



Argyll and Bute Education Service Progress and Impact Report 2024-2025 Strategic Plan 2024-2026



Contents

Argyll and Bute Education Service..... 1

Progress and Impact Report 2024-2025..... 1

Strategic Plan 2024-2026 1

 Section 1: Foreword and Introduction 5

 Section 2..... 6

 Glossary of Terms and Acronyms 6

 Background Information..... 7

 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation..... 7

Overview of the Education Service 7

 Resourcing Our Plan: The Education Service Budget..... 7

 About this document 8

 Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together 8

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025..... 10

 National Improvement Framework (NIF) Outcomes and Priorities..... 10

 National Improvement Framework (NIF) Outcome 1..... 10

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025..... 11

 National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 1 11

 Progress and Impact Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Support and Accreditation..... 11

 Rights-Based Policy and Professional Learning..... 11

 Partnerships and Funding Support for Children’s Rights 11

 Inclusion and Diversity Initiatives..... 11

 Young People’s Voice and Participation 12

 Early Years – Children’s Rights, Family Engagement and Collaboration..... 12

 Youth Leadership and Participation: Young Scot Ambassadors..... 12

 Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Development 12

What are we going to do now? 13

Professional Learning and Rights-Based Practice 13

Wellbeing, Rights, and Relationships 13

Learning for Sustainability (LfS)..... 13

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025 14

 National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 2 14

 Progress and Impact..... 14

 Wellbeing, Rights and Relationships 14

 Our Children, Their Nurturing Education (OCTNE) 15

 Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA) 15

 Free School Meal registered and Non-Free School Meal Registered..... 16

 Table 2 – Attendance in Primary 16

 Table 3 - Attendance in Secondary 16

 Table 4 – Exclusions Data 17

 Inclusion and Equality 17

 Curriculum Development and Access to Senior Phase 18

 Enhancing the Curriculum through Wider Achievement..... 18

 Corporate Parenting and Support for Care Experience Children and Young People (CECYP)..... 18

 Curriculum Innovation and Professional Learning..... 19

 What are we going to do now? 19

 Early Years 19

 Curriculum and Secondary Sector..... 19

 Relationships, Participation and Rights 19

 Wellbeing, Inclusion, Equity and Achievement 19

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025 21

 National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 3 21

 Progress and Impact..... 21

Curriculum Literacy	21
Numeracy.....	21
Early Years.....	22
Motivation, Commitment, Resilience (MCR) Pathways Mentoring Programme	22
Using Data for Improvement.....	23
What are we going to do now?	28
SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025	29
National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 4	29
Progress and Impact.....	29
Table 13 - Percentage of School Leavers in a Positive Destination Achievement Awards 2023-2024	29
Table 14 - Summary of Wider Table 15 - Wider Achievement Level 4 Table 16 - Wider Achievement Level 5 Table 17 - Wider Achievement Level 6 Table 18 - Wider Achievement Level 7	30
What are we going to do now?	32
SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025	32
National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 5	33
Progress and Impact.....	33
What are we going to do now?	41
Priority Mapping.....	42
SECTION 4: Education Service Strategic Plan 2024-26.....	43
NIF Priority 1: Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education	44
NIF Priority 2: Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.....	46
NIF Priority 3: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people	49
NIF Priority 4: Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.....	51
NIF Priority 5: Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy	53
APPENDIX 1: Provisional 3 Year Stretch aims 2023-2026	56

Section 1: Foreword and Introduction

Councillor Audrey Forrest
Policy Lead for Education



As Policy Lead for Education, I am pleased to present Argyll and Bute Council’s Education Service Progress and Impact Report for 2024-25, alongside our Strategic Plan for 2024-26. This document reflects our shared commitment to ensuring that every child and young person in Argyll and Bute flourishes in their learning, their lives, and their future aspirations.

At the heart of our vision is *Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together*, our updated and renewed Education Vision and Strategy. This framework sets out our ambition to create nurturing, inclusive, and inspiring learning environments, where every learner is supported, challenged, and empowered to reach their full potential. It aligns with national and Council priorities and, crucially, has been shaped by the voices and experiences of our children and young people.

Our Education Service continues to work with passion ensuring that all children and young people benefit from the highest quality education. The Progress and Impact Report highlights the progress we have made, while the Strategic Plan sets out our next steps, built around the key priorities of our Education vision.

Through collaboration, innovation, and a relentless focus on improving outcomes for all of our children and young people, we will continue to deliver on our commitment: enabling every learner in Argyll and Bute to thrive, today and in the future.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director



As Executive Director for Education, I am pleased to add a Director’s perspective to the Policy Lead for Education’s foreword to Argyll and Bute Council’s Education Progress and Impact Report for 2024-2025 and Strategic Plan 2024-26.

We want Argyll and Bute to be a place of opportunity—a place where families can live, work, and thrive. Education is at the heart of that vision. It is central to ensuring that our children and young people have the best possible start in life and that our communities continue to grow and flourish.

Our Strategic Plan for Education sets out our commitment to providing high-quality learning experiences that equip our young people with the skills, confidence, and ambition to shape their own futures. Through *Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together*, we are building an education system that not only supports learners but strengthens the communities they call home.

We know that great schools and early learning settings are essential to attracting and retaining families in Argyll and Bute. That’s why our plan prioritises ambition, equity, and resilience. By working together—schools, families, employers, and communities—we can contribute to the Council’s priorities for our area and help ensure that Argyll and Bute is a place where people choose to stay, put down roots, and build their futures.

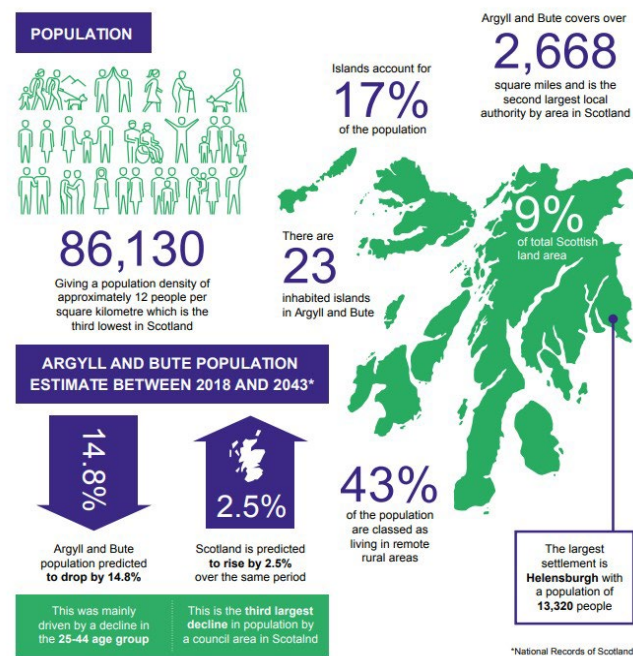
I look forward to working with you as we continue to deliver an education service that makes a lasting difference, both to our children and young people and to the future of Argyll and Bute.

Section 2

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

ACRONYM	TERM	ACRONYM	TERM	ACRONYM	TERM
ABEP	Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership	EY	Early Years	PEF	Pupil Equity Fund
ABSTEM	Argyll and Bute Science Technology Engineering and Maths	FLP	Flexible Learning Plan	PT	Principal Teacher
ACEL	Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level	FSM	Free School Meal	Q1	Quintile 1
ADES	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland	GIRFEC	Getting it Right for Every Child	Q5	Quintile 5
ADP	Alcohol and Drug Partnership	GM	Gaelic Medium	QI	Quality Improvement
ANA	Addressing Non-Attendance	GME	Gaelic Medium Education	RRS	Rights Respecting Schools
APM	Annual Participation Measure	HMIE	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education	SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
ASL	Additional Support for Learning	HSCP	Health and Social Care Partnership	SCILT	Scotland's National Centre for Languages
ASN	Additional Support Needs	HWB	Health and Wellbeing	SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
BGE	Broad General Education	KSB	Keep Scotland Beautiful	SEF	Strategic Equity Fund
CECYP	Care Experienced Children and Young People	LfS	Learning for Sustainability	SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence	LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender	SPA	Single Point of Access
CLD	Community Learning and Development	LTA	Learning Teaching Assessment	SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
CLPL	Career Long Professional Learning	MCR	Motivation, Commitment, Resilience	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	NIF	National Improvement Framework	TIE	Time for Inclusive Education
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce	OCTF	Our Children, Their Future	UHI	University of the Highlands and Islands
ELC	Early Learning and Childcare	OCTNE	Our Children, Their Nurturing Education	UKSPF	United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund
ES	Education Scotland	PAG	Parental Advisory Group	UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Background Information



* Excerpt from [Argyll and Bute Corporate Plan 2023-2027](#)

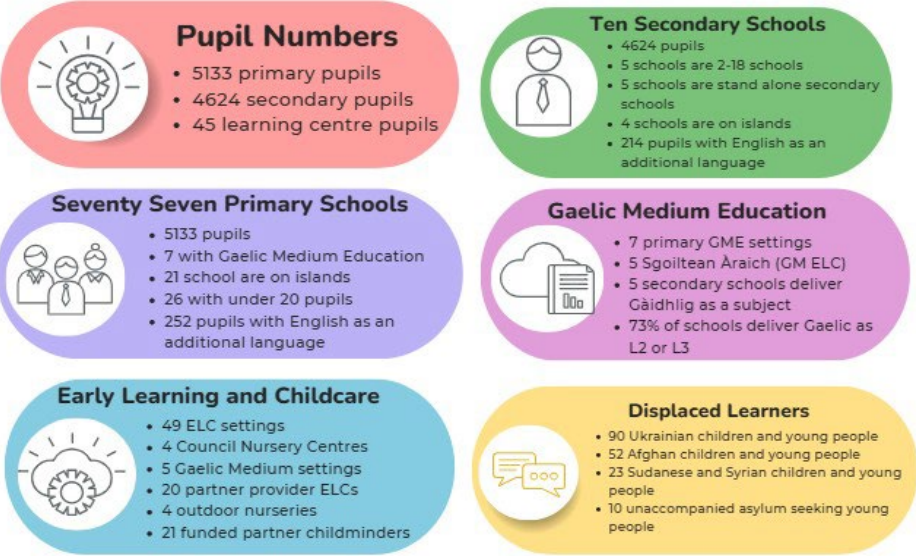
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

As a local authority comprising of large areas of rural and remote rural populations it is difficult to measure elements of rural deprivation. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a tool used by the Scottish Government to identify areas in Scotland that are experiencing different levels of poverty or disadvantage. It looks at things like; income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. These are combined to give an overall picture of how deprived each area is.

Argyll and Bute is made up of 125 SIMD data zones.

- 10 of these data zones are ranked within the 15% most deprived in Scotland.
- 8 of these zones are in the 15% most deprived in regard to employment.
- 13 of these data zones are in the 1% most access deprived.
- Coll and Tiree are ranked as the most access deprived.

* Data from [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020](#)



Resourcing Our Plan: The Education Service Budget

Service Area	2024-25	2025-26
Additional Support for Learning	11,787,495	13,016,151
Central/Management Costs	1,906,158	2,032,473
Early Learning & Childcare	17,497,317	18,570,560
Primary Education	40,496,298	43,332,268
Pupil Support*	2,418,849	4,407,979
Schools - Central Services	2,376,547	2,510,955
Secondary Education	37,264,437	41,833,086
Grand Total	113,747,101	125,703,472

* The increase in Pupil Support is due to the transfer of School Hostels into Education, resulting in a budget increase of £1.85m

About this document

Evidence for the Progress and Impact Report is gathered through a range of activities designed to provide challenge and support to schools and ELC settings. Evidence for the 2024-25 report has been informed by the following sources:

- Performance and questionnaire data
- Feedback gathered through the Parental Advisory Group (PAG)
- Intelligence and review reports on schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings from the Central Education Team
- Feedback from our Collaborative Improvement activity in association with ADES and Education Scotland
- Feedback from our HMIE Thematic Inspection on Local Authority Approaches to School Improvement
- Inspection reports and triannual reports by Education Scotland
- HMIE Thematic Review report
- Responses to our Service Vision and Strategy refresh
- Reports on Early Learning and Childcare settings by Care Inspectorate Scotland
- School and Service Improvement Plans and Standards and Quality Reports,
- Engagement groups with children and young people from a number of establishments in different contexts across Argyll and Bute
- Feedback from our Education Service Vision and Strategy refresh

The report and updated plan are also informed by:

- [Argyll and Bute Council Corporate Plan 2023-2027](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-2034](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Education Service strategy and vision *Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together*](#)
- [Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#)
- [Scottish Government's GIRFEC wellbeing indicators](#)
- [Scottish Government's Curriculum for Excellence](#)
- Education service self-evaluation activities and evidence
- Recent national publications including:
 - [It's Our Future Independent Review of Qualifications Assessment](#)
 - [All Learners in Scotland Matter: Findings from the National Discussion on Scottish Education](#)
 - [Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education](#)
 - [OECD Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence](#)
 - [Support for learning: All of our children and ALL their potential](#)
 - [Fit for the Future: developing a post-school learning system to fuel economic transformation](#)

Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together

Scotland's vision for education is a “*globally respected, empowered, and responsive education and skills system with clear accountability at every level that supports children, young people and adult learners to thrive.*” (NIF outcome 1) This vision is directly echoed in the refreshed Argyll and Bute education service vision and values [*Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together*](#).

In December 2023, we began a comprehensive consultation on the Education Service vision and strategy. Over the following 15 months, leading up to its approval by the Community Services Committee in March 2025, we undertook a robust and inclusive consultative process involving pupils, parents, staff, and key partners. Their feedback, along with alignment to key national policies— including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Getting it Right for Every Child, the National Improvement Framework, The Promise, and Curriculum for Excellence—shaped the development of the refreshed vision and strategy.

Our Children, Their Future has five key priority areas at its core:

- **Best Start for Learners** – Every learner has inspiring learning environments that build curiosity, confidence and the love of learning.
- **Ambitious Learners** – Every learner is supported and challenged to aim for their best.
- **Nurtured Learners** – Every learner has the opportunity to thrive in a safe, happy and supportive space.
- **Connected Learners** – Every learner is active in their local and global community.
- **Lifelong Learners** – Every learner benefits from opportunities to seek knowledge, value challenge, welcome change and keep learning throughout life.

Each key priority area is presented on a dedicated page, featuring learner-perspective statements which describe what that priority looks like in a school or early years setting. Pupils were excited to see how their feedback influenced the document and shared that they feel represented on every page.

NURTURED LEARNERS

Every learner has the opportunity to thrive in a safe, happy and supportive space.



'I believe in myself and I know that others do too.'

'Everyone works together to build positive relationships and I have someone I choose to talk to when I need to.'

'My learning community understands that people need different types of support at different times.'

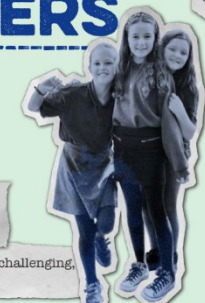
'The people who care for me and my school community join together to meet my needs, helping me grow and develop.'

'I am supported to look after my physical and mental wellbeing, to develop resilience and enjoy a healthy life.'

'I am encouraged to be me: I am unique and I value other people's uniqueness.'

AMBITIOUS LEARNERS

Every learner is supported and challenged to aim for their best.



'I am encouraged by everyone to be the best learner I can be.'

'My learning environment inspires me to learn, be curious and participate meaningfully.'

'My learning is varied, relevant, challenging, motivating and engaging for me.'

'I am a confident learner and have high expectations about what I can achieve.'

'I am involved in planning and assessing my learning and know how to set my own goals.'

'The adults around me use information about my learning and help me understand where I am in my learning and what I need next.'

'My commitment to learning is recognised, I feel successful in my learning and my achievements are celebrated.'

'I feel safe and brave within my learning environment and am confident to try new things.'

BEST START FOR LEARNERS

Every learner has inspiring learning environments that build curiosity, confidence and the love of learning.



'I belong and feel safe, valued, respected and confident.'

'I have adults who help me and are kind to me.'

'Those around me work together to help me find joy and interest in learning.'

'Adults around me know me well so I have the best support when I need it.'

'There are no pauses in my learning whenever and wherever I move.'

'My learning space is inspiring, motivating, interactive and inclusive.'

CONNECTED LEARNERS

Every learner is active in their local and global community.



'I can safely use technology to make my learning better.'

'I am asked for my thoughts and ideas in decisions that affect me and adults listen and respond to what I have to say.'

'I am encouraged to be creative and enterprising.'

'I feel included as part of my community and I am aware of how the skills I have learned can contribute to my local community/economy.'

'I can learn independently as part of a team and as a member of my community.'

'I develop as a local and global citizen through learning for sustainability which inspires a love and respect for my community and the wider environment.'

'There is a community understanding of my rights which are respected by all, this makes me feel included and respected.'

LIFELONG LEARNERS

Every learner benefits from opportunities to seek knowledge, value challenge, welcome change and keep learning throughout life.



'I have a wide choice of opportunities which support me to achieve and attain in order to enjoy success.'

'I am learning that success and positive destinations looks different for everyone.'

'I am an independent, responsible learner who is able to persevere and problem solve inside and outside of school.'

'Adults will support me to see connections in my learning in and out of school, helping me to improve my skills now and for the future.'

'I am supported to take steps to create a happy and confident future.'

'I have opportunities to develop my leadership skills and can help and support others to learn along the way.'

'I understand that learning is not limited to school subjects only and I have a variety of experiences to develop skills for learning, life and work.'

The information contained within this report will also help to inform the Education Service report on progress we are making towards addressing the National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities and our National Improvement Framework Plan for 2025-26. The Education Plan has been prepared in compliance with the requirements set out in the Statutory Guidance, accompanying the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act 2000.

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025

National Improvement Framework (NIF) Outcomes and Priorities

Scotland’s refreshed National Improvement Framework sets out a bold vision for a world-class, equitable education and skills system. It outlines seven key outcomes and five priorities focused on empowering learners of all ages to thrive through a system that is accountable, inclusive, and responsive. These outcomes and priorities emphasise collaborative working across services.

NIF 2025 Priorities	NIF 2025 Outcomes
- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education. - Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing. - Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people. - Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people. - Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.	- A globally respected, empowered, and responsive education and skills system with clear accountability at every level that supports children, young people and adult learners to thrive. The system enables the development of their knowledge, skills, values and attributes that give them the best opportunity to succeed and contribute to Scotland’s society and economy. - Young people experiencing the benefit of schools and early years settings working in excellent partnerships with wider children’s services and other partners, families, and communities, in line with the GIRFEC approach. - Inclusive and relevant curriculum and assessment which gives young people the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to society, and shape a sustainable future, while celebrating and supporting progression for all. - High levels of achievement across the curriculum for all learners, with action to close the poverty-related attainment gap. Highly skilled teachers and school-leaders driving excellent learning, teaching and assessment for all, especially those with additional support needs. - Improving relationships and behaviour, and attendance, with increased engagement in learning and a culture of dignity and respect for all. - An education system engaging in digital technology to enhance all aspects of learning and teaching, supported by a digitally skilled workforce and tackling digital inequality.

National Improvement Framework (NIF) Outcome 1

A globally respected, empowered, and responsive education and skills system with clear accountability at every level that supports children, young people and adult learners to thrive. The system enables the development of their knowledge, skills, values and attributes that give them the best opportunity to succeed and contribute to Scotland’s society and economy.

The Education Service priorities, developed as part of a two-year improvement cycle, are all integral to actively supporting and driving the first outcome of the NIF and will be evidenced across the reporting against the NIF priorities within this progress and impact report and strategic plan.

- The achievement of NIF Outcome 1 - a globally respected, empowered, and responsive education and skills system - relies on strategic Education Service priorities that drive system-wide improvement and leadership.
- Promoting children’s rights, inclusion, and diversity ensures that our education system remains equitable and accessible, fostering a culture of respect and empowerment.
 - Supporting health and wellbeing through targeted approaches underpins the ability of children, young people, and adult learners to fully engage with their education, recognising that wellbeing is fundamental to success.
 - A data-driven approach to addressing disadvantage and informing targeted support strengthens accountability by ensuring that interventions are tailored to the needs of learners, closing attainment gaps and promoting equity.
 - Strengthening partnerships and career pathways ensures a responsive system that aligns education with the evolving skills landscape, enhancing opportunities for lifelong learning and economic contribution.
 - Improving learning and teaching, tracking literacy and numeracy attainment, and enhancing professional development builds capacity at every level, equipping educators with the tools to deliver high quality teaching.
 - Embracing educational reform and digital advancements drives system-wide innovation, ensuring that Argyll and Bute’s education infrastructure is future-ready.

These Education Service priorities collectively support system accountability, leadership, and continuous improvement, reinforcing the responsive and internationally respected education system envisioned in NIF Outcome 1.

SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025

National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 1

Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.

Education Service Strategic Priority 1.1: We will protect and promote Children’s Rights through the promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity for all of our learners.

Progress and Impact Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Support and Accreditation

Education settings have received extensive support on their Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) journey. This includes accreditation workshops for Bronze and Silver levels, which have strengthened staff knowledge and confidence to progress through the accreditation process. Regular network meetings provide peer support tailored to accreditation stages, fostering ongoing assistance and professional dialogue. As a result, every school in Argyll and Bute have achieved RRS accreditation at Bronze, Silver, or Gold levels. Leadership capacity has also expanded, with the strategic lead increasing the Silver accreditation team to four members. The Rights Respecting Schools work has increased commitment to embedding rights in education practice and ensuring staff, pupils and parents/carers are rights aware. Pupils are more aware of their own rights as well as understanding how to respect and advocate for the rights of others. These are important aspects of ensuring that we meet our legislative requirements.

Rights-Based Policy and Professional Learning

Our Relationships Policy Guidance has embedded a rights-based approach that links children’s rights with Nurture and GIRFEC practices. This framework supports settings in developing their own policies, bolstered by professional learning aimed at senior leaders. This has ensured that settings are supported in the development of their own Relationship Policy, meeting an Education Scotland expectation. Additionally, all staff have access to relevant children’s rights training through the LEON professional learning platform, extending learning opportunities beyond education staff. Completion reports demonstrate increasing participation across children’s services, highlighting the growing reach of this training. The impact of this is evident in increased engagement with children and young people on community issues that impact them. This is ensuring that children and young people’s voice is being considered and have the opportunity for meaningful participation across a range of local authority development areas.

Partnerships and Funding Support for Children’s Rights

Partnership working has been enhanced through a CORRA grant award focused on promoting children’s rights. Various activities funded by this grant are documented in the CORRA Foundation Grant Report. One notable outcome is the creation of a child-friendly UNCRC one-page plan, which has been featured as a case study on the Improvement Services website, showcasing innovative local practice in rights promotion. [Child-friendly Reporting in Argyll & Bute Council | Improvement Service](#).

Inclusion and Diversity Initiatives

Inclusion and diversity have been further promoted through achievement of the Silver LGBT Youth Charter by Oban High School, with Hermitage Academy, Rothesay Joint Campus, and others progressing towards this award. Participation in Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) Training has increased by 22% among users from Argyll and Bute council over the past year, alongside a 25% rise in completion of stage 1 of the e-learning module. Feedback from pupil focus groups indicates that the charter has fostered a more inclusive school environment, with both staff and students demonstrating greater confidence in using respectful and inclusive language. Thirteen schools have registered with the Carers Trust for the Young Carers Challenge, marking initial engagement with this new award. This programme helps schools meet legislative requirements for young carers and ensures appropriate support systems are in place.

Young People's Voice and Participation

Young people's voice and participation have been strengthened, with Youth Voice group meetings in Argyll and Bute Council increasing in regularity following young people's feedback in June 2024. Meeting minutes reveal engagement across a wide range of issues, further evidenced in the CORRA Foundation Grant Report related to Rights Grant funding. The expansion of Rights Respecting Schools also supports the development of children and young people's voice, which is a requirement for Silver accreditation. This commitment is reflected in the local authority's work, including the Geography Network where young people's opinions have been recorded on the Aspiring Places website. This platform not only allows young people to influence community development but also provides Geography students with valuable resources for project work.

Early Years – Children's Rights, Family Engagement and Collaboration

Increased levels of collaboration centrally have produced an infographic overview of how children's rights are supported in a multiagency approach across Argyll and Bute. This has been shared with all ELC settings, supporting workforce understanding of rights-based practices in relation to community services. Parents also have access to this information, enabling them to access services which support their children.

Our collaboration with Glasgow University to increase parental engagement in learning outdoors is underway. This initial stage will deliver essential data to enhance our outdoor CLPL programme to include family learning. We will then be able to build learning for sustainability into a wider community delivery model.

Youth Leadership and Participation: Young Scot Ambassadors

Argyll and Bute are the pilot local authority for the introduction of Young Scot Ambassadors in Scotland. S3 pupils from each secondary school have been trained to deliver information pertaining to being a Young Scot and specifically the benefits of using the Young Scot card. Our ambassadors will deliver this information to P6/7 pupils within their clusters, as well as to all pupils in their own secondary schools. It is the intention that this will also be extended to include delivery to students from UHI Argyll College. The Young Scot Ambassadors have worked with Young Scot to create the materials they will use. This has ensured that they feel empowered and that their voices are listened to, valued and acted upon.

Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Development

An LfS working party has been formed. Teachers from across sectors and representation from the wider Council have begun to form a draft strategy and actions. An LfS survey was conducted with 38% of primary schools responding and two secondary schools. Nearly all schools had LfS within their School Improvement Plan (SIP), rationale, or as part of staff development. A few schools have engaged with Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) resources and all schools have engaged with Rights Respecting Schools. A smaller sub-group is developing Argyll and Bute's outdoor learning statement and a skills progression framework linked with outdoor learning. This will be shared with schools in August 2025, and engagement with outdoor learning will be monitored for impact. Schools have been given regular updates and communication on access to sustainability resources through the monthly STEM newsletter, emails including information from partners such as KSB, and through input at area Head Teacher meetings.

The LANDS25 event in March 2025 offered online live lessons related to sustainability. Fourteen practitioners from nine primary schools engaged in Climate Ready Classrooms with KSB. As a result, fifteen schools have now engaged with Climate Ready Classrooms.

Thirty-two establishments have received Nature Restoration Grant funding. This is supporting schools to focus on sustainability, citizenship, and outdoor learning, with activities including tree planting, biodiversity projects, and composting. Schools have completed their reports and evaluations, which were submitted at the end of June.

What are we going to do now?

Professional Learning and Rights-Based Practice

- Expand Early Years outdoor learning CLPL to include family learning within a place-based model, helping to extend LfS across local communities.
- Deliver CLPL to build practitioner understanding of rights-based practice and increase the number of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings achieving their Bronze Rights Respecting Award.
- Develop approaches and mechanisms to provide children and young people with meaningful opportunities to be empowered and actively shape their education.
- Support establishments to co-construct curriculum design and rationale with stakeholders to reflect their unique contexts.

Wellbeing, Rights, and Relationships

- Continue to develop local authority guidance and approaches in line with recommendations from the Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research and forthcoming Scottish Government documents, including the *Fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment* guidance.
- Further develop The Rights Respecting Schools programme with a focus on embedding rights within learning and teaching.
- Increase participation in TIE training over the next year to meet national expectations on LGBT Inclusive Education.
- Further promote and embed UNCRC awareness across services and communities through the Keeping Our Eye on Rights Award, developed by young people in Argyll and Bute.
- Increase engagement with the Young Carers Challenge to ensure universal understanding of statutory obligations and equitable access to support for all young carers across Argyll & Bute.
- Work in collaboration with the project team on the new Tobermory Campus focussed on enhancing an improved learning environment to support improved attainment.
- Celebrate inclusion, diversity, achievement and attainment through increased social media presence.
- Engage with the national Educational Psychologists Anti-Racism training.

Learning for Sustainability (LfS)

- Continue to promote training opportunities, partnership support, and key resources to help all establishments develop the three aspects of Learning for Sustainability: outdoor learning, sustainability, and citizenship.
- Early Years outdoor learning CLPL delivery will include family learning, within a place-based model, to begin to build learning for sustainability across communities.



SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025

National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 2

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

Education Service Strategic Priority 2.1: We will support improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing through the use of targeted approaches and understanding of learning and learners to enhance experiences in different contexts, which will support attainment and achievement across the four capacities.

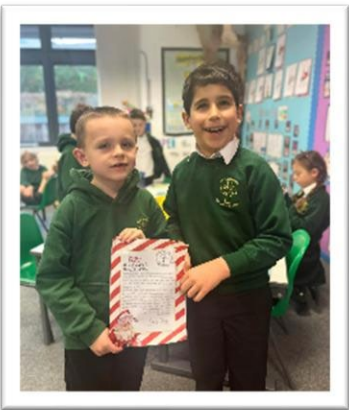
Progress and Impact

Wellbeing, Rights and Relationships

All Argyll and Bute secondary schools are trained to deliver the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Programme, supported by a team of four trainers, to ensure sustainability across settings. This programme has provided valuable leadership opportunities for senior pupils and enhanced peer education within the PSHE curriculum. Feedback from the Argyll and Bute Youth Voice group highlights a positive impact on reducing incidents of bullying, with further evidence expected from Education Scotland's School Impact Survey. We have been early adopters of the MVP Primary and Early Learning and Childcare Programme, with four trainers completing professional learning in March. This foundation will enable us to expand MVP as part of the Respect for All development work next session.

Central monitoring of bullying and equalities data has been improved, enhancing our awareness of training needs related to incident recording and targeting areas of concern identified by the data. Alongside this, the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) School Support Services have strengthened their provision for secondary school students affected by drug and alcohol use. Following a comprehensive service review, support is now available to all schools in Argyll & Bute, with contract monitoring in place to measure impact during the two-year pilot phase.

Planet Youth activity has increased across the five participating school areas due to grant-funded staffing supporting coalition development. This progress is detailed in the Planet Youth evaluation report for Argyll and Bute and is reflected in improved health and wellbeing data from the Planet Youth Surveys. This data underpins strategic planning across services and is cited in the Children and Young People's Service Plan, Sexual Health Strategy Group minutes, and Police Scotland's Local Policing Plan. Furthermore, new Mobile Phone Guidance has been introduced for primary and secondary schools, aligned with the Behaviour In Scottish Schools Report recommendations, with ongoing monitoring planned to assess its impact.



Our Children, Their Nurturing Education (OCTNE)

Significant strides have been made in embedding trauma-informed practices and nurturing approaches throughout the authority, aligning with our strategic goal of providing appropriate support for children and young people. The OCTNE framework currently supports fifty-eight establishments, including fifty-two schools and six partner providers of Early Learning and Childcare, fostering nurturing school environments. The Educational Psychology Service has facilitated whole-school nurturing approaches through OCTNE, delivering the fifth cohort of leadership training and empowering Nurture Teachers to lead their schools into the forthcoming accreditation cycle. These efforts have led to improved emotional wellbeing and resilience among learners.

Ongoing professional development has been a priority, with training in Lego Therapy and nurturing principles equipping educators, especially newly qualified teachers, with skills to support students' mental health and wellbeing. This commitment to continuous learning promotes a culture of reflective practice and proactive support across our schools.

Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA)

Our implementation of the ANA programme continues to focus on improving pupil attendance and engagement. The pilot project has gained notable recognition, with an article on the approach set for publication in the British Psychological Society's Educational and Child Psychology journal in June 2025, highlighting its evidence-based nature and positive potential outcomes.

Currently, 70% of secondary schools have engaged with ANA training. The Education Psychologists will collaborate with school leaders in the coming session to address this gap. While ANA training has been accessible on the LEON platform for primary schools since November 2024, uptake remains below expectations. To address this, Educational Psychologists and the Education Manager for Wellbeing, Rights and Relationships are actively raising awareness at Primary Headteacher meetings. This effort emphasizes early intervention, prevention, and understanding risk factors to strengthen engagement and promote proactive attendance strategies.

This work is closely coordinated with the Education Manager for Wellbeing, Rights and Relationships and the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor to ensure alignment with national strategies and avoid duplication, thereby enhancing support for schools. Six schools are engaging in the Quality Improvement Programme for Attendance led by Education Scotland which aims to improve school attendance across Scotland, particularly considering the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program emphasizes a whole-school approach, early intervention, and collaborative working to address barriers to attendance and support learner re-engagement.

As of May 2025, the overall rate of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) has fallen by 4 percentage points against 2023-24. Persistent absence amongst FSM pupils has also fallen by 3.3 percentage points. The percentage of all pupils with attendance over 90% has increased by 3.8 percentage points in primary and 2.8 percentage points in secondary.

Argyll and Bute – ‘Our Children, Their Nurturing Education’	
	Overall
Confirmed Data (June 2023)	64.45% (N.B 2023 Stretch Aim = 60%)
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	64%
Confirmed Data (June 2024)	66.67%
Interim Stretch Aim 2024/25	67%
Confirmed Data (June 2025)	69.19%
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	70%

Free School Meal registered and Non-Free School Meal Registered

Table 2 – Attendance in Primary

HWB – Attendance in Primary - Free School Meal registered and Non-Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM Registered	Not-FSM Registered	Gap (FSM/NotFSM)
Stretch Aim 2023-24	93.5%	89.25%	93.5%	4.25pp
Actual	93.0%	89.6%	93.6%	4.00pp
Stretch Aim 2024-25	93.7%	90.25%	94.25%	4.00pp
Data Pickup (June 2025)	93.8%	90.3%	94.5%	4.2pp

Table 3 - Attendance in Secondary

HWB – Attendance in Secondary - Free School Meal registered and Non-Free School Meal Registered				
	Overall	FSM Registered	Not-FSM Registered	Gap (FSM/NotFSM)
Stretch Aim 2023-24	90.0%	82.0%	89.5%	7.5pp
Actual	87.4%	82.4%	88.3%	5.9pp
Stretch Aim 2024-25	89.7%	83.5%	90.75%	7.25pp
Data Pickup (June 2025)	87.8%	82.3%	89.1%	6.8pp

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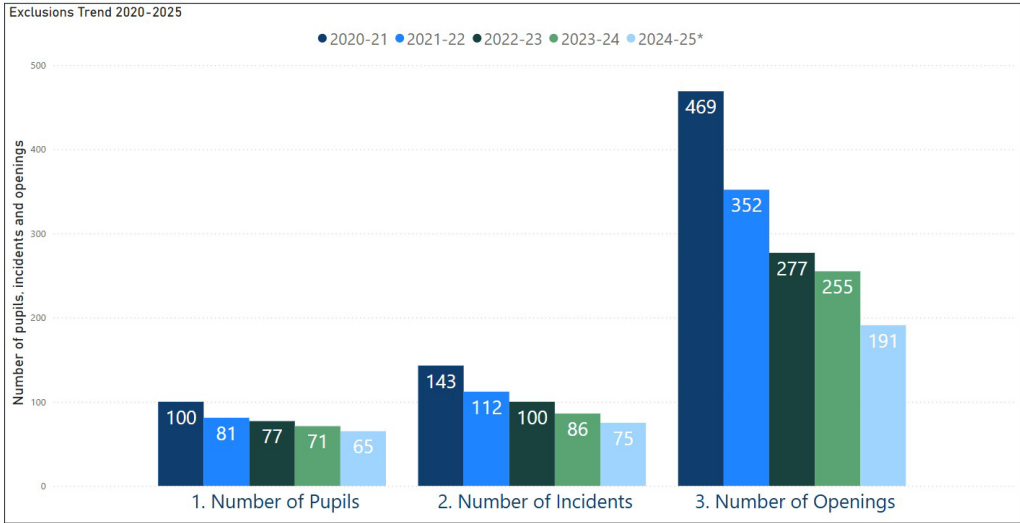


Table 4 – Exclusions Data

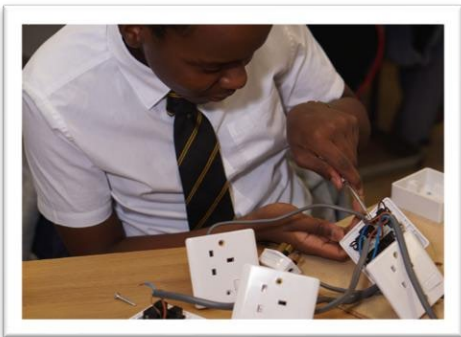
Exclusion data shows a positive downward trend linked to the authority wide interventions across health and wellbeing, attendance, relationships and learning and teaching. Table 4 illustrates the exclusions data which details a decrease in the number of pupils excluded, the number of exclusion incidents and the number days pupils have been excluded. Notably the work to support attendance and engagement of care experienced children and young people at school has resulted no exclusions for this population of pupils this session.

* Exclusions data updated as of June 2025

Inclusion and Equality

Data analysis through PERS100 returns has identified schools requiring training in co-regulation and de-escalation to better manage dysregulated behaviour. Schools participating in CALM training report increased confidence in supporting learners experiencing dysregulation, resulting in changed and improved approaches that better meet learner needs. Additionally, CIRCLE training has been widely offered to primary and secondary schools, contributing to good practice in creating environments that effectively support learners. Feedback from settings highlights the positive impact on pupils as articulated by staff.

The development of four new Learning Centres, along with increased provision in existing Learning Centres across Argyll and Bute, has improved equitable access to specialist support. This expansion is reflected in a growing number of children receiving Specialist Provision placements for the 2025-26 session, supported by additional staffing and environments designed to meet their specific needs.



Early Years Additional Support Needs (ASN) locality networks continue to attract strong participation and facilitate practice sharing across localities. Feedback indicates that these networks are effectively developing workforce understanding of strategies to support children with additional support needs. The multiagency involvement within these networks is particularly valuable in areas where Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) partners are experiencing staffing shortages, ensuring ELC staff have access to allied health professional expertise despite service challenges.

Curriculum Development and Access to Senior Phase

We continue to support progress in attainment and achievement through the continual review of Secondary School curriculum offers. Subject offers are regularly reviewed with consideration of pupil choice to ensure personalisation and breadth. We have widened access to the Senior Phase curriculum by offering courses virtually between schools. This approach has improved the resilience of our Senior Phase offer in response to the challenges faced by our Secondary schools across Argyll and Bute.

A commonality of timetable is maintained through a joint shared column structure across all secondary schools. This allows courses available in one school to be accessed by pupils in others where the same course may not be offered. In 2024-25, Advanced Higher Mathematics, Biology, Physics and Maths were delivered virtually between schools, supporting five young people to access courses unavailable in their base school. This virtual offer has ensured equity of opportunity and removed the barrier to achievement that rurality can create.

Enhancing the Curriculum through Wider Achievement

All secondary schools and Parklands Specialist Provision have made extensive use of their share of the £125,000 UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Children and young people from S1 to S6 have engaged in a wide range of activities and opportunities. These have included Cycle Maintenance, Sports Leaders, Outdoor Education, Film Making, a German Exchange experience, Leadership Awards, Dynamic Youth and Saltire Awards, STEM experiences, Wild Water Swimming certificates, and Enterprise and Employability opportunities. These projects have delivered meaningful wider achievement opportunities and enhanced the curriculum on offer.

Corporate Parenting and Support for Care Experience Children and Young People (CECYP)

Comprehensive training, such as *Keeping the Promise* and Designated Manager training, is supporting increased awareness of CECYP needs and how best to support this cohort. This has resulted in an authority-wide commitment, including from our Chief Officers Group, to continue working towards *Keeping the Promise* and maintaining high aspirations for our CECYP.

Effective partnership working through Corporate Parenting Board attendance and wider Education Service priority meetings continues to be refined. This has enhanced the support available to our CECYP, particularly when considering post-school destinations. The positive impact is evident, with 94% of CECYP leavers in 2023-24 achieving a positive destination and 83% sustaining it in 2024-25.

Strategic commitment to GIRFEC, *The Promise*, and OCTF has led to greater awareness across settings of the value of bespoke approaches, early intervention, and trauma-informed support. This has contributed to a year-on-year decrease in exclusions since 2020. As a result, zero CECYP were excluded in 2023-24, and as of May 2025, none have been excluded in the current academic session. Authority-wide policies and training such as *Maximising Attendance*, OCTNE, RRS, and *We Promise* are leading to earlier intervention and targeted attendance support for CECYP. These include multiagency approaches and whole-family support, with pupil voice evidencing positive impacts on wellbeing and inclusion.

Argyll and Bute participated in the testing phase of the Scottish Government's *Improving Education Outcomes for CECYP* framework. The authority worked with the government to refine the measures, which will now support schools in setting local targets and positively impacting outcomes.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment to support information sharing, along with a refreshed transition needs analysis document, has increased transition support for young people. With greater awareness of *The Promise*, schools are effectively sharing information throughout transitions, leading to greater consistency of support and nurture. This is evidenced by reductions in exclusions and improvements in individual attendance, attainment and wellbeing data.

Curriculum Innovation and Professional Learning

Cohort 2 of primary Head Teachers (representing eight schools) have been working with Education Scotland’s Curriculum Innovation Team through a series of face-to-face and online professional learning sessions. As a result, all Head Teachers in this cohort are currently reviewing their curriculum design and rationale. Head Teachers have reported that the dedicated time for professional dialogue and collaborative work has positively impacted their knowledge and confidence around curriculum design. They now feel more equipped to apply this learning within their schools to improve curriculum planning and refine rationale statements. A further session took place at the end of May with Education Scotland, bringing together Cohorts 1 and 2 along with senior leaders involved in Early Level curriculum design. Organised by Early Years with Education Scotland, these sessions supported continued professional learning and the development of practitioner networks.

What are we going to do now?

Early Years

- Continue collaboration to improve multiagency understanding of GIRFEC processes and procedures.
- Return ASN locality networks to a locality-based format aligned with the Single Point of Access (SPA) model developed by Educational Psychology colleagues.
- Review distribution of resources to support a reduced reliance on individual services and strengthen the staged intervention process at stages 1 and 2.

Curriculum and Secondary Sector

- Continue curriculum development through access to resources and professional development opportunities.
- Develop practitioner and senior leader networks to support on-going curriculum design to meet learner needs within each establishment's unique context.
- Expand the virtual curriculum offer through collaboration across secondary schools and explore broader opportunities to develop this work with partners across Scotland.
- Support all secondary schools to refine and refresh their curriculum, offering meaningful pathways and opportunities for all learners.
- Strengthen partnerships with local businesses and community organisations to enhance curriculum breadth and relevance.
- Ensure UKSPF funding is targeted toward measurable opportunities, with timely evidence gathering and reporting.

Relationships, Participation and Rights

- Update our Anti-Bullying policy to align with national Respect For All guidance, supporting improved recording, monitoring, and local response to bullying incidents, alongside increased awareness of supporting resources.
- Address the recommendations for the national Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research Report.
- Continue to develop the Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA) approach following insights from the Education Scotland Quality Improvement Programme on Attendance.
- Continue to use data sharing at HT cluster meetings to support upstream health and wellbeing approaches in primaries and transition planning.
- Maintain training and monitoring of the ADP School Support Service to ensure consistent access and approach across the authority.

Wellbeing, Inclusion, Equity and Achievement

- Strengthen strategic collaboration, capacity building and professional learning for nurture and inclusion.



- Integrate the attendance dashboard with the ANA framework for improved data insight and evidence-based decisions.
- Support remaining secondary schools to implement ANA fully and raise awareness in primary schools on early risk identification and intervention.
- Create a locality Place-based Model offering high-quality supports to schools, including professional learning to build capacity in universal and targeted approaches.
- Develop a support network for Specialist Provision settings to improve curriculum, pedagogy, environment, and resources for children with complex needs.
- Pilot a self-evaluation framework to support Specialist Provision and complex needs settings.
- Monitor the impact of the ADP School Support Service to ensure greater consistency of approach across the local authority.
- Share data with school leaders to inform upstreaming approaches to Health and Wellbeing in primary schools and consider appropriate transition planning.
- Further develop the gathering and use of health and wellbeing data.
- Continue to develop work on preventing Violence Against Women and Girls as an early adopter local authority.
- Expand engagement in Equally Safe at School and roll out Gender-Based Violence & Early Intervention training across primary and ELC settings.
- Align with the Scottish Government's draft framework for improving education outcomes for CECYP.
- Expand the training approach for co-regulation and dysregulation.
- Increased percentage of settings achieving the We Promise and Designated Manager training completion.
- Address barriers to education through development of the SPA and deployment of Family Liaison Officers.
- Continue to deliver trauma training with multiagency partners.
- Continue to lead the implementation of Our Children, Their Nurturing Education across settings and develop capacity to support ongoing implementation.
- Continue to develop and implement the Single Point of Access.



SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025

National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 3

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

Education Service Strategic Priority 3.1: We will address disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap by analysing data to inform a strategic overview of attainment for disadvantaged groups across the Local Authority and allow effective, targeted interventions.

Education Service Strategic Priority 3.2: We will use a data and research informed approach to provide targeted support to establishments across the Authority.

Progress and Impact

Curriculum Literacy

This session, Quality Improvement in writing has continued offering professional learning and collaborative working for a further two cohorts of primary teachers. Over session 2024-25, this has involved nineteen primary schools and forty-seven primary teachers. A total of thirty-nine of primary schools that have now engaged with QI writing. Cohort 5 ran from August 24 to November 24, involving a total of 221 pupils. In August, 62% of children were identified as on track with their writing; by November this had risen to 82%. The impact on attainment has been positive. In most cohorts, children on track increased by an average of 42%.

Two sessions were run for early level literacy professional learning, aimed at ELC practitioners and early level teachers. As a result of this professional learning, all practitioners reported that they felt more confident using benchmarks and progression planners. They recognized the importance of listening, talking, and skilled observation. Additionally, they reported that the professional learning opportunity had had a positive impact on their practice.

High quality learning and teaching in writing was supported by two online sessions delivered to classroom teachers focusing on the stimulus-dialogue-model for writing pedagogy, with eight schools attending. As a result, all practitioners reported that they felt they had increased confidence to use best practice pedagogy and understood how this pedagogy could be transferred to their classroom practice.

The Argyll and Bute Literacy planners, including Third and Fourth level, are accessible through the bespoke Staff Section tile on Glow. Some schools who require support to develop their planning have begun to use these planners.

Numeracy

The Counting on Excellence Frameworks are accessible to all education staff across Argyll and Bute via the Counting On Excellence website. Counting On Excellence promotes mastery by fostering deep understanding, robust skills, and confidence in reasoning and problem-solving. This initiative supports consistent pedagogy, shared expectations, and smooth transitions, enabling learners to build on their knowledge at every stage. For every child to excel in maths, a clear, consistent, and interconnected approach from the very start is required. The Counting On Excellence Framework champions and facilitates this vision.

Numeracy and Mathematics frameworks will continue to be developed to ensure clear progression across all strands of mathematics in the BGE. The Principal Teacher (PT) for numeracy established engagement with secondary schools by initiating contact with PTs of Mathematics. As a result, 40% of secondary schools are now engaging with the Counting On Excellence programme at an initial

introductory stage, with further collaboration planned. A social media feed is in place on X (formerly Twitter) that provides daily bulletins on Counting On Excellence to raise awareness of numeracy initiatives.

The Counting on Excellence framework and associated support and training have been piloted with eleven primary schools and one secondary school. This has involved collaborative work and training on in-service days and online twilight sessions. A numeracy kit with high-quality resources has been distributed to these schools to support planned learning activities. Numeracy Ambassadors have been identified for each school to support embedding and sustainability in pedagogical approach and use of the framework. Professional learning has included two early years workshops followed by two online sessions introducing the framework to early years staff and explaining the role of the educator in numeracy. Throughout the year, online training sessions on different aspects of numeracy have been provided to further develop high quality learning and teaching. In total, 386 teachers have attended these sessions. This figure includes teachers attending more than one session and involved all teaching staff from the twelve schools participating in the pilot.

Early Years

16% of ELC settings received blocks of focused literacy interventions delivered by Early Years Excellence and Equity Leads, targeting children's listening skills. In all settings, children's listening skills improved as a result of the intervention, with almost all children's skills progressing at pace, as evidenced through tracking and monitoring data. Practitioner feedback demonstrates increased confidence by almost all staff involved to continue delivering the focused intervention independently, leading to improved literacy attainment within this curriculum organiser for all children within the settings involved.

4% of ELC settings received blocks of focused numeracy interventions by Early Years excellence and equity leads, targeting the five principles of counting. Observation and tracking data showed that 100% of children engaged in the project improved their understanding of number and counting. Qualitative data from parental feedback reinforced this evaluation. In all three settings, practitioners reported that their understanding of teaching number concepts and counting had increased, and all were confident in their capacity to continue this work independently.

Collaboration with health colleagues to deliver parental information sessions via community 'buggy walks' has increased. We now have regular sessions in almost all mainland urban towns. Parental engagement continues to grow in relation to the numbers of parents attending regular sessions. Feedback shows these sessions are delivering early support for parents in the areas of dental health, speech and language development, and parental mental health.

Our Play on Pedals collaboration with Cycle Scotland is now being delivered across 75% of our localities. As a result, most children attending sessions with their parents are now able to cycle a bike with confidence. We anticipate this will ensure almost all children, where the programme is operational, will achieve age and stage appropriate development in relation to gross motor skills.

Motivation, Commitment, Resilience (MCR) Pathways Mentoring Programme

This senior phase mentoring programme matches young people with volunteer mentors, creating relationships which enable young people to realise their skills and potential, ultimately supporting their progress onto a post-school positive destination. We have three full-time MCR coordinators located in Dunoon Grammar School, Hermitage Academy, and Oban HS, and a part-time coordinator in Rothesay Joint Campus. Recruitment for a part-time coordinator who will manage the MCR programme across Campbeltown Grammar School and Lochgilphead Joint Campus will take place early in the 2025-2026 academic session.

In 2024-25, there were 110 young people mentored through the MCR Pathways Programme across Dunoon GS, Hermitage, Oban HS, and Rothesay Joint Campus. In addition, 12 young people are supported on a one-to-one basis by Pathway coordinators, and 70 young people in S1 and S2 access group work, totalling 182 young people across Argyll and Bute in three secondary schools accessing support through MCR Pathways.

The MCR programme commenced in Rothesay Joint Campus this session and there are nine S1 young people and eleven S2 young people participating in group work, with nine young people engaging in one-to-one mentoring supported by nine registered mentors. Of these, seven mentor-mentee pairs are matched, and two are ready to be matched. Highlights in 2024-25 have included seeing mentor relationships develop across each school involved, with some mentor pairs meeting regularly for over one year. Feedback from young people involved in MCR provision indicates that 87% feel there has

been an improvement in their confidence, 81% feel they have been supported to identify goals, 90% feel their mentor encourages them to be the best version of themselves, and 92% feel they have built trusting relationships with their mentor.

Mentors have reported that 93% feel they have helped their mentee feel good about themselves, 79% feel they have helped their mentee understand who they are and what their needs are, 79% feel they have supported their mentee to have more self-belief, and 86% feel they have created relationships which enable young people to talk about anything they feel they need to. This illustrates how the MCR mentoring programme enables young people to develop positive working relationships with their mentors, relationships which support young people to realise their skills and potential.

Using Data for Improvement

Several developments have been made this session to enhance the use of data for improvement across the service. The central team now has improved access to data through data dashboards which provide data on attendance, attainment, exclusions, tracking and monitoring and demographics. The dashboards allow managers and officers to explore data at authority, administrative area, school, class and stage level. This has allowed a fuller interrogation of data taking into consideration specific context. The data which schools receive from the central team has also been improved. A revised matrix for the Progress and Achievement system has led to more consistent teacher judgements of pupil progress across the authority furthering the collective understanding of expected progress within stages not included in Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) returns. Technical improvements with how the central team provides data has meant that schools now have access to cohort level progress over time visuals as well as enhanced data sheets which allow schools to drill into their data to identify, and remedy, attainment gaps.

Table 5 – Literacy (P1, 4, 7 Combined) and Stretch Aims

Year Change in Percentage Achieved (2022-24)					
Stage	Reading	Writing	Listening and Talking	Literacy	Numeracy
P1	6.7	10.5	4.8	11.0	6.7
P4	6.7	9.7	5.6	9.8	7.4
P7	9.7	13.4	9.3	12.6	11.4
P1,4,7 Combined	4.1	5.7	3.1	6.3	4.1
S3 (Third Level or Above)	0.9	0.5	1.6	2.4	4.3
S4 (Fourth Level)	17.4	17.9	18.1	18.2	6.8

Table 6 – Numeracy (P1, 4, 7 Combined) and Stretch Aims

Change in Gap to National (2022-2024)					
Stage	Listening & Talking	Literacy	Numeracy	Reading	Writing
P1	3.6	8.2	5.4	4.9	8.0
P4	6.8	8.4	8.3	6.8	9.6
P7	1.0	2.8	1.3	2.1	2.8
P1,4,7 Combined	3.8	6.3	5.0	4.5	6.6
S3 (Third Level or Above)	0.1	-0.4	3.0	-0.9	-1.8
S4 (Fourth Level)	8.8	7.7	0.9	8.4	8.4

Table 7 – 3 Year Change in Percentage Achieved

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
ACEL June 2022	62.4%	52.6%	80.0%	27.4pp
ACEL June 2023	67.7%	67.7%	80.6%	13.9pp
Stretch Aims 23-24	71.0%	70.0%	81.0%	11pp
ACEL Data June 2024	72.2%	67.6%	82.6%	15.0pp
Stretch Aims 24-25	73.5%	72.5%	83.0%	10.5pp

Table 8 – Change in Gap Authority Achievement Rate to National Achievement Rate

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
ACEL June 2022	72.7%	68.1%	85.9%	17.8pp
ACEL June 2023	76.3%	75.6%	90.3%	14.7pp
Stretch Aims 23-24	78.0%	73.0%	89.5%	16.5pp
ACEL Data June 2024	80.1%	73.1%	87.5%	15.4pp
Stretch Aims 24-25	80.5%	75.5%	90.25%	14.75pp

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved throughout the BGE. Performance in P1,4,7 combined literacy improved by 4.5 percentage points against 2022-23, whilst numeracy also increased by 3.8 percentage points. Strong progress was also experienced in S3, as illustrated in table 7. Fourth level attainment in literacy grew by 15 percentage points against 2022-23, and numeracy increased by 8 percentage points. Sustained progress in literacy and numeracy has occurred following the lows in attainment caused by pandemic-related disruption. P1,4,7 literacy is up 13.5 percentage points against 2020-21, whilst numeracy is 11.1 percentage points higher than 2020-21.

Progress in closing the attainment gaps between SIMD quintiles 1 and 5 in literacy and numeracy is continuing. The gap of 15 percentage points in 2023-24 in both literacy and numeracy demonstrates sustained progress from amplified gaps experienced during the pandemic. In 2020-21, gaps of 33 percentage points in literacy and 29 percentage points in numeracy were experienced. As such, the attainment gaps in both curricular areas have been roughly halved.

Progress towards Argyll and Bute Stretch Aims for 1 or more pass at SCQF 5, 1 or more pass at SCQF 6 is collated in tables 9 and 10. Secondary attainment meetings require headteachers to highlight areas for improvement and associated actions in relation to attainment and achievement , on consistency in moderation and understanding standards and on ensuring an aspirational presentation policy which enables all pupils to achieve their potential. The attainment paper template has proven an effective basis for improving reporting to the Executive Director and Elected Members through Community Services Committee on individual school attainment.

In 2023-24, the percentage of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 decreased from 2022-23 meaning that the stretch aim of 91.5% was not achieved. The number of school leavers in quintile 1 achieving 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 increased by just under 2 percentage points. Secondary schools are continuing to track and monitor the progress of all learners in order to ensure that all young people are supported and challenged to achieve and attain at the highest possible level.

In 2023-24, the percentage of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 increased by approximately 4 percentage points overall. Attainment of those in quintile 1 increased by just under 10 percentage points and the gap between Q1 and Q5 leavers reduced by approximately 4 percentage points. Continued work is underway at school level in order to further reduce the gap as it still much greater than the stretch aim.

Table 9 - School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Leavers Cohort 21-22	90.9%	83.6%	98.0%	14.4pp
Leavers Cohort 22-23	89.1%	80.0%	96.4%	16.4pp
Stretch Aims 23-24	91.5%	85.0%	98.5%	13.5pp
Leavers Cohort 23-24	85.7%	81.7%	95.3%	13.6pp
Stretch Aims 24-25	92.25%	87.0%	99.25%	12.25pp

Table 10 - School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Leavers Cohort 21-22	66.0%	54.1%	82.4%	28.3pp
Leavers Cohort 22-23	62.6%	38.8%	85.7%	46.9pp
Stretch Aims 23-24	66.5%	57.0%	84.0%	27.0pp
Leavers Cohort 23-24	66.7%	47.9%	90.6%	42.7pp
Stretch Aims 24-25	67.75%	60.0%	86.5%	26.5pp

The Annual Participation Measure is released each year at the end of August by Skills Development Scotland (SDS). It reports on the number of 16 to 19 year-olds across Scotland and in each local authority who are in education, employment or training. The data in table 11 below demonstrates that Participation figures for Argyll and Bute have been consistent over the last four years, placing the council in the top ten Scottish local authorities for Participation over that time.

As part of the national drive to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap, the Council agrees targets with the Scottish Government relating to reducing the Participation gap between the most and least disadvantaged young people across Argyll and Bute. The data in table 11 demonstrates that since August 2022 we have seen a reduction in this gap in Argyll and Bute. In order to continue this trend, and to ensure as many young people as possible are participating through entering positive post-school destinations, the council is working effectively with partners in SDS, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Community Learning and Development (CLD), the Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership (ABEP) and with employers across Argyll and Bute to ensure all young people from all social backgrounds are ready to enter a fulfilling and sustained positive destination on leaving school. This involves supporting young people in finding high-quality, relevant work placements and contributing to the skills development and employability curriculum in schools. Young people most at risk of not entering a positive destination are identified and receive bespoke support and interventions to ensure they enter a positive destination on leaving school. The progress of young people after leaving school is also tracked, to enable the council and its partner agencies to identify any young people who have been unable to sustain a positive post-school destination, and support them back into employment, education or training.

Table 11 - Participation Measure – 16-19 Year Olds in Education, Training and Employment

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
APM August 2022	93.9%	89.1%	95.5%	6.4pp
APM August 2023	94.4%	88.4%	97.8%	9.4pp
Stretch Aims 23-24	94.0%	89.5%	96%	6.5pp
APM August 2024	94.3%	91.5%	97.1%	5.6pp
Stretch Aims 24-25	94.25%	91%	96.5%	5.5pp

Scottish Attainment Challenge

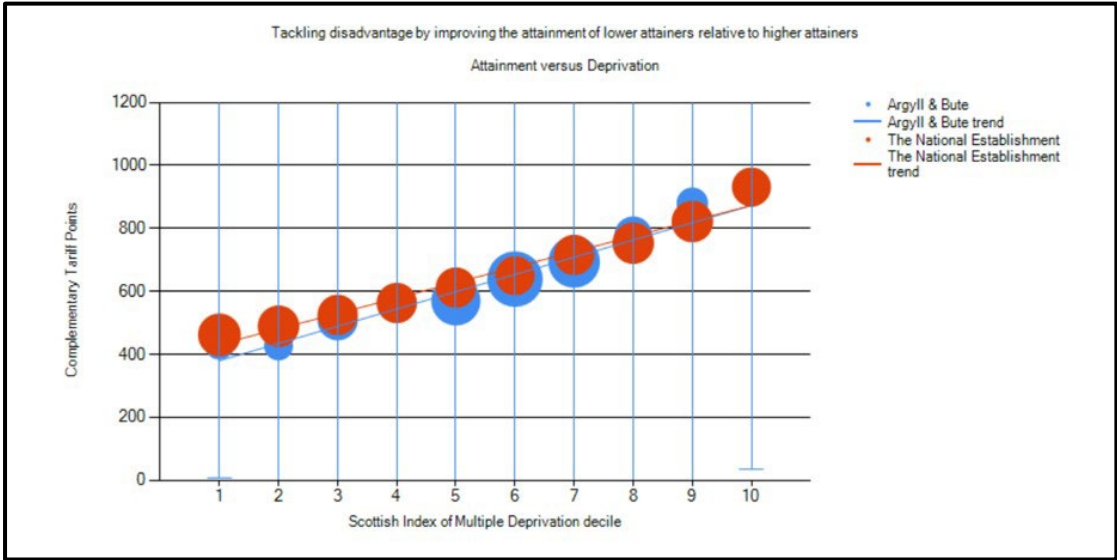
Schools are being encouraged to consider more sustainable practices as we head into the final phase of this current Attainment Challenge. These include capacity-building in effective teaching and learning, leadership, and nurturing schools. This connects to strategic equity planning and is emulated across local authorities. Use of data and evidence has been central to these conversations. Approaches to tracking and monitoring have been refined, enabling officers and managers to present and share data in a more accessible and meaningful way. All data packs and charts offer the opportunity to make school comparisons against the Stretch Aims and SIMD attainment gaps at individual school and authority levels. Newly devised data dashboards have enabled school staff and the central team to obtain a clear, high-level overview of key data sets. Schools report feeling increasingly confident as a result of this refreshed system and through training and engagement.

At the school level, Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used to target areas including targeted support for literacy and numeracy learning and teaching initiatives, promotion of digital inclusion, support for pupil health and wellbeing, collaboration with third sector partners to support pupils and families facing specific barriers to school attendance and participation, and initiatives to reduce the cost of the school day. A number of case studies from across the authority, exemplifying effective impact, have been produced and shared with all schools. Further examples will be gathered and published to continue building this resource bank.

PEF spend over the last four years shows an encouraging upward trend in overall investment spend, rising from 63% investment in 2021-22 to 84% investment in 2024-25. As PEF is reported within a financial year and schools operate the budget through an academic year, the remaining 16% is committed to costs and projections for further spend by September 2026, when a further improvement in percentage spend will be evident.

A number of Secondary schools have been supported in the creation of data-informed intervention guidance. Secondary schools are using robust and ongoing data analysis to ensure appropriate interventions are in place. Identifying the need for targeted intervention as early as possible, alongside new robust tracking systems, is supporting schools to improve literacy and numeracy attainment throughout the BGE, reduce the poverty-related attainment and achievement gap, and sustain improvement in senior phase overall attainment. Tracking data between terms has already demonstrated a positive attainment increase in specific schools.

Table 12 – Attainment versus Deprivation (Secondary)



The chart at table 12 shows the relationship between attainment and deprivation for secondary pupils in Argyle & Bute, compared with the national average in Scotland. The aim is to highlight how deprivation (measured using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) affects educational outcomes.

SIMD deciles are recorded along the horizontal axis with decile 1 being the most deprived and decile 10 being the least deprived. The vertical axis shows the measurement of attainment measured by complementary tariff points. The red circles show the national data with the blue circles representing data for Argyle and Bute pupils.

A positive correlation exists between SIMD decile and attainment in both Argyle and Bute and nationally, with pupils from higher deciles achieving more highly on average. Argyle and Bute generally performs in line with the National Average across most SIMD deciles.

What are we going to do now?

Curriculum

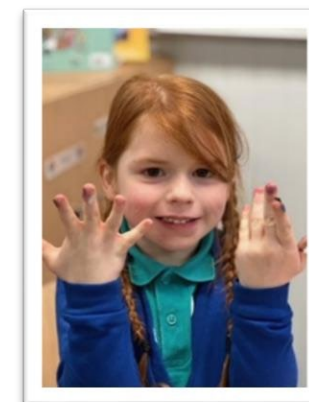
- Continue to expand use of Quality Improvement (QI) writing including supporting new and existing cohorts, developing ongoing training for programme sustainability.
- Support professional learning in early level literacy in partnership with Early Years.
- Further develop professional learning opportunities to raise attainment in all aspects of literacy using data at authority level to identify gaps.
- Engage with Learning to Read led by Education Scotland for early level professional learning.
- Support further engagement by Secondary BGE with Counting on Excellence to raise awareness of the framework at BGE across the system and use of the framework to strengthen Primary to Secondary transition.
- Continue to develop and offer professional learning through CLPL sessions aligned to the maths and numeracy framework and continued creation of high-quality resources to support key numeracy pedagogies.
- Continue to support schools with access to STEM resources, professional learning and experiences to enhance curricular approaches.
- Support parental engagement in literacy and numeracy through the development of high-quality resources.

Early Years

- Early Years Excellence and Equity Leads will continue to deliver and track impact of targeted Early Level Literacy and Numeracy interventions.
- Continue to monitor feedback from community 'buggy walk' session to track impact in terms of early intervention support for speech and language development and dental health and begin to introduce family learning sessions in relation to toilet training.
- Play on Pedals will be introduced into all mainland and island large towns, and we will continue to track the impact upon gross motor development.

Attainment and Equity

- Continue to focus on raising attainment across the BGE and Senior Phase though challenge and support for schools, ensuring a sharp focus on those in key equity groups to further reduce the poverty related attainment gap.
- Continue to support secondary schools to develop approaches to raising attainment through early intervention, ensuring that all schools have robust approaches to interventions in place and that these are systematically tracked to ensure impact.
- Continue to target SEF funding to areas where improvement is required with a focus on learning, teaching and assessment, literacy and numeracy support, support for schools around data and performance, specific support around PEF planning and reporting.
- Continue to ensure that schools are utilising PEF appropriately by planning interventions and approaches that are informed by their data, are evidence based and have clear measures of success identified at the outset.
- Challenge and support teachers and school leaders to become increasingly data literate and confident in using a range of data to identify and target gaps to improve outcomes for all learners.
- Expand our MCR Pathways programme to reach and support an increased number of young people.
- Support establishments development and use of STEM through resources, updates, and CPD opportunities via the ABSTEM website
- Continue to build networks with partner organisations to support STEM in schools and establishments.
- Work towards implementing the Service strategy for equitable access to digital technology across schools.



SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025

National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 4

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

Education Service Strategic Priority 4.1: Through partnership working we will promote the development of skills, knowledge and understanding of learners to widen learning opportunities and career pathways for learners.

Education Service Strategic Priority 4.2: We will further enhance our partnership with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) to ensure all young people have the opportunity and successfully develop the skills for life and work required to attain sustained, positive destinations post-school.

Progress and Impact

Positive Destinations and Partnerships

Education and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) have continued to work in strong partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the third sector, and a growing range of employer partners to support young people in developing skills, shaping personalised learning pathways, and tracking progress toward and within positive destinations. This collaborative approach has contributed to 94.8% of school leavers in 2023-24 entering a positive destination. Additionally, 94.3% of all 16–19-year-olds in Argyll and Bute were in education, training, or employment, placing the authority 9th in Scotland according to the SDS Annual Participation Measure, which is published yearly in August. The distinction between the Annual Participation Measure and the School Leaver Initial Destinations should be noted. The SDS Annual Participation Measure records the status of all 16–19-year-olds in Argyll and Bute and identifies them according to the activity in which they spent the greatest part of the year between April 2023 and March 2024. This means that all pupils 16 and over in school are recorded as Participating, as are all school leavers who spent more than half of the year in employment, education or training. The School Leavers Initial Destination data, provided in Table 13 below, is a snapshot on 7th October 2024 of the destinations of all summer 2024 and December 2023 school leavers. A factor contributing to the reduction in positive initial destinations over the last two years has been the effects of Covid-19 on young people’s engagement and resilience. Also, there has been a 5% drop since 2021-2022 in the number of school leavers entering employment.

In partnership with SDS and DYW, Secondary schools are working with young people and their families to ensure as many young people as possible enter and sustain positive destinations on leaving school. Schools and SDS are also tracking young people in the 12-18 months after leaving school, and continue to intervene to support back into work, education or training any young people who may fall out of a positive destination.

Table 13 - Percentage of School Leavers in a Positive Destination

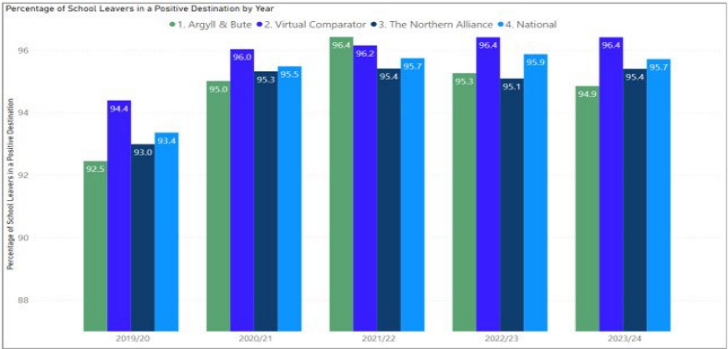


Table 14 - Summary of Wider Achievement Awards 2023-2024

SCQF Level	Presentations	Number of Passes	Pass Rate
SCQF Level 4	360	285	79.2%
SCQF Level 5	758	645	85.1%
SCQF Level 6	467	377	80.7%
SCQF Level 7	8	8	100.0%
All Awards	1529	1251	81.8%

Work-Based Learning and Flexible Pathways

Employer partnerships have grown significantly in 2024-25, resulting in 387 work placements, a 60% increase from the previous year. These placements have enabled young people to explore vocational pathways, build skills for life and work, and increase their confidence and resilience.

Flexible Learning Plans (FLPs) have continued to provide tailored curricula across all secondary schools. Forty FLPs are currently in place, reflecting increased school capacity and commitment to planning personalised timetables. This has enabled vulnerable young people to re-engage with education and transition into sustained employment or training/apprenticeship opportunities.

Senior Phase and College Partnerships

The authority continues to work closely with UHI Argyll College to extend the Senior Phase offer. Virtual networked courses are available to all Senior Phase learners across Argyll and Bute, and each Secondary school also has bespoke face-to-face college arrangements. In 2024-25, twenty-five college courses at SCQF levels 3 to 6 were offered, providing 576 young people with access to tailored learning aligned to their interests and aspirations. Additionally, five networked courses were delivered virtually across all secondary schools, allowing 107 more young people to access subjects not available in their base schools. These opportunities are instrumental in building confidence, expanding curriculum experience, and supporting progression into positive destinations.

Education has strengthened its partnership with Community Learning to expand both the Broad General Education (BGE) and Senior Phase curricula. As a result, 614 young people have engaged in seven accredited award programmes, while an additional 718 young people have participated in eight non-accredited learning activities. These include primary-secondary transition programmes, all of which support wider achievement and engagement.

Early Years Modern Apprenticeships

The Early Years service is successfully delivering a practitioner programme to six Modern Apprentices, all of whom are progressing well in their learning. Several previous apprentices are now employed within the service, demonstrating the success of this ‘grow our own’ approach, which enables young people to build careers in early learning without leaving the authority.

Table 15 - Wider Achievement Level 4

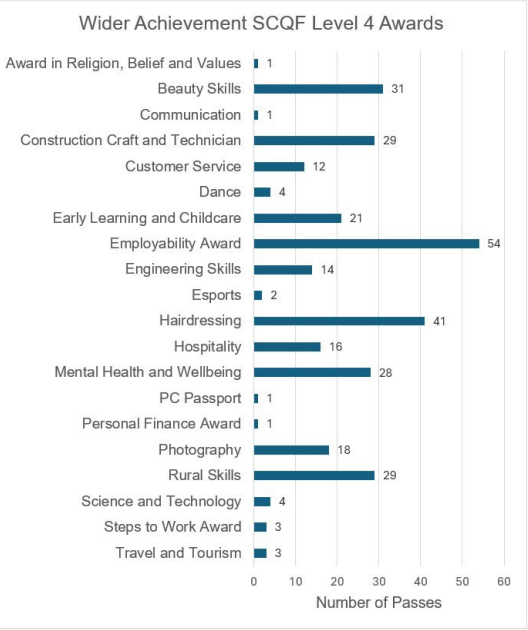


Table 16 - Wider Achievement Level 5

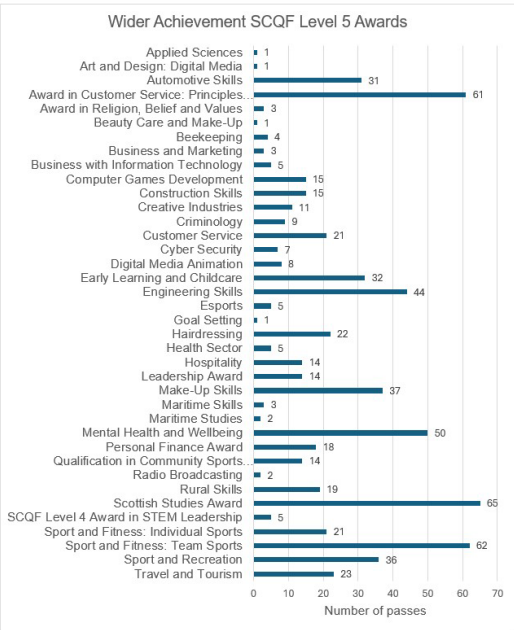


Table 17 - Wider Achievement Level 6

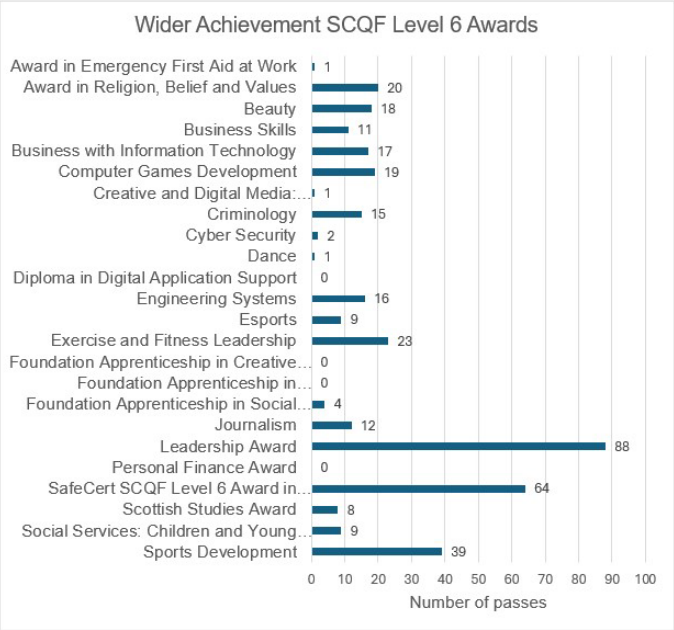


Table 18 - Wider Achievement Level 7



Digital Learning and STEM

Between April 2024 and April 2025, the Digital Learning team engaged over 1,600 pupils, including two cluster STEM events: STARS24 and LANDS25.

The LANDS25 STEM event in March 2025 engaged 180 pupils from ten Mid Argyll schools in hands-on outdoor STEM activities, linking local industries to STEM careers. From Jan 2024 to Jan 2025, the Digital Learning Team delivered CLPL to 152 staff and ran workshops for over 690 pupils on topics like Micro:Bits, Spheros, and Green Screen. In partnership with the Primary Science Development Officer, the team supported the Climate Smarter Celebration (155 pupils, 12 schools) and led STEM transition events for 440 pupils in Hermitage and Oban.

The STARS24 STEM event, in collaboration with DYW and Discover Space UK, highlighted the varied career paths within Scotland's space industry. The event featured interactive workshops, talks from industry professionals, and an exhibition with prominent Scottish space companies. A key highlight was the launch of a rocket that ascended to an altitude of one mile. The event saw participation from 235 students across ten Primary and two Secondary schools. Additionally, a mission patch logo competition received over 370 entries from twenty-one schools, with all entries flown on a space mission by Blue Origin.

The Digital Learning Team partnered with the Primary Science Development Officer (PSDO) to enhance STEM engagement across the region. A major highlight was support for the Climate Smarter Celebration. This event successfully showcased pupil achievements from a Prosper-led project spanning twenty-three local authority schools. The event brought together 155 pupils forming 27 teams from 12 different schools.



What are we going to do now?

Improving Sustained School Leaver Destinations and Participation

- Secure an improvement in sustained school leaver destinations by developing and improving our interventions for young people at risk of a negative destination, or who have not been able to sustain a positive post-school destination.
- Increase school leaver positive destinations through targeted partnership interventions by secondary schools and Skills Development Scotland for young people not sustaining a positive post-school destination.
- Continue to expand the MCR Pathways programme across secondary establishments.
- Further develop flexible learning plans to support vulnerable young people to access education and work toward positive destinations.

Developing Employability Skills and Work-Based Learning

- Improve the availability and bespoke nature of work placements for all young people who require them through increasing the number and quality of school-employer partnerships.
- Develop and refine our approaches to work-based vocational learning Flexible Learning Plans as targeted interventions for young people at risk of disengagement from education.
- Increase the range of personalised pathways open to young people and further increase the availability in all Secondary schools of accredited wider experience qualifications through partnership with Community Learning.
- Review and refine approaches to partnership working with college in order to ensure that arrangements and provision meet the needs of our learners and lead to positive outcomes.
- Explore opportunities to expand the range of networked courses delivered across Secondary schools.

Curriculum

- Strengthen partnership working to enhance the curriculum offer in schools.
- Embed STEM approaches and link with partnership organisations.
- Offer STEM opportunities and experiences for schools in coding and future job market skills.
- Continue to support schools with access to STEM resources, professional learning and experiences to enhance curricular approaches.
- Continue to offer a range of professional development for teachers on digital skills and programmes.
- Establish STEM hubs in North and South Argyll and Bute to provide in person and remote STEM opportunities for school-age learners and teachers.

Early Years Workforce Development

- Further develop training opportunities to build upon current success in relation to growing our own practitioners.



SECTION 3: Report on Progress and Impact 2024-2025

National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priority 5

Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.1: We will provide targeted support to schools to improve learning and teaching in order to improve outcomes for children and young people and develop systematic evaluation and sharing of high-quality materials and resources to support continuing professional development to support practitioners in addressing barriers and raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy for our children and young people.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.2: We will track and monitor children and young people's Literacy and Numeracy attainment, build capacity of senior leaders and practitioners in order to further develop their skills in data analysis to inform improvement. We will increase the use and range of data to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.3: We will respond to and embrace educational reform in relation to approaches to inspection, curriculum development and qualifications.

Progress and Impact

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels

The tables below indicate attainment of Curriculum for Excellence levels recorded in June 2024 for children and young people in P1,4,7. This data was submitted to Scottish Government in September 2024 and published in December 2024. Attainment for Numeracy (table 20) shows a 3.7 percentage point improvement placing Argyll and Bute in line with the National average. Whilst attainment for Literacy at P1, 4, 7, (table 19) where pupils have achieved all three organisers, has increased by 4.5 percentage points, we remain sitting slightly below the national average. Improvements have been made in the accessibility of data provided to schools and an increased confidence and capacity at school level in the analysis and use of data for improvement is being evidenced by increased consistency of teacher professional judgement. A variety of universal and targeted work has been undertaken across session 2024-2025 as detailed within this plan with central team staff working closely with schools to establish areas of concern and next steps. We are confident that the actions and follow up work that has taken place this session, has had a positive impact on attainment in both literacy and numeracy for session 2025-26.

Table 19 - Percentage Achieved Expected Level (P1, 4 and 7 Combined) in Literacy

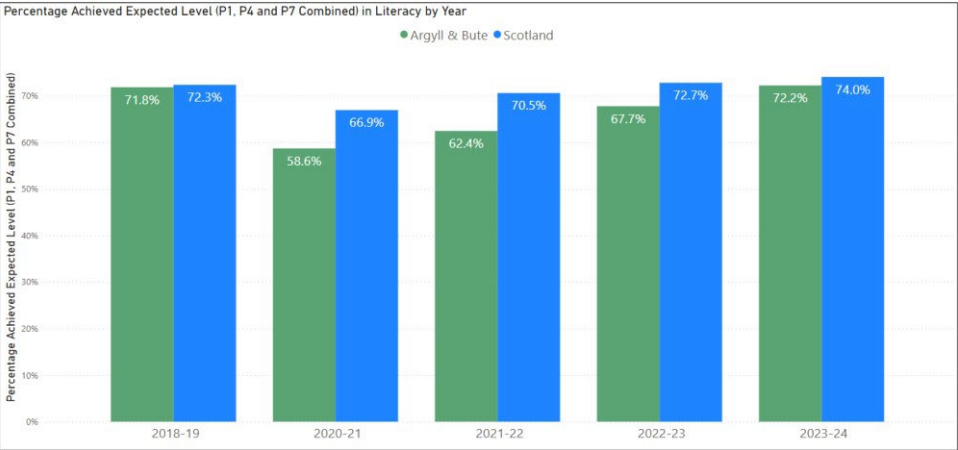


Table 20 - Percentage Achieved Expected Level (P1, 4 and 7 Combined) in Numeracy

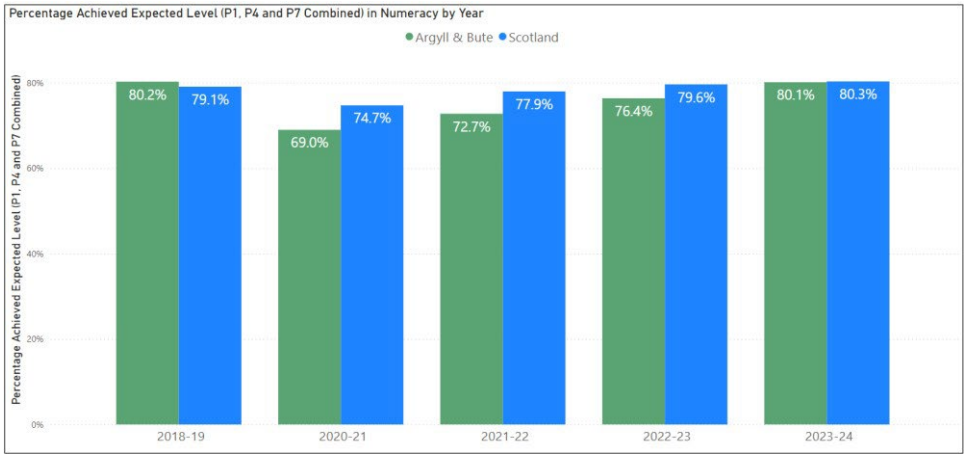


Table 21 - Achievement of Third Level or Better Literacy (S3)

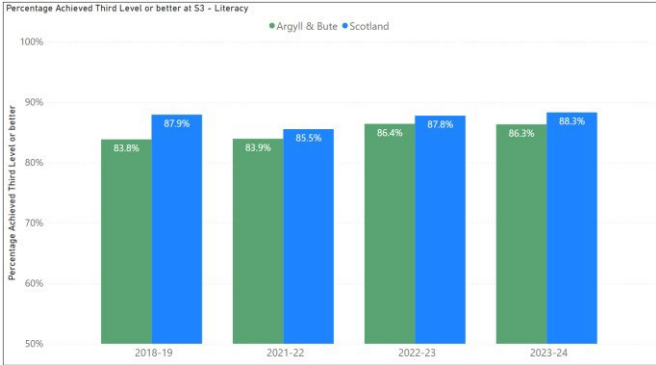
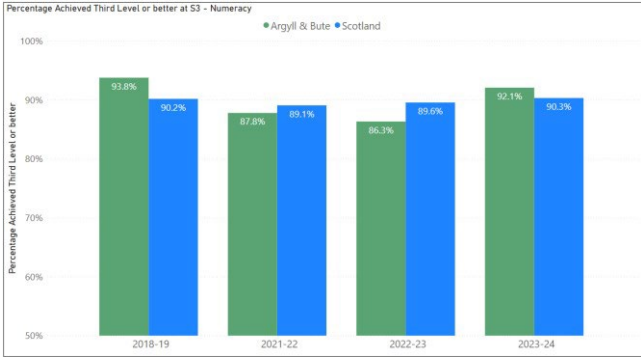


Table 22 - Achievement of Third Level or Better Numeracy (S3)



For S3 pupils, comparisons cannot be made to 2019-20 and 2020-21 as the data was not collected.

Compared to 2018/19:

- S3 Literacy (Third level or better) has improved by 2.5 percentage points when compared to 2019 ACEL data.
- S3 Numeracy (Third level or better) has declined by 1.7 percentage points when compared to 2019 ACEL data but improved by 5.8 percentage points from 2023 ACEL data.

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy at Levels 4, 5 and 6

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 4 and 5 Literacy and Numeracy are achieved via the passing of National 4 or 5 English or Maths, or through the completion of separate Literacy and Numeracy units at levels 4 and 5 which do not require an examination



Table 23 - Literacy and Numeracy Achievement – All Leavers

Table 23 shows the SCQF achievement for literacy and numeracy at level 4 and 5 for all leavers, this would include school leavers for all years (S4, S5 and S6). The number of S4 leavers has increased for Argyll and Bute for comparison on the next page table 24 shows the achievement for those pupils remaining through S6.

For this cohort of pupils Level 4 Literacy has shown a slight decrease of 2 percentage points and remains below the virtual comparator. Level 4 Numeracy remains at 87% which remains below the virtual comparator. Level 5 Literacy has decreased by 1 percentage point and remains below the virtual comparator. Level 5 Numeracy has decreased by 1 percentage point and remains below the virtual comparator.



Table 24 - Literacy and Numeracy Achievement – S6 Leavers

Table 24 shows the SCQF achievement for literacy and numeracy at level 4 and 5 for S6 leavers. The data for this cohort remains positive with 97% of S6 leavers achieving Level 4 Literacy and 93% of S6 leavers achieving Level 5 Literacy, although this remains slightly below the virtual comparator. 93% of S6 leavers achieved Level 4 Numeracy and 84% achieved Level 5 Numeracy. Achievement at Numeracy for Level 4 and Level 5 remain below the virtual comparator.

Attainment of Care-Experienced Young People (CECYP)

The Promise states that by 2030 “schools and education establishments in Scotland will be ambitious for care experienced children and young people (CECYP) and ensure they have all they need to thrive, recognising they may experience difficulties associated with their life story.” Argyll and Bute continue to have high aspirations for our CECYP, evidenced through our ongoing commitment and investment in the work of the Virtual School.

Our CECYP are supported to achieve their maximum potential in literacy and numeracy, which often involves overcoming significant barriers. Our support strategies included targeted one to one support, bespoke curriculums with enhanced nurture and wellbeing supports, attendance interventions and our team of Health and Wellbeing Family Liaison Officer (HWBFLO) working alongside settings.

Each setting has a Designated Manager for CECYP who links with the Virtual Head Teacher (VHT), ensuring greater scrutiny, support and challenge. This is leading to greater awareness and understanding of how best to support our CECYP, evidenced through increased wellbeing and attainment for this cohort.

Scottish Qualification – Authority Attainment Data 2023-2024 (CECYP)

The following attainment data relates to care experienced learners across Argyll and Bute for the 2023-24 academic session.

Table 25 - National Qualifications Pass Rates (CECYP)

	A	B	C	D	A-C Pass Rate	A-D Pass Rate
National 5	11.4%	12.9%	21.4%	28.6%	45.7%	74.3%
Higher	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%	37.5%	33.3%	70.8%
Advanced Higher	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%

The data at table 25 represents National Qualification achievements at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher for care experienced young people from S4-S6 across Argyll and Bute. It is important to note that some of our care experienced young people were able to undertake the coursework and present for examination, despite challenging circumstances. Additionally, we have maintained a 100% pass rate for National 4 results for CECYP young people this session.

Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy – National Comparison (Looked After)

Tables 26, 27, 28 and 29 below evidence a national comparison of ‘looked after’ learners in S5 in relation to literacy and numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5, cumulative attainment by the end of S5 based on original S4 roll. They present a positive picture for most years, rather than a singular year. Caution should be given due to the extremely small cohort numbers in the authority

Table 26 - Literacy Level 4 (Looked After)

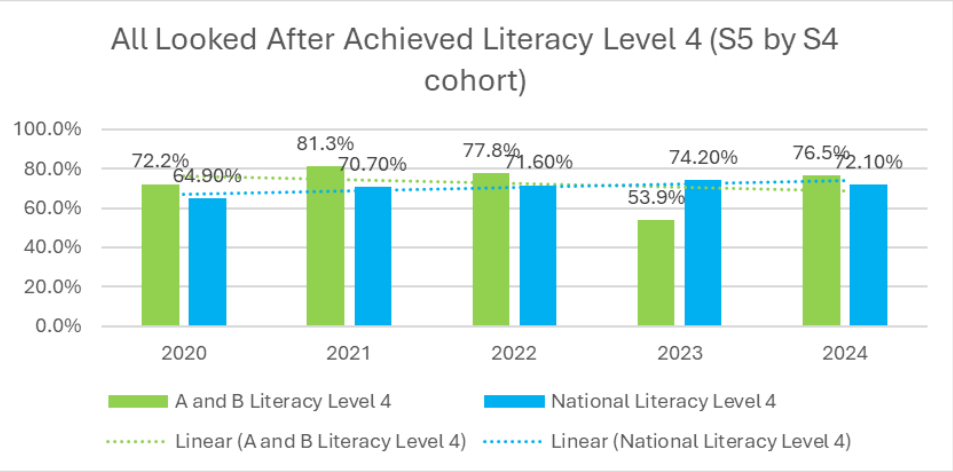


Table 27 - Numeracy Level 4 (Looked After)

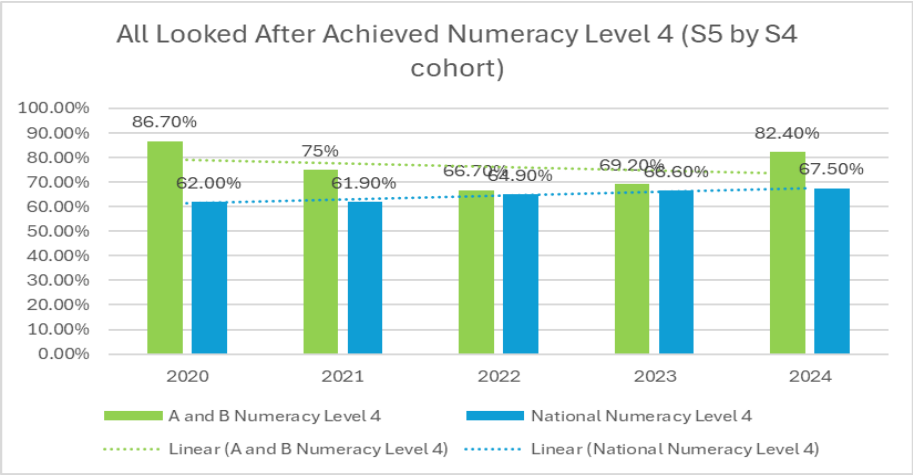


Table 28- Literacy Level 5 (Looked After)

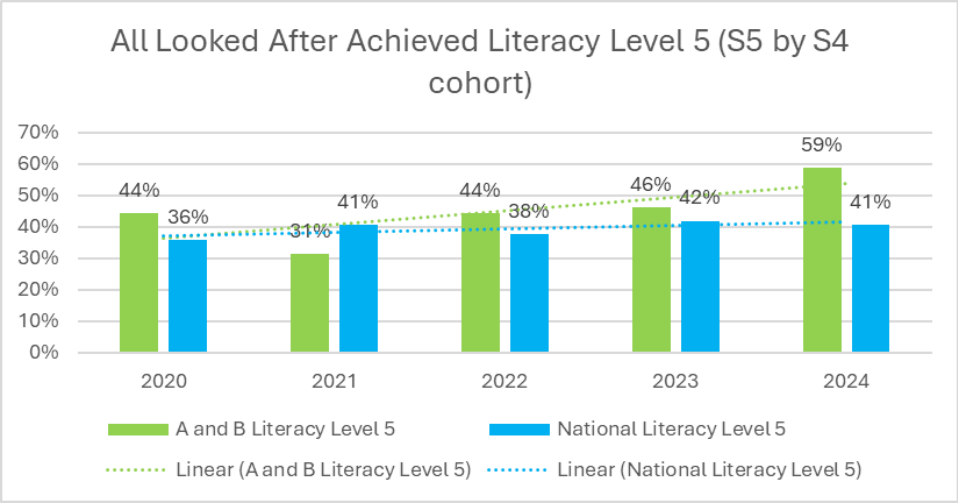
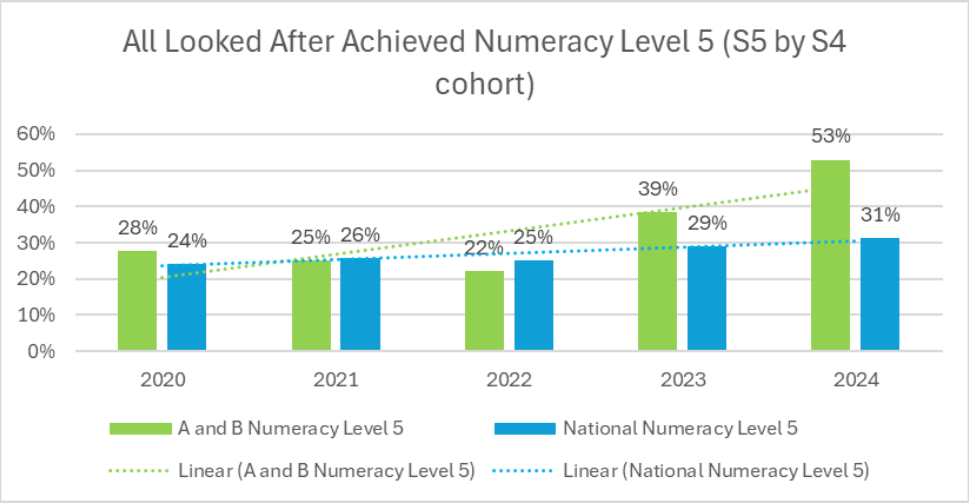


Table 29 - Numeracy Level 5 (Looked After)



Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy – Local Comparison (Looked After)

Table 30 below shows the comparison between looked after young people and all leavers from 2020 to 2024 for Level 4 and Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy and the attainment difference at Authority level. The gap between looked young people after and all leaver young people in Literacy and Numeracy has closed over the last five sessions at both level 4 and level 5. This is a result of significant increases in looked after leavers achieving Literacy and Numeracy qualifications

Table 30 – Literacy and Numeracy Achievement Comparison

Establishment	Year	Looked After			All			Difference between All and Looked After	
		% Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy	Number in Cohort	% Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy	Number in Cohort	Level 4	Level 5
Argyll & Bute	2024	70.59	52.94	17	83.17	64.82	796	12.58	11.88
Argyll & Bute	2023	63.64	36.36	11	85.28	67.09	781	21.64	30.73
Argyll & Bute	2022	70	20	10	88.31	68.14	838	18.31	48.14
Argyll & Bute	2021	63.64	9.09	11	86.41	68.08	802	22.77	58.99
Argyll & Bute	2020	55.56	22.22	18	87.46	68.66	702	31.9	46.44

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) – 4 Year Authority View

By combining cohorts, we can compare Care Experienced (CE) and non-Care Experienced pupils at an authority level. Table 31 below evidences the three-year positive progress for our CE learners in P1, 4, and 7. This is a positive picture with attainment for CE pupils showing an increase in every area and illustrating a closing of the gap between CE and non-CE pupils in every area with CE pupils, who themselves have also improved. Table 32 includes the attainment for pupils in P1, 4, 7 and S3 which also shows a positive picture.

Table 31 – ACEL Organiser Achievement Comparison (P1, 4 and 7)

	Care Experienced Pupils					Non Care Experienced Pupils					Gap Between Care Experienced and Non-Care Experienced				
Curricular Area	P1,4,7 Combined Percentaged Achieved the Level														
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Four Year Change	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Four Year Change	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Four Year Change
Reading	35%	47%	53%	58%	23%	72%	74%	77%	81%	9%	37%	27%	24%	23%	-14%
Writing	30%	27%	37%	49%	19%	63%	67%	72%	76%	13%	33%	40%	35%	27%	-6%
Listening and Talking	39%	60%	65%	71%	32%	76%	81%	85%	86%	10%	37%	21%	20%	15%	-22%
Literacy	28%	25%	37%	49%	21%	59%	62%	68%	72%	13%	31%	37%	31%	23%	-8%
Numeracy	41%	44%	43%	59%	18%	70%	74%	77%	81%	11%	29%	30%	34%	22%	-7%

Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA)

The LTA Board of key managers and officers has been established, meeting monthly to drive improvement in LTA at a strategic level. As a result, strategy and planning relating to improvement of LTA across all schools is coherently and consistently understood, and the experience and context of all managers and officers has contributed to strategic direction. Improving Learning, Teaching and Assessment has been the key focus of the September 2024 HT Conference in Helensburgh, led by Bruce Robertson. The impact of this has strengthened the increased focus on high-quality pedagogy in schools; and pedagogy highlighted at the conference has been increasingly implemented by teachers, as demonstrated by observation of LTA in targeted schools.

An Education Officer (0.6) has been appointed to support the Education Manager LTA and develop the Northern Alliance LTA Toolkit, adapting it to Argyll and Bute’s context. This has impacted positively, as targeted schools have employed the Northern Alliance LTA self-evaluation toolkit, resulting in the identification of clear improvement priorities around LTA leadership and practice. Schools are also employing the Logic Model toolkit to clarify actions around LTA which are measurable and have maximum impact.

Observation of LTA across the Primary and Secondary sector has demonstrated that almost all practitioners employ Learning Intentions and Success Criteria in their practice. As a result, children and young people are beginning to understand and engage with their own learning in terms of challenge and relevance. All schools engaged in inter-school moderation of Literacy through the collaborative planning of high-quality assessments during the In-service Day in November 2024. As a result, understanding of assessment standards has increased, as demonstrated by teacher feedback and evaluation of the assessments. High-quality exemplars have also been collated and added to a resource bank to enable sharing of best practice.

Professional Learning and Collaboration

In a majority of schools, there is evidence of collaborative, enquiry-led professional learning around pedagogy, demonstrated through programmes of professional reading and collaborative improvement activities relating to LTA. In some schools, teachers observe and evaluate each other’s practice, and in those schools, teachers are beginning to develop agency and leadership relating to pedagogy. Seven twilight online LTA CLPL sessions have been offered, with increasing attendance. As a result, observation of LTA in targeted schools has demonstrated improvement in key elements of LTA.

Early Years Pedagogical Leadership

Leaders from 51% of settings have now engaged in the Pedagogical Leadership programme, co-designed in response to insights from quality visits, leadership dialogue and national inspection feedback. Endorsed by a co-author of *Realising the Ambition: Being Me*, the programme aligns with Education Scotland’s model for networked learning. Feedback from 37 of 48 attendees across two cohorts shows that practitioners experienced a broadened perspective and deeper understanding of their pedagogical role. The programme has acted as a catalyst for reflective practice and change and sustained progress will be possible with continued leadership capacity investment.

Table 32 - ACEL Organiser Achievement Comparison (P1, 4, 7 and S3)

	Care Experienced Pupils				Non Care Experienced Pupils				Gap Between Care Experienced and Non-Care Experienced			
Curricular Area	P1, P4, P7 and S3 Combined											
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Three Year Change	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Three Year Change	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Three Year Change
Reading	49%	59%	57%	8%	78%	81%	83%	5%	29%	22%	26%	-3%
Writing	36%	49%	51%	15%	72%	76%	79%	7%	36%	27%	28%	-8%
Listening and Talking	59%	67%	65%	6%	83%	86%	88%	5%	24%	19%	23%	-1%
Literacy	33%	48%	48%	15%	69%	73%	77%	8%	36%	25%	29%	-7%
Numeracy	48%	52%	61%	13%	77%	80%	84%	7%	29%	28%	23%	-6%

The Digital Learning Team offer a range of CLPL sessions to support inclusive teaching and have developed a dedicated Google Site featuring support materials, downloadable resources, and video examples to enhance delivery of computing outcomes.

STEM

This session, the Primary Science Development Officer delivered 83.4 hours of CLPL and direct support to 262 practitioners across 68% of establishments. Feedback from the RAiSE Local Authority Survey showed strong impact: 88% reported increased confidence and knowledge in STEM, 82% increased their involvement in STEM delivery, and 76% enhanced their leadership capacity in STEM.

Direct work with schools to plan strategically against SIP aims, providing guidance, CLPL and modelling practice has taken place. STEM has been related to broader themes of effective teaching and learning and curriculum design highlighting effective formative assessment strategies, linking to skills progression and embedding STEM in wider curriculum design utilising IDL and PBL strategies.

Developmental work has been informed by participation in Education Scotland working parties, Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) Co-Design Group, Assessment and Moderation in BGE Sciences and the Curriculum Improvement Cycle in Science. Work has been taken forward as part of the RAISE network to view innovative practice, policy and curriculum development across various local authorities.

Funding from the Royal Society of Chemistry (£500) and Drax (£2,000) supported resources for sustainable transition events. A two-day transition event held in Oban event will be shared as a model for transition. £8,000 from the RAiSE grant funded science inquiry kits for eight remote areas, and £1,700 supported the addition of a Sphero Indi class kit. Positive feedback from staff and pupils highlighted improved confidence, capacity, and engagement in STEM learning.

Languages and Literacy Development

Live Lessons were delivered in partnership with other local authorities in Gaelic, French and Spanish to support professional learning and high-quality experiences for children. Over 90% of teachers surveyed reported increased pupil confidence in pronunciation and steady progress in language learning. Similarly, over 90% of teachers reported increased confidence in their own delivery and that their professional learning needs were met by this model. Gaelic had thirty-one teachers and 22 schools participating; French had 45 teachers across 26 schools; and Spanish had 7 teachers from 7 schools.

Gaelic Language and Languages 1+2

Two teachers took part in the national Gaelic Language in the Primary Schools course, one attended twilight sessions from Highland Council, and four enrolled in National 5 and Higher Gaelic courses through e-Sgoil. In partnership with Highland, seven Gaelic literacy twilights were delivered, with all GME practitioners attending at least two sessions. These were funded by the Gaelic Specific Grant, which will continue next session. Maeve McKinnon from Education Scotland delivered CLPL on Gaelic, Dyslexia and pedagogy and continues to support quality assurance and improvement through school visits. Nearly all schools received a self-evaluation toolkit, and all GME Head Teachers reported improvements in teaching, learning and environment. The National Standardised Assessment team delivered an inperson session on understanding and using national assessment data to inform next steps. Nearly all GME schools had a representative attend, and all verbally reported improved understanding of standardised assessments and increased confidence in using data.

Gaelic or French are delivered as L2 in schools. 46 schools delivered Gaelic as L2 or L3, with pupil numbers increasing from 2,121 in 2023-24 to 2,293 in 2024-25. Several schools also offer Spanish and British Sign Language as L3. The Gaelic Administrator in Furan supported five of seven GM settings this year, providing high-quality spoken Gaelic input, which correlates with increased pupil fluency and attainment. All GM pupils have access to online Mod tuition. Argyll & Bute also participated in inter-authority Gleans challenges, with many schools involved in the recent Seachdain na Gàidhlig challenge. A photo slideshow documented school participation which can be accessed here: [Seachdain na Gàidhlig 2025](#).

Language transition projects continued across the Islay & Jura, Oban, Lorne and the Isles and Cowal clusters. P7 pupils created Gaelic or French videos shared in a Google Classroom for teachers. Selected examples were used to create listening activities during transition visits and formed a body of evidence for moderation. This strengthened transition and staff understanding of language levels, while giving children an opportunity to apply their skills and celebrate their learning. Support from SCILT also included Arabic in three schools and Discovering China for one pupil. The British Sign Language Level 3 video course remains available on Glow, with plans to re-launch engagement via a training session from Sheila Lundberg.

Leadership and Professional Learning

The creation of a new Middle Leaders and Aspiring Middle Leaders programme, Support Staff Professional Learning Network and the refreshed Aspiring to Headship Programme has ensured that colleagues have the opportunity to develop their professional knowledge and understanding, increase their confidence within their role and access high quality relevant professional learning. The development of the Leadership Professional Learning Framework will provide increased leadership capacity in schools. The Framework ensures colleagues at each stage of their leadership journey access relevant professional learning which builds upon their prior knowledge and understanding. The Framework details progression through the various Leadership Programmes from Middle Leadership to Head Teachers and System Leaders.



What are we going to do now?

Improving Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA)

- Continue to develop the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment across all schools through the provision of high-quality CLPL.
- Continue to improve the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment in targeted schools through high-quality engagement and support with school leaders and teachers.
- Collaborative work with officers and managers to moderate approaches to observation of LTA to ensure consistency and coherence in the support being offered to schools and settings will take place.
- Improve the capacity of schools to implement the Learning, Teaching and Assessment/Moderation Cycle to ensure high-quality planned learning experiences, a varied range of evidence from planned assessments, and consistent understanding of assessment standards.
- Further develop staff leadership and agency at school level and improve the pace and sustainability of improvement in LTA through a collaborative, enquiry-led professional learning culture and collegiate activities.
- Increased use of dynamic assessment in conjunction with the Educational Psychology Service.
- Establish a cutting edge, technologically driven, digitally immersive classroom at Dunoon Grammar School to promote learning and wellbeing.
- Support professional development in the use of digital tools to support learning.

Language Learning and Development

- Further raise awareness of language resources through inclusion in HT meetings.
- A wide range of opportunities for language development for pupils and CLPL for staff will be offered.
- Support transition through Early Years to Primary transition for L2 Gaelic and French as a component to local transition projects.

Gaelic Education and Cultural Engagement

- Continue school support from the Gaelic Administrator in Furan, funded through Bòrd na Gàidhlig, to maintain current engagement levels with schools and ELCs.
- Continue to promote involvement and celebration of Gaelic language and culture, including local Mods and Gaelic Week.
- Continue collaboration with partners (Comunn na Gàidhlig, Fèis nan Gàidheal, e-Sgoil, Fèisgoil, Gaelic Language Learners consortium, Education Scotland) to support children's language development and teacher training.
- Increased focus on Gaelic attainment at secondary using data, dialogue with Education Scotland and Education Officer (Gaelic) support.
- Provide high-quality professional learning specific to GME staff and increase capacity to deliver Gaelic as L2/L3.

Early Years Leadership and Quality

- Continue to deliver the Pedagogical Leadership programme to cohorts 3 and 4 during session 2025-26.
- Collaborate with thought leaders on play as curriculum to support leadership of learning at Early Level.
- Continue to develop quality assurance and scrutiny processes.
- Support establishments in the development of context specific curriculum rationales.

Leadership and Management

- Pilot a self-improving schools' group to co-construct an authority framework document.
- Develop use of the support matrix to ensure appropriate deployment of central team resources to meet schools' support requirements.
- Create a suite of Professional Learning for Head Teachers and System Leaders.
- Refresh the Newly Appointed Head Teacher programme in line with local and national priorities.



Priority Mapping

National Improvement Framework 2025 Priorities	Argyll and Bute Council Priorities	Argyll and Bute Education Service Priorities	Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together
Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.	United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – ensuring that views of children and young people are considered in decision-making.	1.1 We will protect and promote Children's Rights through the promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity for all of our learners.	Best start for learners Ambitious learners Nurtured learners Connected learners Lifelong learners
Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.	- Explore ways to enhance Argyll and Bute's early learning and childcare offer to support employment and business needs of local families alongside its role in nurture and contribution to access to better life chances for young people. - Explore ways to enhance Argyll and Bute's early learning and childcare offer to support employment and business needs of local families alongside its role in nurture and contribution to access to better life chances for young people.	2.1 We will support improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing through the use of targeted approaches and understanding of learning and learners to enhance experiences in different contexts, which will support attainment and achievement across the four capacities.	Nurtured learners Connected learners
Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.	- Develop our school curriculums with the jobs of the future in mind, to build up a strong local skills base and help create more opportunities for young people to stay and grow in their own communities. - Enabling as many young people as possible go from school to positive destinations of all kinds.	3.1 We will address disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap by analysing data to inform strategic overview of attainment for disadvantaged groups across the Local Authority and allow effective, targeted interventions. 3.2 We will use a data and research informed approach to provide targeted support to establishments across the Authority.	Best start for learners Ambitious learners Nurtured learners Connected learners Lifelong learners
Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.	- Develop our school curriculums with the jobs of the future in mind, to build up a strong local skills base and help create more opportunities for young people to stay and grow in their own communities. - Enabling as many young people as possible go from school to positive destinations of all kinds. - Enable learners to take full advantage of emerging technology and to be ready for the 'jobs of the future' here in Argyll and Bute.	4.1 Through partnership working we will promote the development of skills, knowledge and understanding of learners to widen learning opportunities and career pathways for learners. 4.2 We will further enhance our partnership with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) to ensure all young people have the opportunity and successfully develop the skills for life and work required to attain sustained, positive destinations post-school.	Best start for learners Ambitious learners Lifelong learners
Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.	- Continue the programme of improvement in our schools so that they are a compelling choice for families, providing good educational attainment and supporting the wellbeing of young people. - Enable learners to take full advantage of emerging technology and to be ready for the 'jobs of the future' here in Argyll and Bute.	5.1: We will provide targeted support to schools to improve learning and teaching in order to improve outcomes for children and young people and develop systematic evaluation and sharing of high-quality materials and resources to support continuing professional development to support practitioners in addressing barriers and raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy for our children and young people. Education Service Strategic 5.2: We will track and monitor children and young people's Literacy and Numeracy attainment, build capacity of senior leaders and practitioners in order to further develop their skills in data analysis to inform improvement. We will increase the use and range of data to improve outcomes for all children and young people. 5.3: We will respond to and embrace educational reform in relation to approaches to inspection, curriculum development and qualifications.	Best start for learners Ambitious learners Nurtured learners Connected learners Lifelong learners

SECTION 4: Education Service Strategic Plan 2024-26

The Education Service Strategic Plan 2024–2026 outlines the anticipated outcomes and impacts aligned with the National Improvement Framework priorities. It clearly demonstrates how these align with both Argyll and Bute Council’s overarching priorities and the Education Service’s Vision and Strategy — ‘*Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together*’. This plan builds upon the progress achieved during session 2024–2025, setting out the key areas for ongoing improvement and detailing the strategic actions required to achieve meaningful and measurable outcomes.

The purpose of the strategic plan is to provide a clear and supportive framework to assist individual schools, early years settings, and wider services in shaping their own improvement priorities. It is not intended to dictate specific improvements or prescribe exact methods, but rather to offer guidance that can be adapted to local contexts. Each team within the Education Service will produce a more detailed internal plan that captures the specific improvement actions they will undertake, alongside the expected impact.

The table on page 35 illustrates how our strategic priorities align across the National Improvement Framework, Argyll and Bute Council Priorities, Education Service Priorities, and the five key ambitions outlined in *Our Children, Their Future – Thriving Together*.



NIF Priority 1: Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Education Service Strategic Priority 1.1: We will protect and promote Children’s Rights through the promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity for all of our learners.

Improvement Activity	Expected Outcome/Impact	Performance Measures/ Evidence of Impact
Professional Learning and Rights-Based Practice - Expand Early Years outdoor learning CLPL to include family learning within a place-based model, helping to extend Learning for Sustainability across local communities. - Deliver CLPL to build practitioner understanding of rights-based practice and increase the number of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings achieving their Bronze Rights Respecting Award. - Develop approaches and mechanisms to provide children and young people with meaningful opportunities to be empowered and actively shape their education. - Support establishments to co-construct curriculum design and rationale with stakeholders to reflect their unique contexts. Wellbeing, Rights, and Relationships - Continue to develop local authority guidance and approaches in line with recommendations from the BISSR and forthcoming Scottish Government documents, including the <i>Fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment</i> guidance. - Further develop The Rights Respecting Schools programme with a focus on embedding rights within learning and teaching. - Increase participation in TIE training over the next year to meet national expectations on LGBT Inclusive Education. - Further promote and embed UNCRC awareness across services and communities through the Keeping Our Eye on Rights Award, developed by young people in Argyll and Bute. - Increase engagement with the Young Carers Challenge to ensure universal understanding of statutory obligations and equitable access to support for all young carers across Argyll & Bute. - Work in collaboration with the project team on the new Tobermory Campus focussed on enhancing an improved learning environment to support improved attainment.	- A positive, inclusive, rights-based culture in all services, settings and schools where diversity is celebrated and social justice is realised. - A workforce and communities who are committed to the rights of children and young people. - Enhanced partnership working that is centred around the rights of the child and that leads to increased number of schools and settings achieving Rights Respecting status. - Increased number of schools and settings receiving national recognition for work on diversity including LGBTQ+ - Children and young people who are empowered and feel that their voices and opinions are listened to, valued and acted upon. - Approaches to Learning for Sustainability are embedded and staff are knowledgeable and confident in this area.	- Number of schools and settings with RRS status - Evaluation comments from professional learning opportunities - Questionnaire responses from thematic reviews, school reviews and external scrutiny - Number of schools and settings who have achieved accreditation and/or recognition for work related to diversity and/or social justice - School Improvement Plans - Standards and Quality Reports - School review findings/reports - HMIE inspection reports/national thematic visits - School self-evaluation evidence against key Q.Is - Social media analytics

• Celebrate inclusion, diversity, achievement and attainment through increased social media presence. • Engage with the national Educational Psychologists Anti-Racism training. Learning for Sustainability (LfS) • Continue to promote training opportunities, partnership support, and key resources to help all establishments develop the three aspects of Learning for Sustainability: outdoor learning, sustainability, and citizenship. • Early Years outdoor learning CLPL delivery will include family learning, within a place based model, to begin to build learning for sustainability across communities.		
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NIF Priority 2: Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing.

Education Service Strategic Priority 2.1: We will support improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing through the use of targeted approaches and understanding of learning and learners to enhance experiences in different contexts, which will support attainment and achievement across the four capacities.

Improvement Activity	Expected Outcome/Impact	Performance Measures/ Evidence of Impact
Early Years - Continue collaboration to improve multiagency understanding of GIRFEC processes and procedures. - Return ASN locality networks to a locality-based format aligned with the Single Point of Access (SPA) model developed by Educational Psychology colleagues. - Review distribution of resources to support a reduced reliance on individual services and strengthen the staged intervention process at stages 1 and 2. Curriculum and Secondary Sector - Continue curriculum development through access to resources and professional development opportunities. - Develop practitioner and senior leader networks to support on-going curriculum design to meet learner needs within each establishment's unique context. - Expand the virtual curriculum offer through collaboration across secondary schools and explore broader opportunities to develop this work with partners across Scotland. - Support all secondary schools to refine and refresh their curriculum, offering meaningful pathways and opportunities for all learners. - Strengthen partnerships with local businesses and community organisations to enhance curriculum breadth and relevance. - Ensure UKSPF funding is targeted toward measurable opportunities, with timely evidence gathering and reporting.	- An inclusive culture underpinned by the principles of GIRFEC which supports the health and wellbeing of all children and young people. - Trauma informed practices and nurturing approaches are embedded in order to ensure that children and young people are appropriately supported. - Approaches and systems that ensure identification and appropriate support for children and young people with additional support needs. - A curriculum which empowers and enables all children and young people to be successful, confident, responsible and effective in school, their work, their community and in the wider world and which supports them to meet their full potential. - An increase in the percentage of schools evaluated as 'good' or better for Q.I 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion. - Embedded practice which supports aspirations of The Promise with a focus on attainment and wider achievement for our care experienced children and young people.	- Uptake and evaluations for professional learning opportunities - Feedback and engagement data from programmes and training - MCR Pathways data: attendance, participation, confidence, wellness, retention rates and leaver destinations Attainment and achievement data for children and young people with additional support needs - Parent/carers feedback - Sampling of pastoral notes, CP files, child's plan's, CSPs, etc. - Attendance, exclusion, bullying, racist incident data from SEEMiS - HMIE Inspection reports - Authority, school and thematic review reports and evidence - Attainment and achievement data for CECYP - School Improvement Plans/Standards and Quality Reports - Pupil feedback and questionnaires - PAG group minutes - Youth Voice evidence - Data evidencing progress towards 'plus' stretch aim

Relationships, participation and rights

- Update our Anti-Bullying policy to align with national Respect For All guidance, supporting improved recording, monitoring, and local response to bullying incidents, alongside increased awareness of supporting resources.
- Address the recommendations for the national Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research report.
- Continue to develop the Addressing Non-Attendance (ANA) approach following insights from the Education Scotland Attendance Quality Improvement Programme.
- Maintain training and monitoring of the ADP School Support Service to ensure consistent access and approach across the authority.

Wellbeing, Inclusion, Equity and Achievement

- Strengthen strategic collaboration, capacity building and professional learning for nurture and inclusion.
- Integrate the attendance dashboard with the ANA framework for improved data insight and evidence-based decisions.
- Support remaining secondary schools to implement ANA fully and raise awareness in primary schools on early risk identification and intervention.
- Create a locality Place-based Model offering high-quality supports to schools, including professional learning to build capacity in universal and targeted approaches.
- Develop a support network for Specialist Provision settings to improve curriculum, pedagogy, environment, and resources for children with complex needs.
- Pilot a self-evaluation framework to support Specialist Provision and complex needs settings.
- Monitor the impact of the ADP School Support Service to ensure greater consistency of approach across the local authority.
- Further develop the gathering and use of health and wellbeing data.
- Continue to develop work on preventing Violence Against Women and Girls as an early adopter local authority.
- Expand engagement in Equally Safe at School and roll out Gender-Based Violence & Early Intervention training across primary and ELC settings.
- Align with the Scottish Government’s draft framework for improving education outcomes for CECYP.

• Expand the training approach for co-regulation and dysregulation. • Increased percentage of settings achieving the We Promise and Designated Manager training completion. • Address barriers to education through development of the SPA and deployment of Family Liaison Officers. • Continue to deliver trauma training with multiagency partners. • Continue to lead the implementation of Our Children, Their Nurturing Education across settings and develop capacity to support ongoing implementation. • Continue to develop and implement the Single Point of Access.		
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NIF Priority 3: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

Education Service Strategic Priority 3.1: We will address disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap by analysing data to inform a strategic overview of attainment for disadvantaged groups across the Local Authority and allow effective, targeted interventions.

Education Service Strategic Priority 3.2: We will use a data and research informed approach to provide targeted support to establishments across the Authority.

Improvement Activity	Expected Outcome/Impact	Performance Measures/ Evidence of Impact
Curriculum - Continue to expand use of Quality Improvement (QI) writing including supporting new and existing cohorts, developing ongoing training for programme sustainability. - Support professional learning in early level literacy in partnership with Early Years. - Further develop professional learning opportunities to raise attainment in all aspects of literacy using data at authority level to identify gaps. - Engage with Learning to Read led by Education Scotland for early level professional learning. - Support further engagement by Secondary BGE with Counting on Excellence to raise awareness of the framework at BGE across the system and use of the framework to strengthen Primary to Secondary transition. - Continue to develop and offer professional learning through CLPL sessions aligned to the maths and numeracy framework and continued creation of high-quality resources to support key numeracy pedagogies. - Continue to support schools with access to STEM resources, professional learning and experiences to enhance curricular approaches. - Support parental engagement in literacy and numeracy through the development of high-quality resources. Early Years - Early Years Excellence and Equity leads will continue to deliver and track impact of targeted Early Level literacy and numeracy interventions. - Continue to monitor feedback from community 'buggy walk' session to track impact in terms of early intervention support for speech and language	- Improved literacy and numeracy attainment throughout the broad general education (BGE). - Improved attainment in the senior phase. - An improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people. - An increase in the percentage of schools evaluated as 'good' or better for Q.I 3.2 raising attainment and achievement. - An increase in activities which support prevention and early intervention, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. - An improvement in the percentage of children reaching all of the expected developmental milestones on entry to primary school. - Increased capacity of staff at all levels to analyse data and use a range of data to inform improvement at school/classroom level. - Robust systems and data evidencing progress of each learner through the BGE and beyond.	- Attainment data/progress against meeting core and plus stretch aims - Attainment data for BGE and Senior Phase learners including those who are care experienced, have additional support needs or are in key equity groups - Developmental milestones data - Uptake and evaluations for professional learning opportunities - Parent/carer feedback - Sampling of child's plans, CSPs, etc. - Attendance, exclusion, data from SEEMiS. HMIE Inspection reports - Authority school and thematic review reports and evidence. - School Improvement Plans/Standards and - Quality Reports - Pupil feedback and questionnaires

development and dental health and begin to introduce family learning sessions in relation to toilet training. • Play on Pedals will be introduced into all mainland and island large towns, and we will continue to track the impact upon gross motor development. Attainment and Equity • Continue to focus on raising attainment across the BGE and Senior Phase though challenge and support for schools, ensuring a sharp focus on those in key equity groups to further reduce the poverty related attainment gap. • Continue to support secondary schools to develop approaches to raising attainment through early intervention, ensuring that all schools have robust approaches to interventions in place and that these are systematically tracked to ensure impact. • Continue to target SEF funding to areas where improvement is required with a focus on learning, teaching and assessment, literacy and numeracy support, support for schools around data and performance, specific support around PEF planning and reporting. • Continue to ensure that schools are utilising PEF appropriately by planning interventions and approaches that are informed by their data, are evidence based and have clear measures of success identified at the outset. • Challenge and support teachers and school leaders to become increasingly data literate and confident in using a range of data to identify and target gaps to improve outcomes for all learners. • Expand our MCR Pathways programme to reach and support an increased number of young people. • Support establishments development and use of STEM through resources, updates, and CPD opportunities via the ABSTEM website • Continue to build networks with partner organisations to support STEM in schools and establishments. • Work towards implementing the Service strategy for equitable access to digital technology across schools.		
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NIF Priority 4: Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

Education Service Strategic Priority 4.1: Through partnership working we will promote the development of skills, knowledge and understanding of learners to widen learning opportunities and career pathways for learners.

Education Service Strategic Priority 4.2: We will further enhance our partnership with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) to ensure all young people have the opportunity and successfully develop the skills for life and work required to attain sustained, positive destinations post-school.

Improvement Activity	Expected Outcome/Impact	Performance Measures/ Evidence of Impact
Improving Sustained School Leaver Destinations and Participation - Secure an improvement in sustained school leaver destinations by developing and improving our interventions for young people at risk of a negative destination, or who have not been able to sustain a positive post-school destination. - Increase school leaver positive destinations through targeted partnership interventions by secondary schools and Skills Development Scotland for young people not sustaining a positive post-school destination. - Continue to expand the MCR Pathways programme across secondary establishments. - Further develop flexible learning plans to support vulnerable young people to access education and work toward positive destinations. Developing Employability Skills and Work-Based Learning - Improve the availability and bespoke nature of work placements for all young people who require them through increasing the number and quality of school-employer partnerships. - Develop and refine our approaches to work-based vocational learning Flexible Learning Plans as targeted interventions for young people at risk of disengagement from education. - Increase the range of personalised pathways open to young people and further increase the availability in all Secondary	- A culture of ambition and achievement in every school. - An improvement in sustained school leaver destinations. - Increased range of partnerships with local businesses and community organisations leading to enhanced opportunities for learners. - An increase in the number of school leavers with well-developed employability skills. - Increased opportunities for children and young people to recognise and celebrate personal achievements. - An increase in the confidence and ability of children and young people to discuss skills and career pathways. - Increased vocational opportunities and pathways for learners within our secondary schools. - Increased capacity of staff and children/young people to employ digital approaches which are current and enhance learning and to deliver high quality STEM experiences.	- Initial and sustained school leaver data Annual Participation Measure Data Attainment data/progress against meeting core and plus stretch aims. - DYW team tracking data - School based wider achievement and participation data. - School curriculum structures and rationales. - Uptake and evaluations for professional learning opportunities Parent/carer feedback - Attendance, exclusion, bullying, racist incident data from SEEMiS. - HMIE Inspection reports - Authority school and thematic review reports and evidence. - School Improvement Plans/Standards and - Quality Reports - Pupil feedback and questionnaire responses. - Feedback from industry and business partners. - Awards/recognitions

schools of accredited wider experience qualifications through partnership with Community Learning. • Review and refine approaches to partnership working with college in order to ensure that arrangements and provision meet the needs of our learners and lead to positive outcomes. • Explore opportunities to expand the range of networked courses delivered across Secondary schools. Curriculum • Strengthen partnership working to enhance the curriculum offer in schools. • Embed STEM approaches and link with partnership organisations. • Offer STEM opportunities and experiences for schools in coding and future job market skills. • Continue to support schools with access to STEM resources, professional learning and experiences to enhance curricular approaches. • Continue to offer a range of professional development for teachers on digital skills and programmes. • Establish STEM hubs in North and South Argyll and Bute to provide in person and remote STEM opportunities for school-age learners and teachers. Early Years Workforce Development • Further develop training opportunities to build upon current success in relation to growing our own practitioners.	• Curricula are inclusive, celebrate diversity, and are decolonised to challenge stereotypes. • Increased opportunities for young people to develop knowledge, understanding and the skills for life and active participation in a global multicultural society and Scotland's place in it.	
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NIF Priority 5: Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.1: We will provide targeted support to schools to improve learning and teaching in order to improve outcomes for children and young people and develop systematic evaluation and sharing of high-quality materials and resources to support continuing professional development to support practitioners in addressing barriers and raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy for our children and young people.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.2: We will track and monitor children and young people's Literacy and Numeracy attainment, build capacity of senior leaders and practitioners in order to further develop their skills in data analysis to inform improvement. We will increase the use and range of data to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

Education Service Strategic Priority 5.3: We will respond to and embrace educational reform in relation to approaches to inspection, curriculum development and qualifications.

Improvement Activity	Expected Outcome/Impact	Performance Measures/ Evidence of Impact
Improving Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) - Continue to develop the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment across all schools through the provision of high-quality CLPL. - Continue to improve the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment in targeted schools through high-quality engagement and support with school leaders and teachers. - Collaborative work with officers and managers to moderate approaches to observation of LTA to ensure consistency and coherence in the support being offered to schools and settings will take place. - Improve the capacity of schools to implement the Learning, Teaching and Assessment/Moderation Cycle to ensure high-quality planned learning experiences, a varied range of evidence from planned assessments, and consistent understanding of assessment standards. - Further develop staff leadership and agency at school level and improve the pace and sustainability of improvement in LTA through a collaborative, enquiry-led professional learning culture and collegiate activities. - Increased use of dynamic assessment in conjunction with the Educational Psychology Service.	- Improved attainment in the Senior Phase particularly in Literacy and Numeracy. - Improvement in the percentage of school leavers achieving level 5 and level 6 Literacy and Numeracy. - Improved Literacy and Numeracy attainment throughout the broad general education (BGE) including application of core skills across the curriculum. - Increased capacity of senior leaders and teaching staff to analyse data and use a range of data to inform improvement at school/classroom level. - An increase in the number of schools being graded as 'good' or better for Q.I 2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment and 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement. - Staff are skilled in the planning, delivery and assessment of high-quality learning experiences in literacy and numeracy which are differentiated and ensure equity.	- Attainment data/progress against meeting core and plus stretch aims. - Literacy and Numeracy data for BGE and Senior Phase learners including those who are care experienced, have additional support needs or are in key equity groups School attainment papers and meetings. - Developmental milestones data. - Uptake and evaluations for professional learning opportunities - Sampling of child's plans, CSPs etc - HMIE Inspection reports - Authority school and thematic review reports and evidence. - School Improvement Plans/Standards and - Quality Reports - School Review reports - Learning and Teaching observations - Stakeholder feedback and questionnaires - National Gaelic Plan - Argyll and Bute Gaelic Plan

• Establish a cutting edge, technologically driven, digitally immersive classroom at Dunoon Grammar School to promote learning and wellbeing. • Support professional development in the use of digital tools to support learning. Language Learning and Development • Further raise awareness of language resources through inclusion in HT meetings. • A wide range of opportunities for language development for pupils and CLPL for staff will be offered. • Support transition through Early Years to Primary transition for L2 Gaelic and French as a component to local transition projects. Gaelic Education and Cultural Engagement • Continue school support from the Gaelic Administrator in Furan, funded through Bòrd na Gàidhlig, to maintain current engagement levels with schools and ELCs. • Continue to promote involvement and celebration of Gaelic language and culture, including local Mods and Gaelic Week. • Continue collaboration with partners (Comunn na Gàidhlig, Fèis nan Gàidheal, e-Sgoil, Fèisgoil, Gaelic Language Learners consortium, Education Scotland) to support children's language development and teacher training. • Increased focus on Gaelic attainment at secondary using data, dialogue with Education Scotland and Education Officer (Gaelic) support. • Provide high-quality professional learning specific to GME staff and increase capacity to deliver Gaelic as L2/L3. Early Years Leadership and Quality • Continue to deliver the Pedagogical Leadership programme to cohorts 3 and 4 during session 2025/26. • Collaborate with thought leaders on play as curriculum to support leadership of learning at Early Level.		
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• Continue to develop quality assurance and scrutiny processes. • Support establishments in the development of context specific curriculum rationales. Leadership and Management • Pilot a self-improving schools’ group to co-construct an authority framework document. • Develop use of the support matrix to ensure appropriate deployment of central team resources to meet schools’ support requirements. • Create a suite of Professional Learning for Head Teachers and System Leaders. • Refresh the Newly Appointed Head Teacher programme in line with local and national priorities.		
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APPENDIX 1: Provisional 3 Year Stretch aims 2023-2026

In partnership with our Attainment Advisor and in consultation with Head Teachers, we have devised stretch aims for 2025/26 and interim stretch aims for 2023/24 and 2024/25 as detailed below. We will build on progress made this year by ensuring a relentless focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap whilst raising the bar for all. This will include universal and targeted support for schools based on their attainment data with the aim of building staff capacity at all levels.

Table 1 Literacy (P 1/4/7 Combined) Stretch Aim

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Stretch aim 22/23	68.4%	60%	81.5%	21.5pp
Confirmed ACEL data 2022/23	68%	68%	81%	13pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	71%	70%	81%	11pp
Confirmed ACEL data 2023/24	72%	68%	83%	15pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2024/25	73.5%	72.5%	83%	10.5pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025-26	76%	75%	85%	10pp

Table 2 Numeracy (P 1/4/7 Combined) Stretch Aim

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Stretch aim 22/23	69%	58%	87%	29pp
Confirmed ACEL data 2022/23	76.19%	76%	90%	14pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	78%	73%	89.5%	16.5pp
Confirmed ACEL data 2023/24	80%	73%	88%	15pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2024/25	80.5%	75.5%	90.25%	14.75pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025-26	83%	78%	91%	13pp

Table 3 – School Leavers with 1 or more pass at ALL SCQF Level 5

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Leavers Cohort 2021-22	90.9%	83.6%	98.0%	14.4pp
Leavers Cohort 2022-23	89.1%	80.0%	96.4%	16.4pp
Stretch Aims 2023/24	91.5%	85%	98.5%	13.5pp
Leavers Cohort 2023-24	85.7%	81.7%	95.3%	13.6pp
Interim Stretch Aim 2024/25	92.25%	87%	99.25%	12.25pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	93%	89%	100%	11pp

Table 4 – School Leavers with 1 or more pass at ALL SCQF Level 6

	Overall	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q5	GAP (Q1-Q5)
Leavers Cohort 2021-22	66.0%	54.1%	82.4%	28.3pp
Leavers Cohort 2022-23	62.6%	38.8%	85.7%	46.9pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	66.5%	57.0%	84.0%	27.0pp
Leavers Cohort 2023-24	66.7%	47.9%	90.6%	42.7pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2024/25	67.75%	60%	86.5%	26.5pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	72%	64%	89%	25pp

Table 5 – Health and Wellbeing – Attendance in Primary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered

	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Confirmed Data 2023	92.71%	88.86%	93.43%	4.57pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	93.5%	89.25%	93.5%	4.25pp
Confirmed Data 2024	93%	89.6%	93.6%	4pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2024/25	93.7%	90.25%	94.25%	4pp
Data Pick Up (April 2025)	93.8%	90.5%	94.4%	4pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	94.5%	91%	94.5%	3.5pp

Table 6 – Health and Wellbeing – Attendance in Secondary - Free School Meal registered and Non Free School Meal Registered

	Overall	FSM registered	Non FSM registered	GAP (FSM/non FSM)
Confirmed Data 2023	88.33%	81.24%	89.46%	8.23pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	90%	82%	89.5%	7.5pp
Confirmed Data 2024	87.4%	82.4%	88.3%	5.9pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2024/25	89.7%	83.5%	90.75%	7.25pp
Data Pick Up (April 2025)	87.2%	81.7%	88.4%	6.7pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	92%	85%	92%	7pp

Table 7 – Argyll and Bute – Our Children, Their Nurturing Education

	Overall
Confirmed Data (June 2023)	64.45% (N.B 2023 Stretch Aim = 60%)
Interim Stretch Aim 2023/24	64%
Confirmed Data (June 2024)	66.67%
Interim Stretch Aim 2024/25	67%
Confirmed Data (June 2025)	69.19%
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	70%

Table 8 - Participation Measure - 16-19 year olds in Education, Training and Employment

	Overall	Q1	Q5	Gap (Q1 – Q5)
Confirmed SDS Data 2021-22	93.9%	89.1%	95.5%	6.4pp
Confirmed SDS Data 2022-23	94.4%	88.4%	97.8%	9.4pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2023/24	94%	89.5%	96%	6.5pp
Confirmed SDS Data 2023-24	94.3%	91.5%	97.1%	5.6pp
Interim Stretch Aims 2024/25	94.25%	91%	96.5%	5.5pp
Final Stretch Aim 2025/26	95%	92.5%	97%	4.5pp