



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON 31 MARCH 2021**

**SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVER ATTAINMENT
2019/20**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This is an update to the Interim Secondary School Attainment 2019/20 report from the meeting of 18 November 2020 (paragraph 17 of the minute refers). This report included information from Scottish Qualifications Authority Senior Phase National Qualifications results generated from submitted estimates during the first national lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young People Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance, (para 9 of the minute refers).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **considers and notes the leaver attainment information of young people in Moray, with specific regard to the National Measures for leavers published on Insight in February 2021; and**
- (ii) **scrutinises and notes the actions for improvement arising from the 2019/20 attainment performance**

3. BACKGROUND

Covid-19 and SQA Assessment Arrangements

- 3.1 For session 2019/2020 the absence of external assessment information, and the Ministerial direction to award estimated grades, have led to a different

pattern of attainment than we have seen in previous years across Scotland. National advice from Scottish Government through Insight, the Senior Phase Benchmarking tool, states that the results for 2020 should not be directly compared to those in previous years or future years. The 2020 Insight data cannot therefore be used to directly demonstrate subject, school or authority improvement compared with previous years. Within, this report however, we will demonstrate Moray attainment in order to provide an overview of progress made during session 2019/20, which saw schools close on 20 March 2020 for the first coronavirus lockdown. There will be an element of comparator narrative within this report in order to provide context and progress within our Education Strategic Plan and the Raising Attainment Strategy targets.

Attainment

- 3.2 Insight focuses on performance in the Senior Phase across four key national benchmarking measures. The four national benchmarking measures focus on:
- Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy
 - Improving attainment for all
 - Increasing post-school participation
 - Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers
- 3.3 It encourages a holistic approach to evaluating attainment and achievement that takes into account the performance within Moray across all four measures. We will also use breadth and depth of SCQF level qualifications for leavers as a measure against our virtual comparator.
- 3.4 A complete picture of the performance of a school (or a local authority, or across Scotland as a whole), requires data from all four of the key measures to be considered together. However, as indicated in the Insight update letter of 22 February 2021, "Care should also be taken when comparing attainment to the virtual comparator, or indeed when making comparisons across schools. Users are reminded that National/Leavers attainment data (as updated in the February 2021 Update) may include attainment gained across a number of academic sessions and therefore reflect differing approaches to certification dependant on the session in which the achievement was certificated". This is in direct response to the cancellation of the SQA exam diet for session 2019/20 and the use of school based estimates as an integral measure of attainment.
- 3.5 Although the latest set of annual exam results become available on Insight in September each year, the school leaver destinations data is not available until December, this then appears in Insight in February of the following year. Therefore, it will only be possible to provide a complete picture of attainment and achievement from March onwards each year.

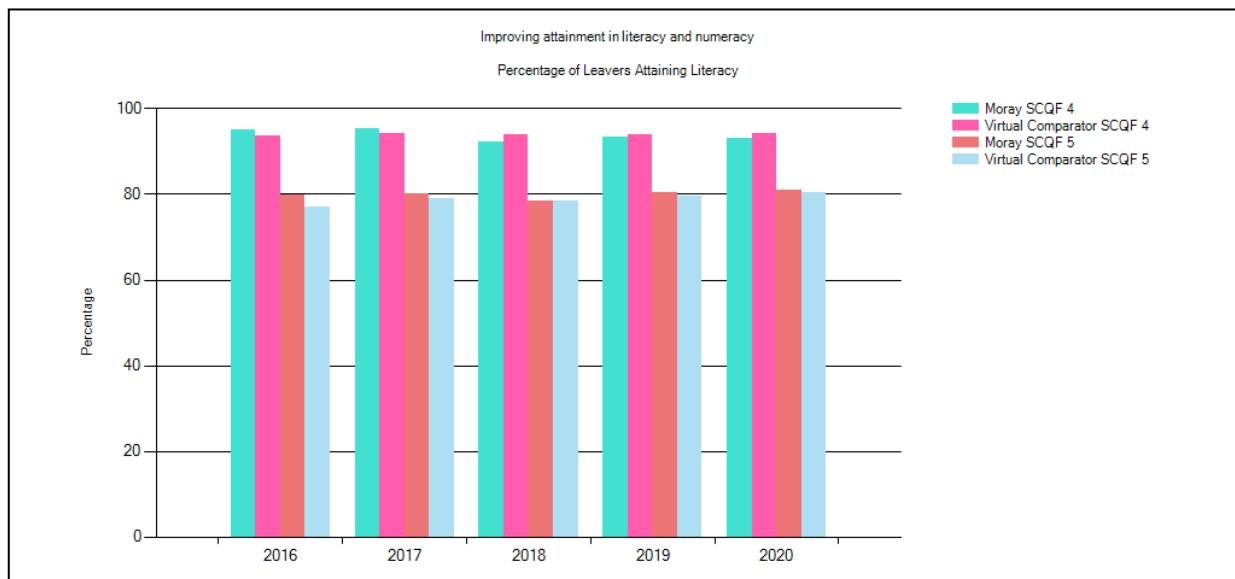
Insight Benchmarking Measures – National Measures

- 3.6 As noted in paragraph 3.2 above, the data for the four national benchmarks will be available each year in late February, once the school leavers' data has

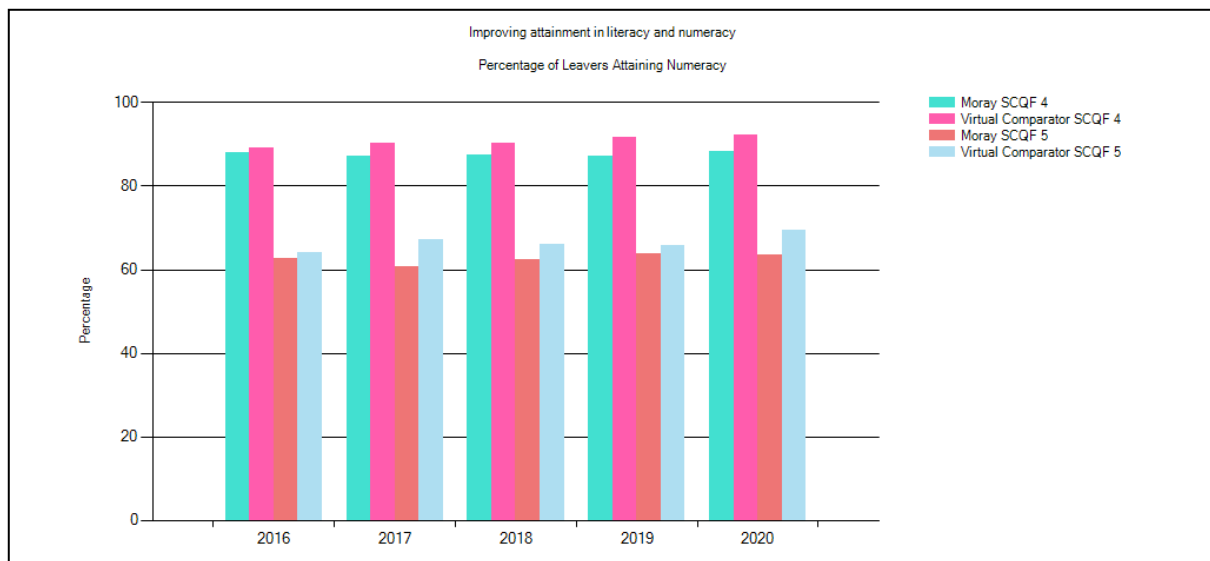
been compiled. It is especially important to reiterate that this represents data for all school leavers from S4–S6 for the school year 2019/20, as opposed to individual cohorts of learners. The National Measures exclusively profile our school performance for learners at the point of exit from secondary school education. The Local Measures, also available on Insight and referred to in the Committee report on 18 November 2020 (para xx of the minute refers) detail the performance of schools on a cohort by cohort basis. To minimise confusion, it is recommended that we will report solely on the four National Measures in March/April each year. Local attainment performance analysis will take place involving principal teachers and other school senior leaders from September onwards, classified by year group, subject, level of qualification, gender and other filters pertinent to each school.

Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

Improving attainment in Literacy
% of leavers achieving an award in Literacy at SCQF Levels 4 & 5 (2020)



Improving attainment in Numeracy
 % of leavers achieving an award in Numeracy at SCQF Levels 4 & 5 (2020)



3.7 The above graphs present the percentage of leavers achieving an award in Literacy and Numeracy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels 4 and 5 by the end of their school experience in Moray as compared with its virtual comparator for each of the last five years.

	Moray			Virtual Comparator		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Literacy Level 4	92%	93%	93%	94%	93%	94%
Literacy Level 5	78%	81%	81%	79%	80%	81%
Numeracy Level 4	88%	87%	88%	90%	92%	92%
Numeracy Level 5	62%	64%	64%	66%	66%	69%

3.8 The additional information in the table shows with regard to literacy and numeracy, Moray has maintained SCQF level 4 and 5 literacy, the gap between performance in Moray and the Virtual Comparator reducing to 1% for Level 4 Literacy and Level 5 Literacy equalling the VC. Numeracy at Level 5 maintaining previous improvement although the gap with the VC is increasing. The orange shading denotes no improvement or reduction in performance and the green shading showing an improvement from the previous year.

3.9 When compared with our targets for Literacy and Numeracy within the Raising Attainment Strategy, we are slightly below the targets set; for Literacy our target was 94% of leavers to achieve Level 4 Literacy and we achieved 93% as a Moray Average and for Numeracy Level 4 we were 3% below our target. However, Elgin Academy, Keith Grammar, Milne's High and Speyside High equalled or exceeded the Moray target for Literacy and for Numeracy the target was exceeded by Keith Grammar, Lossiemouth High, Milne's High and

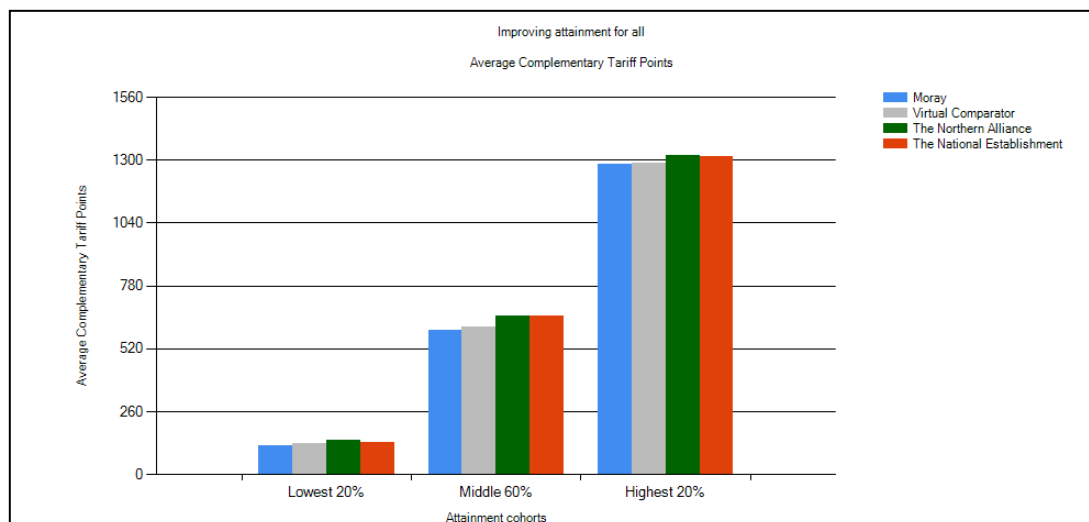
Speyside High. We are continuing our ongoing focus on Literacy and Numeracy in our secondary schools.

- 3.10 Ongoing work to focus on Literacy and Numeracy continues to be a key area for improvement in our service during this further lockdown. As pupils begin to return to school this term, there is a targeted approach to assessment which is supported by an increased accuracy of data gathering. The focus remains on increasing the proportion of learners achieving both literacy and numeracy at level 5 by the end of their school experience an aim in all our schools.
- 3.11 There are a number of initiatives in place in Moray to support the improvement of attainment in both literacy and numeracy:
- Additional time spent in the Broad General Education as well as the Senior Phase to identify gaps in both learning and attainment
 - Targeting pupils to undertake a range of assessments to ensure the highest level of Literacy and Numeracy is attained, supported by robust tracking and monitoring in place in all of our secondary schools
 - Development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum as a responsibility of all, including tracking of literacy and numeracy in the Broad General Education as well as working with primaries
 - Literacy and numeracy is further scrutinised at school level and is an ongoing focus for central staff discussions and school visits taking place virtually during lockdown
 - Our targets for leavers attaining Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy for session 2020/21 is 96% for Literacy and 92% for Numeracy.

Improving attainment for all

- 3.12 This measure allows us to examine how different ability cohorts are attaining in relation to the appropriate virtual and national cohorts. Attainment is measured using the tariff scale, which was developed for Insight; this allocates a specified number of points to each qualification (including units), with more demanding qualifications gaining more points than less demanding ones. Three ability cohorts are identified for each school, its virtual comparator, the Northern Alliance (Regional Improvement Collaborative) and Scotland as a whole: those in the bottom 20% of tariff points scored, those in the top 20% of tariff points scored, and those that fall within the middle 60% of tariff points scored.

Improving Attainment for all
Average Complimentary Tariff Score of school leavers by ability cohorts (2020)



Complimentary Tariff Points	Lowest 20% 2020	Lowest 20% 2019	Middle 60% 2020	Middle 60% 2019	Highest 20% 2020	Highest 20% 2019
Moray	117	127	595	555	1284	1205
Virtual Comparator	130	130	610	568	1286	1244
The Northern Alliance	142	133	654	591	1321	1252
The National Establishment	133	134	657	623	1313	1267

3.13 The above graph shows attainment data of young people leaving school in 2020. It shows that in Moray, the Lowest 20% are slightly below the virtual comparator authority equivalent (by 13 tariff points which is almost equivalent to just one unit award at SCQF level 3). This is a small decrease from last session and there is practice to learn from schools who are performing well for this measure; the schools who are performing well in this area are Elgin Academy, Keith Grammar, Milne's High and Speyside High. Discussions with schools have identified this as a target group to ensure the early identification of the cohort, as well as the curricular and SCQF level offer in place in terms of suitability. This includes improving the tracking and monitoring strategies to ensure the appropriate interventions are in place. The SQA system for resulting awards this year is being rigorously planned and monitored in order to improve this measure for all young people.

3.14 The middle 60% are broadly in line with the virtual comparator (15 points lower, which equates to an Added Value unit at SCQF level 4) but are below the Northern Alliance and national average. However, the complementary tariff points for the Middle 60% of leavers has improved from last session by 40 points which is more than a course award at SCQF level 4. The schools who are performing well for this group of leavers are Elgin Academy, Milne's High and Speyside High. This again reflects the performance of this group as a cohort and in discussions, schools are reviewing their processes to ensure a

range of high impact interventions support curricular choice and progression for learners.

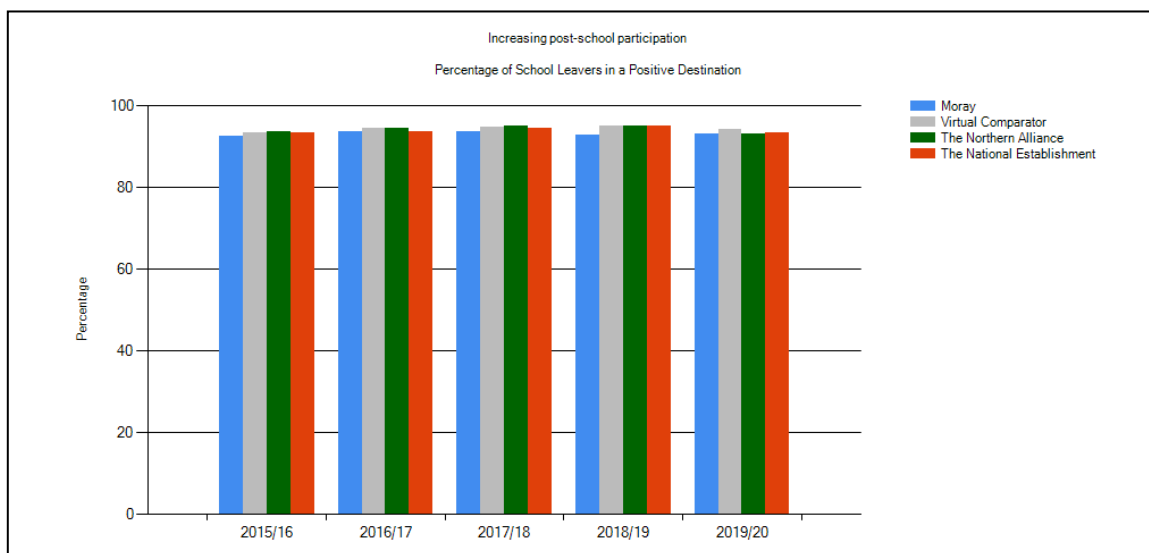
- 3.15 The Highest 20% is marginally lower than the virtual comparator (2 points), Northern Alliance (37 points) and national (29 points). This is a marked improvement and the gap in this measure is closing from session 2018/19 with an improvement of 79 tariff points, which broadly equates to an A at SCQF level 5. There is ongoing work to ensure tracking and monitoring of progress is directly linked to aspiration and a main strategy will be to support and mentor young people to ensure we improve the grades achieved by learners, eg D grades improved to a C, C grades improved to a B and B grades improved to an A, which will bring the tariff points in line with our comparators. Schools who have performed well in this area are Elgin Academy, Elgin High and Speyside High.

It should be noted that this measure looks at the complimentary total tariff score which is not affected by the number of qualifications and units a young person completes; this removes inequality and anomalies with curriculum structures across Scotland, of which there are many.

Leaver Initial destinations – Increasing post school participation

- 3.16 This measure shows the percentage of young people securing an initial positive destination when they leave school.

Increasing post-school participation
Percentage of School Leavers in a Positive Destination (2020)



- 3.17 Destinations figures reflect both choices made by pupils, as well as the opportunities available to them upon leaving school. The availability of particular opportunities (employment opportunities, for example) may have been directly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, while options available to school leavers may also have been affected by the impact of the

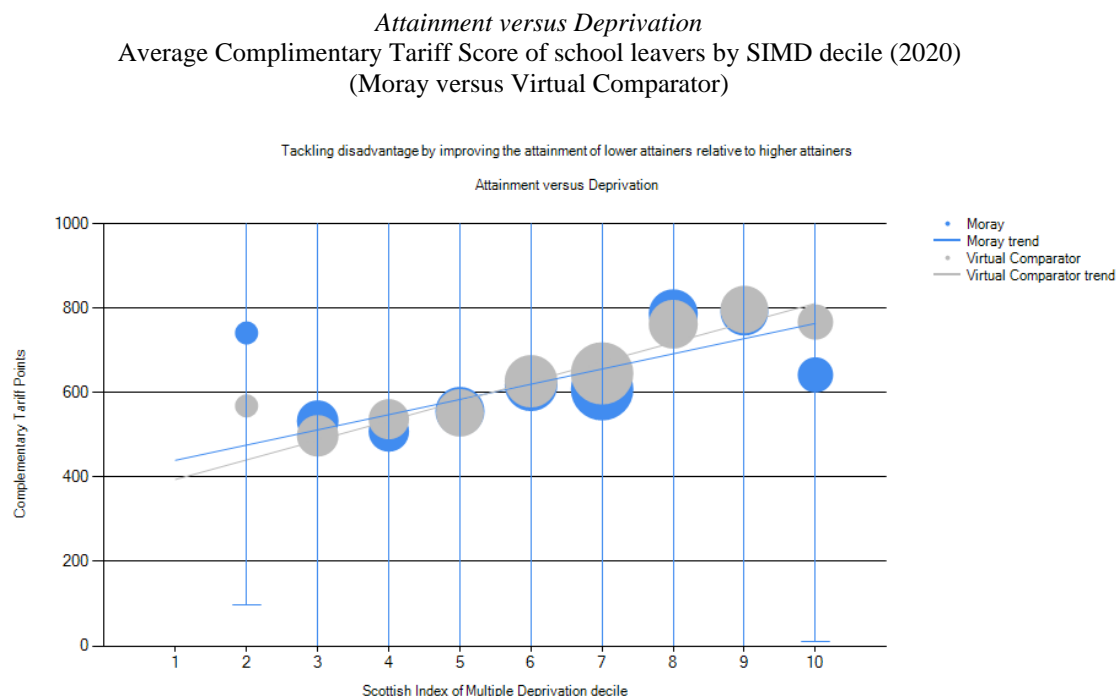
approach to certification in 2020 on attainment levels. This should be considered when reviewing this measure.

- 3.18 The above graph shows 5 years data on the percentage of Moray school leavers progressing onto a positive destination compared against their virtual comparator, the Northern Alliance and nationally. There has been an improvement in this measure and Moray has on average seen an improvement; with Moray performing above the Northern Alliance and broadly in line with the national average for session 2019/20. This measure last year was very disappointing and as a result of much work being undertaken the Moray data is much improved, with Moray now being positioned 14th out of 32 local authorities.
- 3.19 A great deal of work was undertaken in gathering leaver data using a Microsoft Form where data was entered remotely, captured within a spreadsheet and allowed our other administrative processes with Skills Development Scotland to be finely tuned for accuracy. This was also complemented by a partnership Pathway Planning approach with supporting guidance to ensure that all schools and partners worked collaboratively and smartly to support our school leavers. This is being developed as a positive case study by Skills Development Scotland for further use on a national basis. The schools who are performing well in this area are Elgin Academy, Elgin High School, Milne's High and Speyside High. We will continue to focus on this area in order to reach our target for session 2020/21 of 97%.
- 3.20 The table below shows the destinations for Moray young people who left school at the end of session 2019/20.

	Year	% Employed	% Further Education	% Higher Education	% Not known	% PSD	% Training	% Unemployed Not Seeking	% Unemployed Seeking	% Voluntary Work
Moray	2019/20	17.8	32.14	39.78	1.31	1.08	2.03	1.43	4.18	0.24
VC	2019/20	19.02	29.68	41.12	0.73	0.57	3.27	1.62	3.44	0.54
Northern Alliance	2019/20	18.78	27.5	43.39	1.23	0.37	2.57	2.08	3.70	0.38
National	2019/20	16.18	28.06	44.2	0.67	0.79	3.68	1.83	4.14	0.45

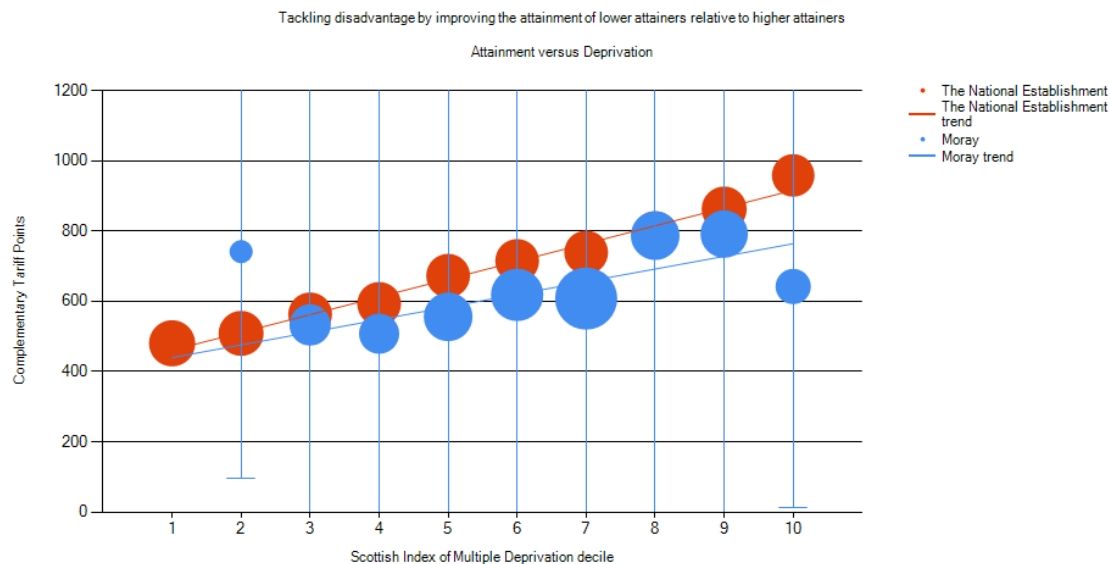
- 3.21 The percentage going into Further Education is higher than all comparators, which is a change from leaver destinations in 2018/19; with the percentage going into Higher Education lower than all comparators. There is a reducing number of leavers from Moray going into employment straight from school and this is a change from previous years; with likely reasons associated with Covid-19 and related economic downturn and challenge within Moray. The destination breakdown for Moray is collated from 8 very different schools who have a range of pathways for all groups of learners to progress to various destinations. Of note is the increase in Higher education and reduction of those leavers going into employment; we continue to work with partners, including Skills Development Scotland to ensure all learners have access to information and support to access appropriate pathways.

Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers



- 3.22 The above graph shows 2019/20 leaver attainment data (using the complimentary tariff scores) for Moray and its virtual comparator, broken down into ten deciles according to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data. Decile 1 refers to the attainment of young people with postcodes within datazones 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 datazones according to SIMD. In Moray there now young people within decile 1. We continue to monitor the use of SIMD as a measure in authorities where rural poverty is a concern, yet not fully considered nationally.
- 3.23 The graph suggests that school leavers within Moray compare well against the virtual comparator within deciles 3-9 with the tariff scores either above or generally in line with the virtual comparator average tariff score. The performance for those young people in decile 2 is above the virtual comparator with decile 10 lower than the virtual comparator, a similar position to last session. The performance of the young people in decile 2 is notably above the virtual comparator. It is important to be aware of the numbers of young people appearing in each of these deciles. This is represented proportionately in the graph by the area of the circles, with the above graph showing the highest concentration of young people in Moray are in deciles 5-9. It is interesting to note that the vertical lines show the range of attainment of tariff points within each decile.

Attainment versus Deprivation
Average Complimentary Tariff Score of school leavers by SIMD decile (2020)
(Moray versus National Trend)



- 3.24 The comparison can also be made against the national picture rather than the virtual authority. This picture shows that the young people in deciles 4-7 and 9 and 10 are performing less well against the national average. The leavers in deciles 2 across Moray compares well with their national comparators.

As a note, SIMD does not consider the rural context of Moray or similar local authorities.

Breadth and Depth of Qualifications

- 3.25 We can also consider the breadth and depth of the range of qualifications which are the awards gained by level. This demonstrates the suite of qualifications that leavers gain throughout their senior phase.

Awards	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
1 or more	98%	97%	97%	95%	88%	61%	22%
2 or more	95%	95%	94%	91%	91%	54%	10%
3 or more	93%	92%	92%	91%	75%	49%	4%
4 or more	89%	88%	88%	86%	67%	42%	1%
5 or more	84%	84%	83%	82%	62%	34%	0%
6 or more	77%	77%	76%	74%	55%	23%	0%
7 or more	63%	62%	62%	60%	44%	15%	0%
8 or more	48%	48%	47%	46%	31%	6%	0%
9 or more	31%	31%	31%	29%	19%	2%	0%
10 or more	18%	18%	18%	17%	9%	1%	0%

- 3.26 The boxes shaded in green within the table above show a higher percentage of leaver overall attainment than during session 2018/19. This demonstrates more young people having more than one SCQF Level 6 or 7 qualifications upon leaving school than previously and more leaving with a greater number of SCQF Level 1-6 qualifications when they leave with a high percentage leaving with more than 7 SCQF Level 1-6 qualifications. Within Moray, there is some considerable work being undertaken to review and improve the curricular offer for senior phase pupils which will directly impact on the breadth and depth measure, including other attainment measures as detailed above.

	SCQF Level 5					SCQF Level 6			SCQF Level 7
	1+	3+	5+	6+		1+	3+	5+	1+
2020									
Moray	88%	75%	62%	55%		61%	49%	34%	22%
Virtual Comparator	88%	76%	65%	57%		63%	50%	37%	23%
2019									
Moray	89%	75%	62%	50%		59%	44%	29%	19%
Virtual Comparator	88%	74%	61%	53%		61%	46%	32%	20%

- 3.27 The key measures for SCQF Level 5 attainment are 1 or more, 3 or more, 5 or more or 6 or more. Within the measure for 6 or more we have a 5 year high and are closing the gap with the virtual comparator. The boxes shaded in green show an increase from session 2018/19. Our target for leavers achieving 5 or more SCQF Level 5 for 2020/21 is 67%. The schools which have performed well in this area of 5 or more at SCQF Level 5 are Elgin Academy, Milne's High and Speyside High.
- 3.28 The key measures for SCQF Level 6 are 1 or more, 3 or more and 5 or more; at all measures we are below all comparators and is a continued area of focus in our schools. We have improved from session 2018/19 and in some areas closed the gap with our virtual comparator. This is an area which continues to be addressed at school attainment meetings and our targets for leavers achieving 5 or more SCQF Level 6 2019/20 is 38%. Schools who perform well for 5 or more at SCQF Level 6 measures are Elgin Academy, Elgin High, Forres Academy, Milne's High and Speyside High.
- 3.29 At level 7, we consider one or more as a measure and we are broadly in line with previous years and our virtual comparator. SCQF Level 7 should be considered if appropriate for learner pathways and for some learners additional SCQF Level 6 qualifications can be a preference for some universities. Schools which perform well in this area are Elgin Academy, Elgin High, Forres Academy and Speyside High.

Summary

- 3.30 As the conclusion to a year of uncertainty and unprecedented times, the leaver attainment in Moray shows a number of improvements against previous attainment and comparator performance. We continue to monitor

progress against our previously agreed attainment targets. Some of our schools are performing well and contributing positively to the overall Moray averages and for other schools there continues to be work to be done to support and challenge performance; this is being undertaken in a range of ways during session 2020/21 and Covid-19 restrictions. These actions being taken are linked to our Raising Attainment Strategy as well as the ongoing work with Senior Phase curriculum development to provide a robust, responsive and appropriate learning offer to ensure that in Moray we meet the needs of all of our learners. This aspect of Curriculum Development will be presented more fully to a future Education, Communities and Organisational Development committee.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The Policy was informed by the priorities within the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan and in particular to Ambitious and Confident Children and Young People and A Growing and Diverse Economy.

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

There are risk implications if we cannot support national expectations and requirements in relation to this key national policy directive. The risks associated with failure to support expectations and requirements are the potential negative impact on school inspection reports and in the failure to improve learner achievement and attainment. This would have a direct impact on any reporting to the Scottish Government on National Improvement Framework areas. An ongoing risk continues to be Covid-19 with school closures and partial reopening having an impact on progress schools are making with the ongoing late release of information and processes from the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

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) Consultations

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

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the updated attainment information of young people in Moray with specific regard to the National Measures published on Insight in February 2020.**
- 6.2 That committee acknowledges the intention to present a further document to Committee on Curriculum Development in the Senior Phase**

Author of Report: Karen Lees, Quality Improvement Manager
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-41