

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	25 November 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Educational Improvement Journey – 2020/21 Key Performance Indicator Tracking Report
REPORT NUMBER	CUS.21.281
DIRECTOR	Andy Macdonald and Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Martin Murchie and Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Reyna Stewart/Eleanor Sheppard
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To provide Elected Members with an interim tracking report, for the 2020-21 academic year, against the suite of Educational Improvement Journey Key Performance Indicator measures, supporting the Excellence and Equity agenda within the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1** notes the content of this report presenting the pre- review outcomes from the 2021 Alternative Certification Model, releases provided through the Insight Tool, and Attendance and Exclusion information;
- 2.2** notes the content of Appendix A, outlining the progress of actions supporting the Education Improvement Journey; and
- 2.3** provides comment on the approach taken to presenting the data within the report to inform future reporting styles.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 DATA AVAILABILITY, QUALITY AND APPROACH

- 3.1.1.** A Curriculum For Excellence (ACEL) data outlining the achievement of pupils in Primary 1, 4 and 7 and initial leaver destinations is not being reported at this time as the national validation process is on-going prior to publication.
- 3.1.2** Local data sets evidence that periods of school closure have resulted in a dip in ACEL data although this cannot be contextualised until comparison is made

with national data. Data will be reported to Committee when the national data is available for analysis.

- 3.1.3 Local data evidences considerable improvement in the initial leaver destination data. Publication of the validated data is imminent and this will be presented to Committee as soon as possible thereafter.
- 3.1.4 Throughout this report reference is made to the statistical significance of datasets to highlight if variations in outcomes represent a material change, outwith the influence of differing cohort sizes and profiles, and warrant consideration/scrutiny by education professionals.
- 3.1.5 In response to feedback from Members of the Committee, the approach to reporting data has been further refined. Officers welcome feedback on this refined approach to ensure that the Education Improvement Journey reports present Members with the accessible information required to discharge their function.

3.2 INSIGHT AND SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY DATA

- 3.2.1 The Scottish Qualifications Authority and the Scottish Government's Education Analytics teams have intimated to data consumers that:

'2019 entry and attainment figures are derived from different awarding approaches than 2020 and, separately, 2021. Comparisons of entries, attainment volumes and attainment rates should only be made with full consideration and recognition of each of these different approaches.'

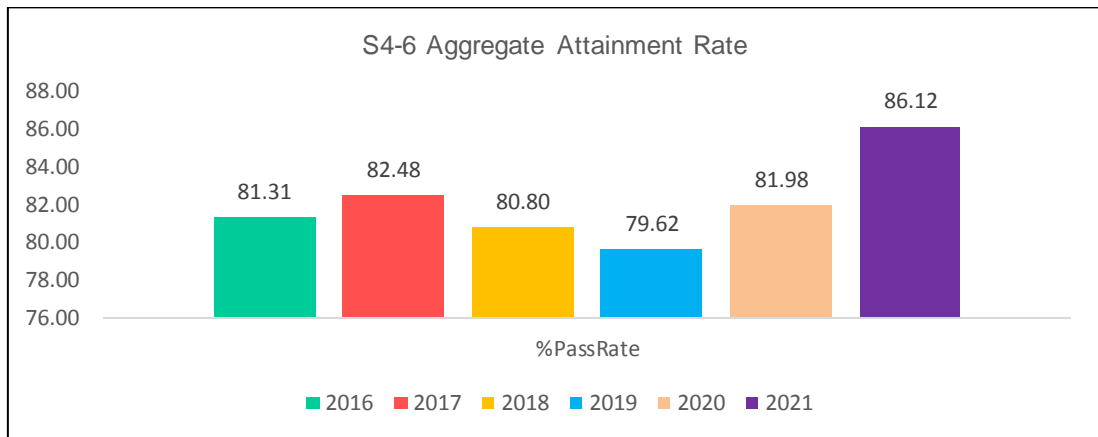
- 3.2.2 On this basis, as in the 2019/20 Education Improvement Journey report to the September 2021 meeting of this Committee, whilst comparative data from prior years is retained to maintain the integrity of reporting, a focus has been placed on comparing in-year City outcomes with those at a national level and against the Virtual Comparator for 2021.
- 3.2.3 It should also be borne in mind that, due to variations in the application of the Alternative Certification Model in 2021 across education authorities, the National and Virtual Comparator benchmark data necessitate some additional contextualisation when being used to compare with local outcomes
- 3.2.4 Members will recall that summary analysis on the 2020/21 SQA release was presented as part of the 2019/20 Education Improvement Journey report, to the September 2021 meeting. This report provides further information and more detailed analysis.

3.3 ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL SUMMARY

- 3.3.1 Overall attainment rates across the Senior Phase in 2021 are up by 4.14 percentage points on 2020, rising to 86.12% with stable or improving outcomes across the SCQF National Course suite at Level 2, Levels 5-7, and at Baccalaureate level.

3.3.2 There is considerable evidence that the process of on-going assessment as part of the Alternative Certification Model worked well for young people across Aberdeen City. An exam diet is anticipated for session 2021/22 with longer term assessment arrangements being considered as part of the Educational Reform triggered following publication of the OECD Review presented to the last meeting of this Committee.

Chart 1: Aggregate (S4-6) Candidate Attainment Rates – Aberdeen City



3.3.3 Across the core level National 5 to National 7 SCQF levels, the City's pupils have made material and sustained gains in attainment rates which statistically match to those at National level.

3.3.4 Collaborative work undertaken by secondary subject specialists to moderate assessments has had a positive impact on the quality of grades achieved. This approach will be maintained.

Chart 1b SCQF 5-7 Level Attainment Rates 2016-21 - Aberdeen City

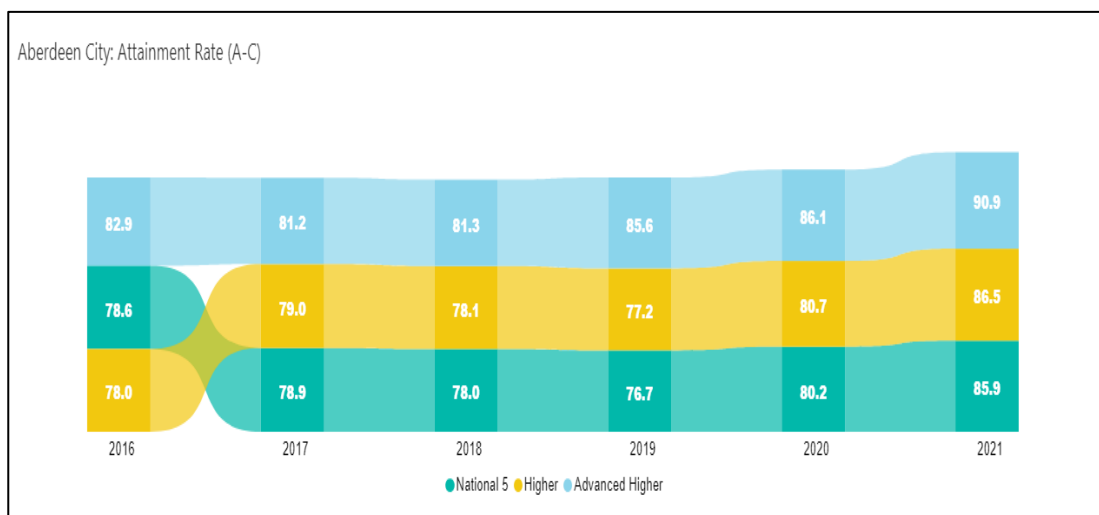
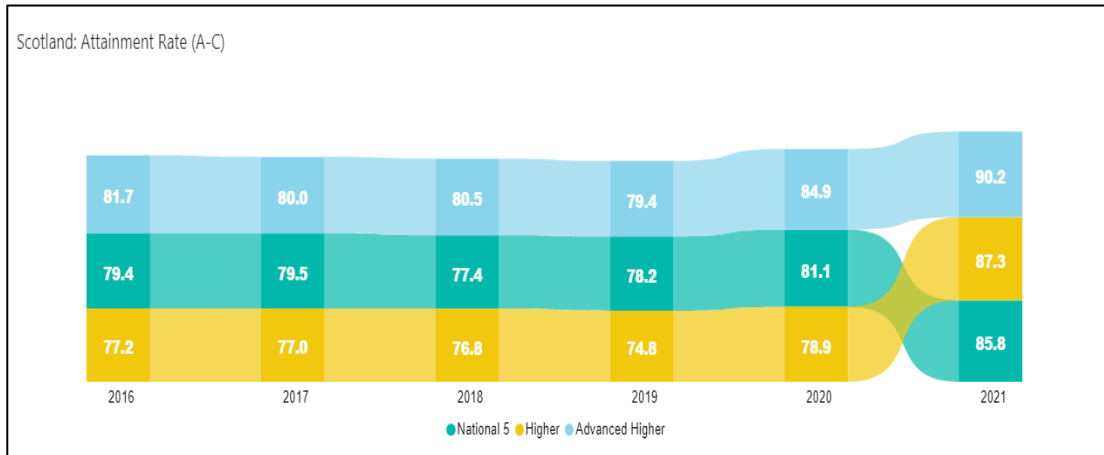
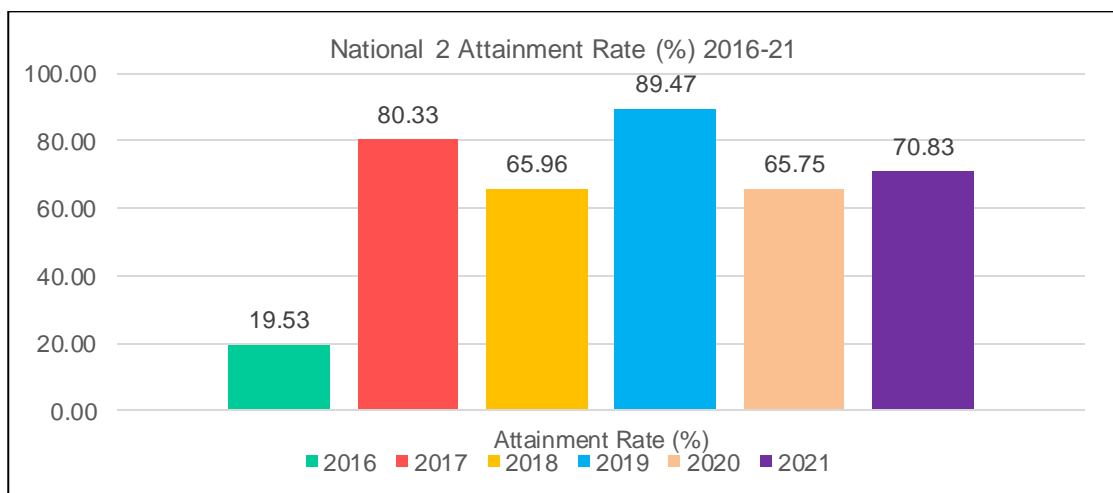


Chart 1c SCQF 5-7 Level Attainment Rates 2016-2021 - National



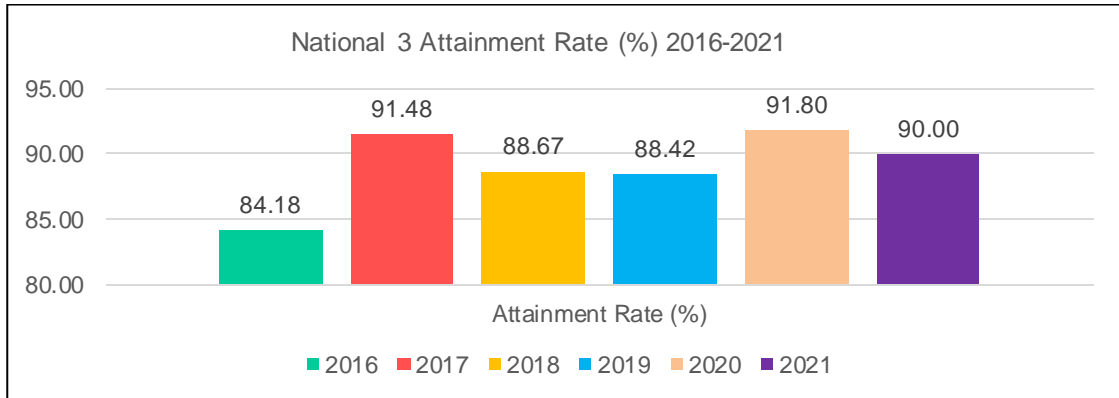
3.3.5 National 2 and 3 courses are flexible provision, which although often attained over one school year can be attained over a longer period. The Attainment rate for National 2 increased by 5.1 percentage points from 65.7% in 2020 to 70.8% in 2021, which is just below the three-year averaged figure.

Chart 2. National 2 Attainment Rate – Aberdeen City



3.3.6 The outcomes for National 3 are marginally reduced from 91.8% in 2020 to 90% in 2021. This variation is of limited statistical significance with the candidate presentation cohort at National 3 being relatively small (340 pupils) which should be considered as a contributory influence. It looks likely that some pupils who may have historically been presented at National 3 have been presented at National 4. The 2021 attainment rate for National 3 is equal to the three-year average figure.

Chart 3. National 3 Attainment Rate – Aberdeen City

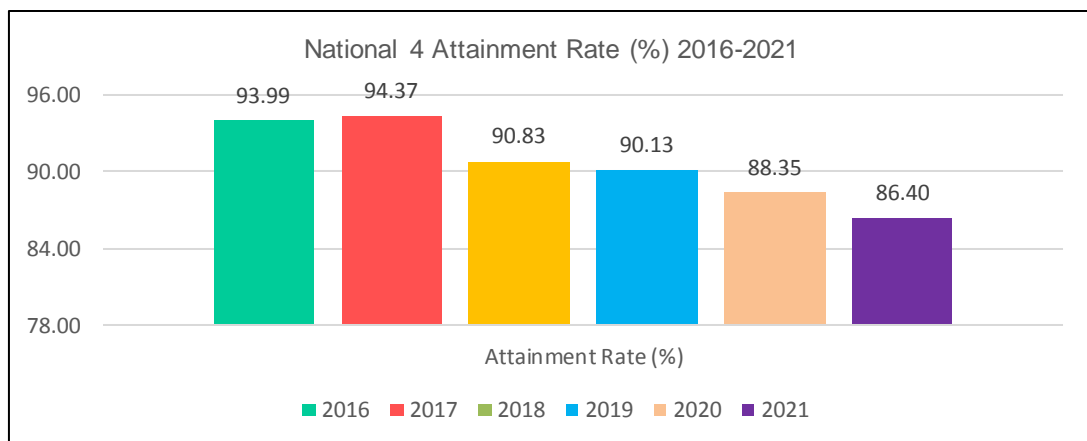


3.3.7 Attainment at National 4 sees a dip in attainment from 88.3% to 86.4%. 99 more entries were made at National 4 and this will be a contributing factor given that the evidence suggests that some young people who may have previously been presented at National 3 have been stretched and presented at a higher level.

3.3.8 Candidate presentations against English and Mathematics saw both increased entries and outcomes against 2020, as did the majority of subjects within the National 4 curriculum suite with sufficient numbers to support year-on-year evaluation

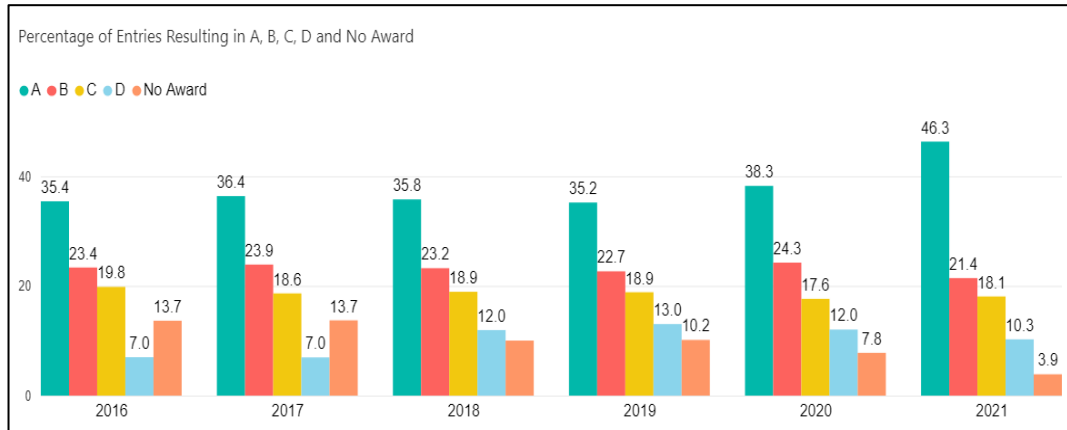
3.3.9 There are indications that some practical elements of course delivery were more challenging over the course of the school closure periods and this, along with the spread of subject presentations, will also have impacted. The Education Service are exploring this slight dip as part of their Quality Improvement approaches to ensure that any identified vulnerability informs next steps.

Chart 4. National 4 Attainment Rate – Aberdeen City



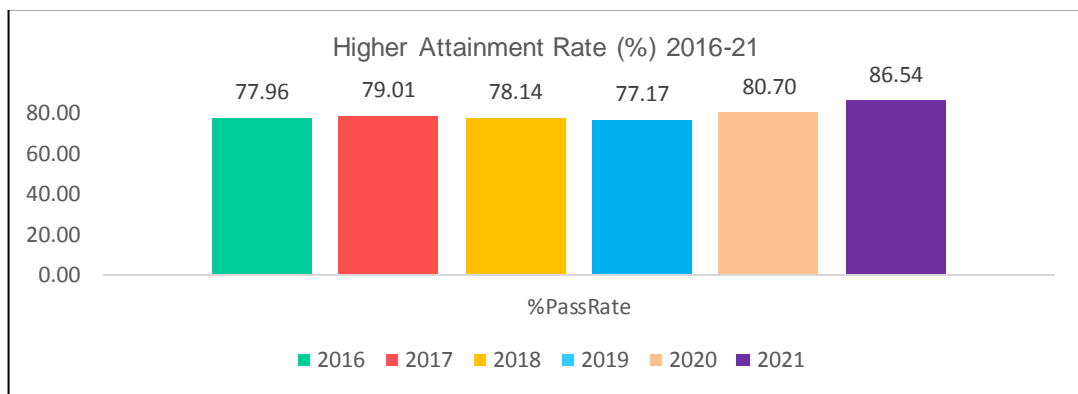
3.3.10 The Attainment rate for National 5 increased by 5.7 percentage points and is at its highest level since 2014, with the greatest proportion of pupils attaining an A pass, and the lowest percentage of presented candidates achieving No Award to date.

Chart 5: Attainment Rates at National 5 – Aberdeen City



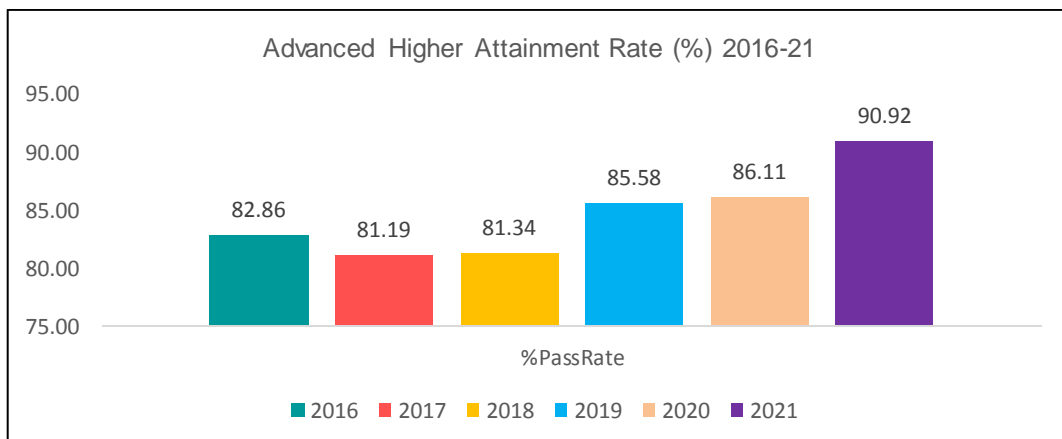
3.3.11 The Attainment Rate at Higher Level (SCQF Level 6) increased year-on-year by 5.8 percentage points and is at its highest point since 2015, demonstrating a sustained statistical improvement over 3 years.

Chart 6: Attainment Rate at Higher (SCQF Level 6)



3.3.12 Attainment rates at Advanced Higher rose from 86.1% in 2020 to 90.9%, an increase of 4.8 percentage points. This outcome is the highest figure since 2016.

Chart 7: Attainment Rate at Advanced Higher (SCQF Level 7)



3.3.13 The Attainment rates for the Scottish Baccalaureate (SCQF Level 7) rose in 2021 in comparison with 2020, whilst awards against Interdisciplinary Projects were maintained at the same levels as in each of the previous 5 years. Due to the small numbers of candidates involved, data suppression has been applied to publication of these outcomes and a visual is not available to support this narrative.

3.3.14 Progress is encouraging when looking at the data available as a result of implementation of the Alternative Certification Model. There is clear evidence of improvement. Further analysis of attainment at National 4 is underway and will help inform next steps.

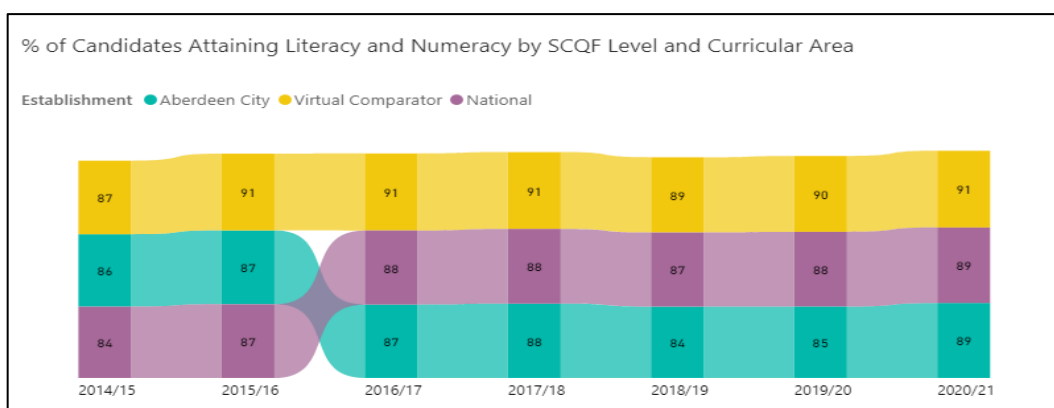
3.4 INSIGHT SUMMARY

3.4.1 The first release of Insight data is quite limited. Analysis will be reviewed following the second update in February as this will provide a more holistic overview of all of the achievements of all young people across the full suite of qualifications.

Literacy and Numeracy

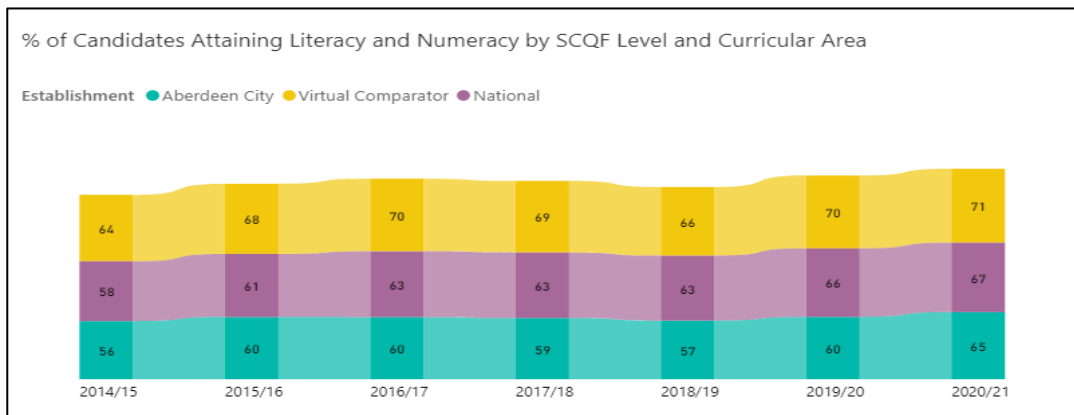
3.4.2 Across each of the stage cohorts (S4, S5 and S6), the percentage of candidates attaining SCQF Level 4 outcomes for Literacy and Numeracy has demonstrated either value stability or absolute and/or relative improvement. The figures for the S5 cohort record a 4-percentage point year-on-year rise, materially closing the gap to both the National figure and Virtual Comparator that had emerged in the prior two years. (Chart 8)

Chart 8: % of S5 Candidates attaining Literacy and Numeracy at Level 4



3.4.3 At SCQF Level 5, the outcome at S4, mirrors the Virtual Comparator and National figure with a marginal, but slower, rate of year-on-year reduction in comparison to both of the benchmarks. The S5 result shows a second consecutive year of increased attainment, rising from 60.1% in 2019/2020 to 64.7%, an improvement rate that exceeds both benchmarks and materially narrows the difference between the City and benchmarked performance levels. (Chart 9)

Chart 9: % of S5 Candidates Attaining Literacy and Numeracy at Level 5

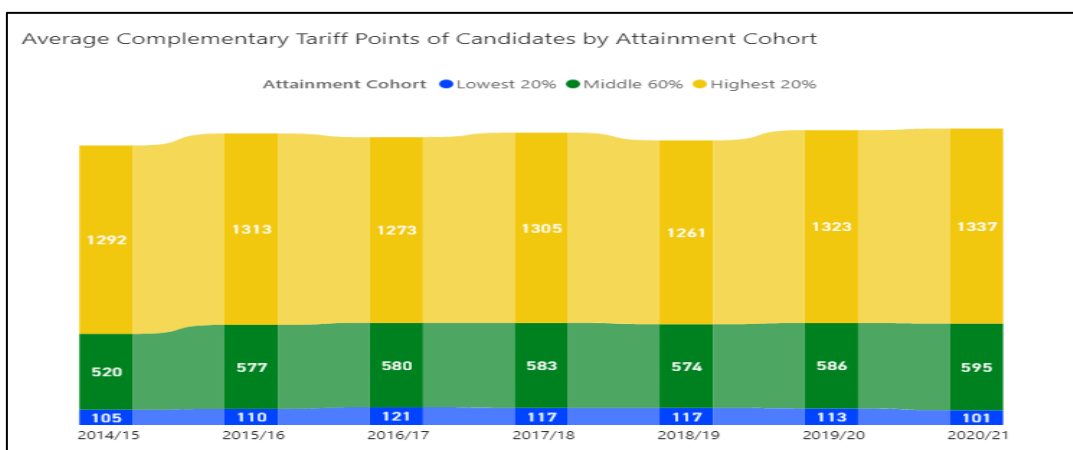


3.4.4 At Level 5, the S6 outcomes closely follow the improvement trends at National and Comparator levels, increasing by an annual rate of 5.62 percentage points to 62% from 58.7% with more limited statistical closing of the outcome gap to the benchmarks. This data confirms the need for an ongoing focus on literacy and numeracy in the National Improvement Framework Plan.

Attainment for All

3.4.5 Year-on-year gains in Average Complementary Tariff Points are evident across both the Middle 60% and Highest 20% of pupil candidates with the latter recording the greater increase and representing the more statistically relevant change. In both instances, the tariff scores achieved are the highest recorded to date for the City. (Chart 10)

Chart 10: Average Complementary Tariff Score by Attainment Cohort



3.4.6 Although meeting the improvement target, the annual and long-term rate of improvement in the Highest 20% of pupil candidates is less significant than those in the Middle 60% and would be judged as being almost unchanged, whilst the trend for the latter cohort shows sustained improvement on the baseline, and against the year-on-year target set for this measure.

3.4.7 The distance to the comparator benchmarks has increased in 2021, compared to 2020 as a result of higher year-on-year improvement rates at both National

and Virtual Comparator levels, although this is a relatively small change.

3.4.8 There is limited movement in the tariff score attained by the Lower 20% of candidates which, although marginally declining in step with both the Virtual Comparator and National Figure, has fallen at a marginally faster rate than either benchmark, extending the difference to these measures.

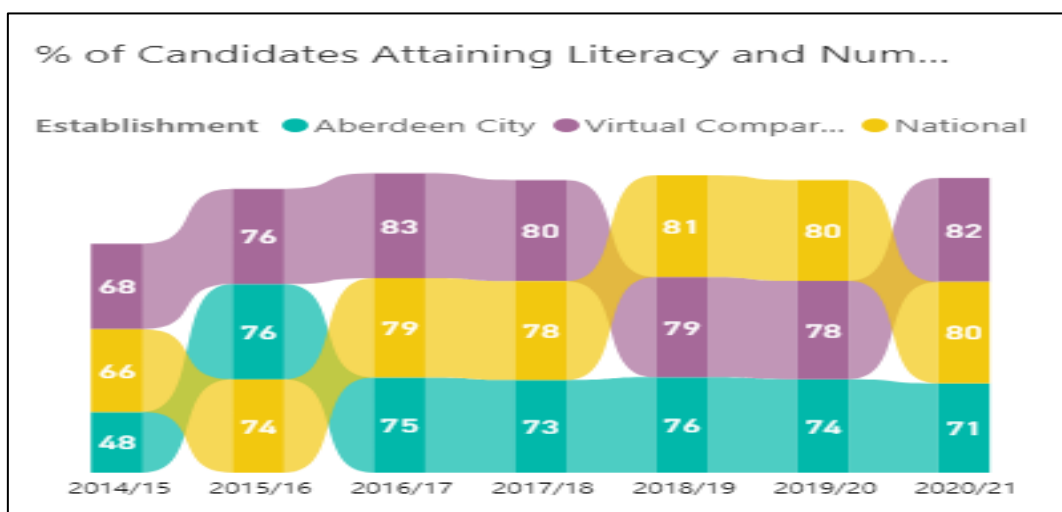
3.4.9 A range of factors will have influenced this change and officers are currently undertaking further analysis in order to identify next steps. There is a need to continue to work with partners to ensure that the offer available to young people in schools (delivered by school and by a range of other providers including Further Education) is ideally matched to the needs of our young people.

Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap - Literacy and Numeracy by SIMD

3.4.10 At SCQF Level 4, there was a marginal year-on-year reduction in the outcomes of the Most Deprived pupils from 74% to 71% whilst the National Outcome remained unchanged and the Virtual Comparator showed a small increase in outcomes for this cohort. (Chart 8).

3.4.11 With the results for the Least Deprived cohort (SIMD 5) being statistically unchanged for the City, this has created a rise in the attainment gap to 22.7%, above both of the benchmark measures. This further confirms the need to prioritise improvement in literacy and numeracy as outlined in the National Improvement Framework Plan and focus our efforts on those historically likely to peak at Level 4. This has implications for partners working across the wider partnership.

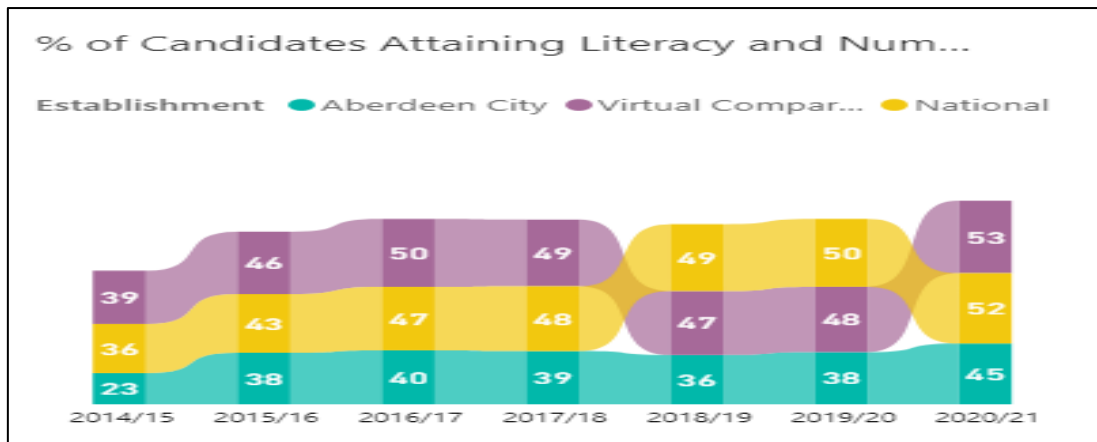
Chart 11: % of Candidates in the Highest 20% of Deprivation (SIMD 1) Attaining SCQF Level 4 in Literacy and Numeracy



3.4.12 The picture at SCQF Level 5 for Literacy and Numeracy, reflects substantive positive movement in comparison with both 2019/20 and 2018/19 with an increase of 6.4 percentage points on 2019/20 among the Most Deprived

cohort to 44.7%. (Chart 12)

Chart 12: % of Candidates in the Highest 20% of Deprivation (SIMD 1) Attaining SCQF Level 5 in Literacy and Numeracy



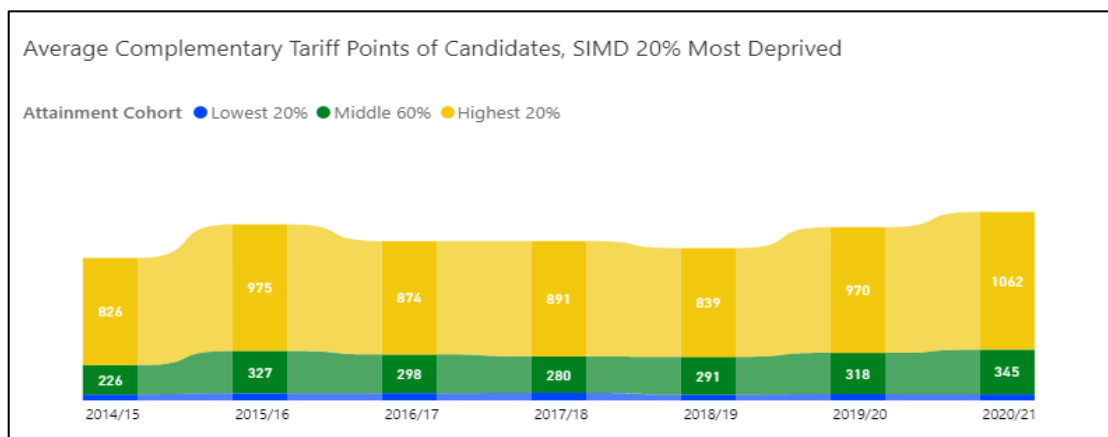
3.4.13 This is the highest Level 5 outcome recorded for the City since this particular Measure was introduced and, although it is below that of the two benchmark, closes the gap to both of these, along with producing a year-on-year 4.7 percentage point reduction in the deprivation related attainment gap to 32.3%.

3.4.14 At this level, the City gap is the lowest in seven years and is lower than either the Virtual Comparator or National figure, despite a continuous improvement trend in the results for those in the Least Deprived cohort.

Attainment by SIMD Quintile

3.4.15 The outcomes of the Middle 60% and Highest 20% of attainment within SIMD 1 (Most Deprived) shows material gains on the previous year, with the median tariff scores rising by 8.5% and 9.5% to 345 and 1062 respectively. (Chart 13)

Chart 13: Average Complementary Tariff Points of Candidates in the Highest 20% of Deprivation (SIMD 1)



3.4.16 These figures are the highest outcomes for both of these SIMD 1 quintile

groups to date. The tariff score for those in the Lowest 20% of attainment within this SIMD cohort is statistically unchanged from 2019/20 but 6.8% above the 2018/19 figure.

- 3.4.17 In spite of the outcomes of the SIMD 5 (Least Deprived) group also showing general improvement against both 2019/20 and 2018/19, the deprivation related gap in attainment, as measured by average tariff scores, has materially closed in comparison with the prior year with a positive movement of 35 tariff score points (6.5%) among the Middle 60% of attainment and 85 points (17.2%) being recorded in the gap between Most and Least Deprived pupils in the highest quintile of attainment.

Care Experienced Children and Young People

- 3.4.18 As in previous years, there is a particularly small cohort of Care Experienced Young People captured within the 2020/21 Insight dataset (fewer than 20 individuals in some cohorts).
- 3.4.19 Considerable care requires to be exercised around extrapolating data trends or deriving intelligence from this information. Given this, the attainment of Care Experienced Young People, and the significance of any variations are most effectively measured through individual longitudinal assessment and support which Schools and the Virtual School Head Teacher provide on a personalised basis. A detailed overview of the attainment and achievement of Care Experienced young people is being presented to this same Committee for consideration.

3.5 SKILLS FOR WORK SUMMARY

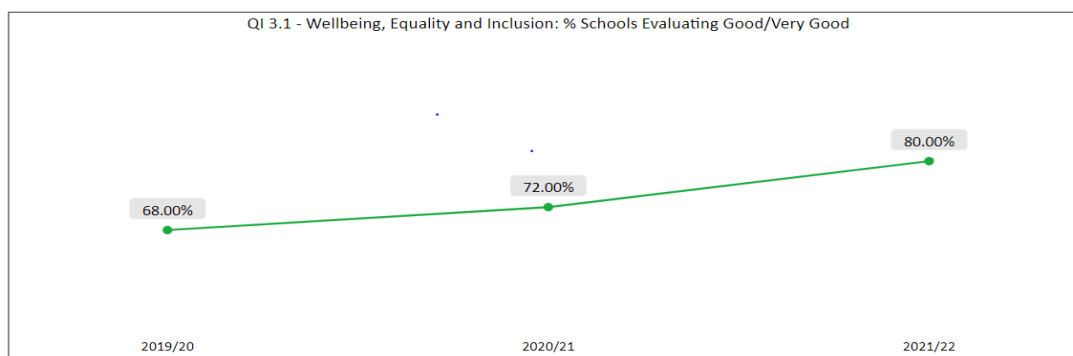
- 3.5.1 At both SCQF Level 4 and 5, there was a material fall in the proportion of candidates achieving sufficient credits to achieve a pass in Skills for Work and Personal Development (SfW&PD) courses. This mirrors the National environment, where the accessibility of training provision outwith the core school curriculum, experienced restrictions arising from the various stages of COVID-19 restrictions.
- 3.5.2 At the same time, SfW&PD qualifications are often delivered over the course of more than one academic year and, on this basis, the Service is working closely with partner organisations to structure opportunities within the current year to enable an element of 'catch-up' that will mitigate against the extent of skills based tuition that may have been lost to candidates in the 2020/21 academic year.

3.6 ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS SUMMARY

- 3.6.1 Considerable focus has been placed on supporting the wellbeing of children and young people, details of which were presented previously to Committee.
- 3.6.2 These changes are having a considerable impact on the supports available to children and young people and schools are evaluating their performance at Quality Indicator 3.1 (Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion) higher than before.

80% of schools now evaluate that their approach to wellbeing, equality and inclusion is either good or very good.

Chart 14. Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion Evaluation



3.6.3 A positive and empowering school culture has a significant impact on levels of attendance which sit at 93.7% across all sectors. The roll out of 1140 hours of ELC has had a positive impact on levels of attendance. This is thought to be in part due to a range of service models being available across each locality in response to feedback from parents and carers. Members should note that this data is drawn from the live data used by the education service to help monitor progress and is not validated. As a result there may be slight variation when the data is cleansed prior to publication.

Chart 15. Pupil Attendance

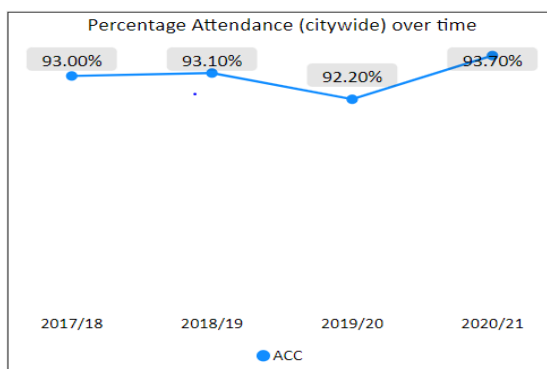
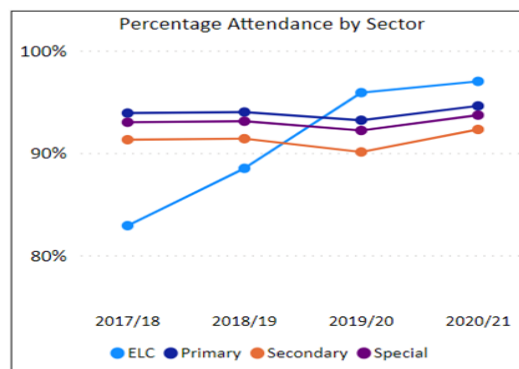


Chart 16. Attendance by Sector



3.6.4 Significant reduction in exclusion data is also evident. This is due to the focus on health and wellbeing in schools and the refreshed policy agreed by Committee in November 2020. There has been a 49% drop in exclusions across the secondary sector and a 62% drop across primary since 2018. Periods of school closure will have impacted this data but there is strong evidence in live data sets of a consistent lowering of levels of exclusion.

Chart 17 Exclusion Instances

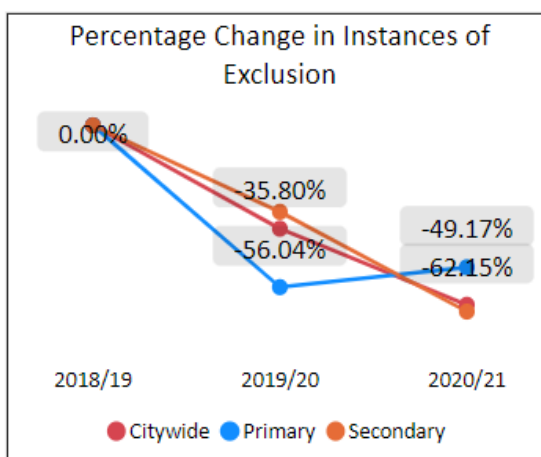
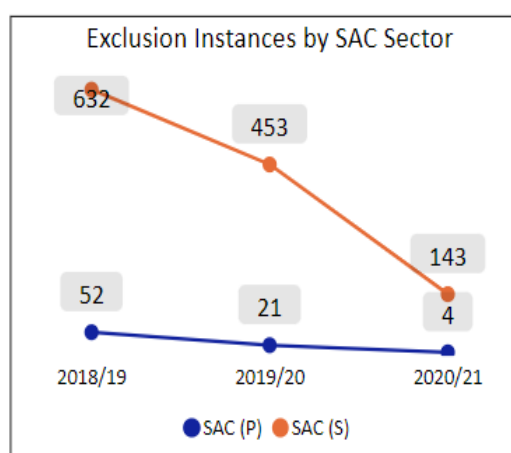


Chart 18. Exclusion Instances by Sector



The considerable drop in levels of exclusion in areas of deprivation has positively contributed to this change. This is as a result of a more appropriate curriculum offering and alternative support systems having been put in place.

3.6.5 Progress in this area continues to be monitored carefully.

3.7 PROGRESS OF IMPROVEMENT PLAN ACTIONS

3.7.1 The analysis of this latest release of data confirms that the plans put in place as part of the National Improvement Framework Plan continue to be appropriate. Good progress is being made in implementing the Plan and a summary of progress to date is included in Appendix A.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The costs of all improvement actions will be undertaken within existing budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 requires that, as the Education Authority, Aberdeen City Council has a duty to:

- Enhance equity and promote a reduction in inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils because of socio-economic disadvantage.
- Endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the NIF.
- Undertake annual planning and reporting and annual school improvement planning to address the four priorities of the NIF.
- Ensure strategic decisions are taken with due regard as to how they will address, or help to address, the disparity of educational outcomes which exist between the most and least disadvantaged and at the same time raise attainment for all.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Risk of not achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.	L	Changes to our provision and service delivery will enable primary prevention and early intervention thereby reducing potential risk.
Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation, financial claims, and legal challenge (tribunals).	M	Mitigated by services being realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and prevent escalation of need.
Operational	Staff are overwhelmed, which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the educational and well-being needs of young people.	L	Mitigated by widespread staff engagement on draft NIF production and offering high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under the relevant Acts.
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource.	M	Mitigated by realigning service delivery and resource through the NIF to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City.
Reputational	Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of all learners.	L	Data scrutiny and reporting enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability.
Environment / Climate	Risk of lack of awareness of environmental/climate issues.	L	Mitigated by breadth and scope of Curriculum for Excellence.

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The provision of information on pupil performance and the NIF Plan supports scrutiny of progress against the delivery of the following Policy Statements:

	<p>2 - UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation</p> <p>3 - Work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes.</p> <p>4 - Support the implementation of Developing the Young Workforce, seek to gain the highest level of investors in young people accreditation and ensure there is a focus on supporting pupils excel in STEM subjects.</p> <p>7 - Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners in the city.</p>
<p>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</p>	
<p>Prosperous Economy</p> <p>400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026</p>	<p>The information within this report supports the delivery of Stretch Outcomes 2 and 3 in the LOIP through the following projects:</p> <p>Support 15 care experienced young people progress to employment through public sector funded employability programmes by 2023. Increase the number of people within Aberdeen City gaining qualifications in ICT and Digital skills at SCQF Levels 7 and above by 10% by 2023</p>
<p>Prosperous People</p> <p>95% of children (0-5years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026. 90% of children and young people will report that their experiences of mental health and wellbeing have been listened to by 2026. As corporate parents we will ensure that 95% of care experienced children will have the same levels of educational attainment, health and emotional wellbeing and positive destinations as their peers by 2026. 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods will</p>	<p>The detail within this report supports the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed LOIP. This includes the following projects:</p> <p>Reduce the number of children starting P1 with an identified speech delay by 5% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase to 80%, the number of staff who feel confident about how to directly support, or refer a child for support, and signpost to appropriate services by 2022.</p> <p>100% of schools offer sustainable and equitable access to counselling for those children aged 10 and above who require it by 2022.</p> <p>100% of children and young people have free access to physical activity which improves mental health and wellbeing by 2022.</p> <p>Increase the number of care experienced young people accessing a positive and sustained destination by 25% by 2022.</p>

<p>sustain a positive destination by 2026 Child Friendly City where all decisions which impact on them are informed by them by 2026. 30% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.</p>	<p>Increase the number of accredited courses directly associated with growth areas by 7% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase the number of vulnerable learners entering a positive and sustained destination by 7% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 93% by 2023.</p> <p>Achieve UNICEF badges in: - Leadership - Culture - Communication - Place - Child Friendly Services – Participating</p> <p>Increase to 100% of staff working directly and indirectly with children who have received child friendly city training by 2023.</p> <p>Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026. Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/managing 26% of Aberdeen’s area for nature by 2026.</p>	<p>The data in this report reflects contributory impacts on LOIP Stretch Outcomes 14 and 15 Respectively, this informs delivery of the following improvement projects: Increase % of people who walk (to school/nursery) as one mode of travel by 10% by 2023. Increase % of people who cycle (to school/nursery) as one mode of travel by 2% by 2023. Increase community food growing in schools, communities, and workplaces by 12 by 2023</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p>	<p>The report reflects outcomes aligned to the Scottish Government’s National Improvement Framework for education.</p>
<p>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</p>	<p>The report reflects outcomes aligned to the Scottish Government’s National Improvement Framework, The Standards in Scotland’s Schools Etc. Act 2000, Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as amended, the Education (Scotland) (Act) 2016, Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 as amended (and associated Code of Practice) Equality Act 2010.</p>

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	The recommendations arising from this report do not require a full Impact Assessment to be completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- OPE.20.222 Senior Phase, Education Operational Delivery Committee, 26th November 2020
- Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2021/22

10. APPENDICES

- Appendix A Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Plan 2021/22 – Progress of Actions

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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