



SOUTH EAST IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE
Working together, empowering all, improving outcomes

REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

August 2022-23



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Foreword

As Executive Director of Children, Young People and Partnerships in Midlothian Council and strategic lead for the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC), I am delighted to present the SEIC Regional Improvement Plan for 2022-23. This plan reflects the achievements of session 2021-22, as well as looking ahead to next steps in our collaborative work across the South East.

*In the coming year, regional work will be focussed on shared areas of need and will enable collaboration within and across schools/ELCs from all five partner authorities, with regional teams and a wide range of partners. The new plan continues to embrace our vision of **Working Together, Empowering All, and Improving Outcomes**.*

In this exciting phase of educational change and reform in Scotland, it has never been more important to collaborate with others, to share ideas and solutions and to maximise our resources. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the time to come.

Fiona Robertson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our SEIC RIC vision is to work together, to empower colleagues and help improve outcomes across the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils. This Phase 4 plan includes evaluation of the work that has taken place in 2022-23 and also sets out next steps for session 2022-23. The strategic goals that continue to shape and influence the work of the SEIC plan are: driving high quality learning, teaching and assessment, including the use of digital technologies to enhance learning, and supporting inclusion, equity and wellbeing. In session 2022-23, collaborative working across the region will focus on two shared priority areas:

- **Literacy**
- **Learning pathways and positive destinations**

Delivery of the SEIC work is directed by the Board (Executive Directors, HTs and partners) and is overseen by the Implementation Group (Senior Officers). The priority areas are actioned through the five elements of the SEIC Empowered System (see below). Universal supports are available throughout the session, promoted through local and regional comms and within the SEIC website. The main SEIC supports come in the form of a series of bespoke SEIC 'Connector' support programmes, enabling collaborative learning with a clear focus on improving outcomes for learners. A variety of SEIC Networks provide opportunities for collaboration on common areas of focus and need, and the sharing of approaches, ideas and practice.

SEIC Phase 4 Model



The Empowered System is a unique feature of SEIC and is made up of five key elements, all designed to enable collaboration and to build the capacity of colleagues working in a range of educational settings. Each of the five aspects provide opportunities for leaders, teachers and practitioners in all areas of the system to work together, share practice, and deliver improvement.

Pedagogy Pioneers - high performing practitioners within all sectors sharing practice, resources and building capacity through webinars, Q&A and in school supports

SEIC Associates - leaders across the system contributing to quality improvement processes and providing peer to peer supports

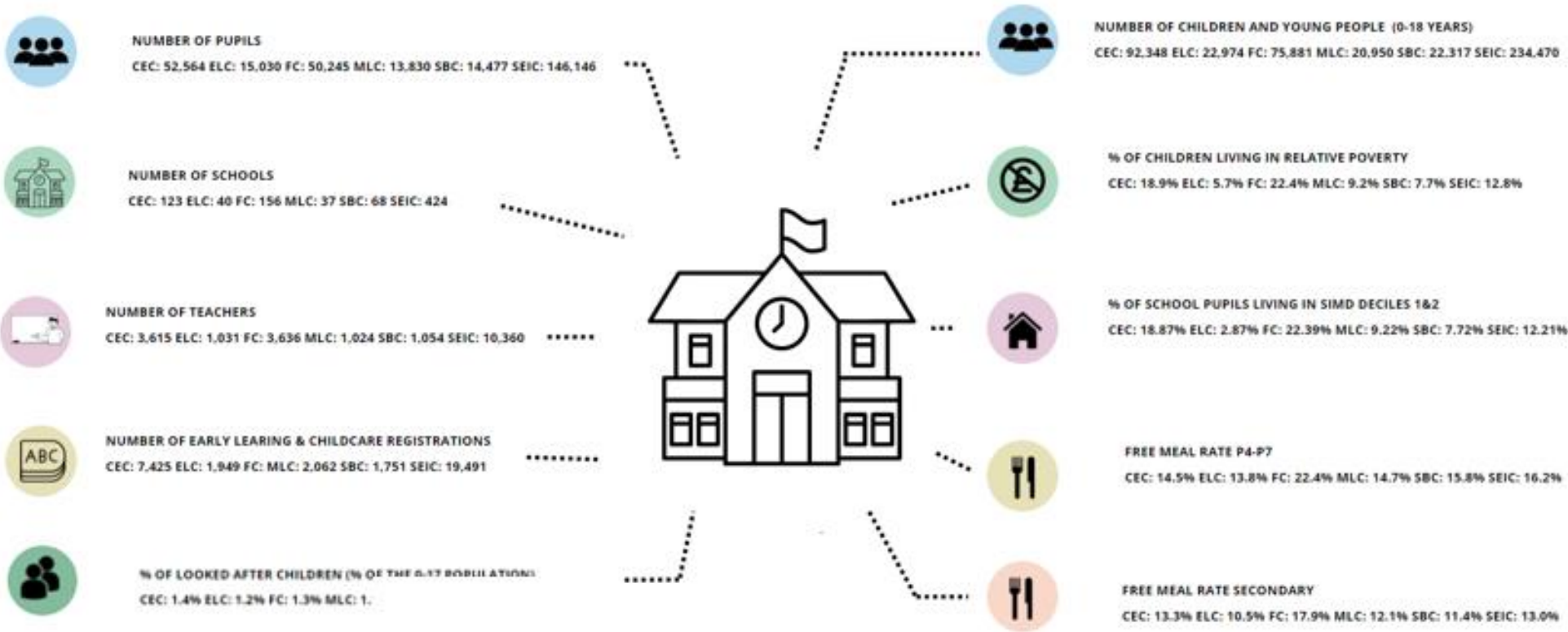
Research Schools/ELCs – settings engaging in supported research to enhance outcomes for children and young people, publishing findings across the SEIC

Improvement Through Partnerships – focussed improvement projects supported by a variety of partners

Learning Schools/ELCs – enabling collaboration across schools/Early Learning & Childcare settings (ELCs), sharing learning from effective practice within settings, supporting other settings where this practice is an area of identified improvement

CONTEXT

The infographic below provides an overview of some key statistics at May 2022, regarding geography, demography, social context and service provision for the South East region. In addition to the challenges recognised in the social context data (for example, SIMD and free school meal registrations), the region has significant groups living with hidden social disadvantage. Rural poverty and a range of multiple interconnected factors are particularly challenging issues.



KEY: CEC – City of Edinburgh Council, ELC – East Lothian Council, FC – Fife Council, MLC – Midlothian Council, SBC – Scottish Borders Council, SEIC – South East Improvement Collaborative

SEIC VISION

Working together, empowering all, improving outcomes

RATIONALE

The rationale behind regional collaboration continues to be a key element in the evolving future of Scottish Education. The aim of all RICs is to provide support for improvement for leaders, teachers and practitioners through teams of professionals drawn largely from local authorities and schools. RICs in Scottish education became operational in January 2018 although some local authorities were formally collaborating before this date. Recent publications and research have highlighted the benefits and the need for collaboration to support our system at all levels, to provide the best possible outcomes for our children and young people. The establishment of RICs was not about creating new formal bodies, but was about developing different ways of working, bringing together capacity from across an area and beyond, to add value through collective efforts.

The South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) recognises that the accountability for improvement remains with each local authority and that SEIC's role is to provide added value through collaboration. By working collaboratively at establishment, local authority and regional level, we believe that we can accelerate progress in agreed priority areas, impacting positively on colleagues working within the region and contributing to improved outcomes for learners. SEIC work takes in account the responsibilities set out in the Education Scotland 'Scottish Attainment Challenge Framework' (March 2022), for all regional improvement collaboratives, in agreeing priorities and collaborative activities.

HOW WE WORK

Through collaboration, the five local authorities agree priorities and delivery mechanisms for the SEIC work, set within a yearly regional improvement plan that reflects and compliments individual local authority planning. The agreed priorities are based on needs within the region and therefore are likely to reflect many school/Early Learning and Childcare improvement plans. Being part of the South East Improvement Collaborative provides a wider system of support and simple ways of finding out about interesting and effective practice across a much wider area, and connecting with a far wider group of colleagues facing similar challenges, with similar hopes and aspirations. Two regional teams, SEIC and Education Scotland's South East Improvement Team (SEIT), alongside a range of partners working within the region, contribute to the range of improvement supports already available to educational settings within their local authorities.



REFLECTING BACK – EVALUATION OF SEIC PLAN 2021-22

In session 2021-22, three SEIC working groups and related networks, delivered improvements relating to the three SEIC strategic goals. The groups and networks involved representatives from all five SEIC local authorities, from a range of partners working in the region, and both the SEIC and SEIT Teams. Progress and impacts relating to the SEIC offers that emerged from networks are detailed below with highlights from the evaluative activity undertaken to evidence impact of improvement activity.

EVALUATION - SEIC Goal 1 – Driving high quality learning, teaching and assessment

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Working Group – This work involved building capacity of trained QAMSOs through delivery of professional learning to over 100 teachers across the region. As part of this, the SEIC Assessment and Moderation Rationale was launched, including a Digital Moderation tool, to over 60 QAMSOs and a further 19 secondary subject networks. Of the QAMSO respondents who rated their level of confidence in being able to support and facilitate learning, teaching, assessment and moderation processes, those who felt fairly or completely confident rose from 38% to 76% as a result of the professional learning.

Creative Learning Network – This work involved the delivery of a Storyline Project to develop skills and confidence in creative and innovative approaches to learning and teaching. 9 schools and 17 practitioners across Primary, Secondary and Special School settings participated, from Scottish Borders, East Lothian, Midlothian and Fife. As a result, there has been increased motivation and engagement in literacy and a 17% increase in pupils achieving literacy outcomes. Feedback from participants was positive, 89% agreeing that their practice has been positively impacted. Also within the session, universal professional learning on Creativity has been delivered to over 800 practitioners and there was an average increase of 24% attendance at the Creative Conversations sessions between June 21 and May 22. This year, the Creative Conversations YouTube channel has been launched and a new Creativity Progression Framework and suite of resources has been created and shared.

Leadership and Professional Learning Network – This work has involved the publication of a comprehensive weekly SEIC update, streamlining and promoting professional learning offers available across the region. As a key element of the SEIC Empowered System, five Research Schools were supported to complete a year-long, whole school professional enquiry to deliver improvements in their settings. In addition, work has been done to transform the SEIC website this session and as part of this, a platform for sharing professional learning from staff in SEIC settings who have participated in various professional learning over the past three years, including Research Schools, has been established.

Literacy Network – This work has involved the delivery of a new SEIC project to improve understanding and develop common approaches to writing at 2nd Level involving colleagues in collegiate planning, sharing of approaches to teaching and assessment, and moderation activities. As part of this work, a bank of professional learning resources and self-evaluation toolkits has been produced. 37 schools across 14 clusters from all 5 SEIC local authorities took part in three professional learning sessions and bespoke supports were provided to individual schools.

Numeracy Network – This work has involved the delivery of the SEIC – I SEE MATHS programme involving four webinars for P4-7 teachers with leadership responsibility for numeracy in schools across all five local authorities. Almost all participants agreed or strongly agreed that their learning from the course would have a positive impact upon the learners they teach. Further, 87% of participants stated that the training had a significant or very significant impact upon them as an education professional.

EVALUATION - SEIC Goal 2 – Supporting inclusion, equity and wellbeing

Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing Working Group – This work involved supporting consistency of practice across SEIC, including alignment of the of 3 national drivers - The Morgan Review, UNCRC & The Promise and their overlapping key themes and recommendations. All local authorities have representatives who have engaged in a set of ‘Reviews, Rights and The Promise’ events that have taken place this session, exploring alignment between the 3 national drivers.

Wellbeing Network – This work has focused on reducing the stigma related to mental health and has involved promoting strategies to support positive emotional health and wellbeing. The SEIC Mental and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Award has been launched across the region.

UNCRC Network - The aim of this work was to raise awareness for whole school/ELC setting communities of their roles in ensuring effective implementation of UNCRC Articles. Practitioners from all local authorities have engaged in sessions to raise awareness of UNCRC and how to effectively implement this in schools/settings. All local authorities now have practitioners trained as trainers in delivering awareness raising session to colleagues within their own LA and have identified UNCRC as an ongoing priority within strategic plans.

Early Years/Pedagogy Network - The aim of this work has been to support high quality play pedagogy across the Early Level. This work has involved the creation of termly Early Level Pedagogy in Practice Pamphlets which have been circulated to early level settings in all local authorities. The pamphlet has been accessed by all types of provider including funded childminders, private providers and school settings including teachers in P1 and P2. In feedback forms received all respondents reported the pamphlet had supported them in improving the quality of play in their setting. In addition, Early Level Pedagogy Pioneer sessions were delivered to practitioners by practitioners in every sector of childcare (childminders, private providers and local authority settings). Bookings for Early level Pedagogy Pioneer webinars was significantly higher than all other areas with between 163 and 250 attendees.

Pedagogy Pioneers - The aim of this work was to empower practitioners to improve pedagogy, through peer to peer support at teacher and practitioner level, sharing innovative and effective practice. All Pedagogy Pioneers delivering sessions reported that the programme had supported the improvement of teacher efficacy and felt empowered as a result of engaging in this work. Practitioners from every sector and from all of the 5 LAs in SEIC have attended Pedagogy Pioneer sharing events. 92% of attendees reported that sessions were useful at some level. This year, the work also involved a bespoke element based on success of previous Pedagogy Pioneers who shared practice relating to play based pedagogy. At the end of every bespoke session, almost all respondents reported that their knowledge and understanding of play pedagogy had improved, the professional reading and support tasks set between sessions had supported their learning, and they would try something different in their setting as a result of their learning to improve play pedagogy. Final comparator audits evidence showed there had been an increase of 22% in confidence in delivering child initiated learning and 27% increase in confidence in assessing and observing. There has been an 80% increase in practitioners implementing teacher initiated learning through play pedagogy in their classroom. 40% in implementing child initiated learning and 33% increase in the use of appropriate assessment and observations methods in play pedagogy.

EVALUATION - SEIC Goal 3 – Using digital technologies to enhance learning

Digital Working Group – This work focused on the creation and delivery of a new model to support improved use of digital technologies to enhance learning. Through engagement with the Digital Schools Award Scotland framework, the SEIC Digital Schools Connector supported 55 schools from across the five local authorities. The Connector model offered monthly professional learning for key staff, drop in and 1-1 sessions to deepen understanding and plan next steps and a range of reflective tools and resources to create a strong framework of support. 88% of participating schools strongly agreed their knowledge had increased or improved due to engagement with the Connector model. 78% strongly agreed practice had been positively impacted. 76% of schools strongly agreed engagement with the Connector had supported school improvement. In terms of ongoing impact, 38% of schools who responded plan to submit evidence to achieve the Digital Schools Award by June 2022, 25% by October 2022 and 38% by December 2022. In addition, the digital work of this session involved colleagues collaborating on shared aspects from the SEIC Digital Needs Analysis, which included sharing strategic approaches to digital, frameworks, skills progressions and expertise.

Digital Network - 29 practitioners across the five local authorities collaborated to share expertise and reflections on how digital tools can enhance learning, teaching and assessment. Feedback using digital tools was identified as a focus aspect across the five local authorities and opportunities to collaborate and share practice were explored.

CLD Network - Connections were made with the DDI (Data Driven Innovation) programme to support family learning. Shared learning opportunities were created between CLD, YouthLink Scotland and teaching practitioners.

SEIC NETWORKS & WORKING GROUPS SURVEY

In session 2021-22, a wide variety of networks met regularly, providing the opportunity to build relationships, to share practice and tackle commonly experienced issues. In May 2022, network members were asked to share what they felt were the benefits of being part of a regional network, as well as their hopes for the networks for session 2022-23.

Key themes emerged from the feedback:

- It was beneficial to meet others with similar roles and responsibilities
- Positive views on the ability to collaborate, to share practice and to find out what's happening in other authorities
- Useful to be able to take part in professional dialogue, to share resources and professional learning opportunities
- Successful collaboration depended on attendance of network members and a clear purpose
- Well organised meetings and structure, with clear tasks and outcomes were key to success, it was not helpful when meetings were too informal
- Hope to continue to collaborate with colleagues from across the region, to identify needs, to work together, and to share approaches and materials

LOOKING AHEAD – SEIC PLAN 2022-23

This session, a series of national papers have been published that have set in motion the educational reform ahead. Key messages that directly shape the SEIC Plan and work ahead include:

Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education, Ken Muir Report, March 2022, principles include

- Article 29 UNCRC underpinning all work - I have the right to an education which develops my personality, respect for others' rights and the environment
- greater coherence and simplification of the policy and support landscape
- a reorientation of resource to provide place-based, responsive, bespoke support for teachers and practitioners
- an enhanced focus on ensuring high quality learning and teaching and increased collaboration among practitioners
- increased trust and confidence between local authorities, schools and national bodies
- greater resourcing and attention placed on ensuring the needs of individual learners are met
- the improved collation, sharing and use of data and intelligence to support continuous improvement

Review of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives, Scottish Government, December 2021

“From this review, there is evidence that RICs are having an impact on developing the skills of school staff, delivery of lessons, skills and consistency around assessment and moderation, leadership and improvement planning skills, collaboration between local authorities, and online learning opportunities for pupils.”

The Scottish Attainment Challenge – Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress, March 2022

“Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICS) continue to bring local authorities together to secure excellence and equity in education – including contributing to the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge – by:

Providing educational improvement support to practitioners through dedicated teams of professionals, drawing on local authority and Education Scotland staff and others;

Providing focus across partners through a joint regional plan and work programme, aligned to the NIF and to regional and local priorities; and

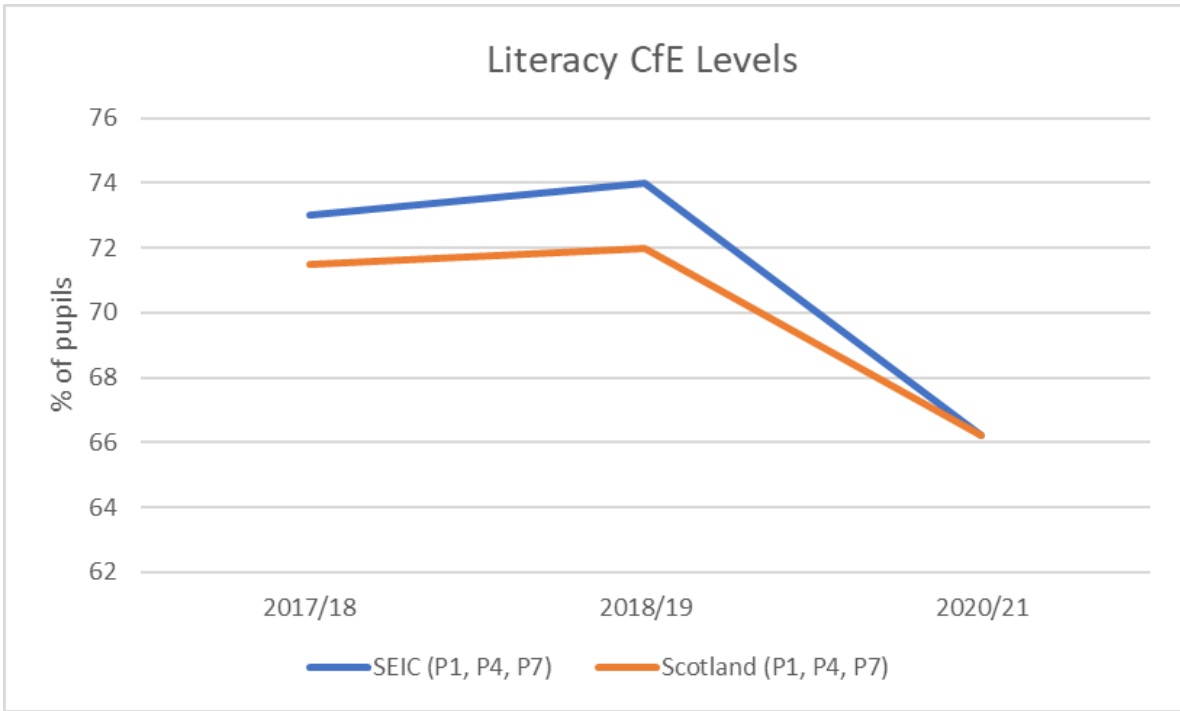
Facilitating and creating the conditions for impactful collaboration working between practitioners, schools and system leaders, including professional learning, innovation and the sharing of best practice.”

Areas of Focus for 2022-23 – CASE FOR CHANGE

Self-evaluation at SEIC level, utilising available data and the direction of local and national policy have provided the basis for collaborative work for session 2022-23. Two key areas of focus have been agreed as shared local area priorities that local authorities have agreed as areas of collaboration across the region: literacy and learning pathways and positive destinations.

LITERACY:

The data below represents pupil performance across the SEIC over the past years. It demonstrates pupils' literacy achievement in P1, P4, & P7 has decreased in recent years. It is important to note that no performance data was collected in year 1 of the global pandemic and the second year of data may not be completely reliable.



Curriculum for Excellence Levels

The trend data for P1, P4 & P7 shows that SEIC has performed slightly below national level in the past years. For 2020/21, Literacy CfE levels for the SEIC region are similar to national level. However, Literacy CfE levels have been impacted from 2018/19 to 2020/21 (74% vs. 66.2%). The data supports the aim of SEIC to increase literacy achievements. Our RIC will add value through building networks and working collaboratively across our RIC and with partners we will further develop more bespoke collaborative opportunities to identify and share effective pedagogical and curricular approaches that can support recovery relating to literacy.

Links to Key NIF Priorities

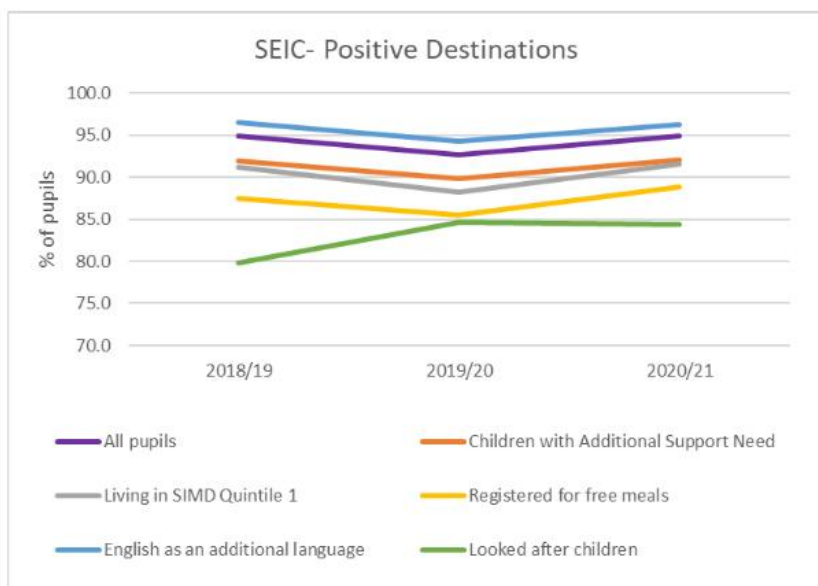
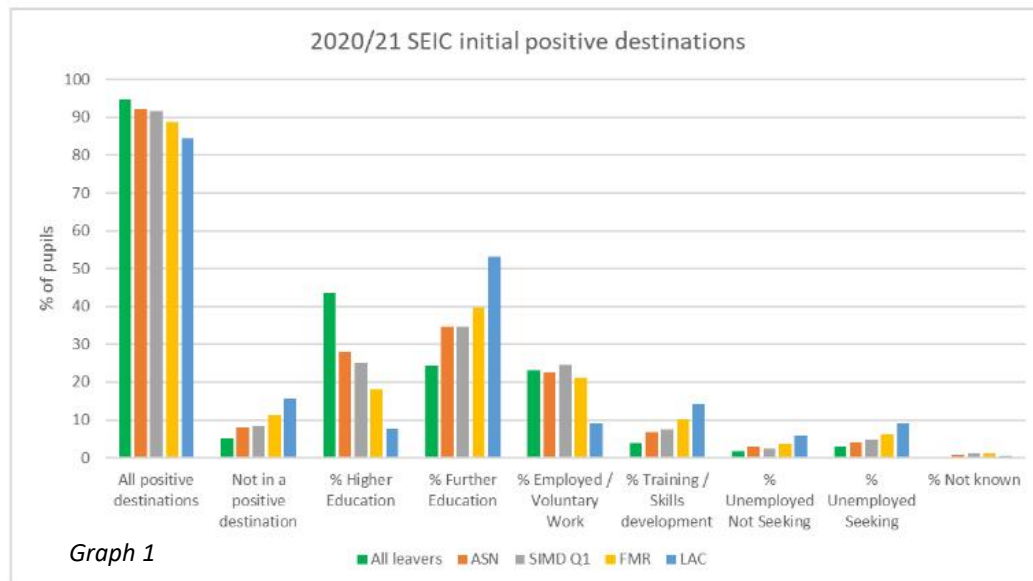
- Teacher & practitioner professionalism
- Curriculum and assessment
- School and ELC improvement
- Performance information
- School and ELC improvement

LEARNING PATHWAYS AND POSITIVE DESTINATIONS:

The data below represents the proportion of school leavers entering a positive destination from schools across the SEIC region.

Graph 1 shows the percentage of 2020/21 school leavers in the SEIC region broken down by initial destinations. The data indicates that the proportion of leavers entering a positive destination is lower for leavers with an additional support need, living in SIMD Q1, registered for free meals, and looked after pupils. However, the proportion of leavers who are unemployed is higher for leavers with an additional support need, living in SIMD Q1, registered for free meals, and looked after pupils.

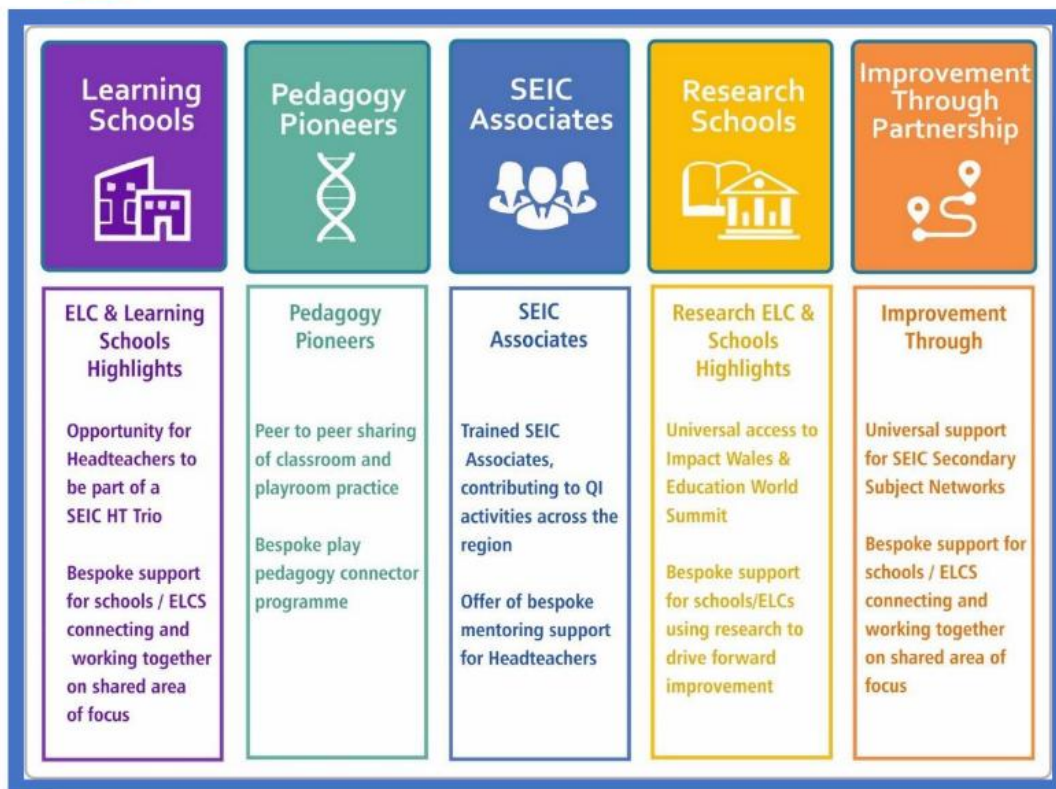
Graph 2 shows the percentage of school leavers entering a positive destination from schools across the SEIC region broken down by groups. The data indicates that the proportion of school leavers entering a positive destination is lower for pupils living in SIMD Quintile 1, registered for free meals, children looked after, and children with additional support needs.



Our RIC will add value by facilitating collaborative working across our RIC and with partner organisations including Education Scotland, colleges, universities, employers and qualification providers, we will support the development of relevant, engaging curricular experiences and pathways that meet the aspirational needs and skills development of all our children and young people, as well as ensuring more consistent approaches to transition that best places them to access high quality sustained, positive destinations in training, employment, Further and Higher Education.

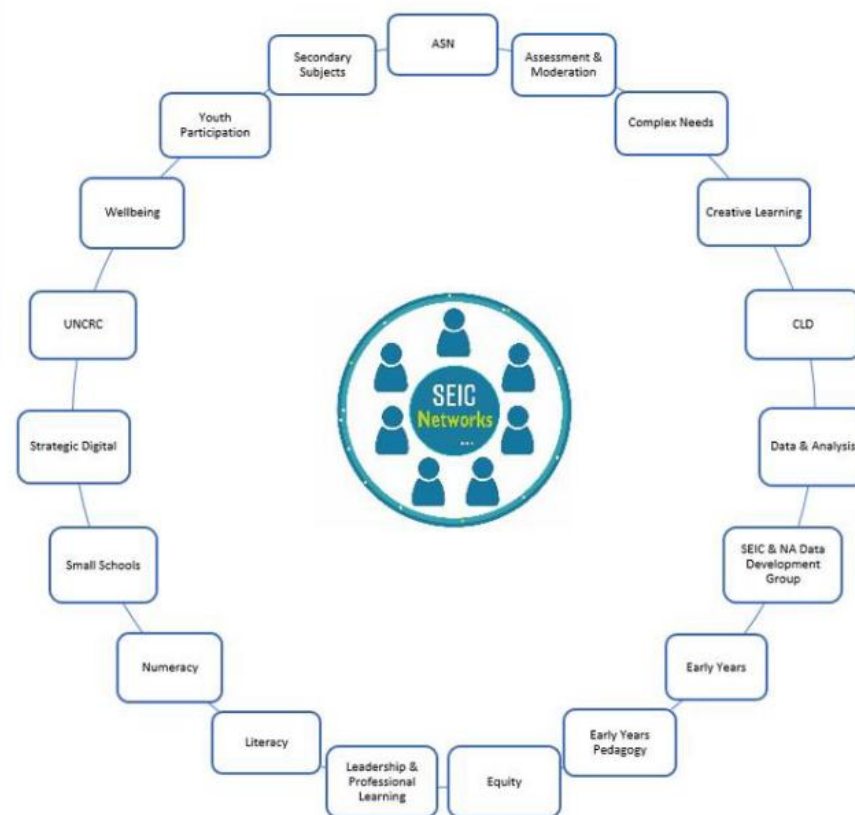
Links to Key NIF Priorities

- Human rights and learners at the centre
- School and ELC Leadership
- Parent/carers involvement and engagement
- Curriculum and assessment
- School and ELC improvement



The Empowered System 2022-23

This enables collaboration, builds capacity and provides opportunities for leaders, teachers and practitioners in all areas of the system to work together, share practice, and deliver improvement.



SEIC Networks 2022-23

SEIC Networks provide opportunities for collaboration on common areas of focus and need, and the sharing of approaches, ideas and practice.

All SEIC networks are self-sustaining which means that they set their own agenda, pace and areas of focus.

Tri Nation Collaboration



Grymuso ysgolion i wella deilliannau i bob dysgwr
Empowering schools to improve outcomes for all learners



A new collaboration across Northern Ireland, the South East of Scotland and Central South Wales has recently been established. A collaborative conference took place in June 2022 with delegates from across all three nations. Sharing of context, practice and approaches relating to recovery and particularly the use of digital technologies to enhance learning, as well as best use of support provisions to support the most vulnerable learners. Further collaboration will take place in 2022-23, building on the strong start to this new relationships across the nations.



SEIC and Northern Alliance Collaborative Data Development Project

This new cross RIC collaboration involves joint working to create the culture and conditions to support the use of data for improvement, and the development of a new data tool that can create a rounder picture of a learner, using live data, resulting in responsive, focused action & supports that lead to improved outcomes.

Data for Improvement:

Context

- understanding our children and young people and where they live

Awareness raising

- of pre-existing information and potential new data sets (e.g. health and wellbeing census)

Correlation

- how the identified data sets correlate with attainment and achievement through linkages with pupil level data, to augment SIMD

Insight

- derive more information by analysing pupil level wellbeing and learning data.

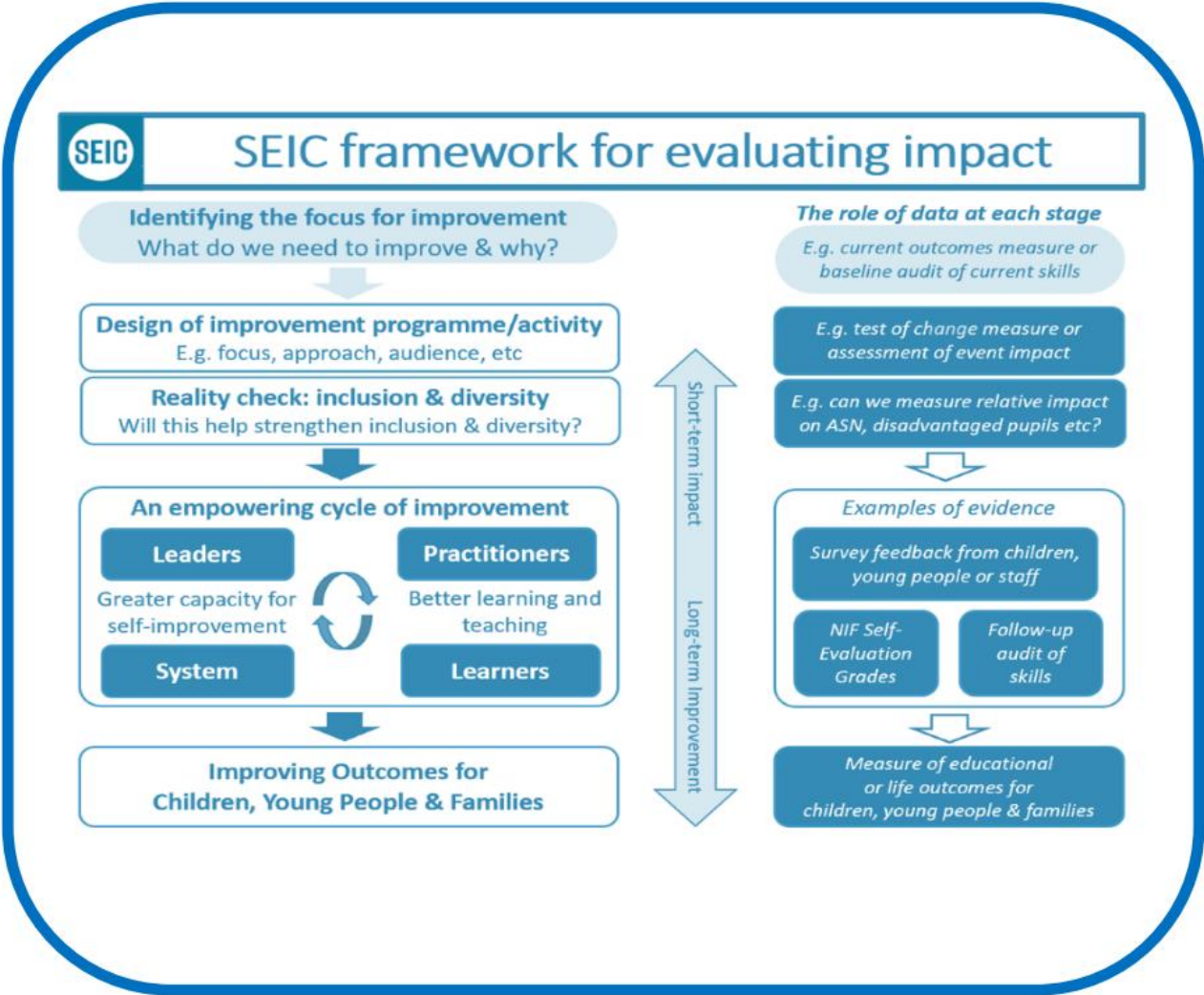
If practitioners had access to the right data, presented at the right level, in the right way, they would be better equipped to apply the most appropriate interventions to get it right for every child.

Measuring Impact

All contributors to the SEIC Plan for 2022-23 will report on progress and impacts on a regular basis, through the 5 Working Group Action plans, reflecting the universal and bespoke supports.

Settings involved in the bespoke supports will identify the specific outcomes they wish to shift by the end of the session and supports will be tailored to help achieve these individual goals. Supports will include effective writing of evaluative text to describe progress and impacts.

Collectively the shifting of outcomes will contribute to the improvements made by individual schools and at local authority level.



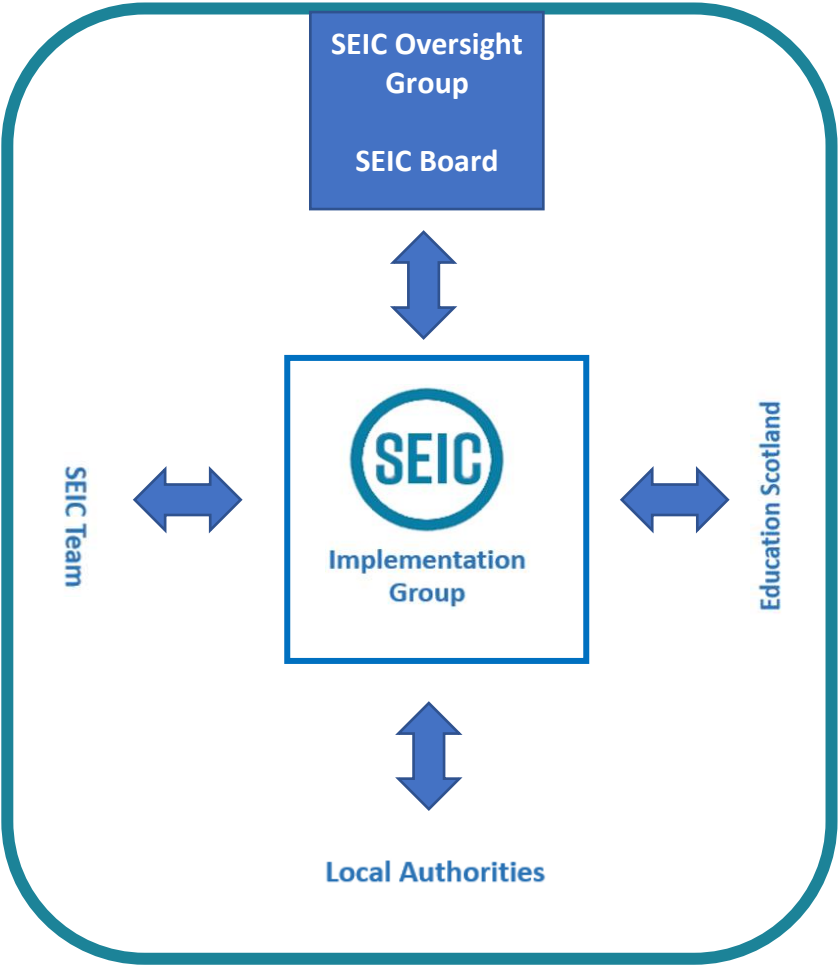
Governance Structure

The SEIC Oversight Group is comprised of Education Conveners and portfolio holders, Vice Conveners and Chairs, Chief Executive Officers, and Directors of Education or Chief Education Officers from the five local authorities across the SEIC region. The group oversees the work of SEIC and provides political accountability for the Collaborative’s work.

The SEIC Board is formed of Directors of Education or Chief Education Officers from each of the five SEIC local authorities, a headteacher representative from each SEIC authority, the Senior Regional Advisor from Education Scotland’s SEIT and representatives from Edinburgh University, CLD and Skills Development Scotland. The Board develops the Regional Improvement Plan and oversees its progress and impact.

The SEIC Implementation Group drives the agreed work of the SEIC plan alongside the SEIC team within the contexts of local authorities. It will consist of a senior officer from each local authority alongside representatives from the SEIC team and Education Scotland’s SEIT. They will drive the work of the new working groups and harness the support of our collaborative networks to deliver improvement.

The SEIC Trade Union Group provides insight into member’s views and highlights any potential or real issues being experienced as a result of SEIC work. This group provides advice and support on ways of communicating key messages and offers of support for the benefit of their members.



Appendix 1

Risk Register for South East Improvement Collaborative

The South East Improvement Collaborative is developing its functions and will continue to work collaboratively when looking at risk. Being aware of the key challenges allows a focus on mitigation and therefore manages effectively any risks posed.

Key Risks	Mitigating Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differing political views and understanding of SEIC at local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective communication • Input locally and regionally for elected members • Local Authority Forums
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing data sets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data sharing agreement • Use of data already publicly available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seconded Staff Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear communication about contract length • Time for quality transition • Staggered contracts to ensure some continuity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CfE Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation exercises to have confidence in CfE declarations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of Children's Rights, specifically Article 29 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of outcomes and supports that will impact on learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity of workforce across SEIC to deliver actions in SEIC Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree equitable resource allocation relative to scale of local authority • Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities • Effective use of SEIC budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Union agreements – LNCT/SNCT and working time agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an agreed way of working across SEIC through the professional associations group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further legislative changes in future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility in SEIC plan to allow for any required changes • Clarity on communication regarding changes required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability at local authority and SEIC levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear governance structures agreed for SEIC • Clear reporting mechanisms in place at a local level