
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	21 January 2025
Report By:	Ruth Binks Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/02/25/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
- Update on teacher numbers position
- Consultation on Play4 All out of school childcare

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**

Blairmore Early Learning Centre (ELC) had an unannounced inspection on the 18th of September 2024. The evaluations of the quality indicators are as below:

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

The full report can be found here: [Find care](#)

As a result of three of the indicators not being evaluated as good or better, an action plan has been drafted in conjunction with the Senior Leaders of the ELC, and this is being supported by the Early Years team and progress and impact is tracked via 4-6 weekly meetings with the Head of Education. It should be noted that leadership was found to be good. We fully expect Blairmore to be back to good ahead of their next inspection which will take place approximately one year from this one i.e. October 2025.

Newark Nursery School had an unannounced care inspectorate visit on 9th October 2024. The evaluations of the quality indicators is 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](#)

It should be noted that within the QI relating to care, play and learning and aspects of the school's practice were found to be excellent, however the overall rating of the QI balances out as very good.

3.2 **Education reform**

The Education and Skills Committee of the Scottish Parliament has now concluded its initial scrutiny of the bill and published the following report with a series of recommendations made: [Education \(Scotland\) Bill - Stage 1 Report | Scottish Parliament](#).

The application process to appoint a host for the Centre for Teaching Excellence is nearing its conclusion. At stage one of the process, organisations that offered Initial Teacher Education were invited to apply to host the Centre. Institutions that were successful were invited to provide more detailed information for stage two of the process, with the applications now undergoing more detailed scrutiny. The appointment of a host body for the Centre will be confirmed by the end of 2024.

Work continues to finalise the detail of the refocussing of Education Scotland's functions to make it a more curriculum orientated national agency. Aspects of this work are already happening as the organisation takes forward the Curriculum Improvement Cycle work. At the annual Inverclyde Education Service Heads of Establishment conference, we welcomed Joan MacKay from Education Scotland to brief heads on this work. A website has been created to updated stakeholders on the ongoing work of the Curriculum Review cycle and can be found here: [Curriculum Improvement Cycle – Education Scotland](#)

The exercise to recruit a substantive Chief Executive of Education Scotland and Chief Inspector of Education is being re-started to ensure the strongest possible field of candidates for these key

leadership roles. This will ensure confidence in the robustness and outcome of the recruitment process, and in the meantime Gillian Hamilton and Janie McManus will continue to fill the respective roles on an interim basis.

Regional Events for Secondary School Headteachers were held in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow across October and November to allow headteachers to hear directly from the Cabinet Secretary and senior leaders of both Education Scotland and SQA, while also giving their views on work in relation to reform. This saw them participate in breakout sessions on the National Improvement Framework and the long-term strategy for Scottish education, and the improvement of curriculum, qualifications and assessment. Inverclyde Headteachers were represented at these events.

The Scottish Assembly of Parents and Carers has now been established with membership nearing capacity. This group will provide challenge to the Scottish Government as reform of the education system moves forward and is due to formally meet for the first time in January 2025.

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.

As reported to committee in November the Scottish Government published [its response](#) on 19 September 2024. It accepted some of the recommendations, but said more work needed to be done to explore how the others could work.

At the time of writing, we are still waiting on the publication of a longer-term improvement plan for education, which had been due later in 2024.

3.4 **Teacher numbers update**

The authority received communication from the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate on 5th April 2024 asking directors to sign off on a commitment to maintain teacher numbers for 2024 by 26 April 2024. For Inverclyde this was to be no lower than 772 (based on 771.5) which is the same number as reported in the 2023/4 census. The agreement was not signed and COSLA and the Scottish Government continued to work together to come to an agreement on the expectations of maintaining teacher numbers. The Scottish Government wrote to Councils on 10 December 2024 and the contents of the letter are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. As part of this agreement, the £145.5 million the Scottish Government committed to providing in 2024- 25 to protect teacher numbers will be allocated in full with the expectation that the 2025/26 teacher numbers are restored to 2023/24 levels. Inverclyde had 751.39 teachers for the census week for 2024/25 as reported in the Summary Schools Statistics on 10 December 2024. This included not only the reduction in Attainment Challenge teachers, but also fewer teachers linked to falling school roll over time and various vacancies. There was also a previous miscoding of central staff which was rectified.

3.5 **Play 4 All Out of School and Holiday Care**

Over recent years, feedback and complaints regarding the provision of Out of School Care (OOSC) for children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) have highlighted the need for a comprehensive review of the current service. Parents have expressed that the variety of available provisions is confusing and difficult to navigate, adding to their concerns about accessibility and fairness.

Currently, the 'Play 4 All' service is registered to provide OOSC and Holiday Care for up to 15 children and a Summer Club for 20 children. However, a specific complaint about the banding system used for allocating after-school and holiday placements was upheld. The complaint pointed out that the current system results in perceived unfairness regarding who can apply for

holiday care. This has further underscored the necessity for immediate action to address these issues.

To address these concerns, the service intends to conduct a consultation to evaluate the current ASN childcare offerings and determine if they align with the needs and preferences of parents. However, as this broader consultation will require time to complete and implement any changes, the service is prioritising the issue of banding for placements in the Out of School Care Service. A consultation is already underway with those eligible to use the service, focusing specifically on reviewing the banding system.

The outcomes of the consultation will guide changes to ensure greater fairness in the allocation of placements. These changes are expected to be finalised and implemented in time for the summer holiday of 2025. The results and proposed adjustments will be reported back to the relevant committee to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the process.

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.

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) 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?

N

YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

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.

E: orlando.heijmer-mason@gov.scotLocal Authority Chief Executive
Director of Education
Director of Finance

10 December 2024

2025-26 BUDGET AGREEMENT BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR SCHOOLS IN SCOTLAND 2024

Thank you for your Council's contribution to the annual census on pupils, teachers and early learning and childcare. The [Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland 2024](#), was published today. At a national level, teacher numbers have decreased from 54,033 in 2023 to 53,412 (down 621, or 1.1%). A breakdown of teacher numbers for each council can be found at Figure 7 in the publication.

Local Government and the Scottish Government have reaffirmed their agreement to delivering improved outcomes for children and young people, acknowledging the critical importance of delivering excellence and equity in education.

As announced in a shared statement with COSLA today, Local Government and Scottish Government are committed to working together to restore teacher numbers to 2023 levels next year, and freeze learning hours which will support the learning experience for pupils across Scotland.

Both Local Government and the Scottish Government have also agreed to make meaningful progress towards reducing class contact time for teachers, in recognition of the asks made by teachers and teaching unions. Medium- and long-term joint workforce planning will take into account the importance of responding to issues including different local needs. In order to support each of these measures, the Scottish Government is increasing the funding available to Local Government to £186.5 million in 2025-26.

As part of this agreement, the £145.5 million the Scottish Government is providing in 2024-25 to protect teacher numbers will be allocated in full. A table showing allocations for each Council is included at Annex A. This funding will be paid as a redetermination of the 2024-25 General Revenue Grant in the last 2 weeks of March 2025. Please note that Local Government Finance colleagues can reprofile the weekly General Revenue Grant payments in order to assist with any cash flow issues, if required.

Next year, individual exceptional circumstances will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis for teacher numbers. However, the list below provides examples of potential exceptional circumstances which could be considered. This is provided for illustrative purposes only:

- Reductions in aggregate Scottish Attainment Challenge funding in 2025-26 which result in a reduction in teacher numbers. This may be due to the tapered approach



between 2022-23 and 2025-26 to phasing out the nine former challenge authority models and moving to Strategic Equity Funding for all 32 Councils.

- Reductions in School Teaching Staff GAE in 2025-26, which reflect changes to the Council's pupil roll.
- Situations where Councils have had to temporarily increase teaching capacity in order to address a short-term spike in pupil numbers (which in the past included Ukrainian refugee support).

Other exceptional circumstances could also apply, such as evidence where a local authority has been unable to fill a particular post or posts at the time of the teacher census in 2025, despite repeated attempts.

Councils will, of course, need to keep in mind that there will need to be sufficient teachers in their local authority in 2025-26 to deliver the associated commitments from the budget agreement on freezing learning hours and making meaningful progress to reduce class contact time.

On learning hours, our longer-term aim is to work together on proposals to establish a statutory minimum number of learning hours, to understand the definition of a "learning hour", and the impact of this ambition on Councils currently providing a lower number of learning hours.

The commitment to reduce class contact time recognises the importance of teachers having more time to prepare for lessons, raise standards and undertake professional development as part of wider education reform ambitions, and acknowledge calls to reduce teacher workload.

Local Government will also receive additional funding of £28 million from 2025-26 to develop the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) education workforce, along with an enhanced offer in support, spanning all stages of the curriculum from the early years to the end of secondary.

An Education Assurance Board will be established to drive activity to achieve our shared objectives to improve attainment, attendance and improve relationships and behaviour.

We will contact you again shortly to begin more detailed discussions on the practicalities of delivering the commitments outlined in this letter. To help us understand local issues better, if there has been a reduction in teacher numbers between 2023 and 2024 in your Council area (see Figure 7 in the published statistics), could you please provide an explanation as to the key factors behind those reductions.

Please provide these to [REDACTED] by Monday 6th January. If you have already submitted information regarding mitigating circumstances, please confirm that this information is still current.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Orlando Heijmer-mason, Deputy Director: Workforce, Infrastructure & Digital

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Annex A – Allocations to Each Council from the £145.5 million the Scottish Government is Providing in 2024-25 to Protect Teacher Numbers

Local Authority	Total (£)
Aberdeen City	5,210,000
Aberdeenshire	7,349,000
Angus	3,039,000
Argyll & Bute	2,125,000
City of Edinburgh	10,658,000
Clackmannanshire	1,399,000
Dumfries & Galloway	3,902,000
Dundee City	4,032,000
East Ayrshire	3,315,000
East Dunbartonshire	3,388,000
East Lothian	2,952,000
East Renfrewshire	3,396,000
Falkirk	4,430,000
Fife	10,165,000
Glasgow City	16,499,000
Highland	6,163,000
Inverclyde	2,120,000
Midlothian	2,785,000
Moray	2,440,000
Na h-Eileanan Siar	718,000
North Ayrshire	3,753,000
North Lanarkshire	9,870,000
Orkney Islands	634,000
Perth & Kinross	3,625,000
Renfrewshire	4,801,000
Scottish Borders	2,893,000
Shetland Islands	746,000
South Ayrshire	2,947,000
South Lanarkshire	9,379,000
Stirling	2,562,000
West Dunbartonshire	2,595,000
West Lothian	5,613,000
Total	145,503,000