

Appendix 2: Proposal Paper



THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT

Proposal Paper

That, subject to the outcome of this proposal:

- **The current Primary Enhanced Provision model will be restructured so that every primary school in Falkirk Council will be supported to develop the capacity to provide an appropriate level of Enhanced Support**
- **Current pupils who attend an Enhanced Provision, which is not within their catchment school, will return to their catchment school and be educated in their local community, with an appropriate level of enhanced support**
- **There would be no requirement for future referrals to the Education Resource Group (ERG), for enhanced provision placement schools, as this support would be embedded in the mainstream structure with schools being provided with the resources to provide the right support at the right time within their own community,**
- **Totality of additional resources will be redistributed across all 47 Primary schools. This devolved model would then align with the current Secondary model of devolved support to schools.**

This document has been issued by Falkirk Council for proposal in terms of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

1. REASONS FOR FORMULATING THIS PROPOSAL

Within Falkirk Education Service, it was recognised that there were increasing numbers of children and young people with additional support needs (ASN) across schools. Data shows that since 2020/21, the percentage of children in primary school with an identified additional support need has increased by 8.12%, with a year-on year increase since 2021/22. A review was required to ensure that the right support was delivered at the right time for all children and young people who required it.

Since 2004, there have been 15 Enhanced Provisions within Falkirk Council primary schools which have provided specialised support for children with additional support needs (ASN), who are at stage 3 of the Falkirk Council Staged Intervention Framework. These children have a high level of need, which requires a high level of support and as previously mentioned, this need is growing each year. Historically, these provisions have been based at specific schools across the council area. However, with the evolution of educational needs, a more integrated, equitable and inclusive model is required. There are several ways in which this model no longer meets the current level of need, these are as follows:

- The 8% increase in additional support needs, within Falkirk Council, since 2021 is an ongoing and upward trend.
- As the rise continues, the number of catchment EP spaces will not match the number of children who require this level of support.
- Geographically, the number of EP provision places do not match the level of need and demand in some catchment areas.
- For children who are placed in a non-catchment EP, their relationships and connections with their local community can be lost due to the compulsory transition out of their catchment area, which often follows a provision placement.
- The current model can create an inequity of access to support for our young people; as, if not placed in an Enhanced Provision, the access to support can be inconsistent.
- The model no longer aligns with the service ambition, which for children and young people is aspirational, with high expectations for all learners; including for all children and young people with additional support needs. We seek for young people to be able to be educated within their catchment school, receiving the right support at the right time.

This proposal is underpinned by statutory duties outlined in the **Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004**, which obligates education authorities to identify, provide for, and keep under review, the additional support needs of every child for whom they are responsible. Moreover, the Act promotes inclusive education within mainstream settings wherever appropriate - an aim directly reflected in this proposal.

The proposed change also aligns with the **Equality Act 2010**, particularly the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires the Council to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (such as disability) and those who do not.

Furthermore, the proposed model aligns with **HGOS4 (2015)**, which sets expectations for inclusive, learner-focused practice. Specifically, Quality Indicator 3.1 'Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion' emphasises the responsibility of all practitioners to promote equality and provide support tailored to meet the wide range of learners' needs.

A formal consultation is required for any proposal to discontinue a special class within one or more schools. The consultation will be carried out in accordance with the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

An initial Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment was completed, indicating a full assessment is required. This has been drafted and will be completed following the planned consultation, taking on board the findings from this work.

The rationale for this proposal therefore includes:

Increased Demand for Inclusive Practice: The current model prioritises ASN resources within 15 designated schools. This restricts the Council's ability to provide equitable support across the authority. Analysis of the current provision landscape reveals:

- Prevalence of 'shadow' Enhanced Provisions: Around 69% of Falkirk primary schools are delivering enhanced support informally, without being designated 'Official Enhanced Provisions'. Schools are doing this in response to the growing and high level of need, showing the desire for schools to be able to meet the needs of all learners.
- Gap in Formal Recognition: Approximately 41% of schools providing shadow EPs have no official designation and do not have equal access to the same level of resource.
- Limited Reach of Official EPs: Only 31% of schools are formally designated as having an 'official' Enhanced Provision and there is also a maximum number of spaces within these EPs; meaning not all children who are at stage 3 on the Falkirk Council Staged Intervention Framework would be able to gain a place and access to an Enhanced Provision space.
- Geographical Inequity: 21% of schools have neither an official nor a shadow EP, indicating potential unmet ASN needs and inconsistency in provision; increasing the demand for formal EP places. This data suggests a clear case for exploring a more system-wide, inclusive model where all schools are resourced and empowered to support ASN learners.

Improvement in Equity of Provision: Redistributing the existing resources will allow every primary school to build and develop the necessary expertise and support to meet local ASN needs - ensuring every child's right to high-quality, inclusive education in their local setting. This approach is aligned with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly Articles 23 and 28, and with Scotland's Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework.

This universal access approach not only supports equity but meets the Council's obligations under Section 1 of the ASL Act, which establishes the principle of mainstream education and mandates that children with additional support needs be educated alongside their peers unless specific exceptions apply. By embedding inclusive practices across all schools, the proposal also reflects HGIOS4's vision of excellence and equity.

Alignment with Inclusion Principles: The proposal supports the Council's commitment to inclusion by integrating support within mainstream environments and fostering inclusive school cultures across Falkirk. Therefore, the principles of the current Enhanced Provision support would exist in every school, allowing all children to then benefit from this approach. These principles are:

- Differentiation and adaptation of the Curriculum for Excellence
- Provision of a communication-rich learning environment
- Where required, autism friendly pedagogy
- Mainstream stage class, with or without support as appropriate/in line with child's progress over time
- A base area as a suitable context to support pupils for a flexible proportion of the school day and access to small group teaching.
- Additional staff resources
- Support of varying nature by link Speech and Language Therapist, where assessment indicates

System-Wide Capacity Building: This change aims to create a stronger, more flexible workforce across all primary schools, moving away from reliance on designated provisions and toward sustainable, embedded support models. For staff to be able to deliver on the principles of Enhanced Support, within each school, the Education Service currently is creating a framework of support, coaching and training for all staff.

By embedding expertise and support into every school, staff would no longer be reliant on referring students to external or designated provisions. Instead, they develop the confidence and competence to meet a wider range of needs within their own classrooms and school community, using their delegated additional resources. This would also eliminate time spent on paperwork for the ERG process and would, instead, allow for this time to be spent with the children in each school.

Autonomy for schools fosters the development of inclusive, needs-led practice as a standard expectation - not a specialist exception. This helps normalise and sustain enhanced support principles across all settings. This is intended to strengthen the culture of the presumption of mainstream education.

With training and coaching embedded in the school system, all staff - from class teachers to support assistants - build skills in differentiated teaching, behaviour support and intervention planning.

In short, devolving Enhanced Provision resources underpins system-wide capacity by embedding skills, knowledge, and support structures directly into every school - shifting the culture from dependency to empowerment, and from reaction to prevention.

Benefits to Children, Families and Communities: This plan strengthens local provision, keeps children in their communities and builds trust in schools as inclusive, supportive environments. It will contribute to stronger school communities and more inclusive local environments. The model allows relationships are maintained and become stronger throughout the learner's journey.

Benefits to Children

Fast, Consistent Support: Children are more likely to receive help early, within their own school, reducing the need for lengthy referral processes in many cases. Support becomes a routine part of daily school life, making it more consistent and effective.

Staying Local and Included: Children benefit from being part of their local community where they can build meaningful relationships and feel included. They will be able to attend school with siblings and make local friendships, while still receiving the tailored support they need.

Unnecessary transitions and breaking of relationships with peers and the school community are avoided as children stay in their local community instead of transferring to another provision/community, therefore promoting the continuity of education.

Better Outcomes: With skilled and supported staff in every school, children are more likely to thrive - academically, socially, and emotionally.

Better Support for All: It is important to emphasise that this is not a return to a one size-fits-all or universal model of support. Instead, provision will be embedded within local schools and tailored to each child's unique learning profile. Resources, staffing, and planning will be personalised to ensure children with additional support needs continue to thrive. The Enhanced Support model would seek to ensure that children retain access to an adapted curriculum, skilled staff and targeted interventions – delivered closer to home.

Benefits to Families

Stronger Relationships: Families develop trust with staff who know their child well. They feel heard, valued, and can be more involved in their child's education due to being within closer proximity to the local school.

Less Disruption: Children can stay in one school setting, and siblings are often able to attend the same school. This reduces stress and makes day-to-day life easier for families.

Greater Involvement: Parents and carers have a stronger voice in decisions and planning, leading to more collaborative and personalised support due to living in proximity to the local school and being within the community. Parents and carers are more able to support the transition from home to school for their children to their local school, engage with other parents and participate more easily with meetings and events held in their local school leading to improved relationships and consistency with professionals involved with the family.

Benefits to Communities

Inclusive Local Schools: Local schools are better equipped to meet a diverse range of needs. This strengthens the school's role at the heart of the community.

Stronger Social Connections: Children of all abilities grow and learn together, helping to build a more inclusive, understanding, and connected community.

Smarter, Sustainable Resources: Investing in staff across all schools is intended to increase the capacity to support a wider range of children effectively. This is expected to contribute to long-term impact and resilience within the Education system.

Cost Efficiency and Value for Money: By reallocating rather than maintaining 15 separate provisions, funding can be used more effectively, supporting workforce development and inclusive pedagogies across the system.

These efficiencies may free up resources that could be reinvested directly into enhancing universal support, professional development, and specialised equipment across all schools, ensuring sustainable and equitable provision for the future.

This proposal is informed by internal data analysis, stakeholder engagement and external models of best practice from local authorities including Aberdeenshire Council, whose early implementation of a devolved support model has yielded promising initial outcomes.

The model is further supported by research published by Audit Scotland (2023) and Education Scotland's inclusive practice guidance.

2. PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

The proposal aims to transition from the current 15 Enhanced Provisions to a model of inclusive support in every school and redistribute the resources (such as staffing allocations, training and equipment) across all primary schools in Falkirk. This redistribution will allow the principles of Enhanced Provision (page 4) to be realised in each Primary School. Two case studies illustrating this already occurring in mainstream primary settings have been documented from St Margaret's Primary School (Appendix 1) and St Francis Xavier's Primary School (Appendix 2). Both schools have successfully supported learners with needs at stage 3 of the staged intervention framework, by applying the principles of Enhanced Provision support within their own mainstream environments using existing resources.

Support Personalised Learning: Each primary school will receive the resources needed to support individualised learning plans for pupils with ASN, providing responsive support in the child's local setting; in conjunction with key professionals, as is current practice. This support can take place in the classroom as well as other areas of the school.

Enhance Workforce Skills: Investment will be made in professional development to upskill staff, empowering every school with the tools, training and confidence to support a broad range of ASN needs.

Encourage Collaboration and Peer Support: Shared expertise across schools will foster professional learning communities and ensure best practice is embedded council wide

Staffing Allocations: The current staffing levels for Enhanced Support will remain the same and any redistribution of staff, if necessary, would follow consultation and engagement with all stakeholders; this would be carefully managed and supported. All resource, including staffing, will be consulted on and Enhanced Support resource will be allocated in accordance with Falkirk Council's Staged Intervention Framework.

3. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

- Currently (figures as of 27th June 2025) there are 281 pupils in attendance in Falkirk Council Primary EPs. 67 pupils are not currently educated in their Secondary catchment area. 99 pupils in current P1-P4 are not educated in their Primary catchment school. Once children transition from Primary EP in P7, they move to a mainstream Secondary school with a devolved model of enhanced support.
- Since 23/24, additional teacher staffing has been devolved to Primary schools to support the development of enhanced support practice and provide additional resources in mainstream to reduce the need for requirement for places in Enhanced Provision.
- 664 pupils are identified as requiring support at stage 3 of FC's staged intervention framework of support. However, only 281 are placed in a formal enhanced provision. Therefore 58% of children with similar levels of need are being educated in their mainstream school.
- Almost half of all Primary schools did not request Enhanced Provision placements for 25/26 demonstrating that schools and parents are confident with the level of enhanced support the catchment school can provide.
- Since 23/24, several parents have opted to receive additional supports in their catchment school and have refused placements in our stage 3 and stage 4 provisions.

As an authority, FC have used the Seemis authority defined page to record stages of intervention. This allows central officers to track and monitor levels of ASN at any given stage or session. Resource allocation is being developed to align with the data in Seemis which records levels and numbers of need. Allocation of resources will therefore be responsive to demographic needs and changes.

- Moving to this devolved model of enhanced support is intended to ensure equitable access to resources for any child with ASN, with schools having the ability to deploy the resource in the most appropriate flexible way.

Therefore, the proposed model offers significant educational benefits, both immediate and long-term:

Universal Access to Local Support: Pupils will be supported in their catchment school, reducing travel times and allowing children to stay within their community. This promotes consistency and is likely to enhance wellbeing and support family engagement. It also strengthens the fabric of local school communities by keeping children within their neighbourhood networks. Research by Public Health Scotland and Education Scotland (2022) indicates that maintaining stability within local settings improves emotional wellbeing and reduces anxiety for ASN learners.

Aberdeenshire Council has recently implemented a significant restructuring of its Enhanced Provision model for Primary 1 and 2 pupils with additional support needs. Rather than placing pupils in separate Enhanced Provision settings, the new model embeds support directly within mainstream, backed by a redistribution of staffing, outreach support and comprehensive training for all school staff.

This shift was designed to promote inclusivity, minimise disruption to learners and build long-term capacity within local communities. The council has reallocated resources within existing ASN budgets to ensure a broader reach, without reducing overall support; this is also what Falkirk Council proposes to achieve by moving away from 15 Enhanced Provision sites to a model of Enhanced Support in all schools.

Aberdeenshire moved to this model in August 2024, to meet their growing needs and demand for support, and so while formal evaluations are still forthcoming, early indicators highlight a more equitable and community-focused approach. These changes have been regarded by the authority as a positive step towards inclusive education across the region.

This evidence has reinforced Falkirk Council's planning, providing a practical example of how inclusive support can be delivered effectively within local school communities, while maintaining flexibility and meeting a broader range of needs.

Increased Inclusion and Belonging: The model aims to promote inclusion as an integral part of everyday school life for children with ASN, fostering social integration and reducing the stigma often associated with segregated settings. This inclusive approach also supports the development of positive peer relationships and social skills.

This model enables more pupils to be educated within their local communities, promoting a sense of belonging and enhancing wellbeing. It ensures greater equity and consistency of provision across all schools, offering more children the opportunity to learn alongside siblings and peers.

Planning for pupils will be responsive and individualised where access to mainstream will be meaningfully and genuinely tailored to meet the needs of all.

The model encourages increased collaboration across schools through shared expertise and consistent professional learning, aligning closely with national education priorities for inclusive practice. This will be underpinned by a robust professional learning offer to develop practitioners' skillset in highly effective practice.

Equity Across the Council Area: This model aims to reduce postcode-based disparities in access to support. All schools will be resourced and prepared to meet need, aligning with national priorities for equity in education and the commitments of the Scottish Government's 'All Learners in Scotland Matter' agenda.

Improved Transitions: Continuity of support within the local school will result in smoother transitions from nursery into primary education and from primary to secondary education. Children with ASN will build skills and confidence in settings similar to their future learning environments.

Workforce Excellence and Sustainability: A skilled and supported workforce across all schools will enhance the quality of teaching and learning for all. Staff development will focus on inclusive pedagogy, positive behaviour strategies, and universal design for learning. The proposal is also informed by HGIOS4 Quality Indicator 1.2 'Leadership of learning' and QI 1.5 'Management of resources to promote equity', both of which reinforce the need for professional learning and effective deployment of staff to ensure inclusive outcomes. Redeploying staff to every school builds capacity in a sustainable way and promotes leadership for equity at all levels.

Future-Readiness and Flexibility: The new model allows the Council to respond to changes in population, need, and policy with agility. It avoids over-reliance on a fixed number of provisions and builds inclusive practice into the fabric of every school. This has already been evidenced by the schools who have created their own versions of Enhanced Support, as can be seen in the attached case studies – these schools are within the 69% of Primary Schools who have created their own spaces where Enhanced Support can be provided but are not classed as official provisions.

Enhanced Choice and Faith-Based Inclusion: The current model, with only one Enhanced Provision located in a Catholic primary school, significantly limits choice for Catholic families seeking inclusive education within a faith-based setting. This proposal ensures that children with additional support needs, including those from Catholic backgrounds, will have the opportunity to attend their local denominational catchment school; providing the necessary enhanced support within their chosen faith community. This aligns with the Council's commitment to parental choice and religious freedom, ensuring equitable access to inclusive education regardless of faith background.

4. IMPACT ON CURRENT PROVISIONS AND SCHOOL STAFFING

Support for Pupils and Families: In line with the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004, the Council will work closely with parents and carers to ensure all transitions are carefully planned and fully supported. Each pupil's needs will be reviewed pre and post transition and appropriate provision will be implemented in their new educational setting; in accordance with national guidance from Education Scotland.

Enhanced transitions will include tailored planning meetings, phased integration where appropriate, in-school visits for pupils and parents and dedicated key staff support for a minimum of one term post-transition.

In parallel, the Equality Act 2010 reinforces the Council's duty to avoid indirect discrimination in school placement and transitions, making local inclusive provision preferable where possible

Staff Redeployment and Training: Existing Enhanced Provision staff would be supported to transition into Enhanced Support roles, if and where necessary, enhancing provision across the school system. Their professional expertise will enhance inclusive practice across local schools, contributing to broader Council objectives and aligning with Education Scotland's vision for a skilled and adaptable workforce.

5. RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

This Proposal Paper has been issued following a decision at Education Executive on 19th February 2026 [Falkirk Committee Information - Calendar](#). This is to seek views on the proposal set out in this paper. This report is available here:

A formal consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 is required for significant changes to educational provision. This proposal meets the criteria for such consultation. This consultation is fully in accordance with the requirements of this legislation.

A copy of this Proposal Paper is available on the Falkirk Council website:

A link to the electronic version of this document will be provided by letter to

A copy of this document is also available from: Children's Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE.

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to Children's Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE by telephone on 01324 506600 or by email educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk

LENGTH OF CONSULTATION PERIOD

The consultation will take place between 25 August 2025 and 7 October 2025.

PUBLIC MEETING

During this timescale (25/8/25 to 7/10/25), there will be a public meeting held to:

- Hear about the proposal.
- Ask questions about the proposal.
- Have their views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.

A note will be taken at the meeting of questions and views. This note will be published in the consultation report which will be available on the Council website.

An online public meeting will also be held.

Responding to the proposal

Interested parties are invited to respond on the proposal. A copy of this document will be provided to all stakeholders which includes:

- Parents and Carers of all primary and nursery age pupils who will be affected by the proposal
- All parents and carers in Falkirk Schools and Nurseries/Early Year Centres
- Parent Councils
- School staff
- Trade Unions
- Elected members of Falkirk Council
- MSP's, MPs
- Education Scotland
- Health and Children's Services Social Work and other partners.
- Community Planning Partnership
- Community Councils
- Local Community groups and advocacy organisations
- Archdiocese of St Andrew's & Edinburgh
- External Local Authorities who have children hosted in Falkirk Council for education.

All responses should be provided by 7 October 2025.

CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Pupils will be consulted about the proposal in school and further information about this will be provided to parents/carers. This will be made accessible to ensure all involved will have the opportunity to engage if appropriate.

FOLLOWING THE CONSULTATION

Education Scotland – When the proposal document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Education Authority. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations received by the Authority from any person during the consultation period or, if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Education Scotland will further receive a summary of any oral representations made to the Local Authority at the public meeting which will be held and, as available (and so far, as otherwise practicable), a copy of any other relevant documentation.

Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 3 weeks after the Authority has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above. The 3-week period will not start until after the consultation period has ended. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may enter the affected school and make such reasonable enquiries of such people they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

Falkirk Council – the Education Authority will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a consultation report. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available from the Council website and from Children's Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE free of charge.

Anyone who made written representations to the Authority during the consultation period will also be informed about the report.

The report will include:

- A record of the total number of written representations made to the Authority during the consultation period.
- A summary of the written representations.
- A summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting.
- The Authority's response to the Education Scotland Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the Education Scotland Report and any other relevant information, including detail of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled.
- A statement explaining how the Authority complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the Education Scotland Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received.

The consultation report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of at least 3 weeks.

This report together with any other relevant documentation will be considered by the Executive of Falkirk Council, who will come to a decision about the proposal.

NOTE ON CORRECTIONS

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this proposal document, either by the Council or any person, the Council must investigate and decide what, if any, action is required.

If relevant information has been omitted or there has been an inaccuracy, the Council will then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction notice, the publishing of a corrected Proposal Paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised. The Authority must inform the person who made the allegation and what action it has taken.

Case Study: The Hive at St Margaret's

We Thrive in The Hive!

Poverty Related Factors:
Lone parent families.
Minority ethnic families.
Families with a disabled adult or child.
Families with a mother aged under 25.
Families with a child under one.
Families with three or more children

This case study is to highlight the positive impact that our ASN support provision, '**The Hive**', is having on our **whole open plan school**; for our ASN learners, learners who are struggling with emotions, our PEF pupils and those learners who are impacted by poverty related factors.

To support the development of The Hive we have utilised an additional 0.6 FTE teaching time and 27.5 hours SEF funded SFLA support, along with 27.5 hours PEF funded SFLA. This is to ensure that there are always two adults available to support children's learning and/or distressed behaviours, as well as making sure there is always a teacher to facilitate high quality learning and teaching.

In addition to the 0.6 FTE Support for Teacher, our existing 0.8 FTE Support for Learning Teacher is based in the Hive at the start of the week then supporting learners in the mainstream classroom at the end of week.

We also used some of our PEF funding to buy nurture, literacy/numeracy, and dyslexia friendly and play based resources. Most of our furnishings came from '*Facebook Free Page*' and parental/community donations, including the painting of the room. Our new flooring was paid for through our devolved spend in session 23/24 (we no longer have this in 24/25).

The Hive: A Developing Rationale (August 2024)

Due to an increasing number of stage 3 children with complex neuro-diverse needs and an increasing number of children displaying distressed and dysregulated behaviours there became a necessity to review the support of our learners. Despite our best efforts, it was apparent that our current approaches were not having the positive impact we would wish.

Prior to setting up The Hive children were supported through nurture groups, restorative approaches, our Emotion Works Programme and HWB curriculum, our Support for Learning rationale, SLT support and the creation of a small nurture space called 'The Cosy' (which we still utilise as required). In addition, we developed our admin corridor to be a nurturing space also.

We observed that the impact that our current available supports were having on some children's wellbeing, dignity and progress, as well as staff time/wellbeing, was not as positive or fit for purpose as we would want. This also included SLT time as we were averaging 3 – 4 hours daily supporting distressed or children who were struggling to stay in their mainstream class or managing in our playground. In addition, our parental complaints about the impact that some children were having on others were increasing and affecting the ethos of our whole school community.

We had also begun to note a correlation between behaviour, complex needs and screen time. Many of our children who were displaying distressed behaviours were also spending lengthy periods of time accessing screen time at home/in school. We took the decision that The Hive would predominantly be an iPad free zone (unless being used for targeted interventions) due to the negative impact we observed on some children who were hiding iPads, becoming very upset/angry when an iPad was removed or refusing to engage in learning tasks.

We reclaimed two spaces used by our after-school care, Go Kids', to develop The Hive and STEAM provisions but providing them with an alternative space.

We used 'The Circle; environmental check list' and Nurture principles to develop The Hive environment. The team then decided how we would want this area of the school to be used and developed as an **inclusive, safe, nurturing and learning space**.

We wanted this space to meet **a range of needs**, to be **inclusive** in practice and to support our learners at **stage 2 and 3**, enabling them to **regulate** better, have the calm, safe and quiet space they needed from time to time & remain, where they belong, in their catchment school.

Our Aims:

- ★ Target our stage 3, some stage 2 learners, EAL, children with protected characteristics – identified through TAC system and progress meetings
- ★ Support our PEF learners and those with other poverty related factors affecting their life to progress in their **literacy, numeracy and HWB** (as needed)
- ★ Provide high quality focused learning and teaching
- ★ To support inclusion by offering the **right support at the right time**
- ★ Provide **nurture** for identified learners
- ★ Ensure **wellbeing** (emotional, mental and social)
- ★ Raise **attainment**
- ★ Provide '**Decider Skills**'
- ★ Create further opportunities for **personal achievement**
- ★ Develop interest based personal projects
- ★ Support learning through targeted supports: speech and language support, literacy support, numeracy support etc.

The support provided is dependent on need, identified through our TAC discussions and based on a child's stage of intervention.

Individuals and groups of learners are also identified through discussions with SLT/CTs/SFLT. **Support is to be proactive & planned but also responsive to need.**

The support:

- Small group: timetabled and planned
- 1:1 support: timetabled and planned
- As required and as needed
- Targeted support and specific interventions
- Universal support to complete class-based learning

Interventions (examples):

- Maths recovery
- Reading recovery
- Writing support and use of the Always Toolkits
- Listening and talking support as well as SALT interventions
- Seasons for Growth
- Nurture projects
- Play based projects
- Personal achievement and interest projects
- Nessy & Code Cracker
- Word Aware
- Colourful Semantics
- Active literacy (Phonics)
- Boxall Profiling
- SCERTS & environmental check lists
- Apps and use of IT to support learning
- Now and then/social stories, visual timetable etc.
- Socially Speaking and Emotion Works
- Nurture groups
- LIAM anxiety supports
- Inner Wings Programme ('Finding my Superpower' and 'Finding my Voice')
- Talking Mats
- JAS Awards
- Soft starts
- Break time support

Baseline assessments & data tracking

A range of assessment tools are used to monitor the impact of our interventions and support. Depending on the identified need targets are set e.g. social targets, academic/learning targets, communication targets etc.

In addition, the team makes use of nurture-based assessments, ABC (Antecedent, Behaviour and Consequence).

The Hive is also a focus for termly CT/HT tracking and monitoring meetings and our progress monitoring approaches.

The Impact so far:

The Hive is supporting an average of 52 children out of 321 from P1 to P7 across the school week. 15 -25 of those children are accessing The Hive, as required, for emotional support. One child has presented as a school refuser but is now attending every day in The Hive, with increasing short periods of time in her mainstream class.

5 children access a morning soft start and are settling into their class well afterwards. 31 of these children are accessing The Hive for learning support and group work in literacy and numeracy.

The Hive supports an extra 5 – 10 children during assembly times where they take part in the same assembly as their peer group but in a more suitable environment for them.

5 Children are taking part in JAS Award daily (personal achievement).

6 Children in P3 and P4 benefit from nurture group support every morning and afternoon.

This has really supported their social skill development as well as peer relationships and emotional regulation.

Out of those children around 30 of them have either a diagnosed additional support need or would fall under the category of PEF or be impacted by poverty related factors. These children are timetabled into The Hive for learning support or Nurture. The most prevalent of these is coming from **a lone parent family, working family poverty, a family with 3 or more children and/or living with a parent who has challenges with their mental health or there exists domestic abuse.**

We are still gathering evidence, but we are already seeing significant progress in terms of meeting **all** (100%) learners identified needs.

We have strong qualitative and quantitative evidence of:

- **Raised attainment** in literacy and numeracy
- Improved **emotional regulation** and coping strategies
- Improved peer **relationships** and relationships with adults
- Longer times spent in the mainstream classroom where they are more settled and **progressing** in their learning
- Improved **attendance**
- A decrease in parental complaints
- Improved **wellbeing** of staff and learners in general

What our children are saying?

We asked them:

1. How does the Hive help you? What would you like to tell people about the Hive?
2. What would you think if we did not have the Hive space?
3. Is there anything you would like to change in or add to the Hive?

P1 – P7

- *'It is a place where we can regulate our emotions. We get lots of support.'*
- *'It helps me feel calm and I can attend school.'*
- *'It makes me not feel grumpy. I like to come to The Hive.'*
- *'I would be sad if we didn't have The Hive.'*
- *'It helps me calm down, the nature theme is calming, and it helps me focus. I have explained the Hive to my parents, and my Mum says it sounds like a good place.'*
- *'If there was no Hive, I would hide my emotions and go home and let it all out.'*
- *'The Hive helps me to have some quiet time and if I need support for my work. You don't hear children being upset in class.'*
- *'I have been in the Hive more this week and I think it is a great place. All the children aren't angry in the pods anymore.'*

- 'It would be difficult to calm down if we didn't have the Hive'
- 'I would like a sensory wall in the Hive'
- 'I would like more learning space in the Hive so more kids could go to learn.'

What visitors say?

- 'This is a wonderful calm space and is truly inclusion at work.'
- 'This space may support some children staying at level 2 intervention instead of moving up to stage 3.'
- 'The atmosphere is wonderful, and you can see you have made best use of the space and resources.'
- 'Every school should have this. It is so clear that this is having a positive impact on all children accessing it and is a really well used space for so many needs.'

What our school staff say?

From an office point of view the area outside the office is a lot calmer. Before the summer holidays, prior to the Hive opening it was difficult to work in the office due to the noise levels and constant interruptions.

Also, pupils who struggle to come into school seem to like the option of being able to go to the Hive for a soft start.

So, a 10 out of 10 for me!

Office staff

Class teachers:

'I would say the impact the Hive is having on the whole school is it allows a safe, quiet place for dysregulated children to go to, to support them in being regulated. It also impacts these children to work with the same adult allowing for consistency and routine.'

The Hive also has an impact on staff as they have a place, they know they can send their pupils to for some quiet or calm time with a pass, whereas in our open plan classrooms this can be difficult to allow the opportunity for.

The Hive supports learning groups to have access to intervention programmes where they can further their understanding and learn to achieve. Having these children in a timetable allows for consistency and the opportunity for time away from a noisy classroom to focus, whereas without the Hive these children may not have this opportunity and struggle to attain. However, due to staff absences the learning group timetable has not been as consistent so the impact these interventions are having on children can be disrupted, something that is unavoidable.

The Hive also supports individuals who may need further support or nurture by adults to help them within school. Whether these pupils are timetabled or spontaneously visiting, the Hive supports all these children to adhere to our school values (Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be the Best YOU).'

P3 Class Teacher

'My children love going to the Hive for group work (Code cracker with AH, writing work with LCD and SLJ, reading groups etc.). They said it's nice and peaceful and they produce really fantastic work whilst they are there. I think it's a good area for focus and concentration.'

Some of my independent readers go to the Hive for a quiet area to read and enjoy the quietness and relaxed atmosphere.

D goes to the Hive at 8.50am – 9.00am every morning due to her anxiety and it has had a really positive impact on her arrival at school. Her mum also said at parent's night that it's been great for getting D into school in the morning.

Having been in the Hive myself, I love the room! It's very peaceful and calming, and I think it's a great area for children to regulate and feel safe.'

P6 Class Teacher

'I feel The Hive has been extremely beneficial for St Margarets since it opened in August 2024. For my class specifically, it has offered one child daily support with literacy and numeracy task which has benefited this child a great deal and given the class teaching time with less interruptions.

The Hive has provided a safe space during break times for children who are perhaps struggling with friendships or are overwhelmed in the large open spaces.

The Hive has also provided a support facility for children who are struggling to enter the school building through classroom doors by opening before 9am and giving children a calm start to their school day.

In conclusion, I feel The Hive has been a very positive addition to St Margarets Primary School and I feel with further funding could make a real difference to even more children's education and mental health.'

P5 Class Teacher

St Francis Xavier's Primary School

Inspiring learners to make a difference

Case Study

TP (Therapeutic Playroom)

The TP provides a safe and supportive environment where children can develop essential executive functioning skills, such as self-regulation, attention, and problem-solving. The improvements in our learners' social and emotional skills lead to improved readiness to learn and, in turn, improved attainment. This improved attainment extends to all pupils, as TP interventions result in classrooms being calm, happy and productive spaces. Between 20/21 and 22/23, the percentage of pupils achieving their expected level at P1, P4 and P7 has increased from 76% to 85% (literacy) and 78% to 88% (numeracy).

The TP also offers pupils opportunity for achievement. 10 of our Primary 7 pupils (who are not on track to achieve their expected level by June) are part of the 'SQA Group'. These pupils have been registered with the Scottish Qualifications Authority and are working in the TP on SCQF Level qualifications. Following successful completion, they will leave the TP, and St Francis Xavier's Primary School, with an SQA qualification.

The TP is staffed using a combination of the school's allocation of Support for Learning staff (teacher and learning assistants). The operation and success of the TP relies completely on this core staffing. The TP is a non-statutory provision which we have developed in response to the needs of our children, families and community. Without this core staffing the TP is unable to operate.

Inspired by the success of secondary colleagues' work around vocational subjects, and links with local colleges, the areas in our TP are themed around such subjects. Areas include Food Technology, Woodwork, STEM and Beauty Therapy.

Currently, 37% of our pupils - 152 children - attend the TP across the school week. 73 of these children have individualised diagnostic targets. Targets are shared with class teachers to allow the skills development to continue in class, and with parents\carers to allow them to support the development of their child's executive functioning skills at home.

As well as the targeted children who visit the TP, 100% of our pupils (412 children) visit via the 'Ticket to the TP' system. Over the course of each term children can expect to visit the TP twice. They are referred for showing a 'growth mindset' towards learning. Applying approaches observed from our early year's colleagues, the TP has been developed in such a way that the continuous provision (areas and resources set out on a permanent basis) enables children to develop executive functioning skills when engaging with any of the areas in the TP. The result is a rich experience for all who visit, and the removal of any stigma for specific groups of children, as the TP is a support for all.

For many children the transition from home to school (and school to home) is a challenge. This leads to children arriving in classrooms dysregulated or not attending school at all. To address this challenge, we offer soft starts and finishes to the school day to support the transition for young people and families, and to support improved attendance. Our attendance has increased from 92.1% in 21/22 to 93.4 in 22/23.

In the TP, Children are supported by staff members, to address individual targets (identified through the *Boxall Profile Assessment* which are carried out biannually). Targets are shared in child friendly language known as 'TP Pieces', with children taking a lead role in assessing their own progress. The targets - taken from the *Developmental Boxall Profile* targets - include 'I can listen carefully to an adult', 'I can follow instructions' and 'I can work cooperatively with a partner'.

All of these skills are essential to allow children to be successful in a mainstream classroom environment. The skills developed in the TP are, over time, transferred into classrooms. This allows all children to be confident, successful, responsible and to make valuable contributions to the wider life of the school. The number of exclusions in the school have fallen from 6 in 16/17 to 0 in 22/23. The TP is key in supporting children at risk of exclusion to be successful in classroom settings.

There are many factors which can impact the development of a child's executive functioning skills. These include environmental factors linked to poverty such as economic hardship, poor nutrition or chaotic surroundings. The demographic of St Francis Xavier's Primary School shows the high level of need across a number of measures, as well as the high percentage of representation from these groups in the TP.

Without the TP to support these young people there would be a negative impact on the attendance, attainment, achievement and inclusion of our most at risk groups:

	% of School Roll	% of pupils with individual targets in TP
Pupils living in SIMD Quintile 1	29%	45%
Pupils registered for Free School Meals	17%	27%
Pupils with an Additional Support Need	34%	23%
Pupils with English as an additional Language	20%	14%

Boxall Scores demonstrate that participation in the TP is having a positive impact on the social, emotional and mental health of our children.

In September 2023, 56% of assessed children presented with high levels of developmental difficulty compared with 46% of in February 2024. - showing a 10% decrease. A decrease was also shown amongst pupils with low levels of difficulty.

In September 2023, 77% of assessed children presented with high levels of diagnostic difficulties compared with 71% of our learners presenting with a diagnostic difficulty in February 2024 - showing a 6% decrease.

The TP has proven to be an invaluable asset to our school. As well as having a positive impact on attendance, attainment, achievement and exclusions The TP supports young people at difficult times in their lives. 2% of our pupils have experienced parental bereavement. The TP is a space where children can be guided by staff to process their grief and manage their thoughts and emotions.

The TP was established in 2016, in response to a primary 1 pupil who was unable to spend any length of time in a mainstream classroom.

The TP was instrumental in supporting his development and enabling him to be successful at school. He is now a thriving S2 pupil on a full secondary timetable, in a mainstream setting. By providing a safe and supportive environment, the TP significantly improves our students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes. The TP is an investment in our children's future.