

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE – 11 MAY 2026**

**REPORT ON: SENIOR PHASE – SCHOOL LEAVERS' UPDATE REPORT**

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

**REPORT NO: 114-2026**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides information on the attainment of S4, S5 and S6 school leavers in academic session 2024/25 in relation to four national benchmarking measures published through Insight:
- Percentage of Leavers attaining Literacy and Numeracy
  - Improving Attainment for All
  - Attainment versus Deprivation
  - Percentage of School Leavers in an initial Positive Destination
- 1.2 In addition to local authority level analysis, this report includes illustrative school-level evidence drawn directly from Insight to highlight notable examples of improvement across Dundee secondary schools.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Families Committee notes the content of the report.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Insight is the national online benchmarking tool for senior phase attainment and destinations. It is designed as an improvement tool to aid schools and local authorities in understanding performance in the senior phase of secondary school education. The findings and analysis within this report are drawn from the most recent Insight data update, published on 25 February 2026. A glossary of key terms and a list of abbreviations used throughout this report are provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The data in this report relates to 1,503 Dundee school leavers from academic session 2024/25. Of these, 619 pupils (41%) lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Quintile 1, the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.
- 4.3 Leaver cohorts differ from year to year in terms of size, stage of leaving school (S4–S6) and attainment profile. Differences in outcomes therefore reflect changes in cohort composition as well as year-on-year performance.
- 4.4 Insight uses four National Benchmarking Measures to report senior phase outcomes: literacy and numeracy attainment; overall attainment using tariff points; attainment in relation to deprivation; and entry to positive destinations. Results are shown alongside a Virtual Comparator (VC) to help interpret performance in context.
- 4.5 Insight advises that comparisons of attainment over time should be treated with caution due to differing approaches to awarding since 2019. While the data provides a reliable picture of attainment for individual cohorts within each year, it should not be used to draw definitive conclusions about improvements or declines in performance between years without additional evidence.

- 4.6 In line with the intended use of Insight as an improvement tool, more detailed school-level data is provided in Appendix 2 while the main body of the report focuses on overall performance patterns and illustrative school-level examples of improvement and variation.

## 5.0 INSIGHT – NATIONAL BENCHMARKING MEASURES

### 5.1 Percentage of leavers attaining literacy and numeracy

#### SCQF Level 4 or better

- 5.1.1 Table 1 shows the percentage of Dundee City school leavers attaining both literacy and numeracy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 4 or better over the last five years, compared with Dundee City's Virtual Comparator (VC).
- 5.1.2 At SCQF Level 4 or better, attainment increased from 80% in 2024 to 82% in 2025. Although performance remains below the Virtual Comparator (85%), the gap has narrowed compared with 2024, indicating a positive direction of travel on this measure.

**Table 1: Percentage of leavers attaining both literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 4 or better (local authority)**

Year	Dundee City	Virtual Comparator
2021	85%	85%
2022	85%	85%
2023	85%	85%
2024	80%	84%
2025	82%	85%

- 5.1.3 School-level Insight data shows that several Dundee secondary schools recorded year-on-year improvement in literacy and numeracy attainment at SCQF Level 4 or better in 2024/25. Notably, Baldrigon Academy increased attainment from 74.4% in 2023/24 to 85.4% in 2024/25, an increase of 11 percentage points, moving from below to above the Virtual Comparator level of 82.0%.

#### SCQF Level 5 or better

- 5.1.4 Table 2 shows that attainment at SCQF Level 5 or better increased from 59% in 2024 to 62% in 2025, indicating year-on-year improvement, reversing the decline seen in the previous year.

**Table 2: Percentage of leavers attaining both literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 5 or better (local authority)**

Year	Dundee City	Virtual Comparator
2021	65%	62%
2022	60%	59%
2023	63%	60%
2024	59%	60%
2025	62%	63%

- 5.1.5 School-level outcomes at SCQF Level 5 or better show variation reflecting cohort characteristics. Within this context, year-on-year improvement was evident in a small number of schools. Notably, Morgan Academy increased the proportion of leavers attaining both literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 5 or better from 63.2% in 2023/24 to 71.8% in 2024/25, an increase of 8.6 percentage points, compared with a Virtual Comparator value of 70.6%. Baldrigon Academy also improved from 50.6% to 56.3% over the same period, an increase of 5.7 percentage points, aligning with its Virtual Comparator value of 56.0%. St John's RC High School also showed year-on-year improvement at SCQF Level 5 or better, increasing from 58.7% in 2023/24 to 62.6% in 2024/25, performing above its Virtual Comparator value of 60.4%.
- 5.1.6 School-level data also shows variation across stages within individual schools. At St Paul's RC Academy, whilst overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is below the Virtual Comparator,

S6 outcomes exceed comparator levels at both SCQF Level 4 (99% compared with 95%) and SCQF Level 5 (90% compared with 87%).

- 5.1.7 HM Inspectors of Education visited the school in December 2025, with the inspection report published on 31 March 2026. Inspection evidence notes that almost all young people achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications by the time they leave school.
- 5.1.8 This highlights the importance of analysing attainment by stage as well as by whole-cohort measures when interpreting Insight data.

## 5.2 Pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN)

- 5.2.1 Data relating to pupils with additional support needs (ASN) should be interpreted with caution. The identification and recording of additional support needs varies across schools and over time, reflecting changes in pupil circumstances, stage of need, and recording practice rather than consistently comparable cohorts. As a result, comparisons with VC figures provide contextual information but should not be interpreted as direct measures of relative performance.
- 5.2.2 Table 3 shows literacy and numeracy attainment for pupils with additional support needs. Attainment improved in 2025, increasing from 69% to 72% at SCQF Level 4 or better and from 44% to 48% at SCQF Level 5 or better. This demonstrates year-on-year improvement on both measures.

**Table 3: Percentage of school leavers with additional support needs attaining literacy and numeracy**

Year	SCQF L4+	SCQF L5+	Number of pupils
2021	75%	51%	594
2022	77%	47%	719
2023	78%	51%	736
2024	69%	44%	785
2025	72%	48%	819

## 5.3 Improving Attainment for All

- 5.3.1 Year-on-year variation in complementary tariff points reflect differences in the composition of each leaver cohort, including cohort size, stage of leaving school (S4, S5 or S6), subject choices and qualification levels, as well as changes in attainment. Complementary tariff point data should therefore be interpreted alongside the other national benchmarking measures presented in this report.
- 5.3.2 Insight uses complementary tariff points to provide a summary view of attainment across a wide range of qualifications and awards. As illustrated in Table 4, the average complementary tariff score increased in 2025 for each of the three Insight attainment groups: the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20% of school leavers, when compared with 2024. The middle attaining 60% achieved a higher average complementary tariff score than the VC for the second consecutive year.

**Table 4: Average Complementary Tariff Points**

Year		Lowest attaining 20%		Middle attaining 60%		Highest attaining 20%	
		Dundee City	Virtual Comparator	Dundee City	Virtual Comparator	Dundee City	Virtual Comparator
2021	2021	83	93	566	576	1226	1286
	2022	86	98	540	527	1223	1237
	2023	81	95	519	509	1221	1225
	2024	60	78	508	497	1186	1202
	2025	75	87	540	529	1195	1223

- 5.3.3 School-level Insight data indicates that the local authority-level improvement in average complementary tariff scores in 2024/25 is driven by performance across a number of Dundee secondary schools and attainment groups.
- 5.3.4 For the lowest attaining 20%, year-on-year increases were recorded in a small number of schools. For example, Harris Academy increased average complementary tariff points from 62 to 109 between 2024 and 2025, compared with a Virtual Comparator value of 92, while Baldragon Academy increased from 30 to 61, compared with a Virtual Comparator value of 74.
- 5.3.5 Within the middle attaining 60%, Baldragon Academy increased average complementary tariff points from 308 to 433, compared with a Virtual Comparator value of 415, while Morgan Academy increased from 550 to 583, compared with a Virtual Comparator value of 577.
- 5.3.6 For the highest attaining 20%, Grove Academy increased average complementary tariff points from 1401 to 1444, compared with a Virtual Comparator value of 1409.
- 5.3.7 Table 5 provides an at-a-glance summary of the school-level examples set out in paragraphs 5.3.4 to 5.3.6, showing year-on-year change in average complementary tariff scores and performance relative to the Virtual Comparator.

**Table 5: School-level examples of change in average complementary tariff scores (2024–2025)**

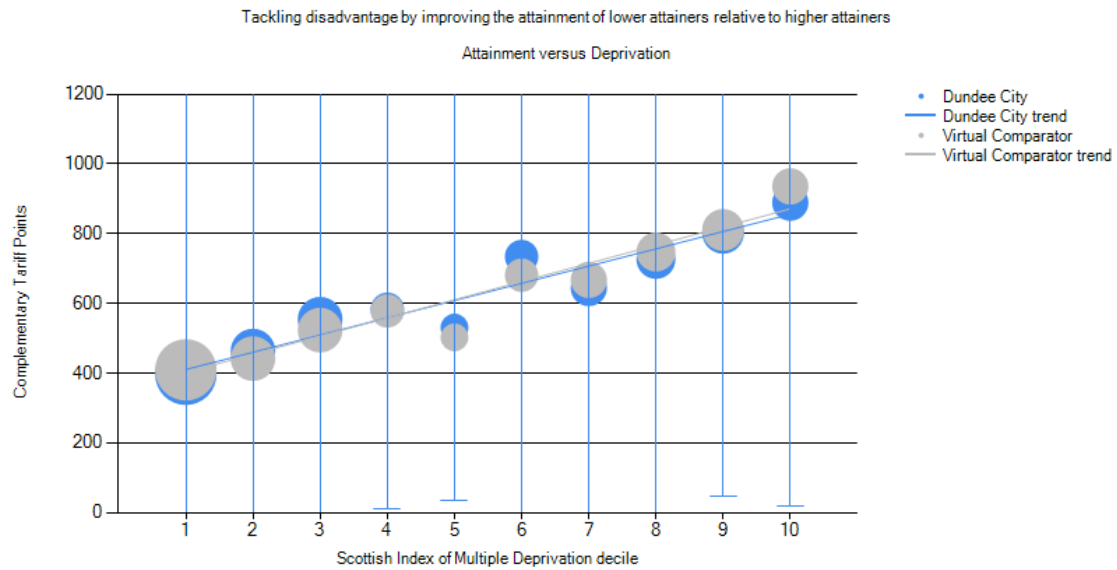
Attainment group	School	2024	2025	Virtual Comparator	Change (points)
<b>Lowest attaining 20%</b>	Harris Academy	62	109	92	+47
<b>Lowest attaining 20%</b>	Baldragon Academy	30	61	74	+31
<b>Middle attaining 60%</b>	Baldragon Academy	308	433	415	+125
<b>Middle attaining 60%</b>	Morgan Academy	550	583	577	+33
<b>Highest attaining 20%</b>	Grove Academy	1401	1444	1409	+43

- 5.3.8 Taken together, these examples illustrate strengthened attainment across the senior phase, recognising that variation reflects differences in cohort size, curriculum offer and stage of leaving.

#### 5.4 Attainment versus Deprivation

- 5.4.1 Insight analysis continues to show a clear relationship between attainment outcomes and levels of deprivation. Attainment versus deprivation data is presented using complementary tariff points across Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles and should be interpreted in line with Insight guidance, particularly where cohort sizes are small.
- 5.4.2 Figure 1 shows Dundee City's attainment versus deprivation profile for 2024/25 alongside that of its VC. Insight significance testing identified no statistically meaningful differences between Dundee City and the VC across SIMD deciles.

Figure 1: Attainment versus Deprivation 2024/25



5.4.3 School-level results across SIMD deciles should be treated with caution because numbers in each decile can be small. However, the Insight data shows some clear, positive differences against the Virtual Comparator in specific deciles. For example, in SIMD decile 3, St John's RC High School recorded an average complementary tariff score of 314, compared with 258 for the Virtual Comparator (+56 points). In SIMD decile 2, Harris Academy recorded an average complementary tariff score of 541, compared with 439 for the Virtual Comparator (+102 points).

## 5.5 Percentage of School Leavers in an Initial Positive Destination

5.5.1 Insight defines positive destinations as entry to higher education,<sup>1</sup> further education, training, employment, voluntary work, or a personal activity agreement. Table 6 shows the percentage of Dundee school leavers entering a positive destination over the last five years, compared with the VC and Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative.

Table 6: Percentage of school leavers in a positive destination

Year	Dundee City	Virtual Comparator	The Tayside Collaborative	National
2020/21	93.7%	94.1%	95.4%	95.5%
2021/22	93.9%	94.7%	94.1%	95.7%
2022/23	95.6%	95.3%	95.4%	95.9%
2023/24	94.8%	94.4%	94.5%	95.7%
2024/25	93.7%	94.5%	95.1%	95.7%

5.5.2 In 2024/25, 93.7% of Dundee school leavers entered an initial positive destination, representing a small decrease compared with 2023/24 and falling slightly below the VC. This follows a period of consistently high initial positive destination rates.

5.5.3 School-level Insight data show clear year-on-year improvement in a number of schools. At Baldragon Academy, the proportion of leavers entering a positive destination increased from 90.0% in 2023/24 to 95.1% in 2024/25, an increase of 5.1 percentage points, compared with a Virtual Comparator value of 94.0%. At Morgan Academy, the proportion increased from 93.7% to 96.0%, an increase of 2.3 percentage points, compared with a Virtual Comparator value of 95.5%. Harris Academy also maintained strong performance in positive destinations, with 97.0% of leavers progressing to a positive destination in 2024/25, above the Virtual Comparator value of 95.0%.

<sup>1</sup> Insight defines Higher Education as any course at SCQF Level 7 or above, so this will include some courses taken at Further Education colleges as well as University courses.

## **6.0 SUMMARY**

- 6.1 Senior phase attainment in 2024/25 demonstrates overall improvement in literacy and numeracy at both SCQF Levels 4 and 5, with school-level evidence indicating that this improvement is not confined to a small number of secondary schools.
- 6.2 Analysis of tariff point outcomes show an increase in average complementary tariff scores in 2025 for the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20% of school leavers, with the middle attaining 60% performing above the VC for a second consecutive year.
- 6.3 Attainment versus deprivation analysis shows that Dundee City's overall profile is closely aligned with its Virtual Comparator. Within this overall picture, the data highlights clear, quantified positive differences in specific SIMD deciles, indicating encouraging outcomes for some pupil cohorts.
- 6.4 The proportion of school leavers entering an initial positive destination remains high overall, despite a small year-on-year decrease at local authority level. School-level data shows improvement and sustained strong performance in a number of current secondary schools.
- 6.5 As highlighted throughout this report, variation in outcomes reflects differences in cohort composition, including cohort size, stage of leaving school and attainment profile. School-level and subgroup analyses are therefore used to support improvement planning rather than for comparative judgement.

## **7.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 Each secondary school will analyse 2024/25 outcomes and emerging 2025/26 data and produce a focused improvement plan aligned to the national benchmarking measures. Plans will prioritise:
- literacy and numeracy at SCQF Levels 4 and 5.
  - tariff outcomes for the lowest attaining 20%.
  - attainment for pupils living in SIMD Quintile 1 and pupils with additional support needs; and
  - sustained positive destinations.
- 7.2 School Improvement Partnerships (SIPs) will continue to provide a key mechanism for improvement. Through SIPs, Headteachers will support and challenge one another, sharing effective practice, scrutinising senior phase outcomes and strengthening consistency of approach across secondary schools.
- 7.3 Curriculum networks, through the Every Dundee Learner Matters (EDLM) Strategy, will support consistent practice, professional learning and the use of comparator evidence aligned to senior phase improvement priorities.
- 7.4 Strategic Equity Funding and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) will continue to be monitored through existing quality assurance arrangements, including engagement with Education Scotland Attainment Advisors, to ensure funding remains targeted to the priorities set out in this report.
- 7.5 Quality Improvement Education Officers will continue enhanced engagement with schools to review progress for pupils living in SIMD Quintile 1, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, and broader achievement.
- 7.6 The Improving School Attendance Strategy will continue to be implemented through school-level action planning and central oversight, recognising attendance as a key factor in attainment and sustained positive destinations.
- 7.7 School-college partnerships will continue to be strengthened to support attendance, attainment and sustained positive destinations for learners accessing senior phase college provision, particularly those at risk of disengagement.

7.8 Progress and impact for the 2025/26 leaver cohort will be reported through the next Senior Phase – School Leavers' Update.

## **8.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 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.

## **9.0 CONSULTATION**

9.1 The Council Leadership Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None.

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**APPENDIX 1****LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>ASN</b>	Additional Support Needs
<b>EDLM</b>	Every Dundee Learner Matters
<b>PEF</b>	Pupil Equity Funding
<b>SCQF</b>	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
<b>SIMD</b>	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
<b>SIPs</b>	School Improvement Partnerships
<b>SQA*</b>	Scottish Qualifications Authority*
<b>VC</b>	Virtual Comparator

\* SQA has now been replaced by Qualifications Scotland, the new national body responsible for awarding and accrediting qualifications in Scotland. Further information on this change, including the timing and transition arrangements, is available at:

<https://qualifications.gov.scot/about-us/becoming-qualifications-scotland>

## GLOSSARY

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Additional Support Needs (ASN)</b>	A term used in Scotland to describe children and young people who need extra support to help them learn, for any reason and at any stage of their education.
<b>Attainment versus deprivation</b>	Analysis that looks at how attainment outcomes vary depending on levels of deprivation, using SIMD as a contextual measure.
<b>Complementary tariff points</b>	A points-based system used within Insight to summarise pupils' attainment across a wide range of qualifications in a single measure that can be compared between schools and local authorities offering different senior phase curriculum delivery models.
<b>Every Dundee Learner Matters (EDLM)</b>	Education's equity driven collaborative improvement strategy for early learning and childcare (ELC) settings and schools, focused on improving presence, participation and progress by identifying and addressing contextual barriers.
<b>Initial destination</b>	The first post school destination recorded for a young person shortly after leaving school.
<b>Insight</b>	A national online tool used by schools and councils to analyse and compare senior phase attainment and post school destinations across Scotland to aid continuous improvement.
<b>Positive destination</b>	A recognised outcome for a school leaver, such as higher education, further education, training, employment, voluntary work, or a personal activity agreement.
<b>School Improvement Partnerships (SIPs)</b>	Groups of schools working together to support and challenge one another, sharing effective practice, and improving consistency across the school system. This is a key component of the EDLM strategy.
<b>Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)</b>	A national framework that sets learning at different levels to show the difficulty of qualifications and how they compare with one another.
<b>Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)</b>	A national measure used to identify areas of relative deprivation in Scotland, based on factors such as income, employment, health, and education.
<b>Senior phase</b>	The final stage of secondary school education, covering stages S4 to S6, when pupils work towards national qualifications and plan next steps.
<b>Senior phase improvement</b>	Actions taken by schools and the local authority to improve learning, attainment, and post school outcomes for pupils in stages S4 to S6.
<b>Virtual Comparator</b>	A comparison group generated by Insight, based on pupils with similar characteristics nationally, used to help interpret attainment and destination outcomes in context.

## APPENDIX 2

School level data for 2023/24, 2024/25 and each school's Virtual Comparator (VC)

Percentage of leavers attaining both literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 4 or better

School	2023/24	2024/25	VC
Baldragon Academy	74.4%	85.4%	82.0%
Braeview Academy (closed)	65.0%	65.5%	79.8%
Craigie High School (closed)	79.1%	76.7%	77.4%
Grove Academy	92.6%	90.7%	93.5%
Harris Academy	81.4%	85.2%	86.6%
Morgan Academy	86.2%	87.9%	88.4%
St John's RC High School	72.4%	76.2%	83.7%
St Paul's RC Academy	79.4%	78.4%	81.6%

Percentage of leavers attaining both literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 5 or better

School	2023/24	2024/25	VC
Baldragon Academy	50.6%	56.3%	56.0%
Braeview Academy (closed)	39.8%	39.4%	54.9%
Craigie High School (closed)	47.8%	55.0%	49.3%
Grove Academy	74.8%	77.2%	81.5%
Harris Academy	65.0%	68.2%	65.5%
Morgan Academy	63.2%	71.8%	70.6%
St John's RC High School	58.7%	62.6%	60.4%
St Paul's RC Academy	59.4%	51.3%	55.4%

Average complementary tariff points for the lowest attaining 20% of leavers

School	2023/24	2024/25	VC
Baldragon Academy	30	61	74
Braeview Academy (closed)	28	42	61
Craigie High School (closed)	54	45	54
Grove Academy	194	195	202
Harris Academy	62	109	92
Morgan Academy	80	78	124
St John's RC High School	49	45	79
St Paul's RC Academy	68	68	60

Average complementary tariff points for the middle attaining 60% of leavers

School	2023/24	2024/25	VC
Baldragon Academy	308	433	415
Braeview Academy (closed)	296	335	409
Craigie High School (closed)	372	405	383
Grove Academy	760	802	802
Harris Academy	564	646	588
Morgan Academy	550	583	577
St John's RC High School	533	507	471
St Paul's RC Academy	494	429	415

Average complementary tariff points for the highest attaining 20% of leavers

School	2023/24	2024/25	VC
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<b>Baldragon Academy</b>	1092	977	1128
<b>Braeview Academy (closed)</b>	881	866	1071
<b>Craigie High School (closed)</b>	1052	1091	1112
<b>Grove Academy</b>	1401	1444	1409
<b>Harris Academy</b>	1221	1186	1265
<b>Morgan Academy</b>	1136	1231	1157
<b>St John's RC High School</b>	1175	1186	1141
<b>St Paul's RC Academy</b>	1097	1003	1143

**Average complementary tariff points for leavers from SIMD Quintile 1, most deprived areas**

<b>School</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>VC</b>
<b>Baldragon Academy</b>	377	376	394
<b>Braeview Academy (closed)</b>	295	321	376
<b>Craigie High School (closed)</b>	372	373	380
<b>Grove Academy</b>	460	473	457
<b>Harris Academy</b>	484	434	386
<b>Morgan Academy</b>	462	512	539
<b>St John's RC High School</b>	480	429	426
<b>St Paul's RC Academy</b>	495	423	399

**Percentage of leavers going on to a positive initial post-school destination**

<b>School</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>VC</b>
<b>Baldragon Academy</b>	90.0%	95.1%	94.0%
<b>Braeview Academy (closed)</b>	96.8%	95.1%	92.8%
<b>Craigie High School (closed)</b>	93.3%	92.5%	93.3%
<b>Grove Academy</b>	95.7%	97.2%	97.2%
<b>Harris Academy</b>	97.7%	97.0%	95.0%
<b>Morgan Academy</b>	93.7%	96.0%	95.5%
<b>St John's RC High School</b>	94.2%	87.4%	93.6%
<b>St Paul's RC Academy</b>	95.8%	88.4%	93.2%