



Chartered Institute of Library
and Information Professionals
in Scotland

Response to Education (Scotland) Bill

CILIP in Scotland (CILIPS) is the Scottish arm of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. CILIP is the leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers. Many of our members work in school libraries.

We are writing in response to the Education and Culture Committee inviting views on the Education (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced in the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Government on 23 March 2015. We refer to the aim to “Promote equity of attainment for disadvantaged children and take steps towards narrowing the attainment gap by imposing duties on education authorities and the Scottish Ministers in relation to reducing pupils’ inequalities of educational outcome together with a duty to report on progress”

As the professional body for library and information professionals, we maintain that school libraries are unique in their ability to support teaching and learning and should be the central resource of every school, open every day and staffed by a professionally trained librarian.

School librarians and school library services have a direct contribution to make to reduce inequalities of outcome in particular:

- Raising standards of educational attainment in the core skill of literacy through their expertise and knowledge in reading for enjoyment and information literacy;
- Offering a vibrant, safe and educational environment for all pupils in the school library and opportunities for all pupils to develop responsibilities of citizenship;
- Supporting pupils develop skills for life.

The budget savings across Scottish authorities are resulting in the reduction of school librarians and school library services, creating a ‘postcode lottery’ of provision and a concerning detrimental effect on equity for the more disadvantaged of our children and young people.

In order to realise equity of attainment and achievement we believe that all learners should have equal access to a qualified school librarian.

We suggest that the need for a professionally qualified school librarian to be in place in every school as well as possible measures to ensure this happens are considered when writing this Bill. As evidence of the impact of school librarians we refer you to recent reports from the Standing Literacy Commission (i) and Education Scotland (ii) with both highlighting the work of school librarians in the areas of English and literacy. Also, we point to the recent research from Dr. Dorothy Williams (iii) that shows the impact of school librarians on attainment as well as our own School Librarianship Advocacy Strategy (iv).

We are happy to discuss any of the above in greater detail or attend further meetings about the Bill.

- i. <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00475485.pdf>
- ii. http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/3to18LiteracyandEnglishReview_tcm4-856583.pdf
- iii. http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/752487/24177572/1389281783530/SLIC_RGU_Impact_of_School_Libraries_2013.pdf?token=1GxtvdmL6%2BrOy%2FdQDD%2BZYQ%2FQsF8%3D
- iv. <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/825826/25593957/1422010188403/advocacystrategy.pdf?token=5lzCiQFfHRUUXJzlybYYf0zzmP8%3D>