

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 11 March 2020**

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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 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. Over the course of the Scottish Attainment Challenge to March 2020 it is estimated that we will secure £8.555m: £5.403m for primary and £3.152m for secondary projects.

- 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** Scottish Government has committed funding to Challenge Authorities until 2022. There is no guarantee of continued funding post 2022.

**4.3** In February 2020 a grant proposal for session 2020/21 was submitted to Scottish Government (**Appendix 1**). This outlined details of overall project costs and identified proposals for any project changes and new interventions.

#### **4.4 Attainment Programme**

The Director of Learning, Scottish Government presented at the Education Leaders Conference and highlighted key achievements of West Dunbartonshire as a Challenge Authority. Key policy drivers which schools and local authorities should consider were identified as the Attainment Challenge Programme enters a fifth year.

The focus of the local School Improvement Framework between January and April is provision of equity in learning experiences. National Quality Indicators are being used by the authority's School Improvement Team to evaluate with headteachers the quality of learning for children. All primary schools will be visited.

##### **4.4.1 School Improvement Partnership Project**

###### **Inter authority School Improvement Partnership Projects**

As part of our continued focus on improving teaching and learning through empowerment we have formed School Improvement Partnerships with East Dunbartonshire and Inverclyde Councils. The project will provide senior leaders with the opportunity to work together across authorities to quality assure learning, teaching and assessment with a particular focus on learner engagement, differentiation and personal support. Schools from Vale of Leven Academy Local Learning Community are working in trios with schools from clusters in East Dunbartonshire and Inverclyde. Depute Head Teachers from each trio will work together to review teaching and learning in each of the establishments. They will then engage in reflective dialogue about features of quality and areas to further develop. Sessions will be led by Senior Officers from each authority and associates from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe).

##### **4.4.2 Early Level Play and Learning**

Funding from SAC has been allocated to provide training for staff and parents on the Solihull Programme for a third year. The training supports building relationships with children using attachment, containment, reciprocity and behaviour management theories and practices. Evidence shows this is having a positive impact on families and staff: One parent focus group was asked what they remembered from the programme and what had changed as a result. The themes that emerged were:

- All parents tried to focus on the positive and speak in a nicer way
- They all tried to spend more time with the children/include them in what they did
- Parents felt less alone having chatted with other parents: 'you think it's only you'

- They felt things were ‘less stressful’
- All parents felt it had been worthwhile coming to the group

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

##### **CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation)**

Following on from last year’s successful pilot to train all school leavers in CPR, we have continued our partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to continue this in the secondary schools. This year we have targeted S3 and S4 pupils, with some schools extending this offer to other year groups.

##### **RSHP (Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood) Education**

With the launch of the Scottish Government’s new national Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood programme, we have been working with schools to begin to replace our current programme. The resource can be used to support the delivery of RSHP education in mainstream and specialist settings and in non-denominational and denominational schools. The new RSHP programme was shared with school health and wellbeing coordinators in January, and there is a planned training schedule in place to facilitate implementation across schools.

##### **Early Protective Messages (EPM)**

Early Protective Messages is a pre-5 health resource that supports early years staff to teach young children how to keep safe. All early years staff have received training in the use of EPM.

##### **SALSUS 2018 (Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey)**

Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) 2018 results have now been published, including summary findings for young people in West Dunbartonshire. This is the latest in a national series of surveys produced by the Scottish Government looking at smoking, drinking and drug use among secondary school children. The report findings will be presented to the Nurture DIG.

#### **4.4.4 Responding to Tragic Events**

A Short Life Working Group (SLWG) was established to produce an Education Guidance document on Responding to Tragic Events. Chaired by a senior educational psychologist, the group included representatives from secondary, primary, special and nursery sectors, Health Development and voluntary organisations. A needs analysis was undertaken to elicit the views of all educational establishments on what they considered Tragic Events to comprise, examples of good practice in managing them, and to identify what would be of further benefit in future. A number of individual interviews took place with establishment leaders to gather more detailed needs analysis. The SLWG met on four occasions, each member working to produce sections of the guidance according to their areas of expertise, which were then edited by the educational psychologists. The Guidance has been shared with all headteachers.

#### **4.4.5 Secondary Attainment Challenge Projects**

The lead officers for SAC in West Dunbartonshire conducted an evaluation of the Secondary School Attainment projects between April 2019 and January 2020. Impact analysis has been conducted using 20 measures in 3

categories: engagement, attainment and achievement, system improvement. It is evident that the SAC projects are making a positive difference to attendance, well being, achievement and improvement. Key impact data shows:

- Increased numbers of young people gaining awards in skills based courses. In one school 96% of 89 young people who undertook a skills based course passed SCQF Level3 and 4 Awards
- Achievement of a level increased for one group of young people receiving targeted support by 10% in writing and 6% in reading.
- Rates of exclusions for young people engaged in SAC interventions are reducing. In one school the number reduced from 91 incidents in 2016 to 34 in 2019.
- Qualitative feedback from Mindfulness Training delivered in secondaries suggests that the course has had a positive impact on teachers, both personally and professionally. Participants' comments reflect a growing awareness of the importance of compassion towards self and others and the impact this has in classroom practice :  
"This practice has become part of my daily life and I am feeling the benefit of it. It has also impacted on my teaching. I have become a calmer person and in turn there is a calmer atmosphere in my classroom. I am gradually learning to live in the moment. This course has had a very positive effect on me."  
"The techniques have helped me to consider what is important in my day and to focus on each challenge as it arises. It has helped me to listen and respond calmly to my students' needs and to allow them time to reflect on their behaviour so we can work together on daily tasks in the classroom."  
"It has also changed the way I speak to the children sometimes and how I ask them questions about their well-being, especially when I have tough conversations with pupils about progress and so on. It's good to remind them to be kind to themselves."  
"The course has made me take time to think and act differently in many aspects of my life, both at home and at school

The Secondary School Project Leads have produced reports on the impact of projects in each school. An example of one is attached in **(Appendix 2)**

#### **4.4.6 West Partnership**

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

West Dunbartonshire is participating again this year in the West Partnership moderation event with a focus on writing. This will continue to enhance the work being done on assessment and moderation through collaboration with colleagues from other authorities. Each Local Learning Community will be represented at the event and practitioners from each level will moderate planning and evidence from across 8 local authorities. The event aims to further increase confidence in practitioners' judgement and provide a more consistent and accurate understanding of standards across authorities. This will continue to develop the quality of assessment in writing and ensure assessment evidence is valid, accurate and reliable.

#### **4.4.7 Learning for Sustainability**

A strategic working group is developing a policy and materials for schools to support the empowerment of our young people to act as Global Citizens committed to a sustainable future. The group has focused on self evaluation of current practice and has engaged with Education Scotland and the West Partnership Global Education Advisor to identify guiding principles, culture and practices which will:

- support children and young people to make informed decisions for the future
- develop their skills, values, knowledge, attitudes and confidence to be able to live within and respect the environmental limits of our planet.

A second Upstream Battle Conference is planned for May in Clydebank Town Hall. All headteachers are invited to join their 2 pupil Upstream Battle Ambassadors at the conference. The conference will focus on supporting schools to plan actions to raise awareness of the sources of litter in the River Clyde and effects on marine life. Keep Scotland Beautiful, Clyde Waterways, Clyde in The Classroom, Loch Lomond Fisheries and Scottish Water are invited to participate in the event.

## **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 2022.

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

- 6.1** For primary challenge projects we have claimed part year costs of £0.708m to December 2019. For secondary challenge projects we have claimed part year costs of £0.809m to December 2019. A final grant claim will be submitted for outstanding expenditure at March 2020.
- 6.2** It is anticipated that the full award of £2.043m for 2019/20 will be spent.
- 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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March 2020

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**Appendices:**

1. SAC grant proposal for session 2020/21
2. Reports on the impact of SAC secondary projects

**Background Papers:**

**Wards Affected:** All wards