

Improving attainment and achievement for all school pupils, Response from The Open University in Scotland

March 2015

Introduction

The Open University in Scotland welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Education and Culture Committee's inquiry into the educational attainment gap. We recognise that a wide range of organisations within and outwith the education sector have an important role in improving attainment and achievement for school pupils, including universities.

Within that context, The Open University in Scotland would like to highlight two schemes that may be of interest to the Committee:

- The Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) which allows students in S6 pupils to experience HE level study and has a particular focus on schools with low progression rates to higher education.
- The OU's role in the award-winning Caledonian Club (managed by Glasgow Caledonian University) to raise the educational aspirations of parents in areas of Glasgow.

Further details about these schemes are outlined below.

Young Applicants in Schools Scheme

The Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) offers students in S6 the opportunity to experience HE level study alongside other subjects and has a particular focus on schools with low progression rates to higher education. Participating students can choose from a range of modules at SCQF level 7 giving them the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of their Higher and Advanced Higher subjects or to try a topic which is not available in school.

As a result, YASS is particularly attractive to schools with limited numbers staying on in S6, particularly those in rural areas where economies of scale mitigate against providing a broad subject choice. The top twenty modules studied by YASS pupils and outlined in Appendix 1 illustrates the breadth of subjects available.

Since its introduction as a pilot with Highland Council in 2007/08, more than 180 schools from across Scotland and over 3,000 pupils have participated in the scheme. This year there are over 700 pupils in more than 120 schools participating in YASS. (Details of schools that have participated in YASS are listed in Appendix 2.)

In recognition of the role YASS can play in improving participation rates to university, the scheme has had a particular focus in the last two years on schools with low progression rates to higher education (SHEP schools). Furthermore, because the scheme is national and open to all schools, it has drawn interest from NUS Scotland for its potential to widen access to all universities in Scotland. The Open University is currently in discussion with other universities in Scotland to explore how the achievements of YASS pupils could be more formally recognised within universities' admissions policies.

YASS also complements the Curriculum for Excellence by empowering pupils to learn independently through new technologies and to explore subject areas not normally available in schools as well as ensuring students are stretched and manage their time effectively.

The Open University in Scotland and the Caledonian Club

The Open University in Scotland works alongside Glasgow Caledonian University's award-winning Caledonian Club to raise the educational aspirations of parents in areas with low progression rates to university which it is hoped will in turn encourage greater educational aspirations amongst their children. The Caledonian Club engages with whole families in schools and nurseries within particular communities in Glasgow. As part of the project, the OU in Scotland runs information and taster sessions on OU courses for parents. Parents who register on OU courses are supported by staff to meet in study buddy groups to build the confidence of participating parents through offering peer support in an informal setting.

In the first instance, parents with a child at one of two schools in Glasgow are offered a free five-week course based around the OU open educational resource, the Reflection Toolkit. Two local OU project officers work closely with the GCU Caledonian Club project lead on this aspect of the project.

Over the course of the next six months, The Open University is developing a new resource and website which will guide parents from informal to formal learning, starting with free, on-line OU material and moving to Badged Open Courses.

Further information

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APPENDIX 1 – Top 20 modules undertaken by YASS pupils in 2014/15

Science, Technology and Maths, (STEM) subjects

- Galaxies, stars and planets (10 credits)
- Molecules, medicines and drugs (10 credits)
- The frozen planet (10 credits)
- Volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis (10 credits)
- Maths for science (10 credits)
- Engineering the future (30 credits)
- Living without oil: chemistry for a sustainable future (10 credits)
- Introducing statistics (30 credits)

Health and Social Care subjects

- Understanding the autism spectrum (15 credits)
- Understanding the cardiovascular system (15 credits)
- Introducing health sciences: a case study approach (30 credits)
- Topics in health science (30 credits)
- Leading work with young people (30 credits)

Law and business subjects

- Introduction to law in contemporary Scotland (15 credits)
- Introduction to bookkeeping and accounting (10 credits)
- Introduction to financial services (10 credits)
- Introduction to business studies (30 credits)

Languages

- Beginners' Chinese (30 credits)
- Beginners' Spanish (30 credits)
- Beginners' Italian (30 credits)

APPENDIX 2 – Schools which have participated in YASS since 2007

School	Scottish Parliament Constituency	Scottish Parliament List Region
Aberdeen Grammar School	Aberdeen Central	North East Scotland
Aboyne Academy	Aberdeenshire West	North East Scotland
Albyn School	Aberdeen Central	North East Scotland
Alford Academy	Aberdeenshire West	North East Scotland
Alness Academy	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Alva Academy	Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	Mid Scotland and Fife
Ardnamurchan High School	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highlands and Islands
Armadale Academy	Linlithgow	Lothian
Arran High School	Cunninghame North	West Scotland
Auchenharvie Academy	Cunninghame South	West Scotland
Auchinleck Academy	Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	South Scotland
Auchmuty High School	Mid Fife and Glenrothes	Mid Scotland and Fife
Balerno High School	Edinburgh Pentlands	Lothian
Banchory Academy	Aberdeenshire West	North East Scotland
Banff Academy	Banffshire and Buchan Coast	North East Scotland
Bathgate Academy	Linlithgow	Lothian
Bearsden Academy	Clydebank and Milngavie	West Scotland
Beath High School	Cowdenbeath	Mid Scotland and Fife
Beeslack Community HS	Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	South Scotland
Belmont Academy	Ayr	South Scotland
Biggar High School	Clydesdale	South Scotland
Bocclair Academy	Strathkelvin and Bearsden	West Scotland
Bo'ness Academy	Falkirk East	Central Scotland
Breadalbane Academy	Perthshire North	Mid Scotland and Fife
Brechin High School	Angus North and Mearns	North East Scotland
Bridge of Don Academy	Aberdeen Donside	North East Scotland
Broughton High School	Edinburgh Central	Lothian
Buckie Community HS	Banffshire and Buchan Coast	North East Scotland
Calderglen High School	East Kilbride	Central Scotland
Caldervale High School	Airdrie and Shotts	Central Scotland
Carrick Academy	Ayr	South Scotland
Castle Douglas High School	Galloway and West Dumfries	South Scotland
Castlemilk High School	Glasgow Cathcart	Glasgow
Charleston Academy	Inverness and Nairn	Highlands and Islands
Clifton Hall School	Edinburgh Pentlands	Lothian
Community School of Auchterarder	Perthshire South and Kinross-shire	Mid Scotland and Fife
Craigholme School	Glasgow Southside	Glasgow
Craigmount High School	Edinburgh Western	Lothian
Crieff High School	Perthshire South and Kinross-shire	Mid Scotland and Fife
Culloden Academy	Inverness and Nairn	Highlands and Islands
Cults Academy	Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	North East Scotland

Cumnock Academy	Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	South Scotland
Dalziel High School	Motherwell and Wishaw	Central Scotland
Deans Community High School	Almond Valley	Lothian
Dingwall Academy	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highlands and Islands
Doon Academy	Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	South Scotland
Dornoch Academy	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Douglas Academy	Clydebank and Milngavie	West Scotland
Douglas-Ewart High School	Galloway and West Dumfries	South Scotland
Drummond Community High School	Edinburgh Northern and Leith	Lothian
Dumfries Academy	Dumfriesshire	South Scotland
Dumfries High School	Dumfriesshire	South Scotland
Dunbar Grammar School	East Lothian	South Scotland
Dunblane High School	Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	Mid Scotland and Fife
Dunoon Grammar School	Argyll and Bute	Highlands and Islands
Dyce Academy	Aberdeen Donside	North East Scotland
Eastwood High School	Eastwood	West Scotland
Elgin High School	Moray	Highlands and Islands
Falkirk High School	Falkirk West	Central Scotland
Farr High School	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Forrester High School	Edinburgh Western	Lothian
Fortrose Academy	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highlands and Islands
Fraserburgh Academy	Banffshire and Buchan Coast	North East Scotland
Gairloch High School	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Glen Urquhart High School	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highlands and Islands
Glenwood High School	Mid Fife and Glenrothes	Mid Scotland and Fife
Golspie High School	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Graeme High School	Falkirk West	Central Scotland
Grangemouth High School	Falkirk East	Central Scotland
Grantown Grammar School	Inverness and Nairn	Highlands and Islands
Greenwood Academy	Cunninghame South	West Scotland
Grove Academy	Dundee City East	North East Scotland
Hamilton College	Uddingston and Bellshill	Central Scotland
Hamilton Grammar School	Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse	Central Scotland
Harlaw Academy	Aberdeen Central	North East Scotland
Hazelhead Academy	Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	North East Scotland
High School of Dundee	Dundee City West	North East Scotland
Hutchesons Grammar School	Glasgow Southside	Glasgow
Inverclyde Academy	Greenock and Inverclyde	West Scotland
Invergordon Academy	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Inverness High School	Inverness and Nairn	Highlands and Islands
Inverness Royal Academy	Inverness and Nairn	Highlands and Islands
Inverurie Academy	Aberdeenshire East	North East Scotland
Islay High School	Argyll and Bute	Highlands and Islands
James Young High School	Almond Valley	Lothian
John Paul Academy	Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn	Glasgow

Keith Grammar School	Moray	Highlands and Islands
Kelvinside Academy	Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn	Glasgow
Kemnay Academy	Aberdeenshire West	North East Scotland
Kilmarnock Academy	Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	South Scotland
Kilsyth Academy	Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	Central Scotland
Kilwinning Academy	Cunninghame South	West Scotland
Kincorth Academy	Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	North East Scotland
Kingussie High School	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highlands and Islands
Kinlochleven High School	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highlands and Islands
Kinross High School	Perthshire South and Kinross-shire	Mid Scotland and Fife
Kirkcudbright Academy	Galloway and West Dumfries	South Scotland
Kirkwall Grammar School	Orkney Islands	Highlands and Islands
Kyle Academy	Ayr	South Scotland
Langholm Academy	Dumfriesshire	South Scotland
Larbert High School	Falkirk East	Central Scotland
Largs Academy	Cunninghame North	West Scotland
Lasswade High School	Midlothian North and Musselburgh	Lothian
Liberton High School	Edinburgh Southern	Lothian
Linlithgow Academy	Linlithgow	Lothian
Lochaber High School	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highlands and Islands
Lochgelly High School	Cowdenbeath	Mid Scotland and Fife
Lomond School	Dumbarton	West Scotland
Loretto School	Midlothian North and Musselburgh	Lothian
Lornhill Academy	Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	Mid Scotland and Fife
Lossiemouth High School	Moray	Highlands and Islands
Lourdes Secondary School	Glasgow Pollok	Glasgow
Mackie Academy	Angus North and Mearns	North East Scotland
Mallaig High School	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highlands and Islands
Marr College	Ayr	South Scotland
McLaren High School	Stirling	Mid Scotland and Fife
Mearns Academy	Angus North and Mearns	North East Scotland
Meldrum Academy	Aberdeenshire East	North East Scotland
Millburn Academy	Inverness and Nairn	Highlands and Islands
Mintlaw Academy	Aberdeenshire East	North East Scotland
Moffat Academy	Dumfriesshire	South Scotland
Morgan Academy	Dundee City East	North East Scotland
Nairn Academy	Inverness and Nairn	Highlands and Islands
Notre Dame High School	Glasgow Kelvin	Glasgow
Notre Dame High School	Greenock and Inverclyde	West Scotland
Oakwood School	Falkirk West	Central Scotland
Oban High School	Argyll and Bute	Highlands and Islands
Oldmachar Academy	Aberdeen Donside	North East Scotland
Our Lady's High School	Motherwell and Wishaw	Central Scotland
Perth Academy	Perthshire South and Kinross-shire	Mid Scotland and Fife
Perth Grammar School	Perthshire North	Mid Scotland and Fife
Perth High School	Perthshire South and Kinross-shire	Mid Scotland and Fife

Port Glasgow High School	Greenock and Inverclyde	West Scotland
Portobello High School	Edinburgh Eastern	Lothian
Preston Lodge High School	East Lothian	South Scotland
Prestwick Academy	Ayr	South Scotland
Queen Margaret Academy	Ayr	South Scotland
Queen Victoria School	Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	Mid Scotland and Fife
Robert Gordon's College	Aberdeen Central	North East Scotland
Ross High School	East Lothian	South Scotland
Sanquhar Academy	Dumfriesshire	South Scotland
Sgoil Lionacleit	Na h-Eileanan an Iar	Highlands and Islands
Sir E Scott School	Na h-Eileanan an Iar	Highlands and Islands
St Aloysius' College	Glasgow Kelvin	Glasgow
St Andrew's High School	Coatbridge and Chryston	Central Scotland
St Andrew's RC High School	Kirkcaldy	Mid Scotland and Fife
St Augustine's RC High School	Edinburgh Western	Lothian
St Columba's High School Gourock	Greenock and Inverclyde	West Scotland
St Columbas RC High School	Dunfermline	Mid Scotland and Fife
St Johns RC Academy	Perthshire North	Mid Scotland and Fife
St Joseph's Academy	Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	South Scotland
St Joseph's College	Dumfriesshire	South Scotland
St Kentigern's Academy	Linlithgow	Lothian
St Margaret's Academy	Almond Valley	Lothian
St Margaret's High School	Airdrie and Shotts	Central Scotland
St Margaret's School for Girls	Aberdeen Central	North East Scotland
St Matthews Academy	Cunninghame North	West Scotland
St Modan's High School	Stirling	Mid Scotland and Fife
St Stephen's High School	Greenock and Inverclyde	West Scotland
St Thomas of Aquins	Edinburgh Central	Lothian
Stewarton Academy	Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	South Scotland
Stirling High School	Stirling	Mid Scotland and Fife
Strathaven Academy	Clydesdale	South Scotland
Tain Royal Academy	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Tarbert Academy	Argyll and Bute	Highlands and Islands
Taylor High School	Uddingston and Bellshill	Central Scotland
The Edinburgh Academy	Edinburgh Central	Lothian
The Gordon Schools	Aberdeenshire West	North East Scotland
The Royal High School	Edinburgh Western	Lothian
The Waid Academy	North East Fife	Mid Scotland and Fife
Thurso High School	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Tobermory High School	Argyll and Bute	Highlands and Islands
Trinity High School	Renfrewshire North and West	West Scotland
Uddingston Grammar School	Uddingston and Bellshill	Central Scotland
Ullapool High School	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Wallace Hall Academy	Dumfriesshire	South Scotland
Websters High School	Angus South	North East Scotland

Wellington School	Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	South Scotland
West Calder High School	Almond Valley	Lothian
Westhill Academy	Aberdeenshire West	North East Scotland
Wick High School	Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highlands and Islands
Woodmill High School	Dunfermline	Mid Scotland and Fife

