

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Education Officer****Education Services Committee: Wednesday 12th June 2024**

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

There continues to be a wide range of training available to all our ELC providers through our Professional Learning Framework. We are working on identifying a new Professional Learning suite of training for session 2024-2025 to work towards meeting the aims of our delivery plan, staff development needs and to support all children.

4. Main Issues**4.1 Quality of our Early Learning and Childcare**

Outcomes for children continue to be very positive, however, none of our settings have been inspected recently so there are no current inspection grades to share since our December 2023 report.

4.2 Children's Progress

Since August 2023 we have carried out more robust monitoring of attendance on a monthly basis within our early years settings in order to have a deeper understanding of the current barriers and challenges experienced by our

settings and identify any further supports and interventions to support improved attendance in all settings. Percentages are listed below.

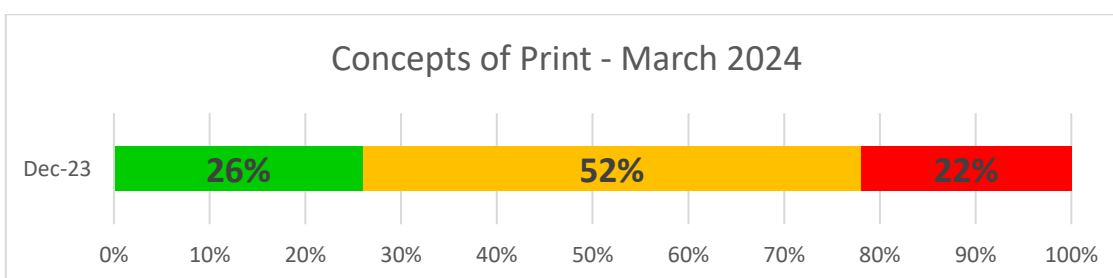
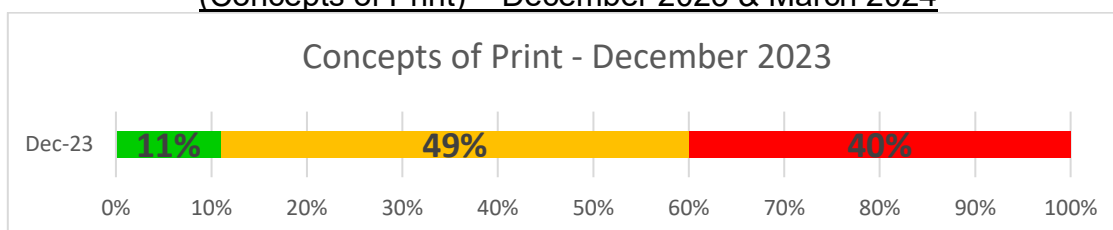
Average Attendance Percentage within WDC Early Years Settings

August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024
80.2%	81.9%	81.7%	78.2%	78%	80.6%	80.3%	82.71%

4.3 Assessment Data

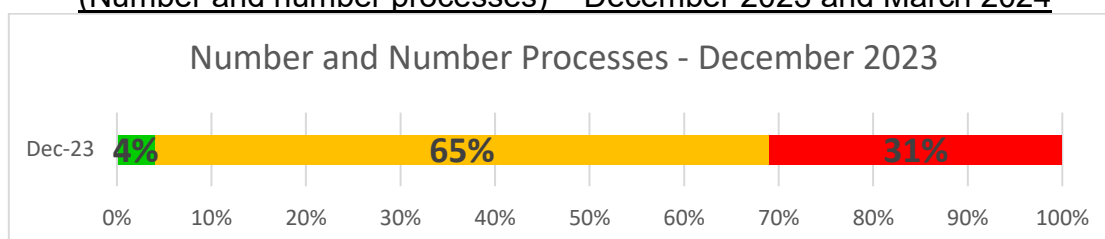
Assessment data gathered in December 2023 and March 2024 shows that children continue to progress well in literacy and numeracy outcome measures.

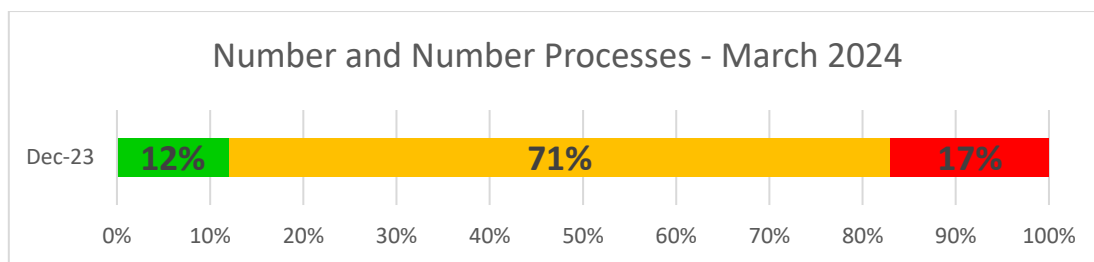
Percentage of Children Achieving Literacy Benchmark (Concepts of Print) – December 2023 & March 2024



Our literacy stretch aim is 69% of all children will achieve the benchmark in Concepts of Print. Since 2017 we have progressed overall from 52% to 59%. Data gathered in March 2024 shows that 26% of children have already met this benchmark, despite this being a benchmark spanning the whole of early level, achievable by the end of Primary 1. This is an increase of 15% from the data provided in December 2023. Additionally in March 2024 52% of children are making good progress towards reaching this benchmark, an increase from the December 2023 data of 3% putting us on track to meet this stretch aim. Those not yet on track has decreased by 18% from December 2023 to March 2024.

Percentage of Children Achieving Numeracy Benchmark (Number and number processes) – December 2023 and March 2024





Our numeracy stretch aim is 35% of children will achieve the benchmark in Number and Number Processes. Last session we achieved 32% and as with Literacy we have seen a steady upwards trajectory since 2017. We continue to promote the Stages of Early Arithmetical Learning Programme as the key driver for raising attainment in numeracy and will engage with the new numeracy programme, 'Count with me in WDC' next session. Data gathered in March 2024 shows that 12% of children have met this benchmark, despite this being a benchmark spanning the whole of early level, achievable by the end of Primary 1. This is an increase of 8% from the data provided in December 2023. Additionally in March 2024 71% of children are making good progress towards reaching this benchmark, an increase from the December 2023 data of 6% putting us on track to meet this stretch aim. Those not yet on track has decreased by 14% from December 2023 to March 2024.

4.4 Staffing Realignment

We are carrying out consultation with the Trade Unions, settings and staff to implement the realignment of some staff to meet the agreed budget savings and better match staffing to the occupancy of settings. Additionally we have advertised for Early Learning and Childcare Officers to enhance our temporary supply list to provide cover for absence when required.

We have also reviewed our current data on children attending settings that live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 and as a result will transfer some of our Excellence and Equity Leads to those settings that have been identified as having a higher number of children living in this quintile. We are also working with our Early Stage Teachers to support them whilst we work to meet the agreed saving and reduction of the team.

5. People Implications

5.1 Support is provided for Early Learning and Childcare staff teams and leaders 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 Since 2022 we have supported 18 Modern Apprentices. 10 have completed their training, achieving a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Level 3 within our Early Learning and Childcare settings and have been supported into employment with the council.

Additionally since 2022 we have supported 18 career changers, 11 have completed their qualification and 7 are currently participating in working

towards achieving their qualification. We will continue to promote this career path and route to qualification.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 Financial Year	Revenue £m	Capital £m
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

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 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 resilient and thriving communities, a strong and flourishing economy and a council that is inclusive and adaptive. These are some of the strategic priorities for 2022-2027.

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Background Papers: none

Wards Affected: All

