

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 22 September 2015

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Summary of Attainment in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Examination Results in East Lothian Schools, Year Ending June 2015

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of overall pass rates levels in East Lothian in SQA Examinations 2014/15 and the level of attainment of secondary pupils in S5 and S6.
- 1.2 To inform the Committee of subsequent reports on the attainment and achievement of all pupils in the senior phase (S4 to S6) in East Lothian, using information from Insight.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:-
 - i. Consider and note the contents of report.
 - ii. Agree the Committee will receive two further reports on attainment in the Senior Phase following the publication of 2015 data through the Scottish Government national benchmarking tool, "Insight":
 - in November focusing on the "Local Benchmarking Measures" and Breadth & Depth data to 2015 based on the attainment and achievement of all young people at the end of S4, S5 or S6 and;
 - in March focusing on the National Benchmarking Measures and Breadth & Depth data to 2015 based on attainment and achievement of all school leavers
 - iii. Note the examination results continue to inform and guide actions in each of the six secondary schools' School Improvement Plans.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Each year young people in secondary schools are presented for National Courses and Units certificated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).
- 3.2 The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is used as the basis for reporting attainment and achievement and allows comparison of the wide range of Scottish qualifications and covers achievements from school, college, university and many work-based qualifications.
- 3.3 There are 12 SCQF Levels. SCQF Level 1 is the least demanding and SCQF Level 12 the most demanding. In schools, students work towards qualifications from SCQF Level 1 to 7 through a range of SQA courses.
- 3.4 Table 1 below shows where the different SQA awards that our school pupils work towards, including the new National Qualifications, sit within the SCQF framework and in relation to previous or existing qualifications that they have or will replace.

Table 1: Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

SCQF Level	New Qualification	Previous/ existing qualification
SCQF 1	National 1	Access 1
SCQF 2	National 2	Access 2
SCQF 3	National 3	Access 3, Standard Grade Foundation Level (Grades 5 and 6)
SCQF 4	National 4	Standard Grade General Level (Grades 3 and 4) Intermediate 1
SCQF 5	National 5	Standard Grade Credit Level (Grades 1 and 2) Intermediate 2
SCQF 6	Higher (new)	Higher
SCQF 7	Advanced Higher (new)	Advanced Higher

- 3.5 The new National Courses have been introduced on a phased basis. 2014/15 saw the second year of certification of the new National Qualifications (National 1 to 5) introduced under Curriculum for Excellence with young people in secondary schools across Scotland being presented for the first time for the new Higher.
- 3.6 Session 2014/15 was also the final year that existing Access, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications were available.
- 3.7 Curriculum for Excellence provides schools with flexibility to develop curriculum models tailored to individual pupils and local circumstances, allowing young people to achieve a range of awards and qualifications at the most appropriate time for them. As such, the qualifications undertaken by pupils both in 2013/14 and 2014/15 vary significantly, with some taking a mix of existing and new, and following different progression pathways.

- 3.8 The dual presentation of existing and new qualifications over the last two academic sessions and different approaches to presentation and delivery across the SCQF Levels makes direct comparisons of attainment between 2015 and previous years extremely complex both nationally and locally.
- 3.9 In East Lothian, young people achieve qualifications at different stages throughout the senior phase (S4 to S6). In almost all our secondary schools, young people at S4 achieved a range of qualifications at National 3, 4 and 5. One secondary school, with the agreement of parents, opted to by-pass National 5 qualifications in some subjects at the end of S4 in 2014 and 2015 with those young people sitting a two-year Higher course for examination in May of S5, 2015 and 2016. Presentation approaches also differed between schools and from previous years.
- 3.10 Furthermore, changes to arrangements for certification, which involve post-hoc entry for awards at Level 4 for those pupils narrowly missing a pass at Level 5 plus any changes through the results administrative review process will be captured in the SQA's data release in November 2015. Therefore, it is not possible to provide accurate statistics for pupils achieving at or above SCQF levels 4 and 5 just now. It is the intention, therefore, to report on attainment more fully at these levels in the third report to Education Committee in March following the update to Insight in February.
- 3.11 The Scottish Government developed a new statistical benchmarking tool 'Insight' to assist schools and local authorities in the analysis of attainment of young people in the senior phase through nationally agreed benchmarking measures and course breadth and depth data. The 2015 data is not available in Insight at this time but updates to the local and national benchmarking measures will be reported to Education Committee in November and March following the bi-annual updates in September and February. General information on the "Insight" tool is available online at:
- <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/seniorphasebenchmarking>
- 3.12 To aid Education Authorities with their reporting to stakeholders prior to the release of Insight, SEEMiS have made available reports in their SEEMiS Vision Reporting system nationally to facilitate reporting on pass rates at SCQF Level and breadth and depth measures.
- 3.13 Note the reports in SEEMiS are based purely on SQA attainment related to internally assessed National Courses (Access 2 & 3 and National 2 – 4) and examination-based National Courses (National 5 to Advanced Higher – including new Higher) and do not take into account presentations and awards for other achievement, outwith these categories, that will be included in the Insight measures in September and February.

- 3.14 Course breadth and depth data is heavily influenced by a school's curricular model therefore the 2014 and 2015 results may not be fully comparable with previous years. In particular, differences between the assessment arrangements for the new National Qualifications at SCQFs Level 3 to 5, compared with the previous Standard Grade qualification means that the 2014 and 2015 and earlier years' data is not directly comparable. Therefore, it is not possible to present data by the end of S4 as the National qualifications and the presentation approaches in East Lothian are very different from previous years.
- 3.15 As a result of the changes and complexities referred to in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.10, this report will focus on the overall pass rates in East Lothian and the performance at SCQF levels 6 and 7 for S5 and S6 pupils only using provisional breadth and depth measures from SEEMiS.
- 3.16 Pass rates have been calculated as a proportion of the entries, across all the stages. For National 2-4 and Access 2-3 courses, which are ungraded, the pass rate is based on entries which have resulted in a pass. For National 5, Intermediate 1-2, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, which are graded, the pass rate is based on Grade A-C attainment.
- 3.17 Breadth and depth measures used in this report relate to the percentage of each relevant stage attaining SQA accredited awards at grades A-C at SCQF Levels 6 or better by the end of S5 and SCQF Level 7 by the end of S6. Percentages are based on cumulative awards, calculated as a proportion of the relevant S4 roll.

SQA Exam Diet 2015 Highlights

- 3.18 Pass rates overall in East Lothian across the stages in 2015 are higher than 2014, although individual school performance varies (see *paragraphs 3.26 to 3.28*).
- 3.19 Pass Rates for each National Qualification Type have been maintained in 2015 or show an improvement on the previous year (see *paragraphs 3.30 to 3.37*):
- 3.19..1 Pass Rates at Nationals 2 to 4 remain consistently at 100% in East Lothian in 2015. Pass Rates at National 5 remain relatively static in East Lothian in 2015 with a slight drop of 0.26% on the previous year.
 - 3.19..2 Pass Rates at SCQF Level 6 or above (Higher) in 2015 are up by 3.5% on the previous year.
 - 3.19..3 Pass Rates at SCQF Level 7 or above (Advanced Higher) in 2015 are up by 2.75% on the previous year.
- 3.20 The % of S5 pupils gaining 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or above (Higher) increased by 6.25% in 2015 and shows an improving trend in East Lothian over the last 4 years (see *paragraphs 3.44 to 3.47*).

- 3.21 The % of S5 pupils gaining 3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or above (Higher) increased by 6.08% in 2015 and shows an improving trend in East Lothian over the last 4 years (see paragraphs 3.48 to 3.50).
- 3.22 The % of S5 pupils gaining 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or above (Higher) increased slightly by 0.51% in 2015 and shows a slight improved trend in East Lothian over the last 4 years (see paragraphs 3.51 to 3.53).
- 3.23 The % of S6 pupils gaining 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 7 or above (Advanced Higher) decreased by 1.87% in 2015 and shows an overall improved trend in East Lothian over the last 4 years (see paragraphs 3.56 to 3.58).

SQA Pass Rates in 2015 in East Lothian schools – Comparison with previous year

- 3.24 Table 2 shows the overall number of presentations and pass rates for all SQA National Qualifications (new and existing) across SCQF Levels 2 to 7 for each East Lothian secondary school in 2014/15. Pass rates have been calculated as a proportion of the entries, across all the stages.
- 3.25 For National 2-4 and Access 2-3 courses, which are ungraded, the pass rate is based on entries which have resulted in a pass. For National 5, Intermediate 1-2, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, which are graded, the pass rate is based on Grade A-C attainment.

Table 2: Number of Presentations and % Pass Rates (all SQA National Qualifications at SCQF Levels 2 to 7)

Establishment	Number of Presentations			% Pass Rates		
	2014	2015	+/- on 2014	2014	2015	+/- on 2014
Dunbar Grammar	1850	1932	82	83.8%	81.4%	-2.4%
Knox Academy	2040	1673	-367	78.9%	79.4%	0.6%
Musselburgh Grammar	2911	2786	-125	81.0%	83.2%	2.2%
North Berwick High School	2402	2361	-41	86.5%	85.9%	-0.6%
Preston Lodge High School	1584	1437	-147	76.8%	81.2%	4.4%
Ross High School	2236	1961	-275	78.0%	81.8%	3.8%
East Lothian	13023	12150	-873	81.0%	82.5%	1.4%

- 3.26 Table 2 shows that the number of presentations across East Lothian schools dropped by 873 from 13,023 in 2014 to 12,150 in 2015 with Musselburgh Grammar School and North Berwick High School increasing and maintaining (respectively) presentation levels in 2015 from 2014 relative to the S4-S6 roll. This may be reflective of the greater flexibility now offered as part of Curriculum for Excellence to undertake other achievement outwith the internally assessed National Courses (Access 2 & 3 and National 2 – 4) and examination-based National Courses (National 5 to Advanced Higher – including new Higher).
- 3.27 Overall the pass rates of all SQA exams sat in East Lothian in 2015 increased by 1.4% on the previous year. At individual school level, four of

the six schools show an increase in the overall pass rate, with the most notable increases at Preston Lodge High School and Ross High School.

- 3.28 Pass rates, however, are influenced by a school's curricular model (presentations policy). Across our schools, East Lothian pupils achieved a range of qualifications (existing and new) across the SCQF Levels through a variety of progression pathways. One school in particular, Preston Lodge High School, with the agreement of parents, opted to bypass National 5 qualifications in some subjects at the end of S4 in 2014 and 2015 with those young people sitting a two-year Higher course for examination in May of 2015 and 2016 respectively instead. Therefore it is not possible to fully compare pass rate performance in 2014 with the performance in 2015, particularly for Preston Lodge High School.
- 3.29 Table 3 illustrates the changes in presentations and pass rates by National Qualification Type between 2014 and 2015 overall in East Lothian.

Table 3: Number of Presentations and % Pass Rates (all SQA National Qualifications at SCQF Levels 2 to 7)

SCQF Level	National Qualification Type	Number of Presentations			% Pass Rates		
		2014	2015	+/- on 2014	2014	2015	+/- on 2014
SCQF 2	Access 2	15	0	-15	100.0%	n/a	n/a
SCQF 2	National 2	3	3	0	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
SCQF 3	Access 3	174	52	-122	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
SCQF 3	National 3	288	232	-56	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
SCQF 4	Intermediate 1	286	2	-284	73.4%	100.0%	26.6%
SCQF 4	National 4	2459	2335	-124	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
SCQF 5	Intermediate 2	1125	24	-1101	70.3%	87.5%	17.2%
SCQF 5	National 5	4831	5578	747	77.7%	77.5%	-0.3%
SCQF 6	Higher	3400	3533	133	73.7%	77.2%	3.5%
SCQF 7	Advanced Higher	442	391	-51	79.9%	82.6%	2.8%

- 3.30 A total of 3,225 examination entries were made across SCQF Levels 2 to 4 in East Lothian with an overall pass rate of 100%.
- 3.31 A total of 5,602 examination entries were made at SCQF Level 5 (Intermediate 2 and National 5) in 2015, with a combined pass rate of 77.5%. This compares with 5,956 entries and a combined pass rate of 76.3% in 2014.
- 3.32 A total of 3,533 examination entries were made at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) in 2015, with an overall pass rate of 77.2%. This compares with 3,400 entries and a 73.7% pass rate in 2014 with five out of six schools increasing presentation levels in 2015 from 2014 relative to the S5-S6 roll.
- 3.33 While at SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher), a total of 391 examination entries were made in 2015, with an overall pass rate of 82.6%. This compares with 442 entries and a 79.9% pass rate in 2014 with two out of six schools increasing presentation levels in 2015 from 2014 relative to the S6 roll.

3.34 Table 4 and Table 5 break down the presentations and pass rates for Higher (new and existing) and Advanced Higher for each East Lothian secondary school in 2014/15. A school-level breakdown for pass rates for SCQF Level 5 is not provided at this time due to the significant differences in presentations policies between 2014 and 2015 and across schools as mentioned previously in paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10.

Table 4: Number of Presentations and % Pass Rates at A-C (Higher)

Establishment	Number of Presentations			% Pass Rates		
	2014	2015	+/- on 2014	2014	2015	+/- on 2014
Dunbar Grammar	438	522	84	79.0%	75.9%	-3.1%
Knox Academy	616	549	-67	72.7%	75.4%	2.7%
Musselburgh Grammar	683	722	39	72.2%	78.4%	6.2%
North Berwick High School	744	722	-22	82.0%	81.9%	-0.1%
Preston Lodge High School	514	519	5	70.0%	73.4%	3.4%
Ross High School	405	499	94	61.7%	76.4%	14.6%
East Lothian	3400	3533	133	73.7%	77.2%	3.5%

3.35 Table 4 indicates that Higher pass rates overall in East Lothian increased by 3.5% on the previous year. At individual school level, the performance in 2015 varied more. Four out of the six schools show an improvement on the previous year with the most notable at Ross High School, up 14.6% to 76.4% following a particularly low performance in 2014, and Musselburgh Grammar School which increased by 6.2% to 78.4%. Dunbar Grammar School was the only school to show a decrease in performance in 2015 while North Berwick High School maintained the previous year's performance. Five out of the six secondary schools increased their overall Higher presentation levels in 2015 from 2014 relative to the S5-S6 roll.

3.36 Again, due to the variety of progression pathways to Higher that different pupils will have taken over the last two years to a mix of existing and new Higher qualifications in 2015, the 2014 and 2015 performance may not be directly comparable. Due to the limitations of the reports in SEEMiS Vision it is not possible to provide a breakdown of the Higher qualifications further into new and existing courses.

Table 5: Number of Presentations and % Pass Rates at A-C (Advanced Higher)

Establishment	Number of Presentations			% Pass Rates		
	2014	2015	+/- on 2014	2014	2015	+/- on 2014
Dunbar Grammar	54	36	-18	77.8%	86.1%	8.3%
Knox Academy	74	111	37	85.1%	86.5%	1.4%
Musselburgh Grammar	65	52	-13	75.4%	86.5%	11.2%
North Berwick High School	111	116	5	88.3%	87.9%	-0.4%
Preston Lodge High School	79	61	-18	77.2%	65.6%	-11.7%
Ross High School	59	15	-44	67.8%	60.0%	-7.8%
East Lothian	442	391	-51	79.9%	82.6%	2.8%

3.37 Table 5 indicates that Advanced Higher pass rates overall in East Lothian increased by 2.8% on the previous year. At individual school level, the 2015 performance shows an increase in three out of the six schools with the most notable increases in Dunbar Grammar School (+8.3%) and

Musselburgh Grammar School (+11.2%) following particularly low pass rates in 2014, while North Berwick High School's pass rate remained relatively static. Both Preston Lodge High School and Ross High School indicate a large drop in the Advanced Higher pass rate in 2015 of 11.7% and 7.8% respectively. Only two out of the six secondary schools show an increase in their Advanced Higher presentation levels in 2015 from 2014 relative to the S6 roll.

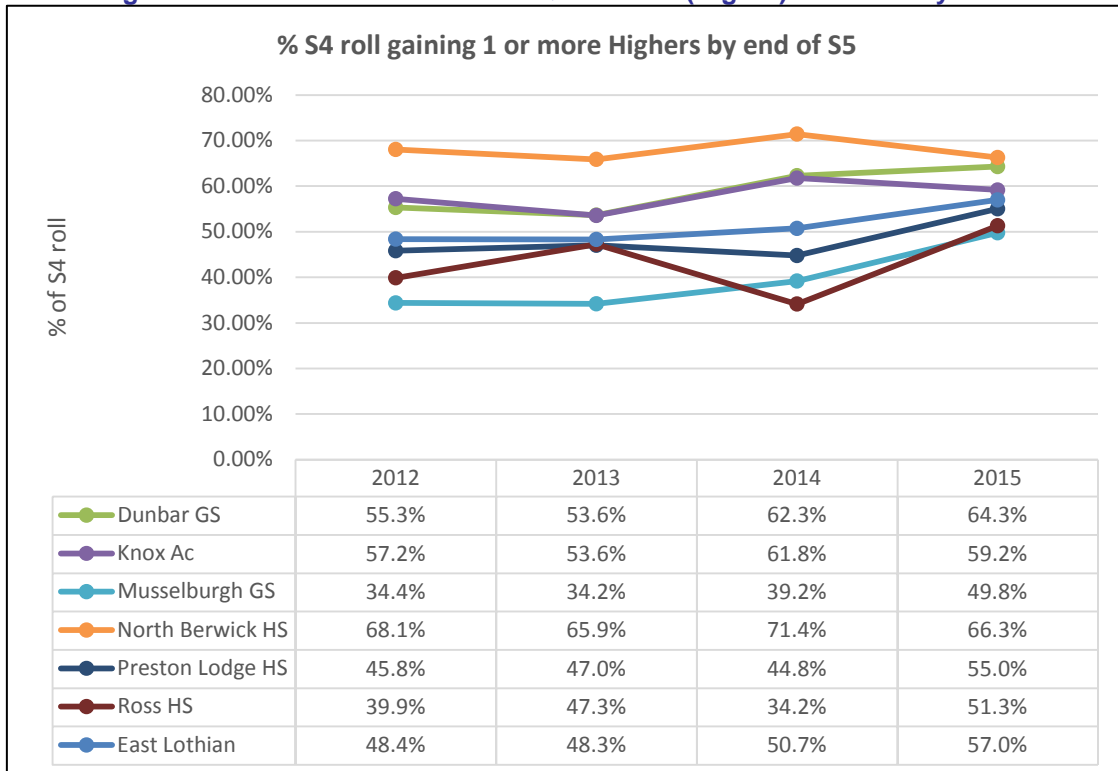
Breadth & Depth Data - Comparison of S5 and S6 attainment measures with previous years

- 3.38 This report reviews the performance of attainment at SCQF levels 6 and 7 using breadth and depth measures for S5 and S6 pupils only. For the purposes of comparison over time, the Education Services' Education MIS team has used data from the SEEMIS Vision Reporting system to report on breadth and depth measures for S5 and S6 over the last four years and shows the percentage of each relevant stage attaining SQA accredited awards at grades A-C at SCQF Level 6 or better and SCQF Level 7 respectively.
- 3.39 Course breadth and depth data is heavily influenced by a school's curricular model, therefore, given the mix of existing and new Higher qualifications this year and the variety of progression pathways that candidates would have undertaken for the Higher qualifications, the 2015 Higher results may not be fully comparable with previous years.
- 3.40 Breadth & Depth data is not available for the Virtual Comparator or National data at this time and will be presented to the Education Committee in November following the release of the September Insight publication.
- 3.41 Figures 1 to 4 that follow show the attainment by the end of S5 and S6 for the following breadth and depth measures:
- 1 or more, 3 or more, and 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S5; and
 - 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher) or better by the end of S6
- 3.42 The percentages are based on cumulative awards at the end of each stage, calculated as a proportion of the relevant S4 roll. The Breadth and Depth data in SEEMiS Vision has only been calculated retrospectively to examination diet 2012. Therefore, we are unable to provide a five-year trend at this time.

SQA Attainment – S5 Pupils

- 3.43 Overall, East Lothian shows an improved trend in the percentage of S5 pupils gaining awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better.
- 3.44 Figure 1 and Figures 2 to 3 show the performance by each secondary school broken down for each breadth & depth measure at S5.

Figure 1: 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S5



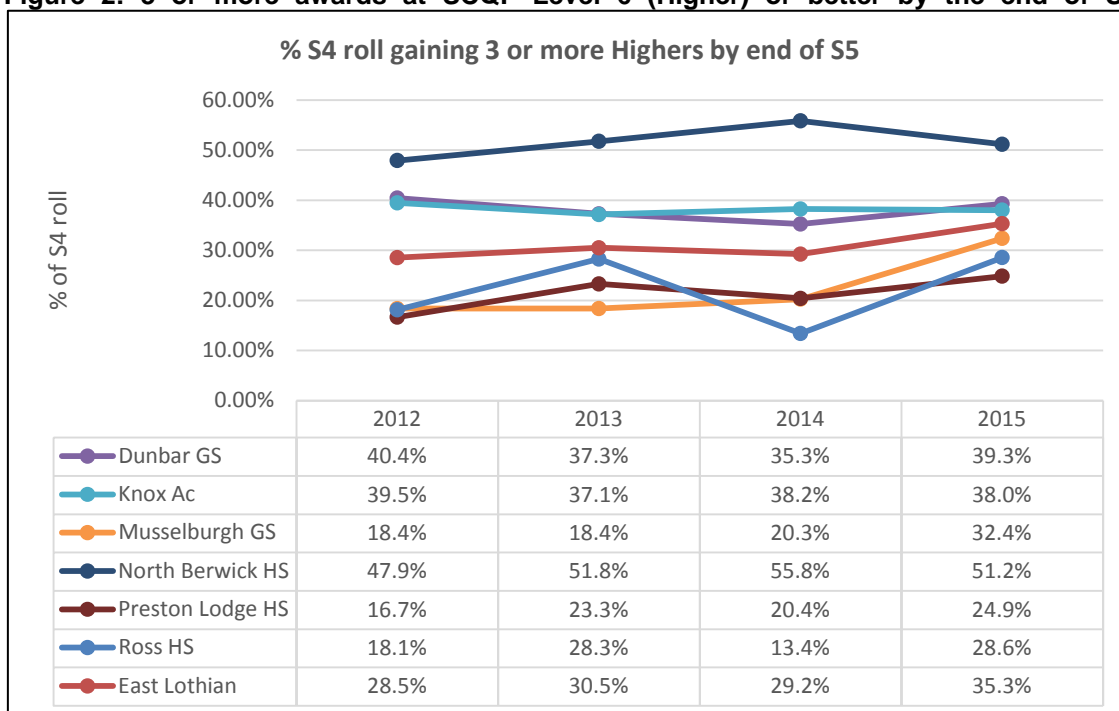
3.45 Figure 1 shows that East Lothian’s performance in 2015 for the ‘1 or more awards at Higher’ measure increased by 6.3% on the previous year as East Lothian’s highest performance to date and shows an improved trend over the four-year period.

3.46 Individual school performance in 2015 varied more with three out of the six schools (Musselburgh Grammar School, Preston Lodge High School and Ross High School) showing significant improvements of between 10% and 17%. Dunbar Grammar School also made further improvements on the previous year. Knox Academy and North Berwick High School’s performance dropped by 2.6% and 5.2% respectively following a particularly high performance in 2014 but still achieved a high level of performance nonetheless.

3.47 Five out of the six schools show an overall improved trend over the four-year period with North Berwick High School showing a slight drop due to this year’s drop.

Figure 2.../

Figure 2: 3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S5



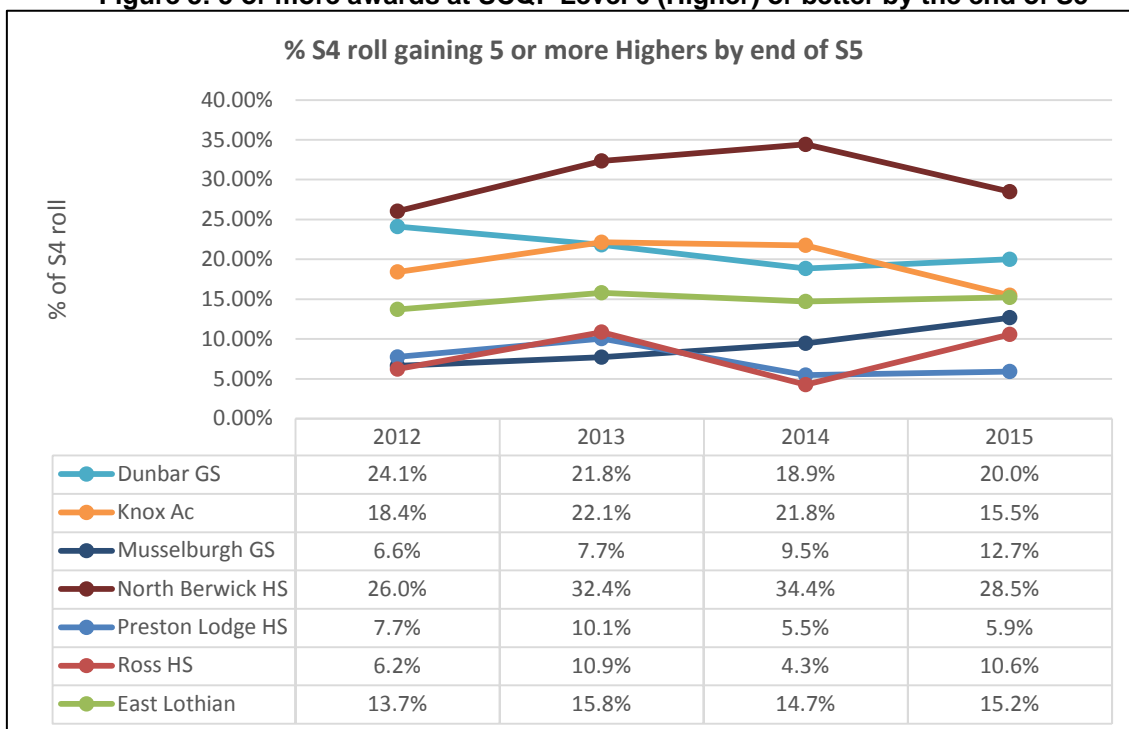
3.48 Figure 2 shows an improved trend over the four-year period with the performance in 2015 for the '3 or more awards at Higher' measure increasing by 6.1% on the previous year as East Lothian's highest performance to date.

3.49 Again, at individual school level, the performance in 2015 varied more with four out of the six schools (Dunbar Grammar School, Musselburgh Grammar School, Preston Lodge High School and Ross High School) showing improvements of between 4% and 15% on the previous year while Knox Academy's performance remained relatively static with a slight drop of 0.2%. North Berwick High School's performance dropped by 4.7% in 2015 following a particularly high performance in 2014 but this was still a high level of performance at over 51%.

3.50 Four out of the six schools show an overall improved trend over the four-year period with the most notable improvement at Musselburgh Grammar School, with Dunbar Grammar School and Knox Academy showing a relatively static trend over the same period.

Figure 3.../

Figure 3: 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better by the end of S5



3.51 Figure 3 shows a slight increase of 0.5% across East Lothian in 2015 on the previous year for the '5 or more awards at Higher' measure and a slight improved trend over the four-year period.

3.52 Individual school performance in 2015 varied more with four out of six schools showing an increase on the previous year. The most notable increase was at Ross High School which improved by 6.3% following a particularly low performance in 2014. Knox Academy and North Berwick High School both show a decrease in performance in 2015 by 6.3% and 5.9% respectively.

3.53 Musselburgh Grammar School, North Berwick High School and Ross High School show an improved trend over the four-year period while Dunbar Grammar School, Knox Academy and Preston Lodge High School all show a declining trend.

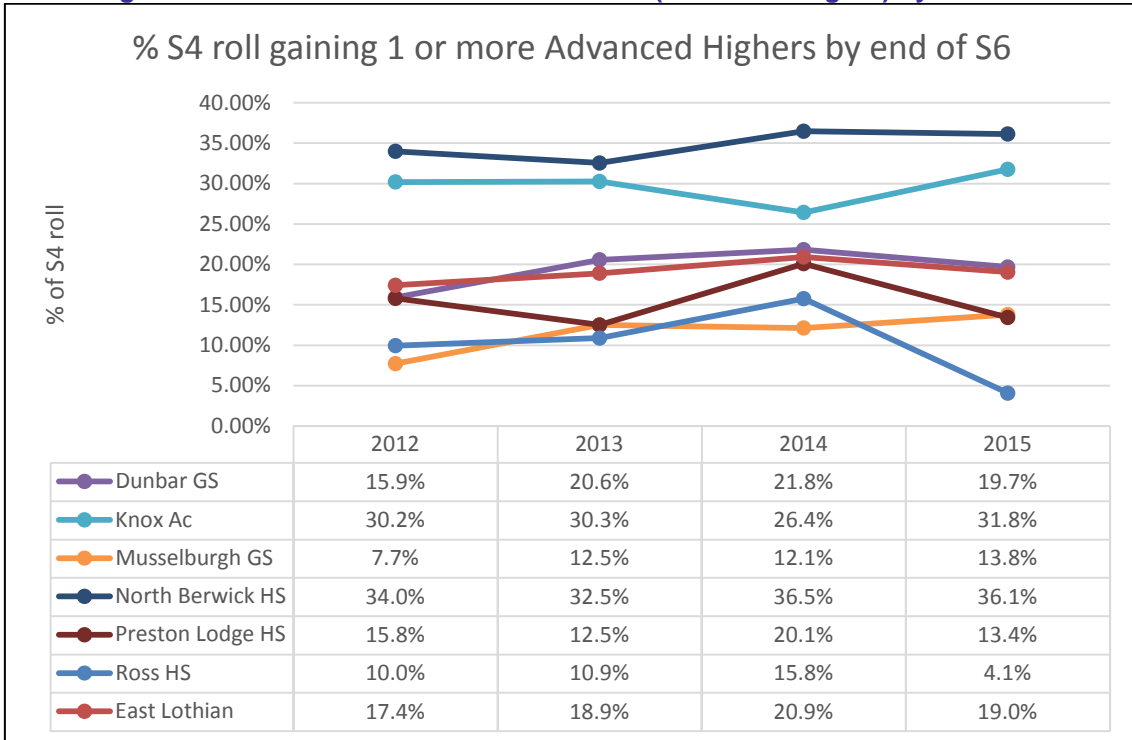
SQA Attainment – S6 Pupils

3.54 Overall, East Lothian shows an improved trend in the percentage of S6 pupils gaining awards at SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher).

3.55 Figure 4 shows the performance by each secondary school broken down for each breadth & depth measure at SCQF Level 7 by the end of S6.

Figure 4.../

Figure 4: 1 or more awards at SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher) by the end of S6



3.56 Figure 4 shows that East Lothian’s performance at SCQF Level 7 in 2015 dropped by 1.9% following a high performance in 2014 and overall shows an improved trend over the four-year period.

3.57 At individual school level, the 2015 performance varied more with two out of the six schools increasing their percentage performance on the previous year with the most notable increase in Knox Academy (+5.3%). North Berwick High School’s performance remained relatively stable while the most notable decreases were in Preston Lodge High School and Ross High School, which dropped by 6.7% and 11.7% respectively following particularly high performances in 2014.

3.58 Four out of the six schools show an overall improved trend over the four-year period.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications in this report.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

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