

Strategic Improvement Priorities Plan over 3-year cycle

Timescale:

Strategic Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1.	Introducing sensory led learning environment for complex learners.	Embedding and extending sensory lead learning environment to sensory learners across the school in appropriate ways.	Sensory curriculum planning and progression.
2.	Raising attainment in Expressive arts and RME (my cultural world)	Raising attainment in social studies (My Historical, My Geographical and My Enterprising world)	Curriculum review on literacy and numeracy.
3. Learning Community priority	Improving Attendance Create a toolkit to improve attendance across the learning community. Looking at Policy, procedures and data analysis	Improving Attendance Implement targeted interventions for identified targeted group which will positively impact attendance.	
4.			

Performance Data - Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2024-2025.

Evidenced from B-Squared Connecting Steps (Benchmarks)



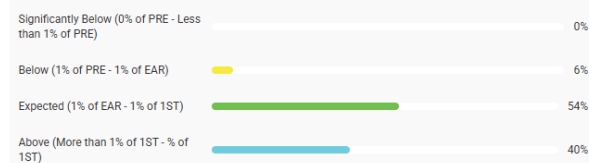
● Significantly Below (0% of PRE - Less than 1% of PRE)

● Below (1% of PRE - 1% of EAR)

● Expected (1% of EAR - 1% of 1ST)

● Above (More than 1% of 1ST - % of 1ST)

Percentage Breakdown



Count Breakdown



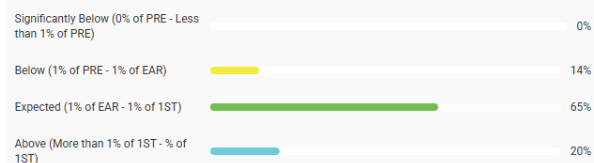
● Significantly Below (0% of PRE - Less than 1% of PRE)

● Below (1% of PRE - 1% of EAR)

● Expected (1% of EAR - 1% of 1ST)

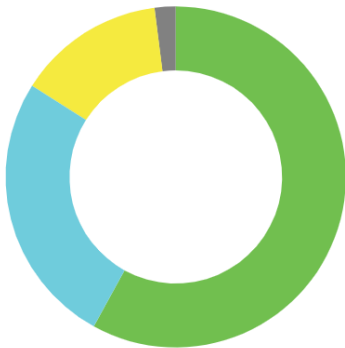
● Above (More than 1% of 1ST - % of 1ST)

Percentage Breakdown



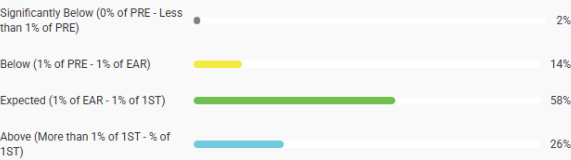
Count Breakdown



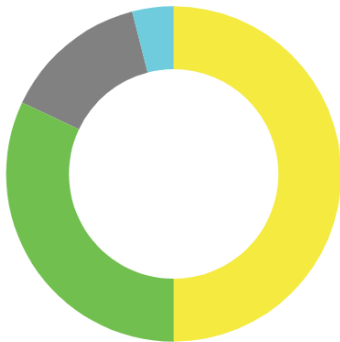


- Significantly Below (0% of PRE - Less than 1% of PRE)
- Below (1% of PRE - 1% of EAR)
- Expected (1% of EAR - 1% of 1ST)
- Above (More than 1% of 1ST - % of 1ST)

Percentage Breakdown

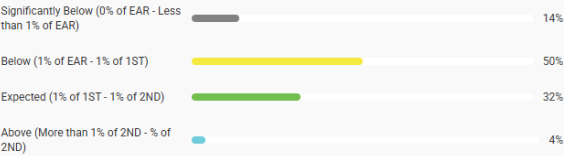


Count Breakdown

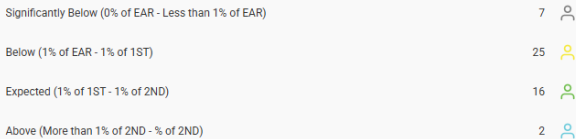


- Significantly Below (0% of EAR - Less than 1% of EAR)
- Below (1% of EAR - 1% of 1ST)
- Expected (1% of 1ST - 1% of 2ND)
- Above (More than 1% of 2ND - % of 2ND)

Percentage Breakdown



Count Breakdown

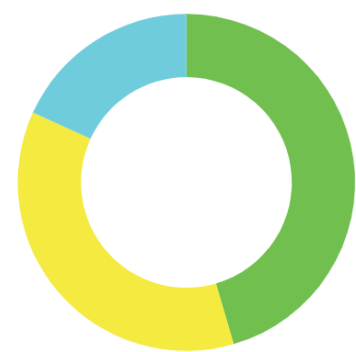


Connecting Steps: Milestones

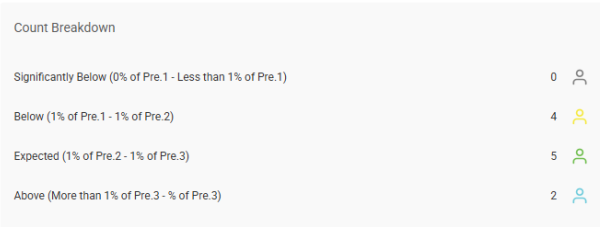
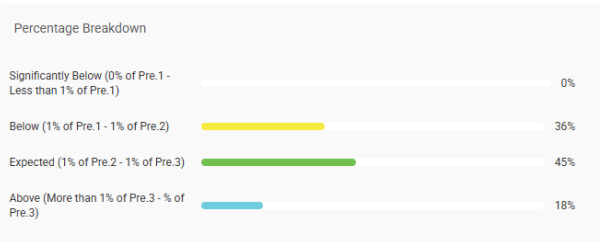
Communication - Attention Skills

Key

Total students 11



- Significantly Below (0% of Pre.1 - Less than 1% of Pre.1)
- Below (1% of Pre.1 - 1% of Pre.2)
- Expected (1% of Pre.2 - 1% of Pre.3)
- Above (More than 1% of Pre.3 - % of Pre.3)



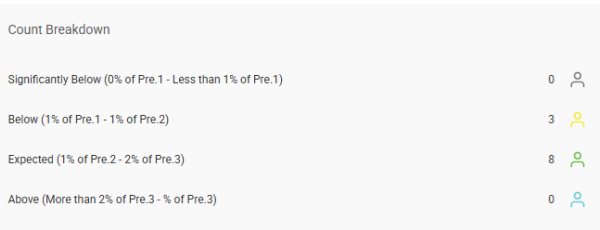
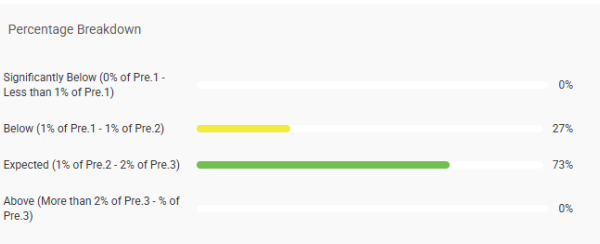
Communication - Interaction

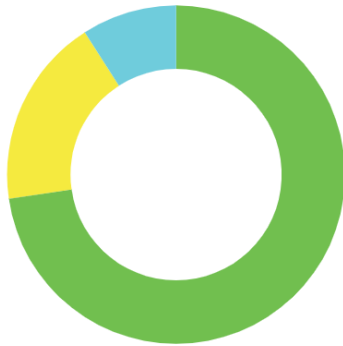
Key

Total students 11

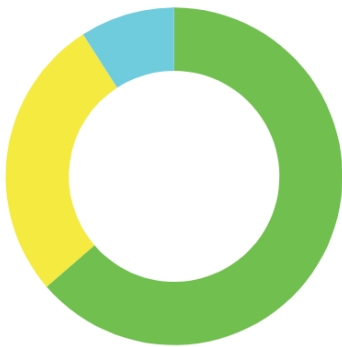
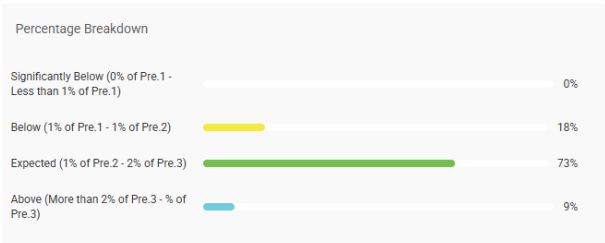


- Significantly Below (0% of Pre.1 - Less than 1% of Pre.1)
- Below (1% of Pre.1 - 1% of Pre.2)
- Expected (1% of Pre.2 - 2% of Pre.3)
- Above (More than 2% of Pre.3 - % of Pre.3)

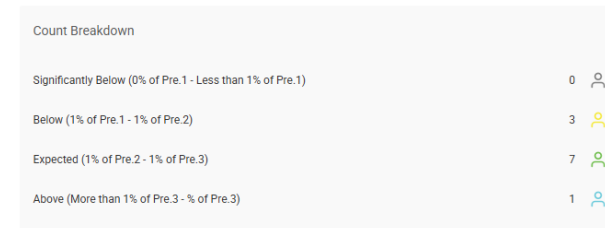
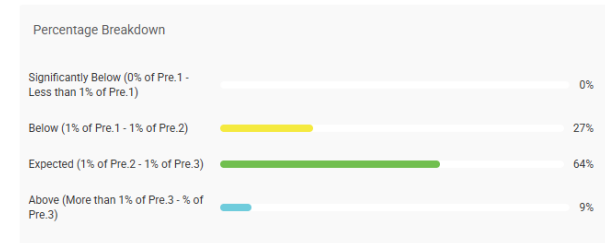




- Significantly Below (0% of Pre.1 - Less than 1% of Pre.1)
- Below (1% of Pre.1 - 1% of Pre.2)
- Expected (1% of Pre.2 - 2% of Pre.3)
- Above (More than 2% of Pre.3 - % of Pre.3)

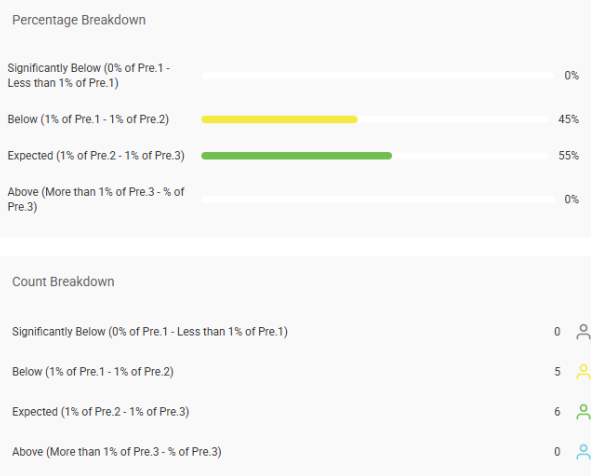


- Significantly Below (0% of Pre.1 - Less than 1% of Pre.1)
- Below (1% of Pre.1 - 1% of Pre.2)
- Expected (1% of Pre.2 - 1% of Pre.3)
- Above (More than 1% of Pre.3 - % of Pre.3)





● Significantly Below (0% of Pre.1 - Less than 1% of Pre.1)
 ● Below (1% of Pre.1 - 1% of Pre.2)
 ● Expected (1% of Pre.2 - 1% of Pre.3)
 ● Above (More than 1% of Pre.3 - % of Pre.3)



Context of school

West Mains School is a Stand-Alone ASN School co-located with Halfmerke Primary School. We specialise in supporting children with complex communication and language differences, often related to extreme ASD, with demand avoidant profiles. The needs of learners placed in West Mains are increasingly more complex and pervasive, and long-term affecting all aspects of life and learning. Many of our learners are pre-intentional, pre-verbal communicators with significant and complex barriers to their learning.

Our beautiful spacious building provides lots of areas where children can engage with learning activities including a sensory room and a soft-play room. Classes have small numbers supported by a class team of a teacher and support staff. We have a nurture suite, known as The Nest/Rainbow Room where children are supported through more complex attachment or social development needs. Our approach has individualised intensive targeted interventions at its heart. There are opportunities for targeted groups to be supported with social/emotional development in a range creative ways and more traditional Nurture Group intervention approaches, as needed. We also build time for all children to access experiences within the Nurture Suite so that all learners value and benefit from the nurture provision.

We have extensive outdoor spaces where children can play and learn. Our dedicated outdoor learning space is called The Willows. Here we have an orchard, and planters in an allotment for vegetables, flowers and sensory plants. We have planted trees from the Woodland Trust to create a Forest for the Future.

In West Mains we ensure that the pupils are at the centre of all we do. Each learner is unique with individual support needs, talents, and interests. Each learner is supported to engage with learning in all aspects of the Curriculum for Excellence, differentiated to meet individual needs. We have high expectations and work to support each pupil to grow and develop within every aspect of the curriculum in their own way. This enables us to ensure their unique achievements and attainments are celebrated. Exciting Interdisciplinary contexts promote meaningful learning, organised around termly themes. These themes focus on a curricular area- My World- with other curricular areas integrated as an Interdisciplinary Learning Theme. Big questions, generated with learners, are used to motivate and inspire learning. This allows deep, rich learning experiences based on pupil interest, and choice. We use a literacy rich environment using stories and rhymes as contexts for learning. Active, play-based learning and Outdoor Learning are widely used and visible in all curricular areas.

Digital technology is used to support learning and communication. In May 2023 we were delighted to be awarded a national Digital Schools Award recognising commitment to digital learning across the curriculum and supporting AAC. The appointment of a Principal Teacher with specific interest and experience in supporting learners through AAC has given opportunity for her to lead initiatives to increase and improve our use of more technology-based AAC, linked to SCERTS. We strive to ensure West Mains is a Total Communication environment with visuals and communication support integrated across the school and all learning. All of this is set within rich nurturing approaches that support children to feel safe and ready to learn and where all behaviour is always treated as communication. Digital resources have been enhanced through successful grant bids and Participatory Budgeting (PEF). We have purchased a class VR set and programmable resources, such as Marty the Robot to enhance digital learning across the school.

We value the importance of family engagement with all aspects of West Mains and learning working to provide opportunities for families to partner with us in supporting pupils to be the best that they can be. We have a very active and engaged Parent Council, who support the work of the school very effectively. With the support of the Parent Council, we are developing effective and supportive links with the local community and businesses.

West Mains is part of Calderglen Learning Community, and we have developed strong links with other local schools, particularly those with specialist ASN provision, and the stand-alone ASN primary schools in South Lanarkshire. Our Peer School Review Group consists of West Mains School, Greenburn School, Victoria Park School and Hamilton School for the Deaf. West Mains School is the focus for the Peer School Review for 2025-26. (See appendix)

Improvement Planning and Standards and Quality Reporting for 2025/2026

Priority 1: Introducing Sensory Learning Environments for Complex Learners.

<p><u>NIF Priority (select from drop down menus)</u> Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education</p> <p><u>NIF Outcome</u> Inclusive and relevant curriculum and assessment Improving relationships, behaviour and attendance</p>	<p><u>SLC Priority (select from drop down menus)</u> Ensure inclusion, equity and equality are at the heart of what we do</p> <p>Provide a rich and stimulating curriculum that helps raise standards in literacy and numeracy</p>	<p><u>SLC Stretch Aims</u> <u>Choose an item.</u> ACEL Primary – literacy – P1, P4 & P7 combined</p>	<p><u>HGIOS?4 QIs (select from drop down menus)</u> 2.2 Curriculum 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 1.3 Leadership of change</p> <p><u>HGIOELC QIs (select from drop down menus)</u> Choose an item. Choose an item. Choose an item.</p>	
Rationale for strategic priority	Outcome (Intended impact)	Operational activity	Measures	School Lead
<p>Our goal is to establish a flexible, sensory-informed, schematic learning environment that fosters engagement, emotional regulation, and developmental progression through relational, play-based pedagogy.</p> <p>Through this initiative, we aim to improve pupil wellbeing, enhance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By December 25 'The Hive' environment will be established and resourced By December 25 consistent planning documents and templates will be formulated and used across 'The Hive' By April 2026 learning zones are well accessed by all children and provide rich learning experiences By June 2026 confidence in meeting a sensory curriculum has increased for all staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up 4 learning Zones in 'The Hive': Discovery Zone, Creative Zone, Social Zone and Motor Skills Zone. Resource each area Ensure consistent use of AAC, visuals and objects of reference across 'The Hive' Establish clear planning, engagement and progression systems and documentation to enable rich learning experiences within IDL structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional enquiry – 4 children to be targeted, assessed and monitored in engagement. Staff questionnaire for teaching and support staff to be distributed at beginning and end of year with almost all staff reporting increase in motivation, understanding, skills and confidence in addressing sensory curriculum. By June 2026 most support staff have been given opportunity to receive training and lead an intervention to promote attention skills, interaction 	<p><i>DHT</i> <i>HT</i> <i>PT (pef)</i></p>

access to the curriculum, and promote progression in all areas of learning by ensuring our environment is aligned with our pupils' sensory and developmental needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By June 2026 all pupils in 'The Hive' are showing increased engagement, motivation and progression in learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rational documents and information sharing with staff and parents.	<p>and/or making connections to impact communicative intent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By June 2026, The Peer School Review process/evaluation will validate the improvement as 'good' or above.	
Progress and Impact				Next Step(s) and rationale to inform SIP for 2026/2027 or establishment maintenance agenda

Improvement Planning and Standards and Quality Reporting for 2025/2026

Priority 2: Raising Attainment in Expressive Arts and RME (My Cultural World).

<p><u>NIF Priority (select from drop down menus)</u> Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.</p> <p><u>NIF Outcome</u> Inclusive and relevant curriculum and assessment Staff and SLT driving excellent LTA skills, esp. for learners with ASN</p>	<p><u>SLC Priority (select from drop down menus)</u> Provide a rich and stimulating curriculum that helps raise standards in literacy and numeracy</p> <p>Support children and young people to develop their skills for learning, life and work</p>	<p><u>SLC Stretch Aims</u> ACEL Primary – literacy – P1, P4 & P7 combined ACEL Primary – numeracy – P1, P4 & P7 combined</p>	<p><u>HGIOS?4 Qis (select from drop down menus)</u> 2.2 Curriculum 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 3.3 Increasing creativity and employability</p> <p><u>HGIOELC Qis (select from drop down menus)</u> Choose an item. Choose an item. Choose an item.</p>	
Rationale for strategic priority	Outcome (Intended impact)	Operational activity	Measures	School Lead
<p>To create an expressive arts/cultural curriculum that is engaging, accessible, and supportive for all children, fostering their creativity, self-esteem and social/ emotional development.</p> <p>Increased staff confidence to deliver meaningful cultural curricular activities more consistently with increased focus on process rather than product.</p> <p>Build Cultural Capital to shape learners' understanding and exploration of their world-connecting directly with curricular goals especially understanding their world and communication/ language offering rich and diverse experiences to help them understand their community and wider world.</p> <p>Offer joyful and relevant cultural experiences/ activities that contribute to learners' sense of identity and promote expression of pupil voice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By June 2026 consistent planner for 'My Cultural World' will be designed and piloted by all classes By June 2026 teachers will have a clearer understanding of skills and processes for expressive arts and RME. By June 2026 rationale and policy documents completed for Expressive Arts and RME. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and opportunities for CLPL for all staff (possible INSET) SLT to investigate possible learning opportunities for staff. Reflection on SLC skills framework and progression pathways to inform a possible West Mains specific pathway. Budget for sensory and multimedia resources and experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative data from staff indicating increased confidence and understanding of skills, creativity and expression for children with complex learning needs, using elf-evaluation (HGIOS/HGIOASN) All staff will be using consistent approaches and documents for planning and assessment, to embed cultural experiences across the curriculum to support literacy and HWB. Pupils demonstrate increased creativity and confidence in expressing themselves through expressive arts and cultural awareness, through using AAC and staff observation of behaviours. 	<p>DHT HT PT</p>

Progress and Impact	Next Step(s) and rationale to inform SIP for 2026/2027 or establishment maintenance agenda

Improvement Planning and Standards and Quality Reporting for 2025/2026

Priority 3 Caldergleng Learning Community Priority: Attendance

<u>NIF Priority (select from drop down menus)</u> Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education <u>NIF Outcome</u> Improving relationships, behaviour and attendance	<u>SLC Priority (select from drop down menus)</u> Ensure inclusion, equity and equality are at the heart of what we do	<u>SLC Stretch Aims</u> Attendance	<u>HGIOS?4 Qis (select from drop down menus)</u> 2.4 Personalised support 2.5 Family learning 2.7 Partnerships	
Rationale for strategic priority	Outcome (Intended impact)	Operational activity	Measures	School Lead
<p>During session 2024-25, Caldergleng Learning Community schools have engaged in professional dialogue around attendance and punctuality data identifying some commonality which need to be further explored.</p> <p>It has been agreed across Primary, Secondary and ASN sectors that a range of interventions have to be identified and consistently applied in order to have a positive impact on improving attendance and punctuality.</p> <p>In line with the three themes identified within Education Scotland, culture, system and practice, as a Learning Community we are committed to identifying and implementing approaches which reflect the above.</p> <p>During session 2025-26, the learning community head teachers will focus on consistency of approaches to improving children's attendance at school by sharing good practice and further developing a learning community model that supports and challenges each school to improve.</p>	<p>Head Teachers will develop confidence and consistency of approaches, share good practice and analyse data in partnership with learning community schools.</p> <p>The average pupil attendance will increase by 0.5+% for each school. Identified pupils' attendance will demonstrate an increase.</p> <p>Increased awareness of learning community approach to attendance by all stakeholders. Creation of a draft Learning Community Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures.</p>	<p>Collegiately working together using the SLC Attendance Fact Building Tool to analyse trends and identify early warning signs and rigorous tracking and monitoring of all absences and punctuality.</p> <p>Head Teachers will meet once per term to analyse attendance data at school and learning community levels to identify priorities for further improvement.</p> <p>Better sharing of cross sectoral information from interventions for attendance leading to meeting our identified outcomes. Engage in small tests of change around attendance interventions to measure effectiveness.</p>	<p>All Head Teachers and School Senior Leadership Teams report increased confidence in using the SLC Attendance Fact Building Tool by May 2026. Data will show an increase.</p> <p>Stakeholder views</p> <p>Analysis of attendance of identified groups e.g. Care Experienced, ASN, FME, etc.</p>	HT/SLT Teams

Progress and Impact	Next Step(s) and rationale to inform SIP for 2026/2027 or establishment maintenance agenda

PEF Improvement Planning and Standards and Quality Reporting for 2025/26

Allocation: £73,985.57

<p>SLC Stretch Aims</p> <p>ACEL Primary – literacy – P1, P4 & P7 combined ACEL Primary – numeracy – P1, P4 & P7 combined Cost of the School Day</p>						
Rationale for PEF / PB Spend	Allocation of PEF / PB spend	Outcome (Intended impact)	Operational activity	Measures	Mid year reviewRAG	End of year reviewRAG
A large proportion of budget has been spent on staffing and has proved positive impact on interventions to support pupils with a wide variety of, particularly nurture interventions. This includes time and opportunity for 1:1 intervention and mentoring and supporting other staff	<p>0.5 class teacher: To enable PT to be out of class £36,969</p> <p>0.4 Principal teacher (Equity) (Teacher) £3,000</p> <p>SSA: 25 hours to enable interventions August-March £14,270</p> <p>SSA Overtime to facilitate Team Meetings and training £1500</p>	<p>DHT and PT non class contact time to facilitate nurture intervention, AAC development and individualised/group support in response to need.</p> <p>Increase in SSA training with impact on skills and confidence</p> <p>Pupil engagement and learning progression</p>	<p>AAC interventions</p> <p>Nurture Interventions</p> <p>Individual and group interventions</p> <p>Responsive to need</p>	SCERTS Traking and monitoring theorgh B-Squared		
Literacy: ongoing support for communication linked to SCERTS and AAC	£4000	Immersive experiences learning within literacy	Responsive to need			
Numeracy resources and technology	£5000	Immersive experiences learning	Responsive to need			

Extra-curricular Activities: Many of our families cite poverty of opportunity when accessing community resources for their ASN children with behaviour driven communication. Rich and meaningful activities to access through the school day.	£5000	A variety of experiences offered Targeted intervention for identified groups with progression evidenced qualitatively Family engagement with extra-curricular activities 50% targeted families attend at least 1 event	Expressive Arts groups. sports events Family clubs Offer opportunity for residential experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gowanbank Outdoor and forest school opportunities Visiting therapists and service providers	Feedback from parents and learners		
HWB: Family engagement, building on the success of parent and child 'clubs' and family workshops this session.	£4000		Responsive to need			
5% Participatory Budget: focus TBC	£3675	TBC by consultation process	TBC by consultation process			
	TOTAL SPEND (incl carry forward)	£73985.57				
Progress and Impact			Next Step(s) and rationale to inform PEF spend session 2026/2027.			

Maintenance Agenda

Key actions	Relevant stakeholder involvement	Timeline for completion
AAC: Increased access to high quality low tech AAC approaches and resources. : More use of TD Snap across the school : AAC solutions for individuals as appropriate and working with Speech and Language Therapist	SLT PT All Staff	June 2026
Play pedagogy across the school, embedding principles and guidelines specific to West Mains.	All Staff	June 2026
Continue to work towards silver Rights Respecting Schools award.	All Staff	June 2026

Evaluation of Quality Indicators

School: West Mains School

Month: June

Year: 2025

Quality Indicator	School Self-Evaluation	Nursery Self-Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Good	Choose an item.
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	Choose an item.
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good	Choose an item.
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement <i>Securing children's progress</i>	Good	Choose an item.



School Name:	West Mains School
Project for the Peer School Review	Sensory-Rich, Schematic Learning Environment for Complex ASN Learners.
Peer Review Team	<p>Christine Shaw: HT West Mains Lisa McMahon: DHT West Mains Kirsty McKeller: HT Victoria Park Maria Neil: HT Greenburn School Lauren Brown: HT HSfD</p> <p>The role of the Peer School Reviewers: Critical Friends: mainly the Peer School Headteachers, but there is scope for other staff to be involved in the process.</p>
What is working well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's physical environment lends itself to the approach It will meet the changing needs of the school population The sensory, play-based curriculum is established. SCERTS informs ASPs often with a focus on Transactional Supports impacting on environmental and staff behavioural changes to support learners more effectively. Collegiate working with planning partners is established and has impacted the quality of planning and beginning to build 'Collaborative Professionalism' (Andy Hargreaves). The opportunity for teachers to lead change within 'Networked Collaboration' between West Mains staff and with colleagues from the Peer School Review and Inclusion. Teaching and support staff are enthusiastic about the approach and inspired and empowered to drive the change through Professional Enquiry. Using Teaching Sprints approach to be investigated as possible structure (prepare, sprint, review) Consistency using AAC, Visuals and routines across the school The approach appears innovative and creative There have been other opportunities to have more child-led approaches in West Mains which have had positive feedback from staff and pupils. There is potential for the approach to have impact in other ASN provisions across SLC.
What are the challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The change is a response to observations of complex learners' behaviour and dysregulation and how this is being supported informally over this session. Reflection on their voice and preferences expressed through behaviours, positive and challenging, has enabled staff to envisage a creative solution based on play-based and sensory rich approaches already in place. The approach will enable us to remove physical barriers and enable learner to explore expanded boundaries. Logistical issues with setting up areas/tracking and monitoring engagement are key considerations How to collect data to inform and reflect on the changes made dynamically and meaningfully and that reflect pupil voice accurately. Contributions to research with Dundee University on extending the
What is preventing you getting to where you wish to be?	



	PLAYFUL Approach to involving ASN Complex learners in change will help inform listening to pupil voice in West Mains in more authentic ways.
Focus for Improvement/Problem	See attached Proposal, Rational, and draft parent leaflet
Key questions for the Review team. (Based on the principles of PSR, 'What are we going to do now? How can we improve on...?')	<p>How will we ensure meaningful and high-quality play-based learning? Discussion points to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSA staff have been selected based on their skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning/training opportunities for all staff How to balance free flow within structure? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One teacher is very knowledgeable and been on SLC year-long course for Play-Pedagogy and has already led whole school input on play pedagogy Another teacher has experience in nursery sector Clear links with SLC Framework for Supporting Children with Complex Needs Possibility of visiting Nurseries to discuss/observe. <p>Suggestions: Halfmerke ELC, Hamilton ELU, Kirkstyles ELU</p>
What is the anticipated outcome of the collaboration? Be specific, measurable gains/changes you expect to see	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff feedback express increased confidence, networked collaborative practice, and empowerment Observation data show pupils are more motivated to engage with learning: how to evidence this; Leuven Scale or another measure? Well-being indicators show reduced incidents of dysregulation for targeted children as part of the professional enquiry. Evidenced with SCERTS? Observational data for focus learners as part of the professional enquiry will evidence a reduction in the number and intensity of dysregulated behaviours. Pupil engagement in learning activities and motivation to explore provocations will indicate most pupils are more engaged: B-Squared assessment data Comparing pre and post feedback almost all staff will express increased confidence and understanding in addressing complex learning needs within play-based schematic approaches Comparing pre and post feedback almost all staff will express how networked collegiate working has been supportive and empowering. Positive parental feedback will indicate most parents of targeted learners understand the benefits of the approach and express that their child's well-being has improved.

Additional Notes / Comments

- Critical Friend visits: early in Autumn term as 'baseline' and then one at mid-point of session and one towards the end. Possible Action Learning Sets approach. Schedule Peer observations: possible peers: Peer School Review HTs/ staff from other Peer School Review schools/ staff in West Mains not part of the pilot. Learning Trios approach (already used within West Mains quality assurance calendar)
- Meetings/dialogue also with QLO/Inclusion (Karen Riley, Liz Burns)
- WTA: 3-4 hours to be agreed, this may be used for some form of play-based sharing event after school. The visits of staff to see/share practice across the peer review group etc would be facilitated within the school day and supported by their own school.

Proposal: Sensory-Rich, Schematic Learning Environment for Complex ASN Learners

West Mains School – The Hive

1. Introduction

This proposal outlines a new educational initiative designed to meet the needs of our most complex and sensory-driven learners, many of whom are working towards the Milestones within the Curriculum for Excellence.

Our goal is to establish a flexible, sensory-informed, schematic learning environment that fosters engagement, emotional regulation, and developmental progression through relational, play-based pedagogy. This initiative will be implemented in our secure mezzanine area, comprising four purpose-designed classroom and open area or "learning zones."

Through this initiative, we aim to improve pupil wellbeing, enhance access to the curriculum, and promote progression in all areas of learning by ensuring our environment is aligned with our pupils' sensory and developmental needs.

2. Rationale

2.1 Meeting Sensory and Developmental Needs

Many of our learners experience significant challenges related to sensory processing, emotional regulation, and social communication. Sensory dysregulation has been shown to inhibit engagement, attention, and participation in learning (Baranek et al., 2006).

By creating a sensory-safe and developmentally appropriate environment, we will enable pupils to access learning in ways that are meaningful and motivating to them. Our approach based on the understanding that emotional and sensory regulation is foundational to learning.

2.2 The Importance of Schematic Learning

Our curriculum will centre around schematic learning opportunities, within a theme to give a real-life context to their learning. These are play-based provocations (e.g. transporting, enveloping, rotation) that align with children's natural learning instincts. These schemas often remain critical in older learners with developmental delay, and engaging with them is essential for cognitive, emotional, and social development—regardless of chronological age.

2.3 Developmentally Appropriate Interventions

We will embed a variety of evidence-informed interventions throughout the zones to support communication, regulation, and engagement, including:

- Intensive Interaction
- Story Massage
- Playboxes
- Music Therapy
- Attention Autism – Bucket Time
- TacPac
- Sensory Hygiene experiences

These approaches foster joint attention, early interaction, and expressive communication in learners with complex needs

3. Proposed Structure and Zones

Within our secure mezzanine area, we will repurpose four classrooms into distinct yet interconnected Learning Zones. Pupils will belong to a Base Class, where they begin and end their day with an identified teacher and consistent team of key staff. Other appropriate 'sharing together times' may be incorporated through the day in response to needs. This structure offers emotional safety, continuity, and predictability, while allowing Other appropriate 'sharing together times' may be incorporated through the day in response to needs autonomy and choice during the day. Pupils will move flexibly across the zones, guided by staff and their individual interests, sensory needs, and developmental goals.

3.1 Zone Overview

a. Discovery Zone

- Focus: STEM exploration (sciences, technology, engineering, maths)
- Features: Hands-on, sensory-rich experiments; cause and effect play; light and shadow exploration and other exciting provocations to explore and learn through,
- Purpose: Foster curiosity, early inquiry, sensory integration, and problem-solving

b. Creative Zone

- Focus: Expressive Arts (art, music, drama) RME
- Features: Sensory art materials, musical instruments, performance spaces
- Purpose: Support emotional expression, communication, imagination, and sensory experimentation and regulation

c. Social Zone

- Focus: Literacy, stories, language/communication, role-play, life skills, and Social Studies
- Features: Sensory story-telling, puppet play, cooking and eating activities
- Purpose: Address sensory aversions (e.g. food textures), encourage communication, literacy, and independence, through Literacy-rich experiences.

d. Motor Skills Zone

- Focus: Gross and fine motor development, HWB

- Features: Climbing equipment, sensory circuit, soft play, fidget tools, fine motor stations
- Purpose: Support self-regulation through movement, sensory input, improve physical coordination and motor planning

4. Educational Outcomes and Benefits

This zoned model supports learners in working towards Curriculum for Excellence Milestones across all four capacities:

- Successful Learners: Through sensory-regulated, play-based provocations that increase focus and participation.
- Confident Individuals: By enabling autonomy, self-directed play, and successful experiences in their environment.
- Effective Contributors: Through relational learning (Intensive Interaction) and communication-building activities, including AAC
- Responsible Citizens: By supporting engagement with the wider world and personal well-being through planned community access.

4.1 Sensory Regulation as a Foundation for Learning

Evidence indicates that sensory regulation precedes cognitive engagement. When learners' sensory needs are met, their capacity for interaction, learning, and emotional stability increases (Dunn, 2001). Creating an environment that honours pupils' sensory preferences helps them transition more easily between states of alertness and calm are essential for successful learning experiences.

5. Community Engagement

In line with our commitment to inclusion and real-world learning, we will provide supported access to community experiences, including sensory-friendly outings to parks, shops, and public spaces. This supports our learners to generalise skills, reduce anxiety around transitions, and increase confidence in the wider world.

6. Evaluation and Next Steps

We will evaluate the success of this initiative through:

- Ongoing observation and evidence gathering through B-Squared and Evisense
- Milestone and Benchmarks tracking and progress monitoring
- Feedback from learners using creative and playful approaches, families, and staff
- Engagement levels and pupil wellbeing indicators

We intend to involve families in the journey, sharing progress through visual diaries, communication tools, and open visits.

7. Conclusion

We believe this initiative is a forward-thinking, inclusive model of education that prioritises the wellbeing, developmental needs, and dignity of our most complex learners. By offering flexible, sensory-rich schematic learning within a predictable and relational framework, and rich contexts for learning we will provide the best possible environment for our learners to thrive—emotionally, socially, and academically.

Welcome to The Hive!



We are excited to share a new learning space we're developing, within our secure upstairs open area at school, to support our most complex, sensory learners. This new environment, called The Hive, is designed to provide safe, engaging, and sensory-rich spaces that encourage learning through exploration and play.

What is The Hive?

The Hive is a new, learning environment designed to best meet the needs of children who benefit from sensory support and a more flexible, play-based curriculum, within structure and clear overarching themes or topics. Just like in a real hive, each child has a role, and our staff work together to support their needs through collaboration and care.

How Will It Work?





Children will be part of a small, familiar base group with a key teacher and support staff. They will start and finish their day in this base, but during the day, they'll have the opportunity to explore the zones based on their interests and needs. They will also have lots of opportunities to learn in outdoor and community spaces.

Why Is This Important?

Many of our learners have sensory processing needs, and being in the right environment helps them feel calm and ready to learn. The Hive supports children to develop emotional regulation, independence, communication, and curiosity in a way that works for them. Maintaining this within contexts for learning will enable us to support children to experience empowering opportunities to thrive.

What's Inside The Hive?

The Hive will have four exciting zones, each with a special focus:

-  Discovery Zone: Hands-on STEM activities designed to stimulate curiosity using sensory-friendly materials.
-  Creative Zone: Art, music, and drama experiences tailored to each child's sensory needs and interests.
-  Social Zone: Story time, role play, and life skills like cooking and eating, designed to support communication and language learning, with opportunities to experience textures, tastes, and smells in a supportive and calm environment.
-  Motor Skilling Zone: Physical play and movement opportunities to support regulation, balance, and motor skill development.
- Other learning areas, including Soft Play, Sensory Room and our exciting outdoor learning areas.

Looking Beyond the Classroom

We'll also provide supported opportunities to explore the local community, and our amazing outdoor learning spaces, helping our learners build confidence and apply their skills in the wider world.

We're so excited about the possibilities The Hive will offer, and we're looking forward to working together with you to support your child's learning journey.

The Hive Team



At West Mains, we are proud to launch a new initiative designed to better meet the complex and diverse needs of our most sensory-driven learners. These pupils, many of whom are working towards the Milestones within the CfE, require a highly individualised, developmentally appropriate approach to learning that prioritises emotional and sensory regulation, communication, and engagement through play and relational connection.

We are introducing a zoned learning environment within our secure mezzanine space, comprising four distinct but interconnected classrooms and Open Area. Each zone is designed to create provocations for schematic learning, allowing pupils to explore, discover, and make sense of the world through play and enquiry in ways that are developmentally meaningful, regardless of chronological age. These learning zones are intentionally aligned with the needs of our learners' sensory profiles, play preferences, and developmental stages. Areas will be regularly re-designed for immersive experiences in response to children's interests, event, and exciting and creative ideas to engage learners.

The Four Zones: A Purposeful, Sensory-Rich Curriculum

1. Discovery Zone (Sciences, Technologies, engineering, numeracy)

The Discovery Zone will provide highly engaging STEM-based provocations tailored to learners' sensory preferences. Learners will explore cause and effect, prediction, experimentation, and early scientific concepts through tactile, visual, and auditory experiences. Sensory integration within STEM supports regulation and attention while fostering early problem-solving and curiosity: working towards establishing progression through Milestones or Benchmarks and key developmental milestones.

2. Creative Zone (Expressive Arts, RME)

Through art, music, drama, and cultural/religious themes, the Creative Zone will offer learners expressive outlets that support emotional literacy and imagination. Sensory-rich expressive arts not only align with the Milestones' experiences and outcomes but also offer vital opportunities for communication, identity formation, social connectedness and co-regulation with adults.

3. Social Zone (Literacy, Language/Communication, Social Studies)

The Social Zone is designed to gently scaffold experiences in communication, social interaction, and life skills. Using stories, puppetry, sensory-rich role play, life skills and food preparation, this zone is particularly suited to supporting learners who experience challenges with oral-motor sensitivities and texture aversion. This environment is ideal for developing tolerance, communication, and daily living skills through safe and supportive engagement enabling learners to express their unique personality and voice through immersive experiences.

4. Motor Skills Zone (Gross/Fine Motor Development, Health and Well-Being)

This zone will prioritise physical regulation and development of fine and gross motor skills. Access to movement-based sensory input is essential for pupils with sensory processing needs. Providing dedicated space for climbing, bouncing, crawling, and proprioceptive input helps regulate arousal levels, supports self-regulation, and prepares pupils for attention and engagement in other zones.

Pedagogical Foundation and Research-Based Justification

Sensory Regulation as the Foundation of Learning

Research confirms that sensory dysregulation is one of the primary barriers to engagement and learning for autistic learners and other neurodivergent individuals. Pupils who are not appropriately regulated are less likely to engage in joint attention, process language effectively, or participate in planned activities (Baranek et al., 2006). By addressing sensory seeking and sensory avoiding behaviours through predictable, purposefully designed environments, we are enabling learners to reach a state of readiness for interaction and learning.

Schematic Learning and Developmentally Appropriate Play

Our approach is grounded in the understanding that play schemas, such as transporting, enclosing, or rotation, are essential building blocks of cognitive development. For many of our learners, chronological age is not a reliable indicator of cognitive or play development. By centring our curriculum around schematic play provocations, within real-life contexts we ensure learning opportunities are meaningful, functional, and accessible. This developmentally attuned approach honours each child's individual learning trajectory.

Intensive Interaction and Relational Learning

Relational pedagogies such as Intensive Interaction will be embedded across zones to support the development of early communication, social reciprocity, and emotional connection. These approaches are especially beneficial for pupils who are pre-verbal or who communicate through non-

traditional modalities, helping them establish the building blocks of language through joyful shared attention and co-regulation. Using a range of AAC will support communicative intent and promote motivation to communicate and build relationships to meet need and wants, and to express joy.

Evidence-Informed Interventions

We will enrich our zoned curriculum through established therapeutic interventions

:

- Story Massage: Enhances communication and emotional understanding through positive touch and narrative structure.
- Playboxes: Offer one-to-one, child-led engagement using personalised sensory/playful materials.
- Music Therapy: Supports emotional expression, auditory processing, and co-regulation.
- Attention Autism (Bucket Time): Builds shared attention and focus in a fun, motivating way, shown to increase engagement.
- TacPac
- Sensory Hygiene experiences
- SCERTS
- Other interventions dynamically introduced to meet specific needs of identified learners.

Structure and Organisation for Success

Each learner will belong to a Base Class, with a consistent teacher and support team. The base class will provide predictability and nurture at the start and end of the school day, anchoring each child emotionally. During the school day, learners will have supported autonomy to explore the four zones, with adults observing, responding to, and expanding upon their interests and regulatory needs. There may be other times for other more formal ‘together times’ through the day in response to short or long-term need.

This flexible yet structured model allows staff to tune into learners’ sensory, emotional, and communicative cues, offering the right challenge at the right time. In turn, this responsive environment maximises opportunities for engagement, emotional wellbeing, and progress toward individual milestones.

Community Connections

We recognise the importance of preparing learners for life beyond the classroom. Our pupils will have planned, supported access to the local community, including our outdoor learning spaces, parks, shops, and sensory-friendly venues. These outings help generalise skills, build confidence, and expand pupils' sense of their place in the world.

Conclusion

This neuro-affirming initiative reflects our belief that learning begins with regulation, and that every child deserves a curriculum that meets them exactly where they are—developmentally, emotionally, and sensorily. Sensory regulation is central not supplemental: by supporting sensory needs The Hive will provide a pathway for deeper engagement and learning. The choice, autonomy, and flexible routines will enable our learners to thrive in an environment where control and predictability are paired with freedom and agency. Autonomy fosters motivation, safety, and long-term independence. By creating a sensory-smart, play-rich and immersive environment with relationships at the centre, we are laying the foundations for lifelong learning, communication, and wellbeing. With the right supports, our most complex learners can flourish.