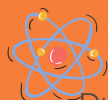


RAISE LEGACY CASE STUDY DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Dumfries & Galloway Council's Education & Learning Directorate was part of the pilot cohort of authorities to embark upon the RAiSE programme, receiving funding from 2017 to 2019.

During that time, the team laid the foundations for a strategic focus on primary STEM which has deepened and grown since its exit.

This case study will outline Dumfries & Galloway's activities in the 2021/22 academic year and how these are examples of meaningful legacy sustained from RAiSE. It is designed to provide information and inspiration for potential, current, and recently exited local authorities involved with RAiSE to plan and execute potential initiatives following this investment.



BACKGROUND

Dumfries & Galloway originally appointed three Primary Science Development Officers (2.4FTE) to lead upon the development and delivery of RAiSE. This represented an additional investment by the authority to have extra staffing resource in order to support the rurality of many of its schools, as well as the space to develop strategic and operational priorities.

When it exited funding, Dumfries & Galloway retained one of the PSDOs as a full-time Curriculum Support Officer with a remit which also includes digital learning and Learning for Sustainability (LfS). The team is managed by David Maxwell, Education Officer, who has a quality improvement role as well as responsibility for STEM, maths and numeracy, and LfS.



CURRENT APPROACH

A key date in Dumfries & Galloway's education calendar is its annual STEM conference, now in its fifth year. For the past three years, the conference has been hosted online due to Covid-19. The conference last year had almost 1000 engagements with four keynote speakers, 43 partnership workshops, and a setting and schools' showcase.

As remits change and develop, and with an increased national focus on LfS, the model and approach deployed for the development of STEM is now being used for LfS. This includes building on and creating successful partnerships across Dumfries & Galloway and beyond, a wide and varied professional learning programme, highlighting key curricular links, and the strategic approach to policy development including communications, online networks, and an annual conference.



THE AUTHORITY HAS COMMITTED TO A LONGITUDINAL STUDY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WOOD FOUNDATION TO EXAMINE THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF THE RAISE APPROACH WITH LEARNERS, TO DISCOVER IF THE INTERVENTIONS AT PRIMARY INFLUENCE SUBJECT CHOICE AND CONFIDENCE AT SECONDARY, AND POST-SCHOOL CHOICES.



IN 21/22, THE DG STEM TEAM WERE INVOLVED IN THESE RAISE INITIATIVES:

Enhanced involvement in the ESP's First LEGO League (Explore & Discover) which included a series of virtual and in-person challenges and celebrations. This work is supported by Dumfries & Galloway College who provide accommodation and STEM Ambassadors to make these events a success.



The STEM Officer joined RAiSE training on micro:bits which are now in all classrooms in Scotland. Additional professional learning for practitioners across the local authority have been facilitated to further enhance this area of work.



They were involved with Global Underwater Hub's professional learning focussed on subsea technologies, delivered by Aberdeen Science Centre. The authority selected clusters in areas near the sea to participate so that young people can better understand the technologies which have relevance to careers in the local area.



The Reece Lab from the University of Edinburgh received funding to work with a rural authority. Over four blocks of learning, 19 schools participated in this project, 39 classes with 962 pupils participated. Comments included: "When I was going around the stations it made me happy, and I now like science even more." "Thank you for teaching us about mosquitos and the disease malaria. I'm not fan of science, but the team made me feel like a proper scientist today."



2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

The Dumfries & Galloway STEM strategy, which looks beyond education to the potential of STEM on the region's economy and society, was influenced by the lessons learned during its RAiSE tenure and heavily focusses on the importance of education to keep the region competitive.

Being a more rural local authority, Dumfries & Galloway has taken a strategic focus to partnership development and used many internal departments to bring learning to life for young people. The authority established a close relationship with Dumfries & Galloway College and with the local Developing the Young Workforce team at the outset of RAiSE which continues to grow and deepen, addressing key STEM drivers for the rural region which include hospitality, forestry and farming.

Its work with the local college is leading the way nationally, representing partnerships with mutual benefits across education. This has been facilitated in a very strategic way, with both representatives from Dumfries & Galloway College, and Dumfries & Galloway Council's Education & Learning Directorate chairing the Dumfries & Galloway STEM Partnership Group.

The Bridge venue in Dumfries is increasingly being used with younger pupils, and an array of learning offers are engaging young people to make connections between education and employment. The Covid restrictions of 2021/22 meant it was closed for part of the year but still engaged almost 800 children. There are STEM skills evaluation webs which evaluate the impact of these experiences, charting the growth in confidence, knowledge, and enjoyment. Through partnership with the Edina Trust, STEM learning materials have been purchased to support learning in The Bridge.

The authority's Glow team space for STEM attracts 293 practitioners from all of the region's 15 clusters. A list of more than 200 STEM key contacts has been established over settings, school, and partner organisations. The team developed home challenge packs to support teachers provide opportunities to those isolating which were downloaded 1124 times.

Dumfries & Galloway has shared learning from these developments with the wider RAiSE network, as it continues to collaborate and be transparent about its learning process.

“RAiSE came at the right time for Dumfries & Galloway. We knew we wanted to focus on STEM and be more strategic. RAiSE gave us the resource, network, inspiration, and tools to do just that. The impact has been far-reaching and changed how we work as an education department and as an authority.

“It is important to always be thinking of the bigger picture. How can you best utilise this opportunity? How can you be creative in achieving the best for your learners? What are your drivers? What are your aspirations? Always think strategically while delivering operational solutions. Think long-term while addressing immediate need.

“RAiSE is a very important part of a much bigger puzzle which, when it all fits together, ensures we are best supporting our teachers to prepare our youngest citizens with the education they need today to make a difference in the future.”

David Maxwell,
Education Officer at
Dumfries & Galloway
Council



Gayle Duffus,
Education Director at
The Wood Foundation



“Dumfries & Galloway is a brilliant example of an authority which really grasped the opportunities afforded by the RAiSE investment and thinks incredibly strategically about all of their activities.

“There has been a deliberate focus on legacy, impact, and cascading learning from the outset.

“The team has been very open to remaining engaged in the network and sharing its journey. From events, to professional learning, to structural approaches, we are proud to have played a part on their journey which continues to have such an impact.”