



Evaluation of the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2023/24



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Context

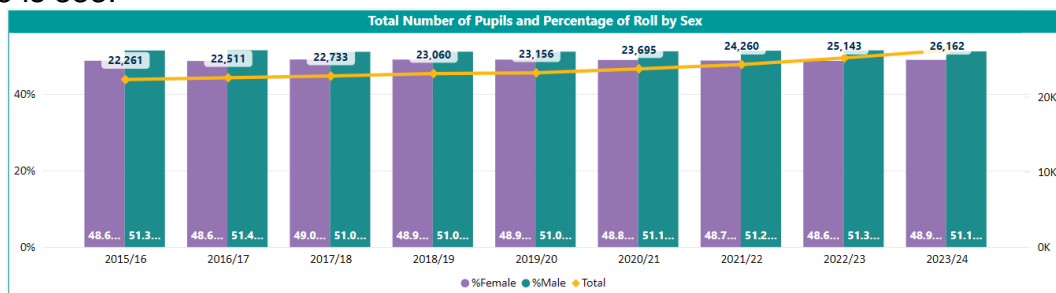
The Scottish Government launched the National Improvement Framework for Scottish education in January 2016. The Framework is central to the Scottish Government's commitment to raising attainment for all and closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 Act amended the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 ("the 2000 Act") to place the National Improvement Framework (NIF) on a statutory footing and introduced requirements for local authorities and schools to plan and report on the measures that they are taking to address the key priorities of the NIF. This evaluation and plan has been structured to take account of the associated statutory guidance.

This evaluation and plan has drawn on the Community Planning [Population Needs Assessment](#) and aims to complement our partnership [Children's Services Plan](#) which acts as the children's section of the [Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#) and our shared Strategic Plan. Our Children's Services Board routinely take stock of and report progress, through for example our [Child Poverty Action Plan](#), Children's Services Plan [Annual Report](#) and evaluation of progress against [The Promise](#). This evaluation and plan considers the implications of this evaluative activity on the priorities for the education service rather than repeat the analysis contained within already published reports.



Reflections from the Chief Education Officer

Session 2023/24 has seen the Local Authority welcome over 1000 additional children and young people into our schools. As might be anticipated this has resulted in pressure on school places within the city centre in particular. The uncertainty around demand has made realising additional capacity challenging and led to an increase in school placement appeals from 167 in session 22/23 to 236 in session 23/24 which has impacted on the capacity of the central team. The forecast number for session 24/25 is 333.



Despite the pressure, schools have responded positively, working with the central team to increase capacity by thinking creatively in order to maximise space and the use of resources to ensure that all children and young people have been placed. All secondary schools have increased their S1 intake for the 2024/25 school session in response to particular challenges in placing children of secondary school age.

The Education Service continues to work closely with Corporate Landlord to ensure that the [School Estate Plan](#) helps ensure adequate and efficient provision of school places. The considerable increase in school roll of late has made longer term forecasting challenging and a drop in the child population is predicted in the longer term.

Children celebrated their first day at the new £23million Greyhope School and Community Hub in Torry in November 2023 and we look forward to opening the new Riverbank School over the 2024/25 school session. The service has also been involved in making plans to address the finding of [RAAC](#) in three school buildings and supporting families who require to be rehomed for their safety due to the finding of RAAC in their homes.



In addition to the Council's on-going commitment to the provision of high quality educational environments, this year has seen investment in our specialist provision from valued partners. New outdoor facilities for pupils at Orchard Brae School were delivered thanks to the school's collaboration with Fairhurst, a UK wide engineering consultancy, and 20 other partner organisations in Aberdeen.



With increased pressure on Council resources, there has been continued work to ensure the best use of resource, with yearly reviews of how effectively our Early Learning and Childcare [delivery models](#) meet demand from parents to ensure efficiency. From August 2024, 3 ELC settings will be moving to delivering a term-time model of provision (Monday to Friday 9am-3pm) to take account of how families are choosing to access their entitlement. Ongoing monitoring and review of delivery models is helping ensure that we meet the needs of families and achieve best value.

We continue to focus on improving quality. Our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) offer continues to provide choice for families with 53 Local Authority ELC settings, 41 Funded Provider settings and 63 childminders working in partnership to deliver flexible funded ELC entitlement for 3-5 year olds and eligible 2 year old children. Over the course of session 23/24, the education service has both [reviewed progress](#) and established a refreshed [Delivery Plan](#) to guide our work over the next two years.

Key Themes for Development

Based on the outcomes of our Evaluation of the Expansion of ELC (undertaken in 2022), our consultation with parents and carers, and our engagement with key stakeholders, including staff voice, triangulated via staff survey, Collaborative Improvement and ELC Learning Festival, we suggest that our key priorities for development over the next 2 years continue to be:

-  Workforce Support
-  Community Partnerships
-  Transitions
-  Family Support

In 2023/24, 98.72% of our eligible pre-school population and 78.92% of our eligible ante pre-school population were placed in ELC. Following the ELC application and admissions process, 1283 new children have been offered ELC places for session 2024/25. This is a slight decrease on the 1418 places offered last year and could be the first indication of the predicted drop in demand due to a lowering birthrate. In response the service will pilot a system to allow families to pay to top up their allocation of 1140 in two settings where capacity allows to help determine next steps.

79.5% of all ELC applications over 2023/24 were offered their 1st choice of ELC placement. There remain challenges in recruiting quality ELC staff at all levels and the service is working closely with the employability team to support placements from those coming back into work as well as continuing to deliver successful Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship programmes. A programme of management training has been developed and delivered for ELC Managers and there is evidence of impact on inspection outcomes.



Staffing across our schools remained fairly consistent throughout the year, however we continue to find it hard to recruit to a number of secondary specialisms and access to supply staff is limited resulting in school leaders covering classes for long periods. Classroom practice can be variable and our focus for next year will continue to be on improving learning, teaching and assessment through our professional learning offer.

Throughout the school session there has been a change in leadership in over 20% of our schools. Senior manager recruitment has been challenging over the school session and this is mirrored nationally. We have further developed our Middle Leadership, Readiness for Headship and Into Headship courses to try to increase the number of quality applicants for leadership positions although central team members are still required to cover some vacant posts. There is some evidence of the positive impact of these courses on the calibre of applicants for headteacher posts within the city but further work to do in collaboration with national agencies and head teachers. We continue to monitor the impact of our work designed to develop leadership capacity and capability.

We have had a significant focus on trying to address the variation across our ELC settings and schools and now evaluate the impact of quality improvement arrangements prior to a new academic session.

The average Care Inspectorate gradings for ELC provision have increased across all Quality Indicators (QIs), suggesting that the professional learning on leadership has impacted positively on inspection outcomes. However, there is evidence of the need to focus on the leadership of play and learning.

We benefited from a [Collaborative Improvement Visit](#) focussed on ELC and have used the learning from the visit to support our planning. The external team provided robust challenge and ideas for improvement which informed our very successful ELC Learning Festival in February and continue to inform our planning. All actions from the subsequent [Action Plan](#) have been transferred into our National Improvement Framework Plan for 2024/25. Following on from the visit, the Early Years Team is working closely with Education Scotland to develop and deliver further training for managers on the quality of play and learning during session 24/25. Our [ELC Quality Improvement Framework](#) has been updated to reflect the slightly amended focus. We can track the impact of our professional learning, and in particular the support of Locality Leads, on more positive inspection outcomes.

Similar review arrangements are in place for schools. The Framework has guided a far more proportionate approach to quality improvement; however, capacity issues have impacted on the consistency of application across localities in the primary sector as members of the central team have covered vacant head teacher posts. These challenges had a disproportionate impact on one locality, and this has triggered a review of the working arrangements.



Although the sample size for comparison is small, there is evidence of improved inspection outcomes in QI 3.1 (Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion) and QI 3.2 (Raising attainment and achievement). The increase in raising attainment and achievement could indicate that training in data literacy and focus on accountability is beginning to have impact. There is generally positive movement up the [support categories](#) allocated to schools, although the evidence is less compelling than that available for ELC. If we look at the pre-pandemic baseline, there is a significant positive shift across all core QIs, however there are still some schools who require support to achieve gradings of good or better and this has to be prioritised.

There is emerging evidence of the positive impact of involving members of secondary school leadership teams in quality improvement activities beyond their own secondary schools, the scale of the challenge across secondary is greater than for primary colleagues. Widening the quality improvement team members to include a cross section of senior leaders is benefitting the school being visited and the individual team members home school by building a shared understanding of what high quality looks like and building capacity across our schools. It is hoped that maintaining this arrangement will help release central capacity not covering vacant head teacher posts.

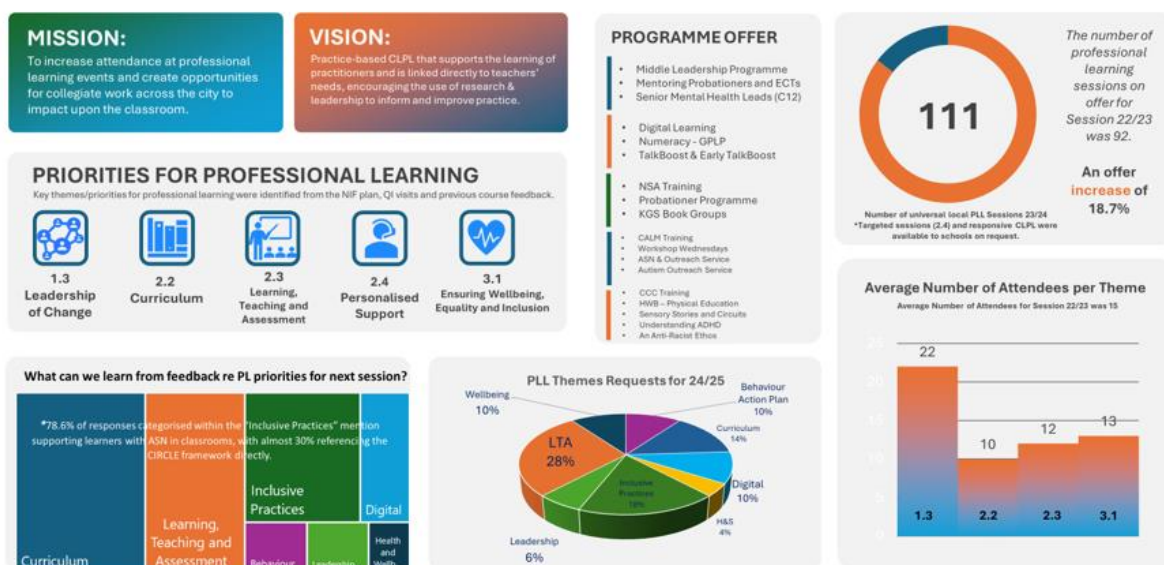
The school [Quality Improvement Framework](#) has been amended in advance of the new school session to broaden the evidence base gathered during visits to help us monitor the impact of our work against an agreed Behaviour Plan, working arrangements to remove single points of failure and more intensive arrangements for those yet to evaluate as good or better.

During Session 23/24, key quality indicators were focussed on as part of the professional learning and leadership offer, alongside responsive professional learning from the ASN Central Team, Orchard Brae, the Educational Psychology Service and the ASN & Outreach Service. Although a comprehensive offer is in place and becoming more aligned, joint planning across the various 'providers' would support more effective monitoring of impact.

Over the course of the academic session, 111 live universal sessions were offered. The Grassroots (GPLP) programme continued this session delivered by classroom teachers, with programmes focussing on Numeracy, Sensory Stories and Circuits, Understanding ADHD and An Anti-Racist Ethos. Feedback for these sessions remained positive with evaluations highlighting the benefits of practical examples to take back into the classroom and opportunities to work with colleagues across the city.

The book groups run by our Orchard Brae Outreach Teacher were very well received, with requests to continue this next session. Some of the attendees have plans to develop book groups within their own settings following on from this learning opportunity.

Professional Learning and Leadership 23/24



At the end of the academic session 23/24, an Audit was sent out to all schools for staff at all levels to complete. In response to the question, "What are the key professional learning priorities for you/your school/sector next session?" - 78.6% of responses categorised within "Inclusive Practices" mention supporting learners with ASN in classrooms, with almost 30% referencing the CIRCLE framework directly, this has been built into our offer for 2024/25.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Curriculum and requests related to the Behaviour Action Plan, including staff wellbeing were among the top requests for professional learning and development next session. This correlates with quality improvement audit responses from the central team with 50% of officers responding to the question "What are the key priorities for professional learning to support our

school based colleagues and impact positively on our children and young people?” referencing training requirements linked to the Behaviour Action Plan. Currently, there are plans in place to address all of the professional development actions within the behaviour action plan via synchronous and asynchronous means throughout the upcoming academic session.

The service continues to work closely with the Data and Insights Team to ensure that our school staff have access to accessible information to support improvement. The various dashboards in place ensure access to consistent data when offering challenge during data discussions with senior leaders throughout the school year. Despite professional learning in the use of the dashboards, there is variation in how they are used at school level. In order to increase consistency across schools’ central officers will increase expectations around use of the dashboards to inform regular data discussions.

There are highly effective governance arrangements in place. Members scrutinise the work of the service against agreed [Plans](#) at the Education and Children’s Services Committee. For the second year running the Local Government Benchmarking data shows Aberdeen City’s Children’s Services are the most improved. The focus on improvement will be maintained as there is still much to do by the Council and wider Community Planning Partnership.



We have successfully worked to broaden the curriculum offer for young people in our secondary schools. Approximately 900 applications from secondary pupils were made for the 31 [ABZ Campus](#) courses running for the first time in 2023/34. 392 places were taken by 372 young people from Aberdeen City secondary schools, equating to approximately 36 places per school. Tracking and survey evidence suggests that there is no negative impact on attainment from travelling to other schools and this will be the subject to further review following the publication of Insight in September. Work has been ongoing with local partners to develop Phase 2 for the 2024/25 school session.

Phase 2 will see an increase to 54 courses from August 2024 including access to 14 new ‘anytime’ courses. Phase 3 aims to further increase the number of courses available, develop work experience opportunities to complement foundation apprenticeships and to work with schools to support their increasing of the offer available at school level through the development of new courses. This includes the

introduction of certificated First Aid courses for senior phase cohorts following a successful test in 2 secondary schools over 2023/24.

Column A (Monday/Wednesday offerings) SCQF Level 7: Advanced Higher Biology (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher English (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Modern Studies (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Physics (St Machar) SCQF Level 6: Higher Computing Science (Aberdeen Grammar) Higher Dance (City Move) Higher Health and Food Technology (Aberdeen Grammar) FA Business S&B (INESCO CH) FA Creative & Digital Media (INESCO CH) FA Scientific Technologies - 1 Year (INESCO CH) FA Scientific Technologies - 2 Year (INESCO CH) FA Social Services: Children and Young People (Aberdeen Grammar) FA Social Services and Healthcare (St Machar & INESCO CH) Higher Music (St Machar) SCQF Level 5 or below: National 5 Dance (City Move) National 5 Modern Studies (Aberdeen Grammar) National 5/6 Gaelic (Aberdeen) FA Construction Level 4 (INESCO Athol) FA Construction Level 4 (St Machar) FA Hospitality Level 4 (INESCO CH)	Column B (Tuesday/Thursday offerings) SCQF Level 7: Advanced Higher Chemistry (St Machar) Advanced Higher Drama (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Geography (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher History (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Physics Education (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Physics (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Spanish (Aberdeen Grammar) SCQF Level 6: Higher Administration (St Machar) Higher ISOL (Aberdeen) FA Social Services: Children and Young People (Aberdeen Grammar) FA Social Services and Healthcare (Aberdeen Grammar) FA Accountancy (INESCO CH) FA Engineering Systems - 2 Year (INESCO Athol) FA Scientific Technologies (Aberdeen) SCQF Level 5 or below: National 4/5 Gaelic (Aberdeen) FA Construction Level 4 (INESCO Athol)	Column C (Monday/Wednesday offerings) SCQF Level 5: Advanced Higher Business Management (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Engineering Science (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher French (Aberdeen Grammar) SCQF Level 4: Higher Games (Aberdeen Grammar) FA Social Services: Children and Young People (Bridge of Don) FA Social Services and Healthcare (Aberdeen Grammar) SCQF Level 4S: Cooking (Aberdeen Grammar)	Column D (Tuesday/Thursday offerings) SCQF Level 7: Advanced Higher Chemistry (Aberdeen) SCQF Level 6: Higher Accounting (Aberdeen) FA Social Services: Children and Young People (St Machar) FA Social Services and Healthcare (Aberdeen)
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Anytime Courses

SCQF Level 7

History Advanced Higher (Aberdeen City)
 Modern Studies Advanced Higher (Aberdeen City)
 Online Art & Design Portfolio Development (Robert Gordon University)
 Environmental Awareness (SRUC)
 Access Course in Physics - Engineering (University of Aberdeen)
 Access Course in Chemistry (University of Aberdeen)

SCQF Level 6

Local Food Production (SRUC)

SCQF Level 5/6

Veterinary Terminology (SRUC)

SCQF Level 5

Equine (SRUC)
 Horticulture (SRUC)
 Investigation into Modern Agriculture (SRUC)
 The Principles of Animal Care (SRUC)

Twilight Courses

SCQF Level 6

Higher Computing Science (RGC Online)
 Higher Applications of Mathematics (RGC Online)

We continue to monitor levels of pupil health and wellbeing carefully and there is evidence that our arrangements are effective for almost all of our pupils. The most recent [Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveys](#) demonstrate improvements in almost all areas compared to the previous two years of data sets. We have a reduction in levels of pupils with low mood and at risk of depression and see increases in self-confidence levels. We are either tracking alongside national data or performing better than the reported Scottish average.

Reports of self-harming and happiness with appearance have both improved in this year's data, including with our 'Did Not Disclose' gender group, and with girls. However, there are indications that despite the positive movement, we are not yet sufficiently addressing the gradient for those who are more impacted by poverty and those who did not disclose their gender. In addition, our cohort of S4 girls (our S3 group last year) are continuing to show poorer self-reporting of mental health outcomes. This is the cohort that would have been most directly impacted by Covid school and community closures. There are wider impacts and considerations when thinking about this cohort, some of them will be leaving school at the end of this year. As well as school community supports, services such as Skills Development Scotland alongside school pastoral care and school staff will work in partnership to plan for positive destinations and pathways beyond school. We will continue to implement the SHINE survey next session as this allows us to benchmark our progress against the national picture, but in collaboration with the Children's Services Board attempt to find a means of measuring the health gradient to further improve our longer term planning.

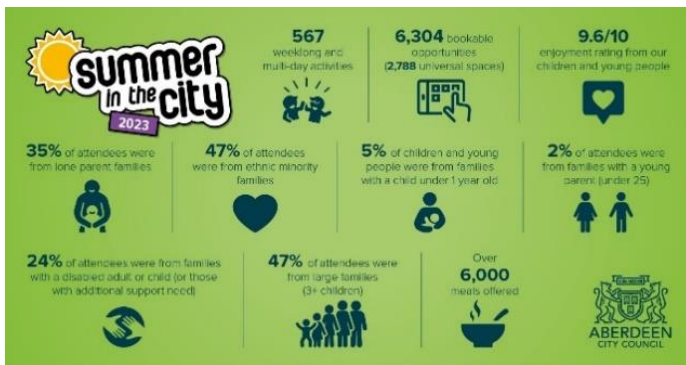
Promoting positive [behaviour](#) has been a key focus this session. The vast majority of children and young people continue to behave well in our schools, with findings not dissimilar from those outlined in The Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research Report, published by Scottish Government in November 2023. The service has worked collaboratively with trade union colleagues to develop a shared [Behaviour Plan](#) to support improved behaviour in our schools. All staff will receive de-escalation training in session 2024/25 and there will be designated trainers in place for each Associated Schools Group (ASG) to ensure sustainability. Progress against the plan will continue to be [reported](#) to the [Education and Children's Services Committee](#).

The service has made considerable progress in ensuring the information available to [Armed Forces](#) families takes account of the new legislative duties and, having an identified lead is allowing us to accelerate progress rather than awaiting review

periods. The school application process has been updated to include UK Armed Forces data capture and we continue to work with other Clusters to establish armed forces champions to take forward accreditation activities and maintain our gold accreditation status. When a new family is identified the officer with responsibility for Armed Forces contacts the family and signposts to supports and funding available. We now plan to have better promoted Armed Forces information for families including signposting to funding via the ACC website in place early in session 24/25.

Ensuring the effective participation of children and young people remains a focus. The [Youth Climate Change Group](#) continues to represent the voice of young people of Aberdeen at national and local events, including at the Education Scotland Learning for Sustainability group. The group continue to support schools to undertake sustainability projects and promote their successes. 14 schools are now recognised as ECO schools. The service has been working to prepare for the implementation of the UNCRC for a number of years and welcomed the incorporation of the Bill into Scots Law from 16 July. School teams have ensured pupil voice is evident in school policies and procedures and provide child friendly versions of policies and plans. Following our early adoption of a child friendly complaints process, we are well positioned to implement the agreed national approach.

The Education Service continues to work well with officers from across the organisation and local partners to plan and deliver popular 'In the City' holiday programmes to support families during Summer, Autumn and Easter school holidays. Evaluations from children and young people are consistently positive with an average enjoyment rate of 9.6/10. Priority groups were well represented, and an accessibility adjusted programme delivered by We Too, Early Intervention services and Sport Aberdeen.



The Music Service has continued to evaluate how well they are expanding the provision of music tuition, increasing more equitable access and providing greater opportunities for students to perform individually and in partnership with other groups in the city.

The success of the Big Sing 2023 was built upon further this session with all P4s again coming together to sing at the Duthie Park. The event was well received by parents and families and plans are already in place to have a bigger and more international event next session.



Our out of school care service secured funding (Improving School Age Childcare Spaces) to support improvements in 4 of our settings.

Cornhill now benefits from direct access to an outdoor play area and new storage units for their play equipment.



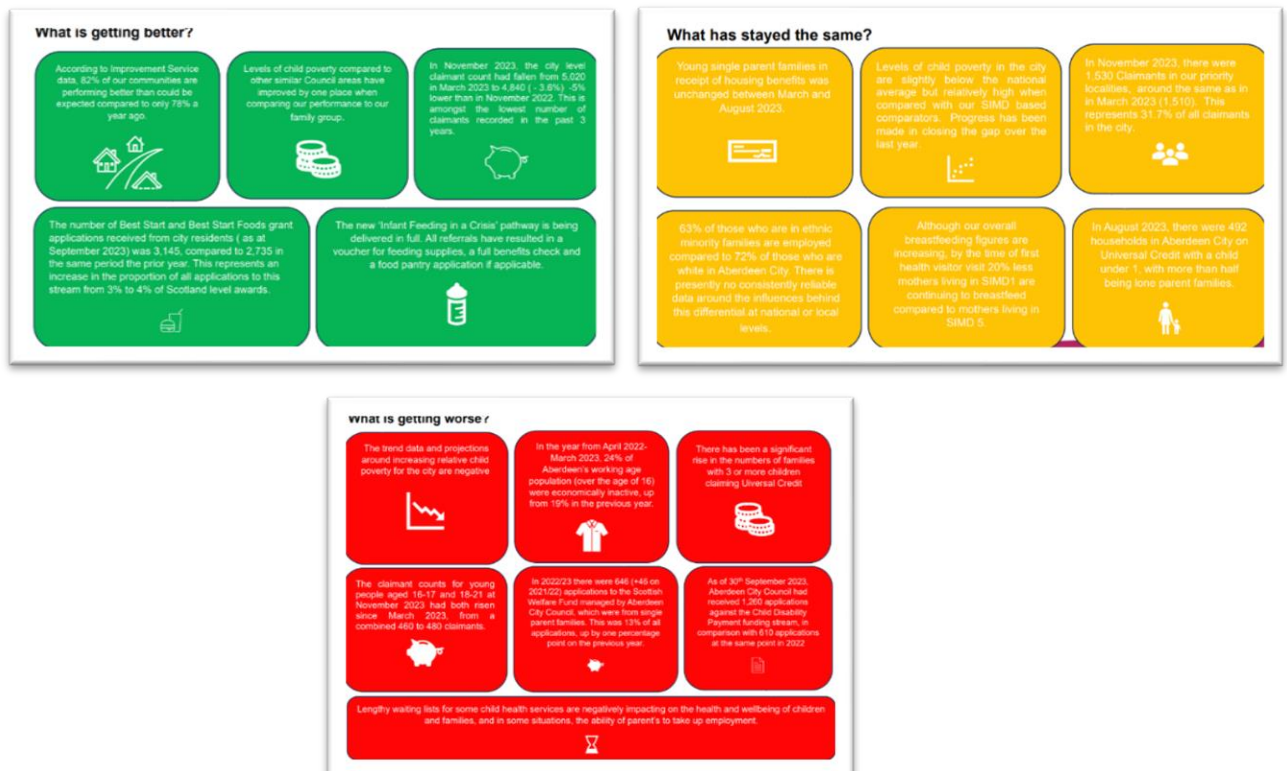
Kirkhill now benefits from a bright and airy playroom and kitchen allowing children and staff to prepare interesting snacks. They also now have a secure outdoor area which is easily accessed and secure storage.

In Orchard Brae the funding allowed the service to create a relaxed room, to support our learners with the most complex needs, with secure outdoor area allowing free flow at all times.

Muirfield received improved outdoor lighting to ensure the outdoor spaces can be used all year round. The increased storage has also helped them to organise loose parts and maximise the outdoor play space.



The cost of living crisis continues to impact on our families and we recognise that we cannot address poverty in isolation. The service continues to be an active member of the Children's Services Board who recently took stock of the current situation in their [Annual Report](#).



The data shows that poverty continues to impact on our families and that this is likely to continue. There is emerging evidence that families are increasingly accessing their entitlements, and this is encouraging, particularly given our investment in Money Advisors through Scottish Attainment Challenge resource. The scale of the challenge is equally clear. There is a need to continue to carefully target those groups most likely to be impacted by poverty wherever possible and continue to increase our knowledge and support of them.

The recent engagement to inform the development of the LOIP has suggested citizens seek more opportunities to get involved in decision making and ways of knowing "[where to raise my voice for my community](#)". This will be considered as we develop our model of Family Support.

The disparity in outcomes evident from the review, largely determined by SIMD quintile is of concern. Despite some evidence of progress across SIMD 2 and 3, outcomes for those in SIMD 1 are by far the poorest. Lengthy waiting lists for some child health services are negatively impacting on the health and wellbeing of children and families, and in some situations, the ability of parents to take up employment.

There is a risk that the gap between those living in SIMD 1 and their neighbours increases. The direct link with poverty and mental health outcomes is clear. There is a need for targeted work to address the needs of those living in SIMD 1 and this learning is shaping the development of our [Family Support Model](#). We have successfully gained national Pathfinder status for this work and are progressing [Plans](#)

at pace. The model will ultimately absorb our two [Edge of Care](#) pilots designed to support work around keeping The Promise. Work has begun on developing the model further to provide support for young people in the St Machar ASG.

Our partnerships with community groups are strengthening. Our schools have continued to benefit from generosity and support from a range of partners. Working alongside its local charity partner, Abernecessities and HMP Addlewell in West Lothian, Aberdeen-based Sodexo Energy & Resources has gifted Northfield Academy pupils refurbished bikes. The Academy has provided the team at HMP Addlewell with a further 13 bikes for reconditioning and is benefiting from an on-going partnership with Sodexo Energy & Resources.



A Doric book about a naughty herring gull has been written by pupils at Riverbank School. 'Summer, e Magic Scurry', tells the story of a herring gull that does all the things a 'scurry' –the Doric word for a gull – usually does, but then, using magic, takes the Primary 5F pupils on an adventure to various places. The pupils were able to create their Doric book thanks to Aberdeen City Council's Creative Fund programme and supported by writer Jackie Ross and illustrator Aaron Gale from Doric Books.



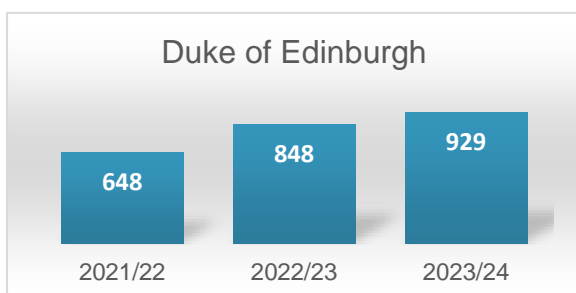
The Men's Shed has funded and constructed a poly-tunnel in the grounds of Forehill School in order to create a space for the children to grow plants, fruit and vegetables. The space is being now being used to support intergenerational community activity.



Dietetics students from Robert Gordon University (RGU) have partnered with Seaton Primary School to teach pupils how to cook quick, tasty meals and snacks while learning about the key nutritional benefits of a healthy relationship with food.



The five-week pilot project with primary seven children has been supported by charity Abernecessities and is the first of its kind for students of RGU's Dietetics course.



The number of young people participating in Duke of Edinburgh Awards has increased steadily over the last 3 years providing young people with experience of volunteering, developing new skills and the opportunity to participate in expeditions



A number of our incredible young people have secured national awards this year. Hafsa Ahmad (on the left), a senior pupil from St Machar Academy achieved the top grade in Higher Biology in Scotland and was presented with an award from the Royal Society of Biology.

Robyn Rodgers (on the right), a Northfield Academy S5 pupil, is the Scottish winner of Level 2 French of the prestigious Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators 2024. Over 16,000 pupils in the UK took part in the creative translation competition, which was across four levels in five languages (French, Spanish, German, Italian and



Mandarin), covering all year groups at secondary school from age 11 to 18 years old.

I am very proud of our Service and how it continues to improve. The challenges of decreasing resource mean that there is an ongoing need to work more collaboratively towards a self-improving system to ensure improvement. I appreciate the skills and expertise of staff across the Service, across the wider organisation and partners who have committed, and continue to commit to the education service.

Key achievements of the last year

**ABZ
WORKS**

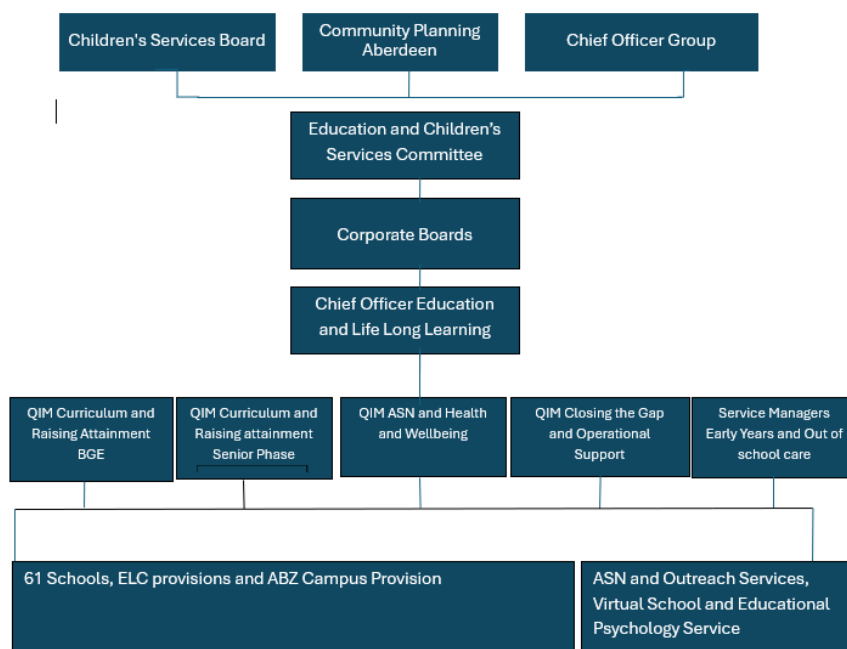
Your route to skills, training and work

- Successfully enrolled over 1000 new children and young people into our schools over the academic session
- 32 ELC Modern Apprenticeships supported to complete their apprenticeship and have now moved into the ELC workforce.
- Improved rate of sign off following return visit from HMIE in our Primary Schools
- ELC learning festival brought 85% of local authority staff together to hear key messages and participate in successful Manager/Senior training sessions.
- First Local Authority in Scotland to pilot ELC Certificate in Outdoor Practice, a new accredited qualification. 19 practitioners are on track to complete this in September 2024.
- Pupil from St Machar Academy was named Foundation Apprentice of the year, and a Northfield Academy pupil won the prestigious Anthea Bell prize for translation from Oxford University.
- Positive feedback from HIME (His Majesty's Inspectors of Education) following the Community Learning and Development Inspection
- ABZ Campus Phase 1 fully implemented and Phase 2 ready to be implemented from August 2024.
- Secured a high-tech centre for higher and advanced higher computing students in One Hub for use as part of ABZ Campus.
- Pilot of the Northern Lights programme complete providing us with the feedback to allow us to move to upgrading Wi-Fi and interactive teaching boards in all schools, providing all staff and pupils with a single password to access all services and offering one to one laptops from P6 – S6 during session 2024/25
- Educational Psychology service presented approach to the roll out of Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) and ELSA ASN to a national Educational Psychology Conference highlighting the good practice in the authority.
- Equity Network established and regularly has 70% school representation at both online and face to face meetings. Successful adoption of the Equity Plan tracker by all schools.
- All secondary schools have a member of staff trained in Mentors in Violence Protection.
- Secured funding to develop outdoor spaces from the Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces (ISACS) Fund.
- Increased in the number of HMIE Associate Assessors from 2 to 10. These leaders will work closely with the central team to help build capacity within the system.

- Successfully delivered training in the teaching of writing to our third cohort of schools, supported by Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative.
- Increased the number of learners participating in the Duke of Edinburgh awards from 848 in 2022/23 to 929 in 2023/24



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.

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 Wood Foundation, with the Developing the Young Workforce Board and with Further and Higher Education partners as we respond to the Logan Report through the Aberdeen Computing Collaborative and continue our development of ABZ Campus.

As well as external scrutiny from inspection agencies, the Corporate Board structure monitors data and seeks assurance on education performance, the Performance Board is currently carefully monitoring the attainment of our senior phase learners who live in SIMD 2 and 3. Elected Members and external members scrutinise performance through Council Committees. In addition, partnership scrutiny is available through Community Planning Aberdeen and the Aberdeen City Executive Group (Chief Officers Group) for Public Protection.

Over session 23/24 around 18.3% 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 ongoing engagement, 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.

In addition to this we welcomed a collaborative improvement visit involving colleagues from other local authorities, the support arm of Education Scotland, ADES and HMIe. Feedback was invaluable in supporting the setting of next steps and offering useful suggestions to increase challenge and improve staff engagement at all levels.

ACC Foundations: Organisational Design

The Council organisational structure continues to drive innovation and more integrated working practices. A refreshed organisational structure, agreed by Council in March 2024, sees the Cluster welcome the Library and Information Service and Community Learning and Development Service into the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster.

It was important to establish a collective identity for the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster and all staff were involved in creating a shared vision and values through a series of engagement events.

Vision for Education and Lifelong Learning - Inspiring communities to learn and grow together

Values:

- Ambition
- Equality
- Nurture
- Respect

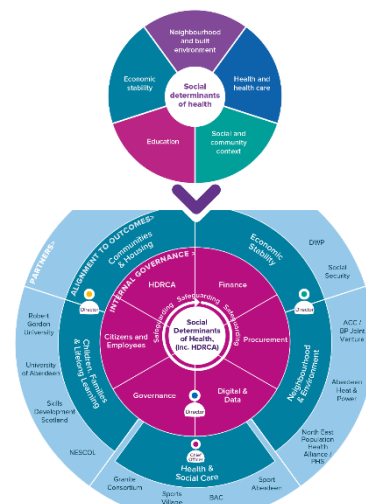
The vision and values will be central to the work of the cluster and used to evaluate practice and help ensure consistency of purpose. The new Cluster provides the opportunity to look at the learning needs of children and families more holistically as we build on our Edge of Care Pilots and develop our model of Family Support.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster now sits within the Families and Communities Function alongside Children's Social Work, Housing and Corporate Landlord. This new grouping is providing opportunities to more carefully consider the determinates of population health on our families and communities.

ACC Foundations: People Management

Head Teachers continue to see their responsibilities as extending beyond their own school community, particularly in response to the need to address variation. All 48 primary Head Teachers have been part of the evaluation team in at least one other school and almost all primary Deputy Head Teachers have had the opportunity to participate in a school quality improvement visit. 9 of our secondary Head Teachers and 31 secondary Deputy Head Teachers have contributed to quality improvement activity. The model provides valuable professional development for team members and has been received positively by schools and staff involved in the visits. There is now a need to ensure that these arrangements offer more equal opportunities for challenge as well as support. School Leaders continue to make considerable contributions to service and partnership improvement activity.

We currently have 5 Senior Leaders completing the Into Headship programme for '23-'24 with 4 already having secured Head Teacher roles within Aberdeen City.



Almost all staff undertaking our Readiness for Into Headship and Into Headship courses in session 22/23 have secured senior leadership positions within the city or Aberdeenshire supporting succession planning for the leadership in our schools. Feedback on delivery is positive with almost all staff looking to progress on through each level.

We are pleased to offer 7 schools the opportunity to engage with 'Winning Scotland' to support the development of resilience, ambition and versatility in pupils. This qualification achieves credits at Masters Level 11.



During session 23/24 a new Education Scotland programme 'Leadership in Professional Learning' was piloted in Aberdeen. 37 DHTs and HTs were involved in the high-quality training to improve theory and build personal action plans. A national event was held in June 24 where a HT and DHT were asked to share very good practice in their primary setting. This provided excellent opportunities to learn from other settings across Scotland. In session 23/24 an additional 8 leaders were successful in securing Associate Assessor positions with HMLe. These leaders will be used to support the Quality Improvement visits and to mentor new or inexperienced Head Teachers.

The positive trend in attendees from both secondary and specialist settings in all Middle Leadership groups this session demonstrates the appetite for professional learning in leadership and management. A similar programme is planned for session 24/25.

The Universal Services continue to pool resources to support children and families in greatest need and have invested time in building relationships further. Plans to progress the establishment of our Bairn's House within the Links Hub are progressing well, and this will provide opportunities to strengthen multiagency practice further as we develop our Family Support Model.

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. Officers have invested considerable time in agreeing a Behaviour Action Plan to be progressed over the 2024/25 academic session.

ACC Foundations: Technology

Northern Lights Programme

Our Northern Lights programme, which aims to deliver access to additional digital tools for learning and teaching whilst seamlessly connecting data systems, completed a successful test in 2 schools over 2023/24. All staff and learners in St Machar Academy and Woodside Primary now have access to Microsoft devices, they all have a single sign-on to access all applications and training on the new learning environment has begun with our training partners, Hable .

Learning from the test schools has been used to help design the roll out to all other schools which will begin in August 2024 with all schools being transitioned by December 2025. The roll out of devices and the new digital learning environment runs in parallel with a commitment to improve connectivity and update all classroom smart panels, providing our pupils and staff with access to state of the art technology to support delivery of the curriculum.



Volunteer digital champions have been identified in all our schools; these staff members will help to drive change in their own schools. The education team and technical team meet regularly to ensure the programme remains on track and any issues are resolved quickly. The wider programme including Wi-Fi and whiteboard upgrades will continue with a completion date of Summer 2025.

The new digital environment provides numerous new learning opportunities. Over session 24/25 there will be a focus on building the capacity of staff in the new tools and understanding how AI can be used to support learning.

Update to Request for Assistance

An updated request for assistance portal has been developed. The refreshed portal has been through all the testing stages and will be ready to launch in August 2024. This final version will provide families and professionals with summaries of the types of support on offer and the ability to make a personal or professional referral.

Once live, the system will be reviewed annually and updated based on feedback from users.

ACC Foundations: Partner Alliances

Aberdeen Computing Collaborative

A digital event was held for over 1000 teaching and support staff which included workshops from RGU and representation from Aberdeen University. The event had Computing Science inputs for Early Stages and Upper Stages Primary focused on growing interest in the subject. The exit survey for the event, completed by 50% of attendees, showed that 86.5% rated the sessions offered as very good or excellent.



Professional learning materials for Early and First level Computing Science have been developed for use from August 2024.

NPA courses for Games Design and Esports are now available in St Machar Academy as part of the work to broaden subject uptake. NPA Cybersecurity is available in all schools through ABZ Campus. During 24/25 work will continue to promote and spread this practice more widely across the city.

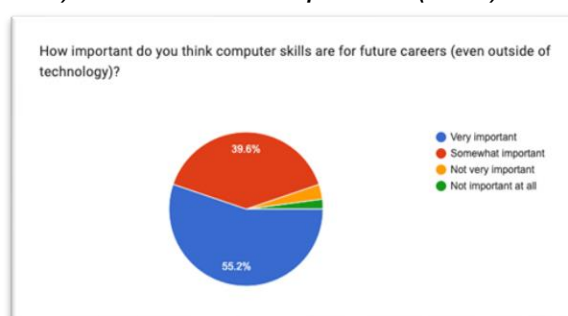
Esports NPA	Entries	Pass Rate
Level 4	4	100.00%
Level 5	9	100.00%
Level 6	3	100.00%

Games Design NPA	Entries	Pass Rate
Level 4	15	66.67%
Level 5	54	85.19%
Level 6	18	100.00%

Cybersecurity NPA	Entries	Pass Rate
Level 4	29	65.52%
Level 5	50	24.00%

2023/24 Session Forecast Results

A survey of attitudes to and experiences of Computing Science and Digital was shared with secondary pupils to help inform next steps. Most of the responses indicated that our young people believe computer skills are *very important* (55.3%) or *somewhat important* (40%) for future careers.



There was interest in extra-curricular computing clubs from 47.6% of respondents committing an interest and 28.6% expressing that they may be interested. This confirms our strategy to introduce more computing clubs in collaboration with Aberdeen Computing Collaborative, CodeClub, FIRST and other partners.

A partnership with FIRST Tech Challenge has been made available to all secondary schools with a focus on Computing Science staff. The offer includes a bursary of £999 for robotics equipment. To date three schools have expressed interest in the offer and they will be supported to access the bursary.

Gender imbalance is an issue identified for action. 31.2% of survey responses were from females. Comments identified that some girls feel isolated or like an “anomaly” in their Computing Science classes. Encouraging more girls into Computing Science is an important area of focus.

The survey also highlights areas for improvement in the delivery of Computing Science education, with respondents wanting more hands-on activities (64%), learning about technology in the real world (including social media, games) (52%), applying computer skills to real world problems (51%) and having more opportunities to work collaboratively on projects (34%). These areas will be considered in the professional learning offered to Computing Science staff in session 2024/25.

Our partnership with Aberdeen Computing Collaborative has established a Computing Science outreach space at OneTech Hub which is equipped with computing equipment for a range of activities. This space will be available from August 2024 for all schools and collaborative partners.



Excelerate

Excelerate is an investment by The Wood Foundation to empower system change in education, providing opportunities for school leaders, practitioners, and industry and community to connect and collaborate to develop learning experiences which allow young people to thrive in school in order to effectively prepare them for the future.

Excelerate continues to support Bucksburn, Dyce, Harlaw, Northfield, Oldmachar and St. Machar Academies develop approaches across learning, teaching and assessment, partnerships, raising attainment and achievement, and curriculum. Each school is focusing on an aspect of development related to their unique context. Below is just a sample of the improvement activity that is being supported through our partnership with The Wood Foundation.

As part of a recent refresh of their language of skills, Oldmachar Academy have been focusing on Oracy to support effective communication. Through the Excelerate connection, staff have been provided with training from Oracy Cambridge, and young people in the Broad General Education (BGE) now have one period of Oracy per week. This is giving young people confidence in effective communication, as was in evidence through their recent Youth & Philanthropy Initiative Final in February 2024.

Northfield Academy have used the Excelerate connection to visit XP Doncaster on a number of occasions. In March 2023, they embarked on a community visit including

parents, young people and staff to review whether the 'Crew' model might be something that could support improvements in culture and ethos at the school. This led to the introduction of a new S1 model; a 'home' room for each S1 class, an increased amount of time taught by one teacher to increase positive relationships, and a residential experience at the start of the academic session to help build relationships. During a recent HMIE visit, inspectors made the following comment:- *'The school's new model for S1, 'Crew', is an emerging success. Young people involved are highly motivated and feel that this provides a safe experience for them to develop key skills'*.

Early evidence comparing S1 in 2023-24 with 2022-23 shows signs of improvement, particularly in reducing levels of exclusion and building agency. There is a sense that Crew is making a difference and this is supported by our [Northfield Advisors](#).

Bucksburn Academy continue to utilise the Excelerate connection across a range of improvement areas including learning and teaching, and curriculum. They make full use of their Business and Community Support Officer (BCSO) who was a panel member at Offshore Europe in September 2023, promoting business/school partnerships and the opportunities for both in such connections. The BCSO role has encouraged partner-activity across all of the Excelerate schools, bringing in 52 new partner organisations during 2023-24 resulting in over 350 hours of partner-led school activities.

The intention is that the experiences and training from the Excelerate schools will not only benefit those schools, but provide opportunities for staff to share their expertise and knowledge to benefit the entirety of the eleven secondary school communities in Aberdeen City.

On-going partnerships with parents and carers

The City Parent Forum is very active and since moving to online, almost all parent councils are regularly represented. The Parent Forum make a very positive contribution to the Education and Children's Services Committee and is now seeking feedback from parents directly to help shape Council policy.

Central staff continue to be invited to Parent Forum meetings to update on committee business and seek feedback on key issues coming through other feedback channels e.g. social media, complaints and compliments.

Of those parents/carers expressing an opinion within HMIE surveying, 86.8% are satisfied with the education offered in our schools.

All formal complaints are dealt with promptly with every effort made to resolve them at the lowest possible level in order to maintain positive relationships between families and school.

Our refreshed parent involvement and engagement plan developed in consultation with our city wide parent forum will be presented to committee in November.

NIF Strategic Priorities

Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

All children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect them, including in how they learn and we continue to work to amplify participation and voice. Through our robust (internal) quality improvement processes and through HMIe inspections, we are able to identify and share best practice. Pupil voice is both sought to inform and is included within school improvement plans with a number of our schools creating and sharing accessible 'child-friendly' versions of their school improvement plans with their school communities.

Our schools offer a range of pupil voice groups to provide our children and young people an active voice in shaping both their school experience and to inform and support school improvement. These routinely include school councils, eco groups, health and wellbeing groups, digital (champions), library groups etc.

A range of tools, including focus groups to surveys, are used to elicit the voice of our children and young people. Their contribution in shaping the updated Local Outcome Improvement Plan and recent health and wellbeing surveys have helped guide strategic next steps.



A significant number of our schools (45) are actively engaged in the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award. This award places children's rights at the centre of school life and supports schools to develop a range of approaches to ensure that children and young people are better able to learn about, access and enjoy a broad range of rights. Several of our schools successfully achieved accreditation at a range of levels (from Bronze to Gold) this year.



Following the restrictions in place over the last few years, our young people are now seeking more ambitious and challenging experiences as shown by the two examples from Bucksburn Academy below.

Nine pupils from Bucksburn Academy experienced a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take part in a two-week scientific expedition to Greenland.

Pupils, whose ages range from 14 to 16 years old, were selected from over 120 applicants in the school to take part in The Polar Academy, a charity that aims to have a lifelong transformative



impact on the pupils and families it works with, building role models that inspire others around them through respect, dignity, self-belief, connections, and kindness.

Whilst on expedition the young team conducted a range of scientific experiments including Environmental DNA (eDNA) which is DNA shed by organisms into the environment and used to monitor wildlife, LiDAR - an application of lasers which creates a 3D representation of the surface of the earth and snow density reporting and subsequently presented their findings to Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the Scott Polar Research Institute.

In May 2024 nine young people from Bucksburn took part in a week long voyage with the Ocean Youth Trust based in Greenock.

The Voyage took place on Alba Explorer, a 72ft ocean-going racing yacht with 6 experienced Staff and the Bucksburn staff and young people. They sailed from Greenock up the West Coast around the islands ending their voyage in Oban.



The crew spent time in a confined environment with unpredictable weather conditions. They were required to work hard, participating fully at all times in sailing the vessel and taking their turn in cooking and other domestic chores. The sailors slept in bunks on the boat and did not set foot on land till the end of the voyage.

The young people were a credit to themselves, their families and the school, embracing every task with enthusiasm and learning so much about resilience,

perseverance, team work, responsibility, safe working practices, technical sailing and every dimension of living on a Sailing boat.

Young people's comments included ,

"The week away sailing with OYT Scotland was one of the most amazing weeks of my life. Everyone worked so hard to safely control the boat and complete the voyage, and I learned so many new skills. I would love to go back on board one day."



"An amazing week away with the Ocean Youth Trust Scotland. I saw views of Scotland I never knew existed and pushed myself beyond what I thought I could do. I Would recommend this to anyone who is debating going. It's an experience that is unforgettable, and has impacted me in so many ways"

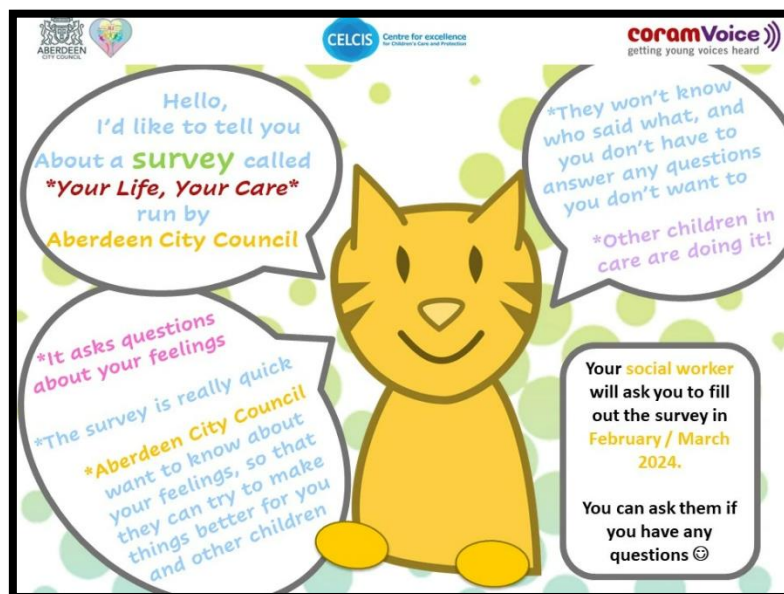
One parent stated, 'I have never seen my daughter so elated and truly excited as she was when we picked her up on Friday evening; she was full of genuine enthusiasm and clearly had enjoyed every minute of the trip and couldn't wait to share her experiences with us. It has been so valuable for her to have this time away, make new friends, work as a team, push herself, and reflect on what is important to her, knowing that she can rise to challenges and hopefully succeed, or at least to come away positive if things don't work out. These are all such significant 'life lessons' and I am sure will stand her in good stead over the coming years.'

Aberdeen City Council is currently involved in piloting the 'One Good Adult' resource developed in partnership with NES, Scottish Government and Children in Scotland. Senior Leaders and Service Managers are encouraged to make reference to this as part of the application and interview process and a series of engagement sessions were held in schools to gather feedback and to inform our approach to implementing this within our recruitment processes for adults working in our schools. The children and young people involved in these engagement sessions developed a range of questions about the areas that they felt were important linked to the themes of:

- Mental Health
- Be(ing) Kind
- Open-mindedness
- Equality and Inclusion
- Reliability
- Encouraging Success

This has provided children and young people with an opportunity to influence decision-making and support the appointment of staff in our schools and senior roles across the Local Authority where applicants often comment that the panel of children presents the toughest challenge. Children and young people form a panel in all head teacher recruitment processes. Pupil panels were also part of the recruitment process for the Executive Director Families and Communities, the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning and other senior Council positions.

During 23/24 our service worked closely with Social Work colleagues, on behalf of the Children's Services Board, to implement the **'BRIGHT SPOTS'** programme.



The **'Bright Spots,'** programme aims to provide an opportunity for children and young people to share their experiences of care, their life beyond care and how they feel about their lives. CELCIS and Corum Voice are currently analysing the responses to provide us with a report later in 2024. Listening to the views of children and young people should help to identify and promote examples of positive outcomes for children and young people and of promising practice. What our children and young people tell us will be utilised at a strategic level, in terms of planning and commissioning. However, it will also have a relevance at a practice level and provide insight how we collectively provide opportunities to improve experiences during session 24/25 and beyond.

Children's rights are embedded in the Aberdeen City Council Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process. As part of our decision-making processes, we routinely consider the impact of any proposals taken to full council/council committees and, where appropriate, seek the views of children and young people to inform and influence our strategies, proposals and plans.

Work will continue across all schools during session 24/25 to increase learner voice and to ensure children's rights are embedded across school policy and practice. Consideration is given, and opportunities routinely planned and delivered, to ensure that children and young people are provided with appropriate mechanisms to influence decision-making regarding (Education) service design and delivery.

NIF Strategic Priorities

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

Improving Mental Health

The mental health of our children and young people is improving. All settings continue to participate in the Schools Health and wellbeing Improvement Network ([SHINE](#)) mental wellbeing survey and the ACC Physical Health and Wellbeing survey to support our understanding of the needs of P6/7 and Secondary learners across our settings. This year's surveys had higher completion rates by learners: over 500 for SHINE and almost an additional 2000 for the Physical Health Surveys. The interventions provided and work undertaken across our settings has led to an improved data picture. Positive improvements were seen in a number of areas compared to the previous two survey returns (March 2022 & November 2022). Of particular interest were the following:

- reduction of pupils reporting low mood and at risk of depression
- improvements in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which measures mental health difficulties
- increases in reported self-confidence levels and optimism
- improvements in physical health
- improvements in feelings of safety, inclusion, good health, aspects of sleep, and being listened to.

Generally, Aberdeen City outcomes now sit above national comparator data. Two previous areas of concern for Aberdeen, reports of self-harming, and happiness with appearance have both improved this year. The 'Did Not Disclose' gender, and 'Girls' gender groups both showed improvements on previous surveys in these areas.

There are other areas the data directs us to consider further:

- the gap between the Family Affluence Scale Groups (low, medium and high) even though each group is showing an improved position
- how to increase positivity towards school (especially at the transition between primary and secondary stages), although improvements against feelings of pressure in relation to schoolwork, and higher reporting of liking school were reported
- the expected poorer mental health and wellbeing of girls with a focus on our cohort of S4 girls (our S3 group last year) who are continuing to show poorer self-reporting in mental health measures relative to their peers in other stages, and their male counterparts
- increased use of technology and devices including its impact on sleep, and going to bed later
- how to support and encourage secondary pupils to eat breakfast
- continuing work with the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to address slight increases in the number of pupils trying of e-cigarettes/vapes and other substances

The Educational Psychology Service will be working to support the cohort of S4, now S5 girls. All secondary schools will be offered an Early Intervention Consultation to discuss and explore their unique setting and context in relation to their data for the S5 girls. This allows for a contextual approach drawing on resources and relationships already in place. EPS training packages, such as Emotion Coaching, Emotionally

Based School Non-Attendance and Teenage Brain Development will be offered, or a tailored programme as required, depending on data and each school's needs. School leaders have access to SHINE reports through a PowerBi dashboard to help illustrate local trends for their settings. This trend data enables individual schools and Associated School Groups Partnerships to identify positive changes and areas for inclusion in School Improvement Plans for 2024/25.

Improving Physical Health

The 'Big Run' held in October 2023 resulted in 88% of primary schools committing to providing a form of Daily Mile to increase daily activity levels during the school day. This was an improvement from 40% pre-event. The national average is 50%.



Boccia training has been rolled out across the city, with some school groups taking this forward in local festivals:

- number of schools: 28
- number of young leaders: 93
- number of volunteers: 17
- number of clubs: 18
- number of festivals: 9 (includes our ASN festivals)



The Aberdeen Physical Education , Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) group continue to work to address 3 key areas outlined within the Children's Services Plan. Early indication shows improvement in all areas with the final results being reviewed by the group in September 2024. Going forward PEPASS have changed their name to include the term School Sport, providing clarity to all members. In 2024/25 the group will focus on supporting schools to achieve Sport Scotland Sport Awards, as part of a holistic approach to reviewing PEPASS provision.

A steering group focussed on the structure and delivery of Primary School football resulted in Active Schools taking over as lead partner from August 2024 to ensure

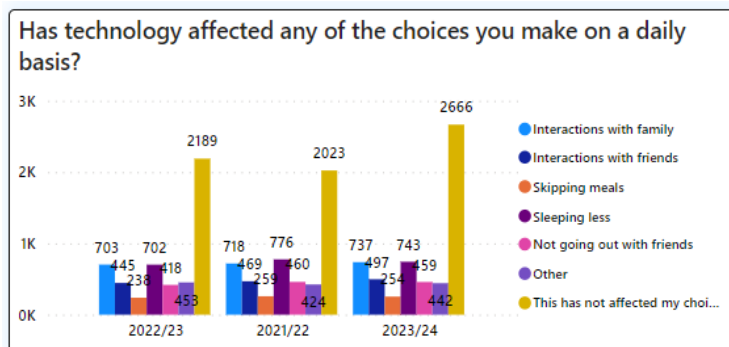


equitable and inclusive approaches are taken to support more participants, more of the time. New terms of reference have ensured that Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust (AFCCT) and ACC remain supportive partners.

Ahead of AFC Community Trust Day on Saturday 17 February, 10 pupils from St Machar Academy were given the unique opportunity to design a football shirt to be worn by Dons

players in the warm-up ahead of their match against Hibernian and sold in the AFC Club Shop in the run-up to Trust Day 2024.

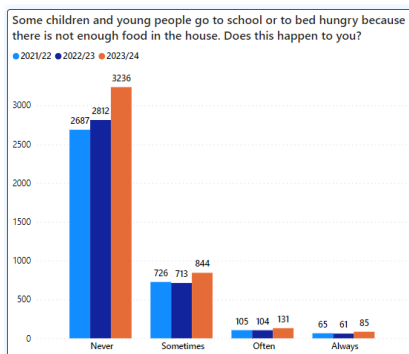
The physical wellbeing survey highlighted an increase in the time spent on technology with **28%** (27% in 2022) stating that they spend more than 6 hours on technology at the weekend. 946 of these are Primary stage learners.



As this is a slight increase on last year in terms of time spent on technology, consideration should be given for encouraging healthy choices for learners, and their families.

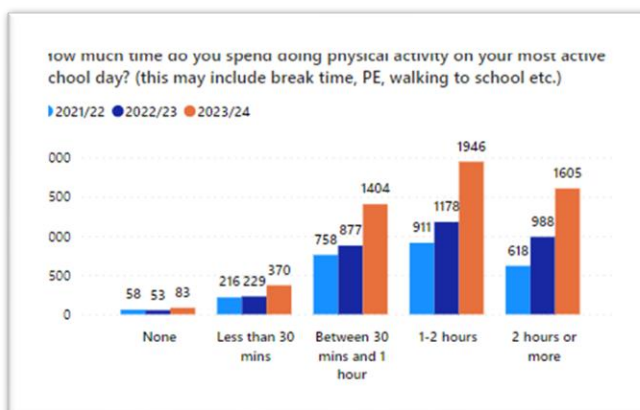
Food and Drink

The physical wellbeing survey told us that there are times where children and young people do not have the right access to food to meet their nutritional needs. **3%**, **238** (compared 3.7%, 256 in 2022). Learners who completed the survey reported that they often or always went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home. Continued review of this data at local level will help us identify where food parcels, foodbanks, breakfast clubs and other such resources would help us address this and target our support. Work in this area will be further supported by the research and planning being undertaken for the healthy weight project.



Physical Health and Body Image

NHS physical activity guidelines suggest that on average children and young people between 5 – 18 should aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity, physical activity a day across the week. **61%** (69% last year) of learners who completed this survey meet the national health standards set above. This was higher for primary pupils than secondary, evidencing the need for us to continue focusing on increased physical activity at the early stages of pupil development and considering a range of options and opportunities at Secondary.

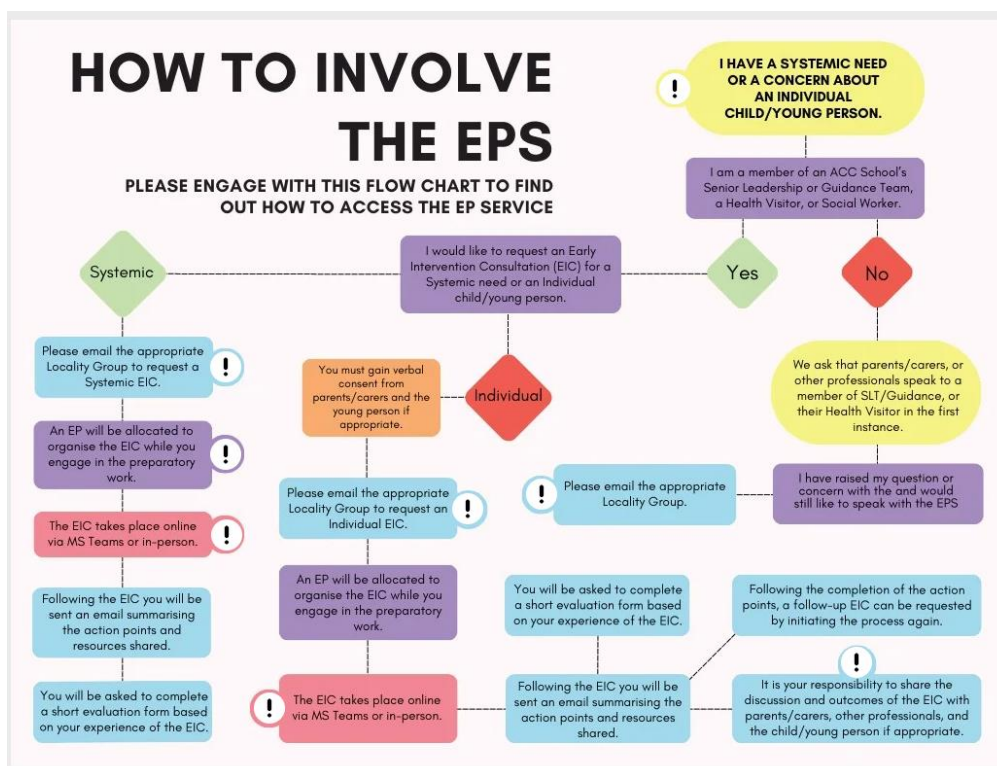


77% (75%, 71% at earlier data points) of learners feel positive or very positive about their body image, showing a further increase of 2% from November 2022. As with the mental wellbeing survey, however 23% (25%, 29%) of learners reported that most of the time they felt negative or very negative about their body image. Out of the 538 pupils who stated they felt very negative about their body image, 109 of those pupils were in Primary School. Being Me a programme to promote positive body image has been running in 7 Primary schools across the city targeting P5 and P6. Schools have reported positive impacts from the first cohorts and this may have contributed to the reduction in the number of young people feeling negative about body image.

Sessions on each of the issues raised will be planned through the Stronger Families series, communications with families, and school or ASG level events to support.

Educational Psychology Service

During session 23/24 the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) developed new operational guidance to support improved engagement with senior leaders in schools and clarify roles and responsibilities. This guidance has been welcomed by school staff.



In addition to individual parent/carer meetings the team have been working closely with parent/carer groups to share the support available to families through the digital hub and through referral at school level.

A new digital system has been developed for case work allowing the team to update records securely and digitally whilst working remotely in schools. This will increase flexibility for psychologists allowing them to have greater impact in schools, and to complete better evaluation of universal and targeted/specialist EPS involvement. This system has been developed and tested throughout session 23/24 and will be fully live for session 24/25.

The EPS support schools at the universal level through a variety of means, not just training packages. Early Intervention Consultations (EICS) increased in 23-24 by 164, with 641 taking place over the year, with positive evaluations, including praising the ease in organising these, quick availability to psychological perspectives, and feeling empowered to take forward strategies and ideas generated. Coaching continues to be offered, and although the number of practitioners in schools taking this offer up remains modest, 6 staff members, evaluations are highly positive regarding impact on individual practitioners and their practice and wellbeing. The Dee Locality drew together and piloted a programme for learners with additional needs in mainstream and this was positively received. The materials and accompanying information will be available across all localities for 24-25.

In session 23/24 the EP service increased the training offers available to school staff, including new offers of Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA), Executive Functions, Teenage Brain Development. These new packages have been well received, with growing interest and positive feedback, all training offers contain follow-up implementation coaching for the setting.

Further investment in the ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) programme has taken place, increasing the number of ELSA trained staff in schools and ELCs to over 50. This programme has received positive evaluations and cohort 4 will run in session 24/25. Additionally, an ASN ELSA programme was created and piloted, to develop ELSAs with 'Emotionally Connected' expertise in class teams working with some of the most vulnerable children across the city. This had an introductory cohort of 11 (reduced by staff absence). This was very positively evaluated by those in attendance, and using the ELSA model, career long support and development for those trained will continue.

Training by the EPS of school staff as 'companions' in the Seasons for Growth programme (a programme to support bereavement, loss and change) has increased the number of learners receiving support in school by 56 this year to 147. These training packages will inform the priority area of the EPS to work alongside key partners to assist schools in supporting the needs of all learners but new materials and packages are also being developed.

New guidance and materials are being developed to support the Education Service Dyscalculia guidance to align with the national pathway which the EPS are working on alongside the ASN & Outreach Service. Materials will also be developed around Mediated Learning (MLE). Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) ensuring that learning support across settings is appropriately tailored, motivating and challenging for all learners.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) continues to develop their own skills and expertise in the area of trauma informed practice. In 2024/25 they will work to embed this across their universal offers, with specialist Early Intervention Consultations (EICs), locality or setting specific work, and training and coaching support. The EPS continues to examine and interrogate their own practice, structures, theories and approaches to ensure they are meeting the needs of all stakeholders, as well as fulfilling their statutory requirement and ensuring they meet the standards of proficiency required for practice by the Health and Care Professionals Council & British Psychological Service regulatory bodies.

In response to the changes in legal status of UNCRC and The Promise, the EPS has collated and developed resources for accessing and capturing the voices of Children and Young People in Consultations and practice. These resources will guide EPS practice alongside operational guidance to support consistent and supportive practice in the involvement of Children and Young People. As well as centring learners and their voices, the EPS will be developing practice to ensure they are meeting and contributing to national EP anti-racist work and can support wider Education & Lifelong Learning colleagues with this. Locally ACC EPS are developing guidance for the E&LL service in supporting refugees and displaced families.

The EP service is involved in analysis of data around incidents and near misses in school and offering targeted support to senior leadership teams alongside QIOs in school where appropriate.

During session 24/25 the service will be undertaking a review of the support available to learners with additional support needs. This will involve focus groups of staff, trade unions, parents and young people, surveys of school staff, semi-structured interviews with school SLT and a case study from each Locality area. Results of the review with recommendations will be shared with Education and Children's Services committee in November 2024 and influence planning for session 25/26. Areas highlighted will inform the priority area of the EPS to work alongside key partners to assist schools in supporting the needs of all learners.

Environments

ASN and Outreach Service delivers universal, targeted and specialist, personalised support within three contexts: Aberdeen School for the Deaf (ASfD), Links Hub ELC and Outreach Support. The latter includes Child's Planning Support, Dyslexia Outreach, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Hearing Support, Vision Support and Wellbeing Support.

Standardised tracking formats are now in use across the Outreach Service, with all teams either trialling or having embedded them. This has built a much clearer picture of attainment and achievement however, work is ongoing with regards to standardising approaches and understanding achievement of a target/level across Outreach teams.

The majority of learners supported by the Wellbeing team are exceeding or meeting individual targets. Where learners are not yet meeting these targets, the majority (58%) identify barriers related to attendance and engagement; these will be key priority areas for improving outcomes during 2024-2025. The minority of learners in the Vision Support team are achieving at least one of their individual targets. Using the Curriculum framework for visually impaired (CFVI) indicators, tracking has identified Literacy, Communication and Technology as key areas for support looking ahead to 2024-2025.

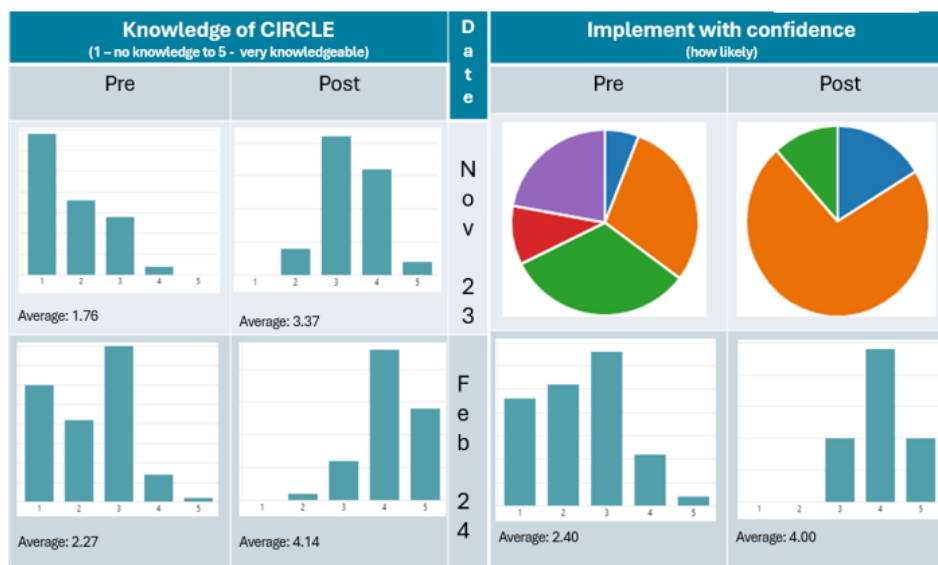
Almost all primary schools have participated in The Whole-School Dyslexia Development programme; developing the secondary sector offer has been an improvement priority during session 2023-2024. Following the success of the 'Dyslexia Champions' programme, a series of professional learning workshops has been created to meet identified/requested stakeholder needs; these have had a positive impact on practitioner knowledge and understanding and on confidence

levels. These will continue to be delivered in session 2024/25 along with work targeted to support probationer teachers.

EAL tracking evidences that learners progress from Level 1 (New to English) to Level 2 (Early Acquisition) within six to nine months (on average): this refers to learners mostly benefiting from group English as an Additional Language (EAL) input and individualised support where appropriate. SQA Qualifications in English for speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) continue to be supported at National 2 – 5 and Higher levels. This session 87 learners were supported, across 9 Secondary Schools (supported both on-site as well as at ABZ Campus). Dedicated BGE S3 ESOL classes have resulted in learners having a clear pathway to ESOL; with almost all learners progressing to senior phase ESOL.

Circle Framework

School Circle Framework leads continue to support implementation of the Circle Framework in order to improve the quality and accessibility of learning environments. All schools have engaged in the development with between 60 and 70% of schools attending each online network meeting. Qualitative feedback from Quality Improvement visits indicate that there has been impact, with an improved quality of learning environments reported in Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland inspection reports. Staff confidence and knowledge continues to grow.



During session 23/24 we increased our partnership working with the NHS Speech and language service through delivering joint sessions and ensuring there is consistency of language and appearance of learning environments. Further collaboration with Speech and Language, health visitors and other allied health professionals is planned for session 24/25

Working as a partnership to support health and wellbeing

Education, Health and Social Work colleagues are meeting regularly to look at how skill sets complement each other and to identify areas of overlap or opportunities to co-locate in order to provide more effective early intervention services for young people and families. This work will continue to be developed as we move towards implementation of our Family Support Model across one targeted community.

The recent Children's Services Board Annual report identified a need for focus on healthy weight, and following a period of research and planning, the partnership intends to come together on the 30th August to start consideration of how we can best take a whole systems approach to healthy weight.

NIF Strategic Priorities

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding continues to provide support for children and young people impacted by poverty. The SAC mission is to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty by reducing the attainment gap between Scotland's wealthiest and most deprived students. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is allocated directly to schools and is targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap with a particular focus on improving outcomes in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.

Quality Improvement Officers review annual school improvement plans including the How Good is Our School? Quality Indicator 3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement and equity for all learners. Head Teachers record the impact of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) clearly and explicitly in the school's Standards and Quality Report. This allows the service to access an overview of the interventions in place.

A new equity planning and tracking format was implemented in 2023 and is monitored as part of the Quality Improvement Framework. Evidence can be seen that most schools are becoming more confident in ensuring plans demonstrate a clear understanding of context through improved interrogation and interpretation of data. Increasingly, interventions are time specific and being tracked more regularly with signs of greater confidence to adopt, adapt or abandon if desired progress is not being made.

Equity Planning Proforma – 2024/2025

This additional information is designed to help you when planning for equity and use of your pupil equity fund. The mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge is to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

Pupil Equity Fund, National Operational Guidance 2023, Scottish Government

There are many ways in which you will be planning for equity which is not directly linked to Pupil Equity Funding in your school, and we would encourage you to record these within your Equity/PEF plan.

All Equity plans should,

- include a clear rationale for Pupil Equity Fund spend, based on robust contextual analysis, be evidence/data informed and context based – what is your identified poverty-related attainment gap. Ensure you are using a poverty lens.
- describe what you do to mitigate against Costs of the School Day.
- illustrate ways in which you engage with stakeholders e.g., Participatory Budget/Pupil Voice.
- contain ambitious and SMART aims and outcomes.
- clearly identify expected impact.
- have clearly identified measures – how will you know your change is leading to improvement?
- include baseline data
- clearly identify interventions, activities and approaches which are additional to universal provision and provide support for children/young people affected by poverty – the right support for the right child at the right time.
- ensure interventions/approaches planned are clearly linked to rationale and poverty-related gap.
- demonstrate use of evidence-based improvement methodology e.g., Qi, if appropriate
- include clear roles and responsibilities for implementation.
- identify planned opportunities to review progress towards expected impact.
- include clear quality assurance processes.

It is good practice to consider including the following,

- evidence of collaboration between schools, clusters, partners etc.
- evidence of longer-term planning (more than one academic year).
- links with Aberdeen City's strategic plans.

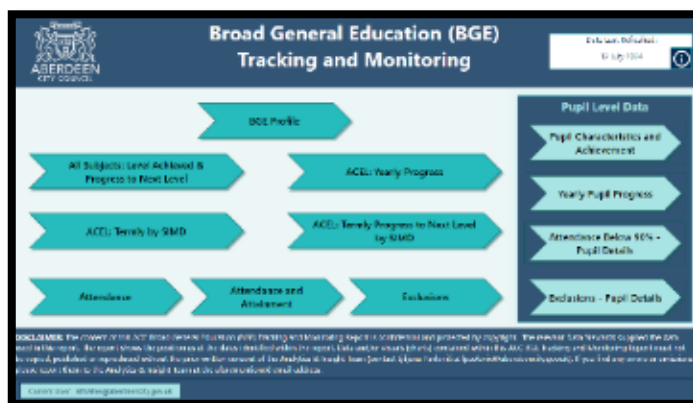
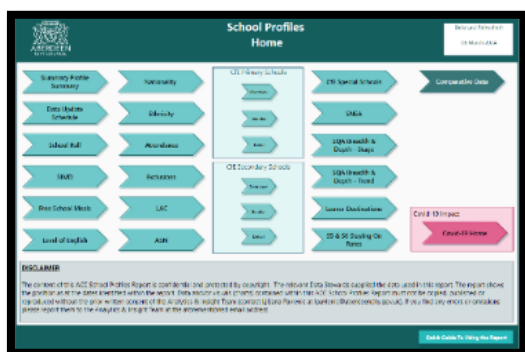
Your school's full PEF allocation must be planned for, including any underspend from 2023/2024.

Remember everything which is funded through Pupil Equity Funding must be included within your plan BUT not all equity interventions and approaches will have a financial cost associated with them.

Attainment Fund Rationale <i>Improve attendance</i>		Amount of Fund <i>£12035</i>	
What is the rationale behind your identified actions? What are your gaps?			
Rationale/Baseline data – link to original measures. Focus on poverty related attainment gap (use of SIMD/FME or other indicator).			
Expected Impact	Interventions Planned	Measure of Success (Triangulation of Evidence/QI Methodology)	Impact on learners Ongoing evaluation Dec/June
<p>Intervention What are we trying to improve?</p> <p>What is the change? Who? What? By when? By how much? Focus on Children and Young People</p> <p>Be succinct – clear baseline statements.</p>	<p>How does this intervention tie in with your rationale?</p> <p>What will this look like? What interventions are planned? Who is involved? Frequency of support?</p>	<p>How will evidence be gathered – data, views, direct observations?</p> <p>Variety of types of data (most relevant to outcome), wider equity measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is responsible? How often will progress be monitored? What is the timescale? Are you making use of any improvement Methodology? 	<p>What has been the impact?</p> <p>Ensure regular monitoring and review is planned for. Who is responsible? Consider monitoring plans in here. IMPACT on children and young people</p>

Rationale What poverty-related attainment gap are you trying to address? This does not all have to have a PEF cost.			Amount of Fund allocated (if appropriate) £
What is the rationale behind your identified actions? why this is a priority? What are your gaps?			
Expected Impact	Interventions Planned	Measure of Success (Triangulation of Evidence/QI Methodology)	Impact on learners Ongoing evaluation Dec/June
<p>(What is the expected impact on outcomes for children and young people)</p> <p>If this links to a SIP priority, please reference</p> <p>Intervention (links with SIP priority)</p> <p>What are we trying to improve? Your aims should be specific and targeted i.e. increase in Y by Z. include baseline data. SMART Aims and outcomes.</p> <p>who will experience the change? By how much is it going to change? / by when?</p>	<p>(What is the intervention? How will it be delivered? Who is responsible?)</p> <p>How does this intervention tie in with your rationale? what will change?</p>	<p>How will evidence be gathered – data, views, direct observations?</p>	<p>(What has been the actual impact/outcome, in particular for the targeted group of learners.) (What data/evidence shows the impact of the project/intervention? Refer to outcome statement. Did you achieve what you set out?)</p> <p>What has been the impact? Have you met your original expected impact?</p>

Updated school profiles and a new PowerBi Broad General Education tool, help school leaders drill down into data by SIMD profile and by demographic information and cohort. As a result, Head Teachers have easier access to information allowing them to determine the gap in their school by identifying target groups/pupils experiencing disadvantage. The use of these tools will be monitored over session 2024/25 to help improve consistency.



At authority wide meetings over session 2023/24, several sessions have focused on effective use of data, case studies, attendance and opportunities to have professional dialogue whilst building knowledge and confidence. Head Teachers have also benefitted from sharing good practice with colleagues in a similar sector as well as across an Associated School Group.

There is now an established ACC Equity Network Teams channel which has been designed to be a place for practitioners involved in improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty to access information, guidance and support to promote equity. All Head Teachers are members of this channel and can request access for relevant members of their staff teams. The Equity Network, led by the Attainment Advisor has been attended by most schools. The Attainment Advisor also provides tailored follow-up online and in-person sessions relating to individual contexts and uptake of these sessions has been good, with the majority of schools engaging. Regular consultation with and feedback to senior leaders in the central team, ensures meaningful content is shaped and delivered.

PEF budget monitoring is facilitated by regular meetings between Head Teachers and Finance Department who also provide regular budget monitoring reports. School leaders have regular meetings with their finance link in order to ensure shared understanding of budget position. Training in the finance system is offered to new Head Teachers as part of the Head Teacher induction programme and additional training is offered on any updates to the system. These meetings along with the established equity network meetings support the monitoring of equity plans and ensure spending is in line with policy.

The equity tracker provides central officers with an overview of school interventions and this is discussed as part of quality improvement visits. The Education Service report on the outcomes in its National Improvement Framework which is reported annually to the Education and Children's Services Committee. The Education and Children's Services Committee also receive regular attainment and performance updates.

Preventing families from experiencing poverty wherever possible

A culture of collaboration across the organisation continues to support our learners and families well. 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. We continue to work with other services across the Council and other agencies to share data and information on child poverty appropriately. During session 2024/25 all schools will have a cost of the school day position statement known by whole school community to further share the supports available at school level.



Schools provide free breakfast provision/clubs, promotion of the uptake of free school meals, clothing grants and other benefits, school uniform and clothing swaps, partnerships with foodbanks and signpost families to the financial inclusion team. We routinely evaluate the impact of arrangements in order to secure continuous improvement. Close collaboration and joined up working with our Money Advisors and workers who support families in their homes means children and families are able to be signposted to the most appropriate source of support and interventions are more timely and effective.

Money advisors offer support to a considerable number of parents, carers and families providing free, impartial and confidential advice on aspects of their personal financial situation. This includes helping families access benefits, tax credits, grants and sources of support such as access to emergency funds and food banks when needed. As this is a confidential service, specific quantitative data is not available. Data from an online benefits calculator shows that 6402 families have used the calculator, of which 5328 families were entitled to previously unclaimed benefits. The financial inclusion team have created electronic and hard copies of support booklets signposting available support for children at different ages and stages – early years, primary school, secondary school and staying on in education. As work continues to address root causes of poverty, positive impact includes the reduction in child poverty and material deprivation as well as enhancing child development and learning.

The Support for Families Information Booklet is shared 3 times per year electronically through school communication channels and hard copies are available in schools for staff to issue e.g. to new families enrolling. Data from the weeks before and following the issue of the booklet in July 2024 shows the impact of targeting this information directly to families:

Base Line Data (2 July to 9 July)

- 91 calculations started.
- 30 calculations completed.
- £15,301.26 per week of new benefits.
- 80% of the completed calculations showed an entitlement to benefits.

The week following the email (10 July to 16 July)

- 1268 calculations started.
- 549 calculations completed.
- £135,458.20 per week of new benefits.
- 98.5% of the completed calculations showed an entitlement to benefits.

Money advisors can also help parents to deal with creditors, negotiate payment plans, apply for insolvency options, and access emergency funds or food banks if needed. This can have a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people in the following ways:

- reduced child poverty and material deprivation
- improved child wellbeing and happiness
- enhanced child development and learning
- increased child participation and inclusion
- strengthened family relationships and resilience
- prevented or resolved family breakdown and homelessness

Feedback from parents has been very positive, *“Financial Inclusion Team are a life saver! I found the team so wonderful my only suggestion is they continue the excellent work. I was taken from despair to hope by the financial inclusion team.”*

An initial discussion has been undertaken with colleagues in other services as part of the proposed pilot of the Low Income Family Tracker(LIFT) dashboard which would enable the local authority to make best use of employability, benefit and health data in identifying those families in greatest need. This would enable us to target specific offers of support through schools and ELC provisions in particular postcode areas where there is an identified need.

During session 2023/24 Scottish Attainment Challenge funded Family Learning, Youth Work and Pathways Advocates .

Pathways Advocates have supported 248 vulnerable young people. Of these young people, 202 are care experienced. The number of young people supported in each of the 11 schools has differed according to identified need with the number supported ranging from 9 to 57 per school. As the Pathways Advocate role is currently 0.2FTE for all schools, prioritisation has been required for those schools with greatest need, Through the termly quality assurance visits, discussions about young people have resulted in bespoke and tailored interventions including support for families and advice on the appropriateness of current plans. Attendance, positive relationships and progress in school are tracked for each young person, with these fluctuating across the session for differing reasons and often signalling a need for intervention. Of the 27 young people who have been closed to the Pathways Advocate, 25 have moved into a positive destination with the other 2 who have been identified as moving into a negative destination, having identified supports beyond school through Skills Development Scotland.

Our overall positive destination figures include those looked after in other local authority areas and as such unable to access the regular support of the team. Consideration of this will form part of our review of the tracking and support available

to all care experienced and looked after young people as this group (those based out with the Local Authority) have the poorest outcomes.

Building on the successes of this year funding allocation for Pathway Advocates has been increased for next session with all schools having a minimum of 0.2FTE and additional resource being allocated proportionally based on need.

Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding has meant family learning was accessible directly through each of the 11 Associated School Groups (ASGs), with 1:1 family support being available alongside a wide variety of city-wide, universal courses and activities which are available to all parent/caregivers across Aberdeen. Opportunities were designed to improve knowledge around specific themes, encourage peer connections, reduce isolation, develop skills and confidence as well as provide support in hugely challenging times.

Almost all (96% 2023/24 data) of all registered learners share that their confidence levels increase due to their engagement with the service and almost all (96% 2023/24 data) report gaining new knowledge and skills. There is clear evidence that the targeted and inclusive programmes delivered by Family Learning improve life chances and effectively enable parents to develop their parenting skills, helping to enable families to give their child the best start in life.

In addition to the family learning targeted support was offered to young people on flexible learning pathways by youth workers, delivered in schools and community settings, this is highly valued by young people, parents and teachers. Through this work young people are engaging with staff and achieving positive health outcomes and achieving accreditation through Dynamic Youth Awards.

As a result of the positive impact we will continue to invest in this area during session 24/25.

Delivery of The Promise

As a partnership, we routinely evaluate our progress against the Promise to help determine next steps. Our edge of care pilots established in 22/23 have continued to support young people and families in need. Staff from social work, education and partner agencies were empowered to think creatively about how family needs could be met holistically. Staff adopted a relational and trauma informed approach from the outset ensuring strong and trusting relationships were developed with key members of staff supporting families to engage with the interventions on offer through each of the services.

Although the number of young people engaging varies at any single point 68 have been supported since the start of the project. For these young people there has been a marked decrease in the number of police concern reports and in the area where the pilots have run there has been a decrease in the number of young people who have been accommodated. During session 23/24 progress has been hampered due to issues with recruitment. The fixed term nature of the resource has resulted in staff moving to more permanent roles in other services. This has been detrimental to

families leaving them without the established trusted relationship which is crucial to the success of the project.

The learning from the edge of care pilots and intensive work undertaken by Youth Workers and Family Learning Workers as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge will be taken into planning for the [Family Support](#) Model with a review being undertaken of the roles and responsibilities to ensure we have the correct staff skills set available to support learners and families.

Implementation of the revised Anti bullying policy

Our revised Anti-Bullying Policy was approved in July 2023 and shared with Head Teachers in September 2023. In early 2024 a session was run to allow colleagues to share practice to support their development of local school policies.

Data is reviewed monthly and trends and anomalies are identified and shared with Quality Improvement Managers to support conversations with senior leaders in schools. During session 23/24 schools have been more consistent in their reporting making effective use of the Bullying and Equalities module on SEEMiS. This has resulted in an increase in the number of incidents being recorded however there is now a broader spread of schools which reflects the more robust and systematic arrangements in place.

	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
May	12	23	8	27	20	50
June	14	21	11	50	25	71
July		3		5		8
August	3	6	12	13	15	19
September	9	30	47	42	56	72
October	8	15	28	16	36	31
November	13	25	34	33	47	58
December	12	22	8	19	20	41
January	21	28	22	29	43	57
February	16	24	19	31	35	55
March	18	42	27	38	45	80
April	6	12	12	22	18	34
Total	132	251	228	325	360	576

Throughout 23/24 staff have engaged in professional learning on offer developing their skills and experience in dealing with and responding to bullying incidents. Several schools have provided QR codes which enable pupils to make disclosures quickly and discretely. Pupil surveys show there is greater awareness of key adults and where to go to if there is a need to report. we will continue to review the impact of the policy and share successes across the service.

In line with national guidance, all secondary schools will now register on the Equally Safe in School website and incidents of gender based violence will be tracked and reviewed as part of the ongoing audits into bullying incidents over session 2024/25. Schools will be asked to review their Relationships and Sexual Health and Parenthood curriculum to ensure it includes learning about equalities and gender based violence.

All secondary schools have staff and young people trained in the Mentors Against Violence programme and schools are at various stages of implementation. 4 schools have fully implemented the programme, 3 are currently refreshing the programme and

the remainder planning to implement during session 24/25. The primary version of the programme is almost ready for release and we have asked to be considered as an early adopter for 24/25.

To support increased awareness of the impact of trauma on young people all staff in schools will undertake the NHS national trauma training with all staff completing foundation and intermediate during session 24/25. Undertaking this training will support greater understanding of the issues impacting on young people who have experienced trauma in their life and how best to support individuals and families.

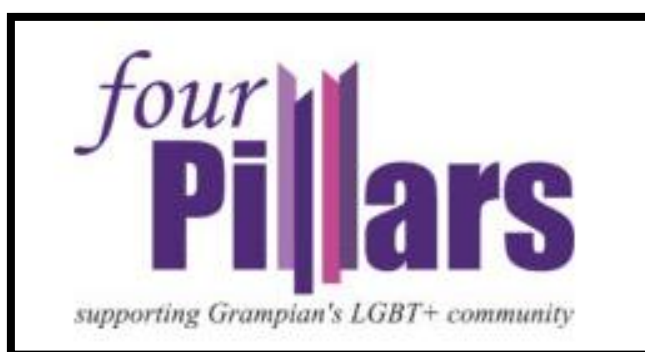
Systems to support LGBTQIA+ community in school

Throughout 23/24 we have engaged with various partners to support the promotion of equality and diversity in our schools. We currently have 2 Secondary Schools who have achieved the Silver Award and 3 other schools who have achieved the Bronze Charter Award. This has resulted in the increased confidence amongst staff to support the LGBTQ community. Our data indicates that schools have in place more effective systems to support LGBTQ students now. The number of perceived bullying incidents involving actual perceived sexual orientation/homophobic/Bi-phobic has reduced to 28 for 2023/24 compared to 192 in 2022/23.

Central officers continue to support schools to engage with TIE (Time for Inclusive Education). There are 345 registered users across over 50 schools/Education settings. 245 education staff have completed Stage 1 of the E-Learning module 'Delivering LGBT Inclusive Education' and another 18 have started the module. We will continue to monitor the impact of this resource and support staff to enrol.



At the end of March 2024, facilitators from 4 Pillars delivered a training session on raising awareness of LGBTQ issues with teaching staff. The training will be rolled out over the next 12 months. It is anticipated that the programme will train 140 teachers who will transfer their knowledge and skills across their schools. We will continue to monitor the input and impact of the training programme.



Increase provision of ELC to those from low income households

We continue to work with the Scottish Government Data Pipeline to help us identify eligible 2s families. Once identified the families are sent information about eligible 2s and how to apply. Based on the data shared with the local authority 456 were shared

and currently the service supports 205 eligible 2s in our provisions. This is a 12% increase on numbers from 2022/2023.

NIF Strategic Priorities

Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

A centrally organised interactive workshop on effective learning and teaching delivered in September was well received by Head Teachers and used to support Head Teacher engagement events throughout the session. The session exemplified national expectations and clarified the role of the Head Teacher in leading the development of learning, teaching and assessment in our schools.

Our focus on improving learning and teaching is also now a feature of collaborative work across partner Local Authorities within the Northern Alliance. A regional plan is in place to support Local Authorities to learn from each other and benefit from economies of scale where appropriate. A senior officer (primary Head Teacher) has been appointed to work with leads from other local authorities to develop a learning and teaching toolkit to support staff development in schools. This resource is on track to be published in September 2024.

The developing toolkit is targeting the identified priorities of Ownership of Learning, Pace and Challenge, Differentiation, Effective Use of Data and Experiences, Interactions and Environments in the first instance, with the opportunity to add further elements over time. The toolkit will provide a set of professional learning and self-evaluation resources to support improved learning, teaching and assessment across the curriculum with a key focus on literacy and numeracy skills.

Staff have delivered the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative's (CYPIC) approach to supporting improvement in writing to 16 schools across ACC, primarily at the P4 stage with 11 of these schools then receiving additional training for their P3 – P7 teachers ensuring the spread and scale of the approach is consistent and of high quality. All staff who have attended the training were more confident in their understanding of the key aspects of the Quality Improvement Journey, using data to inform practice and involving their children in the assessment, feedback and interpreting data process.

When comparing data from each of the 16 schools that have taken part in the programme, almost all schools have shown a rise, some significant, in the percentage of children on track for writing at first level at the end of P4, when compared with data from the end of P3 for the same cohort of children. Qualitative data shows that all children involved in the programme were more positive about their writing experiences post programme and feedback from recent Education Scotland inspections, where the CYPIC approach has been implemented, showed an improved understanding of assessing writing & achievement of a level in writing. Nationally, leads continue to liaise and meet with other local authorities and Education Scotland colleagues, analysing data and planning future development.

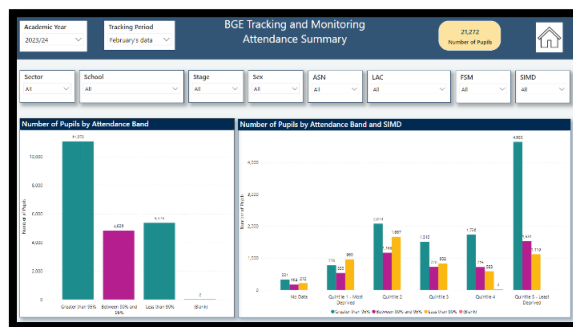
Staff across 2 ASGs were offered training focusing initially on the pedagogy of writing followed by assessment & moderation inputs and a final Q&A session with Education Scotland colleagues. The majority of staff found these sessions beneficial and will continue shared work across ASGs to ensure consistency in teacher judgement in writing.

A Writing Skills Progression focus group has been formed from colleagues across sectors and localities, to work collaboratively on a digital framework to support planning, teaching and assessment of writing skills. The group have looked outwardly to other local authorities and inwards, ensuring consultation with schools across the city on the text types taught in preparation for the forthcoming work planned.

This work will feed into the Literacy plan being developed across the local authority during session 24/25.

School Attendance Levels

Updated Guidance on Managing & Promoting Pupil Attendance was circulated to all schools in July 2023. A new, improved, flow chart is included to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across ACC settings. Quality Improvement visits are used to monitor compliance and to ensure consistency in approach. An updated PowerBi Broad General Education Tracking & Monitoring system provides a platform to monitor attendance easily.



Following our analysis of the issues impacting school attendance, and taking into consideration Education Scotland's Improving Attendance in Scotland Report (November 2023, updated April 2024), Aberdeen City Council Guidance on Managing and Promoting Pupil Attendance has been further reviewed and reissued to all schools.

Percentage Attendance	Days absent	Impact on learning
95% or more	2 days	Little or no impact on learning
90% or more	6 days	Minor impact on learning
85% or more	12 days	Significant impact on learning
80% or more	27 days	Major impact on learning

At an in-person Head Teacher meeting in February 2024 attended by almost all school leaders, a presentation from the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor included an analysis of the factors influencing non-attendance, effective use of data and a range of strategies for schools to explore to support attendance. Two experienced Head Teachers also shared their school approaches to promoting school attendance with the group. Recently published Education Scotland Learning resources have been shared with all Head Teachers for use in their own settings. Following the issue of the updated parent guidance there was an increase in attendance with levels reaching a high of 93.9% in the week beginning 15 May 2024. The guidance will be reissued at the beginning of each term.

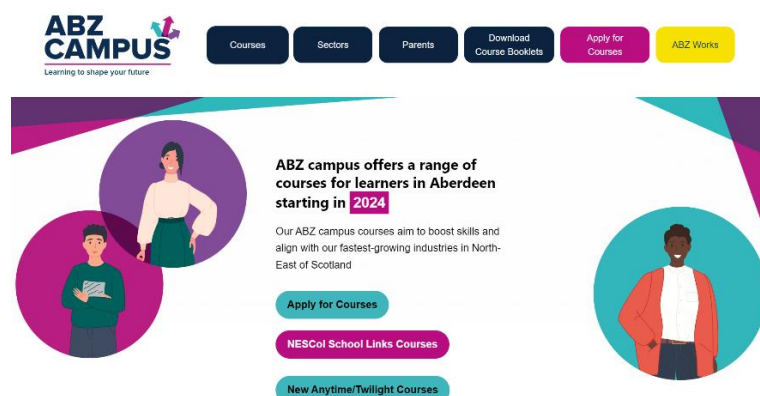
NIF Strategic Priorities

Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

ABZ Campus

Following the launch of Phase 1 of ABZ Campus in Session 2023-24, planning swiftly commenced for the introduction of Phase 2 in 2024-25. As part of planning, key additions to ABZ Campus through Phase 2 were:-

- An increase in the range and scope of school-based and partner-led courses from 31 2023/24 to 54 2024/25.
- An introduction to greater regional working between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.
- An introduction of a new suite of 14 anytime/twilight courses to be available across Aberdeen City and 'Shire young people, delivered by partners and schools.
- Continued commitment to the importance of listening to our young people and their experiences of our ABZ Campus Courses
- The piloting of an ASN Employability experience for young people with more complex needs



For session 2024-25, we have successfully increased the range of courses through ABZ Campus.

Session	School Delivered Courses	Partner Delivered Courses	NESCOL HNC Courses	Foundation Apprenticeship Courses (variety of delivery partners)
2023-24 (Phase 1)	22	1	3	17
2024-25 (Phase 2)	27	1	3	21

Over 1200 applications were received for the 54 Phase 2 ABZ Campus courses offered for session 2024-25, an increase in applications of around 300. This resulted in a total of 846 places offered with 56 young people currently on a waiting list for high-demand courses.

An overview can be found in the table below:-

Applications Accepted/ Places Offered	
NESCol (FA and HNC)	211
ABZ Campus (excluding NESCOL FA & HNC)	568
Anytime/Twilight (ACC Applicants)	28
Anytime/Twilight (Aberdeenshire Applicants)	39
Total	846

An introductory meeting was held between Lochside and Portlethen Academies to explore how far common curriculum planning could open up choices for young people in both schools. Subsequent work included collaboration on timetabling and curriculum between the respective Depute Head Teachers of each school.

Aberdeenshire Council have developed an effective Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) delivery programme. For Phase 2 of ABZ Campus, two Foundation Apprenticeships will be offered for young people in Aberdeen City but delivered by Aberdeenshire Council FA staff. These will be Construction Foundation Apprenticeships, and placed at Northfield and Lochside Academies. As of May, 24 young people were registered to take part. This responds to the demand for construction course places from young people within Aberdeen City.

Feedback from young people and from schools has identified the need for a solution for young people to be able to choose courses that can be studied on a twilight or anytime basis. Information from schools suggests this is due in part to the increased pressure on some young people to contribute to family income and in part due to the appetite for learning that some young people have. As a response, a group of partners and school staff developed a series of options on an anytime/twilight basis which 28 young people intend to participate in.

ABZ ANYTIME/TWILIGHT COURSES BY LEVEL

Regular reporting on our progress with [ABZ Campus](#) evidences how we continue to listen to our young people about their experiences of ABZ Campus. Work to broaden the offer will continue in session 24/25 in addition to the consideration of further partnerships with local business in order to offer bespoke work experience packages for young people.

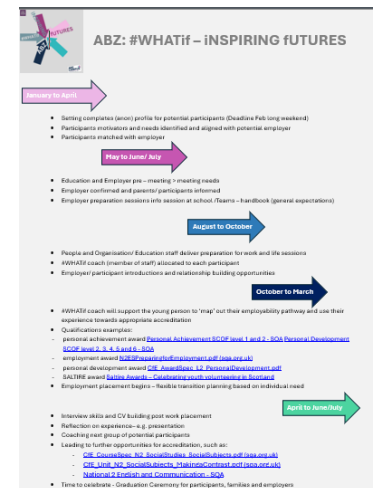
During session 24/25 the service will be working with colleagues from Aberdeenshire, DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) northeast, employability teams, SDS (Skills Development Scotland) and local employers to develop more meaningful work experience sessions for young people across Grampian region. This work will be

linked to the Regional Economic Strategy and look to support growth sector industries in the northeast whilst ensuring positive destinations for our young people.

Pathways for those with additional support needs

A wide network has been established to support the development of the #WHATif (Inspiring Futures) pathway pilot. The pilot will offer 5+ participants the opportunity to develop and apply life and employability skills in a workplace which is of relevance to their personal motivators, skill sets and future aspirations. These include Aberdeen North Foodbank, King’s Church Foodbank Warehouse, The Bridge Cafe, Dyce ELC, Dyce Primary, Instant Neighbour and Bon Accord Care – Kingswood Court Day Centre.

This flow has been developed with colleagues from Education and People, Organisation & Development reflecting how the pilot will be delivered. Final logistics are now being addressed and connections between candidates and employers finalised with significant support from school staff and input from parents/families.



Developing routes into healthcare

NHS Grampian teamed up with St Machar Academy, taking inspiration from American ‘Career Academies’, to give young people a taste of healthcare careers and build the workforce of the future and NHS Scotland Youth Academy.

As part of its Plan for the Future, NHS Grampian is committed to developing the potential local workforce and being an ‘anchor’ organisation, by offering opportunities to attract and keep people in North East Scotland. The Practice Education team have been making this a reality by developing St Machar Healthcare+. A classroom at the Aberdeen secondary school has been transformed into a space where young people can learn more about the range of careers available in healthcare and get hands-on experience in a simulated environment.



ACC Foundations: Outcomes for Excellence

Progress against Stretch Aims (2025/26) and targets

Stretch aims and trajectories for individual groups are included in the graphs and tables later in this report.

Our school rolls continue to increase with a 4% increase this year on top of the increase from last session. Many families have English as a second language and we would expect to see this show in short term data. Our city is changing in demographic and we now have 11% of families for whom English is not their first language at population level. For the 2023-24, there was an increase from 23.2% (2022-23) to 24.1% of young people in S4-S6 where English was not their 'first' language. This compares to 17.8% in 2019-20.



Learners in our P4 cohort and S4 cohort are those who transitioned during the pandemic and although they have been targeted with interventions, their attainment remains below that of previous cohorts. Work will continue with this group in order to close the gap.

Unvalidated ACEL tracking data for 23/24 shows improvement on pre-pandemic levels. The improvement anticipated over the 2023/24 academic session has been achieved by learners in most cases.

Attainment for our Looked After cohort has dropped in all cases, however this is impacted by the fact we are working with a smaller cohort and changes in attainment for a small number can change percentages significantly. There is a need to work with out of authority provisions to improve tracking information gathered and review our current arrangements for supporting those who experience care.

On the following pages, *Previous* gives the validated percentage level achieved for session 2022/23 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.

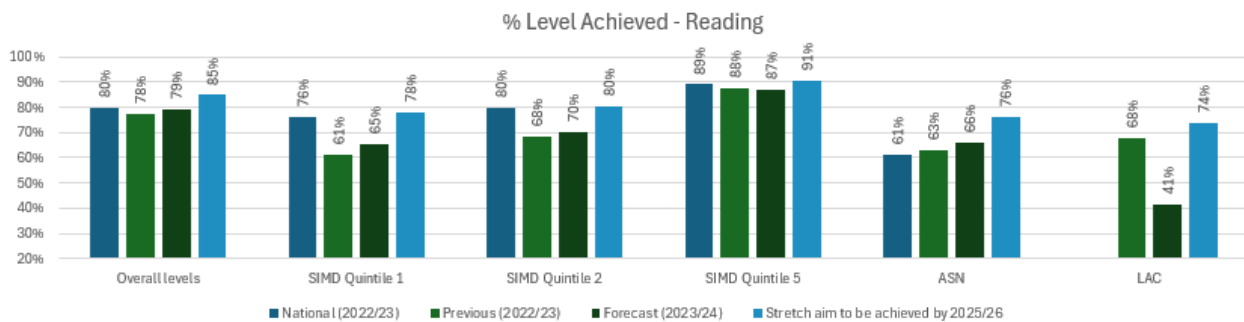
Forecast provides indicative 2023/24 performance based on pre-validation data and this is subject to change as final quality assurance checks are undertaken and the attainment release from Insight in September 2024

ACEL Reading

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

We are within the trajectory for 23/24 with level achieved at 79% overall. As a result of this we have amended our trajectories for session 24/25 to reflect the progress required. The forecast for Q1 (Quintile 1) and Q5 (Quintile 5) indicates that the gap has decreased from 26% to 21.6% and overall levels are 1% below the national level for session 22/23. During session 24/25 our improvement team will continue to work with schools on a programme of moderation to develop greater confidence in level achieved judgements. Increasing the reach of talkboost and early talkboost along with the proposed city wide literacy plan, will support improvement. The dip in attainment for looked after children triggers a need to review the impact of tracking and support arrangements in place for this group.

Trajectory for 2024/25 – Between 81% and 82% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 24/25.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Reading Combined

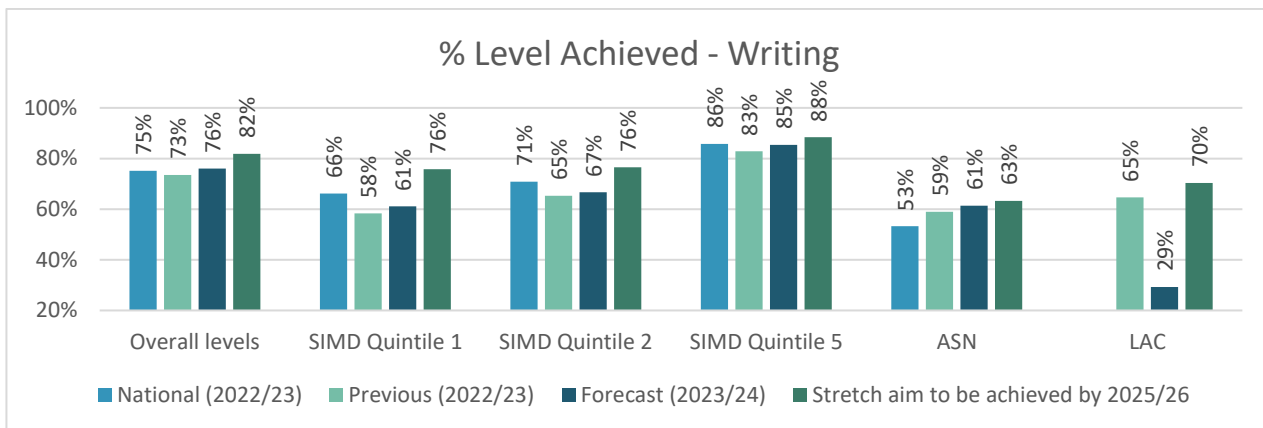
	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	80%	76%	80%	89%	-13pp	61%	
Previous (2022/23)	78%	61%	68%	88%	-26pp	63%	68%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(79% - 80%)	(64% - 67%)	(71% - 72%)	(88% - 89%)	23pp to -21pp	(66% - 67%)	(70% - 71%)
Forecast (2023/24)	79%	65%	70%	87%	-21.6pp	66%	41%
Trajectory (2024/25)	(81% - 82%)	(68% - 71%)	(73% - 75%)	(87% - 88%)	17pp to -19pp	(69% - 71%)	(70% - 71%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(1% - 3%)	(3% - 7%)	(3% - 5%)	(0% - 3%)		(3% - 6%)	(2% - 3%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	85%	78%	80%	91%	-13pp	76%	74%

ACEL Writing

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

We have exceeded our trajectory for this session, attainment has increased from 73% to 76% overall. This increase is partially due to the targeted writing project undertaken with P4 pupils, a programme which was expanded to 10 additional schools in 2023/24. Work continues with the Northern Alliance to develop a writing skills progression pathway. In addition the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer team will support moderation activities in schools with the highest numbers of learners in Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 in P4 to support improvement in attainment session 24/25. The dip in attainment for looked after children triggers a need to review the impact of tracking and support arrangements in place for this group.

Trajectory for 2024/25 – Between 77% and 82% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 24/25.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Writing Combined

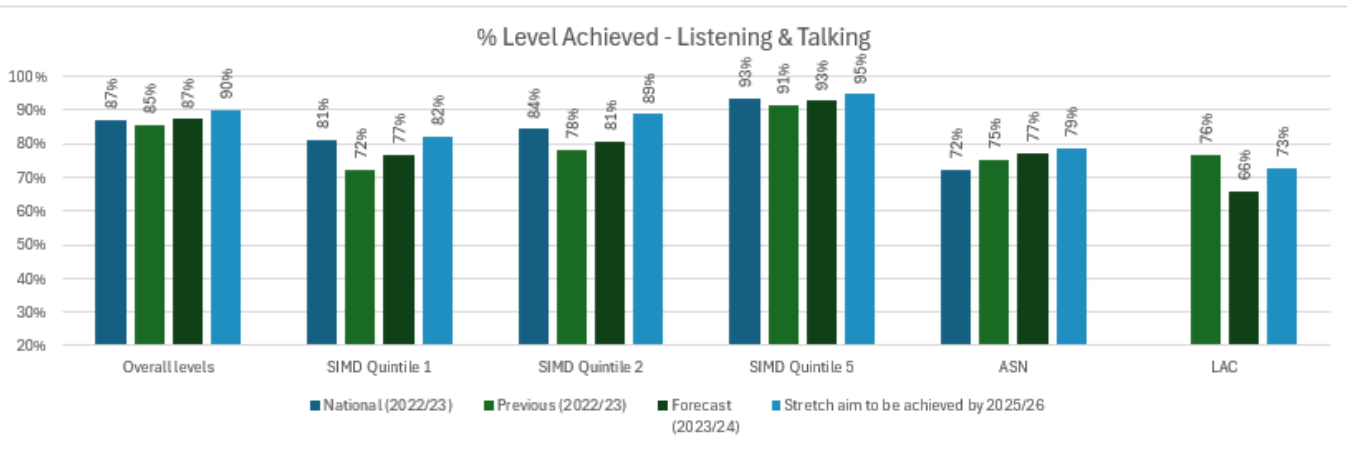
	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	75%	66%	71%	86%	-19.5pp	53%	
Previous (2022/23)	73%	58%	65%	83%	-25pp	59%	65%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(74% - 75%)	(62% - 63%)	(67% - 68%)	(84% - 85%)	23pp to -21pp	(60% - 62%)	(67% - 70%)
Forecast (2023/24)	76%	61%	67%	85%	-22.1pp	61%	29%
Trajectory (2024/25)	(78% - 79%)	(65% - 69%)	(70% - 72%)	(86% - 87%)	18pp to -21pp	(61% - 62%)	(67% - 70%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(1% - 3%)	(3% - 7%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(0% - 1%)	(2% - 3%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	82%	76%	76%	88%	-13pp	63%	70%

ACEL Listening and Talking

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

Attainment is forecast to increase from 85% session 22/23 to 87% session 23/24. 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 the level of improvement, however we have achieved our trajectory for this measure. As a result of this, we have altered our trajectory for session 24/25 to reflect the improvement required to meet our stretch aim for 2025/26. There is a need to target supports to the P5 year group in session 24/25 as well as reintroduce more targeted use of Talkboost and Early Talkboost resources in the Nursery – P3 year groups

Trajectory for 2024/25 – Between 88% and 89% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 24/25.



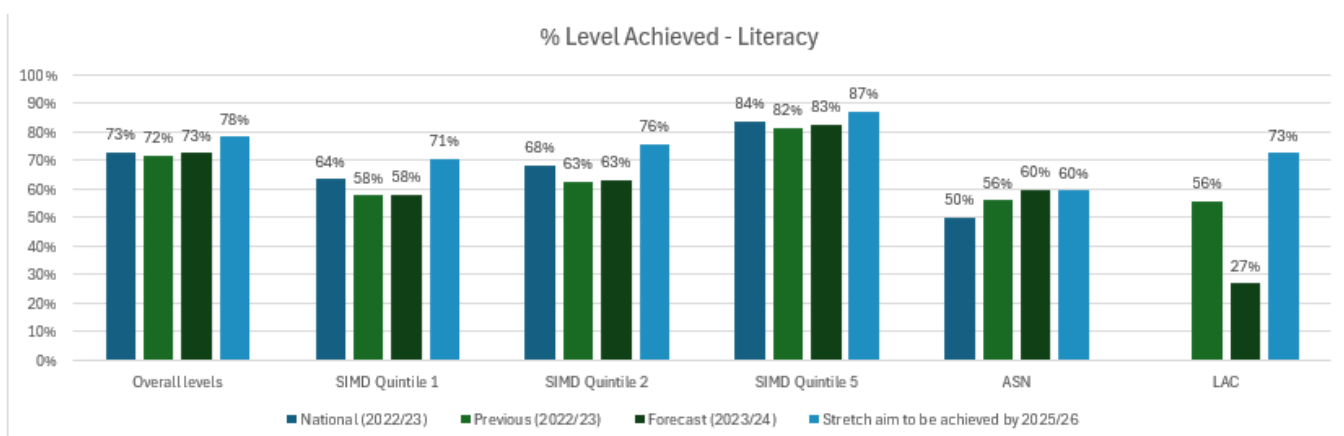
	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	87%	81%	84%	93%	-12pp	72%	
Previous (2022/23)	85%	72%	78%	91%	-19pp	75%	76%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(86% - 87%)	(74% - 75%)	(80% - 81%)	(92% - 93%)	-23pp to -21pp	(76% - 77%)	(76% - 77%)
Forecast (2023/24)	87%	77%	81%	93%	-16.0pp	77%	66%
Trajectory (2024/25)	(88% - 89%)	(79% - 80%)	(83% - 85%)	(93% - 94%)	-14pp to -14pp	(78% - 79%)	(66% - 67%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(0% - 1%)	(2% - 2%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(0% - 1%)	(0% - 0%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	90%	82%	89%	95%	-13pp	79%	73%

ACEL Literacy Combined

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

Attainment in Literacy has risen from 72% in 22/23 to 73% in 23/24. Although we have made progress, we have not reached our target trajectory of between 75% and 78%. 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 by a small margin. 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. Work with the CYPIC on writing will increase attainment in the P4 and there is a need for intensive work with those in P5 in order to address the dip in attainment for this year group. The drop in attainment for our Looked after Children (LAC) cohort is consistent across all measures and triggers a need to review tracking and support arrangements.

Trajectory for 2024/25 – Between 74% and 76% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 24/25.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Literacy Combined

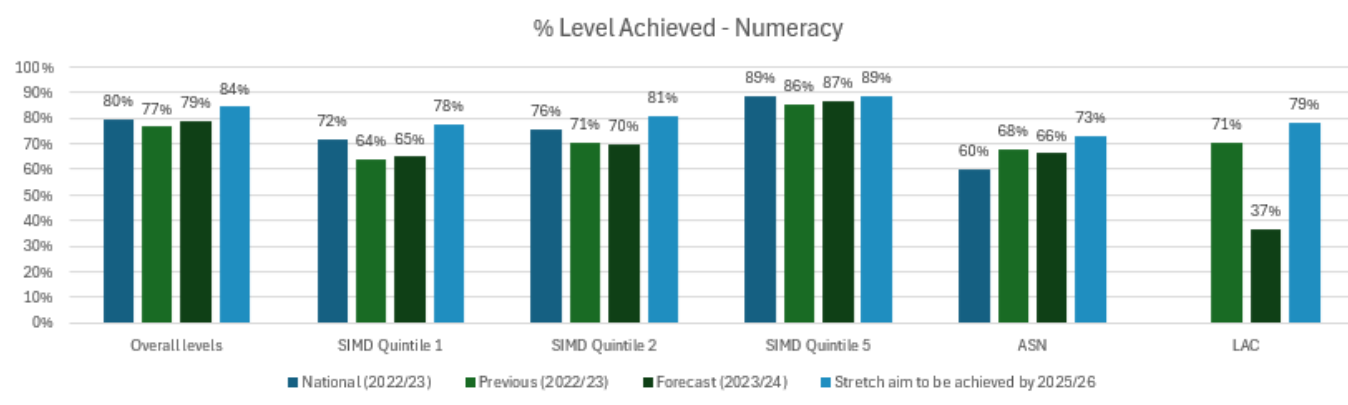
	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	73%	64%	68%	84%	-20pp	50%	
Previous (2022/23)	72%	58%	63%	82%	-24pp	56%	56%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(73% - 74%)	(61% - 62%)	(65% - 67%)	(83% - 84%)	23pp to -21pp	(57% - 58%)	(59% - 63%)
Forecast (2023/24)	73%	58%	63%	83%	-24.6pp	60%	27%
Trajectory (2024/25)	(74% - 75%)	(61% - 63%)	(66% - 68%)	(84% - 85%)	22pp to -23pp	(61% - 62%)	(59% - 63%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(1% - 2%)	(3% - 4%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(1% - 2%)	(2% - 6%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	78%	71%	76%	87%	-17pp	60%	73%

ACEL Numeracy

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

The forecast for 23/24 shows we have improved on 22/23 levels in numeracy overall. The gap between Q1 and Q5 has increased and there is a need to focus on those learners in Q1 and Q2. Interventions will be targeted in order to close the gap as part of a city wide plan to improve numeracy with a focus on transition points. During session 24/25 we will review our planning for numeracy and look to focus on early intervention targeting pupils in P5 initially. In addition to this a numeracy working group will be established to review the curriculum on offer at BGE and senior phase.

Trajectory for 2024/25 – Between 80% and 82% of learners will achieve predicted levels by the end of school session 24/25.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Numeracy Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	80%	72%	76%	89%	-17.0pp	60%	
Previous (2022/23)	77%	64%	71%	86%	-21pp	68%	71%
Trajectory (2023/24)	(79% - 80%)	(67% - 69%)	(74% - 75%)	(86% - 87%)	23pp to -21pp	(65% - 67%)	(73% - 75%)
Forecast (2023/24)	79%	65%	70%	87%	-22.1pp	66%	37%
Trajectory (2024/25)	(80% - 82%)	(68% - 72%)	(72% - 76%)	(87% - 88%)	16pp to -19pp	(68% - 70%)	(73% - 75%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(1% - 2%)	(2% - 6%)	(2% - 5%)	(0% - 1%)		(1% - 3%)	(2% - 3%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	84%	78%	81%	89%	-11pp	73%	79%

SQA results for session 23/24

The SQA release at this time only represents a partial picture of the success of our young people. Increasing numbers now opt to take wider, less traditional SCQF courses and the full impact of the success of these only really becomes available when INSIGHT data is published in mid-September. For example, last year, young people achieved success in over 1,200 additional courses at Levels, 5, 6 and 7 (including Foundation Apprenticeships). Our forecast is that the broadening of curriculum offer and introduction of ABZ Campus will have extended the number and range of these courses in 2024, with a projection of in excess of 1800.

High Level Analysis

There were 4,675 young people in the senior phase of our secondary schools at the point of school census in September 2023. This is 210 more than the census of September 2022 (4,465).

The number of presentations at National 5 increased to **11,236** in 2024 from 10,660 in 2023, an increase of 576 and the highest number on record for the local authority. At National 5, the A-C pass rate for 2024 was **73.3%**. This has decreased from 74.6% in 2023. The National pass rate has decreased by 1.6% from 2023 and currently sits at 77.2%. Aberdeen City results follow the national trend. Our relative position at National 5 (when comparing our results with the other Local Authorities) has increased by 1. We are now sitting 26th out of 32 Local Authorities, but have a higher proportion of entries than others.

The number of presentations at Higher increased to **5,944** in 2024 from 5,689 in 2023, an increase of 255 and the highest number on record for the local authority. At Higher, the A-C pass rate for 2024 was **73.59%**. This represents a decrease from 75.02% in 2023. The National pass rate has decreased by 2.2% from 2023 and currently sits at 74.9%. Aberdeen City results follows the national trend. Our relative position at Higher (when comparing our results with the other Local Authorities) has increased by 6. We are now sitting at 14th out of 32 Local Authorities, with an increased number of entries.

The number of presentations at Advanced Higher increased to **889** in 2024 from 815 in 2023, an increase of 74 and the highest number on record for the local authority. At Advanced Higher, the A-C pass rate for 2024 was **72.33%**, a decrease from 79.51% in 2023. The National pass rate has decreased by 4.3% from 2023 and currently sits at 75.3%. Broadly, Aberdeen City results follow the national trend, but we need to understand our larger dip more fully. Our relative position at Advanced Higher (when comparing our results of the other Local Authorities) is now sitting at 16th out of 32, a fall of 8, but with an increased number of entries.

A-C Attainment (%)		
National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
73.29%	73.59%	72.33%
(2023) 74.68%	(2023) 75.02%	(2023) 79.51%

At National 5, **35.58%** of presentations achieved an A grade in 2024, a decrease from 36.27% in 2023. At Higher **31.56%** of presentations achieved an A grade in 2024, a

decrease from 34.22% in 2023. At Advanced Higher, **29.47%** of presentations achieved an A grade, a decrease from 32.39% in 2023.

A Attainment (%)		
National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
35.58%	31.56%	29.47%
(2023) 36.27%	(2023) 34.22%	(2023) 32.39%

As outlined, schools presented a record number of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher presentations in 2024. Although there is a corresponding increase in school roll, there is evidence of a continued steady increase in the number of presentations for SQA awards per pupil. This rise demonstrates increasing ambition for young people across the school community amongst school staff, parents and carers and importantly young people.

At National 5 in S4, the per pupil presentation increased to **5.49** in 2024 from 5.22 in 2023, an increase of 0.27. At Higher in S5, the per pupil presentation maintained at **3.68** in 2024 from the same figure in 2023. At Advanced Higher in S6, the per pupil presentation increased to **1** in 2024 from 0.95 in 2023, an increase of 0.05.

Average Attainment Per Pupil		
National 5 in S4	Higher in S5	Advanced Higher in S6
5.49	3.68	1
(2023) 5.22	(2023) 3.68	(2023) 0.95

Highlights

National 5

- Our National 5 results placed our percentage A passes at 14th out of 32 local authorities (down four places from 2023), and our A-C passes at 26th out of 32 local authorities (up one place from 2023).

Selected National 5 Highlights by Subject

- 1,482 young people in S4 took National 5 English with 42.11% achieving an A pass and 86.44% achieving A-C.
- 379 young people in S4 took National 5 Business Management with 36.94% achieving an A pass and 77.84% achieving A-C.
- 891 young people in S4 took National 5 Maths with 49.27% achieving an A pass and 72.28% achieving A-C.
- 548 young people in S4 took National 5 Physical Education with 41.06% achieving an A pass and 90.42% achieving A-C.
- 190 young people in S4 took National 5 Music with 43.16% achieving an A pass and 84.21% achieving A-C.

Higher

- Our Higher results placed our percentage A passes at 5th out of 32 local authorities (up one place from 2023), and our A-C passes at 14th out of 32 local authorities (up six places from 2023).

Selected Higher Highlights by subject

- 389 young people were presented for Higher Biology with 31.88% achieving an A pass and 74.4% achieving A-C.
- 1,034 young people were presented for Higher English with 27.18% achieving an A pass and 72.44% achieving A-C.
- 673 young people were presented for Higher Maths with 42.94% achieving an A pass and 70.43 achieving A-C.
- 141 young people were presented for Higher Music with 38.30% achieving A pass and 86.52% achieving A-C.

Advanced Higher

- Our Advanced Higher results placed our percentage A passes at 6th out of 32 local authorities (up one place from 2023), and our A-C passes 16th out of 32 local authorities (down 8 places from 2023).

Selected Advanced Higher Highlights by subject

45 young people sat Advanced Higher English in Aberdeen City s

This is only part of the qualification picture for our young people and we will be reviewing once we have access to all the wider qualifications when INSIGHT is published in September.

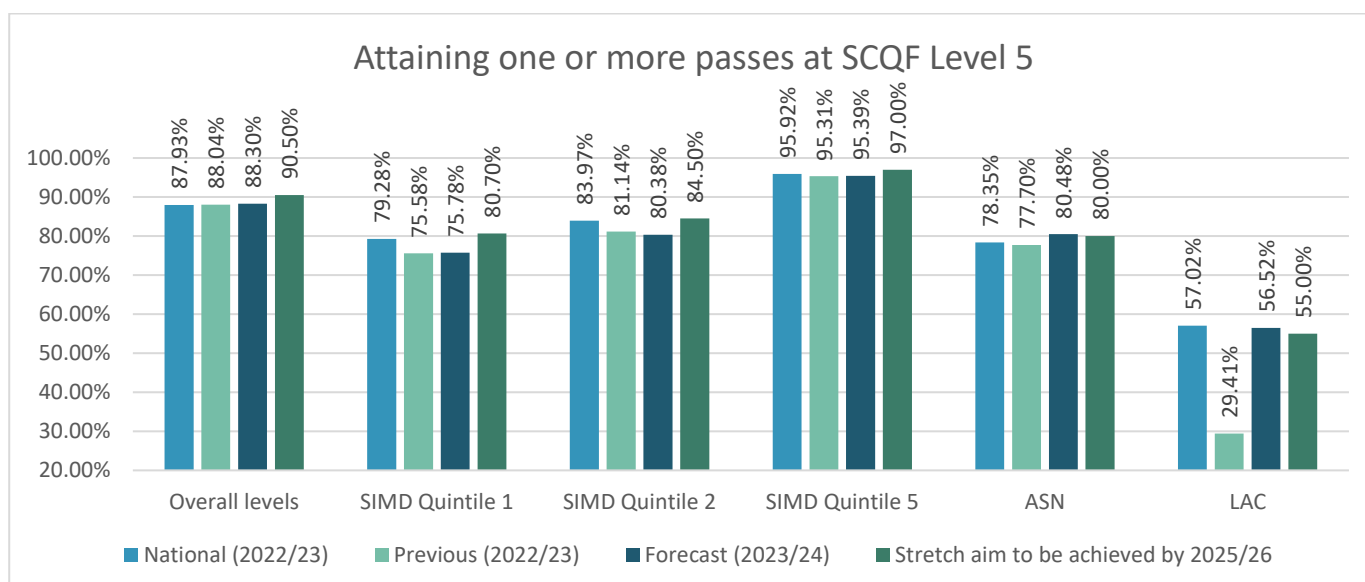
Schools with 80% passing at A-C and all at A-D.

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 for leavers. The data shows pandemic impacts for the most disadvantaged learners and schools are working to narrow this gap between Q1 to Q5, moving from a forecast of 19.61pp to at least 18.61 percentage points for 2024/25. Attainment for ASN is above our upper trajectory and for looked after children has improved at this level however we need to consider the number of young people this relates to.

Target for 2024/25 – Between 88.8% and 89.3% of young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 by the end of 24/25.



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

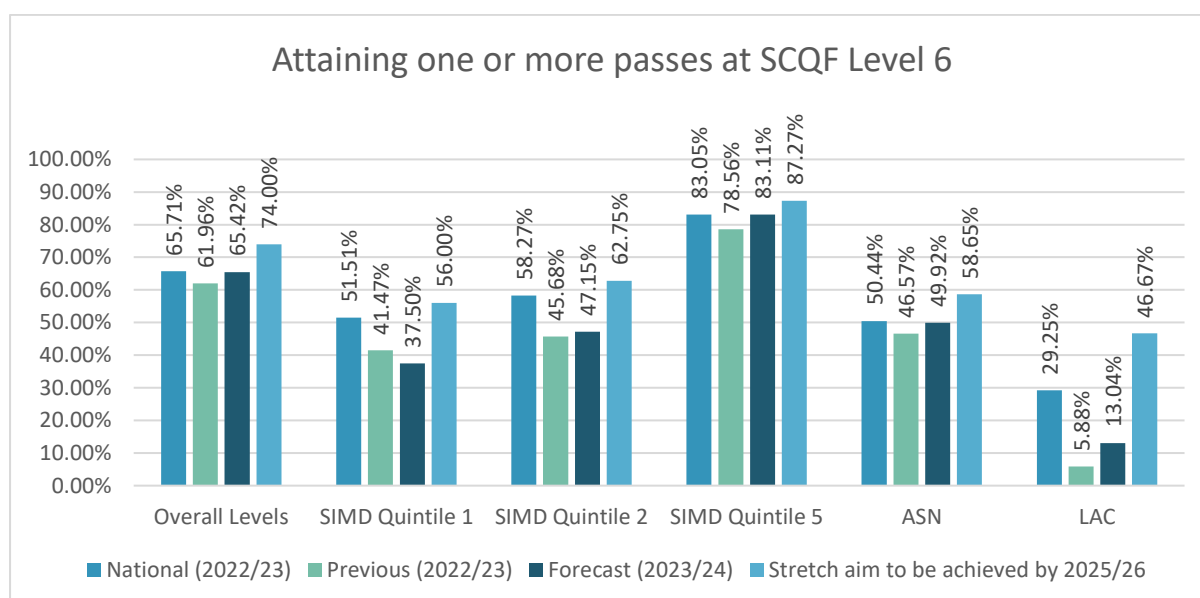
	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	87.93%	79.28%	83.97%	95.92%	16.64%	78.35%	57.02%
Previous (2022/23)	88.04%	75.58%	81.14%	95.31%	19.73%	77.70%	29.41%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2023/24	(89.00% - 89.50%)	(76.50% - 77.50%)	(81.50% - 82.50%)	(94.50% - 95.50%)	(-18.00pp to -18.00pp)	(79.00% - 80.00%)	(36.00% - 40.00%)
Forecast (2023/24)	88.30%	75.78%	80.38%	95.39%	-19.61pp	80.48%	56.52%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(88.80% - 89.30%)	(76.78% - 78.28%)	(81.38% - 82.63%)	(95.39% - 96.59%)	(-18.61pp to -18.31pp)	(80.48% - 80.48%)	(56.52% - 56.52%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(0.5pp - 1.00pp)	(1.0pp - 2.50pp)	(1.0pp - 2.25pp)	(0.0pp - 1.20pp)		(0.0pp - 0.00pp)	(0.0pp - 0.00pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	90.50%	80.70%	84.50%	97.00%	16.30pp	80.00%	55.00%

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 2023-24 and for the coming year, secondary schools will continue to develop a broader curriculum offer and this, combined with the ongoing work of ABZ Campus, should see progress made against stretch aims in this measure. Further broadening of the curriculum at school level will be a focus for session 2024/25 and this will reduce the gap between Q1 and Q5 from 45.61 percentage points to 42.61pp by 2024/25.

Target for 2024/25 – Between 66.42% and 70.42% of young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 by the end of 24/25.



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

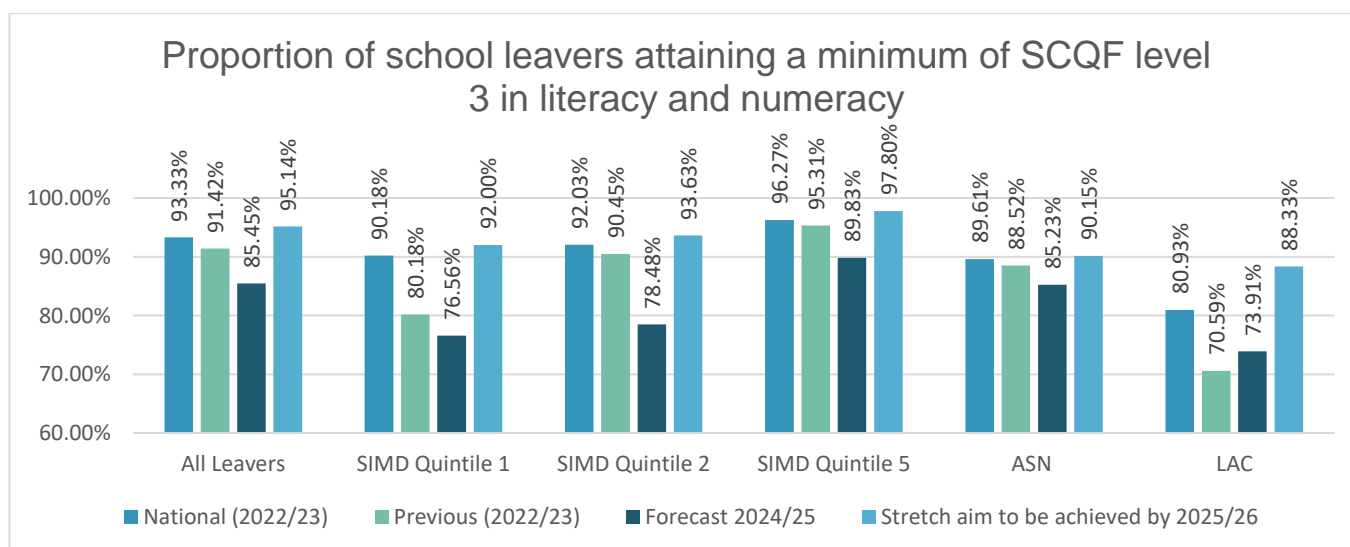
	Overall Levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1-Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	65.71%	51.51%	58.27%	83.05%	-31.54pp	50.44%	29.25%
Previous (2022/23)	61.96%	41.47%	45.68%	78.56%	-37.09pp	46.57%	5.88%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2023/24	(65.00% - 68.00%)	(41.00% - 44.50%)	(49.00% - 53.00%)	(84.00% - 84.75%)	(-43.00pp to -40.25pp)	(48.00% - 51.00%)	(22.00% - 27.67%)
Forecast (2023/24)	65.42%	37.50%	47.15%	83.11%	-45.61pp	49.92%	13.04%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(66.42% - 70.42%)	(41.50% - 47.50%)	(50.15% - 56.15%)	(84.11% - 85.11%)	(-42.61pp to -37.61pp)	(50.92% - 54.92%)	(15.04% - 30.04%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(1.0pp - 5.00pp)	(4.0pp - 10.00pp)	(3.0pp - 9.00pp)	(1.0pp - 2.00pp)		(1.0pp - 5.00pp)	(2.0pp - 17.00pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	74.00%	56.00%	62.75%	87.27%	31.27pp	58.65%	46.67%

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 benchmark 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. Accurate forecasting relies on consistent data being available. In readiness for results in August 2024, the SQA announced changes to the way they would provide data, removing incomplete entries, and this has clouded the ability to provide such a forecast. The figure of 85.45% represents what is known, and that is as far as the forecast will take us. However, there is confidence that the final figure will exceed this and be more broadly in line with targets.

Target for 2024/25 – Between 87.45% and 90.95% of young people will attain a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in literacy and numeracy by the end of school session 24/25.



* forecast is impacted by the changes to the way SQA made data available for August 2024.

	All Leavers	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	93.33%	90.18%	92.03%	96.27%	8.05%	89.61%	80.93%
Previous (2022/23)	91.42%	80.18%	90.45%	95.31%	6.12%	88.52%	70.59%
Trajectory to be achieved over 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%)
Forecast 2023/24	85.45%	76.56%	78.48%	89.83%	-13.27pp	85.23%	73.91%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(87.45% - 90.95%)	(77.56% - 84.56%)	(79.48% - 81.48%)	(89.83% - 90.05%)	(-12.27pp to -5.49pp)	(85.23% - 85.73%)	(73.91% - 76.91%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(2.0pp - 5.50pp)	(1.0pp - 8.00pp)	(1.0pp - 3.00pp)	(0.0pp - 0.22pp)		(0.0pp - 0.50pp)	(0.0pp - 3.00pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	95.14%	92.00%	93.63%	97.80%	5.80pp	90.15%	88.33%

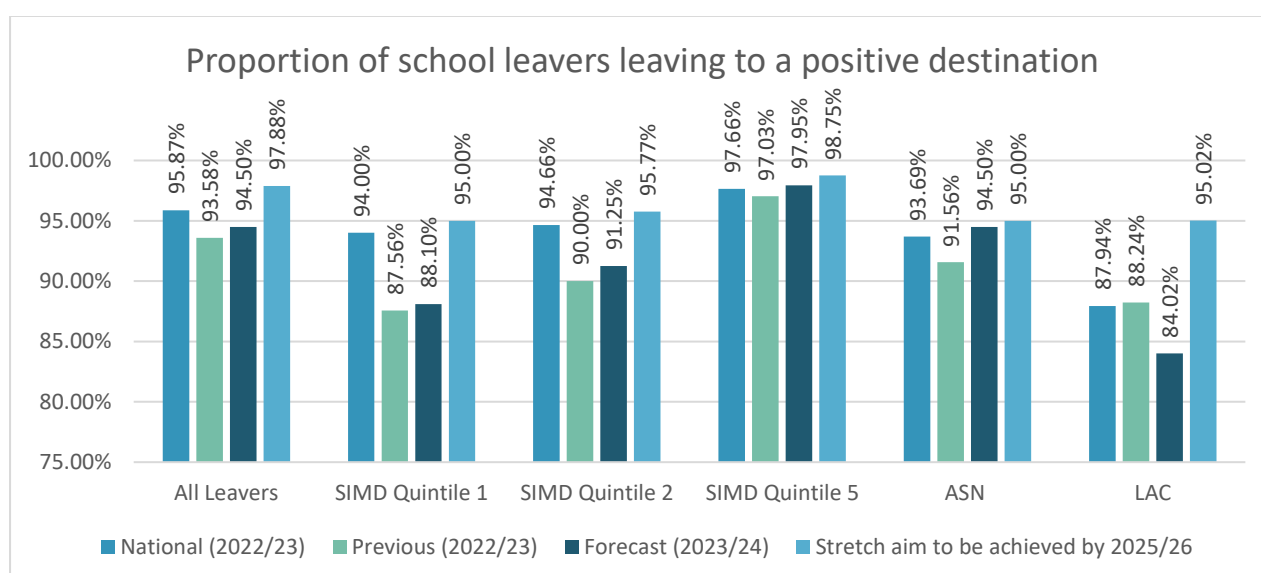
* forecast is impacted by the changes to the way SQA made data available for August 2024.

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. Our forecast for 23/24, following the immediate post-pandemic period, is predicting a small increase in the positive destination figures (94.50% from 93.58%), however, as distance grows from the pandemic and work with schools to improve pathway planning progresses, there is growing confidence that the target of between 96.21% and 96.55% by the end of session 2024/25 is within reach.

Target for 2023/24 – Between 96.21% and 96.55% of young people will enter an initial positive destination by the end of school session 24/25.



Proportion of school leavers leaving to a positive destination

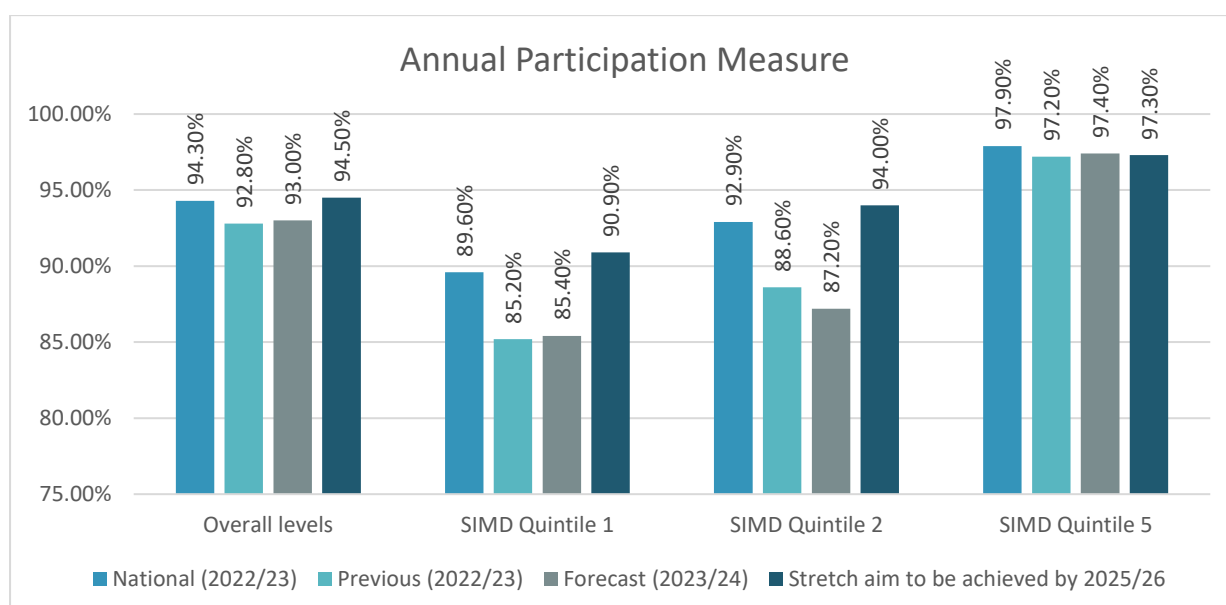
	All Leavers	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	95.87%	94.00%	94.66%	97.66%	-3.66pp	93.69%	87.94%
Previous (2022/23)	93.58%	87.56%	90.00%	97.03%	-9.47pp	91.56%	88.24%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2023/24	(96.21% - 96.55%)	(93.71% - 93.97%)	(95.35% - 95.44%)	(98.08% - 98.22%)	(-4.38pp to -4.25pp)	(94.58% - 94.67%)	(85.85% - 87.69%)
Forecast (2023/24)	94.50%	88.10%	91.25%	97.95%	-9.85pp	94.50%	84.02%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(94.83% - 96.17%)	(90.10% - 92.10%)	(91.75% - 93.77%)	(98.08% - 98.42%)	(-7.98pp to -6.32pp)	(94.58% - 94.84%)	(85.85% - 90.02%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 24/25	(0.3pp - 1.67pp)	(2.0pp - 4.00pp)	(0.5pp - 2.52pp)	(0.1pp - 0.47pp)		(0.1pp - 0.34pp)	(1.8pp - 6.00pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 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 forecast data identifies that 2023/24 saw some progress made (93.00%) from the 2022/23 figure of 92.80%, providing confidence that the target for 2024/25 is achievable. Continued work to support schools in pathway planning will further spread good practice across schools.

Target for 2023/24 – Between 93.38% - 93.77% of young people will be participating in education, employment, or training by the end of school session 24/25.



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

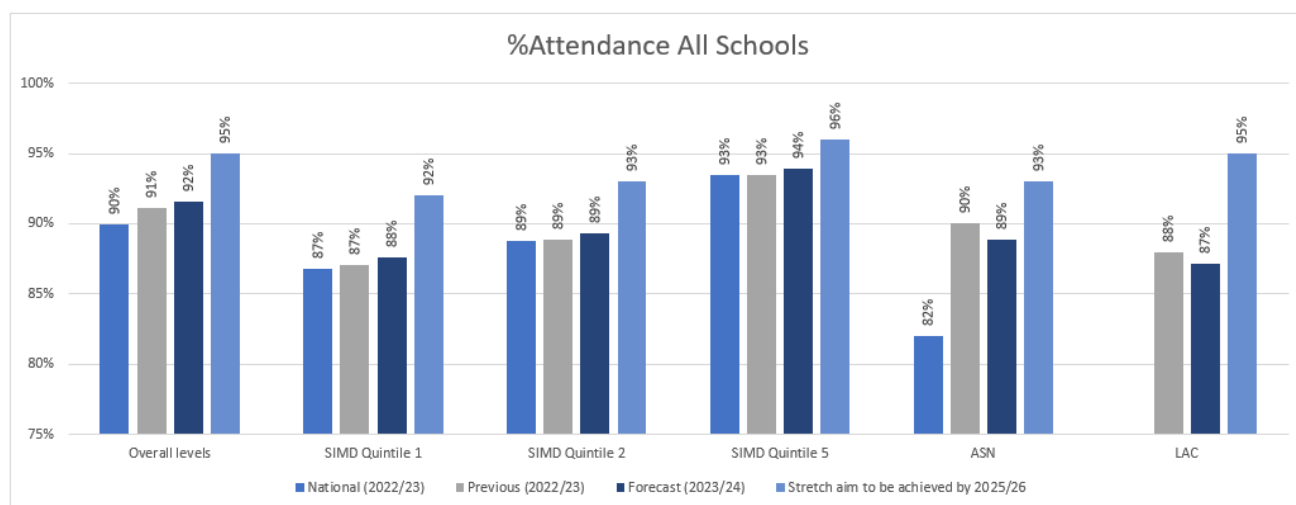
	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5
National (2022/23)	94.30%	89.60%	92.90%	97.90%	8.30%
Previous (2022/23)	92.80%	85.20%	88.60%	97.20%	12.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2023/24	(93.38% - 93.73%)	(86.38% - 88.20%)	(88.37% - 90.00%)	(97.40% - 97.40%)	(-11.02pp to - 9.20pp)
Forecast (2023/24)	93.00%	85.40%	87.20%	97.40%	12.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(93.38% - 93.77%)	(86.38% - 88.10%)	(88.37% - 91.20%)	(97.40% - 97.40%)	(-11.02pp to - 9.30pp)
Improvement (percentage point) for 23/24	(0.4pp - 0.77pp)	(1.0pp - 2.70pp)	(1.2pp - 4.00pp)	(0.0pp - 0.00pp)	
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	94.50%	90.90%	94.00%	97.30%	6.40%

Attendance

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

Effective risk assessments have helped improve pupil levels of attendance at school as indicated in our unvalidated data. Our Guidance on Managing and Promoting Pupil Attendance has been reviewed and further revised to take account of updated national guidance. Most schools have had a relentless focus on supporting attendance. Attendance was the focus of a Head Teacher meeting in February 2024 providing an opportunity for the Assessment Advisor to share the national picture as well as the sharing of interventions currently supporting improvement in schools within the authority. Officers will continue to apply greater scrutiny to the reasons associated with absence in order to identify any patterns, to help improve levels further. Associated School Groups are reviewing trends and working together to develop interventions to improve attendance across communities. Attendance in Aberdeen city compares favourably to other cities.

Target for 2024/25 – Between 92% and 94% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by the end of school session 24/25.



	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	90%	87%	89%	93%	-7pp	82%	
Previous (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%)
Forecast (2023/24)	92%	88%	89%	94%	-6pp	89%	87%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(92% - 93%)	(89% - 91%)	(90% - 91%)	(94% - 96%)	(-5pp to -5pp)	(89% - 90%)	(94% - 103%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	95%	92%	93%	96%	-4pp	93%	95%

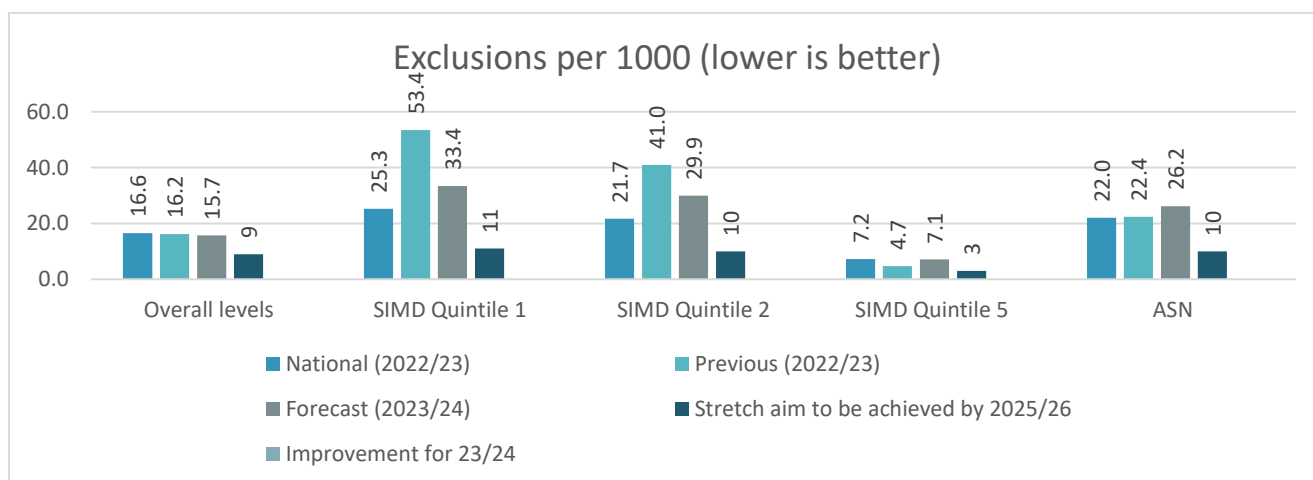
Exclusion

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 22/23 levels of 16.2 per 1000. The length of any exclusion continues to be short. Our Supporting Learners: Minimising Exclusion Policy was reviewed in session 23/24, considering a slightly different post pandemic context being experienced nationally.

Exclusion levels for Looked After Children have increased. We can conclude that our current arrangements are not sufficient and will review arrangements. In the meantime officers will apply greater scrutiny to the reasons associated with exclusions to identify any patterns and interventions, to help reduce these. Q1 and Q2 exclusions have reduced but further improvement is required to achieve our stretch aim. This will be a key consideration as we develop our model of Family Support.

Target for 2024/25 – Reduce exclusions to between 12.1 and 14.1 per 1000 pupils by the end of school session 24/25.



Number of pupils excluded per 1000 pupils (all schools)

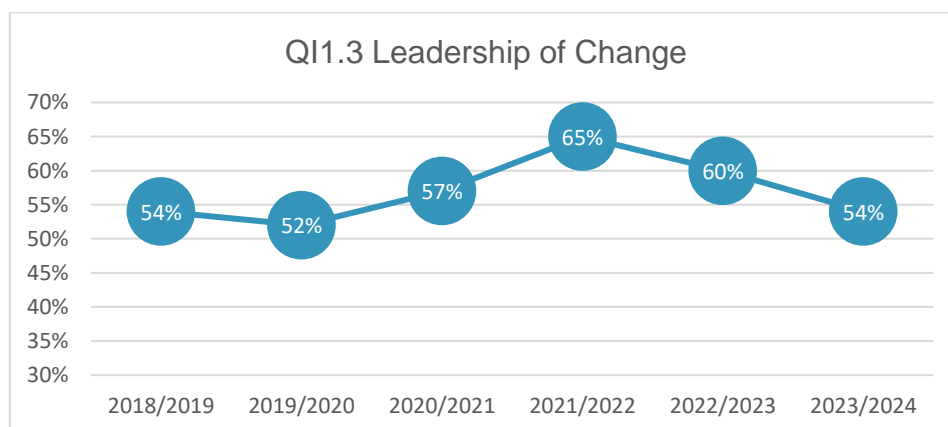
	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	16.6	25.3	21.7	7.2	-18.1	22.0	78.0
Previous (2022/23)	16.2	53.4	41.0	4.7	48.7	22.4	194.59
Trajectory (2023/24)	(14.1 - 12.1)	(20.7 - 25.4)	(20.0 - 24.0)	(6.3 - 5.6)		(24.9 - 23.6)	(77.7 - 59.4)
Forecast (2023/24)	15.7	33.4	29.9	7.1	26.3	26.2	226.8
Trajectory (2024/25)	(14.1 - 12.1)	(20.7 - 25.4)	(20.0 - 24.0)	(6.3 - 5.6)		(24.9 - 23.6)	(77.7 - 59.4)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	9	11	10	3	8	10	30
Improvement for 23/24	(1.6 - 3.6)	(6.4 - 11.1)	(5.9 - 9.9)	(0.8 - 1.5)		(5pp - 10pp)	(15pp - 35pp)

Core Quality Indicators Leadership of Change

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

We continue to see significant changes in our leadership teams across the city with 21% of our Head Teachers either new to the role of Head Teacher or new to the school this session, Quality Indicator 1.3 Leadership of Change has dipped by 6% (3 schools) with 54% of evaluations rated Good or above in 23/24. This reflects the changing landscape of schools at this time. Work continues with our middle leadership group and this is realising increased numbers of leaders coming through the system with a greater understanding of this core QI. This, along with our newly developed Head Teacher induction programme, will support an increase in evaluations in this area in session 24/25.

Target for 2024/25 – 70% of schools will self-evaluate QI1.3 Leadership of Change at good or better by the end of school session 24/25.

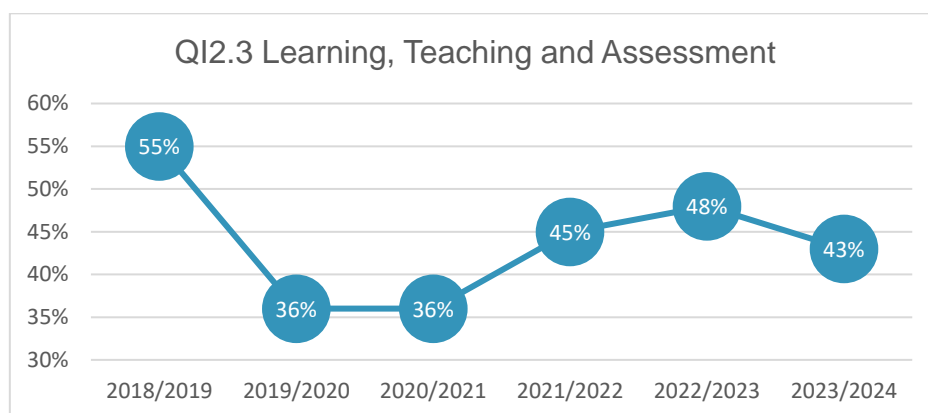


Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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 for all schools. The targeted professional learning throughout 23/24 has resulted in an improved understanding of the national standard and school evaluations align with support categories. This, along with the large turnover in leadership, has resulted in a drop from 48% to 43% (a change in 2 schools) in the number of schools self-evaluating as good or better. Revised quality improvement activity, continued targeted professional learning and work with the Northern Alliance on the learning and teaching toolkit will support improvement in this area and move us towards our aspirational stretch aim.

Target for 2024/25 – 65% of our schools will self-evaluate QI2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment at good or better by the end of school session 24/25.



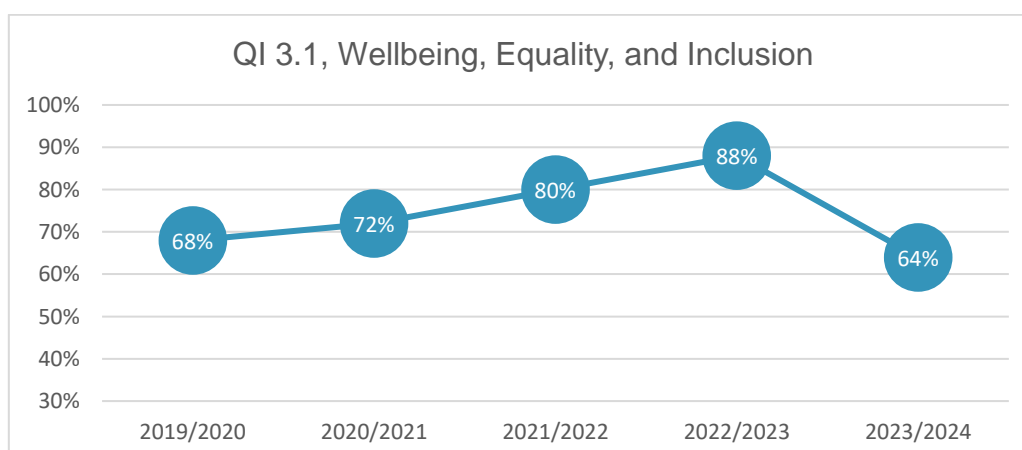
Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion

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

Self-Evaluations of QI 3.1, Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion

Over the last 4 years there has been a strong focus on 3.1 in all schools resulting in a positive trend. Changes in leadership in schools and external validation from HMIE has identified that some evaluations were not in line with national standards in one area of the city in particular and as such, we have seen a dip in evaluations from good to satisfactory in 11 schools across the city, resulting in a drop from 88% to 64% of schools evaluating good or better. This aligns with our quality improvement categories and we are confident that through targeted professional learning and moderation across schools, we will be able to recover the loss experienced this session and continue to move towards our aspirational stretch aim of 100% of schools self-evaluating good or better by June 2026.

Target for 2024/25 – 90% of schools will evaluate QI 3.1 at good or better by the end of school session 24/25.



External Evaluation of Core Quality Indicators

Although there were a limited number of schools visited (6) during session 23/24 the assessments made serve as useful benchmarking of trend data in the context of external evaluation. At academic year end, averaged scores of Good (4) for Aberdeen City, against each of the individual QI evaluations conducted reflected the outcomes below:

Quality of Primary, Secondary and Special School Education Provision (Education Scotland) - % Averaged Inspection Score of Good by Core Quality Indicator

Year	Leadership of change	Learning, teaching and assessment	Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Raising attainment and achievement	Overall Quality Indicator Outcome
2023/24	91.7%	75.0%	112.5%	79.2%	84.4%
2022/23	80.0%	68.0%	75.0%	75.0%	78.8%

The percentage value of 112.5% indicates that we are performing beyond an average of Good in this measure.

This data, based on our aggregated capacity for improvement, is suggestive that, at least in the context of this limited external evaluation, work being delivered through the current Quality Improvement Framework, and lessons learned over the course of the inspection year, are delivering some gains.

So how well do we improve outcomes for all?

There is considerable evidence that the Quality Improvement Framework is improving central oversight of the quality of provision and clarifying expectations. There is a need to continue to review arrangements, and the consistent application of arrangements, on a yearly basis.

There is evidence that some middle leaders seeking headships have not fully developed their skills in improvement planning and this area and this area needs to be addressed. In general, the quality of improvement planning is improving. There are examples of middle leaders lacking the confidence to lead a school when there is a vacant head teacher post. This significantly diminishes the capacity of the central team. This will be addressed through our Middle Leadership programme over 2024/25.

There is evidence that most school leaders make effective use of data dashboards and most staff have increased confidence in identifying the gap at class, faculty and school level. Professional learning in this area will continue in session 24/25. Data across ACEL is generally improving, attainment at the senior phase will be further reviewed when Insight is published in September given the broader range of courses available to young people in our schools.

We set ambitious stretch aims in 2022/23 but did not envisage the increase in school roll. The increase in roll has resulted in an increase in staff new to the authority and in

the majority of cases these are newly qualified staff, there are some challenges recruiting to some secondary specialisms. We continue to be one of the authorities with the lowest average age of staff (37). We are not currently meeting all of our stretch aims however improved tracking, moderation, more stable school population and understanding of data should lead to a further uplift in data for session 24/25.

It is encouraging to see that mental health outcomes are in line with or above national in most measures and that our young people's health is improving. The development of the Family Support Model, and implementation of our agreed Behaviour Plan should bring increased readiness for learning in some.

Our professional learning offer is well received. Although there is evidence of the offer from a range of internal and external partners is becoming more aligned, there is still work to do to help better understand the elements that make the greatest difference. This will be developed further over 2024/25.

Across the local authority there is an inclusive learning culture. Almost all young people have access to a curriculum which meets their needs and are supported well in order to achieve. A small number of young people are currently on a flexible pathway. The widening curriculum on offer at both school and through ABZ Campus is supporting all young people to access appropriate pathways in order to secure positive destinations on leaving school. There may be a need to undertake a thematic review of the provision of flexible pathways following work being undertaken by the Education Psychology Service to understand the effectiveness of arrangements for those with additional support needs .

Historical stay on rates are now being challenged and there has been an increase in the number of young people continuing in school S4 to S5 from 81% in 2018/19 to 83% in 2022/23 and for learners staying from S4 to S6 from 48% in 2018/19 to 52% in 2022/23. Increasing the breadth of the curriculum on offer should see this increase further during session 2024/25.

The following section outlines our plans for next session.

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 Session 25/26

Excellence

Stretch Aims and targets for 25/26

- ✦ 85% of all schools will self- evaluate Quality Indicator1.3 (leadership of change) at good or better by 2026 (current baseline 54% and target for 24/25 70%)
- ✦ 80% of all school will self-evaluate Quality Indicator 2.3 (learning teaching and Assessment) at good or better by 2026 (current baseline 43% and target for 24/25 65%)
- ✦ 85% of pupils will achieve Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (ACEL)reading (P1,4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 79% and target for 24/25 81% - 82%)
- ✦ 82% of pupils will achieve ACEL writing (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 76% and target for 24/25 77% – 82%)
- ✦ 90% of pupils will achieve ACEL Listening and Talking (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026.(forecast baseline 87% and target for 23/24 88%-89%)
- ✦ 84% of pupils will achieve ACEL Numeracy (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026. (forecast baseline 79% and target for 24/25 80% - 82%)
- ✦ 78% of pupils will achieve ACEL Literacy (P1, P4 and P7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 73% and target for 24/25 74%-76%)
- ✦ Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)level 5 to 90.5% by 2026. Current baseline 88.3% and target for 24/25 set at 88.8%-89.3%
- ✦ Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at SCQF Level 6 to 74% by 2026. Current baseline 65.42% and target for 24/25 set at 66.42%-70.42%%
- ✦ Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF L3 in literacy and numeracy to 95% by 2026. Current baseline 85.45% and target for 24/25 87.45% - 90.95%
- ✦ Increase the proportion of school leavers entering an initial positive destination to 97.88% by 2026. Current baseline 94.5% and target for 24/25 set at 96.21% -96.55%
- ✦ 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 93% and target for 24/25 set at 93.38%-93.77%

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the leadership of change in schools			
Build leadership capacity and capability through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a coordinated professional learning programme • involvement of middle leaders in quality assurance arrangements • analysis of surveys of staff, parents and learners to inform Quality Improvement activity 	All QIMs, supporting Associate Assessors and ESO	August	Improvement in QI 1.3 (Baseline 54% and Target 70%)
Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment and curriculum in schools			
Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment (pace, and challenge) by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborating with the Regional Improvement Collaborative to publish the Toolkit • the phased deployment of additional digital tools and a new digital identity • continued roll out of the national improvement in writing programme. • developing and testing an approach to improve numeracy curriculum with a focus on transitions • development of a city wide literacy offer for children, young people and adult learners • working with practitioners to develop an ELC standard to support improvement in pedagogical understanding • ensure a robust application of the new tracking system and use of the digital data tools with an 	QIM (curriculum BGE) QIO (Digital) QIM (CtG) QIO QIO (Curriculum) QIM team	Ongoing August 2024 August 2024 June 2025	Improvement of core QI 2.3 (baseline 43% and target 65%) Improvement in CYPIC and ACEL writing data (baseline 70.3% and target 72%) Improvement in numeracy ACEL data, particularly at transition points Published literacy offer available for citizens and city voice survey showing that it is known about Increase in the levels awarded for quality of play and learning in inspections (baseline 86.2% and target 90%)

increased focus on care experienced children and young people			Increase attainment for care experienced children and young people.
Continue to improve the quality of universal health and wellbeing supports			
<p>Improve health and wellbeing support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to encourage children and young people to be more physically active including those with sensory and other identified needs Shaping and delivering a whole system approach to the healthy weight of children and young people in partnership with others 	QIM (HWB), PEPAS	Ongoing	<p>Increased number of opportunities for children and young people to be more physically active (baseline 1,151 sessions and target 1300) Engagement as a percentage of school roll (baseline 33% target 40%)</p> <p>Reduced number of children and young people reported as not being of healthy weight</p>
Increase the voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services that directly and indirectly affect them			
<p>Ensure children and young people are involved in decision-making and that we respond to what children and young people tell us they want and need including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to work in collaboration with the Youth Climate Group to work towards Net Zero continuing to engage with Aberdeen Youth Movement 	All 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			
<p>Deliver a broader range of learning pathways through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivery of Phase 2 of ABZ Campus continuing to develop pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs 	QIM (PD), DO QIM (PD), DO		Increase in the range of courses available (baseline 54 and target 66)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that the school curriculum is ideally matched to pupil needs opportunities for CLPL for Computing Science Secondary Staff and staff across BGE 			Improvement in destinations(Baseline 94.5% target 96.5%) and participation (Baseline 93% target 93.77%) data
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Equity

<p>Stretch Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> † 100% of schools will evaluate QI3.1 at good or better by 2026. (current baseline 64% and target for 24/25 90%) † 95% of all children will attend school regularly by 2026. Current baseline 92% and target for session 2023/24 (92%-94%) † Reduce levels of exclusion to 9 per 1000 pupils by 2026. Current baseline 15.7 per 1000 and target for 24/25 (14.1 -12.1 per 1000)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs			
<p>Improve the quality of environments and supports by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to implement our accessibility plan On-going roll out of the Circle Framework Evaluate the impact of the Educational Psychology Service on school practice to determine next steps Delivery of the Behaviour Plan Review the provision for supporting learners need Targeted use of TalkBoost 	<p>QIO (ASN), ESO</p> <p>QIM (HWB), (RA) ESOs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Increased attendance at Circle training sessions (baseline 70% target 80%)</p> <p>All staff in schools trained to trauma level 1 All staff trained in de-escalation training</p> <p>Increase number of settings providing bespoke nurture support</p> <p>Reduction in the number of incidents reported in schools by 10% (baseline 1168)</p>
Close the poverty related attainment gap			

<p>Help address the gap and gradient through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with HTs to monitor the impact of PEF interventions • asking every school to have a cost of the school day position statement known by the whole school community • maintaining our focus on attendance levels and termly communication to parents and carers 	<p>QIM (CtG) QIMs/QIOs QIM(CtG) QIMs/QIOs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Increased attainment as a result of interventions</p> <p>All schools have a cost of the school day position statement in school handbook</p> <p>Increase in attendance from baseline (92 – 93%)</p>
<p>Prevent families from experiencing poverty wherever possible</p>			
<p>Continue to work in collaboration to address the root cause of poverty through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeting families most in need of our help by sharing data • the provision of Money Advisors • working with the third sector to support foodbanks and uniform swaps and target families in need of assistance 	<p>QIM (CtG)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All data sharing agreements in place</p> <p>Increased number of benefits claimed through Money Advisors etc baseline (benefit checks 163 benefit claims 54)</p>
<p>Partnership Delivery of the Family Support Model in keeping with the Promise</p>			
<p>Delivery of The Promise through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing oversight arrangements for those who are cared for out of authority • expanding our Edge of Care pilots to St Machar • supporting the development of our Family Support Model test and aligning SAC resource • implementing our Request for Assistance 	<p>QIMs QIMs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Reduce the number of young people going into care</p> <p>Increase support for families and young people on the edge of care</p> <p>Raise the attainment of our Care Experienced young people</p>

			<p>Targeted and accessible support available to families. Families report that they are able to access support when they need it</p> <p>Improved data sharing between third sector and services to reduce overlap of support</p>
Addressing inequality			
<p>Continue to address inequality by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all secondary schools registering with Equally Safe at School and ensure key staff complete the e-module secondary schools to review their RSHP curriculum continuing to support all secondary schools to establish effective systems to support LGBTQIA+ community in school primary schools to pilot primary Mentors Against Violence programme and full roll out across secondary 	<p>QIO (Equity)</p> <p>QIO (Equality)</p>	<p>August 2024</p>	<p>Reduction in number of children and young people reporting low confidence, self-esteem (baseline P6/7 - 12% and target 9%; baseline S1-6 – 15% and target 11%)</p> <p>Reduction in the number of incidents and near misses in schools (baseline 1168)</p>

Strategic Enablers

Workforce - Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
High quality professional learning for all			

			Improved knowledge of authority policies and procedures Reduction in the operation support required by central officers
Continue to support staff health and wellbeing			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver staff wellbeing surveys • Continue to signpost staff to corporate supports for health and wellbeing and highlight case studies • Monitor compliance in the application of corporate staffing policies 	QIM (HWB) ESOs	August 2024 – bi-annual survey	Improvement in staff wellbeing and related responses Reduction in number of staff absences
Monitor workforce levels 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. • Build in performance management and absence reporting expectations for HT network and DHT network (CLPL planned) 	QIM (CtG) / EY Service Managers	Ongoing	Maintain high levels of staffing Pre and post evaluations demonstrate an increase in understanding of policies and procedures
Continue to develop School Profiles			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the consistency of effective use of school profiles and ensure access for all 	QIMs/QIOs/	Ongoing	100% of data discussions reference power Bi tools as part of Quality Improvement More robust dialogue with HTs / SLT about data – data discussions / QI visits / SLT level
Implement improved tracking and reporting			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory data training sessions for senior leaders which includes BGE tracker, H&WB data, School Profiles, etc this should also cover analysis of data and planning next steps, and transition at all levels Data training for all staff to ensure accountability through the system City wide programme of moderation including work with university to ensure alignment with undergraduate training programme 	<p>QIM (curriculum BGE)</p> <p>QIM (CtG)</p> <p>QIM (PD)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 2024</p>	<p>Improvement in closing the gap measures</p> <p>Improvement in QI 1.3 and confidence in the data to ensure early intervention to support raising attainment</p> <p>Increased confidence levels of all staff setting targets based on data analysis – questions to be built into data discussion for all levels</p>
<p>Collaborate with partners to join data sets when beneficial to do so</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve data sharing processes to support planning and implementation of interventions e.g. PEPASS, Health 	<p>ESO (HWB)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Improvement in all core QIs</p>
<p>Increase central oversight of tracking data and PEF impact measures</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor the use of the Equity tracker and provide support through the Equity Network sessions 	<p>QIM (CtG)</p>	<p>Ongoing from August 2024</p>	<p>Consistent tracking of PEF data and improvement in closing the gap measures</p> <p>Increased consistency of tracking PEF interventions and confidence in analysis of this</p>
<p>Partnership - Programme/projects</p>	<p>Lead</p>	<p>From when</p>	<p>Measures</p>
<p>Clear expectations around the Core Quality Indicators</p>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the refreshed Quality Improvement Framework to help improve standards against the core Quality Indicators 	QIMs	August 2024	Improvement in all core QIs
Continually improve central Quality Improvement approaches			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement quality improvement calendar (QIC) which provides well planned, focused quality improvement activity 	QIMs/QIOs	Ongoing	Robust quality improvement processes involving all members of school SLT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the effectiveness of activities within the QIC 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"> Continue to support delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant 	QIM (CtG)		Families report information assessable and easy to access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align partnership forum activity with the family support model building on good practice in existence 	QIM (CtG)		Improvement in closing the gap measures - reduction in duplication of support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh trio model and involve the Associate Assessors in supporting quality improvement activity. 			Increase in the number of schools moving from Category 3 to Category 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop collaboration with locality leads / QI team 			Increased support and challenge across the system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved transition across the city 			Improved alignment across expectations from care Inspectorate and HMle
			Consistency of approaches, meet minimum expectations and build on good practice EY-P1, across stages and P7-S1
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 • Stronger family series to be further developed • Develop and implement the Parental Involvement & Engagement Plan 	QIM (HWB), ESO ESO	Ongoing Ongoing	Consistent communication with parents and carers. Key themes linked to wellbeing survey and support improved attendance, reduction in screen time and increased confidence around body image Refreshed Parental Involvement & Engagement plan from 2024
Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway			
<i>This is now being addressed within the Children's Services plan and led by the Children's Services Board</i>			
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), ASN and Outreach	October 2024	On-going reduction in number of requests for assistance