

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE22 August 2024Report by Director of EducationDRAFT LITERACY AND ENGLISH STRATEGY 2024-27**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Education Committee on the evaluation undertaken of the Education Department's previous literacy strategy and seek approval for the refreshed Literacy and English strategy 2024 – 27.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Education Committee is asked to:
- a. Note the continued progress of the delivery of literacy and comment on the contents as outlined in this paper; and
 - b. Approve the new draft Literacy and English strategy for 2024 – 27.

BACKGROUND

3. Education Committee approved in June 2017 the Education Department's [Literacy Strategy](#) which outlined the ambition for all children and young people within the context of literacy.

4. The strategy identified six key aims over a three year period and a clear set of actions for the department, Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, schools and Adult Services to undertake in order to deliver these aims.

5. The Literacy Strategy aimed to improve:

- outcomes and reduce inequalities in literacy development;
- attainment in literacy throughout the years of the broad general education and senior phase;
- the employability skills of pupils, school leavers and adults;
- teacher confidence and competence in teaching literacy and English; and,
- the quality of learning and teaching.

6. The strategy aligned to the Education Department's vision of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*, with the commitment to raise standards of literacy for all, from early years to adulthood.

7. The Education Department planned to review the impact and progress of the Literacy Strategy during school session 2020 – 2021, however the Covid-19 global pandemic

interrupted these plans. Using a Collaborative Improvement Visit (CIV) model, the review was rescheduled for session 2023 – 2024.

8. The purpose of this Collaborative Improvement Visit (CIV) was to consider the impact made by the Education Department and schools (including ELC settings) in implementing the Literacy Strategy (2017 – 2020), and highlight the progress made against the expected outcomes. The scope of the review took account of the challenging context created by the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic along with the cost of living crisis.

9. The review team identified strengths and areas for improvement. They recommended a refreshed Literacy and English strategy to be agreed and implemented to drive these improvements.

REPORT

10. Using the Collaborative Improvement Model developed with colleagues in Education Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education, a review team was established containing Quality Improvement Officers, Head Teachers, Principal Teachers of Literacy and Education Scotland's Attainment Advisor.

11. The team observed learners' experiences in 8 establishments; 2 family centres, 5 primary schools and 2 secondary schools through 90 learning visits; conducted focus groups with Literacy Leaders, staff groups, pupil groups, Principal Teachers of English, Head Teachers, Cluster Chairs, and the Adult Learning Service; and took account of planning and assessment documentation and any other relevant information shared.

12. [Appendix 1](#) provides an executive summary of the findings of the review.

13. The attached strategy (Appendix 2) has been written by officers from the Education Department including Head Teachers, Principal Teachers of Literacy and led by a Quality Improvement Officer.

14. The strategy links clearly to the Education Department's vision '*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*' and sets out three main areas – pedagogy, progress and partnerships – detailing how we will ensure that all children and young people develop the literacy and English skills they need to be successful throughout life.

15. The refreshed Literacy and English Strategy aims to improve:

- the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in literacy and English
- outcomes and reduce inequalities in literacy and English development;
- attainment and achievement in literacy and English throughout the broad general education and senior phase;
- the development of real-life skills of pupils, school leavers and adults; and
- teacher confidence and competence in teaching literacy and English.

16. It will build on existing good practice in East Renfrewshire, use up-to-date research and evidence and ensure that literacy and English have a central and continuing focus in our ELC settings, schools and services.

17. The strategy sets out the actions that will be taken by the Education Department and

ELC settings, schools and services to deliver the 5 key aims in literacy and English. There are performance indicators and targets set and the timeframe over which the actions will be taken forward is the three-year period 2024-27.

18. Implementation will be monitored on an ongoing basis within the Education Department, with progress reported to Education Committee on an annual basis through yearly presentations on attainment and through the department's and schools' Standards and Quality Reports.

CONSULTATION

19. In formulating this Literacy and English Strategy, East Renfrewshire Council Education Department has demonstrated its commitment to taking into account the views of stakeholders. Staff from early years, primary and secondary schools and Adult Learning Services contributed during this process and consultation with parents, children and young people took place.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

20. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

CONCLUSION

21. The literacy strategy has made a significant impact on learners' experiences across ELC settings, schools and Adult Learning Services.

22. The impact of Covid on literacy and English outcomes for children living in poverty was significant and there requires a continued focus on tackling the impact of this in terms of attainment, with careful and considered use of Strategic and Pupil Equity Funding.

23. The refreshed strategy invites schools, services, agencies and families to work in partnership to raise the bar in terms of what all our children, young people and adults can achieve if we are to:

- raise attainment and break the link between poor literacy levels and deprivation;
- improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in literacy and English; and
- increase practitioner confidence and enhance professional practice in teaching literacy and English.

RECOMMENDATIONS

24. Education Committee is asked to:

- a. Note the continued progress of the delivery of literacy and comment on the contents as outlined in this paper; and
- b. Approve the new draft literacy and English strategy for 2024 – 27.

Director of Education
August 2024

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Appendices

1. Executive Summary Report on Literacy Strategy 2017 – 2020.
2. Draft Literacy and English Strategy 2024 – 2027.

Appendix 1**Review of Literacy and English
Collaborative Improvement Visit
May 2024****Evidence Findings****Scope of Review**

The Literacy and English Collaborative Improvement Visit (CIV) consisted of 3 phases.

Phase 1: Planning and preparation to determine the scope of the review with consideration given to the aims and outcomes of the Literacy Strategy and the impact of Covid-19, agree the methodology for gathering evidence and support and build capacity of the review team to support the process - December 2023.

Phase 2: Senior officers spent 3 weeks gathering evidence from 8 establishments which included direct observation of learning and teaching across all sectors, gathering peoples' views, analysing qualitative and quantitative data and reviewing documentation and resources. - January 2024.

Phase 3 – Focus on collaborative improvement - the information gathered during phase one and two of the review, along with the Secondary CIV of English which took place in October 2023 was analysed to secure improvement, share good practice and begin to identify priorities for the updated Literacy strategy 2024 – 2027 with a focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

During Phase 2 the Review Teams:

- observed learners' experiences in 8 establishments; 2 family centres, 5 primary schools and 2 secondary schools through 90 learning visits;
- conducted focus groups with Literacy Leaders, Staff groups, Pupil Groups, Principal Teachers of English, Head Teachers, Cluster Chairs, and the Adult Learning Service
- took account of planning and assessment documentation and any other relevant information shared.

Summary of Evidence

<i>How good is Literacy and English Attainment?</i>	
Focus Area:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment in literacy and English throughout the years of the broad general education and senior phase • Improved outcomes and reduced inequalities in literacy development
Lines of Enquiry:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have we raised attainment in literacy? • What impact has Covid had on delivering the strategy? • Which interventions have been successful in supporting the development of literacy skills?

There is evidence of very strong attainment across all sectors. The performance clearly shows added value from schools in terms of literacy and English. There is now more rigorous and on-going analysis of data to support children's attainment by senior leaders and extending to class teachers. Increasingly practitioners and senior leaders are confidently using a wider range of evidence to make robust triangulated judgements about learner's progress against the national standards, rather than relying on fixed 'gradients of learning' and standardised test scores as evidence of attainment. Attainment data suggest that teacher judgements for Talking & Listening are more accurate and robust. The ambition and drive to be the highest performing mainland authority is realistic and evident in the approach to tracking attainment, right down to individual pupils. The way forward is more about marginal gains than full scale improvements.

Staff know their children and families well; they have a sound understanding of the key equity groups in their classes and work collectively to address any barriers children may face. A carefully selected range of interventions and targeted support is being used effectively to meet children's needs and the impact of these is carefully monitored. However, there is still a need to focus on inequalities and closing of the poverty related attainment gap. Small gains achieved previously have been mitigated with the impact of Covid. Although there are definite signs of recovery, the accelerated pace in which our children from more affluent areas have recovered has led to an increase in the poverty related attainment gap.

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in both primary and secondary indicate a gender gap with girls outperforming boys in almost all measures. This gap is also evident in SQA attainment.

We therefore need to continue to prioritise reducing inequalities and closing the attainment gap in our next strategy.

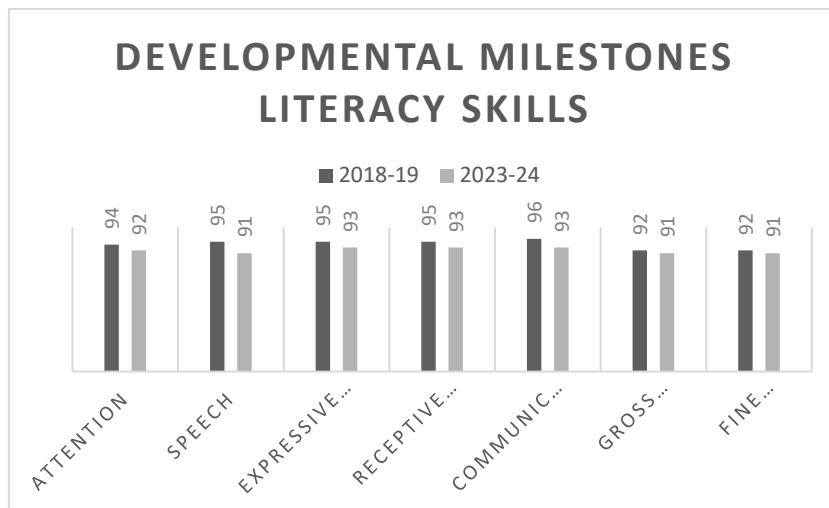
Developmental Milestones

On entry to primary 1 data is gathered in schools each year on the percentage of children achieving the expected levels of development across the following domains: Social, Emotional, Attention, Speech, Expressive Language, Receptive Language, Communication, Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills and Behaviour. In 2023-24 80% of children achieved these developmental milestones overall, compared to 84% in 2018-19.

For the first time, the proportion of children living in more affluent communities achieving their developmental milestones has fallen, with those in Quintile 1 achieving the same as those in Quintile 5. This may indicate the impact of a range of supports which are available to families living in Quintile 1 and 2 including; access to Early learning and Childcare from two years of age, access to hub provision during the pandemic, support from the Excellence and Equity Lead or support from Family First. It should be noted that numbers of pupils residing in quintile 1 are very low in East Renfrewshire.

In terms of literacy, data for all children shows decreases across all of the domains associated with reading, writing, talking and listening as shown in Chart 1 below:

Chart 1



These P1 children would have been between 12-24 months old when the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic came into effect in March 2020. Public Health reports have shown that children’s social, emotional and language development were impacted as a result of the pandemic.

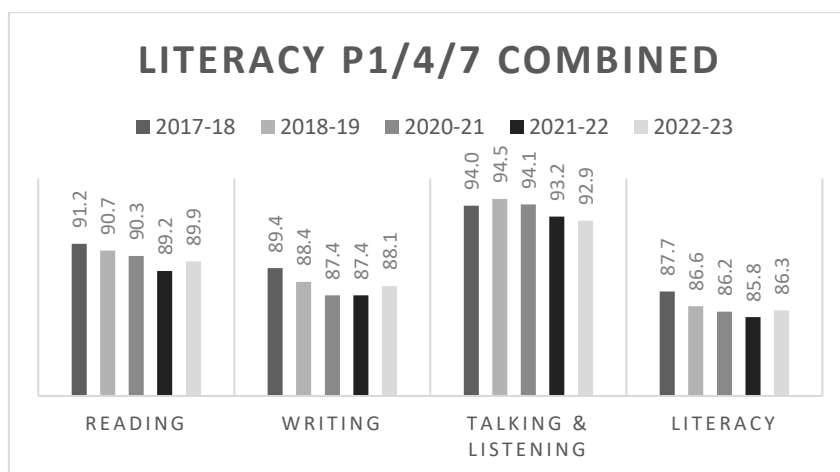
Baseline Assessments

Baseline Assessments in Primary 1 assess specific literacy components: Print Concepts, Rhyme, Letter Knowledge, Alliteration and Name. The authority average for percentage of literacy questions correct (raw scores) has remained consistently high at 60% since 2017-18; with a dip of 1% in 2019-20. Alliteration is the area that pupils find most difficult each year. Overall there is a persistent gap of approximately 8 points between children in SIMD Quintile 1 and those residing in Quintile 5. There is also a small gap evident between girls and boys, with girls outperforming boys by an average of 3 points.

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL)

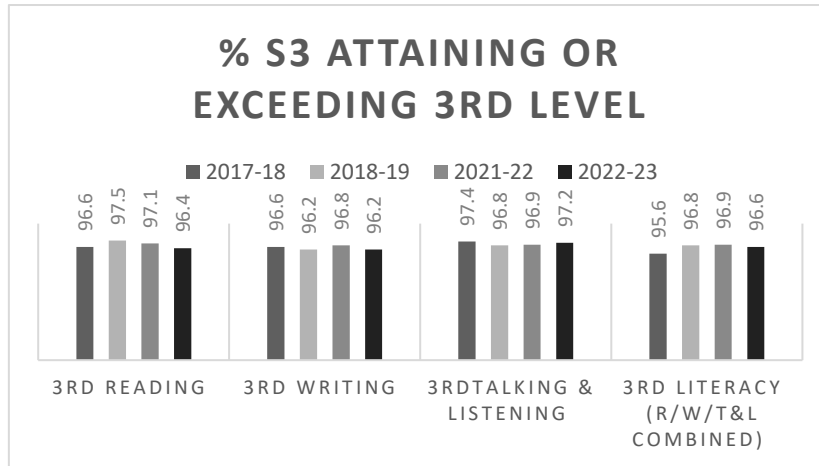
From 2017-2018 to 2022-23 attainment in literacy in the primary sector has remained fairly consistent. No data was recorded in 2019-20 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Each component follows a similar pattern each year with attainment in talking and listening being highest, and writing being lowest as shown in Chart 2 below:

Chart 2



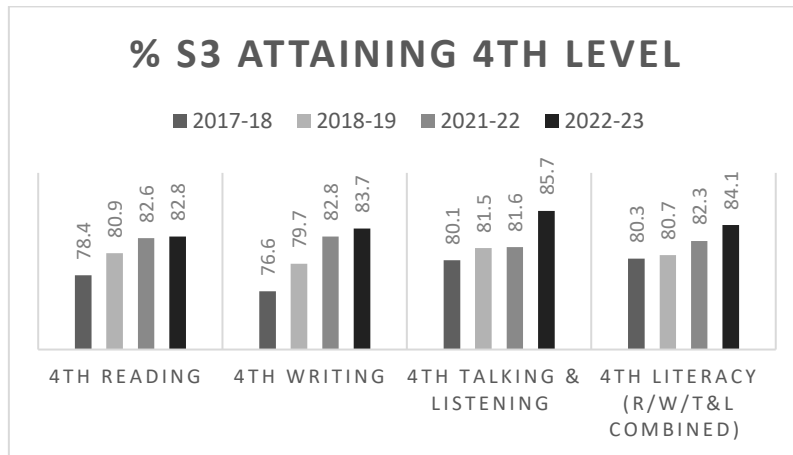
Secondary attainment (S3) at third level in reading, writing, talking and listening has remained consistently high and is significantly above the published national average figures. In 2022-23, attainment at CfE level 3 in reading and writing has decreased slightly since 2021-22 whilst conversely, attainment in talking and listening has increased. Overall, when, reading, writing and talking and listening are combined, attainment in level 3 literacy at S3 has remained relatively consistent as shown in Chart 3:

Chart 3



From 2018-19 to 2022-23, the proportion of S3 pupils (all) attaining CfE level 4 has increased across reading, writing, talking and listening as shown in Chart 4:

Chart 4



The attainment of children entitled to a free school meal has increased across most literacy areas, with the exception of reading, and those living in decile 1 or 2 areas have increased in reading and writing, with no change recorded for talking and listening; this indicates that the poverty related attainment gap has still been a factor for our most disadvantaged secondary aged pupils in S3 over the last five years.

SQA/Senior Phase

National 5 - presentation rates for National 5 English are high with 92.5% of S4 pupils presented in 2022-23. Performance remains strong with an average of 96% achieving A-C awards compared to 86% nationally. There was a 9% increase in A awards from 58% in 2019-20 to 67% in 2022-23.

Higher – most pupils in S5 are presented for Higher English with rates ranging from 84% in 2018-19 to 87% in 2022-23. Attainment at A-C in 2022-23 was 81% across S5/6 which is slightly lower than the pre-pandemic level of 83% in 2019-20, however remains higher than the national figure of 75%. Locally the proportion of A awards increased from 36 to 38% compared to a drop in A awards nationally from 29 to 25%.

Advanced Higher – The percentage of pupils achieving A-C awards at AH has increased from 77% in 2018-19 to 90% in 2022-23. Over this same period the national rate of A-C awards has fallen from 78 to 76%. The proportion of A Awards at Advanced Higher in East Renfrewshire has also increased and is now 36% compared to a national average of 20%.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Since 2018 there has been an increase in the number of learners undertaking the ESOL qualification. In 2018, 14 S4 learners were presented for National 5 ESOL with 100% achieving A Awards. In 2022/23 this figure had risen to 25 learners all of whom achieved A-C awards with 80% achieving an A. 14 learners were presented, and achieved Higher ESOL in 2018, in comparison to 40 learners presented for Higher ESOL in 2023 with 93% achieving A-C Awards.

Adult Learners

Adult Learning Services continue to work in partnership with West College Scotland and Clyde College to deliver a range of SQA accredited courses including; ESOL, Childcare and IT all of which require proficiency in literacy.

In 2022-23 the overall numbers of adult learners increased with 140 residents engaging with a range of learner centred programmes. This included an increase in the number of adult learners attending one or more ESOL courses. 105 adults accessed ESOL courses at all levels from complete beginners to upper intermediate. Adult Learning Services work in partnership with Clyde College for all ESOL provision. 21 adults successfully completed ESOL for Work programmes and 6 participants moved into employment after the course. 12 adults achieved an SQA ESOL qualification at National 4 level and 2 of these learners progressed from this course to further their studies at college. Adult learning services work with a high percentage of parents within their ESOL provision and the need for ESOL for Parents learning opportunities remain high with 42 parents successfully completing programmes aimed at improving skills, knowledge and confidence in relation to family learning goals.

The 2017 Literacy Strategy set a range of critical indicators and targets using the overall literacy measure at each stage to determine the impact of the strategy as detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Critical Indicator	2017-18	2022-23	Change	Target	2022-23 National
Increase % of pupils achieving CfE early level literacy or better by the end of Primary 1.	89.7%	86.5%	-3.2	92%	76%
Increase % of pupils achieving CfE first level literacy or better by the end of Primary 4.	87.6%	86.9%	-0.7	90%	70%

Increase % of pupils achieving CfE second level literacy or better by the end of Primary 7.	85.7%	85.5%	-0.2	87%	73%
Increase % of pupils achieving CfE third level literacy or better by the end of Secondary 3.	95.6%	95.6%	0	N/A	88%
Increase % of school leavers achieving Level 5 Literacy	94%	95%	+1	92%	81.5%

These targets have not been met in the primary sector as a result of the challenges faced since 2020, however attainment at all stages continues to be significantly higher than nationally published figures. The attainment of children entitled to a free school meal and those living in decile 1 or 2 areas has fluctuated during the period from 2017-18 to 2022-23; this indicates the impact of the global pandemic (Covid) on our most disadvantaged primary aged pupils in P1, P4 and P7 in terms of the poverty related attainment gap. In 2022-23 the gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 for combined P1, 4, 7 Literacy was 26.6%, the gap at S3 for Level 4 Literacy attainment was 19.8%.

The 2017 Literacy Strategy also set a range of critical indicators and targets for adult learning services as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Critical Indicator	2017-18	2022-23	Change	Target
Increase the % of adult learners working towards a literacy goal	75%	99%	+24	75%
Increase the % of adult learners achieving literacy goals.	90%	95%	+6	95%
Increase the % of adult learners achieving SQA accreditation for their literacy learning.	23%	10%	-13	35%

Since 2018, there has been an increase in the proportion of adult learners working towards a literacy goal. Over this period, an average of 96% of these learners have achieved their literacy goals each year, with 24% on average achieving SQA accreditation for their literacy learning. Adult learners continue progress to a range of positive destinations including volunteering roles, apprenticeships, further education, and paid employment.

Successful Interventions

Senior leaders, practitioners and parents described the impact of literacy interventions which supported children well. Schools make effective use of data to monitor children's progress and identify those who would benefit from additional support or intervention. Reading Recovery, Together Better Readers (TBR), Together Raising Attainment in Literacy (TRAIL) and Chatterbox were all successful in supporting the development of literacy skills in a

targeted way. Daily Literacy Learning has also been shown to improve literacy skills universally in the classes where it has been implemented and assessed. Data shows that 71% of children who participated in Reading Recovery in P2 went on to achieve age-expected levels. These gains were sustained through to P7 where 70% of pupils who had participated in Reading Recovery in P2 were now meeting or exceeding the National Standard.

<i>What do learners' experiences in Literacy and English look like?</i>	
Focus Area:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of learning, teaching and assessment • The employability skills of pupils, school leavers and adults
Lines of Enquiry:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well has the curriculum been developed to support learning in literacy? • How has pedagogy improved in the teaching of literacy? • How well have partnerships supported learners' achievements in literacy?

Children and young people in East Renfrewshire want to do well in their learning. In almost all play spaces and classrooms they are motivated and engaged in their learning and the relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive.

In ELC settings the learning environments are literacy rich, they promote and nurture early communication and language well and demonstrate a clear sense of children's ownership of the spaces. Children's work is proudly displayed and there is an effective balance of different types of print. Experienced practitioners continue to deliver appropriate adult-led experiences to support literacy learning, such as Hanen storytelling, ABC music and Helicopter Stories. To date, 6 ELC settings have been validated as Promoting and Nurturing Early Communication and Language, an internal accreditation by Education and Speech and Language Therapy, which recognises the commitment and focus by the setting on improving the development of literacy across the curriculum in a holistic way. The target set in the 2017 strategy was that 100% of all settings would achieve this validation however the challenges of the global pandemic, implementation of the Early Learning and Childcare expansion and the capacity of services to provide support has slowed progress in this area.

All schools use the skills frameworks which were revised as part of the Literacy Strategy. These are available for reading, writing, talking and listening from early to fourth level and provide consistent curriculum pathways. This enables a strong cluster approach to learning and mitigates from the "fresh start" approach at key transition stages. Although the curriculum framework provides consistency in terms of content, there is still evidence of conflicting pedagogies in ELC, Primary and Secondary. This is particularly evident in approaches to the teaching of reading and the associated skills.

There is increasing evidence that practitioners in ELC and Primary settings are using real-life contexts, building on learners' interests and skilfully making connections across the curriculum to provide relevance and enjoyment and make links to the world of work. Teachers are choosing engaging texts in various media and ensuring an increasing range of culturally responsive texts are used to promote equality and diversity. Staff are committed to improve the curriculum in literacy and English building on strengths and tackling key areas for improvement. However, in Secondary schools in particular, there is scope for staff to take further responsibility for developing literacy and English across the curriculum

Reflecting on the previous review of literacy and English (2014) pedagogy is an improving picture. Up to date research has influenced the CLPL offer, with a focus on approaches to

reading in early years and Primary School. This has supported practitioners to begin to integrate more meaningful literacy learning into their playrooms and classrooms as part of a play and enquiry based approach to learning. This provides learners with the valuable opportunities they need to apply the skills learned in literacy and English across learning in meaningful contexts. In addition, most settings are making increasingly effective use of outdoor spaces within and beyond their school to provide learners with outdoor learning experiences which enable them to apply and deepen their literacy skills – there is scope to develop this further in Secondary schools.

Most learners were provided with high quality experiences that were well planned, promoted curiosity and enquiry and staff used questioning effectively to extend pupils' thinking and deepen learning. Formative assessment approaches such as self and peer assessment and effective use of learning intentions and co-constructed success criteria are well embedded in teacher's practice. Almost all teachers used effective and skilful questioning to clarify learners' understanding, knowledge and skills. There remains scope to improve the quality of feedback, and ensure that learners have time to act on the feedback they receive.

Opportunities for pupils to lead their own learning have improved significantly. Learners are also benefitting from applying their literacy skills as they lead change and improvement in their schools through committees, pupil parliaments and intergenerational work which supports application of skills in real life contexts. Further opportunities for both learning and application of skills can be seen through creative approaches to Inter Disciplinary Learning (IDL) and 'masterclass' type activities which integrate learning from across the literacy disciplines. All schools participate in a wide range of activities to promote reading for enjoyment including; World Book day, P1 Bookbug, summer reading challenges and Reading Schools Accreditation. Digital technologies were used effectively in the majority of lessons to enhance learners' experiences and provide support through assistive technologies such as talk to text.

Overall although almost all learners' experiences were positive, motivating, engaging and active, there is still an inconsistency from class to class and school to school. To make the marginal gains required, we need to bring about consistency for all learners. The 2014 literacy and English review highlighted differentiation and challenge as areas for improvement, this appears to still be an issue in 2024. This is particularly evident in Primary One where whole class teaching does not take cognisance of, or meet, the varying needs of young learners. There also continues to be a need for schools to develop a progressive approach to the teaching and assessment of listening and talking skills.

Adult Learning Services support adults to achieve their employability-related goals. The service works closely with partner organisations to enhance the learning opportunities on offer and engage with those people who would benefit most from the service. Since the introduction of the literacy strategy, additional literacy support was provided to supplement and develop employability skills. Learners used these skills to update their Curriculum Vitae, write cover letters, and apply for work and volunteering positions. Through the Individual Learning Planning process almost all learners identified and took up progression opportunities.

The service works in partnership with a range of partners, include Further Education establishments. This enables the service to offer adults accredited courses in the community, including learners completing SQA National ESOL Literacies courses and ESOL for Work course.

What are stakeholders telling us about literacy and English?	
Focus Area:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher confidence and competence in teaching literacy and English
Lines of Enquiry:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well has the curriculum been developed to support learning in literacy? • How has pedagogy improved in the teaching of literacy? • How well have partnerships supported learners' achievements in literacy? • Which interventions have been successful in supporting the development of literacy skills?

Learners are articulate, enthusiastic and keen to learn. The views of pupils in primary schools regarding learning in literacy and English, shared through focus groups, are very positive. They enjoy learning within a positive environment, taking responsibility for their learning with help from their teacher when they need it. They do however believe that they should have more choice about what and how they learn. In Secondary questionnaires, however, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of learners reporting that they enjoy learning in English (68%) compared to 84% in 2018 and an average of 82% across all other subjects. In focus groups learners offered a range of explanations why this may be the case including a perception that English is hard and there is an emphasis on assessment rather than on learning and enjoyment. In almost all observed lessons however, learners were engaged in and motivated by appropriately relevant and meaningful learning experiences. Practitioners ensured that learners understood the purpose of their learning through clear explanations and instructions and explicit connections between prior and future learning. In Secondary Schools approaches to personal reading time had been reviewed and evaluated since the 2018 CIV. As a result, the pace of learning and well established routines allowed learners and practitioners to benefit from maximised learning time.

The updated skills framework has supported learning and teaching and literacy across the curriculum. However, pupils were not confident at describing literacy skills. Formative assessment is also a strength, however some pupils still perceive an overreliance by staff on summative assessment in Secondary Schools and the upper stages of Primary School. Learners across the sectors told us that they often find their work too easy, and they get bored when teachers talk too much, they prefer learning experiences which are challenging and engaging rather than passive listening and repetitive tasks. Learners are motivated by current events in the world; they care about the health and wellbeing of themselves, their families, their community and the planet. Although they indicate that opportunities to use their literacy skills are evident across the curriculum, there is limited evidence of this being taught in real life contexts that matter to learners.

Staff across all sectors are very positive about literacy and English. They highlight the quality CLPL, which has been delivered as part of the literacy strategy, as having a positive impact on learners' experiences. The strategy included a critical indicator related to increasing the number of staff reporting that literacy CLPL has impacted positively on classroom practice. The CLPL offer has included a blend of face to face sessions, online sessions, and online independent learning via online platforms such as the Literacy Locker and Early Years Glow Group covering a range of topics. In addition, the Primary Principal Teachers of Literacy have delivered bespoke CLPL on request for schools and clusters, in line with each setting's improvement priorities. Almost all evaluations for Literacy and English CLPL provided continue to be extremely positive.

In addition to the subject specific CLPL practitioners have also benefitted from support for curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment and moderation. The alignment of

departmental priorities is supporting their capacity to teach this curricular area with confidence. The role of departmental staff was highlighted by literacy leads as instrumental in raising the profile of literacy and English across schools as well as providing essential CLPL. This included the Educational Psychology Team and the Principal Teachers of Literacy.

Practitioners are keen to learn with and from each other; they collaborate well to take forward school and cluster priorities. Teachers have taken on leadership roles related to literacy, including those who trained to become Reading Recovery teachers, as well as Pupil Equity Funded Principal Teachers. Teacher confidence in teaching reading, and literacy as a whole, has improved as a result of highly effective CLPL, including professional inquiry and accessing central digital platforms such as the Literacy Locker and Early Years Glow group. Teachers welcome professional learning opportunities which enable them to learn with and from each other as they develop their confidence and practices in teaching literacy and English. There is scope to develop a learning network of 'Literacy Leaders' similar to the leadership role of the Maths Champions to make a positive impact through the sharing of key knowledge, training and resources with the wider staff.

Principal Teachers of English have established a strong ethos of collaboration across the local authority. The English Subject Group is committed to using the programme of collaborative improvement visits as a catalyst to further share best practice in learning and teaching. There is collaborative practice and sharing of expertise within all departments. In all schools, most practitioners actively contributed to self-evaluation activity relating to their collaborative improvement visits. Practitioners continue to benefit from participating in local authority moderation events and are involved in departmental activities which are increasing overall confidence in making professional judgements about how well young people are learning and progressing. In all departments, benchmarks are used increasingly well to define standards that children and young people need to meet to achieve a level. This is supporting improved accuracy of S3 teacher judgements and beginning to demonstrate greater alignment with Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (ACEL) at Level 4, and attainment of National 4 and 5 English.

Adult learners report that improving their English language skills enables them to feel better equipped when applying for work and to understand the employment system in Scotland. Almost all learners reported using their increased literacy skills in other areas of life including supporting children with homework, communicating more confidently with their children's school, filling in work or volunteering-related forms and undertaking college course work.

Key Recommendations

Pedagogy

The Local Improvement Plan 2024-27 emphasises the need for an education system that motivates and inspires learners and nurtures a love for learning and learning behaviour for life. We want children and young people to have learned how to learn and have the capacity to continue to learn beyond school. High quality pedagogy from early years to senior phase is required, within a curriculum that is relevant, flexible and responsive.

Literacy and English are central to this ambition, therefore, to improve pedagogy in the teaching of literacy and English we need:

- A refreshed CLPL programme focusing on pedagogy, with a particular focus on the seven design principles of Curriculum for Excellence – challenge and enjoyment, breadth, coherence, personalisation and choice, relevance, progression and depth.
- To clarify the role of practitioners in all sectors when teaching reading, writing, talking and listening. This must include observation, responsive planning, approaches to assessment and facilitation of play and enquiry based approaches that support learning.
- Literacy rich environments that motivate and inspire learners and promote creativity, curiosity and problem solving whilst learning and applying transferable skills.
- ELC settings and schools to review and improve their literacy and English curriculum ensuring it is relevant, flexible and responsive and that all practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities in teaching literacy skills across the curriculum.
- To build the capacity of all practitioners across the sectors to understand and teach the fundamental aspects of learning to read across all levels, adapting established programmes for local contexts with a deepened understanding of what is important.

Progress

It is vital that our curriculum and pedagogy is matched appropriately to the needs of our learners, ensuring all have the right weighting of challenge and support to enable them to make appropriate progress and flourish as individuals. We know that not all learners have the same opportunities, therefore equity is at the heart of our approach to attainment.

To support all children to make the best possible progress we need:

- To carefully consider our attainment data to identify and understand the gaps.
- To understand and address the barriers to attainment faced by particular groups of children and individuals e.g. Improving attendance, research-based approaches to supporting boys' literacy and English.
- School leaders who make effective use of qualitative and quantitative data related to attainment in literacy and English ensuring they know the stories and faces behind the data.
- To build the capacity and confidence of teachers to use data to inform learning, teaching and assessment.
- Teachers who have high expectations and ambition for all learners, who have a deep understanding of progression in literacy and English and use this to make robust and reliable judgements of learner's progress within and across levels.
- Clear guidance on the role of school leaders in supporting and challenging teachers to make accurate and robust judgements of learners' progress.
- To increase collaboration between schools to maximise the effective use of Pupil Equity Funding and promote opportunities to work together to plan, measure and track impact of interventions
- To reconsider the use of 'gradients of learning' to ensure that progression pathways are not limited and promote pace and challenge for all learners, including those who exceed the national standard.
- Teachers who meet the needs of all learners via effective differentiation, challenge and adaptive teaching which responds to their understanding of individual learners, rather than groups.

Partnerships

The Education Department is an empowered, connected, self-improving education system focused on excellence through equity for all children and young people. We foster a supportive environment where all children, young people, parents and staff feel valued, encouraged and

equipped to take initiative and make meaningful contributions to school improvement. Collaboration within, across and beyond ELC settings, schools and services in our local authority is the synergy which will enable us to achieve our collective goals and aspirations for learners, parents, services, staff, partners and the school community.

To make the changes we want to see in Literacy and English we must work together in partnership. We need:

- A council wide approach to supporting literacy development in the early years.
- To collaborate with other agencies and services such as Speech & Language therapists, to support communication and language development.
- More opportunities for practitioners to look outwards and collaborate with others beyond their setting.
- A network of Literacy Leads in ELC and Primary sectors to enable coaching and modelling in their settings.
- A comprehensive professional learning programme which focuses on levels rather than sectors and promotes greater collaboration.

Appendix 2

**Draft Literacy and English Strategy
2024-2027**

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Foreword by Councillor Andrew Anderson, Convener for Education, Equalities, Culture and Leisure

As the Convener for Education, Equalities, Culture and Leisure, it is my pleasure to introduce the Education Department's refreshed strategy for Literacy and English 2024-2027.

Literacy and English skills are fundamental to individual success and societal development. The ability to read, write and communicate effectively in English is an essential life skill required to succeed and support our children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

The Education Department undertook a phased review of the previous Literacy Strategy – 2017-2020, to identify the progress and impact for our learners. This focused upon attainment and achievement, learners' experiences and the views of children, young people, adult learners, staff, parents and wider partners.

Despite the impact of the Covid-19 Global Pandemic, the review highlighted significant improvement in terms of literacy experiences and progress in our ELC settings, schools and Adult Learning Services, however it also identified key themes for improvement – Pedagogy, Progress and Partnerships.

The refreshed strategy is structured around these themes and sets out key aims we will be working to achieve over the next three years and the clear set of actions required to bring about further improvement within the context of literacy and English.

This strategy aims to empower children, young people, adult learners, staff and parents with the skills required to improve literacy and English for all in East Renfrewshire.

Councillor Andrew Anderson
Convener for Education, Equalities, Culture and Leisure

Introduction

“Literacy is much more than an educational priority – it is the ultimate investment in the future and the first step towards all the new forms of literacy required for the twenty-first century. We wish to see a century where every child is able to read and to use this skill to gain autonomy.”

Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General

A Definition of Literacy:

‘the set of skills which allows an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful.’ Literacy development starts at birth; therefore improvements cannot be confined to a particular sector or point in a learner’s journey. Parents are at the beginning of that journey, nurturing and promoting their children’s language acquisition and development. Early learning and childcare establishments and schools develop children and young people’s basic and advanced literacy skills and in adulthood the ongoing development of literacy skills helps to advance progress on to a sustainable destination.

The overarching aim of the strategy is therefore to raise standards of literacy and English for all from the early years to adulthood.

The strategy will build on existing good practice in East Renfrewshire and ensure that literacy and English will have a central and continuing focus in education and other related policies. The strategy is supported by a set of principles and is meant to provide strategic direction to our early years, school staff and Adult Learning Service. It recognises the need to work with parents and partners to improve literacy across East Renfrewshire’s population.

Background and Context

The Education Department conducted a review of literacy using a Collaborative Improvement model to review the progress and impact of the 2017-2020 Literacy Strategy and reflect on the challenges created by the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic along with the cost of living crisis.

The review team identified significant progress in implementing the previous Literacy Strategy and highlighted key strengths including:

- very strong attainment across all sectors;
- articulate and enthusiastic learners;
- more confident use of data to target interventions and measure impact;
- high quality CLPL which has increased teacher confidence and competence; and
- developments in pedagogy.

The team also identified scope for further improvement which has informed the development of this refreshed strategy whilst taking account of ERC Strategic Equity Funding Plan 2022-26, the DYW Action Plan 2022-25, the Social Justice Strategy, ERC Learning and Teaching Framework and the National Improvement Framework.

The National Improvement Framework (NIF) sets out the vision and priorities for Scottish education. This strategy is closely aligned to the key priorities of the NIF:

- 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 attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

The NIF sets out the national improvement activity that needs to be undertaken to help deliver those key priorities. This includes the National Response to Improving Literacy (NRIL) which will:

- update and improve the literacy curriculum in CfE, strengthening the role of knowledge and repositioning literacy at the centre of learning across all curricular areas
- implement improvement in children's classroom experiences through professional learning and support for educators with a focus on:
 - core skills, knowledge and experiences that children need to develop competence in the basic tools for literacy,
 - research-informed pedagogical approaches that support children and young people to develop creative and critical thinking within reading, writing and listening/talk,
 - supporting progression in literacy knowledge and skills for all, through improved approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

This strategy is aligned to the Education Department's vision and to the Local Improvement Plan 2024-27 which encourages all of us to focus rigorously on the quality of education we provide, and lead with both ambition and authenticity, to ensure that we improve outcomes for all.

The strategy sets out three main areas which are needed to ensure that our education system motivates and inspires learners and nurtures a love for learning and learning behaviour for life:

- pedagogy,
- progress, and;
- partnerships.

The strategy highlights the central importance of literacy in ensuring that our children and young people learn how to learn and have the capacity to continue to learn beyond school. High quality **pedagogy** from early years to senior phase is required, within a curriculum that is relevant, flexible and responsive.

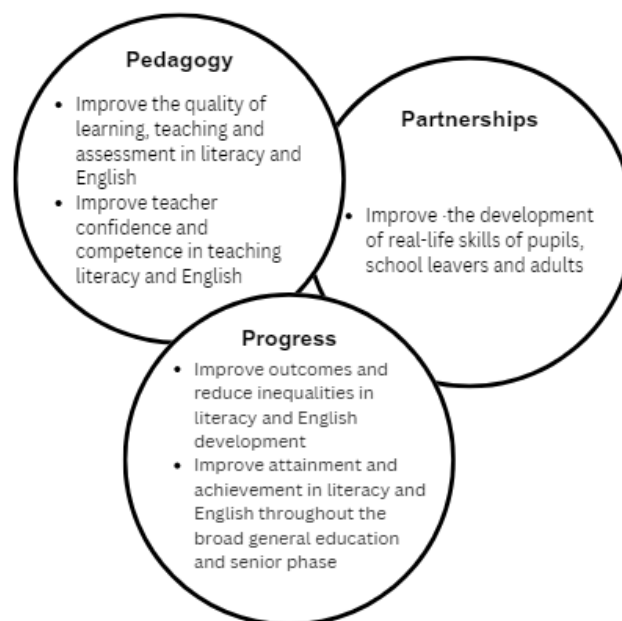
It is imperative that we work together to cultivate positive values and attitudes, igniting that joy and love of learning, which leads to curiosity, creativity and a commitment to lifelong education. Therefore, we must support all children and young people to **progress** in the literacy skills and knowledge needed for 21st century learning.

Collaboration is a key driving force as we strive to improve outcomes and experiences for all our learners. Strengthening **partnerships** within, across and beyond ELC settings, schools and services will enable us to achieve our collective goals and aspirations for learners, parents, services, staff, partners and the school community.

By focusing on pedagogy, progress and partnerships we have set out 5 key improvement aims:

To improve:

- the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in literacy and English
- outcomes and reduce inequalities in literacy and English development;
- attainment and achievement in literacy and English throughout the broad general education and senior phase;
- the development of real-life skills of pupils, school leavers and adults; and
- teacher confidence and competence in teaching literacy and English.



The following sections set out the actions that will be taken by the Education Department, schools and settings to deliver the key aims in literacy and English. The timeframe over which these actions will be taken forward is the three-year period 2024-27.

Pedagogy

The Local Improvement Plan 2024-27 emphasises the need for an education system that motivates and inspires learners and nurtures a love for learning and learning behaviour for life. We want children and young people to have learned how to learn and have the capacity to continue to learn beyond school. High quality pedagogy from early years to the senior phase is required, within a curriculum that is relevant, flexible and responsive.

Literacy and English are central to this ambition. Therefore, to improve pedagogy in the teaching of literacy and English we will:

- Provide a refreshed CLPL programme focusing on pedagogy, with a particular focus on the seven design principles of Curriculum for Excellence – challenge and enjoyment, breadth, coherence, personalisation and choice, relevance, progression and depth.
- Clarify the role of practitioners in all sectors when teaching reading, writing, talking and listening. This must include observation, responsive planning, approaches to assessment and facilitation of play and enquiry based approaches that support learning.
- Support and challenge establishments to provide literacy rich environments that motivate and inspire learners and promote creativity, curiosity and problem solving whilst learning and applying transferable skills.
- Ensure ELC settings and schools review and improve their literacy and English curriculum ensuring it is relevant, flexible and responsive and that all practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities in teaching literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Build the capacity of all practitioners across the sectors to understand and teach the fundamental aspects of learning to read across all levels, adapting established programmes for local contexts with a deepened understanding of what is important.

Progress

It is vital that our curriculum and pedagogy is matched appropriately to the needs of our children, young people and adult learners, ensuring all have the right weighting of challenge and support to enable them to make appropriate progress and flourish as individuals. We know that not all learners have the same opportunities, therefore equity is at the heart of our approach to attainment.

To support all learners to make the best possible progress we will:

- Carefully consider our attainment data to identify and understand the gaps at all stages from 3-18
- Understand and address the barriers to attainment faced by particular groups of children and individuals e.g. improving attendance, research-based approaches to supporting boys' literacy and English.
- Support and challenge leaders to make effective use of qualitative and quantitative data related to attainment in literacy and English ensuring they know the stories and faces behind the data.
- Build the capacity and confidence of teachers and practitioners to use data to inform learning, teaching and assessment.
- Encourage and challenge teachers and practitioners to have high expectations and ambition for all learners, have a deep understanding of progression in literacy and English and to use this, to make robust and reliable judgements of learners' progress within and across the levels of the Broad General Education (BGE), with a focus on attainment in S3.
- Provide clear guidance on the role of leaders in supporting and challenging teachers and practitioners to make accurate and robust judgements of learners' progress across the BGE.
- Increase collaboration between schools to maximise the effective use of Pupil Equity Funding and promote opportunities to work together to plan, measure and track impact of interventions.
- Reconsider and provide advice on the use of 'gradients of learning' in the BGE to ensure that progression pathways are not limited and promote pace and challenge for all learners, including those who exceed the national standard.
- Ensure teachers and practitioners meet the needs of all learners via effective differentiation, challenge and adaptive teaching which responds to their understanding of individual learners, rather than groups.
- Offer a range of learning opportunities for adult learners to gain skills for learning, life and work, including ESOL, adult literacy and digital skills programmes.

Partnerships

The Education Department is an empowered, connected, self-improving education system focused on excellence through equity for all children and young people. We foster a supportive environment where all children, young people, parents and staff feel valued, encouraged and equipped to take initiative and make meaningful contributions to school improvement. Collaboration within, across and beyond ELC settings, schools and services in our local authority is the synergy which will enable us to achieve our collective goals and aspirations for learners, parents, services, staff, partners and the school community.

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- Collaborate with other agencies and services such as Speech & Language therapists, to support communication and language development.
- Encourage opportunities for practitioners to look outwards and collaborate with others beyond their setting.
- Develop a network of Literacy Leads in ELC and Primary sectors to enable coaching and modelling in their settings.
- Provide a comprehensive professional learning programme which focuses on levels rather than sectors and promotes greater collaboration.
- Maintain and extend partnerships between adult learning services and colleges to increase the opportunities of residents to access accredited courses within the local community.

As a result of the activities set out in this strategy, we expect to see:

Strategy Focus	Expected outcome/impact
Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced professional practices in teaching reading, writing and talking and listening in English and across the curriculum • increased practitioner confidence in teaching reading, writing and talking and listening in English and across the curriculum • improved curriculum pathways and learning experiences for all children and young people • increased % of staff responding positively in authority questionnaires to 'staff have a shared understanding of their 'responsibility of all' in literacy and numeracy and health and wellbeing'
Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attainment in literacy and English of children and young people, specifically in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy in the broad general education, - National examinations in the senior phase including English and ESOL • A reduction in the attainment equity gap in relation to gender, language acquisition, additional support needs, poverty and care experienced children and young people. • Increased % of adult learners working towards a literacy goal. • Increased % of Adult Learners achieving their literacy goals.
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased % of children achieving developmental milestones related to literacy • increased % of teachers/support staff responding positively in authority questionnaires - 'I am given the opportunity/encouraged to learn and share practice with colleagues from other schools/settings.' • Increased number of staff reporting that engagement in literacy and English CLPL has impacted positively on practice • Increased % of adult learners achieving SQA accreditation for their literacy learning.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators	2022-23 value	2023-24 Value	ERC Targets 2022-26
% of pupils (P1,P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in literacy (R,W,T&L)	88%	89%	89.3%* (2023-24 Stretch Aim Target)
% of pupils (P1,P4 and P7 combined) from SIMD Q1 achieving expected levels or better in literacy (R,W,T&L)	64%	72%	71.6%* (2023-24 Stretch Aim Target)
% of S3 pupils achieving fourth level in literacy (R,W,T&L)	80%	83%	*N/A
% of S3 pupils from SIMD Q1 achieving fourth level in literacy (R,W,T&L)	67%	82%	*N/A
Proportion of school leavers attaining literacy at SCQF level 5	95%	Available mid-Sep	94%* ERC target is for leavers attaining literacy at SCQF level 5 or better.
Proportion of school leavers attaining literacy at SCQF level 6	81%	Available mid-Sep	94%* ERC target is for leavers attaining literacy at SCQF level 5 or better
Increase the % of adult learners working achieving literacy goals	95%	98%	*N/A
Increase the % of adult learners achieving SQA accreditation for their literacy learning	19% (3yr average)	17%	*N/A
increase % of children achieving developmental milestones related to literacy	92%	92%	*N/A
increase % of teachers/support staff responding positively in authority questionnaires - 'I am given the opportunity/ encouraged to learn and share practice with colleagues from other schools/settings.'	84% - teachers 53% - support staff	84% teachers 53% Support Staff	*N/A
increased % of teachers responding positively in authority questionnaires to 'staff have a shared understanding of their 'responsibility of all' in literacy and numeracy and health and wellbeing'	92%	92%	N/A

increase the number of staff reporting that engagement in literacy and English CLPL has impacted positively on practice	baseline to be established	baseline to be established	N/A
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Targets are aligned to the authority targets and stretch aims.

*no authority targets in place, internal targets will be set and progress measured and reported on.

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