Item 5

19th November 2026

Glasgow City Council

Education, Skills and Early Years Committee

Report by Executive Director of Education

Contact: Brian McDermott Ext: 74214

Attainment: SQA Awards 2025/2026

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Committee with information on the attainment performance of pupils in the senior phase.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to consider the content of the report, note the positive outcomes for young people across the city.

Ward No(s): Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1. Background

1.1 This paper details the key measures attainment data for session 2025-2026. Whilst Local Authorities receive school and Local Authority attainment data in line with the Qualifications Scotland certification period in August each year, comparator data is collated via the Scottish Government's Insight Data Tool in the weeks post-certification and shared with Local Authorities and schools via an update in the middle of September each session.

1.2. Insight is the analytical tool available for all schools across Scotland. A number of indicators are included which allows attainment data at school level and at city level to be viewed in different ways. This includes data comparisons via multiple demographic lenses as well as comparison with Virtual Comparator schools (VC). Virtual Comparator data is generated by matching candidates with ten other candidates who share the same demographic profile across four criteria: School Stage (e.g. S5), Gender, SIMD and ASN profile.

1.3. Whilst much of the data presented on Insight is single year data, this paper includes data presented to show year-on-year progression, which is critical for performance analysis.

1.4. Whilst we do track S4 attainment performance, the analysis offered in the paper has been based on cumulative data by the end of S5, and by the end of S6, over the last five years. Data on S4 has not been included at city level because some schools have chosen not to present groups of young people for national qualifications in S4 and instead focus on qualifications by the end of S5. One school does not present the entire year group for national qualifications in S4. This affects the meaningful relevance of the data as percentages are based on the total number of pupils in year group.

1.5. The awards informing the data here are gathered in terms of 'All SCQF' levels, meaning that a full range of qualifications are included in the data, not just 'traditional' SQA National Qualifications. This is in line with the widening of the curricular offer and the direction of travel in Scottish education, in recognition that young people can learn and be assessed in a number of different ways.

Insight: Breadth and Depth Indicator

2. By the end of S5

2.1 This indicator looks at the number of awards that young people have achieved by the end of a year. Insight allows you to compare performance with the local authority's virtual comparator authority as well as against national figures. It also allows the user to use a range of filters such as gender, English as an Additional Language (EAL), and additional support needs (ASN). The tool also allows for comparison based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to allow analysis of the impact of poverty.

2.2 The data in Insight includes all awards including those achieved in other schools and colleges. Schools are increasingly using a range of awards, including National Qualifications, National Progression Awards and vocational qualifications. This is what is meant by 'All SCQF', above.

2.3 The tables below show Glasgow versus Virtual Comparator and the National cohort in relation to the percentage of S5 pupils achieving 1, 3 and 5 @ SCQF 5 by the end of S5.

Figure 1: One or more awards SCQF level 5 by the end of S5: 2022–2026



Figure 2: Three or more awards SCQF level 5 by the end of S5: 2022–2026

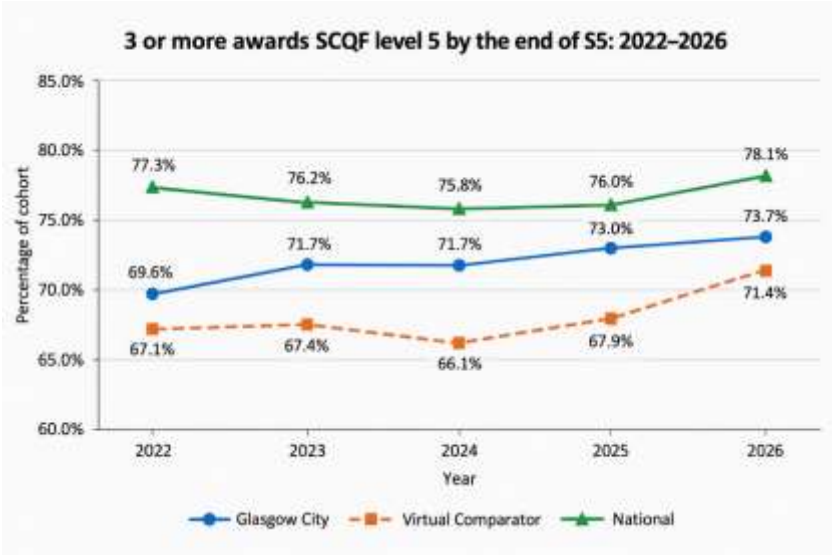
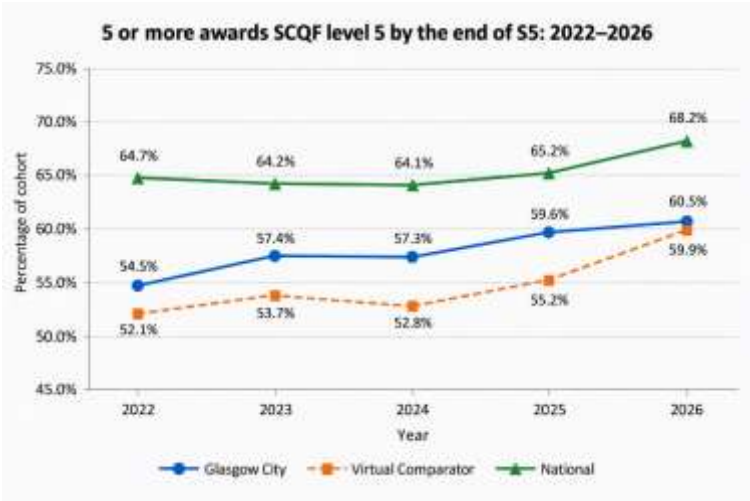


Figure 3: Five or more awards SCQF level 5 by the end of S5: 2022–2026



2.4 The data in the tables above show that in all measures, as well as an improvement in almost all metrics, Glasgow has been consistently ahead of Virtual Comparator (VC) in every measure and continues to be ahead. There remains work to do to bridge the gap between Glasgow and the National cohort, but this is worth considering in the context of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), which will be conveyed later in this paper.

2.5 The tables below show Glasgow versus Virtual Comparator and the National cohort in relation to the percentage of S5 pupils achieving 1, 3 and 5 @ SCQF 6 by the end of S5.

Figure 4: One or more awards SCQF level 6 by the end of S5: 2022–2026



Figure 5: Three or more awards SCQF level 6 by the end of S5: 2022–2026

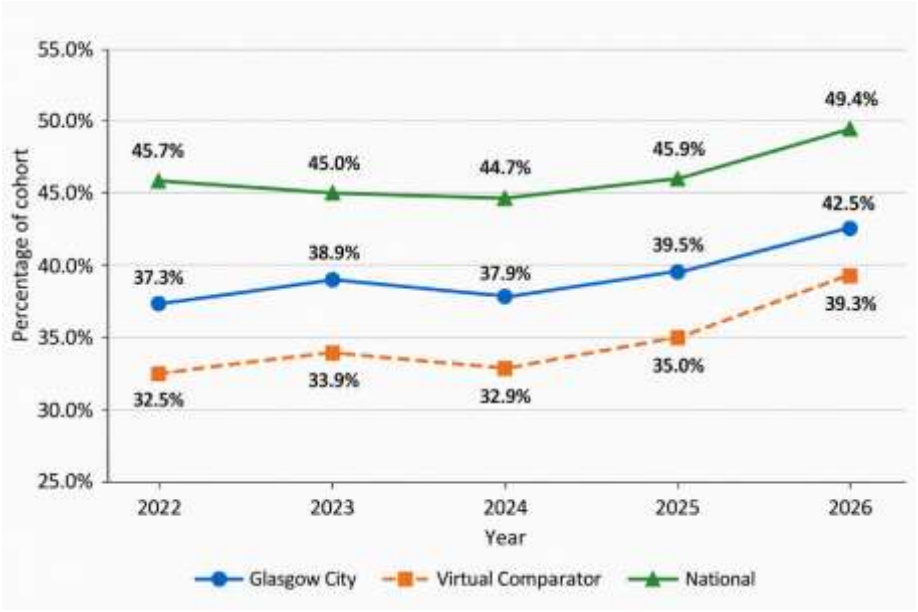
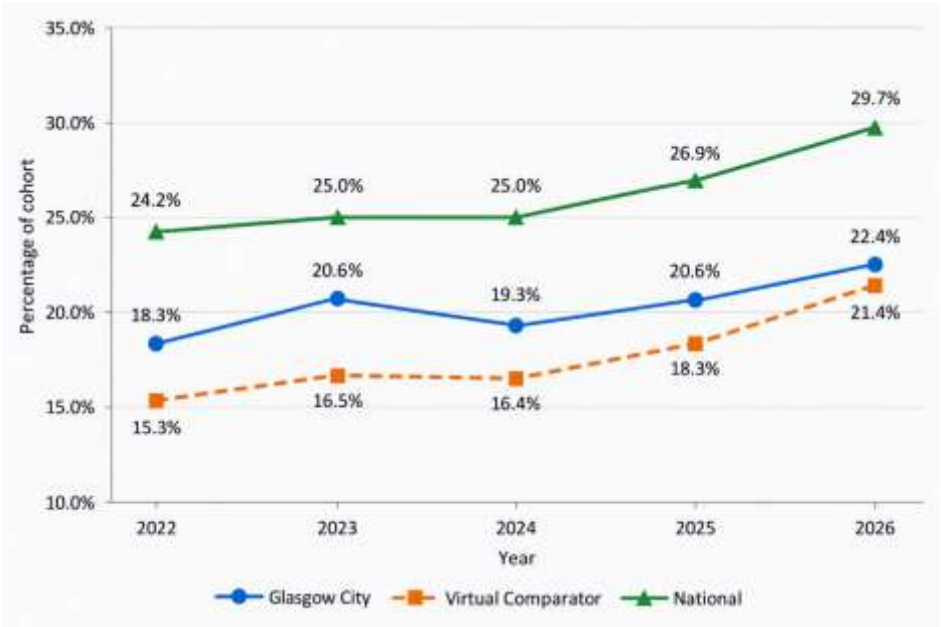


Figure 6: Five or more awards SCQF level 6 by the end of S5: 2022–2026



2.6 Again, the data in the tables above show that in all measures, as well as a consistent improvement in almost all metrics, Glasgow has been consistently ahead of Virtual Comparator (VC) in every measure and continues to be ahead. Again, there remains work to do to bridge the gap between Glasgow and the National cohort, but the same contextual considerations are important.

3. By the end of S6

3.1 The tables below show Glasgow versus Virtual Comparator and the National cohort in relation to the percentage of S6 pupils achieving 1, 3 and 5 @ SCQF 6 by the end of S6.

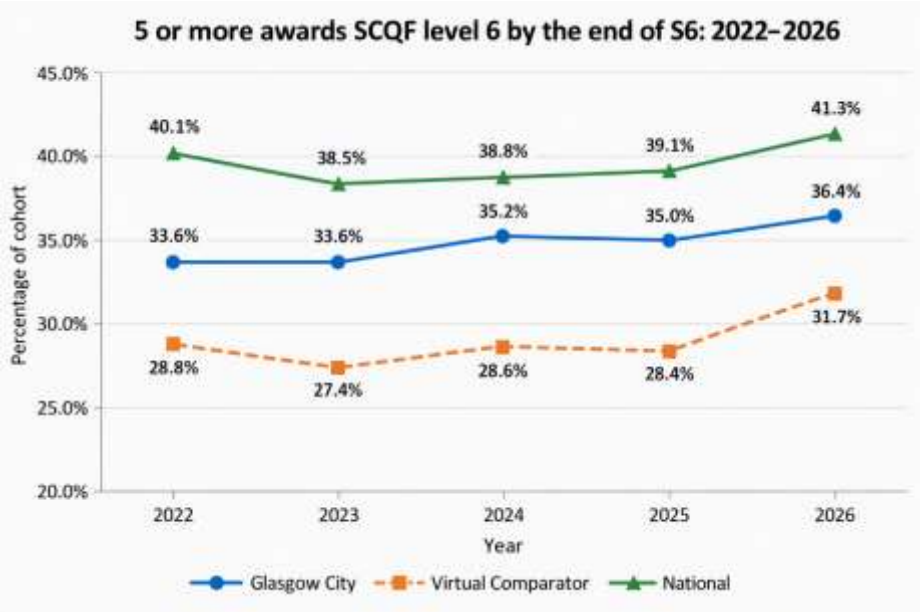
Figure 7: One or more awards SCQF level 6 by the end of S6: 2022–2026



Figure 8: Three or more awards SCQF level 6 by the end of S6: 2022–2026



Figure 9: Five or more awards SCQF level 6 by the end of S6: 2022–2026



3.2 By the end of S6, the pattern of performance is broadly the same as by the end of S5 with Glasgow performing much better than its virtual comparator. Crucially, achieving 1, 3 or 5 @ SCQF 6 supports young people with progression to Higher and/or Further education.

Insight: Breadth and Depth - Attainment versus deprivation

4. By the end of S5

4.1 This statistic allows us to consider the impact of deprivation on attainment. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is used.

4.2 The tables below compare Glasgow's performance against the national performance for the most disadvantaged 20% of young people (Q1) versus the 20% least disadvantaged young people (Q5), using 1, 3 and 5 @ SCQF 6 by the end of S5 as a measure.

Figure 10: One or more awards SCQF 6 by the end of S5: 2022–2026 – Q1 v Q5

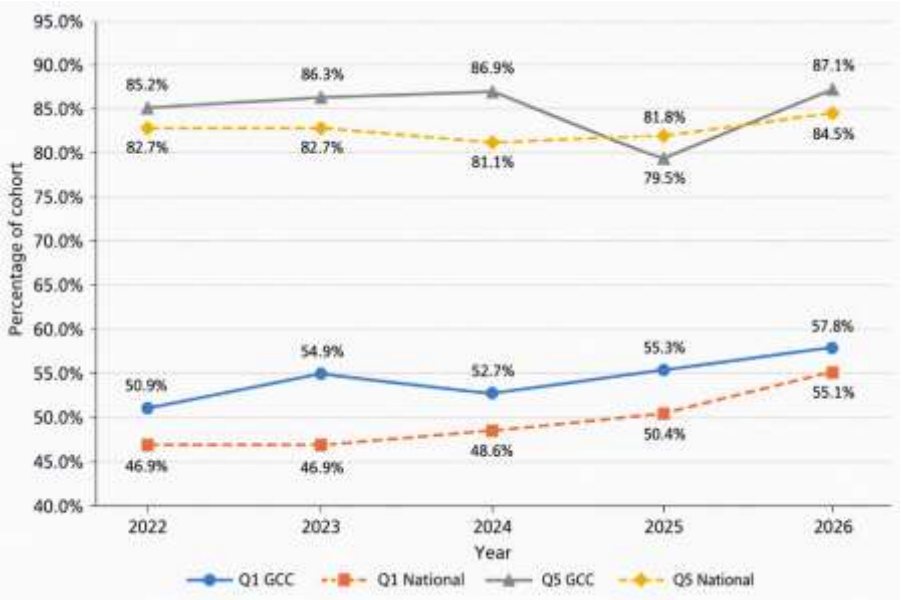


Figure 11: Three or more awards SCQF 6 by the end of S5: 2022–2026 – Q1 v Q5

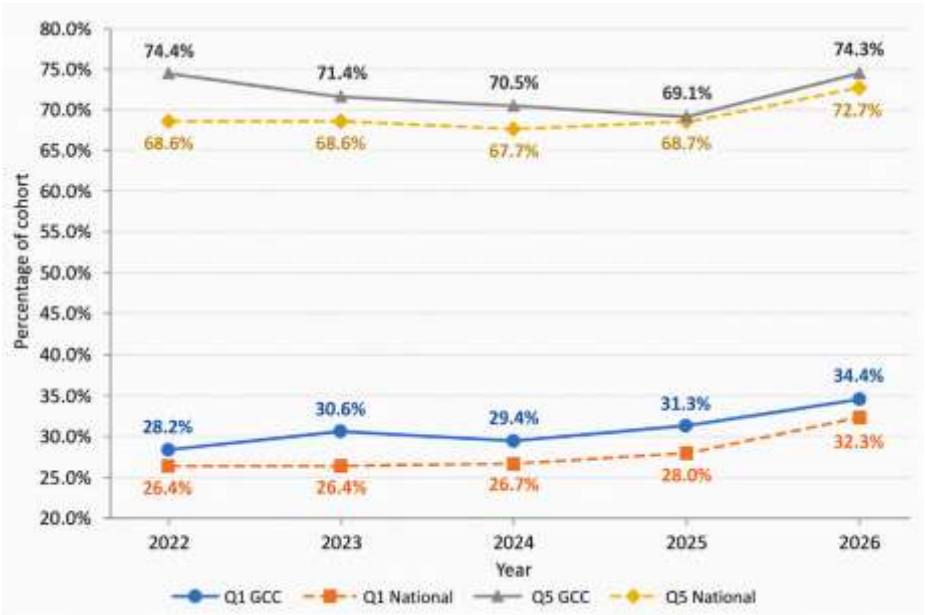
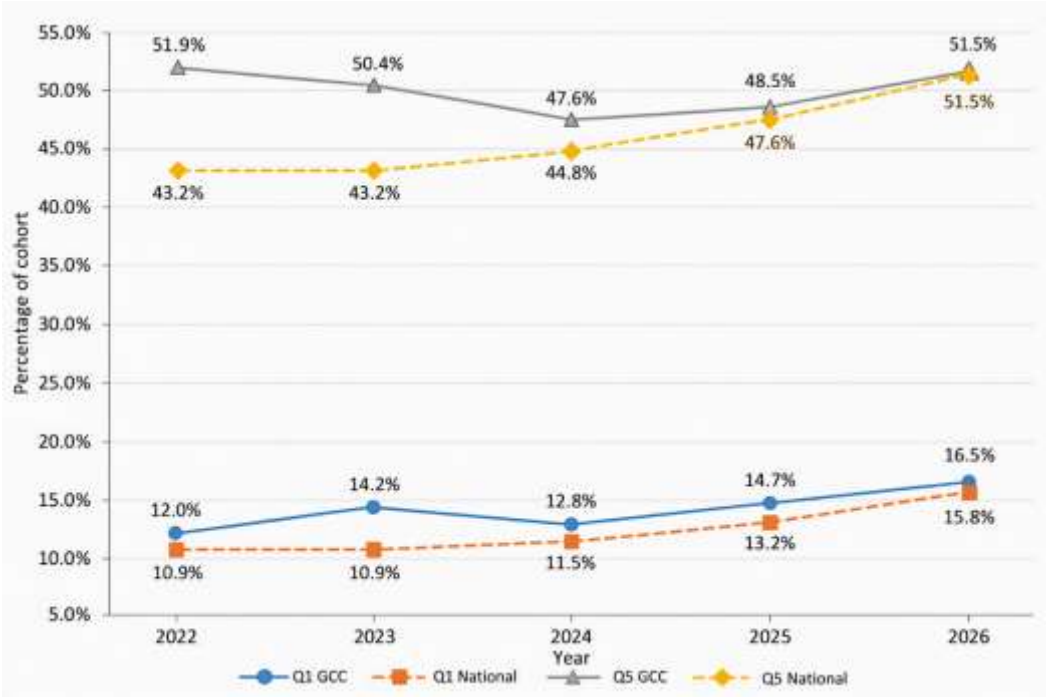


Figure 12: Five or more awards SCQF 6 by the end of S5: 2022–2026 – Q1 v Q5



4.3 The tables above show that Glasgow is marginally ahead of the National cohort when Q1 young people are compared. Additionally, Glasgow performs well relative to the National cohort when Q5 young people are compared. It is worth considering the relative size of each SIMD demographic cohort, with Q5 being a relatively small group in Glasgow:

Figure 13: Glasgow Q1 and Q5 cohort sizes, 2021–2026

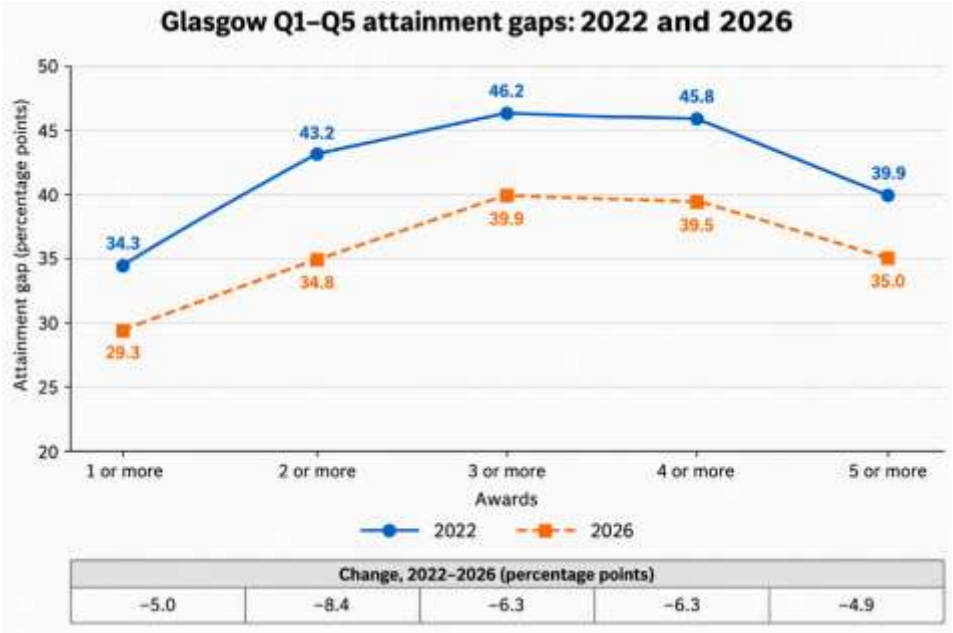
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
No. in 20% most deprived Q1	2,802	2,883	2,918	3,100	3,185	3,239
No. in 20% least deprived Q5	311	297	343	359	307	334

4.4 When looking at the last five years, the gap between the 20% least deprived and the 20% most deprived in Glasgow has narrowed. Nationally, the gap between 20% least deprived and 20% most deprived shows a slight narrowing except for higher attaining pupils where it has widened. It is worth noting that although there was a widening in the gap in 2026, Q1 performance did improve, the gap increased because the margin of improvement at Q5 was greater.

Figure 14: Q1–Q5 attainment gaps — Glasgow and National, 2022–2026 (SCQF 6 by end of S5)

Awards	2022 GCC	2022 Nat	2023 GCC	2023 Nat	2024 GCC	2024 Nat	2025 GCC	2025 Nat	2026 GCC	2026 Nat
1 or more	34.3	35.8	31.4	35.8	34.2	32.5	24.2	31.4	29.3	29.4
2 or more	43.2	41.1	37.6	41.1	39.8	39.4	32.7	37.9	34.8	36.9
3 or more	46.2	42.2	40.8	42.2	41.1	41.0	37.8	40.7	39.9	40.4
4 or more	45.8	39.8	42.9	39.8	39.6	39.4	37.8	39.8	39.5	39.9
5 or more	39.9	32.3	36.2	32.3	34.8	33.3	33.8	34.4	35.0	35.7

Figure 15: Change in Glasgow's Q1–Q5 attainment gaps, 2022–2026 (SCQF 6 by end of S5)



5. Gender Comparison

5.1 The table and graph below show that girls consistently perform better than boys. The numbers of boys and girls in each year is broadly equivalent. In 2026, this equated to 2795 boys and 2778 girls in S5 based on S4 Census Roll.

5.2 It can be seen from the graph and the table that the gap between boys' and girls' performance has stayed broadly the same for higher attaining pupils but narrowed for those achieving a lower number of awards.

Figure 16: SCQF Level 6 by end of S5: gender

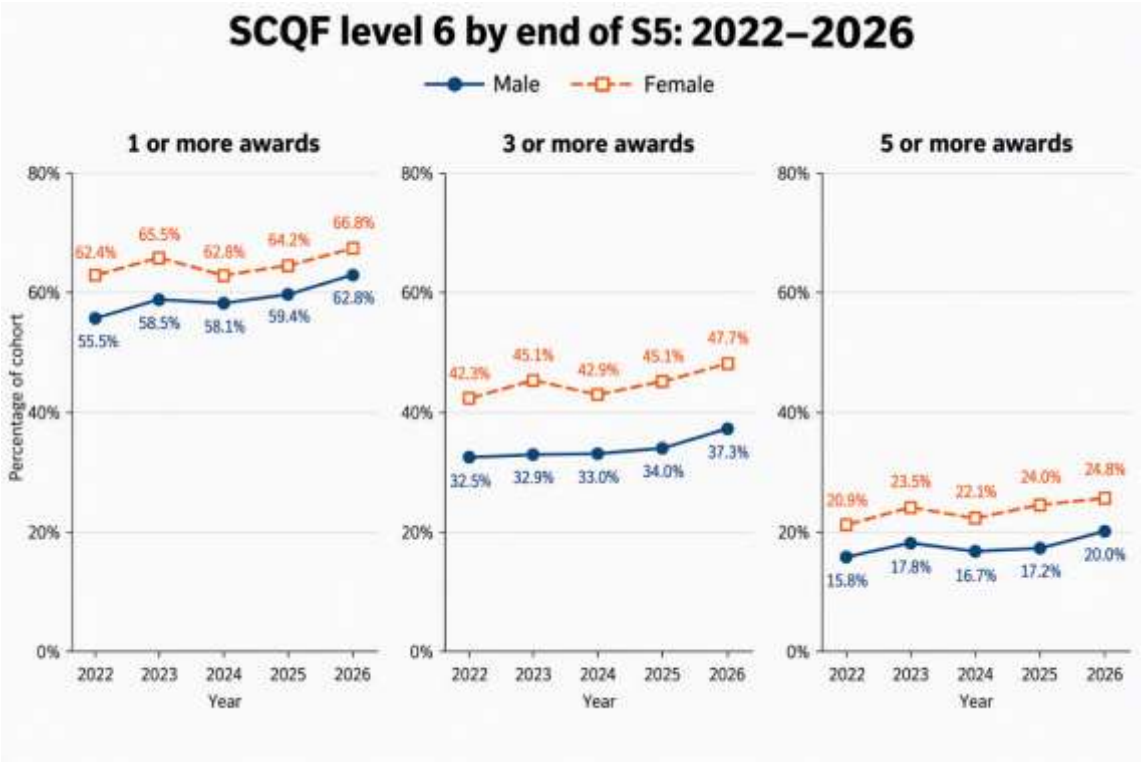


Figure 17: Gender attainment gaps, 2022–2026

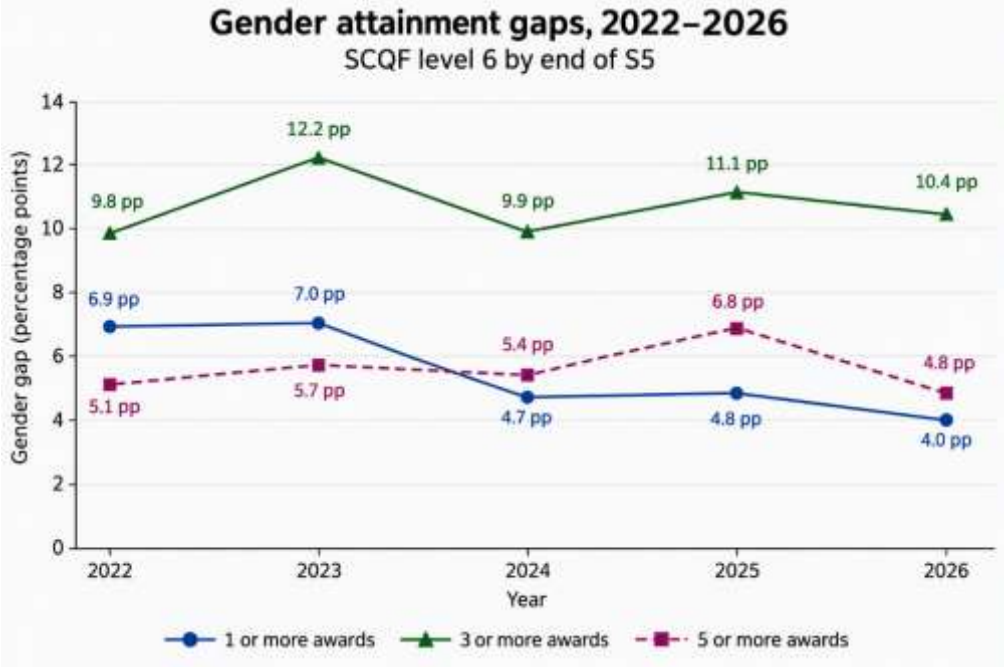


Figure 18: Numbers of boys and girls, 2021–2026

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
No. of boys	2,427	2,539	2,640	2,697	2,814	2,795
No. of girls	2,447	2,446	2,535	2,665	2,741	2,778

6. English as an additional language comparison

6.1 The table and graph below show that young people with English as an Additional Language perform consistently better than those young people who do not have English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Figure 19: SCQF Level 6 by end of S5: EAL

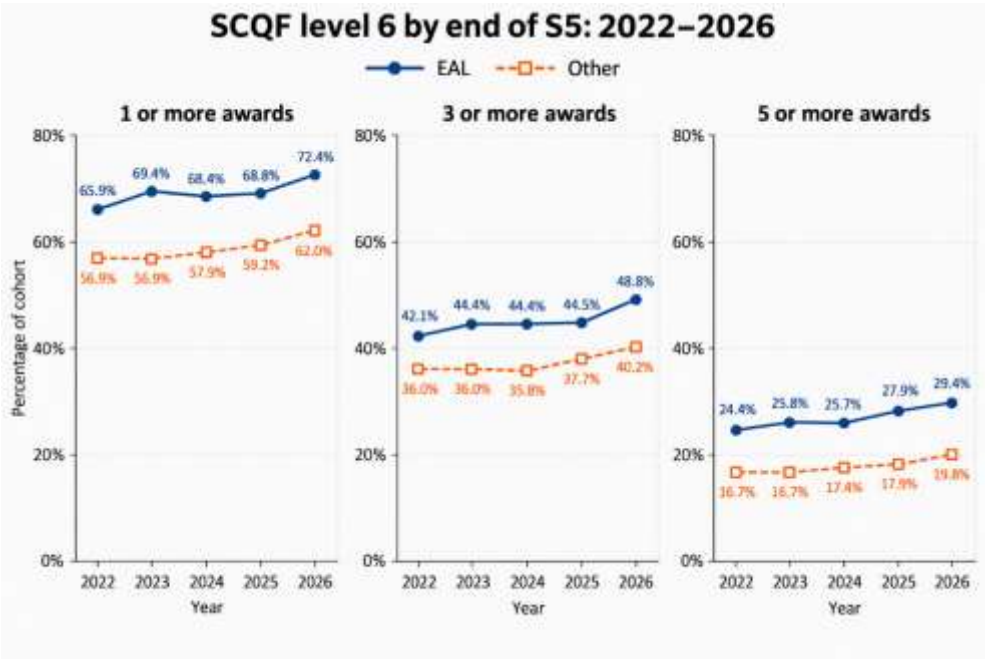


Figure 20: Attainment gaps between EAL and other learners, 2022–2026:

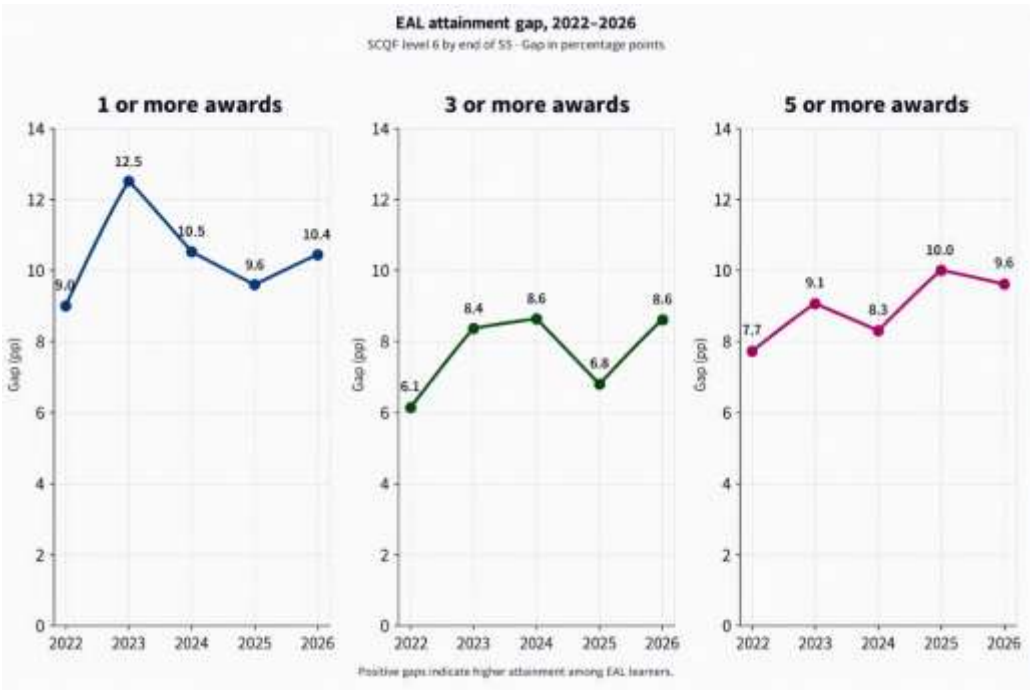


Figure 21: EAL, other learners and total cohort sizes, 2021–2026

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
No. of EAL	1,040	1,070	1,258	1,286	1,466	**1,505**
No. of Other	3,834	3,915	3,917	4,076	4,089	**4,068**
Total cohort	4,874	4,985	5,175	5,362	5,555	**5,573**

7. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	N/A
Legal:	N/A
Personnel:	N/A
Procurement:	N/A

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge 1 – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities.

Mission 2: Meet the learning and care needs of children and their families before and through school.

Grand Challenge 2 – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens.

Mission 3: Raise attainment amongst Glasgow's children and young people.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.	Outcome 10: Glasgow City Council (Education Services) has improved the engagement, participation and inclusion of all children and young people in order to support the attainment, achievement and wellbeing of all, including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, English Additional Language learners, those who identify as black and minority ethnic, LGBT and ASN.
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report	Significant impact in relation to improving opportunities and outcomes for children and young people.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	Continuing to analyse data across key indicators supports improvement in performance and, ultimately, better outcomes for young people.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	N/A
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	N/A
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	N/A

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N	N
If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out	

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is asked to consider the content of the report and note the positive outcomes for young people across the city.