

Agenda Item	12.
Report No.	EDU/28/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Education and Learning Committee

Date: 17th November 2021

Report Title: **National Improvement Framework Annual Reporting and Education Service Plan**

Report By: Executive Chief Officer - Education and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The National Improvement Framework (NIF) and National Improvement Plan was first launched by the Scottish Government in 2016 and they are reviewed annually by Ministers. The purpose of the Framework and Plan is to set out the vision and priorities for Scottish education to deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity. Local Authorities are required to ensure that improvement activity is consistent with the strategic priorities set out in the national framework and produce an annual report setting out the progress made in this regard.
- 1.2 The following report and appendix contain the Highland Council's Annual Service Plan Progress Report for 2020/21, and Annual Plan for the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for 2021/22.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- 1) Note the progress made in Highland Council in session 2020/2021;
 - 2) Note the key activities planned for session 2021/2022 to further improve outcomes for children, young people and families; and
 - 3) Consider the National Improvement Framework Report.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource:** The Annual Service Plan and Report – National Improvement Framework will be delivered within agreed central education and devolved school budgets.
- 3.2 **Legal:** The publication of the Annual Service Plan and Report – National Improvement Framework is required by the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000. The National Improvement Framework is underpinned by a series of planning and reporting requirements, integrated into the 2000 Act by the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. The Scottish Government has published statutory guidance to clarify how the 2000 Act was amended in 2016 to impose duties on education authorities to enhance equity and promote a reduction in inequalities of educational outcomes experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage; to secure improvement in the quality of school education with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework; and duties in relation to annual reporting and annual school improvement planning.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** Communities have been impacted by Covid-19 and the plan aims to support renewal and recovery, including addressing issues related to the poverty and rural deprivation. The Report and Plan will have a positive impact in terms of equalities because of the focus on equity, closing the attainment gap and improving health and wellbeing.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever:** No issues related to Climate Change. The Learning for Sustainability Agenda is a key aspect of the GTCS Standards and the Curriculum.
- 3.5 **Risk:** There is a risk that the aftermath of Covid-19 may continue to impact on attendance although this risk is mitigated by the on-line learning offer and Highland Virtual Academy. There is a risk that the pandemic will have widened the inequalities of outcome experienced by children and young people due to the health, societal and economic harms of Covid. The NIF Plan is particularly targeted at addressing this.
- 3.6 **Gaelic:** The NIF applies equally to Gaelic Medium education and learning.

4. Overview

- 4.1 Education authorities must prepare and publish annual plans detailing the steps they intend to take on the strategic priorities in the National Improvement Framework (NIF) in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education have been designed to deliver excellence and equity in education, and to reflect both the vision and approach of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in developing the four capacities:
- Successful learners
 - Confident individuals
 - Responsible citizens
 - Effective contributors

The four capacities are designed to produce a more rounded education with broader achievements being recognised alongside academic attainment. This is to ensure that children and young people develop a range of skills and capacities and secure a sustained positive destination.

4.2 Excellence and equity are outlined by the Scottish Government as:

- **Excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.
- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The aim of the Education Service Plan is to deliver excellence in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering equity so that every child and young person thrives and have the best opportunity to succeed, regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs.

The three further strategic frameworks which run in tandem with Curriculum for Excellence and support the aims of the NIF include the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

4.3 The four themes of the NIF are:

- to improve attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
- to close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- to improve health and wellbeing
- to improve employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations

Progress in delivering against these themes in 2020/21 is included in the attached in the Annual Report at Appendix 1.

4.4 As outlined by The Scottish Government, there is an expectation that much of 2020/21 reporting will focus on how schools and local authorities have supported children, families and school communities throughout the pandemic, including planning for recovery and supporting remote learning in their own local context. In the current reporting and planning periods, significant emphasis has therefore been given to action and future plans for responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.5 The Caithness Cares Pathfinder and the Sutherland Stakeholder Event have supported a deep analysis into the impact on communities and has informed

action planning. Work undertaken by the Digital Learning Team and the development of the Digital School Hub has protected learning and achievement in the event of remote learning being required.

4.6 The Scottish Government has also recommended that planning for 2021/22 should focus on recovery, renewal and improvement. Depending on local context and circumstances this could include issues such as:

- supporting pupil and staff health and wellbeing;
- transitions at all levels;
- the impact of trauma in communities;
- identifying potential gaps in learning;
- a renewed focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap and addressing any widening of inequalities of outcome experienced by children and young people;
- how Pupil Equity Funding (if relevant) will be used to provide targeted approaches in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to close poverty related attainment and other gaps; and
- any steps taken to make the provision of education more resilient and adaptable to future crises.

The National Improvement Framework and Education Service Plan included as Appendix 1 have been prepared to meet statutory requirements and the recommendations listed above.

5. Next Steps

5.1 The NIF Progress Report/Action Plan (as agreed in May at Education Committee) has been submitted to Scottish Ministers. In future years, the NIF will be agreed at summer Education Committee.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning
Date: 8 November 2021
Author: Tina Stones

National Improvement Framework Plan

Plana Frèam-obrach Leasachaidh Nàiseanta



2021/22

Annual Reporting and Education Service Plan
Aithriseadh Bliadhnaile agus Plana Seirbheis Foghlaim

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Introduction

Ro-ràdh

Education Directorates within Local Authorities must prepare and publish annual plans detailing the steps they intend to take on the strategic priorities in the National Improvement Framework (NIF) in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education has been designed to deliver excellence and equity in education, and to reflect both the vision and approach of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in developing the four capacities.

The four capacities are designed to produce a more rounded education with broader achievements being recognised alongside academic attainment. This is to ensure that children and young people develop a range of skills and capacities and secure a sustained positive destination.

Excellence and equity are outlined by the Scottish Government as:

Excellence through raising attainment: ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.

Achieving equity: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The aim of the Service Plan is to deliver both excellence in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering equity so that every child and young person thrives and have the best opportunity to succeed, regardless of their social, economic circumstances or additional needs.

The three further strategic frameworks which support the aims of the NIF include the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

The Highland Practice Model follows Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) to identify, assess and put support in place for children and young people with a wide range of wellbeing concerns and additional support needs. This assessment and planning process includes those who experience difficulties maintaining their emotional wellbeing as well as those who may have mental ill-health. This is an area of focus in the 2021/22 Service Plan as we move into renewal and recovery from COVID-19.

The following four key priorities are identified in the National Improvement Framework:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

Six drivers of improvement were identified as making the biggest difference to the four key priorities. These are:

- School leadership
- Teacher professionalism
- Parental engagement
- Assessment of children's progress
- School improvement
- Performance information.

Each of these areas is reflected in the service plan of our Education Directorate where we aim to develop an empowered and collaborative system, where everyone's contribution is heard and valued. This involves reflecting on what has been learned during the pandemic, and considering how all parts of the system work in partnership to ensure effective deployment of resources, achievement of best value, focus on continuous improvement and self-evaluation and best offer of, curriculum choice for all young people.

Central to the Council's ambitions for school improvement is an ethos of staff inclusion and empowerment whereby schools produce annual improvement plans and these take account of the Education Service Plan. These plans are underpinned by effective self-evaluation, which is clearly focused on ensuring that every child makes progress in their learning and our colleagues are empowered to lead change.

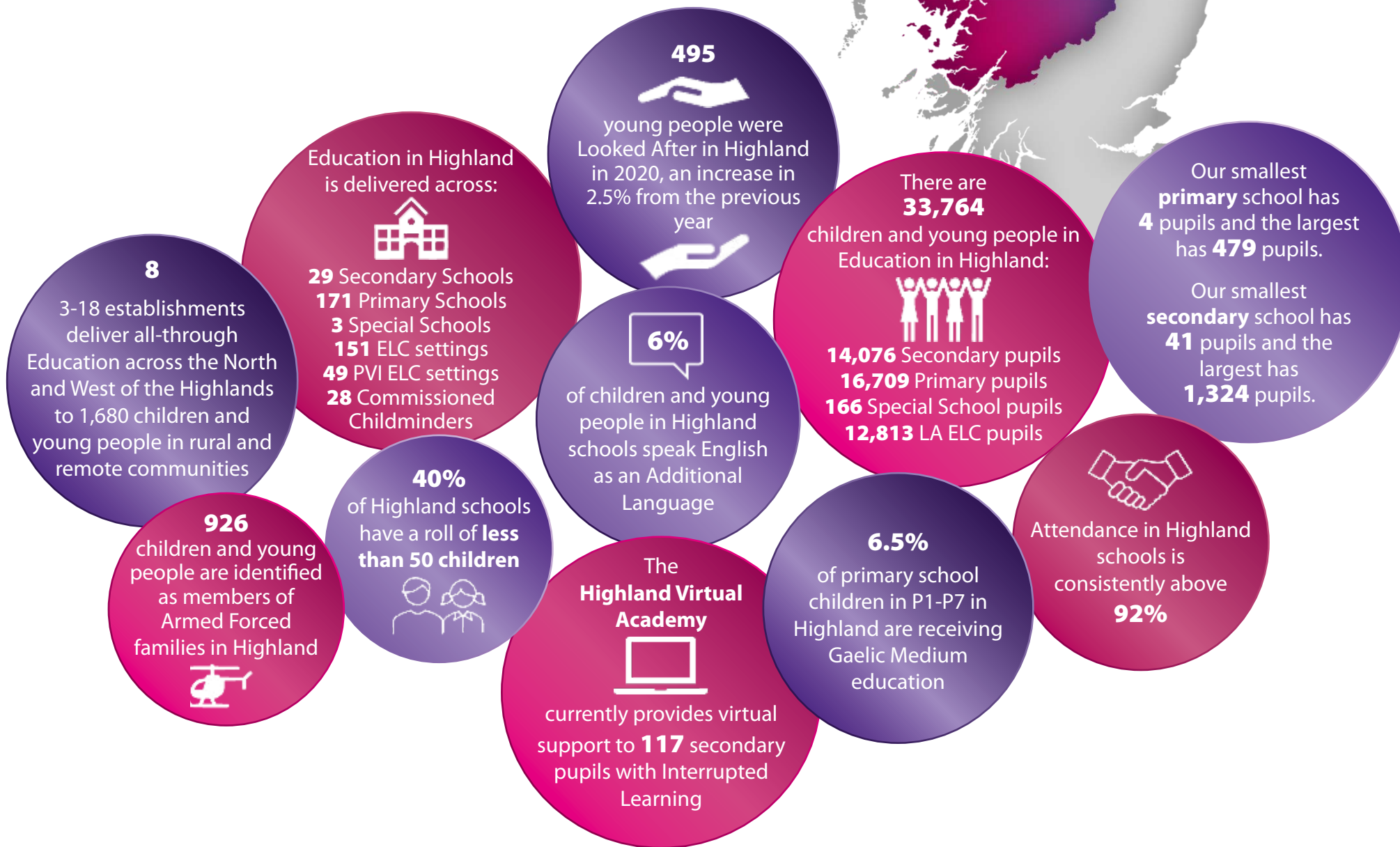
How Good is our School 4 (HGIOS4) and How Good is our ELC (HGIOELC) are used to ensure focused self-evaluation inform school improvement priorities.

In an improvement context in which the 4 harms of COVID-19 prevail: direct health harms, indirect health harms, societal harms and economic harms it is vital that all staff, children, young people and their families are supported in achieving their aims and ambitions with a focus on health and wellbeing. This is detailed in an extensive section in this report and viewed as a core consideration as all stakeholders recover, renew and reimagine in 2021/22 as we move forward out of a worldwide pandemic.



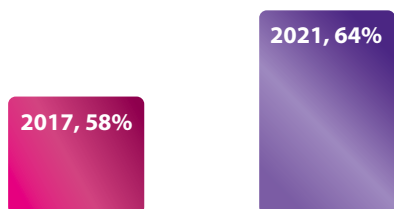
Highland Context

Co-theacsa na Gàidhealtachd

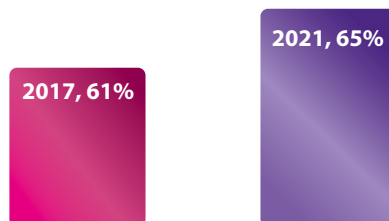


Positive Trends

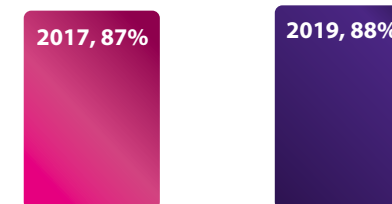
Glusadan Deimhinneach



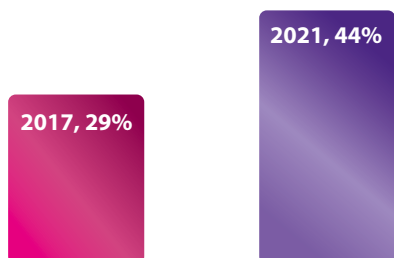
Pupils achieving 1 or more Higher by the end of S5



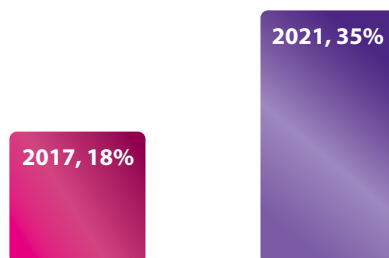
Pupils achieving 3 or more Highers by the end of S6



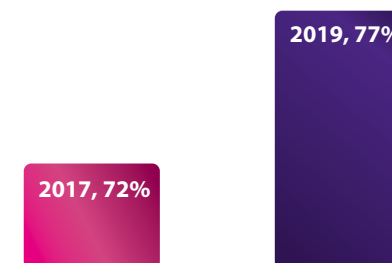
School leavers attaining Literacy and Numeracy: SCQF Level 4



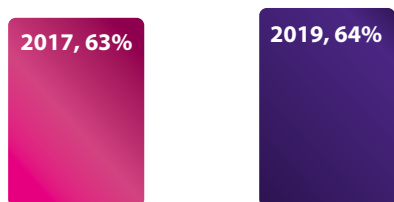
Pupils residing in SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) achieving 1 or more Higher by the end of S5



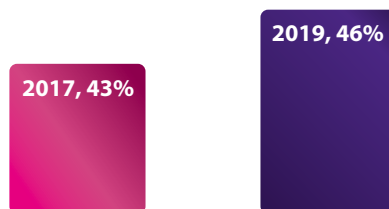
Pupils residing in SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) achieving 3 or more Highers by the end of S6



School leavers residing in SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) attaining Literacy and Numeracy: SCQF Level 4



School leavers attaining Literacy and Numeracy: SCQF Level 5



School leavers residing in SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) attaining Literacy and Numeracy: SCQF Level 5

Leadership and Empowerment

Ceannardas agus Cumhachdachadh

Much work has been carried out in terms of developing Leadership and Empowerment in our schools. A programme of sessions has been run, aimed mainly at new and acting Head Teachers, but open to all, that have covered various operational and strategic topics, such as managing finance and resources, promoting equity, professional review and development, preparing for inspection, health and safety.

These have been well attended and received and have helped us to ensure that our less experienced Head Teachers are acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary for effective leadership in their local contexts. The Directorate have also set up a Middle Leaders programme for Principal Teachers, Faculty Heads and Depute Head Teachers, as well as a new programme for aspiring leaders (those who have not yet been promoted but are interested in the next steps in their careers).

These sessions have focused on the expectations of leaders as we prepare the ground for future generations of Head Teachers.

The Council are running in partnership a bespoke Highland version of the national Evolving Systems Thinking programme which is led jointly by Highland Council officers and trainers from Education Scotland's Professional Learning Team, and which is aimed at supporting system level educators to enhance their leadership skills and experience through national collaborative working with a strong focus on ensuring excellence and equity for all children and young people in Scotland. There have been more than 50 experienced Head Teachers and officers undertaking this training together, with future cohorts planned.

Record numbers of staff signed up for national training programmes such as Excellence in Headship and Into Headship (this course delivers the Standard for Headship, which is now a statutory requirement for permanent Head Teacher posts).

More than 40 staff signed up for Into Headship (in previous years 10-15) which helps to future-proof the Council for HT appointments in the years to come, and 15 participants in Excellence in Headship (previously 2-5) which gives some of our most experienced Head Teachers the chance to engage in professional learning and sharing of practice with similar HTs elsewhere in the country.

Staff who have signed up for these national courses are provided with support and mentoring, both by officers and by experienced Head Teachers to help to ensure course completion.

Alongside the national programmes, the Directorate are supporting staff to take part in training at Masters Level offered by UHI and by Aberdeen University, and, for example, Middle Leaders and Coaching training offered by the Northern Alliance Leadership Workstream.

In all of this work on Leadership and Empowerment the aim is to produce an increasingly skilled and knowledgeable workforce, well versed in the most recent research on educational provision, as part of our ambition to improve outcomes for our children and young people.

Service Priorities

Prìomhachasan Seirbheis

Education delivery in Scotland as we recover from the effects of COVID-19 presents a complex picture. The service plan addresses the unique context of Highland communities whilst maintaining a focus on excellence and equity. The four areas are:

Entitlement; Equity; Relationships; Empowerment and Leadership.

This approach allows us to ensure that our children and young people receive a quality, broad and balanced education which will provide them with skills for learning, life and work wherever they reside in Highland, and our colleagues are empowered to lead in their roles and contexts.

The four areas of focus are detailed in this section and a further breakdown of actions and outcomes can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Our Focus for Improvement in 2021/22

Relationships

We will maximise health and wellbeing for all children and young people to give them the best possible start in life.

1. Further promotion of the Promoting Positive Relationships Guidance and identification of the key priorities to support The Highland Council five-year mental health and wellbeing strategic plan.
2. Prioritise the nine-point ASL review to support and improve outcomes for ASL and inclusion across The Highland Council and in line with the national ASL review.
3. Safeguarding procedures have been reviewed and updated in line with national guidance.

Empowerment and Leadership

We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system for now and the future.

1. Development of Leadership Support Plan, based on the six empowerment themes and thematic elements, which will encompass the whole education service. This will also provide the means by which progress can be monitored.
2. Review self-evaluation practices across the service, including new school review methodology.
3. Review of PRD and PU process for HTs to reflect GTCS national standards.
4. SP with a key focus on interventions and next steps.

Health and Wellbeing through COVID-19 and beyond

Slàinte is Sunnd tro COVID-19 agus thar sin

The Highland Council values the importance of health and wellbeing (HWB) of children and young people and of all those in the communities to which they belong.

Across all schools and settings our health and wellbeing curriculum is the responsibility of all and is recognised as a core driver for closing gaps and raising attainment for all.

We work proactively with our community planning partnerships and third sector partners to ensure a holistic and trauma informed approach across our services. It is also recognised that the pandemic placed a huge amount of pressure on many families, colleagues and communities and the health and wellbeing of all sits at the heart of renewal and recovery.

During 2020/21 the wellbeing and safeguarding team, the Psychological Services, and the Counselling Manager supported schools in developing a focus on children and young people developing the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attitudes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. This is even more important as our children, young people and communities recover from the impact of COVID-19.

During the period of lockdown, a Wellbeing co-ordinator was appointed and provided on-line drop-in sessions for secondary age children and young people who were anxious about returning to school. These sessions were jointly led by the wellbeing co-ordinator and professionals such as Youth Workers, Primary Mental Health, Educational Psychologists and Education Officers.

In response to the school counselling funding programme, The Psychological Services have worked in collaboration with the Counselling Manager and local counselling providers to ensure that access to counselling is established across all secondary schools and for all children aged 10 years and over in the primary school sector.

This has resulted in increased access to services for children and young people who require this targeted intervention support. Initial impact reporting is demonstrating positive impact for children and young people. Formal reporting to Scottish Government commenced, jointly with the Health and Wellbeing Officer on the CYPMHW pilot in July 2021.

Children and young people across Highland have been working with practitioners and officers to co-create relevant Personal and Social Education materials to support the teaching and learning of health and wellbeing in educational and non-formal learning contexts. Our children and young people have also been working in partnership with third-sector partners and education officers on the 'Healthy Minds' strategy, which is a two-year process of service re-design for the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people. Children and young people are proactively involved in the creation of policies, service re-design and delivering professional learning events for professionals across services.

This strategy complements the work of the whole school approach to support mental health and wellbeing which is underpinned by the following eight principles.

Eight principles of a whole school approach to support mental health and wellbeing:

1. Leadership and management that supports mental health and wellbeing across the school.
2. An ethos and environment that promotes positive and respectful relationships and values diversity.
3. Effective curriculum and learning and teaching to promote resilience and support mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing and learning.
4. Enabling children and young people's voices and participation to influence decisions.
5. Supporting staff professional learning and development in order to ensure their own and others wellbeing.
6. Identifying need and monitoring impact of interventions.
7. Working with parents, carers and the wider community.
8. Targeted support and appropriate pathways to the right support.

Discussion of potential models of supervision in education are at the early stages and it is hoped will support wellbeing in schools when implemented within a trauma informed responsive system.



The Highland Virtual Academy

Acadamaidh Bhiortail na Gàidhealtachd

The two strands of the Highland Virtual Academy offer secondary young people opportunities to access areas of the Curriculum for Excellence regardless of their geographic location or difficulties engaging with learning in school.

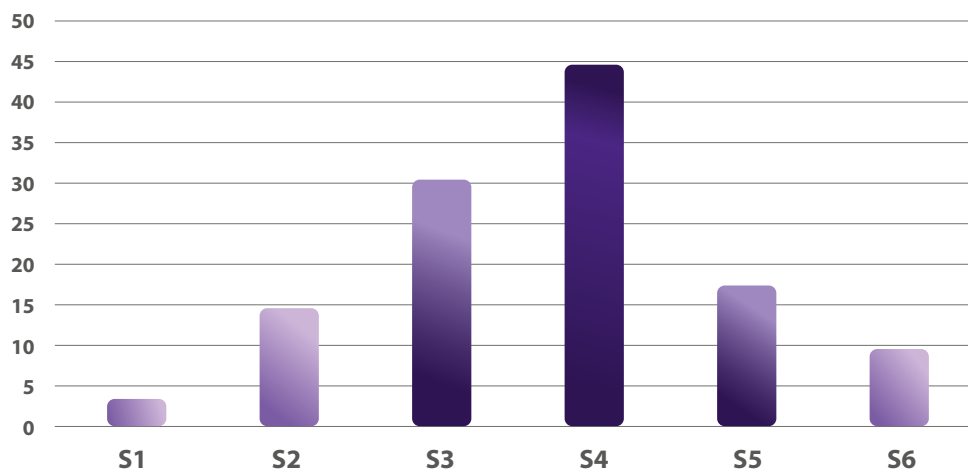
i. HVA – Supporting Interrupted Learning

In 2021/22, a full-time secondary team is dedicated to supporting non-attenders and pupils in secondary schools in Highland with interrupted learning. One of the priorities of the team will be focused on care experienced learners across Highland who attain lower than their virtual comparator.

The two main categories of support are:

- Support for secondary pupils to give them the skills and confidence to enable them to return to school
- Support for 'at-risk' secondary pupils to achieve qualifications.

HVA Interrupted Learning Support 2021/22 - Pupils by Year Group



Building on experience offering online support to children and young people affected by COVID-19, the Highland Virtual Academy will further develop the successful model that was implemented in 2020/21. In consultation with the base school, pupils and parents/carers, a support package can be agreed and implemented. In general, pupils will be started on a 1:1 support to build relationships with teachers.

Support is provided mainly through virtual meetings and work set in a Google Classroom environment. The HVA teaching team have experience in managing barriers to virtual learning and have successfully employed strategies to overcome these. In some areas, a blended approach of virtual and face-to-face learning may be possible.

A key strength of this support is that the team have the capacity to be flexible and create bespoke packages to support pupils depending on their needs, building confidence and skills in preparation for returning to school.

During the first term of session 2021/22, 117 secondary learners have benefited from the HVA Interrupted Learning support. 38% of these pupils are in S4.

ii. HVA – Senior Phase Provision

The vision of the Highland Virtual Academy is to deliver high-quality and engaging learning and teaching, delivered by real teachers in real time through active and collaborative experiences.

Using digital technology, the aim of the HVA is to provide equity of educational opportunities across schools to ensure that all learners can access a wider, enriched curriculum which enables them to progress and succeed.

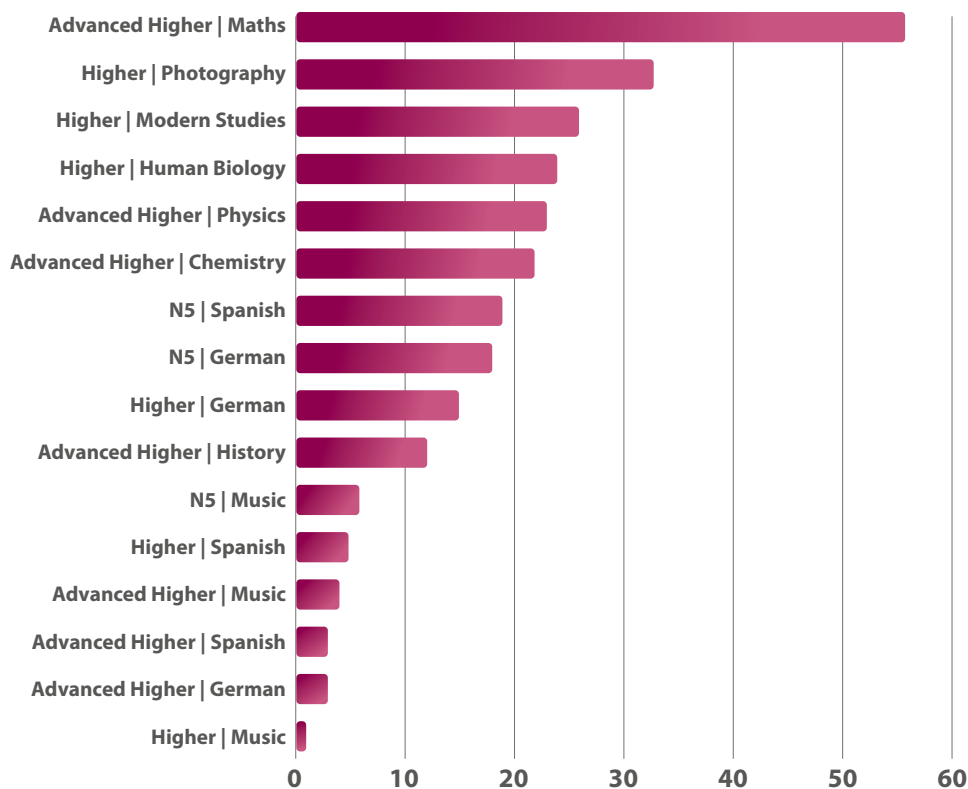
Applications for Senior Phase courses through the HVA have increased by 61% from 2020/21 to 2021/22 with 270 applications received this session.

HVA courses are timetabled throughout the week and online delivery is through Google Apps for Education using Google Classroom and Google Meet. Learning and teaching is of a high quality, with lessons having a structured beginning, middle and end with learning intentions and success criteria.

Strategies used ensure pupils are active participants who are fully engaged, resilient, motivated and interact well during activities, and feedback is used to effectively inform and support progress in learning.

The HVA will continue to provide a timetable of live, interactive online classes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people who for whatever reason find it difficult to access full-time education. Bespoke packages will be created with a focus on health and wellbeing, numeracy, literacy and career ready mentoring.

Number of Applications received in 2021/22 by Course



NIF Measures

Ceumannan Frèam-obrach Leasachaidh Nàiseanta

Theme 1: Improvement and Attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

The graphs in Section 3 show that the percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF 4 in literacy and numeracy increased from 87% in 2017 to 88% in 2019 and, for our school leavers residing in SIMD Quintile 1, the percentage increased from 72% in 2017 to 77% in 2019.

The percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF 5 literacy and numeracy increased from 63% in 2017 to 64% in 2019 and, for our school leavers residing in SIMD Quintile 1, this increased from 43% in 2017 to 46% in 2019. This data is also connected to our NIF Theme 2 and our Service Plan themes of entitlement, outlined in the following section, and equity.

Our focus on equity in our Service Plan, under the following three themes, will further improve these outcomes for our learners.

1. Review Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices for raising attainment to inform policies and practices to support the raising attainment agenda.
2. Develop and embed IDL and skills approaches to curriculum delivery, with a richness and focus on literacy, numeracy, HWB and digital skills.
3. Use consistent approaches to tracking and monitoring across the BGE and into the SP with a key focus on interventions and next steps.

Theme 2: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

As can be seen in Section 3. 'Positive Trends', the number of pupils achieving 1 or more Highers by the end of S5 increased from 58% in 2017 to 64% in 2021.

Of particular interest is the percentage of pupils residing in SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) achieving 1 or more Highers by the end of S5, which increased from 29% in 2017 to 44% in 2021.

The percentage of pupils achieving 3 or more Highers by the end of S6 increased from 61% in 2017 to 65% in 2021 and, for pupils residing in SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) this percentage increased from 18% in 2017 to 35% in 2021.

There are four main strands to the theme of 'Entitlement' that will support the closing of the attainment gap. These are detailed in the Service Plan and include:

1. Develop robust approaches to assessment and moderation to further enhance assessment of children's progress at school level and to support continued learning and achievement.
2. Review of curriculum and pedagogy approaches, including refreshed narrative and understanding of social context.
3. Further enhance the current effective practice in raising attainment into a sustainable Highland Council Raising Attainment Strategy to include authority review of ASG attainment data and next steps.

These themes and priorities will run in tandem with the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund. When considered alongside the data on deprivation and positive destinations further consideration will be given to the curriculum and skills development, which is included under NIF theme 4.

Theme 3: Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

The Educational Psychology Services training strategy has incorporated preventative and proactive support for families and professionals through consultation and direct training delivery followed up with coaching conversations to embed skills. This has included work with midwives and health visitors to support perinatal and infant mental health: Promoting Positive Relationships in schools and understanding the effects of adversity and trauma on child development; work with parents/carers on understanding the teenage brain, anxiety and neurodevelopmental differences and toddler behaviour.

More specific training is also delivered regularly on topics such as mental health awareness, Safe-Talk (Suicide Prevention), staff wellbeing, Change, Loss and Bereavement, Emotional Literacy, Restorative Practice, How to Listen Well, Trauma Informed practice, Nurture for All.

In session 2020-21 the members of the Psychological Service delivered 226 separate training sessions on a variety of topics and to a variety of attendees. There is now a significant focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing training, partly as a response to the current situation, but also in line with the Council's 5-year Mental Health Strategy.

The Service are developing a series of training modules that can be offered to staff over a period of time, to incrementally support understanding and skill in working with children and young people in a way that promotes emotional wellbeing and sustains positive mental health.

There are four key resources which have been developed within our services that have been rolled out to schools: My Rights to Wellbeing, The Wellbeing Zone, Ways to Wellbeing and Resilient Kids. Home Visiting Teachers have developed a number of short information/advice sheets for parents called EASEYS, which have been downloaded extensively from our website and used to support families.

In relation to wellbeing, there are two significant projects being led by Psychological Services and the Improvement project Coordinator, working with a range of pupils across Highland, to identify their definitions of wellbeing and create a self-evaluation tool for pupils and staff to use to identify progress in meeting the needs of children and young people within a whole school approach.

All of these activities are supported by a detailed improvement plan, with an associated measurement plan that is overseen by a member of the team, so that the data and feedback can help us track the progress and impact over time. This planning work is being taken forward in partnership with a Scottish Government Improvement Advisor, who is providing advice and guidance on some of our more complex measures.

Inclusion and Promoting Positive Relationships

One key role of the Safeguarding in Education team and Educational Psychology Services is to work with schools on the various aspects of wellbeing. Inclusion and exclusions are interrelated with pupil wellbeing.

The Scottish Government collects and publishes statistics on permanent and temporary exclusions biennially. This enables key trends to be identified and for the Local Authority and schools to work in partnership to improve the life chances for those at risk of exclusion.

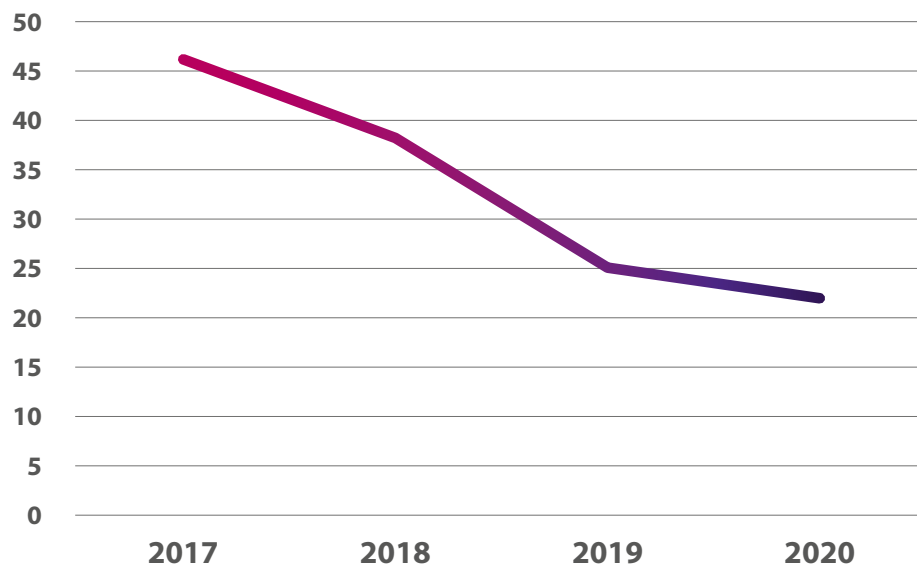
The current exclusion trend data illustrates some improvements over time, and also areas for further consideration, using the exemplar from the Improving Life Chances Implementation Group, improved attendance and Children Missing from Education procedures and improved use of:

'Included, engaged, and involved part 2: A positive approach to preventing and managing school exclusions':

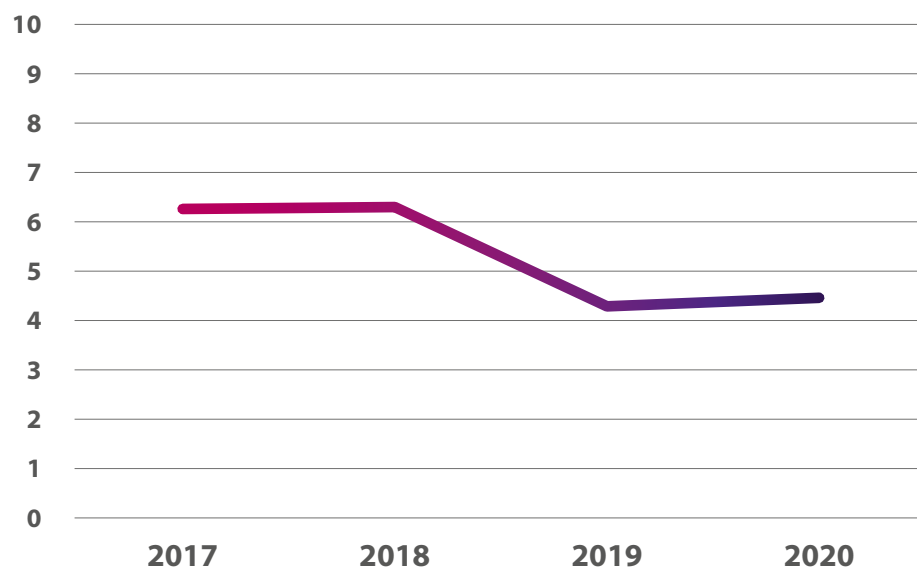
www.bit.ly/IncludedEngagedAndInvolved-Part2

Exclusion Trend Data

Secondary: Exclusions per 1000 pupils



Primary: Exclusions per 1000 pupils



Highland Lifestyle Survey 2021

3,148 children and young people from schools in Highland responded to the HL Survey. 37% P7, 34% S2 and 29% S4. 26% of survey respondents live in highly populated areas and 74% reside in rural, remote or less populated areas, and 98% are living with family members.

10% of respondents identify themselves as being a Young Carer, and 34% of these young people care for more than one person. This figure is higher than the numbers reported on SEEMIS and indicate that schools are not always aware of the young carers enrolled with them.

In a range of questions relating to emotional health and wellbeing, comparisons against the previous lifestyle survey in 2019 were favourable:

- 56% of pupils reported feeling 'mostly happy' or 'always happy' as opposed to 60% in 2019, which is a slight decline in happiness over a very difficult year for most pupils.
- 32% reported that they **never** felt lonely as opposed to 35% in 2019.
- 69% reported that they had **not been** bullied in the 6 months prior to completing the survey, which is slightly higher than the reported figure of 63% in 2019.
- 23% of pupils reported that it was easy to talk to a friend about their worries, which is significantly lower than the previous figure of 45%. It is not clear if this question was interpreted in a literal sense, as most pupils may have found the COVID-19 restrictions made it more difficult just to talk with friends in general.
- A similar number of pupils reported feeling happy with the way they looked – 51% in 2019 and 50% in 2021, however, this still indicates that half of the pupils responding to the survey were not happy with the way they looked.
- When asked about lessons on wellbeing and children's rights, 79% of pupils said they had received lessons this year on wellbeing and 58% said they had received lessons on children's rights. This compares favourably with the data from the 2019 survey, where 71% received lessons on wellbeing and 55% received lessons on children's rights.

Surveys on Returning to School in September 2020

Surveys were undertaken with pupils from P1-P6 and from P7-S6 in September 2020, which provided an opportunity to check how the return to school had progressed for our pupils. The surveys asked questions about the learning experience during lockdown, the return to school after the summer and issues around mental health and wellbeing.

This information was able to provide feedback to school staff on the impact of the support provided to pupils over recent months and also some of the key messages for improving supports and services should the Council once again be required to provide online learning for pupils across Highland.

Pupils were asked initially about the provision of school work and around 80% of pupils reported that for all or most of the time during school closure, work was provided for them.

Around 70-80% also reported that they felt they had improved in terms of the work they were completing, giving an indication that at least for 'some of the time' pupils felt they were learning and making progress in their education (fig 30). However, between 18% and 32% of pupils didn't know if progress had been made and this feeling was more prevalent in the older year groups.

For the most part, our primary aged pupils enjoyed learning from home online. Again, between 70% and 80% of pupils across all primary age groups enjoyed working from home at least some of the time. This also improved digital skills, with pupils in the various age groups reporting that this way of working really improved their digital/computing skills either 'a lot' or 'some' (see below).

93% of pupils responding to the survey for older pupils reported that they received 'High Quality Learning Experiences' during lockdown, with 61% reporting this was their experience 'most' or 'all' of the time.

Out of 4063 responses, 80% felt that the work set was 'About Right'. A small number (5%) felt the work was 'too easy' and a further 15% felt the work was 'too hard'.

Given how important it is for learning to be supported by peers, it was heartening to see that 40% of pupils who responded, reported that they were able to have opportunities to work with other pupils on-line at least some of the time and for 32% of pupils, this was all or most of the time.

In a parent survey undertaken at the same time, 48% of parents reported that their child was coping 'better' or 'much better' with everyday life now that school was open again. 47% of parents reported that their children were coping pretty much 'the same', but 5% of parents reported that their children were now coping 'worse' or 'much worse' that they were during lockdown. This equates to the small number of children who found working from home very positive. With the removal of the social stress of others and the noise and bustle of a school environment, they were able to manage their work and learning on-line very well. Our schools and senior management teams were aware of these pupils and were supporting next steps for them through the Highland Practice Model and the child's planning process, as would be appropriate.

% of pupils reporting that their IT skills have improved

P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
33%	65%	70%	80%	74%	82%

Theme 4: Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

For this theme we want to ensure that our young people are prepared for the world of work, through ensuring that we deliver a curriculum that provides the skills and attributes needed in a changing world. This can be evidenced by our school leavers being well-supported into a positive and sustained destination.

The Highland Council's Developing Young Workforce and Ambitious Highlands team are Creating Positive Pathways strategy which in is partnership with SDS; DYW regional groups; colleges, CLD employability team, corporate parenting board and training providers, will increase the number of young people leaving school into a positive and sustained destination by:

- Providing and supporting the entitlements of Career Education and Work Placement standards for all our Children and Young People.
- Enhancing and informing the Learner Journey through pathways planning and effective use of data.
- Supporting our schools curriculum to be flexible, widening access and providing equity of opportunity for all.
- Increasing work related learning opportunities to meet the aspirational and economic demand.
- Supporting the wider outcomes of the Young Person's Guarantee through joined up approaches with partners.
- Promoting equity of provision through additional, targeted support of our most vulnerable groups.
- Embedding work related learning and skills into our core curriculum and support profiling approaches and tracking of skills.
- Empowering all stakeholders to lead and develop DYW within their own context.

- Ambitious Highland is developing a Highland wide offer delivered through the Highland Virtual Academy for sector work related learning.
- Through Ambitious Highland, a bespoke Highland mentoring programme is being developed linking to positive destinations.

Highland Destination Data

The key aims of the DYW Strategy are working in partnership with Skills Development Scotland, DYW regional groups, colleges, training providers, CLD employability team, corporate parenting board and training providers.

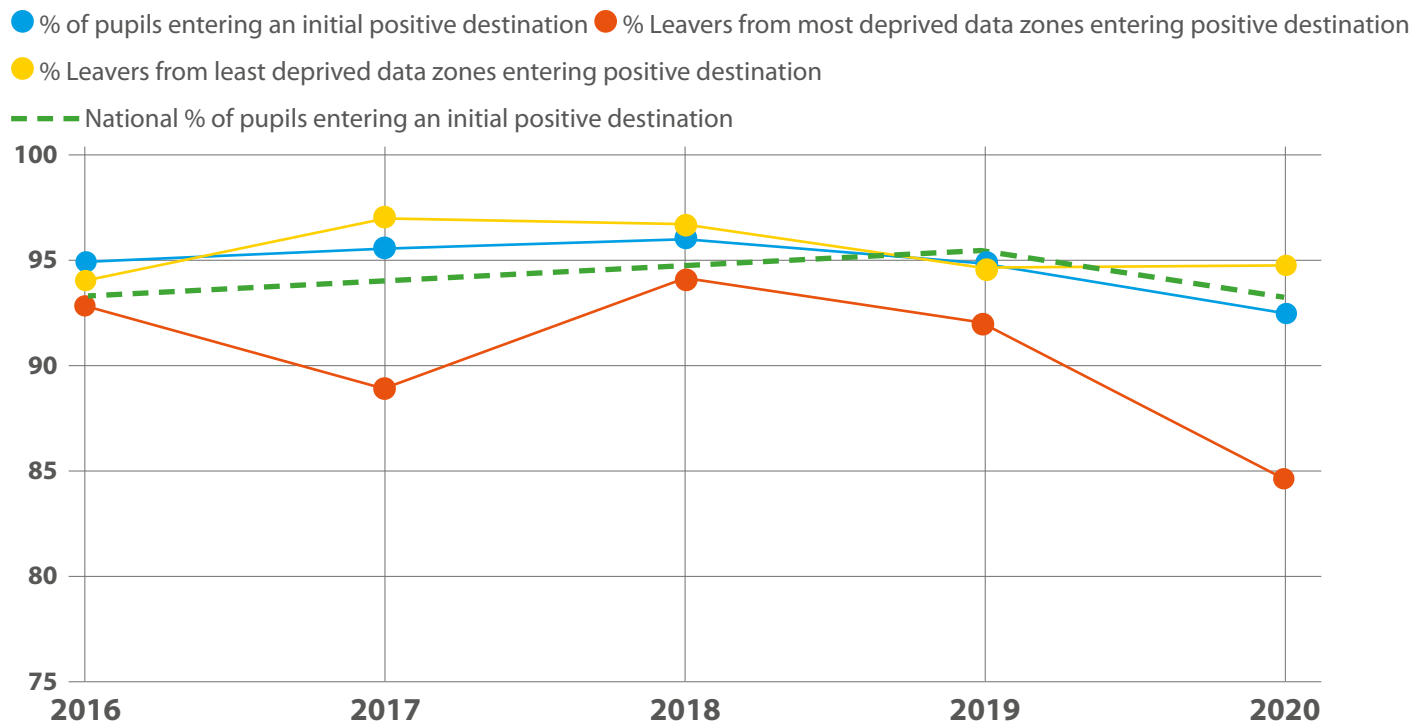
We will increase the number of young people leaving school into a positive and sustained destination by:

- Providing and supporting the entitlements of Career Education and work placements for all our Young People.
- Enhancing and informing the Learner Journey through pathways planning and effective use of data.
- Supporting our schools curriculum to be flexible, widening access and providing equity of opportunity for all.
- Increasing work related learning opportunities to meet the aspirational and economic demand.
- Supporting the wider outcomes of the Young Person's Guarantee through joined up approaches with partners.
- Promoting equity of provision through additional, targeted support of our most vulnerable groups.
- Embedding work related learning and skills into our core curriculum and support profiling approaches and tracking of skills.
- Empowering all stakeholders to lead and develop DYW within their own context.

As can be seen from the data, this is a priority area for Highland Council schools and is reflected in the Service Plan and the identified strategy under NIF Theme 4: Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

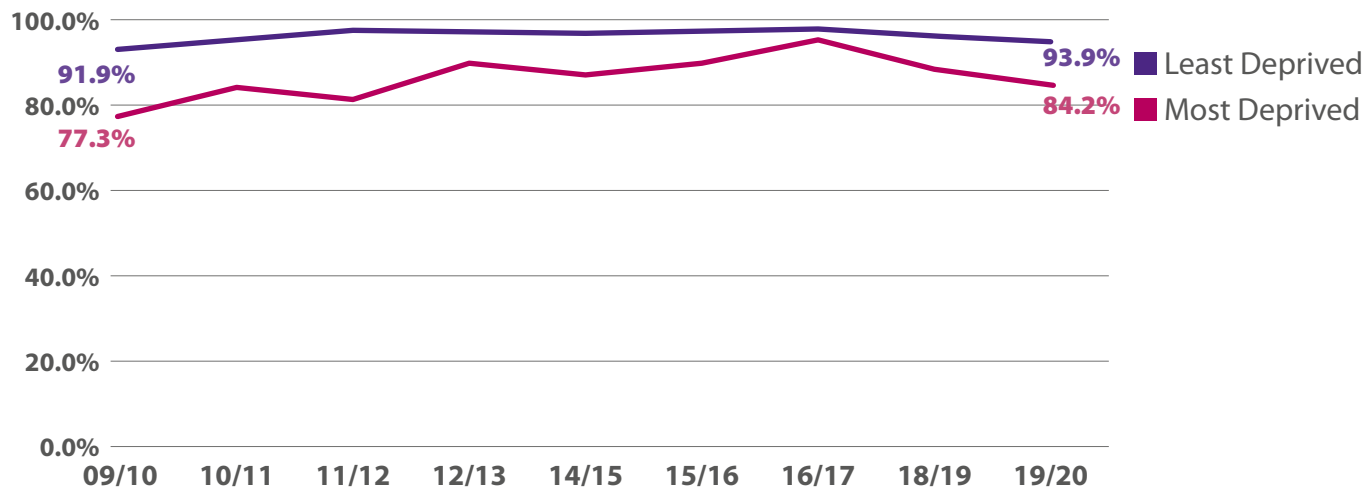
In particular, the % of leavers from our most deprived data zones entering a positive destination requires attention.

Highland trend - Destination Data



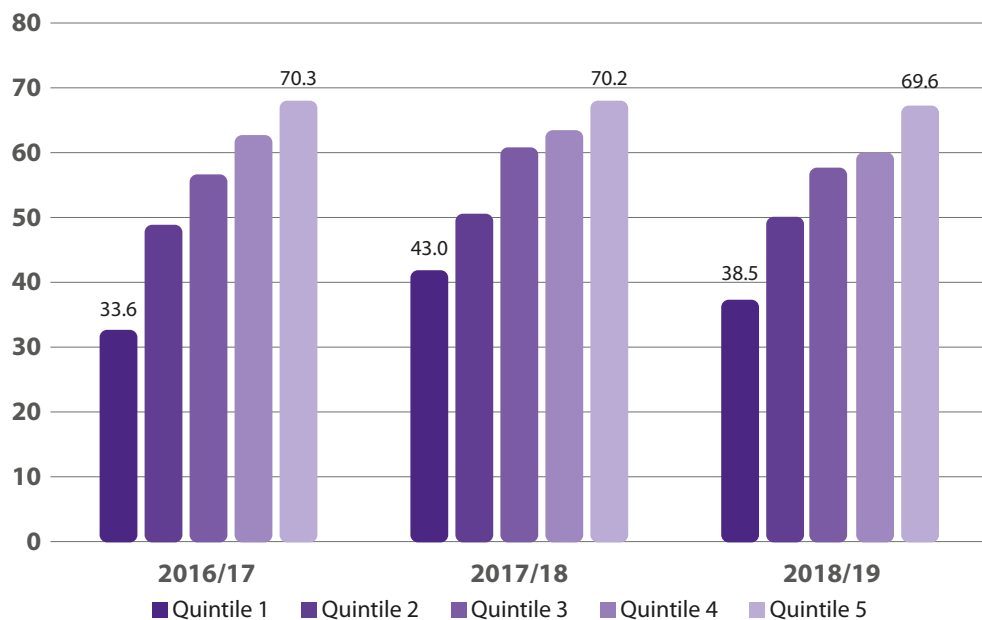
Highland trend - Destination Data

Percentage of leavers in a positive follow up destination



Primary CfE P1, P4, P7 Literacy

Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 children (combined): Literacy by SIMD Quintile

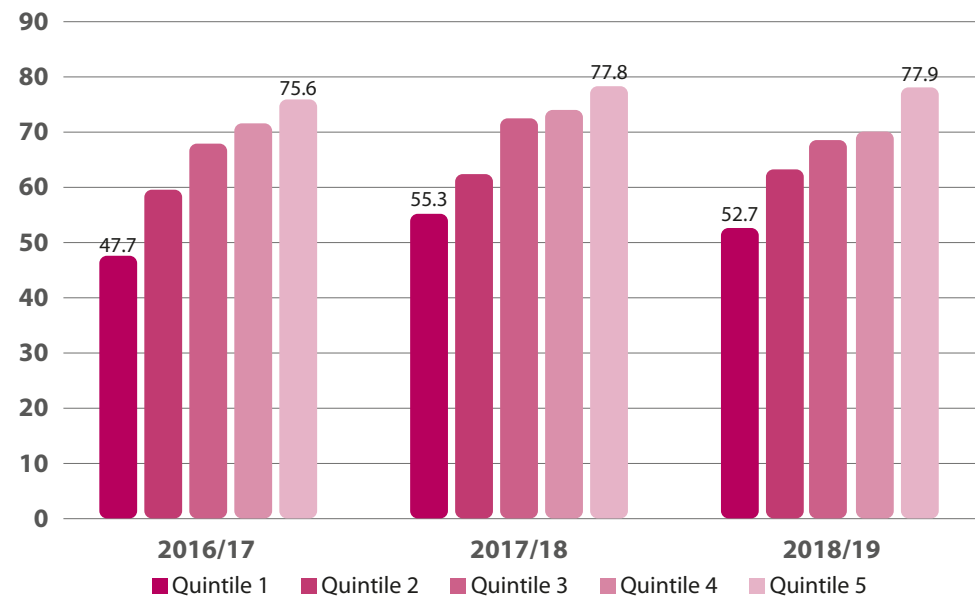


Highland	% achievement for combined P1, P4 and P7 literacy		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
All pupils	58.07	60.49	57.89
Quintile 5	70.31	70.17	69.62
Quintile 4	64.57	65.32	61.96
Quintile 3	58.55	62.66	59.20
Quintile 2	50.44	52.10	51.77
Quintile 1	33.64	43.04	38.50
GAP Q1 v Q5	36.68	27.13	31.12

Information source: ACEL collection

Primary CfE P1, P4, P7 Numeracy

Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 children (combined): Numeracy by SIMD Quintile

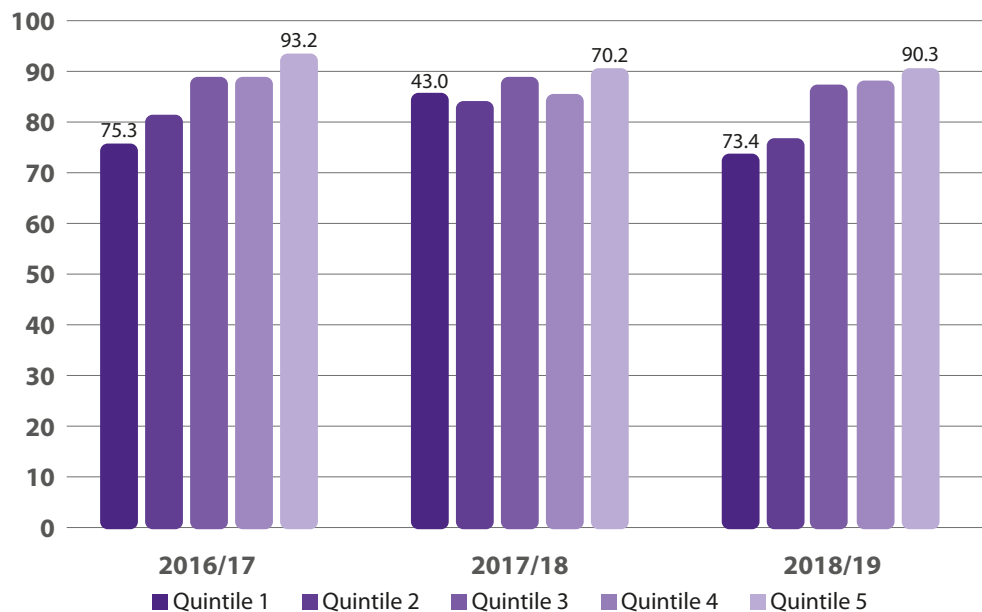


Highland	% achievement for combined P1, P4 and P7 numeracy		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
All pupils	66.48	69.85	67.39
Quintile 5	75.56	77.79	77.91
Quintile 4	71.66	73.80	69.70
Quintile 3	67.47	72.35	68.40
Quintile 2	59.72	62.32	63.20
Quintile 1	47.68	55.29	52.72
GAP Q1 v Q5	27.88	22.50	25.18

Information source: ACEL collection

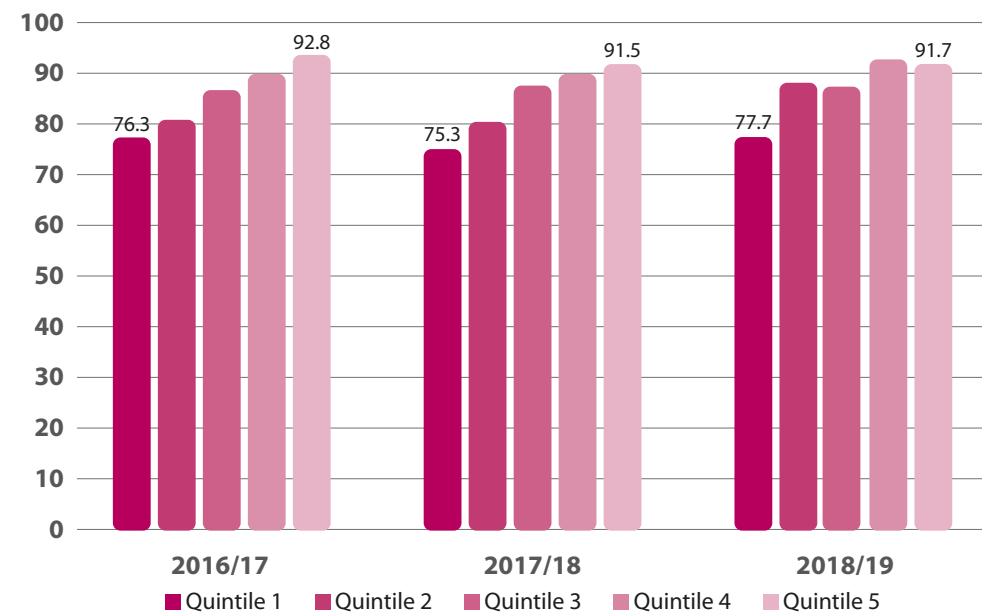
Secondary CfE Literacy

Percentage of S3 pupils achieving: Literacy by SIMD Quintile



Secondary CfE Numeracy

Percentage of S3 pupils achieving: Numeracy by SIMD Quintile



Highland	% achievement for combined P1, P4 and P7 literacy		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
All pupils	86.44	86.19	84.69
Quintile 5	93.23	90.17	90.29
Quintile 4	88.56	85.13	87.89
Quintile 3	88.21	88.09	87.26
Quintile 2	80.95	83.44	76.44
Quintile 1	75.26	85.56	73.37
GAP Q1 v Q5	17.97	4.62	16.92

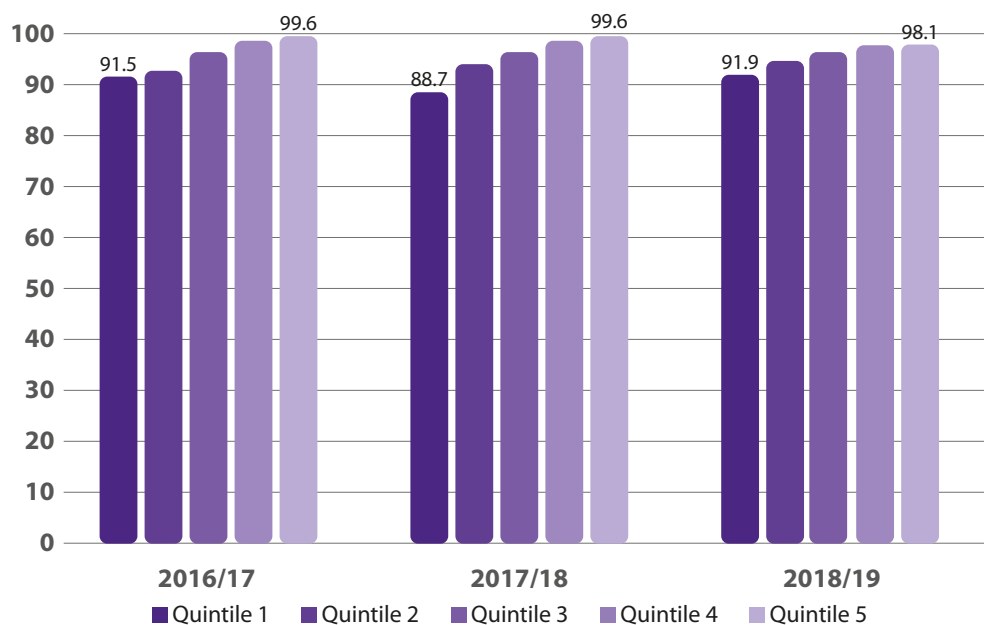
Information source: ACEL collection

Highland	% achievement for combined P1, P4 and P7 numeracy		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
All pupils	85.86	86.59	88.99
Quintile 5	92.83	91.45	91.70
Quintile 4	89.23	90.17	92.99
Quintile 3	85.83	87.94	87.52
Quintile 2	80.36	80.27	87.95
Quintile 1	76.29	75.27	77.72
GAP Q1 v Q5	16.54	16.18	13.98

Information source: ACEL collection

SCQF Level 4

% of School Leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF Level 4 or better



Highland	% of school leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF level 4 or better		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
All pupils	96.43	96.27	96.33
Quintile 1	91.46	88.65	91.91
Quintile 2	92.62	94.09	94.10
Quintile 3	96.58	96.11	96.34
Quintile 4	98.17	98.32	97.81
Quintile 5	99.64	99.59	98.08
GAP Q1 v Q5	8.18	10.94	6.17

Information source: Insight website

SCQF Level 5

% of School Leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF Level 5 or better

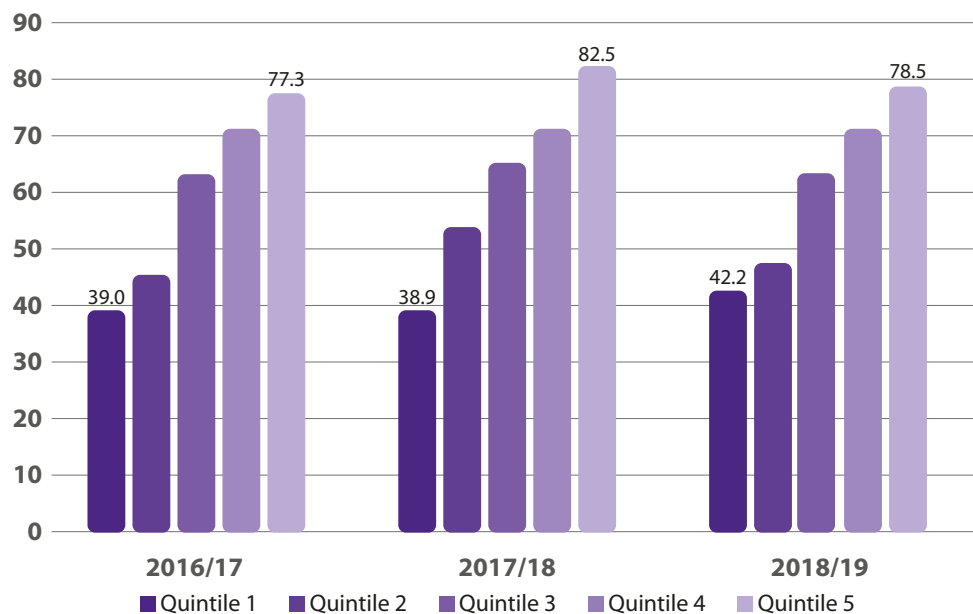


Highland	% of school leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF level 5 or better		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
All pupils	87.72	88.57	87.99
Quintile 1	72.56	73.51	72.83
Quintile 2	77.62	82.93	81.50
Quintile 3	89.18	88.32	89.90
Quintile 4	92.55	93.05	90.97
Quintile 5	93.88	95.93	93.46
GAP Q1 v Q5	21.32	22.42	20.63

Information source: Insight website

SCQF Level 6

% of School Leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF Level 6 or better



Highland	% of school leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF level 6 or better		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
All pupils	62.63	64.65	63.56
Quintile 1	39.02	38.92	42.20
Quintile 2	45.24	53.61	47.45
Quintile 3	62.88	64.95	63.40
Quintile 4	71.06	70.86	71.23
Quintile 5	77.34	82.52	78.46
GAP Q1 v Q5	38.32	43.60	36.26

Information source: Insight website

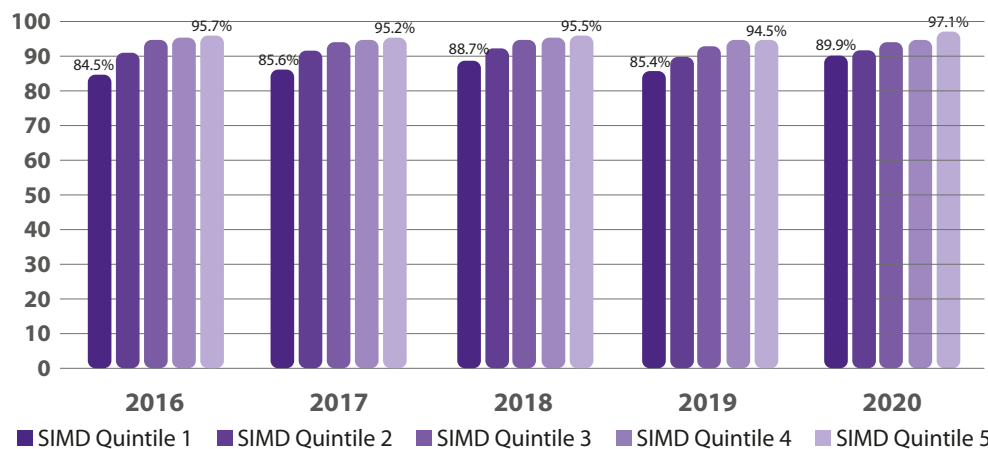


Portree High School by Willie Urquhart

Increasing post-school participation

Please note 10% of 16–19-year-olds in Highland reside in SIMD Quintile 1 while 7% reside in SIMD Quintile 5.

Annual Participation Measure



The Annual Participation Measure (APM) has been adopted in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework as the measure of young people's participation. This has replaced the school leaver destination follow-up as the source of the national indicator, "Percentage of young adults (16–19-year-olds) participating in education, training or employment".

For 2020 in Highland the percentages of 16–19-year-olds participating in education, training or employment were as follows per SIMD quintile:

- Quintile 1 = 89.9%
- Quintile 2 = 91.3%
- Quintile 3 = 94.0%
- Quintile 4 = 94.7%
- Quintile 5 = 97.1%

Highland	% Participating in education, training, or employment 16-19yr olds				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All Pupils	93.5%	93.0%	93.8%	92.2%	93.6%
Quintile 1	84.5%	85.6%	88.7%	85.4%	89.9%
Quintile 2	90.6%	91.0%	91.8%	89.4%	91.3%
Quintile 3	94.6%	93.6%	94.2%	92.4%	94.0%
Quintile 4	95.3%	94.5%	95.1%	94.2%	94.7%
Quintile 5	95.7%	95.2%	95.5%	94.5%	97.1%
Gap Q1 v Q5	11.2%	9.6%	6.9%	9.1%	7.2%

Further Information

Tuilleadh Fiosrachaidh

Further information about the services the Council provides, and our performance, is available at the links below:

The Education and Learning Directorate Service Plan 2017-2022 sets out our service priorities and Key Performance Indicators including evaluation of successes and areas for improvement:

www.bit.ly/Education-Service-Plan

The Highland Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022 outlines our vision for an ambitious, sustainable and connected Highland. The plan includes strategic, statutory and operational improvement priorities:

www.bit.ly/HighlandCouncilCorporatePlan

The Ambitious Highland Health and Prosperity Strategy 2021/22 addresses recovery, improvement and transformation and sets out the key drivers for change and proposals for investment:

www.bit.ly/AmbitiousHighland

The Programme of the Highland Council: Local Voices | Highland Choices (2017-2022) is a review of the whole Council programme and our priorities:

www.bit.ly/HighlandCouncilProgramme



Appendix 1: Our focus for improvement in 2021/22

Eàrr-ràdh 1: Ar fòcas airson leasachadh ann an 2021/22

Entitlement

We will raise attainment and achievement for all, especially for those children from disadvantaged circumstances including rural deprivation.

1. Develop robust approaches to assessment and moderation to further enhance assessment of children's progress at school level and to support continued learning and achievement.
2. Review of curriculum and pedagogy approaches, including refreshed narrative and understanding of social context.
3. Further enhance the current effective practice in raising attainment into a sustainable Highland Council Raising Attainment Strategy to include authority review of ASG attainment data and next steps.

Our Goals	Our Actions	Our Measure of Success
Develop robust approaches to assessment and moderation to further enhance assessment of children's progress at school level and to support continued learning and achievement.	Training on all aspects of the moderation cycle for early years, class teachers, ASNTs, support staff, middle leaders, senior leaders and Local Authority officers.	Collaborative group to be established. Further develop assessment of children's progress and achievements (Moderation; ACEL; SNSA; learner participation).
Continue the review of curriculum and pedagogy approaches, including refreshed narrative and understanding of social context.	Full review of BGE and Senior Phase curriculum rationale and design to include Partnership approach.	Empower colleagues to deliver a rich set of learner experiences and pathways, which meet and address the interests and aspirations of young people leading to positive and sustainable destinations (with a specific focus on digital, employability skills, and wider achievement).
Further enhance the current effective practice in raising attainment into a sustainable Highland Council Raising Attainment Strategy to include authority review of ASG attainment data and next steps.	Establish a working group with a focus on The Highland Council (THC) raising attainment strategy. Establish regular cycle of attainment meetings with all HTs in line with education committee reporting cycles.	Measurement of attainment against national and local targets. Implement strategies to raise attainment and close the equity gap (SAC; PEF; Raising Attainment Champions).

Equity

We will ensure the highest quality of learning and teaching for each and every learner.

1. Review Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices for raising attainment to inform policies and practices to support the raising attainment agenda. Working group to be established.
2. Develop and embed IDL and skills approaches to curriculum delivery, with a richness and focus on literacy, numeracy, HWB and digital skills.
3. Use consistent approaches to tracking and monitoring across the BGE and into the SP with a key focus on interventions and next steps.

Our Goals	Our Actions	Our Measure of Success
Review Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices for raising attainment to inform policies and practices to support the raising attainment agenda.	Input from Education Scotland around LTA. Establish a working group to review THC Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy.	HMI inspection gradings re 2.3. Establish the priorities on how our children and young people learn based on current research.
Develop and embed IDL and skills approaches to curriculum delivery, with a richness and focus on literacy, numeracy HWB and digital skills.	Deliver creative pedagogies which are engaging, effective and appropriate for 21st Century learning (early level pedagogy; literacy; numeracy; HWB and digital skills). All practitioners have the skills, ability and agility to use digital technology in their teaching.	Positive and sustained destinations. All learners have the skills and opportunity to work with others using digital technology.
Use consistent approaches to tracking and monitoring across the BGE and into the SP with a key focus on interventions and next steps.	Develop increasingly skilled use of rich data. (Monitoring & tracking, BGE Benchmarking Tool, School & Performance profiles; Data Coaches).	Increase data literacy of our practitioners. Identify next steps from our tracking and monitoring data.
Ensure participation and engagement of children and young people and the decisions that are made that directly affect them are prioritised.	Proactive consideration of current policy and practices linked to UNCRC.	Embedding of a children's rights culture.

Relationships

We will maximise health and wellbeing for all children and young people to give them the best possible start in life.

1. Identification of the key priorities to support The Highland Council five-year mental health and wellbeing strategic plan.
2. Prioritise the nine-point ASL review to support and improve outcomes for ASL and inclusion across The Highland Council and in line with the national ASL review.
3. Safeguarding procedures have been reviewed and updated in line with national guidance.

Our Goals	Our Actions	Our Measure of Success
Identification of the key priorities to support THC five year mental health and wellbeing strategic plan.	<p>Review implementation of school counselling.</p> <p>Consultation process with partners, children and young people and parent/carers on community MH supports and services.</p> <p>Implement identified community MH supports and services at tiers 1 and 2.</p>	Children and young people will begin to benefit from an improved continuum of supports for mental health and wellbeing. These supports will be available in schools and nurseries and new approaches will be developing through a service strategic commissioning approach.
Prioritise the nine point ASL review to support and improve outcomes for ASL and inclusion across THC and in line with the national ASL review.	<p>Review the ASL transformation project in Highland around the following key workstream themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion, Health & Wellbeing - Highland Practice Model • Improving Outcomes (attainment Gap) • Curriculum • Leadership & Empowerment; and Resources 	<p>Refreshed training and delivery of The Highland Practice Model across services for children; all new and acting headteachers have completed training.</p> <p>Systematic framework is in place to analyse attainment with attendance and exclusion.</p> <p>Consistent quality of curricular provision for complex learners across Highland.</p> <p>ASG resource allocation model is fully implemented.</p>
Safeguarding procedures have been reviewed and updated in line with national guidance.	School leaders will ensure their staff are aware of the risks of using digital technology and the strategies they can use to mitigate those risks.	Learners have had opportunities to experience the relevant cyber resilience and internet safety outcomes in line with the experiences and outcomes at their level.

Empowerment and Leadership

We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system for now and the future.

1. Development of Leadership Support Plan, based on the six empowerment themes and thematic elements, which will encompass the whole education service. This will also provide the means by which progress can be monitored.
2. Review self-evaluation practices across the service, including new school review methodology.
3. Review of PRD and PU process for HTs to reflect GTCS national standards.

Our Goals	Our Actions	Our Measure of Success
<p>Development of Leadership Support Plan, based on the six Empowerment themes and thematic elements, which will encompass the whole education service. This will also provide the means by which progress can be monitored.</p>	<p>Design and delivery of Evolving Systems Thinking course to successive cohorts, in collaboration with Education Scotland.</p> <p>Continue with updated training to raise awareness of the national empowerment agenda.</p> <p>Development of THC Leadership Framework, covering leadership at all levels.</p> <p>Promote and support engagement with Education Scotland professional learning and leadership programmes by THC staff.</p>	<p>By end of session 2021/22 the target is for 100 HTs to have participated in EST programme through several cohorts.</p> <p>Delivery of Empowerment training to HTs, Middle Leaders, Classroom teachers, HPCP and package for schools to use with children and young people.</p> <p>Leadership Framework in place.</p> <p>Increased participation in Education Scotland programmes (target increase 50% across all courses when compared to 2020/21 numbers). Completion rates target of 90%+.</p>
<p>Review self-evaluation practices across the service, including new school review methodology.</p>	<p>Design and delivery of training to support officer engagement with schools.</p> <p>Develop Validated Self-Evaluation process to replace previous Quality Improvement Visit model.</p>	<p>Training delivered to all relevant officers and HTs across THC Areas.</p> <p>VSE process in place and delivering data allowing measurement of progress in terms of improved provision and outcomes.</p>
<p>Review of PRD and PU process for HTs to reflect GTCS national standards.</p>	<p>Continued development of PRD process, building a sustainable model based on coaching approach in line with revised GTCS standards (live from August 2021).</p>	<p>Surveying indicates increased satisfaction amongst staff with the PRD process. 80%+ indicating that they feel the PRD process effectively supports their professional development.</p>



