
INSIGHT LOCAL BENCHMARKING MEASURES TO 2017

Report by Service Director, Children and Young People EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

7 November 2017

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs the Executive Committee Members of trends in attainment and the achievement of Secondary 5 and Secondary 6 pupils in the Senior Phase in Scottish Borders using the “Local Benchmarking Measures” from 2013 to 2017 from Insight the National Exam Comparator Data tool.**
- 1.2 The Local Benchmarking measures provide data on pupils' achievements during the Senior Phase while they are still at school. Leavers' data will be available in the National dashboards on Insight in February. The attainment figures are based on the 'Latest and Best' achievement of young people in the Senior Phase and some early presentations in Secondary 3. In Scottish Borders, the Council operates inclusive schools and there are some pupils who pass examinations at SCQF Levels 1 and 2, which are not included in the analysis as key benchmark measures, but are available in whole school subjects summary reports. The attainment of our most vulnerable pupils will be reported as a separate report to the Executive Committee in January 2018.
- 1.3 The information and commentary in this report detail the progress made by Scottish Borders pupils against the Virtual Comparator and the National Establishment (i.e. national average) by stage over the last five years for each Local Benchmarking measures. Figures are provided for both the National Establishment and the Virtual Comparator, but the Virtual Comparator is seen as the key benchmark for helping schools and Education Authorities understand their strengths and areas for improvement. The Virtual Comparator is made up of ten pupils from other Local Authorities around Scotland who have similar matching characteristics. This is matched by stage, gender, Additional Support Needs (ASN) and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). It is not an actual school, but a helpful statistical comparator. Local benchmarking measures are influenced by a school's curricular model/presentations policy. The local benchmarking data is detailed in the appendix to this report.
- 1.4 There are real strengths in the positive trends of performance of Scottish Borders pupils in national examinations; in every key measure significant progress is evidenced in the last five years and the performance in all key measures improved between 2016 and 2017.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:

- (a) Notes the trends in attainment and achievement of Secondary 5 and Secondary 6 pupils**
- (b) Agrees to recognise the significant improvement in the fifteen key measures of pupils' performance in national exams in 2017 compared to 2016, acknowledging the work of school staff, young people and the support of parents/carers in this achievement.**

3 BACKGROUND

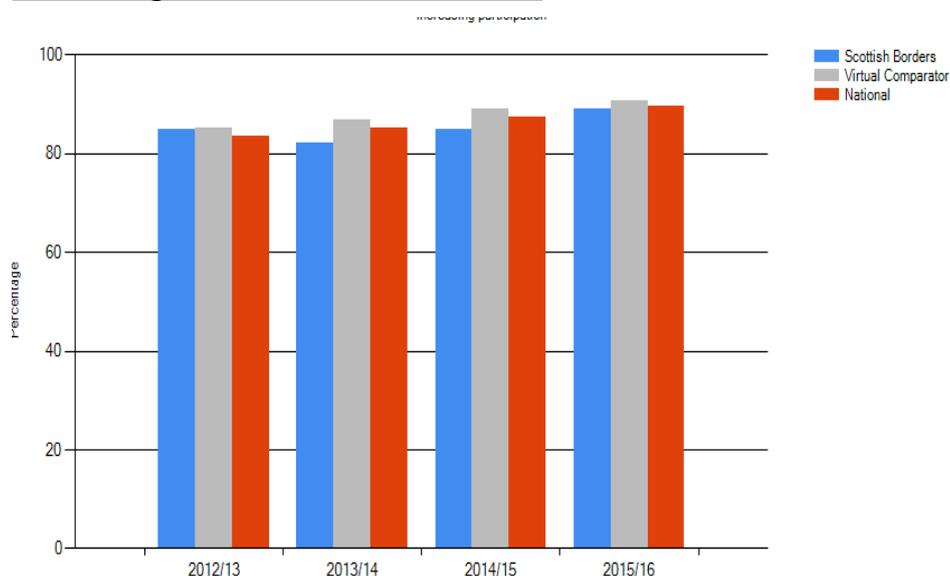
- 3.1 Each year young people in secondary schools in the Scottish Borders achieve a range of awards and qualifications available on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) at different stages throughout the Senior Phase of secondary school (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6).
- 3.2 The Scottish Government developed a new statistical benchmarking tool, 'Insight', to assist schools and Local Authorities in the analysis of attainment of young people in the Senior Phase through nationally agreed benchmarking measures and course breadth and depth data. General information on the "Insight" tool is available online at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/seniorphasebenchmarking>.
- 3.3 This report focuses on the four "Local Benchmarking Measures" based on the cumulative achievements of all young people at the end of Secondary 5 and Secondary 6 in the five years to 2017, and will explore how Scottish Borders Council has performed over this five year period in relation to the national average and its Virtual Comparator.
- 3.4 The four nationally agreed "Local Benchmarking Measures", published through "Insight" in September 2017, are:
- (a) **Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy:** this shows the percentage of young people who achieve a qualification in Literacy and Numeracy across Secondary 4 to Secondary 6;
 - (b) **Improving attainment for all:** this is based on a calculation of points awarded by grade and by level for each subject, including wider achievement awards;
 - (c) **Attainment versus Deprivation:** this is the above attainment information matched to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) information which allows us to track performance by deprivation;
 - (d) **Increasing Post School Destinations:** this dashboard shows the destination of our school leavers up to 2015/2016.
- 3.5 The Senior Phase is a three year learner journey from Secondary 4 – Secondary 6, where learners build up a portfolio of qualifications over this time which best suits the needs of that individual's path. In general, Scottish Borders Council has a high stay-on rate from Secondary 4 into Secondary 5, thus measuring performance at Secondary 5 is a key indicator for the Local Authority. Some learners in Secondary 4 will be on a two year National 5 learner journey in order to meet their needs and so comparison at Secondary 4 does not take into account these differences.
- 3.6 The reports in Insight are based on SQA attainment, schools academy college courses and SCQF level accredited awards.
- 3.7 The main highlights for Scottish Borders are provided in paragraphs 3.8. A detailed breakdown of each of the measures is provided in Appendix 1. It is advisable to study Appendix 1, "Scottish Borders Local Benchmarking" paper whilst following the commentary.

4 Scottish Borders Performance 2012 to 2017

- 4.1 Overall, the three Local Benchmarking Measures (LBMs) reported by the Scottish Government Insight tool in the September 2017 update indicate that attainment in Scottish Borders has improved overall over the five year period to 2016/2017. There are a number of key points detailed in the paragraphs below:
- 4.2 Literacy and Numeracy Achievement – see Figures/Tables 3 to 5 on Pages 4 to 8, Appendix 1:
- (a) Literacy Achievement: Scottish Borders Literacy performance shows an improving trend over the five years across SCQF Levels 3 to 6 at both Secondary 5 and Secondary 6. Scottish Borders' performance has typically been slightly ahead of the Virtual Comparator;
 - (b) Numeracy Achievement: Scottish Borders' Numeracy performance shows an improving trend over the five years across SCQF Levels 3 to 6.
- 4.3 Improving Attainment for All – see Figure 1/Table 1 on pages 2 to 3, Appendix 1:
- (a) Over the last five years Scottish Borders shows an improving trend in the average complementary tariff scores across the three attaining groups of the lowest 20%, middle 60% and top 20% by the end of Secondary 5 and Secondary 6. Tariff points are calculated in Insight using the SCQF scale by level and by band. With the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, it was agreed that it would be essential to implement a new tariff scale to ensure that it is capable of addressing the full range of possible journeys of learners in the Senior Phase, whilst striving to avoid perverse incentives (eg quantity over quality). This calculation also mitigates the difference in curriculum models where young people sitting six compared with eight qualifications, are not disadvantaged;
 - (b) Performance by the end of Secondary 5 and Secondary 6 has typically been in line with the Virtual Comparator across the five years for the middle 60%, with positive trends for the top 20%. The pupils' performances are in line with the national average for the lowest 20% of attainers and are moving towards closing the gap against the Virtual Comparator in this measure;
 - (c) Scottish Borders Council pupils in Secondary 6, based on the roll in Secondary 4, are in line with the Virtual Comparator for achieving 3+ Higher, 5+ Highers and 1+ Advanced Higher.
- 4.4 Attainment versus Deprivation – see Tables 6 to 7 on Pages 8 and 9, Appendix 1:
- (a) Scottish Borders data across the ten SIMD deciles at each stage over the five year period, show that they are roughly in line with the National average, though there is room for improvement in deciles 1 to 3. These lower deciles tend to be where our Secondary 4 leavers exit school and evidence shows that the longer these young people stay in school, the better their attainment. This year schools are making progress with strategies on how to close the poverty related attainment gap.

- (b) There is a whole programme of work, involving every school across the Local Authority, with very clear improvement targets, which will be the subject of a separate progress report to the January 2018 Executive Committee.

4.5 Increasing Post School Destinations -



- (a) In 2015/2016 Scottish Borders Council has shown a positive trend in leaver destinations and remains in line with the Virtual Comparator. The Council is working closely with schools and Skills Development Scotland to improve the quality of data and to use more 'live' data on a regular basis. The Council have improved the number of 'unknown' destinations this year, which should impact on the 2016/2017 information which comes out in the February Insight release.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Attainment for All – Exam Performance and Tariff Scores

- (a) The performance of Secondary 5 pupils in examinations evidences improving trends across all groups of learners in the last five years; performance in 2017 was above the national average and above the virtual comparator for the highest 20% learner group. The middle 60% and lowest 20% learner groups were above the national average but below the virtual comparators.
- (b) The performance of Secondary 6 pupils in examinations evidences improving trends across all groups of learners in the last five years; performance in 2017 was above the national average and above the virtual comparator for the highest 20% learner group. The middle 60% learner group was above the national average, but below the virtual comparators; the lowest 20% learner group were behind national and behind the virtual comparator.

5.2 Literacy and Numeracy

- (a) The performance of Secondary 5 pupils at National 3 and 4 or better shows an improving trend, with both levels showing an increase in 2017 on the previous year. The performance tracks in line with the national average and for the first time in 2017 performance was above the virtual comparator.
- (b) The performance of Secondary 5 pupils at National 5 and Higher shows an improving trend over the five year period, with the performance in 2017 increasing on the previous year with National 5 performance being above the national average and the gap closing on the Virtual Comparator. The performance of Secondary 5 pupils at Higher is improving, but work is required with Higher Maths performance to get above national and the Virtual Comparator performance level.
- (c) The performance of Secondary 6 pupils at National 3 and 4 or better shows an improving trend with both showing an increase in 2017 on the previous year. The performance is typically in line with the Virtual Comparator and the national average.
- (d) The performance of Secondary 6 pupils at National 5 or better shows an improving trend over the five year period, with the 2017 performance 10% higher than the previous year. The performance at Higher or better shows an increasing trend, but is lower than the Virtual Comparator and national average.

5.3 Attainment versus Deprivation

- (a) In 2017 the performance of Secondary 5 pupils in Decile 1 and 3 is below our Virtual Comparator. The performance of Secondary 5 pupils in Deciles 4 to 9 is in line nationally, but below at Decile 10.
- (b) In 2017 the performance of Secondary 6 pupils in Decile 1 to 3 is below the national average. In SIMD Decile 10, Scottish Borders Council performance is much greater than the National Establishment. In SIMD Decile 7, Scottish Borders Council performance is greater than the National Establishment, though there is room for improvement in Deciles 6 and 8.
- (c) Overall the 5 year trends in the exam performance of Scottish Borders pupils are improving. A range of key measures have made significant gain and are above national and Virtual Comparators; for the measures not yet above national and Virtual, there is a very robust focus on raising attainment.
- (d) Each secondary school will have a contextualised attainment review in November; an action plan will follow and be subject to ongoing scrutiny and support. Schools will have an opportunity to participate in a school improvement partnership with another secondary school within the South East Regional Collaborative. A range of professional learning activities and quality improvement processes will support schools to continue to raise attainment in all key measures, with a particular focus on the attainment in Deciles 1 to 3 and closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Council is confident that the strength in school and central officer leadership, the developing culture of ambition and the improving

classroom practice, will continue to improve levels of attainment across all key measures and progress the Council's ambition for all key measures to be above national and above Virtual Comparators.

- (e) There were many strong performances in pupils' exam performance in the Scottish Borders in 2017.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy

There are no direct policy implications associated with this report.

6.2 Integrated Impact Assessment

The subject of this Report does not affect the well-being of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6.3 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

6.4 Risk and Mitigations

The report fully describes all the elements of risk that have been identified in relation to this project and no specific additional concerns need to be addressed.

6.5 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

6.6 Acting Sustainably

There are no economic, social or environmental impacts arising as a result of this report.

6.7 Carbon Management

There are no anticipated impacts on carbon emissions as a result of this report.

6.8 Rural Proofing

There are no anticipated impacts on carbon emissions as a result of this report.

6.9 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation arising as a result of this report.

7 Consultation

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

7.2 The corporate management team have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Donna Manson

Service Director, Children and Young People Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Michelle Strong	Chief Officer - Education, Children and Young People Service

Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference:

Appendix: Appendix 1 – Scottish Borders Local Benchmarking and Graded Course Measures Performance to 2017

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Michelle Strong can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA, 01835 826817