

Report

Report to:	Equal Opportunities Forum
Date of Meeting:	24 November 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity – Education Resources
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ update the Forum of the strategic and operational work being undertaken by Education Resources to meet the commitments within the Mainstreaming Equalities Progress Report 2019 to 2021 and the Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2021 to 2025

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the work being undertaken by Education Resources in terms of the Council's commitment to mainstreaming equalities be noted.

3. Background

3.1. Education Resources has continued to build on progress made and remains committed to embedding equalities across all aspects of service provision, delivering against outcomes highlighted in the Mainstreaming Equalities: Outcomes Report 2021 to 2025.

4. Equalities and Impact Assessment

4.1. Education Resources continues to progress on delivering impact assessments as follows:-

- ♦ it continues to be part of the 2021/2022 Improvement Plan priorities for all establishments and services to undertake impact assessment where appropriate
- ♦ Education Resources contributes to the cross-Resource Impact Assessment Working Group
- ♦ an Impact Assessment sub-group is in place. Its remit is to create, monitor and authorise impact assessments for the Resource
- ♦ from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, 10 impact assessments were carried out by Education Resources

5. Delivering Services

5.1. The focus for Education remains on recovery from COVID-19 and on raising achievement and attainment, inspiring learners, transforming learning and working in partnership to strengthen our communities.

Our priorities are:-

- ◆ to raise standards in literacy and numeracy and close the poverty related attainment gap
- ◆ improve health and wellbeing to enable children and families to flourish
- ◆ support children and young people to develop their skills for learning, life and work
- ◆ ensure that inclusion and equality are at the heart of what we do

5.2. All schools and services across Education Resources demonstrate a commitment to work together to support the best interests of the forty thousand children and young people who attend schools and educational settings. Creative use of platforms such as Google classroom and development of online learning resources provided vital resources to support home learning during the recent pandemic. Physical learning packs were developed and distributed to families who had difficulty accessing online resources, as well as distribution of Chrome books to support pupils without access to a home PC. Additional resources were made available via Scottish Government to provide IT resources and internet access targeted to 250 families unable to access due to poverty related issues.

5.3. Vulnerable families, including Gypsy/Traveller families, those subject to child protection measures, children who were looked after or had additional support needs, were supported with regular phone contact from schools during lockdowns. Colleagues from Inclusion, Early Years and Psychological Services met with Social Work Managers on a weekly basis to assess need and allocate spaces in the Emergency Childcare Hubs. The Youth, Family and Community Learning (YFCL) Service provided an extensive range of targeted supports during the summer holidays to support young people and families.

5.4. Staff worked in partnership with community based services to mitigate the effects of social isolation, financial issues and food poverty including supporting the delivery of food parcels. Free school meal vouchers were distributed to families and continued throughout the school holidays to ensure that families had the means to provide food for their children.

5.5. Psychological Services and Education Resources have established the counselling through school's service for children and young people aged 10 and over providing a one-to-one counselling support. There are termly multi-agency meetings with Education, Educational Psychologist, CAMHS and the Social Work Trauma Recovery Service staff focusing on counselling support for children and young people. A mental health guidance for schools has been developed which is shared with Education, Social Work and Police Scotland.

6. Progressing Equal Opportunities and Further Areas for Improvement

6.1. Education Resources' agenda for improvement is reflected in the actions and measures identified for 2021/2022, and to take forward our priorities we will:-

- ◆ provide high quality learning experiences for all
- ◆ deliver a meaningful curriculum to support the learner journey
- ◆ use evidence to effect improvement
- ◆ build leadership capacity within a strong framework of governance
- ◆ encourage innovation and creativity
- ◆ strengthen partnership working

- 6.2. The planning and reporting for education establishments is embedded in the Improvement Planning of establishments and in the production of Standards and Quality Reports. Establishment Guidance is updated on a regular basis to reflect current priorities.
- 6.3. Education remains both a local and national priority. Our aim is that “all learners in South Lanarkshire achieve the highest possible levels of achievement and attainment”. This means delivering learning opportunities and committing to improving literacy and numeracy, health and wellbeing, knowledge, skills, confidence and creativity which will inspire learners, transform learning and strengthen communities and ensuring inclusion is at the heart of what we do

A breakdown of some of our contributory interventions and activities is outlined in Appendix 1.

- 6.4. Education Resources will continue to deliver safe educational environments in line with the Scottish Government and Public Health guidelines.
- 6.5. In order to support pupils regarding mental health which for many has been made more challenging by the COVID-19 pandemic, a Counselling through Schools service has been established for children and young people 10 years of age and over. As part of this strategy 10 counselling providers are available to schools and thus far, 425 children and young people have benefitted from counselling support.
- 6.6. Literacy and numeracy and supporting learners with literacy difficulties as early as possible to ensure support is offered at the right time is a targeted approach on an individual learners basis.
- 6.7. A robust training programme for staff has promoted active literacy in phonics, spelling and reading and is well established as part of South Lanarkshire Literacy Strategy. 34 schools have been part of the Active Literacy project (2017 to 2020), receiving additional training and support. Evidence from schools to date demonstrates a positive upward trend in reading attainment. Education Resources has recently developed a new Literacy Pathway for Identifying, Assessing and Addressing Weak Literacy Skills and Dyslexia. Ongoing training of staff members and literacy coordinators is taking place over the winter of 2021/2022.
- 6.8. Education Resources recently hosted an Inclusion Conference which highlighted for all staff the importance of working to embed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into practice. Along with that, staff have received in-service training on the key aspects of the national “Promise” for care experienced children and young people. Education Resources, in partnership with Social Work Resources, have placed specialist teachers in each geographic area to work as teachers supporting the most vulnerable care experienced children to enable them to be present at school, participate, be supported and achieve.
- 6.9. *English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)*
ESOL support is offered through joint working between YFCL and Global Refugee Programme. Class sizes are maximised through joint working across both teams. During 2020/2021 the locality-based delivery model has been adapted to take account of COVID-19 restrictions.

- 6.10. Inclusion is at the heart of what schools and educational settings and services do and is a strong value which helps to ensure that equalities is not seen as an add on but something which is seen as a norm and something we should always be striving to achieve.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. Implementation of the initiatives are met from within existing employee resources.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. Implementation of the initiatives are met from existing resources, or from external funding where noted in the report.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1 There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental implications associated with this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. The risk to the Council is that if the Resource does not have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty it may lead to non-compliance with equalities legislation. The consequence of this could be an unlimited financial penalty.

- 10.2. There are no implications for sustainability in terms of the information contained within this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

- 11.2. There was also no requirement to undertake any consultation in terms of the information contained in this report.

Tony McDaid

Executive Director (Education Resources)

4 November 2021

Link(s) to Council Objectives

- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong
- ◆ Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational
- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Tackle disadvantage and deprivation and support aspiration
- ◆ Encourage participation on physical and cultural activities

Link(s) to Council Values

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable
- ◆ Excellent employer

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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