

#### **Falkirk Council**

Title: National Improvement Framework –

**Standards and Quality Report 2018** 

Meeting: Education Executive

Date: 6 November 2018

Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides details of Children's Services first Standards and Quality Report. This report is an evaluation summary of the impact of the Education Division NIF Plan, approved in September 2017 under the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and seeks approval from the Education Executive to submit this to Education Scotland.

#### 2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Education Executive is asked to:-
  - (1) note the report;
  - (2) request that the Director of Children's Services publishes the report on the Falkirk Council website.

#### 3. Background

National Improvement Framework (NIF)

- 3.1 The NIF for Scottish Education was launched by the First Minister in January 2016. The Framework supports the ambition to achieve excellence and equity for every child in Scotland. The NIF is updated annually. The most recent edition: 2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education, Achieving Excellence and Equity, was published in January 2018.
- 3.2 The NIF is underpinned by a series of new planning and reporting duties designed to support transparency and accountability around the efforts of the Scottish Government and Education Authorities to improve educational outcomes. These legal duties (integrated into the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 through Part 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016), will be accompanied by new statutory guidance. This provides Education Authorities with support in:

- interpreting the duties; and
- identifying the practical steps they should take in order to meet their new legal responsibilities.
- 3.3 As a Council, we are required to prepare and publish an annual Standards and Quality Report. This is our first report prepared under the National Improvement Framework and provides an evaluation summary of progress and improvements in relation to the Education Division NIF Improvement Plan 2017-2018.

#### 4. Consultation

4.1 Officers have consulted with schools and central teams in the preparation of this report.

#### 5. Considerations

- 5.1 The Education Division has undertaken a self-evaluation exercise which has helped inform the draft report. This has helped to outline our next steps which feature directly in the Division's improvement plan, which was reported to the Education Executive in September 2018. The draft report, (Appendix 1), highlights the very good practice achieved by the Division, its early learning centres, schools and services. Evidence was drawn from various sources including:
  - attainment data;
  - reports on schools and early learning centres, from Education Scotland and the Service and School Improvement Team;
  - reports on early learning centres by Care Inspectorate Scotland; and
  - school and service improvement plans and Standards and Quality Reports.
- 5.2 This information was analysed and used to identify our priorities for the current academic year.
  - raise arraignment for every child and young person and enable them to make excellent progress through their learning journey 3-18yrs;
  - improve processes to support attainment and positive destinations for Falkirk's vulnerable children and young people; and
  - improve attainment and positive destinations for Falkirk's young people.

This plan was approved by the Education Executive in September 2018.

5.3 With the Education Executives approval, the Division plans to issue a summary report, via our website, to all parents and carers. The full report will also be available to be viewed online or downloaded via the Council's website.

#### 6. **Implications**

#### **Financial**

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### Resources

6.2 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

#### Legal

6.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### Risk

6.4 No risk implications have been identified.

### **Equalities**

6.5 An Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments will not be required.

### **Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

6.6 There are no implications for sustainability or environmental impact arising from this report.

#### 7. Conclusions

7.1 This is the Education Division's first Standards and Quality Report under the new national guidelines and provides an excellent overview of the work of the division during the 2017-2018 academic year.

Director of Children's Services

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Date: 11/10/2018

#### Appendix:

Appendix 1 - Falkirk Council, Education Division, Standards and Quality Report 2018

#### **List of Background Papers:**

None



# Falkirk Council Children's Services

**Standards and Quality Report 2017-2018** 



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### **Foreword**

Welcome to our Standards and Quality report for session 2017-2018.

This report provides the community of Falkirk Council with the performance information needed to understand how well Falkirk is improving education across the authority. These achievements have been supported by our staff and those who work in our partnership services and agencies. This report links to the key drivers of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and also to the Education Division Improvement Plan which clearly states how Falkirk Council intends to drive forward improvements over the coming year.

The children and young people of Falkirk continue to see rewards for their hard work and endeavour. Our attainment continues to improve and overall, is at an all-time high. More young people than ever before are moving on to positive destinations after school. School attendance continues to improve and exclusions are the lowest we have recorded.

Falkirk Council's staff and partners are committed to providing our children and young people with the best possible start in life. Our commitment to quality, training and leadership is ensuring that our schools are well placed to continue to deliver high quality learning and teaching opportunities to support this.

We continue to work collegiately and in partnership with our communities to deliver the far reaching changes arising as a result of national policy. I am confident that Falkirk is well placed to meet these new challenges and maximise the benefits these afford to our children and young people.

David Mackay
Head of Education









### Introduction

The Education Division is fully committed to continuous improvement; Our Improvement Plan for 2017 - 2018 outlined our vision, priorities and expectations in relation to raising educational attainment and achievement for all Falkirk's children and young people. At the heart of our work is our core policy "Learning to Achieve" working in tandem with our Council of the Future vision to "Make it Happen" for all Falkirk's families. This report is structured under these objectives.

This report aims to present an objective picture of Education Division's work based on a wide range of sources. The report looks at key areas of progress and concludes with the identified areas for continued improvement for session 2018 - 2019. Progress and achievements will be summarised under three themes of:

- Attainment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Employability

To avoid repetition and for clarity, progress related to Pupil Equity Funding will be covered within the Health and Wellbeing theme.

Last year has brought unprecedented levels of national direction and expectation for local authorities and for schools. We have worked in a climate of exceptional complexity in terms of financial challenges for local authorities and direct financial enhancement for schools through the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Overarching this, is the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework (NIF) series. This has the greatest implications for the Education Division and for schools. The NIF identifies four key priorities:

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

Through the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, our Early Learning Centres (ELCs), schools and services continue to improve experiences for children, young people and families. The Education Division is confident that it has improved evaluation processes to ensure further improvement across our schools and evidence of our commitment, and that of our ELCs and schools continuously improve.

The next steps outlined in the concluding section of this report will be addressed through the implementation of our Service Improvement Plan for session 2018 - 2019.









# **Learning to Achieve**

8 primary and 2 secondary schools have been awarded Digital School status by external verification. St Mungo's High school holds Microsoft Showcase school status for their use of digital technologies in learning.

Falkirk has 20 Microsoft Innovative Expert Teachers Scottish Education Award winners were Mariner Support Service: for Parents as Partners in Learning and the Larbert Cluster for their work developing 1+2 Languages. 81 Falkirk teachers are trained and accredited with Apple Teacher Status. This is one of the highest rates nationally. Falkirk Schools have the highest national rate for the use of Twitter to promote, celebrate and share learning and achievements.

Curriculum Support staff have delivered 64 ICT-related development opportunities to over 800 staff. These were made up of school-based, and central CLPL. In addition, there were several Digital TeachMeet events.

# **Making it Happen**

Falkirk Council School Improvement Framework (SIF): Our SIF Hub has been developed and created in Glow: Key policy documents related to raising attainment have been collated, these use an accessible and dynamic and digital format, reducing bureaucracy and widening access. This universal strategy hub for all users, links to other relevant strategies and guidance. All documents are live and regularly updated. Co-creation of the online SIF has centralised and unified strategies, support tools, co- ordination of ideas and tasks, and provided consistency of message across the division.

All establishments have access to a complete suite of centrally provided, relevant data sets which is enabling comparisons and moderation of performance with schools across the authority, within clusters and various geographical and comparative groups. This is enabling us to have consistent and robust conversations about data which helps us clearly identify our priorities.

Overall, we have sustained positive, improving performances in the Broad General Education (BGE) and in the Senior phase. Increased numbers of schools are using a range of effective assessment strategies to track and monitor children's progress, attainment and achievement. Centrally organised training in partnership with Scholar supported schools to prepare for the implementation and analysis of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs) in April/May 2018. This was undertaken successfully by our schools within the requested timescale. Results can be seen in Appendix 1 and 2.

To ensure that this incremental progress continues we developed our Leading Improvement – Evidencing Impact Programme. In partnership with our link Scottish Government Improvement Advisor we have created a bespoke programme for school senior leadership teams to support improvement planning. It is delivered through improvement coaching workshops.









# **Learning to Achieve**

#### To date:

- 322 children have been able to access 1140 hours in August 2018 2 years earlier than required.
- An additional 95 children enrolled to receive 1140 hours by June 2019.
- A total of 417/10% (planned uptake 4136 by 2020) children are receiving 1140 hours in session 18/19, ahead of the 2020 Implementation date set by the Scottish Government.
- 66 new staff appointments completed for start date of August 2018, including 23 ELC Assistants.
- We have achieved our target of increasing the number of MAs by 55% and are now supporting 45 MAs.
- 10 support for learning staff are also retraining as Early Years Officers.

# **Making it Happen**

We revised support and guidance for School Improvement Planning, Standards and Quality Reporting, Planning and Monitoring of PEF spend and school self-evaluation. This has provided clarity and consistency of structure and expectation.

We have improved our processes for monitoring levels of exclusion and attendance across our schools. Our attendance remains in line with national averages. Schools are now provided with a monthly summary of attendance and late coming statistics for all pupils, this includes data for specific groups. Exclusion levels continue to reduce with a notable improvement in the secondary sector.

Falkirk 1140 by 2020: Our Early learning and Childcare Expansion Plan was submitted to the Scottish Government on 29 September 2017. Four schools piloted the delivery of 1140 hours and have provided invaluable feedback and support for the continued expansion of ELC provision. We are ahead of schedule in our extension, refurbishment and relocation work.

Early Learning and Childcare Modern Apprenticeships (MAs): As part of our overall approach to raising standards in the delivery of ELC we have overhauled the training programme for MAs. Two ELC practitioners were seconded for one year to support this development. They effectively took forward a more holistic approach to the assessment of trainees.









## **Making it Happen**

The number of school reviews undertaken has increased significantly. Primary and secondary Headteachers have made a very positive contribution to reviewing the process and participating as peer colleagues within the Service and School Improvement teams. Our strategy to include two peer HT colleagues, including an experienced team member has been effective. Colleagues have commented on the rigour and impact of the process. They also report that they returned to their own schools with a renewed sense of accountability and drive to improve self-evaluation, tracking, monitoring and improvement processes.

IT is used to support pupils in their study, with teachers increasingly using IT-based resources to motivate pupils. Pupils are also directed towards IT-based resources they can access at home to support their studies. Heriot Watt University's SCHOLAR programme provides online resources and individual tuition which pupils can access in school and at home.

Social media platforms are used well to create "learning communities" of practitioners and facilitate further sharing, debate and professional enquiry. Participation in monthly Twitter chats increased month on month, with noticeable successes being generated as a result. There are on average 30 colleagues engaging with this forum weekly. The ELC Facebook professional learning community has attracted more than 400 members since its launch in November 2017.









# **Achieve** Learning to Achieve

- 86% of schools and 50% of ELC classes inspected by HMI were evaluated as good or better.
- 100% of ELCs, including Private Partner providers received evaluations of good or better from the Care Inspectorate.
- 73% of these were very good or better.
- 43% of Falkirk's Headteachers are undertaking Professional Learning with SCEL.
- 42 colleagues from across all sectors are currently engaged in Masters level study with a focus on school improvement as part of FC programmes, SCEL and Universities.
- 96% of participants consistently rate the increased range of professional development opportunities delivered by the Service and School Improvement Team (SSI) as highly relevant to supporting their current work.



# **Making it Happen**

Our ELC Workforce Development and Quality Strategy was in place by January 2018 providing an overview of expectations, support and measures for improvement for the ELC workforce. We have entered in to partnership with the University of Edinburgh for the delivery of the Froebel Course. There are currently 30 practitioners across 10 schools involved. A number of important practitioner networks have been established to support staff in taking forward early learning priorities. Staff have commented on the benefit of learning from peers about effective and emerging practice.

Our Early Learning Leadership Forums are providing senior leaders with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of early childhood development, pedagogical leadership, early level curriculum development and effective quality assurance. In May 2018, 30 practitioners, mainly school-based and including the Education Psychology Service and Speech and Language Therapy Services, were trained in Sustained Shared Thinking by a leading expert in the field from Sussex University. This provides managers with a helpful framework which complement our FC Progression Pathways.

In June 2018, we held a highly successful Saturday conference for practitioners to support the implementation of 'Play is the Way': play-based learning in nursery and early stages of primary school. The conference was attended by some 160+ practitioners. The conference was rated 'excellent' by all participants. A significant number asked for this to be an annual event. Early Learning and Childcare Modern Apprenticeships (MAs): As part of our overall approach to raising standards in the delivery of ELC we have overhauled the training programme for MAs. Two ELC practitioners were seconded for one year to support this development. They effectively took forward a more holistic approach to the assessment of trainees.

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# **Making it Happen**

Our bespoke Headteacher Leadership Development Programme (HTLDP) was launched in April 2017. This provided newly appointed, acting and established primary and secondary HTs with a series of 10 facilitated sessions. HT participants developed skills in criticality and leadership. They also increased their awareness of team resilience and the role of professional values. Associated professional reading has led to an increase in research based school improvement. HTs were better informed of operational systems which support them in their role. The HTLDP supported HTs in working towards their improvement agendas in school and fulfilling the responsibilities of their role, in line with GTCS Standards.

Across session 2017 - 2018 senior leaders, teachers and early learning practitioners have presented and facilitated improvement seminars to share effective practice that is impacting positively in raising attainment and improving outcomes for children and young people.

Leadership development has been a major focus for our improvement work. We have enabled our senior leaders to work together regularly. Of particular success has been the symposium approach, bringing together university researchers, Education Scotland/HMI colleagues, senior leaders, officers and practitioners from across the 4 collaborative authorities. Events using this structure are incorporated in to our Regional Improvement Collaborative professional learning programme as well as our own Falkirk Council (FC) activities.





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## Theme 2: Health and Wellbeing



Four schools are currently engaged in a Partnership Schools Programme. They work in partnership with the Connect organisation to develop effective engagement and involvement and partnership with parents. All secondary schools in Falkirk offer the Duke of Edinburgh award with numbers of participation increasing. There has been an increase in the number of primary and secondary schools delivering John Muir awards. ELCs and schools regularly tweeting about visits to local green spaces and further afield as part of the drive for greater participation of children and young people in outdoor learning.



## **Making it Happen**

Pupil Equity Funding has supported the development of a range of outdoor learning projects. These have focused on nurture and alternative curriculum groups with an outdoor learning focus. We have used pre and post intervention measures including social, emotional and wellbeing profiles, literacy and numeracy attainment to monitor the progress and impact of this work. Related data shows a positive correlation between participation in outdoor learning and improved attendance, attainment, engagement and confidence for the pupils involved.



The implementation of revised guidance, and the introduction of parental consent for local area visits as part of the induction process, has enabled outdoor learning to become a more integral part of the curriculum. The number of residential visits being offered continues to increase as does the use of school grounds, local communities and green spaces.

A multi-team working group have reviewed and updated the Children's Services Anti-Bullying Policy which will be recirculated in November 2018. The revised policy reflects national guidance as reflected in the new title 'Promoting Positive Relationships in Falkirk's Educational Establishments'. Successful implementation of this policy will help young people to feel safe at school, any concerns or issues they have will be listened to and that school is a positive experience for them. To support the revised policy, we have organised training sessions for school teams in partnership with respect*me* for November 2018.



Online and social media safety remains of paramount importance to us. We held information sessions for parents in partnership with Police Scotland and have updated our Service Circular 22 on Photography and Video Recording in Schools. We have planned a further series of sessions for parents throughout the next session 2018/19 featuring discussion/presentations on Online Safety in addition to providing parents with updates on PEF and the Regional Improvement Collaborative.



We are well underway in our work to update information about Children's Services on the Council's website to ensure that parents, partners and stakeholders can access helpful information about our schools and the work of the Service. We will continue to consult and engage with our Parent Forum on a regular basis.

# Theme 2: Health and Wellbeing

# **Learning to Achieve**

- 47% of Falkirk schools used Pupil Equity Funding to support developments and targeted interventions to improve children and young people's health and wellbeing. Focusing on health and wellbeing is helping schools to reduce exclusions and improve attendance and achievement.
- 35% of Falkirk's Schools are using Pupil Equity Funding to support families and provide wider and enriching experiences outwith school.
- 58% of primary schools and 13% of secondary schools are working in partnership with Speech and Language Therapy to improve the spoken language, confidence and learning of our children and young people.

# **Making it Happen**

Falkirk schools received over £3.5 million of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) from the Scottish Government to reduce the poverty related gap. All schools carried out a contextual analysis in June 2017 to identify their gaps and allocate funding, and have been working hard to implement their plan over the past year to improve outcomes for their pupils.

Children's Services provided detailed and practical guidance supported by regular facilitated events and surgeries. These provided direct support, training, information, advice and guidance on spend, contracts, recruitment, procurement, and planning. We have worked closely with our Scottish Government Improvement Advisor to further develop the use of improvement methodology to track and evidence progress and improvement.

A new Staged Intervention Framework has been developed, however, further work and consultation with schools will be required before this is rolled out. The current framework will be used whilst further development and consultation takes place. The planning and development for this core programme is underway and a Support for Learning Assistant training day will be held on the in- service day in February 2019.

The Additional Support for Learning Outreach Team and the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service have increased the range of professional development training opportunities for Support for Learning Assistants.









## Theme 2: Health and Wellbeing

# Making it Happen

The Inclusion and Wellbeing Service has increased its capacity through outreach support to provide consultation and support for children and young people across Falkirk's schools. The team has also delivered training to school staff to further improve skills, knowledge and confidence when working with children and young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs.

Following a full public consultation, we have increased capacity for pupils with Additional Support Needs. Larbert High School and Easter Carmuirs Primary School now also have two specialist classes in each school for pupils with Autism and Social and Communication difficulties.

Education Scotland/HMI undertook a validated self-evaluation inspection of our Educational Psychology Service in October 2017. The process focused on the two themes of learning and teaching and partnership working. These themes reflected the Scottish Government's national priorities and relate to the contributions made by EPS to raising attainment, addressing disadvantage and supporting and implementing Getting it Right For Every Child. During the VSE process the service was able to demonstrate positive impact in key areas of service delivery.

All participants involved in the service's self-evaluation demonstrated strong analytical skills leading to appropriate identification of areas for improvement. Partners were supportive and co-evaluators were helpful in providing further evidence to help the EPS triangulate their existing evidence. Very good partnership working was evidenced during the week with a strong skill base demonstrated at both strategic and operational levels.









## **Theme 3: Employability**



# **Learning to Achieve**

92% of young people entered a positive destination in June 2017. This is against the national trend and average of 92.9%. This increased in February 2018 to 93.1%. This is the highest statistic recorded for Falkirk Council since the statistic was first introduced. This evidenced continued engagement with young people who had yet to find suitable employment of further educational opportunities. Results can be seen in Appendix 1 and 2.

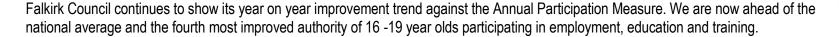


- 64% of Falkirk school leavers have Higher level qualifications.
- 43% of Falkirk school leavers living in an area of deprivation have Higher level qualifications.
- 70 senior phase courses offered on a partnership basis increase the range of pathway options to support school leavers' progress and sustain the destination of their choice.
- Larbert High were awarded the Times Educational Supplement Science Technology Engineering and Maths National Award for Team
  of the Year.



## **Making it Happen**

A Developing Young Workforce (DYW) strategy group has been established to promote effective practice and support improvement. The group has representatives from each secondary school and meet on a termly basis. Each secondary school has had a DYW strategy meeting with the local authority officer to agree and share improvement priorities for the year ahead. This has helped to form the authority priorities for session 2018/19.



The first cohort of Career Ready students have completed year 1 of the programme. Mentors and mentees have reported the programme has had a positive impact on confidence and skills of the young people. The year 1 internships with Falkirk Council have been successfully completed. These involved Education, CLD, SW and Business Support. Mentees have presented the story of their internship to representatives from the services. They have presented evidence of the positive impact this has had on their understanding and decisions around their future career pathways.





## Theme 3: Employability

### Making it Happen

Our Foundation Apprenticeship offer has been expanded to 7 sectors. Schools have been working with Forth Valley College to promote and facilitate this senior phase offer. All 7 sectors will be running the 2 year FA from 2018 - 20. Bids for the 2019 cohort have increased the options for young people as each framework will be offered on both a 1 and 2 year framework.

All secondary schools have developed a number of employer partnerships who contribute to the learning experience both within and outwith the school curriculum context.

Primary Engineers has been implemented in the Grangemouth cluster to enhance the quality of STEM learning within the curriculum, this is to be developed across more clusters in session 2018/19. Graeme High, Larbert High Forth Valley College and Police Scotland were shortlisted for The SQA Star Award for Partnership of the Year for the design, planning and implementation of an HNC in Police Studies, which is the first of its kind in Scotland. This course continues to expand with three cohorts enrolling for session 2018 - 2019.

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# Falkirk Council Children's Services Education Division National Improvement Framework Priorities 2018-19

# National Improvement Framework Priorities

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

#### **Regional Improvement Collaborative Priorities**

- Strengthen and improve teacher confidence, understanding and delivery of high quality learning and teaching experiences in Literacy and numeracy.
- Strengthen the quality of the ELC workforce to support the quality dimension of the ELC 1140 Expansion.
- Provide professional learning that helps drive forward collaborative leadership at all levels.
- Ensure performance information and improvement approaches support raising attainment for all.

#### **Children's Services Plan Outcomes**

- The attainment gap relating to poverty, additional support needs and looked after children and young people is reduced.
- Children and young people are mentally and emotionally healthy.
- Children and young people benefit from being more physically active.

#### **Raising Attainment and Achievement**

# Raise attainment for every child and young person and enable them to make excellent progress through their learning journey 3–18yrs.:

- •Schools will have progressive, coherent, well designed and innovative curriculum designs and rationales.
- Practitioners will improve the range and validity of assessment as and the reliability of assessment judgements to best evidence children's progress, achievement and attainment.
- •Support and challenge the requirement of effective use of performance information through intelligent use of data (Scottish average 85% achieving expected CfE levels pre-intervention)
- •Practitioners will use a variety of well judged, evidence based interventions for individuals and groups of learners to achieve excellence and equity.
- •Highly skilled practitioners employ a variety of engaging and creative approaches to deliver rich and engaging learning experiences for all children and young people, including delivering developmentally appropriate learning on play in the early stages of primary.
- •Support further the development of self evaluation which delivers measurable improvement.
- Facilitate and support strong, collaborative leadership and teacher professionalism.

#### Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

# Improve processes to support attainment and positive destinations for Falkirk's vulnerable children and young people.

- Staff will have the opportunity to improve their skills through a programme of professional learning on inclusion, equality and wellbeing.
- •Inclusive practice in schools will be improved by a new staged intervention policy and guidance.
- Increase the opportunities for children and young people to be educated Closer to Home resulting in improved outcomes.
- •Increase participation in education and promote the quality fro our most vulnerable children and their families.

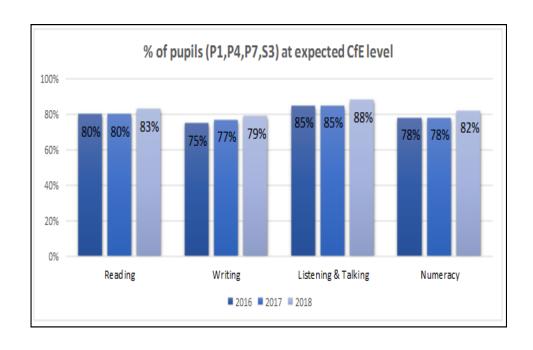


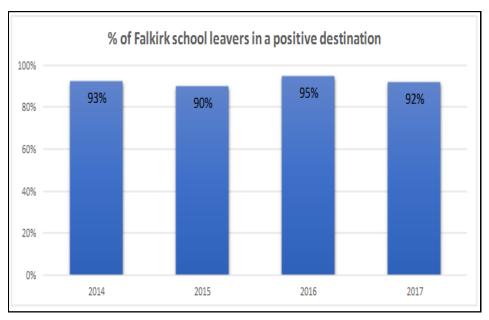
#### **Skills and Attributes Development**

# Improve attainment and positive destinations for Falkirk's young people:

- •Develop a Falkirk Council Framework for skills and attributes development 3 −18.
- •Increase opportunities for learners to develop knowledge and skill in STEM subjects.
- •Increase the number of and access to programmes and experiences which enable children and young people to develop skills for learning, life and work.
- •Further develop the use of consortia arrangements and virtual learning to help learners build a portfolio of relevant and appropriate qualifications and experiences in the senior phase.
- •Increase the number of Foundation Apprenticeships available to young people

# Making it Happen– Appendix 1





# Making it Happen– Appendix 2

