

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE3 February 2022Report by Director of EducationDRAFT STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2020 - 2021**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To inform elected members of the proposed contents of the Education Department's annual Standards and Quality Report for school session 2020 - 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Members are asked to:

- a) Comment on the content and quality of the annual Standards and Quality Report; and,
- b) Invite the Director of Education to make any amendments and take the necessary steps to produce and issue copies of the report for stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

3. Under the terms of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 education authorities have a duty to produce and publish annually a Local Improvement Plan which details how it and its schools and services will continuously improve, and, based on this plan, a Standards and Quality Report detailing how it has sought and achieved improvements in provision.

4. The local improvement plan, upon which this report is based, was approved by the Education Committee in January 2020 and reflected the National Outcomes for Education, the Council's Community Plan; the department's contributions to the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan 2020 – 2023. The plan lists the expected outcomes and impact and is organised under the department's vision statement "*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*". The draft Standards and Quality Report reflects the three key themes of the vision and evaluates the action taken and the improvements achieved as a result.

5. The draft Standards and Quality Report provides evidence of the progress the department and ELC settings and schools have made in supporting all learners, with a particular focus on inequalities of outcome experienced by our more disadvantaged children and young people. The report also sets out the improvement we have made towards the four national priorities as set out in the National Improvement Framework (NIF).

REPORT

6. The department has undertaken a self-evaluation exercise which has informed the draft report. This evaluation has helped to outline our next steps which will be fed into the next Local Improvement Plan that is the subject of a separate report to Education Committee. The draft, takes into consideration the continued challenges that Session 2020-21 offered East Renfrewshire's residents, families, children, young people, council staff and leaders alike as we adjusted to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular it reflects the period of national lock down and school closures.

7. The draft included as Appendix 1, highlights the very good and excellent standards and practice achieved by the department, its schools and services during these difficult times and is offered as a public record of some of the activities which were undertaken during the last school session, and their impact on stakeholders.

8. Evidence for the Standards and Quality Report is gathered annually through a range of activities designed to provide support and challenge to schools and centres. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence for the 2020-21 report was limited to the following sources:

- performance and questionnaire data
- thematic reviews by Education Scotland and the Quality Improvement Team on remote learning
- reports on Early Learning and Childcare Centres by Care Inspectorate Scotland
- school and service improvement plans and Standards and Quality Reports
- SGS Customer Service Excellence review (CSE)
- evaluations of professional learning activities.

9. Following feedback, the format of the 2020 - 2021 report has again been designed to provide a more concise, visual and high level summary of the progress made in implementing the 2020 - 23 Local Improvement Plan.

10. With committee approval, the Department plans to issue the report electronically to all parents of children attending an East Renfrewshire school or Early Learning and Childcare Centre. A limited number of copies of the published report will also be available in all libraries, education, sports and cultural centres and Council buildings, and will also be available to be viewed online or downloaded from the Council's website.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no financial or efficiency implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Members are asked to:

- a) Comment on the content and quality of the annual Standards and Quality Report; and,

- b) Invite the Director of Education to make any amendments and take the necessary steps to produce and issue copies of the report for parents.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 February 2022

Convener Contact Details

Councillor A. Lafferty, Convener for Education and Equalities

Tel: 0141 577 3108

Report Author

Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement)

Tel: 0141 577 3204

Janice.Collins@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendices

1. Draft Standards and Quality Report 2020 - 2021

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Standards and Quality Report 2020-21



Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences

Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences



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EVERYONE
ACHIEVING

EVERYONE
ATTAINING





East Renfrewshire Council continues to provide the highest quality services for all residents. This Standards and Quality Report shows the progress made in achieving our expected outcomes and impact in the past year. Evidence for this report is gathered by the Quality Improvement Team who support schools and services in carrying out self-evaluation. External evaluation is carried out by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate who, in engaging with our schools and centres, commented very favourably on the practice they observed.

Session 2020-21 continued to offer new challenges for East Renfrewshire's residents, families, children, young people, council staff and leaders alike as we adjusted to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The strength of our team working and our capacity to adapt, collaborate and support each other has taken on new significance in this context. The flexibility of our schools and services in implementing online delivery models to provide continuity of learning for our children and young people, and the wider support for children, young people and families provided by the department throughout many changes to education provision over the last year, are testament to the commitment of staff at all levels to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our learners, in all circumstances. The council's values of ambition, kindness and trust are clearly evident throughout this report. The Education

Department remains fully committed to meeting the needs of the General Equality Duty, as outlined by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, through eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

This Standards and Quality report is a tribute to the many outstanding achievements of East Renfrewshire's Education Department, its schools and services and the progress made in the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence in session 2020-21.

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Alan Lafferty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Councillor Alan Lafferty,
Convener for Education and Equalities





The Education Department's vision of Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences is at the heart of our work as we seek to provide the highest quality education and services to children, young people and adults within East Renfrewshire. This report is structured under this vision and details progress during session 2020-21 towards each of the target outcomes and impacts detailed in the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan for 2020-23. This report also clearly demonstrates the progress we have made towards the four national priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.

A commitment to improving children and young people's health and wellbeing is at the core of all aspects of the education department's work. This report outlines the many ways in which children and young people in East Renfrewshire are being supported through enriching, engaging experiences which will help them to become healthy, active and confident citizens.

Our aim for every young person to leave school and go on to further or higher education, employment or training is being realised through the excellent standards achieved by our senior pupils in the Scottish Qualifications Authority examinations and the continuing development and success of our vocational programme. The work outlined in this report evidences the department's relentless focus on increasing equity for learners, mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and families, and reducing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Through the self-evaluation activities which have informed this report, the department has identified next steps in achieving our vision. These will be taken forward over the next three sessions through implementation of our Local Improvement Plan 2021-24. The strong culture of collaboration and empowerment within the department, together with the high ambitions and standards we set for ourselves, combine to create a very high capacity for continuous improvement.

I am deeply committed to providing the very highest standards of education and care to allow every child, young person and resident in East Renfrewshire to enjoy the fullest benefits of lifelong learning. I am delighted to lead the department as we work together to deliver our vision and strive to achieve excellence and equity for all.

Mark Ratter

Mark Ratter,
Director of Education



Background Information

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About the Education Department

In 2020-21, East Renfrewshire Council's Education Department provided an education service through seven secondary schools, twenty-four primary schools, of which thirteen have nursery classes, nine family centres and one school for children and young people with additional support needs. The Education Department also has responsibility for Adult Learning and Facilities Management.

About the Standards and Quality Report

The Standards and Quality Report details the progress made towards achieving the outcomes and impact set out in the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan 2020-23. The Local Improvement Plan is organised under the Education Department's vision of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences* and has a clear focus on outcomes and impact on learners, parents and carers, staff and the community.



Evidence for the Standards and Quality Report is gathered annually through a range of activities designed to provide support and challenge to schools and centres. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence for the 2020-21 report was limited to the following sources:

- performance and questionnaire data
- thematic reviews by Education Scotland and the Quality Improvement Team on remote learning
- an Education Scotland review of the Alternative Certification Model
- reports on Early Learning and Childcare Centres by Care Inspectorate Scotland
- school and service improvement plans and Standards and Quality Reports
- SGS Customer Service Excellence review (CSE)
- evaluations of professional learning activities.

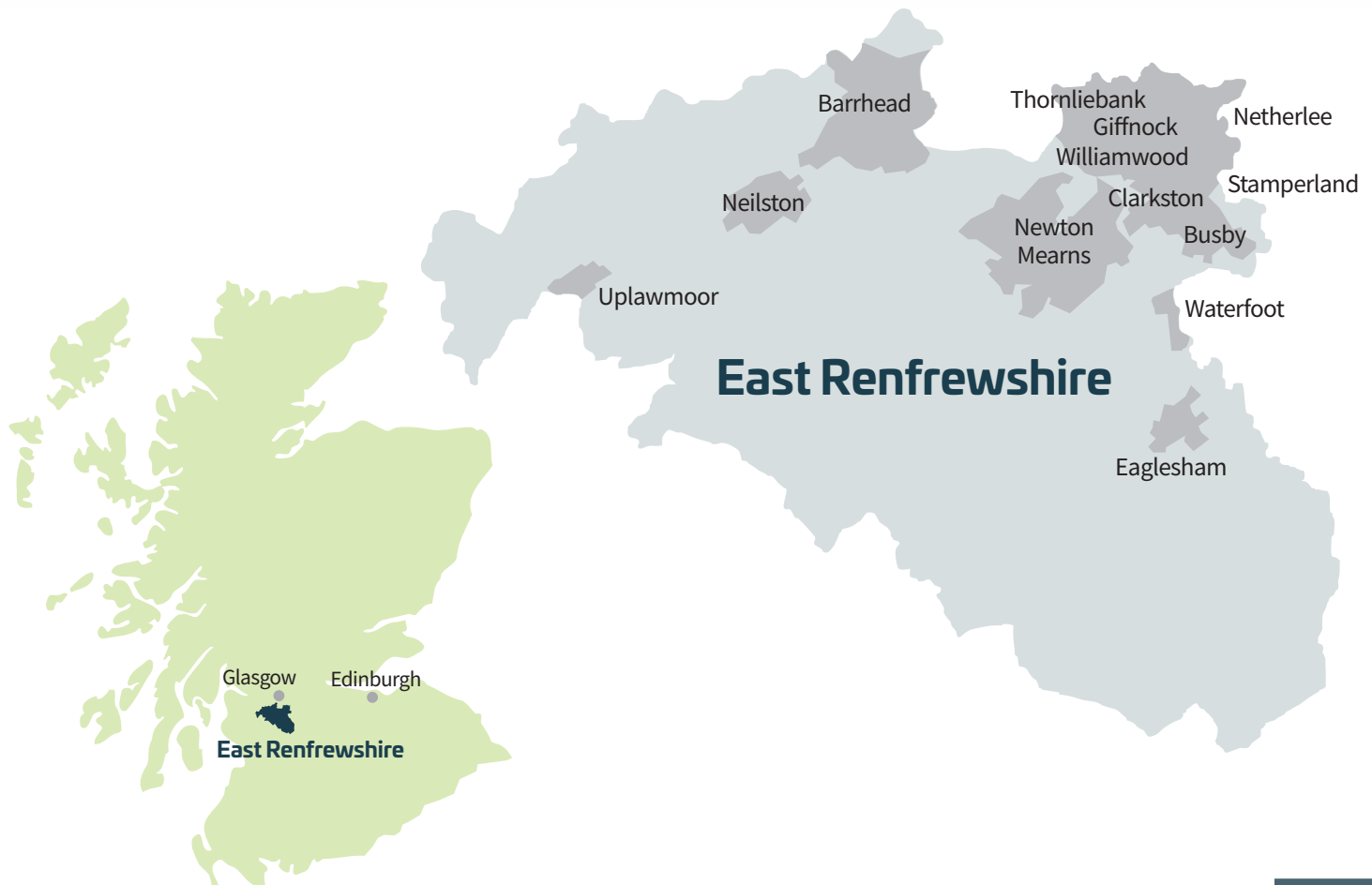
This report is also informed by:

- the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan
- the Scottish Government's wellbeing indicators: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included
- the Scottish Government's 2020 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan
- the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The results of this self-evaluation will be used to plan the next steps, which will be incorporated into the next Local Improvement Plan.



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Everyone Attaining

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NIF Priority 1: Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy

East Renfrewshire continues to advance equity and excellence as demonstrated through a wide range of local and national attainment measures. Our children and young people achieve exceptionally high standards of attainment throughout the broad general education and senior phase.

Senior Phase Attainment

Pupils across East Renfrewshire excelled in SQA qualifications with once again another year of outstanding results. These achievements are a tribute to the hard work of pupils, who have also been very well supported by staff and parents.



79% of S4 pupils attained 5 or more awards at National 5 or better, the second highest in East Renfrewshire's history

50% of S5 pupils attained 5 or more awards at Higher, the highest ever



73% of S5 pupils attained 3 or more awards at Higher, the highest ever



At Advanced Higher, S6 pupils achieved the area's highest ever proportion of one or more awards



St Luke's High recorded its best ever performance for the proportion of S4 pupils attaining 5 or more awards at National 5 since 2016

Barrhead and St Ninian's High schools achieved their second highest ever results for the proportion of S4 pupils attaining 5 or more awards at National 5, whilst Williamwood High school pupils continued to perform strongly with 85% of pupils attaining this measure



Barrhead High and Woodfarm High schools had their best ever performance of S5 pupils gaining 5 or more Highers

Eastwood, Mearns Castle, St Ninian's and Woodfarm High schools recorded their highest ever levels of S6 pupils attaining 1 or more awards at Advanced Higher.



School staff and Education Department personnel worked together to deliver the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) developed by SQA for 2021, in line with SQA and Scottish Government guidelines, ensuring that all learners and parents were kept informed throughout the process. East Renfrewshire's approach to the ACM was evaluated by Education Scotland who commended the level of rigour and collaboration across schools to share effective and validated assessment tools.

Curriculum for Excellence

Following the phased reopening of schools in March 2021 after a second period of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the secondary sector was engaged in applying the Alternative Certification Model for senior phase pupils. As a consequence of this change to SQA certification and the resulting demands on teaching staff, Scottish Government did not gather teacher professional judgements of pupil progress in the Broad General Education for S3 pupils in 2021. Data for this cohort of learners was not gathered locally or nationally in 2021. This means that data was not gathered for S3 in two consecutive years due to the summer term school closures in 2020.

In 2020-21 almost all pupils in P1, P4 and P7 combined, achieved the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level of attainment in the Broad General Education as measured by teacher professional judgements of progress in reading and in talking and listening, with most pupils attaining the expected level in numeracy and writing. The proportions of East Renfrewshire pupils in P1, P4 and P7 combined achieving the expected level in these curricular areas, are significantly higher than the latest published national proportions (2018-19).

Teacher professional judgements

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021*	ERC 3 year average target 2018-19 to 2020-21	National 2018-2019
% Attaining or Exceeding Expected Levels – Reading	90.7	N/A	90.3	90	80%
% Attaining or Exceeding Expected Levels – Writing	88.4	N/A	87.4	89	75%
% Attaining or Exceeding Expected Levels – Talking & Listening	94.5	N/A	94.1	94	86%
% Attaining or Exceeding Expected Levels – Numeracy	90.7	N/A	89.9	92	79%

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Moderation

Quality assurance and moderation remained a key focus throughout 2020-21. The department worked in partnership with schools to adapt approaches to sharing standards, in order to continue to support establishments and practitioners with learning, teaching and assessment.

122 Moderation Facilitators attended training in September 2020 focused on a range of themes including national expectations and key messages, the Moderation Cycle and the Moderation Hub, and approaches to supporting school and cluster moderation. 111 moderation facilitators from primary and early years settings also undertook refresher training. The programme of CLPL offered was highly evaluated and comments indicate a continued appetite for professional learning on the various aspects of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle.

99% of responses indicated that participants felt equipped to take forward moderation within their establishments,



with 94% indicating that their confidence in the process of moderation had improved.

Assessment and moderation activity for secondary practitioners focused on the Alternative Certification Model and provided excellent opportunities for practitioners to engage in ongoing high quality dialogue linked to effective assessment approaches in the senior phase. Through these opportunities, staff are continuing to build their confidence in making accurate professional judgements about learners' progress.

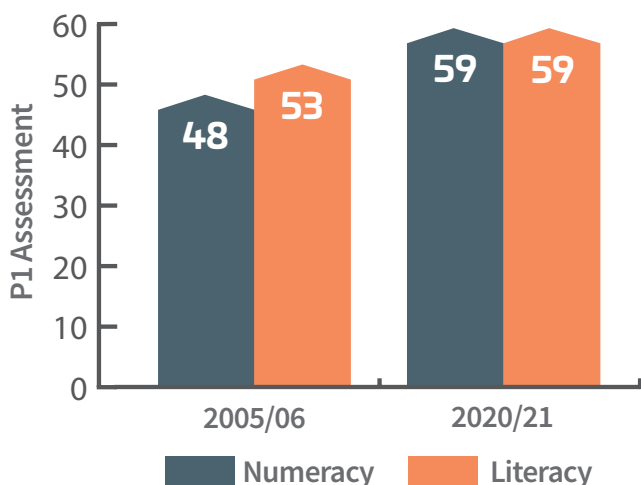
“Most settings and schools have developed opportunities for moderation of remote learning experiences to ensure consistency and a shared understanding of standards and expectations across departments, year groups and the school. In best practice there has been a cluster approach to sharing standards enabling all to see the potential and possibilities within remote learning.”

How Effective is our Remote Learning?, February 2021

Statistics from the 2020-21 questionnaires showed that 92% of teachers agreed that they engaged regularly in effective moderation activities that decided standards and expectations, a decrease of 4% compared with 2019-20. Almost all teachers continued to agree that they were aware of their school's strategies for raising attainment for all and used information and data effectively to reduce inequalities in children's and young people's outcomes.

Baseline Performance

Primary schools assess the literacy and numeracy skills of all pupils following entry to P1 so that children's progress over time can be closely monitored to support their learning. From 2005-06, when the P1 baseline assessment was introduced in its current format, to 2020-21, the average raw score in numeracy has increased from 48% to 59% and in literacy it has increased from 53% to 59%; this has remained consistent over most recent years.



Literacy Strategy

Progress towards the outcomes of the Literacy Strategy has continued despite some restrictions in activities due to infection control. Where possible, Reading Recovery was delivered in primary schools to identified individual children. To address the needs of wider groups of children, East Renfrewshire programmes Daily Literacy Learning (DLL) and Together Raising Attainment in Literacy (TRAIL) were introduced in ten schools. These interventions have led to an increase in children previously assessed as non-readers or emergent readers now being considered to be reading at or beyond age-expected levels.

Training for Pupil Support Assistants in Together Better Readers (TBR) has again provided a framework for PSAs to support the reading of older children in primary schools and young people in secondary schools. Further training for Supporting Reading in the Classroom has also been developed and delivered.

A virtual Literacy Locker was created to support staff and stores all relevant materials for the development of literacy. This includes videos which can be used for staff development, to ensure that training can take place at times convenient to practitioners. Similarly, a Literacy Library has been established for parents including videos for parents on how to support their child's literacy development. Initial feedback from parents who have accessed this resource has been particularly positive about the 'stay at home' suite of resources, which supports parents to develop their literacy skills at home.



Numeracy & Maths Strategy

In 2020-21 the range of professional development activities narrowed in order to protect staff time and capacity to adapt to the ongoing pandemic. Nevertheless, we continued to provide relevant and meaningful opportunities for staff to progress in their skills and understanding in key areas of numeracy and mathematics.

In collaboration with Education Scotland a small suite of workshops relevant to key priorities was developed for all practitioners to access throughout the session. Trained Maths Champions across all establishments in the Early Learning & Childcare and Primary sectors participated in a series of workshops led by Education Scotland, linked to key areas. Maths Champions were also supported through network meetings which focused on the use of digital technologies. These learning opportunities were highly evaluated by participants and further equipped school staff to support delivery of this area of the curriculum during remote learning.

The West Partnership Maths Group arranged the fourth annual conference for practitioners across the eight local authorities, which was held virtually this session. The accessibility of the online platform allowed over 500 participants to attend a variety of workshops on offer, focusing on raising attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

"This session has resulted in me learning several new approaches and activities that I can utilise in the classroom to ensure that I cater for all the pupils."

Primary Maths Champion

NIF Priority 2: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

Equity is at the heart of East Renfrewshire's education strategy and attainment results reflect the work of teachers to vigorously support all pupils. The department has rigorous and highly effective approaches to monitor and track the equity of provision for young people across our schools.

The analysis of outcomes for children and young people in the key equity groups is a central feature of our approach to self-evaluation and quality improvement. The Education Department and schools use data regularly to raise awareness, monitor progression, build leadership capability and capacity, plan improvement activities, and set targets.

Raising the bar and closing the gap

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) can be used to identify children and young people who live in the most deprived areas in Scotland. Nationally, we compare the performance of key equity groups against overall performance to measure and monitor the poverty related attainment gap.

While overall SQA attainment has significantly increased, attainment evidence also demonstrates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the positive progress made by East Renfrewshire schools in closing the poverty related attainment gap over recent years.

Developmental milestone data in 2020-21 demonstrates that the proportion of children residing in SIMD 1-3 properties achieving their milestones on entry to P1 decreased significantly by 9 percentage points, from a previous recorded high of 74% in 2019-20 (following a 4 year trend of improvement); this is the lowest recorded value for each of the last 5 years.

Meanwhile the proportion of children achieving their milestones residing in decile areas 4-7 and 8-10 has increased or remained relatively consistent over the same period, with 81% and 85% of children respectively attaining the measure. This indicates a greater impact from COVID-19 on those children residing in less affluent areas.

2020-21 analysis shows that the gap in the average S2 standardised assessment scores between pupils residing in SIMD 1-3 and SIMD 8-10 increased from last year, in both maths and reading, by 5 and 4 percentage points respectively. This follows a previous decreasing trend in the attainment gap between these groups of learners.

The poverty related attainment gap for S4 pupils attaining five or more awards at National 5 has reduced for the third consecutive year and is now at the lowest level ever in East Renfrewshire.

The gap between the performance of the most deprived and least deprived learners achieving 5 or more to 9 or more National 5 qualifications at A grade in S4 has increased to its highest level in the last three years.

The percentage of S4 pupils with cumulative Insight point attainment scores of 263 or fewer (equivalent to eight "Pass" awards at National 4) increased from 5.2% in 2018-19 to 6.4% in 2020-21; the current value is likely to reduce further once all non SQA awards are included in the Insight Data.

Free Meal Entitlement

The proportion of young people with free meal entitlement (FME) in S4 attaining 5 or more SCQF level 5 awards decreased in 2020-21 by 4% to 51%. The proportion of S5 learners entitled to free meals achieving 3+ and 5+ Higher A-C awards increased by 7% and 9% respectively in 2020-21 compared with 2019-20.



Looked After Children and Young People

There were 13 S4 Looked After young people at the start of the examination diet in the 2020-21; 14 in 2019-20, 9 in 2018-19 and 19 in 2017-18. The percentage of looked after pupils achieving awards in English and Mathematics at National 3 or better increased by 13% to 92% in 2020-21; all looked after pupils achieved 5 or more awards at National 3 and 92% achieved 5 or more awards at National 4. There was a significant increase in the percentage of looked after pupils achieving 5 or more awards at National 5 to 38%.

18 Pupil Equity Funding

East Renfrewshire schools were allocated a total of £1,353,017 in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) from Scottish Government for session 2020-2021. Head teachers developed PEF plans detailing how each school's funding would be used to provide targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to close the poverty related attainment gap.

Due to COVID-19, Scottish Government relaxed the guidance on Pupil Equity Funding to enable local authorities and Head Teachers to provide support that best meets the needs of their communities during the pandemic. The majority of schools allocated a proportion of their funding to provide emotional support to help children deal with the emotional impact of the pandemic and re-engage in their learning.

Most primary schools continued to use a proportion of their PEF allocation to implement Reading Recovery. All primary schools who adopted this intervention reported significant improvements for all children who participated, particularly in relation to children's reading ages. Ongoing assessment and focused tracking provided detailed information on pupil progress throughout the course of the intervention. A few schools also utilised PEF funding to implement additional literacy interventions such as Daily Literacy Learning (DLL).

At individual school level, improvements reported by Head Teachers included the following:

- Attainment in reading and mathematics as measured by standardised test scores
- Reading age of pupils, reading comprehension skills, basic decoding skills and spelling
- Improvement in attendance
- Pupil motivation, engagement, confidence and self-esteem
- Pupil participation in extra-curricular opportunities
- Digital skills and confidence amongst children and young people as well as staff.

Raising Attainment and Achievement

As part of the Education Department's annual improvement planning and reporting cycle, all schools and centres evaluate their performance against key quality indicators from *How Good Is Our School? 4* and *How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?*. The Quality Improvement Team work together with heads of establishments to ensure that self-evaluation is rigorous and takes account of a wide range of evidence gathered from diverse sources and involving all stakeholders. In 2020-21, 100% of schools continued to evaluate their progress as 'good' or better for raising attainment and achievement. 42% were evaluated as 'very good' and 4% as 'excellent'.



Responding to COVID-19

Throughout session 2020-21 the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on all education settings. The department continued to offer regular practical guidance and support to head teachers and school staff to help keep schools and nurseries as safe as possible for the wellbeing of all.

Staff across the Education Department also continued to work closely with a range of internal and external partners on both our response to the pandemic and the ongoing recovery. This included weekly liaison and planning meetings between Educational Psychology, Social Work and Health and Social Care Partnership (HSPC) staff to coordinate support for vulnerable children and young people and their families. Close co-operation between Education and HSPC colleagues has also ensured that key services such as youth counselling have continued to be available.

With the announcement of school and nursery closures in late December 2020, the department worked to ensure that emergency key worker provision would be in place for children and young people due to start back after the Christmas holidays. An online application process was set up and distributed to families, enabling schools and nurseries to quickly identify demand and allocate provision to those who required it most.

Building on the progress made during the first period of school closure in 2020, the department also worked to support more vulnerable families by ensuring that continuing in-school provision could be offered. Throughout the closure period, up to 1600 children per day continued to attend school or nursery and in this way continued to access learning experiences and wellbeing support.

Early Learning and Childcare Strategy

Throughout the session the new Early Years Tracking Tool was used effectively by almost all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to record children's progress in learning and development. Practitioners reported that the tool was supporting them to:

- plan next steps for children
- ensure support and challenge for children who need it and
- respond to any gaps in learning
- engage in professional dialogue within settings and across sectors.

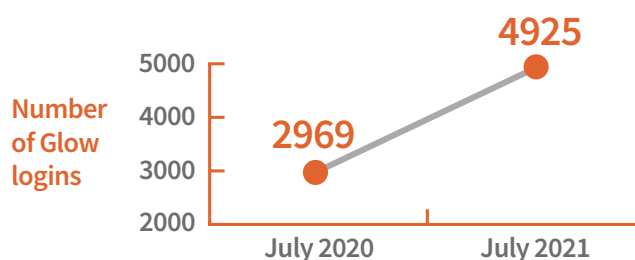
"The tracking tool helps to inform my planning as a teacher. It is a visual way of seeing where children are and what their next steps could be."

Early Years Practitioner

Public health guidance had an impact on the range of resources and opportunities available to children in early years settings and primary one classrooms. Practitioners quickly adapted the learning environments to ensure that children continued to have high quality experiences whilst maintaining the necessary restrictions, such as operating in smaller 'bubble' groups. As a result children were supported to continue to progress in their learning as they returned to education and ELC settings in August 2020. During the second period of closure from January 2021 a range of meaningful and appropriate learning ideas were shared with children and their families so that learning could continue at home.

In addition to remote learning for children, a wide range of remote learning opportunities was made available for practitioners working in the early years. Digital media were used to ensure training was available for staff 'on demand' and supported practitioners to plan developmentally appropriate experiences in response to each child's prior learning. Outdoor Learning was a particular focus within professional learning experiences as practitioners sought to maximise opportunities for outdoor play and experiences, in order to limit transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Data on practitioner engagement with the department's Early Years Glow Group showed that the number of views increased by 66% between July 2020 and July 2021.



Early Years Action Plan

A new Early Years action plan was developed with partners across the council and the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), with a focus on responding to the pandemic and ensuring that services work together to help families who need them most. The action plan forms part of the new Integrated Children's Services Plan and includes the following critical activities:

- Delivering effective parenting support that helps families
- Raising awareness of staff to ensure they are able to identify signs of child poverty and trauma linked to COVID-19 and are well informed about referral pathways
- Targeting resources to ensure they are deployed to support prevention and early intervention
- Targeting resources to ensure children most likely to be impacted by poverty benefit from them
- Improving the health outcomes for vulnerable children and families through collegiate partnership working.



Parenting support

Parenting support continued online throughout the year with a virtual Psychology of Positive Parenting (PoPP) group. 72 families registered with PoPP online and 76% of these reported improvements in their child's behaviour by the end of the programme. The online support led to increased participation by male carers when compared with face to face groups. In addition all parents could access universal parenting support online through the national Solihull Approach offer:

- Understanding pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby
- Understanding your baby
- Understanding your child
- Understanding your teenager's brain.

137 families in East Renfrewshire registered online and took part in the learning on offer which supported them to develop a greater understanding of children and parenting at different stages of development.

1140 Hours

The Education Department has successfully implemented almost all of elements of the 1140 Expansion, with the exception of the provision of free meals for all children attending early learning and childcare (ELC). A programme of minor works at existing ELC centres to facilitate the provision of meals to children during their session was delayed due to the pandemic. These were taken forward in early 2021 so that every child can receive a free hot meal from August 2021, regardless of their attendance pattern.

In recognition of the circumstances the department continued to provide free food for children most in need. This offer was advertised in family centres and targeted towards those who would be entitled to a free school meal if attending school.

Despite delays and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department delivered the commitment to provide 1140 hours of funded childcare by August 2020, a year ahead of the statutory duty to do so.

Early Learning and Childcare Consultation

A consultation was carried out with parents in autumn 2020 to seek their views on the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision available and to help shape the department's next steps. Within the consultation parents were asked to rate how well their child's current allocation meets the ELC needs of their family. 80% of respondents stated that their needs were met well, very well or extremely well, demonstrating a high level of overall satisfaction with the delivery of 1140 hours of ELC.

Respondents were keen to note that East Renfrewshire Council was delivering 1140 hours despite the difficulties associated with the pandemic and were appreciative of the expansion and modernisation work being carried out in settings. Families also reported that the new hours suited their work and family life, relieving financial pressures and reducing the amount of time grandparents were being asked to provide childcare. They recognised the high quality of early learning and childcare that their children received in both local authority and funded provider settings where their children were thriving.

“Well done on providing the additional hours in these circumstances. It has made a huge difference to my family.”

Parent

Adherence to advice on COVID-19 control measures, combined with the need to provide interim placements where nursery buildings were delayed, has meant that very few families have been able to purchase additional hours since August 2020. The department will re-introduce the facility to purchase additional hours, where space is available, through Parent Pay from August 2021, while also ensuring compliance with any on-going guidance from Public Health Scotland.

All nursery places are allocated using the published priorities with a ballot being held where demand exceeds space available. In session 2020-21 88% of families were allocated their first choice of setting with 72% also receiving their first choice of model.





Between 2016-17 and 2019-20, there had been a steady increase in the percentage of children achieving their developmental milestones within the least affluent communities, SIMD deciles 1-3. However, the most recent data shows a reversal in this trend with the achievement gap of those from the most affluent, SIMD 8-10, and least affluent, SIMD 1-3 residencies, increasing from 14% in 2019-20 to 20% in 2020-21.

This data also reflects the findings of Public Health Scotland’s report, The Impact of COVID-19 on Child Development, which found that COVID-19 infection control measures have had a profound impact on 2–4 year old children in Scotland.

A possible reason for this shift is the period of time children did not attend nursery during the first period of school and nursery closures (March 2020 to June 2020). Young children learn and develop best in social contexts and the period of closure brought isolation for many. Primary schools are aware of this impact and additional resources have been targeted to support children and young people with their learning and recovery.

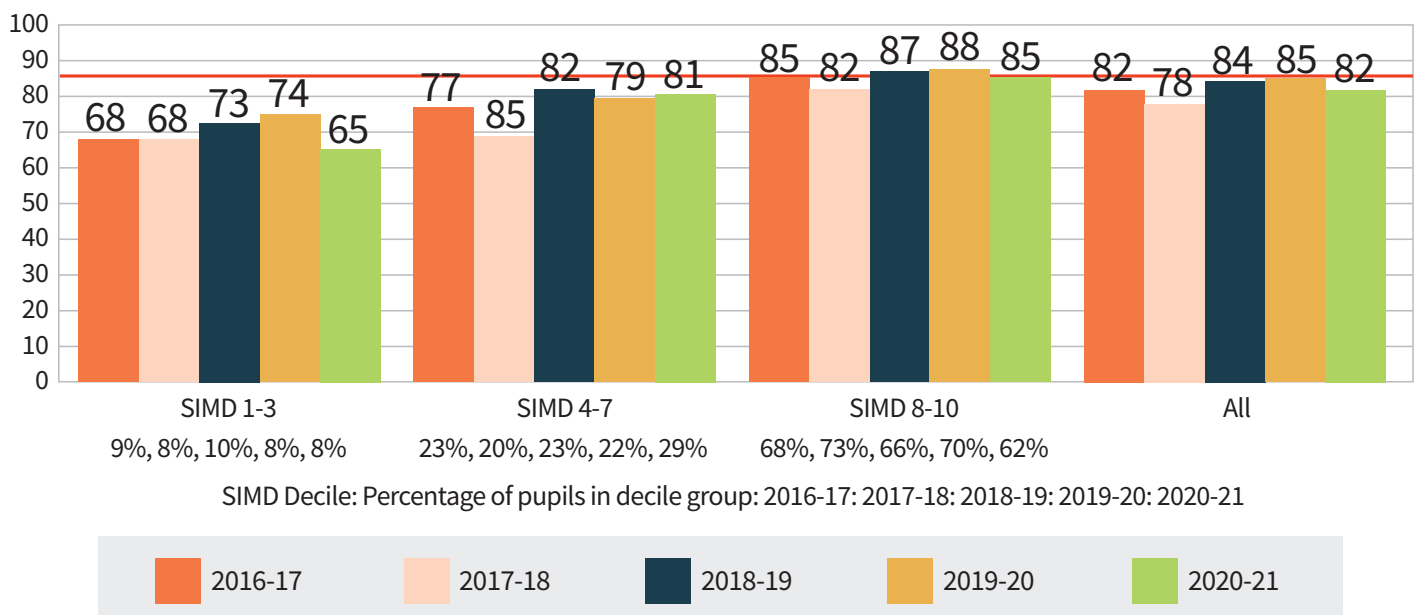
A Baseline Assessment has been in place since 2005-06 to assess children’s attainment in literacy and numeracy on entry to Primary 1. In contrast to the Developmental Milestones, overall performance in literacy and numeracy remained consistent with previous years.

The poverty measured attainment gap, using SIMD as a characteristic, has increased from 9 points in 2019-20 to 13 points in 2020-21 for numeracy, and reduced slightly in literacy from 16 points in 2019-20 to 15 points in 2020-21.

Developmental Milestones

Since 2013-14 data has been gathered on the percentage of children achieving the expected levels of development on entry to Primary 1. The following developmental components are assessed: Social, Emotional, Attention, Speech, Expressive Language, Receptive Language, Communication, Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills and Behaviour.

Developmental Milestones: History: by SIMD 2016-17 to 2020-21



What are we going to do now?

- Review, update and implement Numeracy and Mathematics and Literacy Strategies
- Continue to provide high quality professional learning opportunities for all staff and moderation facilitators
- Support and challenge schools to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements, the target-setting process and improved learning and teaching, particularly for key equity groups
- Support quality, coherence and progression across early level learning and teaching
- Implement the Integrated Children's Services Plan
- Continue to build capability and capacity of senior staff and teachers in schools and centres in the use of tracking and monitoring tools, including Insight, SNSA, the BGE Benchmarking Tool and Early Years Tracking Tool, and the ability to interpret data and identify areas of need for individuals and groups of learners
- Support and challenge schools to improve outcomes for identified groups through effective use of Pupil Equity Funding, with a particular focus on recovery, learning loss and equity
- Review the impact of COVID-19 on collaborative partnerships and support schools to continue with School Improvement Partnerships and other learning partnerships in the current context.

Everyone Achieving

Despite the physical restrictions in place throughout 2020-21, learners, staff members and partners continued to demonstrate a wide range of achievements as well as a determination to ensure opportunities continued to be available for all children, young people and adult learners to succeed. Through a variety of creative solutions such as blended vocational education programmes, remote professional learning and online parent meetings, stakeholders were supported to pursue their learning goals in a variety of innovative ways.

Leadership

Leadership is crucial in developing high expectations and ambitions for pupils. We continued to support schools to develop leadership opportunities for staff at all levels, for example through local authority Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) courses, Masters Level Learning and the Into Headship programme, and by working with schools to further develop approaches to distributive leadership.

In 2020-21, 100% of schools continued to self-evaluate their performance as 'good' or better for leadership of change. 84% were 'very good' or better, with 13% 'excellent'.

Professional Learning

Between August 2020 and June 2021, 222 courses were facilitated by the Quality Improvement Team and Education Psychology Service. Training programmes focusing on Literacy, Numeracy, Digital Skills and Health and Wellbeing have significantly increased the confidence of practitioners to improve learning, teaching and assessment. During the period of school closures from January to March 2021 training courses were streamlined to focus on supporting practitioners to deliver high quality learning experiences remotely. Throughout the session there was a relentless focus on supporting recovery by developing strategies to promote learners' health, wellbeing and resilience.

Evaluations of courses facilitated by the Quality Improvement Team demonstrated that almost all attending staff felt confident that their participation would lead to a positive impact on learners. Increasingly our schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings are sharing their professional learning across and beyond their clusters.

A CLPL calendar produced by the education department signposted practitioners to relevant professional learning. 93% of attendees of CLPL facilitated by the Quality Improvement Team and Educational Psychology Service who completed evaluations rated courses as good or better in terms of impact.

During session 2020-21, 23 teachers were engaged in Masters level (SCQF level 11) learning with the University of Strathclyde and Glasgow Caledonian University. There was a particular focus in these courses on educational leadership and professional inquiry.

An Aspiring Head Teachers programme was developed and recruitment has taken place for the first cohort, who will participate over the course of session 2021-22.

Support for the development of the Early Learning and Childcare workforce continued with 5 practitioners receiving funding to undertake BA in Childhood Practice.

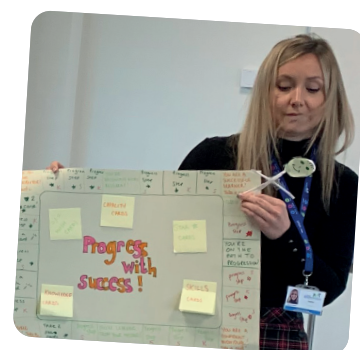
"At this review, you were able to evidence a strong customer focus in relation to training and development. Your Continued Professional Development (CPD) provision has largely moved online whilst maintaining very high levels of satisfaction. Attendance at CPD courses has increased due to the greater accessibility of online training and whilst staff were working remotely."

Customer Service Excellence Evaluation Report, March 2020

Newly Qualified Teachers

A total of 73 primary and 78 secondary probationer teachers successfully completed their one-year Teacher Induction Scheme placement in June 2021 and achieved the GTCS Standard for Full Registration.

A new and comprehensive probationer handbook was produced which provided detailed guidance for probationer teachers and their school supporters. Probationer teachers were well supported in their schools and through an authority-wide training programme facilitated by the Education Department. In a survey conducted in June 2021, almost all probationer teachers agreed that the induction provided by the local authority, including the handbook, was helpful. Almost all agreed that they had been well supported by their supporter and felt well supported by the local authority.



Compassionate and Connected Communities

Compassionate and Connected Communities is a professional learning resource that complements existing whole-school nurturing approaches and provides more targeted support to staff. It aims to contribute to practitioners' understanding and practice around supporting those who have experienced trauma or adversity. A model of practitioner inquiry is used to enhance reflective practice and skills development, and practitioners are encouraged to undertake collaborative action research to further develop their knowledge and skills.

The pilot phase of Compassionate and Connected Communities, led by the Educational Psychology Service, began in the summer term of 2020-2021 with participants from six schools. In response to a local needs analysis, the content of the first module focused on Staff Wellbeing. This work supported the authority's approach to the recovery phase as the department sought to address the challenges brought about by the pandemic, as well as the resulting additional pressures on school staff.

Initial feedback from participants was very positive and all schools involved committed to taking the initiative forward in 2021-22. Each school successfully identified key priorities for their own unique context and all participants were able to link their participation in Compassionate and Connected Communities to local and school improvement priorities. Participants were able to engage in reflective discussion throughout all sessions and adapted very well to the move to online delivery.

"CCC ties in so well with everything we are focusing on just now and moving into next session (and longer term) as well."

Participant, Compassionate and Connected Communities



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Improving Our Classrooms

Improving Our Classrooms (IOC) continued to provide a programme of high-quality professional learning placing classroom practitioners at the heart of school improvement. Members of the Quality Improvement Team worked in partnership with the West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative to provide this professional learning opportunity for identified practitioners in the primary sector.

The programme focuses on:

- high quality self-evaluation at classroom level leading to improved learning and teaching
- data-informed targeted interventions
- improved attainment and achievement
- equity and excellence for all children and young people.

Taking account of physical restrictions due to COVID-19, a pilot of a digital model took place from February to June 2021. All teachers were provided with a mentor who supported them throughout the programme. Eleven East Renfrewshire teachers completed the programme and submitted a Case Study of Improvement.

"Undertaking the IOC course has greatly impacted my professional development and classroom practice. I feel much more confident in identifying priorities to raise attainment and have already implemented various strategies into my classroom. The weekly webinar topics have been extremely insightful and have allowed me to reflect much more accurately on the experiences which I provide for my learners."

Participant, IOC Cohort 2

Creative Skills

National arts and early years organisation Starcatchers delivered their Creative Skills staff training programme in four early learning and childcare settings. This training for the early years workforce was adapted to be delivered outdoors through a blended approach of in-person training supported by online reflective practice and mentoring. Participants were able to share what they had learned with colleagues, and following the training reported feeling more confident in supporting their peers to develop their own creative skills and improve opportunities for children to be creative.

Self-evaluation and External Review

Self-evaluation and external review are essential tools used to develop and sustain the ethos of high expectations and achievement in every East Renfrewshire education school and centre. Throughout 2020-21 the department supported establishments to adapt their approaches to evaluating performance, to reflect the changing circumstances and locations in which learners, families and other stakeholders were engaging with services.

There were fewer opportunities for education practitioners to engage in self-evaluation activities in 2020-21, as schools and settings focused on meeting the needs of learners and families in a rapidly changing context. In questionnaires 85% of teachers stated that they were actively involved in the school's on-going self-evaluation, 9% less than in 2019-20; 82% said that they have opportunities to be involved in agreeing priorities for the school, 8% less than in 2019-20.

Based on experiences during the first period of school closure in spring 2020, all schools and centres worked throughout autumn 2020 to develop contingency planning for any further school closures. This enabled a swift transition to remote learning to take place following the announcement of the second period of school closure from January to March 2021. Digital methods of gathering feedback from children and families enabled schools and settings to swiftly evaluate how well these plans were meeting learners' needs and make adjustments as necessary to ensure all learners were well supported to learn at home.

During this period the department also worked with schools to audit remote learning provision, collecting a range of data and intelligence in order to understand the variety of approaches to remote learning across the authority area and plan for continued improvement to services.

The resulting report, 'How Effective is our Remote Learning', provided an overview of effective practice and evaluated the quality of provision across the key areas of engagement and wellbeing, learning, teaching and assessment, and self-evaluation for self-improvement. The report also identified a number of areas for improvement which were taken forward through ongoing school improvement activities with support from the Quality Improvement Team.

"52% of respondents rated online learning experiences as excellent, 43% as very good and 5% as good."

Arthurlie Family Centre, Family Questionnaire, February 2021

External review activities were paused by Education Scotland in 2020-21 to allow schools and centres to prioritise recovery and re-engagement. The department participated in two national engagement exercises led by Education Scotland, focused on Remote Learning (February 2021) and the Alternative Certification Model (April 2021). In feedback from both exercises, the quality of ongoing communication and engagement with all stakeholders was noted as a particular strength of the department's practice.

In questionnaires, 92% of parents and carers and 83% of learners said they were satisfied with their child's school overall.



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

A pupil from Williamwood High School was nominated for the Clarkston Young Person of the Year award for her positive contribution to her community through her voluntary work and by championing positive mental health.

Languages Leaders Network

A network of primary school staff with leadership responsibility for Modern Languages participated in a series of professional learning activities focused on curriculum design, inter-disciplinary learning approaches, and digital approaches to supporting foreign language learning. The sessions supported lead staff to promote quality language learning experiences in their establishments and across clusters. In evaluations, languages leaders noted a positive impact on their understanding of effective approaches to delivering Modern Languages and on their ability to facilitate dialogue with colleagues about effective practice in their establishments and clusters.

Working in cluster groups, staff evaluated the upper primary school Modern Languages curriculum collaboratively and identified new themes and contexts for learning to be developed in session 2021-22. An Education Development Officer was recruited to support languages leaders and schools with this moving forwards as all schools work to fully embed Scottish Government's 1+2 Approach to Language Learning by 2022.



School leaver destinations

School leaver destinations remain consistently high and above the national average. Initially in 2019-20 overall 96.2% of leavers were in a positive destination, such as higher education, further education, employment, training and voluntary work. The school leavers follow-up survey by Skills Development Scotland, which is undertaken 6 months after the initial survey, indicated that 96.4% of leavers were in a positive destination.

East Renfrewshire had the highest proportion of school leavers entering higher education across all local authorities in Scotland in 2019-20. 68.9% of young people went on to higher education in 2020, an increase of 1.7% in comparison to 2018-19 and well above the national average of 44.2%.

In addition, the latest participation data (2021) indicated that 97.2% of ERC 16-19 year olds were participating in education or training, well above the national figure of 92.2% and the highest result for mainland LAs.



STEM Strategy

The Education Department Science, Technologies, Engineering and Maths Strategy and associated action plan continued to be progressed in 2020-21. The principal aim of the strategy is to build capacity and support the development of our staff's skills as well as developing and sustaining greater partnership working across our establishments, with partners in further and higher education, related industries and other organisations promoting a wide range of STEM activities. Good progress was made with taking forward the actions detailed within the strategy.

In partnership with Scottish School Education Resource Centre (SSERC) a group of teachers from across East Renfrewshire's schools continued to take part in SSERC's 'Sustain and Extend' professional development programme in 2020-21. The group arranged and helped to deliver a series of STEM professional development events, delivered remotely online, which were open to all staff and which had national and international attendees. All sessions were very well attended and positively evaluated.

In November 2020, St Joseph's, St Clare's, Our Lady of the Missions and St Cadoc's primary schools and Glenwood Family Centre achieved Education Scotland's 'STEM Nation Award'. The award programme celebrates, promotes and builds effective practice in STEM education with a focus on: Leadership in STEM; Family and Community STEM Learning; STEM Partnership Working; STEM Curriculum and Learner Pathways; and Equity and Equality in STEM.

NIF Priority 4: Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people



Vocational Education

Vocational education continued to contribute to the achievement and attainment of young people in the senior phase and support them to develop skills for work. The range of vocational opportunities on offer provided high quality opportunities targeted to meet the broadest range of pupil needs, with courses ranging from SCQF Levels 1 to 8.

The progress of our young people is closely monitored to ensure successful outcomes for every young person undertaking a vocational course. This tracking is possible due to the support of college partners and training providers who work in partnership with us to maintain pupil progress and intervene when appropriate, offering further support as required.

The number of Foundation Apprenticeship courses available for our young people has increased over recent years to include more frameworks across a broader range of sectors and more shorter-duration courses. The number of pupils participating in the senior phase vocational programme significantly increased in the five year period from 2015-16 to 2019-20. In session 2020-21, physical restrictions and changes to course delivery resulted in fewer young people participating in vocational courses. 346 young people were enrolled in senior phase vocational courses, a decrease of 38% compared with 2019-20.

Despite the impact of restrictions during 2020-21, mitigations in response to the pandemic including online learning and staggered attendance, allowed young people to continue to engage positively in vocational learning and pursue their chosen pathways. Over the past three years, the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF Level 5 or Level 6 has increased from 21.2% to 28.3% (Level 5) and 10.9% to 15.8% (Level 6). The national figures for both measures are 17.1% and 8.4% respectively.

The vocational facilities at Barrhead High School continued to provide excellent opportunities for young people, with partners and staff across the local authority accessing facilities to support children and young people, parents and wider council staff.

Vocational learners participated in the department's Customer Service Excellence Review in March 2020. Following focus groups with learners and parents the assessor noted:

- the accessibility of support and advice for young people engaging with vocational courses, as well as their parents and carers
- the promptness of information and updates about changes to services during the COVID-19 pandemic
- the positive approaches in place to involve learners in planning their pathways.



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

A pupil from Eastwood High School piped round local care homes every Friday, Saturday and Sunday during school closures. His performances were very much appreciated by the community and he was a nominee for East Renfrewshire Citizen of the Year in 2020.

Adult Learning Services

During 2020 – 2021, Adult Learning Services transformed service delivery to meet the needs of local adult learners. All team members trained as Digital Champions through Connecting Scotland and created online learning provision for adult learners with digital access. The Connecting Scotland programme provided 44 families and individual residents with a digital device, connectivity and ongoing support to engage with learning and services online. For those without digital access, and those who didn't want to engage online, distance learning opportunities ensured the service remained inclusive.

The team worked to ensure that over 80 shielding residents had the necessary digital skills and knowledge to access key services. As a result residents were able to access priority shopping slots, arrange medicine deliveries and engage with learning opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge.

The team also worked with 155 adult learners to provide a range of tailored learning opportunities, enabling them to make progress towards their learning goals and stay connected with their family, friends and local community. Courses included English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), Adult Literacies, Learning for Work and Personal Development programmes.

SQA accredited courses moved online in partnership with local colleges. 14 adult learners gained an SQA ESOL qualification in partnership with Clyde College, and a further 14 gained SQA qualifications at SCQF Level 4 in partnership with West College Scotland across a range of employment-focused courses.

The service supported 59 adult learners with online employability learning programmes, representing an increase in the number of adults referred from the Department of Work and Pensions and an increase in referrals for residents who have been made redundant. This involved digital and technical support to learners, providing digital advice on creating and editing CVs, searching for jobs online, accessing training and finding learning opportunities. With improved confidence and employability skills, all learners felt confident enough to apply for jobs. Adult learners progressed to a range of positive destinations including volunteering roles, apprenticeships, further education, and paid employment.



Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy

Good progress has been made with the actions outlined in the department's Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy, with an increased pace of improvement resulting from the focus on digital learning and teaching during the pandemic. Of particular note is the number of establishments successfully achieving the national Digital Schools Award. Digital Schools Awards Scotland is a national awards programme accredited by Education Scotland which aims to promote, recognise and encourage a whole-school approach to the use of digital technology in primary and secondary schools. By June 2020 overall 92% of primary schools, Isobel Mair School and 71% of secondary schools had achieved a Digital Schools Award. An increasing number of schools are now applying for the Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety (CRIS) badge, with three schools already having achieved this award.

“Everyone has rallied round to support each other and ensure equity of provision for all pupils. Teachers have provided learning experiences through Teams, made videos and also engaged children in whole school events, e.g. P7 transition events. They have been creative in their efforts to engage pupils and parents, and have been extremely successful in their endeavours.”

Mearns Castle High School, Digital Schools Award Validation Report, October 2020



Supporting Online Learning

Schools and centres continued to make very good use of the productivity tools available through Glow in order to support learning and teaching, including to support remote learning during the period of school closure. As a result, there has been an improvement in the confidence and ability of pupils and staff to utilise these tools. Glow logins by teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students continued to be amongst the highest of all Scottish local authorities. Teaching staff made very effective use of a range of websites and apps such as Mote, Thinglink and Jamboard in order to engage learners, encourage collaboration and provide meaningful feedback.

During session 2020-21, the Education Department provided 700 Chromebooks to schools. During school closures from January to March 2021, schools loaned in excess of 1300 devices to families in order to support them to engage with remote learning. The devices increased equity by facilitating digital access for all learners. Feedback from families was extremely positive, with many commenting on the high level of support they received with IT-related issues from school staff.



“The developing digital culture throughout the school is being strategically and purposefully cultivated. The digital tools can be the difference between inclusion and exclusion for learners at Isobel Mair School and thankfully they fully exploit all the additional digital support tools at their disposal to ensure all learners are included and thriving.”

Isobel Mair School, Digital Schools Award Validation Report June 2021

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Convener’s Awards for Outstanding Achievement

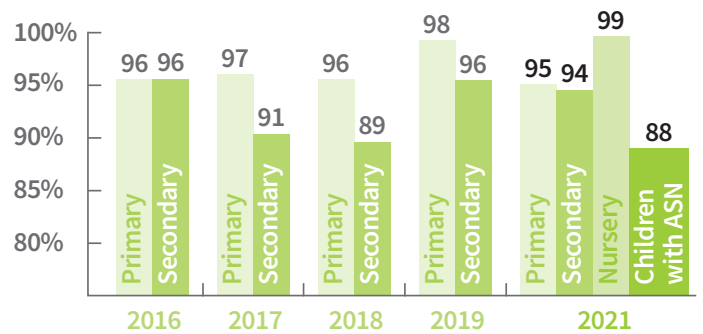
The annual Convener’s Awards were celebrated with an online event in May 2021. 36 young people and groups from across the authority were recognised for their outstanding achievements in various fields such as sports, creativity, community service and advocacy.



Citizens’ Panel

Through the 2021 Citizens’ Panel Report, East Renfrewshire residents surveyed about their levels of satisfaction with the quality of service provided were very positive about the services provided by the Education Department. The report shows that primary and secondary education were the two highest rated council services in the survey. 95% of respondents rated primary education as good or very good; this figure was 94% for secondary education. Further analysis within the report showed that education continued to be one of the top reasons for respondents choosing to live in East Renfrewshire.

% Rating Education as Good / Very Good



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

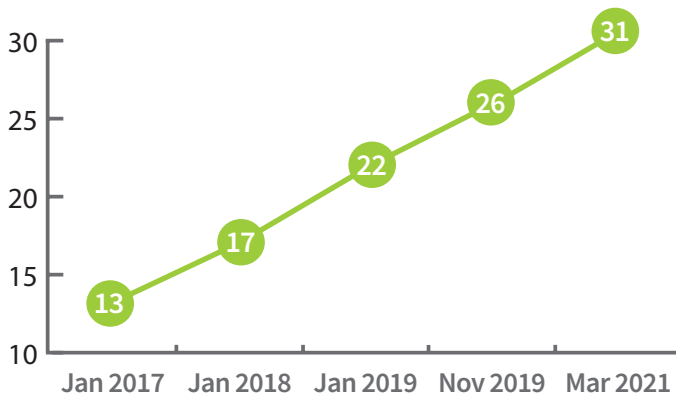
A pupil from Barrhead High School who is a member of the Children and Young People's Panel on Europe worked with the panel during lockdown to create a report titled 'Young Brexit Voices: It's Our Future Too' about the sort of country children and young people want to live in as the UK leaves the EU.



Customer Service Excellence

In March 2021 the Education Department undertook an assessment by SGS Customer Service Excellence and achieved a continued award of the Customer Service Excellence Standard. The report recognises the department's continuing commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified the service as Fully Compliant against all criteria, with 23 areas of Good Practice and a further 31 areas of Compliance Plus, which are 'behaviours or practices which exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as an exemplar to others.' The number of areas of Compliance Plus had increased from the previous assessments in January 2017, January 2018, January 2019 and November 2019, when there were 13, 17 and 22 and 26 respectively.

31 Areas of Compliance Plus



"There is a well-established and very strong corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in your organisation actively support this... There were numerous examples evidenced of where the evolving needs and preferences of customers were taken account of and directly influenced service improvement and delivery."

Customer Service Excellence Evaluation Report, March 2021



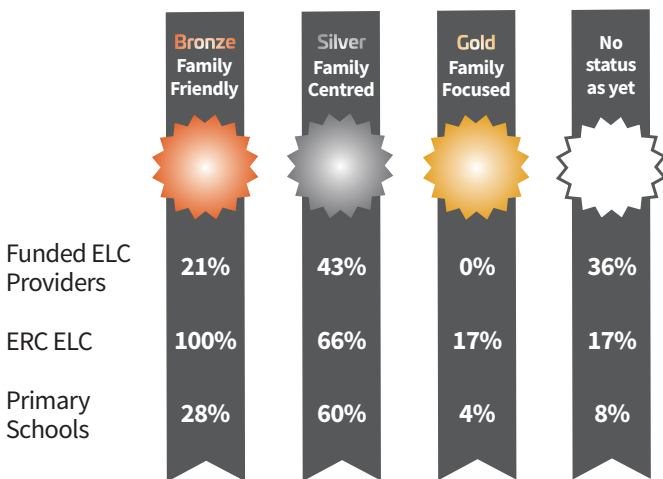
OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

A pupil from Mearns Castle High School who is a 3D printing enthusiast used his own printer to make face shields to support the NHS and the local community. After initially distributing a small number to local NHS workers, he then fundraised £4500 to purchase materials and went on to produce over 2000 face shields. These were donated to the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice, local hospitals, care homes, surgeries and pharmacies. Surplus money was donated to the Beatson Cancer Charity, the Royal Children's Hospital and the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice. The newly purchased printers were later donated to his school.

Parental Involvement and Engagement

Despite public health restrictions which meant that parents could not enter school buildings, schools and settings continued to successfully engage and involve parents in their children's education. A wide range of digital media were used to ensure effective and on-going communication, including voice and video calls, remote learning provision, blogs, social media and school apps.

All our establishments continue to strive to offer excellent services for families as they continue their journey towards Gold Family Focused accreditation. The Family Centred Approaches framework was reviewed to support a digital approach to accreditation and highlight the work schools and settings had undertaken in engaging children and families remotely. This resulted in one family centre and one nursery class achieving Gold Family Focused status and a nursery class being re-accredited at Gold. In addition, this new online process enabled the first primary school to achieve Gold accreditation before the end of term.



Parent Councils were effectively supported through the Parent Council Chairs' Forum. This ensured that Chairs had up-to-date information about the Education Department's plans in response to, and recovery from, the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. In June 2020, we asked parent councils to invite the parent forum at each school to share their questions and worries about the return to school in August. 608 questions were received and were answered at the Parent Council Forum by the Education Leadership Team. Frequently Asked Questions were shared with Parent Council chairs so that they could feed back to the parent forum of each school with information and reassurance.

Members of the Quality Improvement Team worked in partnership with University of the West of Scotland to raise awareness and upskill key staff in supporting parents from diverse groups in their settings. Equalities Coordinators and Parental Involvement Coordinators participated in a series of training sessions, supporting them to pro-actively work to increase representation and participation of parents from all communities.

"I feel that communication between staff and myself has improved during the response to the pandemic. I now feel I am more in touch with what my child is actually doing at nursery than I was previously. My child is loving being back at nursery, and very much enjoying the facilities in the new building."

Parent, Busby Nursery Class Gold Family Focused Accreditation Review

Responding to COVID-19

During the period of school closure from January to March 2021 all schools implemented systems for monitoring online attendance and engagement, which enabled them to effectively target additional support towards pupils who were experiencing difficulties with learning at home.

Almost all pupils in East Renfrewshire participated in remote learning either at home or in the school hub setting, with an overall engagement level of 95% across all Early Learning and Childcare settings and primary, secondary and special schools in January 2021. All settings and schools used attendance and participation data to understand patterns of engagement and implement follow-up interventions, including phone calls home and offers to attend school hubs.

Working in partnership with East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, schools were able to continue to promote achievement and participation through physical activity. The Active Schools Team were proactive and responsive in the context of frequently changing restrictions placed on physical activity, supporting primary teaching staff to deliver physical activities outdoors and providing a wide range of linked professional learning.

Active Schools also supported school hubs during lockdown and provided targeted support for children who found it difficult to re-engage in learning following lockdown. As a result, all schools were able to offer a wide variety of quality opportunities to participate in physical activities to promote recovery and re-engagement in learning.



What are we going to do now?

- Continue to offer challenge and support to all schools and services to achieve consistently high standards
- Support schools to continue to improve learners' experiences and outcomes by implementing the CLPL framework and sharing approaches to professional inquiry across our schools and centres, including through Research Hubs
- Review, update and implement a revised leadership strategy
- Continue to develop and deliver a range of SQA accredited courses to meet the needs of adult learners while ensuring the mode of delivery is effective and safe
- Continue to work in partnership with schools and with ERC Culture and Leisure Trust to ensure all young people have high quality opportunities for wider achievement and that wider achievements of all pupils are recognised in school
- Review, update and implement the STEM and Digital Learning and Capacity Strategies
- Implement the updated Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy 2021-24.

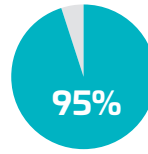
Excellent Experiences

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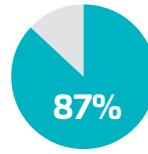
Throughout session 2020-21 the Education Department responded to rapidly changing circumstances in order to support our schools, centres and partners to offer excellent experiences for children, young people and families.

“Whole setting approaches ensure that rights underpin the curriculum and are embedded in learning and teaching. We are developing learner participation across school life; pupils benefit from a range of positive outcomes and most believe they are given the opportunity to influence what and how they learn.”

‘Children’s Rights in East Renfrewshire’, April 2021



95% of teaching staff and child development officers stated that children and young people had the opportunity to lead their own learning



87% of school pupils agreed that staff expected them to take responsibility for their own learning



Virtual String Orchestra

Unable to rehearse together in person due to COVID restrictions, our string orchestras moved online, with over 160 Primary 5 – S6 string pupils, from across the authority, signing up to take part in weekly Google Meet rehearsals and virtual performances throughout 2020/21.

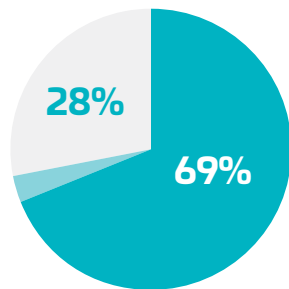
Our Senior Virtual String Orchestra produced video performances for the 2021 Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Holocaust Memorial Day and for the first ever Scottish String and Orchestra Festival, for which they received a Gold Plus award for their performance.

Weekly online rehearsals not only enabled our young musicians to learn new repertoire, develop skills in playing along to backing tracks and how to record and upload audio/video tracks, but also provided an opportunity for the pupils to see and interact with peers from across the authority.

Virtual Nature School

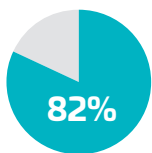
Ten early learning and childcare settings took part in the Scottish Government funded Virtual Nature School initiative, which aims to benefit children and families by providing expert guidance on learning and play in an outdoor environment. Virtual Nature School is a non-profit programme created in response to the needs of children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result children across these settings had enhanced outdoor learning experiences, and images shared via social media were promoted nationally providing inspiration for colleagues around the country to promote learning with children outdoors.

In 2020-21, 100% of schools self-evaluated their provision as ‘good’ or better for learning, teaching and assessment. 69% were evaluated as ‘very good’ and 3% as ‘excellent’.

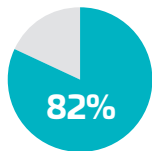


Questionnaire Data

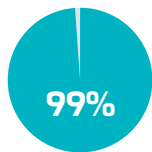
In responses to questionnaires:



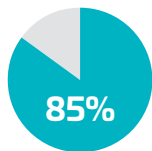
82% of parents and carers of children at school agreed that they received helpful feedback about how their child is learning and developing



82% of parents and carers of children in ELC settings agreed that their child was making good progress at the setting



99% of teaching staff stated that they gave children and young people regular feedback which helped them to progress



85% of school pupils agreed that the feedback they received on their work helped them to improve their learning

Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools

Pupils from East Renfrewshire primary schools continued to develop as global citizens by taking part in 'Discovering China' online classes provided jointly by the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools (CISS), Scotland's Centre for Language Learning (SCILT) and national online learning platform E-sgoil.

'Discovering China' lessons were facilitated by teachers live streaming directly from China, enabling learners to continue to learn Mandarin Chinese, engage with other cultures and develop their international understanding despite the restrictions in place throughout the session. The online sessions were positively evaluated by participating schools, all of whom are continuing to learn Chinese online in 2021-22 combined with a return to in-person support from our Chinese Exchange Teacher.



Support for Parents

Online parent sessions were delivered by East Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service to 184 parents during March 2021. The aim of the sessions was to build capacity amongst parents and carers to support children and young people's wellbeing during the second period of lockdown.

Views obtained from participants prior to the sessions highlighted concerns about the impact of the pandemic on their children's emotional, behavioural and physical skills, on their relationships, and on their ability to access learning. This informed the content of the sessions, which focused on raising awareness of the impact of the pandemic on children and young people and on strategies and resources to meet their needs.

Online evaluations were completed by participants immediately following the sessions, and follow-up interviews were carried out with two participants. Analysis indicated that the sessions had provided participants with reassurance and useful information and strategies to support their children.

"I can see the difference in A since working with you, it's been a vital support. It's been great for the family all round."

Parent/Carer Participant, Online Parent Sessions

NIF Priority 3: Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

Healthier Minds

Healthier Minds works alongside primary and secondary schools to facilitate the delivery of mental wellbeing support services to children, young people and their families.

The Healthier Minds team met on a weekly basis and was attended by regular representatives from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, social work, youth counselling, educational psychology and the Family Wellbeing Service. The best possible supports and routes for provision were agreed based on the individual needs of the child or young person.

The Healthier Minds website has whole range of information and support for staff members, pupils and families to access directly, including recovery specific resources, in recognition of how challenging the last year has been for many people. The website continued to evolve in response to feedback from children, young people and their families to offer a support hub for those seeking more information on self-help, support or local services.

From January to mid-June 2021 the hub received 204 referrals, resulting in 71 referrals to youth counselling, 64 to the Healthier Minds Team and 69 continuing with existing services or recommended to engage with further services. The Healthier Minds team bridges the gap between current service provision and a new systemic model of individual and family support, which will be introduced from autumn 2021.

A Diversity Action Plan was developed in August 2020 to outline the Education Department's strategy for increasing the diversity and representation of all stakeholders engaging with, and providing, education services.

Equalities Coordinators worked collaboratively during September and October 2020 to develop a self-evaluation tool for promoting culturally inclusive learning environments. Coalition for Racial Equality (CRER) supported practitioners and parents to deepen their understanding of the experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, further develop their own racial literacy, and consider effective practice to promote equality and inclusion in schools and centres. This work supported schools and centres to include actions focused on improving equality and representation in their school and centre improvement plans from August 2021.

School Equalities Coordinators met online termly to undertake professional learning and share practice to promote equality. A range of partners from Education Scotland, universities and third sector organisations provided awareness-raising professional learning inputs for the network, which were very positively evaluated by participants. 47 members of school and centre leadership teams attended network meetings throughout the session and these were very positively evaluated by participants.

From March to May 2021 the network focused on tackling child poverty and reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and families on low incomes. Professional learning delivered by Public Health Scotland, Child Poverty Action Group and members of the Quality Improvement Team, supported establishments to understand the changing socio-economic context in East Renfrewshire as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and plan effective strategies to support families on low incomes. As a result, a sub-group was established to audit the Cost of the School Day in 14 establishments across East Renfrewshire during session 2021-22. This work will provide evidence to inform the department's Local Child Poverty Action Plan moving forwards.

"I found this session to be very informative and felt it provided both insight and practical support in tackling these issues. Our school launched a Diversity & Equality Team in February... The inputs and guidance to date have hugely helped us in paving the way for this and the response from staff, parents and families has been huge."

Participant, Equalities Coordinators Network Meeting



Widening Participation

All secondary schools worked in partnership with Glasgow University to support eligible young people into higher education through the Top-Up, Reach and Access to a Career programmes. Through the widening access programmes young people from targeted groups can engage in a range of learning activities to enhance their self-study skills and preparedness for higher education. Successful participants are eligible for adjusted offers for university courses. The programmes, which had previously been delivered in person in high schools by visiting university tutors, moved online in autumn 2020.

56 young people completed widening access programmes in 2020-21 through a range of webinar-based, tutorial-based and independent learning activities. As a result, 47 East Renfrewshire young people were eligible for adjusted offers to enter a wide range of higher education courses in Autumn 2021. This represented 84% of the young people who completed their programmes last session.

Pastoral care staff from all secondary schools took part in professional learning led by the Glasgow University team on the range of support that can be provided for vulnerable groups of pupils through widening access programmes, including those who are care experienced or young carers.

UNICEF Rights Respecting School Awards

Almost all schools and early learning and childcare centres are engaged in the Rights Respecting School Award accreditation process, with 12 currently at Gold level. During assessment visits to East Renfrewshire schools, a number of key strengths were noted including:

- strong pupil voice
- a positive ethos where relationships are based on mutual respect
- a focus on mental health and wellbeing
- leadership teams' desire to help every child succeed.

The education department worked in partnership with UNICEF to provide professional learning for key staff in schools and early learning and childcare centres which explained the accreditation process and made links to the expectations of the proposed UNCRC Bill.

The department also worked with partners across the council and HSCP to complete a report which demonstrates our successes as a council in promoting and upholding children's rights and outlines where we can improve. The report contains case studies which highlight sector leading work in Woodfarm High School and Isobel Mair School.

"The Inclusive Support Team and Isobel Mair School, along with partners from Children's Services, worked with D's family to support his return to school, initially on a part-time basis. This helped D realise that the familiar life of the school community was still available to him... For D, his right to express his views have been promoted and supported, leading to positive benefits for him and his family."

**'Children's Rights in East Renfrewshire',
April 2021**



Nurturing Approaches

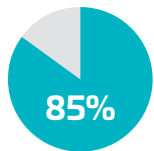
Establishments continued to develop nurturing approaches to support learners' wellbeing as the foundation for their learning. 54% of primary schools reported having a dedicated nurture room in 2020/21.

A range of professional learning opportunities continued to be available and provided opportunities for practitioners to develop and share ideas, activities and resources to translate the theory behind Nurturing Approaches into practice. Sessions on 'Using Nurture Principles and Trauma Informed Practice as a Framework for Recovery' were attended by 38 primary and early years staff from 18 establishments across the authority and were very positively evaluated by participants.

"As an ASN Co-ordinator this has really helped me to examine how I deal with a number of individuals/situations and what else I could be doing to support them. I will also ensure that key points which I found helpful are shared with staff across school."

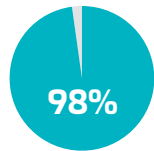
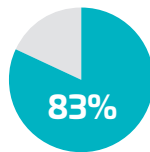
**Participant, Learning Centre Practitioners'
Network**

During the pandemic, and in particular during periods of school closure, the department provided support and advice to schools and early learning and childcare centres to ensure that vulnerable learners were given the highest level of support to engage with key school staff in school hubs and through remote learning. We also communicated very effectively with colleagues in the council's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSPC) and third sector partners during this period, to ensure that children and young people who needed additional support to engage with learning received this. Statistics gathered from questionnaires in 2020-21 showed that:



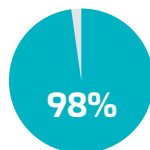
85% of parents and carers agreed that their child receives the help they need to do well

83% of parents and carers of children at school agreed that the school really knows their child as an individual



98% of teachers and child development officers stated that children and young people were provided with experiences which met their learning needs

98% of teachers and child development officers considered that children and young people are engaged in their learning.



Children's Plan

A new Children's Plan 2021-23 was developed in partnership with HSPC. The plan sets out the vision for children, young people and families for the three years ahead, and demonstrates our shared commitment to supporting them achieve the best possible outcomes.

We continued to work to identify more young carers and to improve the support we provide for them. Our Young Carer Schools Group led an awareness raising session for school staff where we launched the young carer education toolkit produced by the Carers Trust and shared best practice from some of the schools who are part of the schools group. Another event was held to mark Young Carers Action Day, celebrating the achievements of our young carers and sharing their lived experiences.

21 schools have engaged with the Young Carer development worker. There has been a significant increase in the number of carers being identified by schools and being supported by the Carers Centre as a result of this activity over the last two years, from 28 in September 2018 to 126 in September 2020.

As a result of this success the department was invited to share its practice at a national conference facilitated by the Carers Trust in March 2021. Funding has been extended to June 2022 for the Young Carer development worker who supports schools by providing assemblies, workshops and drop-in sessions for pupils, as well as training for staff.

Exclusion Rates

Our schools continue to use strategies to promote positive, nurturing and supportive relationships with our children in order to manage behaviour in a proactive and person-centred manner.

In 2020-21, two temporary exclusions were made in the primary sector resulting in an exclusion rate of 0.2 exclusions per 1000 pupils; this is the first time any pupils have been excluded in the primary sector since 2016-17. East Renfrewshire compares very favourably to the national value of 8.1 incidents per 1000 pupils (latest published data for 2018-19). The primary sector achieved its 3-year average target for the period 2018-19 to 2020-21, set at 0.3 incidents per 1000 pupils with a final value of 0.07.

In 2020-21 there was a decrease in exclusions in the secondary sector to 2.3 incidents per 1000 pupils, down from 4.6 in 2019-20, the third consecutive reduction since 2017-18 and the lowest exclusion rate ever recorded. This performance compares very well with the national figure of 39.6 incidents per 1000 pupils (latest published data for 2018-19). After 3 years, the secondary sector achieved its 3-year average exclusion incidents target (2018-19 to 2020-21) of 5.0 incidents per 1000 pupils with a rate of 4.5. The secondary sector achieved the 3-year average target in the last 2 years with values of 4.6 and 2.3 per 1000 incidents; in 2018-19 the rate was 6.8.

Exclusions of pupils from within our Care Experienced community was 8.5 per 1000 Care Experienced pupils in 2019-20. This is the same value as in 2019-20 and maintains the lowest rate recorded since 2014-15.





Attendance

Overall attendance in the Primary Sector reduced in the first year of the pandemic from 96.3% in 2018-19 to 95.6% in 2019-20, then increased to 96.8% in 2020-21. This was the highest value recorded in this sector over the past five years. Similarly, in 2020-21, this sector recorded the highest values for both male and female attendance (96.8%); and recorded no gender gap this year. The reduction in attendance noted in the first year of the pandemic (2019-20) was a direct result of learners moving from very high (>98%) and high (>95%) attendance bands to medium (>90%) and low (>85%). Conversely, in 2020-21, the proportion of learners in the highest band (>98%) increased significantly from an average of 41% pre-pandemic to 54.8% in this year. The proportion of learners in the exceptionally low band remained relatively stable throughout the five year period.

Attendances within the Secondary Sector are calculated for S1-S5 only. Overall attendance in the Secondary Sector reduced in the first year of the pandemic from 93.9% in 2018-19 to 93.0% in 2019-20, then increased to 94.3% in 2020-21. This was the highest value recorded in this sector over the past five years. Similarly, in 2020-21 this sector recorded the highest values for both male (94.4%) and female (94.1%) attendance, and for the overall attendance of learners entitled to free school meals (89.6%). Similarly, the attendance of each SIMD quintile followed the same trend over the past three years, with the attendance of those learners in quintiles 1 to 5 reducing in 2019-20 before returning to higher than pre-pandemic values in 2020-21.

Anti-bullying

The annual anti-bullying return shows there were 51 recorded bullying incidents in 2020-21. The three-year average number of incidents is 48.

Incidents and alleged incidents of racist behaviour remained low across both primary and secondary establishments. Those which did occur were dealt with sensitively and appropriately with restorative approaches.

In questionnaires:

- 85% of pupils agreed that they had someone in their school they could speak to if they are upset or worried by something
- 79% of pupils agreed that the school looks after their mental health
- 85% of parents of school children agreed that the school supports their child's emotional wellbeing; 95% of parents with children in early learning and childcare settings agreed with this
- almost all staff (96%) indicated that children were treated fairly and with respect by staff, with almost all (90%) children agreeing with this. Almost all staff (96%) also indicated that children and young people were encouraged and supported to treat others with respect; almost all pupils (96%) agreed that other pupils treated them with respect.

Child Protection

The Education Department had very effective arrangements in place in relation to safeguarding. A multi-agency child protection audit identified areas for improvement in individual settings. Child protection coordinators' awareness and understanding of issues such as child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and Prevent was supported and enhanced by their participation in child protection coordinator meetings, led by the Quality Improvement Team and the council's Lead Officer for child protection, and through attendance at multi agency public protection training events.

An updated Child Protection briefing presentation was produced and shared with schools for use with all staff during in service days. Senior and pastoral care staff in schools and across East Renfrewshire participated in professional learning in the Signs of Safety approach to Child Protection, which has been welcomed by the local Child Protection Committee.

Almost all pupils (92%) reported that they felt safe in school and almost all staff (99% of teaching and support staff) said that they understand how to apply the school's procedures relating to child protection and safeguarding.

40

Mentors in Violence Prevention

Mentors in Violence Prevention is a peer mentoring programme that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence. It addresses a range of behaviours including name-calling, sexting, controlling behaviour and harassment, and uses a 'by-stander' approach where individuals are not looked on as potential victims or perpetrators, but as empowered and active bystanders with the ability to support and challenge their peers in a safe way.

In May 2021, staff from four secondary schools (Barrhead, St Luke's, Woodfarm and Williamwood High Schools), along with partners from Police Scotland, East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Community Learning and Development, Women's Aid and Rape Crisis, participated in Mentors in Violence Prevention training, facilitated by Education Scotland. These staff then took on the role of trainer, training volunteer senior pupils to become mentors, with further training planned for the remaining three secondary schools to join this programme in session 2021-22.





Learning for Sustainability

The Education Department worked with a range of third sector organisations and partners including West of Scotland Development Education Centre (WOSDEC), Keep Scotland Beautiful and Sportscotland to promote and support Learning for Sustainability as a prominent feature of the curriculum. Following a number of professional learning sessions for staff, an Eco Schools Forum was established and staff met termly to share resources and best practice.

Staff worked in partnership with the Environment Department to consult with pupil leaders from all primary schools via Pupil Council meetings. Pupil leaders shared some of their best experiences in learning about climate change and provided feedback to the Environment Department on the priorities of their draft Climate Strategy.

Busby and Neilston Primary School pupils took part in a project with Zero Waste Scotland on their Managing our Waste campaign. Pupils designed 100% recyclable recycling mascots. Most schools and early learning and childcare centres (29) had a current Green Flag Award in 2020-21. Most schools also held a Sportscotland School Sport Award, with 20 schools currently accredited at Gold level.



Responding to COVID-19

East Renfrewshire was provided with Scottish Government funding to help improve the wellbeing of children and young people over the summer period through the 'Get Into Summer' programme. Education Department staff worked with colleagues across children's services to coordinate and deliver holiday activities and experiences, integrating food and wider family support where needed, and targeted at low income families as well as children and young people particularly affected by the impact of the pandemic.

An estimated 2211 children and young people had first-hand experience of Get Into Summer activities. Parents and carers reported benefits to wider families as a result of removing the need for them to provide child care and lunch over the summer period. A wide range of vulnerable groups of children and young people were sensitively targeted to encourage participation.

Evaluations of the wide range activities provided show that the programme led to many positive outcomes for children and young people from target groups, including:

- increased time playing with other children
- increased time spent outdoors
- increased physical activity, leading to improvements in mental and physical wellbeing
- reduced stigma due to removal of certain financial barriers to participation, leading to happier children and young people
- increased sense of belonging to local community
- reduced parental stress.



Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

A pupil survey was undertaken to better understand the impact of Covid-19 on the mental wellbeing of children and young people in P6-S6 across the local authority, and to provide further evidence for how best to respond to their mental wellbeing needs. The research was developed by the Educational Psychology Service in collaboration with the Healthier Minds Service. A total of 2956 responses from 25 establishments were received.

This research indicated that most young people had coped well with lockdown, with the most common feelings being fine/ok (39%), bored (22%) and happy (12%). The majority of those who responded 'bored' were in younger year groups and additional data suggests that not seeing friends and not getting to go to clubs/groups contributed to this feeling. A small percentage reported that they felt mostly anxious and sad.

The results also suggested that lack of social interaction with friends and family was the most challenging aspect for the majority of young people. Around 20% of pupils were worried about changes to their friendships.

With regards to returning to school after lockdown, the most common response across all stages was fine/ok (36%). The most common positive aspect about lockdown was spending more time with family (45%), followed by learning new hobbies and skills (30%). Many pupils also indicated that spending more time with their pets was a positive feature of lockdown (28%). The qualitative feedback amongst senior pupils indicated that for a small percentage it was a time of self-discovery and growth, and that they had enjoyed the opportunity to focus on themselves.

Overall, the data suggests that social connection was important for supporting the majority of young people's mental wellbeing, in particular talking to friends. Listening to music was also a common strategy, particularly for senior pupils. Physical strategies such as spending time outside, regular exercise and having a routine were also reported as important.

The results of the research were shared across the department and used to inform discussion about how to further support the mental wellbeing needs of our children and young people moving forwards.



43 Investment

Despite the significant financial impact of the response to the COVID 19 pandemic across education services, a combination of factors including early management action to avoid any non-essential spend, additional Scottish Government funding and periods of school and centre closures resulted in an underspend against budget of 1.3%.

Ongoing efficient use of resources is evidenced by continued above average performance in terms of cost per pupil place.

Supported by Scottish Government funding, schools benefitted from additional recovery teaching and support staff as well as enhanced cleaning to ensure all settings remained COVID safe environments for learning. Funding also supported our most vulnerable pupils both in terms of the provision of devices during periods of remote learning and the ongoing provision of free school meals during periods of closure, self-isolation and school holidays. A Winter and Spring hardship payment was also made to support these pupils. £100 payments per child were paid directly to families, ensuring that they had additional support when children and young people were at home over the holidays.

In addition, ahead of the winter holidays the Council paid an additional £25 to all children and young people in receipt of a School Clothing Grant to help families with the cost of essential winter clothing.



Facilities Management

During the period of school closure from January to March 2021, the Facilities Management team provided over 200,000 free school meal packs delivered to learners' homes on a weekly basis, alongside a full service provision of janitorial, cleaning and catering in the hubs. Services were then re-established in all schools, with enhanced cleaning regimes remaining in place to support infection control measures.

The team played a key role in supporting the opening of new early learning and childcare centres, with establishments ready to provide free lunches to all of our early learners, as well as all primary 1 to primary 4 pupils, ahead of August 2021.





Early Years Expansion

The main phase of our early years expansion was dependent on the construction of new facilities that were planned to be available for August 2020, comprising:

- a new family centre within the grounds of Eastwood Park
- two new build larger replacements for Busby and Eaglesham primary school nursery classes
- two new build family centres on the sites of Crookfur and Overlee pavilions
- a new extension at Cross Arthurlie Primary School to establish a nursery class.

Despite delays almost all of the new settings began to welcome children between December 2020 and April 2021, with the exception of Overlee Family Centre which opened in August 2021. A small extension at Carolside Primary School Nursery Class was also completed by December 2020.

Contingency measures were deployed to mitigate the impact of the delay to the infrastructure programme. This included reducing choice and flexibility, limiting the purchase of additional hours and making greater use of outdoor space.



Modernisation

The Learning and Leisure in Neilston project, which will include new build replacements for Neilston Primary, St Thomas's Primary and Madras Family Centre, progressed well with the design now finalised following consultation with pupils, staff and the wider community.

An extension of facilities to temporarily increase the planning capacity at St Ninian's High School was made, honouring commitments made when changing school admissions arrangements.

parentsportal.scot

Online Services

The department has continued to develop a range of digital processes for customers, and this has proven beneficial in relation to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents Portal has improved the digital relationship between schools and families over recent years since its initial launch in 2019-20. Schools have continued to promote Parents Portal with families and during 2020-21 the department sought to expand the opportunities for use, with pilots of online consent forms and parents evening bookings proving very successful ahead of a wider rollout planned over the course of the next session.

Building on the success of the online school admissions process, in January 2021 the department launched a new early years application process, enabling families to apply for 1140 hours of early learning and childcare digitally for the first time. In addition to improving the efficiency of internal processes, the online application has proven very popular with families with almost 90% of all applications now being received through this method.

What are we going to do now?

- Expand and enhance the Healthier Minds Service to ensure it supports children, young people and families with Additional Support Needs
- Create and support opportunities for secondary schools to provide nurturing interventions through targeted and whole-school approaches
- Implement the recommendations from both the National ASL review and the department's ASN review
- Support schools and the Instrumental Music Service to develop flexible approaches to delivery of instrumental music tuition
- Implement the recommendations of the Review of the 1+2 Languages Strategy
- Develop a Social Justice Strategy and Action Plan
- Implement the Learning for Sustainability Strategy
- Provide guidance and support on the most up to date pedagogical research and practices (0 – 18 years), including the assessment of children's progress
- Develop a clear vision for Developing the Young Workforce, including an increase in the different curriculum pathways and vocational opportunities available for our learners
- In partnership with colleagues across the Council, continue to implement The Promise, our Corporate Parenting Policy and the GIRFEC refresh
- Continue to work in partnership to maintain an enhanced level of support with regard to the reduction of teacher workload and bureaucracy within school
- Continue to seek investment to improve the learning environment for all our children and young people and expand provision as required
- Continue to empower our schools and ELC settings, to align their resources to the delivery of the department's vision and to support the recovery of pupils and staff as part of the Building Back Better and Fairer framework.



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