



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Education and Gaelic Committee

Local Authority Chief Executives  
by email only

**7 October 2026**

Dear Chief Executive

### Local Authority Approaches to School Education

The Scottish Government's [2026 National Improvement Framework, Improvement Plan](#) refers to the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE) report on its thematic inspection of local authority approaches to supporting school improvement.

The Improvement Plan notes that while HMIE found that there was much to commend, there were also significant challenges including –

- There is notable variability in the consistency and quality of support provided to schools, both within and across local authorities;
- Self-evaluation processes are not always rigorous enough to maximise the progress of children and young people;
- Leadership development at all levels remains uneven and this is essential for building capacity for continuous improvement.

**The Committee would welcome an update on how your Local Authority has responded to the recommendations of the HMIE thematic report on inspection of local authority approaches to supporting school improvement. This includes how your Local Authority views the “notable variability in the consistency and quality of support provided to schools, both within and across local authorities.” For example, the Committee is interested in how good practice is shared across local authorities and the barriers which may exist to this occurring.**

### Support for pupils with persistent absence

Levels of school attendance have not fully returned to pre-pandemic levels. In March 2026, the Scottish Government published revised attendance guidance. Education Scotland has also undertaken work on improving attendance. Together, these emphasise person-centred approaches, early intervention, effective use of

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attendance data and coordinated support involving schools, families and partner services.

**The Committee would welcome an update from your Local Authority on how the guidance is being implemented in practice and whether it is leading to improvements in local approaches. The Committee is also interested in how schools within your Local Authority identify and respond to persistent absence, how effective multi-agency working is in supporting individual pupils and their families, and how knowledge of effective practice is shared across the education system.**

The Committee would welcome a response by **Wednesday 4 November 2026**.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr James Johnston  
Clerk to the Committee**