

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Senior Education Officer Educational Services****Educational Services Committee: 9th June 2021**

Subject: Pupil Equity Fund Update**1. Purpose****1.1** The purpose of this report is to:

- a) inform members of practices to narrow the poverty related attainment gap resourced from the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and
- b) update members on how we have ensured adherence to policy and revised guidance in light of COVID-19.

2. Recommendations**2.1** Members of the Education Committee are asked to:

- a) discuss and note West Dunbartonshire Council's (WDC) practices in relation to PEF; and to
- b) discuss and note West Dunbartonshire Council's governance of PEF.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Scottish Attainment Challenge is about achieving equity in education. This can be achieved by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 3.2** The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched in February 2015. It is underpinned by The National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child.
- 3.3** Every council area is benefitting from Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) as part of the Attainment Scotland Fund. 95% of schools in Scotland have been allocated funding for pupils in P1-S3 known to be eligible for free school meals.
- 3.4** PEF is allocated directly to schools. This funding is to be spent at the discretion of the head-teachers working in partnership with each other and

their local authority. School communities will be responsible for identifying, planning and implementing interventions.

- 3.5** In response to the Covid 19 pandemic and recognising the additional challenges and demands facing our children and families and those supporting them, Scottish Government have produced revised guidance. [PEF National Operational Guidance 2020](#). [There is also a link to Refreshed guidance](#) on working with the third sector to help support schools make the best use of funding with other partners and the guidance produced by Youth Link Scotland [a schools guide](#).
- 3.6** The essence of PEF stays the same; supporting equity, recognising long term planning, ensuring focus on those funding is intended for and targeting interventions to meet their needs and engaging with 3rd sector organisations to do so. The changes highlight that schools and local authorities should work together to support families, address the digital divide and focus particularly on wellbeing.
- 3.7** In addition to existing 2021/22 PEF allocations, additional funding has been agreed to provide further resource to schools to tackle the poverty related attainment gap, recognising the new and additional challenges schools and their children and young people face as a result of Covid-19. This is being issued as a 15% uplift to the previously published 2021/22 PEF allocations for schools.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** WDC is committed to working with a range of stakeholders, to ensure positive outcomes for those most at risk of missing out as a result of poverty. We ensure all of our schools are clear about the steps they need to take to actively promote and monitor high quality learning experiences; reduce the poverty related gap and increase attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and well-being.
- 4.2** Senior managers in school and at central level are clear of their roles in planning, managing and monitoring interventions to address inequity in a range of ways such as:
- Planning support focussed on the twelve interventions for inequity as identified by Scottish Government (Appendix 1 twelve interventions model);
 - robust tracking and monitoring at class and school level focussing on individual pupils; knowing their gaps and plans to address;
 - ensuring targeted and timely interventions using existing school resources such as support staff, supported study, mentors and buddies.
- 4.3** Continuing staff development is integral to supporting and ensuring appropriate targeted interventions and scrutiny of impact and spends.

Governance arrangements ensure joined up and collegiate approaches to this. (Appendix 2 PEF governance)

4.4 All of our schools are successfully engaging in a range of interventions to narrow the gap; reflecting the twelve identified interventions for equity and the impact of the pandemic on their children and families. The number instigated depends on the financial allocation to the schools and the costs associated with individual plans. It is difficult to attribute impact on attainment to any one intervention as these form part of the bigger picture of school improvement and its many facets. It appears that many of the main themes of intervention/projects overlap between different areas – for example literacy and family learning, HWB and family learning, play pedagogy and professional learning.

4.5 Some examples of effective PEF planning and spending are:

Additional Support Needs Settings

1. The Choices Programme aims to develop the Health and Wellbeing of pupils through the improved use of outdoor activities. This involves working in partnership with the Leamy Foundation and Greenspace to develop the school garden and grounds. This also develops life skills and helps develop a sense of achievement. Provision of the outdoor teaching area that has helped in the current Covid 19 Climate; enabling pupils to learn and work outdoors. Attendance support is an ongoing issue individual to needs of these young people and will take time to demonstrate impact.
2. Kilpatrick school have developed their outdoor learning through play provision. This has enabled the safe use of learning outside with improved resources and professional learning of staff. This has increased opportunities for learning through play for all children and lead to improvements for targeted pupils in verbal communication and eye contact, initiating behaviour and social emotional reciprocity.

Primary Schools

1. The main focus of educational recovery for Linnvale Primary School has been the use of outdoors to support wellbeing, learning and the transition back to school. They have used the development of school grounds and the local area around the canal to build upon opportunities for wider achievement for pupils through outdoor learning and related externally accredited awards such as John Muir and Wild Explorer Awards. All P7 pupils have undertaken Dynamic Youth Awards as a result of this learning experience. This has been very successful and pupils and staff speak highly of the impact of these experiences on the experiences on their return to school, engagement with learning and relationships with staff and

peers.

2. St Kessog's Primary School have focussed on supporting children and families by employing a Pupil and Family Support Worker. This intervention is proven locally and nationally to make a difference to family engagement and support opportunities and has proven invaluable during the pandemic and return to school. In school the worker has focussed on supporting targeted individuals who it is recognised would benefit from opportunities to engage 1-1 with a 'significant adult', supporting social and emotional wellbeing and engagement with learning. To compliment this intervention, the worker also engages with the families of children to ensure appropriate support and signposting is in place facilitating broader supports to families.

Secondary Schools

1. Vale of Leven Academy has continued to focus funding supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of young people and in developing engagement opportunities for those hardest to reach and most impacted by the pandemic. They have a well used Breakfast Club, Uniform access, Nurture Room and enhanced pupil support areas. They have invested in additional staff with specific focussed groups of young people and their families which ensures a broader reach of young people are enabled to feel safe, secure and ready to engage with learning and a broader reach of support for vulnerable families.
2. St Peter the Apostle High School have focussed on wellbeing and readiness to return to learning for their young people. Their investment in Pupil and Family Support Staff and Raising Attainment staff has enabled additional focus and support to improve the attendance and punctuality of young people via a range of interventions with a specific focus on protected groups. They are also focussing on supporting those young people who have difficulty engaging, with aims to reduce the number of young people excluded from education via a range of interventions including nurture, enhanced targeted support, family engagement and a commitment to inclusion

Local Learning Community example

St Peter the Apostle Learning Community have continued to implement a project which is developing Approaches to Enhanced Transition. This has resulted in a reduction in exclusion data and improved well-being outcomes for target groups with a specific focus on learners in SIMD 1 + 2. Improved partnership working including health, social work, psychological services and 3rd sector organisations have been developed and improved parental engagement in supporting learner participation in enhanced transition opportunities.

- 4.7** Measurements of success and impact have varied from project to project; containing a range of statistical and softer data. Realistically, it is expected that longitudinal analysis of impact is necessary to determine the success of most interventions in narrowing the gap. It is also apparent that no one

intervention alone will raise attainment. It is also notable that COVID has impacted on school plans and as a result outcomes are harder to measure than previously anticipated due to move to remote supports, varying degrees of pupils engagement, staff re-deployment and re-focus on priorities for schools, pupils and families. Accordingly plans have been adapted to reflect the impact of COVID on children and their families and the most pressing current needs.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications as a result of this report; however it is essential that robust systems are in place to ensure appropriate staff training and recruitment.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no direct financial implications for Community Planning West Dunbartonshire resulting from this report. All activities related to the implementation of these interventions are contained within PEF Budgets.
- 6.2** Total Pupil Equity Funding in West Dunbartonshire for Session 2020-2021 was £3,353, 520 and £ 3,302,404 for session 2021-22. An additional £495,000 has been allocated to schools to support the response to the pandemic.
- 6.3** By end of the reporting period, funding for the session 2020-21 was fully committed and spent. Monitoring of spend for session 2021-22 indicates all funding for this session will be committed and spent.
- 6.4** Financial scrutiny has been ensured via monitoring at school level, reporting updates to Senior Education Officers and WDC Finance Business Partner.
- 6.5** We are continuing work with Procurement partners to ensure compliance and scrutiny of all spends and that Head teachers have appropriate training to manage funds in line with Council policy.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** If the Council is unable to ensure positive outcomes for children, we will not be meeting their needs (Children and Young People Act 2014) (Equalities Act 2010).
- 7.2** If the Council is unable to narrow the poverty related gap this could result in reputational damage.
- 7.3** If the Council were not able to manage and monitor spends appropriately then there is risk of reputational damage and inequity.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 The supports and guidance enhance the quality of the service provided to all children and young people and therefore can be seen to have a positive impact in terms of the equalities.

9. Consultation

9.1 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 reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

Claire Cusick

Senior Education Officer

Communication Bulletin

This box should contain a media summary of the decision made through the recommendation of the paper which can be used following the meeting

Person to Contact:

Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer
Services for Children and Young People,
e-mail: claire.cusick@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
(tel: 01389 737304)

Appendices:

- 1. 12 Interventions for equity**
- 2. PEF Governance**

Background Papers:

Wards Affected: All wards