

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 7 November 2023

Senior Phase Attainment Report

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 2022-23.
 - 1.1.2 Note the continued hard work of young people, staff, parents and carers to support the successful delivery of qualifications in session 2022-23.

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Report

Attainment in the Senior Phase, 22-23

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 2022-23.
- 2.2 The Annual Participation Measure demonstrates that our positive destination results are the best on record and that the gap in this measure between the most and least deprived is the narrowest on record.
- 2.3 For the cohorts S4, S5 and S6 the attainment in City of Edinburgh schools has improved relative to the virtual comparator in most measures. The poverty related attainment gap in these cohorts has narrowed across most measures when comparing to 2019 pre-pandemic levels.
- 2.4 The attainment of learners in receipt of free school meals and those learners who are looked after is significantly below the virtual comparator measure.

3. Background

- 3.1 The report on attainment in the Senior Phase has previously been brought to committee in March or April as the national Senior Phase benchmarking tool for attainment and achievement, Insight, analyses the attainment of school leavers. Leavers' data is published in February. This new November report will provide analysis of SQA performance by cohort (S4, S5 and S6) in three key areas: Literacy and Numeracy, Improving Attainment for All and Depth and Breadth measures. Reporting by cohort enables us to make comment on the performance of all Senior Phase learners at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.2 This report will use the Annual Participation Measure 22-23 from Skills Development Scotland to comment on the performance in improving leaver destinations
- 3.3 There will be an update in April on the performance 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.

- 3.4 There have been different approaches to awarding attainment in each year since 2019. This means that comparisons of attainment between years should be treated with caution.

4. Main report

- 4.1 **Positive Destinations (Table 1):** The Annual Participation Measure: percentage of 16-19 year-olds participating in education, employment or training for all young people in Edinburgh is 95%. This is the highest figure since the publication of this measure in 2016. The Annual Participation Measure for those young people in the least advantaged 20% is 91.4% and the in most advantaged 20% it is 97.8%. These results have never been higher and at the same time, the gap of 6.4% has never been narrower.
- 4.2 **Literacy and Numeracy (Table 2):** The percentage of learners in S4 and S5 achieving SCQF level 4 or level 5 Literacy is above that of the virtual comparator. The percentage of learners in S4 and S5 achieving SCQF level 4 or level 5 numeracy is similarly above the virtual comparator. In S6 the percentage of learners achieving SCQF level 4 or level 5 Literacy is slightly below (within 0.3%) that of the virtual comparator and in Numeracy slightly above the virtual comparator in both levels.
- 4.3 **Attainment for All (Graphs 1-3):** This measure demonstrates the attainment of the lowest performing 20%, the middle 60% and the highest performing 20%. This is an important measure as it directs attention to the performance of all learners. In S4 the performance of the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% are all above the virtual comparator. Similarly, in S5 the performance is above the virtual comparator in all three measures, most statistically significantly so for the highest performing 20%. In S6 the lowest performing 20% is slightly lower than the virtual comparator while the middle 60% is greater and the highest 20% is much greater than the virtual comparator.
- 4.4 **Breadth and Depth in S4 (Tables 3 & 4):** Across most measures the attainment of the S4 cohort is above its virtual comparator. This represents a marked improvement when compared to 2019, particularly in the 5 awards at SCQF level 5. The gap between the least and most advantaged learners in this cohort has narrowed in most measures since 2019. The gap in 5 awards at SCQF level 5 is at its narrowest on record, however it remains unacceptably high.
- 4.5 **Breadth and Depth in S5 (Tables 5 & 6):** Across most measures the attainment of the S5 cohort is above its virtual comparator. This represents the best performance against the virtual comparator in the last five years across all measures. The gap between the least and most advantaged learners in this cohort is at its lowest level in five years in all but one measure. The gap in Higher performance is narrowing but remains unacceptably high.
- 4.6 **Breadth and Depth in S6 (Tables 7 & 8):** In the majority of measures the attainment of the S6 cohort is above its virtual comparator. The performance

against the virtual comparator for learners gaining at least one Advanced Higher is the best on record. The gap between the least and most advantaged learners in this cohort has narrowed at Higher when compared to 2019. However, over the same period the gap in Advanced Higher performance has widened.

- 4.7 The improvement in performance in breadth and depth measures is partly due to the excellent work Edinburgh schools are doing in planning a wider range of pathways through the introduction of vocational qualifications and awards. Schools are working to ensure that these vocational pathways have parity of esteem. The main vocational course award is the National Progression Award. In 2019 we had 296 NPA passes, in 2022 we had 765 NPA passes and in 2023 we have had 941 NPA passes across 40 vocational courses.
- 4.8 **Attainment of identified groups (Table 9):** The attainment for most identified groups is broadly in line or above the virtual comparator. The performance of EAL learners and those learners identified in insight as Minority Ethnic is difficult to comment on because of the large numbers of young people coming into Edinburgh schools this year as a result of conflict in their home countries. The attainment of learners in receipt of free school meals and learners who are looked after is significantly below that of the virtual comparator.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Set cohort stretch aims - 3 or more SCQF level 5 awards for S4 and 3 or more SCQF level 6 awards for S5. Review progress against all stretch aims three times per year through rigorous tracking and monitoring. This tracking will pay particular attention to the attainment of looked after learners and the effectiveness of the interventions designed to support them.
- 5.2 Provide timely and rigorous support and challenge for identified schools with areas of under-performance in the measures detailed in this report.
- 5.3 Work through the Pathways board to develop communities of practice that will improve the various curriculum pathways across all Edinburgh Schools to meet the needs and ambitions of all Edinburgh's young people.
- 5.4 Work through the Corporate Parenting Board to review the priorities of care experience funding to ensure that there is more focus on measures designed to raise attainment.
- 5.5 Produce and implement an Accredited Pathways Framework to ensure that all partnership work with third party organisations in the Senior Phase is focussed on gaining awards on the SCQF framework and that the success of this work is tracked against agreed outcomes.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no clear financial impacts associated with this review at this time.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 All actions to improve inclusion are also driven by the need to close the poverty related attainment gap and meet the duties of the Equalities Act.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 Raising attainment and positive destinations is monitored through the Schools Risk and Capacity Register, as well as the Education Risk Register.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Summary of the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment considered alongside its key recommendations can be found here; [The Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment: The Review and its Key Recommendations - Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment: review and key recommendations - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- 10.2 [Are NPAs really a qualifications reform trailblazer? | Tes](#)

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – graphs and tables
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – key attainment measures
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – SCQF levels

Appendix 1 – graphs and tables

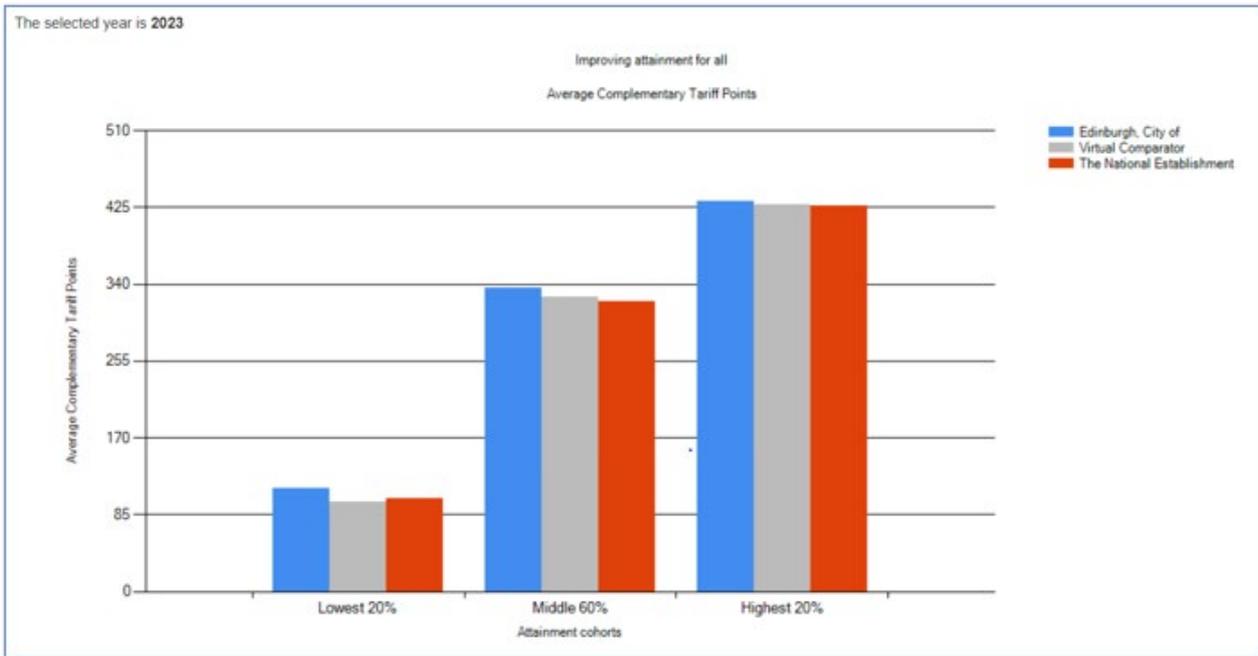
Table 1: Annual Participation Measure

	NIF Measure: percentage of 16–19-year-olds participating in education, employment or training			
	All pupils	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 5	Gap (Q5 – Q1)
APM 2020-21	92.52%	87.61%	96.57%	9.0pp
APM 2021-22	91.95%	86.36%	96.48%	10.1pp
APM 2022-23	95.0%	91.4%	97.8%	6.4%
Stretch aim to be achieved 2022-23	93.00%	88.00%	97.00%	9.0pp

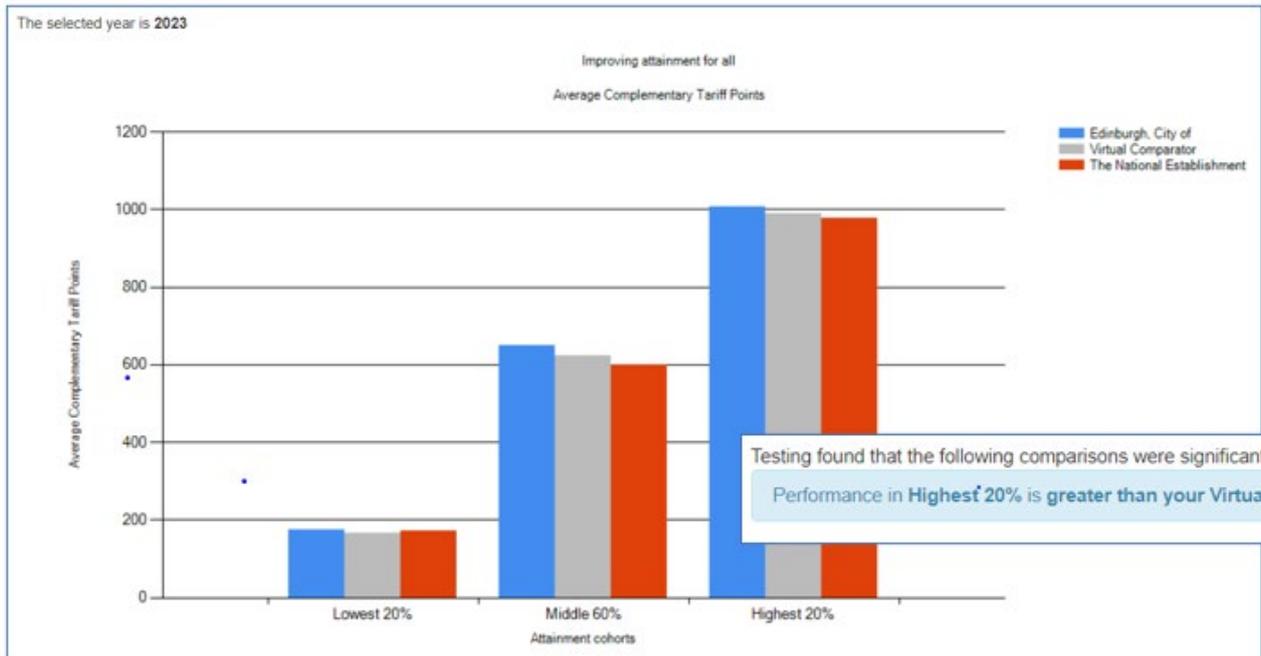
Table 2: Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy SCQF Levels 4 & 5 for S4, S5 and S6

	Establishment	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy	Number in Cohort
S4	Edinburgh, City of	2023	93.17	92.35	79.01	67.18	4117
S4	Virtual Comparator	2023	91.79	87.75	75.73	64.51	41170
S5	Edinburgh, City of	2023	96.01	94.49	88.55	78.47	3484
S5	Virtual Comparator	2023	94.93	92.61	86.36	76.24	34840
S6	Edinburgh, City of	2023	97.76	96.99	95.53	88.94	2460
S6	Virtual Comparator	2023	98.01	96.55	95.8	88.15	24600
	Statistically greater than the VC	Literacy and Numeracy SCQF Level 4 and Level 5, S4, S5 and S6					
	In line with VC						
	Statistically lower than the VC						

Graph 1: Improving Attainment for All: S4 Performance



Graph 2: Improving Attainment for All: S5 Performance



Graph 3: Improving Attainment for All: S6 Performance

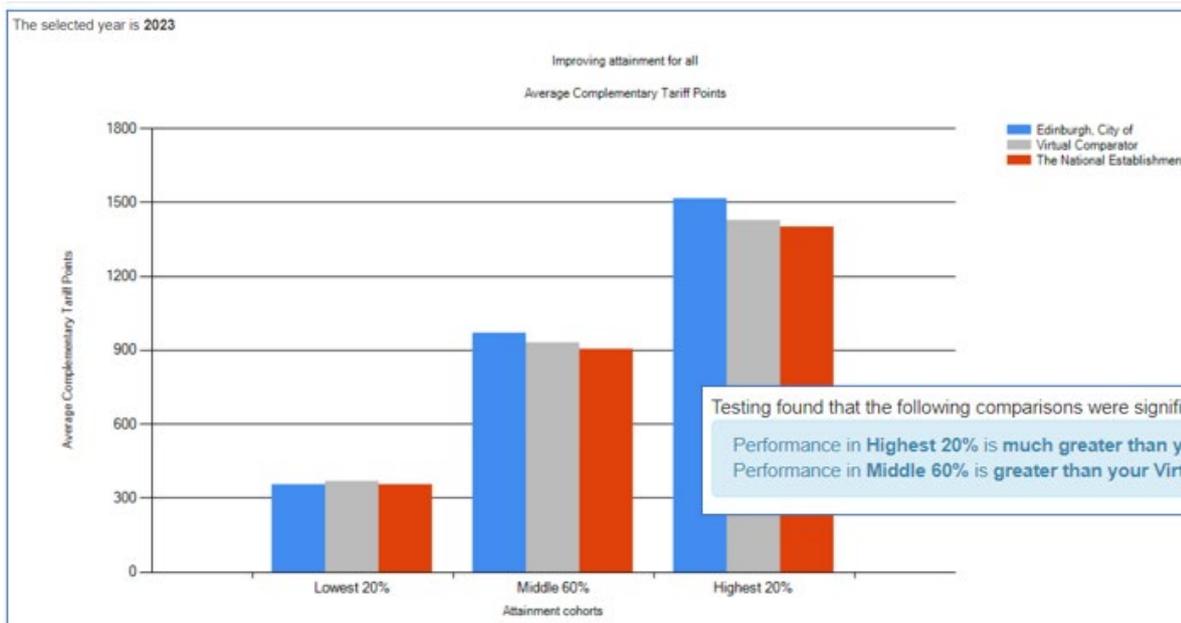


Table 3: Breadth and Depth measures, all candidates in S4 Vs virtual comparator

	2023				20222				2019		
	All Candidates				All Candidates				All Candidates		
All SCQF	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5		
1 or more	97.89	96.33	84.21	97.74	95.80	84.78	97.98	95.09	83.09		
3 or more	94.44	91.16	71.05	94.45	91.58	70.89	93.36	88.18	66.92		
5 or more	88.37	83.68	57.3	88.90	84.22	57.34	87.14	80.29	52.07		
	Virtual Comparator			Virtual Comparator			Virtual Comparator				
	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5		
1 or more	97.13	95.37	84.63	96.85	95.01	84.77	96.99	95.15	84.46		
3 or more	92.23	89.27	70.09	92.41	89.61	70.06	92.81	89.81	68.65		
5 or more	84.99	80.92	55.81	85.80	81.60	56.23	84.72	80.24	53.58		
	Gap			Gap			Gap				
1 or more	0.76	0.96	-0.42	0.89	0.79	0.01	0.99	-0.06	-1.37		
3 or more	2.21	1.89	0.96	2.04	1.97	0.83	0.55	-1.63	-1.73		
5 or more	3.38	2.76	1.49	3.1	2.62	1.11	2.42	0.05	-1.51		
Gap measures ragged comparing actual data with virtual comparator											

Table 4: Breadth and depth measures, Quintile 1 Vs Quintile 5 in S4

	2023 Q1 v Q5			2022 Q1 v Q5			2019 Q1 v Q5		
	Quintile 1			Quintile 1			Quintile 1		
All SCQF	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5
1 or more	96.21	93.03	72.74	97.05	92.35	73.42	96.91	91.44	69.99
3 or more	91.81	84.35	51.59	92.48	85.64	50.34	89.2	79.52	44.18
5 or more	83.62	70.78	32.89	84.43	74.09	32.35	81.07	67.46	25.39
	Quintile 5			Quintile 5			Quintile 5		
	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5
1 or more	98.82	98.18	93.5	98.59	98.30	94.49	98.84	98.26	93.55
3 or more	97.05	96.06	87.13	96.89	96.68	87.70	97.11	95.62	86.27
5 or more	94.29	93.04	78.33	94.49	93.29	78.87	94.21	92.22	76.26
	Gap			Gap			Gap		
1 or more	2.61	5.15	20.76	1.54	5.95	21.07	1.93	6.82	23.56
3 or more	5.24	11.71	35.54	4.41	11.04	37.36	7.91	16.1	42.09
5 or more	10.67	22.26	45.44	10.06	19.2	46.52	13.14	24.76	50.87
Gap measures ragged comparing 2023 with 2019 data									

Table 5: Breadth and Depth measures, all candidates in S5 Vs virtual comparator

S5	2023		2022		2019	
	All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates	
All SCQF	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6
1 or more	92.14	74.31	92.43	73.94	91.11	71.04
3 or more	82.86	56.37	83.90	55.39	80.07	50.97
5 or more	71.67	33.70	71.25	32.72	66.23	28.75
	Virtual Comparator		Virtual Comparator		Virtual Comparator	
	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6
1 or more	91.61	73.90	92.85	73.47	92.46	72.14
3 or more	83.23	54.35	84.51	54.67	82.65	51.91
5 or more	72.40	32.06	73.28	30.93	69.42	29.3
	Gap		Gap		Gap	
1 or more	0.53	0.41	-0.42	0.47	-1.35	-1.1
3 or more	-0.37	2.02	-0.61	0.72	-2.58	-0.94
5 or more	-0.73	1.64	-2.03	1.79	-3.19	-0.55
Gap measures ragged comparing actual data with virtual comparator						

Table 6: Breadth and depth measures, Quintile 1 Vs Quintile 5 in S5

S5	2023		2022		2019	
	Q1		Q1		Q1	
All SCQF	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6
1 or more	84.74	55.96	85.26	51.69	82.6	50
3 or more	67.73	30.52	67.85	27.35	62.67	24.32
5 or more	52.15	14.94	48.31	14.21	44.76	9.63
	Q5		Q5		Q5	
	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6
1 or more	96.69	89.18	97.74	88	96.4	85.77
3 or more	93.81	76.88	94.39	75.68	91.8	72.16
5 or more	87.19	51.91	86.98	48.64	82.25	46.58
	Gap		Gap		Gap	
1 or more	11.95	33.22	12.48	36.31	13.80	35.77
3 or more	26.08	46.36	26.54	48.33	29.13	47.84
5 or more	35.04	36.97	38.67	34.43	37.49	36.95
Gap measures ragged comparing 2023 data with 2019						

Table 7: Breadth and Depth measures, all candidates in S6 Vs virtual comparator

S6	2023		2022		2019	
	All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates	
All SCQF	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7
1 or more	91.99	50.24	90.09	49.09	89.05	42.23
3 or more	79.27	13.13	77.50	12.84	75.19	8.18
5 or more	63.25		60.45		57.46	
	Virtual Comparator		Virtual Comparator		Virtual Comparator	
	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7
1 or more	91.93	42.24	92.10	45.6	91.16	37.89
3 or more	80.16	8.64	80.59	8.03	76.55	6.33
5 or more	64.41		64.56		58.45	
	Gap		Gap		Gap	
1 or more	0.06	8	-2.01	3.49	-2.11	4.34
3 or more	-0.89	4.49	-3.09	4.81	-1.36	1.85
5 or more	-1.16		-4.11		-0.99	
Gap measures ragged comparing actual data with virtual comparator						

Table 8: Breadth and depth measures, Quintile 1 Vs Quintile 5 in S6

S6	2023		2022		2019	
	Q1		Q1		Q1	
All SCQF	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7
1 or more	84.36	30.98	78.44	22.16	73.85	22.64
3 or more	60.43	6.44	54.19	3.29	51.21	7.28
5 or more	37.12		34.13		29.93	
	Q5		Q5		Q5	
	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7
1 or more	96.15	62.57	94.70	62.43	94.82	54.04
3 or more	89.91	17.80	88.21	20.29	87.34	12.96
5 or more	78.07		74.77		72.48	
	Gap		Gap		Gap	
1 or more	11.79	31.59	16.26	40.27	20.97	31.40
3 or more	29.48	11.36	34.02	17.00	36.13	5.68
5 or more	40.95		40.64		42.55	
Gap measures ragged comparing 2023 data with 2019						

Table 9: Attainment of Identified Groups

	%		All	ASN	EAL	Minority Ethnic	FSM	Looked After	Male	Female
S4	3 or more @ SCQF level 5	CEC	71.05	56.21	63.38	75.96	36.46	21.28	69.19	72.99
		VC	70.09	54.31	56.32	66.78	54.96	42.34	67.32	72.99
S5	3 or more @ SCQF level 6	CEC	56.37	40.20	34.12	53.45	26.67	23.53	54.23	58.57
		VC	54.35	37.27	37.32	48.28	37.93	37.94	50.12	58.68
S6	3 or more @ SCQF level 6	CEC	79.27	67.75	52.31	71.79	52.4	46.15	76.35	82.23
		VC	80.16	66.98	66.69	76.33	71	55.38	76.92	83.45

Data ragged against VC if difference is greater than 1%

Appendix 2 – key attainment measures

This report considers the attainment measures of cohorts S4, S5 and S6. It also contains comment on the annual participation measure.

The Annual Participation Measure August 2023

“The Scottish Government’s Opportunities for All commitment offers a place in learning or training to every 16–19 year-old who is not in employment, education or training. SDS worked with the Scottish Government to develop a measure of participation which allows us to identify the participation status of the wider 16-19 cohort. The latest report (published August 2023) marks the ninth release of statistics on the participation of 16–19 year-olds at a national and local authority level. As agreed by Scottish Ministers the Annual Participation Measure (APM) has been adopted in the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework as the measure of young people’s participation. This has replaced the school leaver destination follow up as the source of the national indicator.”

School Attainment Measures

- **Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy:** the percentage of learners in S4, S5 and S6 attaining literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better and SCQF level 5 or better.
- **Improving Attainment for All:** the average complementary tariff points of learners in S4, S5 and S6 based on the attainment of the lowest performing 20%, middle 60% and highest 20%.
- **Attainment Verses the Virtual Comparator*** In this report we have used depth and breadth* measures for learners in S4, S5 and S6, comparing the performance of all learners to that of the Virtual Comparator.
- **Attainment Versus Deprivation:** tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of pupils from the most deprived areas relative to pupils from the least deprived areas: In this report we have used depth and breadth measures for learners in S4, S5 and S6, comparing performance in the most deprived 20% (Quintile 1) to the least deprived 20% (Quintile 5).

***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.

*Depth and Breadth refers to the level of qualification and the number achieved. For example: 5 @ SCQF level 5 is a depth and breadth measure as it refers to the level awards and the number of these awards gained.

Appendix 3 – SCQF levels and Tariff Points

SCQF level Qualifications included

Level 3	National 3, NPA level 3
Level 4	National 4, NPA level 4
Level 5	National 5, NPA level 5
Level 6	Higher, NPA, level 6
Level 7	Advanced Higher

Note that there are other (ungraded) qualifications which also accrue tariff points on *Insight*, for example National Progression Awards (NPAs). NPAs are vocational courses and Edinburgh schools offer these from SCQF level 3 to level 6.

What are Tariff points?

Insight uses tariff points to take account of the pupils' 'latest and best' performance. Awards at higher levels attract more points than those at lower levels. Tariff points for all attainment and achievement included in Insight is dependent on each award's SCQF credit rating. The number of Insight tariff points accumulated for each individual course/award is consistent throughout all calculations in the tool.

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

NPAs are ungraded, they carry the same tariff points of a grade C as the National Qualification at the same SCQF

For example: NPA level 5 carries 64 tariff points