

# **West Dunbartonshire Council**

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

### **Education and Lifelong Learning Committee:**

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**Subject: To provide an analysis of the deployment of centrally employed teachers in West Dunbartonshire Council.**

#### **1 Purpose**

**1.1** The Education and Lifelong Learning Committee of 9<sup>th</sup> February requested that a report should be submitted to the next meeting:

- (i) providing a breakdown of where centrally employed teachers were employed within West Dunbartonshire;
- (ii) explaining why West Dunbartonshire had a higher proportion of centrally employed teachers than comparator authorities; and
- (iii) outlining the costs and benefits associated with centrally employed teachers.

#### **2. Background**

**2.1** In December 2009, the Scottish Government produced the first issue of its *Summary Statistics for Schools* which displayed information on a variety of themes including staffing levels and rates of school exclusions and attendance. A report was prepared for the February Committee on the new statistical bulletin.

**2.2** One of the tables (2.1) in the report entitled: *Teachers in publicly funded schools by sector, by Local Authority* presented West Dunbartonshire Council as having comparatively high numbers of centrally funded teachers.

#### **3. Main Issues**

**3.1** The table 2.1 stated that the Council had 31 teachers centrally employed, and an additional 11 teachers whom worked within the Pre-School sector. The Scottish Government collected the information on Pre-Schools directly from the Centres and did not share the information with the Council. The figures quoted in the report do not correspond with our own staffing figures. The Government has since issued a revised table stating the Council has 31 centrally funded teachers and an additional 9 whom work in the Pre-School Sector.

**3.2** The Scottish Government was asked to provide the raw data collected from the Pre-School Centres. The figure provided was for 9 teachers, and an examination of the names revealed that several of the returns were for Centres not managed by the Council. There was also an error in a calculation which accounted for 4 full time equivalent teachers (FTE). Once the inaccuracies were removed the final total of teachers allocated to the Pre-School Sector was zero. The Council records its Pre-School teachers as being paid centrally. Therefore, to avoid Pre-School teachers being double counted they should not be appearing in the two separate columns entitled: Pre-School and Centrally Deployed. Therefore, the figure of zero for Pre-

School accurately reflects the figures for the Council, since pre-school teachers are included in the Centrally Employed category.

- 3.3** The Council has 33 teachers deployed centrally. Of the 33, 15 are specialist teachers supporting primary aged pupils with additional support needs (ASN); 12 are allocated to Pre-School Centres and to support Nurturing in selected primary schools; and 6 are supporting vulnerable pupils such as those Looked After by the Council, or those unable to attend mainstream school due to having ASN, being a Gypsy/Traveller or because of a medical or emotional difficulty.
- 3.4** Approximately a third of pupils attending the Council's schools require additional support to reach their full potential and this, coupled with a high level of deprivation, demonstrates the need for the Council to have specialist teachers well trained in all aspects of pupil support.
- 3.5** The ASN teachers are allocated to schools based on a regular audit of need. The teachers are based in one school and managed by the Head Teacher, but are not part of the school's core staffing. Such an arrangement allows them to be sent to the schools with the highest level of need. The need for this type of flexible approach is of importance in West Dunbartonshire Council as we have a relatively large number of small schools. To provide each of our primary schools with a dedicated member of staff for ASN would require 34 FTE teachers and cost considerably more than at present, but would reduce the number deemed to be centrally employed.
- 3.6** The teachers working in the Pre-School Centres and with Nurturing are based in a single primary school but work within several Centres. This is a cost effective model of providing teaching support into 21 separate Centres.
- 3.7** The 6 staff supporting pupils not able to attend mainstream schools or those Looked After by the authority, are deployed to support pupils in all our schools and run the Choices Programme, which is our specialist provision for fourth year pupils presenting with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Through the work of the teachers a number of pupils are able to be supported without recourse to an expensive externally commissioned residential school; the average cost of such a school is over £100,000 per annum, excluding the cost of transport.
- 3.8** The total cost of the 33 teachers is approximately £1,390,000 per annum. The expected cost of providing each primary school and Pre-School Centre with a FTE teacher would be circa £2,310,000.
- 3.9** As of the summer of 2009, centrally employed staff have been managed by Head Teachers, which has removed the need for an additional layer of management.
- 3.10** As the above details illustrate, the term "centrally deployed" is potentially misleading. All these teachers work full time in schools and Pre-School Centres or provide direct support to individuals or groups of young people who are not in attendance at school. However, because they are not part of the school's core staffing they are deemed to be "centrally employed."

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1** There continues to be a significant financial investment in school based measures for children requiring additional support and at risk of being excluded or not attending. Many of the measures are dependent on intensive input from specialist staff.
- 4.2** There continues to be a significant financial investment in Pre-School Centres to provide teachers to further enhance the development of the early level curriculum and to meet the requirements of the Scottish Government's Early Years Framework.
- 4.3** The cost of the service is detailed in 3.8 above.

#### **5. Risk Analysis**

- 5.1** Failure to deliver services for children requiring additional support or Looked After by the Council represents an educational risk for a number of pupils and represents a risk that the Council may fail to discharge its duties under the terms of the Additional Support for Learning Act.

#### **6. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 6.1** The removal of specialist teachers would adversely impact on our most vulnerable pupils including those deemed to be Looked After by the Council.

#### **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 7.1** Members are asked to note that the original report from the Scottish Government contained factual inaccuracies.
- 7.2** Members are also asked to note that the use of centrally employed teachers is considered a cost effective approach to supporting all our schools and Pre-School Centres.

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**Terry Lanagan**  
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**Appendix:** None

**Background Papers:** Scottish Government's Summary Statistics for Schools

**Wards Affected:** All wards