

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE**  
**18 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**Initial Report on SQA performance**  
**Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport**

**Summary**

This report outlines key information arising from the SQA examination diet of 2008. At this stage results are subject to alteration following appeals and other modifications of data.

**1. The Programme of the Highland Council**

1.1 The monitoring and reporting of SQA results will evidence progress in the achievement of the following Programme outcome:

1.6 We will continue to raise levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy for pupils in pre-school, primary and secondary provision and maintain high levels of achievement in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and achieve the outcomes in a Curriculum for Excellence.

**2. Introduction**

All pupils have an entitlement within the Education Act 2000 to receive an education which maximises their potential within the context of the National Priorities in Education. A key aspect of this is to maximise pupil attainment. The Programme of the Highland Council 2009 – 2011 commits the service to continue to raise levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy for pupils in pre-school, primary and secondary provision, maintain high levels of achievement in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and achieve the outcomes in a Curriculum for Excellence.

3. The SQA results below give an indication of pupil performance although at this stage the figures must be regarded as provisional.

**3.1 Results obtained by pupils by the end of S4**

The results in this section relate to the accumulation of awards gained by the end of S4. Around 29% of Highland pupils will have gained some of the awards in S3 and this represents a 3% increase on last year.

**Level 3 – Access, Standard Grade Foundation**

By the end of S4, 95.7% of our pupils gained level 3 in English. This is a significant increase from last year (94%) and is now above the National average of 94%.

Performance in Mathematics has increased from 95% to 96.3% and remains above the National Average of 94%.

91.5% of Highland Pupils gained 5 or more awards at level 3 or better. This is consistent with the previous year (91.3%) and is above the National Average of 90%.

#### **Level 4 – Intermediate 1, Standard grade General**

80.1% of pupils gained 5 + awards at level 4. This is above the National Average of 76% and is an increase on last year (79.5%).

#### **Level 5 – Intermediate 2, Standard Grade Credit**

37.9% of pupils gained 5 or more awards at level 5. This represents a significant increase compared to last year (35.6%) and remains above the National Average of 34%.

#### **Level 6 – Higher**

1.3% of pupils gained at least one award at level 6 in S4. This is above the National Average of 1% but is slightly less than last year's performance (1.6%). With the discouragement of early presentation, this figure may further reduce.

### **3.2 Results obtained by pupils by the end of S5**

#### **Level 4 – Intermediate 1, Standard Grade General**

83% of pupils gained 5 + awards. This is well above the National Average of 78% and is consistent with last year's performance (83%).

#### **Level 5 – Intermediate 2, Standard Grade Credit**

50% of pupils gained 5 + awards and this is well above the National Average of 45% but represents a very slight decrease on last year's (51%).

#### **Level 6 – Higher**

42.8% of pupils gained 1 + awards and this is well above the National Average of 38% and is a small increase on last year (42.1%).

23.7% of pupils gained 3 + awards. This is above the National Average of 22% and a small increase on last year's performance (23.1%)

9.5% of pupils gained 5 + awards and this is slightly below the National Average of 10% and represents a decrease from last years figure of 10.1%.

44 pupils (1.5%) of pupils gained 5 awards at level A. This is the same percentage as last year.

### **3.3 Results obtained by pupils at the end of S6.**

#### **Level 5 – Intermediate 2, Standard grade Credit**

54% of pupils gained 5 + awards and this is well above the National Average of 48%. Last year (53%)

#### **Level 6 – Higher**

49% of pupils gained 1 + awards and this is well above the National Average of 43%. Last year (47%)

33% of pupils gained 3 + awards and this is above the National Average of 30%. Last year (34%)

22% of pupils gained 5 + awards and this is well above the National Average of 19%. Last year (23%)

#### **Level 7 – Advanced Higher**

12% of pupils gained 1 + awards and this is around the National Average of 12%. Last year (13%)

### 3.4 **Looked After Children**

Data on the 2008 examination performance has yet to be verified. The present data, based on those a snapshot of children ceasing to be looked after indicates that 28 pupils from 41 who ceased to be looked after in 2007 attained at least 1 award at level 3. Figures for 2006 are 25 pupils from 39.

17 pupils from the 41 who ceased to be looked after in 2007 gained at least level 3 in English and Mathematics compared with 15 out of 39 in 2006. This change may relate to a shift in schools from Standard Grade to National Qualifications.

### 3.5 **Gaelic**

In S4 Gaelic Learners 195 gained an award at SCQF levels 3 and above, 173 gained an award at SCQF levels 4 and above and 119 gained an award at SCQF levels 5 and above.

For Gaidhlig in S4, 79 gained an award at SCQF levels 3 and above, 75 gained an award at SCQF levels 4 and above and 58 gained an award at SCQF levels 5 and above.

At Level 6 Higher Learners, 40 out of 50 pupils 80% gained an award at A – C. In S6, 8 out of 9 pupils gained an Advanced Higher award.

At level 6 Higher Gaidhlig, 33 out of 39 pupils (84.6%) gained an award at A – C. 9 out of 9 pupils gained an Advanced Higher award in S6.

#### **Engagement with Schools, dialogue and action points on attainment.**

Quality Improvement Officers will be visiting each Secondary School during the month of September to conduct a dialogue with schools based on a detailed analysis of attainment data for the school as a whole and for individual subjects within schools. The effects of the schools previous strategies for raising attainment will be discussed. Specific action points will be noted and included in the schools' improvement plans. Maintaining and improving the quality of learning and teaching and pupil achievement, including SQA examination performance, is a central part of the ongoing engagement between schools and Quality Improvement Officers.

## 4. **Resource Implications**

- 4.1 No additional Resource Issues. These developments are supported through the National Priorities Action Fund.

## 5. **Recommendation**

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the outcomes of the SQA examinations.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

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Date: 1 Sept 2008