

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Service
DATE	17 November 2016
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen City 2016 Insight Briefing
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/16/061
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- a. The main purpose of this report is to update Committee of the most recent Aberdeen City attainment data in the Scottish Government senior phase (S4 to S6) national benchmarking tool, Insight.
- b. To update Committee of the current trends in attainment in the Senior Phase, including Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) performance, in Aberdeen City for academic session 2015/16, using the local and national benchmarking measures from Insight.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Note the information provided in this report.
2. Note the progress made in relation to the four national benchmark measures for attainment and achievement in the senior phase in our secondary schools using Insight and the local and national benchmarking measures.
3. To acknowledge the hard work and dedication of pupils and staff which have resulted in their successes in examinations and other courses and awards.

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**

5.1 **Changes and further reports**

Committee was made aware of the new senior phase benchmarking tool at Committee on 3rd September 2015. A further briefing on attainment data from Insight was presented at Committee on 28th January 2016.

The Insight tool, created by the Scottish Government and its partners, has been developed to assist local authorities and secondary schools to analyse, compare and improve the performance of pupils in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The new tool went online in August 2014 and is updated twice a year - in February to reflect the attainment and achievement of leavers and in September to reflect the performance of all pupils following the latest examination diet. It should be noted that the February Insight update will continually impact and supersede any figures which are presented in advance of this update.

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 by comparing 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 the aims of CfE 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

General information on Insight is available at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/seniorphasebenchmarking>.

5.2 **Benchmarking**

The main focus of the Insight tool is to provide data on four new key measures which go beyond the traditional numerical achievement of awards reported above. The measures aim to provide understanding on:

- 1. Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy:** Reflects the importance placed on these crucial skills which unlock learning in all other areas of the curriculum and are therefore vital for success in learning, life and work in the modern world and workplace.
- 2. Improving Attainment for All:** The overall aim, together with measure four, is to have pupils attain as highly as possible 'across the board' by considering the average tariff score of the top-attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and lowest-attaining 20% groups.
- 3. Increasing Post-School Participation:** Positive destinations for our leavers are a vital measure of the success of CfE in our schools.
- 4. Tackling Disadvantage by Improving the Attainment of Lower Attainers Relative to Higher Attainers:** The overall aim, together with measure three, is to have our pupils attain as highly as possible 'across the board' by considering attainment across deprivation deciles.

5.3 Performance Improvement in Schools

Insight aims to support the key principles and purposes of CfE by helping local authorities and schools to focus on understanding and reducing the gap between higher and lower attainers. Insight's key benchmarking features measure attainment at the point of exit from school. This should demonstrate the impact of effective programme routes through the senior phase.

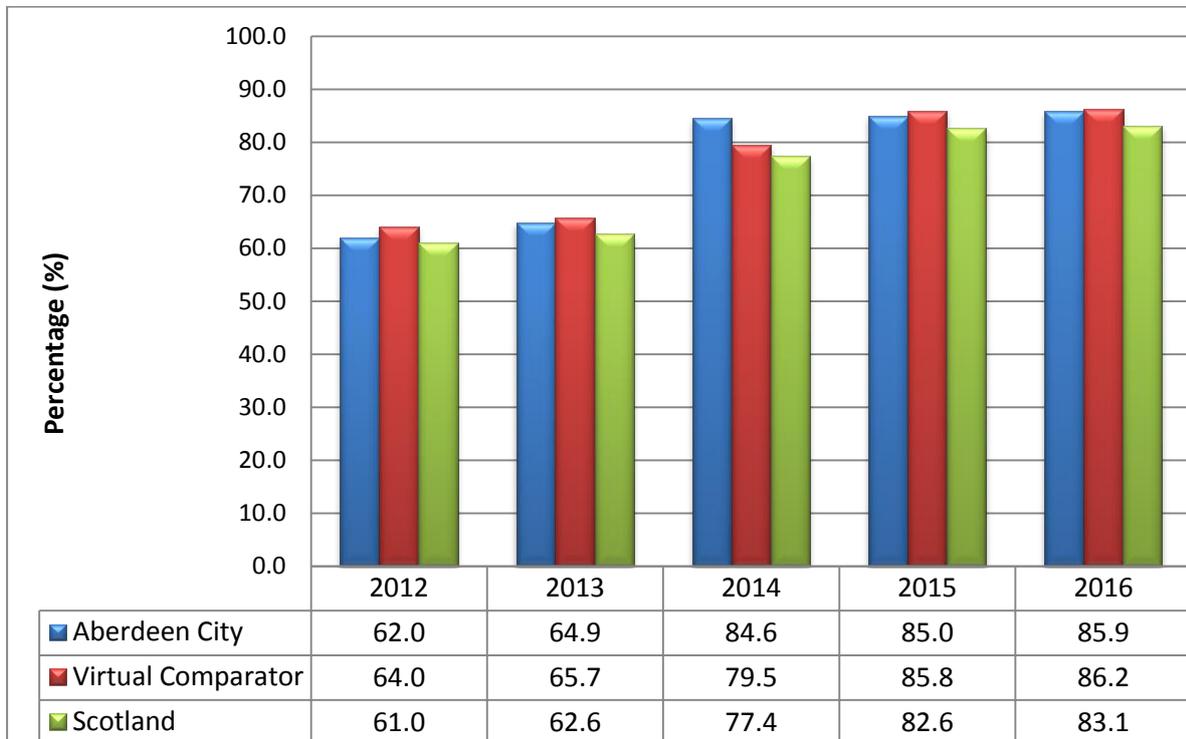
The comparator benchmarking has improved with the development of the Virtual Comparator model. The Virtual Comparator takes results from statistically similar pupils across Scotland. This is done by selecting four key characteristics which go into the makeup of an Authority or school:

- gender balance;
- staying-on rate;
- percentage of time spent in mainstream;
- and deprivation based upon the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

From these four areas Insight matches ten pupils from around Scotland to every one pupil in Aberdeen City or in the school in question and treats this matched group as the Virtual School or Authority (Virtual Comparator). It is worth noting that certain contexts need to be taken into account, such as presentation policies and senior phase models.

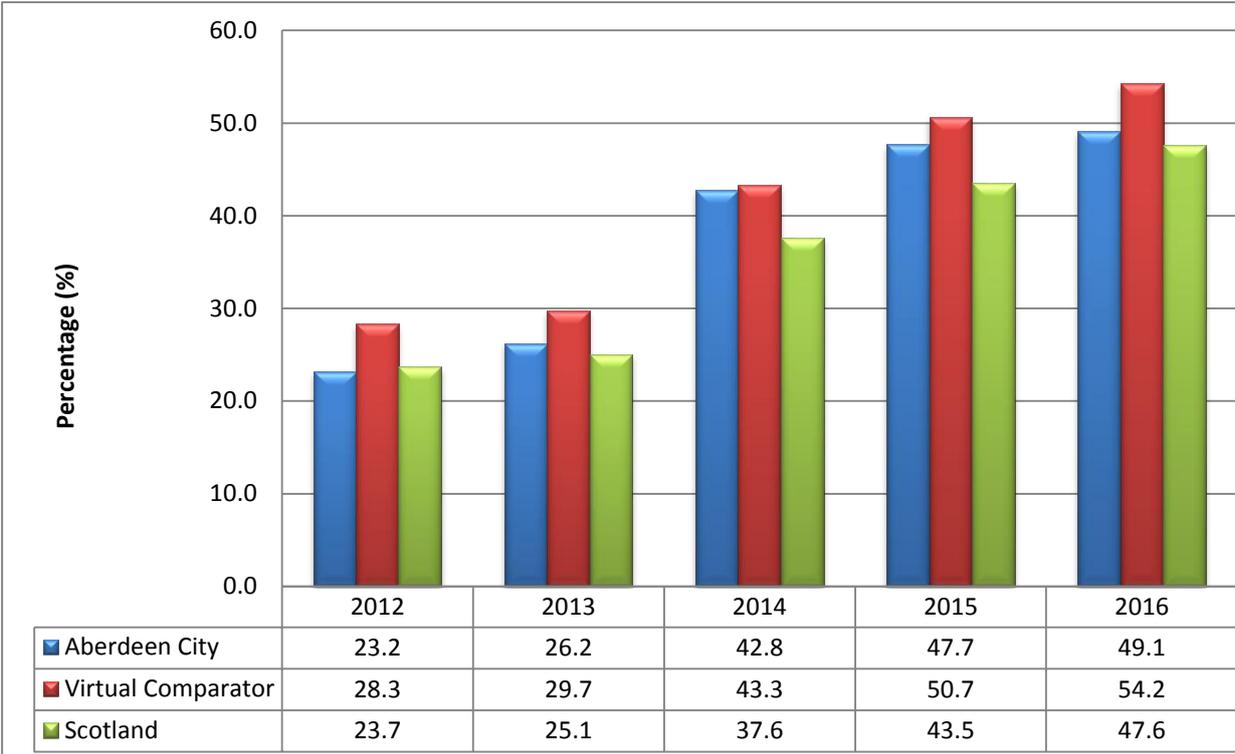
5.4 Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

Figure 1: Local benchmarking measure: Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy: Percentage of candidates attaining literacy and numeracy, SCQF Level 4, S4, 2012-2016



The percentage of Aberdeen City S4 pupils gaining a level 4 in Literacy and Numeracy has increased significantly over the last 5 years from 62% to 85.9%. Aberdeen City has always been above the national average and has maintained a similar level against its virtual comparator.

Figure 2: Local benchmarking measure: Improving attainment in literacy and numeracy: Percentage of candidates attaining literacy and numeracy, SCQF Level 5, S4, 2012-2016



The percentage of Aberdeen City S4 pupils gaining a level 5 in Literacy and Numeracy has increased significantly over the last 5 years from 23.2% to 49.1%. While the figure is below the Virtual Comparator average, the level of variance is not of statistical significance, meaning that pupils are performing as expected and above the national average.

5.5 Improving Attainment for All

This measure allows us to examine how different cohorts are attaining in relation to the virtual and national cohorts. Attainment is measured using the tariff scale, developed for Insight, which allocates a specified number of points to each qualification (including units), with more demanding qualifications gaining more points than less demanding ones. Three ability cohorts are identified for the authority, its virtual equivalent and Scotland as a whole:

- those in the lowest 20% of tariff points scored;
- those in the top 20% of tariff points scored;
- and those that fall within the middle 60% of tariff points scored.

Figure 3: Local benchmarking measure: Improving attainment for all for S6 Cohort based on their cumulative attainment from S4 to S6, 2014

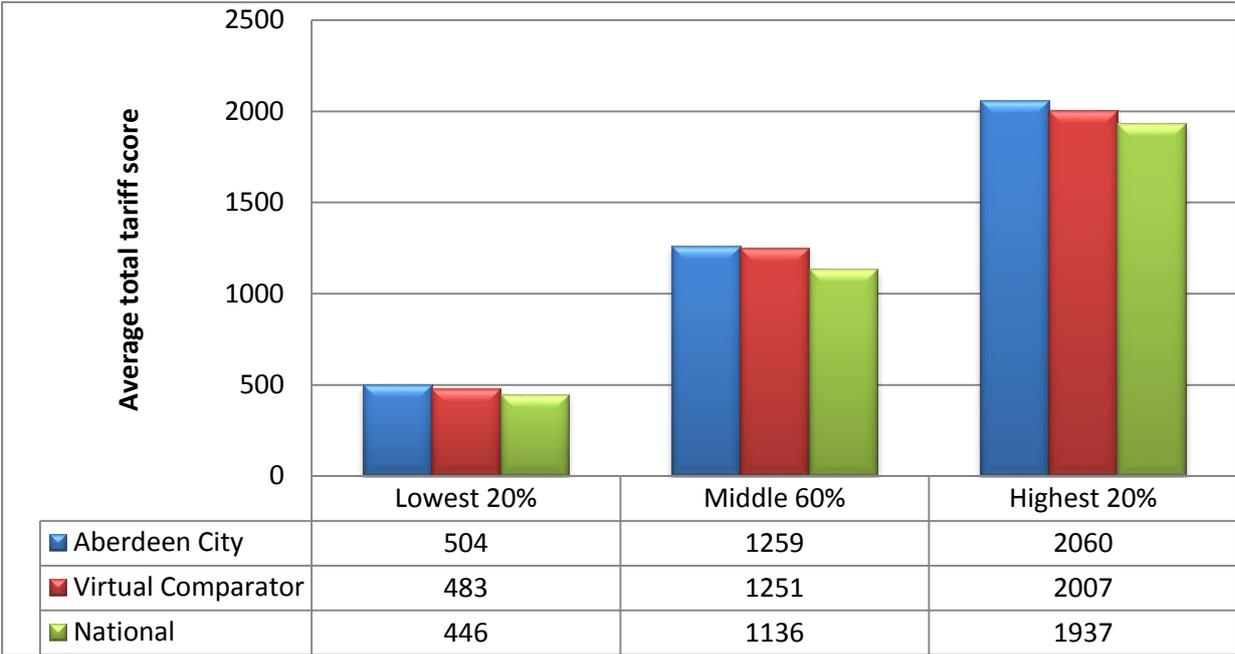


Figure 4: Local benchmarking measure: Improving attainment for all for S6 Cohort based on their cumulative attainment from S4 to S6, 2015

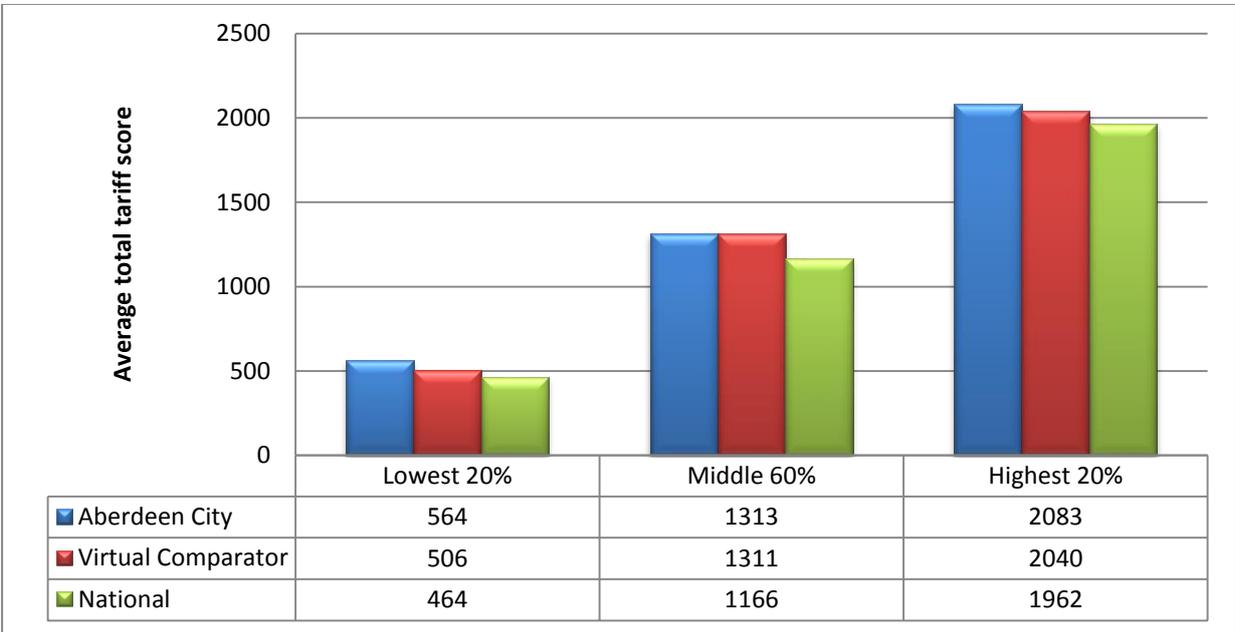
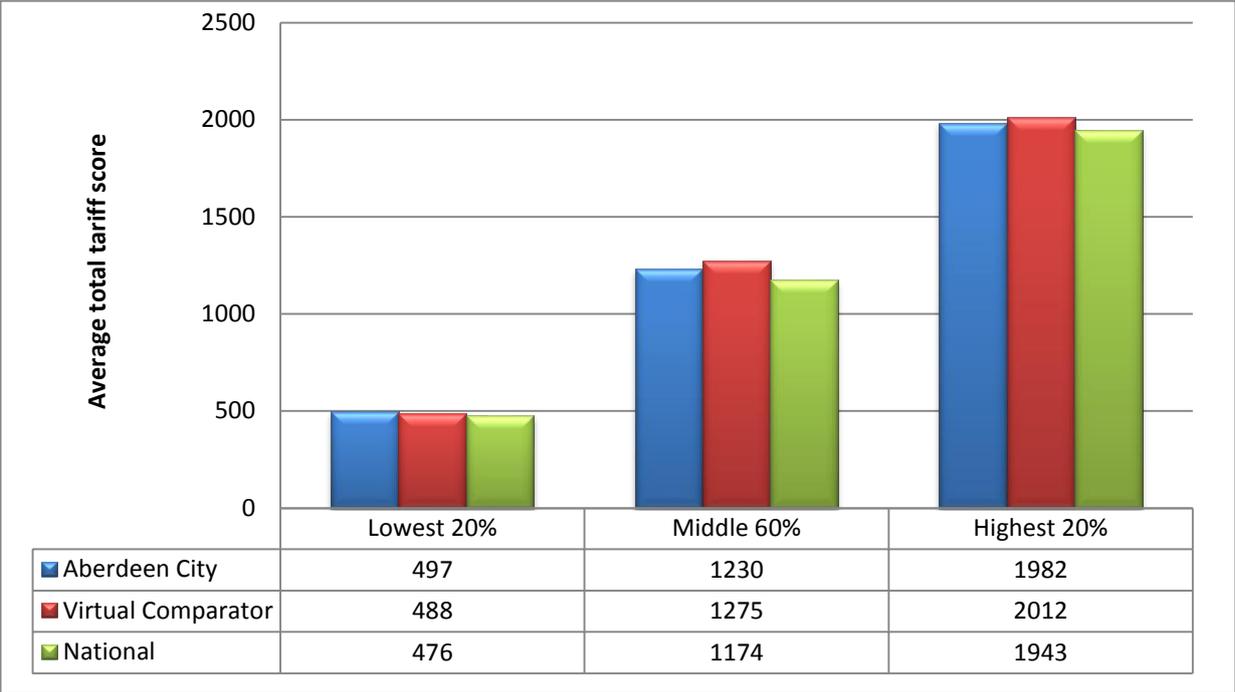


Figure 5: Improving attainment for all for S6 Cohort based on their cumulative attainment from S4 to S6, 2016



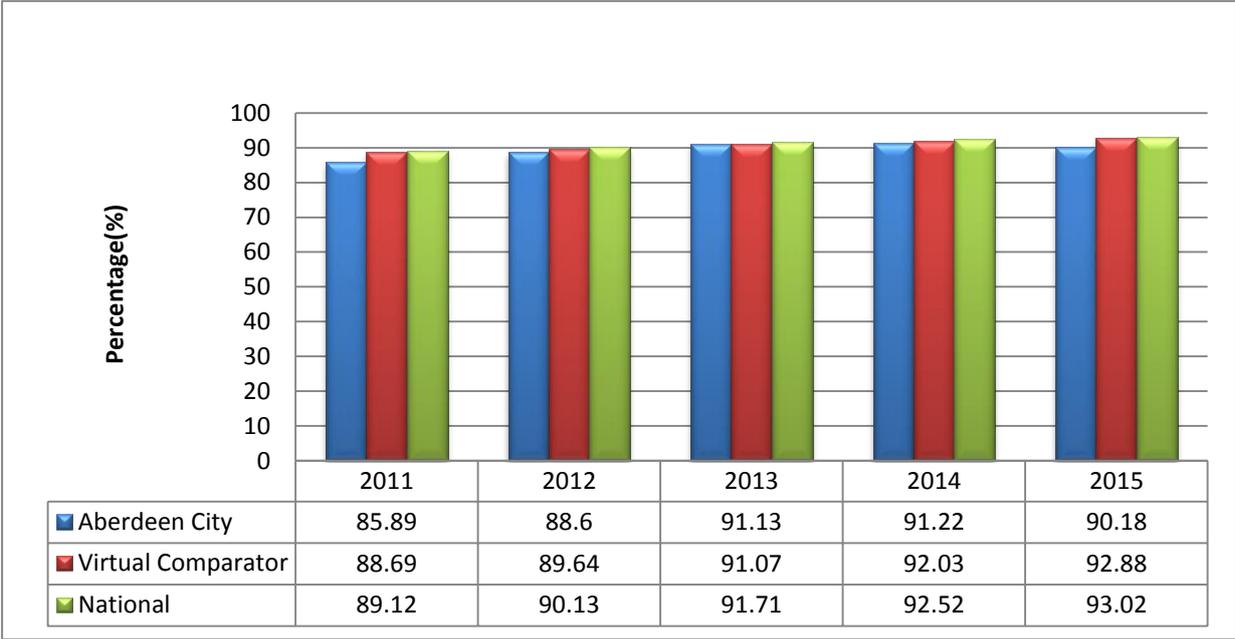
The benefit in using the S6 cohort exam performance as a measure is that it allows for considering the cumulative attainment from S4 to S6, a core principle of Curriculum for Excellence.

The lowest 20% outperform their peers in the national and virtual benchmarks; however 2016 has seen a decrease of 11% when compared to 2015. The performance of middle 60% has continued to stay ahead of the national benchmark but is lower than virtual comparator.

The top 20% have continued to stay above the national benchmark over the past three years.

5.6 Increasing post-school participation

Figure 6: National benchmarking Measure: Percentage of school leavers in a positive destination



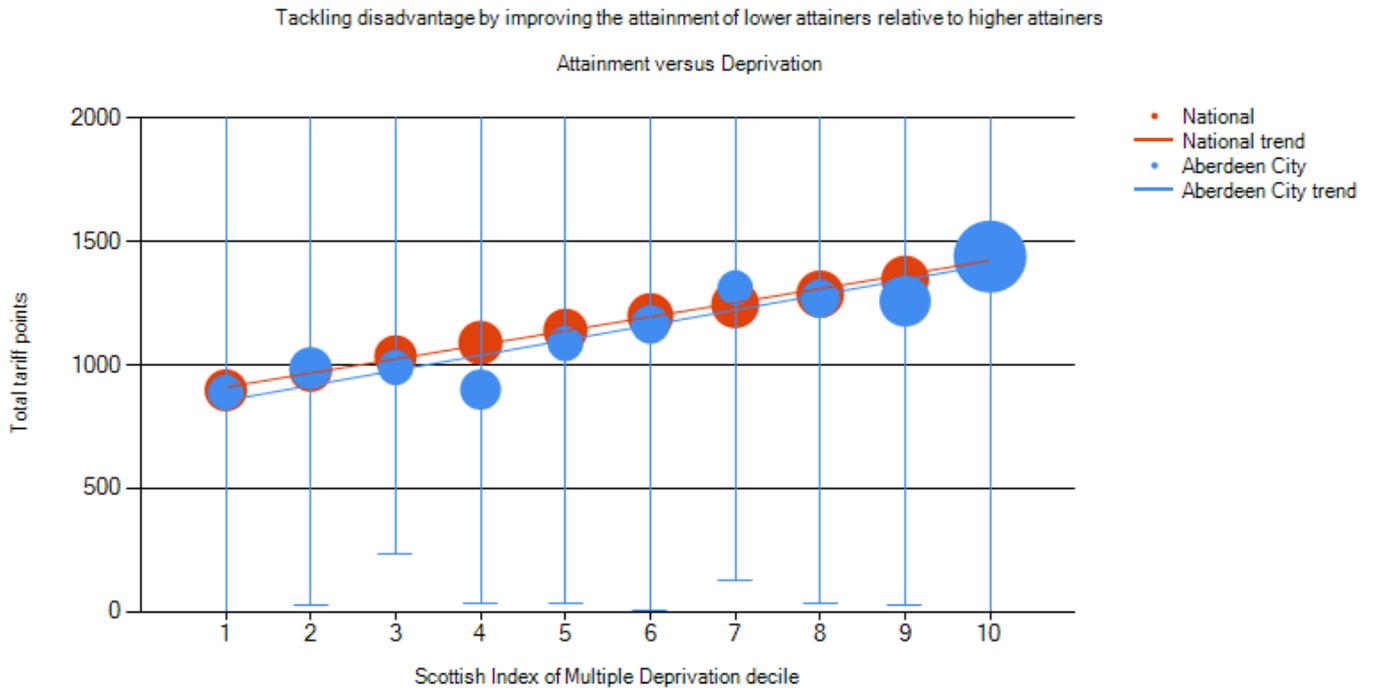
As can be seen from figure 6, positive destinations in 2015 decreased in Aberdeen, with the gap between Aberdeen and the national and the virtual comparator widening.

5.7 Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers.

The following graphs display attainment (measured using the same tariff point scale as referred to in 5.5) for Aberdeen City (blue shaded circles), its virtual comparator (grey) and nationally (red), broken down into ten deciles according to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data.

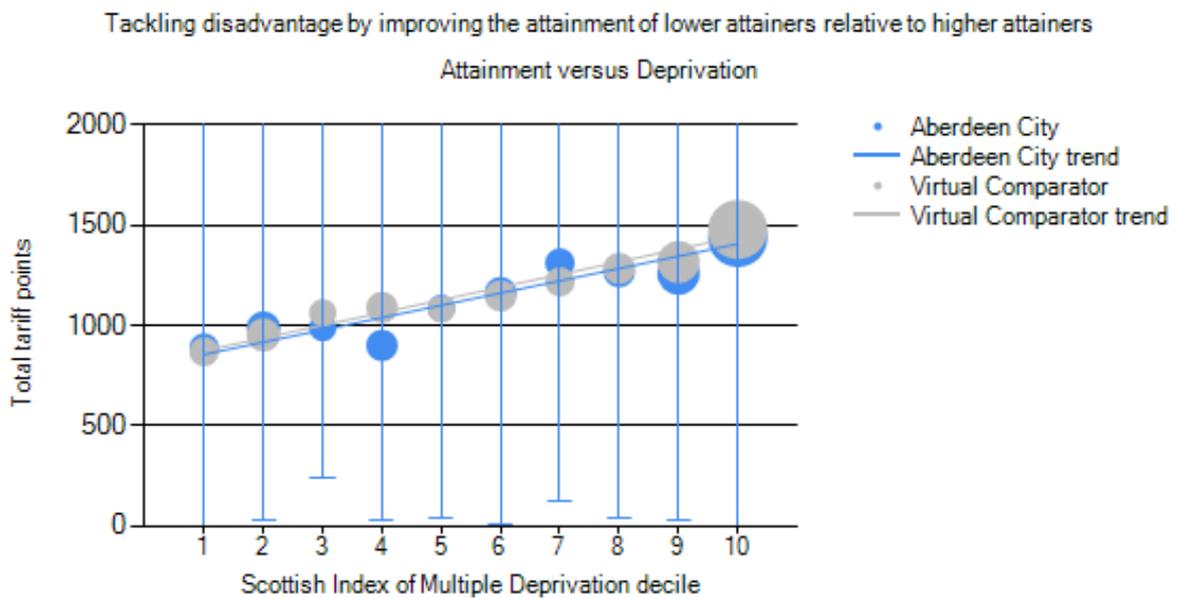
Decile 1 refers to the attainment of young people with the home post codes within data zones identified as being the 10% most deprived in Scotland according to the SIMD. Decile 10 refers to those young people with post codes in the top 10% of the most affluent datazones according to the SIMD. The size of the circle is an indicator of the group size in each decile, with 23 pupils in decile 1 and 330 pupils in decile 10 for figure 7.

Figure 7: Local benchmarking measure: Attainment versus Deprivation for Aberdeen City and National, S6 cumulative, 2016



In relation Aberdeen City compared with the National trend, pupils from deciles 3, 4, and 9 are performing lower than the national totals.

Figure 8: Local benchmarking measure: Attainment versus Deprivation for Aberdeen City and Virtual Comparator, S6 cumulative, 2016



By the end of S6, all of our young people are performing as well as or better in comparison to our virtual comparators, with the exception of decile 4.

Taking into account the overall attainment charts and the attainment versus deprivation, Aberdeen City is a city in which the attainment gap is narrowing and the impact of disadvantage is being reduced. There is evidence of good early progress and it is anticipated that the work will continue to be developed over future years.

5.8 Curriculum for Excellence Levels

All Scottish Local Authorities have been required to submit Curriculum for Excellence Levels to Scottish Government over the past two years. Data on the percentage of children and young people in each school who have achieved the appropriate level for their stage was collated and submitted in June.

Attainment at CfE Levels in literacy and numeracy at the following stages was recorded:

- Early level at the end of primary 1
- First level at the end of primary 4
- Second level at the end of primary 7
- Third level at the end of S3 (in addition, those achieving Level 4 by the end of S3 was also collected).

In session 2015-16, primary schools used standardised assessments (Performance Indicators in the Primary School (PIPS)) in primary 1 (start and end), 3, 5 and 7. Also, pupils sat Assessment for Excellence (InCAS) in P2,4 and 6. In session 2016-17, only PIPS at P1 (start and end) and InCAS at P2, 3, 5 and 6 will be evaluated.

These baseline assessments, in particular at the start then at the end of P1 assist teachers in deciding most appropriate approaches to learning and teaching for individual pupils.

The Scottish Government has also asked for data to be submitted annually from August 2016 on the percentage of children and young people who have attained the expected CfE level for their stage at P1, P4, P7 and S3 in literacy and numeracy.

This data will be published annually on an individual and Local Authority basis, starting in December 2016.

Table 1: Percentage of pupils who have achieved the expected CfE Level by Stage (teacher professional judgement) – Aberdeen City

Year group/CfE Level	Reading	Writing	Listening & Talking	Numeracy
P1/Early Level	64.1	63.5	69.8	70.7
P4/First Level	59.5	51.1	63.6	56.4

P7/ Second Level	56.0	48.8	63.6	57.4
S3/Third Level	47.7	46.6	47.7	37.3
S3/Fourth Level	20.7	20.3	20.7	46.4

There has been limited capacity for moderation and confirmation of standards of CfE Levels across schools, both locally and nationally. Teacher confidence in reliably evaluating a pupil's achievement of a level is developing. There is, therefore, a need to exercise a significant degree of caution when interpreting these results.

A moderation plan for school session 2016-17 has been implemented and this should result in more consistent approaches to learning and teaching as well as more confidence in reliability of performance within, schools, between schools in an Associated Schools Group (ASG), across the authority and nationally.

Progression pathways from preschool into primary one for early numeracy and literacy are implemented in all schools, although there is a continuing need to further improve curriculum transition into P1 in some schools.

There has been a clear focus in all Aberdeen schools on raising attainment and increasingly, on closing the poverty related attainment gap during 20115-16.

Much progress has been made, even in the context of on-going challenges in recruiting and retaining teaching staff.

Systems for tracking and monitoring of the progress of individual pupils and students has become much more robust and this is likely to continue to have a positive impact on learning. This allows staff to work with children and young people to better plan their learning and make it more effective and relevant.

Schools are becoming increasingly aware of the need to identify appropriate interventions where under-attainment is evident, particularly in children and young people for less affluent backgrounds. Recent visits to schools by Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs) including gathering of evidence of schools capacity to identify and address the needs of children and young people who are underachieving and from such backgrounds.

5.9 Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Government has allocated additional funding to schools under the above programme to assist schools in raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Schools in areas of greatest deprivation were identified using criteria of the proportion of homes in SIMD deciles 1 and 2.

Four primary schools (Bramble Brae, Manor Park, Riverbank and Tullos) and three secondary schools (Northfield, St Machar and Torry Academies) are now participating in the programme.

A total of £258,000 was made available to the primary schools in year one.

The secondary programme has been more recently instigated and funding in year one is a total of £214,000. It is anticipated that the programmes will run for three years in the first instance.

The main areas which have been support in the primary schools are early literacy and numeracy, as well as resilience and emotional wellbeing. In secondaries, there is also a focus on improving basic literacy and numeracy skills.

It is intended to provide all schools with evidence of the impact of the programmes so that the children and young people in all schools can potentially benefit in their learning.

5.10 Challenge and Support

Education & Children's Services School Improvement Team have, in consultation with partners, developed an evolving model of challenge and support to support school improvement.

On an annual basis, all schools receive an agreed level of support for the coming academic year as a result of analysis of data, inspection and other external scrutiny and capacity for improvement.

The provisional level of support, agreed in June, is confirmed or otherwise at an annual Keeping In Touch Meeting in August/September. Final confirmation is agreed once analysis of the September update of SQA results in Insight has been completed.

Each school's support level is identified as either:

- Universal - base-line support, minimum provided for all schools
- Targeted Support - greater planned support for schools where areas for improvement are few in number or straight forward.
- Intensive Support - wider range and depth of planned support for schools where areas for improvement are multiple in number or greater in complexity.

Where schools are identified as having targeted or intensive support, a Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) will be produced for each area of improvement.

The RAP is intended as a short to medium term intervention to address specific area for improvement. The plan is detailed with timescales, areas of responsibility and measures of success.

The nature and source of support will be dependent upon the nature of each area of improvement.

Sources of support include but are not limited to

- the school itself,
- the Quality Improvement Officer for the school or the broader School Improvement Team,
- other schools within Aberdeen,
- schools out with Aberdeen,
- the Curriculum Team,
- Community Learning,
- the Professional Learning Team,
- other services in the Council,
- Education Scotland,
- External consultants and experts.

Where a school successfully provides evidence that all areas within a RAP(s) have been addressed, they may move out of one level of support. Conversely, as a result of local authority review or Education Scotland/Care Inspectorate Inspection, the support provided to a school may move from universal to targeted support or from targeted to intensive support.

6. **IMPACT**

Improving Customer Experience

Analysis and publication of the contents of this report provides the opportunity to evaluate the extent to which expectations of customer experience are being met. This allows informed decisions to be made on how service delivery is provided in future to ensure on-going improvement.

Improving Staff Experience

Analysis and publication of the contents of this report provides staff with the opportunity to understand where successes and challenges lie, again providing an opportunity for improvement of future service delivery.

Improving our use of Resources

This report also allows the service to ensure that resources are utilised most efficiently and effectively.

Corporate

Reporting to the Committee is an essential governance requirement of the Directorate's performance management arrangements, by which Members may seek assurance that performance improvement activity is evidenced and robust.

Public

The report is designed for information purposes only and no Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been provided.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

As members are only being asked to note the contents of this report, 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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