

Support for Learning Department

Introduction

At Ullapool High School, around 45% of pupils on roll have an identified support need. This figure appears high when compared to a national figure of 26.6% (Scottish Govt. 2017) but a straight comparison does not take into account the degree to which all staff at school know their pupils and their awareness of the range of barriers which may impact a child's learning and well-being. The Support for Learning team at Ullapool High School consists of a Principal Teacher, a part-time ASN Teacher and five part-time Pupil Support Assistants. Our work is supported by the work of guidance colleagues as part of a wider pupil support team. Keeping up to date with continual professional development and sharing expertise is central to the work of staff in the department. All team members are knowledgeable, well trained and experienced in supporting pupils experiencing barriers to learning. Staff have specialist knowledge in addressing dyslexia and other persistent literacy difficulties and supporting young people with autism and developing skills in supporting deaf pupils. The PT and the school nurse have completed training to become qualified Companions in the Seasons for Growth initiative, supporting pupils experiencing loss or bereavement. The wider team are all developing skills around supporting mental well-being. We have external links with two local social enterprises.

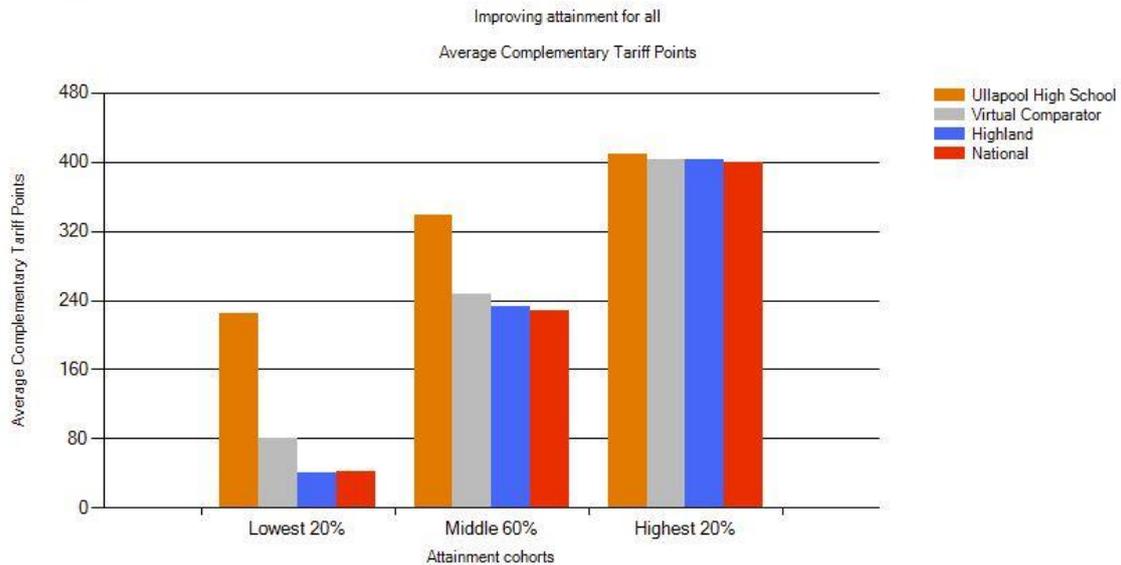
Senior Phase Analysis

The SfL department has a significant responsibility for developing a curriculum at appropriate levels and with appropriate breadth to aim to meet the needs of all pupils. This is an ongoing challenge with no real finish line as the demands of modern society are constantly changing. In recent years we have offered courses at National 2, National 3 and National 4 or delivered courses leading to ASDAN qualifications, either in collaboration with curricular colleagues or under our own auspices. Staff from the department have also contributed to the delivery of a wide range of subjects across the curriculum such as construction skills, art & design and textiles work, music, geography field trips, history field trips, literary studies, languages and technical studies.

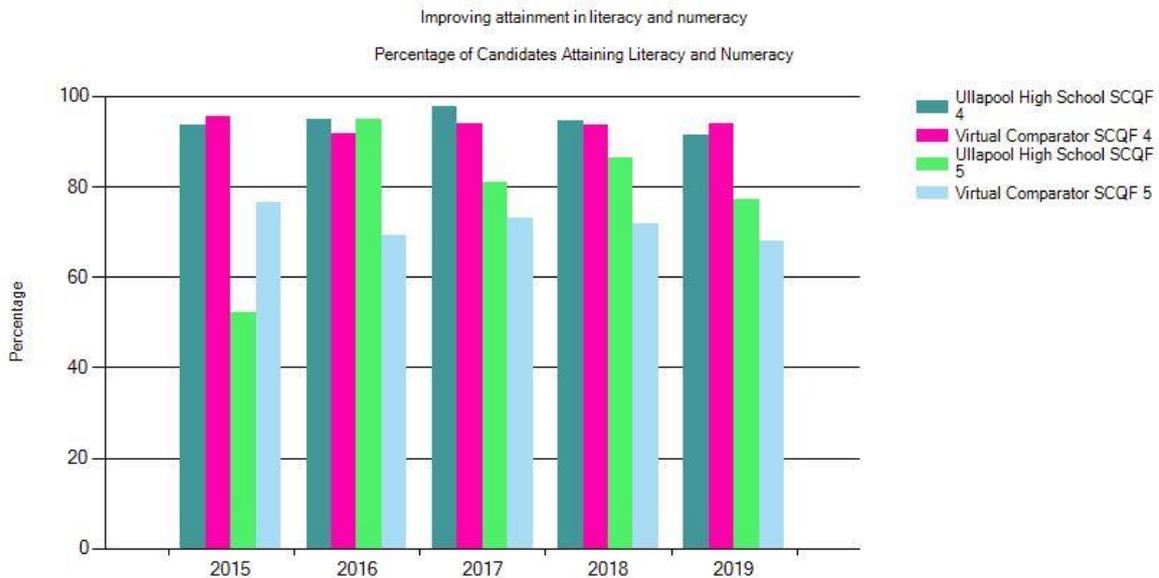
A major element of the work of SfL in the senior phase is supporting pupils with additional support needs through formal coursework and external assessment. This is really a year-long undertaking with constant discussion and refinement occurring throughout the year in consultation with pupils, staff and parents. During the year leading up to the 2019 exam diet, 60 pupils with identified needs benefitted from 252 different alternative arrangements - a fairly typical year's work for the department, which is reflected in the school's attainment statistics both for the school population as a whole and for pupils with additional support needs in particular.

On the measure of improving attainment for all across the curriculum, it is possible to see how Ullapool High School outperforms other comparators in 2019 for those pupils in the top 20% who gained the highest number of tariff points through exam successes and the differential by which UHS pupils outperform these other measures increases dramatically for the middle 60% and the lowest 20% reflecting the significant input of the learning support department in supporting pupils through courses and exams at all levels from National 3 to Advanced Higher.

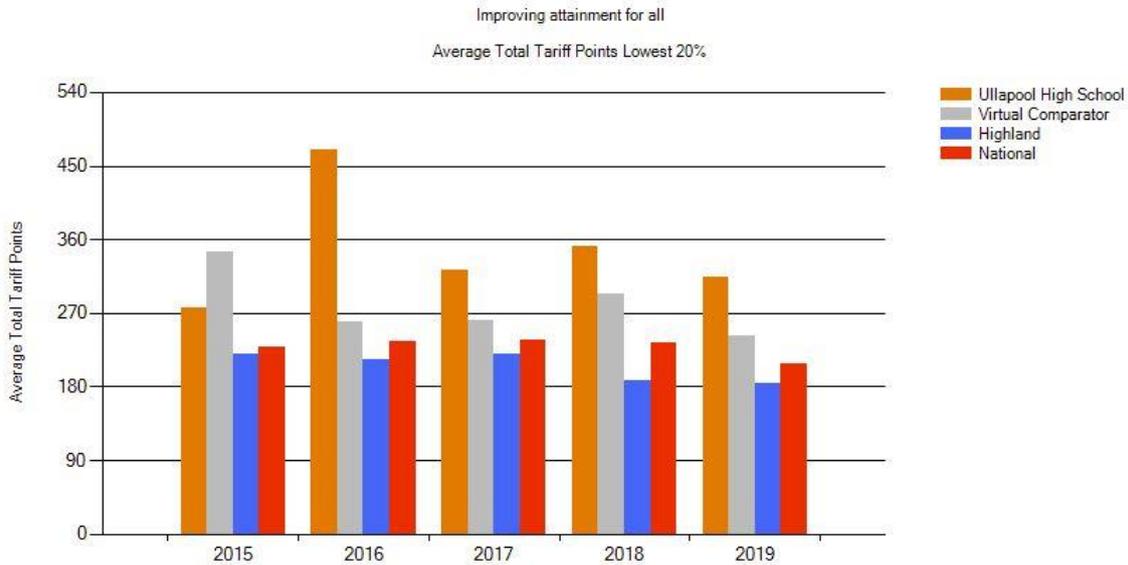
The selected year is 2019



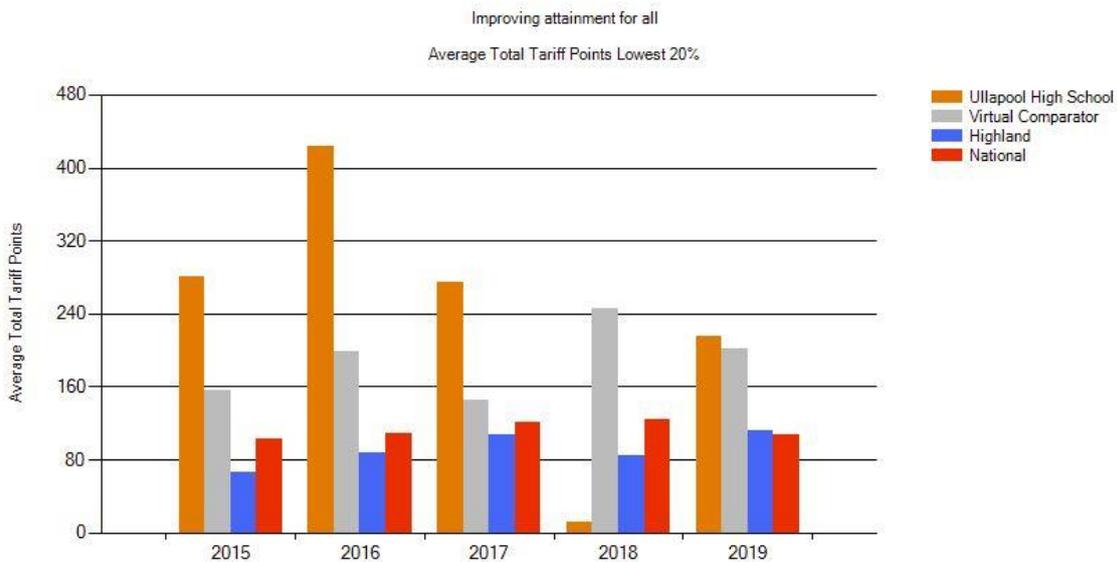
In 2019, pupils did not perform as well as out virtual comparator school at National 4 level but they did outperform the VC at National 5 level.



If we look at the collective tariff points for those pupils that form the lowest 20% of the school's exam results we can see that UHS outperformed all other measures in 2019. Whilst we have not managed to repeat the highly successful results of 2016, the picture remains very positive and we are maintaining a consistent level of success, even in a very challenging environment when ASN budgets are under pressure.

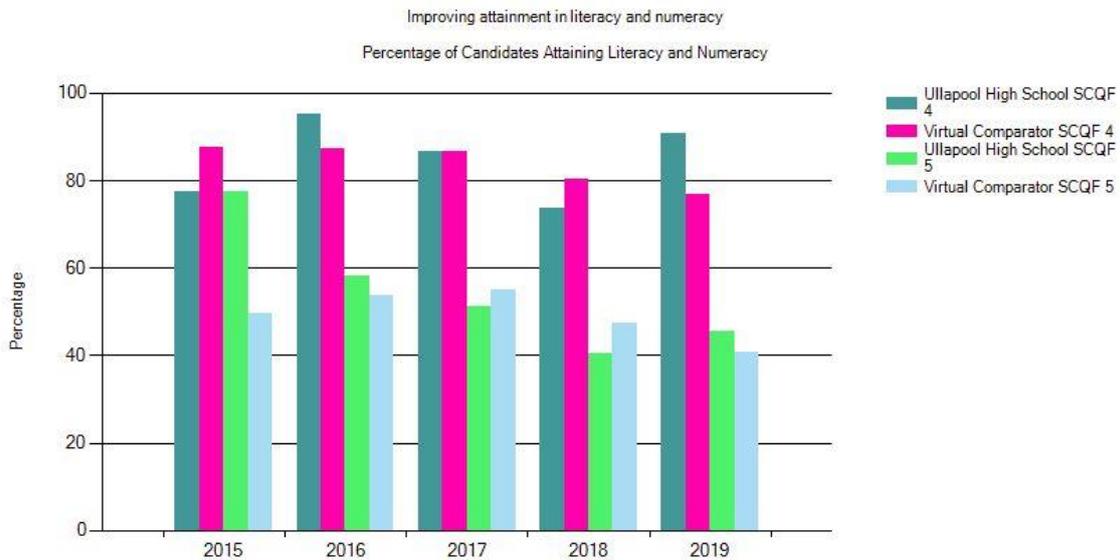


Drilling down further into the data we can focus on pupils with additional support needs who featured in the bottom 20% and see the impact of personalised support on exam performance.



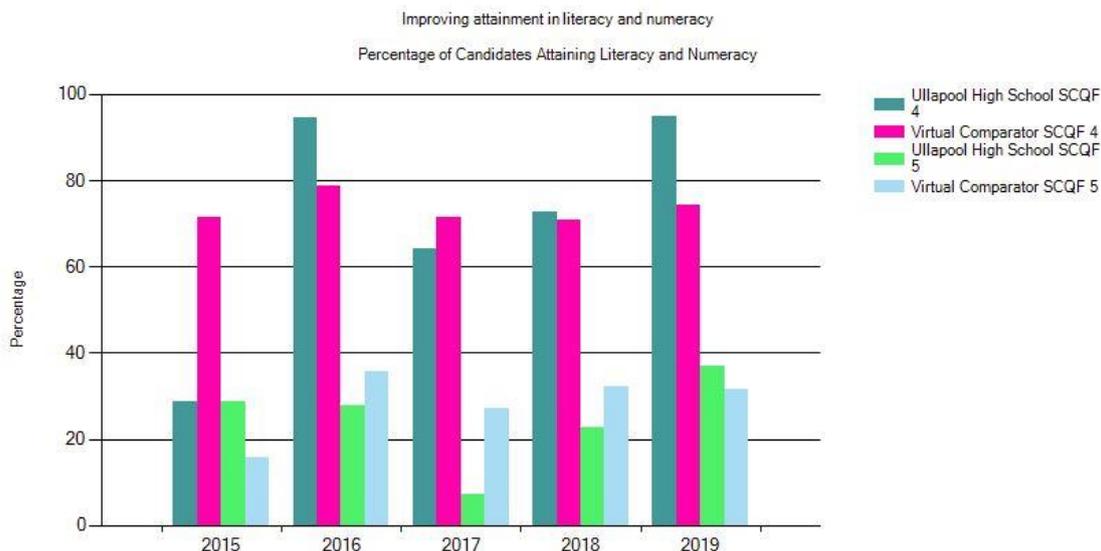
Here again we can see that UHS pupils with additional support needs outperformed all other measures, with a much improved performance on the 2018 cohort, which included several young people who left school without sitting exams.

If we focus on the data for S4, now into S5 there is evidence of improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving N4 and N5 in literacy and numeracy. Again, we can see that UHS outperformed all other comparators in 2019 and that there was an improvement on the 2018 statistics.



Filtering the data to focus more closely on how pupils with identified needs in that year group performed against other measures, we can see that once again UHS pupils greatly outperformed the virtual comparator, equalling the highly successful S4 cohort of 2016 and doing almost 4 times better than the 2015 cohort at National 4 level.

At National 5, S4 pupils with additional support needs did better than the VC and better than in any year since 2015. This may reflect a general trend towards entering more pupils for the National 5 exams but almost certainly reflects the work of the learning support department in helping more pupils with additional support needs to access mainstream courses and to have the confidence to sit exams at N5, not to mention the effective support Sfl staff provide in meeting alternative arrangement requirements for individual pupils.



Another significant area of responsibility for the SfL department is successful transition at 16+ for pupils with additional support needs. Beginning at age 14, the department uses a transitions flow chart in combination with regular review meetings to support young people to navigate their way through the challenges associated with leaving school and moving on to their next stage, whether that is further study, or work, or other activity that is meaningful to them, whilst helping them to develop independent living skills to thrive in a new environment. The work of the SfL department forms part of a wider team involvement that might include partners such as guidance teachers, Skills Development Scotland, Hi-Life Highland, social work and NHS colleagues or social enterprises and local employers to support the young person into an onward destination that meets their immediate needs and provides scope for next steps. Opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills and employability skills are addressed by encouraging them to engage with in-class support for BGE classes. Last year senior pupils supported younger pupils in a range of different curriculum subjects.

BGE Analysis

In the Broad General Education phase, the work of the SfL department has already begun across the ASG (Associated Schools Group) through collaboration with primary staff to identify and assess for additional support needs amongst primary pupils. One ASN teacher has a remit to work between the primary schools and the high school. There is also a particular focus on a well established primary/secondary transition programme centred around outdoor learning and leading to a John Muir Award for all participating pupils by the end of P7. Whilst the focus on outdoor learning has been an excellent addition to classroom based learning, 2019 saw improved weighting of the transition programme to offer P7 pupils more authentic classroom experiences at high school, supported by SfL staff.

Pupils with identified needs coming into S1 are well supported through the presence in lessons of SfL staff, who assist class teachers in delivering the curriculum in a way that is suitably differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Around transition time, data from SNSA assessment (previously INCAS) is utilised to help inform the allocation of support, together with any assessment data which has been collected during pupils' primary education. An introductory meeting is held for parents in which the work of the SfL department is explained in detail. In addition, parents and children are invited to meet with the Principal Teacher SfL and guidance staff at the end of the first term to consider what is working well and to fine-tune support requirements as necessary. Depending on the level of need, children's individual requirements are recorded in support plans, individualised education plans (IEP's), child's plans or co-ordinated support plans, which are reviewed at regular intervals.

For some pupils with identified needs the existing curriculum may not be appropriate and so time during the week may be allocated to work in one of the SFL classrooms on more personalised learning. Examples of personalised learning could be the Social Use of Language Programme, Resilience4Life, SQA Personal Development Awards, ASDAN short courses, work on independent living skills, working through the implications of an autism diagnosis, developing social and communication skills, addressing dyslexia or it may simply be additional time to consolidate learning in other subjects and get support with personal and study organisation.

SfL staff contribute to the breadth of opportunities on offer to all pupils at Ullapool High School through involvement in a range of extra curricular activities such as the Isle Martin S1 residential, Albert Roux Adopt-a Chef dinner, geography field trips, archaeology field trips, sporting fixtures and events at home and away, vocational visits off-site e.g. Careers in Health Day and work experience placements. Opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills and employability skills are addressed through involvement in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative during S3. In the first two years of YPI in Ullapool pupils have raised a total of £6000 for two local charities with a third year of the initiative just commencing.

Improvement

- *Better mechanisms for sharing targets and assessing outcomes with curricular staff.*
- *Developing skills to encourage good mental health.*
- *More focus on meeting the needs of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (Closing the Gap).*