

Agenda Item	5.
Report No	EDU/9/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Education Committee

Date: 15 September 2022

Report Title: Highland Attainment Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update to members on the work underway across Education and Learning Service to improve outcomes for all, through raising attainment and achievement, and reducing the poverty-related attainment gap. It also seeks approval of the range of actions underway as part of the Raising Attainment Strategy.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. Note the contents of this initial attainment report.
- ii. Note the key successes, areas of progress and action being taken by schools and the Education Service to improve pupil attainment during the current school session 2021-22 and planned for session 2022-23.
- iii. Approve the actions and key areas of focus as part of the development of a Raising Attainment Strategy focused on improving outcomes for all.
- iv. Agree that a further attainment paper with more detailed analysis of SQA attainment data following publication of national attainment information will be brought to the November committee meeting, and
- v. Agree that analysis of the Broad General attainment will be brought to the February committee following release of the national data in December 2022.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource:** There are no additional resource implications to The Highland Council. The work outlined is planned and budgeted for.

3.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications contained within the contents of this report.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** Improved opportunities for young people to be involved in local decision making.

- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever:** There are no climate change issues arising from this report.
- 3.5 **Risk:** Reputational risk should attainment in Highland's schools not continue to improve.
- 3.6 **Gaelic:** The delivery of better outcomes will build on the recent SQA success of our young people undertaking GME and GLE course work and courses.

4. Overview of Attainment

4.1 P1/4/7 Literacy & Numeracy Attainment

These data are **estimates** based on returns from schools in June 2022. Data from all schools will be submitted at the end of August and a process of validation, quality assurance and adjustment will take during the analysis of the national data. That may result in these data changing and in previous years, that has resulted in variation of up to 2% from our June estimates. We have made a number of assumptions when calculating percentages, based on previous experience. The formulas used to calculate percentages may not be identical to those used by the Scottish Government and may add to the variation between our estimates and the final, published results.

Schools submit Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels for each of their P1, P4 and P7 children. Levels are assessed by the class teacher, taking into account a range of evidence such as class work, in-class assessments and standardised national tests. Class teacher assessments are quality assured by the headteacher, before being submitted to the local authority. A process of quality assurance takes place at local authority level, before ACEL (Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels) data is submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of August.

The tables below show ACEL estimates from June 2022 and show a significant improvement in performance, compared with 2021 results. Our aim is to achieve in line with the national average in 2023 and to exceed it in 2024.

Measure	P1 (%)		
	HC 2021	HC 2022	change
Reading	61	73	+12
Writing	57	69	+12
L&T	73	81	+8
Literacy	52	64	+12
Numeracy	67	77	+10

Measure	P4 (%)		
	HC 2021	HC 2022	change
Reading	60	68	+8
Writing	51	57	+6
L&T	71	78	+7
Literacy	47	54	+7
Numeracy	57	63	+6

Measure	P7 (%)		
	HC 2021	HC 2022	change
Reading	63	74	+11
Writing	53	63	+10
L&T	69	79	+10
Literacy	48	59	+11
Numeracy	56	67	+11

Measure	P1, P4, P7 Combined (%)		
	HC 2021	HC 2022	change
Reading	61	72	+11
Writing	53	63	+10
L&T	71	79	+8
Literacy	49	59	+10
Numeracy	60	68	+8

4.2

Initial Analysis of Attainment in Senior Phase National Awards 2022

The SQA Results for 2022 is the first year that formal exams have taken place since 2019 but this year does not mark a return to normal. Learners continued to face disruption from COVID-19, on the back of the two previous years of disruption from the pandemic. The significantly different circumstances and awarding processes of 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 do not allow for meaningful comparison or for conclusions to be drawn on changes in education performance. However, comparison of the performance of Highland learners to national figures for 2022 indicate attainment broadly in line with national, with our Higher A-C attainment rate being above national.

The headline figures for 2022 National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in Highland in:

National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
12,899 entries	7,107 entries	920 entries
A-C attainment rate 79.3%	A-C attainment rate 79.5%	A-C attainment rate 80.5%
A attainment rate 37.6%	A attainment rate 33.8%	A attainment rate 32.6%

The National headline figures for 2022 National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses are:

National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
310,170 entries	188,220 entries	28,220 entries
A-C attainment rate 80.8%	A-C attainment rate 78.9%	A-C attainment rate 81.3%
A attainment rate 40.3%	A attainment rate 34.8%	A attainment rate 33.7%

Of particular note is the improvements in National 5 Mathematics where there was an increase of 6.8% percent compared to 2019, from 35.9% passes A-C at Nat 5 to 42.7% passes A-C at Nat 5 in 2022. For the last two year, Highland secondary schools have focused on increasing the number of young people being presented for a National 5 course award in either Mathematics or Applications of Mathematics. Further work has taken place in supporting professional learning in Mathematics.

Overall, results in 2022 are between the 2019 results, when exams last took place, and 2021, when alternative assessment was used. This is in line with the National examination outcomes.

Highland

Year	National 5 A-C attainment	Higher A-C attainment	Advanced Higher A-C attainment
2019	78.1%	74.9%	78.6%
2022	79.3%	79.5%	80.5%
2021	82.5%	83.8%	84.3%

National

Year	National 5 A-C attainment	Higher A-C attainment	Advanced Higher attainment
2019	78.2%	74.8%	79.4%
2022	80.8%	78.9%	81.3%
2021	85.8%	87.3%	90.2%

(*Note: The alternative awarding arrangements in place in 2021 and the significantly different circumstances in which exams took place in 2019 mean that comparisons of attainment between years should be treated with significant caution and do not allow for any conclusions to be drawn on changes in education performance.)

The data reported here relates to full courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. In addition to these awards, Highland secondary schools offer a wide range of other awards and certificates, including National Progression Awards, National Certificates, Skills for Work and SQA Awards. Further analysis of the National awards and the wider achievement course will be published in September and a full more in depth report of the senior phase performance data will be brought to committee in November.

4.3 Literacy Developments 2022/23

We are committed to upskilling the workforce and improving literacy outcomes and attainment by high quality, Career-long, Professional Learning.

The Authority training provided below will meet identified literacy outcomes.

- Emerging Literacy - ensuring a developmentally appropriate Literacy curriculum prioritising secure foundational reading and writing skills.
- Raising attainment in literacy through a structured approach to teaching reading comprehension skills.

- Wraparound Spelling and Morpharound Spelling - a systematic spelling structure which extends phonological awareness into phonics, morphological awareness, writing and grammar.
- Training and school-based support in the teaching of writing, from oracy to written expression based on the Talk for Writing Principles and Explicitly Teaching Writing Stephen Graham - external providers.
- High quality interventions using the 3 Wave Model of Intervention and Challenge to address learning gaps - Literacy for All in a World of Neurodiversity training.
- Toolbox of strategies to support teachers and pupils to make well-paced progress towards accurate reporting of the achievement of a level.
- The Highland Literacy Roadmap in Sharepoint is a suite of Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) resources that can be used by individuals, groups of practitioners or whole staff groups. Each PowerPoint includes facilitator's notes to support delivery, resources to use during collegiate sessions, follow-up links and video recordings. This resource has been created to support professional learning.

Collaborative Leads will focus on the attainment of literacy in their designated schools, looking closely at the literacy curriculum and where attainment is low signpost Head Teachers to training and support from the Literacy Development Officer.

Impact will be measured by:

- Tracking levels of training engagement in schools with their literacy attainment.
- Setting Stretch Aims - % increase in overall progress in achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels in literacy combined.

4.4 **Numeracy Developments 2022/23**

Highland Council is running a numeracy project with 5 Associated School Groups, Lochaber High School, Golspie High School, Thurso High School, Dingwall Academy and Inverness Royal Academy to develop strategies for improving numeracy attainment at Curriculum for Excellence 2nd level. This work is in conjunction with Education Scotland.

The aims of the project are:

- Increase confidence in mathematical understanding/skills of staff
- Increase confidence in supporting learners who are struggling to achieve at appropriate level
- Increase proportion of learners ready for third level at S1
- Increase confidence in teaching for understanding
- Increase understanding of the importance of retrieval
- Create and share a common plan for second level
- Create a professional learning community to share practice and support, and to share appropriate research
- Create a programme of bespoke professional learning, reflection and discussion

Over the coming sessions, 6 collaborative twilight sessions throughout the year for the P6, P7 and S1 staff involved to share learning from the project more widely with all teachers. At the end of the session there will be a sharing practice event to build confidence and expertise in chosen areas of Numeracy and showcase good practice.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Raising Attainment One Year Action Plan

Highland Council is committed to improving attainment for all children and young people in line with the National Improvement Framework and through the effective delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. Building on the improvements outlined, one year Raising Attainment Action Plan for 2022-23 (Appendix 1) has been developed. This plan details the range of interventions planned which are designed to raise attainment and close the gaps for all learners.

5.2 Collaborative Lead Officer Roles

The Collaborative Lead Officer team will continue to work with school leadership teams on their improvement priorities and will monitor the school's progress through self-evaluation processes.

5.3 Attainment meetings

Attainment meetings with Head Teachers of all Highland secondary schools will take place to review each school's attainment for session 2021/22, once the national comparative Insight data has been published. These attainment meetings will explore historic attainment patterns in each school and attainment projections for 22/23.

Collaborative Lead Officers will meet with their primary school headteachers to discuss attainment, improvement plans and priorities for professional learning. Follow up meetings will take place once the national data is published.

5.4 Member Engagement

More detailed reports on primary and secondary attainment data for session 21-22 will be brought forward to committee once national benchmarking information is published. Attainment reports for each Associated Schools Group (ASG) will be presented at Area Committees for scrutiny of ASG attainment data and identification of next steps.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Education & Learning

Authors: Fiona Grant, Head of Service Secondary Education
Colette Macklin, Head of Service Primary & ELC

Date: 18th August 2022

Appendices: [Appendix 1](#) – Highland Raising Attainment Action Plan 2022-23

Action Plan – Education & Learning Raising Attainment Action Plan

Background info	In our senior phase qualifications, The Highland Council has seen a steady increase in national examinations over the past few years, although other authorities have improved more rapidly than us and we need to address this. Our current data is showing that the percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy and numeracy has increased from last year. This detailed plan outlines the activities that will be taken forward to by the service to raise standards of attainment and achievement in Highland.
Improvement Priority	Improved outcomes including; attainment, achievement, positive destinations for all children and young people with a particular focus on literacy, numeracy in line with our stretch targets including our most vulnerable.
Key Objectives	<p>During session 2022-2023 the following areas will a key focus for the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our approaches to quality assurance • Improve the consistency and quality of learning, teaching and assessment • Effective analysis of data to identify trends and identify areas for improvements • Planning and implementing targeted interventions to address poverty related attainment gaps • Improve the consistency and quality of provision in early years schools & settings • Improve effectiveness of additional support for learning services in accordance with national action plan for supporting learners, The Promise and the UNCRC Children’s Rights Scheme

Priority 1 – Improve our approaches to quality assurance		Person (s) Responsible – Heads of Education	
Action	Expected Impact	Measures/Milestones	RAG
Implement a rigorous and integrated quality assurance system to effectively support and challenge schools, aligning to national and local priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for all Headteachers and Central Officers in self-evaluation for continuous improvement. • Quality assurance strategy for Highland developed in conjunction with officers and Headteachers • Following Education Scotland training, Headteachers & Central Officers produce accurate, evidence-based self-evaluation reflected in the National Improvement Framework overall response to Education Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Headteachers and Central Officers and complete training by December 2022 • First draft for consultation by December 2022, full implementation by June 2023 • Monitored through school visits by collaborative leads and school annual standards & qualities reports 	
Identify and collate common themes from schools' improvement priorities and facilitate networks to enable leaders to work collaboratively to address them.	<p>Common themes identified and agreed from analysis of School Improvement Plans</p> <p>Workplan produced detailing each common theme where improvement is required, with RAG rating illustrating level of priority relating to each theme.</p> <p>Networked collaborative groups established with relevant school leaders joining group themes relating to their areas of expertise. Completed improvement outputs shared across the service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By October 2022 • Collaborative Groups established based on common challenge by November 2022 • By June 2023 	

Priority 2 – Quality of Learning, teaching and assessment in schools & settings		Person (s) Responsible – Heads of Education	
Action	Expected Impact	Measures/Milestones	RAG
<p>Support schools & setting to improve consistency and quality of learning, teaching and assessment</p> <p>Improve validity and reliability of teacher professional judgement and strengthening tracking and monitoring of Broad General Education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared understanding of what makes excellent teaching • Develop a culture of self-evaluation of teaching within school communities • Develop a strong professional learning culture around classroom pedagogy which supports, challenges and inspires everyone to learn and improve • Focus on the principles of good feedback to support learning • Develop the use of class data to support planning of next steps in learning • Develop a Learning and Teaching Policy based on inclusive approaches • Implement literacy and numeracy 1 year action plan • Collaborative Leads and Quality Assurance Moderation and Support Officer to support moderation practice across the BGE • Enhanced opportunities to engage in high quality professional learning with a focus on pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly review of progress • Policy finalised May 2023 • Termly review of progress 	

Priority 3 – Improved use of data for improvement		Person (s) Responsible – Heads of Education	
Action	Expected Impact	Measures/Milestones	RAG
<p>Stretch targets set for the Local Authority and individual schools in line with the expectations outlined in the Scottish Attainment Challenge: framework for recovery and accelerating progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretch targets set with individual schools based on Local Authority targets and the school context • Develop and implement tracking and monitoring arrangements to ensure consistency of approach and opportunities to further develop moderation practices – Nov 2021 • Pilot a Local Authority system to support monitoring and tracking of attainment based on an ASG tracker • All schools have access to tools to support their analysis of data and have an improved understanding of how to use these tools effectively within their setting. • Working in collaboration with partners updated Highland strategy for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) delivered resulting in an increasing proportion of 16-19 olds participating in education, employment or training. • Establish a system to routinely track those at risk of not securing a positive destination and agree and implement escalation procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets set by October 2022 • Review progress towards targets with Headteachers in February 2023 • November 2022 • Pilot complete by June 2023 • Training ongoing throughout session 22-23 • Termly meetings of DYW partners to update and consult on strategy • Final Strategy by August 2023 • Review progress termly 	

Priority 4 – Addressing poverty related attainment gap		Person (s) Responsible – Head of Primary Education	
Action	Expected Impact	Measures/Milestones	RAG
<p>Effective use of the Pupil Equity and Strategic Equity Funding support and challenge schools and settings to improve attainment and achievement for identified groups, address learning gaps and speed up recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance group established to oversee the use of Strategic Equity Funding. • Provide ongoing support to schools in implementing evidence-based approaches for learners supported by Attainment Scotland Funding. • Local targets set around poverty related attainment gaps in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By September 2022 • By September 2025 (monitored bi- annually) • Local targets reviewed annually, monitored termly 	
Priority 5 – Quality of provision in early years schools & settings		Person (s) Responsible – Head of Primary & ELC	
Action	Expected Impact	Measures/Milestones	RAG
<p>Work in partnership with Headteachers and Early Years Team to secure a greater understanding of high-quality Early Years provision in settings and the quality of all Highland Council ELC provision meets the expected standard.</p> <p>Headteachers of schools with ELC provision engage with best practice and apply it to their setting to improve quality and standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteachers of schools and those with ELC management time can accurately evaluate where they are in line with the national standard and have plans to implement change to improve the quality of provision. • Re-establish links with health and social care colleagues to ensure the needs of all ELC children are met. • Follow up with Education Scotland colleagues on the launch of ‘realising the ambition’ to include ‘realising the Highland ambition’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation work complete by Dec 2022 • Improvement plans produced by Jan 2023 • Improvement activities implemented and embedded across all settings by August 2023 • By August 2023 • By August 2022 	

Priority 6 – Additional Support for Learning		Person (s) Responsible – Head of Secondary Education	
Action	Expected Impact	Measures/Milestones	RAG
Continue to work in partnership with school leaders and stakeholders to review the structures, systems and services that underpin Highland’s approach to Additional Support for Learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed review of Additional Support for Learning in Highland to support and improve outcomes for all learners and create implementation plan to respond to the findings. • Develop strategies to systematically gather the views of young people with additional support needs to inform local authority policies and procedures. • Engage with partners, including parents and carers to develop and deliver ways of working that support and promote positive relationships, communication and address barriers that may arise • Improve awareness of ‘The Promise’ and map next steps to support our care experienced learners and continue engagement with MCR Pathways Mentoring Programme for care experience learners • Implement improved use of data across ASN services including arrangements for tracking groups according to disability, protected characteristics and those who care experienced to be able to make meaningful comparisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 2023 • Review progress termly • Review progress termly • Termly milestones agreed • Term 1 & 2 – improve how schools record support needs of learners • Terms 3 & 4 – officers and schools use data to track groups of learners 	