

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 23 August 2018

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) update

1. Summary

- 1.1 This board report provides an update on the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) in Renfrewshire. The report discusses the progress made in relation to the central coordination of the PEF, outlines some of the impact of the PEF and discusses the challenges related to the PEF. The report concludes by outlining forward plans for 2018-19.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the updates in relation to the PEF.
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3. Background

- 3.1 The PEF is being provided as part of the £750 million Attainment Scotland Fund which will be invested over the current parliamentary term (2016 to 2021). The fund is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 3.2 Publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools will receive £1,200 in 2018/19 for each child in Primary 1 to S3, or equivalent, who is registered for free school meals under national eligibility criteria.
- 3.3 The 2018/19 funding allocation has been calculated using the most recently available Healthy Living Survey and Pupil Census data and is based on:

- The estimated number of P1-P3 pupils who would be registered for free school meals using the national eligibility criteria. This will be done by taking the proportion of pupils registered for free school meals in primary schools in 2014 and then applying those to the 2017 school rolls for P1 to P3.
 - The estimated number of P4-P7 and S1-3 pupils who are registered for free school meals.
 - The estimated number of special school pupils in the P1-S3 age range registered for free school meals.
- 3.4 This funding is to be spent at the discretion of the head teacher working in partnership with each other and their local authority.
- 3.5 As part of the PEF, Renfrewshire received £4,248,000 in 2017-18 and £4,272,240 for the 2018-19 session.
- 3.6 In line with the national guidance and with support from the authority, each school has devised a PEF plan which outlines their intentions of spend. This plan is now incorporated into their overall school improvement plan.
- 3.7 PEF plans are devised in consultation with staff, pupils and parents and build on areas related to the Attainment Challenge i.e. literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Further to this, colleagues have had the opportunity to consider the learning thus far at a variety of internal and external peer challenge / support events and this has driven subsequent plans.
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4. Progress

- 4.1 A PEF coordinator was recruited in 2017 to support the authority and schools with the central coordination of the PEF. The coordinator has been working in collaboration with schools to provide support in relation to finance, staffing and procurement. Considerable progress has been made in relation to the central coordination of the PEF.
- 4.2 A central database has been compiled which outlines the main areas of spend for schools. This database highlights any procurement and staffing issues which schools must respond to. Support in doing this has initially been provided by key authority departments such as HR and business support. The information in the database has been shared with education managers so they have an overview of school plans and can guide them during the support and challenge visits.
- 4.3 Further to this, a short-life working group meets regularly to monitor the PEF. This is a cross-sector group with representatives from children's services, HR, finance and business and customer services.

- 4.4 Scoping work took place late 2017 to understand the impact of the PEF at school level. This involved two head teachers visiting and observing PEF related activity in a number of schools. This information was fed back to the central team.
- 4.5 In February 2018, an authority event was held where this scoping work was showcased to staff. Best practice and common challenges faced by schools were discussed. Presentations were delivered from schools where the impact of their PEF plans was showcased. Colleagues were able to consider and discuss the learning from year 1 and this process has encouraged head teachers to review and develop their PEF plan for year 2. The plans will continually adapt as this learning continues.
- 4.6 At this event, the PEF coordinator and education manager, responsible for PEF, discussed the national PEF guidance and outlined the implications for schools. This gave head teachers the opportunity to ask questions related to staffing / procurement.
- 4.7 Two West Partnership PEF events were held in March 2018 where the authority was asked to present examples of their work. The events provided a national overview of PEF, areas of good practice and challenge.
- 4.8 Following these events, schools were asked to submit their 2018-19 PEF plans which were scrutinised by the PEF coordinator for any staffing, financial and procurement issues. Feedback and support was provided to each school so they can implement their plans in August.
- 4.9 To further support schools and to showcase good practice, case studies have been developed from primary and secondary schools which highlight the impact that PEF has had on pupils to date.
- 4.10 There are a number of themes which have emerged from the case studies with regards to impact (see appendix 1 and 2 for examples of the case studies). PEF has helped to enrich children's emotional development and there is evidence to support that PEF interventions / approaches has had an impact on attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- 4.11 PEF has enabled staff to lead change and helps build their confidence. Parental and family engagement has been a focus for many schools and PEF has helped schools better understand family circumstances and establish closer links between home and school. Staff also report that they are more confident in working with parents to help them support children.
- 4.12 In the case studies, parents also report improvements as a result of PEF initiatives / approaches. Parents report that they are now able to use the same language as the teachers at home and this helps them to better support their child with homework. Parents also note improvements in their children's learning and confidence.

- 4.13 With regards to challenges associated with PEF, schools report common themes. These are related to the management of PEF (the fund is downloaded directly to schools), the movement of staff, recruitment and procurement regulations. However, these challenges are not unique to Renfrewshire and have been nationally recognised.
- 4.14 The short-life working group will continue to meet and monitor the PEF. Schools have plans in place for 2018-19 and these will be implemented in August when schools return after summer. School will receive on-going support and coordination from the central team. The continuing impact of the PEF will be captured via qualitative and quantitative methods.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Financial implications are monitored in the PEF risk register.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – HR and OD implications are being monitored by the PEF coordinator and discussed at the short-life working group.
3. **Community Planning** – none.
4. **Legal** – none.
5. **Property/Assets** – none.
6. **Information Technology** – Risks are monitored in the PEF risk register.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – none.
9. **Procurement** – Procurement have provided guidance to schools on their 2018-19 PEF plans and this is being monitored by the PEF coordinator and discussed at the short-life working group.
10. **Risk** – Risks are monitored by the PEF short-life working group.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Appendix 1: PEF case study
- (b) Appendix 2: PEF case study

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Approach

National Improvement Framework:

1. School leadership
2. Teacher professionalism
3. Parental engagement
4. Assessment of children's progress
5. School improvement
6. Performance information

Agreed actions

- One Attainment Challenge teacher
- One Attainment Challenge nursery officer
- After school Reading Café to support children and parents
- Resources to support learning and teaching

PEF allocation

Children, staff and parents were fully consulted using questionnaires, formal and informal meetings, assemblies, and through the Parent Council. The school took full advantage of parents' evenings to talk with parents and carers about the PEF and noted that the 'Engaging Children and Families Toolkit' was a useful framework to help structure discussions and focus on priorities.

The Head Teacher reported that she had been a long serving member of staff at St Catherine's, starting as a class teacher before becoming Depute Head Teacher. As a result, she felt that she had a very good knowledge of the families and the community that the school served, and had benefitted from working with previous Head Teachers who were positive role models

Why it worked well

The Head Teacher believed that as a Class Teacher she had gained the respect of the staff by having high standards, working hard, and caring about the children and their families. The Head Teacher reported that her professional learning, in preparation for headship, had greatly benefitted her ability to lead and manage the PEF.

The Head Teacher stated that the school had a history of collecting attainment data to track and support children's learning, and consequently the staff had a sound knowledge of children's progress. The Head Teacher emphasises the complimentary skills of the management team, and the professionalism of the St Catherine's staff as a key elements in taking forward the PEF initiatives.

The Reading Café

The Head Teacher reported that the Reading Café had been very successful. She attributed this to the time taken to ensure that the staff had been fully involved in the planning; the emphasis on building relationships between children, parents and staff; and the provision of a framework to support the organisation and management of each session. Using impact and evaluation data, the Head Teacher was able to demonstrate that all parents whom had attended the Reading Café had evaluated the experience very highly. In addition, the staff had also reported increased knowledge of family circumstances; closer links between home and school; and more confidence in working with parents to help them support their children.

Impact on Pupils

All of the children in the focus group felt they had been consulted on the PEF. They felt that their suggestions for improvement were acted upon, and talked about the benefits of the additional equipment in the playground.

All of the children were able to talk about activities in the school that supported literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Several children talked about the benefits of the nurture room, and another child talked about supporting a friend who was dyslexic.

All of the children had enjoyed the Reading Café, reporting that it had made them more confident to read aloud and had improved their spelling. One child commented that the Reading Café had been 'the best thing ever' and several others noted it had 'brought me closer to my mum'. Indeed, there was general agreement in the group that reading together with a parent at home was enjoyable. All of the children identified that working with their parents, alongside other children from their class in the Reading Café wasn't embarrassing because 'they trusted one another'.

Impact on Parents

Both of the parents in the group agreed that they had been consulted about the PEF, however they emphasised that at St Catherine's it was the children, not the parents, who were at the centre of the consultation process.

Both of the parents felt that communication in the school was very effective, commenting on how much they appreciated the monthly reports which allowed them to sort out any concerns with their child's learning at an early stage. One parent commented that the Head Teacher could, 'Tell you the family history of every child in the school.' and both of the parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the staff team at St Catherine's.

The parents also commented on the effectiveness of the Reading Café. They had appreciated meeting staff in a more informal setting and seeing staff as, 'Just like ordinary people'. They had also enjoyed learning how to use the same techniques as the teacher to help their child at home. One parent commented on how helpful the reading strategies bookmark had been. In particular, the parents also noticed the pleasure to be gained from reading with their children and the positive impact this had on their relationships at home.

Impact on Staff

The staff group felt that the Head Teacher had consulted them effectively both through formal and informal meetings and were fully invested in the actions that had been identified.

They expressed confidence and trust in the Head Teacher's judgement, and recognised the effectiveness of the Reading Café approach. Whilst initially they felt a degree of uncertainty about working directly with parents, this proved to be unfounded due to the time spent agreeing the details of how the Reading Café would operate; the support staff offered one another; and the provision of the framework to assist with the organisation and management of each session. The staff group also reported the benefits of being able to share the reading strategies from the Literacy Project with Parents; meet with parents in a more relaxed setting; and being able to share their own experiences of the challenges of parenthood.

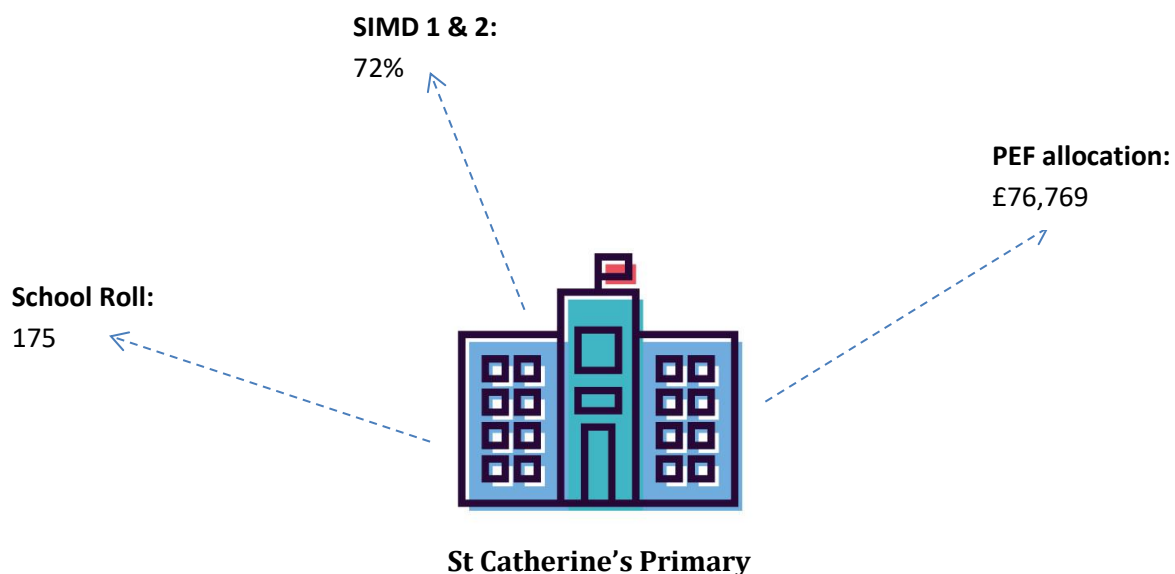
The staff group felt that forward planning meetings were a very good opportunity to look closely at attainment data and how best to support individual children. One member of staff commented that the Head Teacher was always keen to keep the focus on improvement and would regularly, at these meetings, ask the question, 'What do you need to support this child?' The staff group reported that there were high levels of professional engagement and that all staff were willing to take on distributed leadership.

Challenges identified:

- Encouraging more parents to come to events
- Making family learning sustainable

Next steps for St Catherine's Primary:

- Build on the success of this year (early intervention/targeted support)
- Extend the Reading Café approach (model) to include non-fiction texts and digital learning
- Develop family learning and training of support staff in numeracy
- Develop a relationship with 'Place to Be' a mental health charity
- Take forward P1 pedagogy



St Margaret's Primary School: Case Study

Background:

Early learning professionals have developed a programme to address the need to prepare children for a structured learning environment, focused on their transition from home to nursery, and nursery to school.

They have created a **research based** programme which gives parents the opportunity to build relationships with each other, as well as their child's early years setting. The programme aims to equip parents and carers with resources and expertise for the transition.

Aims and Objectives:

- The programme is designed to lay the pedagogical foundations for children to develop social and communication skills, heighten their interest in the world around them and their curiosity about how it works.
- 'Parental involvement in the form of 'at home good parenting' has a significant positive effect on children's achievement...The scale of the impact is evident across all social classes and ethnic groups.' Desforges, 2003
- Parents/carers are given the opportunity to develop skills and techniques to support their child's learning, whilst developing relationships with other parents.

Programme Structure and Session Agenda:

- 6 week programme for 2 hours per week, with 10 parents/carers and their child
- The sessions are separated in to a range of timed play and reflective activities
- Timescales are set throughout the sessions which allow children to adapt to a specific structure and use a time frame in order to complete activities.
- Parents are given instructions for their children to listen, respond and follow.



Good Start Great Start

Going to school can be a daunting time for parents as well as children. The programme aims to strengthen parenting roles so parents understand how best to support and prepare their children for an important stage in their academic development. In turn, children have a support network where they learn to build confidence, work with others, listen with interest, take turns and develop the ability to solve problems. They also have a space in which to become familiar with the school environment.

A day at Good Start Great Start:

Super Snacks

This activity focuses on the values of nutritional eating with emphasis on the importance of children starting the day with a good breakfast - to help them be alert and an active learner at school. Before they start, children have a hand-washing routine guided by parents.

Make & Do

Parents and children undertake a weekly 'Make & Do' task which support children's 'school readiness skills' and provide a resource for the families to take home. The activities include playdough, puppet making, growing plants, shapes, and sending letters.

Me Time – Children

Age groups are divided to enjoy separate peer activities. For children, this time allows them to play with children out with their normal social groups which helps build a network of new friends they might be going to school with. There is also a mixture of group activities to encourage further social interaction and develop gross motor skills. Indoors/outdoors activities provide a contrast which prepares children for calmer activities to follow.

Me Time – Adults

For parents/carers, 'Me Time' gives them the opportunity to get to know each other and build a support network of parents and new friends. This time provides opportunity to share concerns facilitated by weekly discussions with set themes i.e. Communication, Play, and Behaviour.

Story Bags

A range of themed story bags are provided with guidance notes to help parents/carers with ideas and vocabulary to use during the activity.

Scrapbook

Children and parents create a scrapbook documenting their days throughout the programme. It is used to create memories to take home.

All Join In

The group finish the session with singing and a positive affirmation exercise, i.e. 'I am glad because..', Nursery Rhymes, and a Thank you.

Comments from parents:

"Friday is our day. We come here and then carry it on and go out for lunch together."

"I wish it was on for longer than 6 weeks"

"It gives me a chance to have that 1-2-1 time that I don't get to do at home"

"I can't believe she spoke out today. I just told a parent that regardless how many weeks we come, she will never speak out, and she did!"

"We love it. It has so much more involved in it than I expected."

