

Planning Guidance for Primary Teaching Staff - LNCT Agreed Advice to Schools (January 2026)

In striving to deliver the very best education for the children of West Lothian, the following guidance has been prepared in line with the illustrations outlines in HGIOS4. This will allow staff to undertake planning within the agreed time outlined in schools' Working Time Agreements (WTA) and plans for tackling bureaucracy. The following guidance should be read in conjunction with West Lothian Council's Learning and Teaching statement.

Flexible long term planning (possibly in the format of an annual overview)

This should provide brief plans for appropriate coverage of all areas of the curriculum, taking account of the four contexts for learning and cross-cutting themes, as well as the school calendar over the course of the school session.

Medium term planning (agreed blocks or possibly termly plans)

Medium term plans (often called 'forward plans') are working documents which will be adapted through the course of a learning block. Based on the Experiences and Outcomes and design principles, all staff plan for each individual group within Literacy and Numeracy clearly identifying planned learning. Planning should reflect the level each group are currently working at. Evaluations of medium-term planning by teachers should be proportionate and should support learners' progression. Evaluations at the end of each block/term should identify next steps and areas for development in future plans. A clear progression of each individual/group's learning through a CfE level should be in place to allow staff to make informed decisions about the learners' journey.

Appropriate and proportionate group/class planning is in place for the other 6 areas of the curriculum, making relevant and appropriate use of discrete subject, cross-curricular and interdisciplinary planning.

WL Progression Pathways for all areas of the curriculum are available on Sharepoint and can be used as a benchmark as to the expectations for ensuring appropriate curriculum coverage.

Medium term plans should be made available to class teachers, non-contact time teachers, and SLT. They identify the learning of the class as-a-whole and can also be used by supply teachers, where the class teacher is absent, to help ensure continuity of learning and progression.

Schools should agree on suitable formats for their medium-term plans to allow for consistency across the school and to assist in quality assurance. These formats should ensure they are adequately detailed to ensure this, without being a driver of workload, or overly burdensome, for class teachers. They should avoid any 'duplication' of work (for example, copying and pasting from progression pathway or other curricular documents should be avoided).

Short term planning (possibly daily or weekly plans)

These should be flexible notes that are suitable and appropriate for each individual practitioner. In planning learning, teachers should ensure that this translates to providing clear learning

intentions and success criteria for pupils in all learning episodes and plans for effective differentiation to meet pupils' needs.

The detail of each teacher's short-term planning will vary depending on the teacher's knowledge, understanding and experience of effective pedagogy and the subject area.

Quality Assurance of teachers' planning

The moderation of long term and medium-term planning should form part of all schools' quality improvement activities. It should be undertaken collaboratively in order to improve collective practice and should be known by staff through the school's annual calendar of activity. Short term plans, and the daily or weekly evaluations of them, are for teachers' planning purposes and should not form part of the school quality improvement activities i.e. do not need to be submitted.

Where medium term plans are quality assured, SLT should avoid providing overly detailed written feedback to teachers. Plans should be used to inform professional dialogue and discussion at planning, attainment, or excellence and equity meetings.

Good Practice Guidance (HGIOS4)

HGIOS QI2.2

- Learning pathways support children to build on prior learning and ensure appropriate progression
- Learning pathways are based on the experiences and outcome and design principles of CfE

HGIOS QI2.3

- Planning should clearly identify what needs to be learned and assessed
- Teachers plan appropriately over different timescales to meet the needs of learners across all areas of the curriculum
- Learners are fully involved in planning learning