Education Scotland
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THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE
LITERACY NUMERACY
HEALTH & WELLBEING

Scottish Attainment Challenge Self-evaluation resource

Updated September 2020

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

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Introduction

This resource was first published in December 2019. The purpose of this self-evaluation resource is to support the achievement of equity in Scottish education. This resource is designed to assist schools[1], local authorities, regional improvement collaboratives and local and national partners in bringing about further improvement at this time of recovery. It has been used widely by schools and local authorities to support their work in relation to achieving equity. The impact of COVID-19 since March 2020 has resulted in an unprecedented educational experience for Scotland's children and young people. Notwithstanding the best efforts of schools, local authorities and national organisations it is widely accepted that this is likely to widen the poverty related attainment gap. This resource has been updated to support identification of strengths and next steps in recovery. It now includes challenge questions to support self-evaluation for equity, taking into account learning from the period of school building closure during lockdown[2].

The document may be helpful as a stand-alone resource but it can also be used in conjunction with other self-evaluation frameworks and is not intended to replace other frameworks.

This revised self-evaluation resource will support the education system to take a closer look at the most effective approaches to achieving equity and help establishments and the wider system, to begin reflecting on the impact of lockdown on learners and learning. The following questions remain at the heart of self-evaluation:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Background to the Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Attainment Challenge[3] was established to promote equity in education by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. It is underpinned by The National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child. It focuses on improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

The Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) is a targeted initiative focused on supporting pupils in the local authorities of Scotland with the highest concentrations of deprivation. There are currently nine of these Challenge Authorities - Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire. There are also 73 schools, across a further 12 local authorities, with significant proportions of their pupils living in deprived areas who are also benefiting from additional funding.

The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), launched in 2017, and the Care-Experienced Children and Young People Fund (CECYPF), introduced in 2018, are also part of the ASF. PEF is allocated directly

[1] The references to schools throughout this document can also include other types of educational establishment.
[2] Lockdown is the term used to describe the period between 20 March 2020 and 12 August 2020 where school buildings were closed to learners and provision was made using a remote learning approach.
[3] https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/pupil-attainment/

to schools and targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Every council area is benefitting from PEF and almost all schools in Scotland receive this funding. CECYPF provides targeted initiatives, activities, and resources, designed to improve the educational outcomes of this group of disadvantaged young people in every local authority area.

Education Scotland's team of attainment advisors work collaboratively with every local authority and their mission is to maintain a relentless focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The specific role of the attainment advisor is tailored to the needs of each local authority.

Towards an empowered system

One of the recommendations made by the International Council of Education Advisers[4] (ICEA) is for the Scottish Government to consider professional empowerment, responsibility, and ownership as policy imperatives for the next phase of improvement:

- **Professional empowerment**: While initial large-scale educational reforms for a whole country often require clear direction from the centre of national government, to move to sustainable high-quality implementation requires a shift to professionally-led educational improvements within and across classrooms, schools and local authorities.

- **Responsiveness:** Empowered education professionals and policy-makers are also highly alert, adaptive, and responsive to local needs, priorities, changes and challenges.

- **Ownership**: Putting the above together – empowerment of all involved and responsiveness to professional judgement and evidence – is vital to developing the co-ownership that is essential to realise the ambitions of excellence and equity for all learners, and the priority to close the historical and persisting poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland. It is important that Scotland's education system is both world-leading and uniquely and appropriately Scottish.

This resource supports the recommendations of the ICEA, providing materials for all stakeholders to use to self-reflect on current practice and empower schools and local authorities to maximise progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland.

[4] International Council of Education Advisers Report 2016-18

Moving forward

In the National Improvement Framework Plan 2020, the government set out five areas to further accelerate the impact of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. At this time, Scottish Government and Education Scotland will continue to support educational recovery in partnership with local authorities, schools and other key stakeholders. These five key areas can support this work:

1. Expertise and tailored **additional support will be targeted** where the latest evidence shows that the pace of progress could be increased.

2. Every school and every teacher **will have access to, and understand, what the data and evidence says and have the skills to use** this to improve children and young people's learning, progress and achievement.

3. **Specific approaches which are making the biggest impact** in improving children's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing **will be identified and shared systematically.**

4. We will work with teachers and schools to **enhance their professional practice by empowering them to develop sustainable approaches to improvement**, and ensure lasting impact for children and young people affected by poverty.

5. Working together at national, regional and local level, we will **increase our collective efforts across all levels of government and build on the momentum of empowerment and collaboration**, to identify, take responsibility for, and tackle the causes of the attainment gap at all levels.

Inspection of Local Authorities: How well are we improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?

During the session 2017-18, local authority inspections were conducted to evaluate how well Challenge Authorities are improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap. The inspections focused on two key questions:

- Question 1: How effective is the education service's leadership, governance and management of Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding to improve learning, raise attainment and narrow the poverty related attainment gap?
- Question 2: How effective is the education service's use of data to target, select and evaluate the impact of initiatives?

Nine local authorities were inspected. Links to their reports can be found in the appendix.

Self-evaluation for equity

How to use this self-evaluation resource

When using this resource in conjunction with other Education Scotland self-evaluation frameworks, schools and others may find it helpful to use different themes to focus on aspects of their work in relation to achieving equity. The features of highly effective practice and challenge questions provide the opportunity to drill deeper into the evidence that supports their conclusions to strengthen on-going self-evaluation. The themes can also be linked to the quality indicators in other self-evaluation frameworks but should not be confused with, or considered to be, quality indicators in themselves.

Features of highly effective practice are included to illustrate examples of evidence of impact towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The examples are drawn from the wide range of evidence listed earlier and based on the work going on in schools and local authorities across Scotland. The examples are not a definitive list under each of the themes.

Challenge questions have also been included within this resource to support professional dialogue and point to aspects of practice that might require further improvement. Some of the challenge questions may be more relevant depending on your own context, who is using them and for what exact purpose. Some of the questions are particularly focused on schools and classrooms while others are provided to focus on local authority and regional improvement. A set of questions relating to the impact of Covid-19 has been included for each theme These can be used independently or with others from within the resource. All questions can be adapted and used by a wide variety of people including class teachers, attainment advisors, local and regional quality improvement teams, HM Inspectors and partners.

The features of highly effective practice and challenge questions are grouped under themes related to the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the National Improvement Framework. The themes include a mixture of the primary levers for change, interventions for equity and policy priorities. It should be noted that each of the themes are inter-related and different aspects could easily sit under more than one theme.

Themes

Leadership

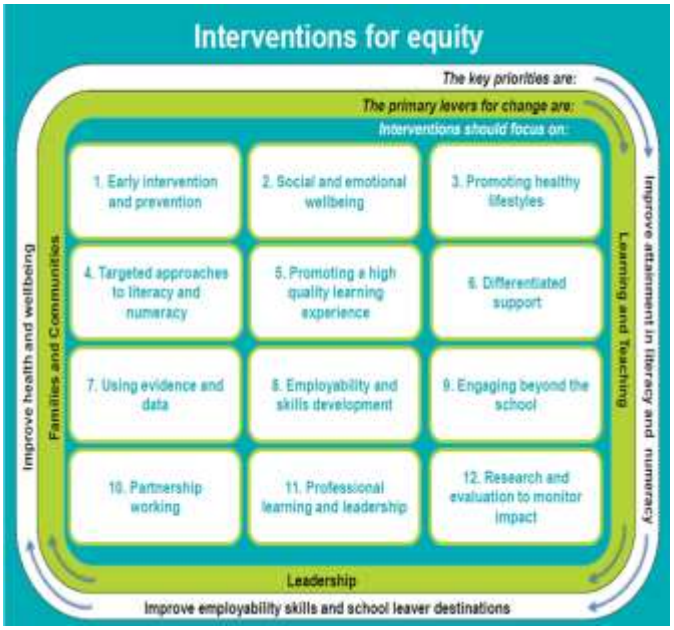
a) Governance and management
b) Data and closing the gap
c) Self-evaluation and research
d) Pupil Equity Funding

Learning and teaching

e) Learning, teaching and assessment
f) Professional learning and sharing practice

Families and communities

g) Parental engagement
h) Collaborating with partners
i) Cost of the school day



Leadership

a) Governance and management

Features of highly effective practice

- A shared vision and commitment with a clear focus on achieving equity for children and young people living in the most deprived communities and circumstances.
- Strong and effective leadership at all levels driving forward improvement in the outcomes of children and young people.
- Effective robust governance structures that provide sufficient opportunities for support and challenge at all levels.
- Time and space for innovation and creativity to achieve equity.
- Building the leadership capacity of staff through professional learning and collaboration.
- A smaller number of very focused interventions and approaches with clear outcomes and measures in place.

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How well do staff at all levels clearly focus and commit to achieving equity? • To what extent are school decision-making structures clear and transparent to all stakeholders? • To what extent are we considering and ensuring long-term sustainability as part of our planning to achieve equity? • To what extent are staff at all levels clear and specific about the outcomes they are trying to achieve? • If we are having difficulty recruiting additional staff, how are we considering alternative approaches and creative solutions?	• To what extent are local authority decision-making structures clear and transparent to all stakeholders? • In considering our approaches to planning, to what extent do we ensure that our plans are straightforward, clear and distinctly focused on equity? • How effectively do our quality assurance processes provide support and challenge, and empower schools, to focus on equity? • To what extent are we considering and ensuring long-term sustainability as part of our planning to achieve equity? • How effectively do we keep our elected members and other stakeholders informed about progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap? • How do we ensure that there is sufficient scrutiny by elected members of the Scottish Attainment Challenge work in the local authority and schools? Does this include the full range of work including Pupil Equity Funding and Care -Experienced Funding?[5]

[5] This challenge question could be applied to any Attainment Scotland funding stream at the time of publication or at any point in the future should funding structures change.

At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Do all staff have a shared understanding of the potential impact of COVID-19 on educational experience and attainment? • Are staff at all levels clear and specific about the outcomes they are trying to achieve with and for young people, and have these been redefined to take account of the current situation? • Are all staff, including Scottish Government-funded additional staff and non-teaching staff contributing to achieving equity and providing targeted support? • Are staff considering alternative approaches and creative solutions to intensifying support for disadvantaged children and young people, including in blended and remote learning situations?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Do we ensure that our plans are straightforward, clear and distinctly focused on recovery? • Do we keep our elected members and other stakeholders informed about the impact of Covid-19 on the most disadvantaged learners and progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap?

Leadership

b) Data and closing the gap

Features of highly effective practice

- Effective use of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data and evidence to understand the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Interventions are effective because they are informed by robust analysis of data.
- Sharing and analysing data collegiately and with partners as part of ongoing self-evaluation.
- Clear analysis and understanding of the poverty-related attainment gap at all levels including local authority, establishment and in the classroom.
- Building the capacity and confidence of staff through professional learning, peer collaboration and close working with data specialists.
- Local authorities and schools making the greatest progress are able to show that attainment overall is improving and the equity gap is beginning to narrow.

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How confident are we that all of our staff and partners understand how to use data effectively to monitor the impact of our interventions and approaches? • To what extent is our self-evaluation underpinned by a shared strong understanding of our data? • Are there sufficient opportunities for professional discussion of data and evidence as part of our self-evaluation processes at all levels? • To what extent is our effectiveness in using data and evidence enabling us to set out clear outcomes and measurable targets? • How well are we making progress at improving the attendance and reducing rates of exclusion of children and young people living in our most deprived communities and circumstances? • Is progress evident at all stages from early years to post school? Is progress sustained beyond the intervention? • How confident are we that our interventions and approaches, whether universal or targeted, are leading to improvement? How effectively do we change our approaches if they are not having the intended impact? • To what extent are we narrowing the attainment gap in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing? What can we do to ensure that we	• How effectively do we support schools to access and analyse a range of data that will help them to focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap? • To what extent do we provide robust support and challenge to our schools? • How effectively do we use data across the local authority and region to encourage collaboration to achieve equity? • How clear are we that we are making progress towards achieving equity at school, local authority and regional level? • How confident are we from our data analysis that the poverty-related gap is closing over time and that progress is being sustained? • Are we clear from the analysis of our data to what extent we are making progress in both our universal and targeted approaches? • How effectively do we use the national measures and stretch aims[6] to monitor our progress and

[6] See: Appendix 1 – Closing the attainment gap: 11 key measures

make sufficient progress over time in all three of these areas? • How confident are we that all children and young people, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, are accessing a wide range of learning experiences and pathways? Are they progressing to positive and sustained destinations?	support increased understanding of where we want to get to? • How effectively are we collaborating with other local authorities, to ensure that the needs of children and young people educated outwith the authority who look after them, are considered?
At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Have we identified what data is relevant **now** for planning next steps: - **Demographic:** descriptive information about the school community - **School Processes:** what is happening now to support holistic outcomes for learners - **Pupil Learning**: holistic outcomes of our children and young people **- Perceptions:** what all stakeholders think about the learning experience • Are we intensifying support for the most disadvantaged children and young people?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Are we supporting our schools to review data through the lens of the current situation? • Are we collaborating with others, to ensure that the needs of children and young people educated outwith the authority who look after them, are considered?

Leadership

c) Self-evaluation and research

Features of highly effective practice

- Robust self-evaluation process are well-embedded at all levels and are supported by strong and effective governance arrangements.
- Using evidence-based research to choose appropriate interventions and approaches matched to the local context and needs of learners.
- Increased use of recognised methodologies and approaches, such as collaborative action research and improvement science to further strengthen self-evaluation.
- Working closely with partners such as educational psychologists and universities to build capacity in self-evaluation and research.
- Making effective use of online support. For example, Interventions for Equity and the Scottish Attainment Challenge: Learning and Teaching Toolkit.

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How focused are we on closing the poverty-related attainment gap in our school self-evaluation? • To what extent is our self-evaluation providing clarity about which interventions and approaches are most successful at helping us to close the gap? • To what extent are we involving our partners and stakeholders in our self-evaluation processes? How effectively is this leading to best use of our collective resources and expertise? • How well are children, young people and parents engaged in our self-evaluation? • How effective are we at using evidence-based research to choose appropriate interventions and approaches? • What range of sources do we use to identify evidence-based practice that may suit our school context?	• To what extent are our local authority self-evaluation and quality assurance processes focused on closing the poverty-related attainment gap? • How sufficient is our emphasis on the pace of progress? • To what extent are we working in partnership with the research community to inform our decisions locally and regionally? • To what extent are we involving our partners and stakeholders in our self-evaluation processes? How effectively is this leading to best use of our collective resources and expertise? • How effectively are we supporting and empowering our schools to engage with research that will help them to improve their practice? • To what extent are our local authority school improvement planning and reporting processes helping our schools place sufficient focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap?

At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Do all staff in our school know who the children and young people are whose learning may be impacted most during the recovery or a lockdown situation? • Are children, young people and parents engaged in our self-evaluation of their educational experience? • Are we at using evidence-based research to choose appropriate interventions and approaches to support learning in this context?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Are we effectively supporting and empowering our schools to engage with research that will help them to improve their practice? • Are we sharing examples of 'what works' across schools?

Leadership

d) Pupil Equity Funding

Features of highly effective practice

- The school has set out a clear rationale and plan for its allocation of Pupil Equity Funding taking full account of national and local guidance.
- The school's plan is well-considered and based on robust self-evaluation including the views of children and young people, parents, partners and staff.
- The school has used a range of data and evidence to identify attainment gaps for groups and individual children and young people. As a result, appropriate interventions and approaches are in now place, with a clear focus on improvements in health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy.
- A range of interventions, such as classroom-based activity, additional targeted support and extended opportunities and experiences in and beyond school are in place.
- Effective systems are in place to monitor and track the progress of individuals and groups. Schools and local authorities are able to evidence impact on raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How well have we considered how we will evidence the impact of our interventions and approaches? • How effectively are we tracking and monitoring our progress? • To what extent is our rationale for spending our allocation of Pupil Equity Funding based on robust self-evaluation with relevant stakeholders? • How effectively have we involved children and young people, parents and partners in decision-making around Pupil Equity Funding? • To what extent is our self-evaluation informed by effective analysis of data focused on the poverty-related attainment gap? • To what extent are we clear and specific about our interventions, approaches and targets? • How confident are we about making timely informed changes to our plans if our interventions and approaches are not achieving their intended impact? • How well are we using our Pupil Equity Funding to ensure flexible and sustainable	• To what extent do our local authority school improvement planning and reporting processes help our schools with planning and evaluating the impact of Pupil Equity Funding? How effective are these processes at minimising bureaucracy? • How confident are we that all headteachers have a clear contextual analysis and clear rationale for spending Pupil Equity Funding based on robust self-evaluation? • What local Pupil Equity Fund guidance in place? How often and to what extent is this reviewed? Does it enable schools to make effective use of the funding and support them to be accountable for their decisions? • What robust procedures are in place to monitor how Pupil Equity Funding is being spent? How do we use the information gathered to report effectively on impact? • To what extent is our schools' use of Pupil Equity Funding leading to improved outcomes for children and young people? How effectively is this

improvements in culture, ethos and pedagogy to improve outcomes for learners? • To what extent is our use of Pupil Equity Funding improving outcomes of children and young people and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?	helping to close the poverty-related attainment gap? • How effectively does our strategic approach to improving outcomes for care-experienced children and young people complement how our schools are using Pupil Equity Funding?
At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Is our rationale for spending our allocation of Pupil Equity Funding supporting recovery and based on robust self-evaluation with relevant stakeholders? • Are we clear and specific about our interventions, approaches and targets to intensify support?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Are we confident that all headteachers have a clear contextual analysis and clear rationale for spending Pupil Equity Funding based on robust self-evaluation? • Is our schools' flexible use of Pupil Equity Funding leading to improved outcomes for children and young people during the recovery period?

Learning and teaching

e) Learning, teaching and assessment

Features of highly effective practice

- Teachers use effective strategies to improve learning and teaching, as a result of their increased awareness and understanding of the socio-economic challenges and barriers faced by children and young people.
- Staff and partners work effectively together to remove barriers and to implement a range of interventions and approaches to improve health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.
- A focus on increasing the participation and engagement of children and young people in their learning, personal achievement and activities beyond the school.
- Strong and valued contributions from educational psychological services providing evidenced-based practice leading to improvement. For example in relation to nurture, growth mindset, resilience and restorative practice.
- Significant focus, commitment and action resulting in an inclusive ethos.
- Safe and welcoming learning environments and inclusive approaches tailored to needs.
- Strong contribution by speech and language therapists to closing the vocabulary gap leading to improvements for learners and building the capacity of staff to improve literacy.
- Targeted and effective use of well-trained support staff working in partnership with class teachers to promote equity and help to close the attainment gap.

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How effective are we at differentiating learning and teaching, and using strategies to address the socio-economic challenges and barriers faced by children and young people? • To what extent do we focus on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people living in the most deprived communities and circumstances? Does this include a focus on equity for care-experienced children and young people? • How effective is our moderation, monitoring, tracking and assessment in ensuring that our interventions and approaches are raising attainment and helping to close the poverty-related attainment gap? • To what extent are we providing additional experiences and opportunities for children and young people who we have identified as missing out? • To what extent is an inclusive ethos evident across all aspects of the life and work of the school community? • To what extent are we considering equity across the four contexts of learning? • To what extent are our collaborative partnerships with specialists and partners improving outcomes of children and young people? How is this work building	• How confident are we that staff at all levels in our schools understand and consider the socio-economic challenges and barriers faced by children and young people when planning learning? • How robust are our local and regional approaches to moderation and assessment? To what extent do these approaches focus on equity? • To what extent are we monitoring and tracking the interventions and approaches in our schools to know if they are raising attainment and helping to close the poverty-related attainment gap? • How effective are we at sharing learning, teaching and assessment approaches that have a focus on equity across our local authority and region?

the capacity of our staff to improve outcomes and achieve equity?	• How confident are we that all establishments are intensifying support for the most vulnerable children and young people?
At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Do we have an effective plan for supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and where appropriate, their families? • Have we established protocols for ensuring provision of hard copy or digital learning resources (including hardware and connectivity) for all children and young people who require them? • Do we track pupil participation and progress effectively and make use of this information to plan next steps in learning? • Is the work of our partners embedded in any offer we have planned?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Have we applied our own and others' learning of what works in this recovery situation? • Are we confident that all children and young people have access to appropriate hard copy or digital learning resources (including hardware and connectivity) for all children and young people who require them? • Do we rigorously track pupil participation and progress? • Are our interventions and mitigations effective?

Learning and teaching

f) Professional learning and sharing practice

Features of highly effective practice

- A well-planned strategic and structured approach to career long professional learning which is building capacity and leading to improvements in practice and outcomes.
- High levels of staff engagement at all levels within a culture of collaboration, and with partners.
- A deepened understanding of the poverty-related attainment gap and how pedagogical approaches can improve outcomes for children and young people living in the most deprived communities and circumstances.
- Well-developed case studies and practice exemplars of what is working effectively towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap are shared online, at conferences and through professional discussions.

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How deep an understanding do staff at all levels have of how pedagogical approaches can improve outcomes of children and young people living in the most deprived communities and circumstances? • To what extent are we monitoring the impact of our professional learning on staff and learners? • To what extent is professional learning leading to improvements in outcomes of children and young people? To what extent is this leading to equity for children and young people living in the most deprived communities and circumstances, including those who are care--experienced? • In ensuring sustainability, how well embedded are our school's approaches to building capacity and improving practice? • To what extent are we ensuring that our approaches are applied consistently across each of our classrooms? Are we confident that the most effective practice to achieve equity is being embedded? • To what extent are we sharing our effective practice to achieve equity collegiately within our own school and with other schools?	• How confident are we providing professional learning opportunities that are leading to improvements in outcomes of children and young people living in the most deprived communities and circumstances? • How effectively do we use our collective capacity across the local authority and region to deliver professional learning and share effective practice? • To what extent are we ensuring that the most effective practice to achieve equity is embedded in our schools and classrooms and applied consistently? • To what extent are local authority and regional approaches to building capacity and improving practice embedded to ensure sustainability? • To what extent are we supporting schools across our region to develop case studies and practice exemplars around achieving equity? How well are we including a focus on care-experienced children and young people within our range of practice exemplars? • How effective are we at supporting establishments and local authorities to learn from effective practice elsewhere to achieve equity?

• To what extent are we looking outwards and learning from effective practice elsewhere to achieve equity?	
At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Have we applied our own and others' learning of what works in this situation? • Have we created opportunities for staff to learn from one another and from colleagues in other settings? • Have we effectively tracked the impact of professional learning (pedagogical and digital) in supporting staff provide an effective remote or blended learning offer? • Are we confident that all learners, including those with additional support needs, and those with English as an additional language, have access to the most effective learning and & teaching approaches, whether working in school or remotely?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Have we shared effective learning & teaching approaches identified from within or outwith the LA? • Do our central teams work effectively to deliver appropriate professional learning to support a remote or blended approach? • Have we effectively tracked the impact of professional learning (pedagogical and digital) in supporting all staff provide an effective remote learning offer as a potential contingecy?

Families and communities

g) Parental[7] engagement

Features of highly effective practice

- Staff have developed very positive relationships with families based on trust and respect. They are aware of and sensitive to family socio-economic circumstances, challenges and barriers. As a result, parents and carers are confident to engage with schools in supporting their child's learning.
- Structured family learning programmes, co-constructed with partners, are leading to meaningful accredited and non-accredited outcomes for parents and carers living in the most disadvantaged communities.
- Staff support and deliver family learning programmes. They work directly with families to improve home school links and provide practical support.

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• To what extent are we managing to engage with the parents of children and young people living in our most deprived communities and circumstances? • In what ways does our learning environment feel welcoming and helpful to all our parents and carers? How do we know? • To what extent does our curriculum include opportunities for families to learn together? To what extent is this helping us to achieve equity? • How well do we help parents with supporting their children's learning? • To what extent do we engage and support parents of children and young people living in our most deprived communities and circumstances during key transitions and pathway choices? • How well is our engagement with families leading to improved outcomes and equity for learners? • To what extent is our Parent Council inclusive and representative of our school's socio-economic context? • To what extent are we engaging parents in the evaluation of interventions and approaches to achieving equity? How	• How effectively do we promote the engagement of parents to achieve equity? To what extent do we support our schools to do this? • Does our local authority parental engagement strategy have an appropriate focus on equity? • To what extent do we support and challenge schools to engage with their local communities to design, develop and evaluate their curriculum? To what extent does this focus on equity? • How effectively do we plan and coordinate family learning opportunities between schools, local authority services and partners? To what extent is this helping us to achieve equity? • How effectively do we consider our role as corporate parents as part of our approach to achieving equity? • To what extent do we ensure that -care experienced children and young people benefit from our schools' approaches to parental engagement?

[7] Throughout this document, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

effective are we at taking account of their views in decision-making around change and improvement?	
At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Do we engage with and support the parents of children and young people living in our most deprived communities and circumstances? • Are we taking account of disabilities and/or language difficulties of parents that might act as barriers to them supporting their child?? • Have we planned an equitable remote / blended learning curriculum where parents and children can learn together? • Have we measures in place to support parents when their child is learning at home? • Have we planned effectively to provide support to parents, making sufficient time available for this?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Do we promote the engagement of parents to achieve equity and support our schools to do this? • Do we support schools in providing an equitable remote / blended learning curriculum? • Do we ensure that care-experienced children and young people benefit from our schools' approaches to parental engagement?

Families and communities

h) Collaborating with partners

Features of highly effective practice

- Schools and local authorities are working with a wide range of partners to improve the life chances of children and young people living in the most disadvantaged communities and circumstances. For example, community learning and development, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and third sector organisations.
- A focus on removing barriers to learning caused by socio-economic challenges. This includes providing children and families with a network of support through an effective multi-agency approach.
- Schools and local authorities are working with partners to provide children and young people with additional experiences and opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities including sport, outdoor learning and personal achievement.

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How well do we understand the range of potential partners within our local community who can support our approaches to achieving equity? • To what extent does our school make effective use of a wide range of local and national partners to improve outcomes for learners? How do we know this is making a difference and leading towards equity? • To what extent are we engaging with partners in planning, delivery and evaluation of our work to achieve equity? • To what extent are our children and young people informed about the range of opportunities for personal achievement in their school and in the community? Is this leading to increased participation and helping to achieve equity for learners in our school? • To what extent are we able to mitigate against the challenges of partnership working in remote geographical areas?	• How well are we supporting schools to access a wide range of local and national partners to improve outcomes for learners? • To what extent are we engaging with partners in planning, delivering and evaluation of our work to achieve equity? • To what extent are we promoting and supporting partnerships that will help to achieve equity? • To what extent are our children and young people informed about the range of opportunities for personal achievement in their community? Is this leading to increased participation and helping to achieve equity for learners in the local authority and across the region? • How effective is the collaboration between education and social work to ensure that the Care -Experienced Children and Young People's Funding is improving life chances?

At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Do we have clear channels of communication and contact already established with partners to help everyone collaborate remotely? • Have we planned effectively and made time available to facilitate good partnership working with others in our community? • Do we understand the range of potential partners within our local community who can support our offer to children and families? • Are we engaging with partners in planning, delivery and evaluation of our work to achieve equity?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Are we supporting schools to access a wide range of local and national partners? • Are we engaging with partners in planning, delivering and evaluation of our work to achieve equity? • Is the collaboration between education and social work effective in ensuring that the Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund is providing effective support during the recovery period?

Families and communities

i) Cost of the school day

Features of highly effective practice

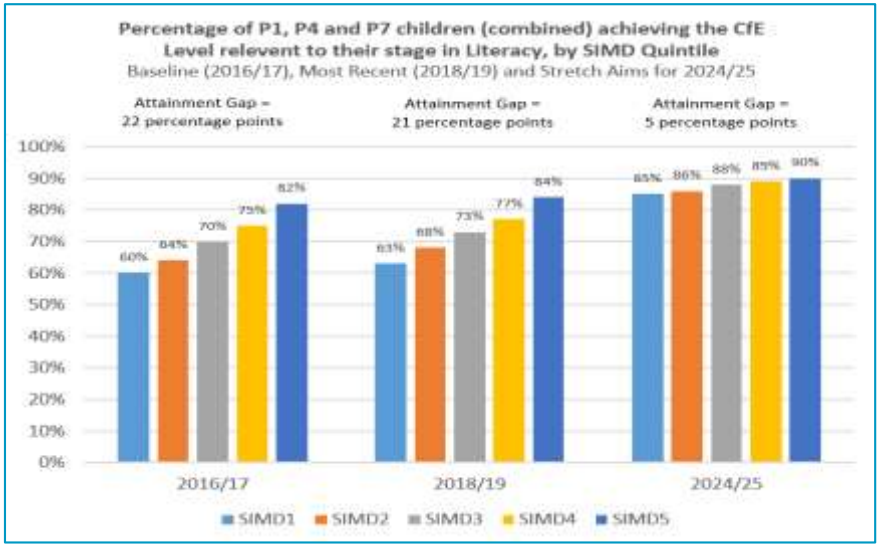
- Schools and local authorities are sensitive to families facing socio-economic challenges. The dignity of families is respected while ensuring that children and young people do not miss out on opportunities and experiences because of financial barriers.
- Arrangements are in place to ensure that children and young people can access additional experiences such as excursions and residential experiences. Targeted interventions, such as breakfast clubs and holiday programmes ensure that children and young people are not missing out as a result of hunger.
- Schools and local authorities review and adapt their approaches to costs associated with the school day. For example, removing additional charges for curriculum subjects, sensitivity around fundraising and minimising events such as non-uniform days.

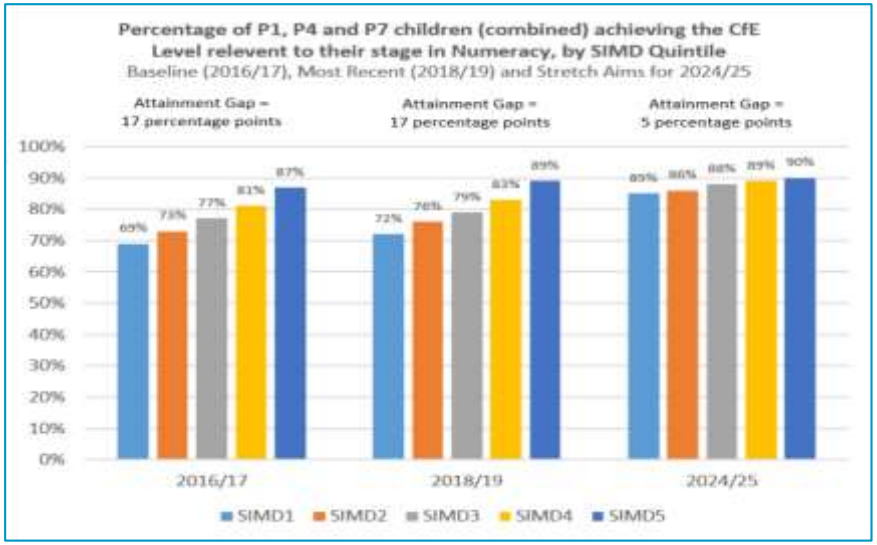
Challenge questions

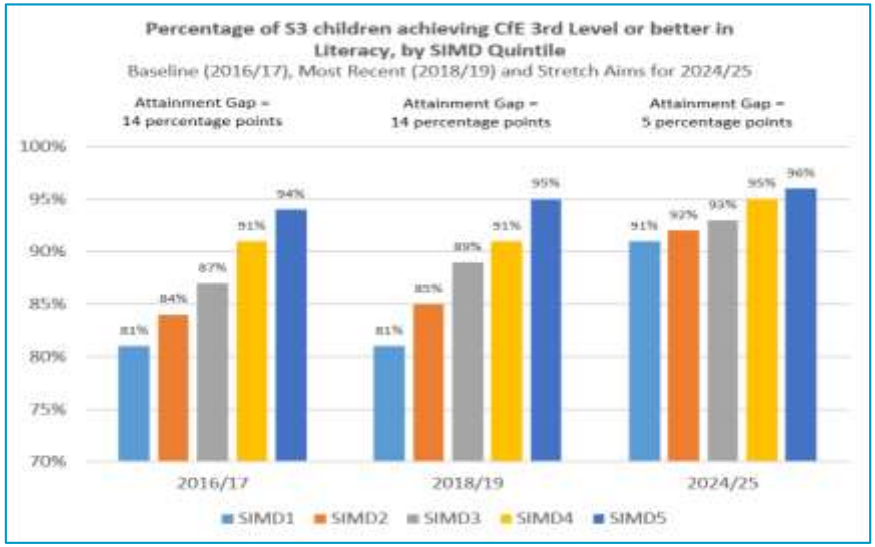
For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How well have we reviewed our school policies and procedures to ensure that we are mitigating against additional barriers that may prevent children and young people from participating in all aspects of their education? • How well do all staff and partners respond to the needs of children and families facing barriers due to socio-economic circumstances? • To what extent do all staff have a sound understanding of the need to ensure the cost of the school day does not exclude some children and young people from the opportunities that we promote? • How effectively do we engage with children, parents and partners in reviewing the cost of the school day? To what extent do we involve them in making financial decisions? • To what extent have we considered how we will evidence	• How well are we supporting and empowering schools with mitigating the cost of the school day? • To what extent do our local authority policies and procedures help to mitigate against additional barriers that may prevent children and young people from participating in all aspects of their education? • What policy and procedures do we have in place to ensure any pupil, who may be learning at home, can access their learning digitally? • How well are we providing any additional resources or support to schools to help them address issues associated with the cost of the school day? How effective is this support at achieving equity?

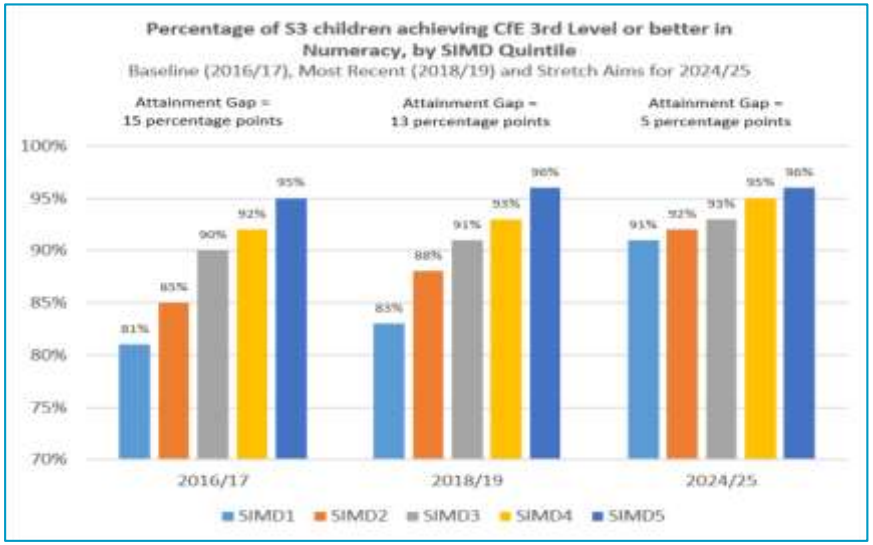
the impact of our interventions and approaches? • How well are we tracking and monitoring our progress and ensuring equity? How can we ensure this continues if children and learning at home?	
At this time of educational recovery,, to what extent: • Have we reviewed our school procedures to ensure that we are mitigating against additional barriers that may prevent children and young people from participating in all aspects of their education? • Have we planned to support families with fuel, food or data poverty issues? • Do we have procedures in place that allow pupils to access their learning online if they are learning from home through the provision of hardware and data if required? • Do staff ensure resources for planned, progressive learning activities are accessible to all?	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent: • Do our local authority policies and procedures help to mitigate against additional barriers that may prevent children and young people from participating in all aspects of their education? • Do our policies and procedures ensure that every pupil learning from home can access their learning digitally? • Do we have procedures in place that allow pupils to access their learning online if they are learning from home through the provision of hardware and data if required?

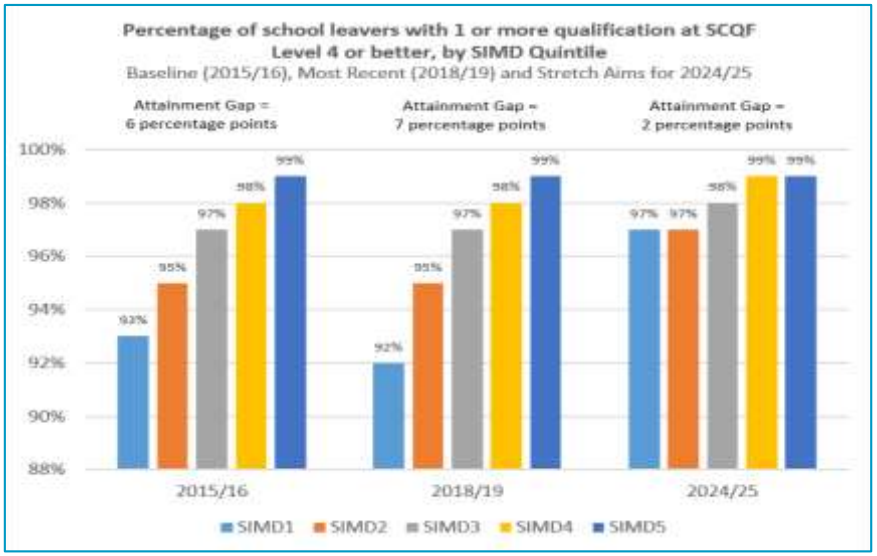
Appendix 1 – Closing the attainment gap: 11 key measures

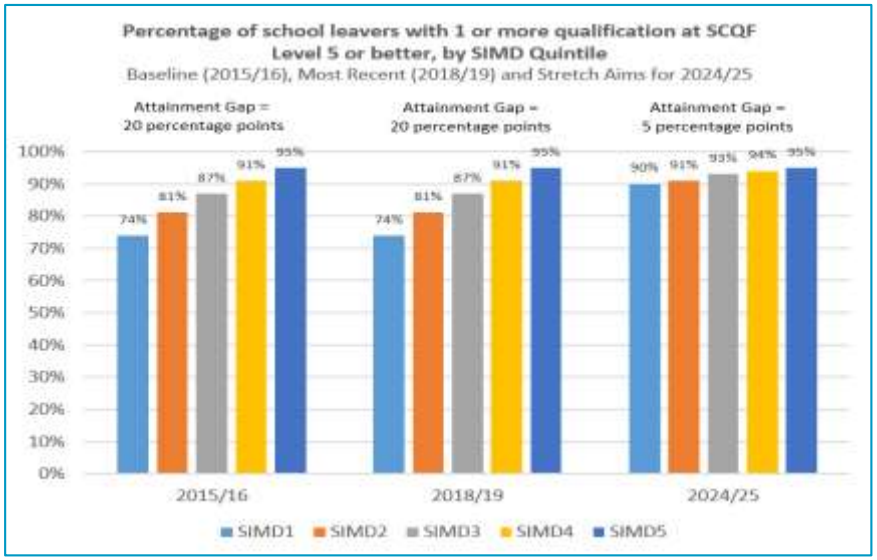


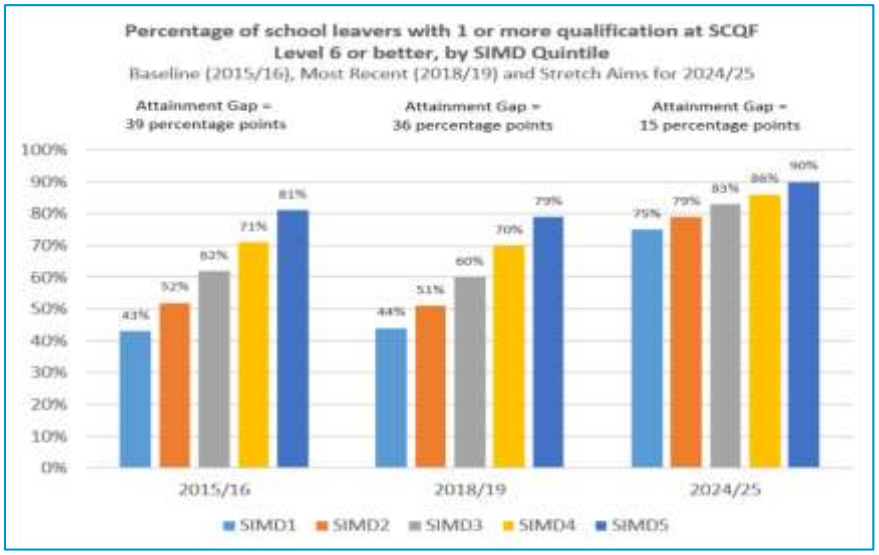


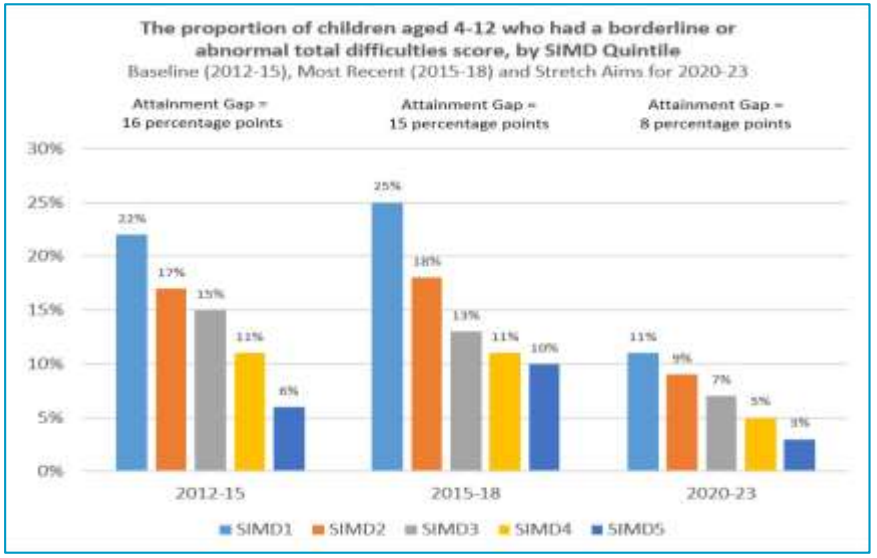





Percentage of school leavers with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 4 or better, by SIMD Quintile
Baseline (2015/16), Most Recent (2018/19) and Stretch Aims for 2024/25
Attainment Gap = 6 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 7 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 2 percentage points
100%
98%
96%
94%
92%
90%
88%
93%
95%
97%
98%
99%
92%
95%
97%
98%
99%
97%
97%
98%
99%
99%
2015/16
2018/19
2024/25
SIMD1
SIMD2
SIMD3
SIMD4
SIMD5


Percentage of school leavers with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 5 or better, by SIMD Quintile
Baseline (2015/16), Most Recent (2018/19) and Stretch Aims for 2024/25
Attainment Gap = 20 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 20 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 5 percentage points
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
74%
81%
87%
91%
95%
74%
81%
87%
91%
95%
90%
91%
93%
94%
95%
2015/16
2018/19
2024/25
SIMD1
SIMD2
SIMD3
SIMD4
SIMD5


Percentage of school leavers with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 6 or better, by SIMD Quintile
Baseline (2015/16), Most Recent (2018/19) and Stretch Aims for 2024/25
Attainment Gap = 39 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 36 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 15 percentage points
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
43%
52%
62%
71%
81%
44%
51%
60%
70%
79%
75%
79%
83%
86%
90%
2015/16
2018/19
2024/25
SIMD1
SIMD2
SIMD3
SIMD4
SIMD5


The proportion of children aged 4-12 who had a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score, by SIMD Quintile
Baseline (2012-15), Most Recent (2015-18) and Stretch Aims for 2020-23
Attainment Gap = 16 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 15 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 8 percentage points
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
22%
17%
15%
11%
6%
25%
18%
13%
11%
10%
11%
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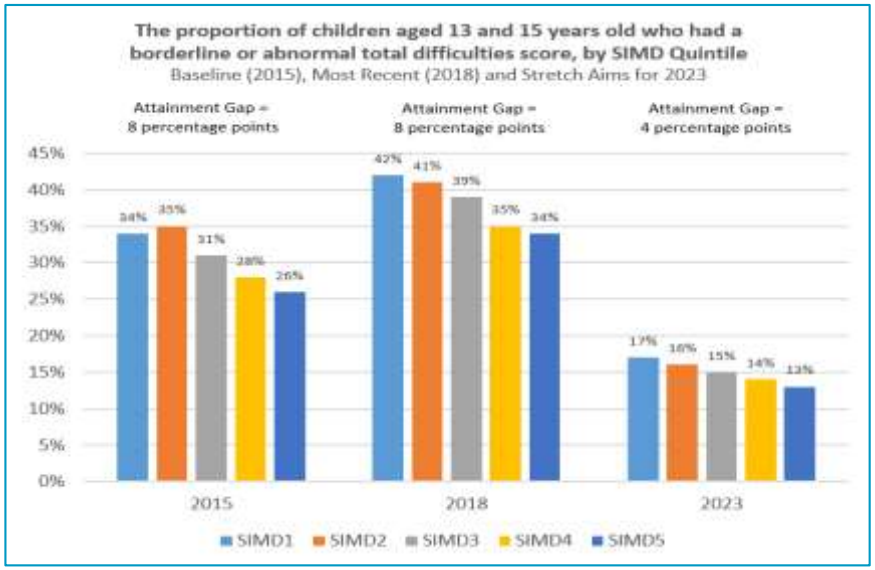
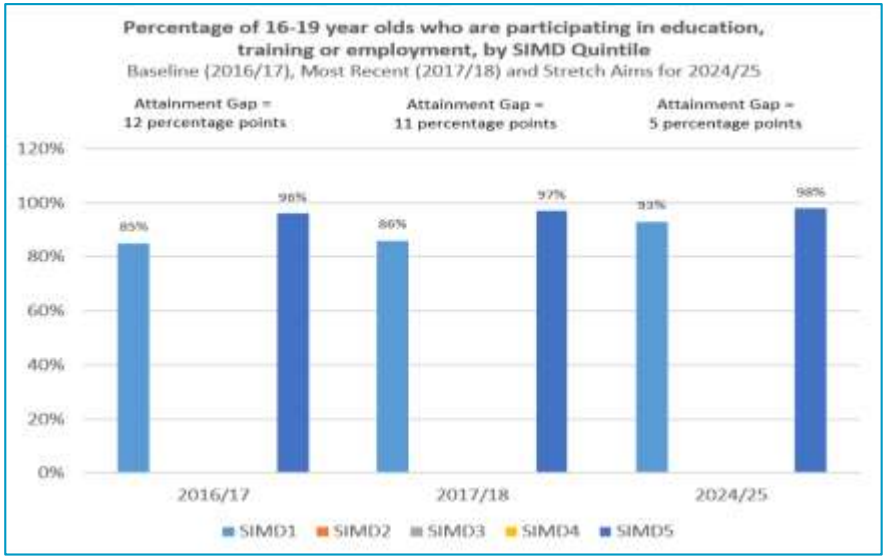
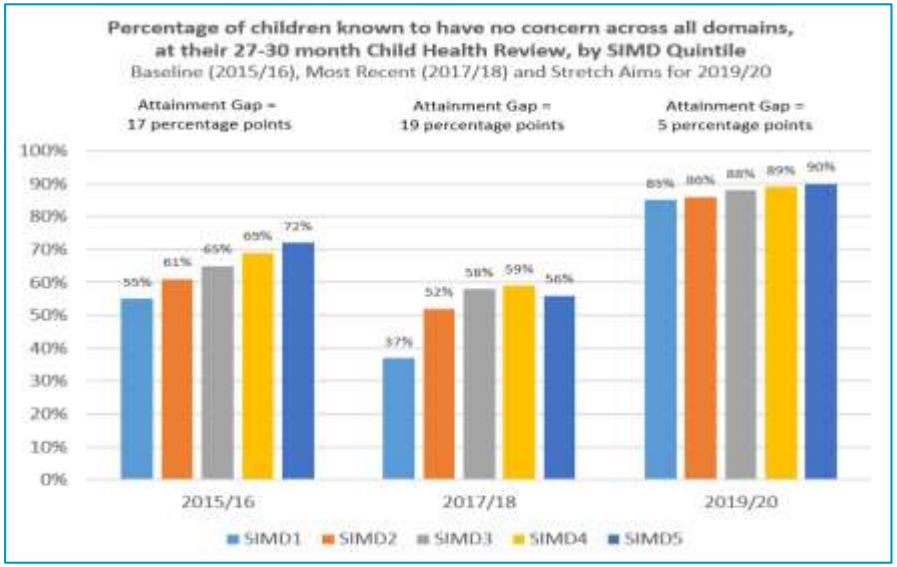
5%
3%
2012-15
2015-18
2020-23
SIMD1
SIMD2
SIMD3
SIMD4
SIMD5


The proportion of children aged 13 and 15 years old who had a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score, by SIMD Quintile
Baseline (2015), Most Recent (2018) and Stretch Aims for 2023
Attainment Gap = 8 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 8 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 4 percentage points
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
34%
35%
31%
28%
26%
42%
41%
39%
35%
34%
17%
16%
15%
14%
13%
2015
2018
2023
SIMD1
SIMD2
SIMD3
SIMD4
SIMD5


Percentage of 16-19 year olds who are participating in education, training or employment, by SIMD Quintile
Baseline (2016/17), Most Recent (2017/18) and Stretch Aims for 2024/25
Attainment Gap = 12 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 11 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 5 percentage points
120%
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
85%
96%
86%
97%
93%
98%
2016/17
2017/18
2024/25
SIMD1
SIMD2
SIMD3
SIMD4
SIMD5


Percentage of children known to have no concern across all domains, at their 27-30 month Child Health Review, by SIMD Quintile
Baseline (2015/16), Most Recent (2017/18) and Stretch Aims for 2019/20
Attainment Gap = 17 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 19 percentage points
Attainment Gap = 5 percentage points
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
55%
61%
65%
69%
72%
37%
52%
58%
59%
56%
85%
86%
88%
89%
90%
2015/16
2017/18
2019/20
SIMD1
SIMD2
SIMD3
SIMD4
SIMD5

Appendix 2 – Links to local authority inspections

- How well are the Scottish Attainment Challenge authorities improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? **Summary report**.
  https://education. gov. scot/Documents/SACSummaryReport. pdf

- Inspection of Local Authorities: How well is **Clackmannanshire Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/yfcjqc02/insclacks191218.pdf

- Inspection of Local Authorities: How well is **Dundee City Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/rd2prm5d/dundeecitycouncilins250618.pdf

- Inspection of Local Authorities: How well is **East Ayrshire Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/qozhdve0/eastayrshirelains070319.pdf

- Inspection of Local Authorities: How well is **Glasgow City Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/wwhh2pd4/glasgowlains110319.pdf

- Inspection of Local Authorities: How well is **Inverclyde Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/pacdluev/inverclydecouncilins301018.pdf

- Inspection of Local Authorities: How well is **North Ayrshire Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/xidnj1k3/northayrshirecouncil020718.pdf

- Inspection of Local Authorities: How well is **North Lanarkshire Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/lx1ipmif/northlanarkshirecouncilinspection.pdf

- Inspection of Local Authorities: How well is **Renfrewshire Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/l0sj5w1h/renfrewshireila190219.pdf

- Inspection of local authorities: How well is **West Dunbartonshire Council** improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?
  https://education.gov.scot/media/q0xjmpr1/westdunbartonshirecouncilins010518.pdf

Appendix 3 – Other useful links

- Scottish Attainment Challenge – Scottish Government
  https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/pupil-attainment/
- Scottish Attainment Challenge – Education Scotland
  https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/Scottish%20Attainment%20Challenge
- Attainment Scotland Fund interim report (years 1 and 2): evaluation
  https://beta.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-attainment-scotland-fund-interim-report-years-1-2/
- Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation: interim report (year 3)
  https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-attainment-scotland-fund-interim-report-year-3/
- Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation: headteacher survey 2018
  https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-attainment-scotland-fund-headteacher-survey-2018/
- Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation: school case studies
  https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-attainment-scotland-fund-school-case-studies/
- Evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund - Analysis of Local Authority Mini Survey – Summer 2018
  https://beta.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-attainment-scotland-fund-analysis-local-authority-mini-survey-summer/
- Every Child Every Chance: The tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022
  https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22/
- Interventions for Equity
  https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/Interventions%20for%20Equity
- Scottish Attainment Challenge: Learning & Teaching Toolkit
  https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/EEF-Toolkit.aspx
- 2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education

https://www. gov. scot/publications/2018-national-improvement-framework-improvement-plan/pages/5/

- National Improvement Framework Interactive Evidence Report
  https://public. tableau. com/profile/sg. eas. learninganalysis#!/vizhome/NIFInteractiveEvidenceReport/FrontPage

- Scotland Learns – Education Scotland
  https://education. gov. scot/improvement/scotland-learns/

- CLD, Poverty and Social Justice - Wakelet
  https://wakelet. com/wake/6c48f6c4-8e25-45d2-8f21-31a5c2243ab7

- Cost of the School Day - breaking down the financial barriers to education
  https://cpag. org. uk/scotland/cost-school-day

- The Poverty Alliance – working together to combat poverty
  https://www. povertyalliance. org/