

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer**

**Educational Services Committee: 6 March 2019**

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**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:

(a) the progress made in the past three months with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire.

**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 The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in February 2015. It aims to accelerate the pace in which Scotland closes the poverty related attainment gap in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing through leadership, families and communities and learning and teaching. West Dunbartonshire became a Challenge Authority in 2015 receiving additional funding to deliver projects in primary and secondary schools. From its inception in 2015/16 to 2018/19 it is estimated that we will have secured **£4.458m** for primary projects and **£2.053m** for secondary projects from the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It is envisaged that funding will continue until March 2020.

- 3.3 In December 2017 HM Inspectors and professional associates, working in partnership with Audit Scotland evaluated the education service strategies to improve learning, raise attainment and narrow the poverty-related attainment gap. It was reported that West Dunbartonshire is making very good progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty related attainment gap.

**4. Main Issues**

- 4.1 Project implementation needs to be on track to ensure outcomes for young people and families are delivered. The Attainment Challenge features as a strategic risk in the local delivery plan.

**4.2** Attainment Challenge funding is due to end in March 2020. There is no guarantee of continued funding post 2019/20.

**4.3** In February a grant proposal for 2019/20 was submitted to Scottish Government. This outlined details of overall project costs and identified proposals for any project changes and new interventions.

#### **4.4 Attainment Challenge Projects**

The lead officers for SAC in West Dunbartonshire will conduct a detailed evaluation of project impact between February and April 2019. A variety of sources will be used to evidence impact. Data will include qualitative evidence, e.g. stakeholder views, Scottish Government publications, case studies, HMIE inspection evidence at local authority and establishment level. This data will be reviewed alongside quantitative evidence from A Curriculum for Excellence (ACE) census, Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA), local early years assessments and individual project assessments.

##### **4.4.1 Literacy**

The literacy strategy group has produced new assessment criteria for reading and writing. Primary and secondary teachers are working together to moderate standards by assessing pupil work using the shared set of criteria. This aims to support an improved transition experience from primary seven to first year.

Our literacy website is now complete. This has been designed using the same layout and format as the numeracy website. The site provides links to all current resources as well as National Guidelines. The provision of education sites on Ourcloud is part of our strategy to reduce teacher workload by providing online forums for curriculum and learning and teaching materials.

West Dunbartonshire will pilot year 2 of the national P4-7 Read, Write, Count Campaign. This is a Scottish Government, Education Scotland and Scottish Book Trust initiative. P7 pupils will receive a pack of materials to support learning at home. Primary and secondary schools are encouraged work together to deliver family engagement projects. Information sessions are being offered to primary seven and first year teachers.

##### **4.4.2 Numeracy**

Teachers participating in a maths challenge network have implemented projects to increase levels of parental engagement in maths and numeracy. A number of innovative ideas have been piloted including lunchtime maths activity sessions, open afternoons, baking challenges and breakfast maths clubs. Schools have also produced helpful information leaflets, used You Tube and Google Classroom to share ideas and resources with pupils and parents.

Evaluations have been very positive. It is notable that parents have commented they have an improved understanding about how to support their children.

A thematic review of maths and numeracy will be conducted by lead officers and the maths strategy group between March and June 2019. This review will focus on the impact of our professional learning in maths and numeracy on the quality of learning and teaching, attainment and parental engagement.

#### **4.4.3 Health and Wellbeing**

Our health and wellbeing strategy updated in 2017 is under review to ensure the recommendations in the latest national review on personal and social education are included. Relationships, sexual health and parenthood, counselling and mental health are key priority areas.

Scottish Mental Health First Aid training was delivered jointly to teachers and senior pupils in Dumbarton Academy. Our health development officer co-ordinated this training which was delivered by West Dunbartonshire's Health Improvement Team. Feedback from the training was very positive and will now be rolled out to the other secondary schools starting with Clydebank High in March. This is a national training programme in response to Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 which recommend mental health training in educational settings to support early intervention and prevention.

Five primary schools, Aitkenbar, St Peter's, Our Holy Redeemer, Balloch and St Kessog's have been selected to participate in The Shake It Up project delivered by Y Dance. Two professional dance artists working in partnership with school staff using dance as a teaching tool to deliver a range subjects within the curriculum.

#### **4.4.4 Holiday Programme**

An Easter holiday programme will be delivered in partnership with Active Schools. The programme will run over one week across Clydebank, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven. Lunch and snacks will be provided to address the 'Holiday Hunger' agenda. This will be the third year of providing free health and fitness camps in areas of greatest need.

#### **4.4.5 Assessment and Moderation**

West Dunbartonshire is participating in a research pilot to identify ways in which the new national standardised assessments could be used by schools and local authorities to identify aspects of strength and improvement. West Dunbartonshire was selected to participate because of the high level of positive engagement by our staff at training on the new national assessments. In session 2016/17 West Dunbartonshire's BGE tracking toolkit was launched to monitor progress of children and young people across the Broad General

Education (BGE), i.e. from pre-school year to S3. This session the local authority is conducting an evaluation with headteachers.

#### **4.4.6 School Improvement Partnership Project**

A West Dunbartonshire training programme for staff on Collaborative Action Research has been produced by a local authority working group. Seventy primary and early years staff are completing training between January and March. All probationer teachers are conducting action research projects. Our approach has been shared with the West Partnership collaborative learning work stream.

#### **4.4.7 Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)**

West Dunbartonshire continues to work closely with other authorities across Scotland as part of the West Partnership collaborative and RAiSE (Raising Aspiration in Science Education) programme. A key STEM project for the West Partnership is Upstream Battle led by Keep Scotland Beautiful focusing on reducing waste within the Clyde Valley. Initial meetings have taken place to scope out the project within the West Partnership. Dumbarton Academy pupils will be involved in making a film about the sources of marine plastic litter within the Clyde Valley to be used nationally. To promote our young people as leaders of learning and global citizens our learning for sustainability working group is planning to deliver a pupil led West Dunbartonshire Upstream Battle campaign.

West Dunbartonshire's STEM development officer is part of a national group developing the Young STEM Ambassador Award. This award will promote pupil leadership in STEM in the Broad General Education.

### **4.5 Secondary Attainment Challenge Projects**

#### **4.5.1 Multi Agency Hub**

In Clydebank High School the Youth Engagement Officer is working with five third year pupils on additional No Knives Better Lives training. Seventy school staff have now been trained in Nurture Principles. The school is working with their educational psychologist to provide training for staff on 'The Connected and Compassionate Community'. To raise awareness of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) training was provided for staff as part of the inservice programme in February.

There is a significant increase in the number of families engaging with the school based Family Opportunities Team. One hundred and eighty eight families have linked with the team in contrast to eleven families for the same time period last year. An adult learning programme continues to be successful with forty adults participating in the ICT level 4 and 5 courses.

In Our Lady and St Patrick's High School small groups of staff have participated in Mindfulness training. The course will support staff to use the

approach with pupils and as a method to support their own well being and stress management. Participating staff report they have a better understanding of attachment and child development. Nurture is also being used more widely as the school's shared framework for understanding social and emotional needs and challenging behaviour.

The Family Opportunities Team continues to provide a range of supports to parents. This includes financial advice and guidance about debt management, benefit entitlement, EMA and energy advice. Employability pathways are being provided by supporting parents to participate in volunteering and learning opportunities for example, IT and interview skills. Parents have also been provided with foodbank and school uniform support.

#### **4.5.2 Skills Academies**

The skills academy is successfully widening the pathways through learning by providing alternative courses, vocational work, creative learning and e learning giving more choice and flexibility in the curriculum offering. This is supporting young people to attend, engage and gain success.

The plans are to develop online resource for the skills academy to support independent learning. Between March and June The School of Dance will be extended by offering national qualifications and also provide after school and holiday programmes. The School of Dance will pilot a holiday programme for dance in April as part of the Easter Holiday Programme. Pupil uptake in the School of Dance is under review with a view to increase numbers gaining qualifications.

#### **4.5.3 Enhanced Broad General Education**

In Dumbarton Academy a group of first and second year pupils are being provided with personalised support for literacy and numeracy to assist them to access and increase their levels of engagement in all curricular areas. The pupils are participating daily in a structured reading programme called Reading Wise. Literacy / numeracy diaries have been issued to support pupils to record when they are transferring their literacy and numeracy skills to help build confidence and understanding of the value of these skills in life. The pupils have been allocated a sixth year mentor to support them with their numeracy skills and confidence skills.

In St Peter the Apostle High School one hundred and nineteen pupils in first and second year are being provided with a highly personalised curriculum. The young people completed a strengths and difficulties questionnaire about their self esteem, anxiety and confidence levels. Individual and small group support programmes are being delivered. Supports range from additional curriculum time allocated for health and well being. A nurture base provides a safe space for one to one support. Pupils in the base are learning about team building skills, friendship building, making choices and managing anger. The use of 'Therapy Dogs' has been introduced with young people reporting this

helps to de-escalate their feelings of anxiety, isolation and stress. Art therapy is also provided on an individual basis.

#### **4.6 Attainment Programme**

The Enhanced School Improvement Team are visiting all primary schools this term to monitor the quality of learning, teaching and assessment at primary one, four and seven. The team engage in classroom visits, individual meetings with stage teachers, senior leadership teams and pupils. This is conducted in partnership with school headteachers to build the capacity of heads to monitor, review and support a consistent model of delivery in all schools.

Our senior education officers, education officers and attainment advisor are conducting one to one meetings with headteachers to review school attainment at key stages, performance against national benchmarks and comparators and to set interim targets for attainment.

A professional learning programme will be delivered between March and April for all deputy heads, curriculum leaders and principal teachers on the new national benchmarking and improvement tool. This will support leaders at all levels to use an outcome focused model of improvement.

#### **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** The additional funding from Scottish Government has supported the secondment of officers and teachers assigned to raise attainment and narrow the poverty related attainment gap. Exit strategies are being developed prior to funding streams ending in 2020.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Implication**

- 6.1** For primary challenge projects we have claimed part year costs of £0.955m to January 2019. For secondary challenge projects we have claimed part year costs of £0.622m to January 2019. A final grant claim will be submitted for outstanding expenditure at March 2019.

- 6.2** If the grant award is not spent in full the unspent sum must be returned to the Scottish Government – it is not permissible to carry forward unspent grant. However, as indicated in the table below it anticipated that the full award of £2.043m for 2018/19 will be spent.

	<b>2015/16 actual</b>	<b>2016/17 actual</b>	<b>2017/18 actual</b>	<b>2018/19 projected</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Primary	£778,595	£1,322,450	£1,189,844	£1,167,572	£4,458,461
Secondary	n/a	£353,019	£823,264	£876,243	£2,052,526

<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>£778,595</u>	<u>£1,675,469</u>	<u>£2,013,108</u>	<u>£2,043,815</u>	<u>£6,510,987</u>
<b>Grant awarded</b>	<u>£1,024,856</u>	<u>£1,895,410</u>	<u>£2,013,108</u>	<u>£2,043,815</u>	<u>£6,977,189</u>

**6.3** There are no procurement implications arising from this report

## **7. Risk Analysis**

**7.1** 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

**7.2** The Committee will be provided with regular update reports advising of progress.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**8.1** There was no requirement to undertake an EIA for the purposes of this report as it is providing an update to Committee.

## **9. Consultation**

**9.1** A meeting has taken place with our link officer in Corporate Communications to alert them to the national project and to discuss how we promote this good news for West Dunbartonshire. Subsequently, there has been positive coverage of the project in the local media.

**9.2** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

**9.3** In developing these proposals there has been consultation with Education Scotland, the Scottish Government and parent councils.

## **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.

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Chief Education Officer  
March 2019

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**Background Papers:**

**Wards Affected:** All wards