

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by Chief Education Officer

Education Services Committee: Wednesday 13th December 2023

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**Subject: Early Learning and Childcare Progress Update****1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report provides progress made to provide high quality Early Learning and Childcare in West Dunbartonshire Council.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that Committee notes: progress to deliver the statutory entitlement of 1140 hours of high quality Early Learning and Childcare.

**3. Background****3.1 Early Learning and Childcare**

Within Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) we now deliver, across all our settings, up to 1140 hours to eligible 2 year olds and children aged from 3 to those not yet attending primary school. Places for children under the age of 2 are available in our partner settings for working families and in our council settings for those families who require some support. Overall children are very well supported, provided with exciting learning opportunities, and are nurtured by well trained staff.

**3.2 Training**

Based on our recent experience and knowledge from inspections the ELC central team have created further training and support for all settings, including the early level of Primary, that has been shared with all to support them in reflecting and evaluating on their provision to further promote improvements and high quality learning, teaching and care.

There also continues to be a wide range of training available to all our ELC providers through our Professional Learning Framework. This varies from a bespoke professional learning programme focusing on play pedagogy and pedagogical leadership delivered by Strathclyde University to Forest Kindergarten. This training has also been extended to support the Early Level within Primary Schools through our launch of One-ery Guidance. (The One-ery approach is a play based pedagogical approach adopted in some primary one settings that also have a nursery. This approach also encourages shared opportunities for play based learning across this early level stage.) Some of our newly qualified Principals have also been selected to attend training from Education Scotland on Pedagogical Leadership.

**3.3 The West Partnership**

Early Learning and Childcare and Primary staff working at the early level have attended professional learning delivered by West Partnership. The sessions

include the following subjects: Child Development, Child Centred Pedagogy and Play and Transitions.

#### 4. Main Issues

##### 4.1 Quality of our Early Learning and Childcare

Outcomes for children continue to be very positive. The table below summarises the grades received by our Early Learning and Childcare settings in recent inspections.

##### Care Inspectorate Evaluations from recent inspections

Early Learning and Childcare Setting	Date of last Inspection	How good is our care, play and learning?	How good is our setting?	How good is our leadership?	How good is our staff team?
Brookland	24/01/2023	Good	Good	Good	Good
Carousel (Dumbarton)	25/01/2023	Good	Good	Good	Good
Auchnacraig	09/03/2023	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good
Braehead	29/03/2023	Good	Very Good	Good	Good
Clydebank	25/04/2023	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good
Gavinburn	18/05/2023	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Lennox (Alexandria)	18/05/2023	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Brucehill	24/05/2023	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good
Ladyton	01/06/2023	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Excellent
KEYS	02/06/2023	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
St. Eunan's	15/06/2023	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Excellent

##### Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education Evaluations

##### **Linnvale Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Centre**

Quality Indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
Securing children's progress	good

## Levenvale Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Centre

Quality Indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Securing children's progress	good

### 4.2 Scottish Government – Programme for Government in Early Learning and Childcare

This states that from April 2024 those staff in the Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector (PVI) delivering funded Early Learning and Childcare should receive a minimum hourly rate of £12. We have been informed that it is expected the funding for this will be allocated through the sustainable rate allocation and await further guidance on this.

### 4.3 Deferment

This session, with the introduction of automatic deferment entitlement for those children who do not turn 5 until after the start of the August term we have seen an increase of 47.7% of children deferring from last year. We have been able to accommodate these children within our existing Early Learning and Childcare provision and it has not had an impact on places available to eligible 3 year olds.

Year	Jan-Feb Deferrals	School Start – Dec Deferrals	Prior to School Start Deferrals	Total	Increase/Decrease from Previous Year
2021 – 2022	63	27	2	92	n/a
2022 - 2023	60	28	0	88	4.3% decrease
2023 - 2024	80	47	3	130	47.7% increase

### 4.4 Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare

Phase 4 of the Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare is now underway. They are gathering information on the impact of 1140 hours on eligible 2 year olds. Some of our settings have been selected to engage with this study.

### 4.5 Additional Support Needs Audit

To further support our staff and settings in fully supporting all children our Additional Support Needs working group have created an Additional Support Needs audit which has been issued to all Early Learning and Childcare settings. This audit gathered the views and confidence levels of settings and staff. It has allowed us to identify further areas for development, meaning we can create and deliver more bespoke training programmes to provide further

upskilling in this area. Our ELC Leaders have recently received training, from our Principal Educational Psychologist, on Solution Oriented Approaches. This training will further help settings in more confidently developing goals and solutions for all our learners.

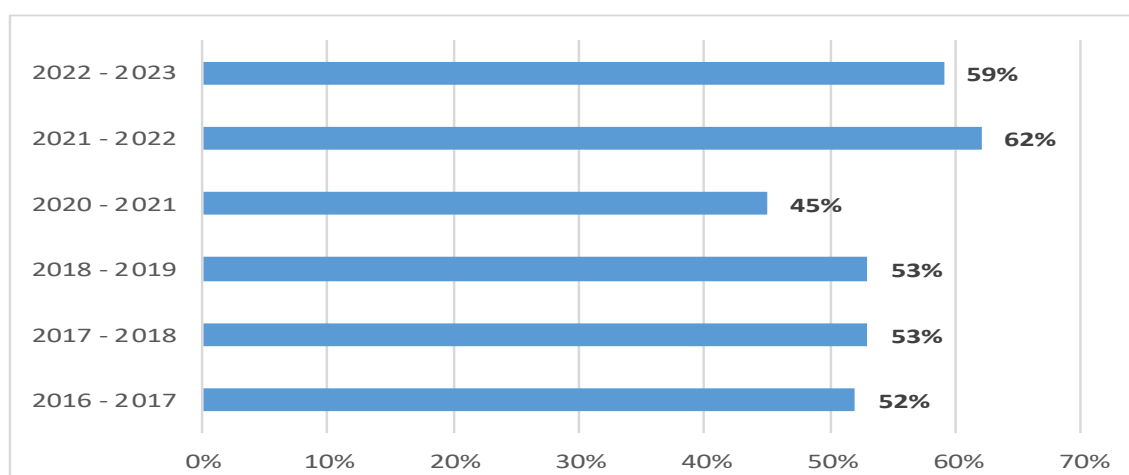
#### 4.6 Children's Progress

Assessment data gathered in June 2023 shows that children continue to progress well in literacy and numeracy outcome measures. Our Early Learning and Childcare settings use individual Statistical Reports to analyse attendance, gender, Additional Support Needs and reasons for support, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation distribution and children at risk of not achieving. The report also has literacy and numeracy data action planning which is derived from the data.

Our literacy stretch aim for June 2023 was 67% of all children will achieve the benchmark in Concepts of Print. We did not achieve this stretch aim, however, these children were in a covid cohort. Initially when they returned to our settings our main focus was on their health and wellbeing. Reflecting on this, the stretch aim set was very ambitious, though, looking at the long term picture we are on a steady upwards trajectory. Since 2017 we have progressed overall from 52% to 59%. We have also been looking more closely into the risks associated with attainment in order to identify where we can target further training and support. All settings now provide detailed monthly attendance reports to allow us to identify those that need to think more closely about how to improve attendance give the direct correlation between attendance and attainment.

Additionally, settings have been supported to create more detailed context reports to allow them to identify specific areas for targeted development and improvement. We then intend to use the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation element within these context reports to identify a comparator Early Learning and Childcare setting. Settings will then be able to work together to moderate, develop and improve outcomes. Additionally, we will continue to promote the key drivers for raising attainment in early years.

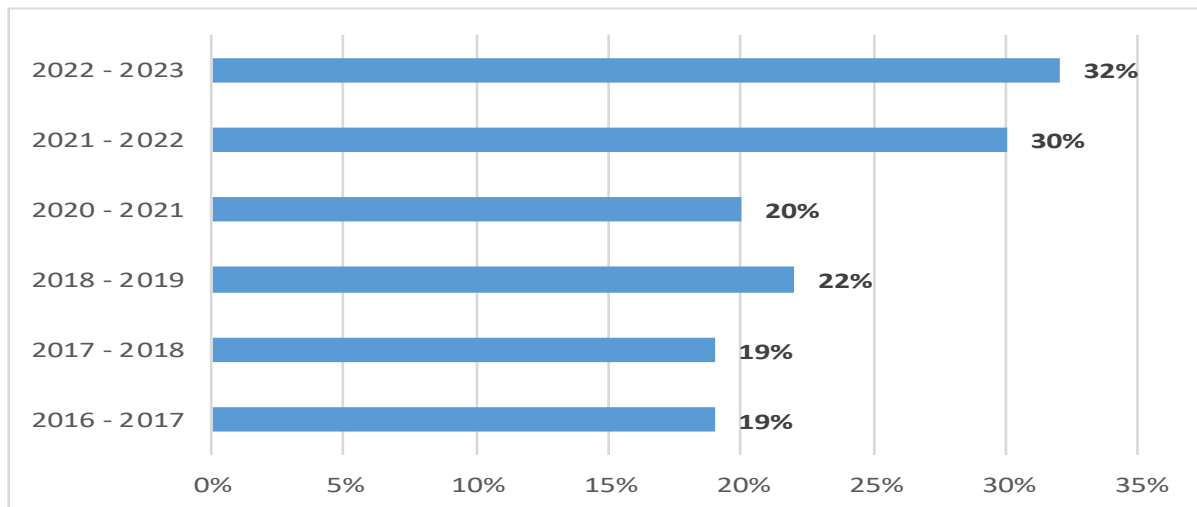
#### Percentage of Children Achieving Literacy Benchmark (Concepts of Print)



Our numeracy stretch aim for June 2023 was 33% of children will achieve the benchmark in Number and Number Processes. We achieved 32% and as with literacy have seen a steady upwards trajectory since 2017, with an overall

increase of 13%. We continue to promote the Stages of Early Arithmetical Learning Programme as the key driver for raising attainment in numeracy.

#### Percentage of Children Achieving Numeracy Benchmark (Number and number processes)



To provide us with greater detail of children's achievements and attainment over time we have extended our tracking. This will now encompass children in their ante-pre school year and those in their deferred year, allowing us to provide greater support or challenge if required for children. Through this approach we will have more detailed tracking of children's progress, attainment and achievements from when they enter nursery at age 3 through until they move on to primary school.

#### **4.7** Christie Park

Our new Early Learning and Childcare provision at Christie Park has now received registration from the Care Inspectorate and has opened. The setting will offer 24 places for eligible 3 year olds to pre school aged children and currently all places have been allocated.

#### **4.8** Faifley

Plans for the new Early Learning and Childcare provision within the new Faifley Campus have been shared with the Care Inspectorate and are now finalised. When completed this new ELC provision will incorporate children who would have previously attended Lennox (Faifley) and Auchnacraig Early Learning and Childcare Centre. It will also have scope to provide more capacity in the area if required.

### **5. People Implications**

**5.1** Support is provided for Early Learning and Childcare staff teams and leaders identified to enable effective delivery of the high quality ELC and the expectations of the statutory offer of 1140 hours for eligible 2 year olds and 3 year olds to pre school aged children.

**5.2** We have 59 career changers to date; 2 who have just completed their training and gained their Early Learning and Childcare qualification; and a further 7 who are undertaking the qualification at present. 32 career changers have

secured employment within ELC within the last 5 years. We will continue to promote this career path and route to qualification. Additionally we currently have 8 Modern Apprentices being supported to work towards achieving the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Level 3 within our Early Learning and Childcare settings.

### **5.3 Health & Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019**

This act will be implemented from April 2024 and will have implications for all Early Learning and Childcare providers. We are working with Safe Staffing Advisers and our ELC Providers to raise their awareness of this act in preparation for its implementation. One main key change is in Part 3 where providers will have to ensure the wellbeing of their staff. We are confident within West Dunbartonshire Council that staff wellbeing is very well supported by our supportive management teams and through all staff having access to the Council's Wellbeing Hub. We will be expected to report to Scottish Government on how we comply with section 3(2) of the act and await further guidance on this.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

<b>6.1</b>	<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Revenue £m</b>	<b>Capital £m</b>
	2018/19	1.410	0.580
	2019/20	5.268	2.380
	2020/21	8.717	4.480
	2021/22	9.723	5.880
	2022/23	9.485	0.794
	2023/24	9.742	0.287

### **6.2 New Sustainable Rate**

Our funded private providers have now received notification of the new sustainable rate for eligible 3 year olds to those not yet attending school of £5.84 per hour, which was approved at Committee in September 2023. All backdated payments have been made to them.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

### **7.1 The Key Risks:**

- Maintaining high quality Early Learning and Childcare at all funded providers to ensure that they meet the National Standard Criteria.
- Failure to deliver 1140 hours curriculum by confident, well-trained Early Learning and Childcare staff teams.
- Evaluations of good for environment by Care Inspectorate are at risk if Early Learning and Childcare building assets are not maintained.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment**

### **8.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment for the Expansion Plan was undertaken previously. There was no requirement to undertake another Equalities Impact Assessment for the purposes of this report as it is providing an update for Committee.

## **9. Consultation**

**9.1** Regular consultation with stakeholders including parents and carers, Early Learning and Childcare staff, Unions, Council partners in the project and partner Early Learning and Childcare providers continues through the various Council fora and regular meetings.

### **9.2 Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance**

As detailed in Section 50 of the Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance we have a duty, at least once every 2 years, to:

- Consult with persons who appear to be representative of parents of children under school age in their area about how they should make early learning and childcare available.
- Have regard to the views expressed in the consultation and must prepare and publish a plan setting out how they intend to make early learning and childcare available.

Our last consultation took place in 2021 and we have now gone out to consultation once again. The summary of these findings will be shared at the March committee.

**9.3** 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 Council's aspiration to have a strong local economy, improved employment opportunities and efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents. These are strategic priorities for 2017-2023.

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Chief Education Officer

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**Background Papers:** none

**Wards Affected:** All

