

The Highland Council
Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
8 October 2015

Agenda Item	12.
Report No	ECAS 87/15

Educational Attainment Update

Report by Director of Care & Learning

Summary

This report provides the initial analysis of school performance in the SQA exams in 2015. A more detailed analysis will be provided at a future Committee.

1. Introduction

1.1 The introduction of the approaches that form the basis of Curriculum for Excellence and the nature of the new qualifications must be taken into account when considering the 2015 results. There are a variety of factors which mean that direct comparisons between attainment in 2015 and previous years will be extremely complex.

1.3 New National Courses

1.2.1 The new National Courses have been introduced on a phased basis, by level, as learners experiencing Curriculum for Excellence move through the school. In session 2014-15, National 2 to National 5 and the new Higher were available and have been developed to ensure good progression from the Broad General Education phase of Curriculum for Excellence.

1.2.2 2014-15 was also the final year when the existing Access, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher qualifications will be available, and is also the final year of the existing Advanced Higher qualification.

1.2.3 As a result, the qualifications taken by candidates may vary significantly, with individual candidates taking a mix of existing and new qualifications.

1.3 New National Qualifications

1.3.1 The new Qualifications have been designed to reflect the purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and involve the assessment of different skills and knowledge, for example, deeper learning and higher order thinking skills. Learners will have undertaken different approaches to assessment of the new qualifications. National 4 qualifications are internally assessed and quality assured by SQA. Almost all of the National 5 and Higher courses include some sort of coursework assessment. This allows valid assessment of a wider range of skills and knowledge. In the majority of courses, a learner's

final grade is based on a combination of coursework assessment and a final examination.

- 1.3.2 All of the new National Courses, including the new Highers this year, have been benchmarked against the previous and existing National Qualifications on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). This ensures that the new courses are set at the same level of demand and difficulty as their predecessors, and that national standards are maintained. Nationally the entries at SCQF level 6 are split between existing (46%) and new Higher (54%) with variations in this proportion by subject.

1.4 Flexibility of Curriculum Models

- 1.4.1 Curriculum for Excellence provides schools with the flexibility to develop curriculum models best suited to their local circumstances and individual candidates. Different curriculum models provide the opportunity for learners to study a different mix of awards and qualifications at the most appropriate time for them during their Senior Phase (S4-S6). Learners will have experienced a variety of presentation patterns, informed by discussions with teachers and parents and carers in the best interests of the learner, both in terms of the number of subjects and whether individuals are studying for a qualification over one or two years.
- 1.4.2 This year's S5 learners, for example, may have been following any of a number of presentation pathways. Many learners will have studied National 4 and/or National 5 qualifications in S4 last year, and then progressed to study either the new or existing Highers. Some learners who had studied Intermediate qualifications in S4 will also have studied the new or existing Highers. Another category of learners may have not attempted any SQA qualifications in S4, and their first presentation for examination will be for the new Highers in S5 (often referred to as 'by-passing'). This flexibility in curriculum models exists both between schools and in some cases, within subjects in schools. For example, in some schools individual learners will have studied a combination of existing and new Highers this year.
- 1.4.3 In the first presentation of National 5 qualifications in 2013-14, the majority of learners undertaking the courses were in S4. In the second year of National 5, the proportion of candidates from other stage groups has increased significantly with entries from S4, S5, S6 and College. Those entered for National 5 this year also include those who have progressed to National 5 in one year and others in two years from the Broad General Education as well as candidates who are resitting these qualifications. Others have progressed on from National 4 or Intermediates. Some candidates may, for some subjects, bypass National 5 altogether and progress directly to Higher.
- 1.4.4 The candidates for National 5 qualifications this year are therefore not a similar group of candidates to the previous year.

1.5 Candidates Entering for Higher Qualifications

- 15.1 During this session, the new Higher qualification ran alongside the existing Higher. This allowed schools and Local Authorities in consultation with parents, carers and learners to enter for those qualifications judged to be in the best interests of the learner. This has resulted in a variety of presentation patterns across subjects for the new and existing Higher.
- 1.5.2 For the existing Higher, the distribution of candidates across S5 and S6 this year was broadly similar to 2013-14 with just under half the candidates in S5 with a significant proportion of candidates in S6.
- 1.5.3 For the new Higher, there is a higher proportion of candidates in S5 than has been seen in Highers in previous years and the proportion in S6 being similar for the new Higher.
- 1.5.4 We have also seen a variety of progression pathways for candidates entering the Higher qualifications. Examples of these progression pathways include candidates entering Higher directly from Broad General Education over 2 years; candidates progressing from Intermediate 2 to both the new and existing Higher, and from National 5 to both the new and existing Higher.
- 1.5.5 The candidates for the existing and new Highers were therefore not similar groups.

1.6 Making Comparisons across Qualifications and Years

- 1.6.1 This is the second year of certification of the new National Courses to support Curriculum for Excellence in schools and colleges. It is also a year in which candidates are taking existing and new Highers. Although both existing and new Highers have the same level of demand and difficulty, in many cases they may involve the assessment of some different knowledge and skills.
- 1.6.2 For these reasons, detailed comparisons year-on-year will be extremely complex.

2. Initial Highland Picture

- 2.1 It is important to acknowledge the continued success young people across Highland have had in their SQA exams in 2015.
- 2.2 Individually, there are many very good examples in schools of outstanding performance by pupils at all levels.
- 2.3 It is important to note that a fuller more detail analysis will be presented to members in at a future Committee, when the data available for 2015 is complete.
- 2.4 Summary of initial data (see attached graphs)

- Highland's young people continue to perform at a high level.
- Positive destinations for young people continue to paint a strong picture.
- Performance in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 4, 2015 is lower than our Virtual Comparator in S4.
- The improvement attainment for all data in 2015 would suggest further work needs to be done in S4.
- The initial data for 2015 confirms there are issues to be addressed in closing the attainment gap across S4, S5 and S6.
- Measuring attainment against deprivation would suggest further work needs to be done in S4 for the SMID 1 and 10. In S6, it suggests that young people in SMID 9 and 10 perform less well than in their virtual comparators.

3. Implications

3.1 There are no Legal, Climate Change/Carbon Clever; Risk and implications.

3.2 Equalities – It is important that the strategies put in place maximise the opportunities across the Highlands but particularly in deprived areas.

3.3 Gaelic – Strategies need to put in place to ensure the opportunities for Gaelic medium pupils are maximised.

3.4 Rural – It is important to ensure that factors that may impact on young people in rural areas are taken into consideration.

4. Recommendation

4.1 Members are invited to comment on the initial analysis of this year's SQA results and to congratulate the young people of Highland on their successes in this year's exams.

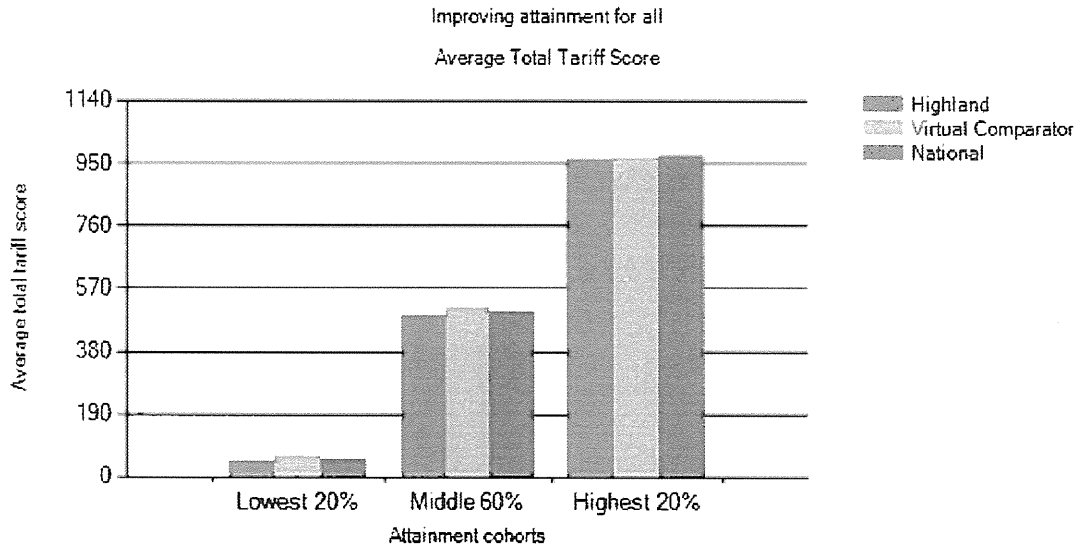
Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 29 September 2015

Author: Jim Steven Head of Education

Local Benchmarking Measure: Improving Attainment for All

The selected year is 2015



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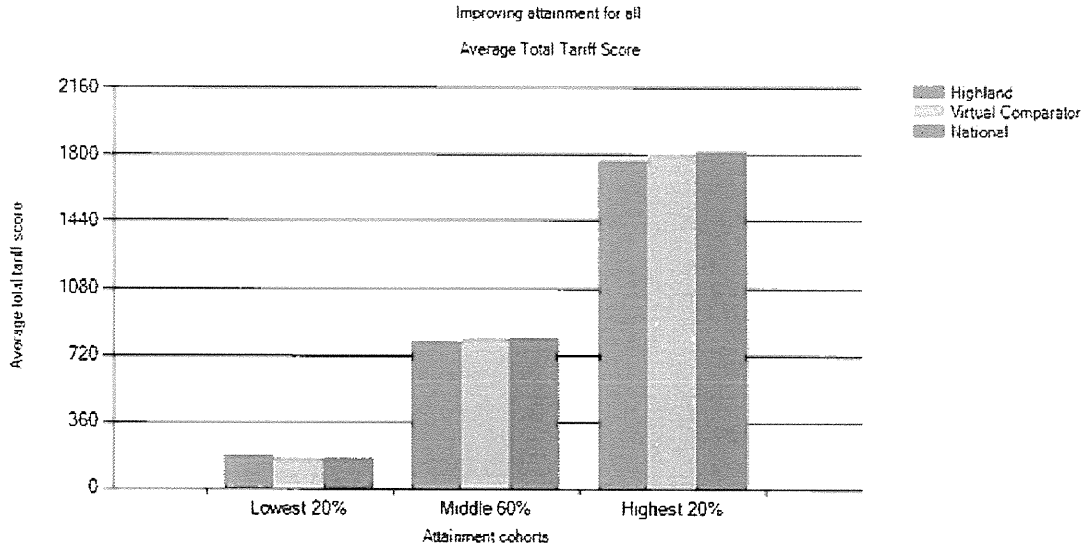
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	Lowest 20%	Middle 60%	Highest 20%	Number in Cohort
Highland	49	487	959	2390
Virtual Comparator	62	509	967	23900
National	54	499	970	47696

Year : 2015
 Stage : S5
 Based upon (stage roll) : S5
 Calculation Type : Annual
 Age : All
 ASN : All
 EAL : All
 Ethnicity : All
 Gender : All
 Highest SCQF Course Attained : Any
 LAC : All
 Leaver Destination : Any
 Pupil Points : All

National Benchmarking Measure: Improving Attainment for All

The selected year is 2014



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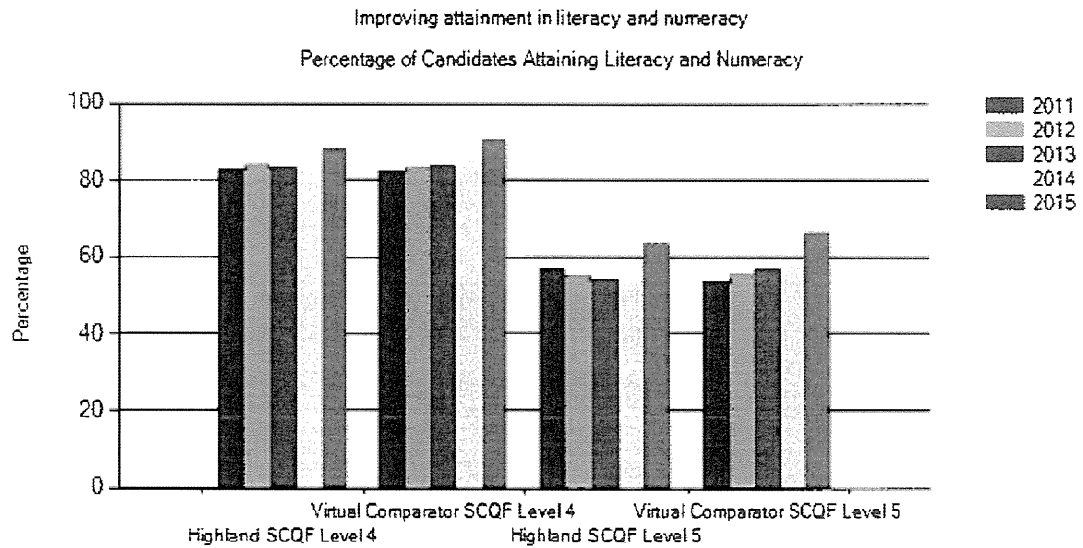
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	Lowest 20%	Middle 60%	Highest 20%	Number in Cohort
Highland	175	793	1763	2369
Virtual Comparator	166	805	1805	23690
National	163	806	1818	50035

Year : 2014
 Age : All
 ASN : All
 EAL : All
 Ethnicity : All
 Gender : All
 Highest SCQF Course Attained : Any
 LAC : All
 Leaver Destination : Any
 Pupil Points : All
 SIMD : Any

Local Benchmarking Measure: Literacy and Numeracy



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DisplayName	Year	% Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy	Number in Cohort
Highland	2011	82.93	56.59	2320
Virtual Comparator	2011	82.22	53.42	23200
National	2011	80.39	51.88	48151
Highland	2012	84.22	54.72	2414
Virtual Comparator	2012	83.34	55.51	24140
National	2012	81.67	53.48	48259
Highland	2013	83.39	53.74	2246
Virtual Comparator	2013	83.67	56.49	22460
National	2013	82.65	54.63	48127

Highland	2014	86.66	58.44	2339
Virtual Comparator	2014	85.19	57.69	23390
National	2014	84.62	57.04	48175
Highland	2015	88.28	63.26	2390
Virtual Comparator	2015	90.37	65.93	23900
National	2015	89.61	64.88	47696

To explore this information further:

Stage : S5

Based upon (stage roll) : S5

ASN : All

EAL : All

Ethnicity : All

Gender : All

Highest SCQF Course Attained : Any

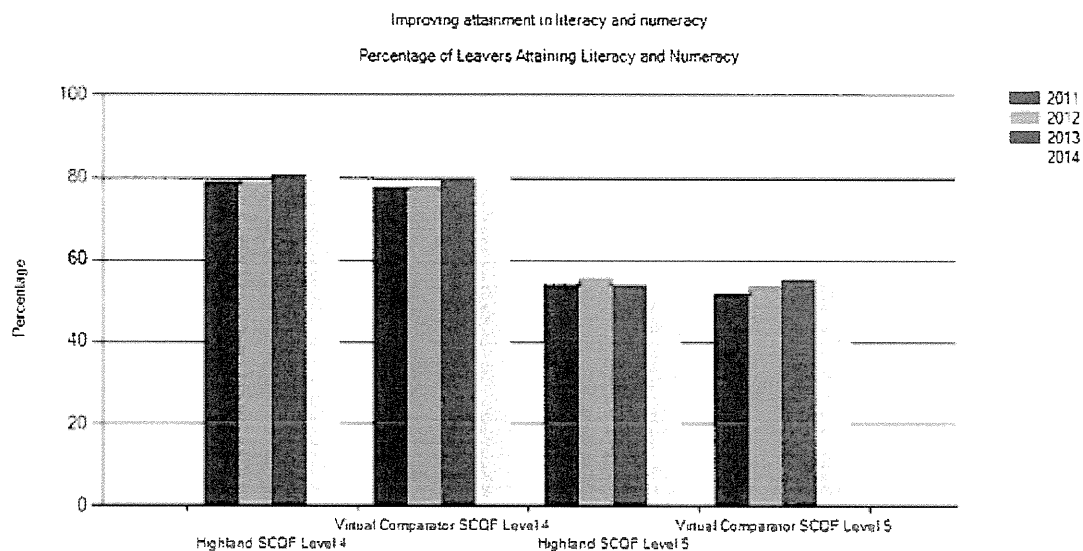
LAC : All

Pupil Points : All

SIMD : Any

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National Benchmarking Measure: Literacy and Numeracy



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DisplayName	Year	% Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy	Number in Cohort
Highland	2011	78.66	53.77	2535
Virtual Comparator	2011	77.50	51.81	25350
National	2011	74.88	49.31	53209
Highland	2012	79.34	55.56	2430
Virtual Comparator	2012	77.95	53.31	24300
National	2012	76.69	52.23	49744
Highland	2013	80.54	53.83	2508
Virtual Comparator	2013	79.71	55.12	25080
National	2013	77.92	52.47	51632

Highland	2014	83.41	55.55	2369
Virtual Comparator	2014	81.71	55.69	23690
National	2014	81.28	55.68	50035

To explore this information further:

Age : All

ASN : All

EAL : All

Ethnicity : All

Gender : All

Highest SCQF Course Attained : Any

LAC : All

Leaver Destination : Any

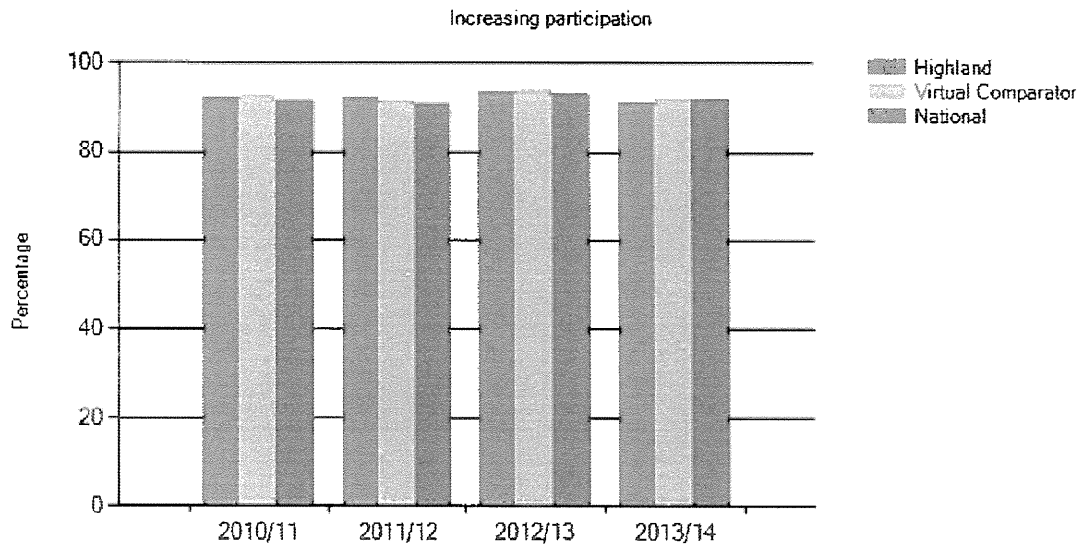
Pupil Points : All

SIMD : Any

Stage : S4/S5/S6

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Local Benchmarking Measure: Candidate Initial Destinations



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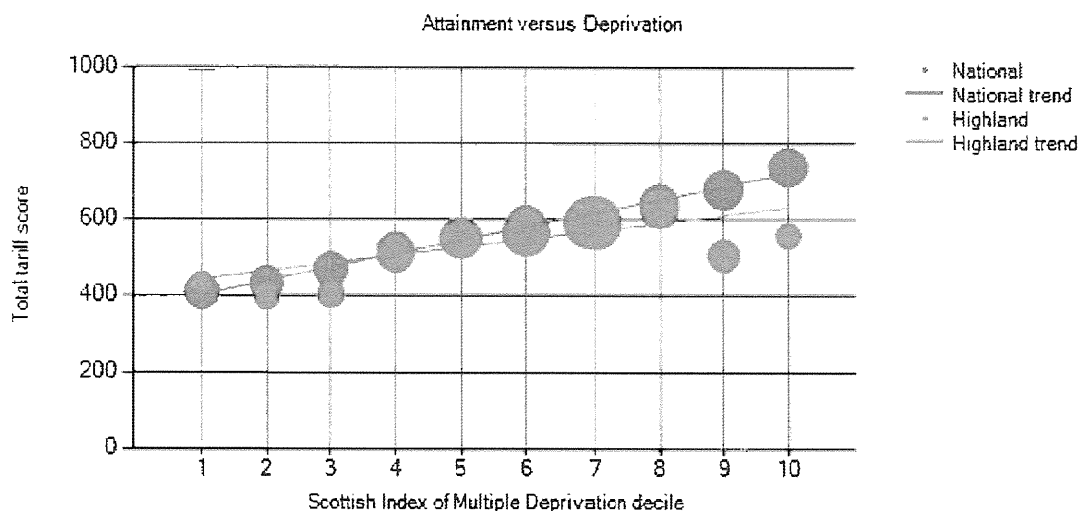
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Establishment	Year	% of Candidates in a Positive Destination	Number in Cohort
Highland	2010/11	92.37	2320
Virtual Comparator	2010/11	92.66	23200
National	2010/11	91.66	48151
Highland	2011/12	92.17	2414
Virtual Comparator	2011/12	91.58	24140
National	2011/12	90.85	48259
Highland	2012/13	93.63	2246
Virtual Comparator	2012/13	93.72	22460
National	2012/13	93.16	48127
Highland	2013/14	91.15	2339
Virtual Comparator	2013/14	91.84	23390
National	2013/14	91.93	48175

Local Benchmarking Measure: Attainment versus Deprivation

The selected year is 2014/15

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



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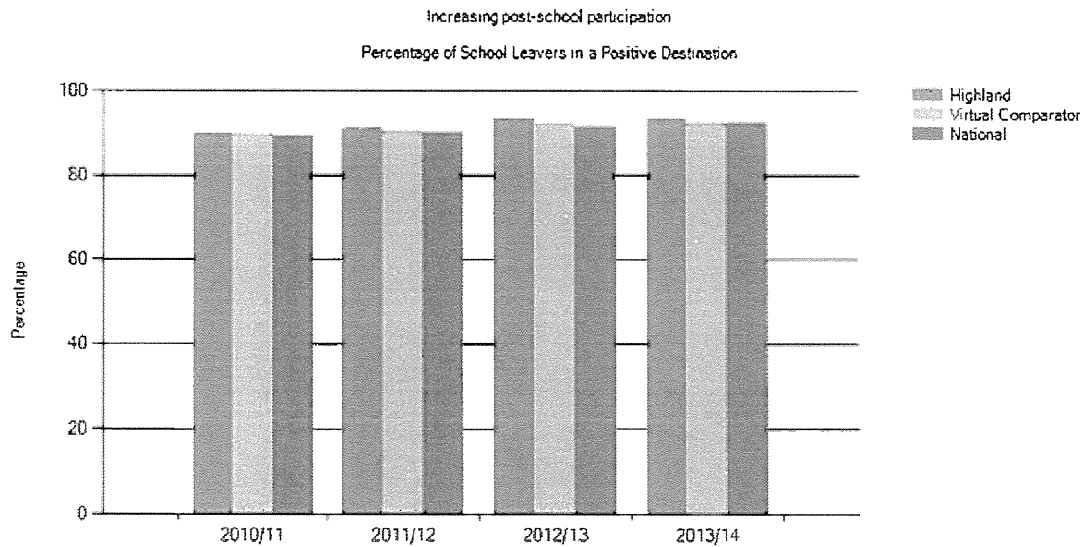
In SIMD decile 9, you have performed lower than the National Establishment
In SIMD decile 10, you have performed lower than the National Establishment

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Compare With : National
 Year : 2014/15
 Stage : S6
 Based upon (stage roll) : S6
 Calculation Type : Annual
 Age : All
 ASN : All
 EAL : All
 Ethnicity : All
 Gender : All
 Highest SCQF Course Attained : Any
 LAC : All
 Leaver Destination : Any
 Pupil Points : All
 SIMD : Any
 Stage : S4/S5/S6

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National Benchmarking Measure: Leaver Initial Destinations



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Establishment	Year	% of Schools Leavers in a Positive Destination	Number in Cohort
Highland	2010/11	89.98	2535
Virtual Comparator	2010/11	89.95	25350
National	2010/11	89.12	53209
Highland	2011/12	91.23	2430
Virtual Comparator	2011/12	90.65	24300
National	2011/12	90.12	49744
Highland	2012/13	93.38	2508
Virtual Comparator	2012/13	92.12	25080
National	2012/13	91.70	51632
Highland	2013/14	93.58	2369

Virtual Comparator	2013/14	92.68	23690
National	2013/14	92.57	50035

To explore this information further:

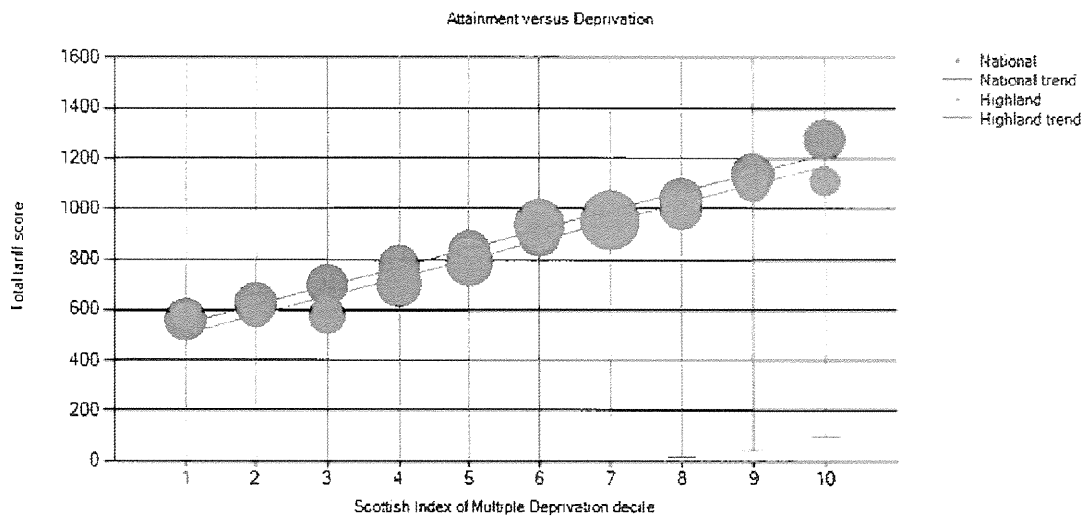
- Age : All
- ASN : All
- EAL : All
- Ethnicity : All
- Gender : All
- Highest SCQF Course Attained : Any
- LAC : All
- Pupil Points : All
- SIMD : Any
- Stage : S4/S5/S6

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National Benchmarking Measure: Attainment versus Deprivation

The selected year is 2013/14

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



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Establishment	Number in Cohort	SIMD 1 Average	SIMD 2 Average	SIMD 3 Average	SIMD 4 Average	SIMD 5 Average	SIMD 6 Average	SIMD 7 Average
National	50035	562	625	701	777	832	896	972
Highland	2369	577	593	579	701	789	937	954

Compare With : National
 Year : 2013/14
 Age : All
 ASN : All
 EAL : All
 Ethnicity : All
 Gender : All
 Highest SCQF Course Attained : Any
 LAC : All
 Leaver Destination : Any
 Pupil Points : All