

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION (VSE)

MAY 2014

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Overview

West Dunbartonshire, in common with other older industrial areas, has suffered from the decline of traditional industries such as shipbuilding, manufacturing and heavy industry. This has led to it becoming one of Scotland's most deprived Local Authorities as measured by a range of the most widely accepted indicators.

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to providing the best possible outcomes for children, young people and their families and this is reflected in the Council's Strategic Plan 2012-17 where a key priority is to "improve life chances for children and young people." This priority for West Dunbartonshire Council provides the focus for directing educational resources to give every child and young person in West Dunbartonshire a coherent educational experience which equips them with the skills and understanding for learning, life and work.

West Dunbartonshire Council, through its Educational Services Committee, is absolutely committed to the priorities of the Service and has a determined focus on raising attainment and achievement to improve the life chances of our children and young people. The most recent feedback from Audit Scotland indicates satisfaction with the progress and improvement within Educational Services.

In 2012 Educational Services undertook a significant survey of stakeholders to ascertain views about provision within the Service. This provided the starting point for scoping potential areas for further investigation and evaluation. The initial scoping was refined over the course of the year and four particular themes were selected.

The Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) approach and related processes has enabled examination and challenge of key areas of strategic focus for the future success of all learners in West Dunbartonshire. Educational Services will benefit from the evaluation findings and secure improvement for ongoing development of key areas of policy and practice. This level of scrutiny is viewed as essential to fulfilling the Council's obligation and commitment to children and young people within West Dunbartonshire.

The four themes to be explored further as part of the VSE are:

- Raising Attainment and Achievement
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transitions
- Vale of Leven Learning Community Joint Evaluation

The themes selected each reflect work ongoing to improve the life chances of children and young people. Educational Services works together with other Council departments, agencies and partners to provide high quality experiences for children, young people and their families.

Each thematic group is chaired by a colleague beyond Educational Services' senior team and each group has a range of participants. A Project Board has been established to bring

further rigour to the scrutiny of policy, practice and leadership. The chair of each themed group reports to the Project Board where thorough and challenging discussions support colleagues with next steps within the evaluation process. The attached report details findings to date and suggests key strengths and main areas for development.

The lessons learned from the VSE approach have built capacity across Educational Services and will be integrated into the framework for improvement.

At this stage in the VSE process each group has identified key strengths and areas for improvement.

The emerging picture at this stage indicates that West Dunbartonshire Council's Educational Services has key strengths in:

- Partnership working;
- Strong relationships showing trust and respect;
- Commitment of staff, communities and elected members to improving outcomes for children;
- Openness to robust self-evaluation to bring about improvement;
- Workforce development opportunities.

Areas identified for improvement are:

- The need for consistency;
- The need for effective communication at all levels;
- The need to inculcate a common agenda across the service;
- The need to ensure that our new structure delivers the corporate and departmental priorities at a time of financial challenge.

Raising Attainment & Achievement

Theme - Focus

How effectively has West Dunbartonshire Council raised attainment and achievement:

- through the Leadership for Learning Programme and the Raising Attainment teachers in the Senior Phase resulting in a rigorous approach to utilising performance data;
- through monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching;
- by involving parents, carers and families as a means to improve performance?

What key outcomes have we achieved?

In line with the Scottish Government's Raising Attainment agenda, West Dunbartonshire Council is firmly committed to improving the life chances of young people. WDC's Raising Attainment Strategy promotes data analysis, quality learning experiences and parental involvement as key strategies in raising attainment and achievement. Fully committed to closing the gap, the strategy has impacted on WDC's Education Service Plan and on establishments via Standards & Quality Reports, School Improvement Planning and Raising Attainment Action Plans. The VSE group sought to evaluate the impact of the above through scrutiny of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data. This included data analysis, examination of documentation, professional dialogue, engagement with pupils, parents and partners and visits to establishments to observe impact.

The authority has developed and implemented a rigorous, comprehensive and inclusive approach to the analytical use of performance data in the Senior Phase. The Leadership for Learning Programme and the establishment of Raising Attainment teachers in every secondary school are two key drivers for enhanced professional development and improved outcomes for learners.

The Leadership for Learning Programme is now embedded in each secondary school and includes validation of a school's own self-evaluation through the use of quantitative and qualitative evidence and direct observation in classrooms. There are opportunities to involve Principal Teachers and Faculty Heads in sharing their successes and areas for development. Through a mix of direct observation and professional dialogue, staff at all levels, including support staff, felt that these visits were worthwhile and supported the Raising Attainment agenda as a clear priority for the Council.

The Raising Attainment teachers have made a significant, positive impact in improving outcomes for young people. Young people confidently describe the positive impact of a number of raising attainment strategies including mentoring, master classes and supported study. All spoke positively about the ways they were encouraged to be ambitious and how they were helped to be the best they can be.

The effective monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching is embedded in the authority within a clear structure developed as part of the Quality Improvement Framework. Liaison between the authority and establishments over a period of years, combined with a focus within establishments, has resulted in schools developing strong processes for the

monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching. There is a clear focus during classroom visits leading to improved outcomes for young people. Pupils enjoy a strong voice in improving the quality of their learning experiences, leading to further improvement in teaching approaches. A positive culture exists within schools where staff feel the balance between support and challenge is strong and that they have had many opportunities to lead learning. All staff, including learning assistants, are involved in evaluating learning and teaching.

The authority has a continuing clear focus on parental involvement. There is a strong commitment to parental involvement at school and authority level and a shared understanding of the importance of parents as partners in their child's learning. Parents are included and consulted at a strategic level through the Parental Involvement Strategy Group and at a school level through an active network of Parent Councils. Parents are involved in authority committee meetings, staff appointment procedures, curriculum design and the allocation of financial support to all secondary schools. A range of needs driven approaches, tailored to specific contexts, is a common and key feature of success in parental engagement.

Although developing data rich establishments, evaluating learning and teaching and parental engagement cuts across all educational sectors, the scope of the VSE was to consider the impact on attainment, achievement and closing the gap in the Senior Phase. The following trends provide evidence of positive impact:

- In the five year trends, taking 2009 as the baseline, the Council has improved in 10 out of 11 measures with no change in 1 measure;
- Year on year comparison with 2012 shows 7 measures increased, 3 stayed the same and 1 decreased;
- Last session high schools equalled or exceeded their highest ever level of attainment in 8 of the 11 measures;
- The authority has received national recognition through a number of awards including COSLA, Scottish Education Awards and SQA Star Awards;
- Pupils have demonstrated success in a wide variety of other awards that contribute to wider achievement.

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

There is a concerted effort on the part of the authority to develop pupil voice. Pupils are regularly involved in the evaluation of learning and teaching and are consulted about a wide range of issues via a range of forums. Authority monitoring and evaluation of performance data has resulted in significant improvements in support for young people.

The Leadership for Learning Programme enables schools to focus on strategies for improvement and has impacted positively on the professional development of staff at all levels. The Raising Attainment teachers have made a positive impact on pupil performance and attainment via a wider and more focused range of study support measures, resulting in an increased pupil awareness of strengths and development needs. Young people have developed an increased sense of involvement and responsibility and, consequently, academic performance has improved. The authority has enjoyed considerable success in

relation to wider achievement.

The Council has enjoyed success involving parents in the education of their children. The network of Parent Councils and Parental Engagement Workshops has resulted in parents playing an important role in the life of establishments.

Reflecting the active role of elected members in raising attainment, the Council has made available an annual sum of £55,000 from which each secondary school Parent Council receives an allocation to enable parents to support and improve educational provision. This finance has been used to support raising attainment initiatives and opportunities for achievement. Evaluation reports suggest that parents greatly value this sense of responsibility and involvement.

Good support is offered to parents through a range of communication channels and the provision of formal training for engagement, including involvement in selection panels and Parent Councils. The Raising Attainment teachers have developed strong relationships with parents through a sophisticated communication network. Effective support is also offered through Parent Information Evenings within establishments. Parents are included and consulted at authority and establishment level through the Parental Involvement Strategy Group, chaired by a parent, and, more recently, the Parental Consultative Group. The Council has benefited from having significant involvement from a parent who leads the National Parent Forum. The restructuring of Educational Services will enable the authority to monitor more rigorously the consistent implementation of the Parental Involvement Strategy.

The Raising Attainment Strategy has had a positive impact on professional development. There are good opportunities for staff at all levels to enhance skills and develop leadership capacity. The Leadership for Learning Programme has resulted in improved staff confidence in the analysis of performance data, leading to improvements in attainment. The Raising Attainment teachers have had a positive impact on the professional development of staff. Raising Attainment teachers have established very productive connections between departments and have effectively built capacity.

Monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching is effective and has led to a focus on approaches to improving learners' experiences. Teachers are very comfortable with school processes in place to monitor the quality of learning and teaching through peer observation and SMT formal monitoring. Young people enjoy a strong voice in shaping improvements to their learning experiences. The evolution of Teacher Learning Communities supports improved consistency across establishments, impacting positively on pupils.

The Raising Attainment Strategy has enabled the authority and establishments to work together in a culture of professional openness and respect. The strategy has ensured that the raising attainment agenda maintains a high profile and has had a positive impact on all levels of improvement planning across the authority.

How good is our leadership and management?

There is evidence of effective, creative and innovative strategic leadership and management

regarding the authority's Raising Attainment agenda that has impacted positively on meeting stakeholder needs. There is a strong commitment to this strategy from Elected Members, the Executive Director of Educational Services and the Senior Management Team. The investment of time, money and effort is evidence of this commitment and also of the vision and leading strategic role of the Director. The Quality Improvement Framework clearly sets out expectations for support and challenge which has driven forward steps to improve attainment.

The leadership and management of the Raising Attainment Strategy is collegiate in nature in that there is open dialogue at all stages of implementing the strategy.

The authority is aware of the need to ensure a balance between prescription and allowing schools a degree of flexibility regarding their own contexts. All stakeholders including parents, staff and pupils are encouraged to participate and elected members make a significant contribution to the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy. The evolving nature of the strategy is evidence of rigorous self evaluation processes at authority level, resulting in changes and continuous improvements to the approach year on year: changes which have made the process more rigorous and challenging. The authority has shown a willingness to listen to, and act upon, advice to improve the process. There is evidence of effective leadership and management regarding attainment and achievement at all levels in establishments.

What is our capacity for improvement?

Our capacity for improvement is good. There is a clear commitment to embrace self evaluation as a vehicle for effecting change and improvement. This positive approach is evident across all sectors of the authority. It is recognised that strategies and policies require regular review. This open, professional and self critical attitude will ensure the continuing evolution of a Raising Attainment Strategy which improves outcomes for young people. Capacity for future improvement is further enhanced by collegiate working across the authority to ensure effective self evaluation and improvement. There is a sense of a shared vision and evidence of effective partnership working.

There is evidence across all sectors of the authority's capacity for improvement and the restructuring of Educational Services should support further improvement. The authority has already demonstrated the ability to adapt and improve its practices year on year. There is clear evidence of establishments refining their practice in monitoring and evaluating in order to raise attainment.

Key strengths

- The clear commitment at all levels to the raising attainment agenda, closing the gap and improving outcomes for young people
- The commitment to engaging purposefully in self evaluation processes to secure a culture of continuous improvement as reflected in the re-structuring of the Policy Performance and Improvement Service
- The leading role and vision of the Executive Director of Educational Services and the Head of Educational Services, and the enhanced participation of elected members in the raising attainment agenda

- The open atmosphere of trust, collegiality, partnership working and the sharing of good practice
The positive impact of the Leadership for Learning Programme and the Raising Attainment Teachers as key drivers for improvement
- The robust and rigorous programme of performance analysis and interpretation of data which is linked directly to improving outcomes for young people
- Very strong professional development and leadership opportunities for staff
- The positive impact of the Raising Attainment Strategy on performance in SQA examinations

Main areas for improvement

- Revise and communicate the Raising Attainment Strategy to ensure it addresses the current educational context and changes in central authority structures
- Develop a more systematic approach to accrediting and recording the wider achievement of learners
- Ensure more rigour and consistency in monitoring and evaluating processes relating to the Raising Attainment Strategy
- Continue to build upon strategies for improving parental engagement
- Continue to develop leadership capacity and professional development opportunities
- Continue to learn from the experience of the validated self evaluation process to continue building future capacity

Transitions

Theme – Focus

Transitions (P7-S2)

Examine the effectiveness of transitions 3-18 through an evaluation of:

The impact of transitions policy and practice on planning for progression, depth, coherence and relevance.

Phase one evaluation will focus on the transition from primary to secondary in the five cluster groups.

After review of the process applied in phase one, evaluation will focus on transition 3-6, from broad general education to senior phase and from senior phase to post 16.

What key outcomes have we achieved?

Evidence from school inspections shows a very positive report for the quality of provision in the local authority. It is reported that there are effective transition arrangements in place particularly in the area of pastoral care. Evidence from the VSE process identifies the need to plan curricular transition more effectively.

To evaluate the impact of our provision for transition, a review of the attainment and achievement of individuals has been tracked across primary into secondary. The purpose is to evaluate our performance in achieving positive outcomes for learners and to identify successful models as well as areas for development.

Across all sectors our most able pupils achieve very well. There are examples of some groups of pupils with a high SIMD attaining and achieving very well. Additionally, there are examples of local primary schools with high SIMD outperforming local comparator schools. Comparator data between schools and other local authorities is being used to identify good practice to be shared across clusters and sectors. Further work is required to identify what the key factors are that impact on the success of those schools that outperform other comparator schools so that we can ensure there is a consistency of pace and progression across the transition (P7/S1) for primary schools in each of our cluster areas.

The authority is highly committed to improving the attainment of our most vulnerable young people. An authority drive to monitor more rigorously attainment from primary into secondary has highlighted a decrease in attainment between primary 3 and S2. Our evidence suggests that the decline begins in primary 4. Data for children with additional support needs shows a high level of commitment to identifying and planning for meeting the needs of our young people. Analysis of ASN data has been correlated with GL assessment data to identify patterns and trends.

In the transition from primary to secondary, data on the social and emotional needs of learners is used to support enhanced transitions for individual children which would indicate

good practice in pastoral care transition. However, this is not always replicated in planning the curricular content. Tracking data for 3 cohort groups of children on staged intervention suggests there is a 20% increase in the number recorded as requiring staged intervention in S2 compared to when they were in P7. An evaluation of reasons for this requires further research but our initial review would suggest that improvement in planning for progression and continuity is necessary to ensure P7/S1 curriculum content provides an appropriate pace and challenge for all children. This will require a collective model for curriculum review and planning across primary and secondary. As part of WDC's MCMC work in secondary schools an early identification strategy is used to support the delivery of positive destinations for the majority of our school leavers through the use of a risk matrix model. This model has proved to be a success and an evaluation of its impact for use in primary schools is underway so that we can streamline and co-ordinate systems and processes for sharing information as part of transition.

In order to provide a baseline against which existing practice in transitions can be evaluated, models of success in West Dunbartonshire where joint planning and effective use of assessment information has improved outcomes for our young people have been identified. Our literacy strategy shows emerging evidence of a positive impact on attainment using the literacy hub model. This is also evident in the initial findings of our Early Years Collaborative work. These initiatives involved a translation of shared objectives, joint planning, shared understanding of processes and collective responsibility. These principles should assist staff in developing transition processes which ensure a smooth learner journey from primary to secondary for all learners.

High levels of commitment to supporting the wider achievement of our learners is evident in, for example, the number of schools awarded ECO status and Rights Respecting School Accreditation. A wide range of processes is used to plan and record the wider achievement of pupils. Learner profiling is used very well by some establishments to support engagement by stakeholders. This is consistent in early years, primaries and secondaries. In line with national policy all primary 7 children have produced profiles which have been transferred from primary to secondary. All schools use a similar format to aid consistency. This stems from the local authority strategy for assessment and our approach to the broad general education.

An authority audit of the secondary sector evidences a comprehensive provision for the wider achievement of learners. A model for sharing and planning between primary and secondary is required to ensure cohesion for learners. Data about learner achievement should be used more effectively to personalise the curriculum at key points of transition.

There is consistency in the learning experience of our young people across sectors. A survey of our young people in transition from primary 7 to S1 evidences that our strategy for CfE has made a positive impact on the quality of learning experience with co-operative learning, AiFL and teacher learning communities used consistently. This provides a strong platform upon which to build our transitions agenda.

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

The majority of our young people are positive about their experience of transition and report that this helps them prepare for the transition from P7 to secondary. They feel valued and respected. They would like to experience a wider range of subjects during their transition programme from primary to secondary.

Our rates of exclusion have reduced significantly. Absence and exclusion rates are higher in secondary than primary but this is in line with national trends. A clear commitment to meet the needs of our young people is evident in the use of MCMC, an enhanced transition programme and the provision of alternatives for those at risk of missing out. The use of a risk matrix in secondary is being evaluated against the staged intervention process used in primary and secondary to try and develop a consistent model to support effective transition. This evidence based approach to tracking learner need has great potential.

The majority of parents are satisfied with arrangements for transition. Data gathered highlights models of good practice used from early years to primary. These could be used to support a continuous model of parental engagement at key points of transition. There are very positive parental evaluations of the transition process from mainstream to specialist provision this is a key area of strength. Parents report they are well informed about transition processes.

There is evidence of commitment in each cluster to the principle of transitions. Our staff are conversant with the rationale of CfE and recognise the professional responsibility to engage in the strategy for improvement. Very good practice is evident in most clusters of improvement strategies to support planning for curriculum, continuity and progression and the sharing of standards.

Commitment to cluster working groups is high and opportunities to share across the authority should be promoted. An example of very good practice is the work in Clydebank High School with curriculum working groups for all subjects involving primary and secondary staff. Staff evaluated provision, produced plans for improvement and meet regularly. These groups aim to deliver a cohesive curriculum experience.

Dumbarton Academy Cluster has delivered a cohesive approach to transition in mathematics and numeracy. Collaboration on curricular content at P7 into S1 has enabled support matched to the level of need for groups and individuals. There has been a reduction in the number of children moved between groups at the start of S1 due to shared approaches to curriculum planning and assessment (shared standards). Review of planning for progression and curricular content across the cluster facilitated dialogue about levels of expectation for attainment in P7 and S1.

Our staff are highly committed to their own professional development evidenced in the high numbers participating in teacher learning communities. Authority participation in the GTCS pilot for professional update demonstrates a clear commitment to support the continuous professional learning of staff.

How good is our leadership and management?

A local authority transitions policy was produced in 2011. The translation of this policy into practice is varied and requires review in light of the most recent national advice. There are very well established transition projects in all clusters with examples of practice in some subject areas that is considered to be very good.

The transitions agenda has featured in local authority service plans for a number of years. The VSE model provides opportunity for rigorous evaluation of policy. This demonstrates an authority commitment to high quality service delivery. The wide range of sectors represented in the transitions group is building capacity for improvement.

Evaluation of strategies for raising attainment and the CfE Implementation Plan identified transitions as a key area for further development. The central direction to form learning communities supports a more efficient model of resource allocation with shared responsibility across both the learning communities and the local authority for leadership, school improvement, curriculum planning and raised attainment. This is further supported by the re-structure of the central local authority team, with a team of Service Managers having delegated responsibility for key areas of service improvement. In the Service Improvement Plan, transitions is recognised as a key area for further development.

National expectation for a cohesive 3-18 curriculum requires a workforce capable of delivery. The authority leadership strategy of June 2013 aims to drive this agenda for change to ensure our workforce has the skills, knowledge and understanding to provide a high quality experience of learning. This will extend to include staff responsibility to be informed about curriculum and pedagogy. This strategy also responds to a local and national shortage of headteachers. Models for shared headship, curriculum leaders, and secondments are being piloted. A review of the content and structure of education leaders meetings and headteacher focus meetings aims to enhance opportunities for sharing good practice and for collective planning for the entitlements across all sectors. These will become a platform for the implementation of education policy which includes transition. Cluster planning is well established and a refreshed model is being directed centrally.

The authority leadership strategy is in response to the national lead to improve standards in Scottish schools. Our leadership for learning is increasingly effective and has already made a difference to the quality of the life and work of the education service. This will support transition planning across sectors as there is a raised expectation for school managers to take responsibility for our education service and not solely their own establishment. This agenda will support a transformation in working practice that meets the national agenda for Scottish education.

What is our capacity for improvement?

Our capacity for improvement is strong. A re-structure of the management service in education will continue to enable the implementation of key strategic priorities for CfE. This development for our education service provides a strong platform for continued improvement in transitions as an increased expectation is being set by the local authority.

Transitions policy is evident in the education service plan and evaluation of the impact of policy implementation is facilitated by the VSE process. The service manager with responsibility for curriculum is working in partnership with the evaluation team. The identification of this theme as an area requiring significant improvement highlights the strength of the authority openness and willingness to engage in robust evaluation of practice.

Capacity for translation of policy into practice is very strong as a more streamlined approach is being directed centrally. The re- structure will support this. Key policy drivers for raised attainment, CfE and leadership encompass collective responsibility and collaboration.

There is a strong commitment to planning for continuity and progression with working groups in each cluster improving provision. Raised expectation for sharing successful strategies between clusters will support continued development.

Local authority strategies for learning and teaching, raising attainment and CFE have had a positive impact on ensuring consistency of experience across all sectors. The formation of learning communities is a strong platform for continued improvement.

The VSE model has built leadership capacity. There are strong indicators emerging from the engagement week of commendable levels of professionalism and commitment from the theme chairs, group members and CMT. The principles of VSE have been central to this success.

Key strengths

- High level of professional commitment to delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people in WDC;
- Comprehensive data sets for children's attainment and achievement;
- High level of commitment to involving parents in their child's learning;
- All children have profiles in P7 and S3;
- Cluster and cross sector planning for The Entitlements within CfE;
- The VSE has built a robust model of distributed leadership which will extend and develop leadership responsibility and capacity of many key staff;
- Involvement of elected members in some of the themes;
- The education authority's openness and willingness to engage in robust evaluation of practice.

Main areas for improvement

West Dunbartonshire should continue to develop a streamlined approach to planning for improvement.

West Dunbartonshire should continue to audit the efficacy of the range of data systems for targeted support with a view to aiding early intervention for those at risk of underachieving in P7-S2.

West Dunbartonshire should continue to share successful strategies across sectors (learning communities).

Promotion of high quality cross-sectoral professional dialogue to further develop:

- The purpose and use of profiles;
- Standards of learning at key milestones;
- The need for key data/ information to be shared at critical points of a learner's journey.

West Dunbartonshire should continue to make better use of benchmarking information to help the process of agreeing priorities for future development.

Health and Wellbeing

Theme - Focus

How effective are West Dunbartonshire Council's Health and Wellbeing strategies, with reference to Emotional Health in enhancing Education Outcomes for children aged 3-8?

What key outcomes have we achieved?

Good commitment of staff in taking forward health and wellbeing strategy is evident. Across West Dunbartonshire there is evidence from a variety of sources that children are making good progress in their learning and we have begun to gather data to measure attainment at the early level for example through the establishment of the baseline literacy assessment. In addition educational psychologists are taking a lead role and making effective use of data to support the Health and wellbeing strategy.

Levels of attendance reflect West Dunbartonshire's priority and commitment to the belief that every child will realise their potential through regular attendance at Educational establishments. Multi-agency working and partnership with parents enhance the provision of support and are effective in meeting the needs of young people. Some of the examples the group were impressed with were the partnerships with the Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) in delivering parenting support.

There is a coherent approach to partnership planning which ensures effective joint working based on the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child to deliver positive outcomes for young people. Evidence for this was from the responses of Headteachers / managers in early years centres who took part in questionnaire surveys carried out across the council. They felt that multi-agency working and partnership with parents was very beneficial in helping to better meet the needs of children.

There has been a series of training opportunities provided to ensure that practitioners have a shared knowledge, understanding and language of the health and wellbeing indicators and are in a better position to deliver these through the development and implementation of a single child's plan and named person. All teaching staff undertook training in GIRFEC. It is clear that those spoken with had enjoyed training and had benefited from it in terms of helping either re-fresh skills or develop more appropriate ways of engaging with children and their parents. Staff also spoke well of the training in PATHs and FAST and Solihull and the impact of these approaches on the wellbeing of children.

Documentation provided by the council showed that there had been a significant uptake of training from frontline staff across health, education, social work and also from the third sector. This was aimed at helping work in partnership with parents. Through the visits undertaken throughout the engagement week, staff and parents spoke about the value of this partnership. There was evidence of the impact of the Solihull and PATHS training on the early years workforce. In particular, staff in one EECC visited during the engagement week welcomed the input on Solihull which they felt was enabling them to be more reflective and in applying strategies which they had been learning on the course.

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

In the establishments visited as part of our themed focus there was clear understanding about the role of all staff and the requirement to work well in partnership with others to create a nurturing, caring and stimulating environment where children felt safe and included. There was evidence of a willingness to embrace new methodologies, interventions and resources.

West Dunbartonshire Council funds a number of nurture groups across the local authority which provide enhanced provision for our most vulnerable children. The culture enabled effective team working within the establishment and beyond its physical environment. Parents feel valued and consider staff approachable and responsive to their children's needs and also their own needs. Parents commended the school highly with regard to the impact of the nurture group provision their children had received.

There were planned development opportunities which enabled the staff to become skilled and confident in recognising when support was needed and what form this would take to ensure that the emotional needs of the child were met. Where this was most effective and having the greatest impact was when there were planned opportunities for staff to share professional dialogue, resources and professional learning experiences. These opportunities happened both within individual education establishments and across establishments, for example Nurture Group schools and PATHS practitioners met on a regular basis to share good practice. In this environment and culture there is respect which is shared across the establishment and which adds value to the learning experience of the young people. Training and development is built in to maximise impact on both staff and the young people. Where there was the opportunity to work together with partner agencies, the establishments were able to maximise the impact of their specialist skills, knowledge and expertise upon the learning of the young people within the establishment and also within its local community. Good examples are the parenting support programmes and Roots of Empathy. The shared goals become the focus and staff feel motivated, valued and empowered to deliver learning where health and wellbeing is of equal importance as numeracy and literacy.

Curriculum for Excellence states clearly that, for effective delivery of health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes, partnership working must engage the active support of parents and carers. In the establishments which were visited parents are engaged through the formation of good relationships. Parents and carers reported that they felt welcome within the establishment and that staff were approachable, supportive and responsive to their needs and the needs of their child. The establishments recognised the skills that parents can offer to support the development of health and wellbeing in all children. Where there was targeted support the parents experienced transparency and clarity about the progress that their child was making and the different supports offered by the establishment to enable this to happen both in school and at home. The parents and carers were involved in discussions and there were agreed actions, priorities and responsibilities. Parents reported that they were able to access a range of supports eg Seasons for Growth, Roots of Empathy and Incredible Years programmes. Parents whose children had participated in Seasons for growth were able to provide practical examples of ways in which this approach had helped their children deal with change and loss.

Children felt included and part of their learning community. They knew that staff cared for and valued them through the celebration of their achievements. There were opportunities for activities which focused on health and wellbeing outcomes and involved learning indoors and outdoors, one example is the development of forest schools which is positively impacting on the emotional wellbeing of children. There were opportunities for children to lead the development of health and wellbeing for themselves and for others.

How good is our leadership and management?

There is recognition that strong leadership is crucial if all establishments are to strengthen and expand their role in developing children's health and wellbeing. West Dunbartonshire Council's Educational Services strategic plan is linked to national priorities which focus on improving outcomes for all learners. There are clear links between national policy advice and the department's Curriculum for Excellence 3 - 18 Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The strategy has clear aims, purposes and objectives and it was developed with involvement from a variety of practitioners which ensured that there was a consistent and common approach. Through the Strategy, West Dunbartonshire Council clearly identifies its vision for leading and developing key aspects of health and wellbeing in order to secure improvements.

The Health and Wellbeing Framework for schools has developed from Phase One to Phase Two. From 2009 to 2012 all schools within the authority received a focused health Phase One visit. From the information gathered in the course of the Phase One visits it is evident there is much in the way of good practice across West Dunbartonshire in health and wellbeing - some of which has been recognised across the country. There is a clear expectation that the principles behind the Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included approach permeates the health and wellbeing of all young people. Getting It Right for Every Child is also a key consideration which focuses on the key entitlement to personal support which enables young people to gain as much as possible from the opportunities which Curriculum for Excellence can provide.

Many schools and early years centres are succeeding in creating a common strategy to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for children through the collegiate formation of integrated health and wellbeing policies which make clear the links between the national and local guidance. In the establishments which were part of the themed visits, this integrated approach supports and enhances the development of the curriculum and creates an ethos where health and wellbeing is seen as central to helping every child and young person realise their potential. In these schools there was a culture of openness and collaboration with shared expectations and clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and accountability in improving health and wellbeing outcomes for all learners. This was directly linked to effective leadership which both challenged and supported staff to develop their knowledge, behaviour and attitude to the needs of the establishment. In the establishments visited there were working groups or health committees which were instrumental in improving aspects of health and wellbeing whilst affording opportunity at the same time for developing the leadership skills of others.

What is our capacity for improvement?

There is clear evidence from our self-evaluation processes to demonstrate that there are effective strategies and measures established to ensure positive outcomes in health and wellbeing. There is quality and value in the Health and Wellbeing strategic framework which empowers staff to make effective contributions to ensuring positive educational outcomes for children and their families. There is strong capacity for improvement through the effective distributed leadership at all levels and through partnership working across the Authority. Effective professional learning opportunities are provided for all practitioners who work with children and their families, many of which are supported and delivered by partners

Key strengths

- Health and wellbeing is valued and viewed as a priority and is seen as a key driver in improving achievement and reducing inequality;
- The new health and wellbeing strategy is actively consulted in many establishments to guide developments and practice;
- The authority has shown commitment to responding to the specific needs for emotional health and wellbeing in individual communities;
- There are opportunities for staff, parents and partners to meet, discuss and respond to concerns about individual children's health and wellbeing needs;
- Strong supportive and effective leadership is evident at establishment level which contributes to improved educational outcomes for children and young people;
- All educational establishments have a range of approaches in place which help create a supportive and nurturing ethos;
- Partnership working with other agencies is planned and is proactive in contributing to meeting the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children and young people;
- Practitioners have access to high quality training opportunities;
- There is a willingness by staff to embrace new methodology, interventions and resources;
- There is evidence that the workforce is committed and driven to ensure the best possible emotional health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people;
- Staff are able to engage in good reflective discussions and recognise the value of focused group discussions and observations to enhance the self-evaluation process;
- There are opportunities for review and reflection by members of educational establishments, partners and parents which inform future developments and strategic planning aimed at improving emotional and health and wellbeing.

Main areas for improvement

- Develop the strategic plan which guides how opportunities to participate in initiatives that improve emotional health and well being are offered to establishments and ensure that the health and wellbeing strategy is being implemented by all;
- Seek the views of a varied sample of Head Teachers, children and parents using focus groups and questionnaires and continue to review and refine processes for evaluating the longer term impact of emotional health and wellbeing approaches on children and families;
- Investigate how to measure and record consistently the impact of emotional health and wellbeing approaches on children's attainment and achievements;

- Make better use of existing quality improvement measures and arrangements, including improvement planning processes to improve self evaluation When writing future evaluative reports on progress and impact of emotional health and wellbeing, it would be helpful to use both qualitative and quantitative data more, terms such as 'all' 'most' 'the majority' should be employed where applicable;
- Ensure WDC builds the capacity to sustain effective initiatives which positively impact on improved educational outcomes for children and young people, continue to build in a focus on training and sample the impact of training to help with self-evaluation;
- Improve procedures for joint planning between partners, staff and parents to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of children.

Vale of Leven Community Joint Evaluation (Educational Services/CL and D)

Theme - Focus

A learning community seeks to address the learning needs of its locality through partnership. It uses the strengths of institutions, public, private and voluntary services, and community groups to enable young people and adults to achieve to their full potential. Learning communities use learning as a way to build community capacity, and to promote social cohesion, social inclusion, regeneration and economic development.

- Learning in Scotland's Communities, 2011

The focus of this theme will be based around the following 3 questions:

- Does the partnership enable joint planning, co-ordination and evaluation of learning opportunities provided for young people?
- How effective is the partnership at facilitating the sharing of local intelligence, information collection and collation of information to identify the priority needs/gaps to provide tailored opportunities for VOL young people?
- How well does the partnership identify and meet joint workforce development needs?

What key outcomes have we achieved?

The CL&D self evaluation had already highlighted a need for an improved joint planning process. The VSE group decided that while additional evaluation was being completed, work should begin to address areas for improvement that had already been noted. Joint projects were set up within Vale of Leven Academy (VOLA) to meet the needs of identified groups of young people. This would be used to help establish an effective method of joint planning with ongoing evaluation embedded within the programme. A joint needs assessment and identification of shared priorities was undertaken. Information has been gleaned from the VOLA Improvement Plan, CL&D Self Evaluation/Improvement Plan the Corporate Objectives and the analysis of shared data e.g. school leavers destinations, MCMC Matrix, STACS. This has clarified the kind of partnership work that would be useful to support a range of identified needs of the young people in VOLA.

Work has begun on the embedding of ongoing joint evaluation within the planning and delivery of new projects to meet needs, priorities and shared outcomes identified from the initial VSE work. Regular meetings have taken place between VOLA staff and CL&D staff; bespoke programmes have been created to meet the needs identified; evaluation of programmes established since November 2013 have been jointly planned.

It was recognised that further self evaluation would be required to be undertaken within the

education sector, both at strategic and operational level, with professional dialogue being planned with Managers (Education and CL&D) and Head Teachers across all sectors. Where appropriate, support staff, parents and pupils will be consulted. Further involvement of groups within the community and wider partners are an area for ongoing evaluation.

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

For this evaluation, stakeholders will include pupils, parents, West Dunbartonshire Council CL&D staff, education staff, including support staff/volunteers and partners.

A programme has been set up in response to a need to support young people in studying highs. Information from previous results, pastoral care, parental contact and pupil voice all indicated that a group of senior school girls, who were doing very well academically but were feeling stressed due to the amount of work they had to complete. Some were doing a number of highs including crash courses. Joint planning with CL&D produced a planned approach to implement support which would impact on their stress management, coping skills, time management and study skills.

A second project has been set up in response to a need to support a group of S4 boys who are underachieving in the new national qualifications. The aim is to help increased confidence, motivation, knowledge & skills and attainment and achievement of those pupils involved. On-going evaluation is embedded in the programme. A third project was set up to help local community working to be shared with school. Previous evaluation had shown that a group of young people had been working with CL&D in the community setting, to complete Youth Achievement Awards; these young people had produced a portfolio of work which evidenced a wide range of skills and achievement. The pupils did not share their success with their school. With a lack of systems in place for partners to share the learner journey, an opportunity to build on the young persons' progress and success, was lost. A similar group, which is currently running in the community, now has had one period set aside in the secondary school. The young person has an opportunity to work on their project, share their skills and make links with the curriculum. School staff have an opportunity to use this information to further support the young person.

How good is our leadership and management?

There are regular strategic meetings between Educational Services and CL&D.

At a strategic level the focus on joint planning, partnership working and the development of sharing of local knowledge, sits with actions included within the Education Service Plan 2012-17. The plan includes identifying and implementing opportunities for wider achievement and developing Senior Phase curriculum models to meet the needs of all learners. This requires us to plan, implement and evaluate with a wide variety of partners. Effective systems of monitoring and recording achievement and sharing local information are essential to support this process.

The West Dunbartonshire Council Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan 2013-14 makes clear reference to partnership working and development for staff.

The VSE partnership draws on the collective knowledge, experience and interests of the participants and creates opportunities to lead on projects. Members of the group have been working on building sustainable relationships and identifying roles and responsibilities. Aims and roles within the partnership are being clarified and strengthened as we work through the joint projects. Training requests have been made by Vale of Leven Academy staff to increase their expertise in some of the techniques being used in the stress management class. CL&D have offered to lead a training session to overtake this request. Vale of Leven Academy has offered to organise shadowing within the school for CL&D. This is a method of professional development that college lecturers have found useful. The CL&D tutors would follow either a member of staff or a pupil depending which perspective they wished to experience.

What is our capacity for improvement?

There is an understanding that our focus is currently on the Vale of Leven Learning Community and this learning community model of working will need to be shared across the authority. The implications of rolling out this model will have to be discussed at a strategic level and a plan put in place. A joint agreement will need to be considered and implemented to ensure best use of resources in relation to need and successful outcomes for stakeholders. Partnership programmes e.g. Hungry Caterpillar need to incorporate forward planning / next steps as part of the strategic planning, in order to manage expectations and maximise resources. Successful partnership planning within the Vale of Leven Community may not be directly transferrable to other areas of the community, but may be of value as a model to be adapted to suit local needs.

Based on evaluations completed so far for some of the planned groups, there is a need for greater clarity from the strategic planning stages right down to the implementation of the programmes. It is essential, to avoid confusion, that programme outcomes and understanding of the content to be used is shared with all members of the partnership, right down to those delivering the programme. Monitoring of programmes of work needs to be rigorous and support for staff made available when required.

There is more work to be done on improving the sharing of information of pupils involved in CL&D programmes within the community. A more formal method of collating and transferring relevant details which incorporates all areas of the Learning Community e.g. volunteering, sports clubs, needs to be explored. Awareness raising with key staff within schools of the links that can be made with CL&D could enhance current partnership working.

Current joint planning using the risk matrix, staged intervention, joint assessment team, pastoral care and relevant partners, focuses on identifying and supporting young people. This process could further assist with continued development of support for young offenders.

Achievement is an area of priority across the authority and work is planned to develop methods of capturing and recording all achievement. This will include achievement within schools and across the community, with the young person at the centre.

Key strengths

Good ground work has taken place in sharing data and undertaking joint needs assessment. Previous learning programmes have been evaluated and their impact on attainment and accreditation has been undertaken. Strong values are shared by staff who complement each other, offering a wide range of skills and experience. Staff have benefited from the opportunity to participate in the partnership, enabling effective sharing of practice.

Partnerships with other establishments, organisations and businesses are used to broaden and deepen young people's learning and to enable them to achieve success in wider contexts. This work is carefully planned by school leaders to enhance the curriculum and develop the perspectives of both children and staff. Some of the work is currently jointly planned with the partner; however, this needs to be rolled out. Formalising of partnership agreements is progressing e.g. Duke of Edinburgh.

Education staff call on the services of partners, agencies and community groups which they know can contribute relevant and high quality additional experiences, to specific curriculum areas. Pupils can participate in a wide range of activities including leadership, enterprise, community involvement, work placements and shadowing and sports leadership awards. Schools have a wide range of partners to support these areas. VOLA is a Scottish Football Association School of Football with SFA coaching staff delivering a coaching programme within the school. Kuehne+Nagel have agreed a long term partnership with VOLA focused on their logistics project with the S3 pupils. VOLA have completed an audit of partners who include Nuffield with their Bursary Programme, Tullochan work with MCMC pupils, Cameron House careers day and REACH/ Focus West Programmes.

There are effective partnerships developing, based upon joint learning and evaluation, resulting in positive outcomes which address a range of issue based work with young people across the school. This includes effective targeting of young people at most risk e.g. positive work addressing the needs of young carers and MCMC programme which helps young people develop the confidence and life skills to make informed career choices. Partnerships with the local college, fire service, Y Sort It, Tullochan and CL&D has supported this work.

The wider community around VOLA also plays a key and effective part in supporting young people in transition through the Homework Study clubs. Local volunteers have an opportunity to work with pupils, parents and staff as well as increase their own skills and experiences.

CLD partnerships are strengthening with approaches to joint planning and shared evaluation beginning to develop. This has resulted in positive recognition from School staff about the impact this is having on them as teachers, the development of skills in the pupils and effective contribution to the community. There is a strong contribution from CLD to CfE. The photography and fire raising project at Ladyton Primary School enabled children and young people to develop skills in communication, team work, knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. This resulted in growth in confidence, increasing responsibilities and making effective contribution to their community. The Hungry Caterpillar programme at Haldane Primary School provides a very good example of family learning, with primary one

pupils able to articulate impact. The parents spoke about growth in their confidence, impact on health and wellbeing, healthy eating, as well as improving relationships with their children, school staff. Some parents commented that it had opened the door to engage in other opportunities. The Head teacher recognised the learning and is keen for school staff to deliver similar programming

Main areas for improvement

Although wider partners are involved in delivering in VOLA and within the Learning Community, some good work is currently carried out side by side rather than together. There is a need to improve partnership working, to self evaluate and plan jointly in order to offer coordinated opportunities for young people and parents. It would be beneficial to engage in professional dialogue, with colleagues across Scotland, who are developing a joint self-evaluation process in a learning community.

Wider partners need to be consulted and to inform how best to take this development forward particularly in light of the existing effective CPP Youth Alliance and Adult Learning Partnerships and their roles in jointly planning for and addressing the needs of young people and families in West Dunbartonshire. A partnership workshop has been discussed and is likely to be delivered in Spring 2014. The workshop would provide an opportunity to discuss the recommendations and implications of the Woods Commission draft report on Developing Scotland's Young Workforce

It would be helpful for partners to look at how they can continue to provide opportunities that offer skills progression during the transition from primary school to secondary school. There are opportunities to develop some of the programmes already being delivered to allow reciprocal peer education across the sectors.

Many of the community projects being delivered are based on tackling issues. There is a need to move to highlighting community strengths and building on assets important in relation to community photography project and fire-raising project. The assets include the young people themselves, there are many positive role models

Some of the areas for improvement of partnerships within the Vale of Leven Academy/ learning community that have been noted are:

Out of School Hours Learning/Supported Study

- A need to gain more information regarding the origin of referrals as a large number appear to come directly from families, with fewer from Education;
- OSHL staff need to look at how they report back to school staff as a programme is progressing. Currently no report is produced for school staff on progress.

Tullochan

- To engage further with the school by being present at parents' evenings to allow the wider community to be aware of the work and impact they have in school;
- To include achievements with Tullochan in school reports.

Duke of Edinburgh

- Pupils recognise a need to raise awareness of their subject teachers regarding their involvement in DofE and their developing skills, knowledge and experience.

MCMC

- Build on youth alliance to include schools;
- Formalise partnerships – partners, as a collective, do not have the opportunity to plan together, agree shared outcomes and review impact and progress;
- Work to allow pupils to use skills to plan, organise and run an event.