

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 27 September 2023**

Subject: Literacy and Numeracy - Benchmarking**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report advises the Educational Services Committee on the attainment progress and performance of the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire at Early Years, P1, P4, P7 and S3 in academic session 2022/2023

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Committee reviews the performance analysis and notes progress made in academic session 2022/2023 to raise attainment and tackle the poverty related attainment gap.

3. Background

- 3.1** Information contained in this report is based on Educational Service's analysis of West Dunbartonshire's Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) in literacy and numeracy at P1, P4, P7 and S3 in academic session 2022/2023 compared to 2021/2022; and West Dunbartonshire's Early Years' Literacy and Numeracy Attainment Baseline.

- 3.2** Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels are collected by Scottish Government in June each year as an aspect of the National Improvement Framework Reporting and Monitoring programme. Scottish Government will publish a national ACEL statistical report on attainment across all local authorities for academic session 2022/2023 in December 2023. The ACEL attainment presented in this report is draft until ratified by Scottish Government in the report being published in December 2023.

A report will be presented to Education Committee in March 2024 following the publication of the national statistical analysis of attainment at P1, P4, P7 and S3 in December 2023.

- 3.3** Attainment data for children in Early Learning and Childcare Centres and in P1 is collected annually by West Dunbartonshire using locally developed literacy and numeracy baseline assessments. The early level baseline assessment is benchmarked across the authority to highlight performance levels. This was suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic.

- 3.4** In session 2020 Scottish Government suspended the ACEL collection due to the pandemic. In 2021 the ACEL collection resumed at P1, P4 and P7; and was suspended at S3 due to concerns raised regarding pressures secondary schools were facing with the new Alternative Model of Certification arrangements. Therefore, June 2022 was the first time in three years that attainment in literacy and numeracy attainment at S3 has been gathered locally and nationally.
- 3.6** This report provides analysis of attainment data at ELC, P1, P4, P7 and S3 for academic session 2022/2023 providing information about:
- West Dunbartonshire's performance in literacy and numeracy attainment in 2022/2023 compared to 2021/2022;
 - the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected ACEL level for their age and stage at P1, P4, P7 and S3 by June 2023; and
 - the attainment of pupils in each of the social indicators of multiple deprivation in session 2022/2023 compared to 2021/2022.
- 3.7** A report on the plan to support continued improvement is included in the report Strategy for Attainment and Achievement presented to Committee, 23 September 2023.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Attainment in Early Learning and Childcare and Primary 1 Session 2022/2023

- 4.1.1** The percentage of children in our Early Learning and Childcare Centres achieving the benchmark score in numeracy is the highest in 2022/2023 compared to data from 2017 onwards; and attainment in literacy is high compared to previous years (2017 to 2021).

In 2022/2023 the percentage of children in our Early Learning and Childcare Centres achieving the benchmark score increased for literacy (concepts of print) and numeracy (number and number processes) in 2022/23 compared to 2021/2022 (Table 1):

Table 1

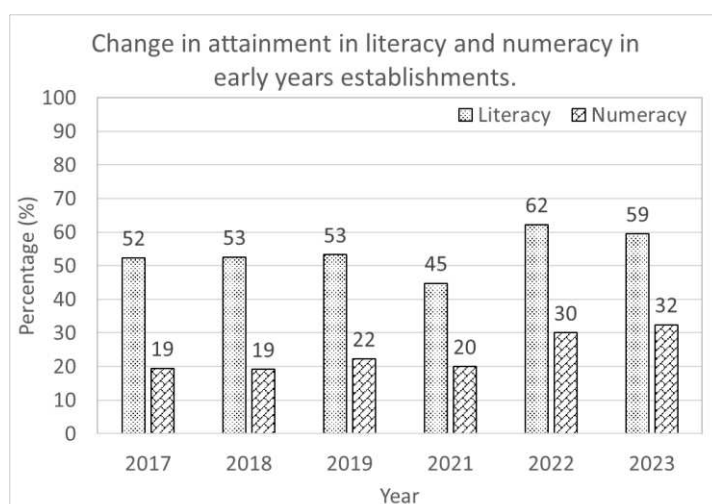


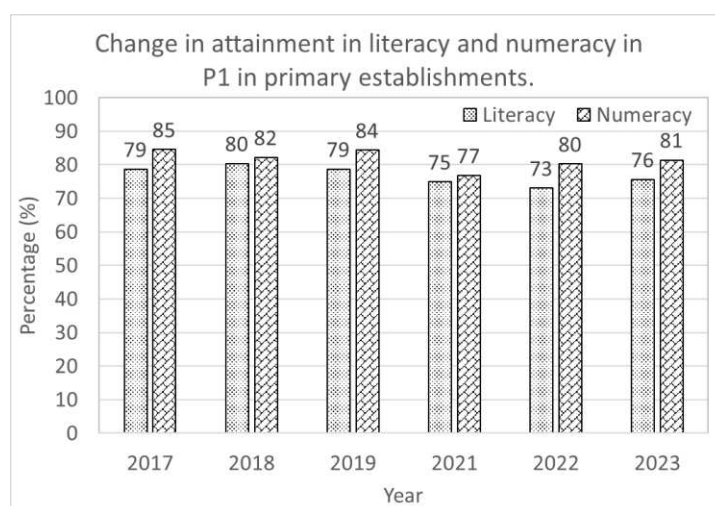
Table 1 shows that literacy attainment decreased by 3 % from 62 % in 2021/22 to 59 % in 2022/2023 ; and numeracy attainment increased by 2 % from 30 % in 2021/22 to 32 % in 2022/2023

4.1.2 The results in Table 2 compare attainment in the West Dunbartonshire Baseline Assessments at Primary 1 in 2022/2023 to session 2021/2022. Compared to session 2021/2022 there is an increase in the percentage of children in Primary 1 achieving the benchmark score in literacy (phoneme blending); and a slight increase in the percentage of children in Primary 1 achieving the benchmark score in numeracy (number and number processes) in session 2022/2023:

- Literacy increased by 3 % from 73 % in 2021/2022 to 76 % in 2022/2023
- Numeracy increased by 1 % from 80 % in 2021/2022 to 81 % in 2022/2023

The percentage of children in Primary 1 achieving the benchmark score in literacy and numeracy is not at the same level as pre 2020 but remains high.

Table 2

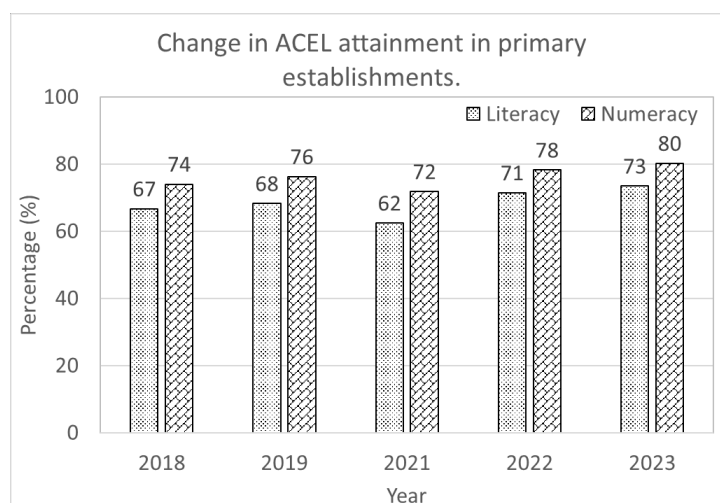


4.2 Attainment in Primary Schools 2022/2023

4.2.1 Attainment in primary schools improved at all stages and organisers (reading, writing and numeracy) in session 2022/2023, except P7 reading.

4.2.2 The percentage of primary pupils achieving the level for their age and stage increased for all organisers (reading, writing, numeracy) in 2022/2023 compared to 2021/2022 (Table 3):

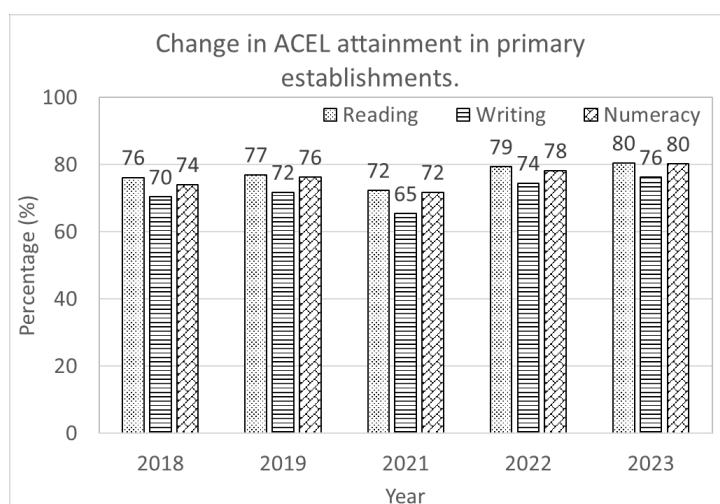
Table 3



- literacy attainment increased by 2 % from 71 % in 2021/2022 to 73 % in 2022/2023;
- numeracy attainment increased by 2 % from 78 % in 2021/2022 to 80 % in 2021/22;
- the largest increases in attainment are at P1 with a 3 % increase in numeracy attainment from 82 % in 2021/2022 to 85 % in 2022/2023; a 3 % increase in P4 listening and talking attainment, from 84 % in 2021/2022 to 87 % in 2022/2023; and a 3 % increase in P1 writing attainment, from 76 % in 2021/2022 to 79 % in 2022/2023.

4.2.3 The West Dunbartonshire attainment performance for primary in 2022/2023 in reading, writing, and numeracy has steadily increased since 2017 with the exception of 2021 due to the pandemic (Table 4):

Table 4



The attainment in primary schools in academic year 2022/2023 compared to 2017 shows an increase of 4% in reading; 6% in writing; and 6% in numeracy.

4.2.4 In session 2022/2023 the attainment gap narrowed between children in our most deprived areas Quintile 1 and children in our least deprived areas Quintile 4 (Table 5), (Table 6):

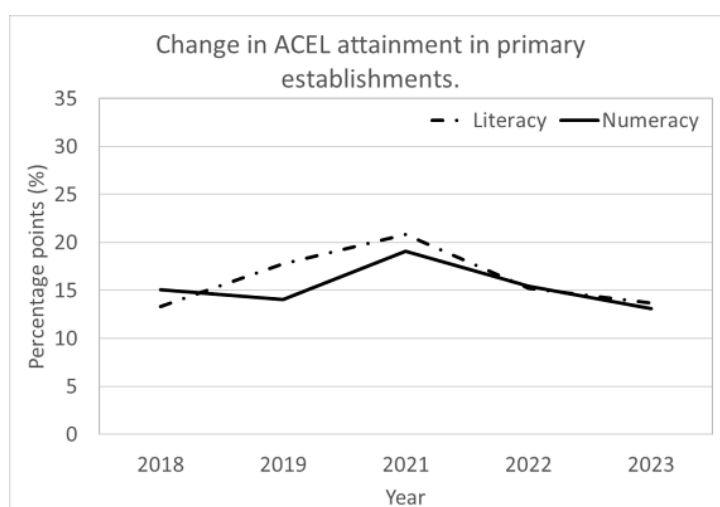
Table 5

WDC - Gap over time Quintile 1 - Quintile 4	Literacy (percentage point* difference)			Numeracy (percentage point difference)		
Stage/Level	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23**	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23**
P1 - Early Level	25	10	19	18	16	17
P4 - First Level	24	17	4	28	18	9
P7 - Second Level	14	18	16	14	12	11
P1, P4 and P7 combined	21	15	14	20	16	13

* pp = percentage points, i.e. the number of percentages points (pp) difference between Quintile 1 and Quintile 4
 ** unpublished data - analysis undertaken at WDC.

- The attainment gap narrowed across primary for literacy and numeracy by 1 pp and 3 pp respectively.
- The reduction in attainment gap is evident at all stages for literacy and numeracy at primary, except for P1 literacy, which shows an increased gap of 9 pp and P1 numeracy which shows an increased gap of 1 pp.

Table 6

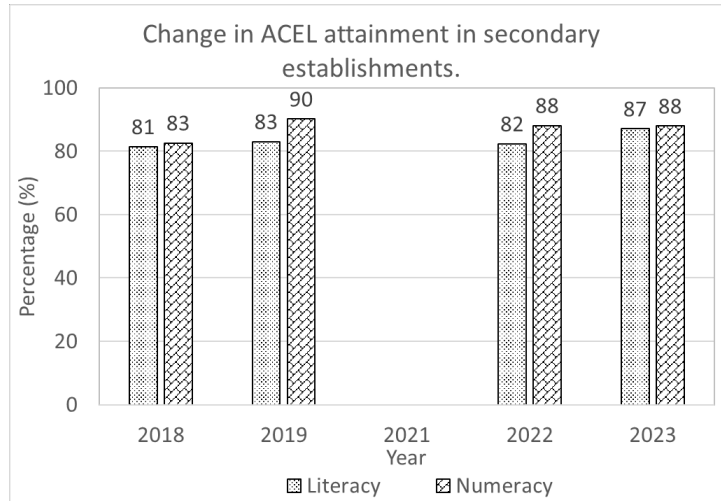


4.2.5 In literacy 69 % of primary schools maintained, or improved, their performance from 2021/2022 to 2022/2023. Likewise in numeracy, 69 % of primary schools maintained or improved performance from 2021/2022 to 2022/2023.

4.3 Attainment in Secondary Schools 2022/2023

4.3.1 Percentage of secondary pupils at S3 achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels increased or remained the same for all organisers (reading, writing, numeracy) in 2021/2022 to 2022/2023 (Table 7):

Table 7



- Literacy increased by 5 % to 87 % for secondary.
- Numeracy remained the same at 88 % for secondary.

4.3.2 Percentage of secondary pupils achieving levels in numeracy has reduced in 2022/2023 for the most deprived pupils in three out of five secondary schools compared to 2021/2022, however, attainment is still high with 78 % to 87 % achieving third level or more at S3.

4.3.3 The attainment gap narrowed between children in our most deprived areas Quintile 1 and children in our least deprived areas Quintile 4 in session 2022/2023 for literacy but increased for numeracy (Table 8):

Table 8

WDC - Gap over time	Literacy			Numeracy		
Quintile 1 - Quintile 4	(percentage point* difference)			(percentage point difference)		
Stage/Level	2019/20	2021/22	2022/23**	2019/20	2021/22	2022/23**
S3 - Third Level +	14	15	11	13	5	15

* pp = percentage points, i.e. the number of percentages points (pp) difference between Quintile 1 and Quintile 4

** unpublished data - analysis undertaken at WDC.

- The attainment gap narrowed across secondary for literacy by 4 pp but increased for numeracy by 10 pp.

4.3.4 In literacy and numeracy 60 % of secondary schools maintained, or improved, their literacy performance from 2021/2022 to 2022/2023; and 80 % of secondary schools maintained, or improved their numeracy performance from 2021/2022 to 2022/2023.

5. People Implications

5.1 West Dunbartonshire Council benefits from Strategic Equity Funding providing additional staff to support equity and excellence. The main areas supported

by this funding are: one to one pupil support, out of hours learning, early intervention ,welfare advice and poverty support, nurturing mental wellbeing, community safety, professional learning and personalised learning pathways. As this funding is decreasing annually up to 2025/26 this will reduce the number of staff available to deliver in these areas.

- 5.2** The new funding model will reduce this number of posts by 42% from 41.5 to 24.07 posts by 2025/2026. In session 2022/23 the local authority Scottish Attainment Challenge funded 39.0 a reduction from 41.5 posts in 2021/22. In session 2023/24 the Strategic Equity Fund will fund 30.0 posts.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** West Dunbartonshire has benefitted greatly from the Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding since its inception in 2015 and its associated funding streams which have helped us increase attainment levels and the life chances of young people. The change in Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding from highly targeted funding of 9 Councils, to a new, nationally distributed formula in 2022 means a 58% decrease in funding for West Dunbartonshire Council by 2025/26 as displayed in Table 9:

Table 9

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£2,043,815	£1,745,797	£1,447,779	£1,149,761	£851,743
Reduction of £298,018 (-15%)	Reduction of £298,018 (-17%)	Reduction of £298,018 (-21%)	Reduction of £298,018 (-26%)	

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** The reduced funding model could impact negatively on sustained improvement in future academic sessions. However, we will continue to monitor this closely to inform future planning

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and has identified the decrease in funding will limit ELA's strategic ability to deliver and progress a range of functions within the raising attainment agenda. These include, but are not limited to scrutiny and challenge teams, resources to support out of hours and holiday learning as well as access to wellbeing support for parents. Scope exists to mitigate the adverse impact on pupils, however this requires

adaptations across key service areas through the modification of plans to reflect the reduction in Scottish Government Funding.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** This report reflects the Councils 2017-2022 overarching priority to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire which supports improved outcomes for all learners in our community.

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Appendices:

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All