

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Thursday, 27 April 2023

Attainment in the Senior Phase, 2021-22

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 2021-22.
 - 1.1.2 Note the continued hard work of young people, staff, parents and carers to support the successful delivery of qualifications in session 2021-22.

Amanda Hatton

Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services

Contact: Lorna French, Service Director of Education

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

Attainment in the Senior Phase, 2021-22

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 2021-22. The report focuses on the attainment of school leavers.
- 2.2 Our school leaver destination results are now at their highest level (96.1%), outperforming the virtual comparator and national summary. More leavers attain literacy skills than numeracy skills, particularly at higher SCQF levels. The highest-attaining 20% continue to outperform the VC and national but a small proportion of school leavers attained no passes at SCQF level 3 or better in 2021/22. The gap between the proportion of school leavers from the most deprived and least deprived areas attaining 1 pass or more at SCQF level 4 was 4.2 percentage points but this widens with progression in SCQF levels reflecting the national pattern of attainment versus deprivation. The outcomes of leavers identified as Looked After are improving.
- 2.3 As the attainment of this leaver cohort has been determined differently to pre-pandemic years we do need to take care when making comparisons.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report complements the report Attainment in the Broad General Education in Edinburgh Primary Schools, 2021-22, which was discussed at committee on 15 November 2022.
- 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 has been brought to committee in May of each year, as the data for school leavers is not updated until February, however we will now be reporting on attainment following the initial release of *Insight* in September.
- 3.4 The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to changes to the way in which National Qualification results at SCQF Levels 5 to 7 were determined. The attainment data in this report considers all of the attainment which a school leaver gains over their time at school. This means the attainment of school leavers in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 may be based on a combination of different approaches to determining results.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 The attainment of school leavers in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 has been determined differently to that for 2018/19 and before so we are advised that care should be taken when making comparisons over time. Similarly, care should also be taken when comparing attainment to the Virtual Comparator.
- 3.7 Within this report, therefore, we report on attainment for session 2021-22 and indicate possible patterns of improvement (or otherwise).
- 3.8 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 progress, as well as areas for development, in the attainment of leavers last session (3596 leavers in the cohort). 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.

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

Literacy and numeracy are key skills for any school leaver. Literacy is taken to be the ability to communicate by reading, writing and listening and talking. Numeracy is defined as the ability to use numbers in order to solve problems by counting, doing calculations, measuring, and understanding graphs and charts.

Improvements –the percentage of leavers achieving SCQF level 4 Literacy has increased year-on-year. We continue to be above the VC for SCQF level 4 Literacy and Numeracy, and SCQF level 5 Literacy.

Areas of concern – more leavers attained literacy skills than numeracy skills, and this was more marked at higher SCQF levels, this reflects the national picture too. We are below the VC for SCQF level 5 Numeracy.

Next steps – we are undertaking a Literacy thematic review to identify best practice and develop a more coherent literacy strategy.

4.3 **Improving leaver positive destinations** (see graph 3 and associated tables)

Improvements – Positive destination data dropped nationally in 2020, because of the Covid-19 pandemic's impact 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 and our partners during 2020-21, resulting in improvements to our positive destination data. The Edinburgh School Leaver Destination Results (SLDR) are now at their highest level and are above those of the VC and national average. For Leavers who live in our most deprived areas (Quintile 1) the SLDR is at its highest level of 94.7% and the gap in Edinburgh is 3.1pp compared to the national gap of 4.4pp.

Next steps – we need to sustain our school leaver destinations and continue to reduce the poverty-related gap in results.

4.4 **Improving attainment for all** (see graphs 4 to 7)

Improvements - There has been a drop in the average complementary tariff points for the lowest-attaining 20% and middle-attaining 60% in 2021/22 however this aligns with the national and VC pattern. Attainment is higher than that of the pre-pandemic data (2019 and earlier). The highest-attaining 20% continue to outperform the VC and national, demonstrating an improving trend over time.

Areas of concern – 1.4% of school leavers in Edinburgh attained no passes at SCQF Level 3 or better in 2021/22. Although this is lower than the national proportion (2.1%) we need to ensure that all young people are leaving with suitable awards.

4.5 **Closing the gap: attainment versus deprivation** (see graphs 8 to 11)

The National Improvement Framework monitors the poverty-related attainment gap based on a basket of key measures. Three of these measures are based on school leaver attainment by deprivation, namely:

- The proportion of leavers attaining one pass or more at SCQF Level 4 or better
- The proportion of leavers attaining one pass or more at SCQF Level 5 or better
- The proportion of leavers attaining one pass or more at SCQF Level 6 or better

Improvements – At SCQF Level 4 or better, the gap between the proportion of school leavers from the most deprived and least deprived areas attaining 1 pass or more was 4.2 percentage points, so the gap has narrowed and is at its lowest level. The gap at SCQF Level 5 increases to 17pp but this is lower than pre-pandemic years. At SCQF Level 6 or better, the gap is at 40.7pp. The widening of the gap

with progression in the SCQF level reflects the national pattern of attainment versus deprivation.

Areas of concern – 44.9% of school leavers from the most deprived areas are attaining 1 pass or more at Level 6 compared to 85.5% of those from the least deprived areas.

Next steps - By developing better progression pathways and the range of available SCQF awards the gap should narrow and the attainment of all improve. We are adapting our model for the delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships to promote of esteem and improve uptake. The review of Scotland's curriculum will also support our pathways workstream.

4.6 **Improving attainment for Care-Experienced young people** (see graphs 12 to 14 – 46 Leavers classified as *Looked After at home and away from home*)

Improvements – the percentage of leavers classified as LAC who achieved one or more award at SCQF level 4 increased by 15 percentage points to 87%; for SCQF level 5 and level 6 there were also marginal gains to 47.8% and 28.3% respectively. 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.

4.7 **Attainment by pupil characteristics** (see table 15)

Summary of findings – the percentage of leavers classified as Minority ethnic who achieved one or more award at SCQF level 4 or above is higher than that of all leavers. The attainment of those identified as having an Additional Support Need (ASN) is not as high as all leavers and the gap broadens as the SCQF level increases. 91.2% of leavers entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) attain 1 or more at SCQF level 4 and this is 2pp below the VC.

Areas of concern – the attainment of leavers entitled to FSM at SCQF level 6 is 34.4% and is significantly below the VC 47.7% and it is also lower than those living in the most deprived areas (44.9%).

Next steps - our approach to the allocation of Scottish Equity funding from 2023 will be based on a needs-analysis of Learning Communities, to increase progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap. Senior leaders are engaging in high quality professional learning, such as Leadership for Equity and collaborative opportunities at Headteacher conferences, to ensure that targeted additional activities, approaches or resources known to be effective at raising attainment for children and young people impacted by poverty, are being implemented.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 We will report on progress with the priorities given above, when reporting on Senior Phase Attainment for session 2022-23. The Quality Improvement and Curriculum Service (QICS) continues to provide intensive support and challenge to those schools where attainment is of particular concern. This involves coaching in context for the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team, by the Quality Improvement and Education Officer (QIEO) assigned to the school, alongside support from the Edinburgh Learns Team to upskill teaching and support staff. An Action Plan and timeline for improvement is agreed and a Senior Education Manager meets 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](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 \(edinburgh.gov.uk\)](https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/Data/Education,%20Children%20and%20Families%20Committee/20200307/Agenda/item_78_-_senior_phase_attainment_2019-20.pdf)
- 8.5 Attainment in the Senior Phase, 2020-21

<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s48784/7.10%20Attainment%20in%20the%20Senior%20Phase%202020-21.pdf>

- 8.6 Attainment in the Broad General Education in Primary and Secondary schools, 2021-22

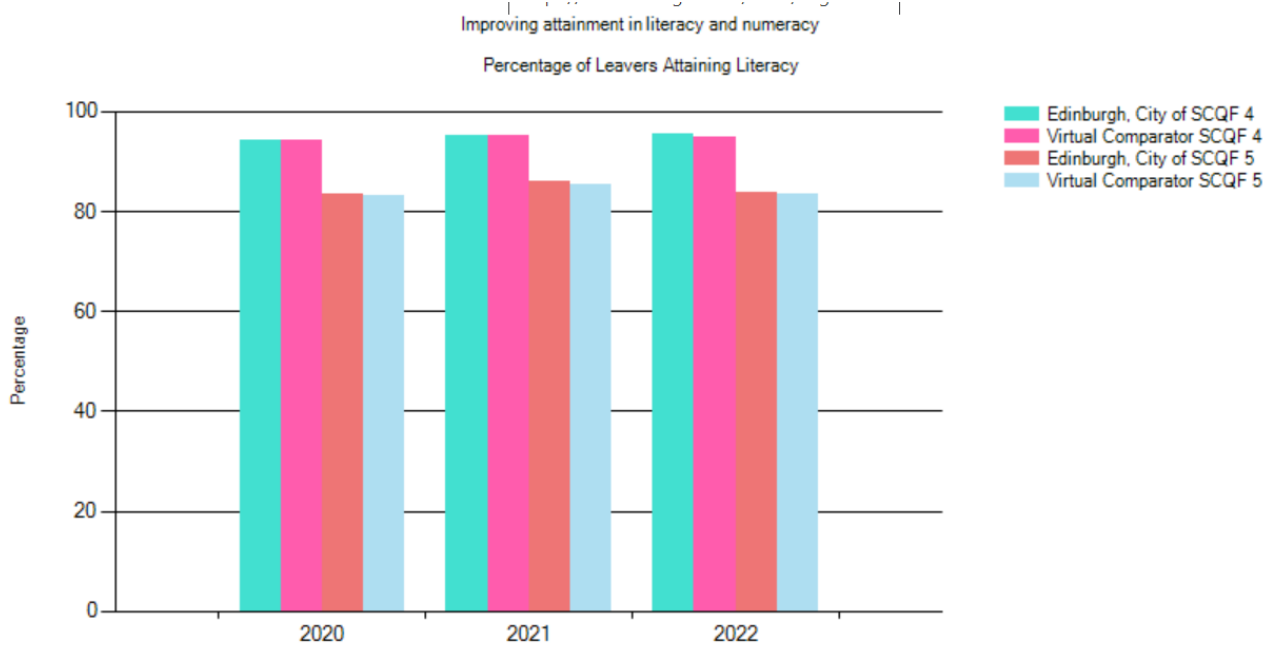
<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s50902/7.1%20Attainment%20in%20the%20Broad%20General%20Education%20in%20Edinburgh%20Primary%20and%20Secondary%20Schools%202021-22.pdf>.

9. Appendices

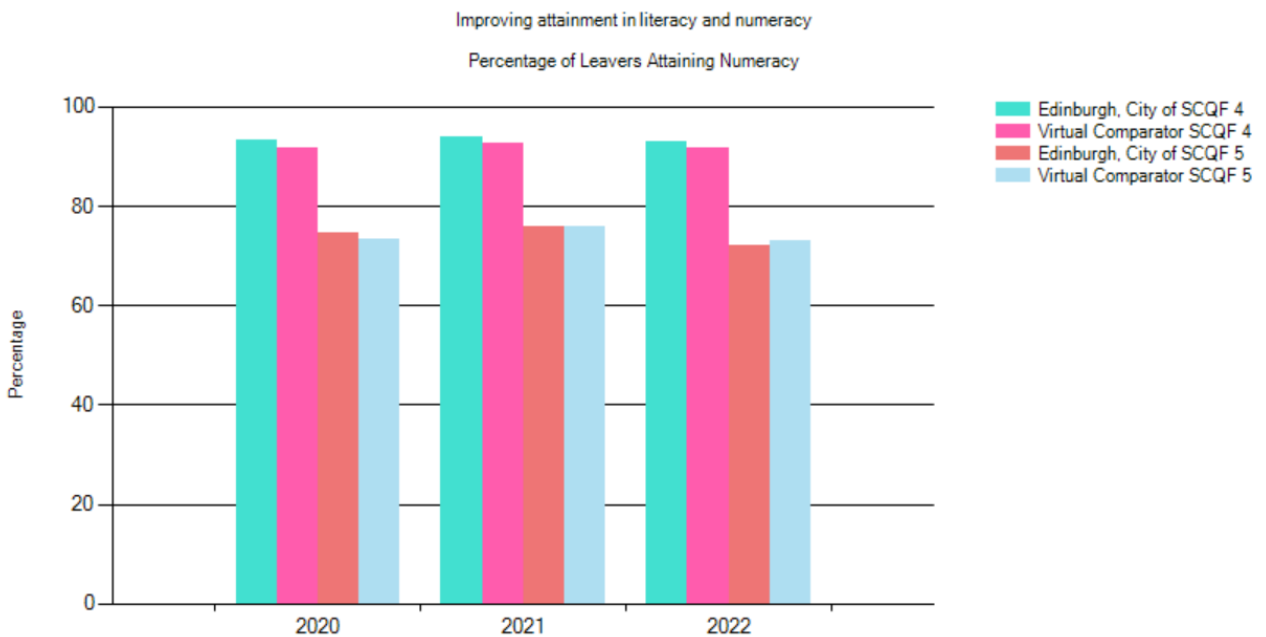
- 9.1 Appendix 1 – graphs and tables (see page 8)
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – key attainment measures (see page 16)
- 9.3 Appendix 3 – SCQF levels (see page 18)

Appendix 1 – graphs and tables

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

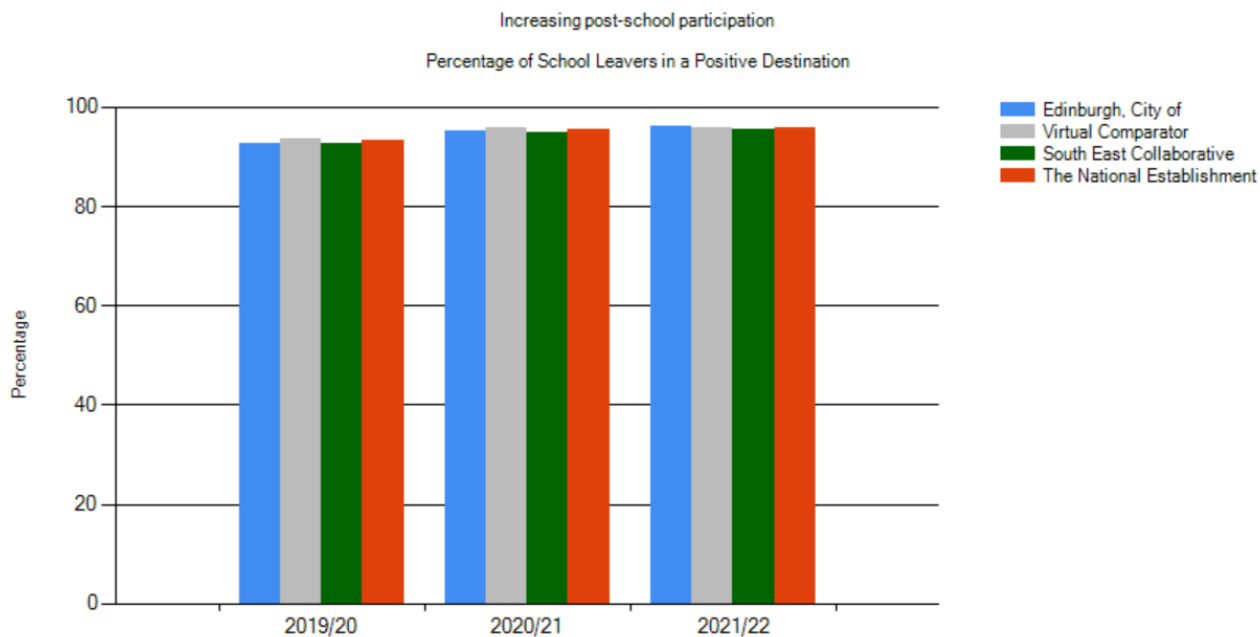


Graph 2 – leaver attainment in numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5



Establishment	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy
Edinburgh, City of	2022	95.52	93.05	83.95	72.25
Virtual Comparator	2022	94.79	91.73	83.44	73.11
Edinburgh, City of	2021	95.35	93.84	86.11	75.94
Virtual Comparator	2021	95.12	92.52	85.52	76.04
Edinburgh, City of	2020	94.14	93.36	83.65	74.57
Virtual Comparator	2020	94.27	91.83	83.24	73.48

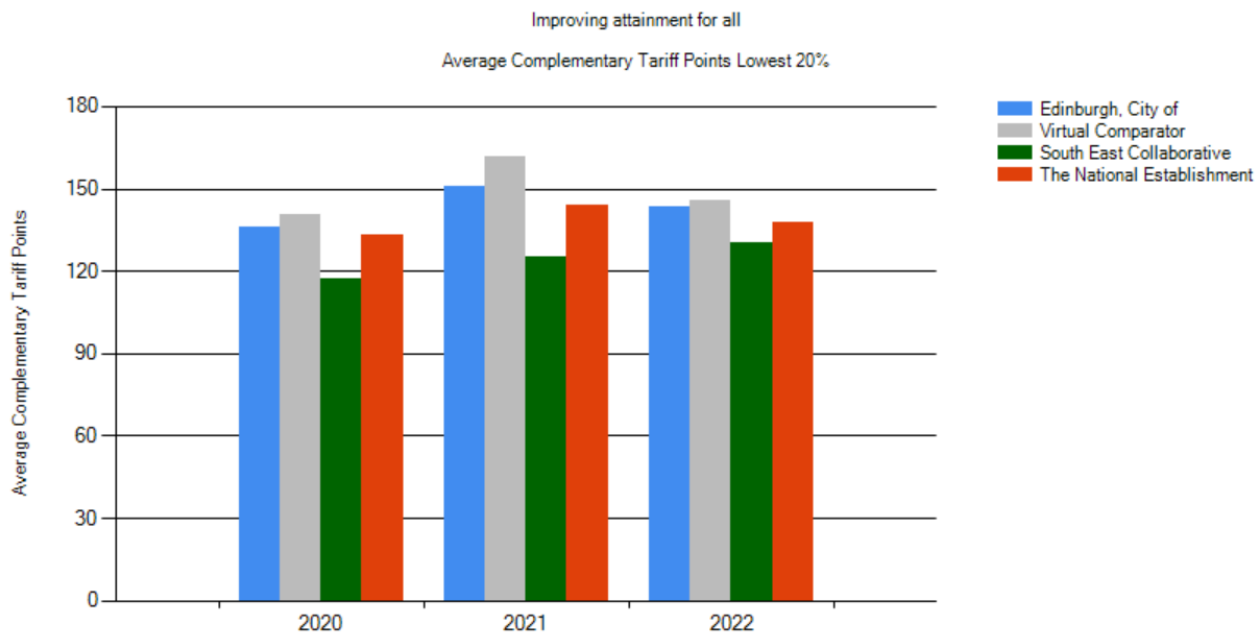
Graph 3 – initial positive destinations for leavers



PD	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
CEC	92.52	94.28	95.11	92.53	95.13	96.13
VC	94.13	94.75	95.59	93.64	95.98	95.9
National	93.72	94.39	95.05	93.36	95.48	95.74

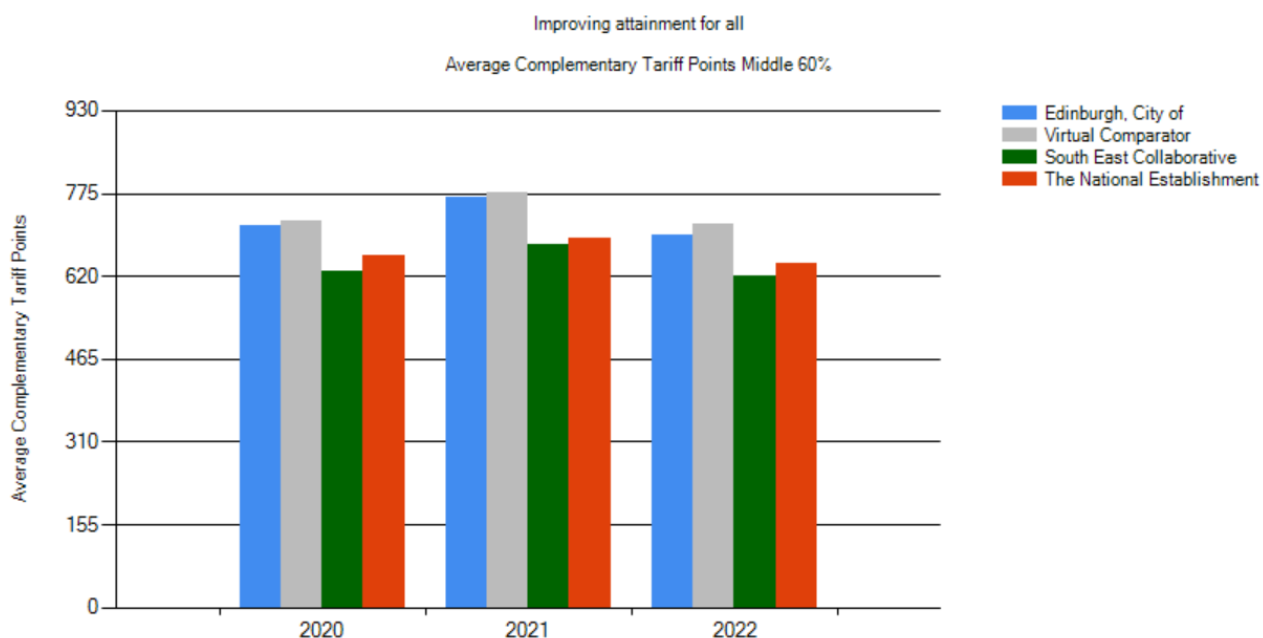
Category	2019	2020	2021	2022
Employment	23.39	15.49	20.67	25.44
Further Education	25.29	26.97	20.92	23.69
Higher Education	42.63	45.86	50.03	43.27
Voluntary Work	0.76	0.59	0.40	0.7
PSD	0.55	0.63	0.46	0.5
Training	2.48	2.99	2.65	2.53
Unemployed (Not Seeking)	1.77	2.89	1.69	1.33
Unemployed (Seeking)	3.00	4.08	2.87	2.25
Unknown	0.12	0.49	0.31	0.28
Total Positive Destinations	95.10	92.53	95.13	96.13

Graph 4 – leaver attainment by cohort: lowest-attaining 20%



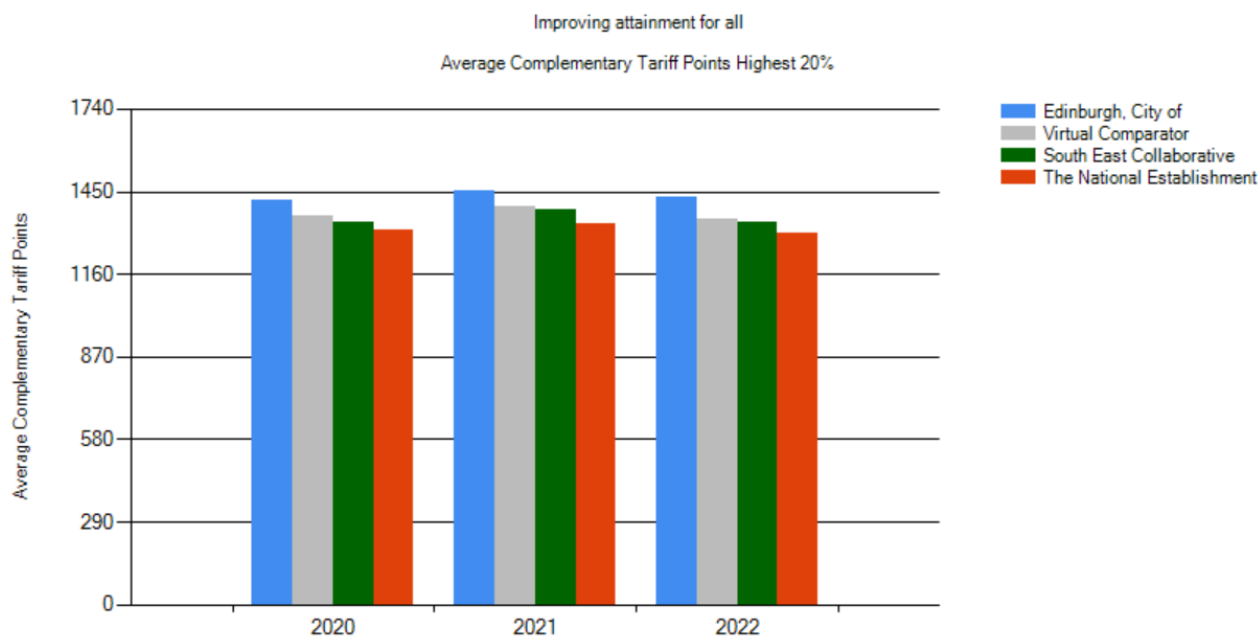
Lowest 20%	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Edinburgh, City of	131	132	127	136	151	144
Virtual Comparator	157	151	145	142	162	146
South East Collaborative	131	128	124	117	125	130
The National Establishment	148	143	134	133	144	138

Graph 5 – leaver attainment by cohort: middle-attaining 60%



Middle 60%	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Edinburgh, City of	658	671	677	715	767	697
Virtual Comparator	690	707	682	723	776	717
South East Collaborative	617	632	620	629	679	620
The National Establishment	634	646	623	657	692	644

Graph 6 – leaver attainment by cohort: highest-attaining 20%



Highest 20%	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Edinburgh, City of	1336	1366	1374	1419	1451	1428
Virtual Comparator	1326	1338	1317	1367	1398	1353
South East Collaborative	1286	1311	1316	1344	1388	1345
The National Establishment	1269	1281	1267	1313	1339	1303

Table 7 – national summary statistics (national qualifications only)



2.1% of school leavers attained **no passes at SCQF Level 3 or better** in 2021/22.

1.4% of school leavers in Edinburgh attained no passes at SCQF Level 3 or better in 2021/22

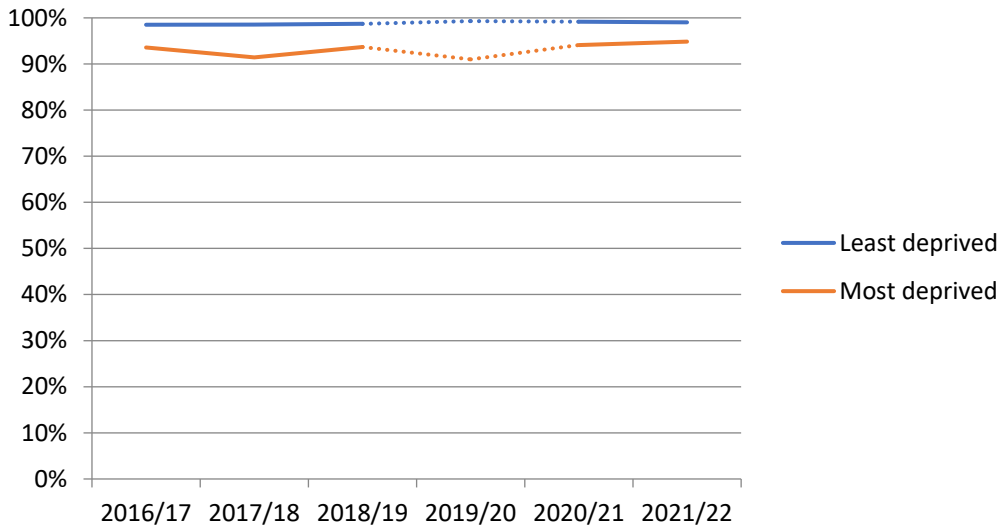
Table 8 – national summary statistics for Leavers (National Qualifications only)

The gap between the **most deprived** and **least deprived** areas in 2021/22 for leavers attaining 1 pass or more at:

- **SCQF Level 4 or better is 5.8 pp**
- **SCQF Level 5 or better is 19.1 pp**
- **SCQF Level 6 or better is 37.0 pp**

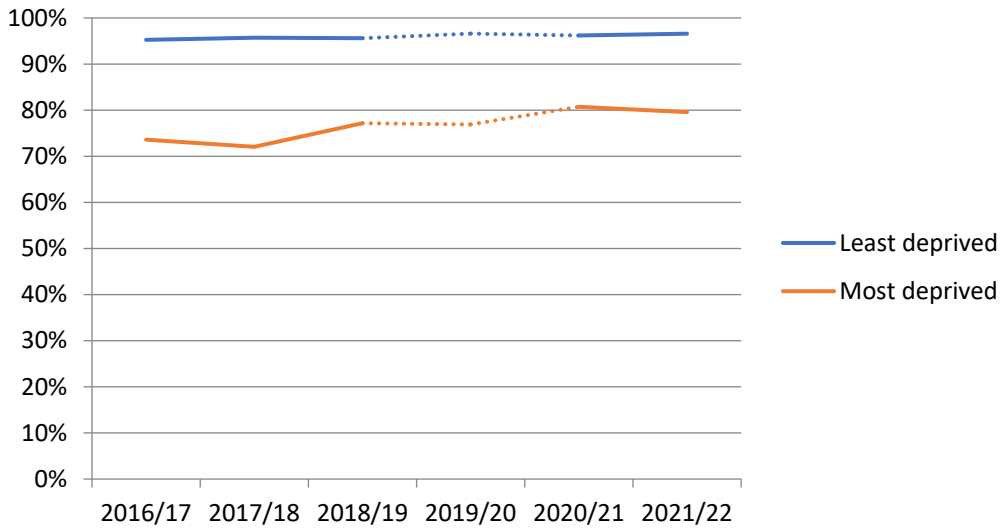
(percentage point gaps are affected by rounding)

Graph 9 – leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF Level 4 or better (all SCQF Awards)



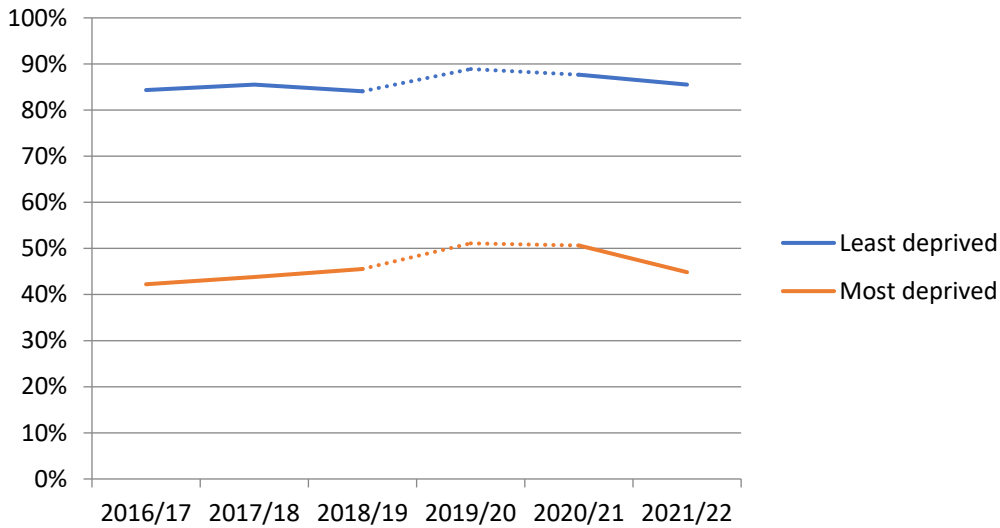
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Least deprived	98.5%	98.6%	98.7%	99.3%	99.2%	99.0%
Most deprived	93.6%	91.4%	93.7%	91.0%	94.1%	94.9%
Gap	4.9%	7.1%	5.0%	8.3%	5.1%	4.2%

Graph 10 – leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF Level 5 or better (all SCQF Awards)



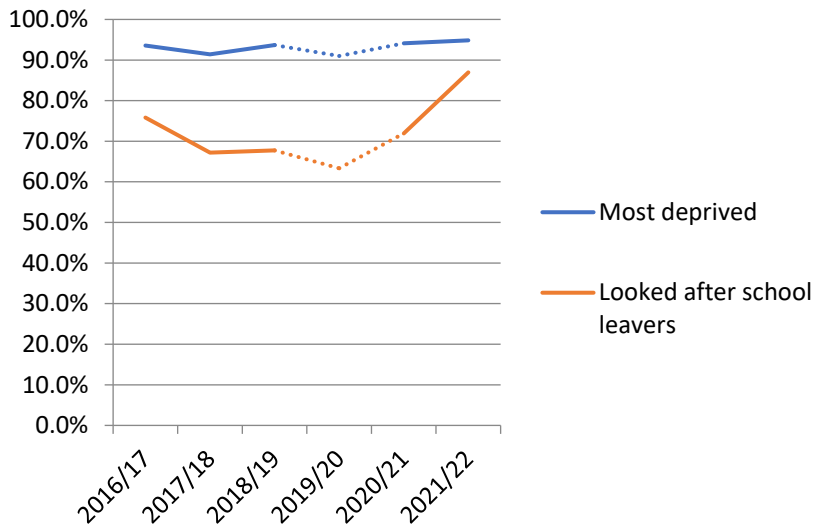
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Least deprived	95.3%	95.7%	95.6%	96.6%	96.2%	96.6%
Most deprived	73.6%	72.1%	77.2%	76.9%	80.7%	79.6%
Gap	21.6%	23.7%	18.4%	19.7%	15.5%	17.0%

Graph 11 – leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or better (all SCQF Awards)



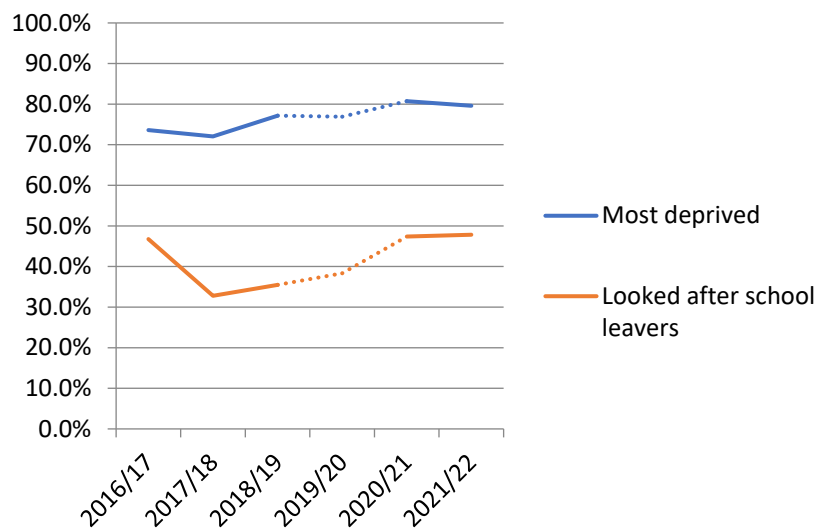
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Least deprived	84.4%	85.5%	84.1%	88.9%	87.7%	85.5%
Most deprived	42.2%	43.8%	45.6%	51.1%	50.6%	44.9%
Gap	42.1%	41.7%	38.5%	37.8%	37.0%	40.7%

Graph 12 – leavers classified as LAC achieving 1+ at SCQF Level 4 or better



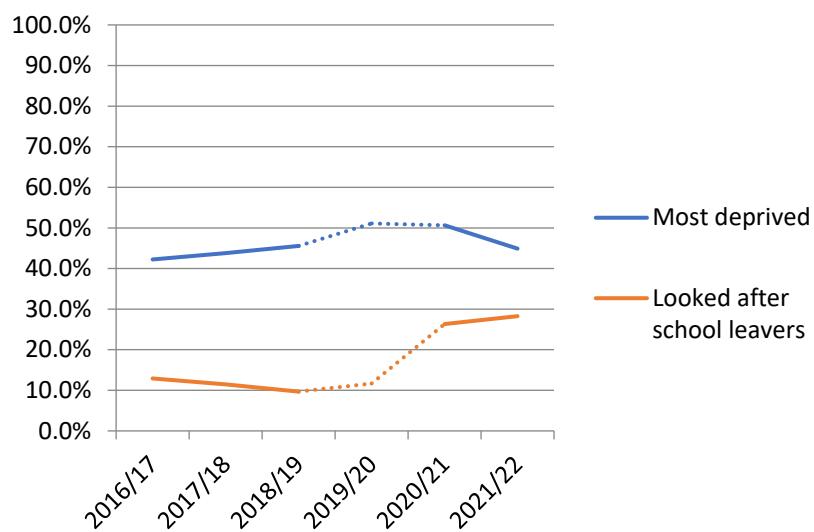
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Most deprived	93.6%	91.4%	93.7%	91.0%	94.1%	94.9%
Looked after school leavers	75.8%	67.2%	67.7%	63.3%	71.9%	87.0%

Graph 13 – leavers classified as LAC achieving 1+ at SCQF Level 5 or better



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Most deprived	73.6%	72.1%	77.2%	76.9%	80.7%	79.6%
Looked after school leavers	46.8%	32.8%	35.5%	38.3%	47.4%	47.8%

Graph 14 – leavers classified as LAC achieving 1+ at SCQF Level 6 or better



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Most deprived	42.2%	43.8%	45.6%	51.1%	50.6%	44.9%
Looked after school leavers	12.9%	11.5%	9.7%	11.7%	26.3%	28.3%

Table 15 - Percentage of school leavers by attainment at SCQF Level 4 to 6 or better, by pupil characteristic 2022

	All SCQF Awards	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	cohort
Edinburgh – Minority ethnic	1 or more	98.38%	92.42%	77.08%	554
VC – Minority ethnic	1 or more	98.56%	94.15%	78.07%	
Edinburgh – Additional Support Needs	1 or more	94.74%	79.39%	51.74%	1635
VC - ASN	1 or more	94.30%	81.28%	54.97%	
Edinburgh – Free School Meals	1 or more	91.25%	69.20%	34.41%	526
VC - FSM	1 or more	93.35%	77.95%	47.66%	
Edinburgh - All	1 or more	97.05%	88.57%	68.38%	3596

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.