



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

**SUBJECT: INITIAL ATTAINMENT REPORT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS
2020**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the SQA attainment across our secondary schools and for this data to be fully scrutinised as part of our raising attainment improvements and strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **scrutinises the Senior Phase Attainment across our Secondary Schools for session 2019/20 and notes the initial processes in preparation for exams in session 2020/21;**
- (ii) **note that school based attainment meetings took place in October and November 2020 and actions for improvement were agreed; and**
- (iii) **note that a follow up report of leaver destinations will be reported to Committee in April 2021 which will be supported by further attainment meetings which elected members will be invited to attend**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 SQA Attainment – Session 2019/20

SQA announced on 19 March 2020 that this year's diet of exams would not go ahead due to the coronavirus pandemic and schools across Scotland closed on 20 March 2020.

- 3.2 SQA results were received as expected on 4 August 2020 for all our senior pupils. On 11 August 2020, the Deputy First Minister announced that further to the release of SQA results on 4 August 2020 and in response to concerns from a range of stakeholders, all candidates would now be awarded their estimate grade if this was higher than the grade awarded on 4 August 2020 or the grade awarded on 4 August 2020 if this was higher than the estimate.
- 3.3 In addition and due to a variety of reasons, a decision was made by Scottish Government in September 2020 that the Insight data release we usually receive in September each year for cohort attainment across S4, S5 and S6 performance would not be released this year.

The usual Senior Phase Benchmarking Toolkit is a holistic approach to attainment and performance and allows comparison with virtual comparators and on a national basis. This normally allows analysis of the following:

- 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 high attainers
- 3.4 Senior Phase Attainment Meetings have taken place with all secondary schools to analyse the SQA performance data and to set actions for improvement appropriate to all schools on an individual basis.
- 3.5 As such, the attainment data presented to Committee within this report is collated from SQA results across the senior phase and will cover the following:
- 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
 - Overview of subject performance
 - Attainment in senior phase from courses provided through UHI, Moray College
- 3.6 Our recent Best Value Audit Report for Moray highlighted poor levels of attainment for a number of measures; this was extracted from our attainment data for session 2017/18. Within this Committee report, data from 2017/18 is noted along with data from 2018/19 and 2019/20 in order to demonstrate progress made to date as well as actions for improvement in place to ensure this improving trend continues.

4 SENIOR PHASE ATTAINMENT ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

4.1 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	2018	2019	2020
1 @ Level 5	75.7%	78.6%	82.3%
3 @ Level 5	52.2%	55.0%	61.4%
5 @ Level 5	30.9%	32.5%	39.2%
6 @ Level 5	20.8%	20.5%	27.8%
7 @ Level 5	0.0%	0.1%	9.4%

The above data demonstrates an improvement across all measures in 2020, and for almost all areas this is a trend over the 3 year period. For the first time we are also presenting the trend for attainment of 6 and 7 qualifications at level 5. This shows a positive position with 4 of our schools presenting a number of pupils for 7 level 5 qualifications and as a result we have the emergence of a strong performance for this measure. This is primarily for those pupils presented for Applications of Maths alongside Mathematics at National 5 level. Work has already started with all schools to ensure more pupils across all of our schools have the opportunity to undertake 7 and more level 5 qualifications in S4 with this initially being for Application of Maths but will extend to other subject areas as appropriate.

Our targets for session 2020/21 are:

Moray	2021
1 @ Level 5	85%
3 @ Level 5	65%
5 @ Level 5	42%
6 @ Level 5	31%
7 @ Level 5	15%

4.2 S5 Breadth and Depth attainment at SCQF Level 6

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

This data is based upon the S4 cohort numbers who continue to S5 and is not for all pupils who were still in school for S5. This is a normal measure for measuring performance with SQA qualifications.

Moray	2018	2019	2020
1 @ Level 6	53.7%	46.0%	56.8%
3 @ Level 6	33.8%	27.5%	33.4%
5 @ Level 6	13.9%	11.7%	13.3%

There is an improving trend for 1 pass at level 6 and for 3 and 5 passes at level 6 there is an improvement from 2019. S5 attainment continues to be an

area of focus across Moray and is supported through our ongoing review of the curriculum provision at SCQF level 6 across our schools to ensure that we provide a responsive and appropriate offer for all learners.

Our targets for session 2020/21 are:

Moray	2021
1 @ Level 6	61%
3 @ Level 6	36%
5 @ Level 6	16%

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

This measures how many qualifications S6 learners achieved SCQF level 6 and 7 qualifications; 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 accumulation of level 6 and 7 attainment which may have been achieved prior to S6 within the Senior Phase. Similarly, to S5 performance, we are continuing to develop the curricular offer for S6 pupils.

This data is based upon the S4 cohort numbers who continue to S6 and is not for all pupils who were still in school for S6.

Moray	2018	2019	2020
3 @ Level 6	38.1%	42.2%	37.9%
5 @ Level 6	25.2%	26.9%	26.1%
1 @ Level 7	17.6%	16.5%	18.6%

Our S6 attainment is variable across achievement of both 3 and 5 qualifications at SCQF level 6 with young people achieving at least 1 Advanced Higher is displaying an improving trend. There is still work to do across our S6 curriculum offer and demonstrated attainment.

Our targets for session 2020/21 are:

Moray	2021
3 @ Level 6	44%
5 @ Level 6	30%
1 @ Level 7	20%

4.4 Actions for Improvement for Breadth and Depth Attainment

A range of actions for improvement have been put in place to further improve our breadth and depth attainment following data and trend analysis and secondary school attainment meetings. These will be monitored and followed up by central officers on a school by school basis throughout the session.

- Cohort and group based tracking and monitoring to support interventions for improved attainment
- Increased focus on target setting through Universal Pupil Support interventions and regular department meetings
- Inservice focus in November on attainment and readiness and responsiveness for SQA exam diet 2021
- Authority-wide focus on high quality learning and teaching, embedding Our Moray Standard across all schools
- Launch and implementation of Moray Raising Attainment Strategy, Toolkit and Practitioner Guide
- Review of curricular provision including range and number of qualifications on offer to support all learners using consortia approaches as well as virtual solutions
- Provision of study support at school level as well as national support through eSgoil supported study sessions available virtually

4.5 Subject Performance at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Level

At National 5 level, from the 33 subjects presented across Moray schools, the average pass rate for S4 pupils was 91%; this is an increase of 9% from 2019. Within our schools this ranged from 85.8% to 97.1%.

At N5 our highly positive subject attainment is in Art and Design, Dance, Design and Manufacture, Drama, French, German, Music, Practical Woodworking, Spanish pre update and this improved to most subjects post update with some work to continue improvement in the Sciences, Geography, Maths

At Higher Level, from the 33 subjects presented, the average pass for S4 pupils was 89.3%; ranging from 81.4% to 96% across our schools. This is an increase of 15% from 2019.

At Higher our highly positive subject attainment is Art and Design, Dance, Design and Manufacture, French, Music pre update and this improved for most subjects post update with some work to improve in Sciences, Engineering Sciences.

Subject performance has been reviewed at school and local authority level and support and challenge is in place for ongoing subject group meetings as we prepare for the expectations and requirements for SQA Exam Diet 2021.

4.6 Actions for Improvement for Subject Based Attainment

A range of actions for improvement have been put in place to further improve our attainment and estimate rigour. These will be monitored and followed up by central officers on a school by school basis throughout the session as well as by school senior leaders.

- Subject group meetings to support data and trend analysis and dissemination of good practice
- School based department attainment meetings, some of which supported by central officers
- Familiarisation with National 5 assessment and moderation requirements and school and authority processes to support this
- SQA Understanding Standards and associated webinars
- Higher and Advanced Higher assessment changes and associated changes to learning and teaching approaches
- School and authority quality assurances process during session 2020/21

4.7 Moray College continues to provide a range of qualifications 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.

At National 5 and Higher level the performance is noted below for A-C passes for 2018 - 2020:

	2020	2019	2018
	A-C	A-C	A-C
H ESOL	100%	80%	100%
H Psych	74%	40%	70%
H Sociology	100%	50%	31%
N5 ESOL	100%	75%	100%
N5 Practical Cookery	90%		
N5 Psychology	86%	70%	82%

National 5 attainment is broadly in line with previous years; 2020 saw an improvement in H Sociology with a decline in numbers presented however and H Psychology continues to be a concern from Moray College. These results will be addressed and discussed at our College Attainment Meeting this term.

4.8 Actions for Improvement of Moray College Attainment

As stated, the attainment for Skills for Work and National Progression Awards continues to be positive for Moray senior phase learners, however a range of actions for improvement have been put in place to further improve National Qualification attainment at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher level. These will be monitored and followed up by the authority Moray College link throughout the session.

- Moray College attainment meeting attended by central officers and school based representative

- Enhanced tracking and monitoring processes shared regularly with each school
- Regular discussions re early warning and interventions for pupils as required
- Mid-session progress meeting re attainment and improvement status
- Extension of partner offer to include eSgoil and the Northern Alliance Digital Depute Headteacher who is supporting in this area

5. SENIOR PHASE SQA EXAM PROCESSES FOR 2021

- 5.1 It was announced on 7 October 2020 by the Deputy First Minister that following an external review, National 5 examinations would not take place for session 2020/21. Instead, there would be the submission of estimates supported by a revised assessment process which will be supported and moderated by internal school and authority processes as well as external SQA procedures. Following the estimate process undertaken for exam diet 2020, all schools in Moray are well placed to build on the good practice and all schools and their SQA coordinators are working closely with the local authority SQA lead to develop and implement a rigorous and reliable system to ensure that all pupils are provided with a fair and equitable approach to estimates and attainment.
- 5.2 The Higher and Advanced Higher exams will take place within a condensed exam diet with will start later than usual to allow for extended opportunity for learning, teaching and assessment in preparation to enable positive preparation for these exams; given that the S5 pupils attempting Higher exams have not yet sat a formal SQA exam due to the cancellation of exams last year. We will work closely with schools and practitioners to enable learners to be fully prepared for these exams. The SQA and Scottish Government are currently working on a set of contingency plans should the Higher and Advanced Highers not take place and committee will be updated should this arise.

6. 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 as to how this attainment dataset will be used as comparator data for the next 3-5 years and may skew future performance reporting.

(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 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 note the SQA estimate process in preparation for the full 2020 attainment report at the next Committee meeting

6.2 The Committee is asked to consider the potential impact on exams and performance for session 2020/21

Author of Report: Karen Lees, Quality Improvement Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: