



COUNT US

IN

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS  
FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL

WE'RE STILL HERE

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FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL

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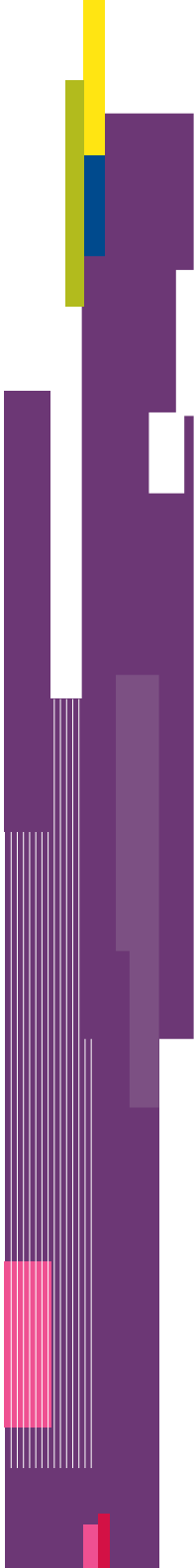
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## Foreword

We have chosen the title of this publication, *We're still here*, to get the message over that we all need to think differently about secondary school to post-school transitions. The term 'leaver', as in 'early leaver' or 'S4 leaver' detracts from what is a very important point of transition in the lives of all young people. Although we still have a statutory leaving age, the fact of the matter is that the majority of young people continue with their education, training and skills development in post-compulsory education or training.

Supporting transition for all who move on from school, regardless of destination, is of critical importance in providing a stepping stone to a sustainable and successful future. For a majority of young people, the passage to further or higher education or stable employment with good quality training experiences, for example, as an apprentice, is exciting even if it is sometimes not devoid of difficulty. For those involved, moving across from school to a more adult world is a clear sign of success. For a significant minority, this is not the case.

Some one in eight young people do not move on to employment, education or training. A further substantial group find low-paid employment with little opportunity for advancement and even less learning and personal development to help them to progress subsequently to higher-skilled areas of work. And we know that for a significant minority of young people, particularly from poorer family backgrounds, Scottish secondary education does not enable them to achieve at school and equip them for the future, as well as they might, even in an education system such as ours in which schools are generally good. We need to do better for them.

For this significant minority of young people, we need robust transition processes that enable them to take advantage of the choices and services available, which in turn will improve their longer term chances in life. Some, for example, those

with profound needs or those who have been in care, will need intensive and ongoing support. Others will need less intensive or more periodic but, nevertheless, sustained support. Many will need some form of support plan to ensure they are able to take best advantage of the support services, choices and chances available. We also need to do better for them when they are at school in a preventative way that ensures that all young people maximise their potential.

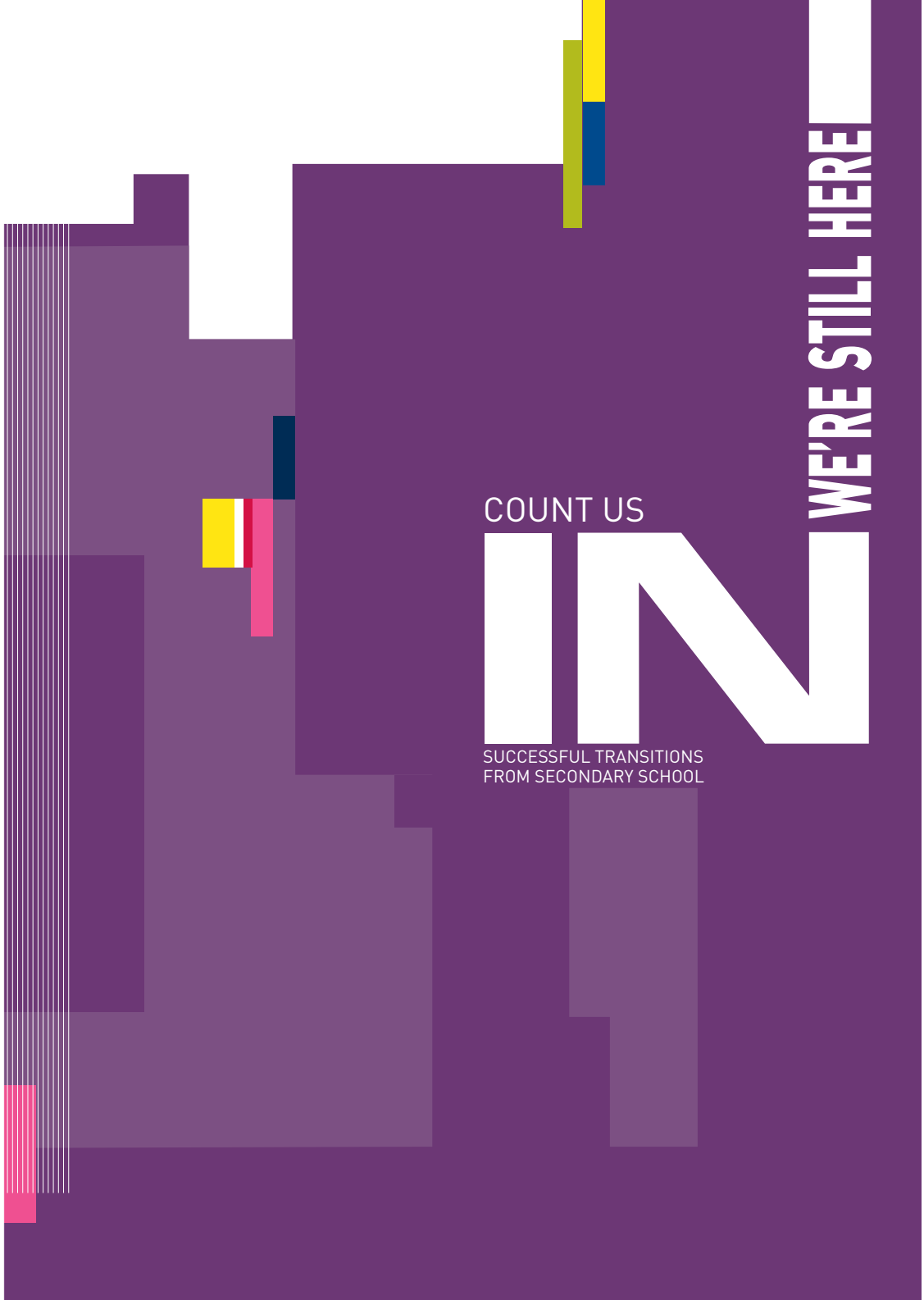
So this document addresses part of the agenda of going from good to great, of achieving excellence for all. We have known for some time that in secondary schools, particularly in S3 and S4, we start to lose some pupils. Attendance goes down, exclusions go up, motivation and enthusiasm wanes. This document is part of the wider support comprising *The Journey to Excellence* series. It fits in well with HMIE's focus on aspects of inclusion as a follow-up to *Count us in*. It is part of the follow-through to the strategy for young people who are at risk of not entering education, employment or training at or beyond the transition point from secondary school to post-school, as described in *More Choices, More Chances*. The document has been produced specifically to support secondary schools in improving the experiences and successes of all their pupils in making that transition but it will also be useful for those working in partner agencies. By implication, the challenge for secondary schools is to take more responsibility for being proactive in developing effective partnerships with other agencies and to put in place robust processes which will smooth that transition.



**Graham Donaldson**  
HM Senior Chief Inspector







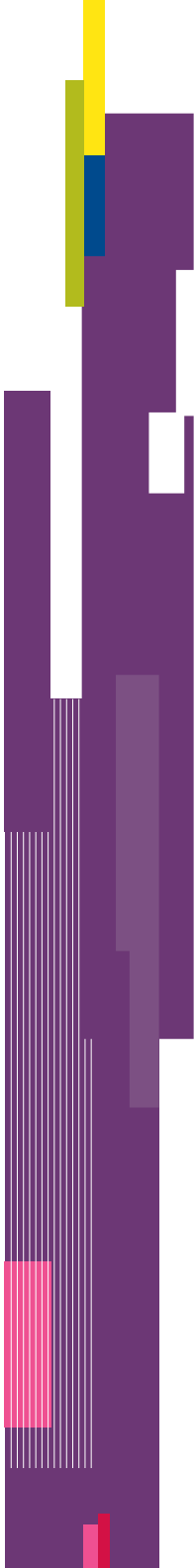
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## Introduction

HM Inspectorate of Education takes a broad view of inclusion and diversity, and relates them to the wider issues of equity in education. This view has been developed and explored through a number of national reports, starting with *Count us in* and including *Missing out* and the five parts of *The Journey to Excellence*<sup>1</sup>.

Staff in schools, partner agencies and voluntary organisations have been aware for some time now of widespread concerns about the numbers of young people – currently around 32,000 – who, for various reasons, have not entered education, training or employment by the time they are 19. *More Choices More Chances* and *Skills for Scotland: A Skills Strategy for a Competitive Scotland* set out national strategies for addressing the needs of young people: skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. The Additional Support for Learning Act (ASL Act) Code of Practice provided guidance on planning for transitions for young people with additional support needs. *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) stressed the need for assessment and planning to consider the context which young people inhabit, both risks and opportunities. It pointed to the importance of them developing qualities such as resilience, sociability and problem-solving skills and of professionals consulting effectively, sharing information and taking joint action.

Over the last decade or so, the pattern of schooling which young people experience has changed significantly. The traditional linear progression from school to college, university, training or directly into employment is developing into more complex pathways. Increasing numbers of young people experience flexible forms of educational provision while still at school. Such provision may include part-time

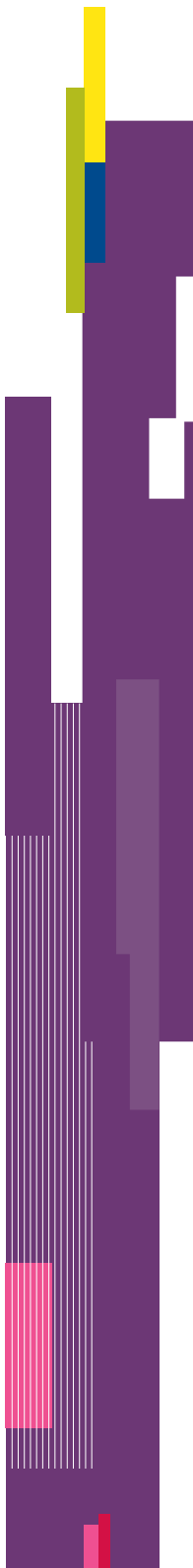
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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for references to relevant reports by HMIE and an outline of the national context.

placements at colleges, pre-vocational placements run by agencies and voluntary organisations and broad enrichment activities of the 'outward bound' type.

Some young people, however, who may be disaffected and disengaged from school, perhaps with patterns of long-term absences, or who demonstrate challenging behaviour or have other additional support needs may need particular help to smooth the transition into their post-school lives. Others may draw little attention themselves at school and their longer-term needs may remain unrecognised. Young people may have significant responsibilities as carers for their own young children or for parents and siblings, which make it difficult for them to take up and sustain the opportunities available. A few, for example, looked after and accommodated young people, may lack the social, emotional and practical support provided by family and peers which help to ease transition into adult society. Teachers and other council staff have responsibilities as corporate parents to provide such support. Not all young people who find post-school transitions difficult have low attainment. Groups of S4 pupils at all levels of attainment may find difficulty in moving on after school. For example, one authority found that almost half of its S4 leavers who had no positive post-school destination had tariff scores of 76 or above, which equates to three or four general awards or better. Some had considerably higher attainment levels.





The statistics themselves may hide a range of different personal stories. Young people sometimes leave school and undertake a range of short-term jobs, voluntary activities or placements before achieving positive destinations at a later date, when they are ready. Some may enter the statistics as apparent 'success stories' but a year or two later may 'drop out' of university or college. They may have made inappropriate career choices at an earlier stage or find the transition from the structured environment of school or from the social context of their own locality too challenging. Some may have been successful in entering employment, but in industries and services which provide few opportunities for them to develop and build on their skills. So the situation is more complex than may appear at first sight.

The outcomes of *Curriculum for Excellence* apply to **all** young people. Most will develop these capacities at school but others may need support from partner agencies or flexible placements to fulfil their potential. Young people need to experience coordinated, coherent programmes of learning as what was previously offered in 'alternative' provision is brought into the mainstream. The Skills Strategy emphasises the importance of smoothing learning transitions from school to college or employment, providing a continuum of support, and putting more effort and resources into helping those who need most help. Young people aged 14-19 with additional support needs may need to experience 'supported' transition pathways which require joint working by education staff in schools and colleges, community workers, Careers Scotland, health and social work services and voluntary providers. In turn, this requires schools to identify such pupils as early as possible and accept greater ownership of the whole transition process post-school.

We do know the key factors which enable smooth transitions to sustained positive destinations. They include features such as:

- learning experiences which engage and motivate all young people, and encourage them to attend;
- appropriate and relevant curricular pathways, personalised to meet individual needs;
- positive and supportive relationships with staff;
- recognition of, and respect for young people's emerging adulthood;
- planned development of skills for employability;
- nurturing of personal qualities such as confidence and resilience;
- listening to young people, taking their views seriously and responding positively where possible;
- close tracking and monitoring of the progress of all learners, including those with individualised educational programmes and coordinated support plans; and
- recognising and celebrating individual achievements within a wide range of contexts and communicating these to young people themselves and to potential employers and selection agencies.

Many of these features are already evident to some degree in schools and services across Scotland. Some aspects, however, may require transformational change in the way some of our schools currently operate, in the services they provide to young people and in the quality of the relationships between school staff and the young people and families they serve.

The rest of this guide describes examples of promising practice in enabling smooth post-school transitions, which have been gathered during visits to schools, colleges and provisions managed by agencies and voluntary organisations in Scotland. In many cases, the long-term impact of these initiatives has not yet been formally evaluated by the establishments and services involved, although there is evidence of positive effects on the experiences of individual young people. The examples chosen are just a small number of the varied and interesting developments across the country. Each section of the guide explores this practice in the context of the dimensions of excellence from *The Journey to Excellence*. It also notes the quality indicators from *How good is our school?* which schools and others may use to evaluate their own provision. Digital movies exemplifying the themes highlighted in this publication will be included in the online digital resource *The Journey to Excellence* ([www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk](http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk)).



### Who is this guide for?

This guide is for all school leaders, and pastoral care, support and teaching staff who work with young people who are preparing to move on from secondary schooling to the next stage in their lives.

It is also for people who work in partnership with the school to support young people who are going into employment or continuing their learning, for example, parents, residential care staff, college staff, and staff from agencies and services such as social work services, Careers Scotland, post-school psychological services, youth work services, voluntary providers, training providers, community groups, other educational establishments and employers.

### What does this guide do?

This guide provides examples of some of the things which school leaders, teachers and their partners do to support young people at transition. Successful transitions result in young people who are confident and resilient, and who are able to enter the world of work with the skills they need and contribute to society as a whole.

The signposts to excellence are based on real practice in Scottish schools, further education colleges, community groups and other agencies, as observed by HMIE. They supplement and contextualise the advice given in Parts 1 and 2 of *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence* and within the revised quality indicators which make up Part 3. Schools may refer to the signposts to help them in their planning, using the approaches presented in Part 4, *Planning for Excellence*. The signposts are supplemented by examples of actual practice and the voices of staff and young people as they reflect on the key issues in transition for them. Also included are some questions to stimulate reflection on what is currently going on in schools.

### How is this guide organised?

The guide is in five parts, based on the five broad areas identified in the *Missing out* report as typifying schools which were successful in addressing the needs of **all** their pupils.

- › Teaching that provides the highest quality learning experiences
- › Leadership and a shared vision
- › Partnerships including those with parents and families
- › Reflection on practice that values people
- › An ethos of ambition and achievement

These five areas are also organisers for *The Journey to Excellence*, and each is associated with two of the dimensions of excellence.

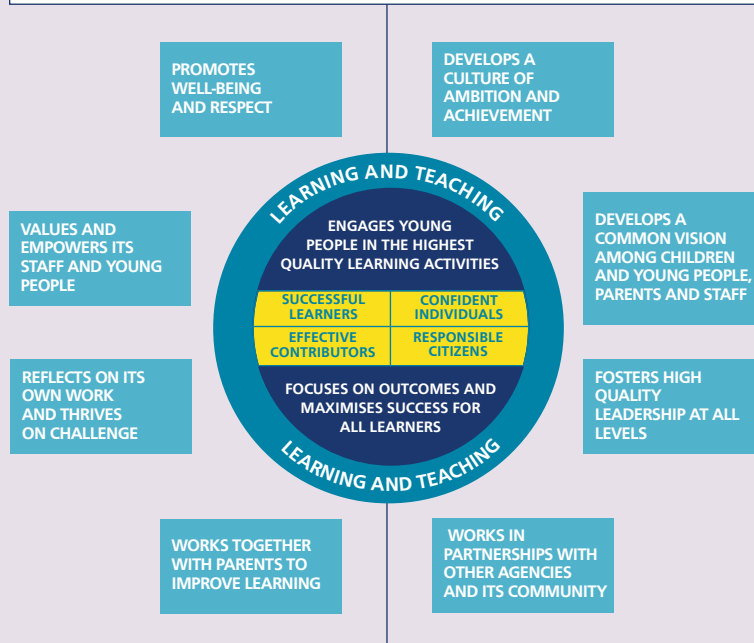


# Learning and teaching

**Dimension 1: Engages young people in the highest quality learning experiences**

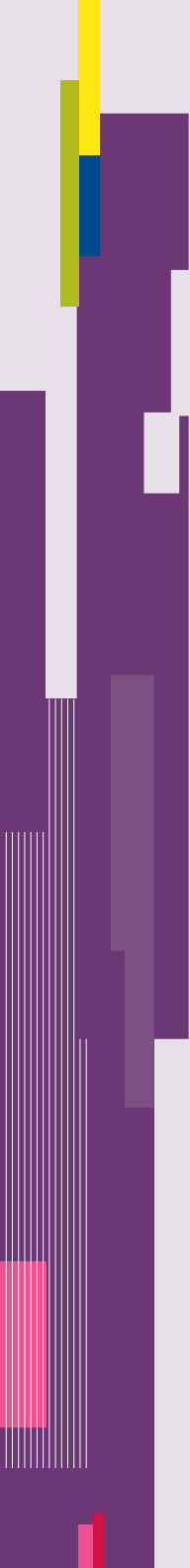
**Dimension 2: Focuses on outcomes and maximises success for all learners**

- Dimension 1**
- Learning as personal development – meaningful in the lives of children and young people
  - Promotion of active learning
  - Meeting children’s learning needs



- Dimension 2**
- Planning the outcomes of learning
  - Assessing the outcomes of learning
  - Reflecting on and recording success based on outcomes
  - Reporting on success in achieving outcomes





'Teachers have a comprehensive understanding of children's learning and provide personalised feedback for each learner. They observe learners closely, track their progress and use the information to plan their future progress. They strive to ensure continuity of learning approaches and experience at transition stages.'

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 35**

'Curriculum planning takes full account of the principles identified in *Curriculum for Excellence*. It is based firmly on a clear identification of the needs of all young people and is designed to address and meet these needs, result in successful learning, and develop pupils' confidence, skills and ability to contribute.'

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 42**

Relevant quality indicators	QI 5.1 The curriculum
	QI 5.2 Teaching for effective learning
	QI 5.3 Meeting learning needs

'We ensure that when learners transfer to and from our school, or when they have a shared placement between our school and another, they maintain continuity and progression in their learning. We ensure our learners are creative, enterprising and prepared for the world of work and their future careers.'

**QI 5.1 The curriculum**

Many of the challenges for schools relate to the importance of preventative work before young people reach the transitions stages. Secondary schools have a strong focus on attainment in the form of examination results, but this can sometimes be at the expense of the achievements emphasised in the *Count us in* report and can work against those learners who prefer more overt relevance and practical and applied approaches to learning. Many schools have developed a very good focus on vocational learning, including experiences in work-based environments, and have developed excellent relationships with employers. Employers are often more likely to look for attitudinal or social, rather than just academic skills, for example, the willingness to work hard, good time-keeping and attendance, and positive attitudes. These provide a very good basis for subsequent training. Learning activities leading to accreditation through, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award or Youth Achievement Award, can develop such skills at least as effectively as Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) courses.

In many circumstances, the work of teachers in preparing young people for transition will be supported by other partners. This may involve school staff in:

- arranging for delivery of particular aspects of the curriculum by other professionals;
- organisation and support for shared placements, for example, with support services, special schools, further education colleges, community organisations, or employers;
- enabling young people to engage with youth workers who develop their confidence and motivation; and
- taking account of the views of employers in developing the curriculum.

The most effective schools are proactive in developing such partnerships.

*Curriculum for Excellence* places young people at the centre, with schools planning the curriculum around their needs. This approach requires schools and colleges to be flexible and prepared to adopt innovative and creative approaches to curriculum planning and teaching approaches which enable all young people to achieve successful outcomes. School pupils with learning needs or at risk of missing out may attend college part time for a block or for one or two half days per week for their last year of school. The key priority is meeting individual needs. The following examples suggest some promising approaches to providing young people with worthwhile and motivating learning and curricular experiences.

#### **Preparing for transition through the school curriculum**

Cardinal Newman High School in North Lanarkshire prepared young people for employment or training by providing a focus on vocational experiences in S3 and S4 through a dedicated vocational options choice column. In addition, other option choice columns included a range of vocational inserts such as digital photography and institutional banking. Pupils were very



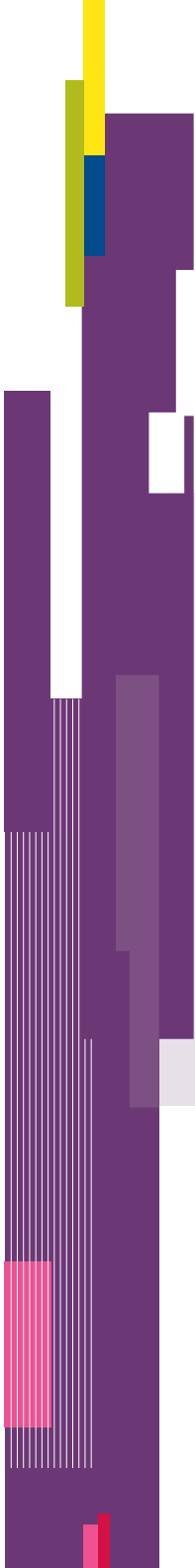
positive about their learning experiences in these simulated professional environments. The school had a strong partnership with Motherwell College but one in which all the activities were wholly sustainable by the school. Staff jointly delivered a range of vocational courses in the school with staff from the college. These courses focused on employability and developing a work ethic. The school set up a professional kitchen and restaurant, financed by North Lanarkshire Council's Regeneration budget which enabled pupils to take Intermediate 2 Professional Cooking.

A college lecturer and a professional chef also helped to deliver other hospitality courses run by the school through the home economics department. Teaching styles and methodologies used by college staff were shared with teaching staff. The school consulted parents fully about their plans to enhance vocational experiences through parent information evenings and sampling sessions. The lessons delivered by the chef provided highly motivating experiences which helped young people to develop their knowledge and skills relevant to catering and enterprise. Learners were highly motivated and engaged enthusiastically in the activities. Their achievements were enhanced through participation in a range of enterprising activities and, in S5, through gaining nationally recognised certificates in basic food hygiene. Pupils said that they had learned to work as a team and that their social skills had improved.

Preparing young people for transition by developing the curriculum to include vocational options may require significant adjustments to timetables. The *Skills for Work* report<sup>2</sup> includes an example where timetabling a course on early education and childcare in two columns was used to allow learners sufficient time to engage with a private training provider outwith school time. They could then complete the

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<sup>2</sup> Some case studies in the rest of this publication have been taken from *Preparing for Work*, a report on the Skills for Work pilot programme, HMIE 2007



programme within one year. On one afternoon each week, learners visited a nursery. On one morning, a trainer delivered the theoretical part of the course in the school, working collaboratively with the class teacher. Similarly, another school offered a *Skills for Work* construction crafts course on its own premises as a part of the normal curriculum for S3 and S4 pupils. The school reshaped the timetable to provide one single and one double period per week for *Skills for Work* courses, rather than single periods, to facilitate the delivery of practical activities.

**'The (Care) course has given me a good understanding of what it will be like when I start work. I've learned about respect for others. I know I need to have the right attitude – I have to smile. I need to communicate. I've learned I need to be able to start a conversation.'**

S4 pupil

**'The benefit for any school offering *Skills for Work* courses is that it will be in a better position to meet the needs of all young people in its community. I am confident we are offering our young people a range of options that meet their learning needs, meet their learning styles and prepare them for the world of work beyond school, whether in work, college or university, and that is a welcome addition to the curriculum.'**

Secondary school headteacher

In Smithycroft Secondary School, Glasgow, the timetable was designed to incorporate a vocational option for S3 and S4 pupils, in addition to a wide range of vocational programmes, placements and in-school courses for pupils in S3-S6. Pupils experienced a range of challenges including developing enterprise activities. At recognised points in the school year external agencies such as Careers Scotland, were involved in delivering courses. The focus was on helping young people to develop essential skills for employment, training or continuing education.

The *First Steps* programme in Dumfries and Galloway was designed for pupils in S3 who were not coping well within their secondary school. It offered a variety of work-related activities, including practical first aid, health and safety workshops, team-building exercises and a range of vocational options. Young people were awarded certificates for successful completion of these options. Pupils' attendance, completion of courses and behaviour had all improved. Other initiatives which involved young people at the transition from school to college included the *Next Steps* programme which, followed on from the *First Steps* programme, and the Prince's Trust scheme for young people aged 16-24.

In North Lanarkshire the *Expanded Learning Opportunities* programme managed by Careers Scotland, is for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). Such young people are likely to experience difficulties in making successful transitions to positive post-school options. Pupils undertake this programme towards the end of their statutory period of education in an SEBD school. Following assessment, a customised and individual programme of action is created for participants to include a mixture of training placements, college placements, work tasters, specialist interventions such as counselling support, anger management and psychological support, structured outdoor activities and other general life-skills support. Studies showed that seventy per cent of pupils moved into positive destinations when they left school, significantly above expectations, and what was previously experienced by the schools involved.

Willowbank School, North Lanarkshire, provided education for secondary pupils with social emotional and behavioural needs and with a history of non-attendance in mainstream schools. The *Expanded Learning Opportunities* programme enabled them to engage in community-based projects to facilitate their transition to post-school education, employment or training. The school's client development worker engaged local



employers and training providers with the work experience programme. They had access to a wide range of SQA courses and NQ units, including early presentation. Learners had long and short-term targets for every subject, and were involved in setting and reviewing these. They developed important generic skills, for example, working in groups for drama improvisations, enterprise and citizenship through art and design, and practical use of the internet for planning a school trip. Residential visits, sporting musical and cultural events increased their well-being, and developed their confidence, teamwork and creative talents. Pupils who attended college achieved certification at Intermediate 1 and 2 and were also presented for Access and NQ courses. Some achieved certificates in landscape gardening through the Scottish Training Foundation and in car mechanics through Lanarkshire Automobile Group Training Association. All pupils achieved through Scotia awards and the North Lanarkshire Challenge. Almost all leavers went on to education, employment or training.

In Portland High School, North Lanarkshire, also for pupils with social emotional and behavioural needs, the school's partnership with Careers Scotland enabled pupils to receive individual advice and guidance about preparing for the world of work and to develop the necessary skills. From S3 to S5, all pupils benefited from placements in training agencies and further education colleges. The client development worker visited homes and discussed young people's progress with their parents.

### **Preparing for transition outwith the school context**

For some pupils, following courses and accessing vocational experiences away from the school context increased motivation and provided an incentive to continue learning and to achieve. Staff in Berwickshire High School reported that college courses had raised pupils' self-esteem and confidence. One pupil said he would not be at school if it were not for the

college experience he enjoyed. Overall, young people felt that their tutors had time for them, gave good advice and that they were treated like adults.

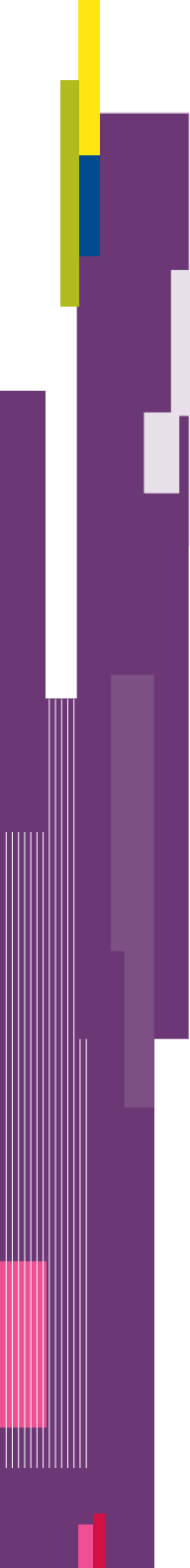
**'You are more relaxed. When you are treated as an adult, you have to behave as an adult.'**

S4 pupil

The *Three Towns Motor Project* in North Ayrshire offered young people who had become disaffected with school a curriculum option focusing on motor vehicles. The initiative was managed by community learning and development and worked effectively to provide accredited and non-accredited learning through partnerships among schools, colleges and youth organisations. Programmes successfully combined practical skills and theory-based learning much of which was transferred back into mainstream school and then into post-school training. As a result, young people grew in confidence and self-esteem, and increased their skills as responsible citizens.







'I attended the project because the school said that if I stopped truanting I would get out of school for four periods on a Wednesday to work on cars. I want to be a mechanic so I am now getting the experience.'

'The project showed me that I can do more than I thought and gave me more confidence in myself. It gave me practical understanding and firsthand experience of mechanics and the safety issues that come with it. I am interested in mechanics and also cars. The motor project gives you real cars instead of bits of paper.'

Learners talking about the Three Towns Motor Project

In the *Borders School Plus* initiative, core skills were contextualised within coursework and young people received ample opportunities to take responsibility for their learning through use of ICT support packages, researching information and planning practical work. They enjoyed the high practical component of courses and learned better where practical activities led gradually to theoretical aspects, and where the contexts were relevant to prospective areas of employment. They felt they were treated as young adults and were consulted on setting workshop rules. All programmes for secondary school pupils included promotion of positive behaviours and the college's core values. This resulted in most school leavers being familiar with college expectations prior to starting full-time programmes and helped them adapt to the college environment. Staff at Hawick High school reported that participation in *School Plus* courses had re-engaged many young people in learning and heightened their aspirations for post-school education. Young people's successes were celebrated through a high-profile awards ceremony attended by young people, parents, and college and school staff.

Reid Kerr College provided a flexible approach to delivering a wide range of programmes to support transitions. The *STEP* programme aimed to develop young people's self-confidence,

personal, social and vocational skills within a practical and supportive learning environment. Students negotiated part of their own timetables through a menu of options which could be adapted to suit individual needs. Students enjoyed the out-of-college activities and the practical work as they could see the end product. Students said they were treated like adults and learned more effectively as their courses were delivered in shorter timetabled periods, with more breaks. They developed work-related skills through 'taster' options and work experience for one day per week for six weeks. The core curriculum included numeracy, communication, computing, a residential experience, world of work and guidance support with vocationally-based and personal development options. In the second year of the course vocational aspects increased. Most STEP students attended a *Steplink* course one day per week for six weeks to ease transition and to ensure that the course would be appropriate. The *Steplink* programme enabled pupils with additional support needs to attend college part time in their last year of school, providing them with a supported transition to college.

The *New Directions* programme for young people in their final school year, a Renfrewshire Council resource run within the college, offered supported learning opportunities to students who at school had displayed challenging behaviour and showed signs of disengagement. The small group setting worked well in providing meaningful courses, strong pastoral support and recognition of students' achievements through Access, Intermediate and Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) certification, merit awards and an award ceremony. Elective elements included vocational options in hospitality, hairdressing, construction, engineering, computing, design and make, creative arts, care and health. Eighty per cent of those completing the programme had positive destinations. Eleven secondary schools were involved, with significant improvements in attendance and achievement reported for most individuals.

'College helps you figure it out. They are not watching over your shoulder all the time. Teachers are too helpful.'

S3 pupil

'We talk in first names with our tutors and they don't give us punishments.'

S4 pupil

### Issues to consider



- How do you ensure that young people's individual needs are identified early enough?
- How has your school incorporated work-based and/or community-based activities within young people's programmes?
- How do the programmes young people follow enable them to progress to work or further learning? Do all programmes have clear end goals and criteria for ascertaining success?
- How much do school staff know of the detailed content of programmes offered in colleges and other provision external to the school?
- How does your school and its key partners monitor and report on young people's engagement in learning, their progress through their courses and their success in achieving their goals?
- How does your school track and support the progress of young people after they have left school?

### Signposts for excellence

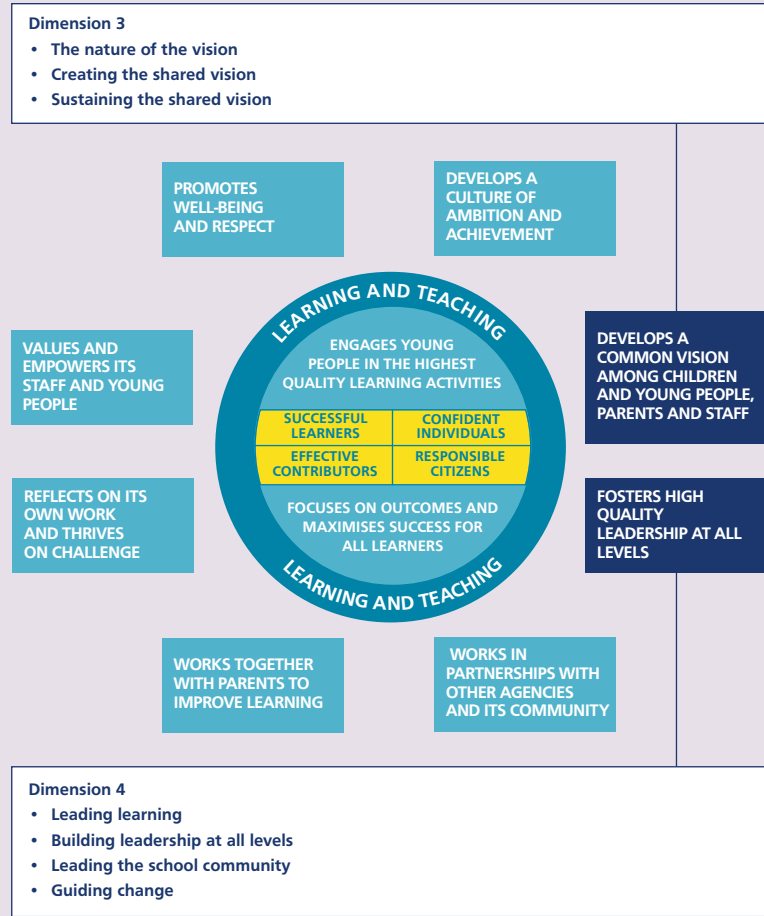
- Programmes are designed to help young people develop essential skills, including personal skills, vocational skills and other skills for employability. They raise awareness of expectations regarding standards, practices and behaviours in different settings, for example, the workplace, within social contexts or in further learning situations. Programmes take good account of individual needs, build confidence, encourage teamwork and promote independence in learning.

- Personal support and careers staff undertake substantial preparatory work to ensure all staff and young people involved have clear expectations of the content and aims of programmes, including those provided in out-of-school settings. They regularly consult with young people about programme content. Young people are aware of the pathways for progression and what they will learn and achieve, so that they can make clear choices.
- Induction processes are relevant and appropriate to the needs of young people, and prepare them well for the programmes they have chosen.
- Learning activities are integrated and contextualised and enable young people to achieve success. They help them gain awareness of the wider community and their own impact on other people. The sequencing is well planned and teaching approaches and contexts are varied.
- School staff know what young people are doing when they engage in vocational learning in or out of school. They share relevant information about the young people they are responsible for with their partners. They monitor young people's attendance and progress towards their goals, and evaluate individual and group success. The school is aware of the current status, placement, achievement and progress of every learner on its roll.
- Staff establish positive and productive relationships with young people, based on mutual respect. Learning activities promote a positive ethos and encourage open interaction between staff and young people.
- Schools make good use of schemes and initiatives which provide formal recognition of young people's skills and achievements to facilitate and ease their entry into work or training programmes.
- Schools, colleges and employers ensure that pupils who need it receive additional support to ensure success, for example, through careful tracking and monitoring, mentoring, and identifying named individuals to support young people.

# Vision and leadership

**Dimension 3: Develops a common vision among young people, parents and staff**

**Dimension 4: Fosters high quality leadership at all levels**



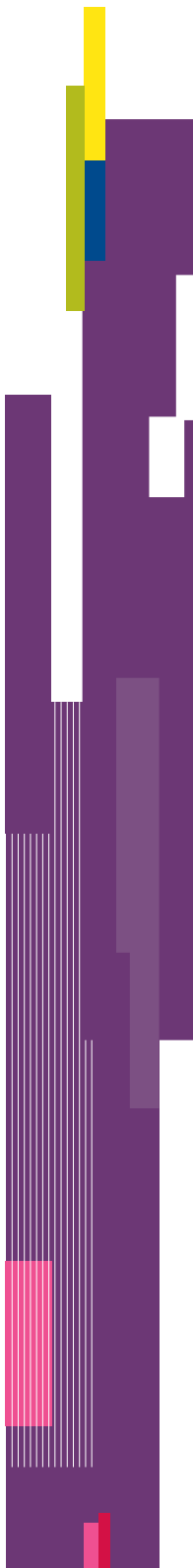
'Leaders reinforce a culture where staff and pupils feel able and confident to take lead roles within and beyond the classroom. Current and future leaders learn with and from others, formally and informally, prompting reflection and change. Such modelling and training promotes the conditions through which the school sustains excellence.'

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 59**

Relevant quality indicators	QI 9.1 Vision, values and aims
	QI 9.2 Leadership and direction
	QI 9.3 Developing people and partnerships

'We work with learners, parents and other partners to develop and shape a common vision for our school and community through reflection, debate and ongoing consultation. Our vision is firmly based on outcomes for learners and is in line with local and national priorities. The work of our school gains direction from our clear statements of our vision, values and aims.'

**QI 9.1 Vision, values and aims**



Effective support for transitions, whether between school and part-time placements or to post-school destinations, needs to be led and managed, in the same way as other key aspects of the school's work. This means that the vision and direction of schools and their partners relate explicitly to the needs of young people at transition and to their preparation for their future lives. The delivery of key processes which derive from this vision, for example, curriculum, learning and teaching, support for learners, improvement through self-evaluation and professional development, must also be responsive to these needs.

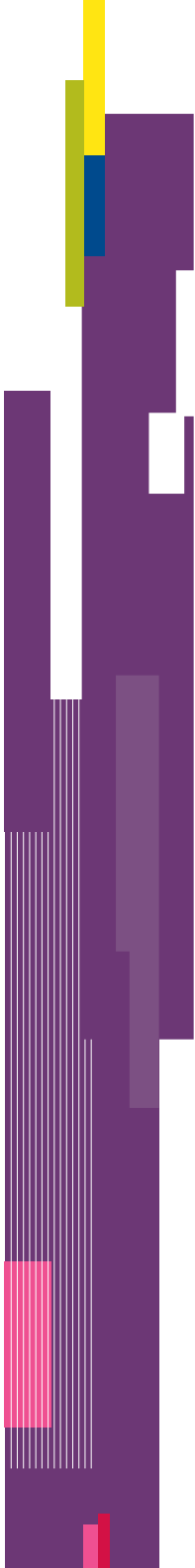
### **From vision to direction**

The educational aims and objectives of Reid Kerr College related directly to the communities served by the college. The college sought to 'make a difference' to the lives of individuals. The principal provided enthusiastic and inspirational leadership, aided by the Board of Management and a dynamic senior management team. They had a clear vision of the role of the college in responding proactively to stakeholders' needs and helping learners develop citizenship and employability skills. The college had developed effective school-college partnerships. Renfrewshire Council had aligned the timetabling of senior pupils across all schools to facilitate attendance at college. Provision for local school pupils had been developed across most subject areas in the college, with over 1200 pupils attending the college each week. Senior staff with responsibility for school and community learners had been very successful in ensuring that the college provided successful progression routes for learners. The college had enhanced the skills of staff teaching vocational programmes to secondary school pupils. Evaluation of the impact of the training had confirmed an increase in staff confidence and expertise leading to an increase in effective learning by pupils. Staff morale had improved and learning and teaching approaches and classroom practice were more effective.

Hollybrook School, Glasgow, a school for secondary-aged pupils with additional support needs arising from learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorder, focused on developing young people's employability skills through a broad range of approaches. Through excellent leadership and a very clear vision for young people, the school had improved the curriculum to meet learners' needs and increased their success in national qualifications. Programmes for personal and social education, citizenship and enterprise were given high priority. Friday afternoons were used to further develop personal and social skills through a range of events and activities. A wide range of awards was used to accredit achievement of pupils from S3 to S6, including ASDAN and SQA. Pupils benefited from well-organised work placement programmes such as the Prince's Trust Xlerate programme, supported by local businesses and the wider business community. As part of the focus on personal responsibility, pupils chose their own tutorial groups as well as their subjects, at the end of S2. They led focus groups for school improvement and were producing their own Standards and Quality report. Links with local colleges and the wider community enabled pupils to extend their skills and apply them in different contexts. Confidence and citizenship skills were developed through residential trips, including a European project on the environment supported through Comenius. Numeracy skills were developed in everyday







contexts, for example, visiting local supermarkets and working with a local bank on savings and accounts. Pupils followed Towards Independence units, certificated through ASDAN, as well as courses at the local college. Half of S4 pupils had achieved units in ICT at Intermediate 1 or 2. Transition arrangements from school to college were very good. Almost all leavers had entered employment, education or training.

### Issues to consider



- What is your school's vision of its role in supporting all young people throughout their school career and through transition to post-school experiences?
- How does your school actively promote parity of esteem for all curricular programmes among staff, parents and young people?
- To what extent do all partners involved in planning, delivering and evaluating programmes for young people work as a team, motivated by the same vision of what they want young people to achieve?
- How does the school actively involve young people in creating and sharing its vision?

### Signposts to excellence

- The school, college or placement has a vision and values which are broad and explicitly inclusive. School leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to equality and fairness in promoting a culture of ambition and achievement.
- Leaders ensure that the vision for the curriculum is underpinned by timetabling and planning arrangements which enable vocational experiences to be delivered effectively and with the best possible outcomes for young people.

- Leaders actively promote the worth of a wide range of curricular programmes, including vocational programmes, within the school. They stress the importance of all programmes meeting the needs of individual young people and developing their capacities and attitudes.
- Leaders explore with, and define clearly for all staff, parents and young people what the term 'successful outcomes' actually means in practice.
- Leaders take care to ensure that all staff involved in the planning and delivery of programmes, especially at key transition stages, are clearly aware of their aims and objectives.

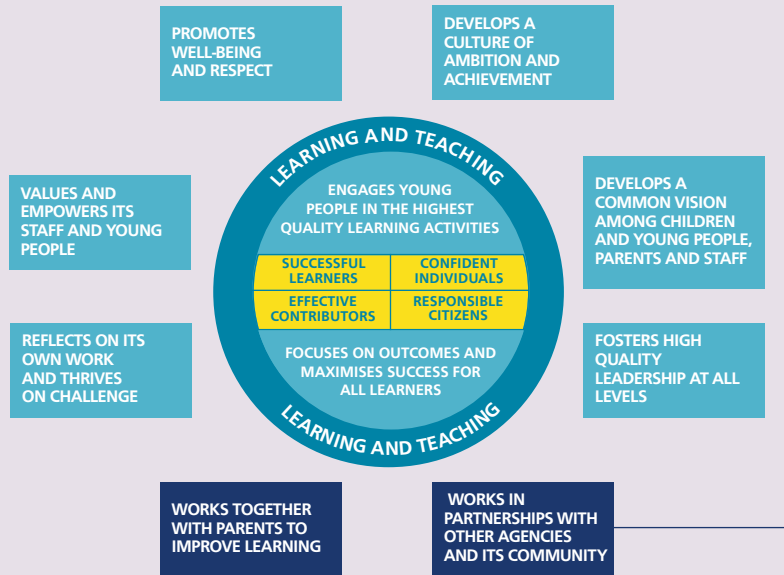
# Partnerships

**Dimension 5: Works in partnerships with other agencies and its community**

**Dimension 6: Works together with parents to improve learning**

**Dimension 5**

- The school in its community
- Working with partners to meet the needs of all children and young people
- Multi-agency approaches to improve learning
- Leadership and coordination



**Dimension 6**

- Developing parents' support for their children's learning
- Active involvement of parents in school activities
- Collaboration and representation

'Partnership agreements with colleges include monitoring of the progress of all pupils and prompt intervention to ensure pupils stay on track when things do not go according to plan.'

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 71**

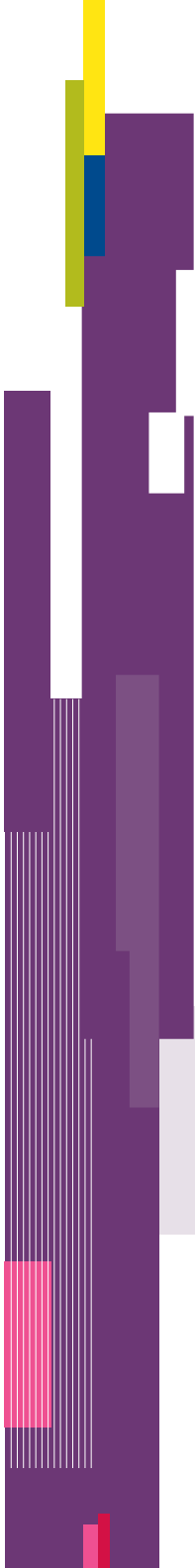
'Some parents help the school promote effective partnerships with other parents and with employers. For example, they provide career/vocational role models for young people. Parents talk about their work, culture or lifestyle as part of the curriculum, and contribute to careers guidance.'

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 80**

Relevant quality indicators	QI 5.7 Partnership with learners and parents
	QI 8.1 Partnerships with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers

'Our links with other educational establishments, community and specialist agencies and employers have enriched learning and improved learners' achievements and targeted support to individuals and their families. Staff work well with others to ensure that those most vulnerable are well supported and their learning and welfare needs are addressed throughout transitions. We provide effective support through partnerships, where appropriate, with employers, industry, community learning and development, Scotland's colleges, voluntary groups, educational psychologists, health services and social workers. Staff work with these partners to identify their distinctive contributions to enriching experiences for all learners or targeting support to groups and individuals. Staff participate actively in initiatives led by other agencies.'

**QI 8.1 Partnerships with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers**



The agenda for schools in accepting significant responsibility for the progress and destinations of young people after they leave school, is huge. They cannot do this alone. Schools that have gone some way to achieving successful learning for all have often taken a proactive approach to developing partnership working with other agencies to help reduce barriers that are experienced by individual learners. A key area for transforming practice is in ensuring smooth transitions for young people to **sustained** positive destinations and progression in learning. Some local partnerships have successfully brought services together in a coherent way to support young people at the transition stage from secondary to post school and have made such support sustainable. Schools need to be aware of the range of services that can be brought to bear and which need to be coordinated, again in a proactive way. As well as taking preventative action by ensuring success for all, including the use of coordinated support plans, individualised educational programmes and close tracking of the progress of all pupils, secondary schools can help ensure that young people have access to services in relation to careers advice and guidance, post-school psychological support and college provision. The recognition of emerging adulthood and fostering of mutual respect between school staff and young people at the time of transition is vital.

**Staff ensure that individuals and groups, including the most vulnerable, are well supported and that their learning needs, in particular, are addressed throughout transitions.'**

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 70**

Careers Scotland offers targeted and tailored services for those who need most support to enable them to make effective post-school transitions, including a follow-up service beyond school. All secondary and special schools in Scotland are expected to have effective, meaningful and appropriate

partnership with at least one college in delivering the curriculum for S3 pupils and above<sup>3</sup>.

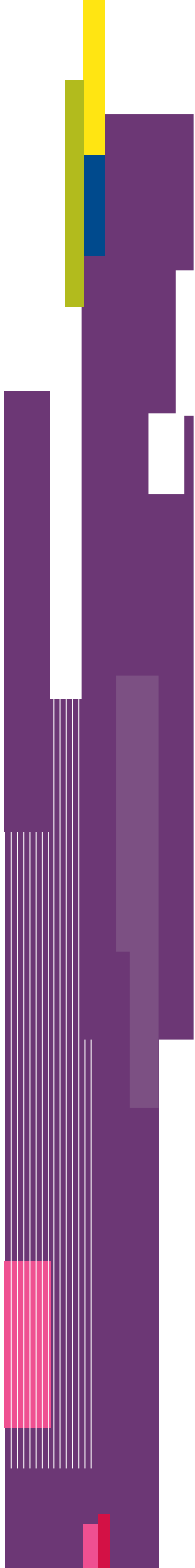
**'Collaboration and partnership between local authorities, schools, colleges and other providers are considered essential for the delivery of *Skills for Work* courses.'**<sup>4</sup>

Much of the support to young people at risk of missing out on post-school opportunities is provided by agencies and voluntary organisations working in partnership with the school. Specific programmes such as *Get Ready for Work*, *Activate* and *Breakthrough* provide enhanced support beyond standard careers provision. Careers Scotland runs the *Activate* programme in about 120 schools. It is designed to provide extra support to young people in S4/S5 who are likely to have difficulty in moving into a job, college or training place. Delivered in the school by a Careers Scotland adviser *Activate* focuses on employability skills and enterprise activities, and aims to improve self-esteem, confidence and communication skills. The programme includes ongoing mentoring and post-school follow-up. *Activate* achieved an overall positive destination rate of 89% for 1,818 project participants in 2006-2007.

Voluntary organisations run programmes which can play a key role in providing supported transitions for young people. They may have as much effect on changing young people's attitudes to school attendance and learning, and on their aspirations and confidence as on easing them into immediate employment. They appear to be particularly effective with those who are at risk of becoming disengaged from the education system, before they have already become so, another argument for early intervention. The timing of these interventions and of the liaison between partners necessary to ensure appropriate support is available at the right time for young people at the point of transition is crucial. A mismatch can mean vulnerable young people 'slipping through the net'.

<sup>3</sup> *Lifelong Partners - A Strategy for Partnerships*

<sup>4</sup> *Preparing for Work*, a report on the Skills for Work pilot programme



### Supporting transitions through partnerships

In the Borders *School Plus* project, a strong education authority, college strategic partnership linked all schools to the college through a common authority protocol. A clear statement of values was shared within a schools-college partnership agreement. An Education for Work Development Officer provided an effective conduit for education authority, school, college partnership working. The *School Plus* project operated in local communities from bases throughout the authority. Pupils came to the college campuses for their vocational classes but lecturers also taught some of the courses through outreach at Peebles and Hawick High Schools. Lecturers attended school parents' evenings to report on pupils' progress, and college and school reports were issued together. Classroom assistants played a key role in the *School Plus* classes. Their views were taken during evaluation exercises and they attended staff development sessions with lecturers.

Glasgow's *Enhanced Vocational and Inclusion* programme (EVIP) offered full-time places to young people who are looked after or who have social, emotional and behavioural needs. EVIP provided access to a range of vocational options as well as access to core and life skills and literacy and numeracy support. EVIP was developed in partnership with Social Work, Education and Building Services and several Glasgow colleges to enable young people to gain the skills to access jobs. A dedicated vocational coach supported a specific group of young people, working in partnership with college lecturers and providing feedback to schools, parents, carers and referrers.

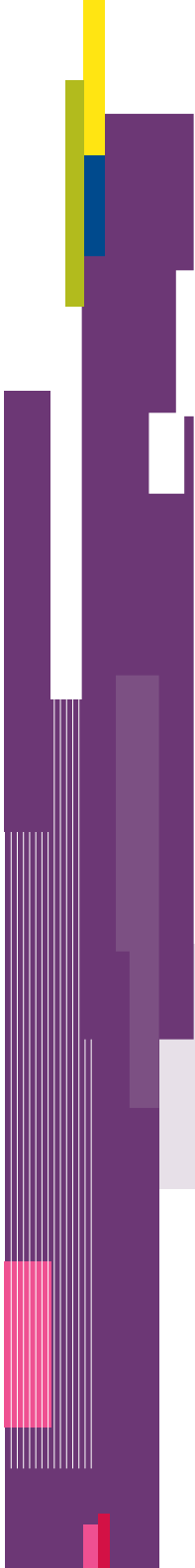
Auchinleck Academy, East Ayrshire, had a range of partnerships to support young people at risk of not making successful transitions to employment, training or further education. The main focus was on employability, setting goals and the development of skills for work. The school worked in partnership with the East Ayrshire *Strategy for Youth* project, Careers Scotland and Ayr and Kilmarnock Colleges to help equip young people with life skills and possible future

pathways into employment. Together they delivered a range of activities and interventions through, for example, the Prince's Trust XL group where school staff and community link workers helped young people to build self confidence and teamwork skills. Multi-agency assessment teams met regularly to plan and review pupils' progress. School staff also met regularly with their partner colleges to negotiate appropriate courses and inserts that would meet the needs of their current pupil groups. Young people could access *Skills for Work* courses in a wide range of disciplines, including hospitality, health and social care and construction crafts. Places were offered to pupils following individual interview by college staff. Formal review meetings ensured that placements continued to meet learners' needs. A specialist careers adviser supported young people to ensure that they benefited from the college experience. All subject departments delivered enterprise education in its broadest form and ensured that all pupils could clearly see the links between the subject they are studying and possible vocational outcomes.

**'The partnership began as the council implemented recommendation 2 of the *Determined to Succeed* course and the college responded by forming a Schools Team both to coordinate strategic development and to execute operational matters. The Schools Team attends the Council Vocational Steering Group, advises on the suitability of courses and contributes good advice on the interviewing of learners, selection, and ongoing matters of course adjustment on a yearly basis. The council employs a vocational co-ordinator and a number of support assistants who work with the college on operational matters relating to discipline, learner support, transport, provision of protective clothing and school liaison. This works very well. A number of the courses, particularly in the construction crafts, are run jointly with the college and the Council Training Service.'**

Senior local authority officer





In Glasgow's *Bridges to Work* project, a dedicated careers adviser, funded by the City Council, worked with 24 targeted pupils each year, four from each of six schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties in Glasgow. The project was for young people in their final year and gave support in entering the job market. They were prepared through:

- phone calls or visits to employers which involved finding out about jobs, writing reports and presenting them to classmates, resulting in a certificate;
- individual interviews with employers followed by matched work experience placements, with the careers adviser keeping in regular contact with young people and employers, such experience often leading to a job offer;
- contact and support maintained for up to a year after leaving school; and
- short further education courses negotiated to improve preparedness, for example, car valeting.

Occupational destinations of these young people included jobs in supermarkets, gardening, offices, catering, department stores, sport and leisure.

**'... by being partnered with an organisation in the real world, a business or a further education college, pupils can enter into the workplace and the skills they learn are the kind of skills they will be able to use in the world of work.'**

Headteacher of an independent secondary school

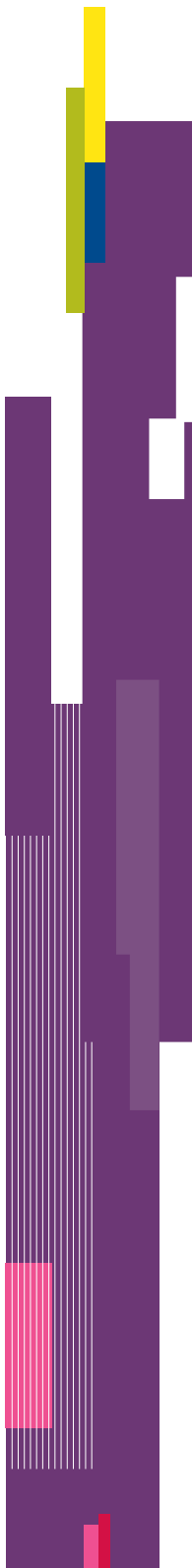
The Tulloch Trust, based in West Dunbartonshire, worked in partnership with all the secondary schools in West Dunbartonshire, Clydebank College, social work services, the police, and community groups. Staff supported eight major projects which were designed to tackle personal development, healthy living and employability, through early intervention. The projects included sport, arts and craft, music and drama,

outdoor education, IT and literacy. The first project *Hop, Skip and Jump* was aimed at 8 - 12 year olds and the support continued with different projects until participants left school, or were in further education, employment or training. The Trust was very successful in supporting young people to first decide on personal goals and then to meet them. The key factors were the long-term support offered to young people, the very strong partnership working with schools and the other key partners, and the early intervention approach. This had resulted in the many pupils involved in the Trust demonstrating successful outcomes in relation to the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

#### Issues to consider



- How is your school working with its key partners to promote progression to further learning and employment?
- How do you ensure that the contributions your school and its partners make to young people's learning complement each other? In what ways do these contributions enhance their learning experiences and enable them to achieve success?
- How good an understanding do school leaders and staff have of the processes, programmes and ethos within colleges, and vice versa?
- How are parents, carers and residential staff engaged in the planning and implementation of transition arrangements? Do key staff from the respective agencies attend and participate in all meetings about transition arrangements?
- Are review meetings for young people with additional support needs held at an appropriate time, for example, when colleges and other partner agencies are able to confirm that places will actually be available?



### Signposts to excellence

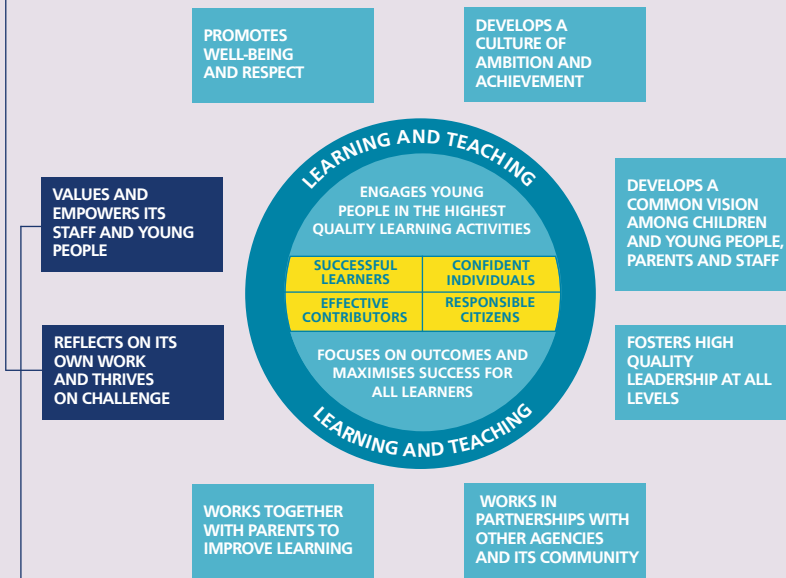
- School staff identify aspects of their work with young people which would benefit from joint working with other agencies. They are proactive in developing and sustaining these partnerships.
- School staff engage effectively with staff in other organisations to identify approaches which enhance young people's learning experiences and increase their awareness of opportunities for progression to work or further learning.
- All staff involved in delivering pre-vocational programmes – school staff and staff from partner organisations – are involved in planning, reviewing and improving these programmes. Parents and young people are consulted and their views taken into account.
- School staff and their external partners are aware of the aims of programmes, what success looks like, and the processes and indicators used to evaluate successful delivery and share this with parents and young people
- School staff work closely with staff in other agencies including Careers Scotland, Scotland's colleges, post-school psychological services, employers, local enterprise companies, community learning and development services and voluntary sector organisations to plan how the identified needs of young people would be best met. They promote and ease access to further learning and work opportunities, taking appropriate account of the Additional Support for Learning Act.
- Schools incorporate into their programmes work-based and community-based activities which promote young people's involvement in the community and develop their sense of social responsibility and their social skills.
- All staff involved in multi-agency approaches are clear about where overall responsibility and accountability lies. Young people and their parents know whom they can approach for support and guidance.

# People

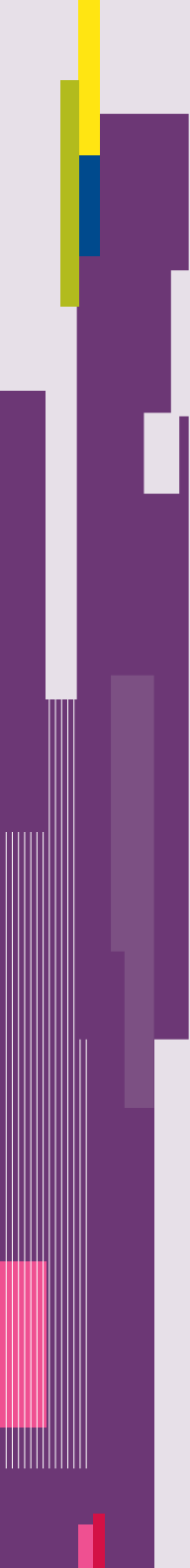
**Dimension 7: Reflects on its own work and thrives on challenge**

**Dimension 8: Values and empowers staff and young people**

- Dimension 7**
- Continuing and critical enquiry
  - Welcoming challenges
  - A collective commitment to improvement
  - Continuous professional development
  - Being data rich



- Dimension 8**
- Having their capabilities extended
  - Being empowered to influence the future development and direction of the school
  - Giving pupils a voice and enabling them to take responsibility
  - Being encouraged through a vibrant and progressive school culture and climate



‘Young people are valued as active partners in their learning. Staff encourage them to contribute to developing their own learning experiences. Staff recognise their personal and professional responsibility for the learning of all young people, including those with additional support needs. Learners recognise and value the role of staff as partners in their learning.’

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 96**

Relevant quality indicators	QI 5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation
	QI 6.2 Participation in policy and planning
	QI 6.3 Planning for improvement

‘Our commitment to joint planning with associated schools, partner organisations and services is evident in the use of integrated working to achieve improvement objectives. Our partners are fully involved in planning to ensure that learners are safe, healthy and well cared for; that they achieve to their fullest potential across a range of skills; and that they are confident and responsible citizens who make active contributions to their communities.’

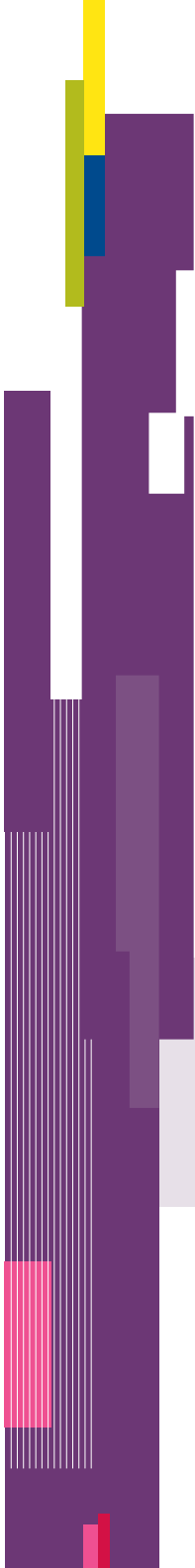
**QI 6.3 Planning for improvement**

*The Journey to Excellence* focuses on people. It is very largely through relationships with others – their peers as well as their teachers – that young people learn. Empowering young people in their learning leads to greater independence and an improved capacity for taking on challenges. Young people who are used to having their views considered, and who are practised in finding their way through difficulties, are more likely to be resilient and less likely to be discouraged by problems and stresses. These qualities are particularly important when young people are moving on from one setting to another. Staff too need to be empowered and challenged, to reflect on the successes or otherwise of the learning and support they have planned for young people.

### **Empowering young people**

Auchinleck Academy promoted an open and participative learning style. Young people were involved in making decisions and expectations of all learners were high. The school allocated group mentors to all learners and individual mentors to learners with additional support needs, including those who were looked after and accommodated. An individual member of staff supported the learning of these children in English and mathematics through guiding and monitoring their use of personal laptops and software. Personal education plans were shared with pupils and reviewed regularly.

In order to develop young people's leadership skills, during a *Skills for Work* lesson in a Sport and Recreation Intermediate 1 course the teacher explained to a group of learners that each learner would lead an activity in the swimming pool. They had to plan the activity, state its aims and objectives and explain and instruct the group on how the activity was to be carried out. Peer assessment of each leader's performance at the end of the lesson provided effective feedback. This approach was



successful in enabling learners to take responsibility for their learning and use feedback from peers to plan for improvements in their future activities.

The *Heads Up* programme within Our Lady and St Patrick's High School in Dunbarton was aimed at S2 and involved pupils who were identified by the pastoral team in school and then selected by the Tulloch Trust. The pupils worked in groups supported by project workers. Young people were given the opportunity to follow taster courses at college, again supported by the youth workers. They were very positive about their involvement with the Trust. If pupils successfully completed a project then they could go on to another Trust project. Participation in any of the projects was dependent on pupils meeting individual targets in attendance and behaviour. Outward Bound courses as well as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme were delivered in the Trust Clubs which offered evening sessions to young people until they moved on to further education or employment. Pupils were confident and focused on their learning goals. Staff highlighted the effect on pupils who had been isolated in S1 and unable to communicate. They now managed to contribute to discussions and readily give their opinions.

**'We get a report from the college and this is put with our school report. The youth worker at the Trust Club is always asking how we are getting on and if we are having a problem he will encourage us to solve it ourselves.'**

S5 pupil

In the Vale of Leven Academy in Alexandria pupils spoke highly of the *Heads Up* project, *Way through the Wilderness* (a leadership course lasting 29 days), and the Trust Club. All were encouraged to have career goals. Staff spoke positively about pupils' increased confidence as the project progressed.

Staff personnel highlighted the ongoing problem with territorialism and sectarianism within the area. They felt that because the Trust projects involved pupils from other secondary schools, problems were minimised and pupils' behaviour targets were being met.

**'Everything we do at the Trust Club is interesting because we get to choose what we are doing. *Way through the Wilderness* was just great. I learned things about myself and now I want to be a youth leader myself.'**

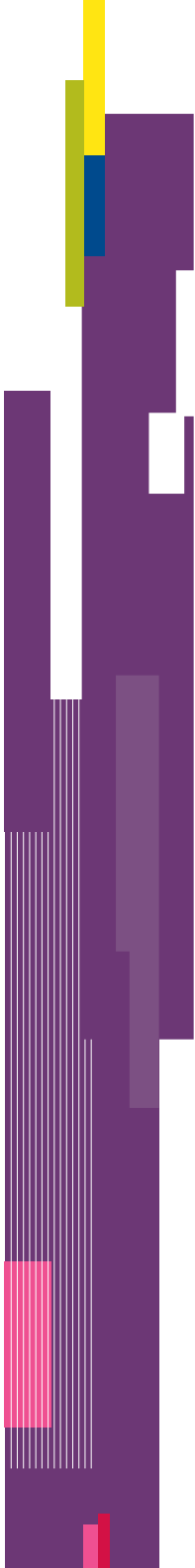
S5 pupil

### **Reflecting on the quality of what is delivered**

In Fife there were regular opportunities for liaison between schools and colleges. A strategic group involved college principals, headteachers, careers and a planning and implementation group involving other relevant staff focused on monitoring transition arrangements, chaired by Social Work Services. Young people were also involved in carrying out evaluations, with Careers Scotland undertaking to feed back. Overall, school staff reported that college experiences had had a positive impact on young people, particularly in promoting positive behaviour. Young people enjoyed the vocational courses and valued the 'adult environment' within the college setting.







In Dumfries and Galloway, the *Schools Link Partnership* consisted of the college principal, headteachers or representatives from each secondary school and a *Determined to Succeed* officer. The focus of this group was to oversee and monitor projects which involved working relationships between schools and colleges. It ensured staff involved with young people had the appropriate knowledge and skills particularly when dealing with challenging young people.

#### Issues to consider



- Does your school give a clear commitment to young people about the routes to education, employment and training which are on offer and the support that they can expect?
- How do you ensure that young people's views and preferences are at the forefront of planning for their future pathways?
- What account do school leaders take of the skills and attributes of staff when planning the delivery of programmes?
- How does your school use feedback from young people and other key stakeholders to evaluate programmes and identify areas for development?
- How does your school and its key partners identify the development and support needs of staff, provide appropriate training (including joint training) and share good practice among all those involved in delivering programmes?
- How does your school use information on post-school outcomes for young people, particularly beyond their immediate destinations, to develop provision and improve integrated working?

## Signposts to excellence

- All young people are given opportunities to develop their leadership skills and to contribute effectively within their school and community.
- Staff see the potential in pre-vocational and community-based programmes for young people to take on real responsibilities for planning and managing activities and projects. They encourage empowerment and responsibility, and enable young people to take risks in a managed and safe environment.
- Schools use feedback from young people and other key stakeholders systematically and effectively to evaluate programmes, identify areas for development and plan for improvement. Staff ensure young people's views are taken on board and outcomes shared with them.
- School staff work well in teams and in partnership with staff from other organisations in the planning, delivery and review of programmes.
- School staff and their partners from other organisations, develop and implement approaches for monitoring and reporting on the extent to which programmes are successful in engaging young people and on their progress and achievements.
- Schools identify the development and support needs of staff involved in the planning, delivery and review of programmes and provide appropriate training and support as required. This includes training for staff working with young people with additional support needs, for example, in helping young people with autism spectrum disorders make successful transitions.
- Schools identify and share innovation, good practice and success internally and with key partners.
- Leaders take good account of the skills of individual members of staff, particularly in developing positive relationships with young people, when planning the delivery of programmes.

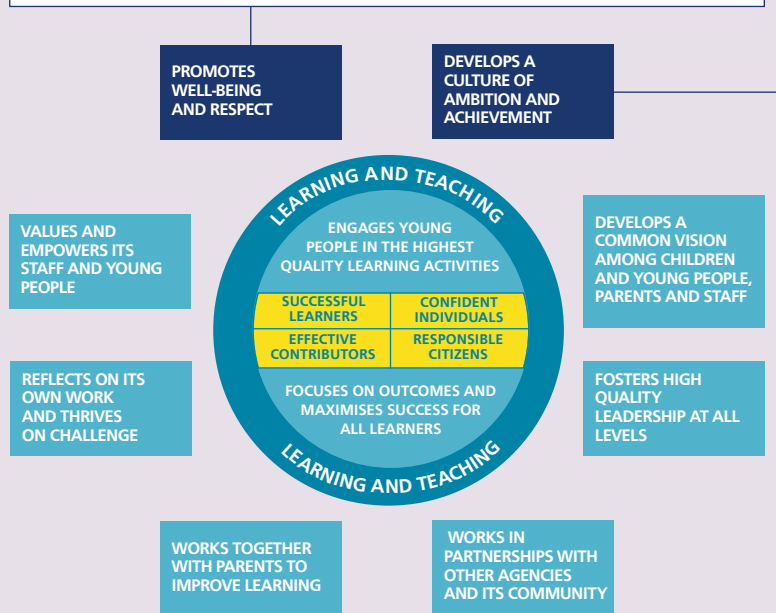
# Ethos and culture

## Dimension 9: Promotes well-being and respect

## Dimension 10: Develops a culture of ambition and achievement

### Dimension 9

- Promoting positive relationships within a learning, caring and inclusive school community
- Supporting children and young people
- Providing the whole school community with positive experiences that promote and protect their health
- Promoting positive health attitudes and behaviours



### Dimension 10

- Aiming high
- Enabling all children and young people to achieve
- Encouraging enterprising attitudes and behaviour

'Through experiencing regular success, young people become confident individuals developing self-respect and physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being. They hold well-grounded and secure beliefs and values and can clearly express their ambitions for the future. They have planned opportunities and experiences to develop decision-making skills based on sound and valid evidence.'

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 111**

'All pupils engage in enterprise education that extends their confidence as learners and contributors to society. The vocational and enterprise curriculum meets the needs of all learners and the community. It is progressive and continuous, motivates learners, promotes a sense of achievement and adds relevance to learning. Creativity, experimentation and imagination are nurtured through open-ended learning experiences.'

**The Journey to Excellence Part 2, page 119**

Relevant quality indicators	QI 5.5 Expectations and promoting achievement
	QI 5.6 Equality and fairness
	QI 5.8 Care, welfare and development

'Learners are proactive in developing ideas about their future and have acquired the skills and knowledge to plan their careers effectively and gain experience of the world of work. Our vocational guidance is founded on appropriate consultation and accurate, relevant and up-to-date information and advice.'

**QI 5.8 Care, welfare and development**



It is quite common for young people, when asked about what has kept them in school or has made a difference to their lives, to identify the contribution made by a significant adult. That adult is often a teacher, a member of the support staff or a youth worker. What matters is that that person demonstrates that they care, that they have time to listen and that they believe that the young person can progress and achieve. The projects and approaches outlined below recognise the importance of trusting but robust relationships between young people and the adults who work with them. Such relationships are not sentimental. Case studies will often point to the high expectations set in terms of attendance, punctuality and conscientiousness. A similar belief in the importance of relationships in supporting and motivating young people lies behind the development of the Small Schools Movement in the USA, and mentoring schemes in Scotland. What characterises such relationships is the unconditional positive regard in which young people are held by the staff who support them.

Young people who are vulnerable, for example, looked after children, may find it particularly difficult to achieve in educational terms if their other needs are not met. Such holistic support may include:

- additional educational support;
- designated teachers with clear roles in providing enhanced assistance;
- flexible individualised support before and for some time after transitions;
- a focus on their physical, mental and emotional health and well-being;
- stability and continuity within education and care settings; and
- clear practical advice about how to look after themselves in the future.

Young people who are hard to engage may need their supporters to be particularly persistent, for example, in providing further chances when things go wrong.

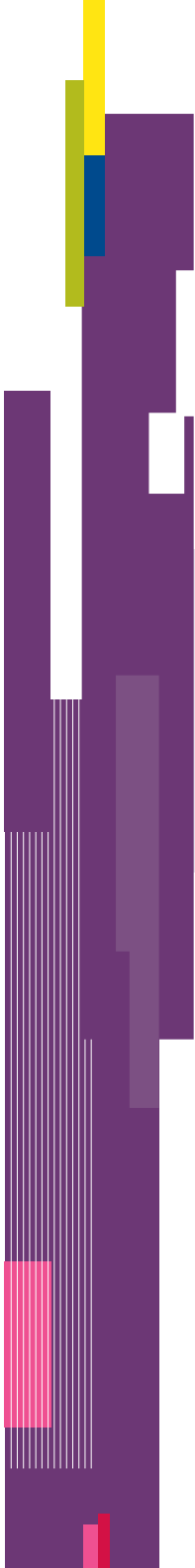
GIRFEC stresses the importance of young people and their families:

- believing their views are being heard;
- knowing about the help available to them;
- feeling that their needs are being addressed; and
- experiencing co-ordinated and unified approaches when several professionals are involved in supporting them.

### **Supporting vulnerable young people in making the transition to adulthood**

Mayfield and Easthouses Youth 2000 Project, a community-based voluntary youthwork organisation in an area of multiple deprivation, delivered a range of services to young people seven days a week. Young people's needs were used to inform strategic development of services and innovative approaches to engaging hard-to-reach, vulnerable and excluded young people. A range of services helped young people to be aspirational and continue in education and training, including drop-ins, educational group work, street work, advocacy and gender-specific provision. In addition, the organisation worked in partnership with local high schools and integration teams in a video-referral project looking to re-engage young people in learning, education and employment.

Alva Academy, Clackmannanshire, had developed a climate of positive intervention through group work, individual support and access to college programmes. School leaders were strongly committed to meeting the needs of all young people and promoted a whole-school approach involving key staff, and a school-based youth worker. Young people reported that they felt 'consulted and listened to'. Looked after young people clearly stated that if it had not been for the support of the youth worker within the school they would have opted out of the system. Young people with social and emotional difficulties were making very good progress in the transition to college, due to the very gradual build up of activities which



focused on increasing their confidence and self esteem. Staff fully involved them in putting together an effective programme of tasks and activities which focused on encouraging positive attitudes throughout the transition process. Activities included visits to the college when it was less busy, support in the college canteen and working every week on the same computer. This gradual transition was helping the young people to think very positively about college and set realistic goals for the future.

Two young people with additional support needs spoke very positively about school and college.

*'School is pretty fine and college is great. Teachers help me to learn and help me speak out more. College helps me with the computer and my enterprise.'*

*'This is a great school. We do lots of activities that help us. I take the money and serve in our school café on a Friday. We make super snacks like toasties. At college we talk to the teachers using their first names. They help me with my learning and give me lots of support.'*

Both young people felt fully supported in school and at college. They both had a wide range of SQA units at Access levels 2 and 3 and were working well on ASDAN life skills and employability awards. School staff reported that they were working very well at college, gradually increasing their time there with the aim of taking up a full-time placement when they left school.

Fairbridge in Scotland worked with young people in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee. Their services were targeted at young people between 13 and 25 who were facing multiple barriers to engagement with education, training and employment and who would, in the main, have disengaged from learning in their early years. Fairbridge's Active Steps programme was specifically developed for young people between the ages of 13 and 16 who were at risk of disengagement from education and/or unlikely to make

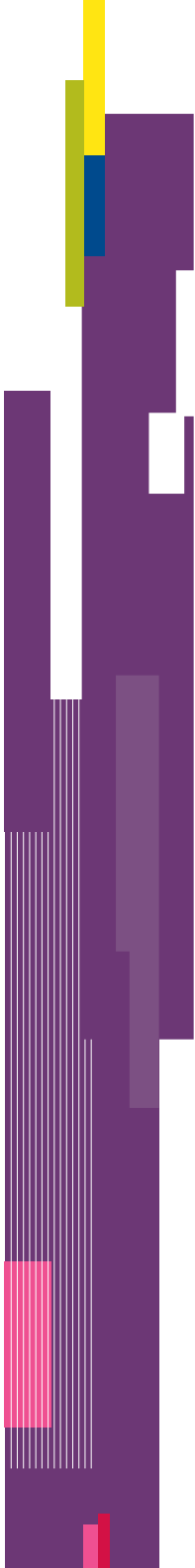
successful transitions to post-school opportunities. The programme provided opportunities for young people to develop core personal and social skills, tackle issues relating to self esteem and resilience and focus on addressing risk-taking and inappropriate behaviours. The young people referred to the programme had typically been involved in truancy, were experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties, or were at risk of offending or educational exclusion. The most common barrier to young people's progression in schools was poor behaviour and poor relationships with peers. Over a third of young people involved with the programme who were not attending full-time education had been reintegrated into mainstream education.

### Raising aspirations

West Lothian's Sure Start project, *Young mums @ school*, had supported the inclusion of pregnant vulnerable young people in school through enabling them to be ambitious, and to prepare for and chart a pathway into post-school education. A specialist worker provided home-based support and funded childminders allowed young parents to attend lessons and sit examinations.

Barnardo's Youthbuild Paisley project equipped disadvantaged young people with the skills, experience and qualifications to make the transition to sustainable employment. It targeted the construction industry, which offered considerable opportunities for employment, and addressed issues at the root of social exclusion such as disadvantage and the impact of poverty. It did this by responding flexibly to individuals and bringing together partner agencies from all sectors, including private industry. Support workers from Barnardo's provided proactive support to young people to access and sustain employment. They responded flexibly to individual needs, working in partnership with employers and other agencies. Workers supported young people through three months of training and six months of employment. Over 80% of young people they worked with were able to retain a full-time job at





the end of the nine months. Young people found the prospect of doing a 'real job' paying a reasonable salary very motivating.

The Barnardo's Cluaran multidisciplinary team worked in partnership with young people, families and education and social work services. It offered a flexible range of community-based support to families and young people at risk. Its work was based on the core principles that young people and families were central to the service; that everyone had the potential for growth and change; and that working together was the only way to achieve effective change. The Cluaran service had helped young people at risk progress from poor attendance to attending school regularly and securing Modern Apprenticeships.

Young people in East Ayrshire who were looked after or looked after and accommodated were given access to web-based learning materials and mentoring and support systems in schools. This prepared them for post-school education and training, and helped them develop skills in independent working. Education and social work colleagues worked closely to ensure that young people accommodated in children's homes could take advantage of this service to prepare for post-school training or employment.

The S4 Transitions Group at Braes High School, Falkirk, was made up of 12 disaffected pupils identified by pastoral staff. Criteria for involvement were low attendance, high exclusions and multiple referrals. The aim was to achieve academic or vocational qualifications, develop employability skills and achieve acceptable references. The course was run jointly with the local Employment Training Unit (ETU) who selected young people through competitive interview. The programme involved two days in school as a block, and three days in the ETU, from August to May. In school, learners studied English, mathematics, physical education, drama, information and




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communications technology and personal and social education. In addition to Standard Grade or Access awards, they achieved components of PC Passport, ASDAN (World of Work), and the John Muir award (health and safety) and could undertake the Construction Industry Training Board test. They also carried out a school project – in the current year redesigning, rebuilding and planting the quadrangle. Pupils were encouraged to take up placements which did not reflect traditional gender roles and which could lead to Modern Apprenticeships and/or continued employment. Wider activities included canoeing and mountain climbing. Expectations and success criteria were clearly defined. Participants had to follow a strict behaviour code and achieve regular attendance. They were expected to wear work dress and look after their tools. Parents were kept fully involved and their views were very positive. Over the last three years, the success rate had increased. Attendance had improved, and exclusions and referrals had fallen considerably. In 2006-2007 all participants achieved a training place or job. The course culminated in a graduation ceremony at the town hall.

### **One teacher can make a difference!**

*'She respects you, she listens. If it wasn't for her I wouldn't be in my apprenticeship. Every school should have a teacher like her.'*



### One pupil talked about his experiences when moving into S4 at Braes High School

'I hated school. I hated being told to get on with it, get writing. I would just cause trouble to get excluded. Teachers expected me to cause trouble so were always on my case. I felt I was always being picked on. Mind you some of it was my doing. When I moved to S4 I was given the chance to do an ASDAN award. I was two days at school, two days on work placement and one day at college. The teacher was great. She talked through things and helped me work in a team. She made me look ahead, to have goals. She asked my opinion and got to know me, not just as a pupil. You can tell by someone's body language if they are really interested. The work was practical and interesting. There are some teachers in the school that make things interesting. She also told you if you were good and phoned home to tell my mum. I enjoyed my work placement and college. I now have an apprenticeship and it's all thanks to her. Every school should have a teacher like her. I've left school now but get invited back to speak to others. I can see them being like me.'

**What makes it work? 'More encouragement, more practical work but most of all, respect.'**

At Abercorn School, Glasgow, a school for secondary pupils with additional support needs, young people were developing a broad range of employability skills. An increasing number experienced success across a wide range of curricular experiences. Young people were very well prepared for their post-school lives. The school had extended certification through a wide range of awards, including SQA at all levels from Access to Advanced Higher, and through ASDAN and the Caledonian Award. Pupils experienced very successful college placements, and were very well supported by the school through transition. The excellent personal, social and health education programme enabled learners from S3 to S6

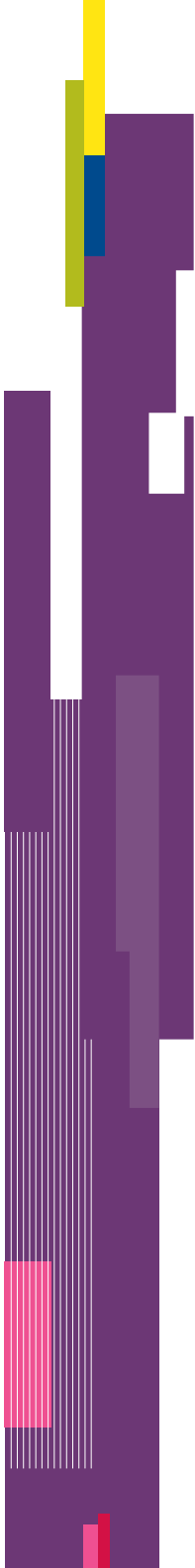
to gain certification, including those with more complex needs, and prepared them well for the world of work through practical activities. Learners undertook vocational and pre-vocational courses. Work experience placements were very well organised and local employers conducted mock interviews. The careers adviser provided learners with very good support on an individual basis. Learners participated in a wide range of sporting, social and cultural experiences which developed their personal and social skills. Additional literacy programmes were delivered effectively by volunteer tutors. Pupils received tutorial support for numeracy and learned about financial management through running the school bank. At the weekly Transitional Club, pupils in their final years had the opportunity to meet with pupils who had recently left school. Social events included outings and sporting, music and art activities while at the same time the club gave young people the opportunity to find out about employment, colleges and training. School staff were available to help with application forms, contact social work and other services and to provide support. For those S4 pupils who were not yet ready for work experience and would require a lot of support to access employment the school introduced a Work Awareness week. Pupils visited a range of employers, colleges and support agencies and took part in workshops within school, including talks by former pupils.

*'The Skills for Work course has taught me how to approach people. I know the importance of having a good attitude towards your job – about being on time, being reliable, about being ready, looking smart, wearing your uniform and acting happy – even if you're not really! It's also made me realise I need to be more responsible for my own actions. I can't always just rely on my family. It's made me realise I need to be independent.'*

S3 Hairdressing *Skills for Work* learner

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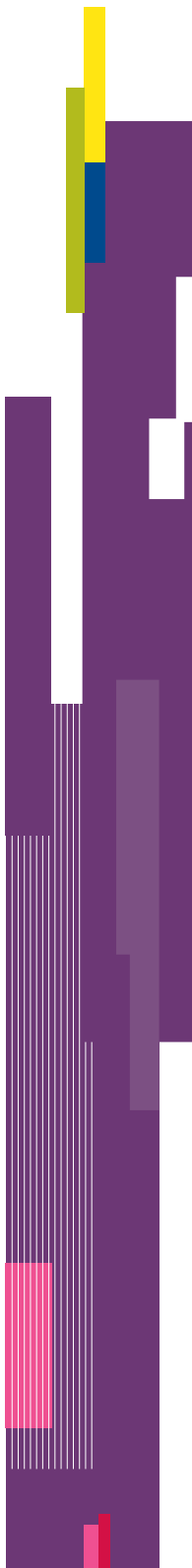
## Issues to consider



- What steps does your school take to ensure that pupils enter their future work and/or training settings with the social skills and confidence to make successful transitions?
- How does your school ensure that the additional support needs of young people are planned for well in advance of transition and that they are aware of these plans and are consulted and involved?
- How do you communicate with colleagues in colleges and training placements about the continuing support and access needs of young people for whom you are currently responsible? What information do you share with them and how?
- What use does your school make of schemes and activities which provide formal recognition of young people's skills and achievements and ease their entry to work or college programmes?
- How does your school work with its partners to plan for extended transition for vulnerable young people, including looked after children, as part of a staged intervention process, starting, for example, by S3?
- If placements are not successful or if young people return to school having decided that they are not yet ready for college or employment, how successful is your school at providing them with worthwhile learning opportunities which lead to successful destinations?

## Signposts to excellence

- Appropriate and proactive arrangements are in place for early identification of the learning, care and vocational needs of young people. Existing information is used effectively to plan any future support necessary within school or in out-of-school settings. Young people with identified needs receive additional support which enables them to succeed.
- The school makes arrangements for attendance and transport which ease access to vocational and college provision for all young people who need it.
- Vocational advice is accurate, relevant and up to date. It enables young people to make informed choices about the courses and programmes they wish to follow within school and about their direction after leaving school. It encourages young people to aim high and be aspirational. It takes into account the fact that they may not have demonstrated all their talents and abilities at school or reached their potential, and may be highly successful in other contexts and with increasing maturity. Advice does not close doors and pathways do not lead to dead ends.
- Young people are enabled to be proactive in developing their ideas about what they want to do in the future. They have acquired the skills and knowledge which enable them to plan their careers effectively and gain experience of the world of work. They are encouraged to make positive choices about work-based and community-based activities. Such choices are not made on their behalf because they are disaffected or exhibit challenging behaviour.
- Before they complete their vocational programmes, young people receive guidance about further options. They have frequent and regular contact with pastoral and/or support staff. This guidance prepares them well for progression to further learning and/or employment.



- Staff help young people to re-engage in learning by being pro-active and responsive, particularly when young people's previous experience of learning has been negative.
- Staff recognise and positively reinforce individual and group achievement and make good use of school and partnership events to celebrate success.
- Pastoral and other staff aim to encourage young people to develop resilience and to build on their strengths. They recognise their social and emotional, as well as their learning, needs and strive to address these, working with other professionals as appropriate.
- Staff are particularly mindful of the needs of looked after children and other vulnerable groups. They are responsive to the fact that some young people may not have the same levels of family support as others, and they do their best to support them, raise their aspirations and help them to succeed.
- Staff help those young people who find new contexts stressful and/or who arouse negative reactions in others through inappropriate social behaviour, to recognise these characteristics and adjust their conduct and attitudes to those better suited to an adult working environment.
- Disability is not seen as a barrier for young people at the time of transition.
- Effective systems are in place to ensure early identification of pupils who are beginning to show signs of struggling - for example, poor behaviour, absence or falling attainment levels - and intervene promptly.



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# APPENDICES

## Key publications and the national context

*Count us in* explored emerging principles and practices in inclusive education in Scotland. It suggested that services for children should have high expectations and an ethos of achievement and that such achievement should be broadly based. *Count us in* also focused on removing barriers to learning, particularly any that prevented individuals or groups from thriving in schools, and on developing a positive appreciation of diversity. This diversity includes the varied economic and social backgrounds of young people and also their varied learning needs and preferred learning styles.

*More Choices More Chances* sets out a strategy for tackling the issue of young people who do not manage to sustain their engagement in education, employment or training after they leave school. Successfully tackling this issue depends on us transforming some of our practices in schools in a preventative way, for example through curriculum flexibility, meeting the learning needs of all pupils, ensuring positive relationships between school staff and young people at the time of transition and developing greater personalisation of learning pathways through the secondary school stages and transition to post-school.



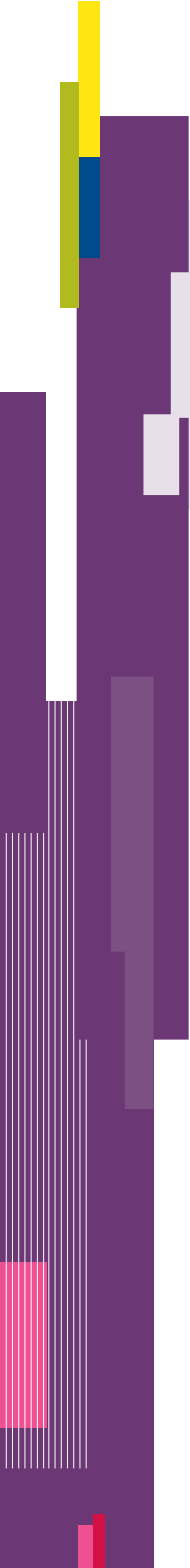
The Code of Practice for the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004, explains the duties placed on local authorities to help pupils with additional support needs make the transition from school to post-school life successfully. These duties include seeking and taking account of information from appropriate agencies (i.e. any other local authority, any NHS Board, Careers Scotland, any FE college or any Institute of Higher Education), seeking and taking account of the views of the pupil, and passing on information to the appropriate agencies, but only with the approval of the parent, in the case of a child under 16, or the young person himself/herself.

The Scottish Government noted in their document *Skills for Scotland: A Skills Strategy for a Competitive Scotland* the need for us to:

- ensure that people receive a basic grounding before entering the labour market;
- create the necessary frameworks for education and qualifications; and
- play a role in addressing market failures by providing support or co-ordination in seeking solutions.

The Skills Strategy identifies overlapping clusters of skills:

- personal and learning skills
- literacy and numeracy
- the five core skills of communication, numeracy, problem solving, information technology and working with others
- employability skills which prepare people for employment rather than for a specific occupation
- essential skills that include all those above
- vocational skills that are specific to a particular occupation or sector.



Previous HMIE support documents on transitions include *Ensuring Effective Transitions*. That document notes that:

**'An effective transition should guarantee continuity and progression in children's learning. School staff, parents, all professionals and support agencies need to work together to ensure this. ... In recent years, educational establishments have improved the transfer procedures to enhance the transition process and allow individual pupils to feel valued and well prepared for the next stage of their education.'**

While this is the case for transitions between schools and at different stages, a considerable gap in the service we provide for pupils is at the transition stage between secondary school and post-school. Some of the advice in *Ensuring Effective Transitions* can usefully be applied to the transition process to post-school.

In *Moving on from school to college* HMIE outlined a series of principles that apply to young people with additional support needs at the point of transition from school to college. The principles included: having the highest expectations of all young people; involving them in decisions about their own future; developing effective partnership working within an overall strategy for inclusion; respecting the adult status of those concerned; and sustaining arrangements and recognising the need for continuing collaborative support. These same principles apply more generally.

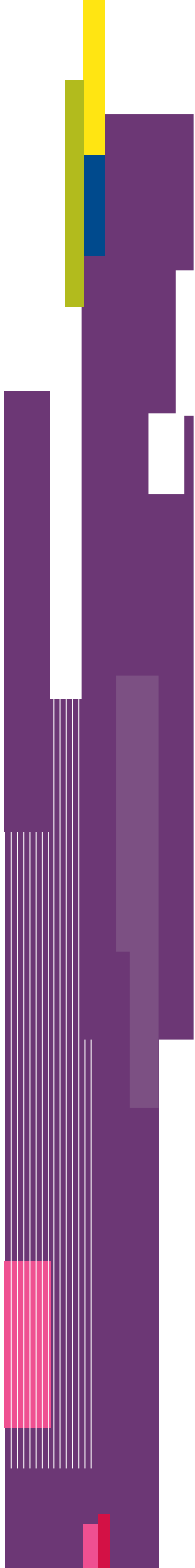
The *Missing out* report also listed points for action that need to be tackled to move things forward. These included better measures of achievement and better use of these measures, for example to benchmark progress of particular groups of individuals who may be at risk of missing out on educational opportunities and better use of information about individuals at points of transition. It demonstrated the need for early identification and prompt intervention for individuals as soon

as things start to go wrong, a principle that applies equally at the post-school stage. It stressed the success that can be achieved through inter-agency support for individuals. And it described the strengths in adopting flexible practices in meeting individual's needs including practices in delivering education and vocational training.

*Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) seeks to promote action where necessary to improve a child or young person's well-being. Where action involves multi-agency activity, there should be one integrated plan and the child and family should if at all possible be involved in its development and implementation.

The dimensions of well-being are defined in operational terms as seeking to achieve the four capacities (successful learners, effective contributors, responsible citizens, confident individuals) underpinned by the seven indicators of well-being (safe, nurtured, healthy, active, achieving, respected, responsible, included). Action, integrated where necessary, should focus on improving outcomes for the child or young person in relation to the indicators.

Central elements of GIRFEC run through a range of policies including *Curriculum for Excellence* and *More Choices, More Chances*. GIRFEC relies on effective co-operation between universal services (health and education) and other services relevant to a child or young person's well-being.



## Sources of Support

- Count us in, HMIE, 2002
- Moving On from School to College, HMIE, 2002
- How good is our school? School-college Partnership, HMIE 2005
- Supporting children's learning: Code of Practice for the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004, Scottish Executive, 2005
- Lifelong Partners – A Strategy for partnerships, Scottish Executive, 2005
- Citizenship in Scotland's Colleges, HMIE, 2006
- Student Representation in Scottish Further Education Colleges, HMIE, 2006
- Overcoming Barriers: Enabling Learners, HMIE, 2006
- More Choices More Chances, Scottish Executive, 2006
- Improving Scottish Education, HMIE, 2006
- Ensuring Effective Transitions, HMIE 2006
- Missing Out, HMIE, 2006
- The Journey to Excellence Part 1, Aiming for Excellence, HMIE, 2006
- The Journey to Excellence Part 2, Exploring Excellence, HMIE, 2006
- The Journey to Excellence Part 3, How good is our school, HMIE, 2007
- The Journey to Excellence Part 3, The Child at the Centre, HMIE, 2007
- The Journey to Excellence Part 4, Planning for Excellence, HMIE, 2007
- The Journey to Excellence Part 5, Journeys to Excellence, HMIE, 2007 ([www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk](http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk))
- Report on the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, HMIE 2007

Preparing for Work, a report on the Skills for Work pilot programme, HMIE 2007

Moving Forward: a Strategy for Improving Young People's Chances through Youth Work, Scottish Executive, 2007

Getting it right for every child: Guidance on the Child's or Young Person's Plan, Scottish Executive 2007

Skills for Scotland: A Skills Strategy for a Competitive Scotland, Scottish Government 2007

Count us in: Improving the education of our looked after children, HMIE, to be published June 2008

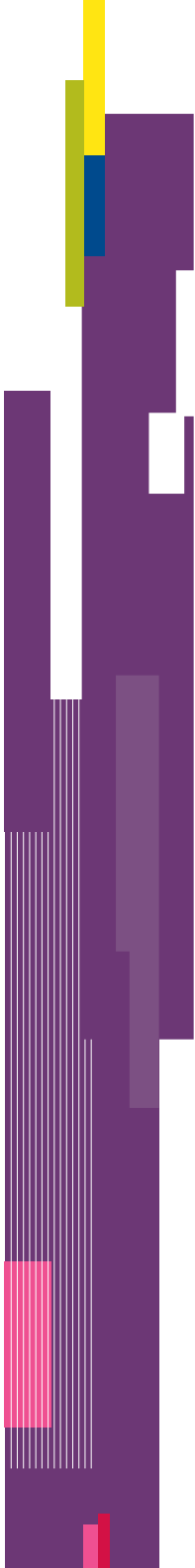
Improving the odds, HMIE, to be published June 2008

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### Schools

Abercorn School, Glasgow  
Alva Academy, Clackmannanshire  
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Braes High School, Falkirk  
Cardinal Newman School, North Lanarkshire  
Hawick High School, Scottish Borders  
Hollybrook School, Glasgow  
Smithycroft High School, Glasgow  
Our Lady and St Patrick's High School, West Dunbartonshire  
Vale of Leven Academy, West Dunbartonshire  
Willowbank School, North Lanarkshire  
Portland High School, North Lanarkshire

### Colleges

Motherwell College  
Scottish Borders College  
Reid Kerr College  
Dumfries and Galloway College

### Education authorities

East Ayrshire Council  
Fife Council  
Borders Council  
Scottish Borders Council  
South Lanarkshire Council  
North Lanarkshire Council

### Specific projects and agencies

Barnado's Cluaran multidisciplinary team

Barnado's Youth build project

Careers Scotland

Fairbridge

Mayfield and Easthouses Youth 2000 project

Sure Start project, West Lothian

The Three Towns Motor Project, North Ayrshire

The Tulloch Trust

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