
To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 19 January 2023

Report by: Director of Children's Services

**Heading: Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (CfE) Level
Return 2022**

1. Summary

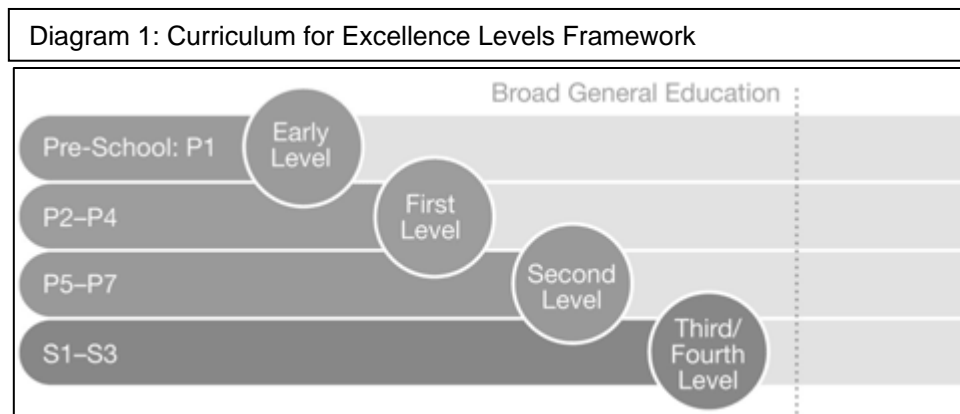
- 1.1. This report summarises attainment in the Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level return (ACEL) 2021-22. The ACEL return contains data on the highest Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level achieved for all pupils in Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3.
 - 1.2. The 2021-22 return demonstrates that there has been an increase in attainment across all curricular areas. This follows the 2020-21 data which saw decreases across all curricular areas as a result of pandemic related disruption. This trend is visible within Renfrewshire and nationally. However, attainment in Renfrewshire remains in line with or above the national figures across all stages and curricular areas.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of the education and children's policy board are asked to:
 - note the content of this report;
 - note the efforts of the children and young people and the significant commitment of teachers and support staff.
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3. Background

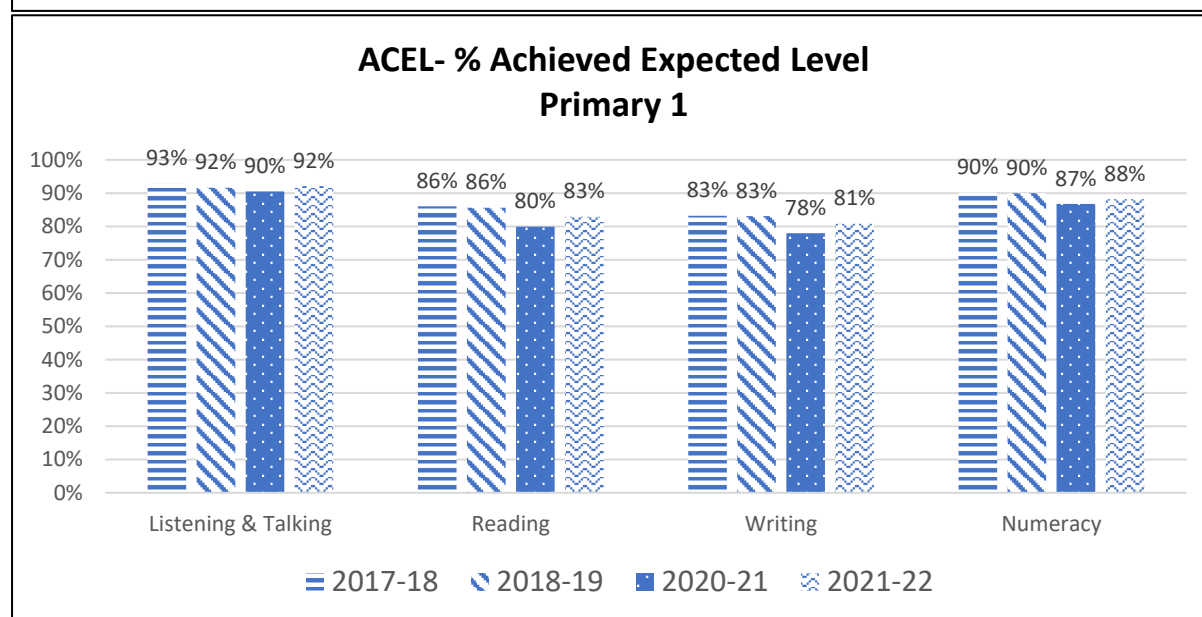
- 3.1. The 2022 ACEL return includes data on all Primary 1, Primary 4 and Primary 7 pupils. Secondary schools were included in the 2022 return after being omitted nationally from 2020 and 2021 due to the implementation of the SQA National Qualifications Alternative Certification Model as well as other challenges. The data measures performance in the literacy curricular areas (listening & talking, reading, writing) and numeracy. Assessment of the level achieved is based on teacher professional judgements.



- 3.2. Diagram 1 shows the four curriculum levels within Broad General Education (BGE) (P1-S3). The ACEL return measures the percentage of pupils that have achieved early level by the end of Primary 1, first level by the end of Primary 4, second level by the end of Primary 7 and third/fourth level by the end of S3. This reflects the path that most children and young people are expected to follow. However, the framework displayed in diagram 1 is designed to be flexible to permit careful planning for those children and young people with additional support needs.
- 3.3. The return is submitted for the 2021-22 school session and is published nationally in December 2022. Due to school closures, there was no national return for the 2019-20 school session as it would not have been possible to gather accurate data. The closure of schools in March 2020 and January 2021 had a negative effect on some pupils' progress and attainment with socio-economically deprived children amongst those who were most negatively affected. This was reflected in the 2020-21 figures, present in this report, and should be kept in mind when interpreting figures from this year and those from 2018-19 and before.
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4. Attainment by Stage

Graph 1: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Early Level by the End of P1

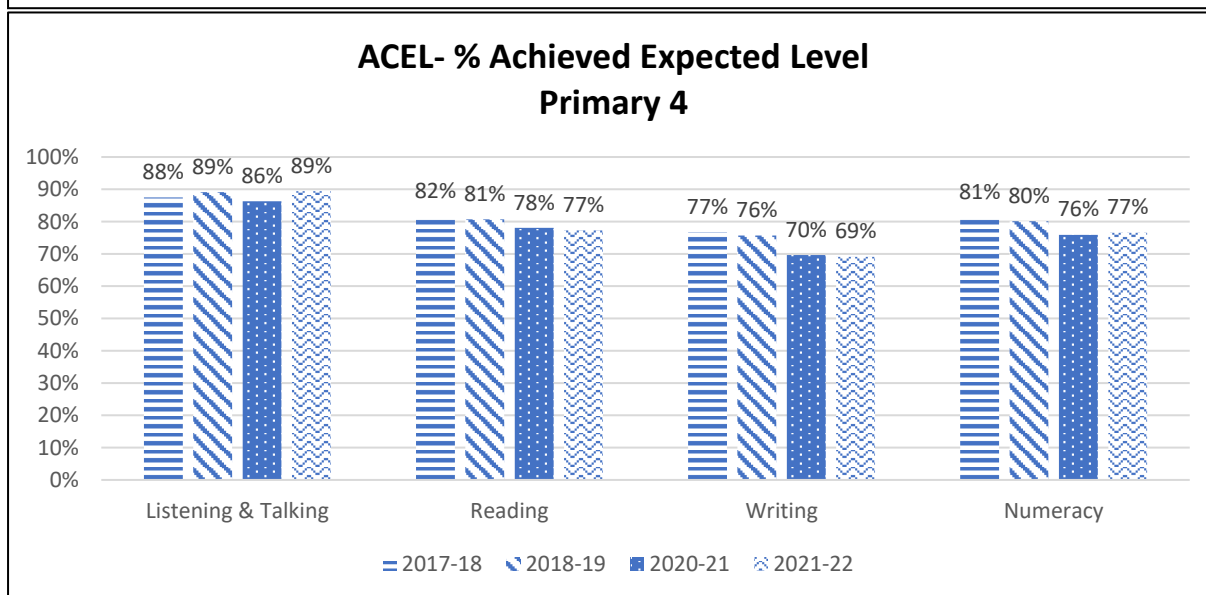


- 4.1. Graph 1 shows that attainment was lower in 2020-21 than previous years in all curricular areas but has recovered somewhat in 2021-22. This year's figures have returned to pre pandemic figure for listening and talking but remain slightly behind for reading, writing and numeracy. Attainment remains highest in listening and talking, followed by numeracy. Primary 1 attainment continues to be higher than in other primary stages.

Table 1: Percentage of Pupils Achieving Early Level by the end of P1. 2021-22				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	92%	83%	81%	88%
National	86%	79%	77%	84%

- 4.2. Renfrewshire performs above national levels in all curricular areas in Primary 1, as shown in table 1. This is the fifth year that Primary 1 pupils in Renfrewshire have performed above national levels of attainment. The patterns of attainment in P1 are similar to national, with the highest attainment in listening and talking and the lowest in writing. Like in Renfrewshire, national attainment has increased against last year in all curricular areas.

Graph 2: Percentage of Pupils Achieved First Level by the End of P4

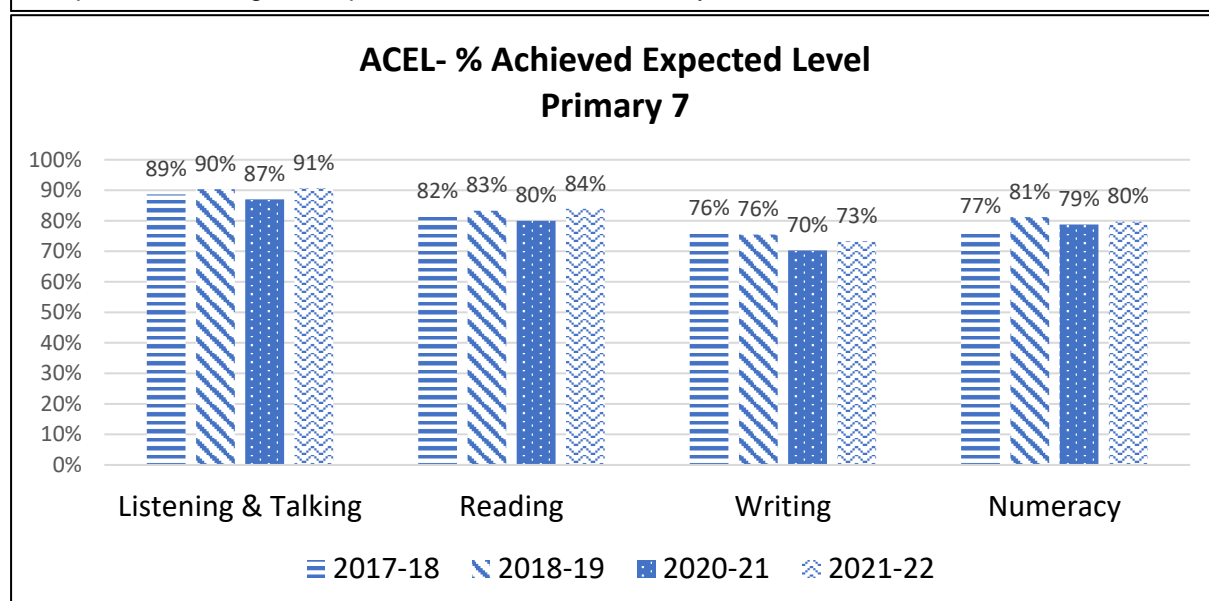


- 4.3. Graph 2 demonstrates that attainment is highest in listening and talking followed by reading and numeracy. Attainment is lowest in writing. Attainment in 2020-21 had decreased in all areas from 2018-19, but we now see improvements in listening and talking and numeracy attainment. Reading and writing attainment decreased slightly on 2020-21 figures.

Table 2: Percentage of Pupils Achieving First Level by the end of P4. 2021-22				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	89%	77%	69%	77%
National	85%	76%	70%	75%

- 4.4. Table 2 shows that Renfrewshire performs above national in all curricular areas aside from Writing in 2021-22. Nationally, attainment in Primary 4 and Primary 7 is lower than in Primary 1. Renfrewshire attainment patterns replicate national trends.

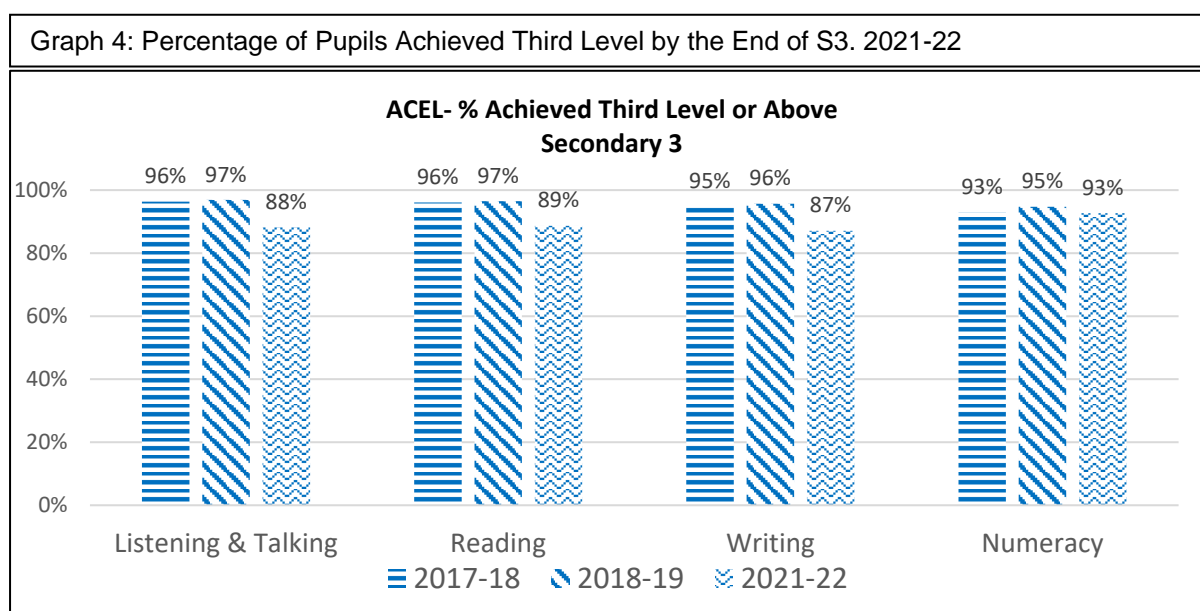
Graph 3: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Second Level by the End of P7



- 4.5. In Primary 7, attainment has increased in all areas versus 2020-21 figures. This is in contrast to 2020-21 which saw decreases across all curricular areas against 2018-19. Listening and talking and reading figures are at the highest they have been in 5 years. Patterns of attainment are similar to other stages, with attainment highest in listening and talking and lowest in writing.

Table 3: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Second Level by the end of P7. 2021-22				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	91%	84%	73%	80%
National	86%	79%	73%	76%

- 4.6. Table 3 demonstrates that Renfrewshire performs above national across all curricular areas aside from writing, for which it is equal with the national figure. The largest difference is in listening and talking as well as reading, where Renfrewshire is 5 percentage points above the national figures. The patterns of attainment across the four curricular areas are the same as national, with the highest levels coming from listening and talking and the lowest found in writing.

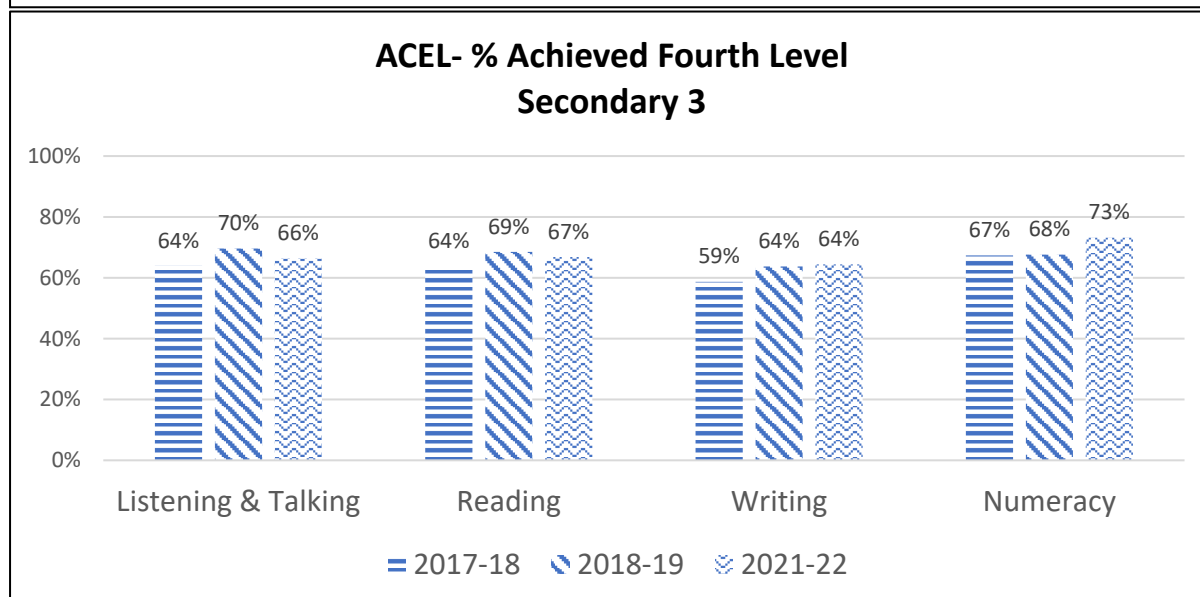


- 4.7. The ACEL return measures the percentage of pupils who achieve third and fourth level in S3. The percentage of pupils that achieved third level or above are displayed in graph 4. This graph demonstrates how listening and talking, reading, and writing have decreased significantly since 2018-19. Numeracy has also decreased from the 2018-19 figure but only by 2 percentage points and remains level with 2017-18 figures.

Table 4: Percentage Pupils Achieved Third Level or Above by the end of S3. 2021-22				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	88%	89%	87%	93%
National	89%	88%	87%	89%

- 4.8. Renfrewshire performs close to or above national figures across all curricular areas in 2021-22 as demonstrated in table 4. Listening and talking, reading and writing are all within 1 percentage point either side of the national figures. The largest difference is in numeracy, which is 4 percentage points above the national figure. I

Graph 5: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Fourth Level by the End of S3. 2021-22



- 4.9. Graph 5 shows the percentage of pupils achieving fourth level across all curricular areas. Small decreases have occurred in listening and talking and reading, although these figures are in line with 2017-18 levels. Writing has remained the same as 2018-19 and numeracy has increased by 5% points.

Table 5: Percentage of Pupils Achieving Fourth Level by the end of S3. 2021-22				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	66%	67%	64%	73%
National	55%	54%	52%	59%

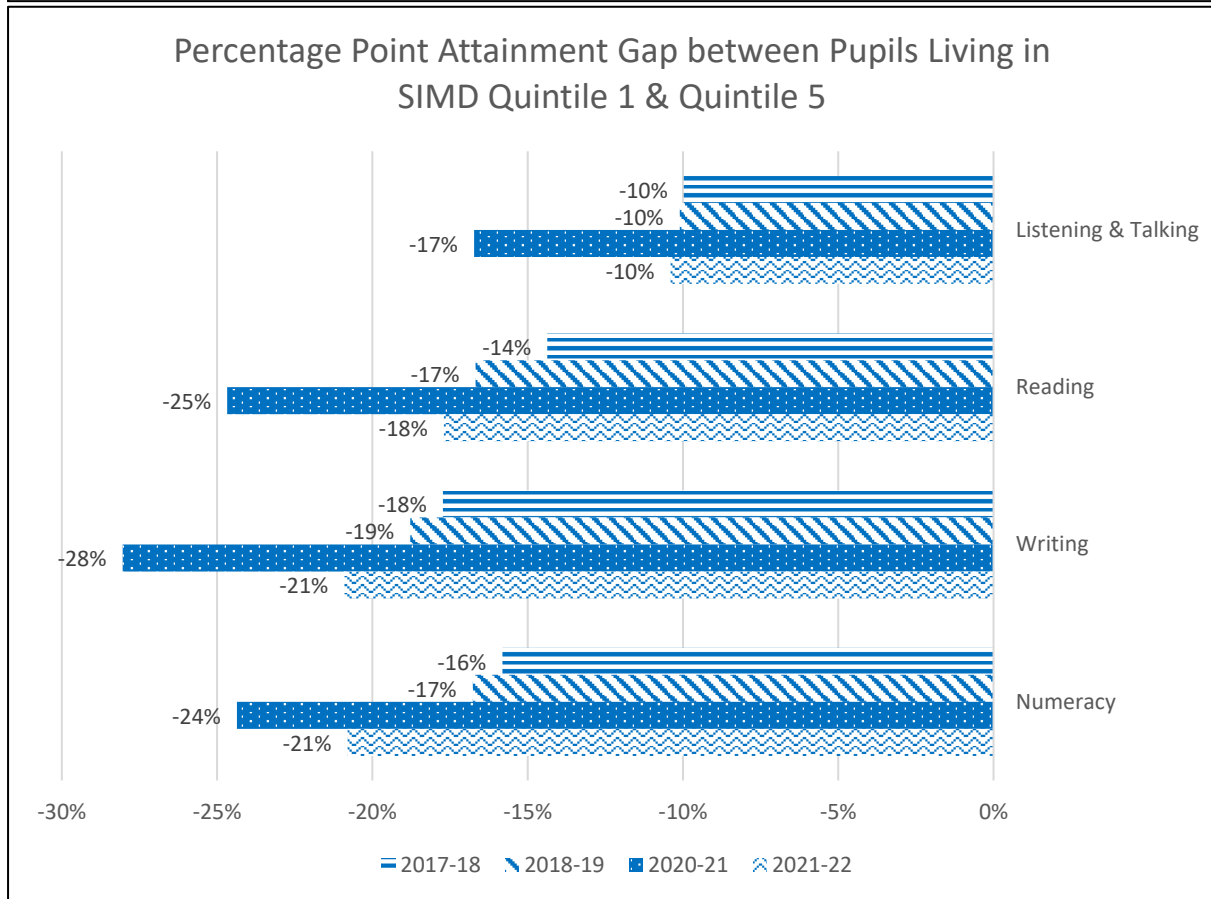
- 4.10. The percentage of pupils achieving fourth level in S3 is considerably above national for all curricular areas. The biggest difference is in numeracy, which is 14 percentage points above the national figure. The differences between Renfrewshire and the national figures are larger in this measure than other stages. However, the national figures are impacted by a high degree of variation between local authorities in the percentage of pupils achieving fourth level.

5. Poverty- Related Attainment Gaps

- 5.1. The attainment gap is measured using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), which is an area-based measure, as well as free meal and clothing grant entitlement as an individual measure of deprivation. By considering both measures, a more robust analysis of attainment gaps in Renfrewshire can be achieved. The data from the 2021-22 ACEL return indicates that attainment gaps have closed following an increase in 2020-21.

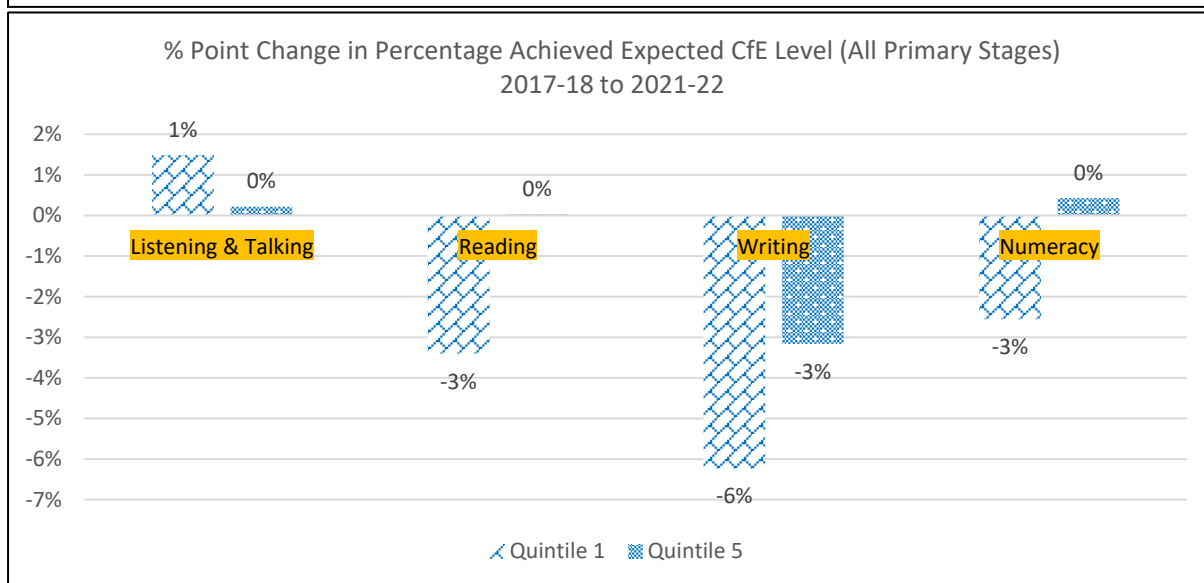
This is due to larger attainment increases for pupils living in most deprived areas and those entitled to free meals or clothing grants. Although similar decreases have been seen in national data, Renfrewshire continues to perform well against the national picture.

Graph 6: Percentage Point Gap between Pupils Achieving Expected Level in SIMD Quintile 1 & 5 (All Primary Stages Combined)



- 5.2. Graph 6 shows that the size of the attainment gap between pupils living in SIMD quintile 1 (20% most deprived areas) and those living in SIMD quintile 5 (20% least deprived areas) has decreased across all curricular areas, reversing the large increase in 2020-21. This change is consistent with national data which shows that pupils living in most deprived areas were most significantly impacted by school closures.

Graph 7: Percentage Point Change in Percentage of Pupils Achieving Expected Level. 2017-18 to 2021-22.

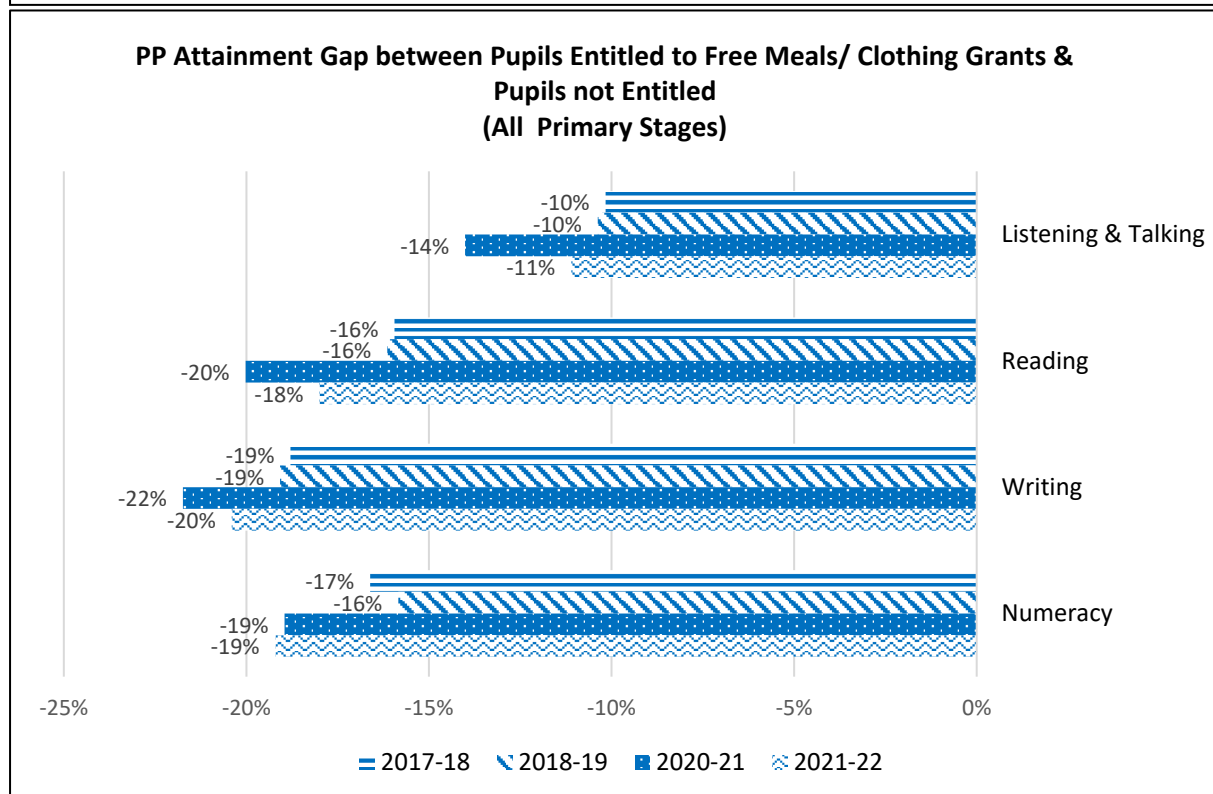


- 5.3. Graph 7 demonstrates that attainment of pupils living in quintile 1 (20% most deprived) areas is lower than in 2017-18 across all curricular areas aside from listening and talking. Attainment of pupils living in quintile 5 (20% least deprived) areas is unchanged in listening and talking, reading, and numeracy. Attainment in writing for quintile 5 pupils has declined by 3 percentage points.

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Renfrewshire	National	Renfrewshire	National
Quintile 1 (Most Deprived)	61%	61%	70%	70%
Quintile 2	68%	65%	76%	74%
Quintile 3	74%	70%	82%	78%
Quintile 4	79%	76%	87%	82%
Quintile 5 (Least Deprived)	82%	82%	91%	88%
Percentage Point Gap between Quintiles 1 and 5	21%	21%	21%	18%

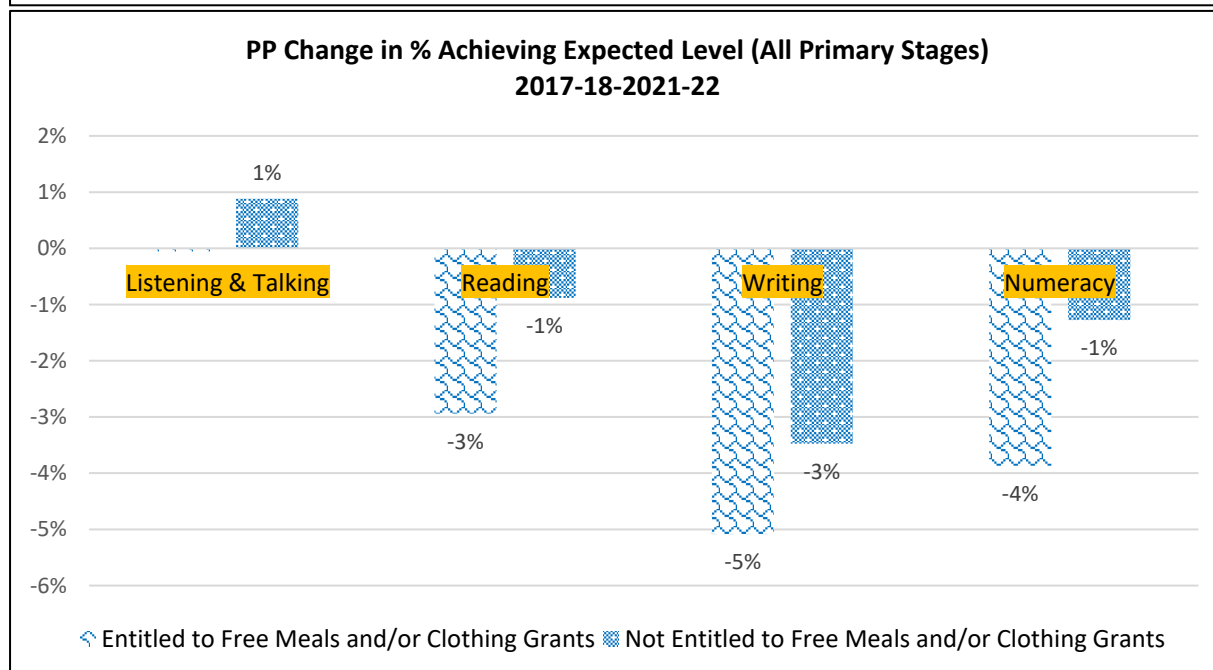
- 5.4. Table 6 demonstrates that Renfrewshire performs in line with or above national figures across all SIMD quintiles in both literacy and numeracy. Attainment in literacy measures whether a pupil has achieved the expected level for their stage across all three literacy organisers. The size of the gap between pupils living in quintile 1 and quintile 5 is equal to the national figures in literacy, but larger in numeracy. This is because of the higher attainment of Renfrewshire pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas.

Graph 8: Percentage Point Gap Between Percentage Pupils Achieving Expected Level for Entitled to Free Meals and/or Clothing Grants and Pupils Not Entitled.



5.5. Graph 8 demonstrates that the gap between pupils entitled to free school meals and/or clothing grants and pupils not entitled to either has decreased for all measures apart from numeracy. However, the decreases have not been big enough to return to the 2018-19 pre-pandemic level. As such, attainment gaps have increased over the last 5 years in across all measures.

Graph 9: Percentage Point Change in Percentage Pupils Achieving Expected Level for Entitled to Free Meals and/or Clothing Grants and Pupils Not Entitled to Either. 2017-18 to 2021-22



- 5.6. Graph 9 shows that the increases in the size of the gap are due to the performance of pupils that are entitled to free meals or clothing grants having decreased more than those who are not entitled over the last 5 years. For listening and talking the percentage of those not entitled to free meals or clothing grants has increased by 1%, whilst those entitled to receive the grants has not changed. For reading, writing and numeracy, both groups have decreased over the last 5 years with those not entitled to free meals or clothing grants decreasing by a smaller percentage.
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6. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 6.1. The ACEL Return in 2021-22 has demonstrated that there has been some recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic which negatively impacted pupil attainment, particularly for those living in most deprived areas. Attainment gaps have closed in comparison to 2020-21 but remain slightly wider than pre-pandemic. Whilst the pandemic negatively impacted attainment across the board, those pupils from the most deprived areas saw the greatest decreases. The 2021-22 data suggests that these same pupils have seen the greatest increases in attainment, with the result being the closing of attainment gaps.
- 6.2. Patterns of attainment remain similar to before the pandemic. Attainment in listening and talking remains higher than other curricular areas and P1 attainment continues to outperform other stages.
- 6.3. Despite increases in attainment nationally, Renfrewshire continues to perform in line with or above national figures at all stages and in all curricular areas. Renfrewshire is also in line with or above national figures across all SIMD quintiles. The size of the attainment gap between quintile 1 and quintile 5 is slightly larger than national figures for numeracy, however this is due to higher attainment for pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas in Renfrewshire.
- 6.4. This data has been utilised to inform planning and a range of targeted support is now in place across schools. This includes reinforcement of high-quality professional learning with a strong focus on improving outcomes with writing at all stages. This support will continue to be evaluated to ensure that it is delivering what our pupils need to thrive and be successful.
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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.

13. Climate Risk

None.

List of Background Papers

(a) None

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