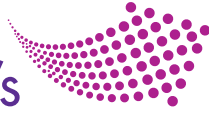The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Scotland's
Futures Forum
Fòram Alba air Thoiseach

Goodison Group
in Scotland
INFLUENCING LEARNING

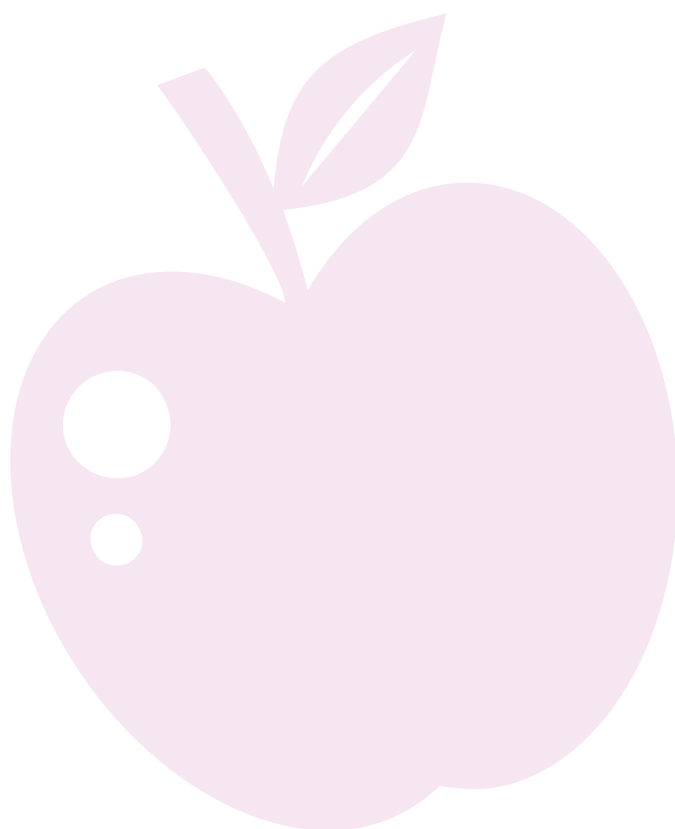# Schooling, Education and Learning
## 2030 and Beyond

## Project Report

SCOTLAND
2030

**March 2020**

# CONTENTS

# FOREWORD

In these turbulent times, there is enormous value in taking a step back to look forward. Over the last three years, the Goodison Group in Scotland and Scotland's Futures Forum have done exactly that by exploring what our schools and learning might look like in 2030 and beyond.

Although considering the current education system was not the primary objective of our project, it was important for us to acknowledge what participants believed to be going well and less well within the current system.

We want to recognise the dedication, passion and commitment amongst our teachers. This commitment is often complemented by strong engagement from parents and carers, as well as meaningful partnerships with businesses and the wider community. As a result, we have shining examples of great practice across the country that promotes collective learning and engages with the 'real world' to give education purpose and meaning.

The growing importance of leadership in education has also been a key and welcome development in recent years.

However, some project participants described the current education system as linear, inflexible, beige and boring, held back by structures and funding constraints. Conversely, models of possible futures were described as less hierarchical and more collaborative, adaptive, free flowing, supportive or colourful. These models were also described as having more scope for greater cross-fertilisation and bringing in those who had previously been disengaged.

Therefore, we have strengths to build on and the potential to improve.

We acknowledge that the direction of change in education has been the subject of much recent debate, including the announcement by the Scottish Government of an independent review of Curriculum for Excellence by the OECD, which will report in 2021.

At the heart of this report is a scenario that sets out what our schools and learning spaces might look like in 2030 and beyond. Dialogue has been a very important part of this project and the organic nature of the process helped us take the ideas and thoughts of participants and develop the scenario in an iterative way.

We want to be clear the scenario is not a prediction, nor should it be seen as a manifesto. It should also not be seen as reflecting directly the differing views of our various contributors. It outlines one potential future, and we recognise that there will be other futures to explore.

We very much hope that you will see this as a starting point and that you take the time to step back and consider our scenario, use it to reflect on your aspirations for our education system, and consider the decisions we need to make now to ensure we get there.

**Sir Andrew Cubie**
**Chair, The Goodison Group in Scotland**

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

## *What could schooling, education and learning look like in 2030 and beyond?*

Starting with this question, the Goodison Group in Scotland and Scotland's Futures Forum have been exploring education, schooling and learning in 2030 and beyond. The main focus of the first phase of this project was formal education: early years, primary and secondary education.

We have looked at what could happen. What are the implications for education and learning when the future is uncertain and continues to change rapidly? What capacities will young people need to develop to thrive in this type of environment and shape their world?

Over the past three years, in a series of interactive seminars, we have brought together participants from a wide range of backgrounds to consider these questions and others.

We have heard from experts on how technology may change our world, and on the skills that our economy will need in the future. We have brought together leading figures from education and beyond to consider our aspirations and to challenge our thinking on the kind of leadership required over the coming decade.

We have worked with Young Scot, the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children's Parliament to hear directly from children and young people; through roundtable discussions and a survey, we explored with them what might be different in our schools in 2030.

Throughout the project, we responded to opportunities to hear from different groups and to experiment with different approaches. Interactive sessions using the U-process helped unlock other forms of knowledge, such as creativity and body knowledge, and generate fresh insights into how we bring about change.

This report outlines some of the inputs, presents a scenario of what education might look like in Scotland in 2030 and beyond, and considers the implications for leadership and action. The development of the scenario has been an iterative, transparent process with a draft shared after each session. It is not a prediction, and it has been developed, along with the suggestions on how it might be realised, to provoke thoughts, ideas and responses – in other words, to encourage people to think creatively about our education system.

This report captures the main points of the many debates that have taken place over the course of this project. Individual reports summarising presenters' ideas and research, the ensuing discussions, and a full list of ideas identified as potential "acupuncture points" for change – how the scenario might be realised – can be found at: **www.scotlandfutureforum.org/scotland 2030-future-schooling**

The organic and responsive nature of the project has meant that we will not have heard from all stakeholders. Nor does it reflect all perspectives in what is a highly contested field of debate. We see the scenario and the issues raised within this report as the start, not the end, of a debate.

We therefore encourage all those who share our passion for education to use the report as a tool to reflect on where our current trajectory is taking us, and to identify what needs to change now if we are to develop an education system fit for 2030 and beyond.
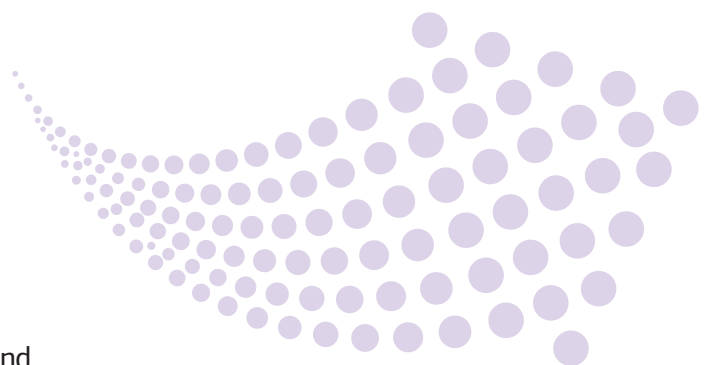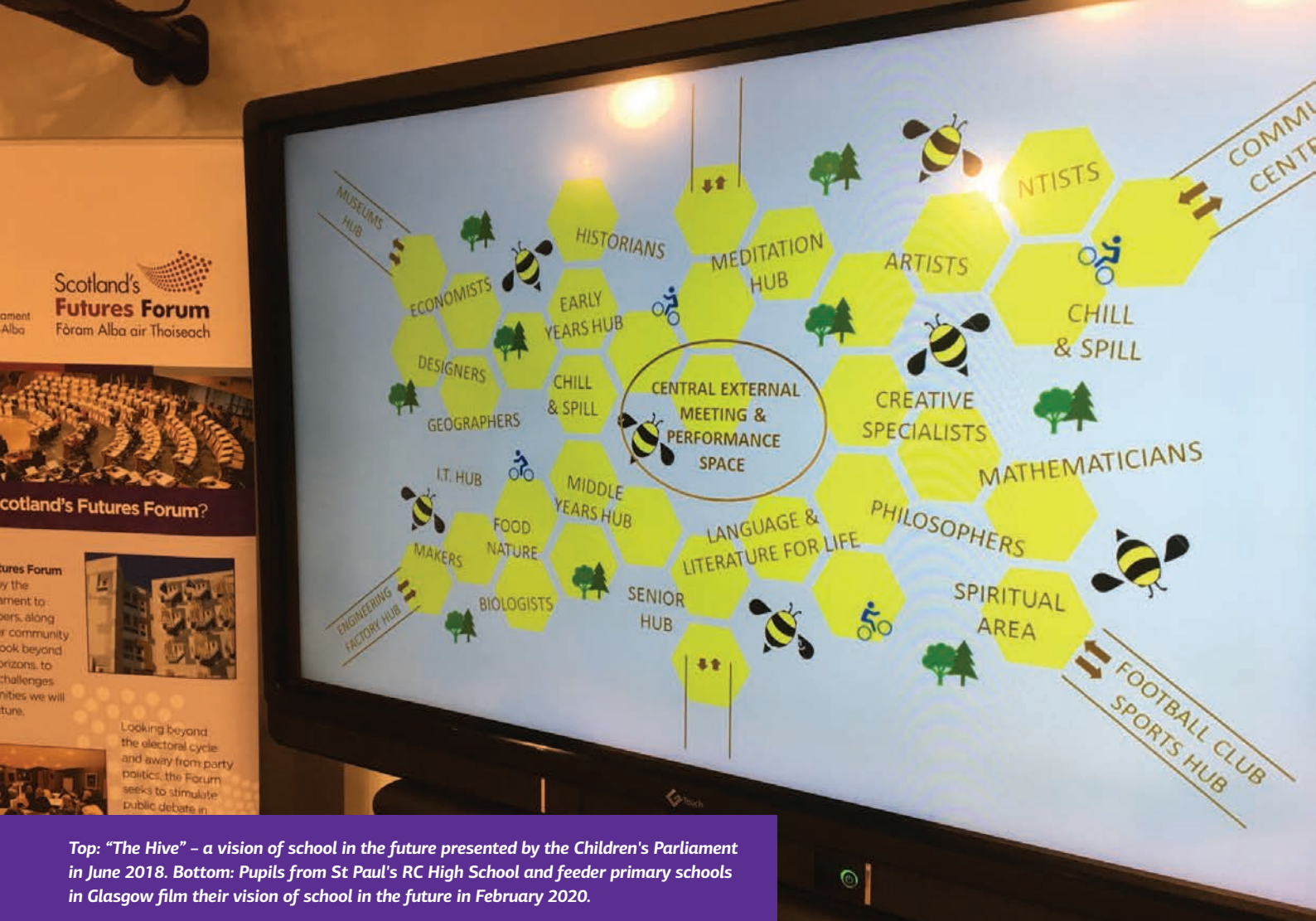
*Top: "The Hive" – a vision of school in the future presented by the Children's Parliament in June 2018. Bottom: Pupils from St Paul's RC High School and feeder primary schools in Glasgow film their vision of school in the future in February 2020.*

# SCOTLAND IN 2030

Any exploration of our future education system needs to be cognisant of current trends as well as the key challenges that Scotland will face over the coming decades.

Those changes, touched on below, will have far-reaching consequences across different aspects of society. We will all need to understand and respond to them, but the onus is particularly on our education system to support our young people to rise to the challenges and opportunities that the future provides.

## Environmental change

Climate change is the most urgent threat we face. We will have to adapt our society to make the deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions required to ensure that global warming does not exceed an increase of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. We will also have to mitigate the impacts that come from more extreme weather events, both locally and globally.

Ongoing biodiversity loss, soil depletion and the unsustainable use of natural resources are equally serious environmental issues that threaten the future wellbeing of our society.

In addition, the transition to a low-carbon economy will need to be a just one if whole communities are not to be left behind.

## Technological change

The proliferation of artificial intelligence, automation and the internet of things will see digital technology embed itself even more deeply into all aspects of our lives. This will bring new threats and new opportunities, such as the potential offered by digital democracy. However, given the unrelenting pace of change in this area, we risk technology shaping our lives rather than society making best use of new innovations.

The ongoing ease and speed with which resources, big data and ideas can be shared is likely to outpace regulatory frameworks, bringing particular challenges around cyber security, the use of personal data and fake news.

## Social and economic change

Climate change, rising inequalities and changing markets will trigger greater movements of people globally. This could see Scotland become a more diverse nation. However, without more inward migration, we will be an increasingly ageing society, with 24% of the Scottish population predicted to be over 65 by 2030.

Increased automation together with changing labour market patterns and new types of employment may give rise to more leisure time, or alternatively they may entrench existing income inequalities.

There are also likely to be ongoing challenges to existing power structures and demands for more transparent and devolved democratic systems, particularly from networked social movements. Greater empowerment is likely to come for some groups, especially children through the adoption into Scots law of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The education system of the future needs to engage with, challenge and influence all these changes, as well as prepare young people for a world where fast-paced change will be the norm. The scenario produced during this project offers one vision of how that might happen.

# SCHOOLING, EDUCATION AND LEARNING IN 2030 AND BEYOND: **A SCENARIO**

The invitation to imagine our schools in 2030 and beyond unleashed a myriad of suggestions. The resulting scenario set out below includes ideas that build on current strengths; other ideas are more radical and would require a major shake up of the current education system.

In the scenario, structures have been dramatically overhauled, with power largely devolved to schools, teachers and learners. With greater autonomy comes greater flexibility in terms of where, how and when learning takes place and by whom. It also brings with it increased responsibility and accountability. The learner is placed firmly at the centre of the system, co-creator of, and responsible for, their own learning.

A key theme throughout is meaningful engagement with those in the system, as well as with the wider community. This means that, in 2030 and beyond, Scotland has an education system underpinned by the trust of all who have a stake in it.

## *Context*

Scottish education has been on its own learning journey over the decades since 2020. Now, in 2030, Scotland has a clear, long-term vision for education which includes high achievement, pedagogical excellence, innovation, experimentation, change and compassion. The vision, drawn up with teachers, learners and their communities, has generated a strong, positive narrative around education as well as a shared understanding of its purpose, leading to high levels of ownership and trust in the system.

These changes began in the early 2020s when a radical review of the whole system was undertaken with the aim of preparing our children and young people for the challenges they will face as adults.

Leadership, a key part of the review, considered the empirical research and existing approaches. This led to a model that differentiated between leadership and management and which was based on the values of compassion, care and cooperation.

As a result, the whole system became more open to experimenting with different structures and career paths for the teaching profession, as well as developing a much better understanding of how to lead simple, complicated and complex change.

In 2019, the Scottish College of Educational Leadership (created in 2014) became Professional Learning and Leadership (PLL) within Education Scotland. PLL has since evolved into a Leadership Academy, bringing together leaders from across the public sector and encouraging networks that promote real system change to engender a better and fairer society.

An economic downturn in 2022, coming hard on the heels of extreme disruptive weather, brought many challenges into sharp focus and provided the impetus to implement the review's more radical recommendations. This has seen Scotland flourish as a country with an education system that both reflects and engenders the wider social values of social justice, optimism, diversity and inclusion.
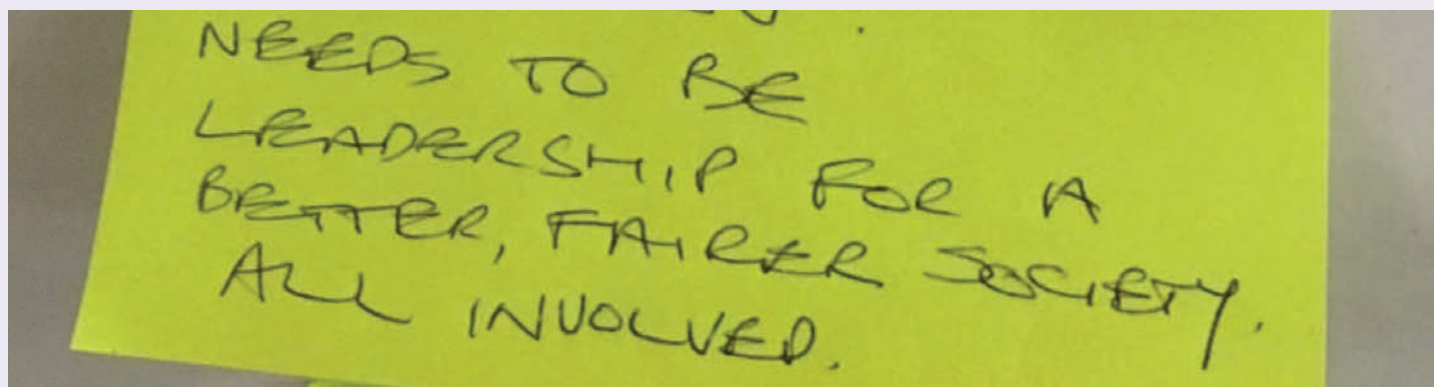
## *The values and behaviours expressed in the education system*

Scotland now holds a shared belief that the primary aim of education is to enhance a child's life, to ensure they have the necessary knowledge, skills, behaviours and values required to shape their future and thrive, and prepare them as life-wide and lifelong learners.

The UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child and Persons with Disabilities were incorporated into Scots law in 2021, a move backed by educators who understood that children treated with human dignity have higher levels of confidence and learning.

Change within the education system was supported by wider policy changes, including the vision set out by the Scottish Government in 2018 in the National Performance Framework for "Our children [to] grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding….[with] stimulating activities [that] encourage children to engage positively with the built and natural environment and to play their part in its care". We now work in an education system in which we can all take part and "which inspires us to reach our potential".

Although in 2030 policy supports change, it is not necessarily the driver for change. Participation in consultation exercises from learners, parents and all sections of the community has become the norm and more meaningful since power and adequate funding was devolved to schools or learning hubs – as many schools have become known.

Devolving power has also engendered greater trust and made for a nimbler system. The professionals in the learning hubs work within an agreed framework, driven by a shared vision of what education is for; providing the flexibility to innovate and develop practice, with children's learning firmly at the centre. The framework also includes decision making parameters and processes, with leaders in the hubs now responsible and accountable for decisions appropriate for their local context.

Drawing inspiration from the growing number of citizens' assemblies, children's views are routinely sought, alongside those of the community, and are acted upon. As the whole community has a stake in the system, there is a greater understanding that accountability requires learning and openness, rather than blame.

Visits from Government ministers and policymakers are often unannounced but are welcomed by learning hubs. These visits are seen by staff as a great opportunity for policymakers to understand what is happening at the coal face.

Learning hubs have been able to take advantage of research from the recently established Social Innovation Institute, which has given them a fuller understanding of how to benefit from technological innovations.

Funding for education, especially for early years, significantly increased as part of the preventative spend agenda during the 2020s. The drive to reverse growing inequality in Scotland also decreased the levels of deprivation and related stigma that had previously inhibited some children's ability to learn.

## *When education takes place*

When to educate children and young people changed as a result of evidence-based research. The traditional stages of schooling were adjusted leading to the old divide between primary, secondary and further education being phased out.

**3 to 8-year-olds** attend **Kindergarten**, where children learn predominantly through play. A kindergarten system of 'hubs' supports the development of well-rounded individuals who can go on to positively contribute to and help shape society. While there is no testing other than teacher assessment, this stage links well to the rest of the education system and lays the foundation for a child's future learning.

Children can leave kindergarten aged 7 or stay on for another year until it is agreed by the child, carers and educators that they are ready to move on.

**8 to 15-year-olds** undertake a broad general education during the **'GenEd'** phase. As research shows that adolescents' attention spans can be adversely affected while their brains are still developing, teenagers are offered a gap year at 15, with options to participate in community projects or work experience before transitioning to the senior phase.

**16 to 21-year-olds** participate in the **'Senior Phase'** are offered a range of flexible academic, technical and cultural pathways, which have been developed with key stakeholders, including industry. This phase encompasses what was previously known as further and higher education.

Based on robust research, learning hub start times have been adapted to be age appropriate, with the best learning times adopted for each stage of education.

## *Where learning and education takes place*

The terms 'nurseries', 'schools', 'colleges' and 'universities' have been discontinued in favour of learning 'hubs', 'hives' or 'communities'. Learning environments, which include virtual spaces, are more permeable, allowing children and young people to learn wherever suits them.

In the early 2020s, grants to local authorities encouraged collaboration with companies and local architects to transform empty commercial space into flexible, innovative learning spaces. These flexible learning spaces have become pastoral centres for the wider community, engendering a greater sense of shared responsibility for the education of children. All learning environments also encourage peer-to-peer and intergenerational relationships, with many local authorities building retirement housing alongside learning hubs.

Around the hubs there is plenty of outdoor, wooded space, where students spend a lot of time learning in nature. Outdoor overnight stays in forests are also common to steep learners in the wonders of nature. Learners are regularly consulted about their learning environment and as a result, spaces are simple to navigate and learners can easily find the right learning activity.
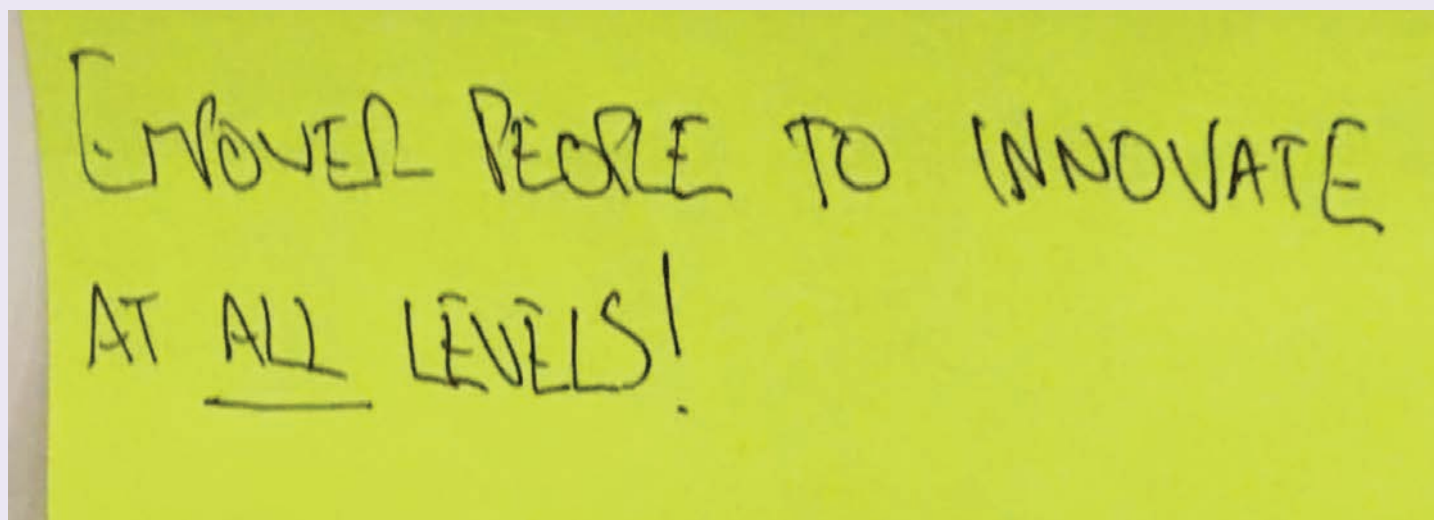
To meet Scotland's climate change targets, learning environments for children and young people are now virtually carbon neutral. Since 2025, only electric vehicles can be used in the vicinity of a learning environment and the final phase of changing roof tiles to solar tiles will be completed by the end of the year.

Every individual has access to what was known as broadband in 2020. Wearable Wi-Fi is now common place and free for all children as increased demand together with the equality and inclusion policies have driven down costs.

Following the Climate Change strikes in 2019, all children and young people take part in the annual Global Sustainability Summit. Through developments in digital democracy they can also vote on the programmes of reforms they believe should be taken forward in this area and others.

As the first country to decarbonise its curriculum, Scotland has just been shortlisted for the Greta Thunberg "Planet Wellbeing Prize", awarded annually to the country that demonstrates a holistic approach to sustainability issues.

**Kindergartens** have a 'buzzy' feel and emanate a sense of fun. They place particular emphasis on outdoor space where children spend the majority of their day, building dens to imitate homes or to play hide and seek. They are also encouraged to build temporary structures with the help of adults. These types of outdoor learning foster resilience, risk taking and help build peer-to-peer relationships.

Kindergartens operate a flexible timetable and are open every day including at weekends. Younger children do not have to spend all day at kindergarten as support is available for parents who do not want their children to spend long periods outside the home.

**GenEd** takes place in a network of connected learning hubs. As some learning is delivered remotely, learners attend learning hubs mainly for discussions, assessing learning and socialising. Local businesses and charities also offer learners placements and other projects that encourage teamwork and allow for the application of learning, which gives education more meaning.

In the **Senior Phase** there is a much stronger connection with employers as students develop their own pathways. Young people at this phase also access virtual workplaces to learn about different sectors, and to tailor their pathways.

## *What children and young people learn and develop*

As an overall aim of the education system is to develop a child's capacity to thrive in an ever-changing environment and shape their future, the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors) have been retained and re-energised. The curriculum is underpinned by these capacities, with emotional literacy, resilience, creativity, empathy, leadership, enterprise and critical thinking seen as key.

Numeracy, literacy (including digital literacy), health and wellbeing, and developing a range of deep knowledge remain important but the curriculum now facilitates learning in broad areas. Inter-disciplinary learning has been particularly successful in addressing the biggest challenges facing Scotland: climate change, automation and changing demographics. A renewed emphasis on the arts, humanities and social sciences has led to many opportunities to learn about different global cultures through other languages. The term "extra-curricular activities" is seen as arcane as the curriculum encompasses all types of learning and learning environments.

Children are now seen as leaders and co-creators of their learning, and hub staff as facilitators of that learning. The curriculum is revisited annually by all stakeholders including parents and employers, as well as the wider community through discussions that draw on national and international research, published by the Curriculum Community of Practice (CCP) which was established in 2025 and has evolved to ensure a balance of views on education reform.

Children are also regularly consulted on inclusiveness, in recognition of the fact that learning takes place when children feel safe and respected. The devolved nature of learning hubs means support for children can be changed quickly to address any concerns.

Greater flexibility in the system also allows staff in learning hubs to take advantage of any appropriate new technology and to take account of the latest research or new trends, in order to innovate and make recommendations for changes to the curriculum via the CCP.

In the Senior Phase, young people are encouraged to build on their knowledge and skills set and develop their own learning pathways. In the first year, learners explore different options – academic, vocational, or a combination of both – by speaking to employers, entrepreneurs and hubs that offer degree courses.

Individual pathways last between one to five years with transition and exit points into employment, self-employment or further learning. During this stage, young people also learn about the practicalities of life post-education, including running your own business and the tax system.

With a shift in attitudes towards risk, the education system supports learners to learn and unlearn. Pupils visit the National Museum of Failure to encourage them to experiment and learn from their mistakes and failures, and to understand that having a go at something new is an important part of learning.

The concept that all children and young peoples' behaviour is communication is fully understood in principle and in practice. Children and young people, and the professionals working to support their learning, receive tailored and where required specialist support to maintain positive relationships and enable early intervention and prevention.

> **The Museum was amazing! I didn't realise driverless cars took so long to get right. A lot of things went wrong, which caused cars to crash, but the inventors kept trying different things until they found what worked.**
>
> Mo, aged 8

## *Who provides the children and young people's learning and education*

A radical overhaul of the teaching profession in the early 2020s saw a change in mindset around the qualities required to be a good teacher – ensuring teachers feel equipped to prepare children and young people for world they could only imagine.

Teaching is now a highly valued and desirable profession with professionals trained in a wide number of techniques in relation to child development. Teachers have a passion for what they do, with many entering the profession after time in industry or other occupations.

Whilst the role of a teacher and what they do is now better understood by wider society, a good number of learning environments have decided not to use the title of "teacher" in favour of "hub leader", "hub facilitator" or "educator".

Educators are adept at nurturing and building on the learning that takes place within the family and through community and online settings. With so much learning taking place outside hubs, a lot of emphasis is placed on equipping adults with the skills and confidence to support their children.

Investment in initial education and continuous professional development has led to much greater flexibility within the profession, and it has allowed educators greater autonomy to tailor learning to the needs of individual children. Educators also have a sound understanding of children with additional support needs, such as autism, dyslexia and ADHD, and a better understanding of what inclusion means in practice through implementation of the recommendations in the 2020 review of Additional Support Learning.

Other recommendations in the 2020 education review led to a more respectful relationship between educators and pupils. The use of educators' first names is commonplace and practices such as children having to raise their hand before speaking or being shouted at have long since been ditched. This rebalancing of power became much easier once educators and pupils gained a higher degree of autonomy.

Different pathways into the profession allow educators to play to their strengths. For example, some are involved in designing learning via artificial intelligence or virtual reality. Others have become online stars, delivering expert content in certain areas of the curriculum through videos, online seminars and 'ask the expert' sessions.

After a successful pilot, 'para' educator roles, akin to paralegals in the legal profession, were introduced. Whilst supporting work in the hubs, para educators have the opportunity to become a qualified educator through a pathway similar to what was known as a Graduate Apprenticeship in 2019.

Educators who have spent more than 10 years in the profession are obliged to take a gap year to widen their life experience and retain passion for their area of expertise and knowledge. The media recently reported that a scheme for retired hub leaders to coach and mentor student educators has been oversubscribed this year.

Technology has helped reduce the basic administrative tasks within learning hubs. For example, a report of hub attendees is sent to a tablet through facial/retina recognition systems.

Overall, any perceived challenges relating to educator agency within the profession have been removed and educators feel empowered to support children with their learning and encouraged by parents, who trust them to do their job.

INT. SCHOOL CORRID[...]

Alex and Sam are walking do[...]
morning before class.

V/O

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

2

A classroom, but more comfortable - sofas etc.

Pupil helping with hologram - Alex feels confident valued
to speak.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT

3

Alex doesn't get picked but actually is great - VR
[bas]ketball - Sam other team captain

[...]hat they might

*Pupils from St Paul's RC High School and feeder primary schools in Glasgow film their vision of school in the future in February 2020.*

## *How children and young people are educated*

In **Kindergarten**, learning is via play-based pedagogy, delivered by high-quality staff who understand what children need to thrive. Much of their professional development has been practice-based, with recognition of the importance of research on learning and child development. With no divide between education and care, there is much closer working with health and social work. The kindergarten teams are encouraged to develop individual responses to each child. This careful profiling in the early years has been pivotal in closing the attainment gap.

Children undertake their own independent and enquiry-based learning, facilitated by expert pedagogy. Staff are viewed as kind and encourage children to do better rather than labelling them as naughty.

There is a gender balance in kindergarten staff, while one member nominated as the 'safety officer', with a remit to encourage children to assess and take appropriate risks.

Intergenerational learning is encouraged by policies that give parents, grandparents and carers the flexibility to spend time at kindergarten. They work alongside staff to read stories, sing songs and talk about the games they used to play.

The focus at **the GenEd stage** is on encouraging young people to develop their skills, knowledge and interests. The school day is not rigidly structured, and learning is encouraged through critical reflection.

While learning is largely seen as enjoyable, pupils and students also develop a desire to succeed at 'the hard stuff'. There is an understanding of the importance of knowledge, and the ability to research information, solve problems and fact check is built into all stages of learning. All skills, knowledge and attributes are studied in a real-life context to provide depth to the learning.

Young people are supported to try different approaches to learning with the assistance of hub leaders/educators, coaches, guides and mentors, all of whom encourage creative thought and give children time to think. There are many opportunities to learn in multi-age and multi-ability teams which offer mutual support and encouragement. Project work is very popular as learners can choose a topic of interest, then work with a facilitator to identify the knowledge and skills required to complete the project and to experiment with how to deliver the project's objectives.

Technology has been harnessed to further the common good and to enhance learning, rather than drive it. Knowledge is accessed via different mediums, such as virtual libraries, online seminars, 'ask the expert' sessions and tablets linked to a facilitator, who helps structure learning and support an individual's needs.

Learners can now interact more directly with the topics they are exploring through, for example, stepping into an historical event. The Global Virtual Hub recently launched its second phase of cross-cultural projects, which allows Scottish learners to work virtually with students across the world. During this phase children and young people actively sign up for the Education Incubator where new technology and learning techniques are tested and piloted.

> "
>
> **My learning is based on what I have chosen. My mentor helps me get a lot of understanding about myself and the world around me. I feel the system works for me, rather than me being shaped by the system.**
>
> Amy, aged 13

Through this kind of learning, learners are now expected to be motivated problem solvers able to survive in an ever-changing world. There is much less focus on employability during the **GenEd stage**, the premise being that if children and young people develop core knowledge, skills, strong physical and mental health, and a love of learning, they will have a solid foundation for entering the senior phase.

In the first year of **the Senior Phase**, career support is available in different media – virtual, online and face to face – to help young people develop their pathways. Career and skills coaches from different occupations, industries and academia help learners design their pathway by exploring their interests and passions, and then supporting the development of their employability and life-skills. As individual pathways develop they are shared with parents and carers and the educators within the hub.

Some coaches are employed by the hub while others volunteer, providing a flexible and cost-effective model. This approach to careers has been embedded since 2025, leaving teachers to focus on their areas of expertise and experience.

Intergenerational activities are now firmly embedded into the curriculum.

"
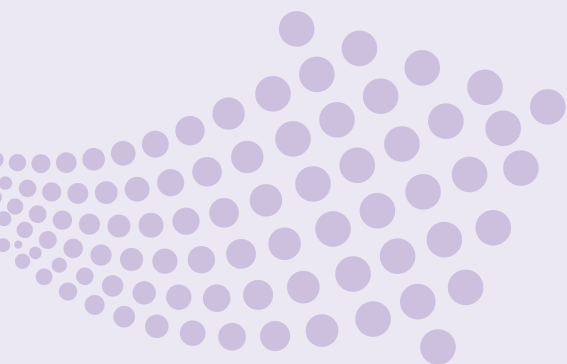
**After I retired in 2025, my late wife, Julie, and I became involved in our local learning hub. Julie really enjoyed helping out in the Kindergarten hub, reading stories to the children and painting, which actually inspired her to take the art class.**

**As a retired IT Project Manager, I worked with young people on a technology design project. To be honest I learnt as much from them as they did from me!**

**Since losing my wife, the learning hub community have been a constant source of support. Without them I would be quite lonely.**

Sam, aged 73

"

## *How success is measured and assessed*

Great strides have been made to close the attainment gap and achieve equity in education with improvements year on year since 2020, 100% numeracy and literacy, including digital literacy, is now in reach. Standards have been raised to such an extent that it is rare for a family to move house just to get into a particular catchment area.

The former HMIE now has a remit to support hubs as learning organisations and has been renamed, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Learning.

There continues to be a commitment to addressing gender imbalance within the system. In 2030, girls are as likely to embark on engineering apprenticeships as boys, and there has been a significant increase in the number of males working in kindergartens.

Success in education is no longer evaluated through monolithic national assessments. There is ongoing and lively debate to ensure we assess what matters in education.

Learners are now asked to select the way they wish to be assessed. They are fully able to identify and articulate the skills and knowledge they have acquired from their learning and what they believe has made their learning successful. Changes in assessment practices have impacted positively on young people's motivation, creativity and wellbeing.

A common language is used in all areas of education as well as with employers to articulate what young people have gained from formal education and other forms of learning.

Developments in technology enables students' e-portfolios to be checked by employers. These passports record their achievements and experience and reduce the need to submit job applications or CVs.

While employers report that the workforce has the necessary skills and qualities to meet the demands of a fast-changing environment, education's contribution to the wellbeing, prosperity and sustainability of local communities is seen as just as important as its contribution to economic performance.

*A model of a future education system produced by participants in a workshop on leadership in education in September 2019*
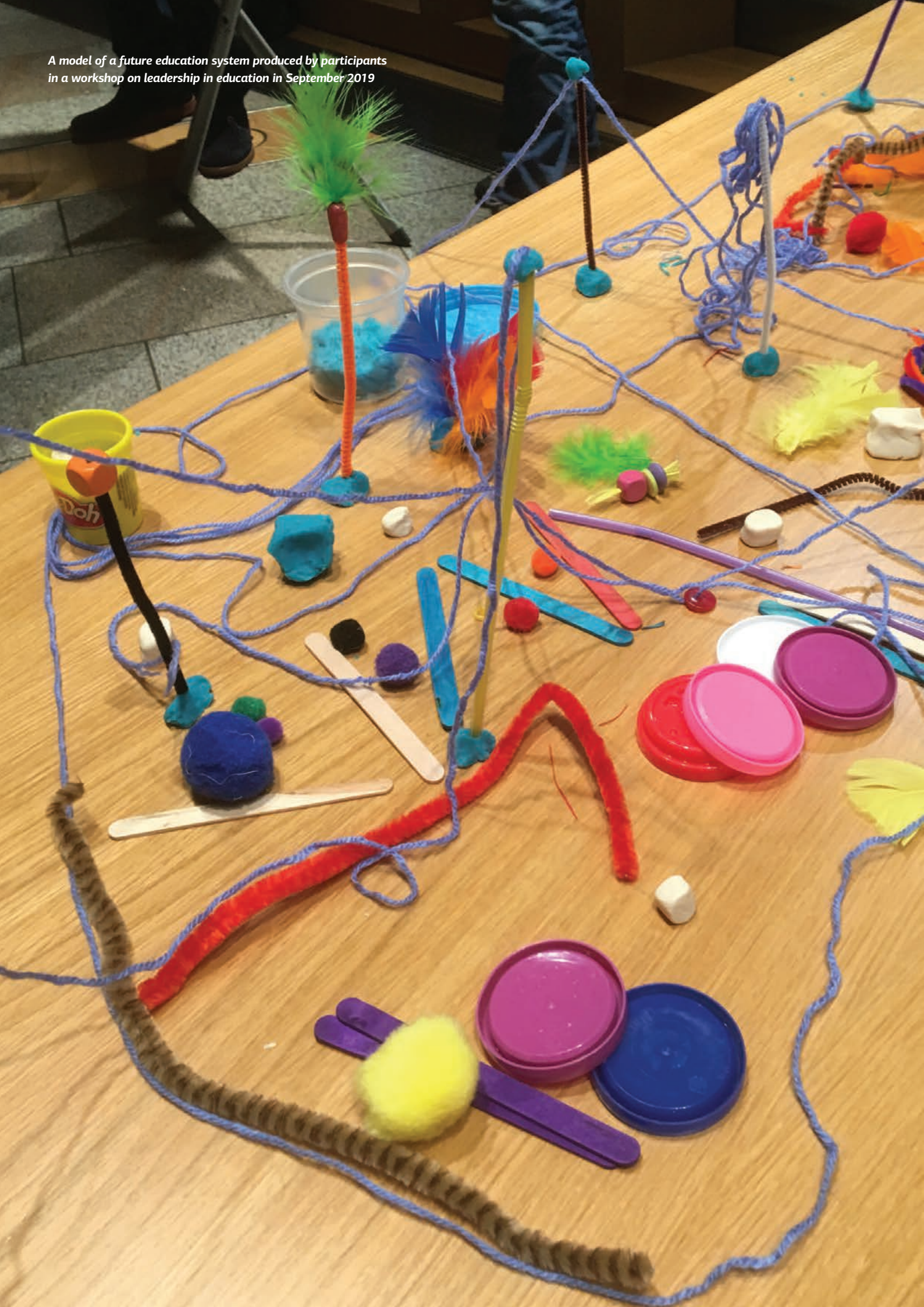
# CHANGE, LEADERSHIP & ACTION

The scenario includes changes to the current system both small and large. Some would be easier to implement than others, and some would be controversial. But what would the future look like if there was no change in the education system?

Throughout the project, the overwhelming response was that the status quo is not an option if our young people are to navigate their way through the challenges of the future and flourish in the decades to come.

With that in mind, and using the scenario as an example of a different potential future, the project explored the leadership and action required to build on the great practice already taking place and to realise the type of schools and learning needed in the future.

## *The Nature of Change*

If we are to achieve our fundamental aspirations – regardless of what those aspirations are – ownership of change must be secured at the point at which it is delivered. However, there is a balance to be had between leaders and teachers shaping change and an incoherent and atomised education system being allowed to develop.

To address this, we need to determine which of the following kinds of change we want to see:

- **Simple change**, which is easy to implement by adopting best practice;
- **Complicated change**, which is more difficult to realise because the cause and effect is harder to identify but can be addressed with systematic and evidence-based approaches; or
- **Complex change**, where the complexity of the context makes adopting best practice ineffective.

While there has tended to be a focus on simple and complicated change in the past, complex change is more reflective of the world in which we now live. We therefore need to shift to an approach that encourages ownership, and we must have the humility to recognise that. As no one source has the right answer, we need to engage all stakeholders and make change a collaborative process.

There is a need to move from thinking of schools as franchises, where quality is defined as faithful reproduction of a single view, to a process where we learn through a strategic exploration of agreed goals.

To do that, there is a need to:

- consult on and clearly set out the values and nature of the change we want to see;
- recognise the complexity and unpredictability of the world we live in;
- bring in a better understanding of the international, national and local context;
- recognise that the ecosystem of education sits within a broader set of interconnected ecosystems.

Context matters: for leaders to flourish, policymakers must start with a common vision for our education system that can be shaped by teachers and schools.

## *Leadership of Change*

With complex change to deal with, how can we support the leaders we need for education in 2030 and beyond?

The project identified a need to develop a leadership approach that promotes collegiality, greater democratic decision making, and creative collaborations.

On the basis that leadership is about relationships, not individual people or processes, it was suggested the five principles of Cooperative Learning could provide the basis for one model of leadership and management to approach the future. These had been noted to support effective group formation and work in classroom pedagogies and it was suggested that deep consideration of the principle may help leaders and the outcomes of their work.

The following Cooperative Learning principles support leadership:

- **Group processing**, which characterises multi-agency working that puts the child at the centre.
- **Social skills and face-to-face interactions**, which can help to share and model the behaviours and values that create the education culture: ultimately it is the interactions between all relevant stakeholders that form a school's ethos.

The principles of Cooperative Learning align well with the requirements of management in the future:

- **Positive interdependence and individual and group accountability**, which ensure that everyone is given roles and responsibilities to collectively support outcomes that are more impactful than the sum of their parts.

This leadership should embody care, compassion and cooperation, and prioritise emotional intelligence. The leadership model for Scottish education should therefore be underpinned by a well thought out set of principles and a well considered set of values which would determine the culture of our future education system.

Such a model could be characterised by the expression: *'Open mind, Open heart, Open will'.*

## *Acupuncture Points for Change*

Using the scenario as the context, the project invited participants to identify the "acupuncture points" in the education system: areas where change, although potentially painful, may make the biggest difference.

The following cross-cutting themes emerged, outlining both the need to do something and potential ways of doing it. Many of the acupuncture points are linked by an overarching need to develop more trust across all those with a stake in the education system and the champions and drivers of change, be they government, local government, teachers, learners, parents, business or the wider community.

### Innovation and risk

Teachers need to be encouraged to be innovative, creative risk-takers (and managers) both in their teaching and in their relationships with employers, parents, communities, colleagues, children and young people. There is a need to create a culture that encourages, connects and gives 'oxygen' to innovators – a culture that allows for innovation, experimentation and learning from mistakes.

To do this, we could:

- Share and celebrate the innovative and creative work already taking place through an Innovator Hub.
- Undertake research into what young people find risky (rather than make assumptions on their behalf) and explore how to celebrate risk taking in school inspections.
- Keep teaching fresh and relevant by moving teachers every five years, offering sabbaticals and being prepared to terminate employment of those who do not perform to the agreed standards.

## Value achievement and not just attainment

Exams provide the "currency" to move through the education system, and can make learning too compartmentalised, less experiential and can limit post-school choices. There is a need to examine how the exams and qualifications system can support the shift in values needed.

To do this, we could:

···⁖ Undertake a review with employers and universities to identify an alternative currency based on the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.

···⁖ Explore the impact and opportunities if the exam system was abandoned entirely to allow for greater experiential teaching and more post-school choices.

···⁖ Develop metrics for qualities that are important but difficult to measure, such as innovation, wellbeing and confidence.

## Cooperation, collaboration and partnerships

People in the education system such as teachers need to develop effective relationships with all those who have a stake in education: learners, parents and carers, businesses, other public services and the wider community. This will help to build capital and agency, co-create learning opportunities and develop the future workforce.

To do this, we could:

···⁖ Move from building schools and start building community assets that encompass many public services. For example, we could build nursery schools alongside care homes.

···⁖ Create mentoring and coaching roles in schools for retired individuals.

···⁖ Create resource and spaces for trust-building initiatives and meaningful engagement between schools, colleges, universities, businesses and communities.

## Empowerment and structures

Moving from a hierarchical education system to one that is flatter and more trust-based would help to put the learner truly at the centre of the education system. To do so, there is a need to empower those in the system by providing a solid framework that schools can build upon in imaginative and creative ways.

To do this, we could:

···⁖ Incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to underpin children and young people's educational experiences.

···⁖ Shift power, control and influence away from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and electoral cycles, and develop more transparency and engagement in the development of education policy.

···⁖ Establish targets for the involvement of children and young people in the design of their education.

···⁖ Explore how technology can be used to alter power relationships in schools, through, for example, flipped classrooms.

## Flexibility

Without allowing a free-for-all, there is a need to encourage more flexibility in the system, including potentially in the school day, school year, delivery models, the curriculum and the environment.
Joining up the services so they work for children and young people, not the system, will enable everyone the opportunity to reach their potential.

To do this, we could:

- Move from organising schools by 'age and stage' and create more opportunities for multi-age projects.
- Change the expectation that every learner must have the same experience and leave with similar set of knowledge and skills.
- Introduce more co-design, including by working with learners and teachers whom the system has failed.
- Create 'para' type roles in the classroom to draw in a broader range of people to share their skills and experiences.
- Review teachers' employment contracts to allow for different work patterns, such as shift and/or on call working.

## Research and Impact

Initiating research and gathering evidence remains important to underpin, drive and validate change in the system.

To do this we could:

- Establish an independent research body, to disseminate and build on the excellent research already taking place in Scotland and to keep reviewing any gaps between theory and reality.

## Teacher education and development

Acknowledging that teachers are key drivers of change, there is a continuing need to deliver high-quality inspiring Initial Teacher Education [ITE] courses. The structure for continuing professional development should provide space for teachers to think.

This will help to create a system in which our teachers can be co-creators of learning with children, parents and communities, with a shared understanding that learning happens everywhere throughout life and that creativity, not conformity, leads to equity and excellence.

To do this, we could:

- Reward excellent teachers to stay in the classroom.
- Encourage a wider group of people into teaching beyond those who meet the current required competencies.
- Place greater focus on pedagogy (including play-based pedagogy) and learning approaches that deliver successful learning.
- Nurture the skills needed for our society in 2030, such as creativity, by including a semester at art school during ITE.
- Put more emphasis on pedagogy and the teaching experience in our CPD, rather than further postgraduate qualifications.
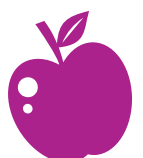
# What next?

At the beginning of this report, we explained that the future school scenario is not a prediction; it is designed to provoke thoughts, ideas and responses.

Perhaps all or some aspects of the future schooling scenario resonate with you or your organisation. Perhaps it chimes with your aspirations or perhaps it has provoked strong disagreement. Either way, we hope that it has helped stimulate your own ideas.

The organic nature of the process and the dialogue has been equally, if not more, important to this project, and what has strongly emerged from the discussions is that no change should not be seen as an option.

It may be a small change that will have a significant impact. Are there any acupuncture points you can take forward, to discuss further or action?

If we are serious about having an education system in 2030 and beyond that is fit for purpose, we need to map out what actions we need to make now.

We urge you to take a step back, and ask yourself:

- **What is the philosophical underpinning and philosophy of education for the future?**

- **What is working in the current system?**

- **What do we need to do differently?**

- **Could the planned review of Curriculum for Excellence provide an opportunity to introduce some of the suggested actions?**

- **How can you help build the education system you want to see in 2030?**
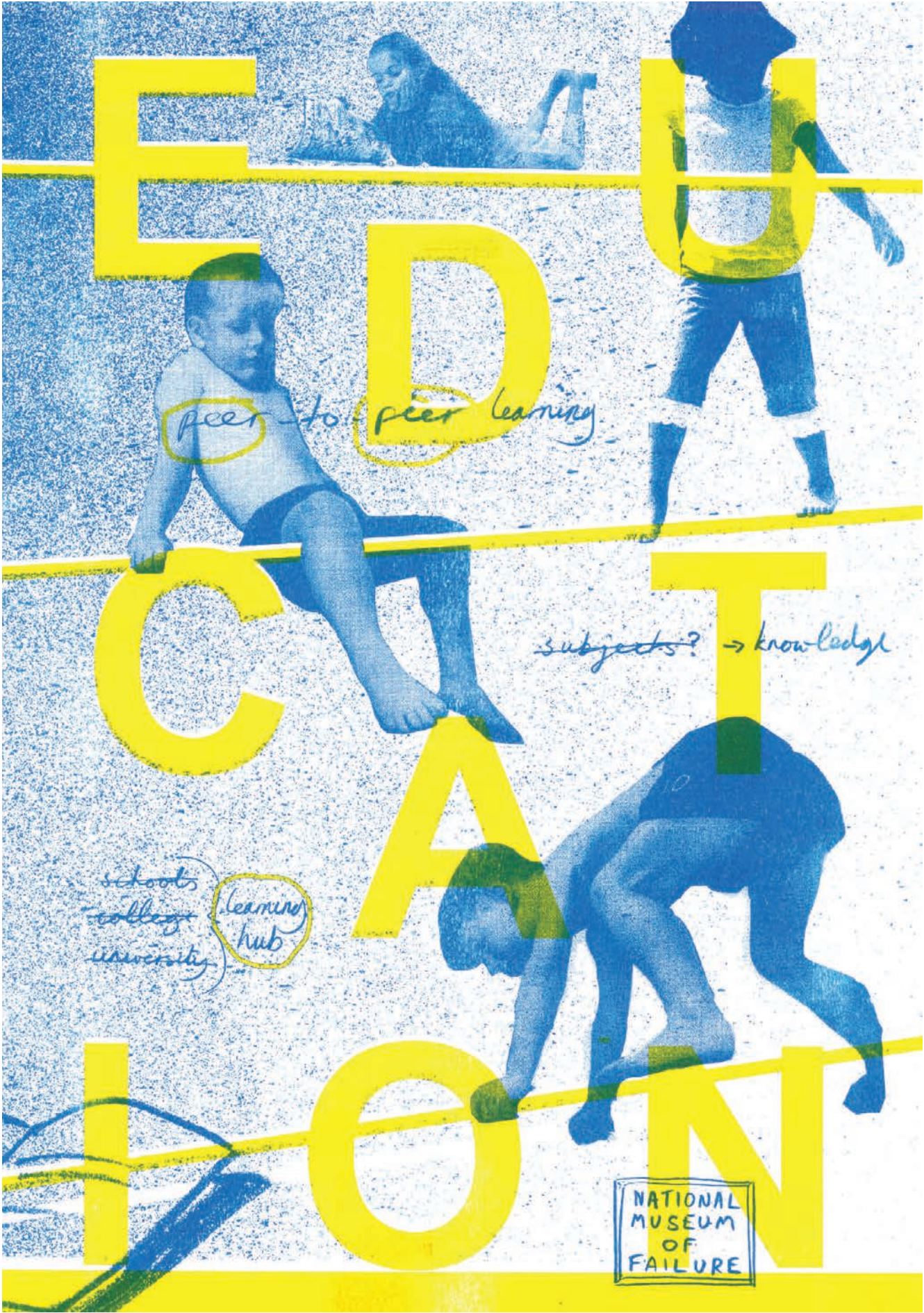
*This print was created by Fiona MacLellan, a PhD student at Glasgow School of Art, as a creative response to the Future Schooling, Education and Learning project as part of her internship with Scotland's Futures Forum through the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities in 2018.*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# The Goodison Group in Scotland

The Goodison Group in Scotland (GGiS) is a charity, solely dedicated to issues of learning through life. We believe civic society should be active stakeholders, contributing ideas and influencing the thoughts of policymakers and decision makers.

We are an independent think tank that considers education and learning, whenever possible, far beyond the immediate horizon. We bring together a cross section of society, including influencers from education, government and business (including the third sector), to develop insights and model future scenarios. Crucially, we seek to provide an informed context for longer term policy and ideas for innovative practice, some of which we hope also has resonance in the nearer term.

The GGiS Board includes Sir Andrew Cubie (Chair), Professor Graham Donaldson, Mark Batho, Tina Livingston, David Watt and Professor Petra Wend.

Our principal connection is with the Scottish Parliament's think-tank Scotland's Futures Forum.

# Scotland's Futures Forum

Scotland's Futures Forum is the Scottish Parliament's futures think-tank. We work on a non-party basis to promote research and to stimulate debate on the long-term challenges and opportunities that Scotland faces. We aim to inform MSPs and others and enable them to consider the effects of decisions taken today on Scotland's long-term future.

Looking beyond the five-year electoral cycle and away from party politics, the Futures Forum seeks to bring fresh perspectives, ideas and creativity on how we might prepare now for the future. We host discussions and seminars and present ideas to engage Scotland's parliamentarians and challenge their thinking.

Our work is guided by a board of directors composed of both Members of the Scottish Parliament and external directors, and it is chaired by the Parliament's Presiding Officer Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP.

**For more information, visit www.scotlandfutureforum.org**

Website **www.scotlandfutureforum.org**

Twitter **@ScotFutures**

Email **ScotlandsFuturesForum@parliament.scot**