



On the theme of **learning that fits** and continuing our work around **curriculum** PINS hosted 3 half day regional seminars. This was an opportunity to hear from and influence directly the team which leads the process of engagement with the *Curriculum for Excellence* programme.

GLASGOW: Tuesday 5th June at the Mitchell Library

ABERDEEN: Wednesday 6th June at Aberdeen Foyer

STIRLING: Friday 8th June the Tolbooth

Here is our report on the 3 regional seminars.

The key presentation was from Dan McGinty, Leader of the Engagement Team for A Curriculum for Excellence based at Learning and Teaching Scotland.

CONTENTS

The seminars considered **WHAT DELEGATES VISION FOR LEARNING LEARNING SHOULD BE LIKE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE.** Read this on pages **3 - 4**

There was an opportunity for delegates to discuss the statement: **'SCOTTISH EDUCATION DOES MANY THINGS WELL AND SOME THINGS PARTICULARLY WELL.'** Read more about what delegate's thought about this statement in each seminar on pages **5 - 9**

Following Dan McGinty's presentation, and again in round table discussions, delegates also considered the statement: **'A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE WILL BRING A RADICAL OVERHAUL OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.'** Read more about what delegate's thought about this statement in each seminar on pages **10 - 14**

There was an opportunity to discuss and record **THE STRENGTHS OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN BUILDING YOUNG PEOPLE'S CAPACITIES IN A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE** read about this on page **15**

Delegates also talked about **THE WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL BASED CURRICULUM AND THE THINGS WE WOULD WANT TO INFLUENCE THROUGH A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE.** Read this on pages **16 - 17**

We asked delegates to identify **THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENGAGEMENT WITH CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE PRESENTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR** read this on pages **18 - 19**

Participants considered **THE THREATS, OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES WHICH ENGAGEMENT WITH A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE PRESENTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR.** Read this on pages **20 - 21**

Finally we asked participants to consider **HOW WILL WE KNOW IF A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE?** Read this on pages **22 - 24**

WHAT DELEGATES VISION FOR LEARNING LEARNING SHOULD BE LIKE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

Learning should be a happy, positive experience – it should be fun, interesting, exciting, creative, challenging, inspiring, engaging, adventurous, enjoyable.

Learning should give the learner hope. It should be empowering, motivational, a moving experience and enlightening.

Learning should take place in a safe environment, which supports wellbeing and mental health and helps engagement and a sense of belonging. Children and young people should be valued, and listened to, and respected.

Learning should be person-centred, and tailored to individual needs and life circumstances. Methods should be inclusive, multi-sensory, adaptable to different learning styles, hands on and practical, informal, flexible, participative, explorative and experimental, and should challenge boundaries/self-perceived limitations. Methods should encourage peer interaction and positive peer groups, and give the opportunity to develop social skills.

Young people should have a role in planning their learning.

Learning should develop life and social skills that are relevant and help young people in their futures. It should encourage self-confidence and acknowledgement of self-worth. It should focus on the strengths of young people. It should be based on praise and reward. It should use a holistic approach, and be ethical.

There should be smaller classes. Residential and Voluntary Sector services should be better known. A multi-agency approach should be used, to ensure an effective 'change of minds and hearts', building on the evidence of what works. A continuum of learning should be available.

Learning should include out of school experiences. We should give young people experiences, as well as skills.

Partnerships should be built, including with employers and colleges, and with other sectors which can contribute to learning e.g. health, youth work, social work... a 'one stop shop'? Learning should be joined up, less fragmented, de-cluttered, with more discussion. It should be about more than just information for exams.

There should be equality of opportunity for everyone. Training and resources should be made available to all educators, to assist in the provision of adding a different dimension in Education. Learning should go beyond the classroom.

Assessment should be ongoing. Goals should be achievable, expectations should be realistic, explicit, relevant. Young people should have autonomy within tasks, and should have input into their own curriculum. There should be

a wide curriculum, with choices. There should be academic and vocational provision, and social/sporting/healthy lifestyles etc. 'Sport can be the sugar that makes the medicine go down'.

It is important to develop positive relationships between teacher and pupil. Young people must be able to relate to appropriate role models, and respect for pupils is important. A positive ethos, including amongst teachers, should include the disengaged who may be off-site. Ethos should build (a sense of) community and belonging, a sense of pride in self and in school. Families should be involved.

GLASGOW: 'SCOTTISH EDUCATION DOES MANY THINGS WELL AND SOME THINGS PARTICULARLY WELL.'

A substantial number of contributions were about schools getting better, they are on a journey of improvement. In particular: there is an increase in vocational and college placements; schools are getting smarter at helping young people achieve, rather than attain; and getting better at recognising the input and significance of partners who also contribute to learning; and getting more thoughtful about curricular flexibility, and personalised education; having a good range of cultural exchanges, residential trips, work or life experience, sport, drama, tutoring, after school groups, and community schools being opened in the evening; there is excellent Early Years and Primary Education; the upper end of Secondary is good preparation for higher and further education.

Schools are becoming more forward thinking and progressive, and initiatives such as 'Determined to Succeed' are prominent in schools.

However, several delegates felt that there is a lack of flexibility at present within the curriculum, but that things are beginning to change, e.g. through Skill Academies and vocational programmes.

Scottish Education is good at inclusion, and this continues to be a priority.

Ethos/atmosphere in schools is important, but there are questions though about how much we have achieved in this area.

Some comments included:

'Overall we are going in the right direction, but still have a way to go in engaging some children and young people.'

'There is a need for early intervention'.

'We think the emphasis on NEET (not in education, employment or training) students is positive – clearly Education isn't working for everyone.'

'Academic pupils are achieving, but we need to focus on all pupils regardless of their abilities, and money and staff are needed to address this.'

One comment cited the 'Discipline Survey of 2006' – a wide range of approaches to behaviour management have been introduced (Staged Intervention, Restorative Practices, Whole School Approaches) but there is still some way to go to get consistency.

Lack of consistency was cited a number of times, with variations between local authorities, and within them, and within schools in terms of promoting social skills, leadership and citizenship.

Concern was expressed about the quality of learning taking place in some settings:

'We're concerned that children and young people feel great pressure to perform and that they learn to pass exams or regurgitate information. We want children and young people to learn how to learn and think critically'.

The effect of league tables was noted. Schools can be geared towards certification rather than education. A large percentage of young people do not achieve qualifications. Standards of basic skills have to improve throughout school life. There should be more involvement with community groups and with the voluntary sector.

'The system is good at pushing pupils but not at catching them'.

ABERDEEN: 'SCOTTISH EDUCATION DOES MANY THINGS WELL AND SOME THINGS PARTICULARLY WELL.'

Half the statements written by the Aberdeen delegates praised aspects of Scottish Education. Primary schools promote a lot of confidence and learning. Scottish Education meets the needs of the majority of young people (those who are stable and committed to their education)

But concerns were expressed about pathways for those who struggle to be engaged and find themselves excluded. Qualifications are achieved but there is narrow focus on attainment.

Some young people do have opportunities they would not normally experience.

There was the reservation that Scottish Education does less well in personal and social development. There is evidence of attempts towards a holistic approach, but it is fragmented and dependent upon leadership and ethos of the school, the value bases of staff and resources.

Two statements concerned training. Teachers' training should include caring for children and young people, not purely educating, and support and supervision for teachers is needed. There are training issues around demoralised teaching staff (and) their personal value bases with regards to young people, affecting newly qualified teachers.

There is a need for Parents to be recognised and respected as prime educators. Schools could be better at supporting parents.

Children and Young People who want to learn are struggling due to disruptive classes and are missing out; their needs are not being met.

One thing Scottish Education may do very well is put pupils off mainstream high school.

STIRLING: 'SCOTTISH EDUCATION DOES MANY THINGS WELL AND SOME THINGS PARTICULARLY WELL.'

Many participants were positive about Scottish Education when thinking about the majority of students; but with reservations about it meeting the needs of all students.

'The main focus is on 'middling students' – excellence is nurtured and valued? The wee soul in the corner is often overlooked. The lowest 20% struggle to 'fit' the system'.

'The statement may be more or less valid depending on your 'place' in the system'.

'Recognise the many good things, but still need to focus on challenges. What about students out with 'the model'? We shouldn't be complacent – must continue to consider core – mustn't do top-down policymakers – must bring in experience of those involved'.

Several comments were made about a lack of consistency of delivery, and specifically linked this to leadership at Local Authority and School Management levels.

'Strength of school management ... impacts on teachers and pupils'.

'Schools are autonomous, and engender a sense of the community – but the potential of a 'community-focussed' school hasn't been realised'.

'The vision and leadership of local authorities and individual schools is a key factor.'

'Vision and Aspirations are sound, but leadership (depends on quality, can be a constraint) and implementation have not reflected this.'

Several comments expressed the need for Scottish Education to change.

'Hits the target and misses the point'.

'Need for change and lack of environment to do it in'.

'Need to celebrate achievement (and) focus on positives. Scottish culture needs to validate achievement.'

'Total involvement with SQA for all relevant awards for students in Scotland is restricting opportunities for students.'

There were comments about the need for better inter-agency working.

'Developing a shared understanding (through joint training opportunities) of the language/concepts we use e.g. inclusion, curriculum is essential. We need a workforce that's working in partnership for the needs of the child'.

Two statements express the concerns of the seminar participants:

'Scottish Education is a succession of changes. Are we now about excellence or smugness?'

'The Curriculum for Excellence is great in principle, but already being diluted away from needs of children and future adults.'

GLASGOW: 'A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE WILL BRING A RADICAL OVERHAUL OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.'

A number of delegates were delighted at how closely the material presented about Curriculum for Excellence dovetailed with their own professional practice.

'We can see how the values, principles and purposes relate to our own areas of work.'

'It captures what the voluntary/youth work sector are doing'.

'It's excellent – a culture change, not just content of subject matter. A different 'ethos' of teaching'.

'There is a need for 'hearts and minds' – this is not a project'.

Other positive comments included: Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are being recognised as transferable skills; the link with transitional stages is positive; less emphasis on 'hard' and more on 'soft' indicators to see if young people are achieving. It is encouraging that it commences at an early stage.

Some comments focussed on what is needed to make a Curriculum for Excellence work. Teachers will need more skills and enthusiasm, will need to be supported, will need training. Resources are needed, which need to be consistent and sustainable. Joint training and discussions between schools and voluntary organisations are needed, to define the way forward.

There is a need for high level support for schools to *'give up ground'*, for there to be parity with partners, a sharing of information.

'Will there be a radical overhaul?'

There were general questions about **how** it will be adopted.

'Guidance is not prescriptive, culture change will take a long time to bed in. Sharing of best practice is important.'

'How will councils support implementation – financially, operationally?'

'Is it realistic? Can teachers deliver this style of learning? What if they can't?'

'Success of change depends on good management.'

One comment asked:

'How Child-centred is this? Have young people been involved in development, and how will individual young people participate in their own curriculum?'

Another stated that

'Language of the level framework is not inclusive – although framework itself is a step forward. It needs to be more sensitive'.

'We should look to other countries and systems with a view to radically altering the way we educate, so we aren't just looking attainment'.

'Will the excluded group still be excluded?'

Specific questions from the participants included:

- Will Learning and Teaching Scotland continue to play a part in keeping the voluntary/youth work sector 'joined up' with Scottish Education agendas?
- How will the Curriculum for Excellence be implemented? How do you ensure consistency across schools?
- Guidance on delivery and implementation is needed. How will this be done?
- How and by whom will it be monitored and evaluated?
- Will teacher training change to reflect broader curriculum, rather than subjects? And will this cover multi-agency intervention and initiatives?

ABERDEEN: 'A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE WILL BRING A RADICAL OVERHAUL OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.'

Several comments were positive, but with some reservations about implementation and about resource/financial implications.

'Excellent – on paper!'

One statement felt that a Curriculum for Excellence is still too focussed on structure and not individual needs. One statement asked how will this provide for young people with additional support needs?

Several statements and questions were about the involvement of the Voluntary Sector and other partners.

'No mention of other agencies' involvement – health and voluntary sector partnerships'.

'Funding arrangements for Voluntary Sector partnerships need to be improved. The expectation is that the voluntary sector will find the funding'.

'Meaningful voluntary sector partnerships need to be created and written up'.

'Hierarchy exists – does everyone know the Curriculum for Excellence is for all agencies NOT JUST schools'.

Other comments included the need to put some emphasis on training opportunities, on monitoring mechanisms and wider community engagement.

'How will C for E impact on those young people who are completely excluded from school – will schools be obliged to put programmes in place for inclusion/engagement of these young people?'

Specific questions from the participants included:

- Will exclusion rates be targeted for reduction?
- What about young people being excluded from school? Especially with Additional Support Needs?

STIRLING: 'A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE WILL BRING A RADICAL OVERHAUL OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.'

Several statements welcomed the Curriculum for Excellence as groundbreaking but with some reservations about resources and full commitment, rather than cherry picking the best bits.

'Huge opportunity, but is there the capacity?'

'Could be a significant breakthrough – but huge resource/management challenges.'

'It formalises and acknowledges some of the best relationships and approaches to teaching.'

'Framework looks flexible, but could schools end up 'opting out' of parts?'

Some statements focussed on how the C. for E. will affect teachers.

'How this change is managed for teachers is important as nobody likes change.'

'Supporting evidence is needed to get teachers to engage fully in C. for E.'

'Enabling and motivating teachers to buy into Curriculum for Excellence is important. CPD for teachers/staff/others – crucial.'

The importance of leadership, links with other existing initiatives and of shared understanding was highlighted.

'Need to join up (and clarify) range of developments/initiatives across education.'

'Must be embedded within training and culture – leadership key – influences ethos.'

Concerns were expressed about evaluation, and about the role of inspection in driving change.

'How is the C of E to be evaluated, at national and local level? Will it be resourced?'

'When should we be visibly seeing the changes? Can inspection system be the driver for the areas that aren't readily recordable? e.g. personal achievement, confidence-building.'

The Voluntary Sector's role is important; and there are high hopes for engagement.

'There is a place for the voluntary sector to assist in the implementation. We are keen to be key partners'.

'Provides a key opportunity for voluntary sector involvement to be formalised and recognised – value their contribution'.

'How can we get statutory providers to listen to the Voluntary Sector – a genuine engagement rather than a tokenistic one?'

Specific questions from the participants included:

- How will inspection arrangements change to reflect C of E?
- Do teachers expect to have the capacity to deliver?
- What is the most logical and simplest way for the voluntary sector to be involved?
- How does this sit with an exam-driven curriculum?
- If voluntary sector engagement is key to this – will funding be provided to the sector to support involvement?

THE STRENGTHS OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN BUILDING YOUNG PEOPLE'S CAPACITIES IN A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Seminar participants recognised that the voluntary sector is not governed by the same statutory constraints (as the school sector) so can use different/more open curricula, and has utilised more flexible, creative and innovative approaches to informal learning.

Voluntary Sector staff bring a different expertise, background, qualifications, range and variety of experience, they have specialisms which are a valuable resource, they can be relevant to children's needs. They can focus more on individual development, on individual needs, on 1:1 work, and on building strong, effective, lasting relationships. They can link (young people) to the community. They can reach the parts that others can't. They can offer choice to young people. They can be quick to respond. They (often) have a high level of commitment/passion.

Voluntary sector staff can get more involved with families.

Young people are often involved with the voluntary sector through choice not obligation (which is an advantage). There are advantages in not being (perceived as) a teacher, or an authority figure. The voluntary sector can offer a 'fresh start'. Voluntary Sector staff can recognise the distance travelled for (some) young people, and can 'work with' rather than 'do to'.

The Voluntary Sector has great experience in engaging with young people who do not fit the 'norm', can recognise the need to resolve social and emotional issues of individuals and can offer resources and opportunities that the traditional education system might not have, to help build (individual) capacity. The value base of voluntary sector organisations are in line with Curriculum for Excellence.

The Voluntary Sector is diverse itself. It has to constantly change and modify programmes to secure funding, this compares with a perceived reluctance from teachers to change. It has to be responsive to market forces and needs. New links are developing e.g. with fire brigade, with police and nurses teaching PSD, with input to the whole school curriculum, and there are links between schools, youth work and Women's Aid. The voluntary sector can bring private funding. It can be needs-led, rather than cost-driven.

The voluntary sector has an independence which is in itself valuable.

The challenge (of C. for Excellence) is to integrate into the whole school, rather than (put on) additional or extra curricular activities. The whole school should be delivering whole, flexible approaches. The voluntary sector wants to help keep children IN schools.

THE WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL BASED CURRICULUM AND THE THINGS WE WOULD WANT TO INFLUENCE THROUGH A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Schools can be too closed and set in their culture, their potential for innovation stifled by workload.

Attitudes ('hearts and minds') need to change.

They have too much paperwork, bureaucracy, administration, and overly worry about Health and Safety and risk assessments.

There is pressure on teachers, head teachers and pupils from Scottish Exec/the media/HMIE to achieve too much – exams, test results, exam-led assessment.

There are continual changes and 'tinkering', Staff can be opposed to change and there has been so much change lately, there is too much constraint. This has left an ageing teaching population ill-prepared to face huge new challenges.

Schools are 'exam-led' and have compulsory subjects; they should be more flexible.

There is an absence of visionary people who are motivated. Heads and members of Senior Management Teams can be affected by 'change-fatigue'.

Poor relationships between schools and the voluntary sector were cited, and better communication is required. Teaching staff need to be made aware of what the voluntary and youth work sector can do. There can be reluctance to share resources. Surprise was expressed at the lack of (knowledge of) youth workers or of a range of professionals in schools beyond teachers. The voluntary sector has been seen as the poor relative by schools – a 'dumping ground', not seen as valued part of curriculum. Schools can see programmes for young people as a reward for bad behaviour.

Voluntary Organisations may be in competition with each other for funding, and rely on good will, in a complex political climate. There is a power imbalance between similar services, and between voluntary and statutory services. Voluntary organisations have to chase funding rather than develop appropriate interventions, and have little opportunity to influence practice in schools.

Many teachers are open to change, involvement of multi-agency support, but experience barriers at senior management level; teachers are not informed properly or taught properly themselves – (initial/CPD/school leadership and management). Positive relationship/support/flexibility/behaviour management - are add on rather than integral; teachers add on or build on to their already massive role.

Schools may see 'Curriculum for Excellence' as groundbreaking, but it's not new (the voluntary sector subscribes to it already).

Senior Management Team's commitment, or lack of it, is crucial. There can be a lack of support throughout schools within the same authority; lack of consistency of access. The lack of consistency between schools/local authorities is a great weakness.

Under-resourcing of Education's alternative provision (building, equipment, etc) is common – how valued do these young people feel?

The Curriculum is not flexible enough (one size fits all) to meet individual needs (at present); does not meet the needs of disengaged young people; individual progression is not supported; there are constraints within the curriculum being delivered; not enough autonomy given to new ideas and ways of alternative working due to workloads and exam-focussed constraints. There is not enough respect given to young people who are not academically gifted. The current curriculum is cluttered. There is poor recognition of achievement.

Schools are unable or unwilling to consider alternative approaches. Not focussing on life skills is a weakness. Schools fail the lowest and highest ends of the spectrum. There is little time or space for 'fun' in subjects, or for a wider school life for teachers and pupils i.e. sport, trips, clubs, dances. It is important to foster values and ethos of school for both staff and children.

Early intervention identifies a need, but the system doesn't address that adequately – the young person) carries the same problem through school life.

A weakness is repetition of ineffective practice in the vain attempt that something will get through. We need a variety of teaching practices, sensitive differentiation. Schools see a problem, not the potential for change and deal negatively – once pupils are 'off site' schools forget about them. We need to build schools' capacity to get it right for every child.

There is an unwillingness to change exclusion procedures at schools. Schools still tend to exclude those who don't fit. Exclusion is a novelty and has lost its meaning for young people. Informal exclusions are unacceptable. Special Needs pupils are the grouping most frequently excluded. There is poor training for teachers to promote inclusive practice. There is poor information-sharing on young people's needs in schools.

THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENGAGEMENT WITH CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE PRESENTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

A Curriculum for Excellence gives us the chance to improve communication; develop new and more stable partnerships; a real and meaningful partnership; formal recognition for voluntary sector in education; sharing of good practice based on information sharing, flexible and exciting approaches, especially informal approaches.

Voluntary organisations can build capacity of schools and can assist with engagement within the wider community; we can create community access to these joined up activities; we can provide and support joint training for voluntary and public sectors; joint working regarding school based curriculum and out of school activities.

We can support improvements in inter-agency working with a genuine commitment to working with colleagues across social work/education/youth work/voluntary sector. There are opportunities for people in the voluntary sector to be the key worker in multi-agency support; widening the groups of people involved in educating children. The Voluntary sector can offer many of the personal/softer skills that should accompany Curriculum for Excellence, and can offer similar development for teachers, too.

'We can help schools and Local Authorities deliver their key performance indicators.'

Proper funding should release resources, and provide income generation for voluntary organisations. There will be a wider view of provision. YouthLink and other multi sector working groups could thrive. There could be an increase of morale through partnership working.

We are positive about the opening of doors, there is a change in attitude; we are receiving recognition for the work we are doing, a universal language has been created; barriers are being broken down; we are more valued; we are on an agenda within the school – we are not an 'added extra' but part of the framework. The Scottish Executive has now identified the voluntary sector as a partner – this is important. Opportunities for consultation with the voluntary sector can lead to the voluntary sector in schools. Community schools implementation is an important complementary opportunity.

But there is also caution in the sector. We need to have voluntary sector input into policy and the ethos of programmes being run and how/why they work. We need opportunities to influence the agenda in schools; an opportunity for the community to influence the school's curriculum; closer relationships with schools.

'Give us access to resources that schools have'

'We embrace the ethos of C for E already – Education please listen'

'The voluntary sector (wants) to engage with the statutory sector to help make changes. Advice given should be listened to'.

The sector needs to raise its profile. Short term funding gives no sustainability.

Several comments concentrated on the results for children and young people of working together. The rapport built through a Curriculum for Excellence may help build trust and support the young person progress; a greater sense of inclusion for the young person could result. We could improve efforts to keep young people in school.

Finally, there are opportunities for teachers to diversify the work they are involved in; to provide a more holistic form of support and approach; diversity; to engage high achievers; to be able to work with our client group at an earlier time. There are opportunities for different professional skills and ways of working and organising work to be shared, and for exchanges of work environments.

THE THREATS, OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES WHICH ENGAGEMENT WITH A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE PRESENTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Changes in attitudes are needed. Schools' expectations of the voluntary sector may not be realistic. Voluntary/youth work sector may not be able to demonstrate to school staff how effective the work we are doing is!

We require a cultural shift from schools to recognise that the contribution of the voluntary sector is important and benefits young people, and vice versa. The informality of the voluntary sector can be perceived as 'undermining' what teachers are trying to establish; there can be conflicting agendas; educational personnel may feel threatened; may resist change; there can be territorialism, and professionals not taking an holistic approach. There can be closed mind-sets in schools. There is an inclusion/exclusion dichotomy.

Schools have to be on board. There must be ownership. Lack of co-operation, competition, inter and intra-agency power struggles and parochialism are all threats, as is failure to provide information to the taxpayer and ultimately to the students.

'If teacher training and CPD are not on board, it can't work. Is it a change in curriculum or a change in attitude?'

A specific barrier is the use of different language or terms by the different professionals. There is also an issue of voluntarism versus compulsion in the ways different sectors operate. Confidentiality could also become a barrier.

A threat could be a challenge to any existing reliance on the voluntary sector. Will schools try to replicate the voluntary sector's present role and areas of delivery? Will funding structures encourage and/or force them to do so?

There are concerns that was a lack of involvement of the voluntary sector in planning meetings of the Curriculum for Excellence and a lack of recognition of voluntary organisations' contribution to learning and education.

The ethics and methods of schools/schooling could influence those of the voluntary sector and the voluntary sector could lose its way. Voluntary organisations could start functioning like academic institutions, e.g. overemphasising accreditation and qualifications, become institutionalised. They could lose their unique identities. Centralised funding could inhibit honest feedback. The voluntary sector contribution could be seen as tokenistic.

There are further issues for the sector about implementation.

'If we don't see anything positive happening/things changing for the better – this could be a threat. There are fears that it won't change in practice'.

'Aspirations are good – but will it happen?'

Ineffective partnerships could be a threat. Partnerships must be genuine, with mutual respect. Short-term funding/unsustainable engagement could lead to further disaffection.

'It could be a marketing exercise but with no delivery'.

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

It will allow for young people to learn what they want to learn in a way that suits them. Young people will be empowered to take responsibility for their own learning. They will be inspired, motivated, happy, self-confident, fulfil their potential, have positive outcomes. There will be fulfilled, content, challenged, valued, well balanced individuals, who are on the road to lifelong learning; learning in a culture which focuses on children and young people in the centre. There will be more opportunities for children with additional support needs to participate.

It will be a fairer and more consistent system, Scotland-wide. Education for all. More young people will be supported and included. There will be more opportunities for those who are academic; and for those who are not academic; and with less pressure on those less academic.

Schools will Change. They will be calm; have a nice environment, be more positive and inclusive; we will see changes in young people's perspectives of school; schools will become whole learning communities; there will be a change of culture – including for teachers and staff, and relationships changed and improved. Schools will value young people. A better ethos in schools will result in happier pupils. There will be greater job satisfaction for teaching staff. There will be greater engagement of young people and children, whose skills will be recognised. There will be considerate educators, enlightened educational professionals. There will be more attainment of teachers; higher and broader achievements based on wider accreditation; schools will have qualified staff and programmes aimed at meeting social and emotional needs and greater variety of educators in school – employees, ex-pupils, army, youth workers; police, counsellors, school nurse. Schools will be less institutional. There will be a new reality.

It will reduce the numbers of young people having negative school experiences, result in less expulsions/exclusions, fewer absences, fewer young people in the NEET group, and the NEET statistics will reflect this. Earlier interventions and support can be provided, so there will be less need for crisis interventions. Students will be at ease with themselves and others, will have healthy minds and bodies.

There will be an open door for others to contribute within school and have their expertise valued. Motivated schools will impact on home life, with an increase of parental involvement, and families will be more supportive of education. There will be a culture of mutual respect and citizenship. If they are not so attainment driven then it may allow for more innovation and creativity on a day to day basis, with more flexibility for teachers; making the curriculum more flexible, more relevant, and with more focus on soft skills, more leadership, life skills, citizenship. There will be recognition of learning out with the classroom. All achievements will be recognised, especially sport. There will be opportunities for group work, positive peer groups and the opportunity to use positive peer pressure, and for creative approaches.

There will be a more holistic view of the development of young person and where they can learn. There will be clear and evident links with home and the community; seamless transitions through school (and also into industry); letting young people fail to enable them to make better life choices. Each child will have gone through a learning process which gives him/her a C.V. which shows achievements. Schools will recognise different learning styles, and what works for each individual. There will be evidence of the 4 capacities in young people - individual educational plans will reflect the 4 capacities, with evidence (which young people learn from). There will be greater recognition of individual's strengths and weaknesses, and personal learning programmes, not one size fits all. Children will recognise that school has a purpose, and will have been instilled with a genuine desire to learn. School cultures will embrace shared values, and parents/carers will be actively involved in school and community life. There will be better relationships and evidence of shared respect. There will be a shared understanding of 'Learning for Life'. There will be greater opportunities for pupils to access skills development and vocational training, which will be also available to the disaffected. Certification (will) reflect actual learning outcomes, including in workplaces etc. There will be a structured approach to the curriculum in its widest sense. Locations other than schools will be recognised to deliver learning.

There will be achievement as opposed to attainment; high standards for all, achievable for all, more academic achievement overall. More young people will be able to read and write. Teachers can give out powerful messages with their words – it's important to sow seeds of hope rather than despair.

There will be assured financial resources and capacity to operate.

Inspection and quality assurance, including of the role and practices of the teacher, will support better experiences for children and young people.

This will take time. There is a need to challenge cultural perceptions (this is a process); need for time to let programme work; a 'shake-up' of teacher training strategies; a re-think of individualistic approaches.

There will be a joined up approach amongst all organisations/agencies; better communication and partnership-working; integration of educational resources, voluntary and L.A.; joint training, and the voluntary sector will be meaningfully embedded and integrated into schools. There will be a better understanding of ways of working, values etc. between sectors. There will be less duplication of effort and systems. There will be a partnership approach to progressing young people in terms of in planning and delivery. This meets part of local authority strategy to meet responsibilities linking all social welfare issues. Joint working will be genuine and effective.

There will be benefits for society as a whole. It will improve the nation's confidence and self-esteem; counteract the negative effects of society; create positive values within society; multi-agency/level effect leaking into all community. There will be less youth unemployment, less school exclusions, fewer disaffected pupils, less crime in the community, fewer ASBOs. Young people at events will influence decisions. Young people will be responsible, happy and confident citizens. There will be positive changes in youth culture and society; young people will be in the field of employment they feel passionate about.