LESSONS LEARNED FROM SCHOOLS OF AMBITION AND GLASGOW PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME SCHOOLS

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Illustrations:

Front Cover: Pupils from St Paul’s High School, Glasgow, Schools of Ambition Programme

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1. Foreword

Implementing Curriculum for Excellence is bringing about change to Scottish education and our schools. This report details some of the activities and achievements of 10 Glasgow schools who took part over the last three years in major change initiatives, the Schools of Ambition Programme, or the Glasgow Partnership Programme. These programmes aimed to assist the schools to undertake change appropriate to their local challenges and circumstances. Their experiences of innovating and managing change will be of interest to others engaged in delivering new initiatives and developments, such as Curriculum for Excellence. We would like to thank all of the teachers, students and partners who gave willingly of their time to assist in the work and enabling this publication.

Scottish Government Schools of Ambition Team

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Glasgow University Research Team
2. Introduction

Background and focus

This report presents some of the lessons learned from a small-scale study of change management practice in ten Glasgow secondary schools. The research was commissioned from the University of Glasgow 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. This publication is based on a much longer and more detailed research report, available from the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council.

Each of the ten schools concerned received an additional financial resource over a three-year period to develop innovative approaches to address locally identified needs. Four of the schools participated in the Government-funded nation-wide Schools of Ambition programme. This was a collaborative partnership between 52 secondary schools and the Scottish Government, Schools’ Directorate (2005-2010). The Glasgow schools in this scheme were Castlemilk High School, St Margaret Mary’s Secondary School, St. Paul’s High School, and Springburn Academy.

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. These were Drumchapel High School, Eastbank Academy, Govan High School, Hillhead High School, Rosshall Academy and St. Andrew’s Secondary School. 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.

The study addressed the following specific 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?

The methods that were used to carry out the research are listed, followed by an overview of the nature of the development activities undertaken across the ten schools. In section 3 of the report a vignette of each of the schools and its approach to transformation is presented. The fourth section draws together lessons learned from the analysis of the experience of these ten schools, and some general conclusions are presented in section 5.
Methods

The findings are based on an analysis of transcripts of interviews involving 162 participants, conducted between September and December 2009, supplemented by analysis of documentary evidence such as each school’s Transformational Plan, inspection reports, project reports, examples of materials and school-generated evaluation pro formas. 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 classteachers involved in specific initiatives. All of the interviews focused on improvement action which was being 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 Skills Development Scotland (formerly 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 by a headteacher seconded to Glasgow City Council who played a coordinating role and also had the opportunity of University 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.
3. Activities and achievements of individual Schools

**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. Both school buildings – together with the four feeder primary schools - are relatively new and both schools have relatively small pupil rolls (2008/9: Castlemilk High 438, St Margaret Mary’s 427).

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.*

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.

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 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.

*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)*

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.

The schools have been working much more closely with the FE sector, although as funding for transport to support this 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.

You can read more about these schools on the Schools of Ambition website. [http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/schoolsofambition/schools/stmargaretmarys.asp](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/schoolsofambition/schools/stmargaretmarys.asp)
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 head saw the professional challenge for the school in this way:

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)

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, 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.

St Paul’s experience of being a School of Ambition has been overwhelmingly positive. The school has received a number of awards in recognition of its achievements. 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 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.

You can read more about St Paul’s on the Schools of Ambition website http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/schoolsofambition/schools/stpaulshighschool.asp
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.

The original Transformational Plan contained four strands for development

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

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 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)

Through a range of staff development activity, innovations in teaching and learning and partnerships with parents and other educational institutions, 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 the 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.
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.

At a whole school level, explicit attention during the project 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, comparisons are made with the previous year and targets set.

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. These pupils were identified in the final term of S2 in consultation with the Senior Management Team and Principal Teachers of Pastoral Care. After an evaluation of the first year of the initiative, only pupils who had 70% attendance or above were 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 group were released from one Standard Grade subject for two years. This enabled three hours dedicated time each week to attend an alternative class over a period of two school years.

The time that we have spent with them is absolutely important. It’s of huge importance. We’ve got children who managed to stay in school to the end of 4th Year and I genuinely believe without the project they would have been out of the system... We’ve got some going on to apprenticeships who would never have made that jump without that intensive support. (Project Coordinator)

Through the Glasgow Schools partnership, Drumchapel High School sought to enhance attendance rates, strengthen home-school links and promote pupil engagement with education throughout school and into further education. 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. 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 evaluated to establish the relative success of interventions. To some extent the programme has challenged teachers’ perceptions about curriculum entitlement and encouraged staff to consider informal learning opportunities offered, for example, through voluntary work. Priorities for the future include a focus on early intervention, before S3, and the promotion of ‘Learn to Learn’ strategies across the school curriculum. 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.
Eastbank Academy

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

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....

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. (Depute Head)

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.

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.

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 Skills Development Scotland (formerly Careers Scotland). There was some concern however, that unless further funds could be identified, some of the developments do seem to be at risk and the aspiration to spread the insights gained across the wider school may be impeded.
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 31 full time equivalent (FTE). The school roll has fallen by more than ten per cent over the period 2007-2009.

Senior staff at the school conducted research and visited other schools in Scotland and abroad 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 Gambia, South Australia. While these schools had different contexts from Govan, they faced similar challenges.

The school development plans for transformation and the curriculum also involved a series of consultation exercises; curriculum conferences which involved many different participants 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”. The aim was to address the needs of all the pupils in the school.

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. 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 restructure 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.

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. 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 schools working towards transformation, 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. Staff and professional partners 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.
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.

Following senior staff changes in 2009 the revised school plan had four overlapping core themes: learning and teaching, attendance, attainment and achievement. 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. 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.

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.

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.

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 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. Hillhead High School faced the additional challenge of managing a high level of activity across a number of fronts within a five-month period. 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.
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.

As part of its project plan, the school identified the following objectives, with particular concern for the most vulnerable students:

- Alter staff perceptions of the Practical Skills Course (PSC) project aimed to and promote positive attitudes towards More Choices, More Chances provision;
- Develop pupils’ 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 throughout the school.

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 (now Skills Development Scotland).

Overall, senior staff and those involved with the delivery of these programmes believe that these have contributed to positive developments in many of the targeted pupils’ behaviours (especially those judged to be in need of ‘More Choices, More Chances), 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 may decrease when external funding ceases, the impact on particular young people through enhanced leadership, teaching and learning approaches and partnership working appears sufficient to make a lasting change.

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.
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.

When the school started receiving additional funds as part of the Partnership Project a Project Lead Manager was appointed 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.

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 some of the staff, these developments have resulted in the school being better placed for a Curriculum for Excellence. Moreover, the introduction of initiatives such as CfE, for example, has resulted in staff developing their skills and knowledge for teaching a variety of subjects including health and well-being.

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 as in need of More Choices, More Chances, at the same time as the school raised attainment for S3-S6 young people undertaking full academic courses. Staff, parents, pupils, and external partners who were interviewed 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. Learning from innovation and change management

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.

Insights from Schools

While the programmes in the six Partnership Project schools were principally focused on pupils deemed to be in need of More Choices. More Chances, 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 other aspects of the SoA 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 seemed 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’.

- **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 (such as social and emotional aspects), 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

- **Cross-sectoral 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. For example, 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.

**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 nine 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 research 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 Scottish Qualification for Headship 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 successful experience of the in developing closer liaison and collaboration with the FE sector, such as at Castlemilk High/St Margaret Mary’s and at Eastbank Academy, 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.
5. 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 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 additional stimulus of a required detailed plan for change 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:

"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. 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 and that ‘instructional’ (or pedagogical) leadership is more significant than ‘transformational’ leadership in improving pupil outcomes.

*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: 83)

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 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.
6. References


