

The background of the slide is the Falkirk Council Coat of Arms, rendered in a light grey color. It features a crown at the top with four floral motifs. The shield is divided into four quarters: top-left shows a saltire, top-right shows a stag's head, bottom-left shows a ship, and bottom-right shows a lion. A banner at the bottom contains the motto 'A'NE FOR A'.

**AGENDA ITEM**

**6**

**ATTAINMENT (5-18) IN  
FALKIRK COUNCIL'S  
SCHOOLS**

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject:       ATTAINMENT (5-18) IN FALKIRK COUNCIL'S SCHOOLS**  
**Meeting:       EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**  
**Date:           29 MARCH 2016**  
**Author:        DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**1.       INTRODUCTION**

1.1       This report provides information to Members on:

- (i)       Standardised Test results for Reading and Mathematics in Falkirk Council schools in 2015 from Primary 1 to Secondary 2, based specifically on testing in P1, P3, P5, P7 and S2, with comparisons in performance over time;
- (ii)       SQA examination attainment of school leavers at the end of session 2014-15;
- (iii)       the impact of strategies to date to raise attainment across primary and secondary schools, including the Council's Literacy and Numeracy strategies;
- (iv)       ongoing work as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement.

1.2       The Standardised Tests used in all Falkirk Council's primary and secondary schools have been developed by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at University of Durham. CEM tests are now used in over 80 percent of Scottish local authorities. They were introduced in Falkirk Council in 2012.

1.3       CEM standardised tests in P1 provide data on attainment in Reading and Mathematics. The tests are based on a Scottish standard of 50 where a score of over or below 50 denotes, respectively, performance above or below the Scottish average. Tests in P3, P5, P7, and S2 are based on a UK standard of 100, with scores above or below 100 denoting above or below UK average attainment.

1.4       It should be noted that there is no specific measure that provides a picture of a child's performance. The analysis of standardised testing by teachers and school managers is just one of a range of indicators used to evaluate children's progress. However, it provides data which can be analysed at the centre to judge overall performance across schools.

1.5       With the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, the Scottish Government replaced STACs, (the system for providing performance data on pupil attainment) with Insight. Insight is a professional tool for secondary schools and local authorities to identify areas of success and where improvements can be made, and to benchmark their performance in the Senior Phase (See 5.2).

1.6       The measures included are intended to provide a rounded and balanced view of performance within Curriculum for Excellence that, as far as possible, minimises the effects of different curricular models.

## 2. ATTAINMENT IN THE BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION (P1-S2)

### READING – PRIMARY SCHOOLS

#### Primary 1

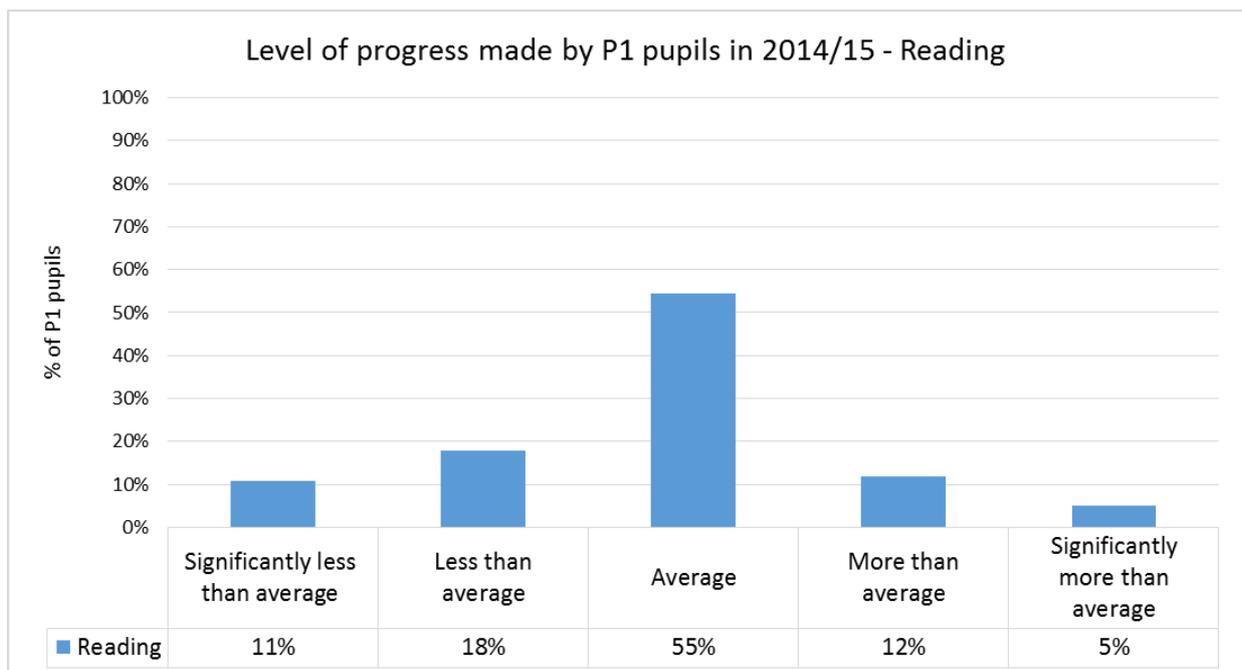
2.1 Test scores are standardised, based on a national sample of children’s performance. The average P1 pupil has a standardised score of 50. If a pupil has the same score in both the start and end tests they have made average progress in line with pupils across Scotland as a whole. If the end score is higher than the start score, the pupil has made more than average progress. Correspondingly, an end score which is lower than the start score denotes that the pupil has made less than average progress.

By comparing the two sets of results and comparing these to other evidence gathered by teachers throughout the session, teachers are able to make informed judgements regarding progress of individual pupils and classes. Head Teachers can also identify areas of good practice which they can share across the school and with other schools, as well as identify other areas where CPD is required. The Council’s Education officers can also see year-on-year performance across all schools.

2.2 Pupils’ progress during the year can be measured in terms of the following five groups:

- Those making significantly more than average progress
- Those making more than average progress
- Those making average progress
- Those making less-than-average progress
- Those making significantly less-than-average progress

2.3 The chart below shows the levels of progress made by P1 pupils in Reading between the start and end of the 2014/15 school session:



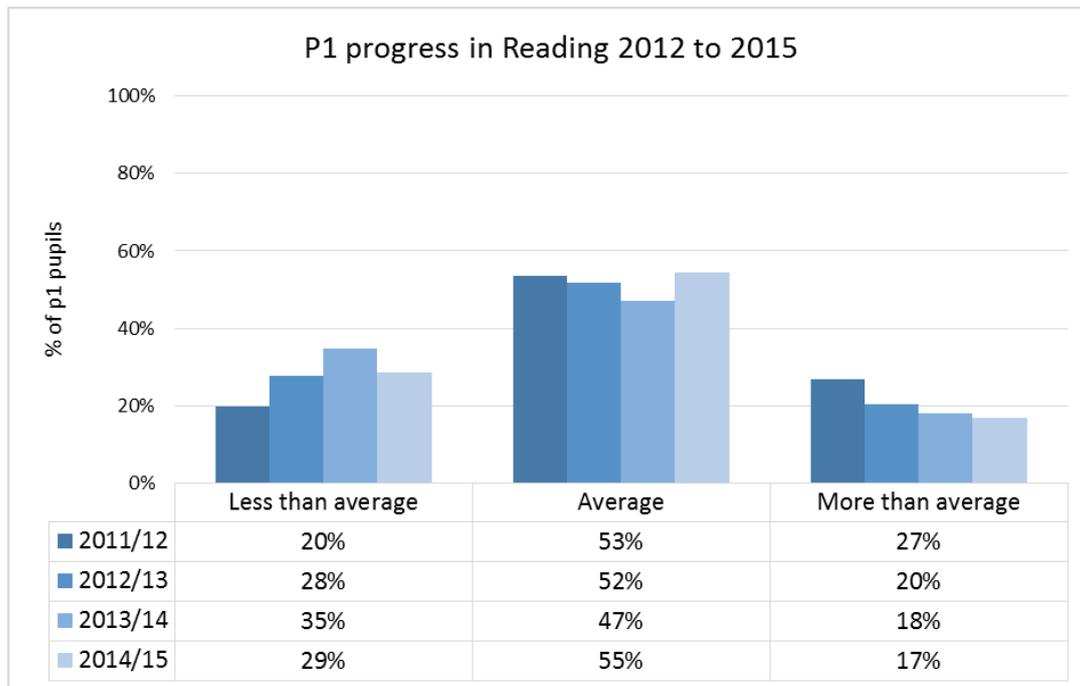
## 2.4 *Areas of strength*

This shows that 72% of pupils in P1 made average or better-than-average progress in Reading. This reflects the impact of the Council’s literacy policy with its emphasis on Active Literacy, which focuses on developing learners’ reading through encouraging them to develop strategies to analyse and evaluate texts.

## *Areas for development*

The table also shows that the performance of 29% of pupils was below average. Given the importance of Reading in allowing children to access the whole curriculum, officers and schools recognise the need to reduce this figure. Through increased sharing of good practice within schools and across clusters, and with the support of Education officers, schools will continue to work together to tackle low attainment in literacy. Further details of ways in which improvement will be achieved are given in Section 4.

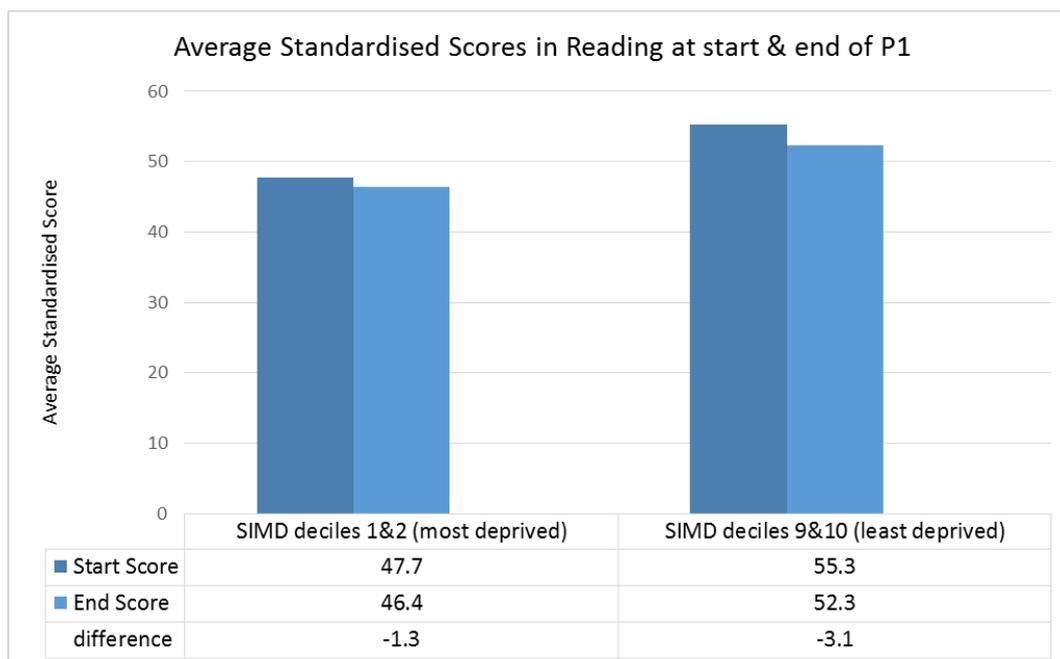
2.5 Comparison with previous years in Reading is shown in the chart below. The figure for 2011/12 should be interpreted with caution as this was the first year of CEM standardised testing in Falkirk schools, which hitherto had no experience in administering these tests.



The table shows that, in 2014/15, 72% of P1 pupils made average progress or better in Reading. Although this is higher than for 2013-4 the percentage of pupils making better-than-average progress has fallen over time. It should be noted that what is being compared here are successive primary 1 intakes

## 2.6 Deprivation – attainment in Reading

The chart below shows scores in Reading at the start and end of P1 for those pupils living in SIMD Deciles 1 and 2 (the most deprived 20%):



Although P1 pupils living in the most deprived areas (SIMD deciles 1 & 2) had lower Reading scores than those living in the least deprived areas (SIMD deciles 9&10), decile 1 & 2 pupils made more progress in Reading in P1 than decile 9 & 10 pupils. However, able pupils, many of whom are in deciles 9 & 10, have high start scores compared to the national pupil performance, which limits the scope for measuring added value. Standardised tests, by their nature, measure pupils only in relation to the expected range of ability across the country and do not ‘stretch’ the most able to their actual limit.

## 2.7 *Areas for development*

The requirement for children in Early Years to gain the best possible start in their Reading is recognised. Nursery and Early Years staff in primary schools will work more closely together to develop children’s Reading skills to ensure that the pace and challenge in emergent Reading is maintained from the Early Years into Primary 1 and beyond.

Schools with children who live predominantly in the less and least deprived areas will be a focus for attention to ensure that the levels of challenge and pace are sufficiently high for these children.

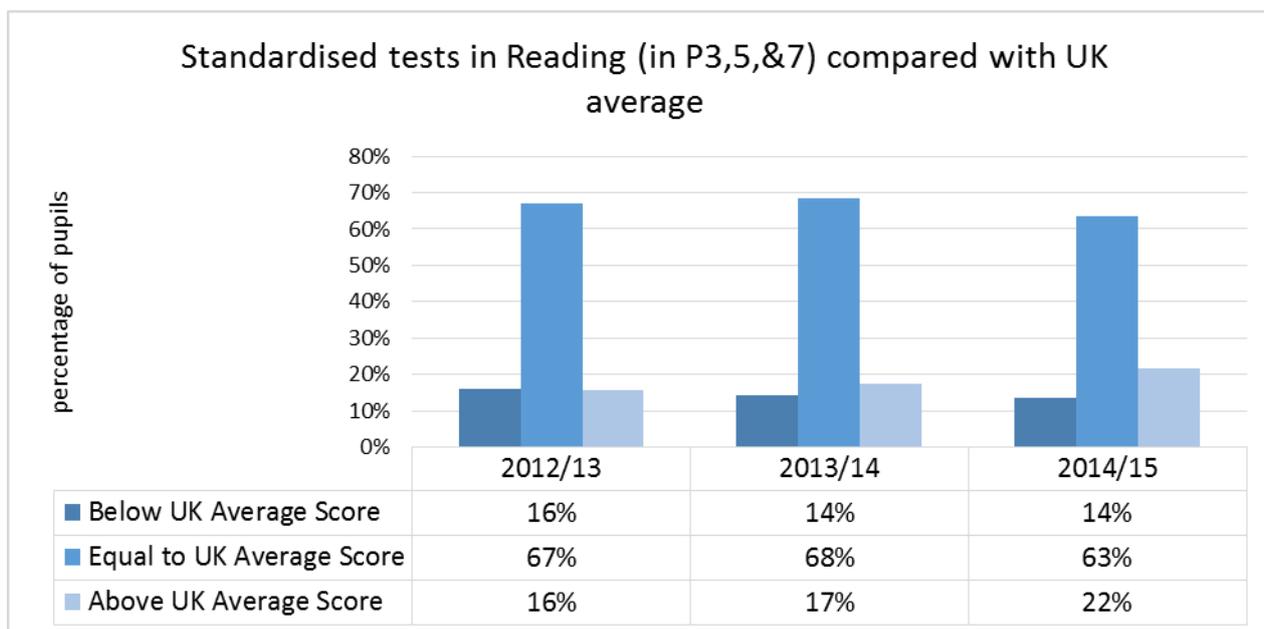
Clusters will be expected to become key drivers of curricular improvement, including improvement in attainment in Reading. School Clusters will be encouraged to share good practice and resources to ensure that pupils in the Early Years are given the best possible start in developing their Reading.

Initiatives aimed at ‘closing the gap’ between the lowest and highest attaining pupils are already in place and will begin to show impact. These initiatives include the Attainment Challenge, focusing initially on Langlees PS but to be broadened to other schools in areas of deprivation, and the Focus on Communication and Language Project (FOCAL), which links learning in Reading with support from Speech and Language.

## 2.8 P3, P5 and P7

Standardised tests at P3, 5 and 7 are administered in the summer term and are measured against a UK standard of 100.

The chart below shows how the average standardised scores in Reading in P3, 5 and 7 compare with the UK average for the past 3 years.



In 2012/13, the distribution of Falkirk’s Reading scores was exactly in line with the UK average. In 2013/14 and 2014/15, a higher than average proportion of pupils in Falkirk had above-average scores for Reading, showing the impact of the Council’s development of effective teaching strategies in Reading.

Although the percentage of pupils gaining below-average scores remained at 14% for the last two sessions, the percentage gaining scores above the UK average shows improvement over time, with a significant increase to 22% in 2014-5. It should be noted that what is being compared here are successive P3, P5 and P7 cohorts.

## 2.9 Value Added from P3 to P5, and P5 to P7 in Reading

The improvement in performance of pupils from when they were in P3 in 2012-13 to when the same pupils were in P5 in 2014-5, and for pupils progressing from P5 in 2012-13 to when they were in P7 in 2014-5 can be measured in terms of ‘Value Added’.

The following table shows the 'Value Added' for the same pupil cohorts in Reading.

	P3 (2013) to P5 (2014-5)	P5 (2013-4) to P7 (2014-5)
Average Reading scores	103 → 104	103 → 99

Figures for P3 and P5 show Value Added over the four years of testing at these stages is better than the UK average, with the Value Added between P3 and P5 rising from 103 to 104.

Until Active Literacy strategies have impacted on pupils' performance throughout all stages in primary schools, the performance in P7 is likely to be lower than in P5. Nevertheless, performance of P7 pupils since 2012 has risen to its highest level to date (99 in 2014-5) and is within a point of the UK average, having risen 6 points since 2012.

This shows that the impact of the Council's literacy strategy is beginning to be evident in the upper years of primary school even though these pupils were not exposed to them during the first few years of their schooling. Literacy continues to be a key focus of the Service's Improvement Plan and, specifically, the aim is to evidence sustained impact from P5 to P7.

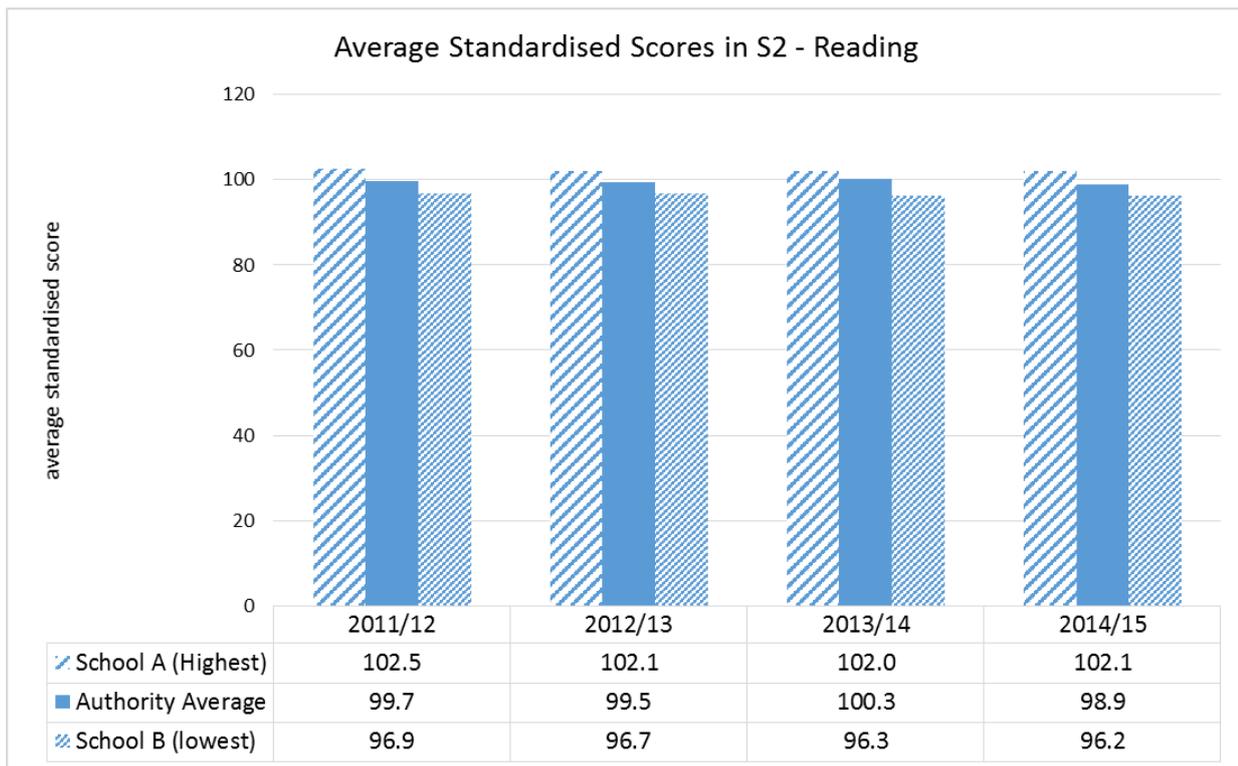
#### Reading – Secondary 2

- 2.10 Pupils in S2 are tested in the summer term, with scores again being based on a UK standard of 100.

The following table shows that 'Value Added' in S2 in Reading brought the standard up to within one point of the UK average by the end of S2 in 2015 compared to the same cohort's performance when they were in P7:

	P7 (2013) to S2 (2014-5)
Average Reading scores	94 → 99

The chart below shows the average scores for Falkirk Council's S2 pupils for the past 4 years in Reading, together with the scores of the highest and lowest scoring schools. (It should be noted that the highest and lowest scoring schools vary from session to session.)



2.11 Although there have been slight fluctuations, the average scores for Falkirk’s S2 pupils have remained close to the UK average in all 4 years in Reading. The highest scoring schools in all four sessions have scored consistently above the UK average.

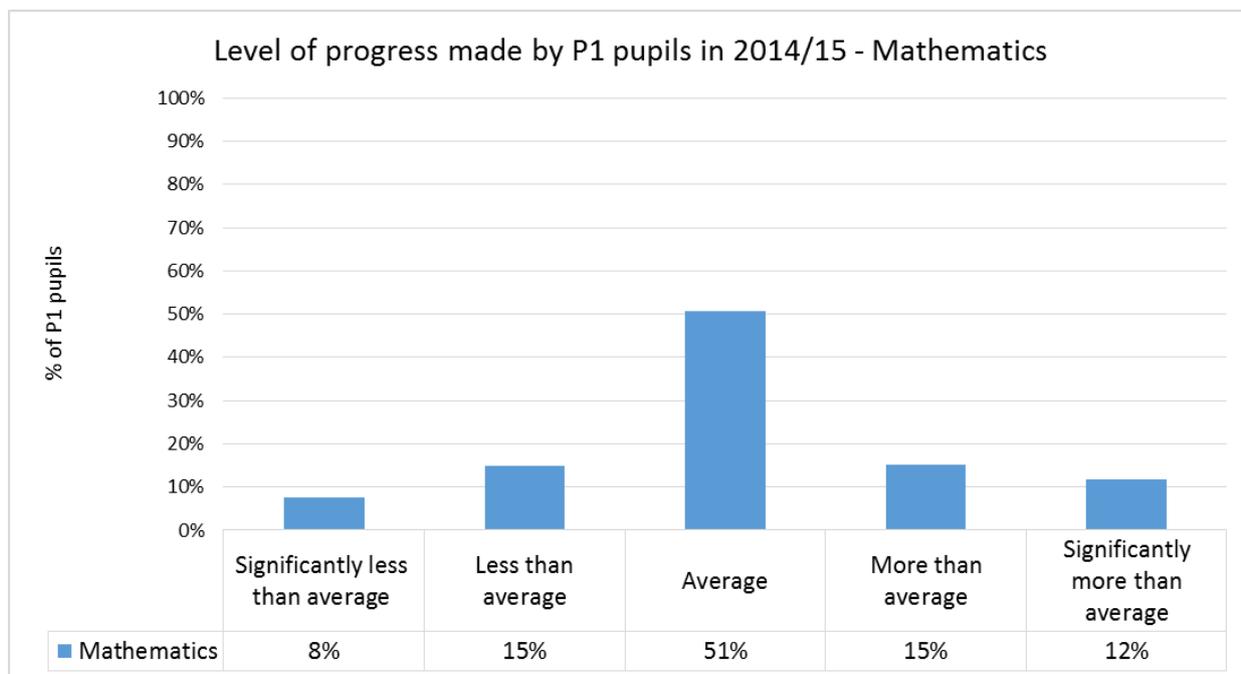
The table above also shows that a number of schools have scored significantly below the UK average, with scores from the lowest scoring schools falling year-on-year. Further work will be expected at cluster level to ensure that secondary schools build on pupils’ prior learning in the primary school.

It should be noted that what is being compared here are successive S2 cohorts.

### 3. MATHEMATICS – PRIMARY SCHOOLS

#### Primary 1

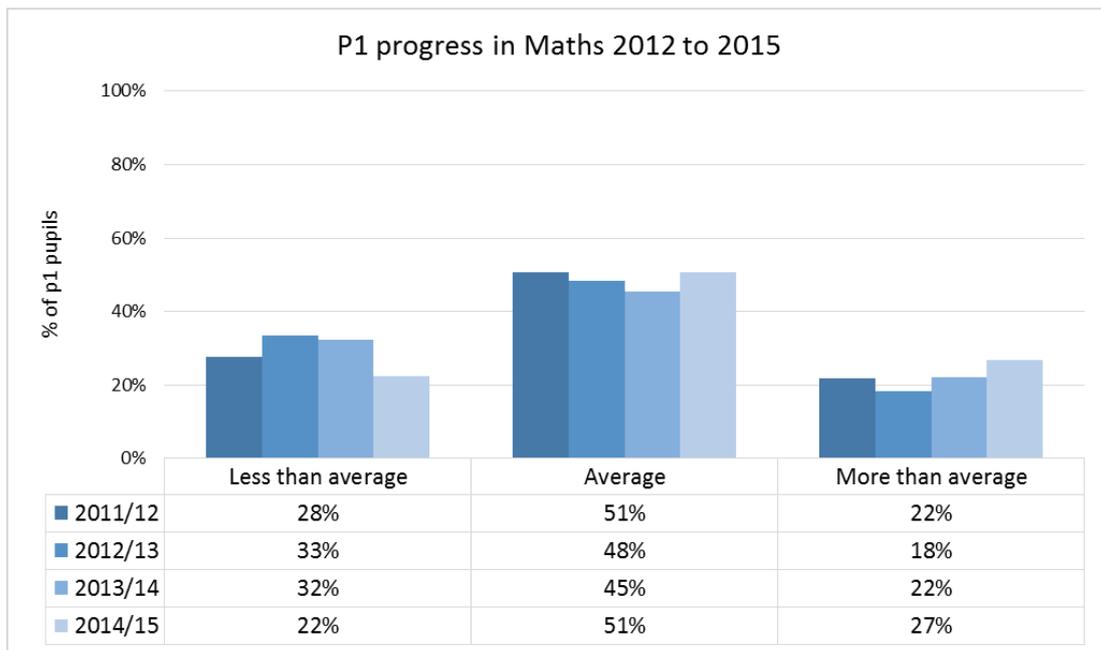
3.1 The chart below shows the level of progress made by P1 pupils in Mathematics between the start and end of the 2014/15 school session:



3.2 This table shows that 78% of pupils in P1 made average or better-than-average progress in Mathematics in 2014-5. This encouraging result reflects the impact of the Council’s Numeracy strategy. Schools are developing effective strategies that encourage confidence in learners to share with the teacher and each other ways in which they make calculations.

They are also encouraged to process mentally their mathematics calculations and to solve mathematical-based problems and, again, to discuss the strategies used with their teacher and with each other. Professional enquiry as to the best ways of teaching these strategies are currently the key focus of the Council’s Numeracy strategy. Resources such as the Big Maths programme (with its counterpart in Early Years entitled Little Big Maths), although significant contributors to support the teaching of mathematics, constitute just two of a range of resources available to teachers.

3.3 Comparison with previous years in Mathematics is shown in the chart below. Again, the figure for 2011/12 should be interpreted with caution given the relative inexperience of schools in delivering standardised tests in their introductory year.

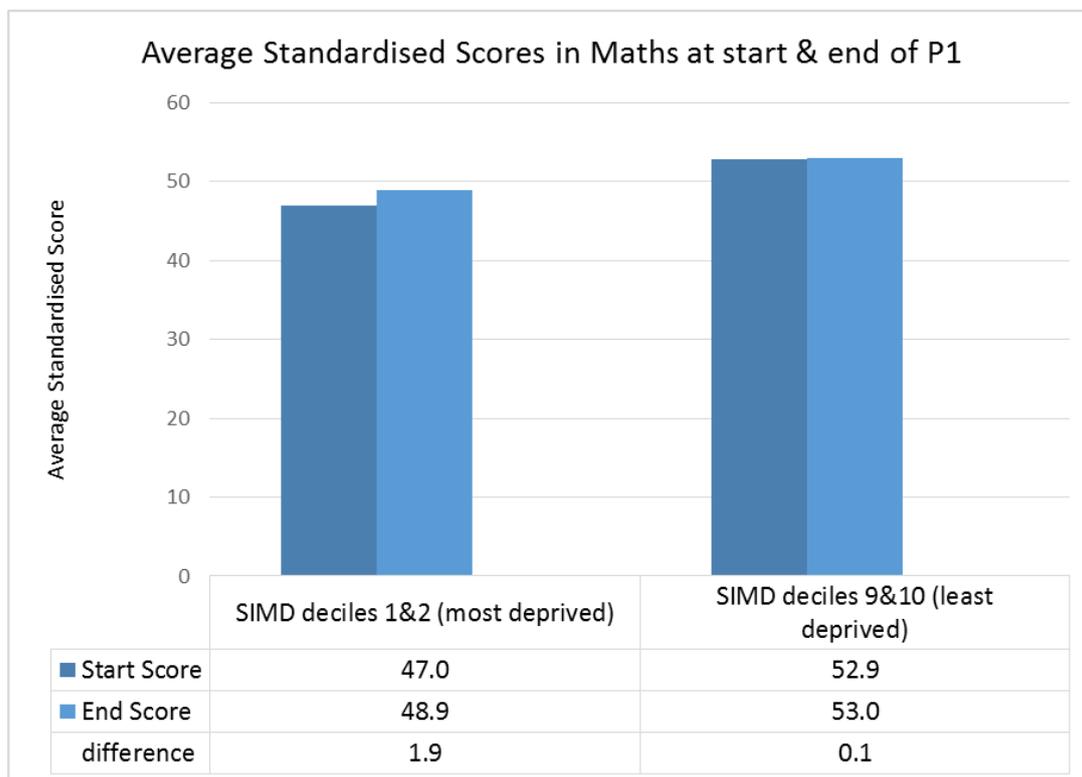


3.4 This table shows that, in 2014/15, 78% of P1 pupils made average progress or better in Mathematics. This was the highest percentage so far for Falkirk Council schools and, again, reflects the positive overall impact of the Numeracy programme.

While 22% of pupils were still making below-average progress in Mathematics in Primary 1 in 2014-5, there is overall improvement. Again, work at individual school and cluster level, and especially between pre-school and P1 teachers, will be actively promoted to ensure that Early Years delivery of Mathematics is increasingly consistently effective. It should be noted that what is being compared here are successive primary 1 intakes.

3.5 Deprivation – Attainment in Mathematics

The chart below shows start and end of P1 scores in Mathematics for those pupils living in the most deprived and least deprived areas.



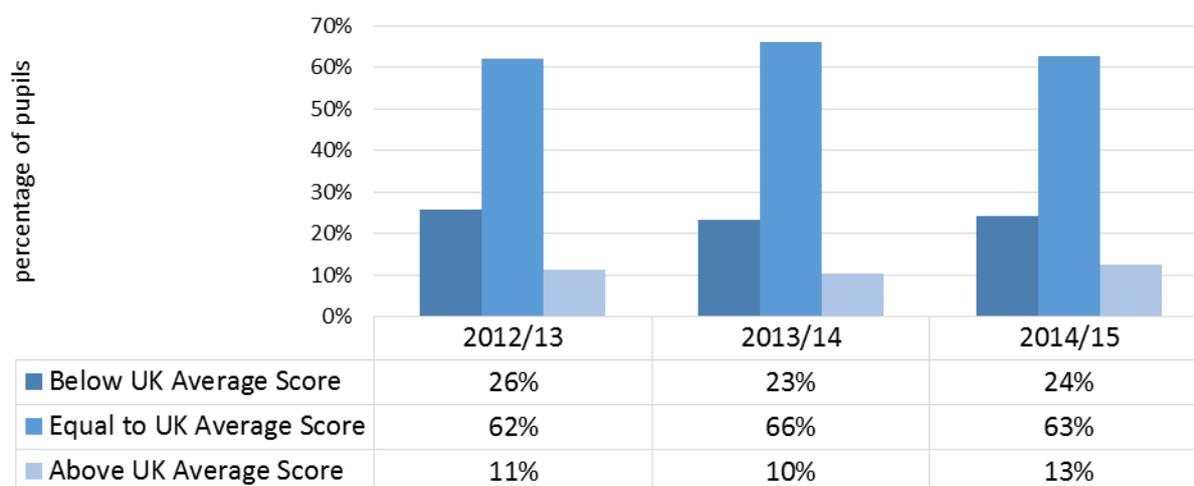
This graph shows that, although pupils living in SIMD deciles 1 & 2 had lower scores overall, these pupils made more progress in Maths in P1 than pupils who live in SIMD deciles 9 & 10. Pupils in deciles 9 & 10, meanwhile, made progress in line with the Scottish average.

While pupils in deciles 1 & 2 are still performing overall below the Scottish average they are, nevertheless, showing above average improvement. The Council's Numeracy strategy will continue to focus on raising attainment overall to ensure that pupils in the Early Years are given the best possible start in mathematics. As with Reading, schools will be supported to work increasingly at Cluster level. An increased focus will be placed on working between nursery staff and P1 teachers to ensure that P1 classes effectively build on the work of the nursery in maintaining the appropriate pace and challenge.

### P3,5 and 7

- 3.6 The chart below shows how the average standardised scores in Maths in P3, 5 and 7 compared to the UK average for the past 3 years.

### Standardised tests in Maths (in P3,5,&7) compared with UK average



3.7 This table shows that, although the proportion of pupils who are below the UK average score has risen slightly in 2014-5 compared to the previous year there is, nevertheless, improvement since 2012-13. The percentage of pupils who are equal to, or who are above, the UK average score in 2014-5 was the same as for the previous year but the percentage of those achieving above the UK average was the highest to date.

The Council's Numeracy strategy, which promotes increased confidence in pupils' abilities to identify strategies for speedy and accurate mental and paper-based calculations, is showing overall improvements in performance over time in the Council's schools. It should be noted that what is being compared here are successive P3, P5 and P7 intakes.

### 3.8 Value Added from P3 to P5, and P5 to P7

The improvement in performance of pupils in Mathematics over time can, again, be measured in terms of 'Value Added'.

The following table shows 'Value Added' between pupils in P5 and P7 in 2014-5 compared to when they were in P3 and P5 respectively.

	P3 (2012-3) to P5 (2014-5)	P5 (2012-3) to P7 (2014-5)
Average Mathematics scores	102 → 96	95 → 88

These figures show that pupils in P5 and P7 made less progress than the UK standard compared to when they were in P3 and P5 respectively. However, with the gradual introduction of Big Maths and a wider focus on Numeracy generally from 2012-3 onwards, much work has been done in schools in Mental Mathematics, which is now resulting in pupils showing greater confidence and accuracy in use of number. Big Maths was introduced initially in the Early Years and is still in the process of being rolled-out across the remaining primary years stages. Its impact is as yet, therefore, more evident in the lower stages of primary schooling, as was evidenced in Section 3.4.

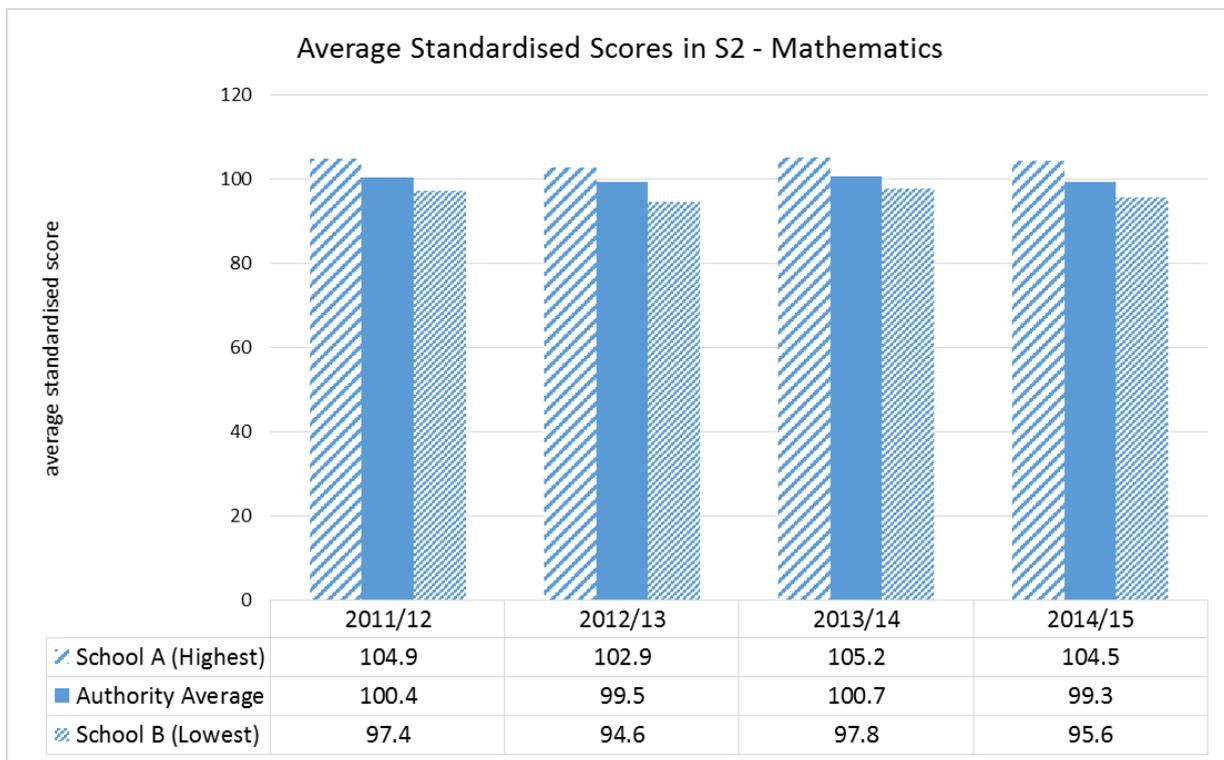
## Secondary 2

The following table shows the 'Value Added' in Mathematics by the end of S2 in 2015 compared to the performance by the same pupils when they were in P7:

	P7 (2012-3) to S2 (2014-5)
Average Mathematics scores	87 → 99

This shows that secondary schools are making significant impact on improving attainment in Mathematics in S1 and S2. The score of 99 is just one point below the UK standard.

- 3.9 The chart below shows the average scores for Falkirk's S2 pupils for the past 4 years in Mathematics. It also shows the performance of the highest and lowest achieving schools each year. (Again, the highest and lowest achieving schools may vary from year to year.)



- 3.10 This table shows that Falkirk Council schools overall have been in line with the UK average across all four years of standardised testing, while the highest achieving school in any given year has scored well above the UK average.

The Council expects:

- (i) the secondary Curriculum Management Group and Subject Development Group in mathematics to identify strategies for ensuring greater consistency across all eight schools.

- (ii) School Clusters to work increasingly effectively within and across primary and secondary sectors and
- (iii) secondary managements to ensure that their strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are effective.

#### **4. ACTION TO IMPROVE ATTAINMENT IN THE BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION YEAR STAGES**

- 4.1 Confidence in schools' abilities to analyse data in order to allow them to improve their performance is increasing. This analysis is supporting professional judgments made by teachers with regard to progressing pupils' learning.
- 4.2 As resources at Children's Services headquarters continue to diminish, there is a correspondingly increased commitment to provide schools and nurseries with the capacity to lead on developments themselves, both at individual school level and in clusters. To this end, accurate analysis of sound assessment data by schools, including standardised test data, is seen as essential in informing progress in these developments. While analysis of data is continually improving at school level, further analysis of data will be expected, including test data at individual teacher, whole school and at cluster level.
- 4.3 The forthcoming introduction of Standardised Testing as part of the National Improvement Framework announced in January 2016 will include a Scottish-based standardised testing programme based specifically on Curriculum for Excellence. Tests will be administered in P1, P4, P7 and S3 to reflect Curriculum for Excellence Levels and will allow further analysis of attainment at school, cluster and whole-authority level.
- 4.4 Falkirk Council's schools are aware of the importance of early literacy and numeracy in providing a solid foundation for future learning. To further develop children's performance in Reading and Mathematics, the following strategies will be put in place:
- (i) Nurseries and Primary Schools will work more closely within schools and across clusters to ensure that staff in both sectors work closely together to improve the curricular transition from Nursery to Primary 1. This will comprise joint development of the Early Level curriculum and joint development of effective ways to deliver this.
  - (ii) The National Improvement Framework places strong emphasis on the partnership between schools and parents in taking forward children's learning. Children's Services will continue to seek ways in which parents, especially those with pre-school children can be engaged in supporting their children's learning in Reading and Mathematics.
  - (iii) The Active Literacy and Numeracy programmes will continue to be developed through promoting increased working at cluster and cross-authority levels. Head Teachers will be expected to identify good practice in Reading and Numeracy in their schools and to:
    - (a) share good practice in planning and delivering literacy and numeracy (not only in Reading and Mathematics lessons but also in other areas of the curriculum) within the school to ensure greater consistency in the quality of pupil experience.

(b) share examples of good practice with other schools, with nurseries and with associated secondary schools to ensure greater consistency in pupil progress from one sector to the next.

(iv) Education Scotland's Attainment Challenge programme focuses currently on Langlees PS. Falkirk Council Children's Services plan to engage other schools with high levels of deprivation in this initiative in due course.

4.5 The Making Thinking Visible (MTV) initiative has been introduced to nurseries, and primary and secondary schools. This develops routines to help learners to think more deeply. All teachers who have been trained in are sharing their work with colleagues in their schools. The impact of MTV will be evaluated through focus groups representing all three sectors.

## **5. ATTAINMENT IN THE SENIOR PHASE (S4-S6)**

### **5.1 Background to Insight**

5.1.1 The principles of Curriculum for Excellence include breadth, personalisation and choice. In response, Falkirk Council's secondary schools have put in place a number of accredited qualifications in addition to those which are SQA-based to maximize young people's choices and to offer additional opportunities for them to be successful in gaining new skills and growing confidence. These additional qualifications may be accredited through City & Guilds, ASDAN, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, etc.

5.1.2 Insight does not take account of all of these additional accredited awards although it is intended that, over time, it will do so to recognize attainment and achievement more fully.

### **5.2 Benchmarking**

5.2.1 Insight allows schools and authorities to compare their performance in the Senior Phase to the performance of a 'Virtual Comparator'. The Virtual Comparator is made up of pupils from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the cohort of pupils being analysed.

5.2.2 The Virtual Comparator allows schools and authorities to see how the performance of their pupils compares to a similar group of pupils from across Scotland to help undertake self-evaluation and improvement activities. For each pupil in the cohort of interest (e.g. S4 pupils in School A), 10 matching pupils are randomly selected from other local authorities based on: gender; year stage; ASN and SIMD.

### **5.3 Impact of Early Presentation in S3 on Insight figures**

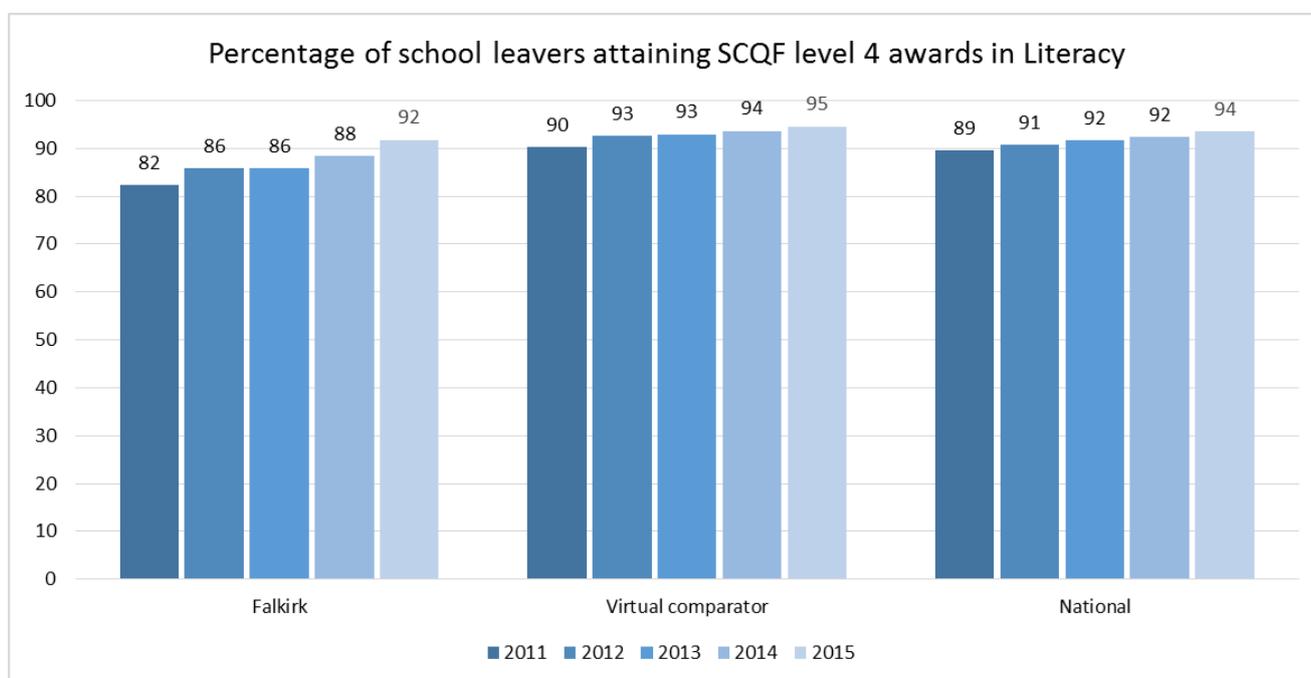
5.3.1 Prior to the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Falkirk Council was one of a small number of local authorities that had a policy of early SQA presentation. Up to and including the final year of Standard Grades (session 2012-13) two of Falkirk Council's eight secondary schools presented pupils for a range of SQA awards in S3 for a range of subjects. A further two Falkirk Council schools presented for SQA awards in English and Mathematics in S3. The calculation of attainment performance measures (pre-CfE) included awards gained in all stages.

- 5.3.2 The introduction of CfE in 2014 brought a change to Falkirk’s SQA presentation policy whereby S3 presentation was abandoned. SQA presentations are now made in the Senior Phase only (S4-S6).
- 5.3.3 The Insight performance data includes attainment gained only during the Senior Phase (S4-S6) and excludes any results gained in S3, with the result that Falkirk’s attainment figures for a number of measures are under-reported. This early presentation will continue to have an effect on Falkirk’s attainment figures until the publication of SQA results in August 2017, by which time all pupils who had been presented in S3 will have left school.

## 6. LITERACY AND NUMERACY AT LEVELS 4 AND 5

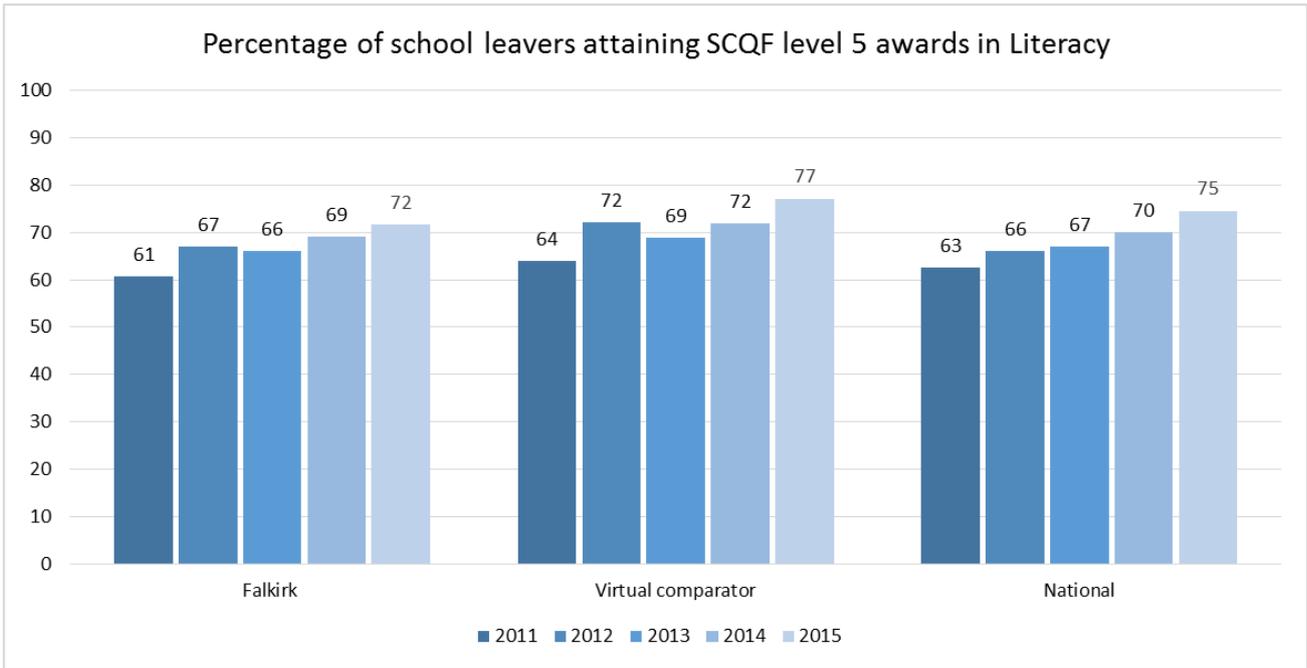
### 6.1 Literacy at Levels 4 and 5

The chart below shows attainment over five sessions in terms of the percentage of school leavers gaining Awards at Levels 4 in Literacy compared to the Council’s Virtual Comparator (VC) and National figures:



This chart shows that, although attainment remains below that of the Virtual Comparator and the National figure, the Council’s performance at Level 4 in Literacy has improved over time and the gap between the Council and the Virtual Comparator and National performance has narrowed. While, in 2011, the gap was 8 and 7 percent respectively, in 2015 this narrowed to just 3 and 2 percent respectively.

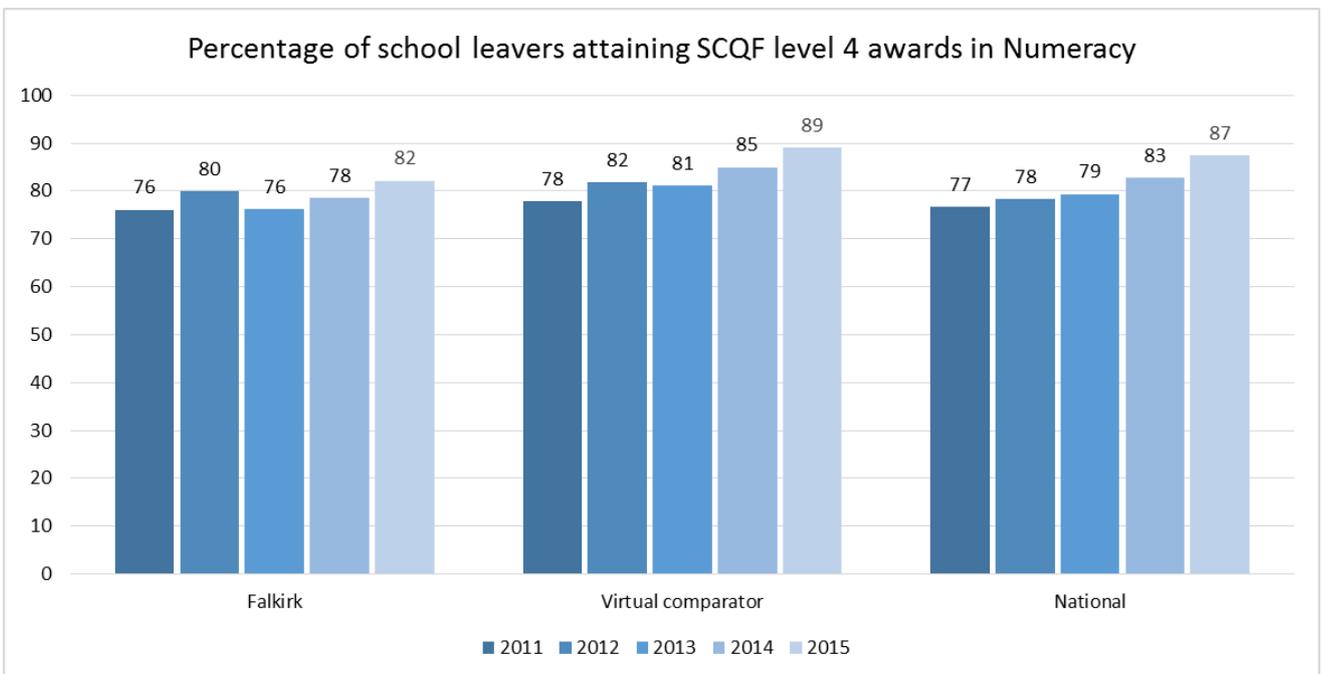
The chart below shows attainment over five sessions in terms of the percentage of school leavers gaining Awards at Level 5 in Literacy compared to the Council’s Virtual Comparator and National figures:



This shows that attainment in Falkirk Council at Level 5 in Literacy has improved significantly since 2010-11, with a steady increase since 2012-3 from 66% to 72%.

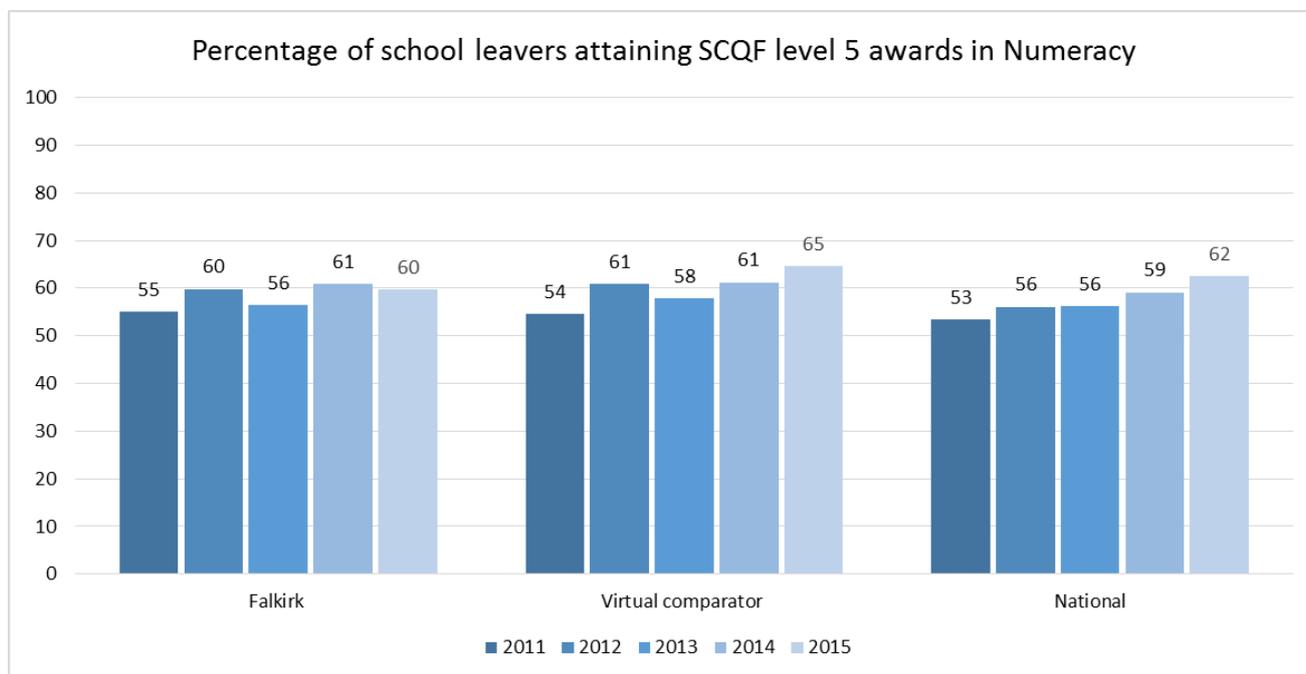
## 6.2 Numeracy at Levels 4 and 5

The chart below shows attainment over five sessions in terms of the percentage of school leavers gaining Awards at Levels 4 in Numeracy compared to the Council's Virtual Comparator and National figures:



This shows that attainment in Falkirk Council's school leavers fell in 2012-13 but has since risen steadily to achieve its highest level in the past 5 years (to 82%).

The chart below shows the percentage of school leavers who attained Level 5 awards in Numeracy:



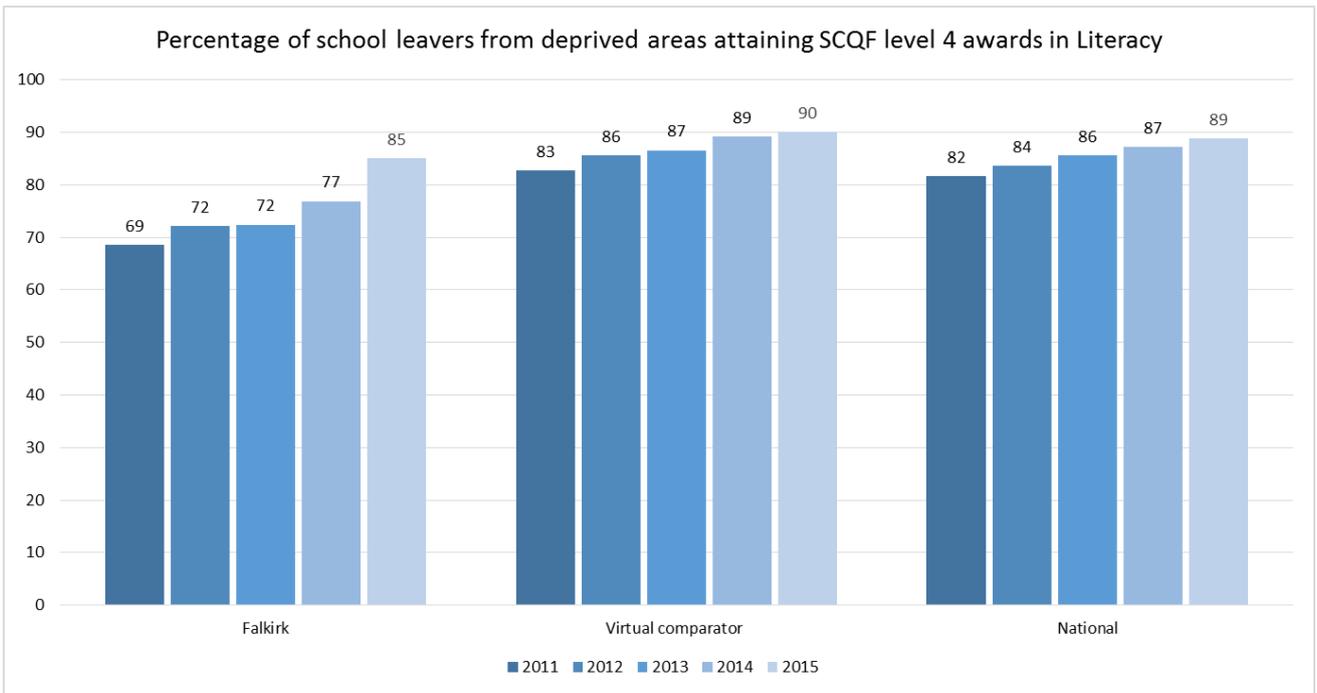
The decline in performance (by 1%) in 2014-5 compared to 2013-4 possibly reflects a less able cohort overall, while still performing at just 2% below the national average.

### 6.3 Deprivation – attainment in Literacy

Insight also provides data for the performance of pupils in the most deprived areas.

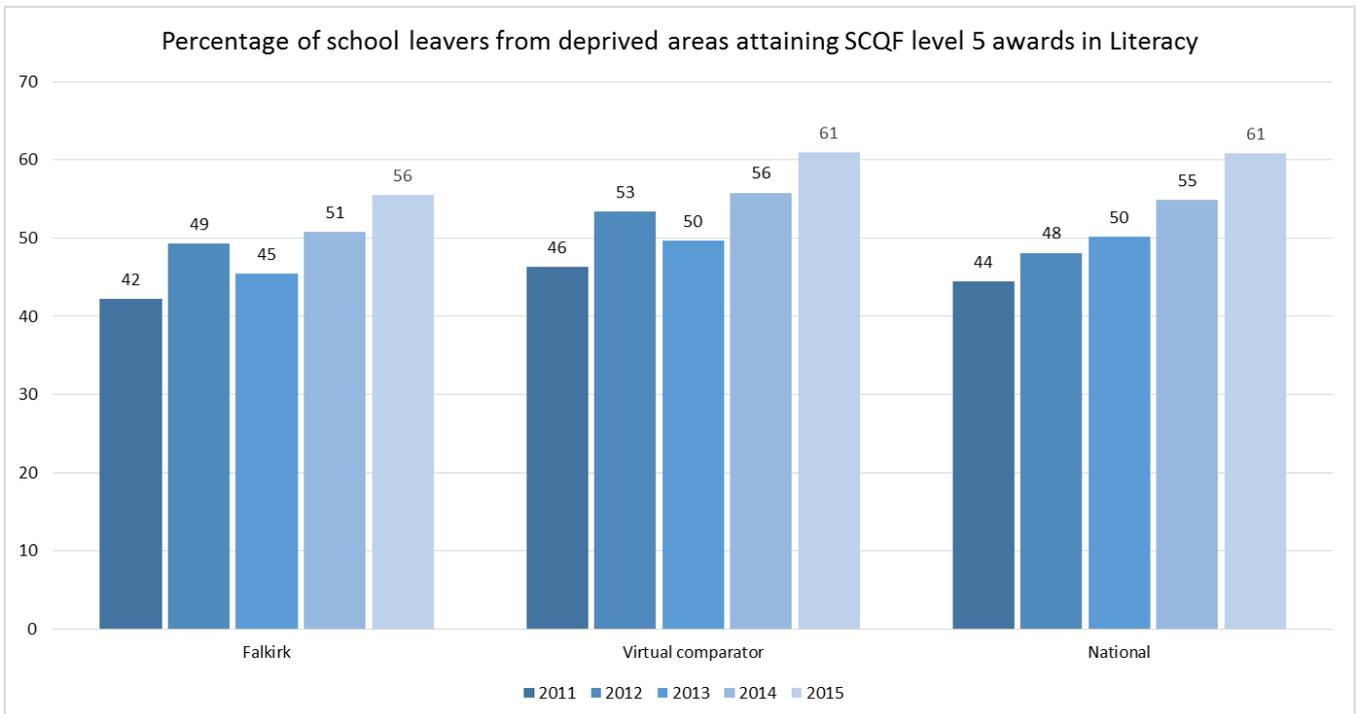
However, unlike the data shown for standardised tests in primary schools (which show performance of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas), Insight data only related to the 30% most deprived areas.

The chart below shows the percentage of school leavers from the 30% most deprived areas who attained Level 4 in Literacy compared to the equivalent cohorts in the VC and Nationally:



This shows that the improvement over time in this measure has been significantly greater in Falkirk Council schools than at VC and National levels. The gap between Falkirk Council schools and the other two measures has also narrowed from 14% between the Council's schools and the VC in 2011 to 5% in 2015. The gap between Falkirk Council schools and National attainment has also narrowed across the same period, from 13% in 2011 to 4% in 2015.

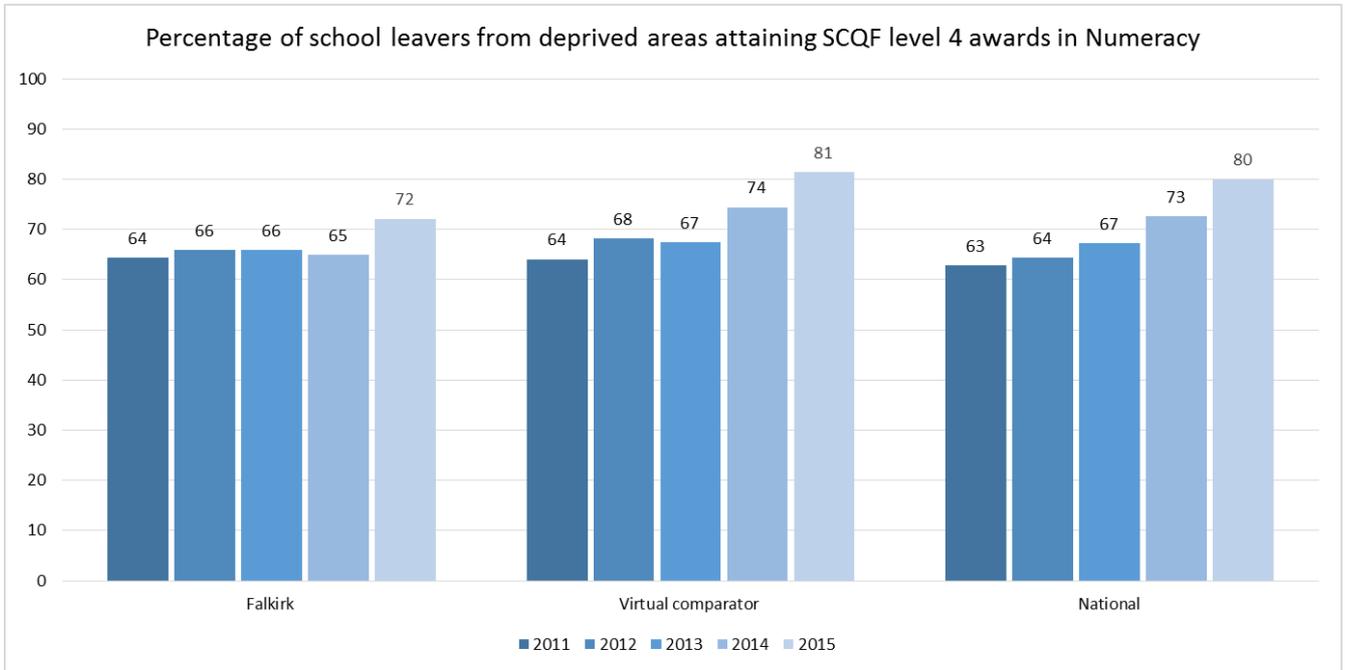
The chart below shows the percentage of school leavers from the 30% most deprived areas who attained Level 5 in Literacy compared to the equivalent cohorts in the VC and Nationally:



This shows that the level of attainment in the most deprived 30% of pupils at Level 5 in Literacy has improved between 2011 and 2015. This improvement is broadly in line with both the Virtual Comparator and the National average.

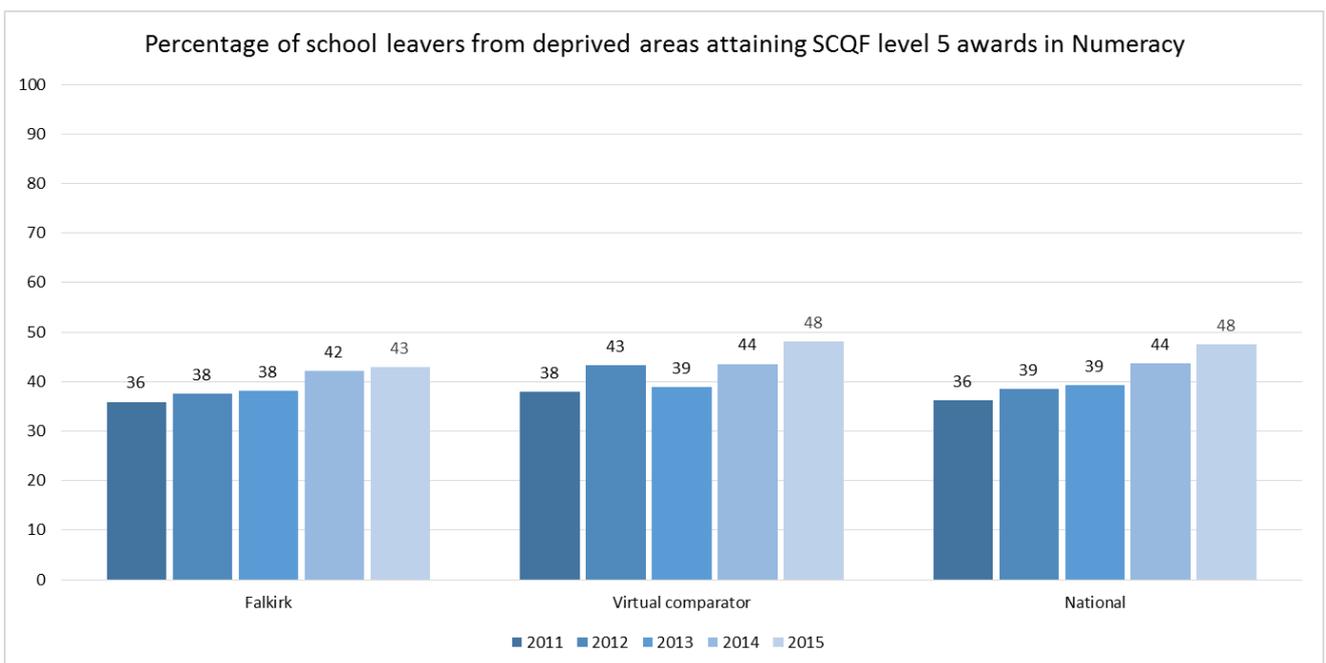
#### 6.4 Deprivation – attainment in Mathematics

The chart below shows the corresponding figures for Level 4 for the most deprived 30% in Numeracy:



This shows that there has been marked improvement in 2014-5, which, at 72%, is now 6 points above the previous peak attainment of 66% in 2011-12 and 2012-3.

The chart below shows attainment in the most deprived 30% at Level 5 Numeracy:

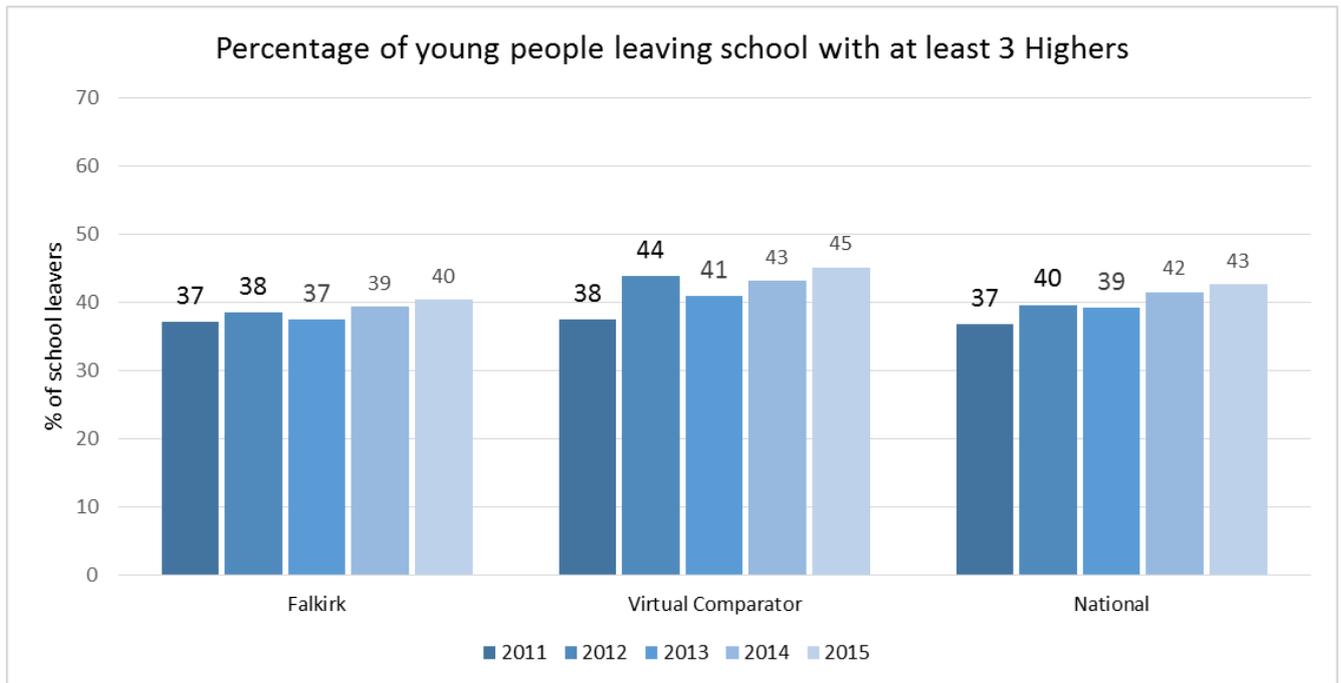


This shows that attainment in Numeracy at this Level has improved over time, from 36% attaining Level 5 in 2010-11 to its highest level to date, at 43% in 2014-5.

## 7. ATTAINMENT AT LEVEL 6

### 7.1 Attainment of Leavers with 3 or more Highers

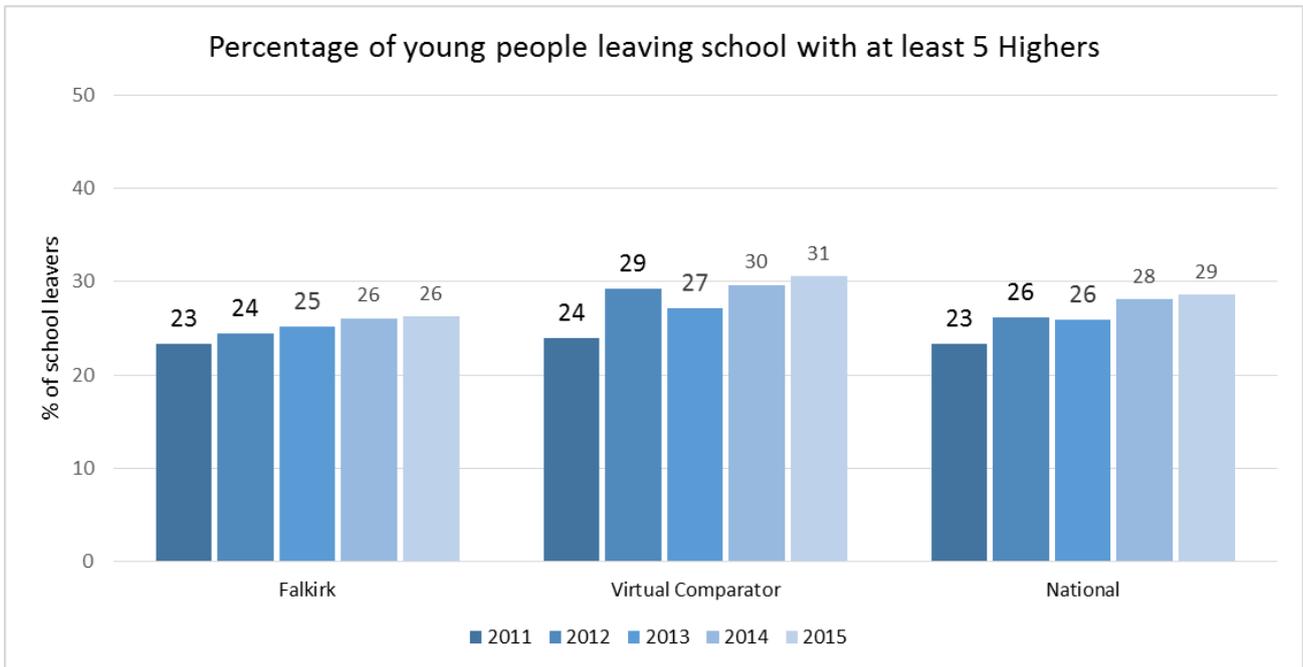
The following chart shows attainment over time (since 2010-11) in school Leavers gaining at least 3 Highers, with comparative data for the VC and at National level:



This shows that, since 2012-13, there has been a steady rise in attainment at this measure, from 37% in 2010-11 to 40% in 2014-5.

### 7.2 Attainment of Leavers with 5 or More Highers

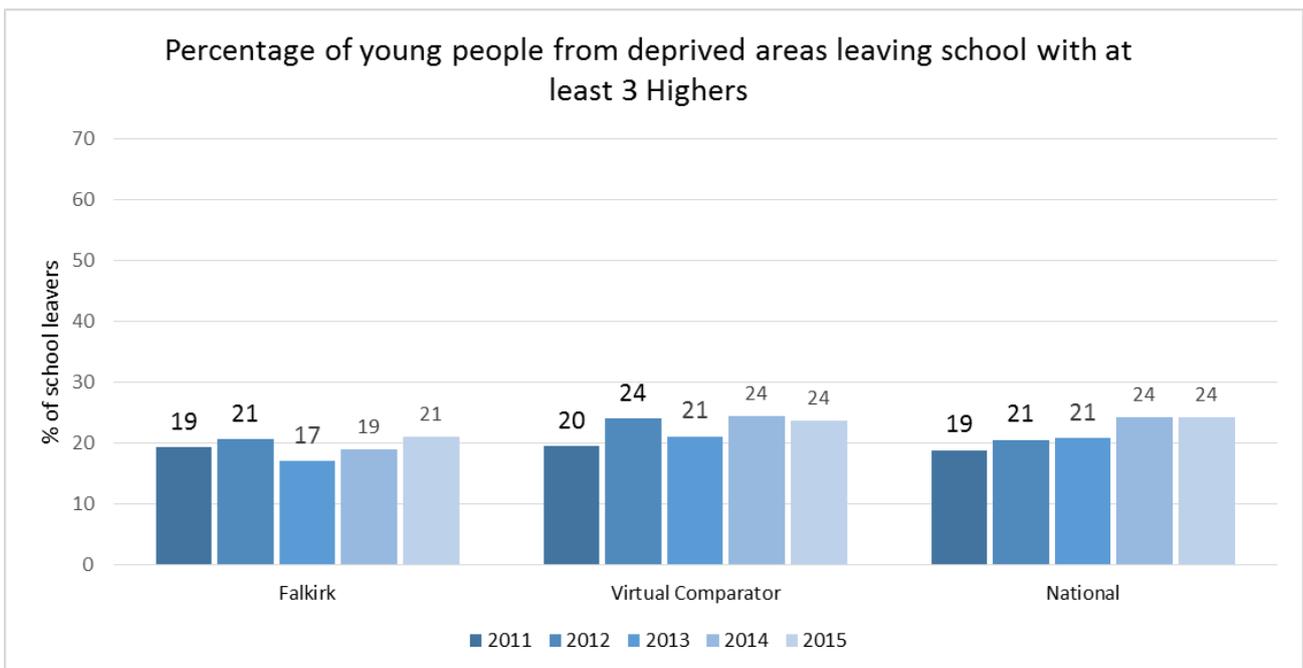
The following chart shows attainment over time (since 2010-11) in school Leavers gaining at least 5 Highers, with comparative data for the VC and at National level:



The level of attainment of leavers gaining at least 5 Highers has remained at 26% having risen since 2011.

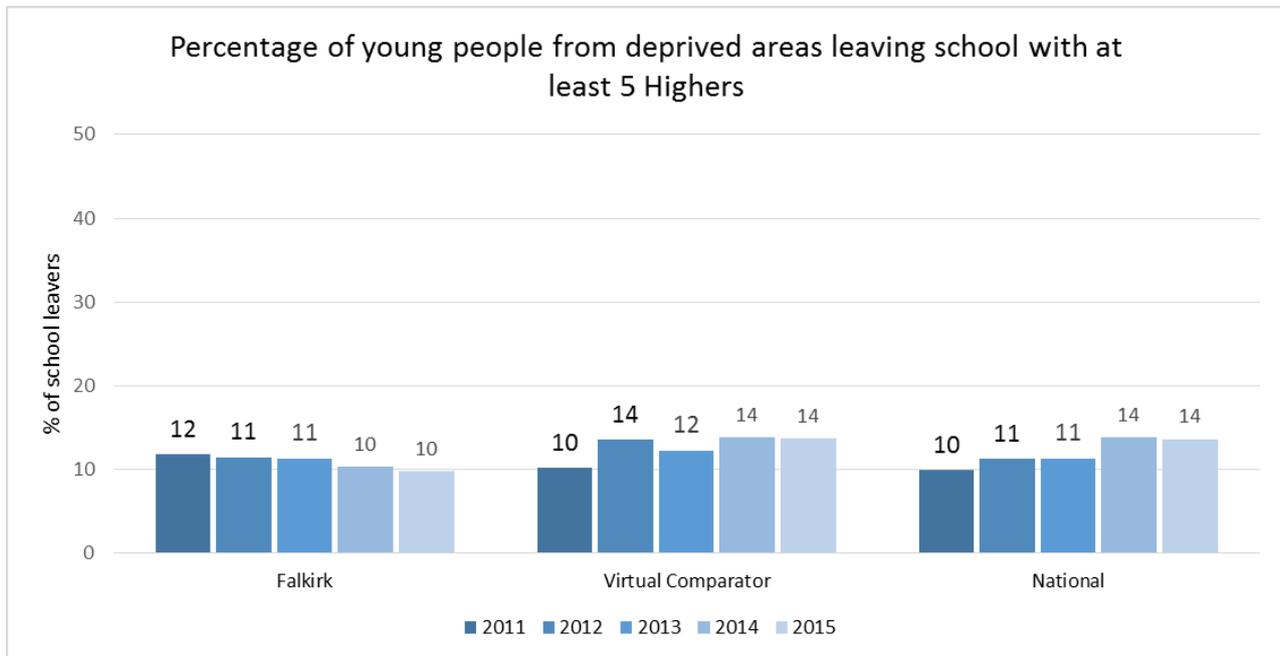
### 7.3 Deprivation – Attainment at 3 or More Highers

The following chart shows attainment by pupils living in the 30% most deprived areas in Falkirk Council and who gained at least 3 Highers:



This shows that attainment in this group in 2015 was at its equal highest level of 21%. It should be noted, however, that year-on-year comparison is militated against by the relatively small numbers of pupils in this group not only in Falkirk Council schools but also in the VC and Nationally.

The following chart shows the attainment of pupils living in the 30% most deprived areas in Falkirk Council and who gained at least 5 Highers:



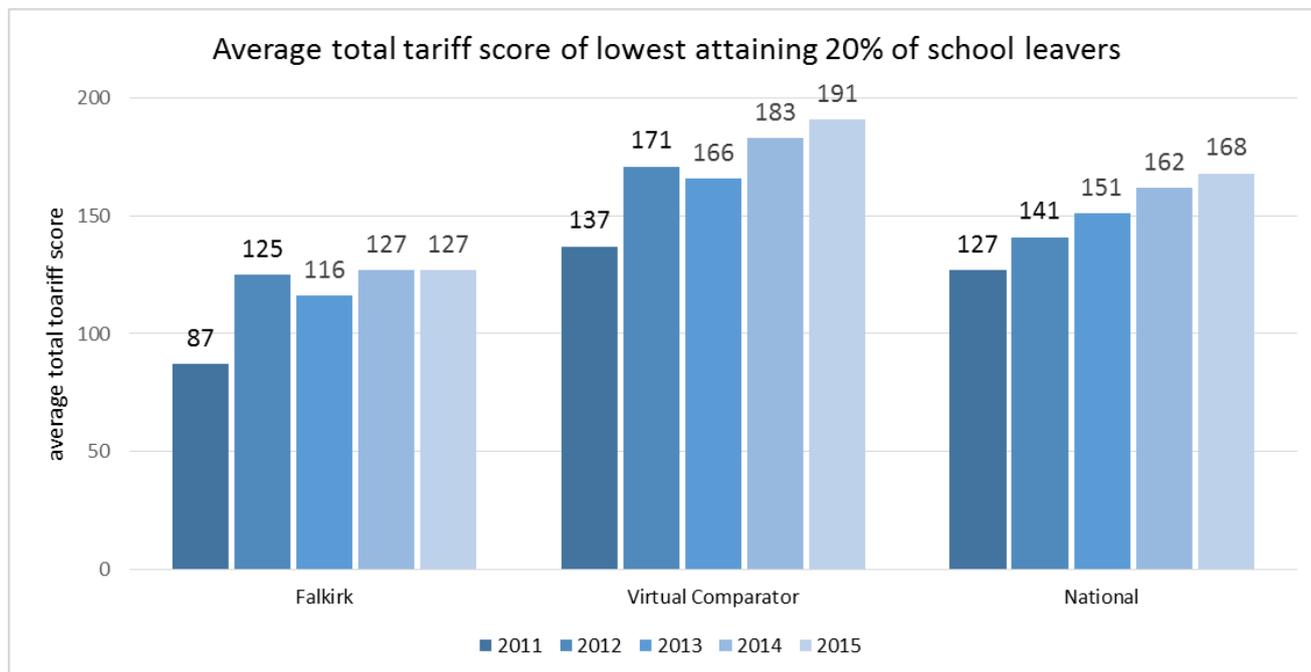
While the percentage of pupils in this group has declined in Falkirk Council schools since 2011, the number of pupils involved is again too small to make year-on-year comparison viable.

## 8. AVERAGE TOTAL TARIFF SCORE

- 8.1 Insight also provides schools and the authority with a tariff score. Each SCQF accredited unit and course carries a tariff 'score' (known as tariff points) based on the SCQF Level and grade achieved. A pupil's total 'tariff score' is the total of the tariff points achieved based on latest and best achievement at the point of exit from secondary school.
- 8.2 Tariff scores provide a means of capturing and displaying attainment data which allows schools and local authorities to compare attainment in a number of ways including between schools, local authorities, the Virtual Comparator or other breakdowns of cohorts in the Senior Phase.
- 8.3 Again, it should be noted that not all accreditation schemes that are followed in Falkirk Council schools are included in the Tariff Points (See 5.1.3).

#### 8.4 Average total tariff scores as shown by levels of attainment

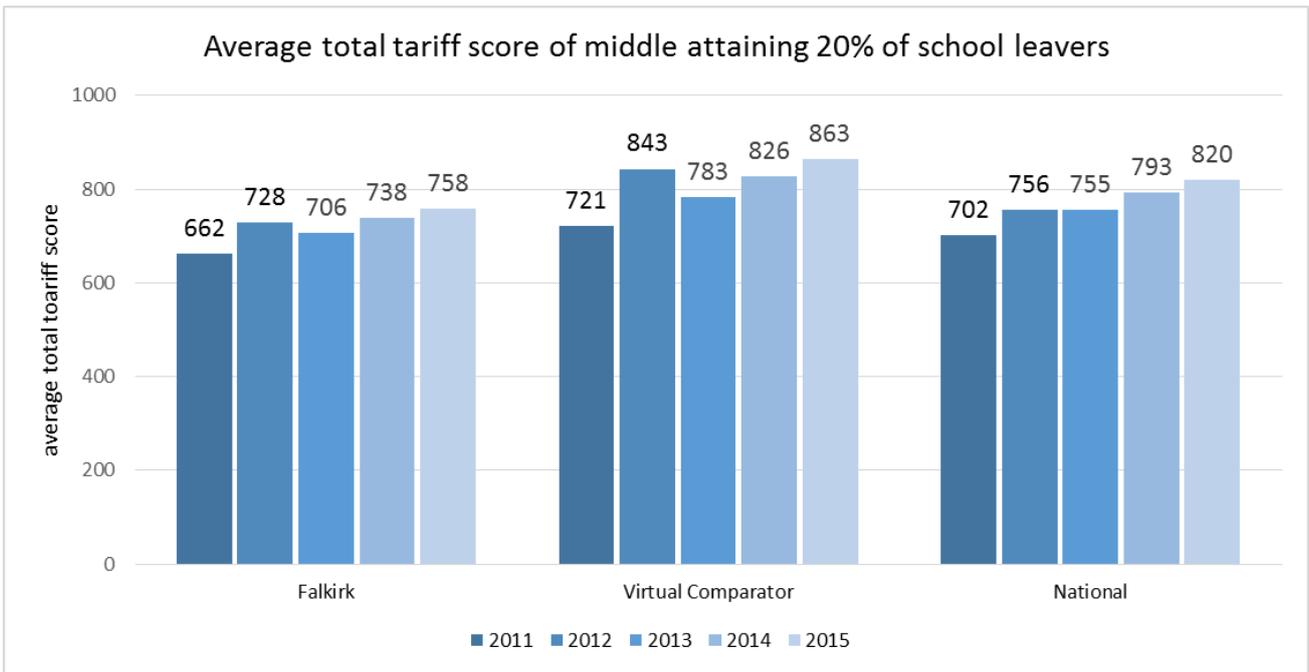
The chart below shows the average tariff scores of school leavers who fall into the lowest 20% of attainment:



This shows that, in 2015, the average total tariff score for this group was equal highest, maintaining the level of 2014. The apparently low average total tariff scores in Falkirk Council schools when compared to the VC and National figures can be explained by the fact that Falkirk Council's figures do not take account of S3 tariff points gained in S3 presentation (See Section 5.3).

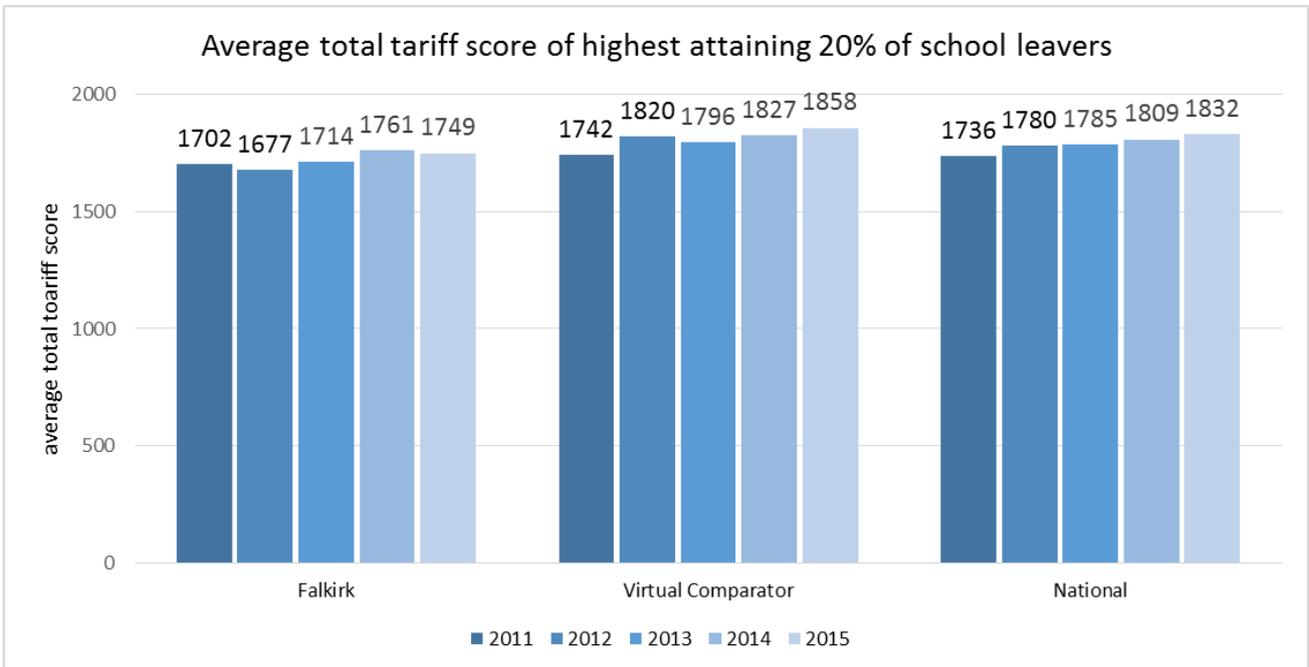
It should also be noted that many pupils in this category achieved success through accreditation in assessments not reported through Insight (See 5.1.3).

The chart below shows the average total tariff points for the middle attaining 20% of school leavers:



This shows that there has been a steady gain in attainment in this group while not taking account of accreditation gained through other awarding bodies not reported by Insight and disregarding tariff points gained in Early Presentation.

The chart below shows the average total tariff points for the highest attaining 20% of school leavers:



Although there was a slight decline in the total tariff points in the 2015 cohort of 20% of highest attaining school leavers, the figure remains the second highest in the last 5 years. Again, the figure is suppressed by the impact of Early Attainment.

## 8.5 Uptake and performance in specific subject areas

Schools are required to ensure that, while offering a broad range of subjects in the Senior Phase, pupils are directed, at the point of course choice, to those courses that are the most appropriate and likely to lead to positive outcomes. This advice and direction is based on sound evidence being gained by Pastoral staff. This evidence takes account of:

- (i) each pupil's prior success and its appropriateness in preparing the pupil for a given course;
- (ii) the pupil's intended pathways to a positive destination; and
- (iii) the need for pupils to acquire appropriate life-long skills.

Accordingly, in session 2014-5, schools recorded a number of successes at Higher in terms of increasing uptake in a number of subjects while also maintaining a high level of success in those subjects:

The following subjects are particularly noteworthy in these respects:

Subject	Uptake (as percentage of original S4 cohort)				% pass rate (A-C)			
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015
Administration and IT	2	1	1	3	68	76	73	83
Biology	4	4	4	5	71	69	65	76
Drama	2	2	3	3	75	82	87	91
English	18	18	21	21	69	72	75	81
Physical Education	5	6	5	7	89	85	87	98
Spanish	1	1	1	3	84	95	87	88

The table shows that there have been steady improvements in attainment in English and Drama, that the decline in performance in Biology has been reversed and is now at its highest level to date and, similarly, performance in Physical Education has now significantly surpassed 2012 performance having declined in the intervening years.

## 9. **STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS - THE BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION AND SENIOR PHASE**

9.1 The Broad General Education phase in primary and secondary schools aims to provide pupils with a wide range of educational experiences that provide appropriate challenges, build on prior learning and prepare pupils for the Senior Phase and ultimately for life and work by ensuring that courses in S1-3 articulate appropriately with those in S4-6. .

9.2 In light of the above, Secondary schools are currently reviewing the quality of their S1- S3 CfE-based courses by working more closely with each other and with their associated primary schools to identify areas of good practice in planning and delivering the Broad General Education. In particular, secondary schools managements are expected to direct their Faculty Heads of English and Mathematics to:

- (i) make increased use of the well-analysed data (including Standardised test data) that is available through their Management Information Systems to identify and share good practice in planning and delivery of Reading and Mathematics through the appropriate Curriculum Management Groups (CMGs) and SDGs;

- (ii) evaluate their strategies for delivering literacy and numeracy across the curriculum to ensure that Reading and Mathematical skills are being promoted across all areas of the curriculum;
- (iii) work with colleagues in the associated primary schools to identify, share and implement in secondary departments good practice in active literacy and numeracy and ensure that programmes in Reading and Mathematics build on prior learning.
- (iv) capitalise on the newly-established e-networks for teachers of Mathematics and English, which promote sharing of planning, teaching practice, assessment and resources.

9.3 To support secondary schools in assessing attainment in S1 to S6, a shared understanding of CfE Levels will be enhanced through application of the forthcoming 'Achieving a Level' documents. Through shared development work at departmental level and through the Subject Development Groups (SDGs), schools will be able to make fair comparison between their relative performance in Reading and Mathematics.

9.4 Between September and November 2015, each secondary school was the subject of a School Improvement Meeting to review the school's progress. These meetings were attended by the Convenor or Vice Convenor, Head of Service for Education and officers from the centre. Each school's Senior Management Team was questioned regarding:

- Attainment 2015
- Supports provided for Pupils with Additional Support Needs
- The school's pupil destination data
- Pupil attendance and absence (including 3 selected pupils with attendance under 70%)
- Exclusions
- Curricular transitions (viz: P7 to S1; BGE to Senior Phase; Developing Young Workforce/preparation for post school)
- Consortia arrangements for study in other Council schools
- General and specific staffing issues
- Using Insight to challenge Faculties

9.5 As a result of these meetings, Falkirk Council Children's Services have identified the following areas for development:

- (i) More robust tracking and monitoring of individual pupils is expected in both the Broad General Education years and Senior Phase.
- (ii) A number of Depute Head Teachers from Larbert HS and Graeme HS visited schools elsewhere in Scotland which had been judged to be 'Excellent' in their self-evaluation. Ways of strengthening the quality of tracking and monitoring were identified. Larbert HS is now using its Management Information System to monitor more effectively pupil progress in S1 to S3.

Further initiatives have been put in place to raise attainment in secondary schools:

- (i) Courses are being further refined and improved as teachers gain experience of presenting for the new Curriculum for Excellence-based examinations at all stages.
- (v) Schools are making increased use of the well-analysed data (including Standardised test data) that is available through their Management Information Systems to identify and share good practice in planning and delivery of all Senior Phase courses through the CMGs and SDGs;

- (vi) Schools capitalise on the newly-established e-networks for teachers of Mathematics and English, which promote sharing of planning, teaching practice, assessment and resources.
- (vii) Pupils are increasingly making better-informed course-choices, from a widening range of options, to ensure that they select courses which will optimise their chances of performance.
- (viii) Head Teachers and their Depute HTs with responsibility for data analysis attended, at the beginning of March 2016, a CPD event on making best use of Insight in gathering and interpreting data.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Members of Education Executive are asked to**

- 10.1 note the analysis of the Standardised Tests in Falkirk Council’s primary and secondary schools, and the attainment in the Senior Phase of secondary schools.**
- 10.2 request the Director of Children’s Services to implement the strategies already in place and planned to further improve performance in:**
  - (i) Literacy and Numeracy in Falkirk Council schools and nurseries;**
  - (ii) the Senior Phase of secondary schools.**

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**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

**Date: 16 March 2016**

Contact Officer: Tony Bragg, Team Manager (Performance Management), ext 6624.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL