

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
17 SEPTEMBER 2009

Agenda Item	14.
Report No	ECS/45/09

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 2009. At this stage results are subject to alteration following appeals and other modifications of data.

The monitoring and reporting of SQA results indicate progress in the achievement of the following outcome of ***Strengthening the Highlands***:

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.

It relates directly to the Single Outcome Agreement 2 objectives of:

- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens

1. Introduction

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

- 1.1 Overall, the results are very encouraging and show a consistent overall improvement through most categories. In some of the areas there has been major improvement.

2. Results obtained by pupils by the end of S4

- 2.1 The results in this section relate to the accumulation of awards gained by the end of S4. A significant number of Highland pupils will have gained some of the awards in S3 and these are included in the S4 Total.

Level 3 – Access, Standard Grade Foundation

By the end of S4, **95.2%** of our pupils gained level 3 in English. This is an improvement on last year (94.8%).

Performance in Mathematics has increased to 96.1% compared to last year's figure of 95.6%.

91.8% of Highland Pupils gained 5 or more awards at level 3 or better. This is an improvement on the previous year (91.3%).

Authorities sit very close together on these areas and a very small difference can take performance above or below the national average. In English and in the 5+ Awards we are above the average and in Mathematics below.

2.2 Level 4 – Intermediate 1, Standard Grade General

80.7% of pupils gained 5 + awards at level 4 is an increase on last year (80.0%). Highland has consistently performed significantly above the national average in this area and continues to do so.

2.3 Level 5 – Intermediate 2, Standard Grade Credit

Last year 37.7% of pupils gained 5 or more awards at level 5 - a significant increase compared to the year before (35.6%). This year we have made a small further improvement to **37.8%**. This remains above the above the National average.

2.4 Level 6 – Higher in S4

26 pupils gained at least one award at level 6 in S4. This is less than last year and appears to reflect the national discouragement of early presentation at this stage.

3. S4 Skills for work

3.1 Skills for work has shown a steady increase in the participation of young people and their successes which are outlined below:

Construction:	65 presentations 47 achieved full course 18 achieved units
Engineering Skills:	7 presentations and all 7 achieved the full course
Hospitality:	28 presentations 26 achieved full course 2 achieved units
Practical Experiences	
in Construction Crafts:	20 presentations 20 achieved full course
Rural Skills:	50 presentations 38 achieved full course 12 achieved units
Sport and Recreation:	14 presentations 12 achieved full course 2 achieved units

This gives a total of 184 presentations 150 full course achievements (81.5%) and 34 unit achievements (18.5%).

4. Results obtained by pupils by the end of S5

4.1 Level 5 – Intermediate 2, Standard Grade Credit

52.5% of pupils gained 5 + awards and is an improvement in last years performance of 50%

This performance is significantly above the national average.

4.2 Level 6 – Higher

22.9% of pupils gained Higher English and this represents an improvement on last year's figure of 20.6%.

17.5% of pupils gained Higher Mathematics and this also represents an improvement on 2008 (17.00%).

43.3% of pupils gained 1 + awards and represents a significant increase on last year (42.4%).

25.1% of pupils gained 3 + awards - a significant increase on last year's performance (23.5%).

All of the above figures have been consistently above the national average and remain so.

11.4% of pupils gained 5 + awards and this is a significant increase on last year's performance (9.5%) which was an area of concern. This is well above the national average.

66 pupils gained 5 awards at level A. This is a major increase from last year which stood at 44 pupils.

5. Results obtained by pupils at the end of S6.

5.1 The results in S6 are cumulative and include achievements at S3, 4 and 5. They show a consistent pattern.

Level 5 – Intermediate 2, Standard Grade Credit

53.5% of pupils gained 5 + awards and this is slightly less than last Year (54%). This is significantly above the national average.

5.2 Level 6 – Higher

50% of pupils gained 1 + awards and this is a further improvement from last year (49%).

34% of pupils gained 3 + awards and this is a slight improvement last year's figure. These performances have been consistently above the national average.

22% of pupils gained 5 + awards and this is also the same as last year's figure although this time it is probably only slightly above the national average.

Level 7 – Advanced Higher

13% of pupils gained 1 + awards and this is a small increase last year's figure of 12% which was on the national average. There may be a similar bunching effect of Authorities as this figure is now showing as below the national average.

6. Looked After Children

6.1 Data on the 2009 examination performance has yet to be verified and will be

reported in detail at the November Committee.

7. Gaelic

7.1 Detail on the 2009 examination performance in Gaelic will be presented to the Gaelic Committee subsequent to the issuing of national statistics.

8. Engagement with Schools, dialogue and action points on attainment

8.1 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.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 Members are asked to note and comment on the outcomes of the SQA examinations.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date:

Ref: TMc/PA

Background Papers