

The background of the slide features the Falkirk Council Coat of Arms. It is a shield divided into four quarters. The top-left quarter shows a castle tower. The top-right quarter shows a stag's head with antlers. The bottom-left quarter shows a sailing ship on wavy lines representing water. The bottom-right quarter shows a bird with spread wings. Above the shield is a crown with four floral motifs. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the text 'A'NE FOR A'.

Agenda Item 10

SQA Attainment in Falkirk Secondary Schools (2019)

Falkirk Council

Title: SQA Attainment in Falkirk Secondary Schools (2019)
Meeting: Education, Children and Young People Executive
Date: 17 September 2019
Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides information on the initial analysis of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) attainment within Falkirk Council secondary schools in 2019. By February 2020, Insight data will take account of outcomes for school leavers and will include national and comparator authority figures. These will be reported to Committee in the spring of 2020.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Education, Children and Young People Executive is asked to:

- (1) note the SQA attainment of Falkirk Council secondary schools; and**
- (2) agree that a future report will be presented to the Education, Children and Young People Executive in the spring of 2020 to take account of updated and additional SQA and other attainment data.**

3 Background

- 3.1 At this stage, information on SQA results comes solely from the SEEMIS management information system and reports on passes in National 3 and 4 courses and A - C passes of graded courses within the National Qualifications framework. SEEMIS reports are limited at this stage solely to SQA performance and do not take account of other non-SQA accredited courses.
- 3.2 The figures below do not take account of any pupils gaining awards following referral to the SQA's Post Results service (which replaced Appeals on the introduction of Nationals and New Highers).
- 3.3 Figures will be updated by the Scottish Government's Insight benchmarking system later in the year and this will include results from SQA unit awards, and SQA and non-SQA vocational courses. It will also include:

- HNCs, which pupils from a number of schools study at Forth Valley College as well as within some schools;
- Foundation Apprenticeships;
- ASDAN – e.g. Certificate of Personal Effectiveness;
- Duke of Edinburgh – e.g. Leadership Certificate but not Bronze, Silver or Gold;
- Open University – Young Applicants in Schools (YASS);
- Prince's Trust – e.g. Personal Development and Employment;
- RUTS – e.g. BikeFix Leadership Award;
- Youth Scotland – e.g. Dynamic Youth Awards; and
- SQA Qualifications such as National Progression Awards e.g. Enterprise and Employability, Leaderships Award, Volunteering Skills, Personal Finance, Internet Safety, Cyber Security. (These are being used by schools as an alternative to National 5 and Higher courses and to supplement National 4 courses, particularly in S5.)

3.4 This year the Scottish Qualifications Authority have reported that the total number of entries for SCQF level 4,6 and 7 has decreased while the total number of entries at SCQF levels 2,3 and 5 have increased.

4 Considerations

4.1 SQA Attainment in S4

- This report shows comparisons between performance in National Qualifications in 2018/19 and the previous two years.
- The attainment of pupils in S4 is given in the table below expressed as a percentage of the total S4 roll.

	2017	2018	2019
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 3 or better	87	88	88
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 4 or better	81	81	81
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 5 (A-C) or better	38	41	44

- Performance has been maintained at Level 3 and Level 4. Both of these measures remain at their highest level to date.
- Attainment at Level 5 has increased by 3% from last year and is now at the highest level to date in Falkirk schools.
- This is a positive picture; and has been achieved by schools supporting and encouraging students to attain at higher levels.

4.2. Attainment by the End of S5

- Initial data relating to attainment in 2018/19 by the end of S5 is shown in the table below.
- All figures are quoted as a percentage of the original S4 roll who have achieved the relevant number and level of awards (at A-C) by the end of S5.

	2017	2018	2019
1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	57	58	56
3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	34	35	32
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	15	14	16

- There is a difference of 2% in attainment of 1 or more Highers by the end of S5 between this year and last year. Last year's figure matched the previously highest figure of 2016.
- There is a difference of 3% in attainment of 3 or more Highers by the end of S5 between this year and last year. Last year's figure was the highest to date.
- The differential in the Higher qualification statistics for 1 or more awards and 3 or more awards is attributed to the wider range of appropriate qualification pathways on offer to pupils in their senior phase. The improvement in the level of qualifications will show through in the second attainment report, which will be presented in the New Year, and will include all qualifications at levels 2-7 on the SCQF Framework including Foundation Apprenticeships, National Progression Awards and HNCs.
- Attainment of 5 or more Highers by the end of S5 has increased by 2% this year, and is the highest to date in Falkirk schools.
- As with attainment in S4, this is also a positive picture as students have been supported and encouraged to achieve more awards at level 6.

4.3 Attainment by the End of S6

- All figures are a percentage of the original S4 roll who have achieved the relevant number and level of awards (at A-C) by the end of S6.

	2017	2018	2019
3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	45	45	45
5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better	31	31	30
1 or more awards at SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher) or better	18	18	16

- Performance has been maintained in Attainment of 3 or more Highers by the end of S6, and matches the highest figure to date in Falkirk schools.
- There is a difference of 1% in the attainment of 5 or more Highers by the end of S6 between this year and last year. Last year's figure was the highest to date.
- There is a difference of 2% in attainment of 1 or more Advanced Highers between this year and last year. Last year's figure equaled the highest to date.
- The differential in the Higher and Advanced Higher qualification statistic is attributed to the wider range of appropriate qualification pathways on offer to pupils in their senior phase. The improvement in the level of qualifications will show through the second attainment report which will be presented in the New Year, and will include all qualifications at levels 2-7 on the SCQF Framework including Foundation Apprenticeships, National Progression Awards and HNCs.

4.4 Action within the Authority – Senior Phase

- Education officers and head teachers are now reviewing the detailed results in order to make a fuller analysis of the outcomes of the 2019 exam diet.
- School staff are experienced in the detailed analysis of SQA examination results. Each faculty head reports to a member of the senior management team in their school to account for attainment in the subjects for which they are responsible. Together they develop an action plan to improve identified areas, such as teachers' planning, teaching strategies and approaches to assessment.
- Each pupil's progress is tracked by the class teacher in conjunction with a member of the school's pastoral team. Pastoral heads have a detailed knowledge of individual pupils' circumstances – their home background, attendance and other factors that might affect progress – and can advise class teachers regarding these so that realistic attainment targets for each young person can be set.

- Schools increasingly identify groups of pupils at risk of not achieving and provide additional support for them. This can take the form of lunchtime or after-school study support clubs. In many of our schools pupils can also access 1 to 1 intervention and peer mentoring and support.
- I.T. is used to support pupils in their study, with teachers increasingly using I.T.-based resources to motivate pupils. Pupils are also directed towards I.T.-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.
- Faculty heads from across the authority continue to meet as Curriculum Management Groups (CMGs) to identify strategies for improvement across broad areas of the curriculum and within specific subject areas.
- As teachers' experience of teaching National and new Higher courses continues to grow, confidence in identifying the appropriate standard has also grown resulting in more accurate assessment and prediction of performance. Falkirk Council schools' SQA Nominees and Markers are key to supporting shared knowledge of standards. Teachers continue to take up roles as SQA Appointees, who lead teams of Nominees from across a number of authorities and who, therefore, have the deeper understanding of SQA standards and knowledge of good practice.
- Authority officers will hold review meetings in each secondary school early in session 2019/20, at which attainment will be the key focus. School managers will account for: (i) the impact of their tracking and monitoring of performance at individual pupil level; (ii) the overall effectiveness of this in informing learning and teaching; and (iii) steps being taken to improve attainment in subjects where there is apparent underperformance. The attainment and achievements of vulnerable groups such as looked after children and those living in areas of relative deprivation will also be looked at in these reviews.

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. Conclusions

7.1 The information provided in this report will be updated for the spring 2020 meeting of the Education Executive when further and more detailed data is available.

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Director of Children's Services

Date: 12 August 2019
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Appendices

None

List of Background Papers

None