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Evaluation of Attainment Scotland Fund: Interim Report (Year 3)

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

social research

Evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund

Interim Report (Year 3)

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Executive Summary

Background

E.1. In Year 3 (2017/18) of the Attainment Scotland Fund, around £165.5 million was distributed to schools and local authorities as part of the Challenge Authority, Schools Programme and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) strands. This included: nine Challenge Authorities (receiving £38.4 million); 74 schools part of the Schools Programme (receiving £6.9 million); and 95% of schools receiving a total £120.2 million of PEF.

E.2. This second interim report focuses on experiences and progress in Year 3 of the ASF (2017/18) and how this has evolved over time.

In what ways were schools and local authorities working to plan, implement and evaluate activity relating to the ASF?

E.3. Overall, Challenge Authorities spent 92% of their allocated budget in Year 3, with some variation at the local authority level. Similarly, 90% of Schools Programme funding was spent in Year 3. In the first year of PEF, 60% of the allocated budget was spent.

E.4. Local authorities and schools were focusing their approaches on pupils and parents from the most deprived backgrounds. Other factors were also considered, such as additional support needs and attainment data when targeting their improvement activity, as appropriate to their local contexts and circumstances.

E.5. In relation to Pupil Equity Funding, local authorities had processes in place to support schools with their implementation of PEF and many headteachers felt well supported. A variety of sources informed headteachers' approach to planning for PEF including: local guidance, national operational guidance, teachers in the school, parents or the local authority more generally.

E.6. There was some emerging evidence that schools outwith the Challenge Authority and Schools Programme and in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding only may have slightly different perspectives in relation to their experiences of the ASF. This could reflect the PEF only schools' later stage of involvement with the ASF.

E.7. Local authorities and schools recognised the importance of data and evidence for monitoring the impact of their improvement activity. Some Challenge Authorities had worked with local universities to support their evaluative activity. Headteachers reported having evaluation plans in place to monitor the progress of their approaches and 90% felt confident in the use of data and evidence.

What was working well in the implementation of the ASF?

E.8. In Year 3 of the ASF, it was clear that the **autonomy** made available to headteachers through PEF was welcome, providing additional scope to tailor approaches specific to local context. The evaluation found that 89% of headteachers felt they had the autonomy to develop a plan for PEF.

E.9. At the same time, **local authority support** emerged as central to the effective governance of the ASF and schools valued the support they had received in relation to, for example, procurement, budget management and recruitment.

E.10. **Support from Attainment Advisors** was valued by local authorities and schools specifically in relation to providing a link to national priorities, supporting with evidencing impact and facilitating collaboration.

E.11. **Collaboration** continued to feature strongly as a positive impact of the ASF. At local authority level, there was evidence of collaboration with third sector, other professionals, and universities. At school level, collaboration was supported by school leadership and evidenced by an increase in, for example, Professional Learning Communities within schools. In Year 3 of the headteacher survey, 71% of respondents felt there had been an increase in collaboration as a result of the ASF.

E.12. A number of **unintended positive consequences** were also reported in Year 3, including increased skill development; a change in culture/ethos and an increased awareness of the impact of deprivation; as well as improvement in pupil and parental engagement.

What challenges did stakeholders encounter?

E.13. The first interim evaluation report identified difficulties around bureaucracy and challenging timescales. Challenge Authorities indicated this had improved in Year 3. Schools encountered difficulties in having enough **time to plan for PEF** but there was some emerging

evidence that planning for 2018/19 had benefitted from longer timescales.

E.14. There continued to be **challenges around staffing**, with local authorities and schools noting delays in staff recruitment and difficulties finding cover for staff to attend training.

E.15. The experience of the ASF in the context of **wider resourcing pressures** was an issue raised by schools. This impacted on the extent to which the ASF was perceived as additional by a few schools and this is an area to be explored further in Year 4 of the evaluation.

E.16. **Sustainability** was a key consideration for local authorities and schools and there was some evidence of a decrease in confidence of sustainability over time. Stakeholders were confident that the improved skills and practice would remain beyond the years of the ASF. However, they also raised concerns that withdrawal of funding would lead to a loss in additional staffing resources, viewed as key to the success of the ASF.

What did the evidence suggest about progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap?

E.17. As a result of the ASF, some local authorities reported changes in how they were using core funding to support and improve outcomes for pupils experiencing poverty-related disadvantage.

E.18. Most headteachers (88%) saw improvements in relation to closing the poverty-related attainment gap as a result of their interventions and almost all (95%) expect to see improvements over the next 5 years.

E.19. This report draws on the agreed basket of measures used within the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for assessing progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Analysis focuses on patterns of attainment in Challenge Authorities, who have been involved with the ASF since 2015.

E.20. Data from Achievement of a CfE Level, school leaver attainment and the participation measure allow us to consider progress in Year 3 of the ASF. Attendance and Exclusion data is included within the report but only covers the period from 2014/15 (pre-ASF) to 2016/17 (Year 2), prior to the introduction of PEF. A summary of key findings in relation to progress in Year 3 of the ASF is provided below.

E.21. **Attainment in Broad General Education.** This data (which are published as experimental) showed that in Year 3 of the ASF the

attainment gap in literacy and numeracy (at primary and secondary level) was smaller in Challenge Authorities compared to the average in non-Challenge Authorities and Scotland overall. In addition, a higher percentage of pupils from the most deprived areas achieved expected CfE levels in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities.

E.22. **Attainment in Senior Phase.** Between Year 2 and 3 of the ASF, 3 Challenge Authorities showed a narrowing of the gap at SCQF Level 5 and 5 Challenge Authorities showed a narrowing of the gap at SCQF Level 6. Overall across Challenge Authorities, the attainment gap widened at SCQF Level 5 and narrowed at SCQF Level 6.

E.23. **Participation rate.** Between Year 2 and 3 of the ASF, there was an overall reduction across Scotland in the participation gap between those living in the most deprived areas compared to those living in the least deprived areas. Over this time, 6 of the 9 Challenge Authorities showed a narrowing of the participation gap between young people from the most and least deprived areas.

E.24. Overall, the attainment data presents a mixed and complex picture of progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap. As new data emerges, the evaluation will continue to explore different ways of analysing patterns of attainment across Scotland.

1. Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

1.1. The Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation began in 2015 and follows the duration of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. An evaluation of the first two years of the ASF was published in March 2018. This evaluation report of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) focuses on Year 3 of the ASF (i.e. 2017/18).

1.2. This chapter provides detail on the aims of the evaluation, the overall approach and the structure of the Year 3 evaluation report.

Methodology

1.3. The evaluation aims to provide learning about the overall implementation of the ASF and the extent to which the aims of the ASF have been met.

1.4. Evidence in relation to these aims has been gathered from a range of sources and evaluated against a set of agreed research questions (detailed below).

1.5. The sources used to inform progress in Year 3 of the ASF are set out below.

- **Administrative data:** Information gathered as part of the routine organisation of the ASF provides data primarily on the funding local authorities and schools received.
- **Challenge Authority progress reports:** Analysis of mid- and end-year progress reports submitted by Challenge Authorities in March and September 2018.
- **Local authority mini survey:** In April/May 2018, all 32 local authorities were invited to take part in a short online survey. A total of 22 authorities responded, including all 9 Challenge Authorities. Questions covered their experience of the ASF and findings were published in September 2018.
- **Headteacher survey:** In Autumn 2018, an online survey was distributed to headteachers of schools receiving Challenge Authority, Schools Programme and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This was the third year of the survey and included a sample of schools in receipt of

PEF only for the first time. A total of 553 schools responded to the survey, representing a 40% response rate. The full report from the survey has been published online.

- **School Case studies:** A total of 12 schools who volunteered to be involved in case study research were selected to capture a mix of schools on the basis of ASF support received, urban/rural classification and primary/secondary school. Each case study involved an interview with the headteacher and focus groups with staff in the school. The full report on the case studies has been published online.
- **Quantitative data on attainment and wellbeing:** Report draws on measures published in the National Improvement Framework Evidence Dashboard 2018. Analysis focuses on patterns of attainment within and across Challenge Authorities and, where possible, differences between Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities at an overall level.

Data Source	Coverage	Years covered		
		Year 1 (2015/16)	Year 2 (2016/17)	Year 3 (2017/18)
Administrative data (financial information)	All Challenge Authorities, Schools Programme local authorities and schools receiving PEF	✔	✔	✔
Challenge Authority Progress Reports	All 9 Challenge Authorities	✔	✔	✔
Local Authority Mini Survey	Year 1: Responses from 6 of the 7 Challenge Authorities Year 3: Responses from 22 local authorities, including 9 Challenge Authorities	✔		✔
Headteacher Survey	Years 1 and 2: Headteachers of schools in Challenge Authorities and Schools Programme Year 3: Same as above plus sample of schools receiving PEF only	✔	✔	✔
School Case Studies	2 schools in Challenge Authorities, 2 in Schools Programme and 8 schools in receipt of PEF only			✔

Quantitative data on attainment and wellbeing	Analysis of attainment measures set out in the 2018 National Improvement Evidence report.	✔	✔	✔

N.B. Qualitative Research undertaken in 2017 has helped to inform ongoing analysis of recent evidence but has not formed a key data source for the time period covered in the current report.

This report

1.6. This report focuses on how the ASF has evolved in Year 3 (i.e. 2017/18) of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. As such, findings highlighted in the report are mainly those that show any change in Year 3 from Years 1 & 2.

1.7. Year 3 saw the continuation of Challenge Authority and Schools Programme funding. It was also the first year that schools had access to Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). The report therefore includes evidence on the evaluation of PEF for the first time, and considers any emerging differences across the three funding streams.

1.8. The report is structured around the inputs, activities, short to medium term outcomes and long term impact of the Attainment Scotland Fund.

Chapter 2	Inputs: Governance and Funding	What did and didn't work well in the national and local governance and support as part of the ASF?
		How much funding did local authorities and schools receive, to what extent did they consider it adequate, supplement it with other funding sources, and use it in accordance with the ASF's requirements?
Chapter 3	Activities: Interventions and Targeting	To what extent do stakeholders understand, engage and further the programme aims, and why?
		What type of initiatives were organised and to what extent did they focus on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing or other topics?
		How were interventions targeted and to what extent did the interventions succeed in reaching the target groups?
Chapter 4		To what extent did the interventions achieve their short and medium term outcomes?

	Short and Medium Term Outcomes	To what extent did schools and authorities use data, analysis and knowledge of what works to drive improvements as part of the ASF?
		To what extent has the ASF encouraged collaboration and why?
		Did the ASF have any unintended consequences?
Chapter 5	Progress towards Long Term Impact	To what extent did the different types of interventions succeed in improving attainment and health and wellbeing, and why?
		To what extent did the ASF contribute to an improvement in attainment and health and wellbeing, and a reduction of the gap between pupils from the most and least deprived areas?
		To what extent are interventions sustainable beyond the four years of the funding?

2. Inputs: Governance and Funding

2.1. This chapter focuses on the financial inputs and how the ASF was organised and supported at both a national and local level.

Governance

2.2. The evaluation considers what did and did not work well in the governance of the ASF at national and local level and in the support provided by Attainment Advisors.

2.3. Evidence used to address this has been drawn from the Challenge Authority progress reports, the local authority mini survey, headteacher survey and school case studies.

National Governance

2.4. Local authorities responding to the online survey had differing experiences with regard to support from Scottish Government.

2.5. In Years 1 and 2, Challenge Authorities raised concerns about paper work requirements alongside challenging timescales. By Year 3, Challenge Authorities indicated that the reduction of reporting requirements and meetings was helpful. However, they also requested greater advance notice of submission deadlines and more timely sign-off of authority plans.

2.6. Similar to the Challenge Authorities in Year 1, non-Challenge Authorities in Year 3 were positive about the focus on issues relating to the influence of poverty upon attainment. A few noted that they had had limited direct involvement with Scottish Government. There was also suggestion of scope to improve national governance of the ASF. This is described in more detail below.

2.7. Local authorities responding to the online survey also highlighted their positive experience in support received from Education Scotland. They valued established relationships with key staff including Area Lead Officers, Attainment Advisors, Improvement Advisors and Lead Inspectors.

2.8. Specific aspects of the support from Education Scotland included: advice on research methodology and development of outcomes; signposting to existing evidence and other resources; and the

opportunity to share practice via organised events and meetings, such as the Scottish Learning Festival and PEF conferences.

2.9. The survey also suggested that national support provided by both Scottish Government and Education Scotland could be improved via:

- **Collaboration:** Increased opportunity for collaboration and sharing practice/experience between Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities. For example, non-Challenge Authorities suggested that a learning package from Challenge Authorities showing measures used to assess impact would be helpful.
- **Evidencing impact:** Greater consistency in national communication around measuring the impact of the ASF.
- **Reporting:** Improvement in the guidance and documentation around the reporting of the ASF.
- **Allocation of funding:** Non-Challenge Authorities suggested that the Scottish Government consider other mechanisms for distributing funding to take better account of factors, for example, rural poverty.
- **Education Scotland**: Authorities also advised that increased consistency in staffing as well as clarity around the role of Education Scotland would be welcomed.

2.10. In Year 3 of the headteacher survey, respondents were asked about their experiences of receiving PEF; transparency of allocations; and reporting requirements. Responses could relate to their experience of governance at local or national level.

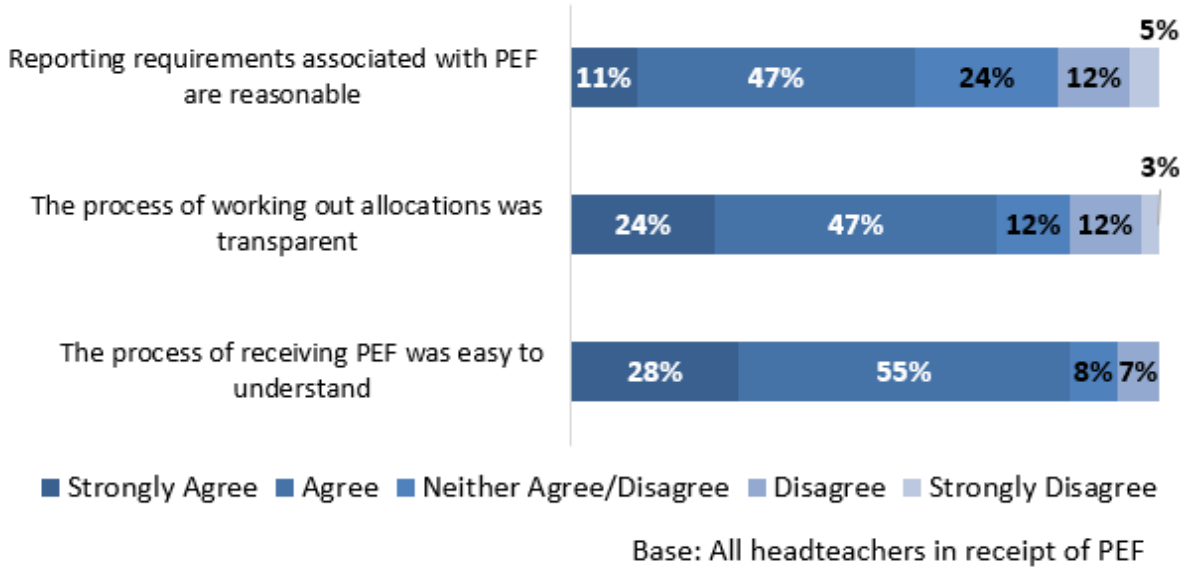
2.11. The majority of respondents agreed that the process of receiving PEF was easy to understand (83%) and that the process for allocations were transparent (71%). Schools receiving PEF only were less likely than those also in receipt of Challenge Authority or School Programme funding to agree that the process of working out PEF allocations was transparent.

2.12. Overall, headteachers were less positive about the associated reporting requirements. Whilst 58% agreed that the reporting requirements were reasonable, 17% did not agree and 24% neither agreed or disagreed.

2.13. Finally, in relation to Pupil Equity Funding, 89% of headteachers felt they had the autonomy to develop a plan which took account of school's local context and needs. In addition, headteachers noted in their written comments that autonomy/flexibility for schools was

something that was working well in the overall governance of the ASF (at local and/or national level).

Figure 2.1: Processes around Pupil Equity Funding, headteacher survey



2.14. These survey responses resonated with the findings from the case studies where many of the schools emphasised that they valued the autonomy and flexibility provided by PEF. For example, whilst they recognised the value of strategic local authority support, they also mentioned the additional scope provided by PEF to tailor interventions specific to their context.

Local Governance

2.15. In the headteacher survey, local authority support was the most commonly mentioned example of something that was working well in relation to the overall governance of the ASF. It was identified as a key positive by 30% of respondents in relation to Challenge Authority funding, and 17% of respondents in relation to PEF. It was also mentioned as something that could be improved by slightly fewer respondents (11% in relation to Challenge Authority/Schools Programme and 9% in relation to PEF).[1]

[1] In the survey, those in receipt of Challenge Authority or Schools Programme funding were asked to comment on the governance of these strands. All respondents were asked about governance in relation to PEF.

2.16. Some of the schools involved in the case studies also mentioned the support they had received from local authorities in relation to recruitment, advice on procurement and sharing practice across schools. This support may be particularly important to smaller schools who have limited planning capacity.

2.17. From the perspective of Challenge Authorities, local authority support via people and/or strategic frameworks was essential in the success of their approach. Indeed, all authorities responding to the mini survey indicated that they had mechanisms in place to support schools in their implementation of PEF.

2.18. Local authorities discussed the role of local authority staff (e.g. Quality Improvement or Education Officers, Principal Teachers, Business Managers, Educational Psychologists) in providing support and challenge. Specific support noted by local authorities in relation to how they supported schools with PEF included:

- **Providing guidance** on the use of PEF, procurement and HR
- **Encouraging collaboration** and collective working across schools. This included organising events to help share learning across schools and provide links to third sector and other partners
- Support on **monitoring and evidencing impact**.

2.19. As was found in Years 1 and 2, there was evidence that staffing in general continued to be a challenge in the overall governance of the ASF.

2.20. At local authority level, recruitment issues were mentioned in relation to specialised posts such as development officers, clinical practitioners and manager roles. There were also difficulties in securing staff cover and Challenge Authorities specifically mentioned difficulties in staff turnover.

2.21. At school level, a similar percentage of headteachers in the online survey noted that staffing and workload was a challenge in relation to Challenge Authority/Schools Programme funding (14%) or PEF (12%). Case study schools noted difficulties in staff recruitment due to shortage of staff and similar challenges in relation to securing the required staff time and cover for essential CPD.

2.22. Headteachers responding to the online survey also suggested that there was a need to address organisational issues in relation to both Challenge Authority/Schools Programme funding (mentioned by 22% of respondents) and PEF (19% of respondents).

2.23. Responses from the case studies shed further insight into these organisational issues. Respondents noted bureaucracy around recruitment, the significant time needed for planning and implementing interventions and some also noted that the pressure to demonstrate impact to the local authority had influenced their planning.

2.24. Finally, whilst headteachers indicated that they valued the opportunity to share practice and experience, a similar proportion also felt there was scope to increase these opportunities. This was similar to the findings in Years 1 and 2.

Attainment Advisors

2.25. Across the evidence sources, it was clear that local authorities and schools valued the role of Attainment Advisors. The local authority mini survey found that, overall, Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities appreciated the support from Attainment Advisors.

2.26. There was also evidence that there could be improved support, achieved via consistency in staffing and (specifically mentioned by non-Challenge Authorities) increased sharing of practice and expertise.

2.27. In Year 3 of the headteacher survey, respondents indicated that support from Attainment Advisors was a key positive in relation to Challenge Authority/Schools Programme funding and PEF, respectively. A small number of respondents indicated there was scope for more support from Attainment Advisors in relation to implementation of Challenge Authority/Schools Programme funding.

2.28. Evidence from the case studies also suggested that some schools benefited from advice from Attainment Advisors, particularly around identification of interventions.

2.29. Overall, relationships with Attainment Advisors were reported as positive and important in:

- Providing a **link to national priorities** and resources;
- Identifying, organising and **evidencing impact** of appropriate interventions;
- Supporting **collaboration**

Funding

2.30. This section looks in detail at the funding received by local authorities and schools through the Attainment Scotland Fund.

2.31. Evidence is drawn primarily from Scottish Government administrative data and Challenge Authority progress reports. It also draws on responses to a question in the local authority mini survey conducted in April 2018 on local authorities' use of core education funding towards improving outcomes for pupils living in the most deprived communities.

How much funding did local authorities and schools receive?

2.32. Funding of around £52 million was distributed during the first two years of the Attainment Scotland Fund for the Challenge Authorities and Schools Programme. In total, around £165.5 million was distributed in Year 3 of the ASF. This included:

- £38.4 million Challenge Authority Programme;
- £6.9 million Schools Programme;
- £120.2 million Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

2.33. PEF was introduced in Year 3 and was allocated to schools on the basis of the number of children and young people in P1 to S3 who eligible and registered for free school meals.

2.34. In total, across the three years of the ASF, approximately £82.6 million was distributed to Challenge Authorities. Table 2.1 below shows funding allocations across Years 1, 2 and 3 for Challenge Authorities.

Table 2.1: Funding allocations to Challenge Authorities

Local Authority	Year 1 (2015-16)	Year 2 (2016-17)	Year 3 (2017-18)
Clackmannanshire	£718,000	£1,253,999	£1,548,000
Dundee	£2,145,000	£4,041,682	£5,582,805
East Ayrshire	-	£2,037,323	£2,760,659
Glasgow	£3,030,000	£9,107,262	£7,665,677
Inverclyde	£592,000	£2,103,269	£3,100,200
North Ayrshire	£1,965,000	£3,490,024	£4,874,620
North Lanarkshire	£2,241,000	£6,897,347	£7,274,968
Renfrewshire	-	£1,711,919	£3,531,000
West Dunbartonshire	£1,024,000	£1,850,410	£2,013,108
Total	**£11,715,000**	**£32,493,235**	**£38,351,037**

2.35. East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire Councils were introduced into the Challenge Authority Programme in Year 2. There were no further changes to the Challenge Authority Programme in Year 3 in terms of local authority involvement. However, the overall funding allocation to Challenge Authorities increased by £5.8 million between Year 2 and Year 3, an increase of 18%.

2.36. In terms of the Schools Programme, Table 2.2 below outlines funding allocations to the Schools Programme by local authority. As East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire Councils were introduced to the Challenge Authority Programme at the start of Year 2, there were no further allocations to either authority through the Schools Programme from Year 2 onwards. The overall Schools Programme allocation increased from just under £5.2 million in Year 2, to £6.9 million in Year 3, an increase of £1.6 million (31%).

Table 2.2: Funding allocations – Schools Programme by Local Authority

Local Authority	Year 1 (2015-16)	Year 2 (2016-17)	Year 3 (2017-18)
Aberdeen City	£157,500	£454,565	£597,938
Argyll & Bute	£20,000	£19,944	£25,002
Dumfries & Galloway	£45,000	£116,533	£139,494
East Ayrshire	£291,470	-	-
Edinburgh	£304,645	£743,808	£800,742
Falkirk	£73,000	£169,463	£282,768
Fife	£416,112	£685,944	£965,687
Highland	£92,700	£594,209	£965,565
Renfrewshire	£231,120	-	-
Scottish Borders	£66,650	£166,620	£218,167
South Ayrshire	£150,400	£299,580	£399,523
South Lanarkshire	£548,690	£1,619,271	£2,019,374
Stirling	£45,600	£166,581	£180,268
West Lothian	£26,197	£188,139	£256,505
Total	**£2,469,084**	**£5,224,657**	**£6,851,032**

2.37. Pupil Equity Funding allocations at both school level and local authority level have been published online. In the first year of PEF, over £120 million was distributed to schools (see also Table 2.3). This included 1927 primary schools, 358 secondary schools and 112 special schools. A total of 8 grant maintained schools also received PEF.

Was the ASF used according to requirements?

2.38. Evidence provided in Challenge Authority progress reports suggested that funding was being used according to requirements, with Challenge Authorities having clear work-streams in place. Challenge Authorities reported that they were able to spend a greater proportion of their allocated funding in Year 3 than the previous year. All but two of the Challenge Authorities reported some degree of underspend.

2.39. Table 2.3 compares spend versus allocation across the three years by funding stream.

2.40. This shows that Challenge Authorities spent 92% of their allocated budget overall in Year 3, with some variation at the local authority level. Similarly, 90% of Schools Programme funding was spent in Year 3.

2.41. There was however higher underspend in Year 3 overall. This was due to an underspend of PEF in Year 3, with £72.2 million of the £120.1 million (excluding grant maintained schools) allocation (60%) spent.

2.42. The underspend in Year 1 of PEF was in line with what occurred in the Year 1 of both the Challenge Authority and Schools Programme strands. In addition, the biggest investment schools made was in relation to staffing. Although PEF was allocated in April, schools could often not start employing staff until August. Emerging evidence from Year 4 of the ASF (2018-19) suggests a lower level of underspend in Year 2. We will review this in Year 4 of the evaluation. 120208000

Table 2.3: Funding allocation and spend Years 1, 2 and 3

		Allocation £ (Million)	Actual Spend £ (Million)	*Spend vs Allocation %*
Year 1 (2015-16)	**Challenge Authorities**	£11.7	£5.9	*50%*
	Schools Programme	£2.5	£2.3	*92%*
	PEF	-	-	
	Total	**£14.2**	**£8.2**	***58%***
Year 2 (2016-17)	**Challenge Authorities**	£32.5	£25	*77%*
	Schools Programme	£5.2	£4	*77%*
	PEF	-	-	-
	Total	**£37.7**	**£29**	***77%***
Year 3 (2017-18)	**Challenge Authorities**	£38.4	£35.1	*92%*
	Schools Programme	£6.9	£6.1	*90%*
	PEF*	£120.1	£72.2	*60%*
	Total	**£165.3**	**£113.5**	***69%***

* In addition, £108 K PEF funding was allocated to Grant Maintained Schools in 2017-18. Just under £77 K (71%) of this allocation was spent

2.43. There was limited evidence gathered regarding the extent to which the ASF was supplemented from other sources. One Challenge Authority continued to receive funding from other sources, as had been the case in Years 1 and 2, and their progress report made reference to the wider impact of the general strategy with regard to raising attainment. It was unclear from progress reports submitted whether other Challenge Authorities were supplementing funding from other sources.

Use of core funding towards equitable outcomes

2.44. There was some emerging evidence that local authorities have changed the way they use core funding as a result of the Attainment Scotland Fund. Over half of respondents to the local authority mini survey indicated that they had changed the way they used core funding as a result of the Attainment Scotland Fund. From 22 local authority respondents, 13 had changed the way they used core resources, including core education funding, to improve outcomes for pupils experiencing poverty-related disadvantage.

2.45. Two key themes emerged from local authority responses regarding how this occurred:

- **Deprivation as a focus.** Many authorities, both Challenge and non-Challenge, indicated that as a result of the ASF, all their resources were being used with a clearer focus on deprivation and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- **Greater joined-up working.** Some authorities, both Challenge and non-Challenge, also indicated that there was greater joined-up working across services as a result of the ASF, or that they now involved wider partners for service delivery.

2.46. Of the 8 authorities who had not identified changes in how core resources were used, a wide range of reasons were given:

- Perception that changes in allocation of funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils would have happened in any case;
- Perception of existing focus on delivery of excellence and equity;
- Perception that as PEF went directly to schools the funding formula at the local authority level was not altered.

2.47. In addition, qualitative evidence from schools involved in the case studies suggested that the impact of ASF supported interventions was somewhat offset by overall reduction in wider resourcing. For a few schools, this somewhat limited the extent to which the funded interventions were ‘additional’ as they would have previously or been expected to be provided through core funding.

3. Interventions and Targeting Approaches

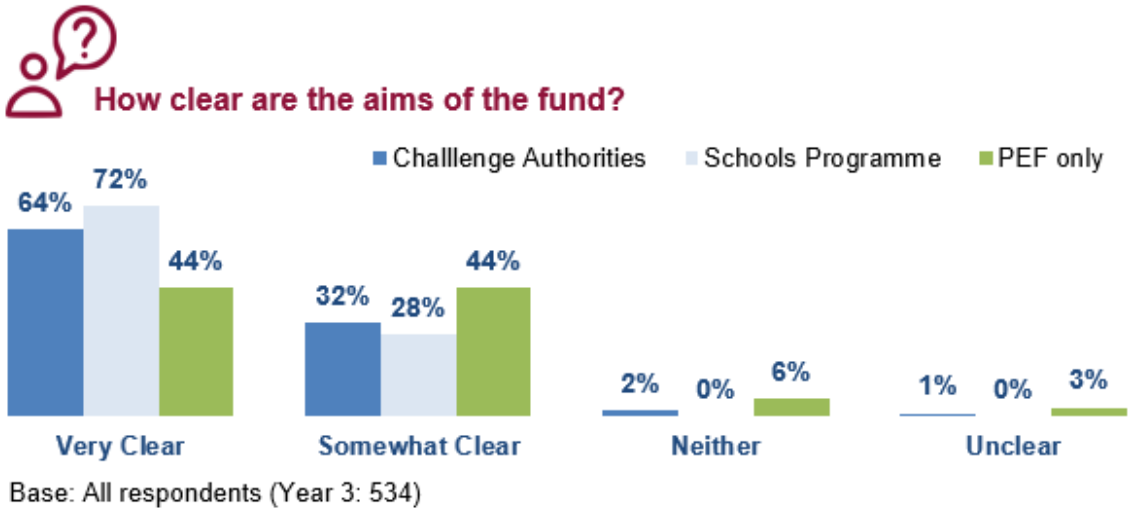
3.1. This chapter focuses on the types of interventions that were implemented as a result of the ASF and how these were planned for and targeted to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap. This is preceded by a brief section exploring engagement with the aims of the ASF.

Engagement with Programme Aims

3.2. Information about the extent to which the aims of the ASF were understood and supported was gathered primarily from the headteacher survey.

3.3. In Year 3 of the ASF, 91% of headteachers felt the aims of the ASF were clear (51% very clear and 40% somewhat clear). This compares to 97% in Year 2 of the ASF and appears to reflect less clarity amongst headteachers of schools only receiving PEF.

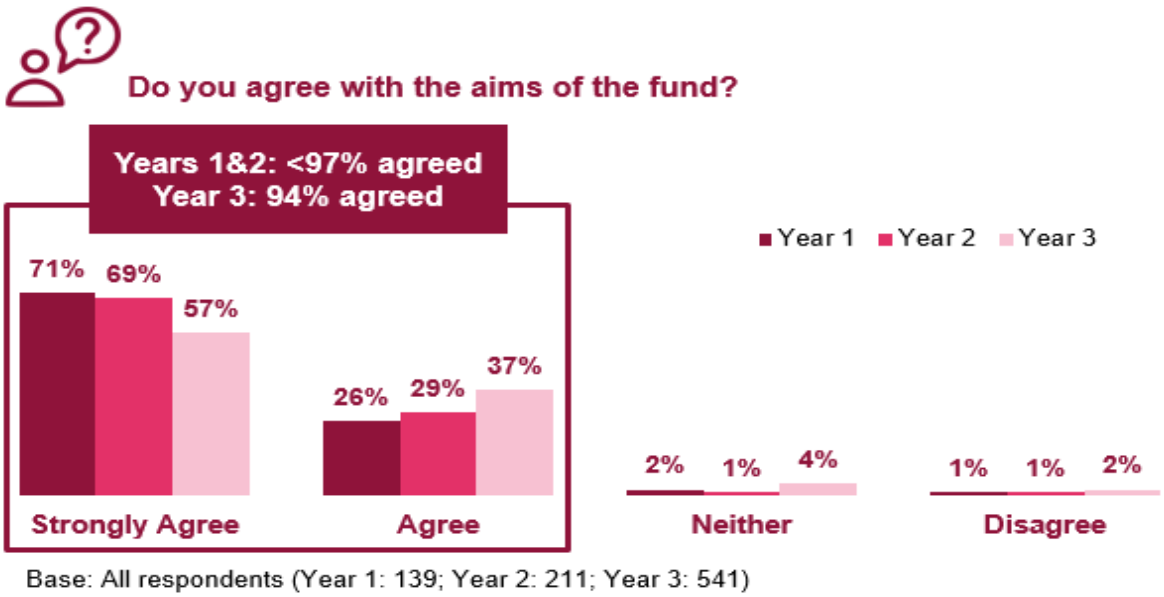
Figure 3.1: Clarity of the aims of the ASF, headteacher survey



3.4. As in previous years, respondents to the headteacher survey were also asked to report on the extent to which they agreed with the aims of the ASF. Whilst a large majority agreed with the aims of the ASF, there

was slightly less agreement than in previous years. This was consistent across respondent groups (96% of Challenge Authority schools agreed; 97% of Schools Programme and 93% of PEF only).

Figure 3.2: Agreement with the aims of the ASF, headteacher survey



Base: All respondents (Year 1: 139; Year 2: 211; Year 3: 541)

3.5. A small number of headteachers (2% of all survey respondents) indicated in their written comments reasons for not agreeing with the aims of the ASF. This included a belief that the focus of the ASF is too narrow and that allocating PEF on the basis of Free School Meal entitlement disadvantages those where take-up rates are low. Headteachers also raised concerns about the limited impacts that the ASF can have within the context of local cuts in education funding.

3.6. Local authorities also indicated commitment to the aims of the ASF. The long-term outcomes identified by Challenge Authorities in the progress reports for their planned programme of work were in line with those identified nationally.

Interventions and Approaches

3.7. This section focusses on how interventions were organised and planned for; the types of interventions that were implemented; and how these interventions were targeted.

Planning for interventions

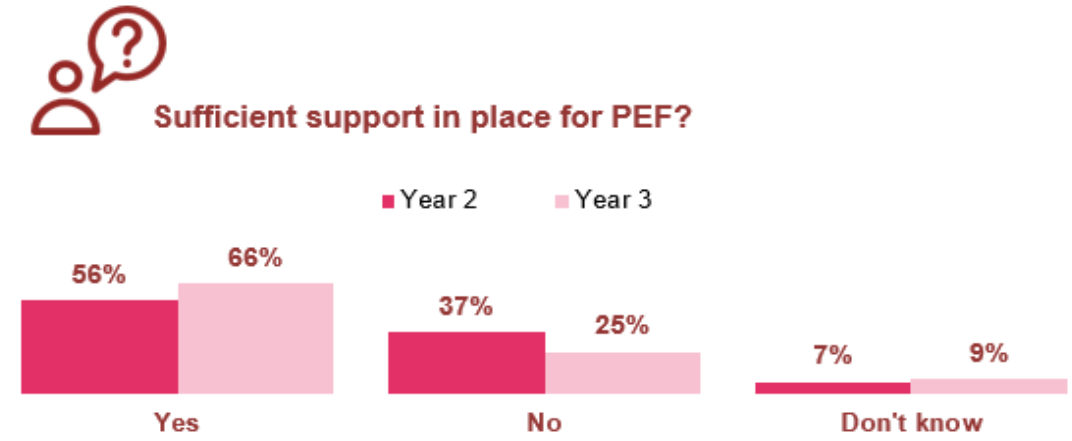
3.8. Year 3 was the first year of PEF and the first section focuses on the experiences of local authorities and schools in planning for PEF specifically.

3.9. The local authority mini survey asked both Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities to report on their experience of planning and implementing PEF. As reported in Chapter 2, all authorities provided some kind of support to schools. There was evidence that schools had access to central support in the form of guidance documentation and/or local authority officers (e.g. Quality Improvement Officers).

3.10. In Year 3 of the online survey, 66% of headteachers indicated they felt there was sufficient support in place to help them develop their plans for PEF. This is an increase from 56% in Year 2 of the survey when only schools in receipt of Challenge Authority or Schools Programme participated.

3.11. There was also a decrease in the number of headteachers not feeling there was sufficient support in place (25% in Year 3 compared to 37% in Year 2).

Figure 3.3: Sufficient support in place, headteacher survey



Base: All headteachers in receipt of PEF (Year 2: 312; Year 3: 449)

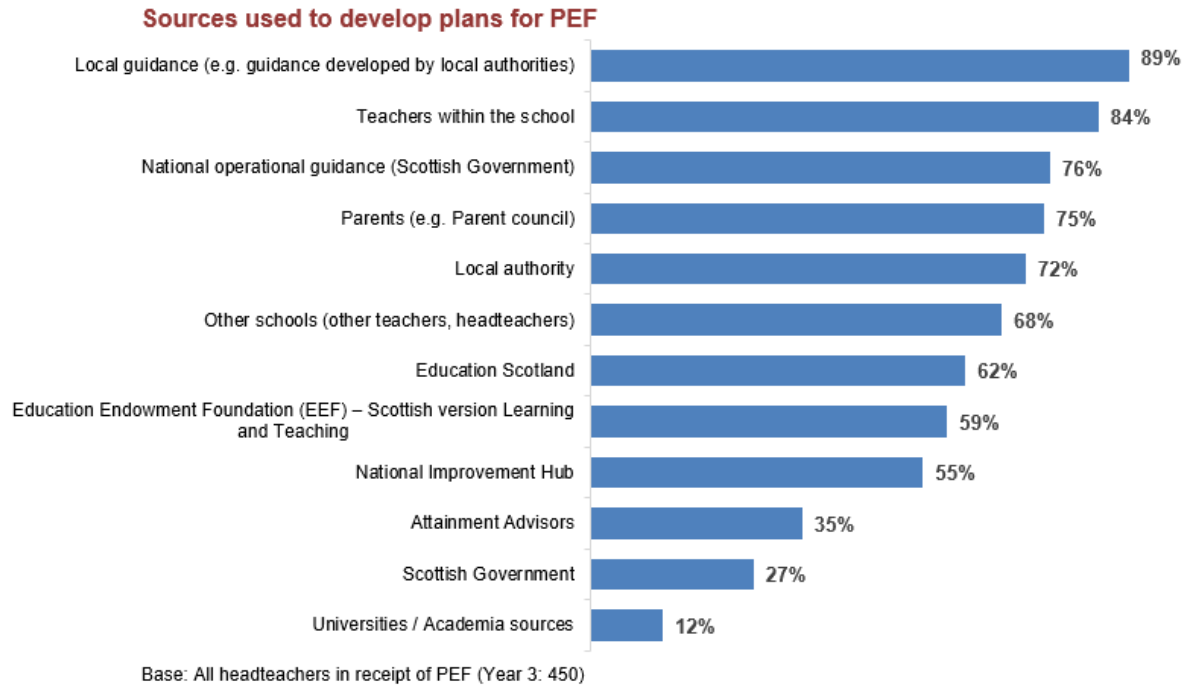
3.12. For those who did not feel there had been sufficient support, this was most commonly because of insufficient time in planning following the 2017/18 allocation of funding.

3.13. Insufficient time for planning following the 2017/18 notification of PEF allocation was also a common feature of the evidence from case studies. There was however emerging evidence that planning in

2018/19 had benefitted from longer timescales. This will be explored further in the evaluation for Year 4.

3.14. Headteachers also reported that they used a range of sources to develop plans for PEF. Over 70% of headteachers reported using either local guidance, teachers in the school, national operational guidance, parents or local authority more generally.

Figure 3.4: Sources used to develop plans for PEF, headteacher survey

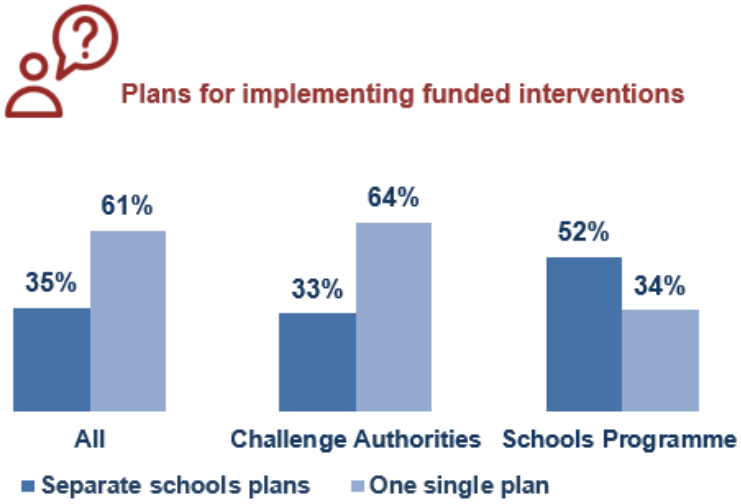


3.15. Where schools had received both Challenge Authority or Schools Programme funding *and* Pupil Equity Funding, headteachers were asked to indicate if they had created 2 distinct schools plans or whether they had a single school plan.

3.16. Overall, more respondents indicated having a single school plan (61%) compared to using 2 separate plans (35%).

3.17. However, there were some differences across funding streams. Those in Challenge Authorities also receiving PEF were more likely to report having a single school plan than headteachers receiving both Schools Programme funding and PEF.

Figure 3.5: Plans for implementing funded interventions, headteacher survey



Base: Schools receiving both Challenge Authority/Schools Programme funding and PEF (Year 3: 270)

3.18. The evaluation also considered the extent to which plans changed over time.

3.19. Headteachers responding to the online survey were asked to indicate to what extent their interventions (supported by any of the funding streams) were new, a scale up from previous year or continuing at the same level. Across both Year 2 and 3, respondents most commonly indicated that the interventions were newly introduced.

3.20. In Year 3 of the headteacher survey, there was an increase in those reporting that most interventions were newly introduced and a reduction in those reporting that most interventions were a scale up of an intervention implemented in previous year. This reflects the inclusion of PEF-only schools; 61% reported that most interventions were newly introduced compared to 30% of Schools Programme schools and 47% of Challenge Authority schools.

3.21. Schools receiving both Challenge Authority or Schools Programme funding *and* PEF were asked whether they had stopped or were planning to stop any interventions supported by the ASF.

3.22. Overall, only a small proportion of headteachers indicated stopping interventions. In relation to interventions supported by Challenge Authority or Schools Programme funding, 11% of headteachers indicated they had stopped or were planning to stop interventions. This compared to 20% of headteachers indicating they had stopped/were planning to stop PEF supported interventions.

3.23. A small number of headteachers provided reasons for stopping interventions in their written comments. Commonly reported reasons for stopping interventions included, in order of frequency:

- Lack of any evidence of impact,
- Reduction in resources, including financial and staffing
- Change of focus over time (e.g. between literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing)
- Feedback from pupils, parents or teachers
- Changes in local authority priorities

Type of interventions

3.24. In their progress reports, Challenge Authorities reported on the interventions they were implementing around literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Interventions on literacy and numeracy were prominent in the primary programme. There was also some evidence that secondary school interventions tended to focus more health and wellbeing.

3.25. There was some evidence from the school case studies that schools with relatively less funding were more likely plan work that supported existing interventions. Those with higher allocations reported more interventions that also had broader scope.

3.26. In the headteacher survey, respondents were asked to list interventions supported in their school during 2017/18 by Challenge Authority, Schools Programme or Pupil Equity Funding. Of those providing details of their interventions, most schools referred to interventions across all areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

3.27. From the Challenge Authority progress reports, there was some evidence that progress was still balanced in favour of the primary schools. This will be important to continue to explore in the evaluation of Year 4.

3.28. Challenge Authority funding was also used to support interventions in the Early Years and at least 4 authorities had developed this as part of their formal strategy.

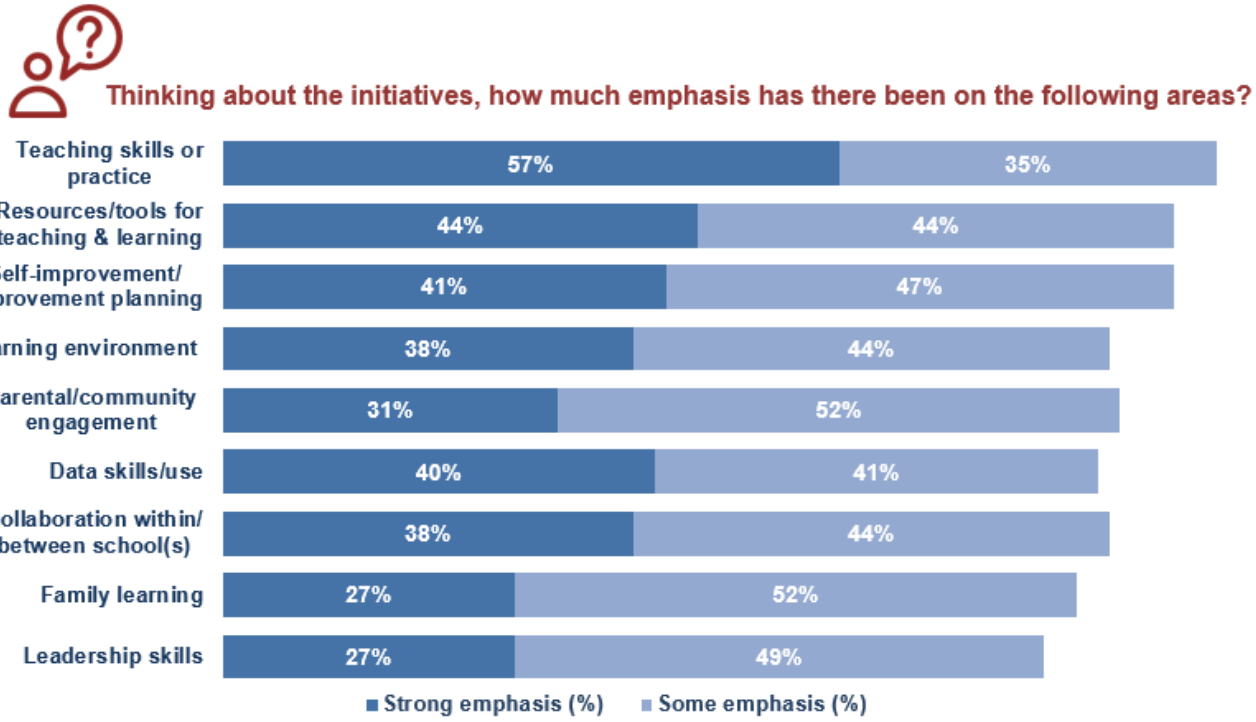
3.29. Challenge Authorities also focused their interventions on leadership, parental engagement/families and communities, and data analysis.

3.30. In line with the findings from Years 1 and 2, 93% of headteachers reported that there was at least some focus on teaching skills or

practice. However, whereas in Year 2, 76% reported a strong emphasis, in Year 3, only 57% reported a strong emphasis. Challenge Authority schools were more likely than schools only in receipt of PEF to report a strong emphasis.

3.31. Figure 3.6 below shows reported emphasis on other potential areas of focus. This list of areas changed from Years 2 to 3 of the survey and therefore is not directly comparable.

Figure 3.6: Focus of interventions, headteacher survey



Base: All respondents (Year 3: between 457 and 472 dependent on question item)

Targeting interventions

3.32. In Year 3, there was evidence of both targeting and universal approaches at local authority and school level.

3.33. Challenge Authorities generally indicated that all schools in their local authority had access to ASF support, with some specific targeting for certain schools or interventions.

3.34. There was evidence that measures of deprivation were being used to target interventions. Outwith the universal offer, some schools within Challenge Authorities were specifically targeted based on socio-economic characteristics.

3.35. Challenge Authorities also reported using other characteristics to target their improvement activity. For example, additional support needs, which included having English as an additional language or being care experienced, were often taken into consideration.

3.36. At the school level, 73% of headteachers indicated that most of their interventions were targeted at pupils or parents living in the most deprived areas. This was consistent with results from Year 2.

3.37. Over half (58%) of respondents also reported targeting at least some of their interventions in 'other' ways. A total of 153 respondents provided a description of these other ways. This included using attainment or attendance, exclusion or risk of exclusion data. Headteachers also looked to individual characteristics when targeting their interventions, including: additional support needs; care experienced; adverse childhood experiences and having English as an additional language. Finally, a lack of family engagement was reported by a few respondents as the basis for targeting.

3.38. Other information on approaches to targeting came from the school case studies. As reported by Challenge Authorities, schools often extended the reach of their interventions beyond measures of deprivation, such as Free School Meals. Schools considered a range of additional support needs such as care-experienced pupils, those with English as an additional language or those facing Adverse Childhood Experiences. They also drew on attainment related evidence when targeting their programme of improvement activity.

3.39. Qualitative evidence from the case studies suggested that, associated with a targeted approach was an increased awareness amongst staff of the impact of poverty on attainment. This resonates with the findings from Years 1 and 2.

3.40. In addition, it seemed that the profile of the school influenced the nature of targeted approaches. For example, schools with a large proportion of their school roll from the most deprived areas needed to take into consideration other criteria in order to prioritise resources. For schools with a very small proportion of their school role registered for FSM, consideration of wider range of needs helped ensure an inclusive approach.

4. Short and Medium term Outcomes

4.1. This chapter begins to consider the impact of the ASF. It starts by describing the short and medium term outcomes that local authorities and schools reported they were trying to achieve, and their perceptions around success in meeting these outcomes.

4.2. The discussion of short to medium term outcomes is then followed by sections focusing in detail on the impact of the ASF in terms of:

- Collaboration
- Use of Data
- Unintended consequences

Short and medium term outcomes of interventions

4.3. Evidence from the Challenge Authority reports indicated that interventions were trying to improve outcomes for children and young people, teachers/other staff and parents. Most of the reported short and medium term outcomes focussed on the professional development of teachers or support staff. Examples of outcomes are shown below.

- **Teachers/Other Staff**: Improved confidence in identifying/implementing pedagogical approaches; increased teaching and learning skills; improved skills and confidence in relation to using data or improvement methodologies; improved leadership skills; increased motivation of staff to change and share practice; increased sharing of practice between schools and improved relationships with partners
- **Children and Young People:** increased attainment, attendance and exclusions; improved confidence, health and wellbeing; improved curricular transitions; improved quality of learning experience; improved relationships between pupils and teachers
- **Parents:** Increased parental engagement; increased confidence in supporting their children's learning; improved positive relationships within the family.

4.4. Evidence on factors that local authorities thought contributed to whether interventions achieved their short and medium term outcomes was gathered from the Challenge Authority progress reports. Factors raised included:

- a focus on collaboration and partnership working;
- the ability to create an approach tailored to local context and circumstances;
- a strategic approach together with a focus on specific interventions;
- support and challenge provided by local authority and Attainment Advisors;
- increased leadership capacity; and,
- the embedding of evaluation and feedback loops to ensure that learning contributed to ongoing development.

4.5. Evidence on factors that helped interventions to succeed in improving attainment more generally is discussed in Chapter 5.

Collaboration

4.6. This section considers the extent to which the ASF encouraged collaboration amongst those receiving Challenge Authority, Schools Programme funding or PEF. Two key questions were considered:

- To what extent did the ASF encourage collaboration?
- What factors helped and hindered collaboration?

4.7. The evaluation of Years 1 and 2 highlighted the positive contribution of the ASF to both the level and nature of collaboration, with collaboration within and across schools and with external partners most commonly reported. This continued to be reflected in evidence gathered for the evaluation of Year 3.

4.8. Evidence has been gathered primarily from the headteacher survey, Challenge Authority progress reports and school case studies.

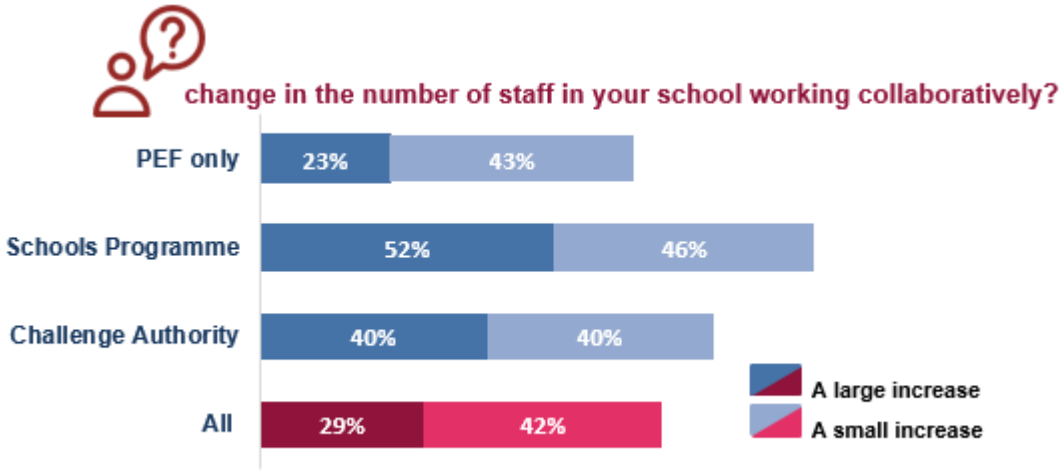
4.9. Collaborative working in schools was viewed by headteachers to have increased as a result of the ASF. Specifically, 71% of headteachers felt there had been an increase in collaboration in their school as a result of the ASF.

4.10. There were differences in the pattern of responses across funding streams. Headteachers involved in the Schools Programme were most likely to have seen an increase in collaborative working (98%) whilst those in receipt of PEF only were least likely to have seen an increase (66%).

4.11. Some of the headteachers of schools in receipt of only PEF did report an increase in collaborative working but did not feel this was

attributable to the ASF; 24% reported this compared to 15% of headteachers in Challenge Authorities and 2% of headteachers in the Schools Programme.

Figure 4.1: Change in number of staff working collaboratively, headteacher survey 2018



Base: All headteacher respondents in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 3: 470)

4.12. Those in receipt of highest 25% of PEF allocations were also more likely than those receiving the lowest 25% of PEF allocations to indicate there had been a large increase in collaborative working (51% vs 19%).

4.13. The most commonly reported reason in relation to why headteachers felt there has been an increase in collaboration was that there had been greater emphasis on collaboration from school leadership. Other factors identified in association with improved collaboration included a change of culture/ethos, increased staff resourcing and staff time, and collaboration being embedded as part of professional learning.

4.14. In instances where headteachers did not identify improved collaboration as a result of the ASF, this was commonly due to perceptions of an existing well-established culture of collaboration. There was also some evidence of headteachers believing that the ASF had not had sufficient impact on staff time or opportunities within schools for collaborative working.

4.15. Schools involved in the case studies highlighted the importance of collaborative working to the success of interventions. Most felt there had been an increase in sharing practice and collegiate working across the school, evidenced, for example, by an increase in the number of Professional Learning Communities or collaborative research groups.

4.16. Collaboration continued to feature strongly in Year 3 Challenge Authority progress reports. In terms of collaboration with external partners, partnerships were evident with universities, the third sector and other professionals, such as social work and educational psychologists.

4.17. A mapping exercise in April 2018 revealed that Challenge Authorities were working with universities to support their evaluation of the impact of the ASF. Challenge Authority progress reports also indicated specific engagement with the Robert Owen Centre (University of Glasgow).

4.18. Also highlighted in Challenge Authority progress reports were improved opportunities for collaboration between schools. There was also some emerging evidence in September progress reports of improved linkages between primary and secondary schools.

4.19. Local authorities responding to the online survey also discussed improved collaboration between schools as a positive consequence of the ASF.

4.20. There was some evidence of the development of mechanisms to facilitate collaboration within Challenge Authorities. For example, one Challenge Authority had created a number of thematic networks (e.g., numeracy, early years, STEM) to support collaboration.

4.21. In addition, whilst the evaluation found limited evidence of collaboration between local authorities, Regional Improvement Collaboratives were mentioned as an important mechanism for information sharing. It will be important to monitor the progress of this in future years of the evaluation.

Use of Data and Evidence

4.22. This section explores the extent to which schools and local authorities have used data, analysis and knowledge of what works to monitor and inform their improvement activity.

4.23. Evidence was gathered in bi-annual Challenge Authority progress reports, the annual headteacher survey, local authority mini survey and school case studies.

4.24. As evidenced during the first two years of funding, there was clear evidence of an ongoing commitment to the use of data for identifying, targeting and monitoring interventions in Year 3. For example, analysis of Challenge Authority progress reports showed that embedding use of

data was viewed by local authorities as crucial to the success of their identified work-streams.

4.25. A wide variety of data sources were cited by Challenge Authorities in their progress reports. These included:

- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL)
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT)
- Positive destinations
- Attendance
- Exclusions

4.26. Most Challenge Authorities complemented this data with other evidence sources, including: local surveys (including pre- and post-implementation); qualitative focus groups; feedback forms; pupil assessments and attendance tracking.

4.27. In addition, in April 2018, a mapping study revealed that 6 out of the 9 Challenge Authorities had commissioned an external evaluation to help measure progress and impact of the funding received. These evaluations were undertaken by universities and typically focussed on one of their planned work-streams.

4.28. Training on evaluation and understanding data continued to be delivered to headteachers, teachers and/or practitioners in Challenge Authorities.

4.29. Furthermore, there was some evidence amongst Challenge Authorities of the creation of bespoke tools for direct use by schools. For example, one Challenge Authority had created a monitoring and tracking database for schools to use to track progress on interventions. In another, a specific tool to support schools to measure the impact of interventions was being piloted across the local authority. There was also evidence of the development of bespoke measures of deprivation to enable targeting of improvement activity by some local authorities. This raises the potential for authorities to learn from each other about these approaches as they develop, and to share emerging practice so that these can support other authorities in their own developments.

4.30. As was found in Years 1 and 2, local authorities (both Challenge and non-Challenge) continued to value the role of Attainment Advisors in planning and evaluation. This included support with identifying appropriate outcomes and data analysis.

4.31. Overall, at local authority level, there was clear recognition of the value of using data to drive improvements. There was also evidence that authorities were making efforts to gather a range of data. It remains important to consider the impact of this increased data use on educational decisions and practice.

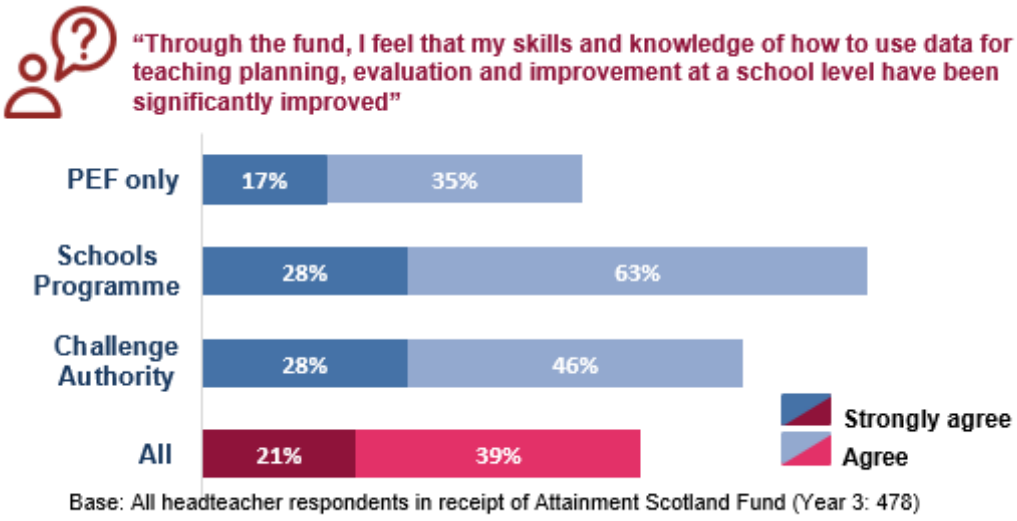
4.32. The headteacher survey and school case studies provided evidence of how data was being used at the school level.

4.33. Year 3 of the headteacher survey highlighted positive features of data use at the school level. There were no significant differences in responses from different funding streams or changes from Year 2 of the survey.

- **90%** felt confident using data and evidence to inform the development of interventions;
- **90%** reported that they always use evidence to measure the impact of interventions;
- **92%** reported having an evaluation plan in place to monitor the progress and impact of interventions.

4.34. Over half of headteachers (60%) also felt their skills and knowledge of how to use data for teaching, planning and improvement had improved through the ASF. Headteachers of schools receiving PEF only were less likely to report that their skills and knowledge had improved.

Figure 4.2: Skills and knowledge on data use, headteacher survey



Base: All headteacher respondents in receipt of Attainment Scotland Fund (Year 3: 478)

4.35. Headteachers of schools receiving the highest 25% of PEF allocations were also significantly more likely than those receiving the lowest 25% of PEF allocations to report that their skills and knowledge in relation to data use had improved through the ASF (79% vs 38%).

4.36. Schools involved in the case studies were asked about how they had used data to support planning and monitor impact. There was some evidence of improved use of evidence to support targeted work. However, whilst data use emerged as a key feature of success at local authority level, it featured somewhat less strongly at school level. Schools were less likely to discuss data use as a key factor influencing the success of their interventions.

Unintended Consequences

4.37. Overall, the unintended consequences reported by headteachers and local authorities were consistent with those reported in Years 1 and 2 of the ASF. Evidence has been drawn from the online surveys for local authorities and headteachers.

4.38. The most common unintended positive consequence reported in Year 3 was around improved collaboration. Local authorities responding to the online survey discussed an increase in schools working together and headteachers reported an increase in collaboration and improved partnership working.

4.39. Other common unintended positive consequences reported included:

- Increased skill development
- A change in culture/ethos and increased awareness of the impact of deprivation
- Improvement in pupil and parent engagement

4.40. In line with the findings from Years 1 and 2, stakeholders continued to report concern around the impact on staff workload and resources as well as a concern around a sense of division or exclusion between those benefitting and not benefitting from the ASF.

4.41. Another unintended negative consequence reported by headteachers in Year 3 was the associated reporting requirements of the ASF and the pressure to demonstrate improvement.

5. Progress towards Long-term Impact

5.1. This section explores progress towards improvement in attainment and health and wellbeing and a reduction in the gap between pupils from the most and least deprived areas.

5.2. The first section explores evidence provided by local authorities and schools on the extent to which different types of interventions improved attainment and health and wellbeing, particularly for pupils from the most deprived areas.

5.3. The second section provides analysis of attainment and health and wellbeing data based on the agreed measures for monitoring progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap set out in the National Improvement Framework.

5.4. The final section explores the sustainability of both interventions and impact of the ASF.

Evidence on the impact of interventions

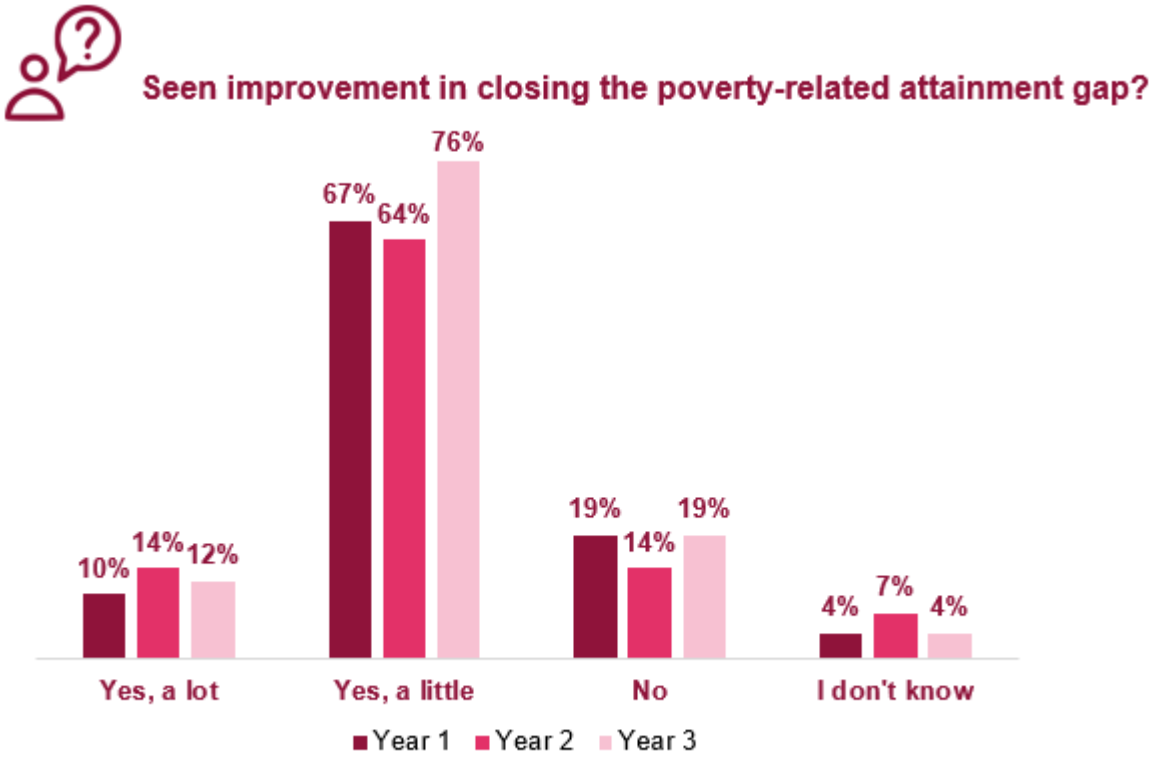
5.5. This section describes reported evidence of progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap by schools and local authorities. It also considers the factors that were felt to contribute or hinder any progress. These findings are based on feedback from schools and local authorities and should be read within this context.

Reported evidence of Impact

5.6. In the headteacher survey, 88% indicated that they had seen an improvement in closing the poverty-related gap in attainment and health & wellbeing. This was a 10 point increase from 2017, when 78% of headteachers said they had seen an improvement (see Figure 5.1).

5.7. Furthermore, 95% indicated that they *expected* to see an improvement in the next 5 years as a result of interventions supported by the ASF. This included 56% who expected to see '*a lot*' of improvement and 39% who expected to see '*a little*' improvement. This pattern of responses was largely consistent across previous waves of the survey. However, it is notable that those receiving the highest 25% of PEF allocations were more likely to report expecting to see *'a lot'* of improvement than those receiving the lowest 25% of PEF allocations (72% vs 42%).

Figure 5.1: Perceived improvement in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, headteacher survey



Base: All respondents (Year 1: 144; Year 2: 207; Year 3: 478)

5.8. Other evidence on the perceived impact of the ASF has been drawn from the Challenge Authority progress reports and school case studies.

5.9. Challenge Authorities were asked to report the findings from analysis of evidence they were using to measure progress towards long-term outcomes.

5.10. Authorities reported a range of changes in pupils, teachers or families engaged in specific interventions. For example, one authority noted improved wellbeing for pupils attending counselling. Another example was authorities noting that staff were more confident in their teaching practice as the result of training.

5.11. Others provided evidence of impact more generally within their authority. Five authorities drew on Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) data to provide evidence of improvement in numeracy and literacy within their authority. Other sources of evidence collected by authorities included: attendance and exclusion statistics, standardised assessment data, information contained in evidence reports (e.g. Standards and Quality reports, inspection reports and case studies).

5.12. Whilst Challenge Authorities noted improvements overall in attainment and achievement, it was not always clear the extent to which this related to closing the poverty-related attainment gap. In addition, some statements of impact were not supported by the provision of clear evidence. Statistical evidence in relation to patterns of attainment within and across authorities is provided later in the chapter.

5.13. Schools participating in the follow-up case studies were asked to note the impact of their interventions on improved outcomes for pupils as well as specific improvements in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

5.14. Many of the schools reported that the evidence base around what works to improve attainment and wellbeing in relation to the poverty-related gap is still developing.

5.15. As a result of their improvement work, case study schools had observed improvements in pupils' confidence, engagement and emotional wellbeing. These improvements were sometimes accompanied by reported changes in pupils' literacy and numeracy outcomes. However, schools were of the view that improvements in wellbeing was critical for more long-term improvements in attainment.

Influencing factors

5.16. Evidence on the factors that local authorities and schools thought helped interventions to succeed (or not) in closing the poverty-related attainment gap was gathered from the headteacher survey, follow up school case studies and Challenge Authority progress reports.

5.17. One of the most commonly mentioned factors contributing positively to achieved impacts was an increase in collaborative working and sharing of practice. This was discussed in detail in chapter 4.

5.18. There was also evidence, from both a local authority and schools perspective, that increased opportunities for staff to develop their skills and undertake continued professional development had supported the success of interventions.

5.19. The evaluation of Years 1 & 2 noted that schools and local authorities found parental engagement challenging. There continued to be evidence that this was an area of difficulty for schools and authorities. However, schools noted that where it had worked, parental engagement had been key to their wider improvements.

5.20. There were also factors that seemed more specific to either a local authority or schools perspective. Nearly 250 of the headteachers participating in the online survey gave responses in relation to the factors that helped interventions to succeed in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

5.21. At the school level, 70%[2] of these headteachers participating in the online survey indicated that the increase in the number of teachers and other staff was an important factor in contributing to the success of the interventions. More dedicated staff time was also mentioned by schools participating in the follow up case studies.

5.22. For Challenge Authorities, more effective use of data seemed to have been particularly important to driving forward improvements.

5.23. Other factors reported by headteachers in the online survey included:

- Teacher training and skills development
- Resources and funding
- Family engagement
- Shared set of objectives, collective focus
- Use of data and evidence
- Effective targeting of support

5.24. The most common factor noted by both Challenge Authorities and schools that had the potential to hinder the success of the ASF was staffing issues.

5.25. At the school level, 51% of the 247 headteachers responding to this question noted that staffing, staff time and workload was a potential barrier to success. Similarly, evidence from the case studies suggested that both recruitment and staff cover for training had been particularly difficult.

5.26. Challenge Authorities also noted recruitment difficulties, particularly for specialised posts, and issues with regard to managing both staff cover and turnover.

[2] Of those answering the question (n=245)

5.27. Several of the schools involved in the case studies reflected that the potential impact of the fund was somewhat limited within the context of a wider reduction in funding for services or resources previously available. A few schools questioned the extent to which the ASF was 'additional'.

5.28. For Challenge Authorities, there was some evidence of difficulties in ensuring a consistent approach where all staff and schools are committed to the authority's approach.

5.29. Other less frequently mentioned factors hindering the success of interventions reported by headteachers included:

- The nature and level of pupils' needs
- Wider community issues, including pupils' home situation
- Organisational issues, including reporting and paperwork requirements
- Difficulties ensuring effective targeting
- Teacher training and skills development

Evidence of impact: attainment and wellbeing

5.30. The measures used to assess improvement in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and the poverty-related attainment gap are in line with those reported in the 2018 National Improvement Framework Evidence Dashboard. Measures with available data for this reporting period are shown in Table 5.1.

5.31. All of the measures are available at Scotland and local authority level. For the purposes of this report, we focus on patterns of attainment in Challenge Authorities, who have been involved with the ASF since 2015. Where appropriate, we report on differences between Challenge Authorities and non-Challenge Authorities.

5.32. We will continue to consider what additional analysis might be appropriate to explore patterns of attainment and how the poverty-related attainment gap varies according to different characteristics.

Table 5.1: Measures of progress towards long-term outcomes

	Measure	Age group(s)	Years reported			
			Pre ASF 2014/15	Year 1 (2015/16)	Year 2 (2016/17)	Year 3 (2017/18)
Attainment	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels	P1, P4 and P7 S3			[a]	✔
	SQA Qualifications – SCQF Level 5 and 6 or better	School leavers		✔	✔	
	Participation Measure	16-19 year olds			✔	✔
Health & Wellbeing	Attendance rates	Primary Secondary	✔		✔	
	Exclusion rates	Primary Secondary	✔		✔	

[a] Data is reported in the previously published interim evaluation of Years 1 and 2

Primary school attainment

5.33. This section describes the attainment of P1, P4 and P7 pupils in Literacy and Numeracy, using Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL).

5.34. ACEL data is provided for Year 3 (2017/18) of the ASF and focusses on progress within Challenge Authorities. **The data continues to be under development and caution should be applied when making comparisons between local authorities and years.**

Primary attainment and the poverty-related gap – Literacy

5.35. Literacy attainment is defined in this section by combining scores across the 3 curriculum organisers (Reading, Writing, Listening & Talking). A combined score for pupils at Primary 1, 4 and 7 is reported[3].

[3] For methodological details, please see Chapter 8 of the ACEL publication

This is in line with the finalised basket of key measures set out in the National Improvement Framework.

5.36. Table 5.2 shows the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels in literacy across Scotland in each of the Challenge Authorities.

5.37. In Year 3 of the ASF, four of the nine Challenge Authorities reported a higher percentage of their primary pupils achieving expected levels in literacy compared to Scotland overall.

5.38. At an overall level, Challenge Authorities reported a lower percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels in literacy compared to Scotland.

Table 5.2: Percentage of Primary Pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy, by Challenge Authority, 2017/18

Local Authority	
Clackmannanshire	72.1
Dundee	65.5
East Ayrshire	58.6
Glasgow	68.8
Inverclyde	73.5
North Ayrshire	72.4
North Lanarkshire	69.0
Renfrewshire	76.4
West Dunbartonshire	66.8
Challenge Authorities	**69.1**
Non-Challenge Authorities	**72.5**
Scotland	**71.4**

Source: Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels, Scottish Government

5.39. Table 5.3 shows the percentage of primary pupils from the 20% most and 20% least deprived areas achieving expected levels in literacy across the Challenge Authorities, and considers performance in Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities.

5.40. In relation to the attainment gap in literacy for primary pupils in 2017/18:

- 6 Challenge Authorities had a smaller attainment gap compared to Scotland.
- 5 Challenge Authorities recorded a higher percentage of primary pupils from the most deprived areas achieving expected levels, compared to Scotland as a whole

Table 5.3: Percentage of Primary Pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy, by deprivation and Challenge Authority, 2017/18

	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	63.5	79.5	15.9
Dundee	59.3	80.1	20.8
East Ayrshire	47.8	77.6	29.8
Glasgow	65.0	85.1	20.1
Inverclyde	62.8	89.3	26.5
North Ayrshire	65.7	83.3	17.6
North Lanarkshire	60.0	83.0	23.0
Renfrewshire	68.1	85.7	17.6
West Dunbartonshire	61.2	82.6	21.4
Challenge Authorities	**62.6**	**83.3**	**20.7**
Non-Challenge Authorities	**60.9**	**83.5**	**22.5**
Scotland	**62**	**83.4**	**21.4**

Source: Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels, Scottish Government

5.41. Table 5.3 also shows how Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities performed as a group, compared to Scotland overall.

5.42. Overall, in Year 3, the attainment gap in literacy for primary pupils was smaller in Challenge Authorities compared to the average at both national level and in non-Challenge Authorities. This is consistent with findings from Year 2, published in the previous interim report.

5.43. In Year 3, a higher percentage of primary pupils from the most deprived areas achieved expected levels in literacy in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities. This is also consistent with the pattern in Year 2.

5.44. There was little difference in the performance of pupils living in the least deprived areas in Year 3 (2017/18); around 83% of these pupils achieved expected levels in literacy in Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities and at national level.

5.45. Given that these statistics are still badged as experimental, it is important to consider differences in approaches to assessment across authorities and over time.

Primary attainment and the poverty-related gap – Numeracy

5.46. This section reports on the numeracy attainment of primary pupils and again provides a combined score for P1, P4 and P7 pupils.

5.47. Table 5.4 shows that in Year 3, three of the nine Challenge Authorities reported a higher percentage of their primary pupils achieving expected levels in numeracy, compared to Scotland overall.

5.48. At an overall level, Challenge Authorities reported a lower percentage of primary pupils achieving expected levels in numeracy compared to Scotland.

Table 5.4: Percentage of Primary Pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy, by Challenge Authority, 2017/18

Local Authority	
Clackmannanshire	77.0
Dundee	73.8
East Ayrshire	68.0
Glasgow	77.8
Inverclyde	80.0
North Ayrshire	79.5
North Lanarkshire	75.8
Renfrewshire	82.8

West Dunbartonshire	74.0
Challenge Authorities	**76.8**
Non-Challenge Authorities	**79.1**
Scotland	**78.4**

Source: Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels, Scottish Government

5.49. Table 5.5 shows the percentage of primary pupils from the 20% most and 20% least deprived areas achieving expected levels in numeracy across the Challenge Authorities, and considers performance in Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities.

5.50. In relation to the attainment gap in numeracy for primary pupils in 2017/18:

- 5 Challenge Authorities had a smaller attainment gap compared to Scotland
- 3 Challenge Authorities recorded a higher percentage of primary pupils from the most deprived areas achieving expected levels, compared to Scotland as a whole

Table 5.5: Percentage of Primary Pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy, by deprivation and Challenge Authority, 2017/18

	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	69.4	82.9	13.5
Dundee	69.1	85.4	16.3
East Ayrshire	59.3	81.7	22.4
Glasgow	75.4	89.3	13.9
Inverclyde	70.8	94.9	24.0
North Ayrshire	74.8	88.8	14.0
North Lanarkshire	68.6	87.9	19.2
Renfrewshire	75.5	90.5	15.0
West Dunbartonshire	68.3	87.2	18.8

Challenge Authorities	**72.0**	**88.1**	**16.0**
Non-Challenge Authorities	**70.1**	**87.9**	**17.8**
Scotland	**71.3**	**87.9**	**16.6**

Source: Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels, Scottish Government

5.51. Table 5.5 also shows numeracy attainment for primary pupils at an aggregate level in Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities.

5.52. Similar to literacy, a higher percentage of pupils from the most deprived areas achieved expected levels in numeracy in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities. This is again consistent with the pattern reported in Year 2.

5.53. The attainment gap in numeracy for primary pupils was smaller in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities. This is consistent with the pattern in Year 2.

Secondary school attainment

5.54. This section provides data on the percentage of S3 pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy and Numeracy, using Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL).

5.55. Data is provided for Challenge Authorities and considers progress in Year 3 (2017/18). **However, as stated earlier, as the data continues to be under development, caution should be applied when making comparisons between local authorities.**

Secondary attainment and the poverty-related gap – Literacy

5.56. In Year 3, three of the nine Challenge Authorities reported a higher percentage of S3 pupils achieving expected levels in literacy, compared to Scotland as a whole.

5.57. Overall, Challenge Authorities reported a similar percentage of S3 pupils achieving expected levels in literacy compared to Scotland.

Table 5.6: Percentage of S3 Pupils achieving Third Level or better in Literacy, by Challenge Authority, 2017/18

Local Authority	
Clackmannanshire	83.4
Dundee	84.2
East Ayrshire	82.6
Glasgow	86.4
Inverclyde	90.5
North Ayrshire	90.8
North Lanarkshire	86.7
Renfrewshire	93.7
West Dunbartonshire	83.4
Challenge Authorities	87.1
Non-Challenge Authorities	87.4
Scotland	**87.3**

Source: Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels, Scottish Government

5.58. Table 5.7 shows the percentage of S3 pupils from the 20% most and 20% least deprived areas achieving expected levels in literacy across the Challenge Authorities, and considers performance in Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities.

5.59. Disclosure control limits the reporting for relatively small authorities. Of the five Challenge Authorities with available data one had a smaller gap compared to Scotland.

5.60. Focussing on pupils from the most deprived areas, 5 of the 9 Challenge Authorities recorded a higher percentage of S3 pupils from the most deprived areas achieving expected levels, compared to Scotland as a whole

Table 5.7: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Literacy, by deprivation and Challenge Authority, 2017/18

	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD)%	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	76.7	89-100	-
Dundee	77.1	94.9	17.8
East Ayrshire	73.7	89.3	15.7
Glasgow	83.6	96.6	13.1
Inverclyde	87.6	93-100	-
North Ayrshire	90.8	96-100	-
North Lanarkshire	82.0	95.9	13.9
Renfrewshire	90.3	96.7	6.4
West Dunbartonshire	78.4	90-100	-
Challenge Authorities	**83.0**	**95.7**	**12.8**
Non-Challenge Authorities	**79.0**	**94.4**	**15.4**
Scotland	**81.4**	**94.6**	**13.2**

Source: Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels, Scottish Government

5.61. Table 5.7 also shows the literacy attainment for S3 pupils at an aggregate level in Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities.

5.62. In line with the findings from Year 2, a higher percentage of S3 pupils from the most deprived areas achieved Third Level or better in literacy in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities.

5.63. The attainment gap in literacy for S3 pupils was also smaller in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities. This is also consistent with the pattern in Year 2.

Secondary attainment and the poverty-related gap – Numeracy

5.64. Table 5.8 shows four Challenge Authorities reported a higher percentage of S3 pupils achieving expected levels, compared to Scotland overall.

5.65. Overall, Challenge Authorities reported a lower percentage of S3 pupils achieving expected levels in numeracy compared to Scotland overall.

Table 5.8: Percentage of S3 Pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy, by Challenge Authority, 2017/18

Local Authority	
Clackmannanshire	80.4
Dundee	80.5
East Ayrshire	90.5
Glasgow	84.3
Inverclyde	85.6
North Ayrshire	91.6
North Lanarkshire	90.1
Renfrewshire	92.9
West Dunbartonshire	82.6
Challenge Authorities	87.2
Non-Challenge Authorities	89.8
Scotland	**89.0**

Source: Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels, Scottish Government

5.66. Table 5.9 shows the attainment gap in numeracy for S3 pupils, across Challenge Authorities in Year 3 (2017/18) of the ASF.

5.67. In relation to the numeracy attainment of S3 pupils from the most deprived areas, five Challenge Authorities reported a higher percentage of pupils achieving expected levels, compared to Scotland overall.

5.68. As with literacy results, disclosure control checks limit our ability to consider performance within small Challenge Authorities. Of the four authorities with available data, three had a smaller attainment gap than Scotland overall.

Table 5.9: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy, by deprivation and Challenge Authority, 2017/18

	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD)%	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD)%	Gap Percentage points
Clackmannanshire	76.0	89-100	-
Dundee	75.6	87.1	11.5
East Ayrshire	84.8	96-100	-
Glasgow	80.5	96.7	16.2
Inverclyde	82.4	93-100	-
North Ayrshire	91.7	96-100	-
North Lanarkshire	85.0	96.6	11.5
Renfrewshire	87.1	98.3	11.2
West Dunbartonshire	74.7	90-100	-
Challenge Authorities	82.2	95.8	13.5
Non-Challenge Authorities	81.1	95.7	14.5
Scotland	**81.8**	**95.7**	**13.9**

Source: Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels, Scottish Government

5.69. Table 5.9 also shows the numeracy attainment for S3 pupils at an aggregate level in Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities.

5.70. In Year 3, a higher percentage of S3 pupils from most deprived areas were achieving expected levels in Challenge Authorities, compared to those in non-Challenge Authorities. This is consistent with findings for Year 2.

5.71. The attainment gap in Year 3 was smaller in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities. This is also consistent with findings from Year 2.

Senior Phase Attainment

5.72. The first interim evaluation report provided detailed analysis of 2015/16 school leaver attainment data.

5.73. This section reports on the percentage of school leavers achieving awards by SCQF levels in 2017/18 – Year 3 of the ASF. Progress in attainment over time is considered from Year 2 (2016/17) to Year 3 (2017/18) of the ASF. Analysis of the data in this report focuses on progress in Challenge Authorities.

5.74. Overall, 85.9% of leavers achieved 1+ award at SCQF Level 5 or better and 62.2% at SCQF Level 6 or better in 2017/18. Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 show this data at local authority level, and how it compares with attainment in 2016/17.

5.75. The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 1 award at SCQF Level 5 decreased slightly over time. The picture was mixed across Challenge Authorities with five authorities showing a decline over time.

5.76. At SCQF Level 6 or better, the percentage of school leavers achieving at least 1 award increased slightly over time. The picture was again mixed across Challenge Authorities with five authorities showing improvement over time.

5.77. As with previous years, the attainment gap between school leavers from the 20% most and least deprived areas was wider at SCQF Level 6 or better than Level 5 or better (see Figure 5.4)

5.78. Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the attainment gap widened at SCQF Level 5 or better and narrowed slightly at Level 6 or better.

Figure 5.2: Percentage of leavers achieving 1+ award at SCQF Level 5 or better, 2016/17 & 2017/18

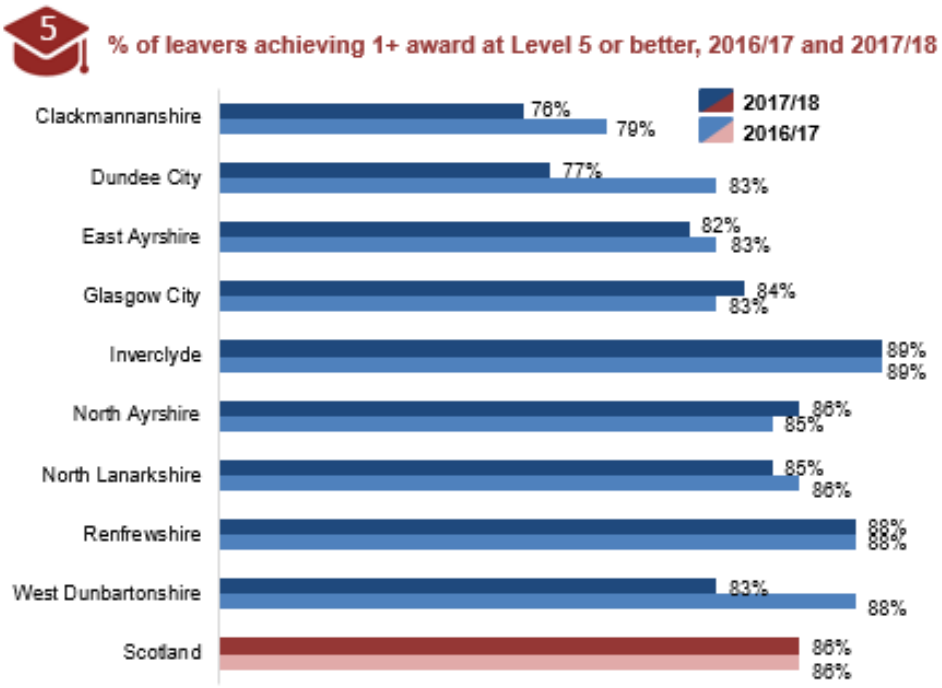
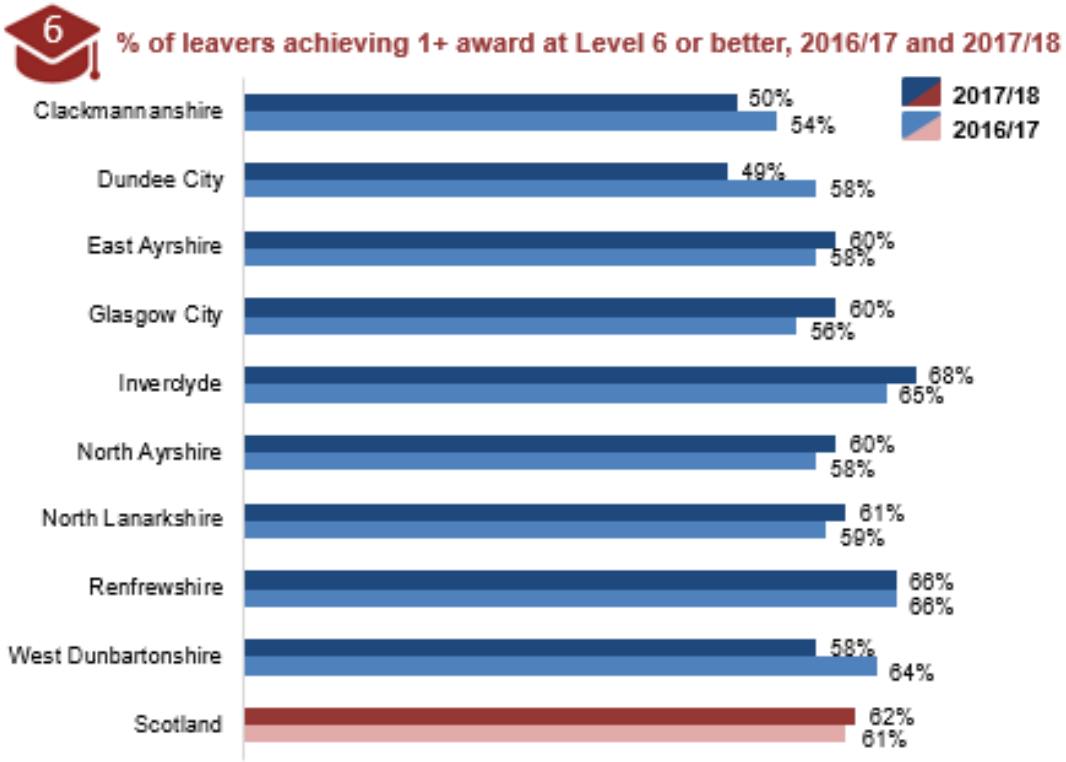
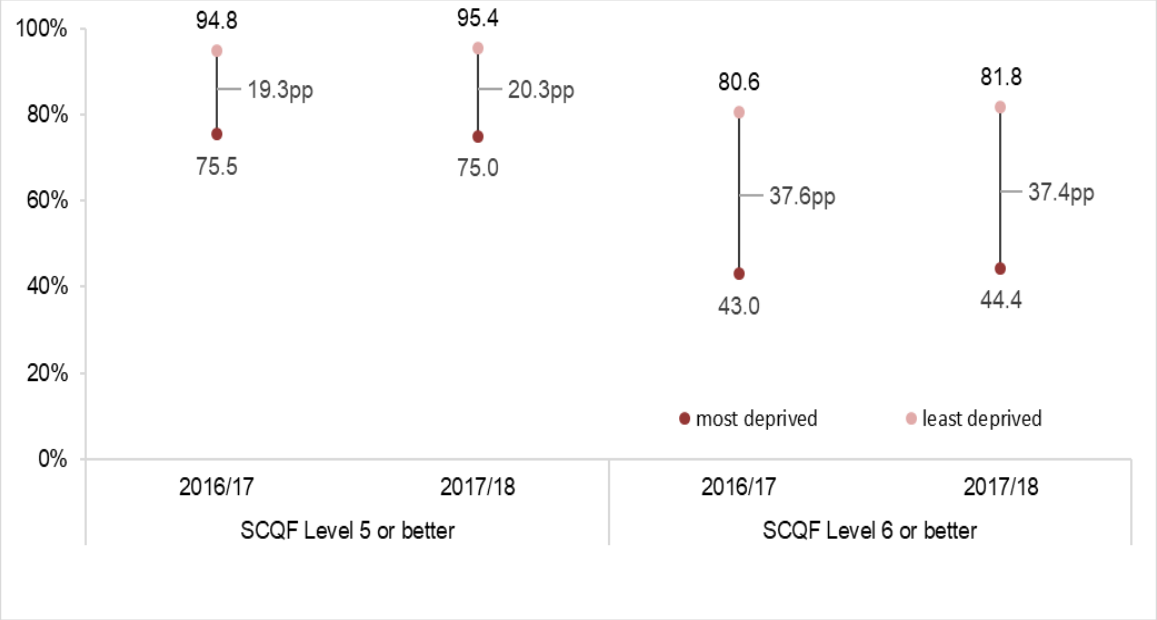


Figure 5.3: Percentage of leavers achieving 1+ award at SCQF Level 6 or better, 2016/17 & 2017/18



Source: School Leaver Destinations and Attainment, Scottish Government

Figure 5.4: Percentage of school leavers attaining 1+ SCQF awards, by deprivation, 2016/17 & 2017/18



Source: School Leaver Destinations and Attainment, Scottish Government

Across the Challenge Authorities, the attainment gap at SCQF Level 5 or better between Year 2 and 3 of the ASF (see Table 5.10):

- Increased in five local authorities: Dundee, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire.
- Decreased in three local authorities: Clackmannanshire, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.
- Remained stable over time in East Ayrshire.

5.79. However, there were variations across Challenge Authorities in the reasons underlying changes in the attainment gap. For two of the three Challenge Authorities that showed a narrowing of the gap, this was because the increase in the proportion of leavers from the most deprived areas attaining one pass or more at SCQF Level 5 was greater than the increase in the proportion of leavers from the least deprived areas attaining this.

Table 5.10: Percentage of leavers attaining 1+ awards at SCQF Level 5 or better, by Challenge Authority and deprivation, 2016/17 & 2017/18

	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %		Gap Percentage points	
	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18
Clackmannanshire	63.6	64.0	96.6	95.0	33.0	31.0
Dundee	71.7	65.0	94.8	93.0	23.2	28.0
East Ayrshire	72.1	69.9	96.6	94.5	24.5	24.6
Glasgow	79.6	79.3	93.8	94.9	14.2	15.5
Inverclyde	83.6	83.4	94.9	95.4	11.4	12.0
North Ayrshire	76.1	79.8	96.1	97.7	20.0	17.9
North Lanarkshire	76.5	74.7	96.1	95.9	19.6	21.2
Renfrewshire	75.2	79.5	96.0	96.8	20.9	17.3
West Dunbartonshire	80.7	77.4	98.1	95.6	17.4	18.2
Scotland	**75.5**	**75.0**	**94.8**	**95.4**	**19.3**	**20.3**

Source: School Leaver Destinations and Attainment, Scottish Government

5.80. The first interim evaluation reported that in 2015/16, the attainment gap was narrower in Challenge Authorities than it was at Scotland level or within non-Challenge Authorities. We found that this was due to pupils from the 20% most deprived areas performing better in Challenge Authorities.

5.81. A similar pattern was found in the analysis of 2016/17 and 2017/18 attainment data.

5.82. At SCQF Level 5 or better, the attainment gap in Challenge Authorities was smaller than the gap at Scotland level and in non-Challenge Authorities. The attainment gap in non-Challenge Authorities was wider when compared to Scotland. This was the case for both Year 2 and 3 of the ASF consistent with the pattern reported for Year 1.

5.83. In addition, a higher proportion of pupils from the most deprived areas attained at least 1 award at SCQF Level 5 or better in Challenge

Authorities, compared to those in non-Challenge Authorities. This was again the case for both Year 2 and 3 of the ASF and consistent with the pattern reported in the interim evaluation report.

5.84. Between Year 2 and 3 of the ASF, the attainment gap widened in Challenge Authorities. It also widened in non-Challenge Authorities.

5.85. However, within Challenge Authorities this seemed to be due to a decrease in the attainment of leavers from most deprived areas. For non-Challenge Authorities, the gap widened due to an increase in the attainment of leavers from the least deprived areas.

Table 5.11: Percentage of leavers attaining 1+ awards at SCQF Level 5 or better – Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, by deprivation, 2016/17 & 2017/18

	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %		Gap Percentage points	
	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18
Challenge Authorities	77.3	76.7	95.6	95.5	18.3	18.8
Non-Challenge Authorities	72.8	72.6	94.6	95.3	21.7	22.7
Scotland	**75.5**	**75.0**	**94.8**	**95.4**	**19.3**	**20.3**

Source: School Leaver Destinations and Attainment, Scottish Government

5.86. Table 5.12 provides detail on the proportion of leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or better. Across the Challenge Authorities, we found that the attainment gap at SCQF Level 6 or better between 2016/17 and 2017/18:

- Increased in three Challenge Authorities: Clackmannanshire, Dundee and Glasgow.
- Decreased in five Challenge Authorities: East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire.
- Remained stable over time in Inverclyde.

5.87. However, as with the SCQF Level 5 or better data, there were various reasons for these changes. For three of the five Challenge Authorities that showed a narrowing of the gap, the increase in the attainment of leavers from the most deprived areas was greater than the increase in the attainment of leavers from the least deprived areas.

Table 5.12: Percentage of leavers attaining 1+ awards at SCQF Level 6 or better, by Challenge Authority and deprivation, 2016/17 & 2017/18

	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %		Gap Percentage points	
	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18
Clackmannanshire	36.4	33.6	77.6	77.5	41.2	43.9
Dundee	42.3	33.3	82.0	75.5	39.7	42.2
East Ayrshire	38.2	45.3	84.2	82.8	46.0	37.5
Glasgow	48.6	51.3	82.2	87.4	33.6	36.1
Inverclyde	47.9	53.8	83.5	89.7	35.7	35.8
North Ayrshire	40.3	46.0	83.8	86.3	43.5	40.2
North Lanarkshire	43.5	45.0	82.8	83.1	39.3	38.1
Renfrewshire	41.0	47.9	84.1	84.4	43.1	36.4
West Dunbartonshire	53.2	46.9	88.5	80.0	35.3	33.1
Scotland	**43.0**	**44.4**	**80.6**	**81.8**	**37.6**	**37.4**

Source: School Leaver Destinations and Attainment, Scottish Government

5.88. At SCQF Level 6 or better, the attainment gap in Challenge Authorities was smaller than the gap in non-Challenge Authorities (see Table 5.13). This was the case for both Year 2 and 3 of the ASF.

5.89. A higher proportion of school leavers from the most deprived areas attained 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or better in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities. This was the case for both Year 2 and 3 of the ASF and is consistent with the pattern reported for Year 1.

5.90. The first interim evaluation reported that the difference amongst pupils living in the least deprived areas was less pronounced in 2015/16; a similar proportion in Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities attained 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or better. However, in both 2016/17 and 2017/18 a higher proportion of school leavers from the least deprived areas attained 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or better in Challenge Authorities than in non-Challenge Authorities.

5.91. Between Year 2 and 3 of the ASF, the attainment gap narrowed in Challenge Authorities due to the increase in attainment of leavers from most deprived areas being greater than the increase in attainment of leavers from least deprived areas.

5.92. In contrast, the attainment gap widened in non-Challenge Authorities. This was due to the increase in attainment of leavers from least deprived areas being greater than the increase in the attainment of leavers from the most deprived areas.

Table 5.13: Percentage of leavers attaining 1+ awards at SCQF Level 6 or better – Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, by deprivation, 2016/17 & 2017/18

	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %		Gap Percentage points	
	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18
Challenge Authorities	45.2	47.2	83.1	83.5	37.9	36.3
Non-Challenge Authorities	39.6	40.3	79.9	81.4	40.3	41.1
Scotland	**43.0**	**44.4**	**80.6**	**81.8**	**37.6**	**37.4**

Source: School Leaver Destinations and Attainment, Scottish Government

Participation Measure

5.93. The Annual Participation Measure (APM) is another key measure for measuring progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, set out in the National Improvement Framework. It is managed by Skills Development Scotland and reports on the economic and employment activity of the 16-19 year old cohort.

5.94. In this section, we report on the participation rate for Scotland and at local authority level. It is not a school-based measure and therefore it is not possible to distil findings at other levels.

5.95. All local authority level data disaggregated by SIMD is available online and therefore in this report we focus specifically on the Challenge Authorities, who have been involved with the ASF for the longest period of time.

5.96. Table 5.14 shows the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment was 91.8% in 2017/18, an increase of 0.7 percentage points compared to 2016/17.

5.97. Looking specifically at the participation rate in the Challenge Authorities, seven of the nine recorded an increase between Year 2 and Year 3 of the ASF.

Table 5.14: Percentage of 16-19 year olds participating, by local authority, 2016/17 & 2017/18

	Participation rate		Percentage point change between 2016/17 and 2017/18
	2016/17	2017/18	
Clackmannanshire	89.7	89.3	-0.4
Dundee	87.6	88.7	1.1
East Ayrshire	88.1	89.3	1.2
Glasgow	88.2	88.8	0.6
Inverclyde	91.9	85.7	-6.2
North Ayrshire	90.3	91.1	0.8
North Lanarkshire	90.2	90.5	0.3
Renfrewshire	91.4	91.6	0.2
West Dunbartonshire	88.3	90.1	1.8
Scotland	**91.1**	**91.8**	**0.7**

Source: Annual Participation Measure, Skills Development Scotland

5.98. Between Year 2 and 3 of the ASF, there was an overall reduction in the participation gap between those living in the most deprived areas compared to those living in the least deprived areas (11.5 pp in 2016/17 and 10.8 pp in 2017/18). This was due to increases in the participation rate amongst those living in the 20% most deprived areas.

5.99. Table 5.15 shows the participation gap over Year 2 and 3 of the ASF, by Challenge Authority. It shows:

- In Year 3 of the ASF, 5 Challenge Authorities had a smaller participation gap compared to Scotland.

- Between Year 2 and 3 of the ASF, the participation gap narrowed in 6 Challenge Authorities.
- In Year 3 of the ASF, the participation rate for those living in the 20% most deprived areas was higher or similar in 6 Challenge Authorities, compared to Scotland.
- Between Year 2 and 3 of the ASF, the participation rate for those living in the 20% most deprived areas increased or was maintained in 7 Challenge Authorities.

Table 5.15: Percentage of 16-19 year olds participating, by local authority and deprivation, 2016/17 & 2017/18

	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD)		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD)		Gap Percentage points	
	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18
Clackmannanshire	82	81.6	95.6	93.9	13.6	12.3
Dundee	82.4	82.9	96.2	95.6	13.8	12.7
East Ayrshire	82.7	83	94.2	97.2	11.5	14.1
Glasgow	85.5	86.1	96.3	96.1	10.9	10
Inverclyde	88.2	87.4	96.4	96.3	8.2	8.9
North Ayrshire	85.9	87.6	97.5	96.4	11.6	8.8
North Lanarkshire	85	85.6	96.2	95.8	11.2	10.2
Renfrewshire	85.5	86.6	96.5	96.9	11	10.3
West Dunbartonshire	84.8	85.7	95.5	96.9	10.7	11.2
Scotland	**84.8**	**85.7**	**96.3**	**96.5**	**11.6**	**10.8**

Source: Annual Participation Measure, Skills Development Scotland

Health and Wellbeing

5.100. This section reports on two health and wellbeing related measures: attendance and exclusions rates. The interim report for Years 1 and 2 also reported on the total difficulties score in the Scottish Health Survey and SALSUS, as well as the Mental Wellbeing Score from SALSUS. However, data from additional waves is not yet available.

5.101. Information on attendance and exclusion from schools is collected on a biennial basis. In the first interim report, we analysed data for 2014/15 – the year prior to the Attainment Scotland Fund. In this section, we consider how these figures changed between 2014/15 and 2016/17 – the second year of the ASF.

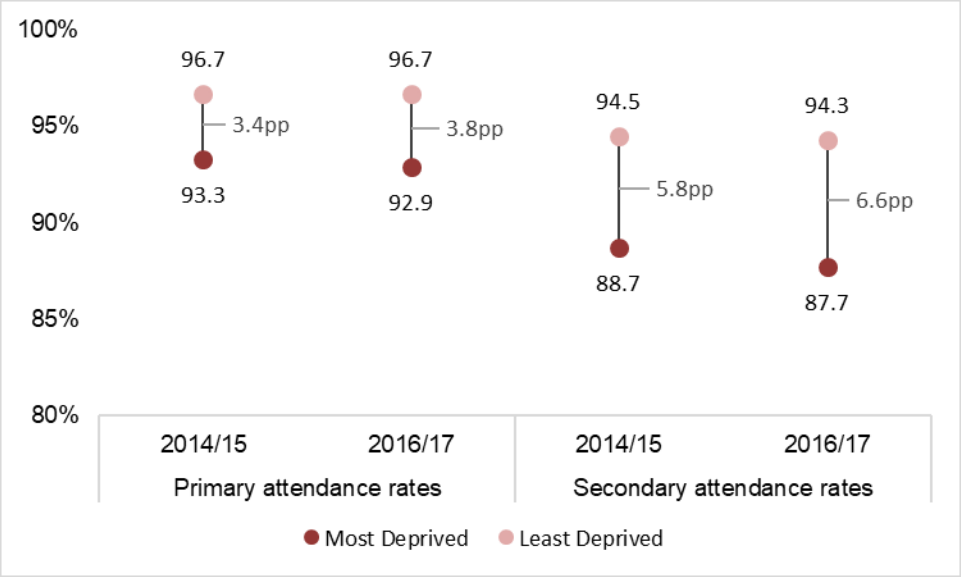
Health and Wellbeing – Attendance rates

5.102. Figure 5.5 shows the attendance levels for primary and secondary schools, by deprivation and year.

5.103. Pupils from the most deprived areas had lower attendance rates and the effect was greater in secondary schools.

5.104. The gap in attendance rates increased over time, with the effect again being greater in secondary schools. Whilst the attendance of pupils from the least deprived areas remained fairly stable over time, the attendance rate of the most deprived pupils decreased.

Figure 5.5: Total Attendance Rates, by deprivation, 2014/15 & 2016/17



Source: Summary Statistics for Schools, Scottish Government

5.105. Table 5.16 shows the attendance rates for primary pupils, disaggregated by deprivation and Challenge Authority.

5.106. In relation to the gap in attendance rates for primary pupils:

- In Year 2 of the ASF, 8 Challenge Authorities had a smaller gap compared to Scotland

- Between 2014/15 (pre-ASF) and Year 2 of the ASF, the gap narrowed in 3 Challenge Authorities.

5.107. The primary attendance rate for pupils from the least deprived areas was fairly consistent across Challenge Authorities (~96%).

5.108. Attendance rate for pupils in the most deprived areas was somewhat more varied. In Year 2, the attendance rate of pupils from the most deprived areas was higher or similar in 6 Challenge Authorities compared to Scotland overall.

Table 5.16: Primary Attendance Rates – By local authority and deprivation, 2014/15 & 2016/17

Primary attendance rates	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %		Gap Percentage points	
	2014/15	2016/17	2014/15	2016/17	2014/15	2016/17
Clackmannanshire	93.4	93.7	96.1	96.2	2.8	2.5
Dundee City	93.3	92.9	96.5	96.6	3.3	3.7
East Ayrshire	93.8	93.6	96.5	96.6	2.7	3.0
Glasgow City	93.1	92.8	96.8	96.5	3.7	3.7
Inverclyde	93.3	93.2	96.9	96.3	3.6	3.1
North Ayrshire	94.2	93.5	96.3	96.7	2.1	3.2
North Lanarkshire	92.8	92.3	96.7	96.5	3.9	4.2
Renfrewshire	94.2	94.0	97.1	96.8	2.9	2.8
West Dunbartonshire	94.0	93.3	97.1	96.5	3.1	3.2
Scotland	**93.3**	**92.9**	**96.7**	**96.7**	**3.4**	**3.8**

Source: Summary Statistics for Schools, Scottish Government

5.109. Table 5.17 shows the attendance rates for secondary pupils, disaggregated by deprivation and Challenge Authority.

5.110. In relation to the gap in attendance rates for secondary pupils:

- In Year 2 of the ASF, 4 Challenge Authorities had a smaller gap compared to Scotland
- From the year prior to ASF (2014/15) to Year 2 of the ASF, the gap did not narrow in any Challenge Authorities.

Table 5.17: Secondary Attendance Rates – By local authority and deprivation, 2014/15 & 2016/17

Secondary attendance rates	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %		Gap Percentage points	
	2014/15	2016/17	2014/15	2016/17	2014/15	2016/17
Clackmannanshire	88.2	86.8	94.0	94.4	5.8	7.6
Dundee City	87.3	87.1	93.7	93.9	6.3	6.8
East Ayrshire	87.7	87.0	94.5	93.9	6.8	6.9
Glasgow City	90.1	89.6	95.1	95.0	5.0	5.4
Inverclyde	88.7	87.7	94.5	94.3	5.7	6.6
North Ayrshire	89.1	87.5	93.9	93.0	4.8	5.5
North Lanarkshire	87.8	85.3	94.5	92.7	6.7	7.4
Renfrewshire	87.5	87.1	93.7	93.4	6.2	6.3
West Dunbartonshire	87.3	86.1	93.4	92.6	6.2	6.5
Scotland	**88.7**	**87.7**	**94.5**	**94.3**	**5.8**	**6.6**

Source: Summary Statistics for Schools, Scottish Government

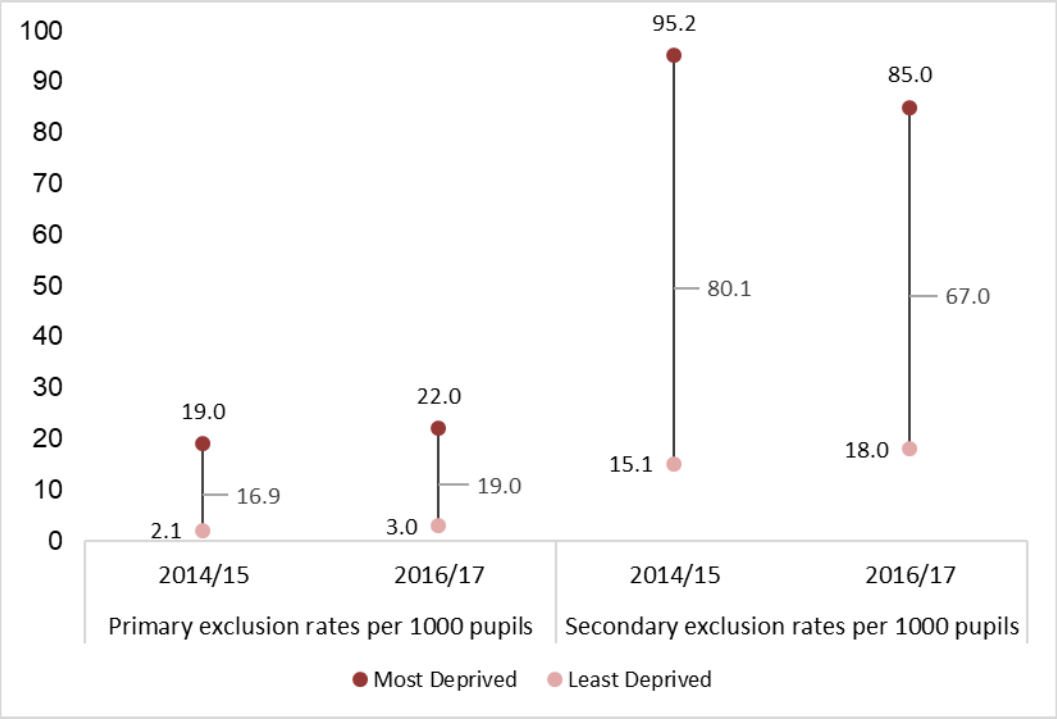
Health and Wellbeing – Exclusion rates

5.111. Full details on exclusion rates disaggregated by local authority and SIMD are available on the National Improvement Framework interactive dashboard.

5.112. Overall, exclusion rates were higher for pupils from the most deprived areas compared to those from the least deprived. Secondary schools had a higher exclusion rate than primary schools and the gap in exclusion rates was also higher in secondary schools.

5.113. Figure 5.6 also shows that over time, the gap in exclusion rates widened for primary pupils and narrowed for secondary pupils.

Figure 5.6: Total Exclusion Rates per 1000 pupils, by deprivation, 2014/15 & 2016/17



Source: Summary Statistics for Schools, Scottish Government

5.114. Table 5.18 shows the primary exclusion rates for Challenge Authorities, by deprivation and year. Due to disclosure control, it is not possible to offer a full analysis of the gap in relation to exclusion rates.

5.115. In Year 2 of the ASF, the primary exclusion rate for pupils from the most deprived areas was lower in 6 of the 9 Challenge Authorities, compared to Scotland overall.

5.116. From the year prior to ASF (2014/15) to Year 2 of the ASF, the primary exclusion rate for pupils from the most deprived areas decreased for 4 Challenge Authorities.

Table 5.18: Primary Exclusion Rates per 1000 pupils - By local authority and deprivation, 2014/15 & 2016/17

Primary exclusion rates per 1000 pupils	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %		Gap Percentage points	
	2014/15	2016/17	2014/15	2016/17	2014/15	2016/17
Clackmannanshire	68.0	49	5.7	*	62.3	-
Dundee City	29.9	20	2.1	*	27.8	-
East Ayrshire	54.2	52	3.8	*	50.4	-
Glasgow City	12.8	18	3.5	4	9.2	14
Inverclyde	3.9	3	0.0	*	3.9	-
North Ayrshire	8.8	9	0.0	*	8.8	-
North Lanarkshire	17.7	20	1.9	3	15.7	17
Renfrewshire	5.3	17	0.4	0	4.9	17
West Dunbartonshire	13.8	23	0	0	13.8	23
Scotland	**19.0**	**22**	**2.1**	**3**	**16.9**	**19**

Source: Summary Statistics for Schools, Scottish Government

5.117. Table 5.19 shows the secondary exclusion rates for Challenge Authorities, by deprivation and year.

5.118. The gap in secondary exclusion rates narrowed in 5 of the 8 Challenge Authorities between 2014/15 and 2016/17.

5.119. In Year 2 of the ASF, the secondary exclusion rate for pupils from the most deprived areas was lower in 5 of the 9 Challenge Authorities, compared to Scotland overall. Over time, the secondary exclusion rate for these pupils decreased in 6 Challenge Authorities.

Table 5.19: Secondary Exclusion Rates per 1000 pupils - By local authority and deprivation, 2014/15 & 2016/17

Secondary exclusion rates per 1000 pupils	Most deprived (bottom 20% SIMD) %		Least deprived (top 20% SIMD) %		Gap Percentage points	
	2014/15	2016/17	2014/15	2016/17	2014/15	2016/17
Clackmannanshire	110.3	42	36.7	24	73.5	18
Dundee City	228.1	124	22.8	32	205.3	92
East Ayrshire	131.8	147	26.7	16	105.1	131
Glasgow City	78.3	60	7.6	19	70.7	41
Inverclyde	61.2	55	9.6	21	51.6	34
North Ayrshire	66.4	57	19.9	*	46.5	-
North Lanarkshire	95.9	86	18.0	20	78.0	66
Renfrewshire	56.0	79	9.6	19	46.4	60
West Dunbartonshire	81.0	133	23.3	30	57.7	103
Scotland	**95.2**	**85**	**15.1**	**18**	**80.1**	**67**

Source: Summary Statistics for Schools, Scottish Government

Sustainability

5.120. This section explores issues related to sustainability of both interventions and impact beyond the years of the ASF.

5.121. Evidence for this section comes from the local authority mini survey conducted in spring/summer 2018, Challenge Authority progress reports, headteacher survey and school case studies.

5.122. As part of the mini survey, local authorities were asked whether they would expect the different improvements achieved as a result of the ASF to be sustainable. Overall, there was a positive outlook in terms of sustainability across both Challenge and non-Challenge Authorities, with a majority viewing improvements to be sustainable. Only 3 of the 22 reported they did not expect improvements to be sustainable.

5.123. Key areas identified as reasons to be confident in sustainability were:

- **Changes in culture/ethos/focus**. Challenge Authorities in particular indicated an increased understanding of the impact of poverty on attainment and a strong commitment to close the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Clear focus on staff in terms of **capacity, leadership, training and development**.
- **Changes in practice** and improvements to the quality of learning experiences for pupils was believed to be sustainable.

5.124. Sustainability was an important consideration across all Challenge Authorities and they indicated a range of ways in which sustainability issues were being addressed:

- staff capacity and development: upskilling the teacher workforce and using PEF to support further professional development opportunities;
- linking key aspects of Attainment Scotland Fund projects with core local authority provision;
- specific actions at the local authority level. For example, altering their planned programme of work to ensure sustainability.

5.125. The evidence suggests that exit strategies were being developed by several authorities, although this was not universal. One authority highlighted that whilst they were building sustainability into their programme, there would undoubtedly be a negative impact if funding was withdrawn.

5.126. Where local authorities were less positive about the potential to sustain improvements beyond the funding timeframe, this was typically related to staffing considerations. For example, one authority noted that, without additional support, local authority budgets would be unable to meet required staffing costs to ensure sustainability. Such concerns about the heavy reliance of the ASF to secure staff was also shared amongst some authorities who believed improvements to be sustainable.

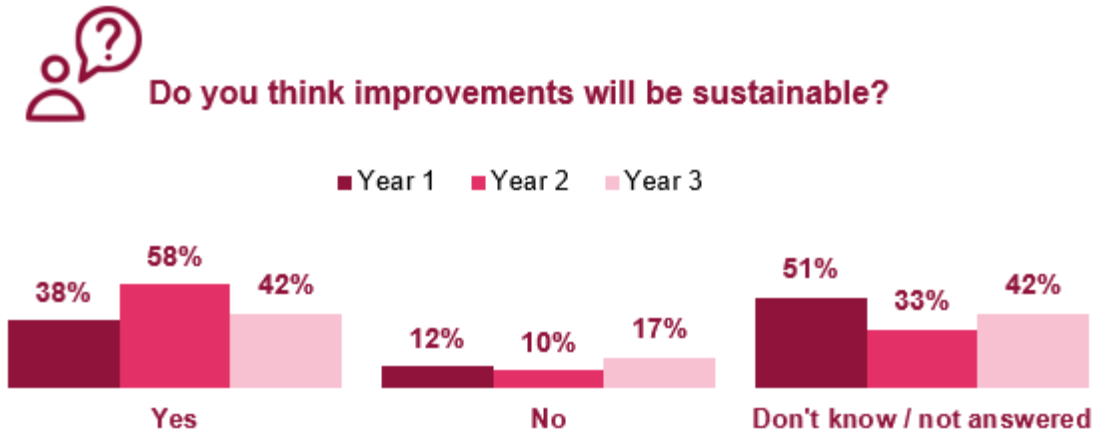
5.127. Findings from the headteacher survey suggested some evidence of a decrease in the confidence of sustainability. In Year 3 of the survey, 42% of headteachers thought that improvements would be sustainable compared to over half (58%) in Year 2. This was consistent across funding streams.

5.128. Headteachers who believed in the sustainability of improvements were more likely to be those who expected to see improvements. They also indicated that the increase in staff training/development (70%), the embedding of practice/pedagogies (26%) and overall change in ethos culture (20%) were common reasons to be more confident in sustainability.

5.129. Evidence from the school case studies also suggested that a belief in sustainability was linked to knowledge that improved practice, skills and expertise was being embedded and that this would have long-lasting impact.

5.130. As was found in Years 1 and 2, the most common reason for being less confident in the sustainability of progress was due to the potential loss of staffing, resources and skills (reported by 81% of those providing comment on reasons for not expecting improvement to be sustainable). Schools involved in the case studies also raised concerns that without ASF support, the inevitable loss of staffing would impact on the sustainability of the improvements.

Figure 5.7: Sustainability of improvements, headteacher survey



Base: All respondents (Year 1: 138; Year 2: 200; Year 3: 466)

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This document is also available from our website at www.gov.scot.
ISBN: 978-1-78781-851-4

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Produced for
the Scottish Government
by APS Group Scotland
PPDAS58887 (06/19)
Published by
the Scottish Government,
June 2019

GSR
GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH
Social Science in Government

Social Research series
ISSN 2045-6964
ISBN 978-1-78781-851-4

Web and Print Publication
www.gov.scot/socialresearch

PPDAS58887 (06/19)