Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Annual Report and Accounts

2025-2026

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

An Executive Agency of the Scottish Government

Laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Ministers

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Performance Report

Chief Executive's Statement

Welcome to Education Scotland's Annual Report and Accounts for 2025–26. I was appointed Chief Executive at the end of April 2026, following a year in which the organisation was led by three Interim Chief Executive Officers. Each provided valued leadership and stability during an important and complex phase of reform. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to them for their professionalism, commitment and stewardship of the organisation. Despite leadership change, Education Scotland has continued to deliver with focus and purpose, maintaining momentum and supporting colleagues and partners across the education system which you will see from this Annual Report and Accounts.

I am grateful for the opportunity to lead Education Scotland at this pivotal point. My professional experience has been rooted in leading systems transformation, with a strong focus on achieving sustained improvement and meaningful impact. Education Scotland now operates with a clear and focused remit as Scotland's curriculum agency, and I am confident in our capacity to deliver positive outcomes for learners, educators and the wider system in the years ahead.

This reporting year has been characterised by continued educational and public service reform, a challenging financial environment, and organisational transition. During the year, preparation for the separation of Education Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE) was intensive. The two organisations formally separated into two distinct public bodies on 1st April 2026. Throughout this period of change, our focus has remained on embedding reform, enhancing our leadership role in curriculum design and improvement through our work with practitioners, and ensuring governance and assurance arrangements remain robust and effective.

Our Annual Action Plan for 2025–26 provided a clear connection between an intensive phase of reform and the development of our Corporate Plan for 2026–31. It ensured continuity of delivery while allowing the organisation to respond flexibly to emerging priorities and risks. Despite significant organisational change, Education Scotland made strong progress against its strategic priorities during the year, with all five priorities either achieved or progressing well overall.

At the core of our work is the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC), which is now live across all curriculum areas. More than 1,500 practitioners were actively involved in co-creating curriculum frameworks over the year, ensuring that refreshed guidance is firmly grounded in professional expertise, evidence and classroom practice. This practitioner-informed approach is strengthening system coherence, professional confidence and shared ownership, and it will continue to underpin implementation planning in the period ahead.

Professional learning and leadership remain central drivers of system improvement. During 2025–26, our professional learning offer supported approximately 3,500 meaningful interactions with educators, with almost 1,200 participants completing programmes. Evaluation evidence demonstrates strong impact, with almost all participants reporting a clear intention to apply learning in practice. In addition, the national Into Headship

programme was unconditionally reaccredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland, reaffirming its importance in sustaining leadership capacity across the education system.

We have continued to provide targeted support in priority areas including attendance, attainment, additional support needs, relationships and behaviour, and wellbeing. Our collaborative work with local authorities through a range of programmes demonstrates the contribution Education Scotland continues to make to system-wide improvement. The launch of the Youth Voice Toolkit further reflects our commitment to children's rights and meaningful participation, supporting practitioners to embed authentic youth voice across educational settings.

In March 2026, Ruth Binks was appointed as Chief Inspector of HMIE. Her experience and leadership continues to support the Inspectorate as it establishes itself as an independent organisation. We will continue to work constructively together as system leaders. Considering the significant change experienced by the Inspectorate during the year, inspection activity was strengthened across a wide range of settings, including joint inspections with the Care Inspectorate, and prison inspections.

As we enter 2026–27, Education Scotland is well positioned to build on the foundations laid during this reporting year. Our focus will increasingly shift towards supporting confident, system-wide implementation of curriculum reform, underpinned by high-quality professional learning and sustained collaboration with practitioners, partners, children and young people. Through our Corporate Plan for 2026–31, we will continue to set out how we will deliver excellence and equity for Scotland's learners, while maintaining strong governance, careful risk management, financial sustainability and cyber resilience.

Finally, our people are central to everything we do. We recognise that sustained change has had a personal impact on colleagues across the organisation. While staff turnover has remained comparatively low, feedback from the Civil Service People Survey highlights areas we must improve. In response, we have begun work on a new People Plan to address these issues, and I will maintain personal oversight to ensure we make meaningful progress.

Donna McMaster, Chief Executive, Education Scotland

Overview

In this section of the performance report, we present an overview of Education Scotland, our activities, and the main risks and challenges facing us. We also include a performance summary which sets out our most significant achievements in financial year 2025-2026.

About Education Scotland

Status, activities and staffing

Education Scotland was established in July 2011 as an executive agency of the Scottish Government under the terms of the Scotland Act (1998). We are responsible for the design and improvement of the curriculum in Scotland and charged with supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education and thereby securing the delivery of better learning experiences and outcomes for learners of all ages. We work in the following ways across education sectors, including Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), and Community Learning and Development (CLD), and at national, local authority and establishment levels:

- leading the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC)
- carrying out inspection and review of education
- providing professional learning and leadership programmes
- working with local authorities to inform approaches to wellbeing, inclusion, relationships and behaviour and better support children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN)
- supporting the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and providing professional advice and support for improvement, including the provision of online resources
- managing the development of national digital resources, including Glow, our online learning platform
- providing independent, evidence-informed policy advice to Ministers and civil servants

Our status as an executive agency means that we operate independently and impartially, whilst remaining directly accountable to Scottish Ministers for the standards of our work. This status safeguards the independence of inspection, review and reporting within the overall context of the National Improvement Framework (NIF).

Education Scotland employed 415 staff (403.3 Full Time Equivalent) as of 31st March 2026.

Purpose and activities

Our vision is achieving excellence and equity for Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators.

Our mission is to work in partnership with stakeholders to secure sustained improvement in achievement and attainment for all learners, closing the poverty-related attainment gap, and securing positive and sustained destinations for all learners, regardless of their age and where the learning takes place.

Education Scotland 're-focused through reform' in 2025-26, as an enabler of excellence and equity in Scotland's education system, working with partners and stakeholders for the

benefit of the people in Scotland's schools and other educational settings. During this period, Education Scotland and HMIE are undergoing the process of being two separate agencies, and work is underway for Education Scotland to deliver the primary focus of curriculum and HMIE to retain its focus on inspection.

Our values are: Respect; Integrity; Creativity and Excellence.

Social, community and human rights

Everything we do is designed to contribute to the Scottish Government's national purpose of creating a more successful country with opportunities for all to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. We have continued to align our strategic planning and performance arrangements with the National Performance Framework. Our work in improving quality, effectiveness and equality in education contributes to the following National Outcomes:

The Scottish population will:

- grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential
- are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
- tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
- have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone
- live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.

Scotland's Public Sector Reform Strategy (2025) is a key priority for Education Scotland, reinforcing a shared commitment across public services to ensure public money is used effectively and delivers high-quality outcomes. Rooted in the Christie principles, the strategy sets out three pillars for change: prevention, joined-up services and efficient services. During 2025/26, Education Scotland focused on the efficient services pillar through targeted organisational design work.

We also give due regard to Fair Work First criteria when administering public sector grants and as an employer. Fair Work First criteria seeks to address particular challenges in Scotland's labour market, to make a real difference to people and their communities, business and other organisations and the economy.

The incorporation of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law in July 2024 makes Scotland the first country in the UK and the first devolved nation in the world to directly incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law. It is a landmark piece of legislation in making sure that Scotland is the best place to grow up and as a public body, it applies fully to Education Scotland. We are committed to taking a children's rights approach to our duties and responsibilities.

Strategy and business model

Education Scotland's Annual Action Plan 2025 – 26 sets out the organisation's corporate planning, performance, and financial planning cycle for the periods before, during and after the separation of HMIE from Education Scotland. This is set out as follows:

- **2021-22**: Education Scotland published a five-year Corporate Plan which set out how the agency would continue to work towards our vision of achieving excellence and equity for Scotland's learners, in partnership with Scotland's educators.

- **2022–24**: Education Scotland published an updated Corporate Plan aligned to reform timelines set at that time and interpret national expectations following the Scottish Government's response to Professor Ken Muir's review of Scotland's education system.

- **2024–25**: Education Scotland extended the 2022 – 24 Corporate Planning period by a further reporting year through publication of Annual Action Plan 2024-25. This retained the Strategic Priorities, whilst updating the key actions and highlighting the pivot towards a re-focused Education Scotland. The Education Scotland Financial Strategy 2024–25 was published in tandem with the Annual Action Plan. The Annual Action Plan 2024 – 25 is consistent with the Accountability Framework, set out a proportionate set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), aligned with the National Improvement Framework (NIF). The Annual Action Plan 2024–25 recognised 'Inspection' as a 're-focus through reform' area and supported the initial work to make the shift to an independent Inspectorate (HMIE) and set out a distinctive set of key actions for the Office of the Chief Inspector.

- **2025–26**: Education Scotland extended the Corporate Planning period by a further reporting year through publication of Education Scotland's Annual Action Plan 2025–26 (AAP2526) and Education Scotland's Financial Strategy 2025–26. The strategic priorities and key actions in this plan act as a bridge between this intensive reform period and Education Scotland's longer-term organisational strategy for 2026 – 31 and align with the Scottish Government's Programme for Government (PfG) commitments, the education reform programme and the National Improvement Framework (NIF). Importantly, the AAP2526 illustrates Education Scotland's role as an enabler of excellence and equity in education and recognises our contribution to improvement for the wider education system and eradicating child poverty in Scotland.

- **2026- 31**: Education Scotland is developing a longer term organisational strategy - the Corporate Plan 2026-31 (CP2631) and Annual Delivery Plan 2026-27 (ADP2627) due for publication in Summer 2026. The CP2631 will be underpinned by evidence gathered from research, published reports, and a series of stakeholder consultation workshops, including practitioners, parents, public bodies and Education Scotland staff. Bespoke horizon scans have also been undertaken on the Scottish Budget, Public Service Reform and education data as part of this evidence collation.

Education Scotland's reporting cycle follows the financial year (April to March) rather than the academic year. This enables Education Scotland to meet its public body obligations, including the alignment of organisational performance and finance. Quarter 1 relates to April to June, Quarter 2 relates to July to September, Quarter 3 relates to October to December and Quarter 4 relates to January to March. Performance arrangements for this reporting year (2025 – 26) also incorporated the legislative requirement to remove the inspection function from the agency.

Key issues and risks

The management of risk is an integral part of Education Scotland decision making. A risk is anything that can impede or enhance our ability to meet our current or future objectives and priorities and we therefore continue to manage risks to our strategic and operational

objectives on an ongoing basis across all levels of the Agency. Our top-level organisational risks remain under the oversight of the Leadership Team and are monitored by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Education Scotland has continued to operate in a complex and evolving environment, with education reform continuing to shape and influence our overall risk landscape. As we moved towards becoming a curriculum agency and a separate inspectorate, our risk assessments fed into the decision to change the date of transfer of accountability for inspection to align with the financial year. The transfer from Education Scotland successfully took place on 1 April 2026.

Recognising the risks that continue to exist in the months following separation, the project group established to lead on delivery of education reform within Education Scotland has been replaced by a new dedicated Implementation Group which comprises the project team and other key members of staff to coordinate and oversee all post transition activity. This is being led by one on Education Scotland's Strategic Directors, reporting directly into the Leadership Team.

At the same time, our key risks continue to be interconnected. For example, delivering structural reform whilst also delivering reform, including the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, has presented Education Scotland with capacity challenges. These pressures were, and continue to be, amplified by the ongoing financial constraints facing the whole public sector.

As a result of the challenging fiscal position Scottish Ministers have been clear on the need to reform how public services are delivered and the Scottish Government's Public Service Reform Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Strategy set all public bodies the challenge of delivering costs savings and managing headcount by 2030. We are having ongoing discussions with Ministers and Scottish Government colleagues to discuss the optimum means of supporting Minister's ambitions in this area to ensure we are able to deliver high-quality support to the education system, in the most effective and impactful way.

We have also further sought to mitigate our capacity and financial risks by setting very clear actions and ways of working for the year, through our Annual Action Plan 2025–26 and reinforcing the continued development of a reformed Education Scotland, focussed primarily on curriculum. The Education Scotland Financial Strategy 2025–26 was published alongside the Annual Action Plan.

Capacity and resource remain a significant organisational challenge, and we recognise the ongoing personal impact of change on colleagues across the Agency. Work to consider how the agency develops is ongoing to ensure we are the right size and shape for the challenges ahead. We have recently set up an organisational wide group to explore what is working well, what is not and to lead on the development of a new People Plan for Education Scotland with the aim of improving our ways of working.

Finally, the ongoing threat of cyber-attacks requires continued proactive management of risk to ensure we secure and have access to our systems and data. We have cyber resilience policies and procedures in place which are supported by staff awareness actions and training to identify and avoid risk exposure. We also continue to participate in the Scottish Local Authority Information Security Group (SLAISG) and work with the Scottish Digital Academy to maintain mandatory Cyber Security training for all Education Scotland colleagues.

Further information on the Agency's approach to risk management can be found in the Governance Statement on page 48.

Going concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. The future delivery of services will be via a re-focussed Education Scotland and an independent HMIE. Services will continue to be delivered using existing assets and therefore the going concern concept continues to apply.

The financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026 show comprehensive net expenditure of £51.427m and a net liabilities position of £3.723m. The position of net liabilities has arisen as a result of the requirement to account for activities on an accruals basis, whilst recording funding from the Scottish Government on a cash basis. Net current liabilities will be funded by the Scottish Government as they arise.

Performance Summary

Our performance in 2025/26. Over the following pages, we present the main areas of our performance in financial year 2025/26. In this summary, we have presented a one-page high level overview of some of our main content.

4 refocus through reform areas:

- Curriculum
- Professional learning and leadership
- Scottish Attainment Challenge
- Enhancing Inspection



Curriculum

10 curriculum areas
and 3 cross-curricular areas continue to progress through Curriculum Improvement Cycle activity

1500+
Teachers and practitioners involved

Curriculum guidance
(new draft) aims to be available from summer 2026

98 participants
across two cohorts (2025/26) took part in curriculum design professional learning

Professional learning

Through the Professional Learning and Leadership team:

3500
meaningful interactions with educators across the system

1200
programme participants completed their professional learning

360+
took part in BRL Plus online learning and 140 attended the in person BRL Anti Racist Leadership event

Into Headship
received reaccreditation from General Teaching Council for Scotland until 2031

370
educators engaged in Introduction to Self Directed Learning sessions.

5,807
engagements taking part in professional learning focusing on curriculum

Youth Voice Toolkit
launched in August 2025 - "Thank you for sharing, looks like a great model and really useful toolkit. Brilliant to hear about in practice too!"

Scottish Attainment Challenge

Third cohort
of the Improving Attendance Quality Improvement Programme completed, with professional learning delivered to all headteachers in five local authorities

64
schools across eleven local authorities participated in the Improving Attendance QI Programme

Feedback
from local authorities highlights the positive value of Education Scotland's support

Enhancing Inspection

January 2026
saw the publication of the Literacy and English within Scotland's curriculum National Thematic Inspection Report



March 2026
marked the commencement of fieldwork for the Broad General Education Primary Thematic

179
schools and 90 ELC settings inspected

September 2025
marked the beginning of the new shared quality framework for inspection of ELC settings

Local authorities
new framework for inspection will be trialled during 2026

Performance Analysis

How we plan, measure, monitor and report our performance

We extended the organisational Corporate Planning cycle through the publication of an Annual Action Plan 2025–26 (AAP2526), as the organisation continues to deliver reform. We are currently developing the longer-term organisational strategy - the Corporate Plan 2026–31, and Annual Delivery Plan 2026 – 27 and this will be published in Summer 2026.

The AAP2526 set out our key actions and directs Education Scotland towards four 're-focus through reform' areas; Curriculum, Professional learning and leadership, Scottish Attainment Challenge and enhancing inspections. In recognition of the curriculum as Education Scotland's primary function, the Curriculum Strategic Priority includes activity related to Learning, Teaching and Assessment. We have aligned our strategic priorities, and key actions that flow from them with the National Improvement Framework (NIF). We refreshed our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against these strategic priorities, and our commitment to 're-focus through reform' to become Scotland's Curriculum Agency and support the removal of the inspectorate function and a new independent officeholder. In tandem with these changes, arrangements for organisational performance, based on planning, monitoring and reporting arrangements continued to be improved, following their introduction in 2024/25.

As part of the refreshed performance arrangements described above, our Leadership Team, Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee received a range of reports including:

- financial monitoring reports (monthly)
- corporate and directorate risk registers (quarterly)
- organisational performance, which includes management information reporting (quarterly)

Agendas and minutes from the Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee meetings are published on our website. The Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee merged for a period during 2025-26 while we recruited new Non-Executive Board members to replace those who had stepped down in the first half of 2025.

Delivery: highlights

All nine of Education Scotland's strategic priorities were identified as progressing well throughout 2025/26. Overall, by the end of 2025/26, the majority of strategic priorities were identified as achieved. Throughout the year, several strategic priorities were under pressure and required agile reallocation of resources to progress and to work towards achieving their objective. Although much progress was made, two key actions, which are foundational to achieving the overarching aims of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, were identified as at risk of not being achieved by the end of 2025/26. This resulted in a four-week stabilisation plan being put in place to resolve this over Q1 and Q2 2026/27 and to achieve their objectives.

We have identified 10 delivery highlights for the reporting year:

1. **Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC)** – The programme met its aim of co-creating CIC frameworks alongside practitioners, with over 1500 practitioners being involved throughout 2025/26. The CIC activity regarding all 10 curricular areas and the three curricular contexts progressed well across the year with this practitioner participation. We are committed to the publication of curriculum guidance in Summer 2026.

2. **Youth Voice Toolkit** – We supported improvement in the way the education system engages with children and young people's voice through the launch of the Youth Voice Toolkit. Over 290 educators from across the education system attended the launch in August 2025. Since then, the Youth Voice Toolkit landing page was accessed 15,820 times with 7,962 unique users between August 2025 and April 2026. See case study 3 (on page 32) for additional information on impact.
3. **Curriculum design professional learning** – With the aim of strengthening workforce capacity and confidence in curriculum design, 98 practitioners participated in the national curriculum design programme in 2025/26. There was sustained growth and improvement of the programme throughout the year, with a recall day held to provide continued implementation support. This was attended by 150 practitioners from the six cohorts who have participated.
4. **The Into Headship programme** – This supports improved school leadership across Scotland. This was unconditionally reaccredited by General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and will remain in place until 2031. The reaccreditation Panel commendations included; the exceptional expertise of everyone involved in Into Headship, the rich and varied opportunities for participants to share their voice, the strong professional networks that continue to grow from the programme and the significant investment in educational leadership that Into Headship represents. The programme also ensured future school leaders have a good understanding of Gaelic Medium Education. See case study 2 on page 31 for further information on impact.
5. **Professional Learning and Leadership** – Between September 2025 and March 2026, our professional learning and leadership offer reached 3,500 interactions with educators across the system. Almost 1,200 programme participants completed their professional learning, with 98.8% of respondents reporting they are likely or very likely to implement their learning in practice, an indicator of impact beyond participation.
6. **Additional Support Needs (ASN) work** – This work strengthens system readiness and workforce capacity in ASN. In partnership with the Scottish Government, we hosted a national ASN Data Summit in November 2025, bringing together cross-sector stakeholders from across Scotland. Building on this, the work is expanding into a series of practitioner events focused on student need categories, national guidance, and the staged intervention model. The ASN Teacher Professional Learning Programme also launched in 2025/26, with 85 teachers in the first cohort completing in November 2026. Co-designed with teachers and grounded in classroom practice, the programme is strengthening professional confidence, system capacity, and national consistency in ASN practice.
7. **Attendance programmes** –We provided targeted support to local authorities through a series of initiatives, including the Improving Attendance Project, the National Attendance and Engagement Quality Improvement Programme, the Attendance and Engagement Theory of Change, and the Young Scot Improving Attendance and Engagement Equity Resource. These programmes are now complete and have delivered a strong range of positive outputs. Evidence demonstrates that Education Scotland's Attainment Advisor and wider support had a significant system-wide impact, enabling schools to move beyond surface-level data analysis to targeted, evidence-informed action. This contributed to measurable improvements in attendance for many learners and increased staff confidence and capability to sustain improvement.
8. **Public Health Approach to Learning (PHAL)** – This is a collaborative system-leadership initiative in Scotland, jointly led by Education Scotland, Public Health Scotland, Police Scotland and the Scottish Prevention Hub. During 2025/26,

PHAL achieved and met the intended milestones. This work further progressed our approach to Public Service Reform (PSR) as it centres on joined up working through data sharing and usage. A comprehensive resourcing options paper was developed to support scaling and rollout strategies and a dedicated evaluation strand will be in position following the first development sites.

9. **Introduction of new Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee** - The recruitment and induction of an Advisory Board and an Audit and Risk Committee for the Refocused Education Scotland was successfully completed over the reporting period 2025/26. This action has ensured Education Scotland has effective governance arrangements in place. This is critical to maintaining public confidence in Education Scotland as a public body and followed a short period when we merged the Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee.
10. **Inspection** – Inspection activity across the reporting year was strengthened, across the range of settings, ranging from state funded, grant aided and independent schools to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), from Gaelic Medium and Learner Education to Colleges, from thematic inspection to education oversight inspection. Inspection included joint inspections for prisons and joint inspections of services for children with the Care Inspectorate. As such, inspection activity provided a more consistent assurance of quality and improvement across learner contexts.

KPIs: summary

The 2025/26 operating context for Education Scotland focused on reform and the separation of Education Scotland and HMIE into two separate organisations, strengthening curriculum design and developing the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC), improving collaboration with practitioners, against the backdrop of a challenging financial climate and public service reforms.

Moving forward, we will continually review and improve our organisational performance arrangements, bringing together delivery assessment, KPIs and wider research and evaluation. We will test the ongoing relevance of KPIs, to focus on the areas of performance that are directly attributable to us.

There are 6 key messages emerging from the KPIs analysis for 2025-26, summarised as follows:

1. Making continued progress on curriculum improvement: the progress made across Curriculum Improvement has ensured that the CIC work is now live across all curriculum areas, as we deliver our objectives as a curriculum agency.

2. Opportunities to simplify our priorities: combining ‘curriculum’ and ‘learning, teaching and assessment’ in light of CIC work, has allowed for streamlined priorities going forward.

3. The importance of system leadership: the approach to System Leadership to increase accessibility for educators is constantly being evaluated to minimise barriers to access. Professional learning opportunities are delivered through cohort-based approaches as well as online open access professional learning, reflecting the needs of the educators.

4. Meeting the changing needs of the system: professional learning and leadership continues to grow to keep pace with changing needs of the system, as demonstrated by the increase in curriculum focused professional learning. The evidence does highlight that

there is still the need for better measurement of the reach and impact of professional learning, through a blend of KPI, research and evaluation options.

5. Meeting the commitment to increasing inspections: 311 planned inspections were completed in the academic year to 31st March 2026.

6. The changes needed to the way we work: as we move through the next stages of reform and Education Scotland and HMIE operate as two separate organisations, it is clear that we need to effectively engage with stakeholders and our function as a curriculum agency is clear.

KPIs: Strategic Priorities

We have structured and presented the KPI section around our strategic priorities.

System Leadership

Number of engagements with educational establishments, local authorities and regions relating to system leadership, to support effective leadership in complex circumstances *(Source: Programme information)*

Local Authority	2024/25			2025/26		
	Number of participants (facilitated programme)	Number of submissions (self-directed learning)	Total number per region	Number of participants (facilitated programme)	Number of submissions (self-directed learning)	Total number per region
Aberdeen City	38	2	290	35	2	251
Aberdeenshire	71			56	4	
Argyll and Bute	47			28	2	
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	11			12	1	
Highland	75			72	0	
Moray	18			14	0	
Orkney Islands	11			8	0	
Shetland Islands	17			17	0	
Angus	34	1	104	32	0	98
Dundee City	27	3		24	2	
Perth and Kinross	39			39	1	
Clackmannanshire	13		135	16	0	119
Falkirk	52			32	0	
Stirling	26			39	0	
West Lothian	44			32	0	
Dumfries and Galloway	47		112	34	0	86
East Ayrshire	19			13	0	
North Ayrshire	28			20	0	
South Ayrshire	17	1		18	1	
East Dunbartonshire	38		536	28	0	400
East Renfrewshire	22	1		20	0	
Glasgow City	175	2		140	6	
Inverclyde	27			14	2	
North Lanarkshire	80			57	0	
Renfrewshire	61	2		38	1	
South Lanarkshire	102	1		71	2	
West Dunbartonshire	25			18	3	
East Lothian	14	1	210	20	0	185
City of Edinburgh	72			61	2	
Fife	71	1		47	6	
Midlothian	22			23	1	
Scottish Borders	26	3		19	6	
Other	54	4	58	33	2	35
Total	**1423**	**22**	**1445**	**1130**	**44**	**1174**

These figures are for the current academic year (August 2025 – March 2026)

Proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities focused on system leadership who report they are likely to implement learning in practice. (*Source: Professional learning evaluation forms)*

This KPI had a target set of at least 95% of participants who are involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities in system leadership will report they are likely to implement their learning in practice. This was not achieved by a narrow margin, and can be attributed to inconsistent reporting processes across the organisation. Measures are being put in place to ensure consistency and to achieve set KPI targets for the forthcoming year.

Financial Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	%				
Proportion of participants in professional learning likely to have implemented learning in practice					94

2025/26 figure is based on 709 completed evaluations.

The reach of Education Scotland's professional learning programme, as indicated by; over 200 CLD leaders and practitioners from local authorities and third sector will have accessed an improved range of national ES professional learning opportunities, over 300 practitioners will have attended the Pondering Pedagogy sessions, over 80 practitioners will have attended sessions on parental engagement and family learning. *(Source: Annual Action Plan)*

There have been a reported 738 engagements across the year by CLD leaders and practitioners, with a further 281 practitioner engagements taking place across network events during April 2025 to March 2026. During 2025/26, there were 633 engagements with sessions that have a focus on parental engagement and family learning. The Pondering Pedagogy programme was completed in early 2025/26. Over that time, 912 registered for the programme, with an average of 336 engagement across the six sessions. It is likely that more joined as some teams joined online through a single device. Therefore, all three aspects of this KPI were exceeded.

Number of participants in professional learning and universal, targeted and/or intensive support focused on system leadership. *(Source: Programme information)*

Cohort led programmes 2025-26

Totals to 2025/26 report the number of active participants in PLL programmes at March in each year. Programmes that have stopped, transitioned or been incorporated into new packages/offers have been removed from the table

Programmes	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Into Headship	478	238 (Cohort 7) 244 (Cohort 8)	215 (Cohort 8) 259 (Cohort 9)	222 (Cohort 9) 269 (Cohort 10)	244 (cohort 10) 246 (cohort 11)
In Headship	53	30	28	28	20
Leading the How of Change				340	231*
Connected and Collaborative System Leadership			52	54	Paused
Building Racial Literacy	85	135	147	162 (cohort 5) 172 (cohort 6)	169
Leadership of Professional Learning			101	176	95
Aspiring to Middle Leadership					125
Total	***1925***	***2088***	***1863***	**1423**	**1130**

The Leading the How of Change incorporated from Excellence in Headship (79 participants in 2022/23) and Leadership of and for Learning (102, 2023/24)

Connected and Collaborative System Leadership incorporated programmes: Excellence in Headship Stretch (32 participants in 2023/24) and Making Sense of System Leadership (90 participants in 2022/23). Paused in 2025.

Aspiring to Middle Leadership was reintroduced as a facilitated programme.

Both Aspiring to Middle Leadership and Leading the How of Change have session in late April and May 2026.

Transitioned to 'open access' self-directed learning programmes in 2024.

Programmes	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 (to Mar 26)
Enquiry in Education (previously Educator Leadership)	154 (Teacher Leadership)	162	116	23	2
Aspiring to Middle Leadership	540	603	400	38	26
Middle Leaders Leading Change	434	461	411	12	16

Prior to 2024 these programmes were facilitated delivery.

One person submitting an AML project, wished not to disclose their local authority. The data above will vary from table on p13.

In 2024 the programmes in the table above transitioned to an 'open-access' offer; a self-directed learning style with suggested completion timeframes.

Curriculum

Professional learning focused on curriculum

This indicator supports our ability to track and monitor the reach of our professional learning which focuses on curriculum design. In recognition of the curriculum as Education Scotland's primary function, the Curriculum Strategic Priority and KPI absorbs Learning,

Teaching and Assessment. The number of participants recorded as engaging in professional learning relating to curriculum has increased by 1,843 (*Source: Management information).* This includes events with a focus on Learning, Teaching and Assessment. The increase in engagement will also be impacted by a number of communication and sharing events aligned to the Curriculum Improvement Cycle work being delivered.

Financial Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	No.			
Number of participants engaging in professional learning programmes focused on Curriculum	1,609	7,263	3,964	5,807

2025/26 figure is based on the number of participants attending across 73 professional learning opportunities.

Implement curriculum learning in practice

In 2025/26, there has been a decrease of **6%** for this KPI. *(Source: Professional learning evaluation forms*.) This KPI had a target set of at least 95% of participants will report they are likely to implement their learning in practice. This was not achieved, and can be explained in part where the professional learning evaluation form has been used for events that have been more about communication and sharing rather than in-depth learning experiences. Measures are being put in place for appropriate evaluation methods for the professional learning delivery and to support the achievement of set KPI targets for the forthcoming year.

Financial Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	%				
Proportion of participants in professional learning likely to have implemented curriculum learning in practice	91	94	91	96	90

2025/26 figure is based on 513 completed evaluations

Curriculum Improvement Cycle

This indicator reflects on contributors' engagement with improving curriculum and delivery across the system, through work on an evidence-based Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC). At least 95% of participants[1] involved in CIC activities (e.g. core or collaboration groups) will report that they contributed authentically, felt their input was valued, and influenced the process in a meaningful way.

Proportion of participants involved in CIC activities (e.g. core or collaboration groups) will report that they contributed authentically, felt their input was valued, and influenced the process in a meaningful way.

[1] All KPIs referencing 'participants' are defined as participants who complete and submit surveys

Two of the KPI targets of 95% were achieved. Measures have been put in place to ensure that targets are achieved across all three areas of the KPI in the forthcoming year.

Financial Year	2024/25	2025/26
	%	
Percentage of participants involved in CIC activities reporting they contributed authentically	98	98
felt their input was valued	97	99
influenced the process in a meaningful way.	92	87

2024/25 figure is based on 343 completed evaluations
2025/26 figure is based on 118 completed evaluations

Inclusion, Wellbeing, Equity and Equality

Professional learning focused on inclusion, wellbeing, equity and equality

This indicator supports our ability to track and monitor the reach of our professional learning which focuses on inclusion, wellbeing, equity and equalities. The number of events recorded in relation to inclusion, wellbeing, equity and equalities has **decreased** by 53% (n=**49).** (*Source: Management Information).* In response to this decrease, further investigation was undertaken. Additional evidence indicated that 171 learning opportunities focused on Inclusion, Wellbeing, Equity and Equality (IWEE) had been offered across the system. However, these events were recorded individually by the delivery team and cannot be independently verified. Work will be undertaken in 2026/27 to improve the consistency and robustness of event recording across the agency.

Financial Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/25
	No.			
Number of professional learning opportunities focused on key areas of inclusion, wellbeing, equity and equalities	66	32	93	44

Proportion of participants involved in professional learning focused on inclusion, wellbeing, equity and equality reporting the likelihood of implementing their learning practice or use it to inform practice.

This indicator provides an indication of the impact of our professional learning focused on inclusion, wellbeing, equity and equality. There has been an increase of **2%** in relation to this KPI. (*Source: Professional learning evaluation forms).* This KPI had a target set of at least 95% of participants who are involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities in inclusion, wellbeing, equity and equality will report they are likely to implement their learning in practice. This target was achieved and measures will be taken next year to ensure that the target percentage remains achieved.

Financial Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	%			
Proportion of professional learning participants likely to implement learning in practice	92	89	94	96

Best Use of Evidence

Capacity was built across Education Scotland in terms of improved and more consistent planning and reporting. In 2024/5, 58% of plans were identified as having SMART measures or outcomes, 16% demonstrated some SMART indicators and 20% showed limited SMART indicators. In 2025/6, this KPI showed improvement. Overall, 68% of plans showed SMART outcome/ measures overall, 26% demonstrated some and 6% showed limited/ no SMART indicators. Evaluation also provided a baseline for Education Scotland's consistency and quality of reporting for 2025/26. Every key action in the AAP spreadsheet has a key person responsible and all teams are inputting into Annual Action Plan reporting as required. Evaluative language was used within 70% of updates at least some of the time and 77% of key actions had clear links to the measures set.

Number of planned inspections completed

This indicator tracks the number of planned inspections we complete based on our annual published programme of inspection activity. (*Source: Management Information)*

Scrutiny Programme	Academic Year: No. of planned inspections completed					
	2020/ 21	**2021 /22**	**2022/ 23**	**2023/ 24**	**2024/25**	**2025/26** (to 31/03/2026)
Early learning and childcare	Paused	Paused	151	152	151	90
Schools	Paused	Paused	253	256	256	179
Schools and Early Learning and Childcare – Further inspection	Paused	112	39[2]	46	64	32
Community Learning and Development services	Paused	5	0	32	5[3]	1
Colleges	27	27	27	25	0	0
Private Colleges and English Language Schools	4	2	1	5	3	
now referred to as Educational oversight (SAAS)						0
Careers Information and Guidance (CIAG) services (follow ups)	4	5	0	0	0	0
Modern Apprentice reviews	Paused	0	9	10	10	5
Prison education	3	3	4	4	3	3
National Thematic inspections	4	4	3[4]	1	3	1

The inspection programme runs across academic years. It also provides the data currently available for 2025-26 inspection programme.

National Thematic Inspection Reports published:

- January 2026: Literacy and English within Scotland's curriculum

Fieldwork for the Broad General Education Primary Thematic commenced in March 2026.

[2] One progress report was published after the end of the academic year.
[3] Further inspections
[4] The thematic inspection of inclusion and promoting positive behaviour was carried out in two parts. Two separate reports were published.

Transition and Transformation

This strategic priority evolved in the course of the reporting year, with a central focus on delivering a safe and successful transition from a single agency to two separate organisations in 2025-26. The work on transition and transformation builds on the previous work regarding culture, values and behaviours and seeks to put staff voice at the centre of organisational reform. Education Scotland aims to ensure that all staff feel valued, empowered and fairly treated. The main objective in this area is to ensure the agency a great place to work, and to deliver the safe and successful transition to the new organisations, underpinned by the transfer of accountability for HMIE from Education Scotland to the Scottish Government's Director General for Education and Justice.

Views of our people: At an organisational level, we aim to improve our performance regarding specific questions in the Civil Service People Survey, comparing our results to those of Scottish Government (SG) overall. See table below. The percentage of staff reporting they feel able to access the right learning and developing opportunities when they need to, draws on a question within the Civil Service People Survey. This is undertaken annually, and results are made available at the end of November. 242 responses were received from Education Scotland staff. This suggests a response rate of 59%, from headcount in October 2025 of 407[5].

When asked if they have access to the right learning and development opportunities when they need to, 42% of staff reported they did. This is a further 7% decrease on 2024. There has been a steady decrease since 2021. (*Source: Civil Service People Survey*) Education Scotland has begun work to develop and co-create with staff, the ES People Plan. This will look insights from the People Survey and address emerging themes and downward trends. These will remain as a KPI in the new corporate plan to work on improvement.

Education Scotland staff members reporting they are able to access the right learning and development opportunities when they need to	**Year**					
	2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	% of participants					
Education Scotland	56	65	62 (-3 from SG)	59 (-5 from SG)	49 (-13 from SG)	42 (-20 from SG)

Staff turnover

This is an important indicator of staff satisfaction with their roles and as an employee of Education Scotland. (*Source: SG HR pack)* Levels have increased since 2024/25 but only marginally. A target percentage for this KPI was not set.

[5] For the purposes of comparison, please note 264 responses were received for 2024, from headcount in October 2023 of 388, suggesting a response rate of 68%.

	Financial Year			
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	% turnover rate			
Levels of staff turnover and retention	6.9	5.8	4.89	4.92[6]

Percentage of Education Scotland staff reporting they feel supported and ready for change

In the 2025 Civil Service People Survey, staff were asked how well informed they were about matters that affect them. **34%** reported they felt informed. This was a decrease of **23%** in results from 2024. This result acts as a proxy measure for this KPI (*Source: Civil Service People Survey*). This KPI had a target of **65%**, which it did not meet by **31%**. This is likely due to the ongoing period of transition and uncertainty during the reform and organisational design work.

Education Scotland staff members reporting…	Financial Year			
	2022	2023	2024	2025
	% of participants			
My organisation keeps me informed about matters that affect me	74	63	57	34 (-23 from SG)

Delivery: Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priorities 2025/26

Summary: All five strategic priorities were achieved or had progressed well overall in 2025-26. Of the 29 key actions identified to achieve the strategic priorities, 17 were achieved and 12 were partially achieved by Q4, with one of these being scheduled to be achieved in Q1 2026/27. For full details see Education Scotland's Annual Action Plan 2025-26.

System leadership:

We provided and improved access to high quality professional learning to support the education system and its leadership by utilising expertise from across the system, collaborating with partners and using evidence informed approaches:

- We continued to provide and improve access to high quality professional learning to support the education system. See Delivery Highlights for further details.
- An enhanced professional learning offer was delivered to CLD leaders and practitioners. Over 660 participants engaged in national professional learning sessions improving their knowledge and understanding in topics such as CIC, data skills, community needs analysis.

[6] Number calculated using FREM formula

- Over 250 practitioners attended our sessions on parental engagement and family learning, recognising the value and importance of families in education.
- Across literacy, maths and numeracy and Gaelic, we worked with local authorities on the successful 'Learning to read in the Early Years' professional learning programme and the advance pilot of the 'Numeracy and Maths Self-Evaluation Framework'. Collaborative working provided practitioners and leaders with resources and professional learning on Gaelic Medium Education throughout 2025/26.
- We continued to work effectively in partnership with others to improve leadership in education. See Delivery Highlights section for further details on the Into Headship programme accreditation.

Curriculum:

We delivered on key actions to develop a curriculum that is ambitious, inclusive and relevant for learners through co-designing the approach with practitioners:

- Three CIC papers were published, which explain the aims, rationale and approach for CIC to the education system. Rapid Research Reviews (RRRs) were also undertaken and further evidence papers published for 10 curriculum areas, to ensure an evidence-informed approach was undertaken for the work delivered.
- We ensured practitioners were involved in the co-creation of the technical frameworks within CIC. See Delivery Highlights.
- The national professional learning programme for curriculum. See Delivery Highlights.
- Embedding inclusion, wellbeing and equalities in curriculum design continued across a number of CIC groups. The Early Level reference group met with representation from Care Inspectorate, core Scottish Government, local authority and other stakeholders to consider the needs and context of the early level in ELC settings and primary schools with regard to the Curriculum Improvement Cycle. Thus ensuring the CIC will meet all children's needs.
- We contributed to the publication of the single combined timeline for reform of curriculum, qualifications and assessment and developed a new professional learning offer on pedagogy, which is ready to launch in 2026.

Inclusion, Wellbeing, Equalities and Equity (IWEE):

We delivered a programme of support with local authorities to improve attendance, attainment and equity through building leadership and practitioner capacity:

- We provided targeted support to local authorities to improve attendance. See Delivery highlights.
- In early 2026, the National Improving Writing programme progress evidenced increased numbers of staff reporting they were extremely or very confident to teach writing, from 14% in August to 78% in February (Wave 4) and from 15% to 89% (Implementation Wave). Furthermore, confidence to assess writing increased from 15% to 69% (Wave 4) and 13% to 87% (implementation wave). This resulted in 480 children more than previously predicted, now being expected to be on track for their age and stage by June.
- Practitioner understanding of effective, relationships-based approaches was strengthened. National engagement increased through strong participation at Learning Festivals and the delivery of high-quality professional learning across local authorities.

Around 2000 practitioners were reached, with feedback confirming relevance, practical value and positive impact on day-to-day practice.

- The IWEE Framework was further enhanced through new evidence-informed modules, which provided practitioners with accessible, trauma-informed resources to support positive relationships, inclusive environments and improved outcomes for learners.
- We worked with partners across education and government to ensure the final Additional Support for Learners (ASL) action plan was published in March 2026 and two highly successful national ASL conferences were hosted, the pilot ASN teacher programme began and the Individualised Educational Programmes (IEP) guidance is being finalised. It is intended that this work will lead to stronger, more consistent support for children and young people with ASN across Scotland.

Best use of evidence:

We delivered improvement on the 'best use of evidence'. This ensured that Education Scotland policies and services are effective and efficient, with resources targeted at 'what works'.

- Strong progress is being made in the development of the Corporate Plan 2026-31. Key highlights included successful completion of the 'engagement and evidence' stage, with over 100 staff engaged in internal engagement sessions and a wide range of stakeholders engaging in external workshops.
- Obligations to respond fully and effectively to public inquiries were completed during 2025/26. Education Scotland provided input to the UK COVID Inquiry, Scottish COVID Inquiry and the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.
- Over the year, our effective use of evidence improved. We conducted four literature and data reviews, supported 12 project and programme evaluations (for example, impact of SAC on maths and numeracy attainment; evaluation for the Education Associates programme), ten rapid research reviews on curriculum areas and delivered eight horizon scans, including bespoke scans on Public Services Reform and Scottish Budget. This led to evaluations and work which was more robust and evidence-informed.
- Data sharing agreements between the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and Inspection were developed in 2025/26. The HMIE agreement was finalised and Education Scotland's will be finalised in Q1 of 2026/27, ensuring continued effective data sharing and usage across agencies.
- Over 2025/26 progress was made to improve the way the education system engages with children and young people's voice. See Delivery Highlights and case study 3.
- We developed a corporate position on Artificial Intelligence.

Transition and transformation:

We delivered key transition and transformation activity, including the preparation for the successful transfer of accountability for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland from the Chief Executive of Education Scotland to the Scottish Government Director General for Education and Justice on 1st April 2026.

- Education Scotland provided a formal response to the Independent Review of CLD. Various activities took place including attending the CLD Strategic Leadership Group meetings, contributing to the national workforce development sessions led by the CLD Standards Council and advising Ministers on progress.

- Risks and challenges arose throughout the reporting year. Work to design a model for delivering corporate functions was particularly challenging. This included the development of shared services arrangements for Education Scotland and the new HMIE, in relation to structures to support governance, finance and digital services. This was agreed through collaboration and detailed transition planning to enable the safe and successful transfer of accountability for HMIE to the Scottish Government on 1st April 2026. See Delivery highlights.
- Areas for improvement were identified in line with UNCRC incorporation through an internal strategy group in 2024/25. In 2025/26 UNCRC mandatory training was launched in spring 2025. Between the 6th May 2025 and 7th April 2026, over 80% of staff completed this training.

Annual Programme of Inspection academic year 2024/25

ELC and schools

In the academic year to June 2025 a total of 151 ELC inspections and 256 School inspections were completed.

Scottish Ministers requested that HM Inspectors conduct one special inspection in accordance with section 66 (1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

HM Inspectors inspected Gaelic Medium and Learner Education in 16 settings across early learning and childcare, primary and secondary schools. HM Inspectors' priorities included supporting system improvement of Gaelic and implementation of the National Gaelic Language Plan by reporting on two changes linked to statutory duties in the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act, 2010.

Health and Nutrition Inspectors (HNI) joined 74 school inspections across 29 of the 32 local authorities during the academic year. HNI gathered evidence of compliance with the Schools Health Promotion and Nutrition Act 2007 and the 2020 Nutritional Regulations to identify what is working well and any areas for improvement by local authorities and sectors.

Visits to schools, services and settings requiring a further inspection or progress report

At the start of this academic year, 72 schools and ELC settings where the quality of education was not considered to be good enough from a previous inspection required further monitoring and evaluation by HM Inspectors. This monitoring comprised further inspections of 59 schools and 5 ELC settings. Progress reports were required and received from the remaining 8 schools.

Community Learning and Development

In 2024/25, HM Inspectors carried out further inspections of community learning and development services in 11 local authorities as part of the annual programme of inspection. This included further visits to five services, and six progress reports were submitted. The report 'Evaluation of community learning and development in Scotland' was published in December 2024 providing an overall evaluation of progress visits to Scotland's 32 local authorities.

Colleges

To fulfil its obligations within the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) annual outcome agreement, HM Inspectors carried out a programme of activity in all colleges and partner agencies in 2024/25. HM Inspectors also supported the development of SFC's new tertiary quality enhancement framework.

Prisons

HM Inspectors along with other scrutiny bodies worked in collaboration with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (Scotland) to inspect three Scottish prisons. The findings are published on the prison inspectorate's website.

Educational Oversight

Education Scotland are an approved educational oversight body in Scotland authorised by the Home Office to carry out educational oversight inspections of private further education colleges and English language schools. These providers hold a student sponsor licence to recruit international learners. In 2024/25, HM Inspectors carried three educational oversight inspections.

National Thematic Inspections

In 2024/25 three national thematic reviews were carried out. HM Inspectors contributed to the Curriculum Improvement Cycle by carrying out a thematic review of learning and teaching in mathematics and a thematic review of literacy and English within Scotland's curriculum.

The third thematic was a national review of local authority approaches to improving schools.

Other sectors

HM Inspectors have a statutory duty under the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 to produce an impartial and independent report on any council's proposals to make changes to its school estate or to individual schools. In academic year 2024/25, HM Inspectors carried out independent evaluative activities for 48 such proposals.

HM Inspectors support a programme of joint inspections of services for children, delivered by the Care Inspectorate. HM Inspectors joined 3 joint inspections of services for children in 2024/25.

HM Inspectors continue to contribute to Care Inspectorate reviews of incidents of death in care of a looked after child or young person. HM Inspectors reviewed the education provision for 2 children and young people who had died in care during 2024/25 and reports were provided to the Care Inspectorate.

The new joint framework with the Care Inspectorate for the inspection of ELC entitled 'A Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors' was released to the sector in January 2025.

Summary of Activity in 2025/26 to 31 March 2026

Between August 2025 and March 2026, HM Inspectors carried out inspections across all sectors in line with the Annual Programme of Inspection 2025/26, as detailed in the table on page 22.

Between September 2025 and March 2026 HM Inspectors have carried out 30 school consultations.

Between September 2025 and March 2026 HM Inspectors joined three joint inspections of services for children.

As part of Phase 9 of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, the Interim Chief Inspector of Education attended a public hearing on 27 May 2025 to give evidence on behalf of Education Scotland.

Following a pilot programme, inspections of ELC settings under the new shared quality framework commenced in September 2025.

The review of school inspection framework announced in April 2024 continued, including extensive stakeholder engagement and a public consultation launched in September 2025.

The development of a new framework for the inspection of local authorities announced in June 2024 continued in 2025/26. Following a programme of stakeholder engagement focus groups, the draft framework was developed and shared with local authorities. The draft framework will be trialled during 2026.

Fieldwork for the national thematic review of the Broad General Education: Primary stages to support the Curriculum Improvement Cycle commenced in March 2026.

Examples of Impact, Feedback and Collaboration

Below are some specific examples of impact and feedback which highlight the valuable work undertaken.

Case study 1: Curriculum Improvement Cycle

The programme is currently in **Phase 2 – Engaging and Co-creating** of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC), with practitioners across Scotland actively shaping refreshed curriculum guidance through structured co-design. From session **2024/25**, each of the four contexts for learning operate as a discrete projects within a common programme model.

There are **14 curriculum and context projects**, each led by a facilitator/Senior Education Oficer and supported by four groups: **Collaboration, Core, Steering and Critical Friends**. Open recruitment in October 2024 enabled broad participation, ensuring practitioner-led design with a 3:1 practitioner to other participants ratio, alongside representation from **Reference Groups.**

Collaboration groups (80–110 participants) explore options for improvement, meeting online and face-to-face and acting as advocates for the CIC.

Core groups (15–30 participants) develop and refine solutions, respond to feedback, and progress work through all CIC phases. Core members received structured training, including statutory obligations, and can commission short-life working groups as required.

Steering groups, co-chaired by ADES, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government, provide strategic oversight, coordination, and challenge, while **Critical Friends** have offered external perspectives throughout.

Impact:
This approach is strengthening system coherence and professional ownership by embedding practitioner expertise at scale. Early engagement is improving alignment across sectors, subjects, and contexts, while statutory and equity considerations are built in from the outset.

- Emerging outputs was shared Winter 2025, with **draft guidance in summer 2026**.
- Sustained professional learning and enactment support from **2026/27 to 2028/29** is designed to enable confident implementation.
- **Formal adoption of the refreshed curriculum in August 2028** providing a more consistent, inclusive and future-focused learner experiences across Scotland.

Quotes from Group members
“Tasks were meaningful and relevant and there have been changes already made based on feedback, so you know it’s genuinely meaningful.”
Local authority/RIC lead (QIO, lead officer), Collaboration Group member, Maths and Numeracy

“All aspects of engaging as a member of the steering group offer me opportunities to contribute, shape and question. The efforts being made to build a genuinely collaborative culture which results in the best possible curriculum review are very clear.”

Local authority/RIC lead (QIO, lead officer), Steering Group member, English and Literacy

“All views and work is taken into the planning for the social studies group. I feel we have a key role in the process of changes.” **Secondary Class Teacher, Core Group member, Social Studies**

“The work of the core group is fully participatory. All members have the opportunity to voice their ideas, views and concerns and their contributions are heard and valued.” **Middle leader, Core Group member, Languages**

“I've enjoyed working with like-minded people, people from all authorities and different varying roles across early years, primary and secondary settings. I have learned so much.” **Ethos and Life, Family Engagement Practitioner in North Lanarkshire Council**

Case Study 2: Professional Learning and Leadership

1. Introduction

The Into Headship programme remains Scotland’s national professional learning pathway for aspiring headteachers, supporting them to achieve the GTC Scotland Professional Standard for Headship. Delivered collaboratively by Education Scotland’s Professional Learning and Leadership (PLL) Team, seven universities, all 32 local authorities and GTC Scotland, the programme continued to grow in reach and impact during the 2024–25 academic year.

2. Programme Context and Purpose

Into Headship aims to prepare teachers for the unique demands of headship by deepening their understanding of strategic leadership, self-evaluation, emotional intelligence and school improvement. Its design ensures alignment with national policy expectations and statutory requirements for appointment to headteacher posts. Cohort 9 completed the programme and achieved the Standard for Headship. Cohort 10 progressed through the Emotional Intelligence 360 process, university courses, Education Scotland legislation modules and national networking events and will be undertaking professional verification of their learning in the autumn. Cohort 11 entered the programme and undertook induction and early engagement activities.

3. Participation and Engagement

More than 740 participants engaged across the three cohorts, representing strong national demand. Approximately two-thirds of participants came from the primary sector, and 77% were aspiring headteachers. A total of 222 participants from Cohort 9 successfully achieved the Standard for Headship in April 2025, demonstrating the programme’s effectiveness in building sustained leadership capability.

4. Evidence of Impact

Evaluation data showed consistently strong outcomes across all programme components, demonstrating significant growth in leadership knowledge, confidence and capability. Of the 140 received responses, 97% of participants reported increased understanding of the headteacher role, 99% reported strengthened leadership confidence and 98% felt equipped to lead values-driven strategic visioning. Participants applied research and leadership theory to real improvement work through the Strategic Change Initiative, frequently citing this as a key source of deep professional learning. The Emotional

Intelligence 360 process was described as transformational, offering participants crucial insights into their leadership presence and areas for development.

5. Participant Experience

Participants rated the quality of university and Education Scotland learning extremely highly and highlighted the value of national networking events and collaborative learning.

Participants described the programme as 'hugely rewarding' and spoke of its impact on their identity, confidence and sense of purpose as leaders.

6. National Developments and Continuous Improvement

The Into Headship programme was successfully reaccredited by GTC Scotland in March 2026. Key developments included revised national programme guidance, updated module content and strengthened collaboration between universities and local authorities. Key Priorities for 2026–27 include enhancements to resources, further strengthening of quality assurance processes and continued work on leadership succession planning.

7. Conclusion

The 2024–25 session reaffirmed the Into Headship programme's pivotal role in preparing Scotland's next generation of school leaders, offering a rigorous and impactful learning experience that continues to strengthen leadership capacity nationwide.

Case study 3: Best use of Evidence – Education Scotland Youth Voice Toolkit

Introduction: In August 2025, Education Scotland launched the Youth Voice Toolkit to support schools, community learning and development (CLD) settings, community organisations and local authorities to embed genuine, non-tokenistic approaches to youth voice and consultation. The Toolkit builds on the Social Justice Ambassadors Toolkit co-designed by Stirling Youth Participation Team and young people from Stirling Youth Forum, developed through a whole-council approach over several years. This practice was scaled regionally across Forth Valley and West Lothian, supported by a regional Youth Voice Charter and numerous pilot projects.

Programme context and purpose: The Toolkit provides a practical mechanism for realising Article 12 of the UNCRC, underpinned by the Lundy Model of Participation and the Children's Commissioner's Seven Golden Rules. It responds directly to concerns highlighted in Together Scotland's 2023 report, which found that children often experience participation as tokenistic, unrepresentative and lacking feedback or influence.

Participation and engagement:

From August 2025 - April 2026:

- 15,820 webpage views from 7,962 users
- 2,164 resource downloads
- 443 views of the launch event recording on YouTube
- 430 attendees across the launch event and subsequent six national professional learning sessions (August–December 2025)
- Over 500 additional participants engaged through inputs to national networks, bespoke local authority sessions, Curriculum Improvement Cycle specific groups and other inputs.

Evidence of impact: Evaluation feedback from professional learning sessions demonstrated participants found the Toolkit clear, informative and engaging, valuing its practical guidance, real examples and structured approach to youth-led participation. Practitioners reported increased confidence in moving beyond tokenistic approaches and embedding consistent youth voice practice. Suggestions focused on increased opportunities for dialogue, follow-up learning and sharing practice.

- Youth Voice Toolkit submitted as a good practice case study for Together Scotland's 2026 *Annual State of Children's Rights Report*.

Source of evidence include ES web analytics, ES Professional learning evaluation surveys, Toolkit implementation forms submitted, internal engagement records and informal feedback.

Participant experience:

"Thank you for sharing, looks like a great model and really useful toolkit. Brilliant to hear about in practice too!"

"Just to say already how great it is to see so much best practice already evident in this! I've been in youth voice for 25 years in various ways, and this is all just super-refreshing and positive."

Next steps include strengthening consistency of youth voice messaging across Education Scotland. Regular national professional learning sessions will continue, alongside targeted pilots using the Toolkit to explore attendance and engagement in 2 local authorities, with scope for wider roll-out in 2026. We will continue to make improvements to the Toolkit following practitioner feedback, and a Gaelic version of the Empowering Youth Voices resource has also recently launched online.

Case Study 4: IWEE Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) reach and impact

Introduction: This academic year, 186 schools have confirmed delivery of the MVP programme, with an estimated total of 232 schools participating across Scotland. As a result, 7,378 young people mentors have delivered approximately 9,836 MVP lessons to 73,770 younger learners. In addition, staff in at least one third of MVP schools are also delivering sessions.

Staff views were gathered before and after MVP training delivered by Education Scotland, using the statement: "I have the necessary skills to educate others about sexual harassment, dating violence and sexual assault in my work." Agreement with this statement rose from 38% pre training to 98.5% post training, demonstrating both the need for this professional learning and its strong impact on staff confidence.

Context: The following case study illustrates the positive impact of MVP on young people in Scotland. Smithycroft Secondary School and St Paul's Youth Forum (SPYF) worked in partnership to deliver MVP through an approach aligned with Scotland's Equally Safe strategy. SPYF staff co-facilitated MVP sessions in school and within youth groups, creating informal and trusted spaces for open discussion. This joint approach strengthened prevention messages across both school and community settings and empowered young people as active bystanders and leaders.

Evidence of impact: Evidence is drawn from practitioner reflections and a 2025 MSc dissertation examining the school–youth work partnership (Ledgerwood, 2025). The dissertation found that “MVP provides a flexible, context sensitive approach to violence prevention,” with the strongest impact occurring when delivered as “relational interventions where trust, safety and openness are fostered.” It noted: “If a school views MVP as a mere checklist, it will not succeed. But if you build relationships first, the conversations can change lives.”

Teachers observed shifts in school culture, including increased pupil openness during SPYF led sessions and more responsible bystander behaviour. One pastoral teacher reported fewer fights and more pupils proactively seeking adult help during conflict.

The Knife scenario had particularly strong impact. One educator commented: “Young people are scared… sometimes it’s fear, pressure, survival. MVP makes space to talk about that.” A youth worker added that it was “one of the few sessions where they all lean in.” A teacher described an S5 pupil who became emotional, saying no one had previously asked how it felt to lose a friend to violence.

Girls in the youth group reported better understanding of healthy relationships, with one saying: “I realised things me and my friends went through were a form of abuse.”

Peer led change was also evident, including mentors challenging harmful comments and applying MVP learning in sports settings.

Case Study Next Steps

- Expand MVP to additional year groups
- Continue recruiting and training senior mentors
- Sustain delivery of key scenarios across school and community contexts
- Extend partnership work with parents, primaries and local communities, supported by National Lottery funding

Future Plans

As Scotland’s Curriculum agency, Education Scotland will continue to lead the Curriculum Improvement Cycle. In 2026/27, the focus shifts to planning for successful system-wide implementation. This new phase will require strong engagement from leaders and practitioners across the education system.

Education Scotland’s role as a system convener will be central, supported by high-quality professional learning. This work will be delivered in line with priorities set for education by Ministers.

The 2026–31 Corporate Plan will set out how these priorities are delivered through clear strategic priorities, outcomes and measures of success.

Financial review

Education Scotland is funded by the Scottish Government through the Education and Skills Portfolio. The financial results for 2025-26 are reported in the financial statements.

Review of Outturn

The total budget initially allocated was £31.037m and a further £18.159m of budget was transferred from the Scottish Government during the year resulting in a final budget of £49.196m. Education Scotland rely on in-year budget transfers as the original budget is not sufficient to cover annual expenditure.

Significant Budget Transfers

A budget transfer of £3.0m was made to support Education Scotland's operational costs. In addition, the Scottish Government transferred budget to Education Scotland to undertake work which was out-with the core remit. The main budget transfers were:

Glow £6.100m – This covers the costs of permanent and temporary staff who support work on Glow and also the costs of the Glow contract.

Curriculum Improvement Cycle £3.347m – The 2021 OECD Review of Scottish Education and the National Discussion on Scottish Education (May 2023) made recommendations regarding curriculum review**.** Both identified the need to establish a regular curriculum review process to ensure that the curriculum remains fit for purpose. Education Scotland has been commissioned to lead on this work.

Inspection £2.000m – Additional budget was made available to support an increased number of inspections.

Scottish Attainment Challenge £1.000m - This funds Education Scotland's work on the Scottish Attainment Challenge and is used to cover the salary costs of Local Authority Attainment Advisors.

Accommodation £0.960m – This covers part of Education Scotland accommodation costs.

Excellence in Headship £0.370m – These funds are used for professional learning for headteachers and those who hold the standard for headship.

Speech and Language Therapists £0.224m - Funding was allocated to employ Early Years Speech and Language Therapists who worked in collaboration with stakeholders at local, regional and national level. The aim is to build increased capacity and confidence in supporting the speech, language and communication of young children, including those impacted by socio-economic disadvantage.

Cyber Resilience £0.240m – Funding was received from the National Cyber Security Centre to deliver the CyberFirst programme in Scotland. The aim of this project is to increase access to cyber security learning for children and young people across Scotland**.**

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) £0.103m – Education Scotland was given a budget transfer to support work on STEM. This funding covered some staff costs and also a number of STEM grants which were issued during the year.

2025-26	Original Budget £000	Updated Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000
Resource Expenditure	28,373	46,374	48,677	2,303
Ringfenced depreciation	1,854	1,854	1,835	(19)
Ringfenced depreciation for Right of Use Assets	810	810	810	-
Pension costs (AME)	-	95	92	(3)
Provision (AME)	-	13	12	(1)
Total Expenditure scoring against Resource Budgets	**31,037**	**49,146**	**51,426**	**2,280**
Capital Expenditure	-	50	50	-
Total	**31,037**	**49,196**	**51,476**	**2,280**

The overspend of £2.280m represents 4.6% of the total budget of £49.196m.

During 2025-26, Education Scotland's functions were to be refocussed on the design delivery and ongoing improvement of the curriculum that is taught in schools and settings across the country. The Inspectorate function was to be removed and established as a separate inspectorate body called His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE).

To accommodate the expenditure forecasted to be incurred by the new inspectorate body in 2025-26, budget totalling £2.813m was transferred in-year from Education Scotland to the Scottish Government. Following this action, the strategic decision was taken to delay the separation of HMIE until 01 April 26, to align with the appointment of the new Chief Inspector. The resulting impact was Education Scotland incurred full year costs for HMIE, but due to system restrictions, the £2.813m budget could not be returned.

The true Education Scotland Outturn against budget is an underspend of £533k.

Significant Variances

Staff costs

Staff numbers have increased by 3 from the previous year and staff costs have increased by £5.2m. Permanent staff costs have increased by £3.4m from 2024-25, but permanent staff numbers have only increased by 1. The increase in expenditure from the previous year is due to having a full years costs for staff recruited later in 2024-25 and also the costs of implementing the 2025-26 pay award, plus staff progressing up the spinal points of the pay scales. All salaries of A to C band staff increased by 4%, with effect from 1 April 2025, on 31 March 2025 pay range values.

The number of non-permanent staff has increased by 2 from last year and the overall increase in expenditure was £1.8m. This covers fixed term contracts, agency staff and secondees.

Digital Costs (SWAN)

There was a reduction in connectivity costs in relation to digital SWAN expenditure compared to the previous year. During 2025-26, the renewal of a major contract realised savings in annual circuit rental costs. The new contract also impacted the additional bandwidth charged to local authorities, which is incurred by Education Scotland and then recharged. Annual expenditure for the year totalled £595k, which is a reduction of £544k.

Practitioner Events

Practitioner events has increased from £122k in 2024-25 to £435k in 2025-26. There was an increase in the number of events held within the Curriculum Improvement Cycle Programme. This area of work aims to improve the technical framework within the curriculum. The representation at events is across local authorities, sectors, roles, and experience and, it is crucial a mixed representation attend to ensure that the process is robust.

Travel and Subsistence

Although travel and subsistence remained relatively static in 2025-26, the level of expenditure remained high at £1.461m (2024-25 £1.425m). Activity in relation to the Curriculum Improvement Cycle continued in 2025-26, with events being held throughout the country to gather views from the education community. Education Scotland cover the travel and subsistence costs for staff and practitioners visiting educational establishments.

More generally, a large part of Education Scotland's business is conducted via inspection/review and engaging with stakeholders and therefore spend on travel takes up a significant proportion of the budget compared to other organisations of a similar size. Inflationary increases on accommodation costs, car hire and public transport costs continue to push costs up.

In order to keep costs as low as possible all staff are advised that only essential business travel should be undertaken and where possible internal meetings should take place 'virtually'.

Grants

The total value of grants issued in 2025-26 was £528k compared to £819k in 2024-25. A number of schemes came to an end in 2025-26, with Food for Thought and Raising Aspirations in Science Education no longer progressing.

Income

Total income for 2025-26 was £998k, which is a fall of £483k from the previous year.

Education Scotland receives income each year from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to support the SFC in fulfilling its statutory duties. In 2024-25, SFC provided additional funding for Education Scotland to support work on the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework. This work was completed in FY25-26, however reduced funding was received to finish the project. SFC funding received in 2025-26 was £668k, compared to £930k in 2024-25.

There was also a reduction in income of £76k from the Wood Foundation. This funding supports 'Raising Aspirations in Science Education' (RAiSE) by funding a Primary Science Development Office in each Local Authority who is seconded to lead on coordinating all science and STEM professional learning. Funding provided by the Wood Foundation is in line with the value of the grants issued.

Finance Strategy

Education Scotland's Corporate Finance Strategy covers the period from 2025 to 2026. The total budget allocated to Education Scotland by Scottish Ministers is finite and the finance strategy is designed to ensure that Education Scotland is able to deliver its strategic objectives in ways that make the best use of the funding available. The key objective of the Education Scotland finance strategy is to deliver the Corporate Plan in a way which maximises outcomes from the available budget.

Looking forward to 2026-27

	2026-27 Budget £000	Education Scotland 2025-26 Budget £000	HMIE 2025-26 Budget £000
Cash Resource (RDEL)	17,304	17,304	11,069
Non-Cash Resource (RDEL) for depn	2,664	2,664	0
Total Budget	**19,968**	**19,968**	**11,069**

As part of the Scottish Government's plans for educational reform, Education Scotland was split into two organisations - a re-focussed Education Scotland and an independent inspectorate (HMIE).

HMIE was established and operational on 01 April 2026. The Education Scotland budget for 2026-27 has subsequently been reduced by £11m reflecting the transfer of budget back to Scottish Government for HMIE expenditure, as accountability will now sit with the Director General.

Education Scotland's budget will increase from in-year budget transfers from SG policy areas which relate to specific programmes. These budgets are received during the Autumn and Spring Budget Revision periods.

The overall fiscal context within the public sector is one of limited funding alongside rising staff costs and inflationary pressures. Given that most of Education Scotland's expenditure is on staff costs, rising staff costs have a significant impact on the remaining budget available for other expenditure. The Scottish Budget 2025-26 includes information on the 2025-26 plans compared to the previous year. For Education Scotland this is 'flat cash' and there is no change from previous years to take account of salary increases and inflation.

Auditors

The Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 places personal responsibility on the Auditor General for Scotland to decide who is to undertake the audit of the agency. For the period 2022-23 to 2026-27, the Auditor General has appointed Audit Scotland to undertake our audit. The audit fee for 2025-2026 is £42,710. The general duties of the auditors, including their statutory duties, are set out in the Code of Audit Practice issued by Audit Scotland and approved by the Auditor General. Auditors' remuneration is a notional charge, as notified to us by our auditors, in respect of audit work carried out during 2025-26. Internal audit is covered by a service level agreement with the Scottish Government Internal Audit Division.

Payment of suppliers

Education Scotland policy is to pay all invoices not in dispute within 30 days from receipt of the invoice or the agreed contractual terms if otherwise specified. The agency aims to pay 100% of invoices, including disputed invoices once the dispute has been settled, on time in these terms. No payments were made during 2025-26 under the *Late Payments of Commercial Debts (interest) Act 1988*.

The agency has a target of paying all invoices within ten days which is above and beyond our contractual commitment. For the year ended 31 March 2026, Education Scotland paid 95.8% of invoices within ten days (2024-25 85.5%).

Sustainability Report

Introduction

In November 2024, the Scottish Parliament passed the *Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024*, which introduced a new framework for setting emissions reduction targets. This Act replaced the former system of annual and interim emissions targets with a series of five-year carbon budgets. The carbon budget levels were set through secondary legislation in October 2025, following advice from the Climate Change Committee.

While the previous framework of interim and annual targets has been replaced, the statutory national target of net zero emissions by 2045 remains unchanged. As such, Education Scotland continues to work towards achieving net zero.

Carbon budget	Period covered	Average annual emissions level	Equivalent reduction vs 2014/15
First carbon budget	2026–2030	43% of 2014 emissions	**57% reduction**
Second carbon budget	2031–2035	31% of 2014 emissions	**69% reduction**
Third carbon budget	2036–2040	20% of 2014 emissions	**80% reduction**
Fourth carbon budget	2041–2045	6% of 2014 emissions	**94% reduction**

These figures represent five-year average limits, not single-year targets. Scotland meets a carbon budget if total emissions over the five-year period remain below the cap, even if individual years fluctuate.

Summary of performance 2025/26

During the reporting period, Education Scotland continued to make progress towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting Scottish Government statutory commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.

Emissions performance over the year reflects ongoing action to reduce energy use, minimise travel-related emissions, and embed more sustainable ways of working across the organisation. Reductions achieved to date demonstrate continued progress towards longer-term emissions reduction pathways, while recognising that continued action will be required across all operational areas to remain aligned with national climate ambitions.

Education Scotland will continue to review its approach to monitoring and reporting emissions as the carbon budget framework becomes embedded across the public sector, ensuring that future performance reporting remains robust, transparent, and aligned with Scotland's evolving climate change legislation.

Performance Emissions table

Scottish Ministers have established four five-year carbon budgets, requiring emissions reductions of 57%, 69%, 80%, and 94% against baseline levels. Education Scotland's baseline year is 2014/15.

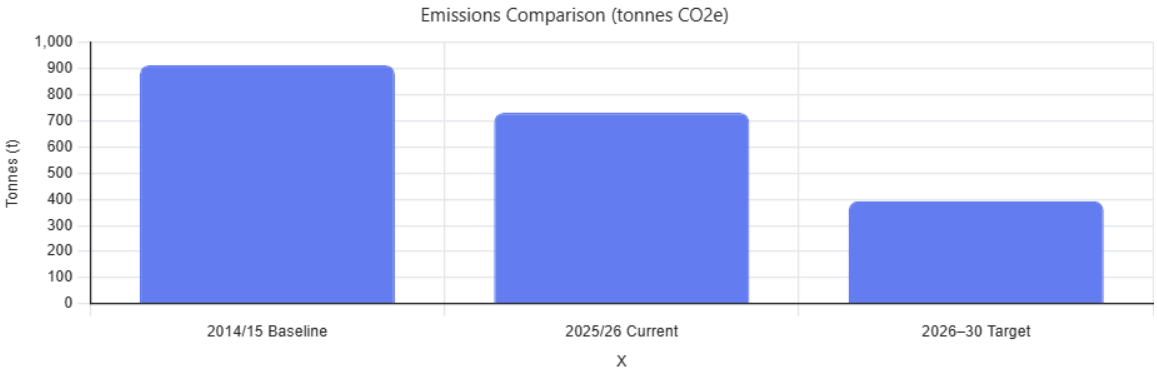
Statutory carbon budgets apply to every year from 2026 to 2045. These targets require emissions reductions across the entire economy, not solely through decreases in electricity generation.

By 2045, any remaining emissions must be balanced by carbon removal measures to achieve net zero emissions.

The first carbon budget period covers 2026-2030. Education Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions baseline for **2014/15** was **914.2 tonnes (t).**

Area	**Baseline (2014/15)**	**2025/26 Figures**
Energy	446.8 t	86.37 t
Waste	2.1 t	0.04 t
Water	7.2 t	0.20 t
Travel	458.0 t	297.20 t
Homeworking	–	174.14 t
Hotels	–	173.28 t
Total	**914.2 t**	**731.23 t**

Targets and Progress



The first carbon budget target for **2026–2030** is **393.10 t**, representing a **57% reduction** from the 2014/15 baseline.

Current emissions for **2025/26** are **731.32 t**, representing an approximate **20% reduction** from baseline levels. However, this is not a direct like-for-like comparison, as the current figures reflect an expanded reporting scope. Emissions from homeworking and hotel stays are now included, alongside data from a broader range of office locations and the inclusion of gas consumption for two offices, providing a more complete and accurate representation of organisational emissions.

Further reductions are required to meet the upcoming statutory targets.

Public bodies Climate change duties reporting

A Statutory Order came into force on 23 November 2015, requiring public bodies to report annually to Scottish Ministers on their compliance with climate change duties.

Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Reporting provides a solid basis for tracking public sector action on climate change and driving continuous improvement.

Each year, we submit our Climate Change Duties Report, detailing the climate change performance of our estate for the relevant reporting year.

Donna McMaster

Chief Executive

Accountability Report

Corporate Governance Report

The Corporate Governance Report describes Education Scotland's governance structure. It comprises the Directors Report, Statement of Accountable Officer's Responsibilities and the Governance Statement. This meets accountability requirements as specified in both the HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual and the Scottish Public Finance Manual.

Directors Report

This year has been characterised by continued educational and public service reform, a challenging financial environment, and organisational transition. On 1 April 2026, Education Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE) formally separated into two distinct public bodies. Throughout this period of change, our focus has remained on embedding reform, enhancing our leadership role in curriculum design and improvement through our work with practitioners, and ensuring governance and assurance arrangements remain robust and effective.

As well as the challenges mentioned above, we have also had to respond to a number of additional internal challenges during 2025-26, including leadership changes at the very top of the Agency and the resignation of one of the Agency's Non-Executive board members, which followed on from the resignation of two other Non-Executives towards the end of the previous reporting year. In order to retain effective oversight and assurance, we have therefore had to be flexible and agile with our governance arrangements, including agreeing the short-term merger of our Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee (referenced later in this document as Audit, Risk and Advisory Committee).

Full details of the governance structure and risk management arrangements in operation in the Agency during 2025-26 financial year are provided as part of the Governance Statement on page 53.

Relationship with Scottish Government

Scottish Ministers are responsible for determining the overall policy and resources framework within which Education Scotland operates. However, as an Executive Agency, our management and budgets are separate from core Scottish Government, with our Chief Executive accountable to Scottish Ministers for managing our performance and budget. Scottish Ministers, are, in turn, ultimately accountable to Parliament. Following the recent parliamentary election Màiri McAllan has been appointed Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic. Prior to that, Jenny Gilruth was Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for education.

The Chief Executive

In line with the Scottish Public Finance Manual, the Permanent Secretary, as Principal Accountable Officer for the Scottish Government, appoints the Chief Executive as the Accountable Officer for the Agency. Our Framework Document sets out clear lines of accountability between the Accountable Officer of Education Scotland, through our Portfolio Accountable Officer, up to the Principal Accountable Officer and Scottish Ministers.

Over the reporting year, the Agency has had three Interim Chief Executives, Gillian Hamilton, Graeme Logan and Lisa Bird; with Donna McMaster taking up the role on a permanent basis on 27 April 2026.

Gillian Hamilton resigned from Education Scotland at the end of August 2025, with Graeme Logan joining the Agency from the Scottish Government, temporarily, as Interim Chief Executive and Accountable Officer.

Lisa Bird, also from the Scottish Government, was then appointed interim Chief Executive and Accountable Officer in early November 2025 when Graeme Logan was absent for a period. On his return, and following Janie McManus's departure, he assumed the role of Interim Chief Inspector while Lisa Bird continued as Interim Chief Executive and Accountable Officer of Education Scotland. Graeme Logan subsequently returned to the Scottish Government when Ruth Binks was appointed and took up post as Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland on 30 March 2026. The transfer of accountability for inspection then transferred from Education Scotland on 1 April 2026.

On 27 April 2026 Lisa Bird also returned to the Scottish Government following Donna McMaster's appointment as Chief Executive of Education Scotland.

The Chief Executive is supported in her role as Accountable Officer by the Education Scotland Advisory Board.

Education Scotland Advisory Board

As indicated above, the Advisory Board was merged for a short period of time, with the Audit and Risk Committee. Meetings of both the standalone Advisory Board and the merged Audit, Risk and Advisory Committee in 2025-26 comprised the members of the Agency's Leadership Team and the Education Scotland Non-Executive Board Members as follows:

Chief Executive & Accountable Officer	Gillian Hamilton, Interim Chief Executive, resigned 29 Aug 2025. Graeme Logan, appointed Interim Chief Executive on 08 Sept 2026. Stepped down as Chief Executive on 3 November 2025 although he remained on the Advisory Board as Interim Chief Inspector until 30 March 2026. Lisa Bird, appointed Interim Chief Executive on 03 Nov 2025, returned to SG on 27 April 2026. Donna McMaster appointed Chief Executive on 27 April 2026.
Chief Inspector	Janie McManus, Interim Chief Inspector until 3 November 2025 when she transferred to a new role within Scottish Government. Graeme Logan, Interim Chief Inspector from 1 December 2025. He returned to his substantive post in Scottish Government on 30 March 2026.
Strategic Director	Ollie Bray
Strategic Director	David Gregory (interim)
Strategic Director	Rob Strachan (interim)
Strategic Director	Gill Ritchie (interim) until 31 March 2026 when she transferred to HMIE
Strategic Director	Patricia Watson (interim) until 31 March 2026 when she transferred to HMIE
Non-Executive members of the Board	Aileen Ponton (Chair of Advisory Board) David Gemmell Sam Anson appointed 17 October 2025 George Docherty appointed 17 October 2025 David Wallace appointed 17 October 2025 Lyndsey McRoberts resigned 24 July 2025

Company Directorships and other significant interests

None of the directors held any company directorships or other significant interests which conflicted with their management responsibilities. A register of the Non-Executive Board Members' interests and their biographies are maintained and published on our website. Board members are also required to disclose any conflicts of interest at both Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

Auditors

Audit Scotland is appointed under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 to carry out the external audit of Education Scotland.

Internal audit services are provided by the Scottish Government Internal Audit Directorate. The scope of work is determined following discussion with the Chief Executive, the Head of Governance and Financial Management and the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, following which it is presented to the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration.

Incidents reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

There have been no data breaches notified to the ICO during the reporting year.

Statement of Accountable Officer's Responsibilities

Under section 19 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, the Scottish Ministers have directed Education Scotland to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in conformity with the accounts direction included at the end of the notes to the accounts of these financial statements, detailing the resources required, held or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by the agency during the year.

The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the agency's state of affairs at the year end and of its net resource outturn, recognised gains and losses, and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accountable Officer is required to comply with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM), and in particular to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Scottish Ministers, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, as set out in the FReM, have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the agency will continue in operation.

The Principal Accountable Officer of the Scottish Government has appointed the Chief Executive as Accountable Officer of Education Scotland. The Accountable Officer's relevant responsibilities include the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which she is accountable, keeping proper records and safeguarding our assets, as set out in the Memorandum to Accountable Officers issued by the Scottish Government.

Disclosure of relevant audit information

The Accountable Officer has taken all necessary steps to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are also aware of that information. There is no relevant audit information of which the Agency's auditors are unaware.

Accounts Direction

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with a direction given by the Scottish Ministers in pursuance of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. This direction is shown as an appendix to the accounts. The Annual Report and Accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable and the Accountable Officer takes personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

Education Scotland Governance Statement 2025-26

This Governance Statement outlines Education Scotland's approach to corporate governance, setting out our systems, internal control structure and risk management framework that was in operation between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 and up to the signing of the 2025-26 Annual Report and Accounts.

This has been a particularly challenging year for Education Scotland. We delivered key transition and transformation activity, including the preparation for the formal separation of Education Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE) - while also responding to other external and internal challenges, including Public Service Reform, organisational transition and a series of changes at the most senior level of the Agency. Throughout year, our focus has therefore remained on embedding reform, enhancing our leadership role in curriculum design and improvement and ensuring our governance and assurance arrangements remained robust and effective, designed to mitigate the risks and challenges that arose throughout the reporting year as much as possible.

As part of this, a decision was taken earlier in the year to postpone the date of transfer of accountability for inspection, with work to design a financially sustainable model for delivering corporate functions particularly challenging. This included the development of shared and blended governance, estates and digital services for Education Scotland and the new HMIE and I can report that the successful transfer of accountability for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland from the Chief Executive of Education Scotland to the Scottish Government Director General for Education and Justice was safely and successfully transferred on 1 April 2026 through strong collaboration and detailed transition planning.

While strong foundations have therefore been laid, we recognise that reform and shared service risks and challenges will likely emerge, especially in the first months following separation. We are therefore establishing a dedicated Implementation Group to coordinate and oversee all post transition activity. This is being led by one on Education Scotland's Strategic Directors, reporting directly into the Leadership Team. We are also establishing robust governance around shared services, with a commitment to joint strategic leadership and collaboration with HMIE, not only to ensure shared and blended services continue to meet the needs of both organisations but also to ensure that as system leaders we are able to continue to deliver high-quality support to the education system, in the most effective and impactful way.

Scope of responsibility

My accountability is subject to the respective overall responsibilities of the Permanent Secretary of the Scottish Government as the Principle Accountable Officer and the Director General for Education and Justice as Portfolio Accountable Officer. Detailed information on the role and responsibilities of Accountable Officers is set out in the Accountability Chapter of the Scottish Public Finance Manual.

I have actively sought to quickly develop my knowledge and understanding about the Agency's systems of internal controls since my arrival, and I have been fully supported in my assessment of the effectiveness of these by both my Leadership Team and my predecessor, Lisa Bird. In doing so, I have identified that there is inconsistent application

and embedding of policies and procedures in some areas. Key areas for improvement therefore include:

- risk management practice - with risk identification, ownership, and escalation not consistently embedded at all levels of the organisation
- continuing inconsistent application of information and records management requirements, including variable adherence to corporate policies and systems such as eRDM.
- over reliance on central expertise and guidance, particularly in relation to impact assessments, with capability not yet fully embedded at team level.

However, while there is a need to strengthen and embed more consistent application of policies and procedures in 2026-27, particularly around the need to strengthen our risk management arrangements, our internal controls do continue to help identify the principal risks to the achievement of our aims and objectives whilst also safeguarding the public funds and assets which have been assigned to me and for which I am personally responsible in terms of section 15 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. I am therefore able to confirm, despite having only taken up post as Chief Executive of Education Scotland on 27 April, that the Agency's systems of internal control and assurance are in line with the Scottish Public Finance Manual and are broadly effective.

Education Scotland also utilises a number of SG corporate systems and I am aware that some concerns had been raised earlier this year about the control environment. However, I have since received an assurance that the services continue to evolve in line with business needs and expectations.

Education Scotland Governance Framework

We adapted our Governance Framework following the resignation of one of our Non-Executive Board Members early in the reporting year. The departure of three Non-Executive board members within such a short timescale (two other Non-Executive had resigned towards the end of the previous reporting year) meant we had to consider how the remaining Non-Executives could continue to effectively deliver the level of oversight and assurance required without placing unreasonable demands on them. As a result, the Advisory Board and the Audit and Risk Committee were merged for a period of time. This was discussed with Scottish Government and both internal and external auditors. During this period, we also co-opted and inducted three new members to the Advisory Board which allowed us to reinstate separate Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee arrangements by the end of October 2025.

However, since then, another Non-Executive, the Chair of our Advisory Board meetings, has stood down for personal reasons as has the Independent Audit and Risk Committee Member. As a result, we are again temporarily merging the Advisory Board and the Audit and Risk Committee while we undertake the recruitment process to appoint further new Non-Executive members. We are also currently in the process of selecting a replacement Independent Audit and Risk Committee member.

In the mean-time, our governance structure continues to be kept under review in order to best support such transition activity and further information about the corporate governance structure in place during the reporting period is provided below.

Leadership Team

As Chief Executive I, and my predecessors, are supported by the Leadership Team which during the reporting year comprised the Chief Inspector and the Agency's Strategic Directors. The Leadership Team is the Agency's most senior formal decision-making group. The frequency of meetings has, by necessity, had to be flexible in order to meet the needs of both the Agency and the reform programme, with governance meetings focussed on the work of the Agency generally taking place on a weekly basis throughout 2025-26. In addition, a number of Strategic Planning Days have also taken place.

As indicated above in the Directors Report, the membership of the Leadership Team saw a number of changes during the year at both Chief Executive and Chief Inspector level. Prior to the appointment of myself as Chief Executive and Ruth Binks as Chief Inspector for Education in Scotland, there were three Interim Chief Executives and two Interim Chief Inspectors during the 2025-26 reporting year.

While the formal governance meetings involved the full membership of the Leadership Team and considered organisational wide issues and risks, in readiness for reform we had also previously introduced two separate leadership groupings, one for Education Scotland and one for Inspection, with meetings focussed on issues impacting on their respective functions. One grouping therefore encompassed the Chief Executive and the Strategic Directors from the Education Scotland side, the other encompassed the Inspectorate senior officials, led by the Chief Inspector. These arrangements continued for the duration of the 2025-26 financial year and provided valuable function specific space at Leadership Team level.

Following the successful set up of HMIE, both Leadership Teams have agreed to continue to collaborate and meet regularly.

Advisory Body

The Chief Executive role is also supported by an Advisory Board, considering the overarching strategy, direction, performance and governance of Education Scotland. The advisory nature of which is set out in the Scottish Government's publication 'On Board: A Guide for Members of Management Advisory Boards'.

Membership includes a number of Non-Executive board members (shown in the Directors' report above) as well as my Leadership Team colleagues. The Non-Executive members act as critical friends and provide constructive challenge and guidance.

As indicated above, following the resignation of a number of Non-Executives, a decision was taken to merge the Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee for a short period during 2025-26 in order to ensure an appropriate level of scrutiny and assurance on the work and performance of the Agency. This was a short-term measure during which we inducted three new members to the Advisory Board which allowed us to reinstate separate Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee arrangements by the end of October 2025.

The merged meetings were chaired by Aileen Ponton, Non-Executive. Having a Non-Executive chair the meetings allowed the Chief Executive to be more involved in the discussion during meetings and we therefore agreed that we would continue to have a Non-Executive chair Advisory Board meetings.

However, since then, in July 2026, Aileen Ponton, Non-Executive and James Wallace, our Independent Audit and Risk Committee member, have both unfortunately, had to resign

for personal reasons. We are therefore again temporarily merging the Advisory Board and the Audit and Risk Committee for a short period while we recruit new members. The merged meetings will be chaired by David Gemmell, Non-Executive.

The Advisory Board met regularly throughout the year to progress the business of the Agency. This included two formal Advisory Board governance meetings, two strategic sessions and two merged Audit, Risk and Advisory Committee meetings.

Audit and Risk Committee

As indicated above, the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) was temporarily merged with the Advisory Board for a period during the 2025-26 reporting year. This saw the first two meetings of the year being merged meetings, with the remaining two meetings of the 2025-26 year being solely the Audit and Risk Committee. However, as indicated above, the two will be again temporarily merged for a period during 2026-27 while we recruit further new members.

ARC provides independent scrutiny of our strategic approach to risk, control and governance, accounting policies and accounts, and audit plans and reports. To ensure that all members of the Advisory Board are sighted on the work of ARC, an update on ARC discussions was provided at every Advisory Board meeting following ARC. The chair of the Committee also submits an Annual Statement of Assurance to the Chief Executive as Accountable Officer.

Membership of the Audit and Risk Committee is wholly external to Education Scotland, routinely comprising a number of Non-Executive Board Members and an Independent Audit and Risk Committee member. As Accountable Officer, the Chief Executive routinely attends the Audit and Risk Committee along with other key personnel from across Education Scotland. Internal and external auditors also attend and their work helps inform the assessment of our risk management, control and governance processes. The auditors also regularly meet with ARC members without executives in attendance.

Other Boards and Committees

A number of additional boards formed part of the Governance Framework in operation during the year:

- The Support and Improvement Board (SIB) which focussed on all non-inspection educational aspects of the remit of Education Scotland, chaired by the Chief Executive. With the separation of Inspection from Education Scotland, this Board will not continue to operate in 2026-27, with its remit reverting to the Leadership Team, at least initially.
- The Inspectorate Board, chaired by the Chief Inspector and focussed on the work of the Inspection function. Both this and SIB had a focus on the provision of assurance, being responsible for monitoring progress against key deliverables in the Agency's Annual Action Plan.
- The Digital Services and the Corporate Services and Governance Boards have continued during 2025-26. The Digital Services Board is chaired Ollie Bray, Strategic Director, while the Corporate Services and Governance Board meetings is chaired by Rob Strachan, Strategic Director. Membership of both is drawn from across the Agency to provide a level of independent, peer led challenge.
- The Partnership Board met frequently throughout the reporting year, with five formal governance meetings and a number of additional reform focussed meetings held

across the year as required. Partnership Board meetings are chaired by Rob Strachan, the Strategic Director for Corporate Services and Governance, with membership including representatives from across the Agency along with key Trade Unions officials. Scottish Government reform colleagues attended a number of the meetings focussed solely on transition and reform.

- The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee met four times during 2025-26, again chaired by Rob Strachan, the Strategic Director for Corporate Services and Governance with membership from across the Agency, including from our Human Resources and Facilities Team.

Internal Audit

The Scottish Government's Directorate for Internal Audit and Assurance (Internal Audit) provides independent, objective assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of risk management, governance, and control arrangements within Education Scotland.

The work of Internal Audit is informed by the Agency's risk profile and by an audit needs assessment undertaken by the auditors. An annual planning meeting is held with the Chair of ARC, the Chief Executive and the Head of Governance and Financial Management to support the development of the annual audit plan which is then normally presented to the Audit and Risk Committee – this year it was presented to the merged Audit, Risk and Advisory Committee.

As documented within that audit plan, Internal Audit have carried out 3 audits during 2025-26:

- Organisational Readiness
- Capacity and Capability
- Risk Management

They also followed up on the previous year's Digital Capacity and Governance Audit.

One audit attracted a limited assurance rating – Risk Management. As indicated above, we had already identified this as an area for improvement and plans are in place to strengthen our leadership and support in this area.

Following their work above, Internal Audit have provided me, as Accountable Officer, with an overall assurance opinion of Reasonable. In determining this assurance opinion, Internal Audit took several factors into account. This has included:

- audit activities undertaken throughout the year;
- engagement with Senior Management;
- consideration of the effectiveness and structure of the Audit and Risk Committee in operation in Education Scotland;
- our approach to governance and risk management; and
- the range of other assurances available such as External Audit.

Their work is also informed by their cumulative audit knowledge and experience of Education Scotland, and crucially, against the context of education reform.

External Audit

The Auditor General for Scotland is responsible for auditing the Agency's accounts. The appointed auditors are currently Audit Scotland. Their responsibilities under Audit Scotland's Code of Audit Practice require them to assess our system of internal control. In doing so, they seek to gain assurance that the agency:

- has systems for recording and processing transactions which provide a sound basis for the preparation of the financial statements
- has systems of internal control which provide an adequate means of preventing and detecting error, fraud or corruption
- complies with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations.

Risk Management

In line with the requirements of the Scottish Public Finance Manual, we continue to operate a risk management framework that clearly sets out our organisational approach and supports the achievement of our objectives.

As indicated above, risk management has been identified as an area for improvement in 2026-27, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to promoting proactive risk management across the Agency. The new organisational structure for Corporate Services in Education Scotland includes plans to supplement the Agency's risk capacity with the creation of a new risk and assurance leadership role. Not only will this bring a more strategic focus to our risk management approach but it will also allow us to continue to support staff to understand the value of risk management, support them to make appropriate risk-based decisions and take personal responsibility for the management of risk at every level. As such, the main priorities of Education Scotland's risk management approach will continue to be the identification, evaluation and control of risks which threaten our ability to deliver our objectives.

Our current arrangements include maintaining a top level, organisational wide risk register which records the highest level internal and external risks facing the Agency. Each risk is categorised, described and allocated a responsible owner who makes informed decisions on how risks are managed and/or mitigated, reporting up, or escalating to Leadership Team as required. As part of this, regular meetings take place between the Agency's Assurance Manager and each of these top level organisational risk owners. The outputs from the meetings help inform the monthly risk report to Leadership Team, alongside the Agency's top level risk register and accompanying Power BI report.

The Leadership Team then reviews the status of each risk in the context of the overall environment in which the organisation exists, with the Power BI report also including brief information on the operational risks being managed across the Agency.

During the reporting year, the top level risk register was also reviewed at both of the merged Audit, Risk and Advisory Committee meetings and at both of the subsequent Audit

and Risk Committee meetings. As we moved through transition and the development of the Education Scotland HMIE corporate structures, ARC also reviewed the Organisation Development (OD) Risk Register, providing comments and advice on the overall risk profile of the OD project.

During 2025–26, we have continued to develop our risk reporting capabilities through expanded use of Power BI, enhancing the clarity, accessibility and insight provided by risk data. Further detail on the key issues and risks faced by the Agency during the reporting year can be found in the Overview at page 8.

Information and data management and protection

There were no data breaches that warranted notification to the Information Commissioner's Office during the reporting year.

Data protection obligations and registration are such that Scottish Ministers' registration with the Information Commissioner includes Education Scotland. Recognising that we operate at arm's length from central government, a memorandum of understanding is in place between Education Scotland and the Scottish Government to manage these arrangements. This sets out the terms of agreement in relation to compliance with data protection laws and provides a structure for establishing co-ordinated procedures in relation to the Scottish Ministers' data protection obligations. Under these arrangements, Education Scotland's Head of Governance and Financial Management is responsible for data protection matters in Education Scotland, supported by the Head of Information Governance.

It is, of course, important that everyone in Education Scotland understands their responsibilities to protect the organisation's systems and data. All employees are therefore required to complete mandatory annual online training covering both data protection and information management. They are also required to undertake mandatory cyber security training.

Given the continued inconsistent use of the current record management system - eRDM, we will use the upcoming migration from eRDM to SG Nexus, a cloud-based replacement provided by Objective, as an opportunity to support colleagues and teams to better understand their obligations in this area.

As part of the shared and blended services offer, Education Scotland will also provide advice and support as required to HMIE on governance and information management issues. Education Scotland will not, however, have decision making powers for HMIE, given they are now a distinct, separate public body.

Planned improvements

Following the successful separation of Education Scotland and HMIE, we will naturally be reviewing and updating our governance frameworks, including introducing new oversight arrangements for organisation design (Implementation Group) and continuing to evolve the governance arrangements for the Shared Services arrangements. We will therefore continue to adapt and refine our governance, risk and control systems across the year to support our new ways of working.

Other planned improvements for 2026-27 include:

- The recruitment of a Head Teacher to sit on our Advisory Board, bringing classroom experience to Board discussions, and supplementing the local authority experience already sitting on the Board.
- We will produce a new Framework Document for Education Scotland, setting out how Education Scotland will operate going forward, our relationship with Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government and how we are expected to fulfil our remit and purpose.
- Development of a longer-term organisational strategy for Education Scotland (the Corporate Plan 2026–31, and Annual Delivery Plan 2026 – 27) which we aim to publish in Summer 2026, setting out clear strategic priorities, outcomes and measures of success;
- Linked to that, we will also continue to develop our organisational planning, monitoring and performance reporting arrangements; and
- Development of a new People Plan to address feedback from the Civil Service People Survey.

Given the ongoing fiscal pressures facing the public sector, all of the above will be informed by our Public Service Reform obligations, working to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the Agency.

Review of the Effectiveness of Internal control

As Accountable Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of Education Scotland's governance framework, including the system of internal control. The system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve our policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

My review has been informed by:

- My discussions with the previous Interim Chief Executive;
- Regular discussions with my Leadership Team, including individual 1-2-1s, coupled with formal, written assurances from Leadership Team members about the operation and effectiveness of internal controls in the areas for which they are responsible;
- The regular review of and discussion of risks and internal controls at Leadership Team, Advisory Board, Audit and Risk Committee, Support and Improvement Board and the Inspectorate Board;
- Updates and assurances provided by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee coupled with the views of all the Audit and Risk Committee on the Agency's assurance arrangements;
- The opinions of internal and external audit on the quality of the systems of governance, management and risk control;
- Regular formal monitoring of the Education Scotland risk register, management information reports and formal budget monitoring reports; and
- Periodic staff surveys.

On the basis of these assurances, I can confirm that reasonable systems of governance, risk management and internal control, consistent with the requirements of the Scottish

Public Finance Manual, have been developed and were operational over the year ended 31 March 2026 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts.

Remuneration and Staff Report for the year ended 31 March 2026

Remuneration Policy

The remuneration of senior civil servants (SCS) is set in accordance with the Civil Service Management Code and with independent advice from the Review Body on Senior Salaries. In reaching its recommendations, the Review Body has regard to the following considerations:

- the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people to exercise their different responsibilities;
- regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;
- government policies for improving the public services including the requirement on departments to meet the output targets for the delivery of departmental services;
- the funds available to departments as set out in the Government's departmental expenditure limits; and
- the Government's inflation target.

The Review Body takes account of the evidence it receives about wider economic considerations and the affordability of its recommendations.

Further information about the work of the Review Body can be found at Office for the Pay Review Bodies.

SCS pay is reserved and decisions regarding pay levels and pay awards are in line with the UK SCS pay and performance framework and rules. Scottish Ministers provide governance oversight to support alignment with the Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy.

The remuneration of staff below senior civil service level is determined by the Scottish Government. In determining policy, account is taken of the need for pay to be set at a level which will ensure the recruitment, retention and motivation of staff. Also taken into account is the Government's policy on the Civil Service and public sector pay and the need to observe public spending controls.

Education Scotland sets the remuneration of Non-Executive Board Members taking into account their roles and responsibilities and remuneration levels for comparable public appointments.

Service Contracts

The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Recruitment Principles published by the Civil Service Commission specify the circumstances when appointments may be made otherwise.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commission can be found at www.civilservicecommission.org.uk

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Advisory Board of Education Scotland.

The information disclosed in the Board Remuneration table on page 58-60, the Pension Entitlements table on page 61, the Percentiles tables and Settlement Agreement on page 64, the Staffing Resources tables on page 66 (with the exception of analysis of employees by gender) and exit packages on page 68 have been audited by Audit Scotland. The other sections of the remuneration report were reviewed by Audit Scotland to ensure that they are consistent with the Financial Statements.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance related pay and benefits in kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Board remuneration

Officials	Salary (£'000)		Pension benefits (to nearest £1000)[1]		Total (£'000)	
	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25
Gillian Hamilton Interim Chief Executive (to 29 Aug 2025)	70-75 FTE 105-110	105-110	17	42	90-95 FTE 125-130	150-155
Janie McManus Interim Chief Inspector (to 3 Nov 2025)	55-60 FTE 95-100	95-100	17	64	70-75 FTE 115-120	150-160
Ollie Bray Strategic Director	95-100	90-95	38	37	135-140	130-135
David Gregory Interim Strategic Director	90-95	90-95	17	22	105-110	110-115
Gill Ritchie Interim Strategic Director	95-100	90-95	46	37	140-145	130-135
Patricia Watson Interim Strategic Director	55-60 FTE 95-100	55-60 FTE 90-95	23	20	80-85 FTE 115-120	75-80 FTE 110-115

Robert Strachan Interim Strategic Director	95-100	70-75 FTE 90-95	38	16	135-140	90-95 FTE 110-115
Lisa Bird Interim Chief Executive (from 3 Nov 2025)	40-45 FTE 110-115	-	28	-	70-75 FTE 135-140	-
Graeme Logan Interim Chief Executive from 8 Sept 2025 until 3 Nov 2025 and then Interim Chief Inspector (to 30 Mar 2026).	70-75 FTE 120-125	-	35	-	105-110 FTE 155-160	-
Ruth Binks Chief Inspector (from 30 Mar 2026)	0-5 FTE 160-165	-	-	-	0-5 FTE 160-165	-
John Fyffe Non Exec Board Member (to 11 Feb 2025)	-	5-10	-	-	-	5-10
David Gemmell Non Exec Board Member	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
David Wallace Non Exec Board Member (from 17 Oct 2025)	-	-	-	-	-	-
George Docherty Non Exec Board Member (from 17 Oct 2025)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sam Anson Non Exec Board Member (from 17 Oct 2025)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aileen Ponton Non Exec Board Member and Chair of Advisory Board	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
Lyndsay McRoberts Non Exec Board Member (to 24 July 2025)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Kevin Kelman Non Exec Board Member (to 14 Feb 2025)	-	-	-	-	-	-

- *The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.*
- *The pension calculation service transitioned on the 1st December 2025 to Capita from MyCSP. In agreement with Cabinet Office and National Audit Office, this year's exercise referenced the fact that opening balances in some cases* might not match MyCSP's figures from last year as Capita are unable to state how MyCSP calculated the figures for FY24/25.

Non-Executive Board member positions are fixed term appointments and are non-pensionable.

The actual figures for salaries and performance related pay fall within the bandings quoted above. No performance related payments were made throughout 2025-26.

Accrued pension benefits included in this table for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the legacy scheme for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the relevant legacy scheme for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the Alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

Salary

'Salary' includes; gross salary, overtime, recruitment and retention allowances, private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation. It does not include amounts which are a reimbursement of expenses directly incurred in the performance of an individual's duties. This report is based on accrued payments made by Education Scotland and thus recorded in these accounts.

Benefits in Kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by Education Scotland and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. No benefits in kind were paid in 2025-26.

Bonuses

The Scottish Government suspended non-consolidated bonus payments from 2011-12. No bonus payments were made in 2025-26.

Pension Entitlements

Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/26	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	Cash equivalent transfer value (CETV) at 31/3/26	Cash equivalent transfer value (CETV) at 31/3/25	Real increase in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gillian Hamilton Interim Chief Executive	15-20	0-2.5	291	275	12
Janie McManus Strategic Director	55-60	0-2.5	1,263	1,201	12
Ollie Bray Strategic Director	10-15	0-2.5	152	119	22
David Gregory Interim Strategic Director	50-55	0-2.5	1,069	1,003	6
Gill Ritchie Interim Strategic Director	50-55	2.5-5	925	851	36
Patricia Watson Interim Strategic Director	0-5	0-2.5	73	48	19
Robert Strachan Interim Strategic Director	20-25	0-2.5	379	336	26
Graeme Logan Interim Chief Executive	50-55	0-2.5	772	-	22
Lisa Bird Interim Chief Executive	40-45	0-2.5	854	-	22

No Board members had partnership pension accounts.

Non-Executive Board member positions are non-pensionable.

Civil Service Pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. Before 1 April 2015, the only scheme was the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), which is divided into a few different sections – classic, premium, and classic plus provide benefits on a final salary basis, whilst nuvos provides benefits on a career average basis. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or alpha, which provides benefits on a career average basis. All newly appointed civil servants, and the majority of those already in service, joined the new scheme.

The PCSPS and alpha are unfunded statutory schemes. Employees and employers make contributions (employee contributions range between 4.6% and 8.05%, depending on salary). The balance of the cost of benefits in payment is met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions in payment are increased annually in line with the Pensions Increase legislation. Instead of the defined benefit arrangements, employees may opt for a defined contribution pension with an employer contribution, the partnership pension account.

In alpha, pension builds up at a rate of 2.32% of pensionable earnings each year, and the total amount accrued is adjusted annually in line with a rate set by HM Treasury. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004. All members who switched to alpha from the PCSPS had their PCSPS benefits 'banked', with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave alpha.

The accrued pensions shown in this report are the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over normal pension age. Normal pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium, and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of alpha. The pension figures in this report show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where a member has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha, the figures show the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes but note that the constituent parts of that pension may be payable from different ages.

When the Government introduced new public service pension schemes in 2015, there were transitional arrangements which treated existing scheme members differently based on their age. Older members of the PCSPS remained in that scheme, rather than moving to alpha. In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional arrangements in the public service pension schemes unlawfully discriminated against younger members (the "McCloud judgment").

As a result, steps are being taken to remedy those 2015 reforms, making the pension scheme provisions fair to all members. The Public Service Pensions Remedy is made up of two parts. The first part closed the PCSPS on 31 March 2022, with all active members becoming members of alpha from 1 April 2022. The second part removes the age discrimination for the remedy period, between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, by moving the membership of eligible members during this period back into the PCSPS on 1 October 2023.

The accrued pension benefits, Cash Equivalent Transfer Value and single total figure of remuneration reported for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the PCSPS for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the PCSPS for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

The partnership pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal & General Master trust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute but, where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost.

CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Compensation for Loss of Office

No employees left under compulsory early retirement terms in the year 2025-26 (2024-25 Nil). No employees left under voluntary exit terms in the year 2025-26 (2024-25 Nil).

Settlement Agreements

There was one settlement agreement in 2025-26 (2024-25 Nil). Details are provided in the table below.

Number of Settlement Agreements	FY25/26 (£)
1	0 – 25,000

Fair Pay Disclosures

Education Scotland staff are Scottish Government employees and are paid in accordance with the Scottish Budget 2025 to 2026: public sector pay policy - gov.scot. The pay policy sets out a multi-year framework from 2025-26 to 2027-28.

	FY25/26 (£)	FY24/25 (£)	Movement
Range of Staff Remuneration	26,245 to 110k – 115k	25,235 to 105k - 110k	n/a
Highest Earning Director Remuneration	110k – 115k	105k - 110k	5%
Average Remuneration (excludes highest paid director)	69,043	66,110	4%

	FY25/26 (£)	FY24/25 (£)	Movement
Median Salary	74,820	71,942	4%
Ratio to highest paid Director	1.5	1.5	
25 percentile salary	47,730	49,472	4%
Ratio to highest paid Director	2.4	2.2	
75 percentile salary	91,403	85,964	6%
Ratio to highest paid Director	1.2	1.3	

The highest paid director was the Chief Executive and banded remuneration was £110k-£115k (2024-25, £105k-£110k). This was 1.5 times (2024-2025, 1.5) the median remuneration of the workforce overall. The equivalent remuneration in the Scottish Government was £205k-£210k (2024-25 £205k-£210k) which was 3.6 times (2024-25 4.0) the median remuneration of £57,151 (2024-25, £52,231).

In 2025-26, no employees (2024-25, 0) received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director. Remuneration ranged from £26,245 to banded remuneration of £110k-£115k. (2024-25, £25,235 to banded remuneration of £105k-£110k). Average remuneration for all staff, excluding the Chief Executive's salary, was £69,043 which is an increase of 4.0% from the previous year (2024-25 £66,110).

In 2025-26 the median remuneration of the workforce was £74,820 (2024-25, £71,942). The median salary is the top of the C1 band, as was 2024-25 as a number of staff are at the top of their bands and cannot move up. The median remuneration for 2025-26 is consistent with the pay, reward and progression policies for Education Scotland's employees as a whole.

The salary at the 25 percentile in 2025-26 is the lowest of the 'B3' band pay scale. In 2024-25 is the second highest of the 'B3' band pay scale, indicating an increase of staff recruited at lower pay band in FY25-26.

The salary at the 75 percentile in 2025-26 is at the maximum of the 'C2' pay band which is the same as it was in 2024-25, reflecting a number of 'C2' band staff are at the top of this band and cannot move upwards.

All percentile calculations are based on permanent members of staff and exclude temporary and agency workers as it is not feasible for Education Scotland to obtain the required information.

Staff Report

Staff Resources

The headcount persons employed by gender is shown in the table below:

2025-26	All	Male	Female	Other
Senior Civil Servants	7	*	*	*
Other permanent staff	385	*	*	*
Other staff	23	2	2	19
Total	**415**	**116**	**262**	**37**

The 2025/26 table does not include all staff members and is not comparable with 2024/25 table because of the suppression to prevent individual members of staff being identified. If the total of Male, Female or Other on any line is below five, the figures supplied by Scottish Government is suppressed to prevent the risk of someone calculating specific personal data. Of the seven Senior Civil Servants, four are on the SCS1 pay band and three are on the SCS2 pay band.

2024-25	All	Male	Female	Other
Senior Civil Servants	7	3	4	0
Other permanent staff	366	106	251	9
Other staff	39	9	16	14
Total	**412**	**118**	**271**	**23**

Staff costs	2025-26 £'000			2024-25 £'000
	Permanent Staff	Others	Total	Total
Wages and salaries	25,181	4,213	29,394	25,585
Social security costs	3,460	0	3,460	2,727
Other pension costs	7,299	0	7,299	6,729
Total Net Costs	**35,940**	**4,213**	**40,153**	**35,041**
Other staff costs				
Subscriptions and Memberships	97	0	97	41
Early severance costs	0	0	0	-
Holiday pay accrual	233	0	233	208
Total staff costs	**36,270**	**4,213**	**40,483**	**35,290**

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and the Civil Servant and Other Pension Scheme (CSOPS) – known as “alpha” – are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but Education Scotland is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.

The Scheme Actuary valued the PCSPS as at 31 March 2020 and the rates for 2025-26 are based on this valuation. You can find details in the Civil Servant Pension Scheme Valuation Report

Employers contributions to the PCSPS were 28.97% of pensionable earnings for all salary bands.

The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions usually every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2025-26 to be paid when the member retires and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers’ contributions are paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Contributions are age-related and ranged from 8% to 14.75%.

Total employer contributions to the PCSPS and stakeholder pension schemes were £7,206,977 for 2025-26 (£6,630,236 for 2024-25).

As an Agency of the Scottish Government, all Education Scotland Staff are Scottish Government employees and any existing pension liabilities will be met by the Scottish Government.

Sickness absence

Staff absences due to sickness are managed using Scottish Government guidance. For the 12 month period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, 2,522 working days were lost as a result of sickness absence which equates to 3.06% (2024-25 2,758 days, which equates to 3.47%).

Employees with disabilities

Education Scotland is committed to equality of opportunity for all employees. All disabled applicants who meet the minimum advertised criteria for a job vacancy will be invited to interview. Disabled candidates are guaranteed the chance to be assessed on their abilities in the same way as all applicants. Opportunities are made available equally to disabled members of staff to assist in their career development. Every effort will be made to retain people who become disabled. This may be done through supplying appropriate equipment or offering different work patterns. Education Scotland currently employs 38 members of staff who consider themselves disabled.

Equal opportunities and diversity

As an Agency of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland adheres to the Scottish Government policy on equal opportunities. All staff are treated equally regardless of sex, marital status, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability or religion. Education Scotland is committed to increasing the diversity of staff within the organisation to reflect the people of Scotland, and to valuing positively the different perspectives and skills of all staff and making full use of these in its work.

Employee involvement/consultation and wellbeing

Employees are kept informed about the organisation, its people and business through a range of activities, which includes a staff newsletter, regular face to face briefings with managers and attending events such as all staff conferences.

There is a partnership agreement and regular consultation with representatives of trade unions recognised by the Scottish Government. Staff take part in the Civil Service People Survey and participate in task groups and project teams which contribute to the delivery of corporate initiatives. Further details of the 2025 Civil Service People Survey results can be found on page 23-24.

Education Scotland is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in respect of access to, and selection for learning and development activities in accordance with individual and team development needs, and our core purpose and strategic priorities. All full and part-time staff, including those on non-standard contracts, have access to learning and development as appropriate for successful performance in their respective roles.

Table containing Education Scotland's staff turnover rate can be found on page 24.

Trade union facility time

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 place a requirement on public sector employers to publish information relating to facility time taken by union representatives before 31 July each year. There are no separate arrangements in place for Education Scotland to publish information relating to facilities time and the requirements will be covered within the main Scottish Government Annual Report and Accounts. However, the agency is committed to supporting strong partnership working.

Consultancy

Education Scotland had no expenditure on consultancy services during 2025-26 (2024-25 nil).

Exit Packages

No staff left on voluntary exits terms in 2025-26 (2024-25 nil). The current policy is for no compulsory redundancies.

Redundancy and other departure costs will be paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation Act 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year of departure. Where the Scottish Government, in conjunction with Education Scotland, has agreed early retirements, the additional costs are met by the agency and not the Civil Service pension scheme. Ill health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in this section.

Apprenticeship Levy

The apprenticeship levy, introduced in April 2017, is calculated as 0.5% of the organisation's pay bill minus a levy allowance, and is paid directly by the Scottish Government. Education Scotland was charged £123,413 in 2025-26 (£115,437 for 2024-25) as its share of the levy.

Parliamentary Accountability Report

Fees and charges

Education Scotland follows the guidance outlined in the Scottish Public Finance Manual. Services provided to other bodies are charged at full cost.

Organisation	Service provided	Cost of service	Charge for service
Scottish Funding Council	College review services	£0.668m	£0.668m

The Scottish Funding Council pays Education Scotland for college reviews and reviews of specific subject areas within Scotland's colleges. The charge is set at a level to recover the full costs of providing the service. The income from the Scottish Funding Council was lower this year as the funding received to develop a new tertiary external review cycle in 2024/25 was not replicated in 2025/26.

Losses and special payments

No debts were written off and there were no special payments made.

Regularity of Expenditure

Expenditure and income reported in the financial statements were incurred or applied in accordance with any applicable enactments and guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers, the Budget (Scotland) Act covering the financial year, and sections 4 to 7 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.

Gifts

No gifts of a material value were awarded or received during the year.

Contingent Liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities at 31 March 2026.

Accounts Direction

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with a direction given by Scottish Ministers in accordance with section 19(4) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. The direction is provided at page 93.

Donna McMaster

Chief Executive

Independent auditor's report to Education Scotland, the Auditor General for Scotland and the Scottish Parliament

Reporting on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements in the annual report and accounts of Education Scotland for the year ended 31 March 2026 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. The financial statements comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows, the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2025/26 Government Financial Reporting Manual (the 2025/26 FReM).

In my opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the body's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and of its net expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2025/26 FReM; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Auditor General for Scotland. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I was appointed by the Auditor General on 03 April 2024. My period of appointment is five years, covering 2022/23 to 2026/27. I am independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Non-audit services prohibited by the Ethical Standard were not provided to the body. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern basis of accounting

I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

These conclusions are not intended to, nor do they, provide assurance on the body's current or future financial sustainability. However, I report on the body's arrangements for financial sustainability in a separate Annual Audit Report available from the Audit Scotland website.

Risks of material misstatement

I report in my Annual Audit Report the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement that I identified and my judgements thereon.

Responsibilities of the Accountable Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accountable Officer's Responsibilities, the Accountable Officer is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for such internal control as the Accountable Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Accountable Officer is responsible for using the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention to discontinue the body's operations.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities outlined above to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Procedures include:

- using my understanding of the central government sector to identify that the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers are significant in the context of the body;

- inquiring of the Accountable Officer as to other laws or regulations that may be expected to have a fundamental effect on the operations of the body;
- inquiring of the Accountable Officer concerning the body's policies and procedures regarding compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework;
- discussions among my audit team on the susceptibility of the financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur; and
- considering whether the audit team collectively has the appropriate competence and capabilities to identify or recognise non-compliance with laws and regulations.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the body's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

Irregularities that result from fraud are inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error as fraud may involve collusion, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. The capability of the audit to detect fraud and other irregularities depends on factors such as the skilfulness of the perpetrator, the frequency and extent of manipulation, the degree of collusion involved, the relative size of individual amounts manipulated, and the seniority of those individuals involved.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Reporting on regularity of expenditure and income

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion in all material respects:

- the expenditure and income in the financial statements were incurred or applied in accordance with any applicable enactments and guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers, the Budget (Scotland) Act covering the financial year and sections 4 to 7 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000; and
- the sums paid out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund for the purpose of meeting the expenditure shown in the financial statements were applied in accordance with section 65 of the Scotland Act 1998.

Responsibilities for regularity

The Accountable Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of expenditure and income. In addition to my responsibilities in respect of irregularities explained in the audit of the financial statements section of my report, I am responsible for expressing an opinion on the regularity of expenditure and income in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.

Reporting on other requirements

Opinion prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland on audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report

I have audited the parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report described as audited. In my opinion, the audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report have been properly prepared in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Other information

The Accountable Officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report and accounts. The other information comprises the Performance Report and the Accountability Report excluding the audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report.

My responsibility is to read all the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon except on the Performance Report and Governance Statement to the extent explicitly stated in the following opinions prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland.

Opinions prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland on Performance Report and Governance Statement

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Performance Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers; and

- the information given in the Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Matters on which I am required to report by exception

I am required by the Auditor General for Scotland to report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

In addition to my responsibilities for the annual report and accounts, my conclusions on the wider scope responsibilities specified in the Code of Audit Practice are set out in my Annual Audit Report.

Use of my report

This report is made solely to the parties to whom it is addressed in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and for no other purpose. In accordance with paragraph 108 of the Code of Audit Practice, I do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

Tommy Yule, FCPFA
Senior Audit Manager
Audit Scotland
4th Floor, South Suite
The Athenaeum Building
8 Nelson Mandela Place,
Glasgow
G2 1BT

Annual Accounts

Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for year ended 31 March 2026

	Notes	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Operating Income	4	(751)	(1,086)
Other Income	4	(247)	(395)
Total Income		**(998)**	**(1,481)**
Staff costs	2	40,483	35,290
Purchase of goods and services	3.1	8,724	8,975
Depreciation and impairment charges	5 and 6	2,645	2,662
Grant payments	3.2	528	819
Provisions	3.2	2	19
Other Operating expenditure	3.2	43	41
Total Expenditure		**52,425**	**47,806**
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2026		**51,427**	**46,325**

The notes on pages 79-92 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2026

	Notes	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Non-Current Assets			
Property plant and equipment	5	3,620	4,407
Intangible assets	6	3,819	5,627
Total Non-Current Assets		**7,439**	**10,034**
Current Assets			
Trade receivables	7	0	24
Prepayments	7	410	386
Grant Debtors	7	0	1
Accrued income	7	169	297
Other receivables	7	245	1
Total Current Assets		**824**	**709**
Total Assets		**8,263**	**10,743**
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	(393)	(288)
Accruals and deferred income	9	(6,739)	(6,761)
Provisions	10	(20)	(30)
Lease commitment	9	(860)	(860)
Total Current Liabilities		**(8,012)**	**(7,939)**
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions	10	(1,239)	(1,227)
Lease commitment	9	(2,735)	(4,230)
Total Non-Current Liabilities		**(3,974)**	**(5,457)**
Total Assets less Total Liabilities		**(3,723)**	**(2,653)**
Taxpayer Equity and Other Reserves			
General Fund		(3,723)	(2,653)
Total Taxpayers Equity		**(3,723)**	**(2,653)**

Donna McMaster

Chief Executive

The notes on pages 79-92 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2026

	Notes	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(51,427)	(46,325)
Adjustment for non-cash transactions:			
Depreciation	5,6	2,645	2,662
Audit fee	3.2	43	41
Movements in working capital:			
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	7	(115)	61
Increase/ (Decrease) in trade and other payables	9	(1,412)	3,204
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	10	2	19
Net cash outflow from operating activities		**(50,264)**	**(40,338)**
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(50)	0
Net cash outflow from investing activities		**(50)**	**0**
Cash flows from financing activities			
Funding from Scottish Government		50,314	40,339
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period	8	0	0

The notes on pages 79-92 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2026

		General Fund
	Notes	**£'000**
Balance as at 31 March 2025		(2,653)
Net funding		50,314
Non-cash charges - auditors remuneration	3.2	43
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(51,427)
Balance as at 31 March 2026		**(3,723)**

		General fund
	Notes	**£'000**
Balance as at 31 March 2024		3,292
Net funding		40,339
Non-cash charges - auditors remuneration	3.2	41
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(46,325)
Balance as at 31 March 2025		**(2,653)**

The notes on pages 79-92 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Accounting Policies

In accordance with the Accounts Direction issued by Scottish Ministers under section *19(4) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000*, (reproduced at the end of the notes to the accounts), these financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2025-26 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM). The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of Education Scotland for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by Education Scotland are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

The accounts are prepared using accounting policies and, where necessary, estimation techniques, which are selected as the most appropriate for the purpose of giving a true and fair view in accordance with the principles set out in International Accounting Standard 8: Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements.

1.1 Accounting Convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of non-current assets to fair value as determined by the relevant accounting standard and in accordance with the IFRS based Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM).

1.2 New Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

Education Scotland disclose relevant accounting standards not yet applied and assesses the possible impact that initial application would have on the financial statements.

IFRS 18 (Presentation and disclosure in financial statements) will replace IAS 1 (Presentation of Financial Statements) and is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after the 1 January 2027 in the private sector. The impact of IFRS 18 on the Public Sector is still being assessed, and a decision has not yet been taken on an implementation date.

1.3 Going Concern

The results of the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure derive from operating activities, all of which are continuing, therefore the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

From 1 April 2026, Education Scotland's functions were refocussed. As the national education agency, Education Scotland has a primary focus on the design delivery and ongoing improvement of the curriculum that is taught in schools and settings across the country. The inspectorate function was removed from Education Scotland and a separate independent body called His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) was established on the same date.

Education Scotland continued to deliver its current functions in advance of the establishment of the new bodies to ensure continuity for learners.

1.4 Property, Plant and Equipment

All property, plant and equipment (PPE) assets which have a useful life of more than one year are accounted for as non-current assets, unless they are deemed to be held for sale. PPE assets comprise accommodation finance leases, leasehold improvements, Plant and Equipment and IT equipment. They are capitalised at their cost of acquisition and installation. PPE assets that have short useful lives or low values or both are reported at depreciated historic cost as a proxy for fair value.

The minimum level of capitalisation of a PPE asset is £1,000. Computer equipment includes individual assets whose costs fall below the threshold, but as they are of a similar nature, are grouped together and capitalised.

Education Scotland does not own any land or buildings, however, from 1 April 2022 future lease payments have been recognised as Right of Use (RoU) asset(s) together with a corresponding lease liability in the Statement of Financial Position. Charges for the rental of accommodation are made by depreciating the value of future lease payments.

Subsequent costs which are considered capital are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to Education Scotland and the cost can be measured reliably. The carrying amount of any replaced parts is derecognised. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure during the financial period in which they are incurred.

1.5 Intangible Assets

Intangible Assets, such as ICT Software Licences and ICT Software, which have a useful life of more than one year are accounted for as non–current assets. They are valued at cost of acquisition and installation and are amortised on a straight line basis over the useful life of the asset. Intangible assets are reviewed annually to ensure that the value of the asset is not impaired and that the carrying amount equals the value in use (IAS36).

Intangible assets under development are capitalised at cost of acquisition and installation. An asset under development is classed as operational at the point at which the asset is capable of operating in the manner intended. Amortisation does not begin until the asset comes into use. Future economic benefit has been used as the criteria to assess whether an intangible asset meets the definition and recognition criteria of IAS 38 where assets do not generate income. IAS 38 defines future economic benefit as 'revenue from the sale of products or services, cost savings, or other benefits resulting from the use of the asset by the entity'.

The minimum level of capitalisation for intangible assets is £1,000. Software includes individual assets whose costs fall below the threshold, but as they are of a similar nature, are grouped together and capitalised.

1.6 Depreciation and Amortisation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the valuation of non-current assets by equal instalments over the expected useful lives of the assets concerned. The expected useful lives are as follows:

Leases	The lease term
Leasehold improvements	The shorter of the asset life or remaining lease term
Plant and equipment	5 years
IT equipment	3 years

Intangible assets are amortised over the useful economic life.

Software licences are amortised over the shorter of the term of the licence and the useful economic life.

Depreciation is not charged in the month of acquisition but is charged over the useful economic life and in the month of disposal. Depreciation/ amortisation on assets under development does not begin until the asset comes into use.

1.7 Value Added Tax (VAT)

Education Scotland receives funding from the Scottish Government's Education and Skills Portfolio to meet expenditure incurred, inclusive of VAT. However, in order to comply with Government Accounting Regulations and normal commercial practice, operating costs are stated net of VAT where VAT is recoverable by the agency.

Education Scotland is registered for VAT as part of the Scottish Government, which is responsible for recovering VAT from HM Revenue and Customs on behalf of the agency.

1.8 Short Term Employee Benefits

International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19 requires that organisations recognise a liability when employees provide a service in exchange for a benefit which will be paid at a future date. Education Scotland recognises the cost of annual leave and flexible working time which has been earned but not taken by employees at the end of the year. The cost for the year is based on the annual leave and flexi balances which are carried forward as at 31 March 2026.

1.9 Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme. The defined benefit schemes are unfunded and are non-contributory except in respect of dependents benefits. The agency recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the PCSPS of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS. Relevant disclosures are reported in the Staff Report.

1.10 Operating Income

The main source of operating income is the income received in respect of the service level agreement held with the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC). Income is recognised when the amounts can be reliably measured and services have

been rendered and/or goods dispatched. Where income is received in advance and services have not yet been performed, income is deferred.

1.11 Leases

IFRS 16 (Leases) was implemented on 1 April 2022. The effect of this is to reclassify leases which were previously treated as operating leases, requiring capitalisation of the underlying assets together with a corresponding lease liability in the Statement of Financial Position. From this date leases have been reviewed to determine if they meet the definition of a 'Right of Use' (RoU) asset. Where a lease is recognised as a RoU asset, lease payments are no longer made through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE) and instead are accounted for by charging depreciation on the RoU asset and interest on the liability (See note 11). The budgeting treatment has been updated to reflect the change in accounting.

1.12 Provisions and Contingent Liabilities

IAS 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets applies in full, and in these accounts provisions are made for legal or constructive obligations which are of uncertain timing or amount at the statement of financial position date.
Provisions are made where an event has taken place which gives the agency a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in the year that the agency becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the 31 March 2026 of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Statement of Financial Position. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it becomes less probable that a transfer of economic benefits is required, the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service line.

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the agency a possible obligation whose existence will only by confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events, not wholly within the control of the agency. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either is not probably that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably. Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Statement of Financial Position but are disclosed as a note to the accounts.

1.13 Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgements

The preparation of the accounts requires that judgements, estimates and assumptions are made which affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amount of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. Actual results may differ from these estimates. Information about critical judgements in applying accounting policies that have the most significant effects on the amounts recognised in the accounts is as follows:

Dilapidations

Dilapidation costs are payable when exiting leased accommodation in order to bring the property back to the original state. The provision for the Optima building is based on the estimate provided by the landlord whilst the dilapidation provision for Denholm House is based on an estimate provided by Scottish Government Property Division. Actual costs may differ from these estimates.

Employee Benefit Accrual

Calculation of the employee benefits is based on applying similar pay points within pay bands for each grade of staff. However, individual staff will be at different points on the pay scales and therefore the estimated costs is likely to differ from the cost if calculated at the level of specific staff in post. The calculation is also based on the information within the HR system which captures annual leave and flexi balances. Accuracy of the calculation is dependent on staff updating HR records correctly.

'Right of Use' Property Assets

The calculation for 'Right of Use' assets and liabilities is based on the current estimate of the most likely term of the lease. This will include any lease extensions where these are likely to be exercised. At lease break points Education Scotland may or may not exit the lease and this will be dependent on factors existing at some point in the future. Where the estimated term of the lease changes the calculation for the 'Right of Use' asset will be updated.

1.14 Trade Payables / Receivables

Trade payables are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Trade receivables are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for any impairment. A provision for impairment of trade receivables is made where there is objective evidence Education Scotland will not be able to collect all amounts due under the original terms of the contract.

1.15 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Education Scotland does not hold any cash balances or cash equivalents. The Scottish Government manages cash on behalf of Education Scotland and ensures that sufficient funds are in place to meet any payments due. Balances at the end of the year are retained by the Scottish Government.

1.16 Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of Education Scotland are met through the Estimates process, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with Education Scotland's expected purchase and usage requirements and Education Scotland is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

1.17 New Accounting Standards

All new standards issued and amendments made to existing standards are reviewed by Financial Reporting and Advisory Board (FRAB) for subsequent inclusion in the FReM which is in force for the year in which the changes become applicable.

2. Staff

Total staff costs for the year were £40.483m (2024-25 £35.290m)

Details of staff numbers and costs are provided in the staff report at page 66.

3. Purchase of Goods and Services

3.1 Costs

	2025-26	2024-25
	£'000	£'000
SWAN	595	1,139
Glow	2,992	2,913
Practitioner events	435	122
External advice	57	20
Contractors	1,109	1,284
Travel and Subsistence	1,461	1,425
Training costs	139	114
Reports and publications	39	31
Rent, rates, utilities and maintenance	1,129	1,108
Advertising costs (including recruitment)	6	39
IT maintenance and consumables	581	608
Legal costs	11	32
Telecoms	16	12
Postage	7	4
Stationery	17	6
Copier Rental	10	7
Catering	83	85
Health and Safety	0	8
Books and periodicals	1	0
Other office Expenditure	36	18
	8,724	**8,975**

3.2 Other Operating Expenditure and Non-cash charges

	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Grants	528	819
Audit fee	43	41
Provision created in the year	12	39
Provision utilised in year	(10)	0
Provision written back	0	(20)
	573	**879**
Total (3.1 and 3.2)	**9,297**	**9,854**

4. Income

	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
SFC Income	668	930
SWAN reimbursements for additional services	83	156
Total Operating Income	**751**	**1,086**
The Wood Foundation	143	219
Accommodation receipts	91	111
Other income	13	65
Total Other Income	**247**	**395**
Total Income	**998**	**1,481**

The largest source of income received is from the Scottish Funding Council for services provided under a Service Level Agreement. The SLA sets out Education Scotland's responsibilities for undertaking external review of colleges, reporting on specific areas and themes, as well as professional support and improvement activities. The aim is to recover the full cost of carrying out these activities. Costs are recovered by charging the full cost for each day spent carrying out SLA work.

Education Scotland arranges for additional services to be provided under the SWAN contract at the request of Local Authorities and the costs of the additional services are recharged.

Accommodation receipts are now shown in a separate line due to the change in accounting policy for leases.

5. Property plant and equipment

Cost	Right of Use Office Accommodation £000	Leasehold Improvements £000	Plant and Equipment £000	IT systems £000	Total £000
At 1 April 2025	**6,780**	**7**	**8**	**365**	**7,160**
Additions	0	0	0	50	**50**
Disposals	0	0	0	(32)	**(32)**
At 31 March 2026	**6,780**	**7**	**8**	**383**	**7,178**
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2025	**2,428**	**5**	**6**	**314**	**2,753**
Charge for year	809	1	1	25	**836**
Disposals	0	0	0	(31)	**(31)**
At 31 March 2026	**3,237**	**6**	**7**	**308**	**3,558**
Net Book Value					
At 31 March 2026	3,543	1	1	75	3,620
At 31 March 2025	4,352	2	2	51	4,407

Cost	Right of Use Office Accommodation £000	Leasehold Improvements £000	Plant and Equipment £000	IT systems £000	Total £000
At 1 April 2024	**6,780**	**7**	**8**	**386**	**7,181**
Additions	0	0	0	0	**0**
Disposals	0	0	0	(21)	**(21)**
At 31 March 2025	**6,780**	**7**	**8**	**365**	**7,160**
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2024	**1,619**	**4**	**5**	**294**	**1,922**
Charge for year	809	1	1	41	**852**
Disposals	0	0	0	(21)	**(21)**
At 31 March 2025	**2,428**	**5**	**6**	**314**	**2,753**
Net Book Value					
At 31 March 2025	4,352	2	2	51	4,407
At 31 March 2024	5,161	3	3	92	5,259

6. Intangible Assets

	Other Software	Total
	£,000	£,000
Cost		
At 1 April 2025	**9,051**	**9,051**
Additions	0	**0**
Disposals	0	**0**
At 31 March 2026	**9,051**	**9,051**
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2025	**3,424**	**3,424**
Charge for year	1,809	1,809
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2026	**5,233**	**5,233**
Net Book Value		
At 31 March 2026	**3,818**	**3,818**
At 31 March 2025	5,627	5,627

	Other Software	Total
	£,000	£,000
Cost		
At 1 April 2024	**9,051**	**9,051**
Additions	0	**0**
Disposals	0	**0**
At 31 March 2025	**9,051**	**9,051**
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2024	1,615	**1,615**
Charge for year	1,809	**1,809**
Disposals	0	**0**
At 31 March 2025	**3,424**	**3,424**
Net Book Value		
At 31 March 2025	5,627	5,627
At 31 March 2024	7,436	7,436

7. Trade receivables, financial and other assets

	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade receivables	0	24
Prepayments	410	386
Grant Debtors	0	1
Accrued income	169	297
Other receivables	245	1
	824	**709**
Central government debtors	20	79
Local government debtors (including schools)	0	8
Other debtors	804	622
	824	**709**

8. Cash and cash equivalents

With the introduction of Oracle on 1 October 2024, Education Scotland was allocated its own bank account to ensure greater transparency over payments and receipts. However, the Scottish Government manages this bank account on behalf of Education Scotland and draws down funds to meet the payments and liabilities which are due. Balances at the end of the year are retained by the Scottish Government and therefore cash and cash equivalent balances as at 31 March 2026 were nil (2024-25 nil).

9. Trade payables and other liabilities

	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade payables	393	288
Accruals	6,739	6,608
Deferred income	0	153
Lease commitment	860	860
	7,992	**7,909**
Central government creditors	329	366
Local government creditors (including schools)	2,077	1,423
Other creditors	5,586	6,120
	7,992	**7,909**

	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Amounts falling due in over one year		
Lease commitment	2,735	4,230
	2,735	**4,230**

10. Provision for liabilities and charges

	Provisions	Total
	£'000	£'000
Balance as at 1 April 2025	**1,257**	**1,257**
Provisions created in year	12	12
Provisions utilised in year	(10)	(10)
Provisions written back	0	0
Balance as at 31 March 2026	**1,259**	**1,259**

	Provisions £'000	Total £'000
Balance as at 1 April 2024	**1,238**	**1,238**
Provisions created in year	39	39
Provisions utilised in year	0	0
Provisions written back	(20)	(20)
Balance as at 31 March 2025	**1,257**	**1,257**

Analysis of timings of provisions

	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Payable in one year	20	30
Payable between 2-5 years	581	569
Payable between 6-10 years	583	583
Payable between 11-15 years	75	75
Total	**1,259**	**1,257**

Provisions

The total value of provisions covers the costs of charges or liabilities which expected to be incurred at some point in the future. Education Scotland has created provisions for the dilapidation costs which are due at the end of the accommodation leases for Optima Building, Denholm House and Compass House. This is to cover the costs of returning the accommodation to the landlord in the condition set out in the terms of the lease.

11. Leasing commitments

Education Scotland does not own any land or buildings and leases its office accommodation. IFRS 16 (Leases) has been applied from 1 April 2022 and the effect of this is to reclassify leases which were previously treated as operating leases, requiring capitalisation of the underlying assets.

Within Education Scotland's accounts, lease payments for 'Right of Use' assets are no longer made though the Statement of Comprehensive net Expenditure (SoCNE) and instead future lease payments are recognised as a Right of Use (RoU) asset(s) together with a corresponding lease liability in the Statement of Financial Position. Charges for the rental of accommodation are made by depreciating the value of future lease payments.

Education Scotland uses office space within Optima (Glasgow), Denholm House (Livingston), Compass House (Dundee), Longman House (Inverness) and Huntly Street (Aberdeen). Each of the leases has been reviewed to confirm whether or not the terms of the lease reflect a 'Right of Use' asset.

Optima and Denholm House have been classified as conferring 'Right of Use' status. However, for the other accommodation Education Scotland has been allocated a percentage share of the space and not a designated area which is within the organisation's control. Therefore Compass House, Longman House and Huntly Street continue to be treated as operating leases.

At 31 March 2026, Education Scotland was committed to making the following cash payments in respect of building leases.

	2025-26 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Buildings		
Not later than one year	860	860
Later than one and not later than five years	2,558	3,395
Later than five years	149	1,018
Total Present Value of obligations	**3,567**	**5,273**

12. Related party transactions

Education Scotland is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government Education and Skills Portfolio, which is therefore regarded as a related party. During the year, Education Scotland had a number of material transactions with the Scottish Government. In addition, Education Scotland has had a small number of various material transactions with other Government Departments and other central Government bodies, such as the Scottish Funding Council. Further information on the agreement with the Scottish Funding Council is at the Parliamentary Accountability Report.

Education Scotland hosts the Community Learning and Development Standards Council. The CLD Standards Council aims to govern itself and manage its own business as a professional body, on the basis of a Framework Agreement with Education Scotland, and carry out the remit set for it by Scottish Ministers.

No board member, key manager or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions with Education Scotland during the year. A Register of Interests for Non-Executive Board Members is published on Education Scotland's website.

Total remuneration paid to senior management is shown in the remuneration report at page 58.

13. Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments as at 31 March 2026 (31 March 2025: nil).

14. Contingent Liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities existing at 31 March 2026 (31 March 2025: nil).

15. Losses and special payments

There were no losses and special payments during 2025-26.

16. Post balance sheet events

On 1 April 2026, Education Scotland's functions were refocussed on the design delivery and ongoing improvement of the curriculum that is taught in schools and settings across the country. Inspectorate functions were removed and established as a separate inspectorate body called His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE).

The Accountable Officer authorised these financial statements for issue 15 October 2026.

Education Scotland

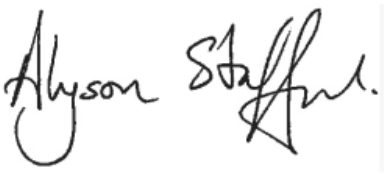
Direction by the Scottish Ministers

1. The Scottish Ministers, in accordance with section *19(4) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000* hereby give the following direction.

2. The statement of accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2012, and subsequent years, shall comply with the accounting principles and disclosure requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) which is in force for the year for which the statement of accounts are prepared.

3. The accounts shall be prepared so as to give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year, and of the state of affairs as at the end of the financial year.

4. This direction shall be reproduced as an appendix to the statement of accounts.



Signed by the authority of the Scottish Ministers

Dated 10 January 2012

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