

Involving the uninvolved: Scotland

Education Scotland

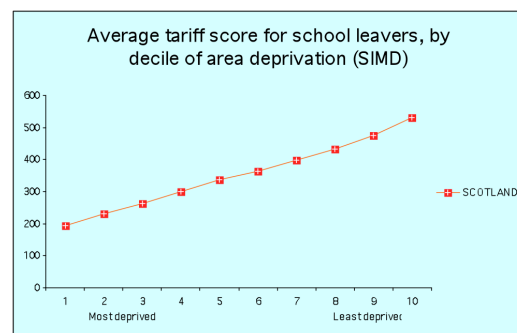
September 2011

SCOTLAND'S ACHIEVEMENT GAP



'At age 5 in Scotland today the gap between the most advantaged and disadvantaged families is already 6-13 months in problem solving ability and 11-18 months in expressive vocabulary.' *Growing up in Scotland (2011)*

At the other end of schooling, the graph below shows the large difference between the qualifications gained by young people who live in the most deprived and least deprived areas of Scotland. This gap has persisted through recent years.



(Source: Scottish Government education statistics)

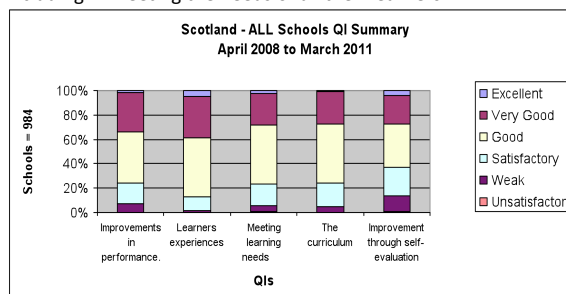
The OECD report of 2007 says, 'Little of the variation in student achievement in Scotland is associated with the ways in which schools differ... Who you are in Scotland is far more important than what school you attend, so far as achievement differences ... are concerned. Socio-economic status is the most important difference between individuals.'

INSPECTION AND REVIEW AND UNDERACHIEVEMENT

Inspection of pre-schools, schools and learning communities

- Each inspection starts with the school's self evaluation, including of their approaches to tracking the progress and attainment of children who are at risk of underachieving and missing out, e.g. members of vulnerable groups and very able pupils.
- Inspectors evaluate and report using five indicators from 'How Good is our School?' as descriptions of quality. Each is relevant:
 - Improvements in performance
 - Learners' experiences
 - The curriculum
 - Meeting learning needs
 - Improvements through self-evaluation

Results of inspections show that many schools could do much better, including in meeting the needs of all their learners.



Where inspection identifies serious concerns about underachievement, Education Scotland continues to engage with the school and may inspect and report on its performance again.

Evaluation of how well local education authorities address underachievement

- annual risk assessment, including evidence of performance in meeting needs of all learners; additional inspection in cases of concern
- emphasis given to vulnerable children and young people, such as those who are looked after away from their families.

Thematic reviews

- Underachievement has been an important theme in the 'Improving Scottish Education' state of the nation reports
- Detailed findings were published in 'Count us in' and other related reports. These include web-based advice and support materials for teachers.
- Education Scotland is about to begin a thematic task on 'Getting it Right for Every Child'.

ADDRESSING UNDERACHIEVEMENT: POLICY CONTEXT

Curriculum reform

Curriculum for Excellence raises expectations of attainment for all learners. It is designed to encourage active engagement in learning in different contexts. It specifies entitlements for each learner, including a new broad general education and senior phase, and support for his or her learning throughout schooling and to a positive sustained destination beyond.

Teacher education and development

Ensuring the highest quality of teachers and school leaders is seen as the most important factor in securing improvement in achievement for all learners in Scotland. The reform of teacher education which is now underway aims to build teachers' professional capacity and enable them to work well with the other partners in learning, including parents.

Legal and policy frameworks

These include the **Additional Support for Learning Act**, an **Early Years Framework** for children from birth to age 8, designed to promote appropriate and early interventions, and **Getting it right for every child**, an approach which requires close cooperation between education and other services so that children and young people get the right types of help at the right time.

References:

Bradshaw, P. *Growing Up in Scotland* (2011) Changes in child cognitive ability in the pre-school years Edinburgh, Scottish Government
 Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland (2007), OECD
 Count us in: success for all (2010), HMIE
 Teaching Scotland's Future (2011), Scottish Government
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/welfare/ASL