

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 4 December 2019**

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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 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 £5.403m for primary and £3.152m for secondary.
- 3.3** In December 2017 HM Inspectors and professional associates, working in partnership with Audit Scotland evaluated the education service's 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** The funding stream for the Attainment Challenge funding has been confirmed till March 2021. There is no guarantee of continued funding post 2020/2021.

**4.3** In September an annual highlights and challenges report was submitted to Scottish Government reporting on project progress and budget spend. (Appendix 1).

#### **4.4** Primary School Attainment Challenge Projects

##### **4.4.1** Early Level Play and Learning

The holistic approach to learning at early level to ensure the continuous provision of child centred learning experiences which support children's cognitive, social and emotional development is well embedded. The task based approach to professional learning supports early learning practitioners and teachers to have a deeper understanding of play based learning. Evidence from improvement visits and inspections show that play based approaches are embedded across all schools and early learning and childcare centres. Monitoring the quality of delivery to support meeting the needs of learners using play based approaches continues to be a priority.

##### **4.4.2** Literacy

Literacy co-ordinators attended professional learning sessions delivered by the Attainment Advisor and depute principal psychologist. The sessions focused on managing the literacy curriculum to raise attainment and narrow the gap. Staff considered effective ways to deliver the reading curriculum and develop teacher skill in the teaching of reading.

##### **4.4.3** Maths and Numeracy

All headteachers participated in professional learning sessions on mastery approaches to learning as the next phase of the maths strategy. The mastery approach supports children to be secure in their learning and understanding of maths concepts and skills before moving on to another aspect of learning in maths. Teaching staff at similar stages and across sectors are engaged in professional learning in mastery to support improved transition from primary to secondary. In November, West Dunbartonshire staff led professional learning sessions on active approaches to maths and numeracy and holistic assessments in maths at the West Partnership Maths Conference in South Lanarkshire

##### **4.4.4** Health and Wellbeing

In September, the secondary schools worked with Educational Service's Health Development Officer to promote Suicide Prevention Week. Resources and learning materials were distributed to schools. West Dunbartonshire's Health Improvement Team attended at schools providing pop up stalls sharing information on mental health issues in schools. Representative staff from each secondary school attended Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

(ASIST) in August. ASIST aims to support helpers (anyone in a position of trust) to become more willing, ready and able to recognise and intervene effectively to help persons at risk of suicide. The training delivered over two days involved practical workshops including scenarios, observation and discussion.

In October, schools were encouraged to promote World Mental Health Day as another opportunity to share the messages around positive mental health. The NHS film 'Every Mind Matters' was provided for schools to use. A transition and mental well being programme called College Connect started in October. The Scottish Association of Mental Health are delivering the programme to young people, parents/carers, school and college staff from West College Scotland and our high schools. The programme aims to support transition from school to college, as well as building the capacity of those around the young person, to support mental health and wellbeing.

#### **4.4.5 Collaborative Action Research / School Improvement Partnerships**

In 2015 the School Improvement Partnership Programme was launched in West Dunbartonshire focusing on improving attainment in primary 4 and primary 7. Since 2015 West Dunbartonshire has raised attainment in Numeracy by 14% for P4 and 10% for P7 as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. A range of interventions has impacted on this, one being practitioners engaging in Collaborative Action Research projects with a heightened focus on using data to plan improvement linked to theories of research. The success of this approach was extended to our early years practice using a local model based on the principles of Collaborative Action Research. Conditions for collaboration to systems level improvement have been scaled up since 2015. A new model of school improvement was introduced in August 2018 led by an Enhanced School Improvement Team (ESIT) comprising 10 headteachers. This work has been shared as a model of good practice on Scottish Government's National Improvement Hub. In October, Professor Mel Ainscow and Professor Christopher Chapman from Glasgow University visited the authority to meet with early years practitioners and teachers, probationer teachers, headteachers and class teachers engaged in improvement partnerships and research projects. As a result, the work of West Dunbartonshire will be developed as a case study of effective practice.

#### **4.5 Secondary Attainment Challenge Projects**

##### **4.5.1 Multi Agency Hub**

Over 100 staff are fully trained in Nurture principles and approach. Nurture approaches are now delivered as an integral part of the health and well being programme across 2 secondary schools. Nurture groups are established in four out of the five secondary schools. Pupils and staff report that as a result of Nurture Groups young people are better engaged, have increased attendance, an increased readiness to learn and improved timekeeping when moving to and from classes. Staff report that the Multi-Agency Hubs have enhanced the nurturing and inclusive culture of the schools. Staff report that "classes are more settled", staff feel "better able to manage stressful

situations” and the “learning environment is better”. An authority report on Nurture states that staff are more aware of what a nurturing approach looks like in practice and have a better understanding of how a child’s circumstances can impact on their behaviour within the classroom. The report confirms that young people say that they feel supported, valued and safe and value additional support that is put in place for them.

In Clydebank High as a result of increased parental learning opportunities a number of parents have achieved the following qualifications:

18 parents have achieved SCQF Level 3 Technology

19 parents have achieved SCQF Level 4 Technology

18 parents have achieved ‘Introduction to Psychology’

13 parents have achieved ‘English as an Additional Language’

#### **4.5.2 Skills Academies**

Vale of Leven Academy reports that a pattern of continuous improved attainment, attendance and engagement is emerging within the Skills Academy. The uptake for the hairdressing course since year 1 has increased by 108% with all students achieving an award. There are no exclusions or referrals to pupil support for pupils participating in the course. The School of Dance is following a positive trend with 100% increase in course uptake in one year as well as increased attendance in comparison to the whole school attendance rates.

A survey has been conducted with pupils about their wider course offering. Feedback is very positive:

- Improved confidence 93%
- Motivated to learn more about the subject 100%
- Motivated to work harder in other subjects 68.7%
- Improved fitness 93%
- Improved resilience 89%
- Improved attendance 82%

Pupil comments :

"The reason I chose Cosmetology was because I wasn't having a good time in any of my old classes and this class caught my eye. The atmosphere in the salon is always positive. If you've had a bad day and you come into the salon, your mood will be lifted right away. Mrs O'Donnell is a great teacher and is always lovely. She enabled us to do the employability award which is good for people who want to work in a salon as it teaches you everything you need to know from health and safety to dealing with real life situations. The employability award gives us an extra qualification you wouldn't normally get. We also get work experience as we go out to a local salon and help. Not only are we always on the go but we were also able to go to hair and beauty shows outwith the school. Going to these shows gives us an idea of how professionals work and what they do. The school show was Little Shop of Horrors. I was lucky enough to be a part of the cast. Not only was I performing but I was able to help with makeup as I knew what the characters looked like and how they were to be portrayed. Overall the salon is a great place to be"

"I had a lot of problems with my confidence but I believe School of Dance has helped with me being more confident and has also brought me friends."

#### 4.6 Upstream Battle Conference

A pupil conference raising awareness of the source of litter in the River Clyde and the effects on marine life was held in Clydebank Town Hall in November. All schools sent 2 pupils as leaders of Upstream Battle for each school. The programme integrated expressive arts, information sessions and workshops to launch the schools campaign in West Dunbartonshire. The conference was delivered in partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful. Pupils in Dumbarton Academy and Braehead have produced digital images and a film to promote the message: <https://vimeo.com/365299971> (password is: upstream) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuOOMpgUmUI>. The film has been entered into the Charity Film Awards. The winner is decided by public vote, which opened on 24<sup>th</sup> October. Keep Scotland Beautiful hope this will promote the film to a wider audience and allow the film to receive the recognition it deserves. Voting closes on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

#### 4.7 Attainment Programme

The Chief Education Officer and Senior Education Officers conducted Leadership for Learning visits to all mainstream and specialist secondary schools between September and November. The visits are part of the authority's Improvement Framework to review progress with raising attainment, improving learning and narrowing the poverty related attainment gap.

### 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 2020.

### 6 **Financial and Procurement Implication**

- 6.1 For primary challenge projects we have claimed part year costs of £0.461m to September 2019. For secondary challenge projects we have claimed part year costs of £0.529m to September 2019.
- 6.2 As indicated in the table below it anticipated that the full award of £2.043m in 2019/20 will be spent.

	<u>Primary actual exp</u>	<u>Secondary actual exp</u>	<u>Total actual exp</u>	<u>Award</u>
2015/16	£778,595	n/a	£778,595	£1,024,856
2016/17	£1,322,450	£353,019	£1,675,469	£1,895,410
2017/18	£1,189,844	£823,264	£2,013,108	£2,013,108

2018/19	£1,167,572	£876,243	£2,043,815	£2,043,815
	<b>Primary est exp</b>	<b>Secondary est exp</b>	<b>Total est exp</b>	<b>Award</b>
2019/20	£944,691	£1,099,124	£2,043,815	£2,043,815
	<b>£5,403,152</b>	<b>£3,151,650</b>	<b>£8,55,802</b>	<b>£9,021,004</b>

**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.

Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer

**Person to Contact:** Julie McGrogan, Senior Education Officer, Department of Education, Learning and Attainment, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU  
Telephone No: 01389 737316  
Email: [julie.mcgrogan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:julie.mcgrogan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendix** Highlight report submitted to Scottish Government

**Background Papers:**

**Wards Affected:** All wards

