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# Evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund - interim report (Years 1 and 2)



**CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS**





# **Evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund**

**Interim Report (Years 1 and 2)**

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# Executive Summary

## Background

- E.1. The Attainment Scotland Fund supports the aims of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, which is to raise attainment and reduce inequity for children across Scotland. During the first two years of the fund, around £52 million was distributed to nine Challenge Authorities and 74 schools with the highest levels of deprivation.
- E.2. Overall, the evaluation aims to provide learning about the overall implementation of the fund and the extent to which the aims of the fund have been met. **This interim report focuses on the first two years of the fund, that is from 2015 to 2017.**

## Were the aims of the fund understood and supported?

- E.3. The Attainment Scotland Fund was found to be a driver for change and cohesion. As a result of the fund, there was an increased awareness, understanding and commitment to address the impact of poverty on attainment across local authorities and schools.
- E.4. Funding was perceived as adequate, reasonable and fair and seemed to be used according to requirements.

## What activities took place as a result of the fund?

- E.5. Most interventions revolved around the three focus areas of the fund: Numeracy, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing. During the first two years, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing interventions were prioritised. Progress around Numeracy was less evident.
- E.6. There was considerable progress made in the primary programme, with strong foundations being built around leadership, resources and training of the workforce. Reflecting the later expansion of the fund into secondary schools, evidence of progress in the secondary programme was more limited.
- E.7. There were wide ranging and varied approaches to choosing interventions across authorities. Approaches varied and so did the level of autonomy given to schools. On the whole, teachers felt included in the process.

- E.8. In terms of targeting strategies, both local authorities and schools used a mix of targeted and universal approaches. Their approach was designed to respond to local needs.

### What was working well in the implementation of the fund?

- E.9. Overall, the fund appeared to have had a positive impact on:
- **Collaboration.** The level and nature of collaboration appeared to increase over the life of the fund; particularly within-school collaboration and collaboration with external partners.
  - **Data / evidence usage and understanding.** Data usage appeared well embedded within fund activities. Data played a significant role in selecting, monitoring and targeting interventions. Stakeholders reported increases in their usage and understanding of data as a result of the fund.
  - **Skill development.** The fund appeared to have improved teaching skills and increased leadership opportunities. It had provided access to training, encouraged reflection on skills, increased professional dialogue and provided opportunities to mentor, network and lead on new approaches.
- E.10. The role of local authorities and Attainment Advisors in supporting schools appeared pivotal to the success of the fund. Both played a significant role in helping schools to plan and develop strategies for implementation and targeting, choose interventions and use data to plan, monitor and evaluate their efforts.

### What challenges did stakeholders encounter?

- E.11. In some areas, the level of **bureaucracy and challenging timescales** was seen as an area that could be improved. Stakeholders reported that the level and nature of reporting requirements and tight timescales acted as a barrier.
- E.12. A significant challenge for local authorities and schools was around the **recruitment of staff**. This put extra pressure on schools and impacted negatively on the success of planned interventions, leading to frustration and underspend.
- E.13. There is scope for **greater collaboration at a local authority level**. Firstly, within each Challenge Authority, greater collaboration at a strategic level between the primary and the

secondary programme could be in place. Secondly, there is scope for further supporting the sharing and learning of practices across authorities.

- E.14. **Poverty as a wider issue.** A wide range of stakeholders stressed that it was important to recognise that a number of factors, other than poverty, were likely to affect attainment. Stakeholders emphasised that education could not bring about sustainable change on its own, and that wider partnership across a range of other services was essential.
- E.15. There were some concerns around **measures of poverty** and deprivation and how to appropriately identify children that need extra support. Concentrating on SIMD data appeared too limiting; with some concerns around stigmatisation evident.
- E.16. **Support provided by Attainment Advisors.** But many local authorities were critical of the variety of roles across Attainment Advisors. Attainment Advisors themselves felt there were issues around clarifying their own role.
- E.17. Stakeholders had mixed views about the success of **parental engagement**, and schools continued to find this challenging.

### **What impact did the fund have on the long term outcomes?**

- E.18. Many stakeholders thought that it was too early to comment on long term outcomes around raising attainment and closing the gap, but initial indications were good.
- E.19. Confidence in sustainability of improvements increased over time. There was a belief that the fund had created significant change in practice and culture.
- E.20. At local authority level, stakeholders reported positive evidence from small scale interventions, particularly for Literacy and Health and Wellbeing outcomes.

# 1. Introduction

## The Scottish Attainment Challenge

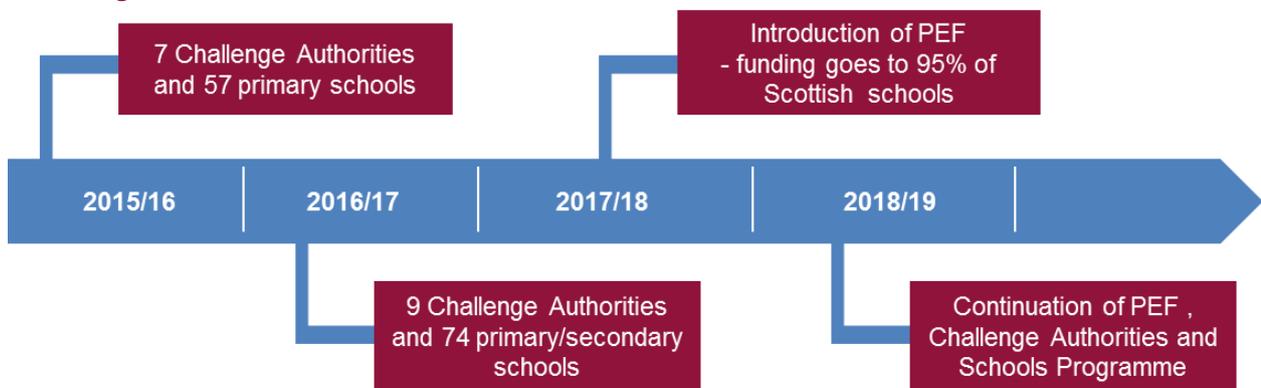
- 1.1. The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched by the First Minister in February 2015. Backed by a commitment of £750 million over the course of this parliament it prioritises improvements in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing of those children adversely affected by the poverty related attainment gap in Scotland's primary and secondary schools.
- 1.2. The Scottish Attainment Challenge builds on the range of initiatives and programmes already in place to raise attainment and reduce inequity for children across Scotland. It is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework (NIF), Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- 1.3. The core aims of the programme are to support schools, local authorities and their partners to develop their own approaches reflecting own circumstances. With the help of online resources such as Education Scotland's [National Improvement Hub](#), the Scottish Government is encouraging them to draw on evidence-based practice, sharing their results and successful interventions with each other to ultimately help close the poverty related attainment gap.
- 1.4. Currently, there are three main strands to the Scottish Attainment Challenge all of which are supported by the Attainment Scotland Fund. In addition to the three main strands there are national programmes funded by the Scottish Attainment Challenge including staffing supply and capacity, professional learning and school leadership.
- 1.5. Table 1.1 overleaf provides an overview of the three strands.

**Table 1.1: Overview of Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF)**

Type of Support	Award Total	Timeframe	Beneficiaries	Overview
Strand 1: Challenge Authorities	£45M	From Year 1 (2015-16)	9 Challenge Authorities and 74 schools	Targeted support to 9 local authorities and an additional 74 schools with the highest levels of deprivation. These Challenge Authorities and Schools deliver targeted and specific interventions focused on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing to close the attainment gap
Strand 2: Schools Programme				
Strand 3: Pupil Equity Funding	£120M	From Year 3 (2017-18)	95% of Scottish schools	Funding provided directly to schools for headteachers to use at their discretion for additional staffing or resources that they consider will help close the poverty related attainment gap. 95% of schools in Scotland have been allocated funding for pupils in P1-S3 based on those known to be eligible for free school meals. Schools will now have their plans in place for using their funding and will be implementing those plans.

1.6. The Attainment Scotland Fund has developed significantly over its lifetime thus far. A summary of yearly progress is provided below:

**Figure 1.1: Attainment Scotland Fund Timeline**



### **Year 1 (2015-16)**

- 1.7. Seven local authorities with the greatest concentration of primary age children living in SIMD 1 and 2, were identified to receive support from the Attainment Scotland Fund.
- 1.8. The Challenge Authorities were: Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire. In addition, 57 primary schools out with the Challenge Authorities were selected to receive funding. These schools had over 70% of their pupils living in the most 20% deprived (SIMD 1 & 2) areas of Scotland.

### **Year 2 (2016-17)**

- 1.9. The Challenge Authority programme was expanded to include two new Challenge Authorities (East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire). The programme was extended to include secondary schools. These schools had at least 20% of their pupils living in SIMD 1 and 2.

### **Year 3 (2017-18)**

- 1.10. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) extended the reach of the Scottish Attainment Challenge to every local authority with £120 million allocated to 95% of schools in Scotland. This funding was on top of the existing £50 million Attainment Scotland Fund finance. PEF allocations are based on the number of pupils from P1 to S3 known to be eligible for free school meals, with schools receiving £1,200 per pupil. This funding is provided directly to headteachers for them to use to close the attainment gap.

### **Year 4 (2018-19)**

- 1.11. 2018-19 will see the continuation of Pupil Equity Funding, and allocated funding to both schools in the Challenge Authority and Schools Programme.

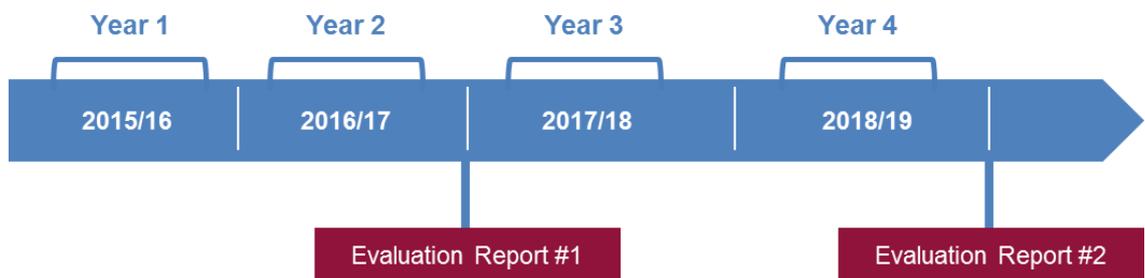
## Evaluation Aims

- 1.12. Overall, the evaluation aims to provide learning about the overall implementation of the fund and the extent to which the aims of the fund have been met.
- 1.13. The final evaluation report will provide feedback to schools, local authorities, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland on what is, and is not, working well during the years of the fund, to enable them to improve initiatives and the working of the fund further.
- 1.14. Specifically, the overall evaluation objectives are to:
  - Assess the impact of the overall fund in improving attainment and Health and Wellbeing and reducing the difference between pupils from the most and least deprived areas.
  - Assess the extent to which the further aims of the fund have been met: promote capacity for data-based self-evaluation and improvement and, encourage collaboration between schools and local authorities.
  - Provide learning and increase the Scottish evidence base of what does and does not work to improve attainment and Health and Wellbeing, especially of pupils from the most deprived areas.
  - Provide learning on what did and did not work well in the process of implementing the fund across participating Challenge Authorities and schools and which factors helped and hindered the fund achieving its outcomes.

## Evaluation Scope and Limitations

- 1.15. This section explains what we can and cannot determine from the data available, and describes more generally the limitations of the evaluation.
- 1.16. The evaluation strategy for the Attainment Scotland Fund follows the life of the programme and commenced in Year 1 (see Figure 1.2). It gathers data that can inform the implementation of fund in achieving the aims of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Figure 1.2: Evaluation of Attainment Scotland Fund Timeline



- 1.17. This is the first evaluation report presenting evidence from Year 1 (2015/16) and Year 2 (2016/17) of the fund. It does not include an evaluation of Pupil Equity Funding, which commenced in Year 3.
- 1.18. A final evaluation report will be published at the end of Year 4. This will consider how the fund has evolved over time.
- 1.19. There exist limitations in the extent to which we can draw conclusions about the overall impact of the Attainment Scotland Fund. These include:
  - **Longer-term impact of the fund will take time to determine.** Changing attainment and Health and Wellbeing is a complex process that requires time. For the fund to have true impact we would ideally measure whether there is lasting change in the longer-term, beyond the years of the fund.
  - **Lack of consistent data sources throughout the duration of the fund.** Chapter 2 outlines the measures used to assess the attainment and achievement of pupils and is in line with those set out in the National Improvement Plan 2018. Whilst there is some data available at senior phase for school leavers, there does not exist a measure of attainment at the primary and secondary stages which collected data before

the introduction of the fund and continued throughout the duration of the fund.

- **Inability to compare participating and non-participating schools.** It remains difficult to identify an appropriate control group. Schools participating in the Challenge Authority or Schools Programme were selected because they have the highest concentrations of pupils living in deprivation. Non-participating schools do not have the same levels of deprivation and therefore are not an appropriate comparison group.

- 1.20. In addition, the introduction of PEF in Year 3, alongside other changes in educational policy present further challenges in identifying the impact of the Attainment Scotland Fund in isolation.
- 1.21. Overall, we are unable to conclude whether any observed changes have occurred as a result of other factors.

## **2. Methodology**

- 2.1. This chapter provides an overview of the evaluation strategy for the Attainment Scotland Fund. It describes the research questions driving the evaluation activities and gives a summary of the different data sources used.

### **Overview of Evaluation Design**

- 2.2. The evaluation aims to provide learning about the overall implementation of the fund and the extent to which the aims of the Attainment Scotland Fund have been met. More widely, it will contribute to the Scottish evidence base around what works or does not work to improve attainment and close the attainment gap.
- 2.3. The evaluation adopts a mixed methods approach that combines a range of different data sources. The evaluation plan has been designed to respond flexibly to any further decisions and activities around the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

### **Evaluation Questions**

- 2.4. The evaluation questions were developed in partnership with key stakeholders to address the objectives of this evaluation.
- 2.5. Table 2.1 portrays the 13 questions that informed the evaluation design.

**Table 2.1: Evaluation Questions**

1	What did and didn't work well in the national and local governance and support as part of the fund?
2	How much funding did LAs and schools receive, to what extent did they consider it adequate, supplement it with other funding sources, and use it in accordance with the fund's requirements?
3	To what extent do stakeholders understand, engage and further the programme aims, and why?
4	What type of initiatives were organised and to what extent did they focus on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing or other topics?
5	How were interventions targeted?
6	To what extent did the interventions succeed in reaching the target groups?
7	To what extent did the interventions achieve their short and medium term outcomes?
8	To what extent did the different types of interventions succeed in improving attainment and health and wellbeing, and why?
9	To what extent are interventions sustainable beyond the four years of the funding?
10	To what extent did the fund contribute to an improvement in attainment and health and wellbeing, and a reduction of the gap between pupils from the most and least deprived areas?
11	To what extent did schools and authorities use data, analysis and knowledge of what works to drive improvements as part of the fund?
12	To what extent has the fund encouraged collaboration and why?
13	Did the fund have any unintended consequences?

## Methods

2.6. Multiple data sources fed into the evidence collected. These include:

- Quantitative data from attainment related measures
- Scottish Government administrative data
- Challenge Authority reports

- School reports
- Surveys (local authority survey and headteacher survey)
- Qualitative research study

2.7. A summary of each of the different data sources employed follows.

### Attainment Related Measures

2.8. The Scottish Government currently gathers or has access to data on attainment of pupils using a variety of measures. For the purpose of this evaluation, data has been gathered for the set of key and sub measures as selected in the National Improvement Framework.

2.9. An overview of the measures used to monitor the long term outcomes of the Fund is provided in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Measures used to monitor ASF long-term outcomes**

Measure	Pre ASF	Year 1 (2015/16)	Year 2 (2016/17)	Year 3 (2017/18)	Year 4 (2018/19)
New Group Reading Test (NGRT)		✓	✓		
SCQF Level 5 & 6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Achievement of Curriculum Levels (ACEL)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Attendance Rates	✓		✓		✓
Exclusion Rates	✓		✓		✓
Participation Measure			✓	✓	✓

2.10. In addition, the New Group Reading Test (NGRT) assessed the reading attainment of a sample of pupils attending schools involved in the Scottish Attainment Challenge Programme during the first two years.

involved in the Scottish Attainment Challenge Programme during the first two years.

- 2.11. For the purposes of this evaluation, we have presented the data, where possible, at a national level and for each of the nine Challenge Authorities: Clackmannanshire, Dundee City, East Ayrshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire.
- 2.12. For each local authority, the data is also shown, again where possible, by pupils living in the most and least deprived areas. This has been defined using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). That is, we compare the outcomes of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas (SIMD quintile 1) to those living in the 20% least deprived areas (SIMD quintile 5).
- 2.13. The current report provides findings relating to the first two years of the Attainment Scotland Fund. Data available for Year 1 (2015/16) and Year 2 (2016/17) is included in this report. Where possible, data prior to the implementation of the fund is also included to provide some context.

### **SG Administrative Data**

- 2.14. Scottish Government policy officials shared information collected as part of the routine monitoring with the evaluation team.
- 2.15. This information was mainly used to provide background and contextual framing for the evaluation. The data also helped to answer research question two on the funding local authorities and schools received, discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

### **Challenge Authority Reports**

- 2.16. Throughout the implementation of the fund, Challenge Authorities were asked to provide written documentation of their planned activities and progress. Table 2.3 overleaf outlines the reports gathered from Challenge Authorities.

**Table 2.3: Challenge Authority Documentation**

	Report	Submitted by	Included in current report
Year 1 (2015/16)	Proposed initiatives for first year	7 Challenge Authorities	✓
	Mid-Year Reports		✓
	End of Year Reports		✓
Year 2 (2016/17)	Proposed initiatives for second year	9 Challenge Authorities	✓
	Mid-Year Progress Reports		✓
	End of Year Progress Reports		✓
Year 3 (2017/18)	Proposed initiatives for third year		
	Mid-Year Progress Reports		
	End of Year Progress Reports		
Year 4 (2018/19)	Proposed initiatives for third year		
	Mid-Year Progress Reports		
	End of Year Progress Reports		

2.17. Document analysis was undertaken on the contents of these reports, using the 13 evaluation questions as *a priori* codes for analysis. The analysis was carried out separately by two analysts within Scottish Government Learning Analysis before meeting to discuss interpretations. This report provides the findings from analysis of Year 1 and 2 progress reports and plans.

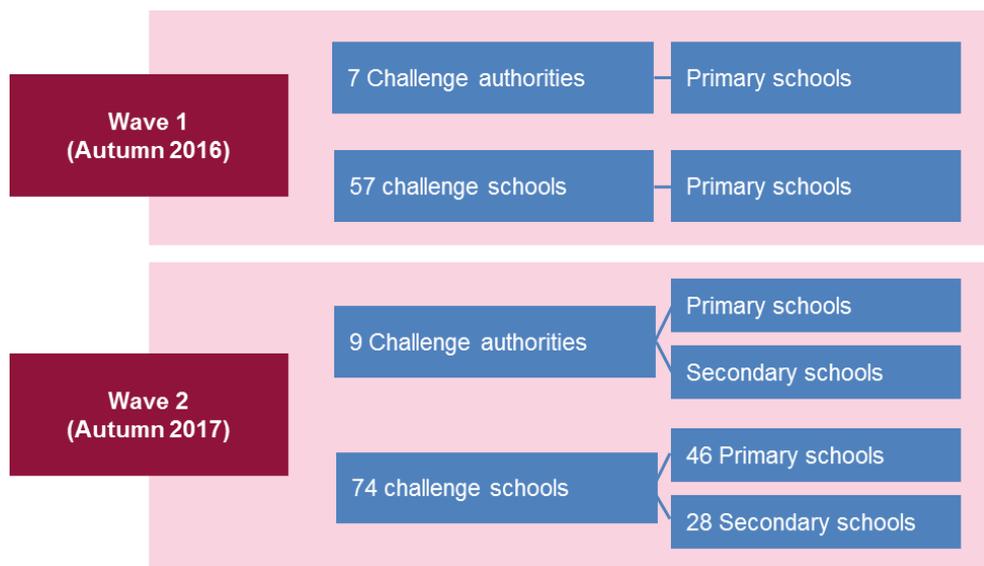
### School Reports and Plans

2.18. Information was extracted from 2016/17 Evaluative Reports and 2017/18 proposals submitted by the 46 primary schools and 28 secondary schools included in the Schools Programme in May 2017. The interventions and approaches included within these reports represent only the work schools undertook using Attainment Scotland Fund money. This may not represent the totality of the work that schools carried out during 2016/17 that positively impacted on attainment.

## Headteacher Survey

- 2.19. An annual online survey collected the views and experiences of all headteachers of schools involved in the Challenge Authorities or Schools Programme.
- 2.20. The first wave was in Autumn 2016 and was distributed to primary school headteachers in the 7 Challenge Authorities and 57 headteachers of those in the Schools Programme. Overall, 181 headteachers responded to the survey. This represented a response rate of 40%.
- 2.21. The second wave took place in Autumn 2017 and was distributed to headteachers of primary and secondary schools in the 9 Challenge Authorities and 74 headteachers of those in the Schools Programme. Overall, 315 headteachers responded to the survey, representing a 52% response rate.

Figure 2.1: Headteacher Survey (Years 1 & 2)



## Local Authority Mini Survey

- 2.22. In April 2016, a short online survey was sent to project leads in seven Challenge Authorities receiving Attainment Scotland Funding at that time.
- 2.23. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain their experiences of the fund so far (i.e. end of Year 1).
- 2.24. The survey involved six questions asking participants about their perspectives on what was working well; what could be improved;

positive and negative consequences of the fund; and sustainability.

- 2.25. Responses were received from six of the seven Challenge Authorities and this data is included where appropriate in the current report.

### **Qualitative Research Study**

- 2.26. Research Scotland was commissioned to conduct a qualitative research study exploring the confidential experiences of key stakeholders involved in the Attainment Scotland Fund, such as headteachers, teachers and other school staff, parents, Attainment Advisors and local authority Directors and project leads.
- 2.27. The research was externally commissioned to promote reliable findings and the overall evaluation's credibility. Findings from the qualitative research have been triangulated with data gathered in-house.
- 2.28. Semi-structured interview guides were developed with input from the Research Advisory Group, comprising of staff from the Scottish Government's Raising Attainment Policy Unit, the Learning Analysis Unit and Education Scotland. The guides were designed to explore topics related to the 13 evaluation themes. Fieldwork took place between May and September 2017.
- 2.29. The qualitative research informed the full range of evaluation themes. The findings have been used alongside the other data sources in this report to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and impact of the fund. The full report from Research Scotland is included in Appendix A.

## 3. Governance

- 3.1. This chapter explores what did and did not work well in the national and local governance and support as part of the programme.
- 3.2. The chapter includes three sections describing national governance, local governance and Attainment Advisor support, respectively. Each section explores what was working well and what could be further improved in terms of the support provided.
- 3.3. The evidence that informs this chapter has been gathered from various sources covering the first two years of the fund; namely, the annual headteacher survey, the local authority mini survey, Challenge Authority progress reports and the qualitative research.

### Chapter Highlights – Governance

- The Attainment Scotland Fund appeared to have become a driver for change and cohesion. During the first two years of the fund, there appeared to be increased awareness, commitment and joint focus on issues relating to the influence of poverty upon attainment.
- Collaboration increased at a local authority and school level – although there is still scope for the further sharing of expertise.
- There appeared to be greater consistency in approach, particularly in relation to professional learning opportunities and an increased use of data.
- However, there is still a degree of variability in governance practices and support provided within and across schools by local authorities and by Attainment Advisors.
- There were mixed views on the support provided by Attainment Advisors. Their support was highly valued by schools, but many local authorities were critical of the variety of roles across Attainment Advisors; and the rationale behind their support. Attainment Advisors themselves also felt there were issues around clarifying their own role.
- Perceived barriers were the high level of paperwork and challenging timescales.

## National Governance

- 3.4. The evaluation sought to understand what was working particularly well in the national governance of the fund and what aspects could be further improved. The figure below summarises key findings and the paragraphs that follow provide further detail.

Figure 3.1: Key findings around National Governance



### What was working well?

- 3.5. Evidence collected highlighted the following to be positive drivers around governance and support:
- Fund as driver of change and cohesion
  - Widespread support of long term outcome
  - Increased professional dialogue and collaboration
  - National events and meetings
  - Clear national priority
- 3.6. **Fund as a driver of change and cohesion.** The Attainment Scotland Fund appeared to have become a driver for change and cohesion. During the first two years of the fund, there appeared to

be increased awareness, commitment and focus on issues relating to the influence of poverty upon attainment.

- 3.7. Many local authorities explicitly mentioned in Year 1 the benefits of the fund in 'driving change' and shaping plans within the local authority. This included Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing being drivers to school planning, and a wider commitment to focus on improving outcomes for those experiencing deprivation. Authorities also noted greater consistency in approach, particularly in relation to professional learning opportunities and an increased widespread use of data.
- 3.8. **Widespread support of long term outcome.** Progress reports revealed that there was widespread agreement with the importance of raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap. The majority of headteachers participating in the online survey found the aims of the fund to be clear (over 96% in Year 1 and 2); and overwhelmingly agreed with the aim of closing the poverty related attainment gap (97% in Year 1 and 2).
- 3.9. **Increased professional dialogue and collaboration.** Professional dialogue was a recurring theme in authority reports and the headteacher survey:
- Local authorities reported at the end of Year 1 that positive aspects of working with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland involved opportunities to communicate, receive constructive feedback and support, and link into inter-authority and national networks.
  - At the end of Year 2, 20% of headteachers spontaneously highlighted local collaborations (within the local authority, between headteachers and between clusters or groups of schools) and national collaborations (platforms such as the Attainment Challenge Hub and the Attainment Challenge Conference).
- 3.10. **National events and meetings.** Challenge Authorities valued the one to one meetings with Scottish Government and found those to be useful, reassuring and to enable the development of positive relationships. National events and networking opportunities were welcomed by Attainment Advisors, local authorities and teachers alike.
- 3.11. **Clear national priority.** Some teachers, interviewed in the qualitative research felt that it was very helpful that the Scottish Government is driving the agenda, setting clear principles,

establishing policy approaches within national policy documents and working to keep the profile of the overall Attainment Challenge high across the country.

### **What could be further improved?**

3.12. During the first two years of the fund, evidence showed that there were some areas for further improvement around the national governance and support provided. The key areas identified across various data sources are summarised below and the paragraphs that follow provide further detail into each.

- Reporting requirements and short timescales
- Variability in the support provided to Challenge and non-challenge Authorities
- Local authority collaboration and involvement
- Pace of change
- Clarity of support provided by Education Scotland

3.13. **Reporting requirements and short timescales.** The most common challenges, reported across data sources around the national governance and support provided, were associated with reporting requirements and relatively short timescales. These came through from various stakeholders.

- Local authorities raised concerns about paperwork requirements and timescales, in the local authority mini survey conducted during the first year of the fund. Specifically, respondents felt that there were challenges in relation to both the level and timing of reports, which often followed the financial year rather than the school year. Some authorities stated in the qualitative research that they would like more trust in the direction of travel evidenced through reduced bureaucracy.
- Attainment Advisors in the qualitative research also reported that the timescales for reports to the Scottish Government did not match the usual reporting cycle of schools.
- Many teachers participating in the qualitative research found the timescales for responding to Attainment Scotland Fund deadlines very tight, which some said made the process very stressful. A few also said there was a lack of flexibility around

budgets and timescales. The headteacher survey highlighted similar issues.

- 3.14. **Variability in the support provided to Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities.** The qualitative research revealed that whilst Challenge Authorities found support from the Scottish Government to be reassuring, authorities in the Schools Programme did not feel they had any direct support from the Scottish Government. Authorities with participants in the Schools Programme felt that:
- Demands on schools were unrealistic
  - Deadlines were too tight
  - Expectations were not always clear
  - Paperwork and reporting was time consuming and laborious
- 3.15. **Local authority collaboration.** Data showed that there was scope for increasing collaboration across local authorities, mainly to share practice and learning from experience. Responses to the local authority survey suggested there was scope for more national support in creating opportunities to share practice across the country. Attainment Advisors felt there was a need to organise more national events beyond the central belt in order to engage those working in rural areas.
- 3.16. **Pace of change.** Some teachers participating in the qualitative research said that the pace of change and volume of associated information was overwhelming. This included the volume of communications about the fund, the range of different initiatives and the information that teachers needed to read and understand.
- 3.17. **Clarity on the support provided by Education Scotland.** The qualitative research and the headteacher survey showed that there were mixed views from both Challenge Authorities and teachers around the support provided by Education Scotland.
- A few Challenge Authorities referred positively to the support provided by area lead officers and the range of materials available on the National Improvement Hub. However, some Challenge Authorities were unclear on what support was available and some felt that there was a lack of leadership from Education Scotland.
  - Some teachers felt that the National Improvement Hub had lots of information. However, some felt that it was not very

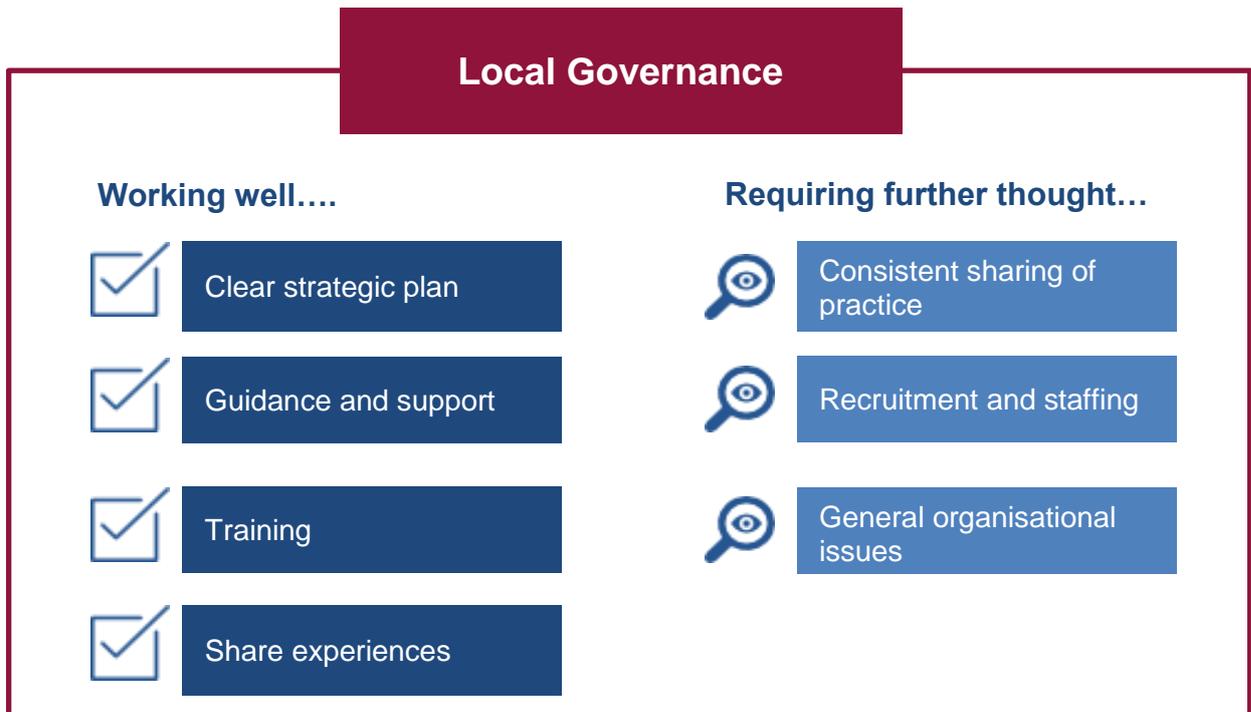
accessible, it was hard to find what they were looking for, and that advice was not helpful. Teachers valued in particular the events organised by Education Scotland. They found those motivational and welcomed the range of information provided. Teachers also valued the emails and newsletters sent with information on what other schools were doing; and the local input provided. A few mentioned that Education Scotland staff had attended headteacher meetings and had provided advice which they found helpful.

- 3.18. Other challenges impacting on the governance of the programme mentioned by strategic stakeholders involved its iterative nature; the political drive; the tension between autonomy and accountability; and the need to move away from reporting on spending to reporting on outcomes.

## Local Governance

3.19. The evaluation sought to understand what was working particularly well in the local governance of the fund, and what aspects could be further improved. The figure below summarises key findings and the paragraphs that follow provide further detail.

Figure 3.2: Key findings around Local Governance



### What was working well?

3.20. The evidence highlighted the following to be positive drivers around governance and support:

- Clear strategic plan
- Guidance and support
- Training
- Opportunities to share experience

3.21. **Clear strategic plan.** For the most part, teachers felt that their local authority had a clear strategic plan and provided schools with a drive and focus to work. The qualitative research showed that teachers were very happy with the support they had received from their local authority. The Year 2 headteacher survey also

suggested high levels of satisfaction. Many respondents saw leadership from their local authority as effective, encouraging, flexible and increasingly tailored to their specific needs.

- 3.22. **Guidance and support.** Local authorities stated that local leadership and governance arrangements were working well, including the formulation of Project Boards around the overall Scottish Attainment Challenge, and the appointments of key individuals such as project managers. Benefits related to governance that were reported by authorities included: greater cohesion between initiatives; clear direction to schools about local and national expectations; and progress towards sustainability.
- 3.23. Teachers reinforced this positive role of local authorities in providing guidance and support. Respondents from the headteacher survey mentioned positively the support provided by their local authority in communicating and sharing information, as well as employing individuals to provide direct support and advice to schools. In Year 2, 47% of headteachers spontaneously referred to the positive support provided by their local authorities.
- 3.24. Most teachers interviewed in the qualitative research were very happy with the support they received from their local authority. Teachers particularly valued:
- Access to good guidance from their local authority – including keeping schools up to date with priorities and expectations and providing access to research
  - Tailored support – opportunities to meet with the local authority to discuss and challenge approaches
- 3.25. **Training.** Training featured prominently during the first two years of the fund. The qualitative research showed that teachers appreciated the access to training and professional development opportunities provided by their local authority. Most teachers felt that training and professional development was provided at the right level, was organised well, and on appropriate topics such as data, improvement science and new pedagogies. In Year 2 of headteacher survey, 26% of respondents reported access to resources as a major accomplishment at the authority level and the majority of their praise focused on access to quality training opportunities.
- 3.26. **Opportunities to share experience.** Teachers felt that the opportunity to collaborate with other schools was a positive feature

of local governance, as data from the headteacher survey showed. Sharing of knowledge and experience across schools, and between the different authorities, was especially important. Examples of this noted by headteachers in the qualitative research were, headteacher meetings, implementation group meetings and other gatherings. There was also evidence of collaboration between schools through the support of the Attainment Advisors.

- 3.27. There was, still, further appetite for more, with 15% of headteacher survey respondents wanting more collaboration focused on the exchange of knowledge and experience in the future.

### **What could be further improved?**

- 3.28. During the first two years of the fund, evidence showed that there were some areas for further improvement in the local governance and support provided. The key areas identified across various data sources are summarised below and the paragraphs that follow provide further detail into each.

- Consistent sharing of experience
- Recruitment and staffing
- General organisational issues

- 3.29. **Consistent sharing of experience.** Progress reports provided by authorities showed that by the end of Year 2, the primary programme appeared well established with clear and solid foundations built across most authorities. Funding to secondary schools was introduced in Year 2, and plans for the secondary programme provided limited detail. From the progress reports submitted, the two programmes, the primary and the secondary, appeared disjointed. The sharing of experience and practice did not come through from the reports provided by local authorities.

- 3.30. **Recruitment and staffing.** A recurring theme over the first two years was that recruitment and staffing issues presented sustained challenges. Specifically, headteachers described staffing issues both generally and in relation to specific posts (including teachers, support and specialist staff), and authorities discussed difficulties in filling teaching posts, backfilling new posts created and covering staff absences.

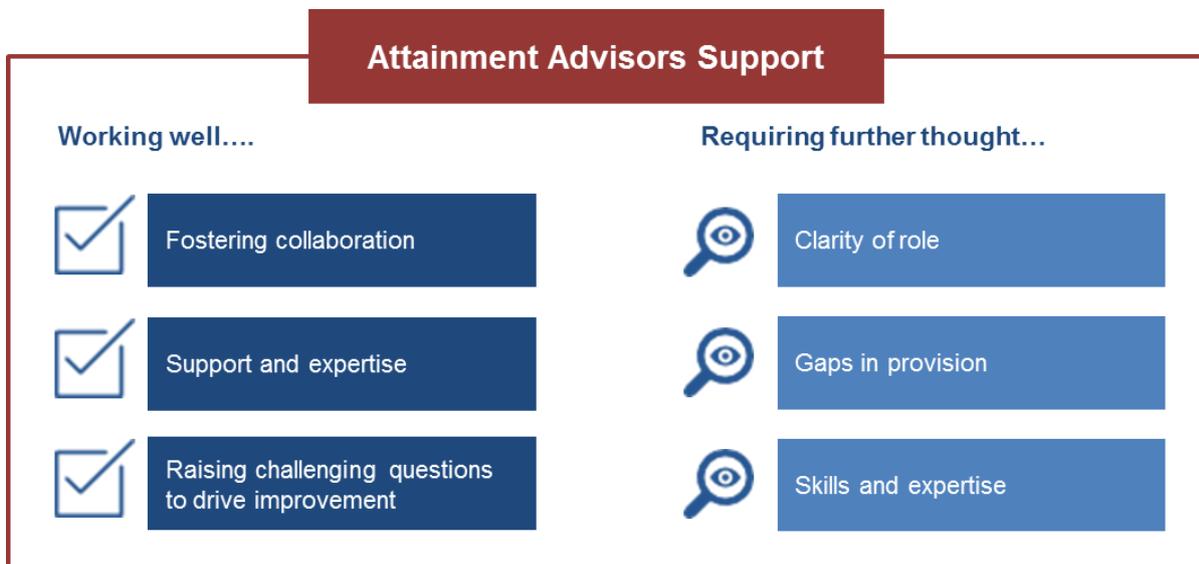
- 3.31. Some authorities indicated that the timescales of funding release and a lack of available teaching staff had direct impact on staff recruitment to attainment-related activities. In some cases, authorities indicated that staffing difficulties had impacted upon workstream progress or had led to a change in workstream plans, for example by scaling down the planned initiative.
- 3.32. Staffing issues came through particularly strongly in data collected from the headteacher survey. Challenges in recruitment and staffing appeared as the second most often mentioned problem when asked about governance issues. 18% of respondents spontaneously mentioned insufficient staffing and discussed the need for more teachers, a decrease in workload, and better means to ensure teaching standards of external staff.
- 3.33. **General organisational issues.** Around a third of headteachers in Year 2 mentioned some general organisational issues that could be improved in the local governance of the fund and the support they received. Namely, headteachers stated:
- A need for greater focus. Headteachers felt that schools were already dealing with a wide range of issues which resulted in scattered attention and insufficient engagement with the fund.
  - More time to implement changes. A few headteachers saw the process as rushed and unfocused with unrealistic deadlines. Some mentioned that any positive change would only be seen in the long term.
  - Less paperwork. Some headteachers felt that the paperwork associated with the fund was excessive.
  - Call for stability. Some headteachers stated that schools needed to know if the funding was to be continued in the long term to have a feeling of stability and to alleviate their worries about sustainability.
- 3.34. **Other issues** raised by a few teachers. While most teachers were generally content with the support provided in their Challenge Authority, a few teachers from four Challenge Authorities in the qualitative research explained that there existed issues around lack of strategic leadership from their local authority. Some teachers in one authority also felt there had been a lack of local support around implementing and measuring impact of interventions. Finally, one strategic stakeholder in the qualitative

research raised concerns about the ability of schools to cope with the level of funding.

## Attainment Advisor Support

3.35. The evaluation sought to understand what was working particularly well in the support provided by Attainment Advisors, and what aspects could be further improved. The figure below summarises key findings and the paragraphs that follow provide further detail.

Figure 3.3: Key findings around Attainment Advisor support



### What was working well?

3.36. Overall, there were mixed views on the support provided by Attainment Advisors. Generally, teachers welcomed the support and guidance provided. Local authorities had more mixed views.

3.37. Across the data sources, both local authorities and schools reported that positive aspects of the Attainment Advisors role involved their ability to:

- Link in with national and local networks, fostering collaboration and information sharing
- Provide support and expertise, particularly around the use of data and research methodologies
- Ask challenging questions, and thus initiating change in professional practice

- 3.38. **Fostering collaboration.** Evidence submitted by Challenge Authorities through their progress reports suggested that Attainment Advisors contributed to increased collaboration between schools. Furthermore, teachers participating in the qualitative research valued that Attainment Advisors brought links with other advisors, other local authorities, Education Scotland and Scottish Government.
- 3.39. **Support and expertise.** The support provided by Attainment Advisors and their level of expertise was valued by local authorities and schools alike.
- 3.40. In the mini online survey at the end of Year 1, some Challenge Authorities described their working relationship with Attainment Advisors as good and productive. They reported the following as things that were working particularly well:
- The guidance and support provided, for example in identifying and organising appropriate interventions, delivering professional development, analysing data, and self-evaluation
  - Their ability to access wider networks
  - Their knowledge of local context, and being credible with everyone involved because of their experience in education
- 3.41. Headteachers responding to the survey in Year 1 described the support from Attainment Advisors in terms of providing helpful challenge, supporting with the use of data and linking into national networks. In Year 2, the positive support of Attainment Advisors was mentioned by 36% of respondents. Some of them were highly complementary and singled out their collaboration with the Attainment Advisor as one of the most positive aspects of their participation with the fund.
- 3.42. Most teachers interviewed in the qualitative research felt their Attainment Advisor was an extremely useful source of support. They valued their supportive, visible, approachable and reassuring role. Respondents to the headteacher survey in Year 2 discussed the importance of easy access to their Attainment Advisors with the ease of contact contributing to the positive impression of approachability.
- 3.43. **Raising challenging questions to drive improvement.** Teachers felt that Attainment Advisors were able keep schools up to date with national aims, signpost to research, ask challenging

questions, link in with national networks and bring expertise in relation to research methodology.

- 3.44. Attainment Advisors were asked in the qualitative research about what worked well around governance. They felt that support worked well when they had: existing links with the local authority; were able to work closely and directly with schools; were accepted by the local authority team and not seen as a threat; and were able to discuss approaches with other Attainment Advisors.

### **What could be further improved?**

- 3.45. While on the whole, the support provided by Attainment Advisors was received positively, data collected showed some areas for further improvement.
- Clarity of role
  - Gaps in provision
  - Skills and expertise
- 3.46. Local authorities had more mixed views about the support provided by Attainment Advisors. Most Challenge Authorities but only a few of the authorities part of the Schools programme found them to be a valuable source of support.
- 3.47. **Clarity of role.** The key challenges in the support from Attainment Advisors were around issues of clarity of their role. It appeared that support was provided in different ways in different authorities. Local authorities were critical of the variety of roles across Attainment Advisors and the rationale behind their support. This came through both in Year 1 (those responding to the mini survey) and in Year 2 (those interviewed in the qualitative research).
- 3.48. Attainment Advisors themselves also felt there were issues around clarifying their role. From their perspectives, it took time to embed their role effectively and some felt it was difficult to bring balance between their local and national remit.
- 3.49. Responses to the mini survey also suggested that there was scope for local authorities to be more involved in the development of Attainment Advisors. Local authorities suggested that it would be beneficial to collaborate more in relation to reporting progress and professional development.
- 3.50. **Gaps in provision.** Some local authorities and teachers referred to gaps in provision of Attainment Advisors. Some teachers in a

few local authorities indicated in the qualitative research that they had not received much or any support from their Attainment Advisor. Two local authorities in the Schools Programme reported that the Attainment Advisor position in their area was unfilled at that time. This was also a common complaint from respondents to the Year 2 headteacher survey. 12% of respondents mentioned issues they experienced in relation to the role of the Attainment Advisor. Some of them complained about having insufficient access or no access to an advisor. Others simply noted that they would like to access the help more easily and on a more regular basis.

- 3.51. Some respondents focused on the need for a stable relationship with their Attainment Advisor (headteacher survey, Year 2). Headteachers wanted to have the same Attainment Advisor throughout the duration of the fund. Advisors developed skills and knowledge relevant to the specific schools and losing them also meant losing their specifically tailored expertise.
- 3.52. **Skills and expertise.** A few teachers in the qualitative research felt that support was variable, and depended on the individual in post. A few respondents to the headteacher survey (Year 2) mentioned inconsistent advice and wanting the advisor to be equipped with more directly relevant guidelines and suggestions.

## 4. Funding

- 4.1. This chapter looks in detail at the level of funding received by local authorities and schools.
- 4.2. Specifically, it looks in more detail at:
- **Funding Allocation.** The level of funding local authorities received as part of the Challenge Authorities and the Schools Programme.
  - **Perceived adequacy of the fund.** It explores how the fund was perceived by authorities and schools.
  - **Funding requirements and practicalities.** The chapter explores in more detail whether the fund was used according to the key requirements / criteria and looks at any issues raised around the process of application and implementation
  - **Supplementing funding.** Finally, this chapter assesses whether authorities and schools supplemented the fund with other sources.

### Chapter Highlights – Funding

- Funding levels increased gradually since the programme started. Overall, during the first two years of the Challenge Authorities and Schools Programme, around £52 million has been distributed in total.
- The fund was perceived as adequate, reasonable and fair by local authorities and schools.
- Overall, funding appeared to be used according to its requirements.
- Timescales for spending the funding were perceived to be tight, with the time taken to agree plans with Scottish Government, and implement plans in line with local authority procedures impacting on the time available to deliver interventions and spend resources.
- Challenges around recruitment of staff were prominent across most Challenge Authorities and some schools part of the Schools Programme. This resulted in a considerable number of change requests and underspend.



## How much funding did Local Authorities and schools receive?

- 4.3. During the first two years, around £52 million was distributed in total for the Challenge Authorities and School Programme.
- 4.4. Table 4.1 below shows funding allocation for the first two years of the Challenge Authority programme.

**Table 4.1: Funding allocations to Challenge Authorities**

Local Authority	Year 1 (2015-16)	Year 2 (2016-17)
Clackmannanshire	£718,000	£1,253,999
Dundee	£2,145,000	£4,041,682
East Ayrshire	-	£2,037,323
Glasgow	£3,030,000	£9,107,262
Inverclyde	£592,000	£2,103,269
North Ayrshire	£1,965,000	£3,490,024
North Lanarkshire	£2,241,000	£6,897,347
Renfrewshire	-	£1,711,919
West Dunbartonshire	£1,024,000	£1,850,410
<b>Total</b>	<b>£11,715,000</b>	<b>£32,493,235</b>

4.5. Table 4.2 shows the total received by schools in any given authority. To provide further detail, Table 4.3 displays the number of schools part of the Schools Programme in each authority.

**Table 4.2: Funding allocations to challenge schools by authority**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Year 1 (2015-16)</b>	<b>Year 2 (2016-17)</b>
Aberdeen City	£157,500	£454,565
Argyll & Bute	£20,000	£19,944
Dumfries & Galloway	£45,000	£116,533
East Ayrshire	£294,470	-
Edinburgh	£304,645	£743,808
Falkirk	£73,000	£169,463
Fife	£416,112	£685,944
Highland	£92,700	£594,209
Renfrewshire	£231,120	-
Scottish Borders	£66,650	£166,620
South Ayrshire	£150,400	£299,580
South Lanarkshire	£548,690	£1,619,271
Stirling	£45,600	£166,581
West Lothian	£26,197	£188,139
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,472,084</b>	<b>£5,224,657</b>

**Table 4.3: Number of schools part of the Schools Programme by authority**

Local Authority	Year 1 (2015-16)	Year 2 (2016-17)
Aberdeen City	4	7
Argyll & Bute	1	1
Dumfries & Galloway	1	2
East Ayrshire	6	*
Edinburgh	8	12
Falkirk	1	2
Fife	6	9
Highland	5	9
Renfrewshire	5	*
Scottish Borders	2	3
South Ayrshire	3	4
South Lanarkshire	12	20
Stirling	1	2
West Lothian	2	3
<b>Total number of schools</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>74</b>

*\*Note: East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire were introduced in the Challenge Authority Programme in Year 2.*



## Was the fund perceived as adequate?

- 4.6. This part of the evaluation seeks to understand to what extent local authorities and schools considered the funding received adequate to meet their goals. Evidence was collected mainly through the qualitative research, although it was supplemented with information submitted in the progress reports.
- 4.7. Overall, most Challenge Authorities and teachers who took part in the qualitative research welcomed the resources provided through the Attainment Scotland Fund, and found funding levels reasonable, fair and appropriate.
- 4.8. Some teachers involved in the qualitative research indicated that they were unable to comment on the adequacy of funding received, as this had been managed centrally by the local authority. These schools had been allocated additional staffing entitlement, resources or access to training and support – rather than cash.
- 4.9. There were issues, however, around recruitment, timescales and limited guidance on applications for funding.
- Schools Programme authorities involved in the qualitative research felt that the fund was a lot of money, with some finding it particularly hard to spend the funding due to challenges in recruiting staff and tight timescales of delivery.
  - Overall, local authorities and teachers would have welcomed more guidance at the beginning, specifically on how much was reasonable to apply for. A few teachers indicated that they would have liked more direction in terms of how to use the additional funding.
- 4.10. Recognising that there may be a need for some Challenge Authorities and schools to adapt aspects of their plans throughout the year, a Change Request process was established to provide some flexibility for Challenge Authorities and schools. Fund recipients were asked to inform Scottish Government of changes to the original plans. They had to provide a rationale for changing the approach and a revised proposal for spend.
- 4.11. During Year 2 there were a total of 67 change requests made by Challenge Authorities and schools that were part of the school programme. The main reasons quoted for changing original plans

related to recruitment issues and staffing / personnel changes. The allocated budget for recruitment was for the most part redirected to the purchase of new Literacy or Numeracy resources and outdoor learning.

- 4.12. In some cases, difficulties in recruiting staff to posts resulted in underspends for Challenge Authorities and schools. Out of the total £52 million allocation, around £37.3 million was spent during the first two years of the fund.
- 4.13. During the first year, the Schools programme spent 94% of the allocated budget and Challenge Authorities 50%. In the second year, both Challenge Authorities and the Schools programme spent over three quarters of the allocated budget. Further detail is provided in the table below.

**Table 4.4: Funding allocation and spend – Years 1 and 2**

	Allocation £ (Million)	Actual spend £ (Million)
<b>Year 1 (2015/16)</b>		
Challenge Authorities	£11.7	£5.9
Schools Programme	£2.5	£2.3
<b>Year 2 (2016/17)</b>		
Challenge Authorities	£32.5	£25
Schools Programme	£5.2	£4.0



### **Was the fund used according to requirements?**

- 4.14. Flexibility to adapt to local needs was paramount to the programme. Challenge Authorities were invited to develop a strategy and submit improvement plans based on their particular circumstances and needs.
- 4.15. The overriding principle was to focus on improving Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing of pupils adversely affected

by poverty. Additionally, there was a set of criteria that needed to be in place in order for support and investment to be provided to local authorities. This criteria was broadly set around: strategies, targeting, evidence based approaches and additionality.

4.16. The criteria which all authorities were asked to have in place was:

- Must be targeted at children from deprived communities
- Cannot be simply to bolster resources generally
- Must be based on demonstration of evidence that the proposal will lead to improved outcomes for the target group
- Must be based on evidence of what works
- Must have clear aims/goals and a way of collecting data on progress and outcomes
- Must set out a clear and realistic implementation strategy
- Must have been developed in partnership with learning communities (Community Planning Partnerships and other stakeholders including parents)
- Leadership commitment must be apparent
- Commitment to embedding what works for the longer term
- Will include but not be limited to additional teachers to deliver interventions

4.17. From the progress reports submitted to Scottish Government over the first two years, funding appeared to be mainly used to support recruitment and staffing issues, provide training and development, and to acquire additional resources needed. Particularly during the first year, a strong focus was placed on having appropriate resources in place and training and developing the workforce.

4.18. Different authorities and schools took different approaches, based on their own local needs and circumstances. It should be noted that the information provided in the progress reports did not evidence whether the approaches taken were indeed suitable and applicable to local needs; neither was this intended to be evaluated.

4.19. Overall, the evidence suggested that the fund was used according to its requirements. More detail is provided in the appropriate chapters that follow, however below is a brief overview of the key requirements:

- **Strategies and implementation plans.** All Challenge Authorities submitted their intended strategies and plans. The level of detail provided varied across authorities and so did the actual strategies implemented.
- **Targeting.** Both local authorities and schools prioritised the careful targeting of interventions. The approach taken varied by local authority and school to reflect local circumstances. However, on the whole efforts were made to ensure that pupils adversely affected by poverty benefitted from the fund.
- **Evidence based approaches.** Generally, teachers and local authority officers felt that their approach to gathering, understanding and using data was improving, with positive attitudes, increased confidence and greater skills around the use of data.
- **Additionality.** Findings from the qualitative research showed that local authorities and most teachers did not use the fund to mitigate other funding pressures. The fund was used for additional work.

### Funding practicalities

4.20. The qualitative research explored in detail what stakeholders thought about the practicalities of the funding process. The key issues raised by local authorities and teachers were:

- **Timescales.** The timescales for spending the funding were perceived to be tight, with the time taken to agree plans with Scottish Government, and implement plans in line with local authority procedures impacting on the time available to deliver interventions and spend resources.
- **Financial vs academic year.** Some local authorities said that the timescales and financial arrangements meant that the bulk of the activity had to be condensed into October to April. Teachers highlighted that the focus on financial year reporting was not helpful within a school setting.
- **Resource constraints.** Some local requirements, for example around recruitment processes and human resources, delayed activity and impacted on spend.
- **Reporting requirements.** A few teachers indicated that reporting systems were bureaucratic, onerous and time consuming.

- **Guidance.** Some Challenge Authorities stated that it would have been useful to have a guide amount, as they were unsure how much would be reasonable to apply for.



## Was the fund supplemented?

- 4.21. The evidence collected on this regard is based on progress reports submitted by Challenge Authorities and the qualitative interviews undertaken with local authorities and teachers.
- 4.22. From the progress reports submitted, only one Challenge Authority specifically stated that they were receiving funding from other sources. They appeared to have a holistic strategy to raising attainment and closing the gap drawing from different funding streams.
- 4.23. While not explicitly stated, other Challenge Authorities referred to projects that were funded through other ways (e.g. Food for Thought fund) in their progress reports.
- 4.24. Local authorities that took part in the qualitative research indicated that, for interventions aiming to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap, they were largely not supplementing the Attainment Scotland Fund with other sources of funding. However, some authorities interviewed said they used core education budgets and core services to support the approach – for example using human resources and procurement services.
- 4.25. Most teachers interviewed also indicated that their schools were not supplementing the fund with other sources. However, a few indicated that they:
- Used the school budget to either fund teaching resources to support interventions, or to roll out successful approaches to the whole school where appropriate.
  - Supplemented from other sources including Awards for All, Tesco Bag funding, local business sponsorship or contributions, or other funding sources such as ESOL funding (English as a Second or Other Language).
  - Used volunteers to deliver Attainment Scotland Fund approaches, including teachers giving their own personal time for free to supplement an approach or particular intervention.

- 4.26. Participants of the qualitative research were asked about the additionality of the fund. Specifically, local authorities and schools were asked whether any Attainment Scotland Fund activities were previously funded through a different source or funding stream. They were also asked whether the fund was being used to mitigate funding pressures.
- 4.27. Local authorities and most teachers said that the fund was not being used to mitigate other funding pressures. Attainment Scotland Fund activity was additional work.
- 4.28. A few teachers indicated that they were losing funding through budget cuts at the same time as gaining funding, so it was difficult to determine whether funding had been used to maintain some previous staff or activities.

## 5. Engagement with Programme Aims

- 5.1. This chapter explores stakeholders' understanding and engagement with the aims of the Attainment Scotland Fund.
- 5.2. As set out in the introductory chapter (see Chapter 1), the fund supports the long term aim of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, which is to close the poverty related attainment gap by focusing on improving Numeracy and Literacy attainment and Health and Wellbeing of pupils living in areas adversely affected by poverty. While the long term aim is the same for the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the specific Attainment Scotland Fund, for evaluation purposes and maximising consistency and clarity, data was collected around understanding of the aims of *the fund* specifically.
- 5.3. The first section of this chapter focuses on the overall understanding of the fund aims. It considers perceptions about the clarity of the aims amongst headteachers, strategic stakeholders and parents.
- 5.4. The second section explores the extent to which stakeholders supported the aims of the fund. It considers information from schools and local authorities describing how they had taken forward what they perceived as the aims of the fund within their local context.

### Chapter Highlights – Engagement with Programme Aims

- The aims of the fund, particularly in terms of enhancing attainment and equity, were clear amongst stakeholders.
- Overall, local authorities and teachers were committed to the aims of the fund.
- Those who raised concerns about the programme aims, highlighted concerns around:
  - raising attainment of all children
  - supporting initiatives beyond school, including out of school support
  - expanding the fund to cover Early Years



## To what extent did stakeholders understand the programme aims?

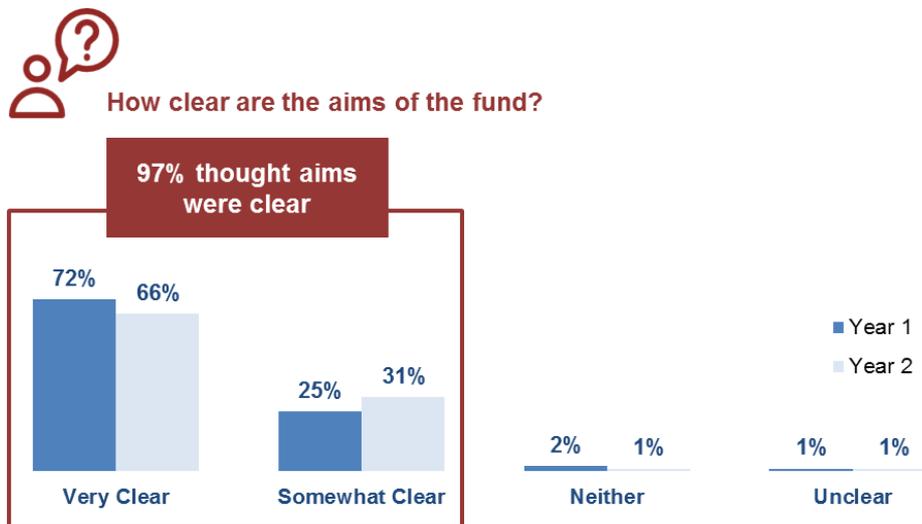
- 5.5. Information about how well the aims of the fund were understood was gathered from headteachers taking part in the online survey as well as from in-depth interviews with strategic stakeholders and parents taking part in the qualitative research.
- 5.6. Overall, these stakeholders felt that the aims of the fund, particularly in terms of raising attainment and enhancing equity, were clear.
- 5.7. This section describes in turn headteachers, strategic stakeholders and parents' awareness and understanding of the programme aims. Local authorities were not asked directly about their understanding of the programme aims and their perspectives are discussed in more detail in the next section.

### Headteachers

- 5.8. Awareness of the aims of the fund was widespread and at the forefront of headteachers' minds. Overall, 98% of headteachers were able to explain with their own words the aims of the fund, mentioning: raising attainment, closing the gap, Literacy / Numeracy / Health and Wellbeing interventions, poverty, equity or SIMD (headteacher survey, Year 2). 
- 5.9. Specifically, the majority mentioned that the fund aims to close the poverty related attainment gap or raise attainment (84% in Year 2 of the headteacher survey). Other headteachers provided more general descriptions of the aims of the fund referring to 'mitigating the impact of poverty' (59% of respondents in Year 2) or 'enhancing equity' (31% of respondents in Year 2).
- 5.10. Around a quarter of headteachers mentioned that the aims involved a focus specifically on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. In Year 2, 26% of respondents mentioned Literacy, 26% mentioned Numeracy and 23% mentioned Health and Wellbeing. Overall, 27% mentioned at least one of these areas of focus of the fund.

- 5.11. There were no headteachers who claimed not to know what the aims of the fund were or to voice a lack of certainty about them. Instead, there were some non-standard or non-detailed descriptions but they comprised only of 2% of responses.
- 5.12. Relatedly, the aims of the fund appeared clear to headteachers from the outset of the programme. At the end of the first year of the fund, 97% of headteachers stated that the aims of the Attainment Scotland Fund were clear (72% very clear and 25% somewhat clear). By the end of the second year, results were very similar as shown in the figure below.

Figure 5.1: Clarity of the aims of the fund, headteacher survey



Base: All headteachers in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 1: 139; Year 2: 214)

### Strategic Stakeholders

- 5.13. Strategic stakeholders interviewed as part of the qualitative research perceived there to be a shared understanding of attainment, equity and excellence.
- 5.14. There was also a perception that local authorities out with the Challenge Authorities or Schools Programme would have a less developed understanding of the fund.

### Parents

- 5.15. Of the nine parents interviewed in the qualitative research, most of them felt well informed about the fund. Whilst some felt that there were efforts to ensure information was widely available, others felt that more could be done to help them understand the programme aims. No evidence was collected as to whom parents thought should provide further information.



## To what extent did stakeholders support the programme aims and were they motivated to engage further with them?

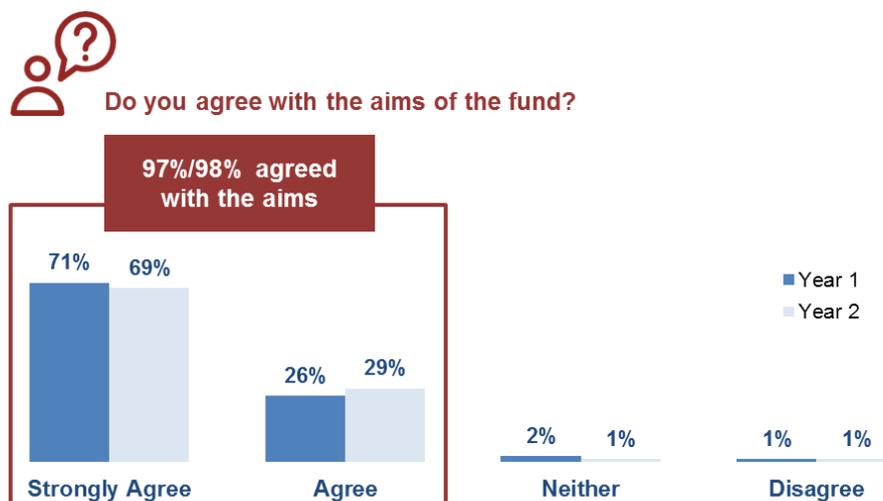
- 5.16. Respondents to the headteacher survey were asked to comment on the extent to which they agreed with the aims of the fund. Information was also gathered from the local authority mini survey, analysis of Challenge Authority reports and in-depth interviews with local authorities and teachers.
- 5.17. The evidence suggested that local authorities and teachers were largely committed to the aims of the fund, though some did raise concerns. Detail is provided in the paragraphs that follow.

### Motivation to support programme aims

- 5.18. Almost all teachers and local authorities interviewed in the qualitative research said they found the programme aims very relevant to their work.
- 5.19. Most teachers interviewed reported that they welcomed new resources and support to help them address the poverty related attainment gap.
- 5.20. Some local authorities and teachers indicated that they had already begun focusing on tackling the attainment gap prior to the introduction of the Attainment Scotland Fund. For them therefore, the aims of the fund complemented, enhanced or accelerated their existing work.
- 5.21. Local authorities reported in their Year 2 reports that there was a strong commitment from teachers to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap.
- 5.22. Overall, the vast majority of headteachers agreed with the aim of the fund from the outset of the programme. Most of them agreed strongly (71% in Year 1 and 69% in Year 2). Further detail shown in the figure overleaf.

*“The Scottish Attainment Challenge programme has allowed us to ‘turbo charge’ our approach to tackling the attainment gap”*  
*(Headteacher, Challenge Authority, Primary School - Qualitative Research – Year 2)*

Figure 5.2: Agreement with the aims of the fund, headteacher survey



Base: All headteachers in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 1: 139; Year 2: 214)

5.23. In the local authority mini survey, respondents felt that across their authority, staff were keen to engage with professional learning opportunities that would raise attainment. This was described as an unintended positive consequence and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 14.

### Concerns about the programme aims

5.24. A minority of respondents raised concerns about the programme aims. Five headteachers at the end of Year 1 and one teacher at the end of year 2 reported that they did not agree with the programme aims. These respondents felt the focus should be on, raising attainment of all children, supporting initiatives beyond school, including out-of-school support and Early Years.

5.25. Similarly, a small number of teachers and local authorities interviewed in the qualitative research indicated that the aims of the programme should include Early Years.

5.26. Some teachers taking part in the qualitative research raised concerns that the aims of the programme did not recognise that other factors, such as additional support needs, also influenced attainment.

5.27. In at least two Challenge Authorities, teachers and local authorities highlighted concerns with the overall focus on children living in SIMD 1 and 2 areas. Teachers in one Challenge Authority also noted a risk of stigmatising these children.

## 6. Choosing Interventions

- 6.1. This chapter explores the process of choosing interventions and the types of interventions that were planned as a result of the Attainment Scotland Fund.
- 6.2. The first section of the chapter describes the process of choosing interventions and whether these were organised around the focus areas of the Attainment Scotland Fund. That is; Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.
- 6.3. The second section of the chapter describes the nature of these interventions. For example, it explores whether the interventions focused on professional learning, parental involvement, leadership or data skills.
- 6.4. The final section explores whether interventions were new, combined with existing interventions or a scale-up of existing interventions.
- 6.5. All three sections draw on data from the qualitative research, the annual headteacher survey, Challenge Authority reports and school reports.

### Chapter Highlights – Choosing Interventions

- Local authorities and schools used a wide range of methods to choose interventions. However, common factors that played a role were data and evidence, support from Attainment Advisors and consideration of the target audiences.
- Approaches varied, and so did the level of autonomy given to schools to choose their own interventions. On the whole, teachers felt included in the process.
- Most interventions focused on Numeracy, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing, family support and engagement, teacher skills development and equipment and resources.
- During the first two years of the programme, there appeared to be a greater focus on Literacy and Health and Wellbeing interventions than Numeracy.



## To what extent did interventions focus on Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Wellbeing or other topics?

### Selecting Interventions – Key factors

- 6.6. Overall, the following factors played a significant role in selecting interventions:

Figure 6.1: Significant factors in selecting interventions



- 6.7. The qualitative research asked teachers and local authorities to describe their approach to selecting interventions. It revealed that **data and evidence** played a key part in the process of selecting interventions and that local authorities largely took the lead in this process. Chapter 12 discusses in more detail the extent to which data was used to support the identification of appropriate interventions.
- 6.8. There was variability in the approach taken to selecting interventions. Some schools were given autonomy and flexibility by their local authorities to select a given intervention. Other schools were provided with a suite of potential interventions to choose from. The approach varied by local authority.
- 6.9. Given this variability, teachers' perception of how much autonomy they had in selecting interventions also varied. Whilst perceptions differed, most teachers interviewed felt involved in the process of selecting interventions.
- 6.10. A minority of headteachers (headteacher survey, Year 2) spontaneously mentioned flexibility as a factor which helps the fund to succeed. They claimed it allowed them to be more creative and it gave them freedom to experiment and arrive at the best possible solution.

- 6.11. At a local authority level, interventions were chosen to reflect a number of broad priorities, based on, for example, attainment gap data, previously successful approaches and engagement with headteachers and other partners or services.
- 6.12. Teachers in the Schools Programme appeared to have more autonomy to select interventions. At a school level, data and evidence played an important role informing which interventions to implement. Interviews revealed that teachers drew on evidence; existing local priorities; views from staff or parents; and learning from previous interventions.
- 6.13. The qualitative research revealed that most teachers in the Schools Programme welcomed the autonomy they had to selecting interventions with only one indicating they would have liked more support.
- 6.14. When asked about what works well in the national and local governance, arrangements and support, some headteachers focused on the right balance between autonomy and guidance as an indicator of successful leadership (headteacher survey, Year 2). Overall, those who mentioned a distinguishing quality of the leadership style of their local authority mentioned flexibility as a key positive feature.
- 6.15. Conversely, a minority of headteachers (headteacher survey, Year 2) mentioned a need for more flexibility when asked about the improvements in governance they would like to see in the future. They noted that the inability to select the interventions which are most appropriate for the school delays their progress and decreases their effectiveness. Lack of flexibility was also mentioned as one of the barriers to the success of the fund, but seemed to apply to the issues around staff hiring more than insufficient autonomy when selecting initiatives.
- 6.16. Information from the Challenge Authority reports gave some insight into how and why specific interventions were selected. These reports revealed that in addition to using SIMD data, authorities chose interventions based on specific Numeracy, Literacy or Health and Wellbeing measures. The prominent role of data was also evident, with local authorities confirming the use of self-evaluation to choose interventions.
- 6.17. Most **Attainment Advisors** interviewed in the qualitative research indicated that they supported schools and teachers, particularly in primary schools, to identify and monitor interventions. However, a

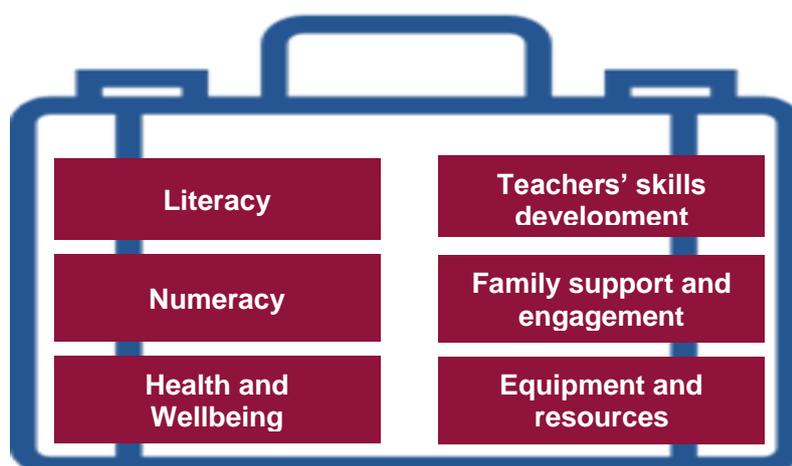
few highlighted that they were not in post at the time of selecting interventions – so their support in that respect was limited.

- 6.18. The **target audience** was also considered when deciding which intervention to select; pupils who live in areas of higher deprivation, all pupils, or pupils who may require additional support due to, for example, physical disability, domestic abuse and family conflict, or care status. Chapter 7 provides further detail.

### Overview of interventions

- 6.19. Overall, a wide range of interventions took place as part of the fund. Mostly, these focused around Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. However, interventions also covered family support and engagement, teacher skills development and equipment and resources.

Figure 6.2: Key focus areas of interventions



- 6.20. There were some marked differences between the primary and the secondary programme, which could be a reflection of the length of time each of these programmes had existed. By the end of the second year, interventions in the primary programme were for the most part, well organised and appeared embedded in the system. Reports from the secondary programme tended to be more general. Though it should be noted, that by the end of Year 2, the secondary programme had been running for one year only.
- 6.21. From the progress reports submitted, it appeared that interventions around Literacy were more widespread than those focusing on Numeracy. In fact, some authorities did not appear to have any interventions to support Numeracy at all. This issue was emphasised in the secondary programme. The qualitative work suggested that interventions around Numeracy had started later.

- 6.22. Evidence was unclear as to where the barrier lies in closing the Numeracy attainment gap; if it was around a strategic barrier, teacher confidence/knowledge, lack of suitable resources or something else.
- 6.23. The remainder of this chapter describes the interventions that focused on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. The next section of this chapter explores interventions that focused on other or additional areas.

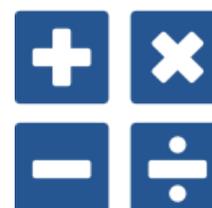
### Literacy Interventions

- 6.24. Most teachers interviewed in the qualitative research felt very positive about Literacy being one of the key focuses of the fund. Teachers believed that the fund had helped the school to embed consistent approaches to Literacy, and spend more time on Literacy within the curriculum.
- 6.25. Literacy interventions reported in the qualitative research ranged from specific Literacy champions or initiatives, one to one support and partnerships with speech and language therapists.
- 6.26. Information on the type of Literacy interventions was also collected as part of the headteacher survey (Year 2). Overall, 30% of respondents listed Literacy initiatives.
- 6.27. Literacy also featured strongly in the Schools Programme. Information provided showed that 235 Literacy interventions and approaches were undertaken during 2016/17. A wide range of expected impacts and measures were proposed by schools to support the implementation of these approaches and establish impact.



### Numeracy Interventions

- 6.28. While Numeracy featured prominently during the first two years of the fund, in the progress reports it appeared relatively less strongly than Literacy or Health and Wellbeing interventions.
- 6.29. Teachers participating in the qualitative research reported that a focus on Numeracy within the fund had helped to change teaching practice.



- 6.30. Numeracy interventions reported in the qualitative research included dedicated Numeracy champions, the use of new resources, approaches and additional targeted support to pupils.
- 6.31. Information collected on the headteacher survey (Year 2) showed that 27% of respondents listed Numeracy initiatives.
- 6.32. In the Schools Programme in particular, there appeared to be less of a focus on Numeracy when compared to other priorities. This was the case during the first two years of the programme. Specifically, during 2016/17, 190 Numeracy interventions and approaches were identified across 55 of the 74 schools. As was the case for Literacy interventions, a wide range of impacts and measures were proposed by schools to support the implementation of these approaches and establish impact.

### Health and Wellbeing

- 6.33. Overall, Health and Wellbeing interventions were widespread across all Challenge Authorities and schools during the first two years of the programme.
- 6.34. Many teachers in the qualitative research felt that good Health and Wellbeing was critical in that it provided the foundation for learning and improved attainment. This included addressing social and emotional needs, to ensure that children were able to attend school, enjoy school and be ready to learn.
- 6.35. Health and wellbeing interventions described by teachers in the qualitative research were varied and focused on a variety of areas including for example: nurture, transitions, targeted support, outdoor learning and mindfulness.
- 6.36. Information on the type of Health and Wellbeing interventions was also collected as part of the headteacher survey (Year 2). Overall, 24% of respondents listed Health and Wellbeing initiatives.
- 6.37. In the Schools Programme self-reporting for 2016/17, 67% of schools included third sector partnership as part of their Health and Wellbeing interventions and approaches.



### Other Interventions

- 6.38. Just under half (48%) of headteachers (Year 2) referred to initiatives that focused on key improvement areas highlighted as

part of the fund requirements. That is: parental engagement, use of data, staff development, resources and third sector partnerships.

### **Schools Programme – Specific evidence on interventions**

- 6.39. Evaluative reports for 2016/17 and proposals for 2017/18 were submitted by schools from all 12 local authorities involved in the Schools Programme in May 2017.
- 6.40. There was a decrease in the number of interventions and approaches identified by schools in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. However, there was an increase in the number of combined Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing interventions and approaches identified.
- 6.41. As was the case across Challenge Authorities, learning and teaching remained the most prevalent lever for change in the Schools Programme
- 6.42. ‘Families and Communities’ was an area that showed growth over time. In the 2017/18 Schools Programme plans, 86% of schools (63 out of 73) included families and communities approaches and interventions. This represents a 10% increase from the previous year’s plans.
- 6.43. In the Schools Programme there was a decline in planned third sector partnerships for 2017/18.



### **What type of interventions were organised?**

- 6.44. The headteacher survey asked respondents to comment on the extent to which their interventions focused on:
- Leadership skills
  - Collaboration within the school or across schools
  - Data skills or use of self-evaluation and/or improvement planning
  - Teaching skills or practice
  - Resources or tools for teaching or learning
  - The learning environment

- Family learning
- Parental or community engagement with the school

6.45. Overall, the responses suggested that the interventions organised focused on each of these areas at least to some extent.

6.46. In both Years 1 and 2, most initiatives focused on **teaching skills or practice**. Specifically, in Year 2, 76% of headteachers reported that there was a strong emphasis on teaching skills or practice. Headteachers' responses to the questions relating to sustainability of the progress made as a result of the fund suggest that the focus on teaching skills could have resulted from their conviction (shared by 79% of headteachers) that staff up-skilling was one of the benefits of the programme which is most likely to last beyond the years of the fund.

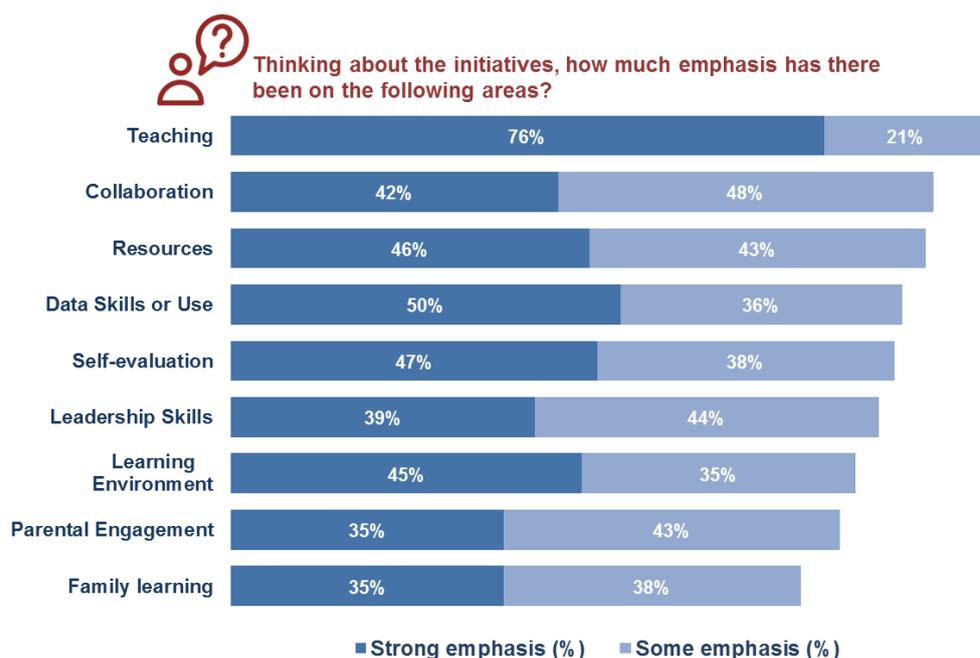
*“We have focused on changing practice through professional learning thus making on-going refinement and improvement of approaches cost neutral”  
(Challenge Authority, Headteacher Survey – Year 2)*

6.47. **Data skills** was also a prominent area of focus, in particular during Year 2. Whilst headteachers in Year 1 indicated that there were relatively fewer interventions focusing on data skills, 50% of headteachers in Year 2 reported there to be a strong emphasis on data skills and a further 36% reported there to be some emphasis.

6.48. Responses to the survey in both years indicated that relatively fewer initiatives focused on **family learning** or **parental or community engagement with the school**. The evidence for why that might be the case was not clear, but 30% of headteachers (Year 2) said that the work at school could be undermined by disengaged parents, citing this as a perceived barrier to the success of the fund.

6.49. Further detail on the focus of the interventions as reported by headteachers (Year 2), is displayed in the figure below.

Figure 6.3: Focus of the interventions – headteacher survey Year 2



Base: All headteachers who stated they received funding for initiatives (Year 2: 166)

6.50. The qualitative research revealed that in addition to describing interventions according to the three main priorities (i.e. Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing), teachers and local authority officers also described interventions which focused on:

- Family support and engagement
- Skills development
- Equipment and resources



### To what extent were interventions new, a scale-up of existing interventions or a continuation?

6.51. As expected, during Year 1 most initiatives were reported to be new to the school after the launch of the Attainment Scotland Fund. Overall, headteachers stated that 379 initiatives were newly introduced in their school following the launch of the fund, 189 were a scale up initiative that existed prior to the fund and 43 initiatives continued at the same level.

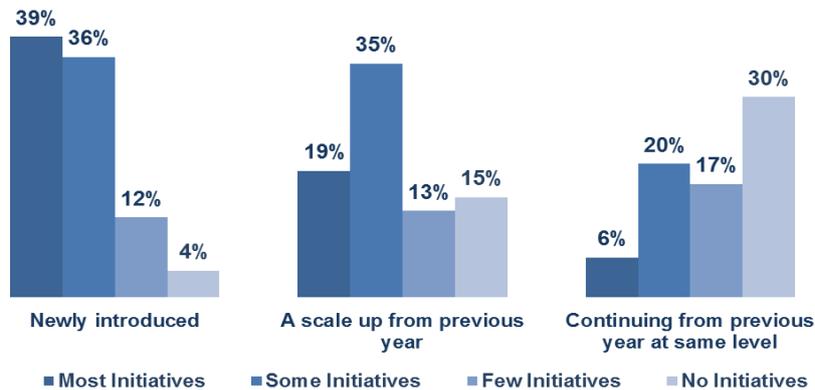
6.52. In Year 2, most initiatives continued to be either new to the school or a scale up of an existing initiative. 39% of headteachers said that most initiatives were newly introduced during Year 2 and 19% stated that most initiatives were a scale up from the previous year. Only 6% of respondents reported that most initiatives continued at the same level as in previous school year (i.e 2015/16). Further detail in the figure below.

*“The additional resource allows the opportunity to increase scale of interventions and accelerate their implementation”  
(Schools Programme, Headteacher Survey – Year 2)*

**Figure 6.4: Proportion of initiatives new or a scale up (headteacher survey)**



How many of these initiatives were...?



Base: All headteachers in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 2: 166)

- 6.53. The qualitative research showed that in many cases the interventions being implemented were extensions of previously successful approaches. Teachers commented that the funding had allowed them to strengthen existing approaches or implement and measure the impact of the approach in a more focused way.
- 6.54. Similarly, local authority officers reported that the fund had been used to scale up the implementation of an intervention that was previously successful or related to local priorities.
- 6.55. Progress reports submitted by Challenge Authorities suggested that many interventions reached a small number of pupils or schools, with some activities focusing on one to one support. The reports did not include strategies to scale up the programme.

## 7. Targeting strategies

- 7.1. This chapter explores in more detail the range of targeting strategies applied as part of the Attainment Scotland Fund. Specifically, it looks at two key questions:
- How were interventions targeted?
  - To what extent did the interventions succeed in reaching the target groups?
- 7.2. Firstly, the chapter considers what methods or criteria schools and authorities used to target their interventions and to what extent these interventions were targeted at pupils or parents of pupils from the most deprived backgrounds. If interventions were not targeted at those from the most deprived backgrounds, the chapter aims to explore why this was.
- 7.3. Secondly, the chapter explores how successful the interventions were in reaching their target group.

### Chapter Highlights – Targeting strategies

- Both local authorities and schools used a mix of targeted and universal approaches. Their approach seemed to respond to local needs.
- Towards the end of Year 2, it seemed that deprivation was a key criteria in targeting interventions.
- Data played a significant role in the targeting process and schools strongly valued the support provided by local authorities and Attainment Advisors in particular.
- There was limited evidence on the success of targeting approaches. However, awareness of the poverty related attainment gap and confidence in using data were deemed fundamental to the success of any targeting.
- Recruiting staff and challenges around the use of data had the potential to impact negatively on targeting success.

## How were interventions targeted?



### What method or criteria did authorities and schools use to target their interventions?

- 7.4. On the whole, both authorities and schools used a mix of targeted and universal approaches. Approaches varied depending on the intervention, the type of school, the mix of pupils and catchment areas. Targeting strategies were therefore adjusted to fit local needs appropriately.
- 7.5. It was evident that data played a significant role in the targeting process across both authorities and schools. This chapter focuses on the role of data to support the targeting process whilst chapter 12 discusses the use of data in more detail.
- 7.6. This section of the report looks in turn at the approach taken by local authorities and schools.

### Local Authorities

- 7.7. Overall, there was no clear pattern around targeting. Some interventions were highly targeted and some were universal.
- 7.8. Information about the targeting of interventions by Challenge Authorities was gained from self-completed progress reports and in-depth interviews as part of the qualitative research. Note that progress reports provided information about targeting approaches as a whole with varying degrees of detail depending on the Challenge Authority.

### Local authorities and their approach to targeting

- 7.9. At the outset of the programme, authorities planned to target specific interventions at different populations, including pupils, staff and parents. Within these populations, there was a difference in the level of targeting, such as:
  - All schools in the authority
  - Clusters of schools
  - Individual schools
  - Age groups within schools (for example all primary 2 pupils)

- Targeted individuals within schools

- 7.10. In line with the scope of the fund, all authorities focused on primary schools during Year 1 of the programme. This was then expanded to secondary schools in Year 2.
- 7.11. Two authorities, in particular, planned to expand their targeting to more schools/communities in subsequent years, with one explicitly stating the aim of 'starting small, thinking big'.
- 7.12. Focusing on targeting of individual pupils, most authorities discussed a combination of both universal and targeted interventions. A 'targeted' support commonly referred to the identification of particular pupils and used a range of data to identify children. 'Universal' support was used with different meanings between authorities; either to all pupils across the authority, or to all pupils in identified schools, or to all schools in a particular year group.
- 7.13. By the end of Year 2, most authorities referred to targeting all 'those most in need'. From the progress reports, it was not always clear how 'those most in need' were defined or indeed identified. Although in some isolated cases, some authorities specified that they aimed to reach those from the lowest SIMD groups; in particular SIMD 1 and 2. Other authorities reported that they also targeted pupils with additional support needs.
- 7.14. This mixed approach to targeting was also evident through the qualitative research. Local authority officers were asked about whether and how they targeted certain schools within the local authority area. Approaches to targeting schools differed across and within authorities. In some areas, local authorities targeted schools with the highest proportion of pupils living in areas of high deprivation. Sometimes a small number of schools were targeted in early years, expanding over time.

### **Local authorities - Skills and use of evidence**

- 7.15. For both schools and local authorities, data played a significant role in the overall approach to targeting.
- 7.16. Some of the data sources used for targeting by authorities included: SIMD, school rolls, attainment data, pupil background information, NGRT and professional judgement data, amongst others.

7.17. Furthermore, all local authorities emphasised the need to support schools in their own targeting strategies. Local authorities stated that they had supported schools to target their activities at pupils and families through various ways. Some of the support provided included:

- Providing access to data
- Support with analysing data
- Building networking approaches and families of schools based on similar challenges; and
- Training and coaching staff within each school on targeting

*“Data is used for the early identification of children and young people at risk. Schools have more rigorous tracking systems in place. Through a combination of staff training and Literacy Coach training, schools are reporting increased knowledge and skills in their ability to deliver appropriate evidence based Literacy interventions”*

*(Challenge Authority, Primary Programme, Progress report – Year 2)*

7.18. Attainment Advisors played a pivotal role in supporting schools directly. The qualitative research showed that Attainment Advisors supported schools to target creatively, to meet needs of individual schools, based on evidence.

7.19. The role of the support provided by local authorities and Attainment Advisors in increasing awareness and knowledge of data is also evident when looking in detail at schools, as shown in the next section.

## **Schools**

7.20. As seen at a Challenge Authority level, there was no clear pattern around targeting at a school level either. Some interventions were highly targeted and some were universal. The evidence is not conclusive as to whether there was greater focus towards one or another approach. On balance, it seemed that schools assessed their individual circumstances and made targeting decisions attuned to their local needs.

7.21. It appeared, however, that targeted approaches based specifically on deprivation were favoured among both schools in Challenge Authorities and in the Schools Programme.

- 7.22. In Year 2 of the survey, all headteachers in both the Schools Programme and Challenge Authorities were asked about their targeting approaches. A total of 75% of headteachers indicated that most of their interventions were targeted at pupils or parents living in the most deprived areas.
- 7.23. Schools in Challenge Authorities, in particular, were, by the end of Year 2, more likely to also be part of interventions that had a more universal approach to targeting, compared to schools out with Challenge Authorities.
- 7.24. Information about the targeting of interventions within schools was gained from self-completed progress reports, responses collected through the headteacher survey and the interviews undertaken through the qualitative research.

### **Schools and their approach to targeting**

- 7.25. Most teachers indicated that they used a mix of targeted and universal approaches to involving children and families.
- 7.26. The approach to targeting varied dependent on the interventions being implemented, with schools often using multiple approaches.
- 7.27. Approaches to targeting varied depending on the mix of pupils within the schools. For example, schools in areas of high deprivation (SIMD 1 and 2) operated in different ways to schools with more mixed catchment areas. Evidence suggested that those schools with a high proportion of pupils living in areas of deprivation were more likely to employ universal approaches. On the other hand, those schools with more mixed catchment areas were more likely to carefully target their interventions.
- 7.28. When targeting was used, stigmatisation appeared to be a key concern for teachers. In the qualitative interviews, teachers talked about the importance of taking care when targeting pupils, to ensure that they did not feel stigmatised. Approaches included providing additional support within the class, targeted group work at the same time as other pupils do work and regular individual attention for targeted pupils.
- 7.29. In some instances, teachers also indicated that once they had tried interventions within a small, targeted group, they would consider rolling out successful interventions.

- 7.30. Universal approaches to targeting were also implemented in schools in Challenge Authorities. Some of the key reasons uncovered through the qualitative research were:
- Catchment areas including a high proportion of pupils living in areas of high deprivation (SIMD 1 and 2)
  - Overall falling trends in attainment
  - Focus on teaching approaches which by definition affect all pupils; and
  - A desire to not exclude some children
- 7.31. Participants in the Schools Programme appeared to favour targeted approaches based on deprivation. This is supported by data from the qualitative research and the headteacher survey.
- 7.32. However, while participants in the Schools Programme favoured targeted approaches, there were still a considerable number of interventions that were universally targeted and a smaller number of interventions were targeted according to another criteria; for example, pupils with additional support needs or English as an additional language.

### **Schools - Skills and use of evidence**

- 7.33. As seen amongst Challenge Authorities, evidence and data in general appeared to play an important role for schools when targeting their interventions.
- 7.34. Awareness of and skills in using evidence appeared to have improved from Year 1 to Year 2, based on progress reports, survey data and interviews with schools. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 12.
- “Previously we relied on common sense, there was no baseline information. It is amazing that we now have baseline information, our approach has been much more structured.”*
- (Headteacher of primary school, Challenge Authority, Qualitative research – Year 2)*
- 7.35. The support provided by local authorities and Attainment Advisors had a positive impact on teachers’ understanding and confidence in using data. Many teachers interviewed said that after receiving support they understood how to use data much more confidently.

- 7.36. Specifically, many teachers in the interviews talked of the value of Attainment Advisors. In particular, schools valued the support provided around understanding schools' local needs, interpreting data and developing data knowledge and interpretation skills.
- 7.37. Some of the data sources being used at the school level to target interventions included: SIMD and free school meal data; attainment or Health and Wellbeing data, school engagement data and professional knowledge.



### **To what extent did the interventions succeed in reaching the target groups?**

- 7.38. On the whole, there is limited evidence at this time on the extent to which specific interventions succeeded in reaching target groups. Progress reports and surveys did not focus on this aspect. The qualitative research, however, explored with teachers what had worked well and what had worked less well in relation to reaching the children and families they had targeted.
- 7.39. This section provides a brief summary of the findings from the qualitative research around the successes and challenges of reaching the targeted children and families. It also includes data from the headteacher survey.

#### **Successes of targeting**

- 7.40. Reflecting the flexibility provided to implement interventions and targeting approaches, teachers had different experiences of what had worked well for them.
- 7.41. An increased awareness of the need to tackle the poverty related attainment gap and an increase in confidence using data were seen by teachers as fundamental to successfully targeting interventions.
- 7.42. Other positive variables for targeting interventions successfully, as reported by teachers were:
- A growing commitment to using a targeted approach – with staff buying into the approach
  - Pupil enthusiasm about being involved
  - Staff training and development

7.43. Headteachers mentioned which factors they considered helpful to the success of the fund. During Year 2 specifically they referred to the ability to deliver targeted initiatives and agreed with the focus of the fund. They believed that the targeted group needs additional help and the fund allowed teachers to deliver it. Over a third (35%) of headteachers saw a clear collective focus as means to success, and perceived targeting as one of the ways in which the focus can be sustained and directed.

### **Challenges in relation to targeting**

7.44. Teachers also highlighted what didn't work well in relation to targeting. The recurring themes from the qualitative research were:

- Challenges recruiting staff
- Difficulties in understanding the nature of the 'attainment gap' when the vast majority of pupils in a particular school lived in areas of high deprivation
- Challenges engaging with parents
- The extra administration created around targeting and the use of data
- The challenges of balancing data with other factors like teacher judgement

7.45. A minority of headteachers (5%) responding to the online survey referred to targeting when asked about barriers around the implementation of the fund. The issues identified by this minority of teachers were:

- Too few or too many children from deprived areas for targeting to seem precise.
- The perceived cultural isolation of some rural areas.

## 8. Interventions – Short and medium term outcomes

- 8.1. The first section explains what short and medium term outcomes interventions were intended to achieve. The second section describes the evidence used to assess the extent to which interventions were achieving these outcomes. The final section explores what this evidence showed around any progress made, and what factors schools and authorities think contributed to whether interventions achieved their short and medium term outcomes.
- 8.2. Evidence in this chapter draws primarily from Year 1 and 2 Challenge Authority progress reports, and the qualitative research findings provide further detail on stakeholders' views of progress towards short and medium term outcomes.

### Chapter Highlights – Outcomes of interventions

- Most Challenge Authorities had clear short and medium term outcomes and targets in place.
- Overall, authorities were, for the most part, able to highlight what evidence they used to measure progress towards achieving their outcomes. However, there was great variability in the breadth and quality of evidence used.
- Overall, there was considerable progress made in the primary programme amongst Challenge Authorities; with strong foundations being built around leadership, resources and training of the workforce.
- Reflecting the later expansion of the fund into secondary schools, there was less evidence of progress in the secondary programme.
- Whilst there was a clear belief across all stakeholders that the fund had provided leadership opportunities and improved teaching skills, views on progress around parental engagement were more mixed, with schools finding this particularly challenging.
- The three key factors contributing positively towards achieving outcomes were early engagement, collaboration and improvement methodologies.



## What short and medium term outcomes were interventions intending to achieve?

- 8.3. Challenge Authorities outlined the short and medium term outcomes that each work stream sought to achieve. Four Challenge Authorities (out of nine) provided short and medium term outcomes in Year 2.
- 8.4. Broadly, outcomes fell into four main themes:

Figure 8.1: Short and Medium Term Outcomes

Short and medium term outcomes	
Outcomes for teachers	professional development, increased motivation/confidence, planning/reflection, improved collaboration
Outcomes for pupils	increased motivation/confidence/skill, improved wellbeing, improved learning outcomes, increased participation, improved collaboration, improved behaviour
Outcomes for parents	increased confidence/awareness/engagement, increased skills, improved relationships
Outcomes relating to data use by practitioners	increased use of data, increased awareness/confidence in using data

- 8.5. The outline below focuses on short and medium term outcomes reported by authorities relating to interventions focusing explicitly on key features of the Attainment Challenge: Numeracy and Literacy as well as Health and Wellbeing.

## Literacy and Numeracy

8.6. Short term outcomes described around Literacy and Numeracy included:

Figure 8.2: Literacy and Numeracy - Short term outcomes

Literacy and Numeracy – Short term	
Staff knowledge / skills	Intended outcomes around increasing skills in a range of areas were discussed. This covered broader teaching skills, as well as more specific skills (for example in teaching mental agility)
Staff confidence	Commonly discussed by authorities at a general and specific level, for example in supporting numerical development, implementing mental agility, and in pedagogy underpinning literacy instruction.
Use of data	In the short term, an increase in the use of data included using assessments, observations and SIMD information to more effectively target pupils.
Developing pupil engagement	Increased motivation and engagement were discussed in relation to reading, discussing books, mental agility and numerical knowledge.

8.7. Medium term outcomes described around Literacy and Numeracy included:

Figure 8.3: Literacy and Numeracy - Medium term outcomes

Literacy and Numeracy – Medium term	
Pupil learning	Outcomes relating to specific skills (such as an increase in vocabulary or increased fluency of reading) and also more general (long-term) improvements in attainment such as 'improving standardised scores' and 'improvement in attainment in literacy and numeracy'
Use of data	In the medium term, the use of data was most commonly described in relation to monitoring and tracking systems to identify, track and plan specific interventions. There was also mentioned of monitoring progress towards raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap. Different ways of doing so were reported (further explored below and in Chapter 12).

## Health and Wellbeing

8.8. Short and medium term outcomes described around Health and Wellbeing included are described in Figure 8.4 and Figure 8.5.

Figure 8.4: Health and Wellbeing - Short term outcomes

Health and wellbeing – Short term outcomes	
Staff knowledge / skills	Outcomes related to an increased understanding of a range of topics and strategies, including attachment theory, nurture, resilience and development. This included specific staff training. Some authorities mentioned outcomes relating to an increase in the number of staff trained in specific initiatives.
Staff planning	Some reports mentioned outcomes relating to improved planning and evaluation by staff and self-reflection by staff.
Motivation and confidence	Improved motivation was described as a short term outcome in relation to students and teachers. Improved self-confidence related to both staff (through increased confidence in the delivery of programmes) and in some cases of parents.
Communication	Improved interactions were discussed as short term outcomes between children and parents, and between staff and parents.

Figure 8.5: Health and Wellbeing - Medium term outcomes

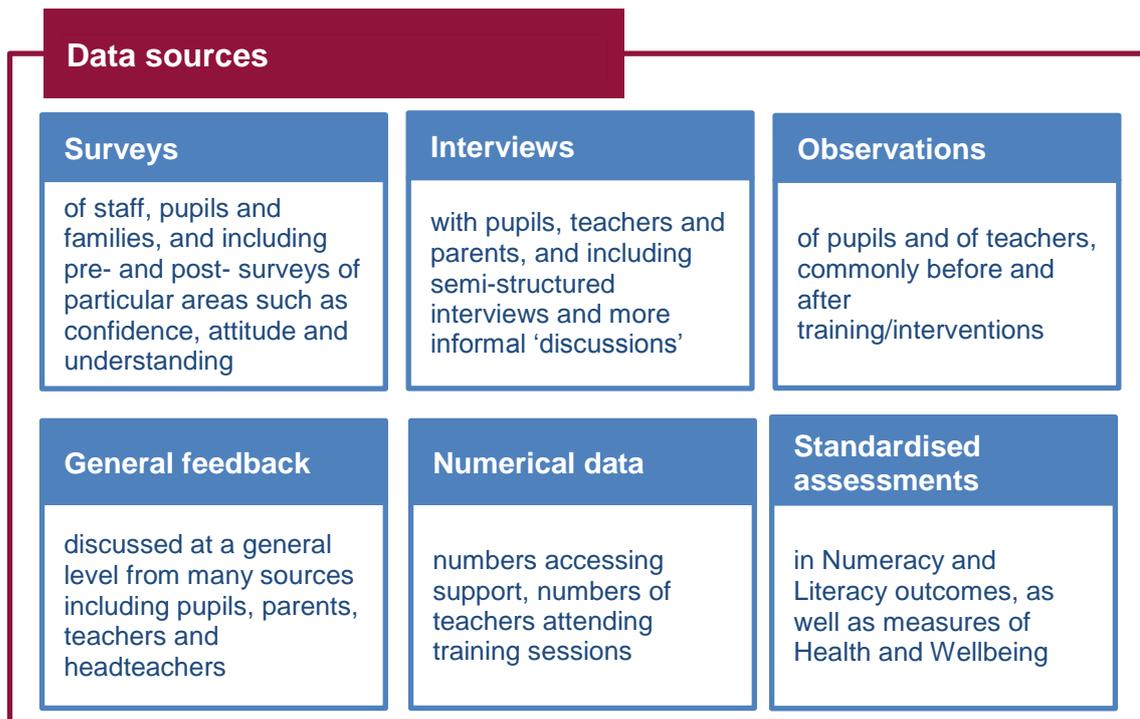
Health and wellbeing – Medium term	
Pupil outcomes	Outcomes for pupils were most commonly in relation to aspects of health and wellbeing, such as self-esteem, emotional self-awareness, social and emotional wellbeing and emotional resilience. Some authorities mentioned the SHANARRI indicators.
Improved relationships / interactions	Interactions related to pupils' relationships with others, including peer relationships, relationships between pupils and their teachers/classes, and relationships between pupils and their families.
Staff knowledge / skills	Authorities discussed increased knowledge and skills in specific approaches (such as nurture), changing practice or pedagogy as a result of increased knowledge (for example in physical and active health), and a more general increased engagement with effective planning.



## What evidence was used to assess the extent to which interventions are achieving their intended outcomes?

- 8.9. For the most part, Challenge Authorities were able to highlight what evidence they used to measure progress towards achieving their outcomes and/or targets. However, there was great variability in the breadth and quality of evidence used across the authorities.
- 8.10. Overall, authorities reported using a range of measures, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Not all authorities collected all of the following, but the main data sources referred to are summarised in Figure 8.6 below.

Figure 8.6: Data sources used to monitor interventions



- 8.11. In the sections that follow, the report describes evidence used to track progress in each of the key areas of the Attainment challenge: Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

### Literacy and Numeracy

- 8.12. Outcomes of interventions focusing on Literacy and Numeracy largely focused on quantitative measures of long-term outcomes

through standardised attainment measurements. In addition, several qualitative measures were mentioned by authorities to measure short and medium term outcomes.

- 8.13. Below are some examples of the methodologies and data sources employed both in the short and the medium term by the range of different local authorities.
- **Short Term:** The most common themes were surveys, interviews and classroom observations. In the measurement of short term outcomes, surveys were commonly reported as measures of change in knowledge/awareness, skills, motivation/engagement and confidence (including training evaluations and 'attitudinal' surveys). Interviews were discussed specifically in relation to outcomes focusing on teachers' confidence and skills, and learners' motivation and skills.
  - **Medium Term:** the most commonly reported measures were attainment data and qualitative measures. Assessments of attainment were often undertaken before and after an intervention. Data sources included questionnaires, focus groups and parent evaluations.

### Health and Wellbeing

- 8.14. In general, a wide variety of measures were reported by authorities to measure outcomes in Health and Wellbeing interventions, perhaps reflecting the diversity of interventions.
- 8.15. The variety of measures used was reflective of the range of Health and Wellbeing interventions, ranging from nurture, to mental health, to physical activity. Broadly, most outcome measures were qualitative in nature, including interviews, focus groups (with staff, pupils and carers), surveys, observations (including analysis of video footage) and self-evaluation measures (such as 'How Nurturing is our School?'). Specific measurement tools varied, with some more common tools being Boxall profiling and resources such as My Class Inventory. In addition, quantitative measures included school statistics (such as school exclusion and attendance rates) and measures of physical activity levels.
- 8.16. Below are some examples of the methodologies and data sources employed both in the short and the medium term by the range of different local authorities.

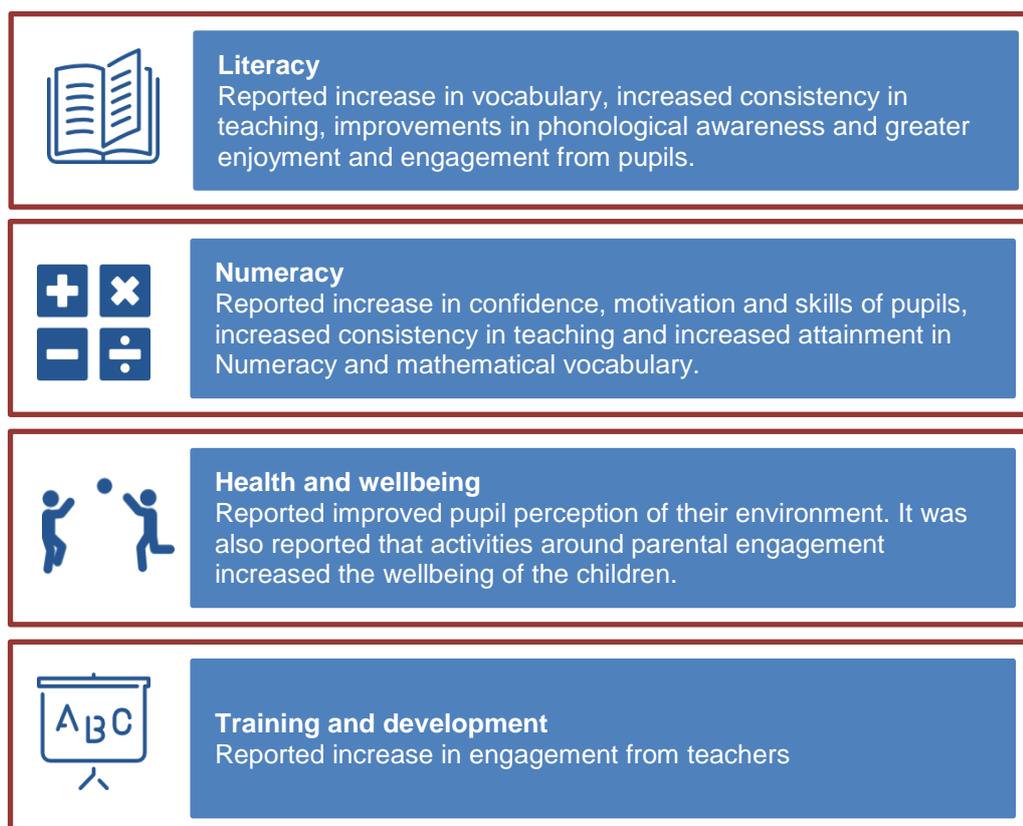
- **Short Term:** Measures of short term outcomes in Health and Wellbeing were similar to measures of Literacy and Numeracy in relation to their use of qualitative data (questionnaires, interviews and observations). In addition, measures described for Health and Wellbeing interventions included three additional themes of evidence of ‘action’, feedback, and Health and Wellbeing assessments. Collecting evidence of action through counts included the numbers of staff accessing training, the number of children identified to receive interventions, and the number accessing services provided through interventions. In addition, authorities mentioned gaining feedback from a number of sources, including external collaborators, schools, headteachers, parents and service users. Assessments included, amongst others, the ‘Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire’, ‘My Class Inventory’ and ‘Boxall’ profiling.
- **Medium Term:** Where authorities provided specific information about measures, three main themes were identified in addition to qualitative measures; feedback, Health and Wellbeing assessments and attainment measurements. ‘Feedback’ was used mostly to measure outcomes relating to pupils, including general improved wellbeing and specific outcomes such as improved relationships, self-esteem and engagement. Assessments of Health and Wellbeing included ‘self-evaluation’ activities by schools and pupil measures. This was done for example using for example Boxall profiling.



### **What does the evidence show on the extent to which each of the different types of interventions achieved their short and medium term outcomes?**

- 8.17. Reported progress towards achieving outcomes varied across authorities. Progress reports submitted differed, with some Challenge Authorities providing more detail than others. The qualitative research also gathered stakeholders’ views of progress towards short and medium term outcomes.
- 8.18. On the whole, progress made in the primary programme was documented to a greater extent. Some highlights of specific individual cases for the primary programme are provided below:

Figure 8.7: Success of interventions in the primary programme



- 8.19. Generally, reports submitted by authorities contained no specific detail as to the size of the reported increases in the primary programme.
- 8.20. Progress in the secondary programme was very limited, as on the whole it was felt by authorities that it was still early days to see any impact. It should be noted that by the end of Year 2, secondary schools had only benefitted from the fund for one school year.
- 8.21. The qualitative research explored stakeholder views on progress towards short and medium term outcomes. Specifically, stakeholders were asked to comment on the extent to which interventions had improved teaching skills, leadership, parental engagement and home learning. Taking each of these in turn:
- Overall, there was a clear belief across the range of stakeholders that interventions had improved **teaching skills**. It had provided access to training, encouraged reflection on skills, increased professional dialogue and improved collaboration.

- Stakeholders agreed that the fund was creating **leadership** opportunities, with opportunities to mentor, network and lead on new approaches.
- The qualitative research saw a more mixed view around progress made in **parental engagement** and home learning. Many stakeholders interviewed indicated that parental engagement was a challenge, and that it continued to be 'work in progress'.

8.22. Many stakeholders interviewed in the qualitative research felt that it would take longer to see and measure tangible outcomes. However, they felt that groundwork (in terms of data use, targeting and understanding the aims of the fund) had been laid in order to achieve outcomes in the coming years.

8.23. Three factors identified by some authorities in progress reports as contributing positively towards achieving the outcomes were:

- early engagement with staff giving strategic responsibility for implementation
- collaboration through clusters and schools; and
- improvement methodologies

## 9. Interventions – long term outcomes

- 9.1. This chapter explores in more detail the extent to which different types of interventions were making progress towards the longer term outcome of improving attainment and Health and Wellbeing, and why.
- 9.2. Specifically, it looks at what evidence was used to track progress, what this evidence said and what factors stakeholders thought contributed/hindered improvements in attainment and Health and Wellbeing.
- 9.3. This chapter therefore focuses on the data and measures employed by local authorities and schools, i.e. how they decided to monitor long term progress towards raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap. Later in Chapter 11, the report shows statistics around attainment and how this compares across authorities and SIMD.

### Chapter Highlights – Outcomes of interventions

- Overall, stakeholders felt that it was too early to comment on long term outcomes, but that initial indications were good. Many spoke of seeing an upward trend in indicators, and positive evidence from small scale projects.
- All authorities were collecting a range of evidence to measure long term outcomes. Each authority chose their own measures. The depth and breadth of data varied across authorities.
- Evidence of progress was clearer for the primary programme than the secondary programme, across both Challenge Authorities and the Schools programme. Many felt that it was too early to see any progress yet in secondary schools.
- Progress towards Literacy and Health and Wellbeing outcomes was generally well described.
- There was less evidence of planned activity in relation to Numeracy, largely due to a prioritisation of Literacy and Health and Wellbeing.
- A wide range of stakeholders stressed that it was important to recognise that a wide range of factors, other than school interventions, were likely to affect attainment.



## What evidence did schools and authorities use to assess the extent to which interventions are improving attainment and Health and Wellbeing?

- 9.4. Challenge Authorities were asked to report on their measures of long-term outcomes of the Attainment Scotland Fund in their progress reports submitted bi-annually.
- 9.5. Authorities indicated that they were collecting a range of evidence to measure long term outcomes. Each authority chose their own measures, and as such there is no consistent picture across the board. The depth and breadth of data varies across authorities.
- 9.6. At least one of the following data sources was collected by Challenge Authorities to assess long term progress in attainment and Health and Wellbeing:



- **Attainment data** – the most commonly reported measure of long-term outcomes was attainment data. Authorities reported measuring attainment through a variety of measures; mostly, standardised Numeracy and Literacy assessments such as Performance Indicators in Primary schools (PIPs), York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC) or New Group Reading Test (NGRT). Many authorities mentioned teacher judgements and the tracking of Curriculum for Excellence levels. Some authorities explicitly stated that they were comparing SIMD data to track progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- **Health and Wellbeing measures** – measures of long-term outcomes in Health and Wellbeing included self-evaluation at school level, health trend data, exclusion/attendance rates, and assessments such as Boxall profiling or tracking of the SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active,

Respected, responsible, Included) indicators. Overall, less in-depth information was provided about measures of long-term changes in Health and Wellbeing compared to changes in attainment.

- **Research collaborations** – a few authorities stated that medium and long-term outcomes were being assessed through research conducted by collaborators within the higher education sector.



## What does local evidence show on the extent to which each of the different types of interventions contributed to improving attainment and Health and Wellbeing?

### Ability to comment on long term outcomes

- 9.7. Many local authority officers (interviewed in the qualitative research) felt that it was still too early to comment on longer term outcomes, but that initial indications were good. Many spoke of seeing an upward trend in indicators and positive evidence from small scale projects.
- 9.8. Some local authorities interviewed were beginning to see the gap between the most and the least deprived decrease, but stressed that this was based on just two years of data. Views on progress were mixed. While some said that they had surpassed their targets, others felt that progress was not happening quickly enough, or that some targets were ‘too big a reach’.
- 9.9. At a school level, 77% of headteachers in Year 1 and, similarly, 78% in Year 2 stated that they had seen an improvement in closing the poverty related gap in Literacy attainment, Numeracy attainment or Health and Wellbeing in their school as a consequence of the Attainment Scotland Fund.
- 9.10. On the other hand, teachers who took part in the qualitative research cautioned that it was too early to comment on long term

*“Turning round kids’ education is like turning round a huge slow ship. We are talking about deeper learning and understanding. You don’t just turn a switch and it happens. It takes time”*  
*(Headteacher, Challenge Authority, Secondary School, Qualitative Research – Year 2)*

progress but many were hopeful that they would see positive outcomes in the longer term. Teachers in secondary schools in particular highlighted that it was very early days for their work supported through the Attainment Scotland Fund, and were less likely to be able to comment on outcomes in any detail.

## Outcomes across a range of areas

- 9.11. This section explores teachers' views on progress towards outcomes around Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. This is based on the evidence collected through the qualitative research. A full detailed analysis of the qualitative research can be found in Chapter 6 of Appendix A. Below is a summary of key findings.
- 9.12. Overall, teachers and local authority officers were generally more able to comment on outcomes around Literacy than Numeracy. There was less evidence on outcomes in relation to Numeracy, largely because work in this area had started later.
- 9.13. Progress towards Health and Wellbeing was highlighted as challenging to measure, but both teachers and local authority officers were able to point to signs of positive progress.

## Impact on Literacy

- 9.14. Teachers commenting on outcomes in qualitative interviews reported that they had seen an improvement in Literacy attainment through evidence from standardised assessments and reading scores, as well as observations of increasing Literacy skills.
- 9.15. Most of the evidence related to younger age groups, i.e. those part of the 'primary programme'. As seen in previous chapters, the secondary programme was only introduced in Year 2; and hence data and evidence on impact was more limited.
- 9.16. There was variation in the way that schools measured progress. Some examples collected through the qualitative research include:

*Example: "In one school, baseline testing for P3, 4 and 5 showed an improvement of 25% in Literacy. The school had delivered interventions to target groups and had 'control groups' in order to better measure the impact of the intervention. It also benchmarked itself against other schools".*

*Example: "One school has used the 'Read to Self' approach with P5 pupils. It began to see tremendous increases in reading age over a very short space of time. It was rolled out to the whole school, and now some pupils are making 36 months progress over 12 months".*

## Impact on Numeracy

- 9.17. Both at a local authority level and school level there was less mention of progress in relation to Numeracy.
- 9.18. A few authorities stated that they had started work around Numeracy later in the programme, and as such there was limited evidence to report on.
- 9.19. While most teachers interviewed in the qualitative research felt that their Numeracy approaches were going well, they also had less evidence about outcomes in this area. As with Literacy, progress in Numeracy was reported in varying ways.

*Example: In one school, through the Number Talks programme teachers are seeing that pupils have an increased ability to talk about maths, and to talk about their strategies for answering questions and problem solving.*

*[Qualitative Research – Interviews with Headteachers / Teachers – Year 2]*

## Impact on Health and Wellbeing

- 9.20. Authorities and schools found progress around Health and Wellbeing harder to measure. However, some saw positive outcomes from individual interventions.
- 9.21. In the headteacher survey (Year 2), respondents discussed Health and Wellbeing initiatives leading to positive outcomes such as children developing 'emotional Literacy' and becoming more ready to learn. Headteachers reported that a focus on Health and Wellbeing was important for increasing pupils' readiness for the transition between primary and secondary schools.
- 9.22. Ways of measuring progress varied by local authority and school. Reported progress in Health and Wellbeing included, fewer exclusions from schools, better punctuality; improvements in behaviour, and increased resilience or improvements in relation to SHANARRI indicators. Some examples of the changes reported by teachers who participated in the qualitative research are outlined overleaf:

*Example: In one school, teachers evaluate Health and Wellbeing three times a year using SHANARRI indicators. Pupils self-evaluate using traffic lights to indicate how they are feeling each day. Teachers pick up on any amber or red lights, and meet with parents to address any issues. Teachers have noticed a change from red to amber, which is going in the right direction.*

*Example: In one school, the nurture group had helped some pupils return to the main class. They were now exploring how they transition pupils back into the main class full time.*

*Example: One nursery was beginning to see changes as children move into primary one. The support that they had provided to parents was already having a positive impact, for example in relation to regular routines and healthy eating.*

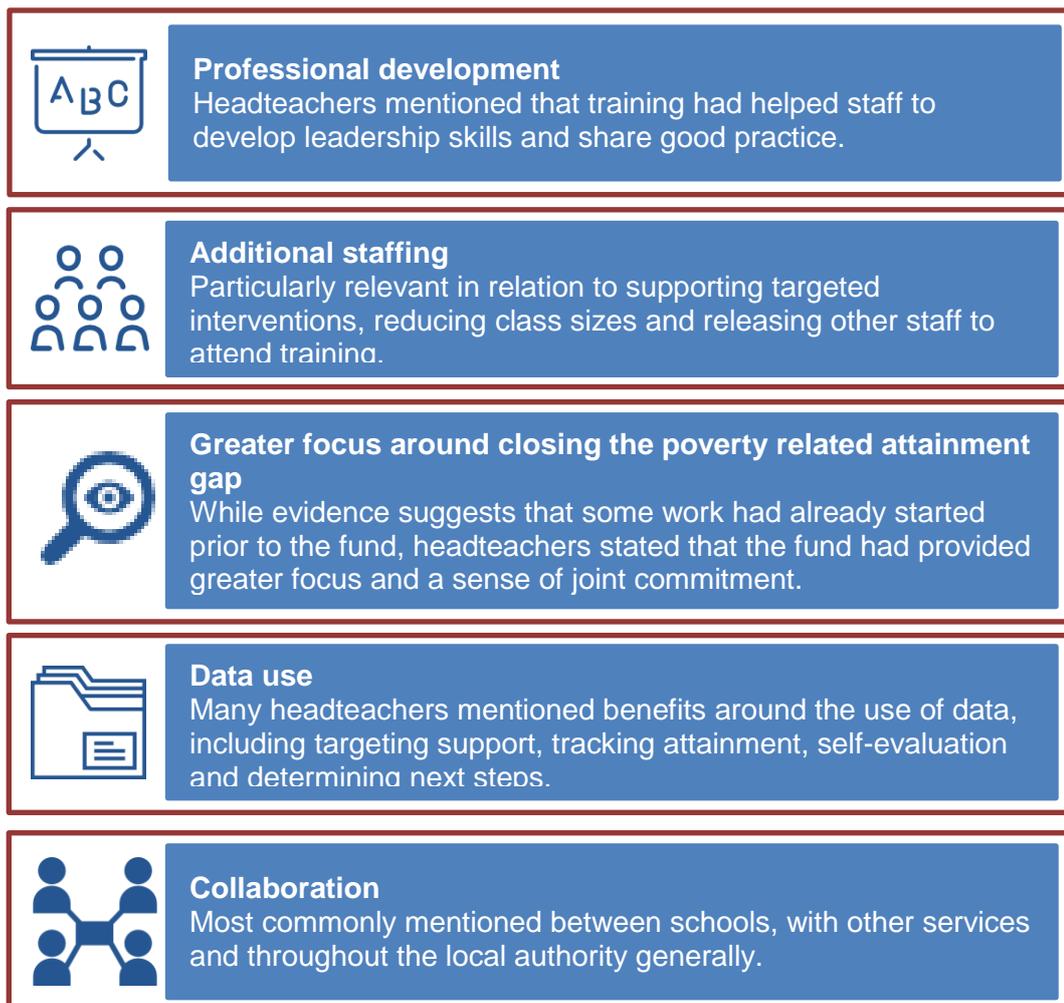
*[Qualitative Research – Interviews with Headteachers / Teachers – Year 2]*



## Why do school and local authority stakeholders think certain interventions worked well (or not) in improving attainment and Health and Wellbeing?

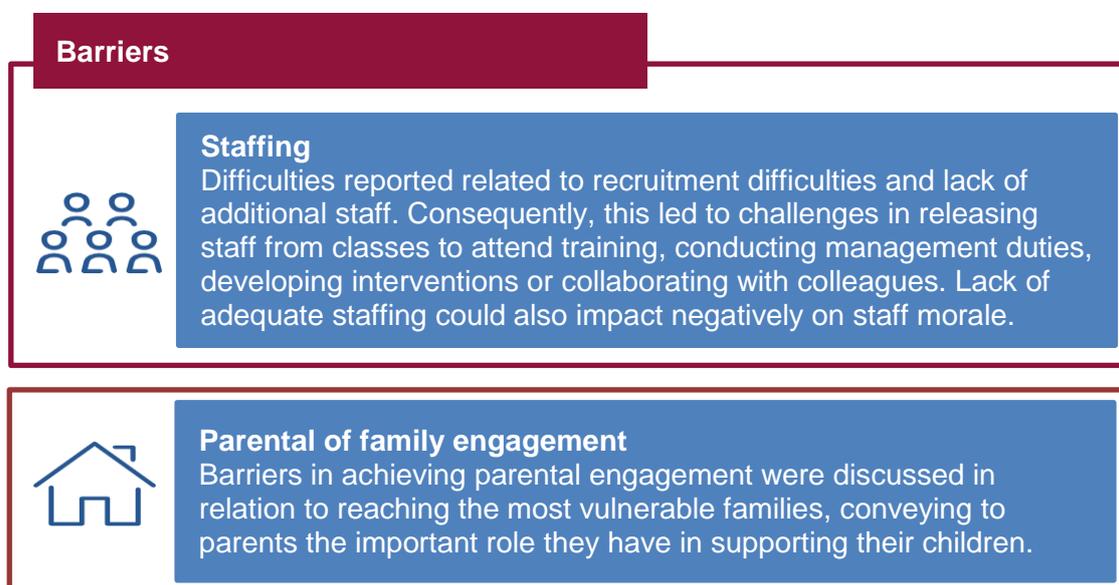
- 9.23. The majority of headteachers (77% in Year 1 and 78% in Year 2) indicated that there had been improvement in attainment and Health and Wellbeing as a result of the fund. Furthermore, nearly all headteachers (97% in Year 2), expected to see an improvement in attainment and Health and Wellbeing in the coming five years as a result of the fund.
- 9.24. Those who indicated that they had seen improvements or expected to see improvements as a result of the funding provided information about the factors that were helping interventions to succeed. The responses could be grouped into five key themes, shown in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1: Key factors helping interventions to succeed, headteachers survey



9.25. The most commonly perceived barriers by headteachers to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap were:

Figure 9.2: Key barriers to achieving long term outcomes, headteachers survey



9.26. There were also a few less frequently mentioned barriers. A few respondents indicated that there were issues around insufficient funding, resources and time. For example, they reported that there was a lack of funding for specific projects. A few respondents also discussed local authority budget cuts. In Year 2, respondents reported that there were difficulties in finding appropriate space and accessing services, particularly for those in rural areas.

## 10. Sustainability

10.1. This chapter explores the extent to which stakeholders believed the impact of the Attainment Scotland Fund could be sustained beyond the years of funding. Specifically, it explores two key questions:

- To what extent can interventions continue to exist beyond the years of funding?
- To what extent can progress achieved by the interventions be maintained beyond the years of funding?

### Chapter Highlights – Sustainability

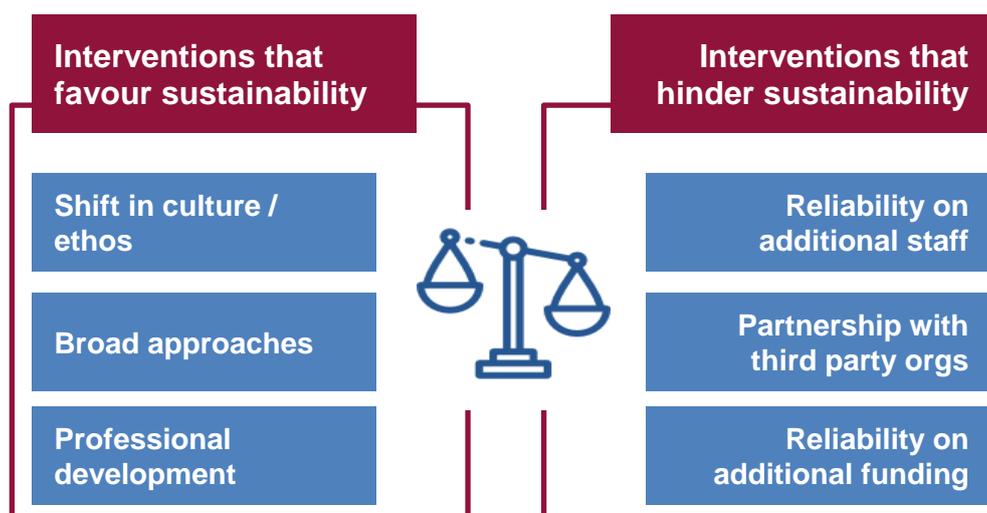
- Whilst stakeholders were positive about the sustainability of the impact of the fund, they also expressed some reasons to be cautious.
- Confidence in the sustainability of improvement in the poverty related attainment gap increased from Year 1 to Year 2.
- Overall, confidence in sustainability seemed to be linked to a belief that the fund had created significant change in practice and culture. Improved teaching, leadership and data skills and an increased awareness of the impact of poverty on attainment were all acknowledged to have long lasting impact.
- There was widespread belief that interventions or approaches relying on additional resources would not be sustainable without funding.
- Sustaining improvement within the context of local cuts and possible withdrawal of posts after the funding was a key challenge.



## To what extent can interventions continue to exist beyond the years of funding?

- 10.2. Overall, there was some evidence of confidence that the interventions implemented as a result of the Attainment Scotland Fund would continue to exist beyond the years of funding. This was specifically the case amongst teachers and Challenge Authorities.
- In the qualitative research, most **teachers** interviewed said that they thought their work would be sustainable.
  - **Challenge Authorities** were also confident about the sustainability of their approaches. They mentioned that their strategic plans were designed to ensure long term sustainability.
- 10.3. Information about the sustainability of interventions was gained from interviews with teachers, local authorities and attainment advisors who took part in the qualitative research. Responses to the headteacher survey also provided evidence about the perceived sustainability of the interventions.
- 10.4. This section describes the interventions that were perceived as most likely to continue and those that were perceived as least likely to continue without ongoing support from the Attainment Scotland Fund. It explains in detail what was seen as favouring and hindering sustainability as shown in Figure 10.1.

Figure 10.1: Interventions that favour and hinder sustainability



### **Sustainable interventions**

- 10.5. Interventions which produced a wider shift in culture, ethos or practice were perceived as those most likely to continue beyond the years of the fund.
- 10.6. Teachers interviewed in the qualitative research mentioned that approaches for improving Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing developed through the Attainment Scotland Fund would continue to be used.
- 10.7. Whilst there was limited evidence overall about the specific interventions that were more likely to be sustainable, the evidence suggested that it was the legacy of the approach that would have long lasting impact. For example, the up-skilling of teachers through training provided as a result of the funding would have long term benefits. This is discussed in more detail in the second section of this chapter.

### **Unsustainable interventions**

- 10.8. Interventions requiring additional staff were noted as approaches which would not be sustainable. Some of the teachers interviewed in the qualitative research mentioned that smaller class sizes, group work and specialist support (e.g. counsellors) all had a significant impact on closing the attainment gap yet were least likely to be sustained beyond the years of the Attainment Scotland Fund.
- 10.9. Teachers in the qualitative research and responses to the headteacher survey highlighted a concern that collaborative work with third sector organisations would be difficult to continue when funding ceased.
- 10.10. Attainment Advisors interviewed in the qualitative research similarly mentioned that interventions reliant on additional funding were less likely to be sustainable.
- 10.11. Attainment Advisors also felt that some interventions that had particular scope for producing long term benefits would be difficult to maintain without some form of ongoing support.



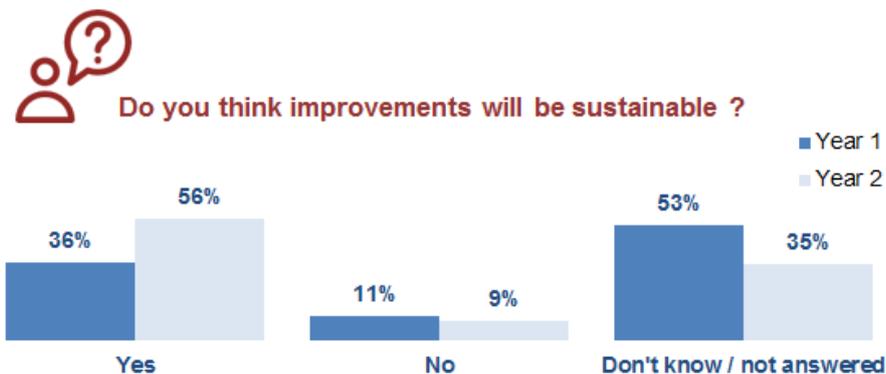
## To what extent can progress achieved by the interventions be maintained beyond the years of funding?

- 10.12. Overall, there were mixed views on the potential sustainability of improvement in the poverty related attainment gap beyond the life of the fund. Whilst there was widespread confidence that improvement could be maintained, there was also widespread doubt about this.
- 10.13. Positively, however, confidence in the sustainability of progress increased over time, from the first to the second year.
- 10.14. Data was collected from the headteacher survey, the local authority mini-survey, progress reports and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders involved in the qualitative research.
- 10.15. This section of the report begins by describing how key stakeholders viewed the sustainability of improvements before going on to discuss what factors supported or hindered sustained progress.

### Sustainability of improvements

- 10.16. Overall, the evidence suggested that both schools and local authorities were reasonably confident that improvements would be sustainable. Confidence in the sustainability of improvements increased amongst headteachers from the first to the second year of the fund.

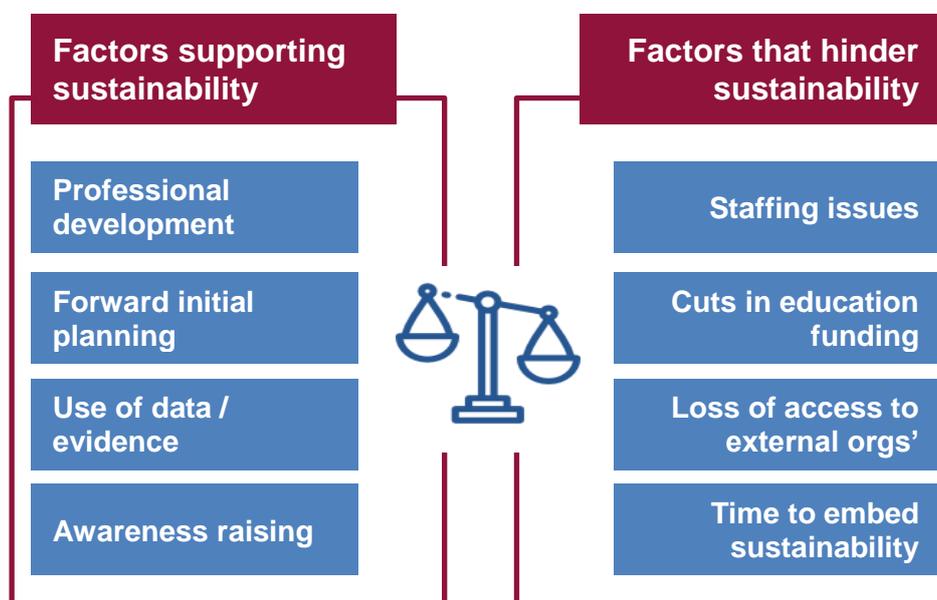
Figure 10.2: Sustainability of improvements, headteacher survey



Base: All headteachers in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 1: 139; Year 2: 207)

- 10.17. Confidence in the sustainability of improvement in the poverty related attainment gap increased from 36% in Year 1 to 56% in Year 2. There was some uncertainty as to whether improvements will be sustainable, though this decreased over time. Around half (49%) in Year 1 and under a third (31%) in Year 2 were unsure about the sustainability of the improvements achieved.
- 10.18. Similarly, in Year 1, all seven Challenge Authorities responding to the local authority mini survey reported that they thought the improvements would be sustainable beyond the years of funding.
- 10.19. Evidence was also collected on factors that could potentially support and hinder sustainability. Figure 10.3 depicts a summary of key findings and the paragraphs that follow provide further detail.

**Figure 10.3: Key factors that support and hinder sustainability**



### **Sustainability of improvements – Successes**

- 10.20. Overall, schools and local authorities believed in the sustainability of their improvements for a number of reasons. These included:
- The long-lasting impact of professional development.
  - Improved approach to the use of data
  - Raising awareness about the impact of poverty.
  - Sustainability had been a key part of initial planning.

- 10.21. One of the most common reasons across all data sources for expecting improvements to be sustainable was due to the **impact of professional development**.
- 10.22. Specifically, training that involved the development of data, leadership, teaching or self-evaluation skills were believed to have a positive impact on preserving progress. Overall, headteachers seem to see skills which allow for more effective governance of the schools as those with the most decisive impact on sustainability.
- 10.23. In addition, the change in practice, including increased collaboration and professional dialogue, brought about as a result of the fund was believed to be sustainable after funding ceased. For example, in Year 2 of the headteacher survey, 16% of headteachers explicitly mentioned increased collaboration as a long-lasting consequence of the fund and respondents indicated that there was likely to be a continued enthusiasm for partnerships with parents, third sector and other schools.
- 10.24. There was also a belief that the **use of data** to underpin the Attainment Scotland work would support sustainability. Teachers interviewed in the qualitative research, who were positive about the ability to maintain progress, felt this partly because there had been an improvement in the use of data. Local authority progress reports and responses to the headteacher survey also suggested that using evidence was a key part of sustained improvement.
- 10.25. More specifically, headteachers participating in Year 2 of the survey suggested that successful use of data improves the ability of the school to reshape its practice based on evidence, and improves the awareness of the teachers by making them realise the impact that poverty has on the pupils at their schools.
- 10.26. Across all data sources, there was evidence that confidence in sustainability was linked to an **increased awareness and understanding of the attainment gap**. In Year 2 of the headteacher survey, nearly a third of those who said their improvements were sustainable indicated that this was due to an improved understanding of inequality.
- 10.27. Those who believed in the sustainability of improvements also seemed to have made efforts to embed the commitments of the Attainment Challenge into their **long term planning approach**. Progress reports indicated that local authorities were strongly committed to achieving sustainability.

- 10.28. Headteachers responding to the online survey in Year 1 also mentioned that sustainability had been built into their local planning. However, only a few headteachers in Year 2 of the survey explicitly mentioned embedding sustainability into strategic planning. Instead, they emphasised their investment in teachers' self-development with an understanding that staff who participated in implementing the fund can continue to use their expertise successfully even beyond the years of the funding.
- 10.29. Those responding to the local authority survey mentioned a commitment to continue posts created as part of the Attainment Challenge beyond the years of the fund. However, the uncertainty surrounding the continuation of these posts remained a concern for headteachers, as shown in the next section.

### **Sustainability of improvements – Challenges**

- 10.30. Whilst there was widespread confidence that improvements would be maintained beyond the years of the fund, stakeholders expressed some reasons to be cautious about sustainability.
- 10.31. For headteachers and local authorities who were unsure about the sustainability of improvements, the following reasons were mentioned and these are discussed in more detail below:
- Staffing levels
  - Local cuts in education funding
  - Poverty and other systemic issues with a negative impact on the local communities.
  - Time to embed sustainability
- 10.32. In Year 1 and 2 of the headteacher survey, the potential withdrawal of posts or reduction in staffing levels after the Attainment Scotland Fund was the most common reason reported for being concerned about the long term sustainability of progress.
- 10.33. In Year 2 of the survey, 55% of headteachers indicated that any reduction of staff was a challenge to sustainability. More specifically, they reported that staff reductions would have detrimental consequences on opportunities to attend training, motivation of staff and the impact of leadership roles.
- 10.34. Qualitative interviews with authorities showed that authorities felt that funded posts had been critical in creating change and

therefore if these posts were discontinued when funding ceased then this would impact negatively on the progress made.

- 10.35. Teachers interviewed in the qualitative research and those responding to the headteacher survey discussed the challenges of sustainability within the context of cuts in education funding, and cuts to wider support services. While this was a prominent theme in Year 1 of the headteacher survey, in Year 2 it was only mentioned by 7% of respondents.
- 10.36. Recognition that the poverty related attainment gap was influenced by wider factors outside of education was another reason for being unsure whether improvements would be sustainable. Teachers and local authorities emphasised that education alone was not sufficient to ensure sustainable change. In Year 2, 13% of headteachers participating in the online survey focused on the wider issues within the community such as poverty, unaddressed mental health problems, addiction, and insufficient parental engagement
- 10.37. Finally, local authorities responding to the online survey said that it would take time to create any real sustained impact from the work of the Attainment Scotland Fund. Therefore, whilst progress may have been achieved, it would still take time to embed the progress and sustain it long term.

## 11. Progress towards high level outcomes

- 11.1. This chapter explores to what extent the fund contributed to an improvement in attainment and Health and Wellbeing, and a reduction of the gap between pupils from the most and least deprived areas.

### Chapter Highlights – Long Term Outcomes

- Current measures of attainment provide a snapshot of attainment levels in the first two years of the fund. The next report will allow us to measure attainment over time.
- Whilst Challenge Authorities all had high levels of deprivation, levels of attainment within authorities and across different measures varied.
- Across all attainment and Health and Wellbeing measures, pupils from the least deprived areas consistently outperformed pupils from the most deprived areas.

#### Literacy and Numeracy attainment

- At primary level, the attainment gap was larger in Literacy than in Numeracy. At secondary level however, the attainment gap was larger in Numeracy than in Literacy.
- At primary and secondary level, the attainment gap within Challenge Authorities was smaller than the attainment gap at both national level and within non-Challenge Authorities.
- Overall, Challenge Authorities reported a higher percentage of primary and secondary pupils from the most deprived areas achieving expected levels compared to average at national level and within non-Challenge Authorities.

#### Health and wellbeing

- Those living in the least deprived areas consistently recorded higher levels than those living in the most deprived areas.
- The proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment increased over time, including in six out of the nine Challenge Authorities. Overall, the poverty related gap reduced by 1.3 percentage points in 2017 (vs 2016).



## To what extent did overall Numeracy and Literacy attainment increase?

11.2. The measures used to assess Literacy and Numeracy attainment have largely been taken from the [2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#). The plan sets out a basket of key measures and sub measures to assess progress. For Literacy and Numeracy these are:

Figure 11.1: Key measures of attainment

Attainment – Key measures		
<b>Literacy</b> The proportion of children achieving expected levels	Primary (P1, P4, P7 combined)	Achievement of CfE Levels (ACEL) – Scottish Government
<b>Numeracy</b> The proportion of children achieving expected levels	Secondary (S3)	
<b>Qualifications</b> The proportion of school leavers receiving 1 or more award at level 5 The proportion of school leavers receiving 1 or more award at level 6	School Leavers	Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) – Scottish Government
<b>Participation measure</b> The proportion participating in education, training or employment	Age 16-19 cohort	Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

Figure 11.2: Sub-measures of attainment

Attainment – Sub measures		
<b>Literacy</b> The proportion of children achieving expected levels	Primary: P1 P4 P7	Achievement of CfE Levels (ACEL) – Scottish Government
<b>Numeracy</b> The proportion of children achieving expected levels		

- 11.3. The current data available provides a snapshot of attainment levels. It is expected that as data collection methods continue to take place, data that tracks progress over the life of the fund should be available.
- 11.4. Additionally, this section also draws on data from the New Group Reading Test (NGRT) which described the reading performance of P4 and P7 pupils in the participating Challenge Authorities during the first two years of the fund.
- 11.5. Overall, levels of Numeracy and Literacy attainment varied between local authorities. Some Challenge Authorities performed better or worse than Scotland as a whole. This varied by measures with no clear pattern of performance.
- 11.6. Literacy attainment as measured by NGRT remained largely stable over the two years it was tracked. There was evidence of some improvement in reading attainment for P7 pupils in Dundee and both P4 and P7 pupils in North Ayrshire.

## Primary Attainment

- 11.7. This section describes the performance of P1, P4 and P7 pupils in three aspects of Literacy (Reading, Writing and Listening & Talking) and Numeracy.
- 11.8. Literacy levels have been measured using Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) for year 2016/17, that is Year 2 of the fund. Data from the NGRT also gives insight into the Reading performance of pupils at the primary level, and how this changed from Year 1 (2015/16) to Year 2 (2016/17).
- 11.9. ACEL data is provided for each of the Challenge Authorities. **However, ACEL 2016/17 results continue to be data under development and local authority comparisons should not be made without full knowledge of local authorities' approach to assessment.**
- 11.10. Across P1, P4 and P7, there was a higher percentage of pupils achieving expected levels for Listening and Talking compared to Reading, Writing and Numeracy. The percentage of pupils achieving the CfE expected levels was lowest for Writing.

11.11. Levels of attainment at the primary level varied across Challenge Authorities. Some reported a higher percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels compared to Scotland as a whole.

11.12. The paragraphs that follow provide greater detail into each of the curriculum organisers taking each in turn: Reading, Writing, Listening & Talking and Numeracy.



### Primary – English Reading

11.13. There was variation between Local Authorities in levels of Reading attainment. Across all primary stages, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde reported a higher percentage of pupils achieving expected Reading levels compared to Scotland as a whole.

11.14. Table 11.1 shows the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels in Reading for their relevant stage across Scotland and in each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.1: Percentage of pupils achieving expected levels for Reading for their relevant stage (P1, P4, P7) (ACEL, 2016/17) – Challenge Authorities**

Local Authority	P1 (%)	P4 (%)	P7 (%)
Clackmannanshire	81	65	70
Dundee	78	73	73
East Ayrshire	80	67	64
Glasgow	77	76	76
Inverclyde	85	77	78
North Ayrshire	81	75	76
North Lanarkshire	77	72	74
Renfrewshire	84	80	80
West Dunbartonshire	78	76	67
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>76</b>

11.15. NGRT data provides further insight into the Reading performance of P4 and P7 pupils. Wave 1 took place in 2016 and included schools in the seven Challenge Authorities benefitting from the fund at that time. Wave 2 took place in 2017 and included eight (of the nine) authorities.

11.16. Overall, results recorded in 2017 were consistent with the baseline year (2016). P7 pupils' score was in line with what would be expected for their age. The average score of P4 pupils was statistically significantly lower than the expected score for their age (score of 95 compared to the standard age score of 100).

11.17. Table 11.2 shows the mean score of all participating P4 and P7 pupils in both years of the test.

**Table 11.2: NGRT mean score – Total (all participating Challenge Authorities) – Year 1 and Year 2**

	Year 1 (2016)	Year 2 (2017)
<b>P4 mean score</b>	95	95
<b>P7 mean score</b>	99	100

11.18. There were statistically significant differences between local authorities. During Year 2, in both P7 and P4, pupils in West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire and North Ayrshire continued to record the highest scores. Full details by local authority can be found in Table 11.3 below.

**Table 11.3: NGRT mean scores by Challenge Authority – Year 1 and Year 2**

Local Authority	P4 mean score		P7 mean score	
	Year 1 (2016)	Year 2 (2017)	Year 1 (2016)	Year 2 (2017)
Clackmannanshire	93.1	93.8	98.5	99.2
Dundee	93.9	93.8	96.8	98.2
East Ayrshire		94.9		100.1
Glasgow	94.4		98.4	
Inverclyde	96.5	97.3	100.7	100.7
North Ayrshire	94.9	96.2	99.2	100.5

North Lanarkshire	95.0	94.8	100.0	99.6
Renfrewshire		93.8		100.8
West Dunbartonshire	96.5	97.0	101.5	102.1



### Primary - English Writing

11.19. Overall, Writing recorded the lowest levels compared to Reading, Listening and Talking and Numeracy.

11.20. As with Reading, there was variation in Writing across Challenge Authorities. Renfrewshire and Inverclyde reported a higher percentage of pupils across all primary stages achieving expected levels in Writing compared to Scotland as a whole.

11.21. Further detail is provided below. Table 11.4 shows the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels in Writing for their relevant stage across Scotland and for each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.4: Percentage of pupils achieving expected levels for Writing (ACEL, 2016/17)**

Local Authority	P1 (%)	P4 (%)	P7 (%)
Clackmannanshire	77	58	49
Dundee	73	66	62
East Ayrshire	76	62	59
Glasgow	75	70	69
Inverclyde	83	73	69
North Ayrshire	78	69	69
North Lanarkshire	75	67	68
Renfrewshire	82	73	71
West Dunbartonshire	69	70	59
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>69</b>

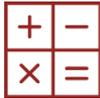


## Primary – English Listening and Talking

- 11.22. The data regarding Listening and Talking varied, both between Challenge Authorities, and within Challenge Authorities across the primary stages.
- 11.23. Renfrewshire and Inverclyde reported a higher percentage of pupils achieving expected levels for Listening and Talking across all primary stages. Other local authorities also performed particularly well when compared to Scotland as a whole in different primary stages.
- 11.24. Table 11.5 shows the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels for Listening and Talking across Scotland and in each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.5: Percentage of pupils achieving expected levels for Listening and Talking (ACEL, 2016/17)**

Local Authority	P1 (%)	P4 (%)	P7 (%)
Clackmannanshire	86	76	75
Dundee	87	82	77
East Ayrshire	85	78	70
Glasgow	83	83	81
Inverclyde	87	88	84
North Ayrshire	88	82	83
North Lanarkshire	82	79	78
Renfrewshire	91	88	86
West Dunbartonshire	84	83	75
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>81</b>



## Primary – Numeracy

- 11.25. Similar to the other curriculum organisers, performance in Numeracy varied between and within Challenge Authorities.
- 11.26. Renfrewshire reported the highest proportion of pupils achieving expected levels for Numeracy across all primary stages.
- 11.27. Some local authorities performed particularly well when compared to Scotland as a whole. In particular, Inverclyde, Glasgow and North Ayrshire. Inverclyde reported a higher percentage of P4 and P7 pupils achieving expected Numeracy levels. Glasgow and North Ayrshire also reported higher percentage of P7 pupils achieving expected Numeracy levels compared to national average.
- 11.28. Table 11.6 shows the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels for Numeracy across Scotland and in each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.6: Percentage of pupils achieving expected levels for Numeracy (ACEL, 2016/17)**

Local Authority	P1 (%)	P4 (%)	P7 (%)
Clackmannanshire	79	60	54
Dundee	79	70	60
East Ayrshire	81	63	57
Glasgow	83	75	72
Inverclyde	88	74	74
North Ayrshire	83	75	73
North Lanarkshire	82	72	68
Renfrewshire	88	76	74
West Dunbartonshire	81	71	63
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>70</b>

## Secondary Attainment

11.29. This section describes Literacy and Numeracy performance of S3 pupils in 2016/17. It provides information on the proportion of pupils who achieved Third Level or better.

11.30. Attainment was measured using ACEL. In order to understand performance across Challenge Authorities, local data has been provided. **However, ACEL 2016/17 results continue to be data under development and Local authorities comparisons should not be made without full knowledge of Local authorities' approach to assessment.**

11.31. In secondary schools, the percentage of pupils achieving Third Level or better was highest for Listening and Talking and lowest for Numeracy. There was variation within Challenge Authorities:

- North Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire reported a higher percentage of S3 pupils achieving minimum expected levels compared to Scotland as a whole across all four curriculum organisers.
- Dundee and West Dunbartonshire reported a higher percentage of S3 pupils achieving minimum expected levels compared to Scotland for all curriculum organisers, except for Numeracy.

11.32. Table 11.7 shows the percentage of S3 pupils that achieved Third level or better across Scotland, and by Challenge Authority.

**Table 11.7: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third level or better (ACEL, 2016/17)**

Local Authority	Reading (%)	Writing (%)	Listening & Talking (%)	Numeracy (%)
Clackmannanshire	84	82	87	64
Dundee	92	91	92	84
East Ayrshire	86	85	88	85
Glasgow	87	85	89	86
Inverclyde	90	89	92	82
North Ayrshire	89	88	88	81

North Lanarkshire	94	93	95	93
Renfrewshire	94	93	94	93
West Dunbartonshire	91	91	95	84
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>88</b>



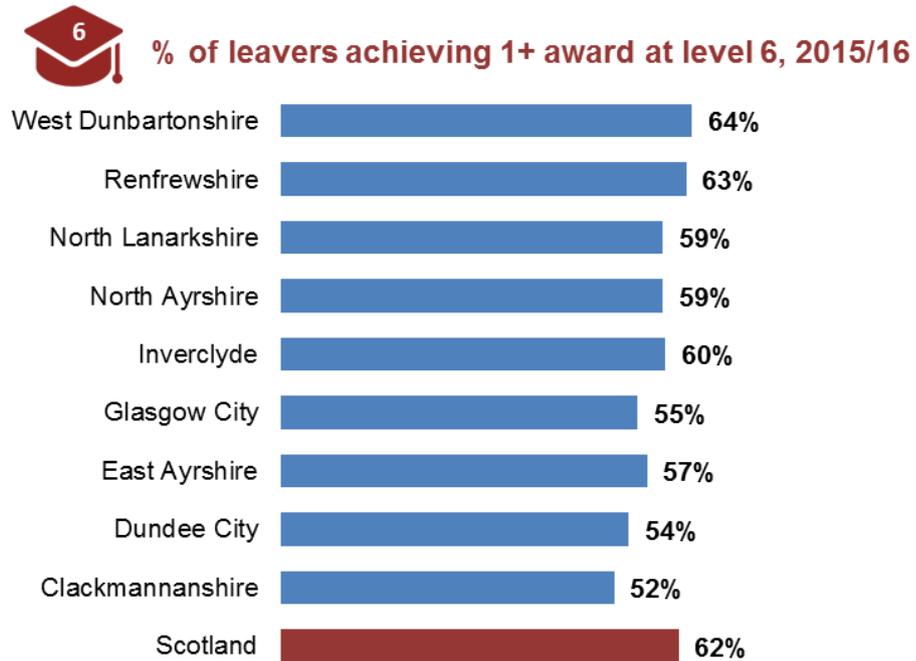
## Senior Phase Attainment

- 11.33. This section reports on the percentage of school leavers achieving awards by SCQF Levels in year 2015/16, prior to the expansion of the Attainment Scotland Fund to the secondary stage. Therefore, it provides a picture of performance prior to the fund being introduced.
- 11.34. Overall, 86% of school leavers achieved 1+ award at SCQF Level 5 and 62% at Level 6 in Scotland 2015/16. There were variations between Challenge Authorities.
- 11.35. At SCQF Level 5, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire had the highest percentage of school leavers achieving at least one award in 2015/16; and were above the level achieved in Scotland as a whole.
- 11.36. At SCQF Level 6, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire had the highest percentage of school leavers achieving at least one award in 2015/16 and were above the level achieved in Scotland as a whole. Further detail is provided below. Figure 11.3 and Figure 11.4 show the percentage of school leavers achieving one or more awards at Level 5 and Level 6 across Scotland, and by Challenge Authority.

Figure 11.3: Percentage of school leavers achieving 1+ award at SCQF Level 5, 2015/16



Figure 11.4: Percentage of school leavers achieving 1+ award at SCQF Level 6, 2015/16





## To what extent was there a reduction in the attainment gap amongst pupils?

- 11.37. The consultation on measuring the attainment gap led to the decision to use a basket of 11 key measures and 15 sub measures. The measures reported in this section are in line with the finalised [NIF improvement plan](#). These are:
- **Primary level:** the difference between the percentage of primary pupils (P1, P4, P7 combined) from the 20% most and least deprived areas achieving expected levels, as measured by ACEL.
  - **Secondary level:** the difference between the percentage of S3 pupils from the 20% most and least deprived areas achieving Third Level or better as measured by ACEL.
  - **Senior phase:** the difference between the percentage of school leavers from the 20% most and least deprived areas gaining one or more awards at SCQF Level 5 and 6.
- 11.38. In addition, evidence from the NGRT is included in this interim report to describe the attainment gap in Reading performance for Challenge Authorities during the first two years of the fund.
- 11.39. Overall, there was a gap recorded between those pupils living in the most and the least deprived areas of Scotland. The gap increased between primary and secondary students.
- 11.40. Overall, the attainment gap within the Challenge Authorities varied. Some had a larger, some had a smaller, and some had a similar attainment gap to that at national level.
- 11.41. The ACEL data for primary and secondary stages revealed that the attainment gap in Challenge Authorities was smaller than both the attainment gap at national level and in non-Challenge Authorities.
- 11.42. Challenge Authorities generally reported a higher percentage of primary and secondary pupils from the 20% most deprived areas achieving expected curriculum levels compared to non-Challenge Authorities and Scotland as a whole.
- 11.43. At Senior Phase, the attainment gap in Challenge Authorities was similar to the attainment gap at national level but smaller than for non-Challenge Authorities.

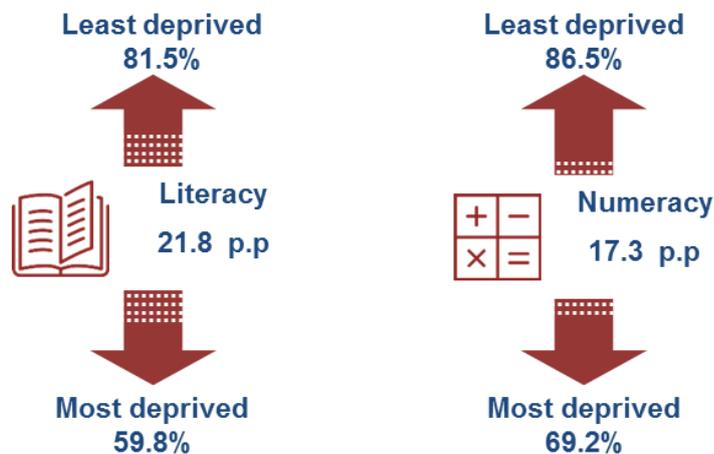


## Primary Attainment Gap

- 11.44. To consider attainment by levels of deprivation, a combined score for pupils at Primary 1, 4 and 7 is reported. For Literacy in particular, the attainment gap is measured by combining scores across three curriculum organisers (Reading, Writing and Listening & Talking). This is in line with the agreed key measures as part of the National Improvement Framework.
- 11.45. Overall, the attainment gap in Scotland for primary pupils was larger in Literacy (21.8 percentage points) than it was in Numeracy (17.3 percentage points).
- 11.46. A higher proportion of primary pupils from the least deprived areas of Scotland achieved expected levels in both Literacy and Numeracy than pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas. Details shown in Figure 11.5.

Figure 11.5: Percentage and percentage points gap of primary pupils achieving expected levels, by deprivation (ACEL 2016/17)

### Primary attainment gap between the 20% most deprived areas and the 20% least deprived areas - Scotland



Note: p.p stands for percentage point

- 11.47. The paragraphs that follow provide greater detail at a local-authority level in the attainment gap in Literacy and Numeracy for both primaries and secondaries.

## Primary Attainment Gap – Literacy

11.48. Literacy levels at primary level for children from the 20% most and least deprived areas is defined by combining scores across three curriculum organisers (Reading, Writing, Listening & Talking).

11.49. There are differences in the Literacy attainment gap between Challenge Authorities. When compared to Scotland:

- One authority had a **larger** attainment gap (East Ayrshire)
- Three authorities performed **similarly** to the national average (Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Glasgow)
- The other five authorities had a **smaller** attainment gap

11.50. The Challenge Authorities reporting a higher percentage of pupils from the most deprived areas achieving expected levels were also the authorities that reported a higher percentage of pupils from least deprived areas achieving expected levels.

11.51. Further detail on the attainment gap by each Challenge Authority can be found in Table 11.8 below.

**Table 11.8: Percentage of Primary Pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy, by Challenge Authority and deprivation (ACEL 2016/17)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	56.8	48.2	66.1	17.9
Dundee	64.6	58.6	75.0	16.4
East Ayrshire	61.3	50.1	77.0	26.9
Glasgow	68.4	64.7	87.0	22.3
Inverclyde	72.3	65.0	86.3	21.4
North Ayrshire	69.5	63.1	82.4	19.3
North Lanarkshire	67.6	58.1	78.1	20.1
Renfrewshire	72.7	62.9	84.6	21.6
West Dunbartonshire	63.7	59.4	73.0	13.5
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>21.8</b>

- 11.52. Overall, Challenge Authorities reported a lower percentage of pupils overall achieving expected levels in Literacy compared to Scotland.
- 11.53. Overall, the attainment gap in Literacy for primary pupils was smaller in Challenge Authorities compared to the average at both national level and in non-Challenge Authorities.
- 11.54. Positively, the attainment gap was smaller in Challenge Authorities because pupils in the most disadvantaged areas performed better. Still, the gap amongst pupils living in the least disadvantaged areas was less pronounced.
- 11.55. Table 11.9 shows how Challenge Authorities and non-Challenge Authorities performed compared to Scotland overall.

**Table 11.9: Percentage of Primary Pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy – Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, by deprivation (ACEL, 2016/17)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge Authorities	67.5	61.4	80.9	19.5
Non-Challenge Authorities	70.1	57.2	81.7	24.5
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>21.8</b>

- 11.56. NGRT data provides evidence about the attainment gap in reading for primary pupils. Table 11.10 shows the difference between NGRT scores for pupils in the 20% most and least deprived areas.

**Table 11.10: NGRT points difference between pupils from 20% highest and lowest deprived areas**

	Year 1 (2016)	Year 2 (2017)
<b>Primary 4</b>	8	7
<b>Primary 7</b>	9	8

- 11.57. On average, pupils in the most deprived areas recorded lower scores than those in the least deprived. However, overall the gap

between the most and the least deprived narrowed slightly in both P4 and in P7. This is not a statistically significant difference.

11.58. The size of the attainment gap as measured by NGRT varied across Challenge Authorities. Table 11.11 shows the attainment gap between the 20% most and least deprived P4 and P7 pupils by each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.11: Attainment Gap as measured by NGRT for P4 and P7 pupils, 2016 and 2017**

	P4 pupils		P7 pupils	
	Year 1 2016	Year 2 2017	Year 1 2016	Year 2 2017
Clackmannanshire	5	7	11	11
Dundee	9	6	10	7
East Ayrshire		7		8
Glasgow	10		12	
Inverclyde	9	8	10	10
North Ayrshire	5	7	6	9
North Lanarkshire	6	7	8	8
Renfrewshire		9		9
West Dunbartonshire	6	9	7	-1

11.59. In seven out of the eight participating Challenge Authorities, there was a statistically significant difference between pupils from the most and least deprived areas. The exception to this was West Dunbartonshire, which scored similarly across SIMD for P7 results in 2017. However, it should be noted that the number of pupils in SIMD 9-10 who sat the test was relatively small for West Dunbartonshire with less than 50 pupils in the top 20%.

11.60. Overall, the attainment gap was larger in P7 than in P4. The P7 attainment gap narrowed by 1.5 points from 2016 to 2017. This change was not significant.

11.61. Challenge Authorities recorded consistent results over time. The key differences from Year 1 to Year 2 to note are:

- Dundee closed the attainment gap between the most and the least deprived by 3 points both in P4 and in P7

- The attainment gap in North Ayrshire was wider in P4 (by 2 points) and in P7 (by 3 points)

### Primary Attainment Gap – Numeracy

11.62. There are differences in the Numeracy attainment gap across Challenge Authorities. When compared to Scotland:

- Three Challenge Authorities reported a **smaller** attainment gap (Dundee, North Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire)
- One authority had a **similar** attainment gap (Glasgow)
- The other five authorities had a **larger** attainment gap

11.63. Table 11.12 shows the difference in the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy across each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.12: Percentage of Primary Pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy, by Local Authority and deprivation (ACEL, 2016/17)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	64.0	52.9	76.2	23.3
Dundee	70.2	66.3	76.8	10.6
East Ayrshire	67.3	56.9	78.4	21.5
Glasgow	76.8	74.5	91.7	17.2
Inverclyde	79.0	70.6	91.4	20.9
North Ayrshire	77.2	72.9	84.8	11.9
North Lanarkshire	74.0	66.4	85.1	18.7
Renfrewshire	79.7	70.6	89.4	18.8
West Dunbartonshire	72.1	68.2	84.4	16.2
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>76.4</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>17.3</b>

11.64. Overall, Challenge Authorities reported a lower percentage of pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy compared to Scotland.

11.65. Table 11.13 shows how Challenge Authorities and non-Challenge Authorities performed compared to the total for Scotland.

**Table 11.13: Percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy – Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, by deprivation (ACEL, 2016/17)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge Authorities	74.8	70.1	85.6	15.5
Non-Challenge Authorities	77.1	67.8	86.6	18.9
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>76.4</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>17.3</b>

11.66. The attainment gap in Numeracy was smaller in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities. The gap was slightly narrower than in Scotland as a whole.

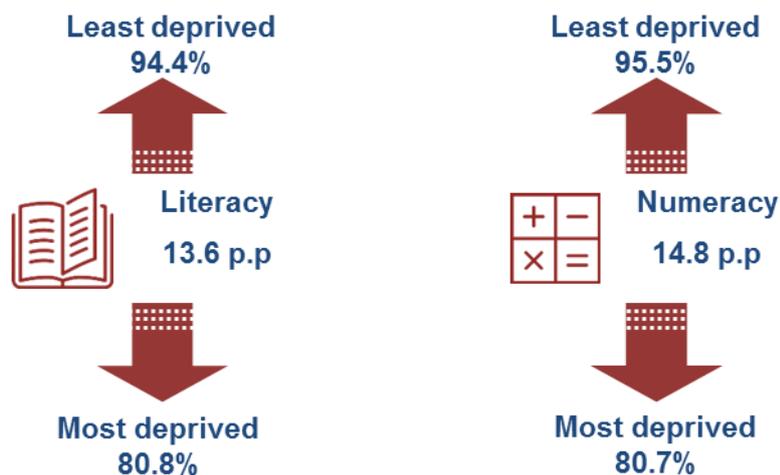
11.67. Positively, the attainment gap was smaller in Challenge Authorities because pupils in the most disadvantaged areas living there performed better. Still, the gap amongst pupils living in the least disadvantaged areas was less pronounced.

## Secondary Attainment Gap

- 11.68. The Attainment gap at secondary level is measured by the percentage of S3 pupils achieving CfE Third Level or better in Literacy and Numeracy.
- 11.69. Overall, a higher proportion of S3 pupils from the least deprived areas achieved minimum expected levels in Literacy and Numeracy compared to pupils from the most deprived areas.
- 11.70. At national level, the attainment gap at S3 level was larger in Numeracy than in Literacy. Details provided in Figure 11.6 below.

Figure 11.6: Percentage and percentage point gap of S3 pupils achieving CfE Third level, by deprivation (ACEL 2016/17) - Scotland

### Secondary attainment gap between the 20% most deprived areas and the 20% least deprived areas - Scotland



Note: p.p stands for percentage point

### Secondary Attainment Gap - Literacy

- 11.71. Overall, the Literacy attainment gap in Scotland for secondary pupils was 13.6 percentage points.
- 11.72. When looking at results for the Challenge Authorities, only two authorities (East Ayrshire and Clackmannanshire) reported a larger attainment gap compared to Scotland. North Ayrshire's attainment gap was similar to national level. All other Challenge Authorities reported a smaller attainment gap.

11.73. Table 11.14 shows the difference in the percentage of S3 pupils achieving CfE Third Level or better in Literacy across each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.14: Percentage of S3 Pupils achieving Third Level or better in Literacy by Local Authority and deprivation (ACEL 2016/17)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	80.1	73.4	91.7	18.2
Dundee	89.1	83.0	94.9	11.9
East Ayrshire	82.1	74.4	96.3	21.8
Glasgow	83.5	81.6	88.5	6.9
Inverclyde	87.1	83.1	90.8	7.7
North Ayrshire	85.8	82.3	95.4	13.1
North Lanarkshire	91.6	87.6	96.5	8.8
Renfrewshire	91.8	88.9	96.2	7.3
West Dunbartonshire	88.7	84.7	92.7	8.0
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>87.1</b>	<b>80.8</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>13.6</b>

11.74. Challenge Authorities overall reported a similar percentage of secondary pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy compared to Scotland.

11.75. Overall, the attainment gap in Literacy for secondary pupils was smaller in Challenge Authorities compared to the average at both national level and in non-Challenge Authorities. The same pattern was evident in primary schools.

11.76. Positively, the attainment gap was smaller in Challenge Authorities because pupils in the most disadvantaged areas performed better. Still, the gap amongst pupils living in the least disadvantaged areas was less pronounced.

11.77. Table 11.15 shows how Challenge Authorities and non-Challenge Authorities performed compared to Scotland overall.

**Table 11.15: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving minimum expected levels in Literacy – Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, by deprivation (ACEL, 2016/17)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge Authorities	87.2	83.0	94.3	11.3
Non-Challenge Authorities	87.1	77.5	94.5	17.0
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>87.1</b>	<b>80.8</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>13.6</b>

### Secondary Attainment Gap - Numeracy

11.78. Overall, the Numeracy attainment gap in Scotland for secondary pupils was 14.8 percentage points; slightly larger than for Literacy (which was 13.6).

11.79. When looking at results for the Challenge Authorities, four authorities recorded a larger attainment gap in Numeracy for S3 pupils compared to Scotland (Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire). The remaining five Challenge Authorities reported a smaller attainment gap compared to Scotland.

11.80. Table 11.16 overleaf shows the difference in the percentage of S3 pupils achieving CfE Third Level or better in Numeracy across each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.16: Percentage of S3 Pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy by Local Authority and deprivation (ACEL 2016/17)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	64.1	53.1	81.3	28.1
Dundee	83.7	76.0	94.9	18.9

East Ayrshire	84.6	76.8	95.6	18.8
Glasgow	85.8	83.6	96.3	12.8
Inverclyde	82.0	76.3	89.7	13.4
North Ayrshire	80.9	74.7	93.9	19.2
North Lanarkshire	93.2	88.8	98.2	9.4
Renfrewshire	92.8	88.0	97.4	9.5
West Dunbartonshire	84.5	77.5	90.2	12.8
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>80.7</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>14.8</b>

11.81. As seen in the results for Literacy, the attainment gap was slightly narrower in Challenge Authorities than it was at national level or within non-Challenge Authorities. Challenge Authorities performed poorer overall, and reported a similar percentage of pupils from the least deprived areas achieving expected levels but a higher percentage of pupils from the most deprived areas were achieving expected levels.

11.82. Table 11.17 shows the percentage of S3 pupils achieving minimum expected levels at Challenge Authority, non-Challenge Authority and national level.

**Table 11.17: Percentage of S3 Pupils achieving minimum expected levels in Numeracy – Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, by deprivation (ACEL, 2016/17)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge Authorities (total)	86.6	81.6	95.5	13.9
Non-Challenge Authorities (total)	88.9	79.2	95.4	16.2
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>80.7</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>14.8</b>

## Senior Phase Attainment Gap

11.83. At Senior Phase, attainment by levels of deprivation draws on data regarding the percentage of school leavers from the 20% most and least deprived areas gaining one or more awards at SCQF Level 5 and 6 in 2015/16.

11.84. The data provides a picture prior to the fund being introduced across secondary schools.

11.85. At national level, the attainment gap between school leavers from the 20% most and least deprived areas was wider at SCQF Level 6 than Level 5. Further detail provided in Table 11.18.

**Table 11.18: Percentage of school leavers attaining 1+ SCQF awards, by deprivation (2015/16)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
<b>SCQF Level 5</b>	85.6	74.4	94.7	20.3
<b>SCQF Level 6</b>	61.7	42.7	81.2	38.5

11.86. There are variations when looking at local authority level data. Following the national pattern, the gap between pupils from the most and least deprived areas widened from SCQF Level 5 to Level 6 across all Challenge Authorities.

11.87. The attainment gap at SCQF Level 5 was wider in six Challenge Authorities than it was at national level. It was smaller in three authorities: West Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde.

11.88. Table 11.19 provides further detail.

**Table 11.19: Percentage of leavers attaining 1+ awards at SCQF Level 5, by Challenge Authority and deprivation (2015/16)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	79.3	67.3	91.8	24.5
Dundee	80.0	68.1	94.6	26.5

East Ayrshire	83.2	73.1	95.6	22.5
Glasgow	82.1	77.7	97.3	19.6
Inverclyde	88.7	82.3	96.4	14.1
North Ayrshire	83.4	72.9	93.4	20.5
North Lanarkshire	85.5	74.3	96.0	21.7
Renfrewshire	87.1	76.6	95.9	19.3
West Dunbartonshire	87.8	82.3	97.4	15.1
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>20.3</b>

11.89. The attainment gap in Challenge Authorities was similar to the gap at national level. The attainment gap in non-Challenge Authorities was wider by 2.1 percentage points when compared to Scotland.

11.90. Pupils living in areas of greater deprivation performed better in Challenge Authorities (75.8) than in non-Challenge Authorities (72.1). The difference amongst pupils living in the least deprived areas was less pronounced. Table 11.20 shows further detail.

**Table 11.20: Percentage of leavers attaining 1+ awards at SCQF Level 5 – Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, by deprivation (2015/16)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge Authorities (total)	84.0	75.8	95.7	20.0
Non-Challenge Authorities (total)	86.4	72.1	94.5	22.4
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>20.3</b>

11.91. The attainment gap at SCQF Level 6 or better was wider in four Challenge Authorities than it was at national level. Conversely, it was smaller in three authorities: West Dunbartonshire, Glasgow and Clackmannanshire. Further detail provided in Table 11.21.

**Table 11.21: Percentage of leavers attaining 1+ awards at SCQF Level 6, by Challenge Authority and deprivation (2015/16)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	51.7	34.5	71.4	36.9
Dundee	53.9	37.5	79.3	41.8
East Ayrshire	56.8	38.0	80.0	42.0
Glasgow	55.3	48.1	84.3	36.2
Inverclyde	59.7	42.2	84.3	42.1
North Ayrshire	59.3	42.2	81.1	38.9
North Lanarkshire	59.3	41.5	83.8	42.3
Renfrewshire	62.9	45.0	84.3	39.3
West Dunbartonshire	63.8	53.1	80.5	27.4
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>81.2</b>	<b>38.5</b>

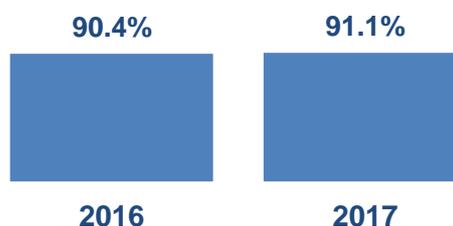
- 11.92. The attainment gap in Challenge Authorities was similar to the gap at national level (38.0 vs 38.5 across Scotland as a whole). The attainment gap in non-Challenge Authorities was wider by 2.3 percentage points compared to Scotland.
- 11.93. Pupils living in areas of greater deprivation performed better in Challenge Authorities (44.4) than in non-Challenge Authorities (40.1). The variation amongst pupils living in the least deprived areas was less pronounced. Table 11.22 shows further detail.

**Table 11.22: Percentage of leavers attaining 1+ SCQF Level 6 – Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, by deprivation (2015/16)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge Authorities (total)	58.0	44.4	82.4	38.0
Non-Challenge Authorities (total)	63.4	40.1	81.0	40.8
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>81.2</b>	<b>38.5</b>

### Participation measure

- 11.94. The annual participation measure reports on the activity of the wider 16-19 cohort, including those at school, and is intended to help inform policy, planning and service delivery. The measure uses the shared data held by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and their Customer Support System (CSS).
- 11.95. The annual participation measure is another key measure to track progress towards closing the attainment gap.
- 11.96. The proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment was 91.1% in 2017, an increase of 0.7 percentage points compared to 2016.



- 11.97. Conversely the proportion not participating within the annual measure was 3.7 in 2017, compare to 4.0% in 2016. This represents a 0.3 percentage point decrease.
- 11.98. At a local authority level there was a variation of 9.3 percentage points between the highest and the lowest in 2017. The highest participation rate was in Eilean Siar at 96.9% and the lowest was in Dundee City at 87.6%. Overall, there were 23 out of the 32 Local authorities showing an increase in participation between 2016 and 2017. When looking specifically at the Challenge Authorities, six of the nine recorded an increase in 2017. Detail is provided in Table 11.23.

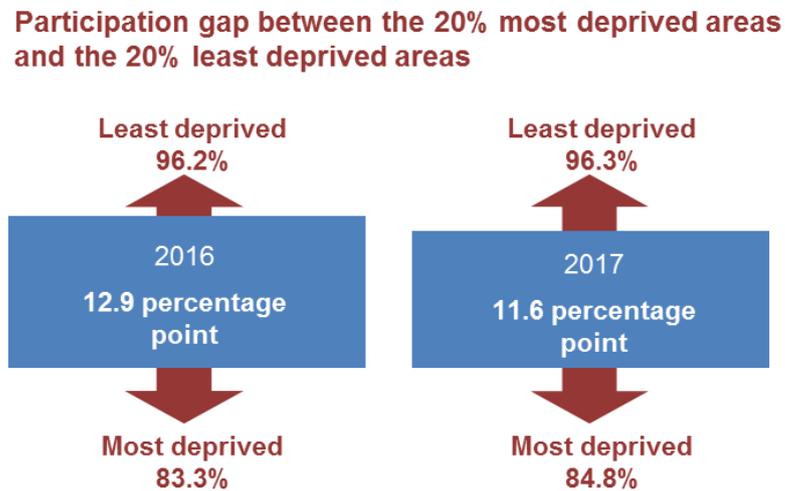
**Table 11.23: Annual Participation Measure – Challenge Authorities – Over Time**

Annual Participation Measure	2016	2017	Percentage point change between 2017 and 2016
Clackmannanshire	88.2	89.7	1.5
Dundee City	87.7	87.6	-0.1
East Ayrshire	89.3	88.1	-1.2
Glasgow City	86.8	88.2	1.4
Inverclyde	91.2	91.9	0.7
North Ayrshire	89.9	90.3	0.4
North Lanarkshire	89.3	90.2	0.9
Renfrewshire	90.7	91.4	0.7
West Dunbartonshire	88.4	88.3	-0.1
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>90.4</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>

- 11.99. The participation measure can be explored further by area of deprivation. Overall, those who lived in more deprived areas were less likely to be reported as participating within the annual measure than those living in less deprived areas.

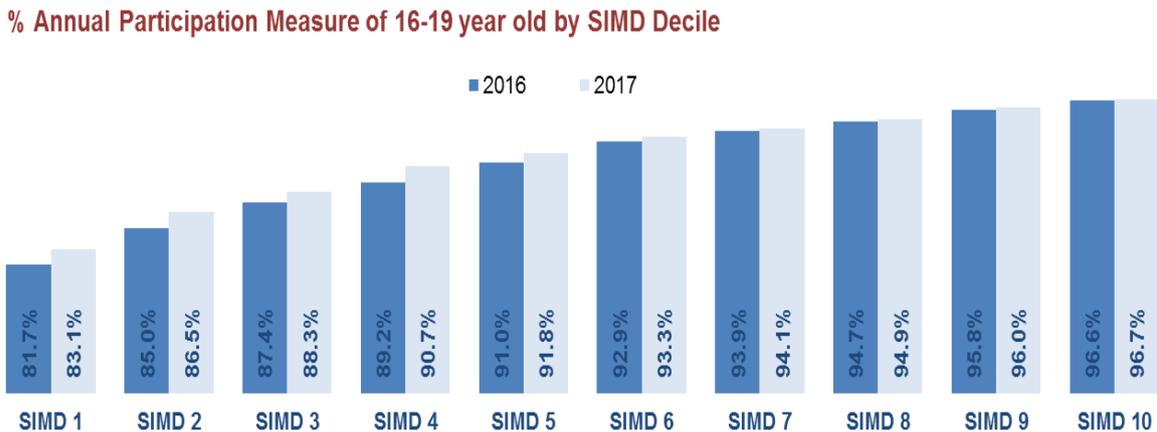
11.100. There is an 11.6 percentage point difference in the participation rate between those living in the most deprived areas (SIMD Quintile 1) and those living in the least deprived areas (SIMD Quintile 5). See figure below.

Figure 11.7: Participation rate, by deprivation (Skills Development Scotland)



11.101. The overall reduction in the poverty related gap was due to higher increases amongst the most deprived SIMD groups as shown in the figure below.

Figure 11.8: Participation rate, by SIMD Decile



11.102. Currently there is no available data of SIMD by local authority, and hence detail analysis of deprivation at a local authority level is not possible.



## To what extent did overall Health and Wellbeing improve? To what extent was there a reduction in the poverty related gap in Health and Wellbeing?

11.103. The measures to assess overall Health and Wellbeing and measure the poverty related attainment gap have been taken from the [2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#). The plan sets out a basket of key measures and sub measures to assess progress. For Health and Wellbeing these are:

Figure 11.9: Key measures of Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing – Key measures		
<b>Total difficulties scores</b> The proportion of children who had a borderline or abnormal score	Age 4-12	Scottish Health Survey
	Age 13 & 15	SALSUS

Figure 11.10: Sub measures of Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing – Sub measures		
<b>Mental Wellbeing Score</b> Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well being scale (WEMWBS)	Age 13 (boys and girls)	SALSUS
	Age 15 (boys and girls)	
<b>Attendance rate</b> The proportion of pupils in attendance	Primary	Scottish Government
	Secondary	
<b>Exclusion rate</b> Total number of exclusions by total number of pupils (rate per 1000 pupils)	Primary	Scottish Government
	Secondary	

- 11.104. Currently, most data is available for year 2014/15, thus allowing us to obtain a picture of affairs prior to the fund starting. The next report should cover the period up until 2020, thus including progress over the years of the fund.

## **Health and wellbeing key measures**

### **Total Difficulties Score**

- 11.105. The social, emotional and behavioural development of children has been measured via the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire designed for use with the 3-16 age group.
- 11.106. The SDQ comprises 25 questions covering themes such as consideration, hyperactivity, malaise, mood, sociability, obedience, anxiety and unhappiness. It is used to measure five aspects of development: emotional symptoms; conduct problems; hyperactivity/ inattention; peer relationship problems; and pro-social behaviour.
- 11.107. A score was calculated for each of the five aspects, as well as an overall 'total difficulties' score which was generated by summing the scores from all the domains, except pro-social behaviour. The total difficulties score ranged from 0 to 40 with a higher score indicating greater evidence of difficulties. There are established thresholds indicating 'normal' (score of 13 or less), 'borderline' (14-16) or 'abnormal' scores (17 or above).
- 11.108. Across Scotland, the proportion of children who had a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score appeared to increase with age. This was 14% amongst children aged 4-12, and 31% amongst children aged 13 and 15.

11.109. Regardless of age, children in the most deprived areas were more likely to have a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score. This is summarised in Table 11.24 and further detail is given in the paragraphs that follow.

**Table 11.24: Total Difficulties Score – By Deprivation**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Total difficulties score (aged 4-12)	14	22	6	16
Total difficulties score (aged 13 & 15)	31	34	26	8

### Children aged 4–12 years old

11.110. The social, emotional and behavioural development of children aged 4-12 has been measured in the Scottish Health Survey via the SDQ. In the Scottish Health Survey, the SDQ was completed by a parent on behalf of all children aged 4-12.

11.111. The proportion of children aged 4-12 who had a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score decreased between 2003 (17%) and 2014/15 (14%).

11.112. Children in the most deprived areas were more likely to have a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score (22%) than those in the least deprived (6%) in 2014/2015.

### Children aged 13 and 15

11.113. The social, emotional and behavioural development of children aged 13 and 15 was measured using the same approach, that is the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The data collection used was the Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS), which allows for greater sample size amongst the year groups of interest. Pupils complete the survey themselves.

11.114. The proportion of children aged 13 and 15 who had a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score was 31% in 2015. Overall, there had been a slight decrease in the percentage of pupils with a normal score between 2010 and 2015 (from 75% in 2010

to 69% in 2015) and a light increase in the percentage of pupils with an abnormal score (from 11% in 2010 to 15% in 2015).

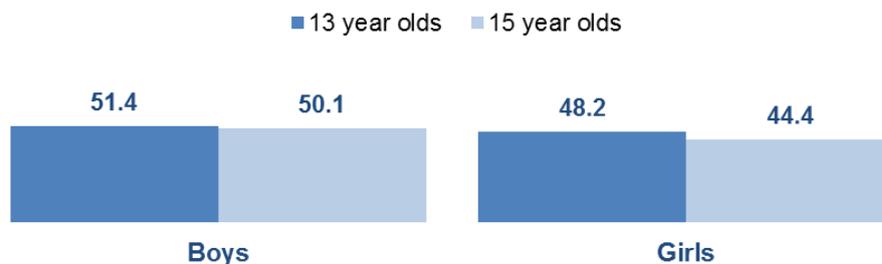
- 11.115. Children in the most deprived areas were more likely to have a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score (34%) than those in the least deprived (26%) in 2015.

## Health and wellbeing sub measures

### Mental wellbeing score - WEMWBS

- 11.116. Mental wellbeing is measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) questionnaire and is used as a sub measure to report progress around Health and Wellbeing.
- 11.117. While the SDQ measures emotional and behavioural problems, WEMWBS measures mental wellbeing – for example how good a pupil is feeling or how well they think they are coping in their life. In the WEMWBS scale, the lowest score possible (indicating poor mental wellbeing) is 14 and the highest is 70 (indicating good mental wellbeing), so a higher average score for any particular group indicates higher mental wellbeing.
- 11.118. The WEMWBS scale was added to SALSUS in 2010 and the latest data provides a picture between 2010 and 2015. Therefore, the data available portrays the state of affairs prior to the Fund being introduced.
- 11.119. Overall, mental wellbeing among 13 to 15 year olds decreased with age for all children. Mental wellbeing recorded significantly higher levels for 13 to 15 year old boys than for girls. The figure below presents data by year group and gender.

**WEMWBS average score by age and gender (2015)**



- 11.120. Mental wellbeing showed a correlation with areas of deprivation. Overall, pupils in the least deprived areas had a higher

WEMWBS mean score indicating better mental wellbeing than those in the most deprived areas.

- 11.121. Table 11.25 overleaf shows the mental wellbeing score by those most and least deprived and displays the gap between the two.

**Table 11.25: Mental Wellbeing mean score – By Deprivation (WEMWBS – SALSUS 2015)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Mental Wellbeing Score (13 year old boys)	51.4	49.9	52.6	2.7
Mental Wellbeing Score (13 year old girls)	48.2	47.2	49.1	1.9
Mental Wellbeing Score (15 year old boys)	50.1	49.3	50.6	1.3
Mental Wellbeing Score (15 year old girls)	44.4	43.7	45.8	2.1

- 11.122. There is no current data at a local authority level. Hence a detailed examination of how Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities performed is not possible at this stage.

### **Attendance rates**

- 11.123. Information on attendance and exclusions from schools is collected on a biennial basis. At the point of writing the report, the most recent dataset fully available for analysis was for the 2014/15 academic year. This provides a picture of state of affairs prior to the fund being introduced.
- 11.124. Detailed information is published in [Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland](#), but below is a summary of the key measures deemed relevant to measuring the attainment gap.
- 11.125. Overall, the attendance rate was 93.7% for academic year 2014/15. The attendance rate was higher for primary schools (95.1%) than secondary schools (91.8%).
- 11.126. Attendance levels were also higher amongst those pupils living in areas of lower deprivation, compared to those living in areas of greater deprivation.

11.127. Table 11.26 shows attendance levels for primary and secondary schools by those most and least deprived and displays the gap between the two.

**Table 11.26: Total Attendance Rates – (Summary Statistics for Schools 2015, Scottish Government)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Primary attendance rates	95.1	93.3	96.7	3.4
Secondary attendance rates	91.8	88.7	94.5	5.8

11.128. When looking at attendance at a local authority level there are some differences. The gap in **primary attendance rates** was larger in three Challenge Authorities than it was at national level, namely: Glasgow, Inverclyde and North Lanarkshire. It was smaller in the remaining six Challenge Authorities.

11.129. Table 11.27 overleaf shows the difference in primary attendance rates for pupils from the most and least deprived areas, across each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.27: Primary Attendance Rates – By Deprivation (2015, Scottish Government)**

Primary attendance rates	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	94.7	93.4	96.1	2.8
Dundee City	94.3	93.3	96.5	3.3
East Ayrshire	95.1	93.8	96.5	2.7
Glasgow City	93.9	93.1	96.8	3.7
Inverclyde	94.6	93.3	96.9	3.6
North Ayrshire	95.0	94.2	96.3	2.1
North Lanarkshire	94.4	92.8	96.7	3.9
Renfrewshire	95.7	94.2	97.1	2.9

West Dunbartonshire	95.0	94.0	97.1	3.1
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>95.1</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>96.7</b>	<b>3.4</b>

11.130. Overall, the attendance rate in Challenge Authorities was higher for primary pupils living in areas of lower deprivation (96.7%) compared to those living in areas of greater deprivation (93.3%). The gap in primary attendance rates in Challenge Authorities was the same as the gap at national level. Table 11.28 provides further detail.

**Table 11.28: Primary Attendance Rates – Challenge vs non Challenge Authorities - By Deprivation (2015, Scottish Government)**

Primary attendance rates	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge authorities (total)	94.5	93.3	96.7	3.4
Non-Challenge Authorities (total)	95.3	93.1	96.7	3.6
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>95.1</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>96.7</b>	<b>3.4</b>

11.131. The gap in **secondary attendance rates** varied across the Challenge Authorities. When compared to Scotland:

- One authority had a similar gap (Clackmannanshire)
- Three authorities had a smaller gap (Glasgow, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire)
- The gap was larger in the remaining five authorities

11.132. Table 11.29 overleaf shows the difference in secondary attendance rates for pupils from the most and least deprived areas, across each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.29: Secondary Attendance Rates – Local authority - By Deprivation (2015, Scottish Government)**

Secondary attendance rates	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	91.1	88.2	94.0	5.8
Dundee City	90.0	87.3	93.7	6.3
East Ayrshire	91.2	87.7	94.5	6.8
Glasgow City	91.1	90.1	95.1	5.0
Inverclyde	91.0	88.7	94.5	5.7
North Ayrshire	91.1	89.1	93.9	4.8
North Lanarkshire	90.8	87.8	94.5	6.7
Renfrewshire	90.9	87.5	93.7	6.2
West Dunbartonshire	89.6	87.3	93.4	6.2
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>91.8</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>94.5</b>	<b>5.8</b>

11.133. Overall, the attendance rate in Challenge Authorities was higher for secondary pupils living in areas of lower deprivation (94.2%) compared to those living in areas of greater deprivation (88.8%). The gap in secondary attendance rates in Challenge Authorities was smaller than the gap at national level. Table 11.30 provides further detail.

**Table 11.30: Secondary Attendance Rates – Challenge vs non Challenge Authorities - By Deprivation (2015, Scottish Government)**

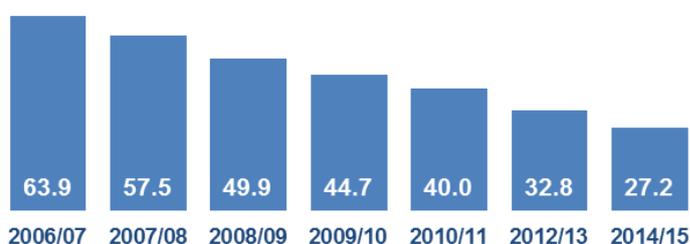
Secondary attendance rates	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge authorities (total)	90.8	88.8	94.2	5.4
Non-Challenge Authorities (total)	92.3	88.5	94.5	6.1
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>91.8</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>94.5</b>	<b>5.8</b>

### Exclusion rates

11.134. As stated above, data on exclusion rates is collected biannually. The latest data available for analysis is from 2014/15, providing a picture of state of affairs prior to the launch of the fund.

11.135. Detailed information is published in [Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland](#), but below is a summary of the key measures deemed relevant to measuring the attainment gap.

11.136. Overall, the exclusion rate for all pupils in 2014/15 was 27.2 per 1,000 pupils. This has been steadily falling year on year since 2006/07.



11.137. The exclusion rate was significantly higher for secondary schools (49.5 per 1,000 pupils) than for primary schools (9.0 per 1,000 pupils).

- 11.138. Exclusion rates were significantly higher in the 20% most deprived areas compared to the 20% least deprived. Detail is shown in Table 11.31 overleaf and in the paragraphs that follow.
- 11.139. In primary schools, rates per exclusions per 1,000 pupils for pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas were 19.0 per 1,000 pupils compared with 2.1 per 1,000 pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas. This represents a gap of 16.9 points.
- 11.140. In secondary schools, the gap in exclusions is more pronounced. The exclusion rate per 1,000 pupils for pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas was 95.2 per 1,000 pupils compared with 15.1 per 1,000 pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas. This represents a gap of 80.1 points.

**Table 11.31: Total Exclusion Rates per 1000 pupils – By Deprivation (Summary Statistics 2015, Scottish Government)**

	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap
Primary exclusion rates (per 1,000)	9.0	19.0	2.1	16.9
Secondary exclusion rates (per 1,000)	49.5	95.2	15.1	80.1

- 11.141. Overall, exclusion rates for primary schools varied quite considerably across the Challenge Authorities. When compared to Scotland, Clackmannanshire, Dundee and East Ayrshire all reported a larger gap in exclusion rates. The remaining Challenge Authorities reported a smaller gap. Table 11.32 provides further detail.

**Table 11.32: Primary Exclusion Rates per 1000 pupils – Local authority - By Deprivation (2015, Scottish Government)**

Primary exclusion rates per 1000 pupils	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	34.1	68.0	5.7	62.3
Dundee City	20.1	29.9	2.1	27.8

East Ayrshire	22.5	54.2	3.8	50.4
Glasgow City	9.1	12.8	3.5	9.2
Inverclyde	2.4	3.9	0.0	3.9
North Ayrshire	4.1	8.8	0.0	8.8
North Lanarkshire	8.8	17.7	1.9	15.7
Renfrewshire	3.0	5.3	0.4	4.9
West Dunbartonshire	9.3	13.8	0	13.8
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>16.9</b>

11.142. Overall, the exclusion rate for all primary pupils in 2014/15 was higher in Challenge Authorities compared to Scotland overall.

11.143. Challenge Authorities overall reported a smaller gap in exclusion rates for pupils living in the most and least deprived areas, compared to Scotland. Non-Challenge Authorities reported a larger gap. The gap in exclusions was narrower in Challenge Authorities because the exclusion rate for pupils living in the most deprived areas was lower compared to the national level. Detail provided in Table 11.33.

**Table 11.33: Primary Exclusion Rates per 1000 pupils – Challenge vs non Challenge Authorities - By Deprivation (2015, Scottish Government)**

Primary exclusion rates per 1000 pupils	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge authorities (total)	10.4	17.6	1.9	15.7
Non-Challenge Authorities (total)	8.4	21.3	2.1	19.2
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>16.9</b>

11.144. The exclusion rate for all secondary pupils was higher in six Challenge Authorities compared to the rate nationally. It was

lower in three Challenge Authorities: Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.

- 11.145. The gap in exclusion rates for secondary pupils was larger in Dundee and East Ayrshire compared to Scotland overall and smaller in all remaining seven Challenge Authorities.
- 11.146. Table 11.34 overleaf provides further detail regarding the difference in exclusion rates for pupils living in the most and least deprived areas, across each of the Challenge Authorities.

**Table 11.34: Secondary Exclusion Rates per 1000 pupils – Local authority - By Deprivation (2015, Scottish Government)**

Secondary exclusion rates per 1000 pupils	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	70.2	110.3	36.7	73.5
Dundee City	132.5	228.1	22.8	205.3
East Ayrshire	65.4	131.8	26.7	105.1
Glasgow City	63.5	78.3	7.6	70.7
Inverclyde	39.1	61.2	9.6	51.6
North Ayrshire	47.4	66.4	19.9	46.5
North Lanarkshire	57.2	95.9	18.0	78.0
Renfrewshire	34.5	56.0	9.6	46.4
West Dunbartonshire	57.0	81.0	23.3	57.7
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>80.1</b>

- 11.147. Overall, the exclusion rate for all secondary pupils in 2014/15 was higher in Challenge Authorities compared to Scotland overall.
- 11.148. As seen in the results for primary pupils, Challenge Authorities overall reported a smaller gap in exclusion rates for secondary pupils living in the most and least deprived areas compared to Scotland. Non-challenge authorities reported a larger gap. Table 11.35 provides further detail.

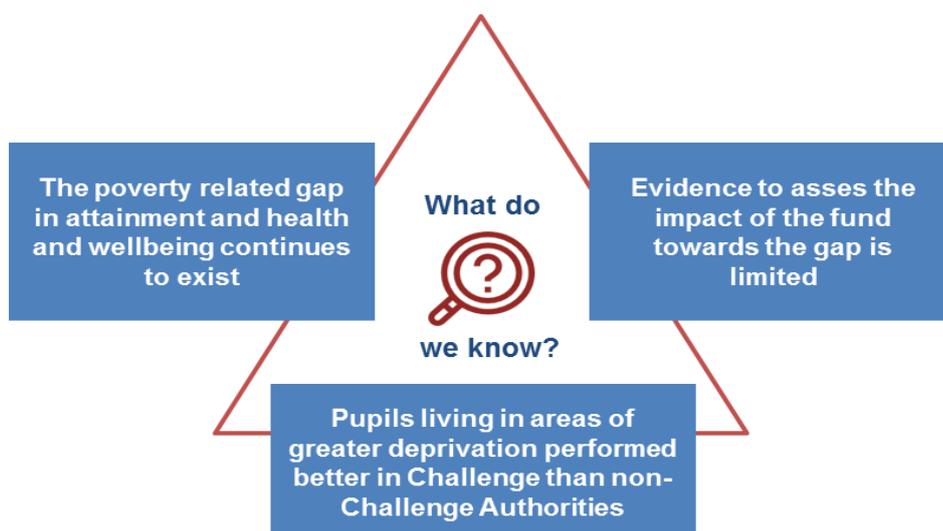
**Table 11.35: Secondary Exclusions Rates per 1000 pupils – Challenge vs non Challenge Authorities - By Deprivation (2015)**

Secondary exclusion rates per 1000 pupils	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Challenge authorities (total)	61.7	94.0	16.2	77.9
Non-Challenge Authorities (total)	44.0	97.1	15.0	82.2
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>80.1</b>



## What do we know about the poverty related attainment gap at this point?

11.149. This section summarises evidence presented in this chapter to help address what this suggests about the poverty related attainment gap. Overall, there are three key points worth highlighting:



### Poverty related attainment gap

11.150. There was consistent evidence of a gap in attainment and Health and Wellbeing between pupils from the most deprived and least deprived areas of Scotland.

### **Limited evidence to assess impact**

- 11.151. There was limited evidence about the size of the attainment and Health and Wellbeing gap within Challenge Authorities compared to the rest of Scotland prior to the introduction of the Attainment Scotland Fund.
- 11.152. At primary and secondary stages, there does not exist local authority attainment data before the fund. The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) provided data about Literacy and Numeracy levels at national level. However, this survey was not designed to provide data at local authority level.
- 11.153. At Senior Phase, school leaver attainment data provides a measure of attainment levels by deprivation and local authority. This data is available for previous years. However, the fund was only expanded to secondary schools during the second year that is 2016/17. The latest school leaver attainment data available is for 2015/16.
- 11.154. Ultimately, without more evidence, at this stage we are unable to conclude the level of impact the fund may have had in raising attainment and closing the poverty related gap.

### **Narrower gap in Challenge Authorities**

- 11.155. Overall, Challenge Authorities recorded lower results, when compared to non-Challenge Authorities or with Scotland as a whole.
- 11.156. However, the attainment gap (at primary and secondary level) was narrower in Challenge Authorities than it was at national level or within non-Challenge Authorities. This is because pupils living in areas of greater deprivation performed better in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities.
- 11.157. Pupils from the most deprived areas in Challenge Authorities may do better than those in non-Challenge Authorities for a number of reasons. Currently the evaluation has not uncovered the reasons behind this.
- 11.158. Future reports of the Attainment Scotland Fund will continue to provide evidence which will aim to broaden the knowledge about the poverty related attainment gap.

## 12. Use of data, analysis and knowledge

- 12.1. This chapter explores the way in which schools and local authorities made use of data in selecting, developing and evaluating their Attainment Scotland Fund activities in order to drive improvements.
- 12.2. Evidence-based plans and approaches was a key criteria for the release of funding to authorities.
- 12.3. There are four key questions that this chapter aims to explore:
- To what extent did authorities and schools use existing local data and evidence to drive improvements?
  - To what extent did they use data to identify their target groups and interventions? To what extent did they use data to measure which interventions were having the desired impact?
  - What did and did not go well in collecting, recording and using data?
  - To what extent did the fund increase the use, skills and knowledge of how to use data?
- 12.4. Evidence was collected from the progress reports submitted bi-annually by Challenge Authorities, the annual plans and reports from the Schools Programme, the annual headteacher survey and the qualitative research.

### Chapter Highlights – Use of data, analysis and knowledge

- Overall, local authorities and schools appeared to have used data purposely and continuously.
- Data usage appeared embedded throughout the whole process of defining strategies and outcomes, choosing targeting strategies and planning and monitoring interventions.
- On the whole, awareness of the need of data and knowledge on how to access, understand and use it improved over the first two years of the fund.
- Support from local authorities and attainment advisors was a key factor in supporting the successful use of data.



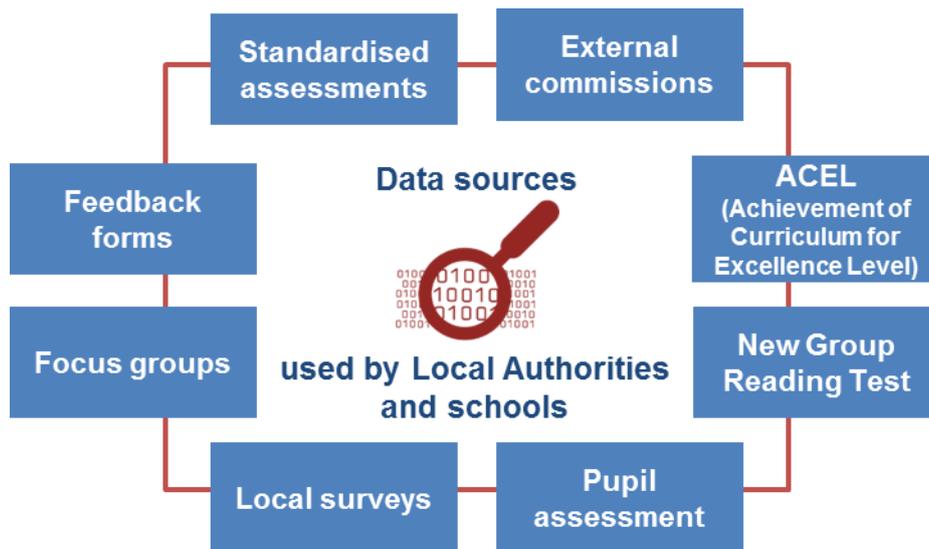
## To what extent did authorities and schools use existing data and evidence?

- 12.5. Overall, local authorities and schools appeared to have used data purposely and continuously. Data usage appeared embedded throughout the whole process of defining strategies and outcomes, choosing targeting strategies and planning and monitoring interventions.
- 12.6. The fund resulted in conversations about data with local authorities and schools. Teachers and local authority officers felt that their approach to accessing, gathering, understanding and using data was improving, with positive attitudes, increased confidence and greater skills around the use of data.
- 12.7. On the whole, appreciation of the importance of data, and knowledge on how to access, understand and apply it, improved over the first two years of the fund.

### Summary of data sources used

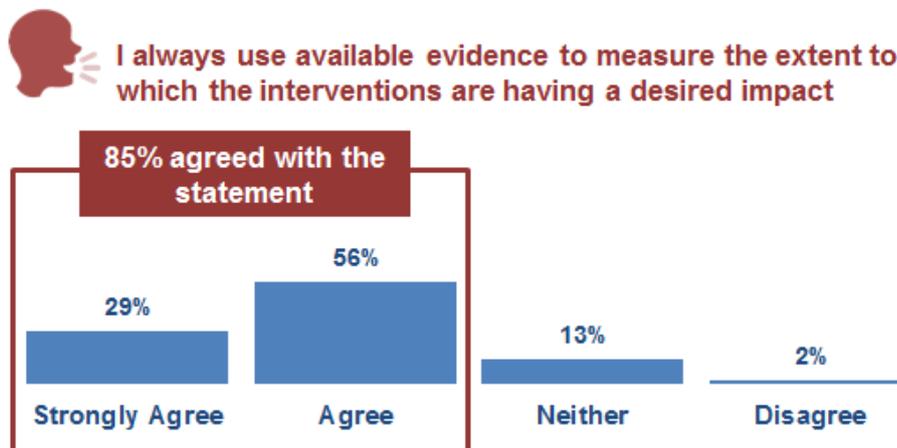
- 12.8. Overall, local authorities and schools used a wide variety of data sources as shown in Figure 12.1.

Figure 12.1: Data sources used by local authorities and schools



- 12.9. Most commonly, data used by local authorities and schools included data from the newly introduced standardised assessments, Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels or the New Group Reading Test.
- 12.10. The majority of authorities and schools complemented this data with local surveys (in some cases pre and post implementation), qualitative focus groups, feedback forms, pupil assessment and tracking of attendance rates/punctuality, amongst others.
- 12.11. Some authorities reported external commissioning evaluations for their specific programmes. In some cases, authorities provided evidence of outputs from the external evaluations. The progress reports submitted did not make clear whether outputs from data collection exercises were well understood or distributed efficiently.
- 12.12. Some authorities claimed to use evidence to drive improvements in their implementation of the programme. In some cases improvement methodologies appeared embedded in their strategic thinking.
- 12.13. Most headteachers reported use of evidence to measure impact of interventions. In Year 2 of the headteacher survey, 85% of respondents indicated that they used evidence to measure the extent to which their interventions were having a desired impact.

Figure 12.2: Use of available evidence, headteacher survey



Base: All headteachers in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 2: 207)



## To what extent did local authorities and schools use data to target and choose interventions?

- 12.14. This section focuses specifically on how local authorities and schools used data to target and choose interventions. Previously in the report, the broader approaches used by schools to choose (see Chapter 6) and target (see Chapter 7) their interventions was discussed. This chapter focuses specifically on the use of data.
- 12.15. Overall, data played a significant role in how both local authorities and schools targeted and chose interventions.

### Targeting interventions - Local authority level

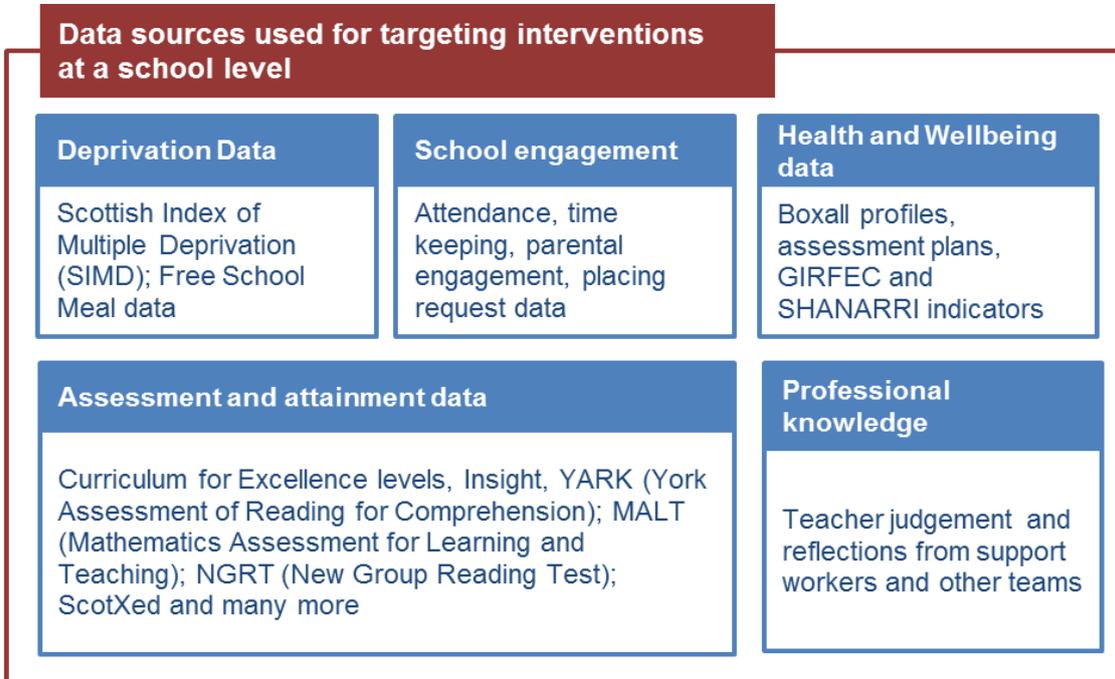
- 12.16. Progress reports varied in depth of detail about their targeting approaches and the evidence used to support these. Based on the progress reports alone, the degree of skills and use of evidence could not be assessed. Still, the majority of authorities stated the use of data and evidence to support their targeting approaches.
- 12.17. However, there appeared to be an increased awareness of the need to use evidence to inform their targeting approaches over time. References to data and evidence in improvement plans and progress reports increased over time. Furthermore, by the end of Year 2 all Challenge Authorities had resources (i.e staff) dedicated at least partly to the analysis and use of data.

### Targeting of interventions - School level

- 12.18. At a school level, awareness of and skills in using evidence to target interventions also appeared to improve over time. The support provided by local authorities and Attainment Advisors seemed to be important for increasing awareness and understanding of data.
- 12.19. Most teachers interviewed in the qualitative research at the end of Year 2 stated that 'they *now* had the information, skills and support they required to be able to target pupils effectively'. Many indicated that it was a big learning curve for them. A few teachers indicated that they felt 'in the dark' in the early stages, and found it took time to get up to speed with the data.

12.20. Schools reported using a wide range of data and evidence to target their interventions. Data sources used for targeting interventions at a school level are shown in the figure below:

**Figure 12.3: Data sources used for targeting interventions**



12.21. Over time, schools appeared to have developed a systematic approach to engaging and using data. The qualitative research revealed that some teachers now had access to data for each pupil, on a spread sheet. This was a new approach for many. Teachers felt that the data from a variety of sources had helped both identify the target pupils, and inform the interventions.

### Choosing interventions

12.22. Data played a significant role when deciding which interventions to choose; both at local authority and school level.

12.23. Local authorities largely took the lead in identifying evidence based approaches, as shown in the qualitative research (see Appendix A). Schools drew on the support from their local authority and Attainment Advisor to select appropriate interventions.

12.24. Local authorities reported that they felt informed about the research evidence underpinning key interventions. Many also reported using the Plan, Do, Study, Act model to monitor interventions.

12.25. Local authorities referred to accessing reviews of research through both partnerships with Universities and those produced by organisations, including:

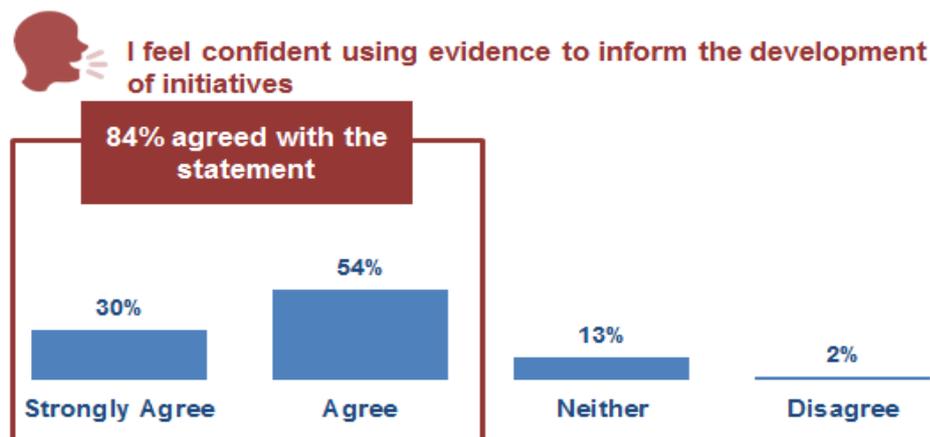
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Dartington Social Research Unit
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Education Endowment Fund

12.26. Teachers reported they were aware that evidence from these organisations and others had been used to inform the selection of interventions.

12.27. In addition, they acknowledged that pupil- and school-level data was used to identify interventions. This included: SIMD, free school meals, Insight data, standardised assessments, staged interventions, health and social work involvement, child protection, attendance, pupil tracking systems, ScotXed data, professional knowledge and judgement.

12.28. Headteachers confidence in using evidence to inform the development of initiatives was high. In Year 2 of the headteacher survey, 84% of respondents agreed that they felt confident in using evidence to inform the development of initiatives.

Figure 12.4: Confidence in using evidence (headteacher survey, year 2)



Base: All headteachers in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 2: 207)

12.29. In addition to using data or research evidence to identify interventions, the qualitative research also indicated that the views and experiences of key stakeholders, and learning from previously

implemented interventions influenced the selection process. This was discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.



## **What did and did not go well around data usage at a school and authority level?**

12.30. By the end of Year 2, most local authorities and schools appeared to have some data skills to make evidence informed decisions. However, this had been a steep learning curve for them, and for some it continues to be.

12.31. During the first two years of the fund, stakeholders were able to identify successful approaches to the use of data, as well as challenges. Evidence from the qualitative research, headteacher survey and progress reports is summarised below.

### **Successful approaches to the use of data**

12.32. The key success factors identified by local authorities around the use of data were as follows:

- Support from local authorities, Attainment Advisors and improvement advisors to schools
- Recruiting research staff and/or commissioning specialist data
- Use of improvement science methodology
- Having conversations about data at the outset
- Standardised assessment – including the development of locally standardised systems
- Including resources to support use of data within the funding application

12.33. Furthermore, some authorities mentioned in the progress reports that they enabled education leaders to engage in the critical analysis of the data. Others stated that they engaged with headteachers to provide feedback to drive improvements.

12.34. Headteachers responding to the survey in Year 2 had many observations about the positive developments and consequences of successful use of data. Some of them saw data as means to improve their initiatives, create a more tailored approach to the implementation of the fund, and introduce more effective and

better informed strategic planning, which they stated had the potential to lead to long-term improvements in practice at the school.

12.35. Similar to the local authorities, headteachers also mentioned that support from Attainment Advisors, as well as resources made available at a national level, had helped to bring about successful use of data gathering and analysis.

12.36. Headteachers reported in the online survey positive consequences as a result of increased data use. These included:

- Increased leadership confidence and increased potential for decision making at a school level
- Long-lasting positive changes – improved strategic planning and improved staff morale with teachers being able to see the evidence of their progress
- Increased awareness and understanding of the impact of poverty on pupil outcomes
- Being more informed about how to select and target interventions

### **Challenges around the use of data**

12.37. While there were recorded improvements around the use of data, local authority officers identified some outstanding barriers. These included:

- The lack of national baselines – a few suggesting that the Scottish Government should prescribe a set of measures or indicators around closing the attainment gap, to enable comparison.
- Measuring impact in the short term
- National reporting requirements
- A perceived focus nationally on quantitative rather than qualitative data
- Time lags in data being available at a national level
- The need for a more standardised teacher judgement data
- The time/work involved in using data effectively.



## To what extent did the fund increase the use, and the skills and knowledge of how to use data?

12.38. Overall, there were some indications that the fund increased the use, skills and knowledge of how to use data amongst local authorities and schools.

12.39. In progress reports, many local authorities highlighted data usage as a priority area for teachers' Learning and Professional Development. Many authorities used part of the fund to organise specific training sessions to improve knowledge of data and evidence in schools.

*“Great improvements being made. Electronic monitoring and tracking systems are now being used by the majority of schools. Schools are also receiving ongoing training and support.”  
(Challenge Authority, Primary Programme, Progress report – Year 2)*

12.40. Some authorities monitored progress carefully around the use, skills and knowledge of how to use data, and reported improvements over the two years of the fund around confidence and skills of teachers using data.

12.41. Teachers themselves also reported an increase in confidence using data. Almost all teachers, who participated in the qualitative research, indicated that they were much better at gathering, understanding and using data than they were previously.

*“We didn't really know anything about how to gather and use data in the early stages of the attainment challenge. We are now in a much stronger position and have a better knowledge of the context and our pupils.”*

*(Headteacher, Challenge Authority, Primary School, Qualitative Research – Year 2)*

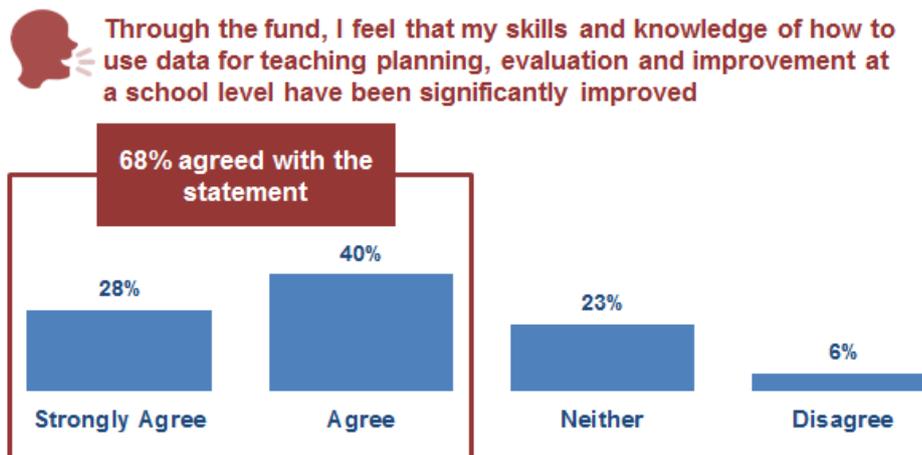
12.42. Attainment Advisors reporting indicated a high level of support given to schools and local authorities around the use of data. For example, in the period between September 2016 and January 2017, advisors across 15 local authorities recorded 75 activities relating to data use. These activities involved supporting individual schools (20), clusters (19) central authority (20), and sharing practice between authorities (9).

12.43. Overall, local authorities and teachers felt that the use of data had improved considerably through the fund. The qualitative research suggested that the fund had:

- enabled the development of systems which track each pupil, and allow easy comparison of outcomes within schools, and across some local authorities;
- embedded the use of improvement science methods within some schools;
- built teacher skills around data, evidence, monitoring and evaluation;
- encouraged teachers and schools to take ownership of monitoring and evaluation; and
- enabled teachers to interpret SIMD data, and other data, more carefully and more meaningfully, understanding changes over time.

12.44. The impact of the fund in improving the use of data was evident in data collected through the headteacher survey. In Year 2 of the headteacher survey, over two thirds (68%) of respondents agreed that, as the result of the fund, their skills and knowledge of how to use data had improved.

Figure 12.5: Improvement of data skills, headteacher survey



Base: All headteachers in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 2: 207)

12.45. In addition, as reported in Chapter 6, 86% of respondents to the headteacher survey said that there had been strong or some emphasis on data skills within their interventions. Indeed, data use

was noted in Chapter 9 as one of the factors that were helping the initiatives to succeed in improving attainment and Health and Wellbeing.

- 12.46. This improvement in data use, however, was not consistent across all authorities and schools. The qualitative research showed that secondary school teachers, who were newer to the fund, had more issues with data than primary school teachers. This was also supported in progress reports submitted by Challenge Authorities.
- 12.47. Progress reports submitted by Challenge Authorities over the first two years of the fund showed that the primary programme had data procedures well embedded throughout the whole process. Conversely, information on data usage was very limited for the secondary programme.

## 13. Collaboration

13.1. This chapter explores the extent to which the Attainment Scotland Fund encouraged collaboration amongst those in the Challenge Authority or Schools Programme. Specifically, two key questions are considered:

- To what extent did the fund encourage collaboration?
- What factors helped and hindered collaboration, and what did and did not work well?

### Chapter Highlights – Collaboration

- The Attainment Scotland Fund had made a positive contribution to the level and nature of collaboration.
- Collaboration within schools and with external partners were the most commonly reported types of collaboration.
- Collaboration between schools was challenging due to difficulties in staff shortages and related capacity of teachers to be released from teaching.
- There remained a need for improved collaboration at a local authority level.
- Factors that fostered collaboration included: a shared commitment to achieve the aims of the Attainment Scotland Fund; the opportunity to engage in professional learning; and the additional resources made available.
- The most frequently reported factors which hindered increased collaboration were lack of staff cover and time.

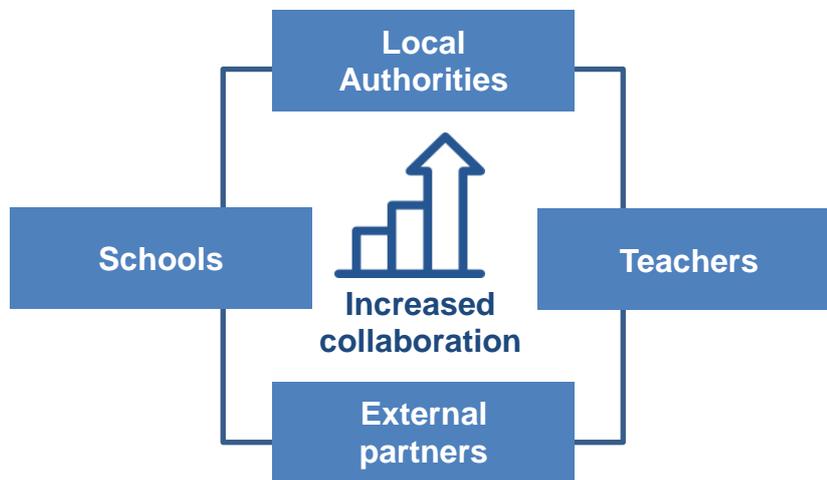


## To what extent did the fund encourage collaboration?

- 13.2. There was widespread agreement amongst teachers and local authorities that the fund had made a positive impact on the amount of collaborative activity.
- 13.3. Collaboration within schools and with external partners was common whilst there were challenges which impacted on the level of collaboration between schools and local authorities.
- 13.4. Evidence has been gathered from four different sources: the local authority mini survey; the annual headteachers' survey; the qualitative research; and Challenge Authority progress reports.

### Increased Collaboration

- 13.5. Overall, there were many examples of collaborative activity supported by evidence that suggested this had increased as a result of the fund. The increase in collaboration was evident in local authorities, schools, teachers and external partners.



- 13.6. **Headteachers** responding to the online survey in Years 1 and 2 felt that there had been increased collaboration as a result of the fund. In Year 1, 71% reported an increase, of which 32% felt this had been a large increase. In Year 2, 77% reported an increase, with 39% reporting a large increase.

- 13.7. Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 14, **local authorities** responding to the mini survey at the end of Year 1, reported that increased collaboration – with other professionals, between schools and authorities – had been an unintended positive consequence of the fund. Challenge Authority progress reports revealed that collaboration was a key part of their programmes.
- 13.8. The qualitative research showed that almost all **stakeholders** felt that the fund had had a positive impact on collaboration.
- 13.9. Nevertheless, a small number of stakeholders did not think the fund had any impact on collaboration. Mainly because it was argued that there was a high level of collaboration prior to the fund.
- For a small number of teachers in the qualitative research, there was already a high level of collaboration within their school prior to the fund.
  - Similarly, 18% of headteachers in both Year 1 and Year 2 reported that although there had been an increase in collaborative activity, this was not as a result of the fund.
- 13.10. Whilst there were lots of examples across the data sources of collaborative activity, some types of partnerships were more common than others and this is discussed in the next section.

### **Collaboration within schools**

- 13.11. Local authorities and teachers taking part in the qualitative research were asked to comment on collaboration within schools, between schools and with other partners.

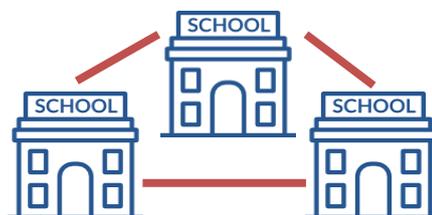


- 13.12. Stakeholders in the qualitative research positively reported on the type of collaboration occurring within schools. Examples of within school collaboration reported to be occurring as a result of the fund included:
- Staff talking and thinking together about new approaches
  - Joint planning and more formal approaches to collaboration
  - Peer observation, team teaching and collegiate working
  - Joint training and joint learning

13.13. A few teachers and local authorities in the qualitative research also reported that there was increased collaboration between teachers working with the same pupils at different stages.

### Collaboration between schools

13.14. Teachers in the qualitative research also spoke positively about the opportunity to collaborate with other schools.



13.15. Most collaboration occurred within the local authority but some teachers, particularly those in the Schools Programme, described collaboration between schools in different local authorities.

13.16. Examples of collaborative activity between schools reported by teachers and local authorities included:

- Clusters or family groups of schools working together to close the poverty related attainment gap
- Learning communities
- Joint training or joint in-service days
- Joint planning
- Visits to other schools to share ideas, do peer-to-peer observation and showcase work to colleagues
- Joint initiatives between schools, for example shared family engagement days

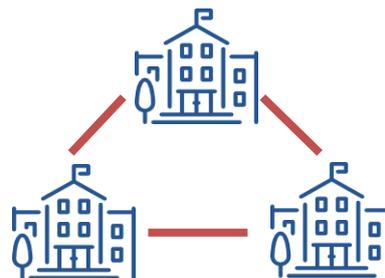
13.17. Whilst Challenge Authorities reported that collaboration between schools and across clusters was common, there was less evidence of collaboration between the primary and secondary programme within each authority.

13.18. Reports from Attainment Advisors stated that the focus for collaborations involving schools was mainly across learning and teaching, including moderation activities. For example, between September 2016 and January 2017, 8 out of 10 collaboration activities focused on learning, teaching and assessment involving primary schools or secondary schools. This included a few examples of primary and secondary school collaboration.

13.19. Teachers and local authorities also reported that there remained some challenges around the level of joint working between schools. Specifically, a few respondents to the headteacher survey (in Year 2) mentioned that they would like to gain improved access to collaborative opportunities reaching beyond their local area. This is discussed in more detail in the next section.

### Collaboration between local authorities

13.20. Cross local authority working seemed less well developed. Whilst there were some small examples of collaboration between Challenge Authorities and challenge schools, local authorities and Attainment Advisors taking part in the qualitative research felt that greater collaboration between local authorities was needed.



13.21. Strategic stakeholders had mixed views on the extent to which they felt the fund had impacted positively on collaboration between local authorities.

13.22. Reports from Attainment Advisors detailed the focus for collaborations within local authorities and between local authorities. This was more frequently reported by Attainment Advisors supporting Challenge Authorities. The focus of these collaborations was largely families and communities, use of data and leadership. For example, sharing practice in the use of data to target support to specific schools.

### Collaboration with external partners

13.23. Teachers and local authorities in the qualitative research reported that due to the fund, they were now more aware of the need to strengthen partnerships with those outside the school setting.



13.24. Most teachers felt that the fund had increased collaboration with external partners, including:

- Health Professionals including speech and language therapists, health visitors, dieticians etc

- Educational Psychologists
- Community Learning and Development workers
- Universities and Colleges
- Third sector organisations
- Parents

13.25. Collaboration with external partners featured as one of the factors increasing the sustainability of the fund, as stated by respondents to the headteacher survey (Year 2). External partners appeared necessary to access expertise.



## What factors helped and hindered increased collaboration?

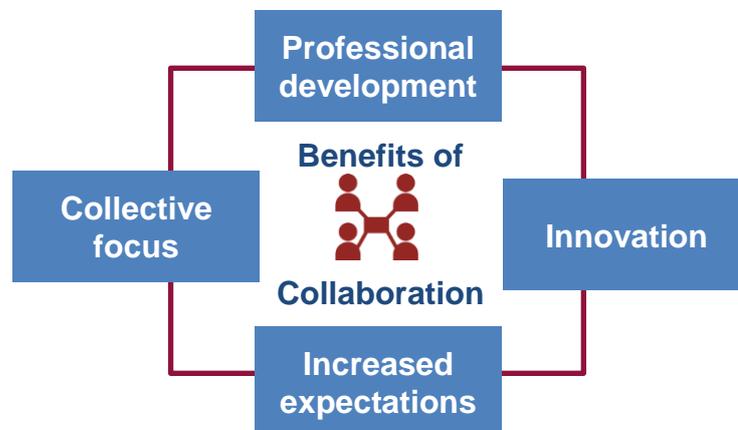
13.26. Whilst shared aims, professional learning opportunities and additional resources all helped to foster collaboration, some types of collaboration were hindered by a lack of available staff or time.

13.27. Evidence has been collected from Challenge Authority progress reports, the annual headteacher survey and the qualitative research with key stakeholders.

### Benefits of collaboration

13.28. Stakeholders saw a wide range of benefits around collaboration. The key benefits reported revolved around:

Figure 13.1: Benefits of collaboration



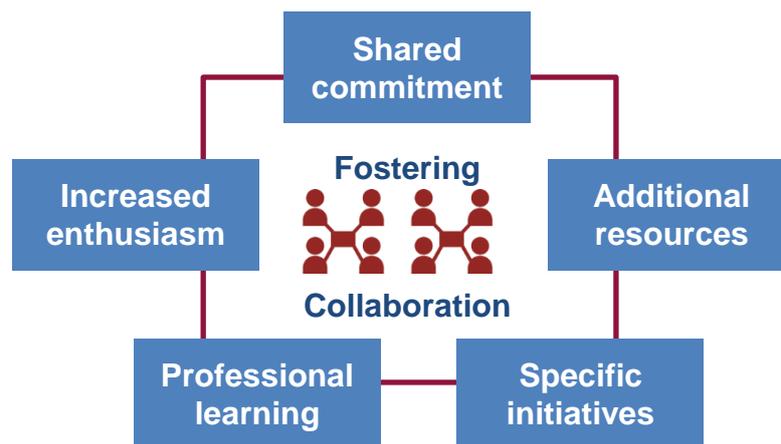
- 13.29. Analysis from the Challenge Authority progress reports and headteacher survey in both years revealed that collaboration helped to maintain a collective focus on the aims of the fund and in planning and implementing initiatives. Specifically, a collective focus was mentioned by 35% of respondents to the headteacher survey in Year 2, as one of the factors which helps the fund to succeed. Chapter 14 will again reinforce collaboration as a positive consequence of the fund.
- 13.30. From the progress reports, it was clear that Challenge Authorities saw the benefit of collaboration as it allowed:
- Sharing learning around what works, for example, in the implementation of interventions and data collection
  - Connecting with third sector organisations
  - Supporting teacher's professional development
- 13.31. Teachers in the qualitative research saw collaboration within schools as a positive impact of the fund. They reported that:
- the fund had built a culture of sharing
  - teachers were more willing to seek out new approaches
  - increased confidence in relation to peer observation and self-evaluation; and
  - increased expectations around attainment within their school
- 13.32. Equally, teachers valued the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues outside their school. Those interviewed in the qualitative research felt that joint working between schools had helped to increase trust and build stronger relationships between staff at different schools.
- 13.33. In the qualitative research, stakeholders reported that collaboration with external partners had helped to strengthen referral processes and overall support; provide expertise and ensure better links between schools and wider services.

## Fostering greater collaboration

13.34. Headteachers in the online survey were asked to comment on why they felt there had been an increase in collaboration as a result of the fund. Their responses revealed that the following factors helped to foster collaboration:

- A shared motivation or commitment of teachers to achieve the aims of the fund and work collaboratively to make an impact
- Additional resources made available as a result of the fund, including additional staff and more time
- Increased enthusiasm, motivation and confidence of staff
- Specific initiatives, including those introduced through the fund
- Professional learning opportunities

Figure 13.2: Factors fostering collaboration



13.35. This was supported by the qualitative research which found that training and professional development was a key catalyst for greater collaboration; it provided the opportunity for teachers to share their learning.

13.36. Teachers in the qualitative research felt that within school collaboration worked well because teachers were excited and eager to learn. Feeling empowered and confident and having the time to reflect on their practice also supported collaboration.

13.37. Strategic stakeholders taking part in the qualitative research felt that national events and the Attainment Advisors role provided more opportunities for networking between local authorities.

13.38. The role played by Attainment Advisors in fostering collaboration was already emphasised in Chapter 3. Local authorities and schools reported that positive aspects of the Attainment Advisors role involved their ability to link in with national and local networks, fostering collaboration and information sharing

### Challenges of Collaboration

13.39. Although there existed collaboration, some felt this was not solely due to the Attainment Scotland Fund. Stakeholders identified barriers which impacted on the extent to which the Attainment Scotland Fund encouraged collaboration. Namely, this related to staffing issues and lack of time or resources.

Figure 13.3: Factors hindering collaboration



13.40. Responses to the headteacher survey in both Year 1 and 2 showed that **lack of staff available** was the key challenge to lack of collaborative activity.

13.41. Relatedly, headteachers also reported that lack of time and lack of funding because of the way funding had been distributed in their authority impacted on the ability to collaborate. Insufficient funding or the withdrawal of the additional investments at end of the fund might have led to insufficient access to external support from third sector partners. This type of support was referred to as costly and difficult to obtain outside of the framework of the fund but also necessary especially when it offers mental health or disability support. This posed a threat to the sustainability of collaborations.

13.42. A few local authority officers taking part in the qualitative research felt that within school collaboration was more difficult in the secondary school context where the Attainment Scotland Fund was less well developed.

13.43. A key challenge reported by teachers and local authorities in the qualitative research in relation to collaboration between schools

was the **difficulty in finding staff cover**. Both teachers and local authorities reported that staff shortages and associated administrative challenges impacted on the opportunity to collaborate with other schools.

13.44. Less frequently mentioned challenges to collaboration between schools included:

- For Schools Programme, being the only school receiving Attainment Scotland Funding in the local authority
- Distance between schools in rural authorities
- Distance or resentment from those not receiving Attainment Scotland Funding

13.45. The most common reported challenges to working with external partners included:

- staff time
- clarity of outcomes and expectations
- the different ethos of external partners
- tight timescales to spend funding

13.46. A few strategic stakeholders in the qualitative research felt that there existed a lack of willingness to collaborate and share lessons which impacted on the level of collaboration between local authorities.

## 14. Unintended Consequences

- 14.1. This chapter explores the extent to which the Attainment Scotland Fund brought about any positive or negative unintended consequences.
- 14.2. Both sections draw on data from the local authority mini survey at the end of Year 1 and the annual online headteacher survey. Interviews with teachers and local authorities as part of the qualitative research also inform the findings in this chapter.

### Chapter Highlights – Unintended Consequences

- The most common unintended positive consequences of the Attainment Scotland Fund reported by teachers and local authorities were increased staff morale, skill development and collaboration.
- The most common unintended negative consequences of the Attainment Scotland Fund reported by teachers and local authorities were the impact on staff resources and workload, and a potential divide between those benefitting and those not benefitting from the fund.



## Did the fund have any unintended positive consequences?

- 14.3. Overall, teachers and local authorities reported that there had been a variety of unintended positive consequences brought about as a result of the fund. It should be noted, that these were unintended for the respondents themselves. Some of the positive consequences noted below, were indeed part of the intended outcomes of the fund.
- 14.4. Specifically, common themes centred around:
- Increased staff morale
  - More opportunities for professional development and increased skill set – particularly around leadership and the use of data / evidence
  - Improved collaboration
  - Parental engagement
- 14.5. In Year 1 of the headteacher survey, 35% of respondents reported positive consequences as a result of the fund. This was maintained in Year 2, with 39% of headteachers reporting that participation in the fund had led to unintended positive consequences.
- 14.6. Both local authorities and teachers interviewed in the qualitative research felt there had been a **positive impact on staff morale** and overall positivity. For teachers, this was the most frequently mentioned positive consequence, reporting that the Attainment Scotland Fund had increased their enthusiasm and confidence in trying new approaches.
- 14.7. Headteachers responding to the online survey at the end of Year 2 also reported that the fund had made a positive impact on staff satisfaction, confidence and motivation. 15% of headteachers spontaneously mentioned improved teacher morale when asked about positive unintended consequences of the fund.
- 14.8. Another positive impact recorded by local authorities and teachers was around the increased number of **opportunities to develop**

**their skills**, and two particular skills that were mentioned frequently were leadership skills and use **of data**.

- 14.9. When asked about unintended positive impact of the fund, 11% of headteachers mentioned staff being more willing to consider leadership roles and being better equipped to take them on.
- 14.10. The evidence suggested that teachers and local authorities felt there had been an increase in the use of data as a result of the fund.
- Teachers: Headteachers responding to the online survey commented that there had been an improvement in the use of data and tracking of pupils. As reported in Chapter 12, 68% of headteachers in Year 2 reported that their skills and knowledge with regard to using data had significantly improved. Furthermore, 9% of headteachers (Year 2) spontaneously referred to improved use of data and data skills when asked about positive unintended consequences of the fund.
  - Local Authorities: The qualitative research revealed that local authorities felt there had be an increased focus on the use of data.
- 14.11. A further recurring theme was that the fund had **improved collaboration**. Teachers interviewed in the qualitative research and those responding to the headteacher surveys felt that there was more sharing of ideas amongst staff. Overall, 22% of headteachers (Year 2) spontaneously mentioned collaboration when asked about positive unintended consequences of the fund. It was the most commonly discussed factor amongst all those mentioned in response to this question.
- 14.12. There was also evidence that the fund had improved collaboration more widely. Online survey responses from headteachers and local authorities suggested there was increased partnership with the wider community, including other professionals.
- 14.13. **Parental engagement** also featured strongly as an unintended consequence. Just over one in ten of headteachers (13% in Year 2) mentioned increased and better parental engagement. This has been the third most often discussed 'unintended' consequence of the fund. Headteachers referred to the success of initiatives aiming to engage families and saw improvements in the relationship between the school and the parents.

14.14. Other unintended positive consequences reported less frequently by respondents included:

- An increased awareness of or focus on the issues relating to the influence of poverty on attainment, from responses to the headteacher survey.
- Benefitting from national recognition of the work taking place in one Challenge Authority.
- An increased enthusiasm for learning amongst pupils; and
- A general improvement of teaching quality and ethos at the school which goes beyond the areas of focus and aims of the fund.



### Did the fund have any unintended negative consequences?

14.15. During the first two years, a small number of teachers and local authorities did report some negative unintended consequences of the fund, including:

- The impact on staff resources and workload
- A divide between those benefitting and those not benefitting from the Attainment Scotland Fund

14.16. The majority of respondents to the headteacher survey did not think the fund had brought about negative consequences. However, 18% in Year 1 and 23% in Year 2 did report that participation had led to unintended negative consequences.

14.17. Local authorities and teachers interviewed in the qualitative research did report some negative consequences. However, some teachers stressed that these were largely outweighed by the positive impacts.

14.18. One commonly mentioned negative consequence was the impact of the Attainment Scotland Fund on **staff resources**.

14.19. At the end of Year 1, headteachers responding to the online survey reported that within the context of recruitment difficulties, it had been difficult to backfill or manage new posts.

14.20. Similarly, at the end of Year 2, headteachers continued to report difficulties in staff shortages and ability to fill gaps caused by staff

changes. 27% of headteachers listed staffing issues as the biggest negative unintended consequence of the fund in Year 2.

- 14.21. Local authorities in both the online survey and qualitative research also agreed that appointing staff to attainment challenge work created a gap which was difficult to fill.
- 14.22. Furthermore, teachers in the qualitative research indicated that when there were staffing gaps this created extra pressure and impacted negatively on teacher morale.
- 14.23. Relatedly, a second common negative unintended consequence was the **increase in workloads**. Headteachers responding to survey in Years 1 and 2 and those interviewed in the qualitative research mentioned that the fund had created additional workload and a lot of associated pressure to deliver on expectations. The majority of responses to the question about negative unintended consequences of the fund referred to increased and overwhelming workload, with 52% of headteachers naming it as the main negative factor in Year 2.
- 14.24. Local authorities in the qualitative research also noted that there were additional time pressures due to the increased administration work.
- 14.25. A final common theme mentioned by both teachers and local authorities was that the fund had caused a **potential division** between those benefitting from additional resources and those not. This was also mentioned by a minority of respondents to the headteacher survey. They discussed the fund as responsible for highlighting inequality and building resentment.
- 14.26. Local authorities and teachers interviewed in the qualitative research reported that there was a feeling of divide between challenge and non-challenge areas and challenge and non-challenge schools.
- 14.27. When headteachers responding to the online survey in Year 1 were asked to describe negative consequences, some suggested that the fund may have led to a division between staff who were participating and those not participating in the fund.
- 14.28. In addition, there were a small number of less frequently mentioned negative unintended consequences.
- 14.29. A small number of teachers in the qualitative research identified wider unintended negative consequences:

- the increasing focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing may mean that children miss out on the wider broad general education;
- there was some concern that pupils in the middle, who would also benefit from support, were being excluded; and
- parents did not want to be stigmatised as poor, so targeting had to be handled very sensitively.

## 15. Conclusions

15.1. This final chapter presents high level findings across all themes explored in the evaluation. It explores the positive highlights arising as a result of the Attainment Scotland Fund; and summarises the key issues to consider for the future working and improvement of the fund.

### Highlights

15.2. Overall, within the first two years of the fund, significant progress was achieved in building strong and solid foundations. Progress and experiences across the range of stakeholders were for the most part positive. Key notes to highlight are:

- **Widespread support and clarity of aims.** Since the launch of the fund, there was widespread support across all stakeholder groups and an improved understanding of the need to tackle the poverty related attainment gap.
- **Fund as a driver of change and cohesion.** Through the fund, a shared commitment to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap was evident across stakeholder groups.
- **Professional skills.** Through the fund, there was an increase in professional learning opportunities. Furthermore, there was a belief that that the fund had improved teaching skills and provided leadership opportunities. It had provided access to training, encouraged reflection on skills, increased professional dialogue, improved collaboration and provided opportunities to mentor, network and lead on new approaches.
- **Evidence based approaches.** Data usage appeared well embedded within fund activities. Data played a significant role in selecting, monitoring and targeting interventions. Stakeholders reported increases in their usage and understanding of data as a result of the fund.
- **Collaboration.** The level and nature of collaboration appeared to increase over the life of the fund, particularly within school collaboration and collaboration with external partners. There remained a need for more collaboration at a local authority level.

- **Attainment Advisors.** The support provided by Attainment Advisors was seen by schools as pivotal to the successful implementation of the fund. In particular, Attainment Advisors played a key role in increasing collaboration across schools and across local authorities; improving understanding and the use of data amongst schools; and providing evidence-based approaches to choosing interventions and defining targeting strategies.
- **Improving attainment.** Initial indications of progress at a small scale are positive and hint towards a shift in the right direction. Strong foundations appeared to be built with respect to the administration and delivery of the fund.

## Areas for improvement

15.3. The evaluation uncovered a range of consistent issues to consider for future improvement of the fund. These are summarised below:

- In some areas, the level of **bureaucracy and challenging timescales** was seen as an area that could be improved. Stakeholders reported that the level and nature of reporting requirements and tight timescales acted as a barrier.
- A significant challenge for authorities and schools was around the **recruitment of staff**. This put extra pressure on schools and impacted negatively on the success of planned interventions, leading to frustration and underspend.
- There is scope for **greater collaboration at a local authority level**. Firstly, within each Challenge Authority, greater collaboration at a strategic level between the primary and secondary programme could be in place. Secondly, there is scope for further supporting the sharing and learning of practices across authorities.
- **Poverty as a wider issue.** A wide range of stakeholders stressed that it was important to recognise that a number of factors, other than poverty, were likely to affect attainment. Stakeholders emphasised that education could not bring about sustainable change on its own, and that wider partnership across a range of other services was essential.
- There were some concerns around **measures of poverty** and deprivation and how to appropriately identify children that need extra support. Concentrating on SIMD data appeared too limiting, with some concerns around stigmatisation.

- There were some challenges around the **support provided by Attainment Advisors**. While on the whole their support was highly valued by schools, local authorities were critical of the variety of roles across Attainment Advisors, and the rationale behind their support. Attainment Advisors themselves also felt there were issues around clarifying their own role.
- Stakeholders had mixed views about the success of **parental engagement**, and schools reported that they continued to find this challenging.

15.4. While significant progress has been achieved over the first two years of the fund, the poverty related attainment gap continues to exist. There are a range of issues to be considered in future planning and implementation of the fund in order to drive further sustainable improvements in attainment.

# Appendix A

Qualitative Research Report – see separate report attached.

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact [socialresearch@gov.scot](mailto:socialresearch@gov.scot) for further information.



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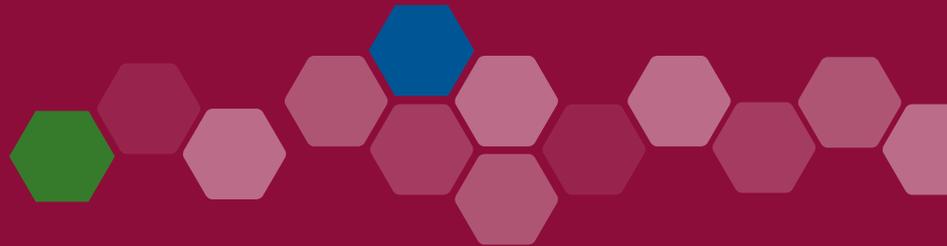
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