

Item: 8

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 2 April 2025.

Orkney Schools Attainment.

Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.



1. Overview

- 1.1. The National Improvement Framework for Scottish education vision is to raise attainment and improve outcomes for all children and young people. These priorities are reflected in the Orkney Education Service Plan and Raising Attainment Strategy.
- 1.2. The Orkney Schools Attainment Report 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, presents attainment for the academic year 2023/24, following national publication of Broad General Education, secondary and school leaver data in December 2024 and February 2025.
- 1.3. The following data is presented:
 - i. Early Learning.
 - ii. Curriculum for Excellence Levels achieved by pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3.
 - iii. Attainment of Senior Phase pupils and School Leavers.
 - iv. Young people's participation in education, employment or training.
 - v. Young people's wider achievements through the Community Learning and Development Service.
 - vi. Destinations of school leavers.
- 1.4. The key measures presented reflect those monitored by the Scottish Government in the Scottish Attainment Challenge, including core measures on which all local authorities report, and measures chosen by the service to reflect local priorities.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Note the Orkney Schools Attainment report for academic session 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, which provides assurance on the levels of success and achievement of children and young people in Orkney.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

- 1. Financial** Not applicable.
- 2. Legal** Not applicable.
- 3. Corporate Governance** Not applicable.
- 4. Human Resources** Not applicable.
- 5. Equalities** Not applicable.
- 6. Island Communities Impact** Not applicable.
- 7. Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our Communities.
 - Developing our Infrastructure.
 - Transforming our Council.
- 8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - Cost of Living.
 - Sustainable Development.
 - Local Equality.
 - Improving Population Health.
- 9. Environmental and Climate Risk** None
- 10. Risk** Not applicable.
- 11. Procurement** Not applicable.
- 12. Health and Safety** Not applicable.
- 13. Property and Assets** Not applicable.
- 14. Information Technology** Not applicable.
- 15. Cost of Living** Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

[Excellence and Equity in Education – The National Improvement Framework: Orkney Islands Council Report \(2023-2024\) and Plan \(2024-25\)](#)

[Raising Attainment Strategy 2023-2026.](#)

Appendix

Appendix 1: Orkney Schools Attainment Report 2023-24.

Orkney Schools Attainment Report Session 2023-24

This report summarises the key measures of attainment and achievement in Orkney schools in session 2023-24:

- **Section 1** Early Learning.
- **Section 2** Curriculum for Excellence levels achieved by pupils in their Broad General Education in Orkney schools at stages P1, P4, P7 and S3.
- **Section 3** Senior Phase and School Leavers' attainment and participation of 16-19 year olds in Education, Employment and Training
- **Section 4** Wider Achievements of young people reported by the Community Learning and Development Service.
- **Section 5** School Leaver Destinations of young people, in Orkney, in session 2023 to 2024.

Section 1: Early Learning

- 1.1** As part of their practice, nursery practitioners interact with children and observe their play to ensure that they are able to extend children's learning and follow children's interests. Practitioners continuously gather information about the children in their care and build up a learning journey for each child, consisting of observations, photographs and children's contributions. Each practitioner is particularly responsible for a group of children and several times each year, nursery managers meet with practitioners to talk about the learning of the children in the practitioner's key group. They note whether children are meeting developmental milestones typical for children of their age however, they are most interested in whether children are making good progress in their play and learning.
- 1.2** Some children will not be meeting typical developmental milestones but will be making good progress along their own developmental pathway. Practitioners use a Staged Intervention Approach to help them consider if they are meeting children's learning needs and how to plan for children's learning. This means that they can build on children's prior learning and provide additional support in specific areas as needed. Practitioners might also decide that they need to provide more challenging experiences.
- 1.3** The tables below summarise information for children moving on to Primary 1.

1.4 Is the child making good progress? Child's needs are well met through universal provision and they are making very good progress.				
	2020-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Listening and talking	87%	91%	92%	94%
Early reading		90%	92%	96%
Early writing		91%	91%	95%
Mathematical development	90%	93%	88%	92%
Wellbeing	80%	86%	87%	94%

1.5 Is the child meeting the expected developmental milestones for their age?				
	2020-21	2021-22	22-23	23-24
Listening and talking	81%	84%	85%	78%
Early reading		86%	89%	87%
Early writing		87%	83%	84%
Mathematical development	88%	87%	85%	87%
Wellbeing	74%	79%	76%	83%

1.6 For children leaving nursery, there has been a slight decrease in children meeting developmental milestones in listening and talking, which would match with national research which highlights the impact of lockdown on babies and very young children in relation to language and social development. There has been an increase in the number of children who are typically developing in relation to their wellbeing. This is important as having good wellbeing underpins all aspects of learning.

Section 2: Curriculum for Excellence Levels

- 2.1 Scottish Government produces an annual report on the [Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels](#) (ACEL). This data is published annually in December reporting on the previous school session. The data supports one of the drivers for improvement within the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education by providing a measure of progress in learning linked to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).
- 2.2 Data gathered in the ACEL survey relates to achievement of a level in Broad General Education (BGE), at Primary 1 (P1), Primary 4 (P4), Primary 7 (P7) and Secondary 3 (S3). The data is based on teacher professional judgements of the CfE Levels achieved by each pupil in areas of literacy and numeracy.
- 2.3 The areas of Literacy reported on are Reading, Writing and Listening & Talking, and the combined number of pupils who achieve three out of three meaning achievement of a level in all 3 of the areas in literacy. (Reading, writing, listening and talking). Numeracy is reported as one area.
- 2.4 Teacher judgements underpin the data reported in ACEL. Teachers make these judgements based on the evidence collected during on-going assessment (formative assessment) of children and young people's learning. Formative assessment involves the daily evaluation of children and young people's learning by the teacher and will include discussion with children and young people about their learning. Teachers create high quality assessment opportunities at regular intervals to help them understand pupils' ability to apply their skills in different contexts. Diagnostic assessments such as the [National Standardised Assessments for Scotland](#) (NSA) and [Scottish Online Formative Assessment](#) (SOFA) provide further information.
- 2.5 Moderation procedures support staff to have a shared understanding of progress within and completion of a level.
- 2.6 Most children and young people are expected to achieve the CfE levels within these timescales:
 - Early level by the end of P1.
 - First level by the end of P4.
 - Second level by the end of P7.
 - Third / Fourth level by the end of S3.

As each child's learning journey is unique, there will be children and young people who achieve the levels earlier or later than would be expected.

2.7 The Broad General Education (BGE) tracking toolkit used by all primary schools provides a comprehensive data tracking and analysis tool. The toolkit helps to identify overall data trends, measures progress against improvement targets, and tracks the attainment of all children along with specific cohorts i.e., those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and Care Experienced Children and Young People. (CECYP)

2.8 S3 pupils are tracked three times a year and progress recorded either in SEEMIS Progress and Achievement or by individual school tracking processes.

2.9 Data in the ACEL survey is reported in terms of the percentage of the year group stage who are recorded as having achieved the “expected” Level by that stage. For S3, the data is reported as the percentage achieving S3 achieving Level 3 and S3 achieving Level 4.

2.10 The following table shows the overall summary of the ACEL data for 2024. Figures show percentages of pupils achieving appropriate level by stage.

	P1	P4	P7	P1/4/7 Comb	S3/3	S3/4
Reading	88	84	86	86	88	57
Writing	86	79	80	81	80	47
Listening & Talking	95	91	92	93	88	39
Literacy combined	85	79	78	80	79	27
Numeracy	89	83	84	85	90	56

2.11 Summary over time

The following tables show the levels achieved by pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3 compared against the national average.

No data was collected in 2019/2020 in all year groups. In 2020/2021 only primary schools' data was collected as schools recovered from the pandemic.

P1 Early Level		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2017/2018	Orkney	76%	68%	79%	67%	82%
	National	81%	78%	87%	75%	85%
2018/2019	Orkney	77%	69%	80%	66%	78%
	National	82%	79%	87%	76%	85%
2019/2020	No data collected - pandemic					
2020/2021	Orkney	78%	74%	85%	72%	84%
	National	77%	74%	84%	71%	81%
2021/2022	Orkney	81%	80%	87%	78%	82%
	National	79%	77%	86%	74%	84%
2022/2023	Orkney	88%	85%	92%	84%	88%
	National	81%	78%	87%	76%	85%
2023/2024	Orkney	88%	86%	95%	85%	89%
	National	81%	79%	87%	77%	85%

P4 First Level		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2017/2018	Orkney	76%	70%	81%	64%	77%
	National	77%	72%	85%	69%	76%
2018/2019	Orkney	66%	61%	72%	56%	68%
	National	78%	73%	85%	70%	77%
2019/2020	No data collected – pandemic					
2020/2021	Orkney	71%	63%	81%	62%	70%
	National	73%	67%	82%	64%	72%
2021/2022	Orkney	75%	68%	84%	67%	74%
	National	76%	70%	85%	67%	75%
2022/2023	Orkney	82%	73%	89%	71%	84%
	National	78%	72%	87%	70%	77%

P4 First Level		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2023/2024	Orkney	84%	79%	91%	79%	83%
	National	79%	74%	87%	71%	78%

P7 Second Level		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2017/2018	Orkney	75%	69%	75%	65%	72%
	National	79%	73%	84%	70%	75%
2018/2019	Orkney	75%	67%	80%	61%	72%
	National	80%	74%	86%	71%	76%
2019/2020	No data collected – pandemic					
2020/2021	Orkney	82%	74%	87%	71%	72%
	National	76%	69%	82%	66%	72%
2021/2022	Orkney	85%	76%	86%	72%	81%
	National	79%	73%	86%	71%	76%
2022/2023	Orkney	90%	80%	92%	78%	78%
	National	81%	75%	87%	73%	84%
2023/2024	Orkney	86%	80%	92%	78%	84%
	National	81%	76%	88%	74%	78%

P1, P4 and P7 combined		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2017/2018	Orkney	76%	69%	78%	65%	77%
	National	79%	74%	85%	71%	78%
2018/2019	Orkney	73%	66%	78%	61%	72%
	National	80%	75%	86%	72%	79%
2019/2020	No data collected - pandemic					
2020/2021	Orkney	77%	70%	84%	68%	75%
	National	75%	70%	83%	67%	75%
2021/2022	Orkney	80%	74%	86%	79%	94%
	National	78%	73%	85%	78%	89%
2022/2023	Orkney	83%	79%	91%	78%	85%
	National	80%	75%	87%	73%	80%

P1, P4 and P7 combined		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2022/2023	Orkney	86%	81%	93%	80%	85%
	National	80%	76%	87%	74%	80%

Commentary on primary 1, 4 and 7 attainment

- Exceeded national data in reading in P1, P4, P7 and P1/4/7 by 5-9pp
- Exceeded national data in writing in P1, P4, P7 and P1/4/7 by 4-7pp
- Exceeded national data in listening and talking in P1, P4, P7 and P1/4/7 by 4-8pp
- Exceeded national data in literacy in P1, P4, P7 and P1/4/7 by 4-8pp
- Exceeded national data in numeracy in P1, P4, P7 and P1/4/7 by 4-6pp

S3 Third Level		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2017/2018	Orkney	92%	89%	94%	88%	93%
	National	90%	89%	91%	87%	89%
2018/2019	Orkney	88%	83%	88%	82%	94%
	National	91%	90%	91%	88%	90%
2019/2020	No data collected - pandemic					
2020/2021	No data collected - pandemic					
2021/2022	Orkney	89%	90%	86%	85%	94%
	National	88%	87%	89%	86%	89%
2022/2023	Orkney	88%	86%	88%	84%	94%
	National	90%	89%	91%	88%	90%
2023/2024	Orkney	88%	80%	88%	79%	90%
	National	90%	90%	91%	88%	90%

S3 Fourth Level		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2017/2018	Orkney	48%	42%	52%	37%	77%
	National	53%	51%	55%	46%	56%
2018/2019	Orkney	19%	19%	19%	11%	74%
	National	55%	52%	57%	48%	59%
2019/2020	No data collected - pandemic					
2020/2021	No data collected - pandemic					

S3 Fourth Level		Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy Combined	Numeracy
2021/2022	Orkney	73%	69%	73%	64%	71%
	National	54%	52%	55%	48%	59%
2022/2023	Orkney	61%	60%	60%	55%	66%
	National	62%	60%	63%	56%	63%
2023/2024	Orkney	57%	47%	39%	27%	56%
	National	63%	61%	64%	58%	65%

Commentary on S3 third and fourth level attainment

- Below national data in reading in S3/3 by 2pp and S3/4 by 6pp
- Below national data in writing in S3/3 by 10pp and in S3/4, by 14pp
- Below national data in listening and talking in S3/3 by 3pp and in S3/4 by 25pp
- Below national data in literacy in S3/3 by 9pp and S3/4 by 31pp
- Equalled national data in numeracy S3/3 and below S3/4 by 9pp

S3 BGE attainment in 2023/24, particularly at level 4, was unusually low compared to Orkney figures in the preceding two years, and when compared to national attainment in 2023/34.

National Standardised Assessments (NSA) in Reading, Writing and Numeracy are carried out at the beginning of S3. Percentages of young people achieving the top and second band scores in the NSA are as follows:

	Orkney Band 12 and above	National Band 12 and above	Orkney Band 11	National Band 11
Reading	26%	12%	30%	22%
Writing	20%	13%	21%	21%
Numeracy	25%	16%	21%	17%

Whilst the NSA is not directly comparable to the Curriculum for Excellence levels, these results do not suggest that the 2023-24 S3 cohort in Orkney are of lower ability than the national cohort; indeed in many aspects the NSA scores are significantly higher than the national average

In addition, we are aware from the monitoring of performance in Literacy and Numeracy attainment of young people in S4 and on leaving school, that Orkney attainment in Senior Phase is broadly in line with national performance (see sections 3.9 and 3.15).

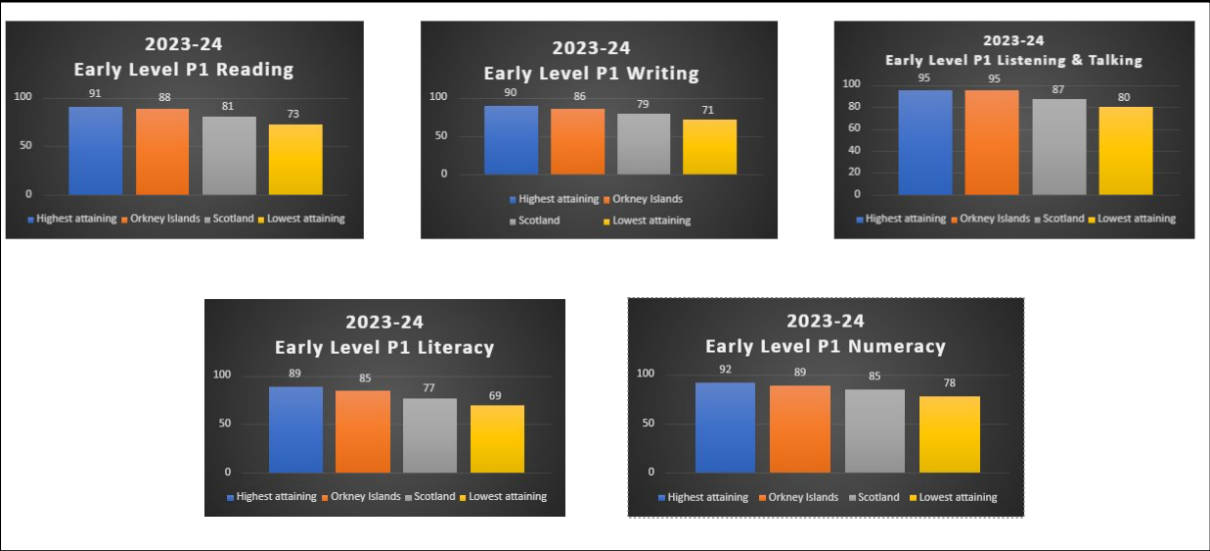
Following the collection of the S3 BGE attainment for 2023-24 a plan was created for work with Orkney secondary schools and shared with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.

As part of this plan there has been work undertaken with teachers to support their understanding of Orkney's position in the national context and moderate judgements of young people's written work against the benchmarks for levels 3 and 4. Tracking of pupil progress and predicted outcomes in December 2024 and February 2025 suggests we will see the percentage of Orkney S3 pupils attaining levels 3 and 4 in Literacy and Numeracy more in line with the national average at the end of the 2024-25 academic year.

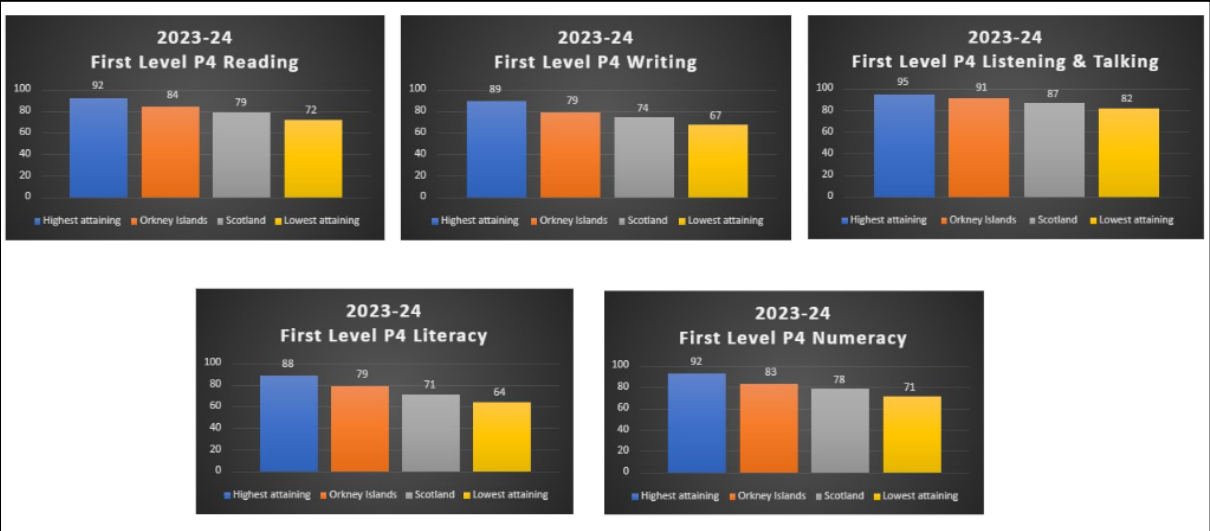
2.12. Comparative data ACEL data 2024

The following graphs show Orkney (orange) compared to the highest attaining (blue) and lowest attaining (yellow) authorities in Scotland. You are also able to see the Scottish national average (grey). The literacy percentage is where the children and young people achieve all three of the literacy organisers. All data is expressed as percentages.

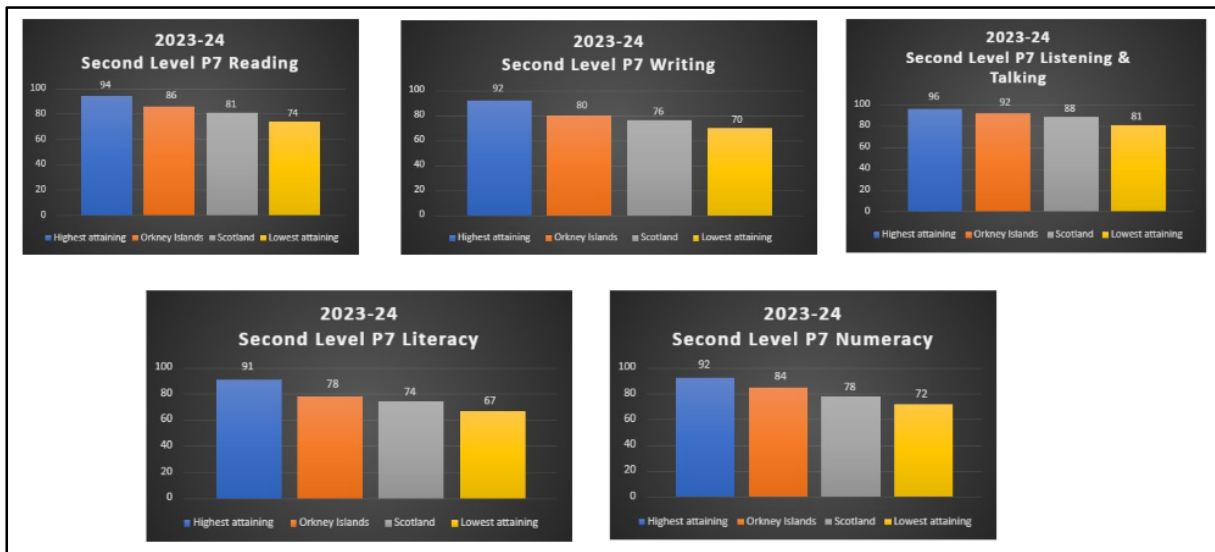
P1 - Early Level



P4 - First Level



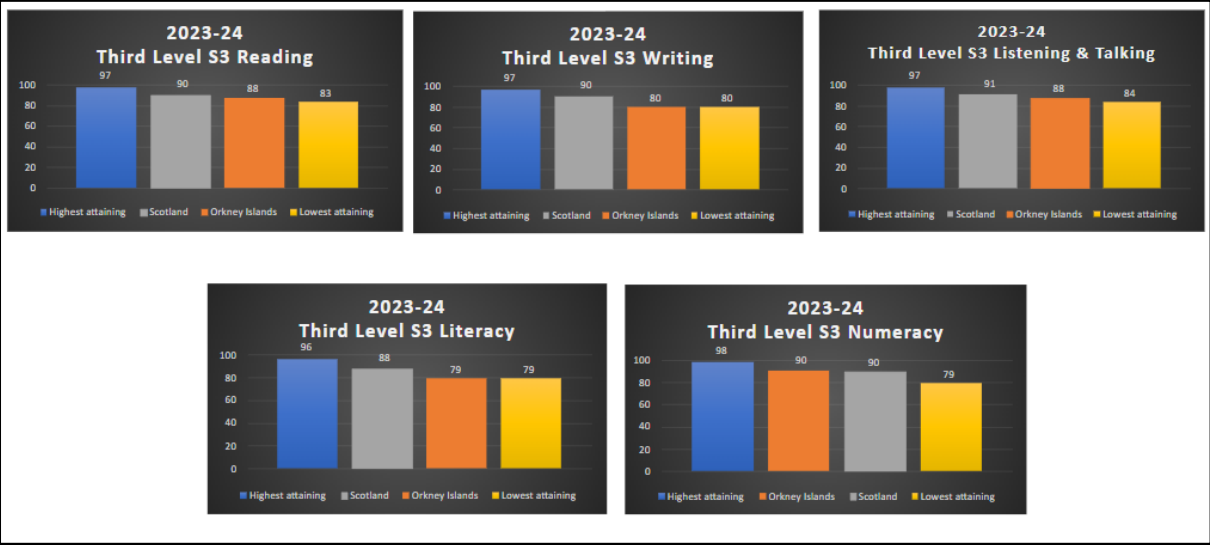
P7 - Second Level



P1/4/7 Literacy combined



S3 - Third Level



S3 - Fourth Level



Next steps

- Priority given to S1-S3 CFE attainment. Develop further improved tracking and monitoring within these year groups. Action plan created to address issues in this.
- Continue to support primary schools in attainment through robust monitoring and tracking processes.
- A clear focus on the attainment of children eligible for free school meals and those who have experienced care.

Section 3: Levels of Achievement in National Examinations

3.1 Senior Phase Tracking and monitoring process

Each year young people in secondary schools in Orkney are presented for National Courses, Awards and Units certificated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), as well as a smaller number presented for a range of qualifications and awards accredited by bodies other than SQA.

3.2 The Education Service monitors the following measures for Senior Phase pupils' attainment:

- Percentage of entered pupils passing National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher.
- Percentage of pupils in S4 achieving 5 or more level 5 qualifications.
- Percentage of pupils in S4 achieving level 4 and level 5 Literacy and Numeracy.

These measures are calculated three times a year using data from school reports, giving figures for young people's current and predicted performance based on teacher judgements. Schools use this data to plan interventions to raise attainment.

At the end of the school session the same measures are calculated using the actual SQA attainment data. An initial version of this data is calculated in early August when young people receive their results and finalised in late September, when it is published in Education Scotland's Insight data tool.

Whilst SQA attainment for pupils in Junior High Schools is not published in this report, due to the confidentiality risk of small cohort sizes, their data is tracked and interventions to raise attainment are agreed using the same process as the secondary schools.

3.3 In addition to the measures in 3.2 above, the following measures are reported annually.

- Percentage of young people aged 16-19 who are in education, employment or training (known as the Annual Participation Measure).
- Percentage of school leavers achieving 1 or more level 5 qualification.
- Percentage of school leavers achieving 1 or more level 6 qualification.
- Percentage of school leavers attaining 5 or more level 5 qualifications.
- Percentage of school leavers achieving 5 or more level 6 qualifications
- Percentage of school leavers achieving level 4 and level 5 Literacy and Numeracy.

The Annual Participation Measure is published in August for the preceding calendar year, whilst data on school leavers' attainment is published in February of the year after examinations were taken.

- 3.4** Some of the annual measures are reported to Education Scotland as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. For 2023-24 “Stretch aims” were set for these measures for Orkney as follows:

Measure	2023-24 Stretch Aim
Annual Participation measure	96%
Percentage of school leavers achieving 1 or more level 5 qualification	93%
Percentage of school leavers achieving 1 or more level 6 qualification	60-65%

[Scottish Attainment Challenge Stretch Aims](#) are published nationally by the Scottish Government.

3.5 Impact of COVID-19 on SQA examinations

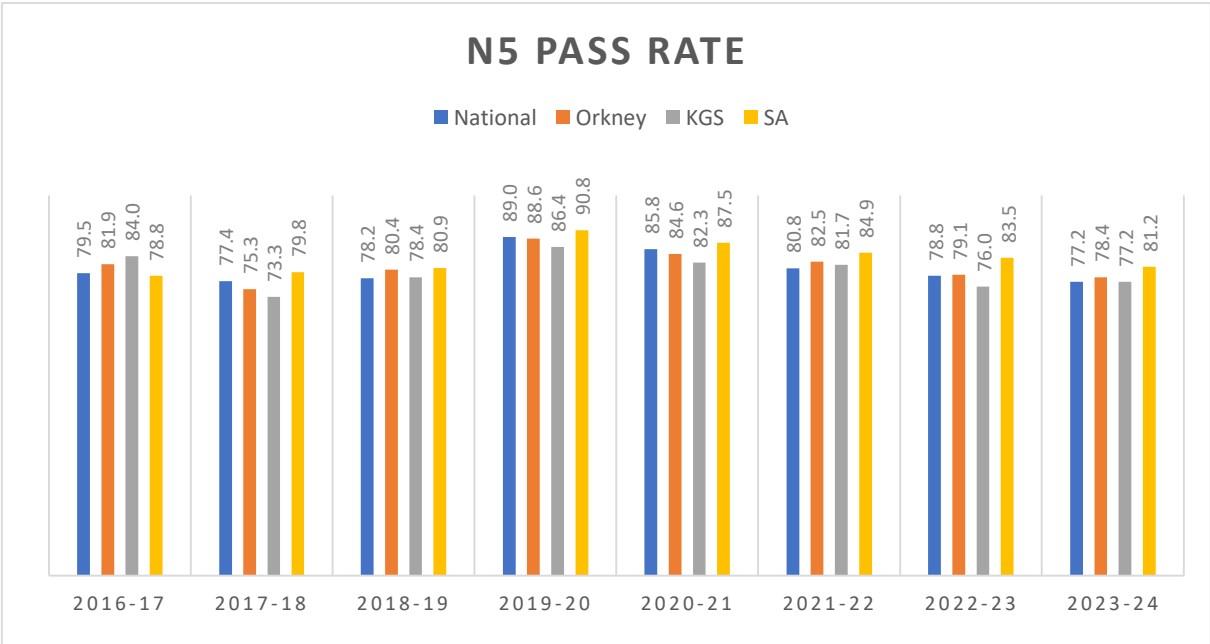
Historic data is presented in each of the measures below. It should however be noted that, due to the Covid pandemic, there were alterations to the examination process making it inappropriate to compare results across years:

- In session 2019-20 there was no SQA examination diet; grades were awarded based on teacher judgement, with courses modified to reduce content.
- In session 2020-21 there was no SQA examination diet; grades were awarded based on an alternative certification model involving teacher judgement of evidence and moderation across schools; courses continued with the same modifications to content as in 2019-20.
- Examinations were held in session 2021-22 and some modifications to content continued; there was an enhanced appeals procedure allowing teachers to present evidence to support an appeal where a pupil’s awarded grade was lower than expected.
- Increased pass rates in the Covid years when examinations were not held are evident, particularly in 2019-20 when cross-school moderation was not required.

3.7 Pass Rates (grades A-C)

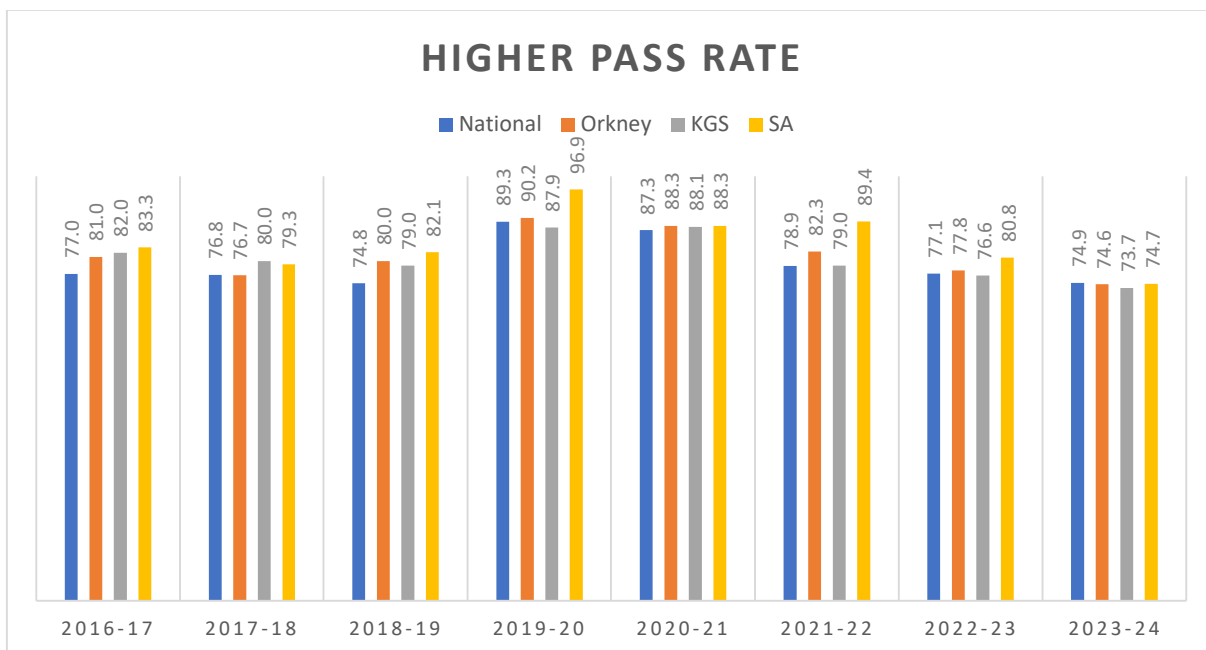
In the pass rate charts for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher presented below:

- The national % pass rate is shown in blue, with the Orkney rate shown in orange, Kirkwall Grammar School (KGS) in grey and Stromness Academy in yellow.
- Direct comparisons between KGS and Stromness Academy should not be drawn given the significant differences in their cohort sizes and demographic characteristics, as well as KGS’s status as the resourced school for pupils with complex additional support needs.
- Caution should also be exercised when comparing a school’s data across years, given that each year represents a different cohort of young people.
- Attainment of pupils in the Junior High Schools is included in the Orkney rate but separate rates for each school are not given as to do so would risk identifying individual pupils in these small cohorts.
- These rates include the outcome of appeals and for that reason may differ from any data seen in August 2023.



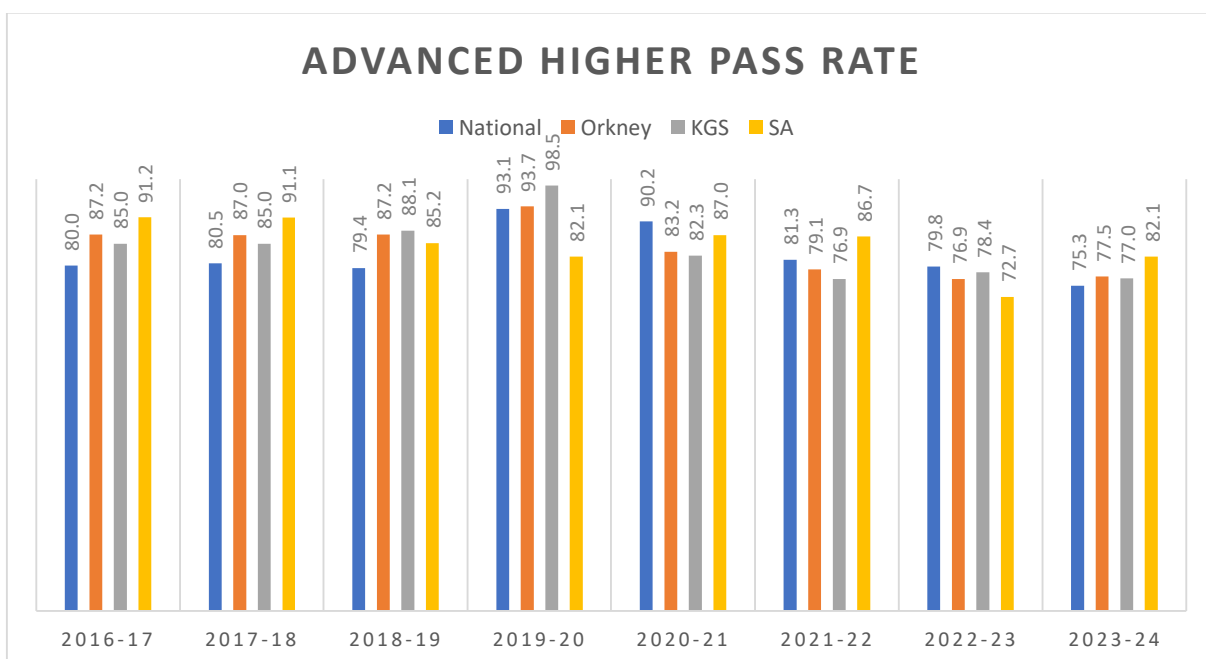
Analysis – National 5

National 5 pass rates in Orkney in 2023-24 were slightly higher than the national rate, just as they were in the previous 2 years. Both National and Orkney rates continued the trend of a slight decrease on the previous year.



Analysis – Higher

The Orkney Higher pass rate is on a par with the national average, as it was the previous year. Both National and Orkney pass rates show a decrease on the previous year.



Analysis – Advanced Higher

- The Orkney Advanced Higher pass rate has risen slightly and is 2.2 percentage points above the national rate.

Next Steps

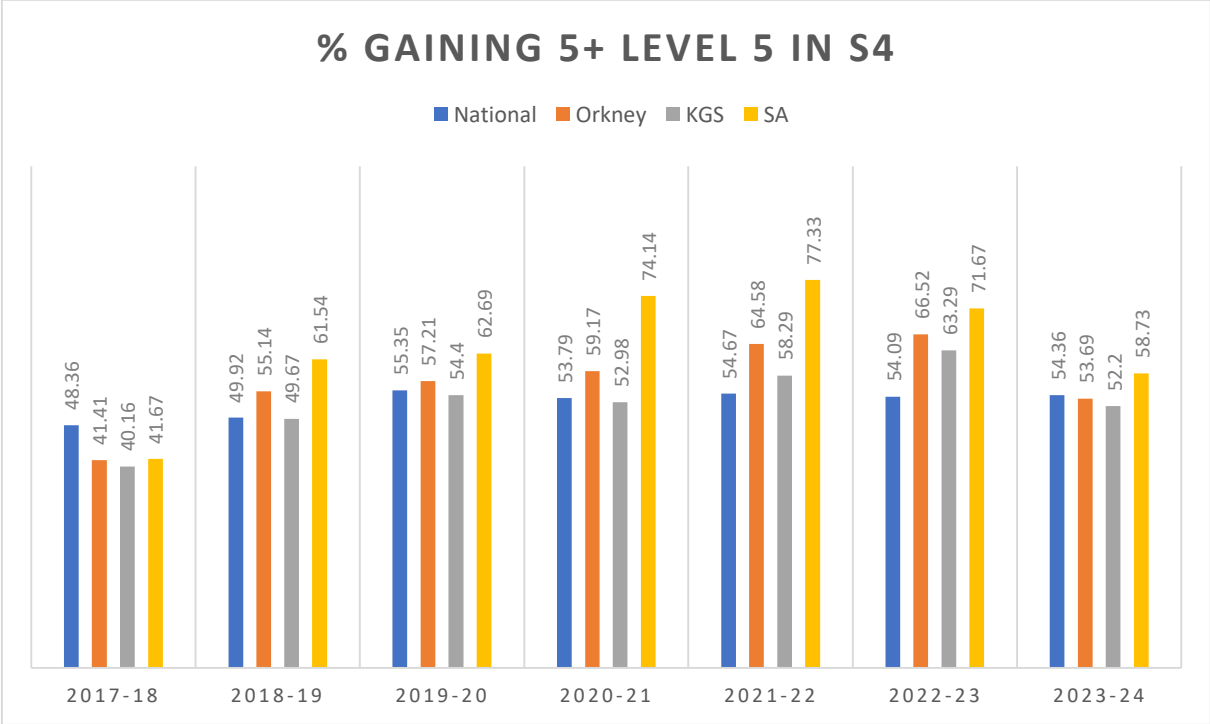
Pass rates, whether at N5, Higher or Advanced Higher, are a percentage of entries. A local authority which sought to increase its pass rate could easily achieve this by withdrawing from the examination all pupils where there is any doubt over their ability to pass. This is not the approach taken by Orkney schools; our aim is to find a balance between giving young people opportunities to achieve and concentrating their and their teachers' efforts on those areas most likely to yield success.

Schools are currently taking first steps in exploring alternative qualifications to ensure that the curriculum offer meets young people's needs and interests. Not all of these will be National Qualifications. This may cause an increase in the pass rates for Nationals, as young people are less likely to be taking courses which do not engage their interest.

Alternative qualifications are comparable with National Qualifications using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, and count towards a young person's overall attainment, including the 1+ and 5+ level 5/6 measures in this report. There are already many examples of these courses delivered for Senior Phase pupils by UHI Orkney.

3.8 5 or more level 5 passes in S4

This measure is important because it demonstrates that pupils are successful across a broad range of subjects and supports progression to further study. Achieving this breadth in S4 is important for pupils who intend to leave school at 16 and go into employment, as they may not have opportunities to continue to enhance their qualification portfolio. Achieving this solid foundation is also key for those aiming to progress to Higher Education as it facilitates pupils taking 5 Highers in S5 to support university applications.



Analysis:

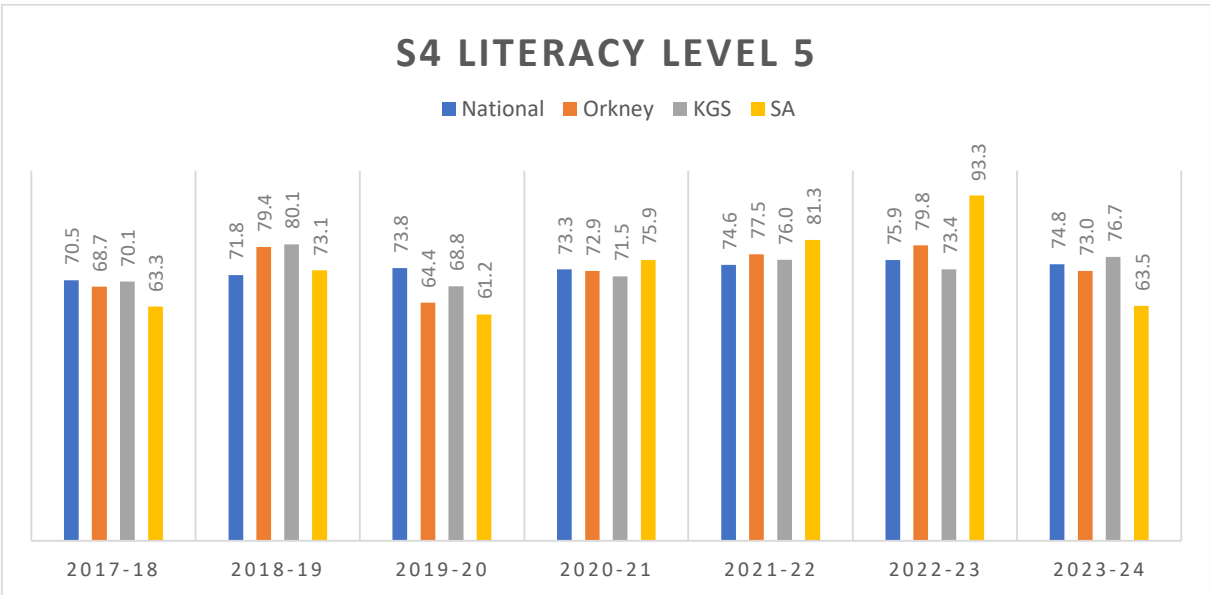
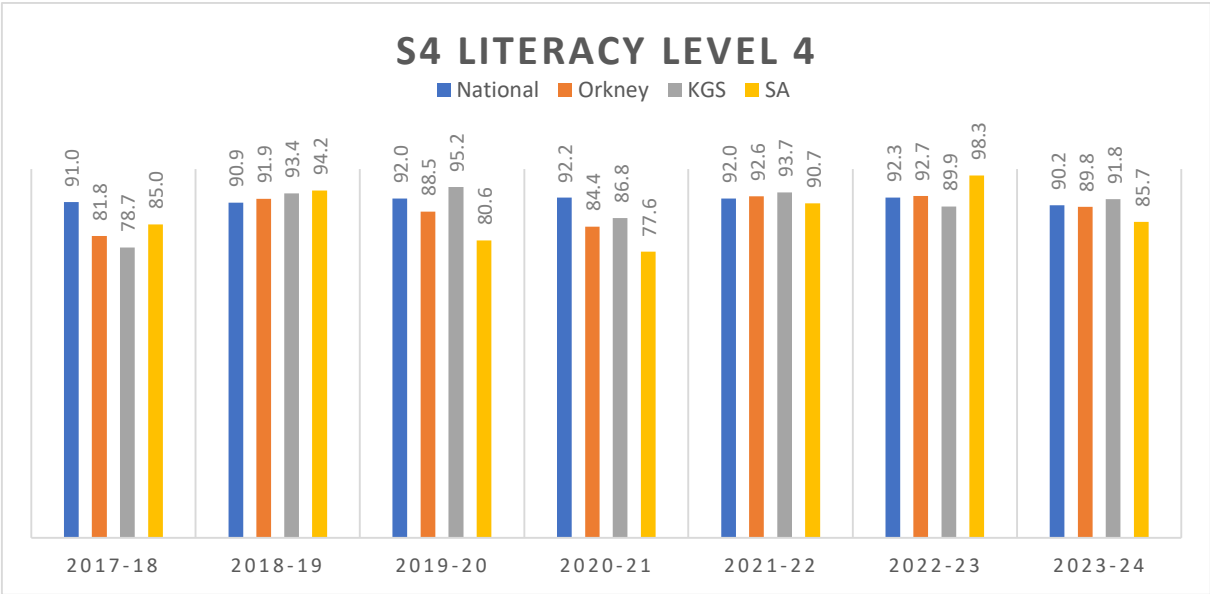
After a sustained upward trend and a particularly strong performance in 2023, Orkney attainment in this measure has dropped back to on par with the national average.

Next steps:

Efforts to diversify the courses on offer to young people, as described under Next Steps for National Qualification pass rates, should in the long term impact positively on this measure. The Orkney Offer provision of level 5 Skills for Work courses for Senior Phase pupils by UHI Orkney is a key part of this; the current cap on Scottish Funding Council funding for these courses at the college presents a risk to attainment under this measure.

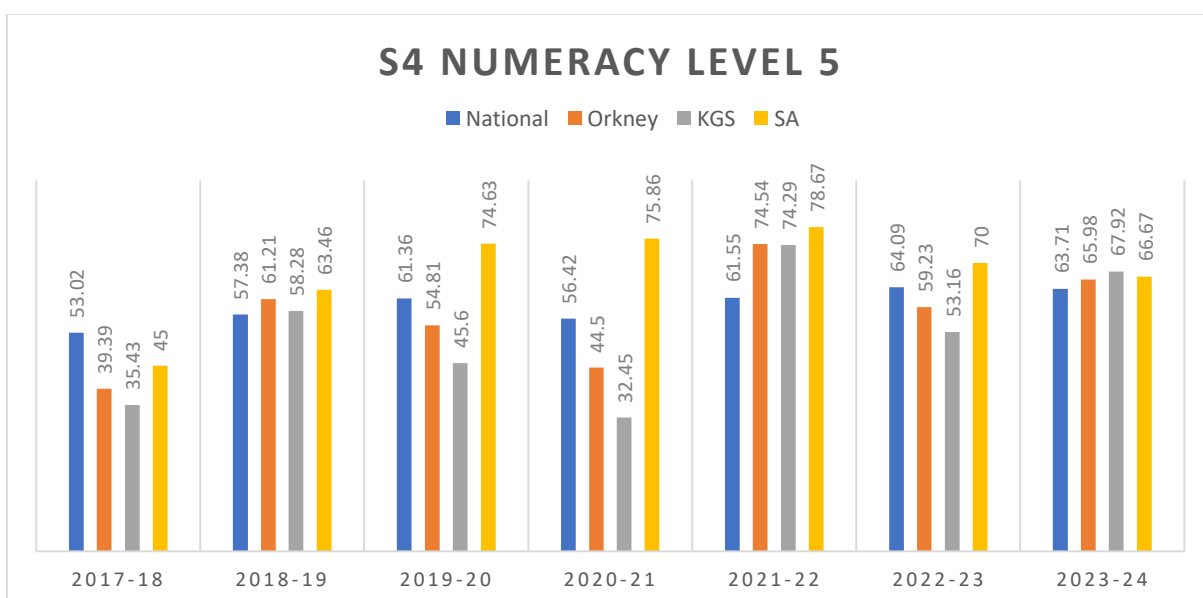
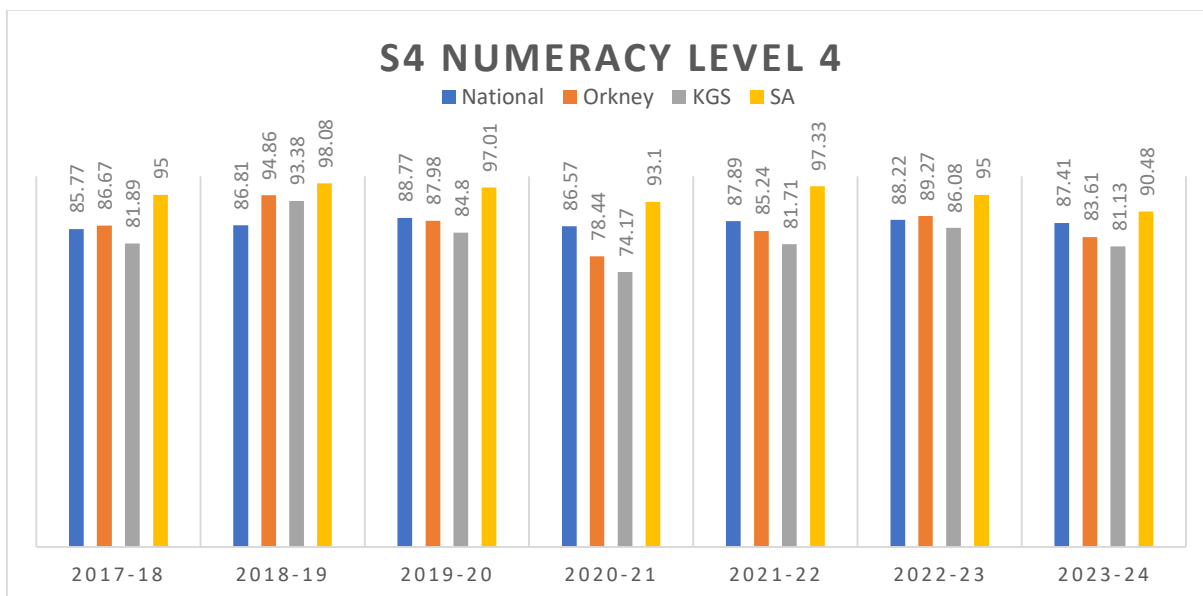
3.9 Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy in S4

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy can be achieved through a national qualification in English/Maths/Applications of Maths, or through standalone Literacy/Numeracy units.



Analysis - Literacy:

Level 4 literacy attainment of Orkney pupils in S4 continues to be on par with the National level. At level 5, attainment in Orkney has fallen to a more “usual” level after an unusually high Stromness Academy performance caused a rise above National level last year.



Analysis - Numeracy:

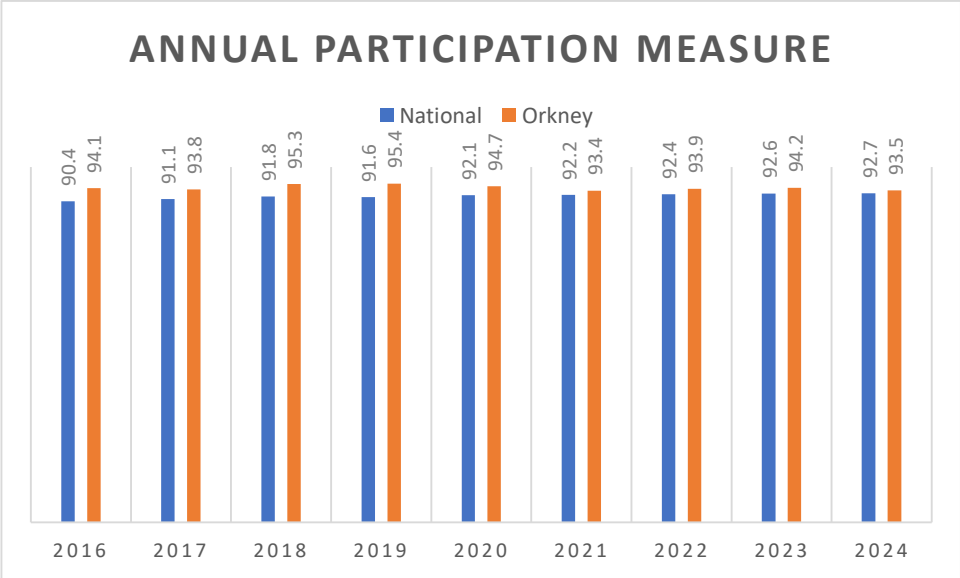
Attainment in Numeracy by S4 pupils at level 4 has fallen and is below National, while at level 5 it has risen.

Next Steps

Tracking and Monitoring data in February 2025 is being used to target interventions during study leave for pupils at risk of not attaining an appropriate level in these key skills. Efforts will also continue to ensure the Mathematics Department at KGS is fully staffed.

3.10 Annual Participation Measure

The participation measure gives the percentage of young people aged 16-19 who are participating in education, employment or training. It is published by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) in the [Annual Participation Measure](#) in August each year.



Analysis:

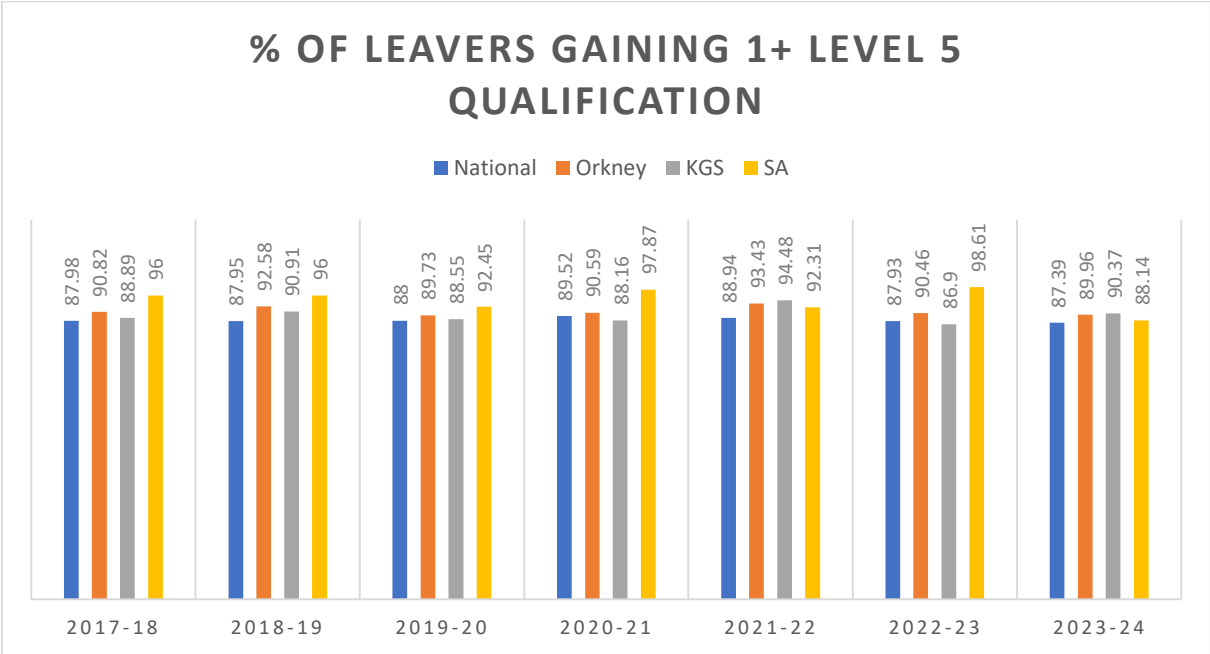
Orkney is consistently achieving above the national average in this measure. The 2023-24 rate of 93.5% ranks us as 16th Local Authority, with 10 local authorities scoring between 93.5% and 94.5%.

Next Steps:

The key focus of this measure is not those who are participating, but those who aren't. The efforts of school Guidance Teachers, Skills Development Scotland and Community Learning and Development Officers continue, aiming to ensure that all young people transition to a positive destination on leaving school.

3.11 Percentage of school leavers achieving 1 or more level 5 qualification

This is one of the core measures tracked by the Scottish Government as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, with the intention of reducing the number of young people leaving school with few qualifications.



Analysis:

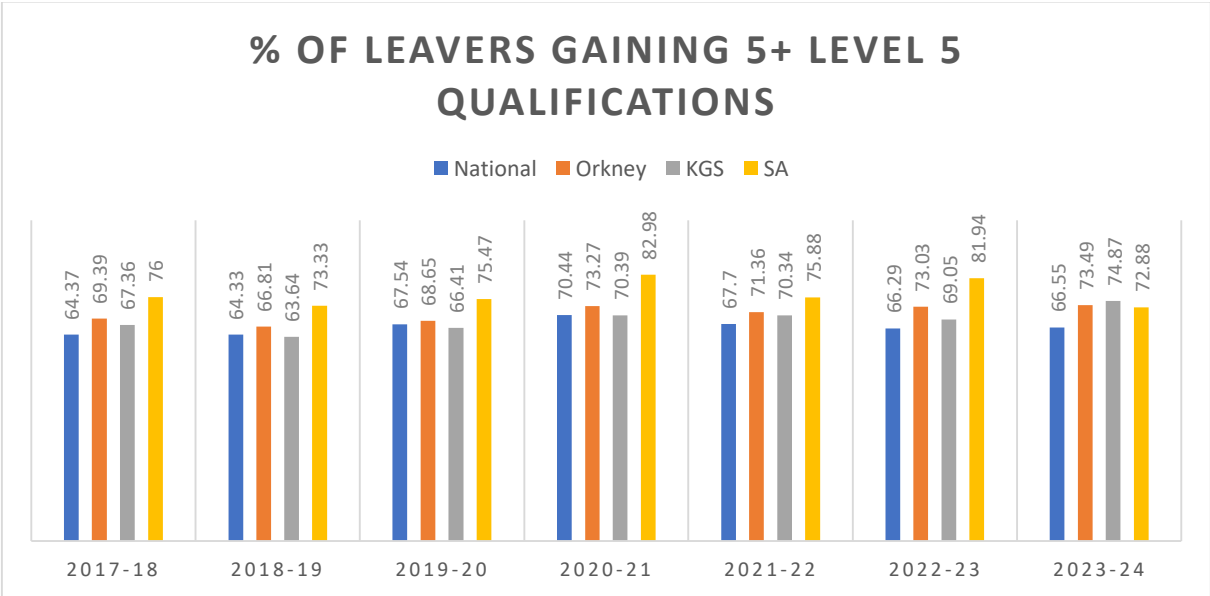
- Orkney is consistently slightly above the national average in this measure.

Next steps:

There is a concern post-Covid of a rising number of young people whose school attendance is low. Schools are working hard to engage these young people and seek suitable accreditation opportunities for them. There has been progress in the provision of online learning in Literacy and Numeracy by the Pupil Support Team for some of these young people which it is hoped will lead to some attainment in 2024-25.

3.12 Percentage of school leavers achieving 5 or more level 5 qualifications

The Scottish Government tracking of School Leavers gaining at least one qualification at level 5 as a core measure focuses on reducing the number of young people leaving school with few formal qualifications. Local Authorities are asked to nominate additional measures they wish to track as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. For Orkney the percentage of school leavers gaining 5 or more level 5 qualifications has been made a key focus, as a measure of success in providing a breadth of education for the majority of young people. This measure works in tandem with the measure of the percentage of S4 pupils gaining 5 or more level 5 qualifications reported above.



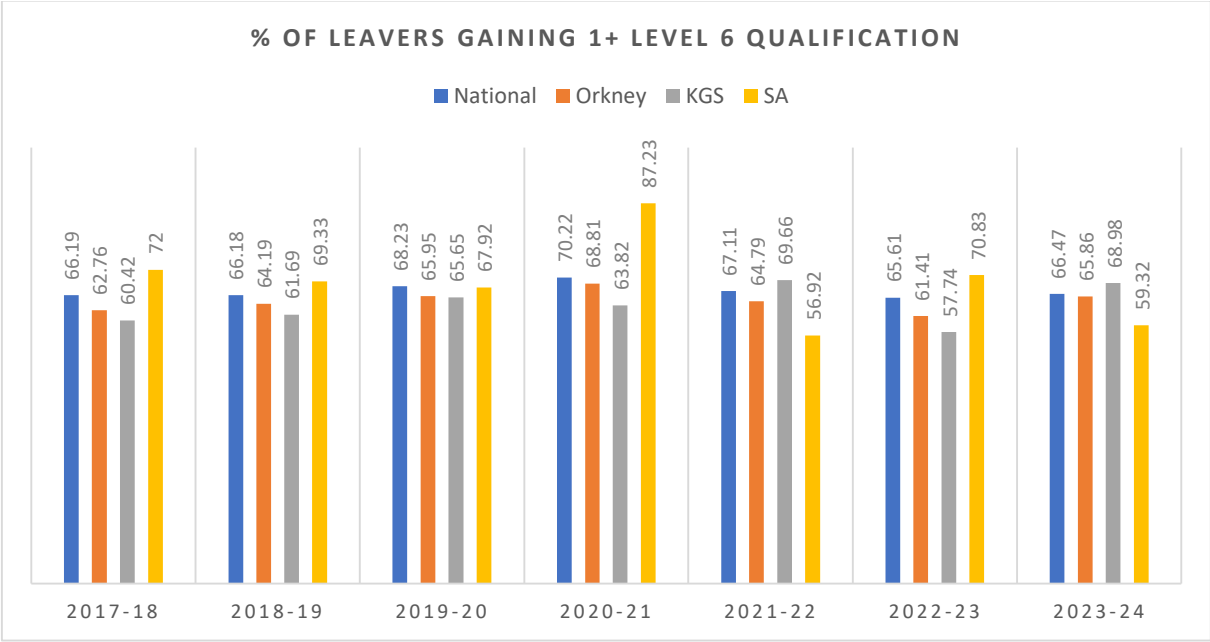
Analysis:

- Orkney is consistently above the national average in this measure and currently performing above pre-Covid levels. KGS saw a significant rise in attainment in this measure for 2023-24 compared to 2022-23.

Next steps:

- A Review of the Senior Phase Curriculum is in the Education Service Plan for 2024-25, and this will include looking at alternative learning pathways which where appropriate will support young people to gain level 5 qualifications other than the traditional National 5s which currently make up the majority of Orkney’s Curriculum Offer. Maintaining the provision of Skills for Work programmes for Senior Phase pupils via UHI Orkney will be a key part of maintaining attainment of this measure.

3.13 Percentage of school leavers achieving 1 or more level 6 qualification



Analysis:

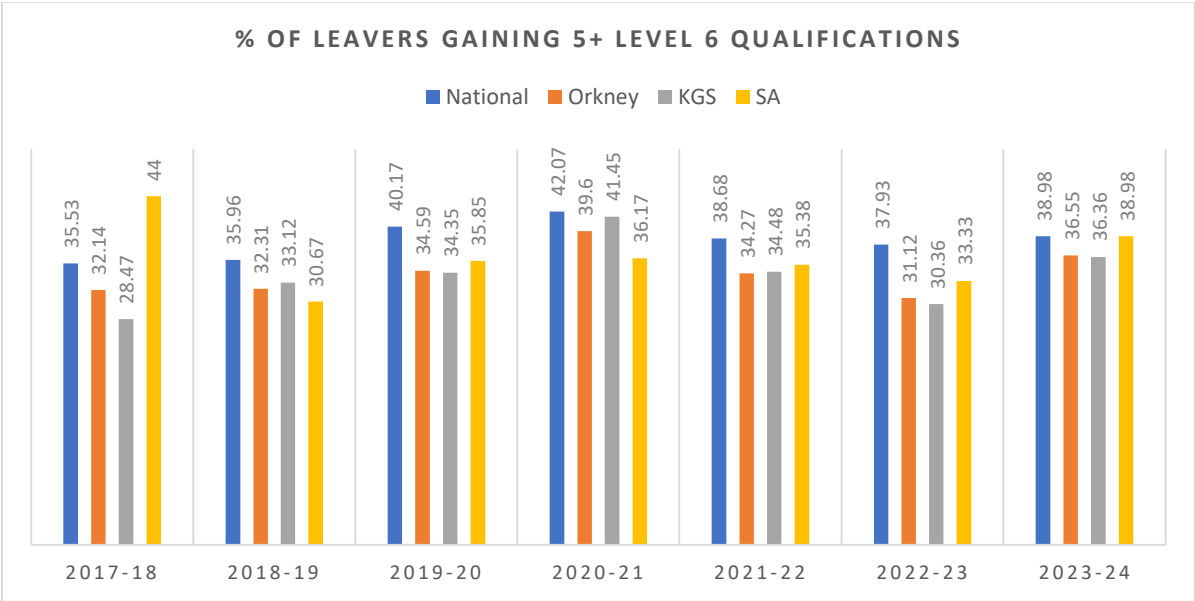
- Orkney is consistently slightly below the national average in this measure. However, the Orkney rate has risen by 4.45 percentage points compared to 2022-23, moving towards our stretch aim of 68%.

Next steps:

A review of the Senior Phase curriculum is included in the Education Service Plan and this will need to include the provision of alternative routes to attainment for those pupils for whom traditional Highers are not appropriate, to increase the numbers of young people attaining at level 6.

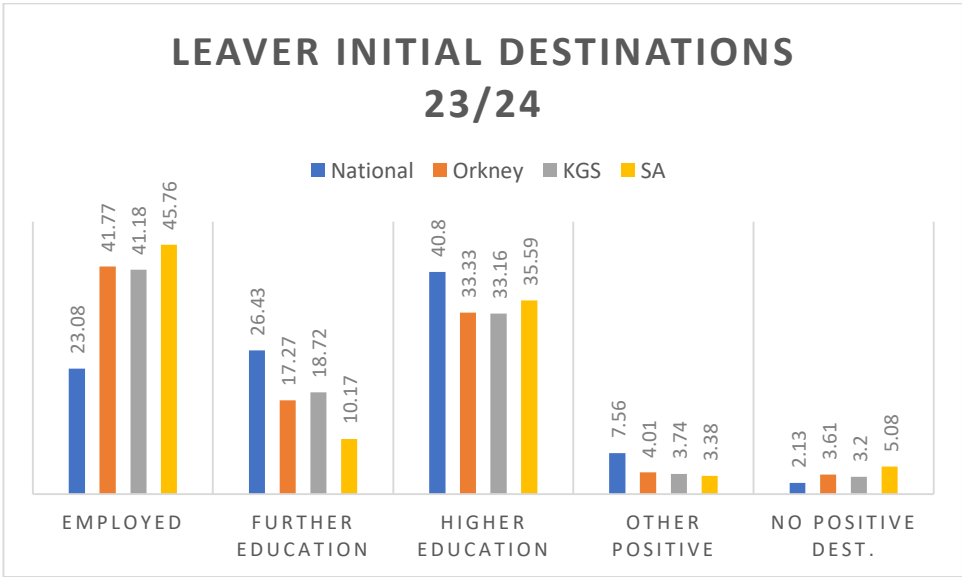
3.14 Percentage of school leavers achieving 5 or more level 6 qualifications

This measure is not reported to Scottish Government but has been included here because it is frequently the subject of media attention.

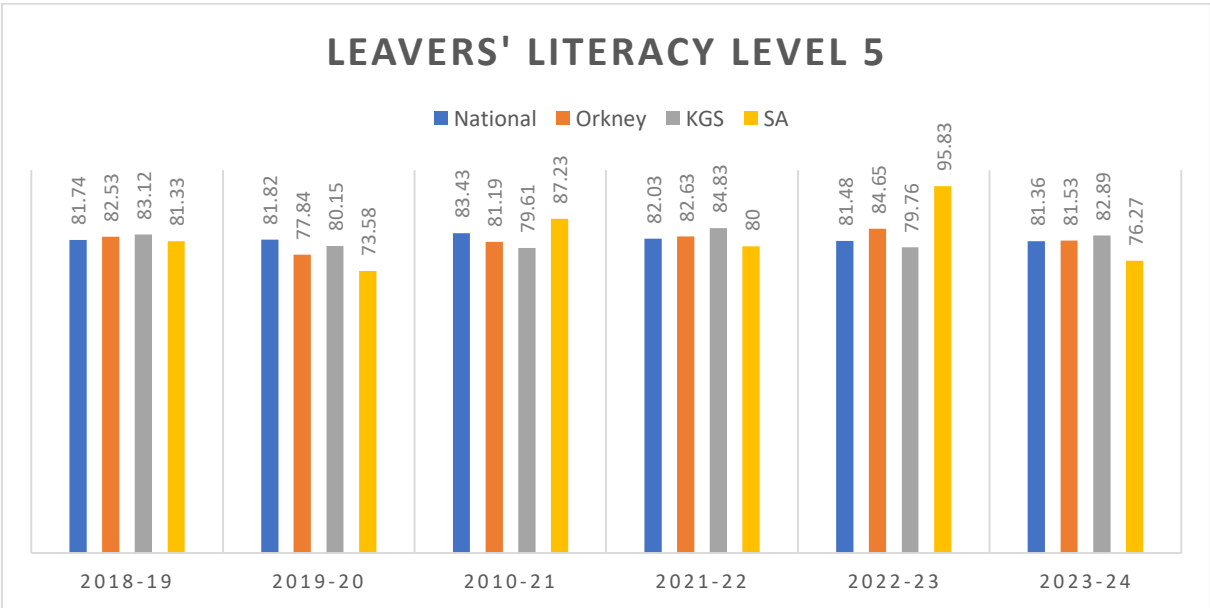
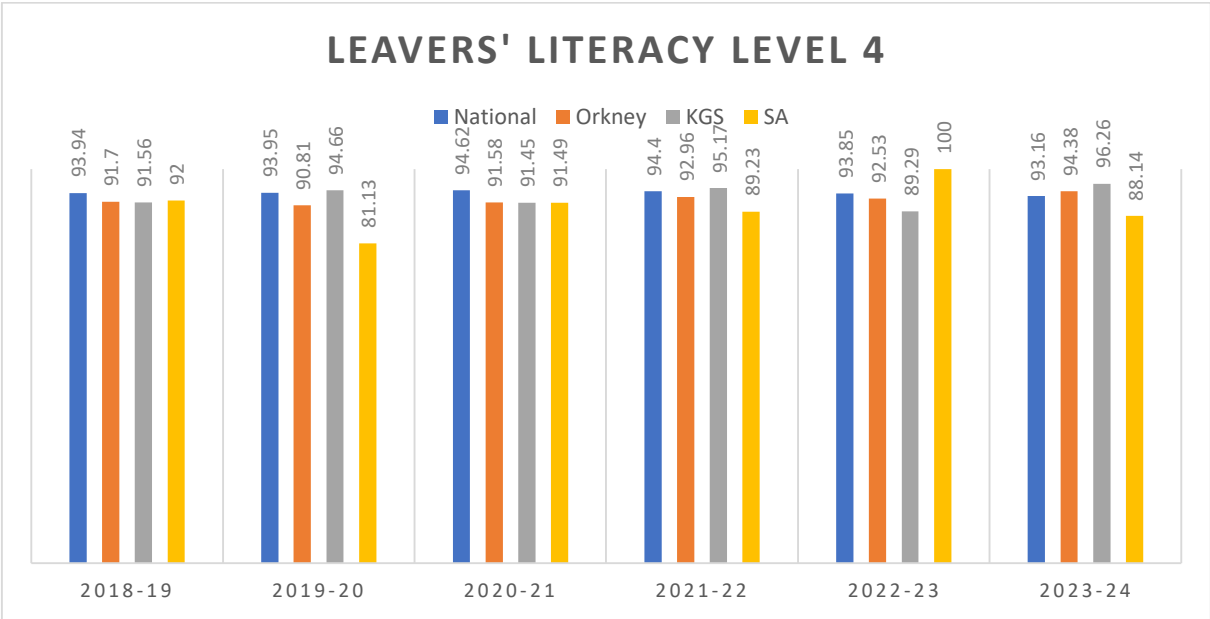


Analysis:

Orkney is consistently below the national average in this measure, but there has been an improvement of 5.43 percentage points compared to 2022-23. Gaining 5 or more level 6 qualifications (Highers) is generally understood to be the requirement for university entry, though in reality offers are frequently made on 4 Highers. As can be seen in the chart below of the major destinations for 2024 school leavers, in Orkney we have a much higher percentage of school leavers entering employment than nationally, and fewer entering Higher Education; this is consistently the picture every year, meaning that 5+ level 6 is not a goal for many young people. Similar patterns are seen in the other island local authorities.



3.15 Leavers' Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

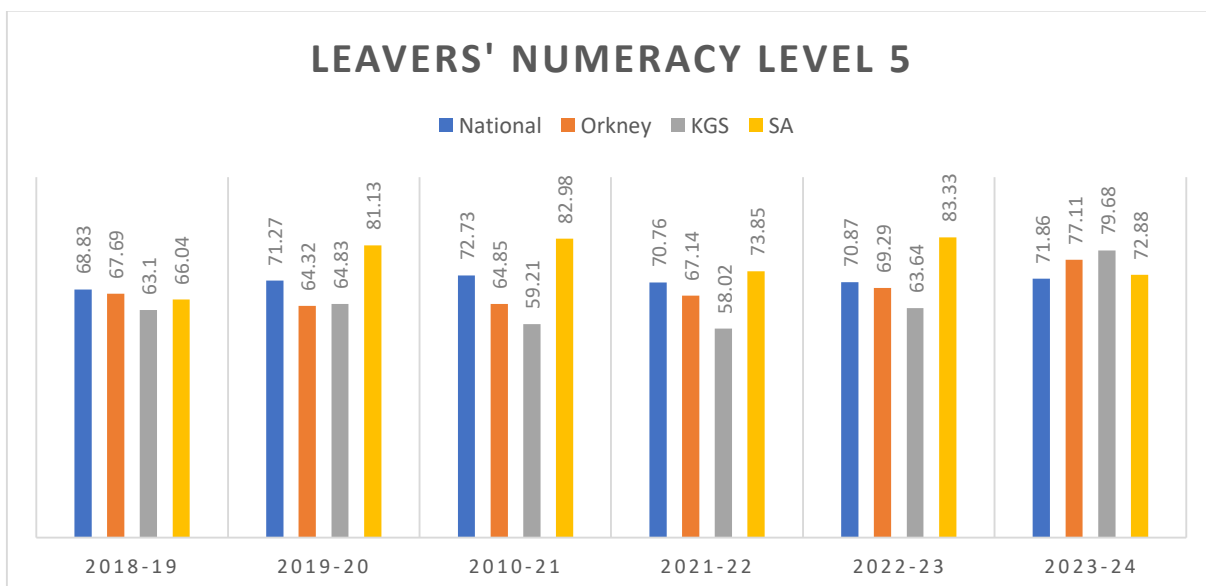
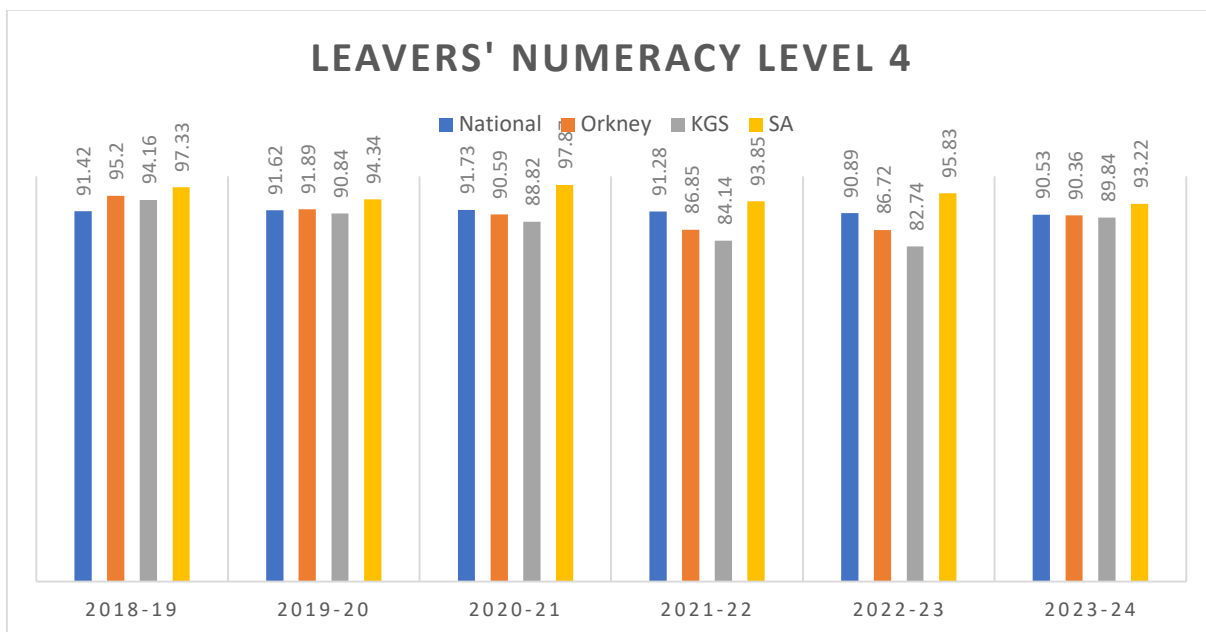


Analysis – Literacy:

Level 4 literacy attainment of Orkney school leavers, whilst high, has been consistently slightly behind the national level, but has edged above in 2023-24.

At level 5, attainment is on par with the national level and slightly lower than 2022-23, which was bolstered by an unusually high performance from Stromness Academy.

Leaver attainment at both levels in 2023-24 is higher than that of the last 3 S4 cohorts reported in section 3.9, giving evidence that some young people are improving their attainment of this measure by staying on in school.



Analysis – Numeracy:

At level 4 numeracy attainment of Orkney school leavers has been consistently slightly behind the national level, but rose to almost equal national in 2023-24.

At level 5 numeracy attainment of Orkney school leavers has risen by 7.82 percentage points compared to 2022-23. In 2022-23 there was an administrative error in KGS that led to young people’s attainment in Numeracy units not being accredited until after this national data was published; KGS’s 2023-24 level 5 numeracy attainment of 79.68 is a substantial increase on this and all previous years.

Next Steps:

Raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy in S4 remains a focus going forwards, with Pupil Equity Funding directed towards interventions for young people at risk of not attaining these measures. Work is also being undertaken to support teachers' moderation of Literacy measures in S3, to enable more accurate targeting of intervention at this pre-qualification stage.

Section 4: Wider Achievement

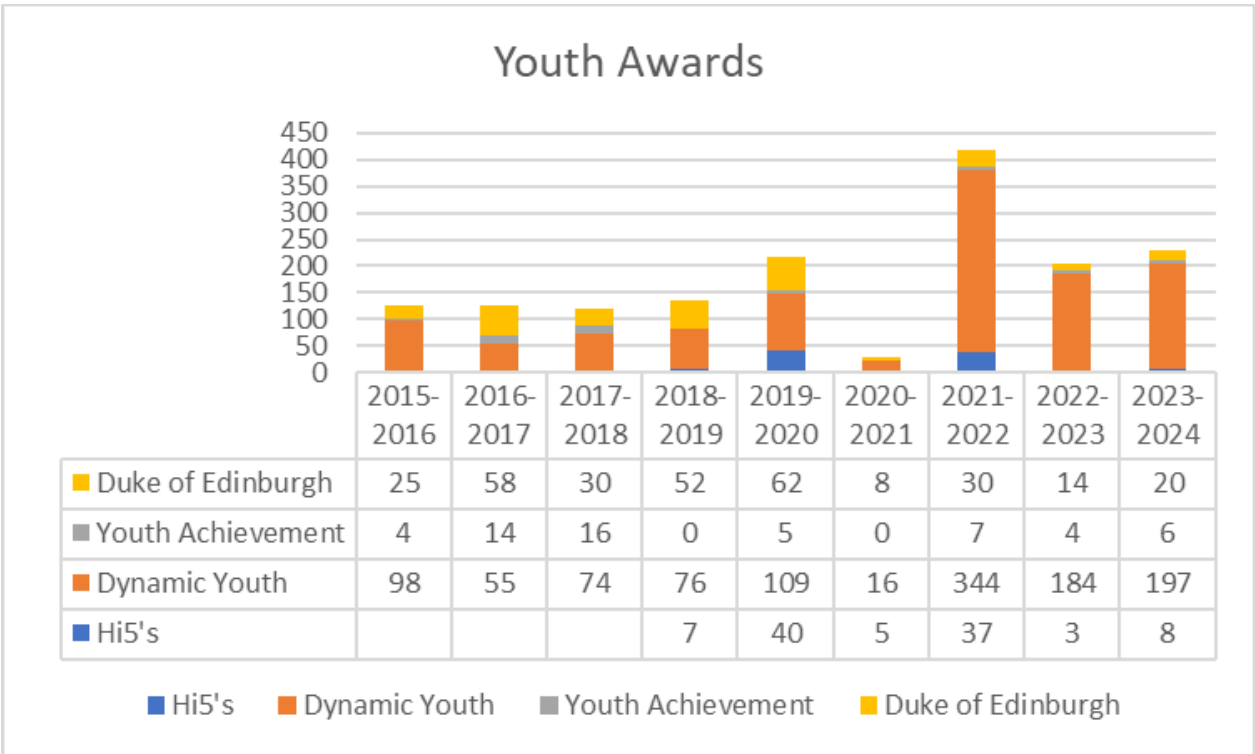
4.1 There is a realisation amongst those involved in the education of young people that passing exams is not the only way that young people can get accreditation for their endeavours. The wider achievements of young people, which take place in a variety of settings, are increasingly recognised, and their benefits appreciated.

4.2 This is evidenced through the more targeted youth work support taking place in two schools in Orkney with the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to ensure youth and family work is embedded to help to close the poverty related attainment gap. Known as the Pupil Engagement Team (PET), the team provides targeted support for children, young people, and families from P1 – S3 who are at risk of disengagement or non-school attendance, in line with the criteria for the PEF.

4.3 Further to this, CLDE has developed a Youth Work in Schools offer which is sent to all schools; mainly aimed at pupils P7+ offering a range of programmes that can be delivered including Confidence to Cook, iLead money, Cyber Resilience and UNCRC training, all with the aim of increasing confidence, attainment and engagement within the school community whilst providing vital life skills for young people.

4.4 Below is an extract from the *Community Learning, Development & Employability Service (CLDE) Annual Report 2023-24*, which provides an excellent example of some of the accredited awards and opportunities taking place through CLDE, in line with curriculum for excellence.

4.5 In 2023-24 young people in Orkney achieved the following:



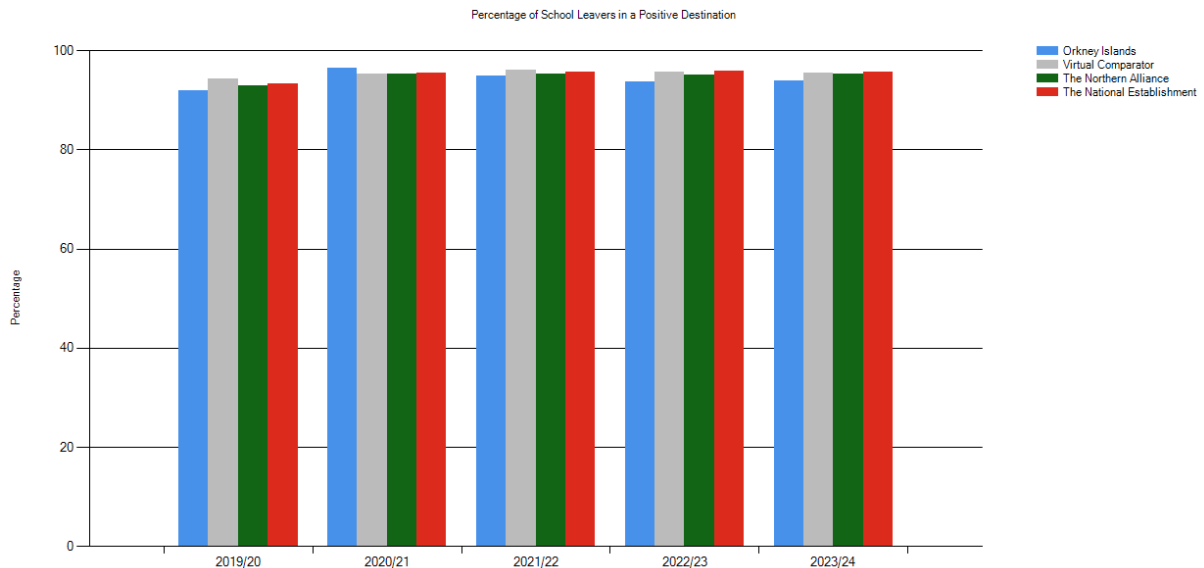
CLDE intervention	No. of Recipients			
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<p>Hi5 Award Introduced in 2018, the Hi5 accredited award is a nationally recognised award for young people age 5+ that records and recognises wider achievement. The Hi5 Award is credit rated on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) where it sits at Level 2. The awards can be incorporated into existing or planned activities, are inclusive and suitable for young people with a range of interests and abilities and assist in the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. Due to a focus on work with older young people CLDE are doing less of these awards.</p>	5	37	3	8
<p>Dynamic Youth Awards Dynamic Youth Awards (DYA) are peer assessed awards for young people aged 10 and over. DYA give young people the opportunity to be recognised and accredited for the activities they take part in either within or outwith the school setting. A Dynamic Youth Award is equivalent to a SCQF Level 3. As a result of additional external Covid recovery funding in 2020-21 there was a significant increase in the number of DYA's achieved. Despite the drop in funding in 2022-23, CLDE saw the number of DYA remain at its second highest and recorded the highest number of hours completed by young people working on their Dynamic Youth Awards, rising from 4818 in 2021-22 to 5679 this year, a rise of 18%.</p>	16 395 hours of activity	344 4818 hours of activity	184 5679 hours of activity	197 4182 hours of activity
<p>Youth Achievement Awards These awards are Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) customised and feature on pupils Scottish Qualifications certificates alongside those formal national qualifications gained in schools and colleges. The awards are gained both within and outwith the school setting and</p>	Bronze 0 Silver 0	Bronze 7 Silver 0	Bronze 3 Silver 0	Bronze 5 Silver 1 Gold

CLDE intervention	No. of Recipients			
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<p>often provide significant benefits for the local community.</p> <p>CLDE are currently working with a number of young people on different award levels and are also providing support to other organisations working on Youth Achievement Awards.</p> <p>It is worth mentioning that in 2022-23 we saw our first gold award achieved for 5 years and Lucy Leech who has come right through CLD youth service since the age of 8, received the first Platinum Youth Achievement Award achieved in Orkney.</p>	<p>Gold 0</p>	<p>Gold 0</p>	<p>Gold 1</p> <p>Platinum 1</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Awards</p> <p>Young people achieve an award by completing a personal programme of activities in four sections (five if they're going for Gold).</p> <p>Due to the lifting of Covid restrictions, participation and completion of DofE awards are starting to recover. The numbers completing Duke of Edinburgh Awards in 2022-23 remained lower than pre-pandemic levels, with DofE awards being progressed in Sanday and Kirkwall Grammar School.</p>	<p>Bronze 3</p> <p>Silver 5</p> <p>Gold 0</p>	<p>Bronze 19</p> <p>Silver 8</p> <p>Gold 3</p>	<p>Bronze 8</p> <p>Silver 4</p> <p>Gold 2</p>	<p>Bronze 12</p> <p>Silver 7</p> <p>Gold 1</p>
<p>Young Persons Guarantee</p> <p>The Young Person's Guarantee is a commitment to bring together employers, partners and young people. It aims to connect every 16-to 24-year-old in Scotland to an opportunity. This could be a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training, volunteering or enterprise opportunity. 2020-21 was the first year of offering this support with the employability team delivering a variety of interventions for young people who were identified as</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>50</p>	<p>34</p>	<p>34</p>

CLDE intervention	No. of Recipients			
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<p>requiring additional support to engage with training, learning and or employment.</p> <p>During 2022-23 the amount of funding coming in through Noone Left Behind to work specifically with young people under Young Persons Guarantee reduced by 66%, from £173,00 to £58,000.</p>				

Section 5: School Leaver Destinations

5.1 The Leaver Initial Destinations measure published in the Insight data tool gives the percentage of all school leavers (S4/5/6) who have progressed to a positive destination. Orkney figures are compared with a “Virtual Comparator” – a group of pupils with similar demographic characteristics – and the rate for the Northern Alliance group of local authorities (Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll & Bute, Highland, Moray, Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles), as well as the national rate. Figures are published in February for the previous academic year.

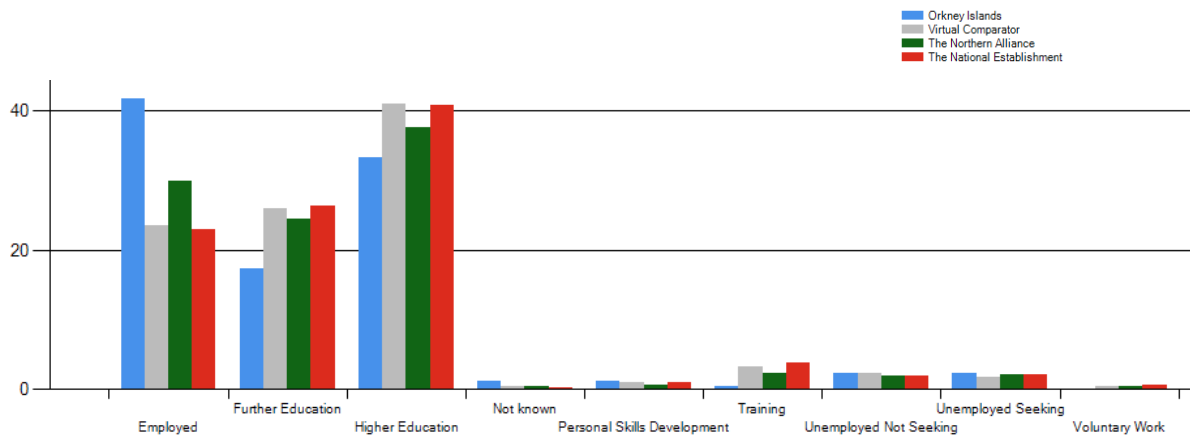


	Orkney	Virtual Comparator	Northern Alliance	National
2018-19	94.76	95.72	94.98	95.05
2019-20	91.89	94.32	92.99	93.36
2020-21	96.53	95.40	95.32	95.48
2021-22	94.84	96.10	95.41	95.74
2022-23	93.78	95.73	95.09	95.87
2023-24	93.98	95.58	95.40	95.71

Analysis

The percentage of Orkney school leavers in a positive destination has consistently tended to be within 2 percentage points of all comparator measures. There has been a small increase in Orkney’s rate compared to 2022-23 and a narrowing of the gap between Orkney and the Virtual Comparator and Northern Alliance.

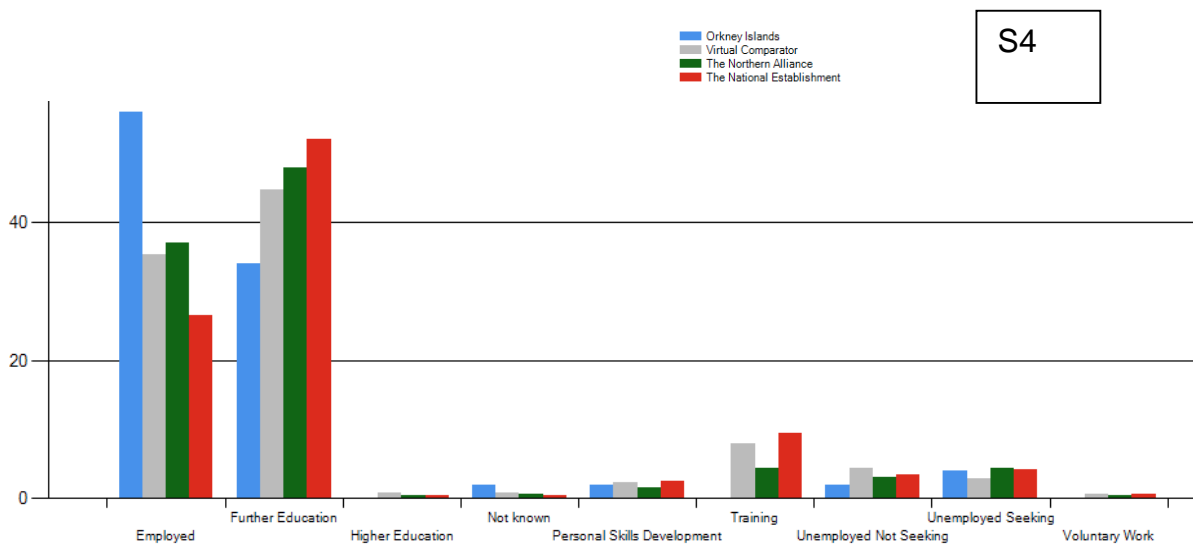
5.2 Taking a closer look at the underlying data reveals our school leavers' destinations.



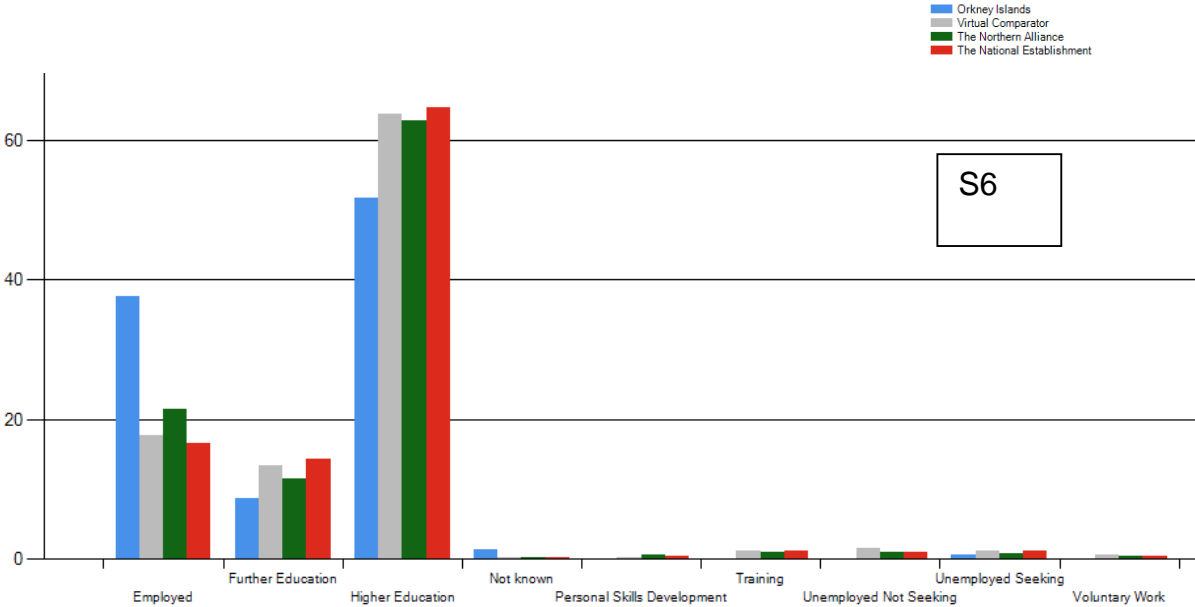
Analysis:

- The initial leaver destination profile does not follow our comparator trends, with many more leavers going directly into employment and fewer moving into further or higher education. This is a consistent picture for Orkney.

The percentage of 2023-24 school leavers who move into employment is even more marked in S4. For this cohort of 50 pupils, 56.00% are in employment:



The majority of Orkney pupils who stayed on to S6 moved on to Higher Education (51.68%), though the rate is still lower than comparators. This is an increase on the 48.74% of the 2022-23 S6 leavers entering HE. The percentage moving into employment, 37.58%, though less marked than for S4 pupils, is still significantly higher than comparators.



Orkney Education Service staff in schools, CLDE and UHI Orkney work together with our partners in Skills Development Scotland and Developing the Young Workforce to support all school leavers into a positive destination which is appropriate for their abilities and aspirations.