



EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE: 25 NOVEMBER 2014

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN 2014 DIET OF SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY EXAMINATIONS AND STANDARDISED ASSESSMENTS

Report by Director of Education and Children's Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT To report to the Comhairle on pupil attainment across the Authority in the 2014 diet of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) external examinations and standardised assessments.

COMPETENCE

- 1.1 There are no legal, financial or other constraints to the recommendation being implemented.

SUMMARY

- 2.1 Information is available annually, in August, on pupils' attainment in external examinations set by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Insight, the online SQA analysis tool, introduced in August 2014, provides four Local and National Benchmark Measures, where performance is illustrated against a virtual comparator and national data.
- 2.2 The Local and National Benchmark Measures are:
- % of Leavers attaining in Literacy and Numeracy
 - Average Tariff Scores
 - % of School Leavers in a Positive Destination
 - Attainment versus Deprivation
- 2.3 The Virtual Comparator is a way of comparing the performance of all pupils in a school/authority with a group of pupils, taken from around Scotland, who have the same socio-economic backgrounds as those of the school/authority. This gives a very fair way of comparing the performance in the Western Isles to that of a similar group of pupils, so that it is clear where performance is strong and where it might be considered as needing improvement.
- 2.4 SQA attainment data for 2014 indicates that Eilean Siar results are above or significantly above both the virtual comparator and national data in the four Benchmark Measures and at all stages, except Advanced Higher.
- 2.5 Progress in English (PiE) and Progress in Mathematics (PiM) tests are administered annually to P3 (English Medium pupils only), P7 and S2 pupils. 2014 results indicate improved performance, at all stages except S2 PiE. Scores are above the mean (UK) standard average in P3 PiE, S2 PiE and S2 PiM, but marginally below in P3 PiM, P7 PiE and PiM. Girls performed better than boys in all tests, at all three stages, except P7 PiM.
- 2.6 Attainment data (SQA and Standardised Assessments), for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar schools is collated and analysed by the Officer responsible for performance data. In addition, each school is required to produce an analysis, indicating strengths and areas for improvement as the basis of an Action Plan. These reports are the focus of discussions at review meetings between the Headteacher/Senior Management Team and the School's Senior Education Officer.

RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle note the content of the Report.**

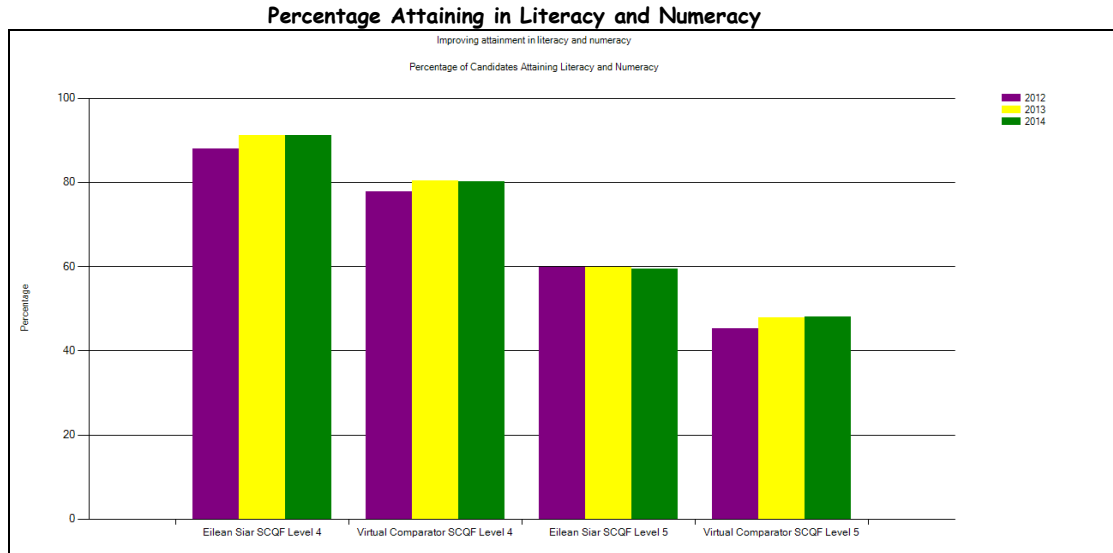
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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Scottish Qualifications Authority - Examination Results 2014; GL Assessments Progress in English and Progress in Mathematics Reports.

2014 SQA ATTAINMENT IN EILEAN SIAR: PERFORMANCE IN NATIONAL BENCHMARK MEASURES

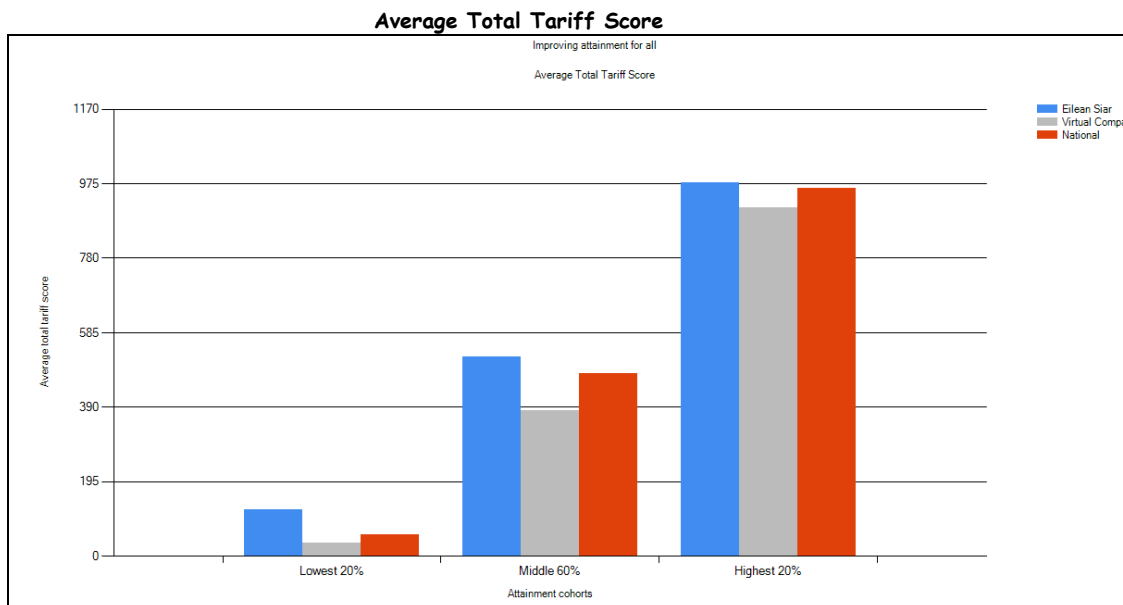
Percentage Attaining in Literacy and Numeracy

- 4.1 The performance of Eilean Siar pupils at Level 4 is *significantly higher* than the virtual comparator and *higher* than the virtual comparator at Level 5.
- 4.2 The bar chart below indicates the percentage of pupils achieving SCQF level 4 and 5 in Literacy and Numeracy qualifications between 2012 and 2014 in Eilean Siar, compared to the virtual comparator.



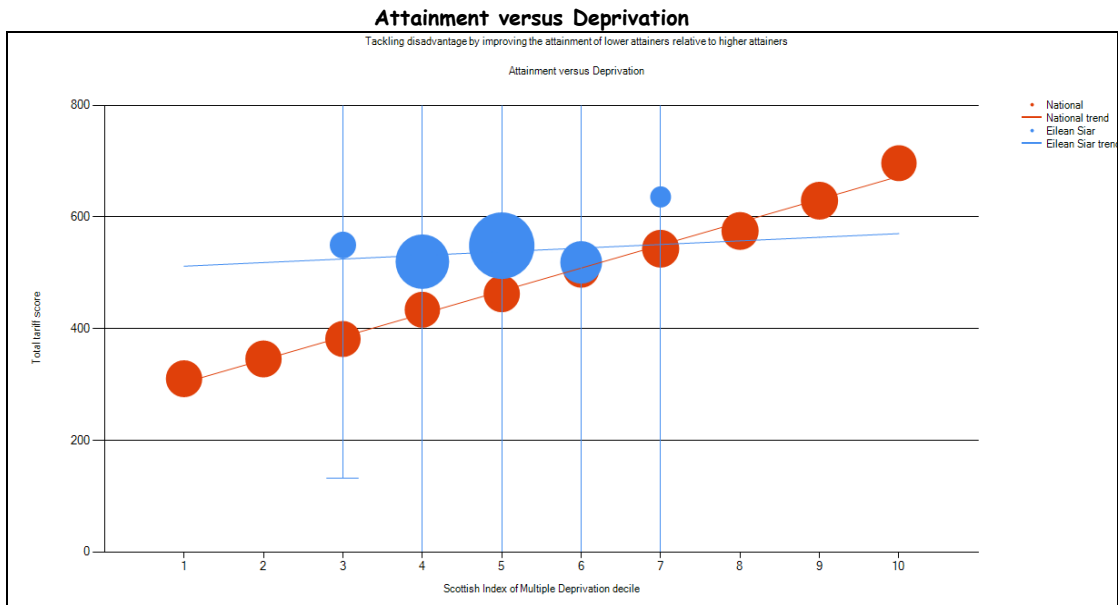
Tariff Scores

- 4.3 The average tariff scores of Eilean Siar pupils is *significantly higher* than the virtual comparator and national groups for the lowest 20% and middle 60% and *higher* than virtual comparator and national scores for the highest 20%.
- 4.4 The bar chart below indicates the average tariff score for pupils in Eilean Siar compared to virtual comparator and national results. A tariff score is calculated by assigning a numerical value to qualifications and grades.



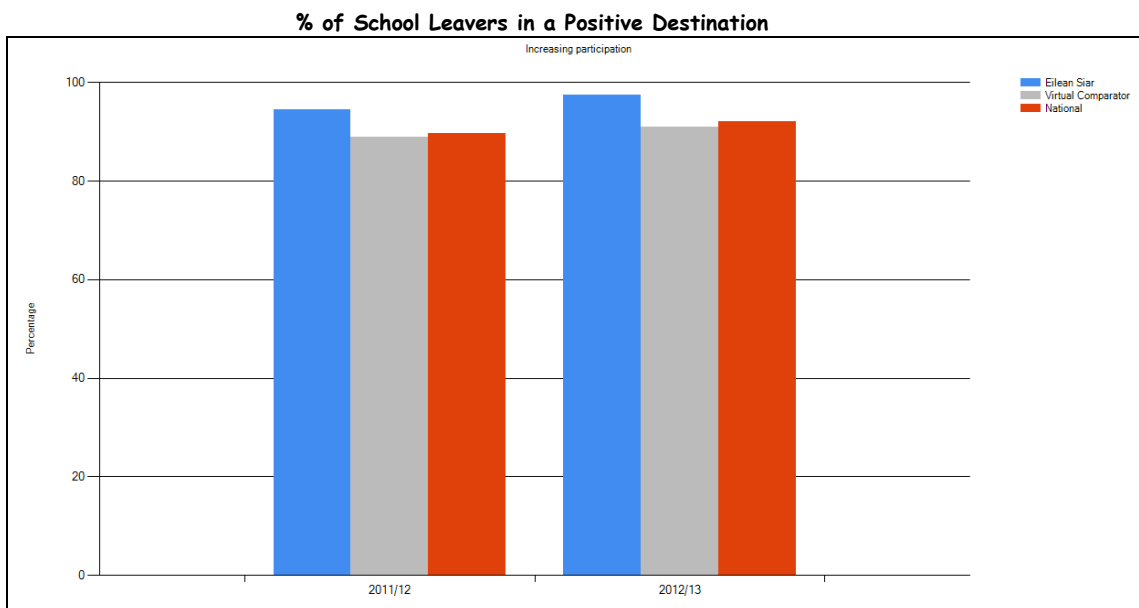
Attainment by Pupils in Areas of Deprivation

- 4.5 Attainment of Eilean Siar pupils in deciles 3, 4 and 5 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, is *higher* than the national trend, indicating that Eilean Siar pupils are affected much less adversely than the national group, by deprivation.



School Leaver Destinations

- 4.6 Figures for 2011/12 and 2012/13, show that in Eilean Siar, the percentage of school leavers entering a positive destination is *significantly higher* than virtual comparators and national figures. Data for 2013-14 will be available in February 2015.
- 4.7 The bar chart below shows the percentage of pupils in Eilean Siar entering a positive destination after leaving school, compared to the national average and the virtual comparator.



Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework

- 4.8 Qualifications in Scotland are placed within what is known as The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	
Level	Qualification
Marked and assessed by the school.	
1	National 1 or Access 1 (Pass/Fail)
2	National 2 or Access 2 (Pass/Fail)
3	National 3 or Access 3 (Pass/Fail)
4	National 4 or Intermediate 1 (Pass/Fail)
Units marked by teacher. Course assessment (exam) set and marked by SQA.	
5	National 5 or Intermediate 2 (A-C = pass)
6	Higher (A-C =pass)
7	Advanced Higher (A-C =pass)

National 4, National 5, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher

- 4.9 The table below indicates the percentage of passes in the examinations held in 2014.

Eilean Siar - % Passes in 2014 SQA External Examinations		
Stage & Qualification	CNES % A-C Passes	National % A-C Passes
S4 National 4 (*Internally marked as Pass/Fail)	95%	93%
S4 National 5	83%	81%
S5/6 Intermediate 2	82% (82% 2013)	77% (79% 2013)
S5/6 Higher	81% (77% 2013)	77% (77% 2013)
S5/6 Advanced Higher	77% (79% 2013)	81% (80% 2013)

- 4.10 SQA Benchmark Measures and percentage passes in external examinations provide valuable data, for schools and the authority, to plan improvements in learning. Performance of Eilean Siar pupils is 'significantly higher' and 'higher' than both their virtual counterparts and national figures in the four Benchmark Measures. External examination results also indicate that at S4 National 5, S5/6 Intermediate 2 and S5/6 Higher, pass rates are higher than national rates, with a significant increase in Eilean Siar percentage passes at S5/6 Higher, from 77% in 2013 to 81% in 2014. However, at Advanced Higher, the percentage continues to be slightly below the national pass rate and has declined from 79% in 2013, to 77% in 2014.
- 4.10 Key issues for schools include:
- robust analysis of examination data to address those aspects of coursework which are problematic for students at all stages;
 - providing more opportunities for able students to study at Advanced Higher level and raising both expectations and standards.

STANDARDISED ASSESSMENTS DATA

- 5.1 Progress in English (PiE) and Progress in Mathematics (PiM) standardised assessments provide additional information for schools in order to improve aspects of learning and teaching. Assessments also provide the Director of Education and Children's Services with comparative data which measures performance against national (UK) norms.

5.2 2014 Results for PiEs and PiMs at P3, P7 and S2 are shown below.

National Average Standard Age Score = 100
2014 results (2013 results) Mean SAS

	All pupils	Female	Male	Gaelic Medium		Free school meals eligibility		Looked after child/children	
				NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Primary 3 PiE	103.6 (98.1)	106.5 (98.9)	100.9 (97.2)	N/A		104.6	98.6	103.6	104.0
Primary 3 PiM	96.5 (90.7)	96.6 (91.6)	96.3 (89.8)	N/A		97.5	91.3	96.5	94.0
Primary 7 PiE	97.9 (94.9)	99.1 (97.4)	96.4 (92.2)	97.6	98.7	98.7	93.0	97.8	100.3
Primary 7 PiM	98.3 (91.8)	98.2 (93.5)	98.4 (90.1)	97.0	101.5	99.2	92.7	98.4	91.0
S2 PiE	101.6 (103.1)	105.5 (105.8)	97.9 (100.5)	101.1	103.9	101.9	99.0	101.8	85.7
S2 PiM	108 (100.8)	109.0 (100.2)	107.8 (101.4)	107.8	111.1	108.3	108.8	108.6	92.7

5.3 2014 results indicate a clear and measurable trend of improvement at all stages in almost all tests. Comparison of the English and Mathematics data shows that, at P3, performance was noticeably better in English, whereas by S2, pupils performed significantly better in mathematics. Further analysis of scores by gender indicates that girls performed better than boys in all tests except P7 PiM, and most significantly in English at both P3 and P7. Test results (P7 PiE and PiM and S2 PiM) indicate that pupils in Gaelic Medium performed better than their peers in English Medium in all the relevant tests. Primary pupils who are eligible for free school meals performed less well than the rest of the cohort in all tests, but the difference was negligible in S2 PiM. Numbers of Looked-after Children (LAC) are very low, so it is difficult to make realistic comparisons.

5.4 The 2014 PiE and PiM data highlights several key issues for schools. These include:

- strengthening aspects of mathematics at the early stages;
- building on the existing strengths in English at the early stages to improve performance further up the school;
- improving the performance of boys in aspects of literacy, at all stages; addressing the disparity between the scores of those eligible for free school meals and the rest of the cohort;
- tackling the widening gap between 'looked after' children and the rest of the cohort as pupils progress through primary and into secondary.

CONCLUSION

6.1 Raising attainment and achievement at all stages continues to be a priority for Officers of the Comhairle. Tackling gender differences and the attainment of children eligible for free school meals, particularly at the primary stage and raising the attainment of the highest performing learners at Higher and Advanced Higher will be a focus for improvement. Senior Education Officers will work with schools to address those areas identified by both the SQA results and standardised assessments data, to ensure that staff have high expectations and that all learners can achieve their potential.