

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: 13 June 2012

Subject: Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire - Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report updates Members on activity and progress with regard to implementing West Dunbartonshire's Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire was agreed by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee in September 2011. A further recommendation was agreed that a report on progress with the implementation of the Strategy should be presented to every Education and Lifelong Learning Committee as a standing item. This is the fourth such update.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Each update report to Education and Lifelong Learning Committee has highlighted specific action taken during the short time span between Committee meetings.

3.2 Masterclasses

West Dunbartonshire held a series of Masterclasses in April. These special classes were designed to enhance the support which is already made available to young people as they prepare for exams. The Raising Attainment teachers worked with the Quality Improvement Service (QIS) and individual schools to identify pupils who would benefit from this support. Classes were offered in English, Maths, History, Geography, Chemistry and Physics. The focus of the classes was exam preparation and technique. Teachers were selected and venues organised at each end of the authority. The evaluations for the innovative Masterclasses are overwhelmingly positive and are included as Appendix 1 of this report.

3.3 Raising Attainment Teachers in Secondary Schools

The Raising Attainment Teachers were originally seconded for a period of 9 months. Following discussion with Head Teachers it has been agreed to extend these secondment opportunities for a further academic session.

The focus for the next element of their work will involve specific support from QIS on literacy and numeracy within and across all subject areas. Curriculum for Excellence policy states that literacy and numeracy is the responsibility of all teachers and not just English and Maths teachers.

3.4 Sharing Good Practice

Work is on-going to ensure that good practice identified by the QIS and through HIME Reports is shared across the 5 secondary schools. Further information on the detail of this will be brought to a future committee.

- 3.5** In the report on the HMIE inspection of Our Lady and St Patrick's High School, also presented to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, it was noted that the school should share its good practice both locally and nationally. The Head Teacher of Our Lady and St Patrick's High School has agreed to work with the authority to support improvement across the secondary sector in West Dunbartonshire.

3.6 Raising Attainment Across Sectors

The Scottish Government and ADES have produced a small booklet, "Raising Attainment". This has been issued to every teacher in Scotland and poses questions for reflection, discussion and action. It is attached for Members as appendix 2.

- 3.7** Head Teachers in primary schools have been divided into "Family Groups" of schools with similar socio-economic profiles to support similar schools to develop strategies to raise attainment. They are currently involved in visiting each other's schools to look at quality assurance, assessment, learning and teaching. They will then share their findings and plan improvement accordingly.
- 3.8** West Dunbartonshire's survey of reading and maths using standard assessment is taking place between 14 and 24 May 2012. This will apply to children in P3, P7 and S2 and will provide an authority wide picture of performance. The findings of this survey will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.9** The Baseline Assessment which has been in use for a number of years in West Dunbartonshire's nursery and primary 1 cohorts has been reviewed and a new version has been piloted. This will be fully implemented in the coming session.
- 3.10** There has been a review of QIS/School Improvement process. This has been refreshed to align with new approaches being used by HMIE. This Improvement Framework will build on schools' self-evaluation processes and will have clear links to change and improvement.

4. People Implications

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues emerging as a result of this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The costs of the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement have been agreed by Education and Lifelong Learning Committee in September 2011 and will be met from within existing budgets.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** Failure to implement an authority-wide strategy to raise attainment will disadvantage our young people and may become a reputational risk to the Council.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 7.1** No equalities issues were identified in relation to this report.

8. Strategic Assessment

- 8.1** The Council has identified four main strategic priorities for 2011/2012, namely Social & Economic Regeneration, Financial Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, and Fit for Purpose Services.
- 8.2** Raising expectation and aspirations with our young people will ultimately lead to regeneration. Investing in their future is fundamental to the values of our Council. Our staff are our most valuable resource and they have the skills to improve outcomes for young people. Success in improving attainment and achievement will impact positively on Educational Services and West Dunbartonshire Council.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1** The Education Service and Lifelong Learning Committee is recommended to:
- (a) note the progress made in the past three months with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire; and
 - (b) seek a further update for the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee at its next meeting.

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Masterclass Evaluations
Appendix 2 - Raising Attainment Booklet

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All wards