

Media Release

Embargoed until 00:01 on Friday 4 December

Issued Tuesday 1 December

Sector staying strong

- 4.3% of children and young people in Scotland attend one of 72 independent schools in membership of SCIS
- More pupils than ever before, over a quarter of all SCIS mainstream pupils, receive help with their fees, to a value of £47 million
- 31% of boarding pupils come from overseas

The figures are revealed by a census taken of all SCIS schools.

The annual SCIS Census reveals that

Pupil numbers at independent schools in Scotland remain strong despite falling by 1.5% for the 2015-16 session. Parents are drawn by the independent sector's commitment to providing the best resources and the highest quality teaching regardless of the uncertain economic climate, political environment and strong performance in the state sector.

International pupils account for 4% of independent school intake and boarding schools continue to attract overseas boarders with 31% of boarders coming from countries such as: Russia, China, Germany and Spain.

John Edward, Director, Scottish Council of Independent Schools, said:

"The current debate in Scottish education is focused on attainment and making the most of what works well. Nothing exemplifies these better than the continuing interest of parents and pupils in the independent sector, where what matters is what works for each individual pupil. Thanks to the biggest widening access scheme in Scotland, more families than ever are coming to the sector for the first time, drawn by the individual opportunity that choice and diversity in education can bring."

Increased Fee Assistance

In 2015-16 Scotland's independent schools will provide a record number of children and young people with help with their fees to a record value of £47million, up £2 million from last year's total and almost double the 2009 figure. An unprecedented 644 pupils are on 100% bursaries and 3.2% of all senior school mainstream pupils are now on 100% fee assistance.

These figures reflect the long term commitment from our members to widen access to our schools.

Richard Toley, Headmaster, Lathallan School, said:

"Despite the difficulties faced by the oil industry in the North East this year, our school, Lathallan, has received a record number of enquiries and has grown to reach capacity in most year groups. Indeed it is pleasing to see throughout the country independent schools have remained resolutely buoyant.

Scottish Independent Schools provide an incredible diversity of choice whether one is looking for SQA qualifications or the International Baccalaureate, large school or small school, boarding or day combined with an enormous range of co-curricular activities. An independent education can provide each child with the tailor made advantages that help not just throughout school but throughout life. In fact many more parents have come to realize that this can be achieved within a budget. Better promotion from schools has meant that parents are less reticent to ask for financial assistance and are also more able to see how the best possible value for their money is achieved."

About SCIS schools

SCIS schools are very diverse, from the large, well-known city day schools to small special needs schools that cater from pupils with complex needs. SCIS schools include single sex (8), boarding (18) and complex additional support needs (20). 88.5% of our pupils are day pupils.

ENDS

Press queries

For more information, please contact:

Alison Herbert or John Edward, SCIS

0131 556 2316 (office)

07717 791 921 (out of hours)

Note to editors:

Scottish Council of Independent Schools

The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) is an educational charity representing over 70 member schools, which educate more than 30,000 children of mixed abilities and diverse backgrounds. SCIS promotes **choice, diversity** and **excellence** in Scottish education. For more information please visit the SCIS website: www.scis.org.uk

SCIS Annual Census 2015

The 2015 Census includes data from all 72 schools in membership of SCIS as at September 2015. **Appendix 1** gives a snapshot of the schools as they were in September 2015. **Appendix 2** provides more detailed and comparative figures.

Company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland no 125368. Scottish Charity No SC018033