

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

---

**Subject: Literacy and Numeracy - Benchmarking****1. Purpose**

**1.1** This report advises Members on the performance of literacy and numeracy in West Dunbartonshire at Early Years, P1, P4, P7 in 2021.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1** It is recommended that Committee reviews the analysis and action plan for recovery and improvement.

**3. Background**

**3.1** Since 2016 Scottish Government has collected attainment data for children and young people in P1,P4,P7 and S3 as part of the National Improvement Framework. The data reports on children's progress with Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) within the Broad General Education.

**3.2** In 2020 the ACEL national data collection was suspended due to the pandemic. In March 2021, Scottish Government advised that the ACEL data would be collected for P1,P4,P7 and S3 in June 2021. In May 2021, Scottish Government advised local authorities that ACEL attainment data would not be collected for S3 in 2021. This was in response to concerns raised regarding pressures secondary schools were facing with the new Alternative Model of Certification arrangements.

**3.3** Attainment data for children in early years' establishments and in P1 is collected annually by West Dunbartonshire using locally developed literacy and numeracy baseline assessments. The early level baseline assessment is benchmarked across the authority to highlight performance levels. This was suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic.

**3.4** Since 2016 West Dunbartonshire Council has had an improving performance rate in the Broad General Education with an increasing trend of our children and young people attaining levels appropriate for their age and stage.

**3.5** The attainment levels for 2021 are being reported as an overview of the current performance levels for children and young people and are not compared to previous years as the data collection was suspended in 2020

due to the pandemic. The attainment data in this report is draft until ratified by Scottish Government in December 2021.

**3.6** This year's data will be helpful in supporting an understanding of the impact that COVID 19 has had on children and young people's achievements and highlight any change in the attainment gap. This will inform recovery planning.

**3.7** The West Dunbartonshire attainment recorded for children at P1, P4 and P7 attaining Curriculum for Excellence Levels for their age and stage in June 2021 is:

- 73% children achieved the expected level in reading;
- 66% achieved the expected level in writing; and
- 72% achieved the expected level in numeracy.

**3.8** The table below details the percentage of pupils at each key stage P1, P4 and P7 attaining Curriculum for Excellence Levels in each component of reading, writing and numeracy:

Component	P1	P4	P7
Reading	75	70	74
Writing	71	60	66
Numeracy	79	67	70

**3.9** The West Dunbartonshire Achievement of a Level data for 2021 records an attainment gap of 15% between children living in the most deprived areas (Quintile 1) and least deprived areas (Quintile 5).

The word quintile is used to describe the SIMD datazones grouped into five quintiles, i.e. Quintile 1 equates to the 20 % most deprived areas in Scotland, while Quintile 5 equates to the 20 % least deprived areas in Scotland.

The attainment gap recorded in 2021 between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 for West Dunbartonshire in each component is:

- Reading: the attainment gap is 13%;
- Writing: the attainment gap is 20.5%; and
- Numeracy: the attainment gap is 15.5%

**3.10** The table below details the West Dunbartonshire reading, writing and numeracy attainment for each Quintile:

Year	Stage	Component	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
<b>2021</b>	<b>WDC</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>84</b>
2021	P1, P4, P7 combined	Reading	68	74	79	83	81
2021	P1, P4, P7 combined	Writing	60	66	71	79	81
2021	P1, P4, P7 combined	Numeracy	66	74	79	85	81

**3.11** The table below details the attainment gap for between Quintile 1 and 5 for each stage P1, P4 and P7 in reading, writing and numeracy:

Stage	Component	Gap Q1 to Q5
P1	Reading	17.6
P1	Writing	22.6
P1	Numeracy	16.6
P4	Reading	4.7
P4	Writing	17.3
P4	Numeracy	8.6
P7	Reading	13.4
P7	Writing	18.7
P7	Numeracy	16.8

**3.12** The results of the West Dunbartonshire Early Years Baseline data in 2021 are recorded in (Appendix 1). The high level messages are:

- the percentage of early years children attaining the benchmark score for literacy in 2021 is 45 % for Concept of Print, 78 % for nursery rhymes and 87 % for clarifying from reciprocal teaching
- the percentage of early years children attaining the benchmark score for numeracy in 2021 is 20 % for number and number process, 69 % for Time and 85 % for measurement
- the percentage of P1 children attaining the benchmark score for literacy in 2021 is 64 % for phoneme blending and 53 % for non word reading test
- the percentage of P1 children attaining the benchmark score for numeracy in 2021 is 69 % for number and number process, 80 % for Time and 63 % for money

#### **4. Main Issues**

**4.1** The results analysis shows higher attainment levels for children living in the least deprived areas. In session 2020 -2021 schools experienced a period of significant disruption due to the pandemic with the 'normal' experience of education changed to remote learning at home during periods of isolation, illness or school closures. Children in West Dunbartonshire who lived in areas of high deprivation had lower rates of engagement in remote learning as was the case nationally.

**4.2** The results analysis records that attainment in writing is not as high as reading and numeracy. The range of evidence available to teachers to assess and evaluate levels of attainment in writing based on daily and weekly writing lessons was not as extensive in session 2020/21 due to the pandemic. As reported in June, levels of engagement in remote learning were good however, rates varied between key stages and individual children impacting

on the capacity of schools to deliver a sustained continued high level of engagement by all children and young people. The teaching of literacy and numeracy had to be modified in session 2020/21 to take account of the change to learning provision.

- 4.3 The results analysis for the Early Years Baseline records that attainment in number and number processes is much lower than other benchmarks. The attainment is within the normal range of expectation for this benchmark as a higher level of challenge is set within this aspect compared to the other benchmarks.
- 4.3 Action plans to support a narrowing of the attainment gap and increased attainment in writing are included in West Dunbartonshire's Scottish Attainment Challenge and Education Recovery plans for 2021/22. Officers are also developing with schools their action plans to support areas for recovery and improvement.

## **5. People Implications**

- 5.1 The additional funding from Scottish Government has enabled the secondment of officers and teachers to focus on specific areas of work to support the work to raise attainment and narrow the poverty related attainment gap.
- 5.2 Teachers and support staff recruited to support education recovery will be allocated to support delivery of the action plan for recovery and improvement in literacy and numeracy.

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

- 6.1 Scottish Government has allocated funding to support education recovery in West Dunbartonshire as part of the national recovery plan. Within the Educational Services Recovery Plan approved by Council in June 2021, £0.346m has been allocated to support excellence and equity recovery.
- 6.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1 Impact of 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 children and 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** An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out on the processes of administering the assessments. No significant issues arose provided pupils with Additional Support Needs were in receipt of their usual levels of support when completing assessments.

## **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 2017-2022 overarching priority to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire which supports improved outcomes for all learners in our community.

---

Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer

**Person to Contact:** Julie Mc Grogan, Senior Education Officer, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton G82 3PU, e-mail [julie.mcgrogan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:julie.mcgrogan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – West Dunbartonshire Early Years Baseline Infographic  
Appendix 2 – Educational Services Action Plan for Improvement & Recovery

**Background Papers:** Equalities Impact Assessment

**Wards Affected:** All

