



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 26 NOVEMBER 2024**

**SUBJECT: INITIAL ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTAINMENT:
SESSION 2023-2024**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the attainment of secondary schools in Moray for session 2023/2024 further to National Insight benchmarking toolkit update in September 2024 and central attainment data analysis and review.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) scrutinise and note the position in respect of attainment of the young people in Moray for session 2023/2024;**
- (ii) note that initial performance discussions with Head Teachers took place during August and September 2024 involving review of attainment position for each secondary school and identification of actions for improvement required;**
- (iii) note that at a future meeting of this Committee, a follow-up Insight report will be presented in consideration of school leaver data including post-school destinations following data publication in February 2025; and**
- (iv) review and agree key interventions now planned and/or underway in support of raising attainment and achievement for young people across all secondary schools through identified actions and secondary Stretch Aims set and previously reported to Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 During session 2023/2024 Moray Secondary Schools continued to offer a broad range of qualifications across a range of subjects. This included graded SQA and wider ungraded SCQF courses studied at equivalent levels from SCQF level 1/National 1 level to SCQF level 7/Advanced Higher level. As schools continue to broaden their curriculum offer to young people, the importance of maintaining a learner centred approach first and foremost remains key to curriculum choices and timetabling approaches.
- 3.2 SQA made modifications to National Qualification course assessment including removing elements of coursework at the height of the Covid pandemic. Modifications to course assessment were extended into session 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. Elements of modifications have been kept in a small number of National Qualification courses (28) where it has been identified that modifications provided a better way for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. Fuller assessment requirements including return of coursework for session 2023/2024 for most National Qualifications resumed.
- 3.3 Schools continued to report further increase in Additional Assessment Arrangements (AAA) requested and required by young people and supported by parents. This included extra time, separate accommodation, reader/scribe arrangements, use of ICT to support assessment and rest periods during exams. Schools have continued focus on supporting and monitoring learner wellbeing while also aiming to raise attainment and achievement for all. Specific concerns in regard to pupil behaviour continues to be addressed by a number of schools involving a small number of young people, impacting on the learning environment and delivery of learning.
- 3.4 In Moray, SQA coordinators working closely with the local authority SQA lead continue to ensure that pupils and staff were supported in preparation for formal assessment and examination delivery. Preliminary Examinations (Prelims) were planned and delivered in January and February 2024 within each secondary school, to provide pupils in S4-S6 with an examination experience and support collection of core evidence in the event this was required for post-certification appeals and AAA evidence.
- 3.5 Following review by Moray Secondary Head Teachers in discussion with central officers and in line with approaches in other local authorities, preliminary examination leave will cease as from session 2024/2025, increasing learning time available for coursework and reinforcement of learning. Assessment experiences including preliminary examinations will continue to be offered as before through subject areas within timetabled assessment windows in each school. Further examination room experiences will also be provided in preparation for young people sitting examinations in the SQA Examination diet in April/May 2025.
- 3.6 Focus on the Moray Council Accounts Commission Best Value Audit Report key messages and measures continued across schools, through key identified actions highlighted through our National Improvement Framework Plan and Stretch Aims, with actions identified through our Raising Attainment focus. These set out an approach to better understand and improve educational attainment, with aspirational Stretch Aims set based on our data

intelligence and contextual understanding of local factors impacting on educational attainment.

- 3.7 Ongoing work with the Additional Support Needs review continues to ensure refreshed approaches to meeting learning needs maximise learner access to qualifications and supports all learners may require in order to be successful, progressing to positive onward post-school destinations.
- 3.8 SQA continue to support our schools through our regional SQA Liaison Manager who links with the local authority SQA Coordinator as well as modification support materials, resources and Understanding Standards events for practitioners to ensure national standards are followed and upheld. These have been extended this session with virtual events now being held across a wide range of subject areas, maximising opportunities for practitioners to attend without barriers of travel and additional expenditure. Reinstatement of coursework across most subject areas as outlined in 3.2 above adds further to complexities of analysing attainment and achievement data over time based on different assessment conditions in place since 2020.
- 3.9 Our schools continue to support all learners through study support opportunities, homework and study clubs, interventions and wider curriculum based approaches (e.g. Universal Pupil Support, Personal and Social Education) in order to prepare young people for future success. This also includes signposting to wider online learning and study support offers through the National e-learning offer, e-Sgoil, Scholar and wider funded learning platforms including Achieve now in use by most of our schools.
- 3.10 Performance in the Senior Phase is profiled by four key national measures on Insight, the Senior Phase Benchmarking Toolkit. This provides a holistic approach to:
- Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy
 - Improving attainment for all
 - Increasing post-school destinations
 - Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers
- 3.11 The exam results are available to schools in August each year and analysis of these results for cohort groups appeared within the Insight toolkit in September; the data relating to leaver destinations is not available until December and therefore, this information does not appear in Insight until February of the following year (February 2025). The complete picture of leaver attainment and the achievement of young people in Moray is available from March onwards each year and will be reported to a future Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee in May 2025.
- Insight Benchmarking Measures – National Measures**
- 3.12 As noted in paragraph 3.10 and 3.11 above, the data for the four National benchmarks will be available each year in late February, once the school leavers' data has been compiled. It is especially important to reiterate that this represents data for all school leavers from S4-6 for the school year 2023/24, as opposed to individual cohorts of learners (all pupils). The National Measures exclusively profile school performance for learners at the point of exit from secondary school education.

Insight Benchmarking Measures – Local Measures

3.13 In September each year it is possible to profile school performance within the local measures and in the breadth and depth of awards gained by learners on a cohort by cohort basis (S4, S5 and S6 pupils). Local measures that are pertinent to report on a cohort by cohort basis at this time are:

- Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy
- Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers (attainment versus deprivation)
- Improving attainment for all

Virtual Comparator

3.14 Insight creates a virtual comparator based on selecting young people from across Scotland that match key characteristics of the young people in the school or local authority in question on a 1:10 basis. The performance of the school can then be assessed in relation to that of the virtual comparator group. A similar methodology is used in Insight to generate a virtual local authority pupil grouping for benchmarking local authority performance. It is important to note that features such as similar curriculum models or structures are not included in the comparison where these vary across Scottish local authorities.

Breadth and Depth

3.15 Insight allows us to profile the breadth (number) and depth (level of study) of qualifications completed by learners in each year in the senior phase. This year we are again able to profile the attainment of the S6 cohort throughout the senior phase (from S4-S6). In addition to local measures, in this report we will consider:

- S4 breadth and depth attainment at SCQF level 5
- S5 breadth and depth attainment at SCQF level 6
- S6 breadth and depth attainment at SCQF levels 6 and 7

Tariff Score Methodology

3.16 In the local measures of “*Improving Attainment for All*” and “*Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers*”, learner performance is measured by the number of tariff points they have accrued during the Senior Phase. The number of tariff points a young person accrues in their school career is currently based on their ‘latest and best performance’. For example, if a learner achieves an A pass at National 5 in S4 this would accrue 84 points, but would be superseded by their performance at Higher in the same subject in S5 and again by performance at Advanced Higher in S6. The points are not aggregated for an improved performance in a given subject area. Learners should never be aware of their tariff point score where these are used for performance measurement at school/subject level only across key aspects (for example, when comparing SIMD performance, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation or how pupils with additional support needs are supported to achieve).

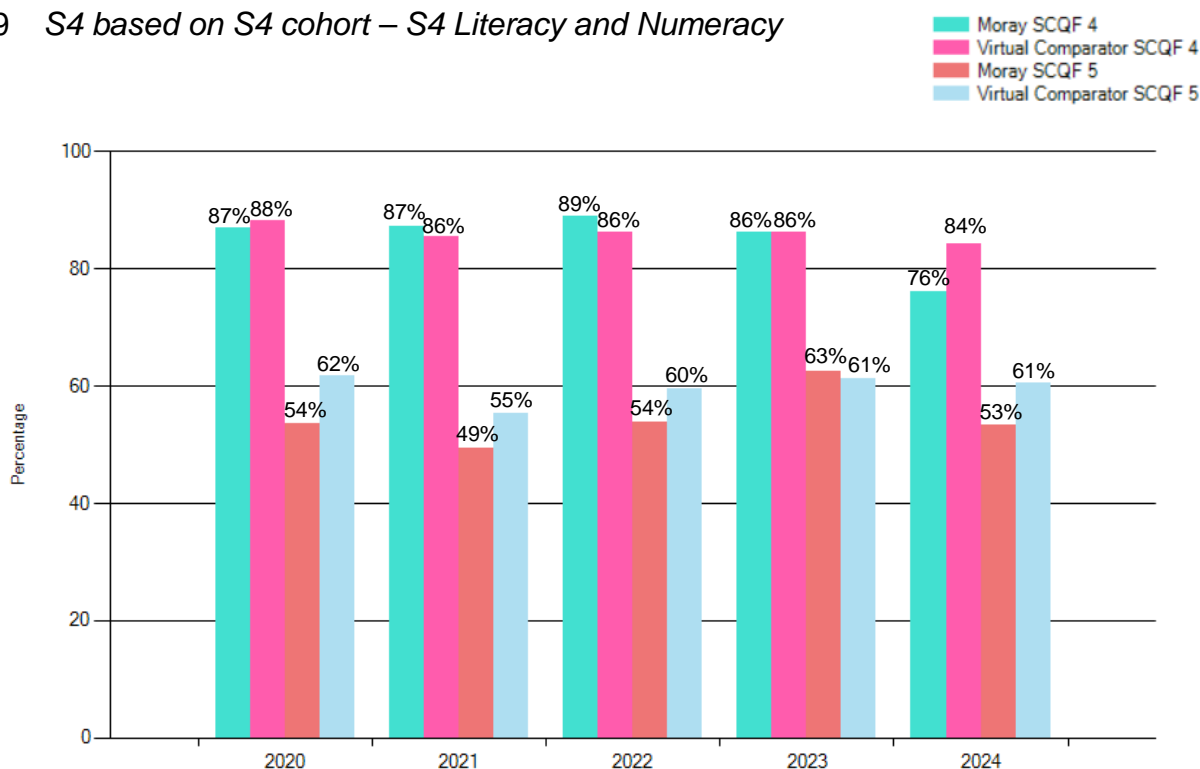
3.17 The total tariff points for the candidate across all of their subjects is calculated as a cumulative measure of their latest and best attainment in each subject to the given point in time plus points for any standalone units which are unrelated to any other subject qualification. Measures presented in the tool

are then an average of the total tariff points for the relevant candidates in the cohort.

- 3.18 The complementary tariff measure is the sum of tariff points accumulated across the latest and best achievement in subjects which a learner has achieved, up to a maximum of 120 SCQF credit points. The subjects which contribute to the 120 SCQF credit points in the complementary tariff measure are those in which the learner has achieved the highest tariff points relative to the amount of learning in that subject (subject tariff points/SCQF credit points for that subject). For purposes of this paper, we will consider complementary tariff points as that gives a truer reflection of a young person’s attainment regardless of local authority or school curricular model and approach.

Local Measure – Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

- 3.19 S4 based on S4 cohort – S4 Literacy and Numeracy



S4	SCQF4 – Literacy & Numeracy			SCQF5 – Literacy & Numeracy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	87%	88%	-1%	54%	62%	-8%
2021	87%	86%	+2%	49%	55%	-6%
2022	89%	86%	+3%	54%	59%	-5%
2023	86%	86%	0%	63%	61%	+2%
2024	76%	84%	-8%	53%	61%	-8%

- 3.20 In S4, SCQF level 4 Literacy and Numeracy (combined) has declined this session, where achievement is below the Virtual Comparator (VC) in session 2024 by 8%. Where the attainment gap between Moray and the VC for SCQF level 5 Literacy and Numeracy (combined) had reduced over time, it is noted that an attainment gap of 8% has emerged against the VC, with Moray performance lowest across the 5-year trend period shown for SCQF level 4 Literacy and Numeracy (combined). Decrease in SCQF level 5 Literacy and Numeracy of 10% in Moray is noted against decrease of 1% in the Virtual Comparator from session 2022/2023 to session 2023/2024. In summary,

Moray performance is below the VC for both SCQF level 4 and level 5 Literacy and Numeracy for this S4 measure.

Further analysis is now required into S4 Literacy and S4 Numeracy individually.

S4 based on S4 cohort – S4 Literacy

	SCQF4 – Literacy			SCQF5 – Literacy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	93%	93%	0%	74%	77%	-3%
2021	94%	93%	+1%	78%	76%	+2%
2022	92%	92%	0%	77%	76%	+1%
2023	94%	92%	+2%	77%	77%	0%
2024	91%	90%	+1%	71%	75%	-4%

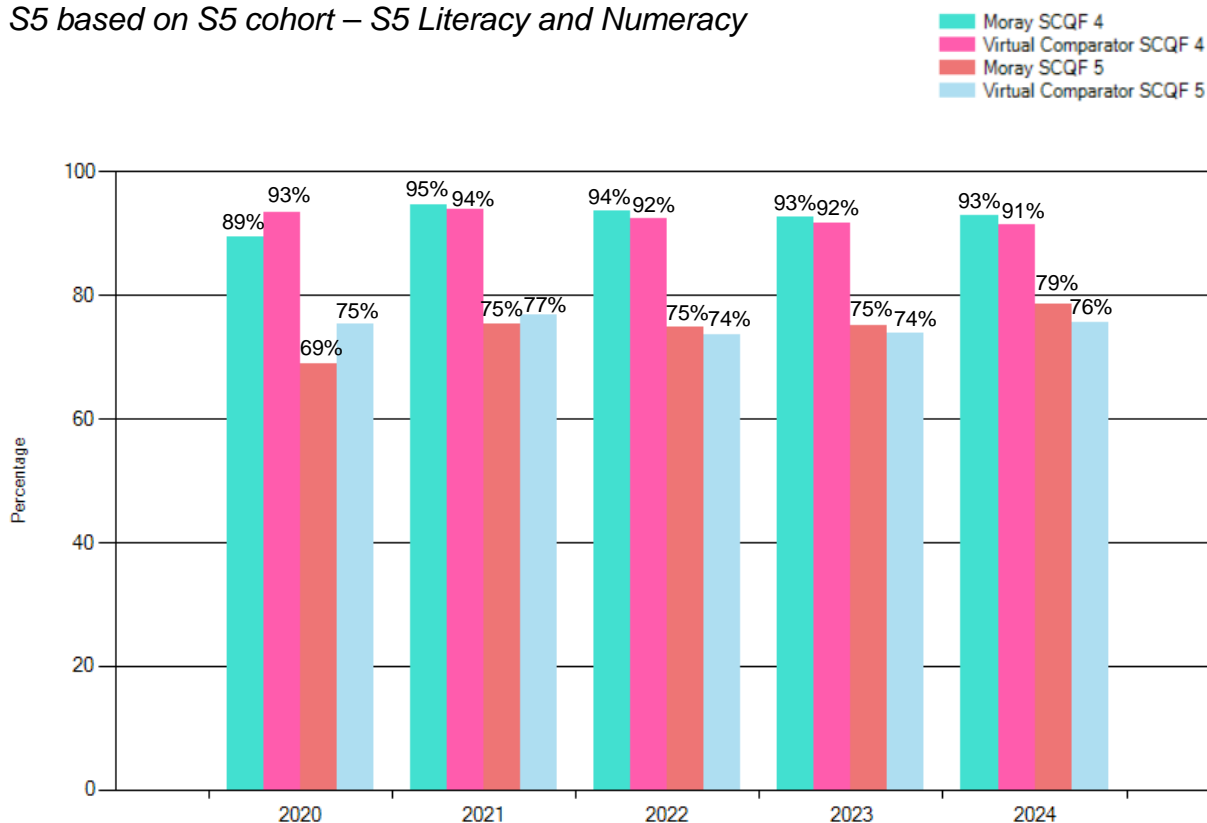
- 3.21 At SCQF level 4 Literacy, performance in S4 is favourable overall with performance in line with or above the VC over past three years. At SCQF level 4, performance is 1% above the VC. At SCQF level 5, performance remains slightly below the VC, with 4% attainment gap noted between Moray and the VC. In summary, Moray performance is above the VC at SCQF level 4 and below the VC at SCQF level 5 for this measure. The latter SCQF measure has reduced by 6% from 2023 to 2024 and resulting in positive trend reversal compared with the previous three years.

S4 based on S4 cohort – S4 Numeracy

	SCQF4 – Numeracy			SCQF5 – Numeracy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	90%	91%	-1%	59%	66%	-7%
2021	89%	88%	+1%	52%	59%	-7%
2022	92%	89%	+3%	59%	64%	-5%
2023	88%	89%	+1%	67%	65%	+2%
2024	79%	88%	-9%	58%	65%	-7%

- 3.22 At SCQF level 4 Numeracy, performance in S4 had witnessed improvement over the previous four years in line with the VC, with attainment 1% below the VC in 2023. Session 2023/2024 has witnessed decline in attainment against the VC at both SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5. At SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5, the attainment gap between Moray and the VC has increased to 9% and 7% respectively. In summary, Moray performance is below the VC at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 in session 2023/2024 for this measure, reversing positive trend noted over the previous three sessions at SCQF level 4 and previous session's improvement in performance at SCQF level 5.

S5 based on S5 cohort – S5 Literacy and Numeracy



S5	SCQF4 – Literacy & Numeracy			SCQF5 – Literacy & Numeracy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	89%	93%	-4%	69%	75%	-6%
2021	95%	94%	+1%	75%	77%	-2%
2022	94%	92%	+2%	75%	74%	+1%
2023	93%	92%	+1%	75%	74%	+1%
2024	93%	91%	+2%	79%	76%	+3%

3.23 In S5, SCQF level 4 level Literacy and Numeracy (combined) has remained in line with session 2022/2023 with a VC drop of 1% noted. However, Moray has exceeded the VC by 2% at SCQF level 4 Literacy and Numeracy (combined) in 2024 as highlighted in green above, similar to 2022 and 1% higher than 2023. The attainment gap between Moray and the VC for SCQF level 5 Literacy and Numeracy (combined) has reduced over time, where it is noted that in 2024 a positive gap of 3% now exists for SCQF level 5 Literacy and Numeracy (combined), with achievement for the past 3 years noted as positive in Moray, with reductions of 1%, 1% and 3% over the past 3 years noted for Moray against the VC. In summary, Moray performance is above the VC at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 for this S5 measure.

S5 based on S5 cohort – S5 Literacy

	SCQF4 – Literacy			SCQF5 – Literacy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	95%	96%	-1%	87%	88%	-1%
2021	97%	97%	0%	90%	90%	0%
2022	96%	96%	0%	91%	88%	+3%
2023	96%	95%	+1%	88%	87%	+1%
2024	96%	95%	+1%	89%	87%	+2%

3.24 At SCQF level 4 Literacy in 2024 and common with performance in 2023, S5 SCQF level 4 Literacy is 1% above the VC with positive performance

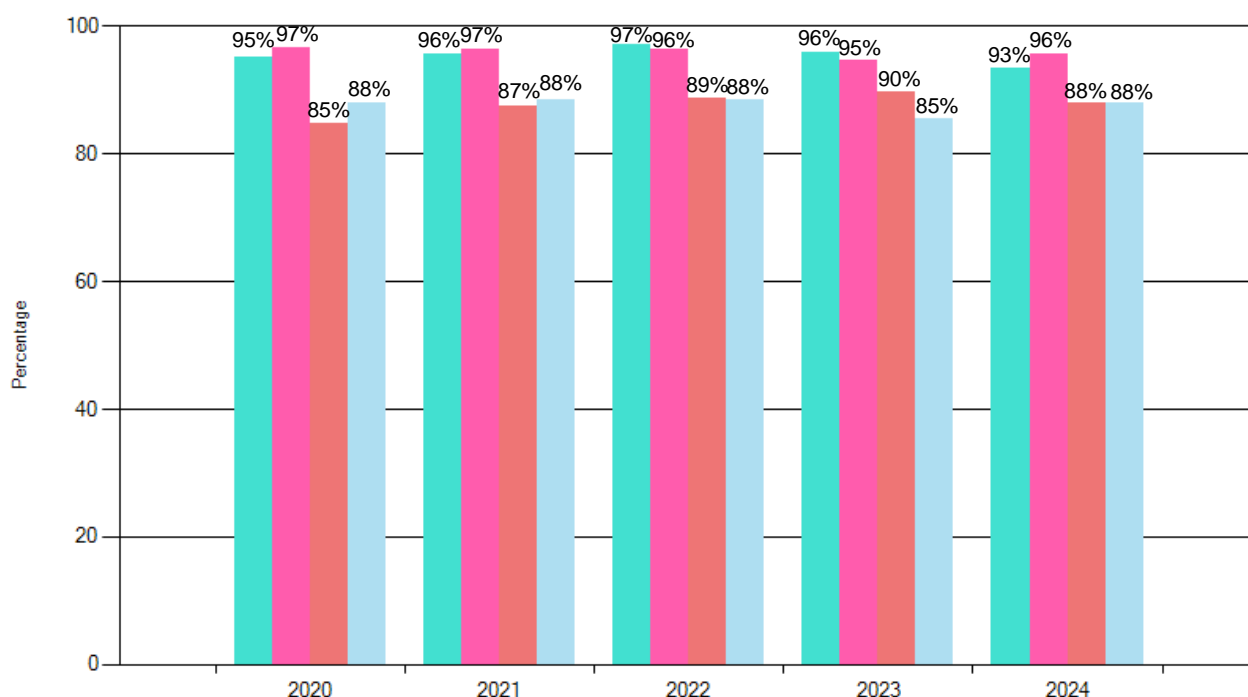
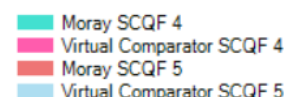
witnessed over a 4-year trend period. At SCQF level 5 Literacy, increase compared with session 2022/2023 is noted for Moray of 1% where the VC remains constant at 87%. Moray has performed 2% above the VC, with positive performance noted as per the last three sessions once again. In summary, Moray performance is above the VC at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 for this S5 measure.

S5 based on S5 cohort – S5 Numeracy

	SCQF4 – Numeracy			SCQF5 – Numeracy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	91%	95%	-4%	70%	77%	-7%
2021	95%	95%	0%	78%	79%	-1%
2022	94%	94%	0%	76%	76%	0%
2023	94%	93%	+1%	79%	76%	+3%
2024	94%	93%	+1%	81%	78%	+3%

3.25 At SCQF level 4 Numeracy, common with performance in 2023, S4 level 4 Numeracy is 1% above the VC with positive performance witnessed over a 4-year trend period. At SCQF level 5 Numeracy, a 2% increase in Moray is noted where Moray remains 3% above the VC, common with session 2022/2023. This is a continuation of a positive 3-year trend period at SCQF level 5 Numeracy. In summary, Moray performance is above the VC at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 for this S5 measure.

S6 based on S6 cohort – S6 Literacy and Numeracy



S6	SCQF4 – Literacy & Numeracy			SCQF5 – Literacy & Numeracy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	95%	97%	-2%	85%	88%	-3%
2021	96%	97%	-1%	87%	88%	-1%
2022	97%	96%	+1%	89%	88%	+1%
2023	96%	95%	+1%	90%	85%	+5%
2024	93%	96%	-3%	88%	88%	0%

3.26 In S6, SCQF level 4 Literacy and Numeracy (combined) has reduced by 3% in 2024 from 2023 to 93%, with slight positive data trend reversal noted across the 5-year trend period. 1% increase from 2023 has also been experienced by the VC (95% to 96%). At SCQF level 5 Literacy and Numeracy (combined), positive performance is noted in line with the VC (88%), with slight drop witnessed in Moray (2%) compared with slight increase in the VC (3%). In summary, Moray performance is below the VC at SCQF level 4 and in line with the VC at SCQF level 5 for this S6 measure.

S6 based on S6 cohort – S6 Literacy

	SCQF4 – Literacy			SCQF5 – Literacy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	97%	98%	-1%	97%	96%	-1%
2021	98%	98%	0%	96%	96%	0%
2022	99%	98%	+1%	96%	96%	0%
2023	97%	97%	0%	96%	94%	+2%
2024	96%	97%	-1%	94%	95%	-1%

3.27 At SCQF level 4 Literacy, performance in S6 is 1% below the VC overall following positive trend witnessed across a 3-year trend period and close to 100% achievement. In 2024, SCQF level 4 Literacy has marginally reduced from 2023 to 96%, proximity to 100% achievement remaining, with marginal drop in performance from 2023 for Moray while VC has remained at 97%. At SCQF5 level Literacy, performance is 2% lower (94%) in 2024 compared with session 2023 (96%). Performance in 2024 is below the VC by 1% compared to 2023 where performance was above the VC. In summary, Moray performance is slightly below the VC at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 for this S6 measure, remaining close to 100% achievement at both levels.

S6 based on S6 cohort – S6 Numeracy

	SCQF4 – Numeracy			SCQF5 – Numeracy		
	Moray	VC	Gap	Moray	VC	Gap
2020	95%	97%	-2%	85%	89%	-4%
2021	96%	97%	-1%	89%	89%	0%
2022	98%	97%	+1%	90%	89%	+1%
2023	97%	95%	+2%	91%	86%	+5%
2024	95%	96%	-1%	89%	89%	0%

3.28 At SCQF level 4 Numeracy, performance of S6 in 2024 is slightly lower than previous years and is below the VC (95% compared with 96%, drop of 2% from 2023 in Moray). At SCQF level 5 Numeracy, the attainment gap between Moray and VC has reduced or remained positive over the past 4 years. In 2024 for SCQF level 5 Numeracy, performance is in line with the VC at 89%. Where a slight drop in Moray is noted from 2023 to 2024 (2%), a

slight increase is noted in the VC (3%). In summary, Moray performance is marginally below the VC at SCQF level 4 and in line with the VC at SCQF level 5 for this S6 measure, remaining positive overall based on percentage difference at SCQF level 4.

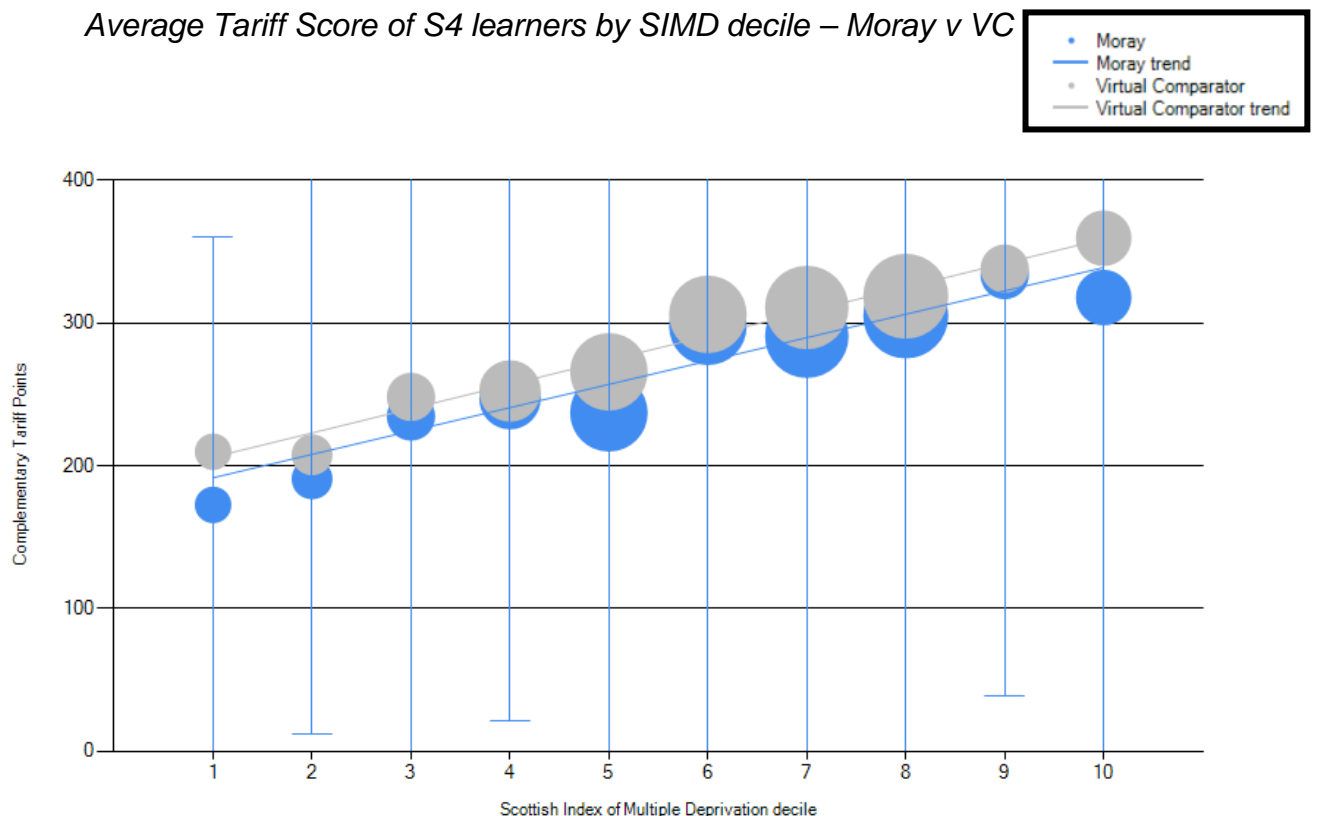
Local Measure – Initial Leaver Destination: Post-school destinations

3.29 This will be reported on as both a Local and National Measure following Insight Benchmarking update in February each year, when leaver data becomes available. This will be reported to a future meeting of Committee, anticipated to be May 2025 based on current Committee cycle.

Local Measure - Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers – Attainment vs Deprivation

3.30 The graphs show 2023/2024 attainment data for S4, S5 and S6 (using complementary tariff scores) for Moray profiled against VC and National data. This is broken down into ten deciles according to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data. Thus, decile 1 refers to the attainment of young people with postcodes within data zones identified as being the 10% most deprived in Scotland according to SIMD, whilst decile 10 refers to those young people with postcodes in the top 10% of the least deprived data zones according to SIMD. In Moray there are few data zones ranked in decile 1. While in Moray it is acknowledged that SIMD does not always indicate inequity that may arise as a result of postcode and locality (including rurality), as a National measure it provides a measure of attainment based on this indicator. It is also useful in considering wider potential external factors which may impact on attainment of Moray’s young people as indicated by data zone.

Average Tariff Score of S4 learners by SIMD decile – Moray v VC

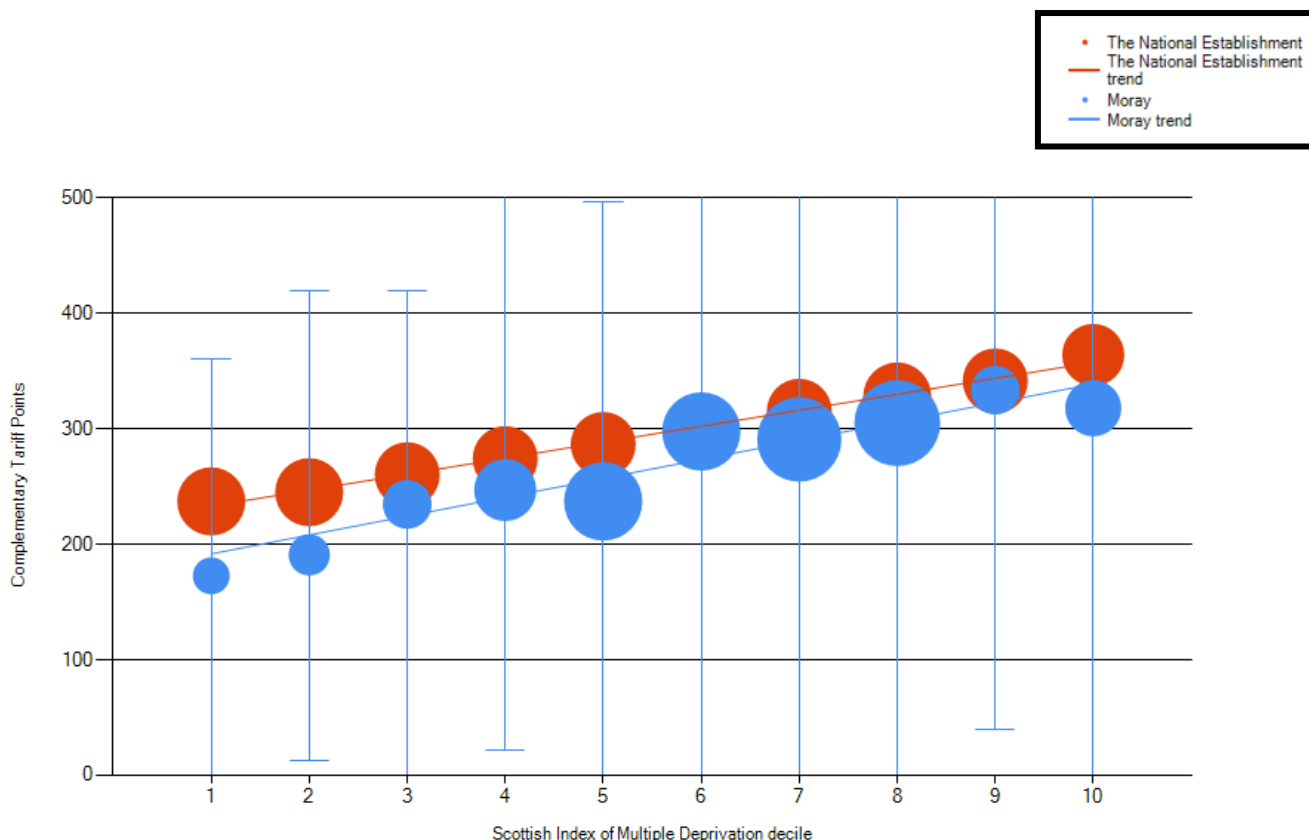


3.31 Overall, the S4 cohort of 1,050 pupils performed in line with or marginally below the VC across most SIMD deciles in 2024. Performance is indicated by the blue (Moray) and grey (VC) trend lines and circular cohort identifiers. In 2024, overall performance at SIMD 4 (91 pupils), SIMD 6 (169 pupils) and

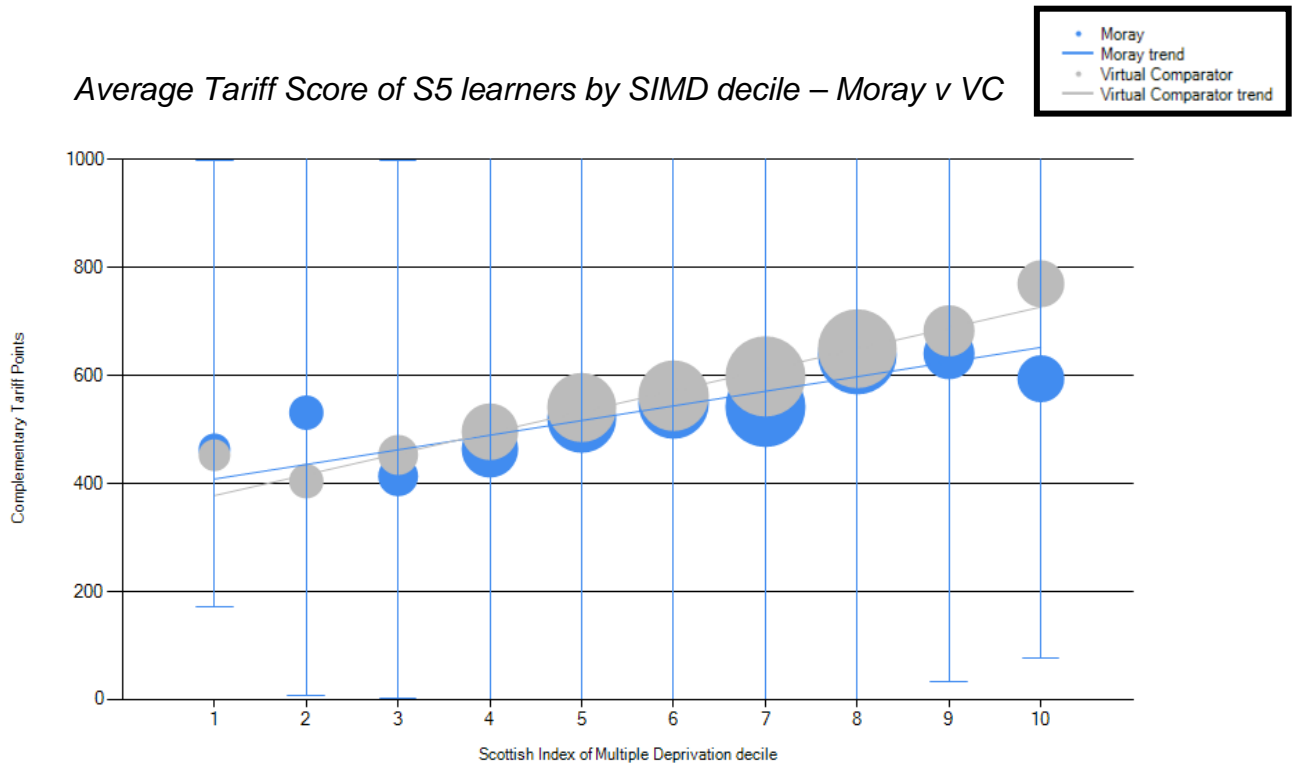
SIMD 9 (47 pupils) is in line with the VC. While the majority of pupils within SIMD 8 (209 pupils respectively) perform in line with the VC, underperformance is noted, particularly in relation to pupils at SIMD 1 (19 pupils), SIMD 2 (26 pupils), SIMD 3 (46 pupils), SIMD 5 (171 pupils), SIMD 7 (204 pupils) and SIMD 10 (68 pupils). Attainment gap is noted between Moray and the VC highlighted by tariff gap between trend lines.

3.32 Performance is similar to the National picture highlighted below. In line with Moray's local profile, nationally there are more learners in lower SIMD deciles (SIMD 1-3) than in Moray as indicated by bubble size. Variance in tariff points achieved across by all learners is noted by blue vertical lines within each SIMD decile as illustrated in both graphs. Learners achieve in line with the National Establishment at SIMD 6 (169 pupils) and SIMD 9 (47 pupils). The majority of pupils perform in line with the National Establishment at SIMD 7 (209 pupils). Learners underperform at SIMD 1-5 (19, 26, 46, 91 and 171 pupils respectively) as well as at SIMD 10 (68 pupils). A slight attainment gap is noted across deciles comparable with VC graph further above, where levels of aspiration through level of study and quality of passes achieved may have impacted on overall achievement compared against pupils nationally, within identified deciles where performance is lower.

Average Tariff Score of S4 learners by SIMD decile – Moray v National

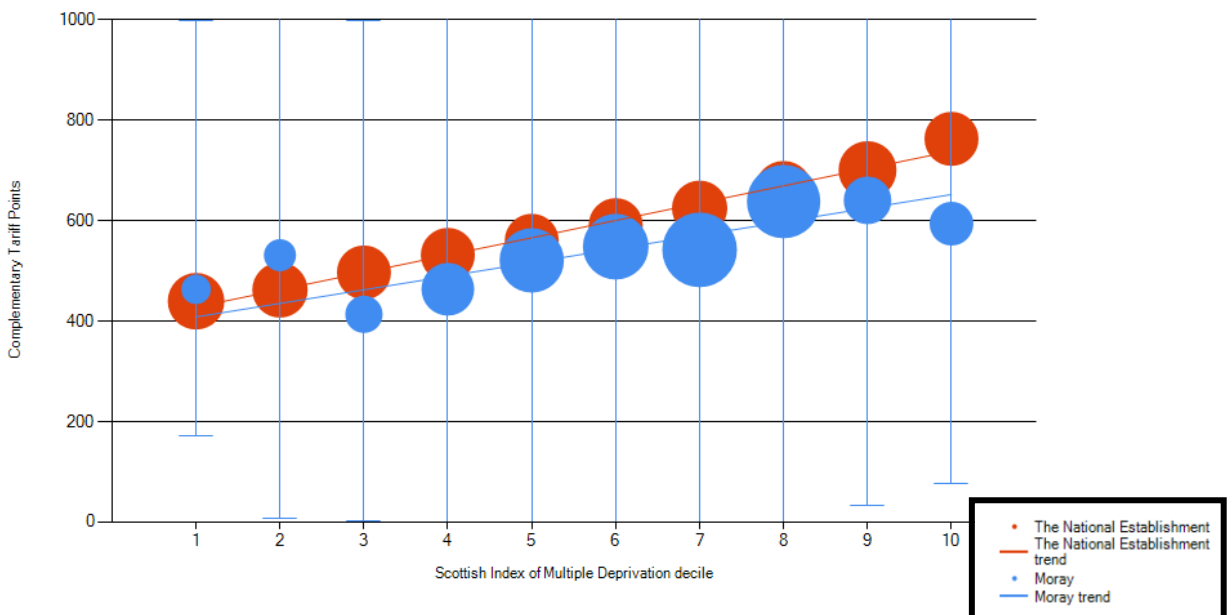


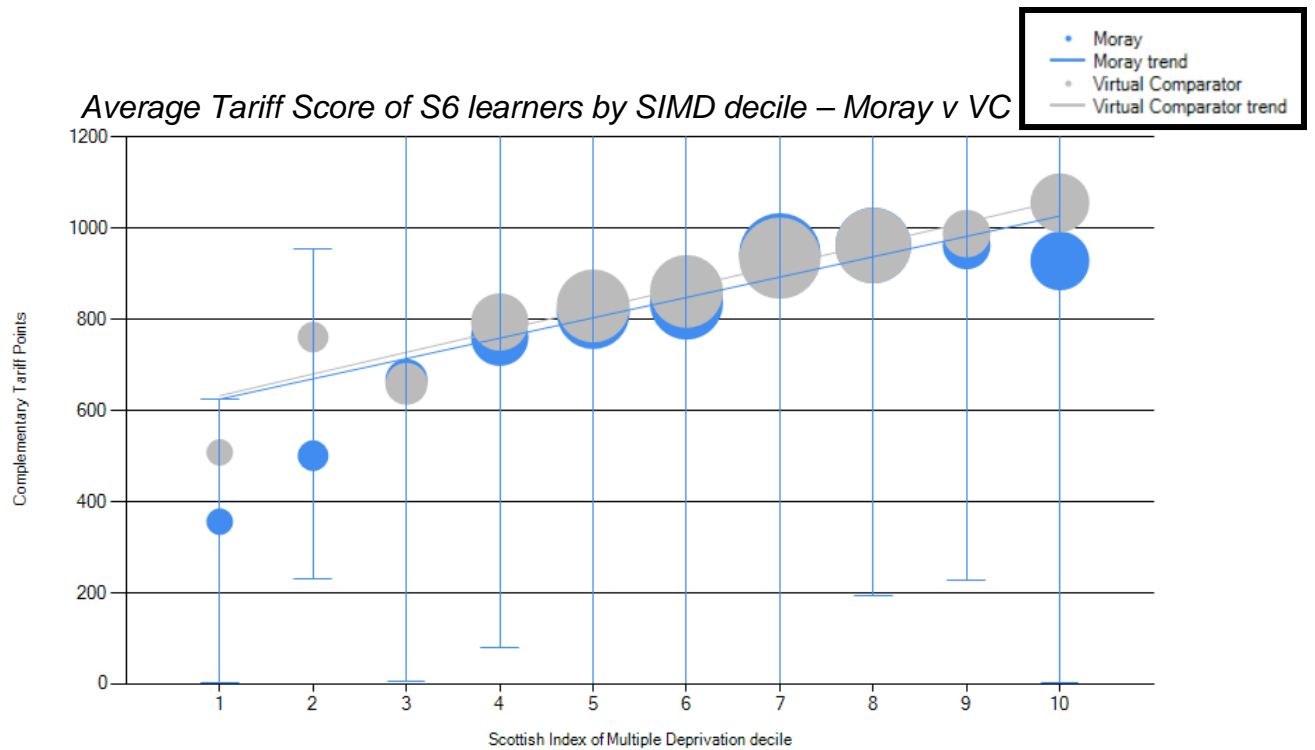
Average Tariff Score of S5 learners by SIMD decile – Moray v VC



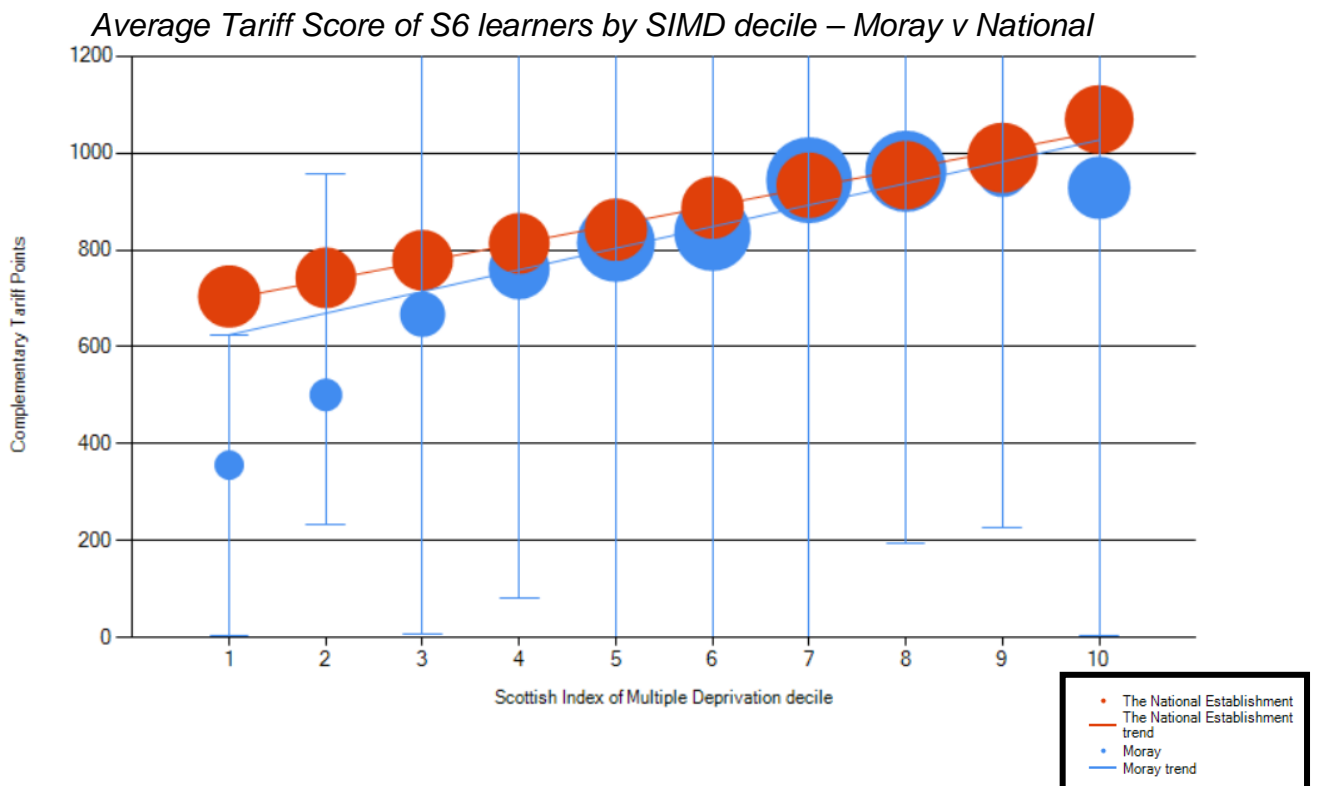
3.33 Overall, the S5 cohort in 2023/2024 (904 pupils, increased from 756 pupils in session 2022/2023) performed marginally below the VC. Learners at SIMD 1 (12 pupils) and SIMD 2 (16 pupils) performed above the VC. Learners at SIMD 5 (133 pupils), SIMD 6 (144 pupils) and SIMD 8 (186 pupils) perform in line with the VC overall along with the majority of learners in SIMD 3 (30 pupils), SIMD 4 (80 pupils), SIMD 9 (61 pupils). Less than half of learners in SIMD 7 (196 pupils) performed below the VC with learners in SIMD 10 (46 pupils) performing well below the VC. An attainment gap is noted as SIMD increases where vertical tariff lines indicate pupils both underperforming and exceeding what the VC would indicate. Performance is similar to the National picture highlighted below. In line with the local profile, there are more learners nationally in lower SIMD deciles (SIMD 1-5) than in Moray as indicated by bubble size, with performance of S5 against VC above similar to performance against National comparator below. Variance in tariff points achieved by learners is further noted in S5 (blue vertical lines) with attainment of pupils in SIMD 8-10 of further note.

Average Tariff Score of S5 learners by SIMD decile – Moray v National





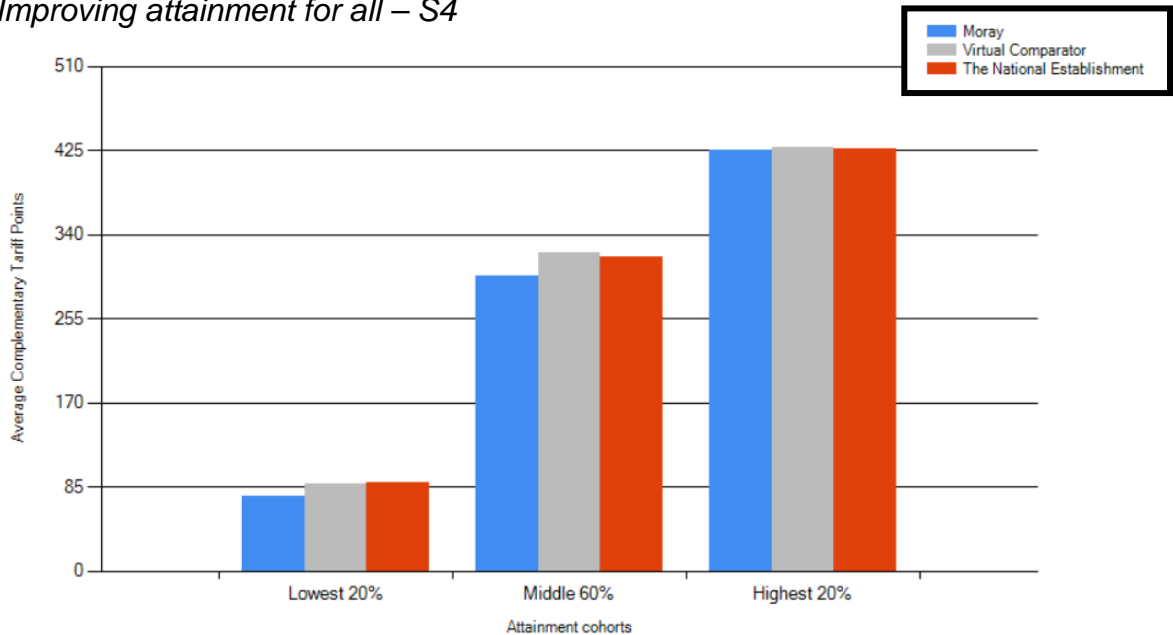
3.34 Overall, the S6 cohort in 2023/2024 (447 pupils) by point of exit performed in line with, or above the VC across the majority of SIMD deciles with very marginal attainment gap noted. This includes SIMD 3 (16 pupils), SIMD 5 (74 pupils), SIMD 6 (71 pupils), SIMD 7 (95 pupils), SIMD 8 (80 pupils) and SIMD 9 (23 pupils). At SIMD 1 (3 pupils), SIMD 2 (5 pupils) and SIMD 10 (41 pupils), performance is below the VC for a number of pupils within these SIMD deciles. Performance against the VC is similar to the National picture highlighted below. It is noted that marginal attainment is noted, with SIMD 5, 7, 8, and 9 in line with National comparator overall, SIMD 4 and 6 marginally below. SIMD 1-3 and 10 are of note with spread in achievement noted. Variance in tariff points achieved by all learners is noted by blue vertical lines within each SIMD decile as illustrated in both graphs, with a number of learners in SIMD 2-10 exceeding national averages while a number underperformed based on what learner profile may have indicated.



Local measure – Improving attainment for all (average complementary tariff points)

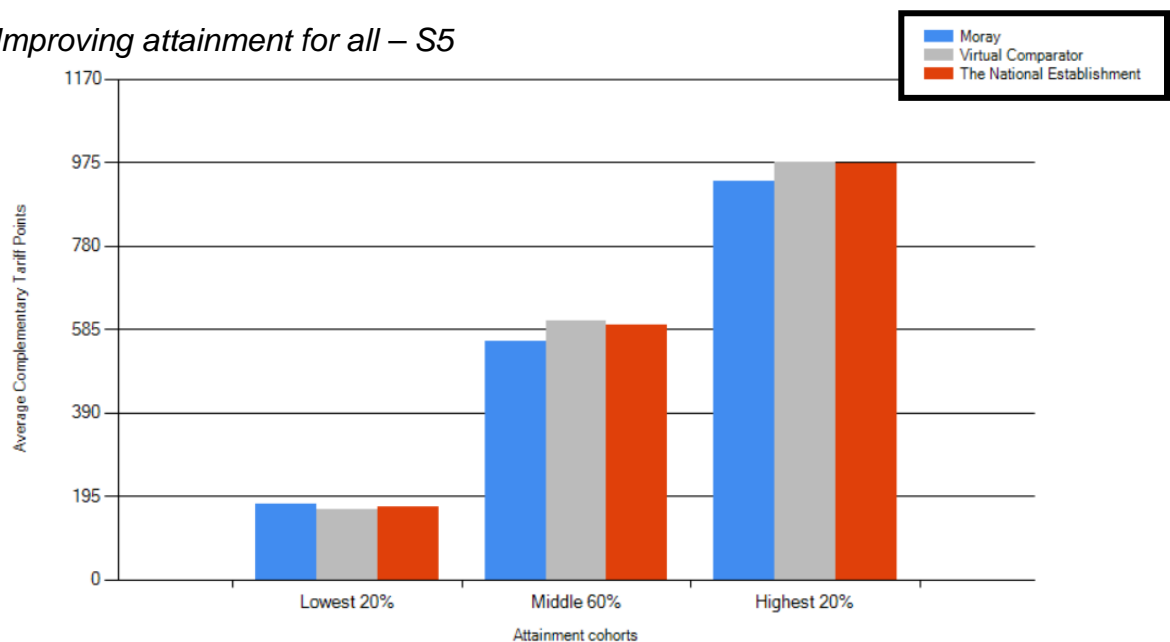
3.35 This benchmarking measure considers the average complementary tariff score for the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% of attainers within the relevant cohort. The local measure (all candidates) will compare Moray with the VC and National comparators.

Improving attainment for all – S4



3.36 In S4, performance for the lowest 20% is marginally below the VC and National comparators. The highest 20% is in line with the VC and National comparator. The Middle 60% are slightly below both the VC and National comparators. This would indicate some learners within the cohort underachieving in terms of course level, aspiration or level of passes/awards achieve. Overall, performance is positive for the highest 20% and improvement in performance is required for a number of learners in the lowest 20% and middle 60%.

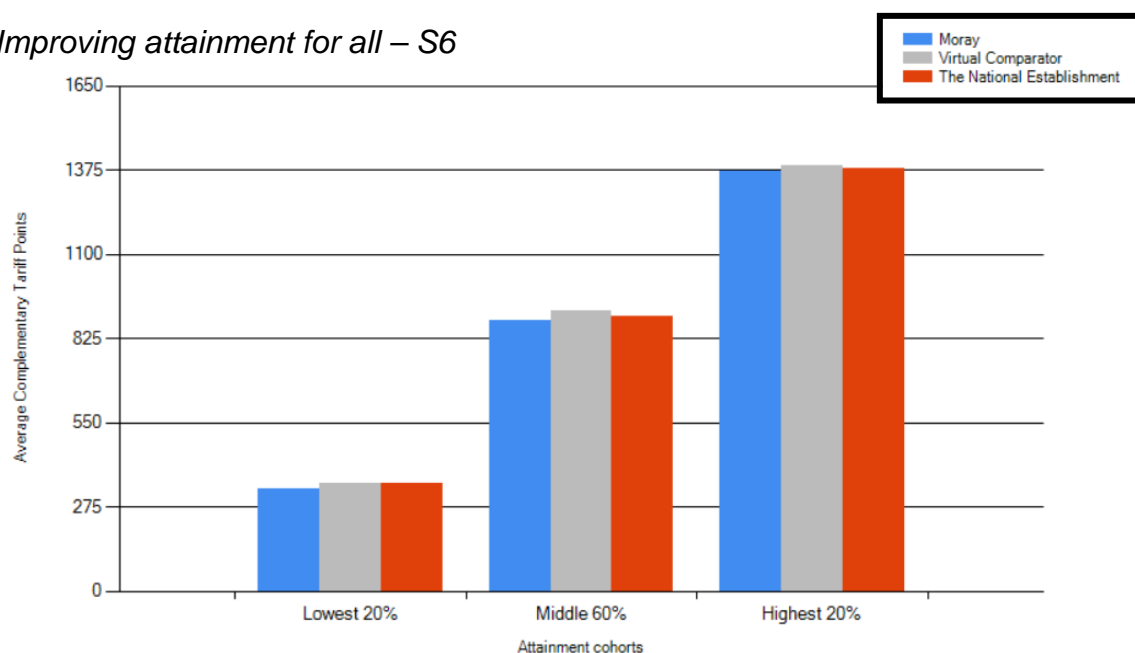
Improving attainment for all – S5



3.37 In S5, performance for the top 20% is below the VC and National comparators. The lowest 20% of attainers in the cohort perform above the VC and National comparators. The Middle 60% are below the VC and National

comparators. Number of passes achieved, level of aspiration in courses studies and quality of pass achieved by a number of learners has led to variance between VC and National comparators.

Improving attainment for all – S6



3.38 In S6, performance for the top 20% overall is in line with the VC and National comparators. The lowest 20% and middle 60% of attainers in the cohort perform slightly below the VC and National comparators. Level of pass achieved may indicate reason for variance in lowest 20% and middle 60% as well as breadth of courses studied in S6.

Breadth and Depth

3.39 *S4 Breadth and Depth attainment at SCQF Level 5*

This measures how many qualifications S4 learners achieved at all SCQF level 5 qualifications; this included National 5 as well as others, including Skills for Work and National Progression Awards at level 5.

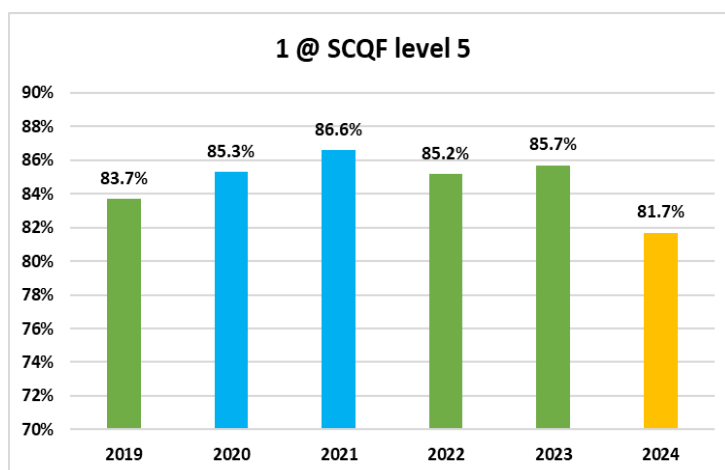
Moray – S4	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1 @ SCQF level 5	83.7%	85.3%	86.6%	85.2%	85.7%	81.7%
3 @ SCQF level 5	64.4%	66.9%	69.2%	65.6%	69.3%	65.9%
5 @ SCQF level 5	42.7%	46.7%	48.2%	46.9%	50.8%	47.9%
6 @ SCQF level 5	30.3%	33.5%	32.8%	35.6%	39.3%	37.3%
7 @ SCQF level 5	0.6%	11.7%	13.2%	18.8%	24.6%	24.6%

3.40 In session 2024, slight decreases in attainment are noted across measures compared with the 2023 cohort. With exception of the 1 @ SCQF level 5 measure, performance exceeds 2019 as last non-Alternative Certification Model year where an SQA examination diet was present as main form of assessment prior to return in 2022. This session witnessed return of coursework for national courses as noted in 3.2 above, adding further assessment not experienced by learners in session 2020 to 2023. Performance in the 6 @ SCQF level 5 and 7 @ SCQF level 5 remain second highest and highest performance across the 6-year trend period presented.

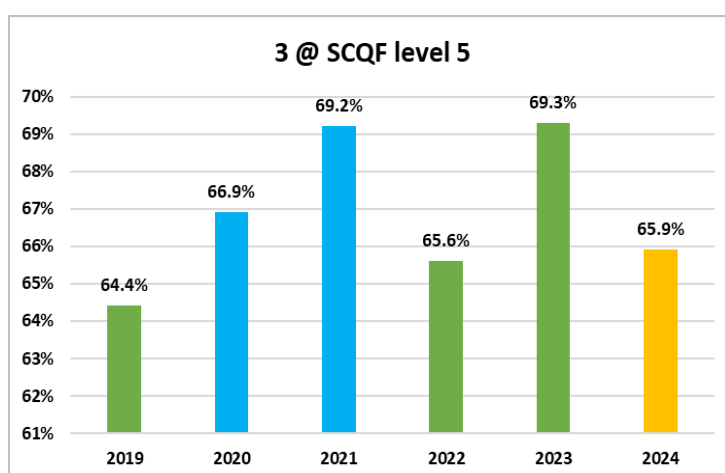
3.41 With regard to trend over time, return to SQA examinations (2019 as previous year of SQA examination diet albeit in alternative assessment conditions in

2022), the following graphs are provided for further review for S4 where 10 pupils represent 0.95%, with 1,050 pupils in the S4 (2024) cohort:

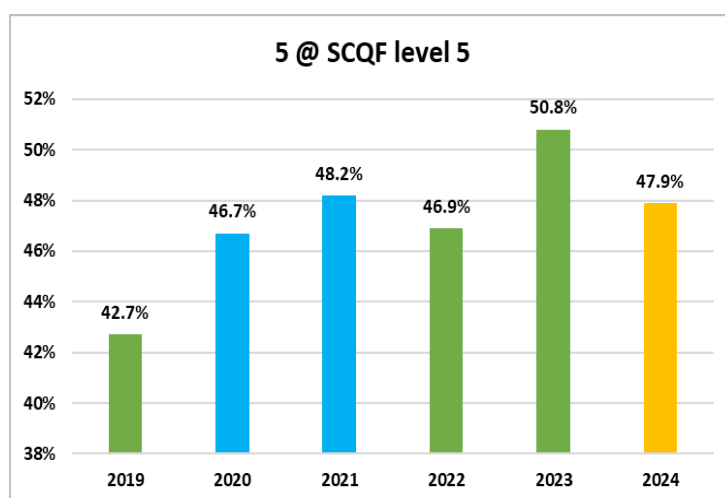
Performance for *1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5* is lowest across the 6-year trend period, below 2019 where coursework last featured as an assessment component and 2022 which witnessed return to a formal SQA examination diet featuring as a key part of formal summative assessment. Year on year, a 4% reduction is noted from 2023 to 2024 (representing 42 pupils).



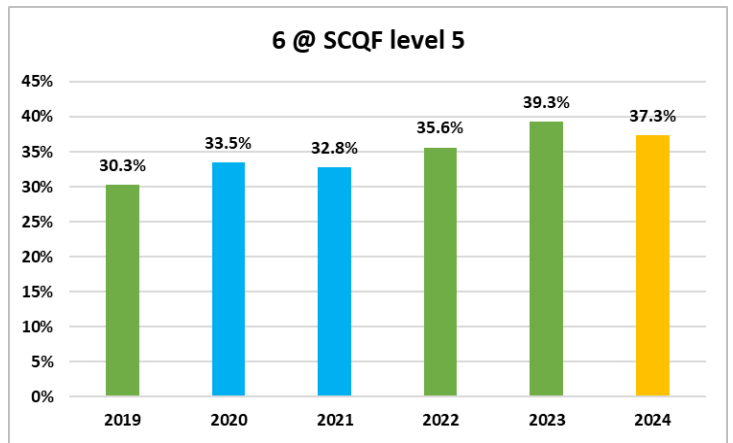
Performance for *3 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5* is comparable to 2022 (2019: 64.4%) when a formal SQA examination diet featured as a key part of formal summative assessment, reintroduced in 2022. As with the 1+ @SCQF level 5 measure above, a slight drop in attainment is noted year on year for this measure (representing 36 pupils).



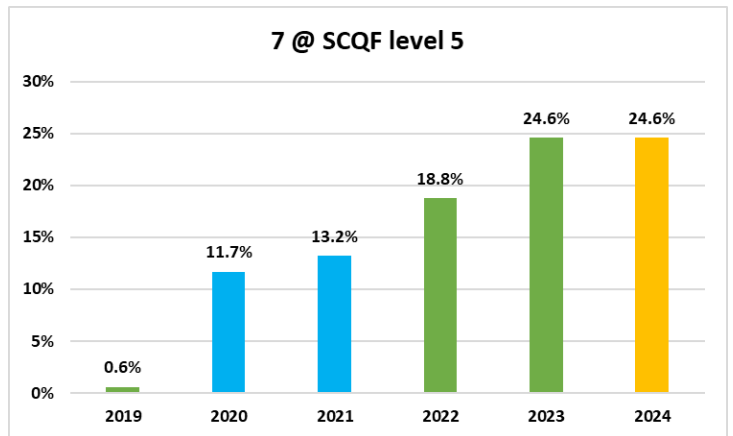
Performance for *5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5* remains comparable to performance across the 6-year trend period presented, noting slight drop in performance (representing 30 pupils). Performance is comparable to both ACM years (2020 and 2021). In relation to 2019 where an examination and coursework features across subjects as core assessment components, performance is 5.2% higher for 2024 cohort (representing 55 pupils).



Performance for 6 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 is above the 2020 and 2021 ACM years. Compared with last session, a 2% reduction is noted year on year (representing 21 pupils). In relation to 2019 where examinations and coursework across subject features as assessment components, performance is 7% greater (representing 74 pupils).



Performance for 7 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 is joint highest across the six-year dataset presented. Within existing curriculum models, schools are offering further opportunity to study a seventh National 5 qualification, with National 5 Applications of Maths dual presentations also supporting positive maintenance at this measure.



3.42 S5 Breadth and Depth attainment at SCQF Level 6

This measure demonstrates how many qualifications S5 learners achieved at SCQF level 6; this includes Highers as well as other qualifications, including Skills for Work and National Progression Awards at level 6.

This data is based upon the S5 cohort numbers who continue to S5 as a common measure for measuring performance with SQA qualifications.

Moray – S5	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1 @ SCQF level 6	64.0%	70.1%	71.2%	68.4%	67.1%	69.0%
3 @ SCQF level 6	42.4%	45.5%	47.6%	45.9%	44.2%	46.8%
5 @ SCQF level 6	20.0%	19.2%	20.8%	18.1%	20.2%	20.2%

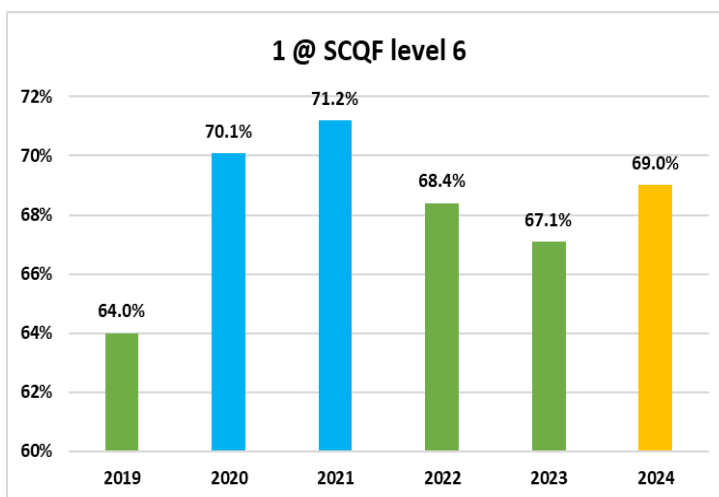
3.43 Following return to an SQA examination diet in 2022, it is noted that performance has increased for the S5 cohort in 2024 compared with the two previous years, the 5 @ SCQF level 5 measure remaining constant at 20.2%. Compared with 2019, performance is stronger overall across measures.

3.44 In review of wider datasets and the measures for 1 or more, 3 or more and 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6, performance is below Virtual and National Comparators in S5 for middle 60% and highest 20% of learners. As with S4, this is highlighted in graphs and charts further above (please see 3.30 through to 3.38 above).

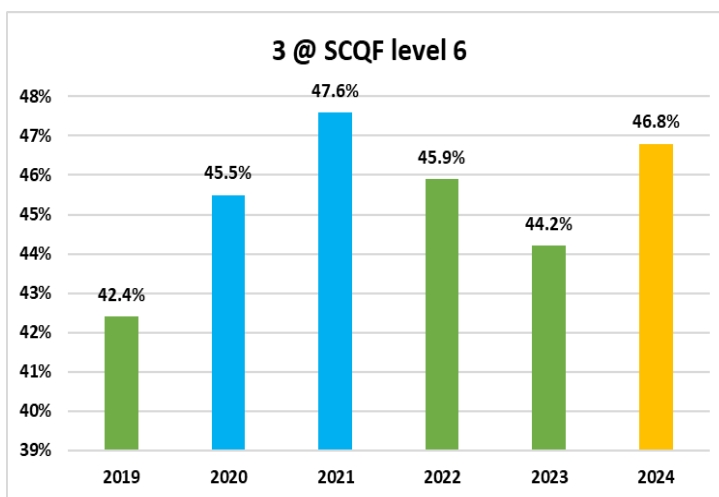
3.45 Across all three measures noted in 3.42 above, compared with 2019 as the last academic session where SQA examinations and coursework were present across subject areas as summative assessment approaches, there is positive improvement overall noted at for 1, 3 and 5 or more passes at SCQF level 6.

3.46 With regard to trend over time, return to SQA examinations, the following graphs are provided for further review for S5 with 10 pupils representing 1.1% with 892 pupils in the S5 cohort; 756 pupils in 2023, S5 cohort indicating higher staying on rate in 2024):

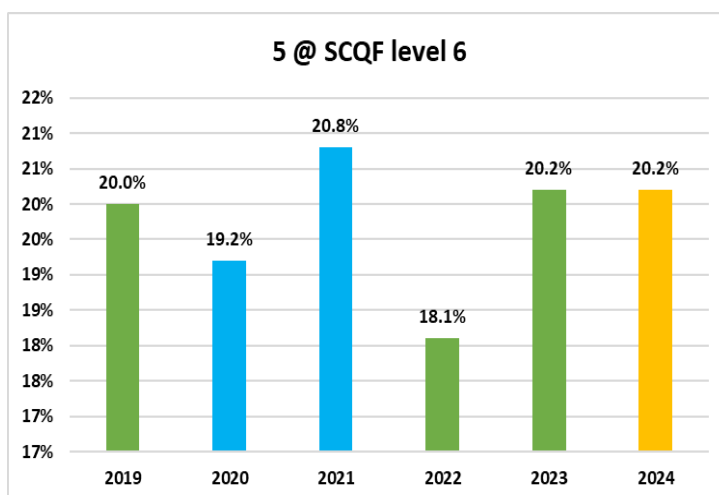
Performance for 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 is slight above 2022 and 2023 performance as most recent examination diet years (1.9% above 2023, 17 pupils) but 5% higher than 2019 as last year prior to 2022 where similar examination diet and assessment conditions were present. Third highest performance year across a six-year trend period.



Performance for 3 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 is above 2022 (0.9%) and 2023 (2.6%; 23 pupils) as most recent years where an external examination diet features as a key part of formal assessment. 2022 performance is 4.4% greater than 2019 which was the last year where a formal SQA examination diet and coursework featured as a key part of formal assessment.



Performance for 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 is second highest (joint with 2023) across all years across the six-year trend period. 2023 and 2024 performance is 2.1% more than 2022 as noted above regarding SQA examination basis, comparable to 2019 performance as last year other than 2022 where an SQA examination diet and coursework formed a key part of formal assessment.



3.47 S6 Breadth and Depth attainment at SCQF Levels 6 and 7

This measure indicates how many qualifications S6 learners achieved at SCQF level 6 and 7; this includes Highers and Advanced Highers as well as others, including Skills for Work and National Progression Awards at level 6 and 7. This is an overview of level 6 and 7 attainment which may have also been achieved prior to S6 within the Senior Phase.

This data is based upon the S6 cohort numbers who continue to S6 as a common measure for measuring performance with SQA qualifications.

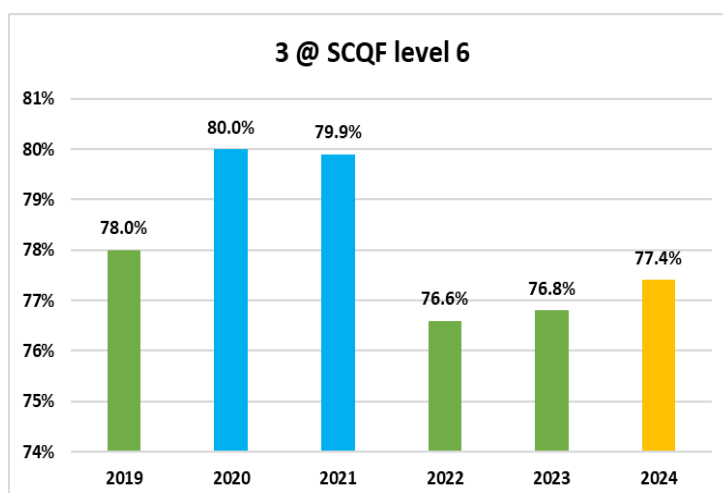
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
3 @ SCQF level 6	78.0%	80.0%	79.9%	76.6%	76.8%	77.4%
5 @ SCQF level 6	57.1%	61.3%	59.8%	55.1%	55.5%	58.8%
1 @ SCQF level 7	38.2%	42.4%	44.1%	40.6%	40.3%	43.6%

3.48 In review of wider datasets and the measures for 3 or more and 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6, performance is marginally below or below Virtual and National Comparators respectively as noted in 3.34 and 3.37 above for the lowest 20% and middle 60%. However, year on year from 2023 to 2024, marginal improvement is noted across measures. At the 3 or more and 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 measures, performance has increased since 2022, similar to the 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 7 measure.

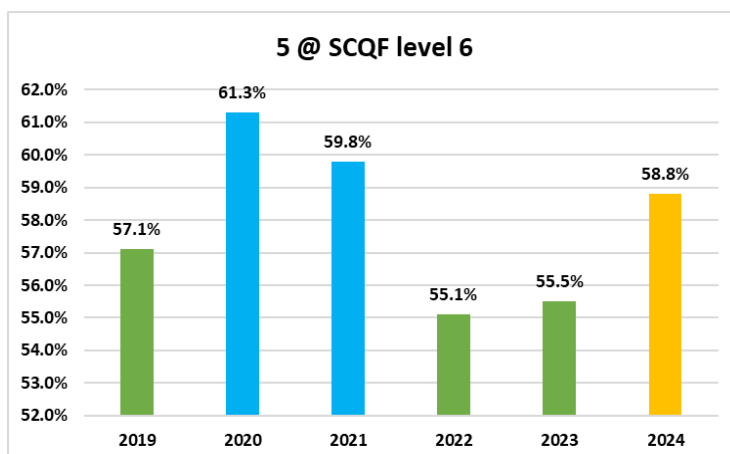
3.49 In comparison with the 2020 and 2021 ACM years, performance remains marginally lower for the 3 @ SCQF level 6 and 5 @ SCQF level 6 measure for S6. Compared with 2019 as the last examination year where both final examination and coursework were present across subjects as with return of coursework in most subjects in 2024, improvements in performance are noted at the 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 and 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 7 measures. Performance in terms of 3 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 is marginally below, but comparable in terms of relative performance to 2019.

3.50 The following graphs are provided for further review where in 2024, there were 447 in the S6 cohort (10 learners representing 2.24% of pupil cohort). Staying on rate is slightly lower than 2023 (474 learners in the 2023 cohort).

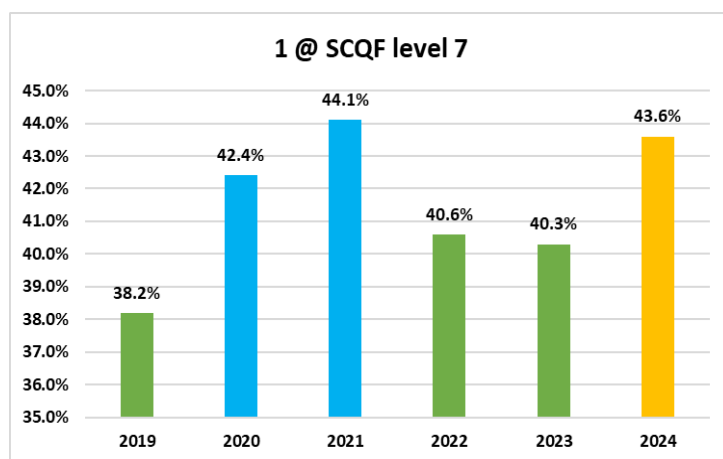
Performance for 3 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 is 0.6% (3 pupils) higher than 2023. Compared with 2019 which was the last year where a formal SQA examination diet and coursework featured as a key part of formal summative assessment, performance is 0.6% below (representative of 3 pupils). Slight increase year on year is noted from 2022 to 2024.



Performance for 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 is 3.3% (15 pupils) higher than 2023. Compared with 2019 which was the last year where a formal SQA examination diet and coursework across subjects featured as a key part of formal summative assessment, performance is 1.7% above (representative of 8 pupils within 2024 cohort).



Performance for 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 7 remains very marginally below one of the ACM years (2021) and above 2019 performance (5.4%; 24 pupils). It is noted that study to SCQF level 7 may not be the preference for most young people, who prefer to add breadth to qualifications portfolio they hold at SCQF level 6. Positive overall.



3.51 Subject SQA performance at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

In Moray, 89% of our young people achieved an award (A-D) at S4 National 5 at SQA results stage where performance for 7 or more passes (A-C) at level 5 based on last year's data at this stage remains positive. In S4, 39 young people also achieved breadth in qualifications achieving 8 or more qualifications in S4 at National 5 as well as added depth, with 25 young people achieving 1 or more Higher (SCQF level 6) passes in S4 as a further level of study where appropriate to their individual learner journey. Positive performance of S4 is noted in Administration and IT, Art and Design, Business Management, Drama, English, French, German, Music, Physical Education, Hospitality (Practical Cookery) and Spanish.

Performance at S5 Higher remains comparable to last session with 88% of young people achieving an award at (A-D) at SQA results stage. In particular, those young people achieving 1 or more qualifications at level 6 remains positive with 61% of young people achieving 1 or more Higher (SCQF level 6) qualification. Compared with 23 pupils in 2022 and last year in 2023 where 29 young people achieved 5 or more 'A' passes at Higher, this year 26 young people have achieved 5 or more Higher 'A' passes in 2024. A number of outstanding individual successes are also noted including 111 young people achieving 5 Higher awards at grade A-C. In particular, young people performed well in Art and Design, Drama, French, German, Graphic Communication, History, Music, Physical Education and Politics.

In S6, young people studied a variety of courses at Higher and Advanced Higher level. At S6 Advanced Higher, 87% of young people achieved an award (A-D) and at Higher, 84% of young people presented at this level also achieved an award (A-D) at SQA results stage. As schools extend their curriculum offer based on the wide range of SCQF qualifications and accreditation on offer, it is noted that study at SQA level 6 (Higher) and SQA level 7 (Advanced Higher) remains appropriate for many young people in our schools and their chosen onward destination post school. In S6 Advanced Higher, positive performance is noted in Art and Design, Geography, Modern Studies, Music, and RMPS.

- 3.52 Moray College continues to provide breadth of additional courses and qualifications of study for Senior Phase pupils at National 5 and Higher level as well as Skills for Work (SfW) courses and National Progression Awards (NPA) at levels 4 and 5. The SfW and NPA course provide a high proportion of passes and this supports continued engagement with the College post-school as well as links to apprenticeship programmes. Current provision is predominantly via 'College Wednesday'.

At National 5 and Higher level, performance is noted in the table below for A-C passes for 2019-2024. Performance is based on a total of 87 entries across Moray Secondary schools for graded courses, with an A-C pass rate of 62% (A-D award rate of 80%). Entries to graded courses remain low overall (87 young people had resulted entries in graded courses this session) as per previous years, with more young people studying towards ungraded and continuous assessment courses (SCQF rated) as noted in 3.53 below.

	2024	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	No of Entries	Passes A-C	A-C	A-C	A-C	A-C	A-C
H ESOL	14	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%
H Psychology	12	50%	46%	38%	93%	74%	40%
H Sociology	11	64%	80%	40%	100%	100%	50%
H Human Biology	3	0%	0%	50%	82%		
H Env Science	2	0%					
N5 ESOL	10	80%	92%	75%	86%	100%	75%
N5 Practical Cookery						90%	
N5 Env Science	2	50%					
N5 Psychology	33	52%	57%	76%	77%	86%	70%
N5 Sociology					67%		

- 3.53 Moray's young people studied a further range of ungraded and non-examination based courses (SCQF rated at level 3, 4, 5 and 6 as noted below) at Moray College UHI. Based on current year performance, 241 passes were achieved across a range of courses with pass rates across these courses noted below:

Level	Course	No of Resulted Entries 2024	Pass rate 2024
National 4	Automotive Skills	32	100%
National 4	Early Learning and Childcare	6	100%
National 4	Hospitality	11	100%
National 4	Uniformed and Emergency Services	13	100%
National 5	Early Learning and Childcare	9	100%
SCQF Level 4	Bakery	16	100%
SCQF Level 4	British Sign Language	6	100%
SCQF Level 4	Construction Craft and Technician	56	100%
SCQF Level 4	Health and Safety in a Construction Environment	5	100%
SCQF Level 4	Professional Cookery	1	100%
SCQF Level 5	Construction	3	100%
SCQF Level 5	Cyber Security	8	88%
SCQF Level 5	Digital Media	11	100%
SCQF Level 5	Engineering Practice	1	100%
SCQF Level 5	Hospitality Operations	1	100%
SCQF Level 5	Professional Cookery	1	100%
SCQF Level 5	Social Sciences	1	100%
SCQF Level 6	Business Skills	7	100%
SCQF Level 6	Creative and Digital Media: Technologies, Processes and Practices	5	80%
SCQF Level 6	Criminology	12	100%
SCQF Level 6	Early Education and Childcare	2	100%
SCQF Level 6	Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills	7	100%
SCQF Level 6	Foundation Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media	3	67%
SCQF Level 6	Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services and Healthcare	15	47%
SCQF Level 6	Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services: Children and Young People	4	100%
SCQF Level 6	Social Services and Healthcare	15	80%
SCQF Level 6	Social Services: Children and Young People	4	100%

3.54 Results continue to be discussed and reviewed in partnership with Moray College link officers with next steps identified and subsequently outlined. This includes extension to existing graded (see 3.52 above) and ungraded pass/fail (see 3.53 above) course offers in order to extend Curriculum offer for young people across Moray. Our academic partnership with Moray College UHI continues to broaden learning pathways for our young people within areas of interest that they may wish to pursue as they consider their post-school destinations. Discussions with Moray College UHI are currently underway in reviewing how specific qualifications (for example, Foundation Apprenticeship offer) can be extended further.

4.0 **Strengths identified from attainment data and analysis**

4.1 *Literacy and Numeracy*

- S4 Literacy at SCQF level 4 remains positive and above the VC for this measure
- S5 – Literacy and Numeracy – Moray performance is above the VC at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 for this measure, for both Literacy and Numeracy, highest at SCQF level 5 across the five-year trend period
- S5 Literacy at SCQF level 5 exceed the VC by 2%, with positive trend continuation noted across the past four years of the five year trend period
- S5 Numeracy at SCQF level 5 exceeds the VC by 3%, for the second year of two exceeding the VC across a five-year trend
- S6 Literacy and Numeracy – Moray performance is in line with the VC at SCQF level 5 for both Literacy and Numeracy combined

4.2 *Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers – Attainment vs Deprivation*

- S4 cohort of 1,050 pupils performed in line with the VC across most SIMD deciles 4, 6 and 9 with a number of pupils at SIMD 8 also performing in line with the VC based on cohort information provided
- S5 cohort of 904 pupils performed in line with or above the VC at SIMD 1, 2 as well as SIMD 3-6 and 8-9 for the majority of learners within these cohorts and SIMD decile demographic
- S6 cohort of 447 pupils by point of school exit performed in line with, or above the VC across the majority of SIMD deciles including SIMD 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9

4.3 *Improving attainment for all*

- In S4, performance for the highest 20% of learners is in line overall with the VC and National comparators. A number of young people perform marginally below the VC and National comparators in the lowest 20% and middle 60% groupings
- In S5, the lowest 20% of attainers in the cohort perform in line with the VC and the National comparator. The middle 60% and highest 20% of learners perform marginally below the VC and National comparators
- In S6, the highest 20% of attainers in the cohort perform in line overall with the VC and the National comparator. The Middle 60% and highest 20% are marginally below VC and National comparators

4.4 *Breadth and Depth*

- Positive trend in breadth and depth is noted for S4 within the 7 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 measure compared with 2023 performance
- Breadth and depth in S5 is noted as showing performance greater than 2019 as first year prior to 2022 where a final examination formed part of final course assessment, with improvement noted 1 and 3 or more qualification at SCQF level 6 measures. Young people achieving 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 remains the same as session 2023 (20.2%)
- The proportion of learners in S6 gaining 3 and 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 and 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 7 has increased from 2023, higher across measures than in 2019

4.5 *Academic and wider partnerships*

- Pupils who study additional courses at Moray College UHI working in partnership with schools, achieved some additional graded and a broader range of ungraded qualifications. Particular success in terms of passes achieved and uptake is noted in non-examination/continuously assessed ungraded courses of study noted in 3.52-3.54

5.0 **Areas of future focus from attainment data and analysis**

5.1 *Literacy and Numeracy*

- S4 – Literacy and Numeracy – drop in Moray performance is noted in session 2023/2024 at both SCQF 4 and SCQF level 5. Learners are noted to have been impacted during their time in secondary – including P7-S1 transition – by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to data presented, further attainment recovery is now required in relation to Literacy and Numeracy for identified learners in order to reverse attainment gaps emerging as learners have now progressed to S5
- S4 – Literacy at SCQF level 5 presents a 4% gap between Moray and the VC, reversing positive three year trend witnessed previously up to and including session 2022/2023. Further work is required to identify the young people concerned in order to maximise their leaver level of Literacy by school point of exit
- S4 – Numeracy at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 data presented highlights a notable attainment gap emerging where a number of young people have not achieved expected levels in Numeracy at SCQF level 4 and level 5. Further investigation is required to ensure young people achieve appropriate levels of Numeracy by school point of exit and as they transition through S5. A number of young people in S4 last session have underachieved based on data presented for SCQF level 4 and level 5 Numeracy
- In S6, a very marginal gap (1%) at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 Literacy and SCQF level 4 Numeracy is noted between Moray and the VC requiring further exploration at school level regarding individual pupil profiles and potential to achieve Literacy and/or Numeracy at SCQF level 4 and 5
- Continued focus on identifying young people who require support to maximise Literacy and Numeracy level by school point of exit as they progress from S4 (now in S5) is required at school level, making use of the Insight Analytical Dataset to identify pupils in need of targeted support

5.2 *Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers – Attainment vs Deprivation*

- S4 attainment focus within SIMD deciles 1-3, 5, 7 and 10 and within individual SIMD deciles based on vertical tariff line range presented is required where attainment gaps are noted between Moray, the VC and National comparators
- S5 attainment review at SIMD 3, 4, 7, 9 and 10 is required where attainment gap is noted between Moray, VC and National. Learners staying on to S6 may require further support and challenge in order to maximise achievements by school point of exit
- S6 attainment review at SIMD 1, 2 and 10 is required where attainment gap is noted between Moray, VC and National comparators. A number of young people within SIMD 4-6 are noted to have underperformed based on data presented

5.3 *Improving attainment for all*

- S4 – improvement in course presentation levels and quality of passes to support strengthened achievement (lowest 20% and middle 60% of attainers)
- S5 – improvement in course presentation levels and quality of passes to support strengthened achievement (middle 60% and highest 20% of attainers)
- S6 – improvement in course presentation levels and quality of passes to support strengthened achievement (marginal, lowest 20% middle 60% and highest 20% of attainers)
- Focus on improving attainment of the above measures may require review of curriculum offer and levels of study available further to ensure best fit with learner interests, talents and post-school destination focus

5.4 *Breadth and Depth*

- S4 breadth and depth – improvement in performance against VC and National comparators now required where pupils have now transitioned to S5 where staying on at school
- S5 breadth and depth – improvement in performance against 2023, VC and National comparators was noted – further continuation required
- S6 breadth and depth – improvement in performance against 2023 noted – further continuation required
- Continued review of curriculum offer, learner centred curriculum approaches and accreditation opportunities across Moray to ensure all young people benefit from appropriate courses and pathways in order to raise attainment and achievement for all

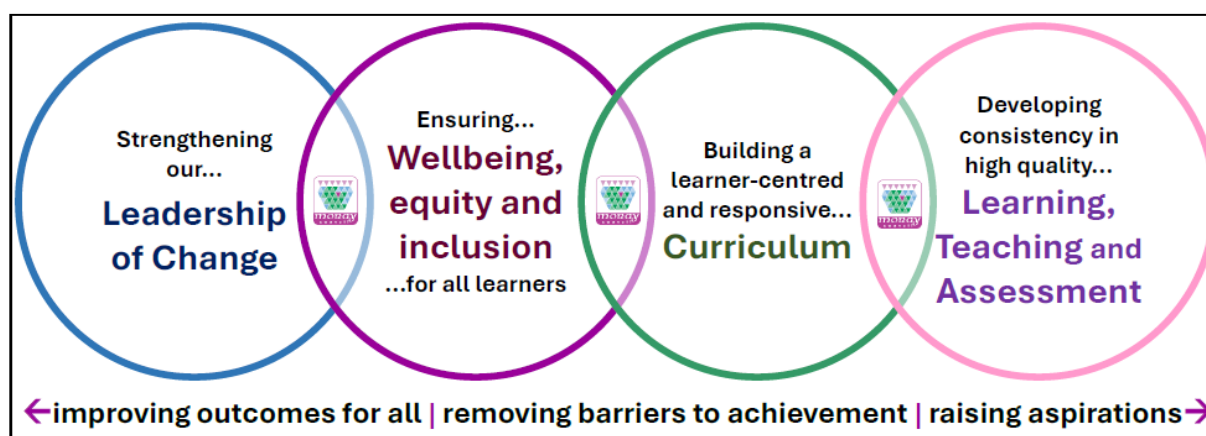
5.5 *Academic and wider partnerships*

- Continued partnership working with Moray College UHI to extend curricular pathways and course opportunities as part of the Senior Phase offer to young people
- Continued work with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), widening progression routes and access to education and training opportunities
- Review of Foundation Apprenticeship offer across schools, working with key partners to deliver relevant work based qualifications to meet learner needs

6.0 **Actions for Improvement**

6.1 Moray Secondary Schools continue to progress work on key priorities framed by School Improvement Plans set out annually. Full review of data is undertaken and in partnership with the local authority, attainment data is scrutinised and actions for improvement are identified to be addressed. A range of reasons for underperformance within cohorts can be evidenced by schools, with schools employing a range of universal and targeted interventions to address barriers to in-school participation, engagement and attendance. Through devolved school budgets and wider funding including Scottish Attainment Challenge monies (Pupil Equity Funding and where projects have been identified, Strategic Equity Funding), schools are working with staff to close identified attainment gaps.

6.2 As a local authority, we continue to progress key areas of work as a wider schools and central education system where the following key areas form the basis of strategic focus for session 2024-2027. Education Strategic Meetings and wider briefings are held with senior leaders where we continue to focus on raising attainment and achievement of all children and young people. Through wellbeing supports and intervention, we aim to deliver a curriculum which will satisfy learner desires and talents and the future needs of the world that will surround them. This requires strong leadership of change where this is core focus as an Education Service for all meetings and Quality Improvement visits throughout session 2024/2025. Initial work in partnership with Education Scotland is currently being planned by Moray Secondary Head Teachers, in order to strengthen middle leaders leading change at department and whole school level.



6.3 Aspirational Stretch Aims across core and core plus measures have been set through the Scottish Government's revised Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress, previously reported to committee through our Education National Improvement Framework Report and Plan. These continue to be a primary focus ([Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, 17 September 2024, item 8](#)) as a benchmark and focus for improvements in performance.

6.4 Our Supporting All Learners strategy continues to embed centring on wellbeing, equity and inclusion for all with renewed approaches to mandatory training across schools and establishments for meeting learner needs. Focused targeting of Attainment Scotland Funding (Scottish Attainment Challenge) including Strategic Equity Funding in order to support further localities in greatest need to raise participation and achievement in learning using data as a key driver for improvement continues, extending to seven projects across Associated Schools Groups this session. As the Additional Support Needs review progresses, allocation of support and resources to where this may be required based on an evidence informed basis continues ensuring equity and inclusion are at the forefront of decision making undertaken.

6.5 Following preparatory work achieved through Moray Improvement Groups including representation on key groups from DYW Moray, Skills Development Scotland, Moray College UHI, wider multi-agency and service partners, schools continue to progress work on the curriculum. An early national statement in September 2024 on the future of the curriculum following extensive national reviews and consultation has been considered, with further

discussion on extending consortia and partnership working – including virtual approaches – being undertaken in partnership with Head Teachers. This includes revisioning of Broad General Education approaches to delivery, interdisciplinary learning, support from partners and extending work based and outdoor learning approaches.

- 6.6 For session 2023/2024, in order to strengthen delivery of learning and teaching across our system and led by our schools, investment in ‘Power up your Pedagogy’ as a back to basics pedagogical LTA focus text for practitioners across Moray for Professional Learning, Practitioner Enquiry and focus for Teacher Learning Communities was supported. This has led to renewed focus within schools on key components required in order to ensure high quality learning, teaching and assessment. Schools now look to year two of delivery with professional learning and leadership sessions emerging, focussed on school based approaches. This has led to positive impact in schools as noted through inspection feedback received. Schools continue to extend approaches, linking in Professional Learning Communities/Teacher Learning Communities to their approach. A Northern Alliance Learning and Teaching Toolkit has also been developed to further add value to school approaches where appropriate.
- 6.7 Following changes to the central Education Quality Improvement Team in July 2024, further review of governance processes and the Moray Quality Improvement Framework have been undertaken. School visit programme has been revised following successful completion last session of How Good is Our School (version 4), Quality Indicator (QI) 2.3 (Learning, Teaching and Assessment) focus. This session will revisit QI 2.3 while taking an extended lens on QI 1.3 (Leadership of Change) through reviewing team activities as well as data and analysis to support improvement.
- 6.8 Subsequent to SQA results in August 2024, the Head of Education in discussion with the Deputy Chief Executive initiated a revised approach to initial attainment meetings with the Quality Improvement Manager. Meetings were held virtually or in person with all eight secondary Head Teachers, a number of those meetings also attended by the Deputy Chief Executive. Meetings held were to discuss performance, data and trends, strengths and areas for improvement.
- 6.9 Following each meeting, key actions were identified and captured for each school to focus upon, focussing school improvement plan actions. In summary, the following key actions as next steps are identified across Moray Schools following the initial attainment meetings held, where data targets and ongoing monitoring will be undertaken throughout the session:
- Support for all learners including those with attendance, behaviour and engagement concerns noted, maximising attainment and ensuring that levels of aspiration and ambition are increased (including support for parents where lower levels of aspiration are noted)
 - Focus on senior and middle leaders and their development in their role and in leading change at subject and school level for raising attainment, maximising subject uptake (assertive coursing), aspiration in level of qualifications studied (positive presentation) and quality of passes for all young people

- Review of the Broad General Education, reflecting on national messages beginning to emerge, in order to prepare young people for Senior Phase courses and qualifications/accreditation including extended cross-sector working across Associated Schools Groups
- Review of the Senior Phase curriculum with continued extension of wider course offers and accreditation through SQA and SCQF opportunities presented and greater curriculum diversification, with particular focus on departments with lower attainment/where further value added could be realised
- Working with other schools and providers, extend curriculum consortia offer and delivery through use of the 33 period week and common timetable column including partnerships around National Qualifications, SCQF courses and Foundation Apprenticeships/National Progression Awards
- Targeted support for departments where attainment and presentation levels and quality of passes is of concern, increasing support and challenge and making use of SQA appointees in supporting with understanding standards and raising attainment
- Continued focus on high quality learning, teaching and assessment ensuring school standards and policy is actioned and quality assurance (learning visits, classroom observations) are in place and impact noted
- School self-evaluation and Quality Assurance processes/approaches to be reviewed with key findings and good practice recognised and shared, leading to improvements in learning, teaching and assessment and raising attainment. Stretch aims, benchmarks set and value added as the session progresses will inform level of impact and improvement realised
- Further increased focus on attainment tracking and monitoring, identifying learners not on track at an earlier stage for earlier intervention and prevention of underachievement, adopting a 'started so you finish' approaches based on equivalent qualifications to those being studied where required
- Looking outwards to good practice in equivalent schools elsewhere with a view to taking forward interventions and approaches at individual school level which will make a difference (based on relevance of context to context)
- Review of processes where learners are not on track to attain with a range of interventions offered including study clubs, online resources and processes including communication with home to build aspiration
- Parental engagement and involvement focus to reinforce importance around levels of ambition and aiming high, removing barrier of low aspirations
- Importance of alignment of the above actions to school vision and values, ensuring core messages, vision, values and aims are owned, shared and known across the school community in raising aspirations for all

6.10 Progress on service improvements as noted above will continue to be reported through ongoing self-evaluation activities and Education Service Plan reporting as well as through the National Improvement Framework self-evaluation and National Improvement Framework plan, reported to committee each year in September. Central Quality Improvement Framework processes and activities will continue to monitor school progress with actions identified through a range of visits and meetings held during the school year.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Reflective of priorities within the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 with particular regard to 'Tackle Poverty and Inequality' where we look to get it right for every child so that we continue to improve attainment for all, with focus on improved attainment in Senior Phase through identified measures. With regards to the 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan LOIP), (2) building a better future for children and young people in Moray through equity of learning experience offered across Moray's schools.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

Actions for improvement identified in 6.8 above highlight desire for improved collaboration and potential to extend consortia arrangements. This continues to be impacted by ongoing digital connectivity and bandwidth issues in respect our ICT Education network operating in schools. As a results, schools continue to repeatedly report operational issues with ICT infrastructure, log-in times, access to core software, devices and poor connectivity having notable impact on learning, teaching and assessment, learner access to digital platforms, school administration, also impeding exploration of school-to-school/school to external learning partner digital consortia approaches. Colleagues within ICT continue to work closely with schools within existing resources in order to remedy issues arising on an ongoing basis, where Education colleagues appreciate ongoing support provided.

Improvement in digital provision is required in order to realise positive consortia approaches and digitally enabled learning and teaching, with absence of 1:1 devices for learners in Moray impacting on learner experiences. Looking outwards where local authorities are digitally enabled, this is having direct positive impact on learning, teaching and assessment and overall achievements of learners in schools where equity in digital access is supported for all. As new digital technologies continue to be explored, this is of further concern as we look to the curriculum of the future.

There are risk implications as to how this attainment dataset will continue to be used as comparator data for the next 3-5 years and may skew future performance reporting. The data presented herein reflects year 3 of a return to SQA examinations following two years of an Alternative Certification Model (ACM), much different to the previous two years of ACM in 2020 and 2021. Similarly, 2024 witnessed return by SQA of coursework to National Qualifications in most subject areas (only subject areas where this was not considered appropriate led to maintaining 2023 assessment arrangements). The conditions for assessment in this year's SQA Examination diet (pandemic related) are most similar to 2019 with where coursework completion required time in class for completion, not

required in session 2022 and 2023. A number of learners have found additional coursework assessment to be challenging, where attendance concerns relating to some young people has impeded coursework completion.

There is further consideration that more young people continue to stay on at school beyond S4 and S5 due to increased anxiety and wider wellbeing factors. This has been noted in some of Moray's secondary schools, requiring creativity regarding potential course options and levels of study. Parent/carer support can vary resulting in lower levels of ambition experienced where schools aim to maximise learner achievement and attainment. Schools continue to support young people through a range of wellbeing and wider learning supports. Schools also report increase in anti-social behaviours and attendance issues, impacting overall on learner achievement and continuity in learning. In a number of schools, challenging and disruptive behaviours of a small minority of young people has adverse impact. Senior Leadership Teams attempt to mitigate issues experienced and seek support of wider partners in order to address individual social, emotional and behavioural issues outwith their scope of expertise.

Schools observe increase in Additional Support Needs among pupils, impacting on number of courses studied and levels of study. This has noted effect on attainment measures outlined above. A number of young people, due to their additional support needs, access a personalised curriculum with individual targets and outcomes. This requires schools to allocate resource in a targeted way with limited additional funds available based on current cost per pupil status as a local authority.

(e) Staffing Implications

No staffing implications arising directly from this report other than risks noted above and potential to impact on staff wellbeing and attendance. Where staffing vacancies arise in specific subjects in secondary, particular difficulties in recruitment have been experienced. In recent sessions, particular difficulties in recruitment to posts in Maths, Home Economics, Technical and English have been experienced as well as discrete Science based subject areas. This has resulted in schools developing creative timetabling approaches through, for example, appointment of BGE Teachers of Numeracy who are Primary qualified but within registration requirements, may teach specific Broad General Education classes. In some schools, curriculum choice has been narrowed due to inability to recruit to specific subjects/posts. Limited availability of supply teachers in secondary, particularly those with subject specialism which may be required, can result in senior leadership teams becoming classroom based, covering classes and detracting from strategic improvement priorities and progress.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on performance.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

No climate change or biodiversity implications have been determined due to the scrutiny and performance based nature of activities reported and no findings related to such implications contained herein.

(i) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education, Communities and Organisational Development, Equal Opportunities Officer, Human Resources Manager and Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Core attainment messages based on key national measures are outlined within this paper with areas of strength noted and areas for further improvement identified for moving forwards, based on data presented. Following initial discussions with Secondary Head Teachers regarding attainment, key actions are identified for raising attainment within each school with common themes emerging. Ongoing monitoring of data and targets set at the start of session will be reviewed throughout the session along with actions identified in order to realise improvements in performance.**
- 8.2 A refocussed Education Strategic Plan provides direction in relation to leadership of change, ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion, learner centred development of the curriculum and focus on delivery of high quality learning, teaching and assessment. Across our schools, ongoing quality improvement activities continue to guide school self-evaluation and impact of directed improvement activities.**
- 8.3 In discussion with Education Scotland and Scottish Government, Stretch Aims continue to provide a basis for measurement and review in line with Scottish Government's revised (2023) Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress, guiding improvement activities moving forwards across the service. Further review of Education central governance processes and our Moray Quality Improvement Framework will provide scrutiny and support of school activities using all resources available, gauging impact of key actions implemented by schools to raise attainment.**
- 8.4 Committee is invited to scrutinise data and key messages reported, contextual factors outlined and acknowledge work undertaken to date. Planned actions as an Education service are underway in order to further strengthen attainment and achievement for all.**

Background Papers: [Education National Improvement Framework Report and Plan](#): Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, 17 September 2024, item 8

Education National Improvement Framework Report and Plan: Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, 17 September 2024, item 8, [Appendix 1](#)

Education National Improvement Framework Report and Plan: Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, 17 September 2024, item 8, [Appendix 2](#)

[Scottish Government: Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress \(2023\)](#)

Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-598