TO: Councillors P. O'Kane (Chair), C. Merrick (Vice Chair), C. Bamforth, T. Buchanan, D. Devlin, C Gilbert, A. Lafferty, J. McLean, and G. Wallace; Dr F. Angell, Ms D. Graham, Ms M McIntyre and Mr D Morris.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Education Committee will be held on **Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 10.00am**.

The agenda of business is as listed below.

CAROLINE INNES

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Please note this is a virtual meeting.

AGENDA

1.   Apologies for Absence.

2.   Declarations of Interest.

3.   Education Department Report on the Quality of Remote Learning - Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 3 - 36).

4.   Progress Report on Implementing the Alternative Certification Model in East Renfrewshire – Report by Director of Education (copy attached, pages 37 - 58).

This document can be explained to you in other languages and can be provided in alternative formats such as large print and Braille. For further information, please contact Customer First on 0141 577 3001 or e-mail customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Report by Director of Education

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF REMOTE LEARNING

PURPOSE

1.   To inform elected members of the report by the Education Department on Remote Learning in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, primary, secondary and special schools in East Renfrewshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.   Elected members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the Education Department report on Remote Learning in our Early Learning and Childcare settings, primary, secondary and special schools.

BACKGROUND

3.   In December 2020, as school recovery continued to evolve in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and the previous school closure period (March 2020 to August 2020), the Scottish Government announced further school closures.

4.   From January 2021 the context for learning and teaching in East Renfrewshire Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools moved to remote learning, with staff facing the challenge of providing responsive and progressive learning experiences for children/young people attending school/nursery as vulnerable learners/children of keyworkers and those who would be learning remotely during lockdown at home.

5.   In East Renfrewshire our schools and nurseries are empowered to develop policies and practices which best meet the communities they serve. Using guidance issued at local Remote Learning: Principles of Effective Practice, Excellent Experiences for All: A Framework for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in East Renfrewshire and national level Education Scotland's Remote Learning Guidance schools collaborated with key stakeholders to develop clear and helpful remote learning policies and guidance for pupils, staff and parents.

6.   Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent periods of closure of education establishments (March – August 2020 and January 2021 to present) East Renfrewshire had well established and ongoing approaches to ensuring the quality of provision across ELC settings and schools.

7.   The Quality Improvement Team play a pivotal role in providing support and challenge to schools on their quality of provision as well as carrying out reviews which focus on aspects of provision. The move to remote learning has not diluted the expectation that schools will deliver high quality (remote) learning to meet the needs of their children and young people nor has it diminished the key role the Quality Improvement Team in East Renfrewshire have in providing that ongoing support and challenge role. However the challenges the Covid-19 pandemic places on existing mechanisms are recognised.

8.   In January and February, link Quality Improvement Officers engaged with their schools. A departmental audit tool: *How Effective is your Remote Learning?* (Appendix 1) was issued with the expectation that school leaders would work in partnership with their link Quality Improvement Officer to take a closer look at their remote learning offer.

9.   The audit covered key aspects of the work of our ELC settings and schools and identified particular strengths and areas for improvement. A report detailing provision on offer across all East Renfrewshire's educational establishments was produced and is attached as Appendix 2.

REPORT

10.   *How Effective is Our Remote Learning Offer: An Overview of Remote Learning in East Renfrewshire, February 2021* is a report on the very good remote learning provision in our ELC settings and schools.

11.   The report focuses on 4 key themes:

- Engagement and Wellbeing
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Self-Evaluation for Self Improvement
- Digital Capacity

12.   The following key strengths are identified in the report:

- Leadership and commitment to remote learning by all staff
- Increased levels of engagement of learners in learning (86% May 2020 and 95% Feb 2021)
- Relentless focus on health and wellbeing and equity
- Range of supports for engagement and wellbeing, in particular HealthiER Minds (education's Psychological Services support resources)
- Commitment and creative approaches to maintaining a sense of identity and whole school ethos
- Greater range of learning experiences being offered to learners across a range of platforms
- Increased range of both recorded and live delivery online with increase in daily "check ins" with learners
- Increased confidence of practitioners in delivering learning remotely
- Greater range of learning experiences being offered to learners than in the previous lockdown
- Increased number of children accessing digital devices
- Positive feedback from parents on the support being offered

13.   In addition the following recommendations are noted in the report:

Education Department

- Provide further professional learning for staff with a particular focus on the pedagogy of remote learning
- Further explore and invest in digital platforms that will support learners in all sectors
- Provide further opportunities across the local authority for sharing of resources and best practice in remote teaching and learning

Clusters

- Explore opportunities to share standards of remote learning across stages, departments, schools and cluster

ELC Settings and Schools

- Continue to develop tracking and engagement tools to enable accurate recording of learner participation
- Maintain a relentless focus on health and wellbeing support for learners, families and staff
- Continue to ensure equitable access to digital devices and online access for learners and staff
- Continue to develop quality assurance of learning provision to support staff in the delivery of high quality remote learning

14.   The report also highlights areas of innovation and good practice across ELC settings and schools.

15.   The Quality Improvement Service will continue to support and challenge ELC settings and schools with regard to the quality of remote learning and the progress made towards the identified recommendations.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

16.   There are no financial or efficiency implications related to this report however it should be noted that schools received monies from the Scottish Government to support with additional teaching and support staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17.   Elected members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the Education Department report on Remote Learning in our Early Learning and Childcare settings, primary, secondary and special schools.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
11 March 2021

Convener Contact Details
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Tel: 0141 577 3204
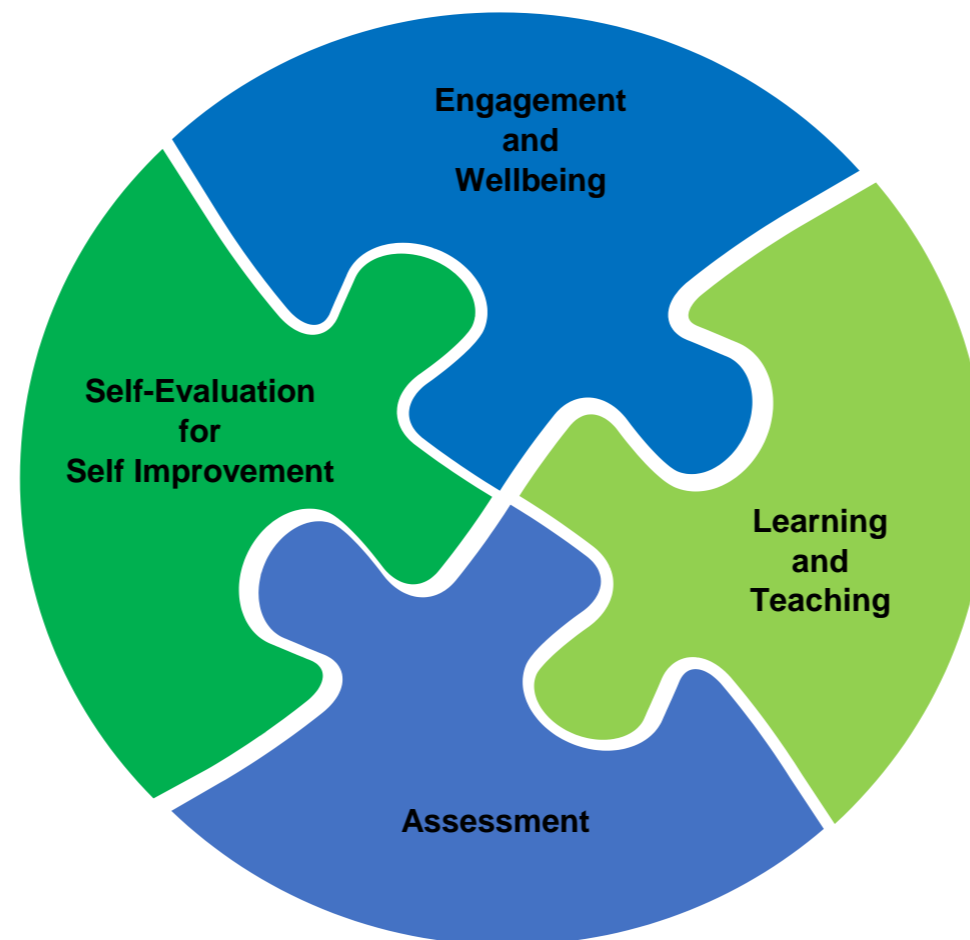Janice.Collins@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1 How Effective is Your Remote Learning? Principles of Effective Practice, January 2021
Appendix 2 How Effective is Our Remote Learning Offer: An Overview of Remote Learning in East Renfrewshire, February 2021

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East Renfrewshire Education Department

How effective is your Remote Learning offer?

January 2021

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Introduction

High quality learning and teaching underpins our vision of *'Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences'*. As the context continues to focus on remote learning, it is essential that our nurseries and schools consider how they can continue to provide high quality learning provision to ensure maximum impact for all learners.

Teaching remotely is not as simple as moving what you normally do to online learning or providing resources for children to use at home. Remote learning requires careful redesign of how you structure your day, plan learning experiences, support new teaching, select and deploy resources whilst ensuring you meet the needs of all learners in your class.

Purpose

This audit tool is designed to support senior leaders to take a closer look at the learning provision that is currently on offer in their establishment. Head Teachers will be aware of their establishment's own unique context and will have a clear rationale on how their staff are continuing to provide high quality learning experiences through remote learning.

The Education Department has produced **Principles of Effective Practice** which supports senior leaders with how they can achieve consistency for learners across playrooms, classrooms, subjects and departments.

There are many considerations for school leaders and staff to consider when establishing their approaches to remote learning. The **Principles of Effective Practice** document highlights 4 key themes.

- Engagement and Wellbeing
- Learning & Teaching
- Assessment
- Self-Evaluation for Self Improvement

This audit tool will allow senior leaders to carefully self-evaluate across these key themes along with an opportunity to assess the digital capacity of pupils and staff.

The Quality Improvement Team will engage with school leaders during the self-evaluation process and provide further support as required. They will also gather information which will contribute to the department's wider self-evaluation of remote learning in our schools.

East Renfrewshire Council

Audit Tool: How effective is your Remote Learning offer?

Name of establishment _____ Date _____

As school recovery continues to evolve in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, schools now face the challenge of providing responsive and progressive learning experiences for children/young people who are attending school as vulnerable learners/children of keyworkers or who are in lockdown at home. Key principles and entitlements for remote learning have been outlined by Education Scotland.   Schools should develop and share their own policy outlining their approach to remote learning in conjunction with the ERC Remote Learning: Features of Effective Practice paper.

Remote Learning Quality Assurance Tool

	Theme	Challenge Questions	Things to Consider	Next Steps (if required)
Engagement and Wellbeing	**Interactions with pupils**	Is there a daily registration / check in for all pupils?		
		Are you using attendance data to understand patterns of engagement and plan follow up interventions?	Consider the extent of engagement, are pupils logging on but not participating or extending their learning.	
		Are pupils who have been offered a place at the hub attending? Are they engaging online instead?	Attendance data versus offers to vulnerable pupils. Strategies to encourage attendance / online engagement.	
		Are there regular opportunities for engagement with other pupils to collaborate and support learning, as well as informal engagement? Are there regular formal and informal opportunities for peer support activities on-line? To support peer relationships.		
		Have you provided opportunities for pupils to explore their health and wellbeing? Can they discuss any concerns / issues with their teacher?	Use of Google Meet, classroom discussion forums. Role of support staff.	
		Are children encouraged to be active, participate in outdoor activities, encouraged to participate in wellbeing activities?		
		Are targeted interventions to support wellbeing and learning needs (loss) continuing?	Use of additional (including recovery) staff to address learning loss, continue with targeted interventions.	
		How are you seeking feedback from pupils in relation to their remote learning experiences?		
		How do you maintain a sense of identity for classes, year groups, whole school?	Use of virtual assemblies Sharing of successes / achievements	
		Do you provide access to classroom resources for pupils to support the planned learning and teaching activities?	Digital Stationary Core Texts Classroom materials	
		Are children clear on the safety protocols for online learning? Has the Responsible user agreement (SC 69) been revisited/reissued in light of remote learning provision?		

	Theme	Challenge Questions	Things to Consider	Next Steps (if required)
	Staff Wellbeing	How do you support staff to undertake teaching and learning remotely?	Advice, resources, environment.	
		Do you provide time for staff to discuss, share and express with their peers and line manager their working arrangements at the moment?		
		How do you maintain staff ethos and morale?	Staff meetings (formal and informal)	
		Are staff encouraged to nurture their own health and wellbeing?	Signposting to Healthier Minds and other wellbeing resources.	
	Consultation with parents/carers	Have communications with parents/carers (including Parent Council) covered the following areas: • How their child's online platform works / How it can be accessed using school developed videos or those from other schools • Plan for the online day / week • What they do if they have any problems • Methods of communication during lockdown	Communication with parents is clear, accessible and known to all.	
		Expectations of the role of the parent in learning at home has been shared?		
		How regular do you contact all parents to discuss wellbeing and engagement of their children with remote learning?		
		What communication do you have with parents who have children who have wellbeing plans and require targeted support?		
		How are you seeking feedback from families in relation to their remote learning experiences?		
		Do you signpost parents to other supports / resources that support family wellbeing?	Partnership working Referral to other agencies	
Learning and Teaching	**Theme**	**Challenge Questions**	**Things to Consider**	**Next Steps (if required)**
	Structure of an online day	Which of the following have been agreed and are in use consistently across the school? • Daily check in times • Types of learning that should be delivered online • Specific times teachers will be online to support **interactive activities, direct teaching and engagement** • Specific times to provide feedback • Other	Use of live recordings, lessons, google meets to provide face to face contact	
	Content of an remote day	For secondary schools only – Are your learners following their face-to-face timetable remotely?		
		Have you considered timetabling any of the following into your online week? • West OS/ClickView • e-Sgoil • SCHOLAR • Other schools offer in the cluster • BBC Offer • Oak National Academy • Other- please detail •		
		Primary only Have you considered the sharing of resources/expertise across the cluster to supplement your in-school offer for learners? If yes, Please provide detail.		

	Theme	Challenge Questions	Possible Answers	Next Steps (if required)
		Have staff considered what high quality learning and teaching looks like and how this can be adapted for remote learning?	Consider a balance of adult led and child led. How are you supporting independent learning skills / study skills?	
		As a school, what are your expectations regarding minimum content of each remote day? For example: • Daily check in (registration) • New Learning including direct teaching (live or recorded) • Time given to complete tasks after direct teaching • Differentiated activities • Regular quality, individualised feedback • Live interactive engagement for questioning, feedback, games / storytelling, pastoral. • End of day check in • Other	Is there consistency across each class, stage, department, year group? Is the pedagogical approach appropriate for each lesson? Is your school remote learning offer understood by all?	
	Support for Learning	Is targeted support / interventions continuing for those who need it?	Wellbeing plans being adapted and followed. Use of Support for Learning, Lowest 20% and Recovery staff.	
		In what ways are teachers /pupil support assistants offering additional targeted learning support for vulnerable learners either virtually or in school as part of the learning hub?		
		Are there clear guidelines regarding how to support/improve learner non engagement with guidance regarding mitigation/intervention?		
	Absence contingency	Have discussions taken place on how learning from home can be managed in different scenarios of staff absence?		
Assessment	**Theme**	**Challenge Questions**	**Possible Answers**	**Next Steps (if required)**
	Assessment for Learning	Is a variety of assessment approaches being used to ascertain learner progress?	Sharing of LI and SC Effective Questioning Plenary / Feedback	
		What opportunities are in place to facilitate pupils' ongoing dialogue, reflection and feedback with their teacher in relation to their own learning?	Use of Jamboard / Microsoft whiteboard	
		Is assessment data being used to plan next steps in learning?	Avoiding long periods of consolidation. Opportunity for shared planning and moderation	
		Are the learning loss gaps identified during the previous period of school closure being used to ongoing targeted interventions / attendance at the hub.		

			Possible Answers	Next Steps (if required)
Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement	**Learners' Experiences**	What systems/approaches do you have in place in order to quality assure your remote learning provision? For Example: • SMT or Principal Teachers membership of every Google Classroom/Microsoft Team • Regular discussion of teacher planning • Learner conversations • Shadow learner journey • Tracking and Monitoring of attendance and engagement • Opportunity for shared planning and moderation • Other, please provide detail		
		Are parents involved in the tracking and monitoring of remote learning engagement? Do you share engagement levels?		
		Are you using tracking data to inform your remote learning approach?		
		Have you sought pupil and parental feedback about your remote learning offer? Have you altered approaches in response?	Feedback from previous school closure period as well as recent.	
		Have you discussed effective practice with colleagues in your sector, cluster, etc?		
		Are staff engaging with up to date research on remote learning?		
Digital Capacity	**Theme**	**Challenge Questions**	**Possible Answers**	**Next Steps (if required)**
	Establishing knowledge of digital access	What steps have you taken to ensure all learners have home access to digital devices/wifi?		
		What alternatives have been considered where digital access has proven challenging?	School access to devices for learners School access to devices for staff Paper packs delivered Other, please detail	
		Have contingency plans been made for every Google Classroom/Microsoft Team in the event of the teacher being absent?	Yes No	
	Staff CLPL	Has the provision of learning opportunities which reflect the principles of Curriculum for Excellence, allowing learners to develop their knowledge, skills and attributes in a variety of relevant contexts and across curriculum areas been reinforced with staff i.e. this should still be reflected in the planning for learning experiences during this time?	Yes No	

		Where staff confidence was less strong, consideration should be given to support/training/peer support mechanisms. How was this delivered/facilitated? How have you identified staff development needs? How was this delivered/facilitated?	Signposting to webinars and CLPL input from ERC Digital Team/ Education Scotland / GTCS Other online/general access training In school sharing practice Staff experts/champions ICT Coordinator / Digital champion NQT Mentor ERC Digital team Support	
	Facilitating Live Engagement	How has live engagement been facilitated?		
		Has this been implemented in classes across your remote learning offer? Is this consistent for all learners?	All (100%) Almost all (91 – 99%) Most (75 – 90%) Majority (50 – 74%) Less than half (15 – 49%) A few (less than 15%) None	
		In what form is direct teaching being provided for learners? e.g pre recorded videos, live lessons etc		
		In what way has the national E-learning offer e-Sgoil/West OS or ERC video Vault provision been incorporated into your remote learning offer?		
		Has access to key learning which is available for learners to revisit as often as necessary such as the use of the use of pre-recorded teaching sessions been discussed?		
		Has this been implemented in classes across your remote learning offer?	All (100%) Almost all (91 – 99%) Most (75 – 90%) Majority (50 – 74%) Less than half (15 – 49%) A few (less than 15%) None	

Appendices / References

East Renfrewshire Education Department Blended Learning Policy

East Renfrewshire Education Department Using Video functionality to deliver high quality experiences

East Renfrewshire Education Department HealthiER Minds

Education Endowment Foundation- Home Learning Approaches April 2020

Education Endowment Foundation Guide to Supporting School Planning 2021

West Partnership: Effective Remote and Digital learning

Education Scotland: Assessment within the BGE 2020/21

EEF: COVID-19 Support resources to share with parents

https://education.gov.scot/media/hblh4yy0/cerg-remote-learning-080121.pdf

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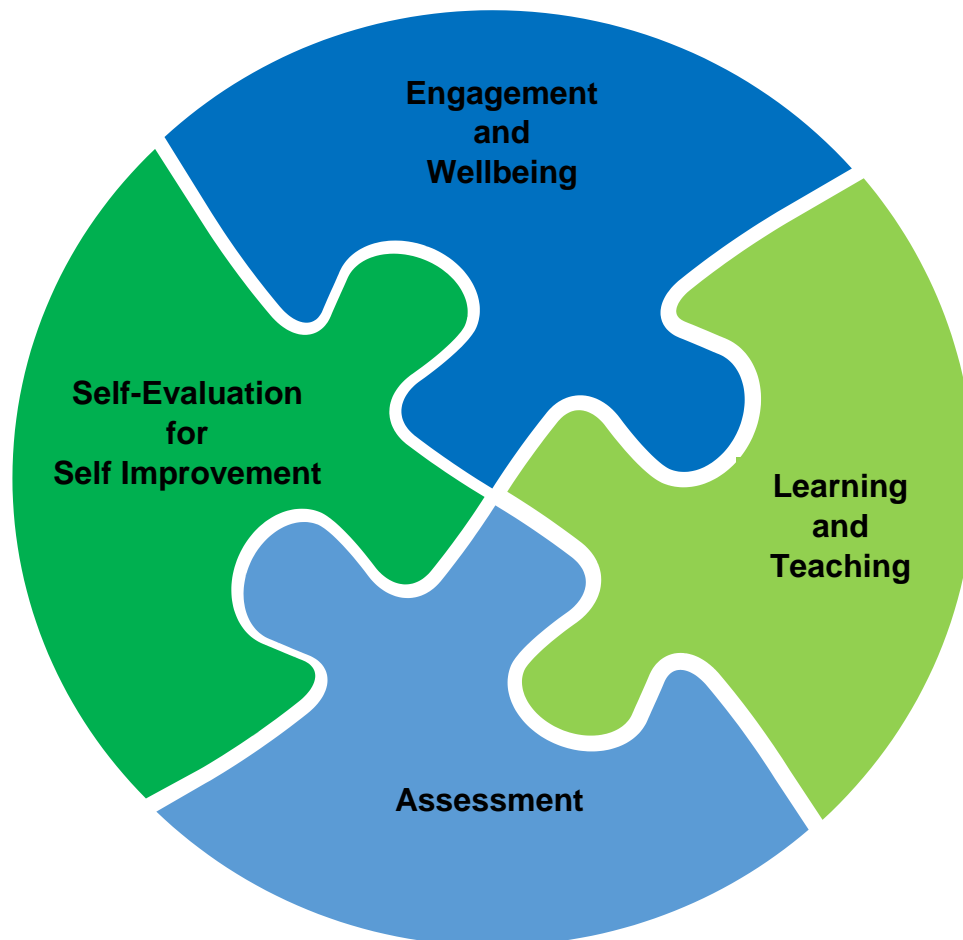
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East Renfrewshire Education Department

Remote Learning: Principles of Effective Practice

January 2021

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Introduction

High quality learning and teaching underpins our vision of *'Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences'*. As the context moves to remote learning, it is essential that our nurseries and schools consider how they can continue to provide high quality learning provision to ensure maximum impact for all learners. This provision should align with the key features highlighted in *Excellent Experiences for All: A Framework for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in East Renfrewshire*

Teaching remotely is not as simple as moving what you normally do to online learning or providing resources for children to use at home.   Remote learning requires careful redesign of how you structure your day, plan learning experiences, support new teaching, select and deploy resources whilst ensuring you meet the needs of all learners in your class.

Purpose

This document is designed to support senior leaders to develop their own guidance which takes into account each establishment's unique context. Head Teachers should establish a clear rationale which details how their establishment is providing high quality learning experiences through remote learning. Consideration should be given to different age and stages of development and curriculum levels across the Broad General Education (Nursery – S3) and Senior Phase (S4 – S6). Whilst it is important that provision is matched to these different stages and demands, a consistency should be applied across playrooms, classrooms, subjects and departments.

Creating and establishing a clear rationale for remote learning will allow senior leaders to carefully self-evaluate the learning experiences across each class, year group, etc. It will also allow head teachers to ensure the learning provision offered is responsive to the needs of their nursery / school community.

Staff should be supported through professional learning opportunities relating to remote learning to ensure they have the capacity and resources to provide high quality learning and teaching within this context. Consideration should be given to the provision for support for staff in planning and preparing. The model agreed should be sustainable for children, young people, parents and staff. It is important that a focus is on the quality of interaction between pupil and teacher as opposed to quantity.

Principles of Effective Practice

There are many considerations for school leaders and staff to consider when establishing their approaches to remote learning. This document details 4 key themes, however the list of considerations is endless and further reading can be found as an appendix of this guide.

- Engagement and Wellbeing
- Learning & Teaching
- Assessment
- Self-Evaluation for Self Improvement

Engagement and Wellbeing

It is effective practice to:

- track daily registration/participation with all pupils across all subjects in order to understand any trends/ patterns of non-engagement and plan appropriate interventions and follow up
- consider approaches/activities to ensure that relationships with all pupils continue to be maintained and further developed
- facilitate opportunities for staff to plan high quality remote learning within an environment in which they are most comfortable e.g their home or a designated area within the school building where they can record lessons
- provide learners with an opportunity to 'check in' each day and share their learning experiences, concerns, issues
- facilitate opportunities for learners to discuss their health and wellbeing
- plan activities that encourage collaboration amongst learners
- maintain regular contact with parents/carers of children/young people who have wellbeing/additional support needs
- work with partners to target additional support and resources to those most in need
- provide continued opportunities to bring the whole school/department/year group communities together e.g virtual assemblies, with a clear focus on learning, successes and achievements
- provide appropriate classroom resources for pupils that are accessible in a centralised area e.g community collection point
- encourage opportunities during the day for pupils to be active, whether indoors or outdoors

Learning & Teaching

It is effective practice to:

- consider what high quality learning and teaching looks like within the classroom context and then reflect on what can be adapted for remote delivery
- develop and share a structure to each lesson (secondary) or day (ELC and primary) to provide consistency and routine for the learner
- consider strategies / ways in which to support children and young people and provide them with the tools to develop skills to lead their own learning and / or work independently on a given task at home
- provide a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities across the week, including opportunities for outdoor learning where appropriate
- have a balance of child-led and adult-led learning experiences
- utilise a variety of resources, approaches and tools to engage learners, reinforce key teaching points; ensuring breadth and depth
- place pupil learning at the forefront of lesson planning, avoiding prolonged periods of consolidation of prior learning
- plan your pedagogical approach to each lesson, whether it is explicit instruction, modelling, scaffolding, etc. differentiating to ensure all learners make progress
- be aware of the disadvantages of pupils spending prolonged periods in front of a screen receiving direct instruction
- identify individual learning needs, in particular for children with additional support needs, and implement high quality, structured, targeted interventions with reliable evidence of effectiveness to ensure progress
- provide additional targeted support to those who would normally receive this in school
- provide clear communication, methods for discussing learning, tasks, issuing new resources etc.
- build in time in the morning and afternoon timetables (primary), weekly subject timetables (secondary) to facilitate 'live engagement' in order to interact and communicate with pupils in real time

- be mindful of the fact that pupils may find it more difficult to concentrate for extended periods of time during remote learning therefore 'chunking' the learning into smaller parts ensures that everyone remains engaged and on task
- share pre-recorded videos with pupils that reinforce key learning points, clearly linking learning intentions and success criteria and an introduction to follow up task(s) and/or activities posted on Google Classroom/Teams (flipped classroom)
- follow up 'live' sessions with the teacher in order to check in, ask questions and be provided with support or challenge.
- provide consistency to learners who are learning remotely in schools or learning remotely at home
- self-evaluate the impact of your teaching on pupil's learning and progress

Assessment

It is effective practice to:

- use a variety of assessment approaches as an integral part of learning and teaching to ascertain what the learners know, understand and are able to do and identify next steps in learning
- reflect on the purpose, validity, reliability and value of an assessment (diagnostic, formative and summative)
- utilise and implement formative assessment strategies, including sharing learning intentions, effective questioning, self / peer assessment
- provide high quality feedback on learning
- plan opportunities for learners to reflect on their learning through plenary type activities/sessions (e.g using Jamboard/Microsoft whiteboard)
- engage learners as learning resources for one another and be owners of their own learning
- use assessment to enable learners to reflect on 'where I am going, how do I get there and where do I go next?'

Self-Evaluation for Self Improvement

It is effective practice to:

- develop approaches for tracking and monitoring engagement in learning regularly to ensure all are engaging
- involve parents/carers in establishing the expectations for remote learning
- provide opportunities for moderation of remote learning experiences to ensure a shared understanding of standards and expectations across the department, year group, school
- use learner and parent/carer feedback to inform next steps
- seek out and share effective practice within and beyond the school and demonstrate improvement as a result
- work as a team; an ethos of sharing practice and of peer support and challenge
- make effective use of up-to-date research/data to inform learning and developments

Appendices / References

East Renfrewshire Education Department Blended Learning Policy

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East Renfrewshire Education Department HealthiER Minds

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Education Endowment Foundation Guide to Supporting School Planning 2021

West Partnership: Effective Remote and Digital learning

Education Scotland: Assessment within the BGE 2020/21

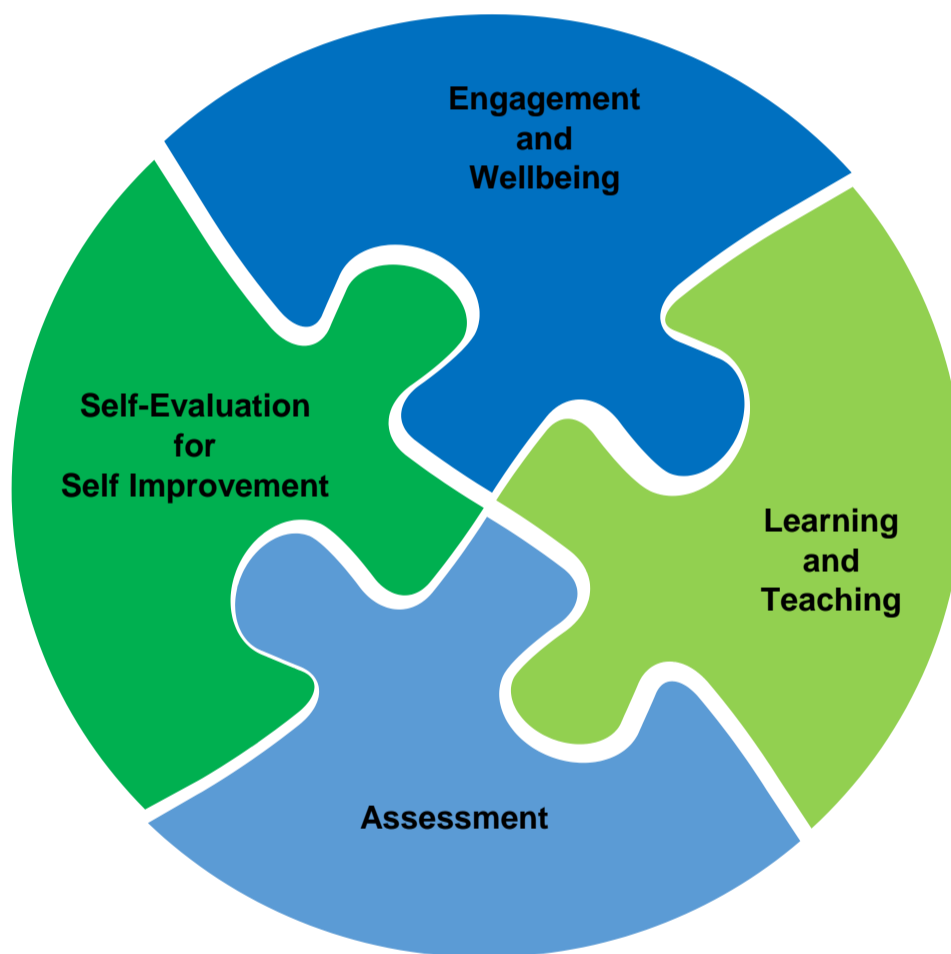EEF: COVID-19 Support resources to share with parents

https://education.gov.scot/media/hblh4yy0/cerg-remote-learning-080121.pdf

East Renfrewshire Education Department

How Effective is Our Remote Learning offer?

An Overview of Remote Learning in East Renfrewshire

February 2021

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Introduction and Context

High quality learning and teaching underpins our vision of *'Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences'*. In December 2020, as school recovery continued to evolve in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and the previous school closure period (March 2020 to August 2020), the Scottish Government announced further school closures. From January 2021 the context for learning and teaching in East Renfrewshire Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools moved to remote learning, with school staff facing the challenge of providing responsive and progressive learning experiences for children/young people attending school as vulnerable learners/children of keyworkers and those who would be learning in lockdown at home.

During the initial school closure period between March and August 2020, the Education Department provided support and guidance to settings which highlighted the importance of ongoing engagement with learners and their families and maintaining a focus of wellbeing. Seven learning hubs were established for vulnerable children and children of key workers; all other children and young people were supported by teachers and support staff to engage with and participate in digital and remote learning opportunities to ensure continuing education provision. Senior and pastoral care staff in all settings maintained regular contact with children and families as required, whether they were learning at home or in a hub and provided additional support to address any wellbeing or learning needs. From March to June 2020 the number of children and young people attending the learning hubs increased from just over 300 to nearly 700 with the number of vulnerable children attending increasing from 24 to 228.

In May 2020 East Renfrewshire Education Department conducted a self-evaluation exercise on the engagement and participation of pupils with their home learning. A report on **Digital Learning and Engaging and Supporting Vulnerable Families** was produced and shared with key stakeholders. Identified good practice was shared and feedback received used to plan Career Long Professional Learning.

A Recovery Group with representatives from the department, schools and Trade Unions was established to oversee the reopening of ELC settings and schools along with the recovery and renewal of the curriculum and learning and teaching. This group supported establishments as they continually prepared for recovery and renewal and the planned blended learning model for pupils returning when nurseries and schools reopened. This blended learning context provided a clear agenda for all to continue to develop their pedagogical and digital practices to ensure that if and when remote learning was introduced they were skilled to deliver the highest quality of experiences for children and young people. This shared agenda with the department allowed professional learning experiences to be planned to build the capacity of staff across all sectors.

In addition a host of advice and guidance was produced locally, regionally and nationally during this time to support and challenge schools to plan for learners' experiences both in a home learning and a blended learning context. These included:

- East Renfrewshire Education Department Blended Learning Policy
- East Renfrewshire Education Department Using Video functionality to deliver high quality experiences
- East Renfrewshire Education Department HealthiER Minds
- Education Endowment Foundation- Home Learning Approaches April 2020
- Education Endowment Foundation Guide to Supporting School Planning 2021
- West Partnership: Effective Remote and Digital learning
- Education Scotland: Assessment within the BGE 2020/21
- West Partnership Guidance on Remote Learning
- EEF: COVID-19 Support resources to share with parents.

Throughout this period schools self-evaluated with a range of stakeholders to identify areas for self-improvement. The areas identified formed part of schools' Improvement (Recovery) Plans for school session 2020 / 2021. The impact and outcomes of these plans has become evident as we have embarked on this second period of school closures.

Approach to assuring quality of provision of learning being delivered by our schools

In East Renfrewshire our schools are empowered to develop policies and practices which best meet the communities they serve. Using guidance issued at local Remote Learning: Principles of Effective Practice, Excellent Experiences for All: A Framework for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in East Renfrewshire and national level Education Scotland's Remote Learning Guidance schools collaborated with key stakeholders to develop clear and helpful remote learning policies and guidance for pupils, staff and parents.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent periods of school closure (March – August 2020 and January 2021 to present) East Renfrewshire had well established and ongoing approaches to ensuring the quality of provision across ELC settings and schools. The Quality Improvement Team play a pivotal role in providing support and challenge to schools on their quality of provision as well as carrying out reviews which focussed on aspects of provision. The move to remote learning has not diluted the expectation that schools will deliver high quality (remote) learning to meet the needs of their children and young people nor has it diminished the key role the Quality Improvement Team in East Renfrewshire have in providing that ongoing support and challenge role. However the challenges the Covid-19 pandemic places on existing mechanisms are recognised.

With these challenges in mind, the existing quality improvement processes have had to be adapted to ensure a clear focus on assuring quality provision of remote learning and teaching for all learners.

The Directorate met with school leaders during the week beginning 11 January 2021 to listen and offer further support and guidance. The authority's Quality Improvement Team also engaged with head teachers on their responses to the guidance, provided nationally and locally and to discuss an overview of their remote learning planning. Dialogue took place in a range of ways including: Head Teacher meetings, one to one discussions with link officers, online professional learning sessions; and follow up targeted support and challenge conversations.

From the week beginning 25 January, for a 2 week period, link officers engaged with their schools again. A departmental audit tool: How Effective is your Remote Learning? *(Appendix 1)* was issued with the expectation that school leaders would work in partnership with their link Quality Improvement Officer to take a closer look at their remote learning offer. This provided a detailed overview of remote learning in individual schools, cluster of schools and across all educational establishments in East Renfrewshire and formed the body of this report.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Identify and share key strengths in Remote Learning across East Renfrewshire, in Engagement and Wellbeing, Learning & Teaching, Assessment, Self-Evaluation for Self Improvement and Digital Capacity.

- Highlight areas for improvement at school, cluster and department level and use our learning to support future remote learning plans as our children and young people return to schools.
- Determine ongoing professional learning opportunities and support for ELC and school staff.

Report Findings

Engagement and Wellbeing

- Almost all pupils in East Renfrewshire are participating in remote learning either at home or in the school hub setting, with an overall engagement level of 95% across all ELC settings and primary, secondary and special schools.
- Almost all ELC settings and schools use a range of effective approaches including Google based tracking systems, RAG analysis, SEEMIS, Filemaker, and Insight on Teams, to collect daily registration details for pupils attending school hubs and learning remotely at home. All settings and schools use attendance and participation data to understand patterns of engagement and implement follow up interventions, including phone calls home and offers to attend school hubs.
- All ELC settings and schools have put health and wellbeing (HWB) and equity at the heart of their remote learning policies. All have very effective processes in place to ensure a continued focus on family wellbeing and targeting of approaches towards those who need it most.
- All settings and schools use a variety of high quality opportunities for pupils to explore their health and wellbeing. These include the continuation of targeted interventions and support strategies, such as nurture groups, Autism Spectrum Disorder /Friendship groups, Seasons for Growth, one to one support sessions, signposting to other appropriate resources, activities and agencies, sharing of information to parents, continuation of lessons linked to existing HWB programmes such as Emotion Works, Kitbag groups and mindfulness sessions.
- East Renfrewshire's Psychological Services has provided excellent resources to support children, young people, families and staff with the Covid-19 pandemic. These include the Healthier Minds resource which focusses on managing anxiety, building resilience, transition and recovery, coping with bereavement and loss. Pupils, Parents and staff report that these resources have been very effective in supporting all during this period of school closure.
- Very good partnership working with staff from East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust has enabled excellent outdoor physical activities to take place in almost all ELC settings, primary, secondary and special schools.
- All ELC settings, primary, secondary and special schools encourage pupils to be active both in and outdoors through a variety of meaningful activities. Best practice includes live PE lessons, links to online resources/activities, designated Google classrooms for fitness/physical activity, sharing of ideas on social media and family learning activities.
- There is excellent relationships at both Education departmental and school level with key partners such as Educational Psychology, Social Work and Health which has enabled children and young people to incrementally increase their hub attendance and remote learning engagement levels. At ELC and school level Joint Support Team meetings (JST) have continued to meet, with wellbeing plans being adapted to meet learning and wellbeing needs which have arisen during lockdown.
- Almost all ELC settings and schools continue to provide targeted interventions to support wellbeing and learning needs including the use of additional teachers and Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) to implement programmes and strategies designed to address learning loss, for example Reading Recovery, regular check ins with pupils and families, small differentiated online group sessions and one to one lessons. Bilingual Support Workers (BSW) have been deployed to support children and families with remote learning.
- Almost all ELC settings and schools have effectively sought feedback from learners on their remote learning experiences, through a variety of channels including phone calls, use of MS/Google forms, weekly newsletter with 'you said, we did' updates.
- Schools and ELC settings have very good systems and processes in place to support the sense of identity and whole school ethos. In best practice these include regular online assemblies, sharing of achievements through social media, 'praise cards' posted home, remote hot chocolate Friday, interactive competitions and continuation of house system events and awards.
- All ELC settings and schools make a range of resources readily available to all pupils to support with their wellbeing and remote learning. These resources include digital devices, wi-fi, stationary, core texts, classroom materials, sanitary products, library books, games, toys, loose parts, musical instruments and hospitality equipment etc. Commendably most schools have identified accessible pick up points in the local community.
- The Education Department has delivered school lunch food bags to all children and young people entitled to Free School Meal (FSM). This service has been evaluated positively by families in receipt of this offer.
- Most pupils across the authority are provided with regular opportunities for engagement with other pupils, with primary and secondary schools recognising the importance of these opportunities for pupil wellbeing. In the secondary sector, these include working on shared documents to present ideas to peers, virtual music and drama rehearsals

Crookfur School Hub, February 2021

Isobel Mair School Virtual Assembly, February 2021

Carolside PS Virtual Games Hall, January 2021

"I am delighted to hear about the Healthier Minds Resource and Team, this is exactly what young people need at this time."

Parent, Parent Council Chairs Meeting, November 2020

"Well done to all those working hard to provide such great support for parents and pupils alike. Thank you for all your efforts, it really is appreciated."

Carlibar PS Parent, February 2021

- and use of apps such as Jamboard in order to encourage collaboration and sharing of ideas. In the primary sector, opportunities include 'show and tell' sessions, interactive check ins with opportunities for peer discussion, use of apps such as Kahoot or Jamboard, virtual playtime sessions and peer assessment activities during plenary sessions.
- There is a very good level of support for staff wellbeing across all ELC settings and schools. In best practice senior leaders hold regular staff conversations, informal opportunities for drop ins, host virtual staff breaks / coffee mornings, buddy / staff pairing system, weekly staff meetings, use of social media, daily briefs, staff newsletters, signposting to resources and specialist services.
- The Education Department has consulted with Parent Council Chairs regarding their departmental remote learning plans and guidance.
- All ELC settings and schools have taken into cognisance national and local guidance when devising their own polices and approaches, which are unique to each setting.
- A majority of ELC settings and schools have formally sought parental feedback through focus groups, questionnaires, online forms, and commendably adapted their policies and approaches in response.

Areas for Improvement

- Build upon systems and processes in place across all ELC settings and schools to capture daily attendance and engagement levels.
- Continue to actively support and encourage pupils to explore their health and wellbeing, whilst putting in place opportunities for them to discuss issues with staff.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- All ELC settings and schools have remote learning policies/guidance which reflects National and Local advice on the subject. In best practice this guidance sets out clearly expectations for staff around the structure of the school day, the entitlement to live engagement and progressive learning experiences, availability of support, stipulations around frequency of small group meets as well as whole-class, balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning, pedagogical approaches and the range of resources and activities and apps to be utilised on a daily/weekly basis. Most schools have consulted with pupils and parents in the creation of these policies with the majority devising parent / carer friendly versions.
- All settings and schools have clear expectations regarding minimum content of each remote day and have a very good balance of pupil led and adult led experiences.
- In the ELC sector almost all settings have shared an exemplar timetable with a range of activities for families to select with their children. All experiences are play based and focus on the breadth of the curriculum, however there is a significant weighting towards literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing. Almost all settings are providing physical resource packs, supplemented with regular recorded lesson content. Commendably a few settings are offering live engagement sessions on a frequent basis.
- In the primary sector, all schools have adopted a very good variety of pedagogical approaches to ensure that children experience direct teaching and opportunities to work independently. Careful consideration of parental feedback from previous school closure periods has led to greater flexibility of primary school timetables with pupils having the autonomy to select the order they complete their tasks. All primary schools have built in the use of recorded content to their remote learning offer each day with an increasing number using teacher own recorded videos or sourcing lessons from ERC Video Vault, West OS, and e-Sgoil. Other websites and interactive resources are used to reinforce key teaching points.
- In almost all secondary schools all pupils are following their normal timetable remotely. A combination of live lessons, Google meets, recorded lessons and independent tasks make up their school day. The availability of teaching staff is clearly communicated to pupils so they are fully aware when they can check in, ask for clarity, access support and share their progress. All pupils are working through new material, in line with departmental timetables. Resources such as ERC Video Vault and other digital learning resources platforms such as West OS and e-Sgoil are being used to supplement live material produced by class teachers, however in the Senior Phase there is a preference for teachers to use their own recorded material for initial lessons, utilising the shared resources for consolidation and to support independent study. Practical subjects have effectively redeveloped their Broad General Education (BGE) courses to make them more compatible with remote learning, for example Music and Drama is weighted more towards the theoretical aspects of the subjects. Commendably other subject specialists have adapted their courses in a similar way to ensure that children are still experiencing the breadth of the curriculum. In the special sector most children are attending the school hub provision. Staff have a very good awareness of what motivates and engages each individual child in teaching and learning. They effectively plan to meet the needs of individual learners and deliver a range of activities including face to face, live recordings, Google Meets or through learning packs delivered home. Commendably pupil voice is captured to support choice, contexts for learning and to inform next steps.
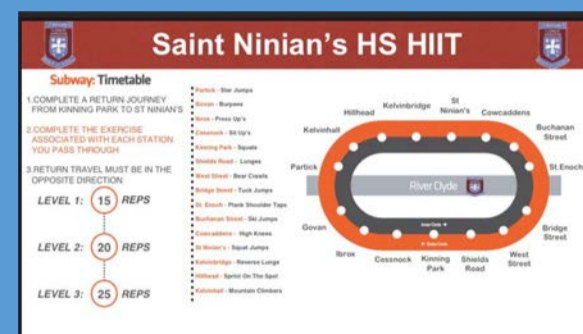

St Ninian's HS HIIT, January 2021

"Teachers are aware of the disadvantages of pupils spending prolonged periods in front of a screen, and have provided a range of learning experiences that include opportunities for outdoor learning, physical activity and other child led learning."

Mearns Castle Cluster, February 2021

"He was totally freaking out this morning before I left for work (so I was freaking out too) BUT when I got back, he was a different kid!!! He said it was loads better than the last online learning and it was better to be able to see the teacher etc. So agree here too pass on that today was good in this house!! Long may it continue!"

Barrhead HS Parent, January 2021
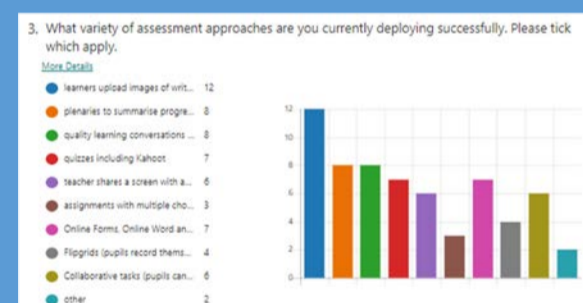
Extract from staff survey results on approaches to assessment: Braidbar PS

"Shout out to all of you too! Thanks for the great mixture of learning and activities. It was good fun watching the kids adapting to this whole new normal via Google Meets! Enjoy your well-deserved weekend."

Busby PS Parent, January 2021

"Our teachers have been amazing, they have worked so hard in difficult circumstances to give us the best experience possible during lockdown"

Senior Pupil, Woodfarm High

- Where appropriate all schools are effectively using resources similar to those in use in the classroom setting. These include continued access to high quality online resources linked to curriculum such as Literacy Planet, Active Maths, Sumdog etc.
- All schools have dedicated time to support staff with their remote learning offer, with almost all staff having engaged in professional learning relating to remote learning and pedagogy.
- All schools are very effectively deploying their support for learning staff and additional teaching and PSA staff (Recovery Resources) to continue to provide targeted support / interventions for those identified children and young people. Support programmes such as Toe by Toe, Together and Towards Better Readers are timetabled as appropriate. In most schools PSAs are timetabled to support learning in hubs or remotely via Google meets.
- All schools are using a variety of assessment approaches in order to ascertain learner progress. These include sharing of learning intentions and success criteria, effective questioning, remote and live plenary sessions (AifL strategies, Jamboard, MS whiteboard), written and verbal feedback (using Mote), Microsoft / Google forms and peer and self-assessment.
- All settings and schools have contingency plans in place to ensure continuity of provision of high quality learning and teaching in the event of teacher absence.
- Throughout this lockdown period, college partners and training providers have continued to work closely with ERC staff to maintain continued delivery of courses and of high quality learning experiences for young people in the senior phase. Quality assurance procedures have ensured both synchronous and asynchronous learning has been monitored and reviewed and arrangements for providing feedback have been put in place. Where appropriate and where it has been safe to do so, work based learning has continued so that young people are not disadvantaged in the completion of full qualifications. Similarly, online work-based challenges forming part of the Level 4 Foundation Apprenticeship have continued with support from college staff and employers.

Areas for Improvement

- Continue to consider equity of experience in the BGE and Senior Phase in secondary schools.
- Provide further professional learning for staff with a particular focus on the pedagogy of remote learning.
- Continue to prioritise excellence and equity and effective deployment of staff to support those most affected by learning loss.
- Support learners across all sectors to use assessment information to reflect on 'where I am going, how do I get there and where do I go next?'

Self-Evaluation for Self Improvement

- All ELC settings and primary, secondary and special schools have developed approaches to regularly track and monitor engagement in learning thus ensuring all learners are participating in the remote learning offer.
- Senior leadership teams are actively involved in Google Meets, Teams Meetings, and Virtual Assemblies, providing very good advice, support and challenge.
- Informal and formal opportunities have been provided in all settings and schools to share and evaluate learners' experiences, identify gaps in provision and agree whole school next steps.
- Very good systems are in place in almost all schools to involve parents/carers in their child's remote learning, with clear expectations for all being shared.
- Most settings and schools have developed opportunities for moderation of remote learning experiences to ensure consistency and a shared understanding of standards and expectations across departments, year groups and the school. In best practice there has been a cluster approach to sharing standards enabling all to see the potential and possibilities within remote learning.
- Commendably all settings and schools have considered feedback from stakeholders during the previous period of remote learning and used this to refine and improve approaches.
- All schools continuously seek pupil feedback on their learning and wellbeing, with almost all teachers using this information to help with planning for volume/pace and challenge of lessons.
- Parent Council meetings have continued in all schools, enabling effective dialogue with parents regarding remote learning offers and areas for improvement.

Areas for Improvement

- Continue to improve learners' experiences by seeking out and sharing effective practice within and beyond each setting, school and cluster.
- Make effective use of up-to-date research/data to inform learning and developments.
- Continue to develop quality assurance approaches to evaluate the standard of provision.

"It was extremely beneficial to hear how others are making sure the pupils are engaging in their feedback and next steps. From now I will be sure to use more voice notes to record feedback and also ask the pupils a question too so that we are encouraging them to read their feedback as well as reply."

Teacher, St Luke's Cluster, Cluster Moderation Event , February 2021

"We have an engaged community, with high expectations, very good relationships and communications – our remote learning has evolved as a result."

"Quality Assurance is not about watching but about the quality that is vivid in the sharing of practice"

Head Teacher, Giffnock Primary School, February 2021

"I have been attending the hub and it has been great to meet up with my class mates on Google Classroom who are working at home. This makes me feel like I am still part of the class. When I can see them and send them messages."

Senior Pupil, Isobel Mair School

"The levels of creativity, professionalism and collaboration have been astonishing"

Head Teacher, St Mark's Primary School, February 2021
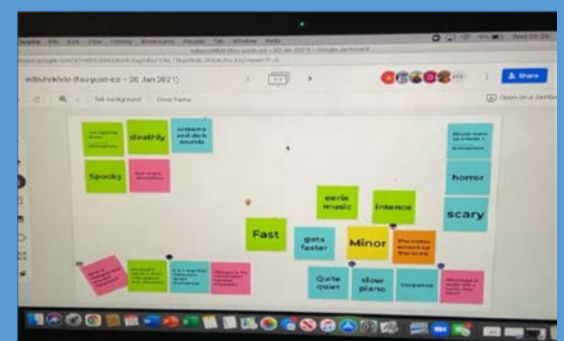
A Google Jam Board, St Luke's High School, February 2021

52% of respondents rated online learning experiences as excellent, 43% as very good and 5% as good.

Arthurlie Family Centre, Family Questionnaire, February 2021.

Digital Capacity

For the past 10 years and specifically with the launch of our Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy in 2018, we have been planning and developing our approach to digital learning, placing us in a strong position to meet the challenges of remote learning.

From 2017 to 2019 we issued 2000 Chromebooks to Primary and Secondary schools based on SIMD 1-3 figures. In August 2020, we issued 600 Chromebooks, 51 Mifi devices and 29 charging trolleys from the Connecting Scotland initiative to schools, allocations were based on equity related factors. In

March 2021 we plan to issue an additional 700 Chromebooks to schools, allocations will again, be based on equity related factors. In addition, as part of our annual 'Digital Refresh' programme, we have invested heavily in Promethean interactive panel devices and laptop and desktop PCs, ensuring that our schools have access to a wide range of devices that are up to date and fit for purpose.

In January 2020, we established our 'Digihub' site, hosted through Glow. This is a 'one stop shop' for all support and guidance on digital learning and teaching and was recognised nationally as an example of good practice. The digital learning and teaching team provide excellent support to schools. Since 2015, CLPL focusing on platforms such as Google Classroom and MS Teams has been delivered by the central team. Between 2015 and 2018, staff digital leaders in all schools received training on Gsuite and Office 365 productivity tools. From September 2018, there has been a wide variety of high quality CLPL on offer, this has been informed by on our own self-evaluation including feedback from stakeholders. Since March 2020, there have been in excess of 1400 attendees at CLPL sessions with many more accessing via live stream/recorded sessions. The digital team have been responsive to the needs of individual schools and have provided bespoke sessions in order to support with remote learning approaches. This support, combined with weekly drop in sessions, ongoing email communication and our weekly 'Digihub Digest' newsletter has ensured that staff feel confident and well supported. This has been evident in feedback gathered.

Between March and June 2020 we begun work on our 'Video Vault' resource, a library of high quality, pre-recorded videos, produced by ERC teachers for ELC settings and schools to utilise in their remote learning offer. This was a direct result of the gap that was identified in our self-evaluation activity of April 2020 and the subsequent report *Digital Learning and Engaging and Supporting Vulnerable Families* where few children and young people were engaged in live or recorded learning.

The majority of staff in all sectors, including our identified ICT Coordinators have high levels of proficiency in using digital platforms to enhance learning and teaching. They willingly share practice and support colleagues. Since March 2020 we have recognised an increase, not only the in consistency of digital approaches across all settings and schools but in the confidence of staff and their willingness to embrace digital approaches in order to enhance learning and teaching.

Barrhead Cluster

All schools gathered information regarding level of need (devices/Mifi) through phonecalls or online form with initial focus on families who required devices during last period of remote learning and vulnerable families. Schools have built upon the practice that evolved from March-June 2020 and staff confidence and capacity has increased. In all schools staff development needs were identified through ongoing dialogue or through a questionnaire to staff. Digital leaders/ICT Coordinators in each school have delivered a programme of CLPL on aspects such as Google Meet, Loom, Screencastify and Google Classroom and produced associated support materials. ICT coordinators/Digital leaders in all schools are providing a high level of ongoing support for families and staff.

Woodfarm Cluster

All schools used a range information to identify pupils who had no access or limited access to digital devices, and families continue to be consulted periodically to ensure that all learners continue to have the necessary technology and other practical equipment to engage. Learning from the experiences of the first school closure, all schools continued with contingency planning and developed detailed remote learning policies during August to December 2020. This included consultation with parents, learners and staff. All schools have established clear guidelines for staff, setting out school-wide standards to be maintained for example agreed amounts of live interaction; consistent availability of teachers; specified frequency of small group meetings as well as whole-class meetings; balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

A range of supports have been offered for staff to enhance their confidence in delivering quality remote learning e.g. signposting to webinars and CLPL input from ERC Digital Team, collaboration with ICT coordinators and digitally strong colleagues, informal digital drop-ins, and pastoral support from senior leaders to overcome digital anxiety. Live engagement is being facilitated in all classes across all schools, with most schools using Google meet for this purpose, supplemented by frequent live engagement through messaging and chat functions. In emerging practice, some ELC centres are also using Google Classroom to share live content such as live story times.

In March 2020, schools loaned 900 devices to pupils and in January 2021, schools have loaned in excess of 1300 devices to ensure digital inclusion during periods of remote learning.

Historically, Glow usage in East Renfrewshire has been amongst the highest nationally and in January 2021, 17528 pupils across the authority accessed the platform.

83% of our schools have the National Digital Schools Award.

Since January 2021, 94% of primary and secondary schools have accessed recorded lessons via West OS viewing a total of 9172 lessons.

West Partnership Analytical Data Report, February 2021

All head teachers have reported that their staff teams have found the weekly digital digests provided by the education department to be very helpful.

Mearns Castle Cluster, February 2021

"To ensure engagement with digital learning and our provision we, have moved forward at a rate not possible in normal times."

Neilston PS & Madras FC, February 2021

In Our Lady of the Missions, the principles of CfE are reflected in the differentiated planning with consideration of the four contexts for learning, 'time away from devices' and opportunities to be involved with national and local events eg the Big Bird Watch.

How effective is our remote learning, OLM PS, February 2021

St Luke's Cluster

There has been a strong focus on equity and excellence with all settings and schools identifying quickly pupils who required access to digital devices and Mifi to support their online learning. Systems were put in place to allow families to borrow devices such as Chromebooks and laptops to enable them to participate along with their peers. Where digital accessibility has remained a challenge, pupils have been invited into the hub to re-engage with their learning. The digital capacity and confidence of staff is good and improving at a significant pace. Training and support has been a feature of practice across the cluster with staff themselves taking the initiative and lead with training and sharing of good practice.

There is a real sense of collegiality in all setting and schools with staff supporting each other to develop new digital skills and knowledge. The role of ERC DigiHub and the ongoing advice and support has been highlighted as very good.

Mearns Castle Cluster

Staff have been supported through a wide range of professional learning to ensure they have the digital capacity and resources to provide high quality remote learning and teaching. It is clear that all settings and schools have been proactively planning for remote or blended learning by focussing on the development of digital skills of staff since August 2020. ICT coordinators, staff "experts" and other volunteers leading CLPL sessions and providing one-to-one support have ensured that staff have the digital skills required to communicate effectively with learners and to provide high quality learning and teaching with engaging pedagogy. Staff and pupils have been provided with devices where needed to allow remote access from home. Head teachers have facilitated opportunities for staff to plan high quality remote learning within an environment in which they are most comfortable e.g. their home or a designated area within the school / setting where they can record lessons.

Eastwood Cluster

The Eastwood Cluster of ELC settings and schools used existing knowledge of digital need to identify pupils and families requiring access to devices/wifi to enable remote learning. A significant number of devices were issued for pupils to take home and use as part of their daily timetable. The digital capacity and confidence of staff has been maximised through a range of strategies including formal and informal opportunities to share practice, high quality professional learning, ongoing support from ICT Co-ordinators, staff experts and the Education Department's DigiHub team. Skills and knowledge developed by pupils and staff during the last lockdown were nurtured and encouraged from August 2020 with class teachers setting homework and other tasks digitally. Live engagement has been facilitated across all establishments in a variety of ways – Live lessons, Live check-ins, pre-recorded input with almost all establishments making use of the national E-learning offer and ERC video vault provision.

Williamwood Cluster

All schools report that their digital expertise has leapt forward significantly in the past year with gains outstripping that which would be seen in a 'normal' school year. Most issues of access to technology were resolved during the first lockdown with digital devices being distributed where needed. ICT co-ordinators, with the support of the DigiHub team, and digitally proficient staff have tirelessly shared their expertise with colleagues offering CLPL sessions or one to one support to enable all staff to develop the skills and confidence required to deliver remote learning effectively. Pupils have benefitted from the creative and effective ways that staff have planned live engagement sessions and pre-recorded teaching.

St Ninian's Cluster

Staff are utilising internal expertise; national and local guidance; and a wide range of external resources to enhance their digital skills and confidence. ICT Co-ordinators and senior staff actively support staff with new and emerging applications; and facilitate the sharing of good practice. Staff are actively monitoring pupil engagement and provide individual support to remove digital barriers. A wide variety of innovative and flexible approaches to learning have been adopted to reduce inequity and respond to learner feedback. The use of digital technology to provide support and feedback to pupils has been a real strength. Learners regularly attend 'live' meets with pastoral staff to support their health and wellbeing. Video and audio content is provided to exemplify concepts and consolidate learning.

All clusters highlighted the excellent support they have received from Education Department staff, particularly they welcomed all the tools and ideas shared which has enabled them to keep remote learning fresh and allow staff to extend the range of resources being used. This invaluable support has led to upskilling of staff, confidence increasing and the creation of a culture of collaboration.

Teachers have benefited from the opportunity to meet in stages in order to share good practice and resources which resulted in the creation of a dedicated Cluster Teams Group to allow for further collaboration.

Barrhead Cluster, February 2021

A child from McCready FC, continuing with their sensory play at home, February 2021

Wellbeing Wednesday provides opportunities to support pupil wellbeing through planned structured activities.

How effective is our remote learning, St Joseph's PS, February 2021

Hazeldene FC, Twitter, February 2021

Support for Learning Teams continuing to deliver targeted support and interventions remotely.

How effective is our remote learning, Uplawmoor PS, February 2021

Where pupils have not been engaging, parents have been contacted. Pupil Support are working on a reward system for those who have been fully engaging or have been working at a very high level.

How effective is our remote learning, Eastwood HS, February 2021

Attendance and Engagement Figures

When schools closed in December 2020 the Education Department took the decision to offer hub provision in each ELC setting and school. This decision was based on the previous self-evaluation and attendance data in June when numbers of vulnerable children attending hub provision significantly increased when the provision was in their own setting. A Filemaker database was developed to ensure accurate analysis of attendance patterns.

From January 2021 the Education Department has been tracking attendance at all hubs, this is detailed below (based on daily numbers provided by Head teachers). Children of key workers and those children who may be particularly vulnerable returned to school on 11 January 2021 after an extended Christmas break. All other children resumed learning remotely.

The table below shows the average daily hub attendance for children of keyworkers (KW) and vulnerable children (P) in each of the sectors (Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Special) to date.

Table 1

Week / Sector	Early Years		Primary		Secondary		Special		Total	
	KW	P	KW	P	KW	P	KW	P	KW	P
Wk Beg 11.01.21										
Wk Beg 18.01.21	131	224	607	209	101	126	5	37	844	596
Wk Beg 25.01.21	131	224	607	209	101	126	5	37	844	596
Wk Beg 01.02.21	131	114	602	280	94	165	5	41	832	600
Wk Beg 08.02.21	136	113	653	302	106	157	4	40	899	612

The Education Department's vision statement "*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*" reflects the commitment and expectation that all learners will be supported to realise their potential. The Local Improvement Plan 2020 - 2023, includes '*An Improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people*' as one of the expected outcomes and impacts. Similarly the Outcome Delivery Plan 2020 - 2023 includes, as in previous years, specific indicators and targets relating to the performance of disadvantaged children and young people. As such it is critical that during the current arrangements our schools have a clear strategy for supporting all children and young people with their learning and wellbeing.

Schools also gather intelligence in relation to pupil engagement with remote learning. Table 2 outlines the current percentage of children engaging with their remote learning by sector. The number engaged reflects engagement with remote learning either in the hub setting or for those families where children are working at home. It is noted that schools have interpreted engagement with pupil's ongoing commitment and interaction with the remote offer provided.

Table 2

Sector	% Engaged (April 2020)	% Engaged (February 2021)
ELC***	76%	92%
Primary	89%	96%
Secondary	83%	96%
Special	96%	100%

***not all had tracking systems in place

Overall the percentage of pupils that are engaging with learning at home across all sectors is currently around 95%. This is an increase of 9% since a similar measure was collated in April 2020. It is noted that the definition of engagement has moved on since April 2020. This increase is commendable as this time all schools have very rigorous expectations around daily engagement with the criteria measured being of a far higher standard than previously.

Cart Mill FC, Twitter, February 2021

The daily timetable is followed by all staff/ pupils in real time to enable staff to be responsive to questions/issues. Live engagements are posted with time and date in advance

In response to pupil feedback from last lockdown core lessons are videoed / narrated so to offer flexibility to pupils to access at any time and revisit and revise, however deadlines are given for tasks to help with time management and organisation.

> How effective is our remote learning, Williamwood HS, February 2021

Using Twitter as a platform, staff at Glen FC links post videos home linked to their planned weekly learning activities. They also provide videos for parents that demonstrate what success should look like. Parents and staff post pictures of the children playing, with staff annotating with statements linked to learning outcomes. They also do a 'weekly roundup' of clips of children learning at home and share it online.

> How effective is our remote learning, Glen FC, February 2021

Sharing of Practice

Woodfarm High School

In Woodfarm there is now a remote self-referral process in place allowing young people to access their Pastoral Teacher. This is in additional to the online Woodfarm Support Hub where vulnerable young people and families can access a range of resources for additional support. The site was initially created to launch and support P7 to S1 Cluster transition arrangements in May 2020 during the first lockdown. It has now been developed to support pupils and their families and pinpoints a number of useful resources. In particular, it has been an effective way to update young people on home learning strategies, offering guidance on additional support needs and making easy access to wellbeing resources. The addition of a self-referral process has been welcomed by young people. https://sites.google.com/er.glow.scot/woodfarmhub/home

Glenwood Family Centre
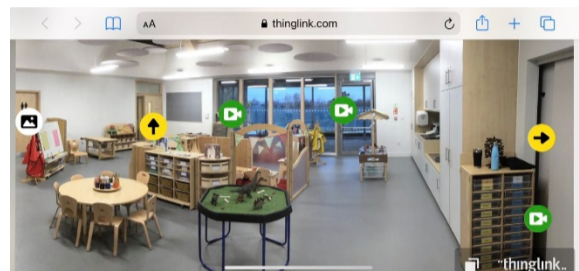
As part of East Renfrewshire's 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Plan, a new purpose built building was designed for Glenwood Family Centre. The current pandemic delayed the completion date of the building and also prevented staff groups from gathering and working in their new building. To support children and staff with the transition to the new facilities a range of digital tools were utilised, including @ThingLink. This tool allowed staff to explore how their new building worked and where everything was situated. This digital tool was a perfect way to share a day of virtual learning for all staff.

Maidenhill Nursery

Maidenhill Nursery have a consistent approach to using a variety of interactive activities on Google Classroom and use Google Meet very effectively for each group in order to engage their children.

Barrhead High School

Barrhead High have been using Jamboard very effectively across departments in order to facilitate pupil collaboration and to assess learning during lessons and plenary sessions.

Neilston Primary and Madras Family Centre

Neilston Primary have continued to develop approaches to parental engagement and gathering feedback through virtual 'coffee and chat' sessions.

St Cadoc's Primary and Nursery Class

St Cadoc's have set up a comprehensive remote learning site for parents and carers. It contains practical guidance on all aspects of remote learning for children in both the nursery and primary school and is regularly updated.

St Clare's Primary School

St Clare's provided all classes with the opportunity to contribute to their guidance on using digital technologies responsibly, particularly Google Meet and Google Classroom. The pupil guidance is displayed as a poster which is engaging and easy to understand. This has ensured that pupils have ownership and fully appreciate the importance of being a responsible user.
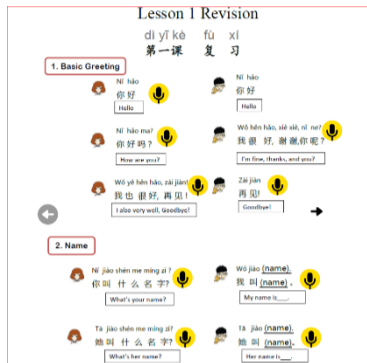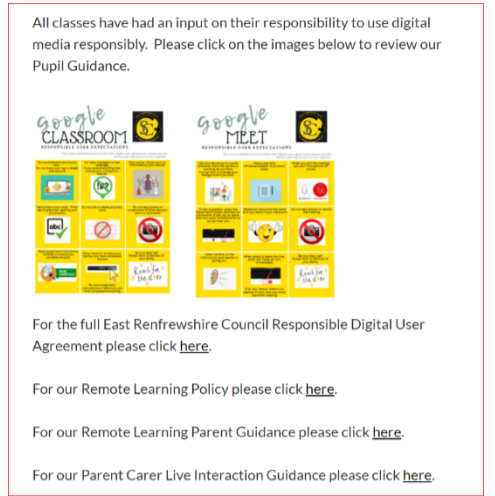
Carolside Primary School

As part of Languages Week one Primary 7 pupil used their Mandarin and digital skills to create a Thinglink to help their friends with the pronunciation of words. They recorded their own sound clips which they inserted into the 'Thinglink'

Busby Primary and Nursery Class

As part of their approach to blended learning, Busby Nursery launched bi-lingual Bookbug and storytelling sessions for the children to enjoy with their families at home. Videos were recorded and shared via the nursery blog, through weekly learning links and the school weekly communication 'Thursday Bundle'. By listening to familiar stories read in a range of languages within their school community, the staff hoped that at a time that they could not be together in person with the children and their families, they would still nurture a strong sense of partnership between home and school.

As a follow up they developed Busby Book Nook, which features storytelling sessions from staff in the school community, parents and some of the children, with a range of languages represented. Families provided suggestions of book titles and volunteers recorded a video in their home language, which could be added to their Book Nook.

Thornliebank Primary School

Thornliebank have been posting 'Well Done Awards' home regularly to recognise pupil achievement both in the hub and at home. Children have really enjoyed receiving these in the post and parents have provided positive feedback, commenting that it is an effective way to motivate and encourage.

Mearns Primary School

All classes have produced their own 'Google Classroom Charters' with tips to ensure that everyone stays safe and gets the most out of their Google Classroom experience.
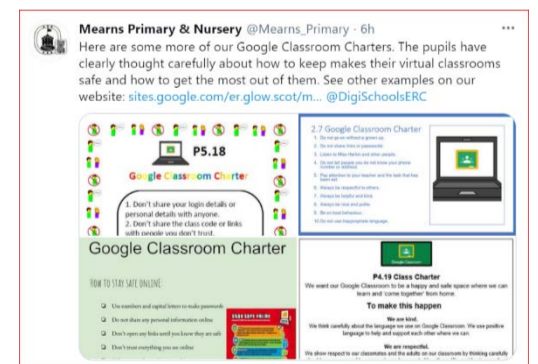
St Luke's High School

To facilitate a remote approach to the usual annual Transitions Programme, three Virtual classrooms were created for the young people of S2,S4 and S5 as they planned for the next steps in their learner journey by choosing subjects for study in the following year. The virtual classroom format was designed to act as a 'one-stop-shop' for learners and their families to access support and information during this period of remote learning. The interactive platforms contain presentations from the Head Teacher and Year Group Head alongside information from the Pupil Support Team regarding live drop-in times via Google Classroom for young people who need additional support when choosing their subject choices. The layout of the virtual classrooms is user-friendly and enables the young people to access a number of different links related to subject choices, support mechanisms and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) resources. Each faculty produced video clips to give pupils an insight into individual subjects and levels with regards to what the course content would involve, the skills and qualities they would develop and potential career pathways. Senior pupils, who had already studied each subject, also spoke about their personal experiences and why they would recommend the course to younger learners. In addition to providing direct links to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and My World of Work, a DYW classroom was also created. This classroom contains video clips from a number of partners talking about their careers

and giving advice directly to the young people of St Luke's. A wide variety of partners participated in supporting this project and as a result, young people are able to benefit from their insights into a broad range of careers such as radio broadcasting, engineering and retail industries.

The virtual classrooms were emailed home to initiate discussions between the young people and their parents/carers regarding their subject choices. Subsequently, all options were captured electronically using Microsoft Forms. The feedback from pupils and parents/carers has been very positive and the digital approach to transitions has been successful in supporting our young people to choose their curriculum pathway with knowledge, insight and confidence.

Kirkhill Primary School

Kirkhill introduced an online *Getting It Right For Me* worry form through the Seesaw app. This allows pupils to share any concerns around progress or wellbeing with their school leadership team; they receive a quick response in the form of a one-to-one meeting within 24 hours. Parents / carers are also involved in these discussions. Pupils who have used this facility have reported a positive impact on their anxiety level. The school's regular Sway parental newsletters contain a section on supporting wellbeing at home; they share resources including those from the East Renfrewshire *Healthier Minds* website. Feedback from parents has highlighted how helpful and supportive the resources have been.

Mearns Castle High School

Staff have continued to celebrate success and achievement through a range of planned approaches. This happens publicly through virtual assemblies, weekly parent updates and social media, but also on a personal level through the introduction of an "E-praise card" which links to the awarding of house points. This has received positive feedback from young people and parents. One parent commented *"Thank you for awarding **** 2 House points. This is just what he is needing at the moment."*

Eaglesham Primary School

Staff have maintained a sense of school identity by continuing with weekly assemblies where they share successes and achievements. Assemblies are themed around resilience, with the school chaplaincy team delivering religious observance remotely too.

Conclusion

- Leadership and commitment to remote learning by all staff
- Increased levels of engagement of learners in learning (86% May 2020 and 95% Feb 2021)
- Relentless focus on health and wellbeing and equity
- Range of supports for engagement and wellbeing, in particular HealthiER Minds
  Commitment and creative approaches to maintaining a sense of identity and whole school ethos
- Greater range of learning experiences being offered to learners across a range of platforms
- Increased range of both recorded and live delivery online with increase in daily "check ins"
- Increased confidence of practitioners in delivering learning remotely
- Greater range of learning experiences being offered to learners than in the previous lockdown
- Increased number of children accessing digital devices
- Positive feedback from parents on the support being offered.

Recommendations

Education Department

- Provide further professional learning for staff with a particular focus on the pedagogy of remote learning
- Further explore and invest in digital platforms that will support learners in all sectors
- Provide further opportunities across the local authority for sharing of resources and best practice in remote teaching and learning

Clusters

- Explore opportunities to share understanding and expectations of remote learning across stages, departments, schools and cluster

ELC Settings and Schools

- Maintain a relentless focus on health and wellbeing support for learners, families and staff
- Continue to ensure equitable access to digital devices and online access for learners and staff
- Continue to develop quality assurance of learning provision to support staff in the delivery of high quality remote learning

We have a variety of supports in place including: Reading recovery, Kit Bags going home, continuation of JST and review meetings, implementation of wellbeing plans and places in the school hub for targeted children.

How effective is our remote learning, Cross Arthurlie PS, February 2021.

Each class has live lessons in the morning and afternoon. A register is taken at the start of the lessons. Attendance rates are very high, however any concerns are passed on to the senior leadership team for follow up.

How effective is our remote learning, Calderwood Lodge PS, February 2021

St John's PS Parent, Twitter, February 2021

There is a very effective multi agency approach taken with Social Work, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Family First, etc to support vulnerable children.

How effective is our remote learning, St Thomas's PS, February 2021

Virtual Sports Club, Netherlee PS, February 2021

Senior leaders analysis and review learners' experiences on a weekly basis using information from Google classroom and provide guidance and next steps to each teacher, to ensure consistency in approaches and refinement of processes.

How effective is our remote learning, Hillview PS, February 2021

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AGENDA ITEM No.4

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2021

Report by Director of Education

PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING THE ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL IN
EAST RENFREWSHIRE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.   The purpose of the report is to update elected members on the progress made in implementing the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) in East Renfrewshire as part of the 2021 certification process.

RECOMMENDATION

2.   Elected members are asked to note and comment on the Education Department's progress in implementing the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) in East Renfrewshire as part of the 2021 certification process.

BACKGROUND

3.   In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government took the decision that there would be no examination diet in 2020. Subsequently the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) set out arrangements for an alternative certification model.

4.   The release of results on 4 August 2020 was accompanied by controversy in relation to the moderated grades provided by SQA to a number of candidates. The focus nationally was on whether the certification model was equitable to all candidates. Professor Mark Priestley was commissioned by the Scottish Government to lead an independent review of the processes through which qualifications were awarded.

5.   In October 2020, following the publication of the Priestley Review and in light of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Deputy First Minister announced the suspension of the National 5 examinations diet. An Alternative Certification Model for National 5 qualifications was outlined based on teacher and lecturer judgements supported by assessment resources and quality assurance.

6.   The Deputy First Minister made further changes on 8 December 2020 indicating that there would be no external assessments of Higher or Advanced Higher courses. As a result, the entire 2021 National Qualifications examination diet had been cancelled and replaced by the ACM.

7.   The National Qualifications 2021 Group was set up to support the development of the ACM nationally, it includes representatives from a range of key stakeholders including Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), the National Parent Forum of Scotland, SQA and Schools Leaders Scotland (SLS). Locally, officers have been liaising with local authority colleagues across Scotland via ADES and have been supported well by our SQA Liaison Manager.

8.   Within ERC, schools are working closely with the Education Department to ensure that the hard work of all our young people is rightly and fairly recognised through the ACM. This paper provides more detail on the arrangements that have been put in place.

REPORT

9.   As a result of the change from Standard Grades to Intermediate qualifications in 2005, ERC schools have focused on ensuring that young people are presented at the most appropriate level in S4-S6 for many years. Schools in East Renfrewshire adopt a genuinely ambitious approach to presentation levels which is based on reliable assessment data from the Broad General Education and Senior Phase.

10.   Elected members will recall from the annual presentation of the SQA results made at Education Committee, since the introduction of Intermediate 1 and 2 in 2007, we have seen improvements in the proportion of S4 pupils presented successfully at the highest possible level. Overall the proportion of S4 pupils successfully achieving at the highest level has increased from 61% of the S4 roll to 83%. These improvements have then led to increases in the proportion of S5 or S6 pupils achieving at Higher and Advanced Higher.

11.   In addition, elected members will be aware that schools in East Renfrewshire collaborate within clusters (associated early years, primary and secondary schools), planning together to design and assess a curriculum which is cohesive across sectors, hence ensuring continuity and progression for children and young people at key points of transition. Clusters have been supported to map out curricular progression from 3-18, taking account of the most appropriate pace of learning for pupils and based on reliable teacher judgements of pupil progress. The collaborative approach supports transition across sectors and ensures attainment, achievement and experiences are progressive and continuous. The ongoing focus on moderation and assessment and rigorous tracking within the Broad General Education meant that ERC schools were well placed to provide teacher estimates for the 2020 certification process.

12.   The 2020 certification process required schools to produce refined estimates for each learner, for each course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. The SQA defined a refined estimated band as not just the result of one prelim or one project, but as an overall judgement based on all activity across the year; estimates reflected both demonstrated and inferred attainment of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses. The 2020 estimates could not be shared with young people or their parents before the SQA made their final decisions in August.

13.   A quality assurance process was put in place across Scotland to ensure the integrity and credibility of the qualification system. Within East Renfrewshire this approach was enhanced with schools also being supported by the Quality Improvement Team to analyse their estimates in advance of submission to the SQA. It included making use of the very effective systems that are in place for analysing attainment, benchmarking, target setting and tracking of pupil progress.

14.   The SQA paper to Education Committee in June 2020 indicated that the Education Department anticipated very strong attainment in S5 and S6 for 2020, based on the results of national qualifications in 2019. It is worth noting that the S5 projections for 1 or more, 3 or more or 5 or more Highers made by the EMIS Unit in September 2019, were very close to the final authority results for 2020.

15.   To support the implementation of the ACM for 2021 the Education Department convened a working group with representatives from all 7 secondary schools. The role of this group is to establish a clear and consistent approach to assessment and moderation across East Renfrewshire; initially this was for National 5, however, the scope has now been broadened to include Higher and Advanced Higher.

16.   In October 2020, the SQA published guidance for schools on gathering evidence and producing estimates. Schools have been asked to provide the SQA with provisional results for each learner for each course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher for 2021. The estimate should be *'a holistic review of a candidate's performance as indicated by assessment evidence';* unlike the 2020 estimate it should be an evidence-based prediction of final attainment and does not include an inferred element. SQA have provided guidance in relation to the type and quality of evidence including detailed subject-specific documents which summarise the key pieces of evidence required as the basis of provisional results.

17.   As noted in paragraph 7, the National Qualifications 2021 Group is overseeing the national development of the ACM. The agreed model has recently been revised to reflect the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and is based on five key stages, these are summarised below:

- **Stage 1: ongoing until April 2021** – *Teachers and lecturers access subject specific guidance, assessment resources and Understanding Standards materials and webinars from SQA.*
- **Stage 2: April to May 2021** – *School, college, training provider and local authority quality assurance continues. During May, SQA requests, reviews and provides feedback on assessment evidence from each school, college and training provider.*
- **Stage 3: end May to 25 June 2021** – *Schools, colleges, training providers, local authorities and SQA work through final stages of local and national quality assurance and feedback, to reach provisional results that are consistent, equitable and fair.*
- **Stage 4: by 25 June 2021** – *Schools, colleges and training providers submit quality assured provisional results to SQA.*
- **Stage 5: Appeals process for 2020–21** – *To be advised following consultation.*

18.   Given the current restrictions East Renfrewshire schools are focused on providing high quality remote learning experiences. The detail of these approaches is the subject of a separate report to Education Committee. Schools will carry out assessments following the return by S4-S6 pupils to in-person learning.

19.   The East Renfrewshire working group has produced an Assessment and Moderation Policy (included as Appendix 1). This takes account of the national guidance and has been agreed by Head Teachers and the Education Department. It sets out best practice for the creation and validation of assessment and how schools will undertake moderation to ensure a shared understanding of standards and expectations. The policy has also been peer reviewed by another Local Authority.

20.   ERC schools are working collaboratively to implement the ACM. Moderation partners have been set up through the network of subject groups, with schools working in pairs or trios to validate assessments and moderate candidate evidence. In addition subject specialist staff across East Renfrewshire are supporting the quality assurance model to reinforce assessment standards. The In-Service day on 5 February 2021 was used by secondary school staff to carry out validation and moderation of assessments.

21.   It has been agreed by the Scottish Government that two additional in-service days will be set aside for teachers to work on assessments this year. Details are still to be finalised, but it is expected that this will support stages 2 and 3 of the ACM.

22.   During May and June, the Quality Improvement Team will support schools to analyse provisional estimates and carry out any internal checks. The very effective estimates tool that was used last session in East Renfrewshire will be updated to allow schools to review estimates, particularly for key equity groups.

23.   The Education Department has undertaken an equalities impact assessment for the new policy and procedures to ensure all candidates are treated fairly, equitably and without bias.

24.   The ACM sets out clearly the role of SQA throughout the five stages. During May SQA will request, review and provide feedback on a sample of assessment evidence from each school across Scotland as part of the national quality assurance.

25.   Unlike 2020, provisional results will be shared with learners before being submitted to the SQA. The provisional results will still be subject to further checks by SQA, who will then issue them individually to learners on 10 August 2021.

26.   Stage 5 of the ACM is the appeals process, which is still to be finalised following national consultation.

CONSULTATION

27.   Secondary Head Teachers and the Education Department continue to review the senior phase curriculum and attainment through the regular Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) meetings. This has included overseeing the implementation of ACM for 2021.

28.   In addition, consultation has been initiated at a school and authority level with Parent Councils and with pupil representatives. The working group will develop a wide range of communications for candidates and parents based on feedback.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

29.   There are no financial and efficiency implications associated with the amended certification process for 2021. The 2021 arrangements will be covered by the agreed SQA budget.

CONCLUSION

30.   Within East Renfrewshire, schools are working closely with the Education Department, pupils and parents to implement the ACM. The strong practice in moderation and assessment, rigorous tracking and effective collaboration within and across the authority means that schools are well placed to ensure ensure a shared understanding of standards and expectations and to implement the assessment and moderation policy.

RECOMMENDATION

31.   Elected members are asked to note and comment on the Education Department's progress in implementing the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) in East Renfrewshire as part of the 2021 certification process.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
11 March 2021

Convener Contact Details
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Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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Background Papers
Progress report on providing SQA with estimates as part of the 2020 certification process
https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/1276/Education-Committee-Item-04-11-June-2020/pdf/Education_Committee_Item_04_-_11_June_2020.pdf?m=637274890045130000

Appendix 1
East Renfrewshire Council Education Department Assessment and Moderation Policy - Qualifications

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East Renfrewshire Council Education Department

Assessment and Moderation Policy - Qualifications

Context

Following the publication of the Priestley Review[1], the Deputy First Minister announced the decision to use an alternative certification model (ACM) to determine results for National 5 qualifications on 7 October 2020. **Further review of learning loss associated with the national pandemic resulted in the decision to include all Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications within this model** on 8 December 2020 albeit with undefined flexibility. SQA published guidance on the determination of provisional results[2] in October 2020.

East Renfrewshire Council convened a short life working group, with representatives from all seven secondary schools (Appendix 5), to determine local authority guidance to respond to the following Priestley Review Recommendations[1]:

> *1. Suspension of the National 5 examinations diet in 2021, with qualifications awarded on the basis of centre estimation based upon **validated** assessments.*
> *2. The development of a nationally **recognised**, fully transparent and proportionate system for moderation of centre-based assessment.*
> *3. The development of more extensive approaches to **collaborative decision making and co-construction** by professional stakeholders of assessment practices related to National Qualifications.*
> *5. The development of more systematic processes for **working with and engaging young people**, as stakeholders and rights holders in education.*
> *6. The development of a clear communications strategy, co-constructed with stakeholders, to ensure that the extraordinary arrangements for 2021 are as fully as possible understood by all parties.*

The National Qualifications 2021 Group has overseen development of the quality assurance model which will support teachers and lecturers in providing provisional results for National 5 candidates in session 2020-21. Provisional results will be based on teacher and lecturer professional judgement of learner evidence. The model also confirms how provisional results will become final results[3].

Combined support from SQA, local authorities, colleges, independent schools and Education Scotland aims to enhance teachers' and lecturers' understanding of the consistent application of the national standard and in making accurate judgements. Schools and colleges can also ask SQA for further support and advice regarding the national standard should they find it helpful.

These processes should ensure trust and consistency across the country so that a National 5 awarded in the north of Scotland is of the same standard as one which is awarded in the south of Scotland and everywhere in between.

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[1] https://www.gov.scot/publications/rapid-review-national-qualifications-experience-2020

[2] https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/nq-estimates-guidance-2020-21.pdf

[3] https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/96101.html

Most of the support will be provided in advance of schools and colleges submitting their provisional results by 28 May 2021. The model has five key stages:

Stage 1: November 2020 to March 2021 – *Teachers and lecturers can access subject specific guidance, assessment resources and Understanding Standards materials from SQA*

- Learning and teaching ongoing.
- Schools are supported by local and national subject networks; any department that requires support through the West Partnership or from SQA should inform their Quality Improvement Officer as soon as possible.
- SQA provides ongoing Understanding Standards support for schools.
- Schools gather evidence and support learners, providing feedback.
- School and local authority quality assurance takes place.

Stage 2: end-January to beginning of April – *SQA requests, reviews and provides feedback on samples of assessment evidence from each school and college*

- Learning and teaching ongoing.
- Schools continue to gather evidence and support learners, providing feedback on progress as supported by existing evidence.
- School and local authority quality assurance continues.
- SQA samples candidate evidence from all schools, and provides feedback.
- Schools start to develop provisional results based on the available evidence and feedback from SQA sampling.
- Schools or local authority can engage in dialogue with SQA where further support is required.

Stage 3: end March to 28 May – *Schools, colleges and local authorities will work through feedback and implement their own quality assurance of the provisional results*

- Learning and teaching ongoing.
- Schools continue to gather evidence and support learners, providing feedback on progress as supported by available evidence.
- Schools take actions in relation to SQA feedback.
- Schools carry out quality assurance checks. Heads of centre endorse the process and outcomes per subject.
- Local authority (where applicable) engages with schools to carry out quality assurance checks.
- Schools or local authority can speak with SQA where further support is required.

Stage 4: by 28 May 2021 – S*chools submit quality assured provisional results*

Further information on how to submit the provisional results to SQA will be issued to schools from SQA.

Stage 5: June 2021 – *SQA carries out national check of provisional results and discusses any issues with schools and local authority*

- SQA undertakes post-submission data checks.
- If SQA identifies any issues with the provisional results, these will be checked with schools and, if appropriate, the local authority. This should be by exception.

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- Following this check, SQA subject specialists may sample learner evidence for final quality assurance.
- In instances where SQA subject specialists determine that assessment evidence is found not to meet the standard, schools will be asked to resubmit provisional results that reflect the standard of the evidence so that certification can proceed.

The above model requires all stakeholders, at all stages, to be fully involved and work in partnership. By doing so, learners will have the best chance of securing the outcomes that their efforts deserve. The timeline agreed for East Renfrewshire Schools is outlined in Appendix 1. Please note that this will be updated to reflect changes in national guidance.

The advice for learners, parents and carers[4] published by SQA on 8 December 2020 provides clarity of the expectations learners will have of the ACM in 2020-2021.

> *Here's how the National 5 quality assurance model will work in session 2020-21:*
> ➢ *Your school and/or college uses guidance and assessment materials to help gather your evidence.*
> ➢ *Schools and colleges are supported in using the national standard for when they decide your provisional results.*
> ➢ *SQA will request, review and give feedback on samples of assessment evidence from your school and/or college.*
> ➢ *Your school and/or college and local authority will check your assessment evidence.*
> ➢ *Your school and/or college and local authority will look at SQA feedback and check your provisional results.*
> ➢ *Your school and/or college will send your provisional results to SQA by 28 May 2021.*

SQA will carry out a national check of the provisional results. We may follow up with your school and/or college about any issues we find.

After SQA checks the provisional results, your school or college might be asked to update this result and resend it to SQA. Any changes to your provisional results will only happen after your school or college talk to SQA, and once a senior subject specialist in SQA has reviewed the evidence sent in by your school or college.

The following policy takes account of national guidance and sets out how we can all work collectively, collegiately and collaboratively to support the ACM process and ensure the hard work of all our young people will be rightly and fairly recognised.

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[4] https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/96098.html

Validated Assessments

The East Renfrewshire publication 'Assessment and Estimating Performance' (Appendix 2) incorporates national guidance and best practice for the creation and validation of assessment; and determination of ACM estimates for all qualifications in 2021. The guidance template can also be used to record internal and\or external validation that confirms assessments are reliable; and replicate the national standard. It is crucial that SQA subject specific guidance[5] is fully considered to determine the key components that will be used as evidence to generate a candidate's provisional result. Please remember that it is not the quantity of evidence, but the quality of evidence that will support you in the estimation process[2].

The process outlined in this policy incorporates the purposes and principles of SQA's internal verification guidance[6]. This provides a useful summary of activities that schools should normally undertake each year prior to the final examination and supports this session's ACM approach by:

- ✓ Helping to ensure that all staff understand national standards and can apply them
- ✓ Facilitating collaboration between staff and with external colleagues
- ✓ Enabling and ensuring fair, accurate and consistent assessment judgements
- ✓ Supporting the credibility of internally-assessed qualifications with parents, employers, higher education institutions etc.
- ✓ Allowing quality concerns to be captured and addressed
- ✓ Helping to protect assessors against challenges to professional assessment judgements
- ✓ Supporting preparation for successful external verification

In line with the ACM model adopted this year and through support of local and national subject networks, key pieces of assessment evidence that have not been pre-validated through SQA will be externally validated by at least one other school. This will provide reassurance for learners and parents\carers that we have worked collectively and collaboratively to:

- Confidently select key evidence pieces
- Replicate the course assessment
- Validate key assessment instruments
- Consistently apply national standards

All East Renfrewshire Schools should keep records of:

- Assessment items that have been validated by another centre or SQA
- Feedback provided
- Any actions resulting from feedback

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[5] https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95157.html

[6] https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74670.html

Moderation of candidate evidence

Moderation develops a shared understanding of standards and expectations. It is a collaborative activity, best done within or across a department or subject area where teachers are familiar with course specifications and approaches to assessment. This session, it is particularly crucial that subject specialist staff across East Renfrewshire support the Quality Assurance required to successfully and reliably deliver the Alternative Certification Model.

Moderation 'partners,' where teachers work in pairs or groups to confirm each other's assessment decisions and to moderate evidence over a period of time, can be an effective way to reinforce assessment standards. East Renfrewshire's publication 'Moderation' (Appendix 3) provides key signposts for all internal and external moderation activity.

With sound moderation of assessment judgements in place, the task of producing candidate estimates can be approached with confidence.

The Role of the Moderator

The internal Moderator or Moderator team is responsible for ensuring the validity of internal assessments and the reliability of assessors' judgements. This responsibility has several parts; however its main role is to support assessors (class teachers).

The main steps in any moderation exercise will involve all of the following:

1. **checking assessment** instruments before they are delivered, where possible, to ensure validity
2. **arranging standardisation** exercises, including reference to Understanding Standards, and cross marking an appropriate sample of scripts before bulk marking to set the standard
3. **sampling assessment** decisions – cross marking a sample of candidate responses (square root of total cohort) – and ensuring that appropriate action is taken before evidence is returned to candidates
4. **signing off** the completed moderation record

a. Arranging standardisation exercises

Standardisation is the cross marking of a small sample of scripts before bulk marking to set the standard. Teachers will work together to consider evidence from a sample of candidates based on the marking instructions to share understanding of the success criteria; specific examples of standardisation approaches are included in the East Renfrewshire publication 'Moderation' (Appendix 3). All teachers will make use of any Understanding Standards exemplification available as a guide to the standard required by the candidate evidence.

All records **and** evidence gathered of moderation exercises, including any feedback to assessors and candidates, should be kept as evidence of internal and external moderation activity.

b. Sampling assessment decisions

Following the marking process, the internal moderator should select a sample of candidate evidence to check that each assessor is making consistent decisions in line with national standards. This should be sampled using the 'square root' formula – i.e. 5 scripts from a class of 25.

A range of assessment methods should be included in the sample *where possible.*

The scripts should be selected to include *where possible:*

- a range of candidate groups
- an age/stage and gender mix of candidates
- evidence which has achieved the national standard and evidence where candidates have no*t achieved the national standard.*

Examples of post-marking moderation might include:

- Cross marking using a different colour of pen
- Annotation of pupil evidence
- Completion of marking grid

The outcomes of internal moderation should be given as feedback to the assessors and used to refine future assessment and teaching and learning.

c. Maintaining assessment and moderation records:

All assessment that leads to certification must be sampled and signed off by the internal Moderator before provisional results are sent to SQA.

This can be done by countersigning the internal moderation checklist. (Appendix 3)

The records that are kept will include:

- validated assessment material (SQA developed/commercial or in-house)
- reports of any meetings, including standardisation exercises
- checklists/marking schemes/annotated/developed where required
- candidate scripts – with annotation
- records of all sampling activity
- feedback to assessors

Please note:

Candidates must be informed that any results shared are provisional and may be subject to change as a result of school, local authority and national moderation.

Quality Assurance Procedures

Due to the vital importance of estimates for determining candidate outcomes, it is essential that quality assurance of estimates is considered at each level of the system.

Estimates are based on **demonstrated** applications of the skills, knowledge and understanding of the course. They are informed by assessment judgements made by teachers and lecturers throughout the delivery of the course. These judgements must be moderated to ensure that estimates are realistic. The process of moderating estimates begins with the moderation of assessment judgements.

The East Renfrewshire publications 'Assessment and Estimating Performance' (Appendix 2) and 'Quality Assurance of Estimates…a summary of good practice' (Appendix 4) should be fully considered in determining each candidate's provisional result.

Alternative Certification Timeline*

East Renfrewshire COUNCIL

February - May

- ❏ Subject groups undertake validation and moderation of assessment instruments and samples

- **May**
  - ❏ SQA samples candidate evidence from each centre and provides feedback.

- **6th May**
  - ❏ In-service day for ACM

- **Early June (to be confirmed)**
  - ❏ In-service days for ACM

- **Wednesday 9th June**
  - ❏ Provisional results agreed at department and school level
  - ❏ Provisional results shared with EMIS for LA analysis
  - ❏ Final pieces of evidence are completed by learners in remaining subjects

- **Wednesday 16th June**
  - ❏ Provisional results shared with learners

- **Friday 25th June**
  - ❏ Head of each Centre endorses ACM process and outcomes per subject.
  - ❏ Provisional results finalised and submitted to SQA

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Assessing and Estimating Performance

This template provides key signposts for development and validation\moderation of assessment evidence in the senior phase.

Reliable Assessment Instruments	Replicating the course assessment	Estimating Performance
Where assessment instruments are used to assess and estimate performance: ○ Items should be gathered from an appropriate range of sources and years ○ Items should be from a range of SQA assessments and examinations and\or commercially produced papers or items from the current year ○ The completed instruments must be appropriately secured to ensure they are not in the public domain	○ Conforms to specific SQA guidance on assessment for 20-21 ○ Individual components and units are adequately and proportionately sampled ○ Individual tasks\questions set at the correct level of the course to allow attainment at A and B to be demonstrated ○ Time allocations (and word limits) replicate course assessment ○ Overall assessment is appropriate within the criteria/specification for the level assessed ○ Centre agreed Marking Schemes provide sufficient detail	○ Appropriate weight given to each individual piece of evidence in accordance with its predictive value ○ Marking schemes correctly and consistently applied to national standard ○ All candidates are treated fairly, equitably and without bias ○ Cut off scores set to an appropriate level for the standard set in the assessments ○ Previous attainment trends considered ○ Estimates generated on demonstrated attainment only (not inferred)

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Moderation

o develops a shared understanding of standards and outcomes
o is a crucial element of quality assurance
o is a collaborative activity
o ensures that all candidates entered for the same qualification are assessed fairly and consistently to the specified standard.

As practitioners you are doing this already – this is an information sheet that summaries the ERC Moderation Policy

Once Assessments have been validated and pupils have undertaken the assessment

Standardisation Exercises	Sampling Assessment Decisions	Maintaining Assessment and Moderation Records
This is the cross marking of a small sample of scripts **before** bulk marking to set the standard. Teachers will work together to consider evidence from a sample of candidates based on the marking instructions to share understanding of the success criteria. o Cross marking: generally used with written evidence, in which assessors exchange the same candidate evidence to check each other's interpretation of the standard. o Blind marking: Mostly used with written evidence, this is intended to reduce any bias, however unintentional, by an assessor. In one form of blind marking, evidence is marked by two assessors, but each is unaware of the other's mark. Discrepancies between the marks can then be resolved. o Dual Assessment: for presentations; both assessors and Moderator assess the same candidate at the same time comparing assessment judgements and interpretation of the standard.	Following the marking process, select a sample of candidate evidence. This should be sampled using the 'square root' formula – i.e. 5 scripts from a class of 25. The scripts should be selected to include where possible: o a range of candidate groups o an age/stage and gender mix of candidates o evidence which has achieved the national standard and evidence where candidates have not achieved the national standard. Examples of post-marking moderation might include: o Cross marking using a different colour of pen o Annotation of pupil evidence o Completion of marking grid The outcomes of internal and external moderation must be given as feedback to the assessors and used to inform next steps including refinement of future assessment and teaching and learning.	o All records and evidence gathered of all moderation exercises, including any feedback to assessors and candidates, should be kept as evidence of internal and external moderation activity. o All assessment that leads to certification must be sampled and signed off by the internal Moderator before candidates results are sent to SQA. This can be done by countersigning the moderation checklist (Appendix 1) o The records that are kept will include ✓ validated assessment material (SQA developed/commercial or in-house) ✓ reports of any meetings, including standardisation exercises ✓ checklists and marking schemes annotated/developed where required ✓ candidate scripts – with annotation ✓ records of all sampling activity ✓ feedback to assessors

APPENDIX 3

Moderation Checklist

Subject area: Level: Assessor(s):

Internal Moderator:

Name of Unit/Learning Outcomes being sampled:

Stage		Comment / Evidence Gathered	Date/Signature
1	**Pre-assessment meeting** • Refer to SQA exemplar assessment materials on SQA Secure and SQA Connect • Identification of assessment item choice • Checking/discussion of marking instructions		
2	**Standardisation – agreeing marking standard** • Refer to Understanding Standards and SQA Connect • Double marking... • Blind marking... • Cross marking... • (other – please note) • Marking scheme finalised in light of discussions		
3	**Sampling Assessment Evidence** • Square root of sample chosen • Cross marking with Moderator • Discussion of differences/findings (please note here) • External moderation undertaken • Action taken to remediate where needed • Scripts returned to candidates		
4	**Review of process/items/marking** • Record any actions required as a result of internal and external moderation. • Teaching and learning needs arising (please note)		

Quality Assurance of Estimates . . . a summary of good practice

Estimates are based on demonstrated applications of the skills, knowledge and understanding of the course. They are informed by assessment judgements made by teachers throughout the delivery of the course. These judgements must be moderated to ensure that estimates are realistic. The process of moderating estimates begins with the moderation of assessment judgements.

Roles of Teachers – Principal Teacher Curriculum – Senior Leadership Team – East Renfrewshire Council

Teachers	Principal Teachers Curriculum

Once you have generated initial estimates for your candidates consider the questions below:
 	
• Have I followed the guidance agreed with PTC/SLT?
 	
• Have I ensured all candidates have been treated fairly, equitably and without bias by:
   o Using the appropriate evidence to support estimates for each candidate?
   o Being consistent across candidates in analysing evidence and generating estimates?
 	
• Do my overall estimates fall within the agreed parameters for this session based on the data my PTC/PT has used from the last three years? If not, what evidence do I have to justify the difference?
 	
• Are my overall estimates largely in line with National Qualification Progression Rates? If not, what evidence do I have to justify the difference
	Once you receive estimates from your teaching staff, consider the questions below and liaise with your staff to ensure you are confident that the estimates are fair, reliable and consistent:
	
	• Have all staff followed the agreed guidance and considered the key questions opposite?
	
	• Are all staff across a subject being consistent in the evidence used?
	
	• Do overall estimates fall within the agreed parameters for this session based on the data from the last three years? If not, what evidence do we have to justify the difference?
	
	• Are overall estimates largely in line with National Qualification Progression Rates? If not, what evidence do we have to justify the difference?
	
	• What are the estimates for the candidates in other cognate subjects?

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Senior Leadership Team	East Renfrewshire Council
Once you have received candidate estimates and data on estimates compared to the last three years and National Qualification Progression Rates from PTC use the questions below to ensure you are confident that the estimates are fair, reliable and consistent: • Have Subject Networks facilitated opportunities throughout the session for practitioners to be involved in internal and external validation\moderation activities? • Have schools shared their annual assessment calendars with parents and learners via school website or email? • Have PTCs confirmed that all candidates have been treated fairly, equitably and without bias? • Are the estimates for each subject in line with previous data and National Qualification Progression Rates? If no, what evidence has been provided to justify this? Does the evidence stand up to scrutiny? • Has each subject considered previous concordance levels and factored this into estimates? • Do subject estimates "fit" the prior profile of the candidate and their estimated performance in other subjects? Example from SQA: Take a small sample of candidates across certain faculties, e.g. Chemistry and Biology. Do the same candidates appear in approximately similar orders? • Are there any anomalies in terms of the individual candidate's performance across the range of subjects they are being presented for and therefore might require further consideration? • Do overall school results correlate with previous attainment results?	East Renfrewshire Council Education Department will undertake a range of activities to Quality Assure and provide guidance to individual schools\subjects as follows: • Quality Improvement Officers will support the facilitation of collaborative and collegiate activities within subject groups to validate assessment instruments and moderate assessment samples. • Quality Improvement Officers will respond to requests for external support with validation and moderation from small departments. • Quality Improvement Officers will fully consider and facilitate (where possible) any requests for SQA appointee support. • EMIS will provide a Quality Assurance Tool (Estimate Tool) to compare previous trends of performance for each individual subject and level; and cumulative whole school attainment trends for all cohorts and key equity groups. • EMIS will complete a sense check of provisional estimates and compare to previous attainment trends; progression values; and whole authority attainment trends. EMIS will provide feedback to individual schools.

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