

**FINAL ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT REPORT – SESSION 2021-2022**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on final attainment across all Argyll and Bute Secondary Schools.
- 1.2 This update follows the release on 28 February of data on the Scottish Government's Insight tool. The Insight tool is designed to allow fair comparison of a group of pupils in Argyll and Bute with larger groups of pupils taken from all the other 31 local authorities with similar backgrounds (gender, additional support needs, stage, and SIMD band). This is known as the Virtual Comparator (VC) and is a key feature of Insight. Insight also allows comparison of attainment in Argyll and Bute with average attainment nationally.
- 1.3 This report focusses on attainment data made available by the Scottish Government in February 2023. Members will recall that data on pupil attainment and wider achievement was shared in the December 2022 paper *Education Performance Data Analysis 2021-22*.
- [ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL NAME OF COMMITTEE \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk)
- 1.4 The report offers analysis of attainment levels across Argyll and Bute secondary schools post-SQA appeals, and of the overall success of appeals in the authority.
- 1.5 The report goes on to present updated attainment information from Insight. Presented data takes incorporates the results of appeals. It also refers to the Insight tariff points allocated to candidates' wider achievement attainment described in December's report. Tariff points are applied by Insight to levels of attainment – for example a Higher A award gains more tariff points than a Higher B award, and both gain more than a National 5 A award. Tariff points allow a score to be calculated for each candidate that summarises a wide range of achievement and awards from a range of providers. Tariff points also allow comparisons to be made between pupil cohorts, schools, local authorities and their virtual comparators.

Specifically, the areas analysed in this report are:

- Literacy and Numeracy
- Average attainment for all candidates,
- Attainment in the context of levels of deprivation
- Young people's initial destinations on leaving school in summer 2022 and at Christmas 2022.

1.6 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Consider the information in this report, particularly as it relates to the attainment performance of school leavers;
- b) Note the increase in attainment brought about by successful appeals, at authority level and school-by-school;
- c) Note, as also recommended in December's report, that for the first time since session 2018/19, pupil performance and outcomes are based solely on examination performance;
- d) Note that the information contained in this report constitutes all attainment across both National Qualifications and Wider Achievement courses, the latter of which was described in the December report without the associated tariff points having been included in statistics.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 In August 2022, the Council received notification from the SQA of awards for all pupils in Argyll and Bute entered for National Qualifications in session 2021/22.
- 2.2 In December 2022, the Council received updated attainment data from the SQA, incorporating the results of appeals submitted by or on behalf of candidates.
- 2.3 In 2022, for the first time since session 2018/19, pupil attainment was determined through a diet of examinations. In 2020 and 2021, examinations were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, and attainment was determined through the submission of provisional results to the SQA, based on teacher professional judgement which considered a wide range of candidate assessment evidence. This has meant that even S6 pupils were experiencing SQA exam conditions for the first time in 2022.
- 2.4 The 2022 SQA examination diet was nonetheless characterised by Covid-related modifications. The internal and external assessment elements of some courses were reduced, and advice on the range of topics to be assessed in examinations for some courses was provided by the SQA to candidates, to support their studying and revision activities.
- 2.5 As a result of such modifications, the SQA has advised that caution should be applied in comparing the 2022 presentation pass rates at both school and authority level to 2019 attainment data.
- 2.6 Additionally, as a result of the alternative assessment models adopted in 2020 and 2021, meaningful comparison should not be drawn between 2022 attainment data and data from those years.
- 2.7 This report is the third report focusing on the attainment of young people to have been brought to Committee in school session 2022-2023. The August 2022 report summarized the initial attainment pattern immediately following the release of attainment results by the SQA. In December 2022, a report gave an overview of attainment across all ten authority secondary schools, incorporating both authority post-appeal data and data from The Scottish Government's Insight tool.

2.8 The data in this report reiterates and further analyses the impact of appeals on attainment. It also presents and evaluates the newly-released data on the attainment of young people who left school in 2022.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Consider the information in this report, particularly as it relates to the attainment performance of school leavers;
- b) Note the increase in attainment brought about by successful appeals at authority level and school-by-school;
- c) Note, as also recommended in December's report, that for the first time since session 2018/19, pupil performance and outcomes are based solely on examination performance;
- d) Note that the information contained in this report constitutes all attainment across both National Qualifications and Wider Achievement courses, the latter of which was described in the December report without the associated tariff points having been included in statistics.

### 4.0 DETAIL

#### 4.1 SQA Appeals

The table below details pre- and post-appeals attainment at grades A-C for Argyll and Bute in comparison to the national figures.

2022 National Qualifications	Argyll & Bute			National		
	SQA Results August	Post Appeal December	Change	SQA Results August	Post Appeal December	Change
<b>Adv. Higher</b>	83.7%	<b>85.5%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>81.3%</b>	<b>82.6%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Higher</b>	79.5%	<b>80.9%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>78.9%</b>	<b>79.3%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Nat 5</b>	78.6%	<b>79.7%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>80.8%</b>	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>

Post-appeals, it can be seen that at Advanced Higher the A-C pass rate has risen by 1.8% and is now 2.9% above national percentage (2.4% in August).

At Higher, the post-appeal A-C pass rate has risen by 1.4%, and has therefore increased to 1.6 % above national percentage (0.6% in August)

At National 5, the A-C pass rate has risen by 1.1%, and is now 1.9% below national percentage (2.2% in August).

The table below outlines the extent to which attainment at grades A-C in

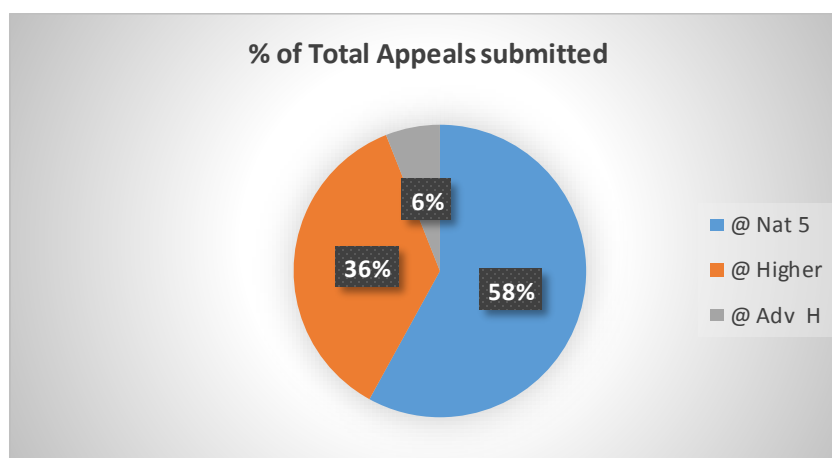
each of the ten secondary schools increased once successful appeals were taken into account:

2022 Post Appeals - % increase.	Argyll & Bute	OHS	CGS	HA	DGS	IHS	LJC	RJC	TA	Ti HS	ToHS
	% Change August 22 to Post Appeal December 22										
Adv. Higher	1.8%	0.0%	7.3%	1.5%	4.8%	0.0%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	0.0%
Higher	1.4%	2.5%	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	1.3%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%
Nat 5	1.1%	2.6%	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	3.1%	0.4%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	2.2%

### Key to School abbreviations:

CGS	Campbeltown Grammar School	OHS	Oban High School
DGS	Dunoon Grammar School	RJC	Rothesay Joint Campus
HA	Hermitage Academy	TA	Tarbert Academy
IHS	Islay High School	Ti HS	Tiree High School
LJC	Lochgilphead Joint Campus	To HS	Tobermory High School

For information the below chart details the spread of appeals in Argyll and Bute across the three National Qualification Levels of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher



- 4.2 The Scottish Government's Insight tool allows analysis of attainment from a variety of perspectives. Below, attainment analysis is provided from three such perspectives: attainment in Literacy and Numeracy – a key element of the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework; average attainment of young people in the context of the top 20% of attainers, the middle 60% of attainers and the lowest 20% of

attainers; and attainment in the context of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). For each attainment focus, data is supplied for all pupils in S4-S6, and for those who left school in 2022 – data which was unavailable in the October insight update.

### 4.3 Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 Literacy and Numeracy are achieved primarily via the passing of National 4, National 5 or Higher English or Maths, or through the completion of separate Literacy and Numeracy units at levels 4, 5 or 6, which do not require an examination.

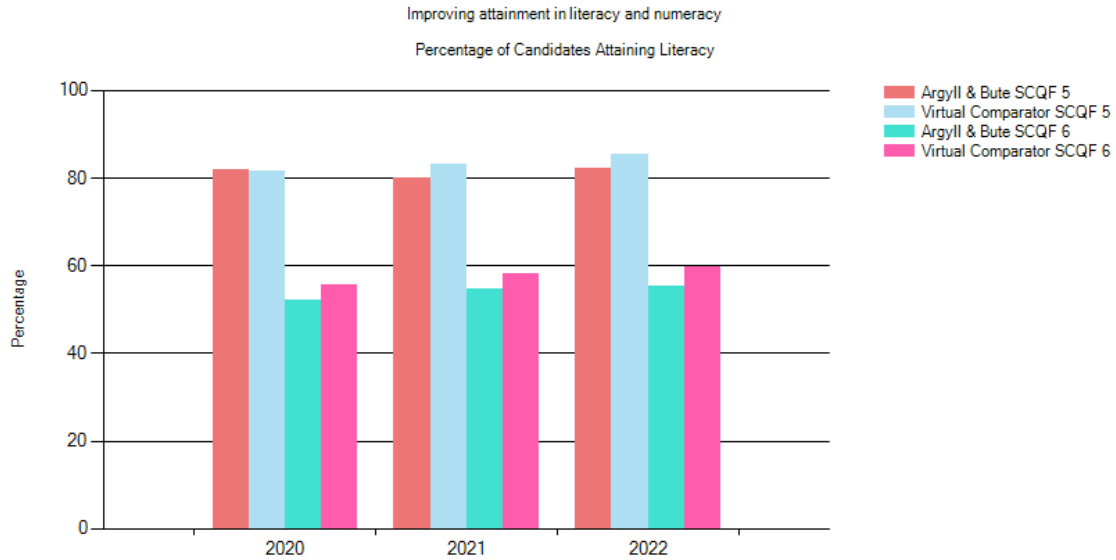
#### Literacy SCQF levels 4 and 5 – cumulative attainment by end of S6 based on original S4 roll (including post appeal results and wider achievement accreditation)



Attainment of Level 4 Literacy stands at 92.5%, higher than both 2020 and 2021 figures. This figure is 2.5% below the Virtual Comparator (VC). The gap with the VC has reduced slightly since 2021.

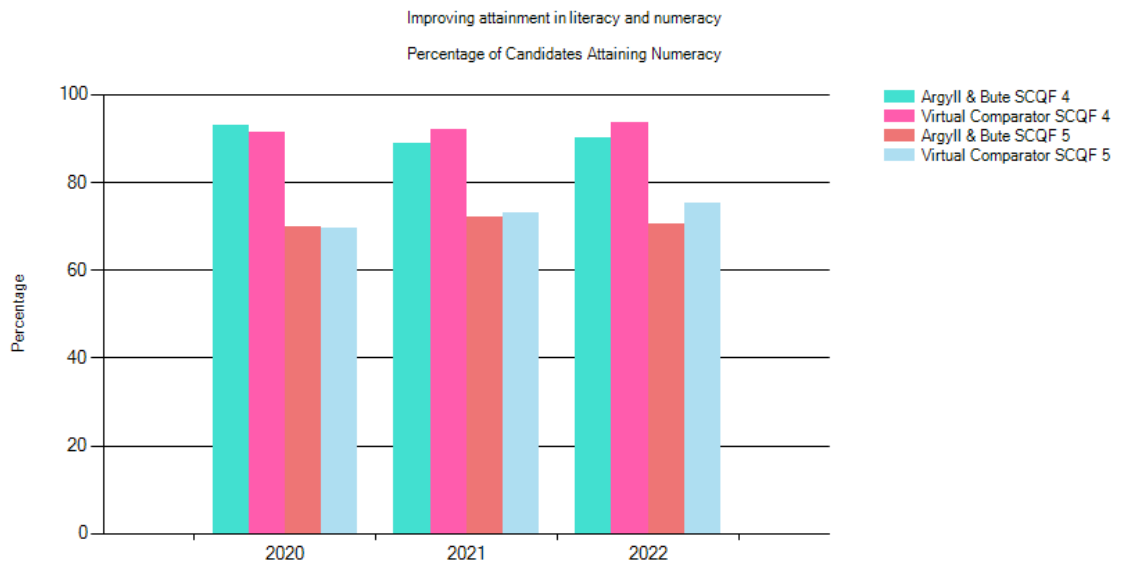
Attainment of Level 5 Literacy stands at 82.4%, higher than both 2020 and 2021 figures. This figure is 2.9% below the VC. Again, the gap with the VC has closed slightly since 2021.

#### Literacy SCQF levels 5 and 6 – cumulative attainment by end of S6 based on original S4 roll (including post appeal results and wider achievement accreditation)



In 2022, by the end of S6 or before, 55.3% of young people in Argyll and Bute attained Level 6 Literacy, sustaining an upward trend for the third year in succession. Attainment is 4.3% below the VC figure.

**Numeracy SCQF levels 4 and 5 – cumulative attainment by end of S6 based on original S4 roll (including post appeal results and wider achievement accreditation)**



In 2022, by the end of S6 or before, 90.2% of young people in Argyll and Bute achieved Numeracy at Level 4, which is 3.5% below the VC figure. This gap is slightly greater than in 2021.

70.6% of young people achieved Level 6 Numeracy by the end of S6 or before, compared to a VC figure of 75.4%. Again, this gap has increased over the last two years.

**Numeracy SCQF levels 5 and 6 – cumulative attainment by end of S6 based on original S4 roll (including post appeal results and wider achievement accreditation)**



In 2022, 55.3% of Argyll and Bute young people achieved Level 6 Numeracy by the end of S6 or before, maintaining the upward trend of the previous three years. Attainment is 4.3% behind the VC figure of 59.6%.

**Literacy SCQF Levels 4 and 5 – school leavers**



Of school leavers in 2022, 94.8% achieved Level 4 in Literacy, continuing the upward trend since 2020. The gap with the VC has reduced from 4.2% in 2020 to 0.6% in 2022.



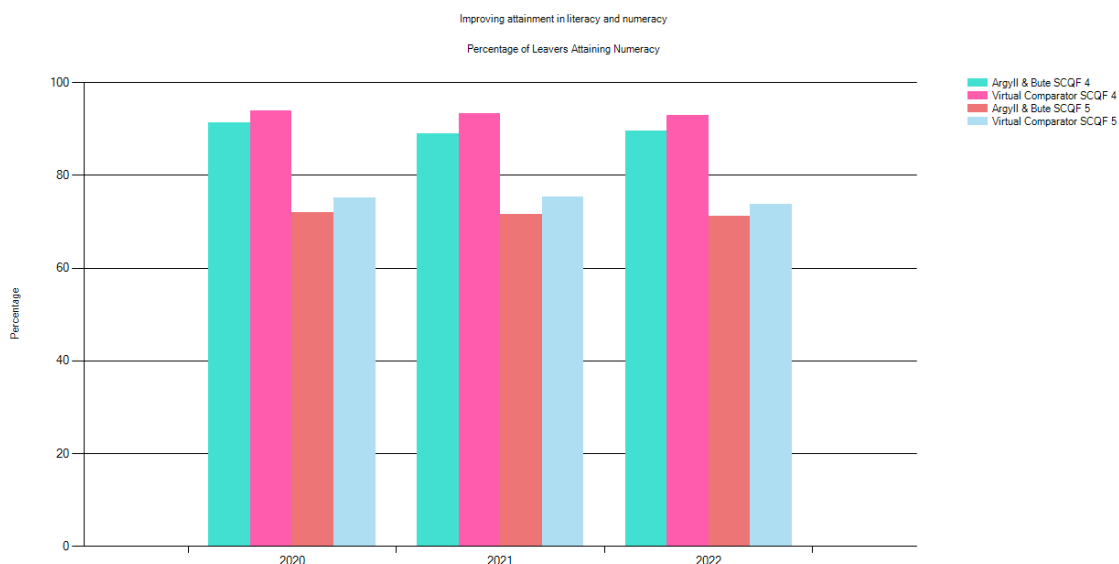
83.7% of leavers achieved Literacy at Level 5, again continuing an increasing trend in attainment. The 1.0% gap to the VC has reduced from 4.3% in 2020.

### Literacy SCQF Levels 5 and 6 – school leavers



53.9% of school leavers achieved Level 6 Literacy in 2022. The VC figure was 56.6%. The 2.7% gap to the VC figure represents a 1.7% reduction of the difference from 2021.

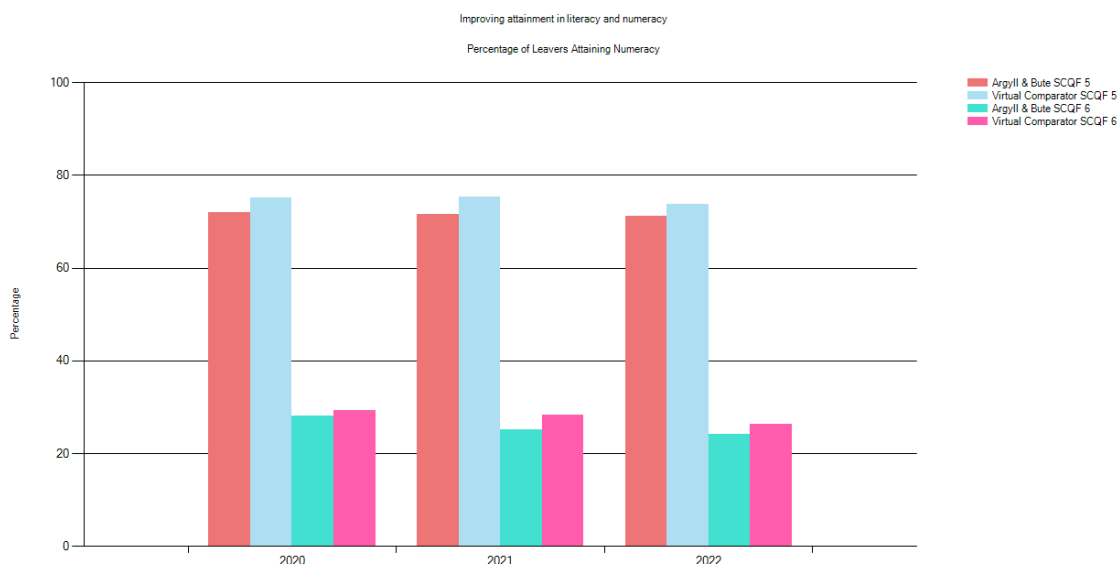
### Numeracy SCQF Levels 4 and 5 – school leavers



In 2022, 89.5 % of school leavers from S4-S6 achieved Level 4 Numeracy, an increase of 0.6% on 2021, and 3.4% below the VC figure.

71.1% of 2022 school leavers achieved Level 5 Numeracy. The 2.6% gap with the VC figure continues the narrowing trend between the two over the last three years.

## Numeracy SCQF Levels 5 and 6 – school leavers



24.2% of school leavers in 2022 achieved Level 6 in Numeracy, in comparison to the VC figure of 26.3%. The gap to the VC has reduced by 1.3% since 2021.

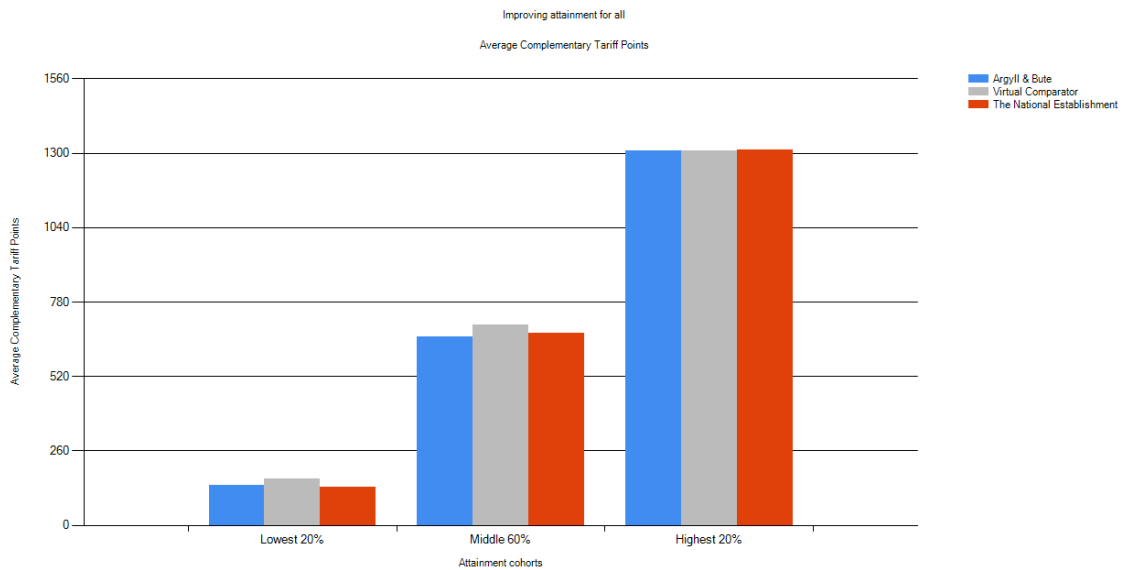
## Raising Literacy and Numeracy attainment in schools

As part of Attainment Meetings with individual secondary Head Teachers, key steps have been discussed to improve literacy and numeracy attainment in all secondary schools. Principal considerations relate to four key principles of raising attainment: a culture of high expectations underpinning aspirational presentation policies within schools; rigorous tracking and monitoring of pupils attainment in literacy and numeracy at frequent, regular intervals; frameworks of supportive intervention for pupils achieving below their potential in literacy and numeracy; and high-quality, learner-centered learning and assessment experiences in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum continuing into the Senior Phase.

### 4.4 Improving attainment for all

This measure details the average attainment of pupils in three attainment cohorts – the highest 20% of attainers, the middle 60% of attainers and the lowest 20% of attainers – using the tariff points gained for the passing of courses at different levels.

## Average cumulative attainment by the end of S6, based on original S4 roll (after appeals and Wider Achievement Accreditation)

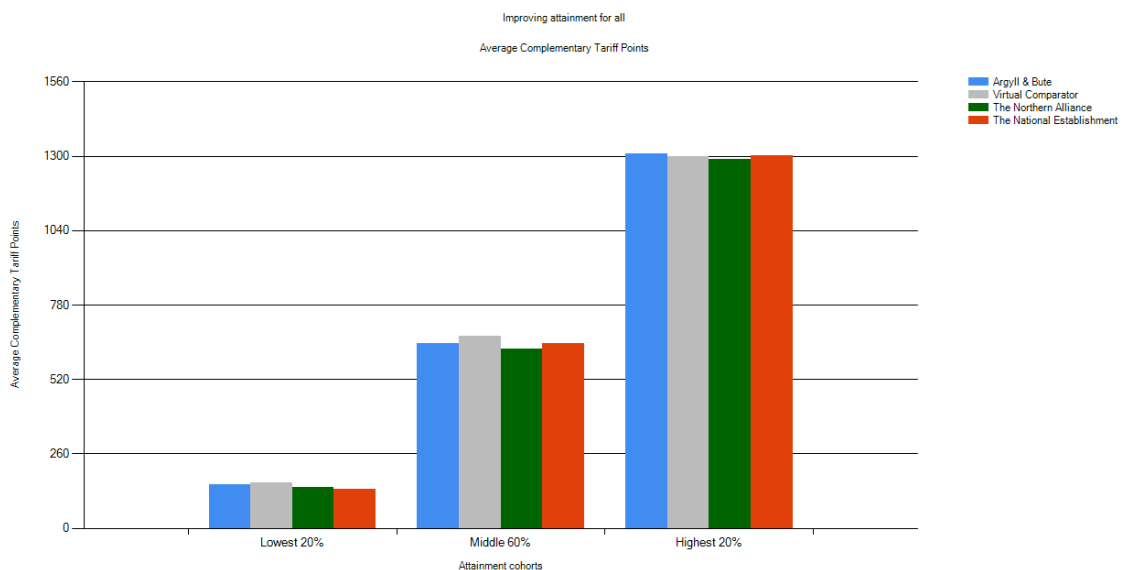


It can be seen that the attainment in 2022 of the highest attaining young people in Argyll and Bute is in line with both the VC and the attainment of the same cohort nationally.

For the middle 60% of attainers, in 2022 Argyll and Bute pupils performed in line with pupils nationally, but slightly below the level of the VC.

In 2022, the lowest attaining cohort achieved above the national average, but slightly below the VC level.

## Average cumulative attainment – school leavers



The overall attainment of Argyll and Bute young people who left school in 2022 is positive.

The average 2022 attainment of Argyll and Bute's highest achieving cohort was above that of the VC, the Northern Alliance group of local authorities and the rest of the country.

In 2022, the middle-attaining cohort on average attained at a higher level than the similar cohort in the Northern Alliance and nationally, and attainment is only slightly behind the VC.

The same is true for the lowest-attaining cohort of young people in Argyll and Bute, with the difference to the VC being minimal.

### **Raising Attainment for all in schools**

Head Teachers in all secondary schools are being challenged and supported to continually examine their curriculum structures and options frameworks to ensure that they allow all young people to attain and achieve to their maximum potential. This includes planning future learning and attainment pathways with pupils and their families at the earliest opportunity, to ensure that, as well as the required breadth of the S1-S3 Broad General Education, there is also the focus on depth of learning, specialisation and coherent progression in S1-S3 which reflects each young person's aspirations and interests and prepares them for high levels of Senior Phase attainment.

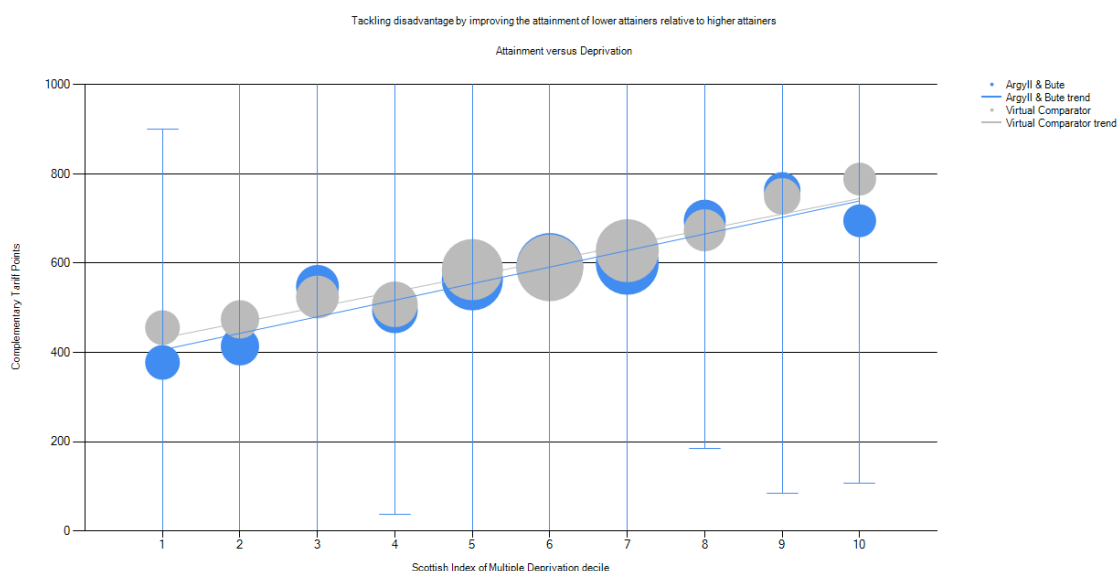
Secondary Head Teachers are also being challenged and supported to ensure their Senior Phase curricula are wide and dynamic. This will ensure that there are meaningful attainment and achievement opportunities for all young people – not only in the traditional academic context, but also in terms of vocational and skills-focussed courses and certification. In line with clear national thinking, schools are also working to develop the culture where there is parity of esteem between academic and vocational attainment, and all young people have access to relevant, stimulating courses which take them towards their preferred post-school positive destination.

By ensuring these types of wide, accessible and equitable senior-phase curricula are in place in our schools, the attainment and achievement of all young people will increase, regardless of their academic ability or to which percentage of attainers they belong.

#### **4.5 Attainment in Context of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**

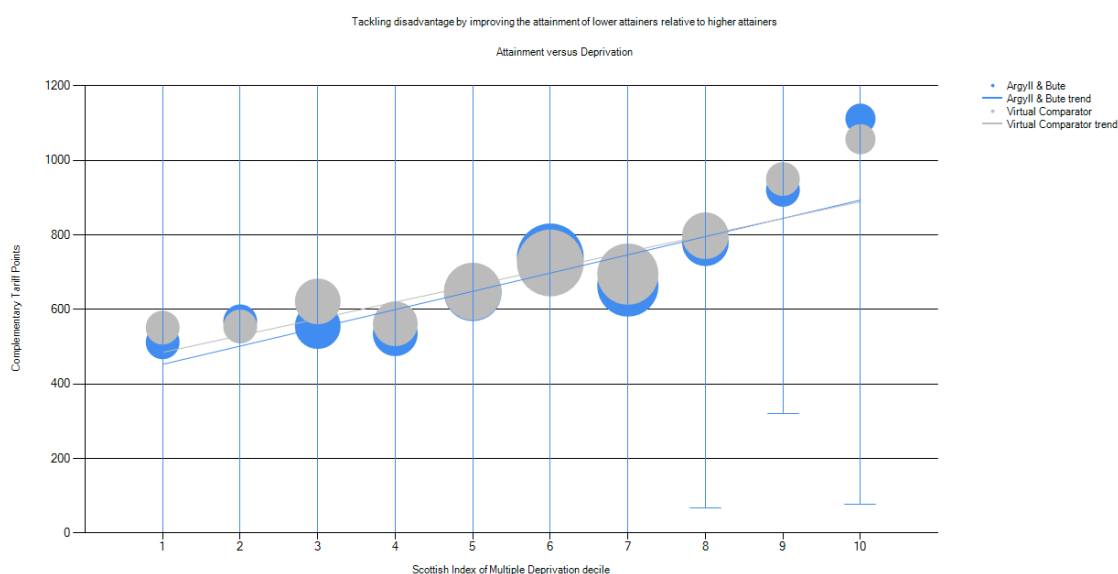
Analysis of attainment in the context of SIMD allows schools and the Education Service to evaluate how attainment is affected by social disadvantage, and take actions accordingly to ensure equity of opportunity and close the poverty-related attainment gap. Argyll and Bute's attainment Stretch Aims focus on reducing the gap in attainment between the most and least disadvantaged young people in the authority.

## Average attainment by SIMD decile compared with Virtual Comparator Data (at the end of S6, based on original S4 roll) – after appeals and Wider Achievement accreditation



From the above graph, it can be seen that in Argyll and Bute, pupils in SIMD centiles 1 and 2 – the least advantaged young people in the authority – are performing slightly below the VC. However, in both centiles the gap between Argyll and Bute pupils and the VC has reduced since October as a result of the inclusion of wider attainment accreditation and successful appeals. The rest of the deciles are broadly in line with the VC, apart from decile 10 – the most advantaged young people – which is below the VC. The small number in this cohort means it is difficult to draw statistical conclusions, as the performance of one or two pupils can make a significant difference to the data.

## Average attainment by SIMD decile – school leavers



Argyll and Bute school leavers from SIMD deciles 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 show as having, on average, attained at a slightly lower level than the VC, while deciles 2, 5, 6 and 10 attained on average in line with or above the VC.

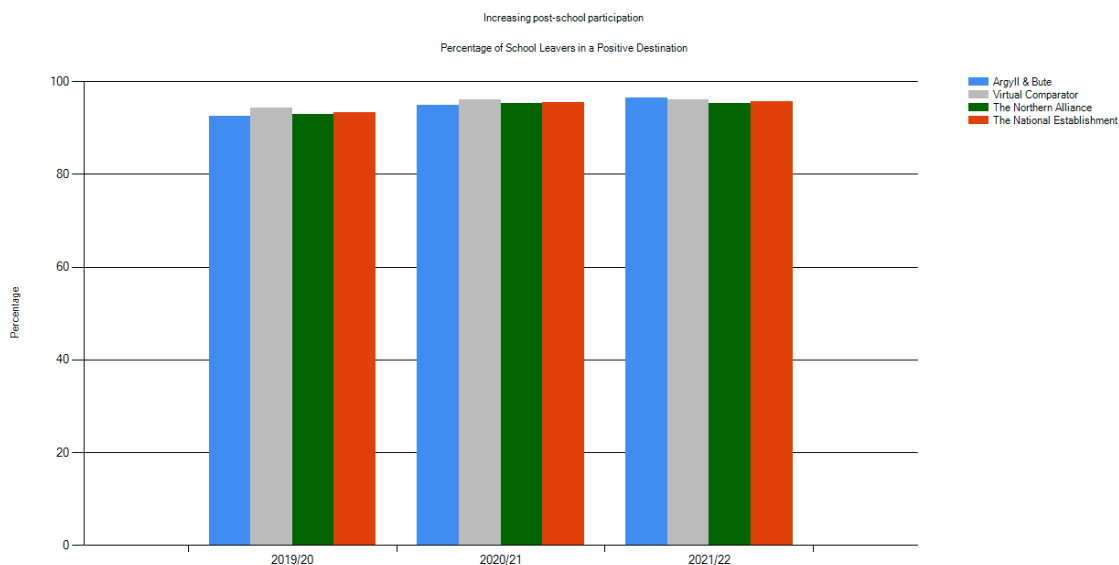
### **Raising attainment and achievement for our most disadvantaged young people**

As part of annual school improvement planning process, in their Standards and Quality Reports all secondary schools now complete detailed analysis of the impact their Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation has had on identified groups of the least advantaged young people. In their School Improvement Plans, Head Teachers also present detailed planning of how their PEF allocation will be spent in the coming year to reduce inequality and support the wellbeing and progress of pupils from the most deprived backgrounds. Additionally, Head Teachers must account for the attainment and achievement of the most disadvantaged pupils in their schools as part of the annual Attainment Meeting with the Executive Director, Heads of Service, Education Manager and Education Officer.

#### **4.6 Initial Destinations of young people in Argyll and Bute**

As detailed in the report to committee in December 2022, the Participation of 16-19 year-olds in Argyll and Bute is strong, with 93.9% of all such young people in employment, training or education, placing Argyll and Bute Council 5<sup>th</sup> out of all local authorities in Scotland for Participation.

The year-on-year initial destinations of school leavers significantly influences the Participation levels. The graph below illustrates the percentages of school leavers in Argyll and Bute securing a positive destination (employment, training, or continuing education) on leaving school in 2022.



Of those young people who left school in 2022, 96.4% moved into a positive destination. This continues an increasing trend over the last three years in positive destinations secured. It can be seen that the percentage of Argyll and Bute school leavers in a positive destination is greater than that of the VC, the Northern Alliance local authorities and the rest of the country, with the VC figure being exceeded for the first time in recent years.

The Education and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) teams continue to extend their work with schools, establishing and developing school-employer partnerships to allow meaningful work-based vocational learning for young people. Bespoke and individualised curricula are in place for many pupils, contextualised by their own interests and professional aspirations. There is particular focus on this type of engagement with young people who are disengaged or disadvantaged, and who would otherwise be least likely to attain a positive destination post-school.

Schools are also working closely with further and higher education establishments, to ensure all those who wish to pursue such a pathway are able to do so, regardless of situation or place. Additionally, Education has partnerships with a range of third sector agencies, and work closely with them to develop in young people the key skills for life and work required to attain and sustain positive destinations.

#### **4.7 Attainment of Care-Experienced Young People**

The welfare, engagement and attainment of Care-Experienced young people (CEYP) is a key focus in Argyll and Bute. The authority Principal Teacher for CEYP tracks and monitors the attainment of this cohort, and co-ordinates a range of interventions to support young people in maximising their attainment and achievement and entering into positive destinations.

The recent appointment of the Virtual Head Teacher for CEYP – creating a virtual school to rigorously address the needs and fulfil the entitlements of all such young people – is a measure of the prioritisation within the service of equity for all CEYP, and an unrelenting focus on their wellbeing and attainment.

The very small size of the CEYP cohort, and the sometimes challenging situations they face, means that year-on-year tracking of attainment trends is difficult, and attainment can fluctuate from year to year.

A full summary of the attainment of Care-Experienced Young People (CEYP) was provided in the December 2022 committee report on attainment (link above).

#### **Literacy and Numeracy**

Care-Experienced young people are supported to achieve to their maximum potential in Literacy and Numeracy, which often involves the overcoming of significant barriers.

Targeted one-to-one support for CEYP is provided both within schools and, when necessary, in the settings outwith schools which best suits the young people's needs.

The attainment of CEYP is closely tracked to identify those most in danger of not attaining in literacy and numeracy, and personalised interventions follow to support the achievement of awards.

As a result, the attainment in Literacy and Numeracy of CEYP is maximised in terms of what they are capable of at this time in their lives.

The February Insight update supplied data relating to CEYP who left school in 2022:

### **Literacy**

70% of CEYP school leavers achieved Level 4 Literacy.

50% of CEYP school leavers achieved Level 5 Literacy.

20% of CEYP school leavers achieved level 6 Literacy.

### **Numeracy**

70% of CEYP school leavers attained Level 4 Numeracy.

20% of CEYP school leavers attained level 5 Numeracy

In terms of their attainment across all subjects, Care Experienced young people in Argyll and Bute who left school in 2022 showed relatively strong attainment. The highest achieving 20% of CEYP school leavers attained more highly than CEYP across the Northern Alliance authorities and the rest of Scotland. The same pattern was evident for the middle and lowest attaining groups among CEYP.

### **School Leaver Initial Destinations**

90% of CEYP school leavers progressed to a positive post-school destination in 2022. This is in line with the VC, and above both the Northern Alliance authorities and national figures.

A factor in the positive post-school destinations for care-experienced young people is the personalised curriculum pathways which are in place for some CEYP pupils. These have involved a mixture of in-school learning and work-placements, during which skills for life and work are developed. Such activities have the added benefit of re-engaging with educational provision some CEYP whose attendance at school had fallen away.



## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Education Service will continue to take forward its programme of support and challenge with schools across the authority to secure further improvement in attainment and achievement outcomes for pupils.

This report updates previous reports to committee on key attainment performance data. It incorporates data from the Scottish Government's Insight tool, which was most recently updated in late February 2023 to include all post-appeal attainment, accreditation for wider achievement qualifications and attainment data relating to all 2022 school leavers.

- 5.2 Central Officers are taking forward a programme of support and challenge with schools across the authority involving a range of actions and measures to support schools to secure further improvement in examination outcomes for pupils. Increasing attainment and achievement, and ensuring that all young people achieve to their potential, regardless of location, circumstance or potential barriers, is at the heart of the work of the Education Service.
- 5.3 Heads of Service and Area Managers continue to meet regularly with Head Teachers to ensure appropriate levels of both scrutiny and collaboration are in place in relation to performance and securing positive outcomes for young people. This work is reinforced and enhanced by central staff through their involvement with national performance networks, such as the Northern Alliance group of local authorities and the Association of Directors which allows them to share best practice with wider Local Authority colleagues.
- 5.4 Additionally, the Education Service has reviewed and improved the process for analysis and evaluation of attainment data. Attainment Meetings with individual secondary Head Teachers take place in October/November, at which all aspects of attainment from S1-S6 are analysed and key improvement strategies to raise attainment are discussed and agreed.
- 5.5 Secondary school Head Teachers will present individual school performance analysis for session 2021-2022 at Local Area Committees in June 2023. Additionally, the agendas for March 2023 Area Committee Meetings include opportunities for young people to speak personally to elected members about their own educational journeys and pathways, illustrating the many personalised pathways to attainment which are available to young people in Argyll and Bute's secondary schools.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Policy:** This report links directly to Outcome 3 in the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement (Education Skills and Training Maximises Opportunities for All). OCTF: Key Objective 1; NIF: Priority 1
- 6.2 **Financial:** None

- 6.3      **Legal:** None
- 6.4      **HR:** None
- 6.5      **Fairer Scotland Duty:**
- 6.5.1    Equalities – None
- 6.5.2    Socio-economic Duty – None
- 6.5.3    Islands – None
- 6.6      **Risk:** The performance of Argyll and Bute schools in national examinations and wider achievement qualifications can significantly enhance or detract from the Council’s reputation and attractiveness as an area to work and live in.
- 6.7      **Climate Change** - None
- 6.8      **Customer Service:** This report provides elected Members with an overview of Service Performance.

**Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education**

**Councillor Yvonne McNeilly - Policy Lead for Education**

**Wendy Brownlie**

Head of Education – Performance and Improvement

**Jennifer Crocket**

Chief Education Officer/ Head of Education – Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement

**Simon Easton**

Education Manager: Senior Phase and 16 Plus

**9 March 2023**