these improvements as a positive step in breaking down gender inequality within the education system arguing that it shows meritocracy is a reality. However, Francis and Skeleton's finding don’t explain why in recent statistics (2018) boys have a higher percentage (13.3) in 3A*-A grades at A-levels compared to girls (11.5). Therefore, this suggests that the changes in the labour market may not be a valid explanation for gender differences in educational achievement.

INTERNAL

A third gender difference in education is the change of GCSE and coursework in the education system. The introduction of GCSEs which brought with it more coursework-based assessments has increased the underachievement of boys as stated in Item A when it says “the education system is systematically failing boys”. Gorard suggests the gender gap in success rates increased dramatically in the academic year 1988/9 which coincides with the introduction of GCSEs and therefore coursework. Mitsos and Browne support this view by suggesting that coursework suits girls best. This is because girls spend more time on their work than boys, girls take more care in presentation, girls are more organised and they develop better speaking and listening skills. Therefore, the new education system is failing boys as girls are achieving higher in coursework. It has also been noted that girls mature quicker than girls and are therefore more willing and capable to complete coursework in lower stages of the school. This suggests that boys will do better in wider society as they are being failed in the education system, meaning they end up in lower paid jobs.

A fourth gender difference in the education system is the amount of attention boys receive from teachers compared to the girls which is suggested by Dale Spender. However, Francis found that this was because boys were more disciplined than girls, Swann says boys dominate discussions whereas girls are more likely to work quietly. Radical feminists will see the education system as patriarchal. The gendered verbal behaviour that occurs in most classes reinforces the radical feminist perspective. Boys dominate talk in the classroom, drown out the girls and ridiculing and interrupting girls contributions. Boys then gain a greater proportion of the teachers time and attention although a lot of this is to do with discipline not learning. This therefore suggests that girls are being made invisible in class which impacts their overall grades which supports the radical feminist perspective that patriarchy is still a huge internal factor to girls underachievement in recent years.

To conclude these explanations of gender differences in the educational system it may be best to consider all aspects as being influential on both genders not just one in particular. This was discussed in the book written by Ken Browne, who said all these factors could be the reasons for underachievement of boys in later years and the underachievement in girls in the most recent years and it can be hard to work all the specific effects of each factor. Instead it may be better to consider the subject choices that girls and boys are choosing, this way it can bring together all these factors and thinking about them alongside factors outside of school. An example of this is peer pressure, a boys may be pressured by society and peers to take a more ‘masculine’ subject such as PE or engineering instead of English or sociology as they may be considered ‘girly’ subject. As well as the boy’s parents neglect encouraging him to go to university as more pressure is added onto girls in modern society. This then encourages the boys to endure a career related to those subjects no matter if it is a low paid job which results in changes in wider society as traditionally males were in the high paid jobs than females. This suggests that despite attempts to break down the gender gap within education, traditional gender identities and inequality are still extremely significant. Overall, both internal and external factors affect gender differences in education, especially for the male.