

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

GENDER PROJECT UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (SECONDARY, COMMUNITY LEARNING & INCLUSION)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Panel of the actions taken to date as well as future plans to tackle gender-based barriers to young people's outcomes in West Lothian schools.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel notes the actions taken to date and future planned actions for the current session and session 2024-25 to tackle gender-based barriers to young people's outcomes in West Lothian schools.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Caring and Compassionate Open, Honest and Accountable Collaborate, Inclusive and Adaptive
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Actions taken to date and planned will have a positive impact on performance indicators including those relating to attainment and positive destinations.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	Not applicable
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Actions taken to date and planned will have a positive impact on performance indicators including those relating to attainment and positive destinations.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Actions taken to date and planned will have a positive impact on performance indicators including those relating to attainment and positive destinations.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Planned actions will be delivered within agreed central education and devolved school budgets.
VII Consideration at PDSP	Underway
VIII Other consultations	Stakeholders including Head Teachers and other relevant West Lothian Education networks, Education Scotland Equalities Team.

D TERMS OF THE REPORT

D1 OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

The Tackling Gender-Based Barriers to Learning (TGBL) project was established last session in response to emerging local concerns about gender-based gaps in attainment outcomes. Initially, the project focused on a high-level analysis of a range of data relating to attainment and health and wellbeing, a review of relevant academic research and consultation with Education Scotland Equalities team. Following this initial research, we have continued to improve our understanding throughout 2024 with further investigation around key areas.

Findings are being shared with a range of stakeholders including the Quality Improvement Team, Secondary Headteachers and other relevant Education networks. Action plans are agreed for session 2024-2025 and working groups have been established with representatives from across secondary schools and central staff. We have improvement teams working with schools to monitor and support this progress.

Several key priorities have also been identified, including:

- Male attainment in Broad General Education (BGE) Literacy
- Uptake and attainment of males in Higher English
- Understanding around male and female uptake of subjects in secondary

D2 FINDINGS FROM DATA

Research during the initial project work included data from all primary settings and the 11 S1-S6 secondary schools. West Lothian data was compared to national trends where available, and in the Senior Phase to the Insight Virtual Comparators. Wherever possible, 5 years of data was compared. Where this was not possible, data was selected to provide as meaningful a comparison as possible.

Data analysed included: Curriculum for Excellence attainment; SQA and SCQF attainment; Positive Destinations; secondary attendance; subject uptake; and authority progression from National 5 to Higher. Our subsequent research from 2023 into 2024 has drilled down even further into the areas of key focus and includes gap analysis - considering both sex and SIMD.

The main findings were:

Male attainment in Literacy in the BGE is lower than female attainment. This gap opens from early level and widens throughout the BGE.

Since 2019, West Lothian has been sitting above the national average for Literacy attainment for males and females in both level 3 and level 4. Our gap analysis shows us that male level 4 Literacy by the end of S3 should be a priority, particularly in Quintile1-2.

Fewer males are presented for Higher English and their attainment is lower than females overall.

Uptake of males in National 5 English across West Lothian is 49% and is in line with the national average. When it comes to progression into Higher, however, this drops

to 42% of males being presented for Higher English in West Lothian, with the national average sitting at 43%.

Overall, females continue to outperform males in Higher English if looking at overall A-C pass rates.

English is being highlighted because it is a gateway subject, especially for employment, ongoing study into higher education, as well as success in other literacy-based subjects. This may also account for the trend we are seeing in fewer males on average being presented for literacy-based subjects such as History, Modern Studies, Drama and Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (RMPS).

There are significant differences between males and females in presentation for subjects.

During April 2024, data analysis was completed across all National 5 (N5) subjects in West Lothian to establish a male / female entries comparison. N5 was chosen for focus because it opens access to Higher in almost all cases and meant a comparison of larger sample sizes.

Overall, the male / female entries in West Lothian are very close to the wider national picture for subject choice at N5 with some slight differences: 7% more males sitting Practical Cookery than nationally; 6% more males sitting Administration and IT; 6% more females sitting Design and Manufacture; 6% more males sitting Health and Food Technology; and 6% more males sitting RMPS at this level.

In West Lothian over the last 5 years (as well as across Scotland) there remains a clear male / female divide in terms of subject choice at N5. Notably: Practical Electronics 97% male; Practical Metalworking 95% male; Engineering Science 91% male; Practical Woodwork 87% male; Fashion and Textile Technology 100% female; Dance 97% female; Art and Design 78% female; and RMPS 78% female.

D3 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The findings will be shared with networks as appropriate, including the Quality Improvement team, Secondary Head teachers, Depute Heads Curriculum, Principal Teachers and other relevant partners.

The Tackling Gender-Based Barriers to Learning working group will continue to support schools by raising awareness about possible areas of focus for schools. In addition to the centrally identified priorities, and in developing staff awareness and understanding of gender-based issues affecting young people, we will share good practice and innovation as it emerges.

Building on professional learning from last session, secondary schools can now also analyse key authority outcome measures by gender using Power BI (data analysis tool), so they can readily identify and address local priorities going forward.

In summary:

- Our research has given us important information and has allowed us to set central priorities, but each school will have its own specific context.
- It is important when considering gender barriers to learning, that we also consider other factors such as SIMD.

- School improvement planning will feature priorities relating to removing gender barriers to learning.
- Ongoing improvement projects and working groups are in place to address issues raised above and/or understand them in more detail.

Next Steps:

- Continue to share high-level findings with HT group.
- Support to HTs through School Improvement Planning and agreement of measurement packages.
- Continuation of TGBL improvement team in session 2024-2025.
- Specific focus for PT English group towards improving male attainment in BGE Level 4 Literacy. This will feature as part of departmental improvement planning.
- Specific focus for some schools on male Higher English presentation and pass rates.
- Ongoing monitoring of male and female presentation % in subjects, with a view to understanding better what is driving these longstanding trends in schools.

E CONCLUSION

West Lothian Council Education staff are committed to working collaboratively to tackle gender-based gaps to young people's outcomes in schools. Significant progress has been made to date to develop understanding of the issues and relevant research in this area to inform improvement planning. Progress in the form of creating the conditions for improvement projects has also been made towards tackling these gaps, which will continue in session 2024-25.

F BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Improving gender balance and equalities – Education Scotland
<https://education.gov.scot/resources/improving-gender-balance-3-18/>

Appendices/Attachments:

1. Comparison of 3rd and 4th Level Literacy and Numeracy
2. Higher English N5 and H uptake comparison
3. West Lothian and Scotland comparison - N5 uptake based on sex

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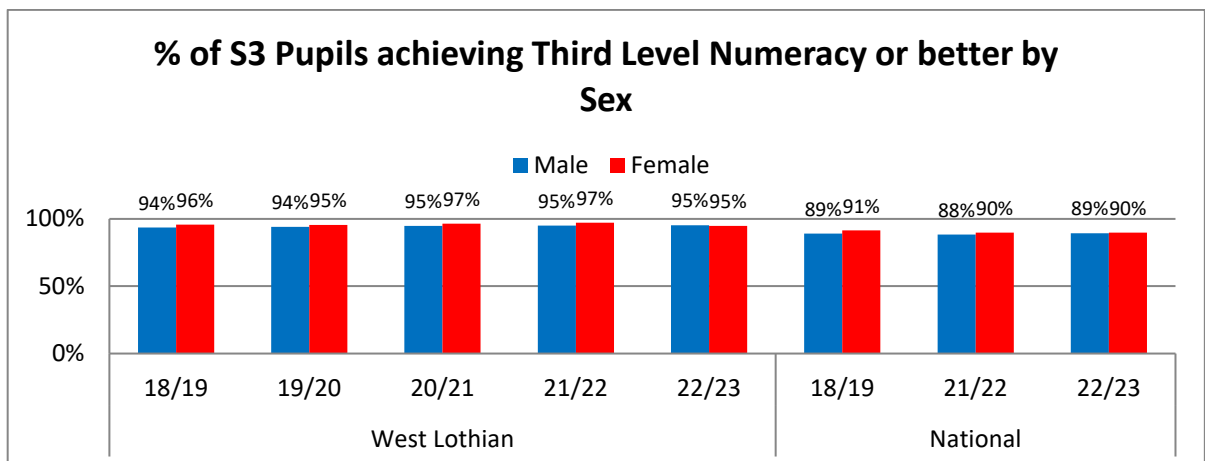
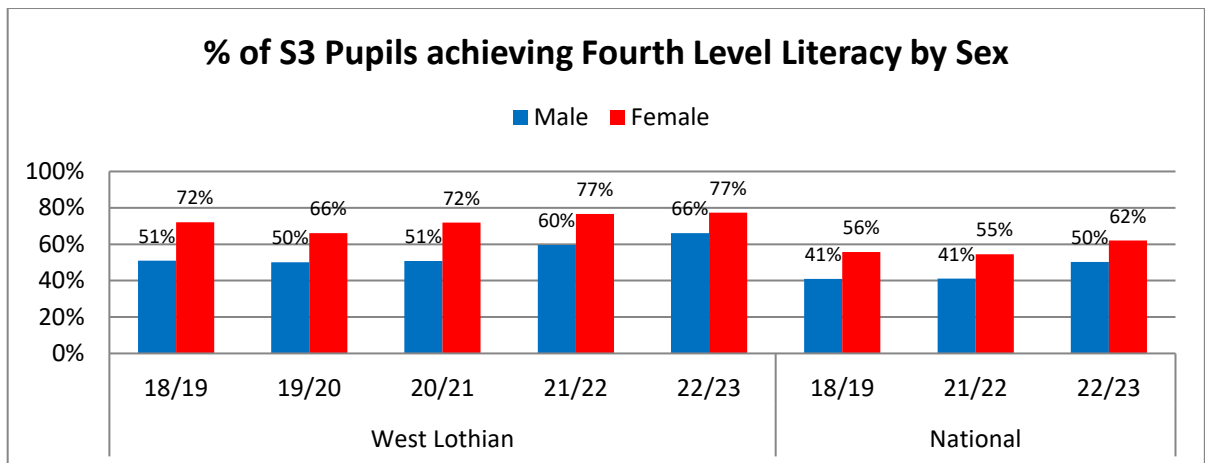
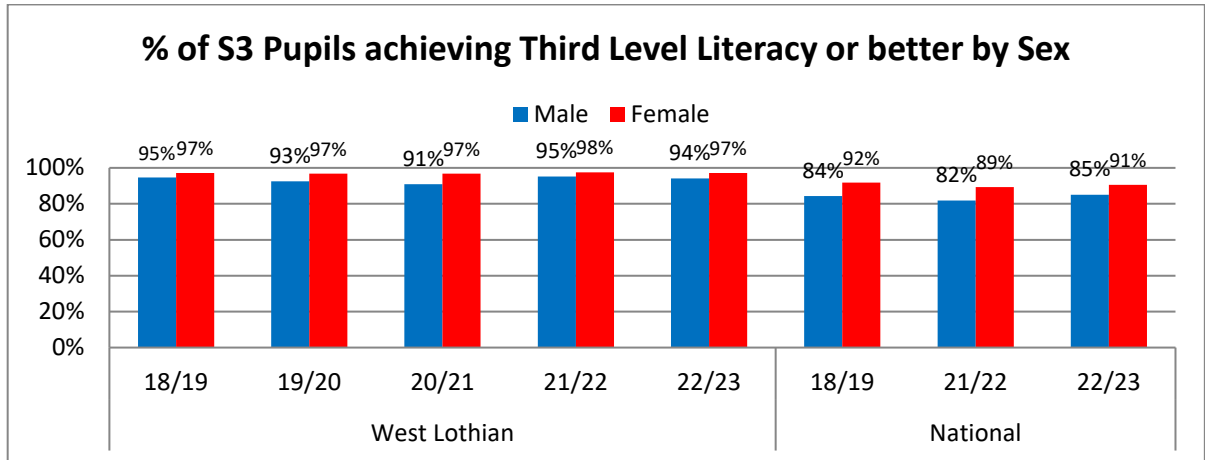
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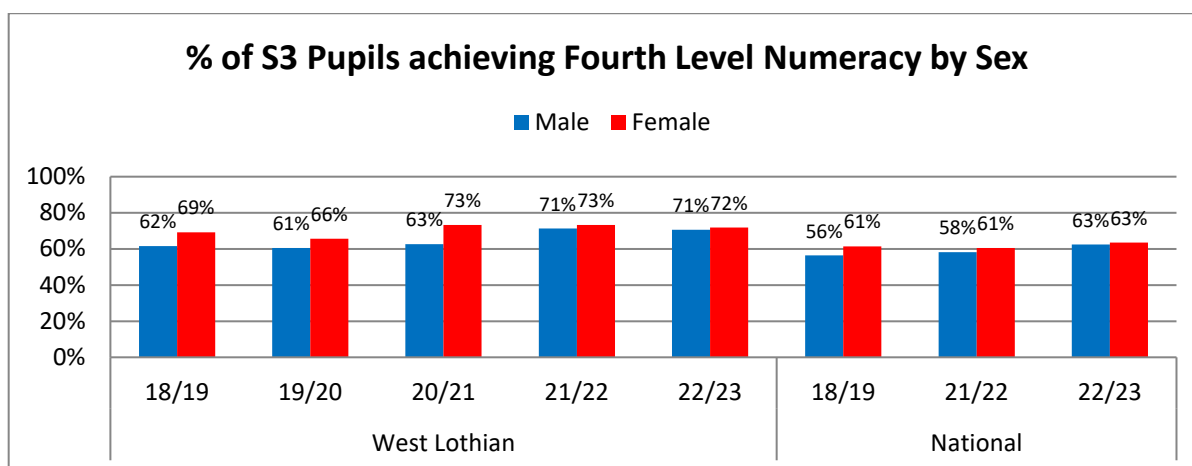
Siobhan McGarty – Head of Education (Secondary, Community Learning and Inclusion)

Date of Meeting: 4 June 2024

Appendix

1. Comparison of 3rd and 4th Level Literacy and Numeracy





2. Higher English N5 and H uptake comparison

N5 English - Scotland	Total	Male	% Male
2019	42454	20717	49%
2020	43780	21461	49%
2021	43917	21654	49%
2022	44827	22088	49%
2023	45872	22487	49%
<i>Average</i>	<i>44170</i>	<i>21681</i>	<i>49%</i>

H English - Scotland	Total	Male	% Male
2019	31434	13252	42%
2020	32506	13719	42%
2021	32755	14299	44%
2022	30537	13542	44%
2023	31907	14067	44%
<i>Average</i>	<i>31828</i>	<i>13776</i>	<i>43%</i>

N5 English - West Lothian	Total	Male	% Male
2019	1657	795	48%
2020	1723	823	48%
2021	1783	917	51%
2022	1814	892	49%
2023	1900	938	49%
<i>Average</i>	<i>1775</i>	<i>873</i>	<i>49%</i>

H English - West Lothian	Total	Male	% Male
2019	1263	494	39%
2020	1278	530	41%
2021	1314	560	43%
2022	1185	530	45%
2023	1235	528	43%
<i>Average</i>	<i>1255</i>	<i>528</i>	<i>42%</i>

3. West Lothian and Scotland comparison - N5 uptake based on sex

West Lothian N5 entries % ranked 2019-2023			
Course	Total West Lothian	% Male	% Female
Practical Electronics	263	97	3
Practical Metalworking	296	95	5
Engineering Science	279	91	9
Practical Woodworking	1093	87	13
Computing Science	1509	78	22
Physics	2267	70	30
Music Technology	211	69	31
Design and Manufacture	906	68	32
Physical Education	2456	68	32
Graphic Communication	869	64	36
Accounting	138	55	45
Business Management	1806	53	47
Geography	1260	52	48
Applications of Mathematics	1428	50	50
English	8877	49	51
Chemistry	2696	48	52
Media	341	48	52
Music	1291	48	52
Mathematics	6958	47	53
Administration and IT	775	43	57
History	2642	43	57
Practical Cookery	890	42	58
English for Speakers of Other Languages	28	39	61
German	92	38	62
Modern Studies	2023	38	62
Biology	3953	35	65
Drama	771	31	69
French	974	31	69
Spanish	1006	31	69
Health and Food Technology	401	27	73
Practical Cake Craft	153	26	74
Art and Design	1717	22	78
Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	616	22	78
Dance	320	3	97
Fashion and Textile Technology	73	0	100

Scotland N5 entries % ranked 2019-2023			
Course	Total Scotland	% Male	% Female
Practical Electronics	2035	94	6
Practical Metalworking	7421	93	7
Engineering Science	7955	90	10
Practical Woodworking	32744	86	14
Computing Science	29091	80	20
Design and Manufacture	21016	74	26
Music Technology	6300	74	26
Physics	60024	72	28
Graphic Communication	25100	68	32
Physical Education	89223	66	34
Accounting	4119	55	45
Geography	45340	54	46
Applications of Mathematics	55313	51	49
Business Management	38817	50	50
English	220897	49	51
Mathematics	175553	49	51
Media	5098	49	51
Chemistry	70734	48	52
Music	36525	46	54
History	71662	45	55
German	6100	43	57
Modern Studies	61092	41	59
Administration and IT	26002	37	63
French	31563	35	65
Practical Cookery	25549	35	65
Biology	100717	34	66
Drama	21857	33	67
Spanish	23967	33	67
Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	10536	28	72
Art and Design	47027	24	76
Practical Cake Craft	5105	23	77
Health and Food Technology	7914	21	79
English for Speakers of Other Languages	2142	15	85
Fashion and Textile Technology	2439	4	96
Dance	3354	2	98