

ITEM No ...2.....

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE – 10 MAY 2021

REPORT ON: SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE – PROGRESS REPORT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 153-2021

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides a progress update of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) in Dundee based on a recent inspection undertaken by Education Scotland. The Attainment Challenge is a centrally funded Scottish Government programme with the direct aim of closing the attainment gap by improving educational outcomes for children and young people living in Dundee's most deprived communities. The focus areas are literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and there is a specific emphasis on those living in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Deciles 1 and 2.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Children and Families Services Committee is asked to:-

- i note the progress, success and impact to date;
- ii instruct the Executive Director of Children and Families Service to monitor progress towards meeting the future priorities outlined in the report and continue to provide regular updates with regard to the funding allocation and the implementation of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in Dundee.
- lii instruct the Executive Director of Children and Families Service to bring the Education Scotland report to the Scrutiny Committee for further discussion.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The First Minister announced the introduction of the Scottish Attainment Challenge during a visit to Dundee on 9 February 2015. A further announcement was made in June 2016 to increase the Fund to £750m. An additional two local authorities are now included in the Scottish Attainment Challenge. All nine council areas were selected because they had the highest concentration of children and young people living in SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) Deciles 1 and 2. Within this funding stream, Scottish Government has introduced Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) linked to schools' Free Meal Entitlement with funding going directly to schools to be managed by head teachers to help close the poverty-related attainment gap.

4.2 In total £25.9m has been claimed by Dundee City Council to support the Attainment Challenge for 2015-2021 and £25.3m has been allocated in Pupil Equity Funding for the five financial years 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022. The SAC funding targets early intervention approaches in the early years and primary and the secondary sector. This builds on and complements existing activity at local authority level to tackle the gap in attainment between children and young people in our most and least deprived communities. The Scottish Government has recently confirmed that our Year 7 funding allocation for 2021/22 will remain at the same level as Year 6 - £6,223,466.

4.3 The Dundee Attainment Challenge Plan sets out an integrated, multi-sectoral and multi-agency approach to closing the equity gap in Dundee. The plan outlines the:

- rationale behind proposals and key drivers for change
- expected impact
- background context
- plans for implementation
- data and analysis
- proposed interventions - programmes and projects to address identified issues
- plans for measuring impact
- plans for local governance.

Progress of the plan is monitored with regular reports provided for the Scottish Government.

4.4 The key drivers for change within the Scottish Attainment Challenge Year 7 bid are:

- Raising attainment for all
- Closing the poverty-related attainment gap
- Improving outcomes for children and young people

4.5 **Scottish Attainment Challenge: 2015-2020 Impact Report**

In October 2020 Education Scotland commissioned a Scottish Attainment Challenge report of progress across each participating local authority. The Dundee city report is attached as Appendix 1. The full report can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/progress-report/2021/03/closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-report-progress-2016-2021/documents/closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-report-progress-2016-2021/closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-report-progress-2016-2021/govscot%3Adocument/closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-report-progress-2016-2021.pdf>

The key messages from this summary are:

- The strong commitment from leaders at all levels to closing the poverty related attainment gap in Dundee which is supporting the attainment challenge vision and implementation. This is illustrated well in the growth of the attainment challenge from an initial eleven schools to all schools, staff and sectors with a shared moral purpose and collaborative ethos central to achieving positive outcomes;
- The focus on providing high quality professional learning and support underpinned by research and enquiry to improve and strengthen the system. This is enabling practitioners and leaders to use data increasingly effectively and to link enquiry and research with practice to close the poverty related attainment gap;
- The early intervention model which underpins Dundee's attainment challenge. This includes a programme of intensive, targeted work to support early acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills in early years which has supported improvements in achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. In addition, early intervention approaches which aim to support wellbeing, increase engagement in learning and reduce exclusion are having a significant impact on groups of vulnerable young people affected by poverty.

In addition, there are improvements over the timeframe of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in Dundee, including for Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF level 5 and 5+ award at SCQF level 5 and 5+ award at SCQF level 6. Overall outcomes for care experienced young people have also improved.

4.6 The report contains many examples of the positive work that has gone on within the city due to the attainment challenge and highlights through 4 case studies significant in more detail the

impact this has had on young people and families across the city. The case studies are listed below:

- AIM (Anxiety in Motion).
- Literacy Fresh Start
- School and Family Development Workers
- Future Skills College

- 4.6.1 The *Aim (Anxiety in Motion)* programme is a collaboration between Children and Families Services and the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). It supports young people with significant and enduring mental health and wellbeing concerns. The report notes improvements in attendance, engagement. Attitudes towards learning and importantly increases in self-confidence. The report states:

'For most young people who participate in the Aim programme there is a significant, positive impact on their attendance, mental health and wellbeing, and attainment. Young people and their parents speak positively about the impact of the programme on their lives.' (Section 7 case study 1).

- 4.6.2 The *Literacy Fresh Start* programme aims to increase young people's ability to access text, to improve fluency and knowledge of language, and to support comprehension and develop transferable literacy skills. Progress was tracked and monitored using a standardised assessment and regular data collection and analysis took place. To quote from the report:

'There was strong evidence of an accelerated rate of progress for learners engaged in the reading intervention. S1 participants made on average 9 months progress over 14 weeks of intensive support.' (Section 7 case study 2).

- 4.6.3 *School and Family Development Workers* have become central to the school team, the local community and partnerships with other agencies. In addition to the support outlined above, they help families to obtain assistance with housing, benefits, employment and provision of food. During school holidays, the SFDW team provides holiday clubs which ensure vulnerable children have access to play and learning opportunities, alongside food and wellbeing support. To quote from the report:

'SFDWs delivered over 200 group sessions to more than 1000 children and 600 adults living in the areas of highest deprivation in Dundee. These sessions have focused on a range of priorities identified by families including: improving family and peer relationships; conflict resolution; supporting wellbeing and managing family breakdown.' (Section 7 case study 3).

- 4.6.4 *Future Skills College* is a full-time, one year, pre-apprenticeship pathway designed for secondary school students. It is offered as a course choice option for students entering S5 and S6. Students tend to be disengaged with learning but not quite ready to leave school. To quote from the report:

'Future Skills College opened in June 2017 and is currently in its fourth year of operation. 90 students have completed the course in its first three years. Despite COVID-19 impacting significantly on the 2019-20 cohort, 48 graduates secured full-time apprenticeships and all but four of the total group are in other positive destinations.' (Section 7 case study 4).

4.7 **Implications of COVID**

The impact of COVID on Scottish Attainment Challenge work has been to create a degree of flexibility in how the spend is targeted to schools, children and young people. The emerging learning gaps due to school closures, and changes to learning approaches, levels of engagement and access to online resources has required this flexibility in the targeting and delivery of Scottish Attainment Challenge initiatives and programmes.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Report has been subject to an assessment of any impact on equality and diversity, fairness and poverty, environment and corporate risk. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

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April 2021

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Scottish Attainment Challenge: 2015-20 Impact report

Local authority report
Dundee

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Executive Summary

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in February 2015 to assist in achieving the Scottish Government's vision of delivering excellence and equity in education. Dundee City Council has been part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge since 2015. The local authority receives funding as a Challenge Authority and through Pupil Equity Fund and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund. Since 2015, Dundee City Council has received £39 978m across these various funding streams.

This report highlights the impact of SAC funding for the children and young people of Dundee and in particular those most affected by poverty. The key strengths are:

- The strong commitment from leaders at all levels to closing the poverty related attainment gap in Dundee which is supporting the attainment challenge vision and implementation. This is illustrated well in the growth of the attainment challenge from an initial eleven schools to all schools, staff and sectors with a shared moral purpose and collaborative ethos central to achieving positive outcomes;
- The focus on providing high quality professional learning and support underpinned by research and enquiry to improve and strengthen the system. This is enabling practitioners and leaders to use data increasingly effectively and to link enquiry and research with practice to close the poverty related attainment gap;
- The early intervention model which underpins Dundee's attainment challenge. This includes a programme of intensive, targeted work to support early acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills in early years which has supported improvements in achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. In addition, early intervention approaches which aim to support wellbeing, increase engagement in learning and reduce exclusion are having a significant impact on groups of vulnerable young people affected by poverty.

Moreover, there is a strong drive and collective determination to build upon these strengths and achievements to target the following areas for future development:

- To embed systems leadership principles and practices, and to continue to build capacity at all levels in order to maximise progress and deliver the local authority's vision for a transformational pace of change across all priorities;
- To build upon improvements in primary attainment and to maximise attainment in the senior phase, ensuring that young people affected by poverty achieve a breadth of skills, qualifications and achievements;
- To further strengthen quality improvement approaches and the effective use of data by building on existing capacity and embedding consistent systems and practices;
- To utilise opportunities presented by entering the next phase of the attainment challenge to review evidence gathering and evaluation approaches across all SAC activity to ensure that improved outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty are highlighted and reported.

Section 1

Context of Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Government's ambition is for Scotland to be the best place to grow up. To achieve this, there is a need to raise attainment and reduce educational inequity for all of Scotland's children and young people. Attainment is the measurable progress which children and young people make as they advance through and beyond school. However, there continues to be a gap in the progress which is made between those living in Scotland's least and most deprived areas. The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) in February 2015 to bring these issues to the fore and to provide a greater sense of urgency and priority to addressing them across the education system.

SAC funding has been available to local authorities and schools to support this vision since 2015. Various funding streams have been available throughout this period. As evidence and understanding evolved, different needs and supports were highlighted:

- Challenge Authority Funding (available to 7 authorities from 2015 and an additional 2 authorities since 2016/7);
- Schools Programme Fund (available to 57 primary schools since 2015 and to another 28 secondary schools since 2016/7). There are now 72 schools in the Schools Programme (as a result of some becoming part of the Challenge Authorities programmes, some mergers and a school closure);
- Pupil Equity Funding (available to almost all schools in Scotland since 2016/7);
- Care Experienced Fund (available to local authorities since 2018/19).

Outcomes

Reducing educational inequity and closing the poverty-related attainment gap is a long term strategy which aims to impact on societal culture and thinking. Consequently a logic model (see appendix) was developed to allow the SAC Programme to recognise and measure short and medium term outcomes towards achieving the long term goals. This report will look at the outcomes achieved with reference to the logic model and how this information can be used to inform next steps.

Dundee's context

Dundee City has a population of around 150,000 people living within 20 square miles. The city has high levels of poverty. Data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020), indicates that 37% of people in Dundee live in a data zone within the 20% most deprived in Scotland. Only 65% of adults are in work and, after housing costs, over one quarter of children live in poverty in seven of eight electoral wards. Life expectancy is the second lowest of any city in Scotland.

Dundee City Council is one of nine 'Challenge Authorities' within the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Since 2015, £24.3m has been allocated from the Attainment Scotland Fund. A SAC Lead Officer oversees spending, planning and delivery of SAC workstreams and priorities. Since 2017, Dundee headteachers have been allocated £15m to target the poverty-related attainment gap through the Pupil Equity Fund.

The Executive Director of the Children and Families Service has overall responsibility for education, social work and community justice. There is a Chief Education Officer and two education managers. Performance is scrutinised by the Children and Families Services Committee. There are:

- 8 council managed early learning and childcare settings and 22 partner provider settings;
- 33 primary schools;
- 8 secondary schools;
- 1 school and 1 off-site service for children with additional support needs.

The City Plan for Dundee 2017-26 and the Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families provide the backdrop to the annual Education Plan and service delivery is underpinned by the Dundee School Improvement Framework.

Section 2

Approach used

During the period from 19th October 2020 to 4th December 2020, Attainment Advisors worked alongside SAC local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence from their individual local authority regarding the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The purpose was to provide qualitative and quantitative answers to three high level questions regarding the impact of SAC within each local authority:

1. How has the implementation of SAC impacted upon the culture and systems of local authorities to ensure those cultures and systems are equitable for children, young people and families affected by poverty?
2. How has SAC positively impacted upon, or contributed to, educational outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty?
3. Which lessons have been learned and what are the future priorities for the SAC?

Each Attainment Advisor completed a professional report providing detail and evidence to thirty-four questions. This provided further detail and evidence around each of these three high level questions. They utilised data from a variety of different sources to triangulate the analysis.

Diagram 1 illustrates the range of data used. This report is the result of this analysis.

Diagram 1: Evidence used to collate the Local Authority professional reports on SAC by Attainment Advisors



Section 3

Transformational changes: cultural and systemic

3.1 Leadership

3.1.1: Strategic leadership:

The explicit aim of Dundee's Attainment Challenge is to close the poverty related attainment gap by improving educational outcomes for children and young people living in the most deprived communities. Three levers with associated workstreams underpin strategic planning and delivery. They are:

- Learning Provision
- Families and Communities
- Leadership

Each workstream has a lead officer who reports to the SAC Lead with responsibility for planning, implementation and reporting. In 2019-20 SAC workstreams were focused upon priorities relating to pedagogy, early years, targeted support, parental engagement and leadership. The impact of each workstream is monitored in relation to:

- Attainment
- Inclusion/exclusion
- Attendance
- Participation
- Engagement

The local authority believes that challenges related to poverty and disadvantage 'should be addressed at a local level through an integrated, multi-sectoral and multi-agency approach.' (Children and Families Services 2020). This collaborative, early intervention approach has been adopted from the outset of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in Dundee. For example, in 2015 a conscious decision was taken to target support towards early years and to build effective partnerships with allied health professionals including speech and language therapists. This has resulted in consistent improvements in early language development and in primary attainment. The positive impact of effective partnership working has also reduced exclusion, increased positive destinations and supported wellbeing. The local authority is committed to working with stakeholders and partners to identify both the 'right interventions and the factors which facilitate their implementation' (op.cit).

Strategic action is being taken to build systems leadership through professional learning, leadership development and sharing standards across the city. The Dundee School Improvement Framework promotes effective use of data, self-evaluation and targeted quality improvement activity to improve performance at school and local authority level.

3.1.2: Leadership skills

Senior leaders provide strategic direction and consistently promote the vision of achieving ‘improved outcomes and increased life chances for all children and families’ (Education Scotland, Inspection 2018). Systems leadership increasingly underpins how the authority aims to achieve these aspirations by:

- building capacity for leadership at all levels;
- using data for improvement;
- developing pedagogy, practitioner agency and enquiry;
- collaboration.

In partnership with the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change, the local authority is expanding the collaborative enquiry model which started in the classroom to build systems leadership across the city.

Professional learning for leadership is effectively supporting succession planning and capacity building. Central officers, school leaders and teachers are engaging with national, regional and local leadership programmes and report increased confidence and leadership skills through:

- Columba 1400 School Leadership programme for senior school leaders;
- Education Scotland’s Professional Learning and Leadership programmes for all levels;
- Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative courses for headteachers and middle leaders;
- Leadership coaching and mentoring with the Mudd Partnership.

Teachers and early years practitioners benefit from high quality professional learning which is developing leadership of learning and promoting agency. In addition, through key partnerships with academia, staff are being up-skilled in data literacy, improvement methodology and action research. The Pedagogy Team plays an important role in coaching teachers to lead improvements in the classroom and successful learning and teaching approaches are being shared through practitioner networks. Staff at all levels are also gaining qualifications and professional accreditation. Central officers are enhancing their existing system leadership skills through leading strategic developments and quality improvement activity across sectors.

3.2 Learning and teaching

3.2.1: Learning and teaching

Securing continuous improvement in learning, teaching and assessment is at the heart of Dundee's Attainment Challenge. There is a strategic focus on raising attainment through consistently building teacher capacity and agency to improve classroom practice. Universal and targeted professional learning, refreshed learning and teaching guidance, progression frameworks, research and enquiry are central to this strategy.

The Pedagogy Team was introduced in 2017-18 to work in partnership with schools to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment and to raise attainment with a specific focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Pedagogy Team:

- provides targeted support;
- promotes the use of impact measures and evaluation tools;
- builds capacity through professional learning informed by research;
- develops learning, teaching and assessment guidance;
- works with practitioners to create curriculum frameworks and support moderation;
- fosters teacher agency by facilitating collaboration and networking.

Local authority attainment data and evidence from schools is used to inform the content of professional learning programmes. School leaders and practitioners select the professional support and coaching model most suited to their priorities. Learning, teaching and assessment approaches which support equity are modelled and effective use of data to measure impact is promoted. Complementary work with the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change and the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative is developing evidence-based approaches through collaborative practitioner enquiry.

Professional learning opportunities which focus on improving pedagogy are being evaluated positively. Practitioners can evidence that these opportunities are improving both confidence and skills in the classroom. Early evidence of the impact of this work is emerging through local authority school reviews and recent school inspections.

3.2.2 Understanding the challenges and impact of poverty

Staff at all levels have a clear, shared understanding of the local context and the barriers experienced by children, young people and families. In 2018 Education Scotland reported that stakeholders, including

headteachers, were 'clearer about the drive for improvement needed and the increased pace of change required to improve the life chances of Dundee's children and young people.'

Local authority strategic plans emphasise the need for collective focus to close the poverty-related attainment gap. These strategic messages influence planning at all levels. Education Officers monitor school improvement plans and PEF spending to ensure there is a clear focus on equity.

A range of approaches have been used to convey the key messages of Dundee's Attainment Challenge and to promote widespread understanding of the impact of poverty on children and young people. These messages have been communicated effectively in a range of ways, including working in partnership with the University of Dundee and Cost of the School Day (CoSD). Approaches have included:

- professional learning sessions for teaching and support staff;
- a CoSD practice sharing network for school leaders;
- presentations to parent councils;
- a public launch to spread key messages to residents across Dundee.

The Growthmindset programme was designed to challenge perceptions about equity and to increase aspiration for all learners, particularly for children and young people living in poverty. Staff from all local authority departments participated in the Growthmindset training programme. The sessions were led by a local authority officer and they were supported by Winning Scotland. Staff describe a change in culture in the local authority as a result of learning gained during these sessions. Importantly, services have been adapted to ensure they are more effective in meeting the needs of residents from all socio-economic backgrounds. There is also greater understanding of the challenges faced by families in the city. The Growthmindset programme also provided parents with information about the impact of poverty on child development.

3.3 Families and communities

3.3.1 Family engagement with educational establishments

Parental confidence in communicating with schools was highlighted positively by Education Scotland in the local authority inspection of 2018. Parents and carers reported that they were 'listened to' and felt that the support their children receive is a strength in the local authority. All schools have a parent council and school

leaders across the local authority encourage parental engagement in learning and in the wider life of the school.

In the last two years, Dundee has participated in the development of a Tayside Strategy for Parents and Carers (2019-22) through the work of the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative. This strategy aims to deliver the following priorities:

- parents and carers have access to good quality information that supports them to make informed choices, plan for and meet their family's needs;
- communities are inclusive, understand children's needs and support families to thrive;
- families have access to effective services that are delivered by a skilled and confident workforce that values the role of parents and carers;
- policies that affect family life are supportive and deliver positive outcomes.

The Parent Chair Forum meets on a regular basis. This provides an opportunity for the chairperson from each Parent Council to meet with local authority officers and discuss shared priorities. The forum effectively seeks the views of parents and carers on a range of issues including the focus of the attainment challenge. Parents and carers are increasingly influencing policy change at corporate, and education service level across a range of areas including services for young people, curriculum, future pathways, and wellbeing.

3.3.2 Family learning

Schools have developed a wide range of family learning opportunities in collaboration with partners. The aims of these programmes have included:

- supporting parents and carers to engage with their child's learning;
- enhancing relationships between parents and carers, and school staff;
- developing parental confidence to engage in the wider life of the school.

School & family development workers (SFDW) have been critical in establishing strong, trusting relationships which subsequently facilitate family learning. SFDWs effectively support families with a range of issues and they seek to mitigate the impact of poverty on family life and on learning. Their work with families has ensured that key projects such as Stay and Play, and Scrap Antics have been well-attended by parents and carers. Participation in these projects has led to some parents and carers becoming more engaged in their child's learning in literacy and numeracy. Schools also work effectively with a wide range of third sector partners to support family learning.

A team of early years educators with a specific remit to work with families has also been deployed. This team provides targeted support to parents and has successfully increased engagement in the children's early learning experiences within the nursery and at home. The early years educators use a cascade model to share speech and language strategies with parents and carers who then replicate these activities at home. This has resulted in accelerated language development and improved early vocabulary acquisition.

3.3.3 Other improvements in outcomes for families and communities

Interventions such as CANI Coaching illustrate that positive impact has been achieved by working holistically with young people and their family. CANI's family empowerment programme has supported participants to:

- develop confidence and build self-esteem;
- create resilience in learning and learn the skill of goal setting;
- explore family dynamics and aspirations;
- to increase personal, social and life skills in order to create a clear sense of direction in the lives of parents, carers and children.

The programme tracks parental and child confidence at the start and the end of the programme. There is also an opportunity for the family to participate in a residential weekend where participants explore the challenges of relationships and family dynamics in relation to their goals and aspirations for school and future life.

Feedback from participants indicates that the programme positively influences the thinking and behaviour of parents, carers and young people.

"I learned that I had lots of changes to make and that positivity is important for me."

"I'm going to live up to my values to help me with my learning and be open-minded."

"Keep an open mind enjoy the slower paced parts of the programme – it's like that for a reason, try and get all the family to come if possible and really try and enjoy yourself."

3.4 How we work as a system

3.4.1 Effective use of data for improvement

The Dundee School Improvement Framework sets out the local authority's clear commitment to effective use of data for improvement. It includes consistent timelines for data collation and analysis and outlines ways in which data should be used to underpin decision-making, planning and evaluation at all levels.

The council's data analysis team provides effective support with data systems and analysis at local authority and school level. A range of quality improvement data and evidence is used to plan proportionate support and challenge for schools. This includes data related to attainment, attendance, inclusion, self-evaluation, staffing and complaints. Education officers use data to challenge school leaders through attainment reviews and school reviews which in turn supports improvement planning and self-evaluation. Peer support and challenge is also encouraged through school improvement partnerships.

Professional learning and targeted coaching for school leaders has increased confidence to interrogate data and use it effectively to target improvements. Middle leaders have also been supported to interrogate Insight data more effectively which is influencing curricular planning in secondary schools. The data and performance group is developing data systems and approaches for use across the local authority. This is leading to greater consistency and shared standards across schools.

Using data effectively is an important lever for the attainment challenge in Dundee. Competence and confidence in using data for improvement is increasingly evident across staff groups. Work in this area is regarded as ongoing in order to continuously analyse patterns and trends in relation to poverty-related gaps, to review and update the rationale for interventions and to track progress against high level outcomes. During school reviews, practitioners are increasingly more confident in describing how they use data to improve learning, teaching and assessment in the classroom. Embedding these data literacy skills at all levels is an ongoing focus.

3.4.2 Collaboration including partnership working

Effective partnership working is a central feature of many successful interventions within Dundee's Attainment Challenge.

Work with allied health professionals, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), secondary and primary HWB workers and third sector partners is successfully supporting the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people. Highly effective work with speech and language therapists is having a positive

impact on early language development. Collaborative projects such as Anxiety in Motion and Includem are improving outcomes for young people affected by poverty by reducing the risk of exclusion, improving mental health, and increasing attendance and engagement. In addition, in 2018 Education Scotland identified that partnerships were benefiting families and leading to 'improvements in parenting skills and parental ambition'.

Key partners such as Dundee and Angus College, local employers and Community Learning and Development have been instrumental in working together to increase positive destinations, through initiatives such as the Future Skills College. These partnerships are central to ongoing developments in the senior phase curriculum.

SAC funding has been used effectively to extend and strengthen the collective capacity and reach of the workforce. Staff have been recruited from different sectors to complement school teams and to broaden skillsets. Staff are working successfully in partnership to understand and tackle some of the complex societal factors which underpin the poverty-related attainment gap in Dundee.

Key partnerships with academia and national organisations are enhancing capacity to meet the needs of learners and to improve learning and teaching. High quality professional learning in leadership, pedagogy and enquiry is being provided in collaboration with partners. Early evidence demonstrates that this work is impacting positively in the classroom during local authority school reviews and in recent school inspections.

Section 4

Improvement in outcomes for children and young people

4.1 Literacy & Numeracy

4.1.1 Literacy

The Best Value Assurance Report (Audit Scotland 2020) recognised that the council's targeted intervention activity is 'having a positive impact on early years and primary school performance.' The number of P1, 4, and 7 children achieving the expected level has risen by 14% since 2015-16, with a 15% increase in the achievement of learners living in areas of highest deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile 1).

In 2018-19, combined literacy attainment in quintile 1 across P1, 4, 7 and S3 is above national averages. This is evident in all elements of literacy, except P4 writing where attainment is 2% lower. Since 2016-17 increases in P1 quintile 1 have been greater than national rates. In addition, Dundee's poverty-related attainment gap has reduced in reading and writing in P1, and in reading, listening and talking in P7. Reducing the gap at P4 remains a focus. Overall, the combined gap for P1, 4 and 7 is smaller than the gap nationally.

In S3 quintile 1, there has been a 5% increase in learners achieving level 3 or better since 2015-16. Performance is higher than national averages in 2018-19 but consistent gap reduction remains a focus.

Literacy interventions have been integral to improvements. They include:

- professional learning in pedagogies to tackle inequity;
- direct coaching for practitioners;
- targeted reading and writing interventions based upon data;
- significant early language and communication development including preventative work to address emerging issues;
- family learning.

Education Scotland identified, 'a strong impact on children's early reading accuracy and comprehension' as a result of planned interventions (Inspection, February 2018).

4.1.2 Numeracy

Attainment in numeracy at P1, 4 and 7 demonstrates improvement. In 2018-19 most children achieved the expected level with an increase of 13% since 2015-16. At P7 there has been a 16% increase over three years. Primary attainment in 2018-19 is in line with the national average and Dundee is placed in the top half of its comparator group of authorities on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF).

Attainment of learners living in areas of most deprivation has increased by 13% since 2015-16. The percentage increase in quintile 1 performance over the last three years has been greater than national levels. In 2018-19, when compared to national data, more children in Dundee in quintile 1 in P1 and P7 achieved the expected level. The poverty related attainment gap in P4 and P7 was also smaller in Dundee.

At S3, most learners achieved the expected level in 2018-19. The percentage of learners in quintile 1 achieving level 3 or 4 or better is less than the national average although there is an upward trend.

Attainment Scotland funding has supported a range of numeracy interventions which have contributed towards improved numeracy attainment including:

- deploying staff to provide professional learning and to support consistency and rigour in the implementation of approaches;
- training all primary teachers in conceptual number development;
- providing resources to promote the use of concrete materials and manipulatives at all levels;
- providing family and outdoor learning opportunities targeting numeracy skills.

Teachers report increased confidence in teaching numeracy strategies, assessing progress, and in identifying and addressing gaps.

4.2 Senior Phase

In 2019, 94.3% of school leavers entered a positive destination. This has increased by 2.8% since 2015-16 and is in line with the virtual comparator. There has been a greater increase in quintile 1 and the poverty related gap has reduced.

Between 2014-15 and 2018-19, combined literacy and numeracy qualifications of school leavers increased by: 2% at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 4; 8% at level 5 and remained in line at level 6.

The national benchmarking measure, improving attainment for all, analyses school leaver attainment using average complimentary tariff points. In 2018-19 by the end of S6, the average score of the 2016-17 S4 cohort is lower than the virtual comparator. However, when comparing attainment versus deprivation at S4 in 2018-19, there is an increase in tariff points across all SIMD deciles with the exception of decile 7.

A cross-sector group in the local authority is conducting a review of the senior phase curriculum. It comprises school leaders and education managers, and is chaired by the Chief Education Officer. Data is being used to identify gaps, trends and good practice across sectors, schools and subjects. A more holistic view of progression and increased breadth of opportunity is emerging.

The curriculum offer is also expanding through consortia arrangements between schools, Dundee and Angus College, universities and Skills Development Scotland. This is raising aspiration by signposting pupils towards higher and further education. An online shared tracking tool, improved information about pathways for parents and a virtual portal highlighting effective practice are enhancing this work.

4.3 Achievement

Increased expectation that wider achievements will be tracked and monitored means that gaps are being identified and there is improved equity of opportunity. Where learners living in quintile 1 are not participating in wider achievement opportunities, barriers are being explored and families supported to access opportunities in school or in the community. For example, as a result of this targeted approach 65% of young people who achieved a John Muir Award in Dundee this year are in receipt of free school meals.

The Data and Performance Group is developing a toolkit to support schools to record and track wider achievements more consistently, including Foundation Apprenticeships and National Progression Awards. Opportunities to gain accreditation and achieve a range of awards are being planned through the curriculum. This includes activities with the Duke of Edinburgh programme, Princes Trust, John Muir Trust and Saltire.

More pupils are now taking part in voluntary experiences as a result of successful partnerships with community learning and development and the third sector. The senior phase curriculum review and effective partnership working are also creating a broader, more appropriate curriculum offer with increased opportunities for achievement.

To ensure equity of access to after-school and lunchtime activities costs are being removed. The local authority committed to ensuring that finance is not a barrier to wider opportunities as part of the Cost of the School Day initiative. As a result, over the last two years 44% of the children who participate in Active Schools programmes live in quintile 1.

4.4 Wellbeing

At the outset of the attainment challenge, the Children Count Wellbeing Survey was used successfully to identify priorities which included mental health and wellbeing, substance misuse and family relationships. The SAC health and wellbeing workstream developed universal and targeted support using data from the survey alongside other self-evaluation evidence. This workstream has enhanced staff capacity to support wellbeing generally and has also provided targeted and intensive early intervention. Actions have included:

- universal training for all staff in nurture principles, trauma informed practice, resilience and restorative approaches with the support of Dundee's Educational Psychology Service;
- dedicated health and wellbeing staff in secondary and primary schools;
- a school and family development worker for every primary school to support family wellbeing;
- AIM (Anxiety in motion) and AIM In schools programmes to tackle underlying wellbeing issues affecting attendance, relationships and mental health;
- therapeutic interventions using the expressive arts and performance to support wellbeing.

Building the capacity of school staff and employing staff with complementary skillsets has strengthened impact on wellbeing and is successfully reducing reliance on external agencies. Schools are more inclusive, exclusions have reduced and there is greater awareness of mental health issues and supports. Staff describe a culture shift with reduced stigma and young people more inclined to seek help with mental health concerns. This is illustrated in the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School survey (PASS) which some schools use from S1 to S3 to evaluate impact on wellbeing.

Intensive wellbeing support provided to individual young people through bespoke interventions has resulted in significantly improved attendance, increased self-esteem, and improved engagement in learning and attainment for these learners.

4.5 Attendance & inclusion

4.5.1 Attendance

Primary attendance has decreased by 0.46% since 2014-15 compared to a national decrease of 0.53%. In secondary schools, attendance fell by 0.89% against a national decrease of 1.12%. In 2018-19, quintile 1 attendance in Dundee primary schools was 0.2% higher than the national rate. However, in secondary schools between 2016-17 and 2018-19, attendance of learners in quintile 1 decreased by 0.8% while national rates decreased by 0.4%.

Local authority attendance tracking shows that the lowest levels of attendance in secondary schools exist in quintile 1. As a result, attendance data for each quintile is now analysed centrally and shared with schools each month. This information is supporting early intervention and targeted work with learners living in areas of most deprivation.

The local authority continues to take action to tackle generational issues relating to non-attendance including seeking to shift culture to ensure young people and parents see the central role of attendance in improving life-chances. A strategic group is developing universal, targeted and intensive approaches to improve attendance. Interventions that are having a positive impact on learners vulnerable to high levels of absence are evaluated and reviewed in order to sustain and spread impact. Learning from these successful approaches is being shared across the city and is being up-scaled to support a wider group. Refreshed attendance policies and guidance are also being implemented and staff are deployed to provide direct support to learners and families. Action enquiry and quality improvement methods are increasingly used to identify the most effective approaches.

4.5.2 Inclusion:

Exclusion rates in Dundee have fallen significantly since 2014 when they were more than double the national average. By 2018-19, exclusions in primary schools had fallen below the national average. Over the same period, exclusions in secondary schools also reduced but remained above national levels (48.5 exclusions per 1,000 pupils compared to 39.6 nationally). However, there is a marked reduction from the start of the attainment challenge when exclusions in Dundee secondary schools were almost three times the national average.

Local authority data shows there are more exclusions of learners in quintile 1 than in other quintiles. However, between 2016-17 and 2019-20 these have been reducing at a faster rate and exclusions of care-experienced children and young people have also reduced significantly.

Work to reduce exclusion has been prioritised and has included:

- universal training from Dundee Educational Psychology Service to promote nurture principles and establish a nurturing culture in schools;
- a range of targeted interventions aimed at supporting learners vulnerable to exclusion;
- professional learning and support in implementing trauma informed practice;
- revised policy and guidance promoting inclusion and alternatives to exclusion.

Initiatives such as the Includem Project have provided intensive support to young people at greatest risk of exclusion. The majority of referred pupils live in quintile 1 and the project aims to reduce exclusion and absence whilst supporting wellbeing and engagement. Evidence demonstrates more positive interactions with peers, increased engagement in learning and a reduction in violent incidents, demerits, behaviour referrals and exclusions.

4.6 Children and young people's voice

Children and young people are engaged in a range of decision making opportunities including through pupil councils, consultations and committees. The views of learners shape improvements in schools and in the community. There is clear expectation that schools will maximise opportunities for young people living in quintile 1 and for others at risk of missing out.

The Youth Voice Council, in partnership with Abertay University, organises and facilitates an annual Youth Voice Conference involving young people in S4-6 from all secondary schools. Launched in 2018, the conference brings young people together with elected members, corporate, community and education staff. Local priorities, challenges and solutions are discussed. Young people increasingly drive change at corporate, community and education service level. Their views influence policy and practice including:

- planning of services for young people;
- developments in the curriculum;
- improvements in support for wellbeing;
- the focus of the attainment challenge.

Feedback from the Youth Voice Conference is presented to elected members and headteachers. The Youth Voice Council is extending its work to include primary schools.

A multi-agency group has been created to increase levels of participation in education, training or employment for 16-19 year olds. This group influences the local authority's employability strategy and seeks to maximise links between schools, Skills Development Scotland and the corporate services employability team. In 2019-20, the national participation measure (the percentage of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment) increased to 90% and participation levels in quintile 1 moved in line with national averages.

4.7 Children and young people who have experienced care

In 2018 a team was created to expand support for care experienced children and young people (CECYP). This team comprises a lead officer, pupil support workers for each cluster, an employability mentor and a health and wellbeing worker. Support is provided to improve attendance, reduce exclusions, support learning and attainment, and increase positive destinations.

In response to the views of CECYP young people, there was a conscious policy change in 2017-18 which prioritised alternatives to exclusion. By 2018-19 exclusions had reduced considerably from 202 to 110 which was significantly below the national average (152). In 2018-19 attendance of CECYP was in line with the national average (87.5%) but below the Dundee average (91.7%). Attendance patterns have been relatively stable over five years.

The percentage of care experienced young people entering a positive destination was above the national average in 2018-19. In the same year, 59% of care experienced school leavers achieved 1 or more SCQF level 3 and 55% achieved 1 or more SCQF level 4. This data is lower than national figures and schools are reviewing their curriculum offer to provide more flexible pathways which meet the needs and interests of young people. There has been variance in overall patterns of attainment of CECYP alongside some notable positive outcomes for individual young people who have attained well. The local authority continues to focus on supporting each individual young person to be successful and to reduce variance.

There are increased opportunities for CECYP to influence decision-making through pupil voice groups and the Champions Board and the local authority intends to continue to strengthen these approaches.

Section 5:

Specific funding streams

5.1 Pupil Equity Funding

5.1.1 What worked well?

In 2017, the local authority was able to build upon their experience as an attainment challenge authority to successfully support the introduction of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). Effective use was made of existing local partnerships, processes and interventions.

£15m has been allocated to headteachers in Dundee through PEF. Appropriate support is provided by central officers in areas such as finance, procurement and human resources. This supports headteachers to spend funding appropriately, work together on recruitment and gain economies of scale. The SAC Lead works with the Procurement Framework Team to ensure suppliers meet the principles of best value.

The local authority's PEF guidance is updated and relaunched each year to reflect national guidance and local priorities. It provides headteachers with clear, consistent guidance and ensures that they are aware of required changes to practice. A database is used to capture PEF spending and interventions. The database informs decision making in relation to which initiatives are working and which should be discontinued.

Education Officers and headteachers meet each term to discuss the progress of PEF activity and a spending review takes place twice in the year. Trios of headteachers meet in school improvement partnership groups to discuss the impact of PEF interventions which often leads to practice sharing across school teams.

The Pedagogy Team supports schools who are considering the evidence base for a particular intervention. This helps schools to carefully consider the most relevant and impactful literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing interventions for their context.

5.1.2 Further developments

Aspects of PEF for ongoing development include:

- sustained opportunities to share the impact of PEF funded interventions across schools and across sectors;
- continued focus on supporting staff at all levels to measure impact and outcomes to fully support PEF reporting;
- continued support and challenge through school improvement attainment meetings to enable close monitoring of outcomes from PEF for children and young people;
- consideration of further scope for joint-purchasing and ongoing refinement of the contracts framework and database to highlight the most impactful services and support best value.

5.2 Care Experienced Fund for children and young people

5.2.1 What worked well?

The CECYP Fund has been used to strengthen capacity across sectors and to ensure that more appropriate support is provided for care experienced children and young people. An extensive programme of professional learning has been delivered to staff in all schools and in all children's houses. This training has significantly increased understanding of trauma, resilience and nurture principles. In addition, dedicated support from educational psychologists has been provided. This ensures that all staff have access to high quality professional advice in order to provide more effective support for care experienced children and young people. There is now more consistent understanding of the needs of children and young people and more appropriate strategies and supports are being used. There have been significant reductions in exclusions which could be attributed to this shift in culture and to increased use of trauma informed practice.

An Education Officer has been appointed with responsibility for overseeing all priorities. A dedicated support team has also been deployed. This team includes a pupil support worker in each cluster, an employability mentor and a health and wellbeing worker. There is now a more coordinated approach to supporting care experienced children and young people which is leading to improved outcomes. For example, the employability mentor, in partnership with Dundee Employment Service, has successfully increased the number of care experienced school leavers who secured college places, employment or training in 2018-19. Young people who have already left education are also supported to find positive destinations and they are directed towards a range of other support including from the health and wellbeing worker.

5.2.2 Further developments:

The local authority aims to further extend existing support for care experienced children in primary schools with a particular focus on transition to secondary.

The significant support provided by pupil support workers in each cluster will be extended to reach a wider group of care experienced young people who are not currently accessing school. In partnership with the accessibility and inclusion team, pupil support workers will focus on providing intensive support to help these care experienced children and young people to reengage in education.

The CECYP Team will further support schools to review data and evidence relating to the care experienced children and young people in their school community as they review their curriculum offer. The team will assist schools to consider how they can broaden learning pathways to increase engagement of some care experienced children and young people and make learning more relevant and focused on positive destinations.

The local authority will continue to develop ways of ensuring that the voices of care experienced children and young people are heard and included through the Champions Board and Youth Voice activity. Ensuring that all care experienced children and young people feel empowered to share their views, engage in pupil voice opportunities and to influence decision-making is central to local authority plans.

5.3 National programmes

Cost of the School Day / Child Poverty Action Group (CoSD)

Dundee City Council was the first local authority in Scotland to commit to the Cost of the School Day initiative. All primary and secondary schools have a CoSD lead and each school has an action plan ensuring that, at the very minimum, all early learning and child care settings and all schools address the four 'Statements of Intent' (2018). Schools have successfully introduced more than 200 CoSD interventions and plans. These are monitored through quality improvement processes in the local authority. Schools continue to make good use of PEF to help reduce costs thus ensuring delivery of CoSD commitments. The CoSD practice network allows effective practice to be shared and encourages schools to work together to deliver the statements of intent.

Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC)

Dundee City Council is represented on all Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative workstreams and priority groups. This has supported key local authority developments in wellbeing, early years and parental engagement. Staff in Dundee have benefitted from shared professional learning opportunities through the teaching and learning priority group and this is supporting improvements in classroom practice. Learning across the three authorities is shared and the TRIC provides a forum for practice sharing and collaboration which enriches experience and understanding.

YoungScot

Through the YoungScot pilot young people have successfully accessed:

- equivalent of 700 weeks of free travel;
- 44 rewards ranging from supermarket vouchers, mobile data to game vouchers;
- 'meal deals' for all Young Scot Card holders during holiday period.

Winning Scotland

See section 3.2.2

Section 6

Lessons learned and future priorities

6.1 Lessons learned

6.1.1 Sustainability

A shared vision and strong commitment to closing the poverty-related attainment gap is firmly embedded in Dundee. In 2015-17, there was a focus on eleven attainment challenge schools. All schools, sectors and staff are now involved and there is clear expectation that equity is the responsibility of all. As a result, a

shared moral purpose, distributed leadership, and a sense of agency are more evident. Vision is increasingly translated into practice by staff at all levels and collaborative partnerships between senior leaders, establishments, stakeholders and communities underpin improvement.

Effective use of data for improvement continues to be strengthened and more consistent data systems are being implemented across establishments which allows standards to be shared. This is also embedding effective data dialogue and more rigorous analysis of attainment gaps at classroom, school and authority level.

The school improvement framework supports the work of the attainment challenge. Education officers and school leaders use this framework as the basis for self-evaluation and quality assurance. A programme of regular attainment meetings, school reviews and peer trio meetings provide headteachers with increased opportunities for support and challenge.

High-quality professional learning and support provided by universities, the Pedagogy Team, the Educational Psychology Service and other partners is strengthening capacity and sustainability. Staff describe increased levels of confidence and skill which are positively impacting on their practice. Where this work is most successful, there is robust analysis of data, action enquiry and prompt upscaling across the school or sector. There are increased opportunities for practitioners and school leaders to share practice through networks and online forums such as Dundee's Digital Schools Platform.

6.1.2 Lessons learned

Building capacity through high-quality professional learning has been integral to improvements to date. In addition, targeted work in the early years and adopting an early intervention approach has had a positive impact on outcomes for both the youngest and the most vulnerable learners. Successfully up-skilling staff in data literacy has been, and continues to be, an important priority to maintain effective use of data for improvement across all roles and settings. Thus, capacity building, early intervention and data literacy will continue to be key levers going forward.

New and improved multi-disciplinary services have been developed which have extended the reach and impact of SAC. Headteachers and families report significant benefits from staff working together across disciplines and with complementary skillsets. This broader staff team significantly strengthens the role schools can play in mitigating the effects of poverty. Maximising collaborative work continues to be a priority, however, there are challenges in retaining staff in some roles due to short-term funding and contracts.

As SAC has progressed over time, the local authority's approach to planning, evaluation, reporting and governance has continued to evolve. The local authority pauses, amends or discontinues initiatives where there has been insufficient evidence of progress. Revisiting how evidence is gathered and impact reported will underpin the next phase of the challenge to ensure all positive impact is captured and areas for development highlighted.

To strengthen attainment in the senior phase, the local authority is currently working with schools to further develop the curriculum offer. The authority intends to support schools to regularly evaluate the quality and impact of their curriculum in relation to learner engagement, pupil voice and attainment.

6.2 Future priorities

There is strong, collective determination to build upon the successes and achievements of the attainment challenge, to focus efforts on sustaining strengths and to target areas for development. The authority plans to embed systems leadership in order to maximise progress and continue to focus on delivering the transformational pace of change outlined in Education Scotland's Inspection in 2018. Priorities and plans include:

- build on strong and successful partnership working across sectors to support some of the wider poverty-related challenges faced by children and families;
- maintain focus on capacity building by continuing to make effective use of career-long professional learning and collaborative enquiry across all sectors, continuously enhance leadership at all levels and embed a culture of agency underpinned by effective self-evaluation;
- further strengthen effective use of data for improvement by embedding consistent data systems, building on existing high levels of capacity to gain consistency across all settings, expanding data coaching and use of quality improvement methods;
- build on the strong progress made in raising primary attainment and maximise attainment in the senior phase by embedding guidance from the local authority's review of the senior phase curriculum and consistently delivering a breadth of skills, qualifications and achievements for young people in all settings;
- take opportunities presented by the next phase of the attainment challenge to further review approaches to evidence gathering and evaluation of impact across all SAC activity to support reporting and governance;
- share the many successful approaches to improving outcomes for children and young people in Dundee and celebrate the achievements of Dundee's Attainment Challenge.

6.3 Other relevant information

The local authority is concerned that if attainment challenge funding is not available to support key interventions and developments which have become integral to effective and holistic service delivery it may not be possible to sustain these.

Section 7

Case studies

Case Study 1

Aim - Anxiety in Motion

The Aim (Anxiety in Motion) programme is a collaboration between Children and Families Services and the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). It supports young people with significant and enduring mental health and wellbeing concerns. Initially trialled as a 12-week intervention for a group of 5 young people, Aim has been upscaled to provide intensive support for up to 20 young people across the city. Participants have typically experienced heightened levels of anxiety in a school environment, leading to chronic non-attendance which has severely compromised their ability and opportunity to attain and achieve.

The Aim core team comprises an education resource worker, teachers, a CAMHS nurse and an educational psychologist. This specialist team supports the young person through mental health challenges and during the recovery period. They maintain support afterwards to help the young person sustain progress and work to reach their potential.

The programme runs throughout the school year and during the holiday period in a community setting. The Aim programme is varied and provides access to specialist teaching, social opportunities and wellbeing support. It includes:

- 'Core Aim' which offers a tailored curriculum at broad general education and senior phase level to young people who feel confident and able to access the Core Aim model;
- 'Monday Aim Drop-Ins' which offer support to young people who are not yet ready to join the Core Aim programme;
- 'Aim Outreach' which supports young people who are unable to attend sessions in a community setting until they can access the drop-ins or transition to the Core Aim programme.

For most young people who participate in the Aim programme there is a significant, positive impact on their attendance, mental health and wellbeing, and attainment. Young people and their parents speak positively about the impact of the programme on their lives. Improved outcomes include:

- increased engagement and communication with peers, family and staff;
- more positive experience of learning;
- sustained engagement and interest in learning beyond participation in the programme;
- increasing number of young people moving to positive destinations;
- increasing number of qualifications gained by participants;
- reconnection with mainstream education from a highly supported setting.

'I never thought I would have much passion for learning at all but at Aim I am not only learning I'm enjoying it as well. I feel like I'm more confident and more ready to put effort in to things. I'm probably also happier.'

Case Study 2

Literacy Fresh Start

In 2017, 27% of young people in S1 were below expected levels in literacy. Assessments suggested that 14% of these learners required a systematic synthetic phonics instruction intervention and therefore an intensive reading intervention programme was implemented. The intervention was underpinned by research which suggested that similar programmes had been successful in narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap in literacy. The programme aimed to increase young people's ability to access text, to improve fluency and knowledge of language, and to support comprehension and develop transferable literacy skills.

SAC funding enabled the appointment of an Education Support Officer (ESO) to lead, coordinate and evaluate literacy interventions in secondary schools. The ESO supported secondary staff with professional learning, coaching and modelling. A professional network was created and resources to support the reading intervention were also provided. Progress was tracked and monitored using a standardised assessment and regular data collection and analysis took place.

There was strong evidence of an accelerated rate of progress for learners engaged in the reading intervention. S1 participants made on average 9 months progress over 14 weeks of intensive support. Therefore, the reading intervention was upscaled and trialled in primary schools at P5, 6 and 7 for learners below expected levels of progress. The aim was to address gaps in learning at an earlier stage and to support transition to learning in secondary school.

Due to the positive outcomes from this work, the intervention programme has continued in secondary schools for learners who require this level of support. However, as a result of successfully moving to an early

intervention model in primary schools, the number of young people requiring a reading intervention in S1 has decreased by 8% over the last three years.

Learners in quintile 1 have been supported through this programme and in two of the last three years, the percentage of learners in quintile 1 achieving level 4 or better in S3 has been higher than the national average. Young people who completed the programme describe how it has significantly improved their confidence and skills in reading and writing across the curriculum.

“I feel more confident in my speaking, reading and spelling in different subjects”

“...it has improved my punctuation and got me in the habit of using commas and apostrophes.”

Case Study 3

School and Family Development Workers

SAC funding has provided each primary school in Dundee with a dedicated School and Family Development Worker (SFDW) who provides holistic support to the most vulnerable children and families.

The support offered by these staff is individualised to meet the needs of the children and their family. It takes place in school, at home or in the community and there may be a focus on:

- improving attendance;
- supporting emotional wellbeing;
- reducing exclusions and improving inclusion;
- encouraging and supporting participation in family learning;
- improving engagement in learning;
- improving parental engagement in the life of the school;
- supporting children to attain and achieve in school.

These staff have become central to the school team, the local community and partnerships with other agencies. In addition to the support outlined above, they help families to obtain assistance with housing, benefits, employment and provision of food. During school holidays, the SFDW team provides holiday clubs which ensure vulnerable children have access to play and learning opportunities, alongside food and

wellbeing support. The holiday programme is supported by Dundee Bairns who provide meals for participants.

In addition, in 2018-19 SFDWs delivered over 200 group sessions to more than 1000 children and 600 adults living in the areas of highest deprivation in Dundee. These sessions have focused on a range of priorities identified by families including: improving family and peer relationships; conflict resolution; supporting wellbeing and managing family breakdown.

Parents, children and headteachers provide very positive feedback on the quality of support provided by SFDWs. Stakeholders state that these workers have become integral to the school and local community, and their support is invaluable. In 2019-20, the number of children and families who are continuing to engage with support is consistent with previous years. However, there has been a significant increase in the number of families requiring financial and household support through foodbanks, financial services and third sector partners during the period of the COVID-19 crisis. The role of the SFDW has been central to supporting these families whilst continuing to assist families who have previously engaged with the service.

Case Study 4

Future Skills College

Future Skills College (FSC) is a collaboration between Dundee City Council, Angus Council, Dundee & Angus College (D&A) and Northwood Charitable Trust.

FSC was established as an alternative school-college pathway in response to research that highlighted a concern that many young people, despite having successfully secured an initial positive destination on leaving school had not sustained this at age 19.

FSC is a full-time, one year, pre-apprenticeship pathway designed for secondary school students. It is offered as a course choice option for students entering S5 and S6. FSC students tend to be disengaged with learning but not quite ready to leave school. They continue on school rolls and continue to access Child Benefit, free school meals and bus passes. FSC also has a full-time student support officer working on their behalf.

Students have access to a broad D&A College curriculum, spending two days per week on specially designed pre-apprenticeship courses in their chosen area of employment. For 2020-21 students are taking courses in early education, plumbing, joinery, and electrical studies.

FSC students usually spend one day per week on work placement with what should be their future employer. This gives students the opportunity to work directly with other staff and to help them prepare to start an apprenticeship at the end of the course. It also gives employers an opportunity to start building their own young workforce, removing recruitment processes and providing support for new employees.

FSC opened in June 2017 and is currently in its fourth year of operation. 90 students have completed the course in its first three years. Despite COVID-19 impacting significantly on the 2019-20 cohort, 48 graduates secured full-time apprenticeships and all but four of the total group are in other positive destinations.

Section 8

Glossary

Term/ acronym	Meaning
AA	Attainment Advisor
ACEL	Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level
ASF	Attainment Scotland Fund
BGE	Broad General Education
CECYP	Care experienced children and young people
ES	Education Scotland
Insight	Insight is a benchmarking tool designed to help bring about improvements for learners in the Senior Phase (S4-S6). The system is updated twice annually, around September for attainment results and February for school leavers data.
LA	Local authority
PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
NIF	National Improvement Framework
RIC	Regional Improvement Collaborative
SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SNSA	Scottish National Standardised Assessments
SRO	Senior Regional Advisor

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Appendix

Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model

