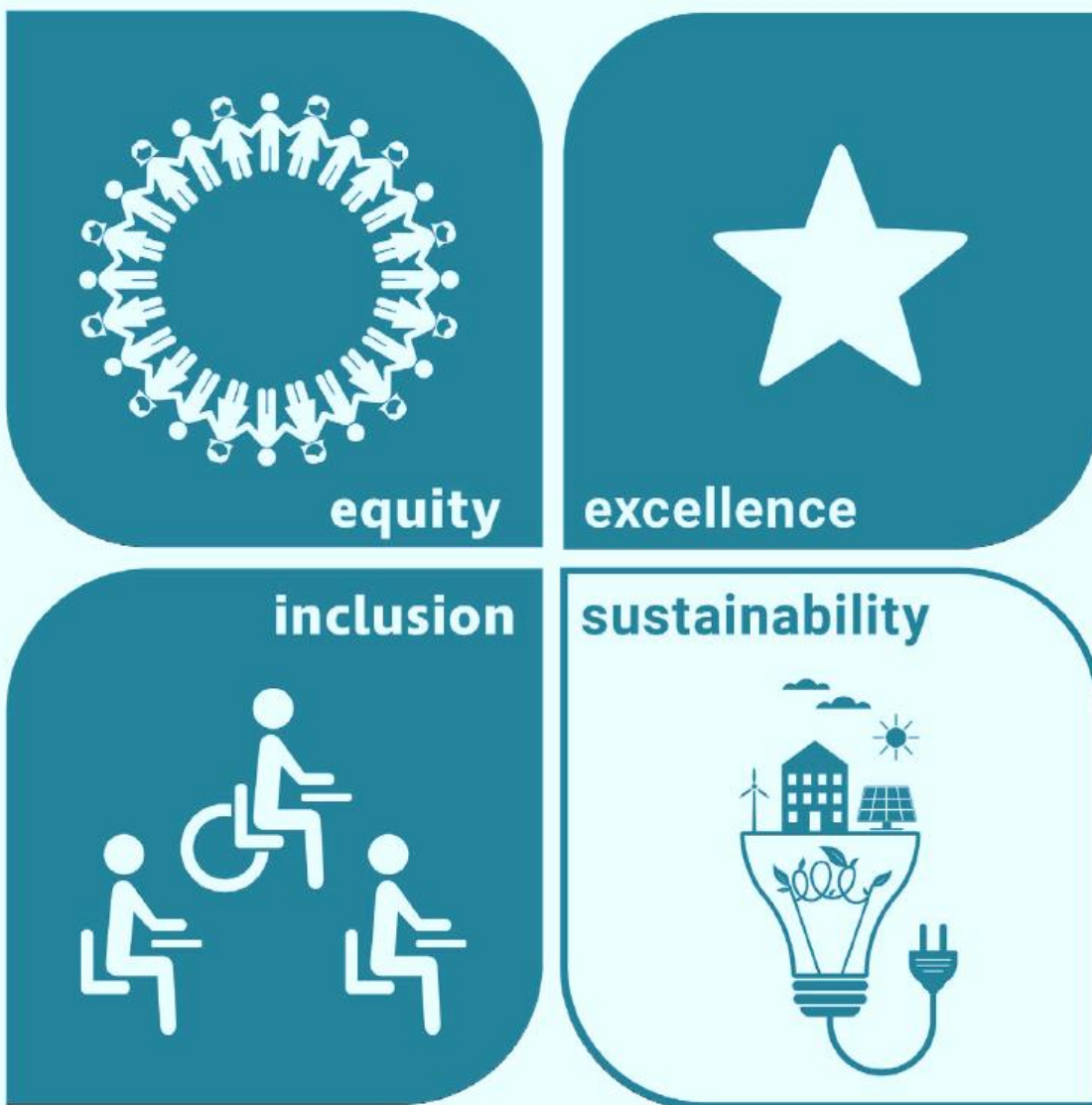


# The Ambition – Excellence and Equity for Shetland’s Learners



*Delivering Excellent Service, Taking Personal Responsibility and Working Well Together to Build a Brighter Future Together*



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## Introduction

'The Ambition' - Excellence and Equity for Shetland's Learners is Children's Services strategy for education improvement in Shetland 2022-2026.

It sets out our high level commitments to deliver against the national priorities within the National Improvement Framework Plan. The development of detailed action plans will be the responsibility of the workstream improvement groups under the guidance and direction of the project board.

The four year strategy is being published at a time of significant change in the Scottish education system as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and embark on a national conversation about the future of education in this country.

Recent reports from Audit Scotland, the OECD, ICEA and the Scottish Attainment Challenge 5 year progress report have all been instrumental in shaping the content of the strategy. A period of self-evaluation, data analysis and consultation with Head Teachers, stakeholder groups and staff have provided the evidence base for establishing our governance arrangements and key areas of work.

This period of engagement has been intended to focus direction and build a shared understanding at every level. Every member of staff across all areas of Children's Services has a role to play including sport and leisure, creative links, libraries and children's social work. We are empowering people across our system through a distributed leadership approach, capturing the voices and expertise of school managers, teaching staff and partners and giving them an active role in delivering improvement. This shared accountability, based on everyone working towards a common purpose, will put us in the best possible position to achieve the ambitions of the strategy and improve outcomes for all our children and young people.

As we continue to move in to and through a period of change and uncertainty, our strategy, and the governance arrangements underpinning it, will ensure that we are agile and responsive to change, enabling corrective action to be taken as the next four years unfold.

By setting stretch aims to 2026 but reviewing progress against these annually and continuing to monitor wider performance data, we will move quickly in response to the changing educational landscape. This will enable us to accelerate improvement where possible and identify emerging risks as we make progress.



## Vision, Priorities and Drivers

### The Vision for Education in Scotland

Excellence through raising attainment and improving outcomes: ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors;

Achieving equity: ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The ambition is for Scottish education to deliver both excellence in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering equity so that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed, regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs. The Scottish Government aims to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of every child and young person in order to ensure they are incorporated fully across the Scottish education system.

Shetland Islands Council recognises the themes identified by the Scottish Government running through the various reports and seeks to adopt these as underpinning principles of the work we do over the next four years:

- A co-ordinated response to combatting the effects of the pandemic and a recovery in education;
- The need to continue efforts to close the poverty related attainment gap;
- The importance of developing the range and consistency of education data;
- The need to combine effective collaboration with clear roles and responsibilities;
- The importance of digital infrastructure and connectivity;
- The health and wellbeing of staff and learners (including mental wellbeing);
- Putting children and young people at the centre of everything we do.



## Key priorities of the National Improvement Framework

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

The drivers of improvement in the outcomes achieved by children and young people through education are:

- School and ELC leadership
- Teacher and practitioner professionalism
- Parent/carer involvement and engagement
- Curriculum and assessment
- School and ELC improvement
- Performance Information

The drivers shall be central to the delivery of improvements across all workstreams.

## Performance Monitoring and Reporting

The Performance Information Management Group shall consider performance monitoring and reporting arrangements as may be specified by the board or workstream leads and ensure compliance with statutory reporting requirements. The group will also ensure that Children’s Service’s performance reporting arrangements to Shetland Islands Council are reflective of the stretch aims and shall advise on the impact of planned, known or foreseeable future developments on performance data. Workstream leads will report to the project board and contribute to the annual progress report.

<b>Core indicators</b>	Performance indicators required by the Scottish Government with accompanying stretch aims.
<b>Core + Indicators</b>	Performance indicators identified by Shetland Islands Council, and partners with accompanying stretch aims.
<b>Monitoring Indicators</b>	Data monitored by the workstreams. These do not have stretch aims and are not published.



## Professional Learning

The cornerstone of delivering improvement across the excellence and equity agenda is in the knowledge, skills, values and beliefs of the workforce. We will update the Professional Learning Strategy to reflect the revised Professional Standards and support reflection on practice. We will work collaboratively across the authority and with external agencies to provide sustainable evidence-led professional learning opportunities for all which align with the ambitions of the plan.

‘Learning is about active engagement; it is what we do when we want to make sense of our world. It may involve the development of skills, knowledge, awareness, values, beliefs and ideas as well having to let go of previous insights to our world. Effective learning involves reflection and supports change. It is a creative activity that goes beyond attending a training course (although of course this can be effective in itself).’

CIPD



# Children's Services

Building a brighter future together

Every encounter matters. We know that everyone in Children's Services works towards building a brighter future together either explicitly or implicitly during our working day.



Our Vision





## Governance







## Workstream 1 - Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

### The Ambition

We want all our children and young people in Shetland to be included as active participants in life at school and in their communities. As an authority, we will plan our future improvements around children’s rights, the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Review and The Promise.

The UNCRC covers all aspects of a child’s life and sets out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights to which all children everywhere are entitled. In March 2021 the Scottish Parliament passed a bill to incorporate the UNCRC into law which will make it unlawful for public bodies to act in a way which is incompatible with the UNCRC requirements. Incorporating the UNCRC is critical to ensuring children’s rights are at the centre of all decision-making in Scotland. The UNCRC is central to Scotland’s national approach to improving outcomes for children and young people, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and the commitment to #KeepThePromise by 2030. Key areas of focus in workstream 1 include:



Source: Education Scotland



## Workstream 2 - Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

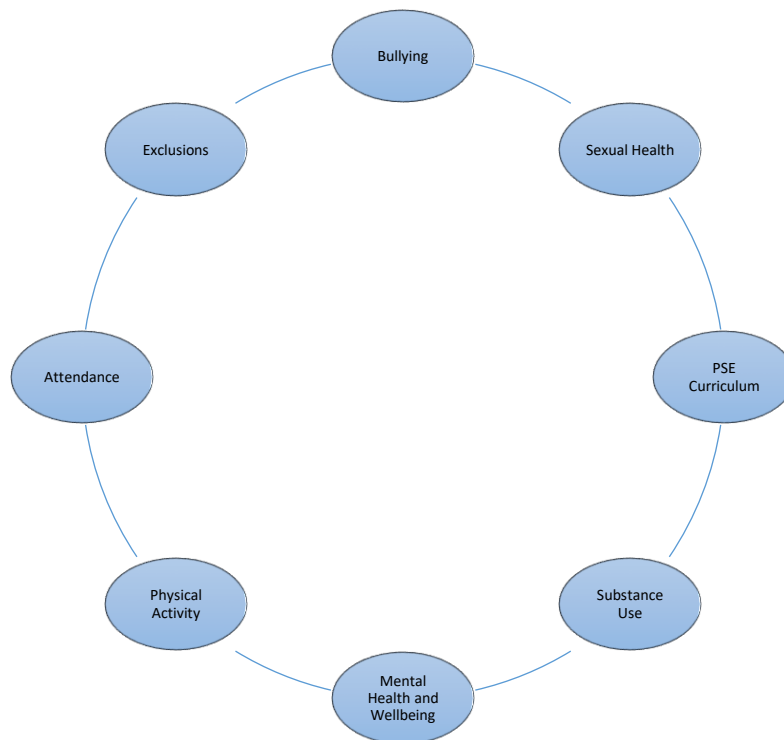
### The Ambition

Schools will be supported to develop a curriculum which enables all children, young people and adults to be successful, confident, responsible and effective in the local community and beyond. Schools will continue to establish vision, values and aims which underpin approaches to wellbeing in schools. Learners' experiences will support young people to develop their personalities, talents, mental, spiritual and physical abilities to their full potential. Practice should ensure that the needs of children, young people and adults are identified and addressed. Central to this work will be an increase in nurture provision across all schools.

Improvements in practice will lead to all settings self-evaluating as "good" or better for Quality Indicator 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion.

### Leadership

The Health and Wellbeing Improvement Group will lead on the work required to improve children and young people's health and wellbeing. The Health and Wellbeing Census undertaken in 2022 by more than 1600 learners across primary 5 to Secondary 6, will be central to refining the key areas of focus for the authority which include:





## Stretch Aims Core

Indicator	Pattern					Stretch Aims			Strategic Outcome
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Session 22/23	Session 23/24	Session 24/25	2026
School Attendance		94.4%		96%		96%		96%	97%

## Core+

Indicator	Pattern					Stretch Aims			Strategic Outcome
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Session 22/23	Session 23/24	Session 24/25	2026
Number of pupils with less than 80% attendance in the year				103	190	180	160	130	<120
S2/3 BGE Learners Average WEMWBS Score (out of 70)					48	50	52	54	56
Senior Phase Learners Average WEMWBS Score (out of 70)					46	50	52	54	56

WEMWBS - The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

## Monitoring Indicators

Data from the Health and Wellbeing Census will provide a rich source of monitoring data for this workstream. Progress against specific aspects of health and wellbeing improvement are expected to contribute to overall improvements in the Core and Core+ indicators.



## Workstream 3 - Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

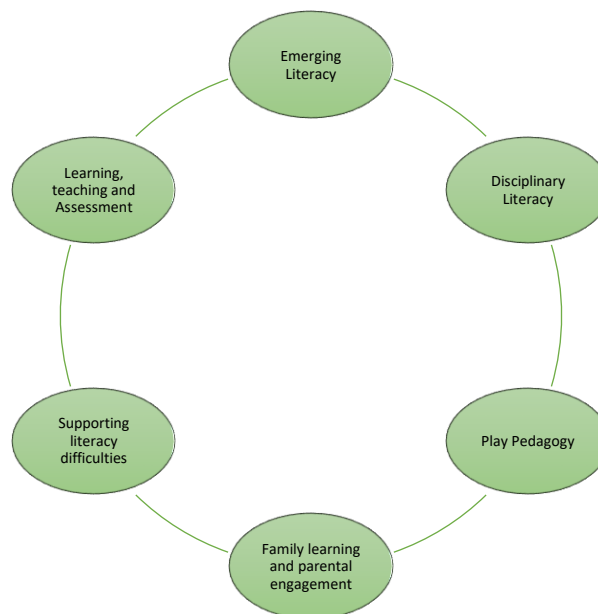
### The Ambition

We want every child and young person to achieve their full potential as successful learners and effective contributors. Learners will have access the highest quality of learning and teaching and to a curriculum and learner pathway which motivates them to succeed. To achieve this there will be a sustained focus on improving levels of literacy and numeracy at all levels and a refresh of the senior phase to broaden curriculum options and pathways for learners. The work of primary schools will focus on improving CfE levels of overall literacy and numeracy levels across P1, P4 and P7, including addressing gaps in learning. School leaver attainment will continue to improve for all whilst more vocational learning opportunities will be available. This will be facilitated by staff teams who are supported to improve their skills and pedagogy through access to high quality professional learning, supported by the professional development and review process.

Improvements in the provision of learning, teaching and assessment will lead to all schools self-evaluating as “good” or better for Quality Indicators 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment and 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement.

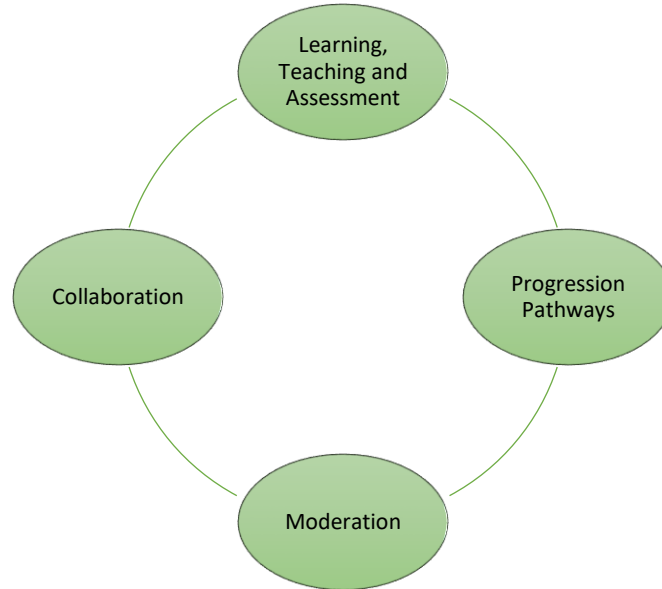
### Leadership

For literacy, this work will be led by the Language, Literacy and Communications Strategic Group supported by further sub groups and networks with a focus and expertise in key areas such as emerging literacy, moderation, qualifications and learners with communication differences. Key areas of focus include:

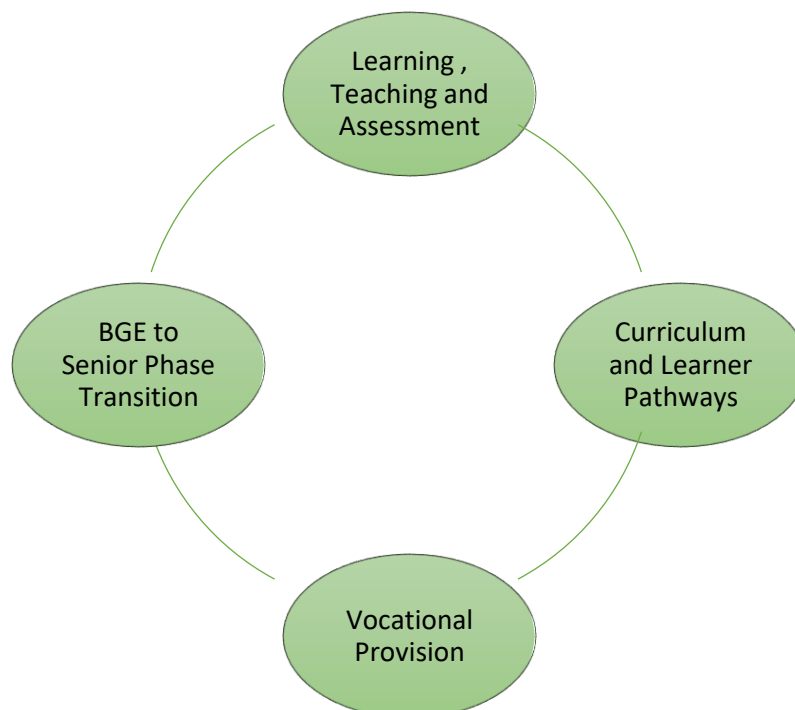




A Numeracy Improvement Group will be formed to oversee the activities required to deliver improvements in numeracy and mathematics. Key areas of focus include:



A senior phase working group, with membership from across all secondary schools, will provide focus to the work required to drive forward change in relation to curriculum, assessments and qualifications. Key areas of focus include:





## Stretch Aims

### Core

Indicator	Pattern					Stretch Aims			Strategic Outcome
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Session 22/23	Session 23/24	Session 24/25	2026
Overall Literacy - P1,P4,P7 combined	74%	63%	N/A	59%	67%	70%	74%	78%	>78%
Overall Numeracy - P1,P4,P7 combined	79%	70%	N/A	69%	73%	75%	79%	83%	>85%
% of secondary school pupils achieving SCQF 5 or above (1 or more on leaving school)	94%	91%	94%	93%		95%	95.5%	96%	>96%
% of secondary school pupils achieving SCQF 6 or above? (1 or more on leaving school)	66%	66%	69%	69%		71%	73%	74%	>75%

### Core+

Indicator	Pattern					Stretch Aims			Strategic Outcome
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Session 22/23	Session 23/24	Session 24/25	2026
School Leaver Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy				93%	94%	95%	96%	98%	100%
School Leaver Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy				77%	78%	79%	80%	81%	82%
% of S6 cohort attaining 5 plus level 6 awards				44%		45%	46%	48%	>50%
% of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5				10%		12%	13%	14%	16%



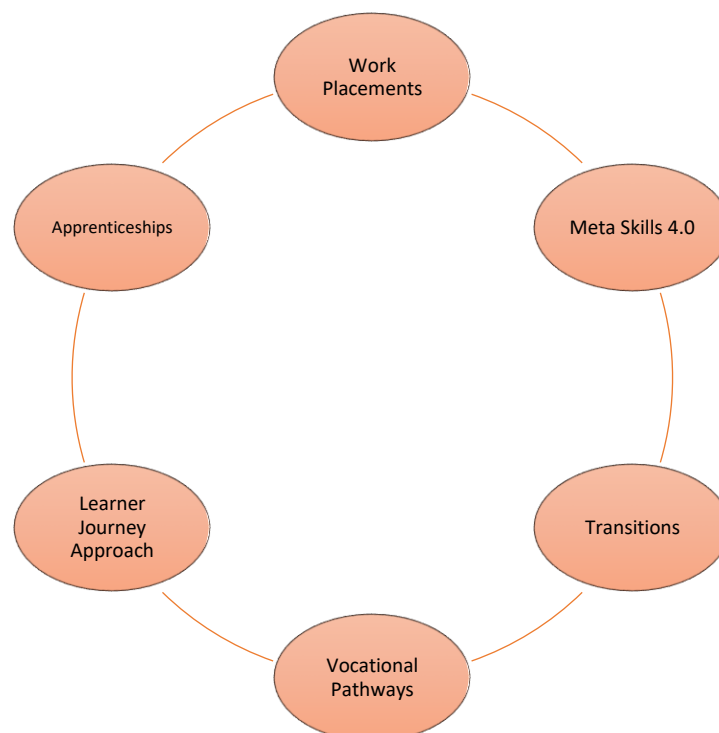
## Workstream 4 - Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

### The Ambition

We will work with schools to develop pathways which enable young people to achieve sustained, positive destinations upon leaving school. We will support schools to develop a skills based curricula and help broaden the vocational and workplace experiences on offer. The views of young people will be sought to ensure high levels of satisfaction with learning experiences. We will work with higher education partners and industry to ensure learning opportunities reflect the changing economic landscape in Shetland whilst making sure that we remove barriers to positive destinations for identified groups of learners.

### Leadership

The Employability Skills and Positive Destinations Improvement Group will lead on the delivery of work to secure improvement in this area. The group has membership from the local authority and schools complemented by youth services, Skills Development Scotland, the Developing the Young Workforce team and representation from the third sector. Key areas of focus in workstream 4 include:





## Stretch Aims

### Core

Indicator	Pattern					Stretch Aims			Strategic Outcome
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Session 22/23	Session 23/24	Session 24/25	2026
Participation Measure	96%	97%	97%	97%	96%	98%	98%	99%	99%

### Monitoring Indicators

The Employability Skills and Positive Destinations Improvement Group monitors a wide range of additional performance information. For example, the group will continue to monitor data relating to school leaver destinations, apprenticeships, school and employer partnerships and My World of Work, each playing an important role in contributing to the achievement of the participation measure strategic outcome.





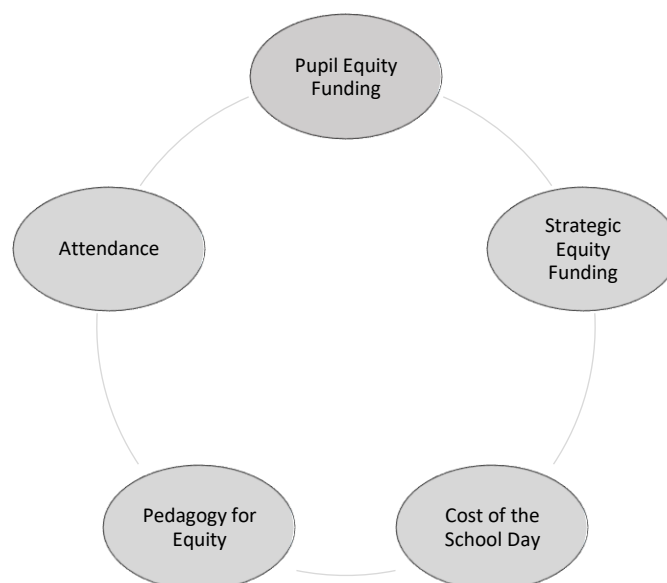
## Workstream 5 - Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

### The Ambition

We will ensure a sustained focus on improving educational outcomes for all children and young people and particularly for those who experience high levels of social, emotional and economic deprivation. Each setting will provide an inclusive and nurturing ethos of high expectation and achievement. This will create the right learning environment to provide targeted interventions to improve the attainment and achievement of disadvantaged children and young people, particularly those who are living in poverty, care experienced or who have protected characteristics. This will include an increase in activities which support prevention and early intervention, improved outcomes and reduced inequalities. We will continue to be mindful of poverty within our Shetland context, supporting children and families beyond the traditional measures of poverty by building an authority wide awareness of vulnerability in Shetland. We will ensure that Pupil Equity Funding and Strategic Equity Funding is used effectively to tackle the literacy and numeracy attainment gap as well as promoting engagement and achievement amongst learners experiencing disadvantage.

### Leadership

The Closing the Gap Improvement Group will lead on the delivery of improvement activities in order to tackle the poverty related attainment gap in Shetland. Members of the group include Head Teachers, Quality Improvement Officer, Attainment Advisor, ASN Outreach Manager, Depute Executive Manger – Children’s Social Work and Anchor Project Manager. Key areas of focus within workstream 5 include:





## Stretch Aims

### Core

Indicator	Pattern					Stretch Aims			Strategic Outcome
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Session 22/23	Session 23/24	Session 24/25	2026
Attendance - FSM % Gap	3.1%	3.5%	4.6%	3.8%		2.8%	2.0%	<2.0%	<2.0%
Attendance - LAC % Gap	2.1%	4.2%	4.1%	2.9%		2.0%	1.5%	1.0%	<1.0%
Overall Primary Literacy - % Gap	19%	16%	13%	25%	25%	22%	19%	16%	13%
Overall Primary Numeracy - % Gap	27%	24%	21%	25%	33%	30%	27%	24%	21%
% of secondary school pupils achieving SCQF 5 or above (1 or more on leaving school) - ASN % Gap		14%	13%	8%	7%	6%	5.5%	5%	<5%
% of secondary school pupils achieving SCQF 5 or above (1 or more on leaving school) - FSM % Gap		19%	14%	20%	18%	17%	14%	11%	<10%
% of secondary school pupils achieving SCQF 6 or above? (1 or more on leaving school) - ASN % Gap		30%	24%	18%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%
% of secondary school pupils achieving SCQF 6 or above? (1 or more on leaving school) - FSM % Gap		39%	40%	36%	33%	30%	27%	24%	<20%