

**ITEM No ...3.....**

**REPORT TO:** CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE – 6 MARCH 2023

**REPORT ON:** PROGRESS: ACHIEVEMENT OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE LEVELS 2021/22

**REPORT BY:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

**REPORT NO:** 79-2023

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2021/22 report provides information on the proportion of children and young people who have achieved the expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage in academic session 2021/22.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Families Service's Committee:

- Note the contents of this report and the improvements in outcomes for our children and young people.
- Instructs the Executive Director to report on the attainment and achievement of our children and young people with complex needs at the end of the academic session.
- Instructs the Executive Director to provide an update in twelve months regarding the progress in further improving the achievement of curriculum for excellence levels (ACEL),

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

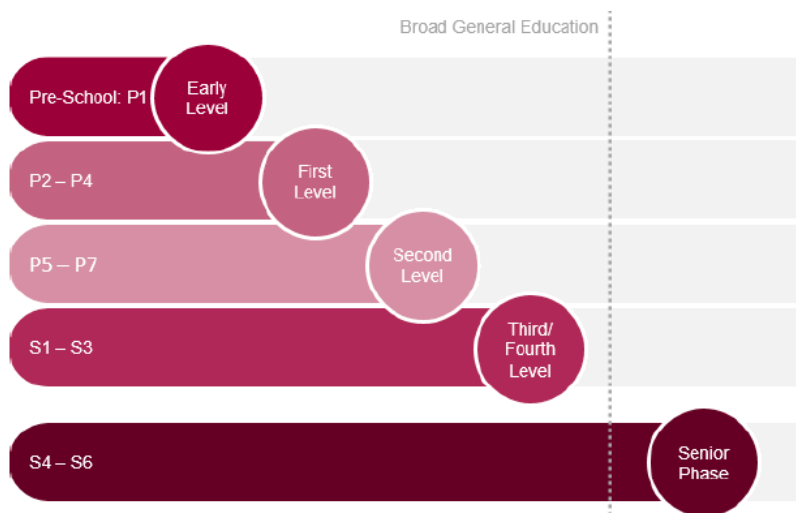
3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**4.0 ACHIEVEMENT OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE LEVELS 2021/ 2022**

4.1 Curriculum for Excellence is designed to provide a coherent, flexible, and enriched curriculum for children and young people aged from 3 to 18. The curriculum includes the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated.

4.2 Curriculum for Excellence defines five levels of learning. The first four levels in the Broad General Education (BGE) phase are Early Level, First Level, Second Level, Third/ Fourth Level, with progression to qualifications described under a fifth level, the Senior Phase.

4.3 The path most children and young people are expected to follow through the levels reflects the stages of maturation of children and young people and the changing ways in which they engage with learning as they develop. Some children and young people will start learning at these levels earlier and others later, depending upon individual needs and aptitudes. The framework is, however, designed to be flexible to permit careful planning for those with additional support needs. Figure 1, below shows the five curriculum levels:



**Figure 1: 3-18 Stages and Curriculum for Excellence Levels**

- 4.4 This report focuses on the BGE phase which covers children from pre-school through to the end of S3. It is intended that all children should have opportunities to experience all of the Experiences and Outcomes up to and including the Third Level where appropriate for individual learning needs. Most learners will progress into the Fourth Level in many aspects of their learning before the end of S3. For S3 pupils this report focuses on Third Level or better.
- 4.5 This report provides information on the proportion of school pupils who have achieved the expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage. Data are collected on pupil performance in the literacy organisers (i.e., reading, writing, listening and talking) and numeracy. It is important to note that a pupil is only reported to have achieved the expected level in 'Literacy' if they have achieved the expected level in all three of the literacy organisers: reading, writing, and listening and talking.
- 4.6 Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) data are based on teachers' professional judgements of individual pupil performance. This report refers to the school year 2021/22; the data reflect what pupils have achieved by the end of the school year – i.e., June 2022. This report is based on data published by Scottish Government on 13 December 2022. The Scottish Government note that achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in 2020/21 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that 2021/22 results may also be affected by the ongoing impact of the pandemic on young people's learning. This should be kept in mind when making comparisons over time.
- 4.7 This is the fifth year for which teachers' professional judgements of pupils' ACEL in literacy and numeracy have been collected. However, no data was collected by the Scottish Government in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in 2021 only data for Primary stages P1, 4 and 7 was collected. This meant that no data was collected for S3 pupils for two consecutive years. This data is no longer considered as experimental in nature. Evidence through moderation with standardised assessment data and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) data, and quality assurance, would indicate that, overall, Dundee's data is robust. However, further work is taking place to ensure that the ACEL data is as robust as possible across all stages of the broad general education. (See Section 9.)

5.0 LITERACY

Overall attainment in literacy: Primary 1, 4 & 7

5.1 Key statistics in reading, writing, and listening and talking:

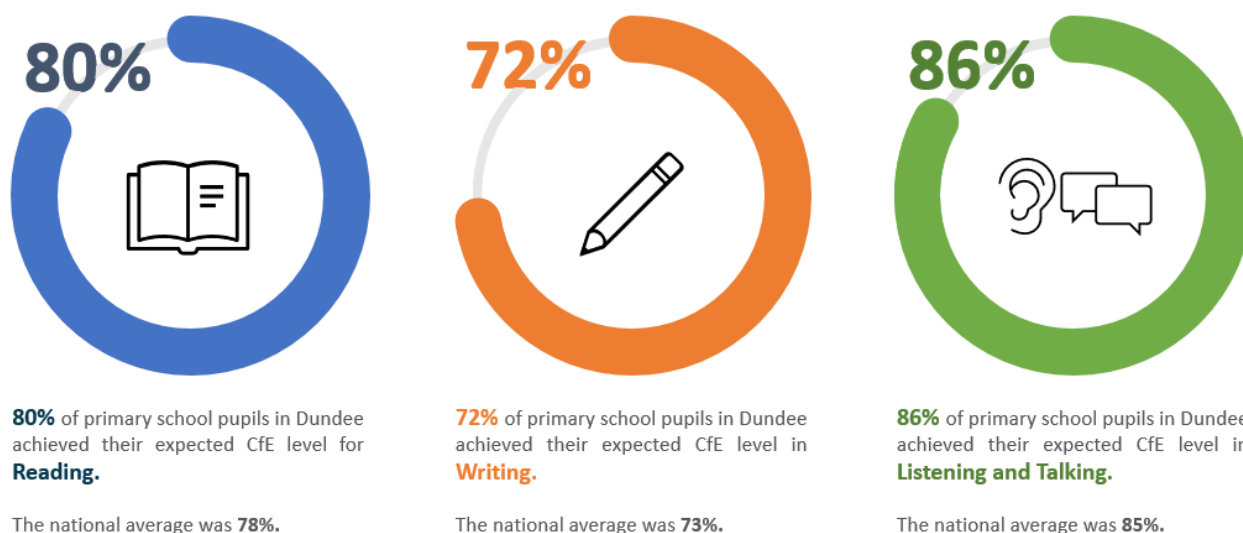


Figure 2: Primary achievement in Reading, Writing, and Listening and Talking

5.2 Prior to 2018/19 the proportion of Dundee primary pupils achieving their expected literacy levels was lower than the national average (Figure 3, below). Since 2018/19 Dundee’s primary literacy attainment levels have been similar to the Scotland average. Both Scotland and Dundee showed a drop in the percentage of P1, 4, 7 pupils achieving their expected literacy level between 2018/19 and 2020/21 which can, to an undetermined extent, be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

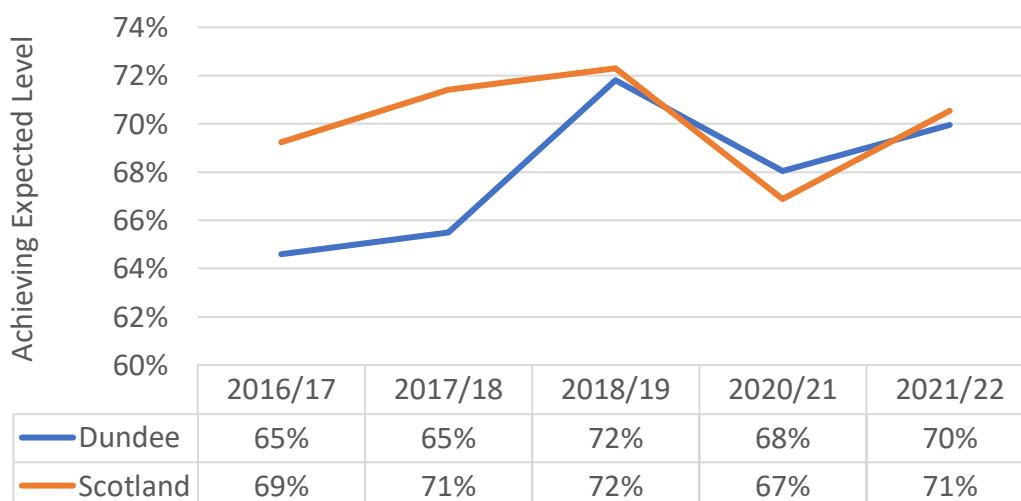


Figure 3: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving their expected level in Literacy

**Closing the attainment gap in literacy: Primary 1, 4 & 7**

5.3 Since 2018/19 primary pupils living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Quintile 1 (20% most deprived areas) in Dundee have shown higher levels of literacy achievement when compared to the Scotland average (Figure 4, below). Again, a dip in achievement was seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, but this was less pronounced in Dundee than the Scotland average.

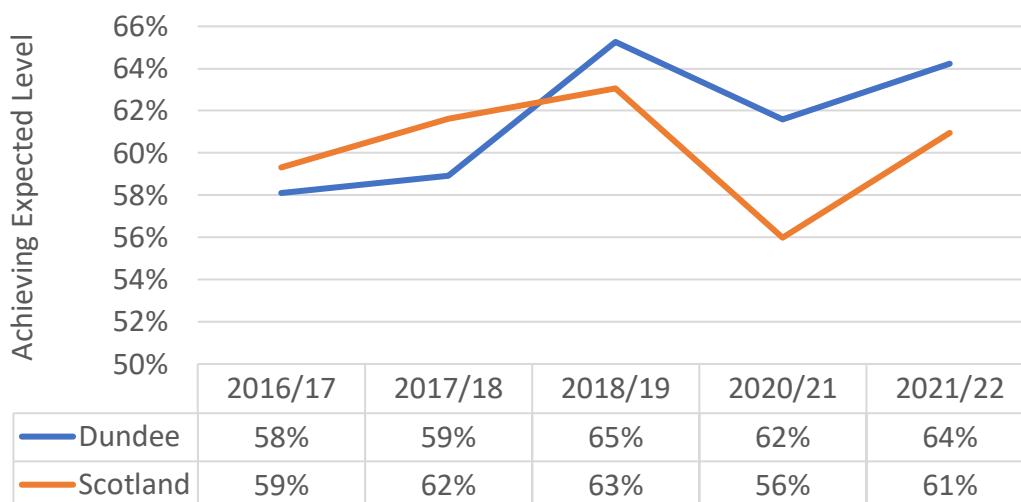


Figure 4: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined from SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) achieving their expected level in Literacy.

5.4 Since 2018/19 primary pupils living in SIMD Quintile 5 (20% least deprived areas) in Dundee have also shown slightly higher levels of literacy achievement when compared to the Scotland average (Figure 5, below). The dip in achievement seen in SIMD Quintile 5 because of the COVID-19 pandemic was not as marked as that seen in SIMD Quintile 1, similar to the Scotland profile. Achievement levels for Dundee pupils in the least deprived quintile are now similar to 2018/19.

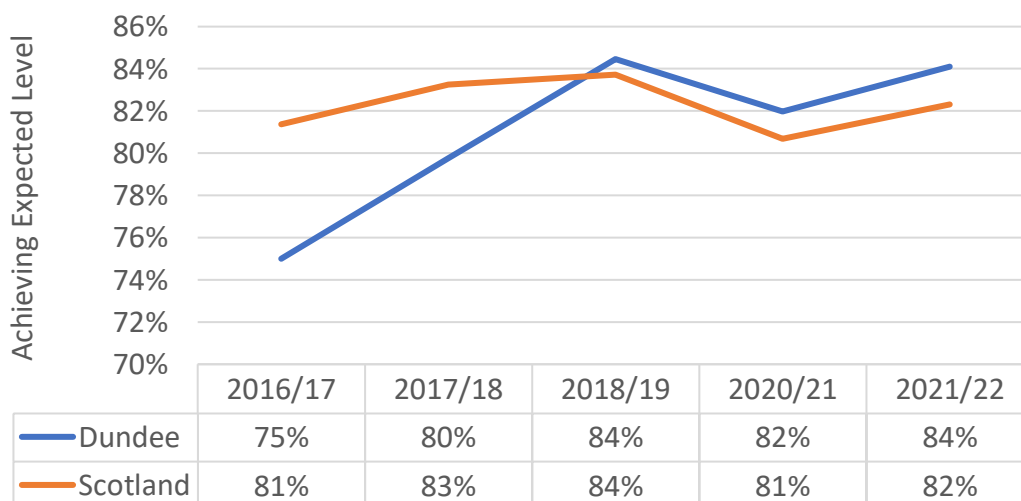


Figure 5: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined from SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived) achieving their expected level in Literacy.

5.5 Despite overall improvements seen in literacy achievement since 2016/17, the gap in achievement between pupils from the most and least deprived quintiles has remained relatively steady at around 20 percentage points (Figure 6, below). The poverty-related attainment gap within Dundee is currently smaller than the national average.

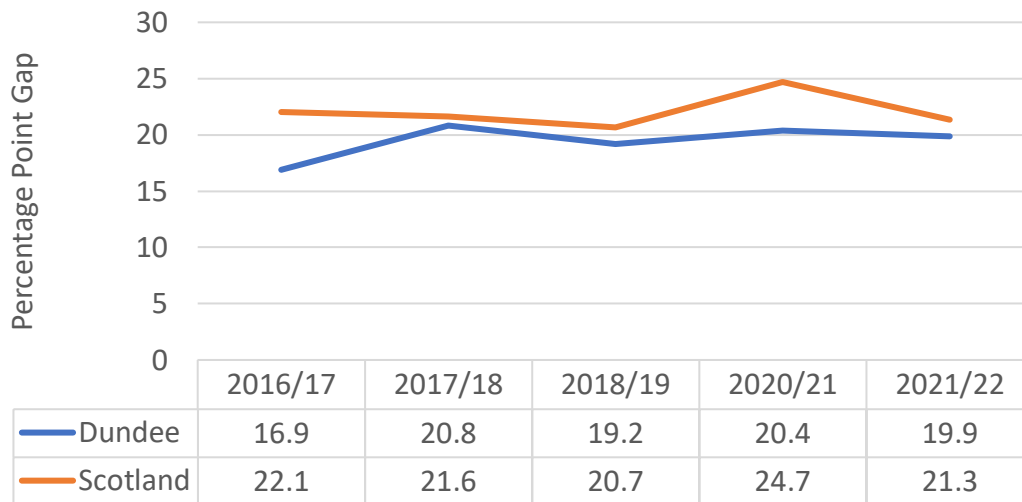


Figure 6: Percentage point gap between P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined from SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5 achieving their expected level in Literacy.

**Overall attainment in literacy: S3**

5.6 Key statistics in reading, writing, and listening and talking:

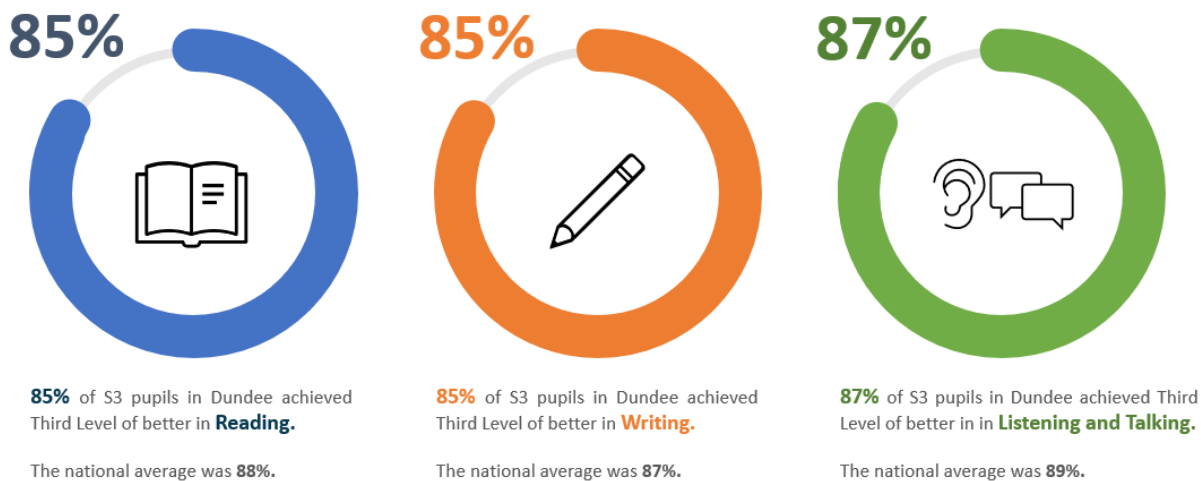


Figure 7: Secondary achievement in Reading, Writing, and Listening and Talking

5.7 According to ACEL returns, the percentage of S3 pupils achieving the expected level in literacy (Third level or better) has fluctuated in Dundee between 84% and 89% (Figure 8, below). Both Scotland and Dundee saw a decline in S3 literacy achievement levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline was greater in Dundee. Unfortunately, there were no ACEL collections in 2019/20 nor 2020/21 so it is not yet possible to determine if there is any recovering trend following the pandemic.

- 5.8 Despite the dip in the proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level Literacy, the percentage of young people achieving 4<sup>th</sup> Level has increased and is at its highest in five years. (See Appendix 1).
- 5.9 The service is investing significant resource in the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) programme, and working closely with schools, to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle to ensure that the S3 ACEL data is as robust as possible.

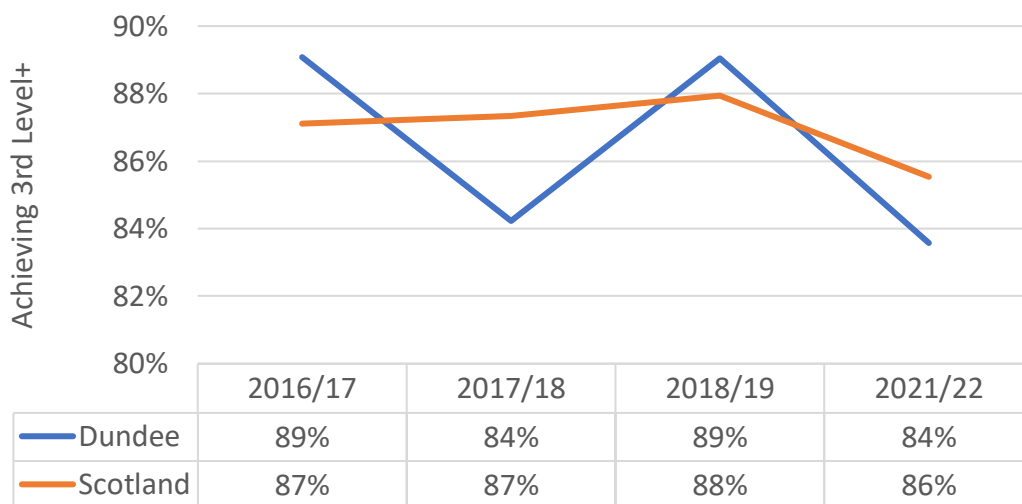


Figure 8: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third level or better in Literacy

6.0 NUMERACY

Overall attainment in numeracy: Primary 1, 4 & 7

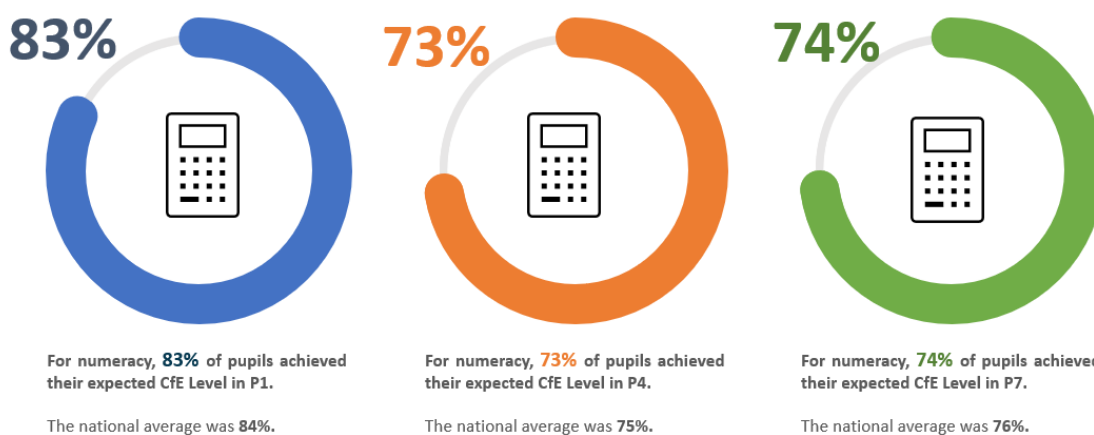


Figure 9: Primary achievement in Numeracy

6.1 Prior to 2020/21 Dundee Primary pupils had lower levels of numeracy attainment than the national average (Figure 10) but were showing improvement. In 2020/21 Scotland saw a dip in primary numeracy achievement levels which may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Scotland then saw a recovery in 2021/22 though not yet to pre-pandemic levels. The pattern in Dundee has been different. The decline from 2018/19 to 2020/21 was not as large as in Scotland but has not been followed by a recovery in 2021/22, albeit just one percent lower than pre-pandemic levels.

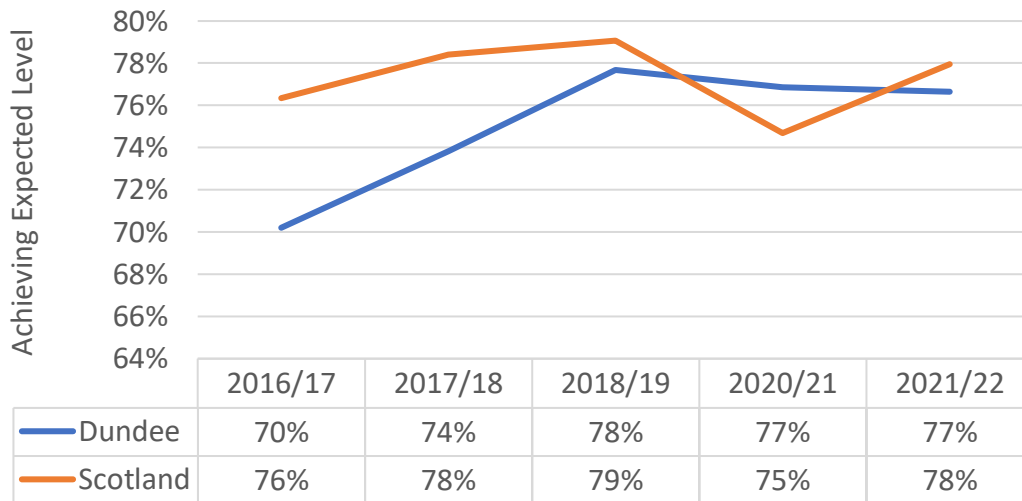


Figure 10: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving their expected level in Numeracy.

**Closing the attainment gap in numeracy: Primary 1, 4 & 7**

6.2 Dundee primary school pupils living in SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) have seen an improvement in numeracy attainment since 2016/17 (Figure 11, below). In 2020/21 and 2021/22 Dundee had a higher proportion of primary pupils from SIMD Quintile 1 achieving their expected level in numeracy than Scotland's average.

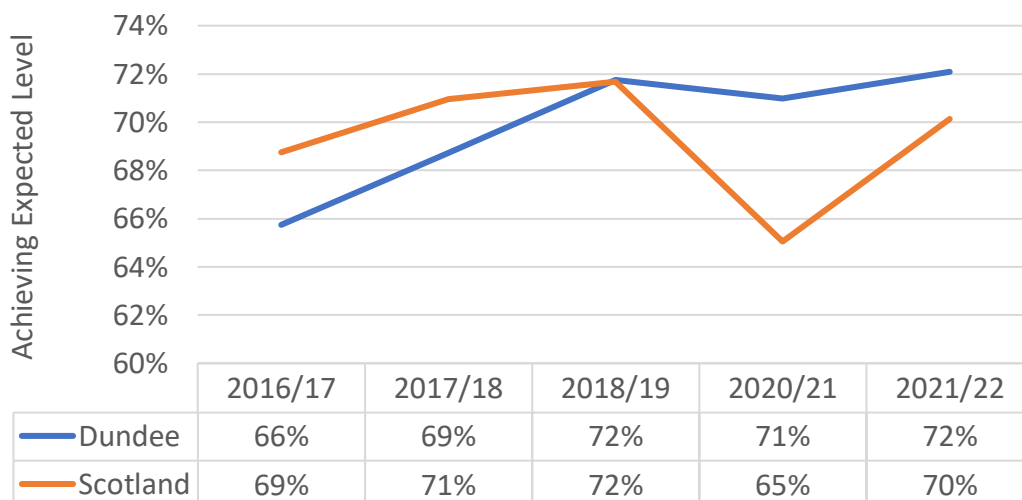


Figure 11: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined from SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) achieving their expected level in Numeracy.

- 6.3 Dundee primary school pupils living in SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived) saw improvement in the numeracy achievement until 2020/21 (Figure 12, below). The percentage achieving their expected level was higher than the national average in 2020/21 but fell by 2 percentage points in 2021/22.

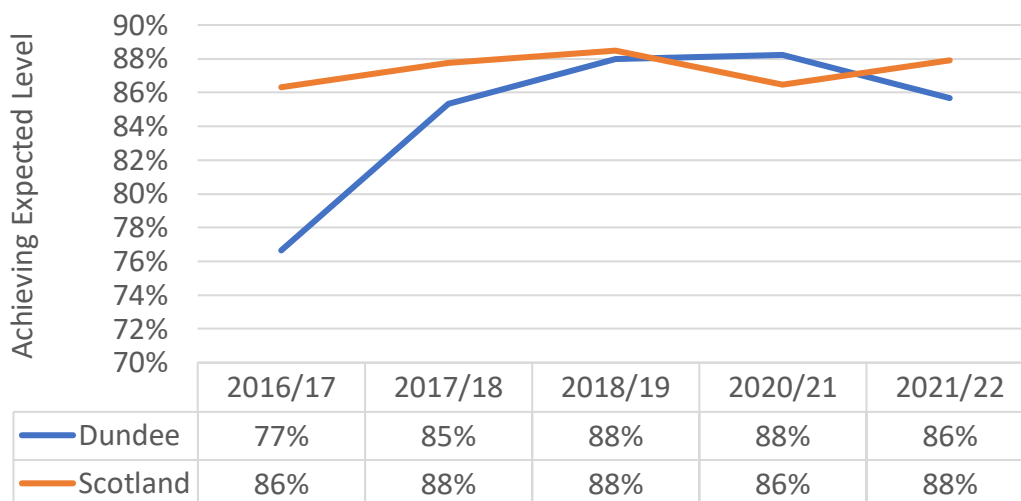


Figure 12: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined from SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived) achieving their expected level in Numeracy.

- 6.4 The gap in primary school numeracy attainment between SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5 remained steady in Dundee at around 16-17 percentage points from 2017/18 to 2020/21 (Figure 13, below). Whilst the gap has closed to 13.6 percentage points in 2021/22, some of this closure is attributed to a slight decline in SIMD 5 performance. The gap is still wider than seen in 2016/17 but remains smaller than the gap seen overall in Scotland.

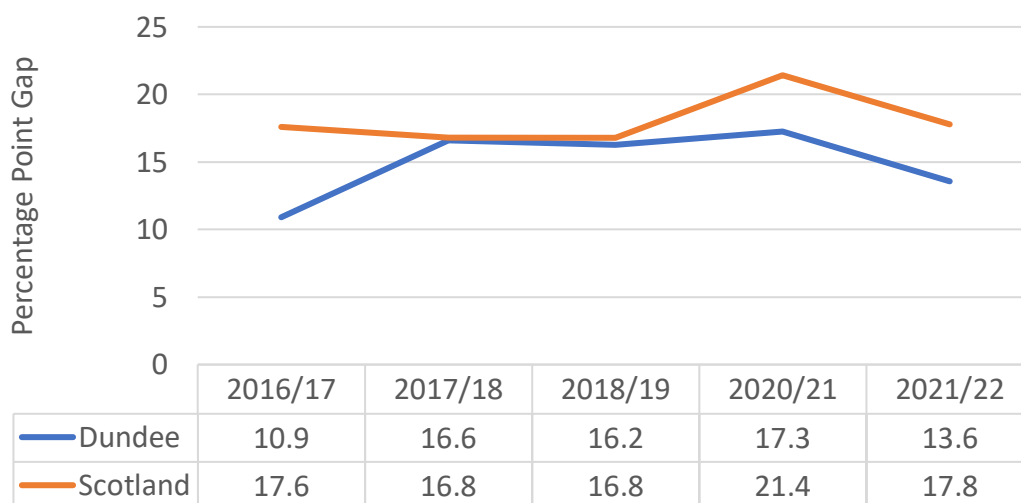


Figure 13: Percentage point gap between P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined from SIMD Quintiles 1 and 5 achieving their expected level in Numeracy.



### Overall attainment in numeracy: S3

- 6.5 The percentage of Dundee S3 pupils achieving numeracy at CfE Third level or better has fluctuated between 80 and 85% since 2016/17 (Figure 14, below). It has remained below the national average.
- 6.6 Despite the dip in the proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level Numeracy, the percentage of young people achieving 4<sup>th</sup> Level has increased and is at its highest in five years. (See appendix 1).
- 6.7 The service is investing significant resource in the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) programme, and working closely with schools, to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle to ensure that the S3 ACEL data is as robust as possible.

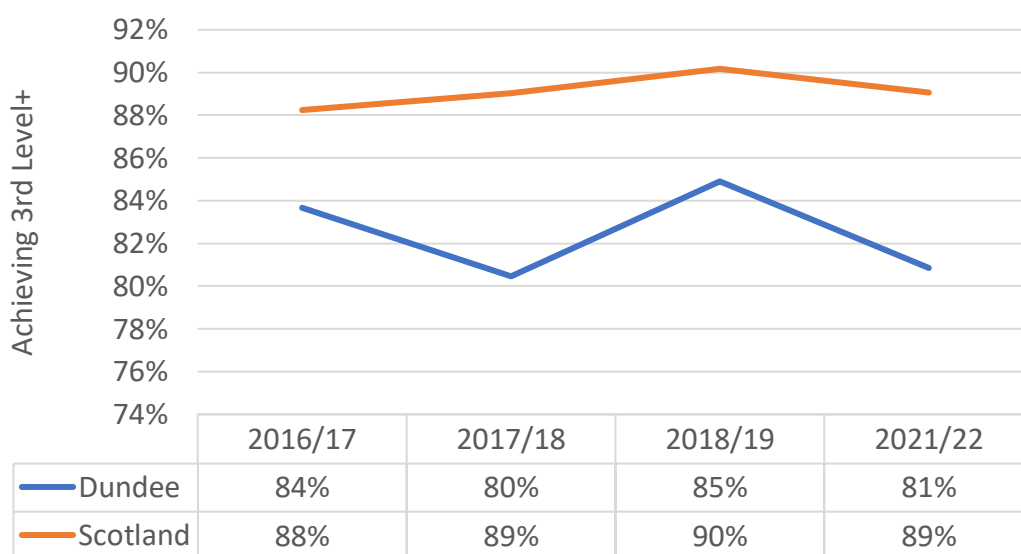


Figure 14: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third level or better in Numeracy.

## 7.0 ACEL RETURNS

- 7.1 The full details of Dundee's Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) data from 2016/27 to 2021/22 are presented in Appendix 1.

## **8.0 ACHIEVEMENT OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE LEVELS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS WHO RECEIVE SPECIALIST SUPPORT**

- 8.1 The attainment and achievement across the Broad General Education (BGE) for all children and young people with complex needs attending our specialist provisions is tracked and monitored within their learner pathway. In order to access the curriculum and demonstrate meaningful progression of their skills for learning, life and work the method of assessments used for teachers' professional judgements must be adaptive and the degree of scaffolding also taken into account.
- 8.2 Achieving a level, or small steps within and across levels, is therefore significant for a child or young person with complex needs, and linear progression is unlikely, so recording and reporting must consider the following factors:
- The importance of the contexts for learning which allow a child or young person to demonstrate progression when they can transfer skills from one learning experience to another.
  - Assessment of a child's conceptual understanding informs the method of assessment.
  - Triangulation and analysis of qualitative assessment information from observations with quantitative measures which inform teachers' professional judgements, e.g., how does the Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing tool inform a child's approach to a learning task?
  - The use of bespoke assessment frameworks such as SCERTS (for a child's social and communication profile) which underpin their participation and progression across all aspects of their lives.
  - Precision teaching which addresses the gaps in a child's learning and provides them with the greatest opportunity for progression in their pathway, e.g., specific literacy skills.
  - Moderation of teachers' professional judgements of children and young people's achievements as well as their assessment methodology needs to be a regular feature of assessment and planning.
  - Collation of children's achievements in a cohort may need to be reported as the % making progress.
  - The significance of 'stopping regression' should also be recognised for children and young people whose health and care impacts significantly on their wellbeing and learning.
- 8.3 The Children and Families Service will table a separate paper to the Children and Families Service's Committee outlining the attainment and achievement of our children and young people with complex needs in the BGE and Senior Phase at the Children and Families Service's Committee in June 2023.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 In seeking to recover from the impact of COVID-19 and to accelerate progress we have a relentless focus on the delivery of a quality educational experience for all children and young people from the earliest stages of their educational journey. Strategies and actions to further improve the proportion of children and young people achieving the expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy include:
- Working with Professors from the University of Glasgow to further develop, and embed, our Every Dundee Learner Matters strategy to better support schools to identify and address their contextual barriers; and, to build networks to ensure the sharing of good practice across our nurseries and schools.
  - Investing significant resource in the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) programme; Dundee has more than 120 nationally trained QAMSOs who are involved in regional and citywide moderation. This group, led by the Pedagogy Team Depute Head Teacher, support schools to ensure robust evidence is gathered and accurate judgements are made around achievement of a level. There will be targeted at S3.
  - Using data effectively to be responsive to need and to target appropriate support. For example, as a result of a data analysis, six primary schools are receiving bespoke support in relation to First level Writing in order to increase teacher confidence, improve learning and teaching and ultimately raise attainment in this area for each school.
  - Providing targeted and bespoke support to individual schools to build capacity and to support improvement in areas specific to each setting, for example our Pedagogy Team are working with four secondary schools and seventeen primary schools to deliver professional learning in a variety of areas related to school priorities e.g., Metaskills, effective questioning and retrieval practice.
  - Working closely with Speech and Language Therapists to build capacity in our workforce to be able to support the language and communication needs of our young people which will impact positively on attainment, achievement and wellbeing.
  - Supporting the Numeracy Pioneer network in the city which recently created Numeracy and Maths trackers at the request of Head Teachers and the network is currently working with the Pedagogy Team to finalise Dundee's Numeracy strategy.
  - Applying to the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) professional accreditation for the Conceptual Understanding in Number training course that our Pedagogy Team currently delivers to the Numeracy Pioneers Network. Accreditation will mean that teachers who complete the course will receive professional recognition for 5 years.
  - Engaging in Collaborative Improvement (CI) with Education Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES). Whilst the focus is on improving outcomes in Senior Phase, the CI also focused on the BGE experience, and in particular S3 attainment.
  - Education Officers work directly with their schools to analyse the BGE data and to offer appropriate challenge and support to ensure improvement plans are focused on key areas for raising attainment.

**10.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

**11.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 11.1 The Council Leadership Team was consulted in the preparation of this report.

**12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 None.

Audrey May  
Executive Director

Paul Fleming  
Head of Service – Education, Learning & Inclusion  
Chief Education Officer

23 February 2023

## APPENDIX 1: ACEL RETURNS

The full details of Dundee's Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) data from 2016/17 to 2021/22 are presented in the table below.

Organiser	Stage	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2020/21	2021/22
Reading	P1	78%	80%	82%	79%	82%
	P4	73%	74%	78%	76%	79%
	P7	73%	76%	82%	78%	79%
	P1,4,7 combined	75%	77%	81%	78%	80%
	S3 - 3rd Level+	92%	85%	90%	n/c	85%
	S3 - 4th Level	54%	50%	54%	n/c	54%
Writing	P1	73%	72%	76%	74%	77%
	P4	66%	65%	70%	69%	70%
	P7	62%	69%	77%	72%	71%
	P1,4,7 combined	67%	69%	74%	71%	72%
	S3 - 3rd Level+	91%	86%	90%	n/c	85%
	S3 - 4th Level	52%	49%	52%	n/c	53%
Listening & Talking	P1	87%	89%	89%	85%	87%
	P4	82%	83%	86%	87%	83%
	P7	77%	83%	87%	82%	87%
	P1,4,7 combined	82%	85%	87%	85%	86%
	S3 - 3rd Level+	92%	86%	91%	n/c	87%
	S3 - 4th Level	54%	52%	54%	n/c	57%
Literacy	P1	70%	69%	74%	71%	74%
	P4	63%	62%	67%	65%	66%
	P7	60%	65%	74%	68%	70%
	P1,4,7 combined	65%	65%	72%	68%	70%
	S3 - 3rd Level+	89%	84%	89%	n/c	84%
	S3 - 4th Level	48%	44%	46%	n/c	50%
Numeracy	P1	79%	80%	84%	81%	83%
	P4	70%	70%	73%	75%	73%
	P7	60%	71%	76%	74%	74%
	P1,4,7 combined	70%	74%	78%	77%	77%
	S3 - 3rd Level+	84%	80%	85%	n/c	81%
	S3 - 4th Level	44%	45%	50%	n/c	56%

Table 1: Percentage of Dundee pupils achieving their expected CfE Levels, 2016/17 to 2021/22, by Stage and CfE Organiser (n/c = not collected)

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ACEL</b>	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels
<b>ADES</b>	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
<b>BGE</b>	Broad General Education
<b>CI</b>	Collaborative Improvement
<b>CfE</b>	Curriculum for Excellence
<b>SIMD</b>	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
<b>SQA</b>	Scottish Qualifications Authority
<b>QAMSO</b>	Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer