





FALKIRK COUNCIL

EDUCATION SERVICE

**IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR SCHOOLS
AND EARLY YEARS SETTINGS**

2025-2026



 <h2 data-bbox="539 220 1102 355">A message from Education Portfolio Holder, Councillor Iain Sinclair.</h2>	 <h2 data-bbox="1426 220 1966 355">An introduction from the Director of Education, Jon Reid.</h2>
<p data-bbox="203 454 1113 635">As Convenor of Education, I am proud to introduce Falkirk Council's Education Improvement Plan for 2025–2026. This plan outlines our collective vision and ambition for every child and young person across our schools and early learning settings. Grounded in national and local priorities, the plan sets out how we will drive forward improvements that are inclusive, evidence-informed, and focused on achieving excellence and equity for all learners.</p> <p data-bbox="203 667 1077 727">Falkirk's Education Service continues to prioritise high-quality learning and teaching, strong leadership, and a culture of continuous improvement.</p> <p data-bbox="203 759 1088 850">Our chosen drivers of improvement reflect our commitment to empowering practitioners and enabling schools and nurseries to lead change that meets the needs of their communities.</p> <p data-bbox="203 882 1120 973">We continue to strengthen our focus on sustainability, digital innovation, and skills for learning, life and work in a belief that these aspects underpin positive outcomes for Falkirk's children and young people.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1005 1117 1160">With this plan, we reaffirm our dedication to supporting every learner to thrive. I am confident that, through shared leadership and collaboration, we will continue to build a responsive and resilient education system, one that prepares our young people for a successful future and reflects the values and aspirations of the Falkirk community.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1192 1120 1375">In commending this plan to you, I want to take this opportunity to recognise the dedication and commitment of staff at every level of the education service. From early years practitioners and teachers to school leaders, support staff, and central teams, their collective efforts are what bring this plan to life. Their professionalism and care make a lasting difference for Falkirk's children and young people, and I offer my sincere thanks for their ongoing contribution.</p>	<p data-bbox="1158 454 2074 579">I am pleased to introduce the Education Services Service Plan for schools and nurseries for 2025/26, which outlines our vision, priorities, and commitment to delivering high-quality education for all children and young people in our communities.</p> <p data-bbox="1158 611 2047 735">We are proud of the progress we've made, and we see real opportunities to innovate, collaborate, and build further on the many strengths of our establishments, whilst recognising challenges arising from ongoing financial constraints.</p> <p data-bbox="1158 767 2042 828">We have carefully framed our priorities for 2025/26 to reflect this balance of ambition and realism. They include:</p> <ul data-bbox="1158 852 2074 1153" style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising attainment and achievement for all learners, with a strong focus on equity and inclusion. • Supporting wellbeing and resilience, ensuring that every child feels safe, supported, and ready to learn. • Enhancing digital learning and teaching, building on the progress made in recent years to create more flexible and engaging learning environments. • Strengthening leadership and workforce development, empowering staff at all levels to lead improvement and innovation. • Working in partnership with families and communities to support learning and improve outcomes. <p data-bbox="1158 1177 2069 1342">This Service Plan sets out clearly how we will deliver on these priorities, monitor our progress, and remain accountable to the communities we serve. The Service Plan for 2025/26 provides a clear roadmap for our actions, aligning our goals with the council's wider strategic vision and ensuring we remain focused, accountable, and ambitious in delivering for our communities</p>



Purpose & Context

Falkirk's Education Service continues to be ambitious for all learners, measured by the quality of their outcomes, through the full range of its work. This plan outlines high level messages for improvement for Falkirk's schools and nurseries. The priorities of the plan are aligned to national and local drivers for Education. Links between the National Improvement Framework priorities and drivers have been incorporated into the plan.

The plan lists the expected outcomes and impact under the agreed pillars for improvement, which thread through improvement planning at establishment level. The annual improvement plan is aimed to help and guide individual settings, schools and services in planning for improvement, not to prescribe what those improvements should be or how they should be taken forward.

Leading Improvement

The Education Service has identified as its *Cornerstones*:

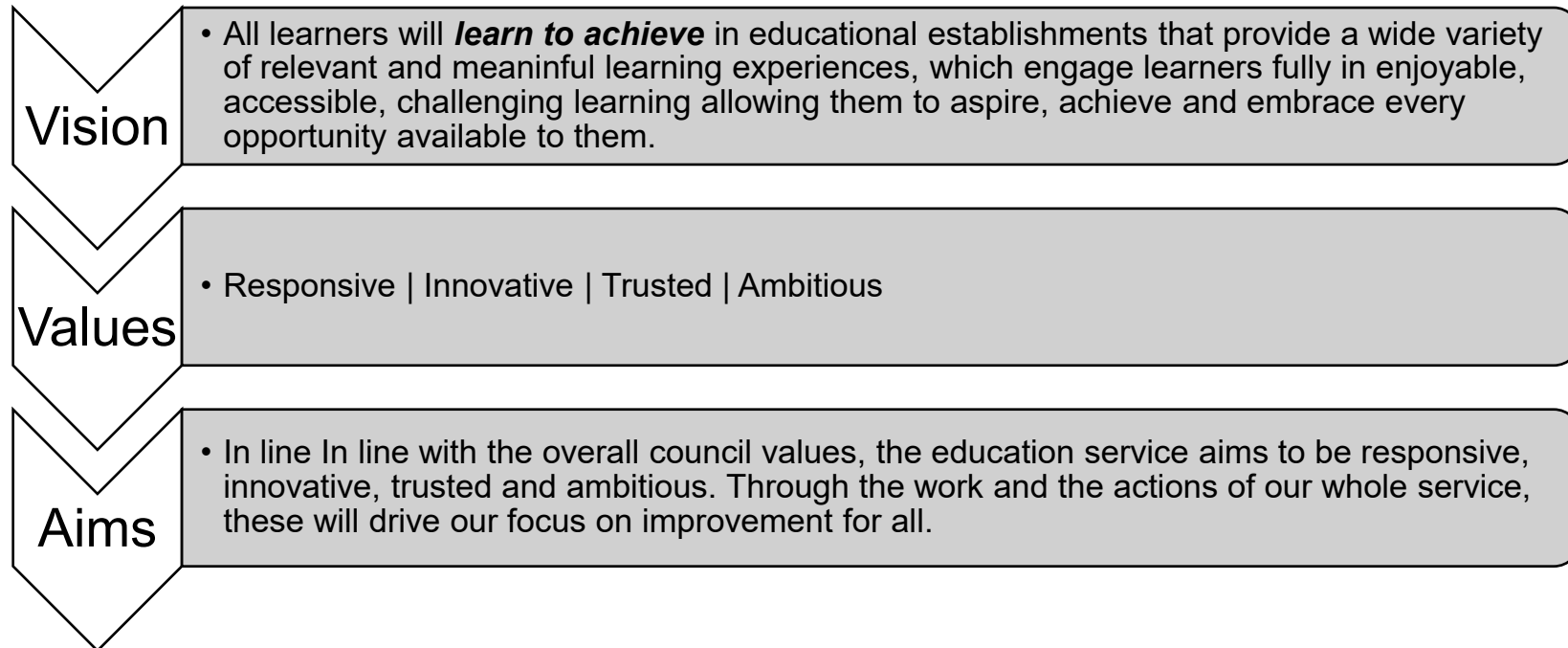
- ❖ Peer collaboration & Connected Autonomy.
- ❖ Professional Learning and Leadership.
- ❖ Thematic & Targeted Support.
- ❖ Improvement in Performance & Data Literacy.

These represent the key drivers for improvement across our Service, and, they describe the ways in which improvement is led across our schools and nurseries.

The overall aim for education is to achieve excellence and equity. In summary, this includes improving the attainment of young people, particularly those from backgrounds of disadvantage, tackling poverty, improving literacy and numeracy and supporting learners to develop their skills for learning, life and work. Therefore, this improvement plan enables all of us to have a shared and clear purpose in our efforts to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families linked closely to our own local context.

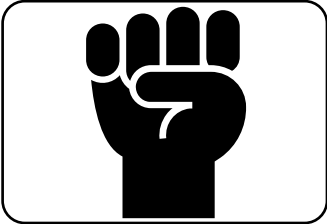
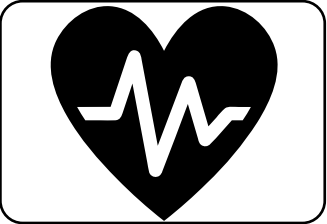
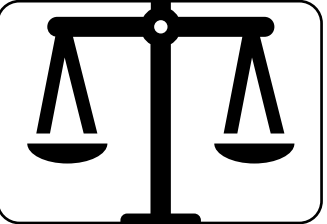
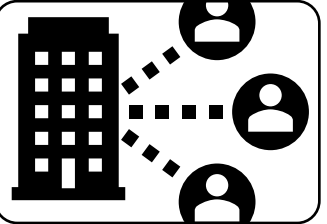
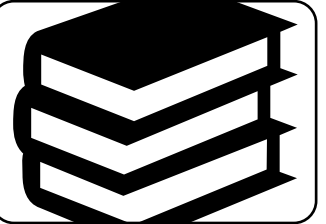


Vision, Values & Aims

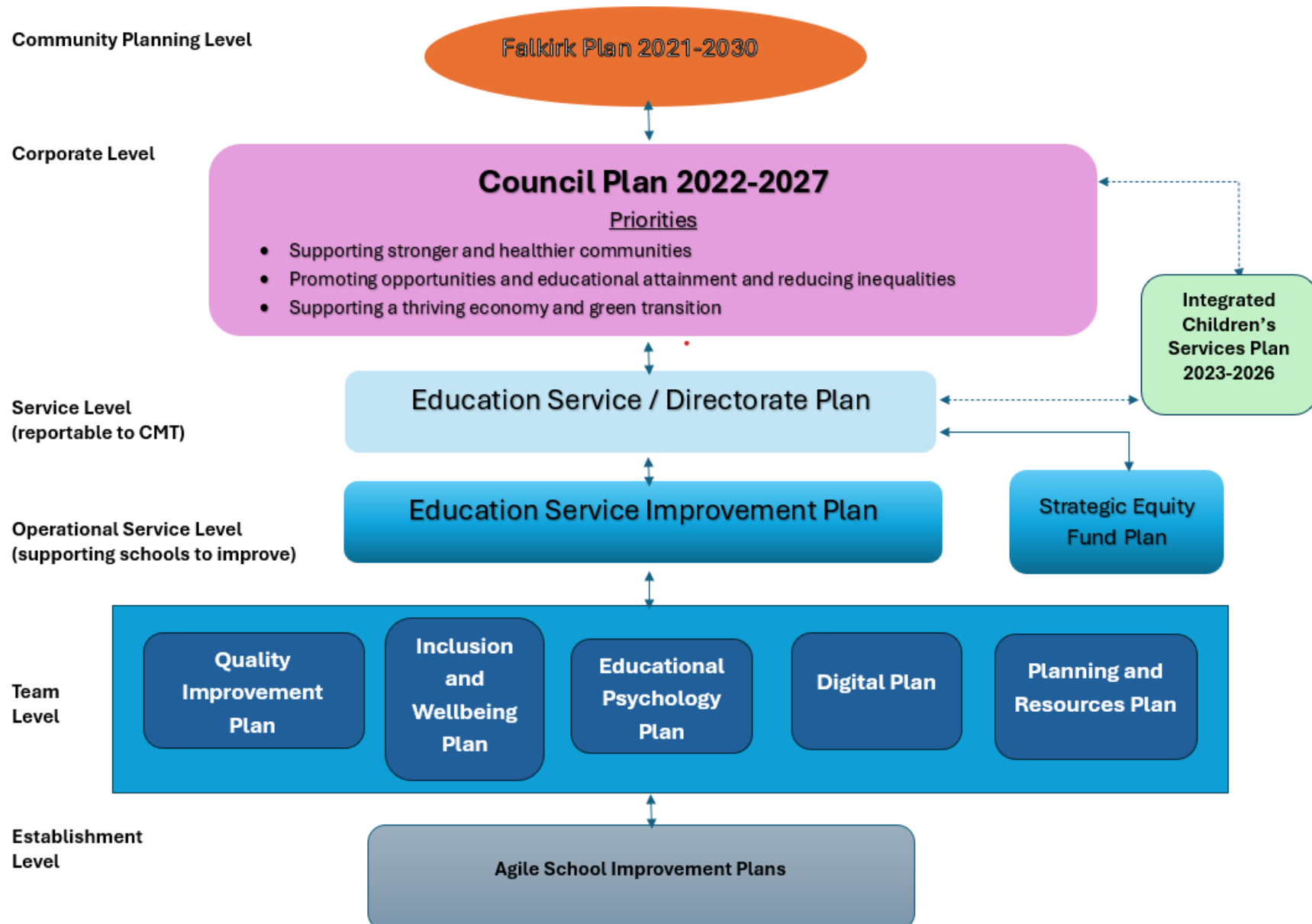




National Priorities

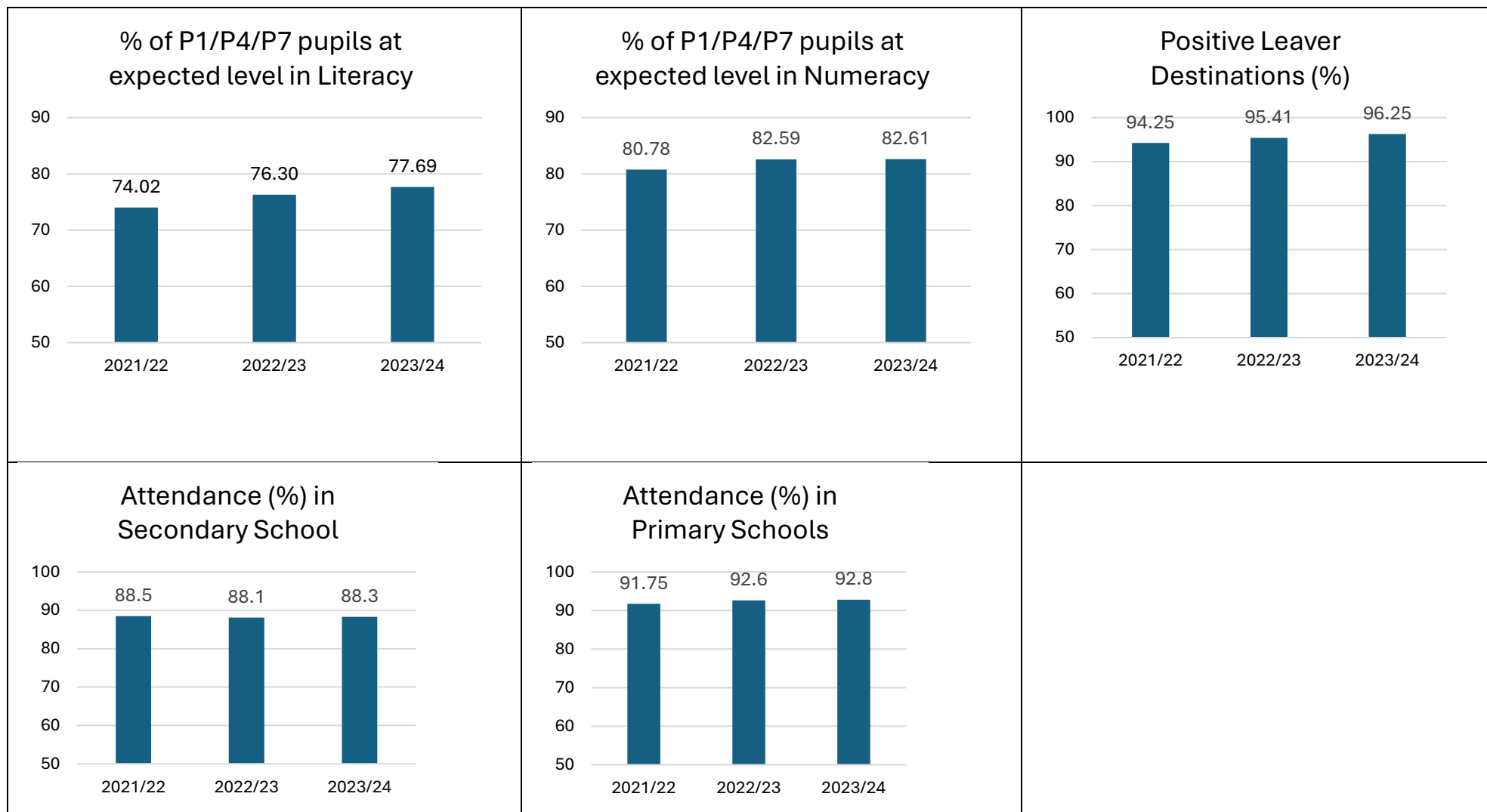
				
Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.	Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.	Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.	Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.	Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

LOCAL CONTEXT – PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE



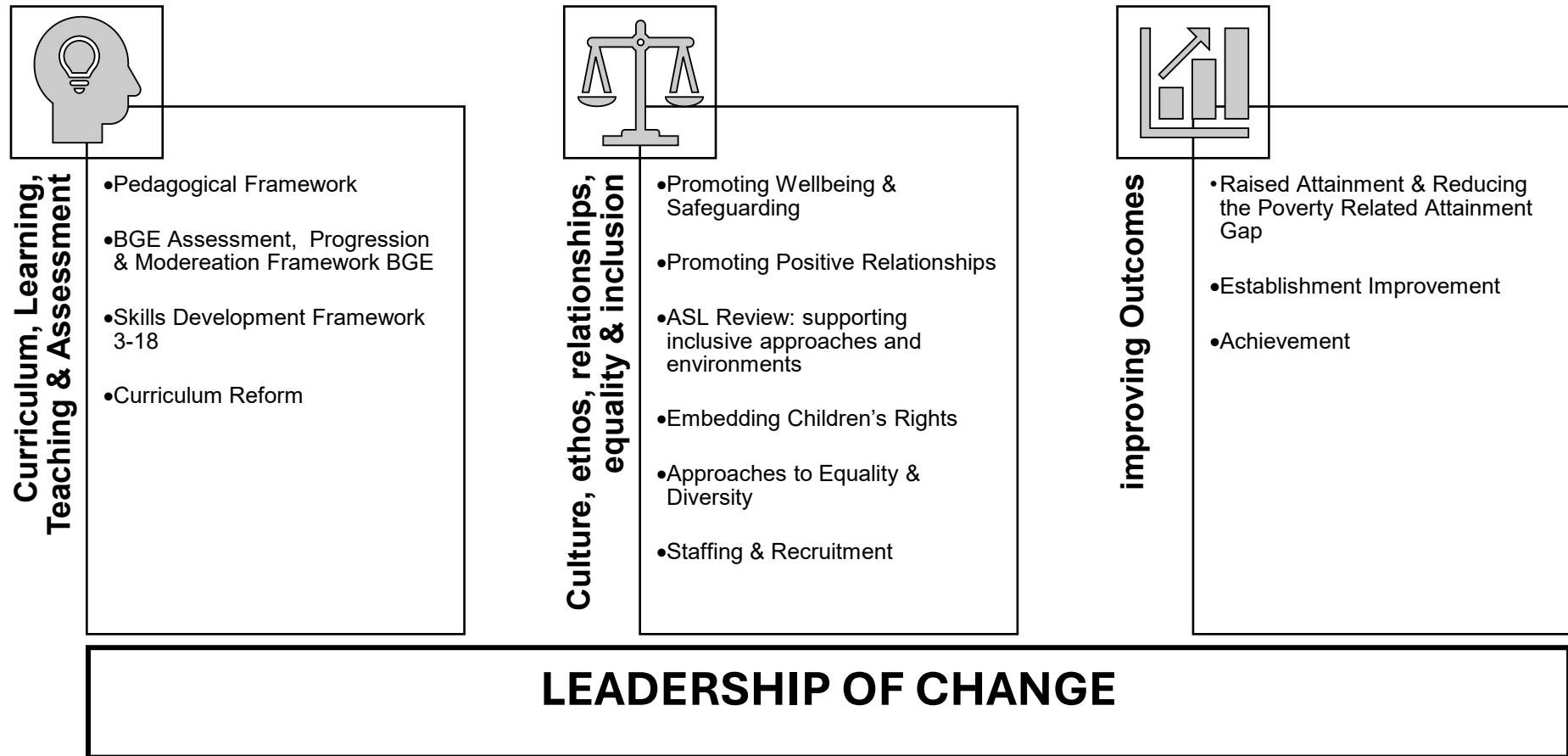


LOCAL CONTEXT – IMPROVEMENTS IN PERFORMANCE





LOCAL PRIORITIES – PILLARS OF IMPROVEMENT





Curriculum, Learning, Teaching & Assessment

- Pedagogical Framework including planning for effective learning
- Assessment, Moderation & Progression Framework BGE
- Progressive Skills Framework
- Curriculum Reform

NIF Drivers	What difference do we want to make?	Improvement Activities
Curriculum and Assessment Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism School and EL/C Improvement Parent / Carer Involvement and Engagement Performance Information	(i) Effective pedagogical approaches in schools and nurseries enable all children & young people to be successful, confident, responsible and effective in their learning.	(i) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop further the Leadership Strategy to include pedagogical leadership support for primary DHTs. • Within the Learning to Achieve policy, refresh the CLPL offer to focus on the development of highly effective pedagogy across all sectors, including the establishment of “Pedagogy Pods” at Carronshore PS, Grangemouth HS and the Learning Resource Service. • Deliver a comprehensive programme of professional learning for the effective teaching of mathematics including the provision of resource kits to schools via the Learning Resources Service. • Develop high-quality content for the Education Hub. • Update SCERTs (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Supports) strategy to support further development of neuro-affirming assessment, planning and target setting. • Develop guidance, training and moderation in effective target setting and tracking milestones in IEPs (Individual Education Plans) Child’s Plans and CSPs (Co-ordinated Support Plans). • Promote the presumption of mainstream by supporting settings to develop inclusive approaches and environments with a schedule of professional development, training and adaptations or provision of resources following audit of current state of readiness. • Provide guidance for primary schools in planning for effective learning. • Develop and launch an ASN Quality Assurance framework for different settings and sectors.



	<p>(ii) Teacher professional judgement of progress is valid and reliable, allowing high quality personalisation and choice in the BGE.</p> <p>(iii) Teacher professional judgement of attainment is valid and reliable and is based on a shared understanding of standards leading to children and young people making best possible progress.</p> <p>(iv) Children and young people understand and demonstrate a wide range of skills across a broad of range of contexts.</p> <p>(v) Practitioners at all levels are knowledgeable and confident to implement curriculum approaches as appropriate to their context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the consistent application of highly effective pedagogical practices and curriculum through Learning to Achieve Festivals and other showcase celebrations. Improve consistency in the use of digital approaches to everyday learning and teaching through delivery of a broader range of CLPL opportunities, and, through more frequent engagement with schools and nurseries. <p>(ii) & (iii)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement guidance to support the effective assessment and tracking of children's progress in literacy. Through our service level agreement with Speech and Language therapy, schools will be supported in a tiered approach to improving children's spoken language and communication skills, and the therapy partner model will be further promoted. Revise approaches to the gathering and use of attainment data. Develop a framework to support effective assessment, moderation & progression within and across sectors. <p>(iv)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building upon existing approaches, aligned to national skills frameworks and curriculum, develop and implement a Falkirk Skills Progression Framework 3-18. Develop a future-facing Employability & Apprenticeship Pathway to maximise vocational training and Foundation Apprenticeships. Introduce an in-house Foundation Apprenticeship Academy programme for Early Learning and Childcare. Launch ASN Transitions 14+ pathway, guidance and training. <p>(v)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish subject curriculum networks for practitioners. Provide support for early years practitioners in developing children's early language through the establishment of Equity Champions; and, through support from the Learning Resource Service to develop approaches to storytelling and story making. Develop Curriculum Improvement Cycle guidance with ASN cluster schools.
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Culture, ethos, relationships, equality & inclusion

- Promoting Wellbeing & Safeguarding
- Promoting Positive Relationships
- ASL Review: supporting inclusive approaches and environments
- Embedding Children's Rights
- Approaches to Equality & Diversity
- Staffing and Recruitment

NIF Drivers	What difference do we want to make	Improvement Activities
Curriculum and Assessment	<p>(i) All Children and young people, including those with protected characteristics, feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.</p> <p>(ii) Children and adults across our establishments benefit from positive and supportive relationships founded on a climate of mutual respect, shared values and high expectations.</p>	<p>(i)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy for Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Distressed Behaviours with associated workforce development plan. • Develop policy to support approaches to addressing the cost of the school day. Support school level Cost of the School Day charter. • With community partners, develop further approaches to the delivery of early learning and childcare entitlement. • Develop the range and quality of sensory resources available through the Learning Resources Service. to support children and young people with severe and complex additional support needs. <p>(ii)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with all stakeholders to review vision, values and aims for Falkirk's Education Service. • Co-ordinate the Reading for Empathy approach with early adopter schools in order to develop pupils' empathy skills. • Improve communication and access to supportive materials through the development of the 'Education Hub'. • Refresh the suite of leadership opportunities for senior leaders to support service-wide developments and collaborative autonomy.
Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism		
School and ELC Improvement		
Parent / Carer Involvement and Engagement		
Performance Information		



	<p>(iii) Children and young people have the right support at the right time to access learning opportunities within their local context.</p> <p>(iv) Children's Rights underpin all aspects of the work of the service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide development opportunities for future and aspiring leaders in all sectors. • Further develop approaches to engaging with parents at key points of transition, including ELC roadshows and ASN transitions. • Revise recruitment & selection guidance for the ELC sector to ensure the consistent application of values-based approaches. • Implement actions associated with the DSM Review. • Review approaches to the deployment, support and recruitment of supply teachers in the primary sector. <p>(iii) & (iv)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop early intervention parent-child playgroups to support children's early language and communication needs. • Lead the development of self-sustaining multi-agency locality groups to support family learning with families of nursery children. • Increase the uptake of early learning and childcare amongst eligible 2-year-olds. • Develop further family-centred approaches and childcare, including during school holidays. • Consult on the draft guidance: Accessibility Strategy & Supporting children and young people with healthcare needs in schools. • Develop a plan to further embed UNCRC and RRS in our schools and education policies • Consult, update and re-launch the Physical Intervention & Recording guidance and training programme. • Develop the Community Single Point of Contact framework for MHWB (Mental Health and Wellbeing) referrals and requests for support. • Carry out education pupil HWB survey and analyse data to support planning around MHWB supports. • Consult on and co-design Enhanced Support principles in Primaries with parents, children and staff. • Using Scottish Government Additional ASN funds, develop an Inclusion and School Support team of highly skilled practitioners and professionals to support the transformation of how schools meet children's needs closer to home with highly effective inclusive approaches and ASN pedagogy. • Re-design the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service to expand the reach of this service, including to care experienced children and young people.
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	<p>(v) Practitioners and school/establishment leaders are supported and empowered in their daily practice through high quality professional learning experiences and the provision of clear guidance and expectations linked to the service and establishment improvement priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an authority framework to improve education engagement and participation around vulnerable children and young people through the re-design of IWS. • Refresh ERG (Education Resource Group) guidance to provide improved advice and information for school staff and parents on next steps and options following an ERG decline. • Provide clarity on guidance for consideration of CSP at each Looked After review. <p>(v)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the Maybo Train the Trainers team and roll-out online modules in de-escalation approach and theory to all teaching staff. • Deliver an awareness raising session for all Heads of Establishment on ASNTS (Additional Support Needs Tribunals) and references to Tribunal for Disability Discrimination, CSP and 14+ Transition plans by parents and children over the age of 12. • Launch updated GIRFEC 'Team around the Child' support guidance. • Develop a Safeguarding supervision approach to support practitioners' resilience and to reflect and improve their safeguarding skills and knowledge. • Embed the Safe and Together approach in Education to ensure schools are cognisant of this approach when working with families. • Provide guidance to schools on Racial Literacy in line with updated national guidance. • Update Education anti-bullying guidance in line with updated national guidelines. • Promote Pedagogy for children with Neurodevelopmental differences. • Promote practice in meeting additional support needs in the Early years.
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Improving Outcomes

- The attainment of children and young people continues to improve across a range of excellence and equity measures.
- An increase in the percentage of schools evaluated as 'very good' or better for learning, teaching and assessment.
- Children and young people, as a result of their participation in a wide range of relevant and engaging learning experiences, are motivated to develop their skills for learning, life and work.
- Practitioners and school/establishment leaders are supported and empowered in their daily practice through high quality professional learning experiences linked to the service and establishment improvement priorities.



Resources Priorities for Schools

Action	By Whom?	Date
Introduce an in-house Foundation Apprenticeship Academy programme for Early Learning and Childcare.	Quality Improvement/Inclusion and Wellbeing Teams	By June 2026
Deliver teacher numbers for session 2025/26	Resources Team	By June 2026
Develop a job sizing strategy (SNCT posts)	Resources Team	By June 2026
Develop and implement the workforce plan across the Service	Resources Team	By June 2026
Undertake quarterly reviews of absence and manage absences in line with Council policy	Resources Team	By June 2026
Develop strategy (with digital solution) for management and payment of supply (devolved and non-devolved) teaching staff	Resources Team	By June 2026
Develop and implement a framework for communication and engagement with wider stakeholders	Resources Team	By June 2026
Improve communication and access to supportive materials through the development of the 'Education Hub'.	Resources / Digital Teams	By October 2026
Develop and implement the Parental Engagement Strategy	Resources Team	By June 2026
Establish the baseline for staff satisfaction of communication and engagement as a single service as part of the Employee Engagement Survey	Resources Team	October 2026
Support the development of a learning estate investment plan/strategy.	Resources Team	By June 2026
Investment in automation and AI technology in facilities to help drive greater efficiencies and enhance our digital growth	Resources Team	By June 2026
Implement actions associated with the DSM Review.	Resources Team	By June 2026
Prepare procurement guidance in line with Corporate Policy for use across education establishments and education service central team.	Resources Team	By June 2026



Increase the uptake of National Entitlement Cards for young people (Under 22 bus pass)	Resources Team	By June 2026
Increase the use of Parents Portal and iPay impact across all educational establishments.	Resources Team	By June 2026
Develop and implement a Service improvement action plan for responding to complaints, Freedom of Information Requests and Data requests.	Resources Team	By June 2026
Review Service risks with a view to moving to quarterly monitoring, review and reporting of risks.	Resource Team	By March 2026
Develop head of establishment and manager assurance statement checklist to demonstrate compliance of Council policies and procedures	Resource Team	By December 2025



Quantitative Measures

Key Areas	Measure	Actual 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Target 2024/25 (SEF)
QUALITY	HMIe Inspection Report Score of good or better	100.00%	100.00%	-
	Care Inspectorate Report Score of good or better	100.00%	100.00%	-
ATTENDANCE	Primary School Attendance Rates (per 100 pupils) (LGBF)	92.77%	92.80%	94.99%
	Q1 Primary School Attendance Rates (per 100 pupils) (LGBF)	89.62%	90.80%	92.20%
	GAP Primary School Attendance Rates (per 100 pupils) (LGBF) (% Points)	-5.35%	-4.20%	-3.00%
	Secondary School Attendance Rates (per 100 pupils) (LGBF)	88.26%	89.00%	89.60%
	Q1 Secondary School Attendance Rates (per 100 pupils) (LGBF)	84.76%	86.00%	87.93%
	GAP Secondary School Attendance Rates (per 100 pupils) (LGBF) (% Points)	-7.58%	-4.20%	-4.63%
ATTAINMENT (PRIMARY)	Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy (LGBF)	77.69%	78.00%	81.31%
	Q1 Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy (LGBF)	68.74%	70.00%	73.44%
	GAP Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy (% Points)	-18.20%	-15.00%	-12.86%
	Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy (LGBF)	82.61%	83.00%	85.81%
	Q1 Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy (LGBF)	74.73%	76.00%	80.60%
	GAP Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy (% Points)	-14.54%	-14.00%	-10.84%



Key Area	Measure	Actual 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Target 2024/25 (SEF)
ATTAINMENT (SECONDARY)	Percentage of leavers gaining 1+ awards at level 5	88.13%	90.00%	92.50%
	Percentage of leavers living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 1+ awards at level 5	79.40%	80.00%	82.00%
	GAP Percentage of leavers gaining 1+ awards at level 5 (% Points)	-18.34%	-17.00%	-16.00%
	Percentage of leavers gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (LGBF)	69.89%	72.00%	-
	Percentage of leavers living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (LGBF)	51.83%	50.50%	-
	Percentage of leavers gaining 1+ awards at level 6	69.49%	69.00%	72.50%
	Percentage of leavers living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 1+ awards at level 6	51.50%	52.00%	53.00%
	GAP Percentage of leavers gaining 1+ awards at level 6 (% Points)	-34.66%	-35.00%	-34.00%
	Percentage of leavers gaining 5+ awards at level 6 (LGBF)	39.66%	41.00%	-
	Percentage of leavers living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 6 (LGBF)	19.60%	22.00%	-
LEAVER OUTCOMES	Proportion of Leavers Entering Positive Destinations (LGBF)	96.25%	97.00%	97.1%
	Q1 Proportion of Leavers Entering Positive Destinations (LGBF)	94.68%	95.00%	95.1%
	GAP Proportion of Leavers Entering Positive Destinations (% Points)	-3.63%	-3.00%	-2.9%