

League Tables and Benchmarking Pupil Attainment

Written by David Watts

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A parent's view of league tables and benchmarking pupil attainment.



The issue of League Tables and related benchmarking of pupil performance between jurisdictions has recently come to the fore with the publication by Daphne Caine MHK of her annual Children's Champion Report together with questions being asked of the Department of Education, Sport & Culture (DESC) in a recent (16th March 2018) sitting of the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee.

The DESC has long been opposed to league tables and in December 2017 published a document highlighting their arguments against such.

The Department's Service Delivery Plan (2016-2021) highlights that part of its vision is for "a world class education system for all...".

The author submits that part of any world class education system would be an enviable benchmarked record of attainment whilst acknowledging and ensuring that other outcomes such as key skills and the development of personal qualities have a prominent and important role in the curriculum. Such skills and qualities are not however, in the author's opinion, mutually exclusive to high academic attainment.

As a parent of two children now in Key Stage 3, I analysed a variety of responses made by the Department in relation to requests (submitted by myself and other individuals) pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 2015. Such requests sought attainment data for the end (Year 6) of Key Stage 2 (KS2 which overall encompasses Years 3-6) for each of the Island's thirty-two primary schools over a period of years.

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My initial focus has been on the most recent academic year (2016-17) where full attainment results were only published by the Department subsequent to the applicant seeking a review by the Information Commissioner whereupon the Department was directed to release the information sought by the applicant....

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