



**Evaluation of the Aberdeen City Council
National Improvement Framework
Plan 2022/23**



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Context

This evaluation of the education service aims to critique how effectively the service has contributed to the improvements outlined in the [Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#) (LOIP) and associated [Children's Services Plan](#) as well as reflecting on the improvements detailed in the Aberdeen City Council [National Improvement Framework Plan](#) in order to determine if the service is successfully improving outcomes for children and young people. The evaluation draws on the Scottish Government Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress to ensure that our approach to evaluation and planning, including the setting of stretch aims across the service, is reflective of national guidance and complements work already undertaken to evaluate progress against the [children's rights](#) and [child poverty agenda](#). The report also considers our progress towards delivery of The Promise and our readiness to respond to the anticipated education reforms.

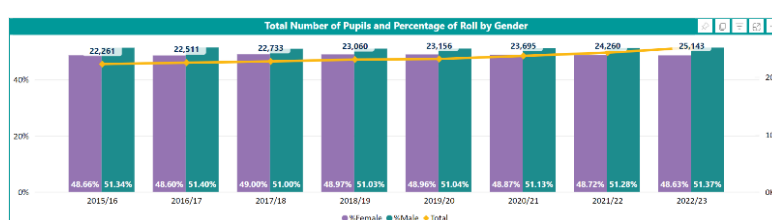
This evaluation aims to align in structure with other key plans for children including that of the Integrated Joint Board and the Children's Services Plan. This builds on the good progress made in aligning planning for children and families to ensure full alignment of work across the Community Planning Partnership.

Reflections from the Chief Education Officer

Session 2022/23 saw the Local Authority respond positively in support of those fleeing their homeland due to conflict. The city now supports the highest proportion of those in need of humanitarian aid with 6.68 people per 1000 (or 0.67% of the city population) being supported locally compared to a national average of 3.08 per 1000 (or 0.31%). Education and health staff proactively collaborated in June 2022 to design and deliver our 5-week Settle in the City programme. Delivery of the programme helped the Education Service better understand the needs of children and young people and make effective arrangements to enrol our Ukrainian guests into Early Learning and Childcare settings and schools from August whilst enabling health colleagues in identify and address any identified health concerns.

The service continues to welcome a high volume of international families coming to the city to study at one of the 2 Higher Education Institutions, with demand for school enrolments placing considerable pressure on schools and the central team. In real terms this pressure has reduced the quality improvement resource available to support schools. Despite the challenges, our schools have responded positively.

The school roll is now around 12% higher than in 2019 and this has led to changes in the use of spaces in some schools to increase classroom capacity. Our roll is far more fluid than before. 6.74% of our current school population arrived in the city after the school census date in September 2022.



Although there is an over provision of school accommodation across some Associated Schools Groups being explored through ongoing work on the School Estate Review, families are choosing to locate in communities within easy reach of the Universities and established international communities resulting in spaces not being available where needed most.

Despite the challenges, the children and young people have benefited from relatively consistent staffing and the trend of being able to recruit to school based posts has been maintained. Some challenges in the recruitment of high quality senior and middle leaders are evident, and this trend is mirrored nationally.

Quality improvement visits have evidenced improvement against some core Quality Indicators, but the level of improvement is inconsistent with different patterns emerging across sectors. In many settings there remains a need to continue to focus on high quality learning, teaching and assessment and to improve approaches to planning for individuals and groups. The Local Authorities in the Regional Improvement Collaborative have committed to work together with Education Scotland to address this vulnerability further over school session 2023/24.

Although there is evidence of improvement in inspection outcomes compared to the outcomes being realised before the pandemic, there is evidence of considerable variation signalling a need to take a more proportionate approach to quality improvement. A refreshed Quality Improvement Framework for 2023/34 has been developed to support this change and the approach was endorsed by the Education and Children's Services Committee in July 2023. Approaches to quality improvement have latterly drawn on the considerable experience of high performing school leaders and this approach will be mainstreamed across all sectors from August 2023.

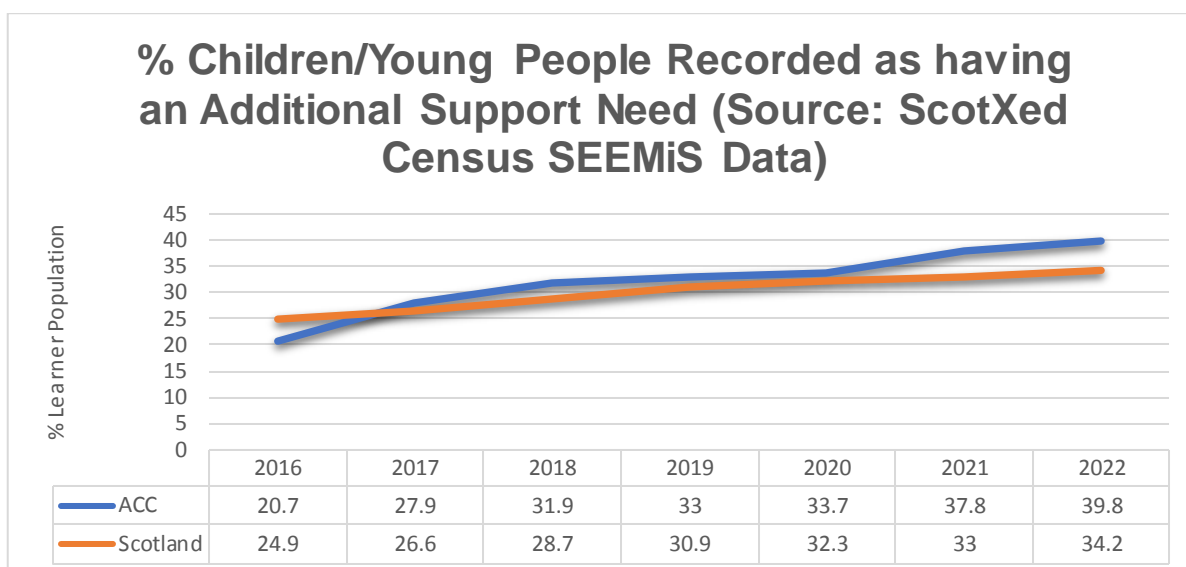
Targeted Early Learning and Childcare settings established as part of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (such as the Links Hub and Duthie Park Outdoor provision), have achieved very positive evaluations from recent Care Inspectorate Inspections and there are more Early Learning and Childcare settings now achieving evaluations of good or better, but there is still work to be done. The Education Service will maintain a relentless focus on this area and welcome a peer review of our approach in November 2023. We now plan to utilise the expertise of staff achieving high evaluations to support less confident settings to address variation. Taking this approach will provide capacity beyond the 6 Early Learning and Childcare Locality Leads and help realise improvement at greater pace. It is thought that the impending publication of the single quality framework for Early Learning and Childcare will help further clarify standards.

There has been an encouraging increase in the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in the city with 94.74% of our eligible population placed in 2022/23 compared to 91.22% in 2021/22. There has also been a 50% increase in the number of eligible 2s placed. In line with national policy, we will consider how best to extend provision for some aged 1 and 2 and consider how best to develop the provision of wrap around childcare for others of primary age when more details of the national policy are known.

Working in collaboration with the Data and Insights team, the service has continued to drive the further development of Power BI dashboards which provide Central Officers,

Head Teachers and other school staff with access to a wide range of data to support improvement both locally and city wide. These tools are of high quality, their strength recognised by national agencies, but there are indications that they have not been fully exploited at school level. Data literacy will be an area of focus over session 2023/24.

The service continues to support a high number of children with additional support needs. Although data for 2022/23 has yet to be validated, 39.4% of children and young people have been identified as having an additional support need. There are indications that the number of children with additional support needs is continuing to rise. This rise has triggered the inclusion of those with additional support needs and disability within our Integrated Children’s Services Plan.



Increased collaboration across the organisation and wider partnership continues to be prioritised with the refreshed Children’s Services Plan outlining our shared ambitions. The pooling of resource, co-location and joint decision making around available resource has become more universal. It is now necessary to consider how to develop this approach further at community as well as city level given the emerging learning from the CELCIS research into Children’s Services.

The Children’s Services Plan is driving our work on the development of a model of partnership Family Support in keeping with The Promise, an improved neurodevelopmental pathway as a pathfinder for the Children and Young People’s Mental Health Delivery Board and a sharper focus on child poverty.

The service anticipates on-going consideration of how the implementation of the National Care Service (NCS) will impact on current arrangements to ensure that children and families continue to receive a consistent offer of support during any period of transition. The City’s Chief Officers Group (COG) is overseeing early consideration of the implications of the NCS to ensure continued close collaboration between the universal service of education and the specialist service of Children’s Social Work. Work is progressing at pace to design and deliver a ‘Bairns Hoose’ for those who experience the care and justice systems.

The refreshed Children's Services Plan encourages senior leaders from across the Community Planning Partnership to hold each other to account for the quality of services being delivered. Local Government Benchmarking data shows that Aberdeen City's children's services are the most improved over the last year. This focus on improvement will be maintained as there is still much to do.



The cost of living crisis, changes in the population as a result of inward migration and the number of families seeking refuge in the city has resulted in the needs of our children, young people, families and staff continuing to change. The service continues to be responsive and agile.

Recent pupil mental health and wellbeing surveys evidence improvement in almost all areas compared to 6 months ago, indicating that interventions have impacted positively. 5% more children in Aberdeen City report having good health compared to the national average now, with self-reported peer relationships, hyperactivity, conduct and emotional symptoms more positive than the national mean. There are signs however, that perceptions of affluence impact our children to a greater degree and that young people who did not choose to disclose gender report more negative outcomes than their peers nationally. There is a need to work with Community Planning Partners to address these findings.

Levels of child poverty in the city are below the national average, however, levels are relatively high when compared with our comparator authorities. We need to maintain a clear focus on the child poverty agenda. In response to the cost-of-living crisis, our ongoing partnership with the Financial Inclusion Team, funded through Scottish Attainment Challenge funding, has continued to provide timely support for families experiencing financial difficulties. Taking this approach has ensured that families are accessing the support they are entitled to with school referrals realising financial gains of £1,077,325.24 for families.

The education service worked with officers from across the organisation and local partnership to plan and deliver holiday programmes during Summer, October, and Easter school holidays. The offer consists of a priority programme for those families at greatest risk of poverty and a universal offer. Evaluations from parents and young people continue to be consistently high sitting at 9.7 out of 10. The allocation of £100,000 as part of the council budget and allocation of a Central Officer to coordinate the programme will allow the service to provide an offer during holiday periods over school session 2023/24.

The service continues to build on the positive gains made in its use of technology. 48% of our pupil population now have access to a chrome book and this will increase with the national commitment to ensure all children and young people have access to a device. We are using the Logan Report on the Technology Ecosystem as a catalyst for change and collaborating with partners across Further and Higher Education to ensure our children and young people are well placed to succeed in this growth sector. This work is being driven alongside our work on senior phase curriculum alignment through the provision of a maximised ABZ Campus offer designed to expand the range of pathways for young people. Phase 1 was launched in June 2023, and we are now working hard on Phase 2. This whole system approach will continue to be a focus over 23/24 and will help ensure that our young people are well placed to secure a positive destination and aid the long-term prosperity of the city.

After a few years of restrictions, the Music Service has now planned for the roll out of city-wide ensembles. In preparation, group performances at locality and city level resumed in 2022/23 with a Christmas concert at the Beach Ballroom involving over 500 learners and culminating in an exceptional finale. Our first Big Sing, organised in partnership with Robert Gordon's College and involving every P4 pupil in the city, was held in Duthie Park in June. Plans are now progressing to build these events into our yearly calendar.

Work to keep the Promise has seen two Edge of Care Pilots operational with emerging evidence that the approach is successfully helping to mitigate risk in these two communities. On-going development and subsequent evaluation will help us determine next steps as we continue to shape our Family Support Model. We need to consider how we might scale up the pilots to extend the approach across other communities who would benefit.

During session 22/23 schools actively reintroduced the aspects of outdoor learning which were halted during the pandemic, these include P7 residentials, day visits using coach transport, and Duke of Edinburgh's award camping expeditions. Secondary schools started planning overseas visits in late 2022 when restrictions were lifted, with most of these scheduled to take place in summer 2023 and beyond due to need for a long lead in time.

The Duke of Edinburgh's award programme has returned to pre pandemic levels across the city with new groups at Oldmachar Academy, the Virtual School and the Open Award Centre who are now based at Northfield Academy. There are currently 992 pupils active in DofE across the city.

The publication of 'All Learners in Scotland Matter' in late May 2023 presents an opportunity to respond positively to on-going education reforms. The guiding values and Call to Action steer the service to continue to sharpen its focus on high-quality teaching and learning, continue to widen the range of different learner pathways, establish alternative routes to success, and consider the range of appropriate assessments required to reflect the unique talents of each learner, support their ambitions, and meet the needs of a changing world. The service will continue to work on these key themes and has considered the report fully in establishing priorities for 2023/24.

The report that follows has been colour coded to make it easier for the reader to reference progress made in relation to the Plan, text in either blue or pink highlights a direct reference to the Plan.

I am exceptionally proud of how the service continues to reshape and respond whilst maintaining a focus on improving outcomes, I also appreciate that there will be a need to become increasingly focussed on how we use a reducing central resource to ensure that we identify the small number of key changes that will realise the greatest improvement. I greatly appreciate the considerable expertise at our disposal from across the organisation and wider partnership.

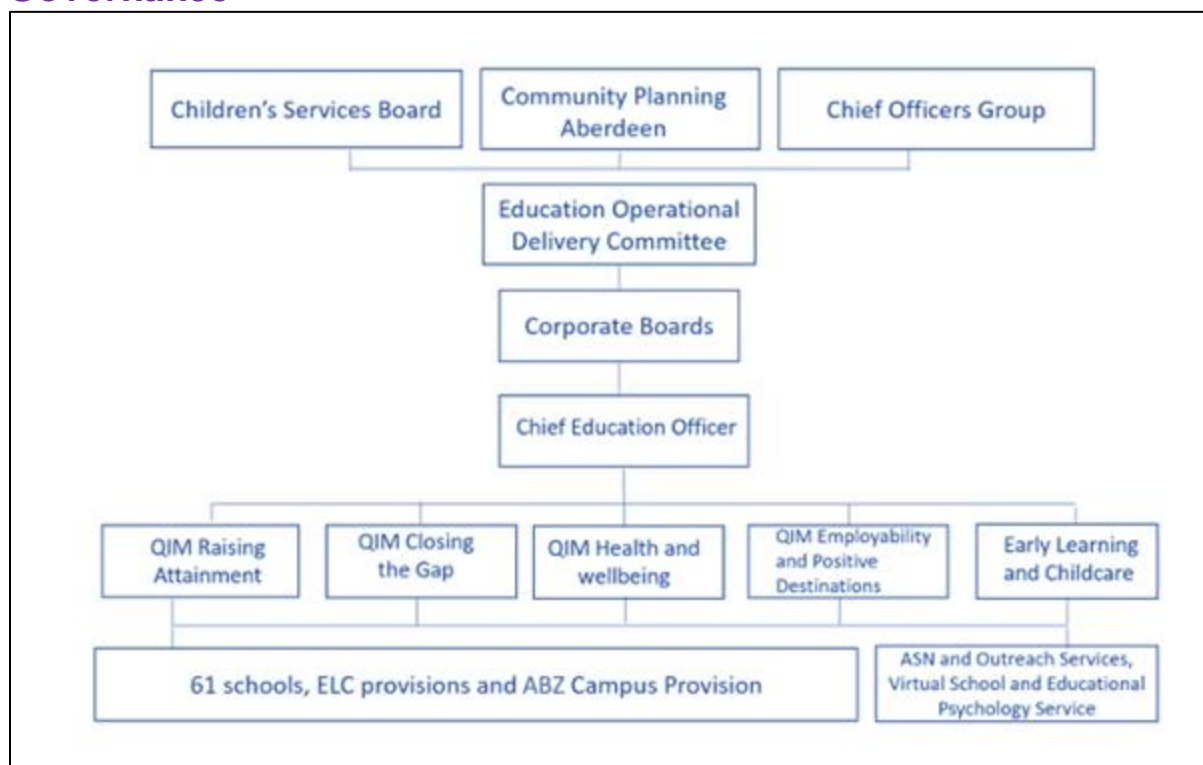
Strategic intent 2022-26			
Excellence		Equity	
Strategic Priorities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Improve the leadership of change in schools ◆ Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in schools ◆ Continue to improve the quality of universal health and wellbeing supports in response to changes in need ◆ Increase the voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services that directly and indirectly affect them ◆ Deliver a broader range of senior phase learner pathways aligned to growth areas ◆ Continue to improve the delivery of Computer Science from 3-18 and beyond 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs ◆ Reshape the Virtual School to ensure that those on the edge of care and those who are care experienced achieve at the highest levels in keeping with The Promise ◆ Close the poverty related attainment gap ◆ Prevent families from experiencing poverty wherever possible ◆ Partnership delivery of the Family Support Model in keeping with The Promise ◆ Implement the Anti-bullying policy 	
Strategic Enablers			
Workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality professional learning for all • Senior and Middle Leadership development • Continue to support staff health and wellbeing • Monitor workforce levels to ensure our capacity to deliver for children and families 	Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop School Profiles • Implement improved tracking and reporting • Collaborate with partners to join data sets when beneficial to do so • Increase central oversight of tracking data and PEF impact measures 	Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear expectations around the Core Quality Indicators • Continually improve central Quality Improvement approaches • Maintain approaches to collaborative improvement across the city 	Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Parental Involvement and Engagement Plans • Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway • More closely align the universal services of health and education

Key achievements of the last year

Despite the challenges the service has experienced over the last 12 months, a number of national and local programmes and policies have been successfully delivered with support from across the organisation and wider partnership. These include:

- An increase in the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in the city with 94.74% of our eligible population placed in 2022/23 compared to 91.22% in 2021/22
- Successful delivery of holiday programmes targeted at the 6 groups most at risk of poverty, with average enjoyment ratings sitting at 9.7 out of 10.
- Development of our Children's Services Plan and associated GIRFEC Operational Guidance
- Further development of school profiles by making use of Power BI to improve the accessibility of data to support school improvement and development of an authority wide PEF tracker to support evaluation of interventions at an authority level to help ensure best value.
- Early response to the issues Logan found in the national review of the technology ecosystem. Successful launch event for Aberdeen Computing Collaborative working closely with local higher education institutes, local independent schools and Opportunity Northeast.
- Completion of Phase 1 of ABZ Campus. Producing a parent information video for parents and carers and offering young people a total of 37 courses with a projected occupancy of 87%.
- A coalesced programme of 'clearing' to provide better opportunities for young people to be able to access their chosen courses.
- Close collaboration between secondary schools and partners seeing an increase in the number of pathways available for young people in the senior phase. An example of this can be found in the projected increase in successful National Progression Awards (NPA) from 390 in 2021-22 to approximately 800 in 2022-23.
- Providing Settle in the City programmes for Ukrainian families arriving in Aberdeen and supporting families to access school placements.
- Establishment of a refreshed Quality Assurance calendar and proportionate model of support with a clear focus on professional development against Core QIs.
- On-going work to support mental health and wellbeing and commissioning of Mental Health Aberdeen to provide city wide counselling for those aged 10+
- Increased opportunities for young musicians to play and sing together.
- Successful partnership working with the Attainment Advisor and Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) National Improving Writing Programme resulting in improved attainment in 11 city primary schools.

Governance



Each Quality Improvement Manager oversees a strategic remit and retains operational oversight of the performance of a group of education settings/targeted services in collaboration with the Quality Improvement Officer team. Strategic work is developed and delivered in partnership with school leaders.

Partnership improvement work is predominantly coordinated through the Attainment and Transition to Adulthood Improvement Group which reports to the Children's Services Board. In real terms however, this encompasses a range of healthy partnerships including those with the Developing the Young Workforce Board and with Further and Higher Education partners as we collaborate on a North East pathfinder, on our response to the Logan Report, and our further development of ABZ Campus.

As well as external scrutiny from inspection agencies, the Corporate Board structure monitors data and seeks assurance on education performance. Elected Members scrutinise performance through Council Committees and significant work has been undertaken to present the data in an accessible format to allow effective scrutiny. In addition, partnership scrutiny is available through Community Planning Aberdeen and the Aberdeen City Executive Group (Chief Officers Group) for Public Protection.

Over session 22/23 around 15% of all schools benefited from engagement with His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and all schools were subject to internal scrutiny arrangements. External scrutiny ranged from return inspection visits, engagement through short and full model inspections and thematic reviews. A healthy appetite for scrutiny is believed to be a key strength of the service.

TOM Foundations which continue to be developed

TOM FOUNDATIONS: Organisational Design and A Culture of Collaboration

The Council Target Operating Model (TOM) continues to drive innovation and build the confidence and working practices of the service.

The service has welcomed new high calibre colleagues over the past year and continues to be agile in how staff are deployed, particularly in response to the need to address variation. Our biannual ELC consultation is currently live and outcomes from the consultation will inform the design of our ELC offer for session 2024/25 ensuring we provide an agile service which meets the needs of the children and families within the resource available.



Head Teachers continue to see their responsibilities as extending beyond their own school community and this has helped the service respond positively to the challenges of the last year. Tactical teams are being established where required to support school operational teams in order to secure improvement, this has extended beyond our Associate Assessors as originally planned. School Leaders continue to make considerable contributions to service and partnership improvement activity.

The universal services of health and education have benefited from co-location at The Links Hub. There are now plans in place to collocate the Bairn's House within the Hub and this will provide opportunities to strengthen multiagency practice further. The universal services now readily pool resources to support the children and families in greatest need as seen by health funding two Place2Be pilots in schools.

The Music Service has developed pupil uptake strategies for settings where the uptake of music tuition was lower. The strategies are based around whole classes learning instruments together in an ensemble setting. These targeted programmes give children the opportunity to learn an instrument and perform alongside their peers and afford some parents the opportunity to learn an instrument alongside their child so that they can be fully involved in their child's musical journey. Music Service Ensembles will start rehearsing in Autumn 2023 and have been designed to include as many young people as possible.

The service continues to value weekly meetings with Trade Unions and benefits from shared working groups and collaboration on key documentation to support the workforce. Trade Union workplace inspections are a welcomed part of this partnership.

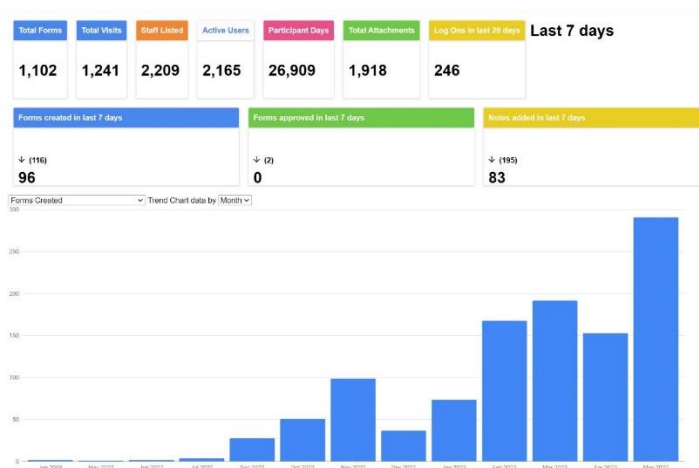
The unwavering commitment to work together to improve outcomes for children and families has considerably increased our capacity for improvement and will continue to be maintained over the coming year. There are strong indications from research that close multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working at locality level is most likely to support improved outcomes for families and this will be explored further over the coming school session.

TOM FOUNDATIONS: Digital

Education Digital Transformation Project

As part of the digital transformation strategy, ACC collaborated with Evolve, an existing web based, digital platform for the planning, approval and management of educational visits, sports fixtures, and extracurricular activities. The system was set up in autumn 2022 and following on from some testing went live in October 2022. Training and familiarisation sessions were organised and undertaken online and also upon request from individual schools. Evolve has the reporting capabilities to develop performance analysis of participation and attainment inclusive of wider achievement awards (including DoE.). The Evolve team are currently developing in-system links to secure payment systems such as ParentPay which ACC currently use.

6 months after the launch of Evolve in Aberdeen we have 2165 active users, 1239 registered off site visits, and 26,908 participant days recorded.



Throughout session 22/23 discussions have taken place with Microsoft to look at creating a single identity to improve the login experience for teachers and learners. Woodside Primary and St Machar Academy have agreed to pilot the use of Microsoft Teams for education for learning and teaching.

From September 2023 a group of 11 early adopters will be brought online and trained as 'champions' to support the roll out across the rest of the pilot school communities in January 2024.

As part of the pilot each learner will be provisioned with their own device and staff will receive intensive training in how to use Teams for Education tools to support learning and teaching. Evidence will be gathered throughout the testing and implementation stages and the findings will be used to inform the direction of travel for the future. This is likely to see an increased focus on the Microsoft tools in schools going forward.

TOM FOUNDATIONS: Partner Alliances

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant was initially a 'promise' between the Nation and its people to ensure that military personnel who are serving, or have served, and their families, do not suffer any disadvantage as a result of their service. This agreement, recognised across all nations of the United Kingdom, was signed by all 32 local authorities in Scotland.

The Armed Forces Covenant legislation places a new duty of 'due regard' for the Covenant on **all** Scottish local authorities and health boards. It is important to note that the terms of the new Act are compatible with the existing body of Scottish educational law and existing statutory responsibilities.

The Duty must be complied with when decisions relating to admissions, educational attainment and curriculum, child wellbeing, transport, attendance, and additional support needs are being considered.

A presentation outlining the scope of the Duty was shared with all head teachers of Aberdeen schools over the 2022/23 school session with some immediate next steps identified for head teachers in terms of determining who our armed forces families and children are and understanding the need to ensure enquiries from armed forces families/ELC/school staff are dealt with in a timely and informed manner, consistent with our existing policies and procedures.

Our action plan for session 23/24 addresses

- updating our systems to ensure all the necessary data is captured.
- tracking attainment and wellbeing of young people to ensure appropriate interventions are offered timeously.
- updating processes to ensure support, if required, is offered from other council services including housing and the financial inclusion team.



Strategic Priorities

Excellence

Improve the leadership of change in schools

Roll out a programme of training associated with the Quality Improvement Framework

In keeping with the recommendations of the OECD reports of 2015 and 2021, the development of Middle leadership continues to be a priority. Secondary Head Teachers ran a series of successful middle leadership courses which were attended by all middle leaders in the sector; it is hoped that these events will enable more consistent delivery of standards. This programme will continue in session 23/24 to ensure we continue to develop the Senior Leaders of the future.

The Middle Leadership Programme offered to both Primary and Secondary Head Teachers has provided training with a clear focus on the Quality Improvement Framework, the Local Authority Quality Indicator Standards, therefore improving awareness of expectations.

We continue to see changes in our leadership teams with nearly 10% of our Head Teachers new to post this session. As a result, Quality Indicator 3.1 Leadership of Change has dropped slightly from 65% of evaluations rated Good or above in 21/22 to 60% in 22/23. The continued focus on the Leadership of Change and the development of our middle leaders will be maintained over the coming year.

Further develop collaboration across the service through the use of Trios and sharing best practice across schools

Primary Head Teachers have been working in trios for the last 3 years. Working in this way has allowed colleagues to offer support and challenge during Quality Improvement visits. Initially all members of the Senior Leadership Team were only involved in visits in their own schools. During session 22/23 trios have evolved to include members of the extended leadership team visiting other schools, providing opportunities to share best practice and increase collaborative working.

A tactical team made up of peer Head Teachers and Central Officers was established to support improvement at Northfield Academy. The impact of this approach will be closely monitored over the school session to determine next steps. During session 23/24 secondary schools will be organised into 3 trios and a pair to support increased collaboration during quality improvement activities.

Enlist the help of Associate Assessors to help drive improvement at school and Local Authority level

Associate Assessors have worked with colleagues to advise on preparing for inspection. Workshops on learning, teaching and assessment and self-evaluation have been well received by colleagues. The insight and experience of the Associate Assessors has been invaluable in supporting schools in a number of areas, but in particular to improve their processes for self-evaluation. Recent inspections have praised school leaders for the clarity of the self-evaluation summaries submitted prior to inspection.

Eight schools were visited by HMle during session 22/23 and there were 4 Local Authority reports requested for schools previously inspected. Three of the eight schools visited have been identified for a return inspection and all Local Authority reports have resulted in schools being signed off by HMle. Following analysis of inspection grades and discussion with HMle colleagues, it was confirmed that there is closer alignment between the outcome of external inspections and internal quality assurance findings with external scrutiny now validating internal evaluations in many cases. This evidences our improved capacity for improvement but also the need to address the variation at pace.

The service has participated in 2 national thematic reviews looking at bullying and the curriculum. Case studies have been requested from the schools visited in relation to the two reviews and these will form part of a national report on best practice. The learning from the thematic reviews has helped to inform our refresh of the Aberdeen City Anti-Bullying Policy.

Edutopia visited Dyce Primary School as one of 5 schools visited across the world who have play central to their pedagogy and the learning is being shared across all settings in the city.

Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in schools

Use of Attainment Advisor and Lead Teacher to establish greater consistency based on our agreed Learning, Teaching and Assessment Standard

The Education Scotland Attainment Adviser has worked with an Education Support Officer to support 11 city schools' involvement with the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) National Improving Writing Programme which aims to:

- Improve children's writing attainment
- Spread a successful QI writing programme
- Equip class teachers with QI knowledge so they can understand and apply tools and techniques that have been rigorously tested and work

Phase 1 schools began the process in October 2022, with Phase 2 commencing in February 2023. Phase 1 schools are already reporting encouraging progress with their first cohort and are seeing the positive impact on attainment data. A further 5 schools have been identified for Phase 3 of the programme which will begin in August 2023.

Improving attainment at Quarryhill School

What problem were we trying to solve? 72% of our school population is within the first two SIMD quintiles and in P1 a third of the year group are being supported within our PEF plan. Our aim is to improve attainment generally but also for the pupils within the lower quintiles for reading, writing, listening & talking, numeracy.

What did we do? We embarked on a journey to improve our P1 experience towards a play-based approach, considering current research with the aim to raise attainment. Our journey included:

- Professional learning for teachers, including visits to other settings, collegiate working, professional reading, and online learning to support the development of our vision, as well as improve staff confidence.
- We resourced both classrooms, changed the physical environment in partnership with nursery staff, and experimented with free-flow learning between classes to increase varied play opportunities, share resources and support differentiation.
- An EYP transitioned with the children from nursery to P1 and supported the development of this approach. A PSA then took over from November onwards working with both classes, focusing also on small group interventions.

What happened? Attainment in listening and talking increased by 1%, reading improved by 24%, writing by 17% and numeracy by 14% over the year.

What next? Our approach needs to further embed in P1 with further opportunities for outdoor learning. Staff will continue to engage with professional learning and network with other settings.

The Lead Teacher (Secondary) has supported city wide training in Learning Teaching and Assessment for Middle Leaders as well as providing customised training for individual secondary schools. She is a member of the city learning teaching and assessment working group and is currently supporting the planning of the digital learning and teaching event planned for November 2023.

Targeting the writing attainment gap at Woodside Primary School

What problem were we trying to solve? We wanted to close the writing attainment gap in P4 and P5.

What did we do? We used Pupil Equity Funding to secure supply teaching staff to enable three teachers to attend two whole day CYPIC National Improving Writing Collaborative training sessions and additional development days. This is a sustainable use of PEF as these members of staff will share their learning with the wider team.

What happened? The approach has positively impacted upon the attainment gap in writing within P4 and P5. Within Primary 4 of the 55% of children who have achieved 1st level, 12% of them were 'below track' at the start of P4. Of the 55% of children who have achieved 1st level, 35% of them are now predicted to achieve 2nd Level earlier than the end of P7. Six children had not achieved Early level at the start of P4 and now have. Of these children, who had been significantly behind track, current predictions for achieving 1st Level show that 71% have closed the gap by at least 1 year.

What next? The next step for the school is to embed this approach to writing and introduce it via the trained staff to two other stages. This will support wider attainment and sustainability, benefiting children in receipt of PEF and FSM.

Launch the Quality Assurance and Moderation QAMSO website to support city wide moderation activities

49 QAMSOs (recruited from our teaching workforce) who have undertaken Education Scotland training, support practitioners across the City to develop and improve their understanding of the moderation cycle, with the aim to ensure all learners experience high-quality learning and teaching: access to a curriculum which meets their needs, appropriate challenge and support in all curricular areas, and opportunities to collaborate in planning and assessing their learning to inform next steps. The QAMSO programme allows us to develop leadership capacity within our schools and across the City. All QAMSOs have been invited to join a North QAMSO network facilitated by Education Scotland. This network further enhances opportunities to develop moderation across the city and the Northern Alliance.

A QAMSO [website](#) is being developed which will support moderation across all levels in Literacy and Numeracy. The website will signpost teachers and school leaders to appropriate training materials as well as guidance around achievement of a level. The site went live in June 2023 and will be maintained by a small QAMSO team.

Continue to improve the quality of universal health and wellbeing supports in response to changes in need

The health and wellbeing of children and young people continues to be of local and national concern and the service has maintained and enhanced the range of interventions and approaches available. We are beginning to see a positive impact of these approaches in some areas as evidenced through the Health & Wellbeing Surveys undertaken by children & young people in November 2022, which gave us comparable data to those undertaken in March 2022.

We continue to work with SHINE (Scottish Health Improvement Research Network) to undertake mental wellbeing surveys with learners from P6-S6 so that we can address any emerging needs within our schools and across the city. This year we have increased the level of reporting and now have access to reports at school, ASG and sector specific levels with additional reports focusing on affluence levels and gender reporting. This alongside the physical wellbeing survey, both undertaken in November 2022, have provided us with a clear picture at 2 data points, showing areas of improvement and highlighting some areas for further consideration. Outcomes from these surveys continue to be shared with the Mental Health Collaborative, established following the Mental Health Summit in October 2022 and the PEPAS (Physical Education, Physical Activity & Sport) Group established in April 2021, to support multi-agency decision making and areas of focus through the Children's Services Plan.

Child development

Several Scottish and UK publications acknowledge the impact the periods of lockdown continue to have on our children and young people. Of the 205 requests, Child's planning support received requests for assistance from 157 learners with communication difficulties. Although the number of requests is down on last year the percentage with communication difficulties continues to be high. Use of the CIRCLE framework continues to support consideration of environmental factors and pedagogies to support learners.

Barnardo's Northern Star at Cornhill Primary School funded through Pupil Equity Funding

What problem were we trying to solve? Pupil readiness to learn, parental engagement, emotional/nurture support, behaviour regulation

What did we do? We have a full-time Barnardo's worker who is fully integrated into school life. Continuity and consistency have been key to the quality and effectiveness of the intervention where relationships are fundamental.

What happened? Over the last year our worker has worked closely with 18 individual pupils and their families, 49 pupils in groups plus several pupils informally. Individual attainment has improved in most cases, with wider attainment improving in almost all supported classes. The majority of the work is carefully planned and targeted but the worker has also been invaluable supporting with ad hoc behaviour and 'crisis management'

What next? We aim to further develop pupil and parental relationships to the benefit of individual pupils and the school more widely.

Attendance

Unvalidated secondary school attendance is currently sitting slightly below 2018 levels. This figure is impacted by a small number of young people who found it challenging to return to school buildings following the pandemic. Schools are working closely with families to identify the most appropriate supports for individuals.



The picture in primary schools is more positive as although still below 2018 levels there are early signs of an increase back towards pre pandemic levels. Special school attendance continues to be impacted by the complexity of conditions of young people and absence has been mitigated through an increased offer of outreach to support learning in the home when a young person is unable to attend the school building. There is a need for more focussed work on attendance as we move forward.

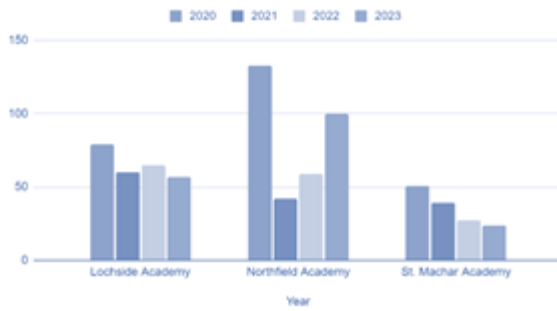
Exclusion incidents

Exclusion rates have considerably reduced from 52.9 per 1000 children in 18/19 to 17.9 per 1000 children in 20/21. Early indications show there will be a slight increase in exclusion rates for session 22/23 and this is linked to an increase in dysregulated behaviours being demonstrated locally and nationally. Levels remain significantly below those reported in session 18/19. There is evidence that some children are still struggling with the return to school following the pandemic. Any exclusions are short and used to review plans to mitigate against repeated incidents.

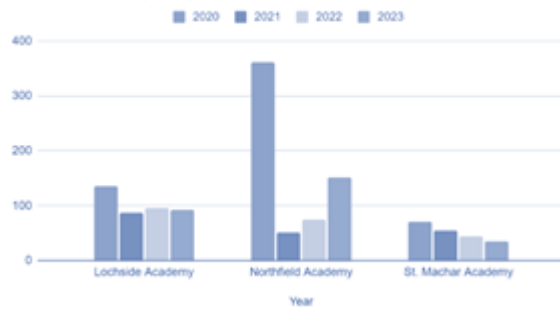
Work in schools continues to promote whole school approaches to inclusion and promoting positive relationships, including Compassionate Connected Communities. Schools follow ACC's Staged Intervention Framework and Single Request for Assistance procedure to consider appropriate supports for learners. GIRFEC principles are embedded in our schools and fundamental to this is the partnership approach, which considers the complexity of the lives of some of our learners, to prevent exclusion.

Schools are supported by the Quality Improvement Team to promote inclusion and prevent exclusion. Officers continue to monitor data on a monthly basis to enable earlier discussion with Senior Leadership Teams and proactive planning where trends are becoming established. This includes regular, active dialogue to ensure robust Individual Education Plans, Child's Plans, Coordinated Support Plans and Person-Centred Risk Assessments are in place to support individual learners as required, consideration of relevant supports for individuals.

Number of excluded pupils:

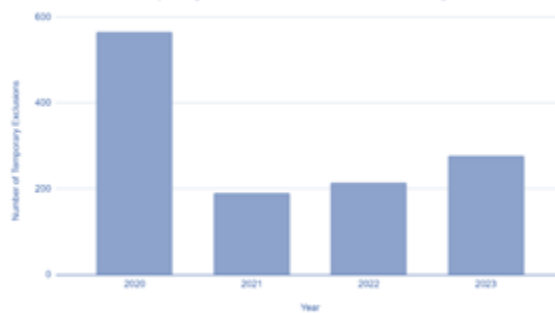


Number of temporary exclusions:



The total number of exclusions in secondary schools serving the 3 priority areas continues to demonstrate a decline in the numbers that were witnessed in 2020. Of note is the continued decreasing pattern of exclusions witnessed at St. Machar Academy. Lochside Academy also demonstrates a declining trend overall. Exclusion figures for Northfield Academy have demonstrated a slight increase on the 2021 and 2022 figures. Supports have been put in place at Northfield Academy. We will continue to consider the positive steps that have potentially impacted on one setting and look to share the learning more broadly.

Total Number of Temporary Exclusions for 3 Focus Schools by Year



Work with school health and wellbeing leads to audit the in school provision

All settings have had an increased focus on the holistic wellbeing of children and young people. Through recent survey results we are beginning to see an improvement in many aspects of wellbeing including that of general health, happiness with particular aspects of life including body image and learners feeling less lonely with an increase in the number of learners reporting they have someone to listen to them about their mental health needs.

All schools continue to engage with the Compassionate and Connected Communities (CCC) programme. We have built the capacity of 11 further members of staff to act as trainers for the programme. Taking this approach of on-going training for trainers ensures that we maintain a full 64 trainers across the city with a trainer available in each city school when there is staff movement or retiral. This ensures an on-going focus on trauma informed practice.

Physical Health Support Visits

Between November 2022 and February 2023 all schools were visited in order to undertake an audit of Physical Health provision. This covered several areas including Free Period Products, Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood, Physical Education curriculum, extracurricular activities as well as physical space and resources. Findings from these visits included low staff confidence in the teaching of PE and in particular the area of gymnastics. This is being addressed through our current professional learning offer and continues to inform the work of the Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) Group. Free period product awareness and provision was good in almost all schools with a small number receiving support to improve marketing with learners and parents.

25% of schools were taking significant steps to improve food and nutrition provision, ranging from free breakfast offers to bespoke cooking facilities.

Active Travel

An active travel survey was undertaken in October 2022, and we received a return from 40 of our 61 schools. Responses allowed us to consider the approaches already in place and consider next steps to improve active travel within each school community.

Officers plan to relaunch the travel plan guidance with clear agreed expectations around this as we focus on improving active travel and addressing the increasing concerns around the environmental impact that transport has on us reaching net zero.



Schools are currently offering opportunities to increase active travel through park and stride, providing parking for bike and scooters and providing bikeability training in partnership with Active Schools.

We work in close partnership with ACC I Bike officer and Adventure Aberdeen to support Bikeability and Cycle training and offer Level 2 training in all of our Primary school settings in response to feedback from the Aberdeen Parent Council Forum. Other supports include the offer of cycle maintenance and cycling events including opportunities led by Adventure Aberdeen and the Aberdeen City I Bike Officer projects, some of which are highlighted below.



Active Schools Assistants

The service used COVID recovery funding to increase capacity for physical activity through the recruitment of Active Schools Assistants. The additional resource increased support for physical activity in our playgrounds when schools first re-opened following periods of national lockdown and encouraged healthy choices and targeted physical wellbeing interventions at school level. Schools have also seen the positive impact of this work, with some now making use of pupil equity funding to sustain this support.

We have seen a 3% increase in young people reporting that their general health is good or excellent since our last report in March 2022.

Free Period Products

A survey of school pupils in July 2022 showed that a significant number of pupils were still unaware that Free period Products (FPP) were available in school to anyone who needs them. Around 50% pupils requested re-usable products in various forms. Overwhelmingly, pupils wanted products to be available in a toilet or designated place where they didn't have to ask for them.

Several activities have been undertaken by the Education service to increase support for children and young people by increasing the understanding of menstruation, its impact and providing increased awareness of how to access resources. These include:

- Free period products distributed to School Health leads.
- Launch of FPP posters in schools
- Launch of animation to promote reusable products in partnership with Waste and Recycling
- Reusable products education resources for schools
- Health & Wellbeing network input from Hannah Miley focusing on Demystifying Menstruation
- Parent Newsletter update provided for parents about how and where to access resources

965 boxes of products have been delivered to schools since January 2023.

Health and wellbeing in the early years

We have established a funding and application process for all registered childcare settings to deliver free milk and healthy snack (fruit and vegetables) to all children attending an ELC setting for 2 or more hours per day via the Scottish Government Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme (SMHSS). The Scheme aims to ensure that as many pre-school children as possible will receive a daily serving of milk and healthy snack to contribute towards healthy growth development and the promotion of healthy eating habits for later life. One of the principles of the scheme is that it is provided free of charge and ELC settings must not charge families for this benefit.

As of 1 April 2023, a total of 130 registered childcare settings have signed up to deliver the Scheme in the city, with 6608 children receiving a serving of milk and healthy snack on each day they attend their ELC setting. This is up more than 1000 from the 5426 children receiving this benefit in 2022.

Reflect on the outcome of the SHINE and health and wellbeing surveys to determine next steps.

Fitlike Aberdeen continues to offer wellbeing supports to families, with one to one, group work and activities available to help address early indicators of distress in children and families. In April 2023 401 young people/families were engaging with the service and 146 of the 401 are families who were being supported for the first time. We see a higher number of males (229) being supported by Fitlike with current numbers of females lower (163) and 9 young people who identify as non-binary, transgender or gender fluid. Reasons for presenting also vary here, however greater support is required for those presenting with low mood, anxiety, emotional literacy/regulation, and wider family support needs.

We are currently working in partnership with Fitlike Aberdeen and CAMHS colleagues to further develop our supports in LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management). This multi-agency collaboration will continue to build on the current supports we have in place across many schools in order to strengthen the universal offer to children and families. All school nurses are currently trained to deliver LIAM, as are a team of Fitlike staff and currently we have staff in 25 schools trained to deliver this support. A further round of training will take place in June increasing the number of trained staff by a further 23 individuals.

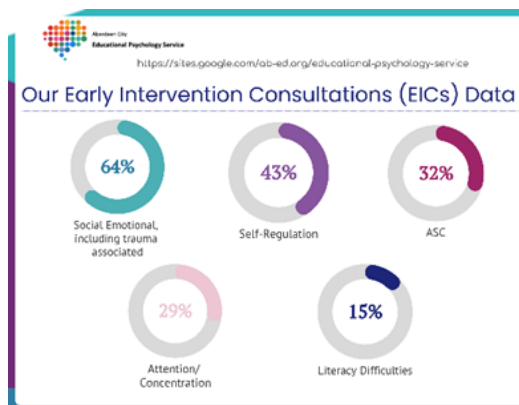
A range of additional interventions above and beyond the school curriculum continue to be in place. We continue to commission Mental Health Aberdeen to support all children from age 10+ with counselling support where required, this can be through referral by school staff or self-referral. Through our last reporting period (October to December 2022) 330 young people were being supported and 100% of the 103 children who had completed an end of session questionnaire at that time, reported an improved wellbeing outcome following this support.

Counselling has a higher percentage of females being supported with this approach and the divide between male and female is 225/96 with 9 young people who identify as transgender or nonbinary receiving this support. Reasons for seeking support vary, however a high number of learners are receiving support for anxiety, bereavement, low confidence/self-esteem, low mood, and relationship issues.

We currently have a small number of Primary schools building a partnership with Place2Be through a pilot project. Place2Be offer in person supports within the primary school setting for children aged 3 and up, families and staff. The impact of this new initiative will be evaluated in due course.

The pilot of DBI (Distress Brief Intervention) has extended to 6 Secondary Schools in partnership with CAMHS and Penumbra focusing on learners aged 14-16. This programme offers more targeted support for young people who have been identified or self-identify the need for support and helps some of our most vulnerable learners to access trained staff and a pathway to support through Penumbra and CAMHS if required. We are beginning to see early signs of improvement through our data report in relation to the Who-5 wellbeing index, which may suggest that earlier responsive intervention is supporting young people previously indicating low mood.

Our Educational Psychology Service (EPS) support schools through [Early Intervention Consultations](#) (EICs), which take place between staff at all levels of the school and the EPS. **424** EICs took place last year, and this academic year to date, **338** have taken place.



The EPS review and update their [digital hub](#) to offer supports to pupils, parents and staff based on information gathered throughout the year about topics and areas of need arising through their work in Education. The EPS continue to review their supports and delivery of several programmes:

- Seasons for Growth – Ongoing training and re-connector groups, offered throughout each session by the EPS. This allows highly skilled groups to be run across education supporting pupils with significant loss and change. This year to date, 89 children have been part of loss and change groups in the Seasons programme. Both the training by the EPS, and the groups continue to be positively evaluated.
- Emotion Coaching – Fully digital training programme, with follow-up EPS coaching and facilitation around implementation and effectiveness. Training programmes run for parents, with content available on the EPS digital hub.
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training. Aberdeen remains the only local authority to offer this programme that has a strong evidence base and is used across England and Wales.

Local Aberdeen City data shows the positive impact this training programme has had to support staff working with children with a range of emotional regulation needs.



39 staff are currently trained, with a further 13 in training, which will give 52 fully trained ELSAs across Aberdeen City schools to work 1:1 and in groups to support children and young-people's development of their emotional literacy and regulation. Each ELSA has ongoing support of 12 hours of psychological group supervision each year.

Where a child displays distressed behaviours, this may result in recording a near miss incident. Collaborative working with Trade Unions and central officers ensures consistency of reporting, investigating and actions. Themes are identified and data analysed by the Quality Improvement Team to support schools where appropriate. Trade Unions continue to provide support regarding conducting investigations.

All Headteachers have accessed training from the Health and Safety team on near misses, investigations, and the new reporting system. We are encouraging reporting of incidents to ensure transparency of data and supports required. This data will inform planning and support measures.

Aberdeen School for the Deaf: Emotional Literacy Curriculum funded through Pupil Equity Funding

What problem were we trying to solve? Self-evaluation in session 2021-22 highlighted that there were significant gaps (school wide) in emotional literacy. Whilst tracking data highlighted that **almost all** learners were on track for individual milestones, **most** were behind track for national expectations in health and wellbeing. Discussions at tracking meetings indicated that most gaps linked to emotional literacy.

What did we do? We commissioned a bespoke Emotional Literacy intervention with our BSL tutor from the National Deaf Children's Society aimed at increasing learner's emotional literacy and developing their understanding of emotions, feelings, and strategies for self-regulation.

What happened? Each class received 1 x 45 minute session per week for a 12 week block. By the end of this block, data has highlighted that:

- **all** learners display increased confidence when talking about their emotions
- All learners have an increased bank of emotion words/signs that they are now using when talking about their emotions
- **most** learners are now working in line with national expectations in HWB
- instances of dis-regulation have reduced with **most** staff reporting learners are accessing self-regulation strategies more successfully

What next? Extend this programme by using Emotion Works resources to:

- supplement this work in order to embed emotional literacy into the curriculum
- develop staff confidence in delivery of emotional literacy curriculum
- consolidate learning and application of knowledge to encourage self-regulation and communication around emotional wellbeing.

Work with the established Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) Group to increase provision of physical activity for children and young people

Supporting physical health and wellbeing of our people

The PEPAS Group continue to work in partnership, taking a lead role as advocates and advisors on Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport on a city-wide basis.

There have been some positive pieces of work developed through the PEPAS group this session including the development of a Primary PE progression toolkit, which provides a clear progression of learning in PE for Primary practitioners and signposts staff to relevant resources and lesson plans. This has been linked to our Grassroots Professional Learning programme led by PE specialists and is improving the confidence of staff in delivering high quality PE. Since the launch of this toolkit, it has been accessed 527 times.

We have undertaken a large scale roll out of Boccia Training in schools. Boccia is a sport designed for all. It is a target sport played indoors with soft leather balls. Boccia (pronounced bot-cha) is a Paralympic sport with no Olympic equivalent and is similar to bowls. This has been delivered to pupil leaders in Primary 6 across the city who have disseminated this training in their school communities. It has also been

delivered to over 400 school staff. Schools are working towards delivery of a city wide Boccia Festival in ASGs.

The PEPAS Group has agreed a standard format for gathering data and will continue to work collaboratively to draw it through MySport, a Sport Scotland tool, which will allow us to have a clearer picture of the activities available to children and young people across the city, identifying strengths and areas for development.

Developing skills at St Joseph's Primary School through Pupil Equity funding.

What problem were we trying to solve? We were trying to create extra in-school activity sessions to meet the needs of learners who are bussed to and from school and therefore not always able to engage in immediate after-school activities on site. Most of our children living in SIMD 1 – 3 are children who arrive by bus and although attainment in literacy and numeracy remains consistent within this group, for the most part, the children need access to a greater range of team and leadership activities with their school peers.

What did we do? We engaged 2 skills-based partners in our work: AFCCT and Ace Voices

What happened? Interim feedback from both the children and the leaders indicates a high level of engagement and participation in the activities.

Each partner is working to develop a different set of skills in children, but both have resilience in unfamiliar territory at their core. The wellbeing assessments and anecdotal data from the children is very positive (currently being updated). Relationships at the school are very positive and restoration is very successful in almost all cases where the learners are participating in the activities.

What next? Make the interventions available to younger children to ensure a broader reach and development of skills and tie this work into the development of a skills framework within the school. Explore the potential to Look engage partners in expressive arts to broaden access to a wider range of skills.

Continue to deliver holiday programmes

Following the success of previous programmes (Summer of Play 2021, Easter of Play 2022, Summer in the City 2022, and Easter in the City 2023) the Council allocated £100,000 for holiday programmes to be delivered over school holiday periods (summer and autumn 2023 and spring 2024).

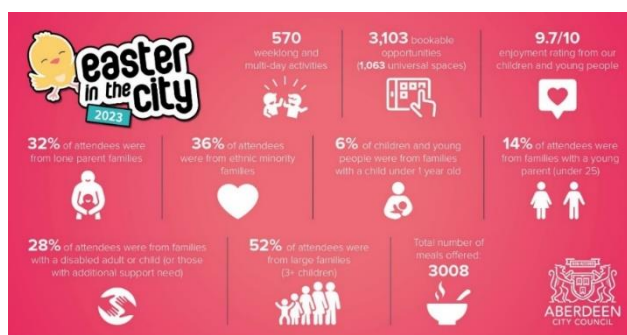
In line with the aims of the previous 'In the City' holiday programmes, the main focus remains to encourage participation and to maximise the positive opportunities available to young people and their families with a particular focus on those within the Tackling Child Poverty Plan priority groupings.

The programme will continue to engage with the widest demographics, providing opportunities for both priority families and those who do not identify as part of a priority group to take part. The programme will also continue to target the 5-14 years age group with some activities still being made available for those not in this age range.

Bookable opportunities for priority families will take the form of short, family, half-day and full-day session.

Since summer 2021, the programmes have provided more than 39,000 bookable opportunities, including weeklong/ multiday camps and childcare camps, day long and short activities being offered, as well as numerous drop-in activities in parks, museums, galleries and local communities and bespoke programmes for those with complex additional support needs. More than 18,000 bookable opportunities have been made available since summer 2022.

The enjoyability rating as provided by children and young people for the most recent programme (Easter in the City, 2023) was 9.7 out of 10.



Increase the voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services that directly and indirectly affect them

Exceleerate

Six secondary schools within the local authority are at different stages in engaging with the support of the *Exceleerate* (link [here](#)) programme, a community-connected learning initiative supported by the Wood Foundation. Through the programme staff in the schools are supported to develop innovative learning and teaching methods which become embedded and sustainable through creating school based champions to lead and cascade to others. This programme has included a number of collaborative visits to the XP Academy in Doncaster, and study visits to the Academies of Nashville. Supported by *Exceleerate*, each school uses their own unique context to identify the areas they seek to progress. These areas include Project Based Learning, Crew, School Leaver Profiles and Oracy to name but a few.

A sharing event was held in May 2023 which allowed schools to showcase the impact of the programme. The event, which was learner focused and learner led, was well attended by staff from across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and partners.

Continue to support our Pupil Climate Change Group

In November there was a celebration of several Climate Change and Net Zero activities that had taken place over the session at NESCOL, as part of World Children's Day. Children and young people from across the city gathered with Aberdeen City Councillors to showcase their work. The theme of World Children's Day in 2022 was "Inclusion for Every Child". Young people at the event highlighted their involvement in the City Centre and Beach Masterplan and the model they created to demonstrate what they would like to see included in these plans.

Charlie Turner, the Youth Climate Change President, had the opportunity to discuss his role and the work of the Youth Climate Change group. S1 pupils from Bucksburn Academy presented their interdisciplinary project: "Eating to Save the Planet".

The Youth Climate Change Group have been able to increase their awareness of the local authority's policies towards climate change and net zero by inviting guests from several council departments to their meetings. Alongside regular meetings the group have created a Google Classroom space for the creation and collaboration of further ideas for sustainability. There is an active discussion forum that the group has created. The Eco Group at Harlaw Academy were able to collate information from this space to inform a meeting that they arranged with the catering service to lobby them for the return of sustainable food packaging in schools. The group are a focal point to promote citywide initiatives to other children and young people across the city, e.g. the bike sharing scheme that launched in Aberdeen recently was promoted by the group across all schools.

Charlie's term as president came to an end in June and he was part of the process to select a replacement. Interviews took place across several of the city's Secondary schools during the last week of the school term. The quality of interviews was very strong. Saanvi Kumar a S5 pupil from Cults Academy has been appointed as the City's 2nd Youth Climate Change President.

Establish a webpage on the ACC site to encourage engagement and participation by children and young people

Work has begun on gathering the voice of children and young people and empowering them to share their messages and influence policy through the Health and Wellbeing Summit and the Climate Change group. Having established high levels of participation and engagement with these two groups, it is important that they are part of the design process of any method of gathering the views of others and encouraging participation and reflect on approaches tested through the web based consultation on the school estate review. During 23/24 we will use the meaningful participation of the two groups to support the design and implementation of a tool to encourage engagement and participation of their peers.

Continue to work with community planning partners on the UNCRC

All policies relating to children take full account of the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child with considerable work undertaken to develop our practice in this area as exemplified in our [children's rights report](#). The service remains poised to undertake a rapid review of our readiness for incorporation following publication of statutory guidance over session 2023/24.

All School Improvement Plans reference the UNCRC, and all staff continue to participate in mandatory training at the start of the school session.



A few primary school learners have produced child friendly versions of the SQUIP. These help learners to understand what improvements are planned and when they are achieved. Best practice has been shared to support spread.

Collaborate with children and young people to report on the extent to which ACC supports and promotes Children's Rights and set next steps

As part of the work of the Children & Young People's Mental Health Task & Delivery Board, we are currently piloting the 'One Good Adult' project. This allows us to directly respond to the views of children and young people at our Health and Wellbeing Summit by placing the voice of children and young people at the heart of our recruitment processes. One Good Adult is now established within our recruitment processes for all education staff. This is to be extended to other services within the local authority and partner agencies for those supporting children and young people in their daily positions over the coming year.

Deliver a broader range of senior phase learner pathways aligned to growth areas

Support the introduction of ABZ Campus comprising an aligned set of curricular opportunities for Senior Phase young people.

Following work started in session 2021-22 with a review of collective provision and identification of key areas to address across Aberdeen City secondary schools, session 2022-23 has been focusing around planning and implementing Phase 1 of ABZ Campus for launch in session 2023-24.

During this planning session, a set of focus groups took place with young people and facilitated by staff from *Skills Development Scotland*. These focus groups provided direction and justification for the planning of ABZ Campus. There was a mirrored process with work closely aligned with engagement with parent council groups to gather the views of parents and carers.

Secondary school leadership teams gathered with the challenging task of seeking curricular alignment across a set of four columns. This work was completed by April 2022, allowing for a smooth timetabling cycle in each school.

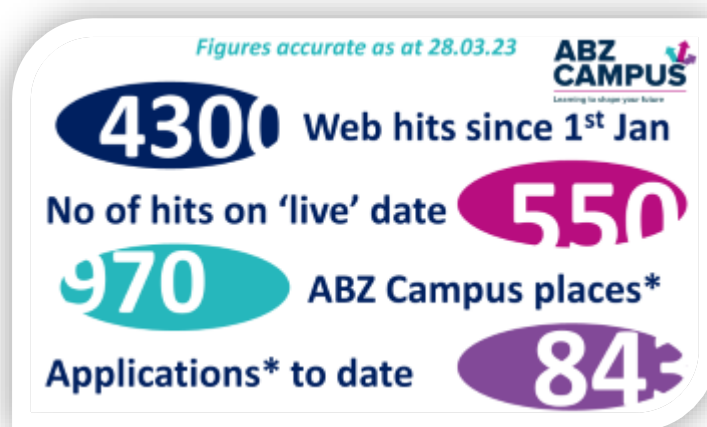
Together with partners, a set of 37 growth sector aligned courses were programmed across each of the four new columns with delivery partners and target capacities agreed.

Building on the feedback from young people, ABZ Campus launched a new application portal with deliver partners *Pinnacle VL*. Not only does the portal streamline and simplify the process of applications from young people to ABZ Campus courses, the new portal also allows better data analysis on successful and unsuccessful applications, course withdrawals and the ability for partners to connect and communicate with participating young people. Feedback from young people, parents and carers suggested that better publicity and information about courses would support young people and families to make more informed decisions in making choices. Between June and December, refreshed course guidance summaries and publicity videos were created for ABZ Campus courses.

The application portal, course overviews and publicity materials were all housed in a newly created section of the ABZ Works website (found [here](#)).

As preparation for launch of choices approached, a series of publicity events were held to support families and staff through their understanding of the process. For staff, an event was held at Cults Academy on 18th November during an in-service day for all choice teams. Helpful input was provided by partners such as *NESCOL*, *Skills Development Scotland* and *Aberdeenshire Council*. For families, a pre-recorded event was released (link [here](#)) in January 2023.

Demand and interest for ABZ Campus courses was high, with well over 1,100 applications made for ABZ and NESCOL link courses through the portal.



An incredibly positive outcome of the work on timetable alignment is that there now exists an opportunity for schools to work together to provide even greater access to courses for young people through a 'clearing' system. As young people made their choices during March 2023, schools shared where there was surplus capacity in their schools and, if a course in one school is over-subscribed, it was possible that the young people could access the course in another school.

During the latter part of the 2022-23 session, planning has turned to a design for Phase 2 of ABZ Campus in session 2024-25. Six groups comprising staff from the local authority and partners have formed to progress work in the following key areas:-

- Seek collaborative work on a regional basis with Aberdeenshire Council.
- Pilot an employability and placement solution for a group of young people with ASN.
- Explore the introduction of a twilight column with a suite of partner-driven courses.
- Develop a quality assurance programme that results in a more consistent offer across all ABZ Campus courses.
- Continue to develop a common monitoring, tracking, and reporting system for all ABZ Campus courses.
- Finally, a desire to continue to extend the growth-sector aligned courses, with a particular focus on Level 4 and 5 in growth sectors where coverage is least strong.

As part of thinking towards how ABZ Campus could be further developed in phase 2, a pilot connection has been made with a school in Aberdeenshire to open up access to some of the courses on offer.

There is a commitment to equity contained within the plans for ABZ Campus. All courses offered will carry an opportunity based on merit rather than where the young person has their 'home' school.

ABZ CAMPUS

Mentoring and Internships

In total 278 young people have engaged with and report benefiting from the MCR Pathways programme. As of February 2023, of those young people who are active or have previously been active with MCR Pathways, 12.59% are currently cared for, 16.14% previously care experienced with the remaining 71.25% being identified as vulnerable.

More consistent staffing (Pathways Coordinators and MCR Managers) may help shift the balance to include a higher proportion of those who are care experienced.

The high number of volunteers (144 trained volunteer mentors and 66 progressing through training) committed to delivering one to one mentoring is exceptionally positive and helping us discharge our Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Young people who choose to engage with the programme tell us that they value and benefit from time with their one to one mentor and qualitative evidence is positive.

Research continues to highlight the positive impact of mentoring programmes, but the pandemic and data quality issues have impacted our ability to gather strong quantitative evidence of impact against key measures. Many of the data sets shared by MCR, when matched with ACC data, have contained significant errors which has made data matching extremely challenging and labour intensive, the split of responsibilities across ACC and MCR may be contributing to this challenge. There is a need to address these data issues to enable more effective on-going monitoring.

In 2023 59 Aberdeen City pupils completed their internships with Career Ready. Of the 11 Secondary schools in Aberdeen 9 provided pupils for the programme. In session 23-24 we anticipate all 11 Secondary schools accessing the scheme with in excess of 100 internships for city pupils planned.

Improve the delivery of Computer Science from 3-18 and beyond

**Establish Aberdeen Computing Collaborative to bring all key partners together
Work with Prof Mark Logan to address the issues raised in his report.**



Professor Mark Logan's report, [Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review](#), highlights how ill prepared local systems are to respond to the need for the current and future workforce to have strong digital skills which will increasingly be a necessity for employers. Problems to be solved include:

- The lack of qualified computer science teachers
- The lack of clear digital skills progression
- The need to attract economic investment in Aberdeen City through the ready availability of those with advanced digital skills.

The Aberdeen Computing Collaborative has been formed by Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University, the University of Aberdeen, and Opportunity North East. The collaborative's focus is on improving computing science education in the city, in line with the recommendations made by the [Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review](#).

The collaborative aims to support a coherent, innovative, and skills-based computing science curriculum from early learning to senior phase and beyond. This includes creating multiple pathways for all learners to maximize access to computing science learning and qualifications in and out of school. Focussing on the development of computer science skills will ensure that pupils across Aberdeen City are well positioned to benefit from post school opportunities.

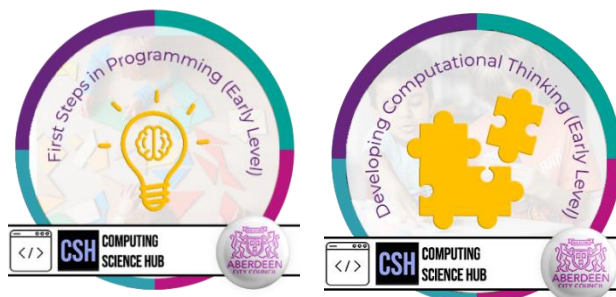
The collaborative plans to increase opportunities for young people, develop the skills of staff and promote the sector through engagement, curriculum support and professional learning. The collaborative held a successful launch event in September 2022, at ONE Tech Hub, which was attended by over 250 pupils and teaching staff. The event included practical computing science workshops and professional development discussions for teaching staff. Feedback indicates that almost all children and young people attending were more likely to consider a computing science career following the event.

North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University and University of Aberdeen each have outreach programmes to promote computing science both in and outside of school. These partners are currently reviewing their outreach activities to reduce overlap and increase areas for collaboration, with a view to improving the experience for children and young people attending these programmes. It is hoped that a greater aligned offer will be available to schools from August 2023 onwards.

Esports is gaining popularity as a tool for education. We recognise the benefits of esports in education, including promoting teamwork, problem-solving, and strategic thinking. Esports can engage learners with technology and act as a gateway to interest in computing science and the tech sector. An Esports hub is being developed at St

Machar Academy, which will deliver a new National Qualification in Esports at SCQF Level 4 and 5 from August 2023. Collaborative partner, North East Scotland College, will support this development in working with the central team and the staff of St Machar Academy.

To support professional development, ACC officers have created “grab and go” resources for staff supporting the youngest learners in our primary schools. A classroom teacher has been commissioned to continue production of these resources and will coordinate this development with partners.



Digital badges for professional learning

To address the local shortfall in computer science teachers, Aberdeen City has entered a separate partnership with University of Highlands and Islands (UHI), to provide a distance learning Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) to support those in the city with an interest in becoming a Computing Science teacher. Entrants to this course will be given placements in ACC schools to encourage them to seek employment locally when fully qualified.

To host these materials, we have developed an online platform to provide on-demand access to professional learning for teaching staff. This platform will include digital badges and awards, linked to our learning and teaching standard, to recognise the learning and achievement of staff.

The Collaborative will take forward the following areas of work over the next 12 months:

- working with ABZ Campus, review the curriculum to broaden opportunities in the sector (including development of Esports and Computing Science hubs to further engagement with Computing Science).
- develop and deliver extra-curricular Computing Science and Digital activities.
- develop communication for parents/carers/young people to promote the opportunities in the sector and the range of pathways available for those seeking to develop careers in the industry.
- continue the development of materials and an online delivery platform for professional learning to provide upskilling for Computing Science and other teachers, to deliver computing science from early to fourth level and beyond with the aim of increasing the number of young people completing courses aligned to support the digital and tech sector by 20% by 2026.

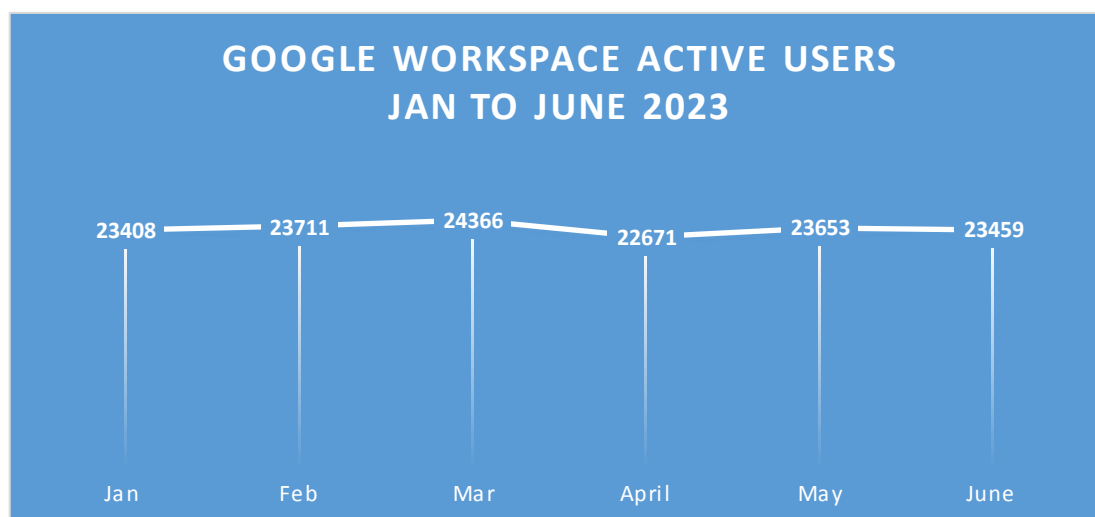
The collaborative has met with Professor Mark Logan, author of the Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review, to welcome his reflections and on-going challenge of our work.

Maximising our use of digital technology

To maximise our use of digital technology, we have continued development and support for Google Workspace and the closely integrated suite of tools which work within the platform. Our online “Workspace Skills” training package has been completed by 168 teachers at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. This on-demand training has proven popular this year however session 2023/24 will feature some

return to face to face digital learning sessions supported by our partners: Education City, Text Help, Thinglink and Google. Our digital tools maximise our investment in Chromebooks while also making digital learning available to pupils in any location; home, school, or any other place.

Our schools continue to be supported to achieve the Digital Schools Award with 9 schools having achieved this award, an increase of 4 since June 2022, 1 gaining an additional Cybersecurity award and 41 working towards accreditation.



Our learners continue to make use of our Chromebooks in session 2022/23 with a device available for all P7, S1, S2 and Senior Phase pupils.

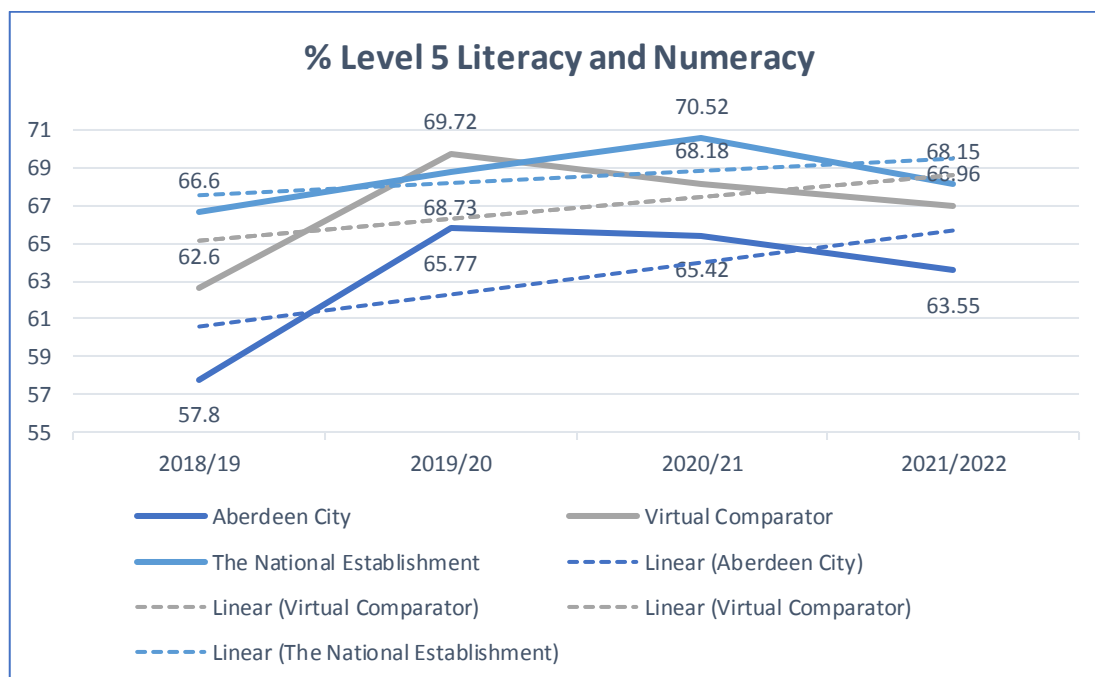
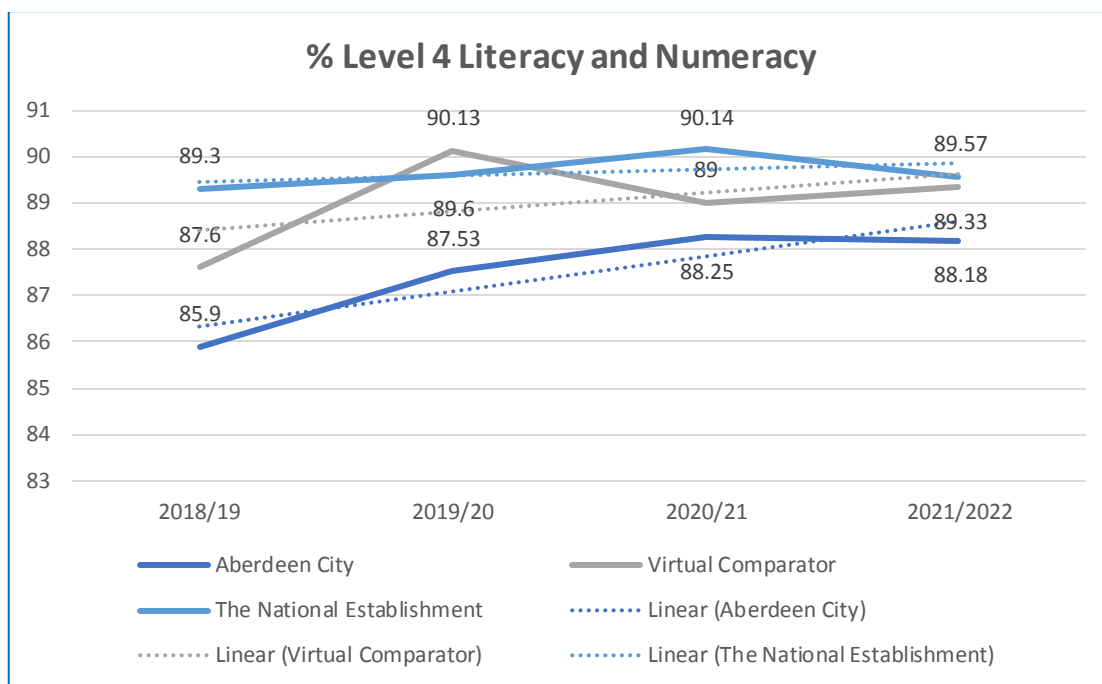
Almost all pupils engage with Google Classroom each month, with most users engaging weekly (typically over 21,000, 86.3% of learners). We have over 4000 active Google Classrooms where learning and teaching resources are shared with pupils and assignments set for learners to complete.

Monthly engagement has continued at similar levels to during periods of home learning with pupils returning over 1 million assignments between September 2022 and March 2023. A typical pupil in ACC will complete between 40 and 50 online assignments during the school year.

Work has begun with 2 pilot schools to look at developing a single login identity to improve access to digital resources. The two pilot schools are also going to evaluate the use of the Microsoft environment for teaching and learning. A group of early adopters in each school will begin the pilot program in August with each pilot school having full school implementation from January 24.

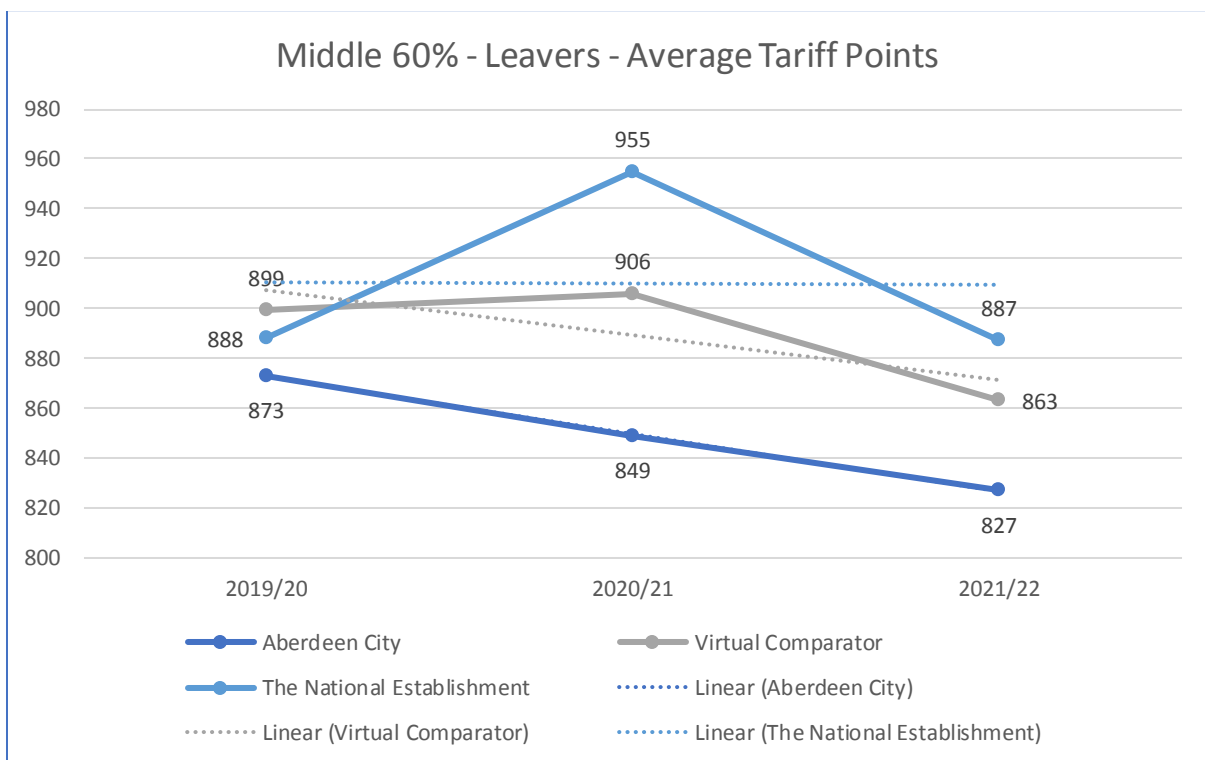
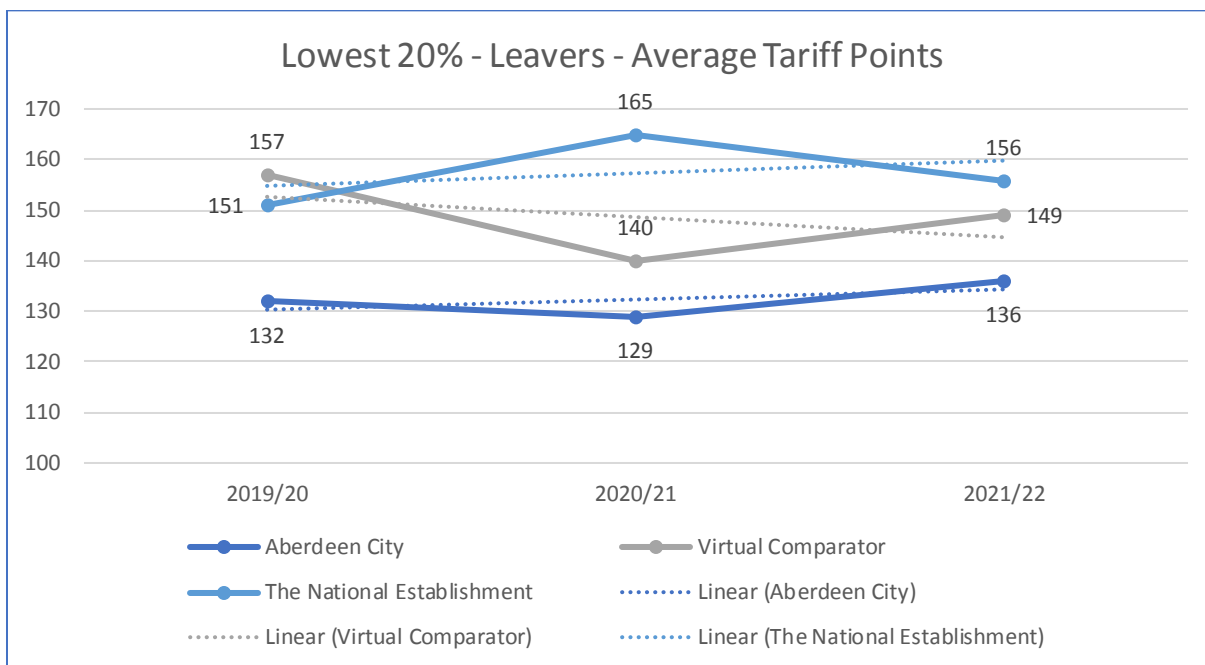
Planning for positive destinations

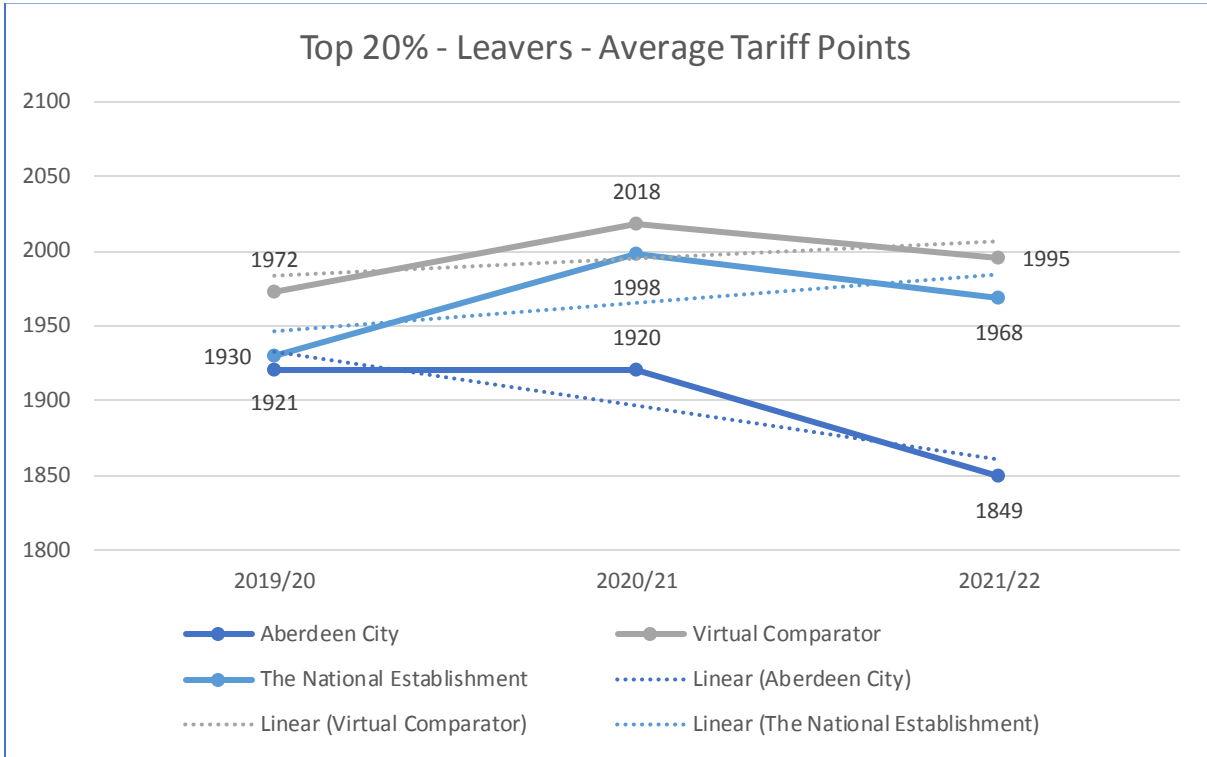
Prior to the pandemic, schools were exploring their curriculum offer at local level. The last two years have seen some curricular changes and improvement in the quality of grades. Care should be taken in making direct comparisons given the changed approaches to certification over the last 2 years. It is clear however, that despite making improvements at pace there is still considerable headroom in attainment.



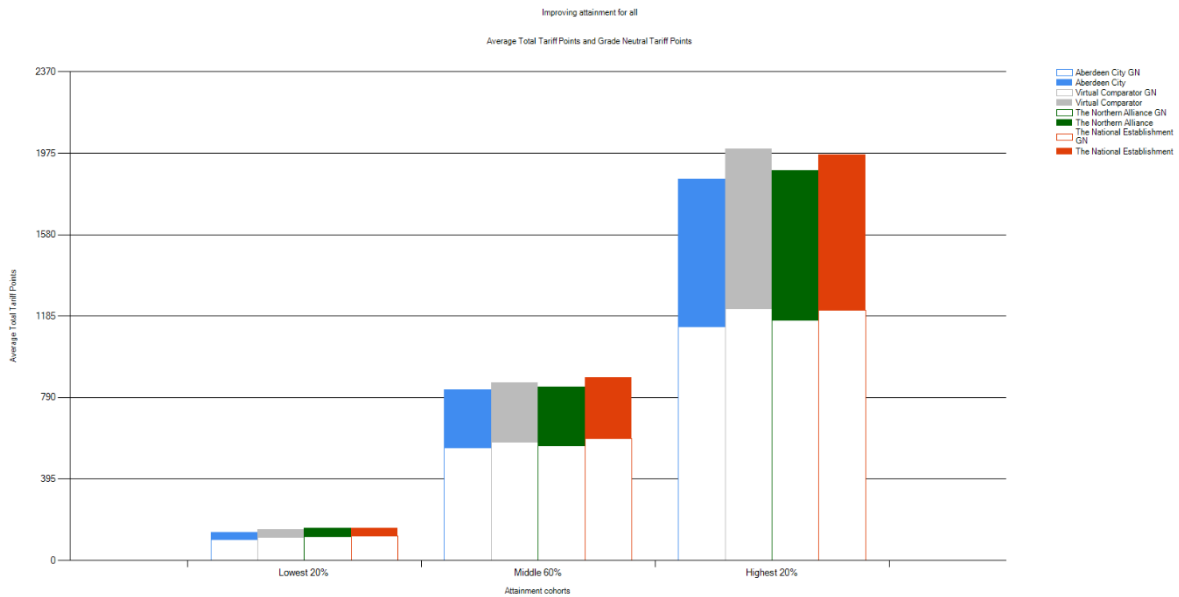
This is further illustrated by a review of average tariff scores. For the lowest 20% quintile cohort, the city has experienced a rising trend in Average Tariff Scores across the four-year period (illustrated by the dotted trendline).

There is a fall in the average tariff points for the middle 60% of learners and this mirrors the decline in average tariff points nationally as assessment processes are adjusted post-pandemic. The data for the top 20% shows a reduction in average tariff points which is similar to our Virtual Comparator and the National Establishment when compared to 2020/21.





A review of national and virtual comparator data shows there is still more to be achieved.



This graphs show that our middle 60% and upper 20% of young people in Aberdeen City secondary schools have performed behind the virtual comparator in 2022 when all attainment data is taken into account. It is believed that one of the key ways in which we can improve this picture is to provide learner pathways (new courses with vocational or clear links to growth industries) that better motivate all of our young people. This is one of the central reasons for the introduction of the new ABZ Campus. We anticipate seeing the impact of Phase 1 of ABZ Campus in attainment data for 2023/24.

The entirety of the work carried out to support young people in Secondary Schools has continued the positive picture in Aberdeen City on the number of young people reaching positive destinations. While there is a slight drop in the figures from 2020/21 there is still a significant increase from the 2019/20 figures. A greater focus on the importance of the pupil pathway planning process in all schools in the BGE will be an area of work this coming school session.

% of School Leavers in a Positive Destination

	Aberdeen	Virtual Comparator	The Northern Alliance	The National Establishment
2021/22	93.87	95.84	95.41	95.74
2020/21	95.38	95.2	95.32	95.48
2019/20	90.29	93.65	92.99	93.36
2018/19	93.74	94.82	94.98	95.05

The Planning for Positive destinations meetings undertaken in all city secondary schools provide an opportunity for proactive planning for young people. The Virtual School Education Support Officer works alongside school staff, the Throughcare and Aftercare and ACC employability teams to support the transition onto independent living and a positive destination. Further training is scheduled to take place in September 2023 where there will a concentrated focus on the importance of targeting care experienced young people during any pathway planning process.

A pathway planning process has helped to clarify roles and responsibilities in supporting young people to secure a positive destination. The Virtual School Education Support Officer works alongside school staff, the Throughcare and Aftercare and ACC employability teams to support the transition onto independent living and a positive destination. Further training is scheduled to take place in September 2023 where there will a concentrated focus on the importance of targeting care experienced young people during any pathway planning process.

Pathways Advocate were introduced in 8 out of the 11 Secondary schools with recruitment to the remaining 3 ongoing. The role of the Pathways Advocate is to provide young people who are care experienced (those currently and previously Looked After) with an opportunity to have an informed advocate based in school to advise and support in the area of choices, vocational pathways and future options. The Advocate is distinct from the Pastoral / Guidance role, and from the expertise offered by SDS, but works alongside these partners.

In schools where advocates are in post, there are early indications of positive relationships being built with young people and school staff, an additional layer of tracking and monitoring being undertaken and information being shared with school staff to help them to better understand the needs of children and young people with experience of care. In some schools the reach of the support has been extended to other young people who have other identified needs or may be at risk of becoming care experienced. The approach will be formally evaluated over school session 2023/4 to determine next steps.

Equity

Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs

Work with partners to roll out training in the Circle Framework to ensure consistent understanding, approaches, and language across all agencies.

Considerable work has been undertaken to support school staff in their use of the CIRCLE framework to help adapt learning environments to support children and young people to re-engage positively with in-school learning. Schools are at different stages of implementation and this initiative will be on-going over 2023/24 and tied closely to our work to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.

During one of the citywide Head Teacher events, Central Officers updated on progress and shared resources to support the implementation of the framework. 3 schools shared their journey and managers responsible for the implementation of the CIRCLE framework were given the opportunity to share experiences.

Professional learning sessions and surgeries have been led by education support officers as well as educational psychologists and health professionals demonstrating a multi-agency approach ensuring a wealth of expertise and knowledge. To ensure practitioners and leaders are supported in the methodology, an online toolkit is being well utilised with evidence showing it has been accessed over 1000 times by schools.

Relevant and flexible support has been effectively established and is ongoing to provide access as and when practitioners and school leaders require it. A suite of recorded training provides accessible reinforcement that delivers consistency and foundation for ongoing professional learning and attainment .

Develop guidance on how to meet a range of needs, particularly sensory needs

A suite of online training modules has been developed to help us better understand the needs of learners. The suite of materials draws on local resources and signposts to national resources available.

The resource can be accessed through QR codes and posters are on display in all staffrooms. Initial feedback is positive, particularly from new or inexperienced members of staff. Circle framework resources are linked to the materials and all resources are updated regularly to ensure relevance

The nature of the framework enables it to be used to support professional learning as part of a group during in-service days or individually as part of personal professional learning.



Seclusion guidance

Our draft guidance, *Supporting Learners : A relationship and rights focused approach to physical intervention and seclusion*, has been issued to schools. Initial feedback has been positive highlighting the importance of shared definitions and the supportive nature of the debrief guides. We will update our local guidance in line with any changes once the finalised national guidance is available.

Continue to be responsive in the support being offered by the ASN and Outreach service.

The ASN & Outreach Service continues to support learners through a quality, collaborative approach. The Senior Leadership Team ensures robust decision making across the Service through shared and collegiate processes, which are overseen by the Head Teacher. Leadership of Change, across the Core HGIOS? 4 Quality Indicators, has been dispersed across Senior Leaders in session 2022-2023. A single Standards, Qualities, and Improvement Plan (SQulP) and associated quality improvement framework continues to support the development of a consistent, high-quality cross-team ethos. Self-evaluation endorses the progress made since Service realignment in August 2021 and evidences this is increasingly underpinned by the Service's vision, values and aims, which were consulted upon and established in session 2021-2022.

Improvement activity directed towards embedding 'The Five Roles of Support for Learning' across teams is increasing the Service's ability to articulate and self-evaluate the quality of its offer. Staff now have a greater understanding of the role of the service and the importance of commonality of approach to ensure learners needs are being met. The Service's website has been continuously updated since its launch in Spring 2022, which forms part of the Local Authorities 2020-2023 Accessibility Strategy. The website provides a range of content which is easy to access and presented using plain language. The parents, carers and families section provides useful links to support services and also a list of frequently asked questions.

Activity undertaken in 2022-2023 enabled the Service to implement a Quality Improvement Framework designed to better-support self-evaluation across the whole service. The Framework is being used to drive the implementation of a system of collective self-evaluation of Quality Indicator 2.3, Learning, Teaching and Assessment. This is coupled with the Service's involvement in local authority Quality Improvement Visits, which was also new this session. Assimilated data has enabled the Service to evaluate this element of their work as 'good' with gathered evidence now providing an increasingly robust evidence base of collective strengths and next steps. A complimentary internal professional learning pilot was launched in conjunction: participant reflection data evidences sessions are increasing both knowledge and understanding, and confidence.

Consistent approaches to tracking and monitoring have been piloted in 'target teams' to strengthen data-led improvement methodology and further engender Service-wide consistency: these seek to ensure the service can consistently track request for assistance (input) data to improved outcomes for learners, thus robustly evidencing the impact of our interventions. The pilot has enabled the Service to generate an evidence base, which links with learners' progress against their individual targets. Plans are in place to expand the pilot in 2023-2024.

Going forward, we will implement refreshed approaches to quality improvement and keep approaches under review based on insight gleaned from inspection agencies. We will constantly review our new more proportionate model as we will work with the Northern Alliance. Our approach to professional learning will continue to be influenced by the data held on the quality of provision, from the self-reported needs of our workforce and will continue to draw on the expertise across our own system.

Work with partners to develop transition planning, including those with disability

More effective transition planning is helping us increase the number of positive destinations being achieved by young people. The refreshed pathway planning process put in place has added greater rigour and consistency to the process. As a result of the new process, and despite the challenges in the local economy, thanks to the hard work of school staff and partners, positive destinations data for August 2022 increased by 5.1% from last year to 95.1%.

Third sector organisations Barnardo's, Foyer and SHMU continue to support the delivery of a programme of support for both winter and summer leavers. Numbers of winter and summer leavers have decreased significantly as more pupils stay on at school. It is thought that the ABZ Campus model across all city schools will provide a greater variety of choice, especially vocational opportunities, for children and young people who remain at school.

Transition planning for those with disabilities continues. Development of provision through the Request for Assistance process and Fit Like Hubs has enabled personalised pathway planning in partnership with schools. This work will be supported further through our engagement with the GIRFE pathfinder on transitions for those with more complex needs.

Delivery of the Accessibility Plan

We have made significant progress regarding the availability and diversity of professional learning opportunities. There has been a reduction in exclusions of learners with disabilities, improvements to understanding of universal and targeted supports and an increase in the number of learners who are declared as disabled. Consultation responses from parents and carers suggests we need to ensure a greater consistency of understanding including of reasonable adjustments and of the need for Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs).

There have been rapid improvements in our use of accessible technologies and availability across our settings. Quality improvement visits have shown that, where used correctly, these can enable learners to lead their own learning and be as independent as possible. We are committed to building further confidence in our staff through provision of ongoing professional learning opportunities and the sharing of effective practice.

Despite the broad range of training that has been made available, consultation responses from parents and carers suggest that there is still work to be done regarding use of effective planning processes. Work on planning formats will be progressed to ensure that they are accessible.

We are proud of the wider opportunities that our learners are experiencing, however consultation responses from learners, parents and carers suggests that more could be done. Extracurricular activities will continue to be a focus in the new plan.

There is a need to maintain focus on the active participation of our children and young people in decision making as we work to give them the skills and confidence to do so.

Effective transition planning impacts positively on our learners and families. Our evaluation shows an ongoing requirement to ensure that our supports continue to be responsive to changing needs.

Improved data collation is clarifying the needs of learners, this alongside professional learning, has enabled a clearer understanding of how a curriculum can be personalised. We have seen an increase in some of our attainment data but acknowledge that the attendance of learners is essential.

External expertise has been commissioned and a specialist consultant has been appointed to carry out site surveys at a cross section of school buildings to inform next steps around school signage.

Design work on new school buildings has included a range of partners and specialists. The proposed model for school buildings has been validated by a pupil survey across the city. Access to the physical environment has been enhanced through understanding the universal supports that can be put in place. For learners with Autistic Spectrum Condition or sensory needs, this is particularly important as we move to flexible learning areas.

Reshape the Virtual School to ensure that those on the edge of care and those who are care experienced achieve at the highest levels in keeping with The Promise

The Promise is increasingly influencing our work across aspects of the education service. This embedding of The Promise is taking place across all Community Planning Partners and as a result, we are currently in the process of evaluating our shared progress against the 2021-24 Promise Plan and the full evaluation will be presented to Committee in due course.

As a result, only areas most specifically impacting on education and not outlined earlier in this report are detailed below.

Role of the Virtual School

A Virtual School Head Teacher has been in place for many years and actively contributes to the sharing of national best practice. There is clear evidence that having this post established has improved the consistency of data being held in the School Management Information System and improved the quality of provision for many. However, there is also evidence that as relationships between the Virtual School and partners has strengthened, relationships with school based designated managers for cared for young people have been compromised. We will need to address this and are testing alternative approaches to support through our 2 Edge of Care Pilots.

Understanding what it means to be care experienced

A programme to support school communities to have a greater understanding of 'What it means to be Care Experienced' has been developed with the intention of rolling this out in schools in 2023/24. This programme has taken cognisance of The Promise Change Plan, UNCRC and Angela Morgan's Review. The delivery of the programme will be further informed by resources and training developed and piloted by Who Cares? Scotland as well as input from the Each and Every Child initiative who have established positive relationships with Education in Aberdeen City.

Review cases of those who are on the edge of care to inform next steps

The Education Service and Children's Social Work collaborated with partners to develop a shared sense of what is meant by the 'edge of care' in an attempt to ensure that appropriate supports are in place and well targeted in order to restrict the number of children who experience the care system. This guided the establishment of two Edge of Care Pilots to explore new ways of partnership working and early evaluation is positive. Staff within the pilots were empowered to think creatively and consider the needs of children and families more holistically.

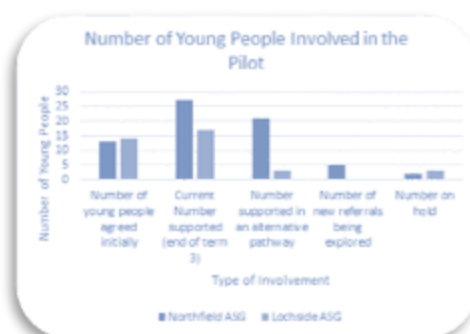
Use Service Design principles to reshape the approach taken by the Virtual School and wider Council with a focus on prevention and early intervention

Following the initial identification of young people by senior leaders in Education and Children's Social Work, the pilot team brought together information to build a more informed understanding of need, this included building relationships with the families to understand their situation more fully. As the pilot has progressed and relationships have been built, plans for young people have become more bespoke in response to the critical insight gleaned from families and the young people.

Establish a pilot in two Associated Schools Group to test and improve the model

From the outset the pilots recognised the criticality of how we engaged with young people and families. Connecting with the learning gained via the Fit Like Service, staff adopted a relational and trauma informed approach. This ensured that the support offer for each young person was based around the barriers they identified to being able to engage in education. Interventions are therefore individualised and have included:

- play-based support and structured work to explore feelings and emotions
- supporting parents to understand the impact of feelings on behaviours, academic input (literacy / numeracy/ASDAN awards/ dynamic youth awards),
- liaising with schools adapting timetables, strategies, and other supports,
- activities including sport, working with others, and managing relationships. families are supported to access weekly community connection sessions, financial support, support to access health



As the pilots progressed, the benefit of a weekly meeting between a key school link and the pilot team became apparent with a notable positive impact on transitions around school where these structures were in place. This practice is evident in both settings.

Young people engaging in the pilots are keen to share they feel listened to and value having an adult they can trust to talk to. Families tell us they value having someone who is seen to be neutral in terms of school and other agencies. As the pilot has progressed positive relationships have been built up allowing families to be more honest about the issues being experienced at home and allowing staff to target support more successfully.

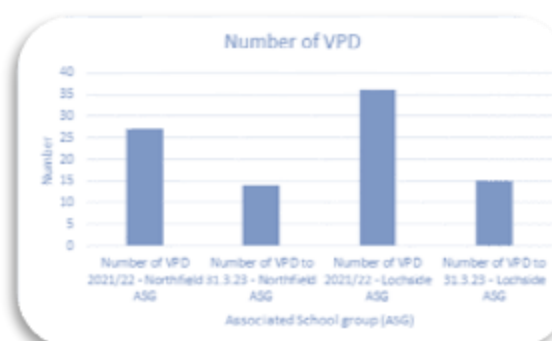
The core measures identified to measure impact were the number of young people involved in the pilot, attendance at pilot sessions, exclusions, and the number of VPD reports (Vulnerable Person Database). Consideration was also given to a number of indicators that would give an indication of progress towards more positive outcomes.

The number of young people engaging with the pilots has varied over time according to assessed need. Since September 2022, 68 young people have been supported across both ASGs. Where it was agreed in consultation with staff, young people, and families that the pilot was not the most appropriate intervention the family have been supported to access an alternative support.

Average attendance for young people engaged in the pilot has improved against levels from the previous session in both schools. In most cases this increase in attendance may be attributable to a key worker being on site and available to the young person should they require support.

The number of exclusions for young people engaged in the pilot has reduced since the pilot began, again attributed to the positive relationships developed and resultant changes being made to the offer available in schools.

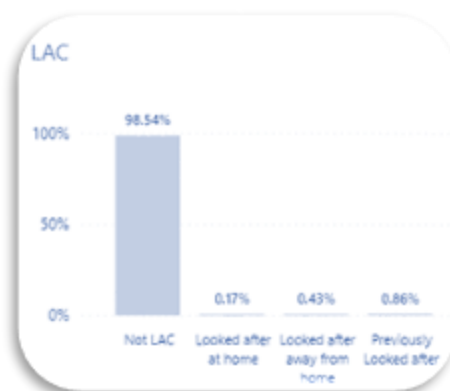
As young people have engaged with the pilot there has been a reduction in the number of VPD reports school has received in connection with their behaviour in the community. This may be related to the increase in attendance at pilot sessions, however it is too soon to draw firm conclusions given that the pilots have only been fully operational since December 2022.



been fully operational since December 2022.

On completion of the evaluation, consideration will be given to how this model may be scaled up as we continue to develop our preventative Family Support model.

Nationally defining 'care experienced' and 'edge of care' in legislation would enable easier identification of those who have experienced care in Management Information Systems and aid the easier extraction of data to monitor trends given the very low numbers of those with a current status of 'Looked After' in our schools.



Continue to work with Further and Higher education to support those who are care experienced into positive destinations

Pathways Advocates

The Virtual School Head Teacher led a sub-group that considered pathways for young people with experience of care in secondary schools. This involved working closely with colleagues in Further and Higher education alongside other key partners, to consider how best to support young people into a positive destination and sustain that destination. Young people in schools were asked what they needed and those in FE / HE were asked what support worked for them in school and what support would have been helpful in overcoming barriers. An output from the group was the development of the job profile for a Learner Pathways Advocate. This role was then implemented in secondary schools from October 2022 and will be fully evaluated in time.

Liaison with Further and Higher Education

There is regular liaison between the Virtual School and FE/HE in relation to supporting individual young people, an example of which is providing a bespoke extended work experience placement for a young person moving into S4, providing information for social work colleagues and also parents / carers. At a more strategic level, the Virtual School Head Teacher has worked alongside NESCol to revise the schools' application form for ABZ travel afternoons to ensure language is changed from Looked After to Care Experienced. This ensures that schools are in a position to share that a child has or continues to have experience of care.

School attendance

Validated data for 2021/22 shows that children and young people who are care experienced have a mean attendance of 86.59%. This is 5% lower than the average attendance of 91.44%. This gap has remained the same as the previous year.

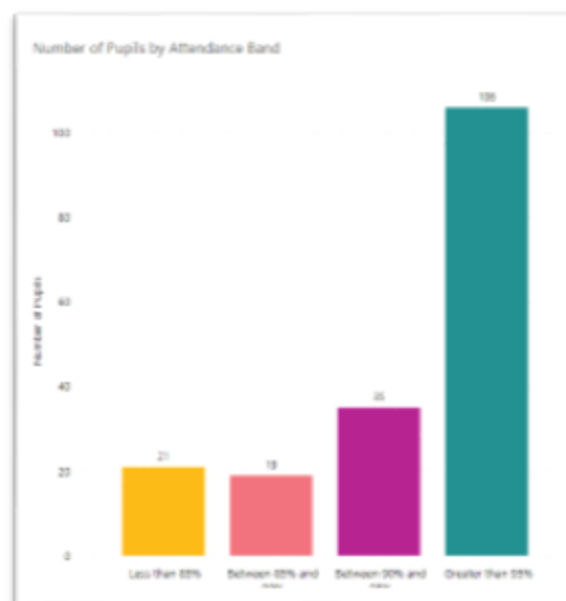
Exploring the data by group, however, highlights a contrasting picture for those who are looked after away from home compared to those who are looked after at home. The attendance of children and young people who are looked after away from home is two percentage points lower than their peers (91.44%). The attendance of those looked after at home is significantly lower at 82.05%, this constitutes a marginal increase from session 2021/22.

Attendance is tracked monthly and there has been an increased focus on supporting accurate recording of attendance of our Looked After Children, some of whom have a personalised curriculum that involves support by 3rd sector partners and commissioned services.

There will be a greater focus in 2023/24 on tracking of attendance for all those who are both currently and previously Looked After (care experienced) both in schools and centrally through the Virtual School.

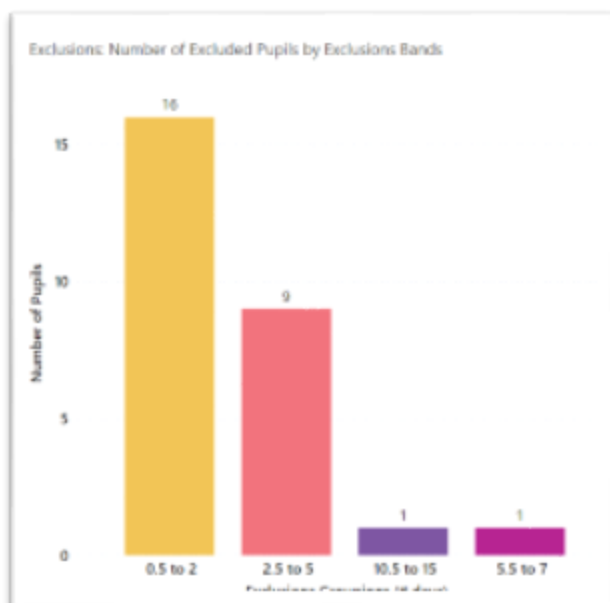
The majority of cared for young people have attendance greater than 95%.

There is a need to understand and address the issues faced by those with poorer levels of school attendance and use this learning to inform the further development of our Edge of Care Pilots.



Exclusion

Exclusions have reduced steadily over the past 5 years.



Many children and young people found the transition back into a school setting challenging and required a degree of support to adjust. This is especially true for children with experience of care as a result of their lived experiences. Schools were supported to plan for the transitions and gave consideration to the personalised support that would be required. This transition may account for the marginal rise in number of exclusion incidents. There is evidence that the numbers of days lost to exclusion is being carefully considered.

Validated data shows that children who are Looked After at home continue to be more likely to be excluded than those Looked After away from home.

19 Looked After children have been excluded to date this academic year with 9 of those having repeat exclusions and accounting for 22 of the 32 total incidents. 14 of the children are Looked After away from home and 5 are Looked After at home. Secondary pupils account for 89% of these exclusions. There is a need to offer a wider range of courses to engage young people more fully in their education and this will be driven through Phase 2 of ABZ Campus.

It is also noted that the 2 highest points for exclusion are prior to the October and Easter holidays. Schools continue to be alert to the holiday build up for our children with care experience in order to support appropriately. There is early evidence that the year-round model of support being piloted in Northfield and Lochside ASGs is having a positive impact in reducing peaks of dysregulation.

Attainment and destinations data

Curriculum for Excellence data for Looked After Children continues to show a gap in literacy and numeracy attainment between those children who are Looked After and their peers. This remains a key focus despite the small numbers in the cohort (100 across all primary stages and 70 across secondary schools) which can skew data and make it exceptionally difficult to identify long term trends in both CfE and senior phase data

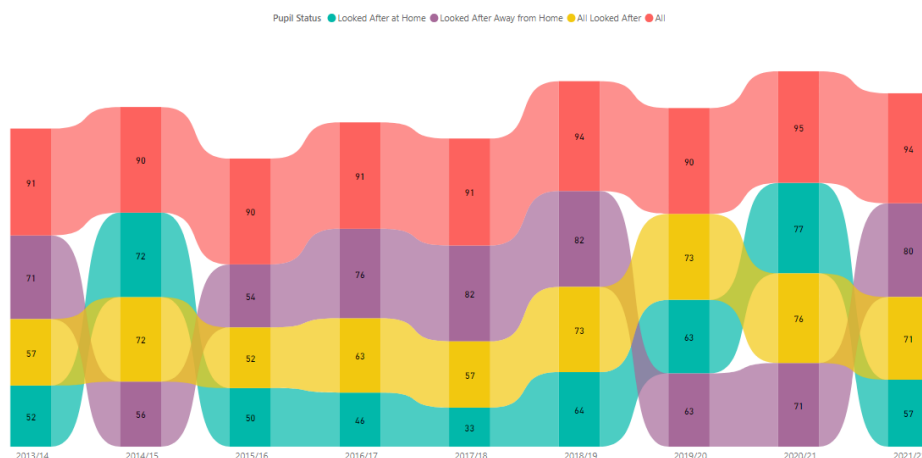
Taking all attainment data into account, the attainment levels for children who are Looked After remains relatively unchanged with little year on year fluctuation. There is a need to think differently around how to address this. There is a need to prioritise the resources available for those who have experienced care to build a wider provision of more flexible pathways.

It is anticipated that continuing to broaden the range of curriculum pathways available to children and young people through the ABZ Campus alongside focussed work from Pathways Advocates will see an increase in the number of subjects being achieved as well as the level at which they are achieved.

Although a lower percentage of young people who are Looked After move into a positive destination when compared to the virtual comparator, the percentage remains constant. Small numbers in the leavers cohort impacts on the percentage change achieved. There is a need to continue to focus on this area with a range of partners including Further and Higher Education in order to ensure that our looked after children consistently achieve a positive destination.

For the 2021/22 cohort, 5 young people did not move into a positive destination (3 are Looked After at home and 2 are Looked After away from home). All 5 had complex needs and were supported through the Virtual School. 3 have since moved on to college, 1 into employment and 1 on to ABZ Works.

% of Aberdeen City Leavers in Positive Destinations



From the cohort of leavers, the INSIGHT data indicates that 2 young people did not achieve any qualifications, however, due to circumstances 1 young person was entered late and did achieve a literacy and numeracy qualification. The other young person was supported to move on to a college course that did not require qualifications from school. This young person had struggled to attend school due to challenges within the home and a high level of anxiety about leaving the house/community. A range of supports continue to be in place to support them to succeed.

Schools are being asked to scrutinise the performance of this group of young people and Quality Improvement visits by Central Officers also have a focus on progress of all children and young people with experience of care. In session 23/24 there will be an increased level of scrutiny through termly visits with the Learner Pathways Advocates and designated managers in secondary schools.

In summary, considerable testing is underway to help deliver on Plan 21-24. There is now a need to drive changes in the senior phase curriculum through Phase 2 of ABZ Campus and evaluate the impact of the pilots underway to help determine the shape of the system in the long term. Data will continue to be a focus with individual schools being asked to monitor groups routinely to help identify and share best practice and address issues timeously.

To fully deliver on Plan 21-24, the education service now needs to:

- Implement the new BGE trackers
- Evaluate our Edge of Care pilots and use this learning to inform the future shape of the Virtual School.
- Evaluate the impact of our Pathways Associates
- Broaden the curriculum further through the second phase of ABZ Campus
- Engage positively with the national education reform programme

Support those least likely to secure a positive destination through a School Leavers fortnight

Initial exploratory work was undertaken with young people. Feedback was that there was no appetite for this development at this time. Consideration of this offer with a particular focus on those with additional support needs will be made again in 2023/24.

Close the poverty related attainment gap

QIOS to work with HTs to monitor the impact of PEF interventions regularly to enable agility.

Quality assuring the extent to which schools are closing the poverty related attainment gap

Schools have continued to use data to inform their use of Pupil Equity Funding with a wider range of interventions available across the city. Quality Improvement Officers continue to monitor the impact of PEF interventions during school visits and during data discussions. Significant consideration and progress has been made to systematically review and develop PEF planning and reporting. The process has included working with the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and looking beyond the local authority for good practice. Working alongside a group of headteachers and

the attainment advisor, the central leadership team have developed a bespoke equity tracker that aligns with updated school improvement planning. The impact of this development will be evident once the final format is shared and implemented with school leaders in August 2023.

Improving attainment at Quarryhill School through Pupil Equity Funding

What problem were we trying to solve? 72% of our school population is within the first two SIMD quintiles and in P1 a third of the year group are being supported within our PEF plan. Our aim is to improve attainment generally but also for the pupils within the lower quintiles for reading, writing, listening & talking, numeracy.

What did we do? We embarked on a journey to improve our P1 experience moving towards a play-based approach, considering current research with the aim to raise attainment.

Our journey included:

- Professional learning for both teachers, including visits to other settings, collegiate working, professional reading, and online learning to support the development of our vision, as well as improve staff confidence.
- We resourced both classrooms, changed the physical environment in partnership with nursery staff, and experimented with free-flow learning between classes to increase varied play opportunities, share resources and support differentiated learning.
- An EYP transitioned with the children from nursery to P1 and supported the development of the play-based approach. A PSA then took over from November onwards working with both classes, focusing also on small group interventions. (Our plan was to have the EYP stay the full session but she left post)

What happened? Attainment in listening and talking increased by 1%, reading improved by 24%, writing by 17% and numeracy by 14% over the year.

What next? Our approach is to be further embedded in P1 with opportunities for outdoor learning. Staff will continue to engage with professional learning and network with other settings.

In Numeracy P1, 4 and 7 the poverty-related attainment gap, measured by comparing the outcomes of learners in quintile one (Q1) and quintile five (Q5), has reduced from 2020-21. The 2021/22 attainment was equal to both the 2018/19 baseline and the five-year average for this national measure.

In Literacy P1, 4 and 7 the poverty-related attainment gap has reduced from 2020-21. The gap decreased from 31% to 11% in 2021-22.

These figures outline the considerable improvements which have been made when compared to 2020-21 data.

Hanover Street School addressing the attainment gap.

What problem were we trying to solve? Data analysis and ongoing assessment highlighted gaps for the majority of our children in SIMD bands 1 and 2. We focused on core subject areas Literacy, Numeracy and Health and wellbeing. For Health and wellbeing, our aim was to provide further nurture support to give children the platform and supporting strategies to fully access their learning.

What did we do? Invested PEF money into 0.6fte teaching staff and 1.0 PSA to increase our offer of support for learning and nurture to identified groups of learners. SfL focused on Literacy and Numeracy using baseline assessment data to measure against to determine progress.

In Literacy, we have used benchmarking and writing criterion scale data as a tool to establish gaps in children's learning. We then focused support on Reading and aspects of writing (spelling, grammar) using a range of resources such as Nessy (online tool to support reading and writing). Children's progress is assessed on a termly basis for example (Benchmarking for reading, comprehension assessments, individualised teacher made assessments for targeted areas)

What happened? Most targeted learners (including our children attending school due to their families fleeing conflict) showed evidence of improved attainment with a few learners making significant progress.

What next? As we approach June, identified learners will be reassessed to determine the level of progress made across the year. The increase in teacher salary means that it will be challenging to continue with our current approach and our plans for next session are currently under review.

Dyce Academy using Interdisciplinary Learning to close the gap through the use of Pupil Equity Funding

What was the problem we were trying to solve? In-school data (BGE Literacy levels) showed that BGE pupils on FSM showed significantly less achievement in writing in S1 and S2 and reading in S2 and S3.

What did we do? We implemented the use of an IDL (International Dyslexia learning – identify develop learn) literacy programme for a targeted group of pupils from S1 - S3. This programme focused on developing knowledge and confidence in different areas of literacy through consistent use of the programme.

What happened? Overall, 80% of pupils who have engaged with this programme have increased their reading age. This ranges from 1-month to 2-year age. When pupils were asked how much they felt the programme was helping them, almost all pupils agreed or strongly agreed that IDL has helped their literacy skills.

What next? As IDL has been a success with a targeted group we are going to broaden the use of the programme and introduce it into an identified S2 English class with a view to further rolling it out to other English classes. This approach along with the purchase of accessible library books will look to further close the gap and increase literacy skills and confidence levels amongst our BGE cohort.

Engagement with Education Scotland

Following thematic reviews 2 of our schools were asked to participate in national events to share their work on Interdisciplinary Learning.

The Local Authority has led work with the Northern Alliance to develop a shared Quality Improvement Framework across the Northern Alliance. All Quality Improvement teams came together in June 2023 for training from HMle and this work will continue throughout session 23/24 and help the Alliance work together to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.

We are in early discussions around curriculum development support for one of our secondary schools.

Bucksburn Academy

What was the identified gap? A gap in literacy levels in S1 and S2. Several pupils were starting S1 with a low reading age.

How many pupils were impacted by this intervention? 301 with 34 being in SIMD 1&2 and 36 in receipt of free school meals.

What happened? From growth data taken from Star Reading: 81.25% of S1 pupils in quintile 1+2 have increased their reading age this session. The average increase was 6 months. 77.78% of S2 pupils in quintile 1+2 have increased their reading age so far this session. The average increase was 9 months 63.2% of S1 pupils who receive free school meals have increased their reading age this session. The average increase was 1 month. 76.5% of S2 pupils who receive free school meals have increased their reading age this session. The average increase was 6 months. The increase in reading age for S1 and S2 as a whole was as follows: S1 - 7 months S2 - 4 months.

People's views The reading ages of all pupils is shared and kept updated on a spreadsheet which is shared with staff. A number of staff have said that the data is useful to them for gauging the amount of differentiation that is required for individual pupils. Support for learning also uses this data to decide which pupils require extra help with reading and set up small literacy groups once a session to help them.

Observations Accelerated reader also helps to motivate the pupils to read more which in turn helps to raise their reading ages. There are competitions to see who can read the most words, class word totals and word millionaires and word multi-millionaires.

Monitor impact of the provision of Youth Work, Family Learning to determine an agile response to supporting disadvantaged groups.

Partnership Forums continue to work to identify the issues being faced across a community to determine priorities, agree how to allocate resources, and identify where gaps in provision remain.

Youth Workers, Family Learning Workers and Financial Inclusion workers were first put in place over 2021/22 as part of the Education Recovery Grant, with a clear remit for early intervention and to target children, young people, and families most at risk of disengaging from education. This resource has been maintained through use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. There are numerous examples of where this more flexible allocation of resource has successfully improved outcomes for learners and families with examples highlighted throughout this report. Emerging learning from CELCIS guides greater focus on multi-agency locality working to improve outcomes and this will be considered further over 2023/24.

The culture of collaboration across the organisation continues to support our learners and families well. The pooling of expertise and resource continues to deliver policies and programmes in an efficient and more impactful way.

Youth work funded by Scottish Attainment Challenge funding

Scottish Attainment Challenge resource continues to be invested in youth work. 2074 young people (aged 10-18 years) and 689 children (aged 5-9 years) have engaged in youth work this year with 1648 of those young people reporting improved mental health and wellbeing as a result of their engagement with the service.

2,459 young people have engaged with the Saltire Awards in Aberdeen. These awards, which are for volunteers aged 12-25 and co-ordinated by ACVO, continue to contribute positively to employability skills. 56 children and 16 young people were supported to complete nationally recognised awards.

Over 100 young people identified as unlikely to secure a positive destination benefited from targeted and carefully tailored youth work programmes. 617 referrals for youth work have been received from across all secondary schools. Of those referrals:

- 26% sought support with health and wellbeing
- 20% sought support to manage relationships
- 16% sought support to improve communication with others
- 13% sought support to improve self-awareness

178 individual 1-2-1 sessions were delivered along with 421 group sessions.

Two years of data strongly supports the provision of youth work in schools and Scottish Attainment Challenge funding will be used to maintain this provision. The ability to provide some job security through extending the provision will help to improve outcomes as it allows for relationships to be maintained.

Youth Work Making a Difference

Cooking skills as part of the ongoing support offered to young people on Flexible Learning Pathways by the Youth Work Team. The sessions support engagement, contribute to young people's life skills and support positive Health and Wellbeing. Confidence 2 Cook sessions ran from August 2022 and 22 young people have taken part at Deeside Family Centre.

During an initial 4-week Confidence 2 Cook course young people choose what they would like to learn to cook, learn about food/kitchen safety and are encouraged and supported to experiment with foods, recipes, and flavours. Flexible arrangements support participants to overcome anxiety about going out of the house or provide learning activities off site from school that will further support skills and confidence building based on their interests.

One young person recently completed a Dynamic Youth Award based on their Confidence 2 Cook sessions, two young people have applied to NESCOL to do Hospitality and one young person will be starting a cooking course through Barnardos employability after Summer. The sessions are based on healthier eating on a budget and young people can make their favourite foods for a fraction of the cost and know the health benefits of reducing sugars and salt.

The engagement and attendance at these sessions is very good and the sessions remain fully booked until October 2023 with young people requesting further sessions. Guidance Teachers have noted the positive impact these sessions have in engaging young people in further learning opportunities and continue to discuss the learning offer with parents and young people and submit referrals to the Youth Work in Schools Team. The sessions also allow young people and staff to build positive relationships and identify other areas where support is needed e.g safety in the community, offending, relationships or future goals.

Feedback from young people

'I want to do cooking for working with children, I have taken HE next year'

'I have a place at College for cooking'; 'skills for when I am older'

I know how to make burgers and tacos, my favourite food'

'helping my mum cook the Christmas dinner'

'I want to be a Chef, gaining my confidence to cook certificate will help'

Parent feedback

'he is really enjoying the sessions.. thank you': 'beetroot burgers are tasty' 'he has been cooking up a storm in the house over the holidays'

'he is at school today and is looking forward to his cooking!'

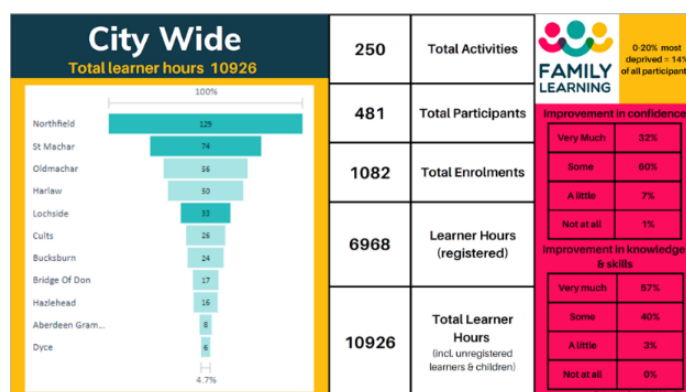
'I've tried all the things and I must say they've tasted pretty good, he's fair chuffed with himself'

During session 22/23 data was gathered more routinely to support more rigorous evaluation and help to inform next steps. We now need to more carefully align this data set with our work to develop a Family Support model and carefully consider the role of Partnership Forums within that model.

Family Learning funded through Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.

The primary reason for most of the referrals to the Family Learning service is for support with behaviour, low attendance at school or support for families with a child who has additional support needs. When work begins with families and a trusted rapport is built, other areas in need of support are often discovered, such as poverty, poor mental health, and the breakdown of family relationships.

Families being referred for 1:1 support generally present with a higher level of need, with 16% of families currently with social work input, on the cusp of social work support or experiencing child protection concerns. Family Learning frequently support the maintenance of de-escalations from social work and is recognised by colleagues as an essential role in the support received by families. The team have developed strong relationships with a wide variety of partner agencies with the goal of ensuring that families access the right support at the right time.



There is now a need to think about how this resource aligns with our model of Family Support.

Family Learning Case Study funded through Scottish Attainment Challenge funding

Working together with home and school

A child displaying aggressive behaviours at home and in school was referred to Family Learning. The child was only attending school for 2 hours each morning at the time of referral and found it difficult to be in class, spending most of the time in school in the nurture room. The referral outlined the parents' need for support to understand the child's emotions and to establish structured routines and boundaries within the family home. Family Learning began building positive relationships with the parents and supported them to attend an 'Understanding Emotions' group. 1:1 support was offered in the family home, establishing positive routines, and encouraging mum and dad to work together to respond appropriately to the distressed behaviours of their child. At the most recent multi-agency meeting for the young person, there has been a marked improvement.

The child is now accessing a full timetable, and most of his timetable is within the classroom with his peers. The child can recognise when he is becoming frustrated, and there is a system in place to allow space for him to deescalate. Mum and dad are noticing that their young person is less heightened at home, and they are seeing a clear reduction in heightened behaviours.

Family Learning at Bramble Brae Primary School funded through Pupil Equity Funding

At Bramble Brae the most impactful intervention has been our Family Learning Worker (0.8) which has been integral to our plans supporting a focus on attendance, engagement, and participation. Our worker has provided focused interventions and workshops for families and has provided 1105 learning hours within our school community.

Over the session there have been 25 courses/1 to 1's. 1 to 1 support priorities the 6 priority family types with 100% of those supported falling within one of these categories. There have been 62 participants over the session with 92% of those in attendance reporting an improvement in confidence and 97% of participants reporting an improvement in knowledge and skills.

Family Learning Case Study - Young Parents Group

Family Learning have been running a support group for Young Parents under the age of 25 in Seaton Community Centre since September 2022. This is a space for young parents to meet other parents their own age and develop a peer support network. Participants have said that they previously struggled to access regular parent and toddler groups due to the difference in age between them and the other parents who attend. Each week they make lunch together and take part in an activity which is decided by the participants themselves. A core group now attend regularly. The group have worked on a variety of creative projects and participants have been able to take part in activities they otherwise wouldn't have enjoyed. The participants have had speakers in from services like St Machar Credit Union, ABZ Works and CFINE and have since signed up to access these in the community regularly. Visits have been undertaken to Aberdeen Art Gallery and SHMU, which group members have enjoyed. Some of the participants are quite vulnerable and have a limited support network.

Through engaging with the Young Parent Group they have been able to access 1-2-1 support from Family Learning workers, Family Learning courses and Grounded Counselling. Two of the group members have children transitioning to primary school after the summer and are now thinking about volunteering opportunities in the community and potentially returning to work. Family Learning staff continue to signpost them to appropriate support and opportunities.

Work with Education Scotland Attainment Adviser to target support to identified schools.

During session 2022/23 our attainment advisor shared support available at a universal level at a head teacher training event. She has offered PEF drop in sessions for all schools which have been well attended and support the management and use of PEF funding in schools.

Writing was identified as an area for improvement and central officers worked closely with the Attainment Advisor and Children and Young People’s Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) National Improving Writing Programme to identify schools to form part of a pilot to improve writing attainment . The team identified 11 schools had access to training and mentor support resulting in improved attainment in the targeted year group of P4 for all schools involved. This pilot will be rolled out further during session 23/24.

**Improvement Project - First Level
Writing Cohorts 1 & 2**

School	Year	Base (%)	Actual (%)
Bramble Brae School	P4	70	83
	P5	56	86
Quarryhill School	P4	36	80
	P5	55	70
Killybrewater School	P4	80	79
	P5	46	75
Kingsford School	P4	89	90
	P5	69	58
Kinnhill School	P4	72	85
	P5	75	76
Rainhill School	P4	85	81
	P5	34	88

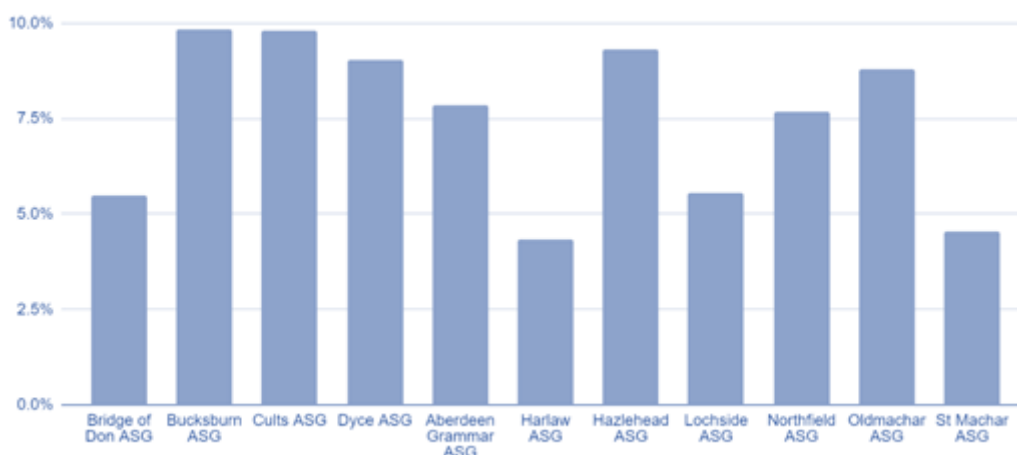
Maximise update of free Musical Instruction

The Music Service has developed pupil uptake strategies for settings where the uptake of music tuition was lower. The strategies are based around whole classes learning instruments together in an ensemble setting. These targeted programmes give children the opportunity to learn an instrument and perform alongside their peers and afford some parents the opportunity to learn an instrument alongside their child so that they can be fully involved in their child’s musical journey.

A significant change can be seen in regards to children in particular areas of the city accessing the service. For example, in April 2021 there were only seven pupils in the Northfield Associated Schools Group (ASG) accessing Music Service provision. This number now sits at 186 pupils. This change is welcomed by the Service.

The chart below shows the percentage of children in each ASG receiving individual and small group music tuition. Through data analysis the service has identified priority

Percentage of ASG roll receiving group and individual tuition



schools for increasing numbers of pupils receiving tuition in the 23-24 academic session.

Audit the cost of the school day to determine next steps

Curriculum costs can restrict the choices that young people make in schools and limit their access to the courses best suited to their aptitudes and interests. Schools have removed all curriculum costs to families. There is clear evidence that this has resulted in children taking decisions on courses which are not influenced by the associated costs.

Further work will be undertaken in session 23/24 to review guidance to schools and look at how other costs impact on learners and families. The financial inclusion team will continue to support families to navigate the on going cost of living crisis through providing timely support and advice to families.

Work with the Scottish Government to increase provision of ELC to those who are 1 and 2 from low income households.

Although this was planned for session 22/23 we are awaiting guidance from Scottish Government as to how this will be implemented.

Universal roll out of PEEP in all ELC settings

Capitalising on the expansion of early learning and childcare

At the heart of the ELC Expansion is increasing family resilience through improved health and wellbeing of children and parents, so as a Local Authority we took the opportunity to put significant resources into the Parents as Early Education Partners (PEEP) 'Learning Together' Programme for ELC staff in both our school nurseries and funded provider settings.

Sessions were delivered online via Microsoft Teams over four half day sessions and are ongoing. The practitioners engaged with a small group during the training in order to develop confidence using the PEEP resources and are then introduced to the PEEP Team Network. 106 practitioners from ELC settings in Aberdeen City have completed the programme and are qualified to deliver PEEP as part of our universal family support offer. A few settings are introducing PEEP sessions as part of their induction process. Feedback from parents has been very positive:

"I enjoyed watching Macy enjoy herself"

In particular parents appreciated the opportunity to get together and support each other.

"It was great to be able to get together with people with similar aged children"

"Getting out to meet other mums"

Despite the investment in training, the number of settings offering PEEP are lower than we had anticipated and plans are in place to increase the support available to enable more consistent delivery of PEEP over school session 2023/24.

Proactive planning and the targeting of families by multi-agency partners has helped realise an increase in the percentage of vulnerable 2–4-year-olds accessing early years provision from 12.3% to 16.5%. This should increase further following the introduction of the Data Sharing / Pipeline Project, which has resulted in 565 flyers going out to names and addresses we have received from Scottish Government.

There have been 3 care experienced parents who have applied for an Eligible 2's place since this became a new eligibility criterion. (an increase from last year) All children are placed and engaging positively. The service will continue to work to identify and place those deemed to be more vulnerable as a priority by working in collaboration with key partners.

Prevent families from experiencing poverty wherever possible

Work in collaboration with others to address the root cause of poverty.

A comprehensive analysis of child poverty was undertaken as the [Children's Services Plan](#) was developed in March 2023 with a further review undertaken as part of our [Child Poverty Report](#). The report highlighted the considerable contribution made by the education service but highlighted the need for a continued focus on child poverty.

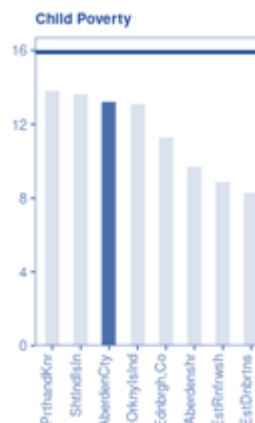
Provisional data for 2021/22 shows that 6,818 children in Aberdeen City were living in low income families (up from 5,405 in 2020/21 and 6,139 in 2019/20). Of these, 5,864 were under 16 years old - equivalent to 16.4% of children under 16 years.

Almost two thirds (62.7%) of children in low income families are in working households and over half (55.6%) are in lone parent families. Figures for the number of children in low income families are calibrated to the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) survey. As fieldwork operations for this survey were affected by the pandemic, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has advised that additional caution be exercised when making comparisons with previous years.



Levels of child poverty in the city are below the national average. However, levels are relatively high when compared with our comparator authorities. We know that nationally around 90% of those living in poverty identify as being a member of at least one of the 6 groups most likely to be impacted by poverty. It is imperative that we now better understand the unique needs of our citizens in the 6 groups to help shape our policies and practices.

A review of the Improvement Service Community Planning Outcomes Tool, shows that 78% of communities were performing better than expected as of 2020/21. This means however, that 22% were not. There is now a need to establish a mechanism to better



track our progress in addressing the child poverty agenda across our communities and localities in real time to ensure that our collective endeavours realise more equitable levels of improvement. There is also a need to improve the quality of qualitative and quantitative data on the 6 groups most likely to be impacted by poverty to inform our work and this will be an area for development with Community Planning Partners over school session 2023/24.

Schools responding to the needs of their communities

Our schools continue to address child poverty at school level with a range of approaches in place to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis on families.

Orchard Brae School

What problem were we trying to solve? Reduce the impact of cost of living on families with children with disabilities living in areas of deprivation. Focus on food, personal care items and clothing to increase pupil focus, engagement, and attendance.

What did we do? Clothing bank set up by a class with information sent out to all parents within this group. Request for donations for reusable school clothing asked from parents/carers/staff Clothing, personal care items and food purchased. A meal of the fortnight launched for families – families could request a pack which included an easy read, easy make recipe card and basic ingredients to make a meal for four. Purchased supermarket vouchers to send to PEF families to support with everyday items and clothing.

What happened? Our evidence is somewhat anecdotal - increased attendance for overall group, slight increase in engagement levels. One of our best outcomes was the engagement from the parents as we had a 100% return/positive acknowledgement after receipt of the vouchers. This has had a positive impact on our ability to further develop the engagement. Some of this group of parents will now be involved in our family engagement leadership group to support all aspects of school life.

What next?

Continue with the clothing bank.

Re-launch meal of the fortnight to make more sustainable and varied

Vouchers to be purchased again to support with everyday items.

Explore possibilities of a family area to support families to charge phones, do washing, get a warm drink and access to support.

The use of the Arts to build confidence and participation

Young people at Northfield Academy shared that they feel branded by postcode. This triggered work with Aberdeen Art Gallery and The Creative Learning Team to help young people explore the uniqueness of their community and themselves. This saw the introduction of Artists in residence funded by Pupil Equity Funding.

Case Study - This is Northfield

Young people at Northfield Academy have told us through a Focus Group that they feel branded by postcode. We want to shift the narrative around Northfield and give young people a sense of achievement. We also know that enjoyment is a key component of learning. An important outcome for this project is to make learning more enjoyable for our young people by using creative interventions. In response, we have partnered with the Creative Learning Team to shape four residencies.

The four residencies aim to use creative arts to develop skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. The Northfield Academy learners will participate in a range of creative activities and develop their creative arts skills and their confidence while they are working towards an SQA qualification by achieving units from the National Certificate in Personal and Vocational Skills. The project will also feed the creativity of our staff by offering them the opportunity to engage with the creative arts, through our artists, as well as mindfulness meditation and other activities.

Residency 1 – What’s Your Treasure?

Northfield Academy learners have been invited to offer new perspectives on artworks and objects in the city’s art gallery and museum collection and work towards an exhibition at Aberdeen Treasure Hub. The young people will have an exhibition on the 17th of June 2023 at the Aberdeen Treasure Hub. <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/AAGM/learn/northfield>

Residency 2 – Princes Trust Collaboration

The Awesome Tech project will invite Northfield Academy learners to build robots and interactive sculptures in small teams. Young people will be using the creative arts to develop their team working and leadership skills.

Residency 3 – Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Working across the whole school, this residency will explore creative interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of teachers, support staff and learners within the school.

Residency 4 – Resilient Northfield

This residency will focus on improving the perception of Northfield by inviting learners to create a sensory map and lead a community arts project.

The evaluation framework will measure several outcomes, including:

Young people will have more confidence.

Young people will feel listened to.

Young people will feel valued.

Young people will learn new skills.

Young people will feel more positive about learning.

Partnership with Nuart

The success of this programme led to establishment of a partnership with Nuart for the first time in 2023/24.



Schools were involved in 2 projects to create art work as part of the festival. Working alongside the renowned Scottish based (and Aberdeen born) street artist Katie Guthrie, Primary 5 pupils from six city centre schools and representatives from every Secondary school participated and got the chance to add their mark to a chalk based artwork in the 'Quad' of Marischal College, with outdoor chalk to create graffiti and street art which the theme of the festival 'Rewilding' at its core. The event encouraged young people to express themselves with no limits imposed. The end result was open to the public to visit during the Nuart Festival.

Working alongside Aida Wilde, an Iranian-born, London-based contemporary serigraph artist, educator and social commentator, young people from Northfield, St Machar and Dyce Academy were given the opportunity to explore any avenues that are important to them and create pieces of powerful messaging which have been 'pasted up' and curated into a public gallery outdoor space in the city centre



Emerging evidence is highlighting the benefit of the arts in supporting children and young people to feel more confident and participate more fully. Discussions have also begun to look at how we can link Nuart with other groups including the music service to allow us to link all the arts together. This will be developed further over school session 2023/24.



Artist in Residency at Glashieburn School

What problem were we trying to solve? The impact on attendance, participation and engagement based on emotional resilience, self-confidence, anxiety/fear, general resilience, and ability to cope with change.

What did we do? We worked with Creative Learning to put an Artist in residence in place across 3 terms.

What happened? Children were involved at all stages, including the interview process, this allowed full ownership of the project. The children based those selected for interview on how interesting their art project was, how engaging they thought it would be for their peers- would it have a 'hook and how would it support them in becoming more resilient. The children worked with school staff to create a set of questions for interview and sat in on these across a day. The children selected to interview had been part of the Resilience residency funded by Creative Learning last session as part of the return from Covid, so they had an understanding of what the project outcome needed to be.

Three Artists were selected to work across the 22/23 session- each with a different art approach but all with a focus on improving resilience, confidence, and self-esteem. The children selected to work with each artist were based on data, including attainment, attendance, and SHINE survey data, as well as parental and teacher concerns. We also selected a whole class to work with an artist where we had a high level of need, care experienced children, low engagement with out of school activities, and three children who are finding it difficult to cope with returning to the classroom after periods of school closure.

The work of our first artist allowed children to see the benefits of change and how to put strategies in place to deal with the negative emotions change brought about. As these groups were mixed, they also supported friendship and relationship building. One child benefitted in terms of communication and providing evidence in support of professional judgement of a level in Talking and Listening. The children involved spoke of the artist being calm, approachable and a good listener, and for one particular child the artwork allowed them a space to work anxiety free, with no pressure for their work to be 'correct'.

The second residency was based with a class and used the outdoors with links to mindfulness and nature. The children have commented on how calming these sessions have been, providing a clearer headspace and a level of freedom to explore, supporting confidence. The class teacher involved has commented on how being outdoors in nature has allowed them to see a different side to some of the more introverted children, commenting on a growth in confidence which some have transferred into the classroom.

Our third residency provided opportunity for children with a range of additional support needs to cope with change and work as a team, developing tolerance and respect.

What next? Our plan is to work with Creative learning to analyse the reports from all 3 artists and consider pupil feedback and broader education data sets.

Free school meal registrations have increased but uptake is too low

Schools encouraged families to register for free school meals and the number of registrations has increased. Improvement in registrations has been realised through changes to benefits awarding systems. Claimants of housing benefit and council tax reduction are now automatically awarded the free school meal benefit. The universal roll out of free school meals has made close tracking of uptake for direct comparison challenging.

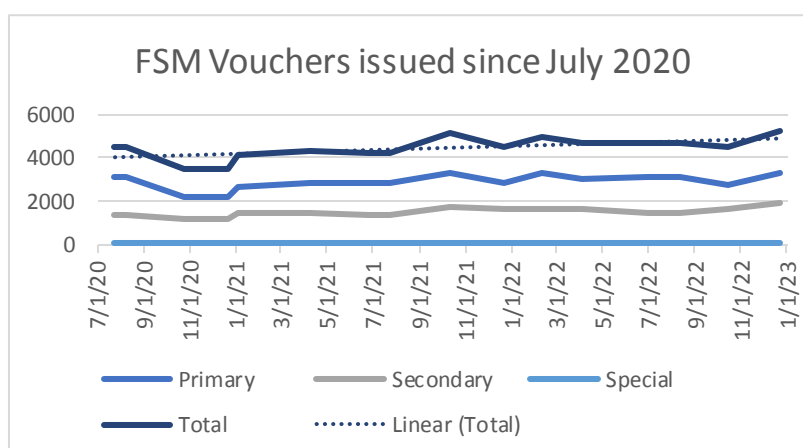
When looking at the number of children (including those who are now automatically entitled in P1-P5), the number of children registered for free school meals has increased from 8277 in 2020 to 12,721 in 2022. While there have been increases at schools in priority neighbourhoods, increases have been seen across schools in the city, including those in areas out with priority neighbourhoods.

Uptake of free school meals varies considerably from school to school and the school catering service are working with local schools to better understand the factors guiding children and young people to not take up their entitlement. According to the most recent data from the Healthy Living Survey, the percentage uptake in Primary schools currently sits at 69.6% and only 47.7% in secondary schools.

Work is in progress to establish a food hub at St Machar Academy to test an alternative approach. The food hub will be out with the main school building and provide 'grab and go' food provision, allowing pupils to be out with school to meet their friends but still uptake their free school meal entitlement. Learning from this trial will be used to determine next steps.

Vouchers have been distributed to families who are eligible due to low income during holiday periods, and these continue to be welcomed by families. In the year to date, vouchers provided were equivalent to the value of £343,964 in school meals .

Free school meal vouchers issued to families on low incomes during holiday periods



Culter Primary Partnership with Aberdeen Football Club Trust

What problem were we trying to solve? Through attendance data, teacher observations and pupil comment we noted that a number of children were arriving at school with factors impacting on their readiness to learn and engage. Some children were complaining of not having breakfast or morning snacks resulting in their first nutrition of the day being school lunch. Additionally, a number of children were continually arriving significantly late or displaying poor attendance. Class teachers also identified a number of children with “high energy” appearing unsettled or restless first thing in the morning. Valuable learning time was being lost and additional staffing resources were being deployed to support the children struggling to engage

What did we do? Through our partnership with Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust (AFCCT) we began two free breakfast clubs from 8-9am offering high energy games and fun football activities followed by a free varied, nutritious breakfast and access to morning snacks supplied by CFine. We opened up bookings to all pupils but prioritised our targeted identified/PEF pupils for places.

What happened? Pupils/Parents welcomed the breakfast club and it has become a regular fixture. This session, we have served over 450 free breakfasts and seen positive feedback/attendance from pupils and parents. Teachers report an improvement in high energy pupils seeming more settled and ready to learn following attendance at breakfast club. Some pupils have seen an improvement in punctuality and attendance on the days they are attending breakfast club. We are reassured that all pupils who attend have received a healthy nutritious breakfast and access to extra fruit/water for morning snack.

What next? We plan to continue running two Breakfast Clubs next session offering priority for our PEF pupils and target families. We will continue to encourage engagement from our pupils displaying poor attendance/punctuality and look at ways to incentivise their attendance. We hope these strategies will ensure greater equity for all and minimise the impact of child poverty on our pupils learning, engagement and achievement.

Maximising uptake of benefits

As of January 2023, over 22,500 young people have applied for and obtained a National Entitlement Card with free bus travel and are benefiting from this service.

In collaboration with the customer function, the service has made 18,998 Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments. These payments ceased after the Winter payment in 2022 with the wider rollout of the Scottish Child Payment, administered by Social Security Scotland, from mid-November 2022.

The Community Planning Partnership has worked hard to increase the uptake of social security and benefits in kind. There is a need to carefully track uptake so that corrective action can be taken if required. It would now be helpful to align data sets so that partners can better assess the complementary nature of interventions to ensure that we maximise collective impact.

Financial inclusion advisors have been attached to schools as part of our approach to education recovery. Over the period April 2022 to March 2023 the enhanced Financial Inclusion Team’s advisors helped families achieve the following:

- Financial Gains of £1, 077, 325.24
- Assisted/Assisting 194 households with debt issues

- Helping with total debts of £1, 129, 447.58
- 381 household with given full benefit checks only
- Assisted 57 households to claim benefits
- Assisting 12 household to challenge being turned down for benefits

In addition to maximising the uptake of benefits, time is now being committed to address the root causes of poverty through the strengthened development of skills for life, learning and work by looking at the needs of young people and their families more holistically. This is seeing strengthened partnerships with our City Growth and Early Intervention and Community Empowerment functions. It is hoped that increased provision of learning pathways for young people will be made available from August 2023 by establishing curriculum alignment and looking at how to extend provision to local communities in order to break the poverty cycle.

Development of retrieval practice at Aberdeen Grammar School

What problem were we trying to solve? Under the existing examination structure, young people where poverty is a barrier, can find it challenging to prepare for 1 high stakes examination. This is particularly the case for young people with additional support needs (ASN). Our aim was to provide all young people with the skills and resources to support them with preparation for SQA examinations at National 5 and Higher level.

What did we do? We introduced Retrieval Practice sitting alongside staff evaluating their physical learning environment against the CIRCLE framework. The supports we put in place, originally for a targeted group are supporting all young people on a universal level. Resources sitting behind this (flashcards, targeted twilight revision sessions, materials for parents – Planning for Success events, construction of a learning and teaching website) have received positive feedback from staff, pupils, and parents.

What happened? Analysis of S4 SCQF level 5 data points to an uplift within the Working Grade for the current S4 cohort. This is looking like a 5% uplift on a universal level. Young people in focus groups report increased confidence in the use of retrieval practice to support retention of information. Dyslexia can be a real barrier for young people with the chunking and retention of information. This group of young people in S4 and S5 were very positive about the “teaching” of strategies to support retention for SQA examinations. As we began to unpick this issue, we felt that a fuller review of our provision for ASN learners was required. We invited colleagues from across ACC with specialist knowledge to support us with this task. We have now interviewed all young people across S1-S3 to populate the ASN Tab with specific strategies which we will share with teaching staff to aid their planning.

What next? Following study leave, meet with all young people in the new S4-S6 with ASN and review the information held for them and adapt with strategies they feel will support them.

Measurable outcomes within the L&T aspect of the new SIP linked to application of learning and feedback

Embedding retrieval strategies/CIRCLE framework/UDL across every classroom to ensure consistency.

Continue to be responsive to the needs of refugees arriving in the city

In September 2021, given the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, the Home Office airlifted over 7000 individuals from Kabul airport as part of the Locally Engaged Staff (LES) Scheme. To meet the temporary needs of families before they find permanent accommodation the Home Office procured hotels across the UK including 3 hotels in central Aberdeen to provide bridging accommodation to a sizeable community. In 2023 the Afghan families living within hotels were issued with 3 months' notice to quit by the UK government for more settled accommodation. Early indications are that at least 10 families have noted their intention to remain in Aberdeen, with children settled in our city schools.

Over the course of 2022/23 our schools have welcomed and supported over 300 children and young people at any given time who have been displaced by the war in Ukraine. Most of these families have been living within hotel accommodation, ranging from at maximum 8 hotels, now reduced to 3 hotels either within the city centre or at Dyce. One of our primary schools has welcomed over 110 children across all stages and one of the secondaries almost 50 young people. Almost all of these children have settled and remained within the schools they initially enrolled in throughout the session. Some movement is now being seen with families being housed in more settled accommodation across the city. Early indications are that almost all families are choosing to remain in Aberdeen with their feedback on support from our schools and education providers being very positive.

Additional supports for staffing, EAL & ESOL provision, counselling and nurturing provision, IT devices and online provision and transitions have ensured our Ukrainian children and young people have become included, nurtured, and are achieving in our schools across Aberdeen.

National Transfer scheme

The implementation of the National Transfer Scheme has seen an increase in the diversity of our children and young people with care experience. The setting up of a best practice group locally has ensure the specific cultural, language and trauma needs of our unaccompanied children are recognised and met. In addition to this, a Wellbeing worker, funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge Grant for Care Experienced Children and young people, was appointed in 22/23 to deliver on 4 key outcomes for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People.

- *Supporting Transitions*: into the City, into School, into wider opportunities, and to a positive, sustained destination;
- *Cultural Integration*: organising and facilitating opportunities in the wider community to support immersion and inclusion in Scotland;
- *Language Development*: facilitating input complimentary to ongoing input (by EAL/ESOL and/or school) e.g. fresh start, Skills for LLW; and
- *Supporting Learning*: curricular support in its broadest sense, complimentary to support provided by the school (but the profile gives flexibility in terms of location, focus etc. i.e. this could be targeting wider learning in the context of wellbeing).

Challenges recruiting to post mean that work is still in the early stages with relationships being built alongside resource development and target setting. It is anticipated that early positive indicators will translate into positive outcomes for academic session 2023/24.

Partnership delivery of the Family Support Model in keeping with The Promise

Continue to work to shape a model of Family Support with Community Planning Partners

Family Support through our Fit Like Hubs

The Fit Like Hub, a multi-disciplinary rights based and family first service established in 2020, continues to help ensure that families can access early and preventative support. There is clear evidence that engagement with the service realises:

- Parents feeling supported to manage their anxieties and worries
- Parents/carers and children and young people feeling listened to and heard
- Strengthened family relationships
- Improved child mental health and wellbeing.

Those accessing the service tell us that it feels like a bespoke service and that it is the first time support has 'felt right'. As a result we have the confidence in our ability to deliver high quality, rights based integrated services that adapt based on what children and families tell us. Families tell us that they appreciate this and other more integrated services and this feedback is helping to shape our work to establish a Bairns Hoose to support those who experience the care and justice system.

The Children's Services Board identified the need to prioritise those who have experienced multiple trauma and recognise the establishment of a Bairns Hoose will help reform ways of working with and for this group. Our ambition is that our Bairns Hoose maximises the potential to fully incorporate the Justice element. This will include having distinct space for Age of Criminal Responsibility interviews but also a remote court suite that enables children and young people to give evidence to Court. This builds on our strong response to the change in legislation around the age of criminal responsibility and our contributions to the national guidance. The Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaboration is led by the Council and extends across NHS Grampian, University of Aberdeen, and Robert Gordon University. It will work with our commissioned external research contractor to support evaluation activity.

More closely align the universal services of health and education

The Links Hub continues to be successful as a targeted ELC provision delivered in partnership with Health Visitors. The service was graded with 3 Very Goods and an excellent for leadership at their Care Inspectorate visit in May 2023. The co-location of services has helped the universal services plan to meet the needs of some targeted families together and there is clear evidence of risk being reduced without the need for access to specialist service. We will see this approach spread as Health Visitors start to be located in schools. Planning has started to co locate the Bairn's Hoose in the vacant wing of the links building this will further strengthen links across the service.

Links Hub

The partnership between health and (early) education sits at the heart of the work undertaken at Links Nursery and Hub. The setting prides themselves on building trusting, therapeutic relationships, which give families the opportunity to voice their needs and the challenges they face. The focus being to reduce referrals to other services out with the Hub and to increase and improve engagement of families within our service.

There is a weekly children's meeting held within the Links Nursery and Hub to promote information sharing and multiagency working. Speech and Language Therapy, Health Visitor, Centre Manager and Excellence and Equity Practitioners are represented. Robust planning support takes place for children and their families who are facing adversity, with Child A providing an example of how this approach is improving outcomes:

Child A's parent was recently diagnosed with a health condition impacting their capacity to parent. The parent was also struggling with Child A's behaviour, which had deteriorated since the onset of their own ill health. Nursery noted this behaviour change, a change of pattern in attendance, and other family member doing almost all pick-ups and drop-offs. These changes prompted a discussion with health visitor, which resulted in a home visit where parent shared her challenges. This information was conveyed at our meeting, which led to structured support from health and education. Parent was offered one-to-one PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) sessions with our Excellence and Equity Practitioner (within the hub) alongside behavioural support within the home. Travel support was also offered to increase the child's attendance. The parent disclosed that they felt a support network now surrounded them.

Outcomes: there has been an increase in engagement with both health visitor and hub centre manager and an improvement in child A's attendance at nursery and at health-related appointments.

It is important to note that families are involved at all levels of future planning support for their children. This new, collaborative way of working at the Links Nursery and Hub involves children at the heart of decisions made to improve their positive future health and education outcomes. The centre opened in 2021 with 40 registered children and now has around 110 children supported on a daily basis evidencing the desire of parents to access joined up services.

Request for Assistance

The request for assistance process, which allows us to amend our response in light of live demand data, is being updated to include access for our multiagency partners. Phase 1 will be ready for launch in August 2023 and will not only gather information on the number of referrals but will also allow referrals to be tracked from allocation to a worker to the point any agency disengages. This will allow all services to be more agile, ensure the needs of families are being met and build a stronger picture of the

journeys taken by our families. Phase 2, to be delivered over 2023/23, will explore how families can self-refer at the point of need.

Aligning support to our Family Support Model

We now need to consider how best to make clear our offer to families given the varied range of provisions available to families through Pupil Equity Funding resource. There is also a need to ensure that supports already available through established Partnership Forums and targeted Family Support Model all work together to support vulnerable groups and this alignment is being driven through the development of a Family Support Model evaluation framework. The Children's Services Plan provides the direction of travel for working with community planning partners to shape a model based on the 10 principles of Family Support outlined in The Promise.

Westpark Primary School working with Barnardo's

What was the problem? Some children finding it hard to settle in the school.

What did we do? 20 children have attended Barnardo's groups with a focus on peer relationships, building self-esteem and target setting. 16 learners and families had 1:1 Barnardo's support from Northern Star worker or student on placement (7% of roll)

What happened? Almost all targeted children now report feeling happy, safe, and normal at school. Almost all now identify people who they trust and safe spaces within school. Almost all now identify supports which make a difference to them.

There has been a decrease in the number of reported near miss incidents as children have identified and can use strategies to regulate heightened emotions.

Almost all target children have very good or improved attendance and engagement as a result of feeling more confident and comfortable within the school environment. Three care experienced learners have had Barnardo's support for more than a year. As well as increasing their engagement with the curriculum, Barnardo's have also acted as a bridge between home and school, supporting families at multi-agency meetings and identifying additional supports (financial, food banks, holiday programs)

Placements offered to social work students this year allowed additional families to benefit from 1:1 support, as well as teachers to request additional targeted group work support.

What next? Barnardo's will continue to work with the school community to develop trauma-informed approaches for meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups in our community, providing tailored support to individuals and their families, to raise school attendance, engagement, and attainment.

Review the Anti-bullying policy

Refreshed Anti-bullying policy was approved by the Education and Children's Services Committee in July 2023. The policy will now be rolled out across all schools from August 2023.

Strategic Enablers

Workforce

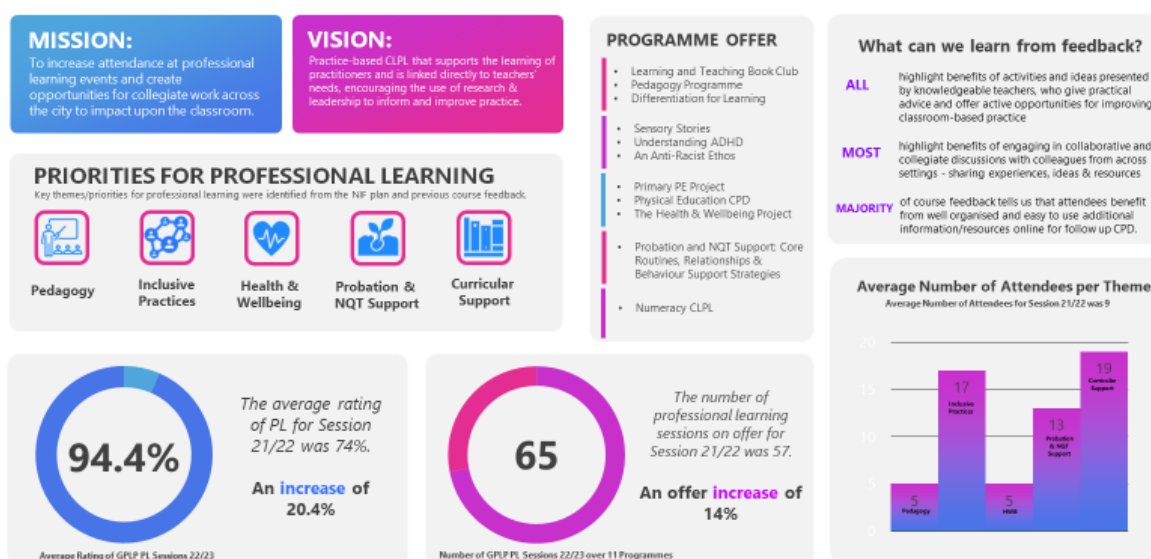
High quality professional learning for all

The Service introduced a grassroots professional learning programme in session 22/23. The programme aimed to offer practice-based professional learning and encouraged the use of research and leadership to inform and improve practice. Content was developed following a review of key themes from quality improvement visits and experienced staff with validated practice were invited to apply to design and run the continuing professional learning sessions.

The approaches to professional learning were varied including workshops, book clubs and hands on experiential learning. This approach has supported an increase in the number of sessions offered and an improvement in the feedback received.

We are still seeing lower numbers of attendees participating in face to face or online professional learning opportunities since pre-pandemic. We will continue to work with colleagues to understand their needs and wants including approaches, timing, and content of sessions to support this to increase.

Grassroots Professional Learning Pilot Programme 22/23



Early Learning Workforce Development and Expansion

We are committed to expanding, developing, and training our workforce and offer funding annually to support workforce development and expansion in the ELC and School Age Childcare sectors.

In 2022/23, 105 applicants were successful in being awarded funding to undertake an accredited qualification. These were from our Local Authority and Funded Provider ELC settings and our School Age Childcare services. Qualifications funded included: BA / PDA in Childhood Practice, SVQs in Social Services (Children and Young People) and Play work at Levels 2, 3 and 4.

Early Years Outdoor Expo

The Early Years Team hosted an Outdoor Expo event in November 2022 with a view to creating a valuable opportunity for practitioners and teachers from across the city to network, combine experiences and move further towards a shared vision of early childhood and outdoor practice. The event invited 60 participants to join a range of practical workshops (i.e. woodwork, creative and natural resourcing and den-building), which had been shaped by attendees' self-identified needs. We also used this event as a platform to engage our educators in local outdoor action research conducted by some of our ELC staff. We empowered our skilled Outdoor ELC team to lead workshops and share their passion for connecting children with the outdoors in order to build confidence in others as we work to address variability.

Participants gave overwhelmingly positive feedback during the event, as well as through formal evaluation, with most stating they had an increase in confidence with outdoor practice after attending and felt inspired and confident to move the provision forward in their setting. Some examples of positive participant feedback included:

'Hazehead Outdoor Nursery is a great example what could be achieved in the setting when everyone supports each other ideas and do things together involving children and carers'.

'I absolutely loved the woodwork session. This is something I don't have any experience of and would probably have been terrified of introducing it before but after experiencing it myself and seeing the simple but clear rules to put in place I am dying to start it with my class!'

'Networking opportunities with early years practitioners. I work in early years on my own at my school as I don't have a stage partner nor a nursery so was lovely to have conversations with like minded professionals'.

Staff identified learning takeaways they plan to put into practice:

'I left feeling excited about woodwork and ready to explore woodwork within my setting.'

'I definitely feel confident in introducing and using real tools at woodwork area. Tips for packing resources necessary for going off site to our nearby local park also really helpful.'

'The tools used for den building, as well as the knots - I learned I will definitely put that into practice and show other staff the knots that can be used to hang the outdoor swings etc. To continuously use my imagination to create and teach new skills.'

Going forward, there will be further opportunities for practitioners to engage with one another, particularly the chance to observe and experience the practice of others.

ELC Modern Apprenticeship Programme

ELC continues to work in partnership with Aberlour and Great Western Training Centre to offer 38 young people a Modern Apprenticeship while working in a local authority setting. The qualification has a timeframe of 22 months to complete and from our October 2021 intake we currently have 11 candidates who have completed their qualification and moved on to ELC positions internally and externally, with the

remaining candidates approaching qualified status in June 2023. This will continue to be a rolling programme.

Early Level Continuing Professional Learning Digital Tools

After the development of the ACC Learn ELC platform which aimed to offer accessible resources that could be accessed flexibly, a programme of tutorial style sessions were planned to allow practitioners to come together for collaborative discussion. Those who attended the sessions reported that they appreciated the opportunity to share practice widely, looking outwards to support their own services self-evaluation.

To streamline the offer of both national and local digital training resources, a single platform collating the wide offer for staff has been developed and hosted on the programme [Thinglink](#). Staff have reported that the Thinglink platform is accessible and helpful in signposting staff to useful and relevant resources.

Continued professional learning is delivered within Localities, developed in response to ELC Locality Lead's quality assurance practices and delivered either individually to ELC settings or across the Locality.

Supporting Pupil Support Assistants

ACC Educational Psychology Service (EPS) have now trained 52 Support Staff in the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) programme, with cohort 3 just completing their training. ELSA is a programme grounded in Psychology, written by Educational Psychologists and with strong evidence of outcomes from its widespread use in England and Wales. ACC EPS data shows the training was rated very highly and that improved outcomes were seen for individuals in schools with trained ELSAs.

ELSA is an intensive training programme with the equivalent of 6 full days of training. The training builds capacity in staff to deliver targeted individual programmes of education in relation to developing self-esteem, resilience and the overall emotional literacy and regulation of learners. Following completion of the training ELSAs receive career-long psychological group supervision 6 times a year, a total of 12 hours per year. This intensive and in-depth training for ACC's Support Staff maps onto the aims of the Scottish Government's 'Pupil Support Staff - Professional Learning Framework'.

The annual training return for ELSAs is not yet complete for 2022/23, but previous evaluations highlighted the following impact on the ELSAs themselves. Their competence increased in all topics from pre to post training.



Other training offered by ACC EPS has included Emotion Coaching, Seasons for Growth, Positive Psychology and Mindfulness. Training evaluation returns remain positive.

Supporting probationers

Despite the challenges of the last year, schools continue to mentor and support new staff well. 98% of probationers in our schools over 2022/23 made satisfactory progress.

Probationers have accessed a mandatory programme of professional learning addressing themes such as Learning & Teaching, Planning for Assessment, Inclusive Practice, Trauma Informed Practice, Learning for Sustainability and Building Positive Relationships. A partnership with NESCOL and SDS gave the probationers an opportunity to engage in skills based workshops at NESCOL highlighting the importance of skills for life, learning and work. *“I have really enjoyed the development of meta-skills and how they can be incorporated into lessons across the school. I really enjoyed the fact that I could see the different meta-skills in different disciplines and how I could apply them into my own setting.”*

96% of attendees shared that the Learning and Teaching (Primary) session had a high to very-high impact on their practice. 78% of attendees at the Learning & Teaching (Secondary) session stated that they were ‘very likely’ to make changes to their practice as a result of attending. *“Hugely useful and informative session. The session gave me lots of ideas for future questioning strategies and feedback”*

In contrast to 21-22, almost all 22-23 CPD sessions were in-person – improving opportunities for collaboration and networking. *“Working with other probationers is beneficial as it allows you to discuss your experience and develop ideas which you can take into your own practice.”*

All probationers have also successfully worked hard to undertake and document the work of a practitioner enquiry project. These have successfully been completed and shared as a feature of our professional learning for future cohorts and can be accessed by all education staff within our Education Intranet.

Senior and Middle Leadership development

Supporting Cultural Change in ELC

The Supporting Cultural Change in ELC Programme was developed in collaboration with Drummond International and was aimed at middle leaders in ELC settings, including our Funded Partner colleagues. The purpose of the programme was recognising the role and importance of ELC in nurturing people and supporting culture improvement across Aberdeen City. This programme aimed to provide a space for ELC leaders to explore the interaction of knowledge information, your team and themselves in a dialogic and collaborative way, supporting staff to navigate the changed principles in light of the 1140 hours service redesign.

The 30 participants were given the opportunity to connect with other ELC Leaders virtually, developing their understanding of their own leadership story, the principles of effective conflict resolution and the science of collaboration, concluding the programme with a developed individual Leadership Action Plan. The programme was delivered over an academic calendar year and consisted of six sessions delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams.

100% of the participants rated the programme either 'Good' or 'Very Good' overall and 100% reported that the content was relevant and useful to their continued

development as an ELC Leader. All reported an increase in their confidence as a leader and their ability to apply the principles of the programme moving forward. 75% of participants have agreed to be part of a working group in delivering this learning more widely across Aberdeen City.

Development of School Middle Leaders

There has been an increase in the number of Middle Leaders applying for Education Scotland's Into Headship course for 2023-24. Into Headship is a pre-requisite for those seeking a Head Teacher's position and is designed to ensure the building of necessary knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence to lead a dynamic school community. There has been a significant increase in interest from the primary sector which may indicate that some challenges in recruiting primary head teachers will reduce in the years ahead.

A Middle Leadership Teams site continues to build collaboration further and is led by an experienced primary Head Teacher. Two professional learning courses were offered to all Middle Leaders. One course was targeted at 12 of our most experienced Middle Leaders who may consider Headship in the future and involved them undertaking leadership 360 evaluations to help develop and implement a personal leadership action plan. Two of the group are already undertaking HT roles and a further two have been accepted for Into Headship programme next session.

A second group have met regularly to discuss a range of leadership topics to support their personal development. This enthusiastic and motivated group have thrived on the opportunity to meet with other professionals in this safe space. Evaluations highlight the quality of the CLPL sessions and the strong desire for greater opportunities for Middle Leadership professional learning. One ASG is creating their own Middle Leaders support network for next session.

In 2022-23, from the 5 staff registered to undertake the Into Headship programme, 4 will complete, 3 have secured headships, with one choosing to postpone their studies for personal reasons. We have recruited 8 colleagues to participate in this programme from the beginning of session 2023-24. This shows an increased number of applicants considering this stage in their leadership journey showing some evidence of the impact of our middle leaders and readiness for into headship programmes.

Those undertaking the Readiness for into Headship programme are actioning individual leadership plans which were created through coaching with an experienced peer HT to evaluate data from a self-reflection 360 tool. This will support individual leadership improvement in some of our most committed Middle Leaders. They are being guided to lead strategic developments to enhance the impact of their School Improvement Plan. 25% of this group are moving into a promoted role.

Staff have continued to seek out opportunities to undertake Masters level learning this session. Through access to Northern Alliance Partnership funding, we secured access to Masters level courses with the University of Aberdeen for:

- 7 participants for Inclusive Pedagogy
- 3 participants for PGCERT Autism and Learning
- 2 participants for PGCERT Middle Level Leadership

Continue to support staff health and wellbeing

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) have continued to offer confidential 1:1 coaching sessions, to support staff wellbeing, as well as facilitating team support sessions to groups of education staff. Those who have attended coaching with the EPS have continued to rate this very highly. The EPS has a range of content available on its EPS Digital Hub for staff, and there is digital training available, created by the EPS for Education staff, drawing upon mindfulness skills and positive psychology.

There is also recognition of the wellbeing needs of adults within our services. During our In-service days in February and May the University of Aberdeen delivered full day courses to support staff wellbeing. Listening to Support Wellbeing and Self-care introduced effective listening skills, dealing with challenging conversations, the importance of self-care and self-care techniques.

Over 100 staff across the city attended these **sessions** resulting in very positive feedback. Staff fed back that the most helpful parts of this training was “Remembering not to judge - to listen to pupil's without judging behaviour”, “Highlighting the difference between hearing and listening - making me re-evaluate whether I am doing the best I can to listen to children” .

One staff member said - “Really enjoyed the day, makes you feel your role is appreciated to get professional training on an in-service day”.

During March 2023, and in response to data from the Staff Health and Wellbeing Survey, staff across the Education Service and all schools were offered the opportunity to engage in a wide range of free sporting activities as part of the Springboard programme. This included generous provision by Aberdeen Sports Village and Sport Aberdeen as well as several independent providers from across the city. Fifteen different sporting activities were on offer culminating in over **100** in-person sessions to choose from.

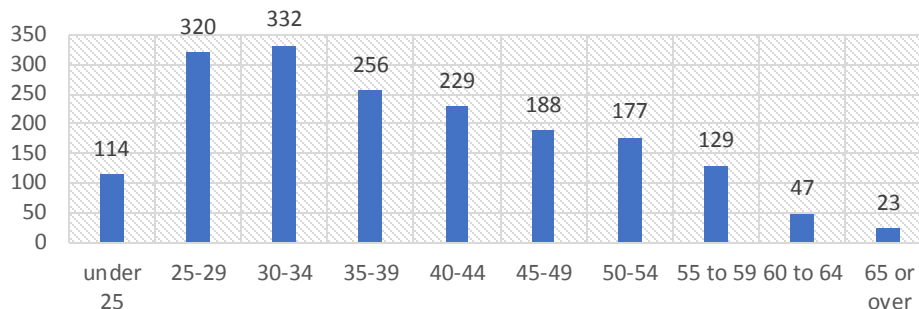
Monitor workforce levels to ensure our capacity to deliver for children and families

Staff absence in ELC can result in operational challenges however collaboration across settings and a willingness to support other services with surplus staffing ensures there is minimum impact on service delivery whilst we work with colleagues in People and Organisation to build the resilience of staff

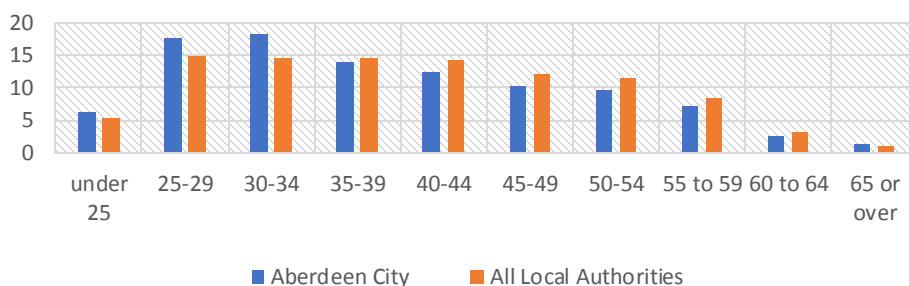
Levels of vacancy are now reduced in schools, leading to schools being for the most part, fully staffed. Some schools, however, continue to face more challenges than others and they will be proactively supported and prioritised through probationer allocations for session 23/24.

We have a relatively young workforce compared to other Local Authorities.

Number of teachers in all sectors by age Aberdeen City Council 2022/23



Teachers in all sectors by age (%) Aberdeen City Council 2022/23



Hard to fill specialisms

The service is working with the University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) to secure subject specialists in Home Economics, Design and Technology and Computer Science as an interim measure to address the issues with under provision which limits our ability to adequately prepare young people for growth areas.

For the current year, 2022/23, we have secured one Computing Science student through the scheme who will be offered a probation year with Aberdeen City. A further student for Computing Science has been recruited for session 2023/24.

We continue to explore how to promote this partnership to attract students to Home Economics, Design and Technology and Computer Science.

Gaelic Medium teachers have been hard to recruit over the last 3 years and this has had a negative impact on the level of service on offer. We are delighted to have secured 2 probationers for the primary unit for session 23/24 and the recruitment of a Principal Teacher 3-18 is being progressed.

Applications for positions

There has been a notable increase in the number of applications being received for middle leadership roles and main grade posts in primary schools thought partially attributable to our middle leadership programme. Primary head teacher posts are attracting fewer applicants with the relevant skills and experience and we are looking into the reasons behind this shift and recognise the need to enhance our middle leadership development to address this gap. Anecdotally, it is believed the

requirement to have achieved the Standard for Headship or to achieve it within 30 months of taking up post may be discouraging candidates due to the perceived additional workload when taking on a new post.

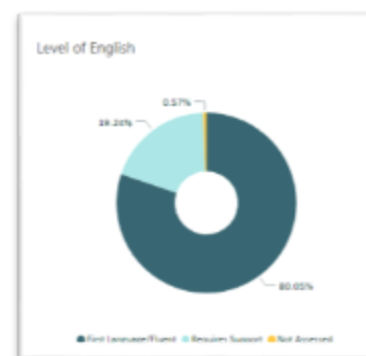
There remain challenges in recruiting to certain specialist subject areas in secondary schools and the service is now working in partnership with UHI to help address these issues. Secondary promoted posts, including head teacher roles, continue to attract a high number of candidates and a number of secondary head teacher appointments have been made recently. The service will continue to be proactive in workforce planning.

Data

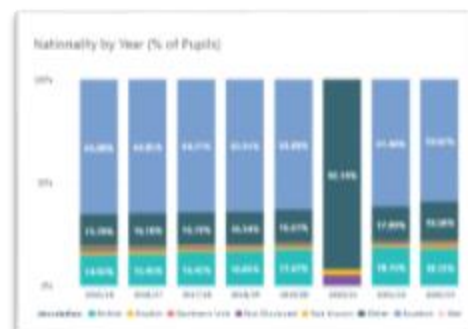
Continue to develop School Profiles

School Profiles put in place in collaboration with colleagues in Data and insights continue to be developed based on feedback from Head Teachers.

Schools now have access to data collected on a termly basis which allows them to be more agile in their allocation of resource and also provides live feedback on the impact of approaches. Having live data allows for more robust data discussions at all levels in the system. Accountability frameworks will be revisited in session 23/24 to ensure all staff are well equipped to play their part in a self-improving system.



As a result of the changes made to data dashboards, school teams can now better understand the unique make up of their school communities and plan for them accordingly. It has been identified that some staff members would benefit from professional learning in how to best utilise the tools for maximum impact and this will be taken forward over school session 2023/24.

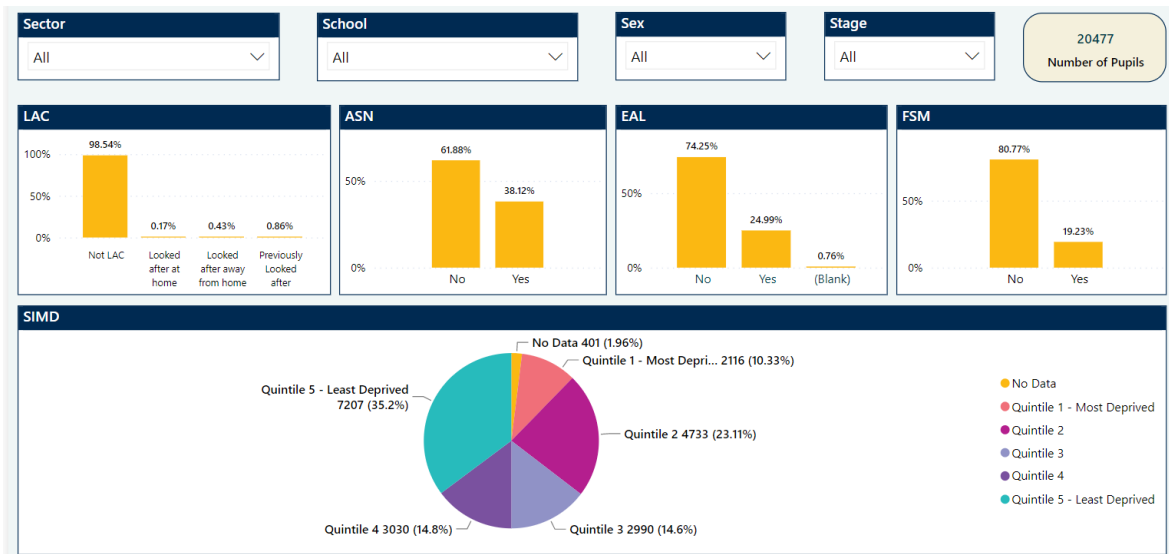


School profiles have been overhauled to allow schools to drill down into data sets based on both SIMD quintiles and also into groups such as those who are Looked After in order to establish the improvements required as part of school improvement planning work.

Implement improved tracking and reporting

During session 22/23 a BGE tracker was developed to allow schools access to live tracking data this will enable school leaders to see the impact of changes in real time. This is critical given that some data sets (such as exclusion) are only validated every two years and will enable us to focus more forensically on understanding the needs of our Looked After children, those on the edge of care in 2023/24 and other groups identified to be at the greatest risk of poverty. This will help schools plan based on more robust data for session 2023/24.

The visuals below show the range of data availability and how it can be drilled down into



Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels by SIMD

Tracking Period: Term 2 | 20477 Number of Pupils

Organiser/Subject Name	No Data	Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 - Least Deprived	Total
Reading (Rf)							
Not Yet Achieved Early Level	67	310	569	412	331	235	2425
Early Level	166	652	1482	960	999	2545	6244
First Level	102	606	1419	856	850	2068	10921
Second Level	52	337	790	462	485	1214	3289
Third Level	13	106	373	202	209	609	1692
Fourth Level	5	35	95	31	102	237	665
Individual Milestones	6	96	482	161	74	361	1164
Total	398	2100	4713	2977	3016	7160	20364

Organiser/Subject Name	No Data	Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 - Least Deprived	Total
Reading (Rf)							
Not Yet Achieved Early Level	16.83%	14.76%	12.07%	13.84%	10.97%	10.28%	
Early Level	36.63%	31.95%	31.02%	32.25%	30.47%	29.96%	
First Level	25.83%	28.96%	29.63%	28.75%	28.35%	28.86%	
Second Level	15.97%	17.00%	16.06%	15.52%	16.08%	16.96%	
Third Level	5.79%	6.05%	5.91%	6.79%	5.65%	9.75%	
Fourth Level	1.26%	1.67%	2.02%	1.04%	3.38%	3.31%	
Individual Milestones	0.75%	1.33%	1.53%	1.01%	0.80%	2.41%	
Not Assessed	0.76%	0.62%	0.77%	0.50%	0.42%	0.42%	

Organiser/Subject Name	No Data	Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 - Least Deprived	Total
Writing (Wf)							
Not Yet Achieved Early Level	66	322	600	431	349	762	2530
Early Level	154	685	1517	986	943	2249	6534
First Level	100	604	1419	858	838	2070	5889
Second Level	49	397	663	434	486	1193	3066
Third Level	19	102	359	190	262	672	1664
Fourth Level	6	31	107	32	100	221	466
Total	398	2100	4714	2976	3016	7160	20364

Organiser/Subject Name	No Data	Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 - Least Deprived	Total
Writing (Wf)							
Not Yet Achieved Early Level	16.83%	15.33%	12.73%	14.48%	11.57%	10.64%	
Early Level	36.63%	32.62%	32.80%	33.02%	31.27%	31.41%	
First Level	25.13%	28.76%	30.10%	28.83%	27.79%	28.91%	
Second Level	12.11%	15.05%	14.66%	14.91%	16.16%	16.64%	
Third Level	4.77%	4.86%	7.62%	6.38%	6.69%	9.39%	
Fourth Level	1.51%	1.62%	1.74%	1.01%	3.44%	3.51%	
Individual Milestones	0.75%	1.33%	0.95%	0.97%	0.80%	0.42%	

Organiser/Subject Name	No Data	Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 - Least Deprived	Total
Listening & Talking (L&T)							
Not Yet Achieved Early Level	56	274	524	374	315	716	2217
Early Level	149	642	1420	968	933	2118	6230
First Level	105	652	1501	905	872	2163	6182
Second Level	43	376	749	467	487	1179	3391
Third Level	24	164	372	188	277	640	1665
Fourth Level	6	34	82	33	103	254	512
Total	397	2108	4714	2976	3017	7157	20361

Organiser/Subject Name	No Data	Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 - Least Deprived	Total
Listening & Talking (L&T)							
Not Yet Achieved Early Level	14.11%	13.05%	11.52%	12.97%	10.05%	10.00%	
Early Level	37.53%	30.57%	30.32%	31.85%	30.59%	29.87%	
First Level	29.23%	29.76%	31.84%	30.47%	29.90%	30.23%	
Second Level	10.83%	17.90%	16.89%	16.89%	16.14%	16.47%	
Third Level	6.65%	6.47%	7.89%	6.68%	5.91%	8.84%	
Fourth Level	1.51%	1.62%	1.74%	1.01%	3.44%	3.51%	
Individual Milestones	0.75%	1.33%	0.95%	0.97%	0.80%	0.42%	

Organiser/Subject Name	No Data	Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 - Least Deprived	Total
Numeracy (Nf)							
Not Yet Achieved Early Level	16.62%	13.07%	11.98%	12.42%	10.47%	10.18%	
Early Level	36.84%	31.60%	32.86%	33.61%	32.09%	30.62%	
First Level	28.46%	30.27%	31.34%	30.34%	29.35%	29.33%	
Second Level	11.84%	15.40%	12.24%	12.91%	15.14%	15.98%	
Third Level	4.53%	5.16%	6.90%	5.39%	7.52%	7.70%	
Fourth Level	2.02%	3.36%	4.02%	3.38%	5.83%	5.66%	

Over time this data will provide a record of a young person's attainment from Early level to Level 4.

Collaborate with partners to join data sets when beneficial to do so

The service has worked hard this session to begin to align data sets with partners to allow us to maximise impact for young people and families. The work on the Data sharing pipeline project undertaken in session 2022/23 will support identification of vulnerable 2 – 4-year olds.

During session 23/24 this will continue to develop alongside the development of the Request for Assistance portal to allow us to track interventions and support provided to families over time.

Increase central oversight of tracking data and PEF impact measures

Significant consideration and progress has been made by the LA's central team to systematically review and develop PEF planning and reporting. The process has included looking beyond the local authority for good practice. Working alongside a group of headteachers and the attainment advisor, the central leadership team have

developed a bespoke equity tracker that aligns with updated school improvement planning. The tracker will begin to be used from August 2023 and will be used by central officers and Head Teachers when quality assuring the impact of the PEF fund.

Walker Road addressing literacy gaps through Pupil Equity Funding.

What problem were we trying to solve? Improve Literacy attainment of selected pupils from across the school.

What did we do? A Principal Teacher (partly funded via PEF) was tasked with coordinating Reading Wise and Talk boost interventions for pupils who were below track for Literacy in line with national expectations. A part-time Pupil Support Assistant (also funded via PEF) worked with class teachers and other PSAs to ensure that targeted pupils accessed these resources consistently throughout the 2022/23 session. More recently, the Principal Teacher has worked in partnership with teacher colleagues to support improved teaching of writing and to coordinate bespoke writing support for targeted Primary 7 pupils.

What happened? Reading Wise and Talk boost data shows improved literacy of pupils who accessed these interventions. Most of these pupils made increased progress towards achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in Literacy. There is initial evidence of increased pupil progress in Writing.

What next? In the 2023/24 session, we will work towards class teachers and PSAs having more ownership of Reading Wise and Talk boost, so these become sustainable. The recent work on Writing will be enhanced through our participation in a Lochside ASG improvement priority focused on Writing and will be informed by current local and national Writing developments.

Standards

Clear expectations around the Core Quality Indicators

There is evidence (in both validated self-evaluation and inspection outcomes) that performance in primary schools has improved overall when compared to the pre-pandemic position. Most improvement is evident in QI 1.3 (Leadership of change) and QI 3.1 (Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion). However, given the low pre-pandemic baseline, there are still some schools who require support to achieve gradings of good or better and this has to be prioritised.

Work is underway nationally to develop one combined framework for assessing ELC settings and this development is welcomed and will go some way to addressing uncertainty around expectations.

A programme of mandatory professional learning has been developed to reinforce standards and highlight key responsibilities. Proposed accountability frameworks are also being developed to make expectations against job profiles explicit

Our revised quality improvement frameworks, which were approved by the Education and Children's Services Committee in July 2023, set out clear expectations around the Core QIs for all schools and ELCs.

Continually improve central Quality Improvement approaches

In order to address variation in improvement across schools we have moved to a more proportionately way of working to address risk. Our approach to Quality Improvement will be informed by school self-evaluation, identification of support requirements through quality improvement activity and timelines following or prior to inspection. Consideration of all known factors will inform the level of support and challenge being afforded to individual schools. Having explored the need for this approach with school leaders, there is a high level of agreement on the level of support required by each school

Reflective discussion across session 2022-23 has allowed Head Teachers and school leaders to identify an opportunity to improve the way we plan improvements in our school settings. This reflection led to a realisation that our documentation had too heavy a focus on activity and not enough focus on the robust measurable outcomes that demonstrate how and where improvements are having an impact. Secondary schools have agreed to pilot a new Logic Model planning framework for 2023-24. With a view to rolling this out across all schools session 24/25.



Maintain approaches to collaborative improvement across the city

We continue to work towards a self-improving system through working collaboratively with school leaders to take forward priorities. This self-improving system also necessarily includes opportunities for senior leaders in schools to look outward and visit other city schools to build their own experience and contribute to the improvement journey of the destination school. Taking this collaborative approach is helping to increase the capacity available to support improvement.

Analysis of data would indicate that there is a need for moderation at all levels. QAMSOs will work city wide to support moderation at both CFE and senior phase. A city wide moderation event has been planned for November 2023 as part of the improvement calendar.

Partnerships

Delivery of Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan

Aberdeen Parent Council Forum (APCF) meet on a bi-monthly basis and have representation at the Education and Children's Services Committee and national forums. Through this, parents have had an opportunity to engage in the National Discussion regarding the curriculum as well as through local schools. The partnership with ACC and APCF continues to be strong with regular attendance from the Education Service at bi-monthly meetings to provide updates in relation to service improvement and to glean valuable insights from parents and carers.

Ongoing support for parent councils (PCs) has been provided with the vast majority of schools currently sustaining a Parent Council. Bespoke support continues to be offered where there were challenges to be worked through.

In August 2022 ACC became a Local Authority member of Connect, a charity providing training and development for Parent Councils. All parent councils now have access to a large bank of resources and public indemnity insurance. More specifically 11 Aberdeen City parent groups have attended 8 information sessions since January 2023 with 8 Head Teachers attending the 'Working with your Parent Council' session. Through the online Stronger Family Series, a variety of learning opportunities were offered to parents and carers which focused on a variety of topics from antibullying to online safety. Recordings were made available for those who could not join the live event.

Our partnership with Save the Children provided key supports to parents in some of our pilot settings. Heathryburn and Woodside accepted funded training to embed a Families Connect programme, a facilitated network for parents of pupils aged 3-6 which has been positively evaluated.

In June 2021, the Safer Schools app was launched for pupils, parents/carers and staff and provides relevant and current information on a wide range of safeguarding, wellbeing, and online safety subjects. The app has been well received by our parent forum members and our Child Protection Committee, as proving a useful resource for all. All schools have signed up to the app, which was shared with all parents via a range of communication channels – direct email, text message and social media. A new version of the app, Safer Schools (Scotland), will be launched in August 2023 and

will provide usage data for adults using the app to help us better evaluate the impact of this development.

We continue to work to improve the quality of information made available to parents about their child's progress and achievements. Broad General Education tracking using Progress and Achievement is now effectively used across all our Primary Schools and links to the reporting system, reducing bureaucracy. Work has begun on developing this to include BGE in Secondary. Linking to PowerBI will allow us to have predictions for attainment across all schools at 3 tracking periods November, February, and May. This will feed into the school profiles and allow greater visibility of the progress being made. There are already indications that this is leading to more consistent data collection.

Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway

This is now being addressed within the Children's Services Plan and overseen by the Children's Services Board. The multiagency group meets regularly and has identified 2 pilot schools to work with as a test of change. Members of the team are in contact with 3rd sector agencies with an interest in providing input. This work on this charter will continue to be reviewed through the Children's Services Board

National Improvement Framework Priorities - Summary of Progress & Next Steps

Raising Attainment & Achievement (including closing the gap measures)

Curriculum for Excellence data (ACEL)

Stretch aims and trajectories for individual groups are included in the graphs and tables below.

Our context is very much changed from when we first set stretch aims in August of 2022. The number of international families travelling to Aberdeen to study and our response to the humanitarian crisis has resulted in our school roll increasing by 6.74% since September 2022. This means that we are reporting the progress of many children and young people who were not in our schools in August 2022. To provide a sense of the scale of change, 10.3% of pupils in Primary 1, 9.8% of pupils in Primary 4 and 5.8% of pupils in primary 7 have joined city schools since late September 2022.

Unvalidated tracking data for 22/23 remains broadly in keeping with pre-pandemic levels. The improvement anticipated over the 2022/23 academic session has not been made due to the change in cohort of learners, we would anticipate this being relatively short term.

As a result of the rise in attainment anticipated from September 2022 not being realised, the service has taken the decision to maintain the stretch aims set in September 2022 but to amend the trajectories to take account of the changed context.

Previous gives the validated percentage level achieved for session 2021/22 for Aberdeen City and *National* the mean value across Scotland. These values are from the published data: [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels \(ACEL\)](#).

Trajectory values provide a “direction of travel” for improvement as we move towards overall stretch aims. Education Scotland has asked that this be shown as a range with upper and lower values.

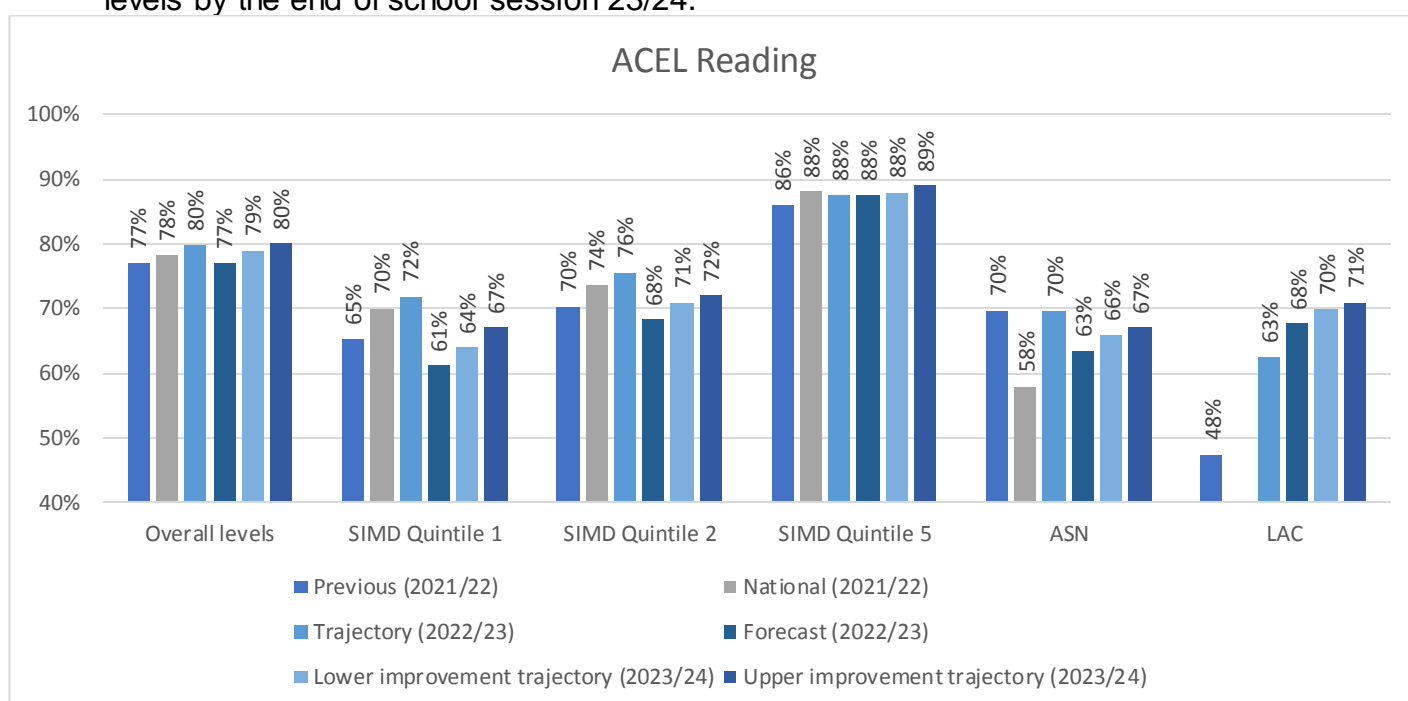
Forecast provides indicative 2022/23 performance based on pre-validation data and this is subject to change as final quality assurance checks are undertaken.

ACEL Reading

Stretch Aim - 85% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2026.

The number of young people enrolled in our schools has impacted on progress in this area and we have maintained 21/22 levels of 77%. As a result of this we have altered our trajectory for session 23/24. The forecast for Q1 (Quintile 1) indicates that the gap has increased and this was not predicted throughout the year and will be further investigated. It is thought that school staff may have been over cautious in their judgements and require further support with moderation. During session 23/24 the QAMSO team will work with the central team to support moderation in targeted schools with a particular focus on schools serving those in Q1 and Q 2.

Trajectory for 2023/24 – Between 79% and 80% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 23/24.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Reading Combined*

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Previous (2021/22)	77%	65%	70%	86%	-21pp	70%	48%
National (2021/22)	78%	70%	74%	88%	-18pp	58%	
Trajectory (2022/23)	80%	72%	76%	88%	-16pp	70%	63%
Forecast (2022/23)	77%	61%	68%	88%	-27pp	63%	68%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(79% - 80%)	(64% - 67%)	(71% - 72%)	(88% - 89%)	(-23pp to - 21pp)	(66% - 67%)	(70% - 71%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 23/24	(2pp - 3pp)	(3pp - 6pp)	(3pp - 4pp)	(0pp - 1pp)		(3pp - 4pp)	(2pp - 3pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	85%	78%	80%	91%	-13pp	76%	74%

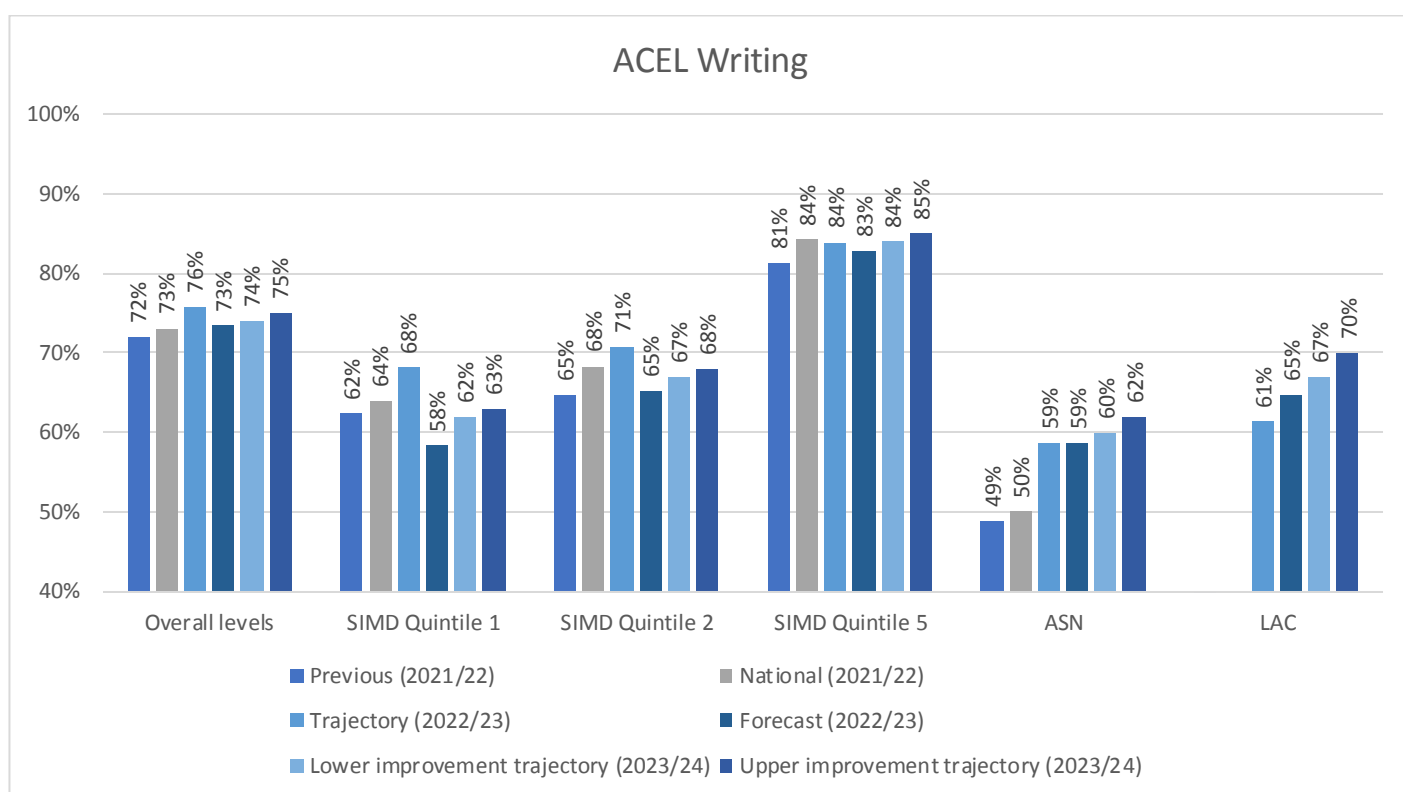
*values rounded to nearest whole number

ACEL Writing

Stretch Aim - 82% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2026.

Although we have not met our trajectory for this session attainment has increased from 72% to 73%. This increase is partially due to the targeted writing project undertaken with P4 pupils in the pilot schools. This project will now be extended to another 10 primary schools across the city and in addition we are working alongside the Northern Alliance to develop a writing skills progression pathway. In addition the QAMSO team will support moderation activities in schools with the highest levels of Q1 and Q2 to support improvement in attainment session 23/24.

Trajectory for 2023/24 – Between 74% and 75% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 23/24.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Writing Combined*

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Previous (2021/22)	72%	62%	65%	81%	-19pp	49%	33%
National (2021/22)	73%	64%	68%	84%	-20pp	50%	
Trajectory (2022/23)	76%	68%	71%	84%	-16pp	59%	61%
Forecast (2022/23)	73%	58%	65%	83%	-12pp	-25pp	59%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(74% - 75%)	(62% - 63%)	(67% - 68%)	(84% - 85%)	(-22pp to -22pp)	(60% - 62%)	(67% - 70%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 23/24	(1pp - 2pp)	(4pp - 5pp)	(2pp - 3pp)	(1pp - 2pp)		(1pp - 3pp)	(2pp - 5pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	82%	76%	76%	88%	-13pp	63%	70%

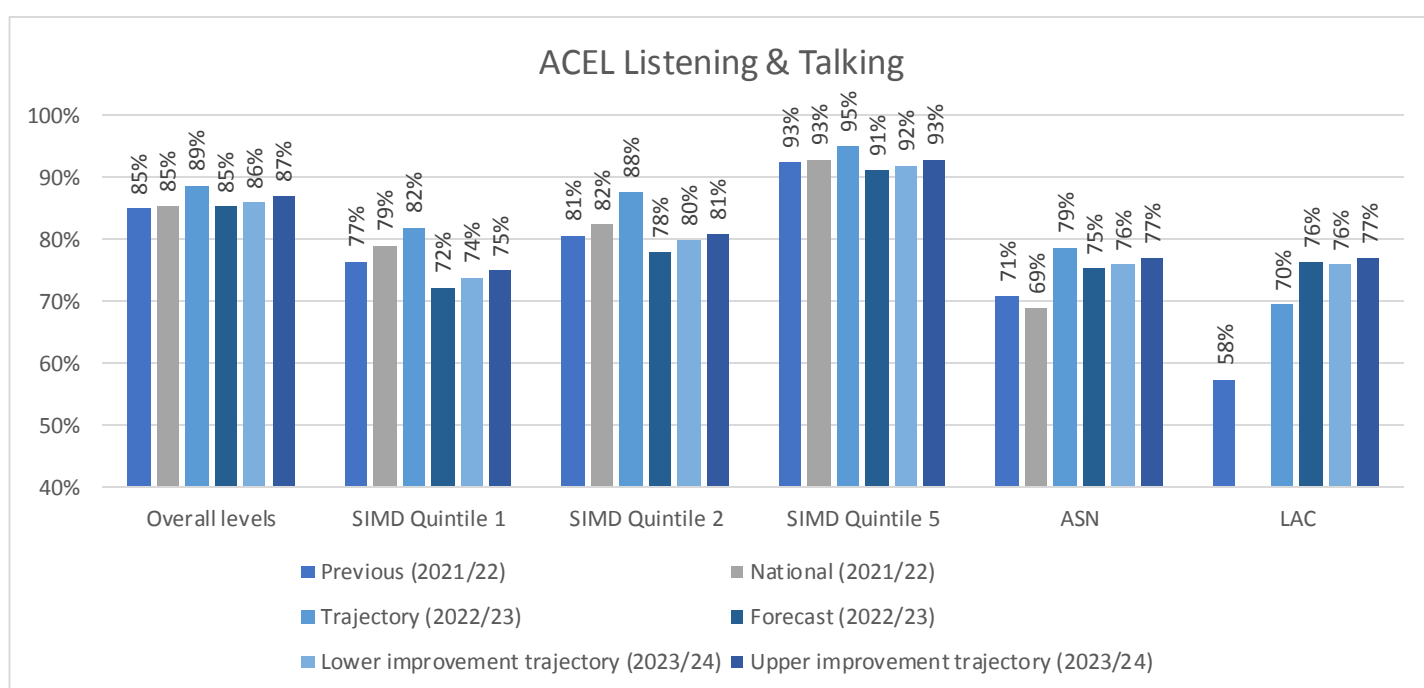
*values rounded to nearest whole number

ACEL Listening and Talking

Stretch Aim - 90% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2026

The increase in school population, increase in the number of those with English as a second language and prevalence of speech and language difficulties has impacted on progress resulting in us maintaining 21/22 levels. This is thought to be a temporary issue as there is already evidence of young people enrolled this session becoming more confident in this area. As a result of this we have altered our trajectory for session 23/24 however we are confident we will be able to attain our 2026 stretch aim.

Trajectory for 2023/24 – Between 86% and 87% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 23/24.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Listening and Talking Combined*

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Previous (2021/22)	85%	77%	81%	93%	-16pp	71%	58%
National (2021/22)	85%	79%	82%	93%	-14pp	69%	
Trajectory (2022/23)	89%	82%	88%	95%	-13pp	79%	70%
Forecast (2022/23)	85%	72%	78%	91%	-19pp	75%	76%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(86% - 87%)	(74% - 75%)	(80% - 81%)	(92% - 93%)	(-18pp to -18pp)	(76% - 77%)	(76% - 77%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 23/24	(1pp - 2pp)	(2pp - 3pp)	(2pp - 3pp)	(1pp - 2pp)		(1pp - 2pp)	(0pp - 1pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	90%	82%	89%	95%	-13pp	79%	73%

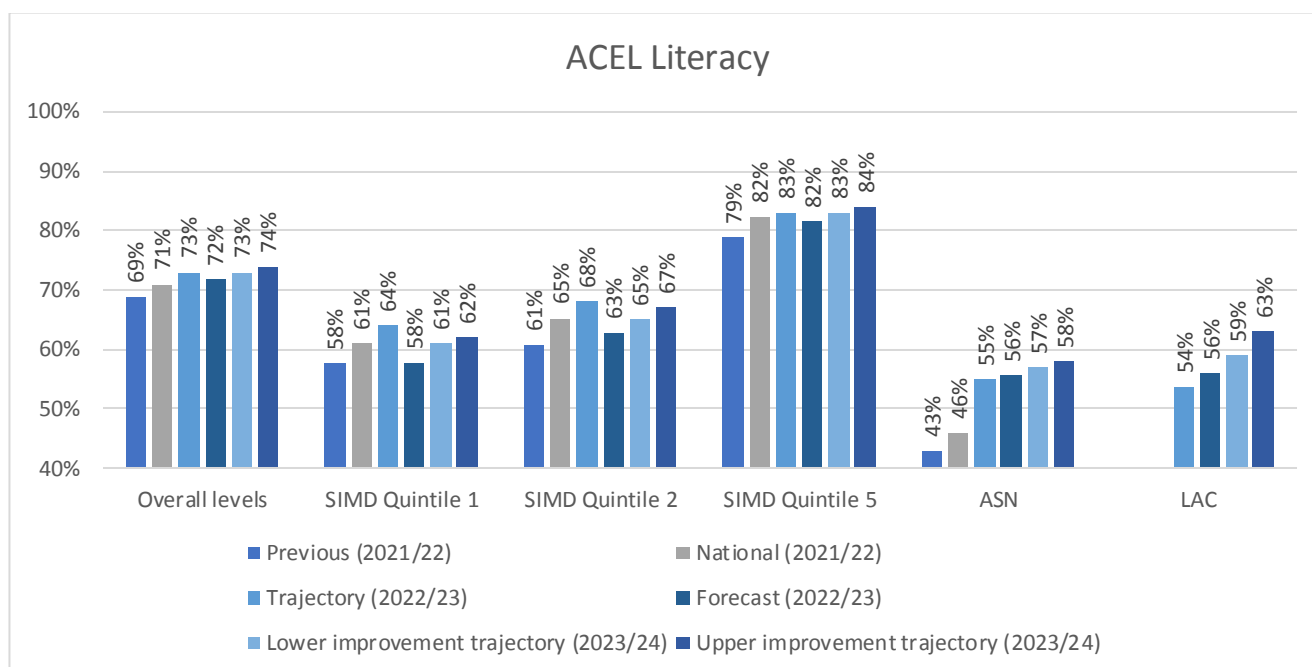
*values rounded to nearest whole number

ACEL Literacy Combined

Stretch Aim - 78% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2026

Attainment in Literacy has risen from 69% in 21/22 to 72% in 22/23. Although we have made progress we have not reached our target of 73%. The combined attainment is impacted by the issues described for each element above and trajectories have been amended to reflect our current context. The Gap between Q1 and Q5 has widened. There is a need for considerable focus to be given to the moderation practices of those schools supporting the highest proportion of children living in Q1 and Q2. Although progress is slower than we predicted we remain confident that we will achieve our stretch aim for 2026.

Trajectory for 2023/24 – Between 73% and 74% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 23/24.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Literacy*

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Current level (2021/22)	69%	58%	61%	79%	-21pp	43%	21%
National (2021/22)	71%	61%	65%	82%	-21pp	46%	
Trajectory (2022/23)	73%	64%	68%	83%	-19pp	55%	54%
Forecast (2022/23)	72%	58%	63%	82%	-24pp	56%	56%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(73% - 74%)	(61% - 62%)	(65% - 67%)	(83% - 84%)	(-22pp to -22pp)	(57% - 58%)	(59% - 63%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 23/24	(1pp - 2pp)	(3pp - 4pp)	(2pp - 4pp)	(1pp - 2pp)		(1pp - 2pp)	(3pp - 7pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	78%	71%	76%	87%	-17pp	60%	73%

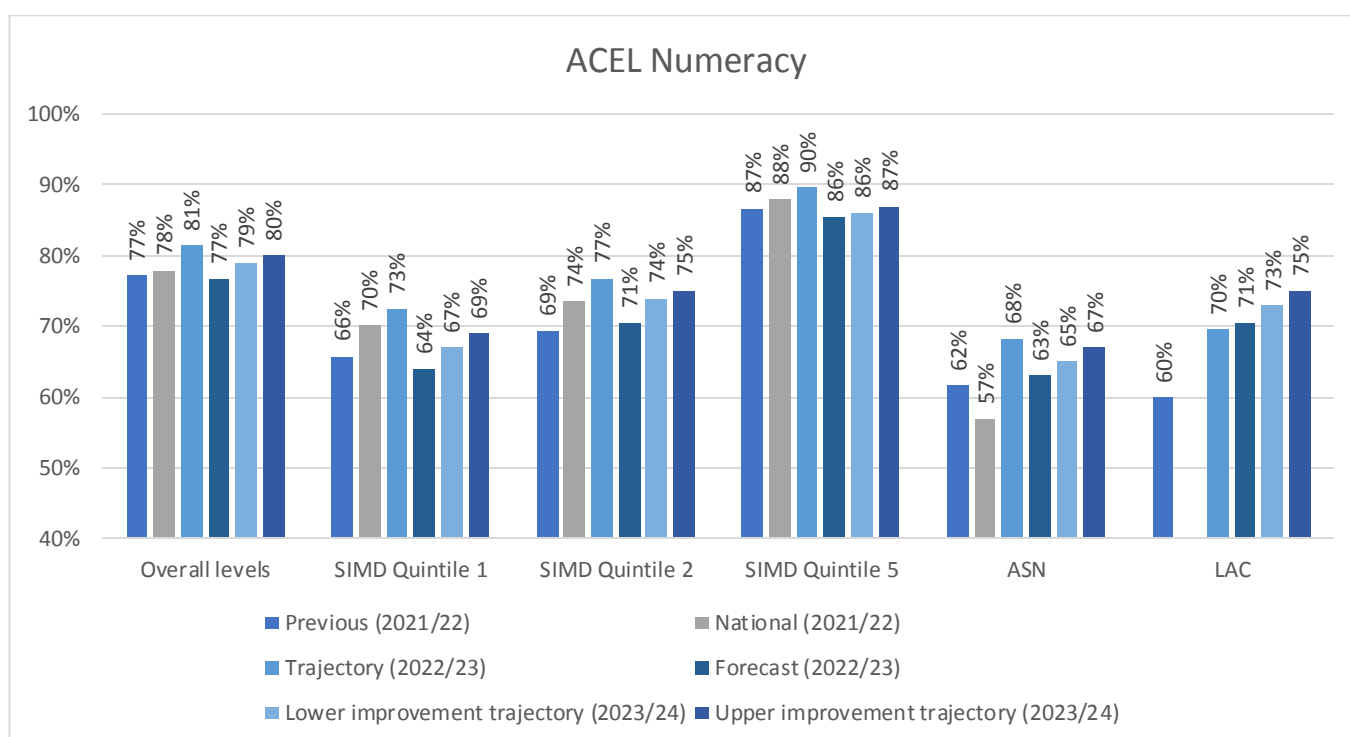
*values rounded to nearest whole number

ACEL Numeracy

Stretch Aim - 84% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2026

The forecast for 22/23 shows we have maintained 21/22 levels in numeracy. The lack of progress toward our targets mirrors results in maths in the senior phase and highlights the need for a strategic plan to address the quality of learning and teaching in numeracy and maths across all sectors. This will be taken forward as part of our plans to improve learning and teaching. The gap between Q1 and Q5 remains at the same level as last year. There is a need to focus on those learners in Q1 and interventions will be targeted at this group in order to close the gap.

Trajectory for 2023/24 – Between 79% and 80% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 23/24.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Numeracy Combined*

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Current level (2021/22)	77%	66%	69%	87%	-21pp	62%	60%
National (2021/22)	78%	70%	74%	88%	-18pp	57%	
Trajectory (2022/23)	81%	73%	77%	90%	-17pp	68%	70%
Forecast (2022/23)	77%	64%	71%	86%	-21pp	63%	71%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(79% - 80%)	(67% - 69%)	(74% - 75%)	(86% - 87%)	(-18pp to -17pp)	(65% - 67%)	(73% - 75%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 23/24	(2pp - 3pp)	(3pp - 5pp)	(3pp - 4pp)	(0pp - 1pp)		(2pp - 4pp)	(2pp - 4pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	84%	78%	81%	89%	-11pp	73%	79%

*values rounded to nearest whole number

Looking at long term data, there is evidence of sustained improvement. The improvement continues to improve our position against national data but there is still more to do. The service will continue to focus on improving attainment through an ongoing focus on high quality learning, teaching and assessment, accountability at all levels and broadening the curriculum offer by making effective and improved use of data. There is also a need to ensure that staff at all levels are able to make effective use of the data tools available to them to ensure that we develop a self-improving system.

Improvements for 2023/24 associated with raising attainment include:

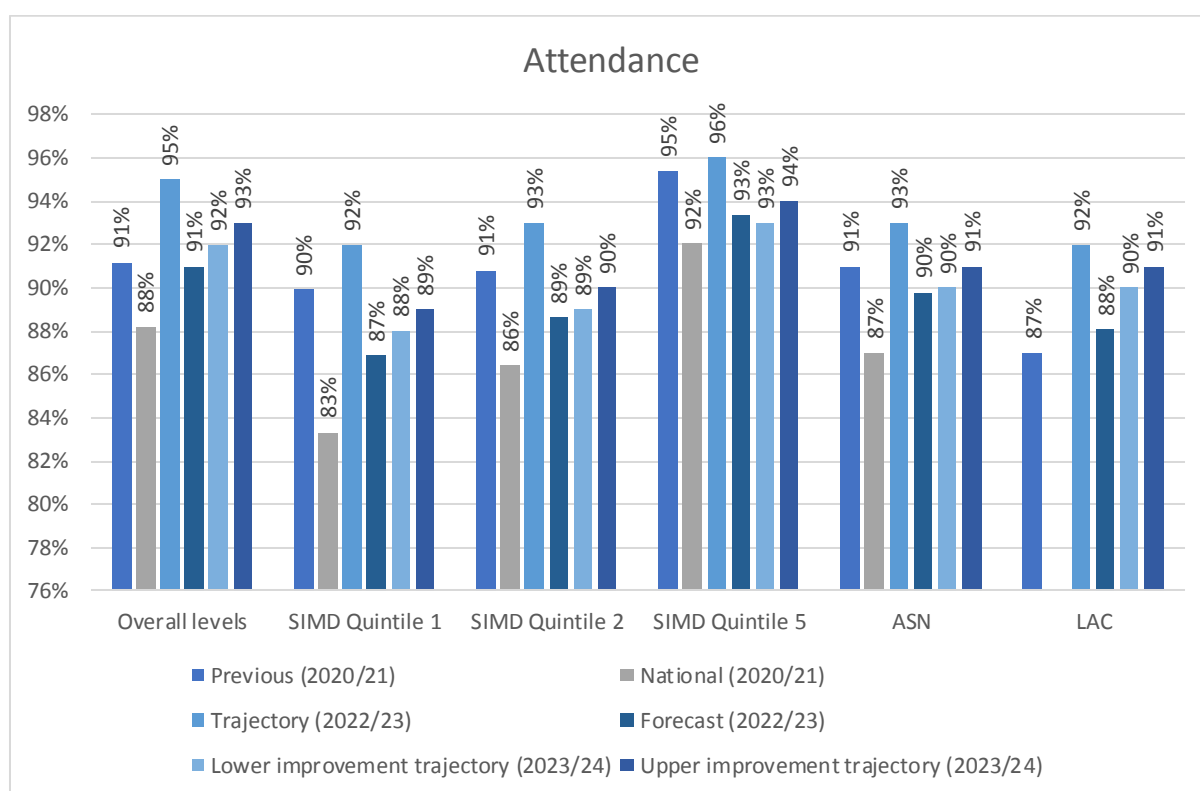
- implementation of the revised anti bullying Policy
- review and implement a revised Minimising Exclusion Policy
- improve understanding and accountability of data at all levels
- implementation of the refreshed Quality Improvement Framework to help improve standards against the core Quality Indicators
- continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment including the provision of appropriate levels of differentiation, pace, and challenge in collaboration with HMle and the Regional Improvement Collaborative
- increased scrutiny of the progress of our pupils on the edge of care and on-going roll out of our Edge of Care pilots to help shape our model of Family Support
- continue to respond positively to the education reforms and strengthening locality working
- work with Microsoft to pilot an increase in the use of Microsoft tools to support learning and teaching
- work with the parent forum to improve communication between schools and parents and increase parental engagement
- prioritise QAMSO support to improve planning and moderation in schools with high levels of learners in Q1 and Q2.

Attendance

Stretch Aim - 95% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by 2026

Effective risk assessments have helped maintain pupil levels of attendance at school but have not enabled an improvement in school attendance, unvalidated data suggests a slight dip in keeping with the national position. Officers will apply greater scrutiny to the reasons associated with absence in order to identify any patterns to help inform a review of attendance guidance to improve levels further.

Target for 2023/24 – Between 92% and 93% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by the end of school session 23/24.



%Attendance All Schools

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Previous (2020/21)	91%	90%	91%	95%	-5pp	91%	87%
National (2020/21)	88%	83%	86%	92%	-9pp	87%	
Trajectory (2022/23)	95%	92%	93%	96%	-4pp	93%	92%
Forecast (2022/23)	91%	87%	89%	93%	-6pp	90%	88%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(92% - 93%)	(88% - 89%)	(89% - 90%)	(93% - 94%)	(-4pp to -5pp)	(90% - 91%)	(90% - 91%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 23/24	(1pp - 2pp)	(1pp - 2pp)	(0pp - 1pp)	(0pp - 1pp)		(0pp - 1pp)	(2pp - 3pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	95%	92%	93%	96%	-4pp	93%	95%

*values rounded to nearest whole number
National data for Attendance is published bi-annually, last update 20/21.
*values rounded to nearest whole number

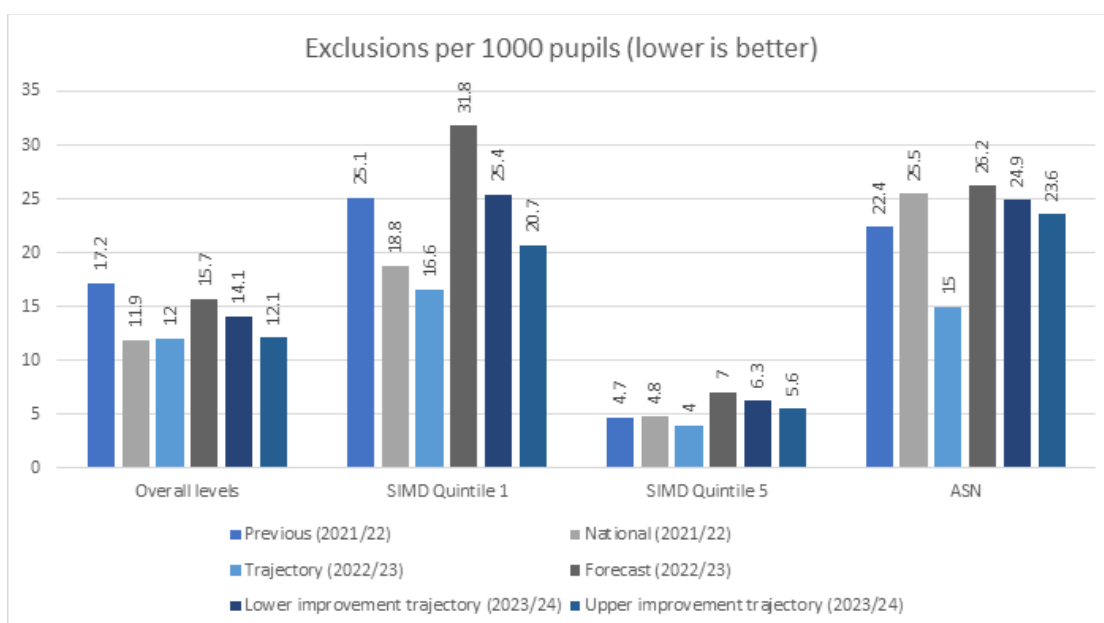
Exclusion

Stretch Aim - 95% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by 2026

Exclusion data shows that we are forecast to be 15.7 per 1000 which remains lower than the 20/21 levels of 17.2 per 1000. The length of any exclusion continues to be short. Our minimising exclusion policy will be reviewed session 23/24 to take account of a slightly different post pandemic context being experienced nationally.

Exclusion levels for Looked After Children continue to reduce. Q1 and ASN will be a priority for improvement whilst reviewing the policy.

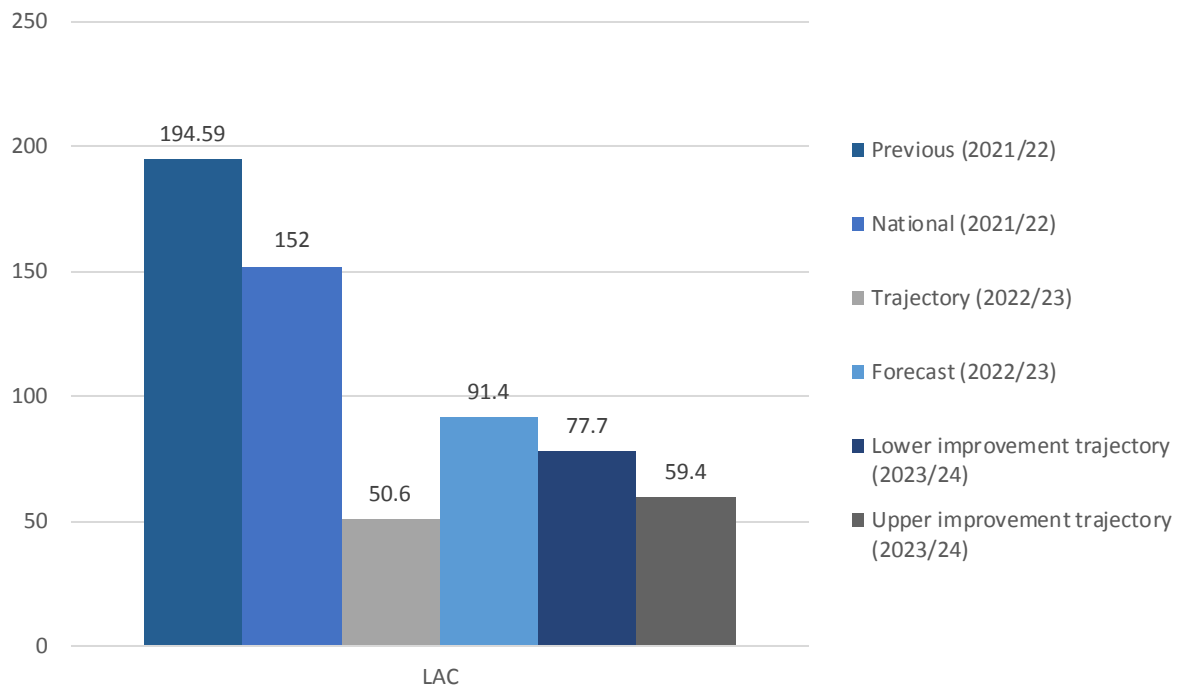
Target for 2023/24 – Between 92% and 93% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by the end of school session 23/24.



Number of pupils excluded per 1000 pupils (all schools)

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Previous (2020/21)	17.2	25.1	4.7	20.4	22.4	194.59
National (2020/21)	11.9	18.8	4.8	14.0	25.5	152.0
Trajectory (2022/23)	12.0	16.6	4.0	12.6	15.0	50.6
Forecast (2022/23)	15.7	31.8	7.0	24.8	26.2	91.4
Trajectory (2023/24)	(14.1 - 12.1)	(25.4 - 20.7)	(6.3 - 5.6)		(24.9 - 23.6)	(77.7 - 59.4)
Improvement for 23/24	(10% - 23%)	(20%-35%)	(10pp - 20pp)		(5pp - 10pp)	(15pp - 35pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	9.0	11.0	3.0	8.0	10.0	30.0

Exclusions - Looked After Children(per 1000 pupils)



Core Quality Indicators

Stretch Aim - 85% of all schools will self-evaluate QI1.3 Leadership of Change at good or better by 2026.

As we continue to see changes in our leadership teams with nearly 10% of our Headteachers new in post this session, Quality Indicator 1.3, Leadership of Change has dipped slightly from 65% of evaluations rated Good or above in 21/22 to 60% in 22/23. This is 15% less than our target but reflects the changing landscape in schools at this time and the work required in this area to refocus on strategic delivery, following years of operational focus during the pandemic to support increased confidence levels.

Target for 2023/24 – 70% of schools will self-evaluate QI1.3 Leadership of Change at good or better by the end of school session 23/24.

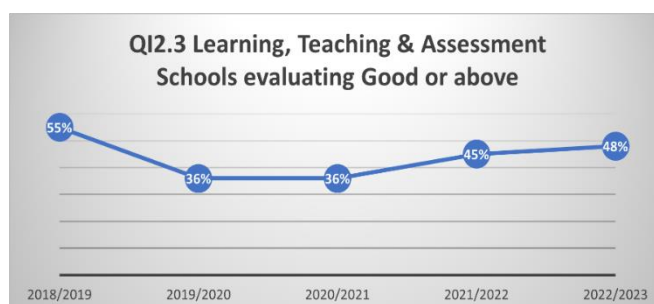


Stretch Aim - 80% of our schools will self-evaluate QI2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment at good or better by 2026.

The quality of learning, teaching and assessment continues to be an area of focus given the inextricable links between the quality of provision and attainment and participation data. On-going work will help us improve evaluations of QI 2.3, Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

Although we have not reached the target of 55% for 2022/23, we have seen an increase in the number of schools delivering higher quality learning and teaching this year by 3%. There remains, however a need for us to continue building on this progress to reach our aspirational stretch aim and our work with the Northern Alliance will support progress in this area.

Target for 2023/24 – 55% of our schools will self-evaluate QI2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment at good or better by the end of school session 23/24.

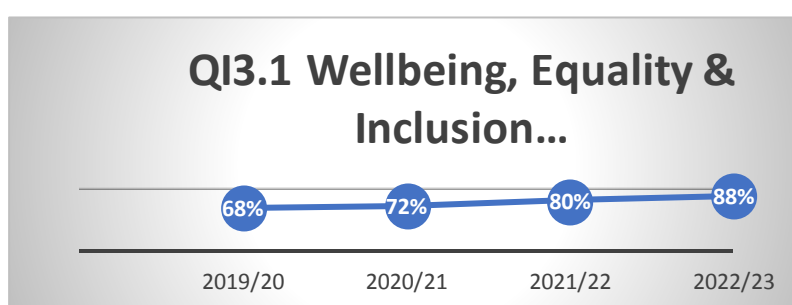


Stretch Aim - 100% of schools will evaluate QI 3.1 at good or better by 2026.

Evaluations of QI 3.1, Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion have been improving over the last 4 years.

We continue to see a positive trend within health and wellbeing and are confident that this will continue to rise. We have exceeded our annual target of 85% by 3% which evidences the impact of the work being undertaken in this area by schools and central officers.

Target for 2023/24 – 90% of schools will evaluate QI 3.1 at good or better by the end of school session 23/24.



Health & Wellbeing (inclusive of closing the gap measures)

Through the LOIP and associated Children's Services Plan we will continue to link with the Mental Health Collaborative and Physical Education, Physical Activity & Sport (PEPAS) Group to review any identified trends and consider how to address these.

There will be an increased focus on poverty and how this impacts health and educational outcomes. Continued work is also required around the area of physical appearance. We will need to consider carefully our support for girls in particular, and those who did not disclose their gender identity, who have shown greater challenges with regards to mental health. We will continue to promote healthy choices and build confidence in our young people and parents and carers, to support good decisions in areas such as sleep, use of technology and substance misuse.

We will continue to monitor trends to ensure that we are targeting the right supports in the right areas.

With increased scrutiny around attendance there will be a need to focus resource on identifying the correct interventions to improve the attendance of individual young people where mental health may be a factor.

Priorities for improvement in 2023/24 to support positive health and wellbeing, based on the findings of this evaluation include:

- Undertake a rapid review of our readiness for the incorporation of the UNCRC following publication of the statutory guidance to make sure that we meaningfully involve children and young people in decision-making and respond to what children and young people tell us they want and need

- Continue to monitor wellbeing data and the impact of interventions in place including the provision of counselling
- Review and implement our accessibility plan
- Maintain our focus on encouraging children and young people to be more physically active including those with sensory and other identified needs
- Continue to support all secondary schools to establish effective systems to support LGBTQIA+ community in school
- Continue to develop our approaches to supporting those with a range of additional support needs including on-going roll out of the Circle Framework and on-going delivery of trauma training through Compassionate and Connected Communities
- Design support materials to increase knowledge and understanding of teenage brain development and the impact of this
- Continue to build a responsive Educational Psychology Service delivery plan to meet the changing needs of the school population
- Maintain an agile programme of high quality professional learning for all ELC and school staff

Our target for 2022/23 reflected the progress made and potential for improvement as we continued to focus on health and wellbeing following the pandemic.

Closing the Gap

Working in collaboration with school leaders and through the LOIP and associated children's service plan we will continue to improve approaches to tackling the poverty gap.

The refreshed Pupil Equity Fund plan and tracker being rolled out from August will allow us to have greater scrutiny of interventions in place to raise attainment. The data collected will be used as part of Quality Improvement visits to schools in session 23/24.

Our request for assistance system has served us well and allowed use to ensure learners are able to access support matched to their need. This system now requires to be expanded to include other services to enable the family to access support timeously.

The National improvement writing programme increased attainment at P4 for the schools involved. During session 23/24 the programme will be rolled out further to schools where attainment at P4 is lower than expected.

Priorities for improvement in 2023/24 to support closing the gap are:

- Improved tracking and scrutiny of impact data related to the 6 groups identified in the Child Poverty Action Plan and those with protected characteristics
- Continue to work in collaboration with others to address the root cause of poverty.
- Maintain our focus on supporting families to access information and support around eligibility in order to maximising the uptake of benefits
- Implement actions associated with the Armed Forces Covenant
- Improve access to wider child poverty data at community level

- Review Partnership Forums to maximise their impact
- Roll out the Pupil Equity Fund tracker and share best practice
- Use request for assistance data to align Scottish Attainment Challenge resource to our emerging model of Family Support
- Maintain work on the national improvement in writing programme
- Review and implementation of a refreshed Minimising Exclusion Policy
- Increased scrutiny of attendance at all stages
- Review our attendance guidance

Positive Destinations (including closing the gap measures)

Considerable work has been and continues to be undertaken in this area as schools work to respond to the changing economic landscape. Secondary School Head Teachers are currently responding to the need to;

- review the City Campus model that has been in place for the past ten years
- build in capacity to create new learner pathways, and
- create a more effective way to work with curriculum partners such as NESCol

It is believed that this work could play a critical part in maximising offers being made to young people across Aberdeen City from August 2023 and improve our ability both to meet the needs of all learners and respond to changing economic conditions.

The work involved in gaining such alignment is considerable and this will be the key focus in this area for 23/24 as we continue to work with partners to ensure that young people have the skills they need to move onto education, employment, or training in a changing local economy.

Priorities for improvement, based on the findings of this evaluation include:

- continued curriculum alignment and expansion of learning pathways through delivery of Phase 2 of ABZ Campus
- Focus on developing pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs
- continue to improve computer science skills through on-going delivery of Aberdeen Computing Collaborative
- improve learning transitions from primary to secondary including a focus on numeracy
- continue to support engagement with Excelerate to increase innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment in Secondary Schools
- review the impact of mentoring programmes to determine our long term approach
- Review current tracking systems for BGE and beyond to ensure accurate tracking of attainment for all children and young people including those on the edge of care
- Continue to work in collaboration with the Youth Climate Group to work towards Net Zero

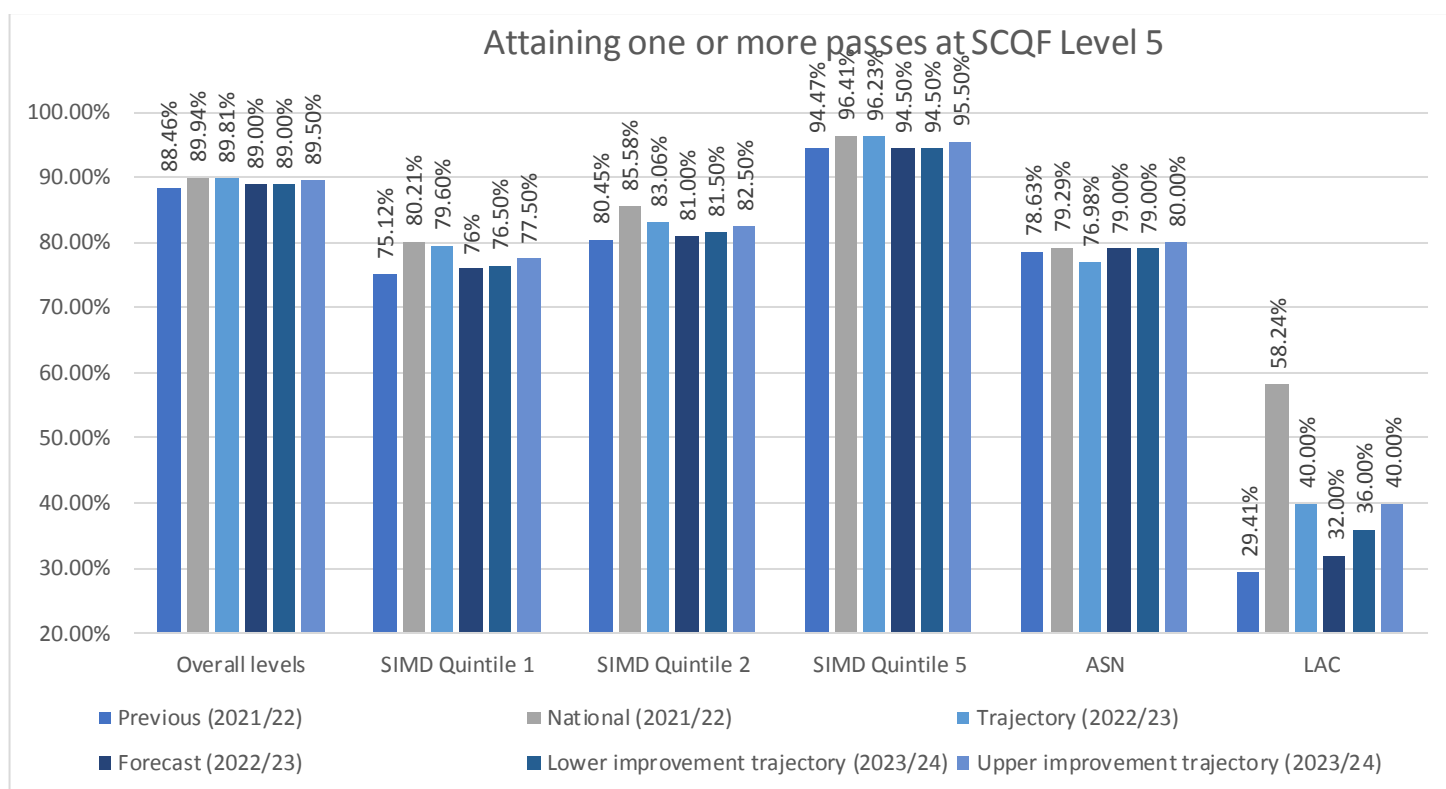
Our trajectories for 2022/23 reflect the progress made and potential for improvement as we continue recovery from the pandemic and have not taken into account an increase in roll at this stage to ensure that we remain aspirational. Trajectories will be reviewed on an annual basis.

School Leaver data

SCQF Level 5

Stretch Aim – 90.5% of all young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 by 2026. As a key benchmark of success, 1 or more at SCQF Level 5 remains a key indicator for attainment in our schools. As the distance grows from the end of the pandemic, a more settled picture will emerge demonstrating that schools are progressing against this measure, with a projection of narrowing the gap between Q1 to Q5 from 19.35 to 18 percentage points by 2023/24.

Target for 2023/24 – Between 89% and 89.5% of young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 by the end of 23/24.



Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 based on the Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations publication

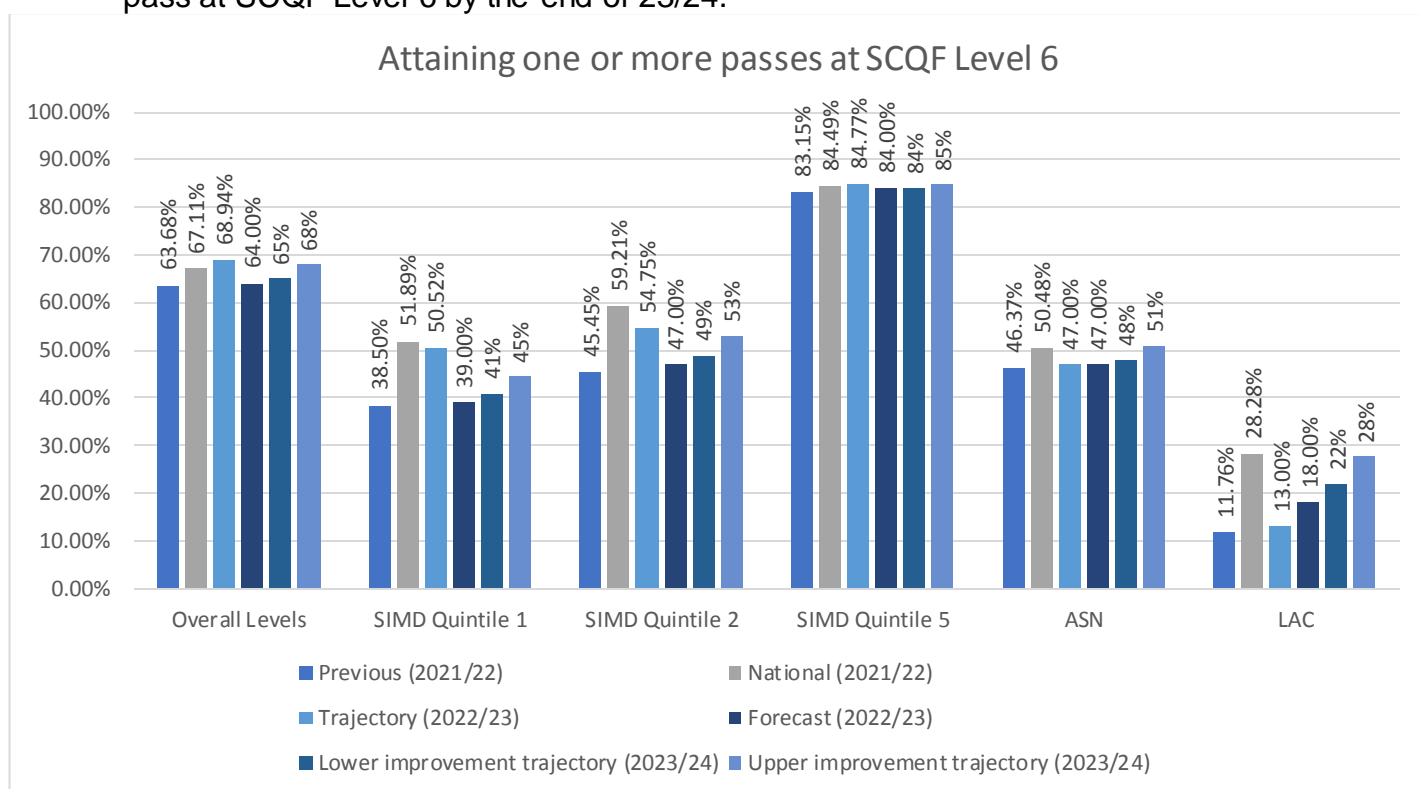
	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC ¹
Previous (2021/22)	88.46%	75.12%	80.45%	94.47%	19.35pp	78.63%	29.41%
National (2021/22)	89.94%	80.21%	85.58%	96.41%	16.20pp	79.29%	58.24%
Trajectory (2022/23)	89.81%	79.60%	83.06%	96.23%	16.63pp	76.98%	40.0%
Forecast (2022/23)	89.00%	76.00%	81.00%	94.50%	18.5pp	79.0%	32.0%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(89.0%-89.5%)	(76.5% - 77.5%)	(81.5% - 82.5%)	(94.5%-95.5%)	18pp	(79.0% - 80.0%)	(36.0%-40.0%)
Improvement (percentage points)	(0pp - 0.5pp)	(0.5pp - 1.5pp)	(0.5pp - 1.5pp)	(0.0pp - 1.0pp)		(0.00pp - 1.0pp)	(4pp - 8pp)
Stretch Aim to be achieved by 25/26	90.50%	80.70%	84.50%	97.00%	16.30pp	80.00%	55.00%

¹ 3 looked after children achieved SCQF level 5 in a cohort of 15 leavers.

SCQF Level 6

Stretch Aim - 74% of all young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 by 2026. 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 is a key attainment indicator, and can serve to demonstrate breadth of course offer across schools. During 2022-23 and for the coming year, schools are developing a broader curriculum offer and this, combined with the introduction of ABZ Campus in June 2023, should see progress made against stretch aims in this measure. The forecast is to reduce the gap between Q1 and Q5 from 44.65 percentage points to 43 by 2023/24.

Target for 2023/24 – Between 67% and 69% of young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 by the end of 23/24.



Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 based on the Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations publication

	Overall Levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1-Q5	ASN	LAC ²
Previous (2021/22)	63.68%	38.5%	45.45%	83.15%	44.65pp	46.37%	11.76%
National (2021/22)	67.11%	51.89%	59.21%	84.49%	32.60pp	50.48%	28.28%
Trajectory 2022/23	68.94%	50.52%	54.75%	84.77%	-34.25pp	47.00%	13.00%
Forecast 2022/23	64.0%	39.0%	47.0%	84.0%	45.0pp	47.0%	18.0%
Trajectory 2023/24	(67.0% - 69.0%)	(42.0% - 44.0%)	(49.0% - 51.0%)	(85.0% - 87.0%)	(43pp to 43pp)	(48.0% - 51.0%)	(26.0% - 29.0%)
Improvement 23/24 (percentage points)	(1.00pp - 4.00pp)	(2.00pp - 5.50pp)	(2.00pp - 6.00pp)	(0.00pp - 0.75pp)		(1.00pp - 4.00pp)	(4.00pp - 9.67pp)
Stretch Aim to be achieved by 25/26	74.0%	56.00%	62.75%	87.27%	31.27pp	58.66%	46.67%

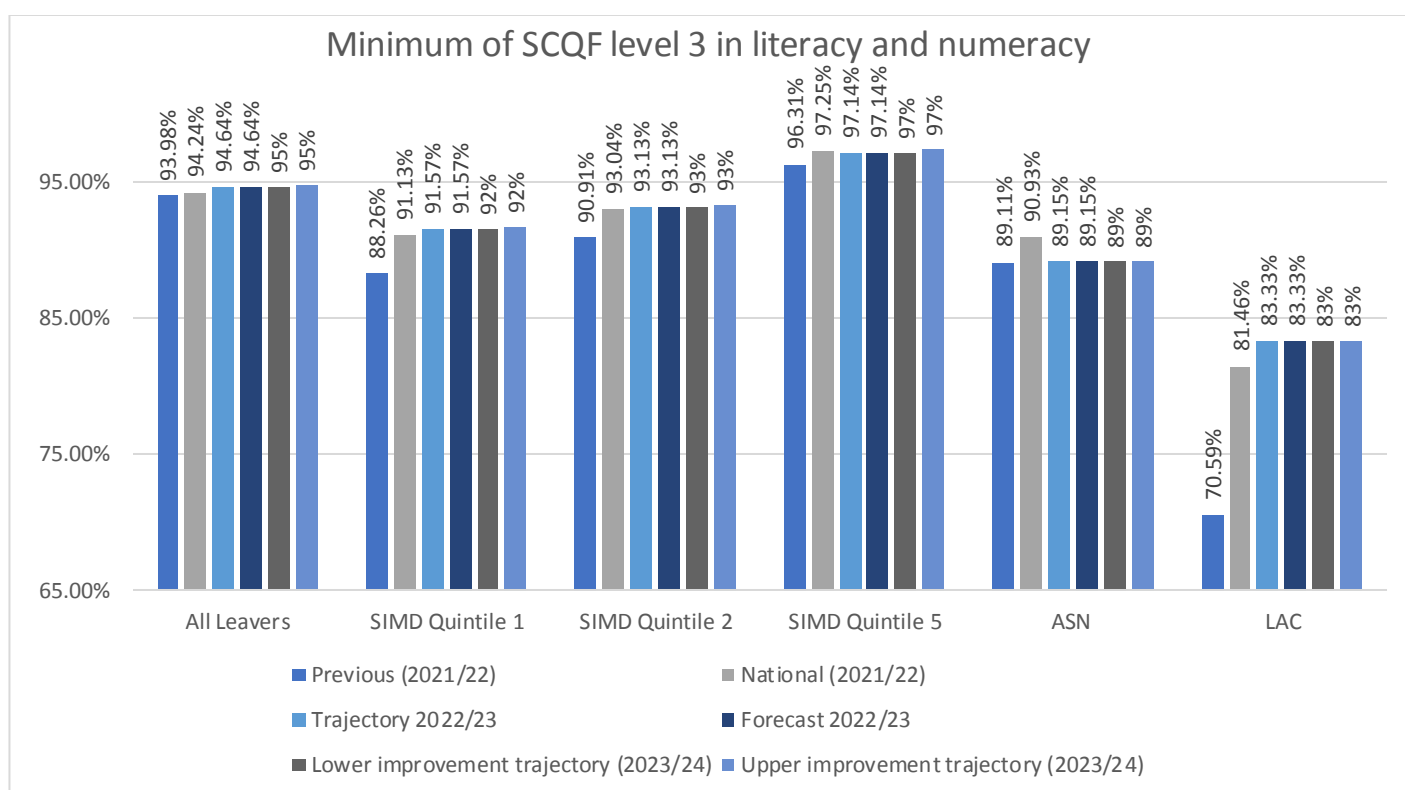
² 1 looked after child achieved SCQF level 6 in cohort of 15 leavers.

SCQF Level 3 in Literacy & numeracy

Stretch Aim – 95.14% of all young people will attain a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in literacy and numeracy by 2026.

Positive attainment in Literacy and Numeracy is an important feature of success in the Senior Phase in schools. There is confidence that attainment in this area will improve towards the stated targets and reduce the gap between Q1 and Q5 in the coming years.

Target for 2023/24 – 94% of young people will attain a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in literacy and numeracy by the end of school session 22/23.



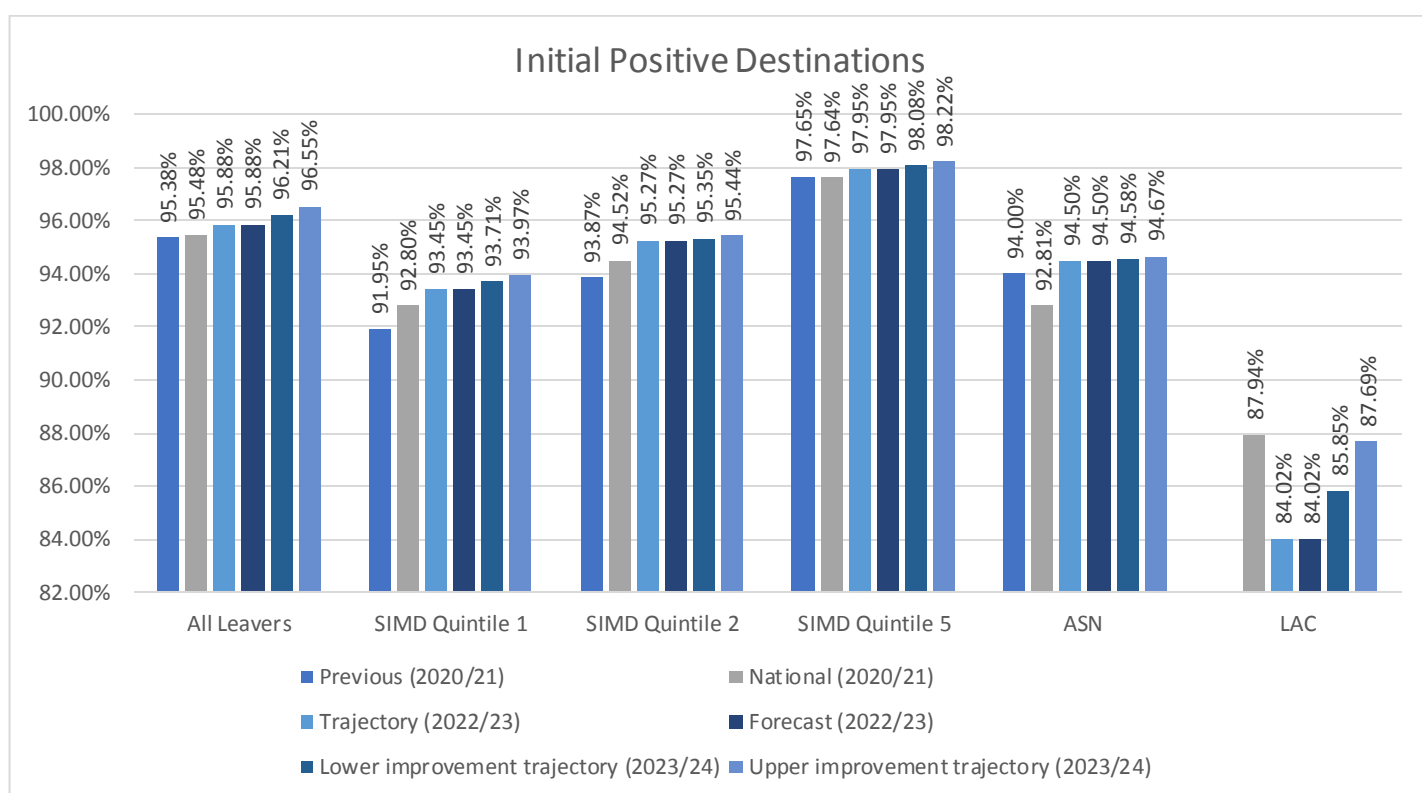
Proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF level 3 in literacy and numeracy

	All Leavers	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Previous (2021/22)	93.98%	88.26%	90.91%	96.31%	8.05pp	89.11%	70.59%
National (2021/22)	94.24%	91.13%	93.04%	97.25%	6.12pp	90.93%	81.46%
Trajectory 2022/23	94.64%	91.57%	93.13%	97.14%	5.57pp	89.15%	83.33%
Forecast 2022/23	94.64%	91.57%	93.13%	97.14%	5.57pp	89.15%	83.33%
Trajectory 2023/24	(94.64% - 94.76%)	(91.57% - 91.67%)	(93.13% - 93.35%)	(97.14% - 97.36%)	(-5.57pp to -5.57pp)	(89.15% - 89.15%)	(83.33% - 83.33%)
Improvement 23/24 (percentage points)	(0.00% - 0.12%)	(0.00% - 0.10%)	(0.00% - 0.22%)	(0.00% - 0.22%)		(0.00% - 0.50%)	(0.00% - 3.00%)
Stretch Aim to be achieved by 25/26	95.14%	92.00%	93.63%	97.80%	5.80pp	90.15%	88.33%

Proportion of leavers entering Positive Destinations

Stretch Aim – 97.88% of young people will be achieving a positive destination by 2026. This is an important yet challenging stretch aim as we look to support all of our young people into a positive and sustained destination on leaving school. Emerging evidence suggests that the immediate post-pandemic period saw a slight reduction in the positive destination figures (2022 – 93.87), however, as distance grows from the pandemic and work with schools to improve pathway planning progresses, there is confidence that the target of 96% by the end of session 2023/24 is within reach.

Target for 2023/24 – 96% of young people will enter an initial positive destination by the end of school session 23/24.



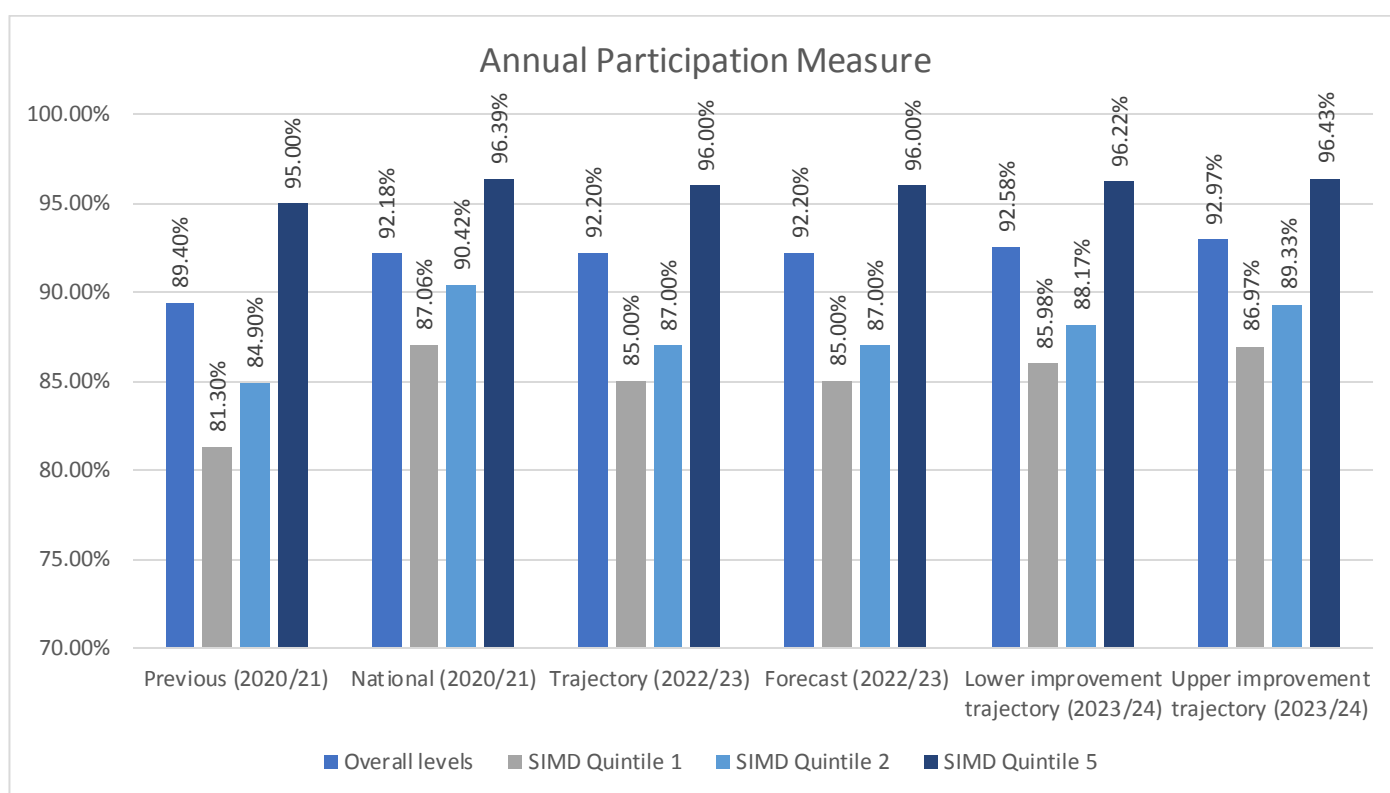
Proportion of school leavers leaving to a positive destination

	All Leavers	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
Previous (2020/21)	95.38%	91.95%	93.87%	97.65%	5.70pp	94.00%	76.47%
National (2020/2021)	95.48%	92.80%	94.52%	97.64%	4.84pp	92.81%	87.94%
Trajectory (2022/23)	95.88%	93.45%	95.27%	97.95%	-4.50pp	94.50%	84.02%
Forecast (2022/23)	95.88%	93.45%	95.27%	97.95%	4.50pp	94.50%	84.02%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(96.21% - 96.55%)	(93.71% - 93.97%)	(95.35% - 95.44%)	(98.08% - 98.22%)	(-4.38pp to -4.25pp)	(94.58% - 94.67%)	(85.85% - 87.69%)
Improvement 23/24 (percentage points)	(0.33% - 0.67%)	(0.26% - 0.52%)	(0.08% - 0.17%)	(0.13% - 0.27%)		(0.08% - 0.17%)	(1.83% - 3.67%)
Stretch Aim 2025/26	97.88%	95.00%	95.77%	98.75%	3.75%	95.00%	95.02%

Participation

Stretch Aim – 94.5% of all young people will be participating in education, employment, or training by 2026. This measure takes a slightly different perspective to the Positive Destination figure (see above) and early signs are that 2022 saw some progress made (2022 – 91.22%), providing confidence that the target for 2023/24 is achievable. Continued work to support schools in pathway planning will further spread good practice across schools.

Target for 2023/24 – Between 92.5% and 93.5% of young people will be participating in education, employment, or training by the end of school session 23/24.



Percentage participation of 16-19 olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland by 2026

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5
Previous (2020/21)	89.4%	81.3%	84.9%	95.0%	13.7pp
National (2020/21)	92.18%	87.06%	90.42%	96.39%	9.33pp
Trajectory (2022/23)	92.20%	85.00%	87.00%	96.00%	11.00pp
Forecast (2022/23)	92.20%	85.00%	87.00%	96.00%	11.00pp
Trajectory (2023/24)	(92.58% - 92.97%)	(85.98% - 86.97%)	(88.17% - 89.33%)	(96.22% - 96.43%)	(-10.23pp to - 9.47pp)
Improvement (percentage points)	(0.3pp - 1.3pp)	(1pp - 3pp)	(1pp - 3pp)	(0pp - 0.75pp)	
Stretch Aim to be achieved by 25/26	94.50%	90.90%	94.00%	97.30%	6.40%

Conclusion

The education service continues to help drive the improvements outlined in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), the associated Children's Service Plan, the Child Poverty Action Plan as well as reflecting on the improvements detailed in the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan. We continue to focus on a small number of priorities for improvement in order to address some of the issues emerging from the data and accelerate work in these areas in closer collaboration with colleagues in school.

In addition to the priorities identified in the above National Improvement Priority Areas, we will also endeavour to:

- Work with HTs to monitor the impact of PEF interventions as part of our Quality Improvement Activity
- Work with the Scottish Government to increase provision of ELC to those who are 1 and 2 from low income households
- Continue to work with community planning partners to shape a model of family support
- Maintain an agile programme of professional learning for all ELC and school staff
- Re-establish subject networks
- Where possible, support staff to gain qualifications in order to realise career progression and promotion
- Continue to deliver a programme for Middle Leaders to enhance leadership skills
- Build on the network for Middle Leaders
- Undertake regular staff wellbeing surveys to understand the needs of staff across the system and support a timely response to this.
- Monitor recruitment to ensure swift identification of any issues to be addressed.
- Continue to evaluate the use of school profiles and ensure access for all
- Develop a quality improvement calendar which provides well planned, focused quality improvement activity
- Evaluate the impact of each programme of quality improvement to determine next steps
- Review and update the Parental involvement & Engagement Plan
- Design and capitalise on opportunities for co-location and co-delivery of services for children and families

High Level Plan 2022-26

Excellence

Equity

Strategic Priorities

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the leadership of change in schools • Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in schools • Continue to improve the quality of universal health and wellbeing supports in response to changes in need • Increase the voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services that directly and indirectly affect them • Deliver a broader range of senior phase learner pathways aligned to growth areas • Improve the delivery of Computer Science from 3-18 and beyond | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs • Reshape the Virtual School to ensure that those on the edge of care and those who are care experienced achieve at the highest levels in keeping with The Promise • Close the poverty related attainment gap • Prevent families from experiencing poverty wherever possible • Partnership delivery of the Family Support Model in keeping with The Promise • Review the Anti-bullying policy |
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Strategic Enablers

Workforce	Data	Standards	Partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality professional learning for all • Senior and Middle Leadership development • Continue to support staff health and wellbeing • Monitor workforce levels to ensure our capacity to deliver for children and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop School Profiles • Implement improved tracking and reporting • Collaborate with partners to join data sets when beneficial to do so • Increase central oversight of tracking data and PEF impact measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear expectations around the Core Quality Indicators • Continually improve central Quality Improvement approaches • Maintain approaches to collaborative improvement across the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan • Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway • More closely align the universal services of health and education

Strategic Delivery Plan

Excellence

Stretch Aims and targets for 25/26

- ❖ 85% of all schools will self- evaluate QI1.3 at good or better by 2026 (current baseline 60% and target for 23/24 75%)
- ❖ 80% of all school will self-evaluate QI 2.3 at good or better by 2026 (current baseline 48% and target for 23/24 55%)
- ❖ 84% of pupils will achieve ACEL reading (P1,4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 76% and target for 23/24 78% - 79%)
- ❖ 81% of pupils will achieve ACEL writing (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 72% and target for 23/24 74% – 75%)
- ❖ 89% of pupils will achieve ACEL Listening and Talking (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026.(forecast baseline 84% and target for 23/24 85%-86%)
- ❖ 84% of pupils will achieve ACEL Numeracy (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026. (forecast baseline 76% and target for 23/24 78% - 79%)
- ❖ 78% of pupils will achieve ACEL Literacy (P1, P4 and P7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 72% and target for 23/24 73% -74%)
- ❖ Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at SCQF level 5 to 90.5% by 2026. Current baseline 87.8% and target for 22/23 set at 89.9%
- ❖ Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at SCQF Level 6 to 74% by 2026. Current baseline 66.9% and target for 22/23 set at 68.9%
- ❖ Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF L3 in literacy and numeracy to 95% by 2026. Current baseline 92.8% and target for 22/23 94.6%
- ❖ Increase the proportion of school leavers entering an initial positive destination to 97.8% by 2026. Current baseline 95.3% and target for 22/23 set at 95.8%
- ❖ Increase the participation of 16-19 year olds in education, employment or training based on Annual Participation Measure to 94.5% by 2026. Current baseline 90.97% and target for 22/23 set at 92.2%

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the leadership of change in schools			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to respond positively to the education reforms and strengthening locality working Increase opportunities for leadership collaboration with particular focus on Secondary settings 	CEO, QIMs	Ongoing	Positive engagement, response and implementation of changes identified
	QIM (PD), AM	August	Improvement in QI 1.3 in Secondary schools
Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in schools			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment including the provision of appropriate levels of differentiation, pace, and challenge in collaboration with HMle and the Regional Improvement Collaborative Work with Microsoft to pilot an increase in the use of Microsoft tools to support learning and teaching Maintain work on the national improvement in writing programme – new cohort Improve learning transitions from primary to secondary including a focus on numeracy Continue to support engagement with Excelerate to increase innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment in Secondary Schools 	QIM (RA), NIF Group	Ongoing	Improvement of core QI 2.3
	QIO (Digital)	August 2023	Improvement in QI 2.3 use of digital
	QIM (CtG) ESO	August 2023	Improvement in writing data
	QIM (PD)	Jan 2024	Improvement in numeracy data, particularly at transition points
	QIM (PD)	Ongoing	Increased creative learning opportunities afforded to children and young people in Secondary Schools
Continue to improve the quality of universal health and wellbeing supports in response to changes in need			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor wellbeing data and the impact of interventions in place including the provision of counselling 	QIM (HWB), ESOs, NIF Group	Annual survey – Sept 2023	Improved QI 3.1 and Health & wellbeing survey data
	QIM (HWB), PEPAS	Ongoing	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain our focus on encouraging children and young people to be more physically active including those with sensory and other identified needs 			Increased number of opportunities for children and young people to be more physically active
Increase the voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services that directly and indirectly affect them			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a rapid review of our readiness for the incorporation of the UNCRC following publication of the statutory guidance 	QIO (UNCRC)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that we meaningfully involve children and young people in decision-making and respond to what children and young people tell us they want and need 	QIO (UNCRC)	Ongoing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the impact of mentoring programmes for children and young people to determine our long term approach 	QIM (PD)		Improvement in engagement within the senior phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work in collaboration with the Youth Climate Group to work towards Net Zero 	QIO (Net Zero)	Ongoing	Increased opportunities to inform strategic decision making across the organisation
Deliver a broader range of senior phase learner pathways aligned to growth areas			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued curriculum alignment and expansion of learning pathways through delivery of Phase 2 of ABZ Campus 	QIM (PD), DO		Improvement in senior phase data range of courses available June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on developing pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs 	QIM (PD), DO		Improvement in destinations and participation data
Improve the delivery of Computer Science from 3-18 and beyond			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve computer science skills through on-going delivery of Aberdeen Computing Collaborative 	QIO (Digital)	Ongoing	Improvement in senior phase attainment data

Equity
Stretch Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 100% of schools will evaluate QI3.1 at good or better by 2026. (current baseline 88% and target for 23/24 90%) ❖ 95% of all children will attend school regularly by 2026. Current baseline 91% and target for session 2023/24 (92%-93%) ❖ Reduce levels of exclusion to 9 per 1000 pupils by 2026. Current baseline 15.7 per 1000 and target for 23/24 (14.1 -12.1 per 1000)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and implement our accessibility plan 	QIO (ASN), ESO	August 2023	Successful delivery of the accessibility plan, improvement in QI 3.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop our approaches to supporting those with a range of additional support needs including on-going roll out of the Circle Framework and on-going delivery of trauma training through Compassionate and Connected Communities 	QIM (HWB), (RA) ESOs	Ongoing	Improvement in all data sets linked to QI 3.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build a responsive Educational Psychology Service delivery plan to meet the changing needs of the school population 	QIM (HWB), PEP	Ongoing	Improvement in QI 2.3, 3.1 and 3.2
Reshape the Virtual School to ensure that those on the edge of care and the care experienced achieve at the highest levels in keeping with The Promise			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase scrutiny of the progress of our pupils on the edge of care 	QIM (RA), (HWB),	August 2023	Agreed data sets to ensure individual needs are being met and progress is being made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going roll out of our Edge of Care pilots to help shape our model of Family Support 	Virtual HT	Ongoing	Increased engagement with school and improvement in destinations data
	QIM (CtG)	Jan 2024	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implementation of a refreshed Minimising Exclusion Policy 			Refreshed Minimising Exclusion Policy – longterm consistency of approach
Close the poverty related attainment gap			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to wider child poverty data at community level 	QIM (CtG)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with HTs to monitor the impact of PEF interventions as part of our Quality Improvement Activity 	QIMs/QIOs	Ongoing	Improvement in closing the gap measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Scottish Government to increase provision of ELC to those who are 1 and 2 from low income households 	EY Service Managers		Plan in place for expansion to 1 and 2 year olds once guidance is available from Scottish Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Head Teachers to review attendance levels and guidance. 	QIM(CtG)		Increased attendance
Prevent families from experiencing poverty wherever possible			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work in collaboration with others to address the root cause of poverty. This will see targeted promotions of support available through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money advisors Partnership with Cfine 	QIM (CtG)	Ongoing	Increased number of benefits claimed through Money Advisors etc
Partnership Delivery of the Family Support Model in keeping with the Promise			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use request for assistance data to align Scottish Attainment Challenge resource to our emerging model of Family Support 	QIMs	Ongoing	Reduce the number of young people on the edge of care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with community planning partners to shape a model of family support 	QIMs		
Review the Anti-bullying policy (suggest alter to review approaches to equality)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the revised anti bullying policy 	QIO (ASN)	August 2023	Reduction in incidents in the longer term

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support all secondary schools to establish effective systems to support LGBTQIA+ community in school 	QIO (Equality)		Reduction in number of children and young people reporting low confidence, self esteem
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Strategic Enablers

Workforce - Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
High quality professional learning for all			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an agile programme for all ELC and school staff to include opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probationers, Early stage teachers, Middle leaders, Senior leaders Supply staff, ELC Staff at all levels Explore increasing opportunities for collaboration at subject level Where possible, support staff to gain qualifications in order to realise career progression and promotion 	QIM (HWB) Building Capacity Team / EY Team	July 2023-ongoing	Improvement in core Quality Indicators and Care Inspectorate Gradings and HMle Inspections
	Lead Teacher	October 2023	Improved collaboration and confidence of staff
		Ongoing	Staff with more highly skilled expertise
Senior and Middle Leadership development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver a programme for Middle Leaders to enhance leadership skills Build on the network for Middle Leaders to continue to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share practice, Learn from and with each other Engage with professional learning opportunities to improve leadership capacity 	QIM (HWB), Building capacity Team	August 2023	Improvement in QI1.3 evaluations
		August 2023	Improved overall quality assurance in schools with strong leadership teams, which directly impacts on all aspects of delivery.
Continue to support staff health and wellbeing			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake regular staff wellbeing surveys to understand the needs of staff across the system and support a timely response to this. 	QIM (HWB) ESOs	August 2023 – bi-annual survey	Improvement in staff wellbeing and related responses

Monitor workforce to ensure our capacity to deliver for children and families			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor recruitment to ensure swift identification of any issues to be addressed. 	QIM (CtG) / EY Service Managers	Ongoing	Maintain high levels of staffing
Data - Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Continue to develop School Profiles			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to evaluate the use of school profiles and ensure access for all 	QIMs/QIOs/	Ongoing	All data sets used to measure school improvement available in the school profiles
Implement improved tracking and reporting			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve understanding and accountability of data at all levels Improved tracking and scrutiny of impact data related to the 6 groups identified in the Child Poverty Action Plan and those with protected characteristics Review current tracking systems for BGE and beyond to ensure accurate tracking of attainment for all children and young people including those on the edge of care 	QIM (RA) QIM (CtG) QIM (PD)	Jan 2024 Jan 2024 Ongoing	Improvement in QI 1.3 Improvement in closing the gap measures Improvement in QI 1.3 and confidence in the data to ensure early intervention
Collaborate with partners to join data sets when beneficial to do so			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve data sharing processes to ensure that all relevant data can be shared to support planning and implementation of interventions e.g. PEPAS, Health 	QIMs		Improvement in all core QIs
Increase central oversight of tracking data and PEF impact measures			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out the Pupil Equity Fund tracker and share best practice 	QIM (CtG)	August 2023	Consistent tracking of PEF data and improvement in closing the gap measures

Standards - Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Clear expectations around the Core Quality Indicators			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the refreshed Quality Improvement Framework to help improve standards against the core Quality Indicators 	QIMs	August 2023	Improvement in all core QIs
Continually improve central Quality Improvement approaches			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a quality improvement calendar which provides well planned, focused quality improvement activity 	QIMs/QIOs	Ongoing	Robust quality improvement processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the impact of each programme of quality improvement to determine next steps 	QIMs/QIOs	Ongoing	Improvement in all core QIs
Maintain approaches to collaborative improvement across the city			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement actions associated with the Armed Forces Covenant 	QIM (CtG)		Consistent approach to supporting families of the Armed Forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Partnership Forums to maximise their impact 	QIM (CtG)		Improvement in closing the gap measures

Partnership - Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Delivery of Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the parent forum to improve communication between schools and parents and increase parental engagement Review and update the Parental involvement & Engagement Plan 	QIM (HWB), ESO ESO	Ongoing August 2023	Consistent communication with parents and carers Refreshed Parental Involvement & Engagement plan from 2024
Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway			
This is now being addressed within the Children's Services plan and led by the Children's Services Board			
More closely align the universal services of health and education			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and capitalise on opportunities for co-location and co-delivery of services for children and families 	QIM (HWB), (RA)	October 2023	On-going Reduction in number of requests for