



Attainment update for Secondary School leavers in Midlothian

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Report for Information

1 Recommendations

Council to note the data for school leavers (2022/23) and agree the proposed next steps to further improve outcomes for young people.

2 Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the annual update on leavers attainment for Midlothian, from the Senior Insight Update. This provides the achievement for our young people at the point of leaving school in 2023/23, highlighting the successes and challenges, along with plans for the future to improve the outcomes of our young people.

07 May 2024

Report Contact:

Andrew Carse, Principal Officer – Performance Data analysis & Research
andrew.carse@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to present the current position, trend outlook and comparison to national and comparator performance for our leavers attainment in Midlothian. The report will present the data from the recently published insight update to highlight areas of strength and weakness in our secondary school leaver cohorts.
- 3.2 The main source of data for this report is taken from the Insight update in published in February. Insight is the professional benchmarking tool for analysing attainment data in the senior phase, accessible by secondary schools and local authorities. It is designed to support improvement within schools and for young people in S4 to S6. There are two releases of Insight per year, the first of which is in September and provides year group-based attainment data for previous sessions. The second February update adds initial leaver destinations data and attainment for those leaving school in the previous academic year, which allows for analysis of data on cohorts of young people at the point of exit from the Senior Phase. This report will cover the annual cohort level update for session 2022/23.

4 Attainment Summary

- 4.1 Appendix B presents a more detailed summary of the attainment from the Insight update. It presents the performance of attainment in Midlothian versus the national and comparator authorities. This highlights the following key messages:
- 4.1.1 Initial Destinations
- i. The number of leavers from Midlothian schools who's initial destination was positive in 2022/23 was 95.30%. This was the third highest ever recorded in Midlothian. This rate was higher than the virtual comparator, but slightly lower than the national rate and LGBF comparator rate.
 - ii. The percentage of school leavers entering further education increase by 6.29% from the previous year to the second highest level in five years. As a result of this the percentage of school leavers in employment and higher education decreased, with 31.90% of leavers attending higher education.
- 4.1.2 Literacy and Numeracy
- i. There was an increase in the percentage of leavers attaining literacy and numeracy awards at SCQF Levels 3 and 4 from the previous year. At level 4 this was also higher than the pre-pandemic and the highest level in the past 5 years.
 - ii. For SCQF levels 5 and 6 however there was a decrease in 2022/23 from the previous year, although level 5 was above the pre-pandemic level.
 - iii. Attainment in literacy and numeracy for leavers was higher than the virtual comparator at SCQF Levels 3, 4 and 5. Attainment at SCQF levels 3 and 4 were also higher than the national and LGBF comparator levels. At levels 5 and 6 however the percentage of leavers was lower than the national and LGBF average levels.
- 4.1.3 Improving Attainment for All
- i. Despite an overall decrease in the average complementary tariff scores for each of the three attainment cohorts from the previous year, there was still strong performance against the virtual comparator. The average attainment in each group was higher. The trend analysis shows that there is good consistency across all attainment groups returning to pre-pandemic levels.
- 4.1.4 Breadth and Depth
- i. There were improvements in attainment in 2022/23 from the previous year for leavers attaining 1 or more awards at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5. All three of these measures also increased from pre-pandemic levels.

- ii. In addition the attainment for leavers for all the key measures were higher than the virtual comparator. Attainment in 1 or more awards at SCQF levels 3 and 4 was also higher than the national and LGBF average rates, including being the highest for all comparator authorities.
- iii. The percentage of leavers attaining 5 or more awards at level 5, and 1+, 3+ or 5+ awards at level 6 decreased from the previous year. The percentage of leavers attaining 5+ awards at level 5 and 6 however did increase from pre-pandemic levels. The performance at Level 5 and 6 was lower than the national and LGBF average.

4.2 In summary, the attainment outcomes for leavers in 2022/23 are positive in comparison to last year and pre-pandemic levels. The overwhelming majority of leavers are in a positive destination, and there is strong performance in attainment in comparison to our virtual comparators. There was also positive achievements in SCQF levels 3 and 4 versus the national and LGBF comparator authorities. There are however challenges where improvement will be focused, which includes the core middle 60% attainment cohort and learners at SCQF level 6.

4.3 In order to address these improvements the schools will continue to support learners and utilise the value from the insight dataset alongside there improvement plans in specific areas. It is also worth considering the significant impact of the pandemic that this has had on our young people. Assessments and examinations from this year (2022/23) was the first time in full since the pandemic:

5 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

5.1 Resource

There are no resource implications for this report.

5.2 Digital

There continues to be improvements and developments of our data and digital maturity, with the formation of a Data and Performance Team supporting the development of more robust data processes and systems. This will enable more support and scrutiny of the data to focus improvements in specific areas and cohort groups within and across our schools.

5.3 Risk

N/A

5.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

N/A

5.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – Insight Summary

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

This will work towards the key priority of; Reducing the gap in learning outcomes.

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

The delivery of this plan will assist the council in meeting its best value duties. Most notably in the following Best Value themes: Governance and Accountability; Effective use of resources and; Partnerships and collaborative working.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

N/A

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The content in this report and the continuous improvement to support improvement in attainment for all young people will assist in improving performance and outcomes for the council.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

N/A

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

N/A

APPENDIX B – Insight Summary

1. Leaver Initial Destinations

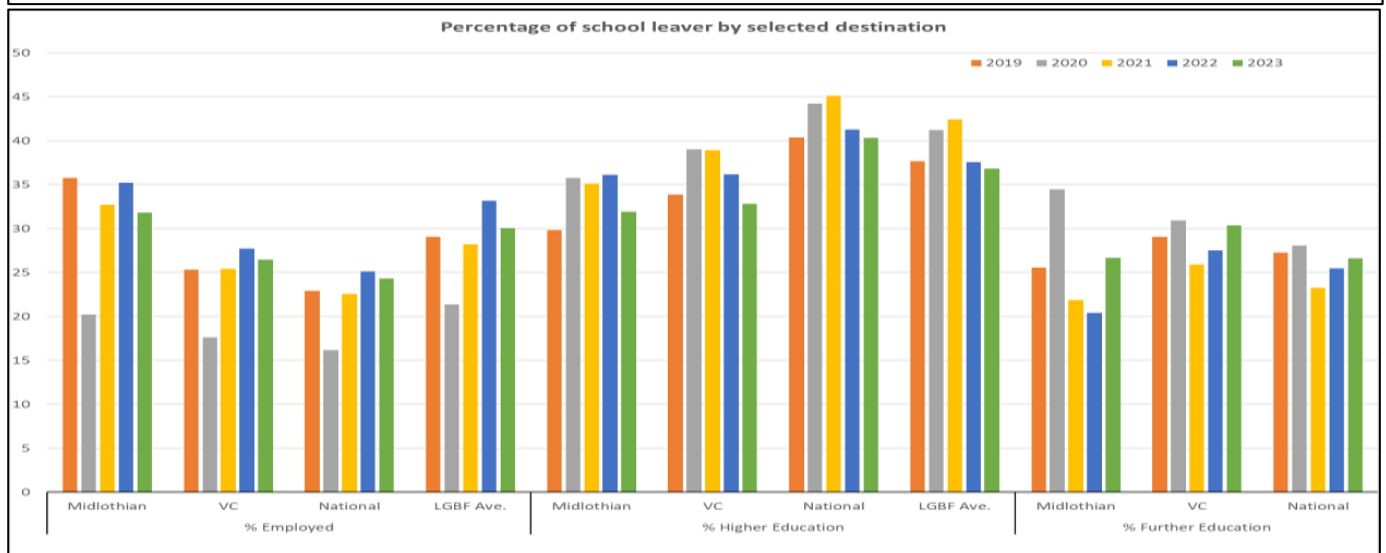
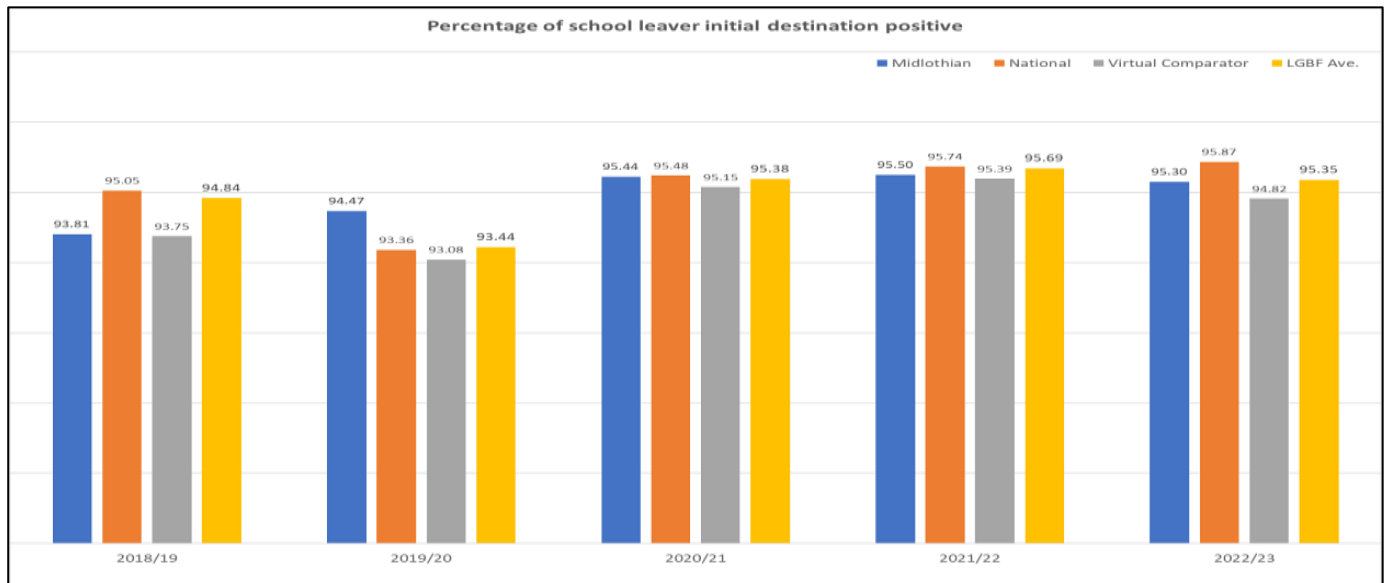


Table 1 – Initial Positive Destinations^a for all school leavers and by type of destination, 2018-2023

		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Diff to 21/22	Diff to Mid Ave ^b	Diff to VC 22/23	Diff to Nat 22/23
Positive Destination	Midlothian	93.80	94.47	95.44	95.50	95.30	-0.20	1.22	0.48	-0.57
	Virtual Comparator ^c	93.94	93.10	94.87	95.39	94.82	-0.57			
	National	95.06	93.36	95.49	95.74	95.87	0.13			
	LGBF Ave. ^d	94.84	93.44	95.38	95.69	95.35	-0.33			
% Employed	Midlothian	35.78	20.21	32.73	35.20	31.80	-3.40	-2.76	5.33	7.46
	Virtual Comparator	24.53	17.61	25.51	27.74	26.47	-1.27			
	National	22.92	16.18	22.58	25.11	24.34	-0.77			
	LGBF Ave.	29.06	21.36	28.22	33.18	30.08	-3.10			
% Further Education	Midlothian	25.57	34.49	21.89	20.40	26.69	6.29	2.89	-3.66	0.07
	Virtual Comparator	29.92	31.26	25.71	27.51	30.35	2.84			
	National	27.27	28.06	23.29	25.45	26.62	1.17			
	LGBF Ave.	24.45	27.00	20.73	21.54	24.21	-0.74			
% Higher Education	Midlothian	29.82	35.78	35.12	36.12	31.90	-4.22	-0.07	-0.93	-8.40
	Virtual Comparator	33.99	38.7	38.7	36.15	32.83	-3.32			
	National	40.35	44.2	45.11	41.27	40.30	-0.97			
	LGBF Ave.	37.66	41.23	42.41	37.58	36.84	2.66			

Source: Insight update (2024)

^a Initial Positive Destinations benchmarks the percentage of school leavers that enter a positive initial destination approximately 3 months after leaving school. A positive destination includes Higher Education, Further Education, Training, Voluntary Work, Employment and Activity Agreements.

^b Average figures for Midlothian are calculated pre-Covid (2017-19).

^c Insight allows schools to compare their performance to the performance of a virtual comparator. The virtual comparator is made up of pupils from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the pupils in your school.

^d LGBF Ave. is the average figures for Midlothian's Local Government Benchmarking Framework family comparator group. This includes Angus, Argyll & Bute, East Lothian, Midlothian, Moray, Scottish Borders and Stirling.

Trend performance

- The number of leavers from Midlothian schools whose initial destination was positive in 2022/23 was 95.30%. This is the third highest level ever recorded in Midlothian, although was a slight decrease from the previous year, but is above the pre-pandemic level.
- The percentage of school leavers entering further education increased by 6.29% from the previous year to the second highest level in five years (26.69%). As a result of this the percentage of school leavers in employment and higher education decreased, with 31.90% of leavers attending higher education.

Comparator performance

- The percentage of school leavers in a positive destination in 2022/23 was higher than the virtual comparator, but slightly lower than the national rate and LGBF comparator rate.
- The percentage of school leavers in employment (31.80%), despite decreasing from last year, was still higher than the national, virtual comparator and LGBF comparator rate. The percentage of leavers in further education is now aligned to the national rate, however there is a gap of 8.40% of leavers in higher education compared to the national rate, with less also attending compared to our LGBF comparators.

2. Literacy and Numeracy Combined

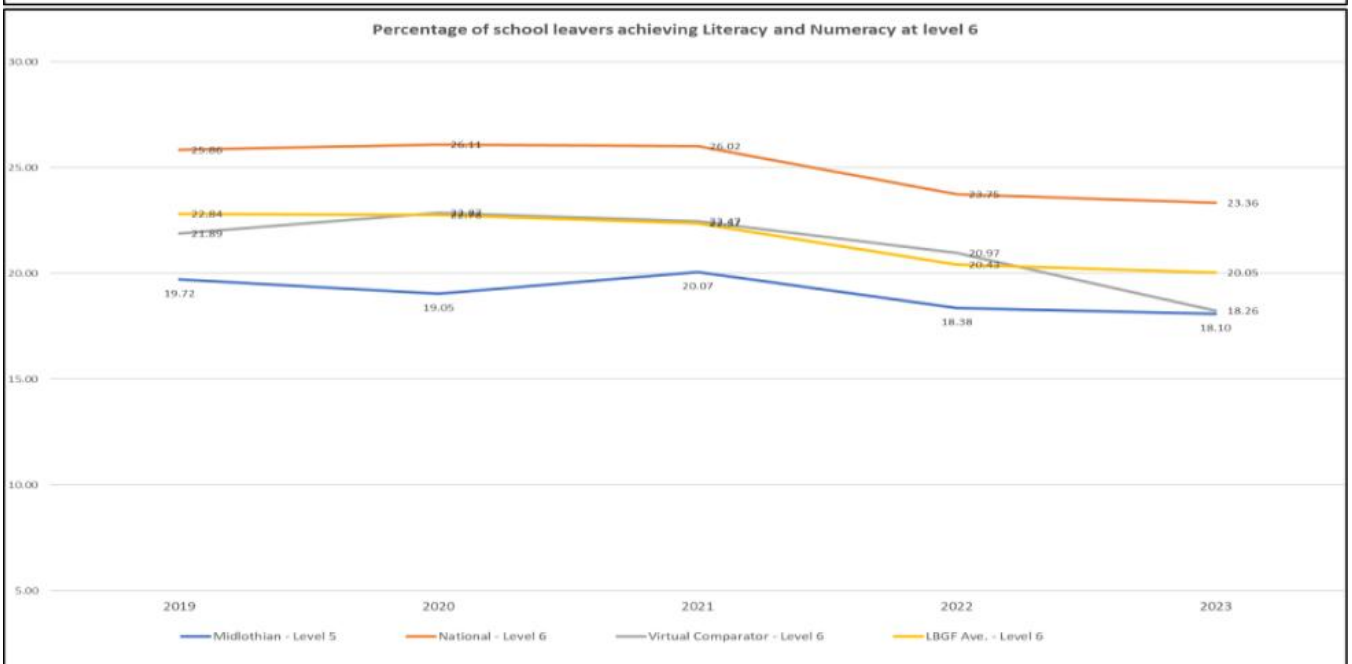
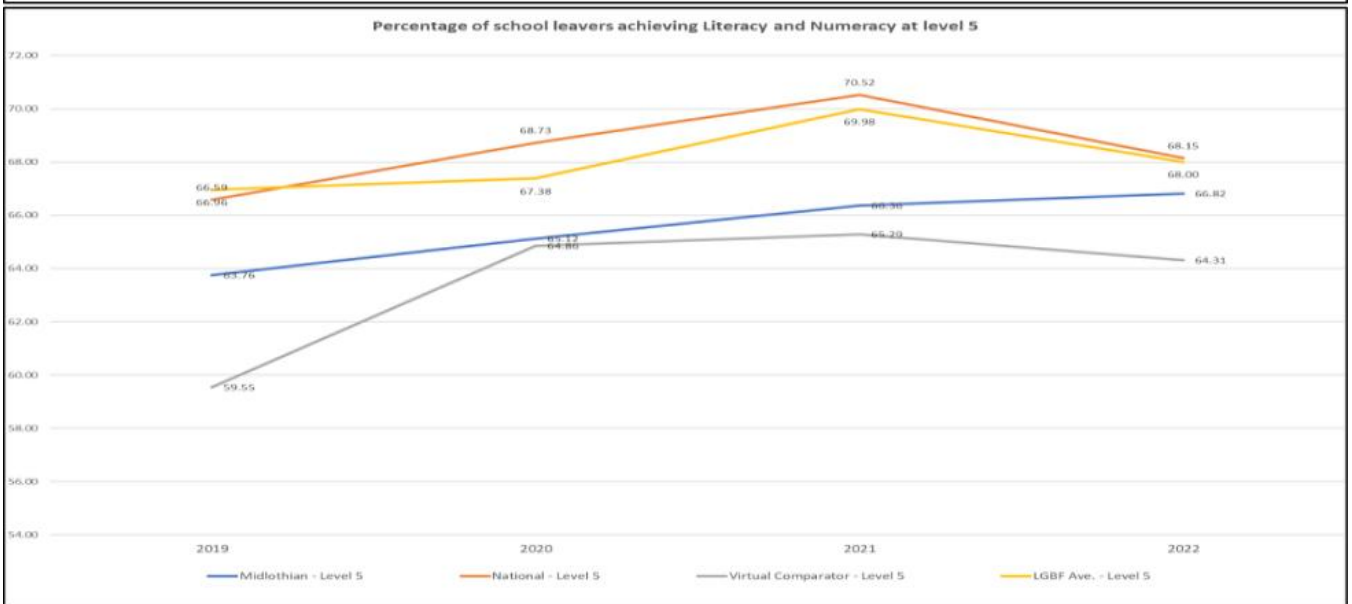
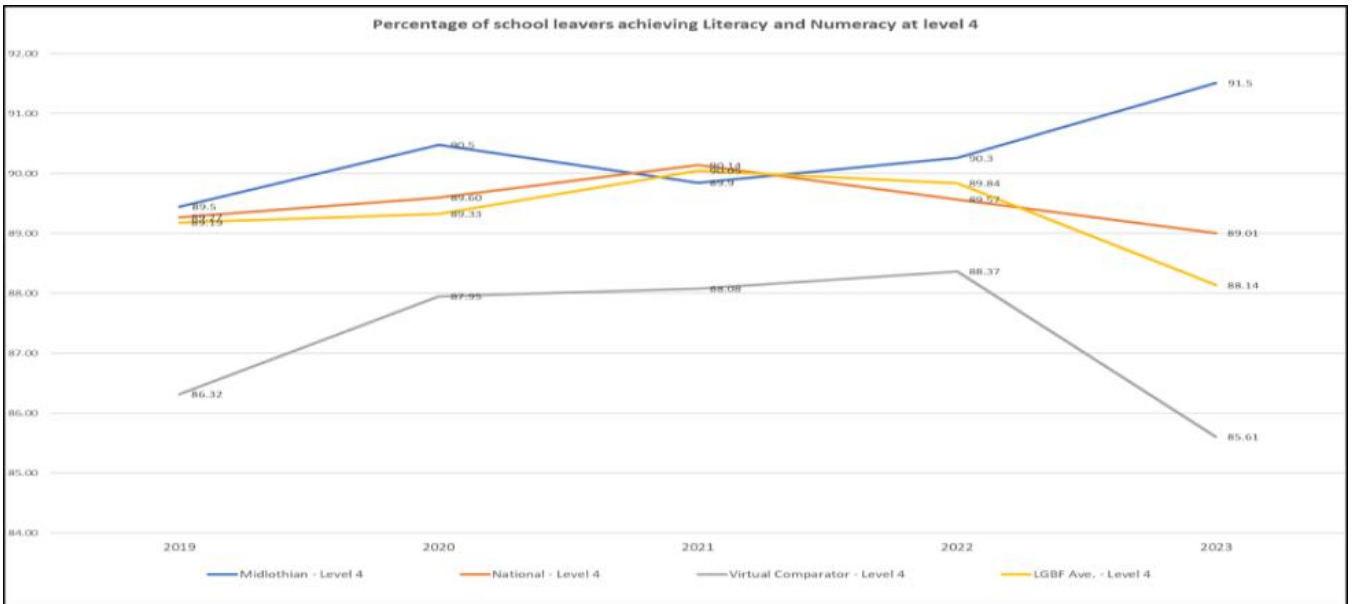


Table 2 – Percentage of leavers attaining Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF levels 3+, 4+, 5+ and 6+, 2019-2023

Establishment	Year	All SCQF Level			
		3+	4+	5+	6+
Midlothian	2019	96.33	89.45	63.76	19.72
	2020	96.40	90.48	65.12	19.05
	2021	96.01	89.9	66.4	20.1
	2022	95.86	90.26	66.82	18.38
	2023	96.11	91.51	65.34	18.1
	Diff to 2022	0.25	1.25	-1.48	-0.28
	Diff to VC	4.81	5.90	4.88	-0.16
	Diff to Nat	2.78	2.50	-2.67	-5.26
	Diff to LGBF	3.68	3.37	-1.49	-1.95
	Diff to Pre-pandemic Ave.	-0.67	2.32	0.30	-3.39
Virtual Comparator	2019	92.02	86.34	59.58	21.89
	2020	93.1	87.95	64.86	22.87
	2021	93.5	88.2	65.3	22.5
	2022	93.31	88.37	64.31	20.97
	2023	91.3	85.61	60.46	18.26
National	2019	93.84	89.28	66.6	25.86
	2020	94.33	89.61	68.74	26.11
	2021	94.7	90.2	70.6	26.0
	2022	94.25	89.58	68.16	23.75
	2023	93.33	89.01	68.01	23.36
LGBF Ave.	2019	93.25	89.19	66.96	22.84
	2020	93.64	89.33	67.38	22.78
	2021	94.26	90.05	69.98	22.37
	2022	93.66	89.84	68.00	20.43
	2023	92.43	88.14	66.83	20.05

Source: Insight update (2024)

^a Average figures for Midlothian, National and Comparators are calculated pre-Covid (2017-19). This is to enable comparison in primary and secondary and to highlight improvement that is needed in recovery from the pandemic.

^b Insight allows schools to compare their performance to the performance of a virtual comparator. The virtual comparator is made up of pupils from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the pupils in your school.

* Note that to be included in the figures pupils must have attained both literacy and numeracy qualifications at the same SCQF level. Each year group is based upon the S4 stage roll. Cells are shaded according to Insight statistically significant testing in the following way: Lower than the Virtual Comparator; Much Lower than the Virtual Comparator; Greater than the Virtual Comparator; Much Greater than the Virtual Comparator.

Trend performance

- For attainment in literacy and numeracy there was a positive trend in the percentage of leavers attaining awards at SCQF Levels 3 and 4, with an increase in 2022/23 from the previous year. At level 4 (91.51%) this was also higher than the pre-pandemic level and was at the highest level in the past 5 years.
- For SCQF levels 5 and 6 however there was a decrease in 2022/23 from the previous year, with attainment in level 6 falling to the lowest level in 5 years. Attainment in level 5 however was above the pre-pandemic level.

Comparator performance

- In comparison to the virtual comparator there was strong performance for leavers at Levels 3, 4 and 5 in literacy and numeracy. With all being statistically significantly greater than the VC level. Attainment at SCQF levels 3 and 4 are also higher than the national and LGBF comparator levels.
- Attainment at levels 5 and 6 are however lower than the national and LGBF average levels. The gap at level 6 was over 5% lower than the national figure.

3. Improving Attainment for All

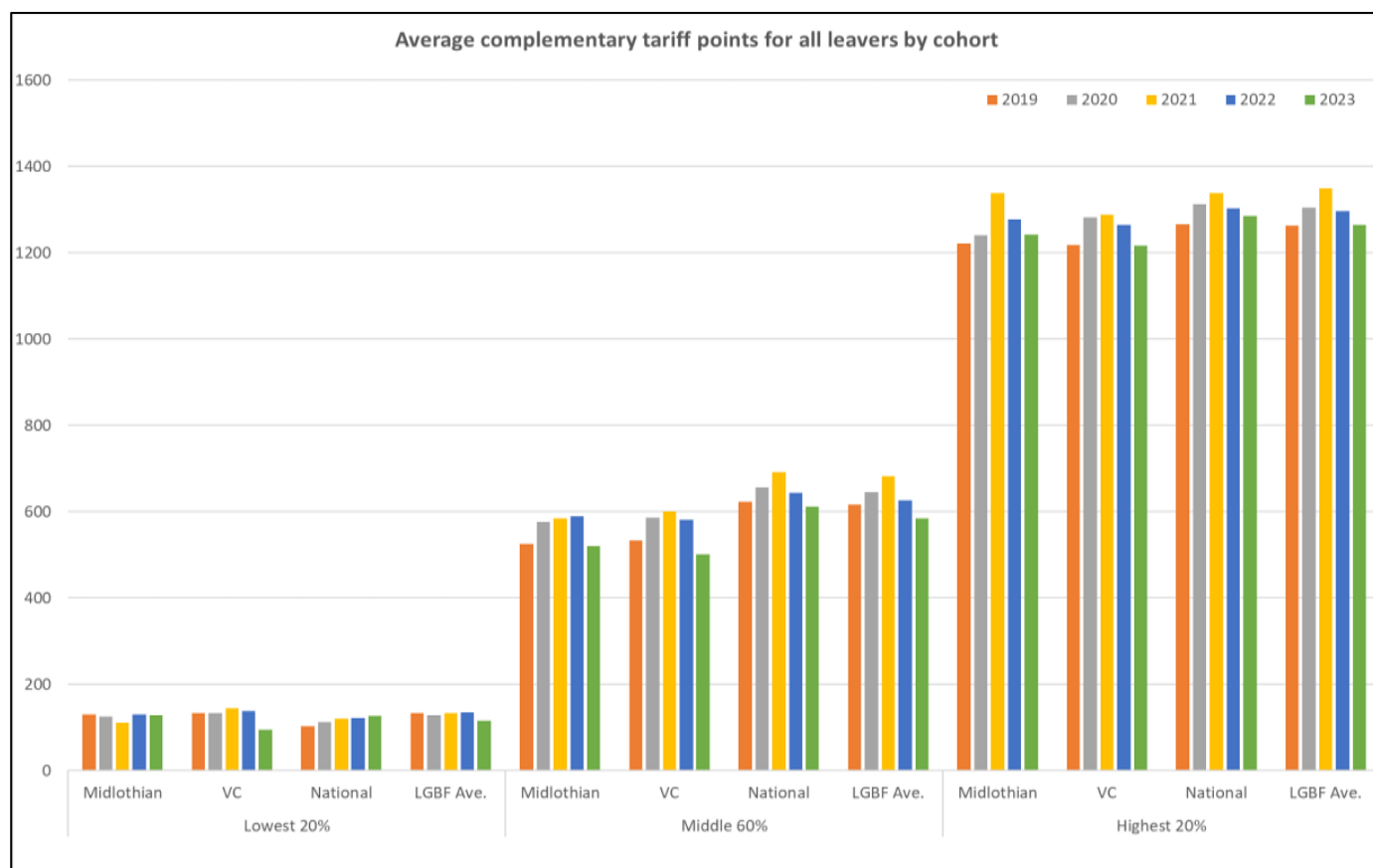


Table 3 – Improving Attainment for All^a shown for the average complementary tariff score by stage, 2018-2023

		Lowest 20%	Middle 60%	Highest 20%
Midlothian	2019	130	525	1222
	2020	125	575	1243
	2021	111	584	1339
	2022	131	588	1279
	2023	129	520	1243
	Diff to 2022	-2	-68	-36
	Diff to VC	34.00	19.00	26.00
	Diff to Nat	2.00	-92.00	-43.00
	Diff to LGBF Ave.	13.71	-64.86	-22.43
	Diff to Pre-pandemic Ave.	-5.00	-39.50	30.50
Virtual Comparator	2019	103	534	1219
	2020	113	586	1282
	2021	120	600	1289
	2022	123	582	1265
	2023	95	501	1217
National	2019	134	623	1267
	2020	133	657	1314
	2021	144	691	1339
	2022	137	643	1304
	2023	127	612	1286
LGBF Ave.	2019	133.86	616.14	1262.57
	2020	129.57	645.29	1304.86
	2021	133.00	683.14	1349.00
	2022	135.14	626.00	1297.14
	2023	115.29	584.86	1265.43

Source: Insight update (2024)

^a Improving Attainment for All is a benchmarking measure that displays the average complementary tariff score for the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% of attainers within the cohort. The overall aim of this measure, is to have pupils attain as highly as possible 'across the board', with all qualifications on the SCQF framework given a tariff score based on level and attainment.

* Cells are shaded according to Insight statistically significant testing in the following way: **Lower** than the Virtual Comparator; **Much Lower** than the Virtual Comparator; **Greater** than the Virtual Comparator; **Much Greater** than the Virtual Comparator.

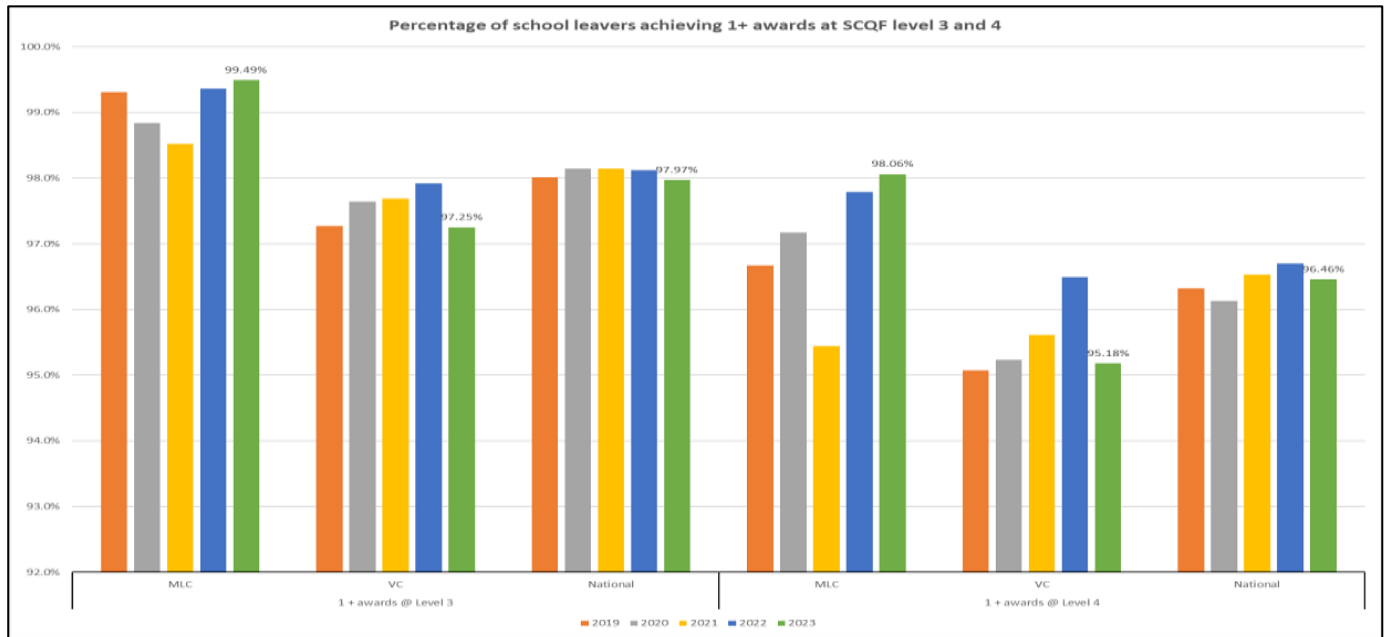
Trend performance

- The average complementary tariff scores for each of the three attainment cohorts decreased from the previous year, the lowest 20% decreased by only 2 points, however the biggest decrease was in the middle 60%. Despite the decrease in the highest 20% attainment cohort, this level (1243 tariff points) was still greater than the pre-pandemic levels. This therefore means that the lowest attainers are performing consistently and the highest attainers despite being lower than last year are higher than before the pandemic.

Comparator performance

- There was strong performance in all attainment groups in comparison to the virtual comparator, with the average attainment being higher in all three. For the lowest 20% the attainment was statistically greater than the virtual comparator. For this attainment cohort, performance was also higher than the national and LGBF comparator average.
- The attainment for middle 60% and highest 20% cohorts were lower than the national and LGBF average, with the greatest difference being in the middle 60% which was 92 tariff points lower than the national rate.

4. Breadth and Depth



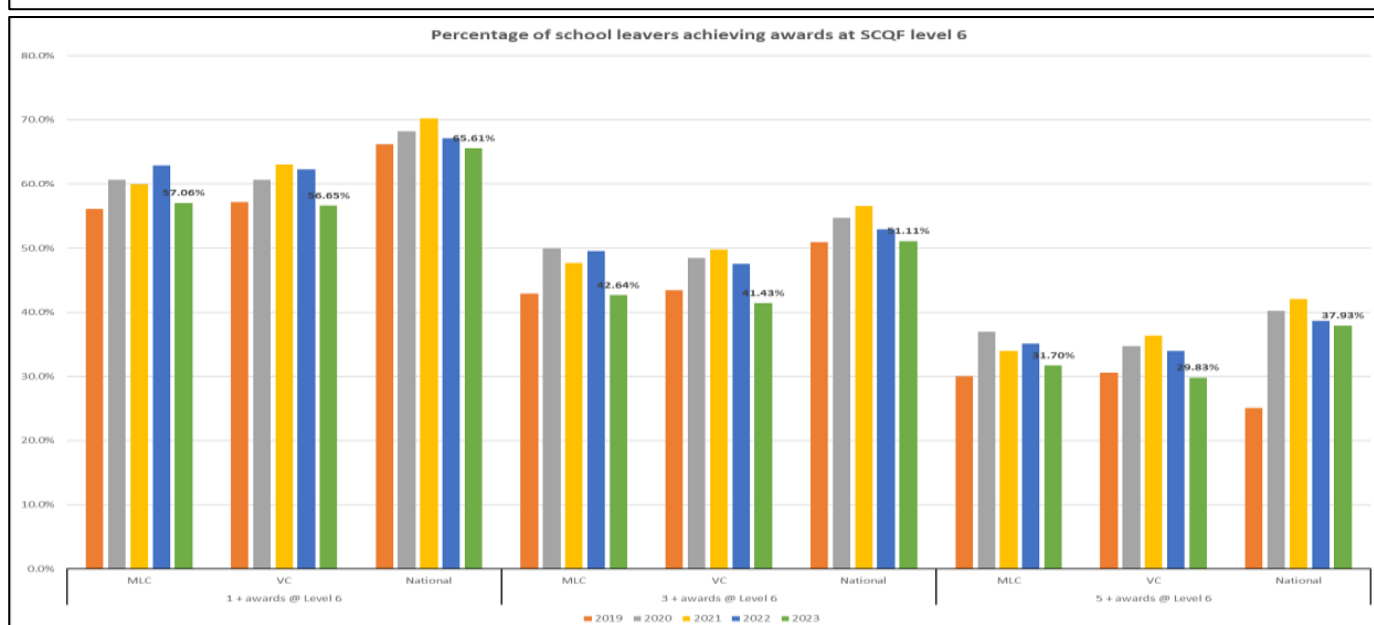
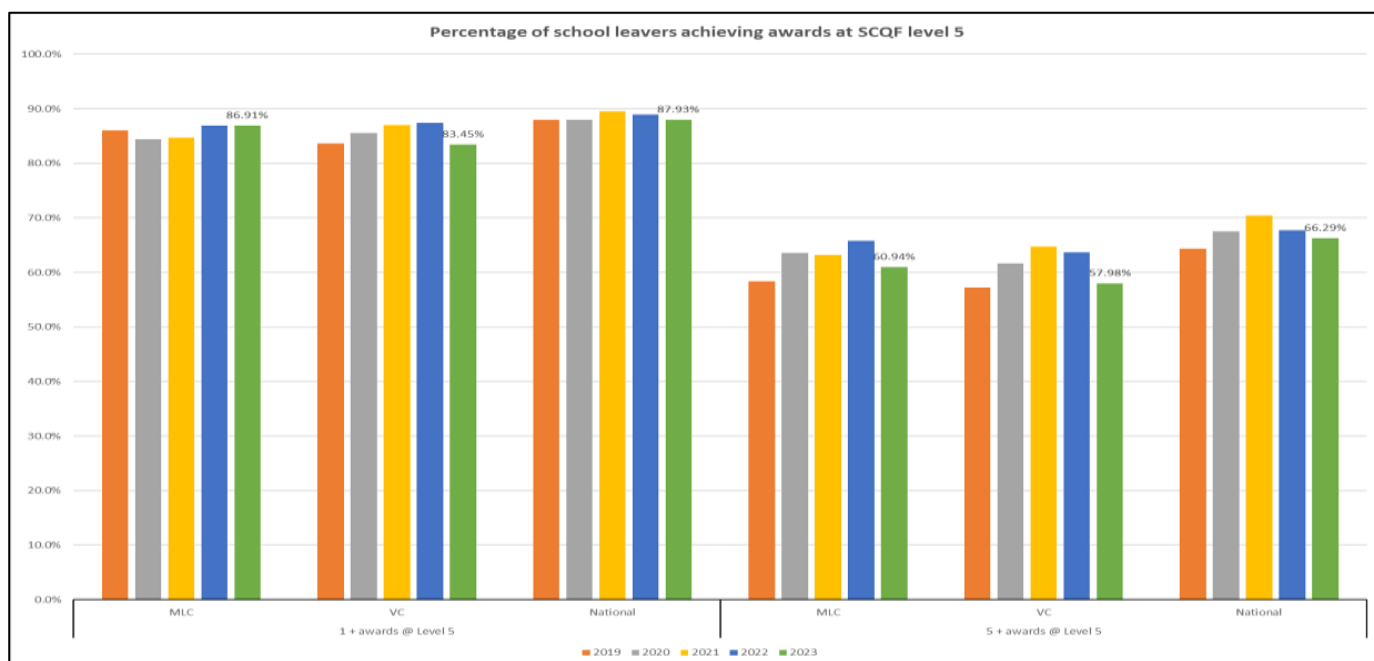


Table 4 – Breadth and Depth^a of all leavers by award, 2023

	1 + awards @ Level 3	1 + awards @ Level 4	1 + awards @ Level 5	5 + awards @ Level 5	1 + awards @ Level 6	3 + awards @ Level 6	5 + awards @ Level 6
Midlothian	99.49%	98.06%	86.91%	60.94%	57.06%	42.64%	31.70%
Virtual Comparator	97.25%	95.18%	83.45%	57.98%	56.65%	41.43%	29.83%
National	97.97%	96.46%	87.93%	66.29%	65.61%	51.11%	37.93%
LGBF Ave.	97.40%	95.85%	86.62%	64.78%	62.39%	48.90%	35.13%
Diff to VC	2.24%	2.88%	3.46%	2.96%	0.41%	1.21%	1.87%
Diff to National	1.52%	1.60%	-1.02%	-5.35%	-8.55%	-8.47%	-6.23%
Diff to LGBF Ave.	2.09%	2.21%	0.29%	-3.84%	-5.33%	-6.26%	-3.43%

Source: Insight (2024)

^a Breadth and Depth shows the number of awards per SCQF Level, which has been attained by all candidates. Note that all award providers contribute to this SCQF measure, as do D grades in SQA courses.

Trend performance

- Overall, there were improvements in attainment in 2022/23 from the previous year for leavers attaining 1 or more awards at SCQF levels 3 (99.49%), 4 (98.06%) and 5 (86.91%). All three of these measures also increased from pre-pandemic levels.
- The percentage of leavers attaining 5 or more awards at level 5, and 1+, 3+ or 5+ awards at level 6 decreased from the previous year. The percentage of leavers attaining 5+ awards at level 5 and 6 however did increase from pre-pandemic levels.

Comparator performance

- The attainment of leavers in all of the key measures was higher than the virtual comparator for 2022/23. For 1 or more awards at levels 3 and 4 this was also higher than the national and LGBF average rates, including being the highest for all comparator authorities.
- The performance at Level 5 and 6 was lower than the national and LGBF average, with 5+ awards at level 6 being 6.23% lower than the national rate, and the third lowest amongst all comparator authorities.