Getting It Right For All Learners during Covid-19

A reflective tool for educators working together across Scotland

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

Contents

Getting It Right For All Learners during Covid-19

1   Context

In the spring of 2020, children and young people across Scotland left their familiar educational settings facing a period of significant change and uncertainty. This took place at speed. Across all learning communities, staff led flexible and creative responses to providing continued support for children and young people in their learning and wellbeing.

There is an opportunity to build on the innovation and positive outcomes which emerged despite the challenges, and ensure that every learner has the opportunity to build the resilience, skill and mindset that empower them to own more of their own learning. They must be able to cope and adapt to life in the 21st century, regardless of the challenges. The learning environment of interactions, experiences and spaces must continue to be where children and young people learn and develop a rich knowledge but also the skills to thrive in a future which is increasingly unpredictable.

How can we therefore ensure that we are getting it right for all our learners, preparing them with the knowledge, skills and attributes that they will need to thrive in this new world?

In considering the challenges that lie ahead, we recognise that our education system in Scotland is well placed to meet them. In Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), we already have the flexibility to support a creative and innovative response to shaping what learning might look like in 2020 and beyond. We revisit our approaches to supporting the core principles and practice of Curriculum for Excellence within the context of the refreshed narrative:

'The four capacities…recognise the knowledge, skills and attributes that children and
young people need to acquire to thrive in our interconnected, digital and rapidly changing world'.

Equally, Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), our national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people, puts their best interests at the heart of decision making. This approach is underpinned by children's rights and its principles reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). By the end of the parliamentary session in 2021, UNCRC is to be fully incorporated into Scots law, with a legal duty on all public bodies to promote and uphold the rights of all children. This tool supports ways for children and young people to take ownership of leading their own learning which in turn supports further the embedding of these rights.

Finally, our approach supports consistency in the provision of high quality learning experiences for all our children and young people. This begins to address the 'significant disconnect between experience and the stated aspirations of the legislation and policy', as stated in the review of provision for learners with additional support needs, 'Support for learning: all our children and all their potential', Scottish Government, July 2020, p. 15.

2   The purpose of the tool

This concise self-evaluation tool comprises a set of reflective questions with three aims:

- o   influence the wider system at a time when there is a small window of opportunity to press the 'reset' button post Covid-19

- o   support a shared understanding of the role that we all have as educators - in Education Scotland, local authorities and establishments – working together to support the system to 'get it right for all learners'

- o   strengthen support for all learners in universal provision of learning

It encourages reflection and discussion about what learning might now look like for all our children and young people in the context of this global pandemic. 'Golden threads' are identified that, when woven through strategic planning across key areas, support inclusive learning provision for all.

It complements the Education Scotland Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Self Evaluation Resource; the themes can also be linked to the quality indicators in other self-evaluation frameworks. It is intended as a standalone tool but it can also be used in conjunction with other such frameworks. Reflective questions are used to explore the key area of leadership and processes of the curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment. When these processes are the right ones for the specific context of the individual learning community, and are underpinned by values-driven leadership, they help to meet learners' needs through strong universal support. This leads to positive outcomes of achievement and attainment, supporting excellence and equity for all.

3   What has shaped our thinking?

A number of documents have influenced our discussions in producing this tool: Education Scotland's draft [Scottish Attainment Challenge Self Evaluation Resource](#); [Education Reimagined: The Future of Learning'](#), *Fullan, M., Quinn, J., Drummy, M., Gardner, M. (2020) -* for fuller details please see the Appendix; '[Interdisciplinary Learning: ambitious learning for an increasingly complex world'](#), a thought paper from Education Scotland, NoTosh and a Co-Design team from across Scotland, Education Scotland 2020; and ['Learner Pathways: A key to successful curriculum design'](#), a collaborative project report on what schools, communities and Government can do to support a curriculum designed around each young person, Education Scotland 2020.

4   The 'golden threads' that support inclusive learning provision

There is a focus on three prioritised 'golden threads' which permeate leadership, curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment: wellbeing, collaboration and learning. Key findings from the [Lockdown, Lowdown: what young people in Scotland think about Covid-19](#) report from the Scottish Youth Parliament, Youth Link Scotland & Young Scot, May 2020, confirm that young people have concerns about both their own mental and physical wellbeing and that of others. [Community Learning and Development](#) teams played an invaluable role across the country supporting communities during lockdown. This exemplifies the strength in collaboration: '*it takes a community to raise a child.*'

Wellbeing
- o   support for mental, emotional & physical wellbeing
- o   building confidence and resilience of all members of the learning community, 3-18
- o   nurturing approaches across the whole establishment
- o   rights-based approach

Collaboration
- o   with a wide range of partners as defined in the appendix, including learners and families themselves, to improve all learners' experiences
- o   learning that is planned and evaluated with all partners

Learning
- o   deep learning to support creativity and adaptability, problem solving, and the four capacities
- o   digital literacy
- o   learners leading their own learning
- o   where can learning take place and with whom?

These themes of wellbeing, learning and collaboration are embedded in the reflective questions.

5   What next?

'The interwoven learning, well-being and equity agenda, and the corresponding system   changes that will be required to enact it, is about the future of humanity itself.

'It is crucial that we act now.'

From 'Education Reimagined: The Future of Learning', *Fullan, M., Quinn, J., Drummy, M., Gardner, M. (2020). A collaborative position paper between New Pedagogies for Deep Learning and Microsoft Education.* http://aka.ms/HybridLearningPaper

This is an opportunity to reflect and build upon the successes of our Scottish education system. We are well placed to meet the challenges ahead.

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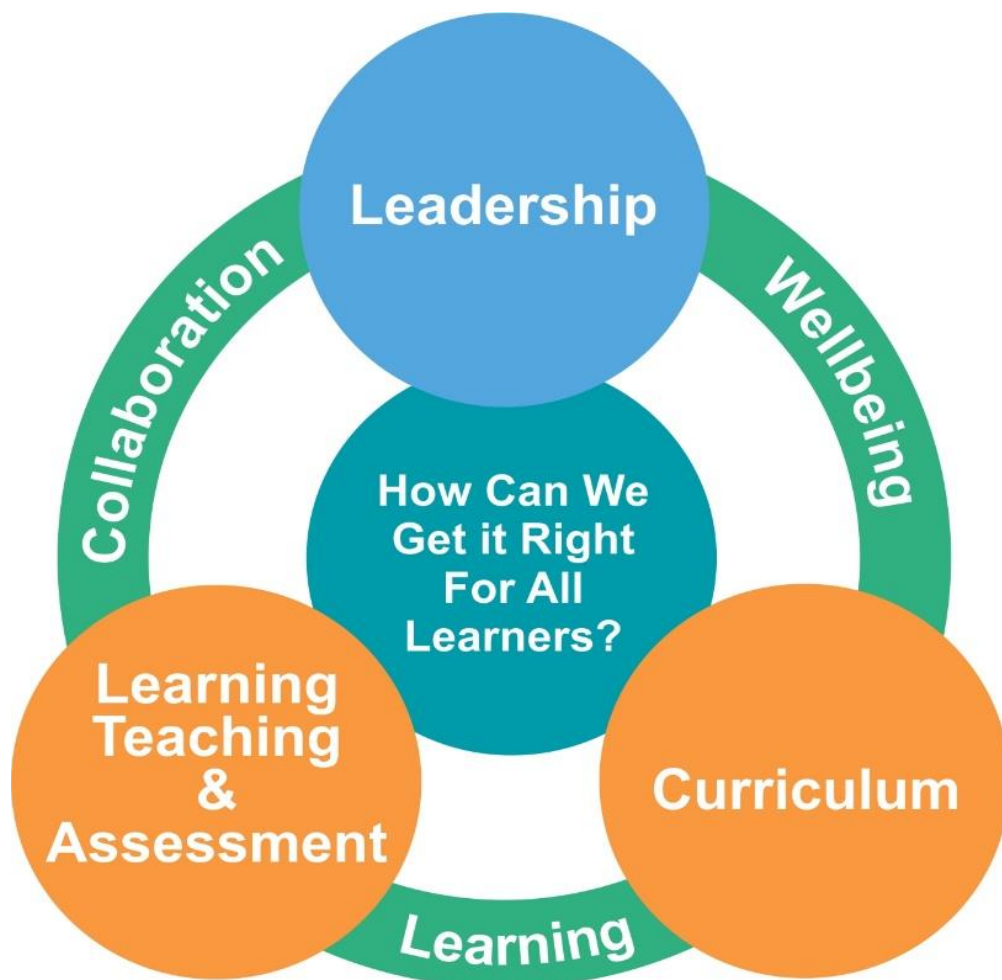
6   Definitions

'Partners' is understood to be those identified in '[An Empowered System](#)' Education Scotland (2019), those who work together to improve outcomes for children and young people:

- o   Learners themselves
- o   Parents & carers
- o   Support staff
- o   Teachers & practitioners
- o   Leaders of schools and early years settings
- o   Local Authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives
- o   Partners (Community Learning & Development; Third Sector; local businesses; health; social work; youth work, etc)
- o   Scottish Government and national agencies.

The above partners constitute the 'learning community' in its widest sense.

7   Key to themes

Wellbeing	
Learning	
Collaboration	

8   Leadership

1	To what extent does our vision actively promote and value the wellbeing of all members of our learning community? How are we developing and supporting the confidence and resilience of all staff, learners and families? How is this seen in practice?	
2	How are we guiding the strategic direction and pace of change to embed inclusive approaches to learning and teaching? How has this changed since lockdown? How does this fit into our recovery planning?	
3	How can we support a shift in mindset about where children and young people learn, who they learn with and from?	
4	How are we ensuring that all our learners develop the attributes, knowledge and skills that they need to achieve their full potential? What types of learning will support emerging learner needs? How has this changed since Covid-19?	
5	How well are we ensuring that all staff feel equipped to support learning in the current context? How confident are they in the effective use of digital technologies?	
6	To what extent do our children and young people have an active and meaningful role in leadership of our learning community? How are we ensuring that we have a rights based approach where their contributions are embedded in the life of our community?	
7	Partnership working with families and communities underpins our work. How has the context of our learning community changed? What might we now need to adjust to improve outcomes for all learners? How can we work together with partners to plan, deliver and evaluate innovative and creative ways of learning?	
8	To what extent do staff collaborate within our establishment and across the wider community to support the further building of leadership capacity?	
9	To what extent are we engaging with and supporting all parents/carers of children and young people? How are we ensuring that our engagement with families leads to improved outcomes for all learners?	

9   Curriculum

1	How have we adapted our approaches to promoting the health and wellbeing of all children and young people in our current context? What has been the impact on them so far?	
2	To what extent are the four capacities central to our curriculum offer? How are we now building confidence and resilience in all our children and young people? How well does our curriculum offer them the opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that they will need to thrive in our interconnected, digital and rapidly changing world?	
3	To what extent does our curriculum provide personalised learning pathways that allow the needs and aspirations of all our learners to be met? How are children and young people involved in helping to co-design their pathway? How are we involving and supporting parents/ carers to understand the available options?	
4	To what extent does our curriculum allow for a flexible, progressive approach for learners? How can we ensure that all transitions within establishments, across and within sectors, provide support and progression? How well do we work with our partners to support transitions?	
5	To what extent are all practitioners sufficiently empowered to initiate change, lead and develop the curriculum? How can we develop and make space for our approaches to interdisciplinary learning to deepen and enhance learning?	
6	How do we ensure that we continue to deliver our curriculum digitally and that digital provision is equitable for all our learners? For older learners, how can we build on pre-Covid consortia and school/ college arrangements to keep all learning pathways open while ensuring that all young people stay safe?	
7	How confident are we that all children and young people are accessing a wide range of learning experiences and pathways? How is progress evident for all learners?	
8	How effectively do we plan and evaluate with a range of partners to provide learning opportunities across all four contexts for learning? How well do we work together to provide inspiring contexts and spaces to support our children and young people to develop skills for life, learning and work?	

10   Learning, teaching and assessment

1	In our current context, to what extent do we support children and young people to develop their resilience and confidence to understand, lead, take responsibility for their own learning and progress?	
2	How have we ensured that nurturing principles and wellbeing of children and young people are embedded in the life and work of our learning community?	
3	How are approaches to flipped and blended learning used to enhance and accelerate post-Covid learning? To what extent do these provide learner-centred approaches to meet diverse learner needs? To what extent is digital literacy embedded within our approaches to high quality learning, teaching and assessment? How can we build on the range of online learning that has taken place?	
4	How effectively are we making use of valid and relevant pre and current Covid data, assessment approaches, tools and information to support the improvement of children and young people's learning?	
5	How confident are we that our approaches, whether universal or targeted, are leading to improvement? How effectively do we change our approaches if they are not having the intended impact? What support do we offer targeted groups or individual learners that could be made universal within the curriculum?	
6	To what extent are we providing opportunities for learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities in different contexts across the curriculum?	
7	To what extent have we considered the impact of Covid-19 in our approaches to differentiation? How well are we differentiating learning and teaching, and using strategies, including digital solutions, to address the socio-economic challenges and barriers faced by children and young people?	
8	How have collaborative partnerships with parents and partners changed since lockdown? How well have they improved experiences for learners and their families?	

Appendix

Useful references

1   *['Education Reimagined: The Future of Learning'](#), Fullan, M., Quinn, J., Drummy, M., Gardner, M. (2020). A collaborative position paper between New Pedagogies for Deep Learning and Microsoft Education. http://aka.ms/HybridLearningPaper*

p. 15:

'This pandemic has magnified the question of what kind of learning is required in 2020 and beyond. To reimagine learning we need to reflect on what we know about learning, our students, the new role of technology and the complexity of an unknown future. Six key questions can foster deep reflection and be used to engage all who need to be part of the solution- students, parents and families, educators, and community partners. What is crucial is to take this opportunity to ask the tough questions of your system, discuss possibilities and take action for a new and better future.

1. What knowledge, skills and attributes do our students need to thrive in this complex world?
2. What kind of learning is needed for this current and future complexity?
3. How do we ensure equity?
4. How do we attend to well-being?
5. What have we learned from remote learning?
6. How can technology be best leveraged for learning in the future?'

2   ['Interdisciplinary Learning: ambitious learning for an increasingly complex world',](#) A thought paper from Education Scotland, NoTosh and a Co-Design team from across Scotland, Education Scotland, 2020

3   ['Learner Pathways: A key to successful curriculum design',](#) A collaborative project report on what schools, communities and Government can do to support a curriculum designed around each young person. Education Scotland, 2020.

4   [Scottish Attainment Challenge Self Evaluation Resource,](#) (draft) Education Scotland, 2019.

5   [Lockdown, Lowdown: what young people in Scotland think about Covid-19,](#) The Scottish Youth Parliament, Youth Link Scotland & Young Scot, May 2020

6   [Scottish Education System, Support for All](#): universal and targeted support

7   [Scottish Government Guidance during Covid-19](#)