

Transforming lives through learning

Corporate Plan 2013-2016



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- A group of children and adults are holding hands in a circle on a playground, viewed from above. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light. Overlaid on the left side of the image is a list of roles, each preceded by a white chevron symbol. The roles listed are: Learners, Parents, Practitioners, Teachers, Directors of Education, Volunteers, and Employers.
- Learners
 - Parents
 - Practitioners
 - Teachers
 - Directors of Education
 - Volunteers
 - Employers

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Foreword

Scotland is a country which values education highly. It is in our national DNA and embedded deeply in our sense of ourselves. For Scotland to thrive in the modern world, education must be, as it once was in the past, our national passion, absorbing our care and attention like never before. That is why we are pursuing the wide and ambitious programme of reform that is now well underway, driving transformation at almost every phase of the learning journey. That certainly includes the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence but equally includes our major programme of reforms in the post-16 sector, developments in community learning and development, and initiatives to improve provision in the early years.

I see Education Scotland as having a key role to play in achieving success on this ambitious agenda for improvement, and so I am delighted to introduce this plan, which sets out how the agency is aiming to ensure it can play its part to the full.

When I took the decision to establish Education Scotland, I was very clear that we have the potential, here in Scotland, to create an innovative new type of national agency which reflects the best international thinking on how to improve education systems. It would be an agency which combined and drew on the

strengths of its predecessor organisations most certainly, but which also added value by doing things differently. That means exploiting the potential for creating genuinely new synergies between developmental and evaluative work, between inspiration and evidence, to create that 'virtuous cycle of improvement' in the education system, which is described more fully in the rationale for the plan.

The plan shows how the agency's potential can increasingly be realised in practice in the years ahead, building on the strong progress which it has already made in its first two years of existence.

In highlighting where improvements most urgently need to be made, the plan directly reflects the Government's key focus on tackling underachievement and delivering more equitable outcomes for all learners.

I am committed to ensuring that no matter where you live or what adverse external factors there are in your life, you should have the same access to educational opportunities as all others and the same prospect of benefiting fully from them.

We are, I believe, ready to make the move from having a good education system to having a great one, a system which stands comparison with the best in the world in terms of the quality and equity of the outcomes it achieves.

I look forward to seeing the strategy laid out in this plan make a major contribution to turning that ambition into reality.

Michael Russell MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Education
and Lifelong Learning



Welcome

I am delighted to introduce Education Scotland's first corporate plan. This plan sets out an ambitious programme of action through which we aim to bring about a step change in the quality and equity of Scottish education.

As Scotland's new national improvement agency for education, we have high ambitions for ensuring that Scottish education ranks amongst the best in the world. Our ambition is for excellence at all ages and stages, ranging from the highest quality of learning experiences in the early years, through excellent provision in the school years which lives up fully to the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence, leading into post-school education and training for young people and on to adult learning provision which ensures all adults can continue to thrive as lifelong learners. Our plan shows how we intend to strengthen our ability to promote improvement at every point in this learning journey.

Of course, our ability to bring about such a change is crucially dependent on our ability to influence others, particularly teachers, lecturers and the wide range of other professionals who have a role to play in promoting and supporting learning. They have the power to make the difference to the lives of individuals through engaging them

in excellent learning. Our aim is to help them make that difference as effectively and as often as possible. No less importantly, we will also aim to play our part in providing high-quality support and advice for parents of young learners and the learners themselves.

With that in mind our corporate plan has been developed through extensive consultation with our partners and stakeholders. It reflects a broadly shared consensus on the sort of approach that we agree will be successful in promoting improvement in education in Scotland and, more specifically, the sort of role which Scotland's national improvement body for learning should play.

Indeed our ambition stretches beyond influencing improvement in the education sector to achieving a broader impact on the wider public sector. Besides engaging actively with health, social services and other sectors to promote more joined-up approaches to improving the wellbeing of children and adult learners, I also believe that the approach we are developing for education has wider, more general relevance to other sectors and can contribute strongly to the way we think about public sector improvement in a wide range of contexts.

I hope you will agree this plan reflects a clear and dynamic agenda for improving Scottish education. If you have any role at all in providing or supporting learning in any context, I hope you will also work with us to help us make it a reality.

Dr Bill Maxwell
Chief Executive



Who we are

Transforming lives through learning

Education Scotland is Scotland's key national agency for promoting improvement in the quality and effectiveness of education.

We promote improvement in all sectors of education and at all stages of the learning journey, from the early years to adult and continuing education.

The creation of Education Scotland on 1 July 2011 brought together the resources and functions of Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), the National Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Team and the Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Team. By capitalising on the resources and expertise of these four organisations, and by working in collaboration with our key partners, we are now very well placed to improve the quality of education for all Scottish learners.

Our operating budget for 2012/13 was £32.5 million, and we are planning for a gradual reduction in our core funding over the period covered by this corporate plan. The creation of Education Scotland has realised over £10 million in efficiencies.

Our work covers the full range of education provision in Scotland for learners of all ages across early years settings, all types of schools, including independent schools, publicly and privately funded colleges, community learning and development (CLD), teacher education, educational psychology services, voluntary organisations and prison education. Our executive agency status safeguards our ability to evaluate and report impartially on the quality of education provision and the success of national policy in practice.

We work closely with Scottish Ministers and the policy colleagues within the Scottish Government who advise them. This means that the evidence and analysis we provide feeds directly into the policy-making process.

Our staff are our key resource. They bring together a rich mix of different skills and

expertise, including curriculum development specialists, HM Inspectors, development officers, corporate services specialists, analysts, and experts in research, information, communications, technology and other areas.

We are committed to maintaining a blend of permanent staff and full and part-time secondees.

This blend helps ensure that the expertise of our permanent staff combines with national expertise as well as continuously refreshed thinking and approaches representing the best current education practice. This ensures that we are working closely with a range of partners in education and playing a role in helping with the career-long professional learning of professionals across Scotland during the period of their secondment or contract.





“

Our ambition is for excellence at all ages and stages, ranging from the highest quality of learning experiences in the early years...to adult learning provision which ensures all adults can continue to thrive as lifelong learners.”

Dr Bill Maxwell, Chief Executive, Education Scotland



The vision

Transforming lives through learning

Learners in Scotland will progress in one of the most effective education systems in the world, renowned for the ability of national and local partners to work flexibly together to achieve high-quality and equitable outcomes for all.

Through engagement with our staff and key partners we have developed a vision which describes our collective ambitions for Scottish education. This vision incorporates a number of key dimensions:

- **Learner focused**

The vision sets a high level of ambition and places the learner at the core of everything we do. It envisages a system in which all learners progress through personalised learner journeys which equip them with the skills they need to thrive in their chosen careers and in society at large.

- **A world-renowned education system**

The vision is for education in Scotland to be globally renowned for its success, widely acknowledged as being one of the best education systems in the world.

- **High-quality and equitable outcomes for all**

The vision has a strong focus on improving outcomes in ways which seek to eliminate the inequity which currently exists amongst learners from different backgrounds and from particular vulnerable groups.

- **Strong and productive partnerships**

The vision reflects our commitment to playing a lead role in promoting strong partnership working amongst the key partners supporting and delivering education in Scotland. We believe our aspirations for improvement in Scottish education are shared by all of our key partners. These can only be achieved by working together co-operatively, with mutual respect for, and understanding of, our different roles, responsibilities and relationships.

Achieving this vision will mean:

- > **educational outcomes for all learners are improving,**
- > **inequity in educational outcomes is eradicated, and**
- > **public confidence in education is high.**





How the vision contributes to creating a better Scotland

The vision for education is aligned fully with the Scottish Government's over-arching purpose:

to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth.



Achieving the vision for Scottish education will make a major contribution to achieving the government's overarching purpose and its associated strategic objectives of making Scotland **Smarter, Wealthier and Fairer, Healthier, Safer and Stronger and Greener.**

In particular, we believe that success in achieving our vision for Scottish education will contribute directly to the following national outcomes that support these strategic objectives (Appendix A):

- **we are better educated, more skilled and successful,** renowned for our research and innovation;
- **our young people are successful learners,** confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens;
- **our children have the best start in life** and are ready to succeed;
- **we have tackled the significant inequities** in Scottish society;
- **we have improved the life chances for children,** young people and families at risk;
- **we have strong, resilient and supportive communities** where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others;
- **our public services are high-quality,** continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs, and
- **we realise our full economic potential** with more and better employment opportunities for our people.

The second of these outcomes is strongly aligned to **Curriculum for Excellence**.¹ We therefore have a particularly strong lead role in relation to this outcome. Promoting the successful implementation of Curriculum for Excellence is one of the key responsibilities with which we have been charged.

We have a direct role in producing some of the evidence against which the success of the national outcomes can be judged. Two of the 50 national indicators which are used to gauge Scotland's progress in improving these outcomes are based directly on our inspection findings.

The delivery of public services - four pillars

As we pursue the vision we will be doing so in ways which are aligned fully with the government's agenda for public services reform, as set out in its response to the findings of the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (the Christie report).²

Our work will make a strong contribution to the achievement of the four pillars of public services reform outlined in the report: prevention, partnership, people, and performance.

- **A decisive shift towards prevention** will be clear, for example in our strong commitment to early intervention to maximise success and equity in learners' achievements, tackling deep-rooted cycles of underachievement and disengagement amongst some groups.

- **A greater focus on 'place' to drive better partnership, collaboration and local delivery** will be evident. We will show increased agility and flexibility in how and where we deliver for practitioners; the approach that is appropriate for one area will be entirely different in another.
- **Investing in people who deliver services through enhanced workforce development and effective leadership** will be exemplified by the strong priority we will place on strengthening professional learning for education practitioners and on enhancing leadership development opportunities.
- **A more transparent public service culture which improves standards of performance** is the central objective of all our work. We will provide external evaluation on the quality of provision and seek to improve the capacity of education providers to evaluate and report on their own performance openly and transparently to ensure standards continue to improve.

1 For a fuller definition of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence see Appendix B.

2 Scottish Government (2011); Renewing Scotland's Public Services: Priorities for Reform in Response to the Christie Commission.



Early years

We will also focus on ensuring education contributes strongly to improving children's development in the early years. We will support implementation of the Early Years Framework, the new Early Years Collaborative and improvements in the quality of pre-school education services.

Getting it right for every child

Our focus will extend significantly beyond school attainment levels.

The *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) approach is about how practitioners across all services for children and adults meet the needs of children and young people, working together where necessary to ensure they reach their full potential.

We will support GIRFEC to help improve life chances for children in a more holistic manner using the eight indicators of wellbeing:

- S** safe
- H** healthy
- A** achieving
- N** nurtured
- A** active
- R** respected
- R** responsible and
- I** included

Equality outcomes

We will play our full role in promoting the Scottish Government's public sector equality duties.

We will make a key contribution to the Scottish Government's specific equality outcome on education:

Within the longer term all children and young people will be able to make the most of the education opportunities available to them to reach their full potential. There will be progress by 2017 in the experience of those with protected characteristics who are currently disadvantaged or underperforming.

We will also contribute to the Scottish Government's other equality outcomes as appropriate.

Post-16 reform

Scotland's ambitious post-16 reform sets out a programme to ensure publicly funded learning provision in our colleges, universities and training providers is better aligned with the Government's ambitions for jobs and growth, improves people's life chances, and is sustainable for the medium and long term.

As reform progresses, we need to ensure that learners have access to a wide range of high-quality opportunities at all levels. Progression through that learning is critically important in ensuring people develop a wide range of work-related and life skills to help them thrive in the labour market and enhance their careers.

We will work directly with the Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and other partners in contributing effectively to the transformations in the provision and quality of post-16 learning and training.



The improvement challenge

Knowledge about how to improve education systems has grown rapidly over the last two decades. One clear message that has emerged is that in order to plan effectively for bringing about improvement in education systems, you need first to be clear about how well your education system is currently performing.³



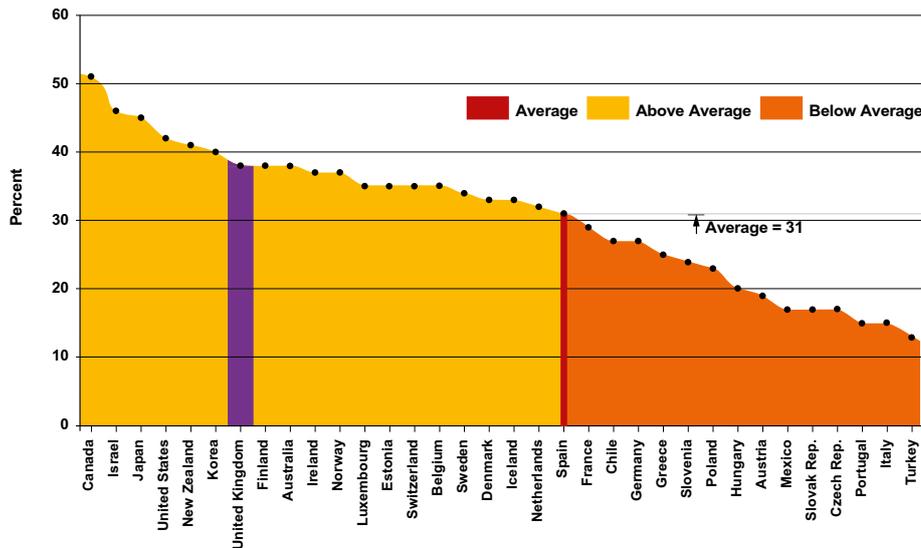
There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to generating educational improvement. Rather, decisions on the choice of the most appropriate methods to secure improvement in an education system depend on its starting point. The strategies appropriate for education systems that are trying to move from ‘poor’ to ‘fair’ are very different from the strategies appropriate for education systems seeking to progress from ‘good’ to ‘great’.

Evidence on the current performance of Scotland’s education system suggests that we have a good education system, which is performing very strongly in a number of respects. However, we are not yet at the level of achieving consistently excellent levels of performance which would match the world-leading ambition of our vision.

A range of evidence confirms this broadly positive performance.

We have a relatively high proportion of graduates in the population compared to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and most parts of the UK.⁴

Graph 1: Proportion of population aged 25-64 that are graduates, 2010



Scotland outperforms the rest of the UK in relation to the number of graduates aged 25 to 64. In the 2010 Annual Population Survey (Office for National Statistics), Scotland’s graduate figure was around 4 percentage points higher than that for the rest of the UK.⁵



It’s important to me that I have faith in the education system which my two children are going through. Though they are still young, I feel they have a bright future, being well supported within the new curriculum, which will play to their strengths and give them the best opportunities possible.”

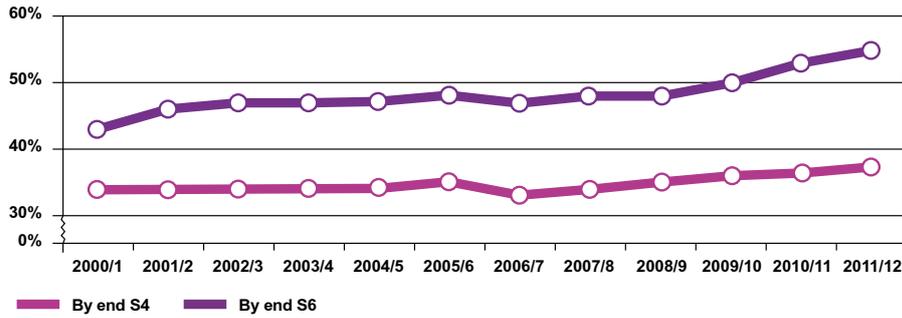
Clare MacDougall, Parent

4 OECD (2012); Education at a Glance 2012, OECD Indicators Table A1.3a, OECD Publishing.

5 Office for National Statistics (2012); Graduates in the Labour Market.

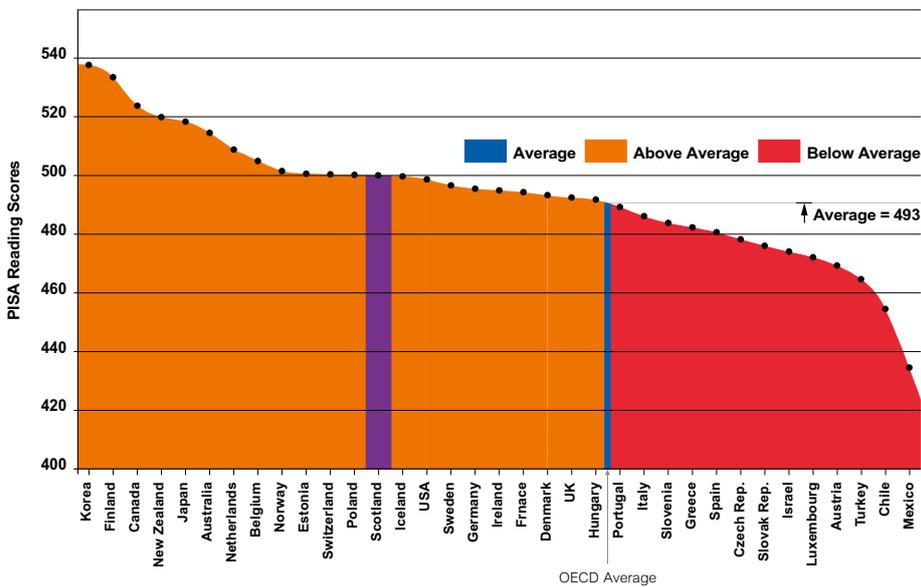
Young people’s performance in National Qualifications at secondary school has gradually improved over the last decade.⁶

Graph 2: Young people gaining five or more awards at SCQF level 5 or above by the end of S4 and S6 2000/01 to 2011/12



Scotland’s performance in international benchmarking tests is relatively strong although we are not one of the top performers.⁷

Graph 3: 2009 PISA Reading Score for OECD Countries



6 Scottish Government (2012); 'Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No. 2: 2012 Edition'.
 7 OECD (2010); PISA 2009 Results: What Students Know and Can Do – Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science (Volume I), OECD Publishing.

Other indicators of good performance in our education system include:

- **the nationally commissioned Growing up in Scotland (GUS)** study which indicates that in the early years of their lives, most children in Scotland have positive experiences and few experience developmental difficulties;⁸
- **the same study also indicates that almost all children in Scotland** make the transition from pre-school to primary school well. In primary schools, evidence from the same study shows that, for most children and their parents, early school experiences are positive;
- **baseline evidence from inspections** of pre-school centres and schools, between 2008 and 2011, shows that almost all are working at a satisfactory level or better in providing children with effective experiences and improving their performance;⁹

- **evidence from inspections also indicates** that the quality of learning continues to be good in almost all secondary schools, with examples of very good and outstanding teaching;⁹
- **most leavers from publicly funded secondary schools** are in positive destinations approximately nine months after leaving school and this is increasing;¹⁰ and
- **since 2001 there has been a steady decrease** in the percentage of adults with low or no qualifications.¹¹

But we face some major challenges

Despite this progress, there remains considerable room for improvement in Scottish education. We need to raise our performance in some key areas if we are to achieve the consistently excellent levels of performance we aspire to, and which could place Scotland amongst the best performing countries in the world.



8 The Improvement Service (2012); Growing Up in Scotland – Key Messages.
9 Education Scotland (2012); Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education: Trends in Inspection Findings 2008-11.
10 Scottish Government (2012); Scotland Performs Technical Note: Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work.
11 Scottish Government (2012); Scotland Performs Technical Note: Improve the skill profile of the population.



Education Scotland has a long and successful track record, working in partnership to support and challenge colleges across Scotland to enhance education opportunities for our students. At a time of significant change and reform there is a very real opportunity for Education Scotland, working closely with colleges, to redefine and shape the future vocational education provision of Scotland. Our collective vision should be ambitious and bold and deliver an education system that is defined by excellence.”

Audrey Cumberford, Scottish Funding Council and Principal, West College Scotland

- **One key issue holding us back** is the strong link between social background and educational outcomes, a link which is strongly embedded in our system.
- **Differences in educational outcomes** linked to social inequities in Scotland become strongly evident before the start of formal education and then persist through schooling and into adult life.
- **GUS evidence shows that children** from the most disadvantaged backgrounds typically start school developmentally between 13 and 18 months behind their peers, depending on the exact measure used.¹²
- **Analyses of data** from the OECD’s international benchmarking studies, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), indicates that social background plays a relatively strong role in influencing educational outcomes in Scotland, relative to other countries.¹³
- **We still have significant issues** with low levels of literacy amongst the adult population – around one-quarter of the Scottish population face occasional challenges and constrained opportunities due to limited literacy skills and 3.6% of this group of people face major challenges with a very severe impact on their everyday lives.¹⁴

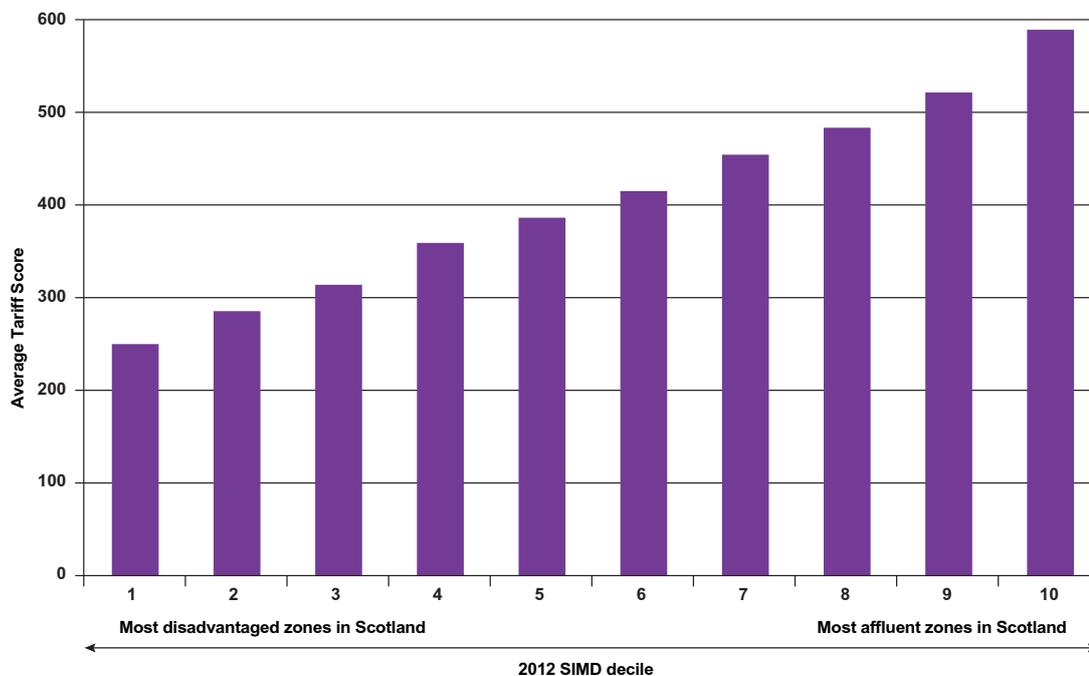
¹² The Improvement Service (2012); Growing Up in Scotland – Key Messages.

¹³ OECD (2010); PISA 2009 Results: Overcoming Social Background: Equity in Learning Opportunities and Outcomes (Volume II), OECD Publishing.

¹⁴ Scottish Government (2009); Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009 – Report of Findings.

Young people’s attainment versus levels of social disadvantage.¹⁵

Graph 4: Average tariff score of leavers 2011/12 by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile.



2012 SIMD decile. The acronym stands for the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation factors. As the name suggests a number of indicators are used to calculate 'deprivation'. Each data zone in Scotland (which is a small area of land, normally a few streets) is allocated to a decile which corresponds to the level of social disadvantage. Decile 1, the left-hand side of chart, is the 10% most disadvantaged zones in Scotland; decile 10, right-hand side of chart, is the 10% most affluent and privileged zones in Scotland.

Average Tariff Score. Each SQA qualification has a number of points attributed to it. As learners move through S4-S6 and achieve more and higher levels of qualifications so they accumulate more points. Pupils with a lower number of qualifications and fewer quality passes are at the bottom (fewer points) and those with a higher number of qualifications and a higher quality of pass, e.g. a grade A, are at the top (more points).

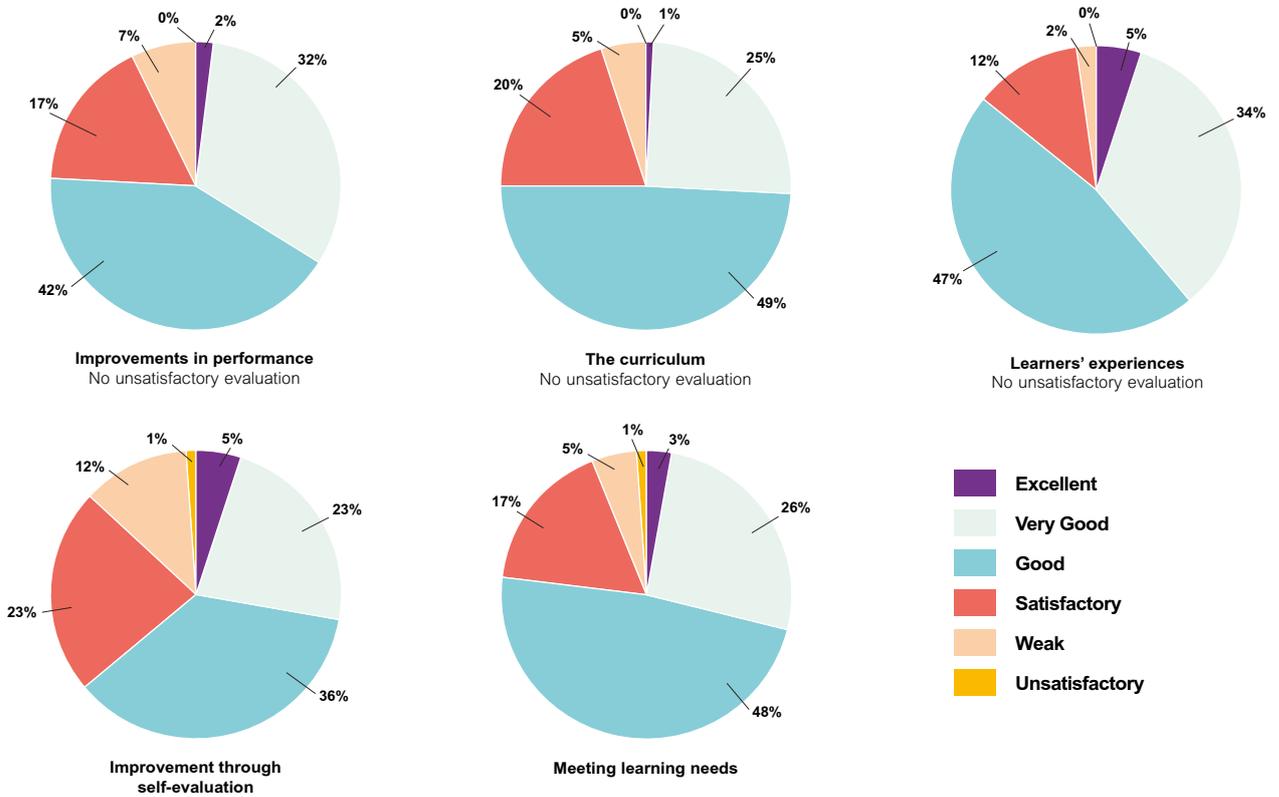
The strong link between social background and educational outcomes in Scotland is clearly shown in this chart, which demonstrates the cumulative achievement of school attainment levels mapped against the social characteristics of pupils’ home addresses.

Raising the bars to the left of this chart is one of the key challenges we face.

Our inspection evidence confirms the picture of a school education system which is generally performing well. We see relatively few instances of extreme underperformance, but we see many schools and services which still have substantial scope for improvement to take them from ‘good’ to ‘great’.

¹⁵ Scottish Government (2013); More detailed analysis from 'Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No. 3: 2013 Edition'.

Graph 5: Quality Indicator evaluations for all schools



Summaries of the outcomes of our inspections over the period 2008 to 2011¹⁶ show the large proportion of our evaluations that fall into the 'satisfactory' and 'good' categories, and the need to achieve a major shift towards seeing more widespread evidence of 'very good' and 'excellent' provision spreading across the system.

Making a definitive shift to higher levels of performance in Scotland requires us to take account of both the system as a whole and the needs of all learners.

We will not make the progress we seek simply by focusing on improving currently low-performing education providers. Rather, we need to ensure that continuous improvement is occurring broadly across the system, no matter the starting point. It is a sustained and persistent effort, on a system-wide basis, that is required if we are to succeed. This is a common feature of high-performing education systems around the world which have reduced inequity in learning outcomes.

16 Education Scotland (2012); Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education: Trends in Inspection Findings 2008-11.

Improving education the Scottish way



We will play our part in developing an ambitious approach to improving education in Scotland which is designed to take Scottish education from 'good' to 'great'.



The increasing body of international evidence on improving whole education systems suggests that countries that are succeeding in making the move from ‘good’ to ‘great’, and going beyond that to excellence, tend to adopt the same core strategies.¹⁷

- **They focus on raising the quality** of entrants into the education profession, ensuring that education is seen as a high-status professional occupation with high standards which attracts and retains the best graduates.
- **They place strong expectations** on education practitioners to continue to develop their professional practice throughout their careers and ensure they have the time and support to help them do this.
- **They promote a high level of autonomy** amongst individual establishments and services, encouraging them to take proactive control of what they teach and how they teach it, adapting their provision to their local needs and taking responsibility for driving their own self-evaluation and improvement.

17 McKinsey and Co. (2010); How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better.

The evidence suggests that the most strongly improving systems also focus directly on promoting a strong culture of **collaborative learning and inquiry**, whereby front-line practitioners are continuously engaged in learning from each other, actively cross-fertilising learning about effective practice amongst networks of practitioners.

They also develop ways of actively **encouraging and supporting innovative practice**, and proactively disseminate the learning from such practice across the system in ways which enable others to benefit from it.

The Scottish approach

Many of the approaches highlighted in this analysis are already clearly evident in the model of educational improvement which we have adopted in Scotland. The 'Scottish approach' has focused on increasing levels of professional autonomy whilst investing strongly in building capacity amongst education practitioners, establishments and services. Our strong focus on developing self-evaluation complemented by proportionate arrangements for external inspection and review has also been a defining characteristic of quality improvement in Scottish education.





...Curriculum for Excellence must develop learning and teaching that will build quality skills in the workforce and better prepare our young people for the world of work... so that the Scottish education system can make an even bigger contribution to Scotland's success."

Iain McMillan CBE, Director, CBI Scotland

Empowering front-line professionals

The focus on encouraging education professionals to have more autonomy in deciding how best to meet the needs of their learners has been powerfully expressed in Scotland's wide-ranging reform of the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment across all sectors 3–18. Curriculum for Excellence, the most comprehensive reform of education provision from pre-school to adulthood in a generation, is explicitly designed to give practitioners much greater professional freedom in deciding exactly what and how they teach to motivate and develop their learners.

Curriculum for Excellence has refocused national guidance to be less prescriptive about the content of the curriculum, producing a more flexible and enabling framework which concentrates on defining broad principles and the key experiences and outcomes which young people are expected to achieve at each stage of their learning journey. We have tailored this approach for the Scottish context, in which detailed decisions about service delivery increasingly rest with front-line professionals and local bodies in the belief that they are best placed to decide how to achieve outcomes in local circumstances.



Building quality and skills in the workforce

Alongside encouraging professionals to have more local autonomy, there has been a clear focus on **enhancing the quality and capacity of our education workforce** to ensure they are equipped to grasp the opportunities to exercise more professional freedom to best effect.

This has included reforms aimed at ensuring we get the best possible people into the education workforce through attracting the highest quality applicants, and policies aimed at ensuring that successful recruits get the best possible training and induction into the profession at the start of their careers. Over the last decade, successive reviews¹⁸ have led to a range of actions designed to raise the professional status of teachers, to improve their training and induction, and ensure more systematic engagement in professional development and school development.

Parallel developments in other areas such as the establishment of the Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland (CLD Standards Council) and the introduction of new training and qualifications in the early years and post-16 workforces are pushing in the same direction.

This focus on building capacity in the workforce has also meant raising expectations about the engagement of education professionals in continuously developing and improving their practice throughout their careers, as reflected in our organisation.

The strengthening of the role of the newly independent General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), whilst raising expectations for initial training and professional standards, is also explicitly increasing expectations around the engagement of teachers in **career-long professional learning**.¹⁹



We believe as pupils that schools need to adapt to the changing world to provide the next generation with the diverse set of skills required to succeed.”

Pupil, Kirkland High School, Fife

18 Scottish Executive (2001); A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century and Scottish Government (2011); Advancing Professionalism in Scottish Teaching: Report of the Review of Teacher Employment in Scotland.

19 General Teaching Council for Scotland (2013); Professional Update.



We are supporting the implementation of **Teaching Scotland's Future**,²⁰ which has set in train a range of actions designed to raise further the professionalism of the education workforce in Scotland, with a range of key developments from initial professional training through to career-long professional training. All of these actions are designed to push further in the direction of ensuring that our teaching workforce can rise to the increasing demands of professional autonomy and responsibility now being expected.

Within this overall strategy for raising skills in the education workforce, improving the capacity for **leadership** has been a key strand. To be effective, high levels of local autonomy require strong leadership. This has been recognised through the development and revision of leadership qualifications, competence standards and a growing range of development opportunities. Teaching Scotland's Future aims to take leadership development to a new level, not least through the establishment of a new Scottish college to lead a more coherent approach to education leadership on a national basis.

20 Scottish Government (2011); Teaching Scotland's Future - Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland.



Capacity building is about more than just enhancing the knowledge and skills of individuals and ensuring they keep them fresh. It is also very much about building the collective capacity of practitioners to learn, innovate and evaluate together in effective ways, so that a vibrant culture of collaborative learning and enquiry becomes a powerful driver of improvement in every sector.

Supporting post-16 reform

The post-16 reform programme puts learners' needs at the heart of education, supporting them to progress as they move between sectors on a more coherent journey.

The development of an effective post-16 education and training system requires all learners to be well prepared and well equipped to enter employment. In meeting the Government's economic strategy through sustainable economic growth, learners must also be adaptable to change, with the enthusiasm and drive to acquire regularly the new skills they need as their careers develop.

The post-16 reform promotes enhanced partnership working, smoother pathways, clearer communication about what is offered and better aligned processes and systems, particularly at the point of transition. A more efficient and flexible learner progression will better prepare young people for their lives and for work. The strong focus on the needs of young people between 16 and 19 draws together Curriculum for Excellence, learner journey planning through 16+ Learning Choices, and the Scottish Government's Activity Agreements. Additionally, through Opportunities for All, 16–19 year-olds have a guaranteed offer of learning or training if they are not already engaged in employment, education or training.



The key strengths that Education Scotland has are access and coverage. Their people work with learners, practitioners and leaders across the system. Their key challenge is to use their unique overview to support innovation and build partnerships founded on good practice. If they do these things successfully, we in education authorities can deliver a local agenda which has a positive impact on our national educational performance.”

Kenneth Greer, Executive Member, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland

Transformation in the college sector, through regionalisation and the introduction of outcome agreements, aims to improve the quality and impact of the college sector’s contribution to the Government’s ambitions. We are working closely with the Scottish Funding Council’s Regional Outcome Managers (ROMs) to ensure that the sharing of information and data between our organisations supports effective regional planning. This evolving partnership working is securing a more rounded set of information and data, used by ROMs and colleges, in developing a pan-region provision which meets the needs of learners and employers, and supports transitions.

The development of Skills Investment Plans by SDS, SFC and key sectors provides further opportunities for us to contribute to work in partnership to support the identification of skills requirements and to help the education system respond to current and emerging labour market needs in a regional context.



Promoting collective engagement in learning and improvement

In Scotland, we have been pioneers in building the capacity of educational establishments and services to undertake self-evaluation and to plan effectively for improvement. National support has evolved from providing frameworks of quality indicators through to providing practitioners with a range of resources designed to help them evaluate and improve their own work. Most recently, these have included tools to help facilitate long-term, strategic-vision change management, with a view to promoting transformational change.²¹

Building on these strengths, it is vital that education professionals become even more skilled at interpreting and applying a rich range of knowledge and evidence about 'what works' to guide the decisions they make about their practice. Regular, ongoing engagement in **collaborative learning and enquiry** of this sort needs to be 'mainstreamed' into the way all Scottish education practitioners work, in every sector.

Positive developments to promote the growth and spread of effective collaborative practice are already underway in many parts of the country. We now need to develop and support a more coherent national strategy for ensuring they have a positive impact on learners' experiences across the whole country.





Success in this approach will rely on practitioners having ready access to a rich mix of **knowledge and evidence** and knowing how to use it. This mix may include the results of evaluations carried out by practitioners themselves as they engage in local collaborative inquiry and more locally generated evidence from other sources. This will be through generating evidence directly from our inspections, reviews and other evaluative activities. It will also be through providing access to key research findings, assessment and statistical data in the pursuit of service improvement, drawing on national and

international sources. We have a key role to play in helping practitioners and educational leaders develop the skills to use this range of evidence and data effectively.

As the practice of collaborative learning and enquiry gains ground we also believe we need to step up our efforts to foster more **innovation and creativity** in our education system. As more autonomous education practitioners engage with more flexible national guidelines we need to ensure the impact of new ways of working is evaluated systematically and that the lessons flowing from that experience are made available widely to inform practice elsewhere.

“

I am committed to ensuring that no matter where you live or what external factors there are in your life you will have the same access to educational opportunities as all others.”

Intelligent accountability

As we take forward Scotland's national improvement strategy, based on greater levels of professional trust and autonomy in the way education is delivered, we also need to find better ways of ensuring we can account for the outcomes being achieved.

Along with professional autonomy and trust comes professional responsibility to engage openly in sharing performance information with others and accounting for the outcomes being achieved.

We know the international evidence indicates that transparent performance data about the performance of educational establishments and services has a key role in the best performing systems. As systems progress towards excellence, data is used in increasingly intelligent ways.

- **Performance data is gathered** and intelligently analysed in ways which enable benchmarking across establishments serving similar learner populations, and which help practitioners focus on particular groups of learners.
- **There is a strong emphasis** on using a rich variety of data to provide a rounded view of performance to inform improvement, rather than an over-emphasis on one or two measures above all others.
- **Performance measures are carefully designed** and skilfully used to minimise perverse incentives, such as narrowing of the curriculum or excessive 'teaching to the test'.





Education Scotland’s commitment to partnership working is welcome. We share a ‘collective ambition’ for Scottish education, especially in challenging the impact of poverty, and the professional associations can bring the teacher voice and experience to the table as we move forward through constructive dialogue.”

Larry Flanagan, General Secretary, Education Institute of Scotland

Our approach to using data to promote improvement is aligned closely with these principles, for example in the development of new ways of benchmarking outcomes for pupils in the senior phase. We are committed to promoting further intelligent use of data to provide accountability and inform action for improvement.

The role of our inspection and review programme, which provides another key element of the accountability and improvement framework, has also changed.

- **The inspection and review programme** is increasingly flexible and responsive to the individual circumstances of the establishment or service concerned, and increasingly based on self-evaluation as the starting point.
- **The style of engagement** between inspectors and practitioners is increasingly one which is based on an open and equal dialogue around quality and performance, so that practitioners feel that inspection or review is being done ‘with’ them rather than ‘to’ them.
- **Inspection arrangements have become increasingly based** on sampling provision across the country rather than routinely inspecting every individual establishment or service on a fixed cycle.

This aligns well with international²² research on how the role of external evaluation changes as systems aspire towards excellence. There is a stronger focus on self-evaluation and improvement amongst providers and less emphasis on frequent high-stakes inspection driving a competitive market of parental choice as a primary strategy.

²² Hargreaves A and Shirley D (2009); *The Fourth Way: The Inspiring Future for Educational Change*.

Building a learning system which drives sustained improvement

Putting all these strands of policy and strategy together, the Scottish approach to education improvement can be summarised as one in which we are seeking to build and support a learning system.

A learning system is one in which the strong collective engagement of a highly professional workforce creates **a virtuous cycle of evidence-based improvements in practice**.

This virtuous cycle can drive improvement in any or all sectors of education. Indeed, it is as relevant to partnerships delivering coherent children and family support as it is to staff in schools and colleges.

Our learning system has learners at the centre and relies on a high-quality professional workforce to make it work.

To function at its best it:

- **ensures practitioners have broad**, enabling national guidance with clear expected outcomes;
- **encourages local interpretation and application in practice**, with incentives for well-managed innovation;
- **ensures evaluation takes place at appropriate levels**, ranging from internal to external and local to national;
- **brings in external evidence** from high-quality research; and

- **is vigorous in identifying and sharing evidence** about what works in ways which are well suited to informing decision-making by practitioners at the front line.

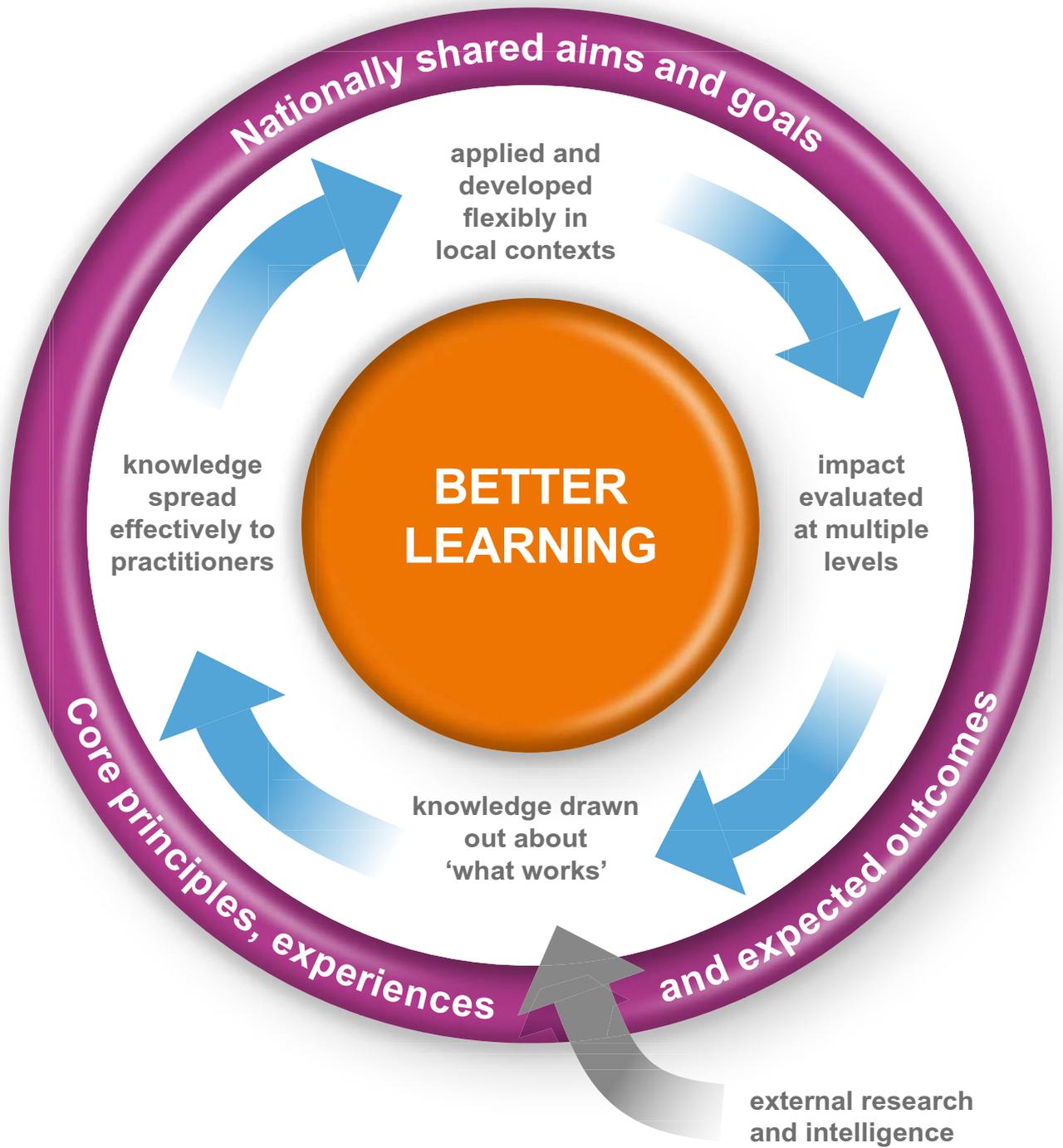
The principles of a virtuous cycle of improvement can equally be applied to the continuous improvement of policy and strategy at a national level.

At national level, we have a key role in helping ensure this cycle operates effectively. The cycle relies on Ministers having good access to well-founded, evidence-based professional advice to help them make decisions about the extent to which policies should be maintained or adjusted in order to meet their aims.

Drawing on our unique breadth and depth of engagement in evaluating provision across all sectors, and our ability to bring evidence from that evaluation together with broader expertise in education practice, we are in a prime position to provide Ministers and policy makers with valuable advice.



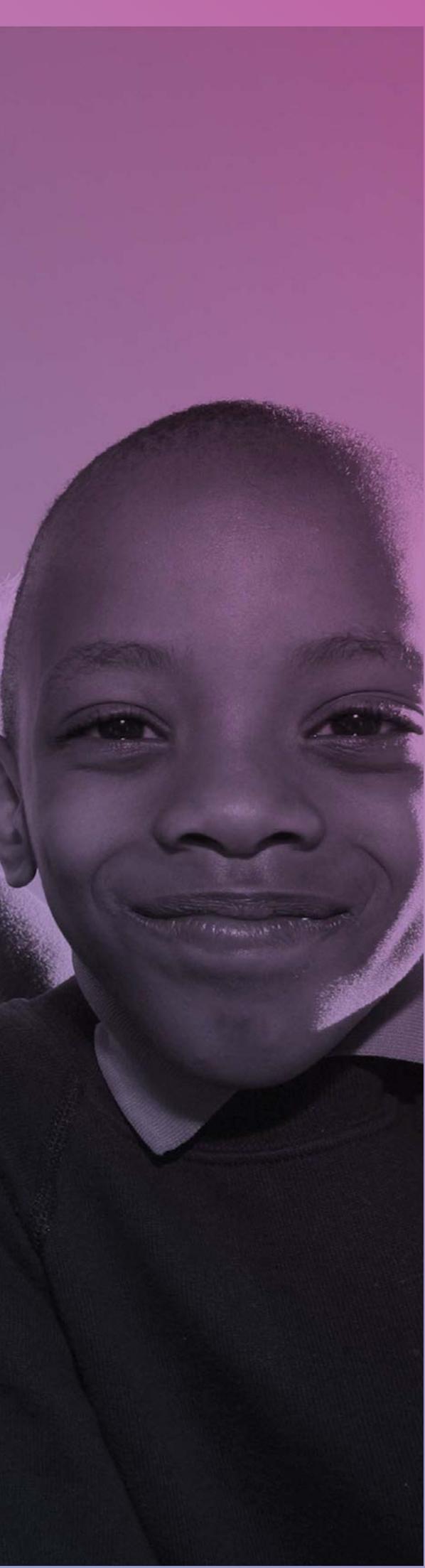
The Virtuous Cycle of Improvement





Our mission

We will provide the best blend of national support and challenge to inspire and secure continuous improvement in experiences and opportunities for all learners in Scotland.



We have developed this mission statement to highlight the distinctive role that we will play in driving the Scottish approach to educational improvement, in our role as Scotland's key national improvement agency for education.

Our mission highlights the real difference between the national role which Education Scotland is now playing, and the roles played by its predecessor bodies before. Through bringing our resources into one place, we are now in the unique position of being able to plan a coherent and balanced blend of activities to support improvement in Scottish education. This includes support activities, such as advice on curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment, and challenge activities, such as evaluation, inspection and review.

This ability to capitalise on synergies between these areas of activity, generating added value as a result, marks out the real opportunity which our new agency brings to Scottish education.

A key challenge for our organisation is to improve our ability to get this blend right and to adapt it in ways which are well matched to specific, local contexts. Some of the unique strengths which we can bring to this task are:

- **Our national and cross-sectoral reach**

We can provide advice, support and evaluation of education which is based on substantial engagement across all areas of the country, with all the scope for national comparison, inspiration and cross-fertilisation that offers, and which covers the full age range from early years through to adult learning.

- **Our trusted objectivity**

As a result of our independence from the providers of education, and the strong governance arrangements which ensure our inspection judgments are free from inappropriate external influence of any kind, we can provide reliable and impartial evaluations of education practice and its impact.



- **Our access to knowledge and expertise**

We have direct access to the most successful expertise, practitioners and practice knowledge in Scotland and internationally. We also have the ability to provide a knowledge hub for all educators in Scotland, drawing together information from research and direct visits to educational providers, including evaluative and best practice activities.



- **Our link with national policy**

Drawing on the strengths above, we have a unique evidence base to draw on in our role of providing advice, guidance and support to Scottish Ministers and their officials as they review, develop and generate new policy. We work to build strong relationships with policy colleagues to ensure that happens effectively.

We believe that, taken together, these strong features highlight the unique contribution that we can make as we implement our corporate plan. Success will depend on combining effectively our partners' contributions with our own in a joint focus on improving Scottish education.

“

I am delighted to see the emphasis on partnership working to address the inequity in outcomes for Scottish young people. With such purposeful collaboration across the sector we must be able to improve the life chances for all.”

Ken Cunningham, General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland

Our values

We aim to 'live' these values in the way that we work together within the organisation. In addition, one of our key commitments as we take forward implementation of our corporate plan is to demonstrate these values in all of our interactions with partners and service users.

All our staff have contributed to defining our core values. They are:

integrity

respect

excellence

creativity



- **Demonstrate the highest professional standards of behaviour.**
 - **Build trust with all those we engage with.**
 - **Be open and transparent in our decision making.**
-

- **Treat all people with dignity, courtesy and respect.**
 - **Recognise and respect individual differences.**
 - **Recognise and use the strengths, skills and abilities of all.**
-

- **Support all learners in Scotland to achieve their highest aspirations.**
 - **Demonstrate excellence in all that we do.**
 - **Develop and lead internationally recognised best practice.**
-

- **Work with others to explore new and different ways to do things better.**
 - **Promote and develop creative thinking and creative skills.**
 - **Inspire, innovate, transform.**
-



Our strategic objectives and our commitments for action over the next three years

We have considered how we can best play our role in promoting the creation of a powerful learning education system in Scotland.

In prioritising Education Scotland's work for the next three years we have focused on the areas in which we believe we can make the strongest contribution, drawing on our unique role in the system. We have defined this contribution in terms of six strategic objectives.

Our strategic objectives directly support delivery of the vision and our mission. They define in more specific terms the key ways in which we believe we can best have a positive impact, in support of the collective national effort to give our learners the best education we can provide.

Each of the strategic objectives makes a distinctive contribution to building the coherent overall framework which is necessary to ensure that a strong virtuous cycle of improvement becomes established across the country.

We have examined what we currently know about Scottish education and we have asked stakeholders what they expect of our organisation. We have explored and described an approach to securing improvement that is designed specifically to fit an education system that is on the journey from 'good' to 'great'.

The first five of our strategic objectives relate to the intended impact of our external services and activities on improving the quality of Scottish education. They represent key routes through which we seek to influence the actions and capability of others, to the ultimate benefit of Scottish learners. The sixth strategic objective is internally focused and relates to how we intend to improve our own capability and effectiveness as an organisation. Meeting that objective will help ensure we are best placed to address the other five strategic objectives with maximum impact.

Here we set out what this all this means for what we will do over the next three years; what we intend to take forward in each of our strategic objectives, the foundation of our work.

We are also clear that we need to know how our intended actions will make a difference to the delivery of our priorities and how they will benefit learners and practitioners.



Strategic Objective 1

Build a world-class curriculum for all learners in Scotland.

The Scottish improvement strategy for education relies on a clear framework of national guidance on the curriculum. This framework is broadly specified rather than narrow and prescriptive, and focuses on the outcomes and experiences which the system is expected to deliver. Curriculum guidance, and associated national guidance on learning, teaching and assessment methods, needs to be clear, coherent and well-founded on evidence of effectiveness. Any guidance must also leave practitioners with plenty of room to exercise their own professional judgment in determining exactly what and how they should organise learning to meet the needs of the learners in front of them. We have a clear role in ensuring that national guidance of this sort is established in all areas and that guidance is kept under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose in the years ahead. Our role in leading the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence is perhaps the most obvious dimension of this strategic objective but it is equally relevant to our lead role in the development and implementation of the new national strategic guidance on CLD. We also have a clear role to play in the development of curricula across other learner groups such as colleges.

To deliver on this objective we will...

- **Lead a national partnership** to drive improvements to the curriculum, 3 to 18 through the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Group.
- **Deliver enhanced national support and guidance** targeted on key priority issues agreed annually through the overall Curriculum for Excellence implementation programme, including support for the new senior phase.
- **Focus on reducing inequity in educational outcomes** for all learners by working with partners to identify and drive effective strategies to improve achievement and raise attainment, particularly in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- **Prioritise improving the progression of all learners** in all stages and sectors, and across transitions, from early years to post-16 education, training and lifelong learning.
- **Engage in collaborative outreach activities** and create high-quality resources to drive improvement in learning, curriculum and assessment.
- **Establish a new structure of curriculum review boards**, with the involvement of stakeholders, parents, learners and other partners, including industry, that will ensure the curriculum remains relevant and capable of delivering high-quality learner outcomes.

- **Lead a national partnership** to ensure the effective implementation of CLD strategic guidance with the aim of building stronger communities to help improve the life chances of people of all ages.
- **Strengthen our partnership** with colleges and the new College Development Network to influence improvements in the experiences and attainment of learners.
- **Develop a new national intranet and promote** the use of other technologies to encourage the most innovative practice for learner progression and effective teaching.
- **Develop a portal for parents** to access coherent and high-quality information about education in Scotland and all relevant information on individual schools.
- **Work with the Scottish Prison Service** to transform the education provision and improve learning outcomes for young people, for example at HM Young Offenders Institute Polmont.
- **Provide specific programmes of enhanced curricular and pedagogical support** to strengthen provision in key priority areas of learning, including Gaelic and the Scots language, Scottish Studies, the advancement of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), enterprise and employability, modern languages, early years and the creativity action plan.
- **Support the embedding of learning** for sustainability in the curriculum by encouraging the adoption of a coherent whole-school approach to global citizenship, sustainable development education, children's rights, outdoor learning and play.

How will we know if we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding. Some of the key activities which will provide evidence of success are listed below.

- **The quality of learners' outcomes will improve** as evidenced through the analysis of national attainment and achievement data, including the use of relevant senior-phase benchmarking information, the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), the Skills Development Scotland data hub, labour market statistics and other national and international benchmarking studies.
- **Inequity in learner outcomes** will begin to incrementally reduce as evidenced through analysis of specific vulnerable communities or groups and international benchmarking studies.
- **The quality of learning will improve as evidenced** through inspection, review and other evaluative visits which will have a specific focus on the extent to which changes to the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment are improving the learner's experience.
- **The data on the usage of our National Assessment Resource (NAR)**, the diagnostics on user and practitioner engagement with Glow, and the parent portal statistics will indicate the strengthening impact of our activities in curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment.
- **Feedback from our partners** will confirm the extent to which our support materials, outreach activities and other resources are enhancing professional learning, promoting wider networks of learning communities and strengthening provision in key priority areas of learning, e.g. Gaelic. We will ask our partners to evaluate our role in conducting curriculum reviews in all areas.

Strategic Objective 2

Promote high-quality professional learning and leadership amongst education practitioners.

The Scottish improvement strategy relies on consistently achieving high-quality professional practice both in terms of service delivery by individual education practitioners and the leadership displayed in educational services and establishments. This is most evident in the reforms being taken forward in response to the Teaching Scotland's Future report, but it is also true in education sectors beyond schools, such as early years settings and adult education services, and for professionals beyond teachers, such as educational psychologists and those with the Childhood Practice Degree. There is an increased focus being placed on regular engagement of practitioners in collaborative learning and enquiry. We have a key role to play in promoting and delivering effective professional development opportunities on a national basis.

To deliver on this objective we will...

- **Lead developments** in collaboration with our partners to seek and embed a strong culture of professional learning and enquiry amongst practitioners in every sector of education.
- **Play a key role** as members of the National Implementation Board for Teaching Scotland's Future in driving forward the agreed implementation programme, including supporting workstreams on initial teacher education, career-long professional learning and educational leadership.
- **Work with our partners** to ensure nationwide access to high-quality learning, coaching and mentoring models that promote and support collegiate networks, and enhance professional learning, addressing local and national priorities.
- **Work with colleges**, ROMs and the College Development Network to promote professional learning and build the capacity of senior college managers and staff in the context of college regionalisation.
- **Collect and promote** the use of knowledge and research to provide clear, succinct advice for practitioners and professional learning communities.

- **Rationalise and develop** our online systems to provide a coherent national portal to support professional learning and promote the use of Glow to encourage the best and most innovative practice for professional learning.
- **Ensure** that the Scottish Learning Festival (SLF) and the Scottish Education Awards programmes are thought provoking, inclusive and innovative, a celebration of both national and international excellence in learning and leadership.
- **Implement effective approaches** to career-long professional learning and leadership, for example we will focus on Masters-level learning in all our engagement activities and concentrate on new professional standards and competencies.
- **Lead the development of new national guidance** on professional review and development, and support the implementation of the 'professional update' for teachers and the new standards for the CLD workforce.
- **Support the development** of Scotland's College for Educational Leadership and leadership development across the public sector.
- **Support the embedding of learning** for sustainability (including global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning) and the modern labour market (including career management skills and enterprise in education) in the practice of practitioners and school leaders in line with the new professional standards.

How will we know if we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding. Some of the key activities which will provide evidence of success are listed below.

- **Network activity and rich reflective dialogue** across professional learning communities will significantly increase as evidenced by the uptake and the quality of the dialogue on Glow (and other online technologies), supporting professional learning communities and networks as well as direct feedback from practitioners.
- **Teachers and other professional groups** will report that they are increasingly experiencing Masters-level learning in national, local and school-based conferences, workshops and collegiate networks.
- **Stakeholders will report higher levels** of competition for key leadership and practitioner posts.
- **Inspection and engagement visits** will report that pedagogical and leadership reforms are embedding further and that partnerships are strengthening across practitioners involved in all phases of Curriculum for Excellence.
- **Involvement and engagement** with SLF and the Scottish Education Awards programmes will continue to increase, becoming more representative of practitioners across Scotland and integrated with planning for professional learning at local authority level.
- **Stakeholders will confirm that our ability** to identify, celebrate and promote effective innovation is improving and valued, leading to improvement in learning and teaching.

Strategic Objective 3

Build the capacity of education providers to improve their performance continuously.

The Scottish improvement strategy relies on the establishments and services that provide education services being highly effective in continuously evaluating their own performance and taking well-judged action to make improvements as a result. We believe in building in quality from the ground up. Establishments and services also need to have the capacity to engage in longer-term strategic planning and potentially manage transformational change. We already have a range of ways in which we provide relevant guidance, advice and support to providers across all sectors of education and we encourage effective self-evaluation and improvement through our inspection and review processes. We need to continue to develop our work in this area, enhance its impact further and extend it to areas we don't yet reach.

To deliver on this objective we will...

- **Work with partners**, national and international, to explore new and innovative approaches for building capacity with a focus on improving outcomes through new partnering arrangements that use the education system's collective expertise, knowledge and skills to maximum impact. This will include the development of School Improvement Partnerships.
- **Ensure that the approaches** and tools we promote for the purposes of self-evaluation are reviewed regularly and updated to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- **Develop new, more coherent systems** to give education providers ready access to innovative and effective practice, analysis and data to inform their self-improvement activities, and provide specific training to help them use data effectively to improve performance.



- **Develop new, more integrated** approaches to improvement and self-evaluation in partnership with other scrutiny organisations to ensure that approaches are aligned as effectively as possible.
- **Enhance the ability of local authorities** and community planning partnerships to drive their own improvement in partnership with other scrutiny organisations with particular support for the Early Years Collaborative.
- **Provide new and more customised,** formalised support for education providers to improve learning outcomes based on effective planning and identified need. This includes local partnership agreements between ourselves and local authorities.
- **Provide a clear focus** on improving life chances for our most vulnerable learners, including delivering career-long professional learning in preventative work.
- **Give particular priority to training providers** in methodologies designed to help them anticipate long-term challenges and effectively plan for the changes that will be required over time, helping them have a clear view of learners' future needs.
- **Work with partners and providers** to develop and deliver inspections and reviews that build further on self-evaluation and international best practice, and increase further the focus on improvement and effective change.

How will we know if we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding. Some of the key activities which will provide evidence of success are listed below.

- **Learner outcomes will improve** and become increasingly more equitable as measured through the use of relevant senior-phase benchmarking information and other national and international benchmarking indicators.
- **Providers will make progress** in building their own capacity for self-improvement as monitored through inspection and other evaluative activities, for example at a strategic level through the Shared Risk Assessment (SRA) process.
- **Feedback from practitioners,** providers and our partners will confirm that they feel we are working more effectively and collaboratively with our partners to bring about improvement.
- **The quality and rigour of self-evaluation** will have improved, particularly at practitioner level and in community planning partnerships, as evidenced through feedback from providers, inspection and other evaluative activity.
- **Our stakeholders will confirm** that we have increased the proportion of our work which focuses on stimulating innovation and brokering knowledge across all sectors and learning communities.

Strategic Objective 4

Provide independent evaluation of education provision.

The Scottish improvement strategy relies on having a strong flow of objective evidence from evaluations of both current and newly emerging practice, so that education providers can share learning and build on each other's successes. This will generate a strong body of external evidence which is produced independently from the providers of education services. It will complement the growing range of internal self-evaluation evidence in the system. This is a core part of the function of our organisation, incorporating our range of inspection and review programmes. We have a unique capability to undertake a broad range of evaluative activities in all education sectors and across all parts of the country. We provide impartial evaluations to drive improvement in individual establishments across regions and at the national level, where we will continue to provide Scotland-wide scrutiny on themes of current national priority.

To deliver on this objective we will...

- **Carry out programmes of independent inspection and review**, and other evaluative activities, consistent with our inspection and review policy and code of practice. We will work with partners as appropriate in early years centres, all types of schools, colleges, CLD, educational psychology services and prisons.
- **Work with partners and providers** to create new approaches to scrutiny that evaluate how well public service providers work together in areas including children's services and community planning.
- **Design a new programme** of independent evaluation of career guidance services and take part in a comprehensive review of the quality assurance landscape for post-16 education providers in support of the post-16 reform programme and contribute appropriately to any changes which may come about as a result.
- **Plan and deliver** a programme of thematic evaluative inspections and reviews which address the key areas of national, strategic priority agreed with ministers and stakeholders and the SFC.
- **Ensure that the process** of inspection and review is in itself an effective intervention that supports improvement, professional learning and capacity building.



How will we know if we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding. Some of the key activities which will provide evidence of success are listed below.

- **Educational outcomes**, follow-up evaluations and stakeholder feedback will provide clear evidence of improvement for learners following the involvement of external evaluation.
- **External inspection and review** will show that self-evaluation at local and regional levels is being carried out with higher levels of validity.
- **Feedback from parents, providers** and users will confirm that they have ready access to externally validated and nationally benchmarked information that is useful, easy to read and understand. Parents, in particular, will feel increasingly well informed about the quality of education in their local area.
- **Providers, users and partners** will continue to report positively on the quality and evaluative skill of our staff.
- **Stakeholder feedback** will confirm that providers believe that our staff work regularly with others within Scotland and beyond to share skills and learning from inspection and other evaluative activity.
- **Ensure that knowledge** from inspection, review and other evaluative activities is used for improvement purposes and available to providers and practitioners at a local level.
- **Provide clear and accessible information** for all parents and all stakeholders on inspection, ensuring that all relevant information is easily accessible by developing and promoting a new single online service combining current online resources, for example Scottish Schools Online and Parentzone.

Strategic Objective 5

Influence national policy through evidence-based advice.

The Scottish improvement strategy requires that Ministers and their policy officials have good access to timely, well-founded professional advice to help them develop and revise policy on education and other areas of public services. As the national education improvement agency we have access to a uniquely broad base of knowledge and evidence from our own evaluative and engagement activities. Together with our awareness of knowledge from research and international analyses, we have a strong responsibility for ensuring that we use this evidence base effectively to provide high-quality, professional advice in ways that have a positive influence on the policy-making process. Building on our close connections across Scottish Government and with other national bodies, we need to engage in increasingly responsive and agile ways in order to maximise our impact in this area.

To deliver on this objective we will...

- **Review and enhance our capability** to analyse and synthesise key evidence from all our engagement, development, and inspection and review activities to generate high-quality, impartial advice on the development, implementation and further review of national policy.
- **Engage widely with partners** and stakeholders to ensure our advice is informed by an appropriate range of perspectives and views.
- **Improve our capacity** to make best use of information from UK and international research and practice to generate advice and inform development of policy.
- **Strengthen our working relationships** with Ministers and policy directorates in Scottish Government to ensure we provide well-timed professional education advice on issues of national priority.
- **Proactively seek out opportunities** to make relevant contributions to a range of cross-cutting policy areas in the wider policy framework across and beyond education and children's services.
- **Liase closely with Scottish Government** to identify and agree a programme of phased thematic reviews of key aspects of education which will ensure we provide authoritative, timeous advice on issues of key policy.
- **Seek to inform the operational policy** of key national bodies relevant to education, drawing also on their support in the development of our own operational policy.



How will we know if we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding. Some of the key activities which will provide evidence of success are listed below.

- **Feedback from Ministers and Scottish Government colleagues** about the range, quality and effectiveness of our advice and relationships will confirm that we are more agile as an organisation and making better connections across all policy frameworks.
- **Our key partners** report that our impartial advice is high quality and our relationship with Ministers has credibility which influences policy.
- **Our key partners** report that we work collaboratively with them in knowledge gathering around key policy areas.

Strategic Objective 6

Improve our organisational capability and invest in our people.

The Scottish improvement strategy clearly implies that as a key national agency for education and learning we must seek to be an exemplar learning organisation. What we ask of colleges, schools and other organisations, we must ask of ourselves. Indeed, our success in pursuing the previous five strategic objectives will to a large extent rely on how effective we are at improving our own organisational capability and realising the potential of our staff. This sixth strategic objective therefore reflects our commitment to continuous improvement of our systems and practices. Within this objective we will focus on our greatest resource, our people, supporting their development and performance, and ensuring we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles. We will also focus on developing our systems and processes. For example, we need to grow and enhance our capacity to manage the significant amount of information and knowledge now available to us from internal and external sources. We will turn those resources into knowledge and advice designed to suit a range of audiences right through from national policy makers to individual practitioners.

To deliver on this objective we will...

- **Ensure we are seen** as an attractive employer able to recruit high-calibre staff with the skills and expertise necessary to contribute towards the achievement of our aims and maintain high credibility amongst our stakeholders.
- **Further develop** our planning and performance management processes to ensure our work is focused on improving outcomes, our vision, mission and strategic objectives, and that we establish effective systems to measure our success in achieving them.
- **Implement a people strategy** which ensures that internal professional development networks and approaches fully utilise the skills of our staff, and that our staff have the opportunity for personal growth and feel valued.
- **Implement a new internal IT infrastructure** and carry out a comprehensive accommodation and working practice review to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of our people, increase organisational capacity and deliver best value.
- **Develop further** our organisational capacity for sourcing, brokering, collating and disseminating well-evidenced national and international research and knowledge.



Don't become complacent. We can't become complacent. We live in an exciting, ever-changing world full of exciting, ever-changing individuals. Let's keep up with it. Let's celebrate it."

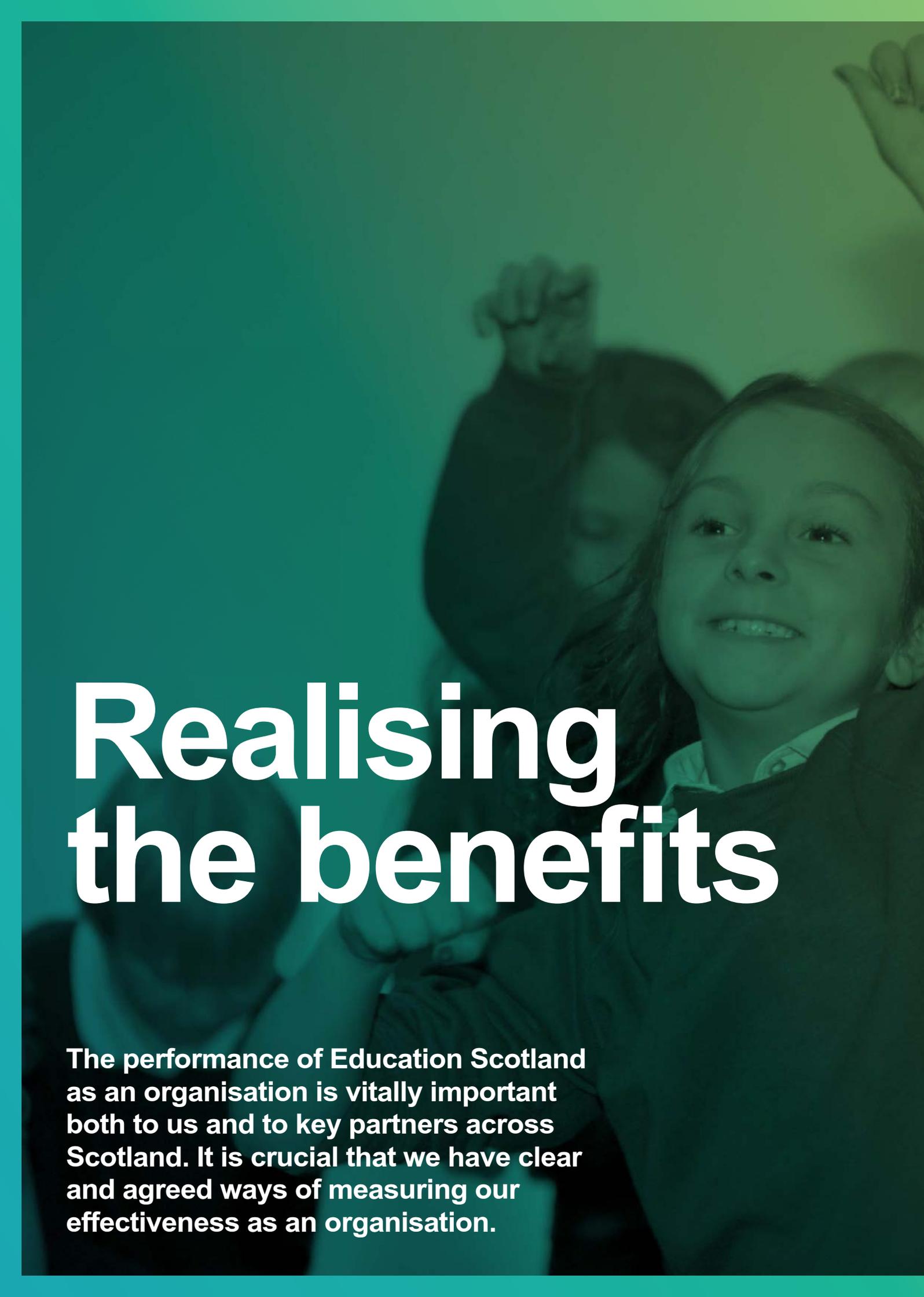
Pupil, Balfron High School, Stirling

How will we know if we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding. Some of the key activities which will provide evidence of success are listed below.

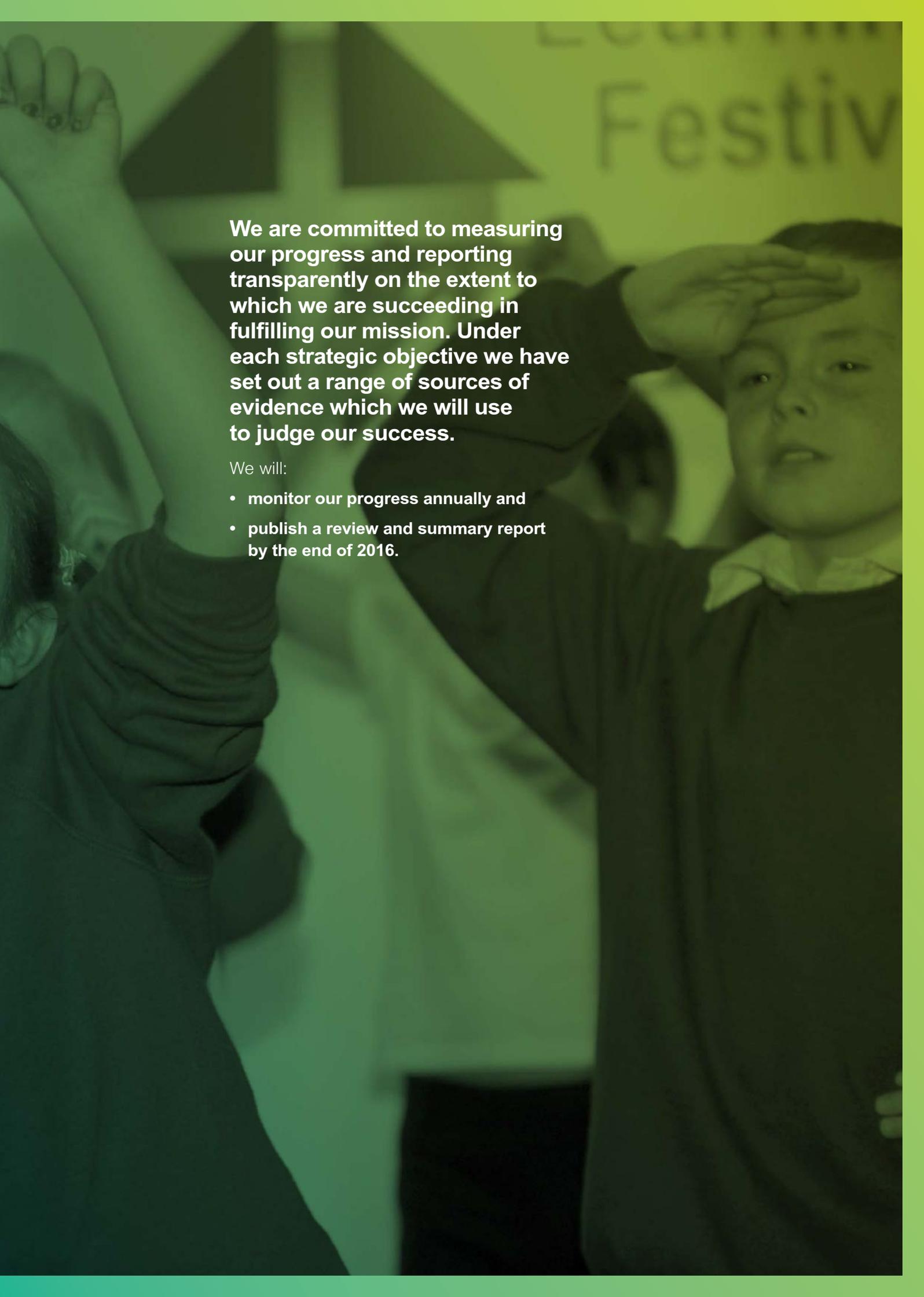
- **Competition for recruitment** into our posts will grow from its already strong base.
- **Systematic annual staff and stakeholders surveys** will indicate that our organisational engagement is improving and becoming sector leading.
- **Our staff wellbeing** returns and equality indicators improve year on year from the baseline recorded in 2012 and become best in comparison with similar organisations.
- **Stakeholder surveys and focus groups** confirm that our partners believe that there are improved processes for researching, analysing, sharing and using knowledge to support more effective collaboration and delivery of our strategic objectives.
- **We are recognised for business excellence** through the European Foundation for Quality Management by Quality Scotland and other external bodies.
- **Best value** evaluations of our organisation improve year on year.





Realising the benefits

The performance of Education Scotland as an organisation is vitally important both to us and to key partners across Scotland. It is crucial that we have clear and agreed ways of measuring our effectiveness as an organisation.



We are committed to measuring our progress and reporting transparently on the extent to which we are succeeding in fulfilling our mission. Under each strategic objective we have set out a range of sources of evidence which we will use to judge our success.

We will:

- **monitor our progress annually and**
- **publish a review and summary report by the end of 2016.**

Appendix A:

Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework

The Government’s Purpose						
To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth						
High-Level Targets Relating to the Purpose						
Growth	Productivity	Participation	Population	Solidarity	Cohesion	Sustainability

Strategic Objectives

Wealthier & Fairer		Smarter		Healthier		Safer & Stronger		Greener	
National Outcomes	We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe								National Outcomes
	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people								
	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation								
	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens								
	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed								
	We live longer, healthier lives								
	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society								
	We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk								
	We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger								
	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need								
	We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others								
	We value and enjoy our built and natural environment, and protect it and enhance it for future generations								
	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity								
	We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production								
	Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it								
Our public services are high-quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs									

National Performance Framework – Measurement Set

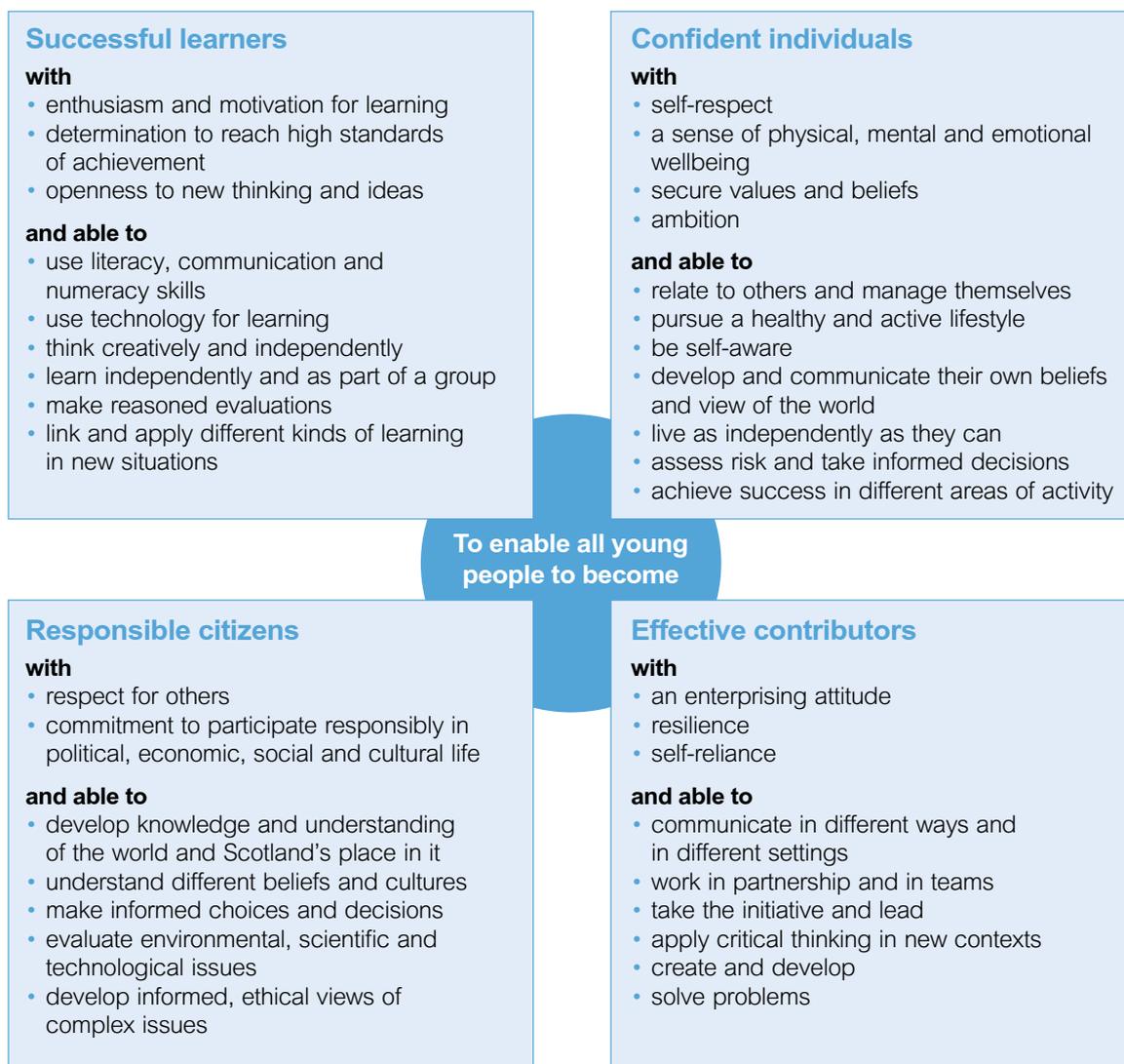
Increase Scotland's Economic Growth	Improve Productivity	Improve Economic Participation	Increase Population Growth
Purpose Targets			
Population – Increase Healthy Life Expectancy	Solidarity – Reduce Income Inequality	Cohesion – Reduce Inequalities in Economic Participation Across Scotland	Sustainability – Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
National Indicators	Increase the number of businesses	Reduce the percentage of adults who smoke	National Indicators
	Increase exports	Reduce alcohol-related hospital admissions	
	Improve digital infrastructure	Reduce the number of individuals with problem drug use	
	Reduce traffic congestion	Improve people's perceptions about the crime rate in their area	
	Improve Scotland's reputation	Reduce reconviction rates	
	Increase research and development spending	Reduce crime victimisation rates	
	Improve knowledge exchange from university research	Reduce deaths on Scotland's roads	
	Improve the skill profile of the population	Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services	
	Increase the proportion of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection reports	Improve the responsiveness of public services	
	Increase the proportion of schools receiving positive inspection reports	Reduce the proportion of individuals living in poverty	
	Improve levels of educational attainment	Reduce children's deprivation	
	Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work	Improve access to suitable housing options for those in housing need	
	Increase the proportion of graduates in positive destinations	Increase the number of new homes	
	Improve children's services	Widen use of the internet	
	Improve children's dental health	Improve people's perceptions of their neighbourhood	
	Increase the proportion of babies with a healthy birth weight	Increase cultural engagement	
	Increase the proportion of healthy weight children	Improve the state of Scotland's historic sites	
	Increase physical activity	Increase people's use of Scotland's outdoors	
	Improve self-assessed general health	Improve the condition of protected nature sites	
	Improve mental wellbeing	Increase the abundance of terrestrial breeding birds: biodiversity	
	Reduce premature mortality	Improve the state of Scotland's marine environment	
	Improve end-of-life care	Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint	
	Improve support for people with care needs	Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport	
	Reduce emergency admissions to hospital	Reduce waste generated	
	Improve the quality of healthcare experience	Increase renewable electricity production	

Appendix B:

The purpose of the curriculum: the four capacities

The child or young person is at the centre of learning provision. The purpose of the curriculum is to enable the child or young person to develop the four capacities. The headings of the four capacities serve well as a memorable

statement or purpose for the curriculum, but the indicative descriptions underneath the headings are probably even more important in terms of understanding the attributes and capabilities which contribute to the capacities.





T +44 (0)141 282 5000
E enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk
W www.educationscotland.gov.uk

Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA

Transforming lives through learning

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