

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 21 June 2023**

Subject: Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update the Educational Services Committee on progress with implementing Educational Services' improvement priorities for attainment and equity.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Educational Services Committee is asked to note:
- (a)** the strong record of progress maintained in academic session 2022/23 achieved by the young people and staff; and
 - (b)** that the Committee is provided with regular update reports advising of progress with improvements to deliver excellence and equity.

3. Background

- 3.1** In line with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement the Committee receives regular reports outlining progress against this strategic priority.
- 3.2** West Dunbartonshire's Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement supported by funding from Scottish Government has supported the local authority to maintain a strong record of progress with excellence and equity outcomes.
- 3.3** The approach to improve outcomes has been supported by Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding 2015-2022; and since 2022 a revised SAC funding model - the Strategic Equity Fund.
- 3.4** Strong Record of Progress
As reported to Committee in March 2023, the Education Service has maintained a strong record of progress with delivering aims and targets for Excellence and Equity in West Dunbartonshire.
- 3.4.1** Attainment for children in the Broad General Education and living in our most deprived areas (Quintile 1) is higher than the national average; and West Dunbartonshire attainment in 2021/22 is higher than the national

average at P1, P4, P7 and S3 (The Annual Statistical Report on Attainment, Scottish Government, December 2022).

- 3.4.2** West Dunbartonshire has increased the number of young people moving into a positive destination in 2021/22 with a 5.4% (89.7% >95.1%) increase moving West Dunbartonshire into 20th place (32nd last year) out of the 32 local authorities.
- 3.4.3** In academic session 2022/23 West Dunbartonshire has maintained the local authority's record of achieving positive grades in 100% of school and Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELCCs) inspections. 8 ELCCs and 3 primary schools were inspected this session. The gradings are based on a 5 point scale used by the inspectors to evaluate quality. The 5 point scale used by inspectors to evaluate quality ranges from weak, satisfactory, good, very good, excellent. All West Dunbartonshire inspections achieved good or very good with one achieving excellent.
- 3.5** In the period March to June officers have worked closely with headteachers to monitor and moderate the assessment of children's progress in the Broad General Education (BGE) and in Early Years. This work is in advance of an annual census of BGE attainment conducted by Scottish Government in June; and a local census of attainment in the Early Years.
- 3.5.1** The BGE census monitors numbers of children and young people attaining 'A Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL)' for their age and stage at P1, P4, P7 and S3. The local authority has requested that schools submit ACEL data prior to the national census date to allow time for central officers to conduct a quality assurance of school performance during June 2023. The Early Years census is based on the West Dunbartonshire Baseline Assessment. All ELCCs and schools submit literacy and numeracy baseline attainment for children aged 3-5 years; and for children in primary one.
- 3.5.2** The Service submits to Committee at the start of each new academic session a progress report on ACEL attainment in the Broad General Education and Early Years Baseline Attainment. A report on West Dunbartonshire's Literacy and Numeracy Attainment for academic session 2022/23 will be submitted to Education Committee in September.
- 3.6** As reported to Committee in December 2022 West Dunbartonshire set ambitious Stretch Aims for the Education Service to be achieved by December 2023. Local authority Core Stretch Aims will be aggregated in a national overview of local authority performance as part of the National Improvement Framework published in December of each year. The annual census data submitted by schools in June feeds into this national report published in December. A recent national conference highlighted the need for a holistic approach across all service areas to be adopted to support the achievement of Stretch Aims.

3.7 Governance of the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement is reported and monitored at the Education Service Improvement Board chaired by the Chief Education Officer. The Improvement Board meets twice each term with membership including officers, headteachers and the Attainment Advisor. At the recent Improvement Board in May officers reported on progress with the Improvement Framework which operates an annual programme of quality assurance, monitoring and capacity building to support education leaders to implement a continuous programme of improvement. An evaluation of the impact of the Improvement Framework was submitted and is attached at Appendix 1 to this report (**Appendix 1**).

4.0 Main Issues

4.1 The strong progress in the service is a joint and collaborative effort between the central education team, schools and ELCCs. As the local authority is responsible for the quality of educational provision sufficient and quality personnel are required to both support and challenge schools and early learning centres to grow, learn and improve.

4.2 Whilst strong progress has been made with outcomes and targets for excellence and equity there still remains a poverty related attainment gap and concerted efforts and resource are necessary to sustain the rates of progress and success achieved. The Service is committed to accelerating progress and achieving aspirational outcomes for the children and young people.

4.3 Strategic Equity Fund

As reported to Committee in December 2022 the change from Attainment Challenge Funding to Strategic Equity Funding in 2022 has reduced the annual income to West Dunbartonshire Council. The Attainment Challenge allocation to the Council prior to 2022 was £2,043,815 in both 2020/21 and 2021/22. The allocation in 2022/23 is £1,745,797 with further annual reductions of £298,018 in each financial year up to 2025/26. By 2025/26 the allocation to West Dunbartonshire will be £851,743 compared to £2,043,815 in 2022. As this funding will be reduced annually each year to 2025/26 this could impact on progress in forthcoming years as the resources available to deliver the strategy will have reduced further by 2025/26.

4.4 Pupil Equity Fund

West Dunbartonshire schools are on track for full budget spend of £3.58m of PEF in the 2022-2023 academic session. Schools have submitted PEF plans for next academic sessions to the Senior Officer leading on PEF and the Attainment Advisor from Education Scotland.

4.5 Progress with improvements to deliver Excellence and Equity

4.5.1 The Improvement Framework

Officers in collaboration with headteachers conducted visits to all schools and ELCCs in academic session 2022/23. Headteachers report that the Improvement Framework provided high quality challenge for leaders to set

targets for improving outcomes for learners in their school; supported and challenged leaders to improve their approaches to self-evaluation and develop their leadership of improvement. Key strengths of the authority approach to improvement identified by headteachers are:

- collaborative improvement approaches which set out clear expectations for improvement; maintaining a sharp focus on raising attainment and narrowing the poverty related gap;
- enhanced scrutiny and support visits which provide a forum for supportive and challenging engagement that led to a clear focus for improvement;
- leaders workshops/seminars/conferences are providing the opportunity to network, raise awareness of current issues/priorities and share best practice to support school improvement and improved outcomes for learners;
- school improvement leadership collaboration is providing headteachers with the opportunity to have a critical friend; and
- Education Officers providing high quality support, advice and challenge.

4.5.2 A new format for schools to report on standards and quality has been introduced this session. A Standards and Quality Report is a statutory obligation for reporting on school progress with improvements in an academic session. Officers developed a new format following consultation with headteachers. A sample of reports from early years, primary and secondary is included for information (**Appendix 2**).

4.5.3 Assessment and Moderation

A local authority working group has been established on Assessment and Moderation. The group are working with a range of staff to support the development of a consistent approach to assessment and moderation in the Broad General Education. The group are also working with senior staff in our secondary schools to support any revisions to approaches as determined by recent national reviews of assessment and qualifications. In the period March to June the working group: established a local authority assessment and moderation forum; developed a WDC Assessment and Moderation Routemap; delivered an Assessment and Moderation Conference; and planned a programme of engagement for academic session 2023/24.

4.5.4 Maths/Numeracy Strategy

Our current focus for learning, teaching and assessment in maths and numeracy is to deliver professional learning on Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract (CPA) maths pedagogy to all maths/numeracy teachers. At the same time as professional learning a working group will update the West Dunbartonshire Curriculum Planning Tool (Maths / Numeracy Pathways). A steering group of teaching and learning 'experts' has met to review current practice in our schools. The improvement programme is planned to run for 18 months to be completed in November 2024. In the period January to June, 2023 the steering group: conducted an audit of staff professional learning, skill and confidence to inform planning where any gaps are identified in teacher

knowledge; planned a professional learning programme for primary and secondary teachers on maths teaching / learning; completed a review of current numeracy and maths curriculum pathway planning; launched the first in a series of professional learning sessions for teachers .

4.5.5 STEM Strategy

The Service has engaged with National and West Partnership STEM Forums to inform the local developments in STEM. The national forums have identified a need to strengthen the STEM offer for young people in S1 -S3. A local working group has been established to review the STEM curriculum at S1-3 in West Dunbartonshire. In the period December to June the group engaged with a number of partners supporting STEM opportunities in West Dunbartonshire including SSERC, Glasgow Science Centre, Babcock Engineering, Lockheed Martin. Plans are underway to develop wider achievement and certification opportunities through working with STEM partners SSERC and RAiSE (Wood Foundation).

4.5.6 1+2 Languages 2022-23

The Scottish Government Survey for 1+2 Languages 2022-23 was conducted in April across all West Dunbartonshire schools. The survey provided valuable insights into the status of language education in the region, highlighting best practices and areas requiring targeted support to enhance language learning. The collected data will be used to guide ongoing efforts to improve and develop language education in West Dunbartonshire schools. It is commendable that all West Dunbartonshire schools are offering a second language from P1-S3, highlighting the schools' commitment towards equipping children with essential communication skills in a globalised world. Moreover, the progress towards offering a third additional language is encouraging, with 50% of schools already offering it, and 34% in the process of developing their third language program in line with the 1+2 Languages Policy from P5 onwards.

To support language learning and teaching in West Dunbartonshire schools, a virtual 'anytime learning' platform is being developed, providing teachers with access to basic language courses online. This initiative aims to address common challenges faced by teachers, such as pronunciation, developing effective teaching strategies, and embedding language learning into lessons. It will empower teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide effective language learning, ultimately enhancing the learning experience of learners and promoting the importance of learning languages in West Dunbartonshire.

4.5.7 Instrumental Music Service (IMS)

In March the WDC Senior Concert Band achieved a Gold Plus Award at the Scottish Concert Band Festival finals at Perth Concert Hall. The IMS Spring concert took place at the end of March with over 150 pupils performing in numerous ensembles to a sold out audience at Clydebank Town Hall. The inaugural West Dunbartonshire Music Service Solo Performer of the Year competition took place at the end of March. 11 pupils from across the authority performed superbly on their chosen instruments and the winner will

go on to represent WDC at the Scottish Young Musicians finals at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in May.

4.5.8 Connect - Creative Wellbeing Project

West Dunbartonshire secured a Creative Learning Network grant of £11,000 funded by Education Scotland and Creative Scotland . The grant supported delivery of 'Connect' a creative learning project focussing on health and wellbeing. 'Connect' ran for 10 weeks with weekly sessions in 3 primary schools - Clydemuir, Balloch and St Kessog's. Children engaged in creative activities and games which helped them to learn about ways to keep healthy socially and emotionally. The children have also produced mini films which are being uploaded to a West Dunbartonshire pupil well being digital toolkit.

4.6 Health and Well Being

4.6.1 Water Safety Education – Summer Term Delivery

Learning resources on water safety are being used in all West Dunbartonshire schools during the summer term prior to the summer holidays. Resources have been developed in partnership West Dunbartonshire, the RNLI, Water Safety Scotland, and can be accessed on the Education Scotland National Improvement Hub using the following link:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/water-safety/>

5. People Implications

5.1 As reported to Council in February 2022 the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding enabled the provision of additional temporary (seconded) funded posts within the education service, partner council services and external providers. The main areas supported through this additionality are early intervention in learning, welfare advice and poverty support, nurturing mental wellbeing, community safety, school and learning community collaboration to improve quality, professional learning and personalised learning pathways. The decreased funding will reduce the number of staff available to deliver in these areas with the seconded staff returning to their substantive posts, and any backfill element will cease.

5.2 The new funding model will reduce this number of posts by 42% from 41.5 to 24.07 posts by 2025/2026. In session 2022/23 the local authority Scottish Attainment Challenge funded 39.0 a reduction from 41.5 posts in 2021/22. In session 2022/23 the Strategic Equity Fund will fund 39.0 posts.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 Since its inception in 2015/16 to March 2022 the Council received £12,642,432 in funding. Attainment Challenge allocations to the Council were £2,043,815 in both 2020/21 and 2021/22. Funding in 2022/23 is £1,745,797 which is a reduction of £298,018.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 The reduced funding model could impact negatively on sustained improvement in future academic sessions. However we will continue to monitor this closely to inform future planning

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.1** A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and has identified the decrease in funding will limit the Education Services' strategic ability to deliver and progress a range of functions within the raising attainment agenda. Scope exists to mitigate the adverse impact on pupils; however this requires adaptations across key service areas through the modification of plans to reflect the reduction in Scottish Government Funding.

9. Consultation

- a. Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.
- b. In response to the revised funding model consultation is being conducted with stakeholders to produce West Dunbartonshire's Strategic Equity Fund plan for 2022-2026.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** This reports reflects the Council's 2017-2022 overarching priority to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire which supports improved outcomes for all learners in our community.

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Appendix:

- 1. [WDC Improvement Framework – Evaluation 2022/2023](#)
- 2a. [Standards and Quality Report Sample 1](#)
- 2b. [Standards and Quality Report Sample 2](#)
- 2c. [Standards and Quality Report Sample 3](#)

Background Papers: Equality Impact Assessment

Wards Affected: All wards

