

SQA SCHOOL EXAMINATION RESULTS 2014

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to provide an update to elected members on the outcome of the 2014 examination diet, to outline the results for pupils entered for formal examinations and to share the successes of Argyll and Bute pupils across wider achievement.
- 1.2 Following changes to the New National Examinations, the introduction of Insight, replacing the previous STACS (Standard Tables and Charts) the Council received SQA examination results for all pupils entered for formal qualification in August 2014. Scottish Government and its partners have developed a new Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool (SPBT), now renamed "Insight" to assist local authorities and secondary schools analyse, compare and improve the performance of pupils in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. A comprehensive range of statistical data was provided for all pupils across each of the ten secondary schools and Education Services undertook an analysis of the statistical information.
- 1.3 The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence began in academic session 2013-14 for pupils in S4. New qualifications include National 3, 4 and 5 which replace Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and 2 qualifications. National 1 and 2 qualifications are also available to meet the needs of learners with specific learning requirements replacing Access 1 and 2 qualifications. (*Appendix 1 – Qualifications overview*). These overlaps prevent direct comparisons with attainment at S4 level in previous years. However, the 2013/14 data will provide a baseline for future years' trend analysis. As a consequence of these changes extreme caution should be exercised when making comparisons of the overall levels of performance across and between schools. Additionally, in some instances data for some schools in key qualifications is anonymised to ensure individual pupils cannot be identified.
- 1.4 Over recent years, Argyll and Bute schools have been developing courses which are increasingly relevant to their pupils' needs. Some of these courses are either not accredited by the SQA or are courses run in partnership with the post-16 sector and not credited to the school's overall percentages. A summary of wider achievement of pupils is contained within the report.

- 1.5 This paper presents an overview and analysis of the progress of schools in implementing New National Qualifications and, importantly, illustrates the performance of schools in SQA examinations in 2014.
- 1.6 As part of the Authority approach to securing improvement for all learners the Education Service is continuing to work with individual schools through a comprehensive programme of support and challenge over the course of session 2014/2015 and beyond. Section seven of this report outlines the key approaches being taken.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Community Services Committee is asked to:
- note the outcome of the examination results for pupils in academic year 2013/14;
 - note and accept the strategic programme of performance review between schools and education development and improvement staff as noted at section 7.1 of the report, and
 - continue to support the work of the Education Service in supporting schools to secure continuous improvement in outcomes for Argyll and Bute Learners.
 - Request a further report at the June Community Services Committee considering the national position arising from information released by Insight (anticipated release date in March 2015)
 - Note that a discussion item will be included in the Committee business session prior to the March Community Services Committee arising from the Argyll and Bute information within the Accounts Commission report on Scottish Education (June 2014)

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3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Council received SQA examination results for all pupils entered for formal qualifications in session 2013/2014 in August. This provided comprehensive information on the outcome of examination performance for pupils across all Argyll and Bute schools. Due to changes to the presentation of statistical information no national or benchmarking 'family' comparisons data will be available until spring 2015. The introduction of Insight, formerly The Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool (SPBT), presents a significant change for all Scottish Local Authorities in receiving, reviewing and presenting examination data. As a consequence of these changes, the content and style of this report differs from previous attainment reports.
- 3.2 The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence began in academic session 2013-14 for pupils in S4. New qualifications include National 3, 4 and 5 which replace Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and 2 qualifications. National 1 and 2 qualifications are also available to meet the needs of learners with specific learning requirements replacing Access 1 and 2 qualifications. (*Appendix 1 – Qualifications overview*). These overlaps prevent direct comparisons with attainment at S4 level in previous years. However, the 2013/14 data will provide a baseline for future years' trend analysis. As a consequence of these changes extreme caution should be exercised when making comparisons of the overall levels of performance across and between schools. Additionally, in some instances data for some schools in key qualifications is anonymised to ensure individual pupils cannot be identified.
- 3.3 Over recent years, Argyll and Bute schools have been developing courses which are increasingly relevant to their pupils' needs. Some of these courses are either not accredited by the SQA or are courses run in partnership with the post-16 sector and not credited to the school's overall percentages. Whilst this supports learners to achieve and sustain a positive post school destination, it does have an impact on the school's attainment of qualifications accredited through the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). It is worth noting that work is underway by Scottish Government and its partners to align national courses in order to provide recognition for pupils within the overall tariff scores.
- 3.4 Scottish Government and its partners have developed a new Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool (SPBT), now renamed "Insight" to assist local authorities and secondary schools analyse, compare and improve the performance of

pupils in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. The new online tool will be live from August 2014 onwards and will replace Standard Tables and Charts (STACS), the toolkit previously used.

- 3.5 A preview edition of Insight has been available, and schools in Argyll and Bute have been able to access this. Head Teachers, Campus Principals, and Depute Head Teachers were provided with the opportunity to attend a briefing led by the Professional Advisor to the project.

Nationally co-ordinated events for schools took place between April and June prior to implementation of INSIGHT in August 2014.

The new INSIGHT model is designed to:

- provide data on four national measures which have been carefully selected to support Curriculum for Excellence;
- replace the current STACs from August 2014;
- be easier and more intuitive to use than STACs and include data on “latest and best” pupil awards;
- include a wider range of SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) credit-rated awards and programmes;
- include commentaries to aid interpretation and prompt a “closer look”;
- be used by secondary schools, local authorities and Education Scotland. It will be available to all teaching staff in secondary schools;
- provide more information on educational outcomes including post-school destinations and attainment in literacy and numeracy, and
- be one of a range of approaches to performance evaluation and improvement. Others include local analyses and self-evaluation processes both at school and local authority level, the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) and Education Scotland inspection processes. A key outcome of this revised approach is the functionality which allows the tracking of progress of pupils in key groups. For example, looked after young people.

The tool will encourage:

- professional reflection and compare schools to a “virtual” comparator allowing users to see how the performance of their pupils compares to a similar group of pupils from across Scotland, and
- a collaborative approach to looking at data and working together as part of the improvement process encouraging schools to identify learning partners.

4: RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Community Services Committee is asked to:

- note the outcome of the examination results for pupils in academic year 2013/14;
- note and accept the strategic programme of performance review between schools and education development and improvement staff as noted at section 7.1 of the report, and

- continue to support the work of the Education Service in supporting schools to secure continuous improvement in outcomes for Argyll and Bute Learners.
- Request a further report at the June Community Services Committee considering the national position arising from information released by Insight (anticipated release date in March 2015)
- Note that a discussion item will be included in the Committee business session prior to the March Community Services Committee arising from the Argyll and Bute information within the Accounts Commission report on Scottish Education (June 2014)

5: DETAIL

- 5.1 The performance of Argyll and Bute schools in 2014 is slightly below the current national performance in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations (*Table 1: refers*). However, it should be noted that new courses and examinations were introduced during session 2013/2014 with pupils being presented for the first phase of the new examinations in May 2014.

Due to the implementation of the revised National Qualifications at level 3, 4 & 5, it is not reasonable to compare statistical outcomes across earlier years. Therefore, the results for Argyll and Bute pupils in session 2013/2014 are illustrated in individual tables across each of the six course levels.

- 5.2 The following tables illustrate performance in each of the ten secondary schools across the New National Qualifications Framework:

Table 1: presents the overall performance of Argyll and Bute across all course levels.

COURSE	ARGYLL & BUTE AVERAGE (%)	NATIONAL AVERAGE (%)	DIFFERENCE (%)
INTERMEDIATE 1	72.2	73.2	-1
NATIONAL 4	89.4	93	-3.6
INTERMEDIATE 2	70.4	77.9	-7.5
NATIONAL 5	81.7	81.1	0.6
HIGHER	76.6	77.1	-0.5
ADVANCED HIGHER	78.5	81	-2.5

Summary:

Overall, the results for pupils across almost all levels are below and in some instances are significantly below national averages. As a consequence of the reporting model and timescales it is not possible to provide a comparison against similar authorities and, as such, these results should be treated with caution at this stage.

Table 2: Intermediate 1 examination outcomes

INTERMEDIATE 1	No. of Entries	A	B	C	A-C	Ungraded passes	Total Passes	%
DGS	69	16	20	15	51	7	58	73.9
HERMITAGE	114	31	26	28	85	0	85	74.6
LJC	47	4	8	6	18	5	23	48.9
OBAN	47	8	12	12	32	1	33	68.1
RJC	31	1	3	10	14	9	23	74.2
TOBERMORY								100.0
TOTAL	308	60	69	71	200	22	222	
Authority Average								72.2%
National Average								73.2%

Intermediate 1 summary:

The performance of schools in Intermediate 1 examinations is positive overall. Six out of the ten secondary schools presented pupils for Intermediate 1 examinations, with four exceeding the national examination average. In the remaining two schools performance was below or well below the national average.

Table 3: Intermediate 2 examination outcomes

INTERMEDIATE 2	No. of Entries	A	B	C	A-C	Ungraded passes	Total passes	%
CGS								100.0
DGS	248	48	70	47	165	0	165	66.5
HERMITAGE	350	75	96	95	266	0	266	76.0
ISLAY	15	0	5	3	8	0	8	53.3
LJC	164	26	44	49	119	2	121	73.8
OBAN	203	39	48	47	134	0	134	66.0
RJC	124	14	18	46	78	0	78	62.9
TARBERT	24	9	4	7	20	0	20	83.3
TIREE								0.0
TOBERMORY	35	9	11	6	26	0	26	74.3
TOTAL	1163	220	296	300	816	2	818	
Authority Average								70.4%
National Average								77.9%

Intermediate 2 summary:

Nine of the ten secondary schools presented pupils for Intermediate 2 examinations, with two exceeding the national examination average and five exceeding the authority average. However, in the remaining four schools the performance of pupils is below or well below the national average.

Table 4: National 4 presentations (no external examination)

NATIONAL 4	No. of Entries	PASS	%
CGS	254	211	83.1
DGS	402	341	84.8
HERMITAGE	16	16	100.0
ISLAY	146	144	98.6
LJC	157	128	81.5
OBAN	372	358	96.2
RJC	170	154	90.6
TARBERT	69	63	91.3
TOBERMORY	37	36	97.3
Totals	1623	1451	
Authority Average			89.4%
National Average			93.0%

National 4 summary:

National 4 awards for pupils in Argyll and Bute are positive overall. Nine of the ten secondary schools presented pupils for National 4 certification. In four of the school pupils exceeded the national pupil average. These results may alter with pupils not achieving recognition at National 5 levels being credited with National 4 awards.

Table 5: National 5 examination outcomes

National 5	No. of Entries	A	B	C	A-C	Number of passes	%
CGS	371	147	87	52	286	286	77.1
DGS	674	310	160	100	570	570	84.6
HERMITAGE							*50.0
ISLAY	226	68	67	60	195	195	86.3
LJC	454	184	97	84	365	365	80.4
OBAN	652	278	148	115	541	541	83.0
RJC	184	49	38	47	134	134	72.8
TARBERT	80	34	24	12	70	70	87.5
TIREE	30	13	6	2	21	21	70.0
TOBERMORY	96	48	19	13	80	80	83.3
Totals	2767	1131	646	485	2262	2262	
Authority Average							81.7%
National Average							81.1%

National 5 summary:

Ten secondary schools presented pupils at S4 for National 5 examinations. A very small number of pupils were presented by Hermitage Academy, in line with their chosen curriculum model - therefore performance is significantly affected. The performance across the nine secondary schools in National 5 examinations is variable. Five out of the nine schools exceeded national performance level, while the remaining four schools were below and in some instances well below both the authority and national averages.

Table 6: Higher examination outcomes

HIGHER	No. of Entries	A	B	C	A-C	Total Passes	%
CGS	266	74	88	59	221	221	83.1
DGS	444	97	114	127	338	338	76.1
HERMITAGE	883	188	262	213	663	663	75.1
ISLAY	106	29	31	24	84	84	79.2
LJC	245	65	67	59	191	191	78.0
OBAN	648	183	177	154	514	514	79.3
RJC	175	30	43	46	119	119	68.0
TARBERT	44	16	10	11	37	37	84.1
TIREE							66.7
TOBERMORY	98	17	18	27	62	62	63.3
TOTALs	2909	699	811	720	2229	2229	
Authority Average							76.6%
National Average							77.1%

Higher examinations summary:

The performance of schools in Higher examinations is positive overall. Five out of the ten secondary schools exceeded both the authority and national examination averages. A further two schools were slightly below the authority average and, in three schools performance was below both authority and national averages.

Table 7: Advanced Higher examination outcomes

ADVANCED HIGHER	No. of Entries	A	B	C	A-C	Total passes	%
CGS	16	7	2	3	12	12	75.0
DGS	20	5	3	6	14	14	70.0
HERMITAGE	175	41	47	49	137	137	78.3
ISLAY							50.0
LJC	37	14	3	11	28	28	75.7
OBAN	59	15	18	15	48	48	81.4
RJC	15	6	4	3	13	13	86.7
TARBERT	11	7	2	1	10	10	90.9
TIREE							100.0
TOBERMORY							75.0
TOTALS	333	95	79	88	262	262	
Authority Average							78.5%
National Average							81%

Advanced Higher summary:

The performance of schools in Advanced Higher examination is above both the authority and national average position in four out of ten secondary schools. However, in the remaining schools the performance of pupils in Advanced Highers is below or significantly below the national average. It should be noted that due to the small number of pupils being presented for Advanced Highers the statistical variances can be significant.

5.3 Attainment of Looked After Children (LAC)

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy for Looked After Children

	Argyll & Bute	National
S4 Level 4 literacy and numeracy	27.27%	29.17%
S4 Level 5 literacy and numeracy	9.09%	3.80%
S5 Level 4 literacy and numeracy	81.82%	36.56%
S5 Level 5 literacy and numeracy	18.18%	12.99%
S6 Level 4 literacy and numeracy	50.00%	72.73%
S6 Level 5 literacy and numeracy	50.00%	42.05%

Educational attainment for LAAC Young People in 2014

	Argyll & Bute	National
S4 Level 4 literacy and numeracy	44.44%	45.00%
S4 Level 5 literacy and numeracy	11.11%	7.32%
S5 Level 4 literacy and numeracy	66.67%	53.40%
S5 Level 5 literacy and numeracy	10.51%	18.32%
S6 Level 4 literacy and numeracy	25.00%	72.73%
S6 Level 5 literacy and numeracy	0%	39.67%

- 5.4 The average attainment tariff score for looked after children in Argyll and Bute for the 2014 examination diet was 80.3. This compares with 58 for session 2011/12 (as reported in the Scottish Government 'Educational Outcomes for Scotland's Looked After Children 2011-12', Scottish Government July 2013). A national average comparison is not yet available for the 2013/14 session.
*(source: SEEMIS Management Information System)
- 5.5 Tariff scores are the cumulative total of tariff points. Tariff points relate to the type of qualification, the subject and the grade achieved, and are allocated on that basis. Tariff points exist across a wide range of qualification providers. For example, a grade A in a Higher is worth 80 points, an ASDAN Personal Effectiveness award is worth 30 points.
- 5.6 Looked after Young People in Argyll and Bute who leave school are increasingly entering positive destinations (education, employment or training). In 2014, **77.8%** of looked after young people who left school entered a positive destination. Four LAC entered FE/HE, 1 gained employment, 1 undertook an Activity Agreement and 2 were unemployed. There were no young persons with unknown destinations. This compares very positively with **46.7%** of LAC school leavers in 2013.

6: ALTERNATIVE COURSES AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 6.1 Argyll and Bute schools continue to deliver a comprehensive programme of alternative courses designed to meet the needs of all learners. These courses are defined as:
- Skills for Work: e.g. Hairdressing, Hospitality, Rural Skills (Intermediate 1 and 2);
 - Alternative Qualifications: e.g. ASDAN, Duke of Edinburgh, Princes Trust XL, YASS – S6 Open University, and
 - UHI Courses: e.g. Politics, Scottish Literature, Scotland's Music BA

The participation rates for young people are as follows:

Number of Young People studying:

Students	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Skills for Work	419	647	621	563	524
Alternative Qualifications	401	787	1386	1491	1364
S6/UHI Partnership	0	0	0	4	3
TOTAL	820	1434	2007	2058	1891

N.B: the reduced number of young people engaged in programmes is as a direct result of the fall in pupil numbers.

Number of courses on offer:

Number of courses	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Skills for Work	13	16	16	20	16
Alternative Qualifications	24	27	37	31	33
S6/UHI Partnership	0	0	0	2	6
TOTAL	37	43	53	53	55

7. MONITORING PROGRESS AND IMPROVING OUTCOMES

7.1 As part of the Authority approach to securing improvement for all learners the Education Service will continue to work with individual schools through a comprehensive programme of support and challenge over the course of session 2014/2015 and beyond. Key approaches include:

- i. an expectation that all Head Teachers will submit their initial analysis of their school's results to the Education Service following the initial release of results by the SQA in August;
- ii. members of the Education Team undertake a comprehensive review of the attainment sets for schools, including discreet subject areas, identification of key trends: positive and negative, three year averages and subject trends;
- iii. meaningful discussion of the outcome of statistical analysis of school reports between the Authority and individual schools;
- iv. ensuring evaluative discussions between school senior management team and subject department leaders take place. These will focus primarily on the performance of individual subject departments across one, three and five years;
- v. Head Teachers invite local Elected Members to a meeting with senior school staff to discuss the examination results in depth;
- vi. following the December report to the Council by the Head of Service and Education Manager, reports on achievement, including examination results, for individual secondary schools/joint campuses will be presented by Head Teachers/Principals at their respective Area Committee meeting;
- vii. Education Officers will take forward a programme of school visits to discuss detailed analysis and predictions for the next examination period. (Due to the revised timescales for the presentation of national attainment statistics, these discussions are anticipated for conclusion early in 2015). Where appropriate, improvement actions at subject level to be agreed. These may include working across schools to improve consistency of standards, and
- viii. in addition, examination results and approaches to quality improvement will be routinely discussed with the Education Scotland, Area Liaison Officer.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 In 2014 the performance of Argyll and Bute schools varied across national qualification measures. In order to secure improvement for learners the work of the Education Development and Improvement Service over the course of session 2014/2015 will take forward a programme of support and challenge with schools across the authority across a range of actions and measures. The results from the 2014 examination diet will now be incorporated into improvement objectives and targets to support further improvement for examinations in 2015.
- 8.2 A further report on Educational Attainment and Wider Achievement will be presented to Community Services Committee following the publication of National Performance information anticipated in Spring 2015.

9. IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 **Policy:** This report links directly to Outcome 3 in the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement (Education Skills and Training Maximises Opportunities for All)
- 9.2 **Financial:** None
- 9.3 **Personnel:** None
- 9.4 **Equal Opportunities:** None
- 9.5 **Legal:** None
- 9.6 **Risk:** The performance of Argyll and Bute schools in national examinations can significantly enhance or detract from the Council's reputation and attractiveness as an area to work and live in.
- 9.7 **Customer Services:** This report provides elected members with an overview of Service Performance.

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Appendix 1: Qualifications overview

SCQF (Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework)	New National Qualifications		Replaces
1 and 2	National 1 and national 2	>	Access 1 and Access 2
3	National 3	>	Access 3 Standard Grade(Foundation Level)
4	National 4	>	Standard Grade(General Level) Intermediate 1
5	National 5	>	Standard Grade (Credit Level) Intermediate 2
6	Higher (available 2015)	>	Higher
7	Advanced Higher (available 2016)	>	Advanced Higher

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and HEIs. However, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information, please visit the SCQF website at www.sqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database. N.B. MA Frameworks have a notional level on the SCQF, but all component parts are credit rated



SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	SVQs/MAs
12	Some SQA qualifications are changing between 2013-2016. See www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner			Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship SVQ 5
10				Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship
9				Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate
8	Higher National Diploma		Diploma Of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4	
7	Advanced Higher Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate	Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3	
6	Higher			Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3	
5	National 5 Intermediate 2			Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 2	
4	National 4 Intermediate 1	National Certificate	National Progression Award	SVQ 1	
3	National 3 Access 3				
2	National 2 Access 2				
1	National 1 Access 1				