

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
Report by the Chief Education Officer

Educational Services: 4th December 2019

Subject: Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Examination Results 2019

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To update Members on the performance of West Dunbartonshire schools in the national Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations of 2019.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** Members are requested to:

- a) Note the contents of this report and the attached appendices;
- b) Congratulate the pupils, parents and carers, staff in our establishments and our partner providers for achievements in this year's examinations.

3. Background

- 3.1** With the introduction of Insight, the National Senior Phase Benchmarking tool in 2014, emphasis shifted in how a school is judged to be performing. Instead of the previous measures of how many pupils gained a number of passes at specific levels, a school is now measured according to its performance in key benchmarks. There are both national and local benchmarks. A complete picture of local authority and school performance requires benchmarks to be considered together.

- 3.2** Insight is updated twice a year, in September with SQA exam results and in March when it updates leaver destinations and the four National Measures. For this reason it is not possible to provide a complete picture of performance through the four national measures until after the March update. A further report will be brought to committee once this update is available. At this time, we are able to update on our performance in local measures.

- 3.3** Insight presents information on the achievements of school leavers at their point of exit from school, be that in S4, S5 or S6. Previously, we focussed on the attainment of an individual cohort taken as a whole (S4, S5 or S6). This change is in line with the CfE approach which sees the Senior Phase as a single coherent experience leading to a positive destination. Each young person's experience will be different depending on their needs.

- 3.4** Instead of comparing schools with each other or comparing one year group against another, benchmark comparisons are made against 'virtual comparators'. Insight makes these virtual comparisons by selecting real young people from across Scotland that match the characteristics of students in

West Dunbartonshire schools or in the local authority as a whole. In the case of school leavers, ten comparable virtual leavers are made for every one of our school leavers from West Dunbartonshire.

- 3.5** Individually, schools will consider their performance in local benchmarks in their work to raise attainment. Themes identified will form the basis whole school and departmental improvement. This is quality assured through our Local Authority Improvement Framework and through the publication and analysis of school Standards and Quality reports.
- 3.6** In 2018, ‘courses’ and ‘units’ were de-coupled, making it possible for candidates to be presented for ‘units’ only at a level, instead of being presented for the whole course award.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** In 2019 we presented 2,117 number of candidates for 9,601 number of qualifications across National 2 – Advanced Higher. 82% of those presentations resulted in a passing grade. This compares with 2,109 candidates for 9,603 qualifications in 2018, 75% resulting in a passing grade.
 - 4.1.1** At National 4, the West Dunbartonshire data shows a decrease in attainment of 7.5% points when compared with 2018 (88% pass rate in 2019 compared with 95.5% in 2018). Between 2018 and 2019 the number of presentations reduced from 2,154 to 2,056 respectively. This difference can largely be attributed to incomplete coursework from a number of young people at the time of presentation.
 - 4.1.2** At National 5, the West Dunbartonshire data shows an increase in attainment of 3% points when compared with 2018 (82% pass rate in 2019 compared with 79% in 2018). We saw a slight increase in the number of presentations (4,317 in 2019, compared with 4,300 in 2018).
 - 4.1.3** At Higher, the West Dunbartonshire data shows a decrease in attainment of 2.03% points when compared with 2018 (77% pass rate in 2019 compared with 79.03% in 2018). Between 2018 and 2019 the number of presentations reduced from 2,599 to 2,562 respectively.
 - 4.1.4** At Advanced Higher, the West Dunbartonshire data shows an increase in attainment of 2.31% points when compared with 2017 (77% pass rate in 2019 compared with 74.69% in 2018). We saw a decrease in the number of presentations (225 in 2019, compared with 245 in 2018).
 - 4.1.5** The performance of each school in relation to the West Dunbartonshire and national average is shown in **figure 1** below. *It should be noted however that percentage pass rates do not convey the number of young people in the cohort being presented for the qualification.*

	CHS	DA	OLSP	SPTA	VOLA	WDC	National
N3	100.00%	78.26%	91.15%	84.15%	92.00%	85.05%	87.90%
N4	98.88%	85.89%	84.08%	79.09%	100.00%	88.38%	88.50%
N5	79.21%	80.07%	89.41%	78.80%	79.52%	81.63%	78.20%
H	73.66%	68.12%	84.27%	75.98%	80.69%	76.70%	74.80%
AH	65.91%	74.19%	86.49%	80.00%	69.44%	76.89%	79.40%

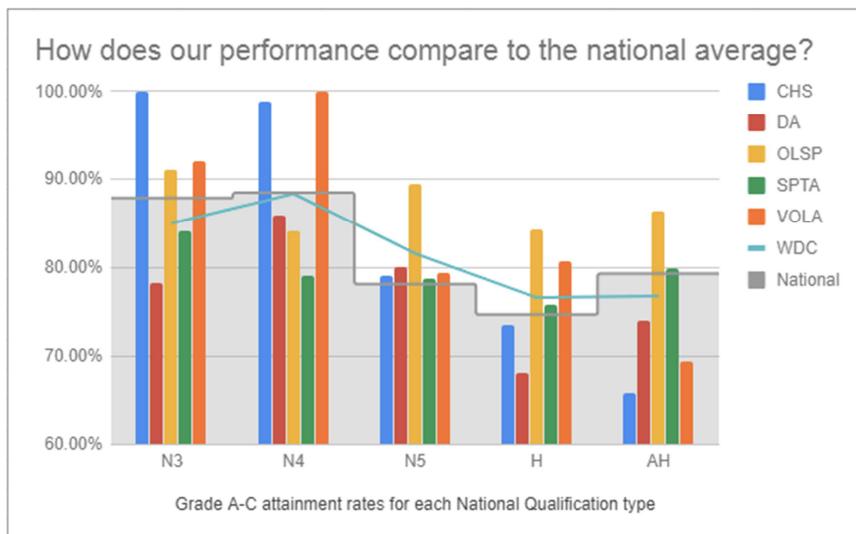


Figure 1 – establishment performance compared with the national average

4.2 Trend by Curricular Area

Figure 2 below shows the trend by curriculum area for 2015 – 2019:

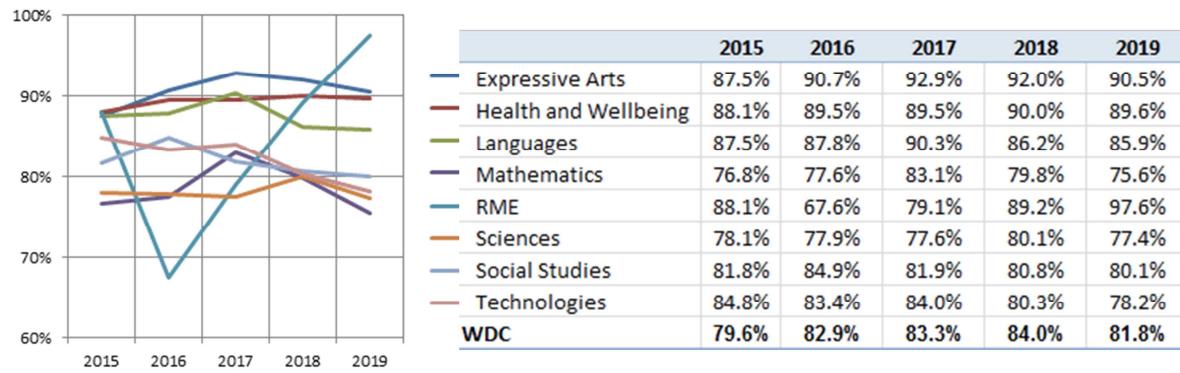


Figure 2: Trend by curriculum area

4.3 Insight data

As noted in 3.2 above the data for the four national benchmarks for session 2018-19 is not finalised and published in Insight until March 2020. Therefore data shown below will not include leaver destination data or indeed changes reflected by the Post Results Service offered by the SQA.

In the sections that follow, we have presented data relating to our performance at local authority level. A more detailed analysis of performance of each of our secondary schools is presented in **Appendix 1**.

4.3.1 Local Benchmark 1: Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

Figure 3 below shows the Percentage of S6 Candidates Attaining Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5 (*Literacy and Numeracy qualifications now include awards for Literacy, English, English as a Second Language, Numeracy and Mathematics*). It shows that at both levels young people in WDC are achieving higher levels of attainment than those in our virtual comparator local authority.

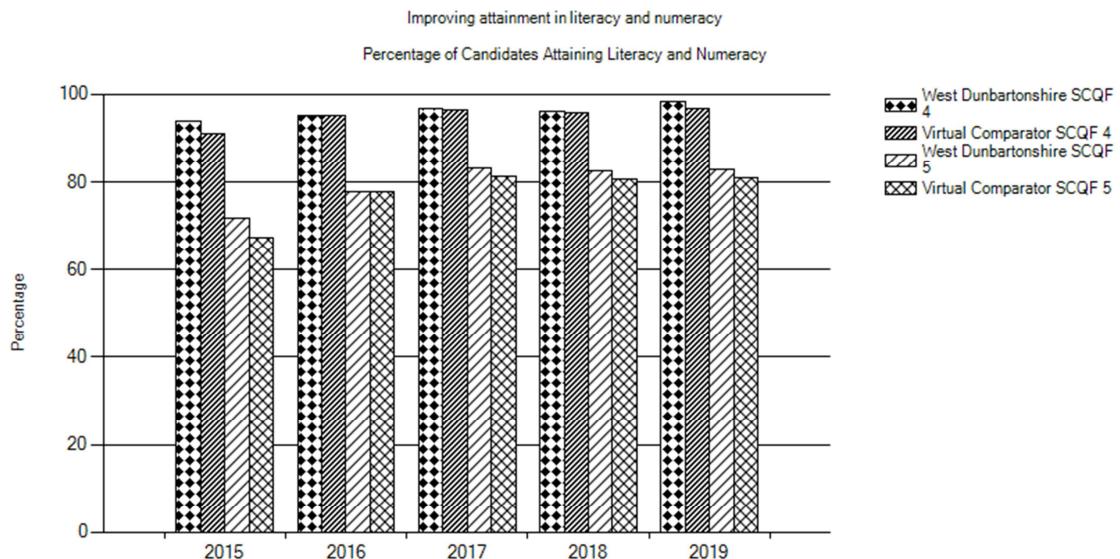


Figure 3 – Performance in Literacy and Numeracy

Local Benchmark 1: Improving attainment in Literacy.

Figure 4 below shows our performance in literacy in isolation from numeracy.

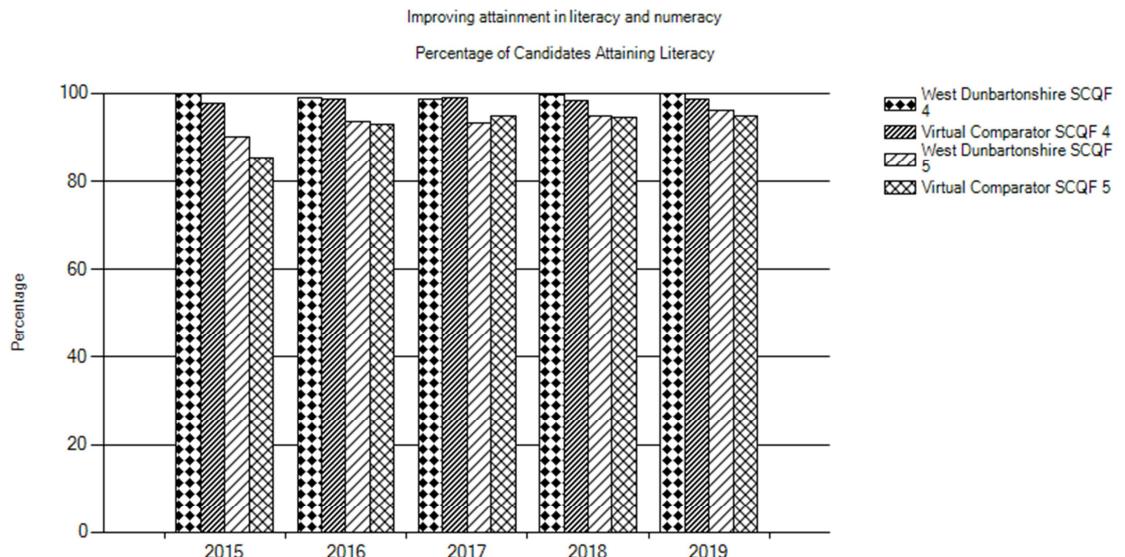


Figure 4 – Performance in Literacy

This shows that whilst we have broadly maintained our performance over time in literacy at SCQF Level 4, our performance at SCQF Level 5 has improved over time. Compared to our virtual comparator, we are above at both SCQF Level 4 and 5.

Local Benchmark 1: Improving attainment in Numeracy.

Figures 5 below shows our performance in numeracy in isolation from literacy.

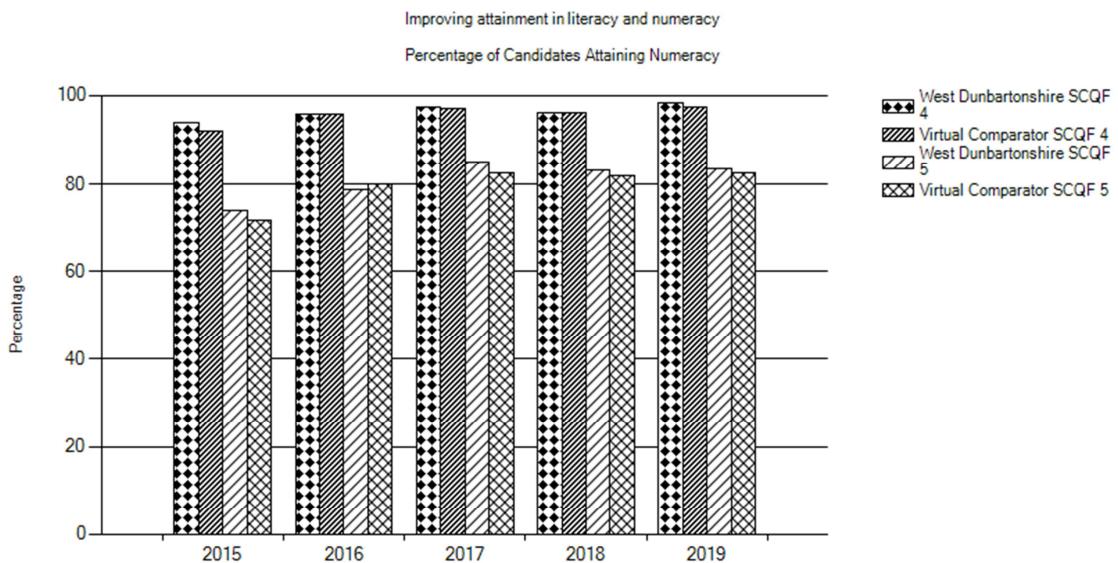


Figure 5 – Performance in Numeracy

This shows that whilst we have broadly maintained our performance over time in numeracy at SCQF Level 4 and are now in line with our virtual comparator, we have seen a slight decrease at SCQF Level 5 from a high in 2017. At both levels we continue to out-perform our virtual comparator.

When viewed separately, it is clear that attainment in literacy is higher than numeracy, with a higher percentage of our young people leaving with a level 5 award in literacy than numeracy.

4.3.2 Local Benchmark 2: Improving attainment for all

This measure allows us to examine how different ability cohorts are attaining in relation to our virtual cohort and the national cohort. Attainment is measured using a tariff scale developed for Insight. This scale allocates points to each qualification (*courses and units which make up courses are all allocated points*). The number of points awarded is dependent on the level of the course, with more demanding qualifications being awarded more points than less demanding ones. Three cohorts are identified, those in the bottom 20% of tariff points scored, those in the middle 60% of tariff points scored and those in the top 20% of tariff points scored.

Figure 6 below shows the average total tariff points gained by our cohorts of young people.

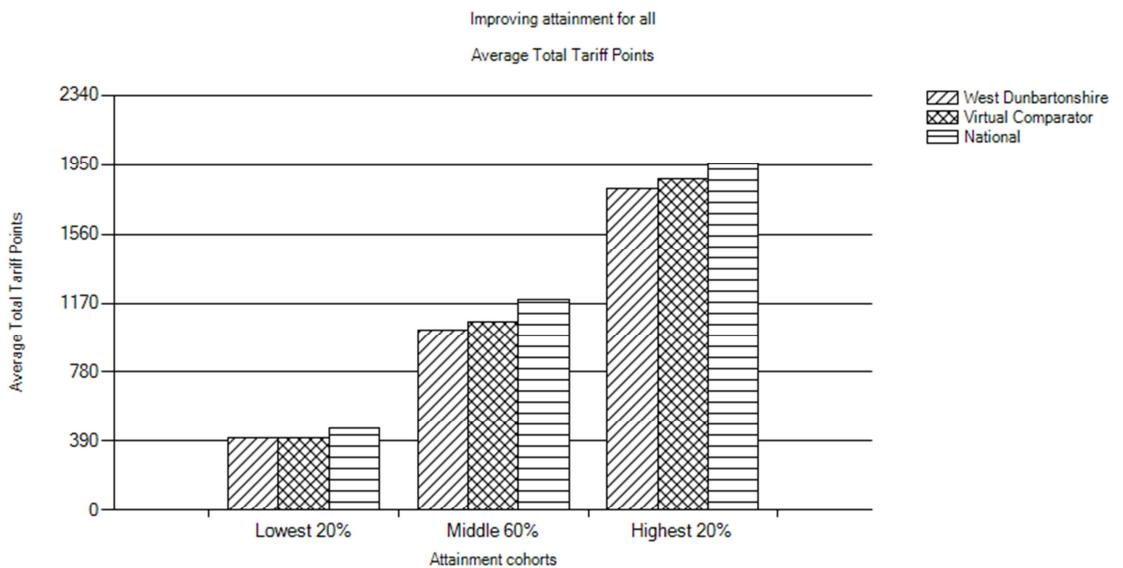


Figure 6 – Average Total Tariff points

This shows that the least attaining young people in WDC are attaining in line with our comparator, but below the national cohort. Young people in the middle 60% are showing levels of attainment slightly below our comparator but significantly below the national cohort. The highest attaining cohort's tariff score is below those in the virtual comparator and below the national cohort.

When viewed through the lens of deprivation, our performance changes.

Figure 7 below shows the attainment of our young people who reside in the 2 most deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles. (Decile 1 refers to the attainment of young people with postcodes within data zones identified as being in the 10% most deprived in Scotland according to SIMD. Those young people in decile 10 have postcodes in the 10% least deprived data zones according to SIMD)

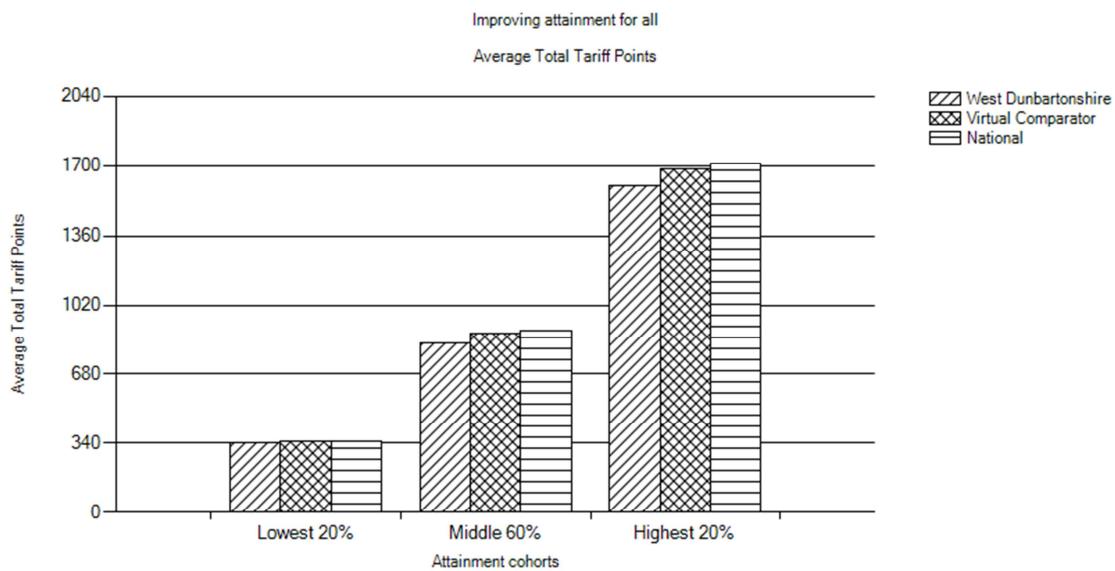


Figure 7 – Average Total Tariff Points for SIMD Deciles 1-2

This shows that from SIMD deciles 1 and 2 our lowest 20% attaining young people attainment is below our virtual comparator, but similar to the national average, whilst the gap in attainment between our performance and the virtual comparator is narrower for the middle 60% and Highest 20% attaining young people.

4.3.3 Local Benchmark 4: Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers

This measure shows attainment measured using the same tariff scale as referred to in the **Improving attainment for all** measure above. Young people are presented in a decile according to their Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data. Decile 1 refers to the attainment of young people with postcodes within data zones identified as being in the 10% most deprived in Scotland according to SIMD. Those young people in decile 10 have postcodes in the 10% least deprived data zones according to SIMD. The area of each the ‘circle’ represents the number of young people in each decile. Ideally the attainment line for Scotland would be level through each decile showing that SIMD had no effect on a student’s attainment. Unfortunately this is not the case nationally or locally.

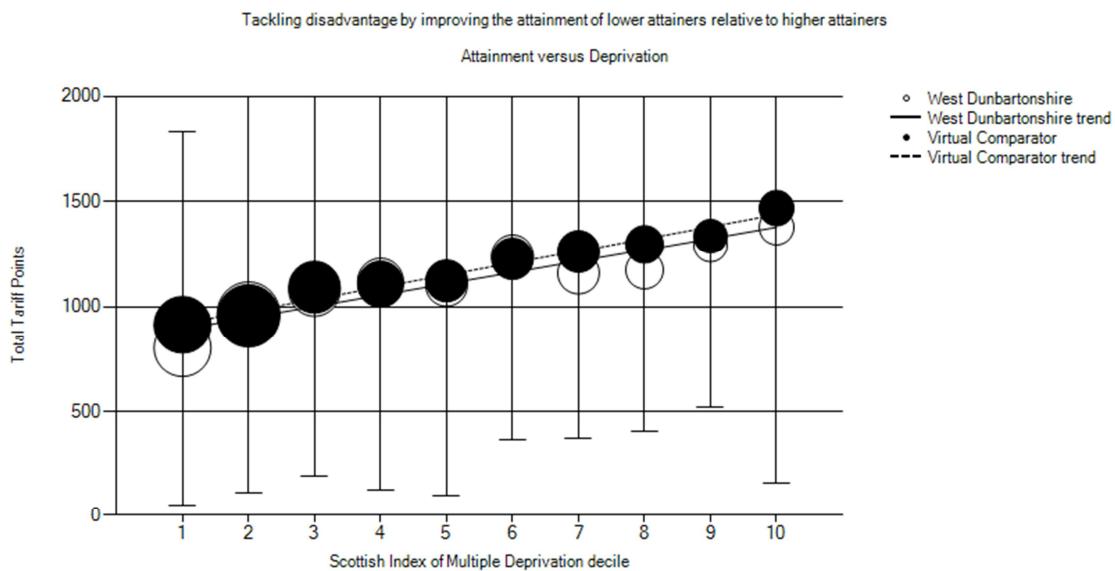


Figure 8 – Attainment versus Deprivation

Figure 8 above shows that the majority of the school pupils in WDC have postcodes in the lower SIMD deciles (*larger ‘circles’ in deciles 1-4*) and consequently that few of our pupils reside in upper deciles. The data shows that the young people of WDC in deciles 2,4 and 6 have attainment either equal to or better than our virtual comparator, whilst the attainment of young people that reside in SIMD deciles 1,3,5 and 7-10 is lower than our virtual comparator.

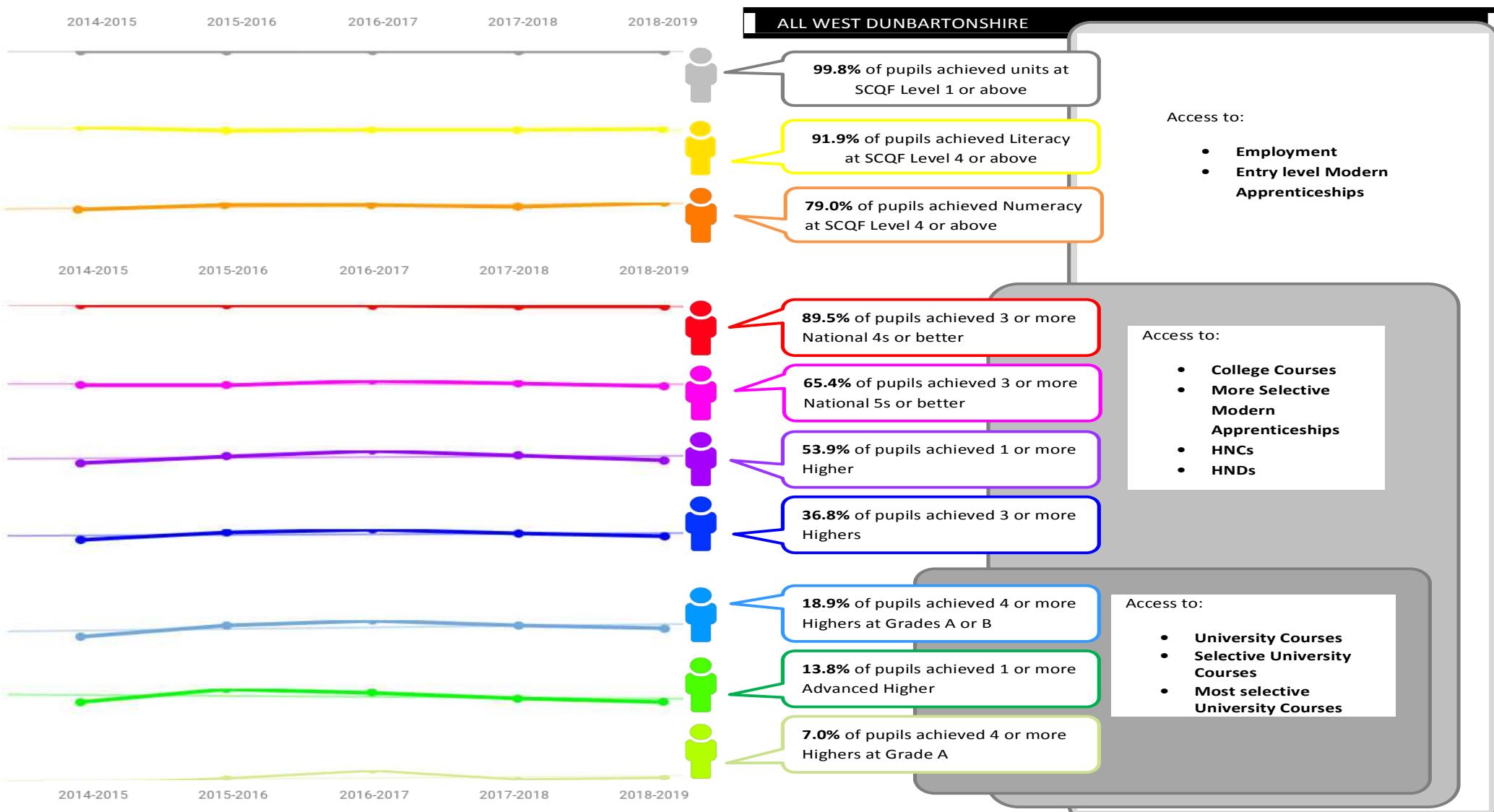
4.4 The relationship between qualifications and destinations.

With the establishment of Curriculum for Excellence, young people were entitled to a Senior Phase that continued to develop the four capacities and gain qualifications, and entitled to support into making a transition into a sustained positive destination. With Insight, these two entitlements have been brought much closer together.

Figure 9 on the following page shows the performance over the past 5 years worth of our school pupils, and the relationship between the levels of qualifications they attain and what destinations this could lead to. Presented as a trend analysis, this helps us view the success of our young people over time, as there are fluctuations in attainment for each cohort of young people..

Figure 9 on the following page shows this for the young people of West Dunbartonshire as a whole. **Appendix 2** then shows this for each establishment.

Figure 9 - Relationship between qualifications and destinations



- 4.5** Although this report focuses on SQA attainment, young people in WDC have demonstrated success in a wide variety of other qualifications which contribute to wider achievement. Following the updating of Insight in March 2020, a further report will be brought back to committee showing the wider achievements of our young people, and their progress to destinations beyond school.
- 4.6** The Council will ensure that schools are given every challenge and support to raise attainment in the areas outlined in this report through both local engagement and by encouraging involvement with national bodies.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no personnel issues related to this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial implications related to this report.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** As members are only being asked to note the contents of this report and the attached appendix a risk assessment is not required.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** Educational Services has carried out a screening in equality for this report. The report was found not to be relevant to the specified equality duty because the content provides an update on service delivery rather than stating a change of policy.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** This report reflects the Council's aspiration to 'increase skills for life and learning' which is a supporting priority to the strategic priority of having 'a strong local economy and improved job opportunities' for 2017 - 2022.

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Date:

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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Insight data for West Dunbartonshire schools. Appendix 2 – The relationship between Qualifications and Destinations in West Dunbartonshire Schools.
Background Papers:	None.
Wards Affected:	All council Wards.

