

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

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 (SAC) 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. From its inception in 2015/16 to the end of the current financial year (2019/20) it is estimated we will have secured £5.403m for primary projects and £3.152m for secondary projects from the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It is envisaged that funding will continue until March 2021.
- 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** The Attainment Challenge features as a strategic risk in the local delivery plan. Project implementation needs to be on track to ensure outcomes for young people and families are delivered.
- 4.2** There are potential changes to Attainment Challenge funding by March 2021. A funding bid for session 2019/20 was confirmed by the Scottish Government in March 2019. This secured funding of £2.043m for one more year.

4.3 Attainment Challenge Projects

Due to the school summer break updates on individual challenge projects will be provided at December committee. The lead officer for the attainment challenge and the Attainment Advisor have produced an evidence of impact audit and have scheduled meetings with project leads from the central team and schools to complete the audit between August and September.

4.3.1 Literacy Strategy

A working group has been established to produce a literacy action plan. The areas for action are based on areas identified for improvement in the 2019 early years baseline report and authority achievement of a level report. The group has produced an action plan to be implemented in session 2019/20 focusing on curriculum content; teaching of phonics; ensuring a balance between play based and direct teaching in early stages; producing guidance on the need for highly structured approaches to literacy for pupils with gaps in their learning; deliver a programme of training for new teachers and teachers new to early stages; provide refresher training on reciprocal teaching focussing at primary 3/4. An authority review of the literacy strategy will be conducted between October to December 2019.

4.3.2 Numeracy Strategy

A review of maths and numeracy conducted in May and June 2019 involving 75% of establishments highlighted the positive impact of our strategy to raise attainment in maths and numeracy. Data is being used very well to monitor and track the individual progress of children and young people with interventions for example Stages in Early Arithmetical Learning (SEAL) improving attainment and narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. There are strong collaborative approaches which have improved our capacity to share and moderate standards and professional learning. There is evidence of challenge and a wide range of contexts for learning being provided. Children with additional support needs are being supported well and the enhanced curriculum offering in secondary schools is making a positive impact on the attainment and achievement of those at risk of missing out. Additional resources for example learning assistants, outreach workers are being used well to support individuals and groups. Digital technology is being used well to support learning and make learning in maths fun and interesting.

Children and young people report that they feel very well supported and confident in their relationships with staff and peers. Evidence from parents tells us that they would like more information on what their child is learning in numeracy and maths. One teacher stated that: “It is reassuring to know that as a local authority we continue to set maths and numeracy as a very high priority and we have got very ambitious plans ahead.”

4.3.3 Assessment and Moderation

The authority 3 year cycle for moderation was completed in June 2019. An authority team of trained verifiers and moderators reviewed the quality of attainment and achievement in reading and writing. Evidence of pupil learning was gathered from 26 primary and secondary schools. This is the third year of moderation from a sample of schools as part of the authority framework for assessment and moderation. This year's exercise completes moderation of all establishments with individual reports produced for each school and an overall report written for the authority. The key findings are:

- All schools are using SNSA (Scottish National Standardised Assessments) to support and inform judgements about achievement
- Tasks are appropriate and teachers judgement in most cases is accurate
- All schools are using the authority assessment criteria
- In most cases there is evidence of high expectation and challenge within tasks
- Staff from each local learning community participating in the West Partnership assessment and moderation programme and/ or Education Scotland Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer's (QAMSO's) programme have had a positive impact on the collation and analysis of evidence for moderation across schools.
- Local learning community moderation programmes are providing rich opportunities for staff to share and moderate standards.

The next steps are:

- To continue to increase the number of opportunities for primary and secondary teachers to cross mark pieces of work
- Regular moderation across and within establishments
- Produce a new 3 year authority moderation cycle building on the existing model with a focus on reading and transition.

4.3.4 Summer Piping and Drumming Camp

A pilot programme of free piping and drumming workshops was delivered in July. This aimed to develop children's knowledge of their local and national cultural heritage through learning the discipline of a musical instrument. The pilot scoped out interest in piping and drumming within schools in West Dunbartonshire. The places were offered to pupils in P6 – S2 with 20 pupils attending. The intensive 3 day programme was delivered by expert instructors recommended by the Scottish Piping Centre. The programme took place in the days before the Scottish Pipe Band Championships at Levensgrove Park and the pupils were encouraged to attend the championships to get a sense of what playing in a real pipe band is like.

The programme was arranged by Neil Mc Allister from the Education Music Service.

4.3.5 Attainment Programme

As part of the local strategy to raise attainment and improve learning through high quality leadership and in response to the national strategy for headteacher empowerment an Enhanced School Improvement Team (ESIT) of ten headteachers has been established for a second year. National guidance published in June 19 outlines criteria for evaluation by education staff at all levels to evaluate empowerment. The guidance refers to local authorities and headteachers as 'supportive partners'. The ESIT team is a good example of local partnership with headteachers who support professional collaboration and take lead roles in supporting improvement in schools as part of the local authority improvement framework. The team will work one day per week as part of the local authority central team working directly with schools to:

- Provide support and challenge to their link establishments to raise attainment, improve learning and narrow the poverty related attainment gap
- Support continuous improvement, performance monitoring and self-evaluation
- Analyse and use performance information to support and challenge establishments to improve
- Participate, and in some cases, lead improvement visits and thematic reviews within the programme for early years, primary and secondary schools
- Collaborate with colleagues locally, the West Partnership and nationally on improvement, using an evidence based approach.

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** The first grant claim for attainment challenge expenditure has to cover the period to September 2019. Therefore no claim has yet been submitted. However, as indicated in the table below it is anticipated that the full award for £2.043m 2018/2019 will be spent.

	Primary <u>actual exp</u>	Secondary <u>actual exp</u>	Total <u>actual exp</u>	Award <u></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
2019/20	£944,691	£1,099,124	£2,043,815	est £2,043,815
	£5,403,152	£3,151,650	£8,554,802	£9,021,004

6.2 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 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 plans 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
August 2019

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Appendix: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All wards