

Annual spend on every pupil is £6000

Secondary bill up 6%

ANDREW DENHOLM
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

ANNUAL spending on education is now approaching £6000 for every secondary school pupil in Scotland and more than £4000 for every primary pupil.

An official report into the amount of money spent on education by the Scottish Executive in 2005-06 has revealed that the cost of secondary education is £1.8bn a

Capital spending on both primary and secondary schools was £280m, or £397 per pupil, 56% up on the previous year's figure, £142 per pupil – though that figure does not include spending on the controversial Private Finance Initiative and its successor, Public Private Partnerships.

Fiona Hyslop, education spokeswoman for the SNP, welcomed the spending rises, but warned that the "key test" was whether it would result in improvements in education.

"A report last week by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) revealed that there had been no significant improvement in education levels in Scotland since 2002," she said.

"Increased spending has made no impact on the bottom 20% of pupils in Scotland and attainment levels in S4, S5 and S6 are not improving."

"The bulk of the increased spending has financed the McCrone teachers' deal, but we know that this had limited effect on educational attainment."

Murdo Fraser, deputy leader of the Scottish Tories, said the money that reached schools was significantly lower than was being suggested.

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year for £5771 per pupil, a rise of 6% on the previous year.

The average amount of money spent on a pupil in the independent sector has been estimated at £7800 for a senior day school, although these figures include capital building projects, additional support needs and business rates.

For state primary education, the figures were a total of £1.6bn or £4158 per pupil, a rise of 7%.

BUILDING A NEW FUTURE



SPADEWORK. Cardinal Keith O'Brien and Anne Mulligan, moderator of the Edinburgh Presbytery, joined Edinburgh City Council leader Ewan Aitken yesterday to help schoolchildren cut the first sod of the new £15m campus which

is part of the £180m regeneration of the Craigmillar area of the city.

The shared denominational and non-denominational site will have a joint school roll of around 700 children which will bring together children from

St Francis and Niddrie Mill primary schools. The campus will be at the heart of a new housing development that forms the first phase of the regeneration of Craigmillar.
Picture: Mike Wilkinson

"While these are the annual spending figures, what the executive forgets to mention is that the actual sum that reaches schools is much lower," he said.

"A very sizeable proportion of these funds is creamed off at a local government level before it is allocated to individual schools."

"There is the question of how much of the budget is actually spent on schools and not taken up on administration."

A spokesman for the executive said the quality of education in Scotland had improved and more money than ever

was being given straight to headteachers.

"We have seen attainment rising, class sizes are going down, there are more teachers in our schools and we have better school buildings and facilities, and all these are making a difference," he said.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Parliament heard the teaching profession would have hit an "all time low" without a £2bn deal to modernise pay and conditions.

Commenting on last week's HMIE report on McCrone, Charles Gray, education spokesman for local government body Cosla, told MSPs

from Holyrood's education committee that, without the agreement, discontent would have led to the quality of Scottish education dipping to an "all-time low."

"We would have continually seen more teachers leaving the profession than coming in. It would have been a dreadful situation had the agreement not come along," he said.

The ground-breaking deal, struck in 2001 between the executive, local councils and teacher organisations, gave teachers a 23% pay rise over three years in return for an overhaul of conditions of service.

Better professional development and new management structures are all being established in schools, he said.

Later, Graham Donaldson, senior chief inspector with HMIE, told MSPs: "If you asked whether schools are dramatically different places for children than they were prior to the agreement, then we would be less confident that would be the case."

"By and large there is momentum there to take things in the right direction, but it's important that we as an inspectorate and this committee and ministers don't take our foot off the pedal."