

ITEM No ...3.....

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE –
27 NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT ON: ASPIRE DUNDEE – PROGRESS UPDATE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 401-2017

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide the Children and Families Services Committee with an update of the ASPIRE Dundee Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Committee members are asked to:

- i. note the content of this report; and
- ii. instruct the Executive Director of Children and Families Service to prepare an annual report on the ASPIRE Dundee Programme.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The ASPIRE Dundee Project was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 24 June 2013, (Article X of the Minute of Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 24 June 2013, Report No 297-2013 refers). The ASPIRE project is part of the Attainment Challenge in Dundee. The project uses music, drama and dance to raise the ambitions and aspirations of primary and early years children in some of our most deprived areas within the city. The ASPIRE project is being delivered by professional musicians, dancers and drama artists to around 2,950 pupils across 13 primary schools and 4 early years establishments. The project commenced in October 2014 with the initial funding being provided by external agencies such as Creative Scotland, Legacy 2014, Early Years Change Fund and the Scottish Government. The project is being evaluated by the University of Dundee.

4.2 The ASPIRE project forms part of a range of work across the expressive arts that are supporting young people's learning and development including the wider Instrumental Service, projects with specific partners and recently the important addition of The Big Noise Programme with Sistema Scotland and Optimistic Sound. All of these programmes are working together through the expressive arts medium to improve outcomes for young people and target the attainment gap by ensuring a greater equality of opportunity for children and families across the city. The organisation of these various projects is co-ordinated to ensure that learning and good practice is shared across the projects and subsequently with all the schools in the city to maximise the benefits of the programmes.

4.3 Schools involved in the ASPIRE Dundee Project are:

School Community	Art Form	Start of Project (planning – implementation)
St Vincent's RC Primary	Dance	November 2013
Rowantree Primary	Dance	November 2013
Rowantree Early Years Centre	Dance	November 2013
St Luke's & St Matthew's RC Primary	Drama	January 2014
Ballumbie Primary	Drama	January 2014
Ballumbie Early Years Centre	Drama	January 2014
Longhaugh Primary	Drama	January 2014
Longhaugh Nursery	Drama	January 2014
Camperdown Primary	Music	April 2014
St Clement's RC Primary	Music	April 2014
Sidlaw View Primary	Music	April 2014
Rosebank Primary	Music	April 2014
Claypotts Castle Primary	Dance	March 2015
Claypotts Castle Early Years Centre	Dance	March 2015
St Pius RC Primary	Dance	March 2015
Dens Road Primary	Music	March 2016
Ardler Primary	Music	March 2016

The key criteria used for selecting the schools and early years establishments included, statistical data and analysis derived from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and data held by Dundee City Council. In addition, consideration was given to ongoing community interventions, community assets, free schools meals, clothing grants, attendance and exclusion rates.

- 4.4 ASPIRE Dundee is underpinned by a belief that issues of attainment, achievement and lack of aspiration facing local communities, children and families should be addressed at local level through a multi-partnership approach. It is a collaborative local partnership programme to help address large scale inequalities in Dundee. The programme increases participation in different art forms in schools and in the surrounding communities. ASPIRE Dundee is a direct intervention and a catalyst for bringing together existing resources and services
- 4.4 The programme uses the transformative power of performing arts to increase and develop pupils' health and wellbeing, self-confidence and self-esteem, and learning and skills development while challenging inequalities and the effects of poverty. Through greater engagement with the arts locally Aspire develops motivation, enthusiasm and resilience in children and ultimately in the community they are part of. The overall aim is to achieve long term social transformation for children in areas of Dundee experiencing economic and social deprivation. This is an essential component of Dundee City Council's Fairness Strategy and impacts on the communities the children are part of, and on Dundee overall.
- 4.6 Dundee City Council is committed to achieving long term social transformation for children in areas of Dundee experiencing economic and social deprivation and expects ASPIRE Dundee to remain a core part of its work in these communities for many years to come.
- 4.7 The continuously reflective ethos of ASPIRE Dundee allows all involved to constantly consider different approaches to the design and delivery of services whilst improving access to community assets and resources. ASPIRE Dundee is proud to build on the

wealth of arts and cultural excellence within the City of Dundee, a UNESCO City of Design. Working with organisations such as Scottish Dance Theatre, Scottish School of Contemporary Dance, Dundee and Angus College, Dundee Rep Creative Learning and the Instrumental Music Service allows us to build upon prior knowledge and practice whilst developing new and exciting approaches to arts based, immersive learning experiences in schools and communities. By using 'design thinking' strategies these new approaches are becoming embedded in the practice of arts and cultural partners when working with other schools and communities not directly involved in the ASPIRE Dundee programme thus delivering a much wider impact and benefit to citizens from the investment in the programme.

4.8 ASPIRE Dundee is recognised nationally by many bodies as a model of excellent and innovative practice. Interest to replicate the model has come from local authorities including Glasgow City Council, North Ayrshire Council, Perth and Kinross Council, Falkirk Council and Renfrewshire Council

4.9 ASPIRE Dundee is part of a series of planned interventions within Dundee City Council's Scottish Attainment Challenge programme

The programme is planned to align with Education Scotland's *Interventions for Equity* increasing and promoting:

- Partnership Working
- Targeted approaches to literacy and numeracy
- Social and emotional wellbeing
- Promoting a high quality learning experience
- Professional learning and leadership
- Promoting healthy lifestyles
- Engaging beyond the school

4.10 **ASPIRE Dance:**

- ASPIRE Dance Officers are working in four primary school communities delivering an in school and community programme.
- Dance Officers are delivering a specialised early years programme in each setting with one setting about to pilot parent and child sessions out with nursery time
- Dance Officers have supported 'stay and play' days working with parents and children and have built programmes around the ABC and Beyond early years literacy programme
- Each ASPIRE Dance Officer is working with their link school on an engagement programme agreed at a local level with Head Teachers. These programmes are designed to extend learning across the curriculum, promote health and wellbeing and develop confidence and self-esteem.

In session 2017-18 these programmes include:

- SHANARRI Superheroes – classes explore health and wellbeing outcomes through dance towards a performance
- Support to Nurture Groups – working with smaller targeted groups of children to develop confidence and social skills
- Wake Up and Shake Up Assemblies – designed to discourage latecoming and motivate first thing in the morning

- Strictly Tea Dance – each school developing their own community tea dance event either in school or in the local community learning social dances and the history of them
- Landmarks Project – classes studying an iconic Dundee landmark in class, visiting the site and then creating a performance response in dance using the landmark as a stimulus
- Tour Around The World – using dance to explore different cultures, peoples and places
- Boys Dance Group – cross school, hip hop group for boys only led by professional male dancers
- Dance and Science/ Dance and Technology – creative performances developed by the children in response to their curriculum exploration of science and technology
- Collaboration with Active Schools: seeking to increase girls physical activity in secondary
- Working with staff of the Multi Sensory Team and Bi-lingual Support Team to support children engaging in dance who may have hearing impairment or speak another language
- Professional dance company FUORA visited the ASPIRE Dance schools in Autumn 2017 to perform their interactive T/HIS T/HAT where the pre-work involves the children learning vocabulary in a modern language to allow them to engage in the performance
- In Spring 2017 the company of the internationally renowned Scottish Dance Theatre toured the ASPIRE Dance schools to perform their acclaimed production of “INNOCENCE” which focuses on the use of poetry and imagination in storytelling
- 420 children involved in the dance programme worked collaboratively towards a main stage performance in the Caird Hall in March accompanied by a 70 piece live orchestra from Edinburgh they performed a new choreography to Stravinsky’s “*Rite of Spring*”. Each section of the spectacular performance was developed around the children’s research into the theme of Global Warming. Visual artists and musicians visited each class involved to provide extended learning opportunities for the schools involved in the run up to the performance. Students from Dundee and Angus College worked alongside the professional ASPIRE Dance Team supporting the children in their performance. 900 parents attended the stunning performance at the Caird Hall in awe of the talents of their children.
- The first ASPIRE *BBairns Classes* have started to run at the St Francis RC PS Campus where children and their parents can attend together and participate in hip hop styled sessions. These community based sessions expanded in January 2017 to the Claypotts Castle PS and St Pius RC PS area.
- ASPIRE Dance is working in partnership with the *Kith and Kin Group* based at the Douglas Community Centre working on an inter-generational programme where children and their grandparents will both be encouraged to participate in dance and music sessions in the evenings
- ASPIRE Dance Officers worked in partnership with School and Family Development Workers to deliver a number of holiday actives and family sessions during the summer and October holiday periods. This was also part of the Dundee Bairns Holiday Fun and Food Initiative.

4.11 Music

- The ASPIRE Music programme takes a whole school approach to developing music making skills and participation across six primary school communities.
- Approximately 700 children in the schools involved are now actively playing a musical instrument (P5-7) with children in some cases electing to learn a second
- High percentages of children who started playing within the ASPIRE Dundee programme have continued to play beyond their transition to secondary school with

many regularly accessing the Dundee Central Bands and Orchestras playing with young people from all across the city

- P1 & P2 Early Musicianship – developing listening, pulse, rhythm, pitch
- P3 Using instruments, percussion, singing, reading notation
- P4 PBuzz, percussion and singing
- P5 Whole Class Instrumental Tuition (wind band)
- P6 Whole class instrumental tuition (wind and) African Drumming & Samba programme
- P7 Performance projects, bands and ensembles, music technology

Along with the development of musical skills the music programme seeks to develop:

- Listening, readiness for learning,
- Co-operation, resilience
- Development of fine motor skills
- Confidence and self-esteem through performance and personal achievement
- The music programme regularly schedules showcase events to share the children's learning with parents/carers. The young musicians have also performed in the community, at the Caird Hall and at Civic events.
- Rosebank PS are travelling to Glasgow with their Samba Band to perform at Britain's Got Talent

4.12 Drama

- Three primary school communities have been involved to date in the ASPIRE Drama programme.
- The ASPIRE Dundee drama programme has worked in close collaboration with the award winning creative learning department of Dundee Rep Theatre on a number of engagement programmes in school, in the community and from within the Rep building itself.
- ASPIRE Dundee has provided the opportunity for children and teachers involved in the programme to work with a wide range of professional artists in school and within the various departments of the Rep. These include: actors, designers, musicians, directors, song writers, puppeteers.
- Programmes such as INSPIRE have provided mentoring and professional development opportunities for teachers to extend their skills in the delivery of drama and performing arts
- Children of the schools and their parents have also received tickets and transport via the programme to allow them to access professional performances as well as participating in large scale theatre and community performance events themselves. All schools involved in the programme have participated in live performances on the Dundee Rep main stage
- The ASPIRE Drama programme has been the first arts strand of the wider initiative to begin successful engagement with a secondary school. In session 2017-2018 Dundee Rep Creative Learning has developed a collaborative partnership with Braeview Academy which has led to a number of creative and performance events taking place in school, in the community and on site at various arts and cultural venues across Dundee
- A moving and highly acclaimed promenade performance took place at Verdant Works in June featuring young people from Braeview Academy in a piece which explored Dundee's industrial and textile making history
- Young people from the Whitfield community have been supported to take part in Rep holiday programmes and youth theatre

4.13 Impact

- The ASPIRE Dundee Project is being evaluated by the University of Dundee Project Team. Professor Teresa Moran (Project Leader), Dr Fiona McGarry and Nikki Doig (Teaching Fellow).
- The third instalment of the University of Dundee Evaluation Report into the impact of the ASPIRE Dundee programme will be published in Spring 2018
- The draft report highlights the following key strengths of the project:
 - Evidence of success in engaging parents
 - Programme promotes readiness for learning
 - Opportunities for wider achievement
 - Promoting social and emotional wellbeing
 - Increased attendance and reduced exclusion
 - Increase in confidence and self esteem in children and young people
 - Greater engagement with arts and cultural organisations
 - Skills development for teachers and artists
 - High levels of motivation
 - Innovation in developing practice
 - Building leadership capacity through collaboration

No major areas of concern were highlighted in the draft.

- ASPIRE Dundee has been featured twice in seminars of the Scottish Educational Research Council presented by the University of Dundee Evaluation Team
- Previous University of Dundee Evaluation findings conclude from the data collated that it is evident that the ASPIRE Project has made positive contributions to pupils' school experiences, parents' perceptions of their children's school experiences, teacher development and wider impact in the community.
- The attendance and exclusion data would indicate that there appears to be a general overall trend towards increased attendance rates and decreased exclusion rates for pupils in the ASPIRE schools. It is recognised that Dundee City Council have a number of initiatives taking place simultaneously in schools across the authority so whilst it is not possible to ascribe these positive trends solely to the ASPIRE project it would be fair to assert that the ASPIRE project is making a positive contribution to increased pupil attendance rates and decreased exclusion rates.
- Pupils' confidence has developed, their willingness to overcome anxiety has developed resilience, their clear enjoyment in learning new skills, the opportunity to perform in front of others beyond family and friends, the opportunity to perform in different venues beyond the classroom and some evidence to suggest pupils' behaviour and interest in school has increased.
- Parents of pupils in the ASPIRE schools are overwhelmingly positive about their children's schooling.
- There is evidence to indicate that teachers' confidence and competence to teach aspects of the arts is growing with several teachers actively learning new skills

alongside their pupils. This can be a very positive experience for pupils to witness their teachers overcoming the same difficulties and challenges they do as they acquire new skills.

- Wider community impact. Through the range of activities that pupils have engaged in, the pupils are getting the opportunity to perform to a wider audience, to use different venues and to experience working alongside different community groups thus raising pupils' awareness of the activities of these groups.

Summary table of fuller interim findings

Dundee City Council Children and Families Service	Children and Young People	Schools	Communities
Increased quality partnership	Increase in confidence and self esteem	Increased attendance reduced exclusions	Focus of positive ethos from primary school
Effective management of existing resources	Improved co-ordination and fine motor skills	Evidence of better behaviour – less disruption	Strengthened relationships
Sharing good practice across local authorities and beyond	Better motivation for learning	Better concentration skills	Increased local participation in arts/ healthy activities
Co-ordinated approach of local services	Higher levels of skills development	High quality Career Long Professional Learning for staff	Sense of pride
Greater capacity for project delivery	Pride and sense of achievement	Positive ethos	Greater connectivity between services
Highly skilled and ambitious workforce	Improved schools and home relationships	Strong partnerships addressing local priorities	Greater use of local assets
	Developing a Growth Mindset approach	Greater parental involvement	Raised awareness of opportunities
	Greater resilience	Strong evidence of high quality interdisciplinary learning approaches	
	Enjoyment in learning and taking part		
	Increased aspirations		

4.14 Innovation and Changing Practice

- From the success of the early musicianship programme established in the ASPIRE music schools further investment has been sought and secured from Creative Scotland

to roll this programme out to all Dundee City Council schools in P1 and P2 classes for the use of mainstream class teachers.

- The practice developed through the whole class approaches to instrumental tuition in the ASPIRE wind band classes has led to further such delivery starting in other schools across the city through a redesign of the delivery of aspects of the Instrumental Music Service:
 - Whole class strings in Our Lady's RC PS
 - Whole class orchestra programmes in St Andrew's RC PS and Ancrum Road PS
 - Whole class winds programme in Claypotts Castle PS

- ASPIRE Dundee has been nominated for a European "Innovation in Politics Award". The final 10 projects shortlisted at the event are those that demonstrate:
 - Innovation
 - Trust Building
 - Bridge Building
 - Sustainability
 - Financial Viability

ASPIRE Dundee received a COSLA Award in 2016 for *Achieving Better Outcomes*

4.15 **Future Plans:**

- **Review of Partnership Board and Governance**

In undertaking a review of the governance of the programme we will revisit the membership and remit of the ASPIRE Dundee Partnership Board. This group will be tasked with informing the strategic direction and building of sustainability of the programme. We will involve colleagues from national bodies such as Education Scotland, Creative Scotland and peer officers from other local authorities in the future membership of this group

- **Parents Group**

Although we have involved groups of parents in ad-hoc evaluation focus groups to date, working with the dedicated Parental Involvement Officer we aim to establish an ASPIRE Dundee Parents Focus Group to help inform and direct the programme as it develops, particularly when it comes to our commitment to greater community and family learning opportunities

- **Children's Board**

We will establish an ASPIRE Children's Board in early 2018 to provide an opportunity for young people's voices from across the school communities involved to help shape the future of the programme

- **Future Evaluation**

As we approach the end of our initial three year evaluation period with the University of Dundee we will review our future evaluation and monitoring processes to ensure that robust and informative monitoring processes are established to ensure that the impact of each strand of the programme is closely monitored and quantitative and qualitative data is used to inform future decision making, policy and allocation of resources.

 - In particular we will continue to track and monitor:
 - Attainment
 - Attendance

- Inclusion/Exclusion
- Participation
- Engagement
- **Secondary Pathways and Participation**
As young people make the transition from ASPIRE Dundee activities in primary school communities we will work with colleagues to ensure progressive pathways of opportunity are available at a school and community level. We will work closely with arts and cultural colleagues to help shape future opportunities and where possible realign existing resources to create maximum opportunity and potential for having impact.
- **Further Extend Family Learning Opportunities**
ASPIRE Dundee's holiday programmes in 2018 will extend to provide school and community based family learning opportunities across all three art forms in partnership with School and Family Development Workers, arts and cultural organisations and Dundee Bairns Holiday Fun and Food Programme.
- **ASPIRE Dundee Learning Events**
In 2018 we will invite arts and learning colleagues from across the country to attend an ASPIRE Dundee Learning Day where we will share our evaluations to date and the innovative practice that has been developed throughout the programme, part of our original commitment to the Scottish Government for their support in initially funding the programme.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainable Development, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.
- 5.2 There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Council's Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

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Executive Director of Children and Families Service

November 2017

