

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

SOCIAL JUSTICE EVALUATION & STRATEGY 2026-29



EAST RENFREWSHIRE
A PLACE TO
GROW



Introduction

This strategy builds on the progress made through the Education Department's first Social Justice Strategy (2023–26). It should be read alongside Beyond Equity: A Framework for Social Justice in East Renfrewshire. Our framework and strategy take account of the need to meaningfully address issues of **recognition**, **representation** and **redistribution** in order to improve social justice. This means we proactively work to develop children and young people's social and cultural capital alongside economic capital, to ensure all learners can get the best from their education experiences now as well as improve their life chances in the longer term.

The Scottish education system already has in place well-developed mechanisms for **redistribution** of resources to promote socially just outcomes, for example through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), free school meals, and education maintenance allowance to name a few examples.

However, redistribution alone is unlikely to have a lasting impact on inequity: in order to improve outcomes we must also focus on equality of **recognition** – the ways in which we acknowledge, respect and include all people, cultures and identities; and **representation** – the extent to which all people can equally engage with services and participate in decision making.

Use of Resources: We support and empower schools to use resources to deliver activities, interventions and experiences that will improve equity in education outcomes.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment: We implement culturally responsive Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices that reflect the experiences and perspectives of our pupils and reduce barriers to learning and attainment.

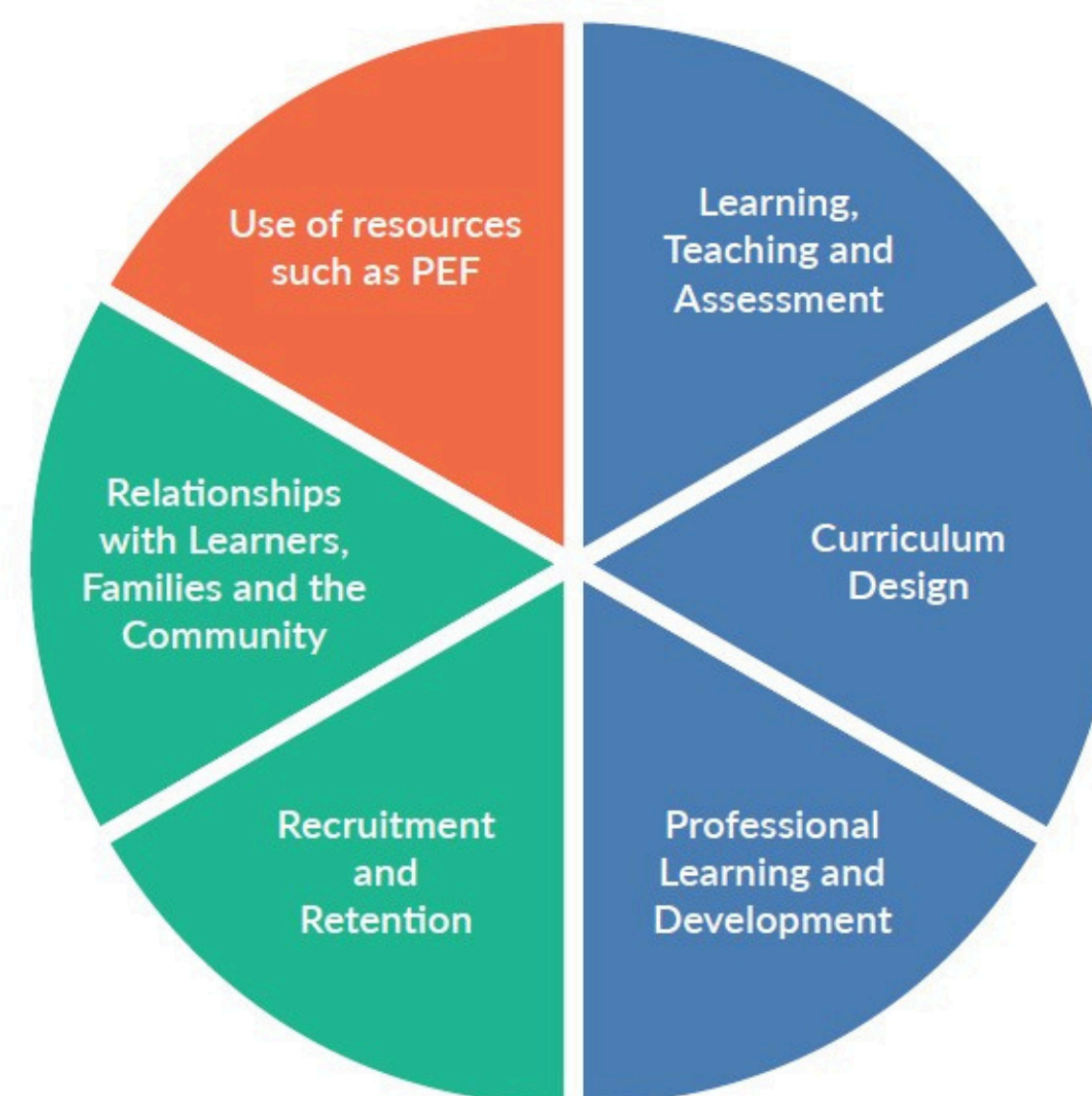
Curriculum Design: All children and young people see positive representations of themselves and diverse others in what they read, see, and hear. The curriculum recognises and reflects the diversity of society and takes account of global perspectives.

Professional Learning and Development: As educators we are able to recognise our own cultural identities. We work proactively to understand our own bias and develop cultural competence, continually updating our practice to meet all learners' needs.

Recruitment and Retention: We are improving staff diversity to better represent and support the children and young people we serve.

Relationships with Learners, Families and the Community: We promote family and community partnerships that value and involve all children and young people, parents and partners, and we work together to develop a socially just climate.

Our six levers for improving social justice in education in East Renfrewshire schools and centres are:



During session 2025–2026 we evaluated the impact of the 2023–26 Social Justice Strategy by:

- analysing of a wide range of data and intelligence including staff surveys, evaluations of professional learning, attainment data, and information gathered through improvement visits by education officers
- analysing of school and centre improvement plans to help us understand what aspects of equality and social justice were being prioritised across schools and centres
- meeting with groups of children and young people, parents, teachers, head teachers, wider school staff and centrally based education officers to hear people's views about what had gone well in improving social justice from 2023–26, and what they thought we should focus on next.

Section 1 highlights key findings from our self-evaluation of the 2023–26 strategy, linked to each priority area in the strategy. **Section 2** outlines our new strategy for 2026–2029, taking account of the findings outlined in Section 1.

SECTION 1: HOW ARE WE DOING? HOW DO WE KNOW?

We said we would:

- Implement all aspects of UNCRC to improve representation of all children in decision making
- Update and improve policies on racism and prejudice-based bullying
- Support and challenge schools to adopt collaborative self-evaluation and consultation approaches to identify local barriers to stakeholder involvement and address these
- Implement actions in the PIE Strategy focused on increasing representation of all parents and families in the life and work of the school.

Relationships with Learners, Families and the Community: We promote family and community partnerships that value and involve all children and young people, parents and partners, and we work together to develop a socially just climate.

Relationships
with Learners,
Families and the
Community

What children and young people told us

Feedback from focus groups of learners indicated they felt included and well supported at school. They valued the many opportunities they described to make their voice heard through various systems for sharing their views, including through Rights Respecting Schools work. They spoke positively about schools' ongoing work to increase the visibility of cultural diversity at school, and they felt that peer support and pupil champion initiatives were particularly helpful in tackling discrimination.

Learners highlighted the following strengths:

- Support with practical needs to help them be ready to learn such as food, materials and toiletries
- Working to tackle gender stereotypes in curricular areas such as sciences and computing
- Increasing the visibility of cultural diversity at school through events like culture days
- Peer support and pupil champion initiatives, which are supporting pupils facing issues such as gender-based violence and mental health challenges.

They suggested the following areas where they would like to see further improvement:

- More inclusive texts and themes in some subjects
- PSHE time could be used more effectively
- Better accessibility across all buildings for people with specific accessibility needs
- More work to reduce the cost of the school day.

The Education Department shares questionnaires with children and young people annually to help understand their views on important aspects of their experience at school. The survey questions below are closely connected to the aims of the Social Justice Strategy 2023-26. The table shows the proportions of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement in questionnaires from 2022-2025.

The positive trend seen across the above questions over the three-year period covered by the 2023-26 strategy, helps us to know that the work being done by schools, centres and the Education Department is having a positive impact on how children and young people experience equality, fairness and rights in education settings.

Question	ALL PUPILS		
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
I feel safe when I am at school	88%	89%	93%
I have someone in my school I can speak to if I am upset or worried about something	84%	86%	90%
My school helps me understand my rights	87%	88%	92%
My school helps me to understand and respect other people	90%	92%	96%
My school listens to my views	74%	79%	82%
I feel I belong in my school community.	85%	88%	90%

What parents told us

We met with parent representatives to hear their views about our progress and next steps. Parents told us that:

- They had seen noticeable improvements in how schools engage with families, including those who are under-represented
- They felt a commitment to social justice through their everyday experiences of the establishments their children attended
- Their children feel heard at school
- As parents they feel part of a community at the school/nursery.

Parents suggested the following next steps:

- Continue to focus on positive destinations for all young people
- Consider how to provide more support for children with additional support needs in mainstream schools and settings
- Continue to provide support for teaching staff to meet all learners’ needs
- Important life skills should continue to be included in the curriculum to ensure equity e.g. swimming, cycling.

Discussions during planned Excellence and Equity visits to schools during autumn 2025 showed that schools were working to involve families from under-represented groups increasingly in the life and work of the school, especially those from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds; however, this also continues to be an area where further improvement can be achieved.

‘Actions and decisions affecting children are rooted in, reviewed and resolved through rights. Children, young people and adults collaborate to develop and maintain a school community based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation; this includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners and promotes wellbeing. Children have been keen to find out more about diversity and equality in action and through topics such as Inspirational People and Black Lives Matter. This is supporting their learning about social justice.’ Rights Respecting Schools Report, St Mark’s Primary School

Next steps:

- Further develop our approaches to gathering and using qualitative data and intelligence about equity and social justice to understand and support children, young people and the school community.
- Implement actions in the PIE Strategy focused on increasing representation of all parents and families in the life and work of every establishment.
- Work in partnership with the Youth Rights Association to ensure children and young people continue to shape delivery of the strategy.

Professional Learning and Development: As educators we are able to recognise our own cultural identities. We work proactively to understand our own bias and develop cultural competence, continually updating our practice to meet all learners' needs.

Professional
Learning and
Development

A comprehensive programme of professional learning was designed and delivered from 2023-26 to support schools to improve equality, equity and social justice. School and centre Equalities Coordinators played an important role in helping to identify challenges faced by each school community and next steps in supporting staff through professional learning. Some key priorities were:

- Supporting bilingual learners and learners with English as an Additional Language
- Reducing the cost of the school day
- Using data to improve social justice
- Anti-racism
- Culturally responsive practice
- Tackling Violence against Women and Girls
- LGBT inclusive practice.

We said we would:

- Provide professional learning opportunities to deepen understanding of social justice issues
- Provide professional learning opportunities to increase knowledge and skills in:
 - planning curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment to recognise, value and include diverse identities
 - supporting bilingual learners
 - anti-racist education
 - LGBT inclusive education.
- Share effective practice across sectors and establishments.

In the primary and ELC sectors, the proportion of schools reporting that the majority of staff had engaged in professional learning on The Circle increased from 3% in October 2023 to 95.8% in May 2025.

In the secondary sector, the proportion of schools reporting that the majority of teaching staff had engaged in professional learning about LGBT inclusive practice increased from 57.1% in October 2023 to 85.7% in May 2025. The proportion reporting that over half of teaching staff had engaged in professional learning about anti-racism and/or culturally responsive practice, increased from 28.6% to 42.9%.



What staff told us

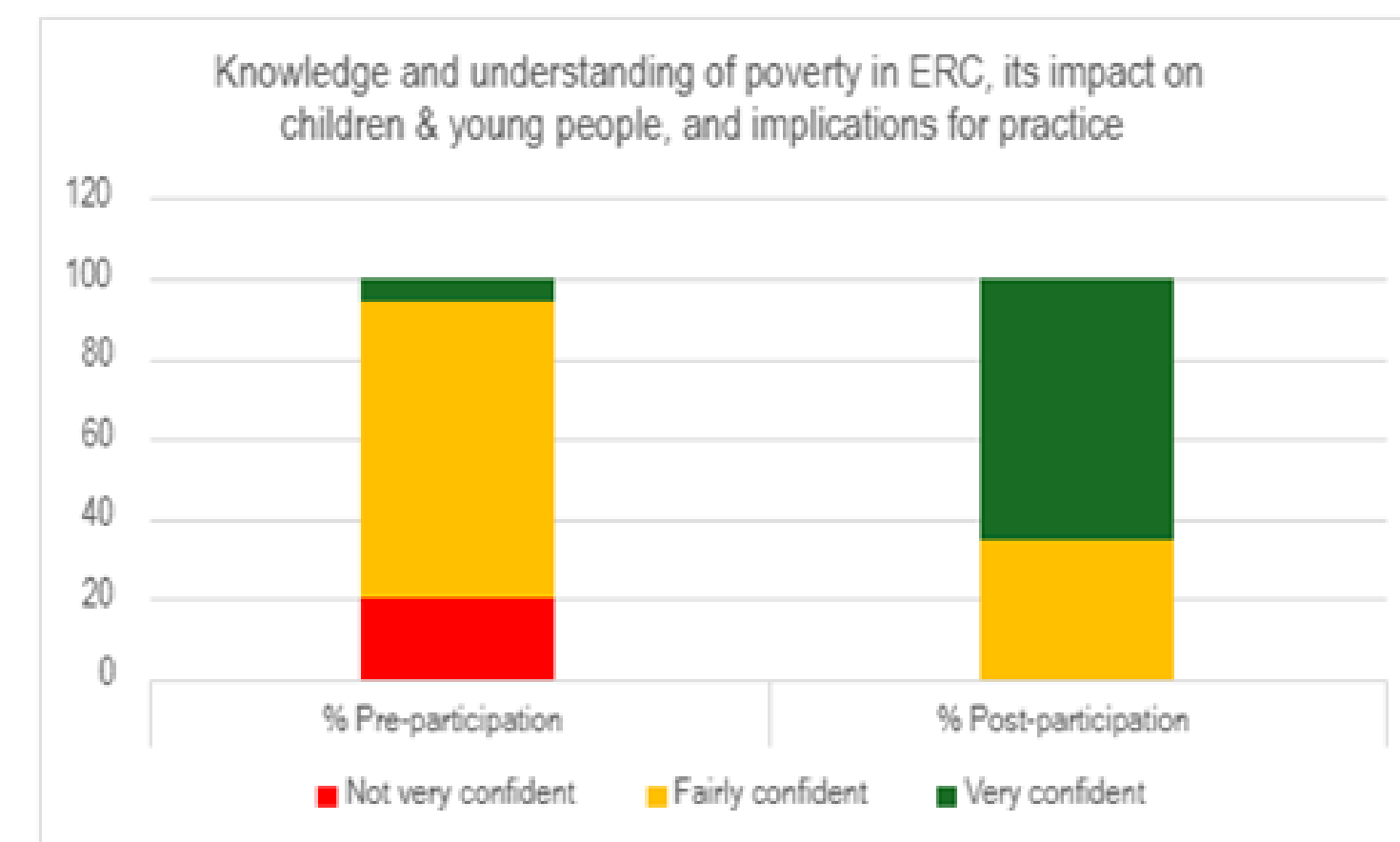
We held discussion groups and workshops to hear the views of a wide range of staff who work in education establishments, including teachers and practitioners from all sectors; school and centre Equalities Coordinators; head teachers and heads of centre; and local government staff such as school business support and office staff. Through these discussions staff noted wide-ranging positive impacts of professional learning about social justice, which has supported their thinking and practice around equity issues.

Areas of progress noted by staff included:

- Greater understanding amongst staff teams of poverty and its impact on children and young people's learning
- Improvements in how well we analyse and use data such as demographic information to improve learners' outcomes
- Improvements in children's rights awareness and family-centred approaches
- Improvements in the engagement and involvement of a wider range of parents
- Positive developments in the curriculum, learning and teaching that are creating more opportunities for child-led learning and improved relevance to local contexts.

Areas highlighted where further improvement could be made included:

- Attainment of children and young people experiencing disadvantage
- More bilingual teachers
- More support for children and young people with additional support needs
- More professional learning opportunities for staff in early years settings
- More professional learning on current issues such as online hate and misogyny.



Participant evaluations: Everyday Equity

We asked all Head Teachers and Heads of Centre: **Where have you seen improvements in social justice?** A representative sample of comments is shared below.

'Curriculum representing all families within the environment – books, home areas, songs/stories in own language.'

'Staff confidence in building relationships and asking important questions is growing.'

'Staff recognise the value and importance of professional learning around themes of equity and social justice. This is feeding into awareness and practice.'

'Decolonisation of the curriculum is gradually improving.'

'Staff have a much more detailed knowledge of class and school demographics and take this into account when planning learning and teaching.'

'Professional knowledge and skills are leading to real improvement.'

We also asked all Head Teachers and Heads of Centre: **Where do you see a need for further improvement?**

'Build upon the representation of families e.g. in parent council, parent association.'

'Considering the experience of our care experienced children and young people – equity and achievement.'

'There is a real opportunity to look at the curriculum through an equity lens in the Curriculum Improvement Cycle. We need to make sure it is representative of all our young people.'

'Decolonising the curriculum – all equity lenses being represented.'

'Continue to share good practice through quads.'

'Continue to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap.'

Next steps:

- Continue to provide high quality professional learning opportunities to deepen professional understanding of social justice issues as appropriate to each school and centre.
- Support and challenge all schools and centres to apply a social justice lens to the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.
- Continue to use meaningful learning networks to share effective practice in advancing social justice across sectors and establishments.

Curriculum Design: All children and young people see positive representations of themselves and diverse others in what they read, see, and hear. The curriculum recognises and reflects the diversity of society and takes account of global perspectives.

Curriculum Design

We said we would:

- Implement actions in the DYW Action Plan focused on improving equity
- Provide professional learning opportunities to increase knowledge and skills in planning curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment to recognise, value and include diverse identities.

At planned Excellence through Equity visits, we asked senior leaders in all schools to tell us how they were using the design of the curriculum to improve social justice. Overall across all schools we found the following strengths:

- Most schools have begun to reflect on their curriculum offer in terms of diversity, inclusion and social justice
- Project-based learning, enquiry-based approaches and pupil-led pathways are increasingly common across all sectors
- All sectors are embedding equity and social justice into their curriculum ethos and daily practice
- All schools are increasingly aware of demographic changes (e.g. ethnicity, SIMD, EAL, ASN) and schools are increasingly adapting their curriculum on an ongoing basis to reflect these changes
- Special sector services provide a highly flexible curriculum designed around complex needs.

Senior leaders also highlighted a need for further, ongoing design changes to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all learners, especially those exceeding expectations or with additional support needs.

Everyday Equity

The Quality Improvement team worked in partnership with a small group of head teachers to develop a three-day programme of in-depth professional learning for middle leaders focused on leadership for social justice. The programme foregrounded practical, evidence-based ways to improve equity through the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment by focusing on ‘belief, design and action’.



84 middle leaders from primary, secondary, special sector and central teams took part across three cohorts of the programme from February 2025 to May 2026. The programme supported middle leaders to:

- develop a deep understanding of a range of equity issues impacting children and young people in East Renfrewshire
- use practical, research-informed strategies to maximise the positive impact of education on children and young people experiencing disadvantage
- further develop confidence in leading for social justice in their own establishments
- mitigate the negative impact of poverty on pupil achievement.

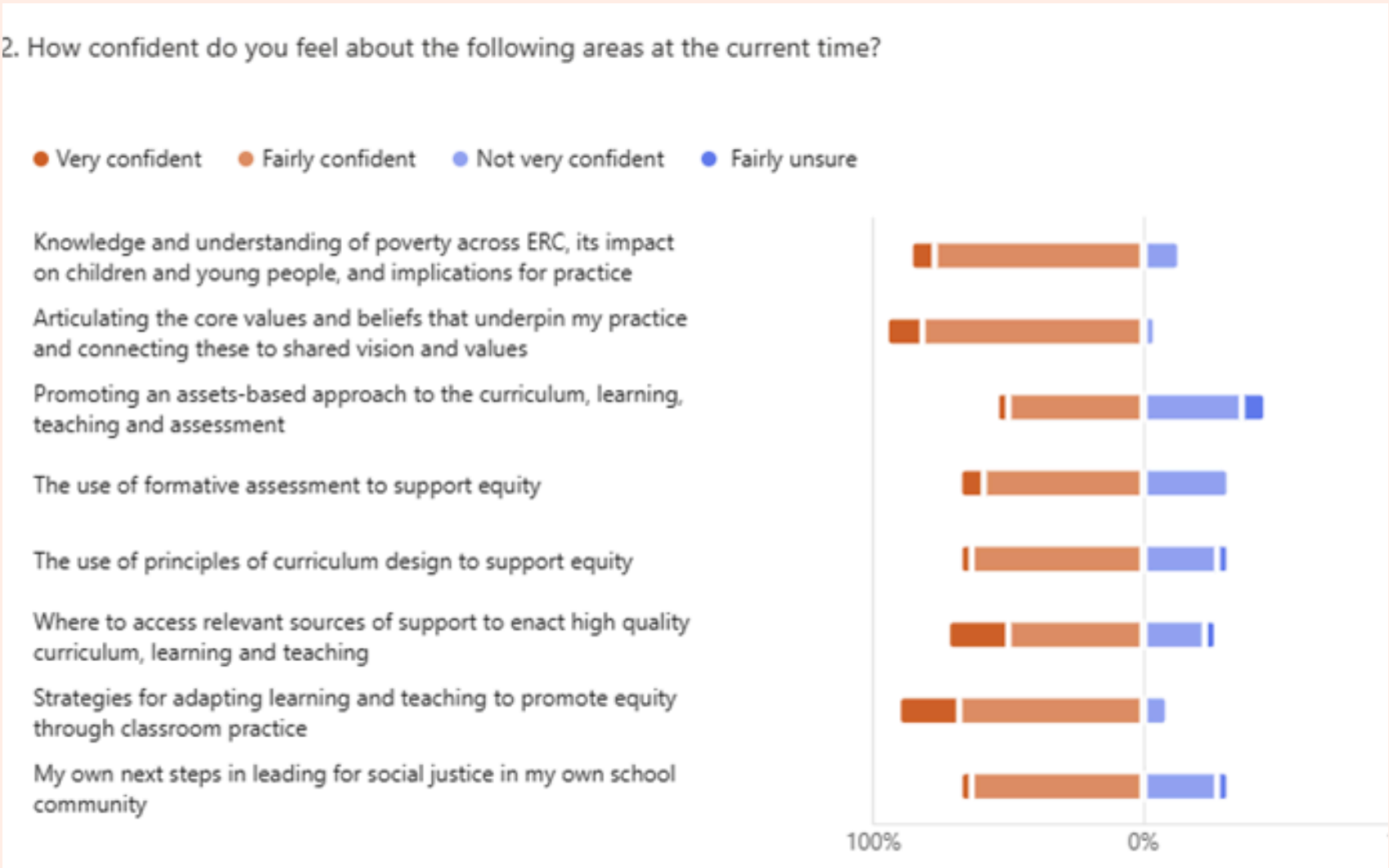
All cohorts evaluated the impact of the programme very highly for its impact on practice. Participants also expressed a desire for further networked opportunities to share practice with other participants across cohorts, so that they could continue to learn and work collaboratively to improve social justice.



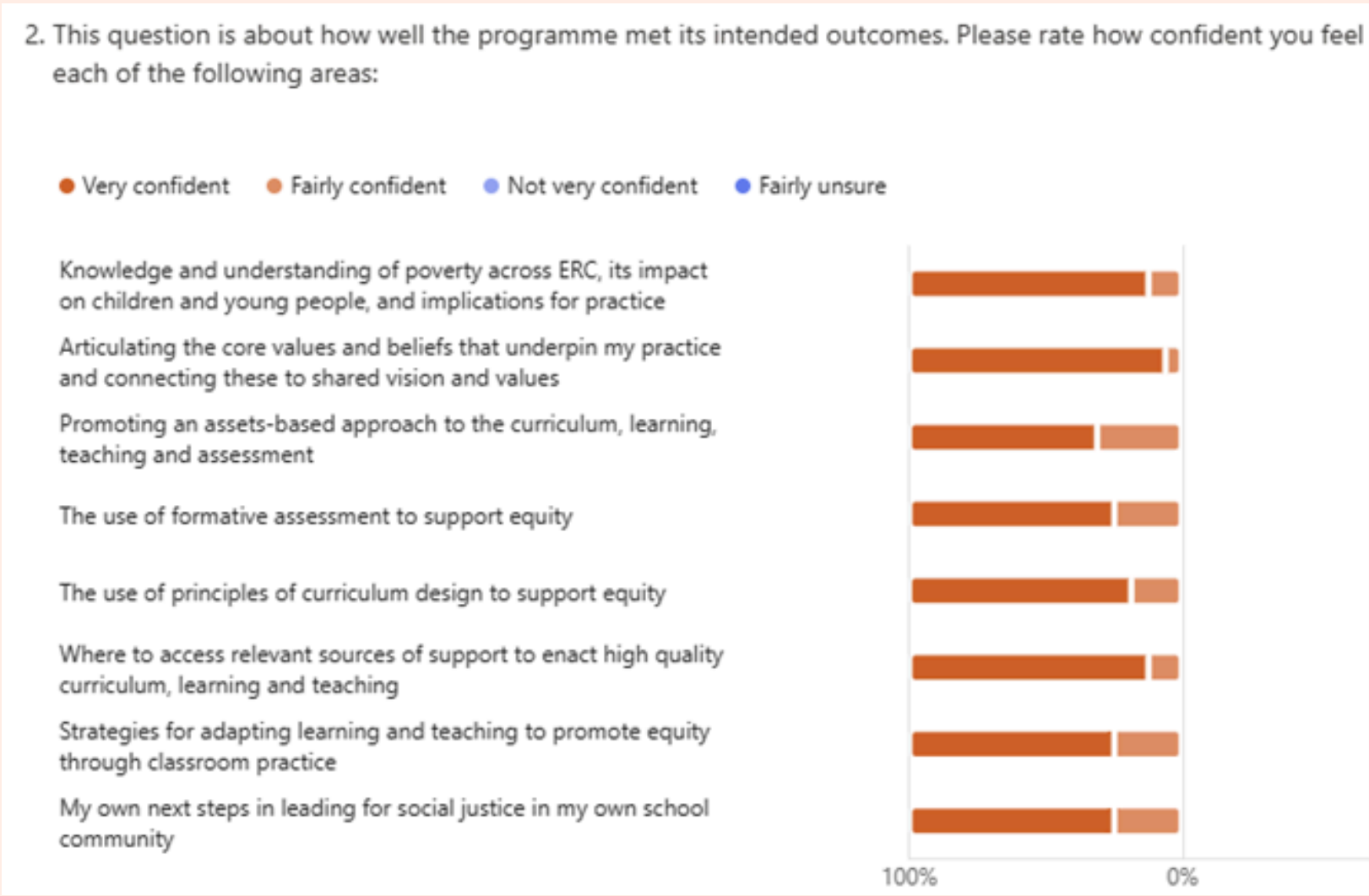
‘The session on pedagogy for equity was very impactful and has influenced my daily practice since.’
‘I plan to use what I have learned over the 3 days to support professional learning in the school and family centre.’

Participants, Everyday Equity

100% of participants agreed with the statement, I expect the programme to influence my practice (85.7% strongly agree/14.3% agree)



Participant evaluations: Everyday Equity PRE-PARTICIPATION

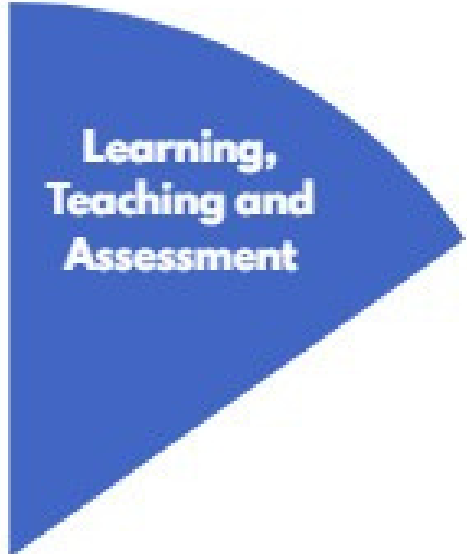


Participant evaluations: Everyday Equity POST-PARTICIPATION

98% of participants agreed with the statement, I expect the programme to influence the practice of others in my establishment (79.6% strongly agree/18.4% agree, 2% neutral)

Next steps:

- Provide support and challenge for schools and centres to further develop the design of the curriculum to include all learners.
- Continue to provide support and challenge for schools and centres to evaluate how well the curriculum meets the needs of all learners.
- Continue to develop practitioner skills and confidence in taking a flexible and creative approach to enacting the curriculum that adapts to the needs of cohorts, groups and individual learners over time.
- Continue to develop meaningful progression pathways into and through the senior phase that are well matched to the needs of all learners.



Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning, Teaching and Assessment: We implement culturally responsive Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices that reflect the experiences and perspectives of our pupils and reduce barriers to learning and attainment.

A programme of equity-focused professional learning opportunities was designed and delivered from 2023–2026 to support practitioners and leaders in all sectors to mitigate the impact of inequality through effective learning, teaching and assessment. These have included direct input sessions on specific pedagogical approaches; online learning sessions; coaching and modelling in classroom and playroom settings; networked learning opportunities, for example at coordinators' meetings; and workshops and seminars for senior leaders.

As a result, practitioners and senior leaders have reported improvements in their confidence to meet the needs of children and young people by promoting equity through specific, evidence-informed practices such as adaptive teaching and culturally responsive teaching.

High quality, inclusive pedagogy continues to be central to improving young people's experiences, outcomes and life chances. Evaluation of school improvement plans and professional learning uptake shows an increasing focus at school level from 2023–2026 on adaptive teaching and scaffolding. This has included opportunities for practitioners to collaborate across schools through networked events such as cluster conferences and subject group meetings to share practice in adapting teaching to meet all learners' needs.

'Not only did the learners' confidence increase, but they became more able and willing to challenge themselves in concepts which would never before have been attempted by them.'

Participant, Improving Pedagogy through Teaching Sprints/Adaptive teaching and scaffolding

'Every child deserves to learn and we must be aware of barriers to learning and act in the best way to minimise the barriers.'

Participant, Adaptive Teaching

We said we would:

- Provide professional learning opportunities to increase knowledge and skills in:
 - planning curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment to recognise, value and include diverse identities
 - supporting bilingual learners and learners with EAL
 - anti-racist education
 - LGBT inclusive education.
- Share effective practice across sectors and establishments

Supporting Bilingual Learners and Learners with English as an Additional Language

Throughout the period of the 2023–2026 strategy the Quality Improvement Team and members of school and centre staff worked together to improve support for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), bilingual/multilingual learners, and newly arrived learners. Some key aims of this work have been:

- increasing curricular opportunities for learners at an early stage of English language acquisition in the secondary sector
- improving support for young people at an early stage of language acquisition within classes in all sectors
- improving consistency in the assessment of English language levels to support better learning
- establishing a shared, assets-based approach to tracking the literacy achievements of young learners with EAL in Early Years settings
- improving practitioner confidence in supporting bilingual learners and learners with EAL.



To take forward these aims we have:

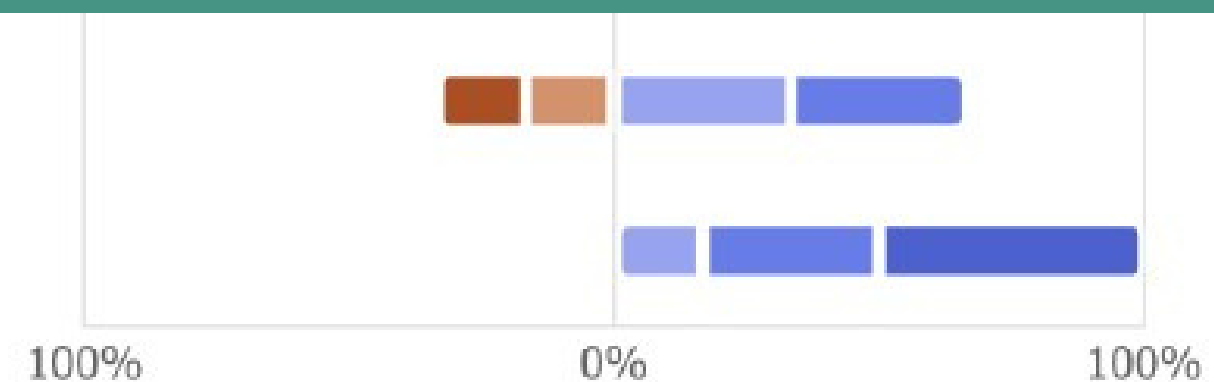
- updated our framework for supporting accurate assessment of English language levels in primary and secondary sectors
- developed a new set of indicators to support Early Years settings to recognise the literacy achievements of children with EAL more consistently as part of established systems for tracking and monitoring
- worked with further education partners to offer ESOL courses to S3 pupils as part of the vocational programme, where these were previously available to S4–6 only
- created a new website where all teaching staff can access high quality sources of support for planning inclusive learning experiences for bilingual learners and learners with EAL
- developed standardised approaches to welcoming newly arrived learners in each sector and identifying appropriate curricular opportunities
- provided highly-evaluated professional learning opportunities on supporting children and young people with EAL for 724 teachers and CDOs
- provided highly-evaluated training for 128 Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) on supporting children and young people with EAL; 20 PSAs chose to also undertake an additional in-depth 6-week block of professional learning on EAL provided in partnership with Adult Learning Services
- funded eight members of staff to undertake the internationally-recognised CELTA programme in teaching English as a second or additional language (ESOL); most high schools now have at least one CELTA-qualified member of staff.

As a result of this work, PSAs and teachers report that they are more confident about how to support learners who use EAL, and that their knowledge and understanding of pedagogy to support learners who use EAL has increased.

The Quality Improvement Team worked with senior leaders and practitioners from 2023–26 through a range of networks and professional learning opportunities to foster a deeper understanding of how racism impacts children and young people in education, and how to become actively anti-racist in our practice. Building Racial Literacy, Culturally Responsive Practice and Decolonising the Curriculum programmes led by the Quality Improvement Team were attended by 727 practitioners and highly evaluated by attendees. Further focused sessions were delivered for individual school staff groups and the educational psychology team.

BEFORE CLPL, how confident were you in having conversations about racism?

AFTER CLPL, how confident are you now in having conversations about racism?



Participant evaluations pre/post-participation in Anti-Racism in Learning and Teaching series

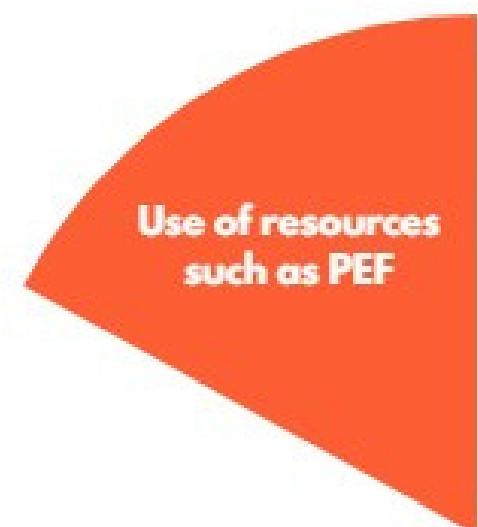
'I am better able to understand the perspectives of my pupils from diverse backgrounds and the necessity to feel represented in the classroom context.'

Participant, Culturally Responsive Teaching CLPL

Views gathered as part of the evaluation of the 2023–26 strategy highlight a desire from both learners and staff for ongoing work to improve the cultural responsiveness of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment so that all children and young people feel represented, supported and included.

Next steps:

- Continue to develop inclusive spaces, interactions and experiences
- Embed our refreshed framework for assessing and supporting bilingual learners and learners with English as an Additional Language
- Provide ongoing guidance, support and challenge for schools to meet additional support needs
- Implement actions in the Literacy Strategy focused on increasing diversity of representation, development of critical literacy and closing literacy attainment gaps.



Use of Resources: We support and empower schools to use resources to deliver activities, interventions and experiences that will improve equity in education outcomes.

The Education Department carried out a thematic review of the impact of Pupil Equity Funding in 2023. We found that schools' use of Pupil Equity Funding was based on very good knowledge of pupils, families, their needs and their context; that schools based interventions on a solid range of evidence; and that outcomes for children and young people supported by PEF were strong compared with national comparator data, both in terms of attainment and also positive, sustained post-school destinations. Schools were aware of the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day and a majority had done some work on this with their school community.

We said we would:

- Design and implement a thematic review of the impact of PEF in ERC schools
- Support and challenge schools to use PEF effectively to improve education outcomes
- Support and challenge schools to reduce the cost of the school day

The review also identified a need to ensure all plans for the use of PEF were providing interventions that were clearly additional to the universal provision provided for all pupils, and that plans were using SMART outcomes, measures and baseline data to ensure impact could be measured. We analysed PEF plans and found that **in August 2023:**

- **a minority** of PEF plans were using data well to inform interventions and monitor progress
- **a majority** of plans outlined interventions that were clearly additional to universal support.

To support schools to develop robust plans we:

- Provided opportunities for peer evaluation of PEF plans across establishments and sectors through annual 'PEF Quad' discussions from 2023-2025
- Updated our local guidance on the use of PEF and supported schools to implement this
- Worked in partnership with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor to provide practical support and challenge during the planning process, including workshop activities for head teachers
- Provided more detailed feedback to schools following submission of PEF plans.

In August 2025:

- **almost all** plans used data well to inform interventions and monitor progress
- **most** PEF plans outlined interventions that were clearly additional to universal support.

At Excellence through Equity Visits during autumn 2025 we found that targeted interventions (e.g. PEF, individualised support) were being used by all schools to close gaps for learners in key equity groups, and schools were becoming increasingly confident in using data to identify and support learners at risk of lower attainment due to equity issues.

In focus groups about the Cost of the School Day in June 2025, young people described a wide range of practical support that was in place across schools to help reduce financial pressure on families. Initiatives such as uniform banks, recycling schemes, breakfast carts and access to toiletries have become normal practice and in this way schools are helping to remove the stigma that young people can feel if they lack essential supplies. Young people's views were central to the updating of the Education Department's 'Dressing for Excellence' school clothing policy in 2025 to place greater emphasis on children's rights, sustainability and reducing costs.

'This year we appointed a Social Justice and Chaplaincy Captain from sixth year. They worked closely with our Pupil Forum to re-stock and reshape our Help Me Out Trolleys. The Help Me Out Trolleys contain a number of everyday essentials that pupils may need and can take from the trolley without being questioned. This includes, drinks and snacks for interval and lunchtime, toiletries including soap, shower gel, deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste. They also have school essentials including pens, pencils, folders and study cards. ...The cost of the school day can be an issue for families but we are addressing that through our creative approach to fundraising, uniform recycling, Fare Share and our Help Me Out Trolleys.'

Senior Leader, St Luke's HS

- Next steps:**
 - Further develop Business Intelligence tools to more clearly identify equity gaps, including for children and young people with recorded ASN.
 - Support and challenge establishments to address equity-related attainment gaps using SEF, PEF and devolved school budgets.
 - Further develop our systematic approaches to intersecting and analysing demographic attainment data and using this to plan interventions.



Recruitment and Retention: We are improving staff diversity to better represent and support the children and young people we serve.

We recognise that to increase the representation of a wider range of people in our staff teams, we need to make sure that schools are attractive places to work for a diverse range of people with different backgrounds and life experiences. Clear policies and practices at school and centre level to promote equality, fairness and rights throughout everyday practice are essential in this respect.

Policy guidance for schools and centres on establishment-level equalities policies was developed in partnership with Equalities Coordinators and launched in August 2025. Training for coordinators on Equalities, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessments was delivered to support establishments to evaluate how well they share their policy on promoting equality with all stakeholders and, where appropriate, how they might further develop practice in this area.

The Council gathers data about the demographic diversity of staff in different roles. Ethnicity is disclosed by staff on a voluntary basis; the data below shows the proportion of staff disclosing their ethnicity as black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in each sector.

- We said we would:**
 - Implement the department’s recruitment and retention action plan in response to Teaching in a Diverse Scotland
 - Update and improve policies on racism and prejudice-based bullying
 - Use Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact assessments effectively to review current practice and ensure appropriate consideration of Social Justice in policies and procedures

% practitioners identifying as BAME, 2023/2026

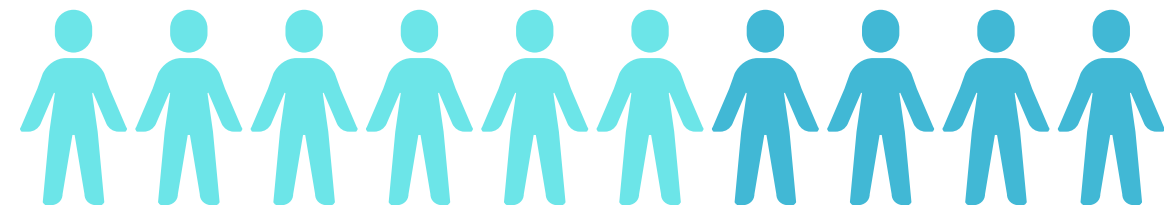
		2023	2026
Location		% of teaching and CDO staff	% of teaching and CDO staff
Early Years		4.57%	5.99%
Primary		2.30%	2.31%
Secondary		2.32%	3.30%

The figures above show an increase in representation of people from BAME groups from 2023 to 2026 in the early years and secondary sectors, with representation in the primary sector remaining at a similar level. While the improvement in some sectors is encouraging, sustained effort in this area is essential to continue to improve equality of representation across our schools and settings.

We also:

- updated guidance for teachers on bullying and prejudice-based bullying in schools, and developed new guidance on responding effectively to racism
- provided professional learning to support practitioners at all levels to respond promptly, effectively and sensitively to any incidents of racism that occur in schools
- worked with national anti-bullying organisation RespectMe to ensure our policies and practices are robust
- addressed anti-racism as a focus at meetings of senior leadership networks throughout 2023–26 including head teachers, aspiring leaders, central education officers, school Equalities Coordinators, and Child Protection Coordinators
- added demographic data gathering to Education Department annual stakeholder questionnaires, to increase our understanding of the experiences of different groups of people over time.

Practitioners report increased confidence in discussing and responding to challenging issues around race and promoting anti-racism in their establishments. This work is also helping schools to ensure establishment policies and processes are robust, up-to-date, and lead to positive learning environments for all.



‘Recognising where we are on our own anti-racist journey is vital to see what progress we still need to make. The biggest impact for me was the difference between ‘not racist’ and ‘anti-racist’; I am going to use this knowledge to better support colleagues, but most importantly for my pupils.’

Participant, Building Racial Literacy

‘Equality and Social Justice continues to be a focus on the School Improvement Plan. An audit has been carried out using the Social Justice Framework to identify areas for improvement. Equalities Parental/Pupil Groups established this year. Work has included revision of anti-bullying policy (including protected characteristics) and working collaboratively to establish an assembly programme focusing on reflecting the diverse culture of our school and other aspects of equalities e.g. celebrating neurodiversity week.’ Senior Leader, Mearns PS

‘The strategy linked well with Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel Values.’
Head Teacher

Next steps:

- Update our action plan in response to Teaching a Diverse Scotland.
- Continue to support and challenge establishments to accurately record all incidents of bullying, racism and gender-based violence and use this data to inform improvement priorities.

SECTION 2: WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW? SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGY 2026-29

AIM

Our ambition is that every child and young person, regardless of background or circumstance, will fully flourish on their journey to adulthood.

OUTCOME

We will know we are making progress WHEN...

Our learning establishments:

- Deliver a curriculum that inspires and prepares children and young people well for the future
- Continue to improve achievement for all

Every child and young person:

- Is loved, safe and happy
- Is as healthy as they can be
- Has friends and adults they trust
- Is a successful learner and well prepared for the future
- Has their voice heard and their rights recognised, respected and nurtured

Our children, young people and families who face challenges and disadvantage will:

- Access the right support as early as possible
- Receive support that is compassionate and aspirational and builds on their strengths

OUR CONTRIBUTION

So we need to...

Provide support and challenge for schools and centres to prioritise equitable, socially just approaches to curriculum design across the breadth of the curriculum from 3-18

Provide support and challenge for schools and centres to further develop inclusive, equitable pedagogical approaches

Use data and intelligence with increasing accuracy, intersectionality and collaborative approaches to improve equity of outcomes



CRITICAL ACTIVITIES

(see over)

CRITICAL INDICATORS

- Overall attainment levels of learners in key equity groups
- Progress towards Stretch Aims
- Impact of PEF and SEF on attainment, attendance, engagement, participation and inclusion as evidenced by Excellence Through Equity visits
- Proportion of establishments recording incidents of bullying, racism and gender based violence in line with policy
- Evaluations of impact of professional learning opportunities
- Evaluation of PEF Plans & Reports, School Improvement Plans and Standards & Quality Reports
- % people from BAME groups represented in our staffing
- % school leavers in key equity groups in positive sustained destinations
- % learners agreeing with statements 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 & 18 in annual local authority questionnaires
- Proportions of staff engaging in professional learning on priority areas
- % schools and centres engaging with Rights Respecting Schools and achieving accreditation at Gold, Silver, Bronze levels
- Proportion of schools assessing English Language Levels consistently in line with updated framework



Priority 1: Provide support and challenge for all establishments to prioritise equitable, socially just approaches to curriculum design across the breadth of the curriculum from 3–18

- Provide support and challenge for schools and centres to further develop the design of the curriculum to include all learners, including a focus on:
 - decolonising the curriculum
 - planning for equality, equity and extension
 - sharing practice and looking outwards
 - involving children and young people in evaluation and development of the curriculum.
- Continue to provide support and challenge for schools and centres to evaluate how well the curriculum meets the needs of all learners, especially those exceeding expectations or with additional support needs.
- Continue to develop practitioner skills and confidence in taking a flexible and creative approach to enacting the curriculum that adapts to the needs of cohorts, groups and individual learners over time.
- Continue to develop meaningful progression pathways into and through the senior phase that are well matched to the needs of all learners.
- Implement actions in the Literacy Strategy focused on increasing diversity of representation, development of critical literacy and closing literacy attainment gaps.
- Support and challenge all schools and centres to apply a social justice lens to the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.
- Work in partnership with the Youth Rights Association to ensure children and young people continue to shape delivery of the strategy.

Priority 2: Provide support and challenge for schools and centres to further develop inclusive, equitable pedagogical approaches

- Continue to support and challenge all establishments to develop inclusive spaces, interactions and experiences, including a focus on:
 - Adaptive teaching
 - The Circle
 - Culturally Responsive Practice
 - Critical Literacy.
- Continue to provide high quality professional learning opportunities to deepen professional understanding of social justice issues as appropriate to each school and centre, including:
 - tackling misogyny and gender-based violence
 - whole-school approach to anti-racism
 - online hate
 - poverty-aware practice.
- Embed the refreshed framework for assessing and supporting bilingual learners and learners with English as an Additional Language, and establish a Subject Group for ESOL.
- Provide ongoing guidance, support and challenge for schools to meet additional support needs in line with the Inclusion Framework.
- Update our action plan in response to Teaching a Diverse Scotland.

Priority 3: Use data and intelligence with increasing accuracy, intersectionality and collaborative approaches to improve equity of outcomes

- Further develop our systematic approaches to intersecting and analysing demographic attainment data, using what we know about the experiences and outcomes of different groups to develop a deeper understanding of the impact on children and young people of experiencing multiple disadvantages, and using this to plan interventions.
- Further develop Business Intelligence tools to more clearly identify equity gaps, including for children and young people with recorded ASN.
- Support and challenge establishments to address equity-related attainment gaps using SEF, PEF and devolved school budgets, including a relentless focus on:
 - the poverty-related attainment gap
 - the attainment gap for care experienced children and young people
 - the gender attainment gap in literacy
 - the attendance gap for children and young people with ASN.
- Further develop our approaches to gathering and using qualitative data and intelligence about equity and social justice to:
 - generate deeper insight into lived experiences and use this to inform improvement priorities
 - empower learners, families and the community to meaningfully influence the work of schools/settings, for example through peer research approaches.
- Continue to use meaningful learning networks to share effective practice in advancing social justice across sectors and establishments
- Continue to support and challenge establishments to accurately record all incidents of bullying, racism and gender-based violence and use this data to inform improvement priorities.
- Implement actions in the PIE Strategy focused on increasing representation of all parents, carers and families in the life and work of every establishment.

