Item 3
30th May 2023

Glasgow City Region Education Committee

Report by: Carol McArdle, Workstream Lead Officer

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West Partnership - Early Level Specialist Network

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the continued development of the Early Level Specialist Network

Recommendations :

The committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the update.

1. Background

1.1 In November 2021, discussion took place regarding Play Pedagogy at the Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CLTA) workstream meeting. It was agreed that a subgroup, with appropriate decision makers as members, would be established to co-create a proposal. It was clear that local authorities were at different stages of their journey and the West Partnership needed to consider how to add value to all.

2 Specialist Network

2.1. From the work of the subgroup, the '*Principles of Effective Learning Through Play and Enquiry'* Framework was co-created. The framework is currently being used across the West Partnership **(Appendix 1)**

2.2. Representatives have also created and shared video recordings on the West Partnership website to support colleagues in using the framework.

2.3. Since August 2022, the subgroup has become a specialist network taking forward the proposal from the West Partnership Early Years group. The proposal centred on the opportunity to defer entry to primary school. The Specialist Network agreed to develop coherent guidance and advice which takes into account children's early learning and childcare experiences from August 2023 (implementation date) to ensure that school staff with responsibility for the early level are fully aware of the learner journey and can support a coherent and progressive transition.

2.4 The specialist network are currently working across three main themes in their plan; Planning for child-centred Pedagogy, Child Development and Transition.

2.5 Planning for child-centered Pedagogy

Representatives are focusing on three main areas; planning, guidance and self-evaluation.

2.6. Child Development

A central resource gathering all local authority and national guidance as well as research for each of the 5 key areas listed within 'Realising the Ambition' on Child Development is being developed and will be included on the West Partnership website.

2.7. Transitions

A roadmap for transitions is also being created currently. This will include the 'pathway' for all children coming from various settings. The roadmap will include reflective questions with documents/resources signposted for practitioners to easily access. This will ensure that practitioners are using consistency in their language around transitions.

3. Continued Development of Specialist Network

3.1 By overtaking priorities in the specialist network plan, representatives are creating clear guidance for school leaders on how to quality assure and maintain high quality experiences for learners that supports their progression and continues to meet the needs of the different developmental stages in the playroom and classroom from June 2023.

3.2. Representatives are planning to offer training on using the guidance for leaders and practitioners in 2023-2024. This has been discussed and agreed with The West Partnership Early Years group.

4. Recommendations

4.1. The Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the update.

Appendix 1 South Lanarkshire Council Case Study

South Lanarkshire Council's use of the West Partnership 'Principles of effective learning through play and enquiry' framework.

Objective

Within South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) a clear need to develop local authority level guidance and professional learning around play pedagogy was identified as many establishments had started to introduce play pedagogy.

The challenge was to ensure the guidance covered the three components of high quality play provision which are outlined in Realising the Ambition (Scottish Government, 2020).

Solution

SLC practitioners were members of the West Partnership Early Level working party and had contributed to the 'principles of effective learning through play and enquiry' framework.

The framework is split into three sections:

- A clear, shared vision
- Enabling environments
- Skilled and knowledgeable practitioners

The sections were used to provide the structure for SLC's play pedagogy guidance.

Results

Outcome One

A clear, shared vision has been outlined by SLC. The importance of building relationships with learners has been considered and a detailed structure for organising learning, teaching and assessment which ensures a balance of adult led, adult initiated and child led learning has been provided. The role of the adult has been discussed as has the potential learning which can be achieved through play and enquiry.

Outcome Two

SLC have outlined the importance of providing enabling environments which support learning through play and enquiry. Information on designing the learning environment whilst ensuring the spaces reflect learners' voices has been shared along with guidance to ensure the environments provide appropriate levels of support and challenge for all learners.

Outcome Three

SLC are committed to the development of skilled and knowledgeable practitioners. Opportunities for career long professional learning and engagement with policy and research are detailed. Practical support with elements such as observations and

planning are offered to assist practitioners to provide high quality learning experiences through play and enquiry.

“Having the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues across the West Partnership to develop the framework has been most beneficial. This work has been invaluable in shaping our approach to developing consistency across the delivery of Early Level learning and beyond".

Lead Officer: Learning, Teaching & Assessment

“The framework was incredibly helpful when developing SLC's play pedagogy guidance. Building on the sections of the framework ensured we could provide guidance which enables practitioners to provide the highest quality learning experiences through play and enquiry"

Development Officer: Play Pedagogy

Next Steps
Following consultation with the SLC play pedagogy working party, the guidance will be launched across SLC. The ambition is for all SLC establishments embedding play pedagogy to use the guidance to structure their practice and policy within their own unique contexts. The offer of professional learning and support will continue to ensure schools are enabled to develop their pedagogy. Finally, SLC will consider the development of play pedagogy beyond primary 1 and the development of an enquiry-based approach.

North Lanarkshire Council Case Study

North Lanarkshire Council's use of the West Partnership 'Principles of effective learning through play and enquiry' framework.

The principles of effective learning through play and enquiry sets out a shared vision and guiding framework across the West Partnership. Within NLC, we are building on the principles to update and refresh our Play Strategy by bringing together a working group of Head Teachers, Head of Centre, Educational Psychologist, Learning Hub and Scottish Attainment Challenge team. We have created a strategic work plan and are designing a CLPL programme building on the principles within the framework. The CLPL programme will focus on key aspects of the framework to support practitioners and teaching staff to take forward play-based pedagogy, as well as providing prompts for self-evaluation and reflection. Through the work of the group, based on the framework, we aim to build confidence of staff through developing professional knowledge and understanding of play pedagogical approaches.

Objective
To provide a clear and consistent pedagogical approach across the ELC sector and early primary stages to improve continuity of experience and learning as outlined in Realising the Ambition. (Scottish Government, 2020, p47)

Play is central to how children learn: the way they form and explore friendships; the way they shape and test hypotheses; the way they make sense of their world. Much is known about the importance of play in children's development, yet it can remain a struggle to implement within our classrooms.

Strategic Overview
An Education and Families Manager, ELC Quality Officer and SAC Education Support Officer from NLC are part of the West Partnership Early Level working party and contributed to the 'principles of effective learning through play and enquiry' framework.

The framework contains the following three sections:

- A clear, shared vision
- Enabling environments
- Skilled and knowledgeable practitioners

The sections are being incorporated into the structure for the NLC play strategy and work plan.

Each member of NLC staff is aligned to a separate workstream within the West Partnership group to support further development in this area. This includes:

- Child Development
- Pedagogy and Planning
- Transitions

Results Outcome One – A Clear Shared Vision

Practitioners in schools often ask the following questions:
- What does it mean to have a pedagogy of play and why is it important?
- What does playful learning look and feel like in classrooms and schools?
- How do educators provide the conditions where playful learning thrives?

Two pilot projects are running this year to test and modify CLPL for primary practitioners on a small scale prior to launching the NLC play strategy. Participating in the POP (Pedagogy of Play) and attending 5 twilight sessions over the year has enabled teachers to work together to plan, experiment, implement and evaluate POP in their classroom.

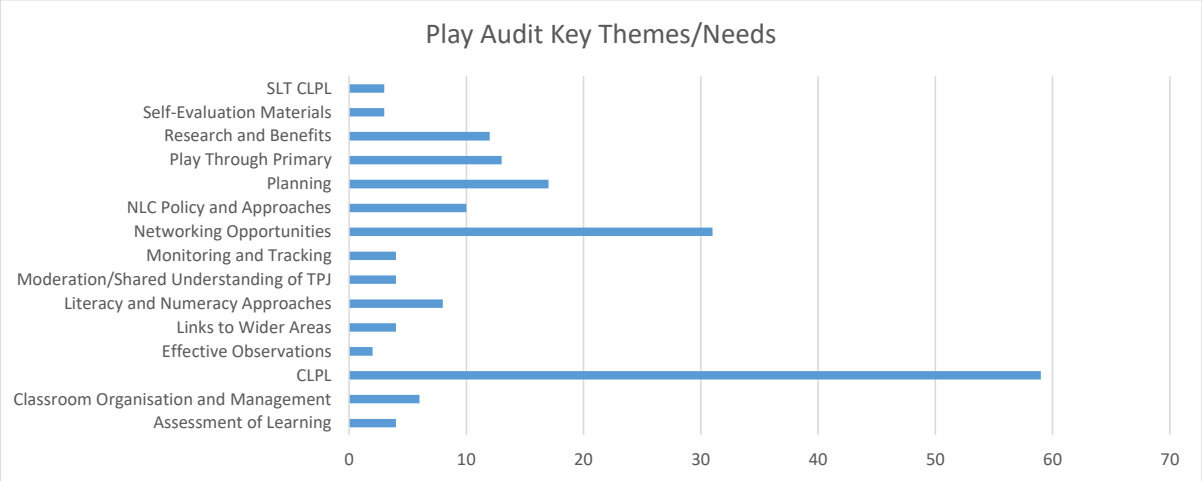


Outcome Two – Enabling Environments
Photographs and videos of environments that have been adapted from a traditional model to a more play-based space are being gathered from NLC and other local authorities as this is an aspect of play pedagogy that primary teachers have reached out to their ELC colleagues for advice and support through transition across early level.

NLC have recently appointed six ELC practitioners to the post of Play Pedagogy Practitioner. Their role will be to work in primary one classes to share their expertise and knowledge with colleagues in schools to enhance the play experiences through provision of high-quality spaces for children to play and learn.
Indoor and outdoor spaces are equally valuable and will be adapted and enhanced.

Outcome Three – Skilled and Knowledgeable Practitioners
Baseline data was gathered from 79% of NLC primary schools. 94 primary schools indicate that:

CLPL is the most significant request/need



CLPL Sessions
Child Development – Realising The Ambition • How I grow and develop • What I need from adults • Schemas • Doing the right thing for me • When things are not straightforward
Child Centred Pedagogy and Play – Why Play?
Interactions and the Role of the Adult
Planning and Facilitating Learning Experiences in Play
Creating Effective Play-Based Learning Spaces
Assessments - Observations and Evidence
Monitoring and Tracking for Head Teachers and Practitioners
Play Pedagogy - Literacy and Numeracy
Quality Improvement Methodology

In response to the request from the baseline data the working group are creating a bespoke suite of CLPL for Head Teachers/ELC Heads of Centre, teachers/ELC practitioners and Play Pedagogy Practitioners.

"Collaborating with colleagues from other local authorities has provided an opportunity to look outwards at the approach and develop greater perspective and understanding of how to implement and embed playful pedagogy within NLC. The knowledge and expertise within the group ensures there is a firm foundation for the work of the group."
ELC Quality Officer

"There is an ambition and vision across primaries to implement and embed play-based pedagogy and working with colleagues across the West Partnership supports us to build our strategy through the collaborative networking."
Education and Families Manager

Next Steps

“‘Pedagogy’ is what we know about children and how they learn, together with the experiences and responses we provide, the curriculum. In determining the nature of our pedagogy, we need to consider the child, the experiences we provide, our interactions, the spaces, the family, and their community and how these factors influence each child’s holistic development and progress in learning. It is important then that practitioners understand and develop a ‘shared pedagogy’.
” Realising the Ambition, Scottish Government, 2020, p53)

We aim to continue to collaborate with colleagues through the West Partnership to ensure practice within NLC is enhanced and outcomes for all our children are improved. We will continue to renew our Play Strategy through working with colleagues across our different networks.