LEARNING FROM INNOVATION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN GLASGOW SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Research Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and focus

This report presents key messages from a small-scale study of change management practice in ten Glasgow secondary schools. The research was commissioned by The Scottish Government, in partnership with Glasgow City Council and was conducted between August and December 2009. The main aim of the study was to identify what has been learned by the schools that may be of benefit to other schools in Glasgow, and beyond.

These ten schools received an additional resource over a three-year period to develop innovative approaches to locally identified needs. Four of the schools\(^1\) participated in the Government-funded nation-wide Schools of Ambition\(^2\) programme. This was a collaborative partnership between 52 secondary schools and the Scottish Government, Schools’ Directorate (2005-2010). In 2006, six further Glasgow secondary schools\(^3\) were identified to receive project funding to support work in relation to pupils designated as requiring More Choices, More Chances. These schools focused on those pupils considered to be most in need of additional targeted support. The Hunter Foundation contributed to project funding during the first two years of the Partnership Schools project, with the Scottish Government increasing its contribution in the final year.

The study addressed the following specific research questions:

1. What is the nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the schools?
2. How have the schools and their communities responded to these challenges in developing their plans for transformation and improvement and for the evaluation of the implementation of these plans?
3. What lessons have been learned through this work about the management of change (including management style and capacity) and about internal and external communication processes, including the involvement of parents and a range of external partners?
4. What opportunities have emerged for teachers and other staff in relation to the development of their professional skills and expertise, including the capacity to manage change and to engage with other agencies in service delivery?

Methods

The report is based on analysis of transcripts of interviews involving 162 participants, conducted between September and December 2009, supplemented by analysis of documentary evidence such as the school Transformational Plan, inspection reports, inspection reports,

\(^1\) Castlemilk High School, St Margaret Mary’s Secondary School, St. Paul’s RC School, Springburn Academy.
\(^3\) Drumchapel, High School, Eastbank Academy, Govan High School, Hillhead High School, Rosshall Academy and St. Andrew’s Secondary School.
project reports, examples of materials and school-generated evaluation proforma. Semi-structured interviews of between thirty minutes and one hour’s duration were conducted in each of the schools with the headteacher, project coordinators and class teachers involved in specific initiatives. All of the interviews focused on improvement action supported by the additional resource allocated to the schools over the previous three years. In addition, focus groups were arranged with pupils, ex-pupils and parents in most of the schools. A total of seventy-four pupils and sixteen parent/carers participated in interviews across the ten schools. Seventeen telephone or face-to-face interviews were conducted with a wide range of external partners who worked with the schools in relation to specific objectives expressed in the schools’ plans for change. This included representatives from Skills Development Scotland, Glasgow West Regeneration Agency, children’s services professionals, community organisations, charities and staff of further education colleges.

Overview of types of activities

The schools shared a common concern with improving teaching and learning to enhance opportunities and outcomes for young people. Across the plans for change there was a strong focus on using curriculum flexibility to better address the needs of all pupils, especially those at risk of leaving school without a positive destination. All of the schools directed attention to enhancing employability, improving attendance, and strengthening home-school relations in order to raise achievement and attainment. Improved partnership working with further education included the availability of places on college courses for school pupils and the provision of courses delivered in schools by college lecturers. Schools sought additional support from Careers Scotland in a variety of forms and worked creatively with Glasgow West Regeneration Agency and local community partners, including primary schools and charities. In many schools opportunities for informal learning beyond the classroom were enriched through extra-curricular community projects and residential experiences, many of which addressed pupil leadership. Other new initiatives included the development of pupil mentoring schemes, pupil tracking systems and improved systems for reporting to and engaging with parents. A minority of schools invested in extensive continuing professional development (CPD) in areas identified as priorities by the teaching staff; most targeted resources on specific groups of pupils identified as most in need.

Approaches to school self-evaluation

Self-evaluation was a requirement of the award of School of Ambition status. Regular reporting and monitoring of progress was a feature of the Partnership Schools model of challenge and support. The Glasgow Schools of Ambition were supported by an advisor seconded to the national Schools of Ambition support team and a mentor from the University of Glasgow. The Partnership Schools were supported through the GCC Coordination activities of Jim Dalziel and had the opportunity of mentor support in the final stages of the programme. Regular reports of progress against objectives were expected in both programmes, although the Schools of Ambition had greater flexibility regarding target setting and modes of reporting. A model of school-led action research was promoted within the national Schools of Ambition programme.
Lessons learned

**Leadership, succession and shared ownership**
The importance of a strong leadership team to provide the initial vision and impetus for ‘transformation’ was apparent in interview transcripts from across the schools. Related to this, interviewees emphasised the importance of continuity in key positions to maintain momentum over time. Whilst strong leadership was identified as important in initiating change, distributed leadership appears significant in maintaining change. Change was most effective where resources were committed to building wider commitment to initiatives across the school community. Staff commitment is likely to be enhanced by genuine measures to involve them in initial planning and is reinforced by the continued involvement of staff in on-going processes of evaluation, including sharing evidence of impact. Few of the accounts offered in interviews placed a strong emphasis on pedagogical leadership within school, the promotion of collaborative CPD practices involving experimenting with new approaches, peer observation and feedback. The level of awareness about initiatives undertaken through the *Partnership Project* also varied within schools. The development of a dissemination strategy at an early stage would be beneficial in encouraging wider support, participation and interest. The experience of several of the schools demonstrates the feasibility of targeting interventions with smaller groups of pupils whilst also involving contributions from a high volume of school staff. Engaging with the wider school staff built capacity to address the needs of pupils most in need and enabled the sharing of good practice across the school community.

**Learning and Teaching**
Both *Schools of Ambition* and *Partnership Schools* developed alternative curricular provision to address the needs of the lowest attaining pupils. In extending choice over courses, certification and sites of learning for pupils at an earlier age, care needed to be taken to avoid reasserting ‘vocational’ and ‘academic’ divisions. In tailoring approaches to meet the needs of lowest attaining pupils, schools paid greater attention to the affective and social dimensions of learning; developments that are transferable across ability groups. Lessons learned through enhanced CPD in the areas of active learning, personalised learning (and their impact on engagement and positive behaviour) are transferable across learning situations. Prospects for whole school transformation were enhanced where interventions penetrate the day-to-day core activities of teaching. In addition to a focus on alternative provision, future plans for ‘school transformation’ might usefully include explicit attention to teachers’ professional learning.

**Partnership Working**
In addressing pupil needs, these ten schools have participated in extended partnership networks, which include services as varied as Barnardo’s, Skills Direct Scotland (formerly Careers Scotland), Health Boards, charities and colleges. Through effective partnership work the schools have improved their capacity to offer specialist provision, guidance and support with the aim of improving achievement and positive destinations. Participation in these networks enabled school personnel working across professional (and departmental) boundaries to develop a common language and shared purpose. Although vulnerable to financial constraints, lessons can be drawn from inter-agency and trans-professional modes of working that are transferable to mainstream school activities, such as the importance of parent advocacy and early
intervention. Often as a result of greater partnership work, many of the schools developed and enhanced their relationship with parents. This included working with community services to reach those parents who previously were reticent about engaging with the school. There is some evidence that parents have become more willing to become involved with the school after witnessing their children achieving for the first time.

**Working with Further Education**
There are many examples of schools working closely with partner colleges to improve positive destinations for as many pupils as possible. Personnel involved in school-college liaison stressed the importance of strengthening support at key transition points to improve continuity in student experience. Evidence from the accounts presented in this report suggests that trainers in vocational areas are currently under-prepared in relation to positive behaviour strategies commonly deployed in the school sector. The CPD Standards set out in the *Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges* (2006) explicitly address issues connected with teaching young people and children from secondary schools. The relationship between the CPD Standards and current practice in school and college sites could be closer.

**Project Management and Capacity Building**
Individual, site-based, collaborative and networked opportunities for the development of project management skills were presented in the course of the *Schools of Ambition* and *Partnership Schools* projects. Opportunities for professional learning across school boundaries were valued by the schools. *Schools of Ambition* coordinators were able to draw on regional and national events to support their work and *Partnership School* coordinators valued opportunities to meet as a group. To acquire further skills in educational project management, several individuals embarked on leadership development programmes such as the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH). Enhanced staffing allowed senior staff to commit time to project management and in some schools additional administrators, sometimes in senior roles, supported monitoring processes.

However, researcher experience working with school staff in the *Schools of Ambition* and *Partnership* programmes suggests a need to build capacity for professional enquiry and evaluation among the general teacher population, especially in light of the potential for school-based curriculum development extended through *Curriculum for Excellence*. Such developments would attend to processes of learning, as well as more established approaches to performance tracking. The link between teacher knowledge and behaviour, and practices that enhance student outcomes is poorly articulated in many accounts of ‘transformational change’. Such knowledge might be gained through the promotion of forms of professional enquiry that look inside classrooms as well as those that examine aggregate performance data.

Where data monitoring systems are developing, there is a need for further support to assist school leaders and the wider school staff in making effective use of these data to inform decision making in school. Evaluation systems could serve a more explicit formative role, as well as providing evidence of end-point impact. Effective management of these tasks might usefully draw on the expertise of school staff with administrative capabilities, the professional expertise of educators and the leadership skills of senior staff.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and scope

This report presents key messages from a small-scale study of change management practice in ten Glasgow secondary schools. The research was commissioned by The Scottish Government, in partnership with Glasgow City Council and was conducted between August and December 2009. These ten schools received an additional resource over a three-year period to develop innovative approaches to locally identified needs. The main aim of the study was to identify what has been learned by the schools that may be of benefit to other schools in Glasgow, and beyond.

The study addressed the following specific research questions:

1. What is the nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the schools?
2. How have the schools and their communities responded to these challenges in developing their plans for transformation and improvement and for the evaluation of the implementation of these plans?
3. What lessons have been learned through this work about the management of change (including management style and capacity) and about internal and external communication processes, including the involvement of parents and a range of external partners?
4. What opportunities have emerged for teachers and other staff in relation to the development of their professional skills and expertise, including the capacity to manage change and to engage with other agencies in service delivery?

1.2 Background

In 2005/6 three
4\footnote{Castlemilk, St Margaret Mary’s and St Paul’s} Glasgow secondary schools were selected to be part of Tranche 1 of the Government-funded nation-wide \textit{Schools of Ambition} programme. A further school\footnote{Springburn Academy} joined the programme the following year. The \textit{Schools of Ambition} programme was a collaborative partnership between 52 secondary schools and the Scottish Government, Schools’ Directorate (2005-2010)\footnote{From its launch in 2005 the programme expanded from twenty-one schools (tranche one) to twenty-eight by 2006 (seven additional tranche two schools including one Glasgow school), and eventually a total of fifty-two schools distributed across the thirty-two local authorities of Scotland by March 2007 (twenty-four additional tranche three schools).}. The programme formally ends in May 2010. The University of Glasgow team led the national project \textit{Research to Support Schools of Ambition}, a collaborative venture with the Universities of Aberdeen and Strathclyde, supported by The Scottish Government\footnote{This work has been reported on in a series of annual reports available at: \url{http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/schoolsofambition/about/schoolsofambitionresearch.asp}}.

Schools awarded \textit{School of Ambition} status received additional funding of £100,000 per annum for three years to implement a locally negotiated ‘transformational plan’...
premised on whole school change. This funding could be used to support changes to the built environment, promote new partnerships through community, college and business links, invest in curriculum and teacher development or create new posts (such as specialist coaches or counsellors).

In addition, a further six Glasgow secondary schools were identified in 2006 to take part in a project with Glasgow City Council (GCC) and The Scottish Government (TSG), also involving The Hunter Foundation. This is referred to here as The Partnership Project and had a particular focus on pupils who were deemed to be in need of More Choices, More Chances (Scottish Government, 2006) (i.e. deemed to be likely not to enter further education, employment or training). These six schools were also able to draw on an additional resource of £100,000 per annum for three years (2006 – 2009) and were also supported by members of the University of Glasgow research team.

The research team from the University of Glasgow Faculty of Education had therefore been working with all ten of these schools, seeking to provide support and evaluation guidance to the staff, in order that they might research the effectiveness of the initiatives they were undertaking as part of one or other of these programmes. The priority areas within each of the ten schools’ plans are set out in Appendix 1.

In all of the schools, it was intended that an integral part of the transformational activity would be a self-evaluation strand and that the University team would provide support for this. There were differences in the overall approach to self-evaluation between the Schools of Ambition and the Partnership Schools projects. The University mentors sought to offer insights into action research, practitioner enquiry and related models of self-evaluation during the support work and one of the questions guiding the present Glasgow-based additional project concerned this strand, as indicated above, in Section 1.1.

Glasgow City Council was interested in distilling and disseminating lessons learned from the research schools to the wider education community in the City and beyond. This process was seen as informing strategic initiatives in relation to the cross-phase Learning and Teaching Strategy - Curriculum for Excellence (GCC, May 2009), which is complemented by the Secondary Strategy 2009-14 (GCC, January 2009). These strategic developments aim to promote transformational change through sustainable innovation.

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8 Drumchapel, Eastbank, Govan, Hillhead, Rosshall, and St. Andrews
Transformational change will be encouraged to improve the outcomes for young people in Glasgow. More and more schools are achieving success through transformational programmes which encourage the whole school community to be creative and innovative. Examples of transformational change which will be further encouraged include: seeking the views of young people about what works; extending the understanding of staff of the world of work; teachers as action researchers; vocational provision will include young people of all attributes and abilities and will be on offer through wider curricular choice and pathways to learning which will be mapped in a city wide prospectus. (Glasgow City Council Secondary Strategy 2009 – 2014[^10], p.3)

The processes of change associated with school development and school improvement have been much researched in the UK and internationally in recent years. Outcomes from this work typically emphasise the complexity of change, the importance of values and leadership and the need for cultural change in order to effect educational improvement (see, for example, work by Fullan, 2003, 2007; Hargreaves, 2003; Caldwell and Spinks, 2008; Fink, 2000; Reynolds, 1996; and Hopkins, 2007). There have been some serious arguments about the differences between school effectiveness and school improvement and there has also been considerable scepticism about what it is realistic to expect schools to be able to achieve in the face of very significant social and economic obstacles (Slee, Weiner with Tomlinson, 1998; Thrupp, 1999, 2005; Thrupp and Willmott, 2003; Mortimore and Whitty, 2000). Indeed the whole ‘school reform movement’ has had a very powerful impact on schools in the USA and England, leading to a range of centralised programmes (see Barber, 2001). Such high stakes approaches may actually have more rhetorical effect than they do on the quality of educational experiences and outcomes for young people (Muijs and Chapman, 2009; Barker, 2005).

In Scotland the policy emphases have been on ‘improvement’ and ‘excellence’. A series of HMIE and Government documents have promoted these terms, partly in response to ongoing concerns about continuing underachievement and inequality of outcomes (Scottish Executive, 2004a, 2004b; Scottish Government, 2006; HMIE 2006, 2007, 2009). Arguably, one of the most distinctive features of the Scottish approach to these matters has been the encouragement to schools and teachers to develop their own localised responses. Hence we see here the emphasis on self-evaluation as an important part of the accountability mechanisms or indeed the approaches taken through Schools of Ambition or in the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence. Glasgow City Council, in developing its response to the opportunities presented by Curriculum for Excellence, appears to support such an approach and indeed the current study is a reflection of the belief that much can be learned by sharing the practices and experiences within individual schools.

1.3 Research activities

The main research methods used were:

- Key informant interviews
- Focus groups
- Analysis of school monitoring data
- Document analysis – internal and external reports

The research reported here is based on a period of condensed qualitative fieldwork between October and December 2009. Semi-structured interviews were carried out in each of the schools with the headteacher, project coordinators, classteachers and other local partners as appropriate e.g. home link workers, youth workers and careers personnel. Interviews and/or focus groups were undertaken with students and parents and other community partners. Participants were selected in negotiation with schools to provide a wide range of relevant insights on school transformation. The interviews and group discussions provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the changes experienced over the past 2-4 years and the extent to which the culture of the school had changed. Before taking part in these activities, all potential participants were asked to read and sign a consent form following an explanation of the project through a Plain Language Statement (see Appendix 2).

Each of the four researchers took lead responsibility for data gathering in between two and four of the schools. Initially, an interview of one hour’s duration was arranged with the headteacher. This led to subsequent individual and group interviews with other key figures within the school, such as members of the senior management team, project coordinators, employability officers, teachers and other school staff with involvement in specific initiatives. During half-day visits to the schools, documents relevant to the research questions were also collected e.g. project reports, examples of materials and school-generated evaluation proforma.

In most of the schools focus groups were also arranged with pupils and ex-pupils and with parents. A total of seventy-four pupils and sixteen parent/carers participated in interviews across the ten schools. In addition, seventeen telephone or face-to-face interviews were conducted with a wide range of external partners who worked with the schools in relation to specific objectives expressed in the transformational plan. This included representatives from Skills Development Scotland, Glasgow West Regeneration Agency, children’s services professionals, community organisations, charities and staff of further education colleges. Most of the interviews were between thirty minutes and an hour’s duration. The range of participants across the ten schools is summarised in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headteacher</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depute</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other staff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>162</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
All of the interviews and focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed in full, producing a set of fifty-five transcripts. Initial analysis of the transcripts was conducted by the field researcher for each school and was organised in relation to the four research questions. This was complemented by team meetings and the creation of a shared (secure) digital resource to facilitate review of the dataset. Transcripts were reviewed together with other available documentary evidence, including typically, the School of Ambition or Partnership project report from the school, the original transformational and/or development plan and HMI or local authority inspection reports. This led to the preparation of a summary overview of developments in each school which are reported in Sections 2 and 3 of this report.

1.4 Structure of the report

Section two and three provide summary accounts from each of the ten schools. In each case, the four key research questions (p.1) are addressed in turn and a summary is offered. Section two deals with the four schools that were part of the national Schools of Ambition programme. Section three of the report deals with the six schools that took part in The Partnership Project. Section four draws out the key lessons learned across the ten schools and identifies some key challenges for the future.
2 FOUR ‘SCHOOLS OF AMBITION’

Of the fifty two schools that were designated *Schools of Ambition* by the Scottish Government, four were Glasgow City Council schools. In order to be so designated a school had to submit a Transformational Plan to their local authority and the local authority could then submit it to the Government for consideration. Each Transformational Plan related directly to the needs of the particular school and the priorities were indeed very varied. In Glasgow two of the schools, Castlemilk High and St Margaret Mary’s, submitted a joint Plan because the intention was very much to develop close collaboration. This was accepted and is presented below as a joint report. The school that follows, St Paul’s Secondary School, was also part of the first tranche, with *SoA* funding from 2006-09. The fourth school, Springburn Academy, was part of the second tranche (2007 – 2010), of just seven schools across the country, which came on stream a few months later. There was an expectation on all *Schools of Ambition* to include an action research element to the implementation of their Transformational Plans.
2.1 Castlemilk High School and St Margaret Mary’s Secondary School

Castlemilk High and St Margaret Mary’s Secondary School serve the Castlemilk housing estate on the southeast side of the city. At one time this estate was among the largest housing developments in Western Europe. The community was established during the 1960s and 70s as families from central areas such as the Gorbals were rehoused in the outer fringes of the city. Over recent years there has been a considerable investment by the City Council in the areas housing stock. Living conditions are in general considerably better than they were ten to twenty years ago. Both school buildings – together with the four feeder primary schools are relatively new buildings and both secondary schools have small pupil rolls (2008/9 – Castlemilk High 438, St Margaret Mary’s 427)

2.1.1 Nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the schools

In order to bid to be designated as Schools of Ambition, these two schools developed a joint ‘Transformational Plan’. This was an unusual collaboration between neighbouring schools, one denominational, the other non-denominational, serving the same geographical community in the south of Glasgow.

In the original proposal it was stated:

*Castlemilk is an area of multiple deprivation that has the highest rates of domestic violence in the City of Glasgow. The young people attending the two schools have to cope with family break-ups, unemployment, debt, alcohol and drug misuse and, in some cases, imprisonment of family members.*

In terms of destinations at the time of the SoA bid, in 2005, 32 per cent (Castlemilk High) and 39 per cent (St Margaret Mary’s) of leavers had negative destinations, not entering employment, training or further education. Thus 68 per cent and 61 per cent respectively had positive destinations. Significant numbers of pupils are registered for free school meals (2008/9 - Castlemilk High 34%, St Margaret Mary’s 42%).

There had been a tradition of cooperation between the two schools at management level, with headteachers taking part in a joint forum bringing together education, health, social work and cultural and leisure services, and also contributing to the Education and Lifelong Learning Group of the Castlemilk Partnership.

2.1.2 The schools’ response to these challenges

The head of Castlemilk High had worked in this community earlier in his career before returning to take up the headship in 2001. He was clear about his priorities at that time, and was guided by the following aphorism:

‘all poverty is damaging but the most damaging poverty of all is the poverty of ambition and expectation’ (Headteacher, Castlemilk High)
This chimed well with the overall vision expressed in the SoA Transformational Plan, as expressed by the head of St Margaret Mary’s:

... my vision of transformation was clearly to try and shift the culture in Castlemilk of lack of ambition, of poverty of ambition, to make sure that although the parents may not be equipped themselves to pass on skills, to pass on knowledge, they had to be confident that the children were in good hands and they would get the best deal possible in both schools in St Margaret Mary’s and Castlemilk High School, (Headteacher, St MM’s)

Indeed the journey that had been started in 2001 at Castlemilk was able to pick up speed with the help of the SoA opportunity:

Then when the School of Ambition [project] came on the scene with Ambitious Excellent Schools, it seemed to us in Castlemilk High, this is the journey that we’re already on, we’ve got a ticket for this train, it fits, so we will join this because it doesn’t deflect us from what we want to do. (Headteacher, Castlemilk High)

The Transformational Plan

Three key areas were specified in the Transformational Plan: Student Attainment; Personal Effectiveness; and Employability. These areas were to be addressed through three major strategies: Teaching for Effective Learning; Curriculum Flexibility; and Enhancing Employability and Improving Attendance.

The Teaching for Effective Learning strategy was addressed through the provision of a range of staff development opportunities and discussion with a range of key partners, including parents. The teaching for effective learning staff development initiative was initially led by an external facilitator, Mary Pirie. The intention was that all teachers would have the opportunity individually and collaboratively to develop and improve their own professional practice, for example by team teaching, classroom observation and the sharing of good practice, both within each school and between the two schools. Parallel provision was to be made for support staff in the schools, so that the effectiveness of their work could also be improved.

Pupils certainly had noticed some changes in teaching and were very enthusiastic about the ways in which teachers were now clear about the purposes of lessons and helped the children understand what they had learned in each lesson.

The Curricular Flexibility strategy involved seeking to harmonise the timetables of the two schools at senior level and facilitating movement of pupils between the schools, in order to increase the range of options that students could choose from. Additional provision was brought in through closer collaboration with FE Colleges, including Cardonald. It was hoped that these improvements would lead to increased staying on rates for pupils.

Harmonising the curricula of the two schools involved very detailed timetable planning, including reviewing school start and finish times, ensuring pupils had time
to travel (although initially taxis were heavily used). The greatest successes were apparently in the science subjects where the collaboration facilitated the maintenance of the full range of subjects taught by specialist teachers, which would not otherwise have been possible. In science, the collaboration has improved the quality of the educational experience in the classes, in the view of one teacher:

> I think it’s been a good experience for them. I think sort of mixing as well with the Castlemilk High pupils has helped, getting them out their own wee niche and actually getting involved with them and, as I said, I think it impacts on the whole kind of ethos in the class because you’ve got more people you can bounce off other individuals in the class and do more activities, so I think it has helped. (Science Teacher, St MM’s)

But there was also an important strand concerned with broadening the curriculum beyond the traditional subjects.

> I think one of the partners that you should see is the driving school. It’s an unusual one and they’ve come from being embedded in the curriculum because we were paying significant amounts of money to get that in, but we were also giving employment to local people and they knew that when the money came to an end, we couldn’t sustain that, so they started thinking up creative plans of, well, how can we do this then? So we took it out of the curriculum this year because we couldn’t sustain it from that point of view and we made it an extra-curricular club, so it’s now still in the culture, but as an extra-curricular club and they’re offering them six lessons for £30. (Headteacher, Castlemilk High)

The proprietor of the driving school was very enthusiastic about his work with the schools and felt that pupils were responding very positively and becoming increasingly responsible citizens. He was very enthusiastic about the school and compared it with that which his own children had been to

> The kids are there, they pay their money, they want the end product now. Kids up there they just want to go out and enjoy it and see what they can do. Probably the hardest thing for them is to realise they’ve got to do some theory as well as practical, that’s it, and I must admit if anybody asked me what school to send a kid to, definitely this school, from what I’ve seen, from the side that I seen in here for the kids, this school is fantastic. (Driving school proprietor)

The schools linked their plan very explicitly to the (then) emerging Curriculum for Excellence, stating that after the three years of the project success would be judged against the following:

> Our vision to transform student, parent and staff outlooks in relation to raising attainment and achievement in school students will be firmly established in the Castlemilk community. Students from the two schools will be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. (Transformational Plan)
In 2009, the two schools produced a joint report on their *Schools of Ambition* project, ‘*Telling the Story*’\(^\text{11}\).

**Partnership with the FE sector**

The liaison with colleges included both pupil travel for attendance at college classes and college ‘outreach’ where lecturers came to the schools to teach. As the Education Liaison Officer from one of the colleges noted, Castlemilk pupils had experienced the additional facilities and social life available at the college. However, with the end of Schools of Ambition funding this proved to be unsustainable.

> *The City Council don’t have the money to subsidise transport virtually all we’re doing is outreach just now.* (ELO Cardonald College)

Without funding, travel to Cardonald is a major undertaking for pupils however.

> *It is possible and a small number of young people from Castlemilk do come here under their own steam possibly to do something like higher psychology, but transport is an issue because coming by public transport by the time you take your teaching time in college, add on public transportation time, it’s not really very viable.* (ELO Cardonald College)

The focus in the College provision, particularly for the outreach work done at the schools, is mainly on vocational courses, although not entirely.

> *Well, currently our programme involves sports, sports leadership, it involves social care, travel and tourism and also a mixture of holistic therapy and beauty therapy and the holistic therapy is one that we did originally. The social care and holistic therapy and I think first-aid were the initial ones that we were involved in three or four years ago.* (ELO Cardonald College)

**Enhancing Employability Strategy**

The third strategy, for Enhancing Employability, included additional support from Skills Development Scotland (formerly Careers Scotland) and further collaboration with the local primary schools, as well as increasing attempts to identify those pupils most unlikely to achieve positive destinations in order to provide support for them. Attendance rates had been improving steadily but increased efforts to improve them further were to be supported through the appointment of an Education Liaison Officer and in each school a support assistant to oversee the new monitoring system. However, while this strategy was reported to have been effective the attendance officer post was discontinued when project funding ended.

Much of the work with local primary schools involved additional careers Scotland input to address the culture of ‘worklessness’ in the community.

\(^\text{11}\) This is available at: [http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/schoolsofambition/schools/stmargaretmarys.asp](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/schoolsofambition/schools/stmargaretmarys.asp)
...we used a dollop of our money to take an extra day each of a careers officer, so our service level agreement gave us one day out of five to engage with young people and we used some of our money, about £7,500, to give us another day, so we had the careers officer in two days and they had a careers officer in two days, and what that did it allowed us to engage far more regularly with young people rather than an interview a year. He [also] ran workshop evenings for parents. (Headteacher, Castlemilk High)

HMIE’s perspective on progress

Castlemilk High School was inspected by HMIE in March 2008 (two years into the project) and the report was very positive, allocating grades of ‘excellent’, saying that key strengths of the school included:

- Positive impact on life opportunities for pupils
- A vibrant sense of community within the school
- High expectations and a shared enjoyment of pupils’ progress and achievements
- Significant improvements to teaching and learning
- Relationships with parents and a wide range of other partners
- Outstanding leadership

The report also makes several references to the Schools of Ambition activity, commending the curricular partnership with St Margaret Mary’s and suggesting that the quality of teaching in the school had become a strength as a result of ‘a significant investment in staff development through the Schools of Ambition programme’.

St Margaret Mary’s had not been inspected by HMIE since 2004. However, Glasgow City Council carried out a quality review of St Margaret Mary’s in Autumn 2008 (two years into the project) and this appeared to be consistent with the outcome of Castlemilk High’s HMIE inspection, saying that ‘The school benefited from wide curricular choices for potentially disaffected young people.’

2.1.3 The management of change

Communication

The two schools appointed a project leader in 2005 to coordinate the implementation of the plan, with the two heads taking the view that the dual nature of the work would create increased complexity. As they put it: ‘the co-ordinator’s role was to support each school and to provide a coherent link within each school and between them both’.

There was no doubt in the minds of senior staff that communication was a key issue. As one of the key Depute Heads, who was central to the project, put it:
I think probably initially there was a big launch, so all members of staff were involved in the kind of philosophy of the School of Ambition, but then for the first year, in fact for the first two years it was only the science department who were involved, so communication really was key for that particular department, but I think one of the lessons we had to learn was when we did roll that out to all of the school we then needed to bring everyone else on board again and there were kind of inconsistencies in that communication and that would be one of the big lessons, make sure that everyone is involved and they all know what their role is, so there would be the deputes in our role, then there would obviously be the faculty heads of department and what was their role in managing the curriculum and the young people and the assessment and all of that aspect and then there would be the actual class teacher, but of course beside that you have the welfare and the care of the young people, so there had to be pastoral care, guidance teachers involved, so really it was at every level in the school that there required to be[engagement]…(Depute Headteacher, St MM’s)

If communication had been largely successful and effective between the management teams, as we were told by those in these teams, there was nevertheless some feeling of frustration among at least some subject teachers, who desired a greater level of professional interaction:

Yes, because I think it’s more like the deputes and head teachers. We did actually meet the science department a couple of times, but I would have liked to have more, that would have helped. (Science Teacher, St MM’s)

Creating a sense of community

The previous St Margaret Mary’s headteacher, who had been the co-instigator of the original plan, had left the school early on in the project for another post and was replaced by a colleague coming from another Glasgow School of Ambition. One of the incoming head’s great prides in the project concerned the way in which the school communities had interacted:

…it’s a tight community and the two schools obviously co-existed for a number of years and I was delighted to say that I don’t think in all the time of the project there has been any difficulty due to territorialism or sectarianism, and I think that’s a huge statement, …. …on a daily basis we have children from our neighbouring non-denominational school walking in, in complete safety, confidence, and simply going to classes alongside our children. (Headteacher, St MM’s)

He also believes that sustaining change is very much about encouraging positive perceptions within the community. The school recently introduced blazers as part of the uniform:

Now blazers in Castlemilk are fairly novel ideas and I researched it fully with the parents, my parent council, and they thought it was a good idea. The reason I always say to the children is they deserve the same educational
experience as any other child in any other school, if not better, because their parents choose to come here. (Headteacher, St MM’s)

Curriculum harmonisation

Involvement of parents at an early stage was also seen as a critical factor in bringing about the desired changes. The schools brought the two sets of parents together and were very encouraged by their responses.

it was a very, very positive meeting and the parents were very positive. They asked very sharp questions, were very clear that they didn’t want the schools to merge, come together, but they saw the sense of having an enriched curriculum by working with not just the partner school but with two FE colleges and some external providers, for example a local driving school, or there was the Scottish Football Association which we tied into as well. They could see the increased options for their young people, the progression pathways for their young people were enhanced. (Headteacher, Castlemilk High)

From a pupil’s perspective however, the integration has not necessarily always been straightforward and a number of students spoke about initially feeling ‘out of place’ when attending classes in the other school. In most cases these feeling appear to have been short lived.

The FE partnerships likewise have not been without their challenges. The closest college actually had a campus within walking distance, but the roll there was declining. The most successful collaboration has actually been with Cardonald College, whose main campus is a considerable distance from Castlemilk, but through a combination of supporting travel and college staff attending at the schools to deliver classes, pupils in the two schools have benefited considerably from Cardonald College input.

Administrative harmonisation

The complexity of this two school project also meant that there was a considerable range of financial and other administrative tasks associated with running it smoothly. An experienced Administration and Finance Assistant (AFA) in one of the schools was asked to take on the extra work as an additional responsibility. She played an important role in a range of activities such as booking transport and liaising with the driving school, as well as coordinating the overall finances and preparing reports to GCC and Government.

Managing different institutional cultures

Partnership working has resulted in some issues of different cultures (‘culture clash’, as one respondent called it) in the schools and colleges:
We’ve had difficulties with behaviour issues when they go to college because we’re sending out the less able usually. We’ve also had difficulties, this is something we’ve learned along the way, with the style of teacher or lecturer at college because they don’t necessarily have the same training as we do and therefore do they put up with the kind of discipline and issues that we have in school? No they don’t. So what they do is they challenge the young people and of course the young people challenge back and before you know we get... We’ve had issues where we’ve had to remove pupils. What we’ve come round to is now trying to get as many college courses delivered in the school, but that has another flip side because then you have college lecturers with the ethos of college delivering in school and other teachers looking and saying “Have you seen what’s happening in that classroom?” They’re allowed to eat, they’re allowed to drink, they’re allowed to…(Depute Headteacher, St MM’s)

From a pupil’s perspective, the college approach added some sense of maturity:

It’s more grown up and the lecturers talk to you as if you’re an adult and you don’t need to put your hand up and it’s just different and we go to the playrooms to learn how a child would learn. It’s interesting. (Female student taking childcare course, Castlemilk High)

2.1.4 Professional Development for teachers and other staff

Staff development was in many ways the key plank of the whole project in these two schools. Engaging staff in the project in a developmental way was the key to reducing any resistance to the original project plan.

As soon as you suggest that there is a potential for change there’s always good reasons why staff would say “well that’s OK but I don’t really fancy that too much”. We did encounter some of [that], but we did a programme … involving the staff. Learning and teaching was in the middle of the transformational plan, therefore staff were critical to our success. All the other bits of the plan were fitted into that, so the staff could then see that it wasn’t about putting money to something that they couldn’t access. They were very much part of that transformational journey through their CPD, so that’s what we tried to do to win over any sceptics on that. (Headteacher, Castlemilk High)

The deployment of an external consultant to lead and facilitate the CPD for staff seems to have been a key element in the success of developments for the two schools, helping to overcome some of the cynicism which can undermine traditional professional development activities:

I think it was recognised at the time that the only way to involve staff is to present them with something, is to give them something, so what was presented to them was literally CPD opportunities on their doorstep. It was a sincere focus on Assessment is for Learning and a focus on teaching for effective learning. Now they hired a national recognised CPD co-ordinator, I don’t know if you know Mary Pirie, of … Locus Learning, and she provided in
a very structured manner this kind of doorstep delivery of CPD because they didn’t have to go anywhere, it was a joint focus, there would be joint twilight sessions, but she would also come into classes and give advice and that’s something as a normal school you would never get. If [a subject] department, …. if that was a difficulty for me OK I could bring the adviser in for a minute, but how do I do a sustained effort to say “no, I think you should do this, I think you should do that” and Mary did that. (Headteacher, St MM’s)

The St Margaret Mary’s Head went on to say that there came a point when the staff felt they would not continue to benefit from further input of this kind and so Mary Pirie’s involvement declined, although she continued to provide advice when asked.

Staff in both schools have been encouraged to adopt an increasingly reflective approach, partly through adopting the HMie approach to school self-evaluation:

... when you look at reflective practices we’ve now moved a huge gear up from when we first started. When we first started I think generally self-evaluation was visits by the middle managers, or joint leaders as they call them in here, joint leaders and senior leaders going into classrooms and observing. That still happens, but we have changed the whole system this session to look at profiles, to look at reflective profiles in each of the HGIOS\textsuperscript{12} kind of indicators so that they reflect themselves. (Headteacher, St MM’s)

The collaboration between the schools might be seen as providing some scope for professional development in itself, but this is not the view of some senior staff closely involved:

I think most of the teachers who are involved in this see this as just another aspect that complicates their work because they have young people from a different school and they have to communicate more and they have to use different systems for discipline behaviour for example. I’m not sure if they would see it as a professional development, I have to be honest. I think they probably see it more as a hassle. They realise why they have to do it because it fills their classes and at the end of the day that does come down to staffing. (Depute Headteacher, St MM’s)

There are development opportunities for the college staff involved in the work as well:

I think from a college point of view many of our staff are not necessarily trained or experienced in working with people as young as they might be in the school sector, so at times we have to do some extra staff development. Sometimes it’s a case of they’re probably quite literally learning on their feet, but I would like to think at the end of the day it will probably improve what our staff can offer having worked in a school, that they will have to learn to maybe be slightly more effective class managers in that probably 99% of the students they work with in college have chosen to be here and are coming in some cases possibly even paying to come to college for their learning

\textsuperscript{12} A reference to How Good Is Our School? (HMIE, 2006)
experience, whereas I think there can be a degree in schools if it’s a captive audience you may not always want to be there, so they no doubt have to adapt their teaching and management strategies in the classroom accordingly. (ELO Cardonald College)

Concerns over working with younger students also came up in a number of the discussions in other schools and colleges about liaison work of this kind.

2.1.5 Conclusions

The major achievement of this project has been the development of a collaborative curriculum between the two schools, that we have recently been told is now being seen by the City Council as a potential model for other schools to follow.

There has been an explicit concern to ensure sustainability of the work in both schools. This has been grounded in setting up structures which are not dependent on individuals but stress important dimensions in managing change.

Following the conclusion of the additional funding, there is no longer a designated co-ordinator to ensure that joint activities work smoothly. The responsibilities are now taken by two of the deputies.

The school has been working much more closely with the FE sector although as funding for transport has finished the links with colleges have come under renewed scrutiny. However, the schools and colleges have worked to address this issue by developing further outreach work from the colleges.
2.2 St Paul’s High School

St Paul’s is a recently refurbished denominational secondary school located in the south west of Glasgow. The roll is currently 811 and has been steadily increasing - ten years ago it was 500. The school was included in the first tranche of Schools of Ambition, in February 2006. Eighteen months into the project, the headteacher retired and a new head was appointed from within the existing school staff.

2.2.1 Nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the school

The school serves a number of large housing estates characterised by a range of problems including high unemployment, poor health and low attainment. Free school meal registration for 2008/9 was 34%, seven percentage points above the city figure.

*It was about trying to raise the aspirations of the young people, many of whom come from very challenging backgrounds and that was a huge challenge for us and one of our key areas in our journey has been learning beyond the classroom and trying to have an impact there. (Headteacher)*

2.2.2 The school’s response to these challenges

The Transformational Plan

St Paul’s Transformational Plan set out to engage staff, pupils, parents and the community in the following:

- Direct focus on each pupil by primarily developing and implementing an effective tracking system.
- Learning beyond the classroom to impact on pupils’ preparation for the world.

Five specific areas for improvement were also highlighted in the original transformational submission.

- Achievement and attainment
- Widening horizons
- Building self-confidence and social skills
- Building positive new traditions
- Raising aspirations

These areas were to be addressed through the development of three key work strands within the school.

- Pupil tracking and reporting to parents
- Learning beyond the classroom
- Enterprise and the world of work

A number of initiatives were aimed at the general pupil populace while others were targeted at pupils with particular needs including, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), disengagement, and low self-esteem. However, it was also clear that in some instances as targeted initiatives developed they had been opened to a wider pupil membership.
Pupil tracking and reporting to parents

Aims:
• To focus on enriching the learning experiences of all pupils by involving pupils and teachers in setting ambitious but achievable targets for learning.
• To link target setting to a pupil mentoring and reward system.
• To radically alter the arrangements for reporting pupil progress to parents and thus increase parental involvement and engagement with both the school and their child’s education.

The school spent a considerable time over its three years as a school of ambition developing and refining its tracking system. The system is now fully electronic and teachers can complete pupil reports from home as well as in school. As the system progressed target setting with S3-S6 pupils was implemented in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and all teachers in the school were invited to mentor named pupils. For S4–S6 this involves mentor and student meeting for 20 minutes each week to talk about the pupil’s curricular progress. Targets are then set and parents are kept informed through the use of a specially designed proforma.

It was evident from the schools own evaluation that pupils, parents and staff felt this was a worthwhile development and was contributing to the school ethos, building pupil confidence, and contributing to improved attainment. One of the parents we spoke to was particularly positive about the tracking system.

*They keep track of the kids now to make sure they’re doing their homework, their attendance. Any problems they’ve got, they’ll ask them “Is everything OK, are you finding any difficulty in classes, are you getting on with other pupils?” If anything comes up it’s dealt with right away so that it doesn’t go into anything major. Every now and again, I think it’s twice a year, you get a report. It’s good. (Female parent with daughters in S3 and S5)*

Engaging with parents

Concerns with low turnouts at parents’ evenings (30%-40%) led the school to replace them with individual teacher/parent sessions. These meetings were set up at a time of the parents choosing with all teaching staff responsible for conducting a number of interviews. In addition all staff were offered CPD on how to conduct one-to-one interviews with parents.

School figures suggest that 80%-90% of parents typically attend these sessions. Moreover, such developments have had an impact on the schools links with the community and increasing the role of parents in the life of the school – highlighted in the HMIe inspection report of 2007.

*Well established innovative arrangements for reporting and discussing pupils’ progress with parents were very successful. Parental attendance at these*
meetings, as well as at more general parents meetings, was very high. (HMie 2007)

The four interviewed parents detailed their experiences of contact with the school, the ethos of the school, and the support given to pupils.

When they do the prize giving there’s a lot of kids get recognition for various achievements whether that’s attendance, pastoral care or academic merit, I think the school does go out of its way to recognise achievement that doesn’t necessarily have to be academic. They’re certainly very interested in my son. I always felt they took an interest in him as a person, as an individual, and I think that always made a difference and they always set high standards and there was always this sense of involvement. (Female parent with son in S4)

There’s quite a lot of information sessions regarding like when my daughter went into 3rd Year to pick her subjects and the same with my oldest to pick her subjects for 5th Year, so I attend all the meetings to do with the kids.... They send a newsletter [home] every so often. The kids bring letters home. They’re well informed and then they inform me, but if it’s not a newsletter then the school phones. ((Female parent with daughters in S3 and S5)

Learning beyond the classroom

A number of projects sought to widen the learning experiences of pupils through the development of extra-curricular activities and by extending pre-existing curricular activities in new interdisciplinary practices. Much of this work involved operationalising the four Curriculum for Excellence capacities.

Aims:

- To engender and develop self-belief, self-confidence and increased social skills amongst the pupils of St Paul’s.
- To widen their horizons and, through carefully planned interventions, raise their aspirations and ambitions.
- To improve both achievement and attainment for pupils and the recognition of these within the school.

This strand of the work involved a number of whole school projects and specific curriculum/subject initiatives. To foster the work the school introduced a bidding system through which learning leaders from within the school and beyond could access funds for specific projects. For bids to be successful a number of criteria had to be addressed, including a focus on enriching the learning experiences of all pupils, and a focus on outcomes, timescale, personnel involved, cost and evaluation plans. In total 13 whole school or residential projects were funded and 42 curricular projects. These comprised Expressive Arts (10), Health & Wellbeing (6), Languages (5) Mathematics (4), Religious Education (2), Science (7), Social Studies (5) and Technologies (3).

Developments within this strand were commented on favourably by HMie in their 2007 inspection report.
...an outstanding range of opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom which was having a positive impact on their personal development. The school has an innovative approach to involvement of subject specialists in planning for learning beyond the classroom helping pupils to make the connections between learning in school and the world of work and further education. (HMIe 2007)

The Citizenship initiative

It was apparent from discussions with participants that a number of initiatives undertaken as part of the ‘learning beyond the classroom’ strand were particularly notable. Chief amongst these was the introduction of ‘Citizenship’ within Social Studies. The aim of this initiative was to provide all pupils in S2 with the opportunity to become more responsible citizens through active learning by engaging them in projects in their school, local and global communities.

The rationale behind the change in S2 was the inclusion of S2 PSE within the Faculty of Social Subjects. It was decided that an integrated approach to this would service better the needs of pupils within this year group. The Faculty of Social Subjects had already changed the delivery of their courses to meet the Access 3 Social Subjects National Qualification requirement and as such was delivering a more contemporary based course where skills development was key. This was done through studying a number of curricular areas (Glasgow, including its Gang Culture, Climate Change and Global Warming, World Development, Health, Local & Scottish History and the USA as well as a whole school initiative on participation and representation through Pupil Parliament elections) tying in with the key concepts of citizenship where pupils were exploring in a more active way their school, local and global community. (St Paul’s Telling the Story - http://www.st-paulshigh.glasgow.sch.uk/)

Interviews with pupils, staff and parents underscored a number of positive outcomes from this initiative. Interviewed pupils generally welcomed what they saw as greater autonomy, increased involvement in decision making, and growing self-confidence promoted through involvement in Citizenship.

There’s no curriculum for citizenship but you have to pick something that’s suitable within the school and your teacher says to you if they think it’s a good idea or not... You feel as if you’re getting a bit more, like the teachers not always telling you what to do. You get to do what you want to do. (Female pupil S3)

All those team building exercises you do in citizenship working together makes you more confident in class and therefore you can excel more. (Female pupil S3)

The teacher looked at attendance last year on the day we had citizenship and the attendance went up every single day.... Everybody seemed to be more
Findings from the school’s own evaluation of Citizenship indicated that the overwhelming majority of pupils felt actively involved in the project, and perhaps more importantly, pupils identified as less able were more likely to indicate gains in their confidence.

Interviewed parents also made a number of comments indicating their appreciation of the Citizenship initiative as well as other ventures associated with learning beyond the classroom.

An environmental education officer with the city regeneration agency, an organisation that has supported much of the environmental work associated with the citizenship initiative, suggested that the school’s involvement in a number of local regeneration projects was helping to raise the profile of the school in the local community, reducing the likelihood of vandalism, and building inter-generational relationships between older community members and pupils.

Enterprise and the world of work

**Aims:**
Developments in this strand were primarily aimed at involving young people at risk of disengagement with school and/or causing low level disruption in mainstream classes, challenging environments through social alienation or personal confidence issues. Activities developed included an S3 Enterprise Group, Princes Trust Excelerate with EL programme, Global Citizens project and supervised work experience. Frequently, young people involved in these programmes were referred by pastoral care teachers. However, it was also evident that this strand has expanded to include a wider range and greater number of pupils within the school.

The Enterprise Officer spoke with great enthusiasm about developments that had or were currently taking place within the school and the subsequent impact on pupils and the wider community.

_We’ve got even more courses that are involving young people within our community. In the wider school the kids volunteer in primaries. We’ve got kids organising parties and different things in the community, in nurseries, kids working with voluntary groups in the community and that’s becoming wider and wider. As the year goes on more and more projects are buying into it and I think it’s very positive. Also we’ve seen a dramatic change in our destination statistics. That’s been a fantastic change. I think it’s a direct result of getting people more confident and out there and understanding what they can do after they leave school. (Enterprise Officer)_

Both the Enterprise Officer and the Community Learning Worker suggested that these initiatives had been relatively successful in engaging both targeted and non-targeted young people, helping to build their confidence, employment experience, and experience of further education opportunities. However, the Community Learning
Worker observed that maintaining the involvement of girls in enterprise groups was generally more of a challenge than with boys, girls being more prone to drop out and difficult to re-engage.

For the same Community Learning Worker there was also a lot to be gained from being based in the school including being able to inform young people of other groups and activities running in the local area. Both the Enterprise Officer and Community Learning Worker had recently become involved in initiatives within the school including the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, an S1 drop-in youth club and involvement in the S2 citizenship classes.

Links with colleges

The depute headteacher also spoke about how the work with colleges had developed and about how such work was building on the schools understanding of the local job market while the Enterprise Officer also pointed out that the school was sending more pupils to pre-vocational courses than ever before.

With colleges [relationships have] dramatically changed. We have college lecturers coming out to the school to teach groups of pupils that we’ve identified and we give certain courses. One of the ones we’re doing is retail. We’re doing that because Silverburn [shopping centre] is across the road. We’re doing child care because there’s a lot of nurseries in this area. There’s lots and lots of child care opportunities in this area and we hope to expand them next year. We send a lot more pupils to college. (Depute headteacher)

Links with primary schools and other community groups

Having raised the profile of St Paul’s pupils in the community it was also evident from interviewees that local primary schools and other organisations were more likely to approach the school seeking to involve its young people in initiatives. Staff and pupils were also more likely to view such developments as central rather than peripheral activities to the school. As one Faculty Head said,

The pupils within this school don’t just see it as this is what we do in this school, I think they see it as we work in nurseries, we work with the primaries, we work with the community, so they’ve got that kind of wee bubble that’s stretched out now. I think a few years ago if you had said “What are we going to do?” they would say “we’ll do a talent show in school” whereas now they would say “we’ll organise something for primaries or we’ll do something with such and such group” so they don’t now see themselves just being wee individuals in the school. The young people are thinking much more broadly. (Faculty Head)
HMIe perspective on progress

Half-way through its SoA funding St Paul’s was inspected by HMIe (April 2007) and the subsequent report identified the following five key strengths.

- Leadership of the headteacher in establishing the school’s very positive reputation in its local and wider community.
- The high quality environment for learning, the commitment of staff and pupils’ pride in the school.
- An outstanding range of opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom, which was having a positive impact on their personal development.
- The overall ethos, underpinned by catholic values, and the quality of pastoral care.
- Partnership with parents and a wide range of external bodies and agencies.

A number of the identified strengths would appear to be associated with the SoA programme.

2.2.3 The management of change

Interviews with participants identified a number of relevant factors associated with the management of change in the school. The retirement of the previous headteacher and the appointment of a new head half way through the initiative had the potential to disrupt the SoA programme. However, the transition proceeded smoothly primarily because the new headteacher was an existing staff member who was both familiar with and supportive of the SoA initiative.

Both the headteacher and depute headteacher stressed the importance of having sufficient time to allow change to take place within a school. Reflecting on the process of change in St Paul’s, the headteacher suggested that organisational change was at first led by enthusiastic members of staff but as the initiative became increasingly regarded as successful, these early supporters were joined by staff who had initially been reluctant to get involved.

For me in Year 1 you only had your very enthusiastic staff that you could probably identify anyway …. very enthusiastic staff who would always be committed and always be there, always be volunteering to do things... They achieved really great success and that starts the ball rolling. By the second year there was beginning to be a sea change in the school, there was beginning to be a yes we can do it attitude and yes we’ll give it a go attitude. I noticed much more inter-disciplinary working. ...... What I’ve taken from [this], and it’s been a learning curve for me as well, is that if you want change and you want it to happen it can’t happen overnight, it can’t even happen in one year, you have to have a plan and you have to have staff buy in. (Headteacher)

The headteacher also highlighted the importance of staff working across departments and with other partners outwith the school. Indeed such developments were seen by a
number of staff interviewees as important in supporting the introduction of *A Curriculum for Excellence*.

### The additional funding

In addition to their comments regarding the process of change in the school the headteacher and other staff interviewees spoke about the importance of having additional finance available. However, it was clear that this funding was regarded as a primer, an inducement to kick-start the initiative and not necessarily critical for maintaining the resultant work.

> It wasn’t huge amounts and that’s my point. To expect people to do it for nothing is not the way it would happen. There has to be a middle ground and I say that the money served its purpose in giving the whole thing impetus and rewards as well and people were rewarded for their great ideas and the reward was you were able to take children out, you were able to get a bus and take them to the Houses of Parliament. We were able to do these kind of things that normally you wouldn’t be able to do. I would be saying to the government or whoever else reads your report, our report, there are lessons to be learned about what a little bit of money in the right way can do for schools. (Headteacher)

> The money gets the interest, gets people interested who wouldn’t have been interested before…. I think with the money comes this idea that something must be valued if somebody’s giving money to it. (Depute headteacher)

### Allocating funds

While additional funding was seen as important in supporting the initiative the process of allocating funds to the range of developing work within the school was also felt to be key. St Paul’s implemented a system where staff were invited to submit proposals for funding to a steering group. Staff interviewees were clear about the benefits of this system, suggesting that it encouraged ownership of the work among the wider staff and pupil communities and promoted a sense of equal opportunity and impartiality in the allocation of funding.

> I think if you are driving something forward yourself it’s your ideas, it’s your enthusiasm, it’s your motivation. If somebody is saying I want you to do this and I want you to do that and you’re not really a hundred percent committed to it it’s not going to work as well. The citizenship for example I came up with the idea, took the whole thing forward myself, so I’m really committed to it. (Faculty Head)
Management support

It was clear from staff interviewees that having a supportive management who fostered an ethos of risk taking was important in developing the initiative. Reflecting on her approach to managing the initiative the Depute Head said,

*Being approachable and being able to listen to people, to give them the advice if you can that they can use to take their plan forward. You have got to follow it up. You have to know when to intervene and when just to leave well alone, and judging that could be a wee bit difficult you know, how long are you going to let something run and you have to trust people, trust their judgement and let them get on with it. (Depute Headteacher)*

These comments were also borne out by the experience of one Faculty Head,

*[Senior management] has been nothing but supportive to me. Anything I ever wanted to do or come up with they’ve absolutely 100% supported me. Basically it was your idea, you run with it as long as you can kind of justify what you’re doing, but with a lot of support from [the DHT], a lot of support from [the HT]. I would have said they were probably the two main drivers in it. (Faculty Head)*

Local authority support

Comments from a number of interviewees suggested that the local authority’s approach had been to support the school at a distance, allowing them to develop the initiative as they saw fit. Indeed it was also evident from comments made by interviewees that the local authority were pleased with the progress of the school.

Sustainability

From the beginning of the initiative schools were charged with addressing issues of sustainability and indeed our staff informants generally indicated that much of the work would continue. The Depute headteacher with responsibility for SoA provided a full response indicating that activities and programmes could be sustained through fund raising, routinisation of activities and ingenuity.

*Sustainability was something that we turned our mind to very much in the last year and we started to withdraw funds from things and said well ideas have either now to be self-funding or they’ve got to cost very little money. And because of that we then had pupils saying “we want to have the Halloween party”. Everything they’ve come up with they have funded themselves. Whatever it takes they’ve been doing it, so that’s been really positive because I wasn’t sure how that was going to work out. The other way is by planning the changes, by making the changes part of what you do every day. That’s got to be the key to it hasn’t it? By making the citizenship part of the timetable.* (Depute Headteacher)
2.2.4 Professional Development for teachers and other staff

Involvement in the Schools of Ambition programme afforded school staff opportunities for professional development. As noted earlier, teaching staff were given the opportunity to undertake training in conducting interviews with parents as well as training from SEEMIS on using the pupil tracking/monitoring system. A small number also took part in Columba 1400. Moreover, staff have been encouraged to network with other schools and authorities. The headteacher reported having recently spoken at a few conferences with other members of her staff and welcomed such opportunities to share experiences with other schools and colleagues.

The Depute Headteacher contrasted the current situation of staff engaged in additional study with the situation prior to becoming a School of Ambition.

_There are two people in the school now doing the Scottish Qualification for Headship, we’ve got two people now doing Chartered Teacher and one doing project leadership and before School of Ambition we had nobody on any of those programmes apart from the head teacher who had done it a few years ago, so I think that’s been quite good. (Depute Headteacher)_

She then went on to describe how the experience of Schools of Ambition had encouraged her to think about her own professional development. Interestingly she also suggested that involvement in the research process had inspired professional development.

_I think for me as well it was seeing the value of the actual research. It was seeing that it wasn’t that difficult and that the best thing to do is to talk to people because I know it’s an old cliché, but it is all about relationships. That’s really made a big difference to me and I think that kind of led me into the educational journals and books and things like that. …. then led me on to doing the SQH which I’ve started this year. (Depute headteacher)_

2.2.5 Conclusions

St Paul’s experience of being a School of Ambition has been overwhelmingly positive and the school has received a number of awards in recognition of the achievements\(^{13}\). There is little doubt that the additional funding provided through the initiative allowed the combined visions of the current and former headteachers, and the depute head to be realised. Staff, parent, and pupil interviewees had experienced new and additional opportunities as a result of the Schools of Ambition programme and were overwhelmingly positive about the school.

The emphases at St Paul’s have been on communication with parents and staff and pupils, promoting independence, initiative and trust among all parties. Engagement with the community outside the school has helped to raise significantly the profile and

\(^{13}\)These include: A Community Champions award from the Evening Times newspaper, a Trades House Citizenship Award from Glasgow City Council and Scottish Education Award for Citizenship
reputation of the school and this has had a positive reinforcement effect on pupils and staff. Cultural change has come about steadily over time and has been achieved through careful allocation of limited additional funds.
2.3 Springburn Academy

Springburn Academy has a new building, opened in 2002, and replaced two former secondary schools, Albert and Colston. The roll has been steadily increasing from about 300 at the time of its creation and is now over 1000.

2.3.1 Nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the school

The community served by Springburn Academy has very high unemployment levels and no tradition of entry to higher education. Free school meal entitlement is 37%. The head said there are actually six distinct communities around the school, each with its own characteristics. The population of the area is generally stable although there has been an increase in the numbers of minority ethnic pupils to about 60. Many of these are from refugee and asylum seeking families.

At the start of the programme and following their inspection (2007), HMIE wrote:

This is an area of long-standing multiple deprivation which is currently: experiencing some regeneration. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 1004. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals was well above the national average. Pupils’ attendance was below the national average. The proportion of pupils staying on after S4, and the proportions leaving school to destinations such as further and higher education, had been significantly increasing. (HMIE, 2008)

2.3.2 The school’s response to these challenges

The report by HMIE highlighted leadership and relations with parents as the strongest features of the school in the inspection in 2007. In the Head’s own words:

It’s good to be vibrant and busy and that attracts your pupils, so that part of the journey is having that stable community. The other thing we knew we needed to do was to raise aspirations and we spent a lot of time raising aspirations, we spent a lot of time talking to pupils asking them “What is it you need to help you achieve?” We spent a lot of time talking to parents. I actually believe that the staff were fairly positive about being aspirational anyway. I didn’t feel I needed to convince the staff terribly much. We had some changes in staffing which perhaps helped us as well. (Head Teacher)

Springburn was successful in bidding to the second tranche (2007) of Schools of Ambition funding. The bid related to Curriculum for Excellence and brought in the school’s own values of respect, learning, community and responsibility. It emphasised the development of students, staff development and the parents’ view of themselves.
The Transformational Plan

The original Transformational Plan contained four strands for development

- teaching and learning
- young people
- staff development and leadership
- parents.

The teaching and learning plan had the adoption of ‘Learning to Learn’ at its heart. This is an approach to pedagogy based on active learning. It was introduced initially into Years 1 and 2 and 5 and 6. It has been one of several factors that has led to a change in the learning culture of the school.

They tried to make learning more fun like introduce it in kind of technicolour, well not technicolour, but involved trips and stuff like that to make you more interested and getting the best that you could get. (S5 pupil)

I think what [she] says is right, though like you did see teachers who maybe before would stick to their own kind of rigid way of teaching, they were experimenting kind of thing and everything was starting in groups and there was smart boards and it was more interactive, like they were actively trying to find a method of teaching that was going to suit you best, not only suit you best but get the best results and rather than just lecturing there would be loads of group presentations like in modern studies and RE and all that kind of thing and they really did try hard to engage everybody and to try and get everybody interacting which was a big change I think. (Former pupil)

A Nurture Group was established, within the teaching and learning strand, for 1st years, targeting those students who appeared to be finding the adjustment from primary school most challenging. Throughout the process of change, there was careful monitoring of results and outcomes, as the headteacher explains:

We talked about exam results and part of all of this stuff you see here is interviewing all the principal teachers when the exam results are out, which never happened before with rigour. Talking through “Well what’s your action plan, how can you make it better?” …. We focussed on two ends. We focussed on 5th and 6th Year and we focussed on 1st and 2nd Year and focussing on 5th and 6th Year we introduced things like mini prelims, we kept the library open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in the evenings and we still do. (HT)

Another plank in the approach to Teaching and Learning has been the introduction of various forms of mentoring, some with outsiders coming in as in a business mentoring scheme, some mentoring of senior pupils by staff members and of younger by older pupils and also peer mentoring of pupils.

One of the pupils describes the mentoring by teachers thus:

Yes, and they’ll go as far as going to all your teachers of your subjects to find out what they can do for you and they get work for you, stuff to make you better at what you’re doing. (Pupil)
Initiatives such as these have played a significant part in changing the school culture to a culture of learning. As one principal teacher noted:

> I think it spreads into the school as well because if you look at the area upstairs in the mezzanine a lot of the time the senior pupils are sitting there actually doing studying and doing work in the mornings and sometimes when they've got free time. They're not all just sitting doing nothing, they are actually working and I think that’s hugely different. I don’t remember that happening before, never been seen to be actually doing it.

Or from a pupil perspective:

> Everybody just got more concerned about their own learning, the learning of others around them and the teachers as well tried to get you more involved and let everybody have their say. (Pupil)

**Relationships**

A key element of the cultural change has been to do with the relationships between staff and pupils.

> I think the senior management team have been really key to the success in Springburn because one thing is they speak to you like you’re on the same wavelength. It’s not in a bad way, but they’re speaking to you as if you deserve respect. They’re not speaking to you as if you will do this and you’ll do that and I just think that’s a better way to learn because if somebody’s offensive towards you you’re going to be defensive towards them and you’re not going to do that. (Undergraduate student, former pupil)

The school library has been kept open after normal school hours to provide a good working environment for pupils to undertake further study, often supported by teachers, who are employed to stay on. One Principal Teacher felt that improvements in attainment were directly related to this.

> For a lot of our pupils who maybe don’t have opportunities at home to study or very supportive environments at home, they’ve got the possibility of going to the library and getting supervision from a teacher. I think that’s been a huge help to a lot of the pupils who are keen to learn higher up the school and I think that’s been excellent, and there’s been obviously money to pay teachers to go because it’s quite a commitment to ask teachers to go from 5 until 7, but that facility being open for our pupils has been really excellent. (PT)

**Parents**

One of the parents that we met agreed that supervised library support was a key element in creating the right opportunities for his children.
As I say I’ve got four kids, I’ve got a lap top and a PC in the house plus several game stations and everything else that can distract, so for a couple of hours if he’s in here he’s learning. He’s not on the X Box while he’s tapping away at his lap top and I think it’s down to the fact that if he’s in a controlled environment there’s more chance, particularly with boys, there’s more chance of them actually doing what they’re supposed to be doing. (Parent)

Other parents depicted the transformations they had observed in their own children. For example, a father talking about his daughter:

She’s always been very, very shy, but she has really come out her shell. She started her standard grade English a year early and we never expected that because she was always middle of the road really, but since she’s came here, it’s awards every year and she has done fantastic. She really has. (Parent)

One of the main formal initiatives with parents was the establishment of a parents’ council and this now operates an open parents’ forum. Activities are organised on a regular basis and while attendance is still limited to a minority, nevertheless numbers have increased steadily and the relationships between staff and parents have improved considerably, with growing mutual confidence being evident. As a Principal Teacher describes the situation:

I know the parents well, I’ve spoken to a few parents who have been very supportive of the school and what the school has done for the pupils and I think they’re very proud of what their children have achieved, and one woman said before her son came here she had colleagues at work who were saying “I wouldn’t send my children to that school, that’s not a good school” and her son has gone through and achieved the best results that we’ve ever had in the school and as good as you would get anywhere. She said she’s had nothing but praise for the school. I think a lot of the parents are very, very supportive of the school. (Vice-Chair, Parents’ Council)

An inclusive institution

If one of the targets for the school was to increase the numbers who are going into further and higher education, what about the experience for those pupils who are not able to proceed there? At least one of the parents expressed concern about this, although they tended to see this as the local authority’s responsibility, perhaps reflecting their great loyalty to the school.

One of the pupils however suggested that the approach by the school was very inclusive and that the needs of all pupils were systematically addressed.

I think a lot of people really believe in the school because if you think about it there is a lot of help for people who are aiming to go to university and college, but then they have things like the modern apprenticeship schemes which help people who perhaps don’t see themselves going to university and there’s just for example a team round beside the PE department, learning support team, where people who aren’t able to learn to the best of their potential in a
classroom get extra help and get the extra support that they need, so it’s not just like everybody who wants to go to uni will get the attention and I think everybody gets an equal opportunity. (Pupil)

Other pupils in the group concurred with this.

Links to feeder primary schools had been long established and the schools had been linked up through a Learning Community initiative. It was clear that the relationship with primary schools was an important part of the wider success of Springburn. The head of one of the neighbouring primary schools said:

*I think in the community the reputation of the school has been enhanced by this [School of Ambition project]. I can’t comment on their academic results. I’m not aware of them, but the perception of all my children, most of my children now go to Springburn Academy. Very few children apply to go elsewhere, so it’s perceived to be a good school by the community. (Primary Head)*

2.3.3 The management of change

The opportunity created by the additional funding provided by the Schools of Ambition project came at a very good time in the development of the school. The headteacher had been in post for three years and had developed a clear vision of what was possible and used the SoA project as a vehicle for accelerating the process of change and development.

*Managing changes you need to have a vision and a plan. I think having the funding ... is important because [it helps to make] staff feel good about themselves. “We are a School of Ambition, we’ve been chosen,” and there is that little bit of extra funding and if you do get it wrong it’s not the end of the world. That’s part of it as well - that you kind of looked at things and experimented with things. (Head Teacher)*

The role of school staff

In other words it provided a kind of licence to take risks. But the Head also saw it as crucial that she brought as many staff ‘on board’ as possible.

*We’ve got 70 plus members of staff. You get members of staff who are right up for it and go along with everything and then you get others who don’t say anything negative but they’re just not actually jumping in with both feet. I think the other thing about managing change is monitoring that change, making sure that it’s actually happening and being persistent and consistent and my part as head teacher I’ve got to have focus because some new people come to the staff, ... (Head Teacher)*

Indeed, there have been a number of staff changes in key positions over recent years and this seems to have been an important part of developing aspirations within the
school, although there were several existing staff with the same kinds of commitments.

The importance of data and evidence

It was argued by the school’s research coordinator that gathering and sharing evidence in relation to innovations was a key aspect of embedding change. This was part of the shared ownership of the developments, even if the head was providing much of the vision and inspiration:

"Otherwise what the staff could possibly perceive certain changes are, for example the head teacher makes a decision, they might view it as the wrong decision but the head teacher’s made the decision so we’re just doing it now, whereas if you can back up and say “this is where we were, this is how much we’ve grown and changed” it certainly says this is why we’re doing it." (Principal Teacher)

Throughout the process, a wide range of school staff have been directly involved in the planning and implementation. Originally the project had had a steering group including external members, but once the project was underway, an extended version of the school’s Senior Management Team effectively became the steering group.

Learning from others

External influences were also important at an early stage in the development of the plans. A large number of the school staff visited Cramlington School in the Northeast of England and some teachers went to Ireland to research practices elsewhere. Indeed this systematic researching approach to development is seen as crucial by staff:

"Pupils and parents see that Learn to Learn, we include pupils, parents and staff in all our research, so I think that the research has helped us inform our journey as it were. I don’t see the journey as ending." (Principal Teacher)

The support of the SoA advisory team was also welcomed by staff, however the local authority was reportedly less evident in their support for the project.

Getting involved

One of the former pupils provided a fascinating insight into the process of change and how she had been drawn into it. This clearly linked with her personal development and learning and inspired her to apply to university. She is now in her third year of an undergraduate programme:

"Once the school had the money they were able to use it more, so you could get the support and help to go into uni. I was one of the kids who done all the campaigning for the School of Ambition [award], done all the papers, and then we officially got told that we were selected as a School of Ambition and"
the whole atmosphere just changed round. Everyone seemed more upbeat and then everyone’s ambitions seemed to rise as well.

... she’s got a good team. Obviously she is the boss but they’re always having meetings discussing anything to do with the school. (Undergraduate student, former pupil)

If many of the pupils have been drawn into the project in this way, it has also been important to involve parents. A leading member of the Parents’ Council said:

The school has been very, very good at listening. Because of the Parent Council a lot of us were actually discussing the fact that there’s been sometimes problems trying, not so much I think too many parents were turning up and we couldn’t actually see the teachers we wanted to see, so the school’s been trying all sorts of different avenues to try and get parents in, so we’ve went from having an open night to having an appointment time and then it’s back up for discussion again because I think the parents group isn’t too happy with it.

The importance of reputation

As indicated before, the external reputation is also important and the school has made effective use of media opportunities.

The raising of aspirations is important in the wider community, in the view of the primary head whom we interviewed. It is not only a matter for the secondary school itself. Relationships are many and various and the reputation of the secondary school has many conduits, both formal and informal. Some parents of pupils at the secondary school have jobs in the primary school. Secondary pupils visit the primary school on work experience. Thus the various sources of information and opinions about the secondary school are circulating around the community, including within the primary school.

In the past in the dark old days we used to wonder what happened to them [our pupils] after they left us and it’s good to hear and see because we go to the prize-giving [at Springburn] every year and it’s good to keep track on your pupils and how they’re progressing... There’s a lot of deprivation here and lack of motivation to achieve, so it’s a struggle for them, but those that they are successful with, they’re very successful with. (Primary Head)

2.3.4 Professional Development for teachers and other staff

The teachers with whom we spoke indicated that their involvement in the process of change over recent years had been extremely stimulating for them. They talked in particular of reinvigoration and renewed enthusiasm for their work, not least because of the enthusiastic ways in which pupils were responding. The engagement with Learning to Learn was important for many of them, but so too was increased involvement in the mentoring of students. There was considerable pride in the
growing academic success of pupils. The team of Principal Teachers in particular was significant, in the view of an Acting Depute Head.

> I think in terms of managing change the Principal Teachers have a very, very important role in this and I think it’s fair to say it has been a challenge for some of them, for all of them, because it has been a big challenge to make such big changes, so I think they will have moved forward a lot as well. (Acting Depute Head)

She felt the school had made enormous investment in staff training and that it was largely to good effect, even if the outcomes were somewhat uneven.

> I think one of the challenges of managing changes is the pace of change in that people will move along at different speeds. If you’re likening it to new technologies, you’ve got your early adapters who are right straight in there and then I don’t know what the ones at the end are called, but I think that has been the kind of initiative that people will move along at different rates. (Acting Depute Head)

It was noted that the majority of teachers employed during their induction year had secured permanent posts and that a significant number of more experienced teachers had secured promotion, either within the school or elsewhere.

### 2.3.5 Conclusions

Springburn Academy has gone through a considerable transformation over recent years. There is no doubt that the SoA project has been a key facilitator of this transformation. However as acknowledged by many of the respondents, the leadership and vision provided by the head and her management team would undoubtedly have led to some significant change whether or not the particular status of SoA had been achieved. Nevertheless, the additional funds were acknowledged by staff and students as helping to drive change at an increased rate. While some pupils had concerns about maintaining the changes that had taken place in the school, teaching staff were more hopeful that elements of initiative had become self perpetuating. Parents involved in the study suggested that the initiative had had a positive influence on the ethos of the school.
3. SIX ‘PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS’

In 2006, six further Glasgow secondary schools were identified, to receive project funding to support work in relation to pupils designated as requiring ‘More Choices, More Chances’. The six schools were located in different parts of the city and while all had significant numbers of pupils with such needs, the overall profiles of the schools were quite varied. The scheme was conceived somewhat differently to the Schools of Ambition in that there was a common focus in these six project schools on those pupils who were considered to be most in need of support. However each school was required to draw up a project plan and to report against the targets set in this plan, on a regular basis. Again there was to be a strong component of school self-evaluation in the implementation of the plans. The Hunter Foundation contributed to the project funding during the first two years with the Scottish Government increasing its contribution in the final year.
3.1 Drumchapel High School

Drumchapel High School is an integrated community school serving an area of severe multiple deprivation. The school moved into a new building in 2002. The roll at April 2008 was 603.

3.1.1 Nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the school

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2009) locates Drumchapel within the ‘most deprived’ decile in Scotland. Half of the pupils are registered for free school meals (2007/08), a fall from 62% in 2006. Over 10% of the school population are children of asylum seekers following the introduction of the UK policy on asylum seeker dispersal from April 2000.

Drumchapel High School sought to improve pupil experiences and outcomes through a highly targeted approach. The main (but not exclusive) focus of the programme involved a range of targeted interventions to address the particular needs of thirty selected S3 and S4 pupils who formed a secondary school FOCUS group and, in the final year of the programme also included fifteen S5 pupils identified as potential ‘winter leavers’ and fifteen S1 pupils at the point of transition to Secondary already identified as having attendance issues. Attendance, parental engagement and enhanced provision of pre-vocational experiences were identified priorities for improvement. The project sought to promote the continued engagement of young people with education, especially through senior school and transition to college or employment.

The school and its community

A lack of ‘aspiration’ among some parents and pupils was identified as a key challenge by the Headteacher. This was attributed in part to high levels of third generation unemployment in the locality, compounded by the geographic isolation and social segregation of the community. The school is distinctive in recruiting from within the G15 postcode area. A Follow Through Inspection Report (March, 2007)\(^{14}\) notes that ‘the number of pupils from the local area choosing to be educated within Drumchapel High School has increased steadily from 70% in 2000 to 93% in 2006’ (p.2). Only five placing requests were made in 2007/08 and the impact of intake ‘capping’ by neighbouring East Dunbartonshire schools means that fewer primary pupils leave Drumchapel for their secondary education.

Many of our young people, and indeed parents, have little reason to leave Drumchapel as extended families tend to live nearby. This is especially true of the more vulnerable members of the community and this lack of wider experiences can lead to a sense of isolation and lack of self-confidence. These can affect how parents interact with the school. All our parents want the best outcomes for their children, it is just that at times they are not sure about how to achieve it or comfortable about approaching the school. (Headteacher)

Traditionally the population of Drumchapel served the heavy industries of Clydebank and Yoker, for example the Shipyards and Singer’s Sewing Machine Factory. When these closed down many people were made redundant and traditional employment opportunities disappeared. Economic conditions at the time were such that alternative employment was difficult to find. It can be difficult for young people to rise early to go to work. It can mean there is no structure to the day and the temptation not to go to school is great. (Headteacher)

The Headteacher and Project Coordinator identified disruption in the home lives of some pupils as a particular issue, especially where young people had assumed official or de facto carer roles. It was reported that family structures had become more fluid with an increased number of part-time parents, and an array of influences on pupils including extended family members and friendship groups. Interviewees noted that some pupils appear to be able to exert considerable control over their home situation with the consequence that,

*If a child wants to make it difficult for a parent to send them to school they can do that much more effectively than they could twenty years ago...This was a particular issue for some of our young people who, due to their domestic circumstances, had virtually assumed the role of parent for a period. When the parent was ready and able to re-take control the young person found it very difficult and was either unwilling or unable to relinquish that role and revert back to being a school pupil. That was a particular lesson I learned from working with some of the young people in the FOCUS group.* (Project Manager)

Parental engagement was identified as a particular area for improvement. Drumchapel High School worked with Glasgow West Regeneration Agency in June 2008. All parents of pupils in P5 to S3 were informed by letter, but only six attended.

*Some parents have busy and, at times, chaotic lives. They send their children to school in the knowledge that, while in our care, the children are safe; therefore the parents don’t see any particular need for interaction with the school. Many of them recollect having a bad experience at school themselves and find that the only time they have contact with the school is when they are summoned -usually in adverse circumstances. Therefore building partnership between the home and school is crucial.* (Project Manager)

### 3.1.2 The school’s response to these challenges

At a whole school level, explicit attention was focused on ‘the four As’: Attending, Aspiring, Attaining, Achieving. This marque is attached as a strap line to all school stationery (letters, reports, posters) and appears above every double door in the new school building. Attendance, uniform and timekeeping has a high profile, underpinned by the rationale that *‘this is your work’* (Headteacher). The first assembly of every month focuses on attendance. Attendance statistics for each year group are publicly shared and comparisons are made with the previous year, and targets set for the month ahead.
Interventions

The additional resource available through the Glasgow Partnership Project enabled targeted interventions with a relatively small group of thirty pupils selected from S3 and S4 which represented 10% of the middle school cohort. These pupils were identified in the final term of S2 in consultation with the Senior Management Team and Principal Teachers of Pastoral Care. After evaluating the first year of the project the school agreed that for subsequent years only pupils who had 70% attendance or above would be selected for inclusion in the FOCUS group (Future, Opportunities, Choices, Us, Success), with some exceptions for family circumstances and direct requests from the Children’s Panel of the Children’s Hearings’ system. The pupils were released from one Standard Grade subject for two years. “FOCUS” was identified as a timetabled subject three periods a week with a dedicated teacher and a planned programme of work. In S3 the programme of work concentrated on developing soft skills, including communication, self-esteem and resilience. Throughout S4 there was a focus on Post-16 Choices. Emphasis was given to increased support for attainment, wider achievement and employability skills, including CV building. At the time of the interviews, the FOCUS group had a dedicated base room and received support from a range of professionals including the Project Coordinator and a dedicated Home-Link worker (a retired Guidance Teacher appointed on a two-year contract). The assembled team also included youth workers from 3D Drumchapel (a partner of Drumchapel Churches Partnership), the School Chaplain, a Careers Advisor from Skills Development Scotland and staff from the Glasgow West Regeneration Agency.

The time that we have spent with them in the FOCUS project is critically important. We have young people who have managed to stay in school and are leaving with qualifications at the end of S4. Indeed some pupils have returned for S5 and even S6 and I genuinely believe that without the support of the project many of them would have totally disengaged from school...We have young people who are now well established in apprenticeships and in F.E courses who would never have made that jump without the intensive support which the project allowed. (Project Coordinator)

The involvement of third sector workers reflected the schools belief that longer-term benefits would arise from flexible and personalised approaches to meeting pupil needs. The involvement of an additional paid Careers Advisor as a regular facilitator overcame the limitation of the ‘one hour entitlement’ prior to pupils leaving school that was deemed less effective. Through weekly involvement the Careers Advisor developed a better understanding of the issues affecting the pupils in this group and the locality. The involvement of youth workers with local knowledge and a long-standing commitment to the area was valued in course design and delivery.

A lot of projects in Drumchapel come and go. It’s about continuity and saying actually I want to be here and you become part of people’s lives. People don’t feel that you’re just parachuting in and out again. That continuity is really significant. (School Chaplain)
The Home-Link worker played a pivotal role in the project and his appointment was an acknowledgement that parents need support too. Parental consent was required prior to young people joining the group. The Project Coordinator and Home-Link worker reported that home visits to discuss the purposes of the project were valuable in bridging home-school cultures. The FOCUS group team sought to enhance parental engagement by offering opportunities for meetings away from the school site. Fifty per cent of school-based meetings with parents were cancelled or parents did not keep their appointments. Ninety-five per cent of appointments for home visits were kept. In addition, the team presented a display of children’s work at the offices of the Glasgow West Regeneration Agency and invited parents to view the work over a coffee. Two parents attended. The team continue to explore alternative venues, including a local community centre, in an attempt to boost levels of parental engagement.

In year three, part of the funding was used to support 15 final year pupils identified as ‘winter leavers’ and at risk of becoming completely disengaged from learning. Traditionally these young people would attend college on an individual basis but very often they fail to continue their courses past the end of September. The school identified a need for enhanced transition to college. Liaison between the school, Anniesland College and Glasgow West Regeneration Agency enabled the formation of a bespoke programme for a group of 15 young people. This involved three days attendance at Anniesland College to take part in ‘taster courses’ in five skill areas and two days attendance at Glasgow West Regeneration Agency, whilst remaining on the school roll. To overcome anticipated issues in organising transport to college, attendance was boosted by the provision of return bus transport from school each day with the supervision and support of an accompanying Home-Link worker. Lunch expenses were also provided. This gave the young people the sense of still belonging to the school community.

**Outcomes**

Drumchapel achieved 100% attendance for standard grade exams by members of the FOCUS group and also significantly reduced the volume of non-awards during the Summer 2009 entry. In an effort to boost attendance, text message alerts were sent to the parent/carer of every child who was to sit an exam that day. Eleven young people within the S4 FOCUS group attended fifty examinations and completed all internal assessments. Staff working with the group reported that tailored support for the completion of coursework, and the provision of intensive workshops and one-to-one support, promoted attitudinal change among the group.

*For a lot of people it’s about survival and getting through day-to-day. A lot of people even from very young just don’t really see that they have choices. It’s almost like you live moment to moment. The Focus Group enabled people to see that they have choices. You can take a step back and say, ‘Yes, if I make this choice now that will impact on what happens further down the line’.*

(School Chaplain)

Facilitators reported that participation in the FOCUS group encouraged the development of social skills among participants. Exclusion and school discipline records suggest improved behaviour by a number of young people involved with the FOCUS group over the school year. A reduction in behaviour issues and regular
access to a non-threatening learning environment appears to increase the aspirations of some participants. Pupils received positive encouragement by being entered for higher level national examinations. To some extent, changes in behaviour and attitude appear to have encouraged a re-assessment of pupils’ academic potential.

Since I went into the FOCUS group, it’s made me think more about what to do next, so I decided to stay in school and when I finish school I’ll either get a job or go to college... I used to do foundation classes but once I got into the FOCUS group I moved into other classes, like general. I used to be in lower classes because of my behaviour, but now I’ve changed. I changed in other classes as well. (S5 pupil and member of the FOCUS group)

I’m going to stay on in fifth and sixth year and continue my studies and after that I think I’m going to go to college or university and study photography and administration...I’ve become more confident in all of my classes, well most of my classes now. It’s really looking better for me because I’m doing higher levels like general and credit now. Before I just did the general or foundation levels. (S4 pupil and member of the FOCUS group)

The provision of a bespoke college experience and return transport from school supported a significant reduction in ‘winter leavers’, with 12 of the 15 young people on the programme still registered with the school through the summer term and the majority in either college or employment. As a consequence, the school has continued to find the resource to support this provision from within the core school budget.

A further outcome of the Partnership Schools project is the extension of volunteering opportunities for pupils. Volunteering is viewed as a means to enhance employability skills and to improve the community standing of the school. The S6 year at Drumchapel now has a column in their timetable for voluntary work in local primary and pre-five establishments, following the initial success of collaborative ventures involving the FOCUS group and Drummore Primary School, the National Trust at Ben Lomond and Millennium Volunteers at Mugdock Country Park. Each S6 pupil has two periods each week volunteering and one period to compile a portfolio of their achievements. This example shows how initiatives undertaken to benefit one target group can have wider benefits for the school community.

**Sustainability**

A key objective for the future is finding ways to maintain and enhance support without the additional resource that enabled close work with the FOCUS group. Peer mentoring by seniors has been suggested as a possible route forward although the challenges of peer mentoring in circumstances where ‘someone doesn’t want to talk to you or turns away’ were acknowledged (Headteacher). In recognition of the value of additional support, the school is exploring ways to scale up aspects of demonstrable good practice across the school.

The challenge is to offer support in such a way as to not identify vulnerable groups of young people. This is especially true because often these youngsters are the ones with low self-confidence and no resilience. This means widening
Challenges were identified in planning meaningful experiences and outcomes for all learners and making adequate provision for certificate classes. Demographic factors faced by schools in challenging circumstances further compound the dilemmas of resource allocation.

All of this is of course set in a very challenging economic climate. We have a falling roll which affects our staffing compliment and we need to make difficult decisions about deployment of teachers. There is a balance to be struck between supporting very vulnerable learners and providing academic challenges in a small senior school, meaning low numbers in Higher sections. (Headteacher)

3.1.3 The management of change

The process of change at Drumchapel appears to be an extension and deepening of partnership work developed over a period of two years. The school website reports close involvement in Drumchapel’s Social Inclusion Partnership working with Drumchapel Action Group, Youth Enquiry Service, Drumming Up Health, Community Police, Young Persons’ Befrienders Scheme and local nursery schools.

Change isn’t deciding we are doing this and starting immediately. We need to plan for change and it is vital that the rationale is shared with everyone. Transformational change is about sharing a vision, winning hearts and minds and giving people the confidence to engage. (Headteacher)

In addition, it was stressed that identification of protected resources was necessary to support and sustain a different educational experience for the targeted pupils. Each pastoral care teacher in the school has a caseload of around 140 pupils. The FOCUS group enabled sustained week by week engagement with pupils identified as at risk of underachieving in a supportive environment.

We need to understand that to run this type of project with young people you can’t do it within existing resources. You need to have people in school who can spend time talking with young people about their aspirations or concerns in addition to the existing Pastoral Care Team. We have a fabulous team but they are so stretched. They don’t have enough time to be proactive because of their large caseloads and as a result are largely reactive. (Project Manager)

3.1.4 Professional Development for teachers and other staff

Although outwith the scope of the Project, Staff from Ladywell School in Scotstoun have always provided CPD sessions for staff at Drumchapel in a well established partnership to enhance behaviour support strategies among staff. Ladywell School is a secondary stage Learning Centre to support pupils who are at risk of exclusion because of behaviour. It has links with six secondary schools in the West of Glasgow.
At Drumchapel, the link with Ladywell supports a ‘staged intervention’ approach to behaviour. Referrals are made to Joint Support Teams of multi-agency representatives when necessary. Behaviour Support Assistants have taken part in training and teaching staff have attended twilight and afternoon seminars focused on attachment issues and emotional literacy at the Learning Centre. The arrangement has a degree of reciprocity in that three members of Drumchapel's staff have helped Ladywell staff with the development of materials for Computing Studies, Home Economics and PSE subjects as the school extends its curriculum for pupils on full-time placements.

At Drumchapel, senior staff reported that the activities of the FOCUS group had sometimes challenged teachers’ ideas of appropriate practice. A particular issue arose through the withdrawal of pupils from a small number of timetabled classes to enable off-site activities, such as volunteering with the National Trust for Scotland in Ben Lomond or helping at a local primary school. Competing priorities and the different value attached to different educational activities and outcomes had the potential to cause tension. At times, negotiations between staff were described as ‘challenging and time consuming’ by the Project Coordinator, but progress had been made.

“It’s trying to build the self-confidence in the adults to accept that change is good and having a shared understanding of the outcomes. (Headteacher).

We provided opportunities for pupils to take part in voluntary activities e.g. at our local A.S.N primary school that sometimes proved difficult because it meant releasing them from other subjects and required a fair bit of negotiation. However, over the course of the project we gradually came to an understanding that time out of class spent on these activities could be made up at a later FOCUS period and thus allowed all the curricular targets to be met. (Project Manager)

“It was persuading colleagues that providing alternative education experiences can enhance engagement with academic attainment for some young people. Schools, especially in S3/4 are very results driven and, while this is as it should be, teachers need to see the bigger picture. (Headteacher)

The headteacher identified possible tensions between the attainment agenda in secondary schools and the aspiration and methodologies of the FOCUS group. The dual concerns of performance and inclusion were highlighted through the operation of the FOCUS group and were acknowledged to sometimes present mixed messages to the staff.

3.1.5 Conclusion

Through the Glasgow Schools partnership, Drumchapel High School sought to enhance attendance rates, strengthen home-school links and promote pupil engagement with education into the senior years of secondary school and further education/apprenticeships. Sustained engagement with community partners was sought to join up and extend the range of support available to young people and the staff who work with them.

Under the leadership of the Headteacher and Project Coordinator, the school developed effective collaborative work with a team of community-based facilitators.
that enriched the range of experiences available to pupils in the FOCUS group. Continuity in provision and support beyond school were valued aspects of partnership work with the voluntary sector. Existing school-based provision was scrutinised and alternative provision was put in place over an extended period for a target group of pupils. Impact and outcomes were regularly evaluated to establish the success of interventions and to inform future planning.

A commitment to the development of flexible and personalised approaches to meeting pupil needs has resulted in positive outcomes, notably a reduction in the number of anticipated ‘winter leavers’ among the S5 target group, a significant reduction in non-awards at S4 during the summer 2009 entry and 100% attendance for standard grade exams by members of the FOCUS group. Participants report that the programme challenged teachers’ perceptions about curriculum entitlement and encouraged staff to consider informal learning opportunities offered, for example, through voluntary work – now available for all S6 pupils. Facilitators reported that participation in the FOCUS group promoted the development of social skills and improved behaviour. This is evidenced by reductions in exclusion and school discipline records by members of the FOCUS group over the school year.

Building on the achievements of work initiated during the Glasgow Partnership project, priorities for the future include a focus on early intervention, before S3, and the promotion of learning strategies across the school curriculum. The school curriculum now contains a period of learning to learn for all pupils in S1 and S2 with this programme being rolled out to S3 next year. In addition small Energy for Learning groups meet regularly. The school continues to work towards enhanced parental engagement and is exploring ways to forge stronger links with local providers of primary, pre-five and further education.
3.2 Eastbank Academy

Eastbank Academy is a large non-denominational school serving the Shettleston area of Glasgow. The school roll is more than 1100.

3.2.1 Nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the school

An inspection of the Learning Community around Eastbank was carried out during 2009 (within the final year of the initiative) and the inspectors say that the area:

- includes Shettleston, and parts of Sandyhills and Tollcross. The area is undergoing considerable regeneration and is the focus for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The proportion of jobless people is higher than the Glasgow average and more than double the Scottish average.

The school’s headteacher suggests that the catchment area is an unusual shape – elongated - with the school located at one end of the area:

- we were expanded back about 1999 when we brought in the most of John Street from Bridgeton, Dalmarnock. It has meant that a significant number of our kids attend a school which is really not in their midst, it’s further away, and that’s been an issue, not with all children and all families, but it’s something we’ve been working at, and six years on, effectively we’re still working at it. (Headteacher)

The long distance that some students have to travel to get to school may be a factor in the attendance figures (see below), in the head’s view. The community also experiences some ‘territorialism’ within the area.

Although the population is a relatively stable one, many of the children have experienced severely dysfunctional family life by the time they reach the secondary school.

- I think down about the Parkhead area, I would personally say I would think there’s been a decline socially over the years with very deep-rooted problems related to drugs and alcohol misuse. That I think is an issue for children coming up to the secondary school in that they lived through their parents’ - most disruptive years of - if you wish to call it - misbehaviour. When they come to us by secondary, the families often have sort of settled themselves down again. They’ve either given up or life’s given them up or they’re looked after by grandparents, but I think it leaves a lasting impression for them. (Headteacher)

3.2.2 The school’s response to these challenges

At the outset of the Partnership Project the headteacher saw the priorities thus:
...we were highlighting what we saw as core skills but in particular the core skill that we wanted to deliver on was to make them as IT literate as we possibly could and also we had the other things, the softer things, like we wanted to make them more confident, if you take the Curriculum for Excellence, more confident individuals, learners, all this. That was why we also wanted to go down the Outward Bound route and we also invested a lot of time and money working with Careers Scotland at the time because as far as I was concerned, the message I had was that if at the end of these three years we haven't improved and maintained the destinations of the youngsters then in a way the project would have failed.

The school employed a Youth/Community Development Officer, using the project funds. This person played a key role in developing relationships with external organisations and helping to identify valuable opportunities for the pupils that could help to meet the priorities identified.

The emphasis on ‘soft skills’ and self-confidence also came through from the Depute Head, who had played a major role in developing the project work. Talking about the responses from the pupils he said:

... I think looking back on it they probably will see that the kind of things they were doing were very, very useful to them particularly in the soft skills area. That was the area that we really felt was most important to them, working as a team, simply getting on with one another, that’s a major issue among children of that level of emotional and intellectual immaturity. They find relationships extraordinarily difficult to negotiate, either formally or informally, and what we found was that over the piece we believe that we were really making a difference to them and doing this and that would stand them in very good stead for the future. I also think too that what it did was it helped to increase their self-confidence ... and that is where I think the Outward Bound course came into it. I thought that that really had a really, really good effect on it. (Depute Head)

So, for those that were able to attend the Outward Bound courses at Locheil, there was great benefit. For those that were not able to attend, the other elements of the project may have been relatively more important. One further key element of the partnership funded work was the increased engagement of Careers Scotland staff within the school, but also using some of the partnership funding to introduce Careers Scotland staff into the feeder primary schools, so that pupils would already be familiar with them when they transferred to secondary. This was one of the biggest investments within the Partnership Project at Eastbank.

**Partnership working**

Over recent years, the school had been involved in a range of partnership activities with various agencies, including British Gas and the NHS.

Partnerships with FE provision were also seen as a major area for development. There had been a longstanding relationship between the school and John Wheatley College.
Indeed, until fairly recently, the College had owned buildings adjacent to the school. The school approached the college and talked with particular departments about forming closer links. Very positive relationships have now been established with electronics and sound engineering that have led to numbers of the school students attending classes in these departments at the college.

In 4th Year they could then pick from lots of different courses that the college ran, so they were getting choice at that point, so they had proved that they could actually go to college, they could sustain it, they knew what college was about and how to behave and they understood what was expected of them and then the following year they went back, but this wasn’t supervised. (Depute Head)

This had a very positive impact on the pupils who took part.

... some of the children have progressed on... they’re doing their college courses and they’re now talking about college will be in their future or employment will be in their future. (Employability Officer)

Other aspects of the curriculum

The school has also made increasing use of the ASDAN awards framework. This has been very popular with pupils who find that they are getting formal recognition for achievements and skills that they can demonstrate. This engagement though is seen as an additional cost that may not be sustainable now that the additional funds provided through the Partnership Project have ceased.

Although the initial plans for the project were not built around Curriculum for Excellence, nevertheless, there has been an increasing realisation that much of the work undertaken in the project has prepared the ground very effectively for engagement with it. In particular the four capacities that underpin CfE are seen to be very consistent with the priorities established for the MCMC students under the Partnership Project.

Tracking and sharing of data was seen as important element in the overall approach to improvement. There is a very systematic and regular approach to gathering and reviewing all available forms of data. For example the use of additional Careers Scotland resource was carefully monitored and followed through.

What they also did and I think this was really, really important was that the money that we got from the Glasgow Hunter Project allowed us to pay Careers Scotland to follow them through for two years afterwards which meant that they were basically chasing these kids up, getting them out of their beds and getting them along to Job Centres, if you like almost the kind of things that one would expect a caring parent to do. (Depute Head)

Such monitoring has become so important in the school that when policies over which school staff have little control appear to influence key indicators, there is great concern. One example of this is the introduction through the City Council of the
Commonwealth Apprenticeship scheme. Many pupils were encouraged to apply for these opportunities but it was taking a very long time for the outcomes to be announced. There was concern therefore that the destination statistics could be very adversely affected by this.

Staff expectations and sustainability

It was also intended that the work of the Partnership Project would engage with the staff’s expectation of pupils. This appears to have been an acknowledgement that it was important that as well as raising the pupils’ own-self confidence, the aspirations held by teachers and others for their pupils should be raised. The introduction of the ASDAN awards and the interactions with the College do appear to have had an effect on the perceptions of some staff.

*I think what it did do is it made people more open to and more aware of non-academic courses as being something that could help these pupils and I think gradually people began to realise that yes this was a good way of dealing with children whose needs were very different perhaps from the rest of the school community, well the rest of the pupil community. (Depute Head)*

Finally, from the outset, the plans for development had included a concern about sustainability and wider engagement. There was an aspiration to ensure that the achievements during the three years of additional funding should become embedded within the school’s practices, but also there was some hope that although the main focus was on the most at risk 20 per cent of pupils, the work might have a positive influence on the whole school – all pupils and all staff. These are concerns that we address in the next two sections.

### 3.2.3 The management of change

In the view of the staff interviewed there is no doubt that the work has had a very positive effect on a number of pupils in the school, particularly those who were targeted by the scheme. However, the implementation of the scheme does appear to have been influenced by some issues around staffing and in particular, continuity of staffing.

**Continuity of staffing**

Staff turnover may have been an issue during the project period at Eastbank. The inspection report notes the high proportion of senior staff who are occupying their roles on a temporary basis. The head also commented on discontinuities in staffing:

*When we started it off, we were going to have core team meetings to discuss it, to review it, to make sure where we were going, and in our draft plans we had tried to set ourselves what we thought were specific outcomes and we were going to achieve certain things. Again I would think that started off reasonably well, but I think in some respects because of losing certain key
personnel we kind of diluted a wee bit of some of these outcomes. ...I have to say towards the second half of the project I suppose the big focus was looking at alternative courses, certification and destinations, and personally I feel that that was... while again the destination was the big thing I think we for various unfortunate, unforeseen circumstances, we had lost elements that I personally think would have been longer lasting, particularly valuable for the kids as they got on. (Headteacher)

**Parental engagement**

There was also a question about the extent to which parents have felt involved in the project. Some staff noted considerably improved engagement with parents but this did not appear to have become embedded within the school, as yet.

*The parents are supportive in that yes they’re keen to see their kids do it, they’re happy to come to award ceremonies and things like that, but in the wider actual involvement of parents maybe not quite as great as we would have liked.* (Headteacher)

However, sessions have been organised at which parents have had the opportunity to find out more about what the school is trying to achieve with their children.

*We’ve started up last year in particular with parental focus evenings and we did one for higher ed. and skills for work which involved everything from pre-voc., college, work experience, the whole shebang and voluntary work and we brought in all of the colleges, all of the voluntary workers, all of the universities that wanted to come and we did a kind of open forum where parents could go round and we were absolutely delighted at the number of parents that turned up.* (Depute Head)

**Allocation of designated roles to staff**

For this school, a key part of seeking to have an impact during the project, was the designation of particular staff roles so that the action points could be pursued vigorously. For example, the school had a ‘values and citizenship development officer’. She had been working in the school with funding from *Save The Children* for some three years and built upon this experience when the *Partnership Project* started. As she explains her role:

*... so it was about getting the young people involved and then the Schools of Ambition project looked like it was going to start with the bottom sets of 3rd and 4th Year pupils, More Choices, More Chances pupils, and it seemed that the work I had been doing would fit nicely into getting these young people involved in different projects and issues.* (Development Officer)

She was instrumental in supporting the introduction of ASDAN awards into the school.
What we decided to do in this school was do the ASDAN awards, starting off with the bronze ASDAN award and hopefully managing to push some of the pupils onto gaining the silver ASDAN award which we thought instead of just doing the projects which are great because you get all these transferable skills, it builds their confidence, team-building and of course working in a team is really, really important. (Development Officer)

Secondly, the school has an employability officer (EO) whose work was closely involved with the partnership project and is now working to ensure the implementation of Determined to Succeed policies in the schools. She did work closely with what she called ‘the Hunter children’, including supporting these children when they were attending classes at the College.

What was exclusive to the Hunter children is in that they were supported with me there all the time and feeding it directly back into the school and the partnership certainly was cemented with the way that we worked together with John Wheatley College in partnership and a lot of positives have come from that and are still coming from it, but other children had the opportunity to go out to college. (Employability Officer)

Outcomes

Attendance levels of 86% in 2008/09 are lower than most comparator schools. Nevertheless, some positive destinations have improved over the past two years, especially with regard to HE and FE, and negative destinations have remained steady, at a relatively low rate compared with the city and Scottish figures – at about 9%. At the same time the data also reveals that school leavers have been particularly successful in securing training or employment positions relative to the city and Scottish figures. The headteacher highlighted the close partnership working between the school and careers service in explaining these successes, one of the elements of the project work.

Improvements in reading writing and mathematics attainment have also improved significantly between 2006 and 2008 by 14, 15 and 23 points respectively, which may derive at least in part from the project work.

Some tensions did arise in terms of meeting the expectations of the external partners in the project. The school had what staff felt was an educational approach to the developments and this was largely supported and understood by the City Council. However, the Hunter Foundation used a rather different set of criteria and approaches to assessing and evaluating the work.

They were coming from a business background and they wanted nuts and bolts counted and sort of cut to the correct diameter and all the rest of it and as you know you don’t do that with people. It just doesn’t work. That’s overstating the case immensely because they were very understanding about things. Certainly the Local Authority were interested. The Local Authority did give support when it was needed but by and large the Local Authority within
certain parameters gave us the right just to go ahead and to develop it as we felt fit. (Depute Head)

On the question around whole school engagement and inclusiveness of all pupils in the scheme, there were some concerns about elements of divisiveness that may have been experienced. On the whole, those who had been working with the MCMC beneficiaries felt this was a price worth paying.

Inspection report

The school was inspected by HMIe in February 2009 (the final year of the initiative). At this stage the inspection report highlighted the following positive strengths:

- High-quality care for young people, especially the more vulnerable.
- Polite, friendly and enthusiastic young people.
- The commitment of staff to raising young people’s aspirations.
- Mutually respectful relationships between young people and staff. (HMIE, 2009)

In reviewing ‘learning and achievement’, the inspection report notes that exam results at the upper end of the school are below national averages but nevertheless broadly in line with comparator schools and for younger children there is evidence of recent improvement in results. They also say:

The school tracks young people’s progress very well and recognises the need to improve attainment, particularly by the end of S4. Commendably, over the last three years, increasing proportions of young people have gone on to further or higher education, training and employment after leaving school. (HMIE, 2009)

In relation to the curriculum, the inspectors say:

They [the pupils] gain important skills from a number of out-of-class learning opportunities such as residential visits, field trips and participation in local and national competitions. The school has widened the choice of courses available through effective links with local colleges and other community groups, but needs to increase access to these choices for more young people. (HMIE, 2009)

Although ‘improvements in learning’, ‘learners’ experiences’ and ‘identifying learning needs’ were all judged to be good, ‘the curriculum’ was judged to be just satisfactory and ‘school self-evaluation’ was judged to be weak.

3.2.4 Professional Development for teachers and other staff

The project had engaged a significant number of the staff, but because it has focussed on particular pupils, it had by no means engaged all of the staff in the way that some of the national SoA projects did.
I think in our case the way the thing has gone that I would say it has undoubtedly impacted upon a core group of staff whose views of the needs of the kids and a wider view linked with FE and community and all that, that’s all been enhanced. I do think that we could or we should have done a bit more to try and bring in a wider range of staff into what we were doing. I think many of the staff appreciated that what was being done was worthwhile, but it was the partnership, it was the project, it wasn’t them, and that I feel is something that we’ve still got work to do with people. (Headteacher)

The Head also felt that, especially with *Curriculum for Excellence* being brought in, to some an extent an opportunity had been missed for a wider staff engagement that might have helped the whole school prepare for *CfE*.

Undoubtedly those staff who were engaged in the project have considerably developed their professional expertise. They spoke enthusiastically of what they had learned, of their greater appreciation of the full range of pupil potential, of the value and benefits to pupils of a more imaginative curriculum, of the benefits to be derived from closer collaboration with FE. These insights were generally not achieved through formal CPD, but through active participation in the project developments.

### 3.2.5 Conclusions

Significant developments have occurred in respect of the educational experiences of the most vulnerable group of children in Eastbank. This has followed through investment in school-based posts and in development of improved partnership with colleges and Careers Scotland (Skills Development Scotland). Unless further funds are identified, some developments do seem to be at risk and the aspiration to spread the insights gained across the wider school may be impeded.
3.3 Govan High School

Govan High School is a non-denominational, state funded secondary school serving the South West of the City of Glasgow. The school has capacity for 800 pupils, however, currently it has a pupil roll of around 360 and a staff of 32.6 FTE teachers. The school roll has fallen by more than ten per cent over the period 2007-2009. This mirrors a fall in the rolls of the associated primaries due to depopulation in the area.

3.3.1 The nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the school

Available census statistics for the Govan area\textsuperscript{15} and SMID data for 2008 reveals that compared to the Scottish average, Govan has a significantly higher percentage of ‘Income Deprived’ (60% Govan, 17% Scotland) and ‘Employment Deprived’ (39% Govan 12% Scotland). There has been a decrease in the number of children in the area, with falling birth-rates. The subsequent decrease in school roll means reduced resources for school in terms of materials, staffing etc.

These contextual demographics and associated long-term social and economic disadvantage are seen by stakeholders as contributing to persistent local challenges concerning health, unemployment and other issues including crime, gang cultures and territorialism. This local situation and impact on life opportunities is, therefore seen as central to the way the whole school has addressed the needs of young people and the community. One parent who works as a senior nurse in a local hospital sees at first hand some of the local issues

\begin{quote}
I see it all the time, all the young kids coming in…they’ve not got jobs, they’re coming in with emergencies into A&E, Alcohol problems, the amount of liver disease within under 30s is shocking. That’s where you know where we’re going. (Parent)
\end{quote}

3.3.2 The school’s response to these challenges

There is a strong belief across adult stakeholders that, given the local economic and social context, those young people who leave the school with limited transferable skills, qualifications and aspiration will likely fail to find positive destinations and risk long-term unemployment, poor health and other problems including criminal activity.

**Consultation and researching for new curriculum model**

Senior staff at the school conducted research and visits to other schools in Scotland and internationally to explore possible curriculum models, for example, Islay High School’s innovative curriculum and several Highland schools, to look at how small schools could present a pupil-centred yet full curriculum. As part of this exploratory work, alliances were formed with other schools including Mount Gambier South Australia. While these schools had different contexts from Govan, they faced similar challenges.

\textsuperscript{15}\texttt{http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0455111B-C3F3-4E19-BE8E-D9A78EB7E283/0/GovanetcPopulationdemographics31aug06.pdf}
The school development plans for transformation and the curriculum also involved a series of consultation exercises; curriculum conferences which involved many different stakeholders in the school community including pupils, former pupils, parents, and staff at various levels of the School, employers and representatives of partner agencies, colleges and employers. This communication also raised the profile of the school, its aims and how others could support the school and appeared to encourage a substantial amount of parental engagement. Essentially, the school was “seeking parents’ permission to implement radical changes”.

Restructuring the curriculum and timetable to address needs

The Headteacher and his Deputes found that many of those pupils who were unlikely to engage with the ‘traditional’ curriculum and struggled to achieve academically benefited from work placements and experiential learning. This realisation began to influence thinking in the school on curriculum design and the whole approach to learning in the school and began to drive school transformation. Therefore, in 2002, the School began to look at what subjects were needed to provide for the future.

*what kind of subjects are important for the kind of kids that we’re working with, but more importantly what kind of subjects do the young people themselves see as relevant to their lives.* (Project Coordinator)

The school thus embarked on a radical overhaul of the curriculum and learning and teaching methods in order to engage with the majority of pupils and address provision of skills for life and work. Previous measures to promote achievement that were reliant on external funding alone saw only short-term impact. Therefore, the School sought to look for a way to restructuring the curriculum to suit the needs of young people without depending on extra financial or staffing resources. The need for change was given impetus by the growing belief among staff that the school had to offer parity in vocational and the academic aspects of the curriculum.

School management team members reiterated the importance of developing the school’s tailored curriculum, the success of which was evidenced by the improved positive destination statistics and ability to meet all pupils’ needs, including fast-tracking the most able 10% of pupils.

*If they leave this school and go to a positive destination the odds are stacked that they will have a positive life, whereas if they leave this school and go to a negative destination the odds are that they will have a very short, negative, unpleasant life and again much of what we do is driven by the socioeconomic context in which we find ourselves. We have to in so many cases, make the difference for these young people... we’re talking about curriculum structures. That’s why we threw the traditional eight standard grade model in the bin. It was not working for our young people and you can look back at exam results, right back to the Second World War, and all you see is a picture of failure year on year.* (Member of Senior Management Team).

The school’s objectives are, therefore, tightly focussed on promoting positive destinations. The accounts of staff, indicate that they see the development of exam-related attainment as important, but that this has to be seen in the wider context of promoting achievement, raising aspirations and providing all pupils with a broad
range of skills. Leadership for pupils and staff was also prioritised and has been addressed via a leadership academy in partnership with Columba 1400.

Over the past five years the School has developed the curriculum and a timetable structure that is seen by staff as unique in Scotland in terms of its flexibility to meet individuals’ needs.

In this school young people do their options at the end of S1 and every year thereafter, so theoretically you could do five qualifications in S2, do your options at the end of S2 and do another five qualifications, repeat that in S3, repeat it in S4, repeat it in S5 and repeat it in S6, so our kids have got two ways to go. You can either settle early on your chosen subjects for your chosen career and work your way up the levels through intermediate 1, intermediate 2, higher, or you can chop and change and as you progress through your four or five years of secondary schooling you can have a broad base of qualifications… the flexibility is there in the curriculum as well as the depth and the breadth and the balance… [The] manipulation of the timetable has been such that if a parent comes to us and says “I want my daughter to do three sciences” we can make it happen. (Depute Headteacher: Curriculum)

One parent who had a daughter in S3 comments how flexible the timetabling has been in meeting the needs of children:

They actually made her a new timetable; they were very good that way. In second year, she actually did Intermediate one… so they actually made her a new timetable. So, they’re flexible in the way that they actually gave her a brand new timetable to fit round her not them; it was very unique. (Parent)

While some staff stressed that the school’s radical developments were initially challenged by some of those responsible locally for education management, the recent Government focus on Skills for Life, Skills for Learning and Skills for Work and Curriculum for Excellence was seen as providing a more supportive context which was in line with the objectives of the School.

Over the last three years the curriculum model has been further developed and evolved in response to lessons learned and evaluative feedback. This has been seen by some staff as rewarding but particularly stressful period. The school has worked with partners such as colleges to ensure that an appropriate curriculum was provided. This has been crucial as the relatively small pupil roll means that the school cannot depend on receiving the amount of teachers that would be needed to provide a flexible curriculum and timetable tailored to the needs of each pupil.

Identifying needs and recognising achievement

The Headteacher and staff believed that young people needed to be able to recognise the skills that they are developing, be confident in their use and be able to transfer and apply these skills to situations in their lives, including seeking and securing employment. Unlike the City’s timetabling system which is based on the SEEMIS administration system, the school constructs the timetable manually, first to address individual learning plans and then fit it to a SEEMIS system. Also, a set of 71 ‘Future Skills’ has been developed. Pupils’ achievements are identified, developed, assessed, recorded and reported. This process is supported by a sophisticated web-based
In addition to SQA awards, learners can obtain a personalised Achievement Certificate, where skills gained also explicitly demonstrate progress in the four capacities in Curriculum for Excellence. The school and HMIE highlight that the impact of the school’s skills-based approach was demonstrated by positive leaver destination statistics for 2008. Indeed, the nature of the curriculum enables pupils of all abilities to access a range of courses and opportunities to also develop their wider skills. The benefits of this were highlighted by parents and employers.

The importance of pastoral support and personal learning plans

In addition to addressing individual’s learning needs and abilities, pastoral support also features strongly. All pupils are also assigned to an Adviser Group which has a senior member of staff providing advice to around 10 pupils in their group one period a week. This session can cover careers, attendance, portfolios, CVs, progress tracking, achievement including attainment, etc. The adviser team can communicate directly with parents. This enhances the School’s monthly reports to parents.

Running alongside the adviser programme is a personal learning plan for every pupil in the school. This is electronically based and exists for every individual pupil. This is periodically updated with supported from the advisers. The plan and its detailed achievements can be printed out and complement other outputs to demonstrate to employers and educational establishments the young person’s abilities. Parents praised the quality of support and teaching provided.

In order to begin addressing pupils’ needs early, the school has a very active primary liaison programme which includes joint working, shared practice and transition work with young people from the primary schools coming to Govan High School to work in the secondary school building and to work at events and projects with staff.

The school’s Partnership Project objectives

In 2006, the school appointed a former Depute Head as Programme Coordinator, with responsibility to manage key aspects of the Partnership Project aspects of the programme and evaluate progress. The bid for inclusion in the project had 3 main facets which were linked to measurable quantitative targets. These concerned:

1. The percentage of leavers without a positive destination
2. The percentage of S4 pupils gaining 5 or more SCQF level 3 qualifications with the individuals’ curriculum being fully taken into account
3. All leavers in the bottom 20% of the ability range being given a ‘skills developed’ profile upon leaving.

Assessing the impact of the Partnership Project and school transformation

The schools’ own monitoring and evaluation focused mainly on using quantitative outcomes and measures such as SCQF and destination statistics and included their own ‘skills developed’ profile measure for target pupils. In addition, there is evidence from the HMIE follow-up inspection conducted in 2009. The external University evaluation interviews and focus groups have provided qualitative information to
provide supplemental insights to promote understanding of how the quantitative outcomes have been achieved and what they have meant to stakeholders.

**Progress against the school’s own programme targets**

The school’s monitoring has shown the following progress against its set targets:

(a) **Target 1:** to cut the ‘unemployed’ leaver statistic from 23% in 2005 to 12% in 2009

Performance: the target performance has been exceeded with an unemployed statistic of 11.8% agreed between Careers Scotland and the School. Also, aggregated negative destinations are down from 33% to 14%.

(b) **Target 2:** to increase the percentage of pupils in S4 gaining 5 or more SCQF level 3 certificates from 57% in 2005 to 75% in 2009 with the provision that the curricular choices of the young people, within the 5 S Grade or equivalent structure, are fully taken into account

Performance: the pre appeal statistic is 75% when all 68 S4 pupils are considered. When the curricular choice of the pupils is taken into account, the percentage gaining 5 or more SCQF level 3 certificates is 91% - consequently, the target performance has been exceeded.

(c) **Target 3:** to ensure that all leavers in the bottom 20% of the ability range receive a ‘skills developed’ profile document

Performance: the target performance has been exceeded with every leaver having a ‘Future Skills’ certificate posted out to arrive at the same time as their SQA certificate in August 2009.

**HMIE comments on progress**

In addition to the school’s own evaluation, recent HMIE reporting has also revealed notable positive developments. Since the HMIE inspection of January 2007, more young people attend school regularly and behave well in lessons and fewer young people are excluded from school. The HMIE follow up report in 2009 cites the particular strengths of the school as including:

- Very effective partnerships to help develop young people’s learning.
- Preparation of young people for the world of work.
- Recognition and recording of young people’s wider achievements.
- The commitment of all staff to the care and welfare of young people.
- The school working well to involve parents more directly in their children’s learning.

The HMIE report highlights as an example of good practice the school’s development of an “extensive set of ‘Future Skills’ that allows the school to identify, develop, record and report the achievements of individual young people”.

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Qualitative insights from stakeholders on progress

Insights from the external University evaluation reveals that staff concur with the schools’ own evaluation and HMIE reports that there have been positive changes over time. They stress that the School’s transformational change has been underway for some time before the Partnership funding became available. However, as the Headteacher stated, ‘this helped us to enhance what we’re doing and the story goes on’. Indeed, the vision for change was seen as beginning over a decade ago.

Many pupils in the school could be classified as requiring MCMC but the staff estimate that there are about 10% ‘high tariff’ young people who come from ‘terrible backgrounds who bring a lot of baggage with them’. The school’s Positive Destinations approach is aimed to promote the life chances of this group and all young people in the school. The team includes the careers officer, a transition worker seconded from the local regeneration agency, the employability officer and the attendance officer along with two classroom assistants. Staff see their impact in the fact that 58% of pupils now go into to FE and that the level of other positive destinations has increased.

The dramatic increase in pupils going on to FE is seen by staff and partner agencies as particularly heartening. The lack of employment, exacerbated by the recent economic recession, might also have meant pupils realised that going on to FE was a more realistic option than seeking work. Nevertheless, it was also seen as indicating a level of self-confidence and aspiration that was lacking in the community some years ago as well as efficient partnership working between the school, careers and college.

There are numerous examples of positive destinations facilitated by partnership working to develop employability and skills in the curriculum. For example, the hairdressing courses provided in partnership with Central College have seen a 100% success rate over the past three years in that every young person that has done the hairdressing course either pursues this in employment or does a related subject through further education to diploma level and then goes into employment. Dance is also seen as a success story with the school converting the old youth wing into a dance studio and hiring a dancer in residence. Again, this provision has almost a 100% success rate in terms of positive destinations with many pupils going on to do either dance or performing arts or theatre studies at a college or university.

The success of courses and learning experiences is attributed in part to a ‘triangle’ where the school is working closely with an FE establishment and an employer. This has worked well in engineering where the school has worked with Stow and Anniesland Colleges and the shipbuilders BVT. In two out of the last three years this has led to several young people obtaining modern apprenticeships with the shipyard including one young woman who is Apprentice of the Year (2009) in BVT. A new engineering course, ‘Get Ready for Engineering’, is another example of this partnership working, with outside partners providing opportunities for pupils to see the potential of careers in engineering.

A major impact has also been on staff attitudes and skills, as one teacher noted

\textit{This is a major transformation for your average Scottish secondary schoolteacher...It’s about recognising their skills, qualities and their contribution and valuing their contribution because that is the big difference here. We have people like classroom assistants who are advising teachers at times and there is no issue with that in this school. (Teacher)}
Perspectives of pupils and parents/carers

Pupils’ comments gathered via focus groups or interviews were positive and concurred with those of professional stakeholders. Pupils stressed the relevance of their learning and their appreciation for the interest shown in their future by members of staff. The positive comments were evident from those pupils seen as academically able as well as those who would traditionally be seen as vocationally orientated pupils. Pupils, who had been at other schools, noted that, in comparison, the ethos and rapport between staff and pupils was far more amicable and productive in Govan High School.

A small number of parents and carers were interviewed. It was clear that they were very aware of what the school was providing and were extremely positive in their views on the benefits for their children. Parents commented that this contrasted with other schools their children had been at and certainly with their own experiences of school. Parents also commented on the relevance of the curriculum and responsiveness of staff to the needs of children. They reported that the school had had a major impact on the learning and development of their children. One parent commented:

she came from strength to strength, I find them an absolutely amazing school, and I know it doesn’t have the best reputation in the world, but, they’re all for skills now, but even for a child that likes academia, they’re still giving 100% with her, and they’re not using her as what age group she’s in, they’re using her as her ability, which is, I have noticed a change in the school with that way. It’s amazing, it really is. That’s her going to sit 2 prelims the now, and that’s Maths and English, and she’ll be sitting her sciences in the summer. And then she’ll be doing her exams again. Last year, she got all A’s, so it was absolutely amazing (Parent)

Other partners

Partner organisations and employers praised Govan High School’s active pursuit of a relevant curriculum and the level of involvement of pupils in this process.

Govan High has been very, very proactive in the variety of different courses that we run. It’s easy sometimes for head teachers and schools to close their doors and just get on with their little world. Govan High have been very, very proactive in letting their pupils experience different courses outwith the school which is broadening the pupils’ horizons as well. (Rangers Learning Centre)

Leadership and collegiality

Informants identified a range of factors that has helped to promote success in terms of the school’s objectives.

Team working, leadership at all levels and flexibility were frequently cited by staff and other professional stakeholders as having developed over time and being important factors in the success of the Programme. Staff saw themselves as part of a team working to address the needs of young people. Informants stressed that the school’s system would not function if people were unwilling to work across traditional subject or professional ‘boundaries’. Parents and pupils appeared to recognise and appreciate this collaborative ethos and approach.
A major factor identified by stakeholders, particularly the staff, was having staff who were committed to the vision and aims of the Programme and who are comfortable with a learner-centred ethos. Getting all staff on board with the Programme has taken time. Originally, there were some staff who were unwilling to look at their practice and adapt to the new approach. This meant that school management had work closely with staff to assess whether they were willing to work within the new system. Having appropriately motivated and skilled staff has been helped by an influx of enthusiastic, well-trained young teachers.

**Partnership working**

Partnership working is seen by staff as key to facilitating the school’s ability to successfully deliver tailored programmes. The partner network and its capacity has grown as partners have become aware of what opportunities they can provide together. While partnerships help the school address the range of needs of pupils, a major issue is that the relatively small number of school staff means a reliance on colleges to provide teaching input to make a number of the courses in the flexible timetable viable. Other partnerships with support and careers agencies help inform progression, destinations and planning. Employers are also crucial in supporting skills courses and learning opportunities. The partner organisation Columba 1400 has provided training in the one-to-one non-directive coaching and development of the Schools’ leadership academy.

*We could not function without the virtual teachers that we created through networking and partnerships, we simply couldn’t function. We wouldn’t be able to give the young people the curriculum.* (Depute Head)

College staff appreciated the fact that the school has worked to ensure that pupils involved with college provision were there because it was appropriate and they were not being treated as ‘a dumping ground’, rather that the pupils are largely ‘confident, able, committed young people’. The colleges appear to understand and value the Govan High School model and the commitment to partnership. Where difficulties have arisen, such as truancy among some pupils, the school and college work together to develop a solution that usually involves providing additional support via a pupil support assistant to make sure the pupils arrive at college and ensure there are no issues with confidence etc.

Another important partner is the Rangers study centre/Rangers education. The organisation has a partnership arrangement with Glasgow City Council Education Services and groups from Glasgow schools attend sessions once a week for 10 weeks. A variety of different courses are provided but the main course is a ready to learn 10-week course to which schools come for 10 half days. This provision uses football and sport to engage with pupils, but also includes a focus on ICT, maths, languages and healthy lifestyles. Rangers Football Club and Glasgow City Council provide support for awards to recognise pupils’ achievements. The Centre also runs evening programmes for community-based projects including those that address territorialism in the Govan/Ibrox area, anti-sectarian work and also work with asylum seekers in the locality and city-wide.

The Centre has also been involved in helping to facilitate broader innovative programmes at the school including:
• an engineering course on aeronautics and to raise awareness and aspirations concerning access to higher education and eventual careers in engineering. This is provided in partnership with British Airways engineering division. A particular focus is on promoting young women’s interest in engineering.

• one of the dance programmes at the High School and other local schools which has 12 part-time dancers providing courses in street dancing, hip-hop and use Govan High School’s dance studio. This also includes a component on nutrition and health. Pupils from the High School won the competition associated with this programme.

The involvement of Rangers and Celtic football clubs is seen as providing an incentive given young people’s (including young men and women) interest in the clubs. Further incentives available via partners included getting to see football matches, including being flown by British Airways to London to see a football match and having access to engineering work in their hangers. One partner stressed that associating such incentives with learning and skills opportunities promotes pupils’ interest in pursuing certain routes that they would not usually have considered.

Communication and consultation with parents and carers

Pupils, parents and staff highlight that the school places the pupil at the centre of the curriculum with a range of consultation strategies in place to ensure their needs are addressed. All parents are kept-up-to-date on their children’s progress with a report every month. Also, school advisers work with all pupils and liaise with their families where appropriate. The development of the current system in the school itself is based on a series of curriculum conferences that involved the whole community. Parents highlighted the personal approach of staff in maintaining contact and providing updates on their children’s progress.

3.3.3 The management of change

While the original vision and direction for school transformation came from the Headteacher and Depute Heads, the management structure in the school is open. Overall, staff commented on a lack of hierarchy but stressed that leadership, shared responsibility, confidence, autonomy and team working. There was consensus that the inclusion of all staff, pupils and partner organisations and providers in decision-making had not only promoted an inclusive ethos but had ensured that change permeated all aspects of the school. There is no Senior Management Team as such. Rather there is a ‘leadership team’ which comprises headteacher, the deputes, the Business Manager and the faculty heads.

The pupil involvement in change included the student council, which was seen as an autonomous body. Certain projects are also led by pupils. Pupils and staff believed that this has contributed to change in the culture within the school. Staff hoped that eventually this would impact positively on the community outwith the school.

3.3.4 Professional Development for teachers and other staff

The School has a two-way monitoring and evaluation system to monitor learning and teaching in with a peer to peer set approach overseen by a monitoring group of five staff from a cross section of unpromoted to promoted staff. The monitoring visits have, to date, been shaped by the How Good is Our School? (3) performance indicators and also the action points from the previous HMIE report. This system has
recently focussed on promoting staff’s capacity concerning formative assessment strategies. Every member of the teaching staff is involved in the system of observational visits and feedback and there are opportunities for teachers to observe teaching approaches across different subjects. There is a quality and standards report produced three times a year. In addition, all staff are encouraged to study and read to keep up-to-date with developments and research that can inform practice in the school. Staff believe that this promotes debate and synergy of ideas. External CPD is also provided, for example, everybody in a management position has been through a Columba 1400 programme, including training in one-to-one non-directive coaching and leadership development.

Every teacher in Govan High School has visited one of the five associated primary school as part of their CPD and primary school staff have visited the High School. This is seen as making a ‘tremendous difference’ to the awareness of staff across the schools concerning learning and teaching approaches and strategies and how early intervention approaches can be developed to better support learners.

3.3.5 Conclusions

Reflecting on the findings to identify lessons learned, issues and implications it would seem that the following emerge:

Overall, the available quantitative indicators from the local authority, the school and HMIE, along with the qualitative insights obtained from the external research, strongly suggest that the approach adopted by the school has made substantial progress in addressing the objective of promoting positive destinations for young people. The transformative work of the school and partners is appreciated by pupils and parents.

In addition to having a positive impact on destinations, the flexible, student- focussed curriculum model has been developed in a culture of critical self-reflection and evaluation and consultation. It continues to develop to reflect needs and circumstances. Over the next few years, the real potential of Govan High School’s approach on all pupils’ skills, achievement, broader attainment and destinations should become evident.

As with other examples of effective school transformation within and outwith the Glasgow Partnership Schools project, it is the vision of the Headteacher and a core of dedicated staff that has driven change, developed partnerships and helped to sustain progress by building the capacity of those in the school community within a particular ethos.

The funding from the Government and Hunter Foundation has contributed to the scope of what the school can offer as part of its wider approach. Staff and professional stakeholders believe that the school’s model is sustainable in that it has developed a staffing resource augmented by partnership working, in particular involving local colleges. However, any future local authority staffing cuts might jeopardise the current structures where a particular subject area of the curriculum relies on one teacher, for example modern languages, ICT, biology, chemistry, physics and religious and moral education. Also any potential reductions in the support staffing levels in the school would have a greater impact on the school than it might on other high schools because of the role of these staff have in supporting young people, for example, the school’s learning resource manager.
3.4 Hillhead High School

Hillhead High School is described by the headteacher as ‘a true comprehensive’. The school amalgamated with Woodside Secondary School in 1999. It has a mixed and large catchment area inclusive of 35 postcodes and 29 different first languages. The proximity of the school to the relatively affluent West End of Glasgow belies its urban status. The school roll encompasses some of the most able pupils and some of the most deprived pupils in the city.

3.4.1 The nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the school

Hillhead High School joined the Glasgow Schools Partnership with the overall aim of improving the achievement, opportunities and destinations of the lowest performing twenty per cent of pupils. The position of Hillhead High School within the partnership is distinctive in a number of respects. First, a new headteacher was appointed in August 2008 and authored a revised transformational plan. Second, as a consequence the final part of the project ran from February to June 2009, a period of just five months (with a budget of £80,000). The revised locally authored plan had four overlapping core themes: learning and teaching, attendance, attainment and achievement. In contrast to the focus on whole school transformation within the Schools of Ambition, the focus at Hillhead was on targeted interventions to support 37 young people in S4 who were identified as at risk of failing to enter employment, education or training on conclusion of their school career.

Attainment in SQA national qualifications reflects the diverse nature of the school population and provides further evidence that socio-economic status matters. By the end of S6, the overall quality of attainment is described as ‘very good’, but only ‘adequate’ at the end of S4 (HMIE Inspection Report, 2008). Nevertheless the percentage of the S4 year group achieving five or more awards at SCQF Level 5 (Standard Grade Credit level or equivalent) or better is above the City average (26% compared with 22% for the City). A proportion of the school population is in constant flux. After the start of the autumn term in August 2008, the school accepted 57 young people from outside the catchment area through placing requests and permanent exclusions. The most recent inspection, conducted in October 2007, noted ‘a high movement around the school population’. The percentage of pupils registered for free school meals (24%) is marginally below the City average (26%), and the average S1-S5 unauthorised absence is below the City average (2008/09) (Source: Scottish Schools Online).

Prior to the intervention strategies (2007 – 2010) trialled with support from the City Council, Scottish Government and the Hunter Foundation, the senior management team reported that school staff were contending with a high number of exclusions, attendance and behaviour issues. Destination figures indicated that 17% of young people leaving the school in 2009 did not achieve a positive destination, a fall from 19% in 2008. Attendance and attainment in S4 were identified as particular priorities for improvement. At the start of the planned interventions, 37 pupils in S4 had been identified as not regularly attending school over the previous three years. The
additional resource allocated to the school was therefore directed at tackling a culture of under-achievement among the lowest attaining pupils in the school (the bottom attaining 20%).

*I feel that Hunter came in at a fantastic time to kick-start the whole notion of ‘let’s change the culture’, all young people matter and not just those pupils sitting five higher or three advanced higher. It needed that.* (Headteacher)

### 3.4.2 The school’s response to these challenges

Additional staffing was put in place to provide tailored support for S4 pupils attending college and sitting Access/Foundation awards in national examinations who had irregular patterns of school attendance. Additional temporary staffing was made available for a half day each week to provide additional English and mathematics support for these pupils. The Principal Teacher Support for Learning identified 18 pupils who were at risk of not gaining five passes at levels 1-6 and closely monitored their progress. These pupils were assigned to a Raising Attainment Group and excused from PSE for one period per week to create time for one-to-one study support. At the selection and recruitment stage of the initiative, parents were invited to school to attend a meeting explaining the objectives of the programme and were subsequently kept informed of their child’s progress throughout the period of targeted support.

*We identified the group on the basis that there were pupils there who had potential to improve. It’s very much about target setting, about reviewing where each of them were, about any potential strengths that they could develop and about any areas of real weakness that they could identify themselves and then work on. If they could identify what help they needed, we could intervene and provide it. There was money there to get them study aids, support materials and past papers. Initially they had a sense of “What am I doing here?” but we explained and tried to keep it informal but still challenging.* (Principal Teacher)

Additional time was made available for the pastoral care team to work with the target group, monitored by a Depute. The pastoral care team used the additional time to interview all potential leavers about their proposed destination; to liaise closely with the school Careers Officer and Employability Officer; and to target pupils who were poor or non-attendees.

### Involvement of partners

In order to raise self-esteem and employability skills, staff from Glasgow West Regeneration Area worked one day a week with 16 S3 pupils between May and June 2009. A trained counsellor was employed one day each week to work with all pupils experiencing difficulties at school or home. Vocational opportunities were enhanced through the provision of an on-site hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapy salon
supported by lecturers from Cardonald College. Access 3\textsuperscript{18} maths courses and national qualifications in financial management were introduced in an attempt to make the curriculum accessible and relevant for all S3 pupils.

**Mentoring**

A ‘Key Person’ initiative recruited 32 members of staff (from a roll of 53 staff) for a pupil mentoring programme. Pupil Support identified 40 pupils in S4 who would benefit from support in relation to ‘curricular monitoring and pastoral well being’. Teachers were asked to select a pupil they would like to mentor who they were not teaching in the current session. Each of the pupils was told privately to give them a chance to opt out of the scheme and none of the pupils declined to participate. Volunteer staff met with individual pupils once per week for ten weeks.

\textit{A number of these fourth year pupils were fairly disaffected with school, perhaps had reputations in the school. At different points in the school had been very negative and very awkward but the response from the pupils was heart-warming. One of the boys said to me “Somebody’s chosen me? I didn’t think she knew me. I didn’t think I counted.”} (Principal Teacher)

The development of pupil leadership skills was promoted by engaging the services of external consultants. Four S3 pupils participated in a Common Purpose course on leadership skills and twelve S3 pupils participated in an in-school pupil leadership course led by Graham Lamont, a training consultant from UXL Ltd\textsuperscript{19}. In conjunction with Common Purpose, a two-day experiential learning experience was provided for fifteen S3 pupils. This group was called the Young Motivators. A one-day Young Motivators’ Conference for all S3 pupils was organised to engage the wider school community and to allow the Young Motivators to consult on areas identified for change in the school.

**Support for parents**

The Findlay Family Network, a non-profit organisation founded in 2005 based in the Findlay Memorial Church in Maryhill, liaised with the school to provide support for a small number of parents\textsuperscript{20}. The network offers parenting groups and one-to-one support to families following referrals from primary and secondary schools. Nine families responded to offers of support and eight parents are still involved in on-going support. As a non-statutory voluntary agency the parental support workers argue that they are well placed to play a brokerage role, mediating between the school and families, sometimes preventing issues from escalating.

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{18} Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels are as follows:
    \begin{itemize}
        \item 7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C
        \item 6: Higher at A-C
        \item 5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2
        \item 4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4
        \item 3: Access 3 cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6
    \end{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{19} See http://www.uxl-ltd.co.uk/education.asp?thepage=education
    \item \textsuperscript{20} In line with reporting conventions, throughout this report the term ‘parents’ should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.
\end{itemize}
We work intensively in building relationships with people in the community. A lot of the parents have actually been to the schools themselves and we have been able to very subtly address some negative thoughts about education. As soon as something turns up there can be a huge negative response, a quite angry response coming out of fear. They don’t hear what the school is saying at that point because they feel completely vulnerable and don’t have confidence in their ability. One of our roles has been to help the parent know that this isn’t a huge thing but it is something you need to hear. It’s not a personal attack on your parenting or a personal attack on how you bring up your children. (Representative, Findlay Family Services)

Outcomes

Within a compressed five-month period the school was able to move forward and demonstrate progress in addressing the objectives of the revised transformational plan. Participants reported that the restricted time available to evidence improvement, focused minds and accelerated the pace of change. The distribution of responsibilities across the short-term working group, combined with invitations to the wider staff to show leadership, built a shared understanding of the rationale for change among the school community and raised the profile of the interventions undertaken.

As a new headteacher, it kick started a whole lot of things for me that would have taken years to do. (Headteacher)

Senior staff reported that the range of targeted interventions, supported by enhanced site-based training available to the wider staff, had positively influenced staff attitudes towards the lowest attaining pupils. This was regarded as important in a school where a pattern of differentiated attainment was noted in the senior school.

We had this diversity in terms of the pupils and there might have been a feeling of ‘Well, youngsters don’t turn up. That’s their issue’. We’re here to help them and if they’re not here, we can’t help them. Once the project was revised, there was a great response. Earlier there might have been a feeling about the less able kids, ‘Does it really matter?’ Once the initiative was being driven, there was a very positive response from the staff. It wasn’t that the staff was anti a particular group of kids. The school was never short of volunteers for an in-service or volunteers to be one of the lead teachers. (Project Coordinator)

Attainment in English and Maths at Hillhead High School increased from 83% to 92%, which the headteacher attributes to the additional resource to support targeted interventions with identified pupils and creative timetabling to ensure on-going and consistent school-based support, including support for 15 pupils attending college courses for half the week. The Raising Attainment Group increased pupil attendance, ensured the completion of all pre-examination work, and culminated in 100% attendance by group members at national examinations in English and Mathematics.
Sustainability

The pupils involved in leadership training at Hillhead are to be given the opportunity to be in-school ‘Leadership Ambassadors’ with the intention of establishing an ever-widening group of potential leaders. The school counsellor will be retained to continue to work one day per week in school. The Key Person pupil mentoring initiative will continue each year in the lead up to the S4 prelims and again in the approach to the national examinations. Staff continue to volunteer as mentors and no resources are required to sustain this work. Staff who participated in the mentoring programme were unanimous in their support for this way of working and saw clear benefits from offering personalised support for pupils in the target group.

*One of the things that we said to the staff was “Would you do it again?” “Yes we would”. That was unanimous. They wanted it earlier. They felt able to do that side of teaching which quite often is missing where they don’t feel they can give personal one-to-one attention. In the busyness of school life it’s not always easy. Although we talk sometimes about people not being willing to take on extra duties most teachers see that kind of role as being quite fundamental and they looked to this opportunity as an outlet to do that with someone. “I get on well with that person; I think I could help them and make a difference.”* (Principal Teacher)

The Raising Attainment initiative will continue and has expanded to four groups comprising 64 pupils. This includes provision for pupils targeting attainment at Foundation, General and and Credit level. These groups now start their work earlier in the school year and have drawn on the resources of probationer teachers to strengthen the level of individual support for learners.

*Albeit Hunter had a sharp focus on our under achieving youngsters at the bottom 20%, I was keen that there were spin offs for the whole school. You’re learning to upskill your staff and increase capacity for learning and teaching. You’re doing it for every child in the school. We were making resources for the bottom 20% that would be sustainable resources that would excite, colour and enthuse people about the subject.* (Headteacher)

The changes to the school curriculum will enhance the choices available to learners in the future and reflect the school’s commitment to provide experiences that are relevant to all pupils’ interests, aptitudes and aspirations. Options will continue to be available to young people in the areas of hairdressing and beauty, holistic therapies and financial management. Additional opportunities include the introduction of an SQA qualified *Skills for Work* certificate for S3 and S4 pupils. Changes to the school estate, such as the creation of the salon, and investment in learning technology, such as the installation of data projectors and purchase of AlphaSmart notetakers, are further changes that are available to the next cohort of pupils. The salon developed at Hillhead High School has proven so successful that other schools in the West Area have developed partnerships with Cardonald College and will make use of the Hillhead salon facilities in the next academic session. Finally, investment in training to enhance the capacity of staff to promote better behaviour and engage pupils in learning may also have longer-term benefits.
3.4.3 The management of change

Hillhead formed a short life working group of six staff who met weekly. The group included the headteacher, two Deputes (one Acting), the School Business Manager, teacher with responsibility for More Choices, More Chances support and an external consultant. The Project Manager for the Glasgow Partner Schools Project at Hillhead was the previous Project Manager of Castlemilk High School’s School of Ambition. Temporary enhancement of staffing in Biology and PE allowed the two Deputes to direct attention to the achievement of the objectives of the transformational plan. Temporary clerical support was established to support the additional administration involved in the range of projects. The working group set tightly focused short-term and longer-term targets. Short term-targets focused on close monitoring of pupil progress among an identified target group. A monitoring group was established for this purpose. Enhanced parental involvement was regarded as important to the efforts of the group and a parent/carer meeting was organised at an early stage, attended by 16 family members of 18 pupils invited to join a Raising Attainment Group.

When schools link with and work better with parents, the young people achieve more. (Headteacher)

Resources were allocated to subject departments on a competitive bidding process. It was made clear that, to be considered, bids must have a clear statement of how the proposed funding would support enhanced opportunities for the lowest performing pupils in school. An acceptance of the need to provide evidence of impact was a requirement of the funding. For example, the English Department were successful in a bid to purchase AlphaSmart portable notetakers to support completion of portfolio work by all pupils and raise attainment in Standard Grade English. This resource is now available to provide additional support for successive groups of targeted learners.

They had to justify any bids for money, identify the target group of youngsters, how it would benefit them and that was monitored. We had to establish our credibility. If we said we were going to do something we did it and then we followed up. We did that time and time again. (Depute Head)

Longer term targets addressed changes to teaching and learning practices across the school through the provision of continuing professional development opportunities for staff. External consultants were employed to provide training in response to needs identified through consultation with the staff.

A More Choices, More Chances Committee and a 16+ Learning Choices Group was set up and continues to operate. Partnership work with the Princes Trust, supported a youth worker allocated to the school and this work continues with a focus on working with the more vulnerable pupils in S3.

3.4.4 Professional Development for teachers and other staff

Hillhead High School organised in-service sessions on ‘Teaching for Effective Learning’ with Mary Pirie, an educational consultant from Locus Learning Ltd. These
afternoon sessions were well attended, finishing at 4pm after the close of the school day. The school continues to build strong links with the University of Glasgow, identifying two school champions and a departmental representative in a pilot project to promote active learning – a project led by Professor Vivienne Baumfield.

A focus on behaviour support and tackling indiscipline arose from consultation at an early stage with the Hillhead teaching staff to identify improvement priorities. Twenty-five per cent of staff attended the CPD sessions and subsequently eleven members of staff volunteered to work in partnership with staff from Ladywell School on the pupil support groups. Outreach staff from Ladywell share their expertise in addressing the issues of pupils who have difficulty engaging appropriately with school.

The Key Person initiative was identified as promoting greater awareness and responsiveness to individual pupil needs. The mentoring programme contributed positively to the professional development of staff, affording time to relate to students on a one-to-one basis outside a formal teaching situation. The coordinating teacher reported that the initiative had extended opportunities for teachers to develop the relational and pastoral dimensions of their role.

I think the willingness of staff to make a contribution on a kind of personal and individual level to a young person and the positive feedback they get from that is quite often missing - to look at how young people approach things, rather than having a kind of class mentality. You’ve got the class in front of you and they’re not doing this and he’s not doing that, but actually to hear the young person saying “well actually I’m quite anxious about this and I’m quite anxious about that”. Sometimes in the busyness of school we can forget all of that. (Principal Teacher)

The Key Person initiative was also a stimulus for greater cross-role and cross-subject dialogue in school. The initiative created and strengthened links between professionals in school. It created opportunities for staff to come together to discuss pupil progress from a number of different perspectives.

I think that was quite useful because there was the necessity to remember that the young people we’re working with are human and that they can’t just abandon all their difficulties at the school gates - a wee bit of advice from a teacher who’s not teaching them that subject or who’s not in that difficult situation with them. It lets them see that some of these kids do have big worries and big, big problems that they bring with them. It brought the staff together much more. There aren’t that many opportunities for folk to work together. You don’t often get the chance to sit and reflect. (Principal Teacher)

Third sector workers identified the development of proactive rather than reactive roles as an area for continuing development. Enhanced partnership work was a positive outcome of the range of initiatives undertaken at Hillhead.

We can give back up support in the community on a day-to-day basis, rather than just be somebody who is coming in for that moment, who isn’t going to have a relationship outwith that room beyond that hour and a half... We have
not really got a commitment to Glasgow City Council or to a single establishment. We have a commitment to the community and everything else falls into that. (Representative, Findlay Family Network)

3.4.5 Conclusion

Hillhead High School sought to address the needs of the lowest attaining twenty per cent of pupils. Attainment records reveal a pattern of high levels of attainment at the end of S6 but comparatively lower levels of attainment among the S4 group. These trends reflect the diverse composition of the school population and led to the ambitious five-month transformational plan outlined above. Under the leadership of the newly appointed headteacher and through the week-by-week coordinating activities of a short-term working group, all of the identified targets were exceeded. These include significantly improved attainment in English and Mathematics – a rise of 9%, improved reported rates of attendance among the target group, the establishment of a teacher-pupil mentoring scheme and an expansion of curriculum choice for pupils. These outcomes were achieved through a combination of targeted interventions to help those pupils identified as being most in need to achieve their potential, whole school approaches to tackle indiscipline and raise pupil aspirations, and creative responses to the opportunities afforded through curriculum flexibility. The school invested in professional development in areas identified by staff as priorities, linking teachers’ professional learning with increasing opportunities and outcomes for pupils. Hillhead High School faced the additional challenge of managing a high level of activity across a number of fronts within a five-month period. From the participant accounts reported here, it appears that the compressed transformational period brought a sharper focus to the action plan and many staff have responded positively to opportunities for participation.
3.5 Rosshall Academy

Rosshall Academy is a non-denominational comprehensive school serving the South West of Glasgow with a roll of 1,200 pupils. The school was formed by the merging of Penilee and Crookston Castle Secondary Schools in August 1999. Staff and pupils moved to a new building in August 2002. It became part of a Learning Community with the local nursery, primary and special schools in August 2004.

3.5.1 The nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the school

There is a very mixed catchment area which presents particular challenges in meeting the needs of all pupils:

*It’s 23% FME* and we have 22% of our youngsters who go to higher education, but equally we probably have another 25% at the other end who are challenging youngsters for whom live in quite difficult circumstances, real areas of deprivation because we serve Pollok, Penilee, Hillington, Cardonald, so it’s very mixed*. This mix of pupils gives us the challenge to meet the learning needs of the most academic whilst also addressing those who have additional support needs. (Headteacher)

Staff and parents make reference to ‘territorial issues between the various localities that make up the catchment area: ‘If something happens in the local community then that can lead to all sorts of things [in school]’. However, teachers believed that the school addresses these issues well. There also appear to be additional factors underpinning instances of territorial conflict, with young people involved in such conflict are also ‘carrying additional baggage of family and personal problems’. The pupil mix in the school is influenced by the Local Authority from time to time, placing young people in the school when they have been moved from other schools for behaviour issues. It could be argued that in comparison to other schools in Glasgow City, Rosshall Academy faces fewer challenges associated with deprivation and other factors that require MCMC responses. However, the school managers and others interviewed for this study believed that particular measures were required to meet the needs of those young people in the school with chaotic lifestyles, low self-esteem, low confidence and limited aspirations among particular groups of the ‘most disaffected or the most disadvantaged’ young people. The main response to this need was the creation of the Practical Skills Course (PSC) project.

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21 Glasgow City Council data shows that the percentage of Free School Meal Entitlement in Rosshall Academy has declined slightly from 23.5% in 2007 to 18.3% in 2009.
3.5.2 The school’s response to these challenges

As part of its agreement with the Hunter foundation and Glasgow City Council (GCC), the school defined the following objectives for the project’s transformational plan.

- Alter staff perceptions of the Practical Skills Course (PSC) project aimed to and promote positive attitudes towards *More Choices, More Chances* provision;
- Develop core skills;
- Improve destination statistics;
- Foster relationships with outside agencies;
- Establish an internal tracking system;
- Develop appropriate courses;
- Development of a Positive attitude towards Learning.

In addition, the School aimed to address in its School Improvement Plan those targets highlighted by the 2005 HMIE inspection report. The SMT stressed that the school improvement plan was strongly influenced by the evaluation and feedback from pupils, parents and staff to assess what improvements they believed were needed. The funding from the programme allowed the recruitment of a dedicated programme support worker to work with pupils. The young people involved in the programme also received advice and support by the school’s partner services such Careers Scotland.

Impact of the Programme

The School’s report to Glasgow City Council (GCC) draws on a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence including focus groups, interviews and self-evaluation forms involving mainly pupils and staff to conclude that progress has been made across the objectives (Rosshall Partnership: Final Summary 2009). SMT and those involved in the Programme believe that it had met its objectives and lessons learned could be embedded in the school, for example, new literacy courses were being developed for *MCMC* students to pilot in 2009/10 and there was increased use of Access 3 certification in core subjects is a sustainable and will be of benefit to the *MCMC* group.

Impact on attainment

In terms of attainment the following outcomes for participants were reported:

- All but one of the first cohort of pupils involved in the programme achieved S grade English. Several of the group also achieved S Grade Maths.
- The second cohort of pupils involved in the project achieved an overall General grade for English after the December 2008 examination diet. The whole group was expected to obtain General grades in English. The vast majority of these were also expected to obtain either S grade or Access 3 passes in Mathematics.
However, the Headteacher is cautious in attributing outcomes solely to one particular programme and notes that other whole school developments are likely to have also promoted attainment for the programme group.

“That particular group they did attain better because they were here, and last year our attainment for English and maths went up from 87 to 92, but how do we know that was what impacted that? We were doing other things.”

(Headteacher)

Staff report that the SEEMIS data system statistics and tracking element has shown improvement in programme participants’ performance in all of their subjects as well as improvements in attendance and behaviour.

Promoting positive destinations

Importantly, there has been an increase in positive destinations for those involved. The school implemented a MCMC working group to promote efforts to improve positive destinations. This group included The Employability and Enterprise Officer (EEO), the Practical Skills Co-ordinator, Head of school, Careers Advisors, Pastoral Care teachers and an MCMC key worker from Careers Scotland. Destination data are checked by the EEO and Pupil Support Group (PSG) co-ordinator. Other measures involve:

- The EEO and Careers Scotland personnel interview every school leaver.
- Vulnerable pupils are targeted including the MCMC group, Visually Impaired and those with learning difficulties.
- Any potential MCMC student is referred to Careers Scotland’s “Positive Futures” programme and benefits from liaison between the EEO, PSG Co-ordinator, Pastoral Care and Senior Management.

The result of this is reported improved destination statistics for the MCMC students, with the entire year one group achieving positive destinations at August 2008. Successful partnership facilitated by the school’s Employment Officer is seen as a key factor in facilitating these positive destinations. The economic recession provided a challenging environment against which the programme had to operate, making promoting positive destinations more difficult and led to a downturn in the numbers of employers who were able to support placements, provide interview simulations and related advice and offer work to young people.

The perspective of HMIE on progress

In their follow-up report in 2007, HM Inspectors identified major progress since 2005 in addressing their recommendations and the School’s Improvement Plan. Selected highlighted highlights on progress include:

- Aspects of pupils’ attainment and their attendance have improved. Of note was the ‘very effective approach of the Employability and Enterprise Officer’
which had ‘had assisted with the improvement in the proportion of pupils going into employment’.

- Improvement in the pace of implementing the improvement plan and regularly reviews of progress of the development targets to maximise the impact on pupils’ learning experiences. The development of systems for pupil monitoring, the evaluation of setting, the development of Access and Intermediate courses and the reduction of no awards at Standard Grade were completed earlier than originally planned.
- The pace of implementation of the school’s tutor system had also been increased.
- Improvement of the Visual Impairment Unit.
- Improvement of the effectiveness of self-evaluation by systematically evaluating the quality of learning and teaching. The school was seen as successfully developing a culture of self-evaluation with teachers more engaged in self-evaluation and beginning to use the information to identify priorities for improvement.
- The school had put in place a number of strategies to raise attainment. Teachers were making more effective use of National Qualification courses at S4 to S6 to better meet pupils’ needs. They had started to set targets with S3 pupils and were mentoring some S4 pupils.

Impact on broader skills and engagement

S5 Pupils involved in the Practical Skills course reported that it had promoted their confidence through the group activities and achieving. The Outward Bound activities, including rock climbing and canoeing were highlighted as being particularly valuable. The difference the Partnership Programme could make to individual pupils was illustrated by an external photography course funded by Hunter resources which proved valuable for MCMC pupils in promoting their skills, confidence, engagement with school and expanding their aspirations. A sessional worker provided this input drawing on her experience of working with local adults and teenagers to deliver a 12 week course on digital photography which concludes with an exhibition for parents’ night. The course included a focus on local topics of interest to the pupils such as sports and football. This helped secure the engagement of participants. One of the Project pupils who had complex issues which meant she had faced numerous problems and challenges at previous schools reported that, following the course, she was more focused now and wanted to have a career in photography.

Staff who viewed such courses as valuable saw them making a difference to the skills and particularly the confidence of young people as well as positively impacting on the attitudes of their families. These positive outcomes could then be built on by other activities in the school and partner organisations. In some cases, it was argued, the outcomes were sufficient to alter a young person’s direction in school and beyond. However, not all of those working with these groups of young people believed that the Partnership Programme had been particularly effective. A Principal Teacher for guidance with extensive experience of teaching disaffected and vulnerable young people believed that the programme had not effectively addressed the needs of those pupils who required support. Overall, this teacher thought that the short-term funding largely went toward unsustainable developments and did not focus on those most in
need of support. To meet the needs of the original target group he advocated adopting a more radical approach, similar to that adopted by centres like Kibble and sufficient input from support staff. Such provision was, he felt, rare across the City.

You’re trying to deal with children who really require more specialist types of help. In the six years or so that I spent building two separate departments in List D in Kibble you were working with on average four or five kids. Anyone in the specialist education area will tell you that you can’t stick 20 kids in a room who have got learning difficulties, who have got behaviour problems and/or whatever at the same time. The same kids that we’re supposed to be helping require extra support and lo and behold what have they just done, yes they’ve just halved the number of support staff. (Technical teacher).

This teacher stressed the importance of employability for the MCMC group, however, he felt that the current curriculum was lacking in meeting their needs

...the trouble is we talk about in a curriculum for excellence...about preparing kids for the world of work, but to do that there has to be a more practical and pragmatic approach and relationship between the education system and the employers and it’s still at a stage of paying lip service. The problem you have in the colleges obviously is the bums on seats scenario. (Technical teacher)

Nevertheless, pupils appreciated existing measures to promote opportunities and employability such as local partner initiatives and support from the Careers Officer and Job Centre case worker provided at the beginning of 3rd and 4th Year.

Pupils noted an improvement in the quality of relationships with teachers, particularly those involved in the programme and believed that the staff usually listened to what pupils had to say and tried to reflect this in changes in the schools.

The Employment Officer has found that feedback from employers, universities and the young people themselves reveals that they value the additional employability attributes and skills that pupils bring following the schools’ efforts in this area. In her advocacy role when supporting pupils to apply for courses and work had emphasises the value of these skills.

I helped these guys filling in their forms I made a point of writing down the reason why these kids don’t have eight standard grades is because they were on this alternative course, but they’ve got a lot of really wonderful life and vocational skills and at the end of the day a lot of these youngsters the thing they need most particularly see your wee quiet, shy ones, it’s confidence these kids need. (Employment Officer)

Factors influencing the Programme

The school’s own evaluation and the external research conducted by the University have highlighted a range of factors that have influenced the Programme’s success.
Initially, there were challenges in promoting acceptance of the skills programme across all staff. The difficulties with the initial group seems to have been a key factor in this.

**Having an appropriate mix of young people on courses**

A major factor in the success of the programme was seen as altering the make-up of the initial phase of the project. Originally, the project had involved the most disaffected and vulnerable young people in the school. This was not effective due to pupil behaviour issues. This also meant many staff saw the programme as a failure. Input from the Employment Officer helped redesign the Schools’ Hunter Foundation funded skills course to ensure that pupils would leave with qualifications as well as broader skills. The Employment Officer had stressed that the programme should ensure that the programme included working towards Standard Grades in order to promote employability, particularly for those seeking apprenticeships. The second version of the programme took this into account.

Drawing on the experience of the first phase, the second group of pupils who were involved had a more varied profile, yet could still be classified as *MCMC*. As this new S3 group began to demonstrate positive outcomes, the attitudes of staff changed to become more positive.

**The importance of learning and teaching approaches**

The pupils also expressed an interest in those lessons that allowed them to be creative (eg Music and Woodwork) and engage in discussion and debate (eg RE). They suggested a need for even more activities, social events and excursions and work experience. There was some indication that, following the programme, pupils missed the very supportive environment and smaller class size of their Partnership Programme course.

*Well when we were in the class with [Teacher] we got more help, like tests and stuff. Not help with tests, but to write them and stuff... We don’t really get much help... and in our [previous Practical Skills Course] class we were like open, like just talk about what our work is, but in our bigger classes we’re more hesitating.* (Female S5 Pupil)

S4 Pupils who had been involved in the second phase of the programme commented on how the active teaching approaches adopted and the closer rapport compared favourably with those in some of the other subjects.

*In maths they just give us text books to work out of with the smart board. Art we just get told to draw something that the teacher says. (S4 male pupil)*  
*In every [Programme] class you had smaller numbers of people. When there’s more people it’s no fun. It’s just boring... The teachers were talking better and teaching you and now they’re not.* (S4 female pupil)
Interestingly, pupils noted that some of those teachers who had an input on the Programme appeared to revert to more didactic teaching approaches when the Programme ended and the pupils were taught in ‘mainstream’ classes. Nevertheless, pupils who had been involved in the Programme found that they were more motivated and able to engage with their lessons when the Programme ended.

*It’s good because we learn new things and I’m actually liking my English lessons. (S4 Female pupil)*

**Partnership working and dedicated Programme workers**

A key strategy to address the challenges posed by pupils’ range of needs has been extensive partnership working facilitated in part by the Partnership Programme. Rosshall Academy now offers a number of courses in partnership with outside agencies to meet the needs of a range of pupils. Examples include: Prevocational; college link courses (GVP); Police links and Pathways and Fashion retailing through both Debenhams and Glasgow Caledonian University. Local colleges, in particular, are a valuable partner in extending education opportunities to meet young people’s needs.

Approaches to support some of the most disaffected young people required close partnership working with pastoral staff and appropriate services. Parents and young people appear to be more willing to engage with those who can offer practical support, particularly if this might include promoting chances of employment. Effective aspects of partnership working have included:

- Princes Trust XL course is now embedded in Rosshall’s curriculum;
- ASDAN training completed by a variety of staff;
- Citizenship course for S4 group by school chaplaincy team for both S3 and S4 groupings delivered in 2007;
- Year one and two groups have worked with Rangers/Celtic education. Cardonald College and Glasgow Met courses for S4s;
- Involvement with SWAMP media centre for year one group;
- Childcare course set up in partnership with Langside College. August 2008 which involved college staff delivering elements in school and then students are given placements in the School’s associated nurseries to gain practical experience and skills;
- SW regeneration agency’s Cr8 bus employability programme;
- “Kicks n tricks” Sports coaching programme delivered in partnership with SW regeneration agency and Rangers FC coaching staff. 2008-9;
- Photography course for year two grouping with Patricia Clark photography.
- The Headteacher, Employment Officer and a DHT are negotiating with the Principal of Cardonald College to explore expanding Skills for Work courses

Partner organisations can also be limited in their ability to respond because of resource issues. Some partnership ventures such as residential programmes with the Outward Bound Organisation while seen as extremely successful will not be sustained because of Local Authority savings measures. In addition, the recession is seen as
meaning a downturn in the numbers of employers that are able to support placements, provide interview simulations and related advice and offer work to young people. Colleges are now enabling the school to provide Skills for Work courses for current S5 and there are positive developments in working with S3 pupils. The school has no space to develop workshops and studios to offer courses such as building, plastering, plumbing and electrician courses and so relies on partnership with the colleges. While colleges help schools extend their range of provision, School support staff are sometimes required accompany particularly vulnerable young people.

They're completely out of their depth to deal with that type of child. They had refused to let them in unless I was constantly there with the kids....Just not geared to take on that kind of kid at all. (School support worker)

This dedicated pupil support worker has played a key role in both engaging with vulnerable young people but also facilitating links with partner organisations. Her proactive approach included visiting local businesses to secure positions (eg employment for two young women in hairdressing). This worker was recruited for her skills and ability rather than being a qualified teacher. This support worker had a background in retail but was able to focus on building relationships with the target groups and help other staff develop approaches that built confidence that would then facilitate improved engagement and learning. However, while lessons have been learned from recruiting this support worker, the lack of funding means it has not been possible to secure the post as it was originally configured.

**Promoting the engagement and support of school staff**

Despite the programme participants demonstrating improved outcomes, a small number of staff remained disinterested in what was being attempted. One partner commented that some staff were sceptical of any provision that did not have a narrow focus on promoting exam performance. This meant that work conducted by some external partners such as Employment Officer, while supported by the Headteacher and senior management, was not always well received by all teachers. Some teachers, it was believed by some staff, did not see promoting employability as within their remit, rather they saw the priority as achieving qualifications. (Employment Officer). However, participants working with SMT have addressed the importance of this aim alongside promoting the school’s exam profile. In deed, after some effort, the school improvement plan now emphasises that every department should have an employability statement.

Following a significant amount of effort from the Practical Skills Course co-ordinator, an increasing number of staff have volunteered to become involved in activities to support mainstreaming Practical Skills in their practice. Key to this buy-in appears to have been the Programme co-ordinator demonstrating to all staff the academic and broader progress that the PSC pupils were making. Staff were also made aware of the financial benefits of the project for developing learning and teaching, addressing pupils’ needs and the fact that it had helped keep some members of staff in employment. The impact of the initiative has been highlighted across the school and community via whole school activities such as celebrating success evenings, charity evenings, presentations at assemblies and school newsletter articles. Staff also
witnessed changes in participating pupils’ behaviour and abilities. The reduced exclusion and truancy rates among the target pupils also influenced staff attitudes. Interviews with staff highlighted the importance of having the ‘right’ people in place to drive and support school transformation and to address challenges, particularly vulnerable pupils’ needs. In addition, partnership working was seen as crucial to this process. Teachers and partner organisation staff made frequent reference to the issue that not all staff have the appropriate disposition and ability, even when trained, to work with vulnerable pupils. Dealing with the ‘most disaffected or the most disadvantaged’ pupils can be extremely challenging and the Headteacher stressed that ‘only very talented staff in school can cope with them’. The importance of the support staff, many of whom were locals, was frequently stressed as an important factor in identifying and addressing needs.

"Our jannies and other support staff, people they meet and know, they live in the local community, they know these kids, they know the background, they will often tell us background information that helps us." (Teacher)

Increasingly, the local colleges and the school are learning to deploy appropriate staff and approaches to meet the needs of pupils. Changes in college staff, including principals, have also improved the willingness of colleges to work with the school.

Monitoring and evaluation

Staff noted that systems were now better developed in the school to monitor and track pupils much more carefully and helped to ‘spot under-achievement and try and take proactive measures’. The monitoring also allowed the school to identify those who were particularly able and ensure they received the support they required. This improved monitoring had also been praised by HMIE.

Wider policy landscape

Occasionally, the wider policy environment has meant that freedom to experiment with the curriculum and learning and teaching has not always been present.

"When this project first started...we were encouraged to experiment and to go away and try new things and make mistakes and then the directorate changed and then it became much more rigorous, more about evaluation, more emphasis on sustainability and I understand why that was, but at the same time when you’re always worried about making it sustainable it stops you experimenting." (Headteacher)

Working with parents

Like others working with target groups of pupils, the Employment Officer stressed the importance of developing rapport and trust with these young people because many do not have the confidence to seek assistance. This approach is extended to include their parents to increase the likelihood of getting pupils to participate.
3.5.3 The management of change

The Headteacher stressed that the main driver of change during and before the project had been to build a staff complement who shared the vision for transformation and also provide opportunities to develop their capacity. Again, the importance of promoting leadership across staff and pupils and communicating the vision for change was stressed by staff. The school management has used various strategies to involved staff including offering CPD and encouraging leadership opportunities for non-promoted staff. Pupils and staff were offered access to Columba 1400 and a focus was on developing pupil leadership across the school. Activities that included a focus on developing learning and teaching and restorative practice are seen as promoting a more conducive ethos for change.

Staff thought that the culture of the school had changed and the importance of an aspiring school ethos was identified by some staff:

...but you have an ethos in the school where we expect you [to achieve]...high standards in class and behaviour about the school, and I think if you have high standards that’s what you get, [rather than thinking] och it’s OK, it’s wee Johnny, his mammy hasn’t worked for six years, so it’s OK if he sits about watching the telly all day, that’s what he’ll do. (Employment Officer)

While the programme and other transformative measures have helped bring about an ethos and environment conducive to change, it was stressed that over the past few years there have been a shift in the age profile of staff, many retiral, McCrone implications, the introduction of a faculty structure and a lot of new staff starting. This then has added impetus to the measures to develop the capacity for leadership in the school. The management stressed that some of the probationers were ideally suited to working in the school because of their ‘enthusiasm and new ideas’.

3.5.4 Professional development for teachers and other staff

The interest of staff in new learning and teaching approaches appears to be reflected in the increased take up of training initiatives which have focussed on Raising attainment for boys, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Restorative Practice. Staff have also supported the Columba 1400 leadership training.

3.5.5 Conclusions

Overall, senior staff and those involved with the delivery of programmes such as the Partnership Project and similar initiatives believe that these have contributed to positive developments in many of the targeted MCMC pupils’ behaviours, skills, self-confidence and aspirations. The positive outcomes are seen by these staff and those pupils interviewed as promoting employability and life chances. This impact is valued by parents and carers and also helps promote positive rapport and collaboration between school and pupils’ families.
The funding from The Hunter Foundation and The Scottish Government and support from other sources such as the Princes’ Trust appears to have been valuable in allowing the school to experiment to identify ways of meeting the needs of target groups. However, while staff acknowledge that the level of support can decrease when external funding ceases, the impact on particular young people appears sufficient to make a lasting change. Such impact also seems to help influence the attitudes of staff, helping them realise that different approaches can have a positive impact on pupils who often seen as beyond reach.

The project thus facilitated extra staffing and partnership working to support the target groups and the plan involved deploying an existing teacher to be the Programme Co-ordinator who was ‘off timetable’. This was seen as a developing a ‘huge capacity’ and while not sustainable, allowed the school to explore new ways of addressing needs that could be embedded.

While the collection of initiatives that can be seen as part of the Glasgow Partner Schools project appear to have had an impact, it is arguable that the vision and approach of the Headteacher and her work to devolve leadership and encourage staff to adopt approaches that better meet the needs of all pupils has played a major role in supporting school change.
3.6 St Andrew’s Secondary School

St Andrew’s is a new-build denominational secondary school located in the east of Glasgow. The school is one of the largest in the city with a student roll in excess of 1600.

3.6.1 Nature of the social and educational challenges faced by the school

The school serves a large part of the east end of the city and includes a number of peripheral housing estates exhibiting a typical range of socio-economic problems including high unemployment, gang violence, poor health and low attainment. According to the Scottish Index of Multiple deprivation (SIMD), 72% of the school roll are living in areas of severe deprivation. Against this backdrop, 93% of 2009 school leavers were recorded as having achieved a positive destination with 27% going onto full-time higher education in the same year. In addition 98% of pupils left with the minimum level or better in literacy and numeracy (the highest in the city for both and above the National figure).

3.6.2 The school’s response to these challenges

The school was inspected by HMIE (2006) just prior to its involvement in the initiative and the subsequent report identified the following six key strengths.

- Commitment of staff to provide high quality learning and teaching and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- Staff expectations for pupils’ attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- Range and variety of approaches to developing pupils’ personal and social development.
- Outstanding partnerships with parents, community and local parishes.
- Impact of self-evaluation on sustaining and improving the quality of learning and teaching and achievement.
- The excellent leadership provided by the Headteacher. (HMIE, 2007)

In 2006 the school became one of six designated Partnership Schools. This resulted in the allocation of additional funds aimed specifically at developing work with disengaged young people and those designated MCMC (More Choices More Chances). Firstly the school appointed a Lead Manager to support the Headteacher and staff in developing an overall strategy for dealing with MCMC youth and to lead on transformational change in order to meet six Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Improved destinations
- Improve literacy and numeracy skills
- Increased use of more alternative, appropriate certification
- Ensure all young people have a competence framework of ‘Soft Skills’
- Establish an internal tracking system
- Establish appropriate internal systems that ensure sustainability
For each of these KPIs the school established a number of related actions and activities, pre-determined methods for recording the extent to which the activities were successful as well as an indication of how the work would be sustained if successful. The final Partnership report submitted by the school, SQA results, school leaver destination figures and evidence from partner agencies indicated that the school met or surpassed expectations for each of the KPIs.

**Identifying pupils in need of additional support**

The Lead Manager reported that, following her appointment, the school set out to identify MCMC pupils in the school; suggesting that they were primarily pupils, with social work involvement, psychological services intervention and/or with identified academic barriers to learning or with poor attendance records. The initial focus was on pupils in S2 and above since the school had good information on their academic ability as well as an expectation of three years of schooling ahead, time in which to enact change and improvement.

*We had in the region of 230 S2 to S4 pupils two or more levels below their 5 – 14 expectation, so there’s an academic challenge, others had social work involvement or maybe a psychological service involvement, some even have all three. In addition there are a number of pupils who either have direct mental health issues of their own or their parents or carers have significant mental health issues, so they’re taking on a caring responsibility which then affects their ability to attend school. (Lead Manager)*

Both the Lead Manager and Headteacher pointed out that their MCMC cohort was largely self-identifying. There was also an acknowledgement that disaffected pupils were unlikely to spontaneously volunteer to take up new opportunities in the school and additional effort was required to ensure that courses on offer were both attractive and relevant to young people. Indeed the Headteacher described this additional effort as both ‘significant and constant’.

*Pupils also need to see why they’re here and that there’s got to be something for them that makes these courses relevant. So we need aspiration, we need motivation, but we also need to have enjoyment and an actual connection as to why it’s important that they do these courses that will lead to a real, positive future. (Lead Manager)*

**Transformation and sustainability**

Following identification of the target group of pupils, the next steps concerned a substantial degree of transformation within the school. This involved changing the remits of a number of staff, promoting evidence-based practice, and developing the work with external partners. Moreover, it was apparent that, right from the outset, the school was building a process to assure sustainability.

*We looked at the way we supported MCMC youngsters across our school from S1 to S6, we developed groups, we tweaked remits a bit within pupil*
support and, we appointed a couple of Middle Managers (MMs) Raising Attainment. We appointed an additional MM Pupil Support what you could call a ‘helicopter’ post. Our MMs Pupil Support all had a dedicated year group. We brought in this post to tighten up a lot of the additional areas that were being skimmed whilst also allocating time to see young carers, to do post-school transitions and a number of things that we had already identified could be significantly improved. The MMs Raising Attainment would work with myself to track youngsters’ SQA performance along with mentors that were appointed to S4 and S5. These posts were funded from our devolved budget but the School of Ambition money gave the Lead Manager the time to identify a structure that we could afford within our devolved budget that would work and could be continued. (Lead Manager)

Pupil experiences

As part of our research programme we interviewed 32 pupils, in seven groups, with experience of one or more initiatives (detailed below). Pupils’ experiences were overwhelmingly positive and many of the young people agreed that these opportunities improved their future prospects.

The lead manager’s role

Across the groups it was also apparent that the relationship between the young people and the Lead Manager was very important to them and, in many cases, was identified as a crucial element in maintaining their group involvement and school contact in general. Indeed many pupils spoke about how they could talk to the lead manager in confidence. One pupil even reported that the Lead Manager had telephoned her on the morning of an exam to ensure she was in school on time to sit the exam. The same pupil noted her appreciation for this action and said that it demonstrated how much the Lead Manager cared about pupils in the school.

Alternative Curricula

One strand of the SoA work involved providing alternative curricula and sought to develop young people’s employability and personal skills. It was originally aimed at a small number of pupils with major disengagement issues, providing them with an alternative curriculum outwith the school. However, as the programme developed and the skills and confidence of school staff grew, and with more support available from external agencies, the curricula have increasingly been provided in-house. Involved pupils spoke about how it had affected them. Several talked about taking part in a large catering event in the school and suggested that they had felt ‘very good’ afterwards and had a ‘real sense of achievement’. Others cited vocational initiatives that they had been involved in and said their confidence had also grown as a result. All interviewees agreed that, as a result of their experiences, they felt much more positive about the school in general and were consequently more likely to attend school.
Barnardo’s group

This group, run by two group workers from Barnardo’s, was set up to involve pupils who had been identified, from primary school, as being in danger of disengagement. The group operated one day a week over the summer with the aim of supporting pupils in the transition from primary to secondary school. After starting at St Andrew’s, pupils continued in the group for several months to help build their confidence and interpersonal skills and provide them with a friendship group. All of the interviewees enjoyed their involvement in the group and several spoke about how it had helped build their self-confidence. Young people generally felt that their involvement with the group had encouraged their school attendance.

Young carers’ group

Recognition that some pupils caring responsibilities interfered with their ability to attend classes, complete homework on time and/or attend after school study support led to this lunchtime study group meeting four days a week. The group is supported by a local carers’ initiative. While staff were encouraged to ‘cut these pupils some slack’ the school also issued its young carers with an ‘express card’ which allowed them to leave classes, deal with family matters, or just give them ‘some space’ to cope with stressful situations. Involved pupils were very positive about the support afforded by the group acknowledging that it gave them opportunities to do homework during lunchtime - with a teacher on hand to help if required. The group also encouraged them to share experiences and support each other and several mentioned being able to express their feelings in the group. Pupils also talked about their ‘express card’ which allowed them to exit classes quickly if they wished to talk to another staff member and a few reported that they were now less likely to get into trouble over homework since they had dedicated time set aside for it. Some also realised more free time for other activities.

Sometimes I can’t concentrate in class - you’re able to get out. [We are] just worrying about parents’ (S3 Pupil)

Not having homework [to do at home] means more time to help my mum and more time to myself as well (S1 Pupil)

CORE and ACE groups

Two groups – CORE and ACE - were set up to support pupil literacy and numeracy within the school. The ACE group supported literacy through a focus on health and wellbeing issues. All pupils enjoyed their involvement with the classes and some also agreed that this enjoyment encouraged their school attendance. Several pupils spoke about having better relationships with staff and said that staff were more supportive and positive towards them. Pupils generally felt that what they were doing in the groups was more relevant to their needs than other classes in the school. Indeed, pupils all had firm ideas about what they wanted to do post school and a few also suggested feeling more confident in securing employment as a result of their
involvement in the group. Working as a team was felt to be particularly relevant for employment.

Builds confidence through working in teams and on your own (S3 Pupil)

Prince’s Trust group

A Prince’s Trust group was set up to provide an alternative to the Spanish option for S3 and S4 pupils. The group focuses on both personal and vocational skills and currently involves over 30 pupils. All of the interviewed pupils indicated that they enjoyed taking part in the group and appreciated being ‘treated like adults’. One pupil also suggested that her involvement with the group had helped her deal with emotional difficulties while another said they were more likely to attend school because of the group. Several of the pupils spoke about the good relationships they had built up with each other and about supporting each other. Pupils also talked about good relationships they had developed with staff members responsible for the group. There was general agreement that involvement in the Prince’s Trust group was the ‘best thing’ for them in the school. Several of the pupils spoke about helpful careers input they had received through the group.

College Experience Initiative

The College Experience Initiative for S3 and S4 provides young people, in danger of disengaging, with experience of college-based work. It was hoped that this would encourage them to attend school, improve their qualification prospects, and offer them options for future education. Pupil informants indicated that they found the vocationally-orientated college work to be more interesting and relevant than their school experiences and a number of the group also suggested that they could see a future career opening up as a result.

The views of parents/carers

Interviews with a number of parents whose children were or had been involved in initiatives, again highlighted the important role of the Lead Manager in parental communication, her commitment to MCMC pupils, and their appreciation of the additional opportunities afforded to the children. The following contributions were typical.

I had problems with my boy, she [Lead Manager] helped get him back to school. She is always on the end of a phone. She even phones later at night and always calls you back when you have called her. She helped get my boy into the construction course. (Female parent)

[My grandson] really relates to [Lead Manager]. She helped get my grandson into the Barnardo’s group which is good for him. The boy had lost his mother and the group had helped rebuild his confidence. ( Female grandparent)
My boys don’t hang about the streets now. My youngest’s confidence has grown and this is through involvement with [Lead Manager]. (Female parent)

It was also clear that the relationships built up with the Lead Manager also provided parents, many of whom had chaotic lives in their own right, with a degree of personal support.

The views of school staff

Staff reflected at some length on the changes that had taken place in the school since the initiative had begun. Many of their comments highlighted the experiences of pupils, struggling to cope with a traditional academic curriculum, who were now benefiting from the greater breadth and flexibility in the curriculum, the developments in vocational education and activities aimed at building personal and interpersonal skills. The following comments were typical.

In terms of Skills for Work and More Choices More Chances - since [the Lead Manager] has taken this on we have run more courses for skills for work. These have been very successful. We are now thinking of putting on Skills for Work Early Education (Intermediate 2). They have been so successful that there has been a lot of demand for them e.g. Hospitality Intermediate 1. Pupils involved in this have taken part in the Good Food Show among other initiatives. This has given them a lot of recognition and built their self-esteem. It is direct preparation for work and is very sustainable. (MM Home Economics)

Many of our youngsters couldn’t cope in traditional academic areas. For this initiative they will come to school, attendance is up. [The Lead Manager] post has allowed this to happen, it was a lot of work to get this all rolling and coordinated. She has a big role in keeping youngsters motivated. There has been more communication with pupils, they don’t just slip through the net now. MCMC youngsters are given tasks and responsibility and you can see their personal development. (MM Raising Attainment)

A number of comments also highlighted the role of the Lead Manager in the work with several stressing the importance of having a dedicated senior manager able to oversee, coordinate, and monitor developments. For example:

[The Lead Manager] grasped the opportunity to sit down and develop things. She has been able to review the whole picture and has made the time to move things along. (MM Raising Attainment)

The Headteacher underlined the importance of the Lead Manager to the success of the initiative when he described her as,

the major force for positive change and success in St Andrew’s over the last four years. (Headteacher)

before going on to say that,
[Her] ability, commitment, dedication and stamina, as well as caring for the welfare of each and every child, has been the catalyst to promoting sustainable change in the attitude of almost all staff. The SMT is 100% with [her], she is a major player. (Headteacher)

Having a Lead Manager, without a traditional teaching background, who brought new perspectives to the work of the school, was also appreciated by staff.

Not being a teacher, she brings a fresh eye and a new way of looking at things, new ideas. (PT Home Economics)

The views of partners

Currently the school is involved with 20 or more non-school based partners including: Careers Scotland, Psychological services, Barnardo’s and business partners such as Radisson and MCR Holdings. Interviewees from a number of organisations spoke very positively about the developments that had taken place in the school. For them, this meant increased contact with the school, more joint working, and more development planning. Many also stressed the strategic importance of the Lead Manager’s role in coordinating joint work. These views are summed up in the following comments.

Compared to what is happening in other schools [The Lead Manager] post is crucial. St Andrew’s destination data is very good. The strategic post allows for planning and pooling of staff time and resources and she has dedicated time for parents, young people and partners. (Careers Scotland Area Manager)

Even with the simple things, you make a request and things get done. There is also a strong sense of multi-agency work in the school which is filtering through [the Lead Manager]. Not being a teacher is positive, she brings a different perspective and questions existing practices. (Senior Educational Psychologist)

The Careers Manager went further commenting on other changes and their impact.

[The Lead Manager] and the school are open to ideas on career planning. We did the Can-Do courses which are also helping to break down the gang violence. Also put forward courses for winter leavers – previously they would just be ‘hanging on’ to leave. Now they can do alternative vocational training. [The Lead Manager] has helped secure placements in nursery. They have a full timetable and many go on to college and sit National and Higher National certificates. We have the evidence to show that they have sustained employment. (Careers Scotland Area Manager)

In many respects partner comments echoed those of school staff, highlighting a positive school ethos, recognising the flexibility in the school curriculum, willingness
to engage with partner agencies, and explore new ways of meeting the needs of all pupils in the school.

3.6.3 The management of change

Significant changes have taken place in St Andrew’s over recent years. The leadership and vision of the Headteacher has been central in effecting these changes and the Lead Manager has played a significant role in operationalising this vision. Informants identified a number of factors that were important in understanding the success of the Lead Manager’s post in developing and managing MCMC work in the school. Being a non-teaching post at senior management level gave the post a degree of credibility among school staff and at the same time allowed her to focus almost exclusively on coordinating and supporting the project initiatives. The Headteacher emphasised the importance of the Lead Manager’s abilities,

*It is a complete misunderstanding to think that any post or title gives a person credibility - it is the postholder who generates and earns the credibility and status. Amongst all the great and talented people I have been privileged to work with in my career, the Lead Manager is among the very top of the list - within and outwith our school, teaching, non-teaching, directorate, external agency staff etc. She is held in the highest esteem - not because of the post, but because of her talent and ability to deliver - see St Andrew's destination statistics and SQA results.* (Headteacher)

Again, not having a traditional teaching background was felt by informants to offer additional advantages, bringing alternative perspectives to the work.

*It is different here from other schools since [the Lead Manager] is not a teacher. She does not have the curricular demands that a teacher would. She can focus and troubleshoot. It’s not an add on set of duties. Being embedded in the SMT gives the post credibility and legitimacy. She is also very efficient. Even with the simple things, you make a request and things get done. There is also a strong sense of multi-agency work in the school which is filtering through [the Lead Manager].* (Senior Educational Psychologist)

According to the Lead Manager, in addition to having a motivated staff, it was also important to have a strong management function to provide the necessary coordination and focus required to operationalise, direct and support such innovative work. Her position on the SMT meant that she was able to directly influence strategic planning, ask critical questions and put forward proposals at SMT meetings and raise awareness of MCMC issues. Promotion of evidence-based practice was also an important aspect of her position. She was familiar with a range of relevant data including, finance, SQA results, attendance figures, destination figures, health and crime statistics, local employment trends and other service priorities and it was clear that she regularly used this material to inform debate, justify change, motivate staff, monitor impact and report successes. Not being employed on teaching conditions means that she also works over school holiday periods helping to ensure continuity of the work. Several staff interviewees recognised the benefit of having work
progressing over the summer by pointing out that many young people are especially vulnerable to disengagement at this time.

3.6.4 Professional development for teachers and other staff

Staff in the school have benefited from the initiative in a number of ways including:

- Increasing departmental contact
- Joint working between departments
- Joint working between school staff and external partners.

According to a number of informants, these developments have resulted in the school being better placed for a Curriculum for Excellence. Moreover, the introduction of initiatives such as ACE, for example, has resulted in staff developing their skills and knowledge for teaching a variety of subjects including health and well-being. More specifically staff have been involved in the following developments and opportunities.

Skills for Work Early Education and Childcare - Intermediate 1

The Middle Manager Home Economics was the first person within a Glasgow secondary school to develop and deliver this course. She reported that this experience has enriched her personal development and she is more confident in her own management and interpersonal skills. Seventeen young people completed this course last year and for most, this was their best result at SCQF Level 4. This work has led to other developments including, links with other Authorities and the FE Sector.

Skills for Work Sport & Recreation - Intermediate 1

This course has been developed by the Middle Manager and a teacher in the PE department. This required research and up-skilling on the employability aspect of the course and also required the staff members to meet with SQA and the Employability Middle Manager to develop additional Skills for Work materials. In addition the PE department teacher undertook a number of other CPD opportunities to increase the certification available to pupils within the school.

Confidence and Well Being Course

This course was undertaken by a Maths, English, PE teacher and the Careers Adviser. The English teacher and Careers Adviser then worked together to ‘differentiate’ the materials and co-deliver them to S1 Core Enhancement Pupils. Staff also improved their ICT skills, with the support of the school technician. The resulting DVD is used in Pupils and Parents Core Enhancement information sessions.
Working with Others - SQA module

Two members of the Modern Languages department, including the Middle Manager Modern Languages worked with the SQA to develop a course aimed at increasing the accreditation of more than 240 S4 pupils who took Spanish each year. In addition the MM Modern Languages also worked with the MM and a PE Teacher, who taught CORE and ACE classes, to help them adapt course materials in order that MCMC pupils could also gain a similar additional qualification.

Recognition of Broader Achievement

The Lead Manager and an English teacher, undertaking Project Leadership, have worked with EdICT (an independent ICT company) to develop a new database and certification programme. This concentrates on recognising the broader achievement of 70 MCMC pupils, although the scheme is also being assessed for suitability for all S4 pupils.

Work experience

Last year a member of the school office staff successfully organised St Andrew’s December work experience placements in place of the Employability Officer. The task involved all aspects of the work including requesting a Health and Safety Inspection of a self-found placement, ordering and allocating pupils’ bus passes and lunch money.

3.6.5 Conclusions

The additional funding provided through the Glasgow Partnership initiative allowed St Andrew’s to develop, implement, and support a number of innovative approaches to improving the achievement and life chances of pupils designated MCMC, at the same time as the school raised attainment for S3-S6 young people undertaking full academic courses. Staff, parents, pupils, and external partners were overwhelmingly positive about the developments that they had witnessed in the school over recent years and the impact of these developments on pupils and the wider community.

For the Headteacher and other staff, the school’s decision to appoint a non-teaching lead manager at senior management level to support and develop the initiative has been the ‘major factor’ in the success of the initiative. However, at present there is uncertainty over the continuance of this post. From the outset, the school was acutely aware of the need to implement work which could be sustained beyond the funding period and to a considerable extent this will happen.
4. LESSONS LEARNED

In this final section we have drawn from the reports and experiences in all ten of the schools to draw out some of the significant insights that have emerged. We are presenting these in three sections below. First we draw out the lessons from both the Schools of Ambition and Partnership Project Schools. Then, we identify key insights concerning the management of change through project interventions in secondary schools before finally offering some reflections and conclusions.

4.1 Insights from the Schools

While the programmes in the six Partnership Project schools were principally focused on MCMC pupils, they had increasingly influenced wider school practice and policy. In the four Glasgow Schools of Ambition (with their broader transformational plans) activities aimed at groups of pupils with greater need had also developed alongside wider school initiatives. Therefore many of the lessons learned are general with applicability to a wider range of schools and their learning communities. These are detailed below.

Leadership and engagement

- **Leadership and vision.** Across all of the schools the importance of a strong leadership team to provide the initial vision and impetus for ‘transformation’ was apparent. This seems to be a required precursor for driving whole school change, particularly when opportunities for distributed leadership are not established.

- **Staff continuity and succession.** Where key personnel with particular roles in the project either left or were absent for lengthy periods, it could prove very difficult to sustain the planned developments. Whilst strong leadership was identified as important in initiating change, distributed leadership appears significant in maintaining change.

- **Commitment and involvement of staff.** This seems to be an important factor in the success of measures to promote school change, especially in terms of ensuring that change permeates all levels of the school. Resistance to new ideas and roles was a reported barrier to the adoption of practices designed to meet the needs of all pupils. Staff commitment is likely to be enhanced by genuine measures to involve them in initial planning and is reinforced by the continued involvement of staff in on-going processes of evaluation, including sharing evidence of impact. Provision of enhanced levels of CPD tailored to specific needs, encouragement and a supportive work environment can also build a positive disposition to change among staff, leading to higher levels of participation.

- **Designation of special roles and posts.** In several schools the way in which project responsibilities were allocated was identified as being important in
bringing about effective change. The most obvious example of this was the appointment of a senior staff member (not a teacher) to the position of project leader at St Andrew’s Secondary School. Other schools also indicated that enhancement of administrative support was needed to improve monitoring systems. At Hillhead High School, temporary enhancement of staffing allowed deputes to direct attention on a weekly basis to the coordination and close monitoring of interventions undertaken. In the joint Castlemilk/St Margaret Mary’s project a retired headteacher was recruited as coordinator to integrate and develop the joint working across the schools. Effective management of these tasks might usefully draw on the expertise of school staff with administrative capabilities, the professional expertise of educators and the leadership skills of senior staff.

Learning and teaching

• **Curriculum flexibility.** Both Schools of Ambition and Partnership Schools developed alternative curricula provision to address the needs of the lowest attaining pupils. It remains imperative in the context of the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, to extend such curriculum entitlement to all learners. Schools would be keen to avoid reasserting ‘vocational’ and ‘academic’ divisions in extending choice over courses, certification and sites of learning for pupils at an earlier age. It would be paradoxical if curriculum flexibility reduced opportunities for young people to acquire ‘conceptual and critical skills’ by redirecting significant periods of learning to the development of vocational ‘craft skills’ (see Education Group, 1981).

• **Appropriate learning and teaching approaches.** Staff and pupils, in particular, reported that methods that allow them to be creative, engage in discussion and debate and which include practical experiences promote pupil engagement and learning. The introduction of more active and experiential learning and teaching is not without its challenges and requires attention to building the capacity of teachers and other educators involved. The importance of working on the affective dimensions of the curriculum, especially working to build self-confidence, was apparent.

• **Skills development to address pupils’ needs.** Building on the previous point, the research highlights the need to provide appropriate opportunities for teachers, school support staff and college lecturers to access opportunities to develop their skills to effectively teach young people, especially those who are more vulnerable and have complex issues in their lives.

Partnership working

• **Partnership working.** Across the schools, partnership working has allowed the deployment of staff with appropriate skills and facilitated greater access to resources and expertise to meet the needs of young people. The involvement of staff from services as varied as Barnado’s, Skills Direct Scotland (formerly Careers Scotland), Health Boards and Colleges has enhanced the range of
opportunities and ability to offer specialist provision, guidance and support to promote achievement and positive destinations. However, partners working with schools are vulnerable to financial cuts and, while lessons can be learned from working with these personnel, reductions in their number can inhibit the flexibility of schools to deploy such staff. It was also acknowledged that working across professional (and departmental) boundaries requires a common language, purpose and time for joint work. In partnership and inter-professional working, clear communication (and non-duplication of effort) across teams who may be addressing the same issues is essential. Interviewees stressed the need for sensitivity to the micro-politics of cross-role working and the potential for devolved resource to compound barriers between school professionals.

- **Working with Further Education.** There are many examples of schools working closely with their partner colleges and this was felt to be critical in maximising the chances of positive destinations for as many pupils as possible. Staff with involvement in school-college liaison stressed that particular care should be taken at transition points to ensure continuity in student experience. Moreover, whilst the schools had additional resource to monitor attendance and intervene appropriately, college staff (employed in the post-compulsory sector) did not appear to have similar provision.

- **Working with parents and the wider community.** Often as a result of greater partnership working, many of the schools have developed and enhanced their relationship with parents. This includes working with community services to reach those parents who previously were reticent about engaging with the school. There is also some evidence that parents have become more willing to become involved with the school after witnessing their children achieving for the first time. For example, in the case of Govan High School considerable effort is made to contact all parents and provide updates on their children’s progress. Staff in the school are willing to telephone parents and routinely discuss pupils’ development. Importantly, the school communicates with parents when there is positive news, rather than only when there is a problem. At Drumchapel High School identification of a key link person within the pupil’s home was cited as a critical factor influencing success. In St Paul’s much effort had gone into developing parental relationships through holding individual meetings with parents to discuss pupil progress.
Other significant lessons

- **Financial support.** Additional funding has helped the schools secure better resources, recruit staff and explore and implement ways to address pupils’ needs. Although not all developments have been sustained schools have also realised that some developments require little if any additional resources. Rather, increased commitment, flexibility and external input has seen a wider range of support emerge (e.g. teachers in some schools being more willing to lead activities and share practice).

- **Monitoring and evaluation of practice.** While there was limited evidence of teachers improving their capacity to self-evaluate, there appeared to have been a development at school level of greater awareness of the importance of monitoring and reflection in shaping practice. In Govan High School, staff who participated in interviews reported an evolving culture of reflection and research use that has informed school policy and practice. In Springburn Academy staff had become increasingly aware of the usefulness of routine monitoring procedures for developing their practice.

- **Wider policy landscape of CfE and HMIE.** It appears that such external factors are a major influence on the schools’ planning and influence the development of an environment conducive to experiment and change. In many of the schools, staff with leadership roles anticipated that Curriculum for Excellence would promote connections across the curriculum and between professionals. Curriculum renewal was associated with new opportunities to address demarcations between subject departments, pastoral/guidance roles and additional support roles.

- **Early intervention is important.** Interviewees at Drumchapel High School reported that S3 is too late to initiate and assess the impact of interventions. Personnel involved in parental support were especially quick to emphasise the need for early intervention. At Hillhead High School, it was judged to be essential that the selection and recruitment of pupils for targeted intervention should take place at an earlier stage before attendance patterns become too low to tackle effectively. This point was repeatedly highlighted in other Schools of Ambition and Partnership Schools. The caseload placed on pastoral teams in some Glasgow schools signals a need for the review of procedures to identify and address the needs of those pupils who require most support. Interventions might usefully commence at an earlier stage in pupils’ school careers and the design of interventions on a case-by-case basis would benefit from strong cross-stage collaboration.

4.2 Project management for school transformation

Reviewing the insights gained from our research in all ten schools, a number of lessons emerge about the management of change in secondary schools. Here we identify eight particular themes under four headings.
Developing school networking

- **Networking of school coordinators.** It would have been beneficial to promote more regular networking opportunities for school coordinators throughout the course of the programmes. SoA coordinators did get opportunities for networking on a regional and national basis and the Partnership Project coordinators were given a small number of opportunities to meet with each other. They valued these opportunities. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests the significance of networking in promoting enhanced professional learning across school boundaries (Hadfield et al, 2005; Chapman, 2008; Hadfield and Chapman, 2009).

- **Encouraging staff participation.** The level of awareness about initiatives undertaken through the Partnership Project varied within schools. The development of a dissemination strategy at an early stage would be beneficial in encouraging wider support, participation and interest. The experience of several of the schools demonstrates the feasibility of targeting interventions with smaller groups of pupils whilst also involving contributions from a high volume of school staff.

Professional development

- **Teacher CPD.** Plans for ‘school transformation’ might include explicit attention to teachers’ professional learning as well as targeted interventions for some pupils by some professionals, particularly where this is delivered off-site or through ‘alternative’ provision. Meta-analyses of research studies consistently identify teacher quality as a key factor influencing achievement (Hattie, 2009). Nye et al (2004:254), writing from a North American context, note that ‘in low socioeconomic status (SES) schools, it matters more which teacher a child receives’. It is unsurprising that prospects for whole school transformation are enhanced where interventions penetrate the day-to-day core activities of teaching (Elmore, 1996).

- **Project management.** Staff responsible for project coordination within the schools highlighted a need for specific project management skills. Indeed a number of them had gone on to enrol on the SQH to develop some of the required skills. This suggests that schools seeking to promote transformation could benefit from identifying their capacity for project management and ways to enhance this. This could involve additional staff CPD in for example, partnership working, project management, organisational development and the employment of non-teaching staff in senior school positions. This latter point was repeatedly emphasised by informants in St Andrew’s as a key driver of transformation within their school.

- **Evaluating CPD.** There appears to be limited evidence of systematic evaluation of the impact of external training on day-to-day classroom practice. This is not to say that such interventions are not beneficial, but that evidence of their impact is not available. Current thinking on continuing professional
development suggests the need for situated, sustained and collaborative CPD (Cordingley et al, 2005).

- **Pedagogical leadership.** Pedagogical leadership within school and the promotion of collaborative CPD practices involving experimenting with new approaches, peer observation and feedback (as well as opportunities for wider teacher leadership) did not feature strongly in many accounts. The promotion of active learning at Hillhead High School was one example of a developing collaborative and enquiry-based approach. Another school reported an increase in candidates pursuing Chartered Teacher status and this may present opportunities for pedagogical leadership in the future.

**Evaluation and data monitoring systems**

- **Staff evaluation skills.** Researcher experience in working with *Schools of Ambition* and *Partnership* school staff suggests that there is a need to build capacity for professional enquiry and evaluation among teachers, especially in light of the potential for school-based curriculum development extended through *Curriculum for Excellence*. Such developments would attend to processes of learning, as well as more established approaches to performance tracking. The link between teacher knowledge and behaviour and practices that enhance student outcomes is poorly articulated in many accounts of ‘transformational change’. Such knowledge might be gained through the promotion of forms of professional enquiry that look inside classrooms as well as those that examine aggregate performance data.

- **Developing evaluation systems.** Where data monitoring systems are developing, there is a need for further support to assist school leaders and the wider school staff in making effective use of these data to inform decision making in school. Evaluation systems could serve a more explicit formative role, as well as providing evidence of end-point impact.

**Working with Further Education**

- **FE staff CPD.** The experience of the Glasgow schools suggests a need for much closer attention to the professional development needs of further education tutors working with school age pupils. Evidence from the accounts presented here suggests that trainers in vocational areas are under-prepared in relation to positive behaviour strategies commonly deployed in the school sector. The CPD Standards set out in the *Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges* (2006) explicitly address issues connected with teaching young people and children (pp.36-7) from secondary schools. The relationship between the CPD Standards and current practice in school and college sites could be closer.
4.3 Conclusions

We conclude by offering some further reflections that arise from this study and from connecting our insights to some of the existing research literature on relevant topics.

Significant developments have occurred in all ten of these schools over the last three to four years including the development of a wider and more flexible curricula, increased and more effective partnership working, more parental involvement and enhanced leadership across the school.

Many of these developments would be likely to have happened, albeit at a slower pace, even if the project funding either through SoA or The Partnership Project had not been available. They are all schools in which there was a desire for change and a desire to improve the quality of educational experience and achievement for the pupils. However, there is no doubt that the project funding and the requirement of a detailed plan have been instrumental in assisting the developments in all cases. While the overwhelming weight of the stories told about the ten schools is a positive one, there have clearly been some critical issues and difficult challenges, not just about the sustainability of the improvements (as one might expect in the context of limited term funding) but concerning the scope and reach of some of the work.

Where plans have been most successfully implemented and developed, it is possible to see from some of the data that we have cited, just how effective the work has been in generating social capital within the school community. This can be seen especially in the words of some of the students and parents, for example at Springburn Academy or in the comments by the head and others at Drumchapel High School, about how the profile of the school has been raised and how that has changed self-image and relationships of pupils. These statements fit well with the view of Colin Campbell, the leader of an independent organisation promoting social capital in Scotland:

\[\text{The key elements for building social capital in our schools are for schools to be first and foremost, child-centred. We need to ensure that they are inclusive of all the school’s communities and minorities, and that teachers and pupils are trusted to provide and exchange knowledge through learning. Our schools need to be confident that they will be supported to develop creative activities that maximise the school environment, its communities and their resources, and in doing so, involve different groups, from the pupils to the teachers and the community, in co-producing learning. (Campbell, 2009: 60)}\]

Cultural change of this kind has been greatest where pupils, parents and staff have all felt that they are part of the initiative, but have also had the confidence to engage with those external to the school.

It is widely agreed that it takes time for significant changes to come about. A three year period does seem to provide sufficient time for cultural change to be noticeable and in some cases for quantitative measures to show positive indications. Although it is unreasonable to expect ‘overnight change’, longer term changes are more achievable when the commitment and focus of attention are continuous and committed.
While ‘shared ownership’ of developments is crucial, nevertheless a common feature of all the progress that has been made in these schools is recognition of the need for strong leadership and for the development of an explicit vision. The head teachers and their senior colleagues are not necessarily ‘heroic’ and charismatic in their approach, but they are all capable of effective communication and engagement with the full range of partners. However, whilst acknowledging the significance of leadership to school transformation, a cautious approach should be taken in relation to leadership effects (Barker, 2005, 2007). Research studies that examine the relationship between leadership and pupil outcomes require sophisticated research designs. Where these have been undertaken, findings consistently suggest that leadership effects are small (see Hallinger and Heck, 1998) and that ‘instructional’ (or pedagogical) leadership is more significant than ‘transformational’ leadership in improving pupil outcomes).²²

The research has provided many insights to the ways in which changes may be brought about within secondary schools. In developing, expressing and communicating vision and leadership, there appears to be a need for very clearly defined priorities and objectives. There also seems to be great value in clearly identifying the key intended beneficiaries of particular strategies. The significant advances in attainment in English and Mathematics at Hillhead High School are associated with interventions with an explicit focus on raising attainment among a specific target group.

The experiences of these Glasgow City schools shows a commitment to link education policies with wider social and welfare policies and signals productive possibilities, particularly in terms of a clearer articulation of the role of a range of school and non-school professionals in responding to the needs of all young people. Several of the schools appear to operate with an extended notion of partnership which includes pupils and parents, as well as a range of community organisations. The Schools of Ambition and the Partnership Project have extended opportunities to build stronger bonds and links between a range of partners within the local education community and accelerated the pace of change that might have been expected. In sharing their experiences these schools open up new opportunities to work with the wider education community on a range of interventions designed to improve pupil experiences and outcomes. At the same time they have highlighted the complexity of change management in urban schools facing challenging circumstances.

²² “Instructional leadership refers to those principals who have their major focus on creating a learning climate free of disruption, a system of clear teaching objectives and high teacher expectations for teachers and students. Transformational leadership refers to those principals who engage with their teaching staff in ways that inspire them to new levels of energy, commitment and moral purpose such that they work collaboratively to overcome challenges and reach ambitious goals” (Hattie 2009, p.83).
References


## Appendix 1: The key priorities in the school plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Main focus of work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools of Ambition</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Castlemilk High and St Margaret Mary’s secondary school | • Student attainment  
• Personal effectiveness  
• Employability |
| St Paul’s RC school | • Pupil tracking and reporting to parents  
• Learning beyond the classroom  
• Enterprise and the world of work |
| Springburn Academy | • Teaching and learning  
• Young people  
• Staff development and leadership  
• Parents |
| **Partnership schools** | |
| Drumchapel High School | • Attending, Aspiring, Attaining and Achieving  
• Intensive intervention with 30 S3 and S4 pupils  
• Dedicated base room and trans-professional team to support target group  
• Focus on reducing number of potential winter leavers  
• Enhanced home-school liaison and college links |
| Eastbank Academy | • Core skills  
• IT literacy  
• Positive destinations  
• Embedding CfE capacities |
| Govan High school | • Promoting positive destinations  
• Improving attainment  
• Improving skills of bottom 20% of ability range. |
| Hillhead High School | • Tailored support for S4 pupils with irregular attendance.  
• Raising attainment of low achievers  
• Enhanced support for parents  
• ‘Key person pupil’ mentoring initiative  
• ‘Common purpose’ pupil leadership initiative |
| Rosshall Academy | • Develop core skills  
• Improve destination statistics  
• Expand partnership working  
• Develop pupil tracking system  
• Develop appropriate courses  
• Develop positive ethos towards learning |
| St Andrew’s Secondary School | • Improve destinations  
• Improve literacy and numeracy skills  
• Develop alternative curricula and certification  
• Promote pupil’s soft skills  
• Establish pupil tracking system  
• Promote sustainability |
Appendix 2: The Plain Language Statement

The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

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Title of Project: Glasgow Secondary Schools Partnership Project

Information for headteachers
(adapted version also available for teachers, community partners, pupils and parents)

This statement sets out the rationale for this research and indicates what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Contact Moira Hulme (m.hulme@educ.gla.ac.uk) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like further information. Thank you for reading this.

The Scottish Government, in partnership with Glasgow City Council, has commissioned a study of processes of change management in ten Glasgow secondary schools. The aim of the study is to identify lessons learned from earlier partnership projects that can be shared with other schools in Glasgow and more widely. The study will focus on the effects of improvement action supported by the schools’ participation in the Schools of Ambition programme or the Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government, Hunter Foundation partnership.

As the headteacher of one of the schools that participated in the above projects, you have been identified as a key informant for this study. If agreeable, you would be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview of forty-five minutes duration (maximum) at a convenient time/date between September and November 2009. A member of the research team will conduct the interview. You will be asked to sign a consent form. If at any time you wish to reconsider your involvement, you are free to do so.

The findings of the study will be reported to participating schools, Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government. Publications accessible to a professional, policy and community audience will be available for participants. We should stress that individuals will not be named in any publication arising from this study, unless express permission has been granted. All information collected will be strictly confidential. The University of Glasgow Faculty of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed this research.

Thank you for considering taking part in this study.

If you have concerns about this research contact:
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