

Councillor Andrew McGuire

Armadale and Blackridge Ward

Response to Question from Cllr Stuart Borrowman for full Council Meeting on Tuesday 23rd January 2024

Q. Outcomes from the 2023 examination diet suggest that West Lothian remains below the Scottish average in French; Chemistry; Mathematics; Music and Geography.

What plans are in place to enhance outcomes in these subjects?

R. Thank you to Councillor Borrowman for the question.

It is worth highlighting that there are two main measures relating to Higher attainment.

The first measure:

is based on the number of pupils who began S4 and went on to attain a Higher in S5 in a particular subject. This measure is heavily dependent on the subject choices made by students at the end of S4 and this differs across schools and nationally.

The curriculum offer in West Lothian schools is now more diverse and contains not only traditional Higher subjects but also a range of National Progression awards, Foundation Apprenticeships (available at equivalent to Higher level) and skills for work courses to name but a few. Students choose the courses that best supports their future pathway. This does, however, mean that the uptake in some courses are lower due to the variety of options and opportunities available to students and this is reflected in this particular measure.

Subject	Number of candidates	West Lothian presentation rate %	National presentation rate %	% of S4 cohort attaining Higher pass in S5 West Lothian	% of S4 cohort attaining Higher pass in S5 National
Chemistry	268	12.19	12.8	9.82	10.01
French	58	2.65	2.8	2.33	2.36
Geography	113	5.16	8	3.88	6.43
Mathematics	515	23.42	24.9	17.63	18.57
Music	134	6.12	6.6	5.66	6.16

The second measure:

gives the pass rate for those students who chose a particular subject and were presented for the Higher examination

Subject	National pass rate A-C%	West Lothian pass rate A-C%
Chemistry	78	81
French	83	88
Geography	80	75
Mathematics	75	75
Music	93	93

Councillor Andrew McGuire

Armadale and Blackridge Ward

In terms of plans to enhance outcomes in the subjects identified I can advise that school and central quality improvement teams analyse all forms of attainment data. They hold regular review meetings with schools to address progress across all subject areas, implementing and evaluating action plans for improvement. Geography has been a priority.

The Principal Teacher networks are assisted by Network leaders and a designated Depute Headteacher link. The support aims to enhance the quality of the learning, teaching and assessment across all subject areas and focus on improvement. This session, West Lothian staff are collaborating together to increase professional learning and develop high quality learning resources to complement school improvement activities aiming to improve pass rates and progression values. There are working groups reviewing Geography and Music and there is also a sustained focus on Mathematics to continue the improvements that have already been made.



Cllr Andrew McGuire
Executive Councillor for Education