

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 8 March 2023**

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 progress with implementing Educational Services' improvement priorities for attainment and equity.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Educational Services Committee is asked to note:

- (a) that the Committee will be provided with regular update reports advising of progress; and
- (b) the achievement of West Dunbartonshire's schools to increase attainment in the Broad General Education for our most disadvantaged children and young people.

3. Background

- 3.1** In line with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement the Committee receives regular reports outlining progress against this strategic priority.
- 3.2** West Dunbartonshire's Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement supported by funding from Scottish Government has resulted in improved outcomes in the Broad General Education with West Dunbartonshire performing well compared to national figures.
- 3.3** The approach to improve outcomes has been supported by Scottish Government Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding 2015-2022; and since 2022 a revised SAC funding model - the Strategic Equity Fund.
- 3.4** As reported to Committee in December 2022 the change from Attainment Challenge Funding to Strategic Equity Funding in 2022 has reduced the annual income to West Dunbartonshire Council . The Attainment Challenge allocation to the Council prior to 2022 was £2,043,815 in both 2020/21 and 2021/22. The allocation in 2022/23 is £1,745,797 with further annual reductions of £298,018 in each financial year up to 2025/26. By 2025/26 the allocation to West Dunbartonshire will be £851,743 compared to £2,043,815 in 2022.

3.5 The Strategic Equity Fund set increased expectations for the national mission to tackle inequity. These expectations aim to accelerate progress to raise attainment and narrow the poverty related attainment gap; with local authorities asked to define local authority Stretch Aims to improve outcomes for all and tackle the poverty-related attainment gap.

4.0 Main Issues

4.1 The Strategic Equity Fund funding model launched in 2022 has reduced the annual income to West Dunbartonshire reducing the capacity of the service going forward to deliver strategic priorities for raised attainment and achievement.

4.2 The Education Service has a strong record of progress with achieving aims and targets set for attainment and tackling the poverty related attainment gap since 2015.

4.3 West Dunbartonshire Progress (Attainment and Narrowing the Gap)
In December 2022 Scottish Government published an Annual Statistical Report on Attainment. The 2021/22 Achievement of a Level (ACEL) data shows a strong performance for West Dunbartonshire compared to the national achievement.

4.3.1 Table 1.1 shows West Dunbartonshire attainment in 2021/22 as higher than the national average at P1, P4, P7 and S3:

Table 1.1

Component	Aspect	West Dunbartonshire	Scotland
P1	Reading	81	79
	Writing	76	77
	Listening & Talking	85	86
	Numeracy	82	84
P4	Reading	77	76
	Writing	73	70
	Listening & Talking	84	85
	Numeracy	75	75
P7	Reading	80	79
	Writing	75	73
	Listening & Talking	85	86
	Numeracy	77	76
S3 3rd+	Reading	87	88
	Writing	85	87
	Listening & Talking	89	89
	Numeracy	88	89
S3 4 th	Reading	55	54
	Writing	49	52
	Listening & Talking	61	55

	Numeracy	50	59
--	----------	----	----

Reading consistently performs better compared to the national achievement for all primary stages and for S3 at fourth level (S3 4th). Writing performs better than the national achievement at P4 and P7.

4.3.2 Tables 1.2 and 1.3 show that in 2021/22 Quintile 1 (most deprived) children and young people from West Dunbartonshire performed better than Quintile 1 children nationally for all components at P1, P4, and for S3 at fourth level (S3 4th):

Table 1.2

Stage	Component	West Dunbartonshire Attainment Quintile 1	Scotland Attainment Quintile 1
P1	Reading	76	71
	Writing	71	68
	Numeracy	81	80
P4	Reading	74	68
	Writing	70	61
	Numeracy	72	67
P7	Reading	75	72
	Writing	71*	64
	Numeracy	74*	67

*Redacted in official dataset. These figures from WDC analysis.

Table 1.3

Stage	Component	West Dunbartonshire Attainment Quintile 1	Scotland Attainment Quintile 1
All Primary	Reading	75	70
	Writing	70	64
	Listening & Talking	81	79
	Numeracy	74	70
S3 3rd+	ER	83	81
	EW	80	80
	ELT	86	83
	N	86	81
S3 4th	ER	51	39
	EW	42	36
	ELT	54	41
	Literacy	38	33
	N	45	43

4.4 West Dunbartonshire Stretch Aims

As reported to Committee in December 2022 West Dunbartonshire set ambitious Stretch Aims for the Education Service to be achieved by December 2023 (**Appendix 1**). Local authority Core Stretch Aims will be aggregated in a national overview of local authority performance as part of the National Improvement Framework.

4.4.1 In Autumn 2022 West Dunbartonshire set Stretch Aims to be achieved by December 2023 which were aspirational yet realistic. These Stretch Aims were set before the Scottish Government published the final ACEL census data in December 2022.

4.4.2 Analysis of the ACEL census data published in December 2022 shows that children in primary schools in West Dunbartonshire are performing at the national standard for the Broad General Education (BGE).

4.4.3 West Dunbartonshire is likely to achieve the ambitious Stretch Aims set to narrow the poverty related attainment gap by December 2023 if attainment continues to improve in academic session 2022 / 23. **Table 1.4** displays:

- the national attainment gap and West Dunbartonshire's attainment gap in 2020/21 and 2021/22; and the Stretch Aim set by West Dunbartonshire to narrow the poverty related attainment gap by December 2023 (the attainment gap being defined as the difference between the attainment of children living in our most deprived areas Quintile 1(Q1) compared to the attainment of children living in the least deprived areas (Q5)).

Table 1.4

	ACEL Literacy P1, P4 and P7 Combined (%)			
	Overall levels Attainment P1,P4,P7 combined	SIMD Q1 (children in most deprived areas) Attainment	SIMD Q5 (children in least Deprived areas)	Poverty Related Attainment Gap Gap (Q1 v Q5)
National (20-21)	67	56	81	25
National (21-22)	71	61	82	21
West Dunbartonshire Attainment & Attainment Gap (2020-21)	62	57	74	17.9
West Dunbartonshire Attainment & Attainment Gap (2021-22)	71	67	85	18.8
West Dunbartonshire Stretch Aim & Attainment Gap Target to be achieved by December 2023	74	72	85	13

4.5 Reduced Funding to West Dunbartonshire

The prediction that West Dunbartonshire is on track to achieve the Stretch Aims set for 2023 whilst positive is as a result of the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement supported by Government funding since 2015. As this funding will be reduced annually each year to 2025/26 this could impact on progress in forthcoming years as the resources available to deliver the strategy will have reduced further by 2025/26.

4.6 Mitigating Impact of Reduced Funding: The Improvement Framework

4.6.1 To mitigate the impact of the reduced funding the Service has implemented an Improvement Framework which supports headteachers to manage change and improvement against clearly defined quality outcomes for attainment and equity. The Improvement Framework operates an annual programme of quality assurance, monitoring and capacity building to support education leaders to implement a continuous programme of improvement. In the period December 2022 to March 2023 school visits were conducted focussing on: attainment and attainment gap; use of Pupil Equity Funding; and quality of learning, teaching and assessment.

4.6.2 Attainment Monitoring: A Curriculum for Excellence

All schools submitted their interim ACEL predictions in early February with a planned programme of support and challenge for schools where progress for children at P1, 4, 7 and S3 falls below targets set in line with West Dunbartonshire's Stretch Aims.

4.6.3 Attainment Monitoring: Senior Phase Attainment Reviews

In Term 2 all secondary schools engaged in Attainment Review Meetings with officers. Using Insight data, school profiles and raw SQA results, schools were asked to demonstrate their self-evaluation, identify their attainment gaps and discuss actions to address improvement. In term 3, schools will have a second Attainment Review monitoring progress of actions agreed at the term 2 visits, reviewing School Statistical Report (SSR) data, looking at wider attainment and achievement measures and evaluating predictions for this year's Senior Phase qualifications.

4.6.4 School Performance Monitoring

As part of the improvement agenda, in November and December 2022 each primary school Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had a meeting with the Data and Performance Officer to discuss their performance data across the BGE. Individual school context and performance data for all primary schools was shared with every school as an excel spreadsheet, thus enabling schools to benchmark themselves against other schools with a similar context within the local authority. At the meetings the Data and Performance Officer and SLT discussed the 2022 data set and longer term trends in individual school data, possible gaps and areas for improvement. The SLT were able to pinpoint possible reasons for the trends and, in some cases, new areas for improvement were identified during this meeting.

4.6.5 Pupil Equity Funding

The continuation of PEF funding directly to schools will increase the level of accountability for delivering outcomes by schools. The local authority is responsible for the quality of education in West Dunbartonshire and will require sufficient capacity to deliver any increased scrutiny and accountability for the delivery of PEF funded outcomes by schools.

A detailed review of PEF budgets across all primary and secondary schools is underway by the central team. This will examine actual year-to-date expenditure versus each school's original PEF plan, take account of committed expenditure and identify variances versus budget. The review will work with school leadership teams to act and/or improve our processes to ensure the overall PEF budget is spent effectively and timeously to close the poverty related attainment gap.

4.7 Education Development

4.7.1 Instrumental Music Service (IMS): The West Dunbartonshire Senior Concert Band took part in the Scottish Concert Band Festival in Livingston. The Band delivered an outstanding performance and were awarded a Gold plus award. The band are invited to the national finals of the Senior Concert Band Competition in March.

The IMS Christmas Concert took place at Clydebank Town Hall for the first time since December 2019. All West Dunbartonshire Ensembles (Senior and Training Concert Bands, Senior and Training String Ensembles, Funk sKool and Guitar Ensemble) took part as well as IMS Soloists and ensembles from some of the High Schools.

In March 2023 we will be holding the IMS Spring Concert at Clydebank Town Hall; and on Tuesday 28th March at Dumbarton Academy we will host a regional qualifying event for the Scottish Young Musicians Competition run by the Music Education Partnership 'Groupon'. The winner of the WDC event will go on to represent the authority at the National Final which will be held in May at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow.

4.7.2 WDC Competencies Framework: Professional Learning Programme:

The professional learning programme for the West Dunbartonshire Competencies Framework has made significant progress over the past term. Professional learning sessions have taken place for all Depute Heads, Principal Teachers and over 100 practitioners. The programme covers an introduction to the key competencies outlined in the West Dunbartonshire Competencies Framework and includes both theoretical and practical components. To ensure that all practitioners have the opportunity to participate in the training, we have offered a flexible programme that allows employees to attend training sessions, both during the day, or after work. Inservice day workshops have also been delivered and materials developed for schools wishing to run their own in-house workshops. So far, we have seen a high level of engagement and have received positive feedback on the quality of the training.

4.7.3 1+2 Languages: Languages Week Scotland - January 30 to 6 February:

During Languages Week Scotland, teachers will have access to a variety of bespoke resources to support to improve their language teaching and learning. This includes a range of online resources and professional development courses to help educators increase their confidence in teaching another language. These resources are designed to be easily accessible and are available in French, Spanish, German, Italian, Gaelic and British Sign Language (BSL). Additionally, there will be opportunities to connect with other

educators and language experts, to share best practices and learn new strategies for teaching languages. Through these initiatives, teachers will have the tools and knowledge they need to provide high-quality language learning.

4.7.4 Technology Replacement Programmes: West Dunbartonshire began investing in Chromebooks for schools in May 2015. Devices purchased in 2015 are now end of life and no longer supported by Google. We continue to work in conjunction with ICT to ensure our Chromebook estate is fit for purpose and we have introduced a rolling programme for device replacement as and when devices reach end of life. This programme is essential to maintain our existing pupil device ratios, provide equal opportunities and a modern learning environment.

The AV replacement programme continues across the school estate. This provides a centrally managed programme of replacement of faulty teaching boards as and when they fail to ensure all teachers have access to a functioning electronic teaching board. The teaching boards are a real asset to schools ensuring that the fundamental tools for learning are provided for all classrooms.

5. People Implications

5.1 As reported to Council in February 2022 the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding enabled the provision of additional temporary (seconded) funded posts within the education service, partner council services and external providers. The main areas supported through this additionality are early intervention in learning, welfare advice and poverty support, nurturing mental wellbeing, community safety, school and learning community collaboration to improve quality, professional learning and personalised learning pathways. The decreased funding will reduce the number of staff available to deliver in these areas with the seconded staff returning to their substantive posts, and any backfill element will cease.

5.2 As reported to Council in February 2022 in session 2021/22 the local authority Scottish Attainment Challenge funded 41.5 posts. The new funding model will reduce this number of posts by 42% from 41.5 to 24.07 posts by 2025/2026. In session 2022/23 the Strategic Equity Fund will fund 39.0 posts.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 Since its inception in 2015/16 to March 2022 the Council received £12,642,432 in funding. Attainment Challenge allocations to the Council were £2,043,815 in both 2020/21 and 2021/22. Funding in 2022/23 is £1,745,797 which is a reduction of £298,018.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 The reduced funding model could impact negatively on sustained improvement in future academic sessions.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.1** A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and has identified the decrease in funding will limit the Education Services' strategic ability to deliver and progress a range of functions within the raising attainment agenda. These include, but are not limited to scrutiny and challenge teams, resources to support out of hours and holiday learning as well as access to wellbeing support for parents. Scope exists to mitigate the adverse impact on pupils; however this requires adaptations across key service areas through the modification of plans to reflect the reduction in Scottish Government Funding.

9. Consultation

- a. Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.
- b. In response to the revised funding model consultation is being conducted with stakeholders to produce West Dunbartonshire's Strategic Equity Fund plan for 2022-2026.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** 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.

Laura Mason
Chief Education Officer
March 2023

Person to Contact: Julie McGrogan, Senior Education Officer, Department of Education, Learning and Attainment, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL
Telephone No: 01389 737316
Email: julie.mcgrogan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendix: 1. West Dunbartonshire Stretch Aims

Background Papers: Equality Impact Assessment

Wards Affected: All wards