

Education System in Scotland

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Abstract

Scotland provides leading education in the world with its dedication. Education from pre-school to higher level is the responsibility Scottish Parliament. Grant-Aided, State-funded and Independent Schools are available in Scotland. Independent Schools are very less in number. The age ranges for education specify the youngest age for a child entering that year and the oldest age for a child leaving that year. Scottish schools follow the Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) throughout the Nursery to Secondary school. Overall personality development of young generation is achieved by this education system. The Scottish Government only sets guidelines for the curriculum, giving schools more flexibility and freedom to make their own decisions about how and what to teach. Curriculum contains health and well-being, languages, mathematics, expressive arts, religious and moral education, sciences, social studies and technologies. Assessment of students is done by Scottish Qualification Authority. The results are not given to students but the complete assessment of ward is discussed in the Parent-Teacher's meeting. Four Scottish universities are in the Times Higher Education Top 200 World Universities.

Keywords

Education, Scotland, United Kingdom, assessment, students, Science and Technology

Introduction

Education is one of the most important components of society. Each country provides the education as per their requirements and objectives. Scotland provides leading education in the world with its dedication. This was the first country where universal education provided to boys and girls in the 17th century. Major reforms are accepted from time to time in Scotland. Education system here is different from other countries and throughout the world, it is very popular for its high quality. System to access children's ability is very strong and effective in this country. It is also known as employment oriented education system.

Scotland

Scotland is a country that is part of the United Kingdom. 'Covering the northern third of the island of Great Britain, mainland Scotland has a 96-mile (154 km) border with England to the southeast and is otherwise surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the north and west, the North Sea to the northeast and the Irish Sea to the south. The country also contains more than 790 islands, principally in the archipelagos of the Hebrides and the Northern Isles. Most of the population, including the capital Edinburgh, is concentrated in the Central Belt – the plain between the Scottish Highlands and the Southern Uplands – in the Scottish Lowlands.'¹

Scotland is divided into 32 administrative subdivisions or local authorities, known as council areas. Limited self-governing power, covering matters such as education, social services and roads and transportation, is devolved from the Scottish Government to each subdivision. Scotland is the second largest country in the United Kingdom.

Education System in Scotland

Education in Scotland is overseen by the Scottish Government and its executive agency Education Scotland. Education in Scotland has a history of universal provision of public education, and the Scottish education system is distinctly different from those in the other

countries of the United Kingdom. 'The Scotland Act 1998 gives the Scottish Parliament legislative control over all education matters, and the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 is the principal legislation governing education in Scotland. Traditionally, the Scottish system at secondary school level has emphasised breadth across a range of subjects, while the English, Welsh and Northern Irish systems have emphasised greater depth of education over a smaller range of subjects.'²

State schools are owned and operated by the local authorities, which act as Education Authorities, and the compulsory phase is divided into primary school and secondary school (often called high school). Schools are supported in delivering learning and teaching by Education Scotland. There are also private schools across the country, but that are very less in number.

Over all control on different factors of education including stakeholders in Scotland are by the Scottish Parliament. Scottish schools follow the Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) throughout the Nursery to Secondary school. Government has focused on inter-disciplinary learning, skills development and encouraging personal achievement of students which results in forming of different capacities in growing children. Schools are providing such an education that students turns in successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Overall personality development of this young generation is achieved by this education system.

Each school teaches the subjects like Health and well-being, Literacy and Numeracy other than general subjects. Students are free to introduce projects that use skills and knowledge from different subjects. Knowledge of their local area including history, places and people is mandatory in syllabus. Students are being asked about areas they're interested to study.

Name and figure of schools and institutes

No name is given to secondary schools in Scotland, but whatever they might be called, with just a few specific exceptions in mainly rural or island authorities, state secondary schools. Amongst the state-run secondary schools, 188 are nominally High Schools. Almost all Catholic secondaries are high schools, with the majority of the other names being non-denominational schools. 131 are nominally Academies. 15 are nominally Secondary Schools. 14 are nominally Grammar Schools. 13 are simply Schools. These schools cater for Primary as well as Secondary school children. 8 are Junior High Schools. They cater for school children from P1 to S4. 4 are Colleges. These include Madras College (in St Andrews, Fife), Marr College (in Troon, South Ayrshire) and St Joseph's College (in Dumfries, Dumfries and Galloway).

Other schools include The Community School of Auchterarder, Auchterarder, Perth and Kinross; The Nicolson Institute, Stornoway, Western Isles; North Walls Community School on Hoy, Orkney Islands and Wester Hailes Education Centre, Wester Hailes, Edinburgh. All of these are, equally, fully comprehensive non-selective schools, differing only in designation from all other state secondary schools in Scotland.

Admission and progress

Children start primary school aged between 4½ and 5½ depending on when the child's birthday falls. Scottish school policy places all those born between March of a given year and February of the following year in the same year group. Children born between March and August start school in August at between 5 and 5½ years old, and those born between September and February start school in the previous August at between age 4½ and 4 years 11 months old. In other words, after completing 4½ to 5 years, children are permitted to admit in schools. School opens in the third week of August and closes at late of June. Children born between March and August are admitted following their fifth birthday. However, parents of children born between September and December and January and February can ask the local education authority to defer their child's start date to the following August. These requests are approved automatically.

Children complete seven years of education at primary school (from P1 to P7) and a further six years at secondary school (from S1 to S6). There are five levels of Education. Early

stage - pre-school and P1, First level up to the end of P4, Second level up to the end of P7, Third and Fourth level from S1 to S3, Senior level S4 to S6, college, and so on.

Pupils remain at primary school for seven years. Then aged eleven or twelve, they start secondary school for a compulsory four years with the following two years being optional.

Curriculum

In 2003, work began on an education reform programme, to produce a new Curriculum for Excellence. This curriculum was launched in Scottish secondary schools from 2012–2013. In 2017, new reforms were introduced moving control over curriculum and schools more towards head teachers and parents.

The Scottish Government only sets guidelines for the curriculum, giving schools more flexibility and freedom to make their own decisions about how and what to teach.

There are two stages of curriculum: General Education and Senior Phase. Early years to end of S3 is for general education and from S4 to S6 is for senior phase education.

Responsibility and provision of Education

Education from pre-school to higher level is the responsibility Scottish Parliament. Policies are administered through the Education and Lifelong Learning Department. Nursery, play group or child care level education is optional. The government guarantees a place in nursery to every child with age at 4 or 5 and provides free education. During pre-school education, children get knowledge or they learn as they play. System develops essential skills which they will rely on in latter life. The preparation for primary school entry is made at this stage. At this stage, the focused points are communication and language development, emotional, personal and social development, physical development and movement, expressive and aesthetic development, knowledge and understanding of the world.

Which high school the children go to depends on the area where they live, known as the 'catchment area', which has a specific high school that takes children who live in that area. Parents can also apply for a placement request if they would like their child to attend a school outside their catchment area.

For primary education P1 to P7 the provision of one teacher to each class is there. Class is of co-education. Curriculum contains health and well-being, languages, mathematics, expressive arts, religious and moral education, sciences, social studies and technologies. In this stage, allotment of marks to language - 20%, Mathematics - 15%, Environmental Studies, Society, Science and Techeology - 19%, Expressive arts and Physical Education - 19%, Religious and moral education (including health education and personal and social development) - 15%, flexible time 20% is given.

Secondary education in Scotland runs from S1 to S6 out of which Years S1 to S4 are mandatory, S5 and S6 are optional. Secondary education in Scotland extends from age 12 to 18 but is not compulsory after the age of 16.

Lower secondary education (age 12 to 16) is divided into two stages - the first two years (S1 and S2) provide a general education based on the 5-14 program and the second two years (S3 and S4) contain specialist elements and vocational education.

Upper secondary education (age 16 to 18 - S5 and S6) covers the final two years of the secondary school and gives vocational training, employment or higher education. National qualifications are available at 5 stages in upper secondary.

In Scotland, pupils sit National 4/5 exams at the age of 15/16, normally for between 6 and 8 subjects including compulsory exams in English and Mathematics. Students have two hours of physical education a week; each school may vary these compulsory combinations. The school leaving age is generally 16 (after completion of National 4/5s), after which students may choose to remain at school and study for Higher and/or Advanced Higher exams.

Assessment

General screening takes place in P1 to assess children's ability at the starting of the school. This is called as SNSA. It means Standardized Assessments in Literacy and Numeracy.

It is implemented in 2017. P1 children take two SNSA assessments: one in literacy and one in numeracy. P4, P7 and S3 children take three SNSA assessments: one in reading, one in writing and one in numeracy.

Assessment is done by SQA (Scottish Qualification Authority). SQA national certificate is awarded to successful students. Colleges provide SQA national qualifications and Scottish group awards. The assessments are executed online and are marked automatically. The assessments do not include remarks like Passed or Failed. Each assessment has 30 to 41 questions, depending on the year group and subject. The computerized assessment system is adaptive if a child finds the questions difficult the questions will get easier, and if a child is doing well, the questions will become more challenging. The assessments are as short as possible and designed to be completed in around 45 minutes. Children do not have to revise for the assessments, which are used to assist teachers to understand well how properly kids are progressing and to design his teaching accordingly.

Results

SNSA provides data information of students to teachers which they may share to teacher of next year. The results are not given to students but the complete assessment of ward is discussed in the Parent-Teacher's meeting. At local level and at national level, SNSA data aims to offer a complete and consistent picture of children's academic progress in Scottish schools. School level data shared to teachers and local authorities and national level data shared to Scottish Government in this system.

Grant-Aided, State-funded and Independent Schools

State-funded schools

These are schools under the management of an education authority. These schools do not charge fees to attend and have no entrance restrictions. Both denominational and non-denominational schools fall within this category. In the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 they are also referred to as 'public schools'.

Grant-Aided schools

Grant-Aided schools are independent of their education authority and can decide on their own governance, but are directly funded by the Scottish Ministers. There is one mainstream Grant-Aided school in Scotland, Jordanhill School. The remaining seven Grant-Aided schools are special schools. Despite their status, several of these schools are members of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools.

Independent schools:

There is also a facility to provide education outside the state system. But the independent or private schools are only 4% approximately of total schools. Parents have to pay fees for these schools. Most of the independent schools are members of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) in which they can come together to discuss matters of common interest and organise training for their staff and governing bodies. There is no legal requirement for independent schools to follow a particular teaching programme.

As independent schools are not under management of an education authority and so do not receive direct state funding. To qualify as a school, it must provide full-time education for at least five pupils of school age. Schools of this type are required to register and are subject to inspections. Most are members of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools.

Further education

Further education is provided through a network of further education colleges available to people having reached the end of compulsory education at 16. In the early 2010s, a number of colleges were merged to form larger, regional institutions. They offer a wide range of vocational qualifications to young people and older adults, including vocational, competency-based qualifications, Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas. The first two years of

higher education are in the form of Higher National Diplomas are taken in a Further Education college followed by attendance at University.

Further education colleges also grant aid to apprenticeship programmes which are coordinated by the public body Skills Development Scotland.

Further Education colleges also provide the pre-employment training, training for employees, course in the work place, evening classes for vocational and non vocational trades, distance learning, community education and English as a foreign language.

Higher Education / Universities

‘Higher Education is provided by 16 autonomous universities and 3 Higher Education Institutions, which receive government funding through the Scottish Funding Council.’³ Higher Education Institutions also offer courses like Pre-Course English as a Foreign Language, Sub-Degree Courses, First Degree Courses, Education And Training of Teachers, Post-Graduate Programmes for Master's, Courses Preparing for Qualification Awarded by Professional Body, Research Projects, Supervision of Research Programmes for Doctorates.

The regular pattern is of 3 years for students studying for first degrees i.e. general or ordinary degrees or 4 academic years to attain the Honors degree. This includes higher specialization. Some courses like medicine are traditionally longer. Degrees awarded in Scotland are recognized in UK and across the world.

Scottish universities generally have courses a year longer, typically 4 years, than elsewhere in UK, though it is often possible for students to take more advanced specialized exams and join the courses at the second year. One unique aspect is that the ancient universities of Scotland issue a Master of Arts as the first degree in humanities.

The universities offer a wide range of courses inclusive of arts, social sciences and humanities, medicine, law, science and engineering. The other institutions have specialness in specific areas like health care, art and design, music and drama, textile technology, agriculture or teacher training.

Universities and other institutions of higher education have the authority to award academic degrees at all levels: undergraduate, taught postgraduate, and doctoral. Students ordinarily resident in Scotland or the European Union do not pay tuition fees for their first undergraduate degree, but tuition fees are charged for those from the rest of the United Kingdom. All students are required to pay tuition fees for postgraduate education like M.Sc., Ph.D., except in certain priority areas funded by the Scottish Government, or if another source.

Qualifications

The majority of Scottish pupils take Scottish Qualifications, Certificate qualifications provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Generally, most pupils take National 4/5s in S3-S4, and Highers in S5. The number of National 4/5 qualifications a pupil enters can vary drastically depending on the individual. For those who wish to remain at school for the final year (S6), more Highers and Advanced Highers in S6 can be taken. Pupils can go to university at the end of S5, as Highers provide the entry requirements for Scottish universities where degrees are normally four years long; however, recently it is more common for students to remain until S6, taking further Highers and/or taking Advanced Highers. The majority of English universities, the most popular choice for Scottish students who wish to study university degrees outside of Scotland, require Advanced Higher qualification levels as these are deemed by the English universities to be most similar to A-levels.

Religion in schools

The majority of schools is non-denominational, and includes the parish schools, pioneered by the Church of Scotland and other Protestant Churches, which became state schools in 1872. Religious education is taught in schools. Of over 2,500 schools in Scotland, there are 366 state schools which are Roman Catholic, three Episcopalian and one Jewish. The Education

(Scotland) Act 1918 brought Roman Catholic schools within the State education system, ensuring the promotion of a Roman Catholic ethos within such schools.

Music education

Music education is available at several levels. Formal music education begins at 4½ years and can progress as high as postgraduate studies. Music education can take place within a Scottish Music school; through a music service or privately.

Inspections and audits

Inspections and audits of educational standards are conducted by three bodies: Care Inspectorate inspects care standards in pre-school provision; Education Scotland for pre-school, primary, education, further and community education; with the Scottish office of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA Scotland) responsible for higher education.

Conclusion

In 2014, research by the Office for National Statistics found that Scotland was the most highly educated country in Europe and among the most well-educated in the world in terms of tertiary education attainment. Here, Government funded schools are free for children aged 5–19. In many cases, this applies to children of international post-graduate students and other immigrants.

The age ranges for education specify the youngest age for a child entering that year and the oldest age for a child leaving that year.

All educational qualifications in Scotland are part of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, ranging between Scottish Qualifications Authority qualifications, Scottish Vocational Qualifications and higher education qualifications.

‘Four Scottish universities are in the Times Higher Education Top 200 World Universities and more than 94% of international students studying here think that Scotland is a good place to be.’⁴ Scottish universities are globally famous for ‘world- leading’ studies. Nine out of ten graduates get employment or opportunity of further study within six months of graduation. This is due to many of the education institutions working in partnership with employers, to prepare college students for transition in the work place.

‘Scotland is the one of the first European country to establish a quality assurance system for its Educational Institutions.’⁵ Scottish education provides most chances of employment. It is having high quality throughout the world. Scotland is home to more world-class universities per capita than almost anywhere else in the world and has the highest concentration of universities in Europe.

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