

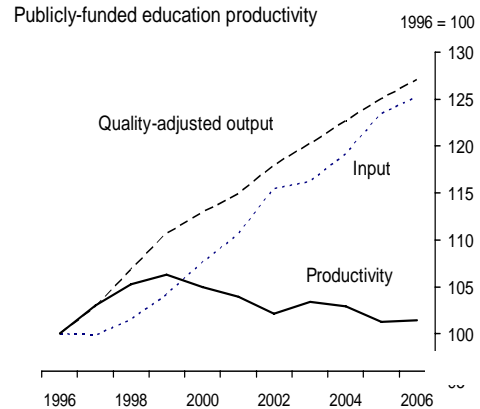
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Coverage
United Kingdom
Theme
Economy

New estimates of education productivity

Productivity in publicly-funded education services is estimated to have increased, on average, by 0.1 per cent a year between 1996 and 2006, using a new quality measure, according to latest estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

An article published today, *Public Service Productivity: Education*, sets out changes in education productivity between 1996 and 2006 and also describes improvements made to the methods of measuring productivity.



The ONS estimate of productivity change using a revised method to adjust for quality of education attainment, shows that:

- From 1996 to 1999, publicly-funded education productivity increased by 2.1 per cent a year; and
- from 1999 onwards, there was an average fall of 0.7 per cent a year, associated with a decline in pupil numbers from 2000 and an increase in school support staff.

Karen Dunnell, the National Statistician, said: "The article published today takes forward developments outlined in the strategy on measuring quality as part of public service output that we published in July 2007. It represents a major step forward in the measurement of publicly-funded education productivity. We will continue to develop further improvements to the estimates, drawing on the knowledge of a wide range of experts."

This is the second article published by the ONS on education productivity. New methods reflect recent public consultations and an ONS strategy *Measuring Quality as part of Public Service Output*, published in July 2007.

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The article presents:

- an explanation of what has driven the change in output and productivity;
- separate analysis for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with an improved method of combining them to give UK estimates;
- a new method to take account of changes in GCSE attainment, based on consultation;
- a wider range of contextual evidence.

Productivity of publicly-funded education is estimated by dividing annual figures for output from education (taking account of quality) by inputs to education (after making an allowance for pay and price changes). Patterns of productivity change over the last ten years may reflect:

- Rising pupil numbers in secondary schools;
- Falling pupil numbers in primary schools;
- The introduction of the workload reform package implemented in 2003, intended to reduce teacher workload;
- An increase in support staff numbers;
- Time lags that mean some changes in resource have not yet had any impact on the current quality measure.

Development work will continue on estimates of publicly-funded education productivity and improvements will be incorporated into future articles.

A supporting technical article explaining the new method of education quality adjustment is on the website.

Further productivity articles on adult social care, healthcare, and social security administration will follow later in 2007.

ONS has recently published the initial report on its Quality Measurement Framework Project, which includes research to measure quality of pre-school education. The project aims to produce new and innovative ways of measuring the quality of public service provision at the front line while decreasing the burden on service providers.



BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The education productivity article is available on the National Statistics website at:
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/PublicSector/output/downloads/Education_productivity_2007_main.pdf
2. A methods article is being published separately which sets out the technical workings of the new quality adjustment model and the model used by National Accounts. This can be found at:
http://statistics.gov.UK/about/data/methodology/specific/PublicSector/output/downloads/Education_quality_change
3. Evidence in section six, Triangulation, has been prepared jointly by ONS, working with the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Scottish Executive. DCSF are publishing a fuller article with more explanation of the relevant policies and systems, available at:
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/?rsgateway/db/sta/tooo745>
4. The Quality Measurement Framework Project initial report and further information about the project is available at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/PublicSector/output/qmf/default.asp>
5. The Quality Measurement Framework has been financed from the Invest to Save Budget (ISB). This is a joint Treasury/Cabinet Office initiative with an aim to create sustainable improvements in the capacity to deliver public services in a more joined up manner. A key principle of the ISB programme is that investment is provided in return for reform. Further details can be found at:
<http://www.isb.gov.uk/hmt.isb.application.2/index.asp>
6. The UK Centre for the Measurement of Government Activity (UKCeMGA) ran three consultations on the best methodologies to take forward the measurement of performance in our public services from September 2006 to April 2007. The consultation papers, written responses received and summaries of the consultation seminars are available at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/PublicSector/output/consultations.asp>
7. The resulting strategy paper, *Measuring Quality as a Part of Public Service Output – Strategy Following Consultation*, was published on 3 July 2007. This sets out the overall strategy for measuring public service output, with particular reference to quality, the future development programme needed to take the strategy forward and specific decisions on methods for measuring education and health. The paper is available at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=1831>



8. UKCeMGA's previous articles on productivity of key public service areas are:

- The first article on Education, published on 31 October 2005.
- Health, published on 27 February 2006.
- Adult Social Care, published on 4 April 2006.
- Social Security Administration, published on 5 July 2006.

These articles are available on the National Statistics website at:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/PublicSector/output/publications.asp>

9. The full Atkinson report is at:

www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/PublicSector/Atkinson/final_report.asp

The National Statistician responded in detail on 18 July 2005:

www.statistics.gov.uk/about/other_letters/default.asp

This included a commitment that any proposals for significant changes to the methodologies used to measure public service output and productivity would be the subject of wider debate and public consultation, before being considered for adoption in the National Accounts.

10. The then National Statistician set up the UK Centre for the Measurement of Government Activity (UKCeMGA), in July 2005, as a new directorate within the Office for National Statistics (ONS), to develop and take forward the recommendations in the Atkinson Final Report. Aileen Simkins is Head of UKCeMGA. UKCeMGA has its own Advisory Board chaired by Professor Peter C Smith. To find out more about the work of UKCeMGA, visit:

www.statistics.gov.uk/ukcemga

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