

Education Scrutiny Committee

Committee Room 2 (FHM05.002), 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes



Tuesday, 19 November 2024 - 10.00 a.m.

AGENDA

Page Nos.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct, members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **MINUTE** – Minute of Meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee of 17 September 2024. 3 – 6
4. **SENIOR PHASE STAGE - BASED OUTCOMES** – Report by the Executive Director, Education Services. 7 – 31
5. **ATTAINMENT IN THE BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION** – Report by the Executive Director, Education Services. 32 – 52
6. **2024-25 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – EDUCATION DIRECTORATE** – Joint Report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director, Education Services. 53 – 57
7. **2024-25 CAPITAL MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT – EDUCATION DIRECTORATE** – Joint Report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director, Education Services. 58 – 62
8. **EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN** – Report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services. 63 – 67

Members are reminded that should they have queries on the detail of a report they should, where possible, contact the report authors in advance of the meeting to seek clarification.

Lindsay Thomson
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Finance and Corporate Services

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12 November 2024

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BLENDED MEETING NOTICE

This is a formal meeting of the Committee and the required standards of behaviour and discussion are the same as in a face to face meeting. Unless otherwise agreed, Standing Orders will apply to the proceedings and the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct will apply in the normal way

For those members who have joined the meeting remotely, if they need to leave the meeting for any reason, they should use the Meeting Chat to advise of this. If a member loses their connection during the meeting, they should make every effort to rejoin the meeting but, if this is not possible, the Committee Officer will note their absence for the remainder of the meeting. If a member must leave the meeting due to a declaration of interest, they should remain out of the meeting until invited back in by the Committee Officer.

If a member wishes to ask a question, speak on any item or move a motion or amendment, they should indicate this by raising their hand at the appropriate time and will then be invited to speak. Those joining remotely should use the "Raise hand" function in Teams.

All decisions taken during this meeting, will be done so by means of a Roll Call vote.

Where items are for noting or where there has been no dissent or contrary view expressed during any debate, either verbally or by the member indicating they wish to speak, the Convener will assume the matter has been agreed.

There will be a short break in proceedings after approximately 90 minutes.

Members joining remotely are reminded to have cameras switched on during meetings and mute microphones when not speaking. During any breaks or adjournments please switch cameras off.

THE FIFE COUNCIL - EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

17 September 2024

10.00 am – 12.20 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Kathleen Leslie (Convener), Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Aude Boubaker-Calder, John Caffrey, Ian Cameron, Eugene Clarke, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Linda Erskine, Julie Ford, Alycia Hayes, Louise Kennedy-Dalby, James Leslie, Lynn Mowatt, Alistair Suttie, Daniel Wilson and Alastair Crockett and Ian Macaulay, Religious Interest representatives.

ATTENDING: Donnie MacLeod, Executive Director, Maria Lloyd, Head of Service, Angela Logue, Head of Service, Shelagh McLean, Head of Service, Gary Peattie, Service Manager, Craig Martin, Quality Improvement Officer, Jacqueline Crawford, Quality Improvement Officer, Stuart Booker, Quality Improvement Officer and Pamela Colburn, Quality Improvement Officer, Education Service; Alison Binnie, Finance Business Partner and Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Finance and Corporate Services.

ALSO ATTENDING: Emma Walker, Chief Executive, Fife Sports and Leisure Trust; and Errin Cummins, Aquatics Development Manager and Sophie McCall, Director of Aquatics Development, Scottish Swimming (for para. 97 only).

Councillor Kathleen Leslie, Convener, on behalf of the committee, welcomed the recently appointed Executive Director, Education, Donnie MacLeod, to his first meeting.

93. CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

Decision

The committee noted that Councillor Caffrey had replaced Councillor Dillon and Councillor Ford had replaced Councillor Neal as members of this committee and welcomed them to their first meeting.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

95. MINUTE

The committee considered the minute of meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee of 7 May 2024.

Decision

The committee approved the minute.

96. EDUCATION DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE FOR 2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service presenting – for scrutiny and comment – the Education Directorate Improvement Plan update for 2024/25 and the Directorate Annual Report 2023/24.

Decision

The committee scrutinised the Directorate Improvement Plan update for 2024/25 and the Directorate Annual Report 2023/24 - which outlined the Education Directorate's approach to improvement of outcomes for children and young people in Fife, within its current budget.

97. SWIMMING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service detailing the current position and future options for supporting swimming for children and young people across Fife, including school swimming lessons and consideration of Scottish Government funding - in response to a motion agreed at a meeting of Fife Council on 16 March 2023.

The committee also considered a short presentation by the Aquatics Development Manager, Scottish Swimming on their role in supporting delivery partners at a local level to plan, organise and prioritise the delivery of school swimming through water safety and basic aquatic skills; and the four levels of the Primary School Swimming Framework, in partnership with Scottish Water, which outlined the varied approaches to implementing school swimming based on local authority needs.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) examined the current swimming offer for children and young people in Fife;
- (2) reviewed the national pilot approaches to school swimming lessons, including funding;
- (3) considered the detailed breakdown of school pupil numbers and associated costs for the provision of swimming lessons across a specific (one) year group over a period of one academic session and comparative costs for the same provision across three-year groups over a shorter period of time. This breakdown included: time cost (impact on learning time); centre availability/hire; and funds available for swimming equipment;
- (4) considered the proposed next steps outlined in the report;
- (5) agreed that an elected member/officer working group be set up to consider, in more detail, the available options and methods of implementing swimming lessons for identified non-swimmers that were accessible and inclusive for all young people – convener to be advised of one nominee from each political group and relevant officers invited to participate; and

- (6) agreed that an outcome report from the working group be submitted for the committee's consideration at a future date with a view to making recommendations on swimming lesson provision to the Cabinet Committee.

98. CHILDCARE SERVICES - EARLY ADOPTER COMMUNITY WORK

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service providing an update on the work carried out within the Childcare Services Team as part of the Early Adopter Community work in the Levenmouth Area.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) considered the information provided and the progress made to date;
- (2) scrutinised the plans to expand the Early Adopter work to other communities in Fife;
- (3) requested an update report on the Early Adopter Community work for consideration at its meeting on 18 March 2025; and
- (4) requested an elected member briefing, in the interim, on the delivery phase of the Levenmouth project and plans to expand the Project Team's learning and research into other areas of Fife and the Cowdenbeath area in particular.

The committee adjourned at 11.35 am and reconvened at 11.45 am.

99. EDUCATION DIRECTORATE: REVENUE BUDGET 2023-24 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services advising members of the provisional outturn for the 2023-24 Education Service Revenue Budget for the areas in scope of the Education Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The committee noted the provisional outturn position (subject to audit) for 2023-24 as detailed in the report and the reasons for the main variances.

100. EDUCATION DIRECTORATE : CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-24 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing information on the provisional outturn for the Education Directorate capital programme for the financial year 2023-24 as well as providing information on the progress on major projects.

Decision

The committee noted the financial position as detailed in the report.

Councillor Caffrey left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

101. 2024-25 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN - EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the projected outturn financial position for the 2024-25 financial year for the Education Directorate as at 30 June 2024.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

102. 2024-25 CAPITAL MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT - EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the projected financial position for the 2024-25 financial year for the Education Directorate.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

103. EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services supporting the committee's consideration of the workplan for future meetings of the committee.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the workplan and suggestions were invited from members of the committee for future areas of scrutiny;
- (2) agreed, as referenced at Paragraph 97 (6) above, to add an update report on swimming for children and young people; and
- (3) agreed, as referenced at Paragraph 98 (3) above, to add an update report on childcare services - early adopter community work to the workplan for the meeting on 18 March 2025.

CONVENER'S VALEDICTORY COMMENTS

Councillor Kathleen Leslie, Convener, on behalf of the committee, thanked Maria Lloyd, Head of Education Service for her support to the committee as lead officer while the Executive Director, Education post remained vacant.

19 November 2024
Agenda Item No. 4

Senior Phase Stage - Based Outcomes

Report by: Donald MacLeod, Executive Director, Education Services

Wards Affected: All Wards

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update following the appeals process on the senior phase of secondary schooling (stages S4 – S6).

This report provides an overview and brief commentary on the senior phase outcomes for Fife for 2024 for cohorts of learners and for specific groups of learners at this current time for SQA, following the appeal process [Appeals service - SQA](#).

The Appeals process included a marking review of your SQA-marked assessments by our most experienced markers, who are also subject-specialist teachers and lecturers.

This was not a re-mark. A marking review checked that:

- all parts of the candidates SQA-assessments were marked
- the marking was in line with national standards
- the marks given for each answer were totalled correctly and
- the correct result was entered on our system.

It should be noted that after being reviewed, the candidate result could stay the same, go up or go down.

This report supersedes the Elected Members briefing provided on 2024 SQA pre-appeal results issued to all Elected Members on 6 August 2024.

The report analyses Fife results in relation to comparative data from session 2022-2023 and 2018-2019 when the exam arrangements were the same. Alternative arrangements for certification were in place during 2019-20 and 2020-21, due to the Covid pandemic. Data for these years does not provide a like for like comparison.

This report also describes the ongoing work in improving outcomes for learners in the Senior Phase of Secondary school.

This report also includes information on sustained positive destinations for school leavers from data provided by Insight (the tool used by the Scottish Government to provide both local authorities and schools with up to date data) in May 2024.

As literacy and numeracy outcomes have been a focus for the education service, some information on attainment of levels 3, 4 and 5 from session 2023/24.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Education Scrutiny Committee:

1. Scrutinise and comment on the senior phase outcomes for session 2023/2024 in the context of Fife data and national attainment trends.
2. Scrutinise and comment on the sustained positive destinations for session 2022/2023 in the context of Fife data and national trends.
3. Endorse the next steps identified for Session 2024-25.
4. Encourage Local Elected Members to meet with Secondary Head teachers to discuss their individual school's 2023/2024 outcomes for senior pupils and their approaches to improving attainment.

Resource Implications

There are no immediate resource implications associated with this report.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no specific legal and risk implications associated with this report.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed and is not necessary at this stage, as the proposals within the report do not currently represent a change to policy.

Consultation

Throughout the session, there have been a number of letters issued to both parents/carers and learners by the Head of Service- Secondary to keep them fully informed of the process being used for awarding SQA qualifications in 2024. This included information on the Appeals process: [SQA website](#)

A 3.2 (Raising Attainment and Achievement) collaborative group is now well established and members include Central Officers and School Senior Leadership Teams from across all of Fife Secondary schools. This has provided an effective forum to share expertise and good practice and to develop a consistent approach to scrutiny of attainment data in order to support raising attainment and achievement.

At the Secondary Head Collaborative meetings, approaches to improving attainment have remained a consistent agenda item. This has allowed a stronger approach to collaborative working, identifying key challenges, sharing good practice and increased scrutiny across schools.

Further scrutiny of outcomes is carried out at Area committee meetings by local Elected Members annually.

1.0 Background and context

Background

- 1.1 This session 2023-2024 is the third year of young people sitting formal exams following covid. Due to alternative arrangements for certification being in place for session 2019-20 and 2020-21, data for these years does not provide a like for like comparison. Differences in outcomes in 2020 and 2021 may reflect alternative assessment and certification, rather than performance.

Last year was a return to full assessment. The SQA stated the “return to full course assessment, including coursework provides a more balanced approach which has helped learners and will support their next steps into education, training or employment”. National analysis shows that:

- National 5 attainment decreased in 2024 from 2023, however volume of A and A to C awards increased.
- Higher attainment and volume decreased in 2024 from 2023, but both increased from 2019.
- Advanced Higher attainment and volume decreased in 2024 from 2023, but volume increased from 2019.

National context

- 1.2 There is a long-standing and well evidenced challenge facing Scotland, regarding equity of educational outcomes. This “attainment gap” exists for different reasons for a wide range of learners. It can be measured by data for a wide range of socio-economic indicators, including Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the proportion of pupils on the school roll who are registered for free school meals (FSM), child poverty data, parental occupation, and educational qualifications. The attainment gap is also linked to the needs and life experiences of children and young people and is evident for groups including children with a need for an additional support with learning (ASL), looked after and care experienced children.
- 1.3 Raising attainment and closing the equity gap remain key national policy priorities. [National Improvement Framework \(NIF\) and improvement plan 2024](#) describes the national policy framework for schools in Scotland to achieve this goal. To achieve equity for all, it plans to ensure every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

It should be noted that nationally last years S4 pupils were most affected by Lockdown in 2020 and poorer transitions due to limitations around contact. Nationally S4 pupils overall have performed less well than 2023.

Fife context

- 1.4 Improving educational attainment for all groups remains a key ambition of the [Plan for Fife](#) and within the current Education and Children’s Services Directorate Improvement Plan. Priorities within the [Education Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26](#) are

- Improving Health & Wellbeing
- Improving Attendance and Engagement
- Improving Achievement (including literacy and numeracy, as well as wider achievement)
- Ensuring Positive Destinations for all young people in Fife

1.5 For each of these outcomes there are significant differences in outcomes relating to equity and equality. These include, for example, differences in outcomes relating to measures of poverty or deprivation (SIMD, registration for free school meals), Additional Support Needs for learning, or being care experienced.

1.6 In order to achieve improved attainment and outcomes, the local authority provides a range of supports directly to improve outcomes for learners in secondary schools. There is an outcomes calendar of activity, shared with schools. The key supports are outlined below (this is not a full list of activity).

- Bi-annual school outcome reviews are held by Senior Education Officers with each school Senior Leadership Team and actions are developed and implemented.
- Secondary Head teacher meetings have a focus on improving attainment at their meetings with HoS.
- Schools are provided with a range of National, local and school specific data to support understanding of the school's context and identify gaps in attainment at cohort, subject and individual pupil level. Training on use of data via Power BI and Insight is available locally and nationally.
- Support and challenge are provided for schools in relation to their planned interventions to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and effective and targeted use of Scottish Equity Funding.

Raising attainment in secondary schools

1.7 As part of the Working Time Agreement (WTA), all schools develop and agree their Quality Improvement calendar. Throughout the school session, schools engage in a range of quality improvement practices to improve attainment. These can include:

- Development of School Improvement Plans which set clear improvement targets, articulate measurable outcomes for learners and describe appropriate actions.
- Analysis of SQA attainment at cohort, subject, class and individual level to inform improvement planning.
- Tracking of attendance and planned support for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Developing school-based approaches to improving the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.
- Tracking and monitoring of all learners at key points in the session to identify progress, gaps, concerns of those at risk or who identify barriers. Plan appropriate, timely interventions especially for those who need targeted interventions.
- Ensuring learning conversations with learners to support their understanding of their progress and identify next steps in their learning.
- Regular communication with parents to inform them of progress and next steps in their child's learning.
- Providing study support opportunities throughout the session and during Easter holidays, which can include after school and online support for those experiencing attendance issues.

- Developing wider curricular pathways with college and other partners to ensure appropriate progression and maximise attainment.

2.0 Overall attainment

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section provides an overview of overall attainment for Fife secondary schools in 2023/24 (i.e. outcomes for the cohort of all learners).

2.2 Attainment in literacy and numeracy

2.2.1 Literacy and numeracy are key skills for learning and future sustained employability. Ensuring that young people are equipped with attainment in these key skills is a key goal by the end of stage S4.

2.2.2 Figure 1, below, provides an overview of outcomes for literacy and numeracy by the end of stage S4. As can be seen:

- Attainment in Fife for 2023/24 exceeded the national average for: literacy and numeracy at SCQF levels 3 and 4, and for numeracy at SCQF level 4. Attainment of literacy at SCQF level 4 was close to the national average.
- Attainment in 2023/24 was below the national average at SCQF level 5 for both literacy and numeracy.

Establishment	% Level 3 Literacy	% Level 3 Numeracy	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy
<i>Outcomes: 2023/24</i>						
Fife	94.0	93.8	90.1	88.0	71.6	61.2
National	93.7	92.8	90.2	87.4	74.8	63.7
<i>Outcomes: 2022/23</i>						
Fife	96.0	95.7	93.8	91.3	74.4	65.4
National	94.5	93.2	92.3	88.4	75.9	64.2
<i>Outcomes: 2018/19</i>						
Fife	92.0	94.1	89.8	90.7	68.9	58.6
National	93.5	92.4	90.9	86.8	71.8	57.4

Figure 1. An overview of attainment for literacy and numeracy in 2023/24 for Fife in comparison with the Scottish national average. Outcomes for last year (2022/23) and 2018/19 are also given for comparison.

2.2.3 Figure 2, below, summarises the change in outcomes seen for Fife, and for the national average: since last year and since 2018/19 (the final year of exams prior to the Covid pandemic). As can be seen:

- Attainment in 2023/24 fell, relative to the outcomes in the previous year. This was the case for both Fife and Scotland across all measures, although outcomes fell further in Fife.
- Attainment at SCQF level 5 has improved since 2018/19 (the last year providing a like-for-like comparison prior to the Covid pandemic) for both literacy and numeracy.

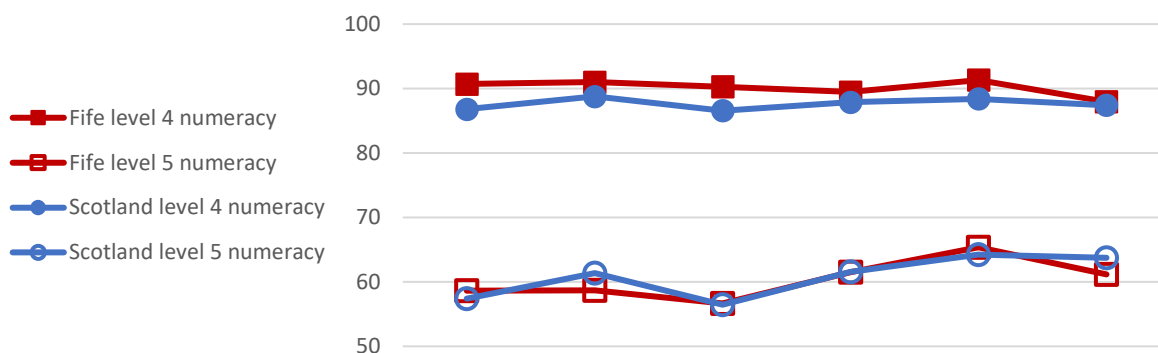
- Attainment for Literacy has improved since 2018/19 at SCQF levels 3 and 4. Attainment for Numeracy has fallen over the same period.

Establishment	% Level 3 Literacy	% Level 3 Numeracy	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy
<i>Change since 22/23</i>						
Fife	-2.0	-1.9	-3.7	-3.4	-2.7	-4.2
National	-0.9	-0.4	-2.1	-1.0	-1.1	-0.5
<i>Change since 18/19</i>						
Fife	2.1	-0.3	0.3	-2.7	2.8	2.6
National	0.1	0.5	-0.7	0.6	2.9	6.3

Figure 2. A summary of change in outcomes for Fife and Scotland since and since 2018/2019, the last year of normal assessments before Covid.

2.2.4 Figure 3, below, summarises the six year trend in numeracy attainment by the end of S4 for Fife and across Scotland. As can be seen:

- Outcomes at SCQF level 4 for numeracy in Fife have generally been higher than those seen across the rest of Scotland but fell back in line with the national average last year.
- Outcomes at SCQF level 5 for numeracy in Fife closely match those seen across Scotland.

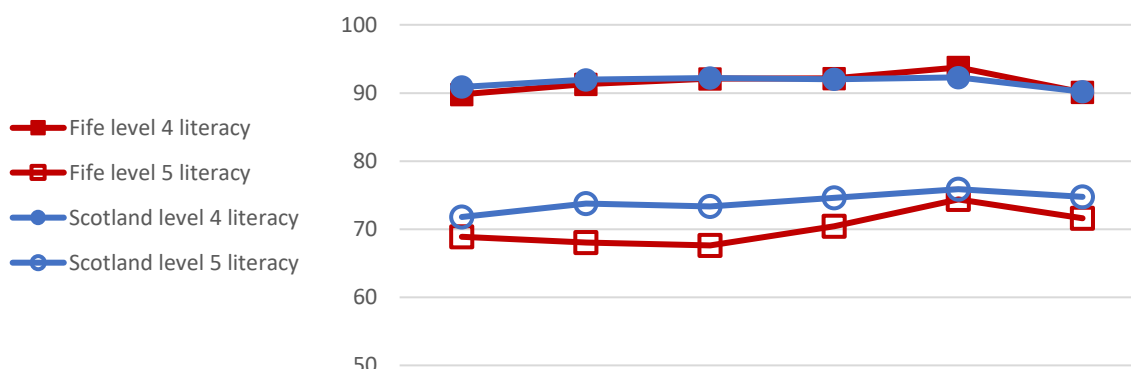


Area	Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fife	% Level 4 Numeracy	90.7	91.0	90.3	89.5	91.3	88.0
Fife	% Level 5 Numeracy	58.6	58.7	56.6	61.5	65.4	61.2
Scotland	% Level 4 Numeracy	86.8	88.8	86.6	87.9	88.4	87.4
Scotland	% Level 5 Numeracy	57.4	61.4	56.4	61.6	64.2	63.7

Figure 3. Six year trend in numeracy attainment by end of stage S4 for Fife and Scotland, showing results at National 4 and 5 levels.

2.2.5 Figure 4 below, summarises the six-year trend in literacy attainment by the end of S4 for Fife and across Scotland. As can be seen:

- Outcomes at SCQF level 4 for literacy in Fife closely match those seen across Scotland.
- Outcomes at SCQF level 5 for literacy in Fife have tracked the national average over recent years but have tended to lag national outcomes by minus 3-4%.



Area	Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fife	% Level 4 Literacy	89.8	91.3	92.1	92.1	93.8	90.1
Fife	% Level 5 Literacy	68.9	68.1	67.6	70.5	74.4	71.6
Scotland	% Level 4 Literacy	90.9	92.0	92.2	92.0	92.3	90.2
Scotland	% Level 5 Literacy	71.8	73.8	73.3	74.6	75.9	74.8

Figure 4. Six year trend in literacy attainment by end of stage S4 for Fife and Scotland, showing results at National 4 and 5 levels.

2.3. Presentations

2.3.1 The total number of presentations nationally and in Fife at National 5 increased in 2024, compared with previous years. There were 21,431 entries at National 5 this year, compared with 18,432 in 2021 and 20,802 in 2023.

2.3.2 The presentation rate at National 5 for S4 learners in 2024 was maintained at 4.1 National 5 presentations per learner in 2024 (the same rate as in 2023). This is higher than the presentation rate in 2021 and 2022 (which equated to 3.9 presentations per learner). The increase in presentations is in line with schools reviewing presentation policies and being more aspirational for learners and giving more young people a chance at achieving a higher level.

- Presentations for Highers increased in comparison with the two preceding years.
- A-C pass rates and A-D award rates have fallen by approximately 2% in comparison with 2023.

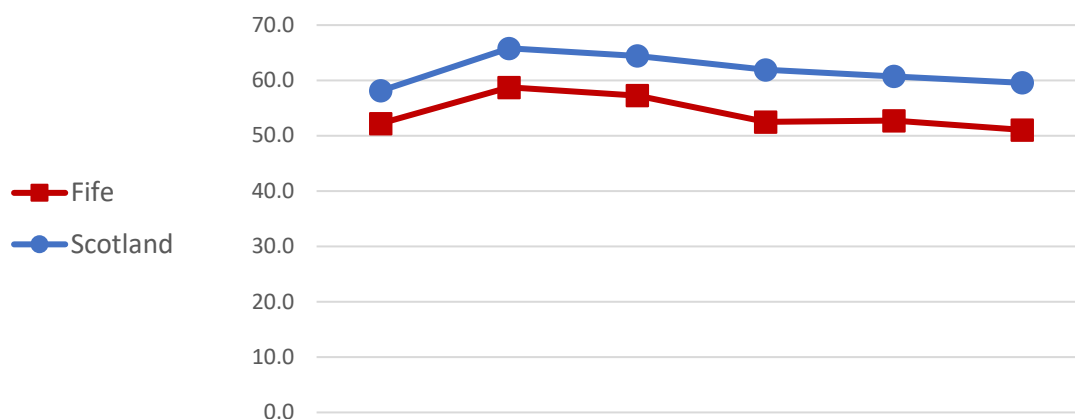
2.4 Wider attainment

2.4.1 Young people's ability to access post-school opportunities depends on their total qualification set when they leave school. This includes other aspects of attainment and achievement, as well as the core skills of literacy and numeracy. This section summarises current outcomes for wider attainment.

2.4.2 Figure 5, below, shows the trend in wider attainment for 3 or more National 5 passes (at grades A-C). Achieving this qualification set equips a young person to apply for a range

of Modern Apprenticeships, or other employment opportunities, as well as progressing to study for a Higher, enabling access to higher education. As can be seen:

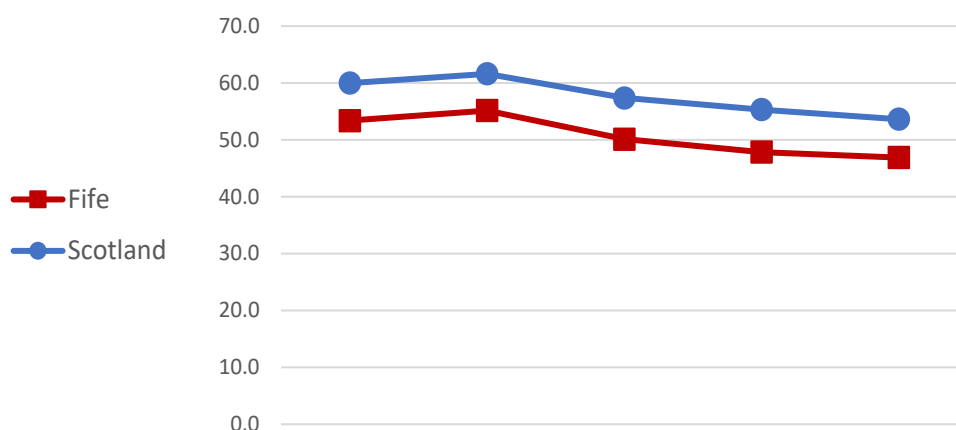
- Outcomes in Fife have tracked the national average, with outcomes in Fife being generally 7-8 percentage points lower than the national average.
- Outcomes in 2023/24 were broadly in line with outcomes in 2018/19 (the year before the Covid pandemic), both in Fife and Scotland.



<i>3 or more Nat 5 passes (S4)</i>	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fife	52.2	58.7	57.3	52.5	52.7	51.0
Scotland	58.1	65.8	64.4	61.9	60.7	59.6

Figure 5. Six year trend for the attainment of 3 or more National 5 passes by the end of stage S4, for Fife and Scotland.

2.4.3 Figure 6, below, illustrates the knock-on impact of poor National 5 outcomes by the end of stage S4. It illustrates the trend in attainment for 1 or more Higher by the end of stage S4. As can be seen, outcomes in Fife have tracked the national average, with outcomes in Fife being generally 6-7 percentage points lower than the national average.



<i>1 or more Higher passes (S5)</i>	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fife	53.4	55.2	50.1	47.9	46.9
Scotland	60.0	61.6	57.4	55.3	53.6

Figure 6. Six year trend for the attainment of 1 or more Higher passes by the end of stage S5, for Fife and Scotland.

2.5 Key messages for overall attainment

2.5.1 Appendix 1 provides an overview of overall attainment in Fife in 2023/24. It also provides a comparison with the current national average and Fife outcomes in 2018/19. This overview confirms the key messages highlighted in sections 2.1 and 2.2. In particular:

- Attainment in Fife at SCQF level 4 and below for the key skills of literacy and numeracy combined, compare favourably with the national average. Outcomes in Fife generally exceed the national average.
- There has been an improvement in attainment of the key skills of literacy and numeracy since 2018/19 at SCQF level 5. However, outcomes remain below the national average.
- Outcomes for wider attainment by the end of stage S4 remain below the national average at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5. As a result, outcomes for attainment of Highers by the end of stage S5 also lag the national average.

2.6 Areas for Improvement

2.6.1 The Education Directorate presented its Annual Report and the annual update of its Improvement Plan to the Education Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 17 September 2024. These recognised that:

“... there remains a significant challenge with outcomes for wider attainment (in particular, the achievement of multiple awards at SCQF level 5 by the end of S4 and at SCQF level 6 by the end of S5). The scorecard measures for wider attainment have been revised to reflect the increased prominence that will now be given to this aspect of attainment, during the next phase of improvement work. They will now be:

- *3 or more awards at SCQF level 5 by the end of S4 and 1 SCQF level 6 award by the end of stage S5.*
- *5 National 5 passes by the end of stage S4 and 3 Higher passes by the end of stage S5.*

These two sets of measures reflect alternative pathways through the senior phase into positive and sustained post-school destinations. They reflect a parity of esteem that is fundamental to the Fife approach.” (See: paragraph 3.4 on p. 9 of the agenda and papers)

2.6.2 Work with Fife secondary schools this session includes a focus on raising attainment including the completion of a self-evaluation summary report, which will be discussed with senior officers. There will also be an evaluation of the schools Prelims results with senior officers to ensure that the school is being aspirational, and that where there may be interventions needed that these are in place.

2.6.3 The outcomes of this work, together with data on the revised scorecard outcomes highlighted above, will be reported in the Directorate’s Annual Report at the end of this session.

3.0 Attainment for key groups

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section provides an overview of attainment for key groups in Fife secondary schools in 2023/24. This includes data on the outcomes of learners living in SIMD Quintile 1, those with Additional Support Needs (ASN), and looked after children. Analysis of data for other key groups, including young people from Armed Forces Families, is still being undertaken; data for these groups is not reported nationally.

3.2 Attainment of learners in SIMD Quintile 1

- 3.2.1 Appendix 2 provides an overview of learners from SIMD Quintile 1. The outcomes for learners in SIMD Quintile 1 are compared with those for learners in SIMD Quintile 5, both for the current year and for 2018/19. Information is also reported for the attainment gap between SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5, and for the change in outcomes seen between 2018/19 and 2023/24.
- 3.2.2 Attainment for literacy and numeracy of S4 learners living in SIMD Quintile 1 have seen improvement since 2018/19. The rate of improvement for learners in SIMD Quintile 1 has been greater than that for learners in SIMD Quintile 5, with a reduction in the attainment gap. In particular, there have been:
- Significant improvements for literacy at SCQF level 5 (a 6.6% improvement and a 4.8% reduction in the attainment gap, in comparison with SIMD Quintile 5).
 - Clear improvements for numeracy at SCQF level 5 (a 4.1% improvement and a 1.7% reduction in the attainment gap, in comparison with SIMD Quintile 5).
 - Small improvements for literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 (a 1.0% improvement and 0.4% reduction in the attainment gap).
- 3.2.3 Improvements have also been seen at lower levels of attainment, with further reductions in the small number of young people ending stage S4 without an award at SCQF level 1 or above. Between 2018/19 and 2023/24 there was a 1.3% improvement in the number of learners achieving an award at SCQF level 1, with a 0.4% reduction in the attainment gap between SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5.
- 3.2.4 Outcomes for wider attainment have been more mixed. In particular, for learners living in SIMD Quintile 1:
- There has been a 2.3% decline in the attainment of 3 or more National 4 awards by the end of S4 and a 2.1% decline in the attainment of 1 or more Higher by the end of S5.
 - Other measures of wider attainment have seen little change
 - Generally, reductions in the attainment gap for wider attainment have resulted from a decline in attainment for SIMD Quintile 5.

3.3 The attainment of other key groups

- 3.3.1 Appendix 3 compares the outcomes of all learners with those of four key groups: those living in SIMD Quintile 1; those with an Additional Support Need; those who were Looked After at the end of 2023/24; those from Armed Forces Families.

3.3.2 The key messages from appendix 3 are:

- Individual young people who face barriers to learning and achievement are capable of achieving outcomes at all levels of attainment.
- As a group, young people facing a barrier to learning and achievement have outcomes that are generally lower than average. This is true for those living in areas with higher levels of deprivation (SIMD Quintile 1), and for many young people with an Additional Support Need.
- As a group, young people facing multiple barriers to learning and achievement (including Looked After Children and Young People) have outcomes that are significantly lower than average.
- As a group, learners from Armed Forces Families achieve outcomes that generally exceed the average.

3.3.3 Generally, comparison with similar tables of data for earlier years shows a very similar pattern of outcomes. This is true for attainment in both Fife and Scotland. This highlights the deep-seated and persistent nature of the challenges faced in closing the attainment gap for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

3.3.4 There is no benchmarking data available to compare outcomes for Armed Forces families on a like-for-like basis at the current time. This is an ongoing area of discussion nationally, through forums like ADES.

3.4 Areas for improvement

3.4.1 There continues to be a need to significantly improve S4 attainment for young people with significant and complex needs, and for those who face multiple barriers to attainment. This is a national challenge.

3.4.2 There is a close connection between this work and action to address poverty and the lives of care experienced young people – the focus of national policy for the Promise <https://thepromise.scot/>. This is a group who often attain at or below SCQF level 4.

3.4.3 There is also a need to significantly improve attainment outcomes for young people with less significant support needs, and those facing some barriers to attainment. These young people are typically achieving some awards at SCQF level 5 by the end of S4 – often literacy (appendix 3). However, fewer of such young people in Fife are achieving multiple awards at SCQF level 5.

3.4.4 Improving S4 outcomes for these groups would also feed through to improved outcomes for wider attainment by the end of stage S5.

3.4.5 Improvement actions to these challenges are set out in the Education Directorate Improvement Plan, as updated in August 2024. These include:

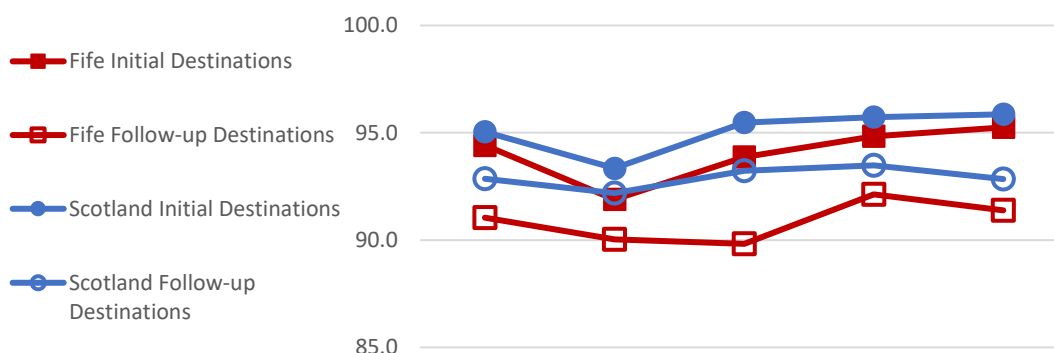
- Work to target support for attendance and attainment of children and young people living in poverty, through use of the Strategic Equity Fund.
- Work to strengthen universal support for children and young people with Additional Support Needs.
- Further development of the 3-18 literacy and numeracy strategy, to monitor and support the development of key skills for those disadvantaged by poverty or a protected characteristic.

4.0 Sustained Positive Destinations 2022/23

- 4.1 Positive destinations continue to be a priority in improving outcomes for young people in Fife. Positive destination categories include Higher and Further Education, employment, training, personal skills development and voluntary work.
- 4.2 In February each year data is published for the initial destinations of school leavers from the previous year. In February 2024 data was made available for those who left school following the 2022/23 school session. The figure in Fife for initial destinations increased from 94.8% in 2021/22 school year to 95.3% in the most recent session to be reported on, 2022/23.
- 4.3 In June each year data is published for the follow up destinations of leavers for the previous school year. Hence, in June 2024 data was made available for the follow-up destinations of those who left school following the 2022/23 school session. This allows an overview of those young people who have sustained the same destination or moved into another positive destination.
- 4.4 In May 2024 a report on initial school destinations was presented to the Education Scrutiny committee; which can be accessed [Education Scrutiny Committee 7 May 2024](#). This report explained the initial destinations of school leavers from 2022/23 cohort.
- 4.5 It is important that any follow up destinations are linked to initial destinations to show how the pathways of young people have progressed and how many have sustained the initial destination 6 months on. Schools track and continue to support young people after they have left school by monitoring their journey and working with partners such as Skills Development Scotland as well as other agencies and groups to provide ongoing assistance and projects to enable them to reengage and continue to be in a positive destination.

Sustained Destinations Overview

- 4.6 As noted above, the current destination information for our Fife schools is gathered in April each year and published in June by Scottish Government. Figure 7, below, provides an overview of the data for initial and sustained positive destinations over the past five years. Trends are shown for both Fife and Scotland. As can be seen, the level of sustained destinations is, generally, lower than the level of initial destinations.



Area	Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Fife	Initial Destinations	94.4	91.9	93.9	94.8	95.3
Fife	Follow-up Destinations	91.0	90.0	89.8	92.1	91.4
Scotland	Initial Destinations	95.0	93.3	95.5	95.7	95.9
Scotland	Follow-up Destinations	92.9	92.2	93.2	93.5	92.8

Figure 7. Five year trend for post school destinations, for Fife and Scotland. Data is shown for both initial and follow-up destinations.

- 4.7 The sustained destination figures for our Fife schools is 91.4% which is a decrease of 3.9% from the initial destination figures of 95.3%. The previous year, follow up in sustained destinations were 92.1% which is a gap of 2.7% negatively from the initial destination figures.
- 4.8 Nationally, the sustained destination figure has decreased from 95.5% to 93.2% in 2021/22; a decrease of 2.2% and a decrease from 95.9% to 92.9% in 2022/23; a decrease of 3%. In the last two years, the Fife statistics show that the reduction in positive destinations has remained above the national comparator by 0.1% in 2021/22 and below the national comparator by 0.9% in 2022/23.
- 4.9 In terms of destination categories, the sustained destination figures notably saw a decrease in those going on to further education from 32.8% to 25.4% with an increase in employment from 21.9% to 28.8%. Following discussions with SDS we are unable to identify the level of job or pay for those moving into employment. In terms of the decrease in those engaged in further education, there is ongoing work being undertaken with Fife College to evaluate the reasons for this and how young people can be better prepared for college courses and also supported to sustain these. We are also using an Education Key Worker to support the ongoing sustainability of young people with college as a destination. As a local authority, the gap has lessened for many of the destination categories with some showing no or little difference between the initial and sustained data.
- 4.10 As well as continuing the strategic work on improving destinations across all schools, some schools have been targeted for support from the central team as well as partners including SDS, DYW etc, where more time has been allocated to the school, with a focus on initial or sustained destinations or both in some cases.

Strategies to Improve Schools

- 4.11 A clear action plan has been reviewed and is being implemented to ensure there is a clear strategy for continuing to improve initial and sustained destinations in Fife. This requires the support of all partners within and out with the council. This strategic plan is linked to the directorate priorities for the next 3 years, most notable for Positive Destinations.
- 4.12 The strategic plan presents a clear direction within the directorate and across our partnerships to continue to improve further both initial and sustained destinations with a plan for all schools, targeted schools, partnership approaches and early intervention for pupil groups and localities.
- Further development of partnership working to ensure collaborative solutions for improved and sustained positive destinations

- Development of more post school opportunities for those young people who are disengaged from existing options
- Ongoing focus on the wider achievement provisions in school and the associated accreditation
- Ongoing expansion and implementation of work experience opportunities across our school for targeted groups
- New processes and targeted groups for Education Key Workers, including supporting young people to sustain their college places, early intervention work with S4 pupils and group work activities with S4 pupils prior to leaving school

5.0 Improvement Priorities and Next Steps

5.1 Our Improvement Priorities

- 5.2 As was noted in section 3, we need to improve outcomes for three distinct groups of learners, those living in SIMD Quintile 1; those with an Additional Support Need; those who were Looked After at the end of 2023/24.

Young people with significant or complex support needs.

- 5.3 This group of pupils will often be achieving attainment at SCQF levels 1-3. Outcomes in Fife for this group are similar to those seen nationally. However, there is a clear imperative – as highlighted in the Morgan Review [Improving additional support for learning - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-additional-support-learning-action-plan-progress-report/pages/1-2-introduction.aspx) additional-support-learning-action-plan-progress-report – to ensure that we are supporting these young people to fully develop their individual potential. This will often involve additional levels of educational and other support. This is forming part of the ASL strategy.
- 5.4 Young people facing complex multiple barriers to learning, including significant socio-economic barriers (e.g. living in areas of deprivation and household poverty) combined with other support needs (e.g. being a young carer, household/personal disability, etc).
- 5.5 There is a significant overlap for this group with the policy challenge of *the Promise* <https://thepromise.scot/> and the wider *Tackling Poverty* agenda. Successfully addressing these barriers will frequently require successful partnership working, including close working between schools and educational services and partnership additional services, whose support may be needed at during particular times. Evidence would suggest that outcomes for this group are typically similar to those for similar young people across Scotland, often with attainment at SCQF level 4 with limited attainment at SCQF level 5. However, these outcomes are significantly poorer than those of most other young people. This will be a key group to help improve outcomes within the *National Improvement Framework* over the longer term.
- 5.6 Young people facing some barriers to learning as a result of their socio-economic circumstances (e.g. living in an area of deprivation or household poverty) and/or some additional support needs.
- 5.7 Evidence would suggest that although this group is often attaining at SCQF level 5, Fife young people in this group are significantly less likely than those in other parts of Scotland to achieve multiple awards at SCQF level 5 and to progress to attaining Highers in S5. Targeted interventions, supported by effective tracking and monitoring, will be key to improving outcomes for this group. This will be a key group to help improve outcomes

within the *National Improvement Framework* [National-Improvement-Framework](#) over the shorter term.

- 5.8 Ensuring improved outcomes for each of the three groups highlighted above will require a more precise understanding of the individual barriers to learning faced by a diverse range of young people. The Education Services Directorate is currently trialling a new use of data to identify pupils with combinations of characteristics that are linked to low attainment. The Risk Prediction Tool can identify initiatives that are working well for pupils with multiple challenges by setting benchmark specific to the types of ASN and levels of poverty facing those pupils.
- 5.9 The Directorate is also reviewing its approach to performance management of Fife schools, to improve the support for schools in targeting, tracking and monitoring support for young people through an online system being implemented in all schools by August 2026. This includes further embedding the Directorate's approach to the use of stretch targets, which are currently being used as a tool to support Attainment Reform work within the primary and secondary sector.
- 5.10 Work on these improvement activities is being undertaken within the current school year and will form the basis for the new three-year Directorate Improvement Plan, which has been implemented since August 2023.
- 5.11 Next steps: building on current best practice at school level to progress our priorities.**
- Further develop consistent approaches to attendance monitoring and develop capacity across Fife to provide high quality interventions to support improved attendance and achieve the stretch targets for each school and Fife's overall target of **88.8%** - to match attendance levels in similar areas of Scotland by the end of the current school year.
 - Within the wider approaches to target setting, continue to build school leaders' capacity to establish meaningful short term stretch targets for 23/24 for all secondary schools in relation to key attainment measures including attendance, literacy, numeracy and positive destinations. Learning from this from last session I now a particular focus across the scrutiny of secondary schools.
 - Further develop collective accountability for Fife wide outcomes by developing school leaders' understanding of the levels of achievement which individual schools require to secure to ensure Fife achieves its stretch target. This will also allow for good practice to be shared to and upscaled.
 - Support the quality of the stretch target setting process by providing stretch target data sets which reflect the prior attainment of the school and the social context of the school community.
 - Ensure that short-term stretch targets are ambitious but achievable and that: the targets set for levels of attainment (overall, in SIMD Quintile 1, and in SIMD Quintile 5 and for specific cohorts) are in line with higher levels of attainment than have been achieved in the past.
 - that the rates of improvement required are in line with more significant rates of improvement achieved in earlier years.

- that the targets will contribute over the medium term to Fife significantly improving attainment and closing the attainment gap.
- Systematic monitoring of progress against stretch targets at school level is being implemented by officers.
- Development of a consistent approach to tracking across the Broad General Education from primary to secondary school, with a particular focus on transition and 3.
- Build capacity with leadership at all levels through data training to interrogate and analyse data to support well targeted improvement interventions.
- Continue to develop the role of the key collaborative networks to support Fife wide moderation and teacher judgment.
- Supporting learners' mental health continues to be a priority in our schools. Schools are using Fife's Our Minds Matter framework to build their capacity to support learners. Strong partnership work continues to be a priority to help address mental health concerns. Our Educational Psychology Service will continue to provide a core offer of support and professional learning to build capacity across our schools and staff.
- Review and update Presentation policies for each school via Outcomes meetings.
- Increase opportunities for study support for 25/26
- Wider attainment was an area for improvement in Fife when the Covid pandemic started. This will return to being a prominent focus for improvement, building on the strengths that have been re-established in literacy and numeracy attainment.
- Develop a raising attainment plan for secondary, with a focus on learning and teaching and assessment including moderation activities during in service days where possible and after agreement with Professional associations.
- Implement the change to the Directorate Scorecard for 2024-26 to reflect the increased prominence that will now be given to wider attainment, four new scorecard measures for wider attainment will be introduced. These will replace the current measure of 3 or more passes at National 5 by the end of stage S4. They are:
 - 3 or more awards at SCQF level 5 by the end of S4 and 1 SCQF level 6 award by the end of stage S5.
 - 5 National 5 passes by the end of stage S4 and 3 Higher passes by the end of stage S5.

These two sets of measures reflect alternative pathways through the senior phase into positive and sustained post-school destinations. They reflect a parity of esteem that is fundamental to the Fife approach.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 Attainment across all key measures for Fife's S4 cohort in 2022/23 shows a positive improving 5-year trend and other than literacy at SCQF level 5, all are above National attainment. Literacy and Numeracy at Level 5 shows significant improvement over the 5-year period within Fife.
- 6.2 Attainment outcomes for the S5 cohort at Higher level sits below National attainment and there is a less positive picture in relation to Fife's 5- year trend. Whilst there has been improvement for those achieving the highest grades (4 or more Highers at A/B passes by the end of S5) there has been little improvement or a decline in attainment for Highers more generally.
- 6.3 It is recognised that within each cohort, there are specific groups of disadvantaged learners whose outcomes are generally less positive than the general cohort. Improving educational attainment for all groups and Closing the Attainment Gap is a key improvement priority within the new Education Services Directorate Improvement Plan (2023-2026). This is reflected in all school improvement plans for session 2023/24.
- 6.4 The Education Directorate and schools have a clear understanding of the disadvantaged groups who require additional focus to improve attainment. The quality improvement processes at authority and school level described in this report are focussed on achieving this over the next 3 years.
- 6.5 Both initial and sustained destinations have improved in both sessions 2021 and 23 with a range of strategies in place across all Fife schools and bespoke approaches within targeted school to maintain this. Positive destinations continue to be a Directorate priority with strategies and actions developed to meet ongoing challenges and supports alongside the DYW board partnership.
- 6.6 The Education Service are taking account of recent documents by the Scottish Government of [The Hayward Review](#) of senior phase qualifications conducted by Prof. Louise Hayward, namely, "It's Our Future – Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment: Report (IRQA) and [The Withers Review](#) of Skills in Scotland, conducted by James Withers, namely, "Fit for the Future": We are increasing the SCQF options for schools and developing a profiling tool for children and young people to and are currently piloting a Fife Diploma of Achievement for P7, S3 and leavers.

Glossary of Terms

SQA ([Awarding and accrediting - SQA](#)): The SQA has two distinct parts, SQA Accreditation and SQA the awarding body.

Awarding: As an awarding body, SQA develops, maintains, and improves a framework of qualifications. These can be gained at Scotland's schools, colleges, employers and training providers.

Accrediting: As an accrediting body, SQA sets and maintains standards for many other awarding bodies. They accredit qualifications such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), which provide evidence that learners can do their jobs well. Our accreditation role is similar to work by Ofqual in other parts of the UK.

SCQF: The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is a way of comparing and understanding Scottish qualifications. It does this by giving qualifications a level and credit points. These tell you how difficult a qualification is, and how long it takes to achieve the qualification

SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation): SIMD is the Scottish Government's standard approach to measuring relative levels of deprivation across Scotland. It provides information about a range of resources and opportunities available to families living in a local community. These relate to income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>

SIMD Quintiles: Each local area in Scotland is classified as being within one of five families, called SIMD quintiles. These reflect the overall level of multiple deprivation recorded by SIMD for that area. SIMD Quintile 1 (often abbreviated to **SIMD Q1**) refers to the most deprived areas, as measured by SIMD. SIMD Quintile 5 (often abbreviated to **SIMD Q5**) refers to the least deprived areas, as measured by SIMD.

Insight: Insight is the Scottish Government benchmarking tool for analysing attainment data in the senior phase, accessible by secondary schools and local authorities.

Senior Phase Analytical Tool (SPAT): A bespoke analytical tool developed by Fife Education and Children's Services, allowing schools to analyse projected measures of attainment for current learners in Senior Phase and identify a range of effective interventions to support raising attainment.

Risk Prediction Tool: A tool devised to allow schools to identify individuals or cohorts of pupils with combinations of characters that are linked to low attainment and have a range of barriers to learning. The tool can identify initiatives that are working well for pupils with multiple challenges by setting benchmarks specific to the types of ASN and levels of poverty facing those pupils.

Appeal: By appeal, we mean, an application for the review of a decision taken by SQA in relation to a candidate or centre (or proposed centre) to SQA's appeals Sub-Committee.

List of Appendices

1. An overview of the attainment gap
2. An overview of cohort wider attainment
3. An overview of outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people
4. Comparison of May projections to August results (results of appeals not included)

Background Papers

1. SQA Appeals process - [Appeals service - SQA](#)
2. SQA Qualifications for 2021 Committee Report - [SQA Results 2021 Committee Report](#)
3. The National Improvement Framework - [National-Improvement-Framework](#)
4. Plan for Fife - [Plan for Fife](#)
5. The Promise - <https://thepromise.scot/>
6. Additional support for Learning Action Plan progress report [additional-support-learning-action-plan-progress-report](#)

7. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) - <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>
8. EM Briefing on Pre appeal Exam results
9. EM Briefing on Sustained Destinations
10. EM Briefing on total number of presentations nationally and in Fife
11. Paper on 2023 Senior Phase Stage-Based Outcomes - https://www.fife.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/528722/Agenda-Pack-for-Education-Scrutiny-Committee-14th-November-2023.pdf

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Appendix 1 – overview of overall achievement for S4 and S5 learners in 2023/24, compared with Scotland

Stage	Overall Achievement of Fife Pupils for key groups in 2023/24. (Stage S5 is based on S4 roll)	Relevance of qualifications set to post school opportunities	Overall Achievement (Fife) 2023/24	Overall Achievement (Scotland) 2023/24	Difference (Fife vs Scotland) 2023/24	Six-year trend for Fife since 2018/19
S4	Pupils achieved awards at SCQF level 1 or above	Have accredited achievement to evidence personal skills	97.6%	97.1%	0.5%	1.1%
S4	Pupils achieved Literacy & Numeracy SCQF level 4	Are able to evidence accredited achievement of both key literacy and key numeracy skills	85.2%	84.1%	1.1%	-1.7%
S4	Pupils achieved 3 or more National 4 Awards	Are qualified for a range of selective Modern Apprenticeships & employment opportunities	83.3%	85.8%	-2.5%	-2.6%
S4	Pupils achieved Literacy at SCQF level 5	Are able to evidence accredited achievement of more advanced literacy skills	71.6%	74.8%	-3.1%	2.8%
S4	Pupils achieved Numeracy at SCQF level 5	Are able to evidence accredited achievement of more advanced numeracy skills	61.2%	63.7%	-2.6%	2.6%
S4	Pupils achieved 3 or more National 5 passes	Are qualified for a range of more selective Modern Apprenticeships & employment opportunities	51.0%	59.6%	-8.5%	-1.2%
S5	Pupils achieved 1 or more Higher passes	Are qualified for an HNC, providing a route to Higher Education	46.9%	53.6%	-6.7%	-2.2%
S5	Pupils achieved 3 or more Higher passes	Are qualified for direct entry to Higher Education for a wider range of courses	27.1%	33.5%	-6.4%	-1.2%
S5	Pupils achieved 4 or more Highers at grades A or B	Are qualified for more selective degree courses (eg science etc)	12.6%	16.6%	-4.1%	-0.2%

Stage	Overall Achievement of Fife Pupils for key groups in 2023/24. (Stage S5 is based on S4 roll)	Relevance of qualifications set to post school opportunities	Overall Achievement (Fife) 2023/24	Overall Achievement (Scotland) 2023/24	Difference (Fife vs Scotland) 2023/24	Six-year trend for Fife since 2018/19
S5	Pupils achieved 4 or more Highers at grade A	Are qualified for the most selective degree courses (eg veterinary science, medicine)	5.5%	7.9%	-2.5%	0.6%

Appendix 2 – comparison of outcomes for Fife learners in SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5 in 2023/24

Stage	Overall Achievement of Fife Pupils for key groups in 2023/24. (Stage S5 is based on S4 roll)	SIMD Quintile 1 2023/24	SIMD Quintile 1 2018/19	Change in SIMD Q1 since 2018/19	SIMD Quintile 5 2023/24	SIMD Quintile 5 2018/19	Change in SIMD Q5 since 2018/19	Attainment Gap 2023/24	Attainment Gap 2018/19	Change in Gap since 2018/19
S4	Pupils achieved awards at SCQF level 1 or above	96.5%	95.2%	1.3%	98.7%	97.8%	0.9%	2.2%	2.6%	-0.4%
S4	Pupils achieved Literacy & Numeracy SCQF level 4	77.9%	76.9%	1.0%	94.3%	93.7%	0.6%	16.4%	16.8%	-0.4%
S4	Pupils achieved 3 or more National 4 Awards	71.5%	73.8%	-2.3%	93.8%	94.0%	-0.2%	22.3%	20.2%	2.1%
S4	Pupils achieved Literacy at SCQF level 5	58.0%	51.4%	6.6%	87.0%	85.2%	1.8%	29.0%	33.8%	-4.8%
S4	Pupils achieved Numeracy at SCQF level 5	46.2%	42.1%	4.1%	80.3%	77.9%	2.4%	34.1%	35.8%	-1.7%
S4	Pupils achieved 3 or more National 5 passes	32.4%	32.3%	0.1%	73.0%	74.3%	-1.3%	40.6%	42.0%	-1.4%
S5	Pupils achieved 1 or more Higher passes	26.9%	29.0%	-2.1%	68.6%	72.1%	-3.6%	41.7%	43.1%	-1.4%
S5	Pupils achieved 3 or more Higher passes	11.8%	11.3%	0.5%	47.4%	50.9%	-3.6%	35.6%	39.6%	-4.0%
S5	Pupils achieved 4 or more Highers at grades A or B	3.4%	3.8%	-0.4%	24.2%	25.6%	-1.5%	20.8%	21.8%	-1.1%

Stage	Overall Achievement of Fife Pupils for key groups in 2023/24. (Stage S5 is based on S4 roll)	SIMD Quintile 1 2023/24	SIMD Quintile 1 2018/19	Change in SIMD Q1 since 2018/19	SIMD Quintile 5 2023/24	SIMD Quintile 5 2018/19	Change in SIMD Q5 since 2018/19	Attainment Gap 2023/24	Attainment Gap 2018/19	Change in Gap since 2018/19
S5	Pupils achieved 4 or more Highers at grade A	1.4%	1.0%	0.4%	10.7%	10.6%	0.1%	9.3%	9.6%	-0.3%

Appendix 3 – overview of cohort achievement by S4 and S5 learners from key groups of Fife learners in 2023/24

Stage	Overall Achievement of Fife Pupils for key groups in 2023/24. (Stage S5 is based on S4 roll)	Relevance of qualifications set to post school opportunities	Overall Achievement (all learners) 2023/24	Pupils living in SIMD Quintile 1	Pupils with Additional Support Needs	Pupils who are Looked After	Pupils from Armed Forces Families
S4	Pupils achieved awards at SCQF level 1 or above	Have accredited achievement to evidence personal skills	97.6%	96.5%	96.5%	91.8%	98.2%
S4	Pupils achieved Literacy & Numeracy SCQF level 4	Are able to evidence accredited achievement of both key literacy and key numeracy skills	85.2%	77.9%	76.3%	63.0%	89.9%
S4	Pupils achieved 3 or more National 4 Awards	Are qualified for a range of selective Modern Apprenticeships & employment opportunities	83.3%	71.5%	72.5%	52.1%	96.3%
S4	Pupils achieved Literacy at SCQF level 5	Are able to evidence accredited achievement of more advanced literacy skills	71.6%	58.0%	56.5%	31.5%	77.1%
S4	Pupils achieved Numeracy at SCQF level 5	Are able to evidence accredited achievement of more advanced numeracy skills	61.2%	46.2%	45.2%	32.9%	61.5%
S4	Pupils achieved 3 or more National 5 passes	Are qualified for a range of more selective Modern Apprenticeships & employment opportunities	51.0%	32.4%	33.6%	19.2%	62.4%
S5	Pupils achieved 1 or more Higher passes	Are qualified for an HNC, providing a route to Higher Education	46.9%	26.9%	32.4%	8.3%	77.6%
S5	Pupils achieved 3 or more Higher passes	Are qualified for direct entry to Higher Education for a wider range of courses	27.1%	11.8%	16.7%	*	61.2%

Stage	Overall Achievement of Fife Pupils for key groups in 2023/24. (Stage S5 is based on S4 roll)	Relevance of qualifications set to post school opportunities	Overall Achievement (all learners) 2023/24	Pupils living in SIMD Quintile 1	Pupils with Additional Support Needs	Pupils who are Looked After	Pupils from Armed Forces Families
S5	Pupils achieved 4 or more Highers at grades A or B	Are qualified for more selective degree courses (eg science etc)	12.6%	3.4%	6.2%	*	47.4%
S5	Pupils achieved 4 or more Highers at grade A	Are qualified for the most selective degree courses (eg veterinary science, medicine)	5.5%	1.4%	2.9%	*	28.4%

* Data has been suppressed to ensure confidentiality for learners.

19 November 2024
Agenda Item 5

Attainment in the Broad General Education

Report by: Donald McLeod, Executive Director, Education and Children's Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on current progress in improving attainment in the broad general education and closing the attainment gap across Fife's schools. This is a key priority within the Education and Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26.

The broad general education begins in early learning and childcare and continues to the end of S3. This includes progress made in the use of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF), which encompasses the Strategic Equity Fund (Year 2), Pupil Equity Funding and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund to address the challenge of Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap and to support families by reducing the Cost of the School Day.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is invited to:

- (1) scrutinise and comment on current progress in improving attainment in the broad general education, and the planned next steps to continue to support education recovery in Fife and close the attainment gap.
- (2) scrutinise and comment on the progress made by Fife's schools and teams in the use of the Attainment Scotland Fund to positively impact on the educational outcomes of children and young people and planned next steps for 24/25;
- (3) seek updates on the impact of approaches and interventions on improving educational outcomes for our children and young people locally, through individual schools and via Area Committee reports or workshops.

Resource Implications

There are no immediate resource implications associated with this report.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no specific legal and risk implications associated with this report.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed and is not necessary at this stage, as the proposals within the report do not currently represent a change to policy.

Consultation

The development of the 3-18 Literacy and Numeracy Strategy consultation has consisted of over 60 participants, representing all sectors. A wide range of information has been gathered from staff across settings on approaches and resources which support learning and teaching within the five agreed themes – Planning for Learning, Resources, Assessment and Moderation, Transition and Data and High-Quality Learning and Teaching.

In determining themes to be supported by Strategic Equity Funding a consultation was undertaken with school staff, pupils and families. Schools are required to consult with stakeholders each year around their use of Pupil Equity Funding.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) provides a coherent, flexible curriculum for learners from ages 3 to 18. Progress of learning through the Broad General Education is defined relative to levels of achievement that learners would typically be expected to achieve. These are:
 - Achievement of Early Level by the end of stage P1
 - Achievement of Level 1 by the end of stage P4
 - Achievement of Level 2 by the end of stage P7
 - Achievement of Level 3 or 4 by the end of stage S3
- 1.2 The framework provided by CfE is, however, designed to be flexible in order to permit careful planning for those with additional support needs, including those who, for example, have a learning difficulty or those who are particularly high attaining.
- 1.3 Data is collected nationally by the Scottish Government on achievement of CfE levels by learners in stages P1, P4, P7 and S3 at the end of each school year. This data is published nationally following a quality assurance process, usually in mid-December.

- 1.4 The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was established to promote equity in education by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. It is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child. It focuses on improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Reducing educational inequity and reducing the poverty-related attainment gap is a long-term strategy, which aims to impact on societal culture and thinking.
- 1.5 As part of The Scottish Attainment Challenge – Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (published by the Scottish Government in May 2023), local authorities are required to set and report on progress in achieving stretch aims for attainment and closing the attainment gap. Fife’s approach to setting stretch aims is based on our existing approach to the use of stretch targets, as a basis to support an ambitious approach to improving educational outcomes.
- 1.6 In setting stretch targets, consideration has been given to current outcomes and trends over time within Fife, across Scotland, and for a benchmark performance outcome, which reflects the influence of child poverty on educational outcomes. The Fife approach to stretch targets has been developed collaboratively with schools with a focus on improving the progression of learning through the 3-18 curriculum. The main stretch targets reflect this focus and are stage-based. They provide a key tool to inform and support improvement activity.
- 1.7 From session 22/23, the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge ([Scottish Attainment Challenge: framework for recovery and accelerating progress - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot)) programme saw Pupil Equity Funding, allocated directly to schools, fixed for four years. There was a move away from direct funding to schools through the Schools Programme Funding element of Attainment Scotland Funding (ASF) in March 2022, to Strategic Equity Funding (SEF). Strategic Equity Funding of £43 million is being shared by all 32 local authorities from April 2022 to March 2026 to invest in approaches to achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC). This move towards a more centralised resource has allowed us to focus our efforts, across Fife, on what works in closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 1.8 Since 19/20 Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding has also been allocated annually to local authorities to support the educational attainment of care experienced children.
- 1.9 An overview of all the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding is shown in the table below (fig 1):

Fund Sources	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 (final)	Total
Strategic Equity	£859,490	£1,708,651	£2,557,812	£3,406,972	£8,532,925
Pupil Equity	£10,456,020	£10,456,020	£10,456,020	£10,456,020	£41,824,080
Care Experienced	£697,025	£697,025	£697,025	£697,025	£2,788,100
Total	£12,012,535	£12,861,696	£13,710,857	£14,560,017	£53,145,105

Figure 1

1.10 The Strategic Equity Plan 23/24 was approved at Cabinet Committee in April 2023. The plan builds on the successes of the 22/23 plan and is focussed on in improvement activity within the themes listed below through the lenses of Professional Learning, Learner Engagement, Curriculum, Learner Pathways and Strengthening Relationships:

- Literacy & Numeracy
- Health & Wellbeing
- Mentoring Programmes
- Family Engagement and Support
- Use of Quality Improvement Methodology

1.11 Allocations to schools under the Pupil Equity Fund for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26 have been fixed. The allocations have been based on levels of free school meal registrations estimated for the school year 2022/23, derived from rates for earlier years. For each year, including 2023/24, Fife Council schools have been allocated-£10,465,820 of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), to support the closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap. This can be broken down as follows:

Primary - £ 7.6 million

Secondary - £ 2.7million

Special - £ 160 000

1.12 As in previous years the funding allocation has been calculated using the most recently available [Healthy Living Survey](#) and [Pupil Census data](#) and is based on:

- The estimated number of P1-P5 pupils who would be registered for free school meals using the national eligibility criteria.
- The number of P6-P7 and S1-3 pupils who are registered for free school meals.
- The number of special school pupils in the P1-S3 age range registered for free school meals.

- 1.13 In session, 2020-21 free school meal registration in Fife was 21.8% for primary aged children and 17.9% for pupils attending secondary school. These are the figures upon which the funding was set for all schools for the four years from 2022/23 to 2025/26. Our current free school meal registration is 23.8% in Primary and 19.4% in Secondary.

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/maternal-and-child-health/free-school-meals>

- 1.14 Across the six years the Attainment Scotland Funding has been in place, schools have identified a range of barriers to learning for pupils who were most disadvantaged through poverty. Some common themes included:

- Literacy & Numeracy
- Health & Wellbeing
- Mentoring Programmes
- Family Engagement and Support
- Use of Quality Improvement Methodology

These themes have underpinned the Pupil Equity Fund planning undertaken across Fife's schools.

- 1.15 Furthermore, costs associated with school can put pressure on low-income families and put children and young people at risk of missing out on opportunities and feeling different, ashamed and stigmatised. Schools across Fife are sensitive to the increasing number of families facing socio-economic challenges. Our ethos and culture ensure that the dignity of families is respected while ensuring that children and young people do not miss out on opportunities and experiences because of financial barriers.

- 1.16 In 23/24 there were 1.5% Care Experienced Children and Young People within Fife schools. Care Experienced young people attain less well than their peers. Nationally a lower proportion of care experienced young people achieve their expected level of Literacy and Numeracy in Primary school. The biggest gap nationally exist at P7, see figure 2 below.

Area	National Gap	Fife Gap
Reading P7	29%	28%
Writing P7	32%	31%
Numeracy P7	34%	33%

Figure 2

- 1.17 Using the Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding, our *Learning with Care* Strategy looks to address concerns around attendance, achievement and sustained positive destinations of Fife's Care Experienced children and young people. The key aims of the strategy are:

- To support Education and Social Work Services within the Belonging to Fife strategic commitment for young people to be cared for and learning in their own families and communities.

- To ensure that children and young people's right to experience success in learning is met, enabling them to maximise their potential and develop motivation to pursue their personal strengths and ambitions.
- To quality assure and support the educational planning for those in Kinship care whose placement is at risk of breaking down.
- To work with colleagues in social work to further support young people at risk of being taken into care in order to maintain stability and continuity in their education.
- To build capacity in schools so they are more culturally responsive to care experienced children and young people.

2.0 Progress & Impact

2.1 Process for Improvement

The improvement work in 2023/24 was being driven through 3 Primary Drivers: Equity, Improved Attendance and Engagement and High-Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment. This work was underpinned by building Quality Improvement Capacity, Culture and Capability in all staff and using data to inform improvement planning and implementation. All work was supported by strategic groups and senior leaders from across a range of settings, who focused on improvement and measured impact through identified secondary drivers and reported termly to the Strategic Achievement Strategy Group, (*Appendix 1- Achievement Driver Diagram*).

2.2 Building Capacity in Quality Improvement

- All establishments completed a SQR for 2023-2024 and IP for 2024-2025. All improvement plans focus on priorities to raise attainment, attendance or engagement in line with Directorate Improvement priorities.
- During 2023/24 session four Quality Improvement Programmes involving 40 settings (over 110 staff) leading 64 projects were undertaken to improve outcomes for children and young people. The programmes focussed on improving writing, nurture, reading, listening and talking, and attendance.

2.3 High Quality Learning, Teaching & Assessment

Approaches to high quality learning, teaching and assessment have included promoting play pedagogy in the early years, development of assessment and moderation networks, improving digital literacy and targeted core approaches to literacy and numeracy that are linked to our directorate improvement plan.

Effective classroom pedagogy is also promoted through professional learning and there has been positive engagement. In partnership with the trade unions, there has been professional learning developed to support clarity around Fife's planning documentation and assessment tools to ensure consistency in approach across Fife:

2.3.1 Assessment and Moderation Network

- Almost all (95%) schools and ELCs have an Assessment and Moderation network link.
- 46 Quality Assessment and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSO's) in Fife have been trained by Education Scotland with almost all clusters represented.
- This ongoing work is continuing to support the development of practitioner knowledge, understanding and confidence of effective approaches and strategies, leading to improved experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

2.3.2 Promoting Play Pedagogy in the Early Years

- To support learning within the early years and improve attainment in literacy and numeracy, Playful Pedagogy continues to be developed across our early primary curriculum. This is a way of integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning, giving pupils the flexibility to find their own solutions to both new and existing problems.
- The Empowering Playful Pedagogy Programme /Learning Community has representation from most (75%) schools, with the accompanying Play Pedagogy Toolkit seeing good levels of access from staff. As of Term 4 the Fife Play Pedagogy Toolkit had 3148 visits to the site with 10926 internal views across the different site pages.
- From school visits there is evidence of play pedagogy impacting on children's independent learning skills. From data analysis there is evidence that Fife practitioners are actively engaging with online supports in relation to Play Pedagogy. This is leading to increased engagement within the learning community/ network, which in turn ensures practitioners are implementing effective pedagogies in play.

2.3.3 Improving Digital Literacy

- 27 schools/settings have been awarded with the Digital Schools Award and Torbain Primary School are the first school in Fife to achieve the Digital Wellbeing Award on 16th April.
- During the 23-24 session, 137 practitioners across Fife have engaged with digital professional learning sessions and 41 schools/settings have been supported individually with professional dialogue and staff professional learning sessions.

2.3.4 Targeted approaches to improving Numeracy and Literacy

- A very wide range of professional learning opportunities have been provided to upskill practitioners with core approaches within Fife.
- In Fife schools where the Workshop for Literacy approach and Conceptual Numeracy approach are fully embedded, there is evidence that this impacts positively on levels of attainment across literacy and numeracy.

- Writing and Reading Assessment Resource Packs have been created, providing a consistent framework based on robust research and evidence. These have been shared with all teaching staff.
 - The 3-18 Strategy gathered feedback from all sectors, parents and pupils on key themes – Transition and Data, Resources, Planning for learning, High quality Learning and Teaching and Assessment and Moderation. There has been a decision made from this data to focus on raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy across the BGE S1-S3.
 - A logic model for the development of Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been developed (*Appendix 2 – Logic Model*).
- 2.4 A tracking and monitoring tool ‘Progress’ has been developed and piloted with ten Primary Schools and two Early Year settings. This system allows for all learners across the BGE to be tracked and reported on all eight curricular areas. Standardised assessments and attainment interventions are also able to be recorded within the same system.

Strategic Equity Fund

- 2.5 Core to the Strategic Equity Fund plan in Fife is the provision of a range of universal, additional and intensive approaches to support young people across Fife.
- 2.6 A key element of this has been our drive to support and improve literacy and numeracy across our schools through a universal offer of support to all schools, both primary and secondary. This has been delivered alongside our five strand targeted approach (based on data provided by schools) to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. This approach includes quality improvement methodology to support reading and writing and other impactful tailored interventions.
- 2.7 Through our use of Quality Improvement Programmes in literacy and numeracy we have delivered our QI Writing, Reading and Numeracy programmes to over 40 schools and have involved over 110 staff and 1066 learners. Schools report that these programmes have led to improvement in attainment for learners involved. East Lothian and Scottish Borders Council have also sent staff to attend this cohort of the QI Reading programme to take the learning from Fife and implement it in their own local authority.
- 2.8 As part of our Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap Strategy in Fife we recruited 10 Principal Teachers to support specific clusters of schools to improve outcomes for children and young people with a clear focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. Schools involved report that the role of the PT was highly effective, and that learning is being shared across schools. This supports staff to improve the quality of learning provided to all pupils.
- 2.9 To support re-engagement of learners with lower attendance we implemented a 1-1 tutoring programme. This project utilised 1-1 tuition to support re-engagement of learners in primary 6 and primary 7 who were showing low attendance at school. This was targeted at those pupils who were sitting

within the 50-79% banding. These were pupils who do not yet meet the threshold of involvement from other services, but attendance patterns were showing worrying trends.

Through this work, learners were offered 1-1 sessions of tutoring, either face to face or online (dependent upon the wishes of the family and child). These sessions were designed to re-engage through the building of positive relationships with the tutor and links with the school. The aim being to increase confidence around learning they have missed which may have been causing anxiety and therefore limiting their ability to return to school.

Evaluation of this work at school level showed that for attendance improved for 89% of the learners who were engaged in this project with some learners increasing attendance as much as 34% however on average attendance improved by 9% to an average of 67.7% from 58.7% at the start of the intervention.

As well as an increase in attendance schools highlighted that for individuals there was an increase in confidence as well as an improvement in attainment with a closing of the attainment gap between the targeted learners and their peers.

As part of our continuing work to review ways in which we can improve support for learners', preparatory work has been undertaken, including action research by our Educational Psychologists, into how Fife Council Education and Children's Services Directorate could develop a model for secondary schools which would make online learning a sustainable element of an education offer for learners not attending school full-time. Research has also been undertaken with other local authorities, including North Lanarkshire into their provision and development of this.

- 2.10 Participatory budgeting (PB) can offer benefits to schools by empowering learners through a direct say in how a proportion of budget is spent and actively involves them in budgeting decisions. PB can also help to strengthen school community by encouraging collaboration between school and a wide range of stakeholders.

To encourage schools use of PB 2 clusters (Glenrothes HS and Beath HS) were allocated funding to take forward a project within their school communities.

Whilst both clusters are at the early stages of development of this work both have engaged with wider partners and have identified areas to progress. Beath cluster have identified a need to work more closely with families to support their understanding of how assessment is used to identify gaps and barriers to learning and to look at how better to engage with families in supporting their child at home. This approach was agreed with parent councils.

Glenrothes cluster have created pupil voice/ Participatory Budgeting groups in each of their schools. Initial feedback from primary schools suggests that

pupils would like to explore how they could use this funding to improve their playgrounds which serve the local community too.
A fuller report regarding the impact of this work will be provided in May 2025.

- 2.11 These strategies, alongside the work undertaken by our family support workers in supporting engagement in learning, our MCR mentors who support young people across four of our Secondary schools, our 1-1 Tutoring support for re-engagement of learners in primary 6 and 7 and our implementation of “50 Things to do before You’re 5” app are all playing a part in closing the poverty related attainment gap for learners across schools in Fife. Further detail about the impact of each of these can be found in our full SEF report which was presented to committee in May 24 - [Education Scrutiny Papers May 2024](#).

Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund

- 2.13 Key outcomes of the Learning with Care strategy 23/24 evaluated within the annual report included:
- There is little or no gap in the attendance of care experienced young people and their peers.
 - The majority of care experienced learners achieve level four literacy and numeracy before they leave school.
 - Almost all S4 pupils who participated in the Learning with Care programme successfully earned at least five National 3 qualifications.

The full annual report for 23/24 can be found here: [Learning with Care Report 2023-24](#)

Case studies that exemplify our close partnership working can be found in *Appendix 3*.

- 2.14 Link to the Learning with Care strategy, in 2023 we successfully secured a grant from Promise Scotland to facilitate system-level change aimed at establishing a more supportive school structure for care-experienced young people. Building positive relationships with young people has been the most important/impactful outcome so far. We have been able to provide extra support within school settings for care experienced young people who are experiencing difficulties within school. Whether this is related to behaviour, mental health, or personal struggles it has meant that they have more support to help them stay within education. As a result of this, isolation from their peers is reduced as well as avoiding placing an additional strain on families/their home life through non-attendance at school. Overall, the project has meant children and families have felt more supported within education as we have been able to adopt a more inclusive approach to ensure we are meeting their needs.

Pupil Equity Fund

- 2.15 From our monitoring of spend in financial year 2023/24 schools were allocated a total of £10.47m (*Rounded to two significant figures*). Carry forward by the end of March 2024 was £2.66m.
- 2.16 During session 23/24, schools used Pupil Equity Funding within the five themed areas below. The table in figure 3 shows the proportion of spend in each area.

Theme	Percentage of Spend
Literacy	41%
Numeracy	16%
Health and Wellbeing/ Family Engagement	24%
Pedagogy	2%
Attendance/ Engagement	13%
other	4%

Figure 3

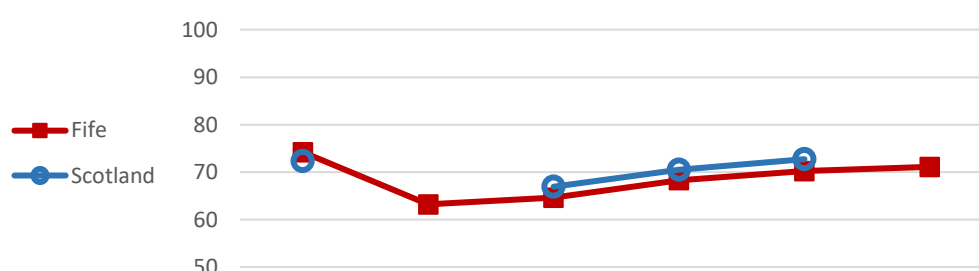
- 2.17 There has been an increase in spending targeted at improving attendance and engagement and a reduction in spend targeted at numeracy.
- 2.18 As in previous years, many schools have made use of Pupil Equity Funding to recruit additional staff. These staff are employed over and above the school's core provision and are used to target support, monitor the impact of interventions, and identify pupils who would benefit from targeted interventions. This additional staffing continues to include Pupil Support Assistants, teaching staff and additional promoted staff such as Principal Teachers and, in some schools, Depute Head Teachers. In all instances, a key role of these staff is to build the capacity of other staff within the establishment and to support them in developing practice to ensure that the work being undertaken is sustainable for the future. These staff members have remits that are linked to Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap.
- 2.19 Systems are in place in almost all schools to ensure that children and young people can access additional experiences such as excursions and residential experiences. Targeted interventions, such as breakfast clubs and holiday programmes ensure that children and young people are not missing out as a result of hunger. All secondary and special schools have removed all charges for curriculum subjects and almost all schools have systems in place to ensure sensitivity around fundraising and minimising events such as non-uniform days.

3.0 Outcomes

- 3.1 The following section provides an overview of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) achievement level data for Fife and Scotland, for both literacy and numeracy.

Achievement of CfE for literacy in stages P1, P4 and P7

- 3.2 The figure below shows the percentage of learners in stages P1, P4 and P7 (combined) who had achieved the expected level of CfE by the end of the school year for literacy. The figure compares levels of achievement in Fife and Scotland. No data is available for Scotland for 2019/20, as data was not collected by the Scottish Government. National data for 2023/24 will be available in December.



	2018/19 Total	2019/20 Total	2020/21 Total	2021/22 Total	2022/23 Total	2023/24 Total
Fife	74.2	63.2	64.6	68.3	70.2	71.1
Scotland	72.3	N/A	66.9	70.5	72.7	N/A

Figure 4. Overall levels of CfE achievement for literacy in stages P1, P4 and P7 combined, comparison of Fife and Scotland.

- 3.3 The table below shows achievement of CfE by learners in stages P1, P4 and P7 (combined) for literacy. Data is shown for learners in SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5. Data is also shown for the attainment gap between outcomes for these two groups of learners.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
SIMD Quintile 1	64.5	49.6	52.6	55.8	59.0	60.0
SIMD Quintile 5	83.0	76.9	76.3	78.1	81.2	82.9
Attainment Gap	18.5	27.3	23.7	22.2	22.2	22.9

Figure 5. Attainment Gap for CfE Achievement of literacy in stages P1, P4 and P7 combined.

- 3.4 The figure below shows the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level of CfE in literacy for different groups of learners over the period 2018/19 (the year prior to the Covid Pandemic) to 2023/24. The table also shows the improvement in outcomes seen in 2023/24 compared with the preceding year.

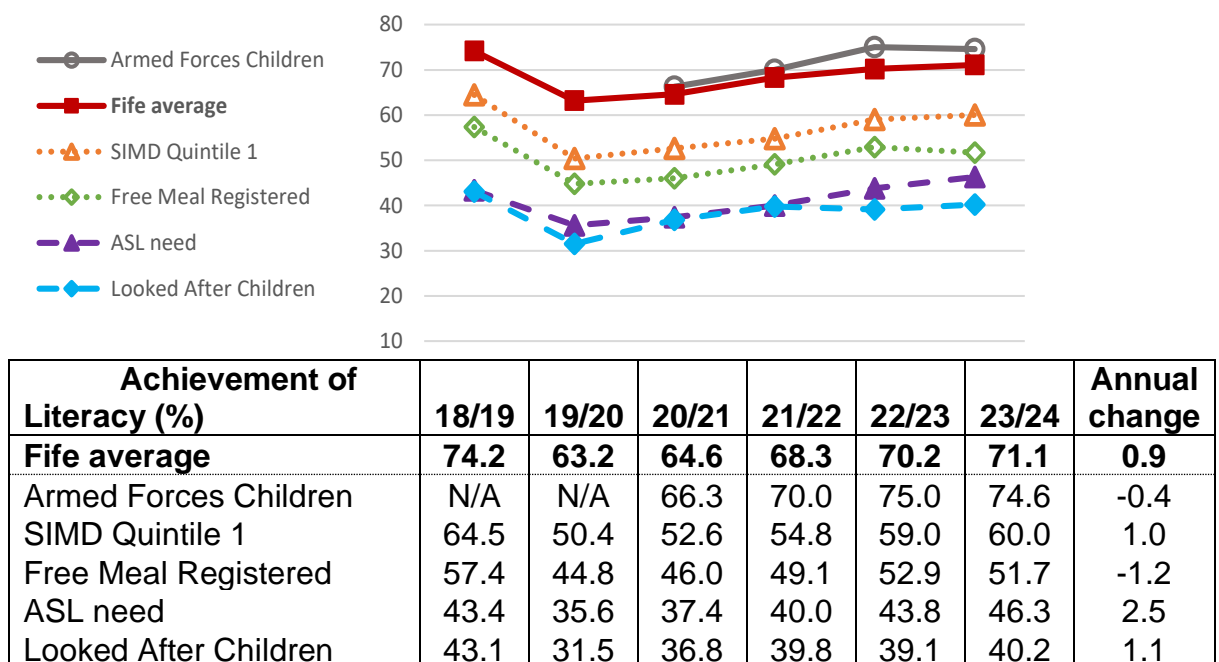


Figure 6. Levels of CfE achievement for literacy in stages P1, P4 and P7 combined, for different groups of learners.

Achievement of CfE for numeracy in stages P1, P4 and P7

- 3.5 The figure below shows the percentage of learners in stages P1, P4 and P7 (combined) who had achieved the expected level of CfE by the end of the school year for numeracy. The figure compares levels of achievement in Fife and Scotland. No data is available for Scotland for 2019/20, as data was not collected by the Scottish Government. National data for 2023/24 will be available in December.

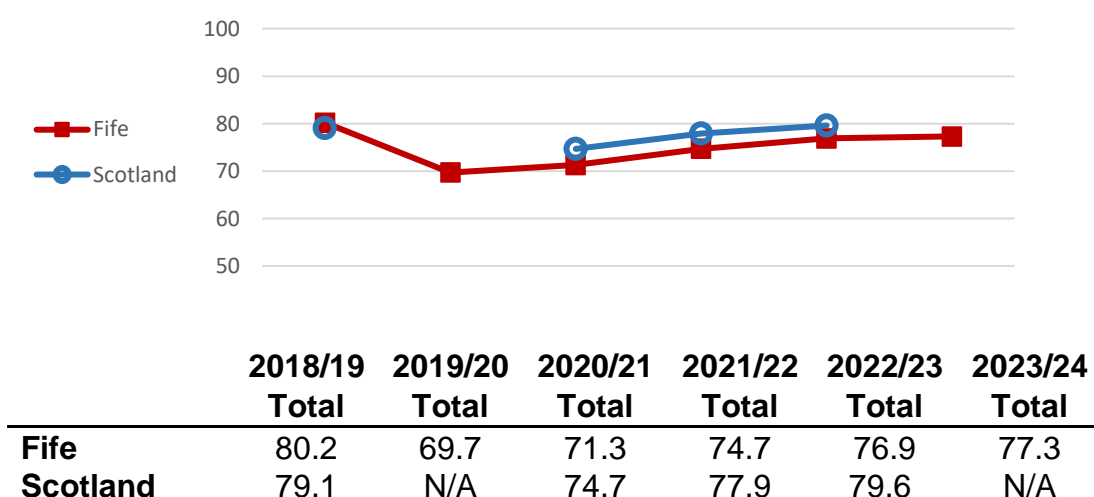


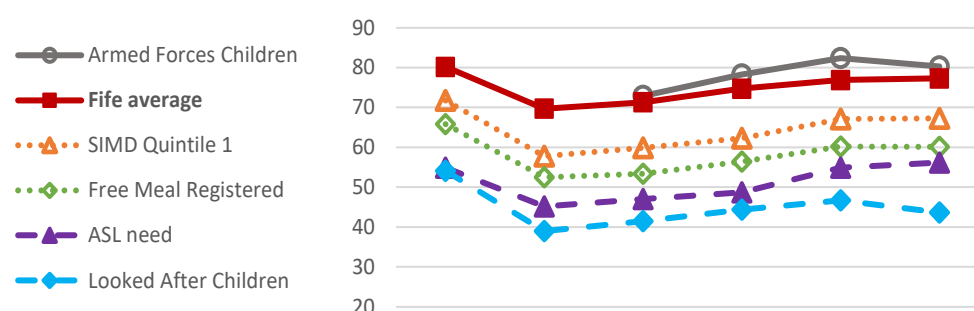
Figure 7. Overall levels of CfE achievement for numeracy in stages P1, P4 and P7 combined, comparison of Fife and Scotland.

- 3.6 The table below shows achievement of CfE by learners in stages P1, P4 and P7 (combined) for numeracy. Data is shown for learners in SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5. Data is also shown for the attainment gap between outcomes for these two groups of learners.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
SIMD Quintile 1	71.8	56.6	59.9	63.3	67.1	67.3
SIMD Quintile 5	88.2	80.9	82.9	84.7	86.1	87.0
Attainment Gap	16.5	24.3	23.0	21.5	19.0	19.7

Figure 8. Attainment Gap for CfE Achievement of numeracy in stages P1, P4 and P7 combined.

- 3.7 The figure below shows the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level of CfE in numeracy for different groups of learners over the period 2018/19 (the year prior to the Covid Pandemic) to 2023/24. The table also shows the improvement in outcomes seen in 2023/24 compared with the preceding year.



Achievement of Numeracy (%)	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Annual change
Fife average	80.2	69.7	71.3	74.7	76.9	77.3	0.4
Armed Forces Children	N/A	N/A	72.9	78.3	82.4	80.3	-2.1
SIMD Quintile 1	71.8	57.8	59.9	62.3	67.1	67.3	0.2
Free Meal Registered	65.8	52.5	53.4	56.4	60.2	60.1	-0.1
ASL need	54.9	45.2	47.0	48.7	54.9	56.2	1.3
Looked After Children	54.1	39.0	41.5	44.4	46.7	43.6	-3.1

Figure 9. Levels of CfE achievement for numeracy in stages P1, P4 and P7 combined, for different groups of learners.

Summary of trends in overall attainment in stages P1, P4 and P7

- 3.8 Comparing figures 4 and 7, we see that overall levels of achievement for both literacy and numeracy show general trends of improvement over time, but that these have been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is evident in:
- A significant fall in levels of achievement in 2019/20
 - A significant widening of the attainment gap in 2019/20

- 3.9 Comparing figures 5 and 8 we see that there is an improving trend for both SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5, as well as a closing in the attainment gap since 2019/20. However, the rate of improvement is slower than would be desired, and progress in closing the attainment gap has stalled.
- 3.10 Comparing figures 6 and 9, we see that outcomes for a range of learners at risk of lower achievement have generally seen improvement over time. However, these improvement have generally tracked the overall level of improvement seen for the cohort as a whole. For most of these groups, however, improvements made last year were greater than those seen overall, leading to a closing in the attainment gap for these groups. It should be noted that Looked After Children are a small cohort of learners; hence, one would expect the rate of improvement to be more volatile for this group.

Achievement of CfE levels in S3

- 3.11 The figure below presents data on CfE achievement in literacy as declared for learners in S3, in Fife and across Scotland as a whole. Outcomes are shown for both levels 3 and 4 of the curriculum. No data was collected nationally, or in Fife, during 2019/20 and 2020/21, due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. This reflects a recognition of the significant work required by secondary schools in supporting alternative models of certification for SQA outcomes in the senior phase during this period.

Achievement of literacy at level 3 or better by the end of stage S3 (%)

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fife	79.7	N/A	N/A	80.1	85.7	86.5%
Scotland	87.9	N/A	N/A	85.5	87.8	N/A

Achievement of literacy at level 4 by the end of stage S3 (%)

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fife	32.6	N/A	N/A	30.7	54.8	57.0%
Scotland	48.2	N/A	N/A	47.7	56.1	N/A

Figure 10.

- 3.12 The figure below presents data on CfE achievement in numeracy as declared for learners in S3, in Fife and across Scotland as a whole. Outcomes are shown for both levels 3 and 4 of the curriculum. No data was collected nationally, or in Fife, during 2019/20 and 2020/21, due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. This reflects a recognition of the significant work required by secondary schools in supporting alternative models of certification for SQA outcomes in the senior phase during this period.

Achievement of numeracy at level 3 or better by the end of stage S3 (%)

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fife	88.0	N/A	N/A	88.5	87.0	88.2%
Scotland	90.2	N/A	N/A	89.1	89.6	N/A

Achievement of numeracy at level 4 by the end of stage S3 (%)

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fife	54.5	N/A	N/A	48.3	59.5	59.3%
Scotland	58.9	N/A	N/A	59.3	63.0	N/A

Figure 11

- 3.13 Following the reintroduction of CfE achievement declarations in 2021/22, arrangements to support moderation are continuing to be re-established and strengthened in the secondary sector. This continues to be a focus of improvement work.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 In line with Directorate Improvement Priorities 2023-2026, our key improvement actions for session 2024-2025 are as outlined within the Directorate Improvement Plan - Improvement Priority 3 – Achievement as we continue our relentless focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap within the Broad General Education and into the Senior Phase in both literacy and numeracy, and ensure all children and young people develop skills, knowledge and attributes through wider achievement opportunities across the Broad General Education.
- 4.2 Professional Learning Support will be aligned within the next phase of the 3-18 Literacy and Numeracy Strategies Development Planning.
- 4.3 Professional Learning underpinning the Transforming Learning strategy will be planned and integrated with the wider work of the Professional Learning Team and the Supporting Learners Service to ensure digital learning and teaching is central to improving outcomes for learners.
- 4.4 Within the focus on high quality learning and teaching, we plan to strengthen our approaches at points of transition and to moderation. This will be supported by the implementation of a new BGE monitoring and tracking system 'Progress' across all stages and curricular areas.
- 4.5 Moving forward into session 24-25, the key focus priority for the Assessment and Moderation Network is transition (moves from stage to stage in education).
- 4.6 Achievement and skills trackers will be developed within the Progress system for early years, primary and secondary. Alongside this will be the development of volunteering, leadership and enterprise pathways from 3-18.
- 4.7 We will continue to focus upon improving attendance through family and learner engagement with our family support offer and multi-agency partnerships. To support re-engagement, we are further developing our 1-1 tutoring offer to support those within the upper stages of primary school with low attendance. A virtual learning offer will also be developed in co-ordination

with Fife's digital strategy. To ensure that this project is successful a group a short life working group has been established to:

- identify which age group to target initially and which to focus on.
- identify a number of schools who are willing to be part of a pilot.
- identify staff available, ideally on a locality basis, to support the additional tasks associated with online learning.
- consider how best to integrate mental health and wellbeing into the resource offer.

Work is progressing at pace with this strategy.

- 4.8 Schools will continue to develop effective ways to engage with stakeholders to inform their Pupil Equity Fund planning. There is evidence of strong practice in some schools, with a few schools beginning to develop approaches using participatory budgeting. We continue to support school leaders to collaborate and share learning and success through these approaches.
- 4.9 40 Early Years and Primary Leaders and 5 Secondary Leaders are currently engaging in professional learning on Strategic Leadership Self-Evaluation. This has been initially focussed on those who are closest to external scrutiny and will be delivered more widely moving forward.
- 4.10 Fife's stretch targets continue to be reviewed at the end of each school session, as part of work to develop a new Education Service Improvement Plan for 2023-26. The review of BGE stretch targets showed that a continued improvement and closing of the gap was achieved, but at a slower rate of improvement than had been achieved in the years leading up to the Covid pandemic. This reflected significant challenges facing schools (e.g., continuing increase in recorded levels of support needs relating to family issues, social and emotional issues, mental health issues). The Education Service Improvement Plan 2023/26 aims to support an increased pace of recovery over the next three years and this has been reflected in updated stretch targets set for the period 2023-26. It should be noted that, in setting these stretch targets, the Education Service has aimed to be ambitious for Fife's children and young people. This approach comes with a risk that outcomes may be lower than aimed for, but the Education Service believes that setting truly stretching targets for future improvement is essential if we are to ensure the best possible outcomes for Fife's children and young people in future years.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 As outlined in section 3, attainment in Fife fell in 2019/20, with the attainment gap widening. Since 2019/20, levels of achievement for literacy and numeracy in Fife have been slightly lower than national and have tracked improvements seen nationally. Data for Scotland for 2023/24 is not yet available, but outcomes in Fife saw further improvement. Outcomes for a range of learners at risk of lower achievement have generally seen

improvement over time. However, progress in closing the equity gap in achievement for these learners continues to be slow.

- 5.2 Although improvements are currently behind the stretch targets set for the period to 2025/26, the stretch targets for this period have been retained as ambitious but achievable.
- 5.3 Improving overall levels of attainment in the Broad General Education, and closing the attainment gap, are priorities within the Education Directorate Improvement Plan for 2023-26. This is reflected in the inclusion of an improvement priority for Achievement in the Plan, and in the inclusion of Equity and Equality, Families and Learners' voice as a cross-cutting themes across all areas of improvement.
- 5.4 Building the capacity for improvement through high quality professional learning and leadership development of staff will remain at the heart of our approaches, to support practitioners to make decisions about what works best for their learners and what has the greatest impact on their progress and achievement.
- 5.5 Importantly, the voices of the children and young people, and their families, will continue to underpin our on-going evaluation of what works best to improve the outcomes of all.

List of Appendices

- 1. Achievement Driver Diagram 2023/24
- 2. Logic model for the development of Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
- 3. Case studies from the Learning with Care strategy report.

References

[Scottish Attainment Challenge: framework for recovery and accelerating progress - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/policies/maternal-and-child-health/free-school-meals)
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/maternal-and-child-health/free-school-meals>

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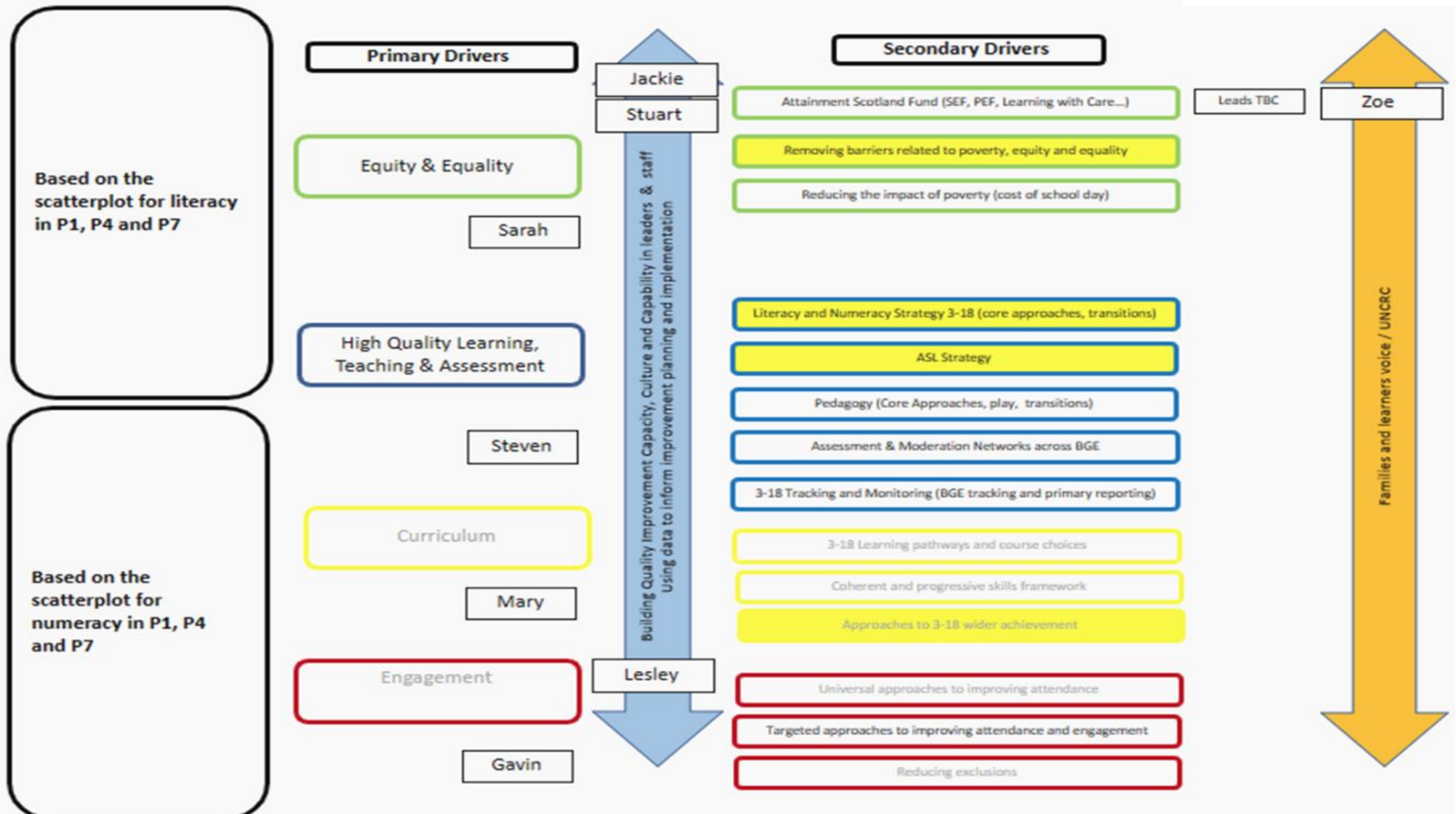
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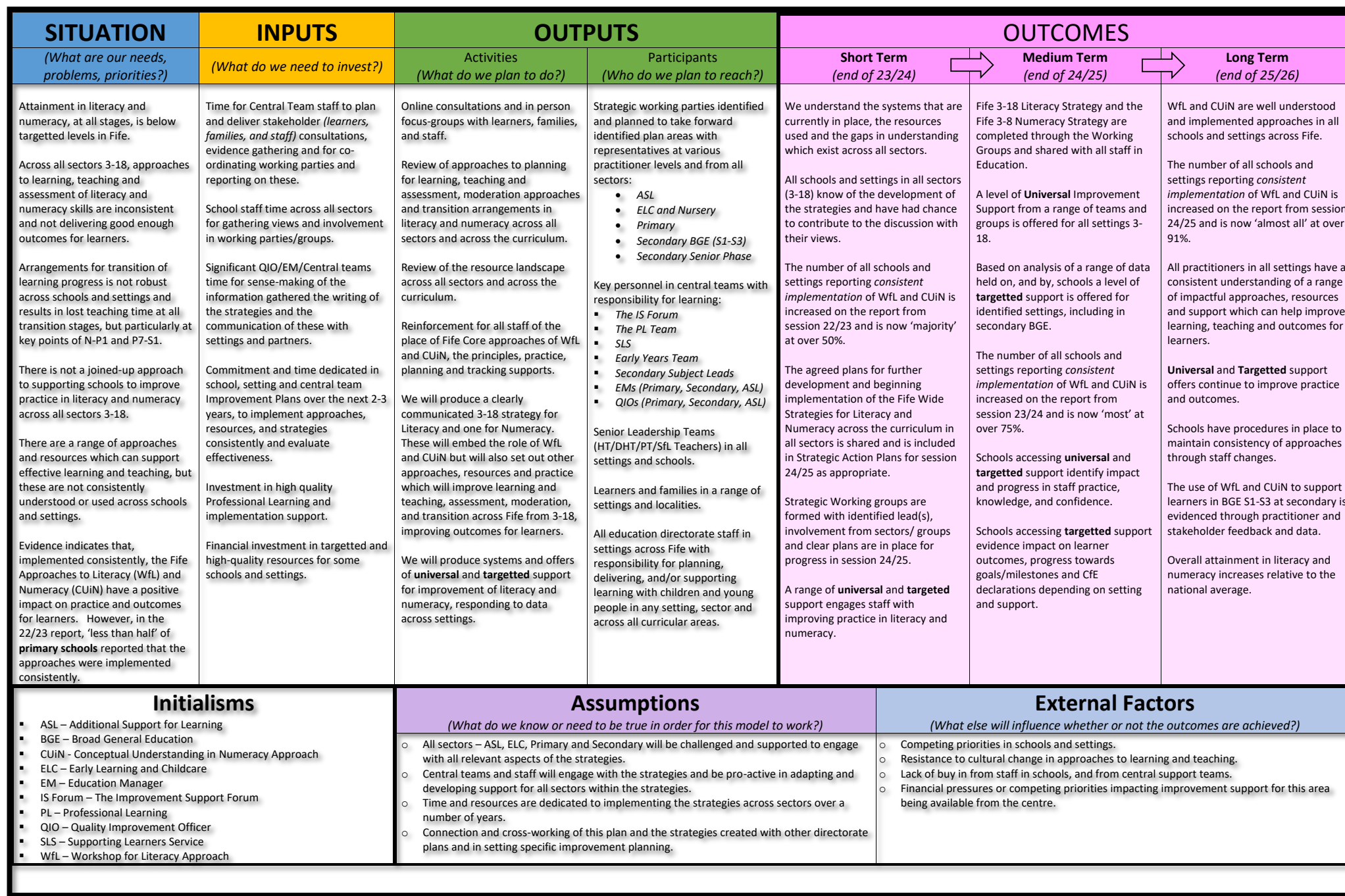
Workplace – Fife House, Glenrothes

Updated driver diagram for Achievement

Appendix 1 – Achievement Driver Diagram



Appendix 2 – Logic Model



Appendix 3 – Case Studies Learning with Care

One Pupil is set to transition back to full-time high school in January and has successfully completed National 4 English. Congratulations on this achievement and the upcoming transition!

Two pupils who were isolated and working on their own had previously not been accessing any formal learning (due to social and emotional difficulties). Both pupils now have daily sessions within the LwC Nurture base and have moved towards accessing early BGE education, with a view of returning to a PSS setting shortly.

One pupil, whom Learning with Care has supported since S2 when he was a school refuser and non-attender, has made remarkable progress. Initially, he wouldn't even leave his bedroom, but now, having formally left school in S5, he attends college daily and travels independently. He has also achieved numerous qualifications and recently participated in a residential trip to the Highlands.

MCR Case study

Corey and Lynne (Names Changed) - St Andrews High School Corey was in S5 when he joined the MCR programme. Corey was care experienced and although he was going to class and had great attendance, he was unfocused and unmotivated when it came to studying. During exams in 2022 Corey's foster placement broke down and he was moved to various homes during his exams, this had a great impact on him, his living situation was not consistent, and he struggled. This caused him not to achieve the grades he was on track to achieve and what he had hoped he would. Corey is very mature for his age and quite a private person so it was essential the right match was found. The guidance team and the MCR Pathways coordinator agreed that Corey would work best with a female mentor who has some experience of higher education as this was what Corey was hoping to achieve and move onto when he finished school in S6. Corey and Lynne got along great from the beginning, they had great conversations and Lynne was a great support and consistent person in Corey's life when he was struggling with changes at home and adjusting to a new living environment. Lynne really helped Corey with his studying and helped him with his Higher Human Biology, doing plenty of research and taking home a textbook to help Corey to the best of her ability. Lynne also offered some wonderful guidance for Corey when applying to university and helped read over his personal statement before he submitted it to UCAS. Corey has matured even further from when we first met, his confidence has flourished and his motivation to succeed has soared. He received multiple offers for university and college, a decision of what he will pursue had yet to be made at the time of writing. He is also hoping to obtain some part-time work and is looking forward to what is to come after leaving school.

2024/25 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn – Education Directorate

Report by: Donald Macleod, Executive Director (Education)

Eileen Rowand, Executive Director (Finance & Corporate Services)

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to give members an update on the projected outturn financial position for the 2024-25 financial year for the Education Directorate as at 31 August 2024.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to consider the current financial performance and activity as detailed in this report.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

Consultation

None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the projected outturn for the Education Directorate, for the 2024-25 Revenue Budget, and to highlight the major variances as at 31 August 2024.

- 1.2 For 2024-25 no specific savings proposals were approved by the Council as part of the Revenue Budget. There is therefore no requirement to include a Savings Tracker as part of financial reporting for the 2024-25 financial year.

2.0 Projected Outturn

Projected Outturn

- 2.1 There is a projected overspend of £1.799m for the Education Directorate. A summary of the 2024-25 projected out-turn for the areas falling under the scope of this committee are detailed in Appendix 1 and 2. Where there are significant variances (+/-£0.250m) to budgets a brief explanation is provided at Section 3.

3.0 Major Variances

Devolved School Management :- projected outturn (£3.883m) underspend

- 3.1 Under the DSM Scheme, schools' budgets are calculated and allocated with reference to a range of formulae based on appropriate data, for example school roll. At this stage in the financial year the projection for the DSM normally reflects the carry forward of underspend from the previous year as school budgets have still to be adjusted to reflect class numbers and staffing for the new session from August. The figure reported above therefore, includes the DSM carry forward across schools from 2023-24 of £1.472m.
- 3.2 In addition to the core DSM budget, schools' Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is included in devolved budgets. This also includes any unspent PEF at 31 March 2024 which was carried forward, and for 2024-25 the amount of carry forward was £2.663m. The underspend reflects the fact that schools manage their PEF allocations over academic sessions, and therefore some of the funding requires to be carried forward to meet the commitments in their PEF plans. Schools' PEF allocations for 2024-25 are still subject to final confirmation by Scottish Government, but the indicative allocations provided by them, which total £10.456m, have been added to schools' budgets. The projected underspend of £2.000m is included as an estimate of unspent PEF at the end of the 2024-25 financial year, based on trends of past spend. Updated projections will be provided by schools in future monitoring reports.
- 3.3 Finally within the Devolved Education budget there is a projected underspend of £0.397m on Pupil Support Service which relates to the achievement of a previously approved budget saving.

Non-DSM/Childcare: - projected outturn - £5.682m overspend

- 3.4 The projected overspend mainly relates to maternity pay and long-term absence, and overspends of £2.789m and £0.188m are included within the projection. These costs are in relation to teachers but are borne by the non-devolved central Education budget and not the DSM. A continued focus on addressing the overspend on this budget will be maintained, with the service implementing additional processes to increase the scrutiny of costs being charged to this area by schools.

- 3.5 Within Nursery Education a projected overspend of £1.593m is included due to additional staffing costs for nurseries to meet Care Commission requirements, and the cost of absence and cover arrangements for long term absence and maternity leave.
- 3.6 A projected overspend of £2.108m is also included for Special Education. This is mainly in relation to additional staffing costs of £0.454m, and overspends on transport costs for children of £1.350m. Also included within the projection are overspends relating to the Education element of secure child placements of £0.454m (costs are shared with Children and Families Service), and £0.390m in relation to payments to independent schools arising from tribunal decisions.
- 3.7 Partially offsetting these overspends is a projected underspend of (£1.851m) within General Education mainly due to budget setting within schools. These budgets will be adjusted when school budgets are amended for the new session from August. Adjustments for the new teaching complement, including probationers, will be actioned and budgets updated as required per school rolls. The impact of this will be reported as part of the October 2024 financial monitor and will be submitted to a future Scrutiny committee. Partially offsetting the underspend within General Education is unachieved savings of £0.756m, which are mainly in relation to historic income generation targets.
- 3.8 The movement since the last monitoring report at June is due to an increase in the overspend under Nursery Education of £1.093m from updated pay forecasts for nurseries to include the impact of long term absence and maternity and the requirement to provide staffing cover in settings. In addition, an increase in forecasted costs for waste collection and grounds maintenance of £0.652m is also part of the movement.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The projected outturn position for the Education Directorate reporting to this Scrutiny committee is an overspend of £1.799m. The Directorate will seek to reduce spend wherever possible to reduce the level of overspend across services, and Heads of Service have reiterated the need to ensure that essential spend only is incurred.

List of Appendices

- 1 Projected Outturn 2024-25 : Devolved School Management
- 2 Projected Outturn 2024-25 : Non- Devolved Education

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BUDGET MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY AUGUST 2024 EDUCATION - DEVOLVED					Appendix 1	
	CURRENT BUDGET 2024-25 £m	FORECAST 2024-25 £m	VARIANCE £m	VARIANCE %	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m	MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m
SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET	248.053	244.170	(3.883)	-1.57%	(3.472)	(0.411)
ANALYSIS OF SERVICE MANAGED BUDGET						
PRIMARY EDUCATION	114.078	111.732	(2.346)	-2.06%	(2.346)	0.000
SECONDARY EDUCATION	125.585	124.481	(1.105)	-0.88%	(1.105)	0.000
NURSERY EDUCATION	3.016	3.054	0.037	1.23%	0.037	0.000
SPECIAL EDUCATION	5.360	4.905	(0.455)	-8.49%	(0.058)	(0.397)
AREA GROUPS	0.014	(0.000)	(0.014)	-100.93%	0.000	(0.014)
	248.053	244.170	(3.883)	-1.57%	(3.472)	(0.411)

	CURRENT BUDGET 2024-25 £m	FORECAST 2024-25 £m	VARIANCE £m	VARIANCE %	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m	MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m
SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET	248.053	244.170	(3.883)	-1.57%	(3.472)	(0.411)
INCOME	(10.466)	(10.466)	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
EXPENDITURE						
EMPLOYEE COSTS	251.970	249.572	(2.397)	-0.95%	(2.000)	(0.397)
PREMISES RELATED EXPENDITURE	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
TRANSPORT RELATED EXPENDITURE	0.102	0.104	0.002	1.66%	0.000	0.002
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	4.739	3.252	(1.487)	-31.38%	(1.472)	(0.016)
THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS	1.708	1.708	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
TRANSFER PAYMENTS	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
SUPPORT SERVICES CHARGES	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
	258.519	254.636	(3.883)	-1.50%	(3.472)	(0.411)
	248.053	244.170	(3.883)	-1.57%	(3.472)	(0.411)

BUDGET MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY AUGUST 2024 EDUCATION - NON DEVOLVED					Appendix 2	
	CURRENT BUDGET 2024-25 £m	FORECAST 2024-25 £m	VARIANCE £m	VARIANCE %	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m	MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m
SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET	176.402	182.084	5.682	3.22%	4.449	1.234
ANALYSIS OF SERVICE MANAGED BUDGET						
PRIMARY EDUCATION	27.959	31.149	3.189	11.41%	2.137	1.052
SECONDARY EDUCATION	28.353	29.602	1.249	4.41%	0.951	0.299
NURSERY EDUCATION	62.455	64.048	1.593	2.55%	0.598	0.995
SPECIAL EDUCATION	36.538	38.646	2.108	5.77%	2.353	(0.246)
AREA GROUPS	0.586	0.586	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION	4.905	4.867	(0.038)	-0.78%	0.090	(0.128)
STAFF DEVELOPMENT	0.000	0.012	0.012	0.00%	0.000	0.012
FIFE MUSIC SERVICE	2.804	2.704	(0.100)	-3.57%	0.000	(0.100)
SUPPORT SERVICES	3.485	3.136	(0.349)	-10.01%	0.000	(0.349)
GENERAL EDUCATION	6.771	4.920	(1.851)	-27.34%	(1.680)	(0.172)
CHILDCARE	2.546	2.415	(0.131)	-5.13%	0.000	(0.131)
	176.402	182.084	5.682	3.22%	4.449	1.234

SUBJECTIVE GROUPING					MOVEMENT FROM	
	CURRENT BUDGET 2024-25 £m	FORECAST 2024-25 £m	VARIANCE £m	FORECAST VARIANCE %	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m
SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET	176.402	182.084	5.682	3.22%	4.449	1.234
INCOME	(12.096)	(11.994)	0.102	-0.84%	0.668	(0.566)
EXPENDITURE						
EMPLOYEE COSTS	106.595	109.466	2.872	2.69%	1.728	1.143
PREMISES RELATED EXPENDITURE	32.988	33.776	0.788	2.39%	0.000	0.788
TRANSPORT RELATED EXPENDITURE	16.544	17.979	1.434	8.67%	1.322	0.112
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	16.151	16.207	0.056	0.34%	0.183	(0.127)
THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS	16.202	16.570	0.368	2.27%	0.548	(0.180)
TRANSFER PAYMENTS	0.018	0.000	(0.018)	-98.01%	0.000	(0.018)
SUPPORT SERVICES CHARGES	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.00%	0.000	0.080
	188.498	194.078	5.581	2.96%	3.781	1.800
	176.402	182.084	5.682	3.22%	4.449	1.234

19 November 2024

Agenda Item No 7

2024-25 Capital Monitoring Progress Report – Education Directorate

Report by:

Donald Macleod, Executive Director (Education)

Eileen Rowand, Executive Director (Finance & Corporate Services)

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advise on the projected financial position for the 2024-25 financial year for the Education Directorate.

Recommendation

Committee is asked to consider the current financial performance and activity as detailed in this report.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal & Risk Implications

None

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

Consultation

None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The report summarises the projected capital outturn for the areas falling under the scope of this Committee for 2024-25. Projected expenditure is £48.992m, which represents 98% of the approved capital programme for 2024-25 and a variance of (£1.111m).
- 1.2 Appendix 1 shows an analysis of specific projects in the current capital investment plan which have a budget greater than £1.000m and analyses total project cost rather than only in year spend.

- 1.3 Appendix 2 details the projected expenditure against budget for each theme, along with associated income.
- 1.4 Slippage describes projects that are expected to spend less than the budget allocation in a particular year due to a delay in timing on the delivery of the project. This is not uncommon in the capital programme, and the reasons for this can be wide and varied. Advancement describes projects that are expected to spend more than the budget allocation in a particular year due to an acceleration of the budget from future years. Specific issues within projects arising from these factors are highlighted within these reports.

2.0 Issues and Options

Major Projects – Potential Risks and Actions

- 2.1 The Council's approved Capital Plan includes £213m investment in respect of Secondary Schools in West Fife, which includes the Dunfermline Learning Campus (DLC) and the Inverkeithing High School replacement. The budgets for the projects reflect the funding arrangements of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP), which requires the Council to fund the up-front cost of construction, with Government support coming in the form of a revenue contribution based on the achievement of outcomes. Both projects will require the funding conditions around the maintenance and condition of the schools to be met in order to ensure financial support is secured for the 25 year period.
- 2.2 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the provisional outturn for the major projects and programmes within the Education Directorate Capital Plan. Included within this is the project to replace Inverkeithing High School. The projected outturn in 2024-25 on this project is £28.465m, and the project is included in the Secondary School Development line in Appendix 2 along with the DLC. The overall budget for this project is detailed in Appendix 1 as £85m. Members will be aware that Cabinet Committee approved the Business Case for the project on 9 May 2024, and the approved budget was revised to £88m. This increase in budget will require to be accommodated within the capital plan review process currently ongoing.
- 2.3 Other significant projects and programmes of work detailed within Appendix 2 include the project at Lochgelly South Primary School for ground consolidation works and improvements, which is included within the Education Rolling Programme. The projected outturn in 2024-25 on this project is £4.856m across both the main project at Lochgelly South Primary School and the associated project at St Kenneth's Primary School, including the provision of accommodation for the decant of pupils from Lochgelly South. Lochgelly South Primary School reopened in August at the start of academic year 2024-25 and works are anticipated to be completed on budget.
- 2.4 Within Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), the remaining project at Raith Lodge is now complete and opened in August.
- 2.5 Scottish Government have indicated their revised policy intention to expand the provision of Free School Meals to Primary pupils (currently up to and including P5) by the end of this Scottish Parliamentary term. This will focus further expansion to children in Primaries 6 and 7, whose families are in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment. Work has already been undertaken to estimate the costs associated with expanding provision in terms of the works required to school kitchens and dining

spaces, and this will require to be prioritised to provide additional capacity. Scottish Government have provided £3.963m of funding to date, and £1.352m is projected to be spent in 2024-25 across the school estate. A further capital allocation for the 2024-25 financial year for free school meal expansion of £9.140m has recently been advised by Scottish Government and this will be added to the current budget. Work will be prioritised across schools to address catering requirements and dining facilities.

Financial Performance – Significant Variances

- 2.6 Under the Education Rolling Programme there is slippage of £1.309m for Freuchie Primary School upgrade, with a change in the financial profile of the project to meet the overall on-site delivery programme. The project is still anticipated to be completed on time next financial year.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The total 2024-25 approved programme for the Education Directorate is £50.103m with a forecast level of expenditure of £48.992m, which represents 98% of the total programme.
- 3.2 The management of capital resources require us to look across financial years, as well as within individual years. The current year performance is only a snapshot of the existing plan and the Directorate will adjust expenditure levels within future years of the plan to accommodate the advancement of projects.

List of Appendices

1. Project Cost Monitor
2. Capital Plan 2024-2025 Projected Outturn Expenditure

Background Papers

Not applicable

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FIFE COUNCIL
EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
EDUCATION AND CHILDRENS SERVICES
CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2024-33
TOTAL COST MONITOR - MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

Appendix 1

Project	Theme	Original Approved Budget £m	Current Project Budget £m	Total Outturn £m	Variance £m	Variance %	Current Project Status	Expected Project Completion Date
Madras College Extension	Opportunities for All		5.713	5.713	-	0.00%	Future Project	2027-28
Dunfermline Learning Campus	Opportunities for All		120.678	120.678	-	0.00%	Completed Project	2024-25
Extension Secondary School - Viewforth	Opportunities for All	5.989	6.335	6.335	-	0.00%	Future Project	2030-31
New Secondary School - Glenrothes /Glenwood	Opportunities for All	27.532	86.831	86.831	-	0.00%	Future Project	2029-30
Queen Anne High School Extension	Opportunities for All		6.626	6.626	-	0.00%	Future Project	2030-31
Inverkeithing High School Replacement	Opportunities for All		85.000	85.000	-	0.00%	Current Project	2026-27
Primary School Development Future Projects	Opportunities for All		97.638	97.638	-	0.00%	Future Project	2032-33
Lochgelly Primary School	Maintaining Our Assets	9.000	8.984	8.984	-	0.00%	Current Project	2024-25
Balwearie High School	Maintaining Our Assets	8.300	8.300	8.300	-	0.00%	Future Project	2027-28
Total Major Projects over £5.000m		50.821	426.104	426.104	-	0.00%		
Extension Secondary School - Auchmuty	Opportunities for All	9.62	3.734	3.734	-	0.00%	Future Project	2027-28
Primary School Development Future Projects	Opportunities for All		6.282	6.282	-	0.00%	Future Project	2031-32
Raith Lodge - Early Years Provision	Opportunities for All		1.432	1.432	-	0.00%	Completed Project	2024-25
Total Major Projects over £1.000m		9.620	11.448	11.448	-	0.00%		
Total Major Projects		60.441	437.552	437.552	-	0.00%		

Expenditure	Current Budget £m	Actual to Date £m	Total Outturn £m	Variance £m	Outturn as % of Plan
Building Fife's Future	0.122	0.043	0.043	(0.079)	35%
Early Learning and Childcare	0.611	0.396	0.611	-	100%
Primary School Development	0.206	(0.013)	0.367	0.162	179%
Secondary School Development	34.363	11.292	34.363	-	100%
Education Rolling Programme	12.520	4.286	11.211	(1.309)	90%
Nursery Refurbishment	0.941	0.142	0.995	0.054	106%
Free School Meals Expansion	1.340	0.449	1.352	0.012	101%
Primary School Structural Pressures	-	-	0.050	0.050	
Childcare	-	(0.004)	-	-	0%
TOTAL EDUCATION SERVICES	50.103	16.591	48.992	(1.111)	98%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	50.103	16.591	48.992	(1.111)	98%

Income	Current Budget £m	Actual to Date £m	Total Outturn £m	Variance £m	Outturn as % of Plan
Building Fife's Future	-	-	-	-	0%
Primary School Development	(0.509)	-	(0.509)	-	100%
Secondary School Development	-	-	-	-	0%
Education Rolling Programme	-	(0.096)	-	-	0%
Childcare	-	0.004	-	-	0%
TOTAL INCOME	(0.509)	(0.092)	(0.509)	-	100%

19 November 2024

Agenda Item No. 8

Education Scrutiny Committee Workplan

Report by: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report supports the committee's consideration of the workplan for future meetings of the committee.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the committee review the workplan and that members come forward with suggestions for areas of scrutiny.

Resource Implications

Committee should consider the resource implication for Council staff of any request for future reports.

Legal & Risk Implications

Committee should consider seeking inclusion of future items on the workplan by prioritising those which have the biggest impact and those which seek to deal with the highest level of risk.

Impact Assessment

None required for this paper.

Consultation

The purpose of the paper is to support the committee's discussion and therefore no consultation is necessary.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Each Scrutiny Committee operates a workplan which contains items which fall under three broad headings: performance reporting, planning; and improvement work. These items will often lead to reactive rather than proactive scrutiny. Discussion on the workplan agenda item will afford members the opportunity to shape, as a committee, the agenda with future items of business it wishes to review in more detail.

2.0 Conclusions

- 2.1 The current workplan is included as Appendix one and should be reviewed by the committee to help inform scrutiny activity.

List of Appendices

1. Workplan

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

None

Report Contact

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Education Scrutiny Committee of 28 January 2025			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
School Meals Provision	Education	Tariq Ditta	Referred from CAC 28.02.24 for scrutiny. Min Para Ref 140 of 2024.CAC.54 refers - motion. Deferred from 17.09.24 then from 19.11.24.
Cost of School Transport	Education	Shelagh McLean	Para 84 (2) of minute of ES 05.03.24 refers. To include cost of provision for pupils with additional support for learning needs.
Inspection Reports 2023/24	Education	Angela Logue, Maria Lloyd	Look back at the previous year's inspection outcomes for early years, Primary, Special and Secondary.
Relationships & Behaviour in Schools – Update Report	Education	Shelagh McLean, Maria Lloyd	Previous update at committee 14.11.23. Should refer to the Behaviour research report 2023 (EM brief issued to committee members on 30 Jan by M Lloyd) and SG action plan.
Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan			

Education Scrutiny Committee of 18 March 2025			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Childcare Services - Early Adopter Community Work	Education	Shelagh McLean, Gary Peattie	Previously considered 17.09.24, para no 98 of 2024.ES.48 refers.
Supporting Refugee, Asylum Seeking and Displaced Young People with English as an Additional Language in Education	Education	Jackie Funnell, Jennifer Wilson-gr	Update report - previously considered 07.05.24, Para No. 88 (2) of 2024.ES.43.Briefing note in the interim?

Education Scrutiny Committee of 18 March 2025			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Attendance Update Report	Education	Rona Weir, Angela Logue	Update - previously considered 07.05.24, Para. No. 91 (3) of 2024.ES.44 refers. Include information relating to the Fife Literacy Review research currently being carried out and due to conclude by February 2025.
Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan			

Education Scrutiny Committee of 20 May 2025			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Senior Phase Destinations	Education	Karen Lees, Stuart Booker	Include info on stretch targets to PD and info on other LA's with similar profiles doing better.
Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan			

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Outcome of Short-term Working Group on Virtual Classrooms	Education	Angela Logue, Craig Martin	Visit to North Lanarkshire to be arranged. Referred from Cabinet Committee of 06.06.24, Para 252 refers (see Action Note): CC Action Note 06 06 24

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
National Thematic - Local Authority approaches to support school improvement	Education	Maria Lloyd, Angela Logue	This is taking place on 10 to 11 September with a focus on how LA supports school improvement. Timing will be dependent on when the report is published by Education Scotland.
Education Directorate Improvement Plan Update for 2025/26 and Annual Report 2024/25	Education	Angela Logue, Stuart Booker	Annual Report - due September 2025. Previously considered 17.09.24 - para no. 96 of 2024.ES.47 refers.
Swimming for Children and Young People	Education	Shelagh McLean, Pamela Colburn	Previously considered 17.09.24, para no 97 of 2024.ES.47 refers. Working group established to consider options in more detail with a view to recommendations to Cabinet Committee.