

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL Report by the Chief Education Officer

Educational Services: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018

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**Subject: Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Examination Results 2018**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To update Members on the performance of West Dunbartonshire schools in the national Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations of 2018.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** Members are requested to:

- a) Note the contents of this report and the attached appendices;
- b) Congratulate the pupils, parents and carers, staff and centrally deployed staff for achievements in this year's examinations.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1** With the introduction of Insight in 2014, emphasis shifted in how a school is judged to be performing. Instead of the previous measures of how many pupils gained a number of passes at specific levels, a school is now measured according to its performance in key national benchmarks. These benchmarks encourage taking a holistic approach to evaluating achievement and attainment. A complete picture of local authority and school performance requires the national benchmarks to be considered as a whole. The four National Benchmarks focus on:

- 1. Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy
- 2. Improving attainment for all
- 3. Increasing post school participation
- 4. Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers.

- 3.2** Insight presents information on the achievements of school leavers at their point of exit from school, be that in S4, S5 or S6. Previously, we focussed on the attainment of an individual cohort taken as a whole (S4, S5 or S6). This change is in line with the CfE approach which sees the Senior Phase as a single coherent experience leading to a positive destination. Each young person's experience will be different depending on their needs.

- 3.3** Insight data is drawn from a number of sources. It includes data from Skills Development Scotland about post school leaver destinations, wider

achievement awards accredited from organisations other than the SQA and socio-economic data relating to other characteristics of young people. As these sources present data at different times of year there are implications for the timing of processes associated with performance analysis. Insight is updated twice a year, in August with SQA exam results and in February when it updates leaver destinations and the four National Measures. For this reason it is not possible to provide a complete picture of performance through the four national measures until after the February update. A further report will be brought to committee once this update is available.

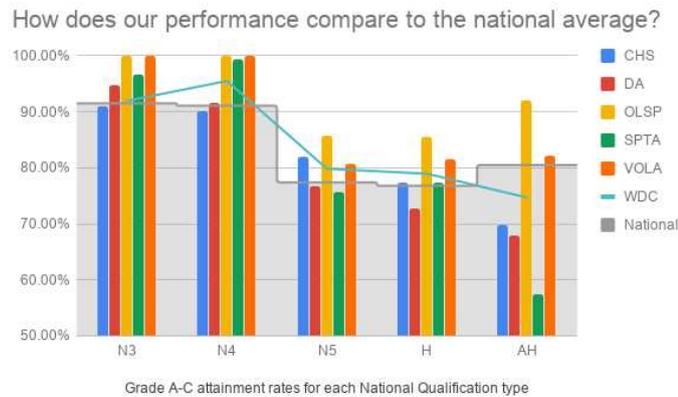
- 3.4** Benchmark comparisons are made against virtual comparators. Insight makes these virtual comparisons by selecting real young people from across Scotland that match the characteristics of students in West Dunbartonshire schools or in the local authority as a whole. In the case of school leavers, ten comparable virtual leavers are made for every one of our school leavers from West Dunbartonshire.
- 3.5** Schools will continue to use the SQA results data released in August to inform their school and department improvement agenda in relation to attainment. This is quality assured through the Improvement Framework and through the publication and analysis of school Standards and Quality reports.

#### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** We continue to make good progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap. Overall, we presented 2,109 number of candidates for 9,603 number of qualifications across National 2 – Advanced Higher. 75% of those presentations resulted in a passing grade.
  - 4.1.1** At National 4, the West Dunbartonshire data shows a slight decrease in attainment of 0.5% when compared with 2017 (95.5% pass rate in 2018 compared with 96% in 2017).
  - 4.1.2** At National 5, the West Dunbartonshire data shows a decrease in attainment of 2% when compared with 2017 (79% pass rate in 2018 compared with 81% in 2017), however we saw a rise in the number of awards gained (3,982 awards in 2018, compared with 3,808 awards in 2017).
  - 4.1.3** At Higher, the West Dunbartonshire data shows an increase in attainment of 3.03% when compared with 2017 (79.03% pass rate in 2018 compared with 76% in 2017).
  - 4.1.4** At Advanced Higher, the West Dunbartonshire data shows a decrease in attainment of 3.31% when compared with 2017 (74.69% pass rate in 2018 compared with 78% in 2017). It should be noted however that this percentage change represents a decrease of only 37 awards across the council area.

**4.1.5** The performance of each school in relation to the West Dunbartonshire and national average is shown in **figure 1** below. *It should be noted however that percentage pass rates do not convey the number of young people in the cohort being presented for the qualification.* For session 2017-18, each school had its own criteria when presenting young people for qualifications.

	CHS	DA	Kilpatrick	OLSP	SPTA	Choices	VOLA	WDC	National
N3	91.04%	94.74%	100.00%	100.00%	96.67%	56.00%	100.00%	91.95%	91.50%
N4	90.22%	91.70%		100.00%	99.27%	48.00%	100.00%	95.50%	91.10%
N5	81.87%	76.62%		85.82%	75.72%	33.00%	80.67%	79.84%	77.40%
H	77.30%	72.75%		85.58%	77.33%		81.57%	78.95%	76.80%
AH	69.81%	67.86%		92.00%	57.38%		82.14%	74.69%	80.50%

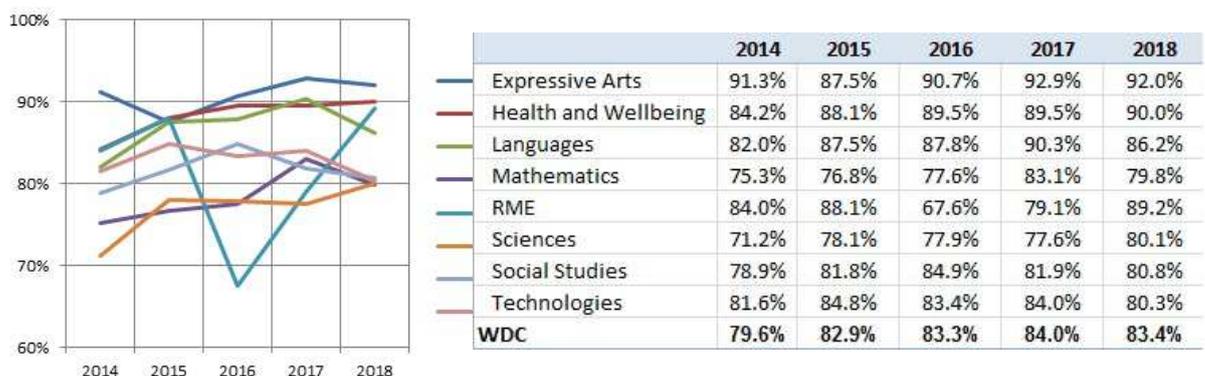


**Figure 1 – establishment performance**

**4.1.6** A consistent council wide presentation policy for establishments is now in place for session 2018-19. This will help establishments to support young people in making the best choices of both subjects and levels across all of our establishments and our work with wider partners.

## 4.2 Analysis by Curricular Area

**Figure 2** below shows the trend by curriculum area for 2014 – 2018:



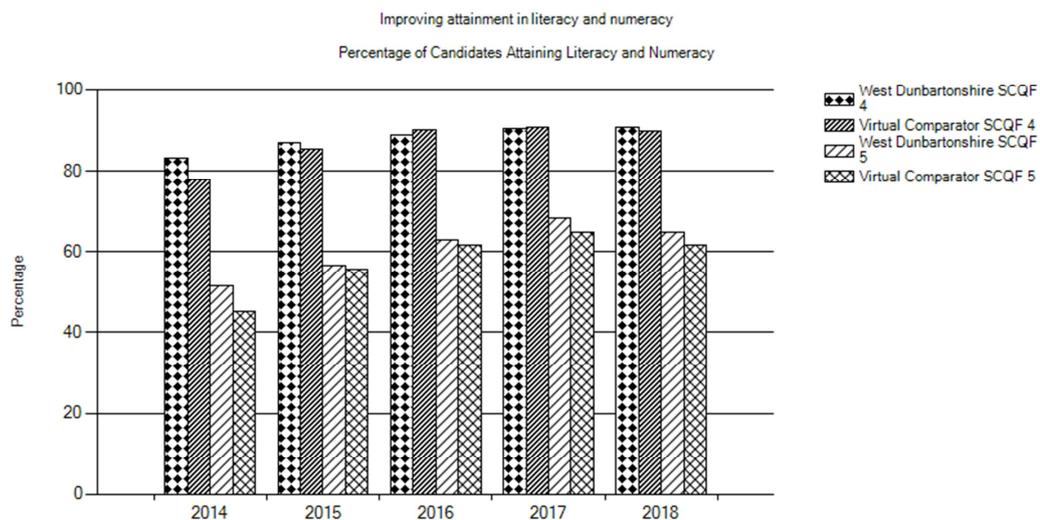
### 4.3 Insight data

As noted in 3.3 above the data for the four national benchmarks for session 2017-18 is not finalised and published in Insight until February 2019. Therefore data shown below will not include leaver destination data or indeed changes reflected by the Post Results Service offered by the SQA.

In the sections that follow, we have presented data relating to our performance at local authority level. A more detailed analysis of performance of each of our secondary schools is presented in **Appendix 1**.

#### 4.3.1 National Benchmark 1: Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

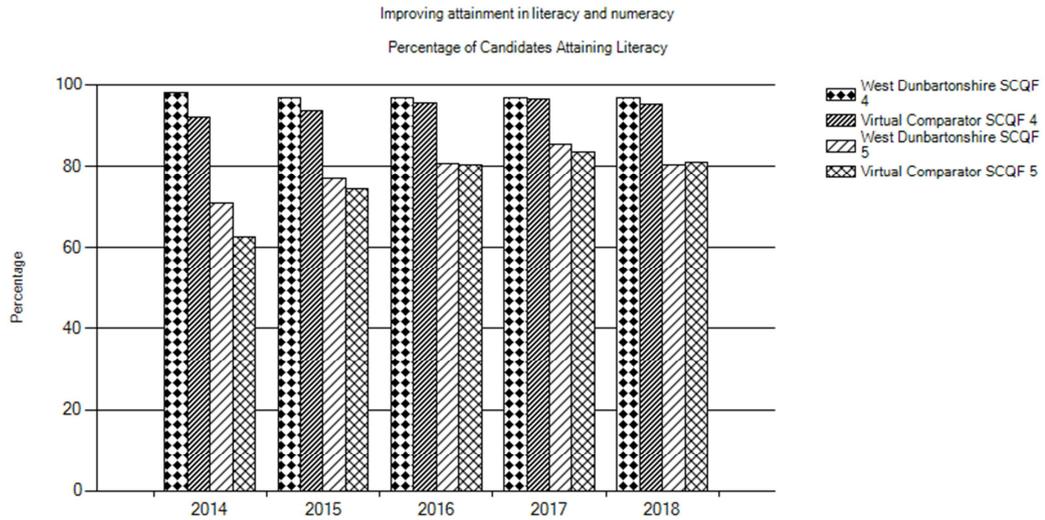
**Figure 3** below shows the levels of attainment in Literacy and Numeracy obtained by WDC school leavers at SCQF levels 4 and 5 (*Literacy and Numeracy qualifications now include awards for Literacy, English, English as a Second Language, Numeracy and Mathematics*). It shows that at both levels leavers in WDC are achieving higher levels of attainment than those in our virtual comparator local authority.



**Figure 3 – Performance in Literacy and Numeracy**

#### National Benchmark 1: Improving attainment in Literacy.

**Figure 4** below shows our performance in literacy in isolation from numeracy.

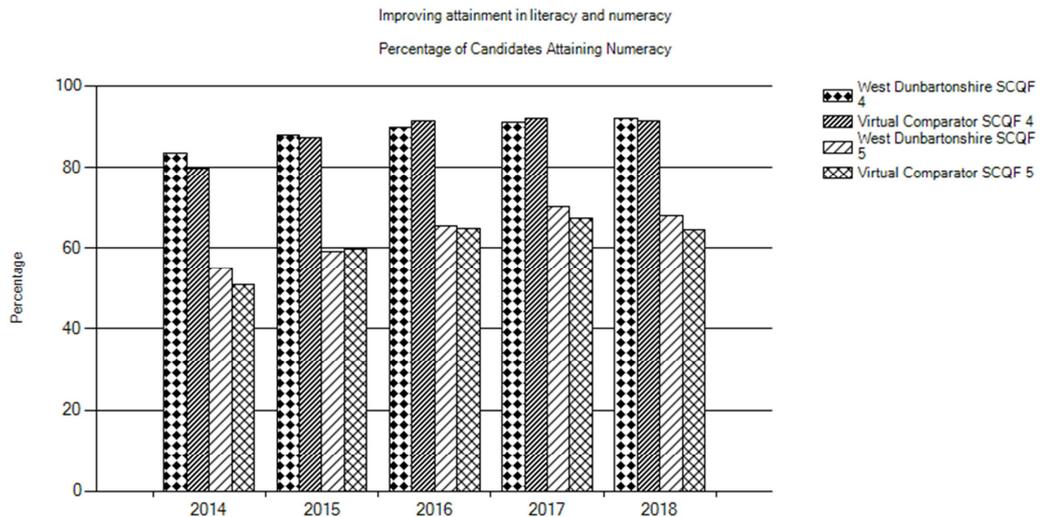


**Figure 4 – Performance in Literacy**

This shows that whilst we have broadly maintained our performance over time in literacy at National 4, our performance at National 5 has returned to the level attained in 2016. Compared to our virtual comparator, we are consistently above at National 4, but for the first year have fallen below at National 5.

**National Benchmark 1: Improving attainment in Numeracy.**

**Figure 5** below shows our performance in numeracy in isolation from literacy.



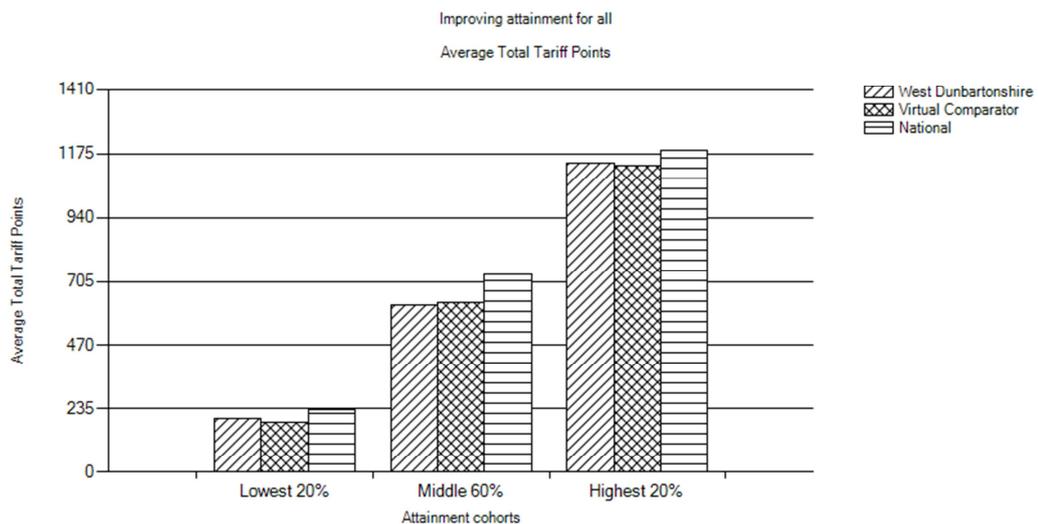
**Figure 5 – Performance in Numeracy**

This shows that whilst we have improved our performance over time in numeracy at level 4 and now out-perform our virtual comparator, we have seen a slight decline in 2018 at level 5, but still out-perform our virtual comparator.

### 4.3.2 National Benchmark 2: Improving attainment for all

This measure allows us to examine how different ability cohorts are attaining in relation to our virtual cohort and the national cohort. Attainment is measured using a tariff scale developed for Insight. This scale allocates points to each qualification (*courses and units which make up courses are all allocated points*). The number of points awarded is dependent on the level of the course, with more demanding qualifications being awarded more points than less demanding ones. Three cohorts are identified, those in the bottom 20% of tariff points scored, those in the middle 60% of tariff points scored and those in the top 20% of tariff points scored.

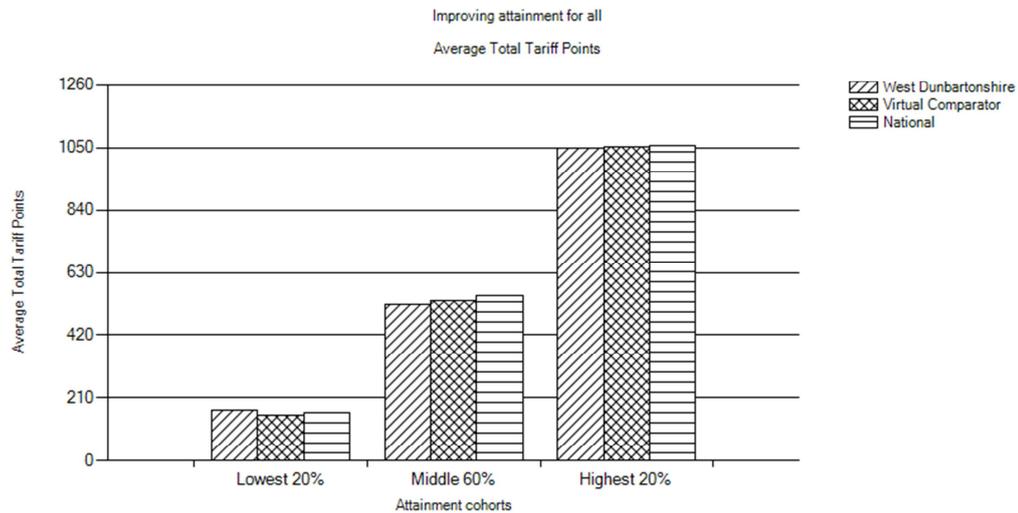
**Figure 6** below shows the average total tariff points gained by our cohorts of young people.



**Figure 6 – Average Total Tariff points**

This shows that the least attaining young people in WDC are attaining relatively better than those of our comparator, and slightly below the national cohort. Young people in the middle 60% are showing levels of attainment slightly below our comparator and significantly below the national cohort. The highest attaining cohort's tariff score is slightly above those in the virtual comparator and below the national cohort.

When viewed through the lense of deprivation, our performance changes. **Figure 7** below shows the attainment of our young people who reside in the 3 most deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles. (Decile 1 refers to the attainment of young people with postcodes within data zones identified as being in the 10% most deprived in Scotland according to SIMD. Those young people in decile 10 have postcodes in the 10% least deprived data zones according to SIMD)



**Figure 7 – Average Total Tariff Points for SIMD Deciles 1-3**

This shows that from SIMD deciles 1-3 our lowest 20% attaining young people attain more than both our virtual comparator and the national average, whilst the gap in attainment between our performance and both the virtual comparator and national average has closed significantly for the middle 60% and Highest 20% attaining young people.

### 4.3.3 National Benchmark 3: Increasing post school participation

The third national benchmark looks at the destinations of our young people. This data will be updated in Insight in February 2019, so this measure will be reported to a future committee.

### 4.3.4 National Benchmark 4: Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers

This measure shows attainment measured using the same tariff scale as referred to in the **Improving attainment for all** measure above. Leavers are presented in a decile according to their Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data. Decile 1 refers to the attainment of young people with postcodes within data zones identified as being in the 10% most deprived in Scotland according to SIMD. Those young people in decile 10 have postcodes in the 10% least deprived data zones according to SIMD. The area of each the 'circle' represents the number of young people in each decile. Ideally the attainment line for Scotland would be level through each decile showing that postcode background had no effect on a student's attainment. Unfortunately this is not the case nationally or locally.

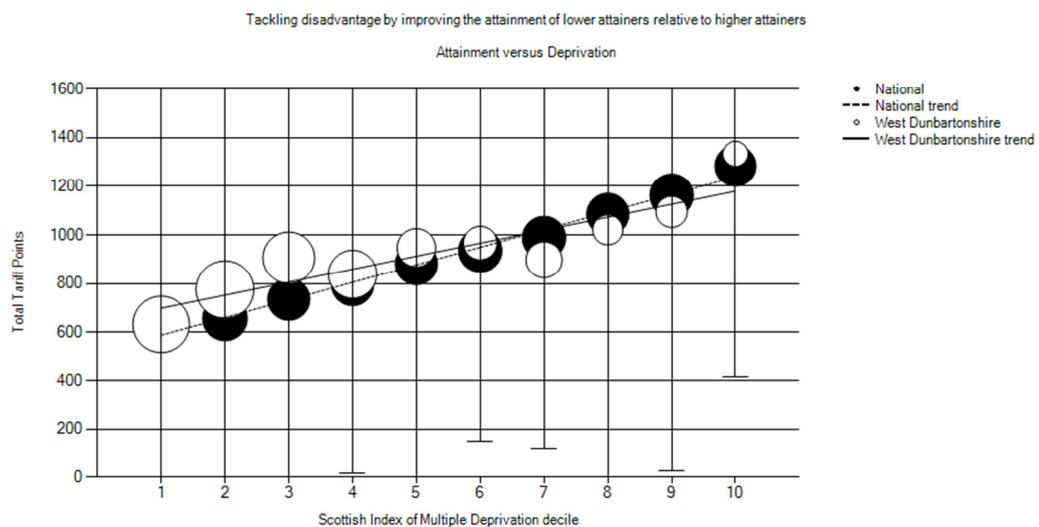


Figure 8 – Attainment versus Deprivation

Figure 8 above shows that the majority of the school leavers in WDC have postcodes in the lower SIMD deciles (*larger 'circles' in deciles 1-4*) and consequently that few of our leavers reside in upper decile postcodes. The data shows that the young people of WDC in deciles 1-6 have attainment either equal to or better than the national level, with the attainment of young people that reside in SIMD deciles 2 and 3 being much higher than the National level.

#### **4.4 The relationship between qualifications and destinations.**

With the establishment of Curriculum for Excellence, young people were entitled to a Senior Phase that continued to develop the four capacities and gain qualifications, and entitled to support into making a transition into a sustained positive destination. With Insight, these two entitlements have been brought much closer together.

For the past three years, we have been showing the relationships between qualifications and destinations by comparing performance with the previous year. As we now have four years worth of data, this can be presented as a trend analysis. This helps us view the success of our young people, as there are fluctuations in attainment for each cohort of young people, however the trend analysis shows us the performance over time.

**Figure 9** on the following page shows this for the young people of West Dunbartonshire as a whole. **Appendix 2** then shows this for each establishment.

Outcome of the cohort of young people completing the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence, 2015 – 2018

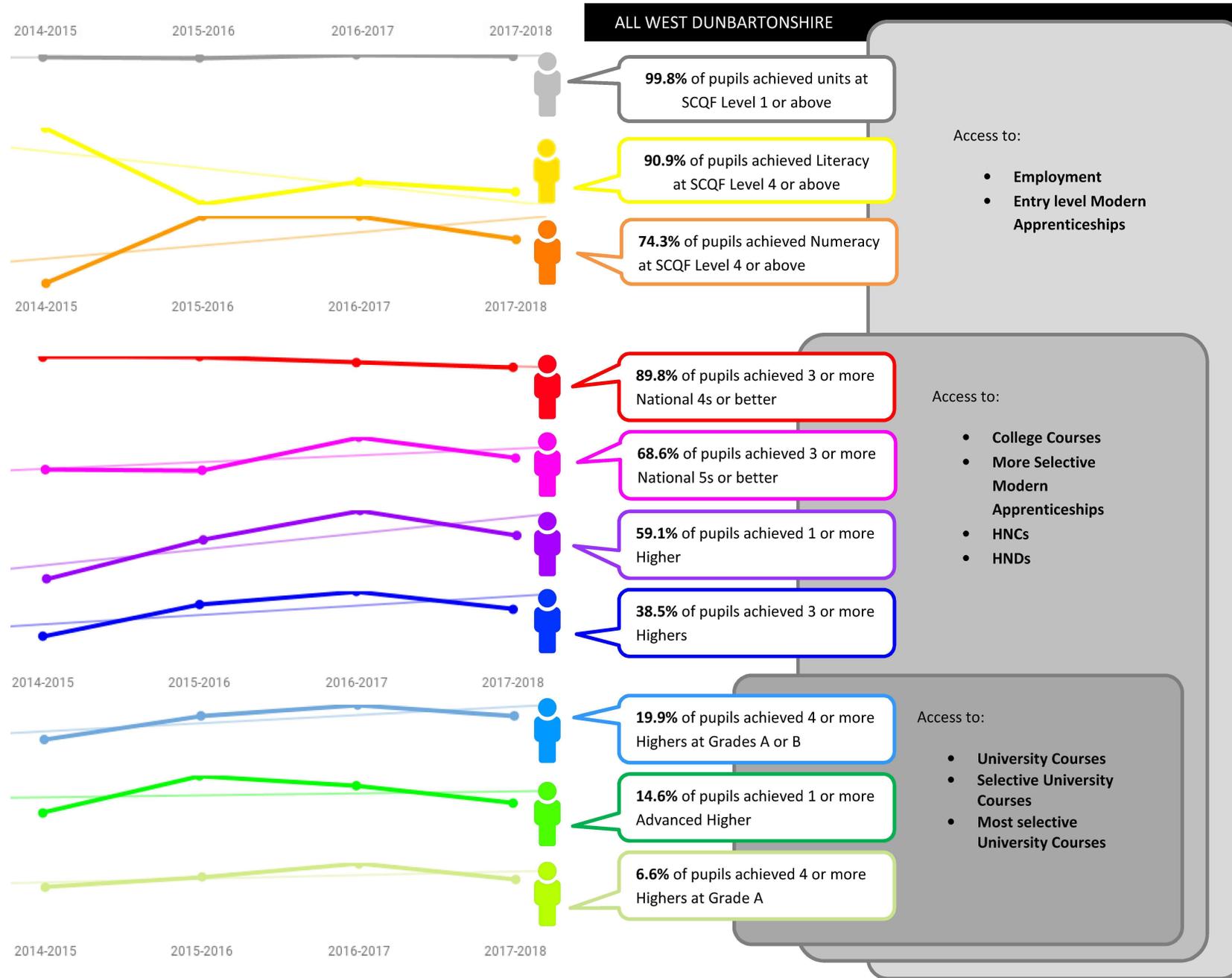


Figure 9 - Relationship between qualifications and destinations

**4.5** Members may wish to note that although this report focuses on the SQA attainment of our young people, WDC pupils have demonstrated success in a wide variety of other qualifications which contribute to wider achievement. A significant and increasing number of our pupils are taking courses with partner providers such as West College Scotland and WD Leisure Trust in a variety of areas including software development, construction, motor vehicle engineering, hospitality, professional cookery, hairdressing, early education and childcare, sport and recreation, beauty and photography. In addition, a wide range of non-SQA accredited qualifications have been achieved. These include:

- ASDAN awards
- Caritas award
- Dance leadership
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Fashion brand retailing (Caledonian University)
- Forest Schools
- Green Flag Award
- John Muir award
- Mark Scott Foundation Award
- Mini Vinnie Award
- Pool life guard
- Pope Francis Faith Award
- Saltire awards
- Scottish Sports Award
- Social Enterprise Academy Award
- Sport leadership
- Stonewall Champion Award
- West Dunbartonshire Volunteering Award
- Youth Achievement Awards

**4.6** The Council will ensure that schools are given every challenge and support to raise attainment in the areas outlined in this report through both local engagement and by encouraging involvement with national bodies.

## **5. People Implications**

**5.1** There are no personnel issues related to this report.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

**6.1** There are no financial implications related to this report.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

7.1 As members are only being asked to note the contents of this report and the attached appendix a risk assessment is not required.

## 8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 Educational Services has carried out a screening in equality for this report. The report was found not to be relevant to the specified equality duty because the content provides an update on service delivery rather than stating a change of policy.

## 9. Strategic Environmental Assessment

9.1

## 10. Consultation

10.1 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

## 11. Strategic Assessment

11.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to 'increase skills for life and learning' which is a supporting priority to the strategic priority of having 'a strong local economy and improved job opportunities' for 2017 - 2022.

**Laura Mason**

Chief Education Officer

Date:

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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> – Insight data for West Dunbartonshire schools. <b>Appendix 2</b> – The relationship between Qualifications and Destinations.
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All council Wards.