

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2021/22

13th December 2022

This statistical publication:

- Provides information on national performance of school pupils in the **literacy organisers** (i.e. reading, writing, and listening and talking) and **numeracy**.
- Reports on the percentage of pupils who have achieved the expected Curriculum for Excellence level in these organisers, based on teachers' professional judgements.
- Covers all Primary 1 (**P1**), Primary 4 (**P4**), Primary 7 (**P7**) and Secondary 3 (**S3**) pupils in publicly funded mainstream schools, and all pupils based in publicly funded special schools/units.

Data for secondary school pupils and special school pupils were not collected in 2020/21 due to other pressures on these schools including implementation of the SQA National Qualifications Alternative Certification Model which was used to award National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers in 2021.

In 2019/20, the data were not collected for any pupils due to difficulties in collecting data whilst schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (for more information see Section 1.3).

With this in mind, for primary school pupils comparisons in this publication are typically made between the latest 2021/22 data and 2020/21 data (and to earlier years where appropriate). For secondary school (S3) pupils, comparisons are made between 2021/22 and 2018/19 - the last year for which S3 data were collected.

Pupils' achievement of CfE levels in 2020/21 were affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It is likely that 2021/22 results may also be affected by the ongoing impact of the pandemic on young people's learning. This should be kept in mind when making comparisons over time.

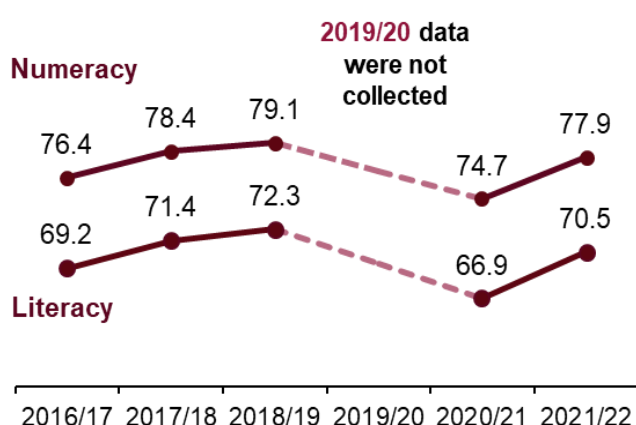
Full results are available from the [supplementary tables](#).

School level results (where available) are accessible from the [School Information Dashboard](#).

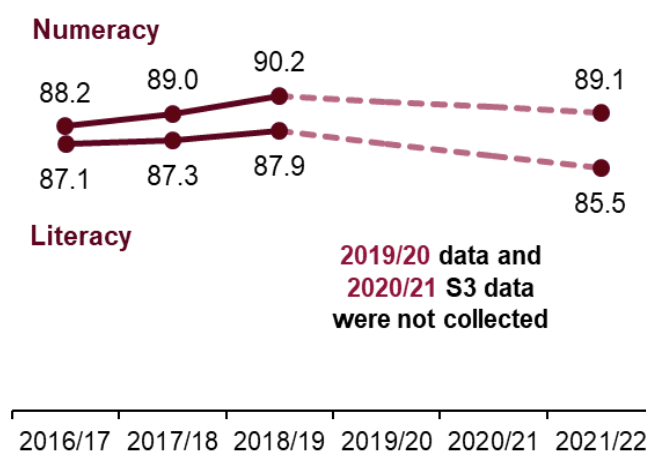
TREND

The percentage of primary school pupils achieving the expected CfE levels has increased in 2021/22 across all organisers and stages, as compared to 2020/21. However, the expected CfE levels were lower than in 2018/19 across almost all stages and organisers.

Percentage of **P1, P4 and P7 pupils** combined achieving expected level, 2016/17 to 2021/22.



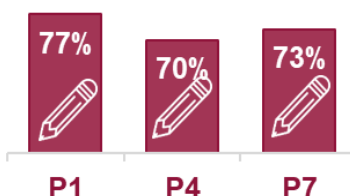
Percentage of **S3 pupils** achieving Third Level or better, 2016/17 to 2021/22.



KEY STATS



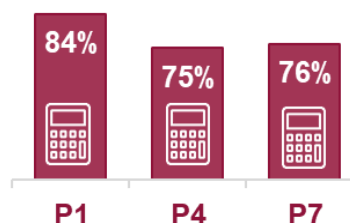
Around **78%** of primary school pupils achieved the expected CfE Level for **reading**.



For **writing**, **77%** of pupils achieved the expected CfE Level in **P1**. This compares to **70%** in **P4** and **73%** in **P7**.



Around **85%** of primary school pupils achieved the expected CfE Level for **listening and talking**.



For **numeracy**, **84%** of pupils achieved the expected CfE Level in **P1**. This compares to **75%** in **P4** and **76%** in **P7**.



Almost **nine out of ten S3 pupils** achieved Third Level or better for **reading** (88%), **listening and talking** (89%) and **writing** (87%).



Around **nine out of ten S3 pupils** achieved Third Level or better for **numeracy** (89%).



Female pupils outperform male pupils across most stages and organisers.

Across all stages and organisers the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was lower for pupils with an **Additional Support Need** than for those without.



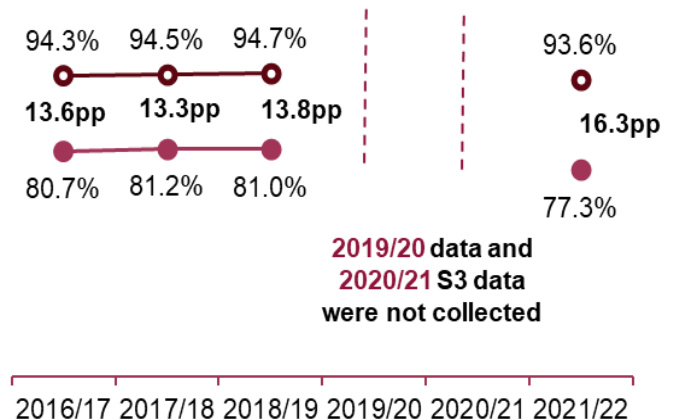
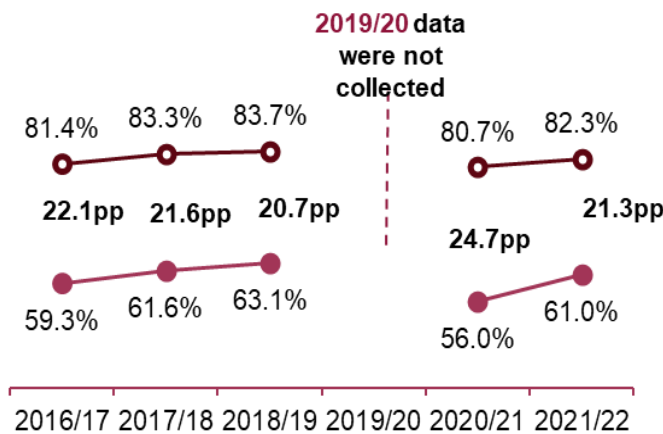
Across most stages and organisers the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was lower for pupils who have **English as an Additional Language** than for pupils who do not.

The attainment gap between school pupils in the most and least deprived areas, 2016/17 to 2021/22.

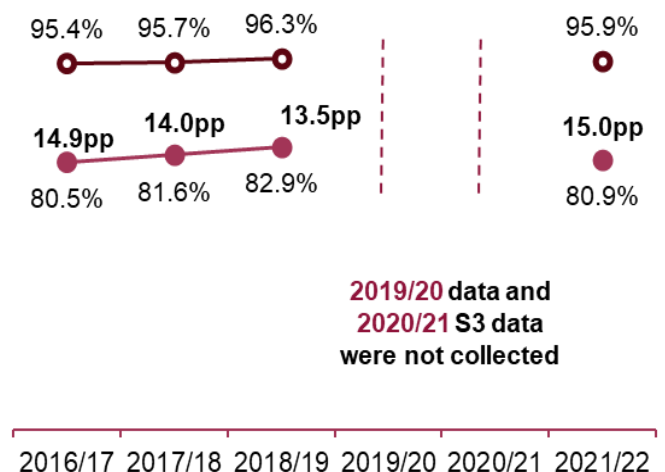
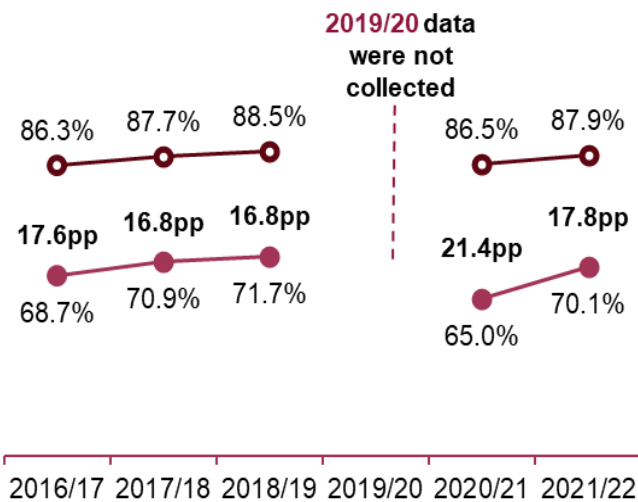
Percentage of **P1, P4 and P7** pupils combined achieving expected level by SIMD, 2016/17 to 2021/22.

Percentage of **S3** pupils achieving Third Level or better by SIMD, 2016/17 to 2021/22.

Literacy



Numeracy



○ Least Deprived ● Most Deprived

○ Least Deprived ● Most Deprived

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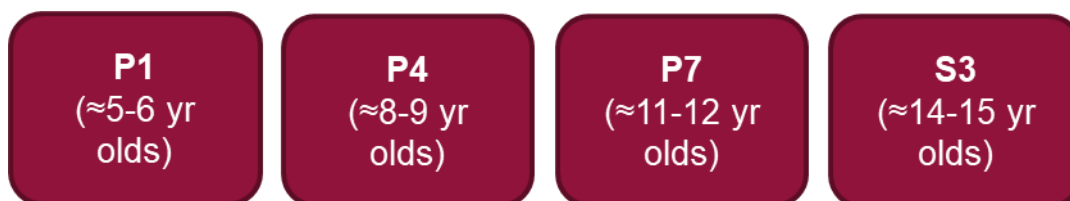
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels Data

This publication provides information on the proportion of school pupils who have achieved the **expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels** in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage.

Achievement of CfE level data are based on **teachers' professional judgements** of individual pupil performance (see Section 9.1.1 for more information). This report refers to the **school year 2021/22**; the data reflect what pupils have achieved by the end of the school year – i.e. June 2022.

Figures are based on pupils in **publicly funded mainstream schools**, in the **32 local authorities and one grant aided school**. Pupils' ages are based on approximate age ranges. Data are collected for pupils in the stages that follow:



From these, a combined primary figure (P1, P4 and P7) has also been calculated.

The national and local authority data within this report cover pupils within mainstream schools, including those in special units integrated within mainstream schools. Pupils attending standalone special schools or standalone special units are excluded from the national and local authority data and are reported on separately in Chapter 6.

A small number of pupils (in both mainstream and special schools) for whom the teacher has been unable to make a professional judgement are not included.

Data are collected on pupil performance in four areas, known as **organisers**:



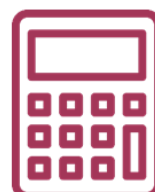
Reading
(English and Gàidhlig)



Writing
(English and Gàidhlig)



Listening and Talking
(English and Gàidhlig)



Numeracy

The achievement of 'literacy' is also included in the publication (for English and for Gàidhlig). A pupil is reported to have achieved the expected level in Literacy if they have achieved the expected level in all three of the literacy organisers: reading, writing, and listening and talking. For more information on how this has been calculated, see Section 9.1.3.2.

This publication mainly focuses on the organisers based in the English language and Numeracy. For pupils based in Gaelic medium schools/classes, the English language organisers are collected at relevant stages and are included in the national and local authority data. Information on achievement of CfE levels in Gàidhlig can be found in Chapter 5. For more information about Gaelic medium education, see Section 9.1.3.3.

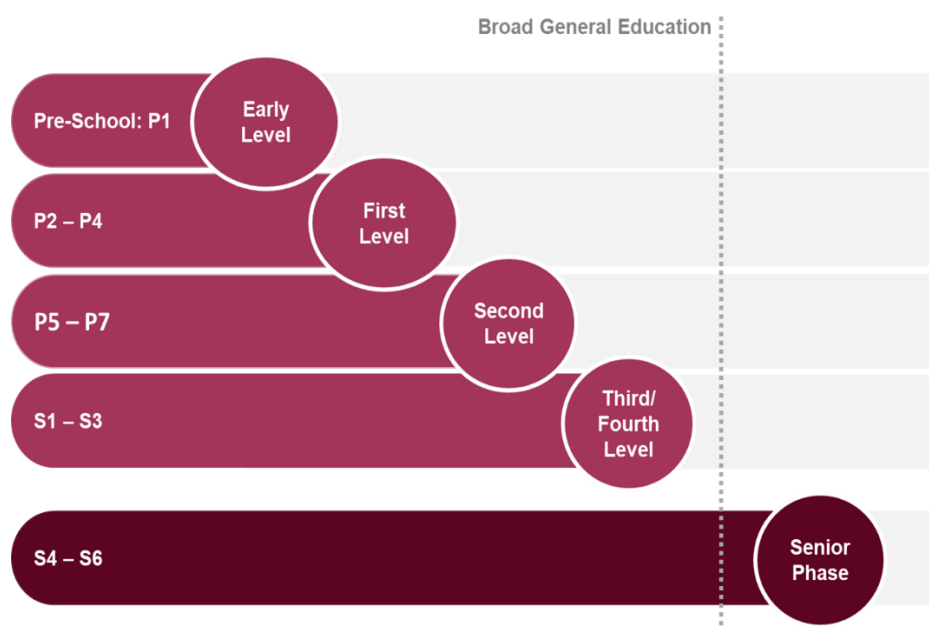
1.2 Curriculum for Excellence Levels

[Curriculum for Excellence](#) is designed to provide a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum for children and young people aged from 3 to 18. The curriculum includes the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated.

Curriculum for Excellence defines five levels of learning. The first four levels in the Broad General Education (BGE) phase are described in the [Experiences and Outcomes](#), with progression to qualifications described under a fifth level, the [Senior Phase](#).

The path most children and young people are expected to follow through the levels reflects the stages of maturation of children and young people and the changing ways in which they engage with learning as they develop.

Some children and young people will start learning at these levels earlier and others later, depending upon individual needs and aptitudes. The framework is, however, designed to be flexible in order to permit careful planning for those with additional support needs, including those who, for example, have a learning difficulty or those who are particularly high attaining. The diagram below shows the five curriculum levels (Source: [Education Scotland](#)).



This publication focuses on the BGE phase which covers children from pre-school through to the end of S3. It is intended that all children should have opportunities to experience all of the Experiences and Outcomes up to and including the Third Level where appropriate for individual learning needs. Most learners will progress into the Fourth Level in many aspects of their learning before the end of S3. For S3 pupils this publication reports on both Third Level or better and Fourth Level although focuses more on Third Level or better.

The Senior Phase is for young people in S4 to S6 and is designed to build on the experiences and outcomes of the BGE phase, and to allow young people to take qualifications and courses that suit their ability and interests. Scottish Government statistics on the attainment of young people in the senior phase are based on point of leaving; these statistics can be found in the [School education statistics](#).

1.2.1 Pupils with complex needs

The majority of school pupils in Scotland follow CfE. For a very small percentage of pupils it is unlikely that they will progress through the CfE levels during their time in education. This is due to pupils having long-term significant and complex additional support needs.

Within some local authorities school pupils with complex needs may attend a special school or standalone special unit. It may not always be appropriate to assign these pupils to a specific stage, so these pupils are treated separately in this publication. Results for pupils in standalone special schools or special units are presented in Chapter 6 but are not included in the analysis in other chapters.

However, in some local authorities, pupils with complex needs are integrated into mainstream schools; where this is the case, these pupils have been included throughout this publication. These differences in where pupils with complex needs receive their education across the different local authorities should be kept in mind when making comparisons between local authorities, or between individual schools.

Young people with long-term significant and complex additional support needs are included within the data as 'pupil following individual milestones'. Where these pupils are learning within a mainstream school or special unit integrated within a mainstream school they will be included in the national and local authority analysis and counted as not having achieved a CfE Level. Where these pupils are learning within a standalone special school or unit they will be included in Chapter 6 and displayed in the 'Child following individual milestones' category.

From 2021/22 onwards, in response to user feedback, a new recording category has been provided for use by teachers in standalone special schools and units. In cases where a pupil in a special school or standalone special unit: a) is deemed by their teacher to be in the senior phase; and b) is being taught at least one qualification, other award or work-based learning; and c) where teachers would not normally make a CfE level judgement for pupils in the senior phase, they may be recorded as 'studying beyond BGE level'. This option was introduced in response to reports that some pupils in special schools and standalone special units were being recorded as 'Not Assessed', when in fact they were working towards national qualifications. Pupils to whom this applies are included in Chapter 6 and displayed in the 'Pupil studying beyond BGE level' category.

1.2.2 Pupils for whom the teacher was unable to make a judgement

Children for whom the teacher has been unable to make a professional judgement are not included in the calculations of the proportions of pupils achieving the expected CfE Levels. This may happen if, for example, a pupil has recently moved to the school, and the teacher feels there has not been sufficient time to form a professional judgement of a pupil's performance. This is the case for less than one per cent of pupils within the Achievement of CfE Levels data.

1.3 Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

1.3.1 Impact on data collection for 2019/20 and 2020/21

The Scottish Government did not collect Achievement of CfE Levels data for any pupils in 2019/20. Schools were closed in Scotland between March 2020 and the end of the academic year as a result of the pandemic meaning that they were closed on the planned ACEL census date of 8th June 2020. It was concluded that it would not be possible to collect consistent data that was fit for purpose and that any attempt to do so would add considerably to other pressures on school and education authority staff. The decision was therefore taken to suspend the data collection.

For 2020/21, data were collected for Primary school (P1, P4 and P7) pupils only. Secondary school and special school data were not collected due to other pressures on these schools including implementation of the SQA National Qualifications Alternative Certification Model which was used to award National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers in 2021.

1.3.2 Impact on children's learning

The closures of schools between March 2020 and January 2021 because of the pandemic are likely to have had a negative effect on some pupils' progress and attainment. Socio-economically deprived children are amongst those who may have been most negatively affected (see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Impact of school building closures – equity audit](#)). It is therefore likely to have had an impact on the CfE levels some children achieved in 2020/21.

The young people covered in this year's publication will also have been affected by disruption to their learning and so it is likely that there will be an ongoing effect on the CfE levels some children and young people achieved in 2021/22.

Chapter 2: Achievement of CfE Levels at Scotland level

Key Findings

- The percentage of primary school pupils achieving the expected CfE levels in 2021/22 was higher than in 2020/21, for all primary school stages and across all the organisers, with increases generally in the range of two to four percentage points.
 - However, the percentage of primary school pupils achieving the expected CfE levels in 2021/22 was lower than in 2018/19 across almost all stages and organisers, typically by between less than one percentage point and three percentage points.
 - For S3 pupils, comparisons cannot be made to 2020/21 as the data were not collected. Compared to 2018/19, the percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in 2021/22 was lower by between one and two percentage points across all organisers.
-

2.1 Achievement of CfE Levels at Scotland level - primary stages

Compared to 2020/21, the percentages of primary school pupils achieving the expected CfE levels in 2021/22 have increased across all stages and organisers. These increases were generally in the range of two to four percentage points. They followed on from decreases of between around three and six percentage points between 2018/19 and 2020/21 associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The increases between 2020/21 and 2021/22 were generally larger than changes recorded at national level prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, the proportions of primary school children achieving the expected CfE levels in 2021/22 remained lower than in 2018/19, across almost all school stages and organisers, suggesting that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continued to affect the learning of some primary school children in 2021/22.

Around seven in ten (71 per cent) primary school pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieved the expected CfE Level for literacy in 2021/22. This compares to 72 per cent in 2018/19, and 67 per cent in 2020/21.

In numeracy, over three-quarters (78 per cent) of primary school pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieved the expected CfE levels in 2021/22. This compares to 79 per cent in 2018/19, and 75 per cent in 2020/21.

As in previous years, in 2021/22 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected CfE level across all primary school stages (P1, P4 and P7) was highest in listening and talking, and lowest in writing. For listening and talking, 86 per cent of P1 pupils, 85 per cent of P4 pupils and 86 per cent of P7 pupils achieved the expected CfE level. Meanwhile for writing, 77 per cent of P1 pupils, 70 per cent of P4 pupils and 73 per cent of P7 pupils achieved the expected level.

2.2 Achievement of CfE Levels at Scotland level - S3 stage

Data for S3 pupils were not collected in 2020/21 (or in 2019/20). The percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in 2021/22 was lower than in 2018/19 – the last time data were collected - by between around one and two percentage points across all organisers.

Almost nine out of ten S3 pupils achieved the Third Level or better in reading (88 per cent), writing (87 per cent), listening and talking (89 per cent), and numeracy (89 per cent) in 2021/22. This compares to 91% in reading and listening and talking, 90% in writing and 90% in numeracy in 2018/19.

In 2021/22, the percentage of S3 pupils achieving Fourth Level was lower than in 2018/19 across the literacy organisers (reading, writing and listening and talking) but slightly higher in numeracy. Compared to 2016/17 and 2017/18, the proportion of S3 pupils achieving Fourth Level was higher in 2021/22 across all organisers.

Table 1 shows the proportions of pupils achieving the expected CfE levels for all stages and organisers for 2016/17 to 2021/22. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's learning should be borne in mind if making comparisons over time (for more information see Section 9.1.4.3).

Table 1: Percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels, 2016/17 to 2021/22

| Year | Stage/Level | Reading | Writing | Listening & Talking | Literacy | Numeracy |
|----------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 2021/22 | P1 - Early Level | 79 | 77 | 86 | 74 | 84 |
| | P4 - First Level | 76 | 70 | 85 | 67 | 75 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 79 | 73 | 86 | 71 | 76 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 78 | 73 | 85 | 71 | 78 |
| | S3 - Third Level or better | 88 | 87 | 89 | 86 | 89 |
| | S3 - Fourth Level | 54 | 52 | 55 | 48 | 59 |
| 2020/21 | P1 - Early Level | 77 | 74 | 84 | 71 | 81 |
| | P4 - First Level | 73 | 67 | 82 | 64 | 72 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 76 | 69 | 82 | 66 | 72 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 75 | 70 | 83 | 67 | 75 |
| | S3 stage/all levels | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] |
| 2019/20 | All stages/levels | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] |
| 2018/19 | P1 - Early Level | 82 | 79 | 87 | 76 | 85 |
| | P4 - First Level | 78 | 73 | 85 | 70 | 77 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 80 | 74 | 86 | 71 | 76 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 80 | 75 | 86 | 72 | 79 |
| | S3 - Third Level or better | 91 | 90 | 91 | 88 | 90 |
| | S3 - Fourth Level | 55 | 52 | 57 | 48 | 59 |
| 2017/18 | P1 - Early Level | 81 | 78 | 87 | 75 | 85 |
| | P4 - First Level | 77 | 72 | 85 | 69 | 76 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 79 | 73 | 84 | 70 | 75 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 79 | 74 | 85 | 71 | 78 |
| | S3 - Third Level or better | 90 | 89 | 91 | 87 | 89 |
| | S3 - Fourth Level | 53 | 51 | 55 | 46 | 56 |
| 2016/17 | P1 - Early Level | 80 | 77 | 85 | 74 | 83 |
| | P4 - First Level | 77 | 71 | 83 | 68 | 75 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 76 | 69 | 81 | 66 | 70 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 78 | 72 | 83 | 69 | 76 |
| | S3 - Third Level or better | 90 | 89 | 91 | 87 | 88 |
| | S3 - Fourth Level | 51 | 48 | 51 | 44 | 56 |

Chapter 3: Achievement of CfE Levels by Deprivation

Key Findings

- The gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in literacy decreased from 24.7 percentage points in 2020/21 to 21.3 percentage points in 2021/22.
 - The gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in numeracy decreased from 21.4 percentage points in 2020/21 to 17.8 percentage points in 2021/22.
 - For both primary literacy and primary numeracy, the gap remained wider than in 2018/19 and for primary numeracy, the size of the gap in 2021/22 was larger than at any point between 2016/17 and 2018/19.
 - In 2021/22, the gap between the proportion of S3 pupils from the most and least deprived areas who achieved Third Level or better increased in both literacy and numeracy compared to 2018/19, and was the largest since 2016/17.
-

This chapter provides an overview of Achievement of CfE Levels by pupils based on the deprivation level of the area they live in, as measured by the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\)](#). It provides information on literacy and numeracy for P1, P4 and P7 combined and for S3. Full details (including all stages, organisers and SIMD quintile categories) are available in the [supplementary tables](#).

When considering data by SIMD as a measure of multiple deprivation, it is important to note that the data show the difference between young people living in the most and least deprived areas. What SIMD does not show is the difference between young people from poor or rich backgrounds.

The figures shown in Charts 1, 2, 3 and 4 (see pages 13, 14, 15, and 16) provide four of the 11 key [National Improvement Framework](#) measures used to measure the poverty-related attainment gap. These key measures are:

- Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected Level in Literacy;
- Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected Level in Numeracy;
- Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Literacy and;
- Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy.

The charts show Achievement of CfE Levels by SIMD since 2016/17, with the pp abbreviation indicating percentage point difference between most and least deprived (referred to as the attainment gap). Please note, 2016/17 to 2018/19 figures are based on SIMD 2016, whereas 2020/21 and 2021/22 figures are based on SIMD 2020. Caution should be exercised if making comparisons over time; for more information see Section 9.1.4.3.

3.1 Achievement of CfE Levels by Deprivation – P1, P4 and P7 pupils

Chart 1 provides information on the percentages of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined who achieved the expected levels in literacy.

The attainment gap between pupils from the most and least deprived areas decreased from 24.7 percentage points in 2020/21 to 21.3 percentage points in 2021/22. This is wider than in 2018/19 (20.7 percentage points) but slightly narrower than in 2017/18 (21.6pp) or 2016/17 (22.1pp).

The proportions of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving the expected level in literacy increased in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 for pupils in both the most and least deprived areas. The proportion increased more for pupils from the most deprived areas which has led to narrowing the gap.

Chart 1: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils (combined) achieving expected CfE level in Literacy by SIMD, 2016/17 to 2021/22

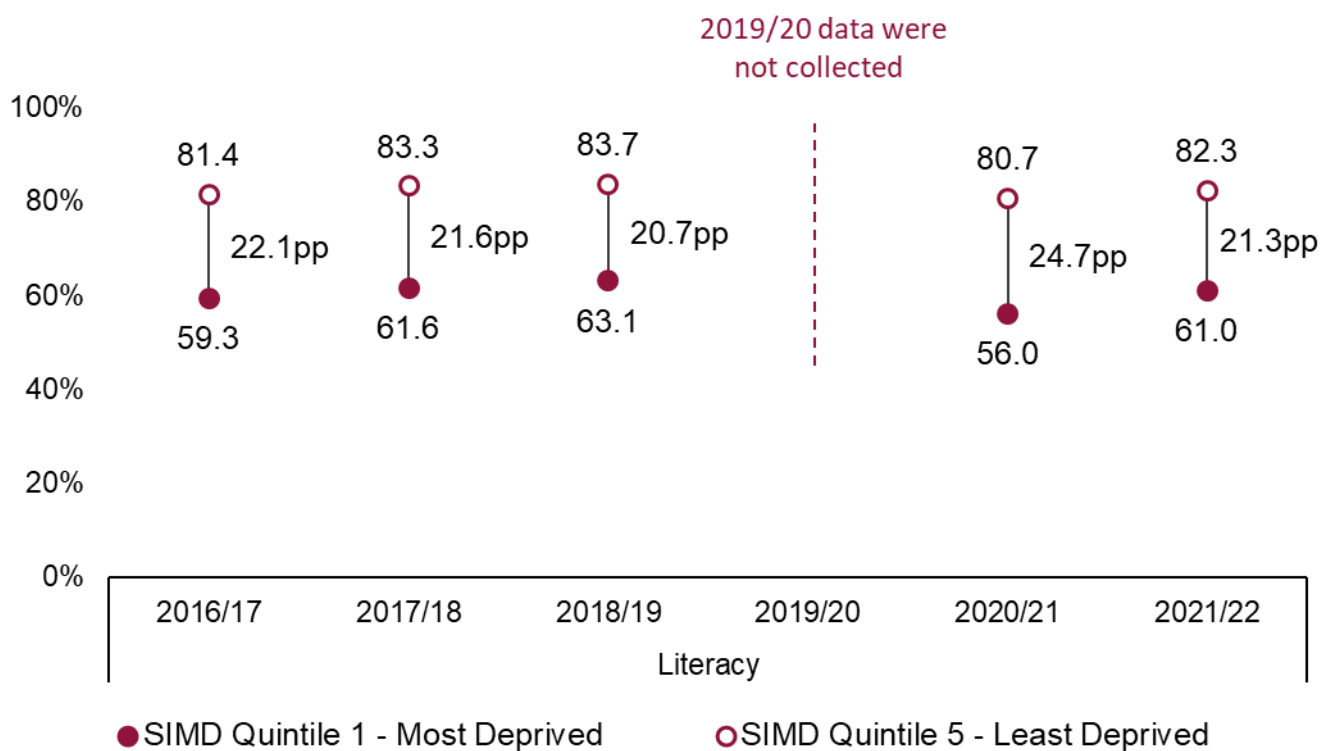
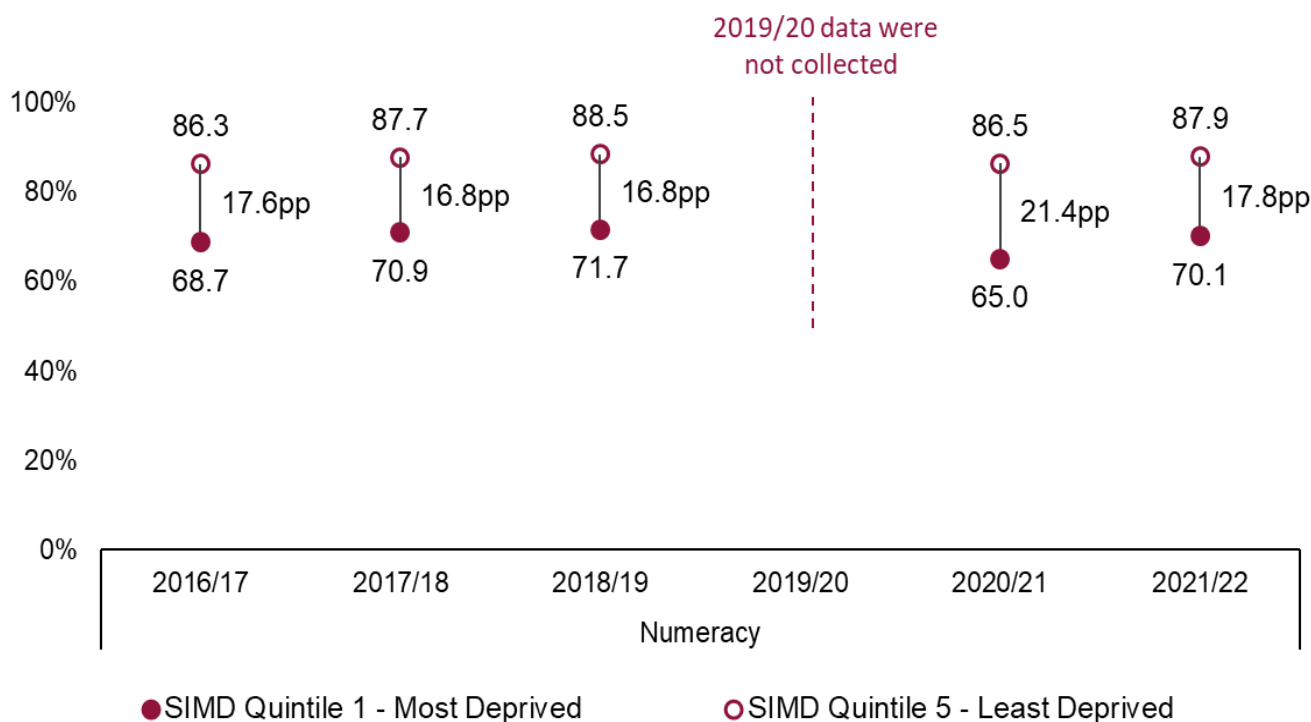


Chart 2 provides information for P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined who achieved the expected levels in numeracy.

The numeracy attainment gap decreased from 21.4 percentage points in 2020/21 to 17.8 percentage points in 2021/22. This remains slightly wider than it was between 2016/17 and 2018/19.

Compared to 2020/21, the proportions of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving the expected numeracy levels have increased for both pupils in the most and least deprived areas in 2021/22. The gap has narrowed as the proportion increased more for pupils from the most deprived areas.

Chart 2: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils (combined) achieving expected CfE level in Numeracy by SIMD, 2016/17 to 2021/22



3.2 Achievement of CfE Levels by Deprivation – S3 pupils

Chart 3 shows the proportion of S3 pupils who achieved Third Level or better in literacy, for pupils in the most and least deprived areas.

The chart shows that the proportion of S3 pupils who achieved Third Level or better in literacy remained broadly stable between 2016/17 and 2018/19, for pupils from both the most and the least deprived areas.

In 2021/22, for both the most and least deprived areas, the proportions of S3 pupils who achieved Third Level or better are lower than in earlier years. The difference is greater amongst pupils from the most deprived areas and, as a result, the S3 pupils attainment gap in literacy has increased to 16.3 percentage points – the largest gap observed since 2016/17.

Chart 3: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Literacy by SIMD, 2016/17 to 2021/22

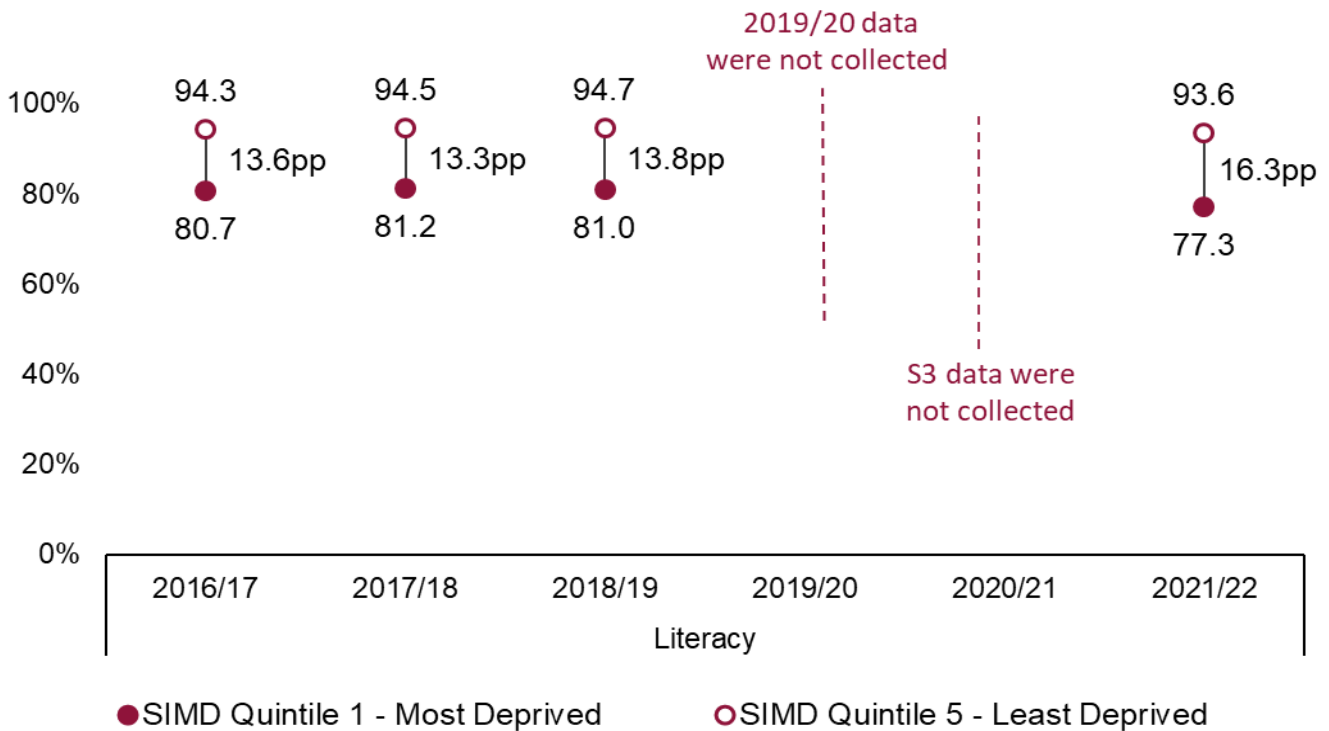
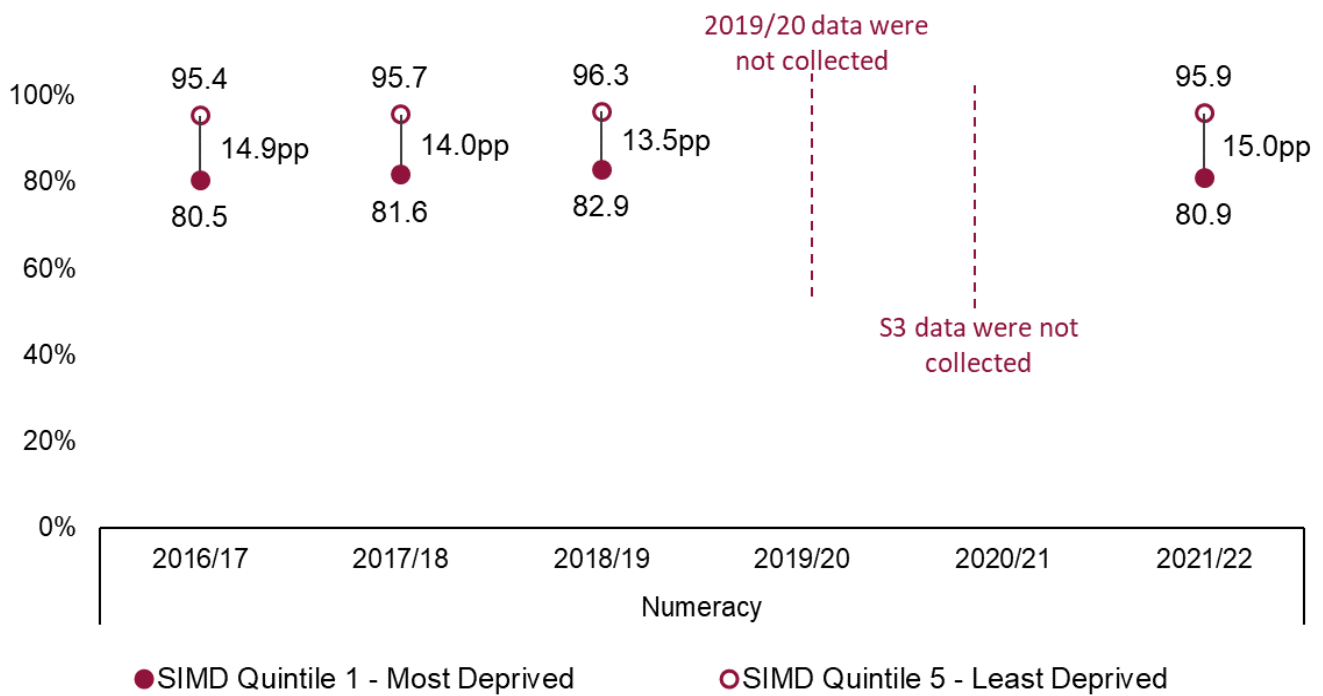


Chart 4 shows the proportion of S3 pupils who achieved Third Level or better in numeracy, for pupils in the most and least deprived areas.

The S3 pupils attainment gap for Third Level or better in numeracy reduced from 14.9 percentage points in 2016/17 to 14.0 percentage points in 2017/18 and to 13.5 percentage points in 2018/19 (see Chart 4 below). In 2021/22, the gap stands at 15.0 percentage points and was the widest since 2016/17 (the first year for which comparable data is available).

The proportion of S3 pupils who achieved Third Level or better in numeracy in 2021/22 is lower than in 2018/19 for pupils from both the most and the least deprived areas. The difference is greater amongst those from the most deprived areas.

Chart 4: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy by SIMD, 2016/17 to 2021/22



Chapter 4: Achievement of CfE Levels by pupil characteristics

Key Findings

- Female pupils outperform male pupils across all literacy organisers at all stages.
 - Across all stages and organisers, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was lower for pupils with an Additional Support Need than for those without.
 - For most stages and organisers the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was lower for pupils with English as an Additional Language than for those for whom English is the main language.
 - A higher percentage of pupils of Asian-Chinese ethnic background achieved the expected CfE levels in numeracy compared to pupils of other ethnic backgrounds, at all primary stages and S3 (Fourth Level).
 - At P1 stage, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was highest for pupils living in accessible rural areas compared to those living in other areas. At P4 and P7, performance was highest for pupils from either large urban areas or accessible rural areas.
-

4.1 Achievement of CfE Levels by Sex

Compared to 2020/21 (see Table 3 in the [supplementary tables](#)), the proportion of pupils achieving the expected CfE levels in 2021/22 has increased across all primary stages and organisers, for both male and female pupils. The size of these increases was broadly similar for male and female pupils, with female pupils gaining slightly more at P1 and male pupils at P7.

In 2021/22, female pupils outperformed male pupils across all literacy organisers at all primary stages and S3 levels. The biggest difference was in writing. Female pupils also outperformed male pupils in numeracy in P1 and S3. This pattern of differences in levels of performance between male and female pupils has been largely consistent since 2016/17.

The largest difference in performance in the literacy organisers among primary pupils in 2021/22 was in writing in P7 with female pupils outperforming male pupils by 13 percentage points. The smallest difference at primary for the literacy organisers was in reading for P4, where female pupils outperformed male pupils by about six percentage points. For S3 (Third Level or better), the largest difference in performance between male and female pupils was in writing at seven percentage points, whereas the smallest difference for the literacy organisers was in listening and talking at five percentage points.

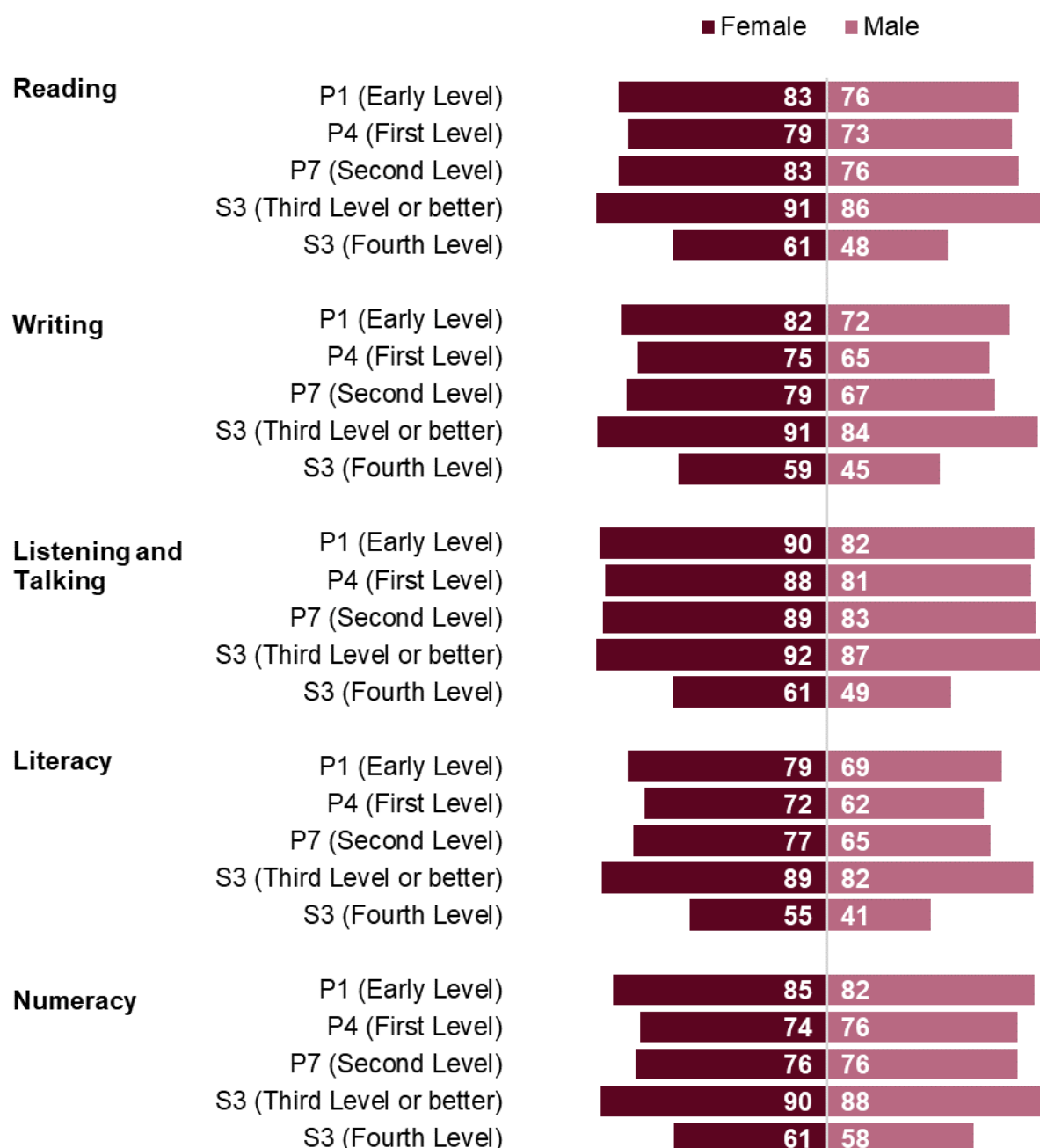
For literacy, female pupils outperformed male pupils by 10 percentage points at P1 and P4, and 12 percentage points at the P7 stage. A broadly similar pattern was observed in previous years. The gap in literacy performance by sex amongst S3 pupils at Third Level was seven percentage points.

Across all stages the smallest difference in performance by sex was in numeracy. In 2021/22, female pupils outperformed male pupils by two percentage points at P1 in numeracy. They also outperformed male pupils by two percentage points at S3. However, male pupils

performed slightly better than female pupils at P4. Female and male pupils had a similar performance at P7.

Chart 5 shows performance in literacy and numeracy by sex for each primary stage and S3 stage.

Chart 5: Percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels, by sex and stage, 2021/22



4.2 Achievement of CfE Levels by Ethnicity

For context, the majority of pupils in the Achievement of CfE Levels data collection were White – Scottish (74 per cent of all pupils), followed by White – non-Scottish (13 per cent of all pupils). The remaining ethnic groups each made up two per cent or less of all pupils. The relative sizes of these groups of pupils should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

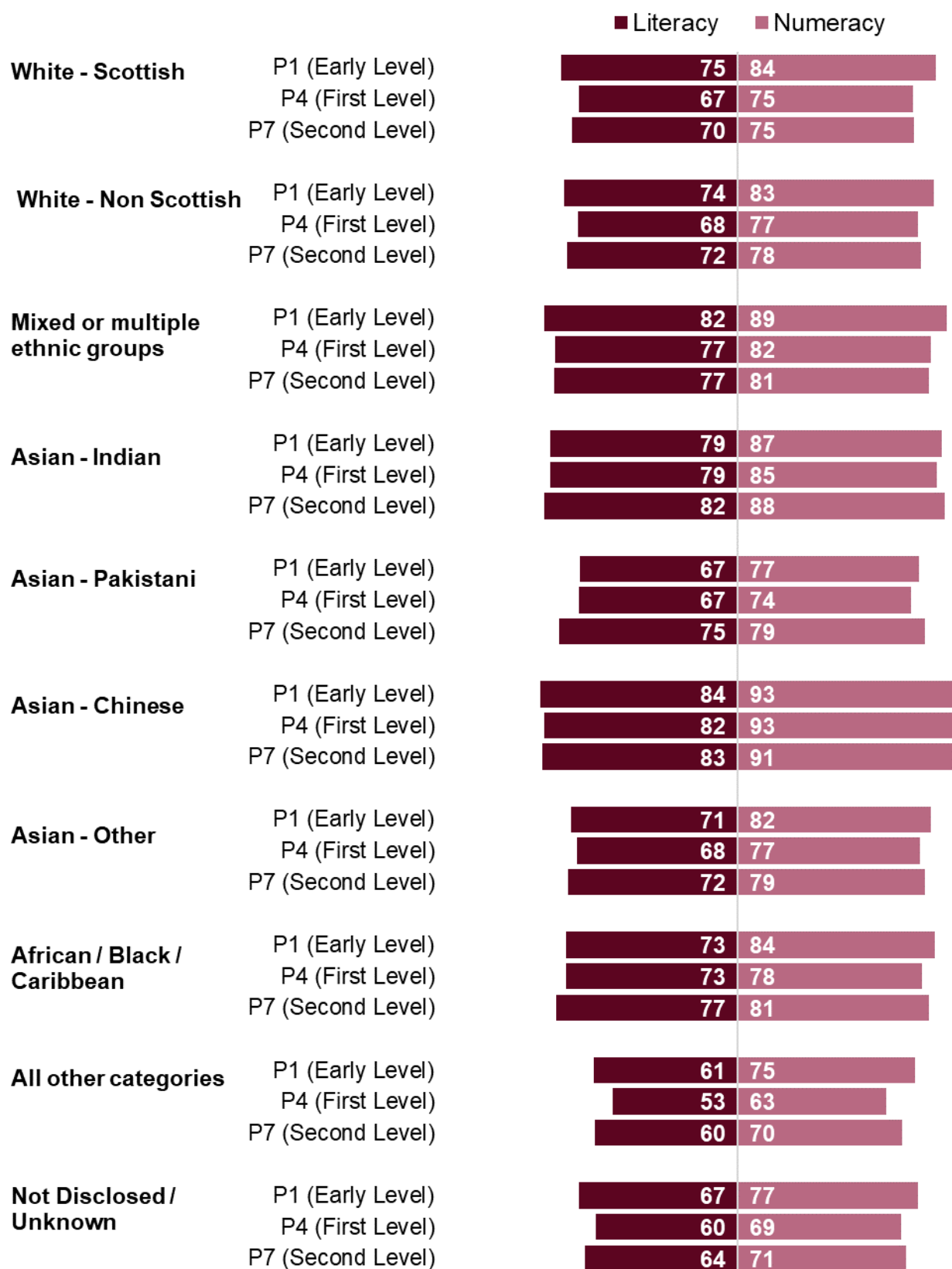
In 2021/22, the percentage of primary school pupils achieving the expected CfE Level in literacy and numeracy increased across most ethnic groups compared to 2020/21 (see Table 4 in the [supplementary tables](#)).

Performance in numeracy was highest for pupils of an Asian – Chinese background, across all primary stages. This pattern has been consistent since 2016/17. In 2021/22, 93 per cent of Asian – Chinese pupils achieved the expected level in both P1 and P4, and 91 per cent of Asian – Chinese pupils achieved the expected level in P7.

In P1, performance in literacy was highest for pupils from Asian – Chinese and mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds (84 and 82 per cent respectively); pupils from Asian – Chinese and Asian – Indian backgrounds performed best at P4 (82 and 79 per cent respectively) and also at P7 (83 per cent for pupils from Asian – Chinese backgrounds and 82 per cent for pupils from Asian – Indian backgrounds).

Chart 6 shows performance in literacy and numeracy by ethnicity for each primary stage.

Chart 6: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils achieving literacy and numeracy CfE levels, by ethnicity and stage, 2021/22



At S3 (Third Level or better), performance in both literacy and numeracy was highest for pupils from Asian – Chinese and Asian – Indian backgrounds (Table 2 below).

Table 2: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better by ethnicity, 2021/22

| Ethnicity | Listening & Talking | | | Literacy | Numeracy |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Reading | Writing | | | |
| White - Scottish | 88 | 87 | 89 | 85 | 88 |
| White - Non Scottish | 89 | 88 | 90 | 86 | 91 |
| Mixed or multiple ethnic groups | 91 | 90 | 92 | 89 | 95 |
| Asian - Indian | 94 | 95 | 96 | 93 | 97 |
| Asian - Pakistani | 94 | 93 | 93 | 91 | 94 |
| Asian - Chinese | 94 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 96 |
| Asian - Other | 89 | 88 | 89 | 87 | 93 |
| African / Black / Caribbean | 92 | 91 | 92 | 90 | 92 |
| All other categories | 77 | 78 | 80 | 75 | 87 |
| Not Disclosed / Unknown | 79 | 78 | 80 | 76 | 86 |
| All pupils | 88 | 87 | 89 | 86 | 89 |

4.3 Achievement of CfE Levels by Additional Support Need (ASN) status

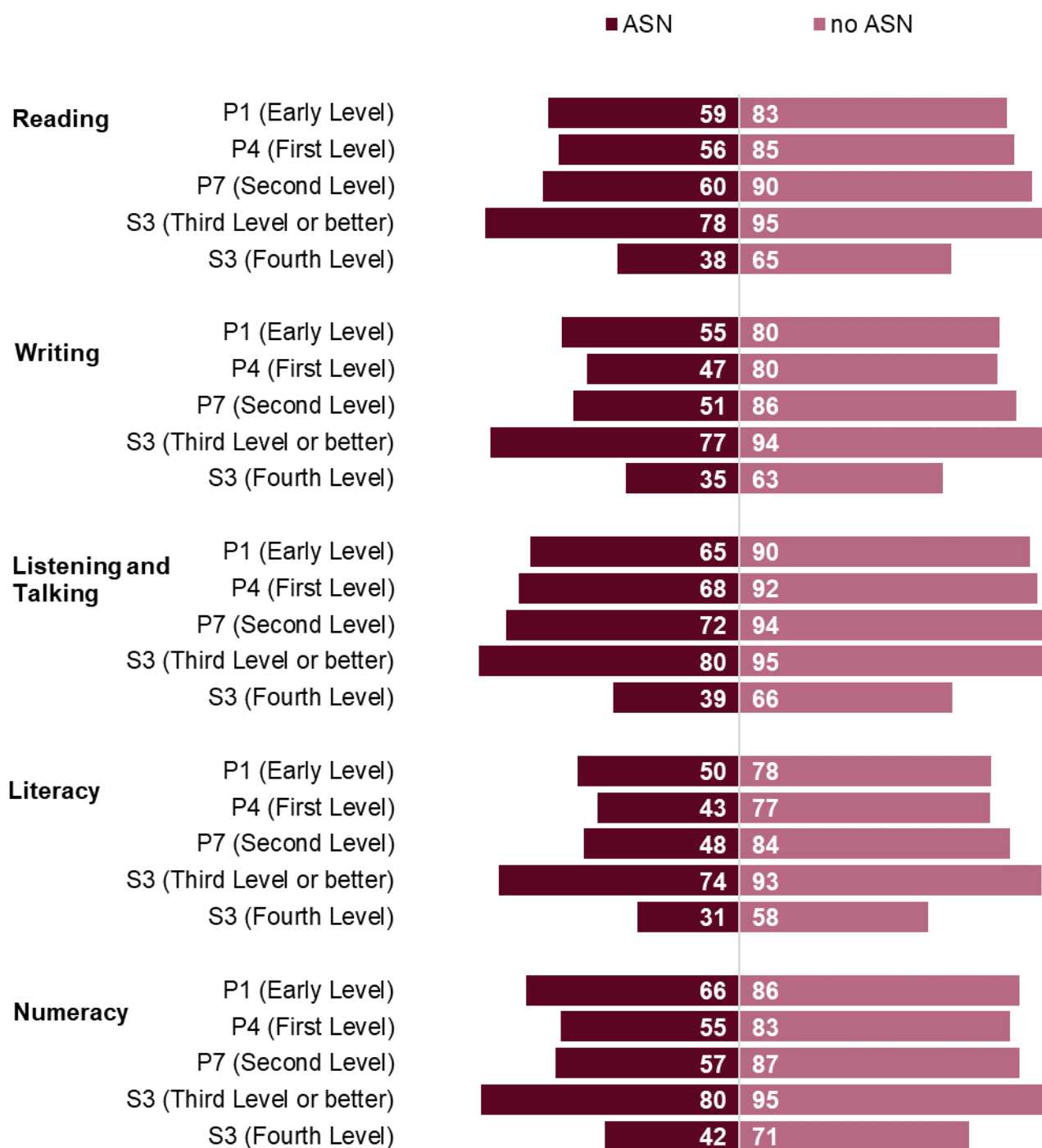
The following chapter provides information on the proportion of pupils with Additional Support Needs who achieved the expected CfE Levels. For context, the percentage of pupils recorded as having an Additional Support Need increased throughout the stages: 10, 25, 32 and 35 per cent for P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils respectively.

Chart 7 shows that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected CfE level was higher for pupils recorded as not having an Additional Support Need (ASN) compared to pupils with a recorded ASN, across all stages and organisers.

Considering the four main organisers – reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy - the difference in performance in P1 was lowest for numeracy (21 percentage points). At both P4 and P7 stages, the difference was lowest for listening and talking (24 and 22 percentage points respectively).

At S3 (Third Level or better), the lowest percentage point difference was in listening and talking (15 percentage points), with 95 per cent of pupils with no ASN achieving this level, compared to 80 per cent of pupils with a recorded ASN.

Chart 7: Percentage of pupils achieving CfE levels, by Additional Support Need status and stage, 2021/22



The greatest difference in performance between primary pupils with a recorded ASN and primary pupils with no recorded ASN was in writing for all three stages (26 percentage points for P1, 33 percentage points for P4 and 35 percentage points for P7).

At S3 (Third Level or better), the greatest difference in performance was also in writing (18 percentage points).

Time series data (available in Table 6 in the [supplementary tables](#)) shows that the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected CfE levels in 2021/22 was greater than in 2020/21 across all stages and organisers both for pupils with a recorded ASN and for those without. For P1 pupils, the sizes of these increases were broadly similar for those with a recorded ASN and for those without. For P4 and P7, the increases were typically slightly larger for pupils with an Additional Support Need than for those without.

Compared to 2018/19, the pattern is less clear although for P7 pupils with an ASN the proportion achieving the expected level in 2021/22 was greater than in 2018/19 for all organisers.

4.4 Achievement of CfE Levels by English as an Additional Language (EAL) status

For context, around seven per cent of pupils in the 2021/22 data collection were recorded as having English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The percentage of pupils achieving the expected CfE level was higher for pupils with English as their main language across most stages and organisers (Chart 8).

In 2021/22, the gap in performance between EAL pupils and pupils with English as their main language was lowest in numeracy; S3 pupils with EAL slightly outperformed their counterparts. The gaps in numeracy performance at other stages ranged from two and one percentage points for P4 and P7 pupils respectively, to seven percentage points for P1 pupils.

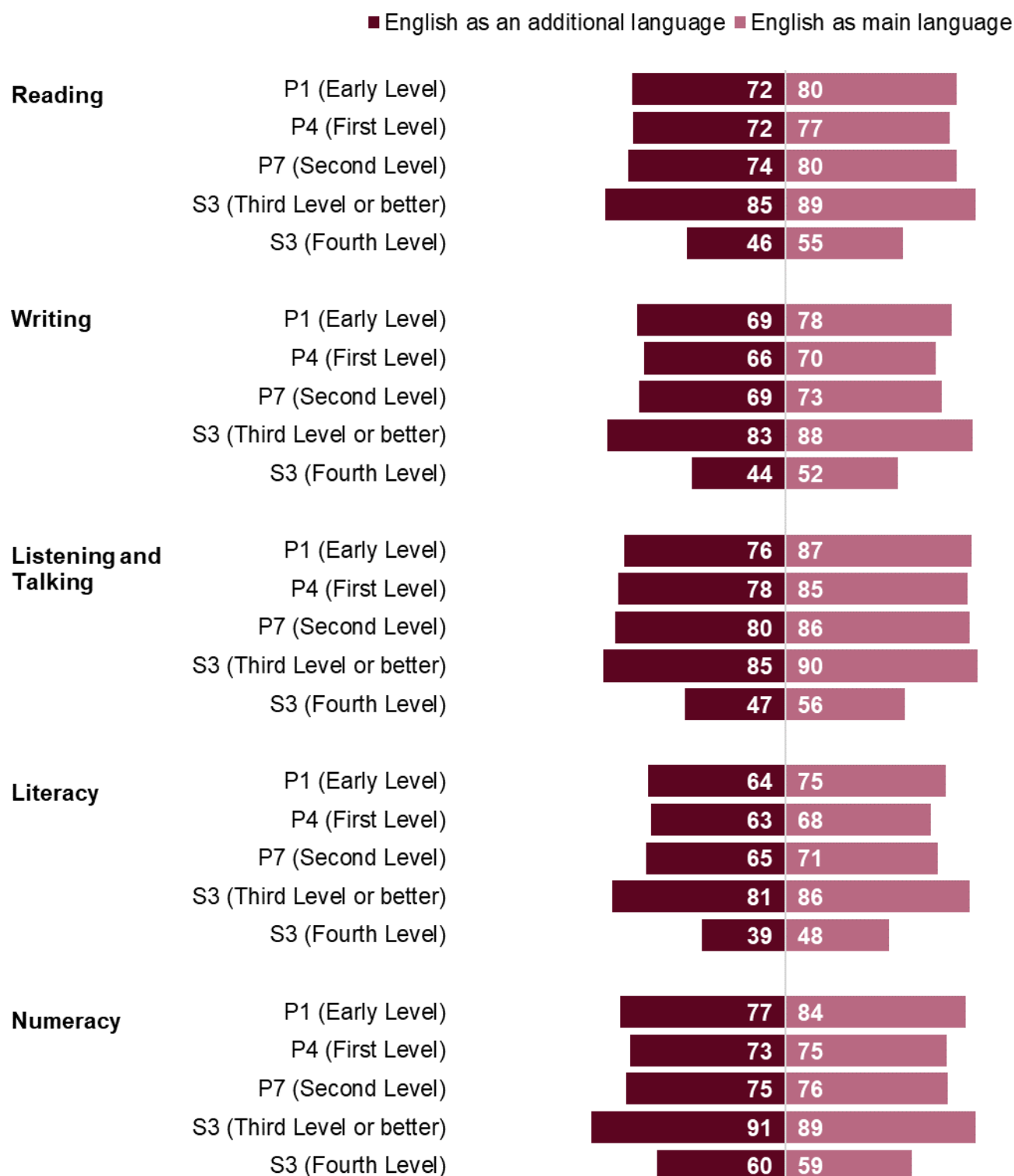
EAL pupils performed better in listening and talking than they did in the other literacy organisers at all three primary stages (76, 78 and 80 per cent for P1, P4 and P7 respectively); with the same pattern being observed in the overall results for all pupils. However, the largest gap in performance between EAL and English as main language primary pupils was also in listening and talking (11 percentage points at P1).

Overall, amongst primary school pupils, the performance gaps in the literacy organisers were generally smallest at P4 and P7 (ranging from four to seven percentage points) and largest at P1 (8 to 11 percentage points).

Compared to 2020/21, the proportions of primary school pupils achieving the expected levels in literacy and numeracy increased for both pupils with English as their main language and pupils with English as an Additional Language; with broadly similar levels of increases observed in each group. However, when compared to 2018/19, the proportion of EAL pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving the expected levels increased for reading and listening and talking and remained unchanged for writing and numeracy, but decreased for pupils with English as main language, across all organisers (See Table 7 in the [supplementary tables](#)).

Similar patterns of change could be observed at the S3 stage (Third level or better), with the proportion of EAL pupils either remaining at the 2018/19 level or increasing slightly whilst there were typically small decreases amongst pupils with English as their main language.

Chart 8: Percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels, by English as an Additional Language status and stage, 2021/22



4.5 Achievement of CfE Levels by Urban Rural Classification

The Urban Rural Classification used in this publication has six classifications as shown in Table 3. The P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils in the Achievement of CfE Levels 2021/22 data collection were distributed as follows:

Table 3: Percentage of pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3 combined by Urban Rural Classification, 2021/22

| Urban Rural Classification | Percentage of pupils |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Other urban areas | 37 |
| Large urban areas | 31 |
| Accessible rural areas | 14 |
| Accessible small towns | 9 |
| Remote rural areas | 5 |
| Remote small towns | 3 |
| Unknown | 1 |

Chart 9 shows a summary of the percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy, by Urban Rural Classification and stage. Detailed results by Urban Rural Classification can be found in the [supplementary tables](#).

At the P1 stage, performance was highest for pupils from accessible rural areas across all organisers. Performance was lowest for pupils from remote small towns for most organisers.

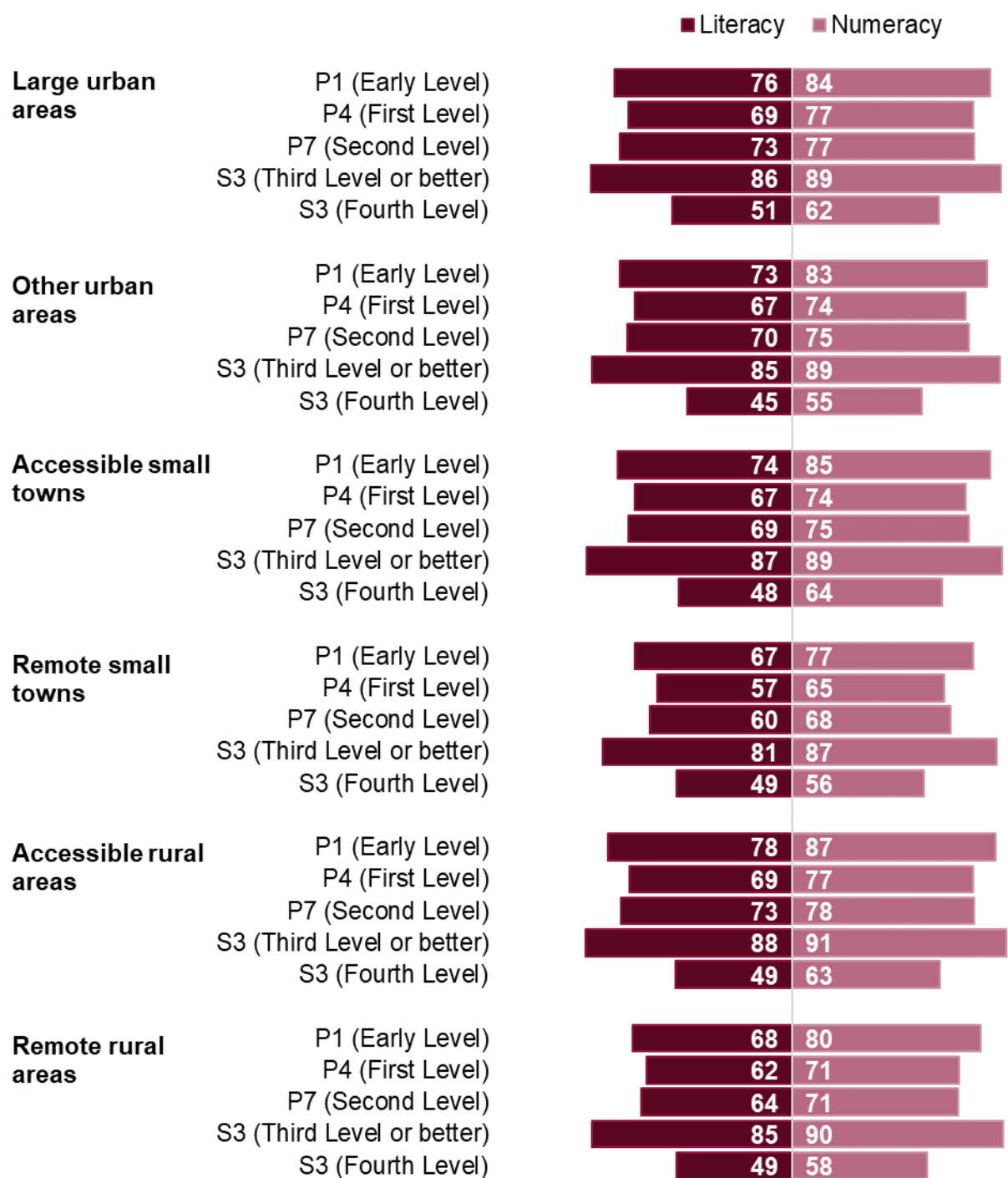
Performance at P4 and P7 was lowest for pupils from remote small towns and remote rural areas across all organisers.

In 2021/22, the percentage of primary school pupils achieving the expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy increased across all urban and rural areas, compared to 2020/21 (See Table 5 in the [supplementary tables](#)).

The percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better across all Urban Rural classifications and across all organisers ranged between 81 and 91 per cent. For the literacy organisers the percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better was typically slightly higher in accessible small towns and accessible rural areas than in other categories.

The percentage of S3 pupils achieving Fourth Level across all Urban Rural classifications and across all four organisers ranged between 45 and 64 per cent. For the literacy organisers the percentage of S3 pupils achieving this level was typically slightly higher in large urban areas and accessible rural areas than in other categories.

Chart 9: Percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels, by Urban Rural Classification and stage, 2021/22



Chapter 5: Achievement of CfE Levels in Gàidhlig

Key Findings

- The percentage of primary pupils in Gaelic medium schools/classes achieving the expected CfE level was highest for Gàidhlig listening and talking, and lowest for Gàidhlig writing at all stages (P1, P4 and P7).
 - Over 90 per cent of S3 pupils in Gaelic medium schools/classes achieved Third Level or better in Gàidhlig reading, writing, and listening and talking.
-

Information on the Gàidhlig data collected as part of the achievement of CfE levels can be found in Section 9.1.3.3. A combined literacy variable for Gàidhlig has been created; this has the same methodology as the English literacy variable. Numeracy and English literacy data for pupils learning in Gàidhlig are included in the other chapters of this report.

Around 1,563 primary school pupils (582 pupils at P1, 539 at P4 and 442 at P7) and 270 S3 pupils included in the Achievement of CfE Levels data are in Gaelic medium schools/classes.

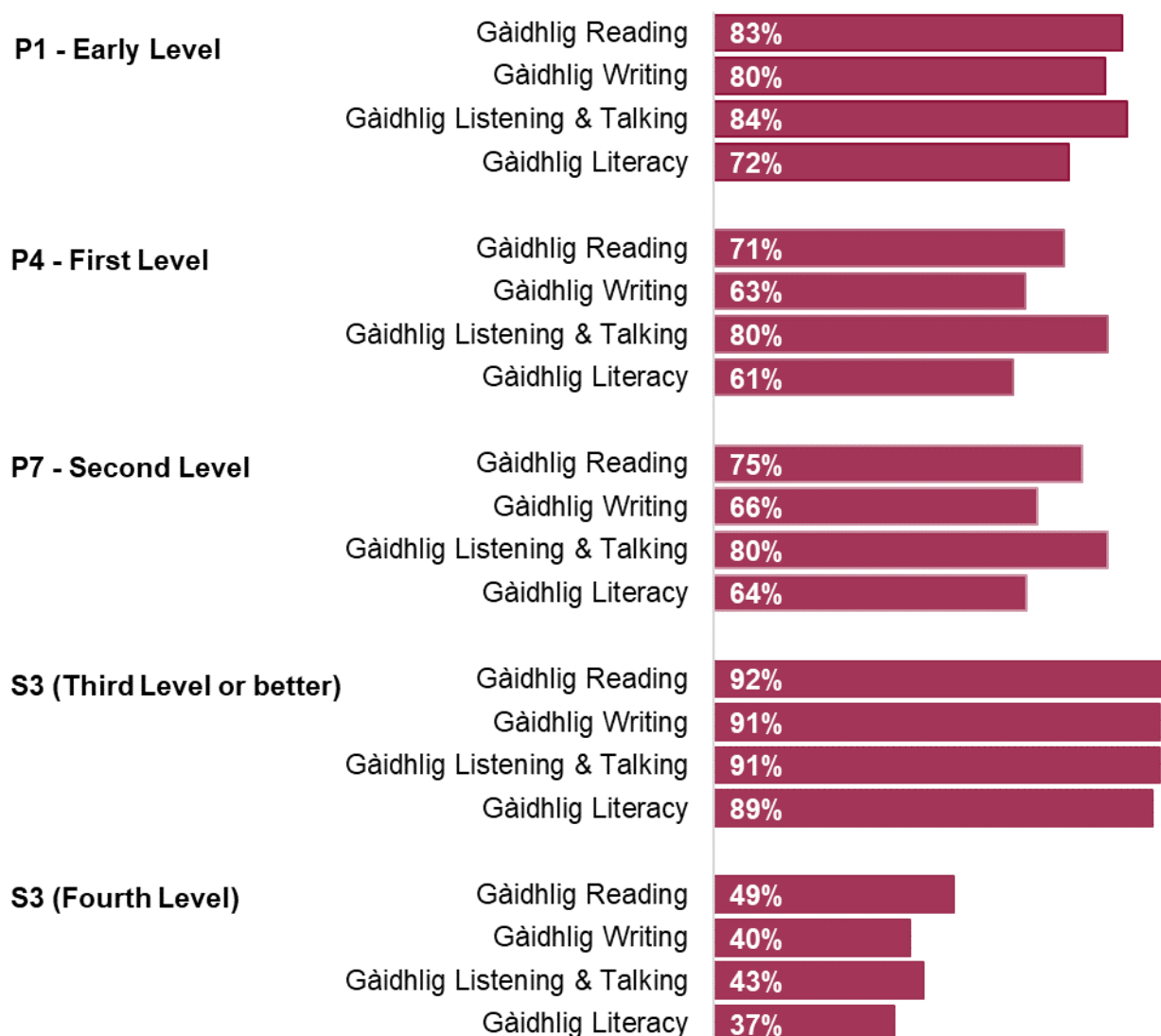
The percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels in Gàidhlig reading and writing was lower in P4 and P7 than in P1 and was highest in S3 (Third Level or better; see Table 4 below). Similarly, for Gàidhlig listening and talking, performance was highest at S3 with 91 per cent achieving the expected CfE level, and lower at P1 (84 per cent), followed by P4 and P7 (both 80 per cent).

Table 4: Percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels in Gàidhlig, 2016/17 to 2021/22

| Year | Stage/Level | Reading | Writing | Listening & Talking | Literacy |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2021/22 | P1 - Early Level | 83 | 80 | 84 | 72 |
| | P4 - First Level | 71 | 63 | 80 | 61 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 75 | 66 | 80 | 64 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 77 | 70 | 82 | 66 |
| | S3 – Third Level or better | 92 | 91 | 91 | 89 |
| | S4 – Fourth Level | 49 | 40 | 43 | 37 |
| 2020/21 | P1 - Early Level | 76 | 71 | 78 | 65 |
| | P4 - First Level | 73 | 61 | 80 | 58 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 66 | 59 | 78 | 53 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 72 | 64 | 79 | 59 |
| | S3 stage/ levels | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] |
| 2019/20 | All stages/ levels | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] |
| 2018/19 | P1 - Early Level | 78 | 71 | 83 | 68 |
| | P4 - First Level | 74 | 64 | 78 | 62 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 73 | 66 | 83 | 63 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 76 | 67 | 81 | 64 |
| | S3 - Third Level or better | 83 | 80 | 81 | 80 |
| | S3 - Fourth Level | 57 | 52 | 58 | 49 |
| 2017/18 | P1 - Early Level | 84 | 77 | 88 | 74 |
| | P4 - First Level | 74 | 71 | 79 | 66 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 72 | 67 | 85 | 63 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 78 | 72 | 84 | 69 |
| | S3 - Third Level or better | 97 | 97 | 97 | 96 |
| | S3 - Fourth Level | 61 | 49 | 49 | 42 |
| 2016/17 | P1 - Early Level | 81 | 80 | 81 | 75 |
| | P4 - First Level | 78 | 71 | 83 | 69 |
| | P7 - Second Level | 73 | 62 | 80 | 60 |
| | P1, P4 and P7 combined | 78 | 72 | 81 | 69 |
| | S3 - Third Level or better | 98 | 94 | 98 | 94 |
| | S3 - Fourth Level | 55 | 40 | 52 | 36 |

For P1, P4 and P7 combined, Gàidhlig listening and talking results were highest whereas Gàidhlig writing results were the lowest (see Chart 10), which is consistent with previous years. At S3 (Third Level), performance was largely consistent over the three Gàidhlig organisers.

Chart 10: Percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels in Gàidhlig, 2021/22



The proportions of primary school pupils achieving expected levels in Gàidhlig were higher in 2021/22 than in 2020/21 across almost all stages and organisers with the biggest increases seen in P1 and P7. The patterns observed in the current data were similar to those seen in 2018/19, but the percentage of pupils achieving expected CfE levels was often higher in 2021/22, particularly at the P1 and S3 (Third Level or better) stages (see Table 8 in the [supplementary tables](#)).

Chapter 6: Achievement of CfE Levels of pupils based in special schools/units

Key Findings

- Around a quarter of pupils based in special schools/units were reported as following their own individual milestones.
 - A further quarter of pupils were assessed as 'Not yet achieved Early Level'.
 - About 12 per cent of pupils were reported as studying beyond Broad General Education (BGE) level.
 - For each organiser, around one third of pupils based in special schools/units were reported as having achieved a CfE Level.
-

Around twenty-five per cent of pupils within special schools and standalone special units were following their own milestones, around a quarter of pupils had Not Yet Achieved Early Level and 5 per cent of pupils in special schools and standalone special units were not assessed (see Table 5 below). For further information see Section 9.1.3.1.

Of the pupils who achieved a CfE level within special schools/units, this was highest for numeracy at 34 per cent, followed by listening and talking (33 per cent), reading (32 per cent) and writing (30 per cent). It should be noted that these proportions cannot be directly compared to those presented in other Chapters of this report. In order to show the full range of information recorded for pupils in special schools and standalone special units the calculations in this chapter include pupils recorded as Not Assessed. Pupils recorded as Not Assessed are excluded from the analysis in other chapters. It should also be noted that these proportions cannot be directly compared to earlier years due to the introduction of a new recording option as set out below.

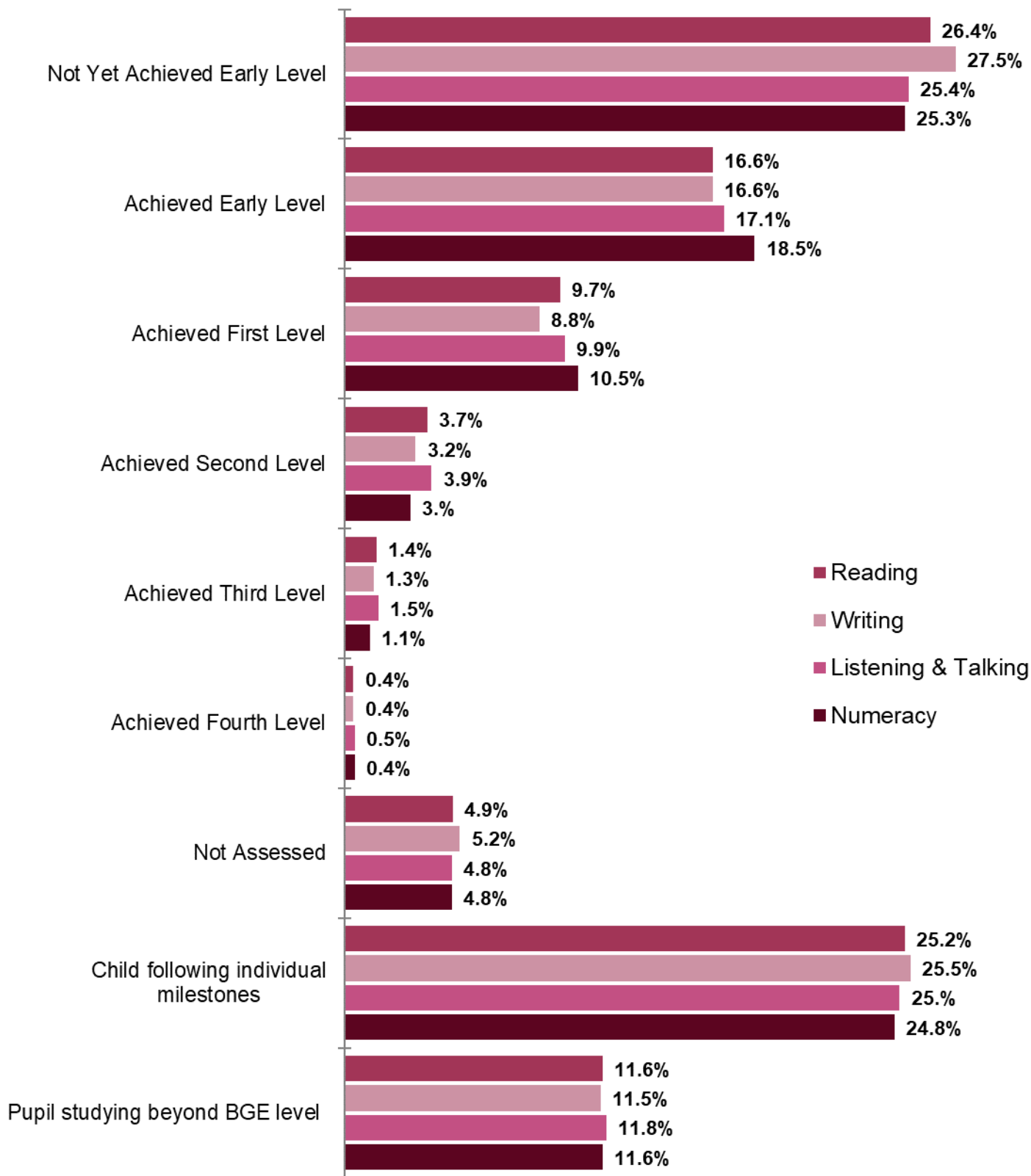
From 2021/22 onwards, a new recording option, 'studying beyond BGE level', has been introduced for pupils in special schools and standalone special units. In 2021/22, 12 per cent of pupils in standalone special schools and units were recorded in this way. As this recording option was not available in previous years, caution should be exercised if making comparisons over time, particularly when comparing the proportions of pupils recorded as 'Not Assessed'. For further information see Section 1.2.1.

Table 5: Percentage of special schools/units pupils achieving CfE levels, 2021/22

| Year | CfE level | Reading | Writing | Listening & Talking | Numeracy |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| 2021/22 | Not Yet Achieved Early Level | 26 | 28 | 25 | 25 |
| | Achieved Early Level | 17 | 17 | 17 | 19 |
| | Achieved First Level | 10 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| | Achieved Second Level | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| | Achieved Third Level | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| | Achieved Fourth Level | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Not Assessed | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | Child following individual milestones | 25 | 26 | 25 | 25 |
| | Pupil studying beyond BGE level | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| 2020/22 | All Levels | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] |
| 2019/20 | All Levels | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] | [no data] |
| 2018/19 | Not Yet Achieved Early Level | 26 | 28 | 25 | 26 |
| | Achieved Early Level | 18 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| | Achieved First Level | 11 | 10 | 11 | 10 |
| | Achieved Second Level | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| | Achieved Third Level | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| | Achieved Fourth Level | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Not Assessed | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| | Child following individual milestones | 27 | 27 | 26 | 27 |
| 2017/18 | Not Yet Achieved Early Level | 25 | 26 | 24 | 25 |
| | Achieved Early Level | 14 | 14 | 14 | 17 |
| | Achieved First Level | 12 | 11 | 12 | 10 |
| | Achieved Second Level | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | Achieved Third Level | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| | Achieved Fourth Level | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not Assessed | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| | Child following individual milestones | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| 2016/17 | Not Yet Achieved Early Level | 25 | 26 | 24 | 25 |
| | Achieved Early Level | 15 | 15 | 15 | 16 |
| | Achieved First Level | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| | Achieved Second Level | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| | Achieved Third Level | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| | Achieved Fourth Level | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not Assessed | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| | Child following individual milestones | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 |

Chart 11 shows the highest CfE level achieved for all pupils in special schools and standalone special units.

Chart 11: Percentage of pupils in special schools/units achieving CfE levels, 2021/22



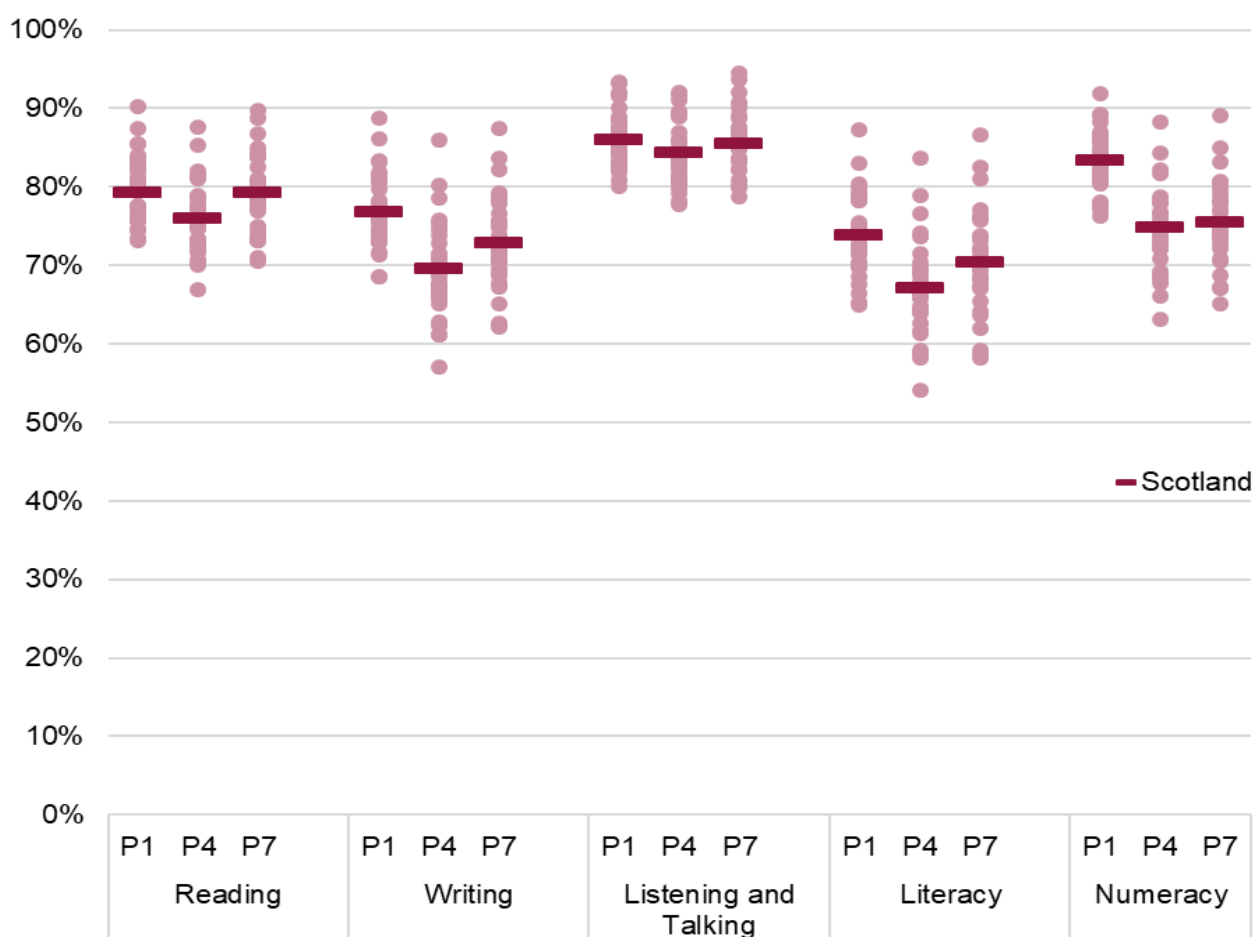
Chapter 7: Achievement of CfE Levels by local authority

If making comparisons between local authorities we recommend keeping in mind the context of the authorities and their approach to assessment. See Section 9.1.4.4 for more information.

This chapter describes the range of data reported by local authorities, and comparisons to the national level results. Full achievement of CfE levels by local authority (2016/17 to 2021/22) can be found in the [supplementary tables](#). The supplementary tables also include a breakdown of local authority achievement of CfE levels by deprivation.

Chart 12 illustrates the range in results between local authorities and organisers for P1, P4 and P7. The largest range in results across the four separate organisers (i.e. excluding literacy) can be seen in writing at P4 (ranging from 57 per cent to 86 per cent) – a difference of 29 percentage points.

Chart 12: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils achieving the expected CfE Levels by organisers and local authority, 2021/22



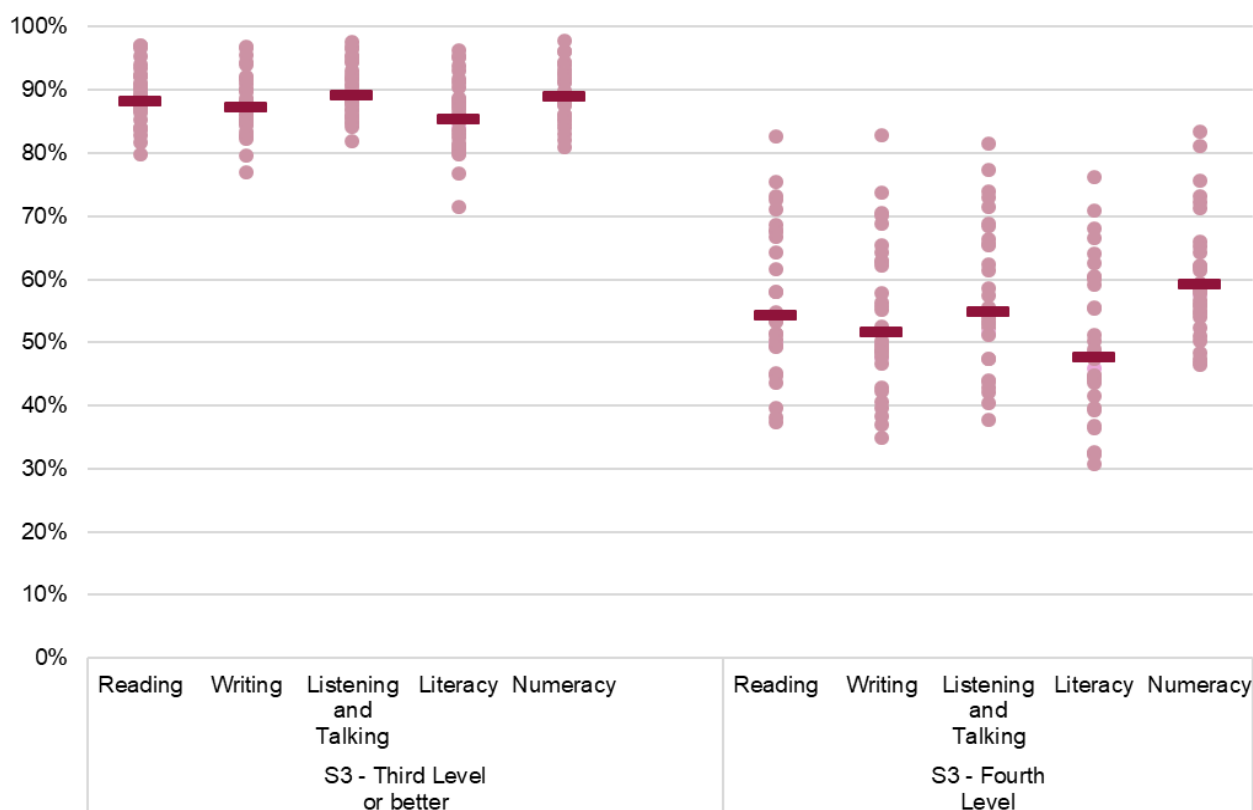
The smallest range in results by local authority across the four separate organisers (i.e. excluding literacy) is for listening and talking. The range in performance (between highest and lowest) in listening and talking is 13 percentage points at P1, 14 percentage points at P4 and 16 percentage points at P7.

In both literacy and numeracy, the range of results between local authorities has decreased, at all three primary stages, between 2020/21 and 2021/22. This follows an increase in the range of results between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

In 2020/21, the range of primary schools results across local authorities increased as compared to previous years. This partly reflected variation in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pupils across the country, as well as data quality concerns reported by some local authorities (for more information see Section 1.3 in [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels 2020-21](#)). Conversely, this year, the ranges across local authorities have reduced back to pre-pandemic levels. This may partly reflect a gradual recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pupils' learning and their results, as well as on data quality.

At S3 (see Chart 13 below), the range in results between local authorities reporting attainment at Third Level or better was smaller than at Fourth Level. For Third Level or better, the smallest range in results by local authority across the four separate organisers was 16 percentage points for listening and talking (82 to 98 per cent). The highest range was for writing at 20 percentage points (77 to 97 per cent).

Chart 13: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving CfE Levels by organisers and local authority, 2021/22



For Fourth Level in S3, the smallest range in results reported by local authorities was 37 percentage points for numeracy (46 to 84 per cent) and the largest was 48 percentage points for writing (35 to 83 per cent).

Results for local authorities by SIMD quintiles are available in the [supplementary tables](#).

Chapter 8: Glossary

Additional Support Needs (ASN):

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended) states that a child or young person has an additional support need where they need additional support in order to benefit from school education.

Broad General Education (BGE):

The [Broad General Education](#) is the first phase of Curriculum for Excellence. It begins in early learning and childcare and continues to the end of S3 (the third year of secondary school).

Code of Practice for Statistics:

The [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) provides producers of official statistics with the detailed practices they must commit to when producing and releasing official statistics.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE):

[Curriculum for Excellence](#) is Scotland's curriculum. It helps our children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century.

English as an Additional Language (EAL):

Refers to pupils for whom English is a second or additional language.

Gaelic Medium Education:

Gaelic Medium Education is a form of education in Scotland that allows pupils to be taught through the medium of Scottish Gaelic (Gàidhlig), with English being taught as the secondary language.

Grant Aided School:

Schools that are directly financially supported by the Scottish Government and follow the Curriculum for Excellence but are independent from local authorities. Grant aided schools are not equivalent to schools termed 'academies' in some parts of the UK.

Grant aided special schools provide for young people with a wide range of ASN. There are seven Grant aided special schools in Scotland.

Government Statistical Service:

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) is a cross-government network led by the National Statistician. The GSS works to provide advice, analysis and a statistical evidence base to help people make better decisions.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD):

The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Scotland.

Least deprived:

Pupils whose home address is in the 20% of least deprived data zones (small areas) as defined by the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#).

Most deprived:

Pupils whose home address is in the 20% of most deprived data zones (small areas) as defined by the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#).

National Improvement Framework (NIF):

The [National Improvement Framework \(NIF\)](#) is Scottish Government policy to ensure children and young people develop a broad range of skills and capacities, whilst supporting them to thrive, regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs.

Organiser:

The ACEL data collection collects information on pupil performance in four areas, known as organisers. Organisers consist of Numeracy and the three literacy components: Reading, Writing and Listening and Talking. A combined literacy measure is also produced based on the three literacy organisers: reading, writing and listening and talking (see Section 9.1.3.2).

Pupil Census data:

A Scottish Government data collection, collecting a range of information and statistics on school pupils in Scotland. For more information see [School education statistics](#).

Publicly funded mainstream school:

Schools which are run and financed by the local authority and grant-aided schools.

Special schools:

Most children with additional support needs are educated in mainstream schools but some with complex or specific needs are educated in special schools.

Urban Rural Classification:

The Urban Rural Classification is an Official Statistic used to distinguish between rural and urban areas. Within this publication the Urban Rural Classification 2016 has been used. For more information see [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2016](#)

Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA):

School children in P1, P4, P7 and S3 complete online standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy as part of everyday learning and teaching. The assessments help to identify children's progress, providing diagnostic information to support teachers' professional judgement. More information can be found on [Scottish National Standardised Assessments \(SNSA\) website](#).

Chapter 9: Background notes

9.1 Sources, coverage, methodology and quality assurance

9.1.1 Sources

The data included in the publication are provided to Scottish Government by local authorities and grant-aided schools. Independent schools are not included in the data collection. The assessments of children's progress are based on teachers' professional judgements in schools. A copy of the specification issued to data providers is available at the Scottish Government website ([Scottish Exchange of Data: achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels](#)).

Teacher professional judgements of achievement of a level are based on all of the evidence collected by teachers during the ongoing assessment of children and young people's learning. A wide range of evidence is collected in a variety of ways. This includes observing children and young people at work, assessing their work in class, standardised assessments and assessing children and young people's knowledge and understanding by talking to them about their learning.

The Achievement of CfE Level census date was Monday 13 June 2022. Data were submitted by local authorities to Scottish Government by Friday 26 August 2022. A process of quality assurance between Scottish Government, local authorities and schools occurs before the production of these statistics.

9.1.2 Coverage

The data collected cover all pupils in Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3 in mainstream schools and all pupils based in special schools/units. Data were provided for 231,596 pupils. Teacher judgements cover the four organisers of reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. Pupils for whom the teacher has been unable to make a professional judgement are not included in the published results (less than one per cent of pupils).

A very small percentage (slightly over one per cent) of children have long-term significant and complex additional support needs that mean that it is unlikely they will progress through the CfE levels during their time in education. These children are included within the data as 'pupil following individual milestones'.

9.1.3 Methodology

9.1.3.1 Pupils based in special schools or standalone special units

Special schools and standalone special units cater for children of all ages. The information gathered as part of the ACEL return does not include a specific stage for these pupils (i.e. they are simply recorded as being a pupil based in a special school or standalone special unit and not as being in P1, P4, etc.). Therefore, it is not possible to calculate the percentage of pupils who have achieved the CfE level relevant to their stage.

The data reported shows the overall picture of CfE levels that have been achieved by pupils based in special schools and standalone special units. These data are not included in the headline national and local authority figures; they are reported separately.

This year, for the first time, we have introduced a new category for Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels data collections. The definition for this is:

For standalone special schools and units, use this category if:

- (a) a pupil is in the senior phase and,
- (b) the pupil is being taught at least one qualification, other award, or work-based learning, at SCQF Level 1 and above and,
- (c) teachers would not normally make CfE level judgements for pupils in the senior phase.

This is in response to reports that some pupils in special schools and standalone special units were previously recorded as 'Not Assessed' when these pupils were in fact working towards national qualifications and out of scope of this collection on Broad General Education performance. In 2019, we consulted key stakeholders, including Education Scotland, special schools and standalone special units and local authorities, regarding how these pupils should be appropriately recorded. The introduction of this new code reflects their feedback and should allow more accurate representation of the achievements of pupils in special schools.

9.1.3.2 Derived variables: P1, P4, P7 combined and literacy variable

The publication tables include two derived variables: P1, P4 and P7 combined and literacy.

P1, P4 and P7 combined figures have been available on the [school level dashboard](#) since 2015/16 to provide data for small schools (where data for individual stages would potentially reveal information about individual pupils). P1, P4 and P7 combined figures are available at local authority and national level for comparison purposes.

The literacy variable has been created from the three literacy organisers: reading, writing and listening and talking. A pupil is deemed to have achieved the expected level in literacy if they have achieved the expected level in all three literacy organisers. A pupil is deemed not to have achieved the expected level in overall literacy if they have failed to achieve the expected level in one or more of the individual organisers. If a pupil has not been assessed in one or more of the organisers ('Not Assessed'), their results are not included in calculation of the overall literacy variable.

These two derived variables are used in the key measures in the [National Improvement Framework \(NIF\)](#):

- Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected Level in Literacy;
- Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected Level in Numeracy;
- Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Literacy and;
- Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy.

9.1.3.3 Gaelic medium education

Pupils based in Gaelic medium primary schools/classes will learn and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in both Gàidhlig and English.

Pupils in Primary 1 Gaelic medium primary schools will generally be immersed in developing their reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy skills in the medium of Gaelic.

From around Primary 3, children based in Gaelic medium primary schools/classes will also start to develop their skills in reading, writing and listening and talking in the English language.

It is expected that by the end of Primary 7, most children who have been based in Gaelic medium primary schools/classes should be achieving Second Level in reading, writing, and listening and talking in both Gàidhlig and English.

For pupils based in Gaelic medium primary schools/classes, the following data were collected and published in 2021/22:

| | P1 | P4 | P7 | S3 |
|--------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| Gàidhlig Reading | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Gàidhlig Writing | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Gàidhlig Listening and Talking | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| English Reading | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| English Writing | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| English Listening and Talking | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Numeracy | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Achievement of CfE levels in Gàidhlig can be found in Chapter 5.

9.1.3.4 Data matching

To reduce the burden on data providers, as per the Code of Practice for Statistics, pupil characteristic information was added to the Achievement of CfE Levels data by using previously collected data from the Pupil Census 2021. The following variables were added:

- Ethnicity
- Additional Support Needs
- English as an Additional Language
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 6-fold Urban Rural Classification

Achievement of CfE Level data and Pupil Census data were initially matched based on Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) and school or, where an initial match is not made, based on SCN and other demographic information (e.g. sex and date of birth).

9.1.4 Data quality and quality assurance

9.1.4.1 Data quality and feedback from data suppliers

As part of the quality assurance process, feedback was sought from local authority data suppliers on the process of compiling the data and on factors which may affect data quality. Feedback was received from 26 out of 32 local authorities. The majority of authorities provided substantive feedback covering the assessment process followed by schools, their own quality assurance of the data and any concerns over the quality of the data.

Overall, most local authorities indicated that they were confident in data robustness and accuracy, with a number of them citing further improvements planned for future data collections and quality assessments. A small number of authorities noted that they still had concerns about the consistency of judgements across schools within the authority, which could affect comparability across the country. Two local authorities noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had had an ongoing impact on this year's data collection. They reported that teacher absences as well as limited opportunities of in-person evaluation activities in the past two and a half years continued to impact on the ability to engage in pre-pandemic levels of cross establishment moderation work.

9.1.4.2 Official Statistics

From 2015/16 to 2017/18 Achievement of CfE Level publications were Official Statistics labelled as 'Experimental Statistics'. This was to reflect the fact that these were new statistics in development, published to involve users and stakeholders in their development and build in quality and understanding at an early stage. From 2018/19 Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level statistics are no longer labelled as Experimental Statistics.

The factors that led to the removal of the [Experimental Statistics label](#) can be found in the [Evidence Paper](#).

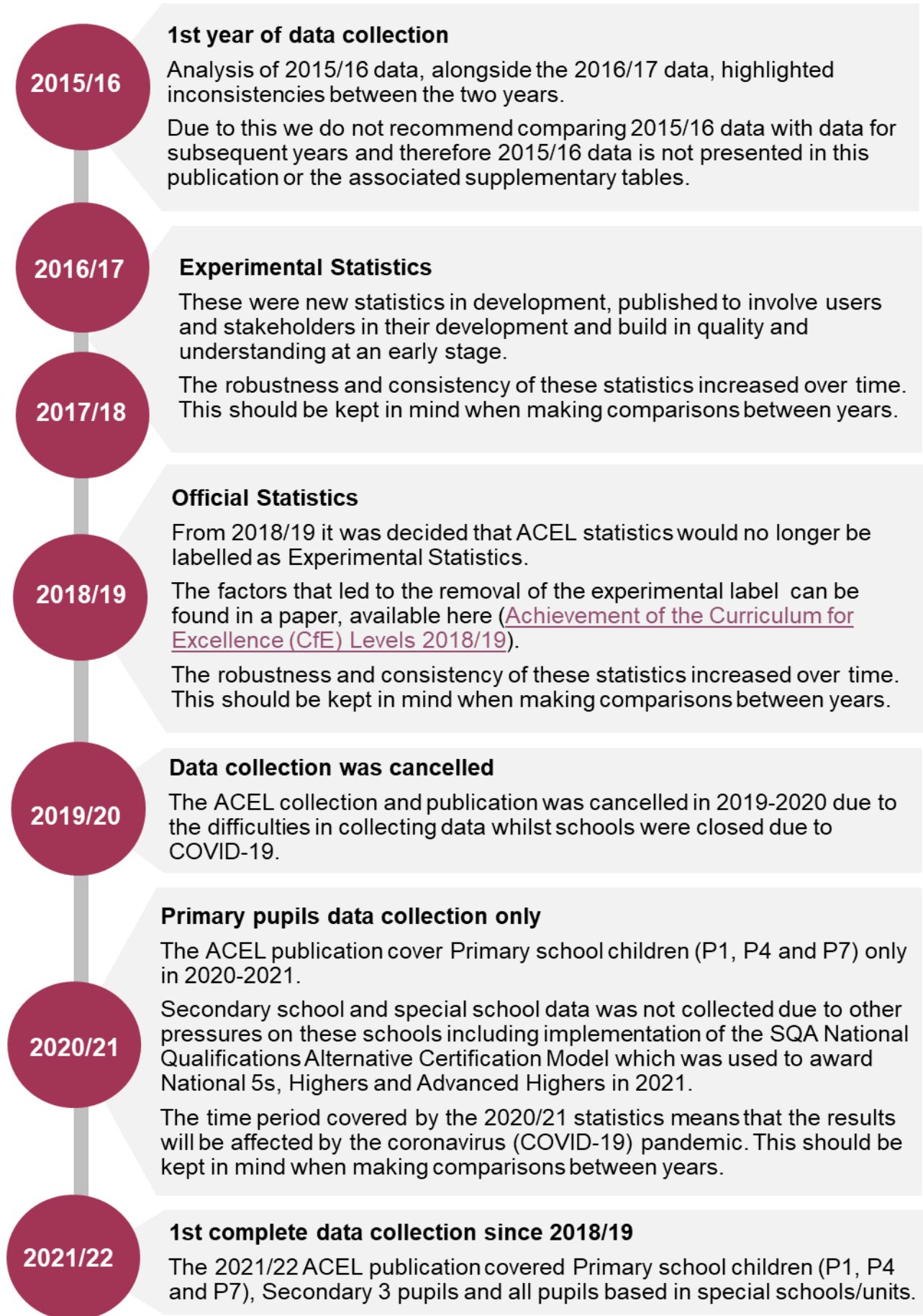
9.1.4.3 Comparisons over time

This publication, and the associated supplementary tables, provide comparisons back to 2016/17, at a national and local authority level. When making such comparisons, it should be noted that both analysis of the data, and evidence provided to us by local authorities, suggests the robustness and consistency of the data has changed during this period (see Chart 14 below).

Comparisons have not been made with data for 2015/16 - the first year of data collection – in this publication. Analysis of this data, alongside the 2016/17 data, highlighted inconsistencies between the two years. Due to this we do not recommend comparing 2015/16 data with data for subsequent years.

The time period covered by the 2020/21 statistics meant that the results were affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This was likely to have had an impact both on learning and teaching (and therefore the CfE levels achieved) and on the quality of the data submitted for some schools. This should be kept in mind when making comparisons between years.

Chart 14: Developments in the ACEL data collection and publication since its introduction.



9.1.4.4 Comparing between local authorities

If making comparisons between local authorities we recommend keeping in mind the context of the authorities and their approach to assessment.

In particular, in some local authorities, pupils with complex needs are integrated into their mainstream schools; these pupils have been included throughout this publication. However, within other local authorities school pupils with complex needs may attend a special school or standalone special unit. It is not necessarily appropriate to assign these pupils to a specific stage, and so, these pupils are usually treated separately in this publication. The treatment of pupils with complex needs across different local authorities should be kept in mind when making comparisons between local authorities, or between individual schools.

9.1.4.5 Assessment of children's progress against CfE Levels

The expected standards under CfE were embedded in the [Experiences and Outcomes](#) from the outset; further to this Education Scotland published draft [Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks](#) for literacy and numeracy in August 2016 in order to provide a more explicit and clear statement of standards. These standards were available to teachers ahead of the data collection for 2016/17. Final versions of the benchmarks were published in June 2017.

A national programme of Quality Assurance and Moderation has been put in place to provide more support and improve confidence and understanding amongst teachers, and in August 2017, [Scottish National Standardised Assessments](#) were made available for teachers to help inform their judgements.

9.2 School level data

School level results are also being released alongside this publication. They are available in the [School Information Dashboard](#). Data will be published for all publicly funded primary and secondary schools subject to data protection limitations.

All school level results will be presented in ten per cent bandings (i.e. under 10 per cent, 10 per cent – under 20 per cent, ... , 90 per cent or more). To prevent potential disclosure of information relating to individual pupils, any results relating to a grouping of 20 pupils or fewer will be suppressed. This means that around 19 per cent of primary schools and four per cent of secondary schools will have no information published for them.

As with the national and local authority level data, school results include 'Pupil following individual milestones'. This may have a particularly large impact on schools with an integrated special unit.

Children who were recorded as 'Not Assessed' are not included in the calculations.

The data quality considerations described in Section 9.1.4 also apply to school level data. There is greater likelihood that an individual school's results are affected by variations in assessment approach, socio-economic context and school size (for example) than is the case at the more aggregated local authority or Scotland level. If making comparisons between schools we recommend keeping in mind the context of the authorities and their approach to assessment.

9.3 Supplementary tables

The collection involves a large amount of data, which cannot be fully presented in this publication. This report seeks to highlight the key messages and give a flavour of the range of analysis possible. Detailed tables are published as supporting tables alongside this publication, and provide a fuller picture of the findings (see the [supplementary tables](#)). As with school level information, a disclosure control policy was applied to supplementary tables.

Within the supplementary tables for 2021/22, trend data for 2016/17 to 2021/22 has been included for pupil characteristics. This includes data by Additional Support Needs, English as an Additional Language, urban rural classification, sex, ethnicity and Gaelic education.

9.4 Revisions policy

Data submissions for the latest year can sometimes identify required revisions for previously submitted data. Scottish Government will revise the previous years' results at the time of publication of the latest year's results. Data revisions must be received by October for inclusion in the next publication.

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level 2015/16 data were revised and new supplementary tables published in 2016/17 following receipt of revised data from two local authorities and a minor coding revision for two special schools. (See [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level, 2016/17](#) for details).

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence for 2016/17 and 2017/18 data were revised in 2019, to use the new data matching basis introduced in 2018/19 and to account for revised data received for one primary school for 2017/18.

In 2020, the opportunity was taken to revise 2016/17 data by ethnicity, English as an Additional Language and Additional Support Needs. These revised figures took account of an improvement made to the data linkage process between ACEL data and Pupil Census data which was introduced for the 2017/18 publication.

9.5 Rounding

Figures used in the commentary of this report are based on the unrounded data which can be found in the [supplementary tables](#). This means that they may not always match with figures that are derived using the rounded data displayed in tables and charts.

9.6 International and UK comparability

England, Wales and Northern Ireland also report on literacy and numeracy performance based on teacher judgements, however, due to the differing education systems and curriculums, direct comparisons cannot be made.

England: [Statistics at the Department for Education](#)

Wales: [Examinations and assessments](#)

Northern Ireland: [Department of Education Statistics](#)

Scotland participates in the OECD's triennial Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey. This assessment is undertaken by 15 year-olds in over sixty

countries, including all OECD countries, and as such is a key international benchmark of performance. The result of most recent PISA survey is available at the Scottish Government website ([Programme for International Student Assessment \(PISA\) 2018: highlights from Scotland's results](#)).

9.7 Further information on attainment

A range of other information on the performance of Scotland's school pupils is available.

The Scottish Government publishes analysis of school leaver attainment (qualifications) and destinations. The latest data are available [at the School education statistics website](#).

Further assessment and attainment information on schools can be found on the Scottish Government Education [dashboards](#).

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) publish attainment statistics which can be found [at the SQA website](#).

For updates on new Scottish Government education statistics, any forthcoming changes to Scottish Government education statistical publications and stakeholder consultations please register with Scotstat at the following website: [ScotStat Register: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

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