



Agenda Item 6(b)

**Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
– Attainment in Falkirk in 2017-18**

Falkirk Council

Title: Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) – Attainment in Falkirk in 2017/18

Meeting: Education Executive

Date: 26 March 2019

Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report follows on from the previous report to the Education Executive in September 2018 on the attainment of Falkirk's senior phase pupils in session 2017/18. The purpose of the current report is to advise on the attainment of young people leaving Falkirk Council's secondary schools in 2017/18. The report therefore focuses solely on point of exit data.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Education Executive is asked to:-

- (1) note Falkirk Council secondary school leavers' results for 2017/18;**
- (2) note the positive progress made by Falkirk Council pupils across a range of attainment measures; and**
- (3) request that the Director of Children's Services will continue to engage with schools on tracking and monitoring pupil's progress, and with partners in planning for positive leaver destinations.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) comprises a broad general education up to the end of S3 followed by a senior phase of learning from S4 to S6.
- 3.2 During the senior phase a young person builds up a range of qualifications, following a curriculum pathway that best meets their needs and interests. The leavers cohort considered in this report will consist of young people exiting from the senior phase of their education variously at the end of S4, S5 and S6. The measures within the report tell us how well they have attained at their point of exit from school, and their destination beyond school (captured at a snapshot date on 1st October 2018).

- 3.3 The qualification gained by our young people, the closing of the poverty related attainment gap and their destinations beyond school are some of the our measures of the impact schools are having in the delivery of the Council's priorities contained within our Corporate Plan 2017-2022.

People:

- Raising aspiration and ambition
- Reducing the impact of poverty on children and their families

- 3.4 The Corporate priorities are translated into the Educational Division Improvement Priorities 2018-19 under:

- Raise attainment for **every** child and young person and enable them to make excellent progress through their learning journey from 3-18 years.
- Closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- Improve positive destinations for Falkirk's young people.

- 3.5 This report provides an overview of the progress our schools are making to deliver on these priorities by raising attainment for our young people.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 The performance information for Falkirk Council schools in this report is benchmarked against the national average, 'Virtual Comparator' (VC) and where available, against that of the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) comprising of Falkirk, Stirling, Clackmannanshire and West Lothian Councils.

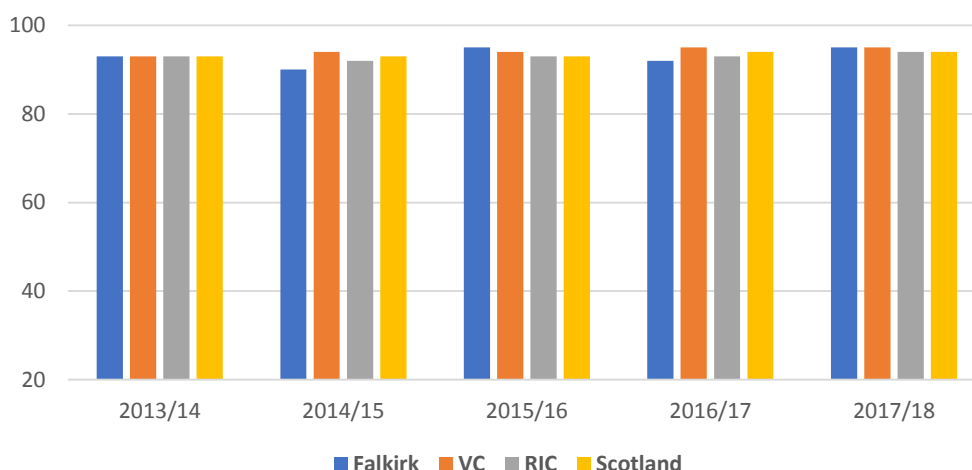
The VC is made up of pupils from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the pupils in our schools, based on their gender, additional support needs (ASN), level of deprivation (SIMD) and leaving stage. The VC calculation takes no account of characteristics such as Looked After status or Level of English, nor does it take account of varying curriculum structures in schools.

- 4.2 The Insight data shown in this report covers a five-year period and therefore includes performance information pre-dating the first diet of CfE qualifications in 2014. The Scottish Government has retrospectively calculated prior performance by aligning old and new qualifications. However, some caution should be used when making comparisons to data in 2013/14 particularly in literacy and numeracy.

School Leaver Destinations

- 4.3 In 2017/18, 1543 young people left Falkirk Council secondary schools – 136 at the end of S4, 415 in S5 and 992 in S6. The chart below shows the percentage of those school leavers entering a positive destination and compares Falkirk Council with the Virtual Comparator (VC), Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) and with the national average.

% of school leavers entering a positive destination



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	93	90	95	92	95
VC	93	94	94	95	95
RIC	93	92	93	93	94
Scotland	93	93	93	94	94

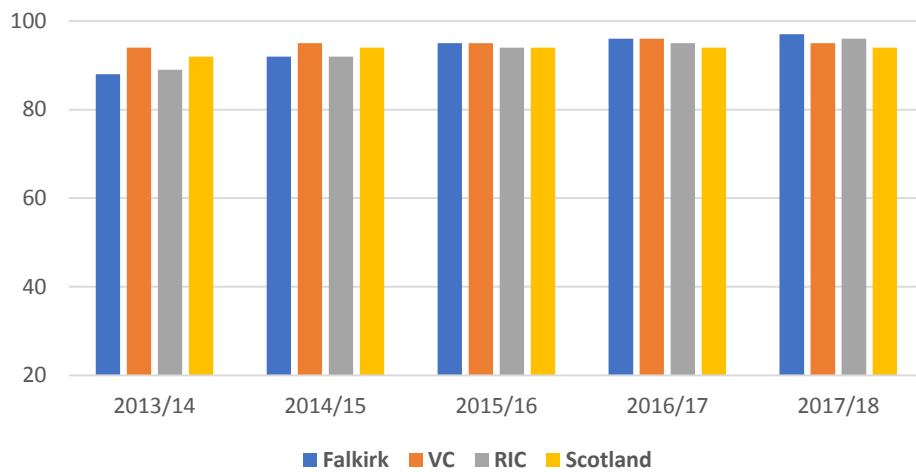
- 4.4 Falkirk schools have seen an improving trend over the past decade and the 2017/18 figure of 95% matches that of 2015/16 figure, which was previously the highest figure for Falkirk Council.
- 4.5 The percentage of Falkirk leavers in a positive destination at the time of the snapshot (1st October 2018) is now in line with that of the VC and is above the RIC and national average.
- 4.6 Of the 84 leavers not in a positive destination, 14 were *Unemployed Not Seeking*. This can be for a variety of reasons but is usually due to long term physical or mental health problems. Of the remaining 70 young people, 61 were *Unemployed Seeking*, and 9 were of *Not Known* status.
- 4.7 Compared to the previous year, a higher percentage of the 2017/18 leaver cohort went into Further Education and Higher Education. Overall, fewer young people were *Unemployed Seeking*, *Unemployed Not Seeking* and on an *Activity Agreement*. This improvement represents the co-ordinated work that is ongoing in our schools to raise the ambition and aspiration of our young people.

Leavers' Attainment in Literacy

- 4.8 Raising attainment in literacy is a priority for Falkirk Council schools. Improved literacy, in turn, allows young people to access the full curriculum and move on to positive destinations.
- 4.9 The charts below show the attainment trend in literacy at Level 4 and Level 5. Level 4 literacy has improved year on year for the past five years and is now above the VC, RIC and national average. Level 5 literacy has shown a similar trend although the rate of improvement has been greater – there has been a

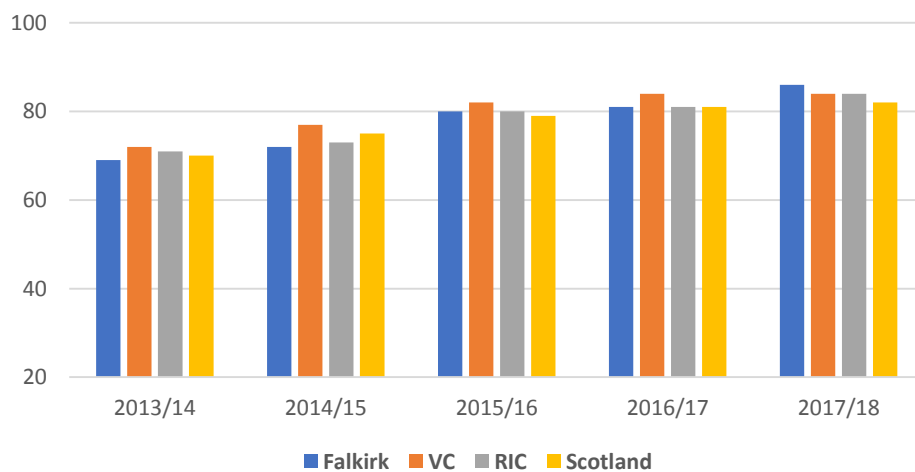
14% increase in L5 literacy since 2014/15. Again the Falkirk figure is above the VC, RIC and national average.

% of school leavers with Level 4 Literacy



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	88	92	95	96	97
VC	94	95	95	96	95
RIC	89	92	94	95	96
Scotland	92	94	94	94	94

% of school leavers with level 5 Literacy



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	69	72	80	81	86
VC	72	77	82	84	84
RIC	71	73	80	81	84
Scotland	70	75	79	81	82

4.10 Further analysis of the data shows that 98% of the S6 leavers achieved L5 literacy or better.

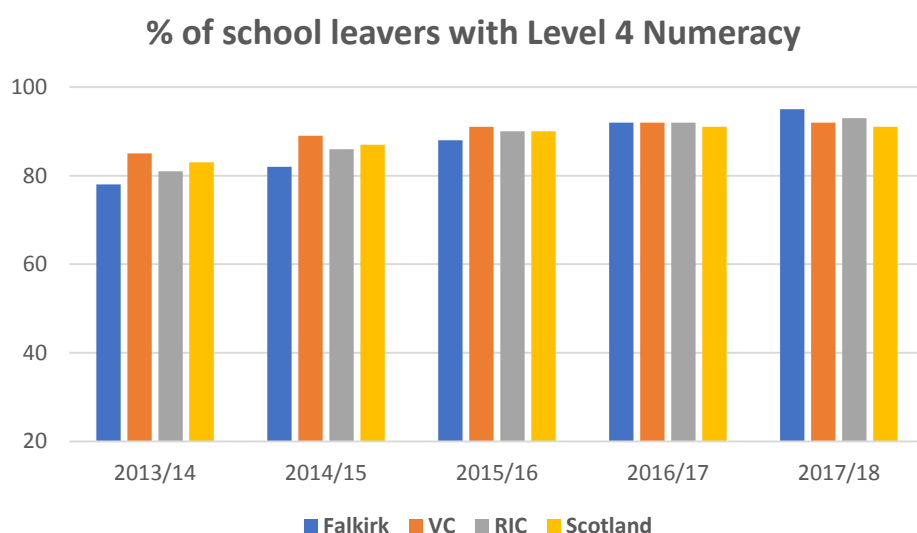
4.11 When ranked against other local authorities in Scotland, Falkirk is in 5th place overall for attainment of L4 and L5 literacy. This places Falkirk in the top quartile of all local authorities in Scotland.

4.12 Schools have achieved this improvement in literacy through a focus on developing literacy across the curriculum led by school appointed literacy co-ordinators. It can also be attributed to improvements in tracking and monitoring of pupil progress and work across clusters.

Leavers' Attainment in Numeracy

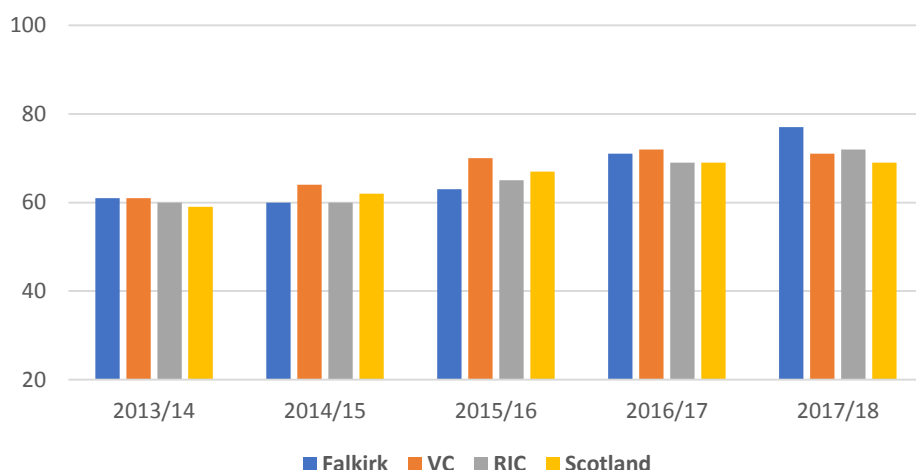
4.13 As with literacy, numeracy remains a key skill for young people in learning, life and work and in combination with literacy, is linked to positive outcomes for young people.

4.14 The charts below show school leavers' performance in Level 4 and Level 5 numeracy. Again, there has been improvement across both measures and Falkirk is clearly ahead of the VC, RIC and national average. At Level 4, Falkirk has moved from being 7% behind the VC in 2014/15 to 3% ahead in 2017/18 even though the VC has also improved during this time. The rate of improvement at Level 5 has been greater, improving by 17% since 2014/15.



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	78	82	88	92	95
VC	85	89	91	92	92
RIC	81	86	90	92	93
Scotland	83	87	90	91	91

% of school leavers with Level 5 Numeracy

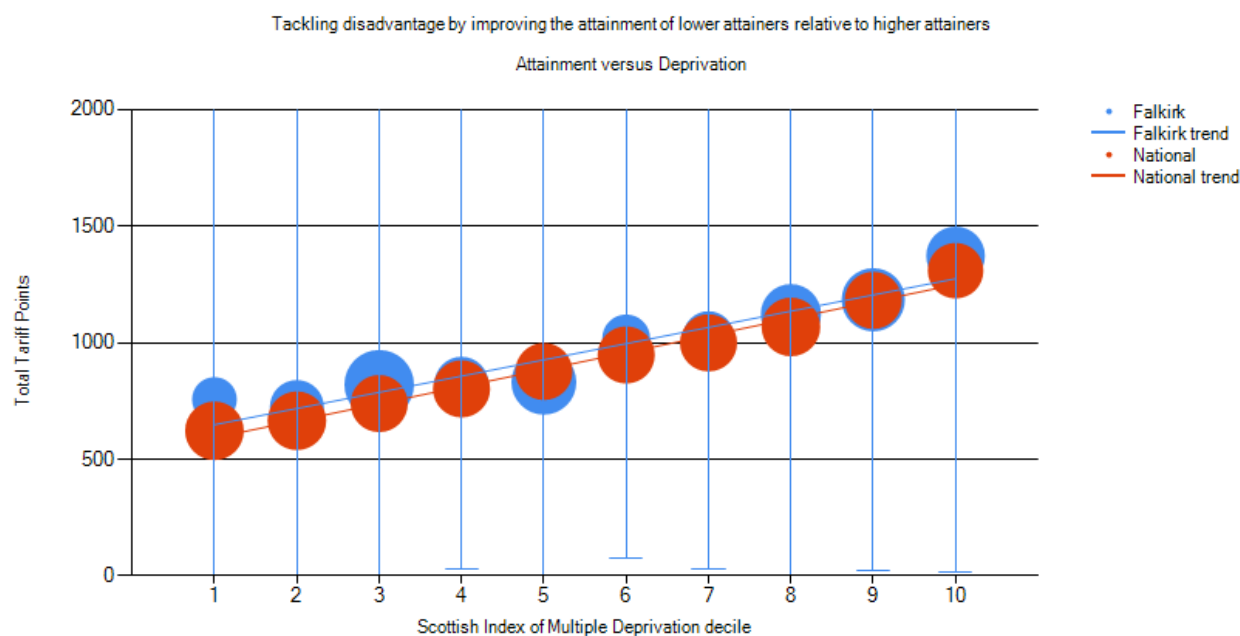


	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	61	60	63	71	77
VC	61	64	70	72	71
RIC	60	60	65	69	72
Scotland	59	62	67	69	69

- 4.15 Further analysis of the data shows that 91% of the S6 leavers achieved L5 numeracy or better. This is significantly better than the 2014/15 figure of 79%.
- 4.16 When ranked against other local authorities in Scotland, Falkirk is in 5th place overall for attainment of L4 and L5 numeracy. This places Falkirk in the top quartile of all local authorities in Scotland.
- 4.17 The Service currently has a dedicated numeracy officer who is working with schools to increase staff understanding of progression in mathematics and numeracy across the early years, primary and secondary sectors. This will continue to support pupil progress in numeracy, from the early years through to the point of exit from school.

Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap

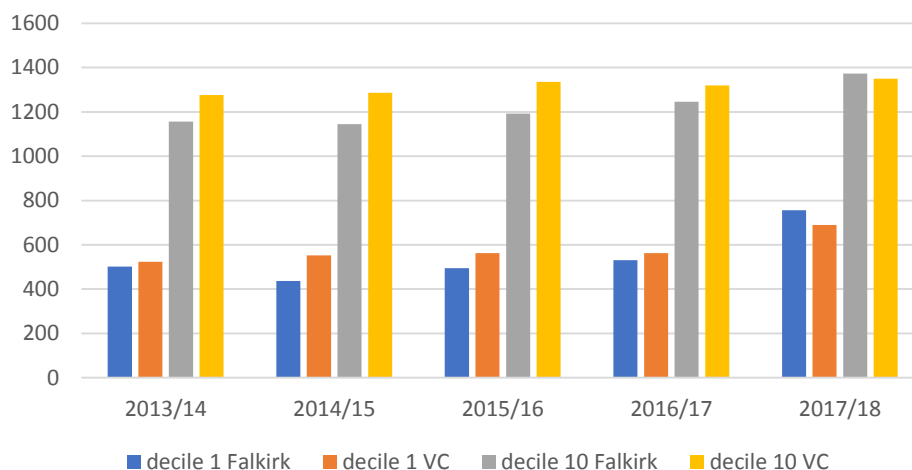
- 4.18 Tackling disadvantage and 'closing the gap' are key priorities both nationally and for Falkirk Council schools. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) allows local authorities to analyse attainment in relation to deprivation. By doing so, schools can more clearly identify where intervention is required.
- 4.19 The chart below shows the total tariff points of Falkirk Council's school leavers in 2017/18 compared with the national average. Every qualification gained by a young person attracts tariff points and these have been totalled and averaged for each decile. The size of the 'bubbles' in the chart relates to the number of leavers who reside in that decile.



2017/18	SIMD 1	SIMD 2	SIMD 3	SIMD 4	SIMD 5	SIMD 6	SIMD 7	SIMD 8	SIMD 9	SIMD 10
Number of leavers - Falkirk	77	133	247	133	206	98	115	177	198	159
Falkirk average tariff points	756	724	820	824	831	1018	1026	1123	1184	1373
National average tariff points	622	665	739	802	877	948	999	1068	1182	1309

4.20 The chart below shows the improvement trend for leavers living in the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas in Falkirk. The improvement since 2014/15 has been significant, particularly for young people living in areas of deprivation. In 2014/15, children living in decile 1 achieved 436 tariff points compared to 756 in the current data. This improvement of 320 tariff points represents, on average, an additional 5 passes in National 5 courses per pupil. An improvement in decile 10 is also evident with an increase of 228 points since 2014/15. This represents, on average, an additional pass at Higher and National 5 per pupil. In both deciles, Falkirk has come from behind the VC to ahead of the VC. When ranked against other local authorities, Falkirk is the fourth highest performing authority for leavers living in decile 1 and fifth for those in decile 10. This again places Falkirk in the top quartile.

Tariff score of SIMD decile 1 & 10

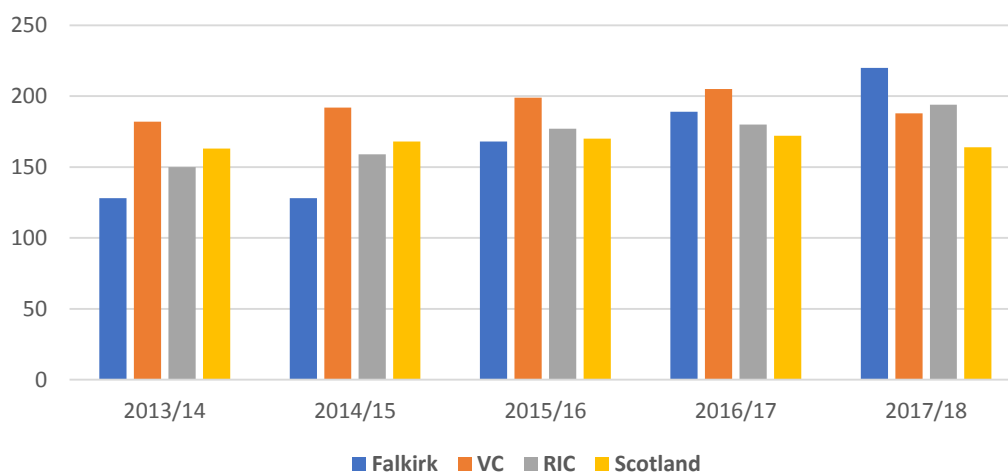


- 4.21 Although the data shows that there is a gap between the most and least deprived leavers, which is also the national pattern, it clearly shows that the gap in Falkirk has narrowed. More of our young people are leaving school with a greater number of qualifications resulting in better outcomes.
- 4.22 These improvements can be attributed to a number of factors including developments in tracking and monitoring of pupil progress; changes in curriculum structures allowing pupils to progress on different pathways; targeted interventions and greater partnership working.

Improving Attainment for All

- 4.23 This is a national benchmarking measure which examines the 'spread' of attainment across the leaver cohort. It compares the performance of the lowest attaining 20% of pupils with the middle 60% and highest 20% of attaining pupils - with a view to improving the attainment for all pupils.
- 4.24 The chart below shows the average tariff points for Falkirk's lowest attaining 20% of school leavers, compared with the VC, RIC and the national average. The improvement that was evident last year has continued and Falkirk is now above the VC and clearly ahead of the RIC and national average. Falkirk is ranked 6th for performance in this measure, which places the council in the top quartile in Scotland.

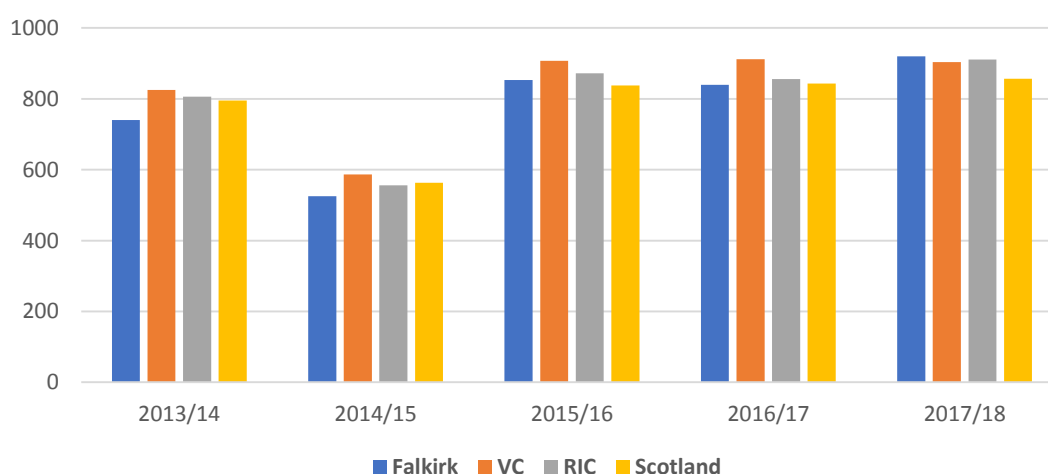
tariff score of lowest attaining 20% of school leavers



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	128	128	168	189	220
VC	182	192	199	205	188
RIC	150	159	177	180	194
Scotland	163	168	170	172	164

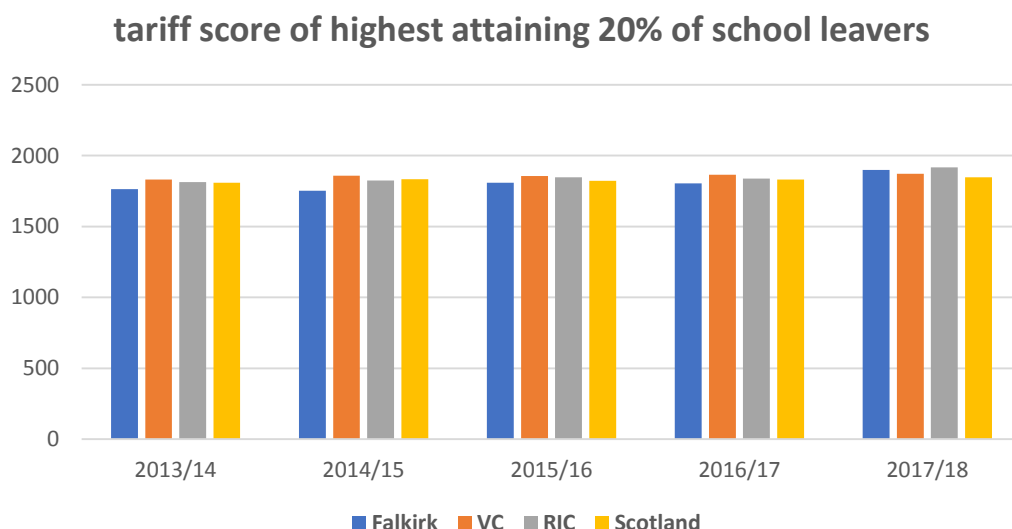
4.25 The chart below shows the average tariff points for the middle attaining 60% of school leavers and this year's figure is the highest to date. Falkirk has come from behind the VC to now being slightly ahead of that group, and has moved slightly ahead of the RIC and national average. When ranked against other local authorities in Scotland, Falkirk is in 5th place overall for this measure and in the top quartile.

tariff score of middle attaining 60% of school leavers



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	740	525	853	840	920
VC	825	587	907	912	904
RIC	806	556	872	856	911
Scotland	795	563	838	843	857

- 4.26 The chart below shows the average tariff points for the highest attaining 20% of school leavers over a 5 year period, comparing Falkirk Council school leavers with the VC, RIC and the national average. Again, performance is the highest to date and Falkirk is now ahead of the VC and national average and only slightly behind the RIC. As a council, this places Falkirk 7th overall and in the top quartile in Scotland.

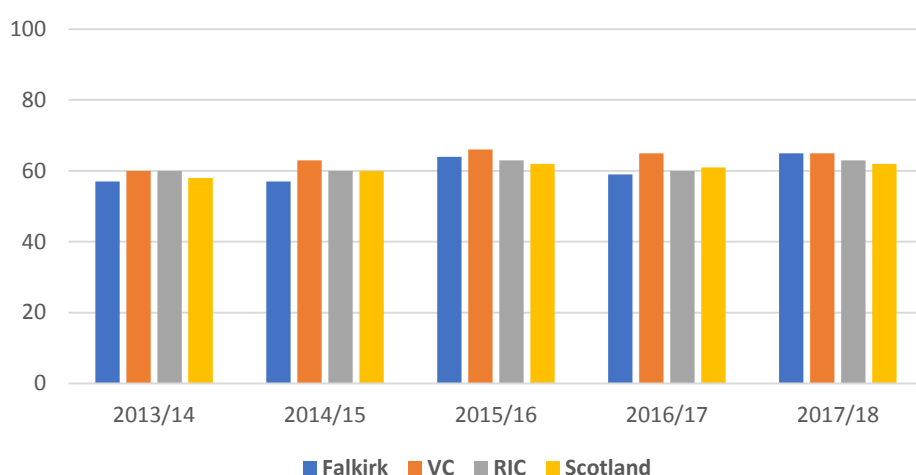


	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	1763	1752	1809	1804	1900
VC	1831	1858	1856	1866	1872
RIC	1813	1825	1847	1839	1918
Scotland	1810	1834	1823	1831	1848

Attainment at SCQF Level 6 (Higher)

- 4.27 As attainment at Higher level remains crucial to accessing further and higher education, it is important that we continue to monitor performance in these measures.
- 4.28 The chart below shows the percentage of young people leaving Falkirk Council schools with 1 or more Highers (A-C passes), compared with the VC, RIC and the national average. We have seen a 6% increase from last year and the figure of 65% is the highest to date. This moves Falkirk to a more favourable position when compared to others and is now in line with the VC, ahead of the RIC and the national average.

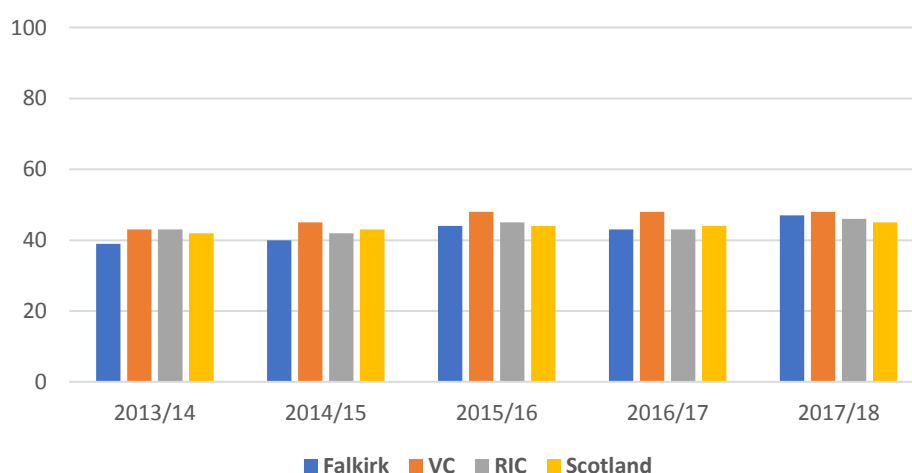
% of school leavers with 1 or more Highers



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	57	57	64	59	65
VC	60	63	66	65	65
RIC	60	60	63	60	63
Scotland	58	60	62	61	62

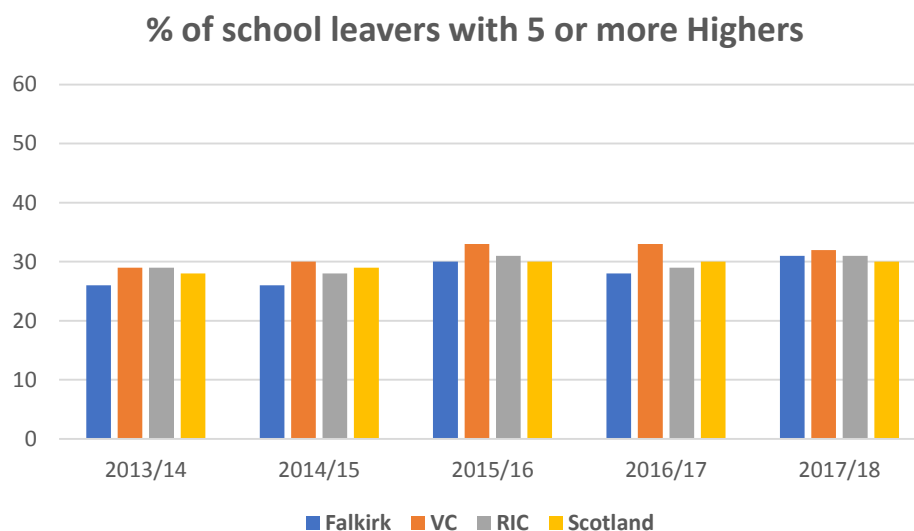
4.29 The chart below shows the percentage of young people leaving Falkirk Council schools with 3 or more Highers (A-C passes), compared with the VC, RIC and the national average. There has been a 4% increase since last year and this figure is the highest to date. Falkirk has narrowed the gap on the VC and is now only marginally behind however, the council is now ahead of the RIC and national average.

% of school leavers with 3 or more Highers



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	39	40	44	43	47
VC	43	45	48	48	48
RIC	43	42	45	43	46
Scotland	42	43	44	44	45

- 4.30 The chart below shows the percentage of young people leaving Falkirk Council schools with 5 or more Highers (A-C passes). The figure of 31% is the highest to date, having increased by 3% from last year. Falkirk is now only narrowly behind the VC, in line with the RIC and ahead of the national average.



	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Falkirk	26	26	30	28	31
VC	29	30	33	33	32
RIC	29	28	31	29	31
Scotland	28	29	30	30	30

- 4.31 Improvements in performance can be attributed to a number of factors including developments in tracking and monitoring of pupil progress; changes in curriculum structures allowing pupils to progress on different pathways; targeted interventions and greater partnership working. Although these figures do not appear to be as strong as the other indicators, this is because the measure focuses on one aspect of what is achieved in our schools. Falkirk Council secondary schools offer a range of HNCs and other certificated courses not included in this indicator. This approach better suits the needs of our young people which is evident in the School Leaver Destination figures.

5. Consultation

5.1 None.

6. Implications

Financial

6.1 None.

Resources

6.2 None.

Legal

6.3 None.

Risk

6.4 None.

Equalities

6.5 None.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

6.6 None.

7. Conclusion

7.1 This report provides an update on a range of measures within the Insight tool relating to the latest cohort of school leavers. Analysis of these measures reinforces the Service's identification of strengths and development needs.

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Director of Children's Services

Date: 27 February 2019

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Appendices

None

List of Background Papers

None