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

**On: 16 January 2020**

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

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**Heading: Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Level  
Return 2019**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. This report summarises attainment in the Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level Return (ACEL) 2018/19. The Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) return contains data on the highest CfE level achieved for all pupils in Primary 1, Primary 4 and Primary 7 and Secondary 3.
  - 1.2. The 2018/19 return demonstrates that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected CfE level for their stage has increased for all stages and curricular areas over 3 years. The patterns of performance by stage and curricular area is very similar to the 2017/18 return. However, many of the attainment gaps between stages and across curricular areas are reduced. Renfrewshire continues to perform consistently above national figures.
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## **2. Recommendations**

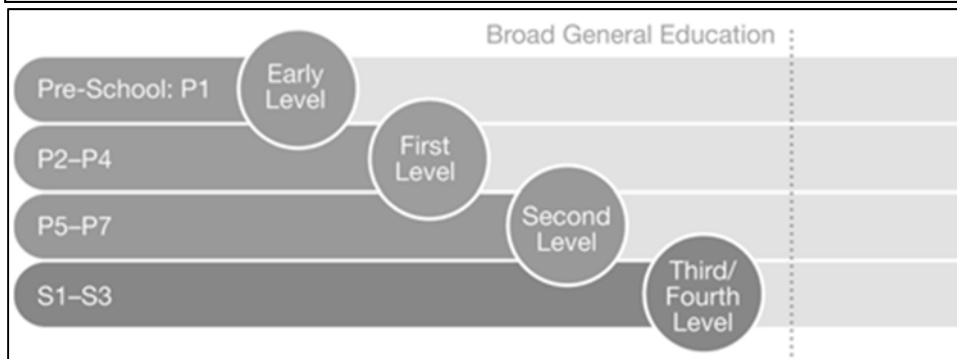
- 2.1. Members of the education and children's policy board are asked to:
  - note the content of this report;
  - note the efforts of the children and young people and the significant commitment of teachers and support staff.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. The ACEL return includes data on all Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3 pupils. The return measures performance in the literacy curricular areas (listening & talking, reading, writing) and numeracy.

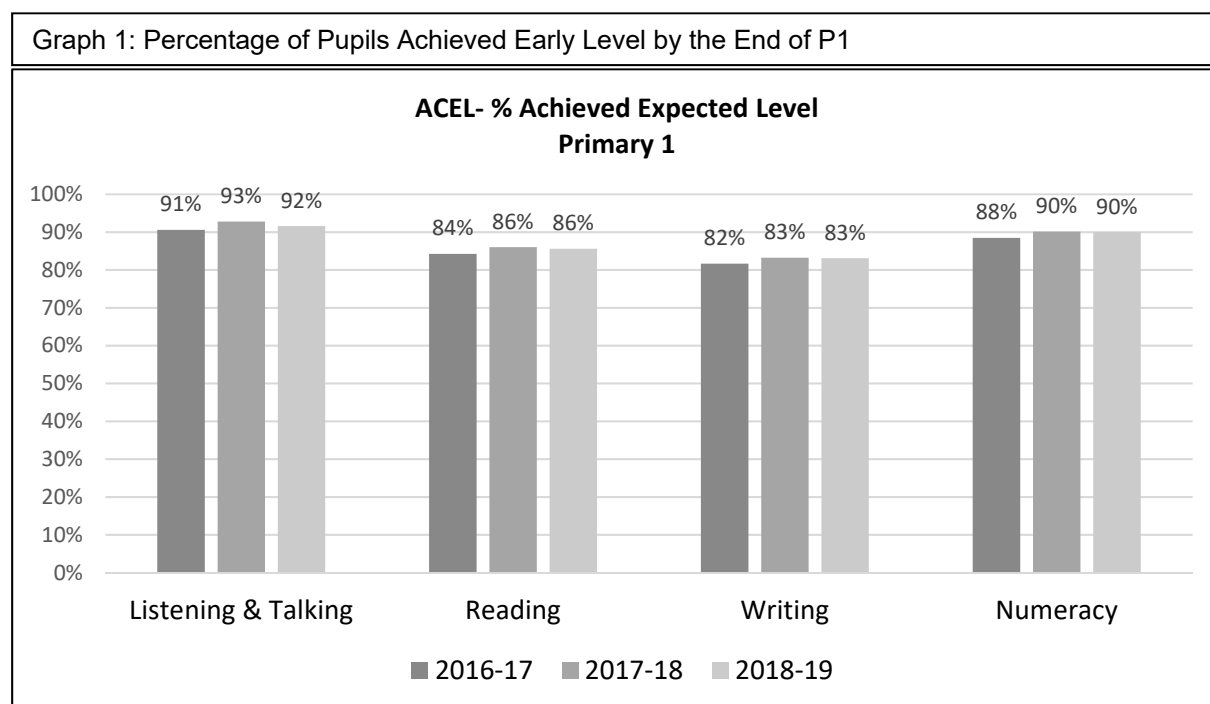
Assessment of the level achieved is based on teacher professional judgements.

Diagram 1: Curriculum for Excellence Levels Framework



- 3.2. Diagram 1 shows the 4 curriculum levels within broad general education (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 or fourth level by the end of Secondary 3. 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 with additional support needs.
- 3.3. The return is submitted for the 2018-19 school session and is published nationally in December 2019. In previous years, the Scottish Government has labelled the ACEL return as experimental statistics to reflect the fact that these were new statistics that required development to ensure quality. Following a review of the evidence, the experimental statistics label has been removed this year for the first time. The data reflects a developing approach to quality assurance and moderation since 2015/16. In Renfrewshire, quality assurance and moderation processes have become much more robust since the first year of data collection and the reliability of the data has improved as a result.

#### 4. Attainment by Stage

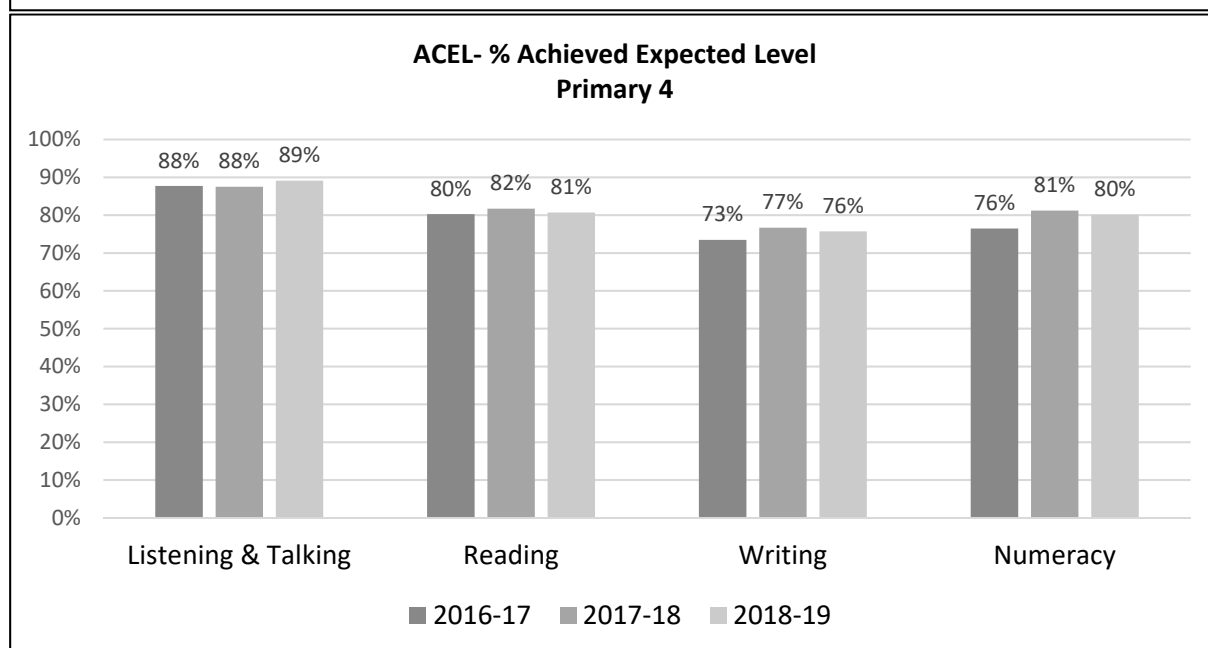


- 4.1. Graph 1 shows that pupils in Primary 1 continue to perform well with increased attainment over 3 years in all curricular areas. The percentage achieving early level in 2018/19 is broadly unchanged since the previous year but attainment in Primary 1 continues to be higher than in other primary stages.

Table 1: Percentage of Pupils Achieving Early Level by the end of P1. 2018/19				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	92%	86%	83%	90%
National	87%	82%	79%	85%

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

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

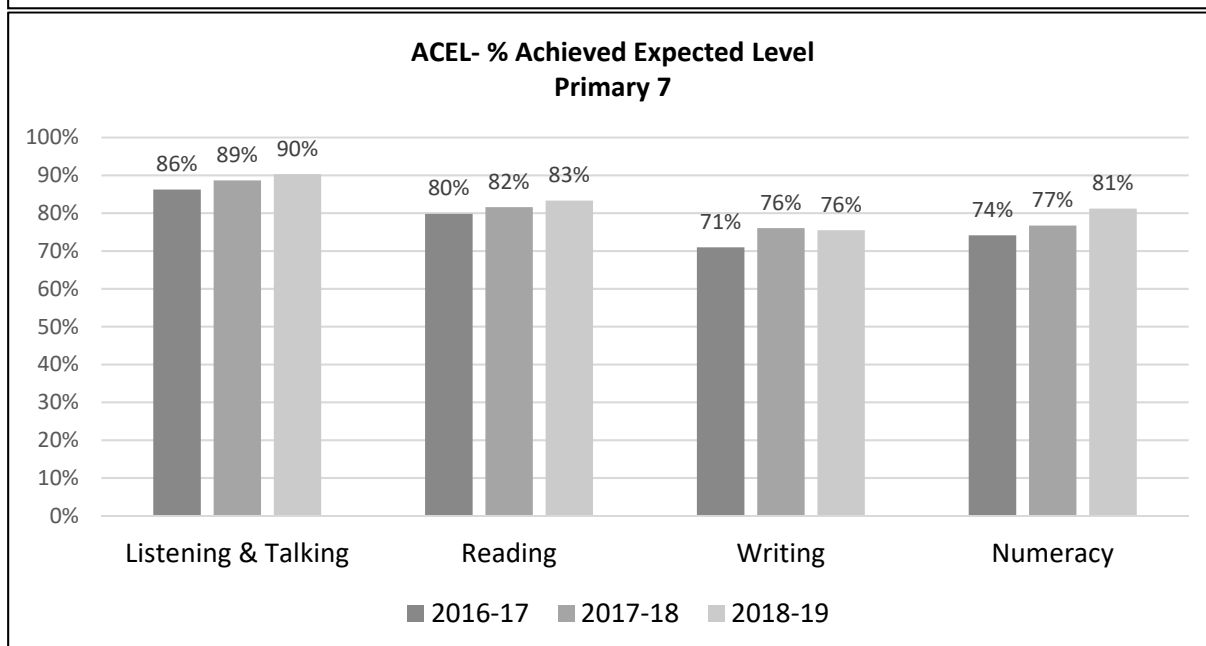


- 4.3. Graph 2 demonstrates that although Primary 4 attainment remains below Primary 1, there has been greater progress over 3 years at this stage in writing and numeracy. All curricular areas have increased over 3 years although there has been some minor decreases since 2018-19. The biggest increase has been in numeracy, which has increased by 4 percentage points since 2016-17.

Table 2: Percentage of Pupils Achieving First Level by the end of P4. 2018/19				
	<b>Listening &amp; Talking</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Numeracy</b>
Renfrewshire	89%	81%	76%	80%
National	85%	78%	73%	77%

- 4.4. Table 2 shows that Renfrewshire performs above national in all curricular areas in 2018-19. Nationally, attainment in Primary 4 and Primary 7 is lower than in Primary 1. This replicates the patterns of attainment in Renfrewshire.

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

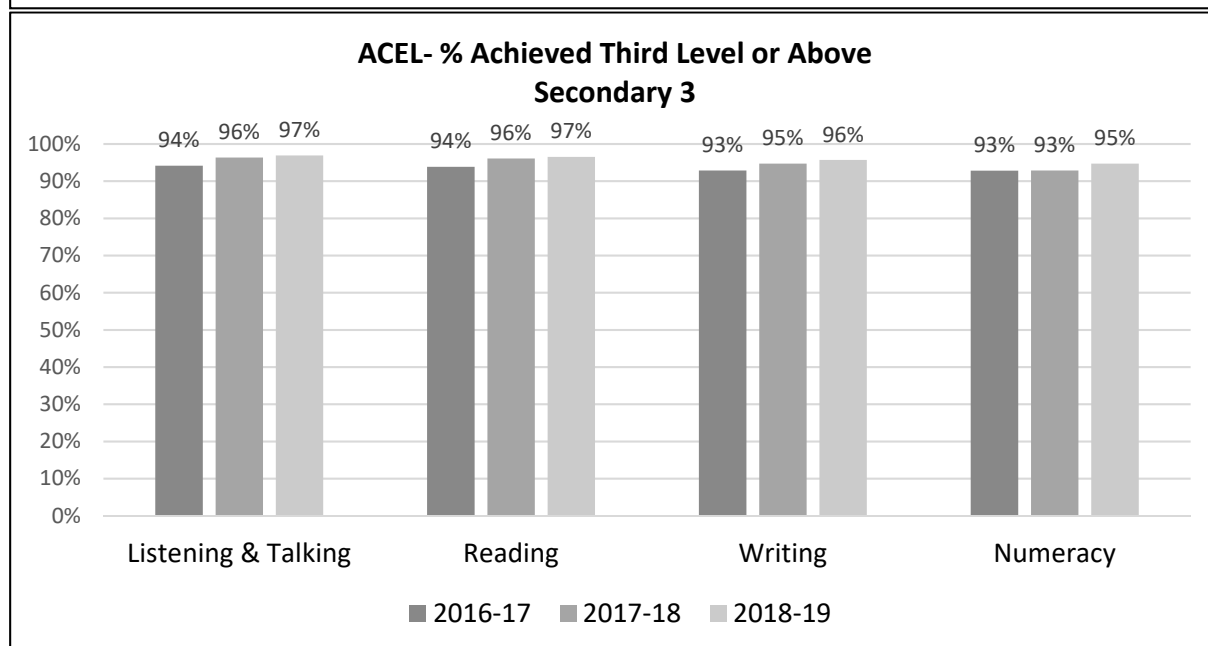


- 4.5. In Primary 7, there has been considerable improvement over the past 3 years across all curricular areas, as shown in graph 3. The biggest increase has been in numeracy, which has increased by 7 percentage points since 2016/17 and by 5 percentage points since 2017-18. There has also been year on year increases in listening and talking and reading over 3 years.

Table 3: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Second Level by the end of P7. 2018/19				
	<b>Listening &amp; Talking</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Numeracy</b>
Renfrewshire	90%	83%	76%	81%
National	86%	80%	74%	76%

- 4.6. Table 3 demonstrates that Renfrewshire performs above national across all curricular areas. The patterns of attainment across the 4 curricular areas are the same, with the highest levels of attainment in listening and talking, followed by reading.

Graph 4: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Third Level or Above by the End of S3



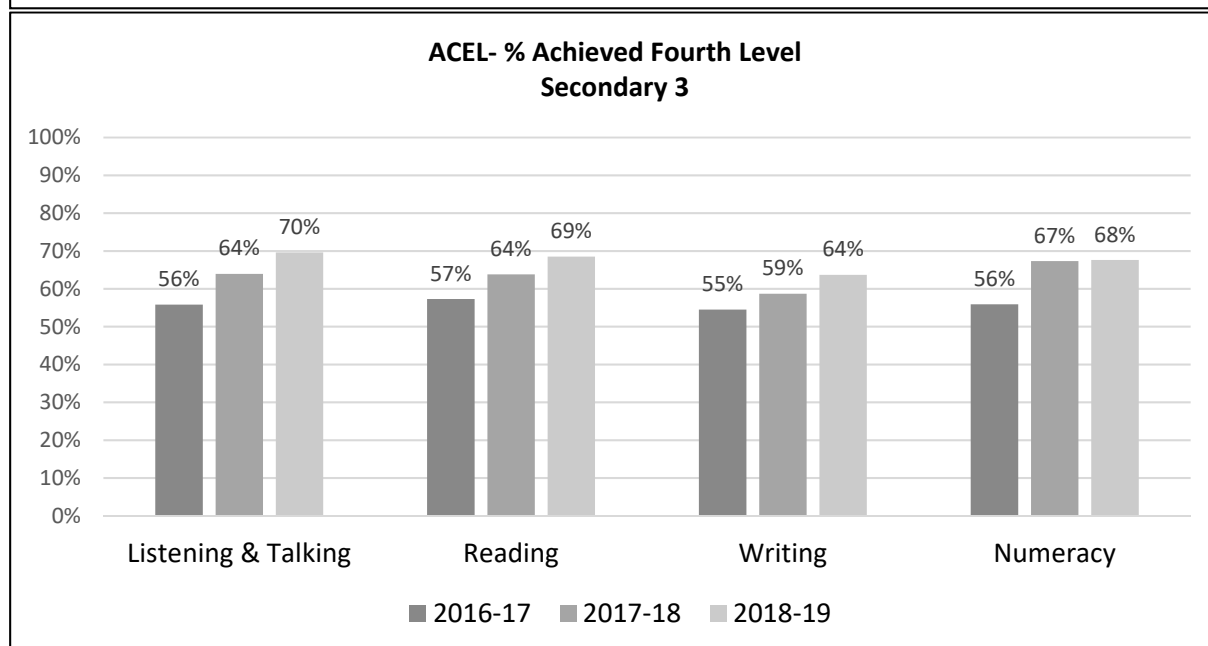
- 4.7. The ACEL return measures the percentage of pupils who achieve third and fourth level in S3. The percentage of pupils that achieved third level or above are displayed in graph 4. This graph demonstrates a 3 percentage point increase in literacy curricular areas over 3 years and a 2 percentage point increase in numeracy. All organisers have increased since 2017-18.

Table 4: Percentage Pupils Achieved Third Level or Above by the end of S3. 2018/19

	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	97%	97%	96%	95%
National	91%	91%	90%	90%

- 4.8. Renfrewshire performs above national across all curricular areas in 2018-19, as demonstrated in table 4. The largest difference is in reading and writing, which are both 6 percentage points above the national figures.

Graph 5: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Fourth Level by the End of S3



- 4.9. The percentage of pupils achieving fourth level has also increased across all curricular areas, as displayed in graph 5. The largest increase since 2016/17 is in listening and talking, which has increased by 14 percentage points and in numeracy, which has increased by 12 percentage points.

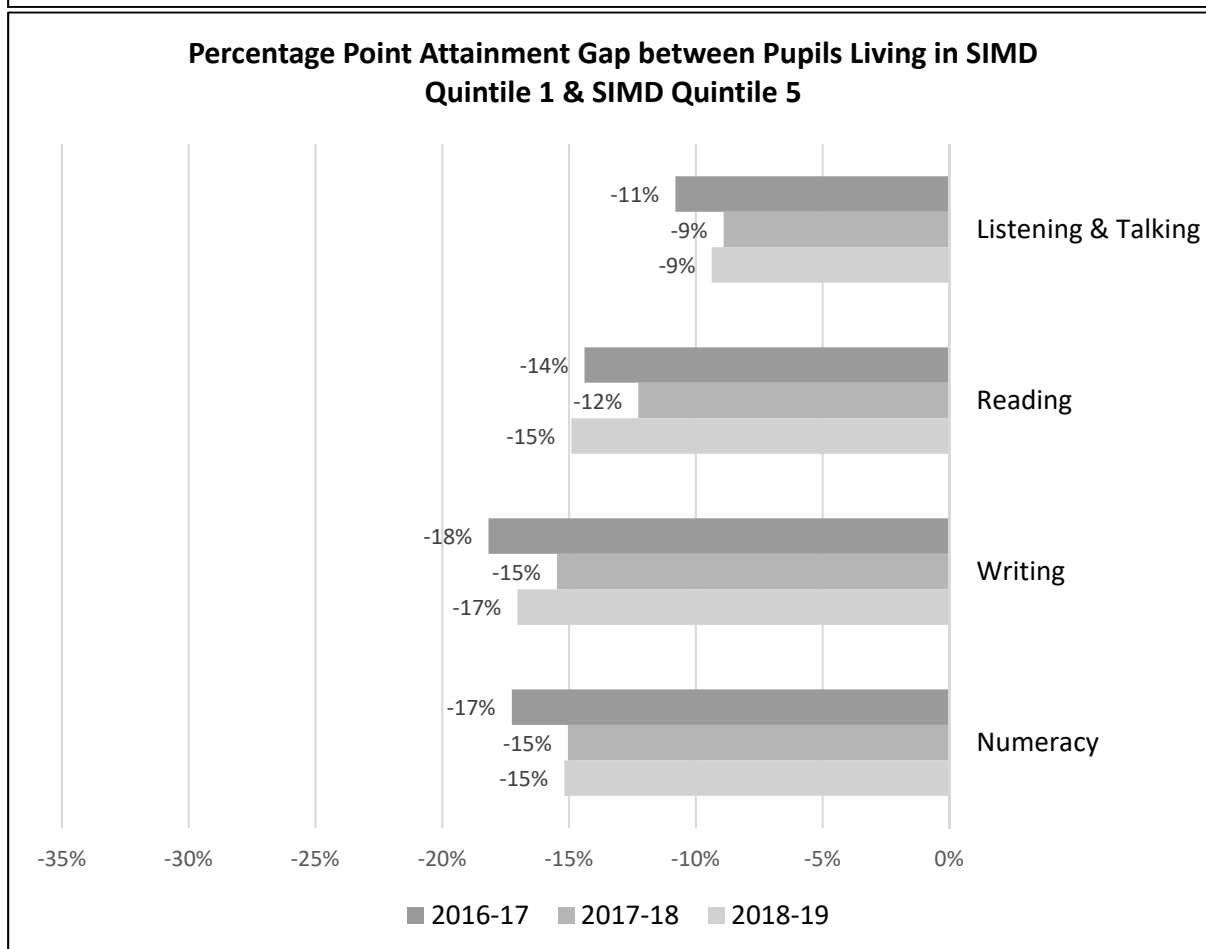
Table 5: Percentage of Pupils Achieving Fourth Level by the end of S3. 2018/19				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	70%	69%	64%	68%
National	57%	55%	52%	59%

- 4.10. The percentage of pupils achieving fourth level in S3 is above national for all curricular areas. The biggest difference is in listening and talking and reading, which are both 13 percentage points above national. 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

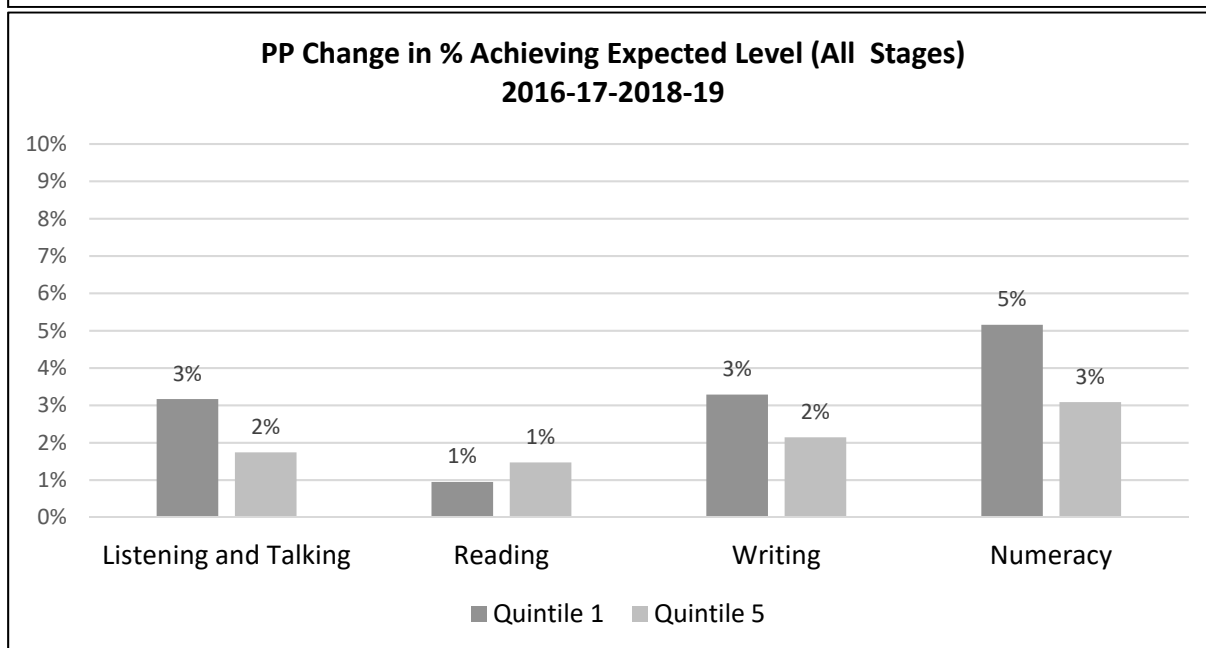
- 5.1. The attainment gap between most and least deprived pupils is measured using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), which is an area-based measure, and free meal and clothing grant entitlement, which is an individual measure of deprivation. By considering both of these measures, a more robust analysis of attainment gaps in Renfrewshire can be achieved. The data from the 2018/19 ACEL return indicates that attainment of most deprived pupils continues to increase and that gaps have reduced across most measures. The largest decreases in the size of the gap have been between pupils entitled to free meal and/or clothing grants and pupils not entitled.

Graph 6: Percentage Point Gap between Pupils Achieving Expected Level in SIMD Quintile 1 & 5 (All 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 reduced listening and talking, writing and numeracy. There has been a marginal increase in the size of the gap in reading, despite a decrease in 2017-18. This increase is 0.5 percentage points so does not represent a substantial change in the size of the gap. Across all stages combined, the gap has reduced by 3 percentage points in listening and talking, 1 percentage points in writing and 2 percentage points in numeracy since 2016/17.

Graph 7: Percentage Point Change in Percentage of Pupils Achieving Expected Level. 2016-17 to 2018-19.



- 5.3. Graph 7 demonstrates that attainment of pupils living in quintile 1 (20% most deprived) and quintile 5 (20% least deprived) areas have both increased over 3 years. The variation in the size of the gap is due to the scale of these increases. In listening and talking, writing and numeracy, pupils living in quintile 1 have increased at a higher rate than in quintile 5. Therefore, the gap has reduced in these curricular areas. In reading, pupils in quintile 5 have increased at a higher rate causing the size of the gap to marginally increase. The difference in the increase between quintile 1 and quintile 5 is within 1 percentage point.

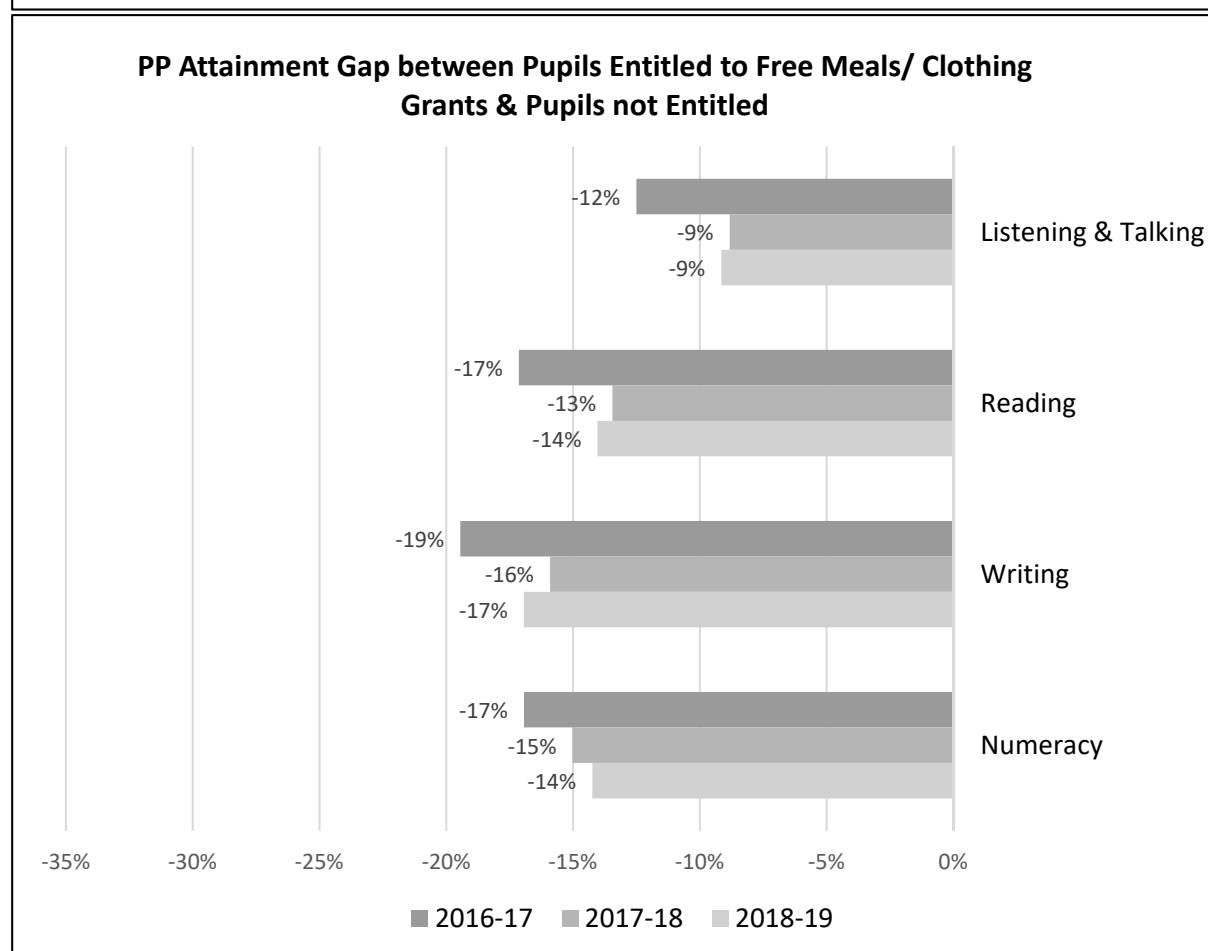
Table 6 : Percentage of Pupils Achieved Literacy & Numeracy in Primary (P1,P4 & P7) 2018/19

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Renfrewshire	National	Renfrewshire	National
Quintile 1 (Most Deprived)	67%	63%	76%	72%
Quintile 2	73%	68%	82%	76%
Quintile 3	77%	73%	84%	79%
Quintile 4	84%	77%	88%	83%
Quintile 5 (Least Deprived)	86%	84%	93%	88%
<b>Percentage Point Gap between Quintiles 1 and 5</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-17</b>

Table 7: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Literacy & Numeracy in Secondary (S3) 2018/19				
	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Renfrewshire	National	Renfrewshire	National
Quintile 1 (Most Deprived)	89%	81%	91%	83%
Quintile 2	95%	85%	93%	88%
Quintile 3	98%	89%	95%	91%
Quintile 4	97%	91%	97%	93%
Quintile 5 (Least Deprived)	99%	95%	99%	96%
<b>Percentage Point Gap between Quintiles 1 and 5</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-13</b>

- 5.4. Tables 6 and 7 demonstrate that Renfrewshire performs above national 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 3 literacy organisers. The size of the gap between pupils living in quintile 1 and quintile 5 is in line with or smaller than the national figures.

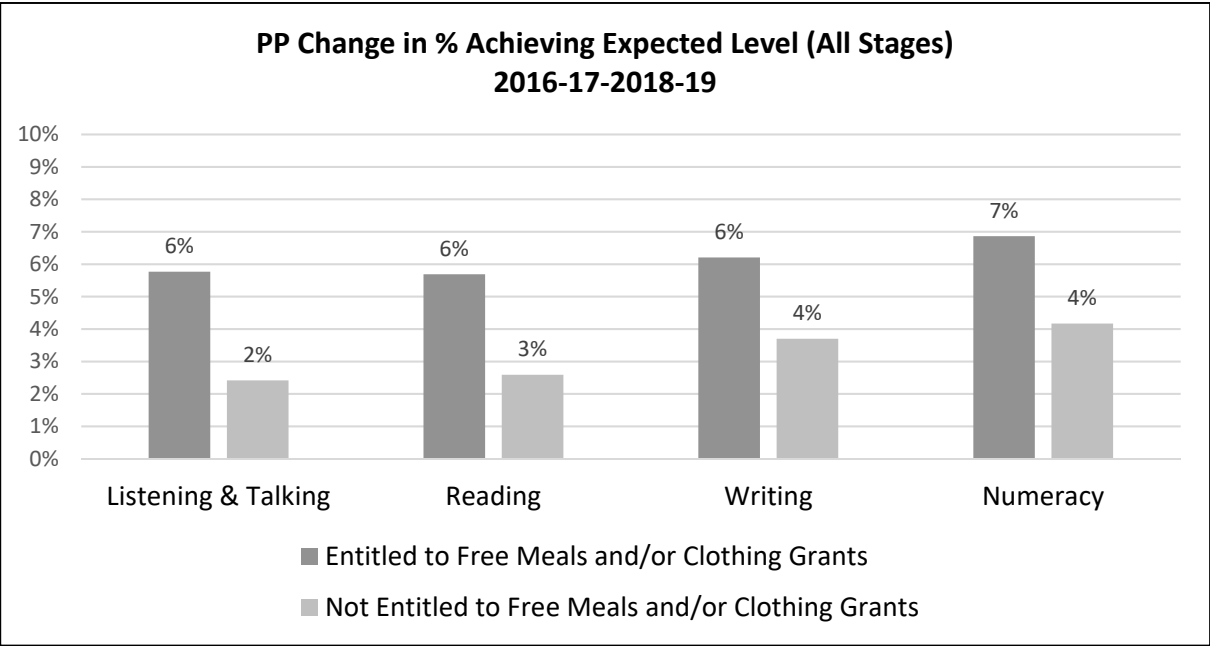
Graph 8: Percentage Point Gap Between Percentage Pupils Achieving Expected Level for Entitled to Free Meals and/or Clothing Grants and Pupils Not Entitled.



- 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 also reduced. The percentage point gap has reduced by 3 percentage points in all curricular areas over 3 years. The size of the attainment gaps between pupils entitled and not

entitled to free meals and/or clothing grants were larger than those the for SIMD measure in 2016-17. However, these reductions in the free meals and clothing grant gaps bring both measures closer in line with each other.

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. 2016-17 to 2018-19

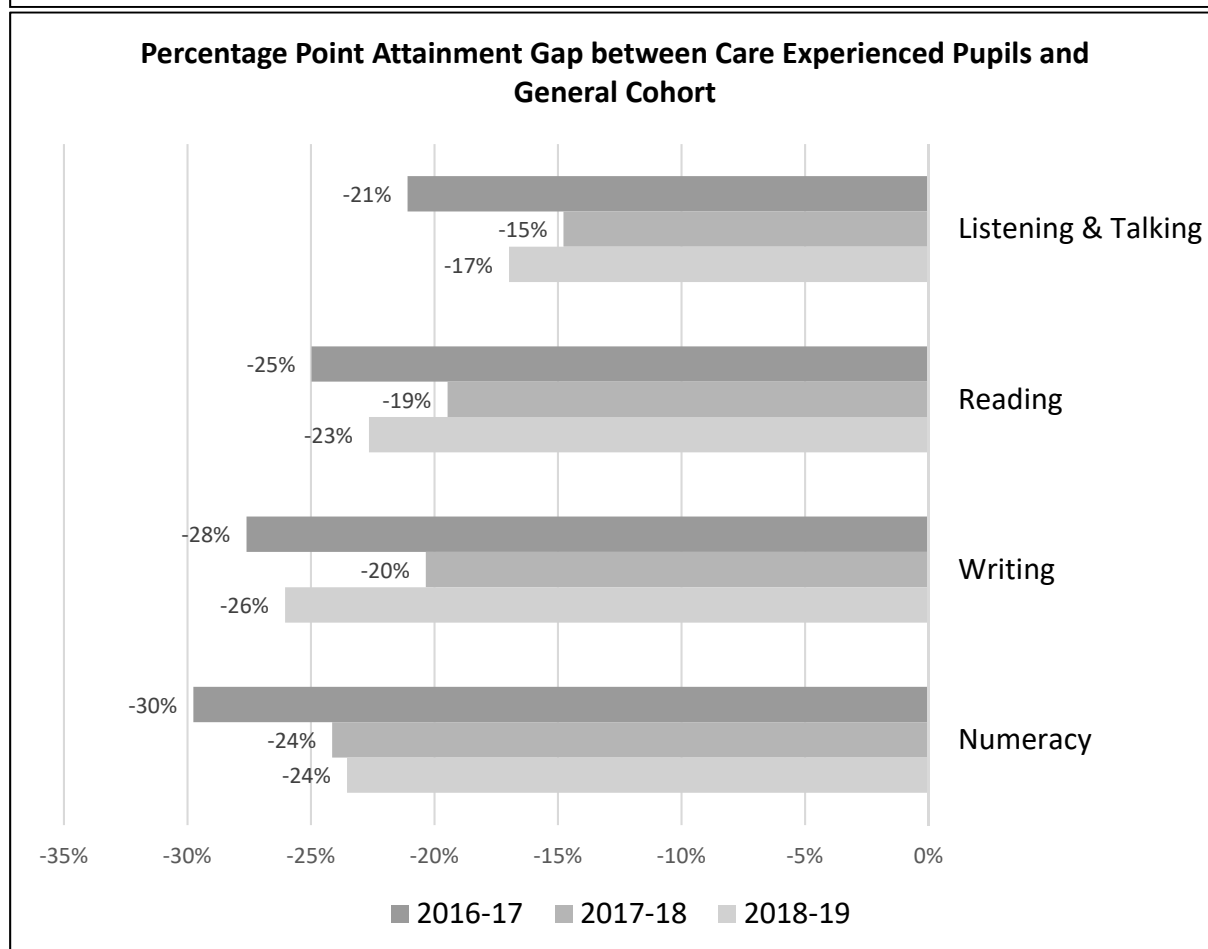


- 5.6. Graph 9 shows that the reduction in the size of the gap is due to a greater percentage point increase in attainment of pupils that are entitled to these benefits than those that are not. Therefore, the attainment gap has reduced while attainment has improved for both groups of pupils.
- 5.7. The data on the poverty related attainment gap demonstrates that across individual and area-based measures of deprivation, attainment of most deprived pupils is increasing. Pupils living in most deprived areas in Renfrewshire have higher attainment than similar pupils nationally. In almost all curricular areas and deprivation measures, the size of the gap has reduced over 3 years while attainment of both groups has increased.

**6. Care Experienced Pupils Attainment Gap**

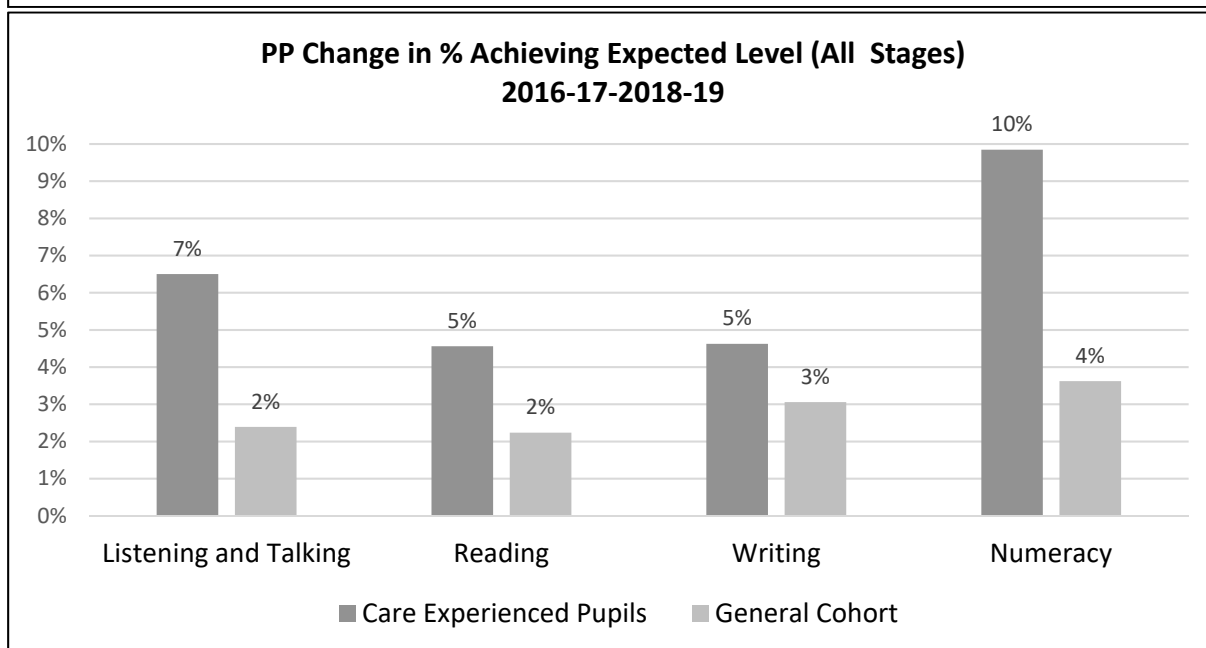
- 6.1. In addition to the poverty related attainment gap, there is also a gap in attainment between care experienced pupils and pupils that are not care experienced.

Graph 10: Percentage Point Gap Between Percentage Pupils Achieving Expected Level for Care Experienced Pupils and General Population.



6.2. As shown in graph 10, the attainment gap between care experienced pupils and the general cohort has reduced over 3 years, however this has not been consistent. In literacy measures, the gap is larger in 2018-19 than in 2017-18. However, a higher degree of variation is expected in these figures due to the small size of the care experienced pupil cohort. Over 3 years, the gap has reduced by 4 percentage points in listening and talking, 2 percentage points in reading, 2 percentage points in writing and 6 percentage points in numeracy.

Graph 11: Percentage Point Change in Percentage of Pupils Achieving Expected Level. 2016-17 to 2018-19.



- 6.3. Graph 11 shows that the reduction in the gap over 3 years is due to greater increases in attainment of care experienced pupils compared with the general cohort. The largest increase within the care experienced cohort has been in numeracy, which has increased by 10 percentage points since 2016-17.

## 7. Conclusion and next steps

- 7.1. The Achievement of a CfE Level Return in 2018/19 has demonstrated improvement in literacy and numeracy across all stages. The highest levels of attainment remain in Primary 1 and Secondary 3, however both Primary 4 and Primary 7 have seen improvements across the curriculum.
- 7.2. Attainment of most deprived pupils has increased within both individual and area-based deprivation indicators. In almost all curricular areas and indicators, there has been reductions in the size of the gap over 3 years. The reductions in the size of the gap have occurred as a result of the attainment of most deprived pupils increasing at a greater rate than least deprived pupils, although both groups have improved.
- 7.3. Renfrewshire performs above national at all stages and in all curricular areas. This pattern is replicated across all SIMD quintiles. In 2018/19, the size of the poverty related attainment gap in Renfrewshire is in line with or smaller than national figures across literacy and numeracy.

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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
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**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.

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**List of Background Papers**

(a) none

Children's Services  
SQ/FW  
10/12/2019

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