

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Educational Services Committee: 11 September 2013

Subject: Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire - Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report updates Members on activity and progress with regard to implementing West Dunbartonshire's Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Educational Service Committee is recommended to:

- (a) note the progress made in the past three months with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire; and
- (b) note that a further update will be submitted to the Committee at its December 2013 meeting.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire was agreed by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee (now known as the Educational Services Committee) in September 2011. A further recommendation was agreed that a report on progress with the implementation of the Strategy should be presented to every Education and Lifelong Learning Committee (now known as the Educational Services Committee) as a standing item. This is the ninth such update.

4. Main Issues

Masterclasses

- 4.1** The second year of Educational Services Masterclasses was expanded due to popular demand. The classes were offered by subject specialists in Higher English, Mathematics, Biology, Human Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography and Modern Studies. Support for Higher PE studies was offered on Saturday mornings during term time, the focus being on improving extended writing for the written paper. This was delivered by a collaboration of English and PE staff.

Subjects were chosen based on high historical presentations and/or curricular areas needing improvement. There were 4 additional subjects compared to 2012; Biology, Human Biology, Modern Studies and PE studies. Masterclasses were timetabled over 3 days in 3 hour blocks and based in St Peter The Apostle for Clydebank students and in Vale of Leven Academy for Dumbarton and Vale of Leven students. Students attending morning and afternoon sessions were provided with a packed lunch. Over 700 students attended the sessions, some attending 4 or 5 sessions. Overall 22 staff were involved. Evaluations were carried out after all the Spring masterclasses. These are attached for information. (Appendix 1) In general students were very positive overall with an average 98% of students agreeing that they would attend again. However there were variations between subjects in responses regarding increasing pupil confidence and improved understanding of examination paper structure. These differences will form the basis for discussion with the staff evaluation meeting, to be held next term. Comments for improvement illustrate that the style of teacher input varied. Some students wanted 'more activity', fewer powerpoints, shorter sessions and more past paper examples. Others wanted 'more past paper examples', 'longer sessions', 'more classes' and others said 'don't change a thing'. Overall the majority of comments indicate a level of satisfaction with the sessions which would suggest that they would be welcomed in the future.

Summer School for Primary 7s

4.2 The standardised English assessments were analysed to identify young people who would benefit from support prior to entering secondary in August. (Appendix 2) This opportunity was offered to P7 pupils in all schools who scored a reading age between 9.00 years and 10.11 years. (120 children across the council). These were children who were reading but who could do with an extra boost in their higher order reading skills, and in their confidence. The proposal was

- To offer the summer school in July and again in August in order to give the maximum number of children to attend even if family holidays had been booked
- The Day would be a 9.30 to 2.30 day 3 days per week
- Each day would have an additional activity such as road safety, music, dance and art
- Lunches would be provided for the children
- WDC experienced primary teachers would deliver the literacy sessions.
- The sessions would be delivered in the children's own secondary schools.

The returns identified that the numbers were too small to make the August dates viable and these were cancelled.

Evaluation of P7 Summer School

4.3 The numbers attending were small but all the teachers reported that both they and the children enjoyed the experience. The children who attended came all three days. The activities offered outwith literacy were varied and enjoyable.

In future years we could boost numbers by giving this opportunity to the children who have a reading age above, or in line with their chronological age, as well as those who have a reading age a year to 18 months below their chronological age. Evaluations indicated that the quality of teaching was very good.

Raising Attainment Teachers

- 4.4 The Raising Attainment Teachers continue to work individually and together to maintain the focus on areas identified within each school's plan to raise attainment. Appendices 3 to 7 give Members an update in relation to each school.
- 4.5 As part of Educational Services Validated Self-Evaluation activity, the theme of "Raising Attainment and Achievement" is being explored. The Raising Attainment Teachers will gather information from their base schools as part of the overall themed evaluation. (Appendix 8) The evaluation findings will be used to inform future improvement to our processes and will be subject to validation activity.

5. People Implications

- 5.1 The Raising Attainment teachers will remain in post for the academic session 2013/2014. Opportunities for professional development will continue for this team to reflect particular issues as we go forward.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this progress report.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1 Failure to implement an authority-wide strategy to raise attainment will disadvantage our young people and may become a reputational risk to the Council.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 Educational services has carried out a screening in equality for this report. The report was found not to be relevant to the specified equality duty because the content provides an update on service delivery rather than stating a change in policy.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.
- 9.2 The young people who participated in Masterclasses were consulted via the questionnaires, summaries of which are included as Appendix 1.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to improve life chances for children and young people which is one of the strategic priorities for 2012 - 2017.

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Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Masterclass Evaluation
- Appendix 2 Primary 7, Summer School
- Appendix 3 Update from Clydebank High School
- Appendix 4 Update from Dumbarton Academy School
- Appendix 5 Update from Our Lady and St Patrick's High School
- Appendix 6 Update from St Peter the Apostle High School
- Appendix 7 Update from Vale of Leven Academy School
- Appendix 8 Questions/ VSE

Background Papers: EIA Screening

Wards Affected: All wards