

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 22 September 2021**

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 activity and progress with regard to implementing West Dunbartonshire's Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement .

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Educational Services Committee is recommended to note the progress made in the past three months with two key priorities:

- 1) The Scottish Attainment Challenge; and
- 2) Education recovery and renewal.

3. Background

3.1 In line with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement the Committee receives a regular report outlining progress against this strategic priority.

3.2 In academic session 2021/22 West Dunbartonshire's Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement will focus on embedding progress made with the Scottish Attainment Challenge project priorities since 2015 and address areas of recovery relevant to the agenda for Excellence and Equity.

3.3 West Dunbartonshire Council's Scottish Attainment Challenge Project Plan for session 2021/22 was submitted to Scottish Government in May 2021 (Appendix 1). As reported to Committee in June in session 2020/21 almost all Scottish Attainment Challenge project workstreams were paused and/or readjusted due to the pandemic. However, the full amount was spent in 2020/21 in accordance with the readjusted plan which followed the Scottish Government pandemic guidance on realigning certain grant funding schemes. The project plan for session 2021/22 aims to continue this support to education recovery and build on progress made with the Council's Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement.

3.4 West Dunbartonshire Council has been allocated Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge funding since 2015. The funding aims to ensure every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed focusing particularly on closing the poverty related attainment gap. In January 2021, Scottish Government announced a continuation of the Attainment Scotland Fund for one more year. The allocation to the Council for 2021/22 is £2,043,815.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Scottish Attainment Challenge

4.1.1 West Dunbartonshire implements four Scottish Attainment Challenge projects: Early Level Play and Learning; Raising Attainment and Narrowing the Gap focusing on literacy and numeracy; Better Well Being Better Learning; and School Improvement Partnerships. The projects aim to improve outcomes for all children and young people (equity) and deliver sustained educational improvement (excellence).

4.1.2 The Scottish Attainment Challenge Project, Better Well Being Better Learning has been amended to include the new recovery workstreams to support equity. The amendments build on work started in 2020 to support children and families to be given equitable access to resources in and out of school. During the period of 2020-21 almost 3000 families received financial / wellbeing support from schools and early learning centres. The new workstreams are:

- Poverty Support: provision of resources to enable children and families to access learning and well being supports in and out of school hours;
- Digital Inclusion: build on provision of digital devices to ensure one to one access to devices and internet connection; and
- Tuition: provision of additional hours of learning for those most disadvantaged.

4.1.3 Priorities to build on and improve excellence outcomes are included in the Scottish Attainment Project Plans for literacy, numeracy and school improvement. These are established areas of work since 2015 and in 2021/2022 will build on achievements to improve the quality of delivery using school performance data.

4.2 Recovery and Renewal

4.2.1 To mark the end of the academic year 2020/21 the Service produced a video which celebrated the remarkable response to the pandemic by all of our early learning and childcare centres and schools. The film reflected that the academic year 2020/21 had been ['A year like no other'](#).

4.2.2 Schools returned in August 2021 at a time of the easing of COVID restrictions bringing hope for less disruption due to the pandemic in the new academic session. A clear focus on high standards and positive values has been

promoted by our staff. Some examples are: [SPTA](#), [Renton Primary](#) and [Early Years](#).

4.2.3 Officers will continue to work closely with headteachers and schools to ensure they are fully briefed and prepared for any future changes to the COVID mitigations in schools. Officers will also collaborate with headteachers to reflect on any new ways of thinking about how to deliver education learned from their experience of lockdown last session.

4.2.1 Senior Officers will conduct visits to all schools in term one to engage in collaborative dialogue with headteachers about their aspirations and plans for this session. The visits will also focus on the well being of staff and pupils in all education establishments in West Dunbartonshire.

4.2.2 To provide support for continuous improvement education officers will conduct monitoring visits in term one to schools and early learning centres as part of West Dunbartonshire's Improvement Framework. The visits will review:

- establishment standards and quality reports;
- school improvement/recovery 2021/22 action plans;
- attainment performance
- planned interventions and support to enable improvements in attainment and equity performance;

4.2.3 Improving Our Classrooms: The professional learning team and school improvement team are working collaboratively to support the implementation of the Improving Our Classrooms programme across all schools in West Dunbartonshire. This programme is one of the West Partnership Leadership Workstreams focusing on the principle that the key to quality in the classroom is teacher professional development which improves the quality of what happens in the classroom. Teachers will be asked to complete a project helping to develop their skills and understanding to support raised attainment.

4.2.4 Improving Our Curriculum: Work has started on developing an exciting range of inter disciplinary learning projects for all our schools to develop skills for learning, life and work. High quality model lessons and materials are under development and will be shared on Campus@WDC for schools to use to inform practice and for self evaluation. The projects aim to build on the digital and independent learning skills developed by our children and young people last year. To support the roll out of the curriculum work all depute head teachers will be invited to join an authority [curriculum planning group](#) focussing on working on leadership and management of [inter disciplinary learning in schools](#).

4.2.5 Digital Inclusion/Learning: The provision of devices continues to increase each year with numbers increased from 2153 in August 2015 to 9354 in August 2021. This Information on the progression in numbers of devices is listed in the table below:

Year	Purchased	Cumulative Total
August 2015 - 16	2153	2153
August 2016 - 17	857	3010
August 2017 - 18	1423	4433
August 2018 - 19	1158	5591
August 2019 - 20	322	5913
August 2020 - 21	3441	9354

In August 2021 an additional 400 devices were purchased for distribution to schools in September 2021.

4.3.2 1+2 Languages: The national focus on the implementation of the 1+2 Languages Policy continues this session. A National Survey conducted in May 2021 indicated that all West Dunbartonshire Primary schools are providing a second language from P1 onwards with all secondary schools delivering 1+2 languages from S1 through to S3. In this session, schools will continue to embed both a second and third language ensuring that all staff understand the progression from P1 to P7; and are aware of the West Dunbartonshire resources and professional learning opportunities available to support them. In addition, there is a comprehensive new [West Dunbartonshire 1+2 Languages website](#) bringing together all available resources and guidance which will support all establishments with the final stages of implementation of the 1+2 Languages Policy.

4.3.3 2021-22 Education Events Calendar: An [Education Events Calendar](#) has been developed to support establishments termly planning for learning and training. The calendar features focussed learning contexts and events as well as expectations of our schools for the year.

4.4 Wellbeing and Safety

West Dunbartonshire Schools will be involved in two new national initiatives as part of the commitment to improved outcomes for all children and young people through supporting well being and safety:

- **Scottish Government Health and Wellbeing Census:** all local authorities will introduce a new national census between October 2021 and April 2022. The census asks children and young people questions covering a wide range of topics including: their physical activity/ exercise; mental wellbeing (S2 pupils upwards); involvement in positive activities; eating behaviours; use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco (S2 pupils upwards); and their social media and online experience. The census will provide information to inform future planning and resourcing..

Planet Youth Icelandic Model Pilot: West Dunbartonshire Council is one of the first local authorities in Scotland to participate in a pilot substance use prevention programme called The Icelandic Prevention Model. The model has been used in Iceland for 20 years where a reduction in rates of

adolescent substance abuse has been attributed to the programme. It is based on three core pillars deemed essential for success:

- (1) using local evidence base: gathering data around areas such as proportion of adolescents who have consumed alcohol or drugs;
- (2) taking a community-based approach including: regular communication to parents; increasing availability of organised leisure opportunities for young people; and strengthening the supportive network between schools, parents and the community; and
- (3) maintaining dialogue across research, policy and practice in substance use prevention.

Clydebank High School will be the first West Dunbartonshire school to pilot the programme.

4.5 Learning for Sustainability

4.5.1 COP 26: In the lead up to COP26 in November all West Dunbartonshire schools and early learning and childcare centres will promote the United Nations Sustainable Goals. Three of the goals will be given a high profile in West Dunbartonshire schools: reduced inequalities; climate action and peace; justice and strong institutions. All establishments will be invited to join a week of action culminating in a local showcase event during the week of COP26.

4.5.2 Glasgow Science Centre Science Lab Programme: Professional development and learning programmes will be delivered to all schools by Glasgow Science Centre this session. Three learning contexts: 'Our World, Our Impact', Scotland Space School and Bodyworks have been selected for West Dunbartonshire schools as these relate to the authority Learning for Sustainability Strategy. An [online classroom](#) has been developed to showcase learning and share learning resources.

4.5.3 The Service has consulted with the Woodland Trust Scotland to arrange for every child and young person in West Dunbartonshire to be invited to plant a tree as part of the authority commitment to becoming carbon neutral during session 2021/22.

5. People Implications

5.1 Additional funding from Scottish Government since July 2020 has enabled recruitment of additional teaching and support staff to aid education recovery as a result of COVID-19. The allocation to the Council is £1,487,640. This has funded 37.6 teachers and 6 learning assistants. It was agreed through local negotiations to open the recruitment to newly qualified teachers and teachers registered for supply teaching in the authority. This ensured a fair recruitment process with opportunities available to all qualified teachers.

6. Financial Implication and Procurement Implications

6.1 For 2021/22 the Council has been awarded the same sum as received in 2020/21, £2.044m. This is divided broadly as follows: £1.056m to primaries and £0.988m to secondaries. The first claim covers the period to the end of September and is due for submission by mid-October.

6.3 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 Impact of the ongoing uncertainty and possible service disruption during the pandemic could impact on delivery of strategic outcomes.

7.2 Failure to implement an authority-wide strategy to raise attainment and secure improvement will disadvantage our young people and may become a reputational risk to the Council.

7.3 The Committee will be provided with regular update reports advising of progress

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 The Council recognises the diverse needs of learners, parents, guardians and carers and will ensure language and communication needs are carefully considered and met, and that suitable material and resources are accessible.

8.2 Building on the established provision of professional learning for staff we will ensure all staff are aware of and able to access appropriate training.

8.3 The Council is committed to the health and wellbeing of employees and we will continue to ensure that staff, children and parents are aware of the range of support available from Council Services, including support from psychological services and the measures in place to mitigate any impact on protected groups.

9. Consultation

9.1 In developing these plans there has been consultation with Education Scotland, the Scottish Government, local Trade Unions, parent councils and heads of establishment.

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 Strong governance and contingency planning in place for the education recovery plan.

10.2 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. Scottish Attainment Challenge Project Proposal 2021/22**

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All wards

