



Improving Scottish
education

HMIe



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education

A report by HMIE on inspection and review 2005-2008

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HM Inspectorate of Education
Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston
EH54 6GA

Tel: 01506 600 200

Fax: 01506 600 337

E-mail: enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk

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Note on contents

The report

Improving Scottish Education 2005-2008 comments on the quality of provision across all sectors and offers:

- a foreword by HM Senior Chief Inspector;
- a section which draws together inspection and review evidence from all sectors to provide an overview of the progress made in the areas highlighted as priorities for improvement in the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, published in 2006;
- a section with eight summarising reports, seven of which focus on a sector of education, the eighth covering child protection services;
- a section that evaluates the impact of local authorities on the quality of education in their respective areas; and
- a final section indicating the way ahead and the focus of HMIE (HM Inspectorate of Education) activities in the next few years.

Website version

A web version of the report and other related materials are available on the HMIE website (www.hmie.gov.uk). This version comprises:

- an electronic copy of the report with access to individual sections;
- all HMIE quality indicator data relating to inspections and reviews in each sector;
- summaries of stakeholders' views as gathered for primary and secondary sector inspections;
- a selection of facts and figures relating to each sector;
- information on national qualifications at secondary school level;
- some facts about the demographic context for Scottish education;
- information on the policy context for each sector; and
- a bibliography of HMIE and other reports, with hyperlinks to each of them.

Section One: Commentary by HMSCI

Recent events have underlined how quickly the world can change and how powerfully interconnected we are across the globe. In the opening paragraph of my commentary in our *Improving Scottish Education 2002-2005* report, I said: 'It is clear that the future will require a population with the confidence and skills to meet the challenges posed by fast and far-reaching change.' That sentence continues to sum up the key test facing education, not just in Scotland but worldwide. This report focuses on how well placed Scotland is to rise to this challenge and provides important pointers for future development.

Scotland's future economic prosperity requires an education system within which the population as a whole will develop the kind of knowledge, skills and attributes which will equip them personally, socially and economically to thrive in the 21st century. It also demands standards of attainment and achievement which match these needs and strengthen Scotland's position internationally.

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We have a powerful legacy of improvement in Scottish education over the last quarter of a century upon which we can build. Developments such as *Standard Grade, 5-14*, *Higher Still* and, more recently, *Assessment is for Learning* and *Determined to Succeed*, have established ways of thinking and working which will remain influential. As the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 has been implemented, all teachers are now becoming more aware of their responsibilities for meeting the needs of every single learner.

In *Improving Scottish Education 2002-2005* we identified the need for: greater clarity about the outcomes of education; a stronger focus on essential life skills, particularly literacy and numeracy; assessment and qualifications that complement the curriculum but do not drive it; space for more imaginative teaching; replacing the separate concepts of academic and vocational education with that of an appropriate education for all; a more pronounced focus on health education; and a clearer and more consistent approach to education for citizenship. I am encouraged by the extent to which *The Early Years Framework*, *Curriculum for Excellence*, *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* and *Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)* address these findings. The challenge remains, however, to translate aspiration into action.

Our evidence shows that Scottish education continues to demonstrate the strengths that we highlighted in the period 2002-2005 across all sectors. Since then, further aspects of the system have moved to positions of strength and Scottish education in general is showing steady improvement. At the same time, however, a number of significant problems remain and the need for further and faster improvement has grown.

Early education continues to be strong overall and that good start is maintained into the early years of primary. Children in our primary and secondary schools experience a broad curriculum which is generally in line with existing national guidance. While maintaining a focus on established expectations relating to knowledge and skills, increasing numbers of schools are giving greater emphasis to broadening achievement and to preparing pupils for positive post-school destinations. These undoubted strengths reflect the professional commitment and competence of our teachers and the improving quality of leadership in our centres and schools.

Other areas of Scottish education also show real strength. Colleges continue to provide relevant and accessible programmes and are helping learners develop an increasing range of essential and vocational skills for the world of work and their own personal development. *The Review of Scotland's Colleges 2007*¹ testifies to the key contribution that colleges make to economic growth. The impact of community learning and development on young people and adult learners has grown since *Improving Scottish Education 2002-2005*. Youth work and adult learning are generally strong.

The context in which local authorities provide education has changed significantly since 2005. Single outcome agreements have provided increased flexibility for decision making at local level and have highlighted the key role that councils play in establishing priorities and leading improvement. Many local authorities have been successful in promoting partnership working and in developing a range of initiatives to improve pupils' learning in and out of school. The best of our local authorities are already leading curricular change and ensuring that high quality experiences and outcomes are being provided for learners. The challenge remains, particularly in a demanding economic climate, for all local authorities to use their increased freedom in innovative ways which address difficult issues and raise standards.

Curriculum for Excellence embodies a new way of working. It recognises that sustained and meaningful improvement should, to a significant extent, be shaped and owned by those who will put it into practice. Within a broad framework of experiences and outcomes, it aims to provide the space and incentive to develop the capacities of our young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. The key to developing capacities, raising standards and meeting the needs of all learners lies of course in consistent, high quality learning and teaching. It remains true that differences within schools are generally greater than those between schools. We must ensure that the welcome development of self-evaluation across Scottish education brings about real improvement and addresses instances of poor quality practice with determination. Self-evaluation should not be seen simply as more effective monitoring by managers but as the commitment of a staff team to reflect and improve. The increasing extent to which teachers are sharing, analysing and comparing each other's practice, although still limited, is encouraging.

We have to place professional development, covering both subject content and pedagogy, at the centre of our approach to change if we are to achieve better experiences and outcomes for learners. The onus will be on local authorities, centres, schools and individual teachers to make optimum use of the time and expertise available for professional development. Such development should build capacity for professional networking utilising, for example, the huge potential of *Glow*² and other forms of ICT. This drive for enhanced professionalism relies upon brave and effective leadership which engages the abilities and determination of a strong and reflective teaching profession.

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1 Review of Scotland's Colleges: Transforming lives, Transforming Scotland: An overview by the Review's 'Core Group'

2 Scotland's national intranet for education, funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Learning and Teaching Scotland.

It is vital that the new curriculum, qualifications and assessment framework embodies the kind of intellectual demand which will stretch all learners. The current profile of attainment within and across the different sectors of education remains uneven. In particular, many young people are not making the progress they should from the middle stages of primary until well into their secondary education. Difficulties with literacy and numeracy and an apparent reluctance or inability to engage with demanding areas of learning such as mathematics, science and modern languages can become entrenched at these stages. I am encouraged that *Curriculum for Excellence* proposes to address literacy and numeracy directly, emphasising the need to develop these fundamental skills across the curriculum and to provide formal recognition of progress up to the end of every young person's school career. Developing to the full the skills and attributes that underpin the four capacities will be essential to equipping our young people to meet the challenges of the future. Formally accredited attainment and broader forms of achievement are sometimes portrayed as alternatives. They are not. Both are essential to the future success of individuals and of our society and economy as a whole.

Sound assessment is integral to the learning and teaching process and to our ability to be confident about standards. A prerequisite is for educators to ensure that they are secure in their judgement of pace and progress in learning. That means actively and rigorously seeking to develop and share knowledge, data and other intelligence about performance in order to be confident that each learner is achieving fully. The next period of development in *Curriculum for Excellence* will involve setting out new approaches that streamline assessment and qualifications arrangements, particularly at S4. Such change poses significant challenges in ensuring progression, breadth of recognition and smooth transitions from the earlier phase of general education.

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The publication of *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* represented a call to action that challenges all lifelong learning providers to equip people with the skills, expertise and knowledge for success. It has provided added impetus for Scottish education to work across sectors in order to ease transition between stages and support learners into positive destinations after each stage. Scotland's lifelong skills strategy draws upon the agenda set by *Curriculum for Excellence* in the pre-school and schools sectors, and requires partnership

working between schools and other sectors, including colleges and community learning and development, in developing skills progressively.

Positive links across partners and stakeholders are key elements in all of this. Successful change in our centres and schools requires the full involvement of parents and learners in considering both the implications of what is proposed and their own contribution. It requires pre-school centres, schools and colleges to work together and with community learning and development, employers and other providers to enhance and extend the curriculum and prepare learners to move on to positive destinations.

The GIRFEC approach aims to ensure that centres, schools and educational services work more closely with partner agencies so that all children get the help that they need when they need it. The 2007 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report *Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland*³ acknowledged that, in comparison with most OECD countries, the Scottish school system is high performing and highly equitable in respect of both learner outcomes and school quality. However, the report also highlighted the limited success of Scotland's schools in tackling those differences in outcomes that are associated with socio-economic disadvantage. A number of important steps are being taken to address this fundamental issue, particularly through early intervention. Curriculum reform should also, in time, make an impact by improving motivation and relevance.

Findings from our child protection inspections show considerable variation in the effectiveness of practice across Scotland. There are strengths in the initial support given to children to keep them safe but these are not always sustained. Effective planning to meet children's needs, based on a rigorous assessment of risk, needs much more development. Improvements are also still required in multi-agency self-evaluation to ensure that this process leads to improvements in practice. We are working with stakeholders to ensure that the lessons from the current cycle of child protection inspections are embedded in practice.

In our last report we said that systems of accountability must themselves adapt to reinforce the kind of changes in practice and in culture which the new ways of working demand. Since then, HMIE has significantly reformed inspections and reviews to focus on what matters most in terms of outcomes for learners, building directly on self-evaluation and enhancing capacity by promoting well-judged innovation. We have also strengthened our work in identifying and spreading good practice through, for example, *The Journey to Excellence* and good practice conferences. These changes have been possible because of the good progress in effective self-evaluation made by schools and colleges over many years. Initial experience of our new arrangements seems to justify that confidence but more needs to be done to establish a consistent culture of self-evaluation for improvement.

This report identifies a range of vital strengths on which Scottish education can build. It also makes very clear the areas where further significant improvement is needed. HMIE will continue to work with others to ensure that Scotland has the creative and dynamic education system for learners of all ages and the effective services for children it needs to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

GRAHAM DONALDSON
HM Senior Chief Inspector

3 Reviews of National Policies for Education – Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland (2007)

Section Two: What progress has been made since the first edition of *Improving Scottish Education*?

In this section, we draw together inspection and review evidence from all sectors to provide an overview of the progress made in the areas highlighted as priorities for improvement in the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, published in 2006.

ACHIEVEMENT

In the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, we highlighted the need to bring together those aspects of education which are described as attainment and those that are called broader achievement in ways which provide a challenging, worthwhile and satisfying experience for all learners. That means continuing to raise standards of attainment for all learners, promoting, developing and recognising broader achievement more explicitly and ensuring that the ways in which we recognise achievement, including formal qualifications, reinforce the purposes of the curriculum.

Areas of continuing strength → and notable improvement ↑

- The good start made by most children in pre-school settings has been maintained. They continue to progress well across almost all the key aspects of learning and development and are making increasing progress in developing skills in early reading and writing. There is good practice in developing children's literacy skills through meaningful play contexts. Children respond well to opportunities to gain independence and to be creative in their play. They are developing their physical skills through more regular energetic activities.
- ↑ In primary schools, personal achievements and personal and social development are increasingly strong at all stages. Gaelic classes successfully celebrate children's wider achievements through drama, music and taking part in National Gaelic festivals. Attainment in listening, talking and reading continues as a strength. The achievements of the lowest attaining children in P1-P5 have improved in recent years. Attainment in writing is improving at the early stages.
- In secondary schools, the performance of young people in national examinations has remained good. Secondary schools are also enabling young people to gain a wider range of accreditation, with increases in, for example, ASDAN,⁴ youth achievement awards, Prince's Trust and community sport and dance leadership awards, as well as a wide range of other awards gained through school-college partnerships.
- ↑ In special schools, pupils progress well in their personal and social skills, and substantial numbers gain awards and qualifications. In residential special schools, care staff and teachers share a better understanding of young people's learning targets and are supporting improvements in achievement.
- ↑ In colleges, the student success rates on further education programmes have improved. Learners on both higher and further education programmes are developing a wider range of essential skills in addition to vocational skills. Success in award schemes and competitions and participation in college and community projects is recognised and widely celebrated in colleges. Programmes specifically developed for learners with additional needs continue to be delivered particularly well in most colleges and learners make very good progress.

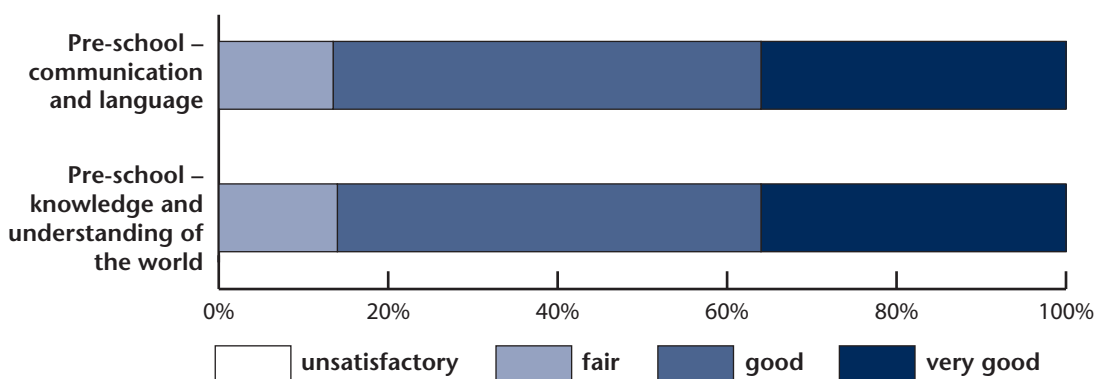
⁴ Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

- ↑ Community learning providers increasingly enable adult and young learners to develop confidence, core skills, including literacy, and citizenship, making a strong contribution to mental wellbeing and promoting engagement in community activities. Within the youth work sector, there has been considerable progress in developing awards for young people that recognise their wider achievements. Some awards have been levelled and credit rated against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). In this way, young people are able to see the value of their learning from project work against the same criteria as formal qualifications. In many areas, youth workers and schools are working together productively to promote and deliver wider achievement activities, and to recognise these achievements.
- In prisons, a well-structured approach to vocational training generally enables those learners who have access to it to develop relevant skills and gain appropriate certification, including nationally accredited qualifications.

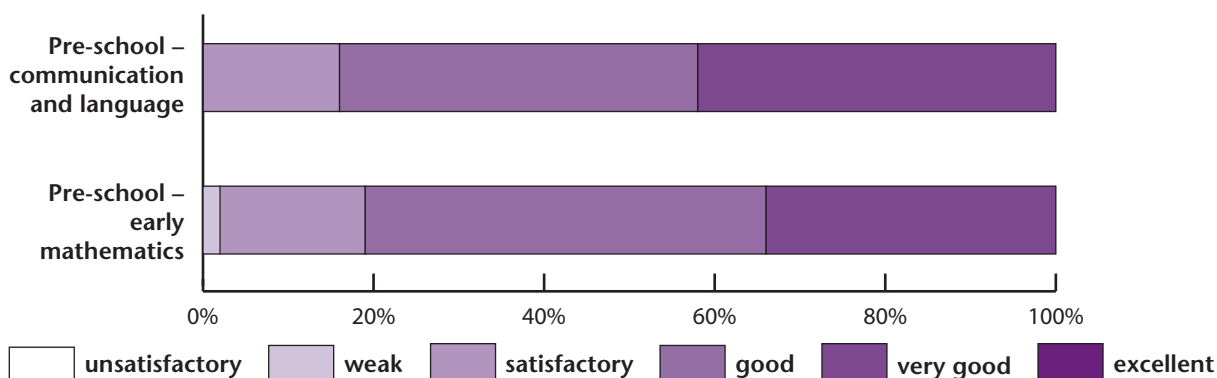
ACHIEVEMENT

PRE-SCHOOL

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING FOUR-POINT SCALE, APRIL 2005-MARCH 2007

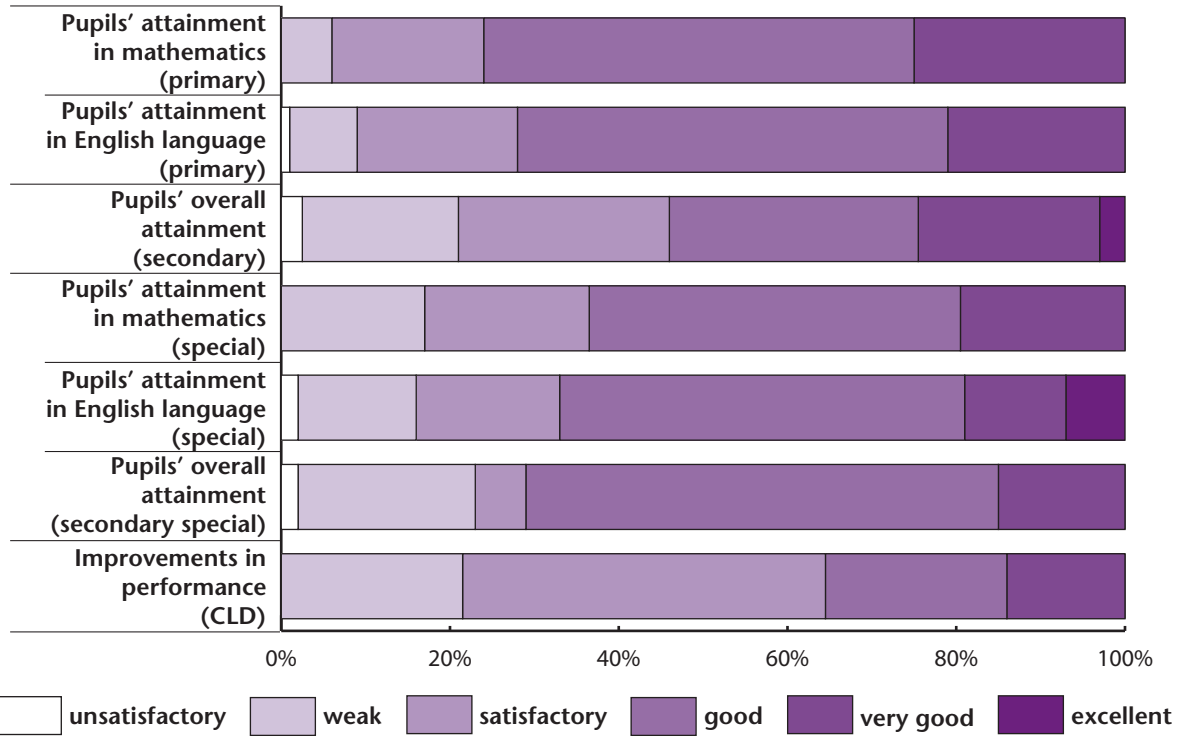


DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING SIX-POINT SCALE, APRIL-DECEMBER 2007



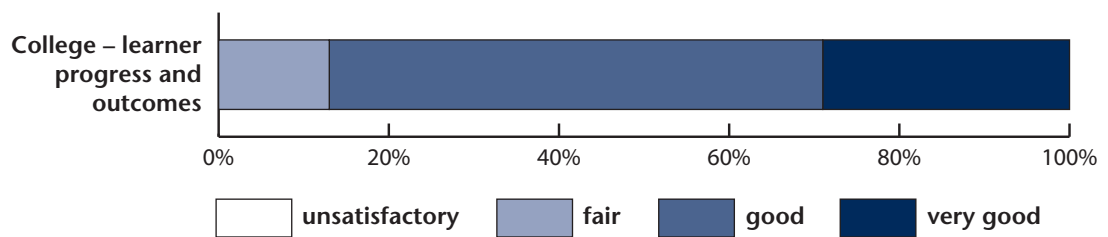
SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOL SECTORS 2005-2007 AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2006-2008



COLLEGE

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY ELEMENT EVALUATIONS IN COLLEGE SECTOR SUBJECT AREAS 2005-2008



What needs to continue to improve?

- The challenge facing all providers of education is to engage with the full implications of *Curriculum for Excellence* and Scotland's lifelong skills strategy. *Curriculum for Excellence* aims to develop young people's capacities as successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals, and effective contributors. *Building the Curriculum 3*⁵ makes very clear the breadth and depth of the learning associated with these capacities, including the development of aspects such as using technology, creativity, developing informed, ethical views, and understanding differences in culture. The framework should be used to raise standards of attainment for all young people while also developing, valuing and recognising their wider achievements. Schools should now work towards a more systematic approach to linking the diverse range of opportunities and experiences they provide for wider achievement to the needs of each individual learner and the development of specific skills, attributes and capabilities across the four capacities.
- Across all sectors, there is a need to improve how learning and skills are recorded and recognised, to collate learners' certificated and other achievements across a range of contexts, and to gather longitudinal data, including tracking learners into further study or employment. The SCQF provides an important means of benchmarking our approach to developing and recognising achievement from the upper secondary stages onwards.
- Whilst there are real strengths in achievement for children and young people in Scotland, we still need to ensure that education is sufficiently inclusive. Substantial numbers of children and young people from vulnerable groups and from disadvantaged circumstances do not sufficiently develop their skills, attain or achieve qualifications. Looked after children are one such prominent group. The gap between young people who achieve and those who do not is too wide.
- Across all sectors, there is a need to ensure progression in learning, especially across transitions, making good use of information on prior learning. Primary schools need to build more directly on active learning at the early stages. Similarly, attainment at the upper stages of primary schools represents insufficient progress from the earlier stages. In secondary schools, the need to raise levels of attainment is now an even greater priority. In science, pupils' performance remains too low. Overall, pupils in S1/S2 are still not sufficiently challenged. The percentages of pupils who did not achieve awards at level SCQF 3 in English and mathematics remained essentially constant over the 2005-2007 period. Boys continue to perform consistently less well than girls, particularly in the proportion attaining SCQF levels 4 and 5 by the end of S4. In Scotland's colleges, there is a need to address low learner retention or attainment on specific programmes.

⁵ Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3: A Framework for Learning and Teaching

CURRICULUM, LEARNING AND TEACHING

In the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, we stressed the need to ensure that the curriculum provides deep, sustained and valuable learning for all learners, including the following.

- Clarity about those elements of the curriculum which should form part of every young person's education, irrespective of perceived ability, social background or school attended.
- Much more rigour and explicit guidance about the development and certification of essential skills, particularly literacy and numeracy for *all* pupils, including those entering higher education.
- Space for imaginative teaching which can capitalise on approaches which make learning relevant, lively and motivating.
- 'Vocational education' to be integral to the education of all pupils – not simply 'parity of esteem' between two separate types of education but an appropriate education for all.
- A more pronounced focus on health education.
- A clearer and more consistent approach to education for citizenship and the key role of schools in transmitting values.

These points are being addressed as *Curriculum for Excellence* and Scotland's lifelong skills strategy develop and they are reflected in the published guidance, including *Building the Curriculum 3*.

We also highlighted the need for learning and teaching of the highest quality, to reduce the unacceptable variability in the quality of learning and teaching and in order to promote the development of learners' knowledge, understanding, skills and capacities as described in *Curriculum for Excellence* and Scotland's lifelong skills strategy.

Areas of continuing strength → and notable improvement ↑

→ There are continuing strengths in the quality of the curriculum in pre-school settings and in the breadth of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools.

↑ There have been improvements in approaches to developing children's literacy and numeracy in primary schools.

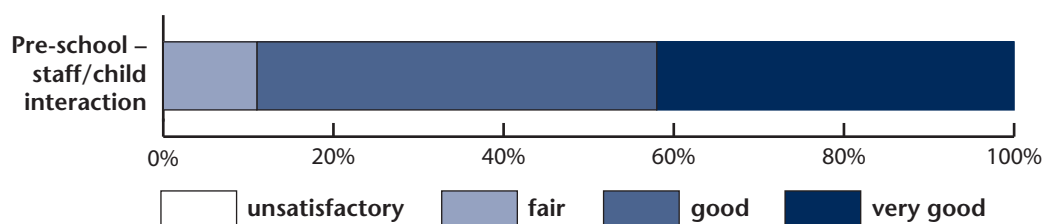
↑ Areas of notable improvement include successful and creative approaches to broadening the range of opportunities for learners. More have opportunities to experience high-quality work-related learning, often through partnerships between schools and colleges and/or community learning and development, but also through activities in their own schools. *Skills for Work* courses have provided substantial numbers of young people with relevant learning experiences. Some schools are moving towards a greater emphasis on planning for learning which takes place beyond the classroom, as part of their broad view of the curriculum. ICT (information and communications technology) is increasingly being used to improve access to opportunities for learning by bringing together teachers and learners 'virtually'. There have been other promising examples of curriculum innovations, but where it is too early to see their longer-term impact on learners. Most schools are making progress towards providing a more substantial experience of quality physical education each week.

- ↑ There have been some effective joint developments which span sectors. As well as leading directly to improvements for learners, these development activities have provided valuable opportunities for professional discussion and shared learning about the curriculum and pedagogy.
- Many members of teaching staff continue to inspire learners and the quality of learning continues to be good across all sectors, with overall high quality in the college sector.
- Learning through play in pre-school continues to be a successful feature of practice, leading to good progress in children's development and learning. Children in pre-school and in primary schools continue to be well motivated and keen to learn.
- ↑ Teachers have enhanced their repertoire of learning and teaching approaches, by taking part in the *Assessment is for Learning* initiative. Successful approaches include sharing learning intentions, skilled interaction with learners to probe and deepen understanding, providing frequent and effective feedback, and securing learners' active engagement in and responsibility for their learning.
- Colleges continue to provide vocationally-relevant curricula which include the contextualisation of core skills that prepare learners well for progression to employment or higher-level study. In partnership with others, they make valuable contributions to the delivery of adult literacy and numeracy.
- ↑ Increasingly, colleges have included a broader range of essential skills in the curriculum, especially at further education level. These include essential skills for lifelong learning, employability and citizenship.

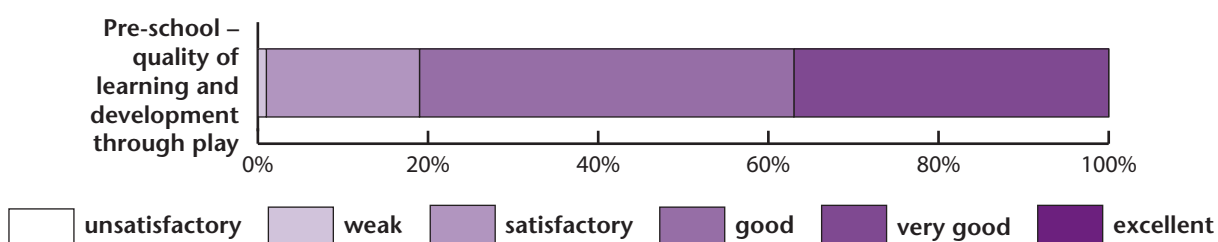
LEARNING

PRE-SCHOOL

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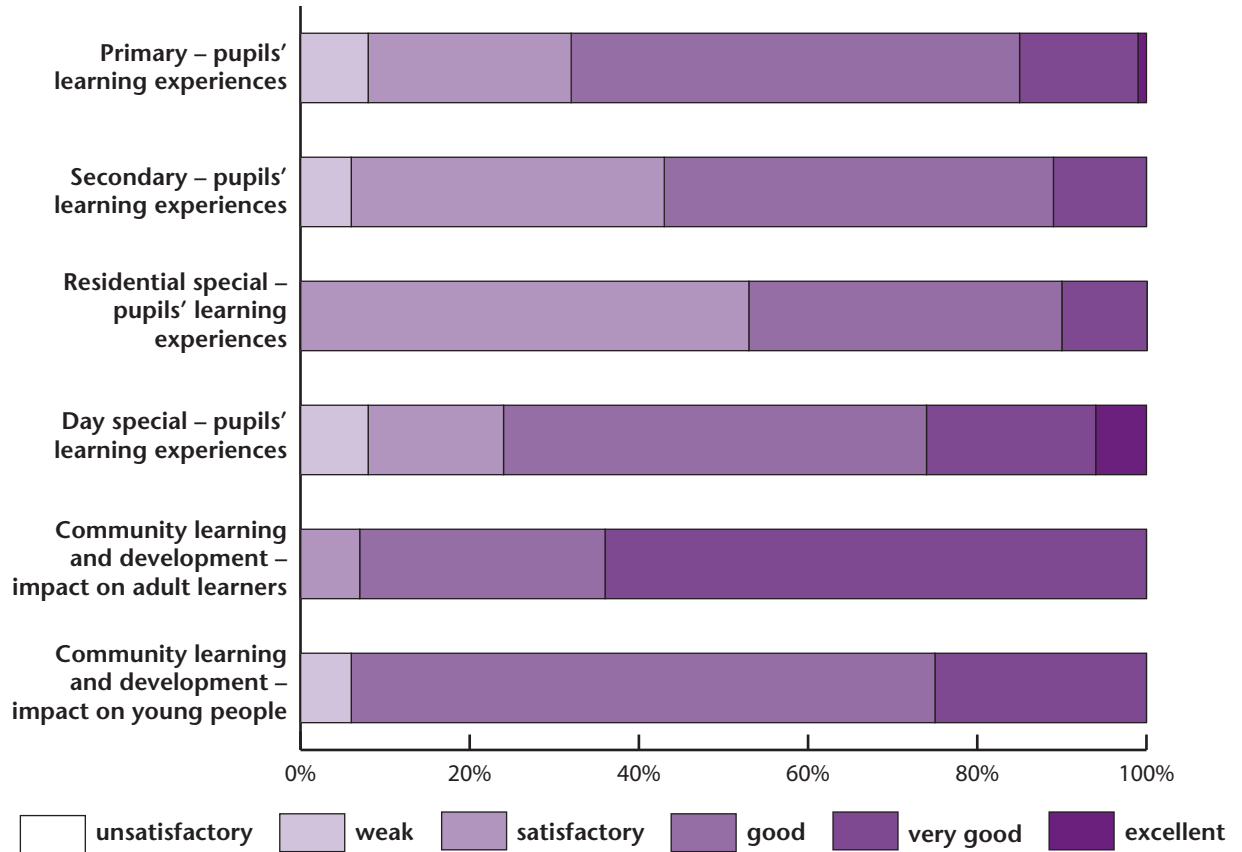


DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING SIX-POINT SCALE, APRIL-DECEMBER 2007



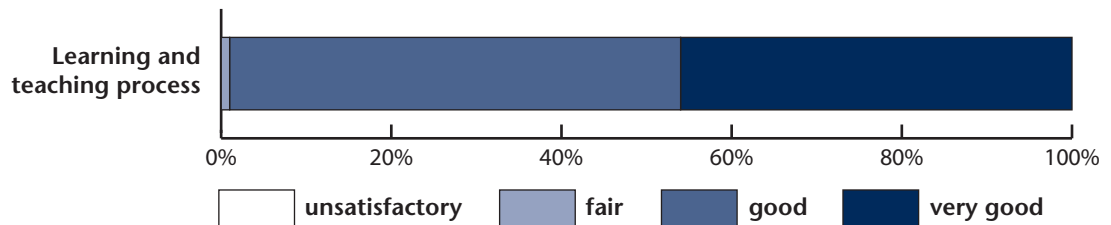
SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOL SECTORS 2005-2007 AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2006-2008



COLLEGE

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY ELEMENT EVALUATIONS IN COLLEGE SECTOR SUBJECT AREAS 2005-2008



What needs to continue to improve?

- Successful implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* depends upon a number of critical factors. First, teaching staff need to develop their understanding of the ways in which the curriculum must change in order to address the likely needs of each individual and of society in the future. They need to be clear about the expectations of the curriculum and to consider the implications for their own practice. This means that they need opportunities to engage in professional discussion both about the curriculum as a whole and about the more specific expectations for each curriculum area set out as experiences and outcomes.
- The broad guidance on the curriculum provided by *Curriculum for Excellence* needs to be translated into aspirational expectations for the development of knowledge, understanding, skills and capacities for all learners, and then into actual changes in teaching, planning and organisation. This represents a very significant opportunity for schools, centres and their partners to use their professional judgement and creativity. It will require, for example, important work to develop a coherent, broad general education from pre-school to the end of S3 for each young person.
- Having considered the aims and requirements of the curriculum, teaching staff need to identify what existing practice needs to be continued and built upon, and plan for the changes which will be necessary. Working with colleagues and other partners, they can help to identify connections between different areas of learning and ensure strong connections between various stages of learning across transition points, between establishments and services, and with the home.
- Local authorities should continue to work closely with schools, colleges and private training providers to ensure that extended curriculum and vocational training opportunities are available to all young people, including those who live in remote areas of the country. Demand outstrips supply for school-college partnership programmes and access to them is not equitable across all geographical regions. It will be important to find ways to give more young people access to the kinds of valuable learning experience provided within these programmes.
- Particular efforts are needed in some specific sectors. It is essential to improve the breadth of the curriculum in many residential special schools, where children and young people need better access to subject specialist teachers and opportunities to experience learning with their peers in mainstream schools. The opportunities for partnership presented by *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* will be helpful in this process. There is also a need to increase the range of educational provision for learners in prisons.
- *Curriculum for Excellence* sets high expectations of rigour. This means that teachers should plan consistently for appropriate pace, challenge, depth and progression, and consciously promote the development of higher-order thinking skills. To help in this process, they need to be aware of and apply the best current thinking and research around learning.
- Most children leave Gaelic medium primary education having studied the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic for at least seven years. Their opportunities to continue studying the whole curriculum through the medium of Gaelic at secondary school are still limited.

VISION AND LEADERSHIP

In the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, we highlighted the need to promote creative and aspirational leadership which is unstinting in the pursuit of quality, and the need to build capacity for leadership at all levels.

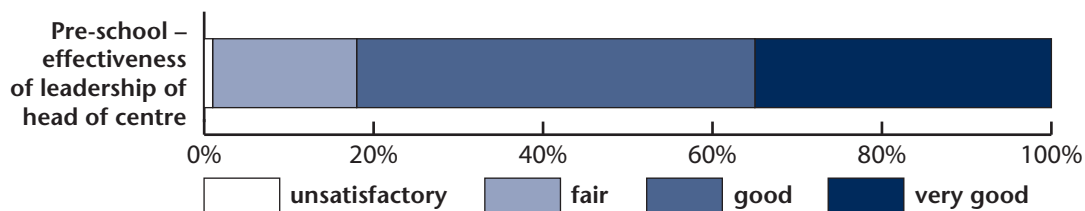
Areas of continuing strength → and notable improvement ↑

- Leadership continues to be mainly strong, providing a good base for the challenges ahead. In almost all local authority-run nursery schools and classes and in most primary and secondary schools, leadership remains a strength.
- ↑ In pre-school settings, there has been national recognition of the need to improve leadership qualifications and skills. Improvements in leadership in the private and voluntary sector reflect the increased number of staff gaining additional qualifications.
- ↑ In most colleges, effective strategic educational leadership creates a clear vision with aims and objectives determined following robust analysis of local and national requirements. Operational leadership at all levels continues to be effective and results in innovative improvements to the curriculum, learning and teaching and services for learners.
- ↑ The extent to which all members of staff in schools take on leadership roles is growing. The introduction of the principal teacher post in primary schools and business managers in secondary schools has significantly increased leadership capacity. In secondary schools, the introduction of curriculum leader posts is helping to improve quality assurance and is leading to a clearer focus on key issues relating to learning and teaching. There is increasing evidence of the concept of 'leadership for learning' being applied as a key driver for improvement and innovation.
- ↑ The flexible route to the Scottish Qualification for Headship has been introduced. Some local authorities are beginning to put planned systems in place to prepare staff for formal leadership roles, including fixed term secondments to leadership posts, opportunities for work shadowing and support for leadership programmes for middle managers. More systematic approaches to succession planning are becoming more evident.
- ↑ A number of authorities with sufficient numbers of staff on the Chartered Teacher programme use it as a vehicle that successfully promotes leadership at all levels.
- ↑ There are examples of strong leadership in special schools, including residential special schools, with a clear focus on improving learning.

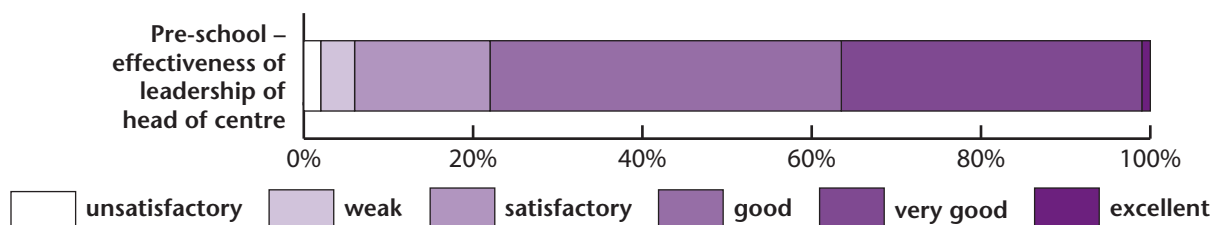
LEADERSHIP

PRE-SCHOOL

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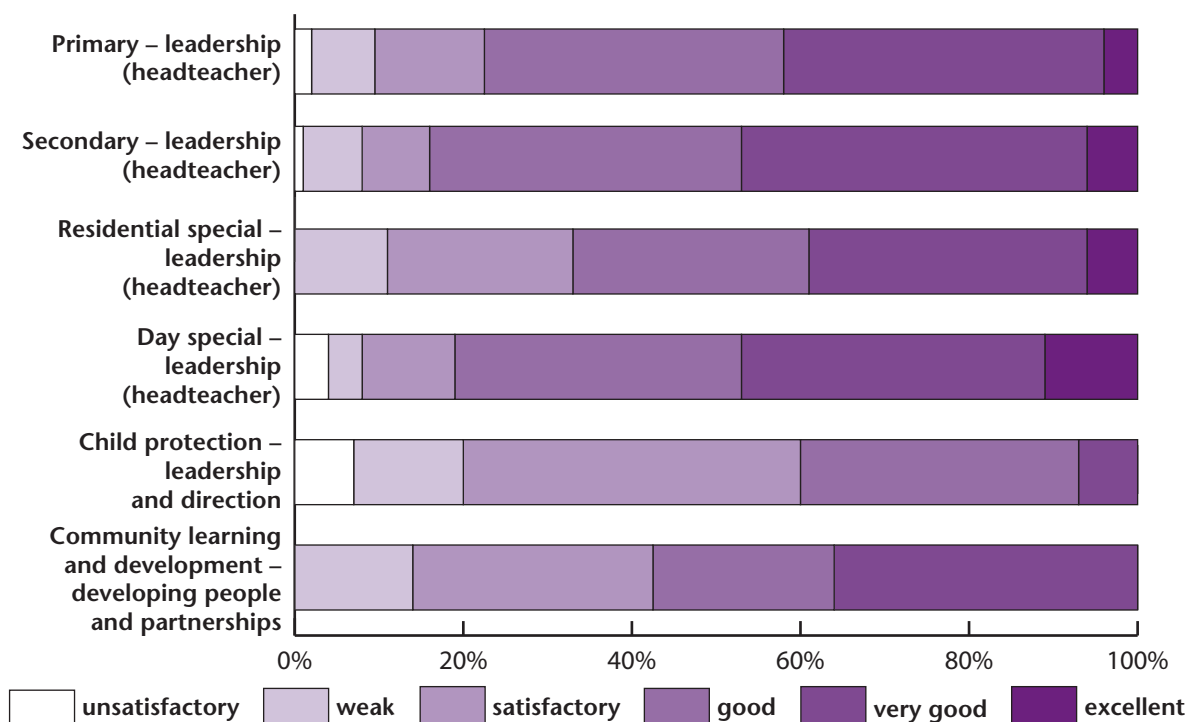


DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING SIX-POINT SCALE, APRIL - DECEMBER 2007



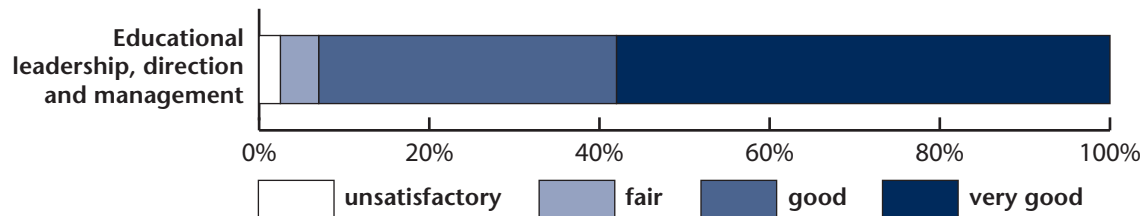
SCHOOLS, CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOL SECTORS 2005-2007 AND CHILD PROTECTION INSPECTION REPORTS JANUARY 2007 - MARCH 2008



COLLEGE

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY ELEMENT EVALUATIONS IN THE COLLEGE SECTOR 2005-2008



What needs to continue to improve?

- Leadership needs to be directed to the development of the curriculum. More school leaders need to take an innovative approach to leading the curriculum and focusing clearly on learners' experiences. Leadership for change, including effective planning of change management, needs to take account of learners' experiences throughout the change process to ensure that innovations fully deliver the anticipated benefits for learners.
- In pre-school settings, there is a continued need for higher-level qualifications for all staff in order to improve leadership capacity in educational development and children's learning.
- Leadership is needed at different levels in all schools, including leadership by class teachers as well as promoted staff. Whilst there is good practice in staff at all levels leading innovation and demonstrating very effective teaching, this needs to be achieved more consistently within and across schools. This includes capitalising on the skills of Chartered Teachers and the development of coaching as an approach to teacher development. There is considerable variation across authorities in the number of registered and candidate Chartered Teachers. Some authorities have done little to promote the programme or utilise the skills of those who have successfully completed it.
- In most sectors, there is scope to improve partnership working with others, both within their own establishment and across sectors, in order to meet the needs of learners. There is a need for the further development of generic skills related to leadership, such as the management of change, at all levels. Opportunities to develop those skills are variable. In secondary schools, the impact of corporate leadership has yet to be achieved consistently across subjects or faculties. Some curriculum leaders have not yet developed the skills to enable them to take forward their extended leadership roles. In colleges, self-evaluation activity needs to include consistently the quality of learning and teaching.
- Across all sectors of education, further work is needed to build more strongly on self-evaluation as the basis for improvement. Building on the experience and expertise that already exist, schools' future approaches to self-evaluation need to demonstrate positive impact and outcomes for learners. In some primary schools, there is still scope for staff to be more fully involved in the decision-making process. In a few instances, primary headteachers do not work effectively with staff to develop the school's capacity to improve. Not all principal teachers have the responsibility and opportunity to lead an area of learning.

- There is a need to develop future leaders and improve leadership capacity, particularly in CLD. The CLD sector has lagged behind others in promoting improvement through continuing professional development and pathways for leadership. A Standards Council for Community Learning and Development has been established and additional funding secured for professional development. Building leadership capacity within the sector will be a priority in the years ahead.
- The monitoring by some colleges of progress towards the achievement of their planned aims and objectives needs to be improved by managers setting more specific and measurable targets.

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LEGAL ISSUES



PARTNERSHIPS

In the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, we highlighted the need to establish effective partnership working across children's services. Working in partnership with others is a fundamental way for educational establishments and services to help practitioners act in ways that make positive differences for children, young people and adult learners. A coherent curriculum requires close collaboration across transitions. This means that educational providers must work with each other, with parents and with other services for children and adults to ease learners' transitions between stages and educational sectors. Such joint working ensures a continuous lifelong learning experience where barriers to learning are successfully identified and tackled.

Since the publication of the first *Improving Scottish Education* report in 2006, new legislation and key national initiatives, including *Curriculum for Excellence* and Scotland's lifelong skills strategy, have emphasised the importance of continuing to improve partnership working in order to meet the needs of each individual learner.

The *Early Years Framework* requires professionals from a range of backgrounds to continue to strengthen partnership working with the aim of improving outcomes for the youngest children and their families. It involves a shift of resources from dealing with failure to building resilience and dealing with the root causes of current social problems. This partnership approach is also reflected in *GIRFEC* which aims to ensure that all children get the help they need when they need it.

The Scottish School (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 sets out to modernise and strengthen the framework for supporting parental involvement in school education. It aims to help schools, education authorities and others to engage parents meaningfully in the education of their children and in the wider school community by: involving them with their child's education and learning; welcoming them as active participants in the life of the school; and encouraging them to express their views on school education generally and to work in partnership with the school.

Areas of continuing strength → and notable improvement ↑

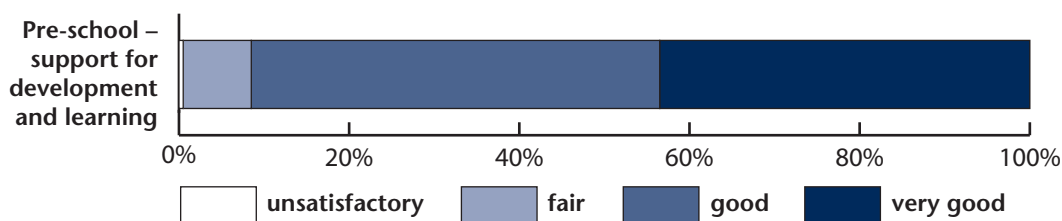
- ↑ Pre-school centres are developing productive links with support services, other professionals and schools to improve joint working and to ensure the needs of every individual child are met.
- ↑ A large number of adults have improved their basic literacy and numeracy through local partnerships involving community learning and development, colleges and the voluntary sector.
- In pre-school and primary school settings, and through outreach work, staff have maintained positive partnership working with parents and carers supporting the pastoral needs of children and families.

- Many primary and secondary schools are good at involving parents in school activities. Many parents provide invaluable support for primary and secondary schools.
- Strengths in joint working across many primary/secondary school groups include effective targeting of support to the most vulnerable learners. This approach is supported by productive relationships with a range of partner agencies, including educational establishments and services, the police, social work, health, housing and leisure services, the Children's Reporter and voluntary and independent organisations, with a focus on 'closing the gap'.
- In colleges, managers and staff work effectively with bodies such as local authorities, local enterprise companies, employers, community organisations, schools and universities to improve progression routes for learners into and out of college programmes. This partnership working is based on sound strategic and operational planning that takes good account of partner needs as well as local and national government priorities.

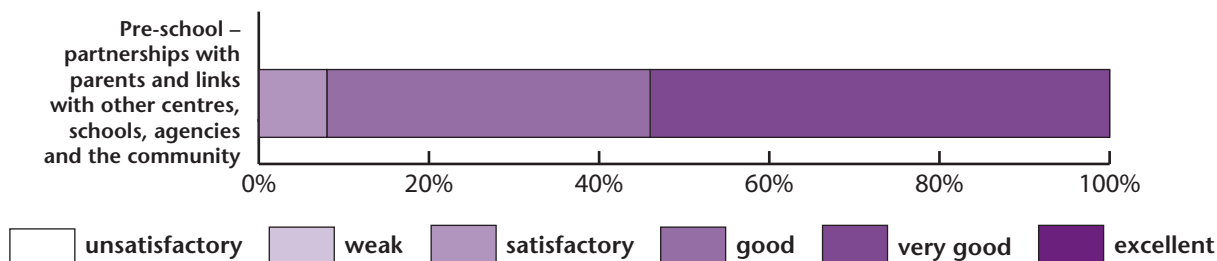
PARTNERSHIPS

PRE-SCHOOL

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING FOUR-POINT SCALE, APRIL 2005-MARCH 2007

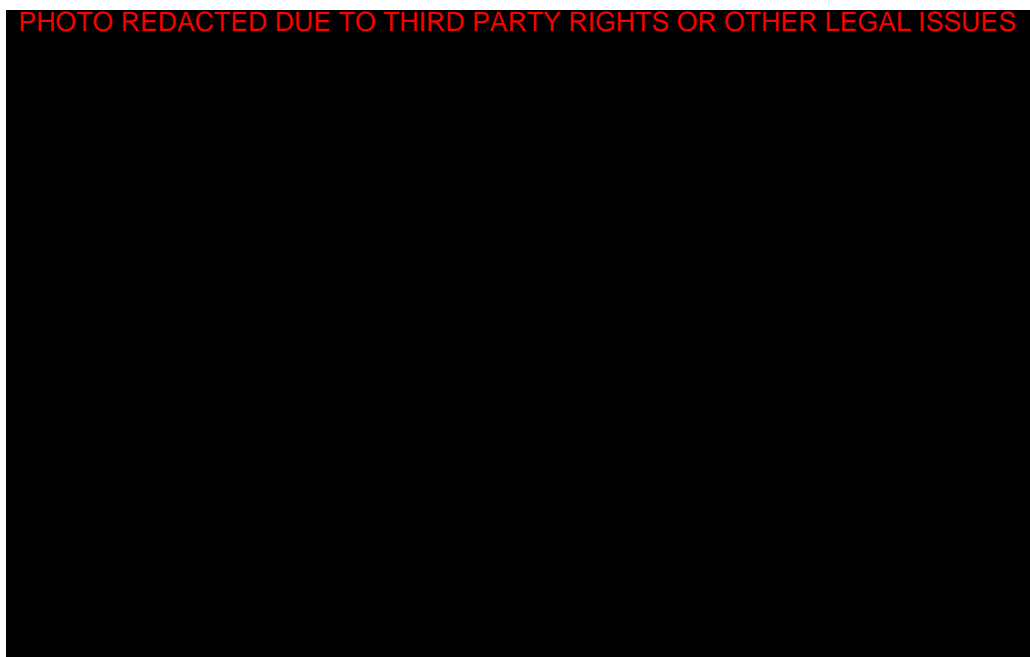
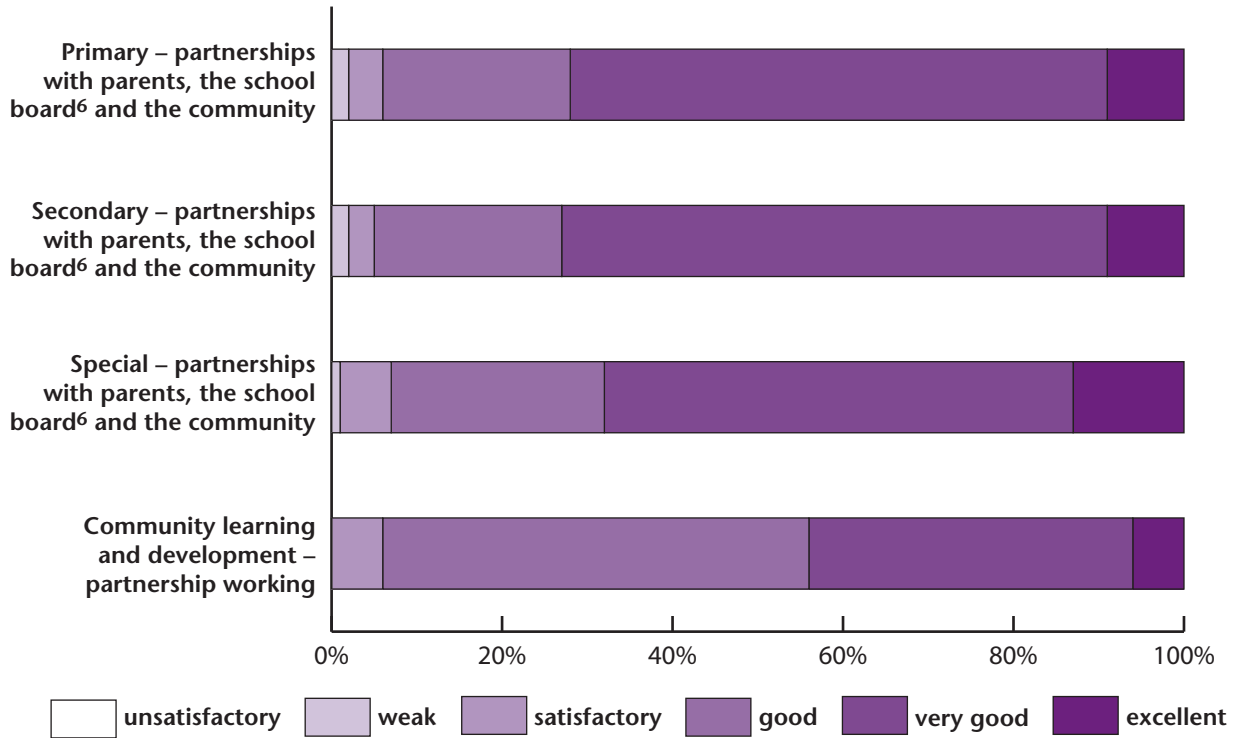


DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING SIX-POINT SCALE, APRIL-DECEMBER 2007



SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOL SECTORS 2005-2007 AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2006-2008



⁶ School Boards were replaced over the period of this report by Parent Councils.

What needs to continue to improve?

- The development of preventative approaches in response to the *Early Years Framework* must ensure that all children have the best start in life. All concerned need to become better at identifying those who are at risk and intervening early to address that risk.
- A particular focus is needed on building on prior learning when pupils enter P1, S1, on transition between school, residential and off-site provision and transition from school to post-school settings. There is a need to establish clear transition pathways from children's to adult services for all individuals at risk of missing out on the opportunities available for education and training. Special attention needed for young people with additional support needs moving to adult support services.
- There is a need to maximise the impact of partnership working to ensure that the needs of every individual child are met in an integrated way. All school sectors need to work more closely with partner agencies to develop a GIRFEC approach to ensure that all children get the help that they need when they need it. The successful implementation of the GIRFEC strategy requires services to take a whole child approach to share appropriate information with a view to developing a single coordinated plan and identifying a lead professional for any child who requires additional help or support.
- Children and young people who succeed do so because they grow in understanding both at school and at home and are able to build a learning bridge between them. Parents have a key role to play in developing children's early reading and numeracy skills. It remains a challenge for pre-school centres and schools to help parents contribute more consistently and widely to their children's learning, and to involve 'harder-to-reach' parents.
- Staff in most sectors need more training together with those from other sectors to improve interagency working and to develop understanding of how to do the right things with the right people at the right time to improve outcomes for each individual learner.

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PROFESSIONAL FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

In the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, we stressed the need to give individual establishments and their staff greater scope to exercise their professional roles. Scotland is fortunate in having a highly professional teaching force. It is essential that this professionalism includes team working and sharing good practice, embracing innovation, taking responsibility for personal performance and development, and encouraging and supporting each learner as an individual.

In 2000, an Act of the Scottish Parliament⁷ set out the duty of each education authority to secure education that was directed to the development of every child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. *Curriculum for Excellence* reflects this aspiration and is about fostering achievement for all. To achieve these aims, learners need to benefit from a confident and professional education service which has a strong and lasting impact on their learning – a world class service for the 21st century.

Areas of continuing strength → and notable improvement ↑

- The professionalism of Scottish teachers was recognised in the 2007 OECD report.⁸ The report also described the arrangements for induction of new teachers as 'world class'. Support for new teachers, and the energetic contribution and the freshness which many of them bring to schools, continue to be strengths of the system. In general, the commitment and competence of teachers in many aspects of their work continue to be features of which we can be proud.
- ↑ There are signs of increasing collegiality in some schools where, for example, staff are involved in working groups and are responsible for taking and implementing decisions about key aspects of the school's work. Some teachers have excellent opportunities to show leadership by chairing these forums.
- ↑ The Teachers' Agreement has helped to promote widening of opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD), and an understanding that CPD might include a broader set of activities such as personal research, online resources, shadowing and peer learning, mentoring and coaching, secondments and other activities to complement more routine courses and in-service meetings. Staff in many pre-school settings and schools are beginning to benefit from the increased focus on relevant training and qualifications and notable improvements in the range and quality of opportunities. Many local authorities are providing good opportunities for their teachers to consider the implications of *Curriculum for Excellence* and are giving greater attention to developing leadership capacity in staff. ICT-based developments and initiatives such as *Assessment is for Learning* have brought greater emphasis on the craft of teaching. Access to CPD in Gaelic language and better networking are reducing the sense of isolation felt by teachers in Gaelic language classes and schools.
- ↑ In Scotland's colleges, teaching staff are well qualified professionally and the proportion with a teaching qualification has risen steadily to its current high level.

⁷ Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000

⁸ Reviews of National Policies for Education – Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland (2007)

- Teaching staff in colleges also have relevant up-to-date vocational experience. Staff review processes in colleges identify individual professional development needs well and the professional development that staff undertake generally meets these needs. College staff are strongly committed to teamwork, demonstrate good levels of knowledge of quality procedures and are committed to improving the quality of the learner experience. They are appropriately involved in self-evaluation and internal review activities in almost all colleges.
- In primary and secondary schools, self-evaluation is well established as a process. The best schools continue to use peer observation and to share good practice in teaching to improve their work. The influence of *The Journey to Excellence*, including the third edition of *How good is our school?*, have provided additional focus and drive for improvement. There is increasing sophistication in the gathering and analysis of performance data in secondary schools.
- ↑ Within the community learning and development sector, considerable attention has been given to promoting improvement through self-evaluation. This has been supported at national level by development projects to help staff focus more clearly on the outcomes and impact of their work.

What needs to continue to improve?

- Many pre-school staff still need to access further training and qualifications to develop their understanding of children's learning. Although there has been some improvement, there is a continuing gap in the level of qualifications of staff, which needs to be reduced to implement *Curriculum for Excellence* and to ensure the success of the *Early Years Framework*.
- Schools and local authorities need to allocate a significant share of the time available for continuing professional development to supporting the implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Not all teachers have yet grasped the opportunities for bottom-up development of the curriculum which *Curriculum for Excellence* is bringing. Many are still waiting for courses and programmes to be prepared for them. Innovation, well-judged change and development at local level are not merely options; they are essential if we are to meet the needs of each individual learner.
- Schools and local authorities will need to share best practice in supporting staff to keep abreast of developments within their stage, curricular area or subjects and in broader, cross-curricular development work. All staff will need to develop their skills in response to changes in Scotland's social and economic context, for example, the increasing number of learners from migrant backgrounds.
- Through using the flexibility in the Teachers' Agreement, authorities have enhanced leadership and management capacity in their schools. However, new structures do not in themselves guarantee better practice and improved outcomes for learners. They have not yet led to consistent impact on learners' attainment in literacy and numeracy or achievements in key cross-curricular areas such as health, environmental, enterprise, international or citizenship education. In secondary schools, the responsibilities of all teachers for pastoral care need to be more clearly defined and fully accepted.
- Across all sectors, staff need to ensure that self-evaluation processes focus consistently on bringing about improvements in the quality of learners' experiences and achievement.

SUCCESS FOR ALL LEARNERS

In order to achieve success for all learners, educational establishments and services need to ensure positive relationships at all levels. They need to seek and build upon the views and evaluations of learners, parents and partner professionals. They need to promote a culture of achievement and provide opportunities for every individual to be successful and to attain to his or her fullest potential. In the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, we highlighted the need to enhance the achievement of our most vulnerable learners, to address purposefully issues of equality and diversity and to tackle with greater determination underperformance in meeting the needs of each individual learner.

Since then, key pieces of legislation and initiatives by the Scottish Government such as *GIRFEC*, *Early Years Framework* and *More Choices, More Chances* (MCMC) have been aimed at improving outcomes for vulnerable groups. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 brought in a broader definition of additional support needs, and an emphasis on inclusive practices and the need to involve parents and pupils in discussions of how learning needs should be met.

Areas of continuing strength → and notable improvement ↑

- Positive and constructive relationships between learners and teachers are characteristic of almost all pre-school centres, schools and colleges in Scotland. There has been a continuing commitment to the principles of inclusion across all establishments and services which play a role in Scottish education. The OECD report of 2007⁹ confirmed that Scottish schools are highly equitable in respect of both learner outcomes and school quality. The overarching aim is to develop and fulfil the potential of every individual learner and overcome any barriers to progress.
- ↑ Increasingly, schools and education authorities are taking a more proactive approach towards the involvement of children and young people in school decision making. Pupil councils play a key role in efforts to increase learner participation in planning and decision making. Colleges are successful at taking account of learner's views and are increasingly involving them in evaluating their own programmes and other services provided by the college.
- Scotland's colleges target under-represented groups and hard-to-reach learners, including those from areas of multiple deprivation and in remote rural locations. They have worked hard to make buildings, the curriculum and learning resources accessible to all sectors of society. Effective partnerships and links with stakeholders help to widen the range of diverse learners taking part in college programmes. Colleges work well with schools and other agencies to plan provision for their most vulnerable learners. Programmes increasingly promote positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity.
- ↑ Many establishments in all sectors and many education authorities have strengthened their policies in relation to diversity, equality and fairness. More flexible and imaginative teaching approaches in pre-school, primary and secondary schools, and special schools, are helping to meet all children's learning needs better. While the overall aim is to support each individual learner, much of the recent focus in school improvement has been on improving outcomes for specific groups of children and young people with additional needs or who may be particularly vulnerable for a range of reasons.

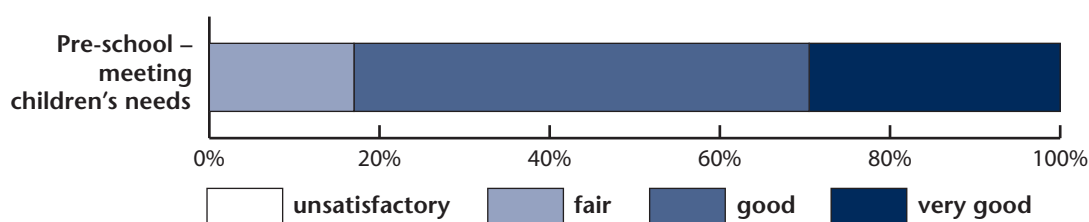
⁹ Reviews of National Policies for Education – Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland (2007)

↑ In CLD, a strong trend has been the importance of work with parents to enable them to support their children's learning. Adult learning and community involvement activities build the confidence and wellbeing of parents and carers. This has a beneficial effect on their relationships and support for their children.

MEETING LEARNING NEEDS

PRE-SCHOOL

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING FOUR-POINT SCALE, APRIL 2005-MARCH 2007

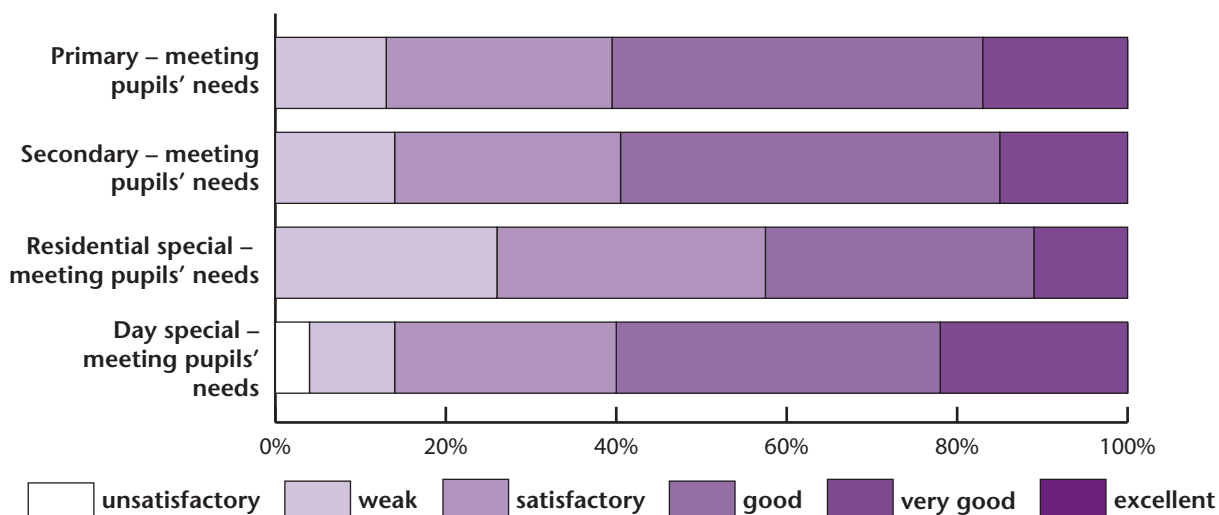


DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING SIX-POINT SCALE, APRIL - DECEMBER 2007



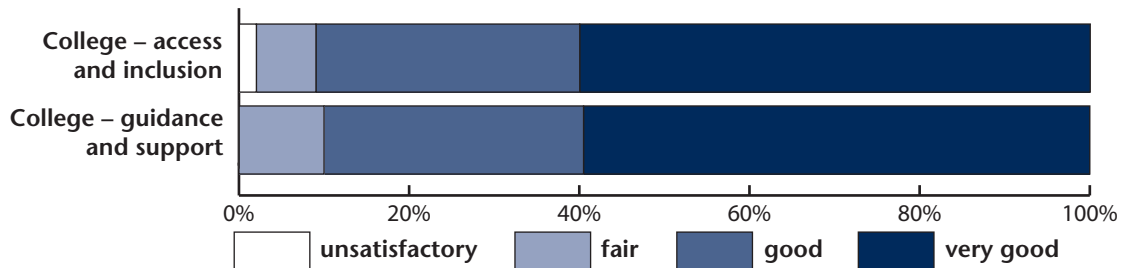
SCHOOLS

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOL SECTORS 2005-2007



COLLEGE

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY ELEMENT EVALUATIONS IN THE COLLEGE SECTOR 2005-2008



What needs to continue to improve?

- Since the publication of *Improving Scottish Education 2002-2005*, HMIE has published a number of reports in its *Count Us In* series which have considered challenges facing Scottish education. These include reports on provision for children with autism spectrum disorders, deafness, dyslexia, and dealing with young people in danger of missing out on chances and choices in education, particularly those who are looked after. The key message emerging from these reports is that there is much high-quality, imaginative and successful work going on in schools and local authorities and their partner agencies, with the aim of ensuring success for these 'at risk' groups. However, the outcomes for the children and young people concerned remain uncertain. Some children and young people continue to do badly. There remains a key role for councils to act as 'corporate parents' taking on responsibilities that generally fall to parents or carers, in improving outcomes for vulnerable children.
- All staff in educational establishments in most sectors and related professional services need to have a clear understanding of their individual and interdependent roles and responsibilities in ensuring success for all learners. Best practice needs to become more consistent in raising expectations and challenging preconceptions about the perceived potential of some learners.
- A continued priority is to work towards a shared understanding of how best to promote diversity, equality and fairness, including race equality, through the curriculum and the broader life and work of schools; and to maximise the impact of these strategies.
- Changing Scottish society over the last three years brings new challenges and brings into even sharper focus the gap between the most and least privileged groups in Scotland. Economic migration and the arrival of many 'new Scots' are leading to increases in the number of adults and children with English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and English as an additional language (EAL) in colleges and schools. It is important to be able to communicate with and support families to ensure effective learning and improved life chances. The skills of all staff in schools need to be developed to deal with the differing learning and support needs of all the learners for whom they are responsible. Greater attention is needed to the early indicators of learning needs, for example, language and communication difficulties, so that appropriate and timely support is provided.
- Outwith the college sector, approaches to listening to learners' views often involve one-off events rather than strategies which provide sustainable methods of engagement. The views of learners and parents need to be taken into account more fully by school and centre staff when change and development to the curriculum, leadership and learning are being planned. Local authorities need to improve the quality and extent of their communication with young people and their parents, and engage young people and parents more fully in decisions which affect any future support.

Pre-school

Primary

Secondary

Special school

College

Community learning and development

Prison learning, skills and employability

Child protection services in local authority areas

Section Three: Pre-school sector

Strengths

- Consistently good curriculum and good progress made by children across key aspects of their learning.
- Confident children who enjoy their pre-school experiences and who are keen and motivated to learn.
- Supportive and caring relationships between children and staff, and parents and staff which ensure children's wellbeing.
- Welcoming and inclusive learning environments which help children to settle and take part enthusiastically in activities.

Aspects for improvement

- The variable quality of provision across sectors with the partnership private and voluntary centres, in general, less effective than the local authority sector.
- The quality of leadership in guiding educational developments and children's learning.
- The impact of self-evaluation in improving outcomes for children.
- Staff interactions which extend and challenge children's learning.
- Identification of children's individual learning needs, staff use of assessment information and staff intervention to ensure all children make appropriate progress.

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How well do children learn and achieve?

Welcoming and inclusive learning environments help support almost all children to settle and participate enthusiastically in activities. Most children are generally very motivated and eager participants in their learning. There is an improving emphasis on the use of ICT to support learning. Children's natural curiosity is encouraged more frequently and they are able to follow their particular interests. Children have considerable choice in selecting activities during play. However, there is scope for children in a minority of centres to make more choices and decisions, to develop their independent learning skills or to be involved in planning the nursery activities.

In the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, it was noted that the quality of interactions between adults and children was not consistently high. There is still room to improve further the quality of interactions. Where interaction is effective, staff know their children as individuals, interact well with them during play sessions, and display high levels of skill in their questioning and timing of their interventions. These staff are mostly well qualified and experienced.

In effective practice, staff observe children at play and use this assessment information effectively to identify needs and plan learning to suit children's development stage, and the challenge and support required. There is still a need to improve the use of the information staff gather on children's progress to provide activities which build on children's skills and earlier learning. The level of challenge is sometimes not high enough, particularly for more able children.

Most children in pre-school make good or very good progress across key aspects of their learning. Children build confidence in social skills and can take increasing responsibilities in their learning. They make choices in their play activities and gain independence in personal tasks.

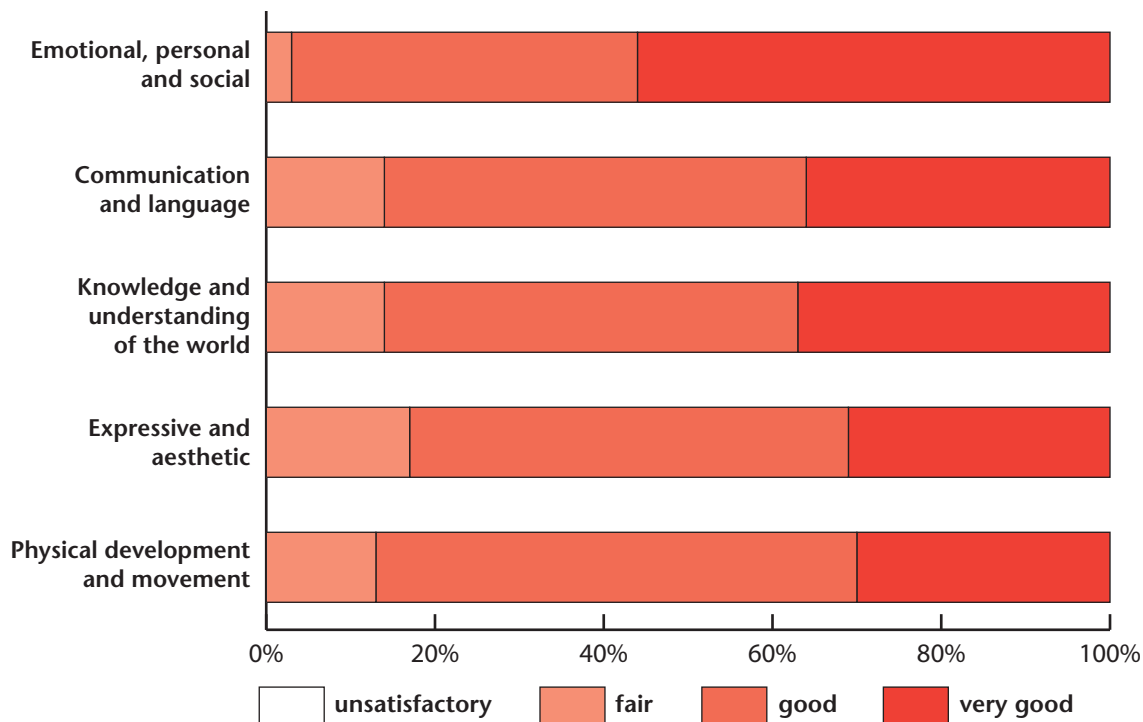
Most children are making good or very good progress in early language skills. They speak confidently to adults and each other and listen well to stories in small groups. Increasingly, children are becoming confident in early writing and reading activities in their play. Children are improving their understanding of numbers and shapes. Most can count, sort and match objects well in their play. Broader mathematical skills are less well developed in their activities. Children are developing a good awareness of their natural environment and enjoy exploring and finding out how things work. They show skill and enthusiasm in imaginative activities and are highly motivated when singing and acting out roles. At times, too many adult-led activities limit children's individual creativity. Most children are developing their physical skills well. Increasingly, they are taking part in good quality energetic play. There is still room for improvement to make sure all children have access to high quality energetic play.

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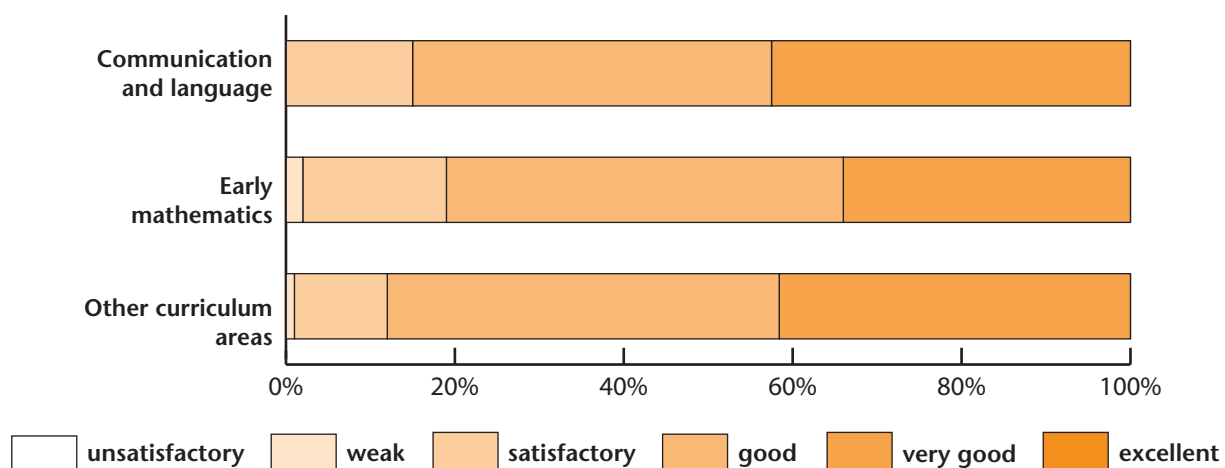


CHILDREN'S PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING FOUR-POINT SCALE,
APRIL 2005-MARCH 2007



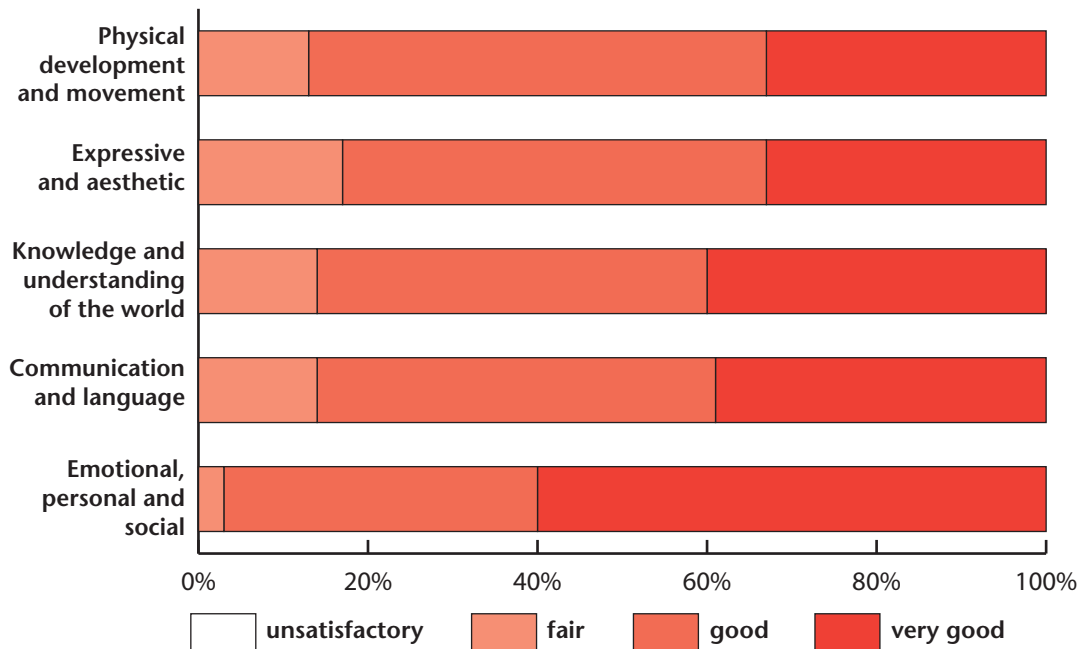
DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING SIX-POINT SCALE,
APRIL-DECEMBER 2007



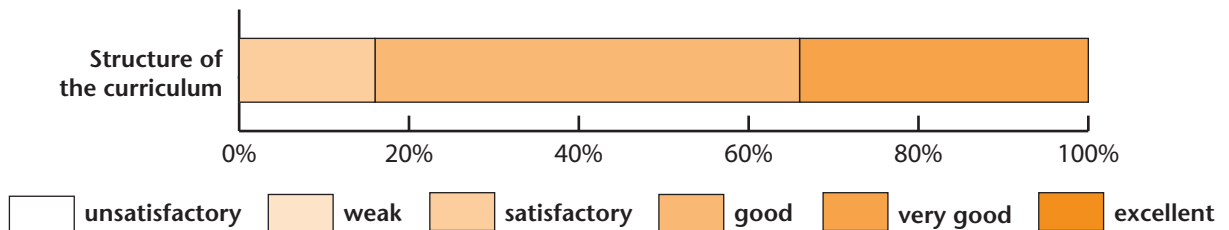
Curriculum programmes remain strong and provide broad and enjoyable experiences. Staff provide well-integrated activities which link children’s learning. Early literacy and numeracy activities are found across curriculum areas which allow children to understand the context of these skills. Children are benefiting increasingly from learning out of doors. Activities are included which encourage children to look after the environment. ICT is used in most centres to develop children’s awareness and skills in using everyday technologies, such as cameras and computers. Curriculum provision in education authority centres is better overall than that of private and voluntary sectors. There is growing awareness of the four capacities to be developed through *Curriculum for Excellence*.

CURRICULUM AREAS

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING FOUR-POINT SCALE, APRIL 2005-MARCH 2007



DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR, USING SIX-POINT SCALE, APRIL-DECEMBER 2007



Do pre-school centres have a clear sense of direction?

Most headteachers or heads of centre successfully encourage teamwork amongst staff. They work effectively to ensure staff have direction, and support and demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of children's experiences.

Leadership was highlighted in the first *Improving Scottish Education* report as a key area for improvement. Since then, there have been signs of improvement, particularly in response to the Scottish Social Services Council's (SSSC) registration and qualification requirements for managers of centres. There is growing recognition that leadership for learning is everyone's job. However, more remains to be done to ensure all children attend centres where leaders are well qualified and provide high quality guidance to staff and children. Leadership in the private and voluntary sectors still lags behind that of education authority provision. In almost all of the centres where leadership was highlighted as a weakness, there were also weaknesses in children's learning experiences.

How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

Most pre-school staff continue to provide effective pastoral care to children and their families and have built positive partnerships with parents, carers and families. Most centres have been successful in using book projects to promote literacy in partnership with parents. Parents and carers are often actively involved in discussing their children's development and learning. Intervention initiatives are gaining more focus, particularly in local authority nursery schools and child and family centres.

Children with additional support needs achieve success with the help of various support networks in most local authority centres. However, in around a quarter of voluntary and private centres, children are less well supported. In effective practice, a varied range of partnership work is having positive outcomes on children and their families. Interagency groups provide effective support for children with disabilities. Families are well supported by strong multi-agency working, including *Sure Start* health visitors, speech and language therapists, extended care and family support and other council staff. Local authority-run integrated early years centres enable a wide range of family needs to be met very well through effective joint working amongst staff from the council and partner agencies, particularly health personnel. Support for parenting skills and for early child development is being encouraged effectively in some local authorities. However, children with more complex needs still require better support through well-coordinated learning plans and stronger and more effective interagency working.

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Most centres have supportive transition arrangements which ensure a smooth transfer between stages in the nursery and from nursery to school. This often involves a programme of home visiting, effective exchanges of information about children's needs and achievements, and well-planned induction visits involving both child and parent or carer. In the most effective cases, meetings also take place between staff in both nursery and school to ensure continuity in active approaches to learning.

Are staff and children actively involved in improving their pre-school centre community?

Staff listen more to children's views and respond appropriately. There is scope for more emphasis on seeking children's views and ensuring they are actively involved in planning their own activities.

A key feature which continues in the pre-school sector is strong team working by staff who were committed to the education and care for all children. The pre-school sector is characterised by positive working relationships and the commitment of most staff to their work. There are improvements in the qualifications of staff, with greater emphasis on leadership training through the SSSC and other routes to improving professional qualifications. However, there continues to be disparity in levels of qualifications between private and voluntary sector and the public sector.

Although the process of self-evaluation is being undertaken in most centres, staff are not always fully included and the impact is sometimes limited. Centres have developed a range of monitoring systems and procedures. For example, staff regularly ask parents their views about the experiences offered. However, information obtained from self-evaluation is not always focused on ensuring improvements in children's learning. Better support for peer evaluation and reflection, particularly in the private and voluntary sectors, is needed for all staff to ensure continuous improvement. In almost all of the centres where self-evaluation was weak, there remain weaknesses in children's experiences overall. Much remains to be done to ensure a reflective culture of improvement through self-evaluation amongst staff.

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Do pre-school centres have high expectations of all children?

The ethos in pre-school centres continues to be very good. Pre-school centres are successful in the inclusion of children and families in welcoming and caring environments and where equality and fairness are shown. Staff work hard to develop and maintain positive relationships with children, parents and wider communities. They have high expectations of children, developing confidence and independence in their learning through play. Children's natural curiosity is encouraged and they have choice in making decisions about their learning activities and developing their interests and ideas.

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Section Three: Primary school sector

Strengths

- Increasing opportunities for children to engage in a broad range of motivating learning experiences.
- Strong and productive partnerships with parents, the wider community and local clusters of schools.
- Warm and purposeful staff-children relationships, the quality of pastoral care for children, emotional wellbeing and education for personal and social development.
- The commitment and effective teamwork and collegiality of staff.
- Children's behaviour, their ability to work well with and be considerate of others and their readiness to accept responsibility.
- Achievements in talking, listening and reading in English language and in aspects of mathematics.
- Increasing opportunities for wider achievements, most notably in aspects of citizenship, health promotion, environmental and enterprise education.
- Effective leadership of the headteacher in most schools and improving shared leadership.

Aspects for improvement

- Closing the gap at the upper stages to ensure all children move on to secondary schooling as sufficiently skilled independent learners who are well equipped to make progress in their learning.
- Meeting the learning needs of all children, particularly challenging the most able children.
- Attainment and application of knowledge in writing in English language and Gaelic, in problem solving in mathematics and in science and the technologies.
- Promoting and monitoring progression in children's wider achievements in relation to the attributes, capabilities and skills underpinning the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Improvement through self-evaluation, including better use of the child's voice to inform more effectively their learning experiences in school.

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How well do children learn and achieve?

Teaching, learning and meeting the needs of all

The OECD report commented that the greatest strength of Scottish education is its primary schools. This is reflected in good standards of learning and achievement. There remains, however, headroom for improvement in achievement and no room for complacency. Teaching is good or better in most primary schools, and satisfactory or better in almost all. A notable strength is the use of well-paced, interactive learning activities in mathematics lessons, particularly in aspects of numeracy and mental calculation. Teachers continue to give clear explanations and make good use of praise to build children's self-confidence and recognise their achievements. Various strategies are used effectively to deepen children's learning and improve achievement. Staff who work with children with additional support needs give well-focused support overall. In a minority of cases, the roles and responsibilities of learning support staff and class teachers in supporting and monitoring children's progress, including children with individualised education programmes, need to be clearer.

There have been improvements in aspects of learning. More schools engage children effectively in their learning by providing them with stimulating activities. Children react positively to a varied range of effective learning approaches. They are more actively involved in their learning through approaches such as collaborative working and sharing learning targets. *Assessment is for Learning* approaches are now used in almost all primary schools. Various strategies are being used effectively to deepen children's learning and improve their achievement. Children respond well where teachers consistently integrate assessment practice in their day-to-day teaching.

Children have increasing opportunities to make links between different aspects of their learning. For example, topics and tasks in enterprise, citizenship and personal and social development provide challenging and enjoyable areas of study. Teachers make increasing use of interdisciplinary studies. Where these are well planned with clear learning outcomes, children often benefit from the increased motivation of learning within a relevant context. Teachers are beginning to use the guidance from *Curriculum for Excellence* to make sure that children build on their skills across the stages.

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Primary school 3

There remains variation across classes and schools in the quality of children's learning experiences and the degree to which staff are able to meet their differing learning needs. It remains the case that too many lessons lack relevance, engagement and excitement and fail to motivate learners. Although primary children are highly motivated and keen to learn, staff are not always clear about how they can ensure progression in children's skills as learners. In particular, staff do not consistently ensure that by P7, all children have sufficiently well-developed independent learning skills. The pace of learning in too many lessons is slow and activities too frequently do not provide sufficient challenge, particularly for higher-achieving children. Although staff provide more opportunities for children to collaborate and work independently, these opportunities need to take place in a range of learning contexts and with clearly understood purposes. Home learning activities are too often routine and miss opportunities to develop children's research skills. Teachers are more skilled at supporting and challenging learners in English language and mathematics lessons than in other areas of the curriculum. Children do not always have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and are not enough involved in setting their own targets for learning.

THE TEACHING PROCESS/PUPILS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL SECTOR 2005-2007



Achievement

Children often achieve well in mathematics work, with a low proportion of underachieving children. However, they do not use mathematics enough in real contexts and for meaningful purposes. Teachers often rely too heavily on textbook exercises from commercially-produced schemes. Children's skills in using a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems are not well developed. A recent international study,¹⁰ found that at P5 Scotland's average score in mathematics remained similar to what it was in 1995 and 2003. In science, children at P5 are performing as they did in 2003 but less well than they did in 1995. Critically, children in primary schools in a number of other countries are improving their performance at a faster rate than Scottish children.

¹⁰ The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) (2007)

The Scottish Survey of Achievement (SSA)¹¹ has provided clear evidence of early gains not being sustained as children move up through the primary stages. In reading, over half of children at P3 and P5 read at levels above those expected for their stage. By P7, whilst half show well-established reading skills, few exceed the expected level. In writing, one in ten children at P3 and P5 and one in seven at P7 achieve higher levels than expected for their stage. In numeracy, most children have well established skills at P3 (90%) and at P5 (80%). By P7 only two-thirds demonstrate well-established numeracy skills. In social subjects, about two-thirds of children at P3 have well-established attainment at expected levels and a third are exceeding this level. At P7, a half of children are working at expected level. In science, 55% of children at P3 have well-established attainment at expected levels. Just under 50% of those at P5 perform well at the level expected of children at P4. Only 6% of those at P7 demonstrate well-established attainment at the expected level. Children living in areas of deprivation perform significantly less well in science.

In English language, children's achievements in listening, talking and reading continue as strengths. Achievement in writing is improving at the early stages, but overall is less strong than in the other skills. Recent international studies¹² have shown that the attainment in reading of children in P5 continues to be above the international average. However, the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is wider than the international average. Children's ability to use their literacy skills to help them learn in other curricular areas is not well enough developed.

In Gaelic medium classes and schools, attainment in Gaelic is good, with aspects of listening, talking and reading very good.

In art and design, most children are able to investigate and use a good range of different media and materials. They are able to create art and design work from observation and imagination. The extent to which children's experiences in art and design enable them to become successful learners is too variable.

In modern languages, children's skills in listening, speaking and reading are better than in writing. Most children are able to listen to, and follow, classroom instructions and directions in a foreign language.

In physical education, in best practice most children are acquiring a good range of games skills. They use these skills regularly in a range of team activities and often practise them during outdoor play and physical activity. Too many class teachers focus on games skills at the expense of developing other aspects of the subject and do not plan effectively for differentiation in children's learning.

In social subjects, children work effectively and collaboratively together on research and enquiry tasks which help them see links across aspects of the curriculum. They have a good understanding of environmental and conservation issues. However, their knowledge and understanding of Scotland's physical landscape and wider mapping skills are not well developed. Across all stages, children demonstrate a good understanding of aspects of the Scottish dimension of people in the past.

11 Scottish Survey of Achievement: English language and core skills (2006); social subjects (enquiry skills) (2006); science (2007)

12 Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2006)

Primary school 3

In science, children's knowledge and understanding is strongest in aspects which deal with living things. Children are making good progress when learning experiences involve hands-on, practical experimental and investigative activities. Best progress is being made by those at the early stages. There is a need for teachers to make greater use of class discussions to help children develop informed views of topical issues in science. Children need more experience of consolidating and revisiting key ideas in their learning. SSA and TIMSS provide important messages for primary schools about significant shortcomings in children's progress and achievements in science.

In technologies, in best practice, presently to be found in a minority of schools, children work collaboratively and develop creative and innovative ideas. They confidently solve problems and make products designed to meet human needs. They are involved in critical thinking, planning, reviewing and evaluation. There is a need for teachers to develop technological activities that are more meaningful to pupils and build on their prior learning. Children need more opportunity to think about the impact of the technologies on their lives and the potential of the technologies to address major social and environmental issues.

Children are increasingly developing self-awareness and creative skills through enterprise and citizenship activities. International education needs a sharper focus to help primary children form a view of Scotland's place in the world and of what can be learned from looking at other countries. Some schools have established effective links with schools in other countries, with children gaining most where there is a shared theme to support learning.

At all stages, children's personal achievements in a range of areas are also a strength. Children are taking on responsible roles through their membership of pupil councils, eco and health groups. They are gaining confidence through participation in activities such as assemblies, school performances and residential visits. In almost all schools, out-of-school hours activities have had a positive impact on children's confidence and achievements. However, in too many schools some children do not take part in these activities and did not benefit in this way. This needs to be tracked more effectively by staff.

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Curriculum

The provision of a broad and balanced curriculum remains a strength in primary schools. Health education and the development of learning through play at the early stages are also strong features in many schools. An increasing number of primary schools provide, or are working towards providing, all children with two hours of physical education each week. A range of visitors enrich children's learning experiences in aspects of the curriculum such as literacy, social subjects, education for sustainability and enterprise in education. Gaelic features within the curriculum of an increasing number of schools. Children's ICT skills show improvement with increased opportunities for them to use these skills in developing their knowledge in other curricular areas. A minority of schools have begun systematically to address the principles of curriculum design underpinning *Curriculum for Excellence*. There are some examples of innovative work being planned, particularly through theme weeks and interdisciplinary studies. Teachers in a number of schools are beginning to develop and apply children's skills in literacy and numeracy across a range of subject areas.

Do primary schools have a clear sense of direction?

Leadership remains strong in most primary schools. It is good, very good or excellent in around 80% of schools. Strengths in leadership included shared vision and values across the school community, a clear commitment to including all children in the life of the school and the development of effective partnerships.

Leadership in fewer than 10% of schools had important weaknesses. Only 2% had major weaknesses. In such instances there is often a focus on day-to-day operational matters rather than on improving learning and teaching. Teachers do not always receive appropriate support and challenge in order to help them improve their practice. There is a need to develop a better understanding of how to increase the school's capacity to improve. The Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH), including the flexible routes approach, has enabled an increasing number to develop appropriate skills in leadership for learning.

Since the first *Improving Scottish Education* report, evaluations of leadership in HMIE inspection reports have taken increasing account of the success of other staff and the education authority in bringing about improvements in provision. It is more common to find all members of staff successfully taking on leadership roles within their school. Principal teachers and class teachers, including some Chartered Teachers, are increasingly leading new developments. These include, for example, involvement in working groups, project development, coaching and mentoring.

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How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

Most primary school staff recognise the importance of effective partnerships with parents. Parent Councils and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) continue to provide strong support for the work of schools. Examples of effective partnerships to promote children's learning, particularly at the early years, include a range of initiatives to encourage children's numeracy and literacy skills. Primary schools have benefited from increased partnerships with local businesses and employers. Children have enjoyed the added stimulus and realism which these experiences can bring to the wider curriculum.

Health promotion partnerships are a strong feature in almost all schools. Active school coordinators work successfully with schools and physical education specialists. Catering staff provide a stimulating range of healthy activities and foods which are popular with most children. Through effective links with school meals providers and health promotion groups, primary schools have, in many contexts, successfully implemented the recommendations of *Hungry for Success*. There are signs of improvement in schools' links with a range of professional agencies such as police, speech and language therapists, psychologists, social workers and health professionals. Through joint working, staff have effectively reduced barriers to learning for a significant number of children.

Most schools have effective transition arrangements in place to support children as they progress from stage to stage and on to secondary education. Staff at the early stages of primary schools are increasingly making good use of information provided by their pre-school partners. There is still scope to improve transitions in learning across the primary stages and from P7 to S1 to ensure continuity and progression.

A key priority for all primary schools remains the need to provide high-quality support services for vulnerable children and their families in order to raise the attainment of lower attaining pupils. Partnerships with other professionals are most successful when the individuals concerned identify strongly with the school and work as an integrated team. Approaches to support children with English as an additional language and their families are not sufficiently joined up to maximise their impact on children's learning. School staff have become more knowledgeable about their corporate parenting responsibilities for children who are looked after and those who are accommodated. However, greater attention needs to be given to ensuring these children make good progress in their learning. Coordinated support plans should be in place. Where plans are implemented effectively, they involve good links with partner support agencies and are subject to regular review.

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Are staff and pupils actively involved in improving the school community?

The commitment of staff and the quality of team work in most primary schools is strong. The recent emphasis on distributed leadership and shared responsibility has endorsed this as an important key to school improvement.

Most primary schools have well-established arrangements to evaluate school performance. Increasingly, staff are working collegiately in order to evaluate their work. The data gathered is used to inform school improvement planning and reporting on standards and quality. Evidence from observations of learning and teaching is often used effectively alongside peer observations to improve practice. The arrangements can be wide ranging and involve worthwhile dialogue and feedback. In best practice, staff in the majority of primary schools have developed consistently effective systems with which to track children's progress. This often includes the use of ICT which enables staff to interrogate and analyse data in order to focus support appropriately. Increasingly, schools are including the use of benchmarking data in order to evaluate their progress against similar schools.

Having processes in place for self-evaluation is in itself insufficient. Improvement through self-evaluation remains an aspect of weakness in too many schools. In some instances, the outcomes of observations of learning and teaching do not lead sufficiently to improved classroom practice. Self-evaluation has been identified as a main point for action in almost a quarter of all primary inspection reports published since the first *Improving Scottish Education* report. Particular aspects requiring improvement include a lack of effective consultation with children, parents and staff, and insufficient focus on improving learning and teaching. In addition, there can be a lack of staff engagement in or commitment to self-evaluation processes and too many instances where self-evaluation does not lead to improvements in children's experiences.

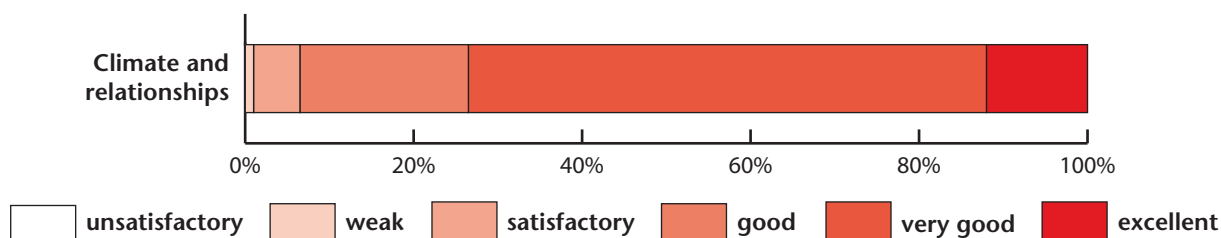
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Primary school 3

CLIMATE AND RELATIONSHIPS

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL SECTOR 2005-2007



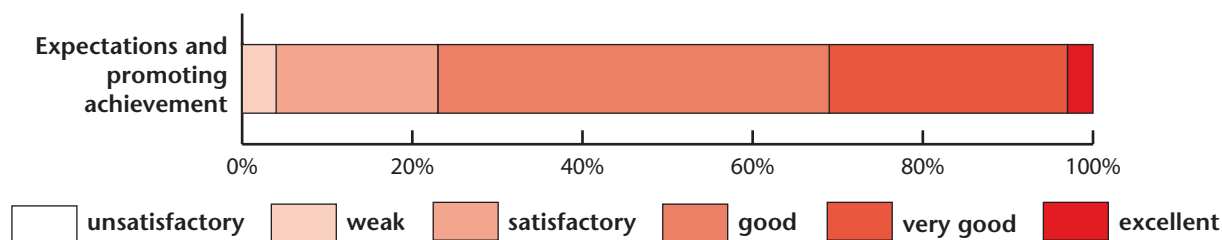
Do primary schools have high expectations of all children?

In almost all cases, primary schools provide a supportive and caring environment for learning. Strengths include the positive relationships between staff and children and the effective arrangements schools have in place to ensure that the care and welfare needs of children, including their medical needs, are met. Staff and children identify strongly with their schools and children report that they are happy at school. Children's attendance is very good in most schools and staff set high expectations in relation to children's behaviour and application to their work. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures. An increasing number of education authorities are putting effective measures in place to ascertain promptly the whereabouts of children who fail to attend school. Schools should continue to address the negative impact of the disruptive behaviour of a few children on the learning of others.

In a few schools, equality and fairness was excellent. These schools ensure a strong sense of equality and fairness and actively promote whole school initiatives across a range of equality areas. Staff use a number of well-planned approaches to promote race equality and to assist children in recognising and tackling discrimination, including sectarianism. Throughout these schools, issues of equality are discussed regularly and openly and any barriers to involvement and inclusion are addressed very effectively. However, this quality of practice is not yet well developed across all schools. Most primary schools have well-developed procedures to monitor gender imbalances in attainment but this information needs to be used more effectively to address identified issues.

EXPECTATIONS AND PROMOTING ACHIEVEMENT

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL SECTOR 2005-2007



Section Three: Secondary school sector

Strengths

- The overall quality of teaching and staff commitment.
- Curriculum innovation focused on improving the quality of learners' experiences and meeting the learning needs of individuals.
- Pastoral care for young people, positive ethos, and staff and learner relationships.
- Recognising and promoting achievement.
- The performance of many young people at the point when they leave school.
- The quality of leadership of headteachers and increasingly of others in leadership roles.
- Levels of satisfaction of stakeholders, particularly parents.

Aspects for improvement

- Consistency in the quality of teaching and learning including building on good practice and focusing staff development on how young people learn and how they develop learning skills.
- Raising achievement particularly by building on prior learning and ensuring challenge for each individual young person, especially those at the early stages, boys and vulnerable groups such as children who are looked after at home.
- Meeting the learning needs of every young person, especially by monitoring and tracking progress and ensuring coherent programmes with skills-based and applied learning.
- Engaging all young people actively in learning, giving each a sense of personal responsibility for their own learning and encouraging them to think independently and creatively.
- Focusing self-evaluation on improving outcomes for young people, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability for innovation and improvement.
- Pursuing an ambitious, strategic vision for improvement including mobilising leadership at all levels.

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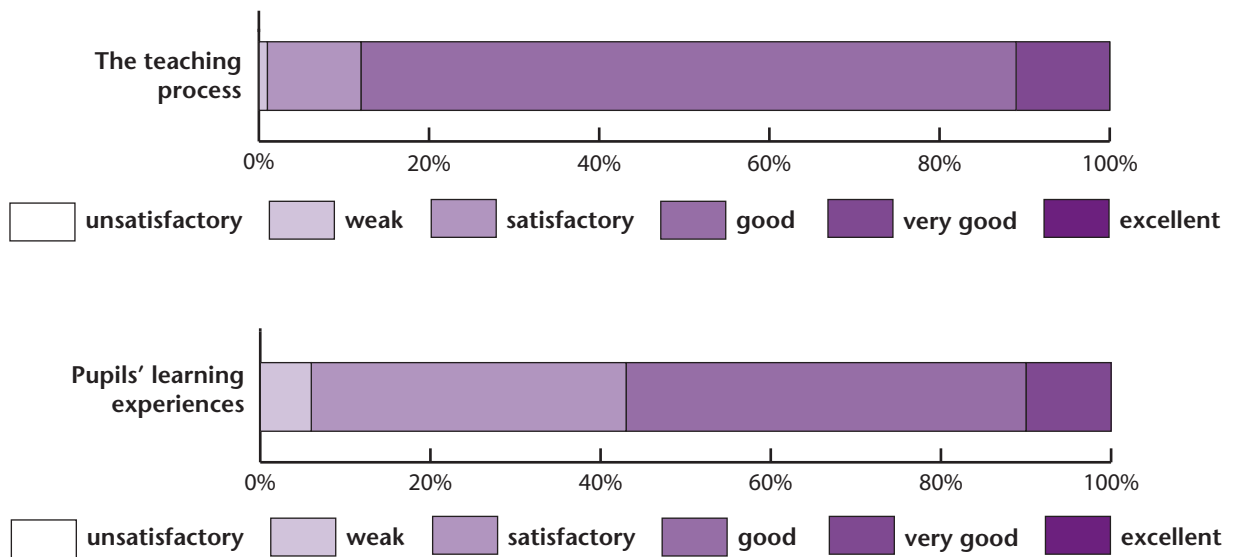
How well do young people learn and achieve?

Teaching, learning and meeting the needs of all

The quality of teaching remains good in most schools. Many teachers inspire learners by engaging them in discussions and using probing questions and effective explanations. The *Assessment is for Learning* initiative has encouraged many teachers to engage young people more in thinking about their own learning. Teachers and young people are making more effective use of ICT as a tool for learning and teaching although its full potential to transform learning has yet to be realised. The range of teaching approaches needs to be widened in a minority of schools, including matching approaches better to intended outcomes and to the learning needs of young people. Too often, young people can be passive observers in lessons. In many cases, the pace and depth of learning need to be increased with greater focus on more challenging thinking and learning.

THE TEACHING PROCESS/PUPILS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR 2005-2007



For many schools, improving the consistency of the quality of learning and teaching remains a priority. In a minority of schools, young people have too few opportunities to investigate issues for themselves and arrive at their own conclusions. Staff development needs to focus on how young people learn. In particular, staff need to engage all young people more actively in their learning and encourage each learner to think independently and creatively.

Curriculum innovation is improving the quality of learners' experiences and meeting the learning needs of individuals more effectively. Some schools are using more real-life contexts, interdisciplinary approaches and studies of relevant issues. While subject disciplines continue to be a key strength in secondary schools, they now need to contribute better to developing interdisciplinary studies while retaining their own identity and integrity. By doing so, they will meet young people's learning needs and help to eliminate the divide between academic and applied learning.

Secondary school 3

Schools are increasingly sharing responsibility for meeting learning needs across all staff. Many schools recognise that personal support, systematic regular conversations about progress and an understanding of what motivates young people remain the vital ingredients to success for each and every learner. Schools now need to ensure that they and their partners provide learning pathways that suit each individual young person. Strategic approaches include appropriate systems and policies in areas such as child protection and broader aspects of safeguarding, including identifying and supporting young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being marginalised. Where learners have additional support needs, in most cases staff identify these accurately and address them in a focused and flexible way. This is a strength in many schools. However, some schools need to ensure that the targets in individualised educational programmes and coordinated support plans are clear and that young people and their parents are fully involved in the process of setting and reviewing them. Some schools are meeting well the additional needs of increasing numbers of young people with English as an additional language, but more attention needs to be given to sharing and building on good practice in this area. Some schools are systematically tackling issues of gender imbalance in achievement.

Achievement

Schools are increasingly recognising and promoting more aspects of achievement for young people. A few are linking the diverse range of opportunities for achievement in and out of class and across subjects, to the needs of all learners. Within these experiences, they are encouraging the development of the skills, attributes and capabilities that comprise the four capacities. Such approaches now need to be prioritised in all secondary schools, particularly at the early stages. S1/S2 remains the phase of education that adds least value to the progress and achievements of many young people. Nonetheless, in some schools, subjects or classes, achievement in classwork at these stages has depth and intellectual rigour.

From S3-S6, most schools are beginning to make more use of a range of forms of accreditation to ensure greater recognition of achievement, including ASDAN, Scottish Youth Awards, the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards Scheme and the Prince's Trust XL programme. These and other youth awards are described in the recent publication *Amazing Things*.¹³

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OVERALL QUALITY OF ATTAINMENT

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While the performance of young people in national examinations has remained good, evidence from inspections and national and international studies paints a mixed picture overall of young people's attainment. Some improvements have taken place at S1/S2 although too many young people are still not achieving the expected levels by the end of S2. The recent Trends in International Maths and Science Survey (TIMSS) found that at S2, Scotland's average score in mathematics and science had declined since 2003.

The Scottish Survey of Achievement (SSA) demonstrates that only around 50% of young people in S2 had well-established skills in reading and numeracy, though between 10% and 20% attained beyond the expected levels. Standards in writing remained static. Nevertheless, school inspections of English find that most young people who have not attained the expected levels by the end of S2 have improved well from their previous levels of attainment. Few schools systematically assess young people's skills in listening and talking, a situation that needs to be addressed. In science, SSA results show that young people are not achieving expected levels at S2 and that there is little sign of improvement. The SSA findings also confirm inspection findings that young people's ability to apply skills and knowledge in new situations and at higher levels of thinking need to be better developed. Across the rest of the curriculum at S1/S2, many schools have still to monitor progress and standards in a rigorous and systematic way.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey conducted in 2006 shows that Scottish pupils aged 15 performed significantly better than the OECD averages in reading, mathematics and science, although other countries have overtaken Scotland. The performance of young people at S4-S6 in national examinations between 2006 and 2008 showed no notable trends.

Several key national performance measures, such as the percentages of pupils achieving five or more awards at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5 by the end of S4 and the percentages achieving three or more awards at SCQF level 6 by the end of S6 have remained largely static. The need to raise levels of attainment at all stages in secondary schools is now an even greater priority. Improving attainment for those in S1/S2, for boys and for those who are looked after at home are particular priorities.

Secondary school 3

Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in most Scottish secondary schools is good overall, and improving. Recurrent strengths are the breadth and coherence of the curriculum at most stages, and the discriminating use at the later stages of a wide range of Standard Grade and National Qualification (NQ) courses. However, too many schools consider changing aspects of curriculum structure and timetabling without having fully explored the impact of innovations in learning and teaching.

Encouraging a wider range of skills, attributes and capabilities, both outwith and within the timetabled curriculum, is becoming a more prominent feature in secondary schools. Most schools continue to place strong emphasis on personal, social and health education. Many have used the *Determined to Succeed* initiative as a stimulus towards improvement in relation to enterprise education and education for work and employability. Over the period of this report, many schools and education authorities improved their links with colleges in the context of the *Skills for Work* initiative and other part-time vocational programmes for pupils in S3 and S4. The strengths and weaknesses of the approaches adopted are set out in detail in *Expanding Opportunities: a report on school-college partnership programmes in Scotland* (2008). Some secondary schools have increased the opportunities available in school for practical, skills-based and applied learning. They are looking creatively at the practicality and benefits of on-site vocational learning to establish a more secure link between the school and employment opportunities in the local community. Some secondary schools work well together to provide a wider range of courses for learners. In the latter part of the survey, most schools have been increasing their emphasis on sustainable development education, through eco-activities and recycling. Only half have reviewed the extent to which the curriculum promotes sustainable development education on a coherent and sustained basis. Too few ensure good quality physical education at the senior stages.

Approaches to introducing Standard Grade or equivalent courses from S2 have met with mixed success. It is too early to detect any sustainable gain in later performance at the senior stages. Some schools have increased the pace of learning in a range of ways, for example by beginning early some aspects of Higher programmes prior to young people sitting their Standard Grade examinations in S4. The *Schools of Ambition* initiative has been used well to improve young people's engagement in new or improved curricular pathways. Increasingly, creative solutions are being used to provide wider choice and remote access to courses. Using available advice, schools should improve the variety and makeup of curriculum pathways and their fitness to meet the future needs of each individual young person. Such approaches should include being able to deliver the detail of the skills, attributes and capabilities that underpin the four capacities.

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STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR 2005-2007



Do secondary schools have a clear sense of direction?

Leadership is consistently good and improving in secondary schools. Fewer than 10% of schools had important weaknesses in leadership and only 1% had major weaknesses. Many schools have a clear vision and sense of direction based on shared values across the school community. The leadership of headteachers is a recurrent strength. Some schools are ambitious, particularly where staff at all levels pursue a shared strategic vision in a collegiate way, supported by senior managers.

Most deputy headteachers are developing their strategic roles well. The contribution of school business managers is having a beneficial impact in allowing other senior managers to focus most of their attention on educational improvement. The quality of the contributions of principal teachers (or faculty heads) in quality assurance and leading learning is still unduly variable. In the best practice, leadership for learning is accepted as a principle that applies to all staff, including many who do not have promoted responsibilities but make important contributions to curriculum innovation and other school improvements. The need remains for leaders to work with others to find innovative ways of improving the curriculum to meet the full range of young people's needs.

How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?

Almost all schools enjoy positive partnerships with parents and the wider community. School Boards and latterly Parent Councils usually provide very strong support. Stakeholders continue to be satisfied with almost all aspects of their schools. Schools are becoming more proactive in seeking out effective partnerships with a range of external agencies to the benefit of young people, particularly those needing more choices and more chances to succeed. While many schools recognise that improving links with primary schools helps progression in learning, too many do not build on what learners have achieved in P7. This prevents them from progressing as well as they could. There are few examples of effective partnerships between staff in schools and those in community learning and development or more widely as part of shared community initiatives.

Are staff and young people actively involved in improving the school community?

Staff in secondary schools have increasingly recognised their direct responsibility and accountability for improvement. The influence of rigorous self-evaluation has become key to sustained school improvement, for example using *The Journey to Excellence* including the third edition of *How good is our school?*. The processes and cycles of quality assurance in schools have become more consistent, as have the inter-relationships between self-evaluation, standards and quality reports and school improvement plans. Analysis of performance data is becoming increasingly sophisticated and rigorous.

Secondary school 3

Most schools have suitable systems for monitoring and tracking the progress of young people. Observation of learning and teaching is an established feature in most schools. Sharing the good practice identified in class observation and peer observation by staff is becoming a prompt to professional discussion of learning, although the full impact of these approaches has yet to be felt. More schools are surveying the views of young people as part of their evaluation of courses, learning and teaching. However, few actively and continuously engage young people in making suggestions for improving learning and teaching, leadership, the curriculum, home partnerships and the school ethos.

Do secondary schools have high expectations of all young people?

Most schools have developed a positive climate of equality and fairness. Almost all have good processes for dealing with racial discrimination and bullying. Most have whole-school policies on race equality but concerted efforts to actively promote race equality and other equality issues systematically and progressively through the curriculum are not common.

The quality of pastoral care for young people and the positive ethos overall are strengths in almost all schools. This is reflected in what young people themselves say. In almost all schools, climate and relationships are constructive and encouraging. While many schools have small numbers of young people with particularly challenging behaviour, any issues arising are usually handled effectively. Most schools have clear and concerted strategies for promoting positive behaviour. Where practice is less effective, issues often relate to the need to engage young people more fully in their learning and to raise teachers' and young people's expectations of what they can learn and achieve. Schools continue to develop systems for monitoring the educational progress and wellbeing of young people at risk, although the impact of schools' strategies on improving the achievement of these young people is not always fully realised. A key challenge for the future is in proactively developing approaches and partnerships to ensure that, as a universal service for children of secondary school age, schools get things right for each and every young person.

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Section Three: Special school sector

Strengths

- Staff's high expectations of young people's achievements and the quality of teaching in day special schools.
- The quality of young people's learning and their integrated learning experiences across care and education.
- Young people's achievements in a wide range of contexts.
- The quality of pastoral care in most schools.
- The quality of relationships among staff and young people.
- In secure care accommodation, specialised programmes to meet the needs of individual young people.
- Improvements in accommodation and facilities in residential special schools.
- Young people's engagement in learning with their mainstream peers.
- In residential special schools, preparation for the inclusion of young people within mainstream society.
- The quality of leadership of the headteacher in an increasing number of special schools.

Aspects for improvement

- Broadening the curriculum.
- Raising attainment in English language and mathematics in residential special schools and among young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- Ensuring greater attention to the learning needs of every young person.
- In residential special schools, extending productive links with similar centres, with education authorities and through sharing good practice.
- Continuing to develop facilities in day special schools.
- Focusing self-evaluation on improving achievement.

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How well do young people learn and achieve?

Teaching, learning and meeting the needs of all

Most special schools ensure that young people are actively involved in their learning. When schools give young people greater responsibility for their own learning and well-structured lessons, tasks and activities and levels of motivation are higher. Staff increasingly use the local community as an environment for learning. Such activities ensure that young people are actively involved in learning within their community, for instance through visits to supermarkets and garden centres. Young people learn more effectively when they have more opportunities to engage in collaborative activities with their peers. They need to work at a faster pace, with more attention being paid to the size of learning steps in relation to their individual needs.

The quality of teaching is a key strength in day special schools. In almost all special pre-school settings, staff ensure that the learning environment is inclusive and supportive. In almost all special schools, teachers create a positive environment for learning. Staff have good relationships with young people and share a clear understanding of young people's individual needs and barriers to learning. They give clear instructions and are skilled in using a variety of approaches to encourage young people to remain focused on their tasks. However, teachers do not always share learning outcomes effectively with young people or offer suitable home learning activities. In the best practice in schools for young people with more complex needs, staff use a range of effective approaches consistently to develop communication skills.

In residential special schools, teaching is now good or better in most schools and excellent in a small number. Overall, care staff and teachers share a better understanding of young people's learning targets, and have developed better joint plans. A key issue in residential special schools is the shortage of suitably qualified teaching staff. In particular, schools for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties face challenges in attracting and retaining teachers with specialist qualifications. Despite an increased focus on learning and teaching, weaknesses remain in the extent to which young people's needs are met in over half of residential special schools.

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Achievement

The development of young people's personal and social skills remains a strength of special schools. Most schools now ensure that achievement in these skills is recognised formally through the use of a range of awards and accreditation schemes. Certification through awards from the Scottish Qualifications Authority has also increased as schools make more use of National Qualification (NQ) courses and units at Access levels 1, 2 and 3. Special schools catering for secondary pupils now offer NQ courses and units, Caledonian awards, awards achieved through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. As a result of these developments, certificated attainment at the secondary stages has improved in day special schools.

Young people in secure accommodation often miss out on gaining formal qualifications owing to absence, truancy or never having attended a mainstream school. Many of these young people do not see the value of formal qualifications in increasing their life chances and levels of certificated attainment are consequently low. In residential special schools and in schools which serve the needs of young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs, achievements in English language and mathematics have not improved sufficiently.

The short school week remains an issue in both day and residential special schools and is a particular challenge in schools for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The resulting restrictions to the time available for learning reduces the extent and breadth of opportunities young people have to achieve.

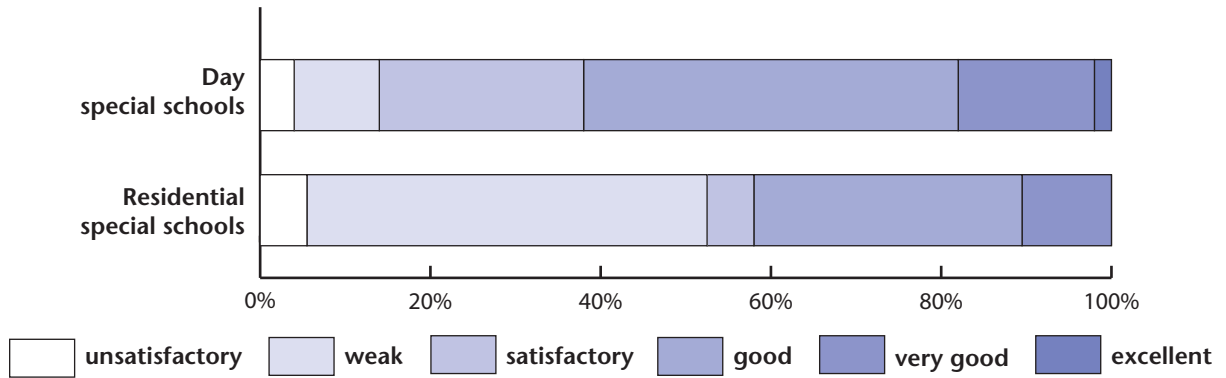
Curriculum

In most day special schools, the curriculum is personalised successfully to meet the needs of individual learners, through the use of effective individualised educational programmes and coordinated support plans. Young people have opportunities to influence the shape of their curricular experiences by being given choices. Many young people benefit from well-judged part-time placements in mainstream schools and shared placements with colleges.

In residential special schools, integrating learning across care and education is a strength. In secure settings, specialised programmes such as cognitive skills training, anger management and victim empathy are used to address the needs of individual young people. In a few such schools, staff have developed an innovative range of learning contexts and experiences relevant to young people's needs and interests in response to *Curriculum for Excellence*. Despite such strengths, the quality of the curriculum is weak in around 60% of these schools.

STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE SPECIAL SCHOOL SECTOR 2005-2007

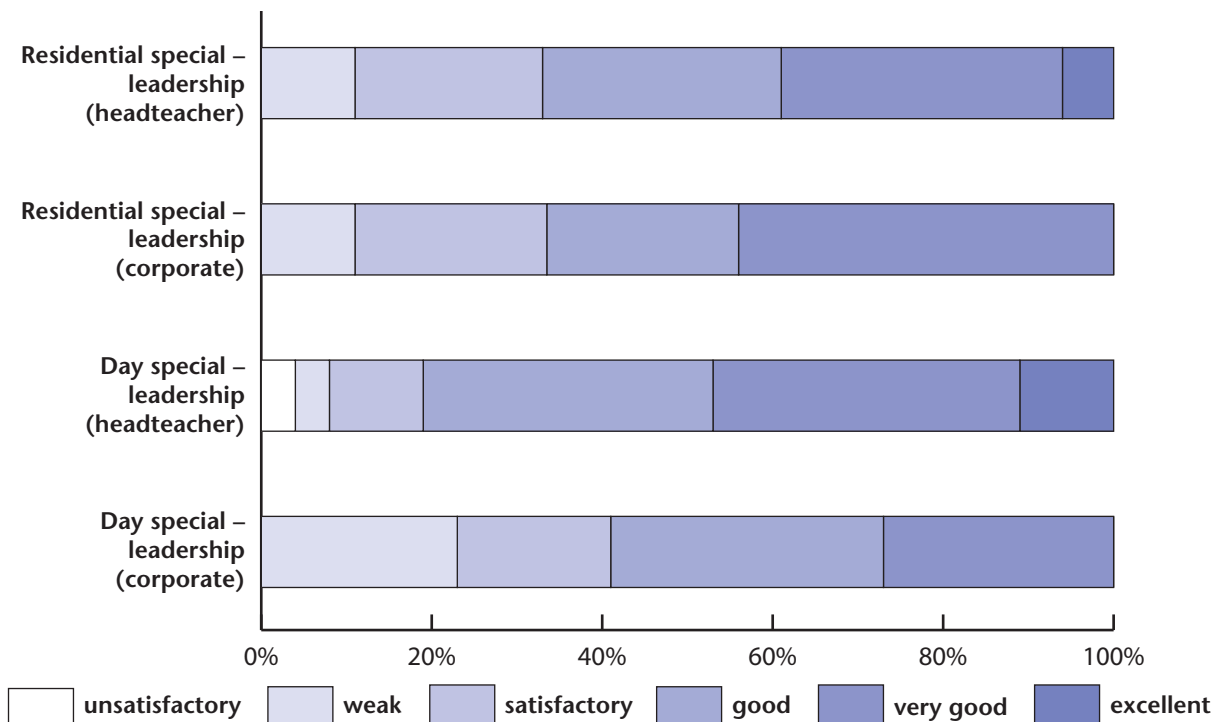


Do special schools have a clear sense of direction?

In almost half of day special schools, the leadership of the headteacher is very good and in a very small number it is excellent. In these schools, headteachers and senior managers focus on managing improvement and change. They take forward the accreditation of young people’s achievements and improve partnership working. They expect and welcome the need for change to continue in the future. However, the leadership of the headteacher is weak in one in ten special schools. In such schools, staff were not offered sufficient guidance and direction to improve the quality of the curriculum and learning and teaching.

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE SPECIAL SCHOOL SECTOR 2005-2007

Leadership



Special school 3

How well do staff work with others to support the learning of children and young people?

Day special schools and special pre-school settings have developed high-quality partnership working across agencies such as health, care and education. In some, the school nurse or teams involved in promoting mental health and well-being work well with key staff to support young people's social, emotional and physical development.

Partnerships in residential special schools are improving, particularly with parents. In some cases, assessment and intervention strategies, including multi-agency support for families, enable parents to take more active roles in supporting their child's learning. There remains scope for further improvement in partnerships between schools, authorities and appropriate agencies. In secure care services, community links including links with local businesses for work experience are challenging to arrange and remain uncommon.

Are staff and young people actively involved in improving the school community?

In special pre-school centres and day special schools, self-evaluation continues to be an area for development with around a quarter of special schools having important weaknesses. In most schools, improvement planning results in priorities which directly relate to learning and teaching and meeting learning needs. Teachers are placing greater emphasis on seeking young people's views about the quality of their learning. However, self-evaluation needs to focus more explicitly and consistently on improving learners' experiences.

In the residential special sector, more schools are now using national care standards and quality indicators to evaluate their work and identify priorities for improvement. However, the quality and impact of self-evaluation remains an important weakness in around 80% of services. Managers need to involve staff in discussions about improvements to learning, teaching and care through reflecting on existing practice.

Do special schools have high expectations of all children and young people?

Almost all special schools show strengths in all aspects of ethos. In almost all special pre-school centres and schools, relationships among young people, parents and staff are key strengths. In these centres and schools, all stakeholders take great pride in their school and staff work very well together to ensure positive relationships and mutual respect among staff and young people. Where behaviour features as an aspect of young people's additional support needs, staff in most schools make good efforts to deal with instances of poor behaviour without disrupting the learning of others. Where young people have additional support needs of a complex nature, senior managers and teachers are caring and supportive in working with medical staff to address young people's barriers to learning. In some schools, staff do not have sufficiently high aspirations for young people's achievements. A key feature of residential special schools is the preparation and planning for the full inclusion of young people within mainstream society. Facilities for care and education are improving in residential special schools and secure accommodation. In some day special schools, accommodation and facilities have important weaknesses.

Section Three: College sector

Strengths

- The high quality of learning and teaching.
- Highly motivated and engaged learners.
- Further and higher education programmes that include essential and vocational skills that meet the needs of individuals and employers.
- Learner progress and outcomes, including high retention, attainment, wider achievement and progression to further study or employment.
- Effective educational leadership, direction and management.
- Access and inclusion arrangements, often supported by effective partnerships.
- Helpful learner guidance and support, led by committed managers and delivered by approachable staff.
- Appropriate buildings and resources, including ICT, and services to support learners, including those with disabilities or additional learning support needs.
- Well qualified and vocationally up-to-date staff with a strong commitment to teamwork.
- Effective staff review and arrangements for CPD.
- Comprehensive quality assurance and improvement systems that enhance the learner experience.

Aspects for improvement

- Ensuring that all teaching staff systematically check learners' understanding, provide them with effective feedback and use a wide range of teaching methods, including ICT.
- In a few colleges, internal communication and target setting in relation to strategic and operational planning.
- Systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of and impact on learning and teaching of continuing professional development activities.
- Training of a few staff in aspects of child protection and equalities.
- Ensuring that self-evaluation activities always include the systematic evaluation of learning and teaching and result in action plans with measurable targets and the sharing of best practice in learning and teaching.

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How well do learners learn and achieve?

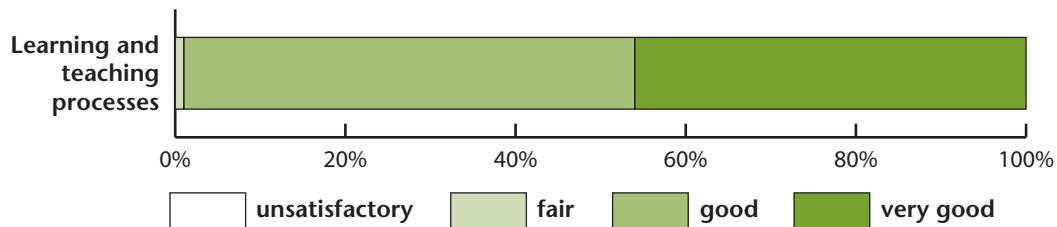
Learning, teaching, learner progress and outcomes

For learners in Scotland's colleges, the overall quality of learning and teaching has remained high. Learners are enthusiastic about their learning experiences, showing high levels of engagement and motivation. Teaching staff apply their specialist knowledge effectively and generally keep their subject knowledge and vocational expertise up to date. This enables them to provide relevant and high-quality learning experiences that have strong industrial relevance.

Relationships between staff and learners are in almost all cases very positive and have contributed to an effective environment for learning. Learners display confidence in using a range of learning resources, including online and other ICT resources.

Staff encourage learners to reflect on their learning and set targets to improve their achievement. This promotes independence and learner ownership of learning goals. However, a few teaching staff need to use a wider range of learning and teaching approaches, including the application of ICT, more effectively in teaching. A few teaching staff also require to check learner understanding more regularly to provide them with appropriate feedback.

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY ELEMENT EVALUATIONS IN COLLEGE SECTOR SUBJECT AREAS 2005-2008



Retention and attainment rates are high across both further and higher education provision in most subject areas offered by Scotland's colleges. Learner success on further education programmes has risen steadily over the last four years. Most learners progress into further study or employment.

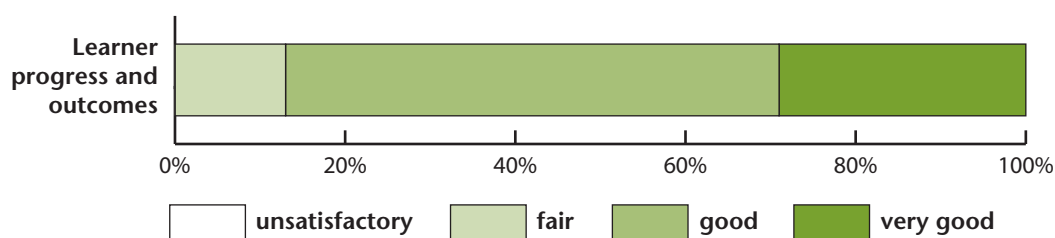
In colleges offering a range of programmes in Gaelic language and Gaelic medium, student retention rates have been high and Gaelic learners achieve well.

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Colleges have continued to make good progress in promoting learners' wider achievements as well as their vocational skills. Learners' personal and learning skills, core skills (including literacy and numeracy), skills for citizenship and employability are being developed well and increasingly recognised.

Almost all colleges use individual learning plans (ILPs) effectively to engage learners in reviewing and recognising their achievements. Such an approach helps learners develop confidence, responsibility and independence in their learning and to plan progression to work or further study. Success in local and national award schemes and competitions, and participation in college and community projects are recognised and widely celebrated in many colleges. However, learner achievements in core skills and other essential skills are not always recorded appropriately.

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY ELEMENT EVALUATIONS IN COLLEGE SECTOR SUBJECT AREAS 2005-2008



Curriculum

Colleges provide a flexible, accessible and relevant curriculum that meets the needs of individuals, communities and employers. A broad range of part-time and full-time further (SCQF levels 1 to 6) and higher (SCQF levels 7 to 11) education programmes provides good opportunities for entry at an appropriate level and progression to work or higher levels of learning.

Colleges also provide programmes specifically designed for and targeted at under-represented groups and hard-to-reach learners, such as those affected by rurality, deprivation, obligations to dependents and those with a previously unsuccessful experience of learning. Colleges which serve areas that have attracted asylum seekers and migrant workers provide relevant programmes in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). ESOL programmes equip learners for employment and improve their ability to function in society. They also enable learners to progress to the mainstream curriculum and citizenship programmes. Many colleges make successful provision for international learners (from non-EU countries) with well-negotiated progression routes to university.

In Scotland's colleges, the curriculum enables people to access and develop skills and capacities which improve the quality of their working, personal, family and community lives. Colleges apply flexible and creative approaches to accommodate the diverse needs and aspirations of their learners. They provide a range of entry points and pathways from access level to more advanced, degree and post-graduate level provision (SCQF levels 1 to 11). Increasingly, colleges enable learners to access programmes on a part-time basis through the workplace, online, and within their local communities, as well as on college campuses.

The collaboration of subject specialist staff with employers in planning, delivering and reviewing programmes contributes to colleges providing an innovative, responsive and relevant curriculum which integrates and contextualises essential transferable and vocational skills. In many cases, the development of essential skills is supported effectively by work-experience placements and involvement in community activities. Increasingly, colleges are also addressing the promotion of equality, fairness and positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity through the curriculum. They are also starting to incorporate learning activities which promote sustainability. Colleges are involved in local literacies partnerships and contribute in a range of innovative ways to the delivery of adult literacy and numeracy provision.

Many colleges provide curricula for school pupils, mainly from secondary schools but also from primary. This includes *Skills for Work* courses, Highers programmes and alternative provision for disaffected learners. Most of these programmes contribute to developing learners' skills that underpin the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*, and college staff are increasingly tracking and monitoring specific learning outcomes against these capacities.

All of Scotland's colleges can now credit rate their own or other qualifications within the SCQF. Some colleges have made good progress in using the framework to accredit learners' attainment in nationally recognised terms. This has included the accreditation of learning through professional development of their own staff.

Do colleges have a clear and appropriate sense of direction?

In almost all colleges, the Board of Management works well with the principal and senior managers to set the strategic direction of the college. Priorities, aims and objectives are well informed by a robust analysis of the economic and social environments in which the colleges operate. Plans address local and Government priorities and the needs of partner organisations and employers, who are often actively involved in the colleges' planning processes. Generally, principals and their senior management teams communicate well with staff, share a clear vision with them and secure their commitment to it. However, a few colleges need to improve internal communication and target setting in relation to strategic and operational planning.

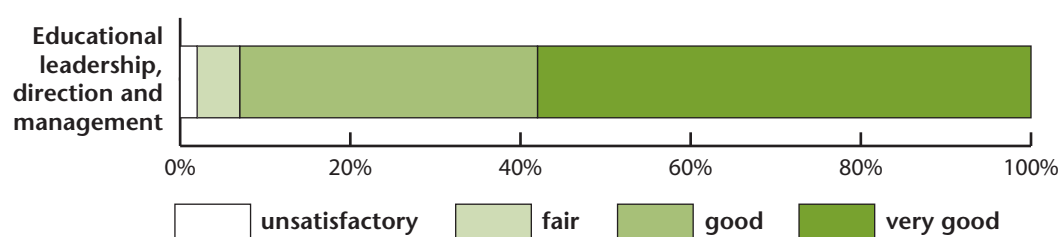
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In almost all of Scotland's colleges, management structures have been revised to empower operational managers and staff teams and to give them greater ownership of decision making. Increasingly, college staff contribute effectively to planning processes, supported by well-developed and, in the main, comprehensive quality systems that result in enhancements to the learner experience.

Operational leadership at all levels is generally effective and results in innovative improvements to the curriculum, learning and teaching and services for learners. Learners are increasingly being involved in decision making that impacts on the work and life of colleges.

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY ELEMENT EVALUATIONS IN THE COLLEGE SECTOR 2005-2008



How well do staff work with others (external and internal) to support learning?

Almost all colleges have established and maintain productive partnerships with other bodies such as local authorities, local enterprise companies, employers, schools and universities. Such partnership working improves progression routes for learners into and out of college programmes.

Almost all colleges have developed effective relationships with partner agencies, providing specialist support to widen learner participation and encourage progression from informal community-based learning to college programmes. There are good examples of college programmes successfully re-engaging disaffected young people in learning.

In almost all colleges, links with employers at strategic and operational levels ensure that programme content is relevant and consistent with current industry standards, and prepares learners well for employment, advancement or further learning.

In almost all colleges, support and teaching staff work well together to provide effective guidance and support for learners. This guidance and support includes academic, pastoral, vocational, and financial assistance, as well as highly specialised support for those with additional needs. Colleges work effectively with external partners to provide learners with further specialised support such as debt counselling and personal and crises counselling. They also provide support on health, addiction, social work and probation matters. They work closely with schools and social work services to ease transitions for young people with specific issues, such as having complex needs or leaving care.

Are learners and staff actively engaged in the college community and in enhancing the quality of learning, teaching and other services?

All colleges have a strategic commitment to internal review and most staff are actively involved in self-evaluation processes. Almost all staff demonstrate good levels of knowledge of quality procedures and are committed to improving the quality of the learner experience. Their self-evaluation and quality improvement activities generally lead to the enhancement of services for learners.

Most colleges have well-developed, robust systems for gathering and analysing performance data and the views of learners and other stakeholders. However, not all college staff make sufficient use of this information to devise or implement effective action plans to improve cases of low retention and attainment, especially when weaknesses relate to learning and teaching processes.

Many of Scotland's colleges are already engaging effectively with their learners to bring about improvements at both programme and whole-college levels. Learner representation is well established in most colleges across a broad range of committees, forums and working groups. These arrangements enable learner views, expressed through questionnaires and in discussion, to form an important point of reference for college internal review activities. In most colleges, many actions taken and enhancements achieved demonstrate the impact of learner engagement across all curriculum and student-service areas, with a positive effect on the overall ethos of the college.

As the result of action plans drawn up throughout the past four-year review period, colleges have improved college-wide planning processes, improved their estates, extended their self-evaluation processes to include more support services, improved their staff review and development processes, and developed increasingly innovative approaches to learning and teaching. A few colleges still need to improve their planning processes by making targets more specific and measurable, and need to evaluate more effectively the impact of their action plans on the learner experience.

Generally, teaching staff are well qualified and have relevant, up-to-date vocational experience. The proportion of permanent college teaching staff with a professional teaching qualification has risen steadily over the last four years to above 90%. Staff review processes identify training needs well and CPD programmes ensure that almost all staff undertake effective development.

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Do colleges have high expectations of all learners?

College learners place a high value on staff commitment to their progress and success in their programmes. Learner-staff relationships are purposeful and productive. In most colleges, staff engage collaboratively with learners to set, agree and monitor high standards of work and conduct. Colleges actively seek to create high expectations of success for learners on both further and higher education programmes, including for individuals whose previous experience of learning has been negative or whose current experience of school learning is not benefiting them sufficiently.

Colleges have a high proportion of learners from the most deprived data zones, from minority ethnic groups and with declared disabilities. Most of the college curriculum, particularly at further education level, incorporates activities and experiences which build confidence and independence in learning. In many colleges, well-considered induction and preparatory programmes also help learners to prepare for learning.

Effective partnership working and links with external agencies enable staff to support learners effectively, building learners' capacity to identify and pursue more challenging learning goals. The widespread use of ILPs, in which learners and staff agree realistic but demanding learning targets, raises the aspirations and expectations of both parties.

Colleges work well with local schools and other agencies to plan provision for their most vulnerable learners. Programmes specifically developed for learners with additional needs continue to be delivered particularly well in most colleges, and learners make very good progress and achieve well. In more than a few areas, the demand for college places exceeds the funding available to colleges to meet this need. Facilities, including assistive technologies and accommodation, generally provide well for learners with additional support needs.

Colleges have been successful in building the confidence of individuals and developing their skills to enable them to become lifelong learners.

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Section Three: Community learning and development

Strengths

- Strong commitment to inclusion, equality and fairness with examples of innovative and effective work with disadvantaged individuals and groups.
- Learning programmes that are flexible and tailored to meet the needs of learners.
- Good quality of youth work and the relationships with young people.
- The high degree of responsiveness to the needs of adult learners.
- The improvements made in community capacity building.
- Partnership working remains a strength in the sector.

Aspects for improvement

- Demonstrating the outcomes of CLD provision and tracking improvements over time.
- Ensuring that planning is needs-led and outcomes-focused.
- Leadership of people and partnerships in half of the authorities.

In almost all authorities, there is headroom for improvement in one or more aspects of CLD management or provision. In particular, the strategic leadership of CLD needs to improve in many authorities.

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How well do participants learn and achieve?

Learning and meeting the needs of all

CLD experiences typically engender great enthusiasm and motivation for learning amongst adult learners. Staff are particularly effective in developing confidence and self-esteem in the majority of learners who are returning to learning, often following negative experiences of formal education.

Overall, youth workers and adult tutors develop very positive relationships with the people with whom they are in contact. They generally show a high degree of responsiveness to the needs and preferences of young people and adults and create environments which are sympathetic and supportive. Examples of best practice in the sector demonstrate the effectiveness of the work with particularly disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups.

Questionnaire and inspection evidence, drawn from CLD participants in 16 local authority areas, also suggests positive outcomes in relation to the *Vision for Scotland's Children*. Almost all young people who responded feel that they are better supported, are achieving more, are more active, more respected and responsible, and more included in their community. A majority of young people also feel safer in their communities and healthier as a result of being involved in youth work. The pattern for adults is very similar but slightly less pronounced in relation to feeling more respected, responsible and included.

In 2007, HMIE published the report *Making a Difference in Scotland's Communities: a five year review of community learning and development in Scotland*. That report provides examples of good practice that demonstrates how CLD contributes to learning for confidence, skills and work; learning for health and wellbeing; and learning for active, inclusive and safer communities.

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Community learning and development 3

Achievement

In communities throughout Scotland, local authorities and partner agencies in the public and voluntary sectors provide a diverse range of mainly informal learning opportunities for young people and adults. A key strength of learning programmes in CLD is that they are flexible and tailored to meet the needs of learners. The impact of youth work is good in most authorities. The impact of adult learning is very good in the majority of authorities. The impact of community capacity building is good or better in almost all authorities. This is a significant improvement since the publication of the first *Improving Scottish Education* report.

Effective practice in adult learning and youth work develops individual self-confidence and core skills such as working with others, communication and problem solving. Particularly in youth work, and to a lesser extent in adult learning, there is a need for better use of assessment to ensure that participants can identify and build on their learning experiences. Family learning programmes are increasing and are effective in developing interest and aptitude among parents, carers and children in early literacy activities and in supporting the work of nurseries and primary schools. An emerging feature within the sector is the positive impact of a range of provision for adults on their mental health and wellbeing. Citizenship activities, such as youth forums or youth conferences, often result in young people taking more active roles in their communities and advocating on behalf of other young people. CLD providers have become increasingly involved in supporting communities to engage with community planning. The most significant outcome from this work is a sense of community ownership of new developments and considerable pride in achievements.

Evidence from questionnaires to participants in CLD activities demonstrates that almost all think that their experiences have contributed to their developing the capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*. This is strongest in relation to becoming more successful learners and more confident individuals. Responses also indicate that almost all participants respected and valued themselves and others more. Almost all young people who responded also indicate that they have become more involved in their community. This feature is slightly less marked for adult learners. A significant minority of adults who responded do not feel that their experience has helped them to get a job or do their jobs better. This is likely to reflect the fact that much of the community-based adult learning is delivered with literacy and numeracy learners and those who, for whatever reason, are furthest from the job market.

CLD participants have improved their communication skills and skills in working with others. A majority have improved their skills in number, ICT and problem solving.

CLD providers make substantial contributions to a number of the key outcomes of the National Performance Framework¹⁴. However, the sector overall needs to improve its capacity to demonstrate how it contributes to these outcomes and to track improvements over time.

¹⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/9>

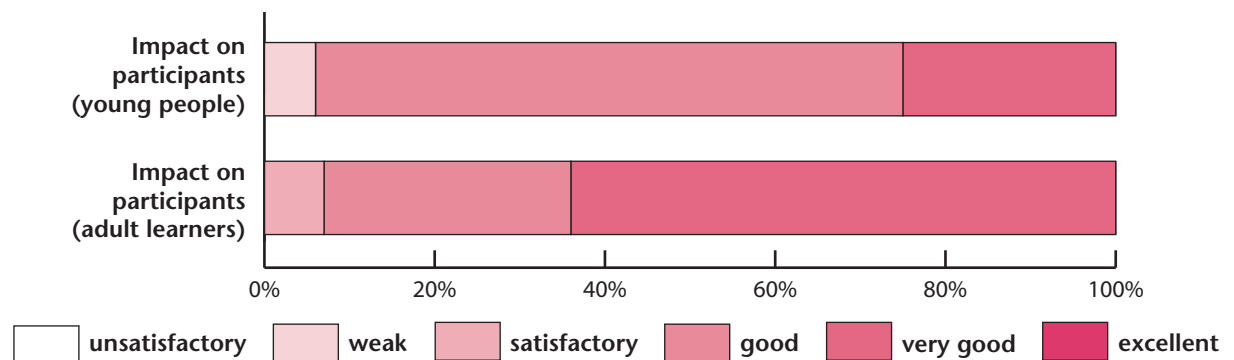
IMPROVEMENTS IN PERFORMANCE

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE CLD SECTOR 2006-2008



IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS

DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INDICATOR EVALUATIONS IN THE CLD SECTOR 2006-2008



Does community learning and development have a clear sense of direction?

Leadership of people and partnerships at local level is satisfactory or better in most authorities. However, this aspect of provision shows quite wide variations across Scotland.

Strategic leadership within local authorities and community planning partnerships also shows variations across the country. In some places, CLD services have a central role in local community planning and community engagement. In others, CLD is an approach to working with communities that runs across services such as libraries, museums, culture and sport. In one very good example of community capacity building, the key structural change that took place a few years earlier had combined CLD and community regeneration services into one service. All CLD strategic partnerships are now aligned with key community planning theme groups across Scotland.

The broad direction set nationally for CLD remains the guidance for community planning partnerships published in 2004, *Working and Learning Together: to build stronger communities*. The general direction of this policy was reinforced in November 2008 in a joint statement by the Scottish Government and COSLA. National organisations have worked closely together to ensure that supporting materials, for example, in relation to promoting a better understanding of the outcomes of CLD, have articulated well with one another.

However, the CLD sector has lagged behind other sectors in CPD. Two recent developments promise to improve this situation over the next few years. The first is the recent establishment of a Standards Council for Community Learning and Development. The second is that Scottish Government funding has been allocated to improve CPD in CLD.

Community learning and development 3

How well do staff work with others to support learning and development?

All community planning partnerships, led by local authorities, support multi-agency partnerships that work towards achieving the outcomes of CLD strategies. Partnership working remains a notable strength within the sector.

Most aspects of CLD partnership work are effective. Sizeable majorities of partners work well together to identify local needs; contribute to and implement CLD strategies, plans and priorities; and improve the quality of provision. However, the quality and range of resources and facilities for CLD are very variable and many are poor.

In the best practice in community capacity building, providers in local authority services and voluntary organisations work well together to support community organisations to influence local decision making and often to deliver effective services for disadvantaged people.

Are staff and participants actively involved in improving learning in their communities?

Learning programmes are developed through negotiation and dialogue between staff and participants. As a result, programmes usually take place at a time and place to suit learners and learners' own goals provide the basis for the style and content of the provision.

The period covered by this report began with the publication of the second self-evaluation framework for CLD in Scotland, *How good is our community learning and development?* (HGIOCLD?2). As with other sectors of education, it has taken time for the process of self-evaluation for improvement to become embedded in the sector. HGIOCLD?2 has become well established in the local authority sector as the main basis for self-evaluating provision. Some voluntary organisations too have used this tool in their work. However, there remains work to do to embed self-evaluation, leading to improvement, within the work of partners and in partnership working.

HMIE also reviews the work of national voluntary organisations that contribute to CLD in its broadest sense. These reviews begin with the organisations being asked to self-evaluate against a range of relevant indicators from HGIOCLD?2. The process of self-evaluation almost always benefits these organisations and the review process has a positive impact on their effectiveness.

Does community learning and development have high expectations of all participants?

The sector is demand-led and therefore focused on the participants' own expectations. Progress is evaluated against what the learner wants to do as a consequence of experience.

Overall, youth workers and adult tutors develop very positive relationships with the people with whom they are in contact.

There is a strong commitment to inclusion, with examples of innovative and effective work with disadvantaged individuals and groups. Inclusion, equality and fairness was evaluated as satisfactory or better in all authorities. In some authorities, the sector is very effective at targeting excluded groups such as lone parents, the unemployed and former drug and alcohol misusers. Programmes of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) include learners from a wide diversity of backgrounds, including economic migrants and asylum seekers.

Section Three: Prison learning, skills and employability¹⁵

Strengths

- Learner progress in developing an appropriate range of skills and gaining certification.
- Highly motivated and engaged learners.
- The engagement of professional and committed educators to deliver learning and develop skills.
- Effective physical education resources that enable prisoners to gain a range of skills and provide good opportunities for prisoners to keep fit.

Aspects for improvement

- Links between Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and college staff.
- The range and flexibility of educational programmes to develop prisoners' literacy, numeracy and core skills.
- Internal review procedures and associated action planning.

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¹⁵ HM Inspectorate of Education inspects Learning, Skills and Employability (LSE) in Scottish prisons as part of the institutional inspections carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons. LSE is defined by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) as a range of coordinated activities and interventions that addresses offenders' needs and develops the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours for offenders to access education, training and employment opportunities on release. It is delivered in part through contracts with two of Scotland's colleges and in part by prison officers.

Learner achievement and outcomes

For those prisoners who have been sentenced, access to education programmes and participation in work parties and vocational training programmes may result in certification and the development of appropriate skills. Levels of achievement of the prison population as a whole are limited because people on remand generally have no access to education or training. However, in more than a few cases, restricted facilities, and insufficient staffing and overcrowding also constrain opportunities for learning.

A well-structured approach to vocational training generally enables learners who have access to it to develop relevant skills and gain appropriate certification, including nationally accredited qualifications. For example, most prisons deliver the British Institute of Cleaning Sciences (BICSc) award to groups of prisoners. In others, prisoners participate in horticulture programmes. In almost all cases, the acquisition of these skills and qualifications is geared to improving the employment opportunities for prisoners when they have completed their sentences. In more than a few cases, prisoners successfully enter employment following their release.

Groups of prisoners in particular establishments improve their literacy, numeracy, life and social skills, particularly through innovative projects. Larger numbers gain enjoyment and develop skills through physical education. A few gain certification such as the Community Sports Leader Award and the *Skills for Work* qualification in sport and recreation.

Curriculum

Much learning is relevant and linked to prisoners' experiences and interests. Overall, the quality of LSE provision varies between establishments. In most cases, there is an appropriate range of courses and programmes to meet learner needs. This is particularly evident in the delivery of vocational training programmes which are relevant to the work of the prison and help prepare the prisoner for employment opportunities upon release.

Vocational Skills Training (VT), delivered by Instructional Officers, covers most of the main employment areas including the various aspects of construction, engineering, horticulture, cleaning, forestry and catering. Prison officers deliver physical education, which is popular with prisoners.

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Prison learning, skills and employability 3

Education classes are provided as part of a contract agreed between the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and Carnegie and Motherwell colleges for all prisons, with the exception of HMP Kilmarnock. Staff employed by the colleges deliver a range of programmes in areas including adult literacy and core skills; computing and information technology; art and design; languages; leisure subjects; mathematics; and music. A group of prison officers recently developed an introductory award in adult literacy designed to support literacy learning in association with physical education. However, overall there is insufficient availability of adult literacy and numeracy and core skills learning to meet learners' needs and prepare them well for their release.

The transfer of prisoners between establishments affects the continuity of learning for them. In many instances, prisoners are transferred to another establishment before programmes can be completed. On arrival at an accepting establishment, prisoners often find that the range of provision does not include programmes at the level at which they had been working prior to moving. Although all information is kept on the central prisons database, prisoners' learning records, in more than a few cases, are not transferred.

Prisoners have little access to extension activities to build upon their standard programmes or on the qualifications they gain during their sentences.

Do prison establishments have a clear and appropriate sense of direction for learning, skills and employability?

The SPS has a strategic policy on and provides a range of vocational learning experiences through the use of work parties and relevant vocational training programmes. These programmes are linked to preparing prisoners for employment opportunities and ensuring they gain relevant qualifications and skills. However, there are insufficient links between SPS and college staff to deliver complementary elements in programmes which would enable prisoners to develop both work-related skills and their literacy and numeracy skills.

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The SPS and prison governors perceive the role of vocational training and work parties as important to the life of the prison. They mostly delegate the organisation and delivery of vocational training programmes to middle managers within the prison, for example to inclusion managers. In most cases, these managers provide a meaningful experience for prisoners. In all establishments, prisoner participation in education or vocational work parties is voluntary and prisoners are paid to participate in these activities. In some prisons, prisoners are offered bonuses for passing units, but this practice is not widespread. The decision therefore for prisoners to give up work-party duties and vocational-training opportunities, and take full-time education, depends in many instances on the differential in wages between involvement in work parties and the education unit.

How well do staff work with others (external and internal) to support learning?

In a few cases, staff from different prisons work together to ensure that learners' needs are met. However, in most cases, education staff in prisons do not engage in joint work with staff from other prisons.

In some cases, there are effective partnerships and working relationships both internally and with external agencies at a local level. In a small number of examples, prisons have developed productive links into broader community networks such as local authority literacy partnerships. There are good examples of involvement of local employers who provide work placement opportunities that help prisoners to gain essential skills and improve the likelihood of post-release employment.

There are some very good examples where individual staff have taken the initiative to work collaboratively with agencies, both in and out of prison, and create meaningful experiences for prisoners and develop their skills. The impact of these activities on prisoners has been significant, with many stating they have increased their self-esteem and gained greater ownership of their learning. Importantly, their experiences help them to look for related employment or voluntary opportunities upon release.

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Prison learning, skills and employability 3

In the open estate, prisoners participate in a wide range of placement opportunities with employers and partners from the local community. In other cases, prisoners work on projects to support community groups, such as helping to clean litter from local beaches, participating in marathons for local charities or contributing to projects working with groups of disabled people.

Do staff actively encourage learning for prisoners?

In all institutions, there is a clear focus on motivating prisoners to get involved and complete their programmes, enabling them to become actively involved as stakeholders in LSE activities. In most cases, good use of appropriate praise and encouragement, combined with recognition and celebration of achievement, helps to increase prisoners' motivation to complete their studies successfully. This ambition is assisted by the encouragement of positive relations between prisoners and staff. In almost all cases, staff display a high degree of enthusiasm in the learning activities.

Opportunities for LSE activities are promoted effectively in some establishments and staff hold information sessions for new learners on a regular basis. In almost all cases, the effective use of questionnaires helps identify prisoners who require focused support to develop particular skills. In all establishments, more than a few prisoners decline to take advantage of educational opportunities despite an identified need. Access to education programmes and vocational training and work parties is also restricted for prisoners who are segregated from the mainstream prison population.

Do prison establishments have high expectations of prisoners as learners?

In almost all cases, insufficient systematic internal review procedures, which do not involve learners, contribute to weak action planning with few measurable and time-bound targets. In more than a few establishments, there is no recording of achievement on the individual learning plans of prisoners. Insufficient systematic monitoring of attainment and achievement makes it difficult for prisoners and staff to reflect on the progress made and to plan future learning activities. In addition, in more than a few cases, establishments and LSE providers do not communicate effectively enough or work together sufficiently in constructive partnership. This reinforces the perception that LSE provision is, in some cases, accorded a low priority.

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Section Three: Child protection services in local authority areas

Strengths

- The help and initial support given to keep children safe.
- The involvement of children and families in key decision-making meetings.
- Children and young people are listened to, understood and respected.
- The promotion of public awareness of child protection.
- The range of policies and procedures linked to vision, values and aims.
- The clear vision, values and aims for child protection which have been communicated effectively to staff.
- Leadership of people and partnerships, including working with private and voluntary organisations.

Aspects for improvement

- Recognition and assessment of risk and needs.
- Planning to meet children's needs and taking account of changing circumstances.
- The participation of children and families in policy development and in planning and developing services.
- Operational planning, including performance management and the development and use of management information.

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How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?

Police, education, social work, health and voluntary sector staff work together effectively to deliver a range of programmes to children about keeping themselves safe and healthy. Children have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and can identify trusted adults with whom they would share their concerns. Most children know how to contact ChildLine. Staff monitor and support children who are educated at home and those not attending school.

Vulnerable children and families benefit from a range of services, including family centres, early education and child care centres, and through a variety of parenting programmes. Some of these services are delivered in partnership with voluntary organisations. Family support workers and health visitors provide effective support to vulnerable children and families.

Staff across services are generally clear about their responsibilities to safeguard children and be alert to the signs that a child may be in need of help or support. When there is a child protection concern, most staff act promptly and appropriately by sharing their concerns and notifying police or social work staff. Initial risk assessments based on information gathered are usually effective. In some areas, there is effective information sharing between police, health and social, work staff when the initial child protection referral is made. This enables staff to plan jointly any investigation and to assess the need for a medical examination. In a significant number of local authority areas, the Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) does not involve health staff. Relevant and important information which may be held by them is not always shared.

Joint child protection investigations by police and social work staff are usually carried out promptly, but some areas do not have a sufficient number of trained staff to undertake joint investigative interviews with children.

The help given to children and young people by professionals responding to immediate concerns is variable. In most areas, services respond promptly and effectively when concerns about children's safety are raised. Services generally act promptly and effectively when there are concerns about unborn or newborn babies.

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Child protection services in local authority areas 3

The short-term needs of vulnerable children and families are mostly met. Children and families receive the help and support in a variety of ways. Sometimes help and support is withdrawn too quickly, particularly when the child's name is removed from the child protection register. Children who move to live with other family members are not always supported well. Children benefit from the help and support provided by a range of specialist services, sometimes delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector. These include services for children who have been abused, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and services for children displaying sexually harmful behaviour. However, there are often waiting lists for specialist services and children do not always get the help and support they need quickly enough. In many areas, insufficient attention is given to planning for the child's longer-term needs. There are often delays in planning to meet the longer-term needs of children.

CHILDREN'S NEEDS ARE MET

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JANUARY 2007-MARCH 2008**



Staff working with substance-misusing parents are generally alert to the risks to children and share their concerns and information with staff in other services appropriately.

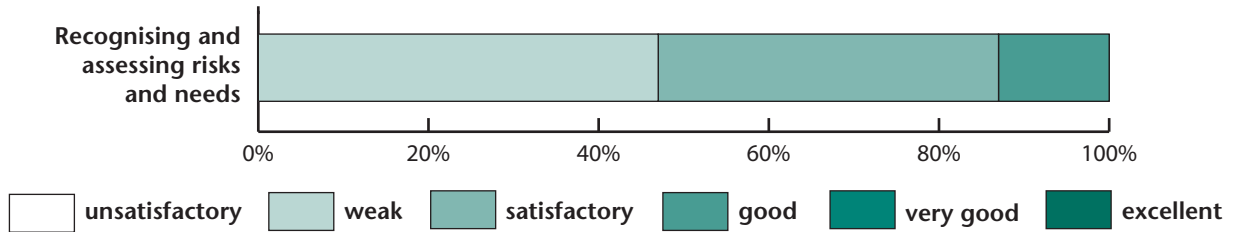
There is an inconsistent approach to medical examinations. In some areas, suitably trained paediatricians and forensic medical examiners are always available to carry out medical examinations of children. These are usually carried out in a child-friendly environment. However, in other areas, suitably trained staff are not always available or contacted. When trained paediatricians are not used, the wider health needs of the child can be overlooked.

There is an inconsistent approach to risk assessments. In many areas, risk assessment tools are available to help and guide staff, but these are not always familiar to staff or used by them. Comprehensive assessments of risks to children are not used widely or consistently. In some areas, delayed assessments result in delayed decisions by the Children's Reporter. In some areas, a lack of foster care places results in some children remaining at home in high-risk situations.

In some areas, staff are slow to respond to accumulating concerns, particularly around child neglect or patterns of concern or behaviour. Joint assessment of risk at child protection case conferences and review meetings is effective in many areas, but on occasions is compromised by poor attendance of key staff.

RECOGNISING AND ASSESSING RISKS AND NEEDS

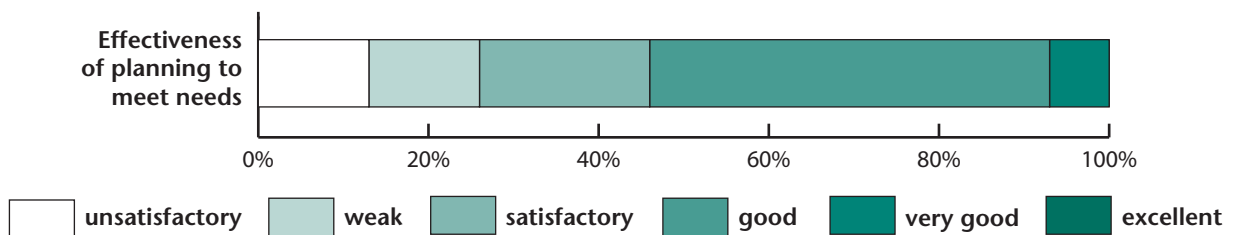
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When planning for children on the child protection register, professionals consider carefully what action and resources are required to help keep children safe and in many cases these are put in place. In most areas, children on the child protection register and those subject to statutory measures of supervision have an allocated social worker. The quality of child protection plans is highly variable across the country. There is often a lack of clarity about the outcomes expected from the actions agreed by professionals and how a reduction of risk to the child will be measured. Early consideration is not always given to planning an alternative course of action to take account of changing circumstances. In many areas, the attendance of staff at child protection case conferences, particularly review child protection care conferences, is inconsistent. Monitoring progress of the child protection plans and ongoing levels of risk is made more difficult as a result.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANNING TO MEET NEEDS

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Core group meetings are at an early stage of development in many areas. They are not always held regularly or well attended. When meetings are not held regularly, care plans are not reviewed sufficiently well to take account of changing circumstances and this often leads to agreed actions being delayed or not implemented.

Child protection services in local authority areas 3

How well do staff involve children and young people, families and the community?

Professionals generally listen to children and encourage them to give their views. At decision-making meetings, including children's hearings, children of an appropriate age and level of understanding are asked for their views and professionals listen to them. At children's hearings, *Having your say* forms are used effectively to seek older children's views.

In most areas, children are seen regularly and consistently by staff who get to know them well, and are able to establish trusting relationships. In some, innovative approaches are used to maintain contact with children and families. These approaches include the use of mobile telephones, e-mails and text messaging.

Health visitors generally establish positive and trusting relationships with babies, younger children and their parents.

The use of independent safeguarders and advocacy services, including children's rights officers, helps to ensure that the child's voice is heard. However, independent advocacy services are not always used effectively.

CHILDREN ARE LISTENED TO, UNDERSTOOD AND RESPECTED

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Some services use a number of well-established groups to seek the views of children, for example, through youth councils, youth forums and *Dialogue Youth*. Education services have used pupil councils to obtain children's views more generally. There are some examples of children's views being sought to help design new services. Some services have recently begun to seek the views of child protection service users through questionnaires, feedback forms and surveys. Only a few local authority areas have involved children in the development of the Integrated Children's Services Plan (ICSP). In most local authority areas there has been no systematic or planned approach taken to gather the views of vulnerable and other hard-to-reach children and families to help plan and develop services, including those directly relating to child protection.

In most local authority areas, Child Protection Committees (CPCs) ensure that effective steps have been taken to promote the public awareness of child protection. Publicity materials, including leaflets and posters, have been developed in most areas and are widely distributed and displayed in public buildings. Internet websites are generally used effectively to publicise child protection information. A few areas have taken effective steps to ensure that information is available in languages other than English.

Services ensure that members of the public know how to contact them at any time. These services are used well by the public, although feedback is not provided consistently to those who passed on their concerns. In most areas, services have reliable systems in place to respond to telephone calls from the public. However, in a significant number of local authority areas, the time taken by the out-of-hours social work service to respond to telephone calls is too long and some callers experience difficulties when trying to make contact with them.

How well are services led and managed?

Individually and collectively most services have a clear vision, values and aims for child protection which have been communicated effectively to staff. Chief Officers and senior managers across services are clear about their individual and collective responsibilities for child protection. There are many examples of joint funding arrangements and effective approaches to sharing resources. The commitment of Chief Officers to CPCs and the establishment of Chief Officer Groups has strengthened accountability and governance. Some of these groups cover more than one local authority area. In many areas, CPCs have been strengthened and provided with additional support, for example, through the appointment of independent chairs, lead officers and training coordinators. Senior managers and CPCs need more robust management information to maintain a strategic overview of the effectiveness of child protection services and key processes. The collective approach by some CPCs requires further improvement and some Chief Officer Groups are still at an early stage of their development.

Chief Officers and senior staff in police, health and the local authorities are working more closely together to plan, develop and deliver services to protect children. There is generally effective partnership working with the voluntary sector, and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration in planning and delivering services for vulnerable children and families. Many areas have established effective partnership arrangements with Women's Aid to help children affected by domestic abuse.

The establishment of Community Health Partnerships/Community Health and Care Partnerships is strengthening joint working. In some areas, the co-location of staff at a strategic and operational level has improved joint working and reinforced an integrated approach to planning.

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Child protection services in local authority areas 3

LEADERSHIP OF PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

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JANUARY 2007-MARCH 2008



Strategic aims and improvement objectives for child protection are incorporated into ICSPs and, in most areas, all of the key services have been involved in developing these plans. In most areas, a planning framework, including action plans for the ICSP, has been established and developed. However, in many areas there is a lack of awareness among staff about the ICSP and how it influences their work.

In most areas, there is a broad range of policies, procedures and protocols in place to help and guide staff in child protection. Inter-agency child protection guidelines or procedures are generally accessible to staff across services. Approaches across services to evaluating and updating child protection policies and procedures and monitoring their impact are more variable.

Senior managers across services and CPCs recognise the importance of taking a more systematic approach to quality assurance through self-evaluation. Most areas have established and implemented a joint approach to significant case reviews, although in some areas this work is still at a very early stage of development. In some local authority areas, a joint approach has been taken to auditing child protection case files, reports, attendance levels at meetings and key child protection processes. Areas for improvement have been identified and positive action taken.

LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

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JANUARY 2007-MARCH 2008



Within individual services, approaches to self-evaluation are variable. In some areas police, health and social work staff have carried out a structured self-evaluation of their child protection services and made improvements. In other areas, progress has been slower. In almost all areas, joint self-evaluation is still at a very early stage of development. In many areas where self-evaluation has been carried out, lessons learned and key improvement objectives are not fully communicated to operational staff.

Section Four: The impact of local authorities on the quality of education

Context

The first programme of inspections of all 32 Scottish education authorities was undertaken from 2000 to 2005. In the second programme of inspections, which began in 2006, we have introduced the following:

- a self-evaluation framework which focuses on impact and outcomes;
- elements of proportionality so that HMIE resources are applied most effectively to secure quality improvement in line with Best Value principles; and
- a move towards more joined-up approaches to inspection in order to provide more integration between inspection programmes and to reduce burdens on education authorities.

A key feature of the new system of inspection is a move towards an intelligence-led, proportionate approach. This approach helps to ensure that inspection supports service delivery and is firmly focused on improvement in the outcomes for learners. We also focus on the impact of the work of Educational Psychological Services.

Our 2006 report on the work of local authorities¹⁶ concluded that *'the evidence from our inspections shows that education authorities can and often do make a significant contribution to providing high quality education in Scotland'*. Each education authority demonstrated that it was having an impact on improving some aspects of pupils' attainment and achievement. Importantly, most authorities were evaluated as having very good or good capacity to improve. However, the 2006 report noted, *'at the time of the inspections, authorities differed markedly in their capacity to evaluate their own performance, a capacity that is essential to securing improvements'*. Weaknesses in leadership and direction, problems related to economic and social factors and the lack of necessary expertise in key staff, had affected the capacity of some authorities to achieve sufficient improvement.

The results of follow-up inspections indicate that progress towards addressing main points for action is almost always positive and show that authorities have achieved considerable success in securing improvements to provision, to outcomes for young people and to their capacity to sustain and improve performance.

¹⁶ *Improving Scottish Education: Effectiveness of Education Authorities (2006)*

Local authority performance since 2006

In nearly half of inspections undertaken since 2006, we concluded that the authority inspected had a strong capacity for improvement. In just over a third of inspections, we decided that we would need to revisit the authority to monitor improvements in performance.

How good are attainment and achievement of learners and how well are they supported?

In almost all inspections, improvements in performance were evaluated as satisfactory or better. Major strengths were identified in improvements in performance in a significant number of authorities inspected. In almost all inspections, impact on learners was evaluated as satisfactory or better. Major strengths were identified in this area in almost half of the authorities inspected.

The impact on the performance of learners of pre-school age was highlighted as a key strength in most inspections. Aspects of strong performance and the impact of the education authority in promoting these improvements include the following:

- the value accorded to early years provision by education authorities as part of a commitment to ensure equality for all children;
- partnerships across council services and with other organisations to make effective provision for pre-school children; and
- the quality of support and assistance provided by the authority and the quality of continuous professional development.

The quality of provision offered by partner providers is still too variable in some cases and at times of insufficient quality. In some cases, there is a need for high-quality curriculum advice for staff. There is a continued need for effective continuity and progression in learning between nursery and P1.

For primary-aged learners, aspects of strong performance and the impact of the education authority in promoting these improvements include the following:

- authorities continue to make raising attainment a priority, with particular success at the early stages;
- in a number of education authorities, an increasing number of pupils achieve appropriate national levels of attainment earlier than might normally be expected; and
- across authorities, there are improving approaches to monitoring and tracking pupils' performance.

However, the performance of the lowest-attaining pupils still requires sustained attention. For some authorities, success in closing the gap in attainment outcomes between boys and girls remains a challenge.

The impact of the work of education authorities on secondary-aged learners is mixed. Strengths include:

- in some authorities, following a specific focus by the authority and schools, there has been considerable improvement in the level of young people's attainment in targeted areas; and
- almost all authorities offer an extensive and beneficial programme of achievement activities, such as sports, arts and cultural activities within and beyond school.

More remains to be done to ensure that in all authorities across Scotland all young people achieve to their full potential while in secondary education. In particular, performance at S1 and S2 requires sustained attention and support at authority level. Support for secondary schools in some authorities is not of a sufficiently high quality. In a few authorities, the overall proportion of pupils leaving secondary schools for destinations in higher or further education, training or employment is too low.

The impact of the work of education authorities on adult learners is positive. Strengths include:

- leading effective partnerships to meet the needs of adults with literacy and numeracy needs and migrant workers and their families who need support to learn English; and
- community learning and development approaches to building the confidence and wellbeing of parents and carers to equip them better for supporting their children's learning.

In most authorities, there remains work to do to integrate the work of community learning and development providers with aspects of formal education. Some schools play important roles in the lives of the communities they serve, but there remains considerable scope for schools to do more to build stronger, safer communities.

Meeting the needs of all learners

The impact of education authorities on outcomes for pupils with additional support needs is generally positive. In a few instances, the approach of authorities to ensuring success for all learners has been outstanding. Features of effective practice include the following:

- in a number of authorities, a wide range of supportive approaches has been developed to meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs;
- good support for parents and carers at important points of transition through often strong multi-agency working; and
- authorities' preparation for and implementation of The Education (Additional Support for learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.

However, there is a lack of consistency in provision for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Authorities have developed a large number of initiatives to improve pupils' learning experiences in schools and centres in all sectors. Increasingly, authorities are promoting the implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* through, for example, cross-curricular initiatives. This now needs to be addressed with vigour by all authorities. Significant progress in learning and teaching is being made through the development of the national *Assessment is for Learning* programme.

In some examples, pupils are clearly motivated by more active approaches to learning, in particular, through improved opportunities to develop their skills in ICT. Authorities are committed to promoting pupils' understanding, and interest in, the development of sustainability and environmental awareness.

Authorities have prioritised and developed a range of effective initiatives to promote pupils' achievements. Pupils in authorities across Scotland benefit from a wide range of cultural and sporting opportunities. Approaches include learning from visits to museums, libraries and arts performances and participation in workshops in schools. Involvement in cultural activities, including music tuition, story telling and traditional dance are, in some instances, impacting positively on pupils' awareness of Scottish culture. Many of these experiences are planned and organised in conjunction with staff from other council services and with other partners. However, authorities do not make enough use of available national awards to recognise these achievements. In some authorities, further work is required in tracking pupils' involvement in initiatives designed to develop their achievements both within and outwith schools.

A wide variety of innovative approaches to enterprise education is being developed in authorities across Scotland. Some authorities showcase enterprise work from schools effectively in order to motivate further young learners. Schools in some authorities work closely with local businesses, and, where effective, these partnerships significantly enhance pupils' learning experiences. Overall, these approaches are designed to raise pupils' awareness of the world of work through well-planned and purposeful class-based activities and work placement experiences at secondary level. In some instances, this is achieved very effectively.

In a range of authorities and across sectors, learners benefit from a clear and widespread commitment to listening to their views. Young people have good opportunities to express their views through participation in other bodies and groups, including School Nutrition Action Groups and Eco Schools Groups and are often developing their levels of self-confidence.

Focus on psychological services

Educational psychology services (EPS) work with children and young people from birth to 18 years, and increasingly up to the age of 24 years. They have a broad statutory remit outlined in Section 4 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as subsequently amended, which states that it is the duty of education authorities to provide an authority psychological service.

The functions of that service include:

- the study of children with additional support needs;
- the giving of advice to parents and teachers as to appropriate methods of education for such children;
- in suitable cases, provision for the additional support needs of such children; and
- the giving of advice to a local authority within the meaning of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 regarding the assessments of the needs of any child for the purposes of any of the provisions of that or any other enactment.

The challenges facing EPS in addressing their statutory requirements differ depending on local circumstances. The structures and deployment of EPS vary considerably across Scotland. For example, service size, management structure and service delivery have evolved and developed in response to national and local priorities. EPS have the important responsibilities for developing services which reflect the priorities of the education authority and meet the needs of their local communities.

Key strengths:

- EPS have made a significant contribution to the implementation of The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.
- EPS play an important role in improving the quality of provision within their education authorities for specific groups of children and young people.
- Children, young people, parents, carers and families are satisfied with most aspects of the service.
- Team working and collaboration is a strong feature of EPS.
- EPS have developed effective working relationships with a range of partner agencies.

Aspects for improvement:

- Roles and remits of educationally psychologists need to be more effectively communicated to partner agencies and education authority staff.
- Less than half of schools feel that the individual case work provided by the EPS is valued by staff and leads to better outcomes for children and young people.
- There is a need to improve record keeping to monitor more effectively the impact and outcomes for children and young people.
- In a number of services, leadership roles require to be further developed. Arrangements for managing change and improving service performance need to be further developed.

Meeting the needs of parents, carers and families

In best practice, parents are actively involved in authority decision-making, have purposeful opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, and have access to a range of opportunities for their own learning through volunteering and family learning. In some authorities, parents have access to a range of services and networks to support and encourage involvement in their children's learning. There are examples of good practice in supporting for parents whose children have additional support needs.

However, more work is required to engage all parents in supporting their children by working in partnership with schools, particularly in the secondary school sector.

How good is the quality of leadership in education authorities?

Improving Scottish Education, Effectiveness of Education Authorities (2006) reported that education authorities varied markedly in the quality of strategic leadership and the impact that it had on children and families. It noted that, overall, there was room for improvement in leadership and direction in many authorities.

Almost all inspections of education authorities undertaken since 2006 have identified important strengths in vision, values and aims and in leadership in developing people and partnerships.

Positive features have included the following:

- a clear corporate vision and a strong sense of direction and purpose;
- acceptance and promotion of leadership as the responsibility of staff at all levels;
- a shared commitment to the common goal of raising attainment and achievement; and
- an increasing focus on learning and teaching and the developing impact of planned developments on improving children's learning.

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Working in partnership and building capacity for improvement

Since 2006, there have been a number of positive developments in this area. Examples include effective multi-agency input across early years education and in relation to pupils with additional support needs. In some instances, local authority departments responsible for CLD have also collaborated well with partners in delivering innovative learning programmes. Where they have been well planned and implemented, strategic partnerships enable agencies and organisations to work together to maximise resources and increase levels of impact on participants. Vitality, there is increasing evidence of these partnerships making a difference to children. However, this positive picture is not consistent. In some authorities, partnerships are still at an early stage of development. In some instances, the sustainability of these partnerships in the longer term is not yet secure. In other cases, new approaches are too recent for impact to be apparent beyond some individual instances, and considerable work remains to be done.

Leading change and improvement

Improving Scottish Education, Effectiveness of Education Authorities (2006) reported that the capacity to raise achievement and attainment across local authorities in councils was too variable.

A number of authorities have achieved considerable success in this important area. This includes examples in which authority staff know their schools well and provide an appropriate mix of support and challenge while retaining a relationship based on mutual respect. In these authorities, senior officers set challenging targets for schools, and headteachers have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in relation to achieving these targets. More remains to be done to ensure that this effective practice is applied on a consistent basis across the country, and is provided to other services involved in supporting children's learning.

Inspection findings have highlighted some very strong practice, including the following:

- authority staff who know their schools well and who can offer a robust level of support and challenge while retaining a relationship based on mutual respect, including senior officers setting challenging targets with schools, and headteachers having a clear understanding of their responsibilities for achieving these targets;
- striking a clear balance between robust monitoring of progress towards the targets set and fostering a culture which encourages innovation and the sharing of good practice;
- a commitment to enhance the quality of learning and teaching and the work of the service;
- open encouragement of creativity and innovation within establishments while maintaining a key focus on effective learning and teaching approaches designed to meet the needs of all learners; and
- well-planned and appropriately-focused professional development opportunities for newly-qualified teachers.

Local authorities have a key role to play in implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Arrangements put in place to support curriculum development in the near future will be a very important factor in the success of the programme. Increasingly, local authorities have helpful plans in place to engage staff and to take forward local developments in the curriculum.

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Section Five: Looking ahead

*'It is clear that the future will require a population with the confidence and skills to meet the challenges posed by fast and far-reaching change.'*¹⁷

As this report shows, Scottish education has substantial strengths, including the professionalism of its workforce and its increasing expertise in self-improvement. This growing capacity for improvement will stand us in good stead as we tackle the challenges which lie ahead.

The report has indentified a range of issues which will need to be addressed in order to achieve the high aspirations which we all seek for our education system and all its learners.

Achievement

Broad achievement is defined through the attributes and skills relating to the four capacities¹⁸ and to the essential skills of Scotland's lifelong skills strategy. It is embedded in the experiences and outcomes in the emerging curriculum guidance. Priorities are:

- recognising that achievement and attainment are not alternatives; both are the outcome of a rich and challenging educational experience;
- using curriculum reform to find fresh ways of engaging learners in deep and challenging learning, to increase levels of achievement for all learners and in particular to improve standards in literacy, numeracy and science; and
- developing ways of recognising achievement, including formal qualifications, which reflect the purposes and expectations of the curriculum.

Curriculum, learning and teaching

In taking forward *Curriculum for Excellence*, local authorities, schools, colleges and their partners have a very significant opportunity to use their professional judgement and ingenuity as they translate the new broad guidance into practice. Learning involves the progressive development of attributes and skills throughout life. All those engaged in supporting an individual's learning from pre-school through to continuing education should see themselves as part of a continuous and collective endeavour.

Priorities are:

- ensuring challenge and progression in learning through imaginative, well-judged teaching, leading to the achievement of high levels of understanding and skill;
- devising curriculum structures which reflect the design principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* and enable all learners to benefit from the experiences and achieve the outcomes described in guidance on the curriculum;
- planning to ensure that all young people achieve the outcomes which comprise a broad general education and that they have suitable opportunities for choice and specialisation;
- working collectively to ensure that children, young people and adult learners make successful transitions between stages or establishments and from education to the world of work, building upon their prior learning;

¹⁷ Quotation from HM Senior Chief Inspector's commentary in this report and in *Improving Scottish Education 2002-2005*

¹⁸ See *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3: A Framework for Learning and Teaching*, page 22

- enabling all learners to apply learning in active and creative ways; and
- putting in place arrangements to support teachers in their assessment of learning, so that they and society can have confidence in their judgements and that assessment plays a central role in tracking and facilitating progress in learning.

Vision and leadership

In order to bring about necessary changes, all members of staff need to play their part, both individually and in teams, in leading learning and curriculum innovation. Priorities are:

- establishing clear direction, securing commitment, fostering partnerships and encouraging initiative while constantly focusing on the impact on learners;
- tackling weak teaching and underachievement wherever it is found;
- ensuring that future leaders are identified and nurtured in their professional development;
- ensuring strategic planning and effective leadership by local authorities to bring about improvement; and
- establishing and sustaining a climate of high aspiration by putting *Curriculum for Excellence* into practice successfully.

Partnerships

Individuals, establishments and services cannot on their own deliver what is required in today's demanding context. Priorities are:

- strengthening partnerships across sectors and services in ways which create a unified learning and support system that eases progression for learners;
- ensuring that education plays its full part in taking forward the *GIRFEC*¹⁹ approach, actively seeking and embedding the behaviours which will sustain effective partnership working ; and
- enabling parents to play a stronger role as partners in their child's learning and development.

Professional freedom and responsibility

The developing approach to change in education assumes a commitment to personal and professional development on the part of every educator. Priorities are:

- fostering a culture in which individuals see themselves as members of a professional community which takes responsibility for its own learning;
- making the best use of both time and expertise in planning for essential continuing professional development, including the sharing of good practice;
- adopting open and objective approaches to self-evaluation in establishments and services, taking full account of the views of learners, and planning and implementing improvements based directly on these approaches;

¹⁹ *Getting it right for every child*

Section Five: Looking ahead

- engaging constructively with other professionals to ensure children and young people are supported to be successful; and
- increasing teachers' capacity to operate confidently and competently within a less directed environment.

Success for all learners

Improving the poor outcomes of some learners remains a central challenge for all establishments and services which support children, young people and their families, and adult learners, particularly those facing significant disadvantage. Priorities are:

- identifying and tackling barriers to learning before they become entrenched;
- finding new ways to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse population of learners, including newcomers to Scotland for whom English is an additional language; and
- personalising learning and support to take account of individual needs, choices and circumstances while relentlessly reinforcing high expectations.

For our part, HMIE will assist national and local bodies as they consider the implications of this report for their work through providing professional advice and support for developmental and capacity-building activity. We shall also ensure that our inspections and reviews are rigorous, proportionate, build upon self-evaluation and support the processes of change and improvement.

Appendix: Note on evidence sources and the use of terms

Evidence base

HMIE evaluations as expressed in this report arise from consideration and reflection on a range of factors. These include:

- findings from the inspection and review process relating to the publication of reports on individual establishments and services across all sectors over the last three or four years, depending on the sector involved;
- the findings from inspections and reviews of educational establishments contributing to the production of aspect reports across all sectors, and HMIE commentary on those findings as published in such aspect reports;
- information drawn from surveys (for example, of stakeholders' views gathered before inspections and reviews);
- reflections on the basis of ongoing interactions with a very broad range of key players in the education process (such as Scottish Government officials, directors of education and other local authority personnel, staff from other education agencies, headteachers, college principals, teaching and non-teaching staff, researchers, and staff in higher education institutions including teacher education);
- reflections on the basis of discussions both internal to HMIE and involving others taking part in inspection and review processes such as associate assessors, lay members, student team members and representatives of agencies engaged in joint inspections (such as the Care Commission, or Audit Scotland); and
- HM Inspectors' wider intelligence in terms of research findings, theory and provision in relevant sectors and in specific contexts.

*Inspection and review details as follows:

pre-school:	1442 inspections undertaken jointly with, and on behalf of, the Care Commission, 2005-2008
primary:	571 inspections, including independent sector provision, 2005-2007
secondary:	126 inspections, including independent sector provision, 2005-2007
special:	50 inspections of day schools, 2005-2007 19 inspections of residential schools, including independent sector provision, 2005-2007
college:	43 college reviews, incorporating 279 reviews of subject areas, 2004-2008
CLD:	inspections of geographical areas in 16 local authorities, 2006-2008
children's services:	inspections of child protection arrangements in 15 local authorities, 2006-2008
INEA:	inspections of the education functions of 15 local authorities, 2006-2008
EPS:	inspections of educational psychological services in 13 local authorities, 2006-2008

Further details

Further details on many aspects included in this report are available in a range of HMIE reports and publications, all of which are available on the HMIE website (www.hmie.gov.uk). Publications over the period 2005-2008 are listed in the Reference and Bibliography Appendix associated with this report on the website.

Good practice

Examples of good and sector-leading practice can be found in the Good Practice and *The Journey to Excellence* areas of the HMIE website. See link above.

Use of terms

Terms describing people

- **'parent/s'** should be understood as including foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends. It should also be understood as referring to one or two (or more) adults in the parent role
- **'learner'** is used generically to refer to school pupils, young people and adults in college, or young people or adults in the community learning and development (CLD) context. The word **'participant'** is also used in the CLD context, where the word **'learner'** may not be so appropriate
- **'young people'** is used to refer across any sector to that group of individuals aged around 12 to 18
- **'pupil'** is used exclusively in the context of schools
- **'children'** is used in pre-school and primary school contexts and in parent-children relational contexts
- **'teacher'** or **'teaching staff'** are used across all sectors to refer to those adults in teaching situations, particularly those who have a teaching qualification
- **'support staff'** is used to refer to other adults in the teaching situation who support the teaching process. They may have a professional qualification. The term includes nursery nurses, nursery or classroom assistants, auxiliaries for children, pupils and young people with additional support needs, technicians, resource auxiliaries and others
- **'staff'** is used to cover both the above groups
- **'headteacher'** is used for school contexts and for nursery schools in the pre-school sector
- **'centre manager'** is used in the pre-school sector to refer to the person in overall charge in voluntary or private centres as relevant
- **'head'** is used generically to refer to the most senior manager across a range of educational establishments and services
- **'principal'** refers to the academic leader and chief executive officer of a college
- **'senior staff'** or **'senior managers'** refers to promoted staff and may include the head, headteacher, principal or centre manager
- **'inspectors'** relates to personnel engaged in inspections or reviews and includes HM Inspectors, associate assessors and other members of inspection or review teams.

Qualitative and quantitative terms

The evaluative words: 'excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'satisfactory', 'weak' and 'unsatisfactory' are as associated with the six-point evaluation scale introduced in August 2005 and as outlined in:

- *The Child at the Centre* (second edition);
- *How good is our school?* (third edition);
- *How good is our community learning and development?* (second edition);
- *How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?*;
- *Quality Management in Education* (second edition); and
- *Quality Management in Local Authority Educational Psychology Services 1*.

The levels on the six-point scale are described as follows:

<i>excellent:</i>	<i>outstanding or sector-leading provision</i>
<i>very good:</i>	<i>provision with major strengths</i>
<i>good:</i>	<i>provision with important strengths and areas for improvement</i>
<i>satisfactory*:</i>	<i>provision where strengths just outweigh weaknesses</i>
<i>weak:</i>	<i>provision with important weaknesses</i>
<i>unsatisfactory:</i>	<i>provision with major weaknesses</i>

* From April 2008, the term 'satisfactory' replaced the term 'adequate'. The term 'adequate' is not used in this report.

The four-point scale was used for pre-school inspections until April 2007 and for college reviews until June 2008. The levels are described as follows:

<i>very good:</i>	<i>provision with major strengths</i>
<i>good:</i>	<i>provision with important strengths</i>
<i>fair:</i>	<i>provision with important weaknesses</i>
<i>unsatisfactory:</i>	<i>provision with major weaknesses</i>

The following standard terms of quantity are used in all HMIE reports:

All:	100%
Almost all:	91% – 99%
Most:	75% – 90%
Majority:	50% – 74%
Minority/Less than half:	15 – 49%
A few:	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms which may be used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

Abbreviations used in this report

ASDAN	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
BICSc	The British Institute of Cleaning Science
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CLD	Community Learning and Development
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSP	Co-ordinated Support Plan
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EPS	Educational Psychology Services
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
EYF	Early Years Framework
GIRFEC	Getting it right for every child
HGIOCLD?2	How good is our community learning and development? 2
HMSCI	HM Senior Chief Inspector
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
ICSP	Integrated Children's Services Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	Individualised Educational Plan
ILP	Individual Learning Plans
IRD	Initial Referral Discussion
LSE	Learning, Skills and Employability
MCMC	More Choices, More Chances
NQ	National Qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Studies
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SPS	Scottish Prison Service
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SQH	Scottish Qualification for Headship
SSA	Scottish Survey of Achievement
SSSC	Scottish Social Services Council
TIMSS	Trends in International Maths and Science Survey
VT	Vocational Skills Training
WALT	Working and Learning Together: to build stronger communities

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Further information is available from:

HM Inspectorate of Education
Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston
EH54 6GA

Tel: 01506 600 200
Fax: 01506 600 337
E-mail: enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk

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