

The Scottish Attainment Challenge - 2018-2022

Equality Impact Assessment Results

February 2022

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Title of Policy	The Scottish Attainment Challenge
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	The Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to help achieve equity in educational outcomes with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap
Directorate: Division: Team	Directorate for Learning: Improvement, Attainment And Wellbeing: The Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit

Executive summary

The aim of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (the Attainment Challenge) is to help achieve equity in educational outcomes with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. During the first five years of the Attainment Challenge there was investment of over £750 million through the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) during the Parliamentary term. In the 2021/22 financial year, £215 million of targeted funding has been committed to tackle the poverty related attainment gap. It marks the first year of investment in an expanded £1 billion ASF which has been committed over the current Parliamentary term.

This EQIA has been carried out to understand the impact of the Attainment Challenge during the first phase of the Attainment Challenge (2016 – 2021/22) on children and young people with protected characteristics and to identify potential opportunities to advance equality of opportunity for children and young people. Since the previously published EQIA, the Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) funding stream has been introduced (2018/19). Other significant developments include the [Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation: fourth interim report - year 5](#), [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021](#) and the [Equity Audit](#), the findings of which are reflected in this document. In November 2021, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced the next phase of the Attainment Challenge, which takes into account the evidence of these reports and experience on the ground of the Attainment Challenge to date. A separate EQIA report will be published covering the refreshed Challenge.

The EQIA process identified that some protected characteristics, for example some ethnic minority groups and those with disabilities, are over represented in the lower Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles. Evidence also shows that some children with protected characteristics, and children and young people living in areas of deprivation, perform less well than the general school population. Therefore, some children and young people have significant barriers to learning because of how they are affected by deprivation and may also face additional barriers as a result of protected characteristics.

The EQIA process did not identify any direct or indirect discrimination through the policy intention, design or activity being implemented as part of the Attainment Challenge and has identified some areas where opportunities for children and young people with protected characteristics might be advanced. The Attainment Challenge is designed to be inclusive. Targeting resources, through the ASF, to children and young people is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people affected by poverty, including those in the protected characteristics.

A number of actions are underway to ensure that the Attainment Challenge promotes the duties of the Equality Act. For example:

- [The National Operational Guidance](#) and grant terms and conditions for Pupil Equity Funding requires that schools promote equity by taking into account protected characteristics when planning support and interventions.
- The National Operational Guidance referred to above states that evidence shows that some children and young people from equalities groups can be disproportionately affected by deprivation and can therefore face significant additional barriers to learning. Education authorities have a responsibility to actively address inequality and the promotion of equity is a shared responsibility held by all staff, partners and stakeholders. In this context, the guidance is clear that headteachers should consider additional steps that might be required to close the educational attainment gap for children and young people affected by poverty who may also experience disadvantage for other reasons. For example, disadvantage relating to; a protected characteristic (disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation); a need for which they require additional support; being looked after; or having caring responsibilities.
- The grant terms and conditions state that in utilising Pupil Equity Funding, the Grantee (headteachers, with support of the relevant local authorities) should consider additional steps that might be required to close the educational attainment gap for children and young people affected by poverty who also experience disadvantage for other reasons. For example, disadvantage related to; a protected characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act 2010); a need for which they require additional support; being looked after; or having caring responsibilities.
- Tools and resources on Education Scotland's [National Improvement Hub](#) include examples of effective interventions that apply to all children and young people, including those in protected characteristics.
- There is also evidence emerging from ongoing Attainment Challenge activity to demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are being made to support children and young people with protected characteristics. For example, investment in speech and language development, additional support for speakers of English as an Additional Language, Educational Psychologists and the development of counsellors and nurture bases. Evidence from the ASF evaluation: fourth interim report - year 5 (see below) shows that, whilst participants in the Challenge Authorities and Schools Programme favoured targeted approaches, there were

still a considerable number of interventions that were provided universally and a smaller number of interventions were targeted according to another criteria; for example, children and young people with additional support needs or English as an additional language.

- Almost all strategies deployed in the Attainment Challenge such as reciprocal reading, communication support from speech and language therapists, nurturing approaches, provide targeted help for children with additional support needs. So it is clear that the work of the Attainment Challenge should prove beneficial to disabled children and that schools are expected take account of their specific needs when considering the use of the ASF.
- One of the aims of the Attainment Challenge is to increase professional learning opportunities for teaching and other staff. It is providing support to enable practitioners with access to training, encouraging a reflection on skills, increased professional dialogue, improved collaboration and providing opportunities to mentor, network and lead on new approaches. There is extensive evidence from the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#), the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) and elsewhere, that such interventions improve the quality of learning and teaching and can make a significant impact on improving the educational outcomes for all children, whether or not they are part of a targeted group.

Evaluation Report - Attainment Scotland Fund

The funding streams within the Attainment Challenge covered by the annual ASF evaluation include:

- **The Challenge Authority and Schools Programmes** which provides additional resource to nine local authorities, and a further 73 schools outwith those local authorities with the highest proportions of deprivation.
- **Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)** provides funding each year directly to schools for headteachers to use at their discretion on initiatives that they consider will help close the poverty-related attainment gap. Over 97% of schools in Scotland have been allocated funding.
- **Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP)** funding for targeted initiatives, activities, and resources, designed to improve the educational outcomes and health and wellbeing of this group.
- Additionally a number of national programmes have been supported for targeted work to raise attainment and improve equity.

The ASF evaluation aims to provide learning about the overall implementation of the Attainment Challenge and the extent to which the aims of the ASF have been met.

A suite of ASF evaluation reports have been published, the latest of which was the [Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation: fourth interim report - year 5](#), published in March 2021. All of the findings from this and preceding evaluation reports were summarised in the [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021](#), also published in March 2021, the findings from which included:

- There is a strong body of evidence that shows good progress is being made towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap and that the Attainment Challenge supported by the £750 million ASF, is having a positive impact.
- Almost nine out of ten schools who completed the ASF survey reported that they have seen an improvement in closing the poverty-related gap in attainment and/or health and wellbeing as a result of ASF supported approaches.
- A great majority of those headteachers who completed the ASF survey (96%) felt that they had a good awareness of the range of approaches that can help close the poverty-related attainment gap, while 93% felt confident about selecting the approach most effective for their school.
- Over the first five years of the Attainment Challenge programme there is evidence that almost all of the short and medium-term outcomes have been met and there has been demonstrable progress on a number of long-term measures to close the poverty related attainment gap.
- The attainment gap is closing, but it remains a long-term endeavour.
- For primary school pupils, the attainment gaps in literacy and numeracy narrowed between 2016/17 and 2018/19 {although to note that they widened in 2020/21 likely due, at least in part, to the impact of COVID-19 on learning- see 2020/21 figures in section below}. (based on the combined P1,P4&P7 attainment)
- For S3 pupils, the attainment gap in numeracy narrowed between 2016/17 and 2018/19. {Data for S3 pupils was not collected in 2019/20 or 2020/21}
- The gap in the proportion of young people in education, employment and training has narrowed year-on-year between 2017 (11.5pp) and 2020 (9.9pp). The gap has since narrowed further to 9.3pp in 2021.
- The most recent evidence from the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) acknowledged the progress that is being made in Scottish education to close the attainment gap through the Attainment Challenge and wider education policies.
- Whilst the attainment data indicates a variation in the pace of progress, the change in culture and ethos that is being seen, particularly in Challenge Authorities, with a stronger focus on poverty and equity, will maximise the sustainability of those improvements already achieved, providing solid foundations on which we can accelerate progress.

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Level – Scottish Government Official Statistics Publication 14 December 2021

The closure of school buildings in March 2020 and January 2021 is likely to have had an impact on the CfE levels some children achieved in 2020/21. This should be kept in mind when interpreting these figures and, in particular, when comparing with figures for 2018/19 and before.

- The gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in literacy has increased from 20.7 percentage points in 2018/19 to 24.7 percentage points in 2020/21.

- The gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in numeracy increased from 16.8 percentage points in 2018/19 to 21.4 percentage points in 2020/21.
- For both primary literacy and primary numeracy the sizes of the gaps in 2020/21 were larger than at any previous point since 2016/17 (the first year for which comparable data is available).

Equity Audit

We published the [Equity Audit](#) in January 2021 to deepen our understanding of the impact that COVID-19 and school building closures had on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and set clear areas of focus for accelerating recovery and support how we implement the Attainment Challenge in 2021/22 and beyond.

The Equity Audit focussed particularly on the impact of the school building closures from 20 March 2020 to the early stages of re-opening of schools on 11 August 2020. The Equity Audit involved an evidence review of local, national and international literature, along with a representative sample of 54 schools in Scotland, looking at a range of measures put in place by schools, local authorities and other partners to mitigate the impacts, with a focus on health and wellbeing and intensifying support.

A number of key themes emerged from the evidence review and from the school-based interviews conducted as part of the Equity Audit. These themes; or key factors behind educational experiences and attainment during this period, have been broadly categorised as follows:

I. Health and wellbeing support

Most Scottish stakeholders, along with the published evidence, identified that both the mental and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people may have been negatively impacted during school building closure. Children and young people reported missing the social aspect of school and the daily interactions with friends and teachers.

II. Digital infrastructure and connectivity

Evidence pointed to the importance of access to technology (devices and connectivity) for children and young people. Where there were gaps in such access – with socio-economically disadvantaged children and young people potentially being most negatively affected - this had a direct impact on the home learning experience and the engagement of children and young people.

III. Support to parents and families

Remote learning was effective in some cases; this was dependent on specific conditions such as parental support and access to digital devices and connectivity. Effective communication between schools and families was key to the ongoing

support for children and young people. Collaboration with partners proved essential in enabling schools to better identify vulnerable families and put in place tailored support.

IV. Teaching provision and the quality of learning

International evidence generally shows that school building closures are likely to have had a negative effect on children and young people progress and attainment, with children and young people who are affected by socio-economic disadvantage being amongst those who may have been most affected. Moving to models of online learning required schools to adapt teaching and learning practices. Children in the early years of primary or those starting secondary were most likely to see a negative impact on their progress.

V. Support for teachers and the wider workforce

Additional support for staff, parents and children and young people increased confidence and knowledge regarding the use of digital technology; this remains a priority. In addition, for staff, digital pedagogy remains an additional focus for continued professional learning.

Conclusion

In response to the extraordinary situation caused by the pandemic, the education system in Scotland - like so many world-wide - responded quickly by moving to online and remote learning so that children and young people could continue their education. The immediate priority became the need to ensure support was provided urgently to the most vulnerable children and families, many of whom relied on schools to provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment.

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap remains a key focus of the Scottish Government. Education remains, by far, the most effective means we have to improve the life chances of all of our young people. That has not changed. If anything, the disproportionate impact that closing our schools had on the most disadvantaged in our society has demonstrated even more clearly the vital role that they play.

The work to close the poverty-related attainment gap remains a long term goal. To deliver this, a renewed focus is required. These reports demonstrate that, whilst the attainment data indicates variation in the pace of progress across the country, good progress has been made in a number of foundational strengths that the system can build on. The opportunity ahead is to build on these foundations, tackle variation and accelerate progress.

The evolution of the Attainment Challenge and its associated investment has seen the number of challenge authorities rise from seven to nine, whilst the schools programme and universal offer evolved, and support for care experienced children and young people and PEF have been introduced. This gradual development has seen the programme grow from a very targeted approach to closing the attainment gap to a system-wide improvement strategy to promote educational equity, and is

reflected in the refreshed arrangements [announced in November 2021](#) by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.

In looking ahead to continued efforts to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap, it is clear that there is progress to build on by focusing on the key areas of strength identified in these reports.

EQIA - Background

Background

The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched in 2015 to help achieve equity in educational outcomes, with a mission to close the poverty-related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities.

The Scottish Government and Education Scotland jointly deliver this programme. The Scottish Government is responsible for the development and implementation of the policy, allocation and distribution of funding, designing an accountability framework to ensure investment is impactful and to evaluate impact nationally. Alongside this Education Scotland provides guidance, support and guidance to local authorities and schools via Attainment Advisors (AAs) and Senior Regional Advisors (SRAs) in terms of the implementation of approaches locally, identifying appropriate outcomes and measures, professional learning and sharing good practice. As part of their inspection function, Education Scotland evaluates the quality of learning and teaching in Scottish schools and education services.

While the Attainment Challenge has evolved during the current Parliamentary term, and new arrangements have now been announced, for the period up until March 2022, it comprised the following elements:

1. Challenge Authorities
2. Schools Programme
3. Pupil Equity Funding
4. Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund
5. National Programmes
6. Universal support, including:
 - Attainment Advisors
 - The National Improvement Hub
 - Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC)

Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund

Initially focusing on improvement activity in primary schools, the reach of the Attainment Challenge is now far wider, with targeted activity being delivered across both primary and secondary sectors and beyond. For the period of this report, the Attainment Challenge had five main strands, with over £215 million committed in 2021/22:

1. Challenge Authorities

- The **Challenge Authority Programme** provides additional resource of £43million to the nine local authorities in Scotland with the highest concentrations of deprivation (as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The 'Challenge Authorities' (seven in 2015, rising to nine 2016/17) are Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire. Grants are issued annually based on proposals submitted to SG and ES for review and approval, with payments drawn-down based on actual spend.

2. Schools Programme

- The **Schools Programme** provides targeted support of £7 million to an additional 73 individual primary and secondary schools in Scotland out with the nine Challenge Authorities who have the highest concentrations of children and young people living in SIMD 1 and 2. Grants are issued annually based on proposals submitted to SG and ES for review and approval, with payments drawn-down based on actual spend.

3. Pupil Equity Funding

- **Pupil Equity Funding** (PEF) was introduced in 2017/18 and provides over £120 million directly to 97% of schools in Scotland based on the number of P1-S3 pupils registered for free school meals, used as a proxy measure for socio-economic disadvantage. Underspends at school level are retained and carried forward to the next year. In addition, in 2021/22, a one-year only £20 million PEF Premium has been added to schools' PEF allocations to provide further resource to schools to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap and support recovery, recognising the additional challenges that schools and their children and young people face due to COVID-19.
- Schools continue to use PEF to plan for equity around the key themes of literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, communities and families, the use of data, and learning, teaching and assessment. Support through PEF in the pandemic has been integral in helping support the most disadvantaged children and young people to access digital equipment and connectivity solutions along with additional focussed learning support services.

4. Care Experienced Children and Young People funding

- **The Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund** was introduced in 2018/19 with funding allocated to all local authorities based on the number of looked after children they have in their care or schools. The funding benefits a much wider group than those currently 'looked after' in a local authority, with care experienced children and young people from birth to the age of 26, being eligible for the Attainment Challenge. That means anyone currently in care, or who has been at any stage in their life, no matter how short, is eligible for support.
- Grant allocations are issued across academic rather than financial years and payments drawn down based on actual spend. Over £33 million was made available during the last parliamentary term, with over £11.5m being provided to local authorities over the 21/22 academic year. The voices of care

experienced children and young people are integral to the use of this funding. Funding is provided directly to local authorities, with spending directed collaboratively by Chief Social Work and Education Officers, in conjunction with key planning partners – including care experienced children and young people and their families.

5. National Programmes

The ASF invests in a suite of national programmes delivered through third sector and other partner organisations. These are:

- Young Scot

In 2018, Young Scot launched the 'Attainment Challenge: National Strategic Partnership' alongside Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Improvement Service, local authorities, and the National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO) to help close the poverty-related attainment gap and to tackle food and rural poverty.

- Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

The Cost of the School Day (COSD) programme was developed by the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland (CPAG). The aim of the programme is to mitigate the impacts of poverty on school children and contribute to equity in education, by reducing or removing financial barriers to full participation in school and poverty-related stigma that some children may experience. It achieves this by encouraging school level action, following research/engagement with parents, children and young people and staff within individual schools.

- Curiosity Collective (previously known as Children's University)

Curiosity Collective (CC) aims to increase engagement in learning and education for young people of all backgrounds, with a particular focus on encouraging and providing and finding opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to engage in learning out of school and providing recognition for those achievements.

- Winning Scotland

The ASF has supported the Winning Scotland Foundation (WSF) in delivering its Mindset in Education training programme. Since 2018 WSF training cohorts across Mindset Champions, Mindset Leaders and Mindset Teams (now all condensed into Mindset in Education) have included 395 teachers (or other teaching professionals) from 145 schools across 7 LAs.

- YouthLink Scotland

YouthLink Scotland operates a Youth Work and Schools Partnerships Programme - a national capacity-building programme supported through ASF funding of two posts within YouthLink Scotland. It aims to strengthen collaboration between youth work and schools in closing the attainment gap and to provide capacity to measure and communicate impact.

- CELCIS

CELCIS convene a network of colleagues from local authorities who are using the Virtual School Head Teacher (VSHT) model or similar. Currently, 16 local authorities in Scotland have chosen to allocate funding from the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund towards the establishment and development of a VSHT role, or a Care Experienced Team (CET).

- Hunter Foundation Partnership

The Scottish Government announced £19.4 million of funding, partly funded through the ASF, to support MCR Pathways to roll out its Young Scottish Talent mentoring programme in local authorities who wish to participate. Columba 1400 are also being supported through this programme with additional funding of £7.5 million being provided by the Hunter Foundation.

6. Universal Support

Universal support is available to all local authorities and schools across Scotland to increase the educational attainment levels of the most disadvantaged young people. Universal support includes:

- Attainment Advisors

All local authorities have direct access to a named Attainment Advisor employed by Education Scotland, who works collaboratively alongside local authority staff on agreed priorities which support the Attainment Challenge. Over time, the reach and impact of the Attainment Advisors has been extended, through regional alignment to promote collaboration and joint delivery across local authorities. The Attainment Advisor team works directly with schools where they can make the biggest difference to accelerate efforts to close the gap.

- The National Improvement Hub

The [National Improvement Hub](#) is a virtual centre of educational expertise that does support the Attainment Challenge. It plays a key role in moving the knowledge to action around the education system. It provides practitioners examples to support a self-improving education system. It includes specific learning and teaching tools and strategies which are proven to help close the poverty-related attainment gap.

- Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC)

The Scottish Government established the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC), which joined up the Early Years Collaborative and the Raising Attainment for All Programme (a precursor to the Attainment Challenge) to deliver quality improvement throughout a child's journey. The CYPIC is supporting schools, early learning and childcare settings, health services and family support services to use the 3-Step Improvement Framework for Scotland's public services more effective and responsive to the needs of children, young people and families.

The Scope of the EQIA

This EQIA has considered the potential impact of the Attainment Challenge on children and young people with protected characteristics in school education to identify possible chances to advance equalities of opportunity for children and young people with protected characteristics. As the Attainment Challenge targets activity

and resources to children and young people affected by poverty, this is a particular focus of the analysis. It is acknowledged that the Attainment Challenge has the potential to impact on all children and young people in school education and in particular on those children and young people with protected characteristics who are more likely to be within the targeted work.

Methodology

In order to determine the impact, a desk based review of evidence was initially undertaken below. This took into account a variety of statistical surveys, reports and other publications including:

- Pupil Census, 2019, Scottish Government (1)
- National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - 2016 Evidence Report (2)
- Child Health 27-30 Month Review Statistics Scotland 2017/18, ISD Scotland (3)
- School level summary statistics 2019, Scottish Government (4)
- Additional analysis of poverty in Scotland 2015/16 (5)
- Prejudice-based bullying in Scottish schools: a research report, Equality and Human Rights Commission, March 2015 (6)
- Scottish Government Equality Outcomes: Gender evidence review, 2013 (7)
- ISD Scotland, Teenage Pregnancy - Year of conception ending 31 December 2014 (8)
- State of the Nation Report: Race and Racism in Scottish Education, 2013 (9)
- National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - 2017 Evidence Report (10)
- National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education – 2018 Evidence Report (11)

In addition, an internal Scottish Government workshop and a number of stakeholder discussions with representatives from relevant organisations including the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Enable, BEMIS, Engender, LGBT Youth Scotland, Stonewall Scotland The Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations Scotland, helped to inform the preceding version of this EQIA. These inputs remain highly relevant to current version of the EQIA given the primary policy development since these have taken place is the introduction of the CECYP.

Key findings – evidence

1. [Summary statistics for schools in Scotland no. 10: 2019 edition](#)
2. [National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - 2016 Evidence Report](#)
3. [Child Health 27-30 Month Review Statistics - Scotland 2017/18](#)
4. [School level summary statistics/](#)
5. [Analysis on trends in poverty covering various factors affecting the risk of poverty](#)
6. [Equality and Human Rights Commission - Prejudice-based bullying in Scottish schools](#)
7. [Scottish Government - Equality Outcomes: Gender - Evidence Review](#)

8. [National Statistics - Teenage Pregnancy - Year of conception ending 31 December 2014](#)
9. [The State of the Nation - Race & Racism in Scotland - 2nd Edition 2013, Vol 2](#)
10. [2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#)
11. [2018 national improvement framework and improvement plan](#)

The EQIA process identified that some protected characteristics, for example some ethnic minority groups and those with disabilities, are disproportionately represented in the lower SIMD quintiles and therefore part of the targeted group for this work.

Impact of poverty on attainment

The evidence shows that children and young people living in areas of multiple deprivation perform less well than the general school population. This is illustrated in the tables below. Note the data for tables 5, 7, 9 and 11 was not collected for 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to COVID-19, the 2018/19 data remains the latest available.

Table 1 shows that the percentages of school leavers attaining at SCQF levels 4 to 6 are lower for those from the most deprived areas than for those in the least deprived areas. Further, table 3 shows that the percentage of school leavers in positive initial destinations was lower for those from the most deprived areas than those from the least deprived areas (90.0% compared to 96.3%). The size of this gap has decreased by 1.6 percentage points between 2015/16 and 2019/20 due to a combination of an increase in the proportion of school leavers from the most deprived areas entering a positive destination and a decrease in the proportion of school leavers from the least deprived areas entering a positive destination.

In addition, the evidence shows that some children and young people with protected characteristics perform less well than the general school population, and the figures show a similar negative pattern for the impact of deprivation on their attainment. For example, tables 4 & 5 show that the proportions of boys achieving the expected Curriculum for Excellence Levels in literacy and numeracy are lower than the proportions of girls across all SIMD quintiles and that the percentages of both sexes achieving the expected levels are lower for those in the lower quintiles.

Similarly, tables 6 & 7 show that the proportions of pupils with additional support needs who achieved the expected CfE Levels in literacy and numeracy were lower than for those without additional support needs and that performance varies across the SIMD quintiles.

Tables 8-11 provide information on the proportions of pupils achieving the expected CfE Levels in literacy and numeracy broken down by ethnicity and show a mixed picture with some ethnic groups performing better than the general population and some, particularly gypsy travellers, performing worse (note that the numbers of gypsy travellers represented in these tables are very small meaning that the figures can fluctuate)., Performance across all ethnicities varies across the SIMD quintiles.

Table 1: Percentage of school leavers attaining at SCQF level 4 to 6, by SIMD¹, 2018/19 and 2019/20

SIMD	2018/19			2019/20		
	1 or more at SCQF level 4 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 5 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 6 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 4 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 5 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 6 or better
0-20% (most deprived)	92.1	74.4	43.5	91.7	74.5	46.6
20-40%	94.6	80.1	50.8	94.8	81.5	54.7
40-60%	96.7	86.2	60.2	96.7	87.8	65.7
60-80%	97.7	90.8	70	97.4	90.9	71.7
80-100% (least deprived)	98.8	94.6	79.3	98.8	95.3	82.7
All Leavers	95.9	85.1	60.5	95.8	85.7	63.9

1. Based on SIMD 2016 for 2018/19 & 2019/20. More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/pages/introduction.aspx).

2. A dashed line break has been placed between the attainment figures for 2018/19 and 2019/20 school leavers reflecting the impact of the change to the assessment approach in 2020 on 2019/20 school leaver attainment as national examinations were cancelled due to COVID-19.

3. For information on how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected these statistics, see section 1.1 of the publication. [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-attainment-and-initial-leaver-destinations-no-3-2021-edition/pages/introduction.aspx)

Table 2: Percentage of pupils who are assessed or declared as having a disability, by SIMD quintiles, 2019

	SIMD Quintile					
	1	2	3	4	5	Missing
All Pupils	22.7	19.5	18.6	19.3	19.8	0.1
Total assessed and/or declared as having a disability	27.6	21.2	19.6	16.2	14.7	0.6
Assessed as having a disability ⁽¹⁾	28.0	20.8	19.4	16.2	14.8	0.8
Declared as having a disability but not assessed	25.6	23.2	20.8	16.2	14.1	0.1
Assessed requirement of adaptation to school provision ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾ :						
Physical adaption	24.8	19.7	20.9	17.9	16.5	0.1
Communication adaption	30.3	21.4	18.0	15.6	14.5	0.1
Curriculum adaption	28.1	21.1	19.4	16.3	14.8	0.2

(1) Irrespective of whether a pupil is declared as disabled.

(2) Occurrences. Pupils with more than one adaptation requirement will appear multiple times.

(3) 1,032 assessed disabled pupils had no adaption recorded. This includes all disabled pupils at grant aided special schools.

Table 3: Percentage of school leavers in a positive initial¹ destination by SIMD² and pupil characteristics, 2019/20

	Sex	SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived
	Female	91.8	93.0	95.5	96.3	96.9
	Male	88.2	90.3	92.7	94.0	95.6
	All leavers	90.0	91.6	94.1	95.1	96.3
	Disability Status					
	Not declared or assessed disabled	90.0	91.7	94.2	95.3	96.3
	Declared or assessed disabled	88.5	88.8	90.3	90.4	93.3
	All leavers	90.0	91.6	94.1	95.1	96.3
	Ethnic Background					
	White – Scottish	89.3	91.6	94.1	95.2	96.2
	White – Other British	89.5	87.3	94.3	92.6	97.4
	White – Irish	87.5	92.3	95.2	*	*
	White – Polish	95.7	94.6	95.7	97.5	97.6
	White – Gypsy/Traveller	60.0	62.5	87.5	*	*
	White – Other	92.2	92.5	93.0	94.9	95.3
	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	89.4	94.3	85.9	94.5	95.7
	Asian - Indian	92.3	94.0	97.8	95.5	96.5
	Asian - Pakistani	96.6	95.1	97.0	99.4	98.2
	Asian - Chinese	100.0	100.0	96.7	98.0	96.5
	Asian – Other	94.7	95.2	95.9	100.0	91.4
	African/Black/Caribbean	95.4	94.5	85.7	93.8	100.0
	All other categories	88.9	93.9	97.8	97.7	100.0
	Not Disclosed/Not known	90.2	85.8	92.2	94.3	98.3
	All leavers	90.0	91.6	94.1	95.1	96.3

1. Positive Destinations include: Higher Education, Further Education, Employment, Activity Agreement, Personal Skills Development, Training and Voluntary Work.

2. Based on SIMD 2016 for 2018/19 & 2019/20. More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot).

3. The categories used to collect ethnicity and national identity data changed in the 2011 pupil census to agree with the categories used in the main population census. This means they are not directly comparable with information collected in previous years. 'White – UK' and 'White – Other' could not be calculated for more recent years so are represented by N/A, and 'White-Scottish' and 'White-non-Scottish' could not be calculated for 2009/10 and 2010/11. Some categories have been grouped together due to small numbers. Some categories (typically 'Asian – Indian', 'Asian – Chinese' contain between 100-200 leavers and due to relatively small numbers may

be subject to fluctuation. Comparisons between groups should take this into account.

4. For 2011/12 to 2019/20 the 'African/ Black/ Caribbean' category includes 'African', 'African - Other', and the 'Caribbean or Black' categories.

5. Pupils who have a CSP, IEP, Child's Plan are assessed or declared disabled or have another need.

6. For information on how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected these statistics, see section 1.1 of the publication. [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-attainment-and-initial-leaver-destinations-no-3-2021-edition/pages/1-1.aspx)

** - information was suppressed due to small numbers*

Source: School leavers data, Scottish Government

Table 4: Percentage of primary¹ pupils achieving expected level in literacy² and numeracy by sex and SIMD³- 2020/21^b

SIMD	Female Literacy	Female Numeracy	Male Literacy	Male Numeracy
SIMD Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	62	66	50	64
SIMD Quintile 2	67	71	56	70
SIMD Quintile 3	72	75	60	73
SIMD Quintile 4	79	81	68	80
SIMD Quintile - Least Deprived	85	87	77	86
SIMD - Unknown	57	61	50	65
Total	72	75	61	74

Table 5: Percentage of secondary pupils achieving Third Level or better in literacy² and numeracy by sex and SIMD³ - 2018/19^a

SIMD	Female Literacy	Female Numeracy	Male Literacy	Male Numeracy
SIMD Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	86	85	76	81
SIMD Quintile 2	89	90	81	86
SIMD Quintile 3	93	93	86	90
SIMD Quintile 4	95	94	88	93
SIMD Quintile - Least Deprived	97	97	93	96
SIMD - Unknown	77	84	65	81
Total	92	91	84	89

Table 6: Percentage of primary¹ pupils achieving expected level in literacy² and numeracy by additional support needs and SIMD³ – 2020/21^b

SIMD	Additional Support Needs		No additional support needs		Additional support needs - unknown	
	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy
SIMD Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	38	49	65	73	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 2	39	50	71	79	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 3	40	52	75	82	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 4	46	57	81	87	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile - Least Deprived	53	65	87	91	n/a	n/a
SIMD - Unknown	43	43	66	69	53	63
Total	42	53	76	83	53	63

Table 7: Percentage of secondary pupils achieving Third Level or better in literacy² and numeracy by additional support needs and SIMD³ – 2018/19^a

SIMD	Additional Support Needs		No additional support needs		Additional Support Needs - Unknown	
	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy
SIMD Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	68	72	90	90	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 2	74	78	91	94	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 3	77	80	95	97	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 4	78	83	96	98	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile - Least Deprived	85	89	98	99	n/a	n/a
SIMD - Unknown	68	78	95	97	68	81
Total	75	79	94	96	68	81

Notes:

a. ACEL 2020/21 publication covers Primary school children (P1, P4 and P7). Secondary school and special school data were not collected, the 2018/19 data remains the latest available.

b. The time period covered by these statistics means that the results will be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and this should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

For more information, please see [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels 2020-21 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

1. Primary pupil is combined P1, P4 and P7, where pupil achieved expected CFE level for their stage

2. Literacy is the combination of reading, writing and listening and talking organisers

3. Based on SIMD 2016 for 2018/19 & on SIMD 2020 for 2020/021. More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).

Table 8: Percentage of primary ¹ pupils achieving expected level in literacy ² by ethnicity and SIMD³- 2020/21^b

Ethnicity	SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived	SIMD - Unknown
White – Scottish	55	61	66	73	80	60
White - Other British	55	61	67	75	83	63
White - Irish	*	*	67	78	80	-
White - Polish	64	64	64	72	*	*
White - Gypsy/Traveller	14	23	27	25	*	*
White - Other	60	64	*	77	84	*
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	64	*	75	80	85	*
Asian - Indian	*	73	77	80	86	*
Asian - Pakistani	59	63	*	69	74	*
Asian - Chinese	78	74	75	79	81	-
Asian – Other	65	62	*	74	75	*
African/ Black/ Caribbean ⁴	69	68	72	*	74	*
All other categories ⁵	45	46	61	*	75	*
Not Disclosed/Not known	55	60	64	75	84	53
Total	56	61	66	73	81	53

Table 9: Percentage of secondary pupils achieving Third Level or better in literacy² by ethnicity and SIMD³ - 2018/19^a

Ethnicity	<i>SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived</i>	<i>SIMD Quintile 2</i>	<i>SIMD Quintile 3</i>	<i>SIMD Quintile 4</i>	<i>SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived</i>	<i>SIMD - Unknown</i>
White – Scottish	81	85	89	91	95	88
White - Other British	78	80	89	91	94	95
White - Irish	*	*	*	*	81-100%	-
White - Polish	81	87	84	88	89-100%	-
White - Gypsy/Traveller	*	*	*	*	-	-
White - Other	81	80	*	90	93	*
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	86	*	87	94	94	*
Asian - Indian	88	92-100%	92-100%	91-100%	94-100%	-
Asian - Pakistani	91	92	91	*	94	*
Asian - Chinese	89	77-100%	83-100%	90-100%	93-100%	-
Asian – Other	87	86	88	91	91-100%	-
African/ Black/ Caribbean ⁴	88	94	91	91-100%	91	-
All other categories ⁵	66	63	77	85	91-100%	-
Not Disclosed/Not known	74	75	84	86	90	68
Total	81	85	89	91	95	70

Table 10: Percentage of primary¹ pupils achieving expected level in numeracy by ethnicity and SIMD³ – 2020/21^b

Ethnicity	SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived	SIMD - Unknown
White – Scottish	63	70	73	80	86	64
White - Other British	64	71	74	81	88	75
White - Irish	*	*	70	81	87	-
White - Polish	78	78	78	84	*	*
White - Gypsy/Traveller	18	32	37	22	*	*
White - Other	69	73	*	84	89	*
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	73	*	83	87	90	*
Asian - Indian	*	77	82	87	90	*
Asian - Pakistani	68	72	*	77	78	*
Asian - Chinese	91	87	89	89	89	-
Asian – Other	72	76	*	81	86	*
African/ Black/ Caribbean ⁴	74	75	76	*	83	*
All other categories ⁵	60	62	72	*	83	*
Not Disclosed/Not known	67	71	75	82	89	63
Total	65	70	74	80	86	63

Table 11: Percentage of secondary pupils who achieved Third Level or better in numeracy by ethnicity and SIMD³ - 2018/19^a

Ethnicity	SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived	SIMD - Unknown
White – Scottish	82	88	91	93	96	94
White - Other British	77	85	89	92	98	90
White - Irish	*	*	*	*	81-100%	-
White - Polish	91	93	96-100%	91	89-100%	-
White - Gypsy/Traveller	*	*	*	*	-	-
White - Other	87	91	*	94	97	*
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	88	*	90	96	95	*
Asian - Indian	90-100%	92-100%	92-100%	91-100%	94-100%	-
Asian - Pakistani	90	94	91	*	93	*
Asian - Chinese	91-100%	77-100%	83-100%	90-100%	93-100%	-
Asian – Other	93	94-100%	90-100%	91-100%	91-100%	-
African/ Black/ Caribbean ⁴	93	92	93-100%	91-100%	91-100%	-
All other categories ⁵	79	78	79	89-100%	91-100%	-
Not Disclosed/Not known	83	89	85	89	94-100%	81
Total	83	88	91	93	96	82

Notes:

a. ACEL 2020/21 publication covers Primary school children (P1, P4 and P7). Secondary school and special school data were not collected, the 2018/19 data remains the latest available.

b. The time period covered by these statistics means that the results will be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and this should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

For more information, please see [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels 2020-21 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Statistics/SIMD)

1. Primary pupil is combined P1, P4 and P7, where pupil achieved expected CFE level for their stage

2. Literacy is the combination of reading, writing and listening and talking organisers

3. Based on SIMD 2016 for 2018/19 & on SIMD 2020 for 2020/21. More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>.

4. *African/Black/Caribbean' category includes 'African', 'African - Other', and the 'Caribbean or Black' categories.*

5. *'All other categories' includes 'Other - other' and 'Other - Arab'.*

n/a = not applicable

** = suppression due to small numbers*

- = nil

Although there is very limited evidence available for some of the protected characteristics pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion and belief), the evidence also showed:

Age

- From the [Child Health 27-30 Month Review Statistics Scotland 2017/18](#) one in five children from the more deprived areas (22%) had at least one developmental concern identified in the 27-30 month review compared to one in ten for the least deprived areas (9%).
- The difference between the percentage of pupils achieving the expected CfE level generally increases as children progress through the primary and secondary stages.

Gender

- A higher percentage of girls consistently achieve the expected CfE level compared to boys across all stages and curriculum areas regardless of where they live.
- The difference in the percentage of girls and boys achieving CfE levels becomes smaller for children living in less deprived areas.

Pregnancy and maternity

- There is a strong correlation between deprivation and teenage pregnancy. In the most deprived areas in 2014, the rate of teenage pregnancy in the under 16 age group was 5.2 times the rate in the least deprived areas (8.2 and 1.6 per 1,000 women respectively).
- UK level figures suggest that teenage mothers are 20% more likely to have no qualifications than older mothers.

Gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion and belief

- Although the exact numbers of children and young people under these categories is not known, bullying and other barriers to learning are known to disproportionately impact on the outcomes of children and young people.

Key findings – impact

The EQIA process did not identify any indirect, direct or unlawful discrimination arising through the policy intention, design or activity being implemented as part of the Attainment Challenge. The Attainment Challenge is intended to be inclusive. Targeting resources, through the ASF, to children and young people living in poverty is intended to have a significant positive impact on lives of children and young people affected by poverty, including those in the protected characteristics.

The Attainment Challenge may advance equality of opportunity by providing training and resources for schools and teachers suitable to addressing the needs of children in equalities groups and helping to address the poverty related attainment gap. The enhanced professional development and leadership opportunities, better use of data to drive improvements and the increased level of collaboration both within schools and with external partners is having impacts beyond the immediate target group of children affected by poverty and have the potential to significantly improve educational outcomes for all children and young people.

The Attainment Challenge is promoting good community relationships. It encourages professionals working with children and young people to maintain a clear line of communication with the families of children and young people who will benefit from the resources or activities delivered through the Attainment Challenge, and the children and young people themselves.

There is also evidence emerging from recent Attainment Challenge activity to demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are being made to support children and young people with protected characteristics. For example, investment in speech and language development, additional support for speakers of English as an Additional Language, and/or fund Educational Psychologists, counsellors and nurture bases.

Actions

A number of actions are being taken to ensure that the Scottish Attainment Challenge does not directly or indirectly, unlawfully discriminate.

For example:

- The National Operational Guidance and the grant terms and conditions for the use of Pupil Equity Funding, makes clear that resources should promote equity by taking into account protected characteristics when planning support and interventions. Additionally, the use of Pupil Equity Funding should be planned for and monitored via existing planning and reporting processes. The guidance around this process makes clear links to How Good is Our School (Edition 4), which contains an equality indicator.
- [The National Improvement Plan](#) sets out a basket of 11 key measures, supported by 15 sub-measures that will be used to monitor progress towards the goal of closing the poverty related attainment gap. We will continue to use the data that is published each year in the National Improvement Framework Evidence Report to show the poverty-related attainment gap at different stages of school and across literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing.
- Work is on-going to ensure that the examples, tools and resources on the National Improvement Hub include examples of effective interventions that apply to all children and young people, including those in protected characteristics. It includes the [Interventions for Equity](#) framework to support the implementation of the Attainment Challenge by local authorities and schools will continue to be updated and developed.

- We know that Gypsy Travellers tend not to self-identify. [Traveller Guidance](#) has been produced by the Scottish Government and was published in December 2018. The guidance advocates that action is required at local authority/ school/ classroom/individual children and young people levels. This will undoubtedly include resources funded by the ASF. Inclusive approaches which support individual children and young people and support families to engage are the starting point.

- A Gypsy/Traveller Ministerial Working Group (GTMWG) has been established to improve the lives of Gypsy/Traveller communities in Scotland. This Group consider the guidance – as part of a wider discussion about improving education for Gypsy/Travellers at their ongoing meetings.

- We will continue to monitor the impact of the Attainment Challenge on children and young people in school education with protected characteristics through national data sources where they exist (i.e. age, gender, disability and race). Where it is not possible to monitor the impact through national data, we will work with local government and other stakeholders to identify any local activity that we may be able to draw evidence from.

Conclusion

The EQIA process for the Scottish Attainment Challenge for 2016 – 2021/22 did not identify indirect or direct discrimination through the policy intention and identified a number of actions being taken to ensure that the Attainment Challenge does not directly or indirectly, unlawfully discriminate (refer to key findings).

This EQIA analysis will be kept under regular review, with any new data or evidence analysed as it becomes available to monitor the on-going impact of the Attainment Challenge on protected characteristics.

Further, a refresh of the Scottish Attainment Challenge to be launched for session 2022/23 has been announced and a new EQIA will be completed as part of the process. Input from a range of partners and stakeholders will continue to form the basis of our approach going forward.



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