

DR. RHODES BOYSON, M.P.

RHODES BOYSON, D. P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP  
The Prime Minister,  
House of Commons,  
London SW1A 0AA

16th December, 1980

*Dear Margaret,*

As promised when I lunched with you on Friday, 5th December, I now enclose a table of the percentage of school leavers obtaining five or more 'O' levels or Grade 1 CSE's, and one or more 'A' levels, in Northern Ireland as compared with England and Wales over the last 18 years.

The way that Wales, that was ahead of both England and Northern Ireland in 1962-63 with the highest percentage of 'O' level and 'A' level achievers, has fallen relatively behind England and Northern Ireland could indicate the academic failure of comprehensive schools. Wales is totally comprehensive with very few day independent schools that parents can opt for out of the State system. Northern Ireland, which has still retained grammar schools, was well behind Wales in 1962-63 and was behind England with 'A' level passes, but now has much better results than England or Wales in both 'O' level and 'A' level examinations.

There could obviously be other factors besides the form of 11-18 schooling, but I cannot believe that the move in England and Wales to comprehensive schools is not a major influence in the relative decline.

All good wishes.

*Yours ever*

*Rhodes*

Dr. Rhodes Boyson MP

Qualifications of School Leavers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

	<u>ENGLAND</u>	<u>WALES</u>	<u>N. IRELAND</u>
1962-63			
<u>Leavers</u> with 5 or more 'O' level passes as a percentage of all leavers	15.7	19.5	16.6 <sup>2</sup>
<u>Leavers</u> with 1 or more 'A' level passes as a percentage of all leavers	8.9	9.3	8.8
1969-70			
<u>Leavers</u> with 5 or more 'O' level passes or CSE Grade 1 results as a percentage of all leavers	23.1	25.2	24.5 <sup>2</sup>
<u>Leavers</u> with 1 or more 'A' level passes as a percentage of all leavers	15.9	15.3	17.0
1977-78			
<u>Leavers</u> with 5 or more higher grade 'O' level or CSE results as a percentage of all leavers	23.7	22.3	28.4 <sup>2</sup>
<u>Leavers</u> with 1 or more A level passes as a percentage of all leavers	15.5	14.2	19.8

1. 'O' level grades A to C and CSE Grade 1.
2. This assumes that all leavers who had obtained 'A' level passes had also obtained 5 or more 'O' level or CSE passes (or 'O' grades A to C and CSE Grade 1).

31st December, 1980

Thank you so much for your letter of 16th December,  
together with its enclosure.

I have read these statistics with the keenest interest.

When the figures for later years become available,  
could you please send them on to me?

There is one aspect of this about which I have asked  
Ian Gow to have a word with you.

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