

LIFT OFF - Young people and schools

Background to region

Fife and Tayside has a population of 764,480, representing 15% of Scotland's population. The region is heterogeneous in nature, ranging from some of the most densely populated areas of Scotland, Dundee with 2376 people per sq kilometre (second only to Glasgow City) to Perth and Kinross which with 26 people per sq kilometre ranks amongst the lowest densities of population.

Significantly some of Scotland's most deprived communities lie within the region but it also includes some of the more economically prosperous areas of the country. However this can bring additional challenges as within these areas there are pockets of deprivation that can easily be overlooked in the overall picture.

In summary, the region is one that, in addition to having significant levels of poverty and urban deprivation, presents challenges associated with other barriers to access, including rurality and remoteness from centres of learning.

Fife and Tayside has 29% of its schools in the lowest quintile for progression into HE. These schools account for 26% of the pupils covered by this area. This is the highest in Scotland. Translated into numbers of leavers, in Scotland, 8581 pupils (i.e 16% of total leavers) attend the 68 schools in the lowest quintile. In Fife and Tayside 2227 leavers fall into this category which at 26% of the Fife and Tayside leavers is 10% above the Scottish average and is the highest in Scotland. (figures taken from Learning for All – Measures of Success 2006)

Both Dundee and Fife have above Scottish average numbers of young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Dundee City has been identified as one of seven hotspots authorities where the NEET group is a particularly pressing problem and in which the Scottish Executive wishes to see a serious and rapid decrease in NEET numbers.

Development of strategy 2004 - 2007

In 2004, the Forum commissioned Critical Thinking to produce a report to consider the issues surrounding disengagement and suggest some areas for action. The report also provided information on participation and attainment rates and this update brings that information up to date and identifies how the issues raised within the 2004 report are being addressed.

In 2004, the Critical Thinking report summarised the key issues for the region as follows:

- Staying on rates are close to the Scottish average but trends are slightly downward in three of the four Fife and Tayside areas
- Attainment levels are slightly lower than the Scottish average for the Fife and Tayside region as a whole
- The Fife and Tayside region as a whole mirrors the Scottish average for leavers entering training
- Fewer go into employment than the Scottish average, but Perth and Kinross sends above average numbers into employment and the regional percentage increased between 2003 and 2004
- A higher proportion than the Scottish average are in the other known category
- All four Fife and Tayside areas have distinguishing characteristics with Dundee City at one extreme and Perth and Kinross at the other
- Dundee City suffers from high levels of social deprivation and is significantly different from the other three areas in terms of tending to perform below the national average

- in both staying-on and attainment rates. Alone of the four areas Dundee City sends a higher proportion of school leavers to further education than to higher education
- Perth and Kinross is alone in the region in performing above the national average in both staying on rates and at all three levels of attainment
 - Dundee City, Fife and Angus all send above the Scottish average to further education (Perth and Kinross is below average) and the trend is upwards for all except Dundee between 2003 and 2004
 - Perth and Kinross and Angus send above average numbers to higher education (Dundee City and Fife send below average numbers to higher education) but the trend is downwards for all except Dundee between 2003 and 2004

Issues raised in the report for discussion

The report suggested that given the significant differences in the region, consideration should be given to applying area specific initiatives as well as general ones. The report also suggested that strategies to form and raise aspiration, to encourage continuing learning within employment and the role of colleges as a route to higher education should be considered when developing programmes of activities. It also stressed the importance of parents as key influencers and the need for their awareness and understanding of post school learning, particularly its financial implications to be addressed.

Development of LIFT OFF

Since the Critical Thinking report was produced in December 2004, the LIFT OFF programme has been developed and introduced to schools. The detailed programme was developed in consultation with further and higher education partners and the four local authorities across the region.

Coherence of region

Following discussions with local authorities, it became clear that despite the differences across the region, schools with low progression rates shared a number of characteristics and these were principally about lower expectations and lack of awareness and family experience of post school learning.

The allocation of schools to the programme from each authority was based on a recognition that two areas, Fife and Dundee had significant numbers of schools with below average progression and also have higher levels of deprivation. However, within the higher performing and less deprived areas of Angus and Perth and Kinross, there are areas and schools that have similar characteristics.

Allocating resources in this manner has allowed the Forum to develop a coherent programme of activities across the region that works with schools that show similar characteristics and challenges.

Forming and raising aspiration

The primary purpose of the LIFT OFF programme is to raise awareness of and aspiration to post school learning opportunities and through close consultation and liaison with schools and authorities this should over time also contribute to education strategies on raising attainment.

Recognition of college as route to higher education

LIFT OFF recognises the importance of all routes to higher education and has developed its programme to fully include both colleges and universities and makes no distinction between them. This approach has ensured that all partners are engaged in the process and also that young people have the information and experience to make more informed choices about their future options.

Timing of intervention

As a result of consultation with partners and schools it was agreed that the main intervention should begin in S3 and this is where the major part of LIFT OFF work begins. Two years on, LIFT OFF 2 Success is becoming well established as an intervention at S3/S4. Activities have been developed linked to this and over time, and resources permitting, it is intended that the programme will run from primary school through to S6.

Working with parents

The importance of the role of parents has been recognised in the planning of the LIFT OFF programme and a parental session that focuses mainly on finance has been built into LIFT OFF 2 Success. In addition a project that seeks to increase understanding of school qualifications (standard grade particularly) and the issues young people and parents face is being developed.

Target Schools

LIFT OFF works with 13 target schools across the region.

These were identified in 2005 following guidance from SFC and the then Scottish Executive that encouraged Forums to work with schools in the lowest quartile of progression to higher education.

It was decided that the Forum would work with 13 schools and taking into account a number of factors including levels of deprivation and school performance it was decided that these would be allocated across the region as follows: Dundee 5, Fife 5, Angus 2, Perth and Kinross 1.

The individual schools were selected by the local authority taking account of the guidance from the Forum and other local authority priorities.

The remainder of this report provides an update on participation in education and learning and also shows the position of the target schools relative to others in the area. However it should be noted that, given the relatively small numbers of schools in each area (particularly Angus [2] and Perth and Kinross [1]) small variations can have a significant impact on the figures for a particular year.

It should also be noted that while the data in the tables provides useful background information on trends in participation and attainment that will assist the Management and Executive Groups in planning and prioritising activities, these cannot and should not be used as a measure of the impact of LIFT OFF activities. LIFT OFF activities support a number of other school and local authority led interventions and it is very difficult to identify the impact that any one of these has on its own, particularly in the early stages of intervention. The main measure of the success of LIFT OFF is in the feedback from young people, teachers and schools involved.

Participation in Education and Learning – update 2004 – 2006

(All data used in this report has been drawn from Parentzone – www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk)

Table 1 – Staying on rates

Staying on rates have remained fairly static in Scotland from 2004 – 2006 and this is reflected in the figures for Fife and Tayside. As would be expected, the staying on rates for target schools are significantly below those for the local authority and region as a whole.

Table 1

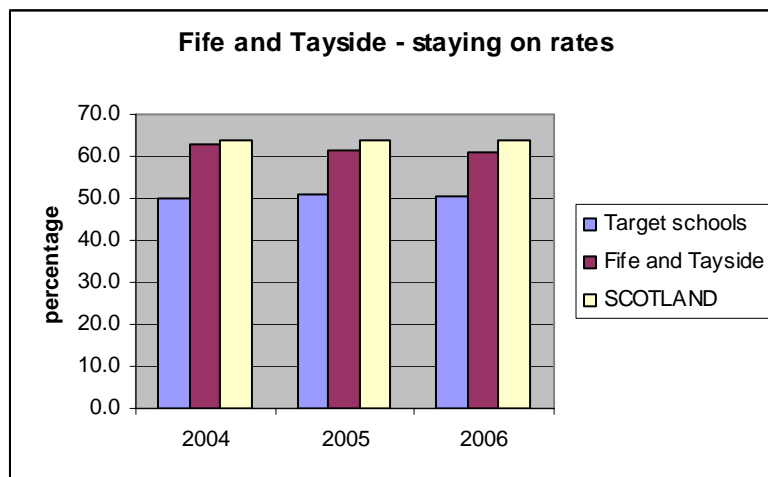


Table 1a

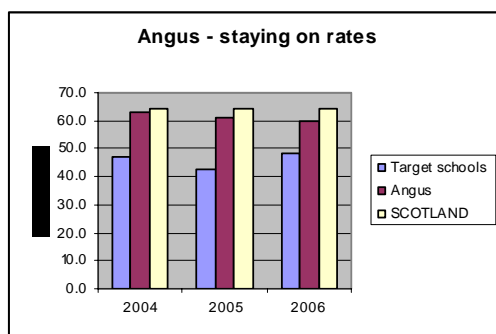


Table 1b

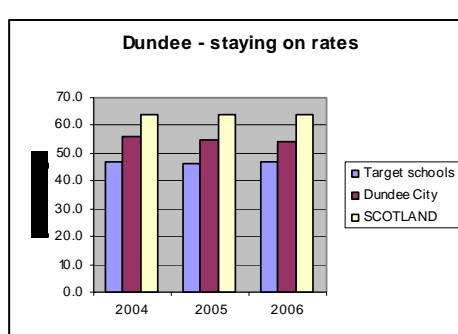


Table 1c

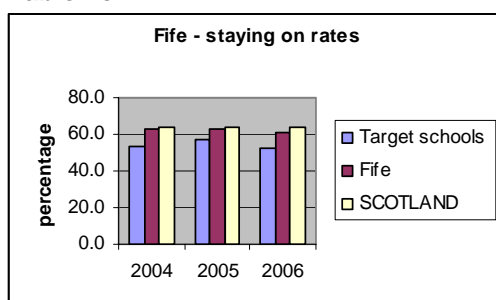
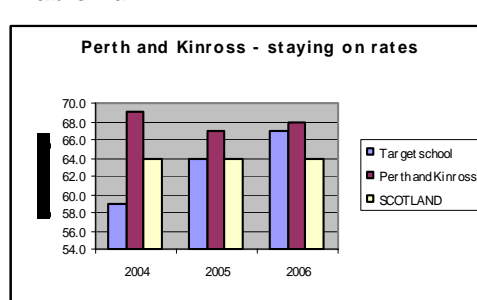


Table 1d



Staying on rates are calculated as the estimated January roll in S5 divided by the previous year's S4 roll as at September.

Table 2 – Attainment at S4 – Nos of young people gaining 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 3 or better

Attainment levels remain below the Scottish average for the region as a whole, however there are variations within the region. Dundee City schools remain consistently below the Scottish average from 2004 to 2006 while Fife has been at the Scottish average over the 3 years. Angus was above the average in 2005 but has shown a decline in 2006 while Perth and Kinross has dropped below the Scottish average in 2006. It is noticeable that the LIFT OFF target school in this area outperformed both the Perth and Kinross and Scottish averages. Target schools overall have shown a slight decline in attainment rates, particularly noticeable in target school results in Fife and Angus.

Table 2

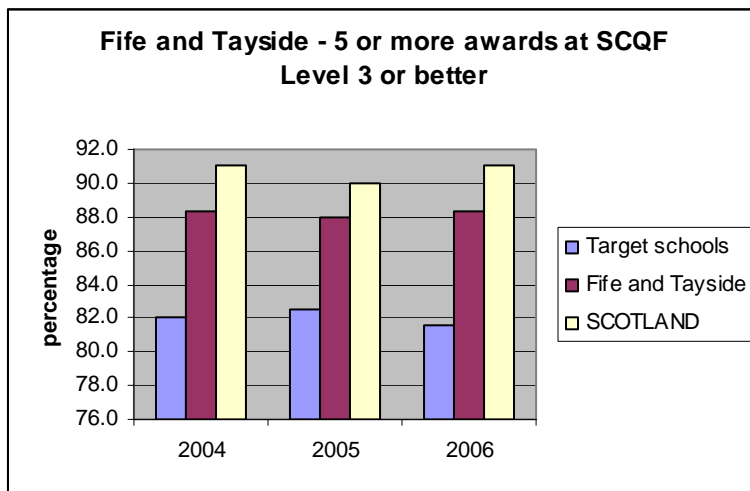


Table 2a

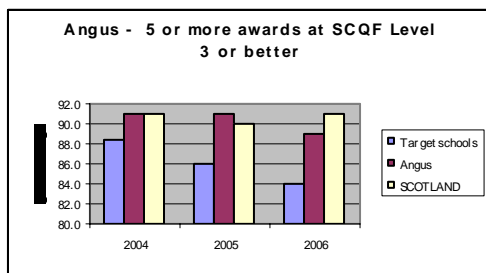


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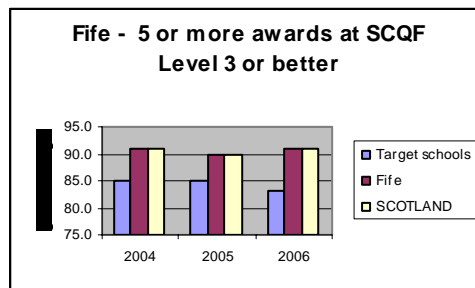


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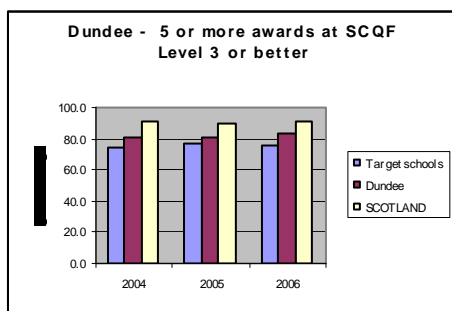
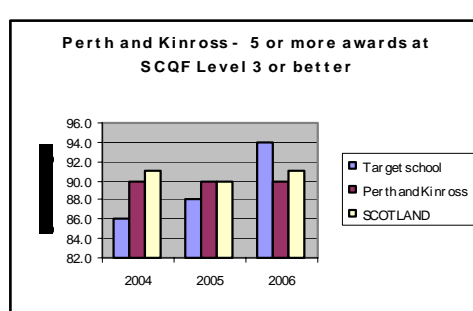


Table 2d



Percentage of the S4 year group achieving five or more awards at [SCQF Level 3](#) (Standard Grade Foundation level or equivalent) or better

Table 3 – Other destinations

These figures were not gathered in 2005 but they can be compared with the 2004 figures in the Critical Thinking report. There has been little change from the 2004 position with Fife and Tayside as a whole mirroring the Scottish average for training and not known categories. In 2004 less went to employment than the Scottish average and this trend continues, as does the trend for high numbers to enter employment from Perth and Kinross. Since 2004, the 'other known' category has been split into 'unemployed – seeking work' and 'unemployed – not seeking work'. While these show that Fife and Tayside again mirrors the Scottish average, we know that there are omissions from the figures, particularly in Dundee, and this will have affected the figures making any meaningful analysis difficult.

Table 3

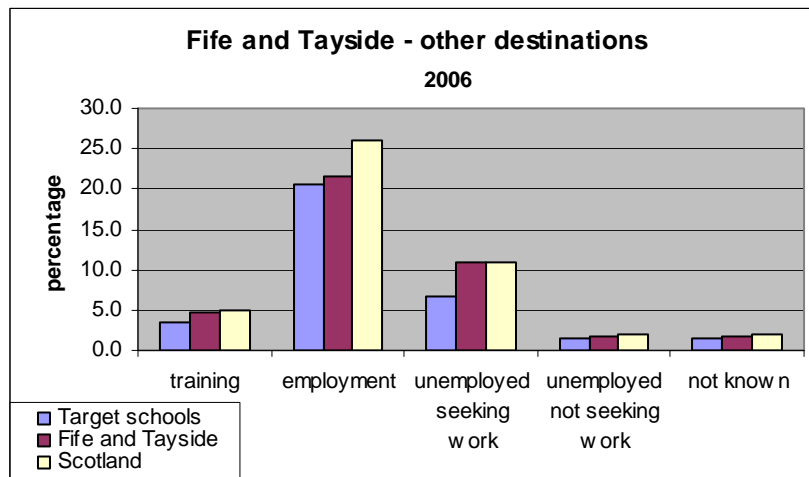


Table 3a

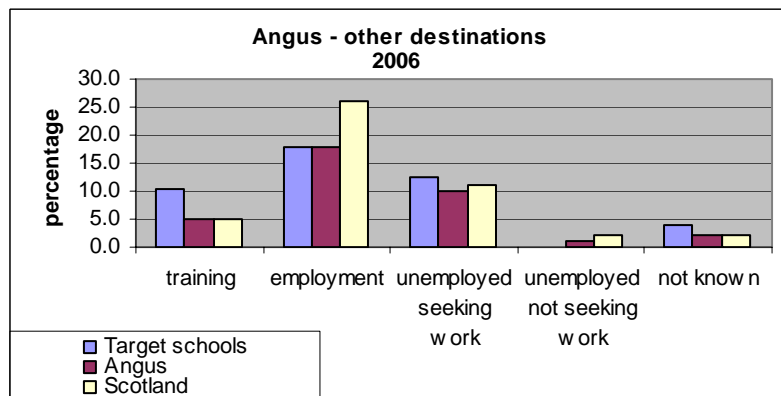


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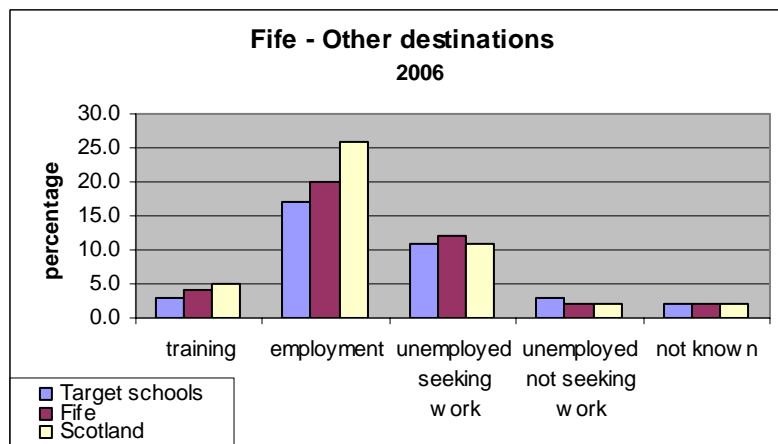


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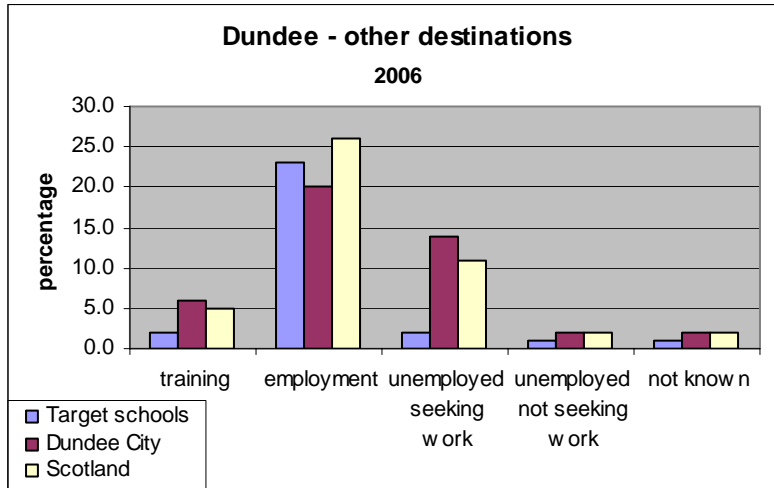
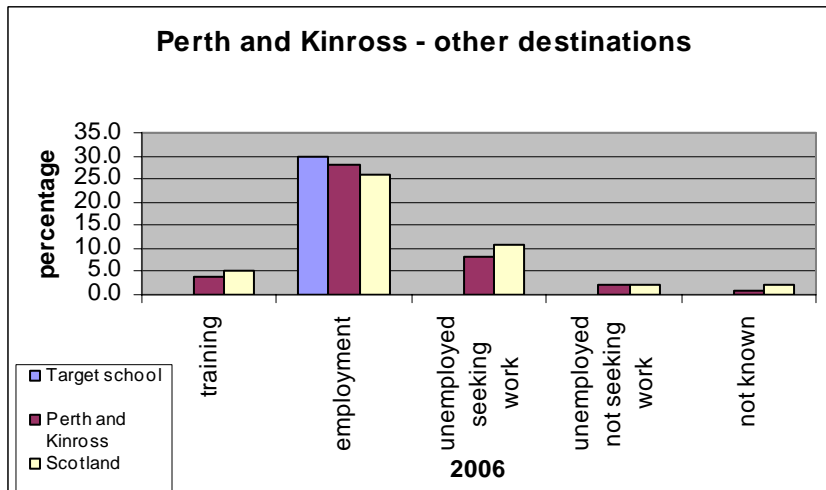


Table 3d



Tables 4 – 6 Progression to further and higher education

Tables 4a and 4b show the numbers and percentages of schools with below average progression rates to further and higher education.

In 2004, there was a slight reduction in the number of schools with below average progression in the region overall but this has levelled out in 2005 and 2006. In particular, Fife and Perth and Kinross increased levels of progression; this has been sustained in Perth and Kinross but Fife has seen their levels of progression decrease in 2006. Both Dundee and Angus have drops in levels of progression between 2004 and 2006.

Table 4a

Table 4b

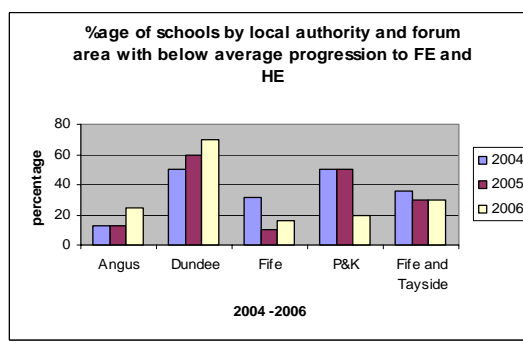
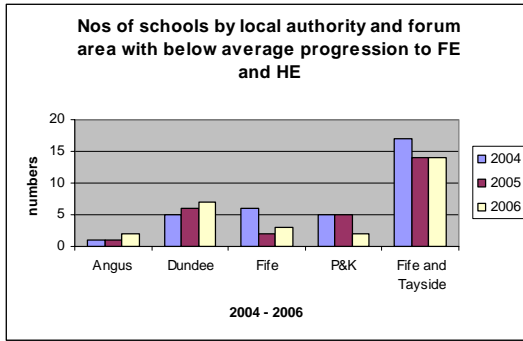


Table 4c shows schools with below average progression to FE and HE as a percentage of total schools in the local authority area and Table 4d shows this as the number of schools. Overall 50% of schools in Fife and Tayside have below average progression rates. Dundee has the highest percentage (80%) representing 8 of its 10 schools and Fife has the highest number with 11 of its 19 schools with below average progression to further and higher education.

Table 4c

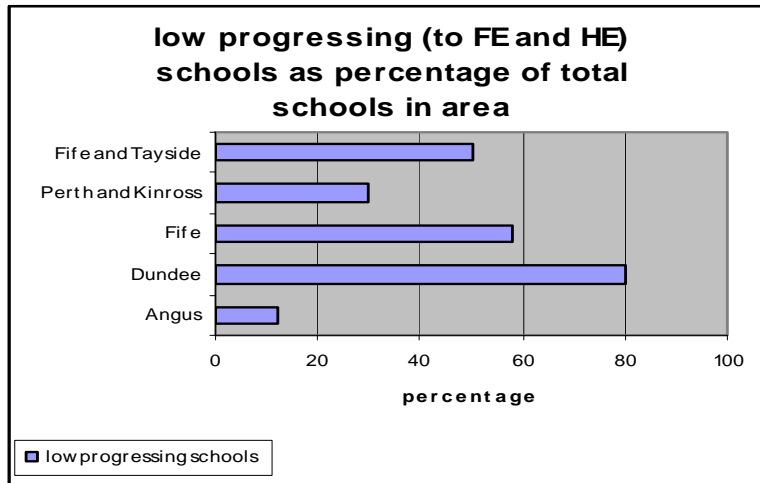


Table 4d

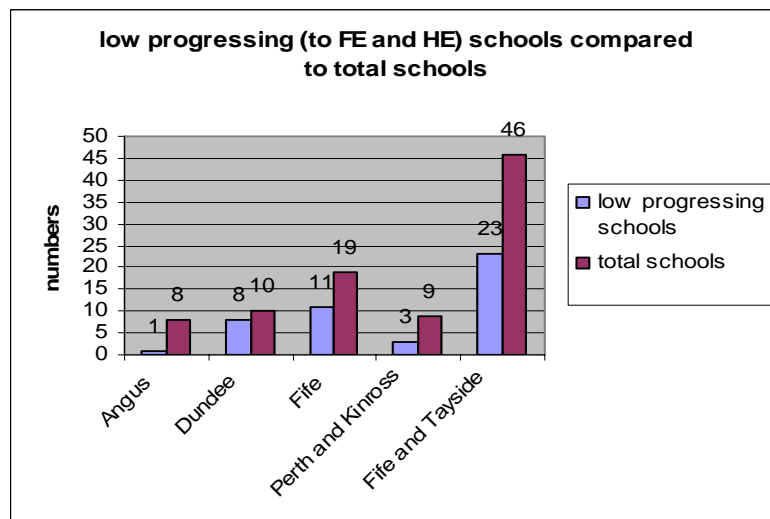


Table 5 – progression to full time higher education

Fife and Tayside has been broadly in line with the Scottish average to higher education from 2004 – 2006. As expected the target schools fall significantly below this. Target schools in all

4 areas have seen a drop in the numbers progressing to higher education, most noticeable in Angus and Fife.

Table 5

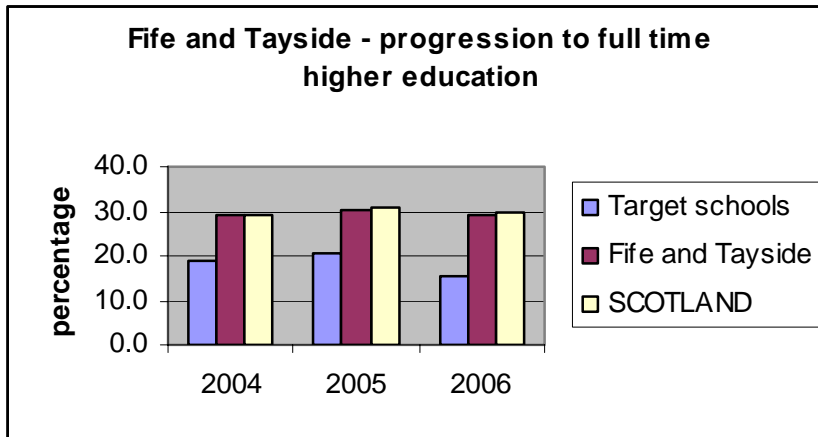


Table 5a

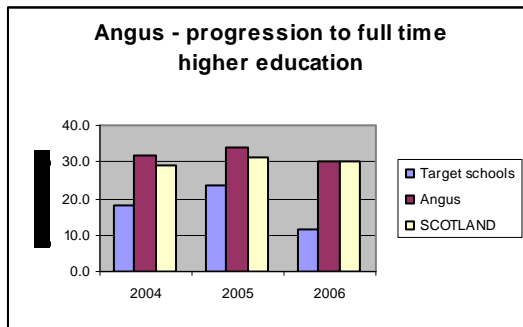


Table 5b

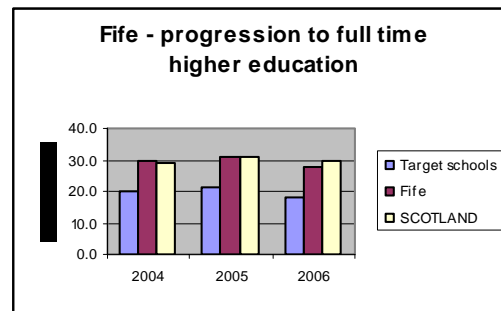


Table 5c

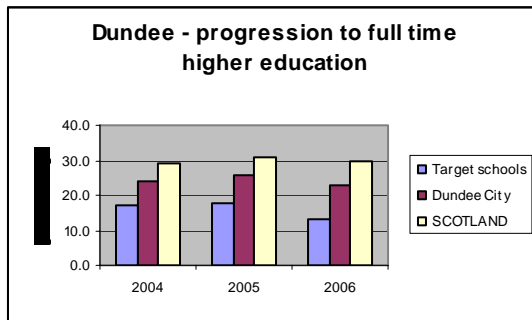


Table 5d

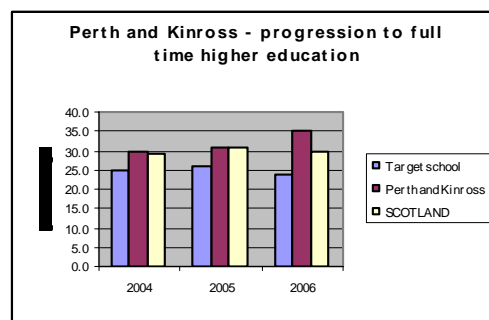


Table 6

Fife and Tayside continues to send above average numbers to full time further education and this trend has been upwards from 2004 to 2006 for both the target schools and the area as a whole.

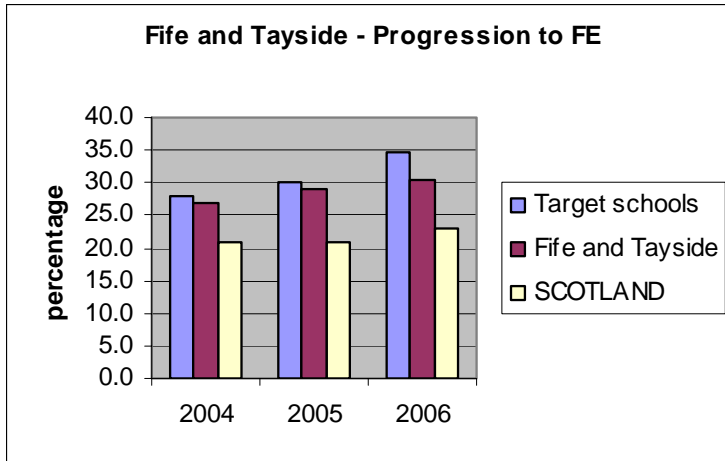


Table 6a

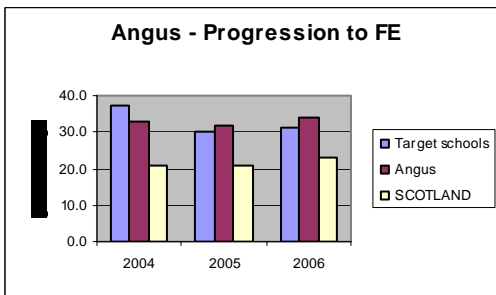


Table 6b

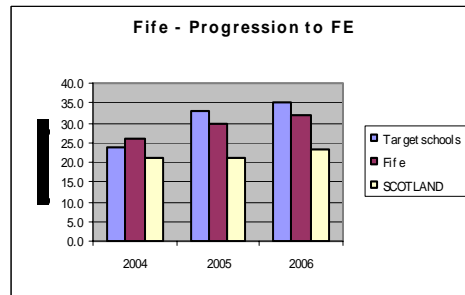


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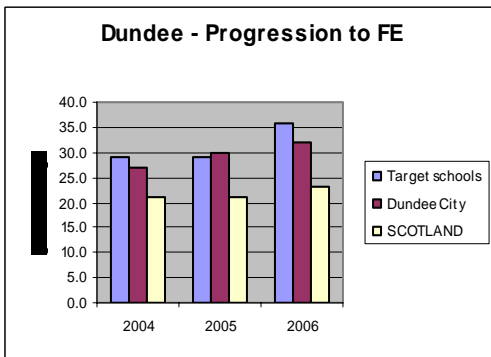


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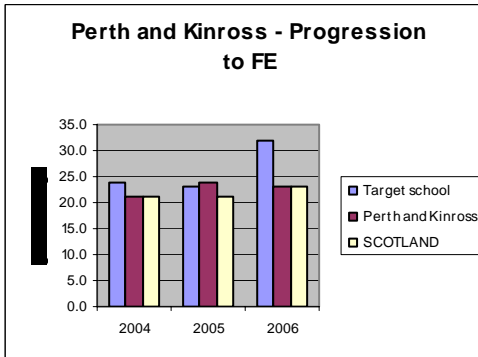


Table 7

Entitlement to free school meals is one of a number of indicators used to identify deprivation in a school catchment area.

Fife and Tayside as a whole is slightly below the Scottish figure. However, Dundee City is significantly above the Scottish figure and is the fourth highest in Scotland. While the figures in Angus, Fife and Perth and Kinross have remained fairly static in the past two years the Dundee figure has fallen. In all areas, with the exception of Perth and Kinross, the figures for the target schools are significantly higher than the authority figure, as would be expected. However all have shown a decrease in 2006 with this being most noticeable in Fife and Dundee.

Table 7

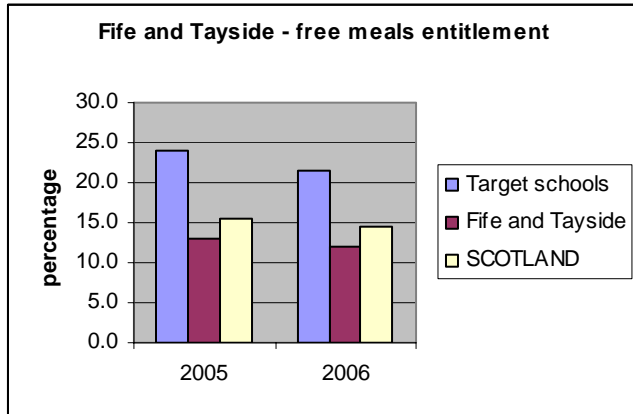


Table 7a

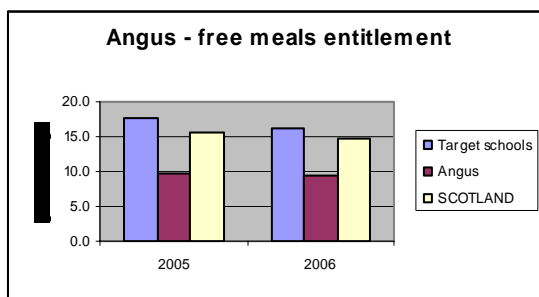


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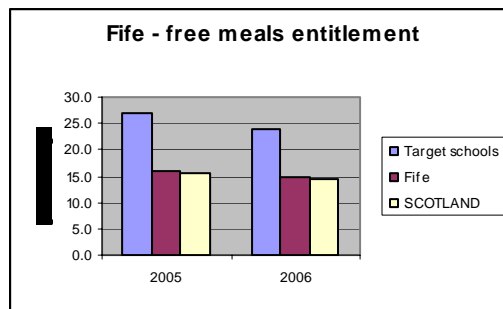


Table 7c



Table 7d

