Appendix 1 to the report.

In discussion, members were informed that the Education Department worked with a range of partners to drive Excellence and Equity and fulfil the requirements as set out in the National Improvement Framework. These partners were detailed in the ERC Summary 2024-2025 and include Education Scotland, Association of Directors of Education, Skills Development Scotland and East Renfrewshire's Work EastRen, Community Learning and Development and Health and Social Care Partnership.

Having heard members commend the report, the Committee noted the progress in implementing priorities associated with the National Improvement Framework.

## **PROGRESS AND IMPACT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC EQUITY FUND PLAN 2022 – 2026**

**1290.** The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education on the progress and impact on implementation of the strategic equity fund plan 2022 - 2026.

The department's Strategic Equity Fund Plan "Raising the Bar for All: delivering Excellence through Equity" identifies 3 key themes as part of the theory of change to tackle the poverty related attainment gap:

- Children and Young People's Wellbeing – Readiness to Learn.
- Literacy and Numeracy.
- Learning and Teaching – Pedagogy for Equity.

The report included in Appendix 1, highlights the very good progress achieved by the department, its schools and services. Key strengths include:

- A professional learning programme for middle leaders leading on equity and social justice in primary and secondary schools. '
  - Improved attendance across primary and secondary schools.
  - The impact of the Learn Well service on young people's wellbeing, attendance and attainment.
  - Primary 1 attainment is the strongest in the last 5 years, with the poverty related attainment gap reduced.
  - The second highest result ever in primary attainment for reading, writing, talking and listening.
  - The highest every numeracy result in primary and S3.
  - Range and success of 'cost of the school day' supports.

Education Committee noted the content of the SEF Progress Report and approved the updated action plan.

CHAIR

