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Inclusion in Scottish Education

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Background



- Like England, Scotland has high rate of inclusion - slightly under 1% of children in special schools – used as a case study to illustrate definitions and tensions.
- Scotland prides itself on tradition of ‘democratic intellectualism’.
- Emphasises provision of same high quality education to all pupils.
- Tradition arises from the Reformation – John Knox – school in every parish
- How is concept of inclusion understood in Scottish education?
- What dilemmas arise in implementing inclusive education policies?



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Competing understandings of inclusion linked to wider debates in equality and social justice



- Emphasis on sameness or difference?
- Disability theory – emphasis on removal of barriers so that disabled people are treated the same as non-disabled people.
- Inclusion of disabled children in mainstream schools, with appropriate support, seen as critical.
- But tensions evident within disability movement – Some Deaf people argue the case for separate special schools to enable Deaf children to use BSL with peer group – right of linguistic minority.



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Broad political trends since establishment of Scottish Parliament in 1999



Labour administration (1999 – 2007) - many initiatives focusing on social exclusion, children with behaviour problems, school leavers not in education, employment or training, looked after children.

Developed a new category of additional support needs – much broader than special educational needs – covered children whose difficulties were created by poverty & inequality.

Scottish National Party – elected in 2007 – desire to create ‘a wealthier and fairer society’ – but less focus on inclusion.

New Conservative-Liberal Coalition Government at Westminster – rejection of policy of inclusion – implications for Scotland?



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The development of policies on inclusion in Scotland



As in England, Warnock Report (1978) extremely influential.

Attempted to abolish categories of difficulty and recommended integration – but still saw role for special schools.

Inclusion seen as having different meanings for different children:

- ◆ **Locational – Children on same site but may spend much time apart**
- ◆ **Social – Children mix during breaktime, lunchtime, for some classes e.g. art**
- ◆ **Functional – All children following mainstream curriculum & in mainstream class**



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The development of inclusive policies in Scotland



- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 – established presumption of mainstreaming – criticised by some teachers as 'going too far' – but how radical has the change been?
- Some special schools closed – but many more special units opened – sometimes referred to as 'inclusion' units'.
- Children in special units often counted as being in mainstream – but may spend little time there.

Reasons for placing child in separate provision:

- If inclusion would involve unreasonable public expenditure
- Be against best interests of child or other children in class
- Parents request special placement



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Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004



- Ongoing focus on inclusion – but definition of special needs population shifts over time.
- Special educational needs – referred to children with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Additional support needs covers children whose difficulties are mainly social (e.g. children whose parents misuse drugs & alcohol, children of travellers, children of refugees and asylum seekers, looked after children.
- Abolished Record of Needs (formal documents given to about 2% of Scottish children) – replaced with Co-ordinated Support Plan (covers about 0.5% of pupils).
- About 5% of children officially recorded as having ASN (i.e. have Co-ordinated Support Plan or Individualised Educational Programme)
- This compares with 20% of children in England recorded as having SEN – so did not lead to wider identification as anticipated.

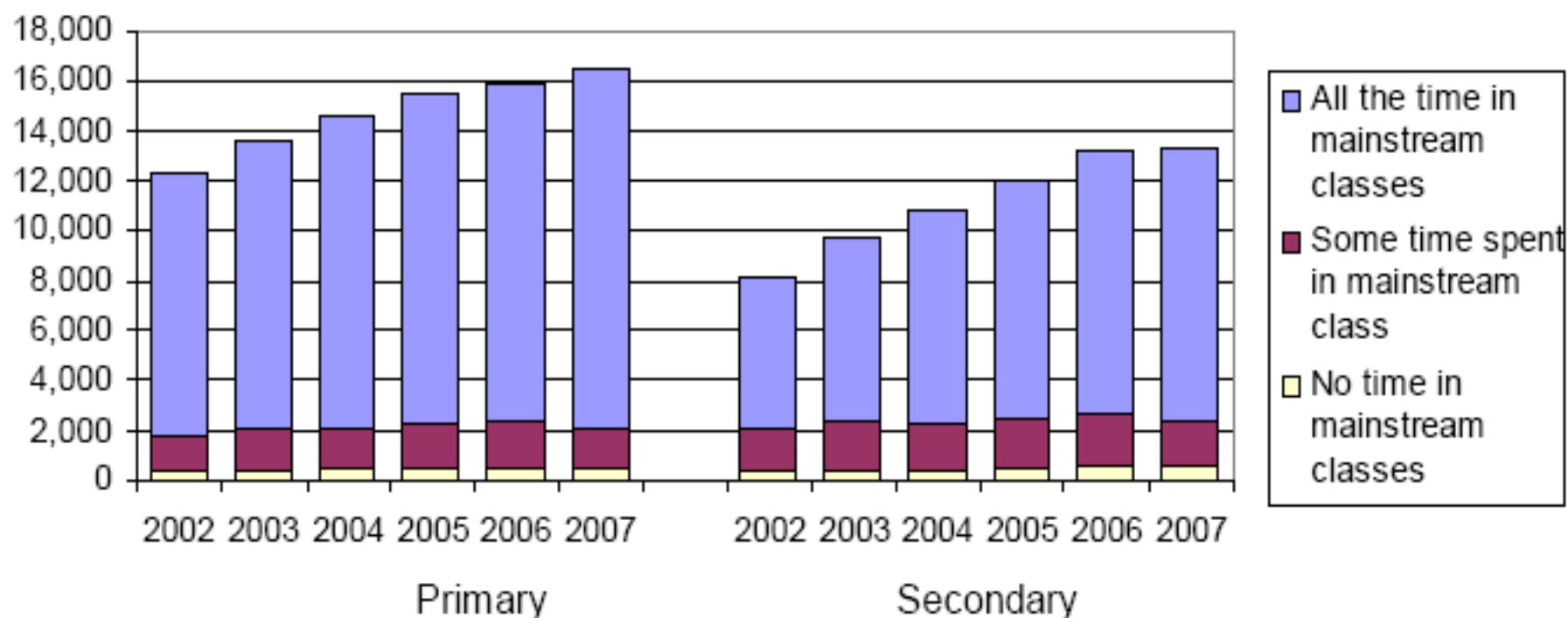


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Increase in number of pupils with ASN in mainstream



Pupils with a Record of Needs (RoN) and/or an Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) in mainstream schools, primary and secondary, 2002-2007



Scottish Executive, 2008

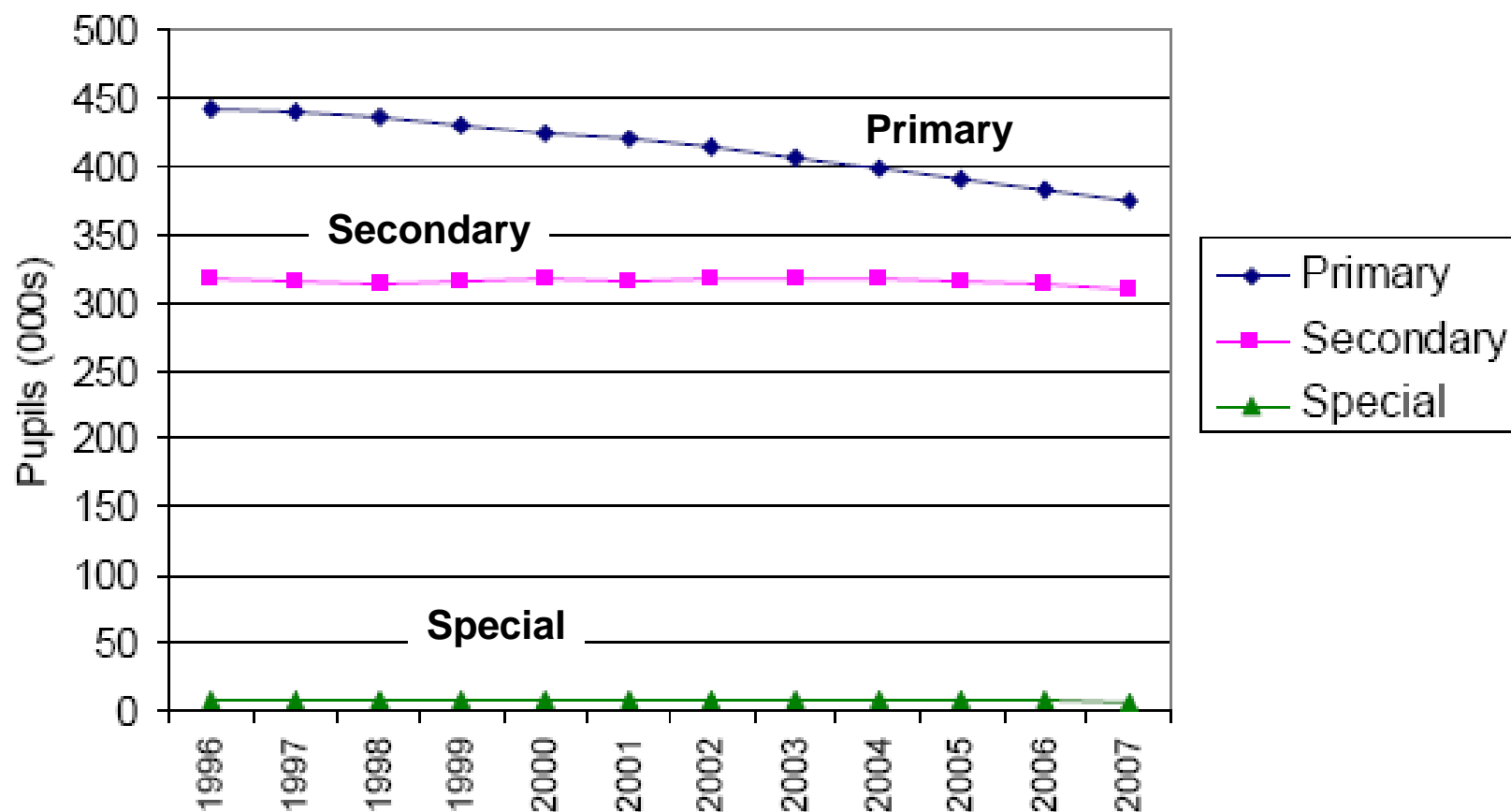


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Numbers constant in special sector about 1% c.f. 4% in Belgium (both French & Flemish communities



Pupil numbers by sector, 1996-2007



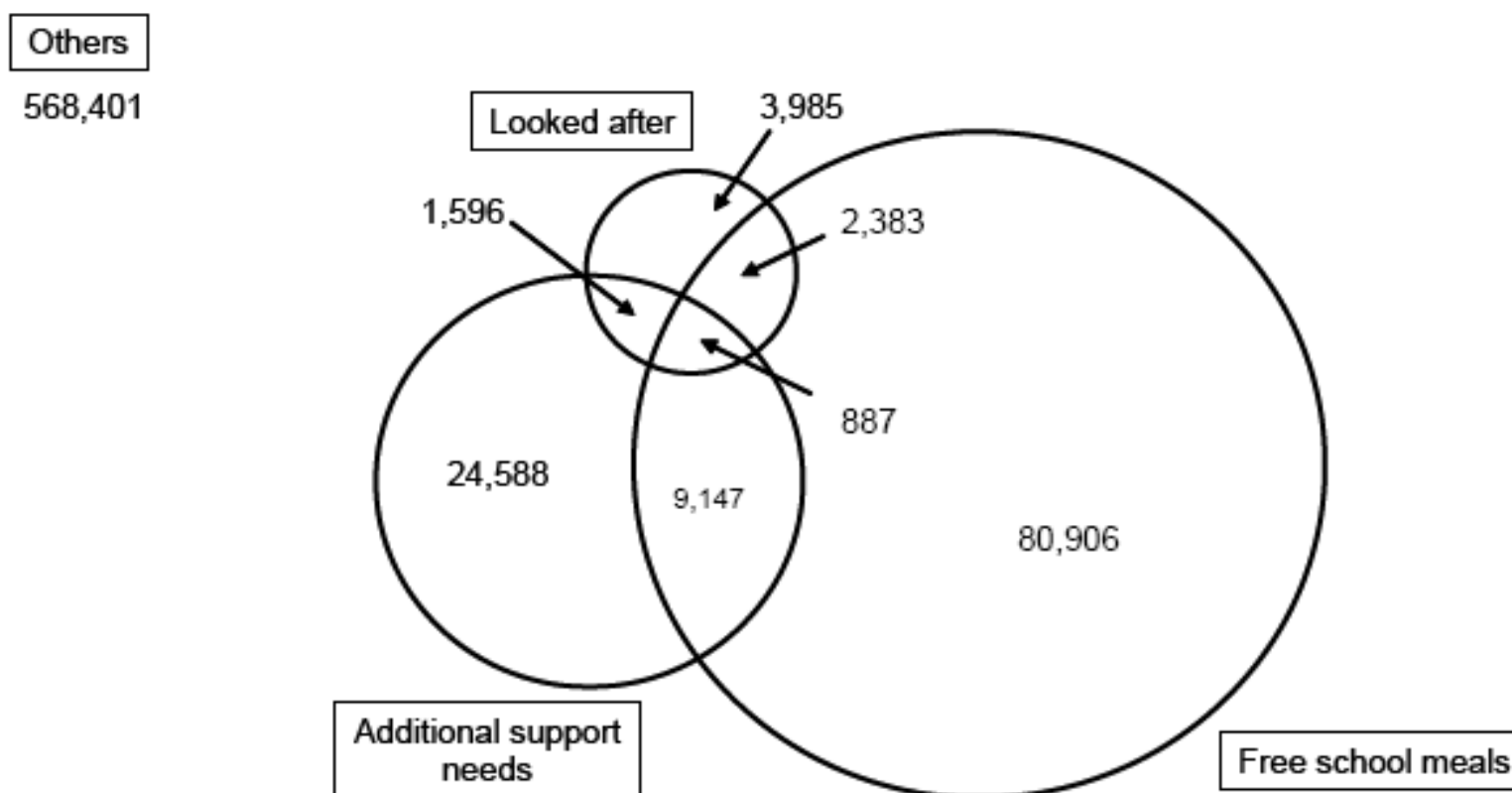


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Persistent links between dimensions of disadvantage



**Number of Pupils with free school meals,
Additional Support Needs and looked after by local authority, 2007**



Scottish Executive, 2008

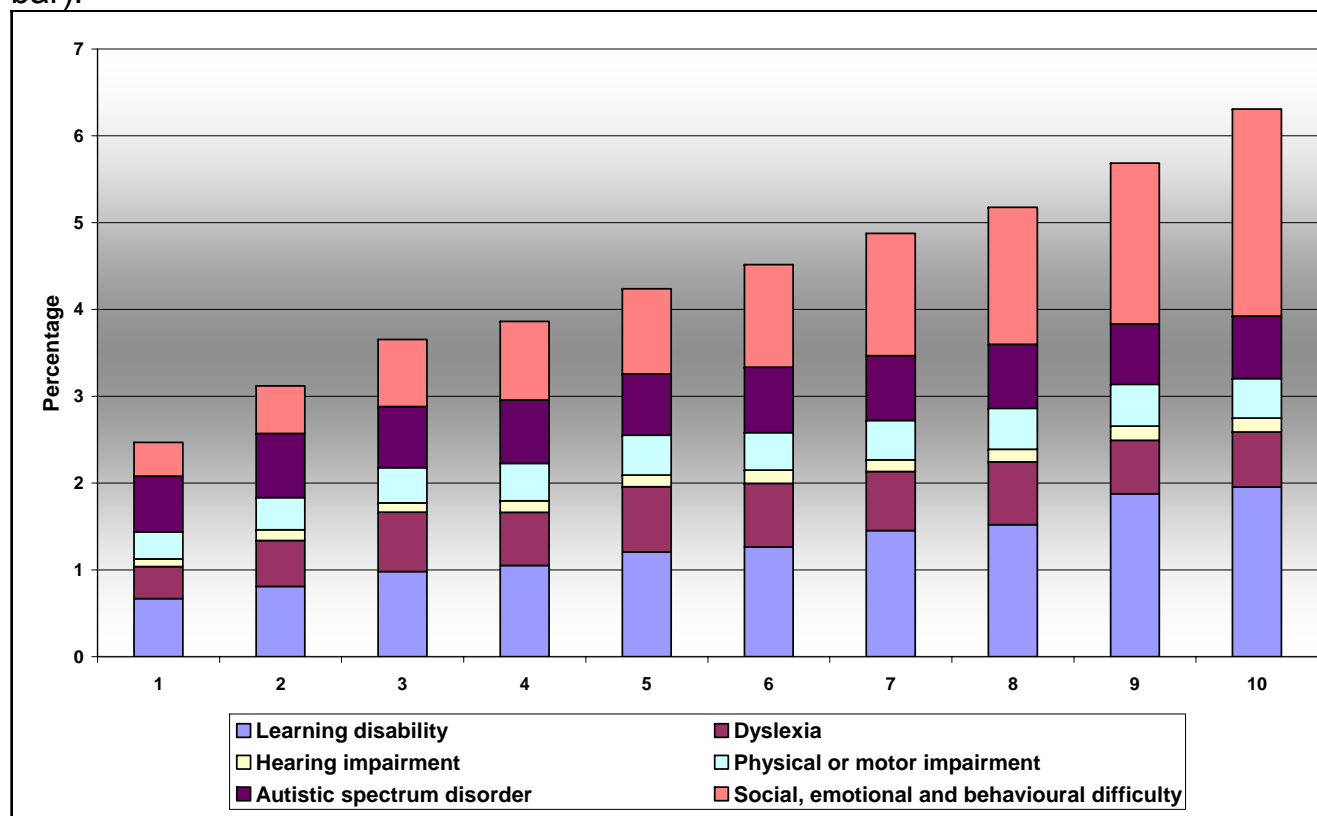


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Links between deprivation & ASN particularly marked for social, emotional & behavioural difficulties



Percentage of Scottish school population within each Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile by type of difficulty (percentages in each group in stacked bar).



Source: Scottish Government, 2009; SIMD = Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.
Category 1 = least deprived, category 10 = most deprived.



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Exclusions from school (small decrease 2007/08)



Year →	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
Total all exclusions	38,656	37,442	36,496	38,919	41,974	42,990	44,794



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Exclusions



- **3% of total school population excluded**
- **Exclusions increased by 7% between 2002/03 and 2003/04 – coincided with removal of targets for reduction**
- **Exclusions in secondary increased by 4% between 05/06 & 06/07**
- **Boys account for c.80% of all exclusions – Peak during S3**
- **Pupils with free school meal entitlement, ASN & looked after children more likely to be excluded – with all 3 factors 13 times more likely!!**
- **32% exclusions due to persistent disobedience; 26% involved verbal abuse of member of staff; 16% involved insolent/offensive behaviour**



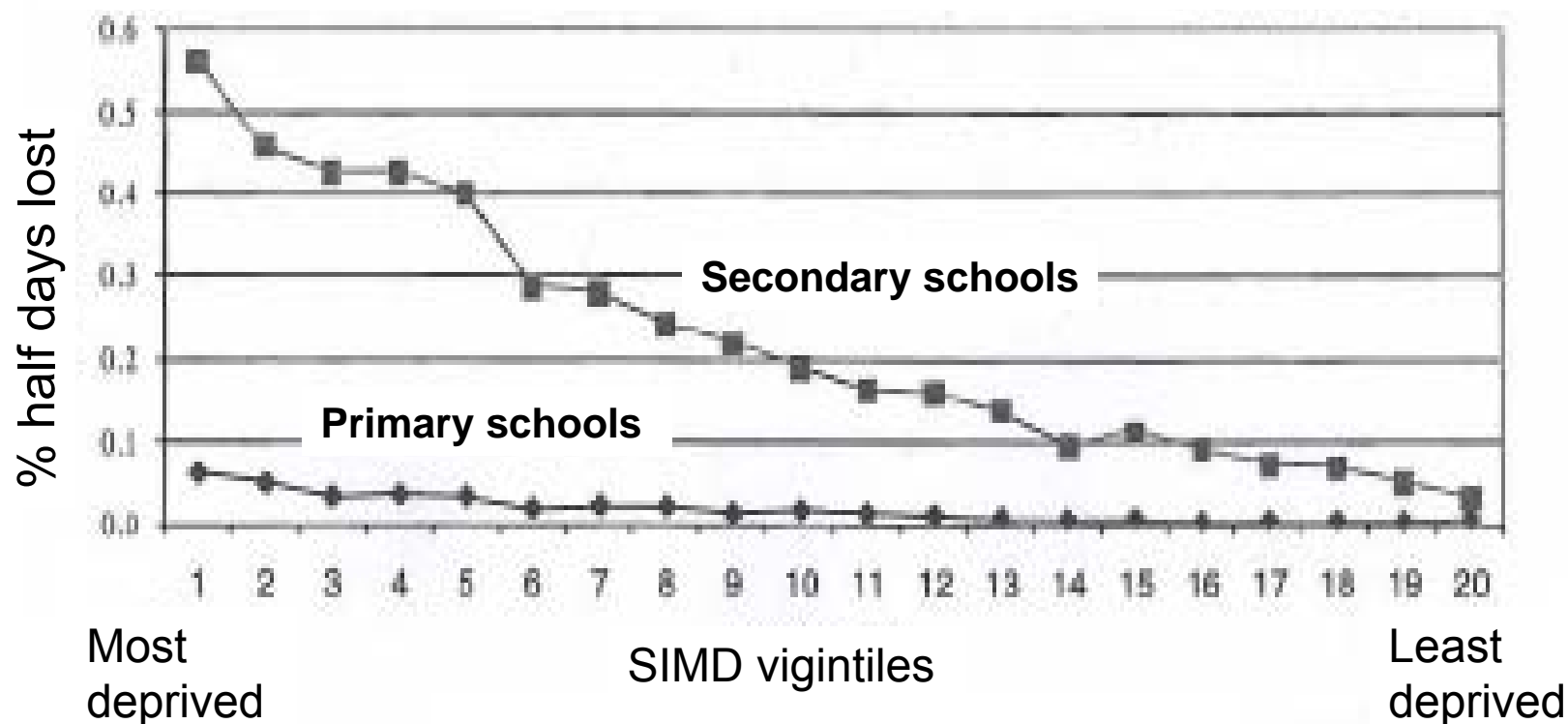
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Association between SES & exclusion



Temporary exclusions, 2003/2004 by deprivation level

Source SE 2006



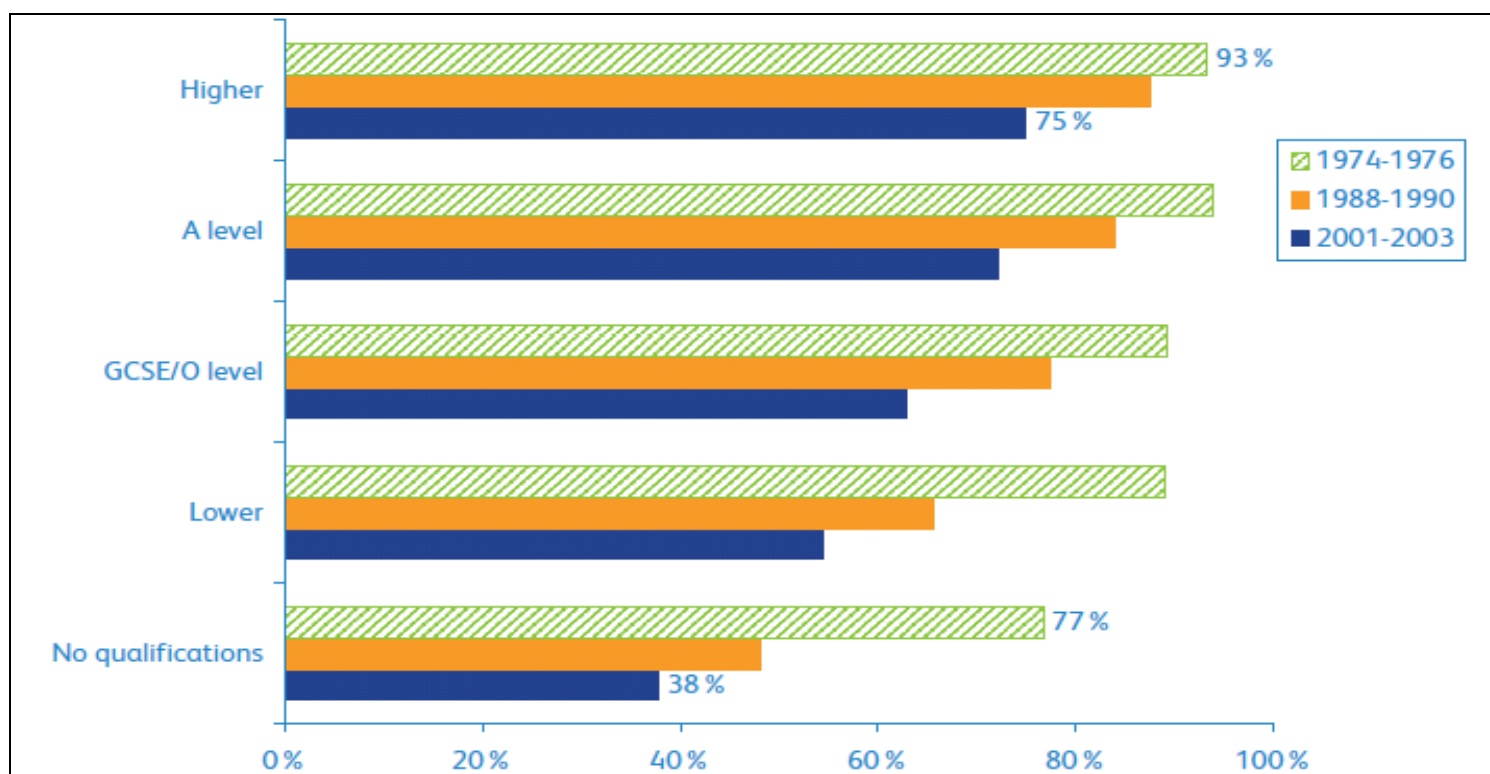


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Excluded children likely to have ASN & no qualifications – employment prospects worsening over time



Proportion of men with limiting long standing illness who are in work, by highest educational qualification



Source: National Equality Panel, 2010



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Summary of trends:

Support for inclusion but creation of exclusion



- For 30 years, strong focus on inclusion in Scottish education – accords with Scotland's image of itself as a more collectivist country than England
- But large gap between attainment levels of schools & LAs linked to levels of social deprivation (OECD, 2007)
- Pupil attainment: top 20% improving - bottom 20% static
- No decline in proportion of children in special ('inclusion') units
- Exclusions rose – have recently stabilised
- Strong (and often unrecognised) links between social deprivation & disability – particularly for males



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Backlash against inclusion of children with ASN

- Teachers associate inclusion agenda with discipline problems – concerns about increase in violence.
- Teachers supportive of inclusion of disabled children, especially relatively able children with physical or sensory impairments – but worried about disruptive pupils – would like to see more pupils excluded (boys & socially disadvantaged groups).
- Teacher unions call for 'additional off-site behaviour facilities for children and young people displaying particularly challenging behaviour'.
- Recently elected Conservative Government opposed to presumption of inclusion – where England goes, Scotland tends to follow (but at slower pace).



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Experiences of disabled children & their parents



Professionals wary of rights discourse:

I think it's [the ASL Act] strengthened the rights of those parents I described earlier who have this sense of entitlement and hostility to basically be frivolous and vexatious. (Pupil and Parent Manager)

Parents complain about lack of respect & attention to rights:

There has been no support whatsoever, even though he is starting P7 and was diagnosed in P2. the school has been unhelpful, even issuing a letter of exclusion. We have had to fight for basic rights

(Parent of child with diagnosis of ADHD)



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Conclusion



Scottish education has tried to treat all children the same – emphasis on universal provision.

Majority of children with ASN educated in mainstream schools – but significant minority of parents feel that their child does not receive enough support.

Major gaps between rhetoric & reality – tendency for discourse of inclusion to mask exclusionary practices.

Problem likely to increase as public sector funding squeezed.