

ADPS Update

achievements of deaf pupils in Scotland

Who are we?

The Achievements of Deaf Pupils in Scotland project team consists of Mary Brennan, Project Director; Marian Grimes, Claire Leiper and Ernst Thoutenhoofd, Researchers; Emily Healy and Pamela Armstrong, Administrators and David Brien, Consultant to the project. The project is supported by funding from the Scottish Executive Education Department.

What do we do?

The core of the ADPS project is a central database of deaf children in education, updated on a yearly basis. It is very important that group data are supplemented with contextual data on pupils' experiences and perspectives. Thus Claire Leiper's recent appointment means that a young deaf researcher can now collect information directly from deaf children and young people about their own experiences and perceptions of deaf education. We also anticipate that these deaf perspectives will enable us to develop the central data collection process in appropriate ways, as well as allowing us to feed back to parents, teachers and deaf people themselves on the key issues for deaf young people. We are also working with BATOD and the Heads of Service Forum in Scotland on the collection of data relating to teachers of deaf children and other professionals and support staff. Such data are important for gaining a fuller picture of the types of support available to deaf children and young people, as well as having relevance in relation to training and recruitment issues. This is a time of considerable change in relation to continuing professional development in Scotland, including the chartered teachers initiative. Therefore, such information can contribute to wider educational debates and policies. We have worked closely with deaf people, parents, teachers, professionals, deaf-related organisations, including BATOD and a wide range of relevant government and other agencies to try to ensure that the picture we begin to provide of deaf children, their achievements and experiences is the full-colour version - certainly not a 'let's draw it by numbers' account.

Background

The project began collecting educational achievement data for the year 2000-2001 and yearly surveys are currently funded until March 2004. This work complements a major exercise in data collection being conducted in Scotland by ScotXed, who collect core data on all school pupils in Scotland. This inevitably means that ScotXed information on deaf children is limited. We are liaising with ScotXed to explore how the two sets of data may be linked in the future. We are also developing similar links with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Ideally, such links will

mean making fewer demands on school staff in the collection of 5-14 information and results of National Qualification assessments in the future.

Who are our target group?

The project aims to collect information on all deaf children in Scotland. This includes both pre-school and children and those within school. However, we realised that it would be unrealistic to expect teachers to collect detailed information on pupils they rarely see. Therefore, for school children a distinction has been made between two groups.

Group A school pupils

Children/young people who attend schools or units for deaf children, or are placed in mainstream provision and receive visits from a Teacher of the Deaf twice a year or more: the project has identified 1416 children in this category and these are the ones for whom teachers complete questionnaires.

Group B school pupils

Children/young people who are visited once a year or not at all: the project has identified 654 children (known as 'listed' children) in this category. Only very basic information was collected for this group (hearing loss levels and and primary/secondary split).

While we do not anticipate collecting full information on Group B school pupils within the current phase of the research, we are gathering more information, eg relating to placement. The project also collects information relating to pre-school children in Scotland: Two hundred and eleven pre-school children were identified by the project for the year 2000-2001 and questionnaires sent out for all of this group. Because we are collecting information on new referrals and all pre-school children, as the years go on we will, in fact, have reasonably detailed information about children who will eventually be in the Group B listed category. Thus the project currently has some information relating to 2281 deaf children in Scotland and detailed information on all but 654 of these.

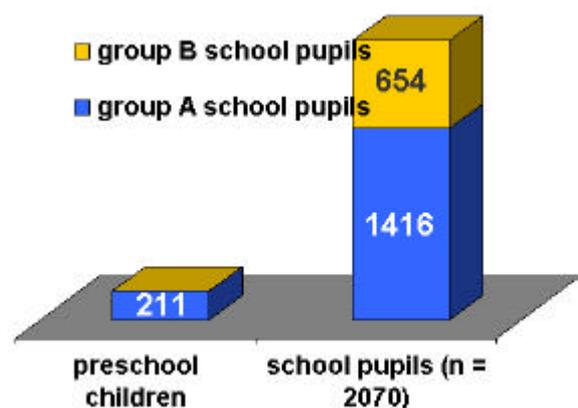


Figure 1
Deaf preschool children and school pupils known to deaf education services in Scotland 2000/01 (n=2281)

So are these all the deaf children in Scotland? These are all the children known to the educational services which provide support to deaf children and young people. The project decided to go through the educational route to collect information in the first instance. It is quite likely that there are other children, particularly those who are recently diagnosed or who are going through the process of diagnosis, who are not yet known either to the educational services or to the project. However, we hope that, given the increasing networking of ADPS and the moves to try to develop more effective links between health and education across the country, ascertainment figures for very young deaf children will improve. There may also be some deaf children in private or home education missing from our records: those children in private schools who are known to the support service are included.

It can be noted that these figures are higher than previous estimates. The MRC project, National Evaluation of Support Options for Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Children, gave an estimate of 1808, based on figures over a 15 year period from health and education. However, the MRC team excluded children with a mild hearing loss. ADPS figures are also higher than those provided within Scottish Executive statistics. This is because the SE figures relate only to children with a Record of Needs, ie 28% of the total child deaf population ascertained within our own project. Thus other groups may use different criteria in ascertaining the population of deaf children within Scotland.

Collecting the Data

Thanks mainly to teachers of deaf children throughout Scotland we achieved a marvellous 99.4% response to our 2000/01 school questionnaire and an 88% response to the pre-school questionnaire for the same year. Given the amount of information requested, this means that we have the most detailed information relating to Scotland. Just as importantly, we now have the solid basis to continue our work. There is an electronic database record for all of the Group A and pre-school children. Each record contains the details for 2000-2001 and the records are now being updated following the returns from the second year of the project. Our aim is to develop key elements of the data collection over time.

Illustrative Findings

In the following pages, we present some information on the findings from the research. These represent just a small set of the overall findings which we hope to present in much more detail within the pages of Deafness and Education International and other journals.

Hearing Loss Levels

Figure 2 below provides information on the prevalence of different levels of hearing loss within the overall population of deaf pre-school children

and pupils. The proportions of children falling within the established hearing loss categories largely accords with those ascertained in previous research, eg within the MRC project quoted above.

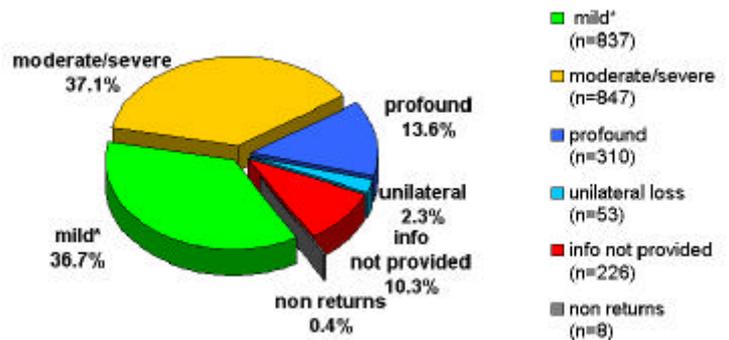


Figure 2
Deaf preschool children and school pupils in Scotland by hearing loss level 2000/01 (n=2281)
*The mild hearing loss figure includes 11 children whose thresholds are within normal range.

Placement

It is well-known that the trend over the last twenty years has been away from placing deaf children in special deaf schools and instead educating them within mainstream provision. However, the ADPS data suggest that the number of pupils being educated solely within mainstream provision may have been somewhat overestimated. Sixty-six per cent of pupils within the Group A category were within mainstream provision. Specific placement details were not collected for Group B pupils: although we can predict that a very high percentage will be in mainstream provision, a small number may be in other specialist provision, such as schools for children with complex needs. Placement data on these children is being collected for the year 2001-2002. Current placement information for the Year 2000-2001 is given in Figure 3.

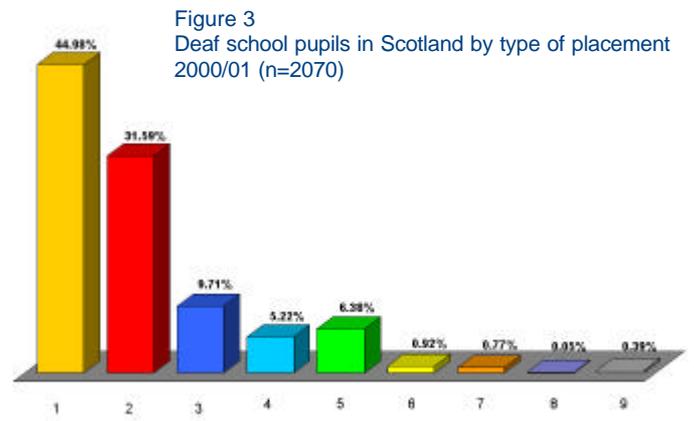


Figure 3
Deaf school pupils in Scotland by type of placement 2000/01 (n=2070)

1. mainstream school (n=931)
2. assume mainstream school or special school-Group B pupils (n=654)
3. mainstream hearing impaired unit (n=201)
4. school for deaf pupils (n=108)
5. other special educational needs (n=132)
6. other educational situation (n=19)
7. split mainstream and school for deaf pupils (n=16)
8. split mainstream, hearing impaired unit and school for deaf pupils (n=1)
9. non-returns (n=8)

Demographic Information

The project is able to provide detailed demographic information. Thus we are able to provide the numbers of the different categories of children within each local authority. This allows us to see variation in relation to the numbers of children in Groups A and B: it may be that different local authority policies, as well as resources, affect whether children are visited more than once a year. Space does not allow presentation of this detailed information here.

Attainments

One of the main aims of the ADPS project is to provide clear evidence on the educational achievements of deaf children. The term 'achievement' is deliberately broad and is meant to suggest more than success in formal examinations and the like. Nevertheless, it is seen as important to provide objective information on the levels of success deaf children attain within both the 5-14 Curriculum framework and the new National Qualifications framework. Ever since Conrad's seminal work in 1979, there has been concern that deaf pupils may not be achieving their full potential. However, we have had little direct evidence within Scotland to support or refute claims to this effect. Some research makes use of other measures, eg parent and teacher perceptions of success. Here it is argued that while such judgements, particularly judgements and perceptions of deaf pupils and ex-pupils themselves, may have a part to play, educational attainment information remains an

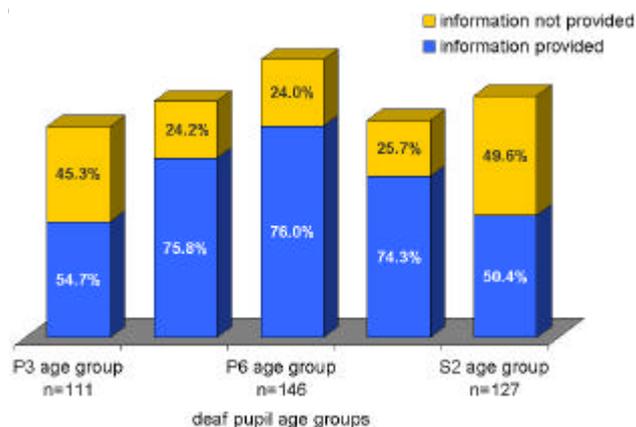


Figure 4 Information provided on 5-14 National Test levels of group A school pupils in Scotland 2000/01 (n=622 [P3, P4, P6, P7, S2])

(SH2) 5-14 National Tests

So how do deaf children perform within the 5-14 curriculum? Perhaps the first point to stress is that we cannot provide a full answer, mainly because we did not obtain full returns across the different age groups. In other words, in a substantial number of cases, teachers who were working to support deaf pupils, did not provide information on the 5-14 National Test results. Thus we can see from Figure 4 that teachers did not provide this information for over 45% of the P3 age group and for almost 50% of the S2 age group. Informal discussions with a

number of teachers suggest that they did not provide this information because it was not available to them. This is clearly a matter which will cause concern to both teachers themselves and to parents.

Deaf pupils in Scotland undertake national tests in reading, writing and maths. Most pupils are expected to have achieved level D by the time they finish Primary 7.

Figure 5 allows a comparison between the overall national test results of hearing children within the mainstream population and those of Group A deaf children.

It should be noted that, in both cases, we focus only on those pupils for whom information is available. We can see that the pattern of achievement is comparable: ie both groups do best in reading and worst in writing. However, the percentage of deaf children achieving the target level is significantly lower than percentage of the hearing children in each of the three areas. Of course, we are dealing with very small numbers, in the case of deaf children. Moreover, our job is not just to present such raw data but to probe further. Can we see different types of results depending on other factors, eg level of hearing loss, type of placement, language choice etc.? Can we analyse the findings, to show that one factor is more important than another? Certainly this is what we are beginning to do.

We suggest that we will need to look at the types of patterning across several years before it will be possible to make definitive statements. However, in order to give a hint of the kinds of patterning which may occur, Figure 6 breaks down the information relating to deaf pupils, given in Figure 6, by hearing loss. We can now see that very few children with a profound or severe hearing loss are achieving level D.

5-14 National Test passes at level D and above among P7-age group A school pupils in Scotland and all pupils in Scotland (excluding SEN*) 2000/01 (all P7 pupils n=59,147** all P7-age deaf pupils n=103)

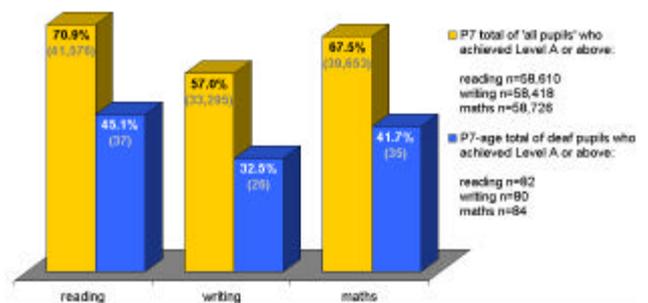


Figure 5 5-14 National Test passes at level D and above among P7-age group A school pupils in Scotland and all pupils in Scotland (excluding SEN*) 2000/01 (all P7 pupils n=59,147** all P7-age deaf pupils n=103)

** Scottish Executive figures exclude pupils in schools and units for children with special educational needs. ADPS figures also exclude these groups except for children in schools/units for deaf children.
**All pupils' figures taken from '5-14 attainment in publicly funded schools' SEED, 24 Jan 2002.

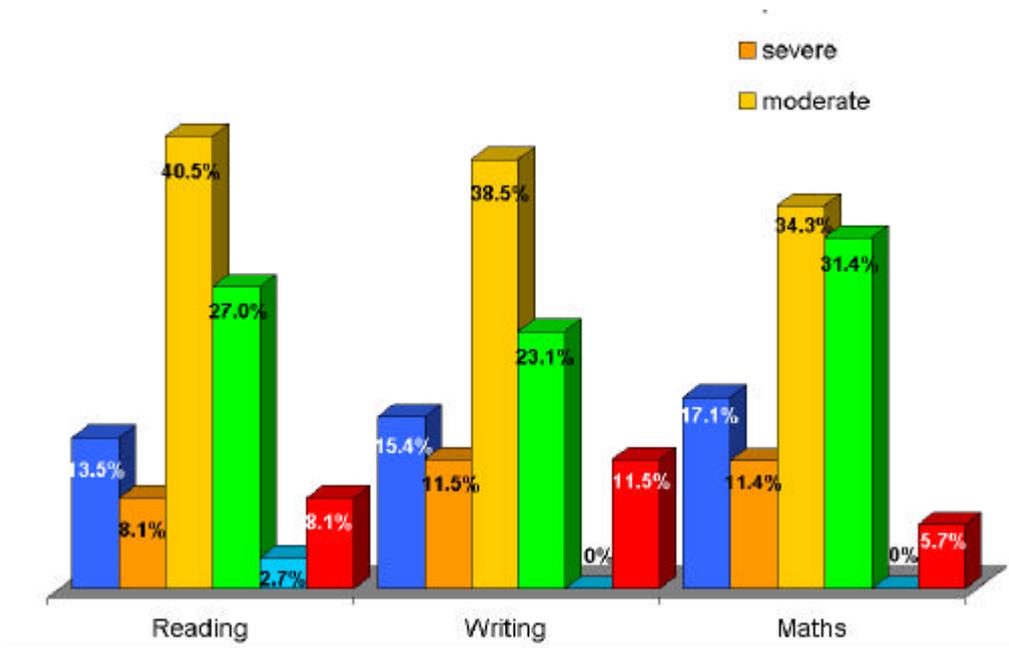


Figure 6
P7-age Group A pupils by 5-14 National Test passes at level D and above and hearing loss level 2000/01 (n=103)

*The mild hearing loss figure includes 10 pupils whose threshold measurements are within normal range.

Standard Grades

The two figures below provide comparable information relating to Standard Grade results. Figure 8 shows that deaf pupils achieve a higher number of passes at general level but a very low number of passes at credit level. When these figures are broken down further to show passes of children within the different hearing loss levels, we can see that very few profoundly deaf children are attaining credit level passes at Standard Grade. Indeed our returns show that there were only 3 passes at credit level by profoundly deaf pupils for the Year 2000-2001.

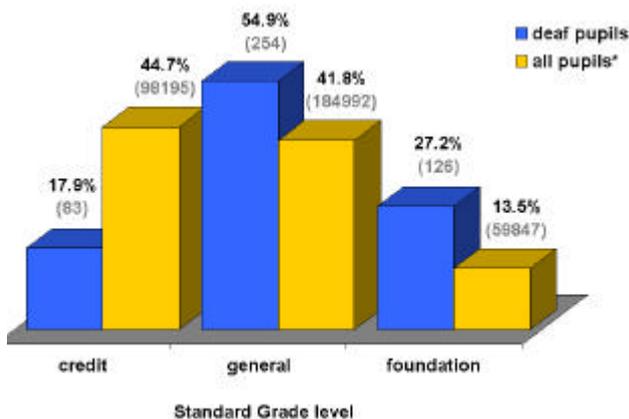


Figure 7
Standard Grade passes of group A deaf school pupils in Scotland (& total Scottish passes) 2000/01 (all pupils passes n=443,034 deaf pupil passes n=463)

*figures on 'all pupils' taken from 'SQA Attainment in Scottish Schools: 2000-01' SEED, 12 March 2002.

Conclusion

We have quoted several examples above which will cause concern. However, we would stress that at this stage it is important to be reasonably cautious in interpreting these results. Firstly, they need to be read in the context of other more detailed information which the ADPS project will be providing. There will be other factors which may affect attainment and an analysis of these factors is not presented within this short account. Secondly, we are well aware that these are results from a single year. A pupil gaining a single Standard Grade pass for this particular year may actually have attained several passes in a previous year. This is why it will be important to look at results over several years to gain a full picture. The ADPS project team are also keen to develop other measures which can augment information deriving from traditional academic testing. Analysis of results from tests delivered by the CEM Centre in the University of Durham shows that deaf children out-perform others in visual spatial abilities. This finding may have a parallel in our data in that all three passes at Credit level by profoundly deaf pupils in 2000-2001 were attained in Art and Design. We need both to face up to under-achievement if it is present and be able to describe untapped abilities and potential.

BATOD Survey 2000

A report of the major findings from the information collected in the BATOD 2000 UK Survey will be presented in the BATOD Association Magazine April 2003. Raw data from the survey is already available as in pdf format to download from the BATOD web site www.BATOD.org.uk