

# **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services**

**Educational Services Committee: 7 November 2012**

---

**Subject: Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Examination Results 2012**

### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1** To update Members on the performance of West Dunbartonshire schools in the national Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations of 2012.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** Members are requested to:
- a) note the contents of this report and the attached appendices;
  - b) congratulate the pupils, parents and carers, staff and centrally deployed staff for achievements in this year's examinations;
  - c) note the strategies being employed by individual schools and by the authority to raise attainment levels in S4-S6;
  - d) request a report to the meeting of this committee in November 2013 concerning performance in the 2013 diet of SQA examinations; and confirm whether they are happy with the way in which information is presented in this report and its appendices, given the number of different formats used over recent years.

### **3 Background**

- 3.1** The Scottish Government publishes annually Standard Tables and Charts (STACS) which give a detailed analysis of the national SQA Examination results. The authority has carried out a further analysis of these Tables and Charts which looks at trends over the past 5 years and makes comparisons with other similar education authorities, national performance, and past performance in West Dunbartonshire. The analysis contains data for years 2008 to 2012.
- 3.2** The 2012 data is pre-appeal while the percentages for all previous years are those after appeals have been granted. The 2012 percentages may show some increase once the appeals, which were submitted in September, are granted or rejected.
- 3.3** The first comparison looks at Council performance in a range of measures over the last 5 years (2008-2012). (Appendix 1). The term NCD refers to the National Comparison Decile which broadly divides performance across Scotland into 10 groups or deciles. A performance in the top 10% in Scotland has an NCD of 1; in the lowest 10% the value of the NCD would be 10; the Scottish average would be 5 or 6.

Comparator data is also provided which relates to performance in similar councils/schools chosen on a range of socioeconomic and deprivation indices. Attainment levels should be considered within this deprivation profile. WDC comparator councils are: Clackmannanshire, Inverclyde, Midlothian, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.

- 3.4** The second comparison (Appendix 2) looks at: School performance in relation to both comparator schools and national performance across 9 measures, (SCQF levels are shown in Appendix 5). Results for St Peter the Apostle High School in 2012 are compared with the combined results for St Andrew's and St Columba's High Schools in previous years (2008-09).
- 3.5** Thirdly, overall subject strengths/underperformance are shown (Appendix 3). This indicates those subjects in which performance is significantly better or worse when compared to average scores in other subjects taken in at least the last 3 years.
- 3.6** Fourthly, subject strengths/underperformance are shown by school (Appendix 4). Again, performance is compared to average scores in other subjects taken. It is significant if performance is above/below this average in at least the last 3 years.
- 3.7** Separate enhanced Leadership for Learning meetings have taken place between school management teams and the Directorate team, Quality Manager and relevant Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs). These meetings, chaired by the Executive Director, focused on SQA results and on specific attainment issues and resulted in agreement on an agenda for improvement in each establishment. A summary of the attainment action plan for each school will be presented to the February 2013 meeting of the Educational Services Committee.
- 3.8** A report detailing the strategies employed to raise attainment in secondary schools across West Dunbartonshire was presented to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee in January 2010. A subsequent report on strategies for Raising Attainment was presented to the committee in September 2011. In the last year a number of initiatives have arisen from this plan. These include:
- revision of SQA/STACS meetings to focus more on school attainment strategies, including input from the wider management teams and pupils.
  - Each school has appointed secondees (STARS) to provide focussed support to the implementation of their strategy.
  - Supported study and Easter revision programmes were enhanced by a series of 'Materclasses' in Higher English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, history and geography.
  - Development of a website, 'Learn, Achieve, Succeed' to support pupils and parents.

## **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** In the five year trends (Appendix 1) taking 2008 as the baseline, the Council has improved in 7 out of 9 measures. Year on year comparison with 2011 shows 5 increased, 1 stayed the same and 3 decreased. We are below our comparator authorities in most measures and there is more work to be done in this area.
- 4.1.1** When individual school performance in 2012 (Appendix 2) is analysed the contribution made by each school to attainment in WDC can be seen.
- 4.1.2** There is considerable variation across the 5 schools within the 9 measures. Schools are expected to perform in line with comparators (schools which are 'matched' with WDC schools using a range of deprivation indices). These comparisons are thought to be more relevant to our schools than national comparisons since they relate to similar cohorts of pupils. Commendably, all of our schools have demonstrated that they can achieve at least comparator standards in a range of measures. All schools have demonstrated that they can achieve results at least in line with national average (NCD 5 or 6) in at least one measure. Notably, 4 schools have achieved national standards in at least two measures, with one school at or exceeding national standards in all of the 9 measures.
- 4.1.3** Given the socio/economic profile of West Dunbartonshire, any performance which is around national/comparator average across a range of measures is strong. Performance above national/comparator average across a range of measures is very strong.
- 4.1.4** Overall, Council performance shows consistent strengths in attainment at level 3 in fourth year, steady improvement at 5+ level 6 in fifth year and continuing improvement in sixth year. Performance at 3+ level 6 in S5 remains a challenge. Some young people choose to study Higher courses over two years rather than one. This has resulted in an ongoing improvement in S6 results. All our schools are working to provide more robust information to parents and young people to enable young people to make informed course choices at the correct entry levels.
- 4.2** The contribution made by individual subjects to overall attainment is shown in Appendix 3. Only those subjects with a three year pattern are shown. It should be remembered that in many subjects performance fluctuates year on year. The breakdown by school is shown in Appendix 4. Again, only a three year pattern is shown. Subjects identified as displaying a pattern of underperformance are the focus of school action plans for improvement. The Quality Improvement team monitors the progress of these plans and supports the departments involved through a variety of means, including the organisation of regular meetings of subject Principal Teachers to share good practice.

**4.3** Members may wish to note that WDC pupils have demonstrated success in a wide variety of other qualifications which contribute to wider achievement. A significant and increasing number of our pupils are taking vocational courses in a variety of areas including construction, motor vehicle engineering, hospitality, hairdressing, early education and childcare, sport and recreation, rural skills and photography. In addition, a wide range of non-SQA accredited qualifications have been achieved. These include:

- ASDAN awards
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Sport leadership
- Dance leadership
- Pool life guard
- Fashion brand retailing (Caledonian University)
- Mark Scott Foundation Award
- Forest Schools
- John Muir award
- Caritas award
- Saltire awards

**4.4** The Council will ensure that schools are given every challenge and support to raise attainment in the areas outlined in this report through both local engagement and by encouraging involvement with national bodies.

## **5. People Implications**

This report has no implications for personnel.

## **6. Financial Implications**

This report has no direct financial implications.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

Failure to accurately analyse SQA performance and failure to take appropriate action to tackle underachievement and to raise attainment could put individual pupils and groups of learners at risk of failing to achieve their potential.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

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 have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

## **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..

---

Terry Lanagan  
Executive Director of Educational Services

---

**Person to Contact:** David Fulton, Quality Improvement Officer, Educational Services, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton G82 3PU. Telephone (01389) 737333.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: WDC Whole School Measures – 5 Year Trends  
Appendix 2: WDC Whole School Results/Council Performances 2012  
Appendix 3: Subject Strengths/Weaknesses in West Dunbartonshire  
Appendix 4: Subject Strengths/Weaknesses by School  
Appendix 5: The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework  
Appendix 6: Glossary of terms used

### **Background Papers:**

Report on strategies to raise attainment in West Dunbartonshire secondary schools presented to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on –

13 January 2010

14 September 2011

9 November 2011

11 January 2012

14 March 2012

13 June 2012

22 August 2012

**Wards Affected:** All.