

## Senate Committee: Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015

#### Outcome: Schools and Youth

#### Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000077

Senator Wright, Penny asked on 05 March 2015, Hansard page 20

#### *Education - fourth report: academies and free schools - UK parliament.*

#### Question

Senator WRIGHT: Okay. Are you aware of any evidence then that establishes that achievement will be improved by independent public schools, particularly in disadvantaged groups? I am asking the department first of all.

Mr Cook: I guess there is a range of research. There is various research around forms of autonomy; various jurisdictions call that 'independence', or 'independent public schools' or however they describe or define it. There was research in 2014 from Stanford University, the London School of Economics and the Harvard Business School, which actually said that autonomous-in-government schools appear to have significantly higher management and management scores than regular government schools and private schools. They talked about higher management being important—where principals have greater autonomy to make decisions around budget and selection of staff and personnel. They have indicated that that possibly correlates with better pupil outcomes.

Senator WRIGHT: Can I ask about that particular one? I do not know if you have others—

Mr Cook: Sure.

Senator WRIGHT: I do not want to cut you off, but just in relation to that one: does the better pupil outcome relate to any evidence? Particularly for pupils of disadvantage?

Mr Cook: I have to take that on notice. I have the global outcome here, rather than having it broken down into particular groups. I am not sure, so I would have to take that on notice.

Senator WRIGHT: If you could. And was there something else you were going to refer to there in that answer?

Mr Cook: Some—

Ms Paul: In the question on notice we can also just put the link as well.

Senator WRIGHT: That would be good, thank you

#### Answer

The research in 2014 from Stanford University, the London School of Economics and the Harvard Business School is 'Does Management Matter in Schools?' (Bloom, Lemos, Sadun and Van Reenen), which is available at:

[http://www.people.hbs.edu/rsadun/Management\\_Schools\\_May2014.pdf](http://www.people.hbs.edu/rsadun/Management_Schools_May2014.pdf)

The research paper states that autonomous government schools demonstrate superior management performance compared to regular government schools due to:

- the strong accountability of principals to an external governing body
- the ability to exercise strong leadership through a coherent long-term strategy for the school.

The research also states 'higher management scores are positively correlated with better pupil outcomes. Although the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow us to

determine whether this correlation is causal (e.g. unobservable differences across schools might drive both pupil outcomes and management quality), the result does suggest that our management data has some useful informational content.' (p. 2).