The Ambition:
Excellence and Equity
for Shetland's Learners

2022 to 2026

Year 2 Progress Report and Areas of Focus for 2024/25

Foreword

The Ambition - Excellence and Equity for Shetland's Learners was published in September 2022 and set out our four year aspirations for improvement against the five national priorities for education in Scotland. This report outlines the progress we have made in year 2 and identifies the areas of focus being undertaken in 2024/25.

Overall, the data presents a positive picture and reflects the sustained commitment to securing improvement against our Core and Core+ indicators.

Our primary literacy and numeracy attainment continues on an upward trajectory and sits alongside a relatively stable level of attainment in literacy and numeracy for our secondary 3s and school leavers. Our performance in national qualifications from secondary four onwards is not where we would like it to be and addressing the negative trajectories in some areas of attainment will be a feature of the next two years of the Excellence and Equity plan.

Our efforts to close the poverty related attainment gap have resulted in positive strides towards educational equity, ensuring that every learner, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. We have exceeded our 'gap' targets at National 5 and Higher for children in receipt of free school meals and for those with an additional support need. The extended free school meal scheme has increased the number of children receiving free school meals and we have captured this entire cohort of learners in our data analysis, not just those who meet the Scottish Government criteria.

Our commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) continues to shape our approach to education, fostering an environment that respects and promotes the rights of every child. With Scotland becoming the first part of the UK to incorporate a UN Charter on children's rights in to law in July 2024, we look forward to building on the sector leading work we are already doing here in Shetland.

We continue to prepare our learners for the future, equipping them with the skills they need to thrive in the workforce. The breadth of support for young people in school and moving through their final years at school and onwards to positive destinations means that we have the highest participation measure statistics in Scotland. The growth in vocational awards is also worth celebrating.

We continue to monitor key aspects of young people's health and wellbeing who report stable levels of emotional wellbeing but highlight areas where things could be better. And whilst our attendance overall continues to be strong, there are a growing number of learners with lower attendance. With our colleagues in schools and partners across Shetland we are ready to respond the challenges our young people are telling us about.

We are gathering momentum in almost all areas and are optimistic about what lies ahead. We are confident that, with our continued efforts, we will achieve our ambition of excellence and equity for all of Shetland's learners.

<div align="right">Helen Budge, Director of Children's Services</div>

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Introduction

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education have been designed to help deliver excellence and equity in education. This is to ensure that children and young people develop a broad range of skills and capacities regardless of their social circumstances or needs.

The five key priorities of the National Improvement Framework are:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people;
- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.

The six drivers of improvement are identified as making the biggest difference to the five key priorities. These are:

- School and ELC leadership;
- Teacher and practitioner professionalism;
- Parental/carer involvement and engagement;
- Curriculum and assessment;
- School and ELC improvement;
- Performance information.

This report summarises the performance, and progress made, including examples of work, by Shetland Islands Council in pursuance of the five national priorities.

The report also sets out our Core and Core+ stretch aims to 2026 and the areas of focused work we will undertake next year to get there.

Our Vision

Building a brighter future together.

Our Values

- Delivering excellent service
- Working well together
- Taking personal responsibility

Our Service Priorities in 2023-24

- Early Learning and Childcare
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- Sustaining Education in Rural Communities
- Employability
- The Promise

Our Ambition 2021-26. Shetland Islands Council's Corporate Plan

The Ambition – Excellence and Equity for Shetland's Learners contributes to key areas of the corporate plan:

- Covid-19 Recovery and Renewal through our focus on wellbeing.
- Climate Change through our work on learning for sustainability.
- Sustaining current jobs and creating new ones in education and through education.
- Skills and learning through our focus on attainment and achievement.
- Digital connectivity through our work within the digital learning and teaching strategy.
- Caring for the community through our commitment to rights, needs and wellbeing.

Abbreviations and explanation of quantity

Explanation of Terms

PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
SEF	Strategic Equity Funding
CECYP	Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding
CYPIC	Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative
Core stretch aims	A set of performance measures set by the Scottish Government, with accompanying targets
Core+ stretch aims	A set of performance measures agreed by the local authority, with accompanying targets
ELC	Early Learning and Childcare
NIF	National Improvement Framework
HGIOS	How Good is Our School 4th edition
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the official tool for identifying areas of poverty and inequality across Scotland
ASN	Additional Support Needs
CLPL	Career Long Professional Learning
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
UHI	University of the Highlands and Islands
ACEL	Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level
BGE	Broad General Education
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
ELC	Early Learning and Childcare
SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
PSE	Personal and Social Education
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
VC	Virtual Comparator - a virtual cohort that is comprised of similar pupils (based on key demographic characteristics) to pupils in your school. This allows the local authority (and to schools) to compare their performance to a meaningful benchmark.

Explanation of Quantity

|	
All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

The six-point scale

The six-point scale is a tool used by Education Scotland, local authorities and other governing bodies for the purpose of national and/or local benchmarking across a number of establishments. In education, an evaluation can be arrived at in a range of contexts and it is important to bear in mind that awarding levels using a quality scale will always be more of a professional skill than a technical process. Education Scotland have used the following definitions and these are applied to the evaluation of progress within Shetland Islands Council's National Improvement Framework Plan.

Excellent	An evaluation of excellent applies to services which are a model of their kind. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice. It is characterised by professional understanding which is being shared to support system-wide improvement. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.
Very good	An evaluation of very good means that there are major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish the service user's experience. An evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision and is a standard that should be achievable by all. There is an expectation that the organisation will make continued use of self-evaluation to plan further improvements and will work towards improving provision and performance to excellent.
Good	An evaluation of good means that there are important strengths, yet there remains some aspects which require improvement. The strengths have a significantly positive impact on almost all service users. However, the quality of service users' experiences is diminished in some way by the aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the organisation should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, and also take action to address the areas for improvement.
Satisfactory	An evaluation of satisfactory means that the strengths within this aspect of the service's work just outweigh the weaknesses. It indicates that service users have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on service users' experiences. However, while the weaknesses are not important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of service users' experiences. It implies the organisation needs to take action to address areas of weakness by building on its strengths.
Weak	An evaluation of weak means that there are important weaknesses within this aspect of the organisation's work. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses, either individually or collectively, are sufficient to diminish service users', experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the organisation.
Unsatisfactory	An evaluation of unsatisfactory means there are major weaknesses within this aspect of the organisation's work which require immediate remedial action. Service users' experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, this will require support from senior managers, or, in some cases, at corporate level, in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the organisation.

Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

Self-evaluation: We have made good progress against this priority.

Primary Broad General Education*
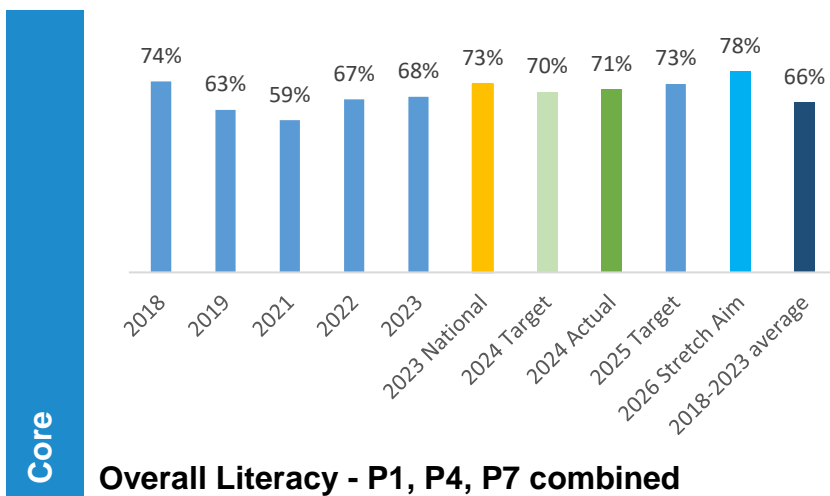
Overall Literacy - P1, P4, P7 combined

We have met our 2024 target.

We are on track towards reaching our 2026 stretch aim.

Overall Numeracy - P1, P4, P7 combined
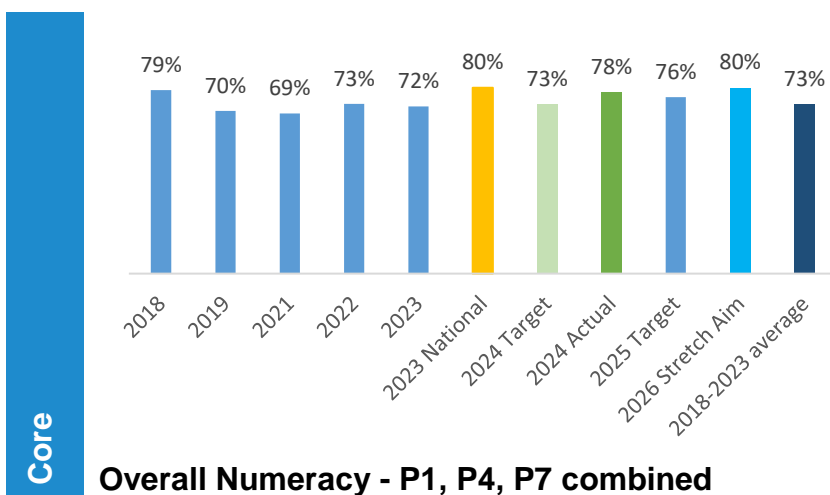
We have met our 2024 target.

We are on track towards reaching our 2026 stretch aim.

*Please note that Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) data contained in this report is the information held by Shetland Islands Council Children's Services. The validated national data is published in December 2024 and may contain minor variations in the data.

Secondary Broad General Education*
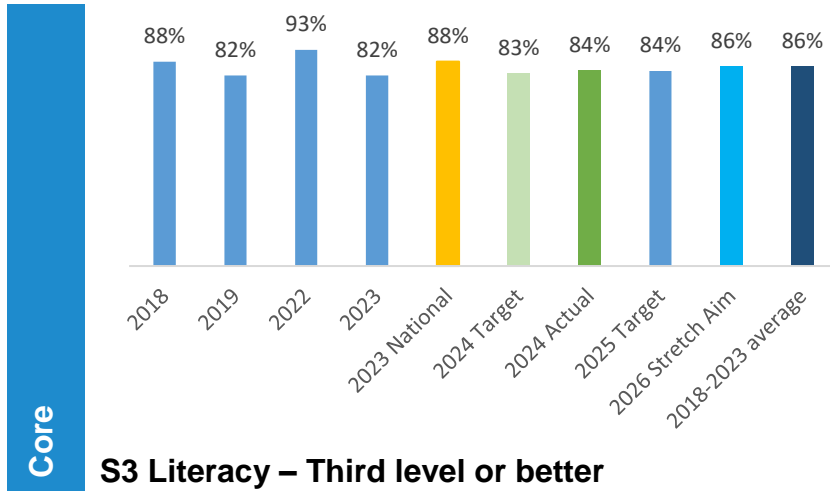
Core

S3 Literacy – Third level or better

Year	Value
2018	88%
2019	82%
2022	93%
2023	82%
2023 National	88%
2024 Target	83%
2024 Actual	84%
2025 Target	84%
2026 Stretch Aim	86%
2018-2023 average	86%

We have met our 2024 target.

We are on track towards reaching our 2026 stretch aim.

Core

S3 Numeracy – Third level or better

Year	Value
2018	95%
2019	93%
2022	88%
2023	90%
2023 National	90%
2024 Target	91%
2024 Actual	93%
2025 Target	92%
2026 Stretch Aim	93%
2018-2023 average	92%
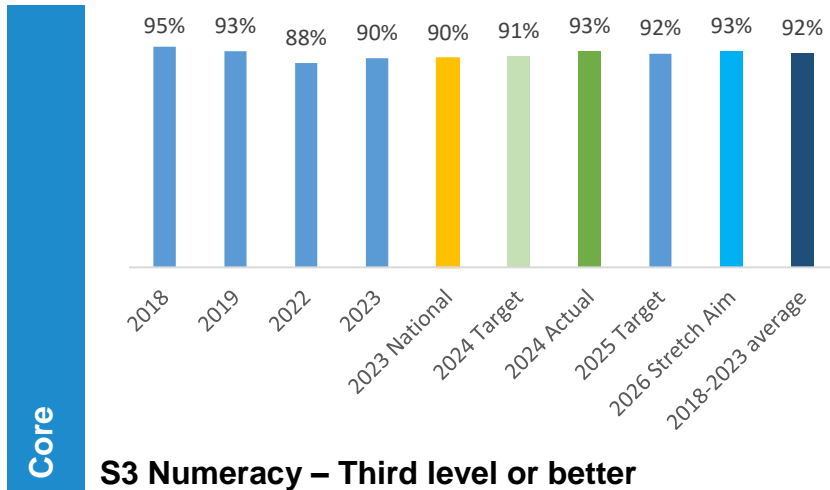
We have met our 2024 target.

We are on track towards reaching our 2026 stretch aim.

	2024 Data	Comparison Against 5 year average	Comparison with 2023
P1			
Reading	**80%**	+5%	+2%
Writing	**76%**	+4%	+1%
L&T	**85%**	+5%	+1%
Numeracy	**81%**	+4%	+1%
P4			
Reading	**81%**	+9%	+5%
Writing	**72%**	+7%	+1%
L&T	**88%**	+9%	+6%
Numeracy	**77%**	+11%	+10%
P7			
Reading	**80%**	+3%	+6%
Writing	**74%**	+7%	+7%
L&T	**85%**	+3%	+7%
Numeracy	**76%**	+5%	+5%
S3			
Reading	**88%**	-1%	0%
Writing	**86%**	-3%	+1%
L&T	**88%**	-4%	0%
Numeracy	**93%**	+1%	+3%

In almost all areas of the primary broad general education, the 2024 cohort has achieved higher attainment rates than the 2023 cohort and has exceeded the 5 year average.

S3 attainment has remained stable or improved in relation to the 2023 cohort, however this is against a backdrop of lower attainment against the 5 year average.

Core+

Annual cohort comparison*

Senior Phase

Core

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Shetland	2023 National	2023 Virtual Comparator	2023 Northern Alliance	2024 Target	2025 Target	2026 Stretch Aim	2019-2023 average
	92%	94%	95%	95%	94%	89%	89%	88%	96%	98%	100%	94%

Level 4 School Leaver Literacy and Numeracy

Core

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Shetland	2023 National	2023 Virtual Comparator	2023 Northern Alliance	2024 Target	2025 Target	2026 Stretch Aim	2019-2023 average
	73%	78%	80%	76%	78%	68%	66%	67%	79%	81%	84%	77%

Level 5 School Leaver Literacy and Numeracy

We met our Level 4 target and are on track to meet our stretch aim.

We met our Level 5 target and are on track to meet our stretch aim.

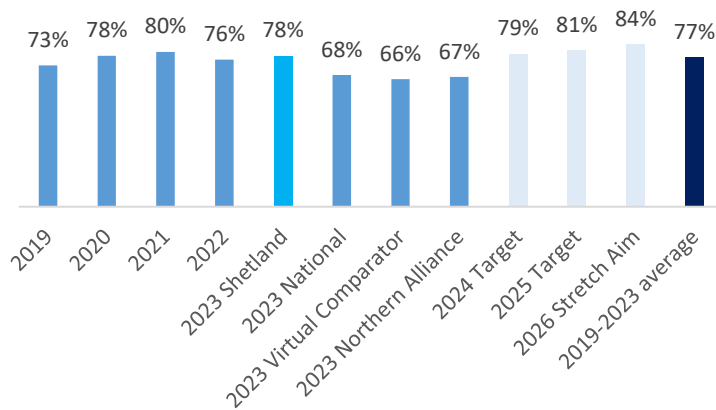Our overall school leaver Level 4 and level 5 literacy and numeracy levels remain high and are much greater than our virtual comparator. This is true for the last four years.

Our ambition is that all young people, where appropriate, should leave school with a minimum level 4 literacy and numeracy.

National Improving Writing Programme (NIWP)

The National Improving Writing Programme was launched in September 2024 to cohort 3 which comprised of 10 schools, 14 classes and 23 educators. The purpose of the programme is not only to improve children's attainment in writing but to also spread evidence-based practice and equip class teachers with Quality Improvement knowledge.

The programme supports the consistent implementation of good learning, teaching and assessment. Educators attended two full days of training plus 6 online twilights. Strategic Equity Funding was used to provide class cover for two full days training. The sessions were run by a Quality Improvement Officer and Education Support Officer who are both local leads of the programme. The initial launch day of the programme was supported by two Improvement Advisors from the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC).

All class teachers received a class observation of a writing lesson from the local leads and feedback was provided. All class teachers were offered the opportunity to 'look outwards' and visit other classes involved in the programme. Where class teachers requested support in writing lessons, the Education Support Officer spent additional time in classes observing, providing feedback and modelling lessons to support teacher confidence and provide professional dialogue.
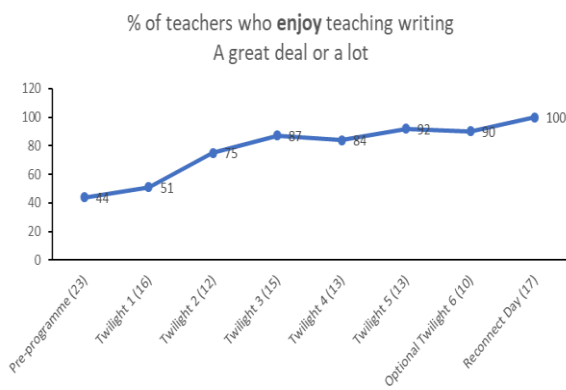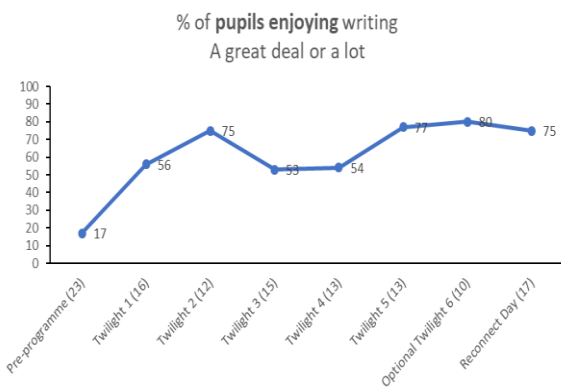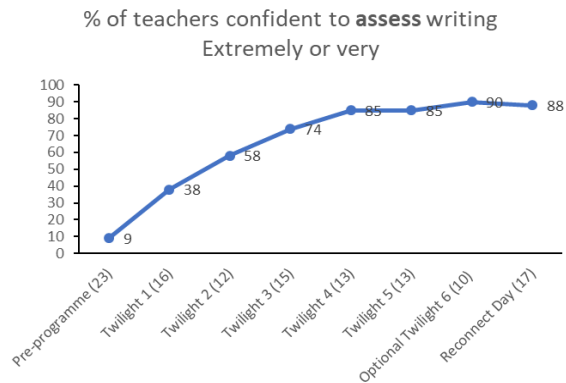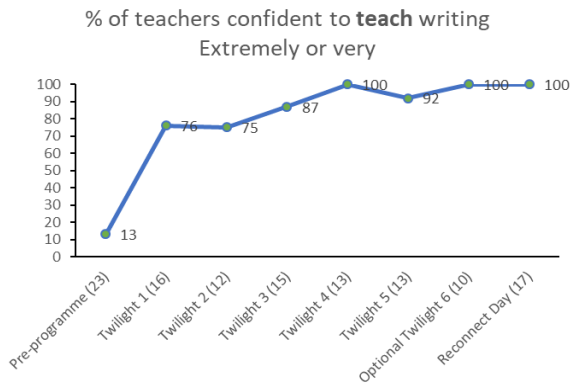
Initially, the focus of the programme was raising attainment in primary 4, however, due to its success the programme has been extended across stages. Data indicates that, since the introduction of the writing programme, there has been an increase in writing attainment but also in the other two aspects of literacy – listening and talking and reading.

Shetland has been part of the national programme since it launched in 2022. The Wave 1 summary report can be found here: National-Improving-Writing-Programme-Wave-1-Evaluation-January-2024.pdf (cypic.co.uk)

Percentage of NIWP school pupils achieving the expected level in P4 and P7.

Primary 4	2021	2022	2023	2024
Reading	73%	73%	76%	81%
Writing	60%	66%	71%	72%
Listening & Talking	76%	78%	82%	88%

Primary 7	2021	2022	2023	2024
Reading	76%	81%	74%	80%
Writing	64%	73%	67%	74%
Listening & Talking	83%	87%	79%	85%

Data and feedback were collected throughout the programme.

% of teachers confident to teach writing
Extremely or very

Pre-programme (23): 13
Twilight 1 (16): 76
Twilight 2 (12): 75
Twilight 3 (15): 87
Twilight 4 (13): 100
Twilight 5 (13): 92
Optional Twilight 6 (10): 100
Reconnect Day (17): 100

% of teachers confident to assess writing
Extremely or very

Pre-programme (23): 9
Twilight 1 (16): 38
Twilight 2 (12): 58
Twilight 3 (15): 74
Twilight 4 (13): 85
Twilight 5 (13): 85
Optional Twilight 6 (10): 90
Reconnect Day (17): 88

% of pupils enjoying writing
A great deal or a lot

Pre-programme (23): 17
Twilight 1 (16): 56
Twilight 2 (12): 75
Twilight 3 (15): 53
Twilight 4 (13): 54
Twilight 5 (13): 77
Optional Twilight 6 (10): 80
Reconnect Day (17): 75

% of teachers who enjoy teaching writing
A great deal or a lot

Pre-programme (23): 44
Twilight 1 (16): 51
Twilight 2 (12): 75
Twilight 3 (15): 87
Twilight 4 (13): 84
Twilight 5 (13): 92
Optional Twilight 6 (10): 90
Reconnect Day (17): 100

I think it is one of the best Shetland based training opportunities that I have participated in.

(Class Teacher)

Moving forward, I can't see teaching writing differently.

(Class Teacher)

I am proud of the dedication and commitment of teaching staff to make the programme work.

(Senior Leader)

I feel much more confident now and my connectives have improved.

(P6/7 Pupil)

Bookbug Leader Training

Nine members of staff working across early years settings attended online Bookbug Leader Training between April and May 2024. Strategic Equity Funding was used to provide supply cover for participants to attend. Throughout the year, closer working relations have been developed between the Shetland Library Service and central education officers.

Learning to Read in the Early Years

Strategic Equity Funding was used to provide supply cover for seven members of staff working across the early years to attend Education Scotland's launch of the online resource 'Learning to Read in the Early Years'. The event was held in Perth on the 23rd of March 2024. Education Scotland have now offered 1 school a place on their pilot programme based on this resource.

Literacy, Language and Communication in the Early Years

The head of Shetland's Speech and Language Therapy (NHS), an Education Support Officer and an Early Learning and Childcare Manager were committed to the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative 'collaborate workstream'. This was developed as part of the Early Learning and Childcare Quality Improvement Learning Exchange to bring focus to improving speech, language and communication needs in the Early Learning and Childcare. The three local leads of this group attended the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative conference in Glasgow in November 2023. Between the group members, at least 15 online sessions were attended. The work focused on using quality improvement methodology to focus on early language development.
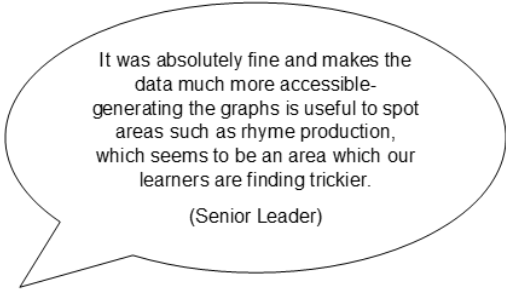
Locally, Sound Early Learning and Childcare were part of the project. Baseline data was taken from the 4 year old developmental overviews and a Pareto was created. This highlighted that the area of focus should be on children to 'follow 3 instructions to carry out an activity without visual ques'. Once the improvement area had been identified, a fishbone analysis was carried out with staff working in Sound Early Learning and Childcare. The staff team came up with the change idea of having a session with the speech and language therapist to better understand this statement. Once input had been given, staff came up with an operational definition and examples to reduce variation when observing this skill in children. Data was then gathered to measure impact and progress in February 2024 and June 2024.

The work with Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative has led to a multi-agency short-life working group to review and re-draft the current developmental overviews and 3 and 4 year olds. These were originally developed by a multi-agency team in Highland in 2013 and have not been reviewed since. The local group consists of Education Support Officers, Quality Improvement Officers, Speech and Language Therapists, Pre-School Home Visiting Teachers and a Paediatric Occupational Therapist.

Primary 1 Phonological Awareness Data

In collaboration with a Performance and Improvement Adviser, a new online dashboard was created to gather information on Primary 1 children's phonological awareness skills. Primary 1 class teachers and senior leaders had the opportunity to attend one of two online sessions to learn how to use the new dashboard. The meeting was hosted by an Education Support Officer and Performance and Improvement Adviser. Class teachers uploaded data quickly and easily. Almost all settings completed this before the summer holidays and reported on how the new system has streamlined data management processes.

Primary 1	2021	2022	2023	2024
Reading	69%	75%	78%	80%
Writing	66%	72%	75%	76%
Listening & Talking	77%	82%	84%	85%

It was absolutely fine and makes the data much more accessible- generating the graphs is useful to spot areas such as rhyme production, which seems to be an area which our learners are finding trickier.

(Senior Leader)

Literacy and Numeracy Attainment at the Bridges Project

Some of our young people face barriers to learning including anxiety, ADHD and autism, mental health, difficult family circumstances, breakdowns in relationships, and experience of living in Children and Young People's residential services. Even with the personalised support, academic learning in a busy school environment can be overwhelming and an alternative learning space is required – a space which promotes nurture, safety and acceptance and a format which includes small breaks, different spaces, time with support workers, a celebration of every achievement and positive interactions.

Through an early intervention approach, the work with young people supports them to develop a variety of skills, to improve health and wellbeing and to building confidence, self-esteem and resilience. An agreement between a young person and a youth worker is developed setting out how young people will take part in a programme of tailored learning and activity, helping them to reengage in formal learning and supporting goal setting for their future.

Teaching at Bridges encompasses the key features of youth work delivery:

- Young people choose to take part
- The work begins where the young person is at socially, emotionally and academically
- The young person is a joint partner in the learning process

The aim of the programme is to gain a qualification which helps the learner move into a positive destination.

Read more here: [An ocean of opportunity awaits Scottish school leavers | The Herald (heraldscotland.com)](heraldscotland.com)
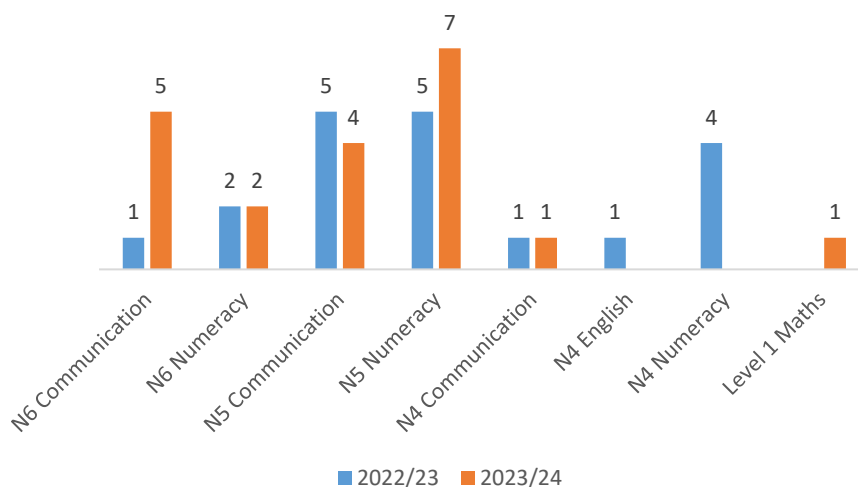
A number of literacy and numeracy courses at different levels are delivered to meet the needs of young people.

Number of Bridges Student Passes

Sample of Bridges Evaluations

I remember the first time I came in to meet with my support worker, I had to take my mam with me as I was SO anxious – I was crying and shaking the whole time, but never once was I made to feel silly or judged, that has been the way throughout my whole time at Bridges. Whenever I was having panic attacks or feeling really anxious, I was always met with unconditional support and that has helped me more than I can say! I love that all my small 'wins' were celebrated, and that I was always made to feel that my thoughts and feelings were valid. I never thought that just over a year later I'd be going to college and even thinking about going to uni someday too! I finally feel like myself again, and you've all played such a massive part in that!"

N6 Communication and Numeracy Student, now Introduction to Social Work Student at Shetland College UHI.

"I'm really loving work and I'm so grateful to you all at Bridges for helping me get here. I was really worried about leaving school and Bridges was the stepping stone I needed."
N5 Communication and Numeracy Student, now Salmon Farm Employee.

"Bridges has been absolutely brilliant for my son who has ASD and couldn't cope at school. It was a great environment for him and he has got so much out of it. It was great for education as well as building on social development when school couldn't provide what he needed. We can't recommend it highly enough, it was a godsend to us as a family when he didn't know where to turn when he couldn't cope with school, this is a vital resource and I hope it continues to help lots of teens in the future. I can't thank them enough for all that they have done for us as a family. My son is now going to start college and that wouldn't have been possible without Bridges."
N4 Communication and Numeracy Student's Parent. Young person now PDA Accountancy student at Shetland College UHI.

"Thank you so much for your support you have given this year. I know you have made a difference to our son and we really appreciate the extra effort you put in. He wouldn't have gotten his Maths and English without you and even he said what a difference you made."
N4 English (RUAE Module) and N4 Numeracy Student's Parent. Young person continuing on Pathway to Employment, Bridges Project.

SEAL Numeracy

Professional Learning in Stages of Early Arithmetical Learning (SEAL) training was delivered to a targeted group of early stages teachers. The training was well received and is being implemented by those practitioners who attended.

"The training course was brilliant and I would highly recommend any staff members to attend a similar course."

"I have seen progress in attainment in the group that I have been working with. If we had enough staff then we could roll out to more pupils and raise attainment."

"I have used several elements of the training in my practice, and frequently refer to the book we were given for reference and ideas."

"Pupils are much more confident and really enjoy playing games while developing numeracy. I also feel much more confident and delighted to get some new ideas."

Developing quality improvement tools to enhance learning, teaching and assessment in numeracy.

A pilot project involving 3 schools received Strategic Equity Funding support funding to implement and measure small tests of change projects in maths, for P7 learners. All 3 schools involved in the project used the Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) and results were interrogated to determine the areas of focus for teaching and learning. Each school undertook the assessments early in the school session diagnostically. A change idea was implemented and data was gathered from further assessments to measure the impact. Furthermore, as part of school improvement visits, Quality Improvement Officers have discussed the timing of SNSA to ensure they have the greatest impact on learners.

Sound Primary School published a poster setting out their improvement work.

Improving Numeracy Outcomes for P7 Learners

Primary 7 Class Teacher
Depute Head Teacher P4-7

Stretch Aim: By January 2024, 87.5% of 7a pupils will be able to achieve second level division benchmarks (Baseline 0%).

Teaching Aim 1: By December 23, 87.5% of 24 children (class P7) will be able to divide a whole number to 2dp by a single digit, including answers expressed as a decimal fraction (baseline 16%) **Teaching Aim 2**: By 22 December 2023, 92% of 7a pupils will be (Baseline 20%)

Method

- Carried out SNSA P7 Numeracy Assessments with class
- Identified Division as the area with most errors/unanswered questions
- Carried out a baseline assessment against division benchmark criteria.
- The baseline assessment was used to create a pareto chart.
- The biggest challenge was dividing whole numbers and decimal fractions to 2dp, by a single digit, closely followed by dividing decimal fractions to 2dp by 10, 100 and 1000
- Data illustrated in the pareto chart informed our teaching aims
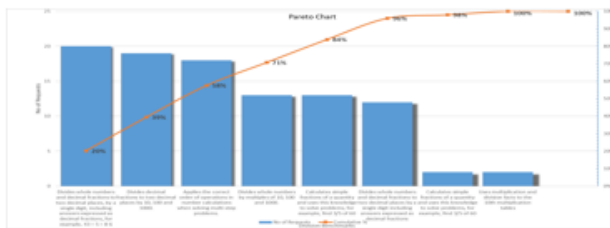
Driver Diagram

Implement/PDSA

- •Children completing division calculations 3-5 times per week
- •Work for 15 minutes, 5 minutes to check
- •Teacher input aligned to aim and model
- •Share learning intention and make success criteria explicit
- •Assess and feedback against Success Criteria
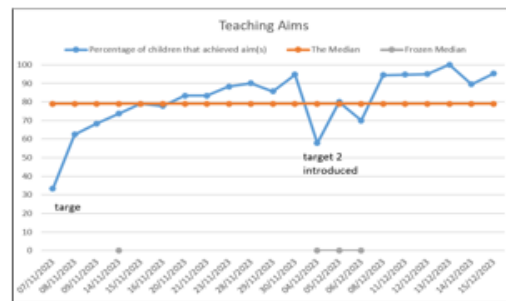- •Involve learners in the process- explain their thinking, self/peer assess

Achievements

By 10 January 2024, 79% of children achieved stretch aim (baseline 0%).

By 04 December 2023, 94.7% of children achieved aim 1 (baseline 16%).

By 22 December 2023, 95.2% of children achieved aim 2 (baseline 20%).

Results

Conclusions

Use of the Numeracy improvement bundle raised attainment in Numeracy in Primary 7. Sharing targeted and clear success criteria was key to this achievement. Pupil attitudes to Numeracy also improved. Pupils reported that they enjoyed Numeracy more and they were more able to identify ways in which they could improve.

Key Learning Points

- Pareto Chart enabled us to prioritise teaching aims
- Regular, short 15 minute timed slots motivated learners. Pupils saw this as achievable, familiar and had no fear of failing as they had another chance the next session
- Sharing explicit Learning Intention and co-constructed Success Criteria was key to pupils being able to achieve and self-assess their targets and identify areas for improvement
- Pupils looked for the run charts and were keen to discuss data
- Sharing and celebrating successes increased pupil motivation and the value they placed on their numeracy.

Next steps

- Share project with other teachers and support them to implement the bundle in their classes.

Outdoor Learning

Providing opportunities for children and young people to experience high quality learning outdoors has been an emerging focus throughout a number of the work streams this year. Research suggests that time spent outdoors has a positive impact on children's cognitive and social development and there is increasing evidence of the benefits of nature on wellbeing.

Some high level messages include:

- Children use five times more words when playing outdoors compared with indoors.
- Processes of relating with nature are found to reduce negative emotional states, such as stress, anxiety, depression, and anger, and to promote relaxation.
- Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's working memory with increased time spent outdoors.

Professional Development

This year, staff from Early Years, Primary and Secondary sectors were offered an opportunity to undertake a qualification focusing on high quality learning outdoors (ITC Award in Learning Beyond the Classroom at SCQF Level 7).

This qualification is intended to provide the learner with an understanding of the benefits of learning beyond the classroom, how to manage groups and facilitate their learning and to practically deliver activity beyond the classroom environment. The course included a mixture of online training, face to face sessions and submission of a portfolio.

10 members of staff proceeded with this including staff from the central team, ELC, primary and secondary sector. Portfolios were due to be submitted in August and feedback from the impact of this will be gathered in session 2024-2025.

Training Opportunity for Parents and Carers

Parents, carers and family members were invited to an informal training session with Kate Hookham on 30th April 2024. Kate is an education consultant in outdoor learning and has worked with staff and children across Shetland.

Feedback from parents and carers include:

"Very inspirational."

"Great ideas and fresh inspiration, very refreshing."

"Some lovely ideas to extend things with any young children who love being outside."

Kate Hookham visited Scalloway Primary School and ELC, Hamnavoe Primary School and Sandness Primary School to support Senior Leaders and staff to develop priorities focusing on outdoor learning.

Some feedback is captured below:

Staff

"It was an inspiring visit in that the activities and resources were relatively simple and achievable.

A lot of recycled materials and activities that could be done in a variety of locations.

The kids were very engaged and intrinsically motivated to play/create/share.

The activities afforded them a high level of personal choice, flexibility and skill building.

What is needed is to build up a small bank of resources, some of which may have to be bought and then just to do it, get out there and try these things out. Setting Health & Safety boundaries is important. Kate had some simple and innovative ways to tackle these issues – like the long-handled pan and the double sieve to contain the popcorn!"

Children

"If I was stranded somewhere I would know how to make a fire and cook food."

"It was fun."

"I learnt some new woodwork activities like making wool patterns around nails and how to make a plant print on cloth."

"I learnt the importance of staying away from fire. I knew that already but it helped."

.

Areas of Focus

Literacy

- Continue the expansion of the National Improving Writing Project
- Establish a local Bookbug Leader network in collaboration with the Shetland Library.
- The Literacy, Language and Communication Group will focus on speech, language and communication in the early years
- Trial updated developmental overviews in Early Learning and Childcare settings
- Emerging literacy training
- Participate in Education Scotland's pilot of 'Learning to Read in the Early Years Professional Learning Programme'

Numeracy

- Build local capacity through a network for numeracy and maths
- Inter-school moderation
- High quality assessments in Numeracy
- Spreading the use of quality improvement tools for numeracy
- Developing practice in early level numeracy
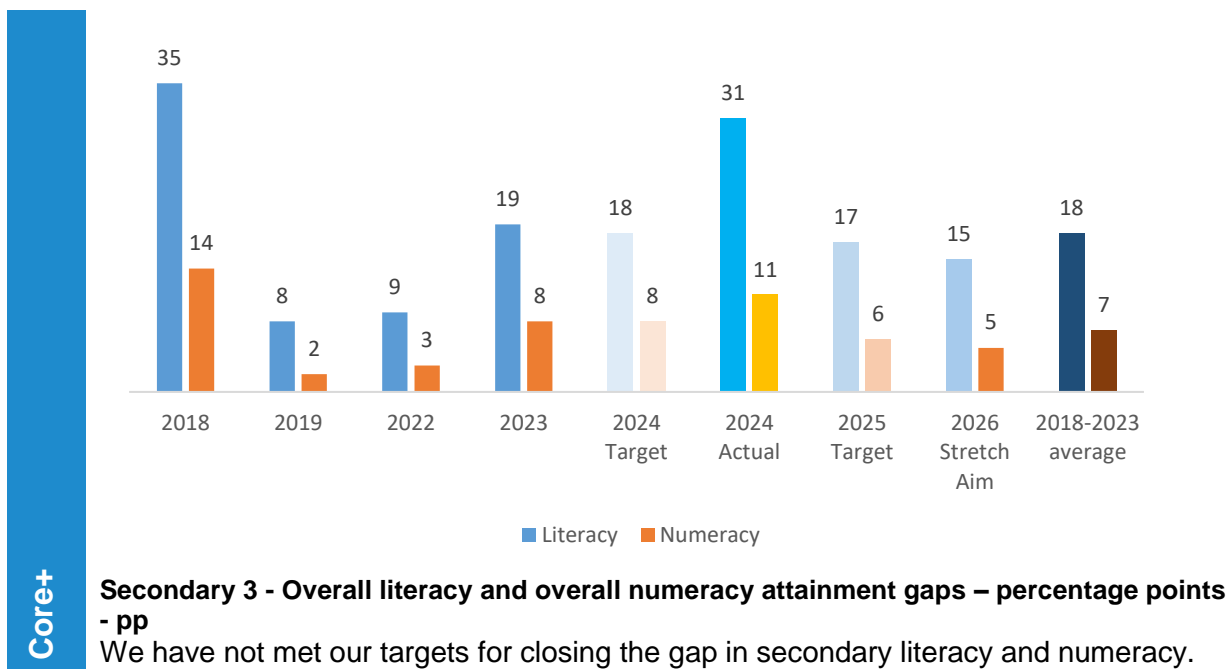- Broaden the maths offer in the senior phase

Senior Phase

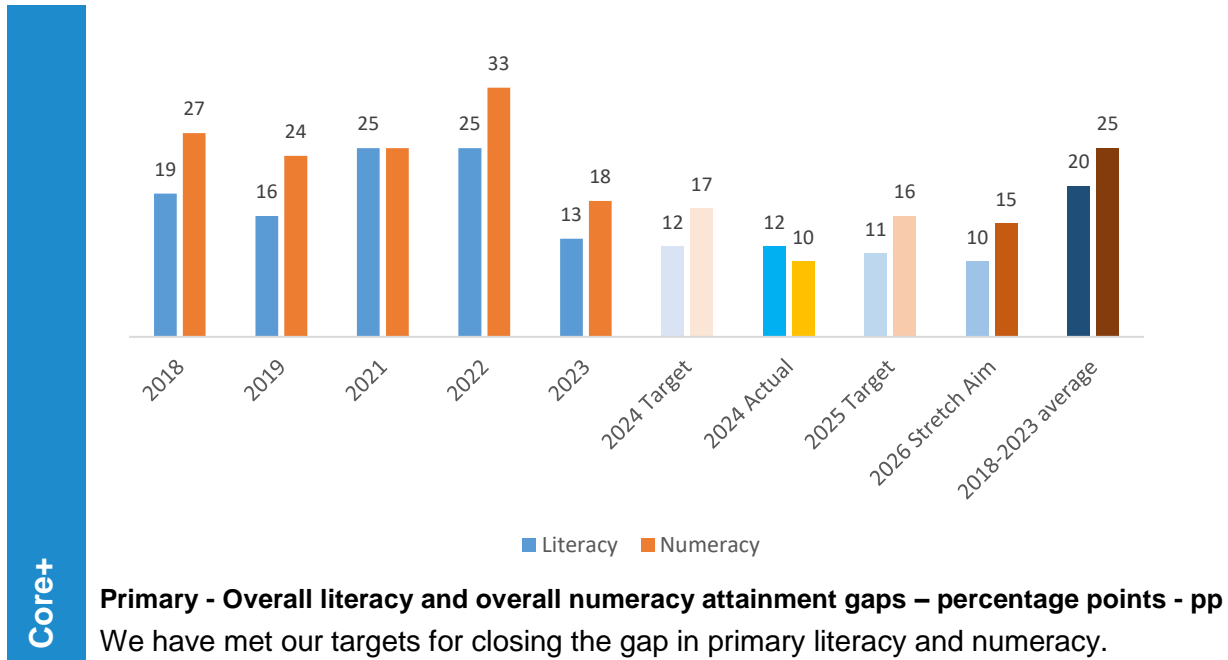- Establish a project board to progress the secondary staffing and curriculum review including consideration of secondary broad general education provision and the 6th year offer
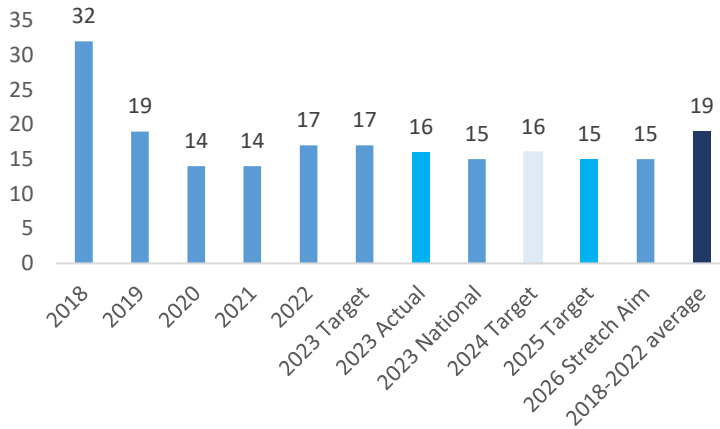
Outdoor Learning

- Evaluate the outdoor learning qualification
- Support staff to capture learning outdoors to support assessment and professional judgement
- Finalise local authority outdoor learning position statement

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

Self-evaluation: We have made good progress against this priority.

Primary - Overall literacy and overall numeracy attainment gaps – percentage points - pp
We have met our targets for closing the gap in primary literacy and numeracy.

Secondary 3 - Overall literacy and overall numeracy attainment gaps – percentage points - pp
We have not met our targets for closing the gap in secondary literacy and numeracy.

Core+

Chart data (1 or more, Level 5, All SCQF – FSM Gap):
- 2018: 32
- 2019: 19
- 2020: 14
- 2021: 14
- 2022: 17
- 2023 Target: 17
- 2023 Actual: 16
- 2023 National: 15
- 2024 Target: 16
- 2025 Target: 15
- 2026 Stretch Aim: 15
- 2018-2022 average: 19

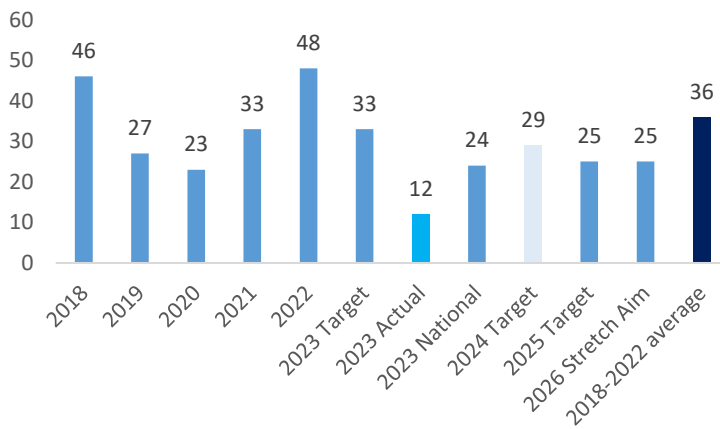**1 or more, Level 5, All SCQF – FSM Gap – percentage points - pp**

We have met our 2022/23 target.

2024 school leaver attainment data will be available in Spring 2025.

We are on track towards reaching our 2026 stretch aim.

Core+

Chart data (1 or more, Level 6, All SCQF – FSM Gap):
- 2018: 46
- 2019: 27
- 2020: 23
- 2021: 33
- 2022: 48
- 2023 Target: 33
- 2023 Actual: 12
- 2023 National: 24
- 2024 Target: 29
- 2025 Target: 25
- 2026 Stretch Aim: 25
- 2018-2022 average: 36

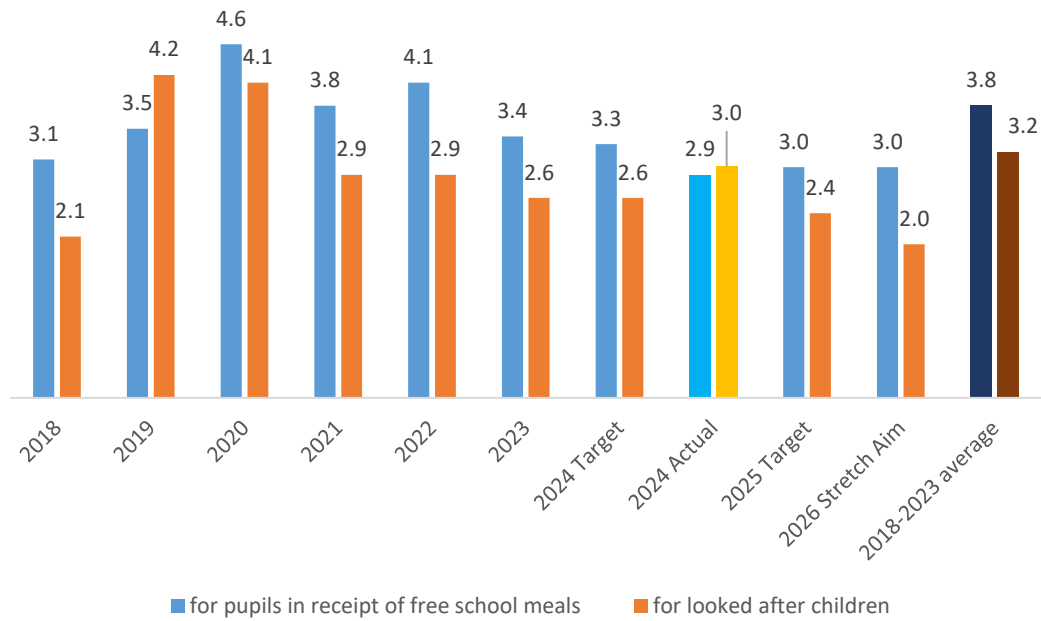**1 or more, Level 6, All SCQF – FSM Gap – percentage points - pp**

We have met our 2022/23 target.

2024 school leaver attainment data will be available in Spring 2025.

We are on track towards reaching our 2026 stretch aim.

Chart data:

Year	for pupils in receipt of free school meals	for looked after children
2018	3.1	2.1
2019	3.5	4.2
2020	4.6	4.1
2021	3.8	2.9
2022	4.1	2.9
2023	3.4	2.6
2024 Target	3.3	2.6
2024 Actual	2.9	3.0
2025 Target	3.0	2.4
2026 Stretch Aim	3.0	2.0
2018-2023 average	3.8	3.2

■ for pupils in receipt of free school meals   ■ for looked after children

Attendance Gaps – percentage points - pp

We have met our target for children in receipt of free school meals. We have not met our target for looked after children. We will continue to monitor and support attendance for this small group of pupils.

Core

Closing the Gap in Maths

Improving Numeracy Outcomes for P7 Learners
Class teacher
Learning Support Worker
Head Teacher

Think Big, Dream Bigger

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

Teaching Aims: By June 2024 primary 7 pupils will feel more confident to complete Numeracy tasks

Method
- Carried out a baseline assessment (SNSA) against benchmark criteria.
- The baseline assessment was used to create a pareto chart.
- The pareto chart informed our teaching aims.
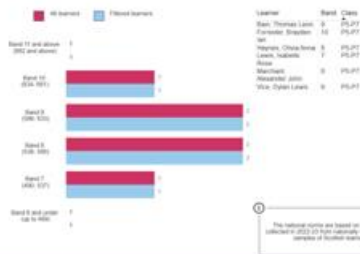
SNSA Data 05/09/2023					
Band	Name	Number	Money, Time and Measurement	Information Handling	Fractions, Decimal Fractions and Percentages
7/8	IL	7/10	4/8	4/6	0/6
8	OH	4/11	4/8	2/5	2/6
8	AM	6/11	2/8	3/5	1/6
10	BF	6/11	6/9	3/4	4/6
9	DV	4/11	4/8	5/5	2/6

Implement
- Children completing numeracy activities 5 times per we
- Once a day for 50 minutes
- Varied individual targeted support
- Encourage enjoyment of math through games
- Share Learning Intention and make Success Criteria explicit.
- Assess and feedback against Benchmarks.
- Updated run chart to celebrate progress
- Involve Children in the process!

Achievements
- Significant increase in confidence and enjoyment of Maths
- This group of learners now look forward to these Maths sessions, instead of dreading Maths (rushing out to start maths)
- All parents acknowledged during Parents Evening of the change in their child's attitudes during Maths and their children recognising how much the group is helping them

Results

Conclusions

I think group has helped me progress with my maths.

I think doing my maths with 'S' is very helpful and I understand a lot more.

I think doing maths with 'S' has helped a lot! I feel like it is building my confidence for high school! I didn't feel confident in math 3-4 months ago but now I feel 10/10! I feel like 'S' listens to what my struggles are! (and she helps with them!) But also 'S' helped me when I wasnt 't feeling the best in math and it stressed me, She was there for me! Overall 'S' is a 10/10 math helper and she can do math with me forever ☺

I really think 'S' is helping a lot with maths! The comparison from last year to this year so far is immense!

I think 'S' has helped me get better and more confident at maths. I love having 'S' to help me with my math. I'm really happy she's helping me

Key Learning Points
- Sharing the run chart was important for pupils engagement. We have not displayed the chart, it is kept in a folder.
- It has been great to see progress and achievement.
- Times Tables identified as an area needing daily practice

Next steps
- Continue daily numeracy group
- Continue to share chart to help celebrate success

Pupil Equity Funding

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is additional funding allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The funding is allocated to schools on the basis of the estimated number of children and young people in P1-S3 registered for free school meals (FSM) under the national eligibility criteria. Pupil Equity Funding is part of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF).

With support from our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor we have started an Attainment Scotland Funding Thematic Review. This work will continue in 2024/25 and will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

We have worked closely with our Island authority partners and the Scottish Government to further develop approaches to identifying and addressing poverty in a remote and rural context. A data sharing agreement is now in place and will support enhanced collaborative working across Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles to identify shared strategies to close the poverty related attainment gap.

Strategic Equity Funding

Strategic Equity Funding is the part of the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge with a revised mission statement "to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap." The funding is distributed annually to every local authority based on Children in Low Income Families Data.

Strategic Equity Funding has been used to support the achievement of the local authority stretch aims and to complement and accelerate the work undertaken in schools to close the poverty related attainment gap and improve wider outcomes for children and young people.

For the last two years, some funding has been allocated to the Youth and Employability team to improve outcomes within the Senior Phase. This continues to have a positive impact on the engagement, participation and attainment for a targeted group of young people. This work has been used as an example of effective practice nationally.
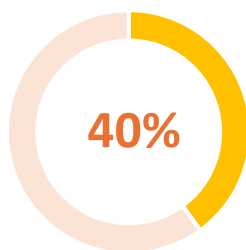
Strategic Equity Funding has been used across primary and secondary settings to improve attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap. This has included targeted support for schools where data indicated areas for improvement within literacy or numeracy. This year, schools have been able to submit a bid for funding. The bids must be informed by data, identify a poverty-related attainment gap and be used for evidence-based approaches. This approach has been effective and the positive impacts have included:

- Increased attainment for targeted groups of learners
- Increased use of short-term interventions allowing support to move to other target groups

- Flexibility to use funding in rural and remote contexts where national metrics of identifying poverty do not apply
- Increased analysis and understanding of data by Head Teachers.

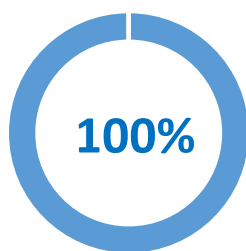**Progress and impact of Strategic Equity Funding projects**

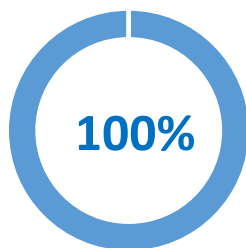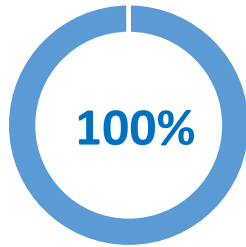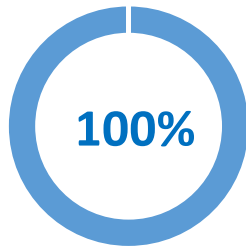|		
Supporting attendance monitoring through the development of systems and processes at the Anderson High School	**40%**	Recruitment challenges delayed the start date of this project. Early qualitative feedback is positive and progress has been made in the development of revised systems and processes of monitoring attendance at the school. There is a commitment to continue this work to March 2025 and it will be important to consider how attendance monitoring can lead on to attendance improvement, considering the Core and Core+ stretch aims regarding attendance.
Easter Holiday Study Support for Senior Phase pupils	**100%**	This element progressed as planned. Teacher feedback was very positive however there is scope to monitor more effectively the participation of pupils that are in receipt of free school meals and lower attendance. Teacher comment: *"A student who regularly worked hard but couldn't complete tasks at a reasonable pace turned up to Easter study support when nobody had expected him to due to his family circumstances. He worked very hard the entire 6 hours he was there and got his project finished, against all odds, to an A standard."*
Part-Time Teacher at Bridges	**100%**	This element progressed as planned. The attainment data of students who were supported by this teacher are set out on pages 17 and 18 of this report. Investment in this project shall continue in 2024/25.

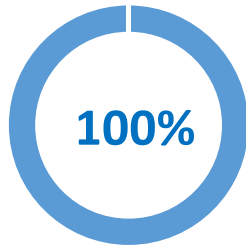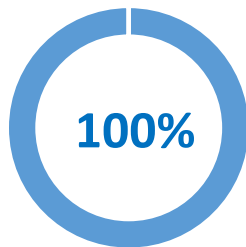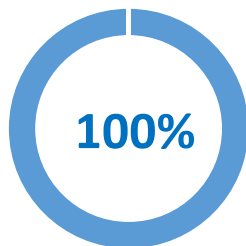|		
CYPIC- Numeracy CYPIC- Literacy	**100%**	Both the numeracy and literacy elements progressed as planned. Primary and literacy attainment has improved as set out in section 1 of this report and investment in this project shall continue in 2024/25.
Three Islands Collaborative, Scottish Attainment Challenge Events and Data Dashboard	**100%**	A rural poverty index has been developed across the three island authorities and Shetland has been represented at all Scottish Attainment Challenge Networking events. The Primary BGE data dashboard has been completed and support for school leaders to adopt the dashboard is in place for 2024/25.
Support for schools who do not receive Pupil Equity Funding	**100%**	Schools not in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding received Strategic Equity Funding. The impact of this funding is captured in school Standards and Quality Reports published on school websites.
Accelerate Attainment – Schools Bids Process	**100%**	Ten school projects were supported to deliver projects around reading comprehension, literacy and numeracy for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs, breakfast clubs, physical activity clubs, pre-school parent support, P7 numeracy and development of inclusive classrooms. The success of the bids process has resulted in an increased level of funding being allocated for school bids in 2024/25.
UNCRC Event and Professional Learning	**100%**	Strategic Equity Funding supported a large scale local event called Rights Ready. An evaluation of this work can be found on pages 32-34.

Areas of Focus

1. Complete the Attainment Scotland Funding thematic review
2. Deliver a revised suite of support through Strategic Equity Funding to accelerate school level approaches to closing the gap
3. Full implementation of the primary Broad General Education data dashboard
4. Revisit 'Cost of the School Day' approaches in collaboration with our Attainment Advisor

Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Self-evaluation: We have made good progress against this priority.

Children's Rights

A series of workshops, engagement events and training were organised over three days with a Childrens Rights Focus. The aim of these sessions were to:

- Raise awareness about UNCRC and the Incorporation Bill
- Upskill Childrens Services Staff (and relevant partners) in terms of Rights in Action in different contexts
- Stimulate engagement and conversation between partners in order to create next steps (How Rights Ready is Shetland? What do we do now?)

The sessions were aimed at three different groups

- Young people (through School assemblies, workshops and wider UNCRC Rights Ready event)
- Staff working directly with young people (through training sessions aimed at ASN practitioners/management, ELC practitioners/management, Youth Development Team
- Strategic Leadership across Shetland Community (elected members, decision makers, officers)

The following organisations had input on the sessions – each with their own focus but all coming together for some of the sessions.

- Childrens Parliament
- Together Scotland
- Improvement Service
- Children and Young People's Commissioner
- My Rights My Say & Enquire (Children in Scotland)
- Scottish Youth Parliament
- John Loughton

The focused events created a wave of engagement in UNCRC with over 200 people (staff and young people) engaged in activities and 8 schools represented.

By having input from a range of partners, it has helped staff realise where support and expertise is available. For example, the Childrens Parliament have now been asked back to Shetland schools for in-service to widen opportunity for Primary and ELC staff to upskill in Rights work.

By opening up the activity to partners out with the Local Authority, we were able to engage staff and leaders from services such as Economic Development, employability, Arts, Sport& Leisure, Library Services, University of Highlands and Islands and Shetland Charitable Trust. From these conversations, there have been collaborative pieces of work between SIC's Youth and Employability Service and Shetland Arts Development Agency (a youth-led Takeover of the arts venue, Mareel).

There was also a request for more engagement from UHI (in-service training in UNCRC to staff) and elected members of the council. Most of this engagement has been at strategic level ahead of incorporation with SIC services and partners being shown examples of self-assessment by the Improvement Service and Together Scotland.

A mentimeter evaluation taken before and after the showpiece Rights Ready session at Lerwick Town Hall demonstrated that people's confidence in being 'Rights Ready' increased after the session from 3.5/5 to 4/5.

What will be your next steps to get more Rights Ready?

49 responses

The mentimeter also highlighted next steps for the community.

What does Shetland need to do next?

51 responses

The feedback from some of the CPD sessions was very positive. Below are some feedback quotes left:

Thank you! Very informative and worthwhile. Easy to engage with. Videos were just super.

Excellent session! Very well facilitated. Really enjoyed the video clips & discussions. Lovely suite of resources. I'm feeling fired up and looking forward to taking this forward in our work. Thank You!

Interesting & relevant. Pace was good, resources helpful. Thank you.

Thought-provoking and timely. Good reassurance that we are doing lots of things right and also ideas to take forward. Definitely interested in learning more about being an 'Unfeartie'. Thank you very much.

I found the training really beneficial and it's given me a clearer understanding of what children's rights look like and how we can, and already do, incorporate and embed this in practice. Thank you!

Great session. Very helpful and great information. Thank you.

Our Youth Development Team now feel more confident in Youth Participation strategies and the principles behind Youth Voice. This has strengthened the capacity of the service to engage the Shetland Youth Voice Forum (group of young people who represent the views of young people in the isles).

While the focus in 2023/24 was on wider engagement, next year we will focus resource and time on areas/schools staff who have so far not engaged in activities but have put UNCRC/Childrens Rights into their School Improvement plan.

There will be a session by Education Scotland on UNCRC Incorporation at this summer's In-service training as well as input from Children's Parliament for Early Learning Childcare and Primary staff. From our links with Improvement Service, we will promote resources to partners and other council services to encourage self-reflection on whether they are 'Rights Ready'

Work has begun to create a learning resource for young people in partnership with local Shetland dialect group, Shetland Forwirds. This aims to teach about Rights in a Shetland/island context as some staff had felt UNCRC sometimes felt too abstract.

Linking UNCRC with other priorities such as The Promise, Trauma Informed practice and Shetland Partnerships' Compassionate Shetland means that Rights will be embedded in practice through these agendas and resources.

Children's Needs

CIRCLE - Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning Education

The CIRCLE Framework is a way of organising and supporting input using a staged system of support, beginning with setting up an inclusive classroom. Checklists and planning tools are included to support discussion and can be used to document strategies used and record professional learning. It includes the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale and the CIRCLE Participation Scale developed with practitioners for the identification of changes required and to support the measurement of progress.

19 schools have received CIRCLE training and there are plans in place to deliver training to the remaining schools. We delivered the full CIRCLE training to all probationer teachers last session and plans are in place to deliver to this training to the 2024/25 probationer teachers. This follows on from the 'Introduction to CIRCLE' delivered to Head Teachers and to learning support staff.

SCERTS - Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support

SCERTS is a framework for assessment and planning for individuals with a range of additional support needs, including autism. There are only 3 schools that do not currently have a member of staff who have completed the 3 day SCERTS training, however the majority of the ASN Outreach team have completed the training including staff at the Additional Support Base.

Areas of Focus

Children's Rights

1. Wider Strategic engagement with SIC and relevant community partnerships
2. Childrens Rights in Practice professional development in Childrens Services Staff
3. Awareness raising of UNCRC to Parents/Wider Community

While staff training on Childrens Rights and overall promotion and engagement of UNCRC Incorporation have been well received and spread to a number of schools, staff, young people and various relevant partners, there has been slower progress on developing key indicators and strategic planning for this area. It is felt that a wider Public Body (Local Authority) approach may be required for both these aspects of work given the duties of Incorporation will impact all council service areas.

In terms of indicators, Youth and Employability Service now has a Participation & Empowerment Project Officer who will play an important role in capturing lived experience for young people in Shetland. They are already working in partnership with Transport and Planning around new bus timetables and collaborating with young people on Place based planning.

The service is also looking at a potential partnership approach with Young Scot around surveying the needs and experiences of young people in the Authority. One recent survey has questioned young people on:

- Knowledge of UNCRC
- Whether they feel their rights are met

There will be discussions about making this survey annual (either through Young Scot or the Health and Wellbeing census done in local schools annually). If this can be set-up this could be a lived experience indicator to use going forward.
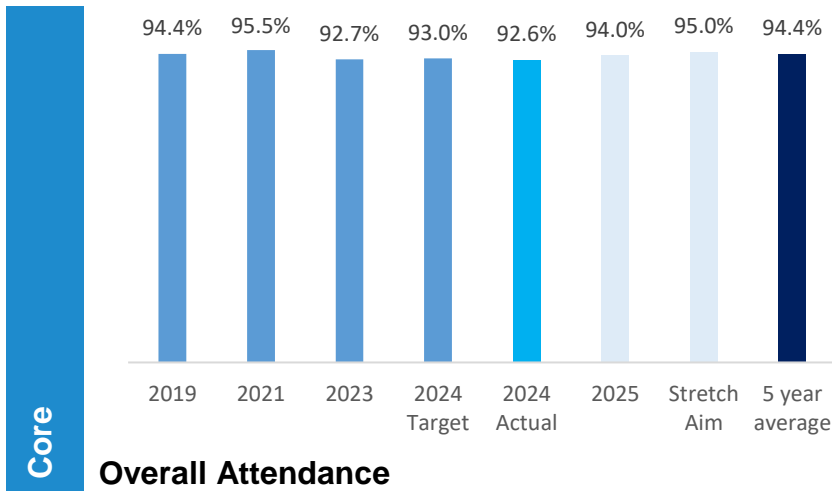

Children's Needs

1. CIRCLE and the development of inclusive practice
2. Nurture and relationship based practice

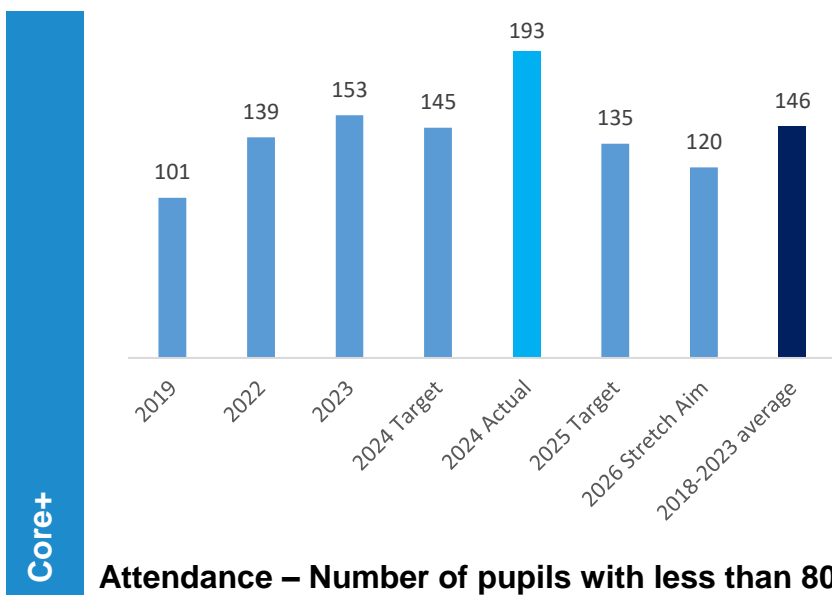# Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

Self-evaluation: We have made good progress against this priority.

Attendance

Core

Overall Attendance

2019	2021	2023	2024 Target	2024 Actual	2025	Stretch Aim	5 year average
94.4%	95.5%	92.7%	93.0%	92.6%	94.0%	95.0%	94.4%

We have maintained overall attendance rates.

The publication of Attendance guidance and further, sustained work in schools to support children attend school is expected to have an impact on this indicator in 2024/25.

Core+

Attendance – Number of pupils with less than 80% attendance

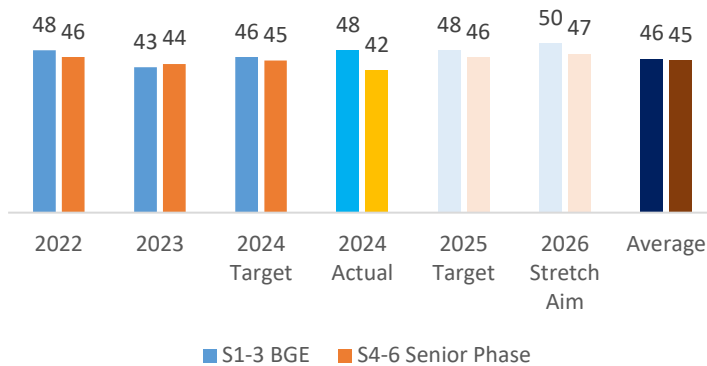| 2019	2022	2023	2024 Target	2024 Actual	2025 Target	2026 Stretch Aim	2018-2023 average
101	139	153	145	193	135	120	146

We have not met our target for this indicator.

The number of children with less than 80% attendance has increased.

The publication of Attendance guidance and further, sustained work in schools to support children attend school is expected to have an impact on this indicator in 2024/25.

Health and Wellbeing

	2022	2023	2024 Target	2024 Actual	2025 Target	2026 Stretch Aim	Average
S1-3 BGE	48	43	46	48	48	50	46
S4-6 Senior Phase	46	44	45	42	46	47	45

Mental Wellbeing - WEMWBS

The survey explores wellbeing through the Warwickshire-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). WEMWBS is a 14-item scale of positively worded statements covering feeling and functioning aspects of mental wellbeing. The 14-statements have five response categories from 'none of the time' to 'all of the time' and pupils are asked to describe their experiences over the past two weeks.

Secondary 1-3 pupils report higher rates of mental wellbeing. We have met our target for this group.

Secondary 4-6 pupils are reporting lower rates of mental wellbeing. We have not met our target for this group.

In a recent survey conducted by Young Scot, Scotland's Youth & Citizenship Charity 80 young people responded to their project. Their responses inform us that 38% of them feel their mental health has got worse. Therefore we must continue to deliver our model of intervention to ensure young people succeed in their learning pathways, taken into account the mental wellbeing of young people.
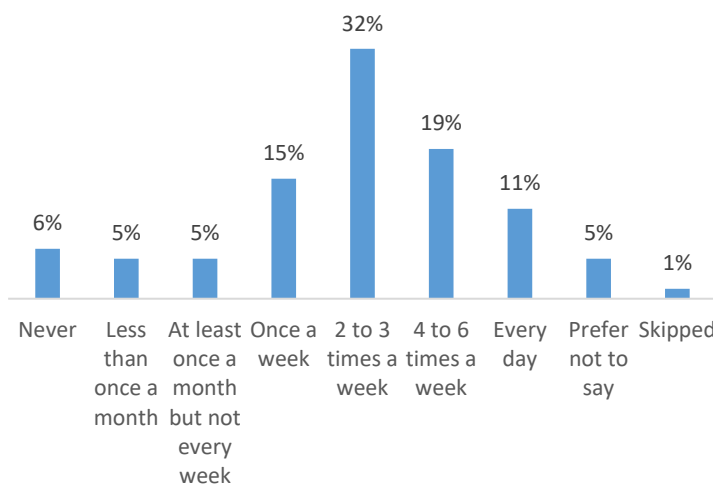
Physical Activity

How often do you usually do any physical activity in your free time (outside school hours) so much that you get out of breath or sweat?

Secondary pupils report more being more physically active than two years ago with 62% of respondents stating that they engage in physical activity which makes them sweat or get out of breath at least 2-3 times per week.
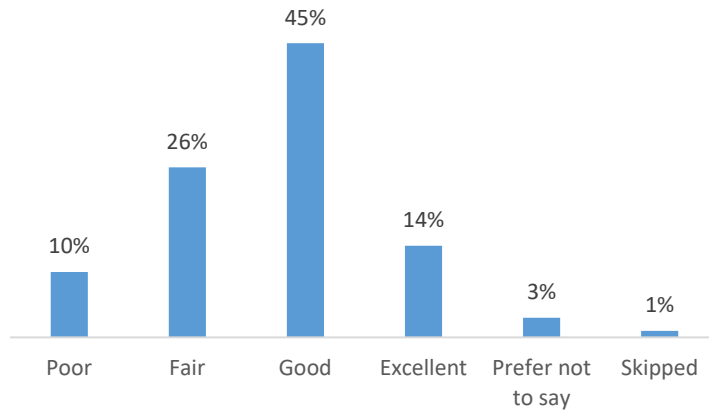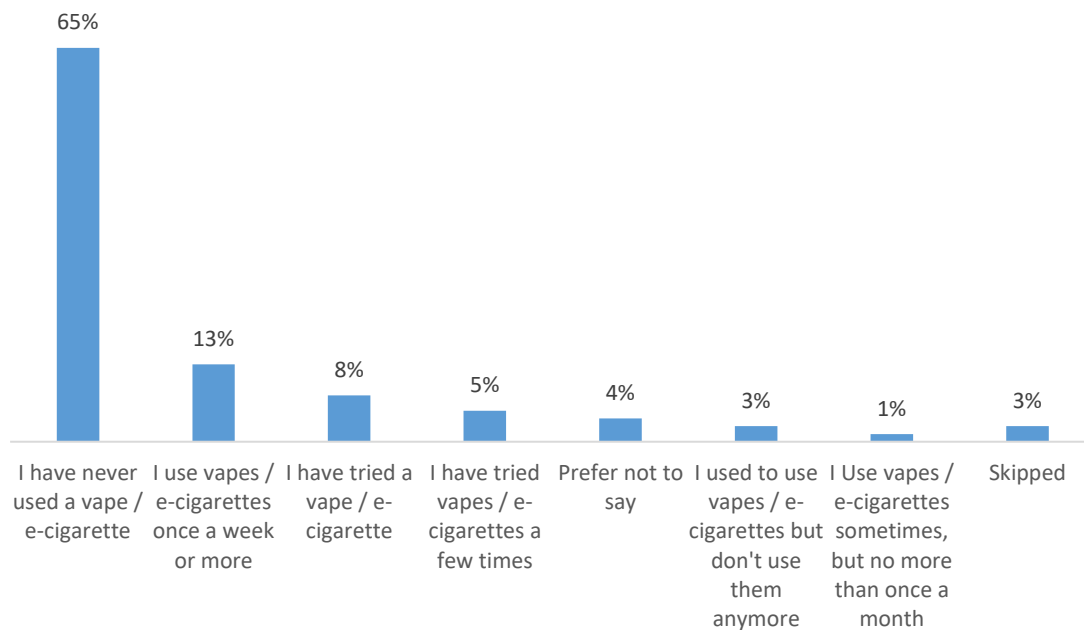
General Health

In general how would you say your health is?

59% of young people surveyed told us their general health was good or better. This is a 3 percentage point improvement from when we asked the same question last year.

General Health chart:
- Poor: 10%
- Fair: 26%
- Good: 45%
- Excellent: 14%
- Prefer not to say: 3%
- Skipped: 1%

Vaping

Vaping chart:
- I have never used a vape / e-cigarette: 65%
- I use vapes / e-cigarettes once a week or more: 13%
- I have tried a vape / e-cigarette: 8%
- I have tried vapes / e-cigarettes a few times: 5%
- Prefer not to say: 4%
- I used to use vapes / e-cigarettes but don't use them anymore: 3%
- I Use vapes / e-cigarettes sometimes, but no more than once a month: 1%
- Skipped: 3%

**Tackling substance use with a particular focus on vaping**

The Youth & Employability Service have provided standalone Personal and Social Education (PSE) workshops where young people are able to expand their knowledge about tobacco, vaping and the impact these products can have on health and wellbeing. Through these workshops youth

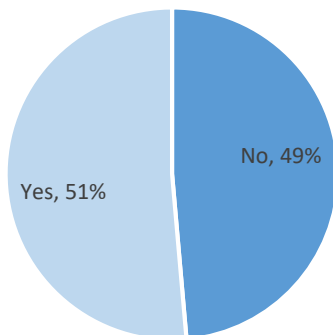workers and young people have discussions around the impact these products are having in our community.

The workshops are supported by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Scotland and all school based Youth Development Workers have been trained to deliver the materials.

A number of departments within Children's Services have had input from NHS Health Promotions including Youth & Employability Service, Shetland Youth Work Network, Children's Partnership and Children's Services Wider Management Team.
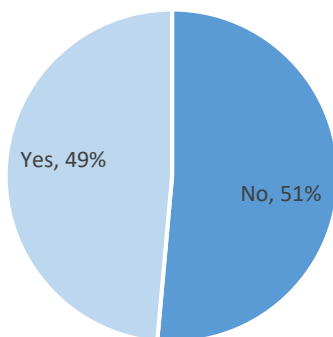
In May 2023 Shetland Islands Council became the latest local authority to call for ban on the sale of single-use vapes in Scotland
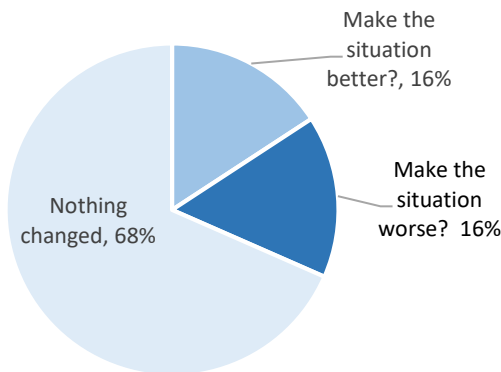

Number of pupils who have taken part in vaping information & training workshops
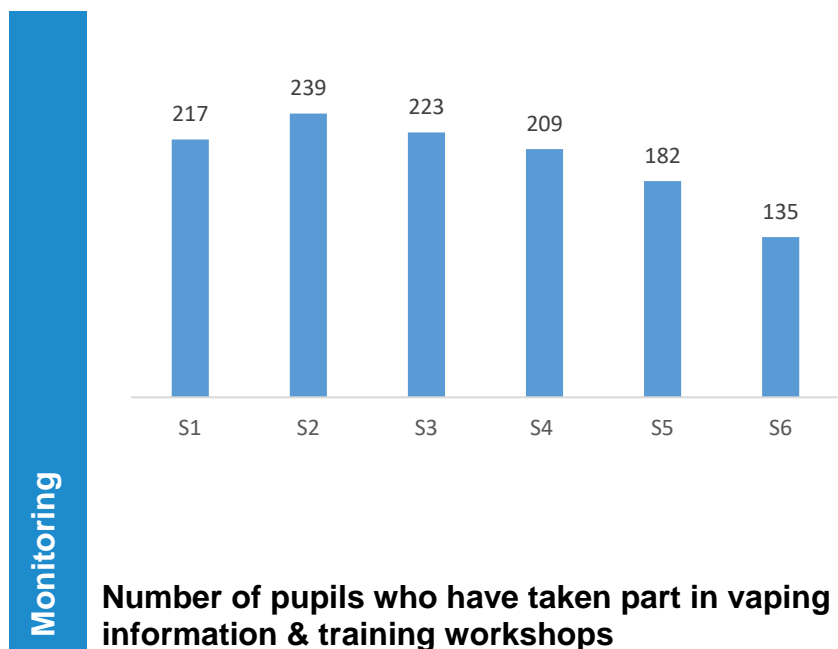
Have you experienced bullying behaviour in the past year?

Yes, 51%

No, 49%

Did you report the bullying behaviour?

Yes, 49%

No, 51%

What happened when you reported the bullying behaviour?

Make the situation better?, 16%

Make the situation worse? 16%

Nothing changed, 68%

More than half of the young people surveyed felt they had experienced bullying behaviour in the past year and over half of those young people chose not to report it. More than two thirds of those surveyed reported that nothing happened when they did report bullying behaviour.

Work is required to prevent bullying behaviour, encourage disclosure of bullying behaviours and to ensure that bullying behaviour is managed in accordance with Shetland Islands Council's Anti-bullying in Shetland Schools policy.

Bullying behaviour

Areas of Focus

1. Revisiting Anti-Bullying in Shetland Schools
2. Delivering vaping education and awareness raising
3. Implementing the revised attendance guidance
4. Considering the National action plan on relationships and behaviour in schools: 2024 - 2027

Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

Self-evaluation: We have made good progress against this priority.
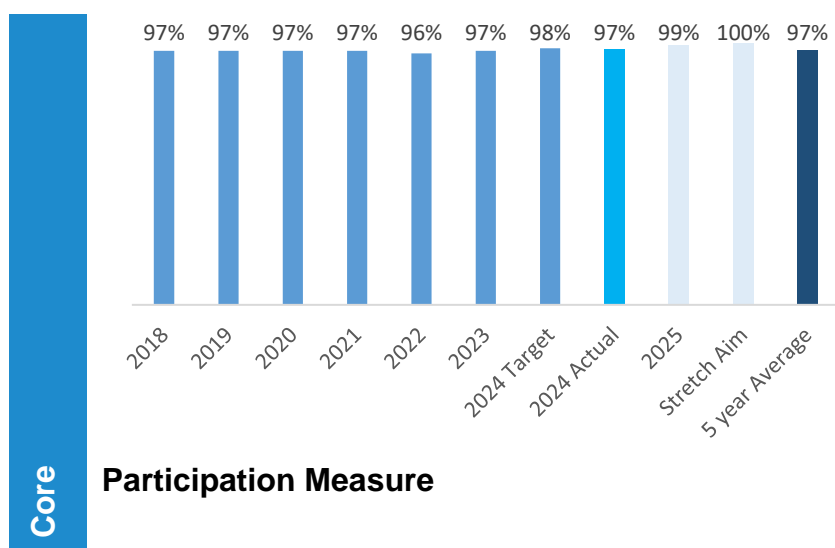
Participation Measure

The Scottish Government's Opportunities for All commitment offers a place in learning or training to every 16-19 year old who is not in employment, education or training.

SDS worked with the Scottish Government to develop a measure of participation which allows us to identify the participation status of the wider 16-19 cohort.

The latest report (published August 2023) marks the ninth release of statistics on the participation of 16-19 year olds at a national and local authority level.

As agreed by Scottish Ministers the Annual Participation Measure (APM) has been adopted in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework as the measure of young people's participation. This has replaced the school leaver destination follow up as the source of the national indicator, "Percentage of young adults (16-19 year olds) participating in education, training or employment".

The measure is drawn from records on our Customer Support System (CSS), which are updated by SDS and by partners (including local authorities/schools, colleges, SAAS, DWP). It allows all partners to better understand the impact of interventions and the outcomes they deliver at every transition point for 16-19 year olds.

Core

Participation Measure

Chart values: 2018: 97%, 2019: 97%, 2020: 97%, 2021: 97%, 2022: 96%, 2023: 97%, 2024 Target: 98%, 2024 Actual: 97%, 2025: 99%, Stretch Aim: 100%, 5 year Average: 97%

The participation measure in Shetland is one of the highest in Scotland. Given the small % of young people aged 16-19 not in a positive destination and the even smaller % of FSM and ASN pupils within that figure, it is not appropriate or valuable to set a gap stretch aim for this indicator. We are aware that all 1.2% unconfirmed young people were in SIMD2 however, there is no indication that a statistically significant pattern exists for this. We will continue to monitor this and take action where necessary.

Work Placements and Developing the Young Workforce

The Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme continues to transform how businesses and education work together in Shetland, helping young people develop their skills and readiness for employment.

Working alongside Staff in Children's Services, DYW have delivered free employer training workshops around Inclusion and Mentoring as well as the highly successful Scottish Careers Week in November 2023.

Work placements provide young people with an invaluable experience of the world of work to inform their career decisions, develop skills and confidence in the workplace and build their networks.

For employers, work experience placements provide access to future talent, easing skills gaps and recruitment pressures and connecting with a diverse range of young people who can bring wider life experiences, new ideas and skills.

DYW delivered Meaningful Work Placement training for businesses providing advice, guidance and a best practice toolkit.

The work placement offer has been impacted by recruitment and training challenges related to a key post in the co-ordination of work placements. Despite this, bespoke work placements have been created for a number of young people who face challenges to accessing the workplace.

Furthermore, Youth & Employability have been in a position to undertake more work placement health and safety checks during 2023/24 and have delivered bespoke work experience solutions for learners at risk of not achieving a positive destination.

We have continued to grow the vocational pathways offer for pupils in Secondary 3 to Secondary 6. The Skills for Work programme has doubled in size with around 250 S3 and S4 pupils attending partnership courses fortnightly.

The Skills for Work programme is tailored to both pupil interests and our economic industries with employment opportunities and demand:

Aquaculture	Enterprise and Employability
Computing	Hairdressing and Beauty
Construction Craft and Technician	Hospitality
Contemporary Art Skills	Maritime Skills
Drama	Sound Engineering
Early Learning and Childcare	Sports Leadership
Engineering Skills	Video Production
	Rural Skills

The S5 and S6 programme has been revised and is communicated to students alongside in-school options choices. This has resulted in attendance growth for almost all course options.

The programme is tailored to both pupil interests and our economic industries, complementing the offer in schools:

Aquaculture and Maritime Academy	Construction Academy
Business Academy – Financial Accounting	Creative Academy
Business Academy - IT in Business	Engineering Academy
Computing Academy – Digital Design	Foundation Apprenticeship Social Services
Computing Academy – Games Development and Hardware Technologies	(Children & Young People)
	Portfolio Building for Art Students
	Sociology Higher

Areas of Focus

1. Implementing the revised work placement offer
2. Supporting young people with barriers to onward positive destinations