



■ John Swinney visited the MCR Pathways project in Glasgow.

## New figures reveal the benefits of mentoring on pupils

ALISON MEIKLE

INCREASING numbers of young people with experience of the care system are making progress in their education thanks to a mentoring programme, new data has shown.

The figures were revealed as Deputy First Minister John Swinney visited the MCR Pathways project in Glasgow to learn how lives are being improved.

Mr Swinney was at the MCR Pathways project yesterday to see how Glasgow City Council has been using its dedicated Attainment Scotland funding to help young people. The

programme involves young people and mentors being matched based on shared interests.

Mentors are trained and supported to build strong relationships and offer guidance with job and career options, as well as overall life goals.

According to the latest data, the percentage of mentored, care-experienced young people returning to school after fourth year increased to 79 per cent against a national baseline of 22% three years prior.

The data also shows that the percentage of mentored, care-experienced young people going on to college, university or a job increased from 52% in 2014 to 86% in 2017.

And there has been a 40% increase in mentored, care-experienced young people attaining literacy and numeracy at level 4 or above.

Almost £33 million has been made available over the next three years to local authorities through the Scottish Attainment Challenge to help close the attainment gap for care experienced young people from birth up to the age of 26.

Mr Swinney said: "We know that there are still many challenges facing young people in care and that they are not always able to access the same opportunities as their peers.

"That is why we are providing almost £33m of Attainment Funding

over the lifetime of this Parliament to target support for care experienced children and young people.

"It was inspiring to see the MCR Pathways project in action today and meet the young people and mentors who are both gaining so much from taking part, their early results have been truly life-changing."

William McMillan, 19, currently in his second year of a politics degree at University of West of Scotland, has been with the MCR programme since his second year at Lochend High School. He said: "The MCR Pathways programme has stripped away those obstacles which have held me back whilst amplifying the best parts of me."