



To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **2 November 2017**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Examination results 2017**

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report summarises attainment in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations in 2017, based on the key measures contained within the Insight benchmarking tool.
- 1.2. The data contained in this report will be subject to minor changes as the SQA process value-added units and also account for any re-marking through their post-results service. In addition, Skills Development Scotland is also currently tracking school leavers. As a result of this, Insight will be updated in February 2018 and a further report providing data on our leavers' attainment will be submitted to the education and children policy board in spring 2018.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of the education and children's services policy board are asked to:
 - note the content of this report;
 - note the efforts of pupils and the school communities in bringing about these results; and
 - agree that a further report will be brought to the education and children policy board in spring 2018.

3. Background

3.1. Since 2014, schools have been engaging with a performance evaluation tool known as Insight. This tool is provided by the Scottish Government to schools and education authorities as a way of benchmarking performance in four key measures:

- Literacy and numeracy;
- Improving attainment for the lowest achieving 20%, middle 60% and top 20% of achievers;
- Attainment versus deprivation; and
- Leavers' destinations.

3.2. This report provides data and commentary on the performance of each of our senior phase cohorts: S4, S5 and S6 over the last three years and against our comparators for three of the measures detailed above. Leavers' destinations will become available in February 2018 and will form part of the report to this board in spring 2018.

3.3. In addition to these local benchmarking measures, this report will provide data in relation to the number and quality of passes at each qualifications level.

3.4. The Insight tool uses a 'virtual comparator' (VC) to allow authorities and schools to make statistically valid comparisons between how young people have performed against young people nationally, who share four similar characteristics. These characteristics are: gender, year group, percentage of time spent in mainstream classes, and live within an area with the same Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile. Insight also allows us to compare our performance with the national picture.

3.5. **Attainment in literacy and numeracy (S4, S5 and S6)**

3.5.1 Raising attainment in literacy and numeracy remains a key priority of Renfrewshire Council children's services and this is reflected in one of the key priorities of the national improvement framework.

3.5.2 Attainment in literacy and numeracy includes passes at national 4 and 5 in English and maths and also passes in some other awards at SCQF levels 4 and 5 which contain certain core elements of literacy and numeracy. The tables which follow, provide data on our performance in literacy and numeracy, compared to our virtual comparator and the national average, for each of our senior phase cohorts.

3.5.3 **S4**

Table 1 below provides data in attainment in literacy and numeracy in S4 at level 4 and level 5.

Table 1	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy
Renfrewshire	2015	93	88	61	54
VC	2015	92	86	61	50
National	2015	91	85	60	50
Renfrewshire	2016	93	84	71	56
VC	2016	92	87	67	54
National	2016	91	86	66	53
Renfrewshire	2017	96	89	75	60
VC	2017	93	89	72	57
National	2017	92	87	70	56

Our S4 attainment in literacy continues to improve at both level 4 and level 5. Level 4 literacy attainment continues to be high and is above both the virtual comparator and the national figure. Attainment in literacy at level 5 has gone from 61% in 2015 to 75% in 2017. While in 2015 our performance was broadly in line with the virtual comparator and the national average, we are now performing well above both these comparator measures.

Numeracy at level 4 has had a similar trend in improvement as literacy at level 4 and is now in line with the virtual comparator and above the national average. Attainment at level 5 numeracy also continues to improve and while our virtual comparator has also improved we are above both our virtual comparator and the national average.

3.5.4 S5 based on S4 roll

Table 2 below provides data on attainment in literacy and numeracy in S5 at level 4 and level 5.

Table 2	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy
Renfrewshire	2015	95	87	77	65
VC	2015	92	87	74	61
National	2015	92	86	73	61
Renfrewshire	2016	95	91	80	69
VC	2016	94	90	77	65
National	2016	93	89	76	64
Renfrewshire	2017	94	89	83	72
VC	2017	94	90	80	67
National	2017	93	89	79	66

Although there has been no improvement in attainment in literacy at level 4, Renfrewshire is in line with the virtual comparator and above the national average. Level 5 literacy, however, is an improving picture and we remain above both the virtual comparator and the national average.

A similar picture exists for level 4 numeracy although we are just below our virtual comparator but in line with the national average. Nevertheless, level 5 numeracy continues to improve and we remain above the virtual comparator and the national average.

3.5.5 S6 based on the S4 roll

Table 3 below provides data on attainment in literacy and numeracy at levels 4 and level 5 by the end of S6.

Table 3	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy
Renfrewshire	2015	94	83	72	61
VC	2015	93	83	71	60
National	2015	91	80	68	57
Renfrewshire	2016	95	87	78	68
VC	2016	92	87	75	64
National	2016	92	86	75	64
Renfrewshire	2017	95	92	81	72
VC	2017	94	90	79	68
National	2017	93	89	77	66

By the time S4 pupils have reached the end of S6, attainment in both literacy and numeracy has increased from that in 2015. The most marked improvements have been in level 5 literacy and at both level 4 and level 5 numeracy. In all measures for S6 in 2017, Renfrewshire is above both the virtual comparator and the national average.

3.5.6 Conclusion – improvements in literacy and numeracy

Renfrewshire has invested in improving levels of literacy through a variety of measures over recent years which have targeted the teaching of reading and engagement and enjoyment of reading in children. As these initiatives have been largely targeted at improving literacy earlier in a child's learning, these interventions do not yet have an impact on the data shown above. We, therefore, expect performance to improve further in the coming years as the impact of these interventions are reflected in attainment in the senior phase. Improving attainment in numeracy has been given a renewed focus this school session and the service is currently exploring strategies for improving numeracy attainment across Renfrewshire. Work has already begun through our Attainment Challenge to improve confidence and skills in the teaching of numeracy and mathematics and all schools engaged very well in a recent 'maths week' which raised the profile of numeracy and maths in our schools.

3.6. Improving attainment for all

- 3.6.1 Each qualification on the Scottish Certificate and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is attributed a number of points, known as tariff points. The higher level of qualification, the more tariff points it is attributed. Insight then converts

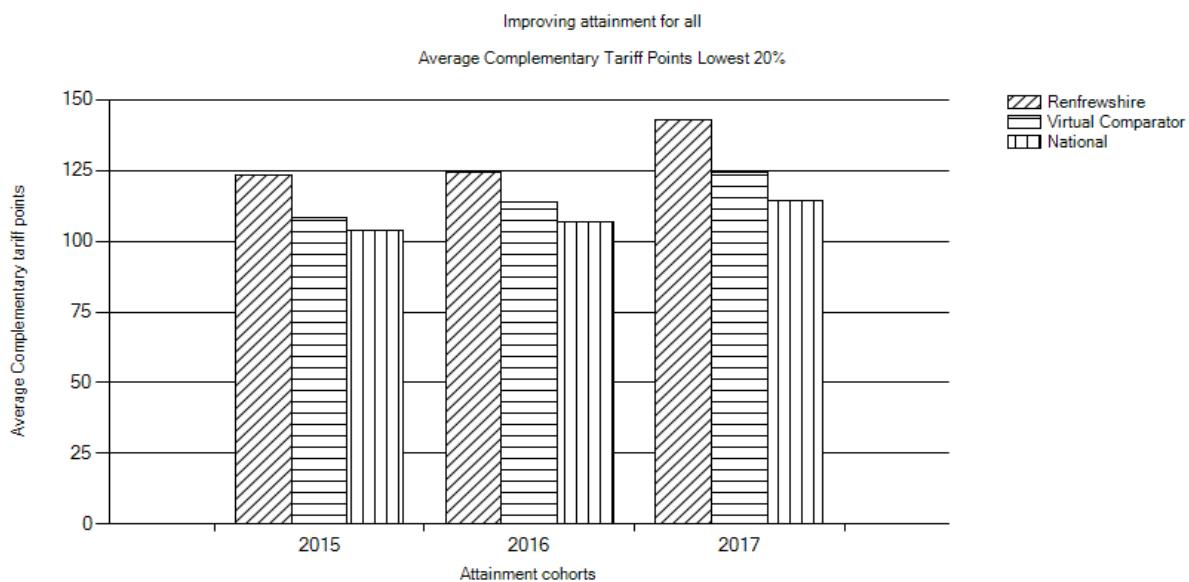
these points into a tariff score which is the total number of tariff points that a young person has accumulated over all of their awards.

3.6.2 Within this measure, Insight breaks the data down into three parts: the total average tariff points for the lowest attaining 20%, the middle 60% and the highest attaining 20% and compares these with the virtual comparator and the national figure. The section below provides a breakdown in the performance of each of our senior phase cohorts. In all graphs below, the phrase 'complementary' tariff points is used. This is a methodology used by Insight which allows us to compare our tariff points with others across Scotland, regardless of differences in curricular models.

3.6.3 S4

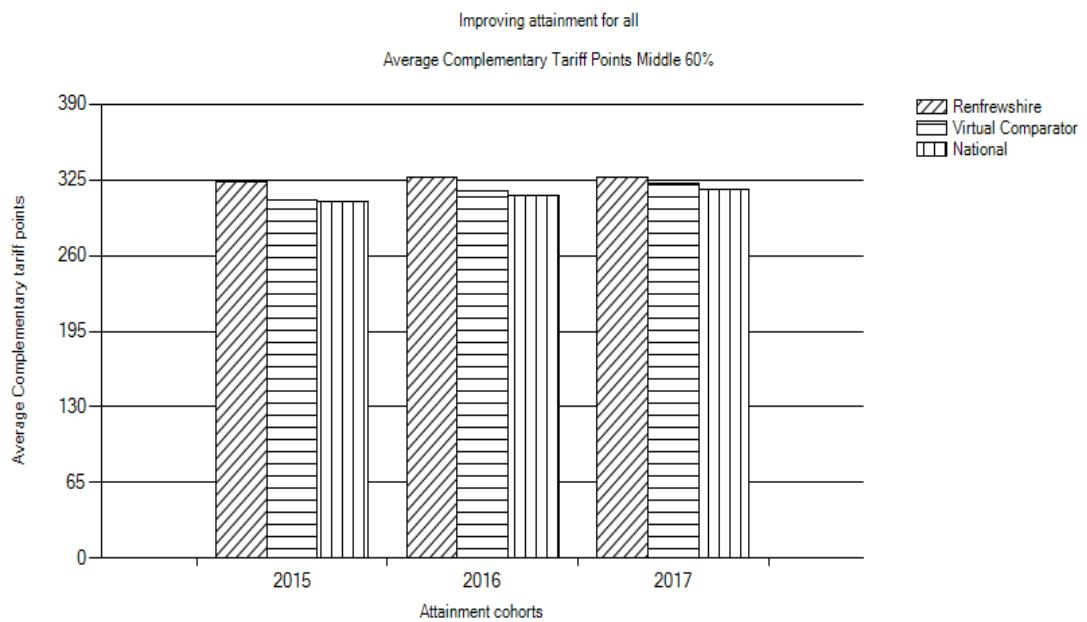
Graph 1 below shows that for S4, there has been an upward trend in tariff points gained by the lowest attaining 20%. In 2017, our lowest attaining 20% gained the most tariff points for the past three years, with performance being consistently above the virtual comparator and the national average over the same period.

Graph 1 – lowest attaining 20% in S4



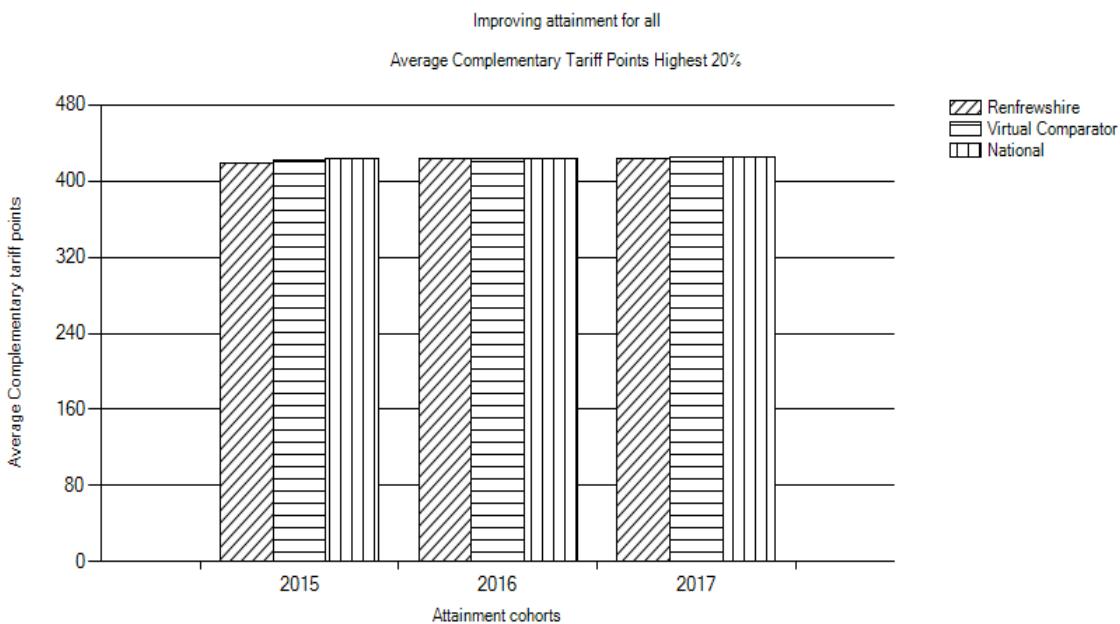
The middle attaining 60%, shown in graph 2 below, shows that the average tariff points of the middle attaining 60% has remained fairly static over the past three years. However, we remain above the virtual comparator and the national average.

Graph 2 – middle attaining 60% in S4



Graph 3 below shows the average tariff points of our highest attaining 20%. Attainment for the highest attaining 20% shows a small improvement which means we are now in line with our virtual comparator and the national average.

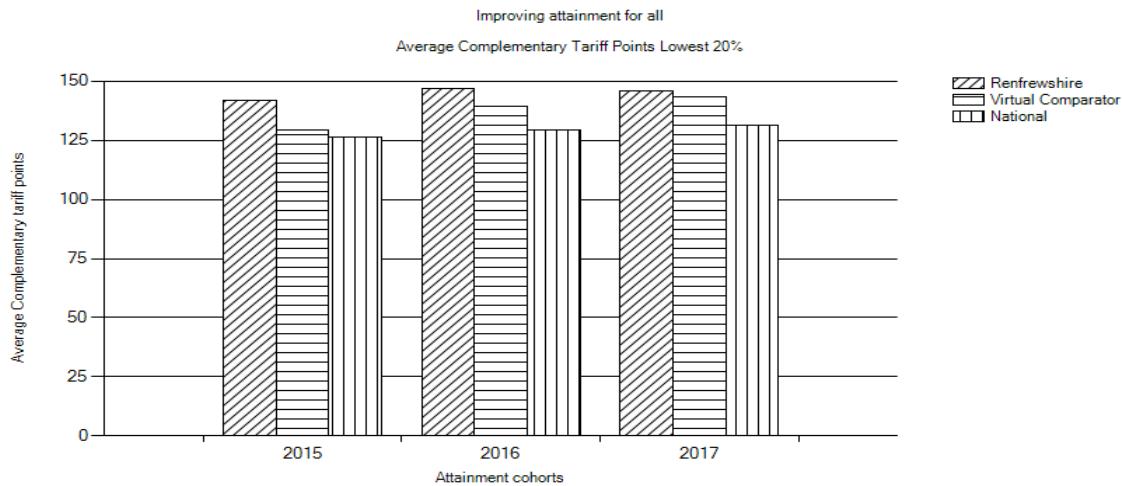
Graph 3 – highest attaining 20% in S4



3.6.4 S5

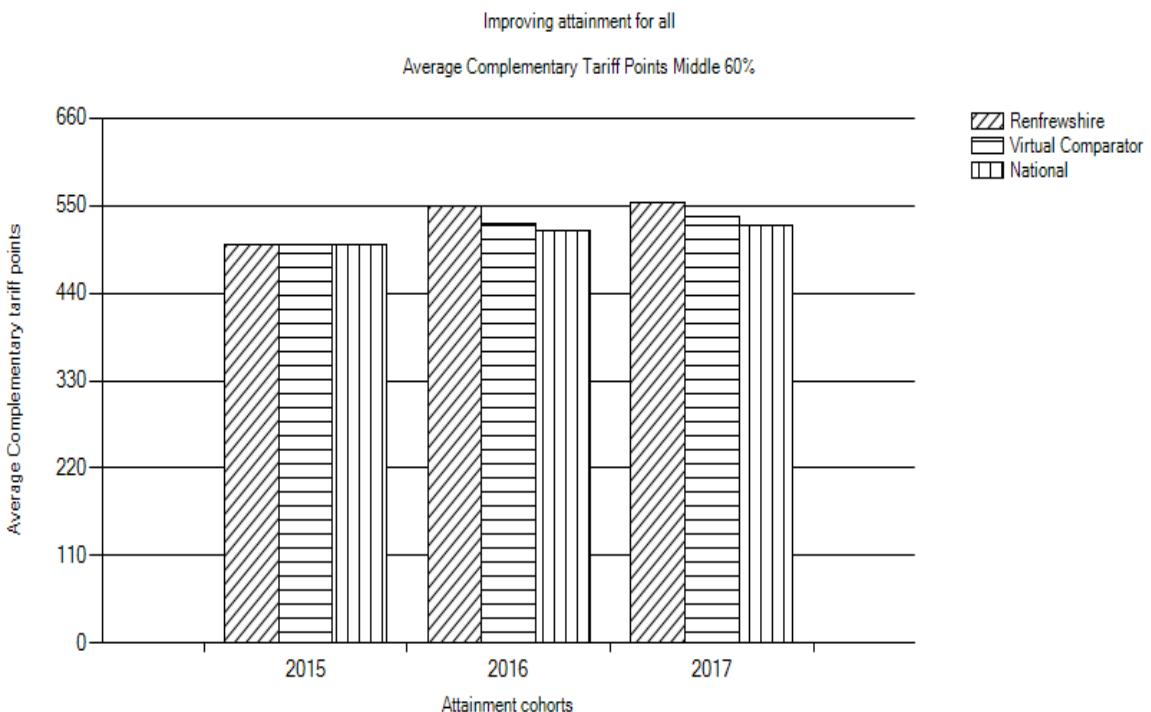
In graph 4 below, we can see that the average tariff points for the lowest attaining 20% is above the virtual comparator and the national average although Renfrewshire's performance has remained fairly static in this particular measure since 2015.

Graph 4 – lowest attaining 20% in S5



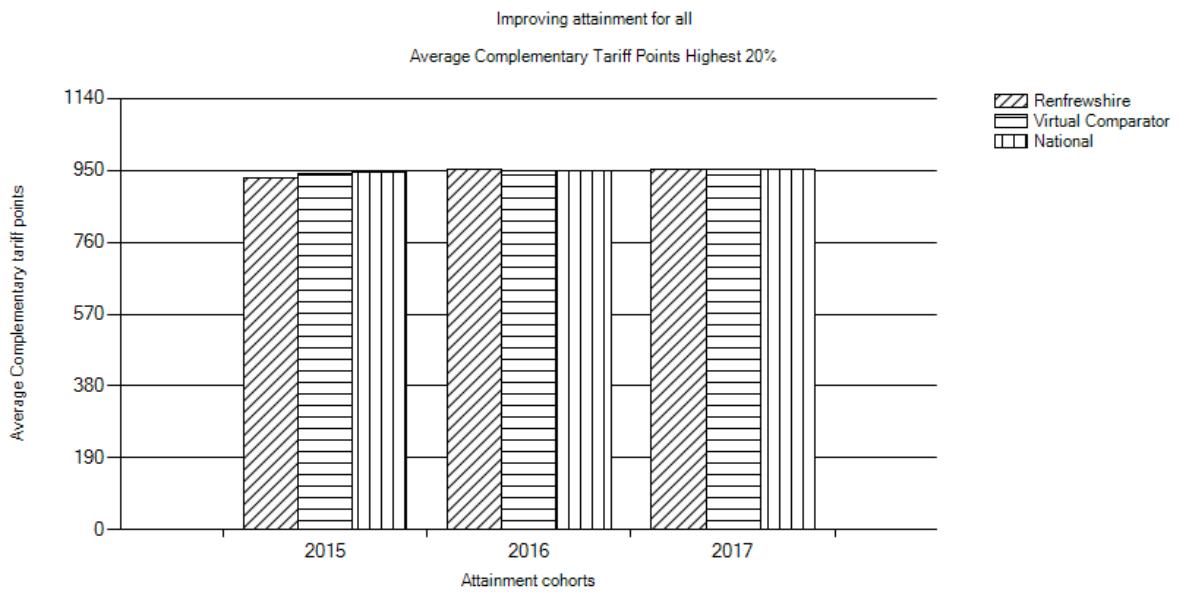
Graph 5 below shows performance for the middle attaining 60% in S5. Performance here remains on an increasing trend and Renfrewshire continues to perform better than both the virtual comparator and the national average.

Graph 5 – middle attaining 60% in S5



In graph 6 below, which shows the average tariff score for the highest attaining 20% in S5, we can see that levels of attainment remain broadly similar to last year, as does our position in relation to the virtual comparator and the national average.

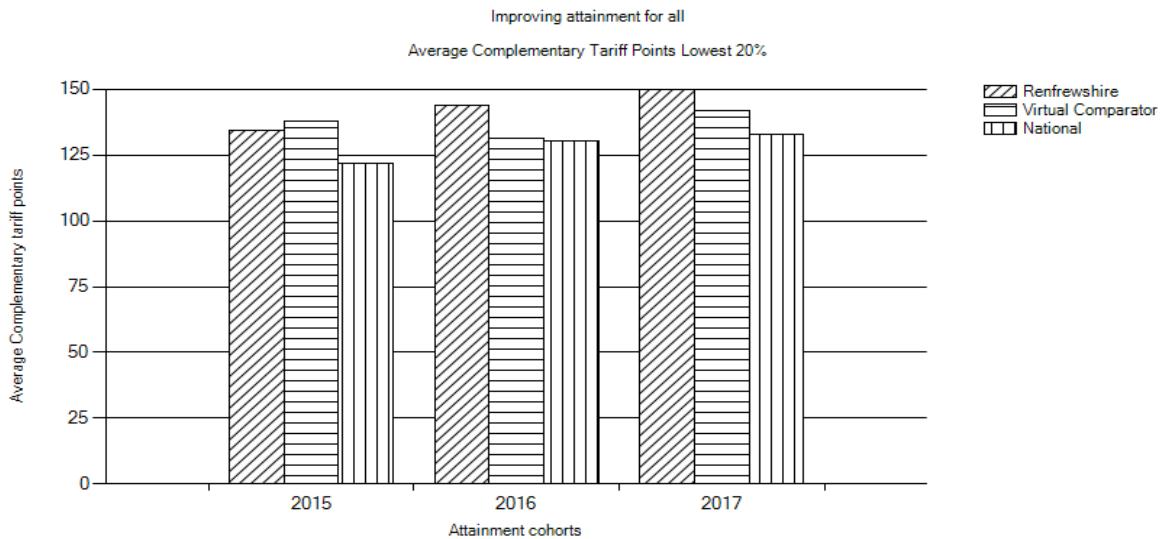
Graph 6 – highest attaining 20% in S5



3.6.5 S6

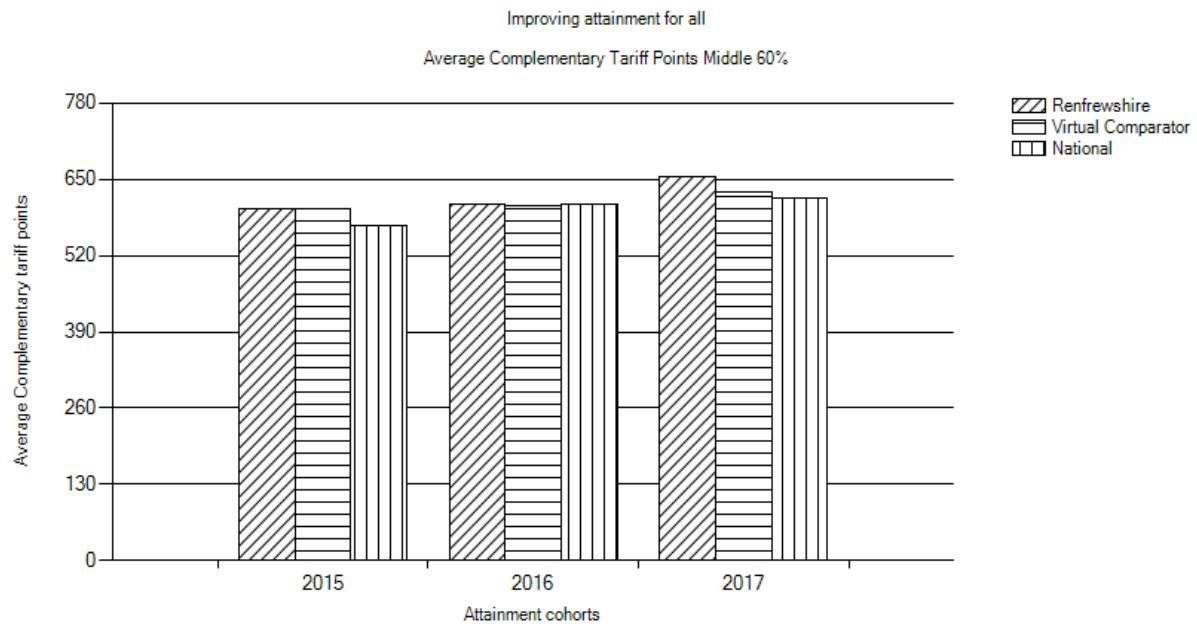
Graph 7 below shows an improving trend in the performance of our lowest attaining 20% in S6. The performance has moved from a position that was below our virtual comparator to now outperforming both the virtual comparator and national average.

Graph 7 – lowest attaining 20% in S6



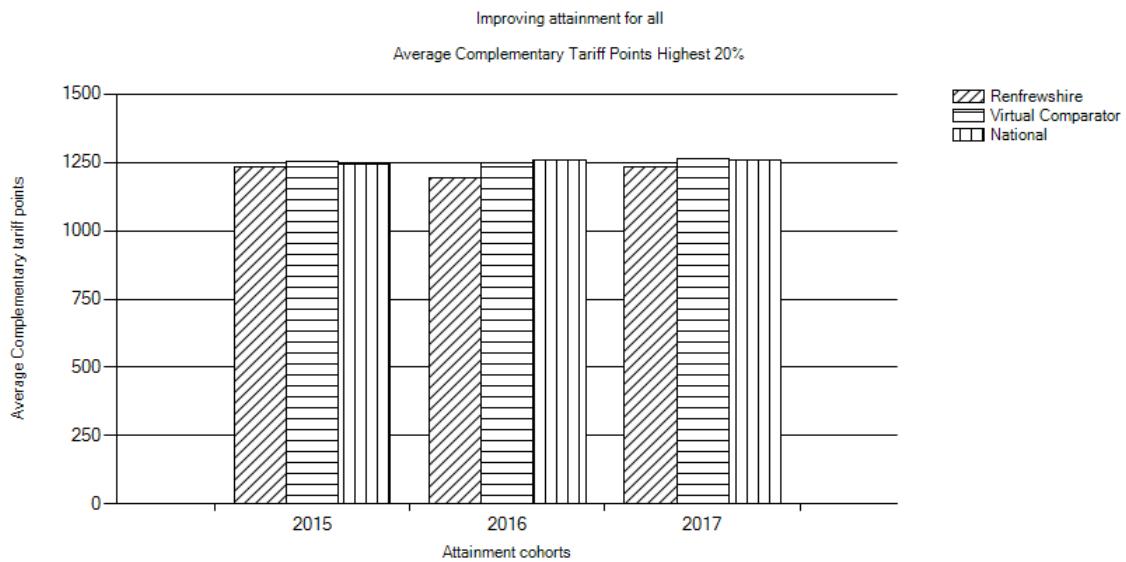
Graph 8 below shows that for the majority of our sixth year pupils (the middle attaining 60%), there has been a marked increase in the average tariff points gained. This has taken Renfrewshire above its virtual comparator and the national average. This means that compared to both the virtual comparator and the national average, our pupils in S6 are achieving more qualifications at a higher SCQF level, than before.

Graph 8 – middle attaining 60% in S6



Although Renfrewshire schools recorded a marked increase in the number of awards at advanced higher in 2017 compared to the previous year, we remain slightly below the national average and our virtual comparator when we look at the average total tariff points of our highest attaining 20% in S6 (see graph 9 below).

Graph 9 – highest attaining 20% in S6



3.6.6 Conclusion - Improving attainment for all

Our performance in S4 has been particularly strong over recent years as there has been a focus on improving the range and quality of qualifications available to all pupils.

We continue to engage with our secondary schools to support the development of a senior phase which is engaging for all pupils and one which allows them to succeed at the highest possible level before they leave school. In addition, our schools are working in partnership with external providers to increase the opportunities available for our young people.

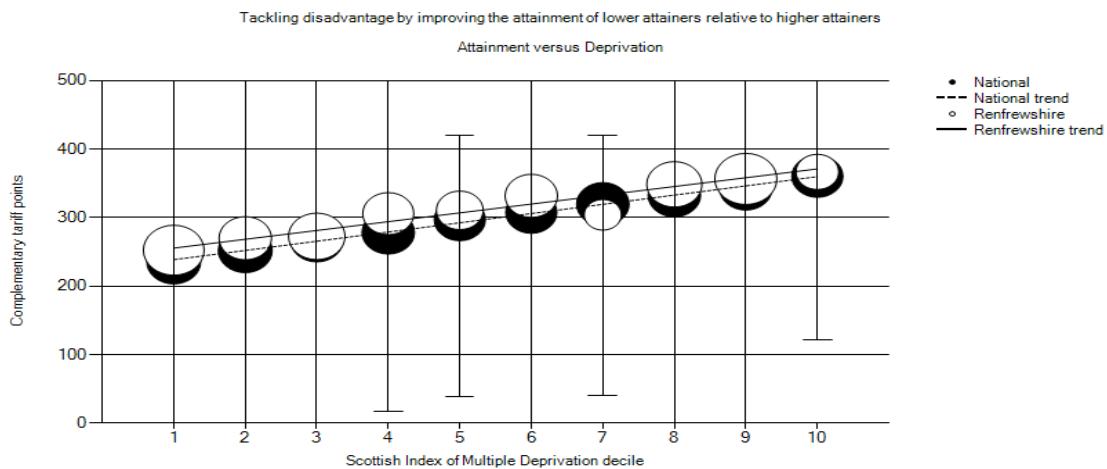
3.7 Attainment versus deprivation

- 3.7.1 Over the past few years, an overarching priority of Children's Services has been to improve the poverty related attainment gap in our schools. Schools are getting increasingly better at identifying their most vulnerable pupils and using strategies to try and mitigate the impact of poverty on their attainment. Insight allows schools and the service to see the impact of some of these strategies by looking at pupil tariff scores across the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles.
- 3.7.2 The following charts show SIMD deciles 1 -10 (most deprived to least deprived) plotted along the horizontal axis with the average complementary tariff points plotted on the vertical axis. The black circles represent the national average for this cohort and the white circles, Renfrewshire's average across the cohort. The size of the circles is proportionate to the number of pupils who reside within each decile. The angled line which runs through the circles represents the difference in attainment between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the least deprived. The steeper the angle, the more pronounced the disparity between the most and least deprived deciles.

3.7.3 S4

The size of the circles in graph 10 on the following page shows that Renfrewshire has a sizeable proportion of pupils who reside in deciles 1, 3, 8 and 9. In terms of performance, the graph shows that in almost all deciles, Renfrewshire is in line with or outperforms the national average for its S4 attainment. Although this graph does not show historic data, the average tariff score for pupils in decile 1 has increased from 268 in 2013 to 309 in 2017. However, the poverty related attainment 'gap' follows a similar trend to the national picture.

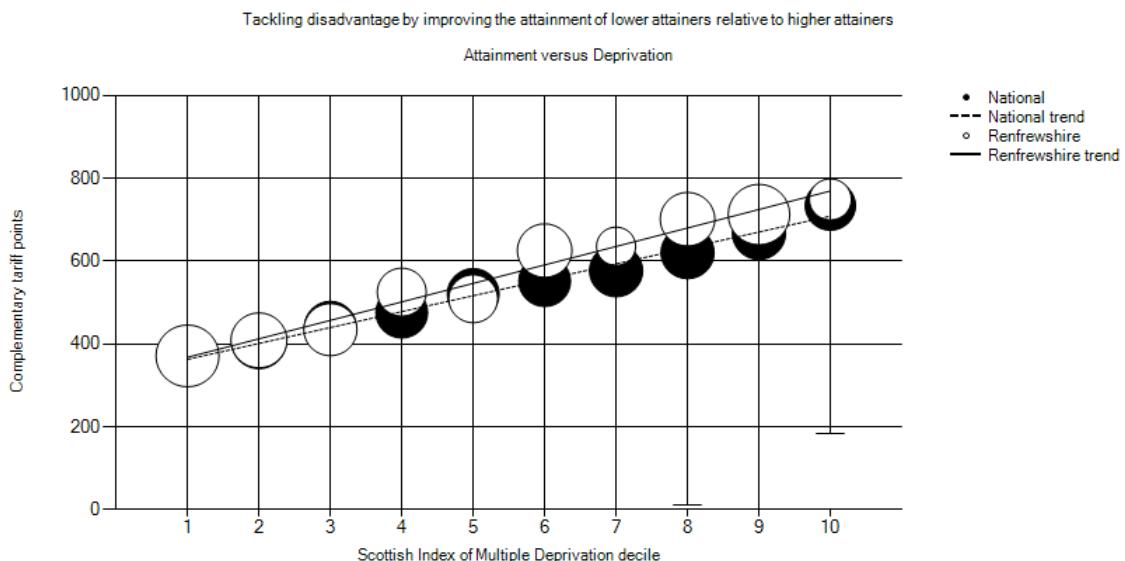
Graph 10 – Attainment versus deprivation in S4



3.7.4 S5

Attainment in S5, (shown in graph 11 below) shows we are in line with, or outperform, the national average in almost every decile. Although young people from deciles 1 and 2 are achieving the same as, or better than, the national average, the stronger attainment in deciles 4 to 10 is increasing the gap between the least and the most deprived deciles. As such, schools as part ongoing Quality Improvement visits have been asked to identify specific groups of young people and ensure supports are in place to give them the best possible chance of success in their exams.

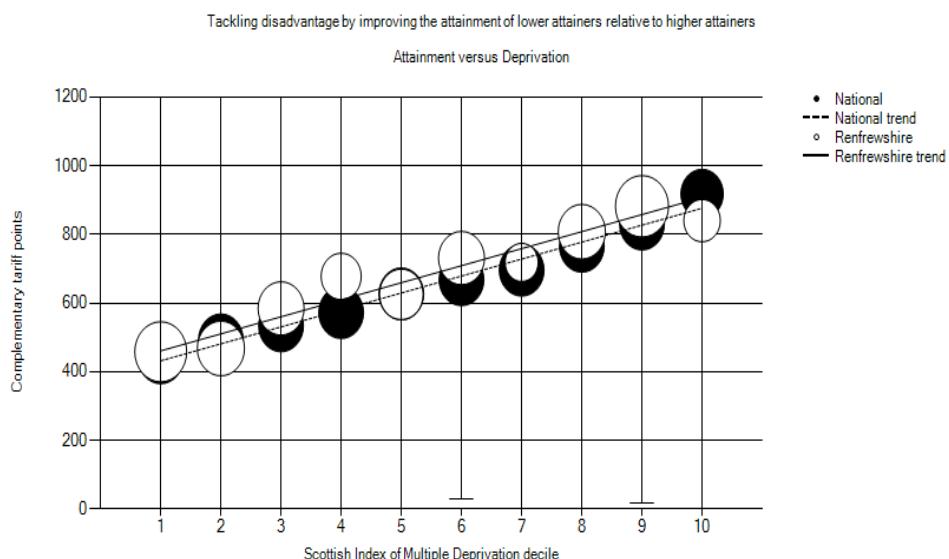
Graph 11 – Attainment versus deprivation in S5



3.7.5 S6

Graph 12 below shows that on average, Renfrewshire outperformed the national picture in 2017 in most deciles. What is not shown in this graph is that the encouraging picture that the average tariff score for young people in decile 1 has been increasing year on year, from 841 in 2013, to 900 in 2017.

Graph 12 – Attainment versus deprivation in S6



3.7.6 Conclusion – attainment versus deprivation.

The strong performance in S4, particularly among pupils in the most deprived SIMD deciles, is above the national average. While the poverty related attainment gap increases slightly in S5, it reduces again by the end of S6. This suggests that if we can continue to increase stay-on rates for our most deprived young people, their chances of achieving as much as their least deprived peers, are better.

4. Breadth and depth

- 4.1 In addition to the key measures available in Insight, the service also looks at the percentage of the cohort who achieved any number of awards at various SCQF levels. These are known as ‘breadth and depth’ measures. We look at this data in conjunction with the Insight measures to allow us to gain a broader understanding of attainment across Renfrewshire and between schools.
- 4.2 The tables on the following page shows performance over time of some of the key breadth and depth measures and how we compare to the virtual comparator. SCQF level 5 is national 5 or its equivalent, SCQF level 6 is higher or its equivalent; and SCQF level 7 is advanced higher or its equivalent.

Table 4 – breadth and depth (S4)

S4	3 or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better		3 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better	
	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC
2015	92%	90%	84%	82%	66%	61%	49%	43%
2016	92%	91%	84%	82%	67%	63%	52%	45%
2017	93%	91%	82%	80%	67%	66%	50%	47%

Table 5 – breadth and depth (S5)

S5	1 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		3 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		1 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		3 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better	
	Ren	VC										
2015	87%	85%	71%	70%	55%	53%	58%	58%	36%	37%	18%	18%
2016	87%	86%	76%	73%	60%	57%	62%	60%	42%	39%	20%	19%
2017	88%	87%	76%	74%	61%	58%	62%	61%	42%	40%	20%	20%

Table 6 – breadth and depth (S6 based on S4 roll)

S6	3 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		1 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		3 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		1 or more awards at SCQF level 7 or better	
	Ren	VC										
2015	71%	72%	58%	60%	61%	62%	45%	46%	32%	32%	21%	21%
2016	73%	72%	60%	59%	63%	62%	46%	47%	32%	32%	17%	20%
2017	78%	75%	64%	62%	66%	64%	51%	48%	35%	34%	21%	22%

4.3 Tables 4 to 6 above show that our attainment in almost all of these key measures has shown an improving trend over the last three years. Although our virtual comparator has also improved, Renfrewshire has consistently outperformed it at SCQF levels 5 and 6 by the end of S4, S5 & S6. There was also a focus on improving advanced higher attainment last year. However, although performance did improve to its highest level since 2013, we still remain slightly below the virtual comparator.

5. Conclusion and next steps

5.1 Renfrewshire continues to improve levels of attainment over time in almost all key measures. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, not least, to ensure we continue to alleviate the impact of poverty on attainment across all levels; to improve levels of attainment in numeracy; and to ensure our senior phase, S5 and S6 in particular, meets the needs and aspirations of all our young people.

5.2 Benchmarking meetings are taking place with each of our secondary schools where head teachers, their leadership teams, and officers from children's services discuss school and subject performance and agree next steps for improvement. These meetings also include conversations with focus groups of middle managers and young people. This year, the assistant director is leading these meetings with each of our secondary schools. These meetings are focusing on the measures contained in this report along with course performance; presentation policies; the attainment of looked after children; the option choice process; and attendance. Areas for improvement are being agreed with head teachers and monitored by children's services as part of the service's quality improvement framework.

5.3 A further report on finalised leavers' data and the attainment of our looked after children will be presented to this board in spring 2018.

Implications of this report

1. Financial Implications

None.

2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

None.

3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

Children and Young People

- High levels of attainment and achievement provide our children and young people with the best start in life

4. Legal Implications

None.

5. Property/Assets Implications

None.

6. Information Technology Implications

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

- 8. Health and Safety Implications**
None.
- 9. Procurement Implications**
None.
- 10. Risk Implications**
None.
- 11. Privacy Impact**
None.
- 12. COSLA Policy Position** - none

List of Background Papers

- (a) none

Children's Services
TMcE
13/10/2017

Author: Tony McEwan, education manager, tel 0141 618 7198