The West Partnership
Evaluation Report 2023-2024

Equity, Excellence & Empowerment

GLASGOW CITY REGION Education

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Foreword

I am delighted to present the West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative Evaluation Report for 2023-24. This report outlines the progress made over the academic year toward achieving the outcomes and expected impacts detailed in the West Partnership Improvement Plan. The West Partnership has a clear vision: to embed the values of equity, excellence, and empowerment in everything we do. By fostering a culture of collaboration across our eight local authority areas, we aim to build a Networked Learning System that continuously enhances learning experiences and outcomes for every learner in the Glasgow City Region.

This year, we have broadened our reach to include a wider range of staff teams within the partnership: senior and middle leaders, teachers, practitioners, support staff, central teams, CLD colleagues, and more. We are increasingly recognising the added value that the West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative brings and the positive impact our activities are having in classrooms and playrooms.

The report highlights significant and sustained improvements in learning and teaching through the Improving Our programmes, the benefits experienced by participants of the Pedagogy Partnerships programme, and the progress of responses to decreases in attendance via our attendance collaborative action research work. Our research into the impact of 1140 hours in early years education and artificial intelligence shows that the partnership has matured into knowledge generators as well as a vehicle for sharing expertise around the system. Our work continues to be recognised by external evaluations conducted by the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change at Glasgow University, and we use this feedback as part of our self-evaluation and planning process.

Our work is organised across three workstreams: Wellbeing for Learning; Leadership, Empowerment, and Improvement; and Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment. We develop programs to add value to local and national initiatives and avoid unnecessary duplication. Designing offerings that meet the needs of colleagues, and consequently children and young people, is paramount. This report demonstrates significant progress across all three workstreams this year - especially in substantially growing the reach of our work. This session we engaged with 92% of all West Partnership establishments and around a quarter of all practitioners across our region. Whilst the 23-24 session saw more than double the sign ups of 22-23, the work of the partnership has not been diluted. Practitioners' evaluations continue to suggest that almost 9 in 10 participants feel they have benefitted from engaging with the West Partnership.

Long term signs of improvement are beginning to rise to the surface. BGE attainment across our region is the highest it has been in the last 5 years, whilst attainment gaps between the 20% most deprived and 20% least deprived have fallen for two years in a row. At senior phase level, attainment is in line with pre-pandemic levels whilst attainment gaps are below 18/19 figures in all measures. This improvement at senior phase has fed through to positive destinations, where the West Partnership continues to improve whilst at the same time reducing the gap between most and least deprived.

Mark Ratter, Regional Lead Officer

West Partnership

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Introduction

Our evaluation report provides an overview of the collective impact and added value of the West Partnership annual activity which is delivered through three core workstreams. These are:

- Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment;
- Wellbeing for Learning; and
- Leadership, Empowerment, and Improvement.

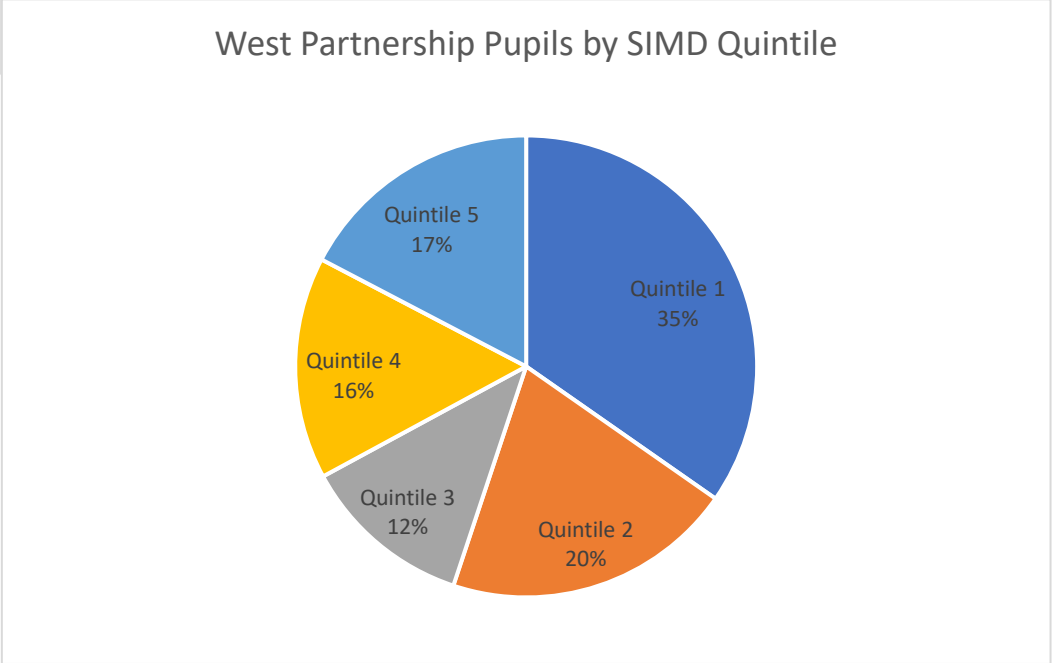
The report first details the reach of regional activity using sign up data before detailing specific activities from each workstream. Later in the report we explore areas of research/knowledge generated by the partnership before looking at how the West Partnership compares across several outcome measures. The full suite of comparative measures are provided in our critical indicators at the end of this report.

Vision

The West Partnership has a clear vision: to embed the values of equity, excellence, and empowerment in everything we do, building a collaborative, networked learning system to improve learning experiences and increase attainment for every learner across the region.

Context

- 8 local authorities across the West of Scotland; East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, and West Dunbartonshire.
- 35% of Scotland's school population attend a West Partnership school.
- Over 1000 nurseries, primary, secondary, and special schools.
- More than 246,000 children and young people.
- Over 50% of all West Partnership pupils reside in SIMD quintiles 1 and 2.
- Data from the Children In Low Income Families (CILIF) dataset suggests that 40% of Scotland's children living in low income families reside in West Partnership local authorities



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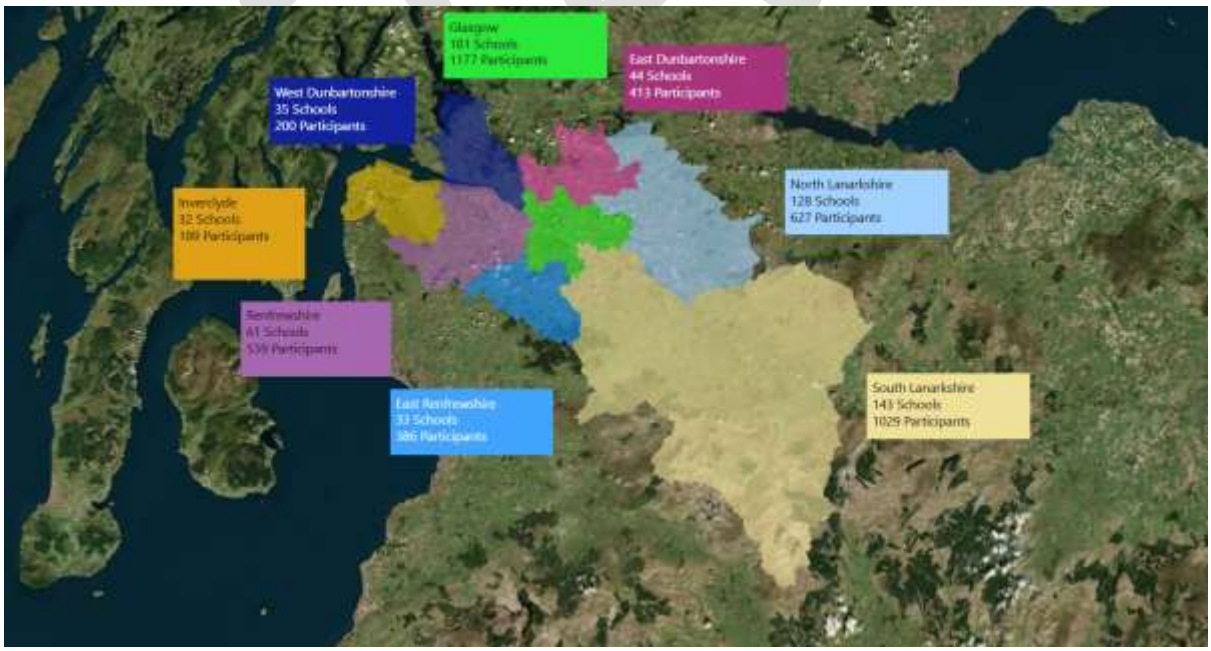
West Partnership Reach – Who did we engage with?

To explore engagement patterns across our activities, we have analysed all sign-up data received from activities within the 23/24 academic session. Our sign-up process captures routine information on those who register for most of our professional learning events. However, there are instances where standard sign-up information is unavailable. For example, several of our more hands-on, in-person sessions are organised via a school leader or local authority central team member but delivered to a larger number of practitioners. In these cases, it is not always practical to collect exact names and establishments. Consequently, overall numbers are included here but excluded from the data where information is missing. Key highlights and insights are detailed below:

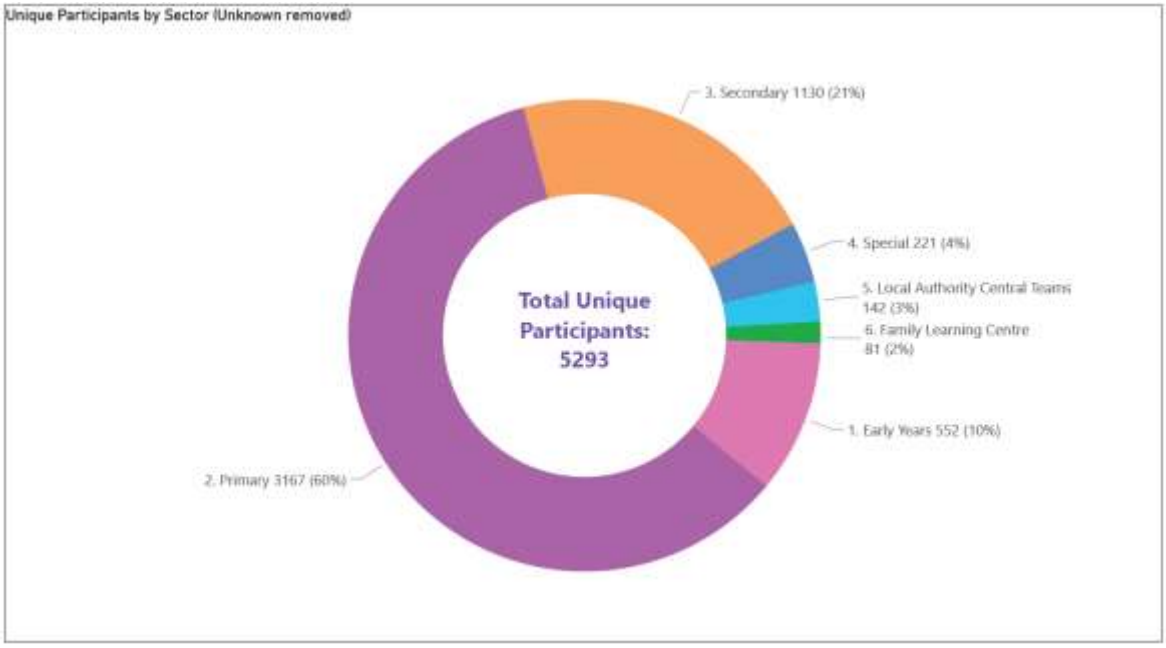
In the 23/24 academic session, our sign-up data was the following:

- Our offering has generated 10,443 sign-ups/engagements.
- Where name information is available, we have engaged with 5,536 practitioners.
- Just over 1600 practitioners (1619) have signed up for more than one of our events.
- We have engaged with practitioners from 954 different organisations. This includes:
    - 266 early years establishments
    - 497 primary schools (91% of all West Partnership Primary Schools).
    - 108 secondary schools (100% of all West Partnership Secondary Schools), and
    - 38 special schools (78% of all West Partnership Special Schools)
    - In total, we have had engagement with 92% of all West Partnership schools.

Below is a geographical representation of our current outreach, covering primary, secondary, and special schools along with their practitioners. This visualisation does not include the early years, central teams, and family learning centres that have also participated in our programmes during the 2023-24 period:



The visual below provides an overview of the number of known participants by sector. The numbers here are smaller than the true figure due to the issues around data collection detailed at the start of this section.

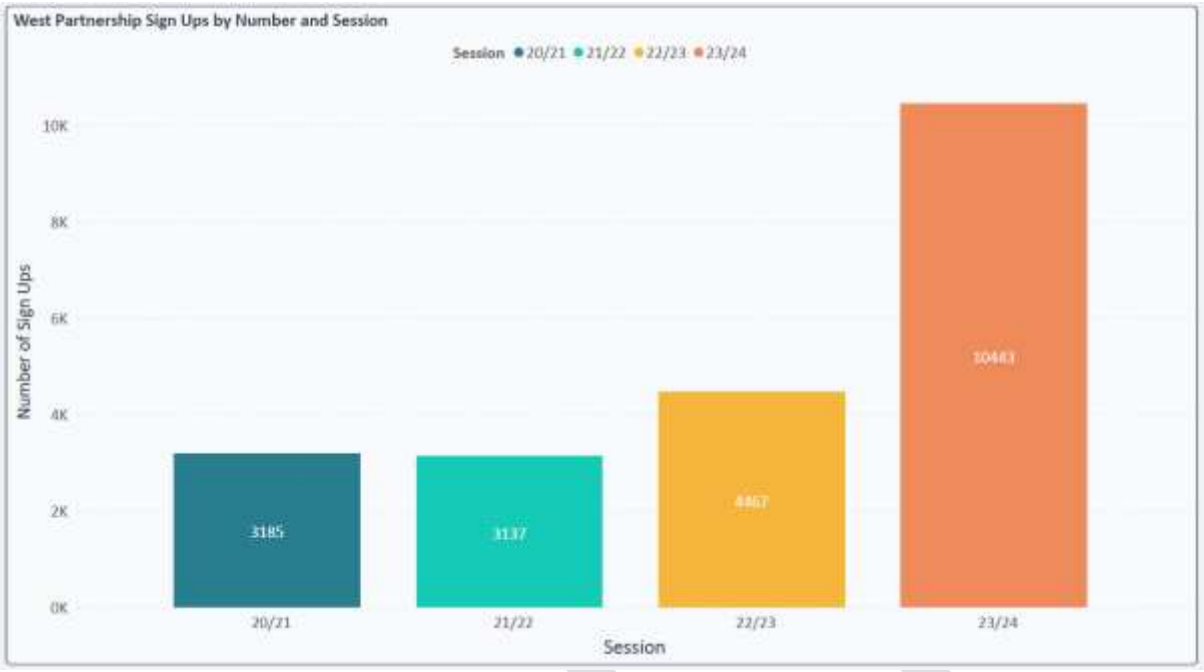


Primary practitioners make up most of our participants (60%). A quarter of participants come from the Secondary (21%) and Special (4%) sectors. We also had over 600 practitioners from early years and family learning centre settings. Just under 150 local authority central team staff engaged with the West Partnership this session. The table below provides an approximate calculation of what proportion of all staff in each sector engaged with the West Partnership this session.

Sector	Number of West Partnership Practitioners	Number of Unique Sign Ups	Known Percentage Engagement
Primary	8896	3167	36%
Secondary	8717	1130	13%
Special	1060	221	21%
All exc ELC	**18673**	**4518**	**24%**

The figures presented in the table are minimum figures. In addition to these figures, we also have 140 named individuals with no establishment, and therefore no sector, as well as approximately 2000 unnamed engagements. These figures also count whole school programmes such as Improving Our School as a single count of the person who signed up. West Partnership primary and secondary schools have, on average, 16 and 80 members of staff respectively.

The limitations and nuances of sign-up data means that the measure with the least caveats remains total number of sign-ups. The visual below shows the progress in sign up numbers over the last four sessions:



The 23/24 figure of 10443 marks an increase of 134% on the previous session and 227% on the figure achieved in 20/21.

Evaluation Framework – Three Drivers of Improvement

In previous sessions, the evaluation framework was enhanced to better showcase the added value and collective impact of the partnership activities. By establishing clear outcomes and measures for various workstreams, three common themes emerged from the evidence. These themes led to the creation of the three drivers of the improvement evaluation framework. These drivers of are defined below and summarised in diagram 1.

Driver 1: Facilitating various forms of collaboration.

We acknowledge that while collaboration is essential in our system, its forms must necessarily vary. Some collaborations may involve brief interactions, while others require ongoing collaborative efforts in specific areas of interest. This variation is crucial to meet the diverse needs of practitioners. Some prefer relatively light-touch associations and networking opportunities, while others need more intensive, sustained co-production activities on important shared topics.

Driver 2: Enhancing practitioner knowledge, understanding and confidence.

Our region includes over 19,000 practitioners, accounting for about 36% of all practitioners in Scotland. We aim to enhance the knowledge, understanding, and confidence of practitioners at all levels, from newly qualified teachers to those in senior positions. This enhancement is inherently tied to our collaborative efforts. With a wealth of expertise and experience across our eight authorities, the partnership plays a crucial role in facilitating the exchange of knowledge and sharing of best practices.

Driver 3: Supporting practice change at various levels.

Our collaborative efforts and goal to drive practice change are supported through partnership activities. Influencing practice change at all levels of the system is a key aspiration for the West Partnership. This includes how teachers deliver in the classroom and how local authority central teams interact across our region. Consequently, we view partnership activities as enabling practice change through a dynamic approach that targets all practitioners, regardless of their role.

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[insert drivers model that was used in the 22/23 report]

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Practitioner Enhancement – Evaluation Evidence

As detailed above, enhancing practitioner knowledge, understanding and confidence is a key process in our approach to improvement. Each of our programmes has clearly outlined outcomes which set out the purpose of the work and, where appropriate, the measures used to understand if the purpose of the work has been achieved. At times this is about improving practitioner knowledge in an area of emerging interest. At other times it is about enhancing confidence in a particular area. The table below highlights the evaluative evidence gathered this year and the numbers of practitioners noting an improvement in one or more of the areas (knowledge, understanding or confidence):

Workstream	Session Name	Number of evaluations	No Improvement	Improvement	Percentage Improved
Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Assessment and Moderation (Various)	304	151	153	50.3%
	Higher Applications of Maths CLPL	50	1	49	98.0%
	Pedagogy Partnerships	68	5	63	92.6%
	Primary Curriculum	36	9	27	75.0%
	Principles of Effective Practice (4 Sessions)	318	65	253	79.6%
	Secondary BGE	15	6	9	60.0%
	Spolight on Effective Practice (4 Sessions)	159	39	120	75.5%
	West Partnership Maths Conference	119	2	117	98.3%
Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement	CSI Essay Submission	80	0	80	100.0%
	CSI Presentation Submission	16	0	16	100.0%
	Differentiation	71	12	59	83.1%
	Effective Feedback	71	8	63	88.7%
	Effective Questioning	89	2	87	97.8%
	IOC Assessment	81	18	63	77.8%
	IOC Day 1	118	4	114	96.6%
	Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	70	10	60	85.7%
	Metacognition and Creative Classrooms	54	2	52	96.3%
	Thinking About Headship Final	25	0	25	100.0%
	Towards CSI	76	1	75	98.7%
Wellbeing for Learning	ADHD Strategies	189	32	157	83.1%
	ASN BGE	16	3	13	81.3%
	ASN HT	13	5	9	69.2%
	ASN Senior Phase	21	1	20	95.2%
	Assessment ASN	32	4	28	87.5%
	Attendance CAR (3 sessions)	129	12	117	90.7%
	Children's Rights - What, Why, How	53	8	45	84.9%
	Co-Reg and De-esc	125	14	111	88.8%
	Digital Strategies	68	4	64	94.1%
	Developmental Language Disorder	145	5	140	96.6%
	Family Learning ASN	35	9	26	74.3%
	Family Learning Enquiry	53	6	47	88.7%
	Family Learning ESOL	16	0	16	100.0%
	Foundations of Family Learning	30	9	21	70.0%
	IMP LP	44	3	41	93.2%
	Inclusion in EY Settings	27	3	24	88.9%
	Keeping Trauma in Mind CAR	9	1	8	88.9%
	KTPA	46	2	44	95.7%
	Play in Response to Trauma	159	10	149	93.7%
	Primary Circle (3 sessions)	86	4	82	95.3%
	Rights and Resources	39	3	36	92.3%
	Secondary Circle (3 sessions)	35	1	34	97.1%
	YA Leaders Training	28	0	28	100.0%
	YBM	38	0	38	100.0%
	Young Leaders of Learning	104	3	101	97.1%
West Partnership Totals		**3360**	**477**	**2884**	**85.8%**

In total we received just under 3400 evaluations where pre-post style questions were asked on the impact of the session on knowledge, understanding or confidence. Just under 2900 evaluation respondents said they had experienced an impact – meaning that 86% of all respondents said the session had had an impact. Of the 46 programmes in the table, many of which had more than one associated session or activity, 24 had over 90% of their respondent's claiming improvement.

Workstream Illustrations

In the sections below, we present an illustration of work undertaken in each workstream. These illustrations demonstrate elements of the three drivers through projects delivered by the workstreams. Both quantitative and qualitative data is presented as well as suggested next steps.

Curriculum, Learning, Teaching & Assessment Illustration – Pedagogy Partnerships

This session, the CLTA Workstream facilitated the delivery of a professional learning activity dedicated to enhancing pedagogical approaches across our eight Local Authorities. Pedagogy Partnerships was developed in response to a request from Workstream colleagues. Underpinning this ask was a focus on features of highly effective practice as outlined in the '*Spotlight on Effective Practice'* series and examined more deeply in '*Improving our Classrooms'*.

The programme was written and developed by the Workstream Lead Officer and an Education Scotland colleague. The activity leans on the work of Simon Breakspear and Bronwyn Ryrie-Jones' '*Teaching Sprints'* framework. Essentially, the activity is a mentored approach to developing highly effective learning and teaching practices in a particular area using a model of practitioner enquiry.

In terms of reach, 122 practitioners from across the West Partnership signed up across 3 Cohorts of Pedagogy Partnerships. Participants were evenly spread across both Primary (45%) and Secondary sectors (48%), with the remaining 11% of participants coming from other sectors. Participation by role shows that the programme was of interest to mainly classroom teachers. However, participation of Principal Teachers and Senior Leaders shows the flexibility of the programme in promoting, not only pedagogical approaches in individuals but at departmental/faculty level and across the whole school.



Evaluation Data

Evaluation data indicates that practitioners have significantly improved their understanding of the framework and pedagogical strategies for high-quality learning and teaching as a result of

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participating in the programme. Practitioners also reported increased confidence in the process and the features of highly effective practice.

An impressive 100% of respondents across the three cohorts stated that the knowledge gained from the sessions would lead to changes in their practice. Additionally, 100% of respondents expressed that they would recommend West Partnership professional learning events after participating in the programme.

Participants also provided qualitative feedback. Consistent with the quantitative data, many practitioners noted how the sessions had positively impacted their knowledge and confidence. Practitioners were asked how the learning from this event would allow you to alter your practice. Below is a selection of feedback from a range of practitioner types:

> *'The useful and informative information learned on this training has allowed me to make small changes to my practice, with great results and positive impact. The learning has motivated me to carry out teaching sprints beyond the training and hopefully carry out CLPL sessions with staff members within my establishment.'*
>
> *'It has given me the confidence to try new things. Hearing from colleagues about what works gives me the confidence and willingness to try it. I feel that knowing what works makes me more likely to try it.'*
>
> *'It has been incredibly useful to work collegiately with practitioners in other subjects and from the primary sector, to learn about different approaches. Although I focused on questioning in my sprint, I have taken note of activities to adapt and use in relation to retrieval and differentiation.'*
>
> *'Pedagogy Partnerships has reignited my love for teaching. Allow me to re-focus on most important aspect of job, pupils, L&T and have confidence to make changes'*

Case Studies

Two of our participants have offered testimonials of how their engagement in the programme led to impact on their practice.

Deborah Robertson – Principal Teacher from Glasgow City Council

> *I attended the Sprints West Partnership training in November 2023 and started my first Sprint with a focus on Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. The process seemed so achievable and the idea that you focus on the tiny shifts made for success in the middle of the busy and chaotic school calendar. My personal sprint process went well I could see those tiny shifts but the biggest learning experience was the engagement in professional dialogue, learning from other colleagues' honest experiences is true professional learning.*
>
> *I, with my other colleagues involved went on to lead the Sprints process across the school, training 12 teachers who then went on their own 'sprint' again the evaluations demonstrated that staff felt empowered by the process and almost everyone agreed that it was achievable alongside the busy work day. The impact on our young people was evident in our school classroom observations, learner conversations and SIP monitoring paperwork, but also in what staff in the school said about the sprints process.*
>
> *We have now trained over 100 members of staff in the Sprints process and all have completed their first 'Sprint'. Moving forward we have started preparing for our next*

sprinting session in the new term, where staff can choose their focus from Glasgow Pedagogy. Through my experience leading sprints across the school, it was evident it allows staff to work collaboratively and engage in professional discussions and observations that get us talking about and improving learning and teaching.

Lauren Baillie – Secondary Practitioner from East Renfrewshire Council

As a practitioner involved in the first cohort of the West Partnership's Pedagogy Partnerships programme, I selected retrieval practice as my area of focus for a 'Teaching Sprint'. As retrieval practice is largely based on improving knowledge, I discussed with colleagues about what 'knowledge' we consider to be important for success in Higher English. We concluded that improving their knowledge of language techniques would be most beneficial and I subsequently created a list of thirty techniques that I wanted them to learn. I started off with the creation of a knowledge organiser which outlined all the key information they needed – this was the knowledge I wanted them to learn and then retrieve. Over the course of the next six weeks, I then incorporated retrieval practice tasks regularly into my lessons, including challenge grids, retrieval pyramids, cloze passages, retrieval relays, and brain dumps.

Before I started the 'Sprint' I quizzed the pupils in the class on the thirty language techniques. The class average was 41%. I then asked them to complete the same quiz at the end of the six weeks (having completed a wide variety of retrieval practice activities) and the class average had increased to 81%. Pupils demonstrated more confidence and a greater ability to identify and analyse these language techniques. With such astounding results, my department have now created knowledge organisers for all year groups and have incorporated regular retrieval practice tasks into our curriculum.

I am grateful for the opportunity the Pedagogy Partnership has afforded me as it encouraged me to focus on an aspect of my teaching practice that might have otherwise been neglected in the busy school year. Although it was a small change I made in terms of my day-to-day teaching, it had a massive impact on the confidence and attainment of the young people in my class.

Next Steps

In Session 24/25, we are facilitating two cohorts of Pedagogy Partnerships, prioritising the sustainability of the activity. We invite past participants to deliver sessions to new cohorts, a highlight that is always welcomed. The willingness of participants to return, coupled with the positive quantitative and qualitative data, underscores the high regard for the programme. As evidenced in the case studies above, schools are adopting this framework as a sustainable approach to enhancing pedagogy and promoting short-term, manageable practitioner enquiry, which has been met with enthusiasm by practitioners across the West.

Leadership, Empowerment & Improvement Illustration – *Improving Our* Programmes and Change to Practice

The West Partnership's *Improving Our…* set of programmes and activity is developed by and for teachers and leaders across the eight local authorities (LAs). All the programmes and groups that drive them have the same focus on improvement through:

- the effective use of **evidence** and **enquiry** to drive change;
- high quality **self-evaluation** undertaken collectively and individually;
- improving **learning and teaching**;

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- a relentless focus on **equity and excellence** for all children and young people; and
- developing **networks** and working **collaboratively across boundaries**.

The programmes and groups that are included in the *Improving Our…* improvement activity are:

1. **Improving Our Classrooms (IOC)**
   IOC is for teachers in the primary, secondary and ASN sectors. It is the only remaining free Masters' Level provision for teachers in Scotland. Those who successfully complete the year-long programme are awarded 30 Masters' Credits and/or General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Professional Recognition. IOC is driven and delivered by a group of experienced headteachers and local authority officers. Over 100 teachers participated in IOC in 2024-25.

2. **Delivering Mentorship (DM)**
   This programme is a year-long Masters accredited module (15 Credits). Participants who have successfully completed IOC can become mentors for the programme and undertake this professional learning module focused on group mentoring theory and practice. DM is supported and driven by a cross-authority group of experienced IOC mentors. IOC participants had over 40 mentors work alongside them in trios in 2024-25. IOC participants had over 40 mentors work alongside them in trios in 2024-25.

3. **Improving Our Schools (IOS)**
   IOS is an establishment level programme for primary schools. This 15 month programme works across the whole school and has a much greater degree of flexibility than IOC. The focus is driven by each school's self-evaluation and data. The programme then becomes a priority in the school improvement plan for the coming session. There are inter-authority networking and sharing opportunities throughout. IOS is currently lead by two experienced primary headteachers. A reference group of headteachers is being set-up to drive and shape the programme. A total of 19 schools, with just under 300 teachers, participated in IOS in 2023-24.

4. **Improving Our Departments and Faculties (IODF)**
   IOD/F is a 15 month programme for any department or faculty in the secondary sector. Department / faculty teams use self-evaluation and data to identify an aspect of learning and teaching and a course/level/ skill component from the BGE or Senior Phase to focus on. This is built into the improvement plan. There are inter-authority networking and sharing opportunities throughout. IODF is developed and driven by a cross-authority, multi-subject group of depute heads, principal teachers, and faculty heads. A total of 22 Principal Teachers and Faculty Heads took part in the pilot. Collectively they lead around 175 teachers.

5. **Leadership of Learning Groups (LOLG)**
   These teacher led groups are cross-sector and cross-authority. Group members share relevant and recent expertise and experience in high-quality learning and teaching. This includes taking a critical eye to relevant policy, practice and research in specific areas of learning and teaching and ensuring the high quality of materials that support the suite of *Improving Our…* professional learning activities.

There are three main themes that emerge across the 2023-24 *Improving Our…* evaluation evidence. This would suggest that the work impacts in consistent ways for individual teachers, across whole departments and faculties and schools.

1. **Networking**
   Developing networks and working across boundaries is one of the central tenets of this work. This is a consistent theme in the evaluations. Participants highly value the opportunities to work with others, share experiences and practice, and find solutions to common challenges. This may be beyond their classroom, school, sector and/or local authority. For example, it is common for IOC trios to still be in touch three or more years after completing the programme. There is scope to develop a stronger approach to networking across this work. It is a key factor in maintaining the relevance, quality and consistency of all the *Improving Our…* work.

   > *"Delivering Mentorship gave me opportunities to work across LAs which was invaluable. I got so much out of those opportunities. Mentoring is difficult, it's a trial run for leadership. It lets you find out if that's the kind of thing you want to do with a wide network of support."*
   >
   > Delivering Mentorship participant

2. **Improved use of data**
   This is both a consistent and very strong theme in the evaluation evidence across IOC, IOS and IOD/F. This year 93% of the teachers in IOC reported both increased confidence and use of data, last session this number was 94%. Headteachers who have had multiple teachers go through the programme over a number of years described this as an empowering experience for teachers who were much more able to actively ask and answer 'so what?' and bring the solutions. The Fact, Story, Action approach to tracking is included in all the programmes. Almost all participants stated they intended to keep using it. This applies to individual teachers, whole departments/faculties, and schools. This will continue to be a focus. It would now be beneficial to expand the examples of this framework in use.

   > *'Teachers' participation in the IOS professional learning initiative enables them to carefully analyse their class data and plan children's next steps in learning well. Teachers are growing in confidence using the effective 'fact, story, action' approach to identifying the learning needs of individual children.'*
   >
   > *St John the Baptist Primary School inspection report, IOS participant*

3. **Focus on improvement in the classroom**
   Participants in IOC, IOS and IOD/F very frequently described the programmes as being built around a strong focus on direct impact in the classroom that is based on local self-evaluation evidence and data. They stated that this gave a very high level of relevance, practicality and impact to what they did as a result of taking part. The self-reported IOC evaluation data from the last two years (see tables below) demonstrates participants' perspectives on the impact on their practice and the learners they work with. This correlates with the case studies and presentations they submit.

Impact on students	2022-23	2023-24
Attainment	95% increased	94% increased
Student attitude to learning	94% stated improved	96% stated improved
Student engagement	95% stated improved	95% stated improved
Student confidence	100% stated improved	99% stated improved

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Impact on teachers	2022-23	2023-24
Use of data	94% stated increased	93% stated increased
Understanding of focus area	94% stated improved	100% stated improved
Confidence to change practice	96% stated improved	98% stated improved
Skills as a teacher	96% stated improved	99% stated improved

> *"The ownership for improvement now goes back to the department so it's more real. We're still trying to make it more relevant. We have a bit to go with this. There is a clear link between our self-evaluation, learning teaching assessment and professional learning."*
>
> *Principal teacher, IOD/F*

IOC has been developed over a period of more than ten years and delivered exclusively across the West Partnership for the last five years. Focus groups with past participants, including headteachers, mentors and teachers suggest that the impact in the classroom can also be seen over the longer term.

> *"The skills from IOC are not optional, it was needed in my school, teachers felt empowered in their own classrooms as a result. They were able to talk robustly about what they had planned and trialled. This has given me a school of leaders. Staff have blossomed in terms of their pedagogy and their leadership."*
>
> Headteacher of a school where all staff have done IOC over the last 5 years

The data suggests that the balance between programme structure and local flexibility is working well. The further development of the groups to develop and drive the programmes should be a priority over the coming months to maintain this when the funding comes to an end in March 2025. There is also scope to further develop explicit connections with both the *Spotlight Sessions* and *Pedagogy Partnerships*. This has the potential to build a strong, coherent professional learning offer for pedagogy that can:

- meet a range of different requirements over the short and longer term;
- work flexibly for the range of contexts across the eight West Partnership local authorities; and
- provide networked learning opportunities for teachers, middle and senior leaders.

In summary, the *Improving Our* programmes are supporting practitioners to make changes to practice at classroom, department, and school level. Evaluative data continues to suggest that almost all participants benefit from engaging with the programmes. Qualitative data suggests that these benefits are stimulated through programme facilitated networking, improvements in the use of data and ultimately in improvements within the classroom.

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Wellbeing for Learning Illustration – Improving Attendance via Collaborative Action Research (CAR)

According to the Scottish Government (2022), regular attendance is strongly correlated with higher attainment levels, an ongoing focus for all local authorities and their establishments across the West Partnership. Regular school attendance helps pupils build critical social skills and relationships, fostering a sense of community and belonging (Reid, 2017). Absenteeism can lead to social isolation, making it harder for students to reintegrate and engage with their peers. We know that schools provide a structured environment where children can access mental health resources and support systems. Regular attendance ensures that pupils benefit from these services, helping them to manage stress and emotional challenges (Kearney & Graczyk, 2020).

Efforts to improve attendance rates should be multifaceted, reflecting the wide range of contributory factors experienced by our learners and their families. The challenge for resource limited establishments is to select the most appropriate intervention/strategy to have the desired impact. Kearney et al (2019) states that full attendance through to school refusal can be considered as a spectrum that can be used as an early warning system to initiate support. This means that establishments must be responsive to the evolving nature of pupil presentation, with robust processes in place to target and support families.

The Wellbeing for Learning workstream created a collaborative action research project focused upon bringing together research, data, and evaluation expertise to inform and support establishments in making such an informed decision. Collaborative action research was selected as the most appropriate vehicle for this professional learning activity because it enabled establishment leads to work together to identify, implement, and evaluate strategies that would refine their processes, procedures and practices, tailored to their context and community.

In terms of reach, 64 participants who signed up represented 7 out of the 8 local authorities within the West Partnership. For 21 of these participants, this was the first West Partnership event they had attended. Primary and Secondary sectors were evenly represented, with 52% of participants from Primary and 44% from Secondary. Local Authority leads made up the remaining 5% of participants. The programme was aimed at practitioners who had a responsibility for attendance and/or pastoral care, many of whom also held remits which focused upon family engagement or learning.

The format of the programme included in-person and online sessions and ran from the end of November 2023 until May 2024. The in-person sessions took place over 1 full day and 2 morning sessions. Day 1 introduced the national picture, data analysis, self-evaluation and the process of collaborative action research. Morning 2 developed this professional learning by providing targeted support in each of these areas to establishments as required to further their research. Morning 3 provided those in attendance with a chance to share their learning and the impact upon learners and their families. Optional online check-in sessions were available throughout the programme, providing participants the opportunity to sense check their research, to review interventions and to share good practice with others.

Evaluation Data

Of those attending the in-person sessions:

- 100% found them to be useful;
- 100% stated they were well organised;
- 98% found the duration to be sufficient. Those who found it insufficient, wished for it to be longer, with more time to discuss with colleagues; and
- 100% stated they supported them to change their practice.

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How did the professional learning support alterations to practice?

To have a more robust attendance policy - filter this throughout the school so all staff are following the same procedures. Pupils and families will be aware of policy and procedures.

I will now be able to analyse data more thoroughly to find trends and to target interventions more accurately to make best use of limited resources.

Reflecting with colleagues in other local authorities has helped highlight some gaps in the attendance procedures/policies in my own local authority.

A focussed idea to address target group attendance. It's been great to get that focus for such a potentially overwhelming issue.

What was most beneficial?

The data spreadsheet was fantastic, with all the slicers. A great piece of work which will be such a great help moving forward. Good to talk to colleagues in other schools and local authorities.

Networking with teaches from different and authorities and the information presented by the different speakers.

The speakers and sharing the resources available - interactive attendance guide, self-evaluation and all the links within this. Time to discuss and share with colleagues.

Being able to clarify my thinking around my project and identify a target group. Professional dialogue with colleagues across the West Partnership and sharing good practice.

Case Study – St Brides Primary School, Glasgow

The school community of St Bride's Primary School in Glasgow experiences high levels of poverty, with 54% of learners living in SIMD deciles 1 and 2. Most pupils have English as an additional language, with 16 different languages spoken, and 46% are from the Gypsy/Traveller Community.

Depute Head Teacher, Fiona Buchanan, attended the CAR programme and worked through the Assess, Plan, Do, Review process.

1. **The Assessment phase** began by analysing a whole school attendance report, where overall attendance was 84.24%. From this they:
   - Identified pupil groups with attendance below 90%;
   - Identified pupils with attendance between 60% - 80%; and
   - Identified classes with highest % of pupils with attendance between 80% - 90%.

2. **The Planning phase** triangulated data from the wider school community, including:
   - Attendance Cards – shared with teaching staff, clerical staff and parents/carers;
   - Creation of pro forma to gather and monitor data;
   - Use of knowledge and insight of families working with Family Support Worker;
   - Phone calls/meetings with parents and carers;
   - Using Forth Valley West Lothian RIC Toolkit for School Evaluation;
   - Data analysis from SEEMiS – Codes;
   - Pupil conversations supported by use of the Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile; and
   - Weekly 100% Attendance recognition.

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Fiona and her school team noted lowest and highest attendance months, looking for trends in relation to cultural or home circumstances. Unauthorised absences were significantly higher than those that had been authorised and these were further analysed.

3. **Within the Doing phase,** pupil attendance was labelled Red, Amber and Green by attendance percentage, and a range of actions were used to support pupils in these groups. These included: parental meetings, pupil meetings, bespoke interventions, telephone calls, home visits, and regular communication with parents.

As recommended by the CAR programme, Fiona selected the 'amber' cohort, those with 80% - 90%, for the Targeted Intervention Group (TIG). Through their interventions, such as music lessons during school day, after school clubs and improved parental understanding of procedures for daytime appointments, they have seen:

- 50% of TIG pupils have increased attendance;
- 1 pupil has achieved over 90%;
- Increased understanding of reasons for absences; and
- Increase in parents informing school of absences.

4. Moving into the **Review phase**, the team are going to focus upon:
    - Identifying the 'pull factors'
        - Pupils
        - Staff
        - School age childcare project - Pilot
    - Parental Communication
        - Focus on August attendance
        - Expectations for 24/25 session
        - Xpressions App
    - Class Timetables
        - Reasonable adjustments to motivate and encourage attendance
    - Nov/Dec and March dips and what can be done to avoid these

End of Programme Evaluation

Nineteen participants attended the final sharing learning session and 100% strongly agreed that they had learned from speaking with colleagues that day. When considering their attendance target group pupils, quantitative data found that:

- 100% had experienced improvements in wellbeing outcomes;
- 95% had improved relationships with families;
- 95% had improvements in learning experiences.;
- 95% perceived increases in attainment and/or achievement;
- 100% had improved attendance rates; and
- 100% stated that the Attendance CAR project supported them to create a robust, intelligence-driven plan to tackle attendance concerns.

Concluding qualitative statements highlighted what made the programme so effective:

> *The ideas and resources generated by the West Partnership CAR project have been really useful in our focus on improving attendance.*

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A really worthwhile opportunity to access high quality CLPL and link with colleagues from other authorities.

The collaboration and the pace was very helpful. The support given helped with the success.

Participating in the CAR project has been so beneficial in providing time to plan and organise interventions.

West Partnership Research and Knowledge Exchange

In addition to supporting the dissemination of knowledge and expertise around our system, the West Partnership has also played a key role in knowledge creation itself. In 2023/24 we completed two pieces of work which address emerging issues in our system. Firstly, we completed our two-year project in evaluating the impact of the 1140 hours policy on children, young people, families and practitioners in our region. Secondly, we completed an overview of Artificial Intelligence and its potential impacts on education.

Evaluating the impact of 1140 Hours

In the 2022/23 session we also saw the commencement of research into the impact of the 1140 hours early years policy at a West Partnership level. The project aimed to understand what impact the policy has had within our region. Aside from understanding the impact on children and their families, the research also aimed to gather insight into the experience of practitioners in the area and central authority teams who are involved in the delivery of early learning at a local authority level. The research is now complete and will be launched in August 2024. The infographic below provides an overview of the key qualitative findings from the research.

[INSERT Appendix 1 here]

Artificial Intelligence – Implications for our system

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its application in education has become a growing concern and source of interest for schools worldwide. Research and feedback from teachers indicated a need for support in understanding how AI works, its potential uses, and the issues that both teachers and pupils must consider. During the 2023/24 academic session, the West Partnership conducted a pilot programme with teachers across the region to demonstrate how this technology can enhance learner experiences, manage teacher workload, and highlight key issues such as bias, accuracy, and data protection.

Before this academic session, a review of the literature on AI in education, specifically aimed at teachers, was produced. The findings from this review emphasised the importance of both educators and pupils developing AI literacy to ensure this technology can be used safely and effectively. This led to the creation of an AI toolkit, structured similarly to the review, which would enable practitioners to identify their strengths and areas needing further development as a department or school.

Between November 2023 and February 2024, a total of 27 schools participated in this pilot programme. Each local authority within the West Partnership was represented, as well as the primary, secondary, and ASN sectors. After delivering sessions 1 and 2 in November and December, all participating teachers were given access to the AI review and toolkit. The West Partnership sought feedback after each session and conducted a follow-up survey in February to measure the overall impact of each resource.

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Key findings from the feedback gathered from practitioners are as follows:

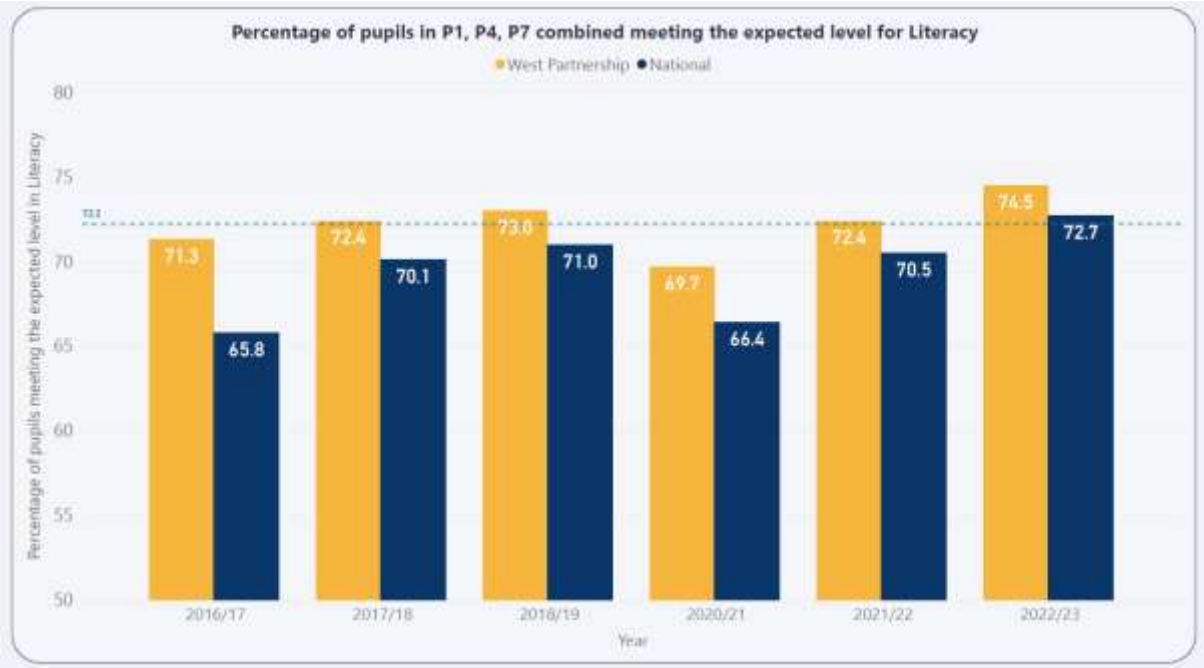
- Prior to attending the first AI session, practitioners rated their understanding of AI at 4.3 on average (1 being poor, 10 being excellent). After attending the second session, this increased to an average of 7.7.
- When asked to rate how beneficial each session was on a scale of 1-10 (1 being not beneficial, and 10 being very beneficial), practitioners rated session 1 at 8.9 and session 2 at 8.7 on average.
- After attending session 2, 100% of practitioners either agreed or strongly agreed that they can better define what AI is, they have improved their knowledge of how they can use AI in the classroom to support learning experiences, and that they hope to explore this technology further both individually, and with their colleagues.
- By the end of session 2, 81% of practitioners had explored or researched AI and its use in education further. This included testing resources cited during the sessions such as Quizalize and ChatGPT, to see how these would fit in their class, and using pupil voice to evaluate how these resources could enhance learning experiences.
- Qualitative feedback from these surveys indicated that practitioners felt more prepared to implement and discuss AI with their class, and that the review and toolkit would be useful to support them with exploring this technology further as a school/department. Some examples of feedback from teachers can be seen below:
  - *Brilliant session. New ideas. Walking away with things to try/share. Always a positive.*
  - *Great introductory session and the emphasis on AI literacy at the start is so important to drive home the importance of seeking to develop in this area further.*
  - *Very insightful- I came in a sceptic and now going to look at ways I can use it!*
- Several schools have experienced difficulties with accessing AI resources due to restrictions within their local authority. Discussions with one school also highlighted differences across subjects, with some AI tools being more effective in certain subjects than others.

How did the West Partnership compare?

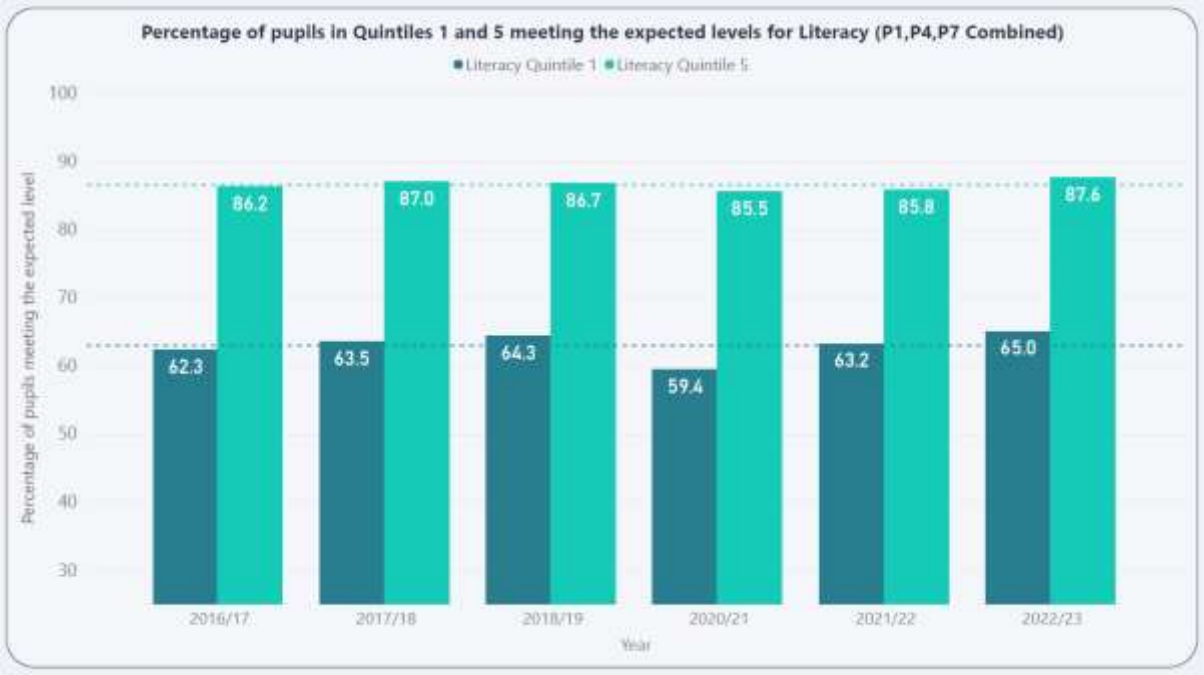
The sections below draw on several of our critical indicators to evaluate progress in key outcome measures. These indicators are broken into three sections: 1) Broad General Education (BGE), 2) Senior Phase and 3) Leavers Destinations.

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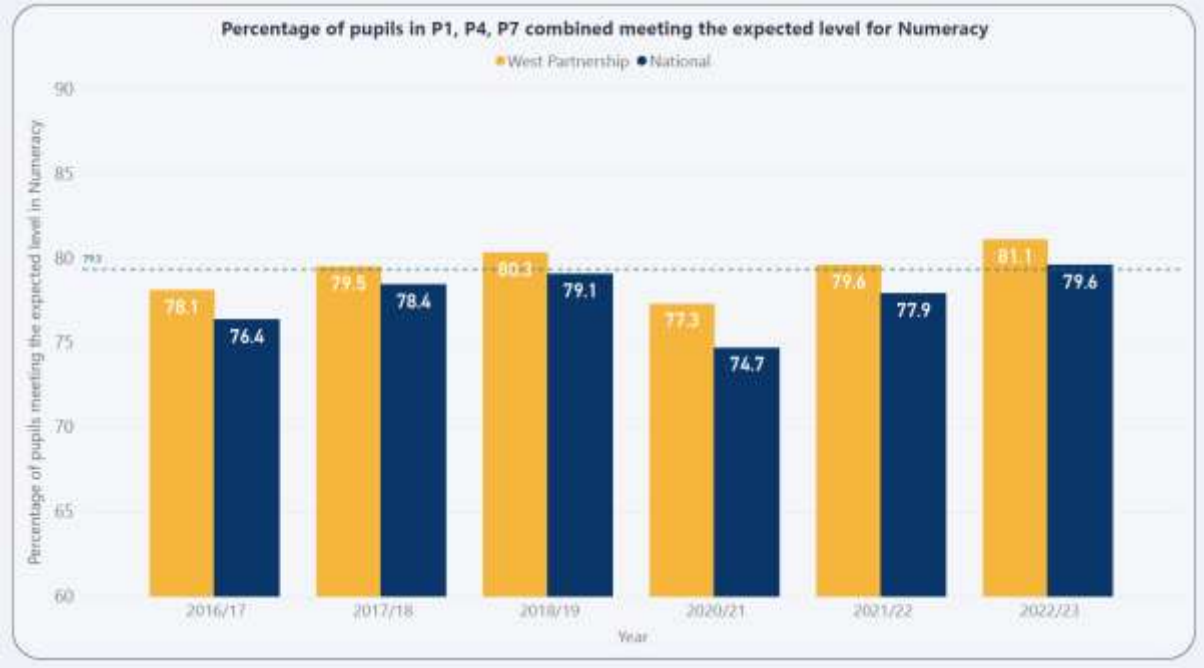
Broad General Education (BGE)



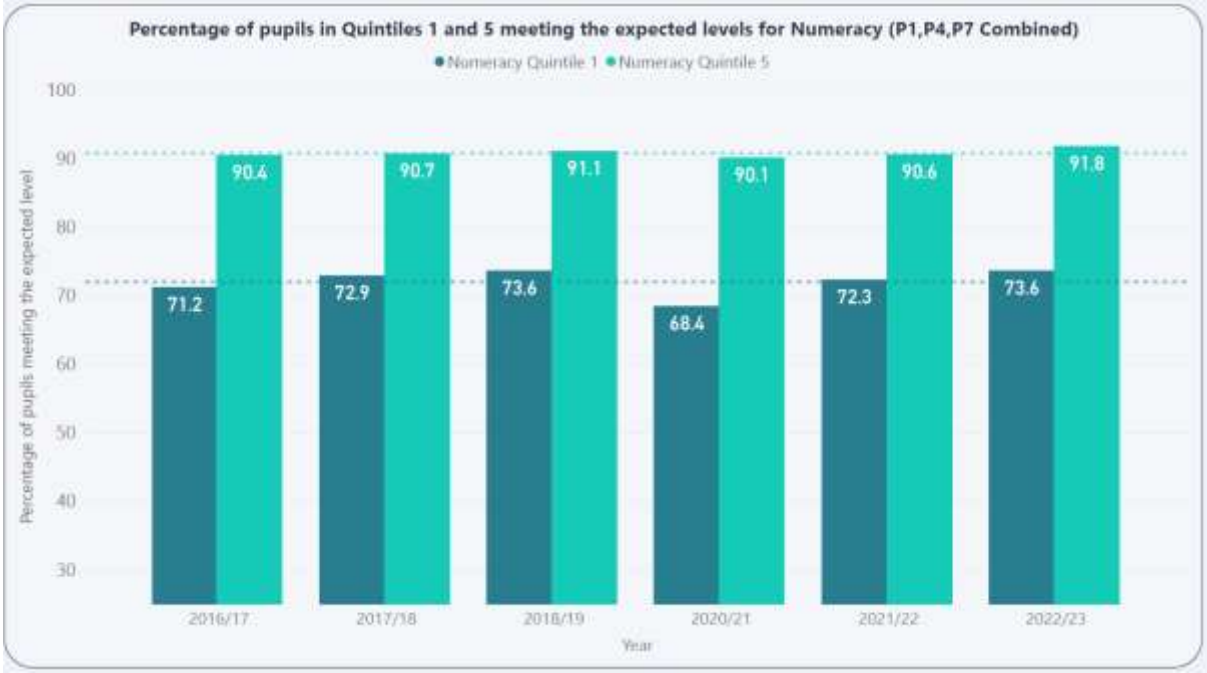
Data from 22/23 shows an increase in the number of primary pupils meeting their expected literacy levels at P1, P4 and P7. The percentage of West Partnership pupils meeting the expected level increased from a low of 69.7% in 20/21 to 74.5% in 22/23. This figure is now above the last pre-pandemic session (18/19) the highest it has been in the last 6 sessions. West Partnership BGE literacy rates continue to be higher than national figures – an outcome replicated in each of the last 6 sessions.



Whilst both groups improved on 21/22 figures, the attainment gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 primary pupils in literacy remains at 22.6% points. This is down from an attainment gap high of 26.1% points experienced in 20/21 but remains higher than the pre-pandemic low of 22.4% points in 18/19. Both Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 learners achieved their highest level of performance over the last 6 sessions in 22/23.



Data from 22/23 shows an increase in the number of primary pupils meeting their expected numeracy levels at P1, P4 and P7. The percentage of West Partnership pupils meeting the expected level increased from lows of 77.3% in 20/21 to 81.1% in 22/23. This figure is above the last pre-pandemic session (18/19) and the highest it has been since 16/17. West Partnership primary pupils continue to be more likely than all Scottish pupils in meeting the expected level for Numeracy.



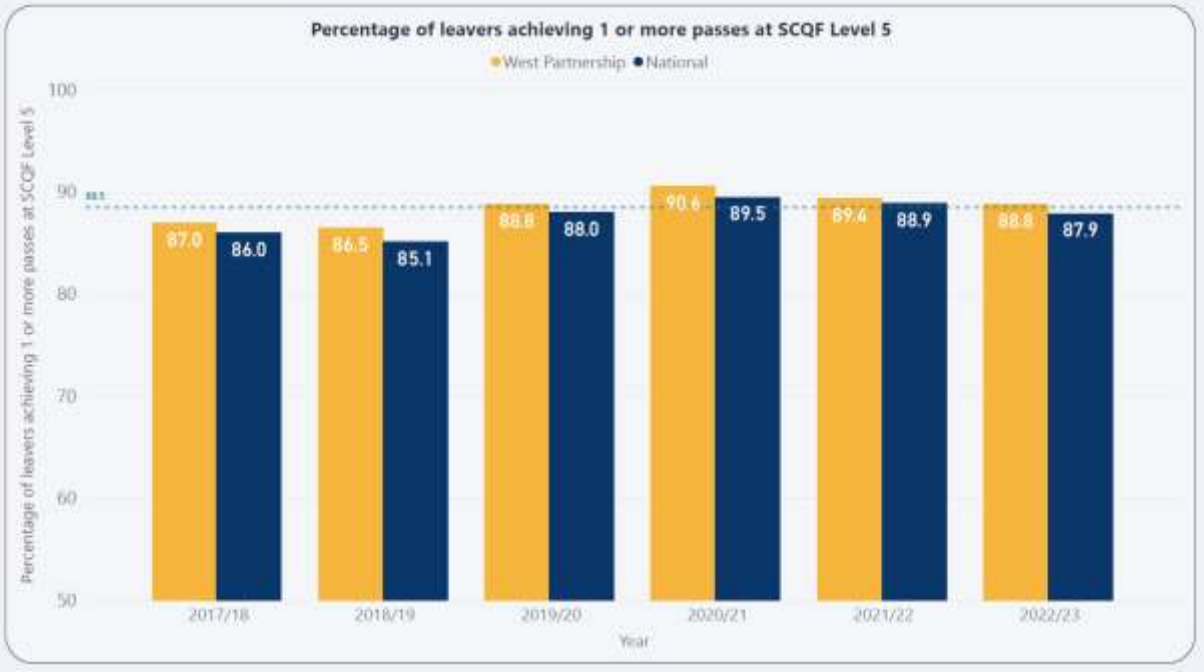
The attainment gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 primary pupils in numeracy has fallen 0.1% points to 18.2% points. This is down from an attainment gap high of 21.7% points experienced in 20/21 but remains higher than the pre-pandemic low of 17.5% points in 18/19. Quintile 5 learners achieved their highest level of performance over the last 6 sessions in 22/23 whilst Quintile 1 learners matched their best performance (18/19).

Senior Phase

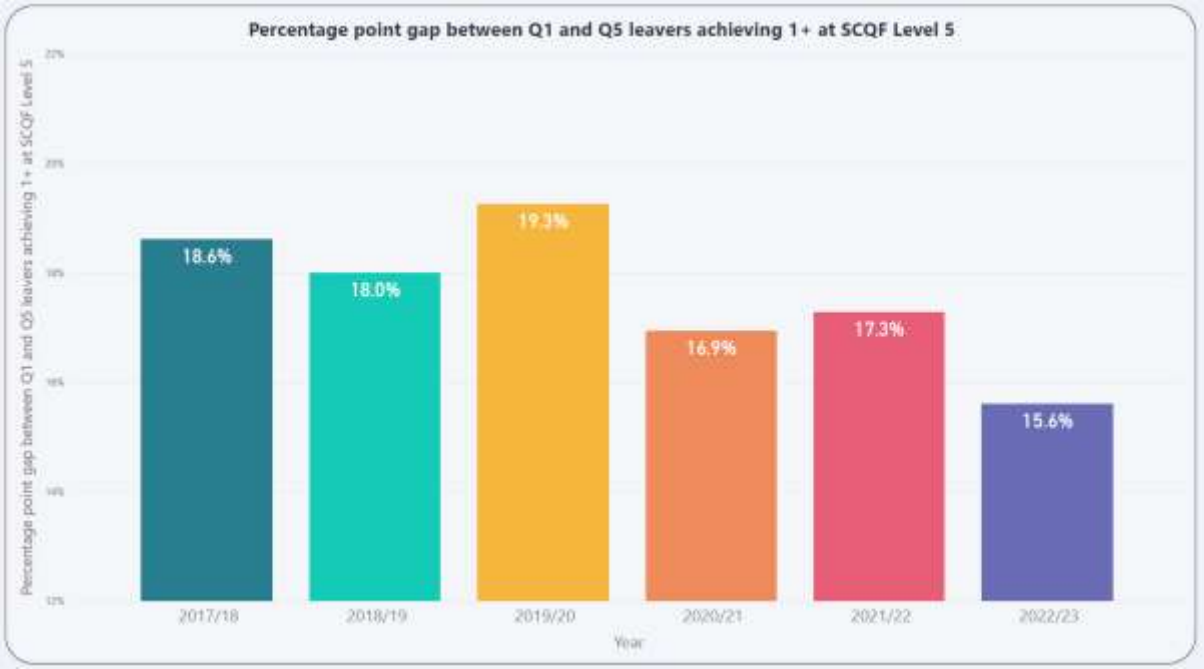
Performance at senior phase has been impacted by a number of factors in the last few sessions. For example, a variety of assessment models have been used over the previous four academic sessions. As such, caution should be noted in making year on year comparisons. Furthermore, indicators which use leavers cohorts have also been impacted by the changing nature of when our young people have left school. The visual below shows how the number of S4 and S5 leavers has changed considerably over the last 5 sessions:



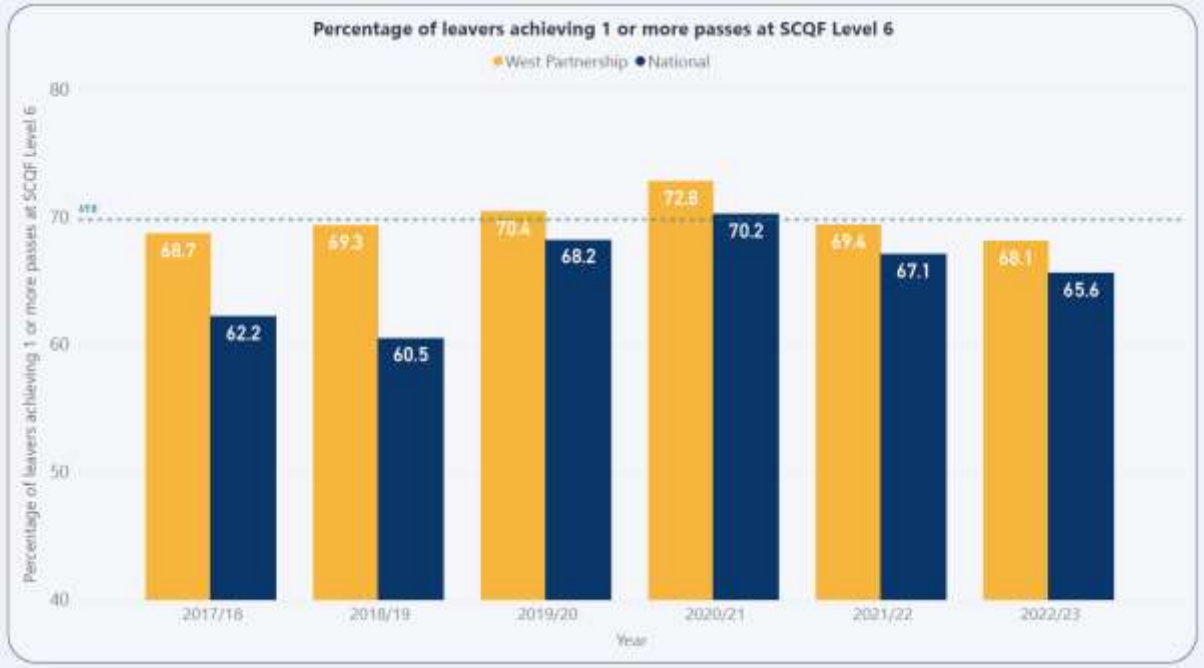
Between 18/19 and 20/21, approximately 1.5k S4 leavers and 4.0k S5 leavers left school each year. This has increased considerably over the last 2 sessions, with 2.2k S4 leavers and 5.0k S5 leavers in 22/23. This marks an increase of 46% for S4 leavers and 25% for S5 leavers. The effect of the increase in S4 and S5 leavers has meant that the proportion of all leavers who left after S6 has fallen to 62% in 22/23 from 68% in 20/21. The increase in the proportion of leavers from S4 and S5 means that our Level 6 measures in particular are impacted as these learners have had less time to accumulate Level 6 awards.



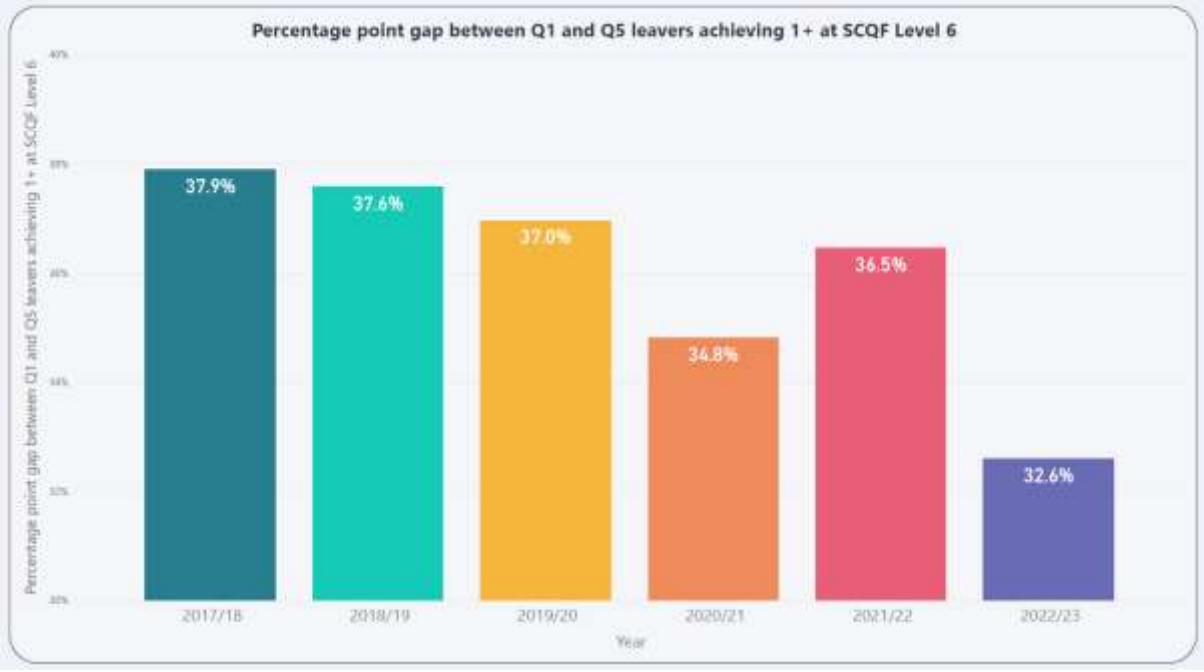
The percentage of leavers achieving 1 or more passes at SCQF Level 5 decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 88.8% from 89.4% in 20/21. The 22/23 figure continues to be higher than the average of 88.5% over the last 6 sessions. The West Partnership continues to have a higher percentage of leavers achieving 1 or more awards at this level compared to Scotland as a whole. This outcome has occurred in each of the last 6 sessions.



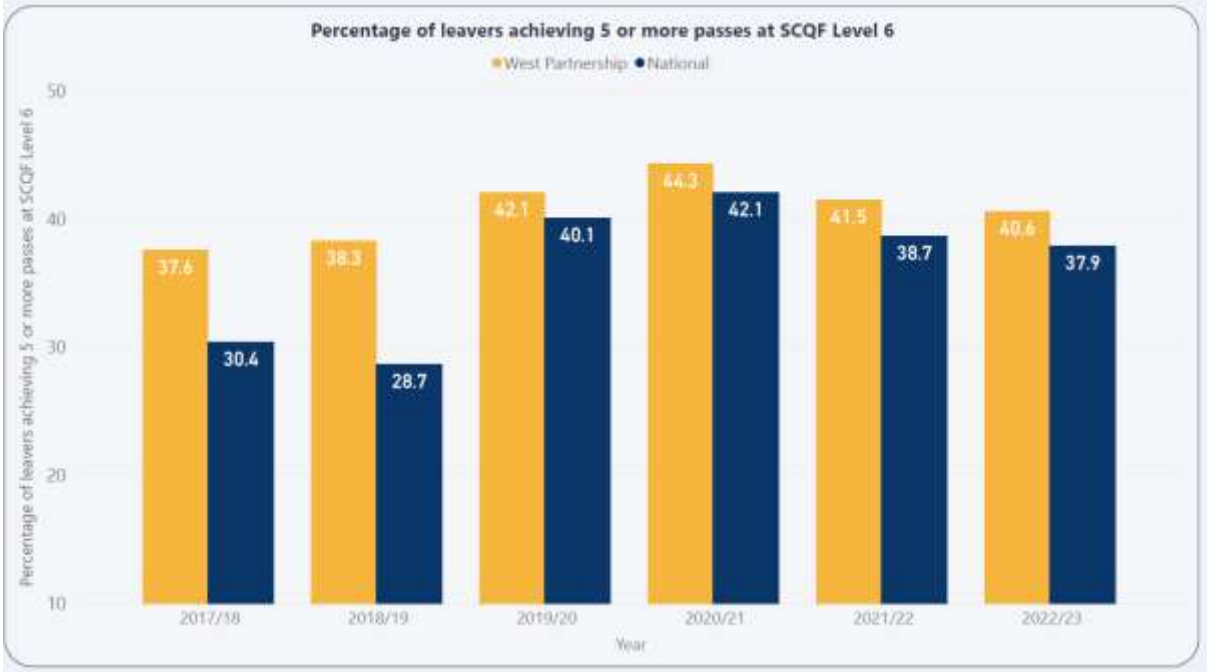
Progress is being made in closing the gap between SIMD quintiles 1 and 5 leavers achieving 1 or more passes at SCQF level 5. The attainment gap of 15.6% points is the lowest it has been across the last 6 sessions and marks a fall of 3.7% points on the highest gap recorded in 19/20. The West Partnership has a smaller attainment gap than the national figure (16.6% points) in this measure.



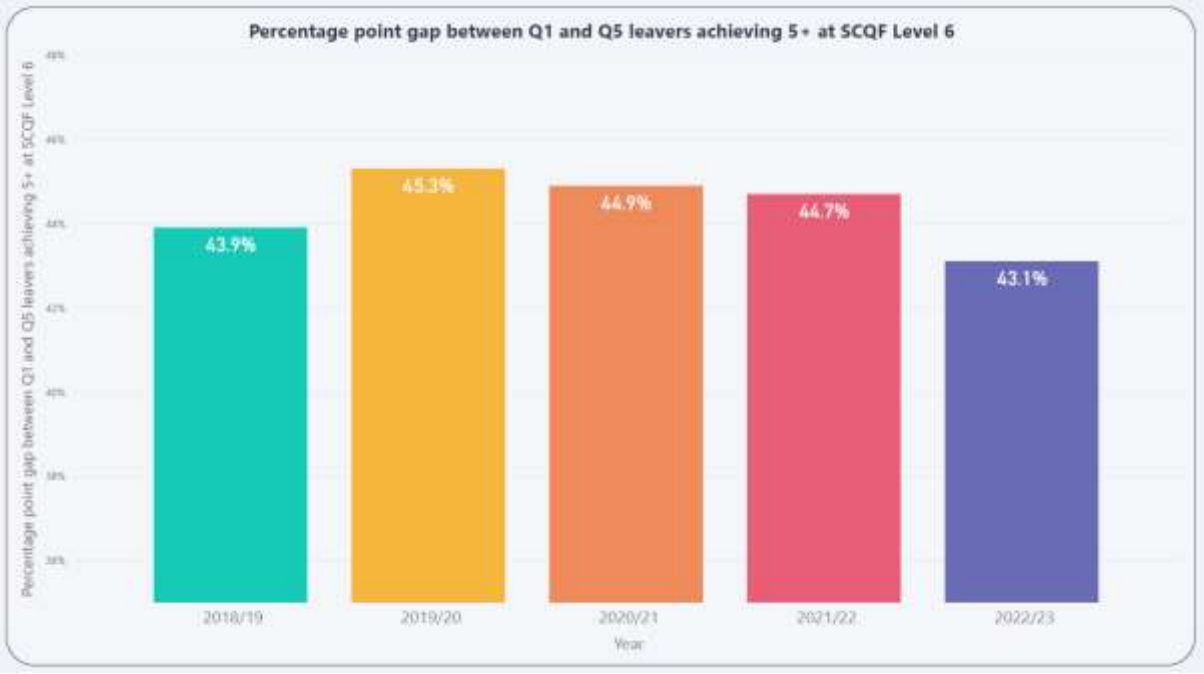
The percentage of leavers achieving 1 or more passes at SCQF Level 6 has fallen by 1.3% points. The figure of 68.1% is now below with the last session which had a traditional model of assessment (18/19). It should be noted that the leavers cohort of 18/19 had a higher proportion of its leavers finishing school after S6 than the 22/23 leavers cohort. West Partnership school leavers continue to outperform the national figure on this measure.



Progress is being made in closing the gap between SIMD quintiles 1 and 5 leavers achieving 1 or more passes at SCQF level 6. The attainment gap of 32.6% points is the lowest it has been across the last 6 sessions and marks a fall of 5.3% points on the highest gap recorded in 17/18. The West Partnership has the same attainment gap than the national figure in this measure. Nevertheless, both Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 groups outperform the national figures (Q1 = 55.0% West Partnership and 51.5% Scotland – Q5 = 87.6% West Partnership and 83.1% Scotland)

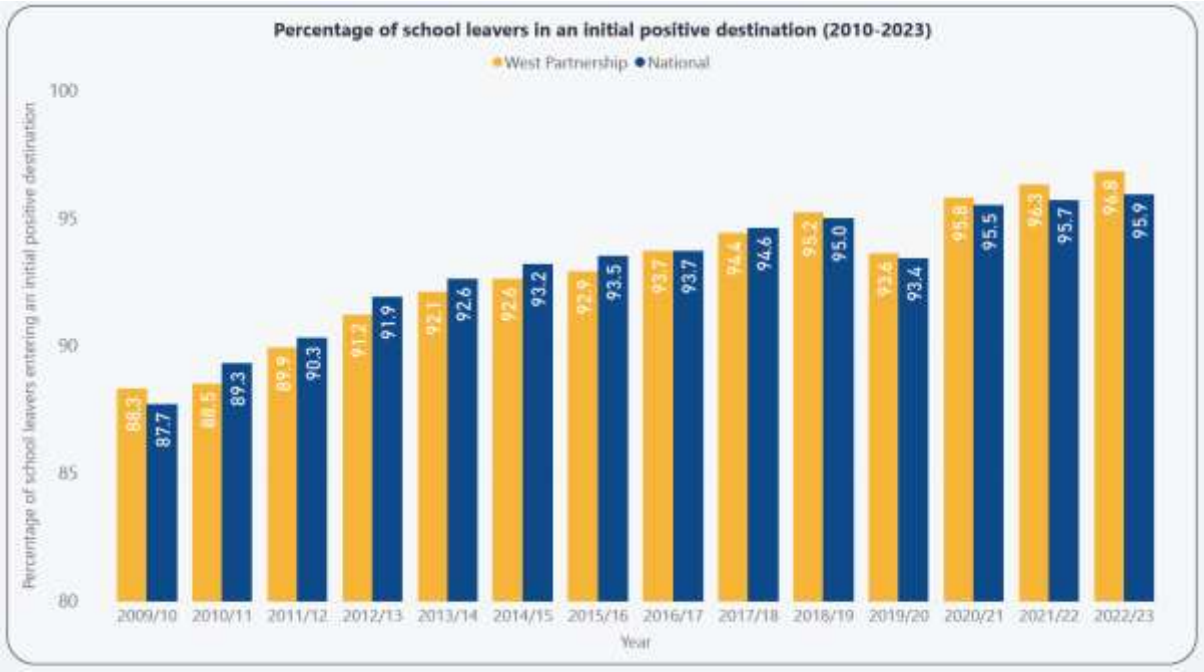


As in other measures at Level 6, the percentage of leavers achieving 5 or more passes has decreased against 21/22 figures. The figure of 40.6% for 22/23 is a 3.7%-point decrease from the high of 44.3% in 20/21. The 22/23 figure remains higher than the last pre-pandemic session of 18/19. As in other senior phase attainment measures, a higher percentage of West Partnership leavers achieving this standard than their national peers.

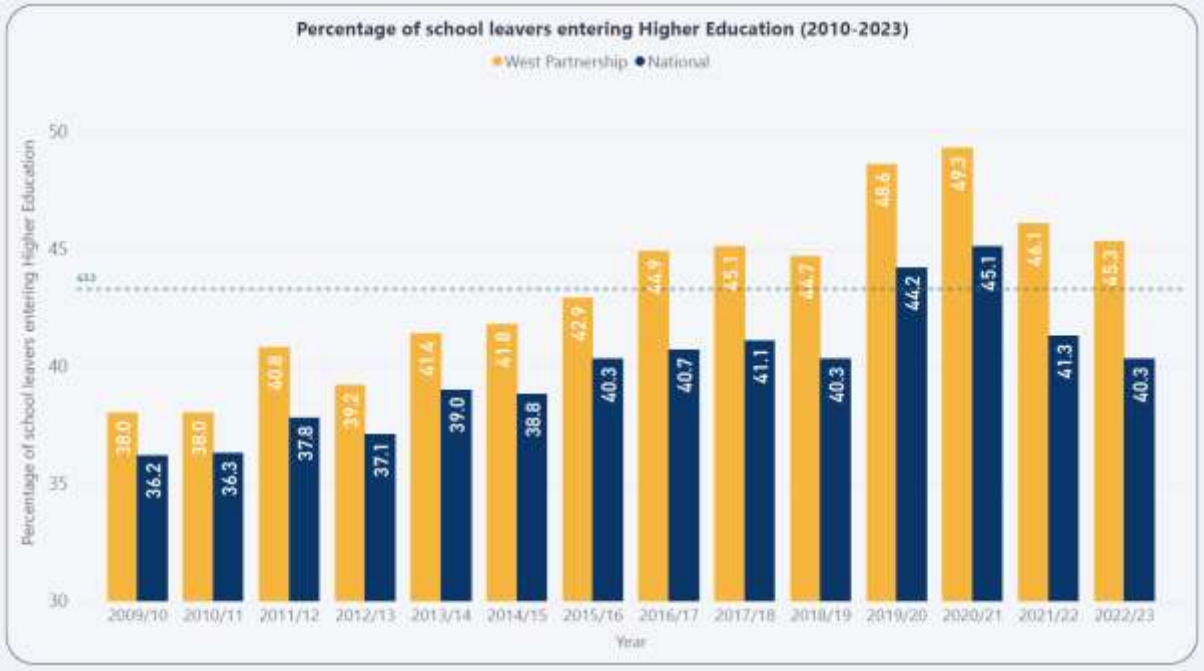


Progress is being made in closing the gap between SIMD quintiles 1 and 5 leavers achieving 5 or more passes at SCQF level 6. The attainment gap of 43.1% points is the lowest it has been across the last 5 sessions and marks a fall of 2.2% points on the highest gap recorded in 19/20. The West Partnership has a smaller attainment gap than the national figure (47.9% points) in this measure. Both Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 groups outperform the national figures (Q1 = 24.9% West Partnership and 22.0% Scotland – Q5 = 68.0% West Partnership and 59.9% Scotland)

Leavers Destinations

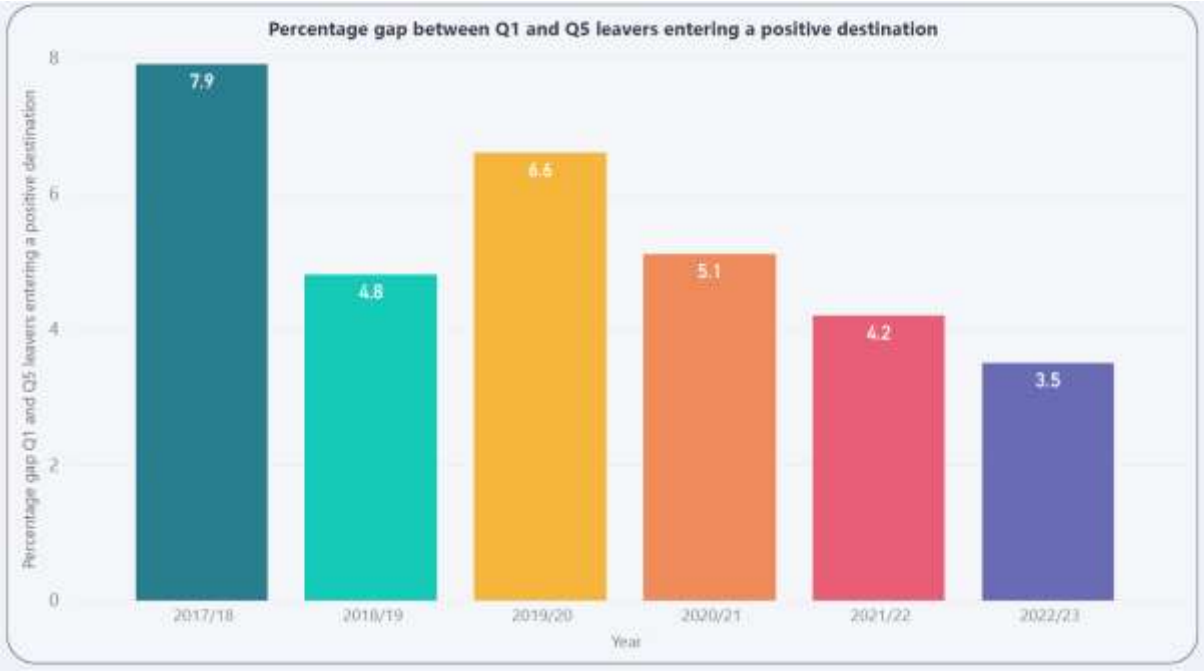


The percentage of West Partnership leavers entering initial positive destinations is at the highest it has been since records began. This continues a trend of year-on-year increases that was only interrupted in 19/20, when pandemic related disruption significantly reduced the percentage of leavers entering employment. The figure of 96.8% continues the progression from 88.3% in 2010. For the fifth year in a row, West Partnership leavers were more likely than their national peers to be in an initial positive destination.



The percentage of West Partnership leavers entering Higher Education has fallen to 45.3% in 22/23, down from historic highs of 49.3 in 20/21. This is likely to be a result of a higher proportion of leavers coming from S4 and S5. Furthermore, when looking at S6 leavers only, the percentage entering HE increased from 65.2% in 21/22 to 66.2% in 2023. Nevertheless, the overall figure of 45.2% is higher than all pre-pandemic leavers cohorts and remains above the average figure of

43.3%. West Partnership leavers have consistently been more likely to enter Higher Education when compared to their national peers.



The percentage gap between SIMD Q1 and Q5 leavers entering a positive destination has decreased in comparison to 21/22 and is the lowest it has been in the last 6 years. The West Partnership destinations gap of 3.5% points is very slightly below the national figure of 3.6% points.

Critical Indicators

Our critical indicators below serve as benchmarks to evaluate the collective impact of the West Partnership. They should be considered as measures that, if our efforts are successful, will improve due to our interventions. Our drivers of improvement describe the mechanisms through which we aim to influence our system, while our critical indicators reveal if we are making an impact.

Last session, we made several small changes to better align our critical indicators with our values as a Regional Improvement Collaborative. First, in this evaluation report, we have themed our critical indicators around our values of *excellence, equity, and empowerment*. Although many of our measures could fit more than one of these values, we have labelled each by what we believe is their primary value. Second, we reinforced our commitment to equity by adding a few key measures. Critical indicators related to the poverty-related attainment gap and the educational outcomes of looked after young people were added last year. Updates to all these indicators can be found below:

Indicators	Excellence, Equity or Empowerment	2018-19 Value	2019-20 Value	2020-21 Value	2021-22 Value	2022-23 Value
% of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in literacy (based on reading, writing and talking and listening)		73.0	**	69.7	72.4	74.5
% of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in numeracy		80.3	**	77.3	79.6	81.1

% of leavers achieving 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better	Excellence	69.3	70.4	72.8	69.4	68.1
% of leavers achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		38.3	42.1	44.3	41.5	40.6
% of leavers achieving SCQF Level 5 or better in literacy		82.6	83.1	84.6	82.7	82.3
% of leavers achieving SCQF Level 5 or beter in numeracy		69.2	70.8	72.8	71.3	71.5
Primary Attendance Rates		94.2	N/A	93.4	N/A	91.7
Secondary Attendance Rates		90.3	N/A	88.4	N/A	87.4
Initial School Leaver Destinations (Positive)		95.2	93.6	95.8	96.3	96.8
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in literacy	Equity	22.4	**	26.1	22.6	22.5
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) achieving expected levels or better in numeracy		17.5	**	21.7	18.3	18.2
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 leavers achieving 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		39.6	36.9	34.8	33.4	32.6
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 leavers achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		48.1	42.5	44.0	44.7	43.1
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 leavers achieving SCQF Level 5 or better in literacy and numeracy		34.7	35.7	34.4	34.0	33.5
% point gap between Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 leavers entering initial positive destinations		4.8	6.6	5.1	4.2	3.5
% of looked after school leavers achieving 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		N/A	N/A	29.8%[1]		N/A
% of looked after school leavers achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better		N/A	N/A	8.9%		N/A
Number of Practitioners accessing professional learning opportunities provided by the West Partnership[2]	Empowerment	TBC	3185	3137	4467	10443
Percentage of practitioners reporting an increase in their knowledge following participation in West Partnership activities		NA	NA	85.1	85.3	85.8
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for leadership of change		73	*	*	91	81[3]
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for learning, teaching, and assessment		71	*	*	88	85[4]

[1] In 2023, the West Partnership board agreed to include two measures which look specifically at the outcomes of looked after children. These values will only be updated biannually, with 2 years of data combining to form a more reliable sample.

[2] Whilst attainment figures are always a session behind, figures for accessing professional learning are presented for current sessions. For example, the 22/23 figure of 10443 above is for those who attended in 23/24 – the reporting period of this annual report.

[3] Based on 31 inspections taking place between June-23 to July-24

[4] Based on 65 inspections taking place between June-23 and July 24

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Conclusion

This year, the Partnership has made significant progress in promoting equity, excellence, and empowerment across the West, as demonstrated throughout this report. We observed a notable increase in sign-ups for our activities, indicating a strong demand for professional learning opportunities and suggesting that West Partnership activities continues to meet these needs.

Our comparison visuals and critical indicators show progress in most areas across our system. Positive destination figures have reached their highest levels, and attainment across all measures is as good as or better than pre-pandemic levels. However, further work is needed to address the decline in attendance across all sectors, an issue being tackled through our CAR projects on attendance. School inspection data also continues to outperform pre-pandemic results.

Our progress has also been recognised externally by research from the Robert Owen Centre (ROC) for Educational Change. In their Phase III Reflections on the Partnership Recovery to Renewal: Reimagining the Future (2022) report, ROC findings complement our internal evaluation, providing a robust, triangulated approach to assessment. Key findings included:

- A strong culture and ethos of collaboration;
- Demonstrable transformative system change;
- Networks building collective agency and capacity at all levels; and
- Added value to local authorities, resulting in significant leadership and learning and teaching developments.

Collectively, we continue working towards ensuring the best outcomes for every child and young person in the West. Equity, Excellence, and Empowerment encapsulate the culture we aim to embed, enhancing the efforts of each local authority to continuously improve our schools and outcomes for our learners.

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