

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 12 October 2021

Attainment in the Broad General Education in Edinburgh Primary Schools, 2020-21

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the update regarding the position in educational attainment in Edinburgh primary schools within the Broad General Education for session 2020-21.
 - 1.1.2 Agree the next steps as outlined in section 5 below.
 - 1.1.3 Agree to receive further annual reports on attainment/improvements in performance.

Julien Kramer

Interim Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

Contact: Lorna French, Acting Head of Schools and Lifelong Learning

E-mail: lorna.french@edinburgh.gov.uk

Report

Attainment in the Broad General Education in Edinburgh Primary Schools, 2020-21

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of the analysis of attainment in the Broad General Education (BGE) for City of Edinburgh's primary schools for the year 2020-21.
- 2.2 There is evidence of an overall decline in attainment, attributable to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting interruptions in learning for our children and young people.
- 2.3 There is also evidence that the decline has more keenly been felt by those children living in areas of greater deprivation.
- 2.4 The final figures overall do show, however, a significant increase when compared to predictions made earlier in the session (November 2020).
- 2.5 Next steps are identified in the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report provides the members of the Education, Children and Families Committee with a summary of the key outcomes in relation to attainment/improvements in performance in the Broad General Education (BGE) within the City of Edinburgh primary schools for the academic session 2020-21. The measures of attainment are based on the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) from Early to Second Level for numeracy and literacy (comprising the three elements: reading; writing; and listening & talking).
- 3.2 It should be noted that in session 2019-20, there was no government collection of ACEL data for any year groups. We have therefore used teacher *predicted* grades as a measure for that year, although this should be treated with some caution. The methodology behind this was explained in the committee paper *Attainment in the BGE, 2019-20 (with 20-21 update)* which was presented to committee on 2 March 2021. That paper also provided an overview of teacher predicted grades for session 2020-21; these predictions are revisited and updated in this paper.

- 3.3 Similarly, it should be noted that there was no national collection of *secondary school* ACEL data in session 2019-20 or session 2020-21, due to the demands being placed on schools by SQA assessments at this time.
- 3.4 No comparison of the primary data for Edinburgh can be made with national data, or with other local authorities, as this data has not yet been published by the Scottish Government. (It is usually published in December each year.)
- 3.5 This report should be read in conjunction with the report *Education Standards & Quality Report 20-21 (Part 2): Learning, Teaching & Assessment*, which is also being presented at this committee meeting. Note in particular the sections on *Closing the Gap in Learning and Assessment & Moderation*.

4. Main report

4.1 Comparing teacher predicted grades (Nov 2020) with final grades (Aug 2021)

Chart 1.1 below compares the predicted ACEL grades for session 2020-21, which were made in November 2020 (and reported to committee in the paper *Attainment in the BGE, 2019-20 (with 20-21 update)*, 2 March 2021) with the final grades as recorded in August 2021. The percentage point change is shown in green in the final row.

Chart 1.1 – predicted grades from November 2020 compared to actual reported grades in August 2021

Changes since predicted grades	Numeracy			Literacy: Reading			Literacy: Writing			Literacy: Listening & Talking		
	P1	P4	P7	P1	P4	P7	P1	P4	P7	P1	P4	P7
Predicted (Nov 2020)	81%	75%	77%	79%	75%	77%	77%	70%	73%	83%	82%	83%
Actual (Aug 2021)	85%	79%	78%	81%	80%	81%	79%	74%	76%	89%	86%	86%
Change	4%	4%	1%	2%	5%	4%	2%	4%	3%	6%	4%	3%

It is encouraging to note the increase in all levels, compared to earlier predictions.

We noted in the previous report that there may have been some issue with teachers exercising caution when making predictions in November, and that does seem to have been the case. This is understandable in a context where children had not been physically in school buildings from March to July 2020, and where staff may have spent some of the first term consolidating work covered remotely before moving on to newer content.

We will however continue to work with staff in order to ensure greater consistency and validity, in terms of the link between predicted grades (usually uplifted in November and March) and final ones. This will be done by a continuing focus on moderation and assessment in literacy and numeracy, supported by networks and *Edinburgh Learns* professional learning offers.

4.2 ACEL attainment data over time

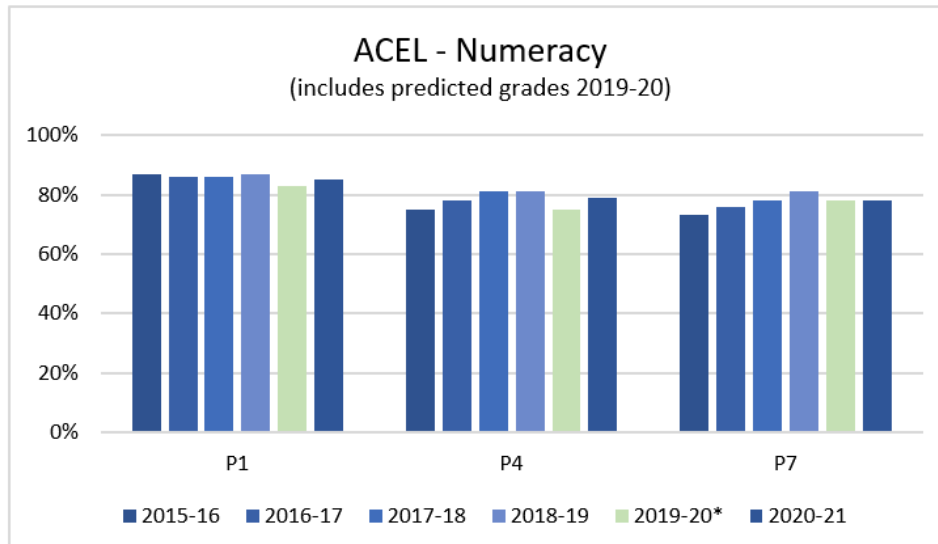
Charts 1.2 to 1.5 below show the percentage of pupils achieving the expected CfE level by the end of P1 (Early Level), P4 (First Level) and P7 (Second Level), in numeracy and literacy (reading, writing, listening & talking), based on teacher judgement.

The columns for 2018-19 and 2020-21 are highlighted to emphasise that ACEL levels were collected in these sessions, in contrast to session 2019-20 where we have used predicted grades. The final column in red shows the change (in percentage points) when we compare 2020-21 with 2018-19. As was anticipated in our earlier report, ACEL levels have fallen for all measures when compared in this way.

Note that in most cases 2020-21 figures are higher than those estimated for 2019-20, which may suggest that the impact of the first lockdown (Mar-Jun 2020) was more severe, in terms of educational attainment, than later ones.

Chart 1.2 – Numeracy: percentage of P1, P4 and P7 achieving the expected level

Numeracy	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21	Change
P1	87%	86%	86%	87%	83%	85%	-2%
P4	75%	78%	81%	81%	75%	79%	-2%
P7	73%	76%	78%	81%	78%	78%	-3%



The largest drop for numeracy is at P7 (3 percentage points down from 2018-19). Note the pattern throughout the table, whereby levels for P1 are higher than P4, which are in turn higher than for P7.

Chart 1.3 – Literacy – Reading: percentage of P1, P4 and P7 achieving the expected level

Reading	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21	Change
P1	82%	82%	84%	84%	79%	81%	-3%
P4	75%	79%	82%	82%	78%	80%	-2%
P7	76%	80%	81%	84%	81%	81%	-3%

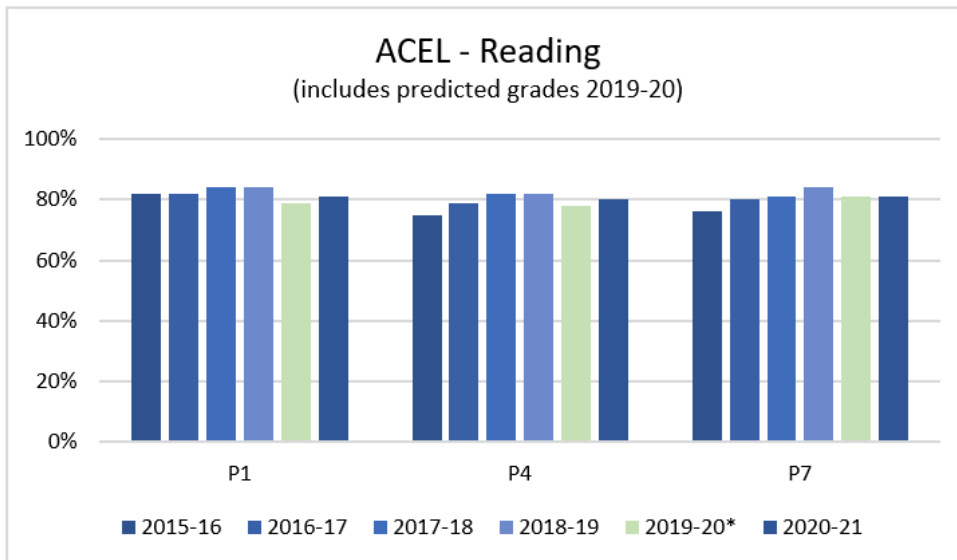


Chart 1.4 – Literacy – Writing: percentage of P1, P4 and P7 achieving the expected level

Writing	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21	Change
P1	80%	78%	81%	81%	77%	79%	-2%
P4	72%	74%	77%	78%	73%	74%	-4%
P7	68%	73%	77%	79%	76%	76%	-3%

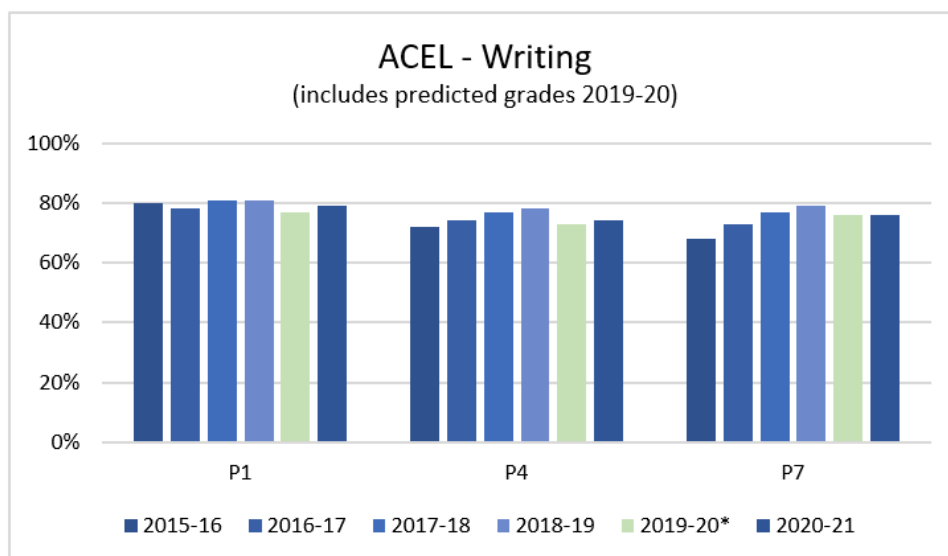
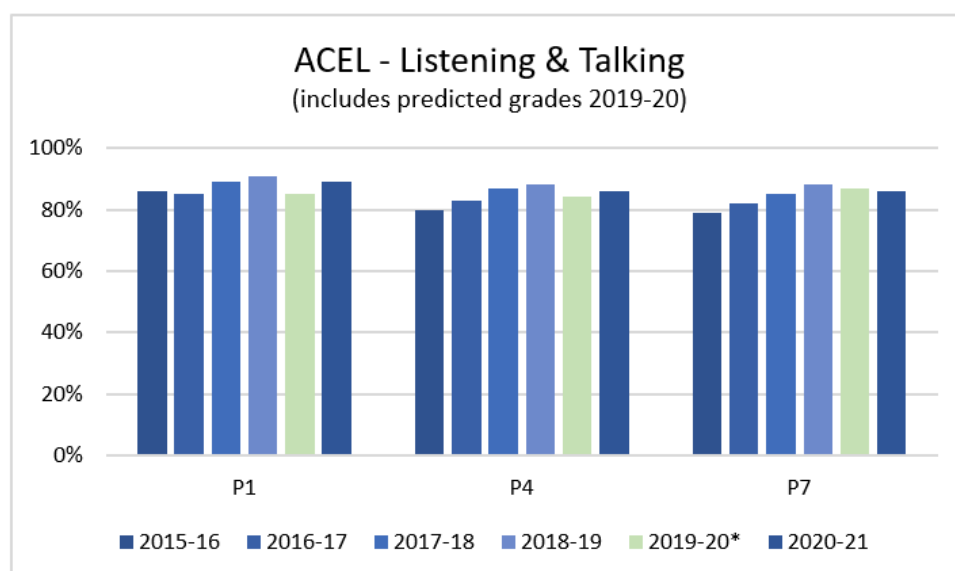


Chart 1.5 – Literacy – Listening & Talking: percentage of P1, P4 and P7 achieving the expected level

L&T	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21	Change
P1	86%	85%	89%	91%	85%	89%	-2%
P4	80%	83%	87%	88%	84%	86%	-2%
P7	79%	82%	85%	88%	87%	86%	-2%



The largest drop for the literacy measures is in writing at P4 (3 percentage points down from 2018-19). Note that in contrast to numeracy, the pattern throughout the tables is for the figures at P7 to be higher than those for P4.

In analysing this data at school level, we have identified schools which require particular support this session to address relatively low levels of attainment. Support is already planned and being delivered by Quality Improvement Education Officers as well as Edinburgh Learns staff. This includes a focus on ensuring effective support for pupils now in secondary schools (in S1), with Head Teachers of the primary and secondary schools in question meeting to agree actions and systems to monitor progress for targeted individuals.

4.3 Closing the Gap data

Charts 1.6 to 1.9 below give the ACEL data from 2016 to 2021, broken down to compare the percentage of children from the most deprived areas of the city (SIMD quintile 1) achieving the relevant level, to those from the least deprived areas of the city (SIMD quintile 5). The “gap” between these two figures is shown for each level.

Note that there is no available data for session 2019-20 as the Scottish Government did not collect ACEL data that year, and the format which we used to gather predicted grades did not allow for any analysis by SIMD at the individual pupil level.

Chart 1.6 – Numeracy: ACEL data for SIMD quintiles 1 and 5

Numeracy	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19			2020-21		
	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap
P1	75%	94%	19%	75%	93%	18%	77%	95%	18%	71%	92%	21%
P4	65%	88%	23%	65%	90%	25%	68%	90%	22%	62%	89%	27%
P7	60%	87%	27%	64%	88%	24%	67%	90%	23%	63%	88%	25%

Chart 1.7 – Literacy: Reading ACEL data for SIMD quintiles 1 and 5

Reading	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19			2020-21		
	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap
P1	69%	92%	23%	71%	92%	20%	72%	94%	22%	66%	90%	24%
P4	65%	90%	25%	67%	92%	24%	68%	90%	22%	64%	88%	24%
P7	65%	90%	25%	65%	91%	26%	71%	93%	22%	67%	89%	22%

Chart 1.8 – Literacy: Writing ACEL data for SIMD quintiles 1 and 5

Writing	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19			2020-21		
	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap
P1	69%	92%	23%	66%	91%	25%	67%	92%	25%	64%	90%	26%
P4	57%	86%	28%	62%	87%	26%	62%	86%	24%	56%	83%	27%
P7	57%	85%	29%	58%	88%	30%	65%	89%	24%	62%	87%	25%

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Chart 1.9 – Literacy: Listening & Talking ACEL data for SIMD quintiles 1 and 5

Listening & Talking	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19			2020-21		
	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap	Q1	Q5	Gap
P1	74%	93%	19%	80%	95%	15%	85%	96%	11%	78%	94%	16%
P4	72%	92%	19%	76%	94%	18%	78%	95%	17%	73%	93%	20%
P7	68%	92%	24%	71%	94%	23%	77%	95%	18%	74%	93%	19%

These charts indicate that the drop in figures for 2020-21, compared to 2018-19, is greater for those living in areas of high deprivation, compared to those living in areas of low deprivation. In almost all cases, the gap between these two has therefore widened. This is in contrast to the pattern from 2016-17 to 2018-19, where in most cases the gap narrowed.

These gaps are widest for writing (all levels) and numeracy (P4 and P7). The gaps are “narrowest” for listening & talking.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Targeted support will be provided for schools where the attainment of pupils in SIMD quintile 1 is of particular concern. This will include cross-sector working between primary and secondary schools to ensure that the progress of new S1 pupils is tracked effectively.
- 5.2 We will promote effective, evidence-based strategies to raise attainment in literacy (writing) and numeracy, supported by Edinburgh Learns staff as well as staff from Additional Support for Learning. This will include providing universal and targeted professional learning for staff. Work in this area will be under the governance of the Edinburgh Learns Learning, Teaching and Assessment Board.
- 5.3 We will continue the now-established practice of gathering predicted ACEL grades from each school in November and March of each session. The data gathered will be analysed to ensure that appropriate supports are in place, where predicted attainment patterns are of concern. This data will also be shared at cluster level, to facilitate effective planning and support across the learning community.
- 5.4 We will ensure effective arrangements are in place to track and monitor progress through the Broad General Education. This will include moving to a universal system across all CEC schools in consultation with Head Teachers, with full implementation in session 2022-23.
- 5.5 Throughout this work we will continue to focus on improvements for our most disadvantaged pupils, in particular Care Experienced Young People and Young Carers.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial implications contained in this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

n/a

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework resource *Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19* includes a chapter on children and education:
[Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 - Chapter 5: Children, Education | National Performance Framework](#)
- 8.2 The Educational Endowment Foundation has brought together several papers which seek to investigate the impact of Covid-19 on attainment (studies taken from several countries):
[Best evidence on impact of Covid-19 on pupil attainment | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

- 8.3 The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and Nuffield Foundation published a report looking at how the pandemic was impacting inequalities in education and skills, as well as inequalities in the labour market and household incomes, in March 2021:

[BN-Inequalities-in-education-skills-and-incomes-in-the-UK-the-implications-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf \(ifs.org.uk\)](#)

9. Appendices

n/a