

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Service
DATE	3 September 2015
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen City 2015 SQA Briefing
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/15/049
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The main purpose of this report is to provide an update to elected members of the outcome of the 2015 SQA examination diet and to outline the results for pupils entered for formal examinations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Note the information provided in this report and the attached appendix
2. Instruct officers to provide a further report at the Education and Children's Services Committee on 12th November 2015 following the release of the Insight information and another in 2016 following the release of leaver destination information.
3. The Committee wishes to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of staff and pupils in the successes they have had with the examination results.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications associated with this report.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Changes and further reports

The examination results data received in August provides comprehensive information on the outcome of examination performance for all pupils across all Aberdeen City schools. Due to changes to the presentation of statistical information, benchmarking comparison data is no longer available. More detailed national benchmark data is not available until September 2015 through the Insight tool. The introduction of Insight, presents a significant change for all Scottish Local Authorities in receiving, reviewing and presenting examination data. As a consequence of these changes, the content and style of this and a further report to Committee on 12th November 2015 will differ from previous years' attainment reports.

5.2 Making Comparisons across Qualifications and Years

The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence began in academic session 2013-14 for pupils in S4. New qualifications introduced in 2013/14 included National 3, 4 and 5 which replaced Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and 2 qualifications. National 1 and 2 qualifications are also available to meet the needs of learners with specific learning requirements replacing Access 1 and Access 2 qualifications. These overlaps prevent direct comparisons with attainment in S4 prior to 2013-14. However, the 2013/14 data has provided a baseline for future years. As a consequence of these changes, detailed comparisons year-on-year will be extremely complex.

During this session, the new Higher qualification ran alongside the existing Higher. This allowed schools in Aberdeen, in consultation with parents/carers and learners to decide upon which enter for those qualifications judged on were in the best interests of each student. This has resulted in a variety of presentation patterns across schools for the new and existing Highers. The data for both is contained within Appendix 1.

5.3 Performance Improvement in Schools

The Insight tool, created by the Scottish Government and its partners, has been developed to assist local authorities and secondary schools analyse, compare and improve the performance of pupils in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. The new tool went online in August 2014 and is updated twice a year - in March to reflect the attainment and achievement of leavers and in September to reflect the performance of all pupils following the latest examination diet.

The tool has encouraged:

- Engagement in school performance data to be available to a wider group of educational professionals in secondary schools including class teachers,

- professional reflection and compare schools to a “virtual” comparator allowing users to see how the performance of their pupils compares to a similar group of pupils from across Scotland in each subject area or course,
- better alignment of data with Curriculum for Excellence by measuring best achievement at point of exit and recognising wider achievement by including a range of SCQF credit-rated awards and learning programmes, and
- a greater focus of the information on educational outcomes, including post-school destinations and attainment in literacy and numeracy

5.4 2015 Aberdeen City Overview of Results

In 2015,

- 3,752 pupils sat examinations compared to 3,683 pupils in 2014 (an increase of 1.9%);
- there were 18,104 exam entries (an increase of 2.1% compared to 2014);
- the Aberdeen City pass rate for National 4 was 98.0% (4.7% higher than the national average);
- the pass rate (A-C) in S4 English SCQF Level 5 (National 5) was 89.4%. This was a significant increase of 6.8%, from 82.6% in 2014.
- the pass rate (A-C) in S4 Maths SCQF Level 5 (National 5) was 71.6%. This was an increase of 0.5% in the pass rate (A-C) from 71.1% in 2014.
- there was a 10% increase in the number of entries in SCQF Level 6 (Higher) from 2014 to 2015.
- the Aberdeen City pass rate (A-C) for SCQF Level 6 (Higher) was 80%. This is 0.8% above the Scottish average of 79.2%.
- the pass rate (A-C) in S5 English SCQF Level 6 (Higher) was 85.7%. This was an overall increase of 2.6% from 83.1% in 2014. This figure includes the pass rate for the existing Higher English exam and the new Higher English exam.
- the pass rate (A-C) in S5 Maths SCQF Level 6 (Higher) was 82.8%. This was a slight fall of 0.3% in the existing Higher Maths exam from 83.1 in 2014.

- Pass rates in Skills for Work courses and wider achievements was 94.8% in 2015. This was an increase by 3.6%, from 91.2% in 2014.

6. IMPACT

Neither a EHRIA or a PIA report are required as this is a monitoring report and is for information and noting only.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

As members are only being asked to note the contents of this report and the attached appendix a risk assessment is not required.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers for this report.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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