Inverclyde council

Report To:	**Education & Communities Committee**	**Date:**	**5 November 2024**
Report By:	**Ruth Binks** **Corporate Director** **Education, Communities and Organisational Development**	**Report No:**	**EDUCOM/49/24/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
- Education Reform
- Independent Review of Qualifications and assessment
- Scottish Attainment Challenge
- Promoting Positive Relationships policy
- Gaelic Medium Education – Secondary GME progress
- Teacher numbers
- Representation of the voice of Young People on the Education and Communities Committee

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

Madeira Nursery had an unannounced inspection at the end of August 2024. Committee will recall that the previous inspection had seen the Nursery rated as adequate. This inspection has seen the nursery return to good across the board. The Early Years team provide support and challenge to the team at Madeira to support their improvement. The evaluations of the quality indicators are as below:

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

The full report can be found here:
https://careinspectorate.com/berengCareservices/html/reports/getPdfBlob.php?id=320859

Kilmacolm Primary School's Nursery Class had an unannounced care inspectorate visit on the 12th of September 2024. The evaluations of the quality indicators are 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

The full report can be found here: Find care (careinspectorate.com)

3.2 Education reform

On Wednesday 5 June the Education (Scotland) Bill was published, this also coincided with an update on the refocusing of Education Scotland's functions.

The Bill sets out the intention to establish a new qualifications body, Qualifications Scotland, to replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The new body will be responsible for delivering and awarding qualifications, and for accrediting qualifications delivered by others.

The intention to establish the office of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland is also set out in the Bill. The independence of inspection and reporting is enshrined in the legislation, with the power to set the frequency and focus for inspections also moved from Scottish Ministers to His Majesty's Chief Inspector. A recruitment process to appoint the new Chief Inspector for the Inspectorate and a Chief Executive for Education Scotland is now under way.

Both Qualifications Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland are expected to be in place in autumn 2025, subject to parliamentary process.

Following engagement with stakeholders and teachers, the decision was also taken to refocus Education Scotland's functions. The body will lead curriculum design, delivery, and improvement, including the provision of resources to support high quality learning and teaching.

The Scottish Government has also asked Connect to establish a new mechanism, known as the Scottish Assembly of Parents and Carers, to strengthen opportunities to shape and influence policy, allowing their views to be listened to as we improve our education system. It is hoped that this approach will enhance geographic reach and be more inclusive of underrepresented groups.

3.3 **Independent Review of Qualifications and assessment**
Professor Hayward's final report on the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessments was published in June 2023.

The Scottish Government published **its response** on 19 September 2024. It accepts some of the recommendations, but says more work needs to be done to explore how the others could work.

The Government says it will set out a longer-term improvement plan for education later this year.

Approach to Assessment
The Government agrees with the need to balance assessment methods and reduce the emphasis on high stakes external exams but will not remove them entirely; exams will still be taken across the Senior Phase including for National 5s. However, the new qualifications body Qualifications Scotland will look to remove them from practical subjects where appropriate, as well as working towards extending the range of assessment methods for national qualifications to provide a better balance.

Qualifications Scotland will also:

- Pilot digital onscreen assessment across various subjects.
- Rationalise the qualifications offer in the Senior Phase, starting with the Creative, Hospitality and Sport and Technology, Engineering and Construction Sectors, to ensure that learner pathways are less confusing and more relevant for learners.
- Explore how graded national courses such as National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher could be organised into modules to give pupils more flexibility to build credit.

Project Learning/ Inter-disciplinary Learning
The Government says there needs to be more work done before inter-disciplinary learning can become a mandatory part of the Senior Phase. The Scottish Government will work with Education Scotland to set up a working group to explore how best to place inter-disciplinary learning in secondary schools.

Personal Pathway and the Digital Profile
The Government agrees with the recommendation of a national digital profile to record learners' achievements, skills, strengths, experiences and qualifications. Skills Development Scotland's My World of Work platform already has a digital profile, and this will be developed further so learners will be able to access a consistent and free to use profile. This will be optional.

Leaving Certificate
While acknowledging a leaving certificate could create a more inclusive approach by recognising a broader range of achievements, the Scottish Government says more work needs to be done to work out what a leaving certificate should contain and how it would work.

Parity of Esteem
The Government agrees with the recommendation to ensure consistent use of SCQF levels in the titles of qualifications while retaining existing names, for example 'Higher English, SCQF Level 6.' This is to make it easier to recognise levels of achievement across different types of qualifications.

Support for Teachers
The Government agrees that teachers will need support and professional learning to deliver the proposed changes. The Government says teaches will need more time to accept greater responsibility for formal assessment, as well as deliver the agreed reduction in class contact time with the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT).

Artificial Intelligence and Digital

The Government agrees it is important the education sector understands the opportunities, implications and challenges of AI. It will work with Qualifications Scotland and Education Scotland to ensure AI can be used effectively and safely, as well as make sure education bodies have access to experts in AI advancements. A new digital strategy for school education is currently being developed in partnership with COSLA and key education stakeholders.

Engagement

The Scottish Government agrees that young people, their parents/carers and teachers need to remain at the centre of the discussion on the future of qualifications in Scotland, as well as universities, colleges and employers.

We will provide a further update to committee later in the academic year once we have more information about the Government's improvement plan has been published.

3.4 **Scottish Attainment Challenge**

The Scottish Government are undertaking Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) sampling work as they seek to develop a collective understanding of the important contributions PEF is making to improve the outcomes of children and young people impacted by poverty. As part of this exercise, Scottish Government and Education Scotland are engaging with over 130 schools across Scotland, 20 identified via their own analysis, the remainder flagged by Local Authorities. Inverclyde have nominated a few schools to be part of this process.

The Scottish Government are drawing out key learning and plan to share this good work taking place in our schools and communities, with Headteachers, Local Authorities and other key stakeholders.

The Scottish Government continue to work to understand the impact of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) programme as part of their evaluation strategy. As part of this, the Scottish Government published reporting on the National Improvement Framework (NIF) measures on attainment and health and wellbeing and the wider evidence summary on the 28th of August.

The NIF Report is designed to be a short, concise summary of progress utilising the core National Improvement Framework attainment and health and wellbeing measures. The Wider Evidence Summary Report is designed to be a summary of national evidence on the impact of poverty on educational outcomes. The Reports are primarily for Attainment Advisors, local authority SAC Leads and policy officials, providing them with evidence on how performance has changed over time in an accessible format and a resource for them to use working with teachers and school leaders.

- Attainment Scotland Fund Evaluation: Reporting on Wider Evidence Sources, 2024
- Attainment Scotland Fund Evaluation: Reporting on National Improvement Framework Attainment and Health and Wellbeing Measures, 2024

Further, Education Scotland published the latest of their SAC National Summary Reports which highlights a range of case studies of work to close the poverty-related attainment gap. This can be found here: National Summary Report March 2024 | Scottish Attainment Challenge | Learning in Scotland | Education Scotland

On 30 August Education Scotland also published a range of resources designed to support local authorities, and schools when they are refreshing their current attendance policies and guidance:

- A sketch note illustrating key national policies, legislation and supporting structures around attendance.
- Guidance on creating a local authority policy.

- A number of additional resources that are not prescriptive but have been designed to summarise or exemplify.

3.5 **Promoting Positive Relationships policy**
The education service's Promoting Positive Relationships policy was due for review by June 2024. At the same time, the Scottish Government published its [Relationships and behaviour in schools: national action plan 2024 to 2027 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](#) .

One of the key actions within the plan to be shared with local authorities by March 2025 is: *To provide guidance to local authorities and schools on whole-school approaches to relationships and behaviour, grounded in developing strong relationships, high expectations, and effective limit setting.*

The service has reviewed the policy and considers at this time that there are no significant updates or changes that require to be made and will review again once the above guidance has been shared by the Scottish Government.

3.6 **Secondary Gaelic Medium Education (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 were not 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. We have tried again to recruit since the last committee but received no applications. The current provision 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.

3.7 **Teacher numbers**
The census week has now taken place. Although the data is yet to be verified, Inverclyde reported a return of 752 teachers. This is 20 fewer teachers than the 772 target that was set for the authority by the Scottish Government. The 20 is made up of 12 fewer teachers linked to reducing Attainment Challenge funding and 8 fewer teachers due to reductions in GAE linked to a falling pupil roll over time. In the letter of 29 May 2024 the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills stated that the following mitigations would be taken into account:-

• Reductions in aggregate Scottish Attainment Challenge funding (which may be due to the tapered approach between 2022/23 and 2025/26 to the phasing out of Challenge Authorities).
• Reductions in School Teaching Staff and Education Recovery GAE in 2024/25 which reflect changes to the council's pupil roll.

Discussions are yet to take place between officials of Inverclyde Council and the Scottish Government.

3.8 **Representation of the voice of Young People on the Education and Communities Committee**
At the last meeting of the Education and Communities Committee officers were asked to look into the possibility of the voice of young people being better represented on the Education and Communities Committee. Since that time, the views of young people have been sought as to what this may look like and various different options are worthy of consideration. Officers will

seek support from Young Scot with the intention of codesigning a model with the young people themselves.

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**

N/A.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments

Annual recurring costs (savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments

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) <u>Equalities</u>

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) <u>Fairer Scotland Duty</u>

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) <u>Children and Young People</u>

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.