

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**  
**Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**  
**Date: 27 August 2013**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This paper reports on Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) attainment within Falkirk Council secondary schools in 2013. Additional information about the post-appeal performance over the five years from 2008 to 2012 is given as well as the comparison with the national average and that of our comparator authorities.
- 1.2 The current comparator authorities for Falkirk Council are Angus, Clackmannanshire, Fife, Moray and South Lanarkshire Councils.

**2. ATTAINMENT IN SQA EXAMINATIONS**

- 2.1 The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) places comparable qualifications into groups by SCQF Level as shown below.

<b>SCQF Level</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
3	Standard Grade (Foundation Level), Access 3 Clusters
4	Standard Grade (General Level), Intermediate 1
5	Standard Grade (Credit Level), Intermediate 2
6	Higher
7	Advanced Higher

- 2.2 The average post-appeal performance of Falkirk Council's secondary schools at each SCQF Level over the last five years is given below together with the average figures for our comparator authorities and for Scotland. Pre-appeal SQA performance for 2013 is an estimate produced from the schools management information systems. Figures will be confirmed by the Scottish Government later in the session, when national and comparator authority figures will also be available.

The figures are quoted as a percentage of the appropriate S4 roll.

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 (pre-appeal)
By the end of S4:							
English and mathematics at SCQF Level 3 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	91	95	95	96	95	96
		92	93	93	93	94	
		91	93	94	94	94	
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 3 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	89	92	93	93	94	93
		91	92	92	93	94	
		90	91	93	93	94	
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 4 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	72	77	79	80	82	82
		76	78	78	79	80	
		77	78	78	78	79	
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 5 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	33	35	35	36	38	38
		34	35	36	36	37	
		33	34	33	34	35	
By the end of S5:							
1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	37	39	44	44	47	48
		39	41	43	45	47	
		37	40	42	43	46	
3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	19	21	25	24	27	26
		22	23	25	26	27	
		20	21	23	24	25	
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	7	8	12	9	13	12
		10	11	11	12	13	
		7	9	9	10	11	
By the end of S6:							
3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	26	30	31	35	35	38
		20	31	33	35	37	
		28	29	32	33	35	
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	15	17	20	24	23	25
		20	21	22	24	26	
		18	18	21	21	23	
1 or more awards at SCQF Level 7 or better	Falkirk Scotland CAs	11	11	13	16	14	17
		13	14	15	16	16	
		12	13	15	15	15	

Note: 2008-2012 post-appeal figures provided by the Scottish Government; 2013 pre-appeal figures provided by schools management information systems (SEEMIS). Some of the 2013 measures may subsequently rise once the annual appeal process has been completed by the SQA.

### 3. ATTAINMENT BY THE END OF S4

- 3.1 Attainment in English and mathematics at SCQF level 3 (Standard Grade Foundation level) or better by the end of S4 is 1% higher than last year's post-appeal figure and is the same as the previous year. Attainment in English and mathematics is now 5% higher than it was 5 years ago (2008).

- 3.2 Attainment of 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 3 (Standard Grade Foundation level) or better by the end of S4 is 1% lower than last year's post-appeal figure, and is the same as the previous 2 years. Attainment of 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 3 is now 4% higher than in 2008.
- 3.3 Attainment of 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 4 (Standard Grade General level) or better by the end of S4 is the same as last year's post-appeal figure, and equals its highest recorded level, being 10% higher than in 2008.
- 3.4 Attainment of 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 5 (Standard Grade Credit level) or better by the end of S4 is the same as last year's post-appeal figure, and equals its highest recorded level, being 5% higher than in 2008.

#### **4. ATTAINMENT BY THE END OF S5**

- 4.1 Attainment of 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S5 is 1% higher than last year's post-appeal figure, 11% higher than in 2008 and is at its highest level yet.
- 4.2 Attainment of 3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S5 is 1% lower than last year's post-appeal figure, and higher than all previous years. It is now 7% higher than 2008
- 4.3 The attainment of 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S5 is 1% lower than last year's post-appeal figure and is 5% higher than 2008.

#### **5. ATTAINMENT BY THE END OF S6**

- 5.1 Attainment of 3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S6 is 3% higher than last year's post-appeal figure, 12% higher than 5 years ago, and is now at its highest recorded level.
- 5.2 Attainment of 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S6 is 2% higher than last year's post-appeal figure, 10% higher than 2008, and is now at its highest recorded level.
- 5.3 Attainment of 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher) by the end of S6 is 3% higher than last year's post-appeal figure, 6% higher than 2008, and is now at its highest recorded level.
- 5.4 Despite some recent media concerns over the relative difficulty of the Higher Mathematics paper (with the national pass rate dropping by 0.8%) the Falkirk pre-appeal pass rate for S5/6 has risen from 71% of entries (2012) to 74% of entries (2013).

#### **6. ACTION WITHIN THE AUTHORITY**

- 6.1 School staff are trained in the detailed analysis of SQA examination results. This helps them to analyse performance in each subject area, identify areas of weakness and take appropriate action to improve attainment.

- 6.2 Authority officers hold a review meeting with each secondary school on an annual basis at which there is detailed discussion of attainment at whole school and subject level. Improvements are recognised and strategies for further improvement are discussed. The attainment and achievements of vulnerable groups such as looked after children and pupils at risk of underperforming are also scrutinised.
- 6.3 Within each secondary school, senior managers and principal teachers also analyse examination results and discuss strategies for improvement. This is then incorporated into school improvement planning.
- 6.4 Principal teachers also meet together on a subject basis within Curriculum Management Groups to identify strategies for improvement.
- 6.5 A focus on effective learning and teaching as part of Curriculum for Excellence is having a positive impact and pupils' awareness of their progress and is helping them to take increased responsibility for their own learning.
- 6.6 Increasing use is being made of attainment data to set targets with pupils for individual subjects. Progress towards these targets is then monitored by principal teachers, pastoral staff and senior management within secondary schools. Mentoring schemes are also in place to provide targeted and proportionate support to pupils as required.
- 6.7 The Secondary School Improvement Partnership (SSIP) takes the opportunity to consider the examination results at school and authority level, and will continue to share expertise and agree strategies to drive forward key priorities and improvements.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 **The Education Executive is asked to note the SQA attainment of our schools and the strategies outlined to further improve performance.**

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**Director of Education**

**Date:** 16 August 2013

Contact Officer: Alex Black, Quality Improvement Manager, ext 6629.

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL