What Have We Learned...

Gallagher, T. (2015). What Have We Learned.... What have we learned from fifty years of Scottish comprehensive schooling?, Edinburgh, United Kingdom.
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ...
The end of academic selection?

1973 - Advisory Council on Education

1976 - Labour Direct Rule Minister

2001 - Burns Report

2002 - Minister of Education

2006 - Education Order

2008 – Ministerial decision on 11+ tests
NI research into the effects of selective education (Gallagher and Smith, 2000)

**Primary schools**
- Test preparation
- Disrupted ‘normal’ curriculum
- Test results affected by social background

**Post primary schools**
- Social patterns to school access
- Bipolar pattern of performance
  - High achieving grammars
  - Long tail of low achievement

**Education**
- Perceptions of system mediated by location
- Divides pupils, parents and teachers
School leaver patterns Northern Ireland & Scotland (1990s)
2013 transfer preferences: difference between 1\textsuperscript{st} preferences & places

Grammar schools

Secondary schools
% of pupils entering grammar schools

Percentage of pupils

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Performance change 1992/93 & 2012/13
% Year 12 pupils with 5+ good GCSEs
% school leavers with 5+ good GCSEs
1963/64 to 2013/14
% school leavers with 3+ A Levels, 1986/87 to 2013/14
Number of school leavers
1986/87 to 2013/14 entering ...

... higher education

... further education

Boys
Girls

Boys
Girls
School performance, 2012/13, by sector:
% Year 12 with 5+ good GCSEs inc. Maths/English
Social patterns, grammar & secondary schools, 2014/15

- % entitled to free school meals
- % on special needs register
- % unfilled places

Percentage of pupils

Grammar | secondary
Social achievement gaps: all pupils, 2012/13

- 5+ GCSEs
- 5+ GCSEs inc Maths/English
- 7+ GCSEs
- 7+ GCSEs inc Maths/English

Percentage Year 12 pupils:
- All pupils
- FSME
Speaking notes 1

• Fairness at the heart of the discussion
  – in NI attempt to suggest that fairness and excellence were add-offs
  – PISA evidences suggests this is not so, that fairness and excellence are both possible

• Strong theme to the book - balancing liberty, equality and fraternity

• Comprehensive approach originally based on a number of core principles:
  – Localism
  – uniformity

• The consequences of moving away from these foundational principles
Speaking notes 2

• How do you deal with the challenge that not all children come to school from the same position

• And how do you deal with the challenge that the outcomes from school are not equally valued

• Challenge one: the challenge of social background and the consequences of social disadvantage
  – not just an educational problem
  – not something that can be solved by schools alone
  – principle of fraternity important as it emphasizes the role of community

• Challenge two: the challenge of unequal outcomes, and their impact particularly on post-compulsory education
  – the relative status of academic and vocational qualifications
  – getting beyond a narrow focus on qualifications alone
Speaking notes 3

• Interesting ideas:
  – wider range of pathways
  – graduation certification
  – recognising much wider range of contributions

• In NI approaching this a different way:
  – diversity an inevitable part of the system - grammar and secondary, also Protestant, Catholic and integrated, Irish medium
  – see schools as an interdependent network, not a system of autonomous units
  – look for networked solutions
  – schools having some degree of responsibility for all the young people in the area where it is based, not just the young people in the school

• Neil Postman - The end of education
  – focus on the social role of US public schools
  – education is a constantly evolving system trying to help build a cohesive society
  – the ways in which this is done changes over time
Speaking notes 4

• Civic conversation
  – the need for a more coherent sense of what Scotland wants from education
    • individual mobility
    • human capital
    • social cohesion
    • cultural capital

• Agreed goals and agreed criteria
  – not criteria for diversity
  – criteria for education, against which implementation of diversity would be tested