

Education in the Scottish Parliament

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PREAMBLE

This paper follows on from the previous bulletin (Redford 2012), which covered the education remit of the Parliament's Education and Culture Committee between September 2011 and January 2012. The following bulletin covers the same remit of the Education and Culture Committee from February to August 2012.

FEBRUARY - AUGUST 2012

The Education and Culture Committee had the following members during this period: Stewart Maxwell (Convener), Neil Findlay (Deputy Convener) Clare Adamson, Neil Bibby, Marco Biagi, Joan McAlpine, Liam McArthur, Liz Smith and Jean Urquhart. Full records of the Committee meetings, including minutes, official papers and transcripts of proceedings can be found on the Scottish Parliament

website at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s4/committees/ellc/meetings.htm>

In this period the Committee heard reports of the Review of Further Education Governance and the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland. They received a series of progress reports about Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and took evidence about the Youth Employment Strategy and the Early Years Taskforce. They returned to the issue of kinship care in private and held a series of one-off events to gather evidence on the following topics: additional support needs, attainment, children's charities and school buildings. They considered a petition on the cuts to Scottish Government funding of the Further Education Sector, one on the training of teachers and support staff in additional support for learning and one seeking parity for kinship carers with foster carers. The Committee addressed a wide range of subordinate legislation and ended the Parliamentary year with a progress meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. The Committee agreed their work programme in private on the 21 February 2012 at which they agreed to hold a series of one-off evidence sessions and to hold an event on the educational attainment of looked after children on 20 April 2012. They reviewed their work programme in private at their meeting on the 29 May and agreed to take further evidence in relation to Curriculum for Excellence. The programme was reviewed again, in private, at their meeting on the 19 June 2012.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF FURTHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE IN SCOTLAND

The Committee took evidence from the Chair of the Review of Further Education Governance in Scotland at their meeting on the 21 February 2012. A briefing paper (EC/S4/12/6/3) with an extract from the report was provided for the meeting. The full report can be accessed at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0038/00386490.pdf>

Date of Committee	Witnesses
21 February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="468 1641 1093 1707"><i>Russel Griggs, Chair of the Review of Further Education Governance in Scotland</i>

In his opening remarks to the meeting on the 21 February, Russel Griggs outlined the brief he had been given by the Cabinet Secretary for the review. This was to consider the

structure of college governance and the democratic accountability of that. He added that he viewed the 34 recommendations in the report as a starting point to develop the sector for the future. Neil Findlay opened the questions by asking if the review had begun with a predetermined view that a regional model should be introduced for the sector. Russel Griggs said that the review had considered structures from other countries and determined that a much smaller group of governing bodies was needed. In response to further questions from Neil Findlay he added that the committee would have recommended a regional structure whatever the economic situation. Liz Smith followed this with a question about how the proposed model would provide better education. Russel Griggs replied that in a regional model resources would be focused on providing the highest quality learning in one place rather than three. Joan McAlpine then asked about the duplication of provision and Jean Urquhart about the function of the strategic forum in relation to the new boards. In reply Russel Griggs said that the strategic forum was proposed, 'to improve the conversation between Government and the college sector at a strategic level' (Griggs 21.02.12, Col 758). He added that the chairs of the new governing bodies of the colleges would be part of the forum. Liam McArthur then asked specific questions about the impact of these proposals on the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). In the discussion that followed Russel Griggs said that the evidence suggested, 'that UHI is a good construct, but that it still needs more work to get it to a place where everybody is content with it' (Griggs 21.02.12, Col 760). The meeting then moved on to discuss student retention rates, the role of the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council and the cost of transitional arrangements.

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

The Committee took evidence at their meeting on the 28 February 2012 on the wider issues raised by the decision of East Renfrewshire Council to delay the introduction of CfE qualifications. They received written evidence for this meeting from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) (EC/S4/12/7/1). They returned to CfE at their following meeting on the 6 March 2012 and at their final meeting before the summer recess on the 26 June 2012. The Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association and Education Scotland (EC/S4/12/20/1) submitted written evidence to the meeting on the 26 June 2012

Date of Committee	Witnesses
28 February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janet Brown, <i>Scottish Qualifications Authority</i> • Larry Flanagan, <i>Educational Institute of Scotland</i> • Terry Lanagan, <i>Association of Directors of Education in Scotland</i> • Bill Maxwell, <i>Education Scotland</i> • John Wilson, <i>East Renfrewshire Council</i>
6 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Bill Maxwell, <i>Education Scotland</i> • Sarah Smith, <i>Scottish Government</i>
26 June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larry Flanagan, <i>Educational Institute of Scotland</i> • Ken Muir, <i>Education Scotland</i> • Alan Taylor, <i>Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association</i> • Margo Williamson, <i>Association of Directors of Education in Scotland</i>

Liz Smith opened the discussion with a question about general concerns about CfE. Larry Flanagan replied that there were concerns amongst teachers and that the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) was currently carrying out a survey of secondary members to gather information about curriculum concerns. In response to a question about the delay of the implementation of the new national qualifications in East Renfrewshire, he replied that the EIS, 'would have preferred an across-the-board delay' (Flanagan 28.02.12, Col 784).

Terry Lanagan then spoke for the Association of Directors of Education (ADES) and said that ADES had surveyed all 32 local authorities in 2011 and although there were concerns none had asked that the implementation of the new exams be delayed. Janet Brown added that there was a detailed plan for the development, consultation and implementation of the new exams. This statement was supported by Bill Maxwell, who said; 'This is a carefully paced and planned programme that has been over eight years in the implementation' (Maxwell 28.02.12, Col 788). John Wilson then spoke on behalf of East Renfrewshire Council, and explained that the decision in his local authority was made 'on behalf of our young people in East Renfrewshire, not to protect timelines, frameworks or whatever' (Wilson 28.02.12, Col 788). Neil Findlay asked him about the Council use of Intermediate exams instead of Standard Grades and if that had influenced the Council decision. John Wilson replied that the Council had not offered Standard Grades since 2005 because it felt that Intermediates offered a better 'learning gradient' (Wilson 28.02.12, Col 791) towards the Higher exams. The meeting then moved on to discuss the structure of the new qualifications, and the relationship between the new exams and the different ways in which schools were structuring secondary education. Liam McArthur asked again about East Renfrewshire and said, 'I am struggling to understand what the exceptional circumstances are in relation to East Renfrewshire' (McArthur 28.02.12, Col 803). This led to a lengthy discussion about the phased introduction of earlier changes in the examination structure and the amount of time teachers needed to prepare new examination courses. The meeting concluded with the Convener stating 'I am still not entirely clear as to why one education authority - in fact, the top performing one - feels that it is unable to move forward, when 31 others feel able to do so' (Maxwell 28.02.12, Col 813).

The Committee returned to CfE at their next meeting on the 6 March 2012. In his opening remarks to the Committee the Cabinet Secretary quoted Peter Peacock, the then Minister for Education and Young People who introduced CfE in 2004. He said that Peter Peacock described CfE as 'opening up choice and flexibility in learning for the first time' (Russell 06.03.12, Col 822). Michael Russell then went on to outline the developments in CfE since he had taken up office and to argue that schools should not be delaying the implementation of the new examination structure. The meeting discussed the audit of readiness that was being carried out by Education Scotland, and Neil Bibby asked the Cabinet Secretary about the current readiness for exams. In reply Michael Russell said that it was good and argued that the Government was offering as much support as possible. Liz Smith asked what the parent response was to one local authority being allowed to delay the implementation of the new exams. In response to this question, Michael Russell said that parents in general felt that there should be no delay and went on to argue that the implementation was different in East Renfrewshire because that local authority did not use the Standard Grade exams. The meeting closed with a question from Joan McAlpine about the support offered to schools for CfE from Education Scotland.

The Committee took further evidence on CfE at their meeting on 26 June 2012. The Convener opened this meeting by asking the panel about their responses to Education Scotland's (2012a) audit report on CfE. Alan Taylor replied that it had not listened to teacher concerns, Larry Flannagan felt that it was superficial and Margo Williamson said that local authorities felt it was just another tool 'to see whether we are on track and doing well' (Williamson 26.06.12, Col 1238). Ken Muir said that the audit was designed 'to do a stocktake at a particular point in time' (Muir 26.06.12, Col 1239). The meeting went on to discuss the difference of views between the audit report and the teacher associations. The Convener asked:

Why did local authorities - and directors of education, specifically - not ensure that the voice of the teacher was heard in their response to Education Scotland? (Maxwell 26.06.12, Col 1246).

In reply to this, Margo Williamson acknowledged that each local authority responded to the audit in different ways and with staff as available. The meeting then moved on to discuss

the introduction of the new national examinations and the different ways in which schools were offering subject choices to pupils. In reply to a question from Liz Smith, Ken Muir said that Education Scotland were 'not advocating a particular model' (Muir 26.06.12, Col 1251) for subject choice. The meeting then discussed the impact of major changes in the content of some curricular areas, which Ken Muir recognised as 'a significant change' (Muir 26.06.12, Col 1257) for some subject areas. The discussion closed with each organisation making a point about the importance of partnership working:

We need openness and more collegiate practice in schools so that we are working together to ensure that pupils get the benefits of CfE (Flanagan 26.06.12, Col 1257).

HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE IN SCOTLAND

The Committee took evidence on the Report of the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland (EC/S4/12/9/1) at their meeting on the 13 March 2012. This review was commissioned by the Scottish Government and made 33 recommendations.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
13 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="539 707 1240 804">Ferdinand von Prondzynski, <i>Robert Gordon University, Chair of the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland</i>

The meeting opened with a question from Liz Smith about how the proposed reforms would deliver, 'a better education for our universities and result in their rising even further in the international rankings?' (Smith 13.03.12, Col 858). In reply Ferdinand von Prondzynski said that the review committee recommended changes in certain areas to ensure that Scottish universities maintained public confidence and reputation. He went on to suggest that most of the recommendations were, 'standard corporate governance recommendations that have been applied - some time ago, in some cases - in the business sector' (von Prondzynski 13.03.12, Col 859). Liz Smith suggested that some of the universities felt that one of implications of the report would be 'greater political control of the sector and greater input from Ministers' (Smith 13.06.12, Col 861). Ferdinand von Prondynski replied that there was no intention of politicalisation in the report. The convener then asked about the proposed higher education forum. In reply Ferdinand von Prondynski said:

. . . the intention behind it is to ensure that there is a co-ordinated higher education strategy, to which the various parties - in particular, the higher education institutions and representatives - have agreed. It is not about determining what individual institutions will do, or about setting strategy for any university or group of universities, but about considering the future shape of the sector (von Prondynski 13.06.12, Col 862).

Liam McArthur then asked about the relationship with Report of the Review of Further Education Governance in Scotland and the possibility of mergers between institutions to bring about changes in governance. In reply Ferdinand von Prondynski noted that there was little evidence of the need for mergers in the higher education sector but that he personally felt 'that universities need to look much more closely at strategic collaboration' (von Prondynski 13.03.12, Col 865). The Committee then discussed staff representation on governing bodies and the recommendation that 40% of a governing body should be female. Considerable time was spent discussing the proposal that the chair of university governing bodies should be elected by staff and students, which Marco Biagi was concerned would mean that role of University Rector would be lost.

We suggest that, if the reform is introduced, the elected chairs be called rectors, because of the inherited tradition in Scotland. There is an understanding of the significance of that particular historical innovation. The existing rectors who exercise their right to chair governing

bodies do not do it in terms that are likely to be identical to what we have in mind, so there will have to be a change of some kind' (von Prondzynski 13.03.12, Col 879).

The meeting concluded with a discussion of the range of people who would be available to chair university governing bodies and the legislation which would be required for the proposed changes to university governance.

KINSHIP CARE

The Committee considered the matter of kinship care in private at their meeting on the 20 March 2012. They agreed to take further oral evidence from the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The Committee took evidence on the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy at their meeting on 20 March 2012. The supporting papers for this session (EC/S4/12/10/1) included submissions from each of the organisations represented. The Committee returned to the issue at their next meeting on the 17 April 2012. The papers for this meeting included a Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) briefing on Youth unemployment: key facts (EC/S4/12/11/1) and two other briefings prepared by SPICe on youth unemployment policy and unemployment (EC/S4/12/11/2 &3).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
20 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Boyd, <i>STUC</i> • Mary Goodman, <i>Federation of Small Businesses</i> • Jacqui Hepburn, <i>Alliance of Sector Skills Councils</i> • Katie Hutton and Danny Logue, <i>Skills Development Scotland</i>
17 April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angela Constance, Minister for Youth Employment, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Hugh McAloon, <i>Scottish Government</i>

The Convener opened the meeting by outlining the focus of the meeting on the commitment of the Scottish Government to provide 25,000 modern apprenticeships in each year of the current parliamentary session. The questions to the panel opened with a general one from Joan McAlpine about the benefits of modern apprenticeships for young people. Katie Hutton replied that studies had shown that there were better outcomes for young people who were employed during their training. This was supported by Stephen Boyd, who added that it was important that modern apprenticeships were retained across a range of industries. The meeting then moved on to discuss the role of colleges in relation to modern apprenticeships. Clare Adamson asked specifically about the impact of the proposed regionalisation of the current college system. Jacqui Hepburn replied that one of the outcomes of the proposals would be the opportunity to develop 'hubs in specialist areas' (Hepburn 20.03.12, Col 899). In response to a question from Jean Urquhart, each organisation then explained their role, if any, in delivering the 25,000 modern apprenticeships. Liz Smith followed this with a question about the perceived problem with the level of skills base of the young people taking up apprenticeships. This led to a discussion with Mary Goodman about the involvement of small businesses in schools. Jacqui Hepburn added to that discussion information from the Scottish employer skills survey which she said 'clearly demonstrates that there is a mismatch between what employers want and what the system provides' (Hepburn 20.03.12, Col 907). Neil Logue then asked for information about the future of the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, which the Scottish Government had stopped funding. Jacqui Hepburn replied that, as a consequence of that, the Scottish team which supported the alliance would stop work at the end of March 2012. There had also been changes in funding at UK level which meant that

'We will have a team of three and a half, who will be based in London, to cover four nations' (Hepburn 20.03.12, Col 908). She concluded that it would be up to the 21 individual sector skills councils to provide information in Scotland. The meeting then moved on to discuss the careers advisory service and the support it gave to young people between the ages of 16 and 19 years, and the issue of youth unemployment.

The Minister for Youth Employment, Angela Constance, attended the Committee meeting on the 17 April 2012. The Convener welcomed her to the post and invited her to make an opening statement. In her first remarks to the Committee the Minister noted that she was 'the first-ever dedicated minister for youth employment anywhere in these isles' (Constance 17.04.12, Col 937). She then outlined the government draft strategy on youth employment and the range of proposed initiatives. The Convener opened the questions by asking what additional value a Minister for Youth Employment provided in addition to the support being offered by other Ministers. Angela Constance replied that she brought a renewed focus to existing work and provided a direct link between education and finance. The meeting then moved on to consider in detail the funding of Government policy and Scotland's colleges, collaborative work with partner organisations and a range of employers. Liam McArthur asked about the target of 25,000 modern apprenticeships. In her reply, the Minister recognised this as ambitious but said that:

The post-16 reforms are about ensuring that the provision of modern apprenticeships and college places is inherently connected to the world of work and to where the jobs are today and will be tomorrow' (Constance 17.04.12, Col 948).

She added that the target had been set in relation to what had previously been delivered and that 21,000 modern apprenticeships were created in 2010 – 2011. This led Marco Biagi to ask about the lack of follow-up information about destinations for young people after apprenticeships. In her reply the Minister talked about the completion rate of 71% for the programme and said that the Government was 'in the early stages of looking at what opportunities there are for following up modern apprentices' (Constance 17.04.12, Col 952). Clare Adamson then asked about the Government commitment 'To give young people who were not in education, a modern apprenticeship or employment an opportunity for training or learning' (Adamson, 17.04.12, Col 954). Angela Constance said that the opportunities varied from activity agreements with colleges, modern apprenticeships and activities offered through social enterprises and community jobs Scotland. The meeting ended with a discussion about the conditions attached to the funding arrangements for modern apprenticeships.

EARLY YEARS

The Committee heard evidence about the work of the Early Years Taskforce at their meeting on the 1 May 2012. Supporting papers for the meeting included the Scottish Government's Early Years Taskforce Vision and Priorities (EC/S4/12/13/1), written evidence received from Inspiring Scotland and the Scottish Government (EC/S4/12/13/2) and a SPICE paper on Early Years (EC/S4/12/13/3).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
1 May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill Alexander and Sally Ann Kelly, <i>Early Years Taskforce</i> • Helen Chambers, <i>Inspiring Scotland</i>

The meeting began with a question from Liam McArthur about which type of interventions delivered the best returns for the task force. Bill Alexander replied that the task force approach was structured around the model introduced through Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). He went on to describe a range of programmes which had been introduced in Scotland. Further questions from Liam McArthur focused on the balance between local

decision-making and the need to take forward a core programme for early years across the country. In reply, Bill Alexander described the use of a health plan indicator for children from the age of six months, which health visitors used to plan appropriate support for each child. The meeting then moved on to discuss the particular needs of looked-after children and the balance between preventative measures and crisis interventions. Marco Biagi asked about information-sharing between organisations working as part of the Early Years Taskforce. This was recognised by all organisations as an issue about lack of compatibility between the different software used to record information. The Convener then moved the discussion onto the involvement of the private sector and asked Helen Chambers about development of private funding for early years. In reply she said that it was a difficult time to raise funds from businesses and wealthy individuals. The meeting concluded with a discussion about the support offered to families who were difficult to reach.

CHILDREN’S HEARINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2011 SECONDARY LEGISLATION PROGRAMME

The committee heard evidence from the Minister for Children and Young People about this legislation at their meeting on the 8 May 2012, which was supported by a letter from the Minister (EC/S4/12/14/1).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
8 May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Tom McNamara and Kit Wyeth, <i>Scottish Government</i>

The meeting began with a statement from the Minister, in which she outlined the reasons for the delay in the full implementation of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act to the second quarter of 2013. The reasons were that key partners did not feel ‘that the full reform could be delivered by this September’ (Campbell 08.05.12, Col 1032). This meant that there would also be a delay to the secondary legislation, which she now intended to introduce later in 2012. The Convener thanked the Minister for her remarks but said that the changes would have direct impact on the work of the Committee into 2013. Liz Smith followed this with a question about the cause of the delay. Aileen Campbell replied that there were three reasons for the delay: firstly, the time taken to reach agreement with local authorities and to ensure that all local teams were in place; secondly, the issues with the size of the section 104 order under the 1998 Scotland Act; and thirdly, the sheriff court rule reforms. Neil Bibby asked about the roles of the national convener and national chairman of Children’s Hearings Scotland. In her reply the Minister explained that the Government had seconded Kit Wyeth to Children’s Hearings Scotland to make sure that ‘momentum was not lost’ (Campbell 08.05.12, Col 1036) during the period of the suspension of the national convener. The committee then discussed the technical issues which had caused the delay and the role of the area support teams. The meeting concluded with a description from Kit Wyeth of the new area support teams:

The support teams will be populated largely with volunteers. The present system’s children’s panel advisory committee is a mixture of volunteers and local authority appointees, who oversee and run the children’s hearing system at a local level. To a large extent, the area support teams will mirror that function – they will be made up largely of volunteers, but they will also include local authority appointees . . . the main work of the panel will be done by volunteers (Wyeth 08.05.12, Col 1040).

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

The Committee heard evidence on Additional Support for Learning at their meeting on the 15 May 2012. This followed the publication by the Scottish Government of the first

annual progress report on the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended in 2009. The Committee were provided with a SPICe briefing paper (EC/S4/12/15/1) for this meeting.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
15 May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Butcher, Glasgow City Council, <i>ADES</i> • Alan Jones, <i>Scottish Division of Educational Psychologists</i> • Linda Whitmore, <i>ENABLE Scotland</i> • Kristina Woolnough, <i>National Parent Forum Scotland</i>

Marco Biagi opened the questions to the panel by asking if the system was working. John Butcher replied that he thought the system was working ‘for the vast majority of children in Scotland’ (Butcher 15.05.12, Col 1059). Marco Biagi then asked about the relationship between NHS Scotland and the legislation. Alan Jones replied ‘the vehicle we have in Scotland – the GIRFEC policy framework – is fantastic. It includes health, which you mentioned, along with education and social work’ (Jones 15.05.12, Col 1062). John Butcher added to this that working with NHS Scotland was not always easy because of the different boundaries between NHS boards and local authorities. The meeting then moved on to discuss the relationship between parents and professionals. Kristina Woolnough commented that it was important to ensure that individual relationships were built at school level. Neil Findlay followed this with a question about the way in which schools communicated with parents, in particular through the use of individual education plans. Alan Jones replied ‘that we must get it right in meetings . . . parents, pupils and young people should feel listened to and empowered’ (Jones 15.05.12, Col 1066). The meeting then moved on to discuss the support needs of looked-after children. John Butcher pointed out that not all looked-after children had additional support needs and suggested that CfE offered a range of opportunities to support those children. The Convener then asked about the assumption, ‘that since November 2010, all children who are identified as looked after will have additional support for learning needs unless otherwise identified’ (Maxwell 15.05.12, Col 1068). The meeting spent some time debating the fact that only 40% of looked-after children were recorded as having additional support needs and agreed that there was a discrepancy in the reporting between schools and the Scottish Children’s Reporter administration. Clare Adamson then asked about the integration of the Act into early years. In reply the witnesses outlined different provision and understanding across the country. This led to a discussion about the variation in the use of co-ordinated support plans between local authorities, and an agreement that there were issues with the way in which the data about the implementation of the Act had been collected. John Butcher noted:

If we introduce new children’s legislation in 2014, as is planned, we need to take some of the anomalies out of the ASL Act and take the best out of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and get to a solution in which we have a single assessment and a single plan for a child (Butcher 15.05.12, Col 1077).

At the end of the meeting the Convener summed up the issues which he felt the Committee should discuss with the Cabinet Secretary, ‘the need for clearer guidelines, which came up strongly, as well as training and variation across the country’ (Maxwell 15.05.12, Col 1093).

ATTAINMENT

The Committee took evidence on attainment at their meeting on the 22 May 2012. The supporting papers for this meeting included a paper from ADES (EC/S4/12/16/1) and a SPICe briefing paper on Attainment (EC/S4/12/16/2) written for the meeting. The Committee considered their report on the educational attainment of looked after children in private at the close of the evidence session. They considered a revised draft in private at their next

meeting on the 29 May 2012 and following various changes, the report was agreed for publication.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
22 May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moira Finlayson, <i>University of Glasgow</i> • Craig Munro, <i>Association of Directors of Education in Scotland</i> • Brian McAlinden, <i>Scottish Government</i>

In his introduction to the meeting on the 22 May 2012 the Convener noted that this one-off evidence session followed the publication of the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy Report (Scottish Government 2012) and ‘the recently published Scottish Government guidance on attainment’ (Maxwell 22.05.12, Col 1093). Neil Findlay opened the questions by asking about the impact of catchment areas on attainment. In reply Brian McAlinden said that the motivation of teachers who worked with children in areas of deprivation and the leadership of the headteacher could counteract some of the effects of deprivation. Neil Findlay followed this with a question about the resourcing of schools, to which Brian McAlinden replied that the challenge was not to move good leaders around but to make all headteachers excellent leaders. This was supported by Craig Munro who said for ADES ‘We do not believe that raising attainment is necessarily resource driven, but is about the quality of the teacher in the classroom’ (Munro 22.05.12, Col 1097). The meeting followed this with a discussion about attainment in Scotland and other countries, in particular with Finland. The Convener then moved the discussion onto challenges in maintaining progression at key points in secondary schools. This led to consideration of numeracy across the curriculum and the lack of confidence of some non-mathematics teachers with numeracy. Liz Smith then asked about the use of monetary awards as incentives for excellence in teaching and added ‘that it is sometimes the system rather than the people that is preventing the achievement of excellence’ (Smith 22.05.12, Col1107). Jean Urquhart asked if inspirational teaching could be taught to aspiring teachers. Brian McAlinden replied that he believed that was possible but not easy. This led to a discussion of the way in which teachers were employed in Scotland. Members then debated with the panel the list of attributes compiled by ADES (EC/S4/12/16/1) that they suggested could raise attainment.

CHILDREN’S CHARITIES

The Committee held a one-off evidence session at their meeting on the 12 June 2012, which focused on the delivery of children’s services by the voluntary sector. This was held as a round table event with representatives from a range of children’s charities. A SPICe Briefing paper (EC/S4/12/18/1) was provided for the meeting and the Committee received written submissions (EC/S4/12/18/2) from five of the organisations represented at the meeting and from Quarriers, who did not attend.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
12 June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham Bell, <i>Kibble Education and Care Centre</i> • Ruth Boddie, <i>Scottish Pre-School Play Association</i> • Sara Lacey, <i>Care Visions</i> • Annie Gunner Logan, <i>Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland</i> • Sara Lurie, <i>The Fostering Network Scotland</i> • Tom McGhee, <i>Scottish Children’s Services Coalition</i> • Jim Sweeney, <i>YouthLink Scotland</i> • Alison Todd, <i>Parenting Across Scotland</i>

Liam McArthur opened the meeting by saying that the Committee would like to understand the decision-making process about whether a service should be provided in house, by a local authority, or delivered by the voluntary or independent sector. This led to a

complex discussion about the different commissioning models experienced by the organisations represented on the panel. Jim Sweeney illustrated the issues through an example from youth work and said that although local authorities should know about the provision in their area, 'No basic community mapping has been done on the groups and the opportunities that are out there in the voluntary and independent sector' (Sweeney 12.06.12, Col 1172). Liam McArthur then asked about the impact of local authority budget cuts on the sector, to which Alison Todd replied:

As a result of the cuts, many third sector services have been cut and taken in-house. Those services may have been well-evidenced and they may have had good outcomes, but they have been taken back in-house as a result of the cuts (Todd 12.06.12, Col 1174).

The meeting then discussed a number of issues connected to the increase in competitive tendering for the provision of childcare services, which included the lack of continuity of services for children and their families, the challenge some voluntary organisations faced in finding the time and expertise to complete the documentation, and the fact that the local authorities themselves did not include their in-house services in the process. Tom McGhee summed it up in this way:

The basic difference is that we are outsiders and independents. We are outside the loop. We do not have the money - the money is not given to us to decide what to do with it. It is given to the local authorities (McGhee 12.06.12, Col 1176).

This led Neil Bibby to ask about ways in which the planning process could be improved. In reply, Annie Gunner Logan described examples of innovative public social partnerships in Dundee, 'which involve a voluntary organisation working with a local authority to design a service response . . . then asking who will respond to it through a tender' (Gunner Logan 12.06.12, Col 1182). This led to a discussion about the inconsistencies in the evaluation of services. The Deputy Convener closed the meeting by asking each participant to make one key point that they wanted the Committee to put to the Cabinet Secretary. The points raised were: the need to celebrate what works, to recognise the role of the voluntary sector in service provision for children, the need for transparency in decision making, the need for collaborative partnerships and the need to work together.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The Committee held an evidence session on school buildings at their meeting on 19 June 2012. The supporting papers provided for this meeting were a SPICe briefing paper on school buildings (EC/S4/12/19/1) and written evidence from the Scottish Futures Trust (EC/S4/12/19/2).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
19 June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Fyffe, <i>Association of Directors of Education in Scotland</i> • Barry White, <i>Scottish Futures Trust</i>

The meeting opened with a question from Liam McArthur about the 500 schools which were assessed in 2011 as being in a poor or bad condition. In reply, both witnesses said that there were issues with the identification of school buildings in this way and how the conditions were averaged out. As John Fyffe described, 'One aspect of the buildings might be in really poor condition, but the other aspects might be in good condition' (Fyffe 19.06.12, Col 1204). Barry White went on to list the way in which the school refurbishment programme had identified schools for repair with local authorities. Hanzala Malik then asked about the design of the new build schools in Glasgow in particular the lack of storage space in them. Barry White replied that the majority of the Glasgow schools had been designed in 2000 and that 'people have taken lessons from that' (White 19.06.12, Col 1208). The meeting then

discussed the rationalisation of school buildings, co-location and shared services. Neil Bibby asked about the differences between local authorities in the provision of new or up-graded school buildings. In reply Barry White acknowledged:

On regional variations there is quite a mixed picture. A number of local authorities - including South Lanarkshire, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire councils - have upgraded all their secondary schools, but a large number have not, so there are huge regional variations in the primary and secondary estate (White 19.06.12, Col 1215).

The Committee then turned to the timescale for phase 3 of the Scotland's Schools for the Future programme. John Fyffe said that 'almost all councils are still putting proposals together' (Fyffe 19.06.12, Col 1220). Barry White added that the bids were due to be placed in July, but that it would take two or three months to decide which schools would be included. Marco Biagi asked about the changes between the phases of the programme, to which Barry White replied:

. . . in the first phase, the secondary schools were chosen by the Scottish Government, whereas in this round all projects are being nominated by local authorities. In the first phase, people were asked to nominate two primary schools each. The big shift this time is that it is being left much more to the local authorities to come up with proposals (White 19.06.12, Col 1221).

John Fyffe added to this that, in section 20 of the bid document, information was asked for about issues relating to accommodation pressures. He said that this section was key for some local authorities with a growing population. The meeting concluded with a discussion about space metrics and the provision of space per pupil in the design of new school buildings.

PROGRESS REPORT

The Convener described this session at the final meeting of the Committee before the summer recess as an opportunity for the community to discuss with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning the progress the Scottish Government had made on education issues during the first year of this Parliament.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
26 June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Mike Foulis, Andrew Scott and Sarah Smith, <i>Scottish Government</i>

In his opening remarks to the Committee, Michael Russell outlined the progress the Government had made in relation to early years, legislation on GIRFEC, pupil performance in examinations, CfE and teacher to pupil ratios. He also noted the appointment of Angela Constance as Minister for Youth Employment. The Convener opened the questions by asking about achievement of the CfE audit undertaken by Education Scotland. In reply, Michael Russell said 'The audit tells me that Scotland is prepared for Curriculum for Excellence' (Russell 26.06.12, Col 1261). He went on to comment on the disengagement of the Scottish Secondary Teacher's Association with the process and to contrast that with the way in which the Educational Institute of Scotland had worked with the Government. The Committee pursued the issue of the audit, and the range of evidence they had heard about the ways in which the audit had been carried out. Liz Smith then asked about the timescales for the introduction of exemplars for exams. Michael Russell acknowledged that this was one of the areas that had changed following discussions with the Educational Institute of Scotland. The Convener then moved the focus of the meeting to attainment and asked the Cabinet Secretary about the quality indicator summary published by Education Scotland

(2012b). In reply Michael Russell talked about the follow up system that existed in Scotland to support schools to raise attainment. The Convener followed this up with a related question about the quality of teachers and the suggestion that all teachers should have masters degrees. Michael Russell replied;

I accept that entirely, which is why we have had the Donaldson review; the McCormack review also partly relates to those issues. I have emphasised that we are moving towards masters-level education for teachers, and we will get there; that is part of the Donaldson review (Russell 26.06.12, Col 1271).

Jean Urquhart then asked about the attainment levels of looked-after children, which the Cabinet Secretary acknowledged was 'the difficult and intractable end of a difficult and intractable problem' (Russell 26.06.12, Col 1272). Neil Findlay followed this with a question about resources for education, and Michael Russell said that he would continue to argue for money for education. The meeting then turned to early years provision, the cost of childcare and the auditing of additional support for learning. Liam McArthur asked the Cabinet Secretary to respond to the issue raised by Enable Scotland of the level of awareness amongst teachers of learning disabilities. In reply Michael Russell described the work that he had done with Jackie Steward on dyslexia and agreed to look into the issue. The meeting then discussed the procurement of services from voluntary and independent organisations and the proposed sustainable procurement bill. Neil Findlay asked about youth unemployment and the cuts to college budgets. Michael Russell replied that the college reform process would continue and that 'It will transform the college sector and increase opportunities for young people' (Russell 26.06.12, Col 1291).

PETITIONS

The Committee considered Petition PE 1414 (EC/S4/12/6/5) at their meeting on the 21 February 2012. This was submitted by Dougie Deans on behalf of the Unison further education sector. The petition called on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to reconsider its proposed cuts to the Further Education Sector of £74 million over the next four academic sessions 2011/2012, 2012/2013, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015. The Committee recognised that this petition had been overtaken by events, in particular the agreement of the budget. They agreed to close the petition (by division: For 7, Against 2, Abstentions 0) and notify the petitioner of their decision.

Petition PE1409 (EC/S4/12/ 11/4) was considered by the Committee at their meeting on the 17 April 2012. This petition was made by Linda Whitmore, on behalf of ENABLE Scotland. It called on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that all teachers and support staff were fully trained to provided additional support for children and young people with learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders. The Committee agreed to consider the issues raised in the petition as part of its one-off evidence session on Additional Support for Learning. They also agreed to write to the General Teaching Council for Scotland, the Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland and to highlight the petition to the Scottish Government's National Partnership Group.

The Committee considered a third petition PE 1420 at their committee meeting on the 8 May 2012. This petition was submitted by Theresa McNally on behalf of the Clacks Kinship Carers and asked for the value of kinship carers to be recognised and for them to be given parity with foster carers across Scotland. The Committee agreed to consider the issues raised in the petition as part of an evidence session on kinship carers and to invite further written evidence from the petitioner.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

The Committee took evidence, debated and approved the following subordinate legislation related to education during this period:

- General Teaching Council for Scotland (Legal Assessor) Rules 2012 (SSI 2012/86)

The Committee considered and made no recommendations in relation to the following negative instruments during this period:

- The Repayment of Student Loans (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2012 (SSI 2012/22)
- The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (Safeguarders Panel) Regulations 2012 (SSI 2012/54)
- Teachers' Superannuation (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2012 (SSI 2012/70)
- Education Fees, Awards and Student Support (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (SSI 2012/72)
- Education (Provision of Information as to Schools) (Scotland) Revocation of Regulations 2012 (SSI/2012/129)
- Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (SSI/2012/130)

The Committee took evidence on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 Amendment (No. 2) Order 2012 [draft] at their meeting on the 7 February 2012 (EC/S4/12/5/3). The Education and Culture Committee was designated as the lead Committee for this instrument, which was introduced to ensure that the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) was no longer within the remit of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
7 February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, <i>Scottish Government</i> • John Gunstone and Helen Reid, <i>Scottish Government</i>

The Minister presented the draft amendment as, 'essentially a tidying-up exercise' (Allan 7.02.12, Col 718) following the order establishing the GTCS as an independent professional body from the 2 April 2012. Due to this change in status the Government considered it inappropriate for the Council to remain within the jurisdiction of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Alasdair Allan assured the Committee, that should any member of the public wish to pursue a complaint about teacher conduct, this could still go to the Ombudsman through a local authority, as the teacher's employer. Liz Smith asked about the situation of complaints against staff at independent schools. The Minister replied that the independent sector was not currently covered by the Ombudsman, but agreed to confirm that in writing to the Convener by the next day. The motion was then agreed to.

The Committee took evidence on the Public Services Reform (Recovery of Expenses in respect of Inspection of Independent Further Education Colleges and English Language Schools) (Scotland) Order 2012 [draft] at their meeting on the 6 March 2012.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
6 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Ken Muir, <i>Education Scotland</i> • John St Clair, <i>Scottish Government Legal Directorate</i>

The Cabinet Secretary explained the background to this draft order in his opening remarks. The order related to UK legislation announced in March 2011 that introduced changes to the UK Border Agency's licensing arrangements for non-European Economic Area students. As part of that announcement, the UK Border Agency proposed that Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) who are now part of Education Scotland, would inspect privately funded colleges and English language schools in Scotland. Mike Russell pointed out that the decision of the UK Border Agency had been made without any consultation with the Scottish Government or the Inspectorate. The order was to enable inspectors to carry out such inspections and to charge for their services. The Committee discussed the implications of the change for Education Scotland and agreed the motion.

The Committee took evidence on the Fundable Bodies (Scotland) Order 2012 [draft] at their meeting on the 26 June 2012.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
26 June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Ailsa Heine and George Reid, <i>Scottish Government</i>

Michael Russell explained to the Committee that the draft order was required to be moved by the Government and debated by the Committee. The draft order included changes to the list of fundable bodies, which are set out in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005, and are the bodies that the Scottish Funding Council is allowed to fund. The Committee had no comments and the draft order was passed.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a draft of their annual report for the parliamentary year 9 May 2011 - 8 May 2012 at their meeting on 8 May 2012. They agreed minor changes and the report was put forward for publication.

REFERENCES

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