Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 20 September 2022

Attainment in the Senior Phase, 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 progress and areas for improvement in educational attainment in the Senior Phase in City of Edinburgh secondary schools, during session 2021-21.

1.1.2 Agree to receive further annual reports on attainment and improvements in performance in the Senior Phase.

1.1.3 Note the continued hard work of young people, staff, parents and carers to support the successful delivery of qualifications in session 2020-21, during the global Covid-19 pandemic.

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Report

Attainment in the Senior Phase, 2020-21

2.   Executive Summary

2.1   This report provides the members of the Education, Children and Families committee with a summary of the key outcomes in relation to attainment in the City of Edinburgh Council secondary schools for the Senior Phase (S4 to S6) for the academic session 2020-21. The report focuses on the attainment of school leavers. Although senior phase attainment is the responsibility of secondary Headteachers, the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) make it clear that effective partnerships with primary schools within the learning community are essential if we are to tackle ingrained issues such as the impact of poverty.

3.   Background

3.1   This report complements the report Attainment in the Broad General Education in Edinburgh Primary Schools, 2020-21, which was discussed at committee on 12 October 2021.

3.2   The national Senior Phase benchmarking tool for attainment and achievement, *Insight* (see Appendix 2), analyses the attainment of school leavers in four key areas: Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy; Increasing Participation (by improving leaver destinations); Improving Attainment for All; and Attainment Versus Deprivation. This report uses these measures to analyse progress; fuller details of the measures used, as well as more detailed analysis (including graphs and tables) are contained in the appendices to this report. Measures used by the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework (NIF) are also used, as appropriate, to measure poverty-related "gaps" in attainment.

3.3   This report is usually brought to committee in May of each year, as the data for school leavers is not released via *Insight* until February/March. This report has therefore been held over from the previous cycle of meetings, due to the cancellation of the May 2022 committee meeting. We will report on Senior Phase attainment for 2021-22 in May 2023.

3.4   For sessions 2019-20 and 2020-21 the absence of external assessment information, and the use of two separate models to deliver the qualifications each

year, has led to different patterns of attainment across Scotland than was seen in previous years. We are advised that care should be taken when comparing the results for 2020 and 2021 with those in previous years or future years, and that the 2020 and 2021 *Insight* data cannot therefore be used uncritically to directly demonstrate authority improvement compared with previous years. Similarly, care should also be taken when comparing attainment to the Virtual Comparator.

3.5   Within this report, therefore, we report on attainment for session 2020-21 and indicate possible patterns of improvement (or otherwise). Where trends are evident, over successive sessions, these are indicated, and carry more weight.

3.6   Irrespective of these caveats, we are confident that the actions proposed throughout the report are appropriate.

4.   Main report

4.1   Below we provide a breakdown of improvements, as well as areas for development, in the attainment of leavers last session. Note that the graphs referred to are found in Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 gives the background to the key measures used for attainment (including an explanation of the use of the Virtual Comparator, or VC), whilst Appendix 3 explains the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) within which these measures sit.

The overall picture shows improvements in most areas of Edinburgh's data, but these improvements are in some cases mitigated in comparison to the performance of our Virtual Comparator, or the national picture.

4.2   **Improving attainment in literacy and numeracy** (see graphs 1 and 2).

Improvements – we are pleased to note that the percentage of leavers achieving at SCQF levels 4 and 5 has increased year-on-year and that we have now been in line with the VC for several years.
Areas of concern – although nationally it is evident that figures for numeracy are lower than for literacy, we remain committed to further improving the numeracy data.

4.3   **Improving leaver positive destinations** (see graph 3 and associated tables)
Improvements – Positive destination data dropped nationally in 2020, due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on employment opportunities in particular (with local authorities in the central belt affected more than others). Addressing this drop was a key focus for us during 2020-21 so we are pleased to note that the fall has been reversed, with the 2021 figure being the highest on record. The Edinburgh figures are just below those of the VC and the nation.
Areas of concern – we remain committed to matching and then exceeding the VC and national data for these measures.

4.4 **Improving attainment for all** (see graphs 4 to 6)
Improvements - the attainment of the highest-attaining 20% of leavers has been consistently above the Virtual Comparator for five years, and *significantly* above the VC for the last three. The figures for the middle-attaining 60% have increased year-on-year for five years and are no longer significantly below the VC (as was the case in 2017 and 2018). The figures for the lowest-attaining 20% have improved since a drop in 2019.

Areas of concern – whilst we are pleased with the improvements noted above, there is still a clear pattern of a gap when comparing our data with the VC for the lowest-attaining 20%. This remains a key focus for improvement and we plan to address this via improved tracking and monitoring of these young people, and an improved curriculum offer to ensure that they are gaining access to the correct qualifications and pathways. We are also committed to improving the outcomes for middle-attaining 60%, via improved learning and teaching supported by our Edinburgh Learns Teacher Charter.

4.5 **Closing the gap: attainment versus deprivation** (see graphs 7 to 9)
When comparing the attainment of leavers from the 20% most-deprived areas with those from the 20% least-deprived, in terms of those achieving one or more awards at SCQF levels 4 to 6, the following can be noted:
Improvements – the gap for SCQF level 4 decreased by 3.2 percentage points in 2021, reversing an increase that had taken place in 2020. There was a similar improvement for SCQF level 5, with a decrease of 4.2 percentage points (and the smallest gap on record). At SCQF level 6, there has been a consistent decrease in the gap each year over the last five years.

Areas of concern – despite the improvement noted above for SCQF level 6, the gap is still very wide, at 37.0 percentage points. The gap is not decreasing fast enough at this needs attention. It should also be noted that the raw figures for quintile 1 and quintile 5 actually decreased in 2021 compared to 2020. Whilst this was a national issue, it nevertheless requires attention.

4.6 **Improving attainment for Care-Experienced young people** (see graphs 10 to 12)
Improvements – we are pleased to note real improvements compared to previous sessions: the percentage of leavers classifies as LAC who achieved one or more award at SCQF level 4 increased by 8.6 percentage points to 71.9%; for SCQF level 5 the increase was 10.8 percentage points to 49.1%; and for SCQF level 6 the increase was 14.6 percentage points to 26.3% (more than doubling the figure for the previous year). These increases show the impact of appointing a QIEO for Care-Experienced Children and Young People, to ensure our work in this area is effectively coordinated.

Areas of concern – despite these increases there is still a clear gap (albeit narrowing) between the attainment of these young people, compared to those living in the areas of highest deprivation in Edinburgh. We remain committed to eliminating that gap.

5.   Next Steps

5.1   We will report on progress with the priorities given above, when reporting on Senior Phase Attainment for session 2021-22.

5.2   The Quality Improvement and Curriculum Service (QICS) will offer a high level of intensive support and challenge to those schools where attainment is of particular concern. This will involve coaching support in context for the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team, from the Quality Improvement and Education Officer (QIEO) assigned to the school, alongside support from the Edinburgh Learns Team to train teaching and support staff. An Action Plan and timeline for improvement will be agreed and a Senior Education Manager will meet regularly with the Head Teacher to review progress.

6.   Financial impact

6.1   There are no financial implications contained in this report.

7.   Stakeholder/Community Impact

7.1   All schools are required to consult regularly with school communities as part of the Empowered System.

7.2   The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board is currently preparing the Integrated Impact Assessment as part of the Edinburgh Learns for Life strategy for education.

8.   Background reading/external references

8.1   Update on Attainment in City of Edinburgh Schools 2015-16, 7 March 2017
https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/Data/Education,%20Children%20and%20Families%20Committee/20170307/Agenda/item_73__update_on_attainment_in_city_of_edinburgh_schools_2015-16.pdf

8.2   Educational Attainment in Primary and Secondary Schools 2017, 22 May 2018
https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/Data/Education,%20Children%20and%20Families%20Committee/20180329/Agenda/$full_meeting_papers__education_children_and_families_committee_-_29_march_2018pdf.xls.pdf

8.3   Senior Phase Attainment, 2017-18
https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/Data/Education,%20Children%20and%20Families%20Committee/20190521/Agenda/item_78_-_senior_phase_attainment_2017-18.pdf

8.4   Attainment in the Senior Phase, 2019-20
mgConvert2PDF.aspx (edinburgh.gov.uk)

9.   Appendices

Appendix 1 – graphs and tables

## Graph 1 – leaver attainment in literacy at SCQF levels 4 and 5

Graph 2 – leaver attainment in numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5

Establishment	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy
Edinburgh	2021	95.4	93.8	86.1	75.7
Virtual Comparator	2021	95.2	92.5	85.7	75.9
Edinburgh	2020	94.1	93.4	83.7	74.3
Virtual Comparator	2020	94.2	91.8	83.5	73.5
Edinburgh	2019	93.9	91.3	82.6	69.3
Virtual Comparator	2019	94.6	92.1	83.4	71.7
Edinburgh	2018	93.5	91.3	82.0	68.2
Virtual Comparator	2018	94.7	91.1	83.1	72.0
Edinburgh	2017	93.7	90.5	80.1	66.4
Virtual Comparator	2017	94.8	91.3	82.4	71.4

Graph 3 – initial positive destinations for leavers

Initial Positive Destinations for School Leavers
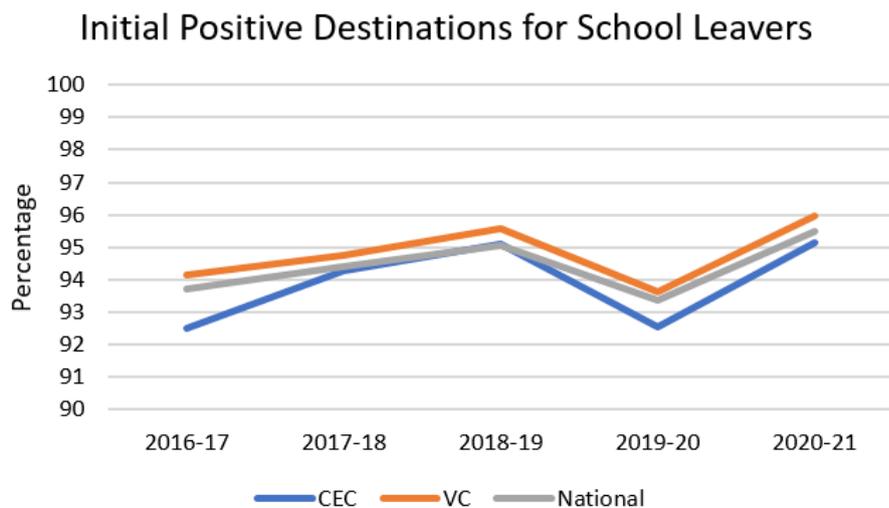
|	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
CEC	92.52	94.28	95.11	92.53	95.13
VC	94.13	94.75	95.59	93.64	95.98
National	93.72	94.39	95.05	93.36	95.48

| Category	2019	2020	2021
Employment	23.39	15.49	20.67
Further Education	25.29	26.97	20.92
Higher Education	42.63	45.86	50.03
Voluntary Work	0.76	0.59	0.40
PSD	0.55	0.63	0.46
Training	2.48	2.99	2.65
Unemployed (Not Seeking)	1.77	2.89	1.69
Unemployed (Seeking)	3.00	4.08	2.87
Unknown	0.12	0.49	0.31
Total Positive Destinations	**95.10**	**92.53**	**95.13**

Graph 4 – leaver attainment by cohort: lowest-attaining 20%
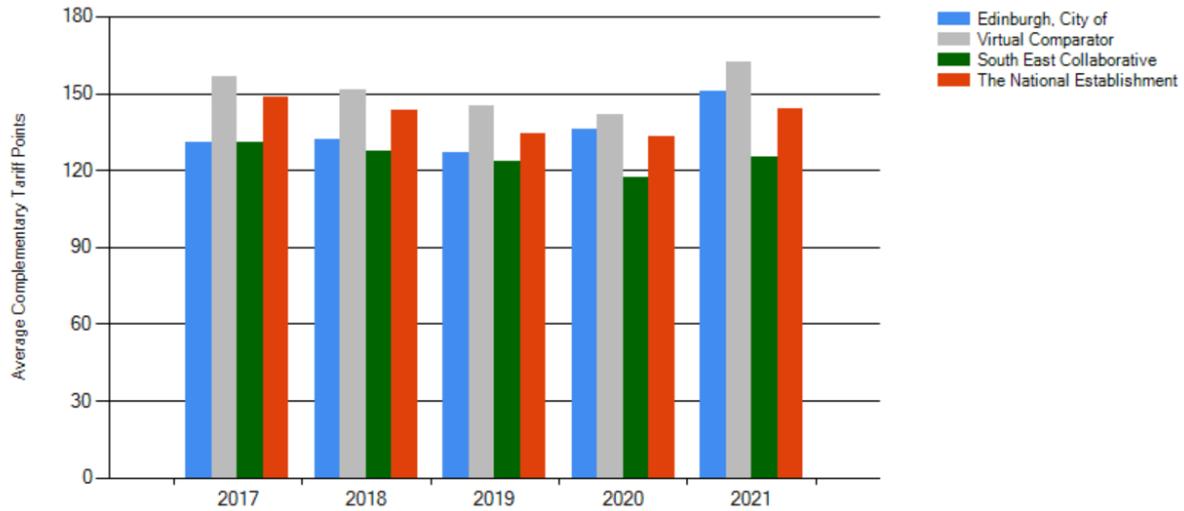
Lowest 20%	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Edinburgh, City of	131	132	127	136	151
Virtual Comparator	157	151	145	142	162
South East Collaborative	131	128	124	117	125
The National Establishment	148	143	134	133	144

## Graph 5 – leaver attainment by cohort: middle-attaining 60%
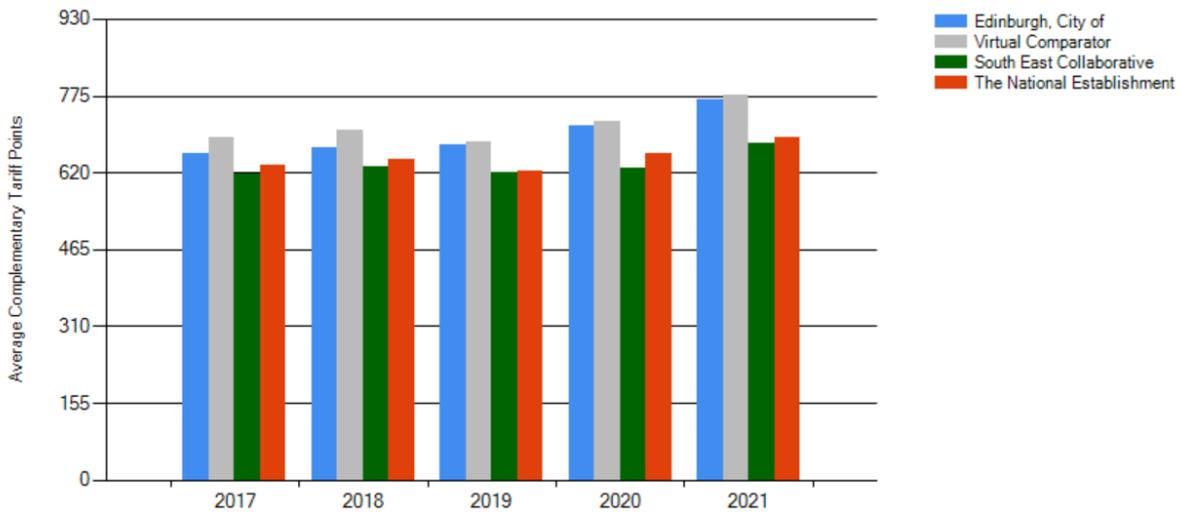
Middle 20%	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Edinburgh, City of	658	671	677	715	767
Virtual Comparator	690	707	682	723	776
South East Collaborative	617	632	620	629	679
The National Establishment	634	646	623	657	692

## Graph 6 – leaver attainment by cohort: highest-attaining 20%
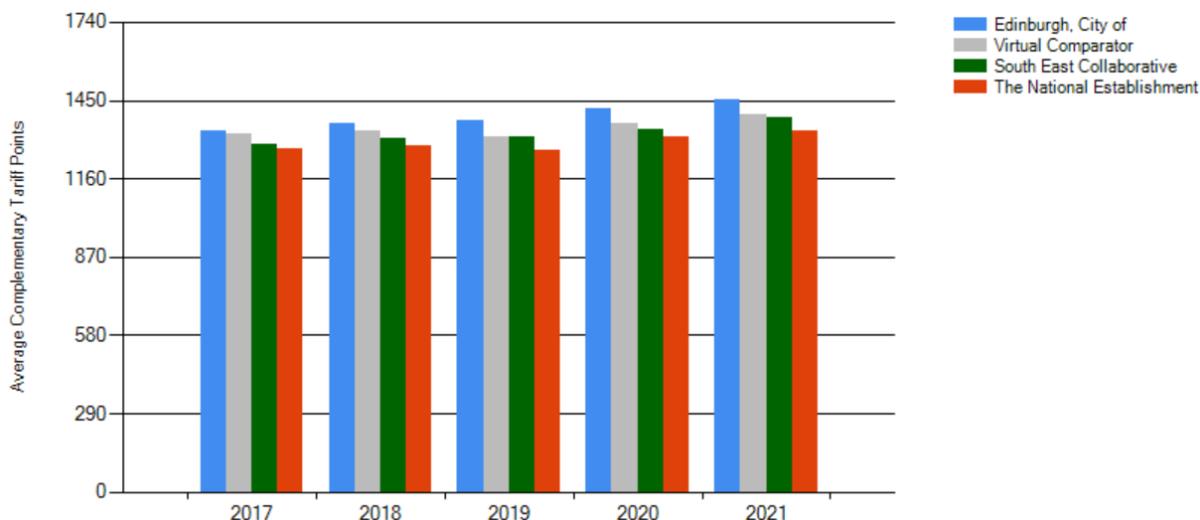
Highest 20%	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Edinburgh, City of	1336	1366	1374	1419	1451
Virtual Comparator	1326	1338	1317	1367	1398
South East Collaborative	1286	1311	1316	1344	1388
The National Establishment	1269	1281	1267	1313	1339

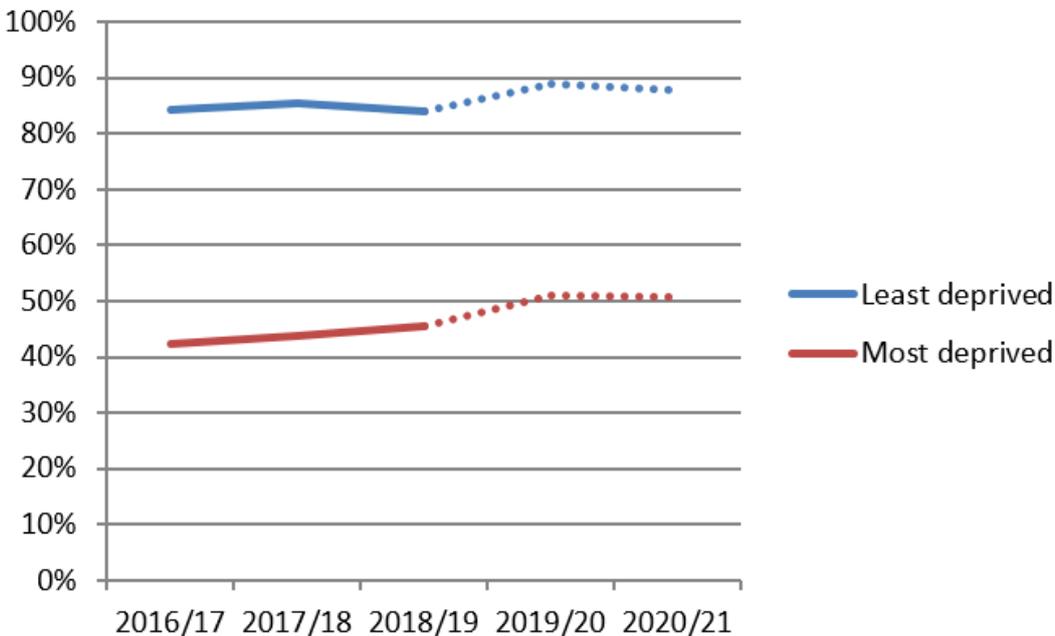## Graph 7 – leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF Level 4 or better
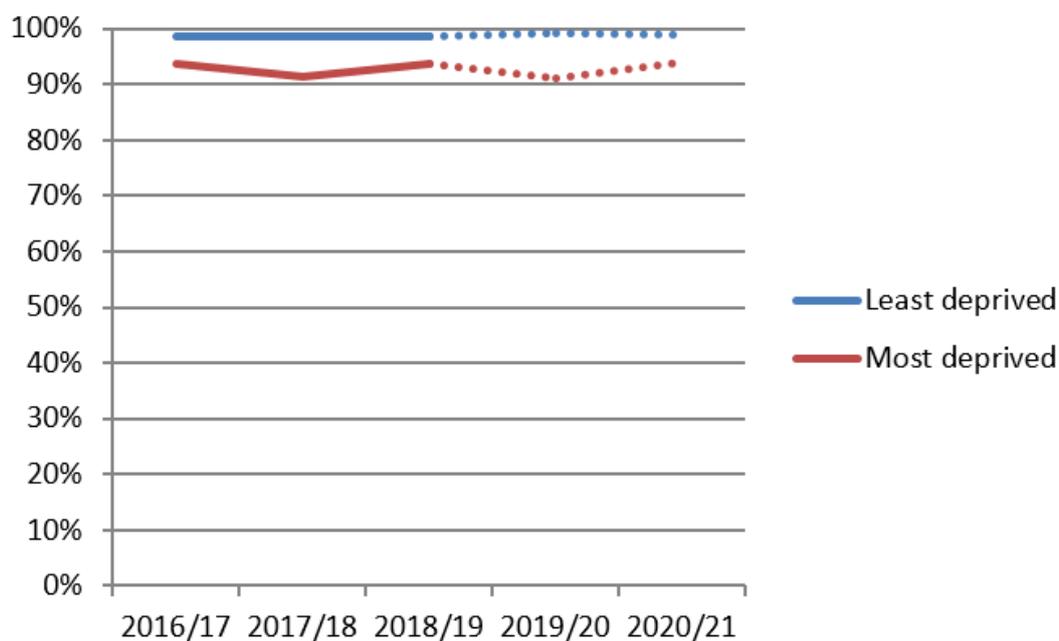
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Least deprived	98.5%	98.6%	98.7%	99.3%	99.2%
Most deprived	93.6%	91.4%	93.7%	91.0%	94.1%
Gap	4.9%	7.1%	5.0%	8.3%	5.1%

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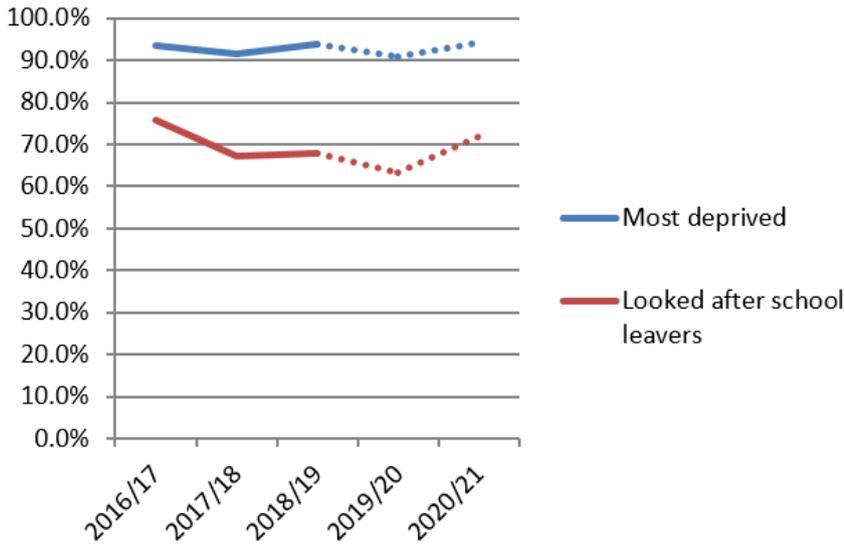**Graph 8 – leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF Level 5 or better**
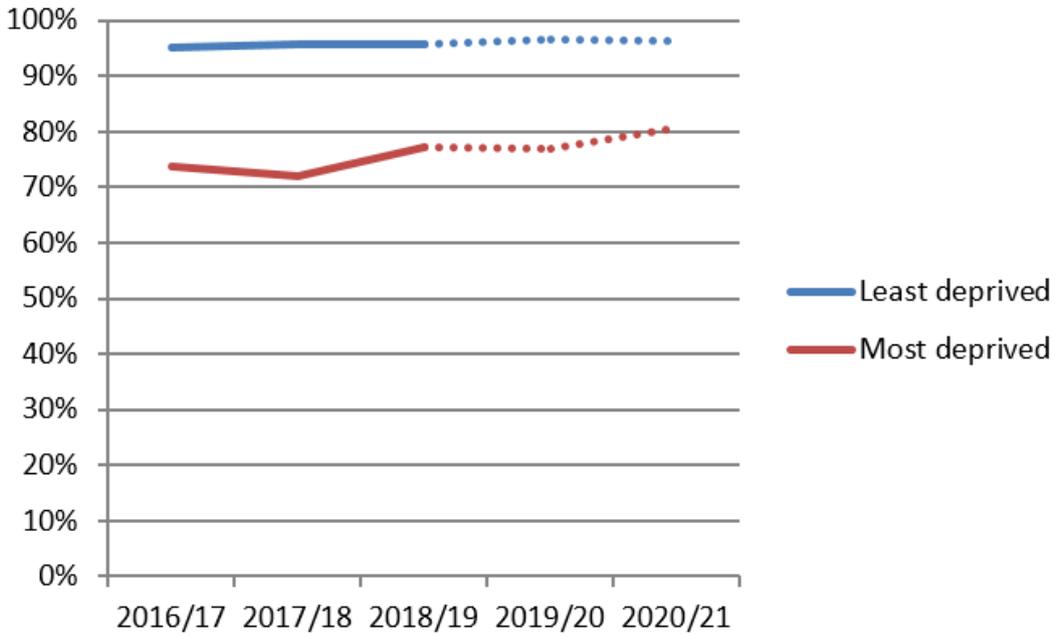
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Least deprived	95.3%	95.7%	95.6%	96.6%	96.2%
Most deprived	73.6%	72.1%	77.2%	76.9%	80.7%
Gap	21.6%	23.7%	18.4%	19.7%	15.5%

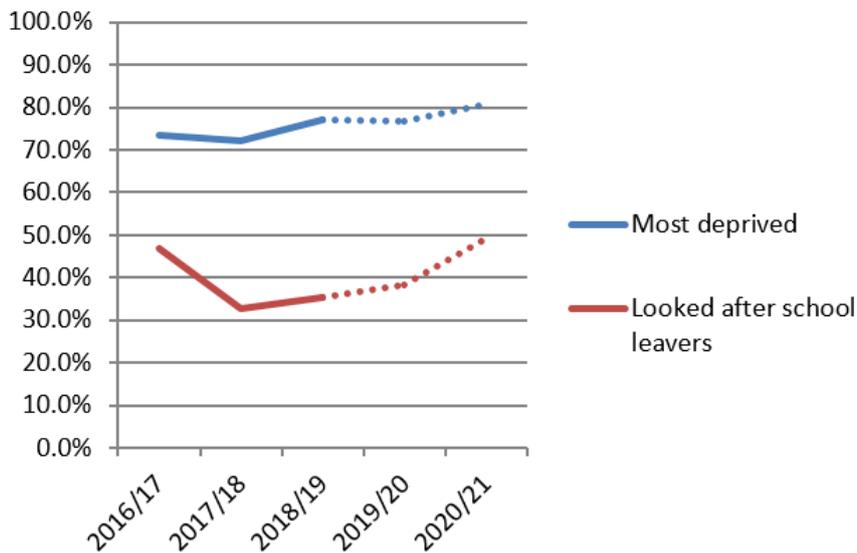**Graph 9 – leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or better**

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Least deprived	84.4%	85.5%	84.1%	88.9%	87.7%
Most deprived	42.2%	43.8%	45.6%	51.1%	50.6%
Gap	42.1%	41.7%	38.5%	37.8%	37.0%

## Graph 10 – leavers classified as LAC achieving 1+ at SCQF Level 4 or better

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Most deprived	93.6%	91.4%	93.7%	91.0%	94.1%
Looked after school leavers	75.8%	67.2%	67.7%	63.3%	71.9%

Graph 11 – leavers classified as LAC achieving 1+ at SCQF Level 5 or better

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Most deprived	73.6%	72.1%	77.2%	76.9%	80.7%
Looked after school leavers	46.8%	32.8%	35.5%	38.3%	49.1%

Graph 12 – leavers classified as LAC achieving 1+ at SCQF Level 6 or better
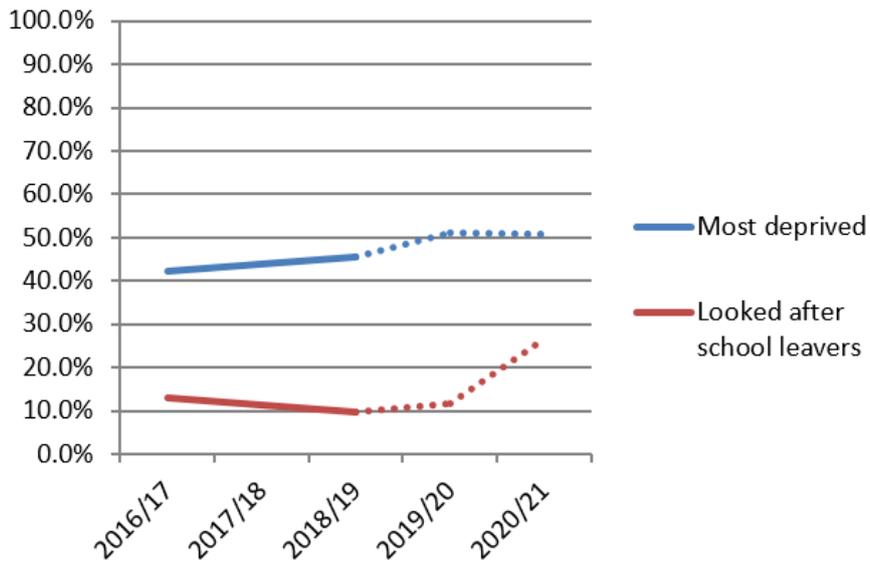
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Most deprived	42.2%	43.8%	45.6%	51.1%	50.6%
Looked after school leavers	12.9%	11.5%	9.7%	11.7%	26.3%

Appendix 2 – key attainment measures

Prior to Curriculum for Excellence it was standard practice for all pupils in S4 to be presented for SQA qualifications at appropriate levels. Under CfE schools and partners are able to offer greater personalisation and choice in the Senior Phase (S4 to S6) in a range of ways, for example by designing the Senior Phase as a three-year experience rather than planning each year separately, or by delivering qualifications over a variable timeframe in response to young people's needs and prior achievements.

It is therefore important that we look at the attainment of young people at *the point of exit* from school (leavers), not at some specific point during their school career (e.g. in S5) or in specific qualification types (e.g. Highers). *Insight* analyses the attainment of school leavers (combining those from S4, S5 and S6) against a number of attainment measures. The four key measures now used for measuring the attainment of leavers are:

- **Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy:** the percentage of leavers attaining literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better and SCQF level 5 or better;

- **Increasing Participation:** the percentage of leavers achieving a positive initial destination (approximately three months after leaving school);

- **Improving Attainment for All**: the average total tariff points of leavers based on the attainment of the lowest performing 20%, middle 60% and highest 20%.

- **Attainment Versus Deprivation:** tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of pupils from the most deprived areas relative to pupils from the least deprived areas: the average total tariff points of leavers, by decile, using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

The table below shows the tariff points carried by each SQA qualification.

Course	Result	Tariff Points
National 3	Pass	12
National 4	Pass	33
National 5	A	84
	B	74
	C	64
	D	59
Higher	A	204
	B	182
	C	160
	D	149
Advanced Higher	A	480
	B	440
	C	400
	D	380

The Virtual Comparator

Instead of comparing schools with each other, *Insight* creates a Virtual Comparator for each school in order to measure progress. The Virtual Comparator is created by matching each pupil in a school to ten other pupils from across Scotland, randomly selected to match the pupil in terms of age, gender, level of additional support needs and SIMD decile.

National Improvement Framework – measures for Senior Phase

In 2018 three measures were agreed for use in measuring progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. These measures involve comparing the performance of school leavers from the 20% most-deprived areas in Scotland (SIMD quintile 1) with those from the 20% least-deprived areas (SIMD quintile 5).

The measures focus on school leavers achieving one or more awards at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6.

Appendix 3 – SCQF levels

List of SQA qualifications included in Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

SCQF level	Qualifications included
Level 3	National 3
Level 4	National 4
Level 5	National 5
Level 6	Higher
Level 7	Advanced Higher

Note that there are other (ungraded) qualifications which also accrue tariff points on *Insight*, for example National Progression Awards.