

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 17 March 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

**Heading: Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (CfE) Level
Return 2021**

1. Summary

- 1.1. Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence level (ACEL) is recorded and collected nationally at individual pupil level, for all pupils in the stages of P1, P4, P7, and S3. This is reported annually to government with a report published in December. Due to the pandemic, this data was not collected for session 2019/20. For session 2020/21, S3 data was not collected nationally and is therefore not included in this report.
 - 1.2. This report summarises Curriculum for Excellence attainment for Primary 1, 4 and 7 in Renfrewshire in 2020/21.
 - 1.3. The 2020-21 report on CFE attainment shows that the Covid 19 pandemic has had a negative impact on attainment, not only in Renfrewshire but across Scotland. It is important to note, however, that Renfrewshire remains above the national average across all stages and curricular areas.
 - 1.4. We are using attainment data to inform and support planning, ensuring that that measures to address the impact of the pandemic on pupil attainment are in place, allocating resource as appropriate.
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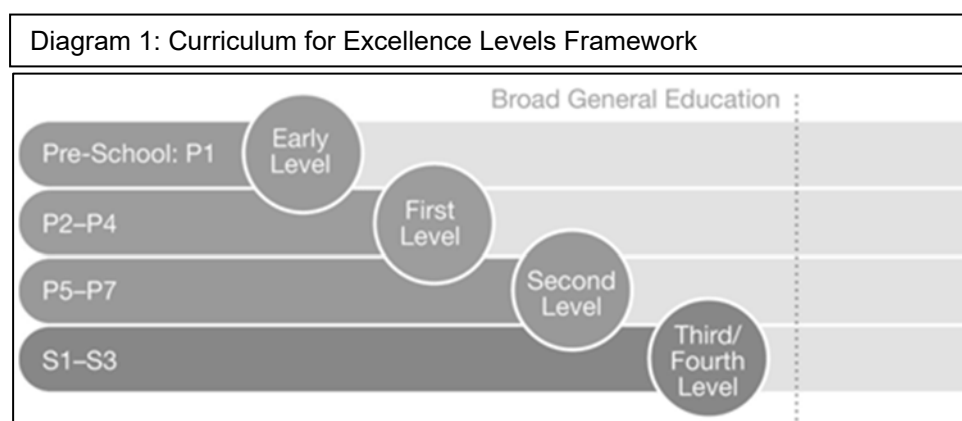
2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of the education and children's policy board are asked to:
 - note the content of this report; and

- note the efforts of the children and young people and the significant commitment of teachers and support staff.

3. Background

- 3.1. The 2021 ACEL data report includes all Primary 1, Primary 4 and Primary 7 pupils. S3 data was not collected nationally due to pressures on secondary schools including implementation of the SQA National Qualifications Alternative Certification Model. The report illustrates performance in the literacy curricular areas (listening & talking, reading, writing) and numeracy. Assessment of the level achieved is based on teacher professional judgements.

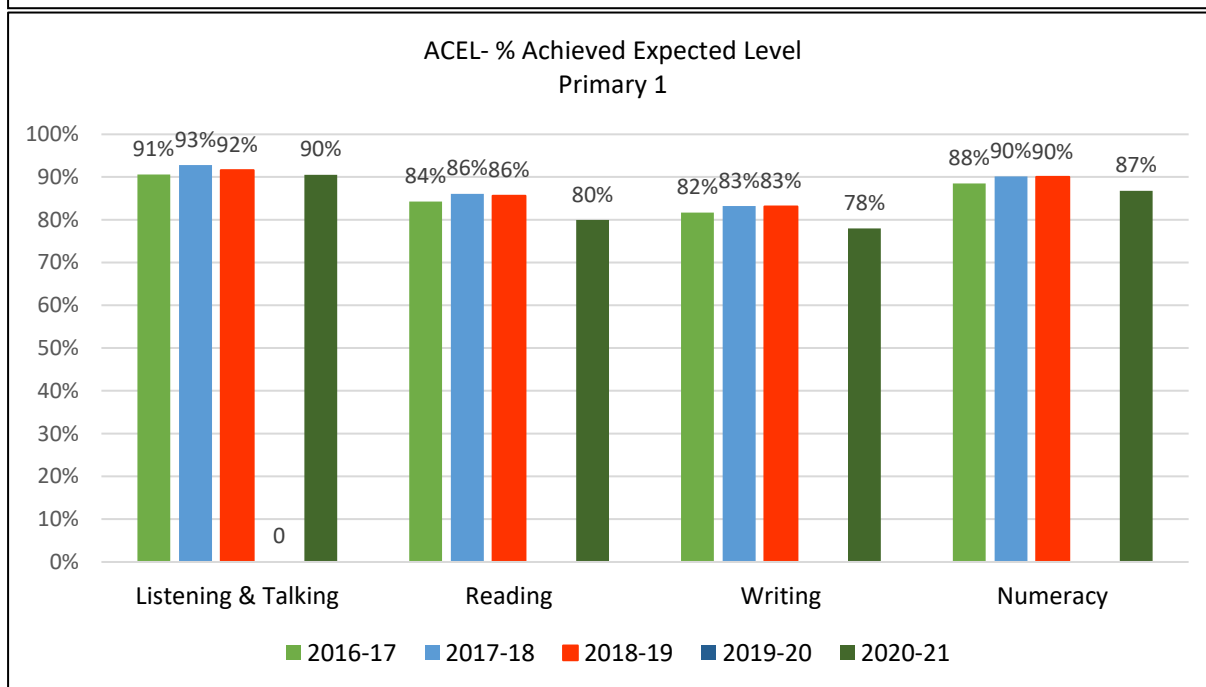


- 3.2. Diagram 1 shows the 4 curriculum levels within broad general education (P1-S3). The ACEL return measures the percentage of pupils that have achieved early level by the end of Primary 1, first level by the end of Primary 4, second level by the end of Primary 7. This reflects the path that most 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 closure of schools in March 2020 and January 2021 is likely to have had a negative effect on some pupils' progress and attainment with socio-economically deprived children amongst those who may have been most negatively affected. This will be reflected in the 2020-21 figures in this report and should be kept in mind when interpreting these and, in particular, when comparing with figures for 2018-19 and before.

4. Attainment by Stage

- 4.1. The negative impact of the covid-19 pandemic on attainment can be seen across all stages in Renfrewshire and nationally. The graphs below demonstrate this and also show that patterns of attainment remain similar to previous years between stages and curricular areas.

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

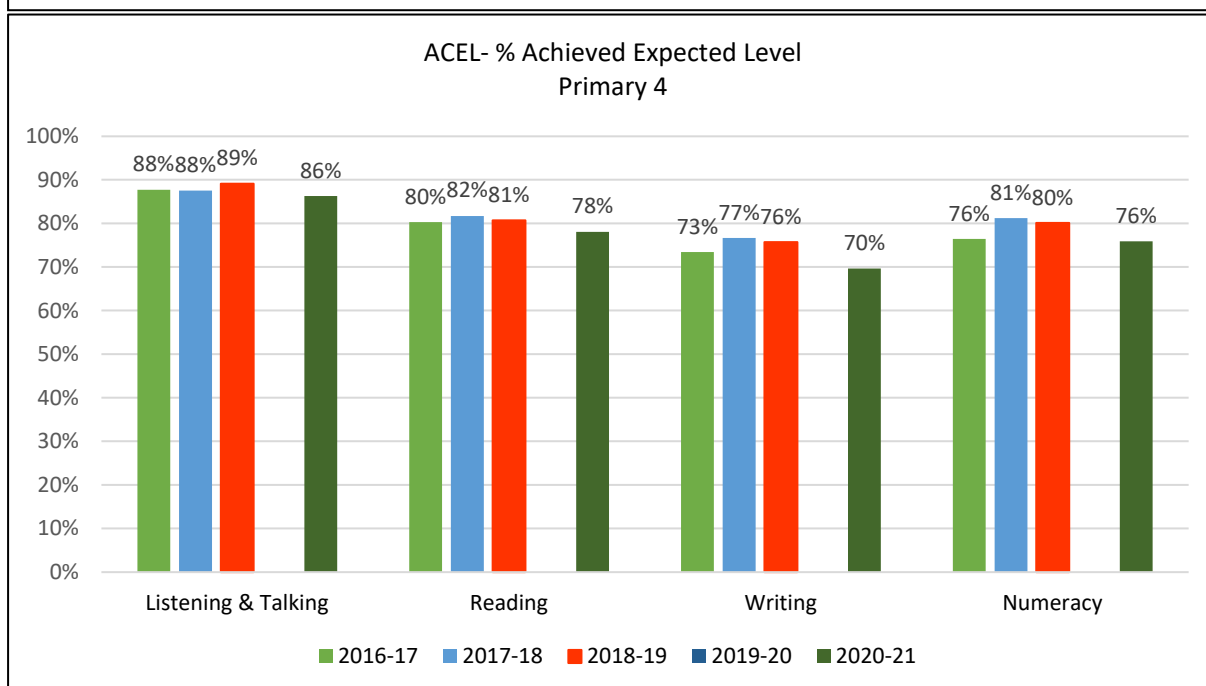


4.2. Graph 1 shows that patterns in primary 1 attainment remains highest in listening and talking, followed by numeracy. Pupils in this stage missed a significant period of time at the end of their early years provision, followed by school closures in their first year of primary. National evidence suggests that pupils in the early stages of primary were more significantly impacted by school closures, particularly those making a transition between sectors. As a result, attainment is lower than previous years across all curricular areas. However, primary 1 attainment continues to be higher than in other primary stages.

	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	90%	80%	78%	87%
National	84%	77%	74%	81%

4.3. Renfrewshire performs above national levels 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 the national figures. The patterns of attainment in P1 are similar to national, with the highest attainment in listening and talking and the lowest in writing. National attainment is also lower than in previous years across all curricular areas.

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

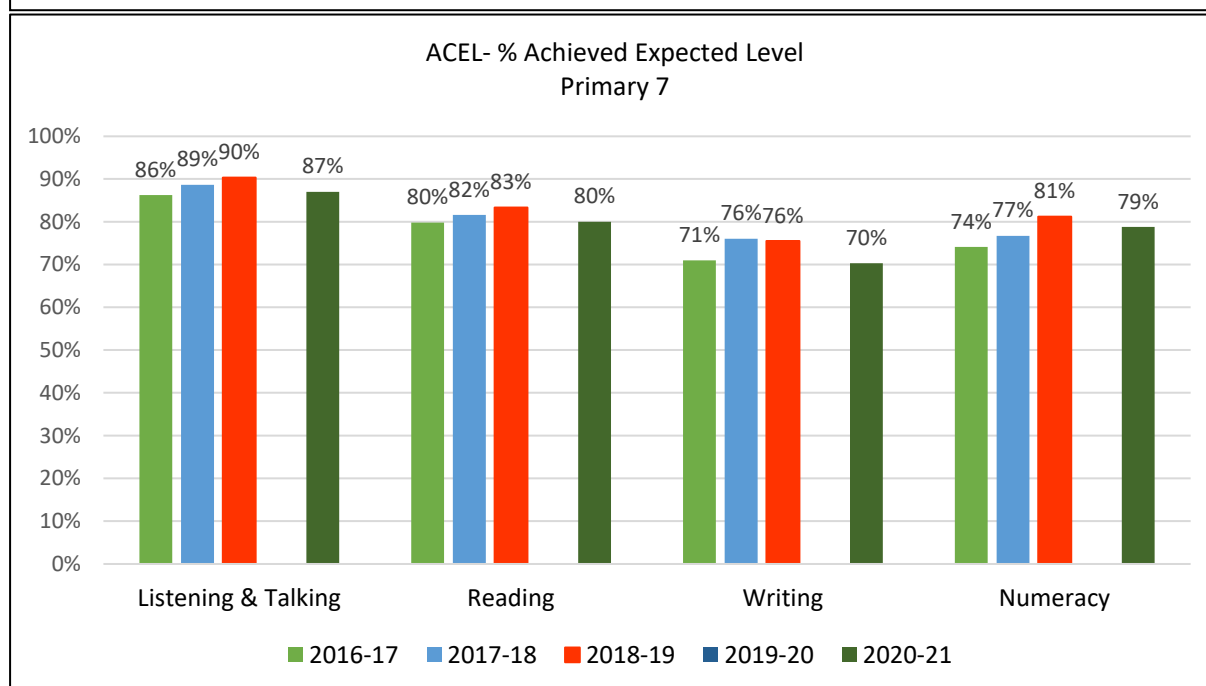


4.4. Graph 2 demonstrates that increasing trends previously seen in P4 attainment, particularly in literacy, have not been sustained in 2020-21. Attainment patterns remain similar, with highest figures in listening and talking followed by reading. Attainment in lowest in writing which has decreased by 6 percentage points since the previous collection.

	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	86%	78%	70%	76%
National	82%	73%	67%	72%

4.5. Table 2 shows that Renfrewshire performs above national in all curricular areas in 2020-21 despite attainment decreases. Nationally, attainment in Primary 4 and Primary 7 is lower than in Primary 1 which replicates the patterns of attainment in Renfrewshire.

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



4.6. In Primary 7, attainment is lower than in 2018-19 however in listening & talking, reading and numeracy remains in line with previous years. This may suggest that pupils in P6 and P7 were better able to access home learning during lockdown periods. All curricular areas previously had increased over the previous 3 years and in some curricular areas remain above 2016-17 figures. 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. 2020-21

	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	87%	80%	70%	79%
National	82%	76%	69%	72%

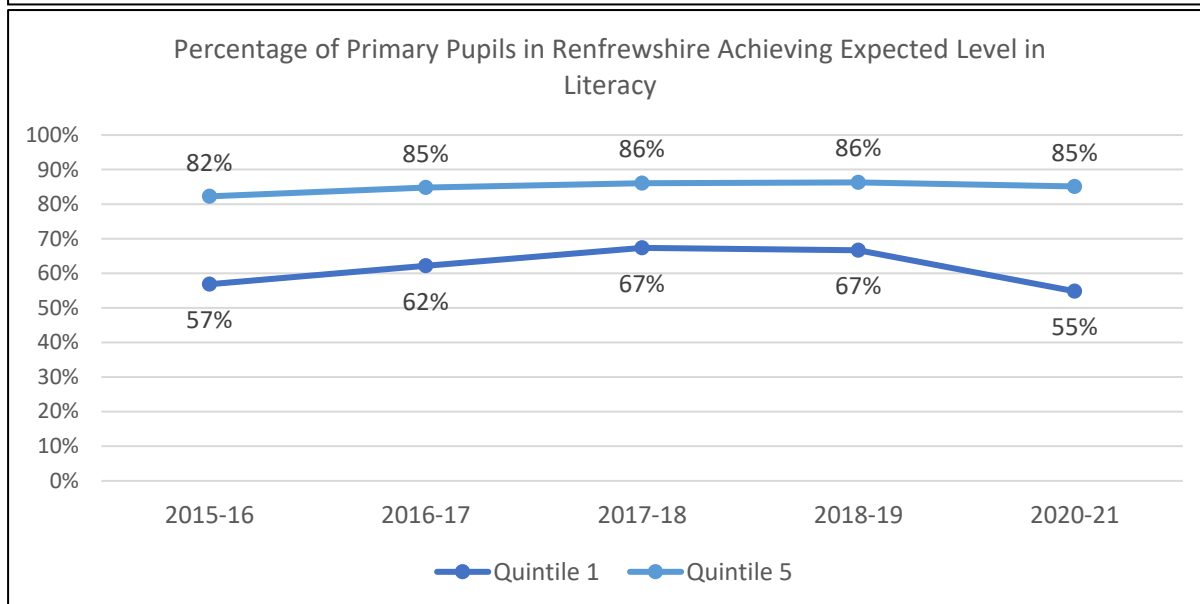
4.7. Table 3 demonstrates that Renfrewshire performs above national across all curricular areas. The largest difference is in numeracy, where Renfrewshire is 7 percentage points above the national figure. The patterns of attainment across the 4 curricular areas are the same as national, with the highest levels of attainment in listening and talking, followed by reading.

5. Poverty- Related Attainment Gaps

5.1. The measures below are part of the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework and measure the poverty related attainment gap by comparing attainment of pupils living the SIMD 20% most deprived areas and SIMD 20% least deprived areas. These are combined measures which provide a high-level picture of changes in the attainment gap over time.

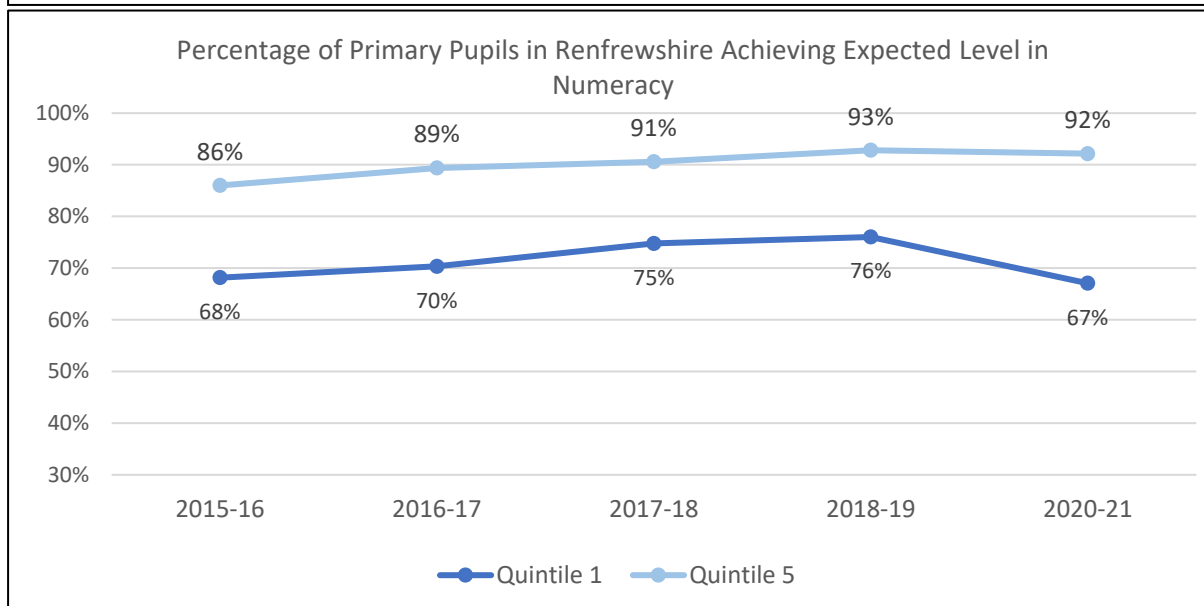
5.2. The data from the 2020-21 indicates that attainment gaps have widened in Renfrewshire and nationally. Scottish Government's Equity Audit provides some context for this change. It identifies research suggesting that pupils experiencing deprivation spent less time on home learning during school closures, often due to lack of resources, space to work and less parental support. Pupils from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds have also been identified as having higher risk of being adversely affected by mental and physical health concerns.

Graph 6: Percentage of Primary Pupils Achieving Expected CfE Level for their Stage in Literacy by SIMD Quintile



5.3. 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 widened in literacy. Attainment in literacy measures whether a pupil has achieved the expected level for their stage across all 3 literacy organisers. Attainment of pupils living in 20% most deprived areas has decreased while those living in 20% least deprived areas remains largely unchanged.

Graph 7: Percentage of Primary Pupils Achieving Expected CfE Level for their Stage in Numeracy by SIMD Quintile



5.4. This pattern is replicated in numeracy (as shown in graph 7) where attainment of pupils living in SIMD quintile 5 (20% least deprived areas) remains in line with pre-pandemic levels at 92%. For pupils living in SIMD quintile 1 (20% least deprived areas), attainment has decreased by 9 percentage points to 67%.

Table 4: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Literacy & Numeracy in Primary (P1,P4 & P7) 2020-21

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Renfrewshire	National	Renfrewshire	National
Quintile 1 (Most Deprived)	55%	56%	67%	65%
Quintile 2	65%	61%	77%	70%
Quintile 3	73%	66%	82%	74%
Quintile 4	77%	73%	88%	80%
Quintile 5 (Least Deprived)	85%	81%	92%	86%
Percentage Point Gap between Quintiles 1 and 5	30pp	25pp	24pp	21pp

5.5. Patterns of attainment have been similar nationally with greater decreases in attainment for pupils living in 20% most deprived areas. Table 6 demonstrate that Renfrewshire performs in line with or above national figures across all SIMD quintiles in both literacy and numeracy. The size of the gap between pupils living in quintile 1 and quintile 5 is larger than the national figures. This is due to higher attainment in SIMD quintile 5 in Renfrewshire compared with the national figures.

5.6. This evidence highlights the importance of reinforcing and continuing to support the evidence-based approaches put in place as part of the Attainment Challenge. Attainment of pupils living in most deprived areas increased over the previous 4 years due to the impact of this work.

6. Measures to Support Recovery

- 6.1. We are using attainment data to inform and support planning, ensuring that that measures to address the impact of the pandemic on pupil attainment are in place and the support is in place for the specific needs of all pupils.
- 6.2. In addition to this the Central Education team are working closely with schools to strengthen and add value to the work taking place. Work includes:
- high quality professional learning to staff at all levels, underpinned by evidence-based approaches in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, to enable those staff to support recovery and redress the gap which has widened as a result of the impact of the pandemic.
 - a package of targeted additional bespoke support in literacy, numeracy and parental engagement for schools where attainment has been most negatively impacted by the pandemic. This has included:
 - Literacy and Numeracy development officers delivering bespoke training and support for schools
 - Modelling and coaching officers providing bespoke support in numeracy and mathematics
 - after-school clubs delivered jointly by teachers and colleagues in Renfrewshire leisure with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and well being
 - Additional teachers were also deployed to primary schools, session 21/22 to support learning and the effects of the pandemic.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 6.3. The Achievement of a CfE data in 2020-21 has demonstrated that the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively impacted pupil attainment, particularly for those living in most deprived areas. Attainment decreases have been seen across Scotland following two periods of school closures during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school sessions.
- 6.4. General patterns on attainment themes 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.
- 6.5. This evidence 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 and bespoke support for areas of particular challenge. 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

None.

2. HR and Organisational Development

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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