NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

26 September 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**Education Service Standards and Quality Report 2022-23**
Purpose:	To report key progress towards the Education Service Improvement Priorities and the National Improvement Framework Priorities for session 2022-23.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet: (a) Notes the content of the report; and (b) Approves the publication of the report

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on the performance of the Education Service in the 2022-23 academic year which aligns with the statutory duty for each education authority to report annually on performance as outlined in the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 and Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

2. Background

Education authority statutory duties

2.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places a statutory duty on education authorities to annually publish a Standards and Quality report. In addition, there is a statutory duty outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, for education authorities to produce an annual plan and report on progress towards achieving National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities. The national priorities in 2022-23 were:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
- Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.

Education Service planning arrangements

2.2 The Education Service Plan priorities for 2022-23 ([Education Service Plan - Annual Improvement Plan (north-ayrshire.gov.uk](north-ayrshire.gov.uk)) are aligned to the NIF priorities, noted in section 2.1 above.

2.3 In March 2022, the Scottish Government published a Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress, updated in May 2023. This document requires local authorities to set stretch aims for improvement, publish them and report on the extent to which progress towards them is being made in the annual statutory Standards and Quality Report, beginning in 2023.

2.4 The Education Service Standards and Quality Report 2022-23, attached at Appendix 1, fulfils the statutory duties and national improvement framework reporting requirements into a single report. The report describes some of the principal improvement activities undertaken throughout the academic session 2022-23 and includes key performance information on learner outcomes.

3.   Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

(a) Notes the content of the report; and
(b) Approves the publication of the report.

4.   Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 The production of an annual Standards and Quality Report is a requirement under the standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000. In addition, an annual report on progress towards NIF priorities is a requirement under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The Standards and Quality Report sets out our progress towards improving educational outcomes for all, but also reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 The Standards and Quality Report sets out our progress towards improving educational outcomes including actions taken to promote progressive and interdisciplinary outdoor learning experiences with a focus on sustainable development goals, directly related to the NAC Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

<u>Key Priorities</u>

4.6   The Standards and Quality Report sets out progress in delivery of the Council Plan 2019-2022 priority to ensure children and young people have the best start in life. In addition, progress made towards actions outlined in this report continue support the Council Plan 2023-28 strategic aim to "transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people" and more specifically "improving educational attainment and achievement and closing the attainment gap" activities.

<u>Community Wealth Building</u>

4.7   None.

5.   Consultation

5.1   This report demonstrates progress made towards the Service Improvement Plan priorities in 2022-23, which reflect the National Improvement Framework priorities for education 2022-23. Consultation on the content of this report is not required. However, a range of stakeholders and partners contributed to this report content and continue to play an active role in enabling the service to realise the NIF priorities and the Council's vision to ensure a North Ayrshire that is fair for all by achieving our mission to work together to improve the lives of our people in North Ayrshire.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director (Communities & Education)

For further information please contact **Andrew McClelland, Head of Service (Education),** on **(01294) 324413**.

Background Papers
Appendix 1: NAC Education Service Standards & Quality Report 2022-23

Education Service

Standards and Quality Report 2022-23

Draft v1

Contents

Foreword

(by Councillor Macaulay, Depute Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Education and Young People)

Introduction

(by Andrew McClelland, Head of Service (Education) and Chief Education Officer)

The North Ayrshire Local Context

[please update the same graphic as last year with the following figures (show in RED) below:]

North Ayrshire Key Statistics
Area: 885.5 km2
Population: 135,280
(2.5% of population of Scotland)

46%
Of our Children and young people live in postcodes in the most deprived areas of Scotland according to SIMD.

29%
Of our Children and young people are living in relative poverty, according to UK government statistics.

6,135
Of our Children and young people are are registered for school footwear and clothing grants.

[please update the same graphic as last year with the following figures (show in RED) below:]

Education in North Ayrshire is delivered through:

48 Primary Schools

Partnership early learning and childcare settings **14**

8 Secondary Schools

Pupils **17,691**

1 Through School

Teachers **1,434**

1 Specialist ASN Campus

387 Early learning and childcare staff

Council-managed early learning and childcare **establishments** **41**

12,700 support staff hours

This report details progress made towards our Service Improvement Plan priorities for session 2022-23, which are aligned to the National Improvement Priorities as follows:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Investing in our Learning Environments

Investment in school buildings is of vital importance for several reasons:

- Raising attainment, achievement and wellbeing
- Enhancing quality and reflecting changes in curriculum
- Reducing inequality of facilities and opportunity

Within North Ayrshire we have an excellent record of continuous improvement across our Learning Estate, and Academic Year 2022/23 saw a number of initiatives developed which strengthen that commitment:

- **Moorpark Primary School, Kilbirnie** – works commenced on the construction of a new 12 class primary school to replace the existing facility. This is due to open in late 2023 and will provide high quality and inspirational learning environments for the children and young people, including excellent outdoor learning and sports facilities.

- **A new primary school at Montgomerie Park, Irvine –** Final contracts were signed with HubSW to deliver a new primary school at Montgomerie Park, Irvine. This completely new facility, which incorporates funding from the Scottish Government LEIP programme, will comprise of 12 primary classes and an Early Years class (2–5-year-olds) and responds directly to the increasing population, arising from new housing, in that part of the town. Currently, the new school is expected to open in 2024.

- **Ardrossan Community Campus-** Also funded through the LEIP programme, 2022/23 saw significant progress in developing the design of the new campus at Ardrossan which will

replace both Ardrossan Academy and Winton Primary School, with a single "Through School"- only the second in North Ayrshire (after Garnock Community Campus). In addition, the public library will relocate to the campus and new public swimming facilities are also included. Contracts are set to be awarded for the construction of the new facility in summer 2023, with a construction period of around two years starting mid 2024.

In addition to these single building projects, 2022/23 saw the final projects completing in the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare facilities across the Authority. This programme of investment has seen 41 individual projects delivered, at a cost of £11.8 million, over a 5-year period.

2022/23 saw works continue on the transformation of Marress House, a former HMRC building in Irvine, which will be re-invented as a new Early Years facility and Training space - due to open in in 2023.

North Ayrshire was successful at securing Scottish Government funding in relation to the proposed expansion of Universal Free School meals (UFSM) in 2022/23, with a further grant of £1.96 million being awarded in addition to the earlier £738k which was received. Essential works to kitchen and/or dining facilities at Largs Campus, West Kilbride, Brodick and Corrie Primary Schools were undertaken, with a further programme of works over the next 5 years planned.

Education Service Improvement Plan Priorities 2022-23

The table below summarises the key pieces of work which have contributed towards our improvement agenda throughout session 2022-23.

PRIORITY 1:	Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
Theme 1:	High quality learning, teaching and assessment

Support establishments to implement a revised learning, teaching and assessment policy and review existing literacy and numeracy frameworks to maximise the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.

Extend play pedagogy from early years into primary 1 and 2, through a pilot programme in identified schools.

Promote progressive and interdisciplinary outdoor learning experiences with a focus on sustainable development goals, directly related to the NAC Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

Develop an Education Digital Skills Strategy and support establishments to achieve Digital Schools status, ensuring that digital technologies are a central component of our approaches to quality learning and teaching.

Deliver a range of facilitated programmes and bespoke sessions, to support the leadership development and enhance skills in context of colleagues across all sectors.

Theme 2:	Raising attainment and achievement

Develop a 3-year Raising Attainment Strategy to improve outcomes for all learners and reduce inequity of outcomes, including a focus on accelerating progress in early primary and ELC following implementation of 1140.

Implement a review of tracking and monitoring procedures in all sectors from early learning to senior phase and improve the use of progress information to target interventions.

Develop universal professional learning supports on effective moderation and planning for learning, teaching and assessment.

PRIORITY 2:	Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
Theme 1:	Interventions to reduce gaps

Reprioritise our targeted interventions to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap in North Ayrshire, maximising the coherence and impact of our work.

Continue to work collaboratively in partnership across the local authority, SWEIC and national networks to support sharing of highly effective practice that reduces the poverty related attainment gap.

Work closely across North Ayrshire services and third sector partners to reduce the cost of the school day and mitigate the impact of child poverty.

Theme 2:	Interventions to reduce gaps

Develop an improving outcomes strategy (and action plan) for identified target groups, including care experienced learners.

Further enhance supports for care experienced children and young people, including mentoring services, that enable them to attain and achieve in line with their peers.

Theme 3:	Data literacy skills

Further develop data literacy skills in our staff to strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement and maximise the effectiveness of targeted interventions.

PRIORITY 3:	Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
Theme 1:	Improved skills

Promote the further embedding of appropriate wider achievement options in the senior phase.

Theme 2:	Improved transitions

Review the use of tracking and transition information to plan learning experiences around key transition points.	
Through DYW co-ordinators and other partners, embed approaches to planning, supporting and tracking post-school destinations for all school leavers.	
Review approaches to implementing the Career Education Standard through strengthened partnership working with Skills Development Scotland.	
Theme 3:	**Partnerships to improve learner outcomes post-school**
Refresh and strengthen the focus of the school-college partnership and to provide enhanced opportunities for achievement, e.g. through the Regional Improvement Collaborative, in the senior phase.	
Design tailored programmes with partners to provide enhanced support for specific groups of school leavers, including those with identified needs.	
PRIORITY 4:	**Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing**
Theme 1:	**Supporting mental health and wellbeing**
Review the impact of school counselling services and external counselling / community wellbeing supports and refresh provision, strengthening the relationship between school counselling and other available supports.	
Assist education establishments to implement the national mental health and wellbeing Whole School Approach, including curricular, professional learning and parental supports.	
Promote staff mental health and wellbeing in a range of ways, including through a new programme of supported reflective practice sessions.	
Theme 2:	**Supporting social and emotional wellbeing**
Review approaches to promoting positive relationships and whole school nurture, based on an analysis of need.	
Support a range of targeted nurturing approaches, including nurture groups that continue to develop the social and emotional skills of identified children and young people.	
Use our analysis of health & wellbeing data from a range of sources, including the national census, to develop targeted improvement priorities for curricular delivery, universal approaches in establishments, and wider community supports.	
PRIORITY 5:	**Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education**
Theme 1:	**Supporting needs**
Review and redesign processes and policies which apply to all learners (2-18) to ensure they are equitable, consistent, lean, coordinated, co-designed with relevant partners, and learner centred.	
Establish an enhanced range of flexible and child centred learning provisions, curriculum and delivery methods to meet a wide variety of support needs.	
Provide tailored professional learning opportunities for all staff groups within establishments to support the needs of children and young people.	
Theme 2:	**Maximising learner participation and voice**
Co-create with children and young people new, systematic mechanisms, which maximise learner participation and voice, through a a new Learner Participation Policy.	
Undertake a review of Service wide policies to ensure UNCRC principles are considered	
Theme 3:	**Maximising parents/carer involvement and engagement**
Implement locally the revised 'Learning Together' Scottish Government parental involvement and engagement action plan.	
Provide enhanced guidance for schools and Parent Councils to support and guide greater involvement in the operational activities of the school.	
Through the Family Learning Team and establishments, offer a wide range of opportunities that enhance family learning in establishments.	

Education Service Priority 1

Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy

Theme 1: High Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy was launched in October. This policy promotes best practice and will be used to build upon consistency in teaching and learning across our schools.

Our Professional Learning Academy has provided training and interventions for our schools with particular focus on numeracy and literacy. Examples of interventions and training we have provided below.

Intervention	Number of Staff	Number of Pupils	Impact of Intervention
Literacy: **Attention & Listening** A whole school intervention to develop attention and listening skills through the levels.	63	337	Staff participants felt the intervention promoted professional dialogue across stages, in addition to the intervention having a meaningful impact and providing opportunities to share existing good practice. The impact of this intervention resulted in pupil progress and approaches which could be implemented within the classroom.
Literacy: **Boosting Reading @ S5/6** 10-week intervention supporting the acquisition of good reading skills. Training with S5 & S6 Pupils working with S1 & S2 pupils who have a reading age 18-24 months below their chronological age	N/A	65	Pupil confidence grew in supporting younger pupils and recognising the strategies that would enable them to do this, **98% of pupils** rated their confidence as high/very high in terms of supporting a younger reader after the training.
Literacy: **Boosting Reading @ Primary/Secondary** 10-week intervention supporting the acquisition of good reading skills. Training with Classroom Assistants working with P3-S2 pupils who have a reading age 18-24 months below their chronological age	11	13	Pupil reading age increased by an average of 30 months over the 10 week intervention. Schools found that the intervention had a significant positive impact on the children involved in terms of fluency, comprehension and confidence.
Literacy: **Classroom Assistant's Supporting Phonological Awareness** Classroom Assistant led intervention with small groups to develop phonological awareness skills at Early, First and Second Level	11	38	Findings from post intervention screeners show improvement in most areas of the Phonological Awareness (PA) continuum in all pupils, with significant improvement in most of the areas targeted. CAs increased understanding of phonological awareness was a key impact of this intervention.

Intervention	Staff	Pupils	Impact
Literacy: **Note Making** 8-week intervention teaching learners the skill of note taking using the Cornell method in order to enhance their writing across the curriculum	4	115	**100%** of pupils were able to successfully use the Cornell notes format. **No pupils** could do this pre-intervention. Post-Intervention feedback highlighted the sustainability of the intervention with those who took part, expressing that they will continue the Cornell note making method across all areas to help pupils build confidence with their notes.
Literacy: **Oracy Across the Curriculum** A whole school approach designed to teach learners to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language	60	700 (Avg.)	Participants felt that it broke down the skills children needed and was a valuable input. Some participants even suggested it should be mandatory training for all schools across North Ayrshire to ensure shared language across the authority.
Literacy: **Talk Boost 2** Training provided by PLA staff to CAs and CTs to support children in Primary 4-7 with their language and communication skills	10	N/A	The session offered opportunities to learn about how to identify pupils with speech and language difficulties. **All (100%)** of participants either strongly agree or agree that the session increased their knowledge
Literacy: **Talk Boost 1** Training provided by PLA staff to CAs and CTs to support children in Primary 1-3 with their language and communication skills	24	N/A	Some participants felt that the session offered good examples of how to track children involved and underpinned the theory of speech and language communication needs.
Numeracy: **Classroom Assistants Supporting Numeracy** A targeted small group intervention for P3 pupils who are "not on track" in numeracy whilst upskilling CAs in supporting numeracy development	15	71	This intervention led to Classroom Assistants discovering novel resources and ideas to keep pupils on track and interested in learning. Almost All CA's commented that they could see clear progress with pupils, who were now also more confident in comparison to pre-intervention and stating pupils could now answer numeracy problems verbally.
Numeracy: **Making Maths Tactile** A whole class intervention promoting effective use of manipulatives and visuals to develop a deeper understanding of numeracy and maths	10	200 (Avg.)	Post-Intervention qualitative statements highlighted that due to this intervention participants felt more confident and comfortable using manipulatives across a wide range of concepts. **All** participants commented on the effect and sustainability of the intervention due to improved confidence and development of pupil's numeracy skills due to this intervention. Pupils now shared their thinking through both written and verbal communication.

The local authority has a holistic approach to assessment and moderation, involving schools, clusters, and the authority level. Senior leaders participate in regional and national moderation groups. The learning, teaching, and assessment policy guides staff in planning formative and summative assessments. National Standardised Assessments are used in the moderation process to identify learning gaps. Professional dialogue promotes continuous improvement, and the authority plans to

provide online standardized assessments to support schools in addressing poverty-related attainment gaps.

Play Pedagogy in the early stages of primary

16 schools from across North Ayrshire participated in our P1 Play Pedagogy pilot this session.

The staff professional learning programme consisted of 7 training sessions with a mix of networking visits and drop-in sessions to provide further support, as well as a support surgery session with colleagues from Education Scotland, Education Psychology, Early Years and NAC Play Pedagogy Development Team. Each session included time for practitioners to network with others in different schools and reflection time to allow staff to plan with their colleagues while at the session, using the development team for support if needed.

Impact was measured using both Leuven scale data and case studies. Each case study had a different focus. This resulted in a wide range of data showing impact on pupil engagement and wellbeing as well as development of curricular areas through play pedagogy. Case studies can be found on our [PLA Pedagogy website](#).

The combination of training, networking, case studies and collaborative working has resulted in positive impact across all 16 schools involved. All schools have now embedded playful approaches across P1 and are looking to move forward with the same approach in P2 and beyond. Sustainability has been built into the programme as schools were encouraged to take a whole school approach, involving management teams and staff at all stages.

Outdoor Learning / Learning for Sustainability

An early years outdoor science resource was developed, led by our STEM team. The purpose of this was to link outdoor learning experiences to Science experiences and outcomes and Sustainable Development Goals. Professional learning sessions for this resource were attended by 215 NAC practitioners. Evaluations were completed by practitioners following the training, 100% of whom agreed that using the resource has helped them to make links between outdoor learning and science experiences and outcomes, and that this would improve and extend the quality of outdoor learning experiences.

Over 100 staff attended further professional learning on outdoor learning and learning for sustainability for primary-aged children. In addition, whole-school training sessions have been delivered in three schools and the STEM team has supported a further three schools through outdoor learning team teaching inputs.

School gardening training sessions were delivered by Ardrossan Academy staff to 10 primary schools. A school gardening handbook has been created collaboratively, with advice, guidance and good practice, and this has been shared with all schools. Finally, six of our schools schools participated in a successful partnership with Go Wild Scotland, to provide nature experiences for learners, linked to the curriculum.

Digital Learning

14 schools have achieved their Digital Schools award with almost all North Ayrshire schools registered and on the way to achieving this award. Many schools are also working towards the Digital Wellbeing award, demonstrating a strategic approach to cyber resilience and internet safety. Senior school leaders from across the authority engaged in a professional learning programme entitled 'Evolving Digital Thinking', supporting this journey. An established network of Digital Coordinators continued to meet termly to develop digital skills and cascade these within their school contexts. Pupil Digital

Coordinators have met twice, learning new skills and networking with other schools, with plans to build on this further next session.

Leadership development

Throughout 2022-23 the leadership team continued to grow the facilitation model to develop skills in context in line with school improvement plans and the education service improvement priorities. The number of leadership facilitated sessions has increased from the previous year. This year 36 establishments have been supported in the sustainable delivery of facilitated learning.

In addition, our "leadership for and of learning" programme continued to grow and offered learning opportunities for colleagues at all levels. For example, the new Head Teacher Induction programme was developed responsively and collaboratively with those 14 colleagues who engaged. The Depute Head Action Learning Set for primary and secondary colleagues enabled good practice and collaborative learning to take place. The leadership for learning programme provided class teachers with the opportunity to reflect on their own leadership styles and to take ownership of their own leadership trajectory.

Our successful partnership with the SWEIC has been based on our continued strategic role in delivering the leadership programmes. The Leadership of Pedagogues (Secondary Middle Leaders) is successfully established and this year's cohorts all achieved GTCS professional recognition. Based on the success of this programme and in recognition of primary colleague demand a Leadership of Pedagogues (Primary Middle Leaders) was piloted and will continue next academic session.

Theme 2: Raising Attainment and Achievement

Ongoing work to raise attainment including improved tracking and monitoring

We provided additional class teachers for some of our primary schools. These schools were chosen using our attainment data from session 2021-2022. Head Teachers and staff identified pupils who would benefit from well-planned interventions which were focused on Numeracy, Literacy and Health & Wellbeing ultimately raising attainment.

Schools set targets for their identified pupils and carefully tracked the progress of the interventions and the impact on their young people. Data was gathered through a variety of formal and informal assessments. All schools report a positive impact and improved attainment.

Work continues to develop data literacy throughout the education service with the provision of an enhanced range of data tools, as well as training and support, which enables effective data driven decision making within schools. For example, with support from our Data Team and input from our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, two collaborative improvement sessions for HTs were held this year to develop use of tracking and monitoring to enhance data led interventions. Furthermore, all Early Years establishments took part in Self Evaluation for Continuous Improvement Programme where the focus was on using data to track and monitor progress. This work, combined with refreshed approaches to teaching, learning and moderation, is supporting schools in closing the attainment gap and raising attainment for all our young people.

Effective Moderation & Planning

We have made significant progress in implementing a holistic approach to assessment and moderation. Our moderation steering group led all schools in their prioritisation of moderation in improvement plans, and final feedback shows that there is now a stronger focus on professional dialogue, collaboration, and use of more consistent planning formats. Pupil voice is valued, and there is a clear emphasis on understanding the process of assessment. Use of the moderation cycle has brought about positive changes, including improved staff confidence, clearer progression, and increased engagement among pupils. There is greater shared focus and collaborative planning amongst staff teams, with an emphasis on high-quality assessments and benchmarking. Participants have appreciated the opportunities for sharing practices and collaborative planning, both within and beyond their schools. There is now a desire for more training, guidance, and examples of high quality assessments, networking opportunities with Early Years settings, and improving the gathering and presentation of assessment data. School moderation leads report a strong belief in the value of the moderation cycle and its impact on consistency, progression, and improved outcomes for all pupils and discussions highlight a commitment to continuous improvement and a focus on narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Performance Indicators for Priority 1

NAC Early Years Developmental Milestones

The percentage of pre-school children achieving their development milestones by the time they start primary school has once again increased to 81% in 2022-23 academic year. This is the best performance recorded since the measure was introduced, with improvements made in all aspects of the early years milestone including literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

% of pre-school pupils reaching their developmental milestones by Primary 1

Year	Overall Developmental Milestones	Health and Wellbeing Milestones	Literacy Milestones	Numeracy Milestones
2017	77%	88%	72%	83%
2018	77%	87%	75%	74%
2019	78%	89%	76%	74%
2021	72%	86%	69%	68%
2022	79%	89%	76%	74%
2023	81%	91%	79%	77%
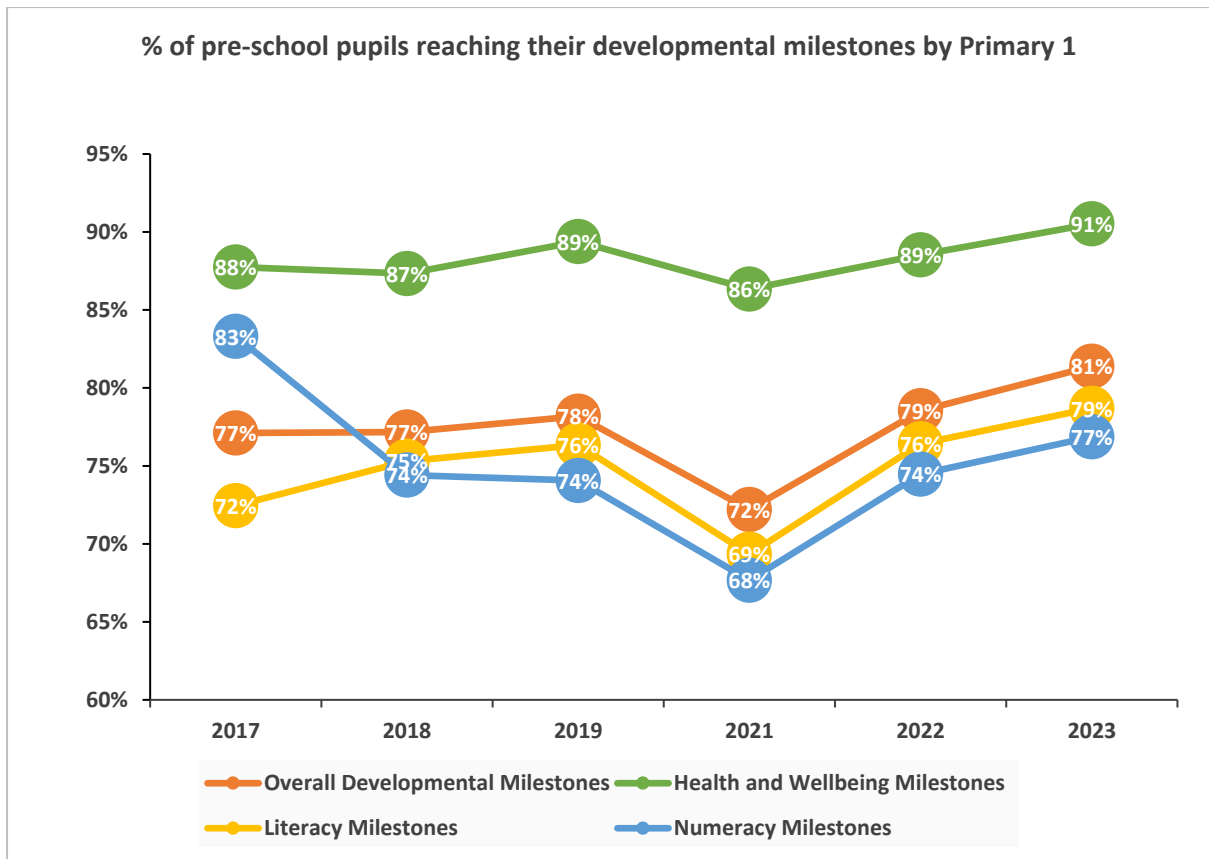
Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels

In 2016, the Scottish Government began to collect statistics on the Curriculum for Excellence level achieved in Literacy (Listening and Talking, Reading, Writing) and Numeracy by pupils in the Broad eneral Education (BGE) stages P1, P4, P7 and S3. This is based on teacher judgement about each pupil's achievement of expected level made at the end of June each session. This data collection by the Scottish Government was suspended in 2020 for all schools due to the impact of the pandemic. Data collection was resumed in 2021 for stages P1, P4 and P7 though not S3. In 2022 all stages were once again collected. There is a strong improvement trend in all measures at almost all stages for the 2016-2019 period. There was a significant decrease across all measures between 2019 & 2021.

The latest published achievement figures are for 2022. These demonstrate the significant steps taken towards recovery. Combined Numeracy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 is 76%, an increase of 9 percentage points on the previous year. Similarly, combined Literacy achievement for P1,P4 & P7 is 67%, an increase of 8 percentage points on the previous year. It is evident that the additional interventions in literacy and numeracy, have had a significant impact in continuing recovery from the pandemic. Early indications are that this improvement has continued throughout session 2022-23, with publication of the 2023 achievement levels expected in December 2023.

Curriculum for Excelence Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy - P1, P4, P7 - combined

NUMERACY						**LITERACY**				
2017	2018	2019	2021	2022		2017	2018	2019	2021	2022
77% 76%	80% 78%	79% 79%	67% 75%	76% 78%		69% 69%	72% 71%	74% 72%	59% 67%	67% 71%

■ NAC ■ National
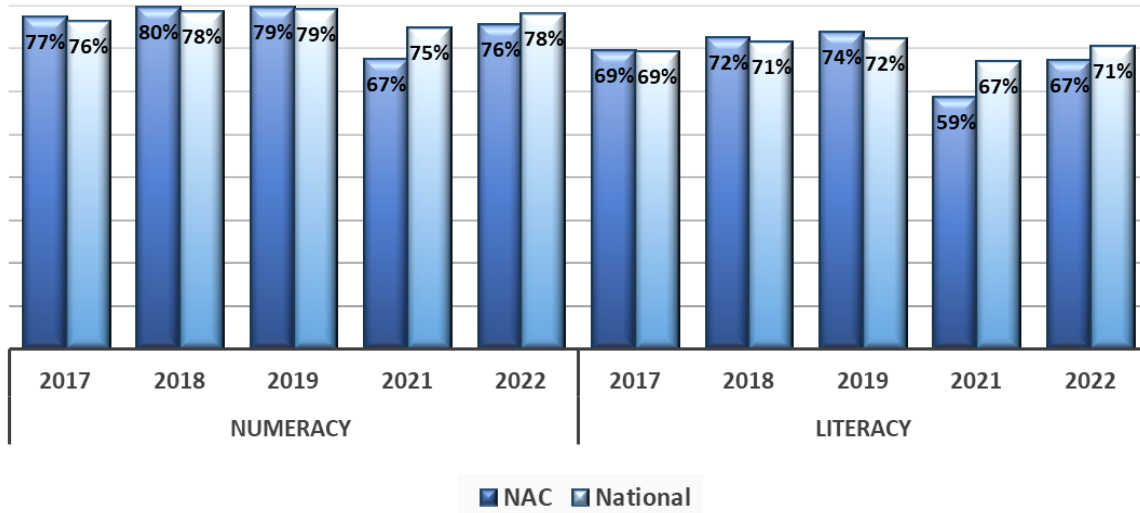
Improving leavers' attainment in literacy and numeracy

Performance of North Ayrshire school leavers in attaining Literacy at Level 4 and Level 5 displays a positive 5-year picture. Our schools remain above or in line with the Virtual Comparator, the SWEIC authorities and the National performance in all 5 years of this analysis. In 2022, North Ayrshire school leavers have outperformed all other comparators at both level 4 and level 5, with 95% achieving literacy at level 4 or better and 84% achieving literacy at level 5 or better.

The performance of North Ayrshire school leavers in attaining Numeracy at Level 4 and Level 5 also displays a positive 5-year trend with both figures above the Virtual Comparator. For Level 4, 91% of leavers achieved this which is the second highest figure in the 5-year trend. Similarly for Level 5, 71% of leavers achieved this which is also the second highest figure in the 5-year trend.

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 4 or better in Literacy

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 5 or better in Literacy

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 4 or better in Numeracy

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 5 or better in Numeracy
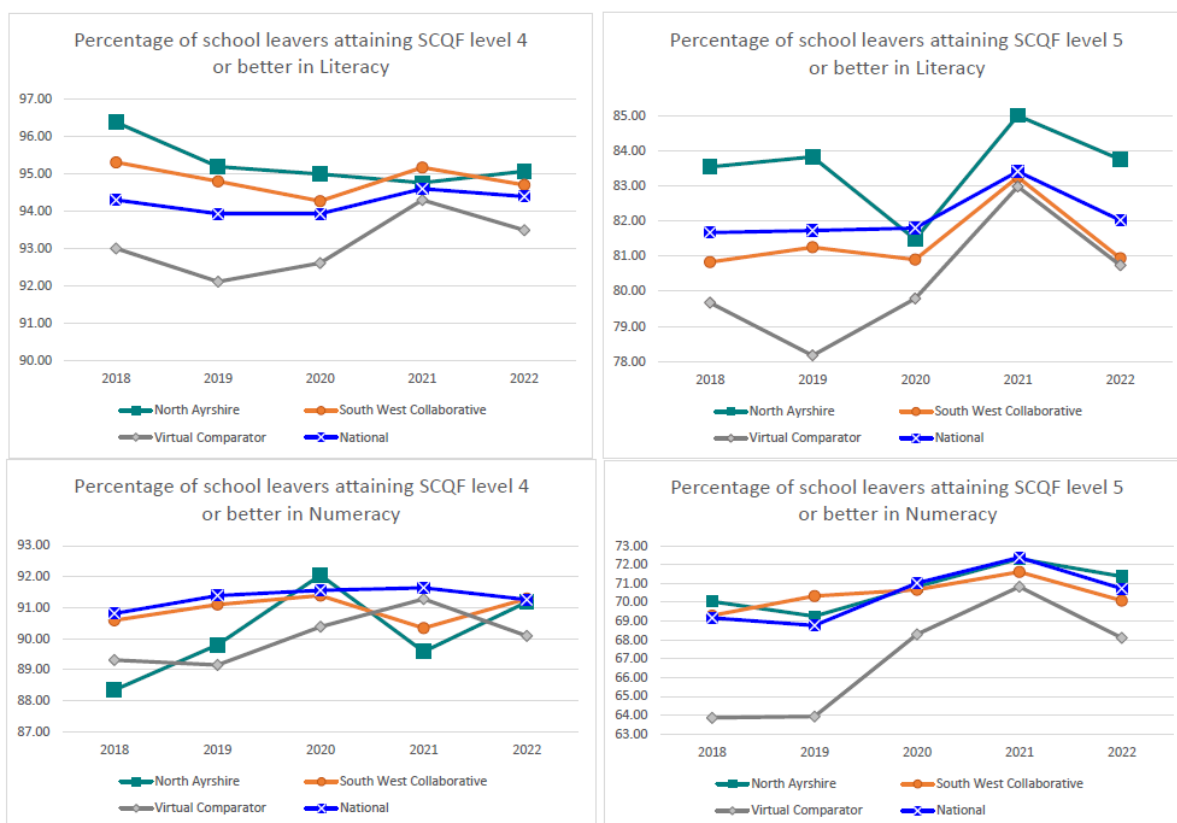
Improving attainment for all

This measure focuses on the average total tariff score of the candidate's latest and best qualifications. Tariff points are assigned to each unit or course achieved by learners – in all SCQF-graded awards, not only those provided by SQA. This acknowledges to a greater extent the drive towards wider achievement qualifications and encourages schools to offer curricular choices tailored to a variety of pupil abilities and aspirations. In 2022, the average total tariff score for the lowest attaining 20% of learners is above the Virtual Comparator, and although slightly lower than 2021, it is above the 2019 and 2020 performance. The average total tariff score of the middle attaining 60% of leavers is the second highest on record in the 5-year trend. Though slightly below the Virtual Comparator, a positive 5-year trend is evident, particularly in the years since the change of curriculum structure in S4. The average total tariff score of the highest attaining 20% of leavers is the highest on record in the 5-year trend. The figure is above the Virtual Comparator and a consistent 5-year positive trend is evident.

School Leavers Average total tariff points in North Ayrshire
(compared to Virtual Comparator and Scotland):

	2017-18			2018-19			2019-20			2020-21			2021-22		
	NAC	VC	Scot	NAC	VC	Scot	NAC	VC	Scot	NAC	VC	Scot	NAC	VC	Scot
Lowest 20%	170	141	164	145	119	151	140	129	151	161	162	165	156	141	156
Middle 60%	815	795	858	697	734	821	782	835	889	845	898	956	819	821	887
Highest 20%	1785	1786	1851	1665	1746	1829	1797	1875	1930	1862	1933	1998	1914	1895	1968

The average complementary tariff scores are calculated using the same principles but display the average tariff score for only the five best qualifications achieved per candidate. Further information about tariff points can be found here.

School Leavers Average complementary tariff points in North Ayrshire
(compared to Virtual Comparator and Scotland):

	2017-18			2018-19			2019-20			2020-21			2021-22		
	NAC	VC	Scot	NAC	VC	Scot	NAC	VC	Scot	NAC	VC	Scot	NAC	VC	Scot
Lowest 20%	150	124	143	134	109	134	126	114	133	141	140	144	137	126	138
Middle 60%	611	604	646	556	563	623	611	618	657	643	654	692	607	601	644
Highest 20%	1229	1227	1281	1189	1200	1267	1255	1268	1313	1254	1286	1339	1256	1252	1303

Breadth and Depth

Breadth and depth measures highlight that North Ayrshire's school leaver attainment performance is broadly in line with both the SWEIC and national performance. In 2022, the performance of North Ayrshire pupils was above the SWEIC performance in every category below for the first time.

A higher percentage of school leavers left school in North Ayrshire in 2022 with at least one Level 6 qualification (Higher) than across the SWEIC or nationally.

Attainment has been steadily increasing at Level 7 over the last six years.

5 or more at Level 3

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
National	90.8%	90.1%	89.0%	89.6%	90.5%	90.1%
North Ayrshire	**91.9%**	**91.3%**	**89.4%**	**89.8%**	**91.0%**	**91.2%**
SWEIC	92.0%	91.4%	89.8%	89.9%	90.8%	90.5%

5 or more at Level 4

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
National	87.4%	86.7%	85.4%	85.8%	87.1%	86.5%
North Ayrshire	**88.0%**	**86.7%**	**83.6%**	**84.3%**	**85.8%**	**86.5%**
SWEIC	88.6%	87.9%	85.4%	85.4%	87.0%	86.3%

5 or more at Level 5

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
National	62.2%	64.4%	64.3%	67.5%	70.5%	67.7%
North Ayrshire	**60.5%**	**63.2%**	**60.7%**	**65.3%**	**69.6%**	**67.0%**
SWEIC	63.0%	64.1%	63.5%	66.4%	69.0%	66.3%

1 or more at Level 6

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
National	64.8%	66.2%	66.2%	68.2%	70.2%	67.1%
North Ayrshire	**62.2%**	**65.4%**	**65.0%**	**67.3%**	**70.6%**	**68.0%**
SWEIC	64.1%	65.0%	64.0%	65.8%	68.6%	65.1%

3 or more at Level 6

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
National	48.9%	50.3%	50.9%	54.7%	56.6%	53.0%
North Ayrshire	**44.9%**	**46.7%**	**44.4%**	**51.7%**	**53.8%**	**51.0%**
SWEIC	47.4%	47.0%	47.5%	51.9%	53.9%	50.7%

5 or more at Level 6

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
National	34.5%	35.5%	36.0%	40.2%	42.1%	38.7%
North Ayrshire	**31.5%**	**30.9%**	**28.3%**	**35.6%**	**37.6%**	**36.1%**
SWEIC	33.7%	32.0%	32.7%	36.3%	38.5%	35.9%

1 or more at Level 7

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
National	22.0%	23.2%	22.1%	25.6%	28.0%	26.0%
North Ayrshire	**19.4%**	**19.9%**	**18.0%**	**23.5%**	**23.9%**	**24.7%**
SWEIC	20.8%	20.6%	20.0%	23.5%	24.9%	24.5%

Education Service Priority 2

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

Theme 1: Interventions to close gaps

Strategic Equity Funding Focus

Despite a £1.1m reduction in Strategic Equity Funding, which is provided to local authorities as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, North Ayrshire has continued to make good progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap following the Covid-19 pandemic. This year a considerable focus has included steps to ensure sustainability of impactful interventions within the context of funding reducing by £4.4m over a 4-year period. This has included the development of a revised Professional Learning Academy delivery model, which aligns more closely with the need for targeted and bespoke support in establishments that is driven by improvement planning. In addition, work is underway to further embed whole school nurture across establishments with further integration of pupil support and targeted nurture resources to best meet the needs of learners.

Reducing the cost of the school day (COSD)

The Education service identified reducing the cost of the school day (COSD) as an area of focus for schools. It is recognised that education can support children to find a route out of poverty, but crucially only if children and young people can access education as fully and equally as possible. An action plan for reducing the cost of the school day has been used to build upon the priorities identified by North Ayrshire's Child Poverty Board.

The Education Service, in partnership with the Youth Participation team has made very good progress towards reducing the COSD for children and young people. Learner Participation has played a key role within the council's Child Poverty strategy and action plan and as part of our commitment to ensuring children and young people are at the centre of our efforts to reduce the COSD, we also held our second COSD conference in May 2023. We brought together over 170 pupils from across North Ayrshire Primary and Secondary Schools for a full day of activities led by Education staff and the Youth Services team.

As a result of prioritising reducing the barriers associated with Child Poverty and reducing the COSD, there is greater shared focus and collaborative planning amongst staff with all educational establishments having been encouraged to use the COSD toolkit and those schools using this approach have seen positive changes, including the following:

- Uniform recycling and new school uniform policies implemented to reduce costs
- Support towards transport to and from school and external trips and visits
- Food initiatives e.g. breakfast clubs, holiday lunch provision, healthy snacks
- Extra-curricular activities and after school Clubs
- Support and fundraising for equipment and trips
- Digital support
- Period dignity products
- Supporting children beyond the school day

Pupils and staff have shared good practice across schools, Early Years Establishments and throughout the community via school and early years networks, youth participation and locality planning networks. There is now a stronger commitment to continuous improvement and a focus on reducing the cost of the school day and the barriers experienced for children and families and poverty.

Theme 2: Specific focus on identified target groups, including care experienced learners

Care experienced children and young people continue to be supported through a range of interventions where the focus is on delivering equity and improving educational outcomes.

MCR Pathways: North Ayrshire's Young Talent programme

The MCR Pathways Young Talent programme supports our young people in, or on the edges of care within 6 of our secondary schools. In the last academic year **229** young people were supported through the programme:

S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total
55	47	68	27	23	9	229

Of this number, all 102 S1 and S2 pupils participated in weekly group work throughout the academic year. The focus of this group work was on building self-esteem and confidence, strengths and interests, teamwork, problem solving and employability skills. A further 50 young people were directly supported by one of our MCR Pathways Co-ordinators, who are members of the school's extended pastoral support team. They provide an enhanced and integrated level of support, liaising with partners. A large number of this group are preparing to be supported by 1:1 mentors.

A key part of the MCR Pathways programme is the use of mentors from across our communities in North Ayrshire. Our mentors come from local businesses, the public sector and the third sector. They have a wealth of experiences and life skills. They all share the same desire to support a young person in their local community and give something back. Our mentors are trained and supported throughout each stage of their mentoring relationship with their young person. This year, 77 young people were supported in weekly face-to-face sessions by a mentor, with plans to extend this figure in the near future.

The impact of the MCR programme is evident in: improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for this group; improvements in the number and level of qualifications achieved and 100% of this year's leavers group supported by this programme entering a positive destination.

Home tuition

An additional tutor has been employed to provide one-to-one tuition for care experienced children and young people. The tutor has joined our Home Tuition Service and supports our learners by:

- Providing one to one intensive individual support. This may happen outside of normal lessons as additional teaching, for example, as part of extending school time or as a replacement for other lessons.
- Supporting with specific classwork or homework which involves the teacher/tutor supporting tasks given to pupils by their teachers to be completed outside of usual lessons and/or 'flipped learning' models, where learners are supported to prepare for classroom discussion and application tasks. This could take place in school outside normal school hours, and/ or in the children's houses.
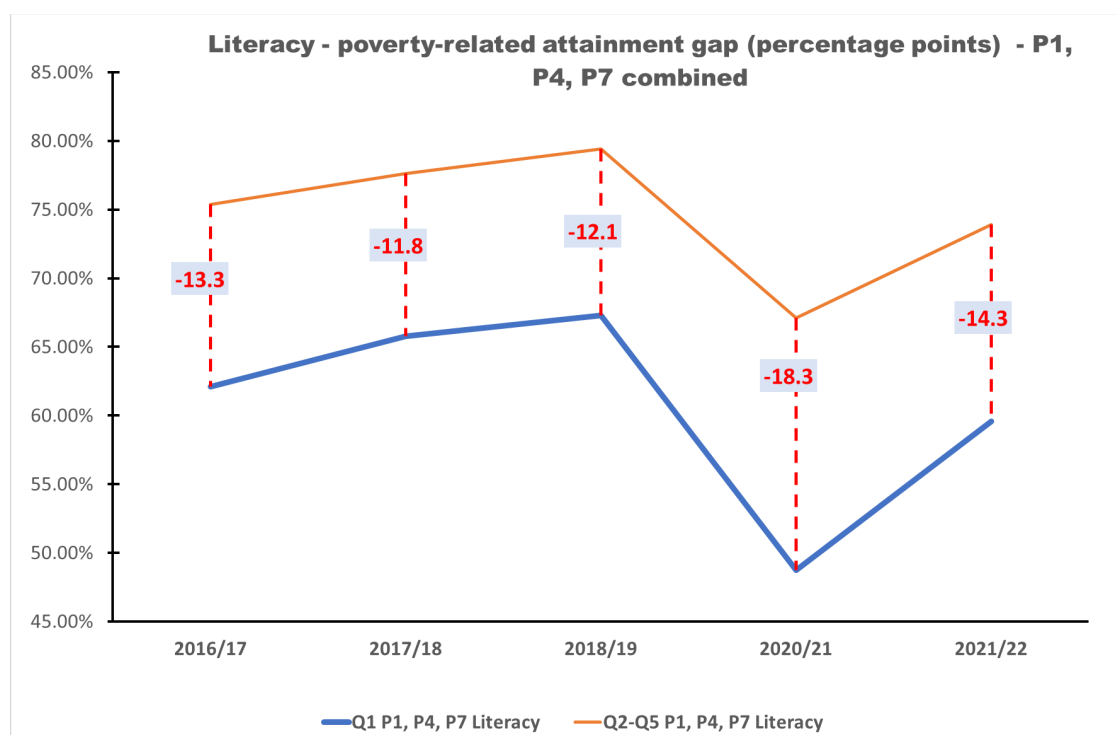
Theme 3: Data literacy skills

Positive steps have been taken in progressing data literacy development across the education service through professional learning opportunities for school leadership teams, with support provided by education's data team, senior managers, and Education Scotland colleagues. This has promoted a 'data driven dialogue' model that can be applied to a range of locally developed Microsoft Power BI reports to analyse pupil data to inform school improvement. Bespoke data analysis tools to interrogate and analyse data include achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels; pupil attendance and exclusions; SQA results; and a new Power BI report which will use progress and achievement data to support school improvement in the 2023-24 academic year.

A data literacy self-evaluation framework is also in development for implementation in the 2023-24 academic year. This will be utilised by school leadership teams to self-identify areas where additional data literacy support would be beneficial as part of the school's improvement journey.

Performance Indicators for Priority 2

Primary attainment gap (P1, P4, P7 combined Curriculum for Excellence Levels)

Primary literacy and numeracy attainment gaps within Broad General Education (BGE) have started to reduce again following the covid-19 pandemic. Although these attainment gaps continue to be greater than pre-pandemic levels, recent data suggests further reductions will occur in part due to targeted interventions across education establishments.

Literacy - poverty-related attainment gap (percentage points) - P1, P4, P7 combined

Numeracy: poverty-related attainment gap (percentage points) - P1, P4, P7 combined

-9.4 | -9.0 | -10.0 | -17.1 | -12.7

— Q1 P1, P4, P7 Numeracy   — Q2-Q5 P1, P4, P7 Numeracy
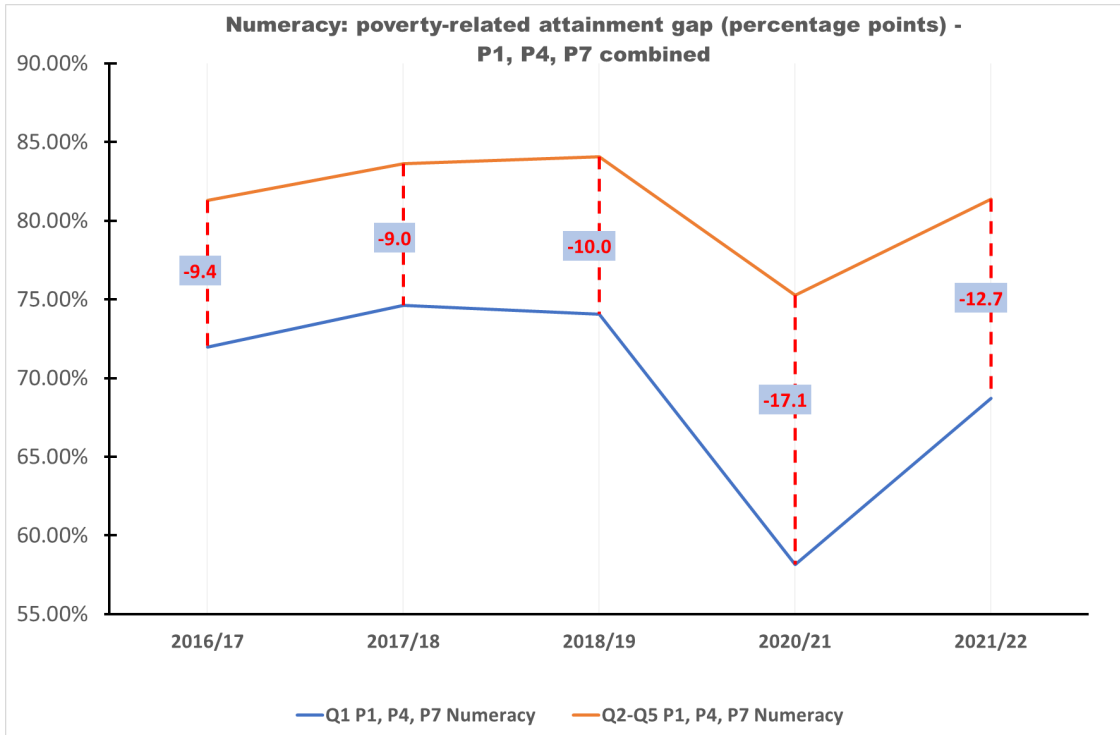
School Leavers Attainment Gap (Breadth and Depth)

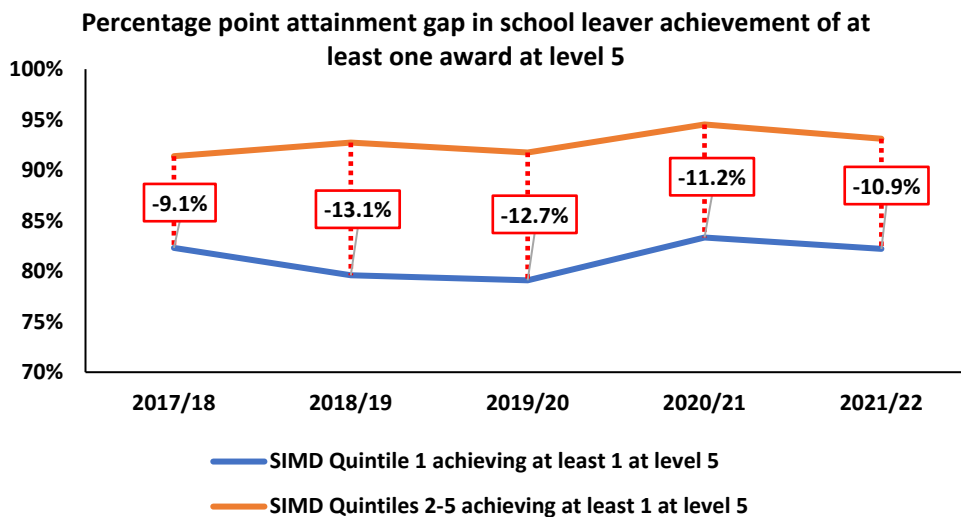In the 2022-23 academic year, the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged school leavers achieving at least 1 qualification at SCQF Level 5 has reduced over the last three years. The percentage point gap between learners living in the 20% most deprived areas of North Ayrshire compared to all other learners is 10.9 percentage points in the most recently published data. The attainment gap in percentage points of school leavers living in 20% most deprived areas (Quintile 1) attaining at least 1 qualification at level 6, is lower in the most recent year than before the pandemic. It must be noted however that Alternative Certification models have been in place from 2020-2022 so caution is advised when interpreting this dataset.

Percentage point attainment gap in school leaver achievement of at least one award at level 5

-9.1% | -13.1% | -12.7% | -11.2% | -10.9%

——SIMD Quintile 1 achieving at least 1 at level 5

——SIMD Quintiles 2-5 achieving at least 1 at level 5

Percentage point attainment gap in school leaver achievement of at least one award at level 6

Chart showing two lines across years 2017/18 to 2021/22 with percentage attainment gap annotations.

- -21.45% (2017/18)
- -23.29% (2018/19)
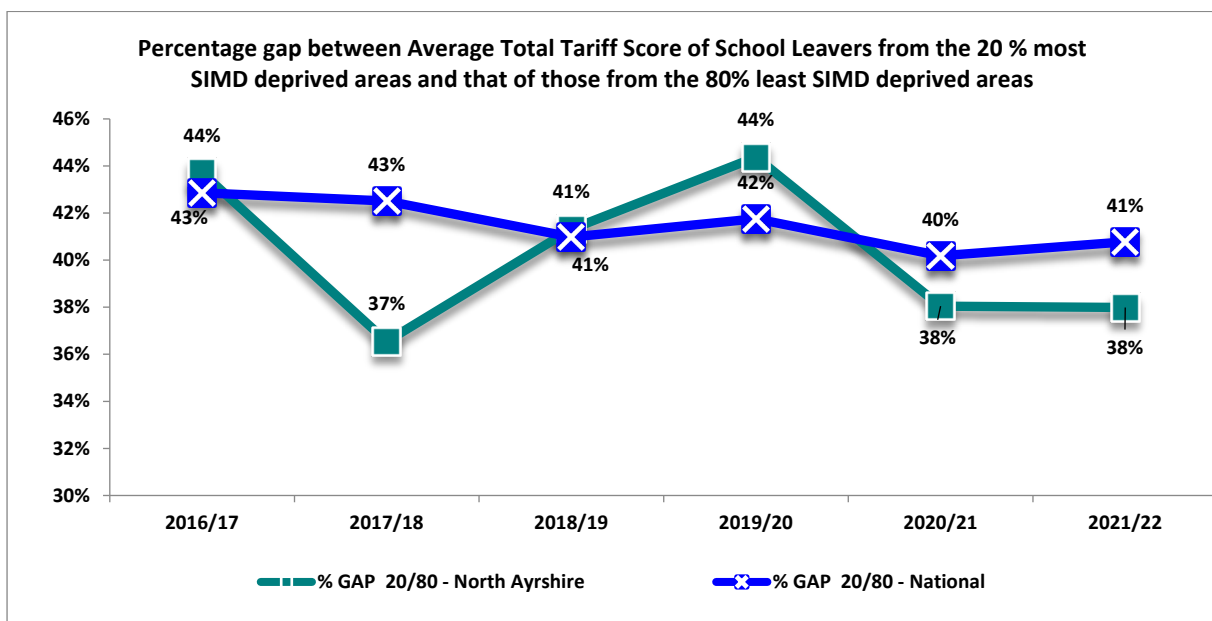- -21.21% (2019/20)
- -17.93% (2020/21)
- -20.82% (2021/22)

Legend:
— SIMD Quintile 1 achieving at least 1 at level 6
— SIMD Quintiles 2-5 achieving at least 1 at level 6

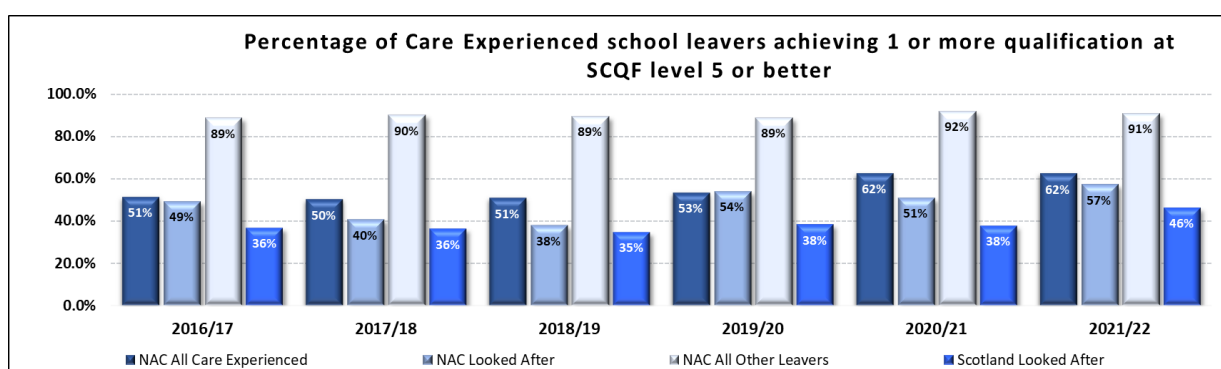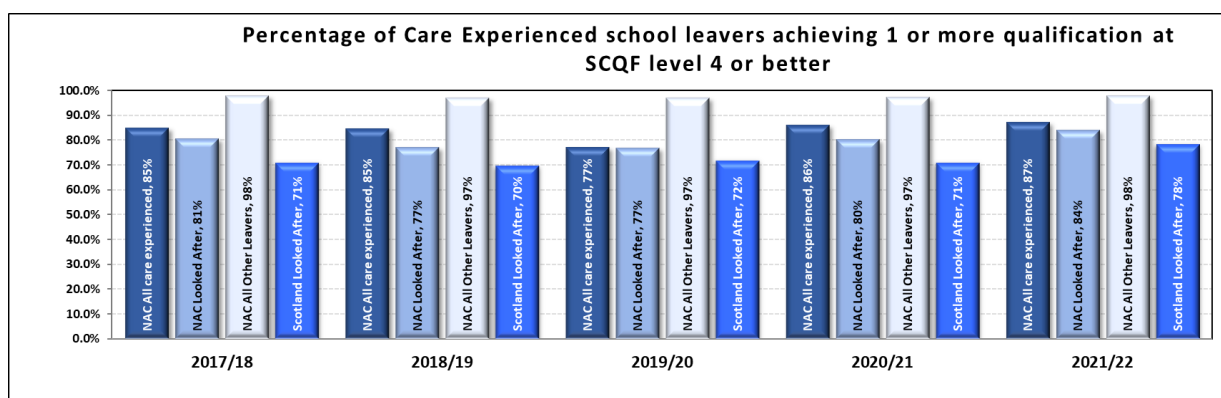*School Leavers Attainment Gap (Average Total Tariff Score)*

Average total tariff score is a measure of the pupil's latest and best awarded qualifications. Tariff points are assigned to each unit or course achieved by learners – in all SCQF-graded awards, not only those provided by SQA. This acknowledges to a greater extent the drive towards wider achievement qualifications and encourages schools to offer curricular choices tailored to a variety of pupil abilities and aspirations.

The attainment gap in average total tariff score between school leavers living in North Ayrshire's 20% most deprived areas and pupils living in all other SIMD deciles has reduced considerably over a five-year period by 6 percentage points. Over the last two years, our performance has stabilised below the corresponding national figure. Again, caution should be taken in interpreting this data owing to the specific circumstances and Alternative Certification models in place since 2020.

Percentage gap between Average Total Tariff Score of School Leavers from the 20 % most SIMD deprived areas and that of those from the 80% least SIMD deprived areas

Chart data points:

% GAP 20/80 - North Ayrshire:
- 2016/17: 44%
- 2017/18: 37%
- 2018/19: 41%
- 2019/20: 44%
- 2020/21: 38%
- 2021/22: 38%

% GAP 20/80 - National:
- 2016/17: 43%
- 2017/18: 43%
- 2018/19: 41%
- 2019/20: 42%
- 2020/21: 40%
- 2021/22: 41%

Legend:
— % GAP 20/80 - North Ayrshire
— % GAP 20/80 - National

Care Experienced Leavers educational outcomes

In North Ayrshire we count all children and young people as "care experienced" if they are currently looked after at home, away from home or if they have ever been looked after at any point in the past. Care experienced leavers in North Ayrshire are continuing a positive 5-year trend of attainment in the number of Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications achieved. In 2022, 87% of North Ayrshire's care experienced leavers attained at least 1 qualification at SCQF Level 4 or better, the highest performance in the 5-year trend. For Level 5, 62% of care experienced leavers achieved at least 1 qualification which is in line with highest performance in the 5-year trend. The national report on Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children does not publish attainment data for all care experienced learners, focusing instead on those who were "looked after" in that year. In the charts below, North Ayrshire's Care Experienced outcomes as well as North Ayrshire's Looked After outcomes are displayed, in order to be able to benchmark the data against the available national level statistics.

Percentage of Care Experienced school leavers achieving 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 4 or better

Year	NAC All care experienced	NAC Looked After	NAC All Other Leavers	Scotland Looked After
2017/18	85%	81%	98%	71%
2018/19	85%	77%	97%	70%
2019/20	77%	77%	97%	72%
2020/21	86%	80%	97%	71%
2021/22	87%	84%	98%	78%

Percentage of Care Experienced school leavers achieving 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5 or better

Year	NAC All Care Experienced	NAC Looked After	NAC All Other Leavers	Scotland Looked After
2016/17	51%	49%	89%	36%
2017/18	50%	40%	90%	36%
2018/19	51%	38%	89%	35%
2019/20	53%	54%	89%	38%
2020/21	62%	51%	92%	38%
2021/22	62%	57%	91%	46%

Education Service Priority 3

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

Theme 1: Improved Skills

Schools across North Ayrshire continue to diversify their curriculum to grow and develop the skills of our young people. In addition to SQA National Qualifications, over 60 additional courses across a wide range are offered such as Beekeeping, Digital Media, First Aid and Film & Media Studies. All secondary schools are either on the journey towards or have already achieved SCQF Ambassador School status, promoting attainment and achievement in a vast range of skills. Ayrshire College has continued to work with secondary schools to develop skills mapping from Senior Phase courses into College Pathways. Furthermore, in partnership with Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, work experience opportunities have also been successfully reintroduced, thereby strengthening access to workplace skills and qualifications.

Theme 2: Improved Transitions

The above work informs post-school transitions which are supported by a wide network in schools and external partners. For example, each secondary school has a Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Coordinator who promotes opportunities and pathways designed to ensure young people have the opportunity to develop skills responsive to future economic changes.

Schools have increased their use of the SEEMIS *16plus* Tab which has enabled earlier identification of specific groups of school leavers through the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Data Hub. This data is used by them and other partners for early intervention and support in advance of anticipated school leaving date. For example, in partnership with SDS and North Ayrshire's Local Employability Partnership (LEP), 169 young people were identified to take part in an offer delivered by employability training partners CEIS (Community Enterprise in Scotland). Young people took part in workshops focusing on confidence, skills & qualities, workplace health & safety and money management.

As part of the Local Employability Partnership, an evening was held targeting young people across North Ayrshire considering next steps beyond school. The *Your Next Move* event was attended by over 600 young people and families with over 40 local employers and Ayrshire College represented. Supplementary events were also held on Arran and a uniquely adapted *Reverse Job Fair* for Lockhart Campus to ensure universal access for all leavers.

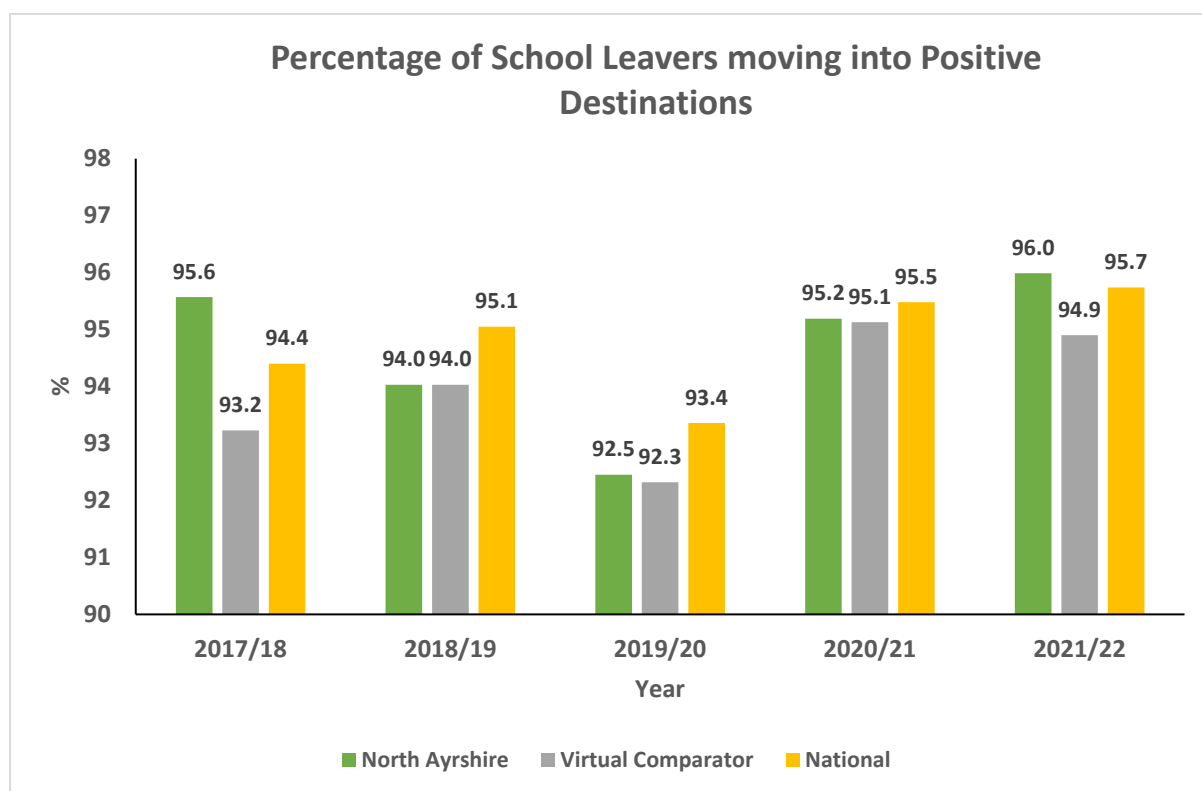## Theme 3: Partnerships to improve learner outcomes post-school

The School-College partnership with Ayrshire College continues to form a valuable part of the curriculum. The offer provides high quality senior phase vocational courses from Level 4 and above and continues to support young people to prepare for employment and Further or Higher Education. It also builds a network of support for young people as they move between school and college or university and plan progression pathways onto full-time courses. Our School-College Partnership team meet regularly to discuss the attendance and progress of each pupil to ensure all possible step success on their college course.

Education works in partnership with North Ayrshire Employability Service to offer individualised support. This feeds into a *programmes, partners and referrals* process which offers various pathways for vulnerable leavers and supported by partner agencies. For example, Barnardos are employed for targeted and outreach work with young people, including care experienced, facing significant challenges in accessing a positive destination.

Performance Indicators for Priority 3

School Leavers entering an initial positive destination

An initial positive destination means that a school leaver has gone on to one of the following activities immediately after leaving school: further or higher education, training, skills development or employment. At 96%, the proportion of leavers in North Ayrshire moving into an initial positive destination is the highest on record, above the Virtual Comparator and National performance. To maximise the percentage of school leavers entering and sustaining positive destinations, schools continue to work hard in strong partnership with Skills Development Scotland.

Percentage of School Leavers moving into Positive Destinations

Year	North Ayrshire	Virtual Comparator	National
2017/18	95.6	93.2	94.4
2018/19	94.0	94.0	95.1
2019/20	92.5	92.3	93.4
2020/21	95.2	95.1	95.5
2021/22	96.0	94.9	95.7

The Annual Participation Measure for all 16-19 year-olds

The Annual Participation Measure (APM) is a measurement of the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment over a whole year (1st April-31st March). The indicator provides a measure of the status of the wider aged 16-19 cohort – not just those who have left school. The Annual Participation Measure, covering the year from April 2022 – March 2023 showed

that of the 5,872 16-19 year olds in North Ayrshire, 93.9% were in education, employment or training and personal development. This is the highest on record since the APM started in 2016.

[INSERT GRAPH – ANNUAL PARTICIPATION MEASURE 2023]

Education Service Priority 4

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

Theme 1: Supporting mental health and wellbeing

Counselling supports and community wellbeing supports

A full counselling review has been undertaken this session and has involved consultation with stakeholders including children and young people, school staff and counsellors.

A literature review of effective practice was also undertaken. This review has been used to shape the future model of primary school counselling and update the well-established secondary school counselling service, which has been in place since the start of the Attainment Challenge. Whilst it has been necessary to change the primary school counselling offer, we are confident that the links with wider mental health and wellbeing (MHWB) supports that have been established as part of this review will ensure that there will be support available for this age group.

In terms of how the counselling service has supported staff practice within our schools, the impacts can be summarised in three main categories:

- School staff are able to support individual pupils better (through for example being more familiar with appropriate support strategies and language).
- School staff have greater awareness and knowledge (of themes such as trauma and its impact).
- School staff have strengthened positive relationships (with for example other professionals working together to support a young person, as well as strengthened links with the home).

Some impact data on how counselling services have supported a wide range of children and young people across North Ayrshire are included at the end of this section.

The Education Service is the lead partner in the delivery of the Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework. Children, Young People and Families have access to a range of supports and services within their communities to support emotional distress and to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. Data gathering and consultation with the community has been central to the development of services. Key highlights include the employment of a Welfare Rights Officer (WRO) to engage directly with families following referral from education staff. Over the course of the 2022-23 school year, this has resulted in financial gains of over £572,000 for families who need it most. The link between financial insecurity and poor mental health is well documented and the positive impacts of our approach in North Ayrshire are increasingly evident.

> *"Just wanted to say thanks again. After coming off the phone to you I felt like I could see a light. I have so much to work through regarding my mental health so having these options of unfit to work and the Scottish pip gives me that time without the pressure."*
>
> (Feedback from a Parent/Carer following initial meeting with WRO)

71 children, young people and families have benefited from co-produced bespoke supports which have had a positive impact on mental wellbeing. Examples of referral reasons for support include:

- family relationships / home issues
- poverty / homelessness
- trauma

with many children and young people experiencing multiple barriers to positive wellbeing.

> *"Personally, as a parent / observer I can see the big difference in the way they self- regulate if a situation becomes challenging and they feel triggered …."*
>
> (Feedback from a mum whose child has neurodiversity and identifies as non-binary)

A review of the Kilwinning and Largs Wellness Models has taken place. The Education Service in partnership with NHS Ayrshire and Arran Public Health along with multi-agency partners have used this review as the basis for developing a refreshed and expanded approach to supporting children and young people's wellbeing across the whole authority, with the revised Wellness Model being rolled out to additional localities. Our review highlighted the importance and benefits of all agencies working together to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing in our communities.

Whole school approaches to mental health and wellbeing

This session we have continued our focus on ensuring children, young people and families have access to the right supports at the right time in our schools and communities. One cluster has piloted the Whole School Approaches to MHWB self-evaluation tool, and this has shaped the further enhancement of supports within establishments.

Education staff have had access to an extensive range of professional learning opportunities with an additional 200 members of staff engaging with our Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Professional Learning Resource this session. In addition, we now have 93 members of staff across a range of schools who are trained to deliver Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM). To broaden the reach of this approach, we have this year developed a "LIAM at home" project which targets children and young people whose engagement with education is impacted by anxiety. This new project is showing early signs of success. Across the authority, 33 children and young people have completed the wider LIAM programme this year with an additional 8 engaging with group work. Positive impacts have included: young people who can now cope with being in crowded spaces; a reduction in exam stress; and an increase in the number of young people who are now able to come to school without feeling anxious. In addition we have delivered Suicide Prevention Training, with 15 additional staff trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST), 54 members of staff trained in Assessing Suicide Risk in Kids (ASK) and 29 in safeTALK – Suicide Awareness training. All S6 pupils in our Secondary Schools have been offered Suicide Awareness Training (safeTALK) with over 100 young people taking part in training during June, feedback from young people indicates they feel more confident to have conversations around wellbeing with their peers.

Our partnership with See Me See Change continues to develop with NAC Education Service contributing to the further enhancement of the national anti-discrimination and stigma youth programme. 200 senior pupils took part in training in June 2023 in preparation for next session. This session, the See Me Ambassadors delivered assemblies, PSE lessons, supported mental health and wellbeing sessions in Primary schools and held bakes sales to raise awareness of mental health.

The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme is now embedded in our secondary establishments. MVP network representatives from each school meet termly to share ideas, update on progress and share good practice, some of which has been used nationally as an example of good practice.

Capacity building for staff has continued in 2023 with bespoke North Ayrshire training delivered by our newly upskilled team of in-house MVP trainers. We have partnered with staff from Active schools, KA Leisure, and Youth services to broaden the reach of this preventative programme further into our communities.

We have invested in the recruitment of 12 additional Area Inclusion Workers who, along with the original team have undertaken extensive professional learning around supporting children and families with their mental wellbeing. They have a key role in maximising school attendance, providing support and guidance to families and delivering Health and Wellbeing Sessions to children. Most pupils who have engaged with one of our Area Inclusion Workers have shown an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing and school attendance. Further evaluation is continuing to support the identification of the most impactful interventions.

Education Staff all have access to an ever-expanding range of resources to support and promote positive mental health and wellbeing through a dedicated glow blog (staff website). There have been over 7,000 engagements with the support materials by our staff in the academic session 2022-23.

Promoting staff wellbeing

We used research and the action research paper developed to inform a staff development session, which helped to demonstrate areas of strength and areas of development.

One of the significant messages noted was the impact of workload and bureaucracy on wellbeing, staff highlighted the value of being listened to and involved in decision making and this has informed how we have worked with staff across the service this session. Wider feedback was shared with all staff and included areas of focus for both establishments and the authority. We have engaged with a number of schools and centres to explore a practitioner enquiry approach to staff wellbeing, which will be taken forward in session 2023-24 and beyond.

Theme 2: Supporting social and emotional wellbeing

Promoting Positive Relationships and whole school nurture

During Session 2022-23 we have undertaken a range of activities to support our Promoting Positive Relationships approach in North Ayrshire. This has included work on Building on Positive Relationships (based on the Non Violent Resistance approach) for both schools and parent workshops. We have run three parent workshops over the session with parents reporting a significant improvement in the behaviour of their children following the workshops. Using the widely available and respected Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire as a basis for measuring impact, the mean scores for children's total difficulties significantly reduced following the 10-week parent group. We have also run

workshops for our primary and secondary schools as well as our Area inclusion workers and further developed our Building on Positive Relationships plans in line with this.

A key part of our work this session has been a review of our whole school nurture approach to ensure that nurture principles are embedded within the whole school system at the same time as building capacity towards a consistent, authority-wide approach to whole-school nurture. This review has included surveys with stakeholders including:

- 832 staff who responded to our main review questionnaire
- 32 children and young people in focus groups across 4 primary and 2 secondary schools
- 11 Educational Psychologists, 15 Head Teachers and 141 teacher and classroom assistant responses to additional questionnaires.
- We also explored our current approaches and held a stakeholder event to look at next steps. Some of the feedback from this work is detailed below:

TRAINING & CONFIDENCE

74% of our CT, CA, and SMT respondents have received professional learning on the Nurturing Principles.

79% of our CT, CA, and SMT respondents feel confident applying their learning of nurturing principles into practice, either all of the time or most of the time.

21 of the CYP we spoke to reported having a good adult in their establishments and described positive experiences with them. A good adult was described as someone who is nurturing, caring, warm, genuine, empathetic, helpful, and prioritises their relationships with their pupils.

ONE GOOD ADULT

Following the review, work has commenced on updating the professional learning programme supporting this work, developing a whole school nurture benchmarking framework to support school self-evaluation and planning for improvement in this area and the establishment of a Service Improvement Group to take this work forward into session 2023-24 and beyond.

Targeted Nurture

There are currently 22 Primary Nurture Groups and 9 Secondary Nurture Groups, with 4 further primary PEF funded groups operating a range of tailor-made nurture models with target groups, supported by the authority-wide Principal Teacher of Nurture. Clear guidelines have been produced and shared with each sector, alongside a quality assurance framework and weekly professional learning sessions.

TWO PILLARS OF NURTURE

CARE
- Attunement
- Warmth
- Connection
- Empathy

CHALLENGE
- Structure
- Expectation

A summary of impact of nurture interventions is included in the table below:

Positive outcomes of targeted nurture approaches

Children and young people in primary and secondary settings who have received nurture support are showing gains in social and emotional progress and are continuing to access mainstream education.
Children and young people who have received nurture support are attaining and achieving more closely in line with peers over time.
Education establishments can demonstrate an increased understanding and application of whole school nurturing approaches. This will increase establishment understanding and awareness of the interdependencies between effective nurture and mental health and wellbeing support.
Of the 832 staff who responded to our nurture survey, 78% felt confident applying what they have learned about nurturing approaches in practice.
St Matthew's Academy were awarded the prestigious Marjory Boxall Nurture Quality Mark Award in 2023 in recognition of their support of Children and Young people. They also became North Ayrshire's first secondary schools to achieve the Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award, in no small part due to their commitment to Nurture.
A longitudinal study is currently in preparation tracing the views and development of those pupils who attended nurture previously, with publication expected in session 2023-24.

Performance Indicators for Priority 4

School Counselling

In the most recent data collection (covering the period from January to June 2023 which included 447 children accessing school counsellors), North Ayrshire had 294 hours of school counselling being provided per week, with 99% of children and young people reporting an improved outcome following access to a counsellor.

The highest frequency reasons for presenting to a counsellor were: anxiety, depression or low mood, emotional or behavioural difficulties, family problems, stress, self-worth, academic issues, trauma.

Community mental health and wellbeing supports and services

Across the whole academic year 2022-23, a total of 6,038 children and young people accessed community health and wellbeing supports and services. Overall, out of the 5,237 people who accessed positive mental health and wellbeing services, 72% had measurable improved outcomes at the time of this report being written.

Pupil attendance data

Attendance has declined across North Ayrshire schools since the onset of the COVID pandemic and has not yet recovered. This general trend also appears to be reflected in national statistics. As a result, the Education Service has incorporated this theme into the next Service Improvement Plan for 2023-24.

NAC Total Pupil Attendance (%)
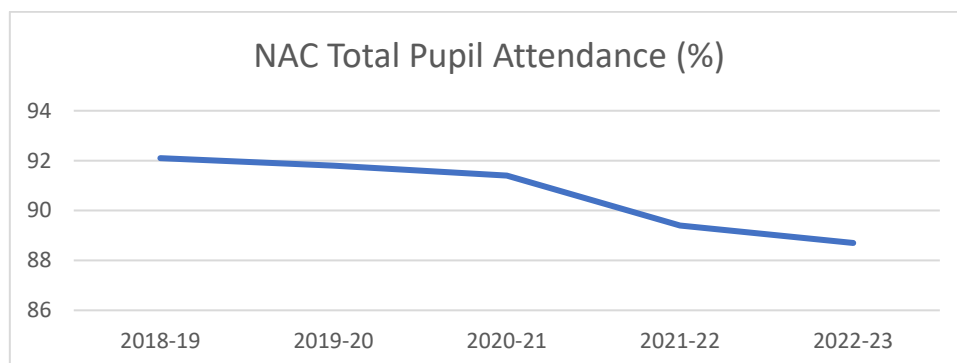
Education Service Priority 5

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

Theme 1: Supporting needs

Supporting needs through renewed systems and processes

Following a collaborative review of the processes involved in supporting needs, specific areas were targeted for redesign. We sought to identify and retain the effective, well-established elements whilst refining and co-designing others. Our Staged Intervention policy for identifying and planning for children and young people with additional needs was redesigned and simplified. This focuses on three elements of support: Enhanced Universal, Stage 1 and Stage 2. The policy includes detailed descriptors around each element which clarify the level of need and how these can be best supported. Streamlined approaches to short, medium and long term planning are in place along with clear guidance on how meetings with young people and their families are recorded to ensure we fully comply with legislation.

Processes for accessing supports such as the Outreach Support Service (Extended Outreach and Tuition Support), Early Years Inclusion Support Service (EYIST) and Accessibility Strategy have been streamlined to enable a service which is learner centred with clear routes to referral. Accessing these services can be time-critical and so the referral pathways have been separated from the existing Inclusion Group to speed up this process and reduce the number of cases being considered at this forum.

At all stages, collaboration and co-creation have been crucial with evaluation ongoing. Leaders from all sectors and at all levels have been involved with the evaluations demonstrating the effectiveness of the approach in ensuring all voices are heard, policies are co-designed and there is a clear sense of joint ownership across the Service.

Supporting needs through enhanced provisions

Following successful pilot projects running in Greenwood Academy and Irvine Royal Academy in 2021-22, Secondary Support Resources were established in all 9 secondary schools. The approach to the design was developed in line with the national 'Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting' published in March 2019. We were also guided by the 2017 Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice and the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act (2000).

This enhanced support resource is available to learners across all secondary schools and offers an environment which supports personalised learning for young people who have a range of support needs and require ongoing enhanced transition. This is *not* specialist provision, instead is a way of offering *targeted support* to those who require it to support their *mainstream experience*.

A network of senior leaders was established to co-create and develop guidance and ensure there were consistent pillars of practice, whilst enabling schools to tailor their provision to match the needs of their current cohort of learners. Learners were identified by cluster primaries as well as through the Inclusion Group. Data and impact reports were compiled and showed that, in this first full year, over 300 learners were supported to attend their mainstream secondary provision. Data demonstrates that there were significant impacts in the areas of attendance, engagement, motivation and positive attitudes to school and self.

Links with educational psychologists and the mental health and wellbeing team have ensure that staff are well-trained and feel confident in the impact they are making on the lives of the young people they support. Evaluations from your people and their families demonstrate the high regard in which the support is held.

Supporting needs through professional learning

The needs of young people have grown in complexity and it has been imperative for us to review and enhance our already significant range of professional learning available to staff teams. Initial evaluations demonstrated the exceptional range of professional learning available locally, nationally and internationally. Therefore, the focus was on curating and signposting this learning for leaders, teachers and support staff.

A professional learning tile was created on GLOW which covers all aspects of supporting needs. This is divided into a range of themes, which were decided upon based on data around the needs most prevalent within our establishments. Topics such as supporting neurodiverse learners, trauma informed practice, SCERTS and Building Positive Relationships are signposted and include professional reading, staff workshops and useful links. There are also links to our partner organisations who have played a key role in supporting our establishments and learners over the course of the session.

This site is complemented by the NACEDinform site which contains all relevant policies, paperwork and referral pathways.

Theme 2: Maximising learner participation and voice

Learner Participation

Research published by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People "How Young People's Participation in School Supports Attainment and Achievement" highlights a strong correlation between schools 'approaches to learner participation and levels of achievement and attainment. Having reviewed the national context, the Education service prioritised the placing of human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of all educational establishments.

A new Learner Participation Strategy has been introduced involving schools and early years settings, clusters and local authority officers. Staff have participated in collaborative sessions to ensure that the new strategy is "fit for purpose". The learner participation strategy will be further developed in session 23-24 through the co-creation and co-design of a pupil-friendly version with learners. The strategy and follow up action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Service Improvement Group responsible for Learner Participation.

Rights Respecting Schools (RRS)

Considerable progress has been made over the last three years across the Rights Respecting Schools programme (RRS). This programme has been promoted and introduced into almost all of our schools. The Rights Respecting Schools Award recognises achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. Children's rights underpin the Getting it Right for Every Child approach.

 Over 90% of our schools have achieved or are working towards RRS status, which is divided into bronze, silver and gold levels.

RRS Gold Award is the highest level of the award and is granted to schools that have fully embedded the principles of the UNCRC into their ethos and curriculum. The accreditation is valid for a period of three years.

The following North Ayrshire schools have achieved Gold status:

Ardeer Primary School; Beith Primary School; Dykesmains Primary School; Glencairn Primary School; Stanley Primary School; St Bridget's Primary School; St Luke's Primary School; St Mary's Primary School; St Matthew's Academy; Whitehirst Park Primary School,

The remainder of schools engaging with RRS awards are at Bronze level, working towards silver or working to maintain their Silver status.

Rights education and the Rights Respecting Schools approach remain areas of success and strength.

The RRS approach is evident in all schools with success being shared through their social media platforms and via attractive school and classroom displays. Focus groups of children reveal that they are knowledgeable about their own and others' rights. Increasingly children and young people are taking on elements of responsibility and participation ensuring that all schools listen and involve pupils fully in decisions that affect them and their school community. A focus on inclusion and equality by our schools and centres ensures increasing opportunities are provided for those with protected characteristics.

Theme 3: Maximising parent/carer involvement and engagement

Developing a range of initiatives, interventions, and programmes to increase opportunities to enhance family engagement in learning continues to be the focus of our Family Learning Team. The Team has worked closely with schools and families to devise and develop family learning opportunities which meet the needs of parents and families.

This session a total of 2,566 families engaged in Family Learning opportunities offered in school and within the local community. Throughout this year Family Learning opportunities were delivered across 39 primary schools and 6 secondary schools.

The programmes delivered by the Family Learning Team can be split into four key areas – Curriculum, Transition, Health & Wellbeing, and Learning Opportunities for Parents/Carers. Through individual school requests the team has delivered 19 different interventions during 2022 – 23.

Programme	Family Participation
Read Write Count Gifting to P2 & P3	510
Family STEM (Including Young STEM Leader)	343
Outdoor Learning (Including John Muir Award)	263
Transition (Into P1 and P7 – S1)	183
Family Literacy	171
Family Food & Fitness	170

The outcome of all interventions delivered by the Family Learning Team are evaluated through seeking family feedback and ongoing monitoring throughout the year to ensure the needs of families are being

met. Evaluations continue to provide evidence of impact, particularly under the following wellbeing indicators:

- Safe - Family gains more knowledge and understanding of how to reduce their child/young person's risk of harm online.
- Healthy – Parents/Carers know how their child/young person can lead a healthy lifestyle and know how to support their child's development and emotional needs.
- Nurtured - Family interacts positively through play/interactions.
- Achieving - Parents/Carers understand how their child learns in school and how this can be supported at home, can prepare their child for transition onto primary/secondary, and have improved skills through attending formal and informal training.
- Respected – Parents/Carers are involved in decision making processes about matters that affect them and have increased opportunities or support within the community.
- Included - Family feels involved in their school community through attending a range of school and family learning opportunities.

Overview of Pupil Equity Funding

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is provided to head teachers to reduce the poverty related attainment gap within their education establishment. 95% of schools in Scotland have been allocated funding for pupils in P1-S3 known to be eligible for free school meals. North Ayrshire schools have received Pupil Equity Funding for six years with funding allocations fixed until 2026. In total North Ayrshire schools receive £4,172,180 in Pupil Equity Funding each year. A considerable effort has been made in the 2022-23 academic year to ensure PEF is fully utilised to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap. This is evidenced by the significant reduction in PEF carried forward into the beginning of the next financial year, which has reduced by almost 20%.

Pupil Equity Funding must provide targeted support for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential. Although the funding is allocated based on free school meal eligibility, Head Teachers can use their professional judgement to determine which pupils receive targeted support. All schools work with their school community to decide how to invest PEF and are encouraged to use participatory budgeting approaches to inform decision making. Examples of how PEF has been used in North Ayrshire's schools this year are included in the next section of this report.

Head teachers have full autonomy to allocate PEF to address poverty related attainment gaps in their school. Schools are also responsible for measuring and evaluating the impact of PEF interventions. Approaches vary on a school-to-school basis but in most circumstances measurement of PEF impact focuses on the pupils who benefit from the intervention at school level through qualitative and quantitative data. A sample of the impact of a range of PEF interventions is included in this report, however, information about all schools is also contained within individual school Standards and Quality Reports, which are accessible via the Council website.

PEF Case Studies

PEF Case Study: Glebe Primary School

(Linked to Priority 1 – Improving Attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy)

Pupil Equity Funding was partly used in Glebe Primary School to fund additional classroom assistants to provide targeted support for children experiencing challenges engaging with learning due to social, emotional, behavioural, and mental health needs. A range of approaches were put in place including supporting learners in small groups which has improved engagement in literacy and numeracy. All pupils using the 5-minute Literacy box improved, with an average improvement of 25.8% across all learners. Similarly, all pupils using the 5-minute Number box improved with an average improvement of 13.6% across all learners. In addition, all pupils targeted through the Talk Boost intervention improved with an average improvement of 16.7% across all learners. Funding classroom assistants has enabled the school to fund a variety of lunchtime clubs for sports and wellbeing. As a result, behaviour in the playground has improved and pupils appear more respectful and engage better with each other. The recent Parent/Carer questionnaire said that 91% of parents feel behaviour in the school is positive which has increased by 19% since 2019. Feedback and pupil attendance at lunchtime clubs has been very positive with 84% of the school attending with all pupils attending at least one or more club per week. Tracking of in and out of school wider achievement activity ensures the school can encourage pupils not attending any activities as it is recognised this can be an important aspect of promoting positive mental health and wellbeing as well as engagement with learning through supporting the development relationships and social skills.

PEF Case Study: St Mark's Primary School

(Linked to Priority 2 – Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people)

St Mark's Primary School have creatively used a small amount of their Pupil Equity Funding to restart a breakfast club in October 2022. Since it re-started the school has a team of volunteers from the community who provide a free breakfast to between 60 and 100 children daily between 8.30am and 8.55am. There have been multiple benefits for members of our school community with children all given access to a free breakfast to ensure that no child is hungry and that they are ready to focus, concentrate and learn as soon as the school day begins. Breakfast club has allowed children to meet up with their friends and to make new friends as well as deepen connections between the school and the local community. This has been a support for parents helping to reduce the stress of the morning routine, cost of the school day and support parents to work. The school has also seen a reduction in the number of late comings, as the children are able to have breakfast in school. The breakfast club has been very well received by new families and was welcomed back by existing children and families. Work is currently underway to ensure the school can measure the impact of the breakfast club through the 4 capacities with a focus on promoting this support to families who may benefit from the breakfast club.

PEF Case Study: Elderbank Primary School

(Linked to Priority 4 – Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing)

Elderbank Primary School has used some of its Pupil Equity Funding to support mental health and wellbeing of learners through enhancing pastoral support and developing a health and wellbeing programme. A key part of this has been starting to use the Glasgow Motivational and Wellbeing Profile as an assessment tool, targeting groups of P5 and P6 pupils. Data shows improvement for all pupils across SHANARRI indicators with progress varying from incremental to significant. A new pastoral support teacher has provided advice to practitioners on supporting behaviour within the classroom and ensuring classroom environments can effectively meet individual pupil needs. The CIRCLE resource has been used as a guiding document, providing an autism and dyslexia friendly classroom where pupils feel safe and included within a differentiated setting, including an accessible calm area where time can be taken to self-regulate. Professional learning opportunities have been offered to class teachers and support staff on a range of topics including children experiencing distressed behaviour, nurture, change and loss, and restorative practice. The pastoral support teacher has also worked closely with parents/carers and other partners to address low attendance and social anxieties around coming to school to ensure the best level of care, support and communication is in place to improve pupil outcomes.

Progress towards our single-year Stretch Aims

For the first time in 2022-23, all local authorities were required to set stretch aims, to indicate the progress they intended to make on a range of improvement activities. In the tables below, North Ayrshire's stretch aims for 2022-23 are recorded along with the baseline position in 2022 and the actual position by August 2023. Most of the stretch aims were not achieved. The legacy impacts of the COVID pandemic are still evident. To show progress over a longer time frame, this year's data has been compared with our performance from two years ago (for curriculum for excellence levels) or from four years ago (for all other stretch aims). Since originally publishing its guidance on stretch aims in 2022, the Scottish Government has now revised this approach, requesting that local authorities set stretch aims over a longer time frame. North Ayrshire Council had already created longer-term stretch aims last year and an update on progress is provided at the end of this section.

Stretch Aim 1				
The proportion of learners in North Ayrshire who achieve the expected levels of attainment in literacy at P1, P4 and P7 will increase.				
	All learners	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2-5	Gap Q1 vv Q2-5
2022 baseline	67%	60%	74%	-14pp
2023 stretch aim	71%	67%	75%	-8pp
2023 actual	**68%**	**62%**	**74%**	**-12pp**
1-year progress (2022-23)	*Improved*	*Improved*	*No change*	*Improved*
2-year progress (2021-23)	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*

Stretch Aim 2				
The proportion of learners in North Ayrshire who achieve the expected levels of attainment in numeracy at P1, P4 and P7 will increase.				
	All learners	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2-5	Gap Q1 vv Q2-5
2022 baseline	75%	69%	81%	-12pp
2023 stretch aim	77%	72%	81%	-9pp
2023 actual	**76%**	**71%**	**80%**	**-9pp**
1-year progress (2022-23)	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Not Improved*	*Improved*
2-year progress (2021-23)	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*

Stretch Aim 3				
The proportion of school leavers who achieve one or more passes at SCQF Level 5 (grades A-C or better will increase.				
	All learners	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2-5	Gap Q1 vv Q2-5
2022 baseline	87%	81%	92%	-11pp
2023 stretch aim	88%	82%	92%	-10pp
2023 actual	**86%**	**79%**	**92%**	**-13pp**
1-year progress (2022-23)	*Not Improved*	*Not Improved*	*No change*	*Not Improved*
4-year progress (2019-23)	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*

Stretch Aim 4

The proportion of school leavers who achieve one or more passes at SCQF Level 6 (grades A-C or better will increase.

	All learners	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2-5	Gap Q1 vv Q2-5
2022 baseline	64%	54%	72%	-18pp
2023 stretch aim	65%	55%	72%	-17pp
2023 actual	**60%**	**45%**	**71%**	**-26pp**
1-year progress (2022-23)	*Not Improved*	*Not Improved*	*Not Improved*	*Not Improved*
4-year progress (2019-23)	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Not Improved*

Stretch Aim 5

The proportion of 16-19 year olds who are participating in education, employment or training will increase.

	All learners	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2-5	Gap Q1 vv Q2-5
2022 baseline	91%	88%	93%	-5pp
2023 stretch aim	91%	89%	93%	-4pp
2023 actual	**94%**	**91%**	**95%**	**-4pp**
1-year progress (2022-23)	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*
4-year progress (2019-23)	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*	*Improved*

Stretch Aim 6

School attendance levels will increase.

	All learners	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2-5	Gap Q1 vv Q2-5
2022 baseline	89%	88%	91%	-3pp
2023 stretch aim	91%	89%	92%	-3pp
2023 actual	**89%**	**87%**	**91%**	**-4pp**
1-year progress (2022-23)	*Not improved*	*Not improved*	*Not improved*	*Not improved*
4-year progress (2019-23)	*Not improved*	*Not improved*	*Not improved*	*Not improved*

Stretch Aim 7

Exclusion incidents (per 1000) will reduce.

	All learners	SIMD Q1	SIMD Q2-5	Gap Q1 vv Q2-5
2022 baseline	18	26	11	15
2023 stretch aim	15	22	10	12
2023 actual				
1-year progress (2022-23)				
4-year progress (2019-23)				

Progress towards our longer-term stretch aims

In 2022, we set out our ambitions for improvement in a range of educational measures by 2027.

Our longer-term stretch aims are that by 2027…

- 450 more learners in our primary schools will achieve the expected levels of attainment in literacy. By 2023, we are **beginning to make progress** towards this stretch aim.

- 250 more learners in our primary schools will achieve the expected levels of attainment in numeracy. By 2023, we are **beginning to make progress** towards this stretch aim.

- Over 90% of our school leavers will achieve at least one qualification at SCQF Level 5 / National 5 or better. By 2023, we are **making good progress** towards this stretch aim.

- Over three quarters of our school leavers will achieve at least one qualification at SCQF Level 6/Higher or better. By 2023, we are **making some progress** towards this stretch aim.

- At least 165 more 16-19 year-olds will be participating in education, training or employment. By 2023, we are **making very good progress** towards this stretch aim.

- More than two thirds of our pupils will have over 90% attendance in our schools. By 2023, we are **beginning to make progress** towards this stretch aim.

- We will reduce our exclusion rate to no more than 10 per 1000 pupils. By 2023, we are **beginning to make progress** towards this stretch aim.

- We will reduce the overall gaps in attainment between the most and least disadvantaged learners by an average of 5 percentage points. By 2023, we are **beginning to make progress** towards this stretch aim.