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ESRC Research Project on *Education and Youth Transitions in England, Wales and Scotland, 1984-2002*

## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE OF COMPULSORY SCHOOLING IN ENGLAND, WALES AND SCOTLAND DURING TWO DECADES OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper looks at changes in schooling, and in young people's experiences of schooling, in the last two decades in Britain (ie in England, Wales and Scotland). The specific changes that I shall examine - notably trends in attainment throughout this period and shifts in attitude to school - are located in a context of very considerable policy change in education throughout Europe and beyond, as neo-liberal design principles are implemented to a greater or lesser degree in many systems (Minguez and Murillo 1996, Lindblad and Popkewitz 1999). Neo-liberal design principles of marketisation, competition, standardisation, differentiation and so on have been associated with deepening inequalities and with stronger tendencies towards polarisation (Lindblad and Popkewitz 1999). This particular study permits exploration of these wider social justice concerns through its comparative dimension. The three countries in question - England, Wales and Scotland - offer considerable scope for internal comparison as, although they are part of the UK, they have separate education systems whose distinctive character has long been recognised. Furthermore, since the creation of a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh assembly, separate development has considerable potential to translate into real policy difference in relation to social justice issues.

The key differentiating factor with which I shall be concerned here is the extent of comprehensive provision in each of the three systems. Critics of marketisation suggest that its emphasis on competition and differentiation advantages middle class parents and pupils who know how to work the system, while working class or less advantaged families lose out. Advocates of comprehensive provision maintain that it is both better and fairer ...Scottish provision is almost entirely comprehensive, while England has become more and more diversified in the period under review.

So the key social justice related questions here are: Did comprehensive provision in Scotland reduce social class related disadvantage? Did this social class gap closed to a greater or lesser extent than in England?

The empirical evidence to address these questions comes from time-series data derived from the England and Wales Youth Cohort Study and the Scottish School Leavers Surveys (Appendix 1). The paper presents findings from ESRC-funded research: Education and Youth Transitions in England, Wales and Scotland 1984-2002, which is being carried out at the Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh.

## **SOCIAL CHANGE**

The two-decades covered by this paper are the 1980s and 1990s, during which the cumulative effects of social change originating earlier in the century had their impact on school systems. For example, changes in the industrial structure of Britain have been characterised by decline in manufacturing industry and related to this a decline in the proportion of workers in manual occupations. Increasing proportions of the work force are engaged in “white collar” jobs, and within their ranks the growing number of managers and professionals reflect the increasingly complex division of labour based on scientific and capital-intensive technology (Halsey 2000). The importance of the education system in developing the skills and talents required in the knowledge-based economy was first emphasised in 1976 by the then Prime Minister James Callaghan when he initiated the “Great Debate”, and has been re-iterated by policy makers many times thereafter. Similarly, young people and their parents have increasingly been made aware of the importance of educational qualifications as a means of accessing career opportunities.

During the 1980s and 1990s there have been increasing opportunities for women in education and the labour market, following the reduction of barriers by the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and other successes of feminism. The effects of these changes include increasing rates of employment and educational participation by women. They impact on the context of schooling through reduction of the gender barriers within schools, such as access to some areas of the curriculum and increasing the career aspirations of girls.

Education policies in previous decades have also had cumulative effects on social change. In particular, the increased provision of free public education after the war, and subsequent raising of the school leaving age to 15 in 1947, and 16 in 1972, has ensured that the parents of school pupils have themselves experienced increasing levels of education. The reorganisation of schools on comprehensive lines from 1965-80, although contested and incomplete in England, was an important step in reducing social class barriers in education. These policies are linked to social mobility, and Halsey writes: “By the end of the century millions of children of manual workers had risen into non-manual jobs and many thousands had become the graduate grandchildren of butchers, bakers and candlestick makers, following professional careers.” (Halsey 2000, p17).

However, there are still major inequalities by gender and social class in British society, and this paper will consider changes in these factors during the last year of compulsory schooling.

## **REFORMS IN THE 1980S AND 1990S**

During the 1980s and 1990s a number of administrative reforms were put into place, which had further impact on young people’s experience during the final stages of compulsory schooling:

- New systems of assessment and certification at age 16, providing appropriate awards for pupils of all levels of attainment. Introduced in 1986, in England and Wales these qualifications were the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and in Scotland the Standard Grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education. Assessments for the qualifications included teacher-assessed course-work as well as examinations.
- Curriculum change, including the introduction of a common curriculum framework in Scotland from 1983, and national curricula in England and Wales following the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA); the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) from 1983, introduction of vocational courses and qualifications such as NVQ and SVQ from 1986 and GNVQ in 1992.
- Creation of quasi-markets in education, including greater parental choice of school from 1980. Performance indicators for schools were published from 1992. Further measures to promote market forces in schools in England and Wales (but not Scotland) were introduced by the 1988 ERA, including Open Enrolment, reduction of local authority control over schools, and National Testing at key stages.

Before looking at the impact of these reforms on young people's attainment and school experiences, I shall describe the similarities and differences between the three British education systems.

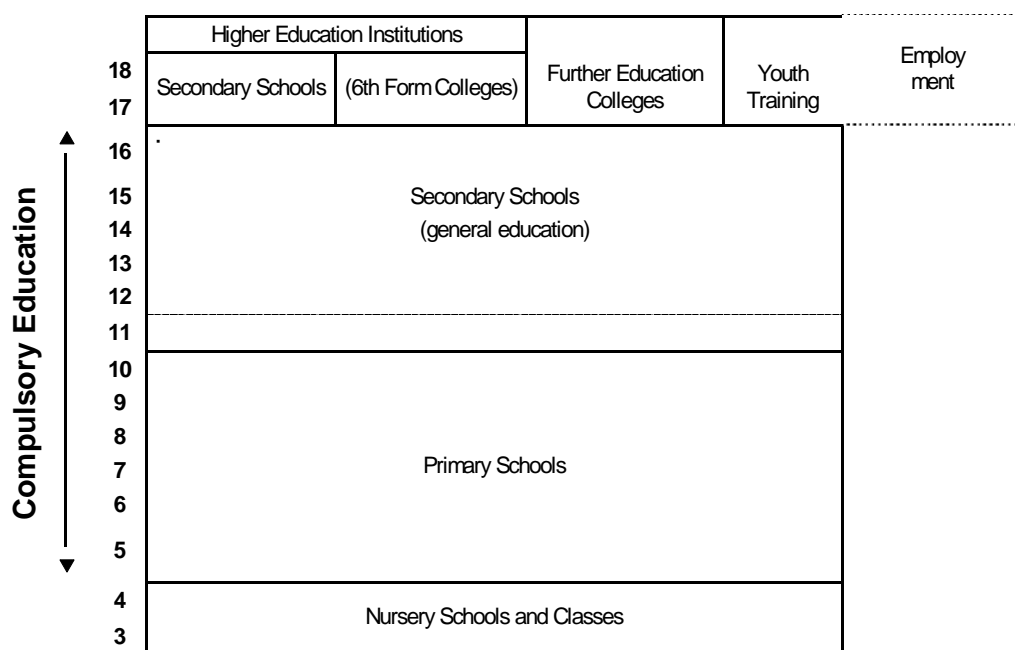
## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLAND, WALES AND SCOTLAND**

A recent research project at CES entitled "*Home International*" *Comparison of 14-19 Education and Training Systems in the UK*" focused on the similarities and differences between these systems (Raffe et al 1999), and the research is now being extended to consider change over time by a further project, *Education and Youth Transitions in England Wales and Scotland 1984-2002*. A key issue for the research is the extent to which we can analyse and explain convergence/divergence between England Wales and Scotland within the context of overarching trends.

The "Home Internationals" project found significant differences among the British systems which could not be attributed to their different social compositions or local circumstances. But it also drew attention to the similarities of the three systems and to their interdependence. Many of the differences were small, and we found many common features which appeared to reflect distinctively British patterns of attainment, participation and transition (Croxford and Raffe 1999).

Figure 1 summarises the structure of British education systems. In each system compulsory schooling starts at about age 5, and ends at about age 16. There is a transition from primary to secondary school at age 11 in England and Wales, and at age 12 in Scotland. Secondary schools in all the British systems provide general education, and there is no division between academic and vocational institutions as elsewhere in Europe. At age 16 young people can choose to continue their education at school or college, or to enter youth training and/or employment. At the beginning of the 1980s there was a strong tradition of entry to the labour market at age 16, but this has reduced considerably over the two decades, as a result of social and economic change

**Figure 1:** The structure of British education systems



A key difference between the school systems of England, Wales and Scotland arises because in Wales and Scotland secondary schools are more comprehensive, and characterised by more social mixing, and greater equality of attainment compared with the diverse range of state schools in England. After 1965, comprehensive reorganisation proceeded far more rapidly in Wales and Scotland than in England, so that by 1980 almost all pupils in state-funded schools in Wales and Scotland were attending schools that were at least nominally comprehensive, compared with 83% in England, and there are still areas of England that retain selective systems of secondary schooling. The independent sector is larger in England than elsewhere in Britain (11% of pupils in England attend independent schools compared with 3% in Wales, and 6% in Scotland). In England there are also more single-sex and “faith” schools. The “Home Internationals” study based on data for 1990/91 found that schools in Wales and Scotland were more similar in their 'effects', whereas schools in England had greater variability, and concluded that comprehensive education may be more effective and receive more public support in Wales and Scotland because the school effect is more uniform: finding the 'right' school is less important (Croxford 2000a).

The introduction of national curricula in the 1980s demonstrates the more consensual approach to policy making in Scotland compared with the more overtly political approach in England. In Scotland, a common curriculum framework, was introduced on an advisory basis in 1983, recommending that students choose subjects within a number of modes. By contrast, the National Curriculum for England and Wales was introduced by legislation through the 1988 Education Reform Act, and was specified in terms of a number of subjects that must be studied, with special provision for the Welsh language in Wales (Croxford 2000b). Linked to the National Curriculum in England and Wales was a mandatory system of National Testing at key stages, with results published on a school-by-school basis as part of the quality assurance system. In Scotland, by contrast, the system of National Testing was strongly

resisted by parents groups as well as by teachers, and a much more flexible system was introduced that could be used at the teachers' discretion.

National examinations at age 16 serve similar purposes in each of the three systems of providing a common system of certification of achievement at the end of compulsory schooling. These examination certificates are important credentials for young people entering further education or the labour market. However, the systems of examination in place at the beginning of the 1980s had been designed to cater for the top third of the ability range, and were not appropriate for all students. The division of students between "certificate" and "non-certificate" classes was very selective and had negative effects on pupils' motivation. The introduction in 1986 of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in England and Wales and Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE) Standard Grade in Scotland provided systems of certification for a much wider range of abilities, and thus provided greater motivation for students. Initially, both GCSE and Standard Grade included assessment of course work as a component of the final grade, and this is still the case in the Scottish examinations. However, in England there has been increasing emphasis on external examinations, and erosion of the role of course work, because of anxieties about "standards".

Over the past two decades there has been progressive devolution of responsibility for education (Raffe *et al* 1999). Others have argued that ideologies, priorities and policy implementation between the three systems have differed, and that the restructuring of education through market principles and competition between schools has been more far-reaching in England than in Wales or Scotland (Ozga and Lawn 1999). A possible result of the operation of market principles in England is that social segregation between schools may have increased (Croxford 2001, this will be analysed in a future paper). Following the creation of the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales in 1999 the systems are exhibiting some signs of increased divergence. For example, both Wales and Scotland have discontinued the publication of school league tables, whereas their publication continues in England, and neither Wales nor Scotland favours the policy of creating specialist schools, which is likely to further erode the provision of comprehensive schooling in England.

## THE TIME-SERIES DATASETS

The data used for the analyses are derived from two cohort survey series which have common origins: the Scottish School Leavers Surveys and the England and Wales Youth Cohort Study (Appendix 1). These are postal questionnaire surveys that cover nationally-representative samples of young people in the last year-stage of compulsory schooling (Year 11 in England and Wales and Secondary 4 in Scotland). There are some similar questions in the two survey series which permit comparative analysis, including attitudes to school, attainment in national examinations at the end of compulsory schooling, sex and social class.

However, there are limitations on the social class data for England and Wales which mean that the results have to be treated with great caution. Whereas for the Scottish time series there have been detailed questions about parental occupation that have been consistently coded to the full occupational classifications developed by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS, now Office for National Statistics (ONS)), the coding of parental occupation in the YCS has been inconsistent and incomplete. In particular, prior to the 1990 cohort the YCS does not include detailed occupation codes, and from 1993 onwards does not include employment status. As far as possible we have tried to use the occupation data to

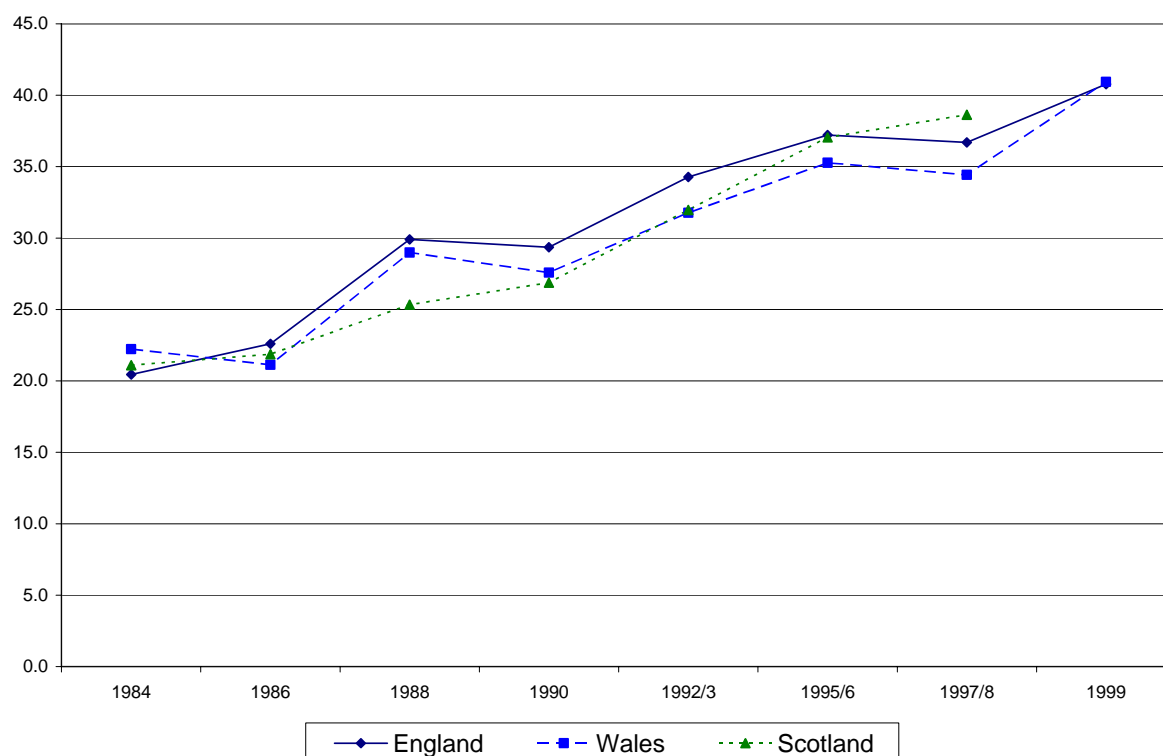
create social class variables that are consistent over time and between the two survey series. For the Scottish time-series parents' occupation has been mapped to the new socio-economic classification (N-SEC: Rose and O'Reilly 1998) using detailed occupation codes and their default employment status. For the England and Wales time-series the mapping of parents' social class to N-SEC is similar to the Scottish time series from 1990 onwards, but is an approximation based on the 17-category socio-economic group from 1984-1988. Thus we must be cautious in interpreting the findings regarding national differences in social-class inequalities prior to 1990.

## CHANGES AND INEQUALITIES IN ATTAINMENT AT AGE 16

A key outcome of schooling for young people in Britain is attainment in national examinations at age 16. Following the administrative reforms that introduced GCSE and Standard Grade examination, almost all students participated in these examinations, and we can therefore analyse changes and inequalities in attainment. Overall upward trends in attainment are illustrated in Figure 2.

The attainment score shown in Figure 2 is based on all GCE/GCSE or in Scotland Ordinary/Standard Grade examinations attempted by young people in the survey, allocating 7 points for A or 1, 6 points for B or 2, 5 points for C or 3, 4 points for D or 4, 3 points for E or 5, 2 points for F or 6, and 1 point for examinations attempted for which the result was lower than F. On average, students in Scotland attempted one less examination than their counterparts in England and Wales and consequently their average attainment scores were a few points lower.

**Figure 2:** Average attainment score at age 16



A key issue for the analysis is the relative trends for males and females, and for students of different social class background. We know that social change has brought about changes in

the family context of students, and we need to take this into account. The Scottish time series includes fairly detailed information about family background that is not available for the England and Wales time series. Therefore the first analysis of changes in attainment is based solely on the Scottish series, and then trends are compared with more limited information for England and Wales.

### The effects of family background in Scotland

Analysis of family background data from the Scottish time series shows:

- An increasing proportion of young people had parents who had been educated beyond the minimum school leaving age (just 16% of the 1984 cohort had one or more parents who left school at age 17 or later, compared with 41% of the 1998 cohort).
- An increasing proportion of young people had a parent in a professional or managerial occupation (23% in 1984 compared with 36% in 1998).
- An increasing proportion of young people had both parents in full-time employment (among the 1984 cohort 74% of fathers and 30% of mothers were reported to be in full-time employment compared with 81% and 45% respectively among the 1998 cohort).
- The proportion with mothers full-time unpaid in the home decreased from 25% in 1984 to 11% in 1998.
- There was a slight decline in the proportion of young people staying with both natural parents (as opposed to step or lone parents) from 79% in 1984 to 14% in 1998.

These changes in family background raise questions about the nature of inequalities over time. For example, if more young people have better educated parents, does parental education still provide a source of advantage for pupils? and conversely is there greater disadvantage accruing to pupils with less educated parents?

A regression model tested the extent to which there were inequalities in young people's attainment scores associated with each of family background, and the extent to which their effects changed over time. The detailed results are shown in Appendix 3. From these findings it is clear that in Scotland there was a clear reduction in the effects of social class background on attainment at the end of compulsory schooling.

The analysis shows that on average attainment was:

- lower if parents left school at the minimum school leaving age;
- lower if parents' occupations were working class or unclassified occupations social class (and, to a smaller extent, intermediate);
- lower if a parent was unemployed, or if father was working part-time or full-time unpaid at home;
- higher if mother was working part-time or full-time unpaid at home;
- lower if the young person lived with a step-parent or lone parent or neither parent.

Over the period from 1984 to 1998 the effects of these factors on attainment changed as follows:

- the effect of parents' school-leaving age was reduced;
- the disadvantage of working class and unclassified parental occupation was reduced;

- the disadvantage of an unemployed parent was reduced;
- the advantage of mother working part-time or full-time unpaid at home was reduced;
- the effects of step and lone parents and neither natural parent was unchanged.

In other words, the changing social context in which more parents are better educated, and more parents are in white-collar jobs appears to have reduced the extent of social class inequality in Scotland. I now turn to the comparison of the effects of gender and social class in the three British education systems.

### The effects of gender and social class in Britain

In the England and Wales time series the amount of information about family background is more limited than that which is available for Scotland. Consequently the “home international” comparison trends and inequalities is limited to gender and social class of parental occupation.

Detailed results are given in Appendix 4.

#### National system differences

- Attainment scores in Scotland were two points lower than in England (“all other things being equal”), but average attainment in Wales was no different to that in England. The difference in Scotland arises from the smaller number of examinations attempted.
- Attainment increased substantially over the period 1984-1999, but the rate of increase was smaller in Scotland than elsewhere, whereas the rate of increase in Wales was the same as that in England.

#### Gender differences

- At the start of the time-period gender differences in attainment in England and Wales were not statistically significant, but females in Scotland had significantly higher attainment than males.
- Over the period 1984-1998 the rate of increase in attainment was slightly higher among females than males. In Scotland the gender gap did not widen to the same extent as in England and Wales.

#### Social class differences

- In all three systems attainment was lowest among young people from working class backgrounds, and in England and Wales this effect did not change over time. However, in Scotland the attainment gap associated with working class background decreased over time.
- In 1984 young people with parents in intermediate occupations had lower attainment than those in professional and managerial occupations, but this gap decreased over time. In Scotland in 1984 the gap between intermediate and professional and managerial social classes was smaller than elsewhere, and although the gap decreased over time the rate of decrease was not as steep as in England. (In Wales the pattern is similar to that in Scotland, but is not statistically significant).
- Young people whose parental occupation was unclassified had lower attainment than those with parents in professional and managerial occupations. In 1984 this effect was



greater in Scotland than in England and Wales, but over time the disadvantage accruing to unclassified social class in Scotland was reduced.

In summary, trends and inequalities by gender and social class are broadly similar in all three national systems. However, in Scotland the inequalities associated with parents' social class were reduced over the period. A possible way of showing the declining social class gap, is the ratio between average working class attainment and average professional and managerial attainment (Figure 3).

**Figure 3:** Ratio of average scores of working class pupils/average scores of professional and managerial class pupils

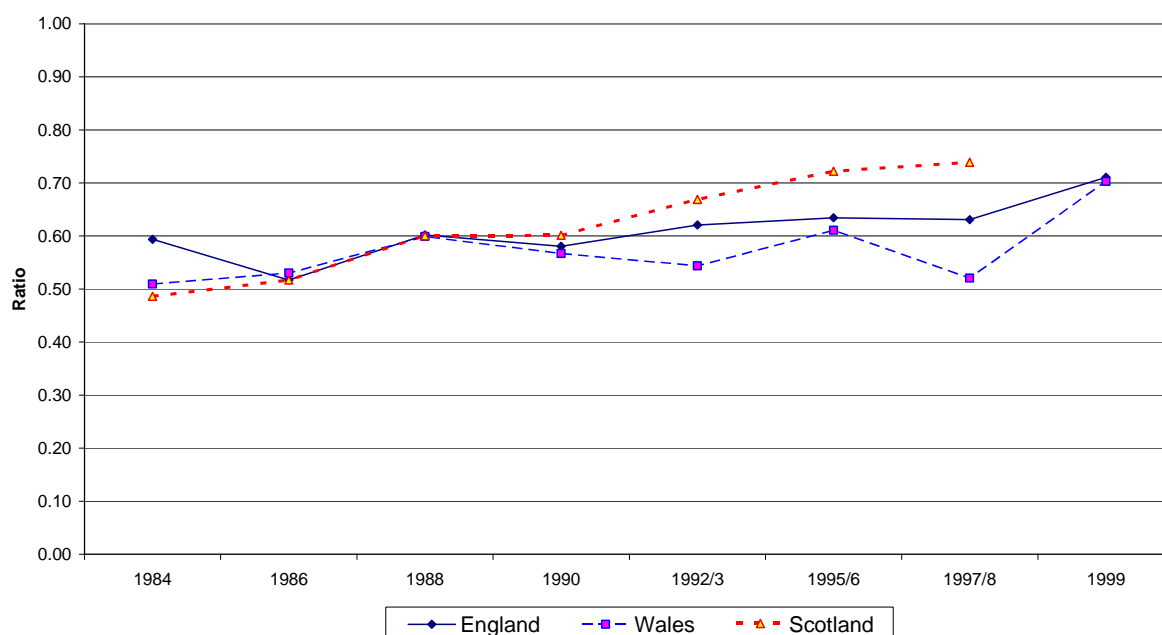


Figure 3 shows that in 1984, the average score of a pupil from a working class background was around half of the average score of a pupil from a professional and managerial background, but by 1998 the average score of a working class pupil in Scotland had risen to almost three-quarters of the score of the higher social class pupil. The trends for England and Wales are more uneven, (and the social class data are less reliable). It appears that there may be a slight upward trend from 1990 onwards in the ratio of working class/professional managerial attainment, but it is not as clear or pronounced as in Scotland.

## HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE PERCEIVE THEIR SCHOOL EXPERIENCES?

Three questions about young peoples' perceptions of their last two years of compulsory schooling have been included in the England and Wales cohort surveys consistently over a number of years, and also in the Scottish surveys since 1992. These questions, which were typically the first items in the Sweep 1 questionnaire, asked:

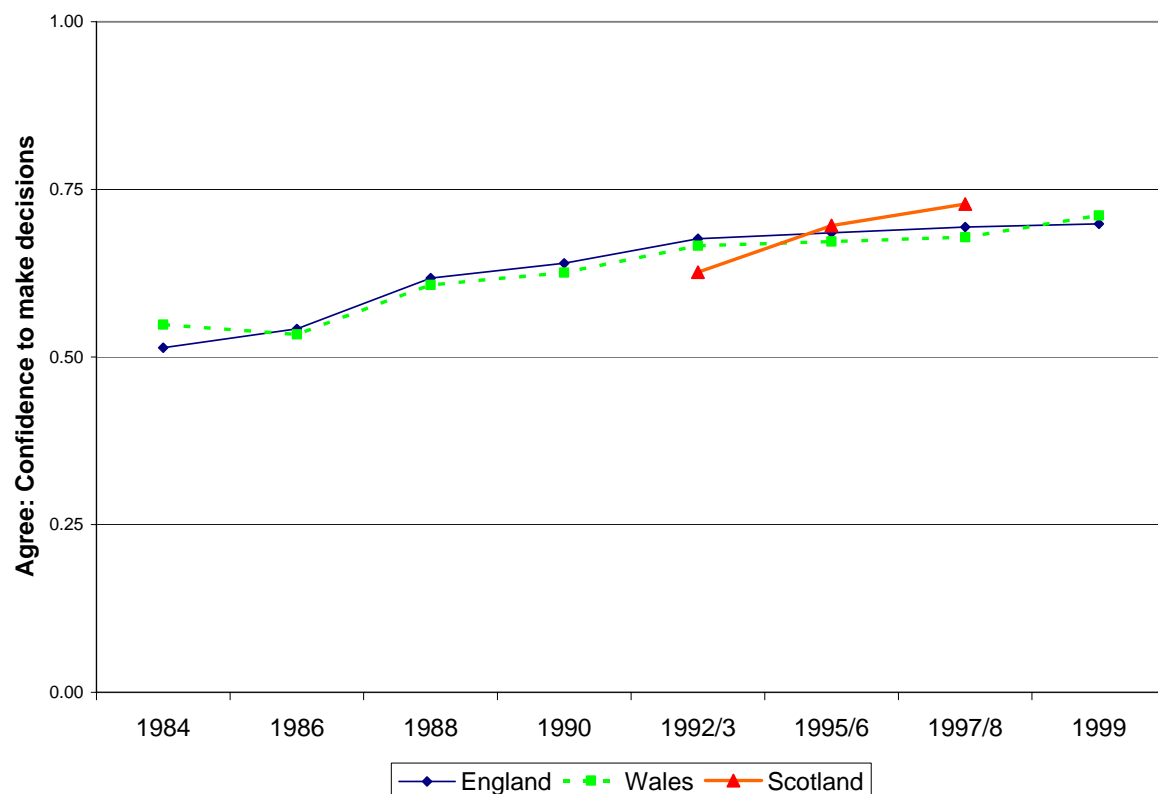
*Here are some things, both good and bad, which people have said about their last two years at secondary school? We would like to know what you think?*

*Please tick a box for each one to say whether you agree or disagree.*

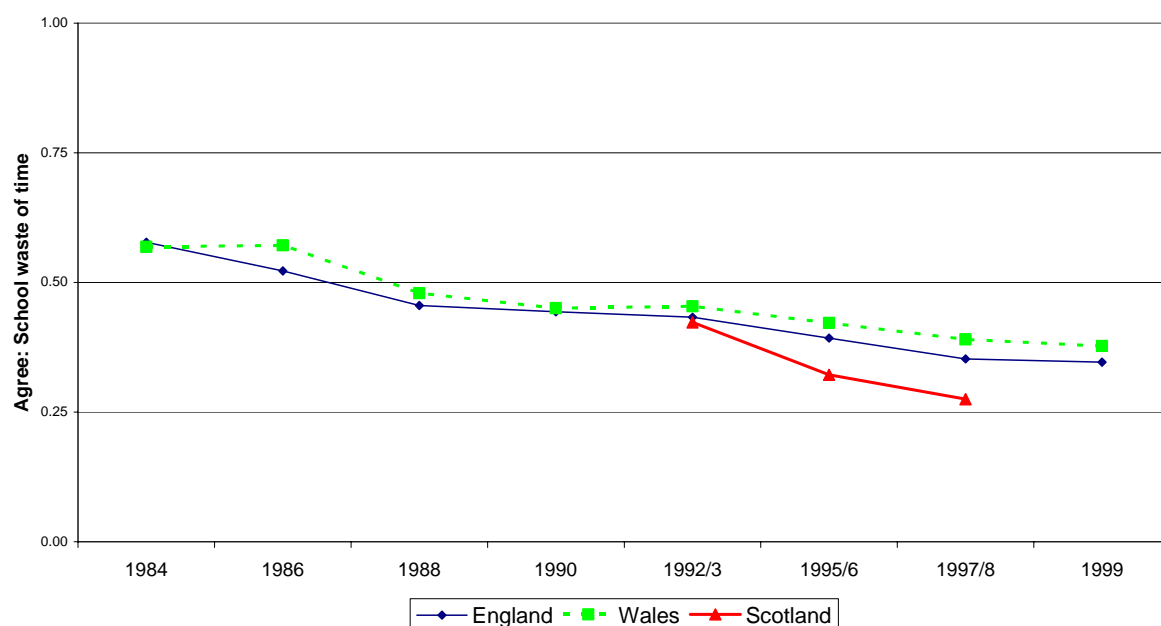
- *School has helped give me confidence to make decisions.*
- *School has done little to prepare me for life when I leave school.*
- *School has taught me things which would be useful in a job.*

Changes over time in responses to these questions are shown by Figures 4 to 7, and reveal that young people throughout Britain are becoming increasingly positive about their school experience. There is a clear upward trends in the proportions of young people who agreed that school taught them things which would be useful in a job, and a more modest increase in those who agreed that school helped give them confidence to make decisions. Similarly, increasing proportions of young people disagreed with the statement that school has done little to prepare them for life after school.

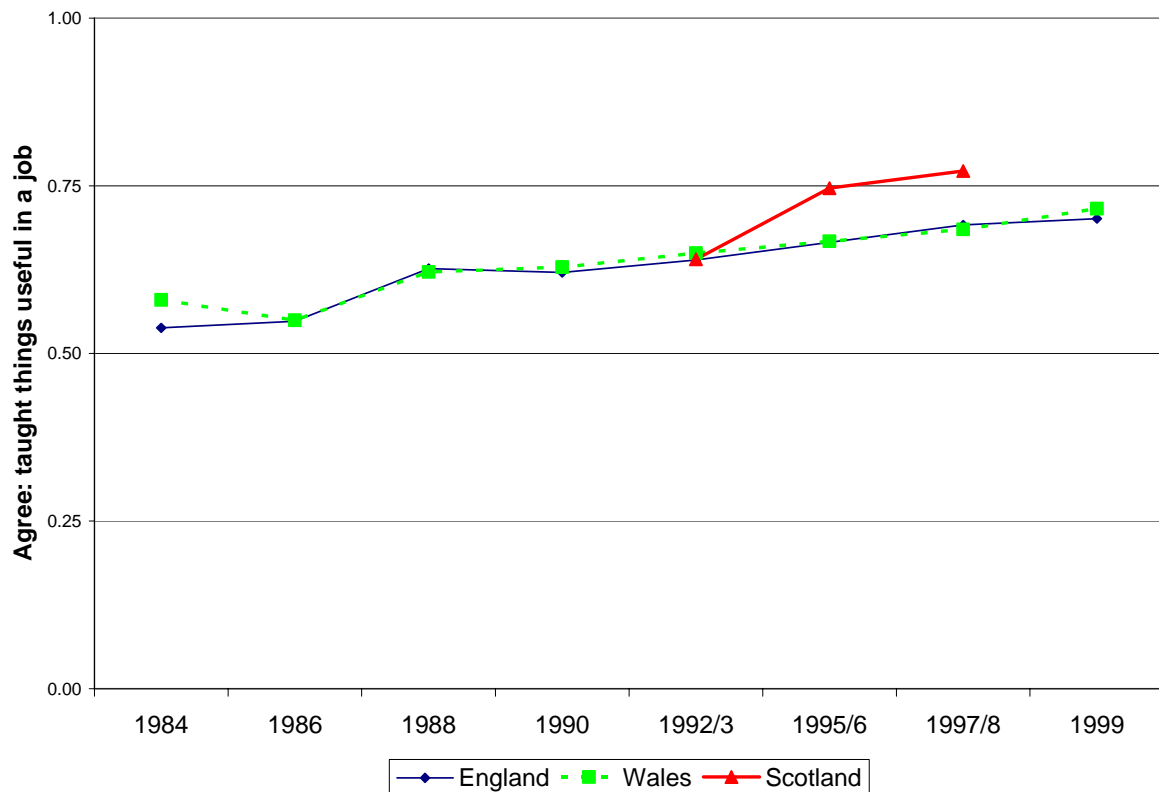
**Figure 4:** School has helped give me confidence to take decisions



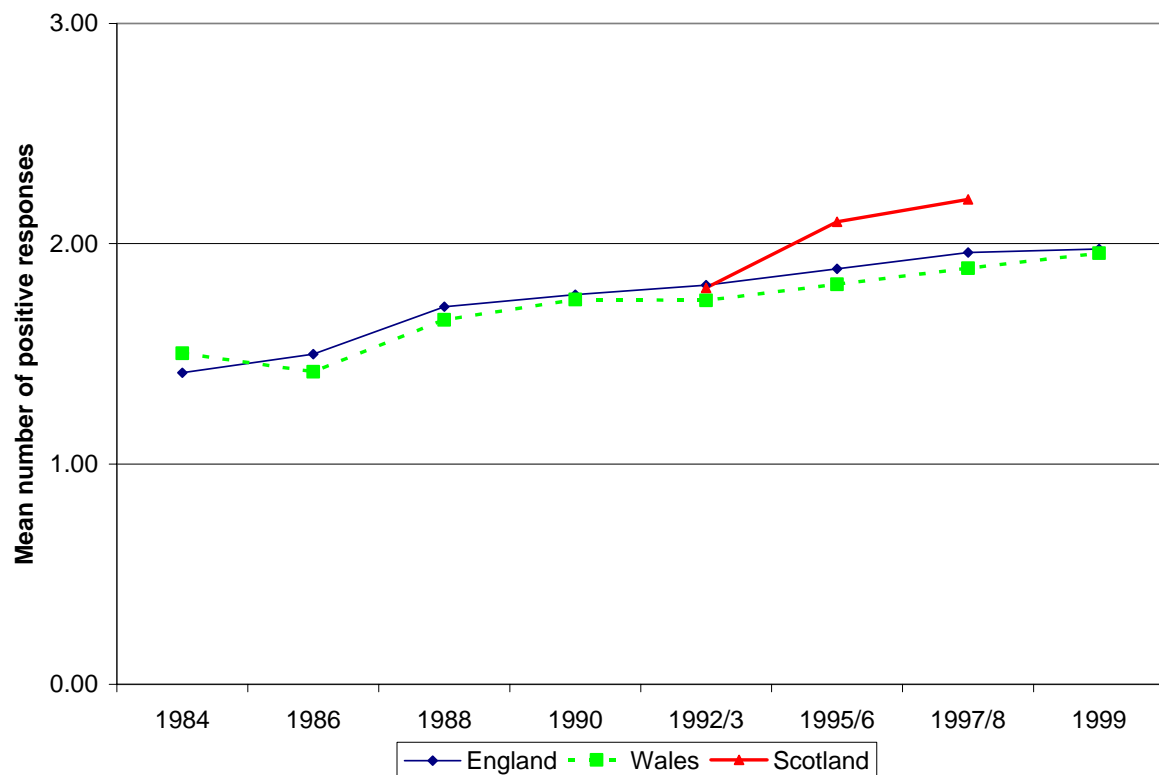
**Figure 5:** School has done little to prepare me for life when I leave school



**Figure 6:** School has taught me things which would be useful in a job



**Figure 7:** Average number of positive responses



The overall trends towards more positive attitudes to school are evident in all three education systems, but there are some system differences. The proportion of respondents from Wales expressing positive attitudes was consistently lower than the proportion in England. There is no data on young people's attitudes in Scotland in the 1980s, but in the 1990s trends for

Scotland are steeper than in either England or Wales. In 1992 the proportion of Scottish youngsters expressing positive views of their schooling was very similar to that in England, but thereafter increased much more steeply to 1998. Are these differences a commentary on the English/Welsh/Scottish systems? or consequences of compositional differences in socio-economic background?

A regression model was used to analyse differences in students' attitudes between the three systems (Appendix 2). The model confirms that on average attitudes to school improved steadily over the period, and that the upward trend was steeper in Scotland from 1992 onwards than in England and Wales. It found that on average girls and boys had similar attitudes to school, but that in Wales girls held less favourable attitudes than boys.

Attitudes to school were strongly associated with parents' social class, with pupils from professional and managerial backgrounds holding the most favourable views. However, in Scotland the difference in attitudes between social class groups was significantly smaller than in England.

There was no evidence, however, that these average differences in attitudes between social class (and gender) groups changed over time. All groups, in all three systems, shared in the increasingly favourable attitudes to school.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this paper has been to examine trends in young people's perceptions of their experience of school, and inequalities in their attainment during the 1980s and 1990s, in the light of social change and policy change.

The analysis shows very marked upward trends in attainment at the end of secondary schooling following the introduction of GCSE and Standard Grade examinations, and may demonstrate the success of educational reforms that have enabled more young people to achieve more highly. In particular, the attainment of females has risen more rapidly than the attainment of males. A number of studies have examined the increasing gender gap and suggested that both equal opportunities policies, rising aspirations and the changing role of women in society may have played a part (Arnot et al 1999, Tinklin et al 2001).

The analyses show that young people are increasingly positive in their perceptions of the usefulness of school. This may demonstrate the impact of policies towards curriculum and assessment and the inclusion of all young people in national systems of certification. In contrast, in the late 1970s, before the introduction of GCSE and Standard Grade, young people in Scotland were asked their views of their school experiences. One young woman replied as follows:

*"At our school we were put into groups one's who can sit their 'O' grades and one's who can't which is unfair. The one's who did not sit there 'O' grades the teachers never Bothered to learn them anything. The only good thing about the school was PE as that was the only class the teachers Bothered about us. The one's who were not in 'O' grade classes never got to see anybody about a job for advice so no wonder pupils stade off as much". (Quoted in Gow and McPherson 1980, p29).*

The increasingly positive attitudes of young people following the GCSE/Standard Grade reforms may result from an increasing sense of achievement as more young people achieve success in examinations. However, social change may also have an impact, as there is

growing awareness among young people that their future career prospects depend upon the academic skills and credentials that schools provide.

On average young people from lower social class backgrounds tended to be less positive in their attitudes to school than those from higher social class backgrounds, and this may reflect a continuing sense of alienation from school. However, it is interesting to note that the increasing trends of satisfaction with school were found among all social class groups. There was no evidence of gender differences in attitudes to school, and the increasingly positive attitudes were shown by both males and females.

A key question for this research is whether the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s have eroded or increased existing social class inequalities in schooling at a time when the relative positions of social class groups are changing. There is strong evidence in Scotland that the attainment gap associated with social class and other family background factors has diminished. However, the trend of reducing inequality in attainment is less clear in England and Wales than in Scotland, and this may give some indication that the different thrust of policy in Scotland may have made a difference. We might argue that the more comprehensive Scottish system and the more moderate form of marketisation have provided an environment in which working class pupils are enabled to catch up to some extent with their peers from higher social class backgrounds. However, we must be cautious in this interpretation because unfortunately there are limitations on the social class data available from the Youth Cohort Study.

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## APPENDIX 1: DATA SOURCE

The datasets on which the research is based come from nationally-representative cohort surveys.

- The England and Wales Youth Cohort Study (YCS), funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
- The Scottish Young Peoples Survey (SYPS, until 1993) and subsequently Scottish School Leavers Survey (SSLS), funded mainly by the Scottish Office/Scottish Executive.

The two cohort surveys have similar purpose and content. Each cohort is defined at the end of compulsory schooling<sup>1</sup>, approximately aged 16. The surveys are carried out using postal questionnaires, with the first sweep of each survey typically in the spring of the year following the end of compulsory schooling, with subsequent sweeps one or two years later. The timing of each cohort is summarised in Table A1. For this project, each cohort will be named by the last year in which the cohort members were in Y11 or S4. The first four Scottish cohorts coincided with England and Wales cohorts 1, 3, 4 and 5, but the timing of subsequent cohorts has not coincided. The 1990 cohort in England, Wales and Scotland was used for the *Home Internationals* Project (HIP).

**Table A1: Youth Cohort Datasets (and year of survey/sweeps)**

Cohort: ended Y11 or S4 in	Scotland	E&W
1984	SYPS85 (1985, 1986, 1987a)	YCS1 (1985, 86, 87)
1985		YCS2 (1986, 87, 88)
1986	SYPS87 (1987, 1989a)	YCS3 (1987, 88, 89 + 94)
1987		
1988	SYPS89 (1989, 1991a)	YCS4 (1989, 90, 91)
1989		
1990 HIP	SYPS91 (1991, 1993a)	YCS5 (1991, 92, 93)
1991		YCS6 (1992, 93, 94s, 94a)
1992	SSLS Reconstructed Cohort (1993-5, 1999)	
1993		YCS7 (1994,,96)
1994		
1995		YCS8 (1996,,98, 2000a)
1996	SSLS97 (1997, 1999)	
1997		YCS9 (1998,99,2000s, 2000a +02)
1998	SSLS99 (1999, 2001)	
1999		YCS10 (2000s, 2000a, 2002)

Since 1990 there have been significant changes in the design of the cohort surveys. Some of the more recent YCS surveys, especially YCS8, 9 and 10, have been more complex in design, with different timing of surveys, and additional interview components. Most notably, the Scottish cohort for 1992 was reconstructed from surveys of school leavers over three years, and poses difficulties for comparability, but we are reluctant to omit the survey from the time-series because there are such large gaps between Scottish surveys.

At the end of the Home Internationals Project, we noted that we were struggling to ensure comparability between data sources, yet by the standards of international datasets ours achieved a high-level of cross-national comparability. This paradox led us to coin Murphy's Law of Home International Comparisons:

*The more similar the systems being compared, the greater the problems caused by small differences in data sources.*

<sup>1</sup> Year 11 (Y11) in England and Wales, which is equivalent to Secondary 4 (S4) in Scotland.

## APPENDIX 2: FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TO SCHOOL (ESTIMATES FROM LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL)

	Estimate	Std Error
<b>National System</b>		
Reference category: England	1.62	0.01
Wales	-0.04	0.04
Scotland	<b>-0.28</b>	0.05
<b>Change over time (Reference category: 1984)</b>		
Average change per year	<b>0.03</b>	0.00
Additional effect per year in: Wales	0.00	0.00
o Scotland	<b>0.03</b>	0.00
<b>Gender (Reference category: Male)</b>		
Female	0.00	0.01
Female in Wales	<b>-0.01</b>	0.03
Female in Scotland	0.03	0.02
Additional increase per year by females	0.00	0.00
<b>Parents' social class (Reference category: Professional &amp; Managerial)</b>		
Intermediate, small employers & own account workers	<b>-0.16</b>	0.02
Working Class	<b>-0.15</b>	0.02
Unclassified	<b>-0.10</b>	0.02
Additional effects of social class per year		
Intermediate etc	<b>0.01</b>	0.00
Working Class	0.00	0.00
Unclassified	0.00	0.00
Social Class in Wales		
Intermediate etc	0.07	0.04
Working Class	0.03	0.04
Unclassified	0.00	0.05
Social class in Scotland		
Intermediate etc	<b>0.07</b>	0.03
Working Class	<b>0.06</b>	0.03
Unclassified	<b>-0.07</b>	0.03



### APPENDIX 3: SCOTTISH TIME-SERIES: CHANGE OVER TIME IN EFFECTS OF FAMILY BACKGROUND VARIABLES ON ATTAINMENT SCORE AT AGE 16

	Modelled separately		Modelled together	
	Estimate	Std. Error	Estimate	Std. Error
<b>Gender</b>				
Reference category: Male, 1984 cohort	22.17	0.189	26.43	0.346
Female	<b>1.24</b>	0.264	<b>1.10</b>	0.233
Average increase per year	<b>1.26</b>	0.023	<b>1.08</b>	0.045
Additional increase per year by females	<b>0.11</b>	0.032	<b>0.15</b>	0.028
<b>Family structure</b>				
Reference category: Living with both natural parents, 1984 cohort	24.09	0.147		
Step-parent	<b>-5.42</b>	0.597	<b>-4.07</b>	0.535
Lone-parent	<b>-6.76</b>	0.394	<b>-1.73</b>	0.393
School hostel/Boarding	<b>7.47</b>	1.157	1.79	1.040
Other	<b>-10.67</b>	0.789	<b>-2.89</b>	0.744
Average increase per year	<b>1.34</b>	0.018		
Additional effect per year of: Step-parent	0.06	0.067	0.05	0.060
Lone-parent	0.06	0.046	-0.07	0.046
School hostel/Boarding	<b>-1.71</b>	0.161	<b>-1.45</b>	0.144
Other	0.06	0.099	-0.16	0.093
<b>Age parents left school</b>				
Reference category: Parents left school at 15, 1984 cohort	19.14	0.179		
One or more parents left school at 17+	<b>16.52</b>	0.338	<b>10.51</b>	0.347
One or more parents left school at 16	<b>5.50</b>	0.329	<b>3.12</b>	0.313
No information about parents' school leaving age	<b>-1.37</b>	0.409	-0.29	0.395
Average increase per year	<b>1.27</b>	0.030		
Additional effect per year of: parents left school at 17+	<b>-0.49</b>	0.042	<b>-0.32</b>	0.043
parents left school at 16	<b>-0.30</b>	0.042	<b>-0.15</b>	0.040
No information	<b>0.16</b>	0.051	<b>0.12</b>	0.049

### APPENDIX 3: SCOTTISH TIME-SERIES: CHANGE OVER TIME IN EFFECTS OF FAMILY BACKGROUND VARIABLES ON ATTAINMENT SCORE AT AGE 16 (CONTD)

		Modelled separately		Modelled together	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Estimate	Std. Error
<b>Social class of parents' occupation</b>					
Reference category: Professional & managerial, 1984 cohort		31.60	0.224		
Intermediate, small employers & own account workers		<b>-4.88</b>	0.333	<b>-2.97</b>	0.325
Working class		<b>-14.92</b>	0.300	<b>-10.22</b>	0.320
No information/ unclassified		<b>-20.45</b>	0.446	<b>-13.42</b>	0.493
Average increase per year		<b>1.06</b>	0.025		
Additional effect per year of:	Intermediate,	-0.02	0.039	-0.03	0.038
	Working class	<b>0.31</b>	0.037	<b>0.20</b>	0.040
	No info/ unclassified	<b>0.50</b>	0.051	<b>0.39</b>	0.058
<b>Parents' employment status</b>					
Reference category: Both parents in full-time work		25.54	0.226		
Father part-time		<b>-4.21</b>	1.292	<b>-2.36</b>	1.178
Father full-time unpaid at home		<b>-6.16</b>	1.741	<b>-3.85</b>	1.590
Mother part-time		<b>0.69</b>	0.311	<b>1.91</b>	0.287
Mother full-time unpaid at home		<b>0.66</b>	0.330	<b>1.87</b>	0.305
One or more parents unemployed		<b>-10.64</b>	0.399	<b>-5.28</b>	0.380
Other (eg disabled, retired)		<b>-7.06</b>	0.360	<b>-1.73</b>	0.364
No information		<b>-9.86</b>	0.502	<b>-3.69</b>	0.503
Average increase per year		<b>1.28</b>	0.025		
Additional effect per year of:	Father part-time	0.14	0.137	0.06	0.125
	Father full-time unpaid at home	0.06	0.215	0.06	0.196
	Mother part-time	<b>-0.09</b>	0.037	<b>-0.11</b>	0.034
	Mother full-time unpaid at home	<b>-0.13</b>	0.046	<b>-0.10</b>	0.042
	One or more parents unemployed	<b>0.19</b>	0.048	0.13	0.046
	Other (eg disabled, retired)	<b>0.34</b>	0.047	0.15	0.046
	No information	0.05	0.061	-0.02	0.078

## APPENDIX 4: BRITAIN: CHANGES IN ATTAINMENT SCORE ASSOCIATED WITH GENDER AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

	Estimate	Std Error
<b>National system</b>		
Reference category: England	33.20	0.19
Wales	-0.50	0.78
Scotland	<b>-2.22</b>	0.34
<b>Change over time</b> (Reference category: 1984 cohort)		
Average change per year	<b>1.17</b>	0.02
Additional effect per year in: Wales	0.01	0.08
o Scotland	<b>-0.19</b>	0.04
<b>Gender</b> (Reference category: Male)		
Female	0.25	0.19
Female in Wales	1.18	0.74
Female in Scotland	<b>0.96</b>	0.32
Additional increase per year by females	<b>0.23</b>	0.02
Additional effect per year by females in Wales	0.00	0.08
Additional effect per year by females in Scotland	<b>-0.10</b>	0.04
<b>Parents' social class</b> (Reference category: Professional & managerial)		
Intermediate, small employers & own account workers	<b>-8.23</b>	0.25
Working Class	<b>-14.91</b>	0.25
Unclassified	<b>-2.88</b>	0.29
Additional effects of social class per year		
Intermediate etc	<b>0.08</b>	0.03
Working Class	-0.04	0.03
Unclassified	0.00	0.03
Social class in Wales:		
Intermediate etc	1.68	1.01
Working Class	0.02	0.97
Unclassified	0.34	1.10
Additional effects of social class in Wales per year		
Intermediate,etc	-0.15	0.11
Working Class	-0.15	0.11
Unclassified	-0.23	0.13
Social class in Scotland		
Intermediate etc	<b>3.37</b>	0.44
Working Class	-0.02	0.41
Unclassified	<b>-2.60</b>	0.56
Additional effects of social class in Scotland per year		
Intermediate etc	<b>-0.10</b>	0.05
Working Class	<b>0.34</b>	0.05
Unclassified	<b>0.53</b>	0.06