

29 October 2019

Agenda Item No. 11

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## Report on Attainment and Education Outcomes

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Report by: Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director, Education & Children's Services

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Wards Affected: All

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### Purpose

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The purpose of this paper is to inform the Education and Children's Services Committee of the progress of learning for pupils in Fife schools. In particular, the paper provides an overview of:

1. Achievement in literacy and numeracy for pupils within the Broad General Education (BGE) and in each stage of the senior phase.
2. Progress in closing the attainment gap for literacy and numeracy
3. Evidence about the wellbeing of pupils within Fife schools

The paper is based on a range of stage-based information about outcomes within Fife schools that is available in September each year. A further paper will be presented in March, informing the committee of outcomes achieved by school leavers, based on information about the attainment and post-school destinations of school leavers that is released in February each year.

The paper also provides an overview of the range of strategies being developed to ensure that the levels of pupils' attainment and achievement continue to increase.

### Recommendation(s)

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The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- (1) Note progress in raising levels of engagement, attainment and achievement
- (2) Comment on the approach being taken to further develop attainment

### Resource Implications

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There are no resource implications arising from this report.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policy is proposed

## Consultation

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No specific consultation was required for this report. The Directorate consults and communicates with schools on a regular and ongoing basis.

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 It is our ambition for each child in Fife to enjoy a high-quality education that encourages them to be the most successful they can be and provide them with a learning journey from 3 – 18 years which leads onto future opportunity. To achieve this, one of the areas we, collectively, must succeed in is to raise attainment consistently and, at all stages, for all our children and young people in Fife.
- 1.2 Specifically, in Fife, we know that there are more and more children growing up in poverty. Recent research highlights that children living in Scotland's most deprived areas are behind their peers in the development of key skills, being:
- 6 – 13 months behind their peers in problem solving at age 5;
  - 11 – 18 months behind their peers in expressive vocabulary at age 5;
  - Generally, around two years behind their peers by age 15
- 1.3 The *National Improvement Framework* (NIF) (updated for 2018) as well as the Delivery Plan, *Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education* (2016), reflect national priorities in this important area (see: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/2018-national-improvement-framework-improvement-plan/>).
- 1.4 The National Improvement Framework (NIF) highlights four broad areas of priority:
- Health and Wellbeing
  - Attainment, including Literacy and Numeracy and Wider Achievement
  - Equity
  - Employability
- The Education and Children's Services Directorate's priorities (Appendix 1) reflect these key national priorities, and the importance of GIRFEC (the national approach to Getting it Right for Every Child) and community empowerment in achieving improvement across these areas.
- 1.5 The Directorate's approach to improving educational and life outcomes for Fife's children and young people involves:
- Improving the development and progress of learning for children and young people as they progress through their schooling. Wellbeing and the progress of learning in the key learning skills of literacy and numeracy are central to this aim. Data on these outcomes – and progress in closing the gap in these outcomes – are available in September each year and form the basis of this report
  - Providing young people with pathways to a wider range of post-school opportunities, including improving the qualification sets of school leavers from Fife schools. Wider attainment and employability skills are central to this aim. Data on these outcomes – and progress in closing the gap for these outcomes –

are available in February each year and will form the basis for a report on school leaver outcomes that will be presented to the committee in March/April next year

- 1.6 Raising attainment is a core Directorate priority. Factors known to help raise attainment include effective leadership, high quality learning and teaching, a positive ethos, effective tracking and monitoring of pupil progress and effective self-evaluation. These are areas that we as a Directorate are prioritising.
- 1.7 With this in mind, the Education and Children's Services Directorate has focussed its efforts to improve attainment outcomes for pupils. This includes a structured look, through our Quality Improvement processes, at pupil experience, achievement and progression in the Broad General Education phase and a focus on analysing attainment and raising attainment strategies. We have also updated our Raising Attainment Strategy which provides advice and guidance to support schools in raising attainment.
- 1.8 In the senior phase, our raising attainment strategy is being further developed in consultation with Secondary Heads and senior officers. A key focus in secondary has been to continue to improve levels of Literacy and Numeracy and to further close the poverty related attainment gap.
- 1.9 The recently formed *Strategic Governance Board* also takes an overview of attainment and achievement across all sectors. A workstream dedicated to looking at how we can further raise attainment is now in place and has developed guidance for schools to support them in raising attainment. This has been shared with all Head Teachers.
- 1.10 The national drive to close the "Poverty-Related Attainment Gap" further supports the work of our schools in raising attainment. Across Fife, almost all primary and secondary schools are in receipt of additional monies through the *Pupil Equity Fund*, with nine of our schools also benefitting from being part of the *Scottish Attainment Challenge Schools Programme*. As result of this, schools are developing and implementing a range of strategies to target barriers to learning, identified for individuals and groups of pupils, within each school context.
- 1.11 The Directorate's attainment review process at school and local authority level ensures that we work closely with schools to drive improvement in attainment. This includes both support and challenge.
- 1.12 Attainment is reviewed at every level of the Directorate. Headteachers and staff have a key responsibility for securing improvement. At present, in Secondary schools, scrutiny meetings are being held between Headteachers and Officers to review attainment in SQA exams and to determine what further action is needed to bring about further improvement.
- 1.13 To support this work, each school produces an annual *Standards and Quality Report* which is a self-evaluation statement of progress, including attainment. This supports dialogue between the school and local authority in relation to attainment, progress towards national measures and next steps in the school's development.
- 1.14 The following sections of this paper provide an overview of the key educational outcomes for children and young people attending Fife's schools, in terms of outcomes for:

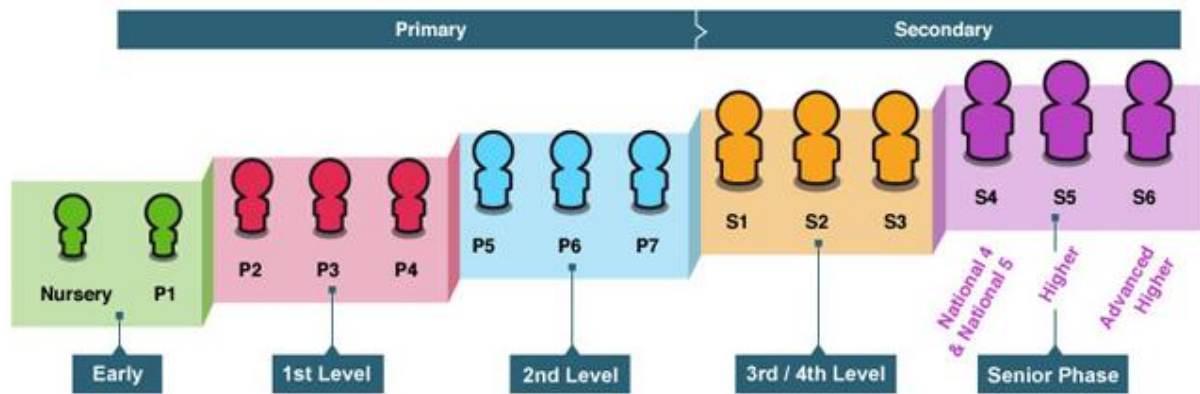
- Health and Wellbeing
  - Stage-based achievement and attainment for literacy and numeracy
  - Progress in closing the attainment gap in literacy and numeracy.
- 1.15 A further paper, outlining educational outcomes for school leavers will be presented, following the spring 2019 update of the Insight Tool, which will provide information regarding post-school destinations and the attainment of school leavers.
- 1.16 The aim of providing this holistic view of educational outcomes is two-fold:
- To help Elected Members form a comprehensive overview of primary and secondary education and the ways in which it meets the needs of its learners.
  - To show how Fife is meeting its legislative obligations, “to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them... with a view to raising standards of education.” Standards in Schools Act (2000).
- 1.17 Importantly, reporting by Head Teachers at Area Committee level also provides a mechanism for Fife Council in relation to this responsibility.

## 2.0 Current Position

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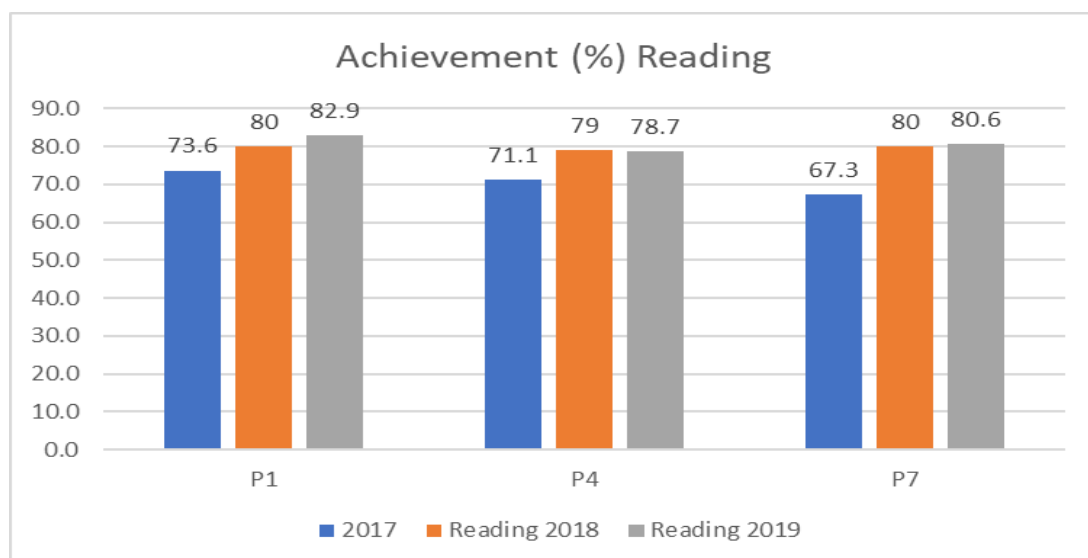
### Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

- 2.1 A key focus for Fife’s Education and Children’s Services Directorate is attainment in literacy and numeracy. Success in literacy and numeracy contributes to the successful development of core skills for life, learning and work. This focus on literacy and numeracy is supported by the Directorate’s Literacy Strategy and Numeracy Strategy and through the work of our *Pedagogy Team*. This is also the focus of the Pupil Equity Fund Networks, aimed at supporting staff in closing the poverty related attainment gap in numeracy and literacy.
- 2.2 The expectation is that, nationally, most pupils should attain the expected level for their age and stage as set out within the Curriculum for Excellence document, Building the Curriculum 5, A Framework for Assessment (see: <https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/btc5-framework.pdf> ). Figure 1 shows an overview of the expected progression for most of our learners. Within primary education there is an expectation that, for most learners, early level is achievable by the end of Primary 1, 1<sup>st</sup> level by the end of Primary 4 and 2<sup>nd</sup> level by the end of Primary 7. As we move through the Broad General Education and into Secondary Education Level 3 should be achieved by most learners by the end of S3. Not every child will be able to attain these expectations. This is something we accept and value.

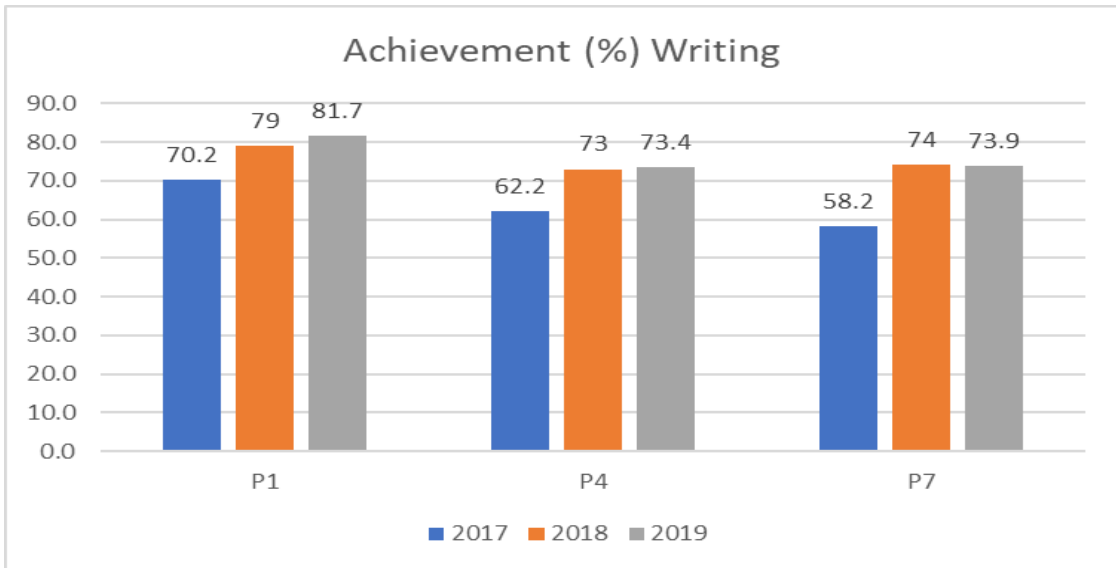


(Fig. 1)

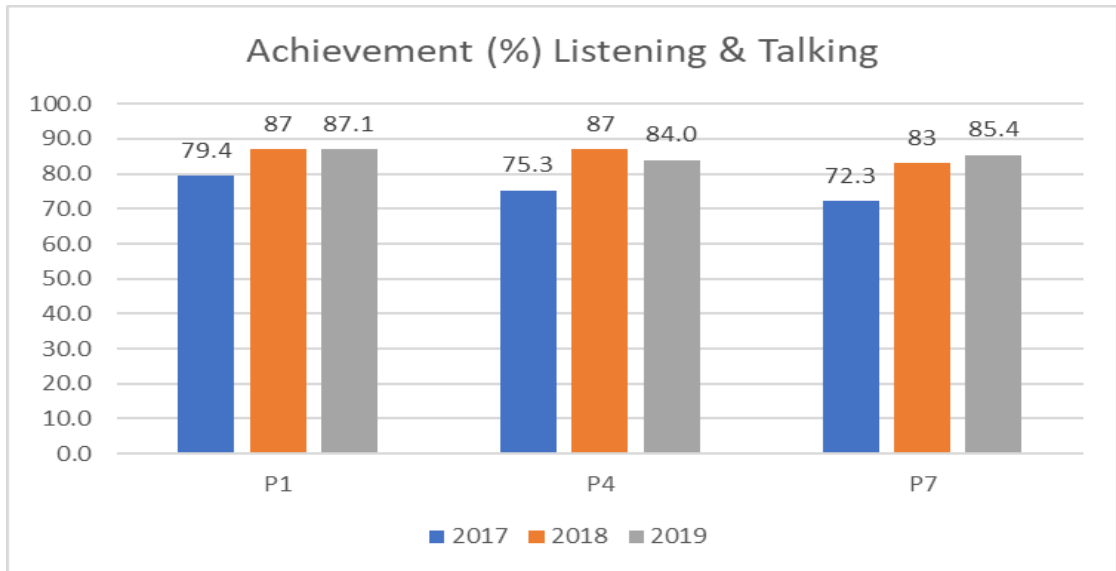
- 2.3 With the move from the previous 5-14 Curriculum to Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) within early 2000, there had been no collection of pupil CFE data at a national level or within most local authorities.
- 2.4 Though a range of work is now being undertaken across Scotland, there remains little consistency across authorities as to how pupil attainment is being tracked, recorded and reported. As such, the data being presented nationally remains experimental until such time as there is confidence, nationally, with regards to the consistency and accuracy of this. Thus, when figures from all authorities are published in December 2019, it is important to bear this in mind.
- 2.5 For session 2018-2019, when comparing the data with regards to the percentage of pupils who have achieved the expected level for their age and stage, we can see that there has been a clear increase in attainment in all areas within P1, 4 and 7. (Fig 2, 3, 4, 5) for pupils in our primary schools. The average increase since 2017 was 10% across all stages and areas of attainment; the increase ranged from a 3% increase for numeracy in stage P1 to a 16% for Writing in stage P7. There has been a slight dip at P4 Listening and Talking which will be now be a focus for this session. Where there is a variance of less than 1% this is negligible across the pupil cohort.



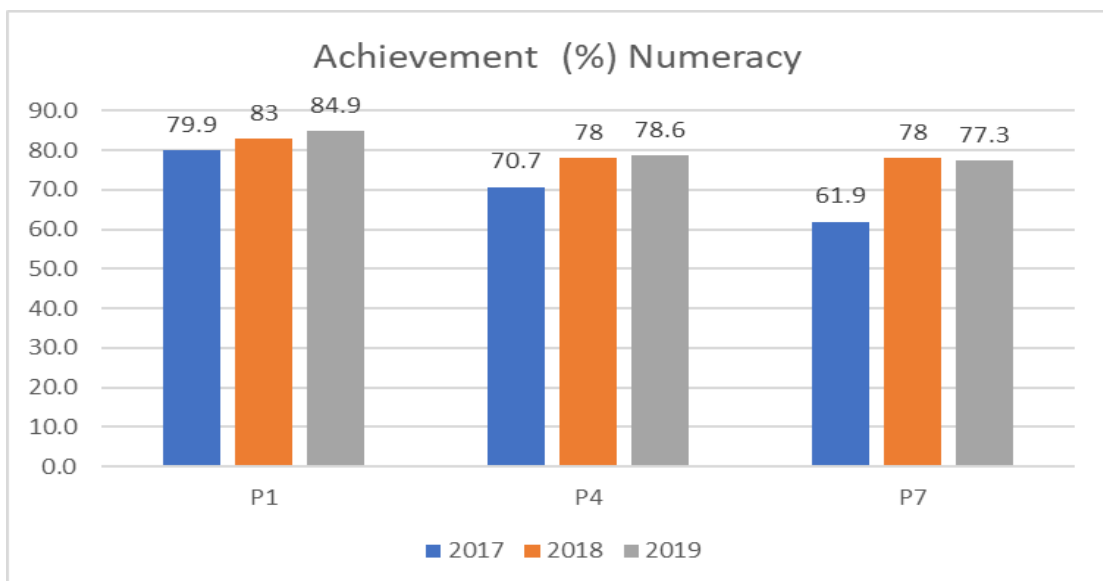
(Fig. 2)



(Fig. 3)

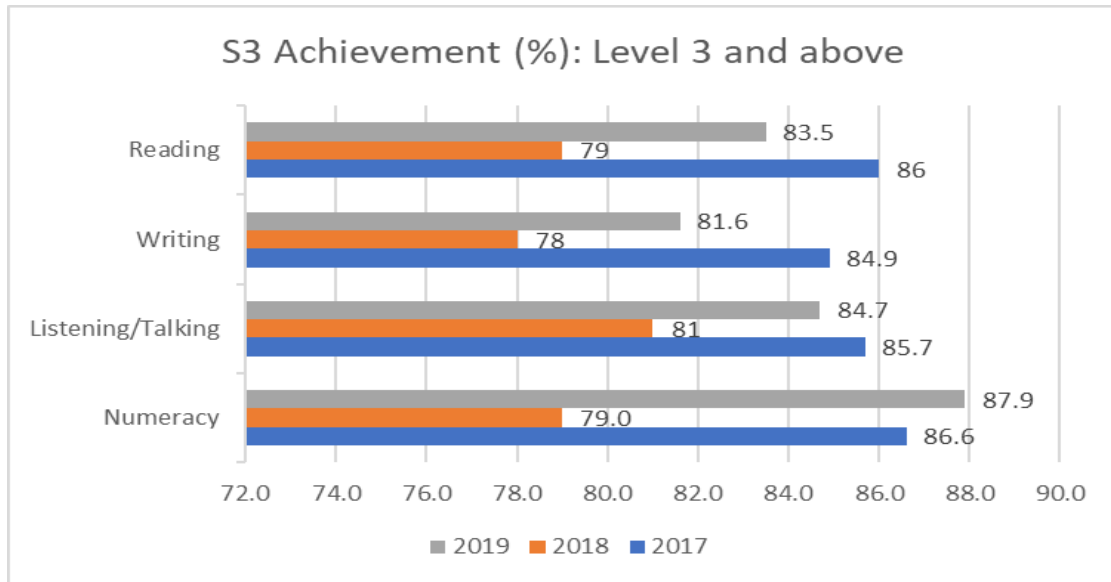


(Fig. 4)



(Fig. 5)

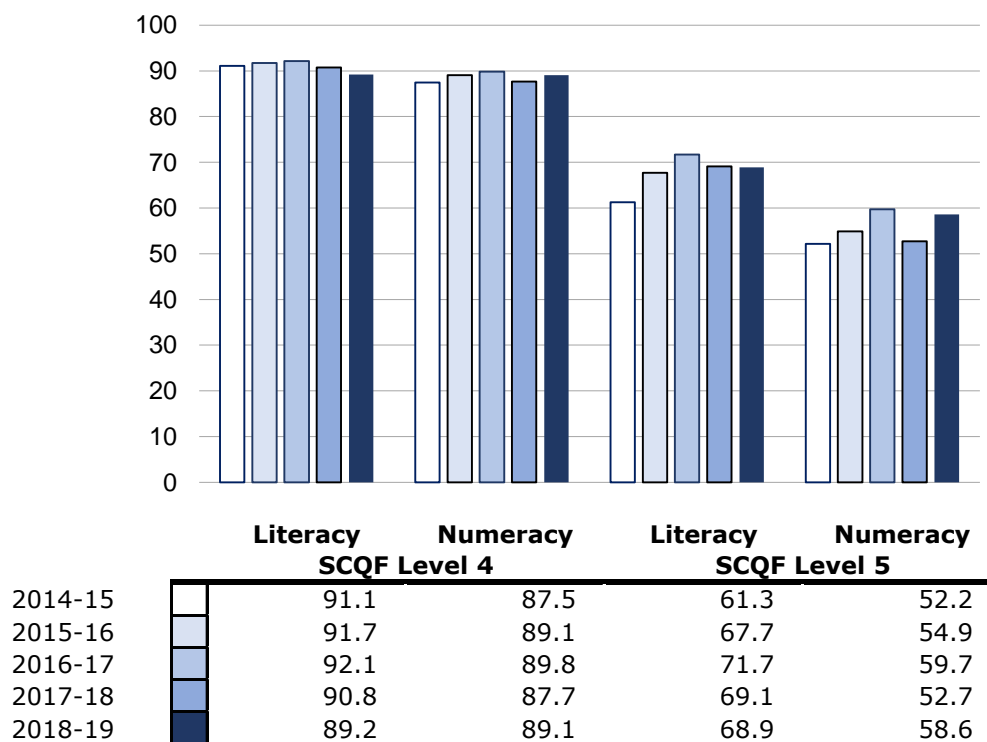
2.6 In the secondary sector (see figure 6) whilst there was a slight decrease in 2017-18 in the proportion of pupils being declared as achieving level 3 for reading, writing and numeracy (a decrease of 2%) this has since increased to bring this more in line with 2017. Work continues within this sector to moderate assessment information within literacy and numeracy.



(Fig. 6)

2.7 The progress with improving attainment for the key skills of literacy and numeracy is also evident in measures of attainment for literacy and numeracy in the senior phase.

**By the end of stage S4**

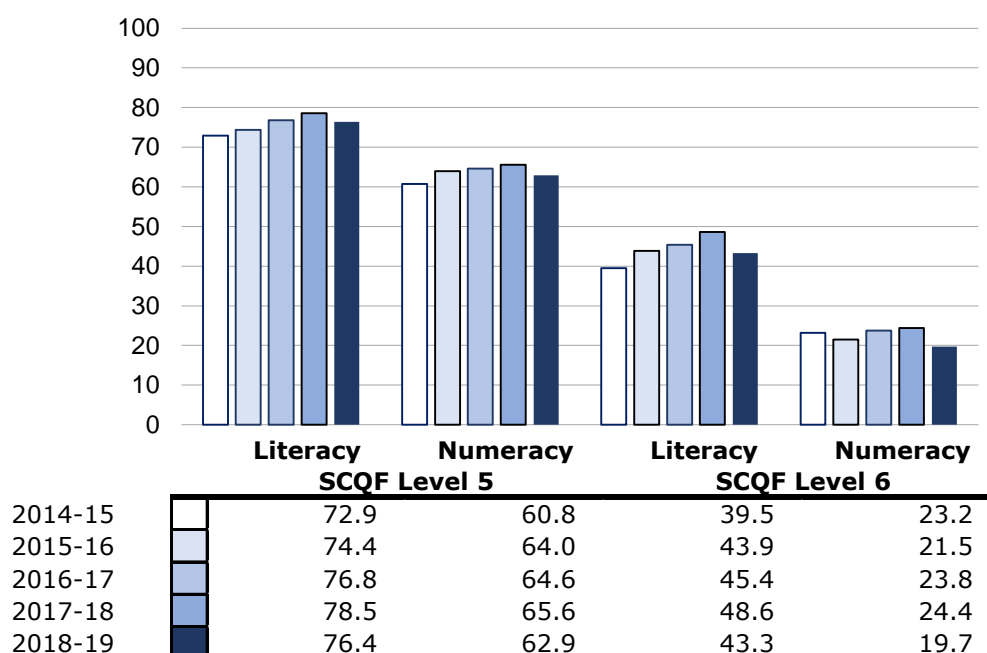


(Fig. 7)

2.8 Attainment for literacy at SCQF level 4 by the end of S4 is relatively high, with approximately 90% of pupils achieving a formal award at this level of attainment by the end of stage S4 (fig 7). This is in line with areas of Scotland with a similar social context. Attainment for numeracy at SCQF level 4 is now also close to 90% and remains significantly better than for areas of Scotland with a similar social context.

2.9 There was a fall in the proportion of pupils achieving awards at National 5 nationally this year, reflecting changes to national guidance on presentation and changes to National 5 examinations. This was reflected in outcomes for literacy and numeracy by the end of stage S4 at SCQF level 5 (fig 7). The impact of these changes has carried over in the attainment for literacy and numeracy at SCQF levels 5 and 6 (Higher) in S5 this year across Scotland. Attainment for these outcomes remains in line with areas of Scotland with a similar social context.

### By the end of stage S5



## Closing the Gap in Attainment

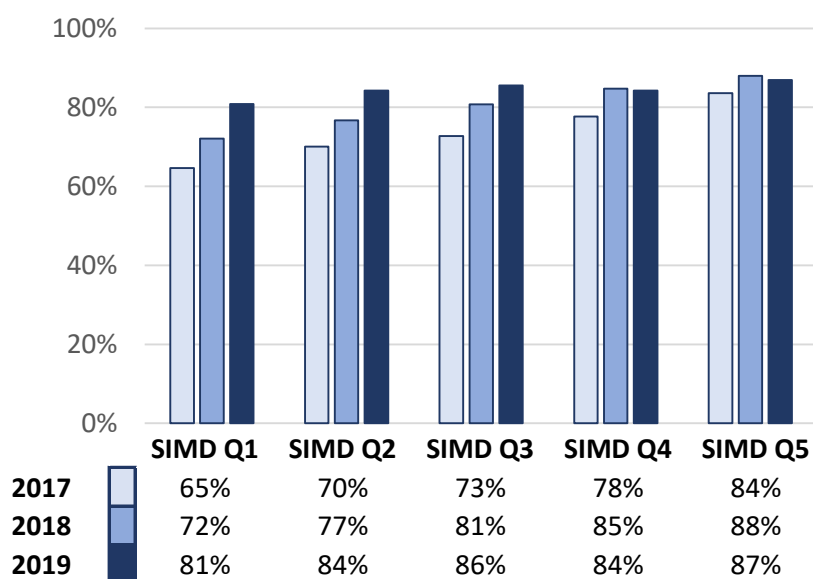
2.10 There is evidence that Fife has made significant progress in closing the attainment gap for the key educational outcomes of literacy and numeracy over recent years.

2.11 Fife’s approach to recording achievement of CfE levels was reviewed for 2016-17, in light of revised national guidelines. As a result, data on achievement of CfE levels in Fife is only available for the period since 2017. Figure 10, below, shows the average proportion of P1, P4 and P7 pupils achieving the expected CfE level. As can be seen:

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level of CfE has improved for each SIMD Quintile since 2017.
- There is still evidence of an attainment gap in literacy and numeracy in primary schooling (shown by the upwards gradient from left (lower attainment in more deprived areas) to right (higher attainment in less deprived areas)). However, there is also evidence of a continued closing of the attainment gap (the difference in outcomes across the chart from left to right is much less pronounced in 2019)



than in 2017). This progress in closing the attainment gap is in addition to significant progress made prior to 2017, although this progress was evidenced using different measures (as reported to this committee in previous years).



(Fig. 10)

2.12 Table 1, below, shows attainment for literacy and numeracy for pupils in S4 living in the most and least deprived social areas in Fife. Attainment at SCQF level 5 has risen for both groups of pupils by a similar amount, leaving the attainment gap broadly unchanged. Attainment for numeracy at SCQF level 4 has improved for pupils in the most deprived areas and has been maintained at a high level for pupils from the least deprived areas, leading to a closing of the attainment gap. However, there was a reduction in the proportion of S4 pupils achieving literacy at SCQF level 4 and a widening of the attainment gap this year.

	Literacy SCQF Level 4	Numeracy SCQF Level 4	Literacy SCQF Level 5	Numeracy SCQF Level 5
SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived)				
2015	84.4	79.0	45.8	36.6
2019	80.5	83.6	51.4	42.1
SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived)				
2015	96.3	94.5	78.0	70.7
2019	95.3	94.3	85.2	77.9
Attainment gap				
2015	12.0	15.4	32.2	34.1
2019	14.7	10.7	33.8	35.8

	Literacy SCQF Level 5	Numeracy SCQF Level 5	Literacy SCQF Level 6	Numeracy SCQF Level 6
SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived)				
2015	55.0	40.4	22.7	9.2
2019	60.7	45.6	25.3	9.3
SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived)				
2015	89.4	78.7	57.1	38.9
2019	91.6	86.2	64.6	35.4
Attainment gap				
2015	34.4	38.3	34.4	29.7
2019	30.9	40.6	39.3	26.1

Attainment has improved for pupils in both social contexts for Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF level 5 and for literacy at SCQF level 6. The attainment gap closed for literacy at SCQF level 5 but widened for numeracy at SCQF level 5 and for literacy at SCQF level 6. There was a closing of the attainment gap for numeracy at SCQF level 6, due to a slight reduction in attainment for numeracy at SCQF level 6 for pupils in the least deprived areas.

- 2.13 Fife’s continued efforts with regards to developing leadership, pedagogy and breaking the cycle to reduce inequity in educational outcomes has focussed on addressing disadvantage and improving life chances for all. Literacy development in Fife is now recognised as best practice. Work done to improve Numeracy and Mathematics is also well received by our school leaders and has received national recognition. Work within our Early Years’ service continues to have positive impact on the lives of our young people over a number of sessions and this will continue to be built upon. Work being undertaken through interventions supported by the Scottish Attainment Challenge fund is beginning to show early signs of impact on many of our most vulnerable learners. This is a topic for a report to Committee later in the year.

## Wider Achievement

- 2.14 The levels of success our children have in national examinations is important. However, there is more to public schooling and the development of our young people than examination results. Within each school, staff use a range of systems to track and monitor children’s broader successes and achievements. This helps to ensure that the needs of potentially vulnerable groups and individual children are understood and assists schools, working with partners as appropriate, to provide equity of access and opportunity for all learners
- 2.15 From feedback through the Education Scotland inspection process and from our own knowledge of school practice, we are aware that a number of our schools are raising awareness of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through the Rights Respecting School Award scheme. This is a priority across schools in Fife and work within this is noted in recent school inspections:

*“There is a strong commitment to children’s rights at Pitcoudie Primary. Senior leaders are improving approaches to ensure that all learners contribute to the life of the school, and have a say about their learning. Each class has designed its own class charter related to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and teachers refer to this during lessons”*

Pitcoudie PS

- 2.16 Across schools, children are increasingly involved in school groups and take on a range of roles such as Prefects, House Captains, Junior Road Safety Officers and buddies to develop important skills. These include effective communication, team work and building confidence in their abilities to express their own views and listen to those of others.
- 2.17 Many pupils benefit from a range of after school clubs offered by schools and partners including sports clubs, outdoor activities, Eco clubs and a range of arts clubs. These are helping children to develop interests and social skills in different settings.
- 2.18 In all schools, learners are actively engaged in successful fundraising activities to support local, national and international causes, thus developing awareness of the lives of others and the support they can offer to help bring about change.
- 2.19 Many of our schools also participate in a range of awards programmes including, the John Muir Award, Natural Connections, Duke of Edinburgh, SQA Personal Achievement and Leadership Awards, Saltire Awards which recognise volunteering and Dynamic Youth Awards. Our Catholic schools engage with the Mini Vinnies, an award focussed on work within the local community. For a second year we have a number of schools engaging with First Chances (primary) in collaboration with St Andrews University. This allows children to develop their skills, motivation and self-esteem. Each year, pupils follow a specially-designed programme, culminating in an annual residential summer school at the University.
- 2.20 Young people often continue these connections through the St Andrew's University REACH programme and The Sutton Trust Summer School. Our schools have a number of connections with Fife College and a number of different universities to provide young people with a range of experiences.
- 2.21 In some instances, schools have been particularly successful in local and national awards, with Fife schools winning a range of awards, such as:
- Plastic-Free Schools status awarded by Surfers Against Sewage
  - Silver School Sports Award – Carnock PS
  - Digital Schools Award - Markinch Primary School
  - Silver award for Rights Respecting Schools - Kirkcaldy West PS
  - Sport Scotland Gold Award status - North Queensferry PS
  - Kingdom FM Local Hero awards - Best School In Fife – Lynburn PS
  - COSLA Excellence Awards "President's Award" – Kirkcaldy HS

## Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

- 2.22 As we noted in last years report, it is acknowledged, nationally, that improved measures are needed to support the identification of future improvements in health and wellbeing for children and young people. A new national Health and Wellbeing Survey is being developed to meet this need, this is still in development.
- 2.23 Another important source of evidence about wellbeing comes from the perception measures, which provide an insight into the child's view of Fife schools.

- 2.24 The Education and Children's Services Directorate undertakes the Pupilwise and Parentwise surveys every three years. These ask for pupil and parent views across a range of questions, covering all aspects of wellbeing. These surveys were undertaken last session and reported to the Education and Children's Services Committee on 22 May 2018.

## Employability Outcomes

- 2.25 In order to take forward employability knowledge and skills within the primary sector, Early years centres and primary schools are integrating *Developing the Young Workforce* (DYW) within their planned curriculum and are working towards implementation of '*The Careers Education Standard 3-18, Developing the Young Workforce*'.

- 2.26 Developing the Young Workforce /Skills for learning, life and work are integrated across children's experiences with the focus being on developing skills, knowledge and concepts. Across Fife, we are promoting enterprise and enterprising approaches within every classroom. This encompasses enterprising approaches to learning and teaching which ensures all children develop a 'Can Do' attitude'. This includes entrepreneurial experiences. This work continues to be reflected within feedback from inspections:

*"There is a whole school approach to Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and the school's 'Skills to Success' progression framework is embedded in daily learning and teaching. Almost all children are developing a strong awareness of employability, skills for learning, life and work and how their learning, both in and out of school, relates to this. This highly effective practice is an area of strength of the school"*

*Townhill PS*

*"The high profile that senior leaders have given to providing young people with learning that is directly relevant to their future careers. Young people are benefitting from a wide range of projects and opportunities across the school to engage with employers, develop their skills and confidence, and experience the world of work."*  
*Inverkeithing HS*

- 2.27 We continue to take a robust approach to developing money/financial education, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) learning, sustainable education and work experience through engagement in social enterprise in partnership with Skills Development Scotland. We now have in place a well-established STEM strategy in conjunction with Fife College with key performance targets for schools set by Scottish Government.
- 2.28 Almost all schools have collated a register of parental occupations and are taking the opportunity to involve parents in supporting their Developing the Young Workforce programmes.
- 2.29 Work is ongoing across schools with Skills Development Scotland to support primary schools to use '*My World of Work*' ('My WOW'). Current figures show that 25% of our Primary 7 young people are registered and using this resource compared to 18% nationally.
- 2.30 In secondary schools DYW is well established as an integral part of the curriculum. We are working very closely with Fife college to further promote this initiative and to

present 'Apprenticeships' as part of the curriculum on offer to our young people. We have a significant investment in the 'Foundation Apprenticeship' programme.

- 2.31 At the start of the session we appointed a DYW Coordinator in each secondary to work develop the curriculum and to work in partnership with business and industry
- 2.32 In the secondary sector Skills Development Scotland staff are based in schools and help to deliver Career Management Skills and the Careers Education Standard. Skills Development Scotland staff directly support young people in a number of ways, including targeted group work and individual interviews.
- 2.33 All Early Learning Centres and schools in Fife are working to implement the Careers Education Standard and develop flexible pathways to ensure that Developing the Young Workforce is a key driver within their curriculum.

## 3.0 Conclusion

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- 3.1 The challenge set out in national and international policy initiatives to raise attainment for all learners is welcomed, in light of the need for more learners to gain higher levels of attainment so that they can compete and flourish in today's job market.
- 3.2 The overall attainment in Fife schools in Curriculum for Excellence in the primary sector has improved in all measures in school session 2017/18 though has levelled out in session 2018/19.
- 3.3 Over the past 6 years we have incrementally raised attainment, though we are ambitious to make a bigger difference. Fife has identified long term, medium term and short-term strategies, including partnerships, which aim to raise attainment even further. The success of these strategies will depend upon everyone at every level having the ambition and desire to raise attainment for our young people.
- 3.4 In line with the National Improvement Framework, significant progress is being made in Fife, with the development of a curriculum that meets the needs of all learners – based firmly on the development of personal skills, employability skills and the key skills of literacy and numeracy. This continuing work will ensure Fife is well placed to see further improvement in future years. The work of the Pedagogy Team and the additional funding through the Pupil Equity Fund will continue to drive these developments, with an explicit focus on how this can lead to improved attainment.
- 3.5 The success of our schools in developing and delivering successful programmes of learning which meet the needs of young people have been the result of a great deal of hard work and collective effort from practitioners. Work within and across our clusters of schools, has both supported and challenged our Head Teachers to develop appropriate learning pathways, moderation of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment and targeted interventions for learners.
- 3.6 The national publication, How Good Is Our School (HGIOS) 4, is used both by schools and practitioners, involves a much greater challenge for schools, through more stringent application of national standards and increased expectations. As such, our Quality Improvement systems and collaborative improvement approaches, including Learning Partnerships, will continue to focus on improving attainment and closely connect this to improvement planning and review processes within schools.

## **Background Papers**

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

Fife Children's Services Plan 2017-20

Education & Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2017-20, Updated September 2018 - as presented at Education & Children's Services Committee 28 August 2018 (<http://fish.fife/fife/uploadfiles/Publications/PDF%20-%20ECS%20280818.pdf> - pp.150-181)

South East Improvement Collaborative Regional Improvement Plan, Phase 2 September 2018

Building the Curriculum 5, A Framework for Assessment  
(<https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/btc5-framework.pdf>)

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