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1 Introduction

This report on the state of literacy in Scotland is one of a series produced in 2015 and 2016 by ELINET, the European Literacy Policy Network. ELINET was founded in February 2014 and has 78 partner organisations in 28 European countries. ELINET aims to improve literacy policies in its member countries in order to reduce the number of children, young people and adults with low literacy skills. One major tool to achieve this aim is to produce a set of reliable, up-to-date and comprehensive reports on the state of literacy in each country where ELINET has one or more partners, and to provide guidance towards improving literacy policies in those countries. The reports are based (wherever possible) on available, internationally comparable performance data, as well as reliable national data provided (and translated) by our partners.

ELINET continues the work of the European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy (HLG) which was established by the European Commission in January 2011 and reported in September 2012. All country reports produced by ELINET use a common theoretical framework which is described here: “ELINET Country Reports – Frame of Reference”.

The Country Reports are organised around the three recommendations of the HLG’s literacy report:

- Creating a literate environment
- Improving the quality of teaching
- Increasing participation, inclusion (and equity).

Within its two-year funding period ELINET has completed Literacy Country Reports for all 30 ELINET member countries. In most cases we published separate Long Reports for specific age groups (Children / Adolescents and Adults), in some cases comprehensive reports covering all age groups. Additionally, for all 30 countries, we published Short Reports covering all age groups, containing the summary of performance data and policy messages of the Long Reports. These reports are accompanied by a collection of good practice examples which cover all age groups and policy areas as well. These examples refer to the European Framework of Good Practice in Raising Literacy Levels; both are to be found in the section “Good Practice”.

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1 For more information about the network and its activities see: www.eli-net.eu.
2 In the following, the final report of the EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy is referenced as “HLG report”. This report can be downloaded under the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf.
3 See: http://www.eli-net.eu/research/country-reports/.
4 “Equity” was added by ELINET.
2 General Information about the Scottish Education System

A constituent country within the United Kingdom (UK), Scotland’s devolved administration (known initially as the Scottish Executive and from 2008 as the Scottish Government) has responsibility for a number of areas including education. Historically, Scotland has always benefited from its own unique education and assessment systems, over which it has policy control. It has its own national curriculum (covering ages 3 to 18), its own qualifications, and its own forms of system evaluation. School resourcing for learning and teaching is the responsibility of the 32 local education authorities.

The school system is organised into four major stages (Figure 1): preschool, primary, lower secondary, and what is now known as ‘the Senior Phase’, which includes curriculum provision delivered in both schools and further education colleges. Compulsory education lasts 11 years, from age 5 to age 16, spanning primary and secondary education. Gaelic-medium and mixed-medium schools are an alternative to English-medium schools for the minority Gaelic community. Most children with special needs are accommodated in mainstream schools.

Figure 1: Structure of the Scottish School System

Local authorities have a duty to secure a part-time funded place in an early learning and childcare centre for every child, from the beginning of the school term after the child’s third birthday. As a result, preschool attendance is almost universal for 3-4 year olds in Scotland, and the Government’s focus is now on the promotion of pre-school education for those 2-year-olds considered to be disadvantaged. Compulsory education starts at an age between 4½ and 5½. Pupils spend seven years in primary education (classes P1 to P7), the longest period internationally (OECD 2014a, p.430). They then move on into the first of the three years they will spend in the lower secondary school (classes S1 to S3), spending the last year (S4) of compulsory education in what is now known as ‘the Senior Phase’. At the end of this period of compulsory education students can in principle choose to continue their education in the secondary school (classes S5, S6), transfer to a further education college to pursue more vocationally-oriented courses, or leave education for the world of work.

A new curriculum 3-18, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), was launched in the early years and primary sectors in 2009, with introduction into lower secondary schools following one year later, and sequential roll-out into the ‘Senior Phase’ then completing the transformation. For a comprehensive overview of
the essential features of CfE see OECD (2015), and for a review and evaluation of CfE implementation to date, see Education Scotland (2015a).

Pupils’ health and wellbeing as well as development of sound literacy and numeracy skills are considered integral to progress in all areas of the curriculum. Described as ‘aspects across learning’, responsibility for health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy is assigned to all teachers at all levels of education, whatever their subject specialism.

In anticipation of the arrival of the new curriculum into Scotland’s secondary schools in 2010, the Scottish Qualifications Authority focused on developing new and revised National Qualifications to reflect CfE’s values, overarching purposes and curriculum design principles (challenge and enjoyment, personalisation and choice, breadth, depth, coherence, relevance and progression). The new unit-based qualifications, National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, were designed to provide learners with the opportunity to develop subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding, and skills for learning, life and work.

Of particular interest in the context of this ELINET report is the fact that National Literacy Units, that aim to develop the four skills of reading, writing, listening and talking, are available at National 3, 4 and 5. While these units are mandatory components in the National 3 and National 4 English and Gaelic courses, they are available on a free-standing basis at all levels for those learners who want or need certification of their literacy skills, including adult learners.

As far as system evaluation is concerned, Scotland has long benefitted from its own domestic national assessment programmes, whose findings complement and enrich those of the international survey programmes in which the country participates.
3 Literacy Performance Data

Scotland participated in the IEA’s first two PIRLS surveys, carried out in 2001 and 2006, and has taken part in the OECD’s PISA since 2000. As a result, the reading attainment of Scottish students at ages 10 and 15 can be set in an international context.

The average reading performances of Scottish 10-year-olds in PIRLS 2001 and 2006 were similar across years and across both reading and reading comprehension processes (Mullis et al. 2007). Scotland’s performance was slightly lower than the average across participating EU countries, but with greater spread. In the secondary sector, while the average reading test performance of Scottish 15-year-olds in the PISA surveys has fluctuated over the period (2000-2012), it has always been above the average for participating EU countries (see OECD 2014b for the latest, 2012, results). The performance spread for Scottish students has been lower than the average among the participating EU countries: the proportion of top-performing readers has been close to the average, whereas the proportion of students considered as low-performing readers has typically been lower.

In 2009, reading literacy was the principal focus in the PISA survey (OECD 2010a). Although based on rather small subsamples in the case of students with an immigrant background, the reading performance gap between native students and those with an immigrant background was lower in Scotland than in EU countries on average, as was the performance gap between those Scottish students who always spoke the language of the test at home and those who did not (OECD 2010b).

As has been the case in many countries around the world, at both ages 10 and 15 girls produced significantly better reading performances than boys in all surveys, complementing findings for primary and lower secondary pupils in national assessment surveys for both reading and writing (Scottish Government 2015a). Scotland has also evidenced a strong socioeconomic gap in performance, for reading in the international surveys and for reading and writing in national assessment surveys.

Scotland did not participate in the first, 2012, survey within the OECD’s Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), having carried out its own domestic survey three years earlier, viz. the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies (SSAL). Some key findings from the SSAL (St. Clair et al. 2010) were that almost three-quarters of the Scottish working age population had a level of literacies recognised internationally as appropriate for a contemporary society, and that almost one person in every hundred faced serious literacy challenges in their daily lives. One of the key factors linked to lower literacy capabilities was confirmed as poverty, with adults living in the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland being more likely to have literacies capabilities at the lower end of the scale.
4 Key Literacy Policy Areas for Development (age-specific and across age-groups)

4.1 Creating a Literate Environment

The EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy stated the following in relation to creating a more literate environment:

“Creating a more literate environment will help stimulate a culture of reading, i.e. where reading for pleasure is seen as the norm for all children and adults. Such a culture will fuel reading motivation and reading achievement: people who like to read, read more. Because they read more, they read better, and because they read better they read more: a virtuous circle which benefits individuals, families and society as a whole.” (HLG 2012, p.41).

Parents play a central role in children’s emergent literacy development. They are the first teachers, and shape children’s language and communication abilities and attitudes to reading by being good reading role models, providing reading materials, and reading to the child.

Schools play an important role in offering a literate environment for students. Schools may foster reading motivation and reading for pleasure in many ways. However, schools do not have sole responsibility. A broad range of actors may shape literacy motivation, from parents and peers to libraries. Particularly this is true in adolescence as it is a crucial phase in life where young people develop long-term identities and self-concepts related to reading and media use (cf. ELINET Country Reports, Frame of Reference, pp. 29ff, 45f).

4.1.1 Pre-Primary Years

Creating a literate environment at home: The home learning environment, particularly in the first three years, is extremely important. It determines the quantity and quality of interactions between the infant and the primary caregivers, who are the most powerful agents of language development, both receptive and expressive, in the context of everyday activities and experiences. During these years, experience-dependent creation of synapses is maximal. We know that the more words the children are exposed to, the more they can learn. Caregiver-child relations in their turn strongly influence the ability to learn, by influencing self-esteem, general knowledge and motivation.

In 2010 the Scottish Government published an action plan on literacy designed to help raise standards of literacy for all, from early years to adulthood (Scottish Government 2010). Among the strategies outlined in the plan, the Government pledged a range of support for parents to help young children develop literacy skills. This included plans to support parents who were experiencing their own literacy difficulties. In relation to the impact of the home learning environment on very young children in particular, the final report on the literacy action plan (Scottish Government 2015b) confirms continued financial support for programmes which encourage parents to support early literacy development. From 2014, the revised Parentzone6 website, hosted by Education Scotland, has been providing parents with new and updated information to help them support their children’s learning.

6 http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/.
4.1.2 Children and Adolescents

Creating a literate environment in school: All practitioners, from preschool through primary and secondary, have formal responsibility for delivering the new curriculum (CfE). In line with this, there is an expectation that a literacy rich environment will be provided within all curriculum areas for learners at all ages:

In planning for learning in any curriculum area it is important for practitioners to ensure that children and young people encounter a wide range of different types of text in different media. As they progress in their learning, children and young people will encounter texts of increasing complexity in terms of length, structure, vocabulary ideas and concepts. (LTS 2009, p.4)

The final report on the Government’s Literacy Action Plan (Scottish Government 2015b) re-emphasises the high priority given to literacy in CfE, with all teachers assigned responsibility for developing literacy skills, irrespective of the age-group or the subject they teach. Literacy features prominently in National Qualifications, and is one of five key themes in a Government initiative entitled Raising Attainment for All (RAfA)7.

The 3-18 Curriculum Review of Literacy and English Provision in Schools (Education Scotland 2015a) also reports on progress in implementing the Literacy Action Plan (Scottish Government 2010), and identifies a number of strengths. These include young people enjoying their reading as a result of their access to, and engagement with, a wider range of relevant and stimulating contexts; staff feeling more confident in using CfE guidance to ensure learners make continuous progress; early intervention and partnership working being used effectively across sectors to support literacy development; and where there is strong leadership for literacy there are indications of improvement in the learning experiences provided and in pupils’ performance.

The Review also highlights a need to prioritise raising attainment in literacy across all sectors and suggests staff in schools and local authorities might work together to drive up standards by: reducing inequity; ensuring literacy development across all curriculum areas; improving transitions to build on prior learning; tracking and monitoring progress, and planning assessment as part of learning. Importantly, among the recommendations in the Review is reference to the need for all staff to develop children’s advanced literacy skills in order to challenge their thinking and involve them more actively in the process of learning.

Offering digital literacy learning opportunities in schools (and other public spaces, e.g. libraries): One area that continues to need strengthening is the digital environment in schools. A current national priority is the provision of digital learning resources to help ensure that all students and teachers in every school throughout the country can benefit from the potential of technology to support learning and teaching8. Resource provision alone, however, will not guarantee the ultimate aim of effective use of the new resource for improving student learning and attainment. In common with many other countries in Europe and elsewhere, there is an urgent need for the provision of ICT training for teachers at all levels if the widespread provision of digital learning devices is to be exploited effectively to improve student attainment in literacy and other areas.

7 http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/Raisingeducationalattainment/RAFA
8 http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Procurement/directory/IThardware/tabletdevices
On the evidence of National Literacy Trust research – described below – the current Government initiative to provide every teacher and learner in Scotland with a digital learning device should further support attempts to reduce, if not eliminate, the currently persisting gender and deprivation gaps in literacy.

**Strengthening the role of public libraries:** The 3-18 Curriculum Review of Literacy and English (Education Scotland 2015a) reports many early learning and childcare settings, as well as primary schools, making good use of local libraries to increase children’s opportunities to engage with books. A pilot project that involved automatic enrolment in public libraries seems likely to result in a recommendation that all local authorities should take automatic enrolment approaches forward (Scottish Government 2015b). The Parentzone website suggests a number of fun ideas to encourage good reading habits, one of which encourages library visits.

**Literate environments for children and adolescents: Programmes, initiatives and examples:** Statistics provided by The Reading Agency⁹ indicate that increasing numbers of children in Scotland are participating in their annual Summer Reading Challenge (sponsored in Scotland by Tesco Bank), in which young people are challenged to read six books during their extended summer break. Funding allows each local authority to purchase materials for 300 children and arrange a visit from an author. The total number participating in 2014, at well over 41,000, was an increase of 18% on the numbers involved in 2011. Youth literacy features in the National Youth Work Strategy¹⁰.

The National Literacy Trust has run several initiatives throughout the UK, including in Scotland, to motivate children and adults, and in particular boys and men, to engage with reading. Projects such as Premier League Reading Stars¹¹, designed for children aged 9-13, and Sports Stories, hold great appeal for a male audience in particular, using the motivational power of sport to promote literacy. Thousands of children over recent years have participated in Premier League Reading Stars, and formal impact evaluations have repeatedly found that while reading interest, attitudes and attainment have improved for all participants, this is especially so for younger children, for children from deprived backgrounds, and for boys (e.g. Pabion & Clark, 2015).

The Trust has also been exploring the potential of technologies for improving literacy. A recent research study investigated the impact of access to an ebooks platform on pupils’ reading motivation and skills (Picton & Clark, 2015). The impact on participants from primary and secondary schools across the UK was positive in several important respects. Confidence in reading grew among pupils who claimed to find reading difficult at the start of the project. Interest in reading also increased, as did reading enjoyment and reading frequency, partly in response to the greater variety of reading matter available. All of these benefits were greater for boys than for girls.

### 4.1.3 Adults

**Fostering literacy provision for adults:** The Big Plus is an awareness raising campaign focused on adult literacy and numeracy, funded and managed by Skills Development Scotland and supported by Education Scotland. The campaign’s objective is to attract adults who need support with reading, writing or number skills into learning. Free tuition is provided in the main by local authorities and

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partners. A website\textsuperscript{12} and helpline offer advice and put people in touch with tutors. Adults with literacy needs can self-refer through the Big Plus, or be referred by Job Centre Plus, by family members or support services, or sometimes by CLD or voluntary sector practitioners. Referrals start with strengths of learners.

A diverse range of provision is offered, with funding provided by several sources, principal among them being the 32 local authorities, the college sector and the voluntary sector. Access to programmes is designed to be flexible and to reach out to learners in the places they use and can get support.

The refreshed Adult Literacies in Scotland Strategy 2020 (Scottish Government 2011a) advises that adult literacy providers must ensure their services adapt as the use of literacies change and evolve and technology continues to have an impact on the skills people need. Online and blended learning should continue to be developed in order to reach more learners, offer alternative modes of learning and provide learners with increased opportunities to access learning. A survey-based evaluation of progress over the period 2010-2015 (Education Scotland 2015b) records both a number of achievements and some issues. Strong infrastructure arrangements (staffing and resources in particular) were viewed by respondents as key to improving literacies provision in the next five years. Accessibility was also viewed as a priority in order to continue to remove barriers and improve access for all learners.

The National Framework for Local Action (Scottish Government 2014a) sets out how the Scottish Government is working in partnership with public, private and third sector organisations to ensure that all sections of Scottish society are able to make confident use of digital technologies and the internet. Action is intended to remove barriers to digital participation, tackle inequalities, help people to engage with online public services, and provide opportunities to develop skills required for active digital citizens.

### 4.2 Improving the Quality of Teaching

The quality of teaching consists of several aspects:

- the quality of preschool
- coherent literacy curricula
- high-quality reading instruction,
- early identification of and support for struggling literacy learners
- highly qualified teachers (cf. Frame of Reference for ELINET Country Reports).

Particularly crucial is the quality of teaching and of teachers, and indeed of headteachers.

#### 4.2.1 Pre-Primary Years

**The quality of preschool education:** Scotland’s Early Years Framework (Scottish Government 2008a) attempted to reconceptualise early years provision, in particular by redefining early years as pre-birth to 8 years of age. National Practice Guidance\textsuperscript{13} (Scottish Government 2014b) subsequently moved away from the name ‘pre-school education’ to a more inclusive title Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). ELC encompasses the range of provision available: local authority schools and settings, Gaelic medium settings, private settings, voluntary groups and childminders. The same document advised that the

\textsuperscript{12} www.thebigplus.com

\textsuperscript{13} http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00458455.pdf
term ‘Practitioners’ should encompass all staff and adults working with children under 5 years of age. Mention is also made (Scottish Government 2014b, p.9) of the subtle differences between ELC and ECEC, a common term used in some other European countries.

This diverse ELC provision is reflected in differences in work environments, qualifications, recruitment and retention and career progression (Naumann et al. 2013, Chapter 2; Scottish Government 2014b; Siraj & Kingston 2015). According to Scottish Government statistics (2015c) three quarters of children in eligible ELC centres appear to have access to a teacher (i.e. professionally qualified and registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland) under a regular arrangement but, even within pre-school settings traditionally managed by local authorities, staff fulfil different roles and are likely to possess very different qualifications.

Where a teacher is deployed, s/he (3% of the workforce are male) will have completed a four-year undergraduate course in education, or gained a Post-graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) after a general four-year degree course. Thereafter, all fully-registered teachers are contractually obliged to engage in career-long professional learning.

Managers of ELC centres must now hold a degree in Childhood Practice, but the staff who prepare activities and work directly with children (nursery nurses and nursery assistants) may be less well qualified: Early Years Care at Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) level 3 is the minimum for nursery nurses, and, while nursery assistants require no formal qualifications, SVQ level 2 in Early Years Care and Education is considered appropriate14.

An independent review of the ELC and Out of School (OSC) workforce (Siraj & Kingston 2015) recommended a long-term programme supporting professional development, qualifications and training to ensure that early years professionals have the requisite skills to focus on and enhance children’s learning, as well as providing childcare.

**Preschool language and literacy curriculum:** Curriculum for Excellence provides a framework for what should be possible at different stages in education, from preschool to upper secondary school, and the areas of learning considered to be of highest importance. A structure for learning is provided, and annotated exemplification has been published online15 to support practitioners’ professional judgements.

Within this curriculum structure, literacy is defined as ‘the set of skills which allow an individual to engage fully in society and learning through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful’ (LTS 2009, p.1). Experiences and outcomes (Es&Os) for Early Level (pre-school through to the first year of primary education – P1) take account of emergent literacy; Reading, and Talking and Listening, contain Es&Os intended to support language development and understanding of grammar.

Young children in Scotland are introduced to the language of books through activities and tasks based on the CfE Es&Os for Reading, and for Listening and Talking. At Early Level in particular, there is strong emphasis in the Scottish curriculum on building the foundations for lifelong learning by motivating and engaging young learners. Active learning is considered key (Scottish Government 2008b) and many of the Literacy and English Es&Os begin with the words ‘I enjoy exploring...’ (LTS 2009),

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15 www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/assessment/supportmaterials/nar
prompting learning experiences which promote discovery, personalisation and choice, and provide a motivating stimulus for learning.

**Early language and literacy screening and training:** All children receive a health review at between 27 and 30 months, during which the Sure Start Language Measure\(^{16}\) is used to assess children’s language development and identify children who may benefit from further investigation or support. Reported national data (Scottish Government 2015c) indicates that difficulty with speech and language accounted for 10% of all new referrals.

### 4.2.2 Children and Adolescents

**Literacy curricula and reading instruction in schools:** In Scotland the development of pupils’ literacy skills has been designated a cross-curricular task in the national curriculum (CfE), and all teachers are expected to be able to develop such skills, whatever their subject specialism. This requirement can be expected to increase the overall curriculum time devoted to language and literacy instruction throughout schooling.

**The quality of pre-service and in-service teacher training:** In Scotland, teachers are highly educated. Nevertheless, a recent review of initial and continuing teacher education commissioned by the Scottish Government (Donaldson 2011) contained a number of recommendations and, in 2012, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)\(^{17}\), which sets the Standards for teachers in all levels of education in the country, published three sets of revised Standards:

- The Standards for Registration (Provisional, Full) (GTCS 2012a)
- The Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning (GTCS 2012b)
- The Standards for Leadership and Management (Middle Leadership, Headship) (GTCS 2012c)

Initial teacher education (ITE) in Scotland is provided by universities in partnership with schools and local authorities, through programmes accredited by GTCS (2013), which sets minimum standards for student admission (GTCS 2015). A National Qualification Course award in English at SCQF Level 6 is essential for entry to all teacher education programmes, while a National Qualification Course award in Mathematics at SCQF Level 5 is the minimum requirement for entry to all teacher education programmes. Individual universities will impose additional requirements, depending on the popularity of their courses and the school sector candidates intend to qualify to work in.

There are a number of different routes to becoming a primary teacher (GTCS 2015, p.3). All involve a minimum of four years’ study at degree level and include an undergraduate combined or concurrent degree programmes or a postgraduate diploma in education following degree-level study.

A teaching qualification for secondary education is awarded in a specific subject following:

- a B.Ed. degree in music, physical education or technological education;
- a combined degree or concurrent degree which involves the study of education as well as a specific subject, and school experience; or
- a PGDE programme after a degree in a specific subject (p.4).

The length of in-school placement is dependent on the course. The combined degree route (both sectors) requires 30 weeks of school placement experience, with the option for B.Ed. (Technology) students of spending six of those on an industrial, commercial or service organisation placement. In

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\(^{16}\) www.govscot/Publications/2012/12/1478/9

\(^{17}\) www.gtcs.org.uk
the concurrent degree, school placement experience ‘must be at least equivalent to the 18 weeks required for the PGDE’ (GTCS 2013, p.5). In the PGDE, 18 weeks is approximately 50% of the course.

Many primary school teachers are likely to have undertaken degree courses with an emphasis on education, whereas most secondary teachers qualify through the PGDE following a degree in a subject specialism. As a result, primary teachers’ may not have the deep subject knowledge of their secondary counterparts, while secondary teachers may have focused less on pedagogical aspects and had less school placement experience. The focus for secondary teachers is often on their subject, so that the requirement in CfE that literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are the responsibility of all – irrespective of subject domain – remains an issue for some.

All intending teachers in Scotland must meet The Standards for Registration (GTCS 2012a). For Scottish trained teachers, Provisional Registration is awarded on completion of a GTCS accredited university ITE programme, with Full Registration on successful completion of a probationary period in school. The Teacher Induction Scheme is a national programme which guarantees a teaching post for newly-qualified Scottish-trained teachers in one of five local authorities of their choosing. Participating teachers are allocated an experienced teacher as mentor and have a reduced class commitment, equal to 82% of that of a full-time teacher, allowing time for their continuing professional development. Once Full Registration is achieved, the Standard for Full Registration is the baseline Standard for competence which all teachers have to continue to demonstrate through their career.

The quality and take-up of continuing professional development (CPD): Teachers in Scotland must complete a minimum of 35 hours CPD per year. To ensure continuing registration, teachers are expected to demonstrate career-long commitment to, and engagement in, professional learning, including continuing engagement in PRD (professional review and development), maintenance of a reflective record of professional learning and associated evidence of its impact, and 5-yearly confirmation of engagement in the Professional Update process with GTC Scotland (the Professional Update sign-off).

Since the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, many local authority CPD programmes have focused on reading literacy to support its implementation, and schools have tended to focus on literacy or numeracy in scheduled collegiate time. Teachers and schools are encouraged to make use of self-evaluation to identify and inform their priorities for improvement.

It is difficult to quantify the time spent on literacy development as there is currently no requirement for professional development focusing specifically on literacy. However, when asked in a recent survey questionnaire enquiry to report on their Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL) activity in the area of literacy over the previous 12 months, fully 85% of responding primary teachers and secondary English teachers, and 60-70% of secondary non-English subject teachers, reported that they had taken part in sharing standards and moderation, reading and discussing the CfE literacy Es&Os with colleagues, and engaging in professional enquiry through reading/personal study (Scottish Government 2015b, p.40).

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18 For teachers who qualified outside Scotland see www.gtcs.org.uk for registration information.
19 http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-update.aspx
4.2.3 Adults

Monitoring the quality of adult literacy providers: Education Scotland is the national body in Scotland responsible for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching from early years to adult and community learning. Annual inspections are carried out in samples of educational providers, from preschools and schools, to community learning and development services, colleges, and residential educational provision. Inspection models are in the process of review.

Developing curricula for adult literacy: The Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework (Scottish Executive 2010, under revision in 2015) advises a social practice approach to adult learning in Scotland. Learners are supported to define their own goals and self-assess their progress (with tutor support) towards these goals. Progress is monitored in terms of ‘distance travelled’, regarded as being as important as gaining qualifications, although many learners want to take their learning forward to accreditation.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is Scotland’s national qualifications framework, and is designed to promote lifelong learning and to support learners, learning providers and employers. Scottish Qualifications Authority Core Skills Units, including newly introduced units in Literacy at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5 that focus on reading, writing, talking and listening skills, provide opportunities for adult learners to gain national recognition for skills, whether developed formally or informally. Revised Core Skill Units offer a more flexible approach to assessment, particularly suited to the social practice approach to adult literacies. They offer a range of benefits for adult learners, allowing them, for example, to develop and evidence their skills in a wide range of contexts, increasing their confidence and motivation, providing a focus for learning, helping to identify skill gaps, and providing evidence to employers and others of learners’ skills and commitment to learning.

Improving the qualification and status of teachers of adult literacy: The adult literacies workforce in Scotland is characterised, in the main, by sessional, part-time and temporary contracts, although permanent posts do exist around the country. Workers often have complex roles. Some coordinate provision as well as undertaking tutoring; others work at a strategic level, while developing (with employers) bespoke learning programmes for workplaces. There is no national pay-scale for adult literacy teachers and thus salaries vary considerably across the country.

Practitioners may be supporting learning in contexts of varying degrees of formality: from a community setting where learning can focus on the need to improve literacies for a specific purpose in the learner’s life (such as helping a child with their homework) to a more formal setting, such as a college or private training environment, where learners are undertaking a vocational qualification and need additional support.

The Scottish Government, as part of the implementation of its 10-year strategy for raising literacy levels among Scotland’s adults, identified the need for a professional development framework targeted at the adult literacy workforce. Consultations and collaborations have led to the development of such a framework (Education Scotland 2012), in which three key roles are identified – Group Tutors, Tutor Assistants and Coordinators – along with typical job responsibilities and associated professional development needs. Supporting roles are Strategic Manager, Learner-Facing Administrator and Referral/Guidance.

There are no statutory qualification requirements for adult literacy teachers in Scotland. In practice, however, practitioners would be encouraged to hold a Professional Development Award in SALL (Supporting Adult Literacies Learning – aimed at tutor assistants) or TALL (Introduction to Tutoring in
Adult Literacies Learning – designed for intending tutors), or some other specialist qualification. The framework document identifies a number of specialist qualification-delivering courses that intending or practising adult literacy teachers might consider. In addition, Education Scotland organises a range of national non-qualification-bearing professional development opportunities for adult literacies practitioners throughout the year. These opportunities include network meetings, seminars, action-research programmes, conferences and training. Other organisations, or clusters of organisations, also offer professional development opportunities for staff in their own and their partner organisations.

There is a desire that adult literacies teachers should have parity of esteem with other education professionals, including school teachers and college lecturers, but this has not yet been achieved.

### 4.3 Increasing Participation, Inclusion and Equity

The High Level Group of Experts on Literacy drew attention to persistent gaps in literacy, namely the gender gap, the socioeconomic gap, and the migrant gap (HLG 2012, pp46–50). Such gaps repeatedly emerge in national and international surveys of reading comprehension, including in Scotland. Figure 2 shows that while migrant, home language and gender gaps exist in Scotland they are less important than the average for those EU countries that participated in the 2009/2012 PISA surveys (OECD 2010a, 2010b, 2014b), while the socioeconomic gap is essentially identical.

Figure 2: Performance Gaps* in Scotland and on Average across EU Countries – (PISA 2009, 2012)

*SES: Top – Bottom quartile on the PISA ESCS scale; Migration: Native – first/second generation immigrants; Language: Speaks language of the PISA test at home – speaks another language; Gender: Girls – Boys

Scotland’s national assessment programme (the SSLN) has confirmed the persisting gender gap, along with a strong socioeconomic gap (Figure 3), both of which are already present in the primary school (Scottish Government 2015a).
4.3.1 Pre-Primary Years

Encouraging preschool attendance, especially for disadvantaged children: The Child Poverty Strategy for Scotland (Scottish Government 2011b) promotes a child-centred, multi-agency approach to tackling economic disadvantage, which includes early intervention and prevention so that families do not fall into poverty. The 2014 revision\(^{20}\) focuses on the same key areas. The Early Years Framework (Scottish Government 2008a) reconceptualises early years provision in Scotland, promotes better quality preschool experience and details the range of support which should be available for very young children and their families.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act\(^{21}\) (2014) directs local authorities to focus on the early years, and highlights the need for interdisciplinary working to alleviate the impact of poverty. It reasons that investment in early years could reduce the need for intervention later. Importantly, the Bill increases entitlement to nursery education for every child aged three and above (and for younger children in special circumstances) from 450 hours to 600 hours.

Preschool attendance is now essentially universal among 3-4 year olds in Scotland. The Government’s current focus is on encouraging the participation in preschool education of those 2-year-olds considered to be living in conditions of deprivation. Those with complex needs are likely to have specialist involvement from birth. Health visitors also carry out regular assessments with young and preschool children, many of whom also have support from a preschool visiting teacher.

This intervention reflects the Scottish Government’s Early Years Collaborative which comprises personnel from social services, health and education as well as representation from the police and voluntary organisations. Its aim is to convert the principles in the Early Years Framework and the ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’ (GIRFEC) initiative (Scottish Government 2008b) into practical action. The Collaborative is committed to ensuring that 85% of children will have reached developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review.

\(^{21}\) http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/legislation.
Compensating socio-economic and cultural background factors: Scotland has a low child poverty rate and on average a relatively high educational level. So far, there has been a relatively small number of migrant families, but the number of these families is likely to increase significantly. Responding to the educational needs of migrants of different ages will be a challenge in the near future.

4.3.2 Children and Adolescents

Supporting struggling literacy learners: The Education Scotland POLAAR resource (Primary 1 literacy assessment and action resource) is designed to help teachers of children in the first year of primary school to identify and assess children who are most at risk of developing later difficulties in reading and writing. It is based on a staged intervention model to help identify what, if any, intervention may be needed. Children identified in the P1 assessment as being at risk of developing language difficulties are referred for specialist support (see the Early Years Collaborative mentioned earlier). At this stage, the most common referral is said to be to Speech Therapists who provide resources and take a lead on communication problems.

Support for migrant children and adolescents whose home language is not the language of school: Latest pupil census records show that around 5% of pupils in Scottish publicly-funded schools have English as an Additional Language (Scottish Government 2015c); this proportion is expected to grow over coming years.

Following the Humanitarian Summit in September 2015, a meeting of public sector and third sector organisations from across Scotland, held to discuss how Scotland might play its part in dealing with the current humanitarian crisis, a review was conducted (Education Scotland 2015c) of the structures and approaches which education and other services had in place to support newly arrived children, adults and young people. Among the key documents cited in the review was an HMIE report (HMIE 2009) that focused on school-age children, and the report of a research study commissioned by the Scottish Government to explore education and schooling provision for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland (Candappa et al. 2007).

Preventing early school leaving: One important, but certainly not sufficient, precondition for raising performance levels in literacy for adolescents is literacy provision during secondary schooling, as functional literacy is mainly acquired in school-based learning. Thus, the provision of secondary education for all adolescents, and the prevention of early school leaving may serve as indicators for the opportunities of adolescents to improve their literacy performance, especially basic functional literacy. The 2020 EU target value for the early school leaving (ESL) rate is 10%. As a result of various initiatives to address the problem, the rate of early school leavers in Scotland was under 9% in 2014, down from 11% in 2013, almost 13% in 2012 and 14% in 2011 (Scottish Government 2015d).

Following a pilot in ten local authority areas, the Government decided to implement Activity Agreements across Scotland as from March 2011. An Activity Agreement is a signed agreement between a young person and an adviser, to the effect that the young person will take part in a programme of learning and activity which helps prepare him/her for formal learning or employment. Activity Agreements provide ‘stepping stone’ provision in a community or third sector setting, for those young people who are not ready or able to access formal learning post-16, and those at greatest risk of disengagement (European Commission 2013, p.31).

Recent policy developments in Scotland put in place strategies to increase the participation of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). ‘Opportunities for All’ (Scottish Government 2012) forms part of this national strategy and includes a commitment to offer all those NEET aged between 16 and 19 a place in learning or training (European Commission 2013, p.47). ‘Exceptional entry’ involves partnership working between schools and colleges. It allows students to enter college in the term before their statutory school leaving date and to attend college while still on the school role. However, while Canduela et al. (2010) found that the majority of potential early leavers complete their programme, the most disadvantaged remain least likely to progress.

Increasing participation, inclusion and equity for children and adolescents: Programmes, initiatives and examples: Tackling inequality is at the heart of Scottish Government’s agenda in order to ensure that every child can gain skills for life and experience success. Current strategies involve a move away from the deficit model which sees the learner as the problem and pays inadequate attention to other factors which may have an influence on learning.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is intended to be an inclusive curriculum 3-18, wherever learning is taking place. A range of measures is intended to address inequalities relating to race, gender, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Additional Support for Learning legislation in Scotland (Scottish Executive 2004) also promotes inclusion: it states that learners have a right to additional support if and when they need it.

Since August 2014, the funded entitlement to 600 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3- and 4-year-olds has been extended to 2-year-olds who are ‘looked after’ (under a kinship order or with a parent appointed carer) or who have a parent in receipt of certain qualifying state benefits.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge is another initiative funded by central government to provide targeted support for pupils in schools and local authorities with the highest concentration of pupils living in deprivation. This will focus on literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing.

A range of resources has also been produced to help achieve inclusion and equalities among children in Scotland. Among these are:

- Promoting diversity and equality: developing responsible citizens for the 21st century (Education Scotland 2013) – picking up on one of the four overarching purposes of CfE (responsible citizens) the report is intended to support schools and centres in promoting diversity and equality through all aspects of planned learning;
- Glow Inclusion Hub: a professional learning forum on the national portal to support practitioners to discuss, explore and share practice relating to inclusion;
- Books for all Scotland (CALL Scotland) – a project funded by Scottish Government from 2010, to encourage and support local authorities to make materials available for pupils with a print disability;
- Route Map through CLPL for those making provision for children with complex additional support needs in schools in Scotland – published online in 2015 by Education Scotland23, it relates to the revised professional standard for career long professional learning;
- Route Map through CLPL for Dyslexia24 – also published online in 2015, this also relates to the revised professional standard for career long professional learning and supports professional learning about, and understanding of, dyslexia and inclusive practice;

23 www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/RouteMapCLPLComplexASN_tcm4-871731.pdf
• Supporting learners: the education of learners newly arrived in Scotland – an Education Scotland review which collates reports and resources to assist staff to consider positive interventions to deliver inclusive education;
• Learning Journey – a celebration of gypsy/traveller communities in Scotland – an online resource exploring the history and culture of the gypsy traveller community in Scotland through the expressive arts and literacy curriculum;
• Journey to Excellence an introduction to inclusion: achieving success for all learners – a resource to support self-evaluation of inclusive practice.

4.3.3 Adults

**Increasing offers for second-language learners:** Education Scotland has policy responsibility for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and in 2015 launched an updated version of the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland (Education Scotland 2015d). Much has changed since the development and publication of the Scottish Government’s original ESOL strategy in 2007, and the refreshed strategy is aligned with the strategic objectives for adult learning in Scotland, in an effort to ensure that the provision of ESOL remains high quality, despite a background of reduced budgets within the public sector. It aims to build on the achievements to date in ESOL, including the improvement in collaboration and coordination of ESOL provision, and to ensure that outcomes contribute to wider policy objectives related to education and lifelong learning, employability, community cohesion, social integration, equality and inclusion.

ESOL provision for adults is delivered by a range of sectors including colleges, community learning and development partnerships and voluntary sector organisations. It is publicly funded for a number of cohorts, including new migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, as well as settled minority ethnic communities, and is generally free to the learner. Eligibility criteria and entitlement vary across funding streams. Community Planning Partnerships are required to report to the Scottish Funding Council on how funding has been spent, and to provide information on how professional development is supported, how barriers to learning are being addressed, and how other sources of funding to sustain provision are identified.

The Professional Development Framework for ESOL practitioners, which was developed in 2010, advises on the professional pathways that new and experienced practitioners can take to further support their development in the teaching of ESOL (see also Education Scotland 2012). Most providers now employ practitioners with a specialist qualification in ESOL, and some also have volunteer tutors who are professionally supported and undergo volunteer tutor training.

The New Scots Strategy (Scottish Government 2013) attempts to coordinate the efforts of all organisations involved in supporting refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland. One of the strategic outcomes is that refugees and asylum seekers are able to achieve the English language skills they are likely to need to integrate successfully with Scotland’s communities.

Following the September 2015 ‘Humanitarian Summit’, the review of the structures and approaches which education and other services have in place to provide effective support to children, adults and

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young people newly arrived in Scotland (Education Scotland 2015b) noted in particular the positive impact of ESOL provision available in Scotland’s colleges on newly arrived adults (Education Scotland 2014).
5 References


