

# Teacher Identities and Professionalism Research

## Scotland



### Headline Findings

#### Strong National Structures, Support and Direction

- Scotland's system is characterised by a strong commitment to national structures and frameworks developed alongside teachers and professional bodies.
- The government aims to strike a balance between creating structure and allowing space for teacher professionalism.
- The **National Improvement Framework** provides a clear central focus for system improvements

#### A positive and welcoming school environment, with a degree of autonomy

- Scottish schools typically have a positive culture with relatively low classroom disruption and high levels of learner, teacher and leader commitment.
- Teachers regularly try new approaches and feel encouraged to do so and have control of pedagogy and the implementation of the **Curriculum for Excellence**.
- The government is committed to shifting more responsibility from local authorities to schools.

#### Active partnerships and increases in collaborative professional learning

- The Scottish system has a strong and active culture of partnership and consensus building.
- The government is supporting collaboration – including 'from the middle' – through initiatives and structures.
- There is a new generation of teachers and leaders developing a collaborative culture for professional learning.

## Scottish Education System Overview

Priorities and Organisation	Teacher Roles, Recruitment and Retention	Professional Development, Teaching and Learning	Leadership, Accountability and Assessment
<h3>System Overview</h3> <p>Most pupils in Scotland (95.5%) attend state-funded schools which are owned and operated by 32 <b>Local Education Authorities</b>, with funding and national frameworks provided by the Scottish government. Scotland's education system operates largely independently of the UK system, with responsibility for funding, management, qualifications, inspections and examinations all devolved to <b>Education Scotland</b>, the executive agency of the Scottish government.</p> <p>Scottish education is organised several stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Early Learning and Childcare (age 2-5)</li> <li>■ Primary 1-7 (P1-7, age 5-12)</li> <li>■ Secondary 1-6 (S1-6, age 12-18)</li> </ul> <p>Scottish state schools, with few exceptions, are <b>fully comprehensive</b> and <b>non-selective</b>. There are currently 454 teachers able to teach Gaelic. A significant minority of teachers work in a Roman Catholic school. Relative to other OECD systems, it is common for pupils to be grouped by ability into different classes or groups within classes for some subjects.</p> <p>With a real terms cut in UK-wide budgets, Scotland is currently working with a <b>challenging funding climate</b>. The government has worked to protect Local Authority budgets and target funding to priority areas through a <b>needs-based formula</b> and designated funding streams in line with devolved school management guidelines. Local Authorities then set education budgets for their areas, providing funds to head teachers who allocate this within their school. There is additional funding for priority groups and areas such as <b>Pupil Equity Funding</b> and funds directed towards supporting probation teachers. There are also targeted initiatives such as the <b>Attainment Scotland Fund</b>, the <b>Schools Programme</b> and <b>The Innovation Fund</b>, all of which focus funds at priority areas and groups of young people.</p>	<h3>Teacher Status and Autonomy</h3> <p>The professional status of teachers in Scotland is well and long-established. The <b>General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)</b> was one of the first teaching councils in the world when it was set up in 1965. In 2012, legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament made it the world's first independent, self-regulating body for teaching.</p> <p>The <b>National Improvement Framework (NIF)</b> identifies teacher professionalism as one key driver (of 6) for school improvement. Indicators for teacher professionalism listed in the <b>NIF</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increases in masters level professional learning</li> <li>■ Inspection and LA self-evaluation checked effectiveness of moderation of teacher judgement of <b>Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)</b> levels</li> <li>■ Increasing the percentage having professional learning signed off by <b>GTCS</b> and <b>GTCS</b> information on teaching and opportunities for professional learning</li> </ul> <p>According to government materials supporting the governance review consultation (commissioned in September 2016 as one response to OECD's 2015 Improving Schools in Scotland report), the approach to governance will be based on the presumption that "decisions about children's learning and school life should be taken at school level." The government reports being committed to shifting more responsibilities from local authorities to schools.</p>	<h3>Professional development and Learning</h3> <p>The <b>Delivery Plan for Scottish Education</b> (June 2016) outlines plans for national programmes and extending the reach and impact of the <b>Scottish Attainment Challenge</b>, the foci which include staffing supply and capacity, professional learning and community learning and development. It sets out the intention to, "continue to extend the use of research to underpin the interventions and strategies used in classrooms to close the gap as part of our developing research strategy." This includes the creation of a national forum for academics and practitioners and working with all 32 local authorities to develop local action research based projects on closing the gap led by educational psychologists. Similarly, a key principle in the <b>NIF</b> is to, "use evidence to inform practice and share innovation".</p> <p>Extensive change and reforms in the Scottish education system means that keeping up to date and engaging with professional learning is of particular importance. Evaluation of the implementation of <b>Teaching Scotland's Future</b> (March 2016) suggests that there is increased collaborative work, sharing of practice and innovation taking place. Professional dialogue is being encouraged by research briefings from Education Scotland summarizing research relevant to the <b>Scottish Attainment Challenge</b>. Teachers report a greater focus, increased engagement and ownership of CPDL and greater awareness of the range of activities that can lead to professional learning). The evaluation also reports that CPDL is more relevant to teachers' needs and there is an increased focus on pupil impact. This and the GTCS standards, promote a "shared language around CPDL and pedagogy."</p> <p>The <b>GTCS</b> emphasises the importance of evidencing impact on pupil learning as part of <b>professional learning</b> and the importance of practitioner enquiry and carries out a wide range of statutory functions and initiatives to promote, support and develop the professional learning of teachers. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confirming teachers are engaging in ongoing professional learning against the appropriate GTCS Professional Standards,</li> <li>• providing access a range of support tools and</li> <li>• accrediting professional learning.</li> </ul>	<h3>Collaboration and leadership</h3> <p>According to the OECD (May 2015), 'real and active partnerships are the hallmark of the Scottish education system', with <b>Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)</b> being a good example of how partners representing different stakeholders come together to plan, implement and monitor progress. The government collaborates with <b>universities, teaching unions</b> such as EIS, NASUWT, SSTA and VOICE and many other stakeholder bodies and <b>professional associations</b> such as the Scottish College for Educational Leadership. A 2016 evaluation of the Impact of the Implementation of Teaching Scotland's Future indicates that a <b>new generation of teachers and leaders</b> are 'more focused on trying to embed a professional learning and create a culture of openness and collaboration.'</p> <p>Both the OECD and the Scottish government have recognised the benefit of <b>strengthening professional leadership and collaboration</b>. According to the Scottish government, greater leadership 'from the middle' (i.e. below national but above school-level) is 'essential'. Leadership at all levels is another key driver for improvement identified in the <b>National Improvement Framework (NIF)</b>. Programmes such as the <b>Tapestry Great Teaching – Great Learning Programme</b> have focused on developing 'leaders of learning' through master-classes, support sessions and the establishment and support of School Learning Communities for all staff led by leaders.</p> <p>An online <b>National Improvement Hub</b> has been set up to mobilise knowledge in the system. It incorporates a range of features to build collaborative learning and engage practitioners to support a self improving education system. Collaboration and stronger leadership is being encouraged in numerous other ways including <b>Attainment Advisors</b> for all local Authorities who work collaboratively alongside local authority staff on agreed priorities which support the <b>Scottish Attainment Challenge</b>. There is also support for inter-authority improvement partnerships on The Scottish Attainment Challenge community area on <b>Glow</b> (Scotland's nationally available digital environment for learning) which provides additional content and opportunities collaborative content and professional learning.</p>
<h3>National Priorities and Contexts</h3> <p>In terms of proportion of the population reaching NVQ level 4 and above, Scotland is one of the most <b>highly educated</b> countries in Europe and was an above average performer in the 2012 PISA results. <b>2015 PISA results</b>, however, have been disappointing. Dips in reading, science and maths have brought Scotland in line with the PISA average.</p> <p>Key priorities of the <b>National Improvement Framework (NIF)</b> include improvements in attainment, and in particular literacy and numeracy, closing the attainment gap between most and least disadvantaged young people, improvement in children and young peoples' health and wellbeing and improvement in employability skills and sustained positive school-leaver destinations.</p> <p>An agenda focused on <b>Excellence and equity</b> is clear across key programmes and reports which currently drive the system such as The National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence; Getting it Right for Every Child; Early Years; Teaching Scotland's Future and Developing the Young Workforce. The government is also targeting enhancements in <b>STEM Career-long professional learning</b> for practitioners, <b>workload reductions</b> and increasing the supply of <b>Gaelic teachers</b>.</p>	<h3>Training, employment and retention</h3> <p>The 2010 <b>Teaching Scotland's Future (Donaldson Report)</b>, a key report into teacher education in Scotland, made a series of recommendations of which nearly all have now been implemented. The <b>National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan</b> continues in this direction. It aims to ensuring that Scotland has a 'highly professional, skilled workforce, who can exploit fully the potential of the new curriculum.'</p> <p>Pay rates are set nationally. Following successful completion of a probation year, <b>Scottish teachers are paid</b> between £26,895-£35,763, rising with annual increments. Teachers can also earn £36,870-£43,845 with Chartered status and £38,991 – £50,319 for Principal Teachers taking on additional responsibilities. Teachers also qualify for a pension based on career average earnings and benefits such as 'death in service' cover. Every year they are entitled to 40 days holiday at full pay. Teachers in Scotland have a maximum of 22.5 hours devoted to class contact time per week.</p> <p>The <b>GTCS</b> maintains a register of teachers in Scotland and sets the professional standards for all teachers. Its accredited programmes lead to the award of GTCS Standards, and include Initial Teacher Education programmes at Scottish universities.</p> <p>Boosting <b>recruitment</b> is a current challenge for the system, with 730 unfilled vacancies across 27 of Scotland's local authority areas. The government is investing £88 million this year to recruit and retain teachers across the country and is opening up new routes into teaching. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is provided by universities in partnership with local authorities.</p>	<h3>Pedagogy, Curriculum and Classroom Culture</h3> <p>The <b>Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)</b> provides detailed guidance on objectives and aspirations for all children. Less prescriptive than previous models, it is designed to give teachers control of pedagogy and implementation, providing structure and support while allowing the flexibility to design local curricular. As the OECD noted in 2015, the curriculum in Scotland has "historically being the subject of a <b>consensual approach</b>, with some national support for locally delivered education." Scotland has many remote rural areas such as in the Highlands where the geographical spread of schools and composite mixed-age classes raise challenges for implementing the <b>CfE</b> as well as recruitment</p> <p>Scottish schools typically have a positive and welcoming environment, with communication with parents and opportunities for their involvement. Pupils report that lesson disruption is low by OECD standards. The OECD states that "learners are enthusiastic and motivated, teachers are engaged and professional, and system leaders are highly committed". The pupil-teacher ratio in local authority schools is 13.7</p>	<h3>Accountability and Assessment</h3> <p>The <b>National Improvement Framework (NIF) (2015,2017)</b> is an assessment, evaluation and improvement framework that focuses reforms. New standardised assessments are being introduced as part of the framework in 2017 alongside many other indicators to support and focus improvement with a robust and nationally consistent evidence base. The government believes that schools should primarily be accountable to parents and their local communities who can use accessible <b>NIF</b> data to make informed decisions and choices.</p> <p>The <b>accountability system</b> currently includes a range of bodies with formal roles including: the Scottish Government, local authorities, Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, the General Teaching Council for Scotland and the Scottish Social Services Council. It also includes a substantial role for moderation of teacher's professional judgement across local authority boundaries.</p>