

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

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

**Educational Services Committee: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

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**Subject: Services for Children, Young People and Families Update Report**

**1. Purpose**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is:

- a) to inform Educational Services Committee of progress on supports to children, young people and families.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1** Members of the Educational Services Committee are asked to:

- a) Note progress on plans to continue developing and improving supports.

**3. Background**

**3.1** In January 2019 a national review of the implementation of Additional Support for Learning began. The subsequent report and action plan had nine key themes which set standards nationally, locally and at establishment level.

**3.2** The national report recommends that local authorities must take account of the findings of the report to review and align their quality assurance processes. This must drive improvements in processes, practice and outcomes at all levels in the system.

**3.3** West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) is committed to ensuring all children and young people are enabled to progress through Early Learning and School with the support they need.  
When this support is more or different to what is generally provided for children and young people of the same age, then the child or young person is said to have additional needs.

**3.4** The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 lists four interrelated factors which individually or jointly impact on ability to learn:

- Learning Environment
- Family Circumstances
- Disability or Health
- Social or Emotional Factors

Additional support may be required throughout a child or young person's

educational journey: others may only require additional support for a short period of time.

- 3.5** It is recognised that children, young people and families are best supported through effective multi-agency planning and delivery of services. Educational Services work in collaboration with a range of council, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and third sector colleagues to support our families. This work is being developed via the Whole Family Wellbeing (WFW) planning, led by Educational Services on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership.

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

- 4.1** There are currently 12, 226 school pupils in West Dunbartonshire Council. 5281 Pupils have Additional Support Needs (ASN) (43%), supported mainly in mainstream schools. 241 pupils are supported in our specialist settings as they require a more specific learning environment. We also have a small percentage of our children and young people with additional support needs supported by day or residential providers in external placements. These often involve young people separated from their peers and their community and can be expensive in comparison to supporting in-house. These costs have increased significantly over the past few years due to increased salaries and increased charges from partner providers for the range of specialist supports offered. This has resulted in budget overspends and it is anticipated that the overspends will be mitigated to some extent by the strategy implementation.

Our ASN Estate consists of:

- 1 all through setting for 0-18 years supporting learners with complex ASN
- 2 Secondary Bases
- 4 Primary Bases

- 4.2** In response to projected needs in the secondary school estate, work is underway to expand the Kilpatrick School Campus with three additional classrooms. The provision of temporary modular classrooms has been planned and these are expected to be ready for use by the end of March 2023. The planned building extension work is due to be undertaken later in the school session 2022/23.
- 4.3** A public consultation seeking views of a range of stakeholders on our plans to re-develop the former Riverside Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC), creating a school for severe and complex learners was undertaken. A report on the outcomes will be shared with committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- 4.4** We recently reviewed the progress and impact of our ASN strategy which reflects the National Improvement Framework. Evaluation considered the range of work streams focussing on improvements to learning and teaching, attainment and achievement, teacher professionalism and the development of the ASN estate. Evidence informs us the Strategy is proving successful in all areas. It is developing teacher knowledge and skills; learners' experiences; how we measure progress and assess and our inclusive practices. Education

Leaders will continue to implement the work contained in the workstreams and in developing the capacity of all staff to best meet the needs of individual children and young people. We recognise from our survey of parents that they too need help supporting their children. Planned work with our partners in HSCP will enhance the programme of parenting supports being established.

**4.5** Notable progress has been as follows:

- Staff members who completed Makaton training last year have reported positive impact as a result of the implementation in their setting. Staff describe that some pupils are benefitting in terms of improvement in communication, Literacy skills, social interaction and are beginning to see a marked improvement in Literacy attainment. Six members of this group are now advancing to the next stage of their learning development to train as tutors over the next few months. This will build capacity allowing Makaton to be rolled out and developed across the authority building a sustainable learning model;
- A group of parents of children who attend Kilpatrick ELCC (KEYS) are undertaking Makaton lessons with the Early Years Lead who has been trained. They report this is helping with communication with their children at home;
- In collaboration with HSCP colleagues approaches to supporting families with children who have a range of neurodiversity needs have been reviewed and a plan to develop these has been started;
- Seventy staff from a range of our settings undertook further Child Protection training which developed their skills in highlighting and recording significant events. These discussions allowed for professional dialogue, moderation and increased understanding, ensuring a more consistent approach across sectors/establishments. Evaluations tell us all staff improved in knowledge as a result.

**4.6** We continue to support our children, young people and families in keeping safe on-line. This term we are promoting Safer Internet Day and encouraging establishments to take part in this year's theme which is "**Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online**". It focusses on Youth Voice and listening to the issues that really matter to children, encouraging them to shape the online safety support that they receive. A survey has been shared which will inform local and national support and inform our areas of focus as we progress. Questions focus on:

- What issues really matter to children and young people?
- What changes do they want to see?
- How can we all work together to advocate for them moving forward?

**4.7** We continue to support our children and young people to attend school; planning supports to overcome barriers to attendance. At the time of writing, average attendance in our Primaries is 91%, our Secondaries is 84% and our specialist settings is 83%. We have an action plan which is led by a range of central officers and education leaders and focusses on five key areas:

reporting systems; tracking and monitoring; professional learning; children and young people most at risk and communication. Leaders know their children and families well and apply a range of appropriate supports, challenges and interventions according to the individual circumstances. Successful interventions and approaches are regularly shared in a range of forums to help improvements across the service. We work in collaboration with the Attainment Advisor for WDC who is supporting individual schools to consider action research approaches to support attendance and with our colleagues across the West Partnership in delivering joint professional learning opportunities for staff to learn with and from others. We will shortly launch a marketing campaign promoting and re-enforcing the value of education.

## **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** There are no people implications as a direct result of this report. However it should be noted that in line with the recommendations in the ASN Review we must ensure we have a well trained, high quality workforce who are equipped to support the range of needs and rights of our children and young people.

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

- 6.1** The projected additional funding required for the learning estate expansion has been approved and planned for in current and future budgets.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** If the Council is unable to ensure appropriate support to children and young people, we will not be meeting their needs under the terms of the Children and Young People Act 2014 (Equalities Act 2010).
- 7.2** If the Council is unable to ensure appropriate support for all children, young people and staff this could result in reputational damage.

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

- 8.1** As noted in the previously produced Equalities Impact Assessment, the ASN strategy and subsequent supports and guidance developed will enhance the quality of the service provided to all children, young people and staff and therefore can be seen to have a positive impact in terms of the equalities.

## **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 aspiration to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

**Laura Mason**  
Chief Education Officer

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**Background Papers:** Getting it Right for Every Child  
[Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)  
[Additional Support for Learning Statutory Guidance 2017](#)  
Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)  
Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive to  
Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017)

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

