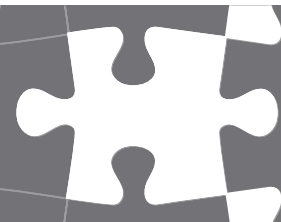


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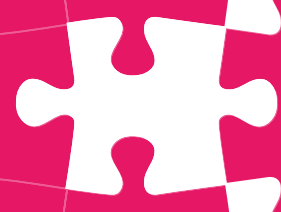
Learning in Scotland's Communities

Learning in Scotland's Communities



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The purpose of this report

The challenges facing communities and providers of services are at a higher level than they have been for a considerable time. Inequalities in health, income, early years experiences and educational outcomes continue to present challenges for Scotland to become a society in which all are enabled to thrive. Resources for public services are under severe constraint and will reduce further in real terms over the next few years. How might providers of education and others respond to these challenges? How might they build on already effective work to further improve outcomes for people in our communities? This report argues that we need a clearer focus on our communities as 'learning communities'. We need to strengthen and extend the connections between educational establishments, public, voluntary and private providers, and communities themselves to secure improvement.

The report sets out HM Inspectorate of Education's (HMIE's) findings from our work in learning communities since September 2008. It is intended to stimulate debate and serve as a basis for action to improve outcomes for learners and communities further.

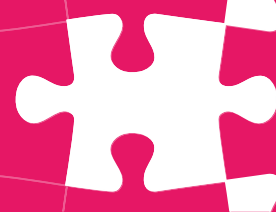
The report should inform the wide range of people who deliver public services in Scotland and contribute to learning and development in communities. It will be of interest to senior officers of public bodies, headteachers, officers in education, colleges, CLD, health and social work and their partners in voluntary organisations and other services.

In the first section we explore some of the drivers of change in this important area of public policy and comment on how these connect with current practice in learning communities. In the second section, we provide an analysis of the findings from inspection activities in learning communities. Finally, we summarise the main findings including a number of areas for further development which we hope will assist the process of improving outcomes for learners and communities.

What we mean by learning communities

Both in Scotland and internationally, the term 'learning community' is used in a variety of ways and contexts. For the purposes of this report, we build on mainstream UK definitions of learning community¹ and tailor them to the context for CLD in Scotland.

¹ Yarnit M 2000: Towns, cities and regions in the learning age: a survey of learning communities.



A learning community seeks to address the learning needs of its locality through partnership. It uses the strengths of institutions, public, private and voluntary services, and community groups to enable children, young people and adults to achieve to their full potential. Learning communities use learning as a way to build community capacity, and to promote social cohesion, social inclusion, regeneration and economic development.

In practical terms, therefore, a learning community is the group of partners who work together to support learning and development within a locality.

Some potential benefits of learning communities

Investment in formal education and non-formal learning can be one of the best means of combating poverty, improving overall health, and eliminating social exclusion.

'Although learning often takes place within formal settings and learning environments, a great deal of valuable learning also takes place either deliberately or informally in everyday life. Policy

makers in OECD countries have become increasingly aware that this represents a rich source of human capital'².

By placing learning at the heart of the development of a community, successful learning communities can:

- contribute to equipping learners and communities to meet the emerging challenges of the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century;
- encourage social activity and so develop a more vibrant and participative society at a local level;
- help with economic development and diversification – contributing to competitiveness;
- foster a new generation of leaders so necessary for both a vibrant local economy and civil democracy; and
- promote social inclusion. Those previously marginalised can, through their active engagement in learning, reduce dependency relationships and contribute effectively to their communities.

² Recognising Non-Formal and Informal Learning: Outcomes, Policies and Practices (OECD, 2010)

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Building momentum behind drivers of change

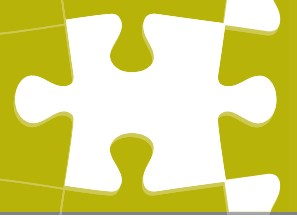


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This section considers some of the drivers which may help to promote the development of successful learning communities and their long-term sustainability. It links these key policy drivers with HMIE evidence gathered from the inspection programme of learning communities and more widely across all sectors of learning.

Curriculum for Excellence

Improving outcomes and raising standards for all children and young people are at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence. The aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence are for all young people to become confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. It takes a broader view than previously of how, what and where young people learn. Most obviously, this is reflected in the four contexts for learning within Curriculum for Excellence:³

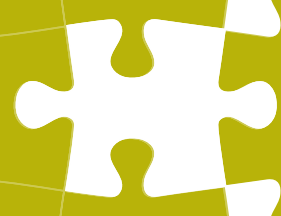
Two relate to learning within curriculum areas and inter-disciplinary learning. The other two – the ethos and life of the school as a community and broader opportunities for achievement in the outside world – are now seen as equally important.

CLD partners have, over many years, contributed to young people's opportunities and achievements outside school. So too, do they often contribute to learning within schools, particularly in relation to young people with more challenging behaviour and more widely to personal, social and health education. Schools have been increasingly building stronger partnerships with community providers to extend and enhance opportunities for learning and achievement in and out of school as part of their implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. We illustrate some of these in the appendix. More young people are gaining accredited achievement awards which recognise the notable contribution they are making. More achievement awards are now levelled and credit rated within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, alongside other qualifications⁴.

³ Scottish Government 2010: A summary of building the curriculum 5, a framework for assessment

⁴ Amazing Things 2: <http://www.youthscotland.org.uk/resources/amazing-things.htm>

Building momentum behind drivers of change



In our reviews of national voluntary organisations we see very good examples of organisations providing high quality opportunities for young people to achieve. In some places, these organisations also make an important contribution to meeting the needs of children and young people with additional support needs. However, some important voluntary services are unevenly distributed across Scotland for reasons of history or the availability of skilled and active volunteers.⁵

Curriculum for Excellence provides a unifying purpose around which a wide range of practitioners across all partners within a learning community can now work more fully in partnership to achieve common goals for children and young people. Although we are seeing positive developments in this area, there now needs to be greater and stronger partnership working between schools, CLD partners and others who contribute towards better outcomes for learners to ensure that the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence are fully realised across Scotland.

Skills for Scotland

For significant numbers of adults in Scotland, returning to learning can

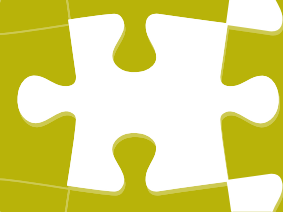
be a significant challenge. These adults are also more likely to be experiencing inequalities of various kinds such as health and income, or living in our more disadvantaged communities. The Skills for Scotland strategy⁶ recognised the role of CLD in the post-compulsory learning landscape:

CLD is a vitally important part of the jigsaw, particularly for those who have been away from work and learning for a long time and may need more intensive, personalised support.

In learning community inspections, inspectors examine the impacts on learners of adult literacy and numeracy work, provision of language support for inward migrants and a range of other activities, including family learning and parenting. Sometimes we see the impact of local social enterprises on young people and adults. Occasionally, we see CLD providers working with private sector companies to enhance the skills of staff and trainees. All of these activities support adults to improve their capacities and skills at work, at home and in their communities. Almost all of these activities build the confidence and

⁵ See reports on national voluntary CLD organisations on the HMIE Website. www.hmie.gov.uk

⁶ Scottish Government, 2010: Refreshed Skills for Scotland Strategy <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/04125111/0>



self-esteem of participants and increase their ability to move on in their lives. An important development is the contribution that many early years centres and some primary schools are making to engaging parents in their own lifelong learning.

The Skills for Scotland strategy remains a major point of reference for community providers and others to help tackle the challenges presented by the economic downturn and the reduction in spending on public services.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

As Curriculum for Excellence is founded on a learner-centred approach, so too is GIRFEC founded on a child-centred approach. Through implementing a GIRFEC practice approach, services aim to improve a broad range of outcomes for children and young people. GIRFEC applies to all those working across children's and young people's services. It also relates to adult services that have an impact on children and young people. The GIRFEC approach seeks to streamline and improve outcomes for children through the delivery of a number of important policies.⁷

These include the Early Years Framework, Equally Well, Achieving Our Potential, More Choices More Chances and Curriculum for Excellence. CLD staff and their partners are engaged in supporting each of these, and the policies are consistent with the social practices approach widely used in CLD.

In learning community inspections, we have found a number of positive examples of CLD staff working with colleagues from a range of services from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. In doing so, they are providing more integrated and responsive services that can make a significant difference to children and their families. In many instances, CLD staff are playing a significant role in engaging with children, young people and families to develop local solutions that make a significant impact on countering disadvantage. Examples of this include the *Challenge Dads* project in Aberdeen and the Woodlands Family Unit in Fife. However, there remain a number of challenges. These include developing shared training that supports improved understanding of each others' roles and being able to demonstrate the impacts of joint action.

⁷ Scottish Government, 2011: GIRFEC Overview http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrens_services/girfec/programme-overview

Building momentum behind drivers of change



Community capacity building in challenging economic times

The contribution of communities themselves to improving outcomes for children, young people and adults has never been so important. As resources for public services are expected to diminish over an extended period, so demand for services is expected to increase. Building community capacity to deliver or co-produce services is one potential approach to meeting this challenge. Embedded within community planning is a commitment to high standards in community engagement.⁸ The Community Empowerment Action Plan⁹ sets out specific actions to support longer-term change in the relationships between public service providers and communities and their aspirations. Guidance from Scottish Government and COSLA to community planning partnerships sets out the expectations of CLD partnerships in relation to building community capacity.^{10,11}

What do we know about community capacity building from learning

community inspections? Overall, we find most learning communities are active and vibrant, with community and voluntary groups making important contributions to community life. In places, this is to do with voluntary and community organisations making effective local contributions over many years. In more disadvantaged communities, it is often to do with community workers enabling local people to address community issues through collective action. There are many examples of this, for example, in Glasgow, where members of the community are supported by staff in *Glasgow Life*, social work, and housing associations to address local issues. Where local community planning is well developed it is often a consequence of new partnership arrangements where local interest groups, including social enterprises, come together with public bodies to jointly address local needs and issues. An important trend is the growth of community development trusts where the trust arrangement is used as a vehicle for community-led improvements in local communities.¹²

We have identified three further trends in community capacity building:

8 Scottish Government 2005 National Standards for Community Engagement <http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/>

9 Scottish Government 2009 Community Empowerment Action Plan <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/20155113/0>

10 Scottish Government 2004 Guidance for community planning partnerships on CLD <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/02/18793/32157>

11 Scottish Government/COSLA 2008 WALT 2

12 Development Trust Association Scotland: Website www.dtascot.org.uk



- First, we are seeing a greater contribution from young people and schools to their communities. School leaders are thinking more broadly about young people's learning experiences and the contributions they can make to their communities, for example by encouraging higher levels of volunteering.
- Second, contributors to effective community capacity building who had often been overlooked in the past are being recognised. For example, providers of culture, leisure and sport services can build the capacity of local groups and clubs to manage the provision, helping to build the skills of those involved and make their communities better places to live.
- Third, we see more communities setting their own agendas for improvement and working with public agencies on their terms to help them achieve their objectives. The Arbroath Area Partnership is a good example of this.

In the current climate of reductions in public spending, the importance of community capacity building has probably never been greater.

Inequalities matter to all of us

There was a clear message about inequalities in Scottish education from the OECD¹³ in 2007:

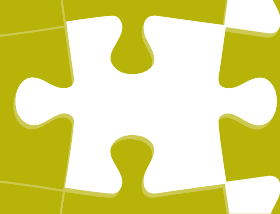
Within Scotland there continues to be concern about the performance of pupils at the low end of the attainment spectrum. Recent evidence shows that attainment (as measured by the National Qualifications examination system) of the lowest 20 percent is actually flat at a time when increases are being seen at the top end of the spectrum. (OECD, 2007)

Important research on the impact of inequalities in developed countries and amongst US states,¹⁴ suggests a clear relationship between wealth inequality and health and social problems. The authors:

¹³ OECD 2007: Report on Quality and Equity in Scottish Education

¹⁴ Wilkinson R and Pickett K 2009: The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better

Building momentum behind drivers of change



Provide the evidence on each of 11 different health and social problems: physical health, mental health, drug abuse, education, imprisonment, obesity, social mobility, trust and community life, violence, teenage births, and child wellbeing. For all 11 of these health and social problems, outcomes are very substantially worse in more unequal societies.

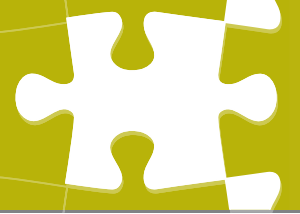
The conclusion is that more equal societies almost always do better on key indicators of health and social wellbeing and education.

Against this backdrop, the Scottish policy context for tackling inequalities is ambitious and challenging. Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) have three linked social policy frameworks: Equally Well (health), the Early Years Framework and Achieving our Potential (poverty and income inequality). A review of progress in relation to these was published in June 2010 and confirmed that the three social policy frameworks remain powerful drivers for delivering long term improvements in outcomes for people.¹⁵

One of the consistent themes from inspections of learning communities is that CLD partners often work well with the most disadvantaged parts of our communities. Most local authority CLD services, for example, take a targeted approach to their work to ensure that they are meeting priority needs. Increasingly, significant aspects of their work are focused on improving the employability and employment prospects of young people and adults. Many voluntary sector partners are also well focused on meeting the needs of particular disadvantaged groups such as unemployed people, homeless people, the financially excluded, the frail elderly, or people with disabilities. Because of its work with people in these groups and the impact that work can have, CLD has an important role in tackling inequalities in Scotland.

¹⁵ Scottish Government/COSLA: Equally Well Review 2010 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/06/22170625/0>

Building momentum behind drivers of change



As thinking and actions on learning communities develop, the roles of CLD partners in reaching and working with the most disadvantaged individuals, groups and families in Scotland will be an important element in reducing inequalities. This calls for even greater effort in connecting the contributions of the range of partners who contribute to this ambitious agenda across Scotland.

Outcomes-based approach to planning and evaluation

In recent years a fundamental shift began to take place in the planning and evaluation of public services in Scotland. Many services had previously been content to evaluate their effectiveness by counting the volume of their activities or their outputs. Now there is a National Performance Framework, which is based on outcomes, and Single Outcome Agreements by which Community Planning Partnerships and Scottish Government will gather information about performance and improvements that are being achieved in communities. Across Scotland, there is now a stronger drive towards better self-evaluation, in other words how well public and voluntary services know their strengths and areas for improvement and importantly, what

they are doing to improve. There is now a clearer focus across public and voluntary services on needs-led, outcomes-focused planning and service delivery, but still further work to do in making this a reality. As COSLA¹⁶ said in its submission to the Independent Budget Review Panel:¹⁷

COSLA would like the Panel to recognise that, whilst the outcomes-based approach is not yet fully developed across the public sector, it is worth pursuing and is the most likely model to result in a cohesive approach to spend across the public sector.

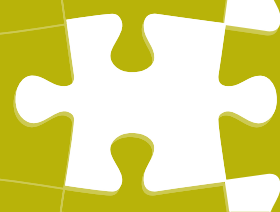
Both COSLA and the Independent Budget Review Panel endorse an approach to prioritising public spending that supports early intervention to improve the quality of life of people in Scotland, and to reduce costs further down the line.

In short, says COSLA, we spend large amounts of money dealing with negative outcomes.

¹⁶ COSLA submission to the budget review panel. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/IndependentBudgetReview/Resources/written-submissions/all>

¹⁷ Scottish Government 2010: Independent Budget Review: the report of Scotland's Independent Budget Review Panel – July 2010 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/IndependentBudgetReview>

Building momentum behind drivers of change



For CLD in Scotland, an outcomes-based approach is not new. As long ago as 2000,¹⁸ CLD providers were being encouraged to adopt a needs-led and outcomes-focused approach to planning and evaluation. Over time this has helped to improve planning and evaluation for CLD in Scotland, but not yet comprehensively or fast enough. Our learning community inspections clearly indicate that CLD partnerships need to improve how they demonstrate the outcomes of their work and show how they are improving over time. Also, the principles of outcomes-focused planning and evaluation now need to be applied across a wider range of partners than has been the case thus far.

For learning communities in Scotland, these are important considerations. Our inspections show that CLD partners can have a very positive impact on the lives of some of our most disadvantaged citizens as well as others across the social spectrum. Yet because some CLD partnerships are less well developed in demonstrating outcomes, too little is known about the differences that their work is making. For example, through our inspection activity, we gather evidence from many learners of the positive impacts of adult learning and community work on improving their health and mental wellbeing.¹⁹ However, we seldom find significant evidence of where this information is gathered and used both in performance reporting, for further continuous improvement and to inform resource allocation.

¹⁸ SCDC 2000. Learning Evaluation and Planning: A handbook for community learning partners.

¹⁹ NIACE 2010. National Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning. <http://www.niace.org.uk/education-promotes-well-being%E2%80%93but-too-many-over-25-excluded>

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What we know now about learning communities

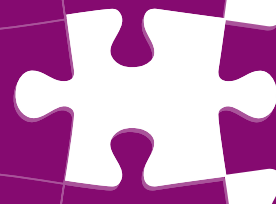


From September 2008, HMIE made a significant change in its arrangements for inspecting CLD. We introduced inspections of learning communities within the geographical areas surrounding non-denominational secondary schools. The secondary school and its learning community were inspected at the same time, and there was an overlap in the membership of the inspection teams. In denominational secondary schools, teams also considered the community dimension in their inspection work. This approach to inspecting learning communities includes looking at activities and their impacts from the perspective of the learner, irrespective of which agency is active in the provision. This has placed a greater emphasis on the quality of partnership activities in communities across the range of institutions and agencies that play a part in supporting people to achieve, and in making communities better places to live. However, this approach has also presented challenges to some providers, especially where partnership arrangements are insufficiently embedded, or poorly integrated.

Since September 2008 we have reported on the inspections of 91 learning communities across the 32 local authorities in Scotland. The evaluations from these inspections are summarised later.

The approach has enabled us to look more effectively at young people's learning experiences both in school and in their communities. It has focused attention on the inter-relationships between the learning and development of children and young people, and the contexts within which they grow up at home and in their communities. It has identified examples of effective practice where schools are making good use of community resources to enhance learning in school, and where young people and staff are making significant contributions to the communities in which they are located. It enables us to develop an understanding of how learning happens in more than one place, and to evaluate the connections and partnerships that are essential if the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence are to be fully realised.

What we know now about learning communities



The impacts of CLD in learning communities

In learning community inspections during this period we have looked at the impact of partners in raising achievement for young people and adults and the achievements of community groups and organisations. These evaluations focus on how well learners are included and participating and how well they are achieving, attaining and progressing. Inspectors talk to service users about how they see the impact of provision on their development.

Young people with more challenging behaviour at Williamwood High School, East Renfrewshire, use Dynamic Youth and Youth Achievement Awards to focus their learning through activities such as drumming, computing and video-making. This work helps to motivate them in their learning and to develop transferable skills for life and work such as communication and problem solving.

- In 72 of 91 inspections the impact on young people was evaluated as good or better.
- in 74 of 91 inspections the impact on adults was evaluated as good or better.

Overall, this is a very positive picture. Beneath these headline figures there lies a wide range of local circumstances, differences in the strategic contexts within which managers, staff and volunteers operate, and different service and partnership configurations.

Army Cadets in Alloa participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award as a vehicle for their personal development. Some young people have additional support needs and all enjoy and are motivated by this context for and style of learning. As a result they develop important skills for life and work such as team work, leadership, communication and working with others.

The range of impacts of this work include developing young people's confidence, skills, resilience and accomplishments through accredited achievement awards, increasing people's employability, engaging adults in lifelong learning, improving parents' capacity to relate

What we know now about learning communities



positively to their children and teenagers, improving reported physical and mental wellbeing, reducing the likelihood of offending, and enabling people to become more active in their communities. Much of the work results in participants reporting improved self-confidence and self-esteem which in turn helps to raise their aspirations and build their capacity to act to improve their situations.

Inward migrants across Scotland are supported to contribute better at work and settle into their new community through the provision of support with English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). For example, some of this work improves the customer service provided by migrants in the tourism sector. It also helps families to deal with correspondence with official agencies and public utilities.



Where practice is most effective, there are very good arrangements for ensuring that services are delivered for and with those whose needs are greatest. CLD provision that connects well with schools, health, employment, social work, and police enables provision to be well targeted towards those who are at risk of becoming excluded.

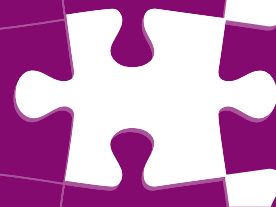
In evaluating impacts on the

community, inspectors talk to a range of community groups, voluntary agencies and community workers. They focus discussion on how groups experience the support they receive from public and voluntary agencies. Of particular interest is the extent to which groups are able to influence local decisions and the impacts of the services they provide locally.

- **In 75 of 91 inspections the impact on the community was evaluated as good or better.**

Again, this is a very positive finding. Our previous CLD inspection programme had led HMIE to focus attention on community capacity building within more disadvantaged communities. In the last two years, our activities have taken us into communities of all types across the length and breadth of Scotland. This has sometimes led us to look at what communities are doing for themselves rather than what staff are doing to support and develop community groups.

What we know now about learning communities



A picture has emerged of active communities in all types of urban, rural and island communities where particular groups and individuals bring energy and commitment to community development. Some communities require more professional support than others. Most have significant numbers of skilled and confident volunteers, whether in community groups, voluntary organisations or in public agencies.

Where communities are particularly well organised, they make very effective use of a range of supports from public and voluntary agencies to meet their objectives. These are usually inclusive partnership groups that bring together the key players in the community and focus on high level issues such as learning, health and the local economy.

The Arbroath Area Partnership is a highly effective area forum with representation from a wide range of interests in the town. The work of members had improved community cohesion and the attractiveness of the town to tourists through a wide range of local initiatives.



The outcomes of CLD activities

Whilst inspections focus clearly on the overall quality of provision, inspecting the outcomes of CLD requires a clear focus on performance data and trends over time. Does the data show improvements over time? For example, is youth work provision improving young people's attendance at school and reducing exclusions? Is adult learning enabling significant numbers of adults to move on to training, further education, volunteering or employment? Does capacity building activity result in more young people and adults volunteering in their community?

Whilst the impacts of CLD are generally very positive, the extent to which providers are able to provide clear evidence of outcomes is less well developed. It is not straightforward to identify robust sources of evidence of outcomes or to demonstrate cause in relation to an effect, but some CLD services are beginning to do this successfully.

As a result of the difficulty in demonstrating outcomes, it is possible that some CLD partnerships are under-reporting the benefits of their activities and as a result decisions taken at a local level may not be fully informed.



Sometimes this is caused by a failure to recognise the wide range of outcomes achieved through the work of CLD partners across all of the strategic objectives of Scottish Government. Sometimes it is a consequence of service structures narrowing the range of outcomes which the service or services within which CLD is located seek to achieve. Sometimes, it is because local authorities corporately have not yet agreed measures of performance that test outcomes rather than outputs. Seldom too are CLD partnerships sufficiently developed to evaluate outcomes across partners, rather than through individual providers.

Inspectors also find that where there are weaknesses in strategic leadership this can have a knock on effect on the capacity of providers to demonstrate improved outcomes at a local level.

- **In only 32 of 91 inspections ‘improvements in performance’ was evaluated as good or better.**

This disappointing aspect became clear early in the inspection programme, and it was only more recently that we have seen improvements in a few local authorities. As a result, HMIE has worked with national partners, principally CLD Managers Scotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland to develop a framework to help CLD partnerships to think through the outcomes of their work and to link these to Single Outcome Agreements and the National Performance Framework. This is still work in progress, but can now be accessed using the link below.²⁰

How good are providers at improving services?

Within Scottish education, there is now an increasing commitment to using self-evaluation to bring about improved outcomes. In learning community inspections we evaluate how effective CLD partners are at improving their services. We consider how well they use information from participants and other stakeholders to help them to improve. Are they using effective processes to evaluate the impacts and outcomes of their work? How well do they plan for improvement

²⁰ CLDMS 2010: Let's Prove It: Providing evidence on the outcomes of CLD activities http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/publications//publication_tcm4631885.asp?strReferringChannel=search&strReferringPageID=cm:4-615801-64

What we know now about learning communities



and monitor how well they are doing? And how well do they report progress in their work to a range of stakeholders?

- **In only 32 of 91 inspections ‘Improving Services’ was evaluated as good or better.**

Again, this pattern of performance was identified relatively early in the inspection programme. It was clearly linked to the issues identified earlier in relation to improvements in performance. As the programme developed, a few authorities were showing significant improvement in using self-evaluation to improve their work. For example, East Renfrewshire Council had put in place very effective approaches to

ensure that their services were improving appropriately and that self-evaluation was embedded and robust. In order to support the sector in this aspect of development, East Renfrewshire Council, supported by HMIE, delivered a national seminar to help practitioners from across Scotland to learn from their experience. The feedback from this seminar showed this to be a successful method of enabling CLD partnerships to learn from the experience of others and one which if replicated, had the potential to enable partnerships to share good practice which would in turn lead to further improvement.

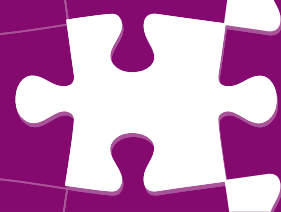
The evaluations from inspections are summarised in the table below.

Summary of evaluations from learning community inspections

Learning Community inspections (based on 91 reports)

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
QI 2.1 IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS - Young People	4	36	32	17	2	0
QI 2.1 IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS - Adults	2	36	36	12	5	0
QI 4.1 IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY	1	33	41	13	3	0
QI 1.1 IMPROVEMENTS IN PERFORMANCE	0	3	29	43	16	0
QI 5.10 IMPROVING SERVICES	2	4	26	39	20	0





Key themes identified from inspection evidence

Beyond the overall evaluations from inspections outlined above, we have identified two key themes that we explore below. The first of these is:

- **CLD providers as partners with schools in implementing Curriculum for Excellence.**

Curriculum for Excellence is a broad and ambitious curriculum for children and young people and its implementation is the responsibility of a wide range of practitioners, by no means solely restricted to teachers²¹. Adults too, in our experience, regard the capacities of Curriculum for Excellence as a reasonable ambition for their own learning.

Since September 2008, we have seen some positive changes in attitudes amongst school leaders and community providers about working together to improve outcomes for children and young people. In some parts of Scotland this partnership work is very well established and successful. In other places the potential for effective partnership work has not yet been fully realised. In the best practice, schools use the considerable resources of their communities to enhance the learning experiences

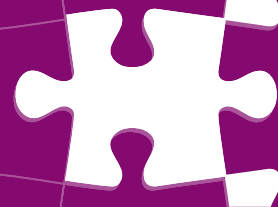
of children and young people in line with the intentions of Curriculum for Excellence. Young people in these schools often comment that they are well engaged and motivated by outside groups that contribute to the curriculum through, for example, assemblies, as part of their personal social and health education or for lunchtime or after school activities in, for example, expressive arts and sports.

Some secondary schools are very successful in engaging employers as partners in supporting enterprise education and preparation for working life. Young people can also be effectively engaged by out of school activities, whether work experience placements, or, increasingly for senior pupils, opportunities for volunteer placements that help them to extend their skills and attributes, and also evaluate their suitability for a possible future career.

Local units of national youth organisations often provide very effective opportunities for young people to achieve. Many provide learning experiences that are well suited to children and young people with additional support needs. Youth workers are often very skilled at enabling young people to learn about and deal with some of the health and social problems that they face.

²¹ Scottish Government: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2010/08/16104818>

What we know now about learning communities



Young people who face serious challenges in their lives are very well supported by Fairbridge Scotland in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee. This support enables them to make successful transitions. Learners take high levels of responsibility for their own learning and are more constructive and aspirational as a result of their participation.



In both schools and their broader learning communities we are seeing a greater emphasis on young people leading learning with their peers. Increasingly, young people in the senior phase are leading aspects of learning for their younger peers. Teachers and youth workers can empower young people to learn through developing independence and taking greater responsibility for shaping and managing their work and in so doing, achieving greater depth and enjoyment. Some pupil councils have moved on considerably from concerns about, say, the fabric of school buildings to engaging with senior staff and teachers about learning and teaching.

Youth workers often play a significant role in supporting schools to develop more robust arrangements for listening to the voice of young people about their school experience.

Community partners can make significant contributions across all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. In youth work, young people can develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in social studies, religious and moral education, modern languages, creative arts and technologies. In the expressive arts, for example, there are a number of high quality youth music and technology projects across Scotland that complement and add to provision in schools very well. We know that there are also very important contributions to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, especially given that these are the responsibility of all. Developments of this kind will always evolve differently in different schools, in the light of the context of each school and its community, but in some areas such development is slow and there is a need to develop this further to ensure that more children and young people can benefit from them. We provide examples of how CLD providers are developing in relation to Curriculum for Excellence in Appendix 1.



HMIE has also gathered considerable evidence of home/school workers, community workers and adult learning staff making a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of parents. As parental confidence increases, so too can their capacity to relate positively to their children and support them in their learning. Curriculum for Excellence recognises the importance of parents as partners in their children's learning.

A less-well documented, understood or valued aspect of schools and early years centres is the varied contributions they make to their communities. We give examples of this in Appendix 2. The second key theme arising from learning community inspections is:

- **Schools and others as partners in delivering the range of outcomes of CLD.**

Since HMIE introduced learning community inspections, inspectors have found evidence of a range of practice that has confirmed a broadening of partnerships to support the broad outcomes of CLD – that is, achievement through learning for young people and adults, and achievement through building community capacity. A few years ago, for example, headteachers frequently did not

consider that they had a role in parents' learning. Many can now give examples of effective interventions through which schools provide adult learning or they work more effectively with partners to engage parents in learning. This trend is most noticeable in early years centres and primary schools. CLD practitioners in a variety of roles work closely with the families of younger children to support parents in dealing with the challenges of parenting. There are increasing examples of practitioners engaging with fathers and other male carers in activities that improve their parenting capacities. Some schools are more alert than others to the literacy and numeracy needs of parents and families. In a few examples, school resources have been used to address the language needs of parents who are inward migrants.

What we know now about learning communities



Some schools are more aware than others of the potential to engage young people in their communities through regeneration and other activities. Where senior staff see their schools as active contributors to community improvement they become more focused on addressing community needs and issues. With the increased emphasis on achievement within Curriculum for Excellence, there has been a significant increase in schools working with others to engage young people in, for example, volunteering activities and leadership activities. This can be part of accredited achievement awards such as The Duke of Edinburgh Award or Youth Achievement Awards or stand alone elements of the senior phase where for example young people work voluntarily in nurseries, primary schools or other community services.



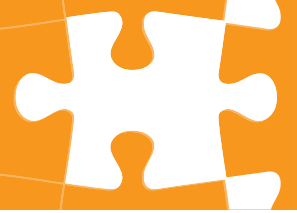
Dornoch Academy is very well engaged with its community and staff make a significant contribution to community wellbeing through volunteering, including through the Dornoch Community Development Trust. Community members are influential and nearly all community managed projects network effectively with each other and public agencies to improve local services.

Inspection evidence has also identified a number of examples of the contribution of culture and sport providers to CLD outcomes. These play an important role in providing opportunities for young people and adults to achieve. They too can help to build community capacity through their links with sports clubs and cultural groups, sometimes working with schools.

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Features of effective practice and areas for improvement

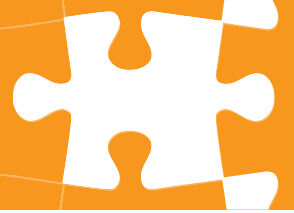


Learning communities are important not only in achieving the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence, but also to other wider aspirations, including addressing inequalities. The evidence presented in this report shows that learning communities are at different stages of development across Scotland and that they vary in the impact and outcomes of their work. We offer here some features of effective practice and areas for improvement, for senior officers in public services, heads of establishment in education, managers and practitioners in CLD, teachers and other staff in early years and schools. Our purpose is to support improvement and development towards more systematic and effective partnership working between educational establishments, community providers and the communities they serve.

Features of effective practice:

- CLD providers have developed and use important skills and experience that support young people to achieve, including, in the best practice, those with additional support needs.
- Opportunities for accredited achievement are developing well and are helping to provide opportunities for all.
- Schools and early years centres are becoming increasingly active in working with partners to support learning for parents and carers.
- Increasing numbers of secondary schools are active in supporting young people to engage with their communities. CLD providers are important partners in supporting this development.
- In a few examples, CLD partnerships are well focused on achieving significant outcomes and demonstrating, through effective self-evaluation, how well these are being achieved.

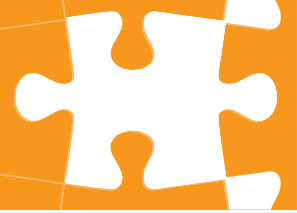
Features of effective practice and areas for improvement



Areas for improvement

- More schools, CLD providers and a range of others now need to work together under the common purpose and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence to enable all children and young people achieve all that they can.
- Community practitioners and teachers need to learn together so that they develop a shared understanding about their roles and responsibilities in successfully implementing Curriculum for Excellence, particularly in relation to the experiences and outcomes, achievement and assessment.
- Community providers, working with early years centres and schools, should continue to build the confidence of parents to engage as learners themselves and to support their children's learning.
- Volunteering and other motivating learning activities now need to be developed further across partnerships, to provide all children and young people with rich learning experiences in both the school and community that extend their skills and develop their attributes and so help them prepare for life and work.
- Schools, centres and all of those involved in CLD need to work more closely together to deliver improved outcomes through joint planning and self-evaluation.
- Partnerships within learning communities need to improve their capacity to measure outcomes across the full range of their impacts and to work across partners in doing this.

Features of effective practice and areas for improvement



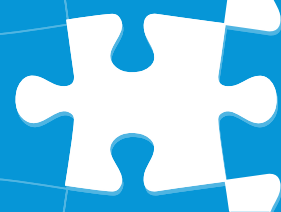
Reflective Questions:

This section is intended to be used by schools, early years centres and CLD providers as part of their self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Resources such as *How Good is our Community Learning and Development 2?*²² and *Let's Prove It: Providing evidence on the outcomes of CLD activities* are also useful tools to help in this process.

- How well do our strategic and operational partnership arrangements support children and young people to achieve the outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence? How well do they support providers to deliver the wide range of outcomes of CLD? How might we improve?
- To what extent are we considering fully the potential and actual contribution of voluntary sector partners to achievement and inclusion, including the local units of national youth organisations and how can we improve?
- Are we making best use of providers of youth achievement awards to extend opportunities for young people to gain accredited awards? How might we improve?
- How do we ensure that all practitioners are aware of experiences and outcomes and the implications of new approaches to assessment?
- How well do schools and community providers work together to promote positive attitudes to health and social issues and to support all learners, including at times of transition?
- How well do we work together to plan and evaluate our work in order to improve outcomes for children, young people, adults and communities?
- How well do we include culture and sports providers in raising achievement, meeting the needs of adult learners and building community capacity?
- How do we improve the capacity of CLD partners to capture the wide range of significant outcomes from CLD provision linked to local and national priorities?

²² How Good is Our Community Learning and Development 2, HMIE 2006, <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/Publications.aspx>

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Appendix 1: Examples of how programmes within learning communities are beginning to plan their outcomes using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence

Expressive arts and technology in Aberdeen

Why the work is done?

Station House Media Unit (SHMU) works in the seven regeneration areas of Aberdeen to address the needs of disadvantaged young people and adults in Aberdeen. SHMU provides a range of multi-media services including community radio and film, publications and training for local residents in these areas of work. These services provide residents with opportunities to learn new skills that are directly relevant to the 21st century workplace.

Which partners are involved?

SHMU works closely in partnership with local employers, CLD and specialist support services to support local residents. SHMU also receives Inspire Scotland funding to support their work.

Linking to the experiences and outcomes

SHMU are exploring the use of the experiences and outcomes in the following areas:

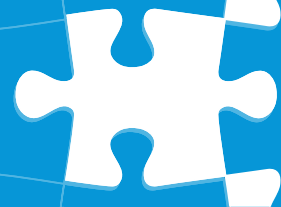
- Expressive arts
- Technology
- Literacy and numeracy
- Health and wellbeing

There is also ongoing work to link the work of community media providers such as SHMU to the development of GLOW.

What difference does the work make?

All young people reported that they had gained confidence as a result of their involvement. Participants increased their communication skills, technical skills and ability to work in a team. Their involvement gave them a positive outlet for creative skills and opportunities to gain new experiences otherwise not available to them. SHMU works with the Woodland Ranger Service and prison staff in the Bridges Project within a local prison. As a result, prisoners engage in radio and video production and undertake the John Muir Award.

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Social studies in West Lothian

Why the work is done?

The West Lothian democratic literacy programme has its roots in the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child, Article 12, concerning the rights of children and young people to be listened to. West Lothian had a lower rate of young people registering to vote than comparator authorities. As in other parts of Scotland, young people in West Lothian are not well engaged with civic society. West Lothian Council staff work with a range of partners in schools, West Lothian College and in the community to raise awareness about democratic rights and responsibilities and support increased voter registration amongst young people. In relation to schools, staff provide a package of support for pupil councils that contributes to the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence outcomes in relation to social studies and health and wellbeing. West Lothian Council apprentices have been trained through the democratic literacy approach.

Which partners are involved?

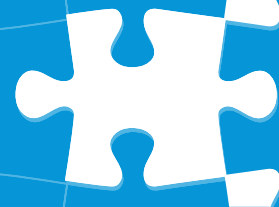
West Lothian Council staff engage a range of partners to secure the success of the initiative. These include headteachers and staff in schools and colleges, Skills Development Scotland, the local electoral registration office, the national Electoral Commission, the Council's Chief Legal Officer and election team, local elected members and MSPs, and a range of youth projects and networks.

Linking to the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes

Partners in this programme are beginning to map the learning outcomes being achieved against the relevant elements of the social studies and health and wellbeing curriculum areas.

What difference does the work make?

- In West Lothian more young people than before are registering to vote when they turn 18.
- In the secondary schools engaged with the initiative all young people, not just those who opt to take Social Studies, access a range of learning experiences that lead to achieving outcomes within the Social Studies curriculum area at level 4.



- Over 150 young people have participated in a college programme. Of these around 90% have registered to vote and about 75% have voted.
- Activities with Skills Development Scotland and in local communities have ensured that some of the most disadvantaged young people have been able to access advice and guidance about their democratic rights and responsibilities.

Health and wellbeing and literacy in Aberdeenshire

Why the work is done?

In response to their local football ground being flooded, two young men organised the 'Turriff has Talent' show. They successfully raised £5000 which went towards the necessary repairs to the pitch. With support from a youth worker, they planned, organised and hosted every aspect of the event.

The experiences and outcomes which could be used in this area of work include:

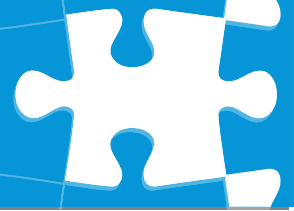
- Health and wellbeing
- Literacy

For example:

- I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order, and use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience. (LIT 4-06a);
- I understand and can demonstrate the qualities and skills required to sustain different types of relationships. (HWB 3/44b/HWB 4-44b).

What difference does the work make?

As a result of their experience they have increased in confidence, communication skills, developed an understanding of when, and how to delegate and some business skills. Their experiences are contributing to their Youth Achievement Awards and they have been put forward for Young Scot Awards. They have also gained school house points.



Health and wellbeing and literacy in Shetland (and New York)

Why the work was done?

At the end of their two year programme, participants in Club XL in Anderson High School, Shetland, organised a visit to New York for a week in March 2010. The trip was organised as part of a module on organising a residential trip. The inspiration for this learning opportunity came from a 10 week work experience and citizenship course which students completed as volunteers with Highlands and Islands Fire Service. The experience stimulated club members' interest in the 9/11 events. The group visited Ground Zero and Fire House 10.

Which partners were involved?

The project was supported by the youth development worker throughout. Young people planned all stages of the project and raised funding with support from International Education and the school.

Linking to the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes

The project used experiences and outcomes in:

- Health and wellbeing
- Literacy and English
- Numeracy

Experiences and outcomes from the social studies curriculum area could also be considered such as SOC-4.16b:

- Through discussion I have identified aspects of a social issue to investigate and by gathering information I can assess its impact and the attitudes of the people affected.

What difference does the work make?

As a result of the experience some participants have higher aspirations for their future and almost all gained skills in working with others, are more open to the views of others and take on more responsibility for tasks.

Health and wellbeing in Dundee

Why the work was done?

Dundee Peer Education Project is a well established project that raises awareness about substance misuse amongst S2 pupils and supports them to work as peer educators with P6 pupils. It originated in a concern about the levels of substance misuse in the city. In 2009/10 there were 74 peer educators from four secondary schools who completed the entire programme. Sixty of them are working towards their Silver Youth Achievement Award. These young people delivered a learning



programme for 550 P6 pupils in 14 associated primary schools. This project won the Gold COSLA Award in 2010 for tackling health inequalities and improving health.

Which partners were involved?

The project works in partnership with schools, a range of NHS and community health groups, Tayside Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Dundee City Council, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and The Scottish Prisons Service.

Linking to the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes

The project has already mapped its work against the relevant Level 2 health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes for mental and emotional wellbeing and social wellbeing. These are then focused on the specific experiences and outcomes that relate to substance misuse. For peer educators, the work has been mapped against Level 3 and 4 Health and Wellbeing experiences and outcomes for mental and emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing and changes and choices. These are also further focused on the specific experiences and outcomes that relate to substance misuse.

What difference does the work make?

The project raises awareness about drugs, alcohol and smoking prevention amongst S2 and P6 pupils. The peer educators additionally gain training and experience in team work, leadership, confidence, and citizenship as well as opportunities for DVD production, photography, buddying and presenting at conferences.

Appendix 2: Examples of schools and centres that contribute well to CLD outcomes

Engaging parents at Mount Esk Nursery through *Now You Are 2*

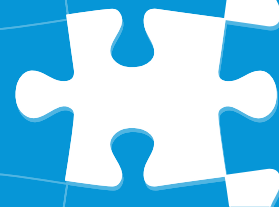
Why the work was done

The Lasswade Early Years Practitioners Group is a multi-agency group of practitioners that work with under fives in the eastern area of Midlothian. The group identified a need for supporting parents of two year olds. Increasing numbers of nursery entrants had delays in their development, more were being referred to health professionals; there was a perceived lack of parenting skills in the community, and, increasingly, research was pointing to the significance of the first four years to brain development and future life outcomes. The work was initially planned by the Council's early years coordinator, the nursery head teacher, the family support worker, health visitor and integration manager. It was delivered by the health visitor, the CLD worker, the family support worker and the childcare and development worker.

What did the work involve?

Since its inception there have been five groups, with on average eight parents in each. All parents of two year olds in the local area are now contacted by letter and a follow up phone call. They are all given a pack of resources advising them about child development and about the range of local public and voluntary services relevant to their needs and their child's needs. Those who join the groups attend for an hour each week for a four week period. The groups are informal and staff respond to the parenting needs and issues presented by the participants. The work has also led to additional provision for parents such as a positive parenting course; confident parent/confident child, a coffee time group for parents' issues, and a support group for parents of twins - there are five pairs of twins currently in the nursery. All of the staff have had their confidence in working with parents improved through training in The Solihull Approach provided jointly by Midlothian Council, the Community Health Partnership and Midlothian Sure Start.

The work with parents links clearly to the health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes within Curriculum for Excellence. In particular, it supports



parents to develop their mental, emotional and social wellbeing as well as their parenting capabilities.

What difference did the work make?

The range of parenting activities in the area now results in many parents understanding their child's development better, able to use specialists with more confidence, able to ask 'the silly questions', improved transitions from home to nursery, increased social networks and friendships, and increased engagement with groups in the community. To date, a few parents have moved on to vocational learning and volunteering.

Engaging parents at Springvale Nursery in Saltcoats

Why the work was done and what was done

Parental partnerships and participation are vital to improving outcomes for children. To support parents to take a more active role in their children's learning, the nursery provided parents with workshops and group work for a full day every week. Topics chosen by parents and staff included work which would support parenting skills, and subjects which interested the parents to develop their own personal skills and knowledge. Over the year, groups focused on healthy

cooking, first aid for babies and toddlers, handling children's behaviour, keep fit, infant massage, Maketon (sign language for children and adults with learning difficulties), BookBug, FAB (Fit Ayrshire Babies), fire safety, arts and crafts and interior design.

What partnership work was involved?

The nursery already enjoyed close links with partners in health, social services and education. Further links were made with community food workers, the local fire service and local companies to work with the range of groups. Partners have all been involved in joint planning and delivery of classes and workshops and gave advice and support. Most of the workshops and classes were facilitated by a member of nursery staff and a partner specialist.

Curriculum for Excellence recognises the vital role of active parental involvement in their child's learning. It also reinforces work across partner agencies and during times of transition, from home to nursery, and then to school. It also stresses the importance of partnership work in achieving effective coherence and progression in learning.

What difference the work has made

Very good relationships between staff, key workers and parents have been built and maintained. Parents have developed trust in nursery staff and visiting specialists through having an understanding of the purpose of their work. For the parents who attended workshops, classes and groups they have developed confidence in working alongside staff, made lasting friendships with each other and have commented that the parents group was a 'lifeline' in terms of support. Individual parents have learned new skills in cooking from scratch on a budget, first aid, sign language, parenting skills and the use of technology. Many of these skills have a direct influence on improved outcomes for children and future parental involvement in their children's learning. Many of the skills are transferable for future capacity building in the community and for parents moving on to training, education and work.

Food and leadership at an Airdrie Primary School

Why the work was done

When the community food co-op in the Craigneuk area of Airdrie closed, Dunrobin Primary School decided to fill the gap within the school. A quarter of the children attending the school come from areas which are in the 15% most deprived in Scotland. The food co-op linked very well with the Health Promoting Schools Gold Award that the school was working towards. It also provided a sustainable project that would build partnerships within the school and the wider community and between staff, parents and children. The project engages all P5 children on a rota basis and, more regularly, children with challenging behaviour. Parents also help with managing the project.

A significant spin off of this work and other initiatives to involve parents was a leadership programme for a dozen parents and grandparents. The headteacher and depute headteacher wanted to use their experience of leadership training to help build the confidence, self-esteem and resilience of parents.



What the work involves

The food co-op opens for business every second Wednesday during term time from 2:00 till 4:00. It sells fresh fruit and vegetables. Over a dozen adults from the community use the co-op regularly as well as school staff and over 50 pupils. Children deliver orders to elderly residents in a nearby sheltered housing complex. The co-op is a not-for-profit enterprise and breaks even financially. The school has now linked with a community allotment group so that children can grow their own fruit and vegetables. The whole school was involved in designing and producing a logo for the food co-op.

Together with the CLD worker, the headteacher and deputy headteacher designed a six week course based on the *Columba 1400* principles. The course used parents' experience of running the co-op as a sound basis for building their confidence and engaging them in further learning. The school intends to build on this experience with other parents.

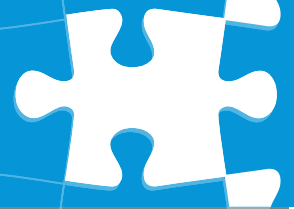
The project enables children to develop in all four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence as well as specifically in health and wellbeing, numeracy and expressive arts.

What difference does the work make?

The food co-op was a catalyst in helping the school to engage with the community and build parental involvement. For example, parents, grandparents and secondary-aged young people now volunteer in the school in a variety of roles including classroom helpers, a lunchtime book club and in putting together school displays. Parents are more ready to contact the school and many want to help the school to improve. There has been a notable reduction in parental complaints.

Exclusion rates in the school have reduced considerably. The children with behavioural difficulties who have been involved with the food co-op have raised self-esteem and enjoy doing practical tasks which are important to their community. An improvement in their behaviour is directly linked to their improved confidence and self-worth.

Almost all of the parents in the leadership programme have gone on to further learning, including support with literacy and numeracy and accredited courses. Pre and post course evaluations showed that most had improved their self-efficacy and resilience.



Adults in the community are being helped to keep their food costs down and to buy a wider range of healthy produce. Children are buying fruit and vegetables on a regular basis and have a wider range of choice.

Emotional Literacy for parents at Raigmore Primary School

Why the work was done

Several years ago, following staff training in emotional literacy the school became a 'nurturing school'. All staff were trained in a solution-focused approach. Some became *emotional warriors* for other staff and all become emotional coaches for children. All pupils were trained in self-awareness and other awareness. The work with parents started following a discussion that occurred during Circle Time. Children were discussing 'rewards'. Many of the children talked about receiving rewards for fighting. Some parents not only condoned this but also joined in. It was clear there was a clash between the values of the school and the values being experienced by the children at home.

What the work involved

The school wanted to share with parents:

- how a nurturing school works;
- to develop further the school's partnership work with parents;
- to support them in relating positively to their children; and
- to improve staff's insight into the lives of the children out of school.

Parents met with a teacher for one hour every week for a block of eight weeks. The meetings were solution-focused and based on issues identified by parents that mirrored what was being worked on in class. The teacher used the same language with parents as was being used in class. Listening, sharing, co-operating and respecting others. What does it look like? What does it sound like? What does it feel like?

At the same time, the school's educational psychologist was carrying out research on children from forces families within the school. The educational psychologist worked with the teacher and the class on cooperation and what that meant within the classroom.



The main link to Curriculum for Excellence was through the health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes.

What difference did the work make?

The impact on parents was very significant. They are now much clearer about what to expect of a 'nurturing school'. They describe clearly how their parenting behaviours have changed and how they relate to their children. They are happier parents and consequently have happier children. They have organised into a group that has managed to save their local community centre and secure significant funding to improve play equipment and build an extension for a coffee shop. Parents are now much more involved in the work of the school.

Strathaven Academy in its community

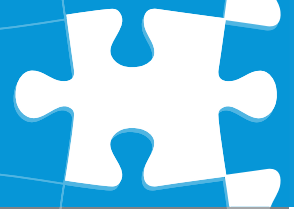
Why the work is done

Strathaven Academy's vision is to make a major contribution to an aspirational learning community - a community where young people and their families are nurtured and challenged to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills that allow them to contribute more effectively to the area in which they learn, live and work. The school strives to provide a

broad and varied range of opportunities for young people and adults to flourish and grow. The school works well with many providers, organisations, businesses, individuals, families and South Lanarkshire Council. It provides a broad and varied range of opportunities for young people and their families to achieve, and to help to make Strathaven a great place to live and work. This case study picks up three areas from the range of partnership activities that contribute to youth and adult learning and community capacity building.

What the work involves and how it links to Curriculum for Excellence

South Lanarkshire Council's Home School Partnership (HSP) initiative supports and challenges young people and their families to grow and develop together. Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are the key areas for development. This partnership offers programmes that engage parents to learn English and mathematics alongside their children. It enables them to address parental concerns such as alcohol and drugs, internet safety and healthy lifestyles. They have recently introduced a confidence building programme for parents, *Steps to Excellence*.



Young people within Strathaven Academy engage in important learning experiences through community programmes, such as Sportworx, Danceworx, Youth Achievement Awards, ASDAN, Sports Leader, and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Many young people undertake voluntary work as part of their programme and often continue this beyond the achievement of the award. These programmes enable young people to develop attributes as responsible citizens and effective contributors to their community.

Young people are also encouraged to participate responsibly by volunteering for a range of activities. These include school committees, Parent Council, Parent Teacher Association, Strathaven Community Council, Strathaven Town Group, Adam's Community Trust, as well as the local youth forum and the Scottish Youth Parliament.

What difference does the work make?

Through HSP programmes parents use their knowledge to support their children in completing homework together. Their confidence as parents of teenagers is increased and they are better able to support their sons and daughters through the challenges of growing up.

Community and volunteering programmes require young people to use their new skills to take initiatives, to lead and participate in activities in local primary schools, youth clubs, sports groups, uniformed groups and many other settings.

Through participation in decision-making bodies young people develop the confidence to consult with others and work in partnership to identify needs and actions to secure improvement.



Effective Transitions at Ross High School

Why the work is done

Ross High School in East Lothian is working hard to be an active and responsible centre of its local community. As part of its drive to promote and recognise achievement for all its young people, in and out of school, Ross High School has forged strong working links with a number of other learning partners, in particular, the primary schools in its cluster and the CLD service staff. The Ross High cluster has ten primary schools serving a diverse rural and urban area with pockets of deprivation. These features have led the school and its partners to adopt an innovative approach to primary to secondary and school to work transitions.

What the work involves and how it links to Curriculum for Excellence

The Cluster Development Plan expresses the commitment of the ten schools in the cluster to work together to develop coherent 3-18 learning provision which embraces Curriculum for Excellence. The Head Teachers are committed to delivering services for young people in partnership with the CLD Service and a wide range of other partners.

The overarching aim of the partnership work is to raise

achievement. All schools want to support all young people to experience success and confidence in their learning and achievements. A forum, which includes all local agencies and partners, meets regularly to coordinate activities and identify gaps in provision. This means that resources can be directed more effectively and young people can be encouraged to access appropriate opportunities to extend their learning and promote their achievements.

Partnership working has focused on the two areas of transition, P7 to S1 and 16+, to ensure maximum impact for potentially vulnerable young people. The primary to secondary transition work is delivered on two levels. The smaller rural primary schools work with CLD staff to deliver an ongoing programme of confidence building to prepare young people for the move to a large secondary. More vulnerable and less confident young people are identified early in P6 and an enhanced programme of confidence building activities is delivered jointly with secondary staff and CLD staff.

The school had identified that a number of young people were not making positive progress into sustained destinations on leaving school. Working closely with a number of partners including CLD,

Skills Development Scotland, Lothian Equal Access Programme and other voluntary agencies, the school has refined processes to identify risk factors at an early stage, and has put in place a variety of supports and programmes. These range from advice and information to highly individualised support programmes. An innovative Pathways to Employment course which leads to SQA accreditation has been designed and delivered jointly by the school and CLD service for young people in S4.

What difference has the work made?

The primary to secondary transition supports many vulnerable young people to settle quickly in high school, encouraging them to overcome barriers to learning. They report increased confidence and less anxiety in relationships.

The partnership work to improve sustained and positive destinations post 16 has had measurable success showing a sustained improvement over five years and an increase of 8.6% over the last year. Most of this improvement is a result of significant increases in the numbers of young people going on to university and college.

Further information about this publication is available from:

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ISBN: 978-0-7053-1599-9

Produced for HMIE by APS Group Scotland DPPAS11393 03/11

Production funded by Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Published by HMIE, March 2011

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