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## **EDUCATION IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

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### **PREAMBLE**

This paper follows on from the previous bulletin (Redford 2018), which covered the education remit of the Parliament's Education and Skills Committee between February to July 2018. The following bulletin covers the Education remit of the Education and Skills Committee from August 2018 to January 2019.

### **AUGUST 2018 TO JANUARY 2019**

The Education and Skills Committee had the following members during this period:

James Dornan (Convener to 18.09.18)), Clare Adamson (Convener from 19.09.18), Johann Lamont (Deputy Convener), George Adam (to 18.09.18), Alasdair Adam (from 19.09.18), Mary Fee, Jenny Gilruth (from 18.09.18), Ross Greer, Richard Lochhead (to 18.09.18), Gordon MacDonald, Rona Mackay (from 18.09.18), Gillian Martin (to 18.09.18), Oliver Mundell, Tavish Scott and Liz Smith. 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.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/99746.aspx> [accessed 27.05.19]

The committee began this period of work by taking evidence about the postponement of the Education Reform bill. They heard evidence about the 2018 Exam diet, reflected on responses to their report on the Achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty. They concluded their inquiry into Young People's Pathways and began work on an inquiry into Music Tuition in Schools. They heard evidence from Government officials in relation to school support staff data and began an inquiry into National Standardised Assessments. During their meetings they also heard evidence from the Cabinet Secretary about the Draft Budget for 2019 – 2020, appointed Jenny Gilruth as their EU reporter and agreed to return to a petition about music tuition in schools. The committee heard evidence and approved subordinate and negative orders during this period. They reviewed their work programme, in private, at their meetings on the 19 and 26 September and 3 October 2018 when they agreed to undertake work on music tuition in schools, Scottish National Standardised Assessments, STEM subjects and the senior phase of the curriculum. They reviewed their work programme, in private, at their meeting on 19 December 2018 and agreed to future work on the 2019-20 budget and additional support needs.

### **EDUCATION REFORMS**

The committee took evidence from two panels of witnesses at their meeting on 5 September 2018. The papers for this meeting included a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/21/1) and written submissions from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and Education Scotland (ES/S5/18/2/2). This meeting followed an agreement signed on the 28 June 2019 between the Scottish Government (Scottish Government, 2018) and COSLA to postpone the education reform bill.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
5 September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen McCabe and Jane O'Donnell, <i>COSLA</i></li> <li>• Larry Flanagan, <i>EIS</i></li> <li>• Janie McManus, <i>Education Scotland</i></li> </ul>
5 September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> <li>• Clare Hicks and Andrew Bruce, Learning Directorate, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The meeting on the 5 September 2018 began with a statement from each of the witnesses about the decision of the Government to postpone the proposed Education Reform bill. Stephen McCabe said that COSLA was concerned that the legislation still remained 'on the table' (McCabe, 05.09.18, Col 3). Larry Flanagan, echoed that concern and reminded the committee that the international council of advisors to the Government had recommended, 'Cultural rather than structural change,' (Flanagan, 05.09.18, Col 3). For Education Scotland, Janie McManus welcomed the focus on collaboration, 'as a model to support sharing and working together' (McManus, 05.09.19, Col 4). The meeting then spent some time considering how progress towards empowerment would be measured. Ross Greer asked about the headteacher's charter and both Larry Flanagan and Stephen McCabe said that there needed to be a wider focus on leadership teams rather than the headteacher. Liz Smith returned to progress and asked what would be measured. In reply Janie McManus said that three thematic inspections would be carried out in 2019 – 2020 that focused on the principles in the joint agreement. The inspection reports would then be considered by the steering group responsible for agreement. Johann Lamont asked about the agreement and Jane O'Donnell replied that, 'COSLA leaders were clear that there had to continue to be local democratic accountability for education, ' and continued, 'It is a sign of where we have reached in the partnership approach that now exists that what we have now is much reflective of a whole-system approach (O'Donnell, 05.09.18, Col 24). The evidence session ended with a discussion about the role of the regional collaboratives.

The second panel on 5 September 2018 began with a statement from John Swinney to the committee where he said that the Government had published the education reform bill, 'So stakeholders can see our clear policy intention and detailed proposals,' (Swinney, 05.09.19, Col 31). Tavish Scott asked if progress would be measured on the principles agreed with COSLA or on practical measures that, 'Teachers and parents can understand?' (Scott, 05.09.19, Col 32). In reply the Cabinet Secretary said that it would cover both aspects and would depend on the partnership work that was taking it forward. In response to further questions about measurement of outcomes John Swinney said:

At the end of the year, after dialogue and consultation with COSLA, I will set out my rationale for the judgment about how much progress has been made. I will not do it without that dialogue. I will also clearly communicate to Parliament my decisions and consideration (Swinney, 05.09.19, Col37).

## 2018 EXAM DIET – CURRICULUM AND ATTAINMENT TRENDS

The committee took evidence about the 2018 Exam Diet at their meeting on 19 September 2018. The meeting was supported by a SPICE briefing paper (ES/S5/18/22/1), and written submissions (ES/S5/18/22/2) from each of the witnesses.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
19 September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Alan Britton, <i>University of Glasgow</i></li> <li>• Professor Jim Scott, <i>University of Dundee</i></li> <li>• Dr Marina Shapira, <i>University of Stirling</i></li> <li>• Dr Janet Brown and Alistair Wylie, <i>Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)</i></li> </ul>

The meeting on the 19 September began with introductory statements from each of the witnesses about the content of their written submissions to the committee. Johann Lamont opened the questions by asking about the lack of national certification in S4. Jim Scott replied that in an analysis of the school leaver data from 2009- 210 onwards there was a rise in the number of children leaving school with no qualifications, and added that from his analysis of pupil outcomes:

The 33.8 per cent drop in overall attainment is 17 per cent structural; it is due to curricular narrowing. The rest of it is partially due to a drop in the roll, and it is partially due to how a school has structured its curriculum and the aspirations of headteachers, teachers and parents in that school (Scott, 19.09.18, Col 17).

The meeting then discussed the curriculum choices available to pupils and way that schools timetabled the curriculum. This led to a discussion between Jenny Gilruth and Jim Scott about their experiences in school during the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence. The committee asked a series of questions about the curriculum advice issued to schools before turning to the pupil experience of assessment. Janet Brown talked about work the SQA was undertaking with Young Scot to explore the views of young people about assessment and what changes they would like to see. The meeting concluded with a further discussion about subject choice and the narrowing of the curriculum.

### **INQUIRY INTO YOUNG PEOPLE'S PATHWAYS**

The committee continued their work on this inquiry at their meeting on the 26 September 2018. The papers for the meeting included a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/23/2) and written submissions from both organisations (ES/S5/18/23/43). They took evidence from the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, and his officials at their meeting on 3 October 2018. This meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing (ES/S5/18/24/1) and a letter from the Minister (ES/S5/18/24/2). The committee considered a draft report, in private, at their meeting on 24 October 2018.

<b>Date of Committee</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
26 September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Russell and Sharon Kelly, <i>Skills Development Scotland</i></li> <li>• Alan Armstrong and Joan Mackay, <i>Education Scotland</i></li> </ul>
3 October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> <li>• Hugh McAloon, Jonathan Gray and Murray McVicar, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The witness session on the 26 September 2018 began with a question from Rona Mackay about when vocational pathway information would be published as part of school performance indicators. In reply Joan Mackay said that currently that information came from different sources and that adding it to school data was being tested. The meeting then considered the targets set for foundation apprenticeships before discussing the way in which Skills Development Scotland offered support to young people in schools. Tavish Scott asked about work experience for pupils in S1 to S3. In response Joan Mackay talked about the need for connections with local employers and supporting pupil understanding of the world of work. Liz Smith followed this with a question about career information in schools. Alan Armstrong replied, that 'The career education standard was well understood by senior staff but not in classrooms' (Armstrong, 26.09.18, Col 16). Liz Smith asserted, 'That the situation is a mess in terms of information going out to youngsters' (Smith, 26.09.19, Col 17). Alan Armstrong disagreed and said that there had been some very positive reviews of careers education and guidance, but that it varied across the country. The meeting then discussed gender segregation in career education and the inclusion and support available to young people within the pathway system.

Gordon MacDonald opened the questions in the second session of evidence by asking the Minister if he was happy with the pace of change. In reply Jamie Hepburn said that he was happy with the achievement of the headline target to reduce youth unemployment, the establishment of the 21 regional groups and increase in the number of young people gaining vocational qualifications. in response to a

question from Oliver Mundell about support in rural areas he talked about the supplement introduced to support companies providing modern apprenticeships in postcode areas defined as rural. Tavish Scott then asked about early work experience opportunities for young people who leave school at the end of S4. Jamie Hepburn agreed that it was an issue that needed addressed. Mary Fee asked how the target of 5,000 foundation apprenticeships was agreed. In reply the Minister said, it was a target that they were working towards:

Essentially, we are designing a new model of delivery of work-based learning in the school environment in a way that schools are not used to. Frankly, Skills Development Scotland is also not that used to delivering that type of activity with schools, so you have two different cultures trying to learn from one another (Hepburn, 03.10.18, Col 11).

Ross Greer asked about the role of guidance teachers in developing the young workforce. In reply Jamie Hepburn noted that guidance teachers were part of the developing young workforce agenda and key part of the support system for young people. This led to questions from Johann Lamont about the structure of face to face careers advice offered by Skills Development Scotland in schools. Jenny Gilruth asked if the Government would issue guidance about gender balance in schools, to which the minister replied that it would not be practical to do so. The session concluded with a discussion about the number of funding streams for developing the young workforce and the availability of data about positive destinations.

#### **INQUIRY INTO ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN EXPERIENCING POVERTY REPORT**

The committee noted the responses (ES/S5/18/23/4) to their inquiry report at their meeting on 26 September 2018, and agreed to return to the subject when further information was available. The committee considered a further response from COSLA, in private, at their meeting on 23 January 2019.

#### **MUSIC TUITION IN SCHOOLS INQUIRY**

The committee heard evidence from young people about music tuition in schools at their meeting on 7 November 2018. The papers to support the discussion included a submissions pack (ES/S5/18/26/3) and a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/26/4). The committee heard further evidence at their meeting on 14 November 2018. The papers for this meeting were a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/27/1), a submissions pack (ES/S5/18/27/2) and summary tables providing information about the fees charged by local authorities for music tuition or instrument hire (ES/S5/18/27/3). They held an evidence session with local authority representatives at their meeting on 21 November. The meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing pack (ES/S5/18/28/1), submissions (ES/S5/18/28/2) and notes of discussions with music tuition focus groups and visits (ES/S5/18/28/3). The committee heard from two final panels at their meeting on 5 December 2018. The papers for this meeting included a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/30/1) and a series of written submissions from COSLA, Midlothian Council, the Scottish Government and the Social Education Association of Scotland (ES/S5/18/30/2). The committee considered a draft report of inquiry at their meeting on the 19 December and returned to a further draft at their meeting on the 9 January 2019.

<b>Date of Committee</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
7 November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catherine Mackie, <i>Scottish Youth Parliament</i></li> <li>• Alice Ferguson, <i>Scottish Youth Parliament</i></li> </ul>
14 November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kenny Christie, <i>Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland</i></li> <li>• Andrew Dickie, <i>Scottish Association for Music Education</i></li> <li>• Kirk Richardson, <i>EIS</i></li> <li>• Professor Jeffrey Sharkey, Principal, <i>Royal Conservatoire of Scotland</i></li> <li>• John Wallace, <i>Music Education Partnership Group</i></li> </ul>

21 November 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Chris Cunningham, <i>Glasgow City Council</i></li> <li>• Councillor David Dodds, <i>West Lothian Council</i></li> <li>• Councillor Willie Wilson, <i>Perth and Kinross Council</i></li> </ul>
5 December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Stephen McCabe, Eddie Follan, and Lauren Bruce, <i>COSLA</i></li> </ul>
5 December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The meeting began with a statement from Alice Ferguson about the campaign she started in 2017 after the free music tuition service in West Lothian was threatened by budget cuts. Alice commented on the support she received from fellow pupils for the campaign and her own experience of music tuition:

I play the trumpet and I have done my grade 8 exams, but I have also made new friends through music and through the extracurricular activities that it provides. I have become more resilient, confident and open minded in everything that I do. From a mental health point of view, I have benefited from the creativity, and feeling that I am part of a community—for example, part of a band—is really good for my mental health (Ferguson, 07.11.18, Col 7).

Rona Mackay asked about the impact of the introduction of charges for music tuition and Alice Ferguson replied that a lot of her friends have dropped out of music because they cannot afford it. Catherine Mackie then commented about her experience at Glasgow Caledonian University where there is a free music society. Both witnesses were asked about their personal experiences of music tuition before the meeting discussed the costs of tuition in West Lothian and Clackmannanshire.

The panel on the 14 November 2018 began with statements from the witnesses about the importance of music tuition within Scotland, and the lack of equity in provision between the 32 local authorities. The meeting then discussed the charges made for music tuition that was part of preparation for SQA exams before considering the number of children and young people taking part in instrumental music tuition. Rona Mackay asked how concessions were offered for tuition fees. In reply Kenny Christie talked about the different ways that authorities operated concessions and the wider difficulties many families had in accessing tuition. John Wallace talked about changes to the uptake of tuition following the introduction of fees. Liz Smith asked about systems for instrumental tuition used in other countries. In reply Jeffrey Sharkey talked about work in Finland and Seattle, concluding, ‘This is an investment in our future that other countries have shown gives more than you put in’ (Sharkey, 14.11.18, Col 15). John Wallace then spoke about the work his group was doing with COSLA and the Scottish Government, ‘We would like COSLA to enable the creation of guidance on instrumental music tuition for local authorities and we are presently working towards that aim,’ (Wallace, 14.11.18, Col 18). The meeting discussed the structure and impact of the youth music initiative before concluding with a discussion about music as an SQA subject in school.

The meeting with the third panel of witnesses began with a statement from each of them as to how their authority charged, or did not charge, for instrumental tuition. The committee asked each councillor why their council had made the decision in relation to charging for music tuition. Ross Greer asked if there was a difference in the cost of providing the service between cities and rural authorities. Willie Wilson answered that in Perth and Kinross, ‘We have pupils and parents who are disadvantaged because of lack of transport or because of distance’ (Wilson, 21.11.18, Col 6). He then went on to describe the way the council worked with community groups and provided buses for music groups. Liz Smith asked further questions about charges and increases in charges in the three councils represented on the panel. Iain Gray followed this by asking if Scotland could use the model recommended for Wales, ‘That music services be delivered nationally through an arm’s-length body?’ (Gray, 21.11.18, Col 10). All of the panel felt that local provision and local decision making was more suitable for Scotland. All councillors felt that a general increase in funding for education would then support each council to support instrumental tuition.

The committee met with officials from COSLA at their meeting on the 5 December 2018. The meeting began with a statement from Stephen McCabe about COSLA's role as a membership organisation and the processes under which local authority members made budget decisions. Iain Gray asked why there were differences in charges or no charges for music tuition between local authorities. In reply Stephen McCabe said that the decisions were made by local councils, 'It is not COSLA's role to impose a national policy on our councils' (McCabe, 05.12.18, Col 3). Alasdair Allan asked if local authorities, were 'Living up to the undertakings that were given six or seven years ago on the back of the Government's working group on instrumental tuition' (Allan, 05.12.18, Col 7). Eddie Follan replied that COSLA had last reviewed them in 2015.

Progress has been made in a number of areas of the group's review, but we can still do more to address the 17 recommendations. We will revisit that as we develop the guidance, which we are doing now (Follan, 05.12.18, Col 8).

Rona Mackay asked for further information about the guidance issued and Stephen McCabe replied that it was guidance about exemption from charges and guidance not to charge for SQA-related tuition. The meeting noted the correspondence with Midlothian Council where an internal charging process was being used to charge schools for instrumental tuition. Eddie Follan talked about joint work between COSLA, the Government and the Music Education Partnership group. The meeting then discussed the funding of music tuition and the COSLA position that an increase in core funding to councils would then help the funding of music tuition.

The meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Education began with a statement from the John Swinney about the importance placed by the Government on the expressive arts. He referred to the working group with COSLA and the Music Education Partnership Group, saying:

That work is on-going and progress is being made to ensure that there are minimum eligibility criteria for full concessions for tuition in certain circumstances and on the development of clear guidance for local authorities (Swinney, 05.12.18, Col 21).

The meeting discussed the role of the working group in revisiting the agreements reached in 2012 and 2013. Alasdair Allan asked about charges for tuition in relation to SQA exams. In reply John Swinney said that he saw no evidence of that happening but that what Midlothian council was doing, 'Is not consistent with the spirit of that 2013 commitment' (Swinney, 05.12.18, Col 27). The committee asked further questions relating to charges for tuition and explored pupil access to music in the curriculum.

## SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF DATA

The committee heard evidence from Scottish Government officials at their meeting on 28 November 2018. This meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/29/1) and written submissions from the Scottish Government and correspondence with the Cabinet Secretary (ES/S5/18/29/2).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
28 November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alasdair Anthony, Roger Halliday, Laura Meikle, and Mick Wilson, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The focus of the committee meeting on the 28 November 2018 was to discuss the changes made to the presentation of statistics about school staff, with Scottish Government officials. In his opening remarks Mick Wilson described the range of data collected and changes made to the data published and additional information that was only available by request. Ross Greer asked why requests for additional information were being treated as Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. In response Mick Wilson said that FOI was the procedure normally used to process such requests and that they published all requests and answers. The meeting then discussed the differences between local authority recording of staff in a range of pupil support roles. Johann Lamont asked about changes made to the way staffing support for children and

young people with additional support needs was recorded. In reply Laura Meikle said that joining the two categories of additional support needs auxiliary and classroom assistant reflected discussions at the advisory group for additional support for learning. Johann Lamont suggested that there was now less statistical information available about such staff, and both Laura Meikle and Mick Wilson disagreed. Mick Wilson the said:

Considering the job titles or roles that we collect as part of the administrative data uplift is not the right way to answer your specific question about the amount of support that pupils with additional support needs receive in schools (Wilson, 28.11.18, col 13).

He then went on to explain that what the officials had found is that the categories they previously used, 'No longer reflect accurately how support staff function in schools' (Wilson, 28.11.18, Col 13). The meeting discussed the ways that authorities recorded the type of planning and support they provided for children and young people with additional support needs. Oliver Mundell asked further questions about the definition of an additional needs auxiliary role and that of a classroom assistant. In response Laura Meikle said, 'Current practice means that they are not as distinct as they were previously' (Meikle, 28.11.18, Col 18). The meeting then considered the data available about music instructors and the division of data into background statistics or management information. Tavish Scott asked a series of questions about changes to the publication of data and stressed the need for information about changes to be shared with the committee. The session concluded with a discussion about the other data sources used to inform policy decisions about additional support needs.

#### **NATIONAL STANDARDISED ASSESSMENTS INQUIRY**

The committee began their inquiry into standardised assessments at their meeting on 9 January 2019. The meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing (ES/S5/19/1/1) and written submissions from those attending the first panel and 19 received after a call for views issued in December 2018 (ES/S5/19/1/2). They heard a second session of evidence at their meeting on 23 January 2019. That meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing (ES/S5/19/3/1), written submissions (ES/S5/19/1/2) and a SPICe briefing paper on international comparisons (ES/S5/19/3/3). The committee heard evidence from two panels at their meeting on 30 January 2019. The papers for this meeting included a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/19/4/1) and a submissions pack (ES/S5/19/4/2).

<b>Date of Committee</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
9 January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mhairi Shaw, <i>Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)</i></li> <li>• Juliette Mendelovits, <i>Australian Council of Education Research (ACER)</i></li> <li>• Professor Sue Ellis, <i>University of Strathclyde</i></li> <li>• Professor Christine Merrell, <i>Durham University</i></li> </ul>
23 January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Keir Bloomer, <i>Royal Society of Edinburgh</i></li> <li>• Professor Louise Hayward, <i>University of Glasgow</i></li> <li>• Professor Lindsay Paterson, <i>University of Edinburgh</i></li> </ul>
30 January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor Andy Hargreaves, <i>Boston College</i> and Visiting Professor, <i>University of Ottawa</i></li> </ul>
30 January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sue Palmer, <i>Upstart Scotland</i></li> <li>• Jackie Brock, <i>Children in Scotland</i></li> </ul>

The first session of evidence began with a general question from Liz Smith about the quality of the assessment. In reply Sue Ellis said that assessment should be viewed as a tool, 'It takes time for

professionals to learn how to use it; how to use it well; what it can do and cannot do' (Ellis, 09.01.19, Col 2). Mairi Shaw agreed with Sue Ellis that there also needed to be, 'A sense of ethics around how we use the data' and went on to say:

The data is getting better. The publication of curriculum for excellence teacher judgments is improving; the data is still experimental, but the SNSA will help to moderate the teacher judgments, as will other activities to make sure that there is professional dialogue around the judgments (Shaw, 09.01.19, Col 3).

Liz Smith then asked a further question about ethical use of data and Sue Ellis gave an example of pupils being set into P1 classes on the basis of formative data from nurseries:

If I explain to them how that enshrines disadvantage and that that is not an ethical use of data, they will often change their policy. I can think of two directors of education who have just sent emails to schools that say that they are not to do that (Ellis, 09.01.19, Col 7).

She added that there was, 'A very poor understanding of the research on how an assessment score can reliably predict results,' (Ellis, 09.01.19, Col 7) and that decisions should not be made on the basis of one assessment. Christine Merrell supported this and said that was important to look at attainment holistically because, 'Children do not necessarily follow a linear trajectory' (Merrell, 09.01.19, Col 9). Juliette Mendevolits added that the methodology for Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) included a long scale that will allow tracking over time of pupils and classes. This led to a question from Johann Lamont about when pupils took P1 assessments and a discussion about using national assessments as a summative tool. Sue Ellis suggested that to fit with Curriculum for Excellence teachers needed to use the assessments as a diagnostic rather than a summative tool. Iain Gray asked about the design of the SNSA and the ways in which the data could be used. Tavish Scott followed this with questions about the norming of results and the issue that the tests were not all taken at the same time of year. The meeting then explored the use of SNSA for children and young people with additional support needs and the benchmarking of assessments against Curriculum for Excellence.

The evidence session on the 23 January 2019 began with a question from Tavish Scott about the purpose of national assessment. In response Louise Hayward said that there were three purposes, 'That is why we have a national improvement framework that draws evidence from a range of sources that are linked to a range of different purposes' (Hayward, 23.01.19, Col 5). This led to a discussion about the use of data from national assessments and the age of equivalent assessments in other countries. Lindsay Paterson talked about previous educational surveys in Scotland and that there was not now enough data collected, 'To know reliably whether we are closing the attainment gap' (Paterson, 23.01.19, Col 11). The committee asked a number of questions about the content and design of the national test for P1. Liz Smith explored the need for a wider range of tests and Keir Bloomer said that the Royal Society felt that was a mistake for Scotland to only use one international survey. Tavish Scott asked the panel if the recording of curriculum for excellence levels could be seen as a replacement for the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN). In reply Lindsay Paterson said no, because the replacement was based on teacher judgement and the recording of levels did not include measures of social circumstance.

We know that two thirds of children who are living in poverty are not in the 20 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods. Your constituency probably has no deprived neighbourhoods, but that does not mean that it has no deprived families (Paterson, 23.01.19, Col 28).

Tavish Scott then asked, 'Would an enhanced SSLN help politicians of all political persuasions with a genuinely difficult issue?' (Scott, 23.01.19, Col 29). Lindsay Paterson and Louise Hayward agreed that it would. Rona Mackay turned back to purpose of the tests and the panel agreed that there had been a shift towards the tests being for diagnostic purposes, which Louise Hayward said was a 'positive move' (Hayward, 23.01.19, Col 29) and Lindsay Paterson that it left a gap in the data. The session concluded with a discussion about the need for teachers to have the skills to analyse data.

The first evidence session on the 30 January began with a question from Liz Smith about how Scotland could learn from international experience of assessment. In reply Andy Hargreaves discussed the

challenges of using large scale standardised assessments to bring about improvement. Liz Smith asked for his comments about the dilemma Scotland faced.

We must grapple with the fact that we want not only to raise attainment among the youngsters who are involved but to use the testing to identify schools or local authorities that need more support (Smith, 30.01.19, Col 4).

In response Andy Hargreaves said that what was recommended in Ontario, 'Was the creation of a kind of firewall between the standardised assessments and the individual diagnostic assessments that are done in school' (Hargreaves, 30.01.19, Col 5). He then added that what was being tried in Scotland was different, using large-scale assessments to inform teacher's professional judgement. This led to a wider discussion about the content and use of the P1 test.

The second session of evidence on the 30 January began with a discussion about P1 tests. Sue Palmer said Upstart Scotland was against skill-based assessments of literacy and numeracy in P1. Jackie Brock said that Children in Scotland agreed with the use of diagnostic formative assessment but was against the use of standardised assessment, that was used, 'To shape individual children's performance and individual teaching strategies' (Brock, 30.01.19, Col 28). In answer to a question from Johann Lamont she went on to explained that Children in Scotland was opposed to standardised assessment because it was to be used, 'To judge the performance of schools and local authorities' (Brock, 30.01.19, Col 37).

### DRAFT BUDGET 2019 - 2020

The committee took evidence from John Swinney and his officials at their meeting on 16 January 2019. This meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/19/2/1) and written submissions (ES/S5/19/2/2).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
16 January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> <li>• Aileen McKechnie and Andrew Bruce, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The meeting on the 16 January 2019 began with a question from Liz Smith about the proposed drop in funding for Universities. In reply John Swinney said that he had decided, 'to sustain the funding of the university sector at the level that we had increased it to in the previous financial year' (Swinney, 16.01.19, Col 4). Liz Smith said that the sector was concerned about sustainability and then asked about funding for EU students if the UK left the EU without a deal. In reply John Swinney said that he could not give that commitment because it was a matter for the finance secretary in future budgets. Alasdair Allan asked about the funding of additional support needs and how the success of that would be measured. In reply the Cabinet Secretary said that the framework supported young people through their education and that it was the responsibility of each local authority to provide support for them. Tavish Scott asked about the use of ring fencing of the pupil equity fund, and John Swinney replied that it was because the fund was going directly to schools. Rona Mackay asked about the multi- year funding agreement with local authorities for early years and childcare, to which he said that local authorities were asked to submit a plan. Jenny Gilruth returned to the pupil equity fund and asked about an underspend in fund. In reply the Cabinet Secretary said, 'the first year is a bit of an exception,' (Swinney, 16.01.19, Col 19) and added that they are not expecting that in the coming year. He went on to say that early tensions between schools and local authorities had 'settled down':

I do not detect much difficulty in schools being able to make the choices that they want to make about the spending of these resources, and I think that that is evidence of a collaborative education system in which schools are enabled to make these decisions on an empowered basis and local authorities provide support where it makes rational sense for them to do so (Swinney, 16.01.19, col 21).

The meeting then discussed the payments to Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the SQA before considering the funding available for local authorities and teachers' pay.

## **EU REPORTER**

The committee appointed Jenny Gilruth, as the EU Reporter for the Education and Skills Committee at their meeting on the 26 September 2018.

## **PUBLIC PETITION**

The committee considered PE1694 on free music tuition at their meeting on 23 January 2019. They agreed to keep the petition open for consideration at a future meeting.

## **SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION**

The Committee took evidence at their meeting on 7 November 2018, on the Assigned Colleges (University of the Highlands and Islands) Order 2018 [draft] from Richard Todd, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Skills. The committee agreed the draft order:

- S5M-10206 —Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2018

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

- S5M-14432—That the Education and Skills Committee recommends that the Assigned Colleges (University of the Highland and Islands) Order 2018 [draft]
- The Education (Student Loans) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (SSI 2018/307)

## **REFERENCES**

Redford, M. (2018) Education in the Scottish Parliament, *Scottish Educational Review*, 50 (2)  
Scottish Government (2018) Education Bill policy ambition: joint agreement. Available online at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-bill-policy-ambition-joint-agreement/> [Accessed 28.05.19]