

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2016 (Literacy)

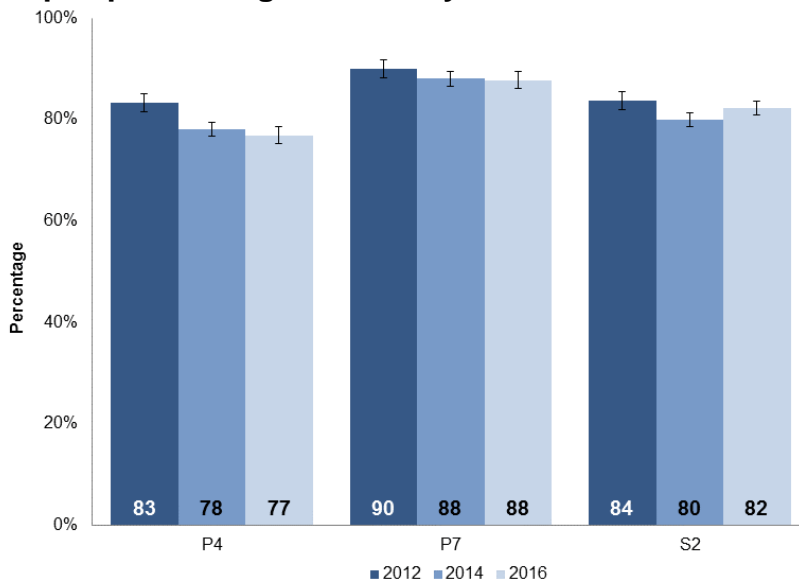
9th May 2017

We would like to thank the pupils and teachers who took part in SSLN 2016.

The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) is a sample survey which measures national performance in literacy and numeracy in alternate years. It is aligned to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels. First Level (P2 to P4) performance is assessed near the end of P4 (age 8-9), Second Level (P5 to P7) performance is assessed near the end of P7 (age 11-12) and Third Level (S1 to S3) performance is assessed near the end of S2 (age 13-14).

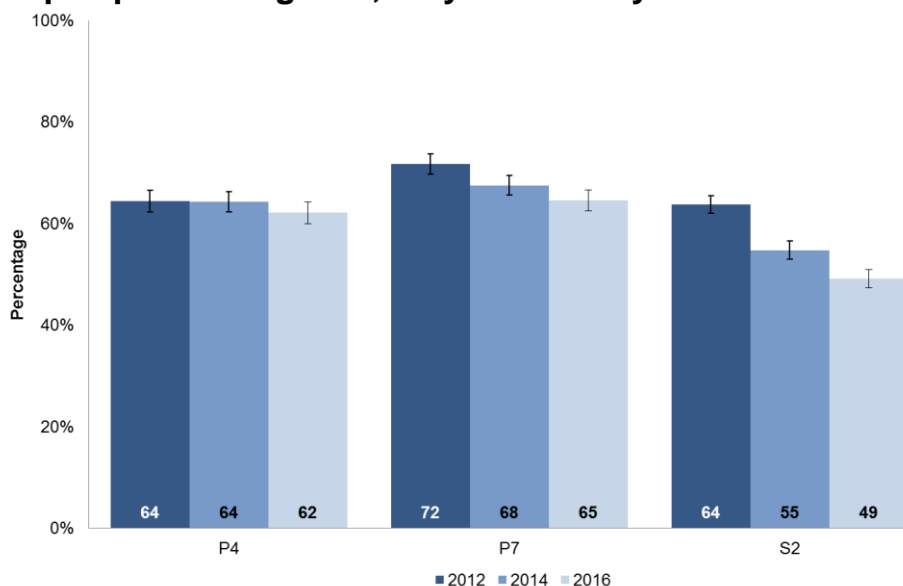
Full results are available from www.gov.scot/ssltn

Reading performance, 2012-2016 Pupils performing well or very well



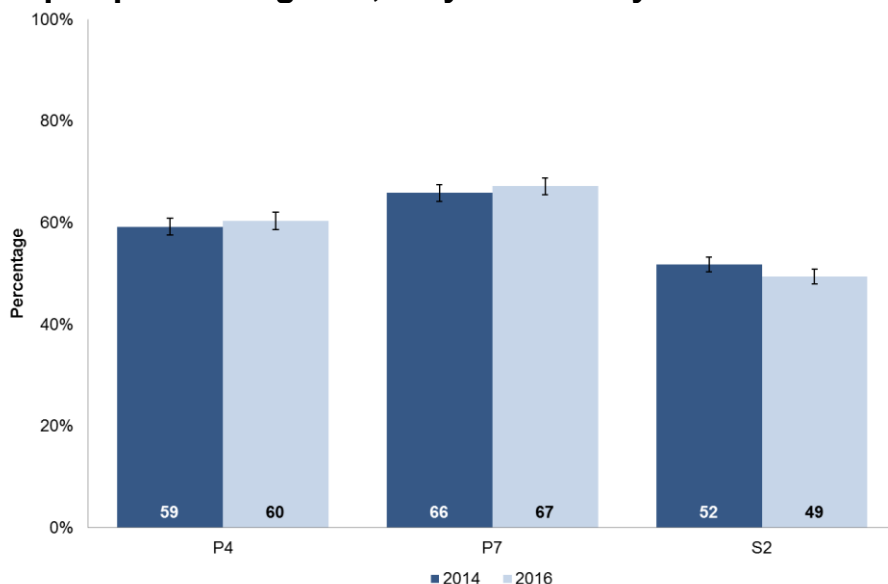
- Reading performance of P4 and P7 pupils was high, but declined slightly between 2012 and 2016 (six and two percentage points respectively). S2 performance in 2016 was similar to 2012.
- Pupils from the least deprived areas outperformed pupils from the most deprived areas at all stages in all three surveys. The size of the gap in performance in 2016 was similar to the size of the gap in 2012.

Writing performance, 2012-2016 Pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level



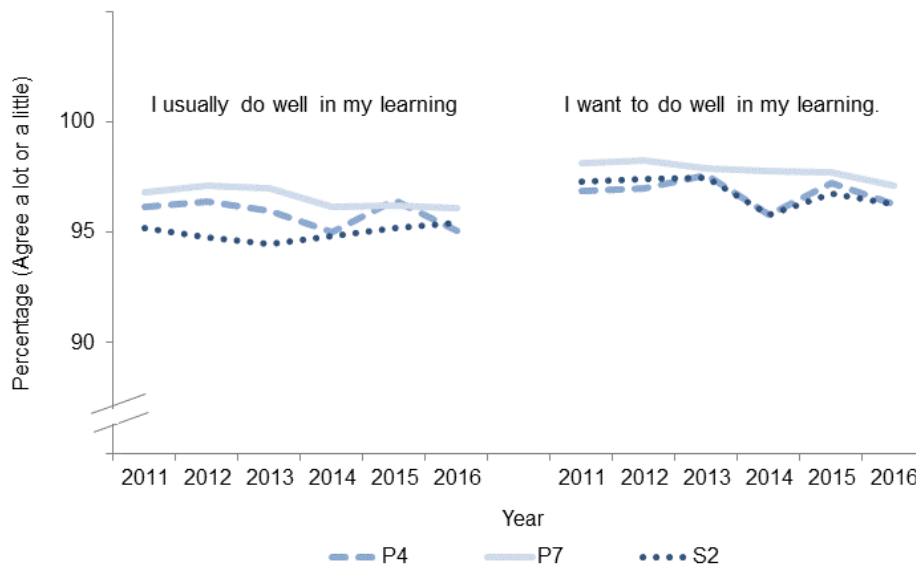
- Writing performance of P4 pupils was similar in 2016 (62 per cent) and 2012 (64 per cent). Performance of P7 and S2 pupils declined by seven and 15 percentage points, respectively, between 2012 and 2016.
- Pupils from the least deprived areas outperformed pupils from the most deprived areas at all stages in all three surveys. The size of the gap in performance in 2016 was similar to the size of the gap in 2012.

Listening and talking performance, 2014-16 Pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level



- Listening and talking performance in 2016 was similar to that in 2014, at all stages.
- Pupils from the least deprived areas outperformed pupils from the most deprived areas at all stages in 2014 and 2016. The size of the gap in performance in 2016 was similar to the size of the gap in 2014.

Pupil questionnaire, 2011-2016 Pupil attitudes to learning, by stage



- The majority of pupils (94 per cent and over) agreed they wanted to do well in their learning and felt they usually did well at school, in each of the six surveys.
- Over 65 per cent of pupils reported that someone at home asked them what they did at school very often and told them that working hard at school is important, in each of the six surveys.

Teacher questionnaire 2016 Proportion of secondary non-English teachers who were fairly or very confident in delivering the literacy experiences and outcomes, by organizer



- The vast majority of primary and secondary English teachers are confident in teaching literacy (94 per cent and over); secondary non-English teachers reported relatively lower levels of confidence in some aspects.
- Teachers are confident in their ability to use ICT and believe it has a positive impact on literacy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 What is the SSLN?

The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) is an annual sample survey which monitors national performance of school children at P4, P7 and S2 in literacy and numeracy in alternate years. The 2016 survey focused on literacy. All mainstream publicly funded and independent schools are invited to participate in the SSLN. For more information on the survey design see [Chapter 10: Background Notes](#).

The SSLN also provides information which informs improvements in learning, teaching and assessment at classroom level through the development of Professional Learning Resources (PLRs) by Education Scotland. All PLRs are available on the [National Improvement Hub](#).

The SSLN replaced the Scottish Survey of Achievement (SSA) which ran from 2004 to 2009. The SSLN was developed in 2009 to support assessment approaches for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), and so results are not comparable with the SSA. The guidance for assessment for CfE is set out in [Building the Curriculum 5: A Framework for Assessment](#) and its supporting suite of publications, first published in January 2010.

The SSLN is undertaken in partnership between the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) and local authorities.

This is the last set of results from the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy. The replacement data source of pupil performance in literacy and numeracy is the [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels Return](#); the results of the 2015/16 collection were published on 13 December 2016. This data collection gathers information for all P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils and reports on the proportion of pupils who have achieved the expected CfE level relevant to their stage, based on teacher professional judgements, for numeracy and the three elements of literacy (reading, writing, listening and talking). The Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence results were published as experimental statistics to reflect the fact that they are based on a new and developing data source.

Results from the SSLN are not directly comparable to results from the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence collection, due to the differing methodologies and reporting styles. SSLN results are based on independently marked or assessed performance against a set assessment or task and results are presented by reporting categories (see Table 1.1).

We would like to thank the 10,100 pupils and 4,600 teachers in the 2,250 schools who participated in SSLN 2016.

1.2 Survey components

The 2016 literacy survey assessed all three literacy organisers (reading, writing and listening and talking). The survey consisted of written and practical assessments and pupil and teacher questionnaires. All participating pupils took part in a reading assessment and pupil questionnaire; pupils at half of participating schools were assessed in writing; and pupils at 40 per cent of schools took part in a listening and talking assessment. More detail on the assessments is provided in the relevant chapters.

The assessments used in the survey were designed to assess the wide range of knowledge, skills, capabilities and attitudes across learning identified in the literacy [Experiences and Outcomes](#). They were designed to reflect the requirements that pupils have achieved breadth, challenge and application of learning. The pupil questionnaire collected information on factors that are likely to affect learning, such as pupil attitudes and experience in class. The teacher questionnaire collected information on teachers' experiences of delivering literacy across the curriculum.

Assessment tasks were either specifically developed for the SSLN by practising teachers and assessment experts or, where previous SSA tasks were used or revised, these were reworked and aligned to CfE Levels and experiences and outcomes. The assessments were constructed to include tasks with different degrees of challenge across the range of [literacy experiences and outcomes](#) set out by the curriculum at each level.

Pupils were assessed at the following curriculum levels¹ :

P4: First Level (covers P2 to P4, but earlier or later for some)

P7: Second Level (covers P5 to P7, but earlier or later for some)

S2: Third Level (Third and Fourth Level span S1 to S3, but earlier for some)

¹ For definitions of the curriculum levels, please see the [National Improvement Hub](#).

1.3 Reporting SSLN results

SSLN results are presented by categories for ease of reporting. A summary of the categories used is given in Table 1.1. They refer to performance in the survey and are not meant to be used for general classroom reporting of performance.

Headline reading results are based on pupils performing well or very well at the level. Headline writing and listening and talking results are based on pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level.

Table 1.1: Summary of SSLN reporting categories

Reporting Category	Pupils are:
Performing very well at the level	meeting almost all the outcomes at that level
Performing well at the level	meeting most of the outcomes at that level
Working within the level	meeting some of the expected outcomes for their level, but they are not yet meeting the others
Not yet working within the level	not yet meeting any of the CfE outcomes of the level assessed

In contrast to the SSA, the SSLN does not assess pupils against other levels. For example, although pupils in P4 may be reported as 'performing very well at First Level', it is possible that some may be achieving many of the Second Level outcomes as well; however, the SSLN does not capture this information. The principles of CfE are clear, however, that the curriculum levels are not a barrier to pupils' progression in learning. In progressing through a level pupils must demonstrate breadth and depth of learning and be able to apply their learning in different and unfamiliar contexts.

There are three deprivation categories reported in the SSLN: the least deprived 30 per cent of datazones, the middle 40 per cent and the most deprived 30 per cent. These are based on the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\) 2016](#) and pupils are assigned to a category according to their home postcode.

The SSLN samples a proportion of pupils rather than the whole population, therefore the SSLN results are presented as estimates. There is an element of uncertainty around the estimates and these are denoted by confidence intervals. Where appropriate, confidence intervals are represented on charts by error bars to help demonstrate this level of uncertainty. Statistical tests were used to test for differences between estimates. All references to differences in this report are statistically significant differences. For more information on calculation and interpretation of confidence intervals please see [Chapter 10: Background notes](#).

All SSLN estimates in this report are rounded to zero decimal places. Differences in estimates are calculated using unrounded estimates, therefore apparent differences may differ from actual calculated differences.

Chapter 2: Reading attainment in 2016

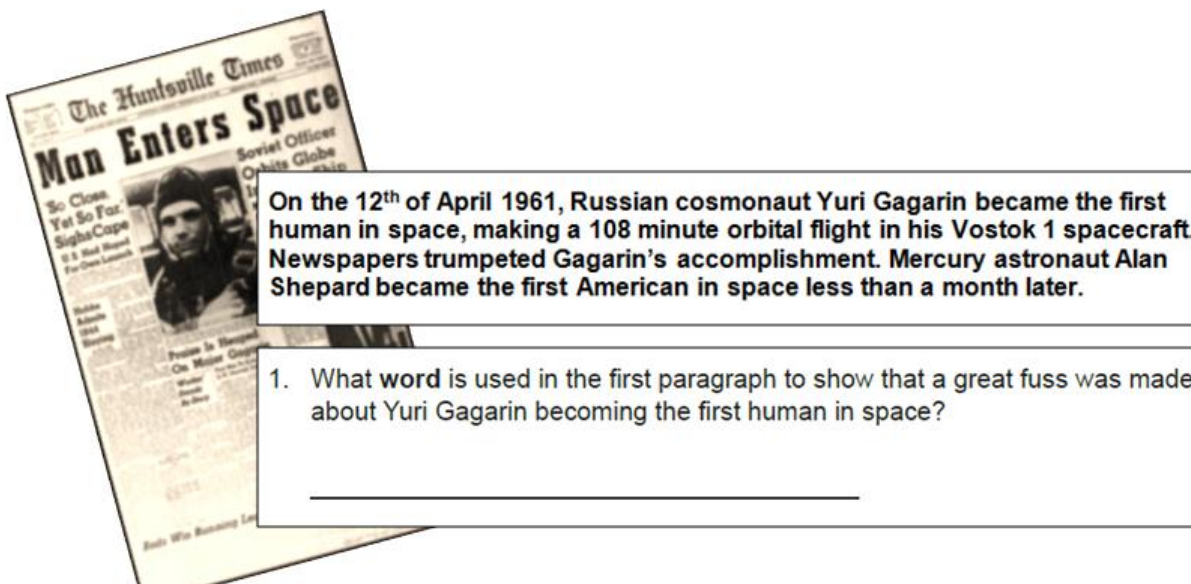
- Reading performance was highest at P7 with 88 per cent of pupils performing well or very well, compared to 77 per cent at P4 and 82 per cent at S2.
- Girls outperformed boys at P7 and S2; there was no difference between boys' and girls' performance at P4.
- Pupils from the least deprived areas performed better in reading than other pupils, across all stages.

2.1 Assessing reading skills

All participating pupils took part in a reading assessment. This consisted of two components: a written booklet consisting of four tasks, each incorporating a source reading passage and a set of questions; and an online assessment containing four tasks: two based on webpage texts and two based on moving image texts (for example a BBC Newsround clip or a television advertisement for a children's museum).

Figure 1 provides an illustration of a pencil and paper reading task developed for the SSLN. The text is an article about the first human in space.

Figure 1: Illustration of a Third Level (S2) Pencil and Paper Reading Task 'Into Space'



The illustration shows a newspaper clipping from 'The Huntsville Times' with the headline 'Man Enters Space' and a sub-headline 'Soviet Officer Orbits Globe'. A photograph of Yuri Gagarin is visible. A text box contains the following text: 'On the 12th of April 1961, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space, making a 108 minute orbital flight in his Vostok 1 spacecraft. Newspapers trumpeted Gagarin's accomplishment. Mercury astronaut Alan Shepard became the first American in space less than a month later.'

1. What word is used in the first paragraph to show that a great fuss was made about Yuri Gagarin becoming the first human in space?

Reading results are based on pupils who completed both components of the reading assessment (written booklet and online assessment). In 2016, this gave an achieved sample size of 3,184 pupils in P4, 3,287 in P7 and 3,600 in S2.

Pupils are assigned to one of four reporting categories based on the percentage of questions they answer correctly. Table 2.1 describes the categories used for each

performance level in the reading assessment. The cut-off scores were set in consultation with Education Scotland, SQA and teachers, based on professional judgement and an analysis of the tasks involved in the assessment.

Table 2.1 Cut-off scores for SSLN reading reporting categories

SSLN reading reporting category	Percentage of items successfully completed in the SSLN
Performing very well at the level	80 per cent or more
Performing well at the level	60 per cent or more, but less than 80 per cent
Working within the level	P4: more than 25 per cent, but less than 60 per cent P7: more than 39 per cent, but less than 60 per cent S2: more than 34 per cent, but less than 60 per cent
Not yet working within the level	P4: 25 per cent or less P7: 39 per cent or less S2: 34 per cent or less

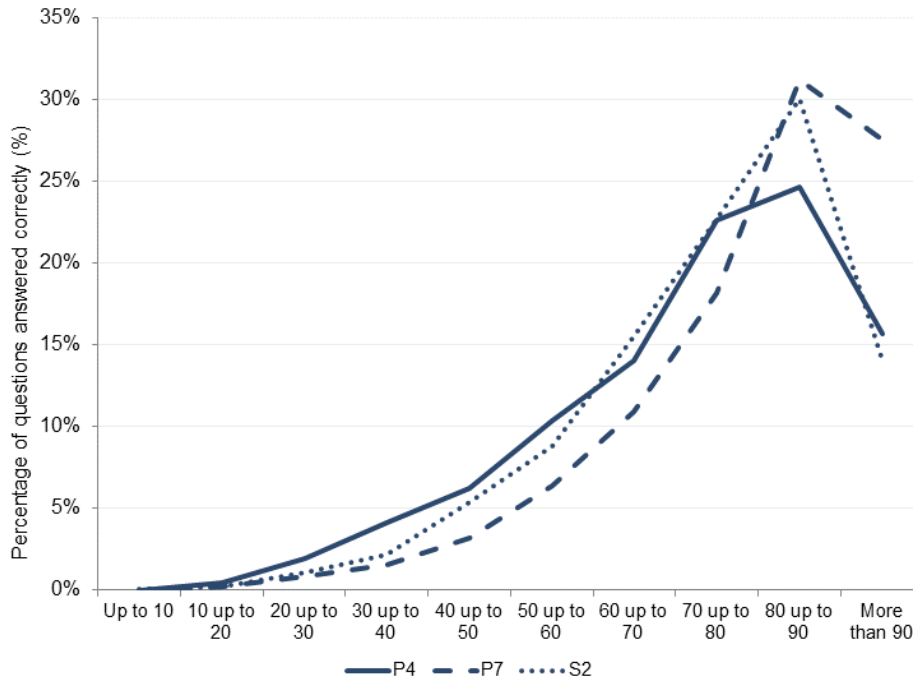
For example, pupils correctly answering 80 per cent or more of the reading questions across all tasks are described as ‘performing very well at the level’. As the assessments are designed to cover the full range of outcomes within the curriculum at a given level, such a pupil might be expected, in general, to achieve at least 80 per cent across all tasks at their level. Pupils described as ‘working within the level’ have achieved some of the outcomes expected for their stage, but are still working on achieving the others.

For each stage, the differing cut-off scores between ‘working within the level’ and ‘not yet working within the level’ were determined by assessing the number of marks that could potentially be obtained in the assessment using only skills acquired at the previous level or, in the case of multiple choice items, by chance.

2.2 Reading attainment

The distribution of reading scores for each of the three stages assessed can be seen in Chart 2.1. At all stages, the distribution is skewed towards high performance: 25 per cent of P4 pupils answered 80-89 per cent of reading questions correctly, this was 31 per cent at P7 and 30 per cent at S2.

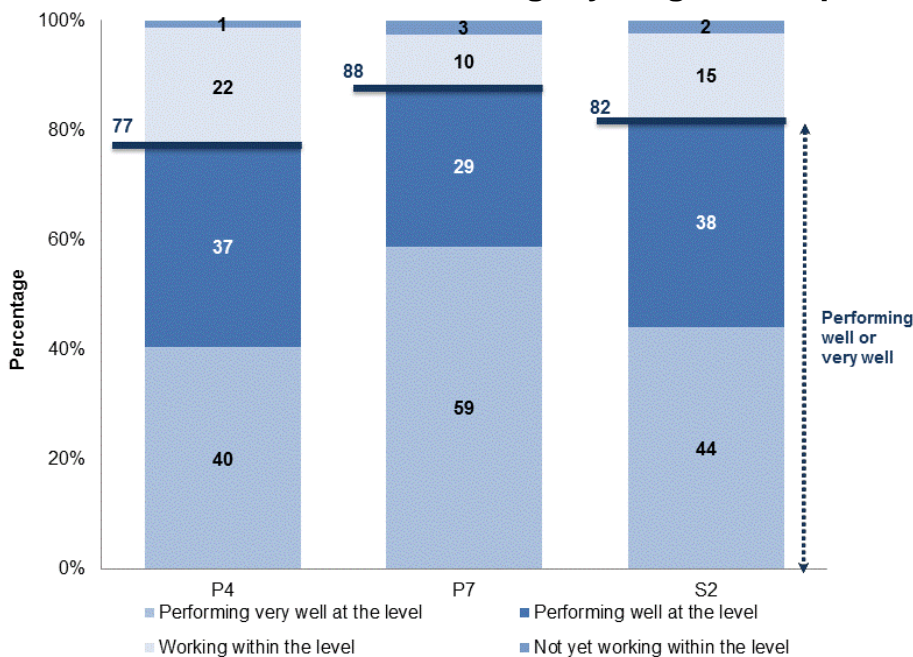
Chart 2.1: Distribution of reading scores by stage



'Up to 10' included 0 and all values up to but not including 10, etc.

Chart 2.2 shows the performance of P4, P7 and S2 pupils in reading as per the four reporting categories described in Table 2.1.

Chart 2.2: Performance in reading, by stage and reporting category



Reading performance was highest for P7 pupils, with 88 per cent performing well or very well at Second Level. The majority of this comprised pupils performing very well at the level (59 per cent) compared to pupils performing well at the level (29 per cent). With respect to P4 and S2 pupils, 77 per cent and 82 per cent of pupils were performing well or very well, respectively. This included, at both P4 and S2, around two fifths of pupils were performing very well at the level.

The proportion of pupils within each stage not yet working within the level for the relevant stage was very low at one per cent at P4, three per cent at P7 and two per cent at S2.

The experimental statistics publication 'Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2015/16' also presents a measure of reading performance for P4 and P7 pupils. For more information see Background Note 10.9. The results cannot be compared directly to the SSLN due to the differing methodologies and reporting styles, however, we can see that a similar proportion of P4 pupils were assessed as having achieved First Level (75 per cent) by their class teacher as were seen to be performing well or very well in reading in the SSLN (77 per cent). A lower proportion of P7 pupils were assessed as having achieved Second Level (72 per cent) than were performing well or very well in reading in the SSLN (88 per cent).

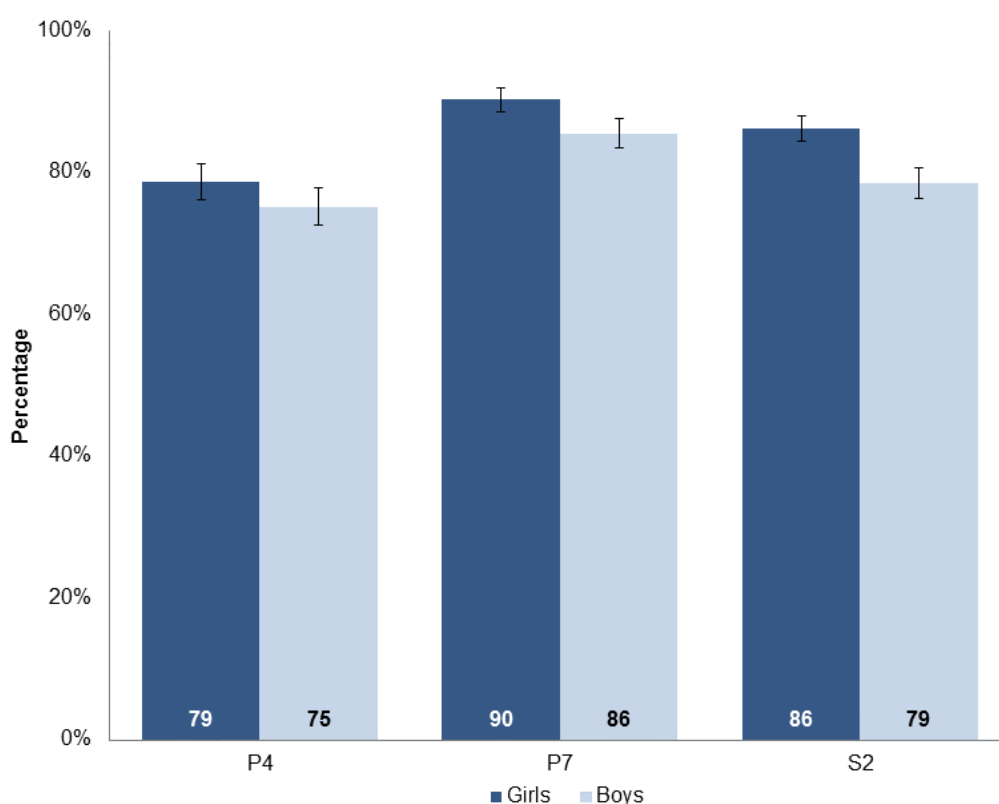
Where there was a noticeable difference in trend was in the national figures for P4 and P7. The SSLN results have consistently shown that a higher proportion of P7 pupils, than P4 pupils, perform well or very well in reading at the relevant level. However, the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels results showed a slightly higher proportion of P4 pupils were assessed as having achieved the relevant level than in P7.

2.3 Attainment by gender

The proportion of girls performing well or very well in reading was higher than for boys in P7 and S2. For P7 this was a difference of five percentage points and, for S2, eight percentage points. There was no statistically significant difference in reading performance between girls and boys at P4.

Looking at the reporting categories separately, a greater proportion of girls performed very well in reading at all stages, compared to boys. The differences were four percentage points at P4, five at P7 and ten at S2. With respect to pupils performing well at the level there was no difference in performance by gender.

Chart 2.3: Proportion of pupils performing well or very well in reading, by stage and gender

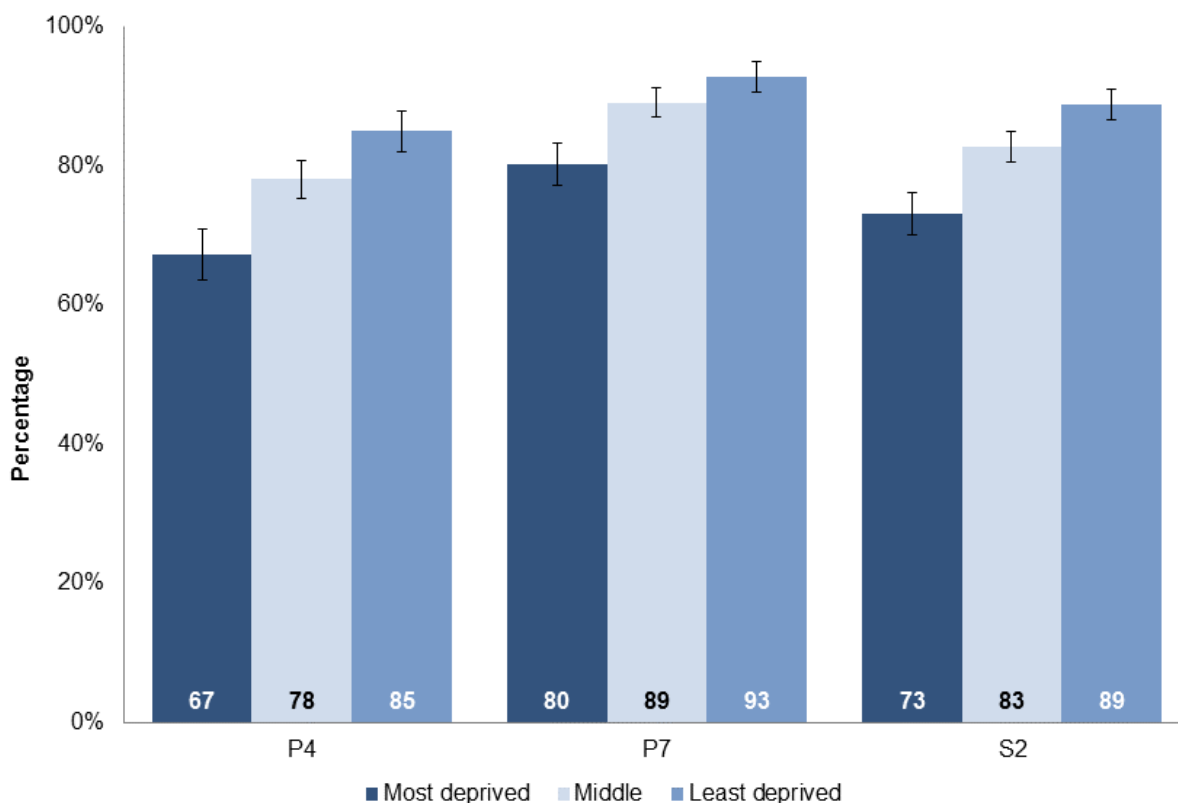


A gender difference in reading attainment was also present in Scotland's latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015 results. Pupils participating in [PISA 2015](#) were 15 year olds and at a different stage of education than those assessed in the current SSLN. These results found that girls significantly outperformed boys in reading, which was consistent with the findings of previous PISA studies.

2.4 Attainment by deprivation

The difference in the proportion of pupils who performed well or very well by deprivation category is displayed in Chart 2.4. Across all stages the proportion of pupils who performed well or very well increased moving through the deprivation categories (from most, middle to least deprived). This results in a stepped pattern where performance improves as level of deprivation declines.

Chart 2.4: Proportion of pupils performing well or very well in reading, by stage and deprivation category



Performance was highest for pupils from the least deprived areas at all stages (85 per cent at P4, 93 per cent at P7 and 89 per cent at S2), compared to pupils from the most deprived areas (67 per cent at P4, 80 per cent at P7 and 73 per cent at S2).

The performance gap (the difference between the proportion of pupils from the least and most deprived areas performing well or very well) was largest for P4 at 18 percentage points, compared to 13 percentage points at P7 and 16 percentage points at S2.

Chapter 3: Reading attainment over time

- Reading performance of P4 and P7 pupils declined slightly between 2012 and 2016 (six and two percentage points respectively). S2 performance in 2016 was similar to 2012.
- Girls outperformed boys in reading at S2 in all three literacy surveys but the picture at primary was mixed; girls outperformed boys at P4 in 2014 and P7 in 2012 and 2016.
- Pupils from the least deprived areas outperformed pupils from the most deprived areas in reading at all stages in all three surveys. The size of the gap in performance has not changed between 2012 and 2016.

A key objective of the SSLN is to monitor national performance over time, in all aspects of literacy, in P4, P7 and S2. This chapter details the methodology used to assess reading attainment over time (2012, 2014, 2016) and provides the trends for key measures from the survey.

3.1 Methodology

Table 3.1 provides the number of pupils participating per stage who completed both a written booklet and an online assessment in each literacy survey. Participation in the reading assessment has increased over the three surveys from 8,450 pupils in 2012 to 10,071 pupils in 2016. The increase in participation was due to a greater number of schools taking part and an increase in the number of pupils successfully submitting the online element of the reading assessment.

Table 3.1: Number of pupils participating in reading in 2012, 2014 and 2016

Stage	2012	2014	2016
P4	2,613	3,155	3,184
P7	2,667	3,223	3,287
S2	3,170	3,542	3,600
Total	8,450	9,920	10,071

The SSLN survey design includes a provision for item release and replacement in order to refresh the survey design or provide examples of the tasks pupils are asked to undertake. They are included, for example, in Education Scotland's Professional Learning Resources. Therefore there was a proportion of assessment booklets that were new in both 2014 and 2016.

In order to check the item release and replacement strategy did not have an adverse effect on the ability to make comparisons, investigative analysis was conducted on 2012 and 2014 data where results were produced on two bases; firstly on all assessment booklets and secondly excluding booklets which had been released or replaced between cycles. A

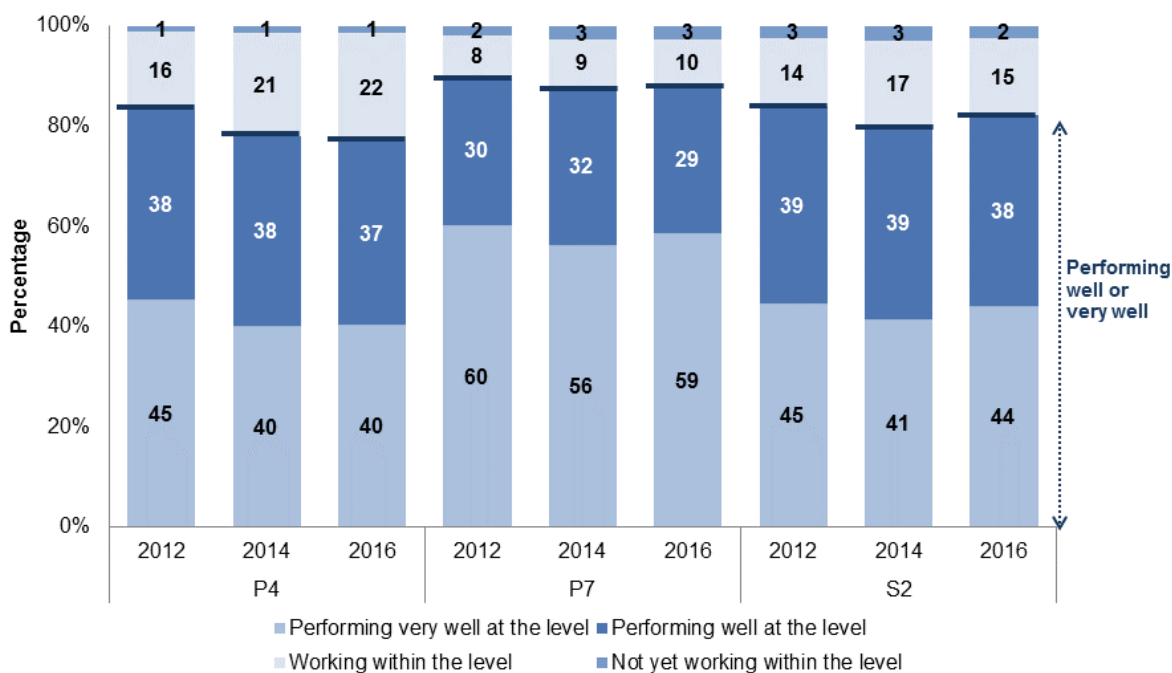
series of in-year and between year comparisons showed that excluding released and replacement booklets did not affect the overall picture of pupil performance and therefore that results across survey years are directly comparable. Item release and replacement between 2014 and 2016 was minimal.

Time series data in this report and the supplementary tables are based on an analysis of all booklets in each survey year. Statistical tests were used to test for significant differences in performance between 2012 and 2014, between 2014 and 2016 and between 2012 and 2016.

3.2 Reading attainment over time

Chart 3.1 shows reading performance by reporting categories and stage, over the three literacy surveys: 2012, 2014 and 2016.

Chart 3.1: Reading performance by reporting category and stage, 2012, 2014 and 2016



The time series trend varies between stages; Table 3.2 shows which changes over time are statistically significant:

Table 3.2: Difference in proportion of pupils performing well or very well in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	Lower in 2014	No difference	Lower in 2016
P7	Lower in 2014	No difference	Lower in 2016
S2	Lower in 2014	Higher in 2016	No difference

The proportion of P4 and P7 pupils performing well or very well declined between 2012 and 2014 and remained stable between 2014 and 2016. The decrease between 2012 and

2014 has contributed to the overall fall evident between 2012 and 2016. The extent of the decrease between 2012 and 2016 was greater in P4 (six percentage points) than P7 (two percentage points).

At S2, there was a decrease of four percentage points in the proportion of pupils performing well or very well between 2012 and 2014, which was offset against an increase of two percentage points between 2014 and 2016. As a result, S2 performance in 2016 was statistically similar to performance in 2012.

3.3 Attainment by gender

The pattern of performance by gender over time varied between stages, only some changes in performance were statistically significant. These changes are displayed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Difference in proportion of pupils performing well or very well in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage and gender

Girls

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	Lower in 2014	No difference	Lower in 2016
P7	Lower in 2014	No difference	No difference
S2	No difference	No difference	No difference

Boys

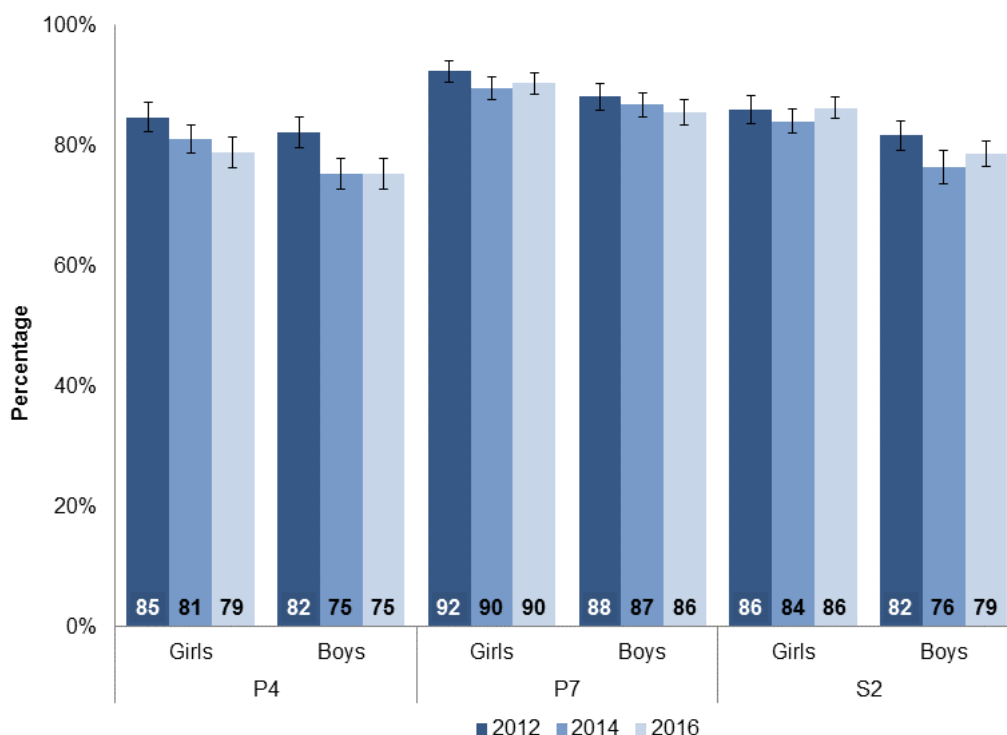
Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	Lower in 2014	No difference	Lower in 2016
P7	No difference	No difference	No difference
S2	Lower in 2014	No difference	No difference

For both P4 girls and boys, there was a significant decrease in pupils performing well or very well between 2012 and 2014 but there was no significant change between 2014 and 2016. This reflects the pattern of the overall trend, so the decrease in overall results was attributable to both boys and girls. (Chart 3.2)

At P7, boys' performance remained constant over the three surveys. For P7 girls, despite a small decrease between 2012 and 2014 (three percentage points), performance in 2016 was statistically similar to 2012.

For S2 girls, the proportion of pupils performing well or very well remained stable across all three surveys, ranging between 84 and 86 per cent. The performance of S2 boys decreased between 2012 and 2014 by five percentage points, however overall performance levels in 2012 and 2016 were similar.

Chart 3.2: Proportion of pupils performing well or very well in reading in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage and gender



Girls outperformed boys in reading in P4 (2014 only), P7 (2012 and 2016) and S2 (all years). The size of the gender gap has not changed between 2012 and 2016 (or between each of the three surveys) in reading.

3.4 Attainment by deprivation

The pattern of reading performance by deprivation was consistent over the three surveys: pupils from the least deprived areas perform higher than pupils from the most deprived areas.

Changes in performance of pupils within each deprivation category varied between stages, with only some changes in performance being statistically significant. These changes are displayed in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Difference in proportion of pupils performing well or very well in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage and deprivation

Least deprived category (pupils from the least deprived 30% of datazones)

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	Lower in 2014	No difference	Lower in 2016
P7	No difference	No difference	No difference
S2	No difference	No difference	No difference

Middle deprived category (pupils from the middle 40% of datazones)

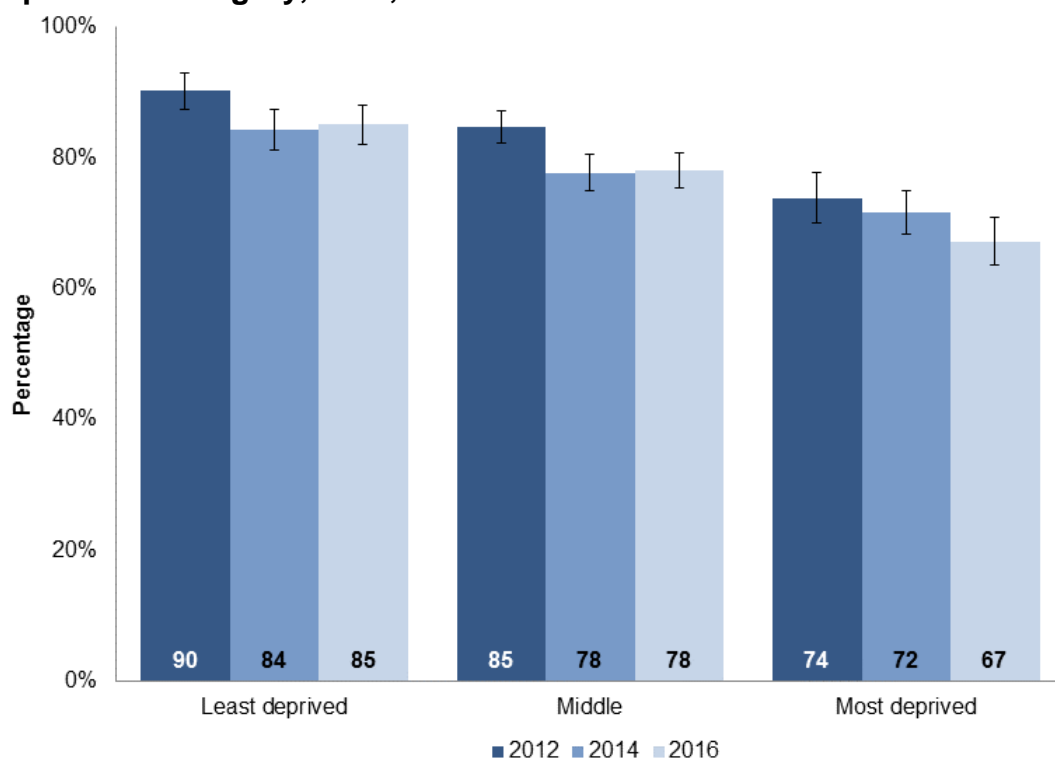
Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	Lower in 2014	No difference	Lower in 2016
P7	Lower in 2014	No difference	No difference
S2	No difference	No difference	No difference

Most deprived category (pupils from the most deprived 30% of datazones)

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	No difference	No difference	Lower in 2016
P7	No difference	No difference	No difference
S2	Lower in 2014	Higher in 2016	No difference

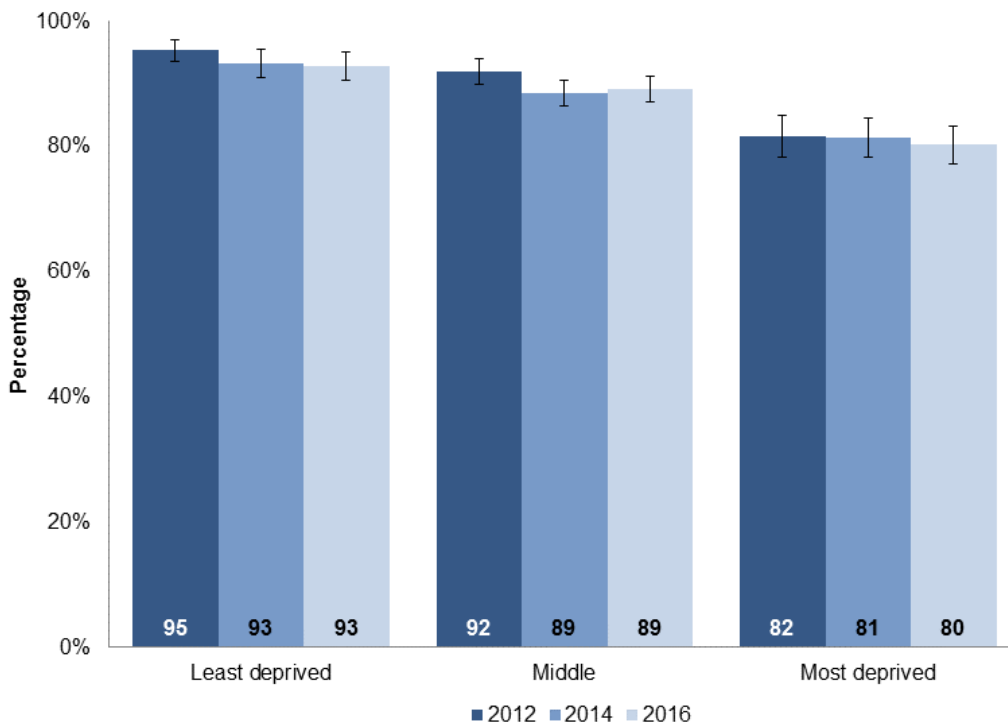
All measures of performance by stage and deprivation were statistically the same in 2016 as in 2014, apart from the most deprived S2 pupils, where the proportion of pupils performing well or very well increased from 68 per cent to 73 per cent.

Chart 3.3: Proportion of P4 pupils performing well or very well in reading by deprivation category, 2012, 2014 and 2016



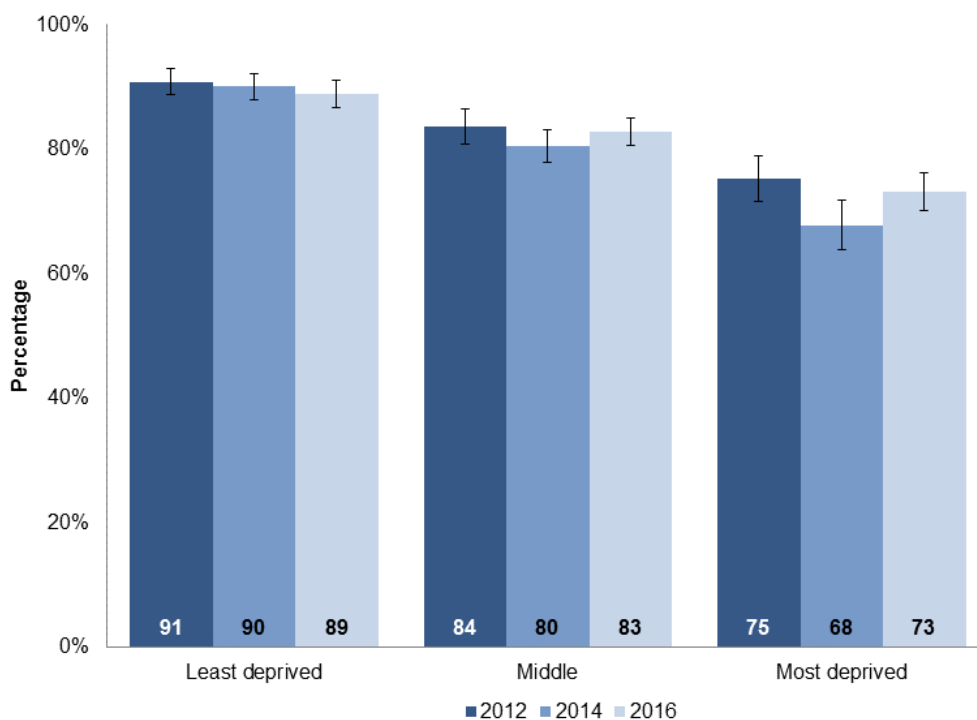
Between 2012 and 2016, there was a decrease in P4 pupils performing well or very well for all deprivation categories. As the results were stable between 2014 and 2016, the overall decrease between 2012 and 2016 can be attributable to the decrease between 2012 and 2014 for the least and middle categories.

Chart 3.4: Proportion of P7 pupils performing well or very well in reading in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage and deprivation



At P7, the proportions of pupils from the least and most deprived areas performing well or very well have been statistically stable between all three surveys. The only change in performance was in the middle deprivation category where performance fell by three percentage points between 2012 and 2014, but was constant between 2014 and 2016 at 89 per cent (Chart 3.4).

Chart 3.5: Proportion of S2 pupils performing well or very well in reading in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage and deprivation



There were no statistical differences between the three surveys for S2 pupils in the least and the middle deprivation categories (Chart 3.5). However, for the most deprived S2 pupils, performance dipped between 2012 and 2014 (eight percentage points) before rising again between 2014 and 2016 (five percentage points). Overall, performance in 2016 (73 per cent of pupils performing well or very well) was statistically similar to that in 2012 (75 per cent).

Table 3.5 shows the performance gap between the least and most deprived pupils in 2016 was statistically similar to 2012, across all stages, even after accounting for changes between intervening years at S2.

Table 3.5: Difference in reading performance by deprivation category in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage

Deprivation gap (least deprived *minus* most deprived), percentage points

Stage	2012	2014	2016
P4	16	13	18
P7	14	12	13
S2	15	22	16

Change in deprivation gap

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	No difference	No difference	No difference
P7	No difference	No difference	No difference
S2	Larger in 2014	Smaller in 2016	No difference

Chapter 4: Writing attainment in 2016

- **Writing performance was highest at P4 and P7 with over 60 per cent of scripts demonstrating pupils were performing well, very well or beyond the level.**
- **Girls outperformed boys in writing at all stages.**
- **Pupils from the least deprived areas performed better in writing than other pupils, across all stages.**

4.1 Assessing writing skills

Half of participating schools were selected to take part in a writing assessment and were asked to submit two pieces of class-based writing for each sampled pupil. The two writing scripts for each pupil were from two different curriculum areas (e.g. social subjects, science); written for two different purposes (e.g. to describe an event, express an opinion); and were selected by teachers to reflect the level at which the pupil was currently working. Guidance on the selection of suitable writing pieces was provided to schools.

Each writing script was assessed by trained, independent assessors and marked according to the five reporting categories described in Table 1.1 (see Section 1.3). Around 110 Writing Assessors completed the 'SSLN Writing Assessor Programme' which was developed by SQA and was accredited with General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) Professional Recognition.

As each script is assessed independently, it is possible for each of a pupil's two scripts to be assigned to a different reporting category (for example, one script is assessed as performing well at the level and the other is assessed as performing beyond the level). As a result, the national performance is calculated at script level for writing (i.e. the proportion of scripts within each of the five reporting categories). This differs from the national performance of reading and listening and talking, which are both calculated at pupil level.

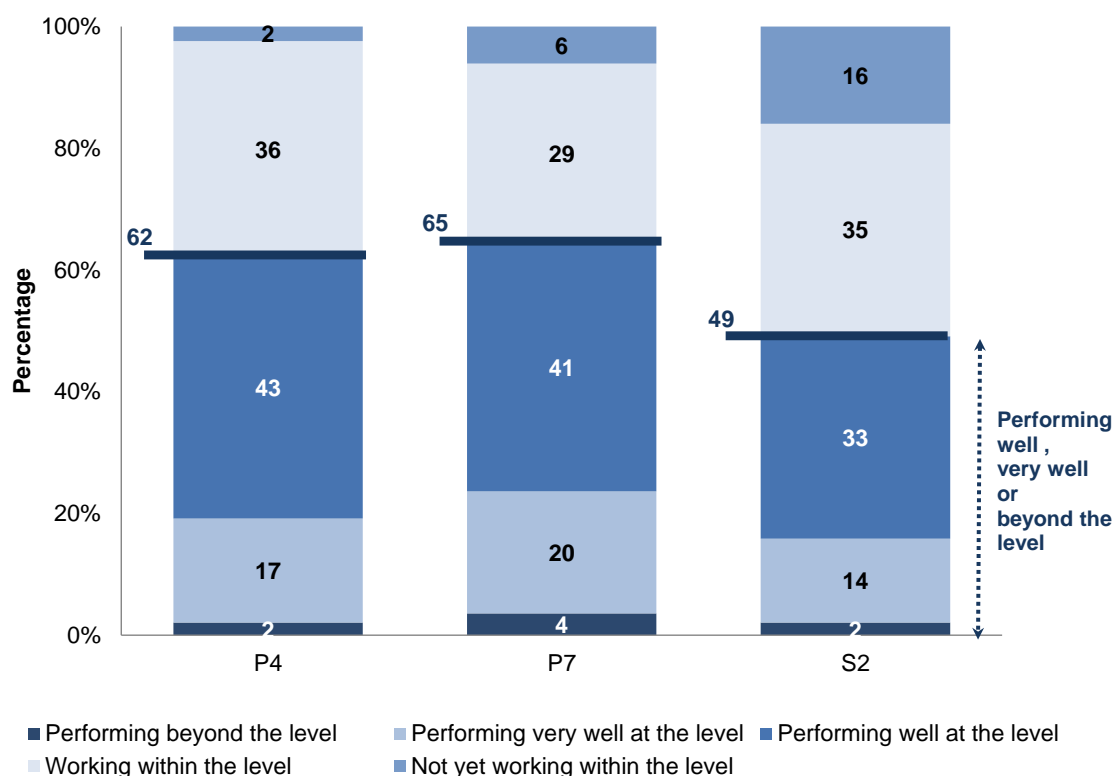
4.2 Writing attainment

Writing performance in 2016 was similar in P4 and P7 where 62 per cent and 65 per cent of scripts, respectively, demonstrated that pupils were performing well, very well or beyond the level. It was lower for S2 at 49 per cent.

The percentage of scripts demonstrating that pupils were not yet working within the level was highest in S2 at 16 per cent. In P4 and P7 this was lower at six and two per cent respectively (Chart 4.1).

The experimental statistics publication 'Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2015/16' also presents a measure of writing performance for P4 and P7 pupils. For more information see Background Note 10.9. The results cannot be compared directly to the SSLN due to the differing methodologies and reporting styles, however, we can see similar writing performance of P7 pupils in both measures but differing performance at P4.

Chart 4.1: Performance in writing, by stage and reporting category

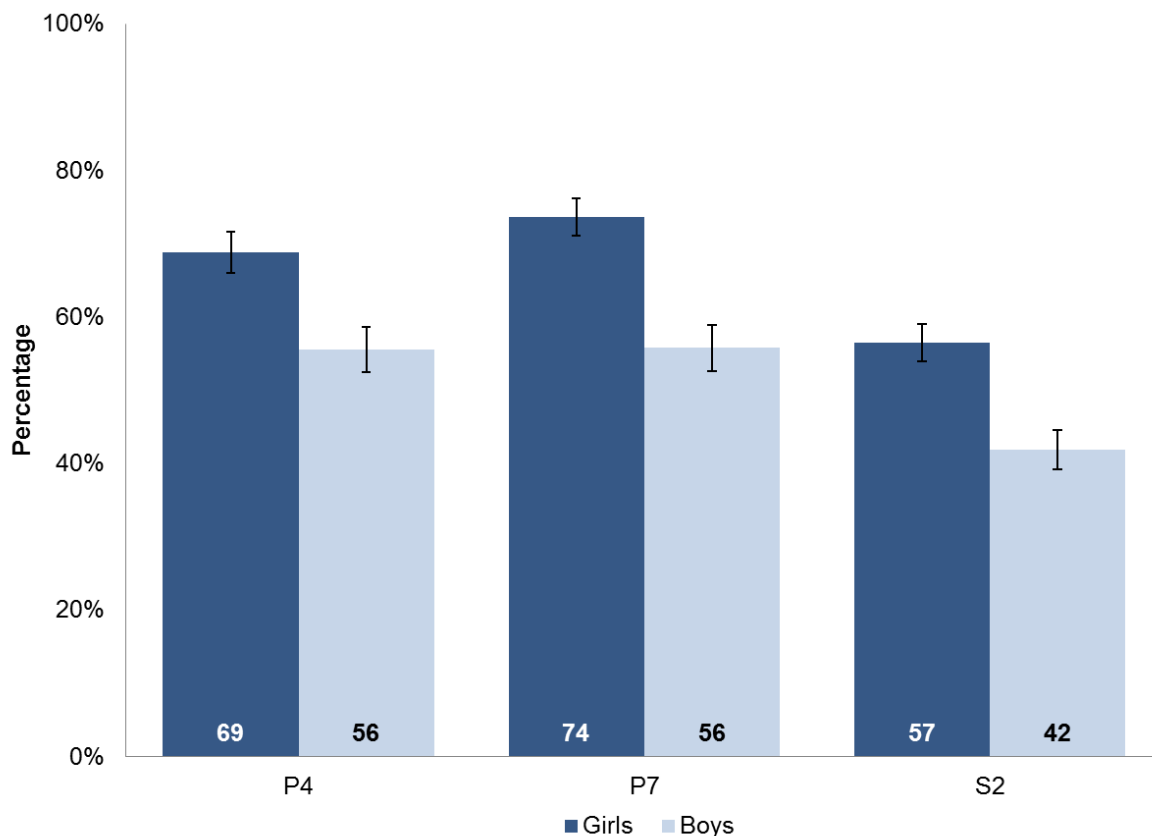


4.3 Attainment by gender

At all stages, the proportion of scripts that demonstrated girls' were performing well, very well or beyond the level was higher than boys' in 2016. The biggest difference in performance in 2016 was at P7 where it was 18 percentage points, whereas P4 had the smallest difference at 13 percentage points (Chart 4.3). This is different from reading attainment where there was no gender difference in P4 but girls outperformed boys in P7 and S2.

The pattern of writing attainment for boys was broadly similar to that for overall scripts for all stages i.e. attainment for boys was similar in P4 and P7 and lower in S2. For girls, there was a significant difference between P4 and P7 attainment that didn't exist for all pupils (P7 performance higher than P4).

Chart 4.2: Proportion of writing scripts demonstrating pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level, by gender and stage



At all stages, there were about twice as many girls' scripts assessed as beyond the level compared to boys. The group with the highest proportion of scripts demonstrating performance beyond the level was P7 girls at five per cent of scripts (two per cent for P7 boys).

Similarly, more than twice as many scripts from boys were assessed as being not yet within the level, compared to scripts submitted by girls, at all stages. At S2, the percentage of scripts from boys demonstrating that pupils were not yet working within the level was 21 per cent compared to ten per cent for girls.

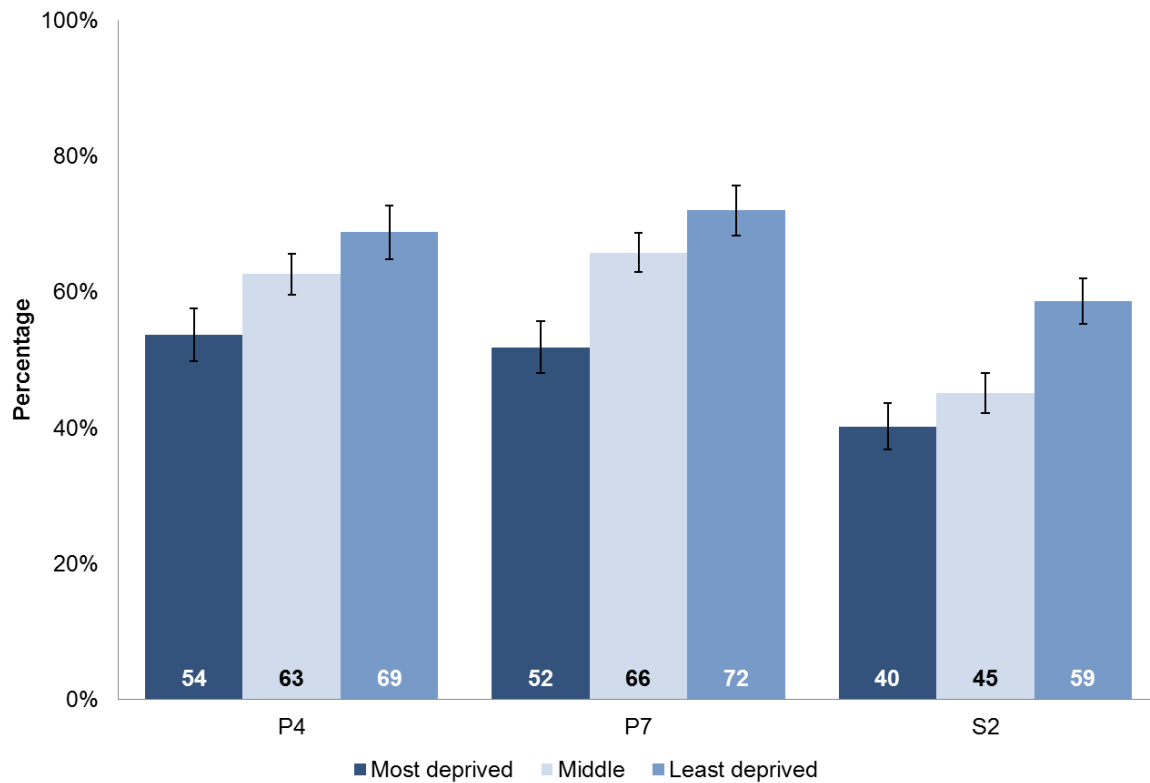
There was evidence that girls outperformed boys at writing across all stages and by all measures (apart from P7, where there was no significant differences in the proportion of scripts assessed as performing well at the level: 43 per cent and 39 per cent for girls and boys respectively).

4.4 Attainment by deprivation

Writing scripts from least deprived pupils demonstrated evidence of higher attainment than those from most deprived pupils, at all stages in 2016.

Chart 4.3 shows the link between performance and deprivation. In all three stages pupils from the least deprived areas did better than those from the middle group who, in turn, did better than those from the most deprived areas. All the differences shown in the chart are statistically significant.

Chart 4.3: Proportion of writing scripts demonstrating pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level, by deprivation category and stage



The performance gap (the difference between the proportion of pupils from the least and most deprived areas performing well, very well or beyond the level) was largest for P7 at 20 percentage points, compared to 18 percentage points at S2 and 15 percentage points at P4.

Chapter 5: Writing attainment over time

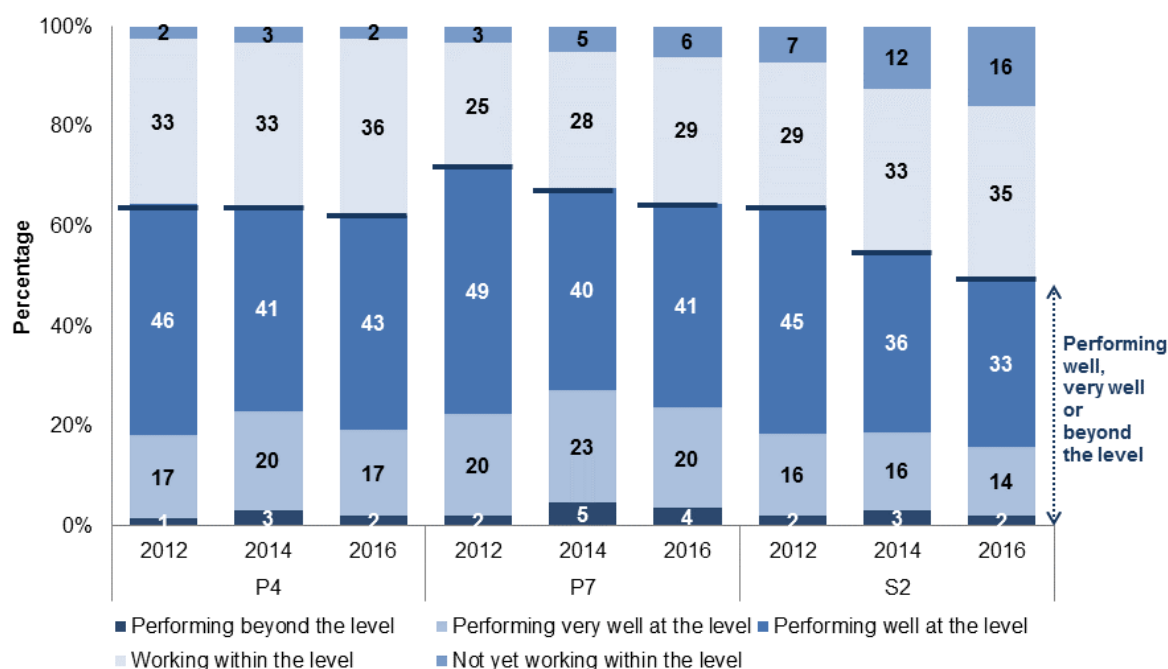
- Writing performance of P4 pupils was similar in 2016 and 2012. Performance of P7 and S2 pupils declined by seven and 15 percentage points respectively, between 2012 and 2016.
- Girls outperformed boys in writing at all stages, in all three literacy surveys. The gender gap in P7 increased between 2012 and 2016. It was unchanged at P4 and S2.
- Pupils from the least deprived areas outperformed pupils from the most deprived areas in writing at all stages in all three surveys. The size of the gap in performance in 2016 was similar to the size of the gap in 2012.

A key objective of the SSLN is to monitor national performance over time in all aspects of literacy, at P4, P7 and S2. This chapter provides key trends in writing over the three literacy surveys (2012, 2014, 2016).

5.1 Writing attainment over time

Chart 5.1 shows writing performance by reporting categories and stage, over the three literacy surveys: 2012, 2014 and 2016.

Chart 5.1: Proportion of writing scripts in each reporting category by stage, 2012, 2014 and 2016



The time series trend varies between stages, Table 5.1 shows which changes over time are statistically significant.

Table 5.1: Difference in proportion of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	No difference	No difference	No difference
P7	Lower in 2014	Lower in 2016	Lower in 2016
S2	Lower in 2014	Lower in 2016	Lower in 2016

The proportion of P4 scripts that show pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level has stayed constant over the three surveys. The small reduction of two percentage points between 2012 and 2016 is not statistically significant.

In contrast, there has been a decline of seven percentage points in performance for P7 from 72 to 65 per cent between 2012 and 2016. In particular, the proportion performing well fell by eight percentage points, very well stayed the same and those performing beyond the level rose two percentage points.

There was also a decline in S2 scripts that demonstrate pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level from 64 per cent in 2012 to 49 per cent in 2016. The proportion of scripts which were assessed as performing well dropped 12 percentage points, very well dropped by three points and beyond the level stayed the same.

The proportion of S2 scripts assessed as not yet working at the level rose from seven per cent in 2012 to 16 per cent in 2016. For S2 it is the rise in the proportion marked not yet working at the level that explains the larger share of the decline in performance.

5.2 Attainment by gender

The pattern of performance by gender over time varied between stages, with only some changes in performance being statistically significant. These changes are displayed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Difference in proportion of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage and gender

Girls

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	No difference	No difference	No difference
P7	Lower in 2014	No difference	No difference
S2	Lower in 2014	Lower in 2016	Lower in 2016

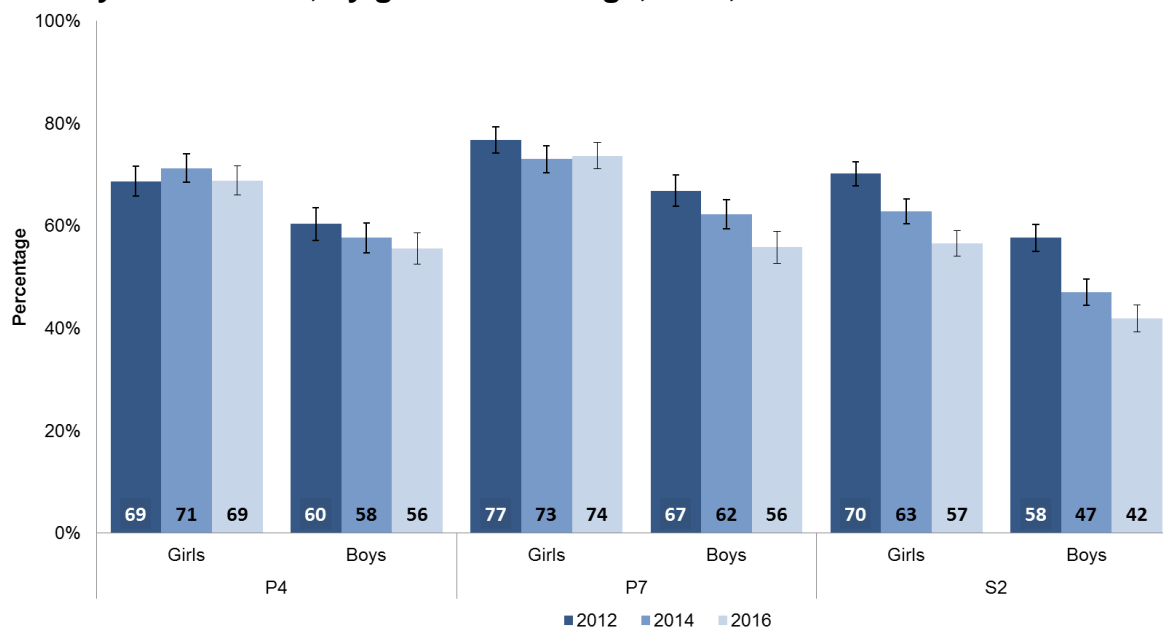
Boys

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	No difference	No difference	Lower in 2016
P7	Lower in 2014	Lower in 2016	Lower in 2016
S2	Lower in 2014	Lower in 2016	Lower in 2016

Girls' performance in P4 and P7 varied little from 2012 to 2016. In S2, however, the proportion of scripts assessed as performing well, very well or beyond the level fell from 70 per cent in 2012 to 57 per cent in 2016.

On the other hand, performance for boys declined across all stages between 2012 and 2016. The size of the declines varied at each stage. For P4 the performance of boys declined five percentage points between 2012 and 2016 (from 60 to 56 per cent (difference due to rounding)). For P7 boys, there was an 11 per cent fall (from 67 to 56 per cent) and S2 boys a 16 per cent fall (from 58 to 42 per cent).

Chart 5.2: Proportion of writing scripts demonstrating pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level, by gender and stage, 2012, 2014 and 2016



Throughout all years of the survey and across all stages girls perform better than boys in writing. The degree to which girls have outperformed boys has increased at P7 (no change at P4 or S2). This increase is mostly explained by declining performance for boys rather than changes in girls' performance.

5.3 Attainment by deprivation

The pattern of performance by deprivation over time is stable, in that a performance gap continues to exist across all stages.

Changes in performance of pupils within each deprivation category varied between stages, with only some changes in performance being statistically significant between the three surveys. These changes are displayed in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Difference in proportion of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage and deprivation

Least deprived category (pupils from the least deprived 30% of datazones)

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	Lower in 2014	No difference	No difference
P7	No difference	No difference	Lower in 2016
S2	Lower in 2014	Lower in 2016	Lower in 2016

Middle deprivation category (pupils from the middle 40% of datazones)

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	No difference	No difference	No difference
P7	No difference	No difference	Lower in 2016
S2	Lower in 2014	Lower in 2016	Lower in 2016

Most deprived category (pupils from the most deprived 30% of datazones)

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	Higher in 2014	Lower in 2016	No difference
P7	No difference	No difference	Lower in 2016
S2	Lower in 2014	No difference	Lower in 2016

In P4 there was no statistically significant difference in performance between 2012 and 2016. In particular, for the least deprived category, although there was a statistically significant fall between 2012 and 2014 this is offset by a small (and itself statistically insignificant) rise between 2014 and 2016. Amongst the most deprived, performance rose from 54 per cent in 2012 to 60 per cent in 2014 but then fell back to 54 per cent in 2016.

The overall results for P7 showed a decrease between 2012 and 2016. This change was reflected throughout all the deprivation categories as performance in the least deprived, middle and most deprived categories decreased by seven, six and nine percentage points respectively.

Similarly, the overall results for S2 showed a decrease between 2012 and 2016 (Chart 5.3). This change was reflected throughout all the deprivation categories as performance in the least deprived, middle and most deprived categories decreased by 15, 15 and 14 percentage points respectively.

Chart 5.3: Proportion of S2 writing scripts demonstrating pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level, by deprivation category and stage, 2012, 2014 and 2016

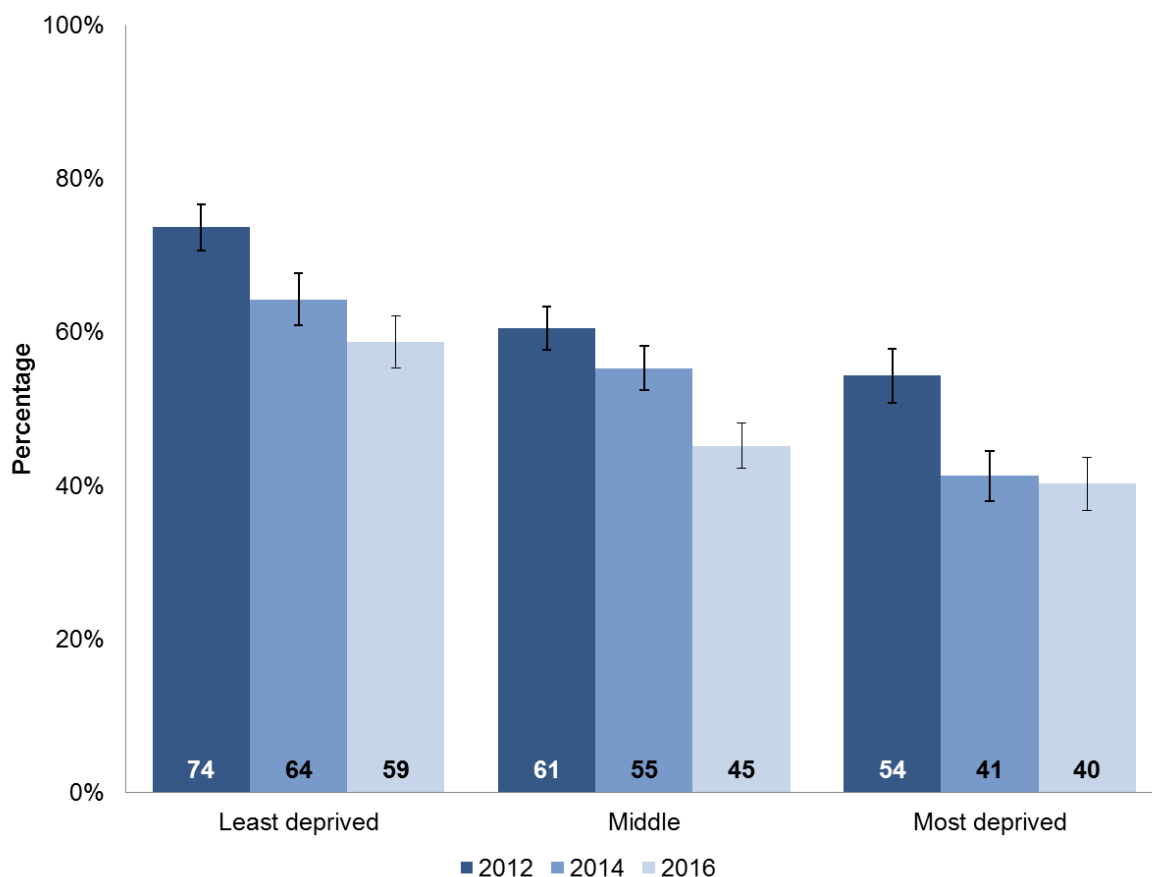


Table 5.4 shows the size of the gap between performance of those in the least and most deprived categories and the results of significance tests on the change in this gap.

Table 5.4: Difference in writing performance by deprivation category in 2012, 2014 and 2016, by stage

Deprivation gap (least deprived *minus* most deprived), percentage points

Stage	2012	2014	2016
P4	19	6	15
P7	18	20	20
S2	19	23	18

Change in deprivation gap

Stage	2012 to 2014	2014 to 2016	2012 to 2016
P4	Smaller in 2014	Larger in 2016	No difference
P7	No difference	No difference	No difference
S2	No difference	No difference	No difference

The deprivation gap in writing attainment did not change significantly between 2012 and 2016 at any stage. Pupils in the least deprived category performed between 15 and 20 percentage points better than their peers in the most deprived category.

Among P4 pupils, the deprivation gap closed from 19 percentage points in 2012 to six percentage points in 2014 before widening to 15 percentage points in 2016. The differing underlying trends in performance of pupils in the least and most deprived categories need to be appreciated when considering these changes. Performance of P4 pupils in the least deprived category was 73 per cent in 2012, 66 per cent in 2014 and finally 69 per cent in 2016. The equivalent figures for the most deprived were 54, 60 and 54 per cent. The small deprivation gap in 2014 is reflective of the best performance of the most deprived P4 pupils found during the survey period coinciding with the weakest performance of the least deprived P4 pupils.

Chapter 6: Listening and talking attainment in 2016

- **Listening and talking performance was highest at P7 with 67 per cent of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level, compared to 60 per cent at P4 and 49 per cent at S2.**
- **Girls outperformed boys in P7. In P4 and S2 there were no significant differences between girls' and boys' performance.**
- **Pupils from the least deprived areas performed better in listening and talking than pupils from the most deprived areas, at all stages.**

6.1 Assessing listening and talking skills

Listening and talking skills are explicitly encompassed within the CfE definition of literacy as important uses of language skills in everyday life. The SSLN was the first large scale national assessment of these skills in Scotland.

Forty per cent of participating schools in Scotland were selected for listening and talking assessments, which took the form of a group discussion. Each group was provided with a task designed to generate discussion that would last around 10 to 15 minutes. The tasks were developed specifically for the SSLN, and each discussion involved three participants². Figure 2 is an example of a group discussion task for use at both P7 and S2 stages.

Each group discussion was assessed, in real time in schools, by a trained, independent Support Assessor who assessed each sampled pupil against each of the five performance categories described in Table 1.1 (see Section 1.3), using guidance developed by SQA, Education Scotland and teaching professionals. Around 120 Support Assessors completed the 'SSLN Support Assessor Programme (Group Discussion)' which was developed by SQA and was accredited with General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) Professional Recognition.

² In some cases, pupils not being assessed as part of the SSLN took part in the group discussion to ensure a large enough group could be formed.

Figure 2: Example of Group Discussion Task ‘Survival’



Your Task:
Imagine that your group has been chosen to take part in a reality TV show.

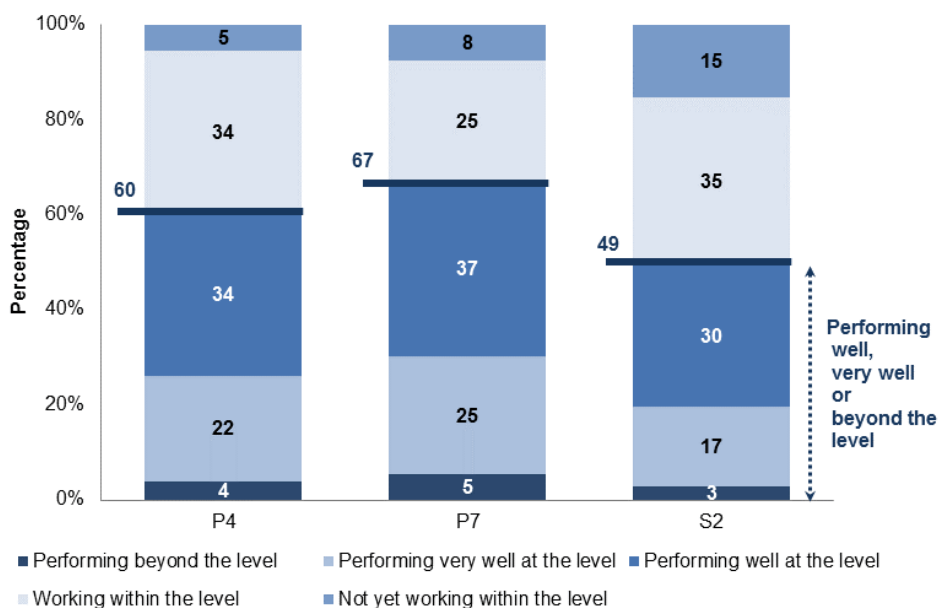
- Talk about what you would need to survive on an island for 3 months.
- Look at the cards, talk about each of them and discard the ones that you don't want.
- Then, arrange the cards in a Diamond 9 pattern on your table, from the **most** important to the **least** (look at the picture).
- Remember to talk about **why** you think they are important and to **listen** to everyone's opinions and to share **your** ideas.

6.2 Listening and talking attainment

The highest proportion of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level in listening and talking was in P7 at 67 per cent, followed by P4 at 60 per cent and S2 at 49 per cent.

Similar proportions of pupils at all three stages were performing beyond the level, at four per cent for P4, five per cent for P7 and three per cent for S2. However, as Chart 6.1 shows, there were substantially more pupils in S2 (15 per cent) who were not yet working within their relevant level compared to P4 and P7 (five per cent and eight per cent respectively).

Chart 6.1: Performance in listening and talking, by stage and reporting category



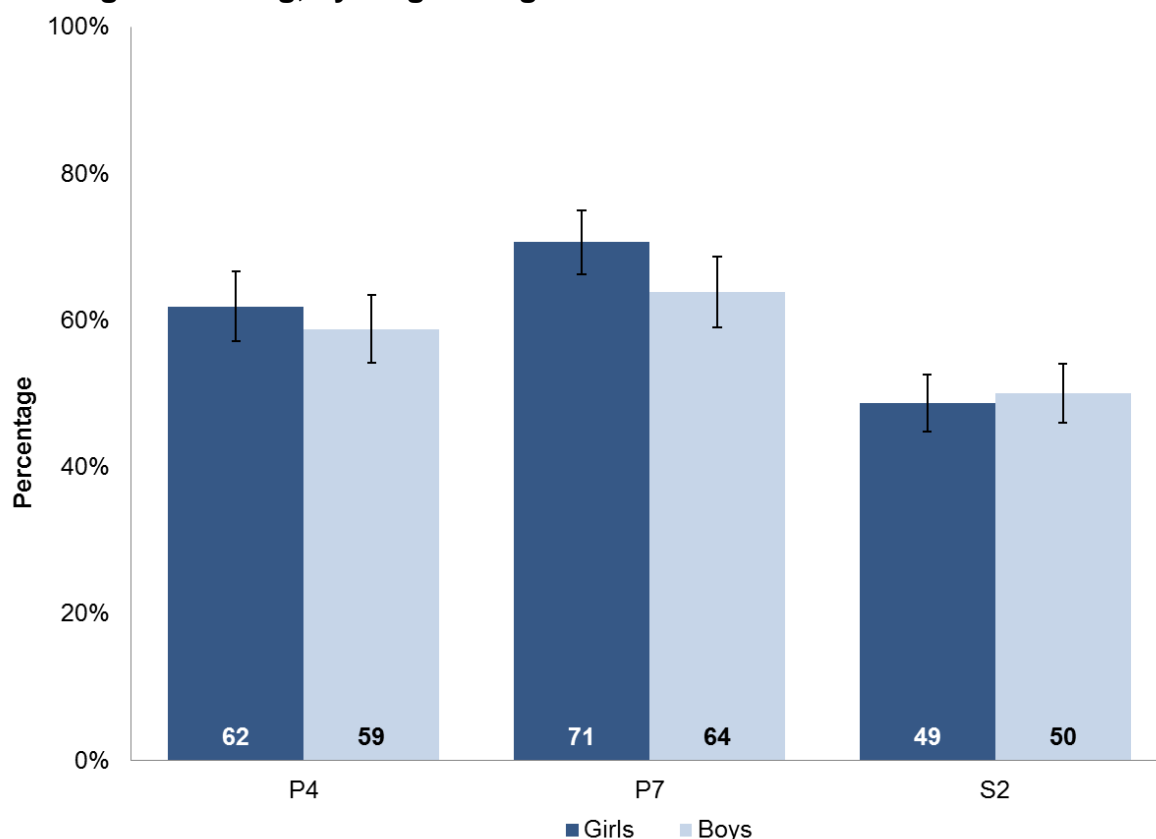
The experimental statistics publication ‘Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Level 2015/16’ also presents a measure of listening and talking performance for P4 and P7 pupils. For more information see Background Note 10.9. The results cannot be compared directly to the SSLN due to the differing methodologies and reporting styles, however, we can see a greater proportion of pupils are assessed as achieving the relevant level than have been assessed as performing well, very well or beyond the level in the SSLN group discussion. The Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels data indicates P4 pupils perform better than P7 pupils but the opposite is shown in the SSLN.

6.3 Attainment by gender

Chart 6.2 shows the proportion of pupils that performed well, very well or beyond the level by stage and gender. Whilst there appears to be differences in performance by gender, the difference is only statistically significant at P7 (seven percentage points), and not at P4 or S2.

This pattern was different from writing, where girls outperformed boys at all three stages, and in reading, where girls outperformed boys at P7 and S2.

Chart 6.2: Proportion of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level in listening and talking, by stage and gender

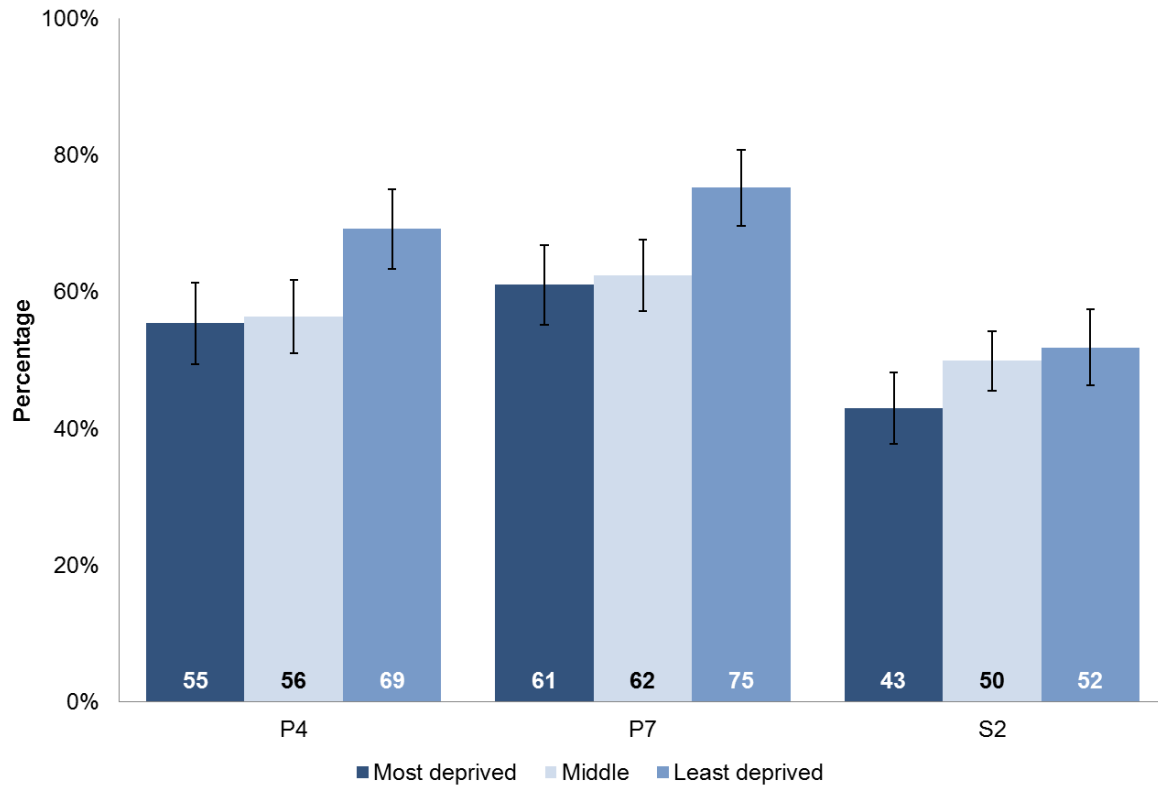


6.4 Attainment by deprivation

In all stages for listening and talking, a higher proportion of pupils from least deprived areas performed well, very well or beyond the level compared to pupils from the most deprived areas (Chart 6.3). This is the same pattern as seen for reading and writing. The performance gap was smallest at S2 at nine percentage points; the difference was 14 percentage points for both P7 and P4.

The link between listening and talking performance and deprivation is slightly different from that of writing and reading in that pupils from the middle category do not outperform the most deprived pupils, except at S2 where pupils from the middle category perform similarly to least deprived pupils.

Chart 6.3: Proportion of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level in listening and talking, by stage and deprivation category



Chapter 7: Listening and talking attainment over time

- Listening and talking performance in 2016 was similar to that in 2014, at all stages.
- Girls outperformed boys in P7 in 2016; there were no other statistically significant differences in performance between girls and boys in either 2014 or 2016.
- Pupils from the least deprived areas outperformed pupils from the most deprived areas at all stages in 2014 and 2016. The size of the gap in performance has not changed between 2014 and 2016.

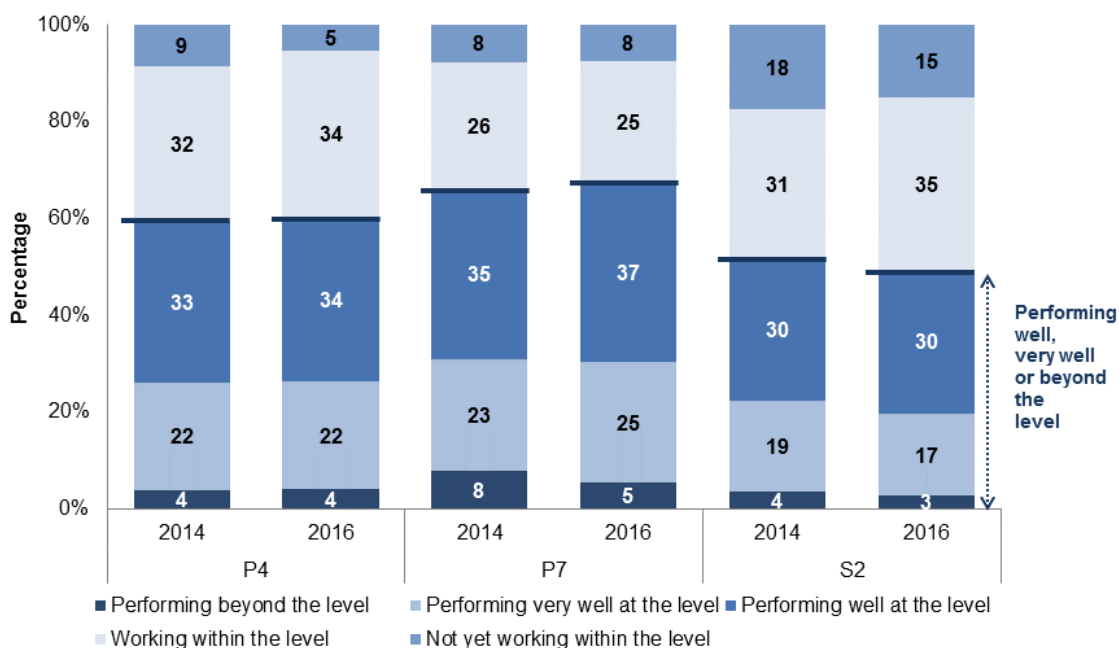
7.1 Methodology

In 2012, there were difficulties in administering the group discussion assessments; mainly due to technical and practical issues. A new approach was implemented for the 2014 and 2016 surveys as described in Section 6.1. Due to the different assessment approaches, no comparisons can be made between 2012 and 2014 listening and talking results, however 2014 and 2016 results are directly comparable.

7.2 Listening and talking attainment over time

Chart 7.1 shows listening and talking performance by reporting categories and stage, over two literacy surveys: 2014 and 2016.

Chart 7.1: Listening and talking performance by reporting category and stage, 2012, 2014 and 2016



There were no statistically significant differences in the proportions of P4, P7 or S2 pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level between 2014 and 2016. In P4, the proportion of pupils who were assessed as not yet working within the level fell from nine per cent in 2014 to five per cent in 2016. In S2, those assessed as working within the level rose from 31 per cent to 35 per cent over the same time period. There were no other significant changes between 2014 and 2016.

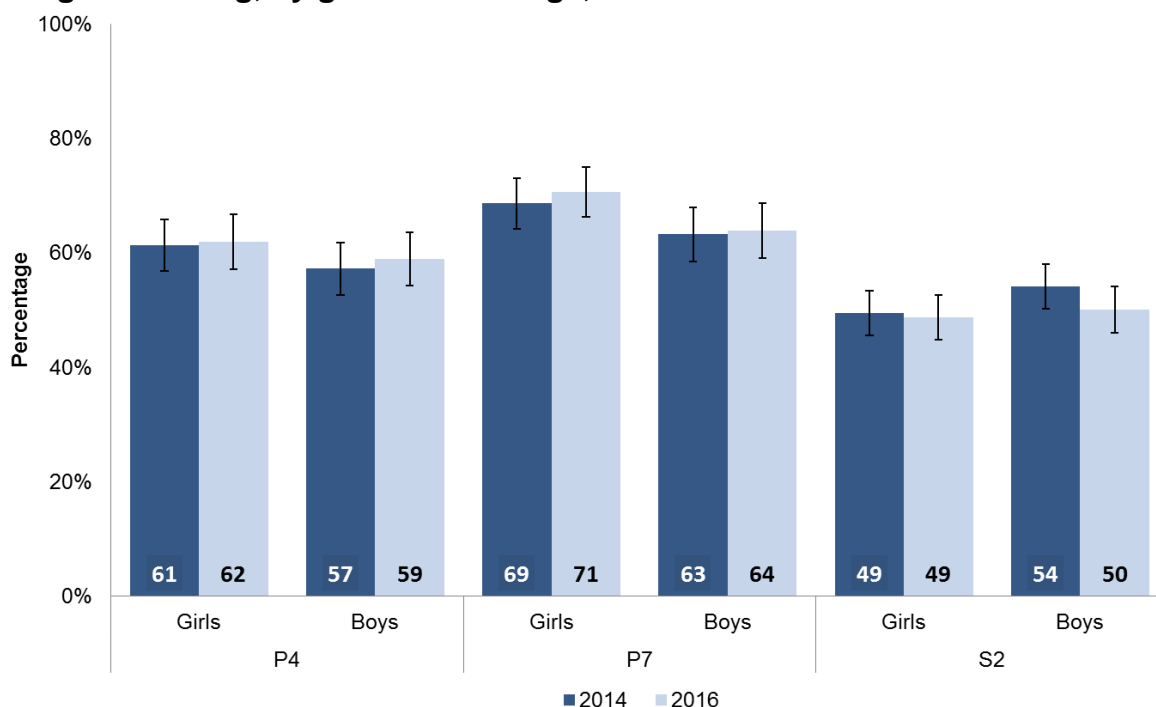
7.3 Attainment by gender

There were no significant changes in the proportion of boys or girls performing well, very well or beyond the level in listening and talking between 2014 and 2016.

For girls, the only significant changes seen in listening and talking performance between 2014 and 2016 are in P4. The proportion of P4 girls performing very well at the level fell seven percentage points whilst those performing well at the level rose eight percentage points.

For boys, there were significant changes in some performance levels at each stage; although there is no obvious pattern that is consistent across the stages. In P4 the proportion of boys performing very well at the level rose seven percentage points whilst those not yet working within the level fell three percentage points. In P7 the proportion of boys performing beyond the level fell four percentage points. Finally, at S2 the proportion of boys working within the level rose five percentage points.

Chart 7.2: Proportion of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level in listening and talking, by gender and stage, 2014 and 2016



The gender gap in performance that exists at P7 (not P4 or S2) is statistically similar to the size of the gap in 2014.

7.4 Attainment by deprivation

There were no significant changes in the proportion of pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level in listening and talking for any deprivation category.

Among the least deprived, the proportion of P7 pupils performing very well at the level rose nine per cent and, at S2, the proportion of pupils working within the level rose eight per cent. There are no other significant differences between 2014 and 2016 performance for the pupils from the least deprived category.

In the middle category the only significant change was a four per cent fall in the proportion of P7 pupils performing beyond the level.

Among the most deprived, the proportion of P7 pupils performing well at the level rose nine per cent. Whereas at S2, the proportion of pupils performing very well at the level fell six per cent. There are no other significant differences between 2014 and 2016 performance for the pupils from the most deprived category.

Chart 7.3: Proportion of S2 pupils performing well, very well or beyond the level, by deprivation category and stage, 2014 and 2016

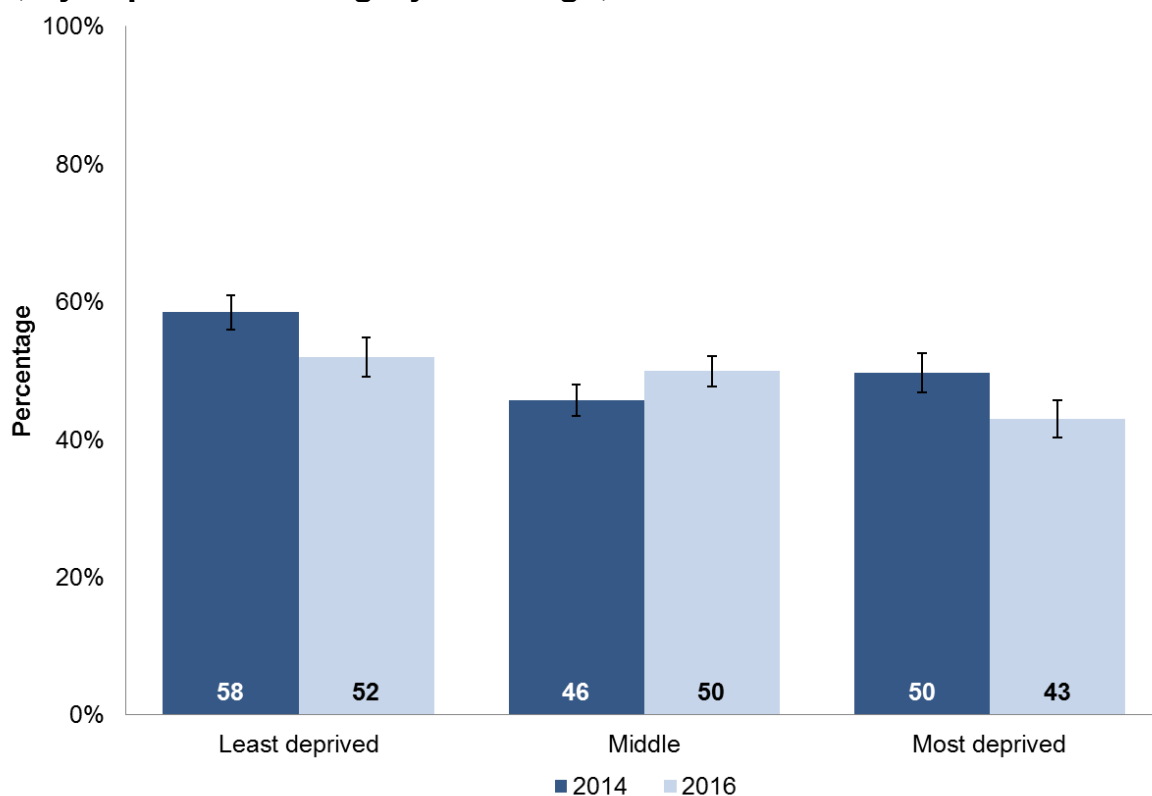


Table 7.2: Difference in performance by listening and talking deprivation category in 2014 and 2016, by stage

Deprivation gap (least deprived *minus* most deprived)

Stage	2014	2016	2014 to 2016
P4	14	14	No difference
P7	13	14	No difference
S2	9	9	No difference

The pattern of performance by deprivation over time is stable, in that a performance gap continues to exist across all stages. There were no significant changes in the size of the deprivation gap in listening and talking between 2014 and 2016.

Chapter 8: Pupil questionnaire

- The majority of pupils (94 per cent and over) agreed they wanted to do well in their learning and felt they usually did well at school, in each of the six surveys.
- Over 65 per cent of pupils reported that someone at home asked them what they did at school very often and told them that working hard at school is important, in each of the six surveys.
- In 2016, S2 pupils were more likely to read on electronic devices and use the internet outside of school compared to primary pupils. S2 pupils also reported having the highest confidence using ICT to do school work.

All pupils participating in the SSLN were asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire focused on factors that are likely to affect learning, such as pupil attitudes and experiences in class. It should be noted that: 'don't know' responses were removed prior to analysis unless otherwise stated; and where 'agreed' is used this refers to pupils who responded either 'agree a lot' or 'agree a little'.

8.1 Attitudes to learning – classroom activities

Pupils were asked how often they participated in a range of activities in the classroom. 'Listen to the teacher talk to the class about a topic' has consistently been the most common activity for P4 and S2 pupils over the six SSLN surveys. For P7, this was highest for five years out of six (in 2012 the most common activity was 'Discuss what you are learning'). In 2016, around two thirds of pupils stated they 'listened to the teacher talk to the class about a topic' 'very often' (64, 67 and 69 per cent in P4, P7 and S2 respectively).

Similarly the second most common activity across all six survey years for P4 and S2 pupils was consistently 'Working on your own' (58 per cent for P4; 57 per cent for S2 in 2016). For P7 pupils, however, the second most common activity was generally 'Discuss what you are learning' (61 per cent in 2016), with 'Working on your own' generally the third most common.

At primary stages, the biggest reported increase between 2011 and 2016 was 'Working through a book or a worksheet on your own'. For P4 and P7 this has increased by 10 and 11 percentage points to 47 and 49 per cent respectively. At S2, more pupils are reporting they 'Work with other pupils', an increase from 24 to 32 per cent.

The biggest decrease in classroom activities was using computers for P4 and P7 between 2011 and 2016. The proportion of P4 pupils stating they used computers in the classroom 'very often' decreased from 34 to 28 per cent and for P7 decreased from 38 to 31 per cent.

8.2 Attitudes to learning and literacy

Pupils were asked how much they agreed with a series of statements related to attitudes to learning, two examples of which are shown in Tables 8.1 and Table 8.2. The results over the six years show engagement with learning has been consistently high. The tables show the proportion of pupils agreeing with such statements tended to be around, or

higher than, 90 per cent. There has been some fluctuation but no more than three percentage points over the six years.

Table 8.1: Proportion of pupils who ‘agree a lot or a little’ to the statement ‘I want to do well in my learning’

Stage	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
P4	97	97	98	96	97	96
P7	98	98	98	98	98	97
S2	97	97	97	96	97	96

Table 8.2: Proportion of pupils who ‘agree a lot or a little’ to the statement ‘I try to find out the answers on my own’

Stage	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
P4	96	96	97	95	96	94
P7	96	97	96	95	96	96
S2	92	93	94	93	93	93

The percentage of pupils who agreed a lot or a little with the statement ‘I don’t like learning’ was 15 per cent for P4, 16 per cent for P7 and 21 per cent for S2 in 2016. There was no significant difference for P7 and S2 to 2011 reported results, whereas there was a small increase of four percentage points for P4.

The biggest disparity between stages was in relation to the statement that ‘Learning is boring’. In 2016, 40 per cent of S2 pupils agreed with this statement, compared to 25 per cent at P7 and 16 per cent at P4. Across all six survey years, the S2 rate has always been at least double that of P4.

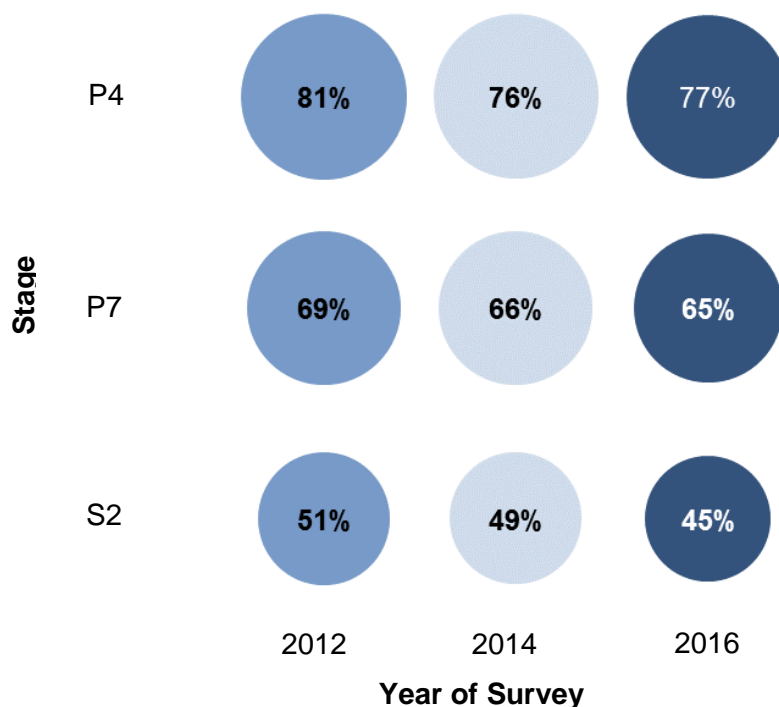
Pupils have consistently agreed that what they are learning in class was useful outside school, with over 90 per cent of primary and over 80 per cent of secondary pupils in agreement. This consistency can also be seen when P7 and S2 pupils are asked about how learning affects their future. Across all surveys, the vast majority agreed with the following statement ‘I learn many things at school that will help me get a job.’ and ‘What I learn is important because I need it for what I want to study later on’.

In literacy years (2012, 2014 and 2016) pupils were asked about their attitude to aspects of literacy.

In 2016, pupils at all stages agreed most positively to the statement ‘I enjoy reading’. P4 was highest with 89 per cent, followed by P7 at 78 per cent and 61 per cent for S2. This was consistent over all three surveys, with only a small change in proportion from the 2016 figures (less than three percentage points).

P4 pupils were more positive about talking to other people about things that they have read. This is shown in Chart 8.1, for each survey P4 pupils are 1.5 times more positive than S2 pupils.

Chart 8.1: Proportion of pupils who ‘agree a lot or a little’ with the statement ‘I like talking to other people about things I have read’ by stage in 2012, 2014, and 2016



Around a third of primary pupils in all three surveys agreed that they only read ‘in school or for homework’. This was higher in S2, ranging between 47 to 50 per cent, which ties in with around 45 per cent of S2 pupils who think reading was boring.

8.3 Pupil engagement with teachers and parents/carers

Pupils were also asked about teachers’ practices in the classroom. The most common practices being undertaken ‘very often’ were ‘Telling you what you are going to learn about before you start working’ (81, 89 and 73 per cent at P4, P7 and S2, respectively). In the last six surveys this has been the highest reported teacher practice by the pupils at all stages, with primary sectors consistently over 80 per cent and S2 over 70 per cent.

A similar pattern can be seen for ‘Encouraging you to work hard’, over the six surveys this has the second highest rates recorded, with P7 consistently over 80 per cent; P4 ranging between 67 and 75 per cent and S2 between 64 and 68 per cent of pupils reporting teachers did this ‘very often’.

More than two-fifths of pupils reported that teachers in the primary sector explained to pupils how they would know when they have done well very often. This has been consistent over the six surveys. This tended to be lower for S2 pupils (between 28 to 30 per cent).

Pupils were also asked how often someone at school talked to them about their learning. For all stages, this has increased between 2011 and 2016. For P4 this was an increase of eight percentage points, four at P7 and three at S2. In 2016, the percentage of pupils who reported this happening very often was 34, 27 and 18 per cent (P4, P7 and S2 respectively). Over half of all pupils for all stages in 2016 reported that someone talks to them about their learning ‘sometimes’, and over a quarter of secondary pupils reporting ‘hardly ever or never’.

The extent of engagement in the home has been constant since 2011. In all the surveys, pupils have been asked how often does someone at home:

- ask you what you did in school
- help you with your homework if you need help
- tell you that working hard at school is important.

Generally, at least half of pupils have reported that someone at home engages with them about school ‘very often’.

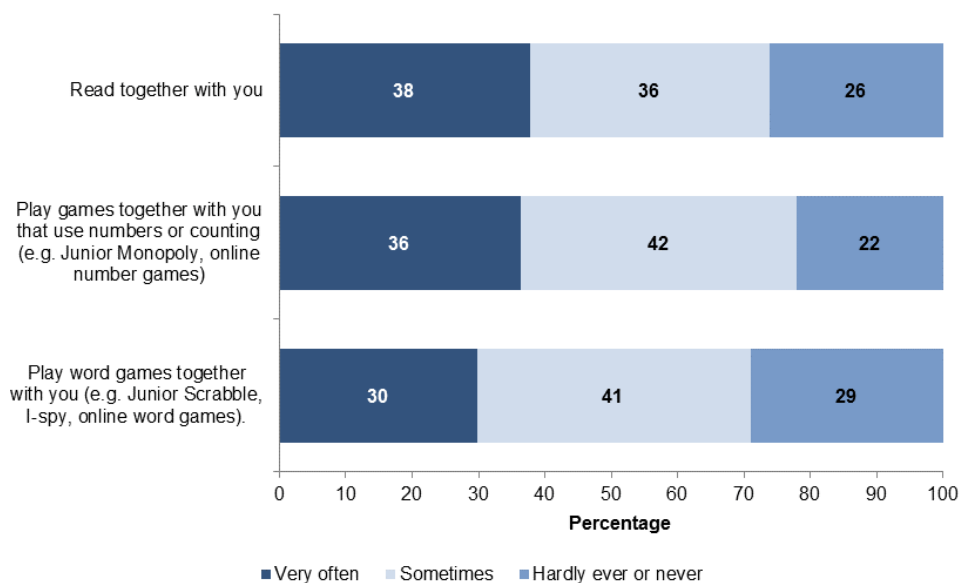
In 2016, P7 pupils tended to respond more positively to the question ‘How often someone asked you what you did at school’ (78 per cent responded ‘very often’) compared with P4 and S2 (both 71 per cent). For the primary sector, there was no change between 2011 and 2016 but there was an increase of four percentage points at S2. So by 2016, seven out ten pupils had someone at home regularly asking them what they did in school.

In 2016, at all stages ‘How often does someone at home help you with your homework’ was least prevalent compared to the other two statements. The highest proportion of pupils responding ‘very often’ was P7 pupils at 65 per cent, followed by S2 at 59 per cent and P4 at 53 per cent.

In 2016, 77 per cent of P7 and S2 pupils reported that someone at home told them school was important ‘very often’ (65 per cent at P4). For P7 and S2 there has been no significant change in responses to this question between 2011 and 2016, for P4 there was a slight decrease of four percentage points in those saying this happens very often.

Some new questions were asked of P4 pupils in the 2016 survey on how often someone at home encouraged activities that promote literacy and numeracy skills. Playing games together that use numbers or counting was the most popular with 78 per cent reporting this happened very often or sometimes. Someone at home was more likely to read with a P4 pupil (38 per cent reported this activity as very often) than play words games (30 per cent).

Chart 8.2: Proportion of P4 pupils who had someone a home who.....



8.4 Activities in and out of school

Since 2015, the SSLN pupil questionnaire has been modular in design. The 2016 modules were Activities Outside of School (last asked in 2014) and Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in school (last asked in 2015). In 2015, a module on Behaviour in School was also asked.

In 2016, some new questions were introduced into the Activities Outside of School module. For example, all pupils were asked if they ‘Go to a library or mobile library’ outside of school time. There was a five percentage point difference between pupils of each stage who responded ‘very often’ to this question (20, 15 and 10 per cent for P4, P7 and S2 respectively). P4 pupils were also asked how often they tell the time outside school and how often they write or type. Around half selected ‘very often’ for telling the time and around a third for write or type.

In 2016, it was the first time pupils were asked about reading information on electronic devices such as tablets, Kindles, phones etc. S2 pupils saw the highest percentage of all the stages with 40 per cent reporting that they did this ‘very often’. In terms of the range of reading undertaken, S2 pupils were more likely to read online (31 per cent) and read directions/instructions (26 per cent) than novels (22 per cent) or reference books (14 per cent). Primary pupils were more likely to read novels for enjoyment (44 and 33 per cent of P4 and P7 pupils respectively).

Table 8.3: Proportion of pupils who responded ‘very often’ to the statements: (ordered by S2 response).

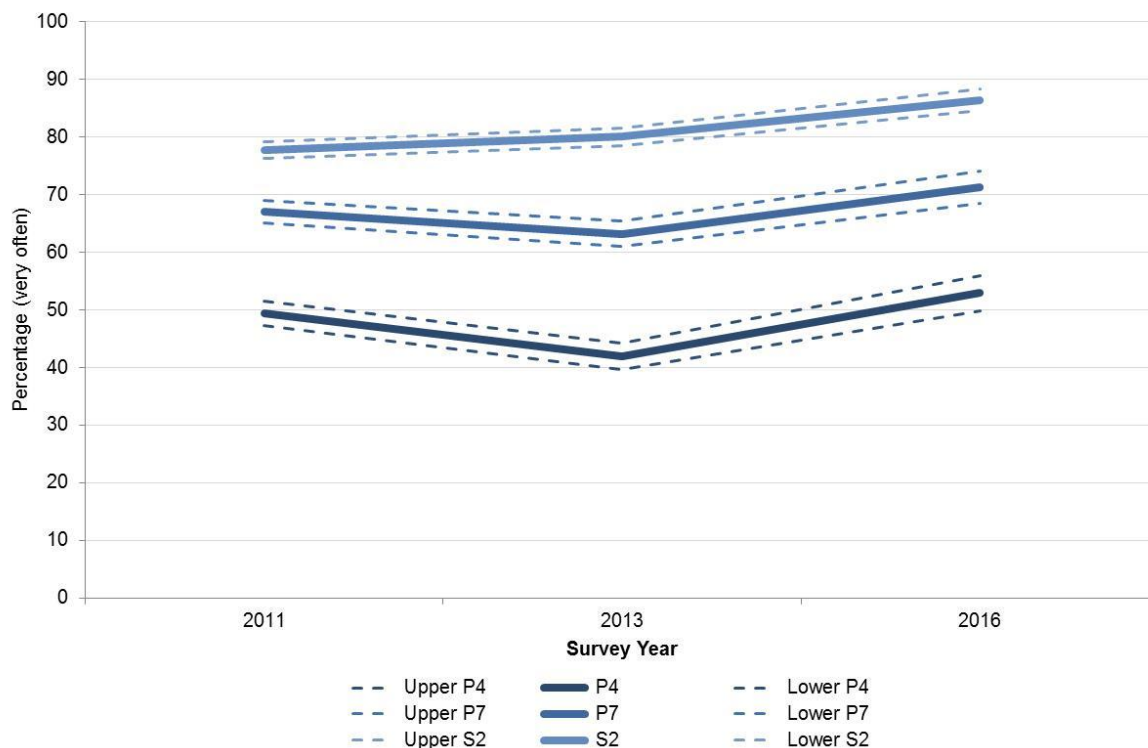
	P4 (%)	P7 (%)	S2 (%)
I read using an electronic device (for example, a Kindle, a tablet or a smart phone).	33	30	40
I read online (for example, web pages or blogs).	21	25	31
I read directions or instructions (for example, to learn how to play a game or download music) ¹ .	-	32	26
I read storybooks (novels) for enjoyment.	44	33	22
I read books that explain things (for example, books about your favourite sports person or animals).	38	25	14
I read magazines ¹ .	-	18	12
I read comics for enjoyment.	27	17	12
I read newspapers ¹ .	-	8	8

¹P4 pupils not asked this question.

The most popular activities outside of school, as reported by primary pupils over five survey years, were ‘I play or talk with friends’ or ‘I play sports’. P4 pupils reported over 70 per cent played and talked to friends ‘very often’ whereas for P7 pupils this was nearly 80 per cent. Between 62 and 66 per cent of primary pupils reported they played sports very often over the five years. For S2 these were also the most popular choices with over 70 per cent of pupils that played or talked with friends, though responses to playing sports was lower than primary pupils ranging from 51 to 53 per cent.

Some of the questions have been asked in three surveys (2011, 2013, and 2016) and the results for 'I use the internet' outside of school was different for each stage (Chart 8.3). For all stages the internet usage has increased between 2011 and 2016.

Chart 8.3 Proportion of pupils who use the internet 'very often' by stage in 2011, 2013 and 2016



Note: Confidence intervals are denoted by dashed lines around the mean estimate (solid line).

The proportion of pupils who report watching television and DVDs has declined between 2011 and 2016 for all three stages to around a third of P4 and S2 pupils and to about a quarter of P7 pupils. This may be due to the increase in television and film content being viewed or streamed online, following the growth of the availability of these services since the beginning of the decade.

In 2015 and 2016, pupils were asked about their use of ICT in general (both in classroom and at home) to assist with literacy and/or numeracy. In 2016, P7 and S2 pupils were most likely to use computers, tablets, etc. to do topic or project work. Half of P7 pupils (53 per cent) and 45 per cent of S2 pupils reported they did this 'very often'. The highest reported use of ICT by P4 pupils was completing work on their own (50 per cent). Over a third of all pupils in both surveys reported using computer/tablets 'very often' to do their homework.

In 2016, S2 pupils reported that they were most confident using ICT to find out information/carry out research and for typing or editing work (95 and 93 per cent respectively). A lower proportion of pupils across all stages reported they were confident creating tables and charts: 72, 75, 78 per cent (P4, P7 and S2 respectively).

When pupils were asked about their attitudes to using ICT, there was no significant difference between the results in 2015 and 2016 apart from P7 pupils. There was a slight

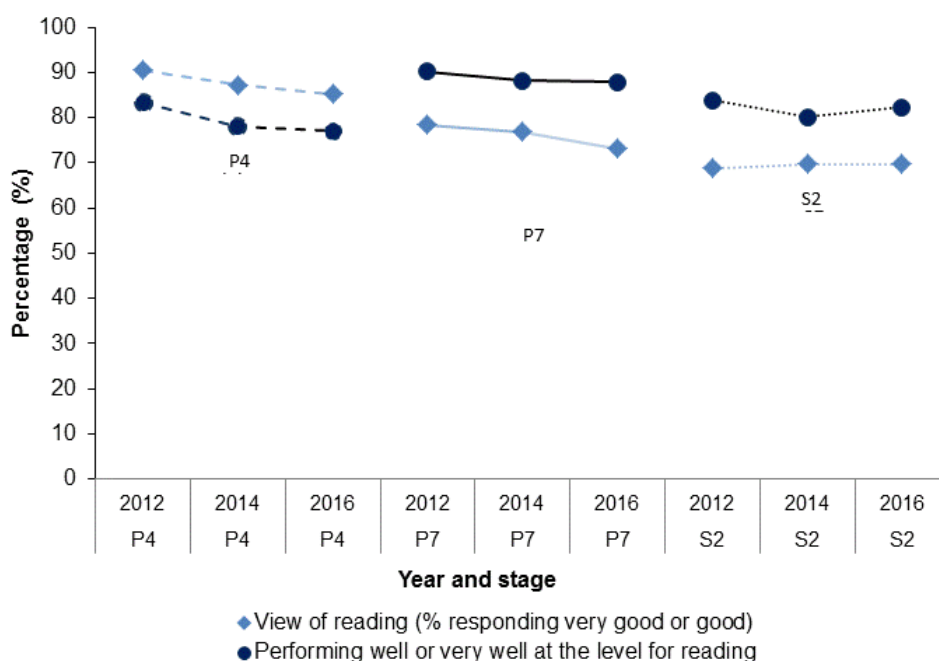
increase from 16 to 19 per cent who agreed that they find tasks using a computer/tablet hard. In 2016, P7 pupils were the least likely to find working with ICT boring in school at 13 per cent (18 and 23 per cent for P4 and S2 respectively). In both 2015 and 2016 and at all stages, over 90 per cent of pupils agreed that they enjoy doing school work on the computer and usually do well in these tasks.

8.5 Links between attitudes and attainment

The results showed evidence of a difference between pupils' views on their ability in literacy and their actual performance in the SSLN. Chart 8.4 illustrates the difference between pupils' views on their reading ability (proportion of pupils who thought they were good or very good) and the assessment results (proportion of pupils who performed well or very well in reading).

Over the three literacy surveys, P4 pupils viewed their ability more positively in reading than P7 and S2. P4 pupils also rated their ability higher than their assessment results would suggest, though this was not the case for P7 and S2 pupils.

Chart 8.4: Difference between pupils' views on their reading ability and performance, by stage and year



In writing, pupils from all stages viewed their ability higher than the writing results would indicate (Chart 8.5); with the smallest discrepancy at P7. Pupils' attitudes towards their writing ability have stayed relatively stable over the three surveys for each stage, with the biggest decrease being five percentage points at P4 between 2012 and 2016.

Pupils were asked to rate their ability in their listening skills independently from talking. They mapped very closely to each other (Chart 8.6), apart from S2 in 2016 where pupils rated their ability in listening higher than that of talking (four percentage points). Similar to writing, all pupils viewed their ability higher than the listening and talking results would suggest. In all six surveys, pupils were very positive in their attitude to learning, it is only P7 and S2 reading where pupil's performance exceeds perceived ability.

Chart 8.5: Difference between pupils' views on their writing ability and performance, by stage and year

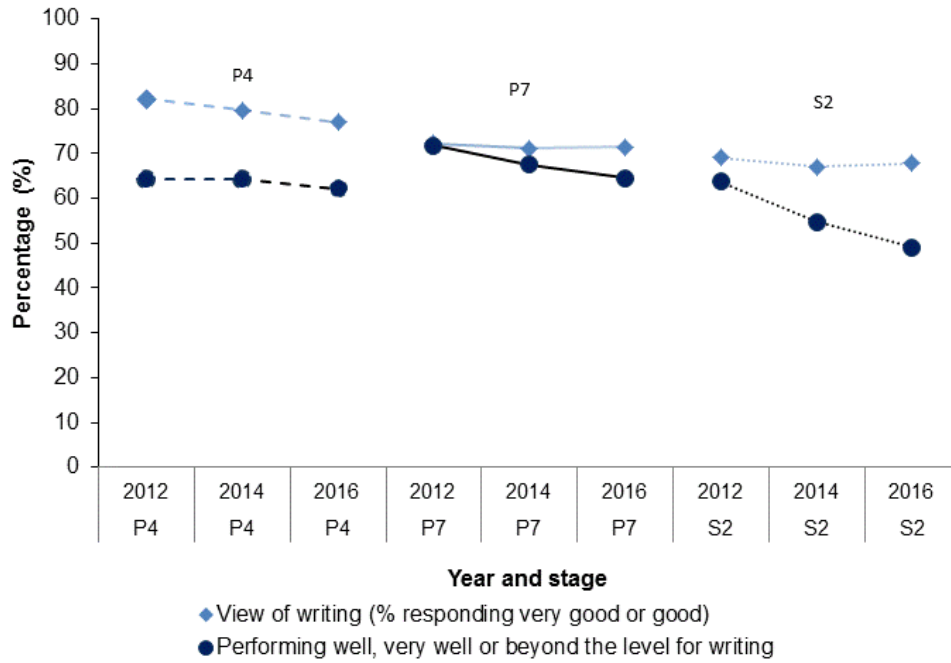
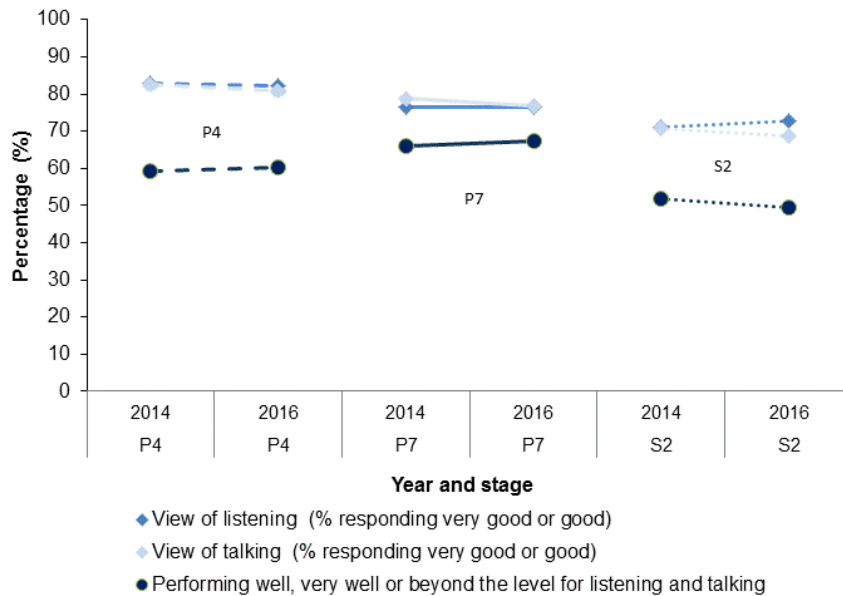


Chart 8.6: Difference between pupils' views on their listening and talking ability and performance, by stage and year



Chapter 9: Teacher questionnaire

- **Teachers reported that pupils work collaboratively in class, often working in groups and discussing what they are learning, as well as working on their own or being taught with the class as a whole.**
- **Teachers are confident in their ability to use ICT and believe it has a positive impact on literacy.**
- **Primary and secondary English teachers are confident in delivering the CfE literacy experiences and outcomes.**

The teacher questionnaire was distributed to all P4 class teachers in half of participating primary schools and all P7 teachers in the remaining half of primary schools. In secondary schools, questionnaires were given to ten teachers in each school: two S2 English teachers and two S2 teachers from each of four broad curriculum groupings:

- Mathematics, Science and Technology
- Social Studies, Religious and Moral Education (RME) and Health & Wellbeing
- Expressive Arts and Languages
- Support for Learning (SfL).

Primary and secondary non-English questionnaires focused on one of reading, writing or listening and talking, whereas secondary English questionnaires covered all three literacy organisers.

9.1 Classroom activities and resources

Teachers were asked how often pupils in their classes spend time doing a range of activities. The results for primary teachers showed little variation across all six survey years. In each year at least 70 per cent of teachers reported that on most days pupils 'worked quietly on their own' or 'talked about what they are learning in pairs/groups' or 'were taught with the whole class together'. These were consistently the three most common activities. Pupils were least likely to 'give a talk to the class or a small group', 'work outside the classroom' or 'watch or talk about videos/DVDs'. Fewer than 10 per cent of primary teachers reported that pupils did these activities on most days in any year from 2011 to 2016.

Results for secondary English teachers show similar results with over 90 per cent of respondents reporting that on most days pupils 'worked quietly on their own', 'were taught with the whole class together' or 'talked about what they are learning in pairs/groups'. There was little change in the reported classroom activities over the three cycles of the literacy survey (2012, 2014, and 2016). However one activity did change markedly in that time; in 2012, 53 per cent of secondary English teachers reported that textbooks were used 'most days/most weeks' which fell to just 34 per cent in 2016. The same result did not apply to secondary Maths teachers with 96 per cent reporting use of textbooks 'most days/most weeks' in 2011, which is statistically similar to the 2015 figure of 94 per cent.

Teachers were also asked about the resources they used when focusing on literacy in 2012, 2014 and 2016 (or numeracy in 2011, 2013 and 2015). For primary teachers, the

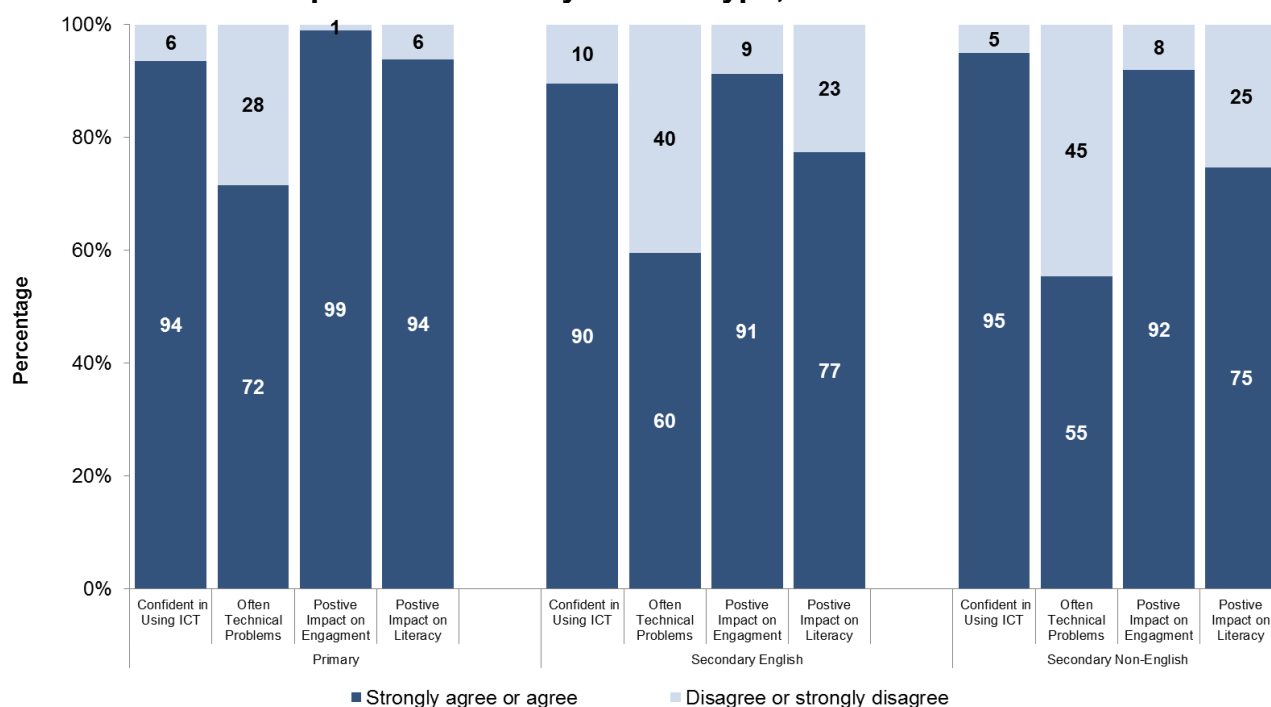
resources used most often were very similar across all years and across both literacy and numeracy. They included ‘Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes’, ‘interactive whiteboards’ and ‘materials you have developed yourself’. In all cases over 90 per cent of teachers reported using these resources every day, most days or most weeks.

There was a difference in the use of commercially produced materials; when focusing on numeracy over 97 per cent of primary teachers used these every day, most days or most weeks but when focusing on literacy that dropped by around 10 percentage points. This difference becomes even more pronounced in secondary school; over 95 per cent of secondary Maths teachers used commercially produced materials every day, most days or most weeks compared to less than half of secondary English teachers in each year for which data is available.

9.2 Teachers use of ICT

Teachers were asked about their use of and opinions on ICT. Chart 9.1 shows that in 2016 large proportions (over 90 per cent) of primary and secondary teachers expressed confidence in their abilities to use ICT in class. They were also confident that its use had a positive impact on pupils engagement in their learning and on their literacy skills. However, more than half of secondary teachers agree that there are often technical problems with ICT equipment available in class. This rises to over 70 per cent for primary teachers.

Chart 9.1: Teachers opinions on ICT by teacher type, 2016

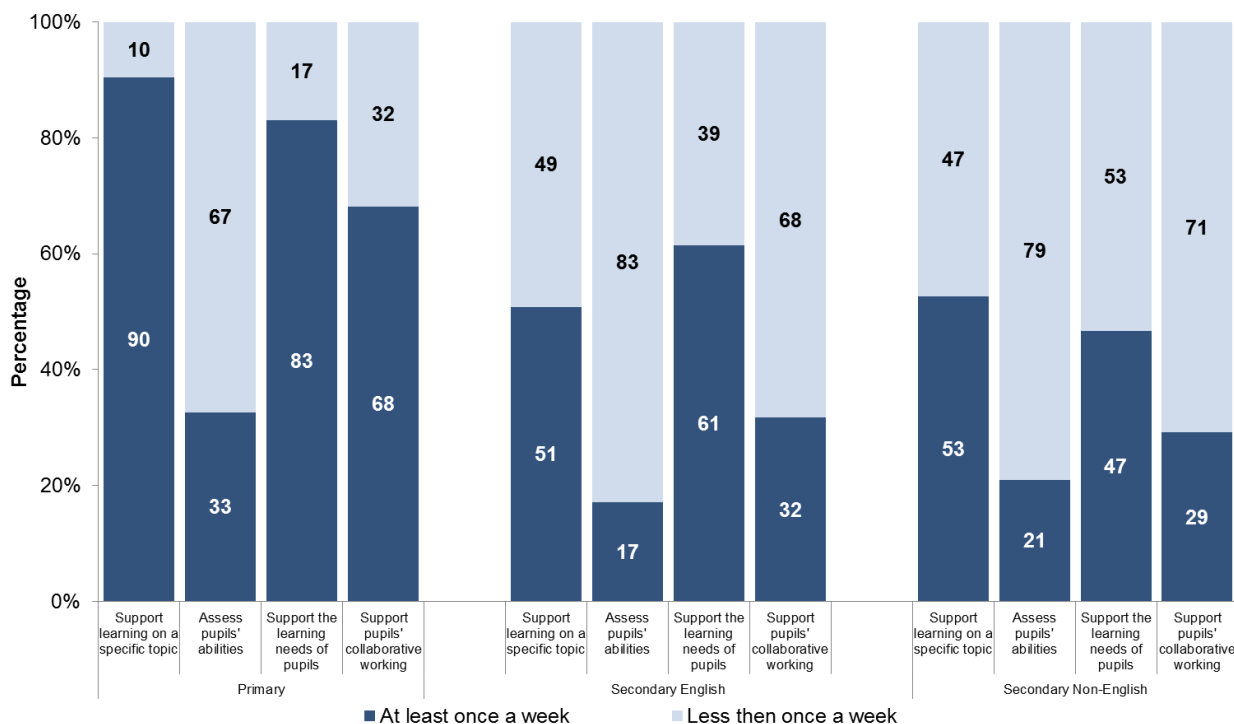


The use made of ICT varies by teacher type; the 2016 survey shows 90 per cent of primary teachers use ICT to support learning of a specific topic at least once a week compared to around 50 per cent for secondary teachers. Primary teachers are more likely to use ICT to support pupils’ collaborative work at least once a week (two-thirds) than secondary teachers (around a third).

Using ICT to assess pupils’ abilities is less common across all teacher types. A third of primary teachers use ICT to assess their pupils abilities at least once a week. This falls to

around a fifth for secondary non-English teachers and a sixth for secondary English teachers.

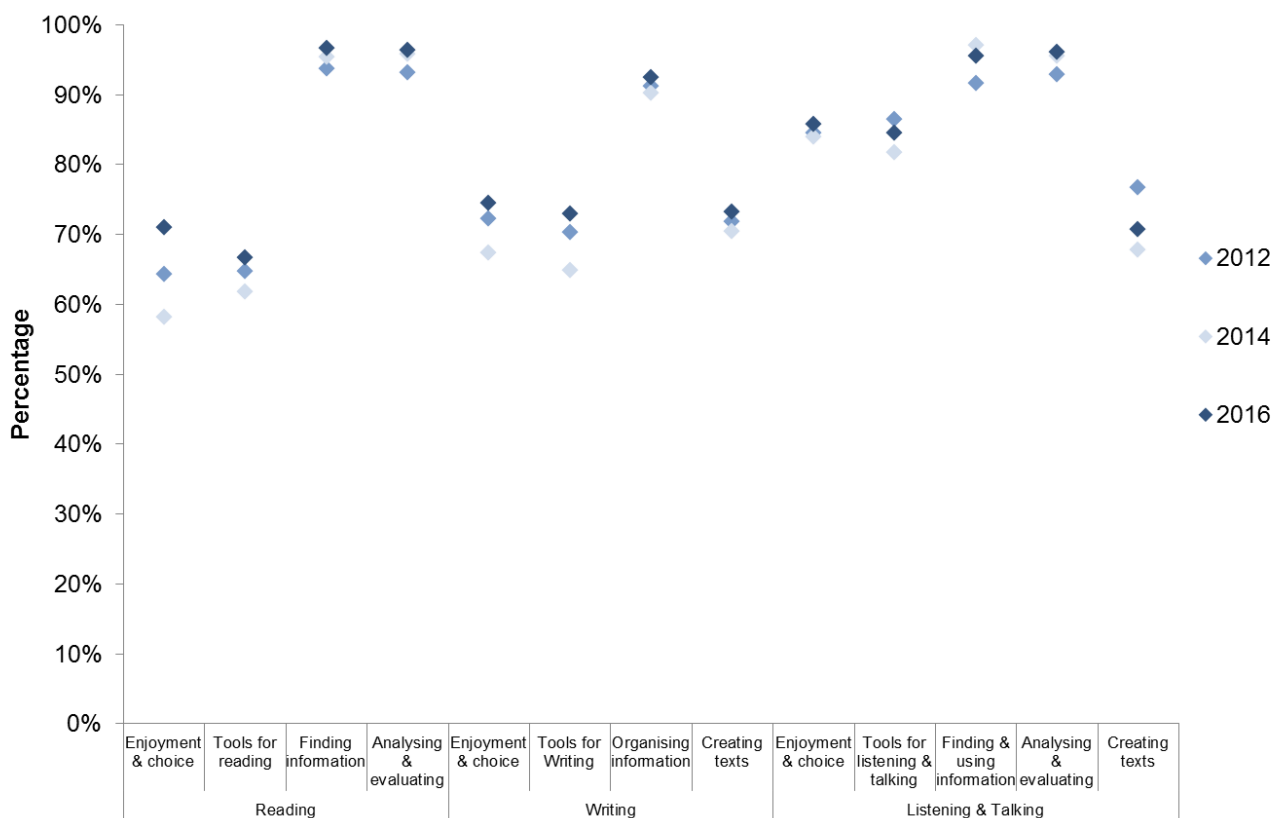
Chart 9.2: Teachers use of ICT by teacher type, 2016



9.3 Teaching literacy across the curriculum

Teachers were asked about their confidence in teaching the literacy experiences and outcomes. Primary and secondary English teachers expressed high levels of confidence in teaching all of them. The confidence of secondary non-English teachers varied by outcome (Chart 9.3). They consistently showed confidence in teaching 'finding and using information' and 'understanding, analysing and evaluating' for reading. Similarly they were confident in 'finding and using information' for listening and talking. There were also increases in the confidence expressed in teaching all three of these outcomes between 2012 and 2016.

Chart 9.3: Secondary non-English teachers confidence in delivering literacy experiences and outcomes, 2012, 2014 and 2016



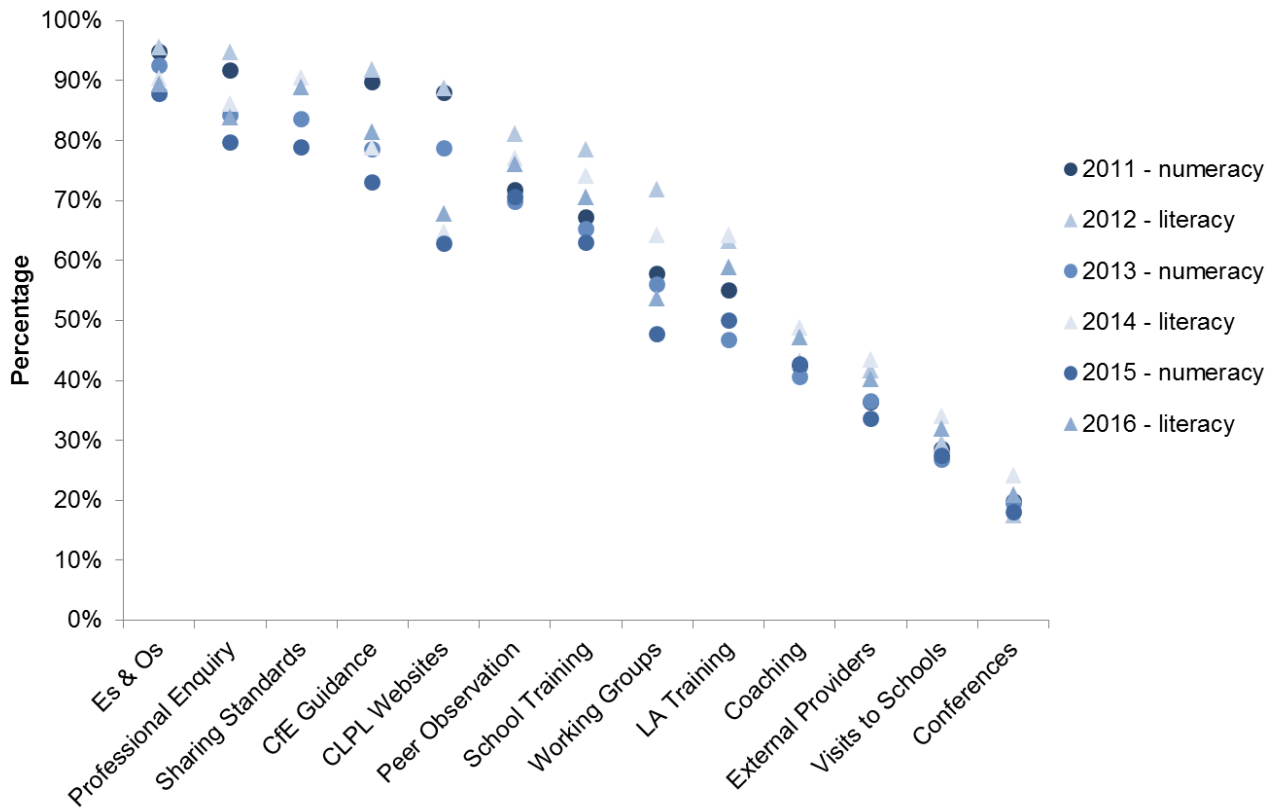
9.4 Professional development

Teachers were asked how often they had taken part in various forms of Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL) in the last twelve months and, if they had, how useful they had found it. The CLPL related to literacy and numeracy experiences and outcomes only.

Chart 9.4 shows that the activities that primary teachers participate in have varied little over the six years of the survey. The top three activities have consistently been ‘reading and discussing the CfE experiences and outcomes with colleagues’, ‘professional enquiry through reading/personal study’ and ‘sharing standards and moderation’ (only asked from 2013 onwards). However, the spread over the six years for each of these activities varies. The proportion of teachers who participated in ‘professional enquiry through reading/personal study’ ranged from 80 per cent in 2015 to 95 per cent in 2012. Whereas ‘reading and discussing the CfE literacy/numeracy experiences and outcomes with colleagues’ ranged from 88 per cent in 2015 to 96 per cent in 2012.

For secondary teachers there are very similar results. Across all six years and all four groups of secondary teachers (Maths and non-Maths in 2011, 2013 and 2015; English and non-English in 2012, 2014 and 2016) the same three activities are identified as the most common CLPL activities.

Chart 9.4: Proportion of primary teachers participating in CLPL activity in literacy/numeracy in last twelve months, 2011-2016



Chapter 10: Background notes

10.1 Sampling frame

The sampling frame for the pupil sample is all P4, P7 and S2 pupils attending all mainstream schools in Scotland that have registered to participate in the SSLN. The SSLN includes Gaelic medium and independent schools but excludes special schools. Pupils with Additional Support Needs attending mainstream schools are included in the sample and should be given the same level of support they would normally have for assessments in class. The P7 pupil cohort in the 2014 survey is the same as the S2 cohort in 2016. The pupils sampled to participate in the survey will not necessarily have been the same in each year.

The sampling frame for the teacher questionnaire is all P4, P7 and secondary teachers in all participating schools.

10.2 Sample design

The pupil sample design is a two stage stratified random sample, i.e. pupils are selected at random within schools and by gender. The sample consists of two P4 and two P7 pupils from every participating primary school and up to twelve S2 pupils from every participating secondary school. This produces a target sample size of around 4,000 pupils per stage. Pupil results are weighted to adjust for possible non-response bias to ensure the sample reflects the profile of the general population.

The teacher questionnaire is allocated to all P4 teachers at half of participating primary schools and all P7 teachers at the remaining half of participating primary schools. Within secondary schools, the teacher questionnaire is allocated to ten teachers covering an equal distribution of four broad curriculum areas and English. This produces a total target sample size of around 5,400 teachers. Teacher results are weighted to account for non-response and differences in school size.

10.3 Response rate

The response rate at school level was 97 per cent in publicly funded schools and 33 per cent of schools in the independent sector.

10.4 Interpretation of SSLN results

As in all sample surveys, as the SSLN is based on a sample of pupils rather than on the whole population, the results shown are estimates. Therefore there is an element of uncertainty within the results because the pupils sampled may not reflect the population exactly.

Uncertainty around the results is estimated using standard errors. Standard errors are a measure of the variation in the data i.e. how each observation differs from the mean. As the SSLN sample design is not a simple random sample - pupils at small schools have a higher probability of being selected than pupils at large schools - this means that standard formulae used to calculate the standard error from a simple random sample would not be appropriate. Standard errors are therefore calculated empirically using the jackknife procedure.

Standard errors are in turn used to produce confidence intervals around the estimates. Confidence intervals show the range of values within which one can be reasonably confident that the actual value would lie if all pupils were assessed.

Ninety-five per cent confidence intervals for the main national estimates were calculated and were around \pm two percentage points. This means that the true value of each estimate is likely to lie within two percentage points either side of the given estimate.

Where appropriate, confidence intervals are represented on charts by error bars to help demonstrate this level of uncertainty. Where the estimates are different but the error bars overlap we cannot be sure that the true values of each estimate are statistically significantly different from each other. Significance tests (t-tests) are used to assess the statistical significance of comparisons made.

Standard error data for the results, used to calculate these confidence intervals, are provided in the supplementary tables available at www.gov.scot/ssltn.

10.5 Sources

Attainment data are derived from the results of assessments completed by participating pupils. For reading, the assessment consists of a paper reading booklet and an online reading assessment. The writing component consists of an assessment of two writing scripts per participating pupil. The listening and talking assessment consists of a group discussion between participating pupils based on a task designed to generate discussion.

All participating pupils complete an online questionnaire on factors that are likely to affect learning and attainment, such as pupil attitudes and experiences in class.

Sampled teachers are asked to complete an online questionnaire on their experiences and views on teaching numeracy.

All SSLN data was collected during the fieldwork period of 3rd May – 3rd June 2016.

10.6 Use made of SSLN data

The results of SSLN 2016 will be used in line with the survey's three main objectives. These are:

- to monitor and report nationally on achievement in literacy at P4, P7 and S2, in 2016 and over time
- to identify areas of literacy strengths and weaknesses among pupils in Scotland to help inform policy initiatives and learning and teaching practices
- to gather information and report nationally on pupils' and teachers' experience of learning and teaching literacy, along with their views about this experience.

In line with the aim to improve learning and teaching practice, Education Scotland has developed PLRs based on an in-depth analysis of previous SSLN data. These resources are used by teachers, schools and authorities to support and inform learning and teaching practice in the classroom. These resources are available on the [National Improvement Hub](#).

The ways in which these materials can be used are set out below.

In the classroom, as a practitioner:

- as a resource for Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL) through use of the reflective questions provided for self-evaluation
- to focus lesson planning linking to known areas for improvement
- as a resource with links to further reading to help develop thinking around the learning and teaching of literacy skills
- to enhance children and young people's literacy skills, through reflective discussion of exemplar materials
- to share views on literacy across learning through use of the activities for teachers to stimulate dialogue and debate on teaching practice
- to support children and young people's literacy learning across the curriculum.

In school, as a leader or manager:

- "to inform development plans to improve standards in literacy" as per the CfE Implementation Plan
- to inform school improvement plans - the resource includes high level findings with reflective questions for whole school self-evaluation to focus discussions around school improvement planning in relation to literacy
- to lead CLPL sessions – the resources include a range of materials which can be used to lead specific sessions focusing on particular areas of literacy to provide a focus for classroom observation – learning communities in schools can use the resources to identify areas for improvement in their own context.

At local authority level, as a development officer or Quality Improvement Officer:

- to provide a focus when supporting individual schools or clusters, to identify clear targets for improvement
- to inform and expand the range of professional development opportunities available for teachers
- to clarify the aspirations contained in the literacy experiences and outcomes
- to identify clear targets for improvement
- to inform transition projects by promoting collegiality with staff from primary and secondary schools.

10.7 Supplementary tables

The survey contains a huge amount of data which cannot be summarised in this publication. This report seeks to highlight the key messages and give a flavour of the range of analysis possible. Detailed tables of the performance data and pupil and teacher questionnaire results are published as supporting tables alongside this publication, and provide a fuller picture of the findings.

The following list of tables is available at www.gov.scot/ssl.n.

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Writing attainment
3.1: Summary of performance by stage
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3.3: Summary of performance by stage and deprivation category
Writing attainment over time
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4.3: Summary of performance by stage and deprivation category in 2012, 2014 and 2016
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7.6: Pupils' confidence in learning
7.7: What pupils think about literacy - General
7.8: What pupils think about literacy - Organisers
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7.10: Pupils' activities outside of school
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8.8: Confidence in delivering the literacy experiences and outcomes
8.9: Gathering evidence of pupils' achievement in literacy

8.10: Evaluating and recording the evidence of pupils' achievements in literacy
8.11: Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) in literacy
8.12: Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) in literacy – impact
Survey data
9.1: Participation figures
Standard errors
10.1: Assessment Data
10.2 Pupil questionnaire data
10.3 Teacher questionnaire data

10.8 Cost of compliance

One of the recommendations resulting from the UK Statistics Authority assessment of the SSLN was to publish an estimate of the cost to data suppliers for participation. The Government Statistical Service has devised a method for estimating the cost that avoids imposing an extra burden on data providers. The method for calculating cost to organisations, including schools, is:

Cost = (number of responses x median time taken to respond in hours x hourly rate of typical respondent) + any additional costs experienced by data providers.

This methodology has been applied to the SSLN administration model and the estimated cost of compliance for the SSLN 2016 (literacy) survey was £394,000.

10.9 Further information

Further information on the SSLN, including the supplementary tables and Survey Design Document, is available from www.gov.scot/sslh.

There is a range of other reliable information on the performance of Scotland's school pupils.

The Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2015/16 Return is a census based data collection and gathers data on whether or not pupils have achieved the expected CfE Level for their stage based on the class teachers' professional judgement. The collection covers numeracy and the three elements of literacy (reading, writing, listening and talking) and four stages within Broad General Education: P1, P4, P7 and S3. These results are not directly comparable to the SSLN results due to the differing methodologies and reporting styles. Results for end 2015-16 were published in December 2016 and are available here: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/ACEL>

Scotland participates in the OECD's triennial Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey. This assessment is carried out by 15 year-olds in over sixty countries, including all OECD countries, and as such is a key international benchmark of performance. The results of previous PISA surveys are available at www.gov.scot/pisa

The Scottish Government also publishes analysis of SQA exam results and leaver destinations. The latest post-appeal data are available at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/06/4523>

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