

**Creating a World Class Education System through Excellence and Equity:
Attainment and Achievement 2019****Report by Andrew Sheridan – Schools Group Manager ASN, Inclusion & Secondary****1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of attainment and aspects of achievement for session 2018-19 from Midlothian Schools, including what we are going to do to continue to improve.

2. Introduction

Attainment information in Scotland continues to be focused on the use of the senior phase benchmarking tool known as Insight. This national attainment data base has two key release dates. An initial release in September takes into account all qualifications sat by young people within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications framework for the session past and this is captured in the local benchmark data. At that stage the National Benchmark data will only show the past sessions data for the schools leaver cohort from S4, S5 and S6. The national benchmark data section is not updated until February of the following year in order to confirm all relevant pupil leaver data.

In terms of analysis of attainment and achievement performance the Education Authority now publishes two statistical reports to schools - called the School Statistical Report (SSR). The first of these is sent to Schools in early October (SSR 1) after the formal September Insight release and discussion centres on the School's local benchmark data which shows how well each stage cohort – S4 to S6 have done across the range and level of qualifications. This report also looks at CfE level 3 and 4 attainment in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3 to help improve later outcomes during the senior phase. Discussions at individual school meetings will feed into school planning and target setting.

In February a second report – SSR 2 goes to schools and focuses on the National Benchmarks which shows how well the school's leavers have done at each respective stage S4, S5 and S6. The discussions with schools at this point focuses on areas such as literacy and numeracy to see how well equipped their leavers are to go onto sustained and positive destinations, as well as considering overall levels of attainment and the types of destinations young people are achieving.

An important part of attainment analysis for Secondary Schools is to compare themselves to their Virtual Comparator (VC) which you will see referenced in this report. The VC is a sample population drawn from the national cohort of pupils. The pupils are selected so they have similar key characteristics to the school population and this provides a fairer and more useful comparison. The Authority also has a virtual comparator based on its characteristics. Where the national average is described it represents the average for all the Scottish students who sat the qualification at that level. This is a larger and more diverse group than the VC

population and caution should be used in comparing our small cohorts with national cohorts as that affects statistical significance.

This report will consider both National and Local Benchmark data for 2018/19 under the various measures.

2.1

Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy- CfE Level outcomes

- At P1 stage (Early Years level CfE) all measures have maintained strong results against the National comparator from 2017/18 to 2018/19 across all SIMD bands. The greatest improvement was in Writing where the number of children achieving Early Level increased by 2%.
- At P4 stage 3 of the 4 measures (Listening and Talking, Numeracy and Writing) have increased from last year although not statistically significantly, Reading has dropped from 79% to 74% across the cohort. Our pupils receiving Free School Meals and PEF funding have shown strong CFE results across the range of measures. The greatest increase coming in Listening and Talking with a 7% increase.
- At P7 for PEF funded children there has been an overall improvement over the last 3 years, Listening and Talking +15%, Numeracy +17%, Reading +9% and Writing +14%. Across the whole P7 school cohort numbers have stabilised in line with National figures, the only significant change coming in Numeracy +3%.
- At S3 results were higher for all measures across the whole School cohort, our PEF funded pupils showing improvement in Listening and Talking +10%, Reading +10%, Writing +12% and numeracy dropping 6%.

What are we going to do next in order to continuously improve?

- Continue rigorous support and challenge to schools re their tracking and monitoring systems including links to longitudinal progress over time for year groups
- Continue to promote the work of the QAMSOs to support planning and holistic assessment towards achievement of a level, based on use of Literacy and Numeracy Benchmarks. Baseline information gathered across all settings and action plans in place. Targeted support in literacy and numeracy.
- Continue rigorous support and challenge to ELC settings.
- Train and support HTs in the use of the BGE Benchmarking Tool to support them to look outwards
- Discuss strategies for schools with students in SIMD bands where attainment may have dropped slightly or is static.
- Ensure there is a focus on protected groups as a separate scrutiny measure to ensure equity of access to the curriculum.

2.2

Improving attainment in literacy and numeracy: the percentage of pupils attaining literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5: The national measures for literacy and numeracy show the following key strengths:

- Attainment in level 4 Literacy has improved up from 88.95% to 90.06%, this is broadly in line with the VC and continues to show a positive trend. Attainment in level 4 Numeracy is slightly down 88.95% to 87.73% however this remains above the VC.
- Attainment in level 5 Literacy is significantly up from 67.89% to 71.85% Numeracy also shows a positive improvement from 54.43% to 59.01%

The local benchmark measures for literacy and numeracy show the following key strengths

- S5 Literacy and Numeracy at level 4: Literacy continues to remain static just below the VC, and Numeracy continues to show an ongoing positive trend above the VC.
- S6 Literacy and Numeracy at level 4: This shows a small positive trend, which is slightly below the VC.
- S6 Literacy and Numeracy at level 5: This also shows a small positive trend however also remains slightly below the VC,

What are we going to do next in order to continuously improve?

- To ensure performance in literacy and numeracy exceeds the virtual comparator and national average, we will analyse progress from P7 into S1 and S1 into S3 in terms of attainment as indicated by CfE level outcomes for literacy and numeracy by the end of S3 (Level 3 and Level 4 in Curriculum for Excellence). We will also analyse how that impacts on outcomes in S4 and S5 literacy and numeracy assessment at Level 4 and 5 on the SCQF.
- We will evaluate policies and systems in schools that: develop better teaching, learning and assessment, support high quality tracking and monitoring and interventions that have a good impact on learner outcomes.
- Develop practitioner enquiry in Schools that leads to collaborative work and sharing good practice in teaching literacy and numeracy.

2.3

Improving attainment for all: the average total tariff score of pupils based on the attainment of the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% by performance

Tariff scores are points awarded for a particular qualification on the Scottish credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Factors such as the level of study and the grade awarded affect the points attached to the qualification. E.g. A Higher award attracts more tariff points than a National 5 award. A National 5 C pass will attract less points than an A pass in the same course. The data considered in this section is an average of the total tariff scores for the Midlothian cohort.

- Average total tariff scores for the lowest performing 20% of leavers' shows positive 3yr progression from 146pts in 2015 to 158pts in 2018, an overall improvement of 12pts. This is higher than the virtual comparator performance of 143pts.
- Average Total tariff scores for the middle performing 60% of leavers' shows positive 3yr progression from 786pts in 2015 to 813pts in 2018, an improvement of 27pts. This is higher than the virtual comparator performance of 778pts.
- Average Total tariff scores for the highest performing 20% of leavers' shows positive progression from 1746pts in 2015 to 1833pts in 2018, an improvement of 87pts. This is higher than the virtual comparator performance of 1821pts.

What are we going to do next in order to continuously improve?

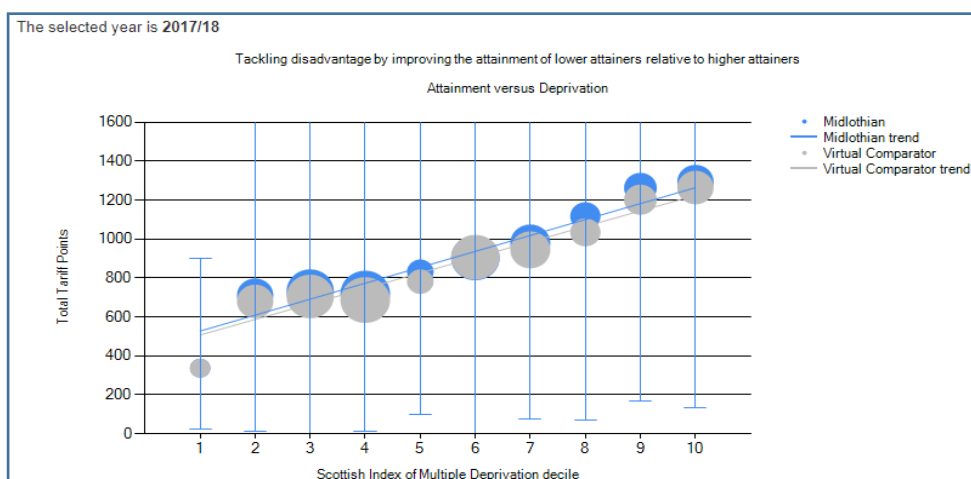
- Implement a range of targeted curricular strategies and wider achievement opportunities in order to maximise tariff scores.
- In particular, work within the BGE curriculum phase will focus on improving how formative assessment impacts on challenge and progression in learning and better prepares students for studying National 5 (SCQF level 5) and Higher (SCQF Level 6) courses.
- Wider achievement courses that offer other possible learner pathways will be audited to ensure they attract tariff points and lead to progression into higher level courses on the SCQF framework.

2.4

Attainment vs. deprivation: tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attaining pupils relative to higher attaining pupils based on the average total tariff score, by decile, using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The national measures for attainment vs deprivation show the following key strengths

- Midlothian leavers are broadly attaining above or in line with other similar leavers across the country, with an improving trend.
- In 2017/18 Midlothian performance was better than the virtual comparator for all deciles with the exception of SIMD 1&6 which are almost identical.



2.5

Breadth and Depth Measures

To complement the data provided by benchmarking measures, Insight also provides local course measures. In this report the Breadth and Depth Course Measure is used to provide data on the percentage of pupils gaining awards at specific levels by the end of each year stage. This data, when used in conjunction with benchmarking measures provides a richer measure of the progress and performance of Midlothian Schools. Generally, over the last 5 years we have been on par with our Virtual Comparator in most breadth and depth measures at S4 and S5 but there has been some positive trends for some stages. All schools need to target their breadth and depth measures if they are to significantly improve their attainment. The current measure is generally satisfactory in terms of the comparison with the Virtual Comparator but disappointingly static over the five last years.

The following key strengths are seen at each stage:

S4

- 5 or more at level 3 is significantly higher than the VC.
- 5 or more at level 4 remains above the VC.
- 5 or more at level 5 has a positive trend but is slightly lower than the VC.

What are we going to do next in order to continuously improve?

- Overall 5 year trends are neutral or slightly positive across 1, 3 or 5 awards or more at Levels 3 to 5 of the SCQF and we need to improve the static trend.

- To do this we need to target the middle 60% of cohorts through: a continued focus on coursing and presentation levels that challenge learners to progress, ensure robust tracking and monitoring are in place and work closely with parents and carers to address underperformance.
- Improve the overall quality of learning and teaching at all stages using best evidence teaching and learning strategies and impact coaches in schools to promote practitioner enquiry.
- All breadth and depth measures should be targeted to be at least in line with the Virtual comparator (VC).

S5

- 3 or more at level 6 is showing a positive 5yr trend, although slightly lower than the VC.
- 5 or more at level 5 and level 6 is remains in a positive trend but slightly below the VC.

What are we going to do next in order to continuously improve?

- As for S4 we will target the middle 60% of cohorts through: a continued focus on coursing and presentation levels that challenge learners to progress, ensure robust tracking and monitoring are in place and work closely with parents and carers to address underperformance.
- Improve the overall quality of learning and teaching at all stages using best evidence teaching and learning strategies and impact coaches to promote practitioner enquiry.
- All breadth and depth measures should be targeted to be at least in line with the Virtual comparator (VC).

S6

- 1, 3 & 5 at level 6 remain in a positive trend.
- 1, 2 & 3 at level 7 are in line with the VC.

What are we going to do next in order to continuously improve?

- As for S4 and S5 we will target the middle 60% of the cohort through: a continued focus on coursing and presentation levels that challenge learners to progress, ensure robust tracking and monitoring are in place and work closely with parents and carers to address underperformance.
- Improve the overall quality of learning and teaching at all stages using best evidence teaching and learning strategies and impact coaches to promote practitioner enquiry.
- Develop support strategies to ensure high achieving students do not disengage from S6 courses after receiving unconditional offers through UCAS.
- All breadth and depth measures should be targeted to be at least in line with the Virtual comparator (VC).

2.6

Positive Destinations

The data shows the following key strengths:

- The February 2019 release of insight data showed Midlothian's initial positive destinations at 94.35%. This included a record percentage of leavers going onto Higher Education - 34.11%, up 3% on last year and 5% on 5 years ago. This has

closed the gap on our virtual comparator at 37.92% and National comparator at 41.16%.

- 1 in 3 (33%) of our leavers now go straight into Employment, above the Virtual (24%) and National (23%)
- Positive destinations itself (94.35) above the Virtual and on par with National figures.

What are we going to do next in order to continuously improve?

- Carry out close analysis of destination trends in the Midlothian context to ensure that young people are accessing options post school that are providing good pathways for lifelong learning particularly with regard to skills for life and work.
- An ambitious target of 96% has been set for initial destinations in 2018/19.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The Educational Leadership Team, all Head Teachers and staff are fully committed to reducing the educational attainment gap. The key National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities will remain a key focus.

3.2 Risk

Addressing inequalities by reducing the attainment gap is of significant importance in order to improve the life chances of children and young people in our care.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan (SMP)

GIRFEC 5: Our people will be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

To close the gap by improving 'attainment vs deprivation' and 'attainment for all' outcomes for children and young people. It is noted that the narrative around closing the gap is problematic and that to close the educational act relies on a number of other key inequalities e.g. health and income, to close as well. In some sections of the report the term reduce has been used to acknowledge and signify this difficulty.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment vs. deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities. Local Authorities are also required to produce and implement a National Improvement Framework Plan.

3.7 Involving Communities and other Stakeholders

All Head Teachers update their Parent Councils on progress in terms of attainment and all schools publish their Standards and Quality Reports for Parents and other stakeholders.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

The recommendations in this report should continue to promote equity of attainment for disadvantaged children and young people and support the steps being taken toward narrowing the attainment gap by imposing duties on Education authorities and the Scottish Ministers in relation to reducing pupils' inequalities of educational outcome together with a duty to report on progress.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

There are no impacts arising from this report.

3.10 IT issues

Full implementation of the Digital Learning Strategy which was approved by Council would assist schools to implement the digital solutions required to reach the targeted attainment outcomes and deliver 21st Century information technology knowledge and skills.

4. Recommendations

- To note the improvements in performance outlined in this report, some of which are significant.
- To endorse the areas for continuous improvement outlined in this report.
- To congratulate pupils, parents and staff on the improvements in attainment and achievement during session 2018-19 highlighted in this report.
- Note that a meeting of Council with Secondary Head Teachers will be held on Wednesday 11 December 2019 at 10.00am to allow further discussion of attainment and achievement in our Secondary Schools.

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