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Description automatically generated**@South-West Connects – Advanced Higher Provision**

**Evaluation Report – 22 August 2022**

**Focus on Attainment and Participation**

The aims of the pilot were:

* To expand and improve the curricular offer at SCQF 7 across the SWEIC.
* To ensure equity of opportunity to access AH courses across the SWEIC.
* To ensure students studying at this level have a high-quality learning experience.
* To develop skills and competencies in learning virtually as a preparation for next steps in employment, college or university in the post Covid world.
* To help manage staffing resources efficiently and equitably and to address areas of teacher shortage.
* To create capacity for schools to diversify their curricular offer by freeing up teacher time.

In order to evaluate the pilot, it is important to try to address how far the aims were met using both qualitative and quantitative data. Much of the qualitative feedback was summarised in the interim evaluation report published in January 2022.

Following a review of entries at AH level and the publication of SQA results on 9 August 2022 this report focusses on the quantitative data.

**Key evaluations are around:**

1. the outcomes in terms of attainment across the subjects
2. breadth and equity of the offer across the SWEIC
3. **Attainment**

**Context**

* This was the first year of a pilot for @South-West Connects – the delivery model was new for pupils, base schools and teachers.
* For all our S6 pupils this was the first time they had sat any formal external exams – this was the cohort whose results at N5 and Higher were determined by teacher assessment.
* National statistics show an increase in numbers passing during the 2 years when exams were cancelled – consequently some pupils may have been on an “elevated” progression pathway. All applicants were accepted on to courses – a small number did not have the preferred entrance requirements (typically an A or B at Higher in the subject).
* Pupil study skills in preparing for external assessment may have been inconsistent from school to school.
* Covid restrictions impacted on the original vision to have face to face induction sessions at the start of the course and an opportunity to meet face to face at intermittent points throughout the year. For most subjects there was no direct face to face teaching / mentoring.
* Some pupils suffered from Covid during the academic year although there is clear evidence that some pupils affected by Covid benefitted in that during periods of absence from school they were still able to engage with learning in their AH subjects delivered digitally through @SWConnects.
* Classes did not start until the end of August – losing some teaching time in June. Further live teaching time was impacted by the differing holiday patterns across the 4 local authorities- although work was posted online for pupils to access.
* In some schools there were issues around access to IT /connectivity / software - some significant issues.
* Despite setting the times in advance some pupils were not able to access live classes for all the scheduled times due to timetabling clashes in their own school – accommodation within schools for a dedicated space was also a major issue.
* Once classes were established and settled (by early Sept) there were very few drop outs – 111 went on to complete courses and 109 sat the final exam. (2 pupils from the same school did not turn up on the day of the exam – evidence at pass level for both pupils was transferred to the base school to inform exceptional circumstances requirements- both were awarded their estimate grade).
* Results for the 11 subjects offered is as follows:

**Grades Achieved By Subject (pre appeal)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Number presented** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **No award** |
| AH Biology\* | 7 | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| AH Chemistry | 11 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| AH English | 10 | 5 | 2 | - | 3 | 0 |
| AH French | 6 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| AH Graph Comm | 14 | - | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| AH History | 20 | 5 | 7 | 4 | - | 4 |
| AH Mathematics | 6 | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | - |
| AH Modern Studies\* | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| AH PE | 8 | - | - | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| AH Physics | 13 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| AH Spanish | 10 | 2 | 4 | 3 | - | 1 |
| **Total** | **111** | **26** | **22** | **26** | **19** | **18** |

\*GCU

**Commentary**

* Of the 111 entries: 93 students achieved an Advanced Higher award at A-D - 84 % of the @SW cohort.
* Of the 111 entries: 73 students achieved an Advanced Higher award at A-C - 67% of the @SW cohort.
* There were 26 A passes (23%).
* There were 22 B passes (20%).
* There were 26 C passes (23%).
* There were 19 D passes (17%).
* There were 18 No Awards (16%).
* 46 pupils were awarded a grade in line with their estimate grade.
* 49 pupils were awarded a grade below their estimate.
* 16 pupils were awarded a grade above their estimate grade.
* A number of pupils from SIMD 1-4 postcodes were presented and many were successful in achieving success (in D&G:20 pupils from SIMD 1-4 presented, 4As, 3Bs, 6Cs, 1D (70% gained an award), 6NAs – represents 30%).
* For a number of our pupils this was the only subject studied at SCQF 7.
* A small number of pupils achieved 2 AHs through @SW Connects.
* 2 priority appeals have been submitted from @SW Connects – there may be more from the GCU pupils who are coordinating directly from schools.
* 49 pupils were awarded a grade below their estimate and are therefore eligible for an appeal - @SW teachers and base schools have been contacted to advise of our procedures and quality assurance processes for both priority appeals and non-priority appeals (the turnaround for priority appeals is for evidence to be with the SQA by Fri 19Aug – a very tight turnaround time for us but is complete).
* There is considerable variation in the results when reviewed by subject- this is also true at regional and national level with significant variation in success rates/ grade boundaries and cut off scores – see SQA statistics available online.

There is a need to compare @SW results against school, authority and national trends. In order to do this effectively data from each of the 4 local authorities is required. Further analysis will also be informed once this data is available and once Insight data is published (usually late Sept 2022). To provide some sense check [Appendix 1](#Appendix1) shows statistics from 2019 – the last year of external exams before Covid, for the subjects included in the pilot.

1. **Focus on equity of opportunity - broadening the SCQF 7 scope**

A key driver for the pilot was to address equity of opportunity in terms of the subjects young people could access at SCQF 7. Small and geographically remote schools have traditionally struggled to offer a breadth of subjects at AH level and in many schools the compromise has been to offer within bi-level classes or through a significantly reduced teaching time commitment. The number of small classes shown below highlights the constraints on the wider curriculum capacity within a school of running small and inefficient sections.

The number of SCQF 7 AH courses on offer by school is shown below – the example is taken from data in 2020 - but is typical of other years.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2020 entries at AH level** | **No of AHs offered - (number of pupils)** | **No of AH subjects offered with 4 or fewer: (bi-level classes/ reduced teaching time/ self-study)** |
| D&G |  |  |
| Annan Academy | 4 (18) | 3 |
| Castle Douglas High School | 11 (38) | 8 |
| Dalbeattie High School | 7 (27) | 5 |
| Douglas Ewart High School | 5 (21) | 3 |
| Dumfries Academy\* | 5 (34) | 2 |
| Dumfries High School\* | 8 (73) | 2 |
| Kirkcudbright Academy | 6 (35) | 2 |
| Langholm Academy | 4 (7) | 4 |
| Lockerbie Academy | 10 (69) | 4 |
| Moffat Academy | 4 (13) | 3 |
| NWCC\* | 2 (5) | 2 |
| St Joseph’s College\* | 14 (98) | 5 |
| Sanquhar Academy | 2 (2) | 2 |
| Stranraer Academy | 5 (25) | 4 |
| Wallace Hall Academy | 15 (63) | 8 |
| \*DLT |  |  |
| EAC |  |  |
| Auchinleck Academy | 9 (28) | 7 |
| Doon Academy | 2 (3) | 2 |
| Grange Academy | 6 (37) | 3 |
| Kilmarnock Academy | 8 (55) | 3 |
| Loudon Academy | 11 (43) | 7 |
| Robert Burns Academy | 8 (33) | 6 |
| St Joseph’s Academy | 5 (17) | 3 |
| Stewarton Academy | 7 (31) | 4 |
|  |  |  |
| NAC |  |  |
| Ardrossan Academy | 7 (25) | 4 |
| Arran High School | 10 (35) | 6 |
| Auchenharvie Academy | 5 (22) | 3 |
| Garnock Community Campus | 10 (56) | 4 |
| Greenwood Academy | 11 (100) | 2 |
| Irvine Royal Academy | 8 (25) | 6 |
| Kilwinning Academy | 10 (48) | 5 |
| Largs Academy | 11 (85) | 4 |
| St Matthew’s Academy | 10 (76) | 3 |
|  |  |  |
| SAC |  |  |
| Ayr Academy | 2 (2) | 2 |
| Belmont Academy | 17 (124) | 6 |
| Carrick Academy | 4 (12) | 4 |
| Girvan Academy | 8 (18) | 7 |
| Kyle Academy | 15 (85) | 7 |
| Marr College | 15 (71) | 8 |
| Prestwick Academy | 11 (75) | 2 |
| Queen Margaret Academy | 14 (61) | 9 |

**Commentary**

* Prior to the launch of the AH hub in Aug 2021 the number of subjects that could be studied at SCQF 7 (AH) varied greatly depending on the school attended – in 2020 some schools were able to offer as many as 17 AH subjects compared to a number of schools only able to offer 2-4 AHs. Of the 40 SWEIC secondary schools 13 delivered 5 or fewer AHs, 11 schools delivered between 6-9 AHs and 16 schools (usually larger schools) delivered 10 or more. Able pupils in the schools offering fewest clearly are at a disadvantage.
* In 2021-22 all schools in SWEIC could technically “offer” a minimum of 11 SCQF qualifications by accessing @South West connects. This would complement their own AH discrete classes or those offered through consortia arrangements with neighbouring schools. In practice a number of schools did not participate for a variety of reasons.
* Some of the schools offering very small numbers serve areas of deprivation where attainment levels may suggest fewer pupils would be on course for SCQF 7 at the end of S5 making it difficult to form viable class groups – often the able individual pupils in these schools would be the ones offered reduced teaching commitment/ bi level groupings putting them at a disadvantage compared to peers in larger schools with dedicated sections.
* In mitigation, some pupils benefit greatly from established consortia arrangements especially where there are in close proximity geographically e.g., in Dumfries Learning Town (4 schools), Ayr. Pupils receive full teaching allocation but the travel time between schools may need to be factored in. Free bus travel will be welcome but dependent on local bus timetables and proximity of routes close to schools. For those schools geographically distant from neighbours or in rural areas this option does not exist or is extremely costly in terms of transport requirements.
* In many of our schools, subjects were offered but low numbers suggest classes operated within a bi-level class or were offered with reduced teacher contact time – sometimes as low as a single period of teaching time. This raises the question about equity of opportunity – is it fair that some pupils studying at AH level get 4-6 periods per week direct teaching but other as little as 1 ppwk.
* In some schools and for certain subjects (often the sciences) small classes were still supported with 4 periods per week of teacher time – at significant cost in terms of staffing efficiency and possible constraints on the wider curricular offer? Danger/ perception of elitism – should AH viability be prioritised over other SCQF groups/ skills for work courses? Would they be run with 3 or 4 pupils opting for them?
* Technically all SWEIC schools “offered” at least 10 AH subjects in 2021 thereby addressing the inequity in the system. In reality in some of our schools the offer was not shared or promoted with pupils, staff and parents. In some there was only a passing mention of the subject being offered digitally with no further reassurance re the delivery approach. The reasons for non-engagement of some schools may be down to communication networks, timetabling issues or resistance to the approach from school staff, pupils or parents? In a number of schools very small numbers continued to be accommodated despite there being an offer from SWEIC on the table? For example, 12 schools had 4 or fewer pupils studying AH French although there was a class running with spaces available in @SW Connects.

Appendix 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2019 D&G results** | **D&G**  **A** | **D&G**  **% A** | **National**  **% A** | **D&G**  **A to C** | **D&G**  **% A to C** | **National % A to C** | **D&G NA** | **D&G**  **% NA** | **National % NA** |
| Biology | 12 | 23.53 | 19.51 | 39 | 76.47 | 71.18 | 5 | 9.8 | 15.34 |
| Chemistry | 28 | 45.16 | 30.09 | 55 | 88.71 | 80.39 | 2 | 3.23 | 11.19 |
| English | 15 | 22.73 | 17.05 | 51 | 77.27 | 76.43 | 9 | 13.64 | 10.63 |
| French | 5 | 50 | 32.59 | 10 | 100 | 72.77 | 0 | 0 | 20.31 |
| Graphic Communication | 2 | 8.7 | 10.3 | 19 | 82.61 | 63.43 | 2 | 8.7 | 25.86 |
| History | 4 | 10.81 | 20.24 | 19 | 51.35 | 76.54 | 11 | 29.73 | 13.19 |
| Mathematics | 28 | 32.94 | 33.2 | 69 | 81.18 | 73.57 | 12 | 14.12 | 18.86 |
| Modern Studies | 6 | 40 | 22.08 | 12 | 80 | 72.32 | 3 | 20 | 19.68 |
| Physical Education | 9 | 56.25 | 21.44 | 15 | 93.75 | 75.4 | 1 | 6.25 | 11.29 |
| Physics | 18 | 40 | 27.71 | 36 | 80 | 76.82 | 5 | 11.11 | 13.25 |
| Spanish | 2 | 40 | 31.18 | 4 | 80 | 74.44 | 1 | 20 | 16.85 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2019 EAC results** | **EAC**  **A** | **EAC % A** | **National % A** | **EAC**  **A to C** | **EAC**  **% A to C** | **National % A-C** | **EAC NA** | **EAC**  **% NA** | **National % NA** |
| Biology | 0 | 0 | 19.51 | 10 | 52.63 | 71.18 | 4 | 21.05 | 15.34 |
| Chemistry | 2 | 25 | 30.09 | 4 | 50 | 80.39 | 1 | 12.5 | 11.19 |
| English | 5 | 11.63 | 17.05 | 28 | 65.12 | 76.43 | 8 | 18.6 | 10.63 |
| French | 9 | 69.23 | 32.59 | 13 | 100 | 72.77 | 0 | 0 | 20.31 |
| Graphic Communication | 1 | 5.26 | 10.3 | 7 | 36.84 | 63.43 | 10 | 52.63 | 25.86 |
| History | 1 | 16.67 | 20.24 | 5 | 83.33 | 76.54 | 0 | 0 | 13.19 |
| Mathematics | 18 | 19.78 | 33.2 | 48 | 52.75 | 73.57 | 35 | 38.46 | 18.86 |
| Modern Studies | 0 | 0 | 22.08 | 1 | 33.33 | 72.32 | 2 | 66.67 | 19.68 |
| Physical Education | 0 | 0 | 21.44 | 3 | 75 | 75.4 | 1 | 25 | 11.29 |
| Physics | 12 | 36.36 | 27.71 | 26 | 78.79 | 76.82 | 5 | 15.15 | 13.25 |
| Spanish | 4 | 100 | 31.18 | 4 | 100 | 74.44 | 0 | 0 | 16.85 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2019 NAC Results** | **NAC**  **A** | **NAC % A** | **National % A** | **NAC**  **A to C** | **NAC**  **% A to C** | **National % A to C** | **NAC NA** | **NAC**  **% NA** | **National % NA** |
| Biology | 5 | 12.2 | 19.51 | 25 | 60.98 | 71.18 | 14 | 34.15 | 15.34 |
| Chemistry | 1 | 2.7 | 30.09 | 23 | 62.16 | 80.39 | 12 | 32.43 | 11.19 |
| English | 9 | 10.98 | 17.05 | 60 | 73.17 | 76.43 | 11 | 13.41 | 10.63 |
| French | 3 | 15.79 | 32.59 | 10 | 52.63 | 72.77 | 6 | 31.58 | 20.31 |
| Graphic Communication | 0 | 0 | 10.3 | 7 | 46.67 | 63.43 | 5 | 33.33 | 25.86 |
| History | 4 | 17.39 | 20.24 | 18 | 78.26 | 76.54 | 3 | 13.04 | 13.19 |
| Mathematics | 13 | 20.97 | 33.2 | 35 | 56.45 | 73.57 | 22 | 35.48 | 18.86 |
| Modern Studies | 0 | 0 | 22.08 | 2 | 100 | 72.32 | 0 | 0 | 19.68 |
| Physical Education | 1 | 20 | 21.44 | 2 | 40 | 75.4 | 1 | 20 | 11.29 |
| Physics | 7 | 25 | 27.71 | 19 | 67.86 | 76.82 | 4 | 14.29 | 13.25 |
| Spanish | 0 | 0 | 31.18 | 8 | 66.67 | 74.44 | 4 | 33.33 | 16.85 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2019 SAC Results** | **SAC**  **A** | **SAC**  **% A** | **National % A** | **SAC**  **A to C** | **SAC**  **% A to C** | **National % A to C** | **SAC NA** | **SAC**  **% NA** | **National % NA** |
| Biology | 11 | 24.44 | 19.51 | 36 | 80 | 71.18 | 6 | 13.33 | 15.34 |
| Chemistry | 20 | 37.74 | 30.09 | 49 | 92.45 | 80.39 | 2 | 3.77 | 11.19 |
| English | 2 | 5.56 | 17.05 | 27 | 75 | 76.43 | 3 | 8.33 | 10.63 |
| French | 2 | 33.33 | 32.59 | 6 | 100 | 72.77 | 0 | 0 | 20.31 |
| Graphic Communication | 1 | 10 | 10.3 | 7 | 70 | 63.43 | 1 | 10 | 25.86 |
| History | 4 | 25 | 20.24 | 11 | 68.75 | 76.54 | 3 | 18.75 | 13.19 |
| Mathematics | 12 | 21.05 | 33.2 | 35 | 61.4 | 73.57 | 16 | 28.07 | 18.86 |
| Modern Studies | 0 | 0 | 22.08 | 3 | 50 | 72.32 | 2 | 33.33 | 19.68 |
| Physical Education | 0 | 0 | 21.44 | 0 | 0 | 75.4 | 0 | 0 | 11.29 |
| Physics | 6 | 16.67 | 27.71 | 24 | 66.67 | 76.82 | 7 | 19.44 | 13.25 |
| Spanish | 0 | 0 | 31.18 | 3 | 100 | 74.44 | 0 | 0 | 16.85 |