
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	3 September 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/21/24/MR
Contact Officer:	Michael Roach Head of Education	Contact No:	01475 712891
Subject:	Education Update Report – Overview of Local and National Initiatives		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to ask members of the Education and Communities Committee to note updates relating to the Education Service both in terms of local development as well as national policy development.

1.3 The report includes update on:

- Care Inspectorate inspection outcome
- National qualifications outcomes – 2023/24 diet
- Digital Education Strategy – Consultation
- Education bill – consultation
- Post school education and skills reform legislation - consultation
- Independent Review of Qualifications and assessment
- Education and skills reform
- National response to improving maths / national maths specialist advisor
- Outdoor learning
- Gaelic Medium Education – Secondary GME progress
- Review of admission for Play4All service
- Closure of Cedars School of Excellence
- Update on teacher numbers
- Admission for academic year 24/25 and placing requests

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked to:

- note the content of the update report

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Care Inspectorate inspection outcomes

Adelene Hutchinson, a local childminder was inspected in May 2024. The full report can be found here: [Find care \(careinspectorate.com\)](https://www.careinspectorate.com)

The provision was found to be very good in all aspects as below:

How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good
How good is our setting?	Very Good
How good is our leadership?	Very Good
How good is our staff team?	Very Good

3.2 National qualifications outcomes – 2023/24 diet

The outcome of the 2023/24 national qualification diet were shared with pupils on the 6th of August. A communication release was shared on the day and can be found here: [2024 Inverclyde exam results - Inverclyde Council](#)

As is the case each year, a members' briefing will be held later in the autumn term to share the full outcomes once an update of Insight is received.

3.3 Digital Education Strategy – Consultation

The Scottish Government, in partnership with ADES and COSLA, have been working on the development of a joint digital strategy for school education. As part of this a consultation was carried out over the summer, closing on 15th of August.

The service provided a response to this and shared it with conveners of the committee prior to submission. A copy of the response can be provided to committee members on request.

3.4 Education Bill – consultation

A call for views in relation to the Education (Scotland) Bill was open until the 20th of August 2024: [Education \(Scotland\) Bill - Detailed call for views - Scottish Parliament - Citizen Space](#)

The Bill establishes a new body called Qualifications Scotland. It also creates a new office His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland. While the Bill provides the mechanism for reforming the current Scottish Qualifications Authority and creates a separate education inspection agency, its provisions largely replicate existing legislation, namely the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 and the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act 2002.

The service provided a response to this and shared it with conveners of the committee prior to submission. A copy of the response can be provided to committee members on request.

3.5 Post school education and skills reform legislation - consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on proposals for changes to what public bodies do in the post-school system. These changes aim to simplify responsibilities for apprenticeships and student support and they need legislation. These changes are just one part of the post-school education and skills reform programme. That programme also includes: changing the way we do skills planning; improving our apprenticeship offer and national careers service; and enhancing student support. There will be more opportunities to comment and engage on other parts of the programme in the coming year.

[Chapter 5: Responding to the Consultation - Post-school education and skills reform legislation: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Responses are to be submitted by 20th of September 2024 and will be shared with conveners prior to submission. Again, a copy of the response can be provided to committee members on request, once submitted.

3.6 Independent Review of Qualifications and assessment

We understand that a Scottish Government response to the Independent Review will be published in due course. We expect the response to the Independent Review to include actions in respect of next steps on the place of external examinations in our system and the balance of different forms of assessment. It will also respond to key recommendations of the Independent Review including a proposed school leaving certificate.

3.7 Education and Skills reform

Work has continued across Education and Skills reform since the last update in May 2024. As indicated by the Scottish Government previously, a bill will be laid before Parliament which will underpin the establishment of a new qualifications body and inspectorate function, with new organisations to be in place in Autumn 2025. This is the Education Bill consultation referred to in 3.4.

The third meeting of the co-production group for the Centre for Teaching Excellence was held on 21st of May. The Cabinet Secretary attended the meeting to outline the vision for the Centre.

The first meeting of the Ministerial Group on Education and Skills Reform met on 2nd of May. This group provides a forum for Ministers to seek views from the profession and independent experts on the opportunities that exist within the education and skills sector. Membership consists of practitioners and experts including individuals from COSLA, local government, universities, colleges and headteachers.

The last meeting of the New Qualifications Body Transition Board took place on 4 June. This board is co-chaired by the SG and SQA with its role to delivery on the Ministerial ambitions for education reform through direction, oversight and assurance on the transition process for the establishment of a new Qualifications Body.

3.8 National response to improving maths / national maths specialist advisor

In line with the announcement by the Cabinet Secretary of a new curriculum improvement cycle which prioritises numeracy/mathematics as the first area to undergo improvement work, a new specialist maths adviser, Andrew Brown, has been appointed. The new specialist advisor will work alongside Education Scotland and the National Response to Improving Mathematics (NRIM) on revising the maths and numeracy curriculum. The maths adviser will also act as the key link between the Cabinet Secretary and NRIM, advising on maths improvement and different approaches Scotland might consider to improve teaching, learning and performance

3.9 Outdoor learning

The commitment made in the refreshed Learning for Sustainability Action Plan to establish a new outdoor learning workstream, including an outdoor learning working group, continues to be progressed. Membership and group structure have now been established and the first meeting has taken place. The Liz Smith MSP Member's Bill, the Proposed Schools Residential Outdoor Education Bill, is currently anticipated to be introduced around June 2024. Efforts to discuss and analyse the data collected to date continue, looking to understand the opportunities and implications of the Bill comprehensively, including concerns previously raised by ADES representatives with regard to inequities in accessing centres, funding, capacity, additional associated costs to parents, issues around staffing for schools and the knock-on effect that this would have on primaries.

To this end, the Education, Children and Young People Committee has launched its Call for Views on the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill. The Bill would ensure that all pupils in state and grant-aided schools have the chance to experience at least four nights and

five days of residential outdoor education during their school career. Subsequently the Parliament's Finance and Public Administration Committee also launched a call for views on the Financial Memorandum of the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill. Officers are working with ADES to inform responses to both consultations.

3.10 **Secondary GME progress**

It was agreed at the January committee that a regular update would be given to committee re the progress being made around the inception of our secondary GME provision at Inverclyde Academy.

We have not been able to recruit a teacher for August 2024, however we have engaged with the e-Sgoil online offer, and have set up teaching for the pupil attending. This will remain in place, alongside support from staff at Whinhill Primary School, until we have been able to recruit.

The GME webpage updated for education services is now up to date and is now dual language: [Gaelic Medium Education - Inverclyde Council](#)

Ongoing communication is in place with parents regarding places at the secondary provision.

3.11 **Introduction of Stay and Play Sessions for ASN and review of admission for Play4All service**

Officers have worked with the ASN parent and carer group to consider the provision of activities for children with Additional Support Needs over the summer holiday period. As a result, Stay and Play sessions were introduced and these proved to be very popular and welcome. The Stay and Play sessions were run by CLD and provided activities for young people with ASN as well as their siblings (and parents). Parental Feedback indicates the sessions provided a much-needed respite and social interaction for families where their child could have fun without stigma or judgement. 16 sessions were run over 8 days across the summer. 384 children attended sessions (this number is individual attendances rather than individual children). The service was initially over-subscribed, however whilst 900 children registered, not all turned up and we were able to contact parents if they had initially been unsuccessful in gaining a place to offer them a slot. As part of ongoing discussions parents have intimated that they would welcome a review of provision of the allocation of places for termtime and holiday childcare through play4All (which is a bespoke childcare service). Officers will undertake a review alongside parents during the course of this year.

3.12 **Closure of Cedars School of Excellence**

The Board of Trustees at the Cedars School of Excellence in Greenock, have taken the decision to close the school as of the 27th of September 2024. During the month of August, Education Services liaised with parents and the Cedars school to consider the transfer of pupils who live within the area into Inverclyde Schools. There were spaces for all pupils in schools in Inverclyde, almost all being in the catchment area. Where there were not catchment places, the pupils have been redirected to the nearest school in accordance with policy. Transition arrangements were put in place and these will include identifying any additional support needs, ensuring pupils are attending school at the appropriate age and stage and ensuring senior pupils are able to access their chosen subjects.

3.13 **Commitment to maintain teacher numbers**

On 26 April COSLA agreed with the Scottish Government to extend the deadline for signing the grant letter so that further discussions can take place. In line with other councils, officers have yet to sign the agreement. The Scottish Government have indicated that mitigating factors such as reduction in Attainment Challenge funding and reduction in pupil rolls would be mitigations that would be taken into account.

3.13 **Admissions for 24/25 and Placing requests**

Details of this are attached to Appendix 1 of this report (at agenda item 21 (Appendix relative to agenda item 15 – Education Update Report – Overview of Local and National Initiatives)).

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 N/A.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial	X	
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		X
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

Annual recurring costs (savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Secondary	Employee Costs	2024/25	£70K		This cost will be contained within the overall Teachers' budget

5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A.

5.4 Human Resources

N/A.

5.5 Strategic

N/A.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
N	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
N	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
N	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 **Environmental/Sustainability**

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
N	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 **Data Protection**

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
N	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.