

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 16 March 2022**

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 Council's Scottish Attainment Challenge programme; and implementing Educational Service's improvement priorities for attainment and equity.

2. Recommendations

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

- 1) The Scottish Attainment Challenge; and
- 2) West Dunbartonshire Council's Education Improvement Framework

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

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 West Dunbartonshire Council is one of 9 Challenge Authorities allocated funding from the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund since 2015. The Challenge Authority Programme set out to accelerate the pace in which Scotland closes the poverty related attainment gap. As a Challenge Authority West Dunbartonshire delivered a successful programme of improving attainment.

3.3 As reported to Council in February 2022, on 14 December 2021 Scottish Government published data on literacy and numeracy levels which confirmed that the attainment gap between pupils from the most and least deprived areas of Scotland has widened. While national Attainment figures have reduced overall, those pupils from the poorest areas of Scotland have seen the biggest decrease.

3.4 The changes in attainment for the period 2020/21 attributed to the pandemic and periods of lockdown were identified as a priority in the Service Recovery Plan 2021/22. The West Dunbartonshire 2021/22 project plan for the Scottish

Attainment Challenge and Improvement Framework programme was adapted to support recovery and renewal focussing on 3 key priorities:

- health and well being ;
- literacy and numeracy attainment; and
- accelerated progress to narrow the poverty gap.

3.5 West Dunbartonshire Council's adjusted Scottish Attainment Challenge Project Plan for 2021/22 is on track with an end of year budget forecast to be submitted to Scottish Government in March predicting full budget spend for the session 2021/22.

3.6 Our schools and early learning and childcare settings are still facing many operational challenges such as increased staff absence due to the pandemic. The commitment to providing high quality experiences by our schools is commendable with staff regularly adapting and adjusting to accommodate any revisions to COVID guidance and also to ensure continuity in learning despite staff absence.

3.7 Despite the challenges of the current context of the pandemic our schools continue to deliver education developments in the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment. West Dunbartonshire schools are focused on delivering improved attainment and equity outcomes and ensure our children and young people experience a wide ranging, motivating offer linked to the national aspirations in the Curriculum for Excellence.

4.0 Main Issues

4.1 The Scottish Attainment Challenge

4.1.1 From 2022/23 the new Scottish Attainment Challenge funding model will reduce the annual income to West Dunbartonshire reducing the capacity of the service to deliver strategic priorities for raised attainment and achievement. Analysis of attainment data has identified schools with high levels of performance and schools requiring additional support to accelerate progress to improve levels of attainment and narrow the attainment gap.

4.1.3 West Dunbartonshire's lead officer for Scottish Attainment Challenge and Attainment Advisor conducted meetings with headteachers between January and March 2022 to review each school's attainment and attainment gap; planning for Pupil Equity Funding; and the quality of delivery of improvements to raise attainment and narrow the attainment gap. The evidence gathered will be used to inform the next phase of planning for the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme in West Dunbartonshire.

4.1.4 At the time of writing this report West Dunbartonshire's Scottish Attainment Challenge Plan for 2022/23 was in draft form to be submitted to Scottish Government in March 2022. The plan will be presented to Education Committee in June 2022.

4.2 West Dunbartonshire Improvement Framework

The Service has developed a robust Improvement Framework which aims to provide support and challenge to deliver improved outcomes. In the period December 2021 to March 2022 officers have prioritised conducting Performance Reviews in all schools.

4.2.1 Performance Reviews

Reviews are being conducted in both primary and secondary schools. The reviews scrutinise attainment data, targets and predictions. Officers work in collaboration with headteachers to make recommendations and identify areas for improvement. Reviews to examine the predicted levels of achievement for pupils in the Senior Phase in this year's Scottish Qualification Awards are scheduled for March 2022. Reviews to examine predicted attainment in Curriculum for Excellence Levels in the Broad General Education (P1, P4, P7 and S3) are scheduled between February and March 2022. Officers will monitor progress and impact of any recommendations at follow up reviews in April, May and June 2022.

4.2.2 School Statistical Reports

The Service Data and Performance Officer has conducted meetings with primary headteachers to discuss the School's Statistical Reports. These reports provide detailed profiles of a school's context and analyse levels of performance against local and national comparators. The meetings focussed on discussing performance and trends in the areas of attainment, attendance, exclusion and equity gap. Primary schools are using this data to inform planning for improvement and to ensure targeted Covid recovery planning.

4.5 Education Development

4.5.1 Anti- sectarian education

As reported to Committee in December 2022 West Dunbartonshire has commissioned Show Racism the Red Card and Nil By Mouth to deliver learning programmes in all schools. There has been a very high uptake of the offer since its launch in November: Show Racism the Red Card has delivered 27 workshops in 14 schools working with 1181 young people with another 62 sessions planned for March. Nil By Mouth has worked with 615 young people across 15 primary schools; and 30 of our young people in S4-S6 who are working towards apprenticeships in the care sector as part of their workplace training programme.

4.5.2 Campus@wdc

West Dunbartonshire's online learning learning campus Campus@wdc continues to grow and develop. The campus provides a wide range of learning content for our children and young people on campus@WDClearners; and for our staff on campus@WDCEducators. The campus hosts a wide range of curriculum content judged high quality which can be used by staff to inform and evaluate the quality of their planning against.

4.5.3 Children's Mental Health Week

Children's Mental Health Week took place on 7-13 February 2022. This year's theme is Growing Together. To assist our schools with planning our Health Development Officer produced a bank of resources shared on the Ourcloud home page:

<https://sites.google.com/ourcloud.buzz/public/home-learning-resources/childrens-mental-health-week?authuser=0>

4.5.4 Creative Learning Project

Educational Services were successful with a project bid to Education Scotland/Creative Scotland to receive a Creative Learning Network Fund. The fund will support the delivery of a Creative Learning project called 'Making Space' which aims to support young people who have or are experiencing difficult transitions or changes in their life. The project will be piloted in 3 primary schools (Our Holy Redeemer, Linnvale and Whitecrook Primaries) between February and June 2022. The children will explore feelings and learn coping strategies through art-making, yoga and learning in the outdoors. A digital teaching resource will also be developed and shared with our schools.

4.5.5 Languages Week Scotland

Languages Week Scotland took place from 31 January - 4 February 2022. The theme was: "The 'Rights' Approach - incorporating learners' rights within Scotland's languages landscape." Young People and families across West Dunbartonshire were invited to celebrate and highlight the signed and spoken languages used and learned across West Dunbartonshire.

During the week there were opportunities to access resources, attend online information events and training linking to a wide range of language, intercultural and rights-based learning. Young people and families were able to get involved with a host of West Dunbartonshire daily language challenges and learning activities to showcase their knowledge and understanding of language learning, as well as the importance of valuing linguistic diversity and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, (UNCRC).

The West Dunbartonshire Languages Week Scotland website can be accessed [here](#).¹

4.5.6 Skills for Learning, Life and Work

Building on our curriculum offer to develop children and young people's skills for learning, life and work two curriculum developments are underway: a review of the Senior Phase Curriculum; and the development of a West Dunbartonshire Skills Framework.

4.5.7 Senior Phase Curriculum Review

Educational Services is currently undertaking a review of the senior phase across our secondary schools with a view to further enhancing the breadth and depth of our curriculum for young people as they prepare for post school destinations. An audit of existing provision of national qualifications across our schools is being conducted with a view to sharing practice and enhancing

¹ <https://sites.google.com/ourcloud.buzz/wdc12languages/scotland-languages-week>

capacity both at individual school level, via consortia arrangements and college provision. An audit of achievement opportunities, including accredited courses and programmes, will complement this enabling schools to enhance opportunities for young people to develop skills for learning, life and work.

4.5.8 West Dunbartonshire Skills Framework

A bespoke West Dunbartonshire Skills Framework is being developed. The Framework will underpin curriculum planning and enable us to record and celebrate the many achievements of our young people as they progress through school into positive and sustained destinations. The Framework is structured around a set of six Competencies which aim to develop knowledge, skills, attributes and qualifications.

4.5.9 Project Based Learning Skills

A professional learning package is being offered on Project Based Learning where staff engage in planning learning across a wide range of curriculum experiences focussing on developing skills for learning, life and work. To support this work a suite of high quality exemplar materials is being produced by our staff:

- 5 Exemplar training websites are being created to support teachers in the delivery of Project Based Learning. These sites include videos of teachers explaining how they plan and implement projects. 2 of the sites have been completed : Goose Guardians² and Ada Twist³
- 31 Primary Probationers have completed introduction to Project Based Learning. They are implementing their projects before March 2022, before showcasing their Projects in the final term. For example, Kilbowie Primary school produced an excellent interdisciplinary learning project on “Fixing Fast Fashion” with his P6 class in Kilbowie Primary School. Project Outline⁴
- Staff from Clydebank High and Our Lady and St Patrick’s High Schools have collaborated on implementing a Project Based Learning approach to a Youth Philanthropy Initiative - Project Outline⁵

4.6 Improving Our Classrooms

19 class teachers from Primary and Secondary schools have been taking part in the Improving our Classroom Programme this year with the West Partnership. Each teacher has submitted their Initial Case Study for Improvement Outline which identifies an intervention that will raise attainment in Literacy or Numeracy. The 19 teachers have taken part in 13 Webinars, 3 in person check in days and weekly trio discussions. In June the teachers will submit their full Case Study for Improvement which will be assessed to gain Masters Level Credits.

5. People Implications

² <https://sites.google.com/ourcloud.buzz/gooseguardians/home>

³ <https://sites.google.com/ourcloud.buzz/ada-twist-scientist/home>

⁴ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oUix8xXN_Y6LEWHkX3NH8tG6L0HT2acz/view?usp=sharing

⁵ https://drive.google.com/file/d/109JZbRYU8qeKLUb0opQsxrUocJv_mNym/view?usp=sharing

- 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 well being, 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 Scottish Attainment Challenge is funding 41.5 posts as detailed in Table 1:

Table 1:

Planned Staffing Breakdown	FTE planned
Data Analysis Officer	1
Education Development Officers	3.4
Family Link / Outreach Worker	17
Psychologist	1.5
Teachers	7
Others - Project Manager, Excellence & Equity Lead, Police Officer, Senior Phase Officer , Professional Learning	11.6
Staff Total 2021/22	41.5

The new funding model will reduce this number of posts by 42% from 41.5 to 24.07 posts by 2025/2026.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

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

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** The reduced funding model coupled with the current context of the pandemic increases risk of a negative impact on priorities to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for all learners in our communities.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

8.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and has identified the decrease in funding will limit ELA's 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 will be conducted with Education Scotland, the Scottish Government, local Trade Unions and Heads of Establishments to produce West Dunbartonshire's Scottish Attainment Challenge 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.

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Appendix: 1. Equalities Impact Assessment Screening

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All wards

