24 November 2015

Dear Convener

I'd like to thank you and the Committee for the opportunity to discuss with you our priorities and ongoing work on 27 October 2015. As I had mentioned in my opening remarks, our session with the Committee was timely as we are beginning our work to develop our new corporate plan.

Please find below further information under each of the key points raised in your letter.

- **There was discussion of the specific contribution that Education Scotland makes in achieving improvement in education.** Alastair Delaney referred to the work being carried out by contribution analysis, which he said was at an early stage (Cols 6-7). This is a key area of interest to the Committee and we would welcome further details of your contribution analysis work and any findings.

This year, we have started to evaluate our impact more systematically by identifying key outcomes and performance indicators for each of our strategic objectives. We are in the early stages of this work and where we can, we are highlighting where we know we have made a positive impact. To take forward this work we have put in place a Strategic Impact Board as part of part of our overall governance structure.

A key focus of this work has been to encourage programmes to define clear outcomes which their work is trying to either achieve (in the short term) or influence (in longer term). Building on the Logic Modelling approach as part of the contribution, each programme has developed a range of draft outcome measures to monitor progress towards achieving programme objectives. The outcome measures for each programme have been aligned under each of our strategic objectives. We are taking forward work whereby outcomes are evaluated on a proportionate basis by individual programmes. In 2014/15 some areas of focus for measuring our impact have included drawing on surveys undertaken with Directors of Education, Associate...
Assessors and evaluations from conferences and events. We have also drawn on evidence from external evaluations such as the review of Game On Scotland.

This year we have started to use this process to report on the impact of our work as part of our Annual Review.

- You referred to the in-year transfer of £1.6m (in 2014/15) for supporting education around respecting rights, and offered to provide further information on what this funding relates to (Col 15).

This funding relates to phase two of the Access to Education Fund. The Fund provides £1.5 million of additional resources to schools to reduce the barriers to learning experienced by pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and to help raise attainment. £50k relates to the third year of three for rights work and £45k for the funding of and Equality and Diversity post.

- It was mentioned that negotiations are on-going that would see further transfer of grant responsibilities to Education Scotland, which would increase the total figure to about £9m, from April 2016 (Cols 17-18). While recognising that negotiations are on-going, can you provide further information on the specific nature of the new responsibilities to be transferred, and say how the transfer of these responsibilities will benefit learners?

Scottish Government’s Learning Directorate and Education Scotland have agreed that elements of work currently carried out by Learning Directorate be transferred to Education Scotland where the work involved is primarily focused on the delivery of education and educational support and resources for schools within the framework of Curriculum for Excellence. This is a logical and sensible brigading of delivery focused work and will result in a better overall package of support for learners and teachers.

As Education Scotland is part of Scottish Government so the grant offer letter, terms and conditions will be similar to the arrangements this year.

Learning Directorate’s Curriculum Unit will retain responsibility for curriculum policy development work. This includes policy options for Ministers and advice on political issues and Ministers’ involvement in Parliamentary business. The Curriculum Unit will meet stakeholders to discuss the details of the transfers over the coming months.

The transfer of activity commenced in October 2015, with the aim of completing the transfer by March 2016.

Appendix 1 provides more detail on each of the grant programmes transferring to Education Scotland, including a description of each programme.
• The Committee is interested in the work to pilot a senior phase review examining the educational provision across schools and colleges in particular areas (Cols 31-32). We would welcome further information on this work and, in due course, an update on the findings of the pilot.

The cross-sectoral thematic review of senior phase learning pathways in The Moray Council begins on Monday 30 November. This inspection will bring together colleagues from secondary, CLD and college sectors.

As the review of the future of inspection and review progresses, inspections will continue throughout the 2015-16 academic session using the published principles and frameworks currently in place. However, after taking account of the views of a huge range of stakeholders and embracing many creative ideas, we are also now in addition going to try out the approaches for which we found there was most support. We shall then work with stakeholders to evaluate the ‘try-cuts’.

• At the end of the evidence session, you responded to a question by saying there was “plenty of evidence” that outcomes have improved for learners since Education Scotland had been created (Col 35). Can you provide further details of the key pieces of evidence to which you were referring?

Appendix 2 is my presentation to SLF 2014 entitled: making the shift from self-evaluation to self-evaluation. The presentation along with my speaking notes (Appendix 3) will provide committee members with an overview of what we have achieved so far, what our priorities for change in the future are and how we will achieve these changes.

If any further information is required, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Bill Maxwell
Chief Executive
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Name of programme</th>
<th>Brief description of programme</th>
<th>Funding amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>WW1 School Battlefield Visits</td>
<td>Scottish Government five year commemorative WW1 school visit subsidy programme for secondary schools - until 1919. It is intended to provide assistance with costs associated with a school battlefield visit and to support pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of WW1 and its impact on people's lives</td>
<td>£150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Heritage Education Travel Subsidy</td>
<td>SG school travel subsidy programme to encourage visits to heritage sites of national importance in support of CfE, LfS and outdoor learning. It provides financial assistance with transport costs between the school and the chosen site for either teacher-led visits or for groups taking part in facilitated education programmes</td>
<td>£175,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>British Computing Society (Plan C)</td>
<td>Support to improve skills and professional learning for computing science teachers</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Social Enterprise Academy</td>
<td>Social Enterprise in Education programme aims to develop an understanding amongst young people of the social enterprise business model; give young people opportunities to get involved hands on in a social enterprise in line with the principles and capacities of CfE; and provide CPD for teachers to help them deliver opportunities for young people to develop their enterprise, entrepreneurial and employability skills.</td>
<td>£24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>STUC &quot;Unions into Schools&quot; Grant</td>
<td>Funding to help the STUC to provide a programme whereby trained trade union reps visit Scotland’s secondary schools and work with classes and teachers to ensure that young people have an improved knowledge of both their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.</td>
<td>£23,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Numeracy Hub</td>
<td>The National Numeracy and Maths Hub is a virtual learning environment that provides an innovative approach to CLPL for all practitioners. It is an interactive resource and source of materials, good practice and support on Maths/numeracy. The funding also supports a network of hub champions in every LA.</td>
<td>£400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>&quot;Leaders of Learning&quot;</td>
<td>Project delivered in partnership between Children in Scotland, Scottish Youth Parliament and YoungScot giving children and young people the opportunity to explore their experiences of learning and promote how they can be included in the planning and delivery of learning</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>British Council Scotland</td>
<td>Management of modern language assistant programme in Scotland. Links to 1+2, part of larger programme which has a reciprocal arrangement with partner institutions in Europe and beyond.</td>
<td>£195,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Education Statement of Intent with France</td>
<td>Manage and further develop a joint action plan to take forward the Education and Training Statement of Intent between Scotland and France signed in October 2013. The focus of the action plan is under 3 headings: Policy exchange and areas of common interest, Partnerships and co-operation, Practical arrangements (on delivery of the plan).</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Holocaust Educational Trust</td>
<td>Lessons from Auschwitz Project. Arranging programme where students and teachers take part in 2 afternoon seminars and a 1-day visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau in order to then pass on the lessons in their schools and communities as project ambassadors</td>
<td>£286,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>Keep Scotland Beautiful - Eco Schools</td>
<td>Whole-school action programme on sustainable development education issues linked to Learning for Sustainability, including Green Flag Award Scheme. Over 98% of Scottish schools are currently participating in the Eco Schools programme.</td>
<td>£240,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>UN Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on Sustainable Development</td>
<td>The grant is to enable the UNRCE to undertake a number of activities to help support LfS in schools, including strengthening and widening the LfS Scotland national network, and by enhancing communications with schools and educators through knowledge exchange and sharing current research and practice</td>
<td>£30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>IDEAS - Development Education Centres</td>
<td>International Development Education Association of Scotland have received funding from SG to take forward core funding for Development Education Centres. The funding will support the delivery of global citizenship education in Scotland in the context of CfE.</td>
<td>£230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Name of programme</td>
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<td>Funding amount</td>
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<td>----</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Expressive Arts</td>
<td>Sistema</td>
<td>Sistema Scotland’s vision is to transform lives with music – to produce systemic, generational change in our poorest communities, transforming the HWB and prospects of the children who participate in the programme. Based on the methods of Venezuela’s ‘El Sistema’ movement, Sistema Scotland develops orchestra centres which are known in the community as ‘Big Noise’. The first orchestra in Scotland was established in Raploch, Stirling in 2008, the second in 2013 in Govanhill, Glasgow. A third Big Noise Centre in Torry, Aberdeen was launched on 29 June 2015.</td>
<td>£150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>NPFS grant</td>
<td>The grant funding is intended to ensure that NPFS provides a clear and strong voice on behalf of parents across a range of EY, education and wellbeing policy areas. It is vital that the NPFS continues to deliver on its role to provide and independent voice on behalf of parents across Scotland and to give Parent Councils and parents an opportunity to discuss and raise educational issues of mutual interest or concerns at a national level.</td>
<td>£50,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Expressive Arts</td>
<td>Music Education Strategy Group</td>
<td>Continuation of the Instrumental Music Implementation Group work to promote the value and place of instrumental music tuition in schools</td>
<td>£30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>Baird of Bute</td>
<td>Competitive scholarship programme for life sciences involving visit to medical research facility in Canada. Currently eligible to S5 learners in Bute but will need to be widened out to a national competition as agreed with Ministers for 2016.</td>
<td>£5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>Scottish European Educational Trust (SEET)</td>
<td></td>
<td>£10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>SSERC</td>
<td>The SSERC programme comprises two key elements: a primary cluster development programme and programmes to support the professional learning of science and technology specialists</td>
<td>£930,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>SCILT</td>
<td>Sponsorship of Scotland’s National Centre for Languages. Both SG and ES have a mutual interest in the entirety of the SCILT strategic plan. The work of SCILT is essential in securing sustained implementation of the 1+2 policy.</td>
<td>£700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>Confucius Institute for Scotland’s Schools</td>
<td>Work of CISSI relates directly to delivery and achievement of school targets contained within the current SG China plan</td>
<td>£754,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>£4,543,620</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba
Transforming lives through learning

Thank you
Making the shift from self-evaluation to self-improvement

- Dr Bill Maxwell, Chief Executive
  Education Scotland
What have we achieved so far?

What are our priorities for change in the future?

How will we achieve these changes?
What have we achieved so far?
Transformational reform of Scottish education

- Reform of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment
- Workforce reform - enhancing professional skills and leadership at all levels
- Re-design of national infrastructure for support and challenge
Are we creating Successful learners?
Attainment since 2000
End of S6

- Up 8% to 82%  5+ Level 4
- Up 14% to 53%  5+ Level 5
- Up 9% to 39%  3+ Level 6
- Up 7% to 26%  5+ Level 6
Positive Destinations

All time high

Up 1.3% in 2014 to 91.7%
Are we creating
Confident, Healthy Individuals?
Effective contributors?
Responsible citizens?
Mori Poll 2015

Survey of 10-20 year olds in UK for The Cabinet Office
Number of teenagers with a charge proved per 1,000 population - by age

- 16 year olds
- 17 year olds
- 18 year olds
- 19 year olds

Number of people with a proved charge per 1,000 population

Year: 2004-05 to 2013-14
Percentage of 13 and 15 year olds who drank alcohol in the last week
Percentage of 13 and 15 year olds who drank alcohol in the last week

- 13 Year Olds
- 15 Year Olds

Percentage (%)

Years: 1999 to 2014
Percentage of 13 and 15 year olds who used drugs in the last month

- **13 Year Olds**
- **15 Year Olds**

Percentage (%)

Temporary exclusions, 2005/06 to 2012/13

Cases of exclusion

School year
What have we achieved so far?

What are our priorities for change in the future?

How will we achieve these changes?
What are our priorities for change in the future?
Equity

Urgent issue which faces us now
"A higher rate of urgency does not imply ever-present panic, anxiety or fear.

It means a state in which complacency is virtually absent."

- John P Kotter
In Scotland, at age 5, the gap between children from the most advantaged and most disadvantaged families is already:

- 6-13 months in problem-solving ability
- 11-18 months in expressive vocabulary

From Growing Up in Scotland
Percentage of P4 pupils performing well or very well in reading, at the relevant level, by deprivation category

- Most deprivation: 72%
- Middle deprivation: 78%
- Least deprivation: 84%
Percentage of P7 pupils performing well or very well in reading, at the relevant level, by deprivation category
Percentage of S2 pupils performing well or very well in reading, at the relevant level, by deprivation category

- Most deprivation: 68%
- Middle deprivation: 80%
- Least deprivation: 90%
Attainment of 2014 Leavers by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile

Mean Cumulative Total Tariff Points

- Most deprivation: 623
- Middle deprivation: 871
- Least deprivation: 1143
Percentage of school leavers in positive destinations, at follow up, by deprivation, 2012/13

- Most deprivation: 84%
- Middle deprivation: 91%
- Least deprivation: 95%
Percentage of school leavers in Higher Education, at follow up, by deprivation, 2012/13

- Most deprivation: 21%
- Middle deprivation: 35%
- Least deprivation: 53%
What have we achieved so far?

What are our priorities for change in the future?

How will we achieve these changes?
How will we achieve these changes?
Applying the Scottish approach to improvement

1. **Aim**
   Is there an agreed aim that is understood by everyone in the system?

2. **Correct changes**
   Are we using our full knowledge to identify the right changes and prioritising those that are likely to have the biggest impact on our aim?

3. **Clear change method**
   Does everyone know and understand the method(s) we will use to improve?

4. **Measurement**
   Can we measure and report progress on our improvement aim?

5. **Capacity and capability**
   Are people and other resources deployed and being developed in the best way to enable improvement?

6. **Spread plan**
   Have we set out our plans for innovating, testing, implementing and sharing new learning to spread the improvement everywhere?
1. Aim
Is there an agreed aim that is understood by everyone in the system?

2. Correct change
Are we using our knowledge to make the right changes, prioritising the things that are likely to have the biggest impact on our aim?
Aim

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
Applying the Scottish approach to improvement

1. **Aim**
   - Is there an agreed aim that is understood by everyone in the system?

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2 Correct changes

Are we using our full knowledge to identify the right changes and prioritising those that are likely to have the biggest impact on our aim?

3 Clear change method

Does everyone and understand the method(s) we will improve?
A comprehensive and multi-dimensional strategy to tackle inequity

**Economic Strategy**
- Government-wide strategy for solving equity, including economic strategy
- Particular emphasis on inclusive economic growth

**Scottish Attainment Challenge**
- Targeted approach with universal offer
- Particular focus in areas of high deprivation
- £100m over 4 years

**Early Years Strategy**

**Post-school pathways**
- Developing the young workforce
- Access to higher education
- Student support
Economic Strategy

- Government wide strategy for solving equity, including economic strategy
- Particular emphasis on inclusive economic growth
Purpose

Competitiveness

Increasing growth and tackling inequality are mutually supportive

Tackling Inequality

Investment  Innovation  Inclusive growth  Internationalisation
Early Years Strategy
Post-school pathways

- Developing the young workforce
- Access to higher education
- Student support
Scottish Attainment Challenge

- Targeted approach with universal offer
- Particular focus in areas of high deprivation
- £100m over 4 years
A comprehensive and multi-dimensional strategy to tackle inequity’

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**Early Years Strategy**

**Post-school pathways**
- Developing the young workforce
- Access to higher education
- Student support
Applying the Scottish approach to improvement

1. Aim
   Is there an agreed aim that is understood by everyone in the system?

2. Correct changes
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   Does everyone know and understand the method(s) we will use to improve?

4. Measurement
   Can we measure and report progress on our improvement aim?

5. Capacity and capability
   Are people and other resources deployed and being developed in the best way to enable improvement?

6. Spread plan
   Have we set out our plans for innovating, testing, implementing and sharing new learning to spread the improvement everywhere?
3 Clear change method

Does everyone know and understand the method(s) we will use to improve?
Collaborative
Professional
Enquiry
Applying the Scottish approach to improvement

1. **Aim**
   Is there an agreed aim that is understood by everyone in the system?

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6. **Spread plan**
   Have we set out our plans for innovating, testing, implementing and sharing new learning to spread the improvement everywhere?
4 Measurement
Can we measure and report progress on our improvement aim?

5 Capacity and capability
Are people and resources being developed in the best way to support improvement?
National Benchmarking Measure: Attainment versus Deprivation

To change the cohort of candidates who contribute, use the Candidate Characteristics Filters.

The selected year is 2013/14.

Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers.

- National
- National trend
- School HEEDO
- School HEEDO trend

Add to personal dashboard

- In SIMD decile 5, you have performed lower than the National Establishment.
- In SIMD decile 1, you have performed greater than the National Establishment.
- In SIMD decile 2, you have performed greater than the National Establishment.
- In SIMD decile 7, you have performed greater than the National Establishment.
- In SIMD decile 8, you have performed greater than the National Establishment.

Show/Hide Tabular Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare With</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>2015/16</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Pupil Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Benchmarking Measure: Attainment versus Deprivation

To change the cohort of candidates who contribute, use the Candidate Characteristic Filters
The selected year is 2013/14

Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers

Attainment versus Deprivation

In SIMD decile 5, you have performed lower than the National Establishment
In SIMD decile 1, you have performed greater than the National Establishment
In SIMD decile 2, you have performed greater than the National Establishment
In SIMD decile 7, you have performed greater than the National Establishment
In SIMD decile 8, you have performed greater than the National Establishment
Applying the Scottish approach to improvement

1. **Aim**
   Is there an agreed aim that is understood by everyone in the system?

2. **Correct changes**
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   Are people and other resources deployed and being developed in the best way to enable improvement?

6. **Spread plan**
   Have we set out our plans for innovating, testing, implementing and sharing new learning to spread the improvement everywhere?
5 Capacity and capability

Are people and other resources deployed and being developed in the best way to enable improvement?
Applying the Scottish approach to improvement

1. **Aim**
   - Is there an agreed aim that is understood by everyone in the system?

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6. **Spread plan**
   - Have we set out our plans for innovating, testing, implementing and sharing new learning to spread the improvement everywhere?
6 Spread plan

Have we set out our plans for innovating, testing, implementing and sharing new learning to spread the improvement everywhere?
National Improvement Hub

- self-evaluation and improvement tools
Self-evaluation and improvement tools

- HGIOS 4 and siblings
- strategic visioning and planning tools
- improvement method support
- benchmarking data and support
How good is our school?

4th EDITION

Transforming lives through learning
Self-evaluation and improvement tools

• HGIOS 4 and siblings
• strategic visioning and planning tools
• improvement method support
• benchmarking data and support
Strategic visioning and planning

**Implemento**
Do the right thing • Do it the right way
Reveal new options • Get three steps ahead
Define the imperatives • Make every action count
Breakout of the dilemma • Do the important stuff first

**Impacto**
Enrolling the Others

Diagram:
- Commitment
- Success Path
- Destination
- Urgency
- Purpose
Self-evaluation and improvement tools

• HGIOS 4 and siblings
• strategic visioning and planning tools
• improvement method support
• benchmarking data and support
National Improvement Hub

- self-evaluation and improvement tools
- access to research evidence
Research publications

The Analytical Services Team at Education Scotland has collated the following list of research-based publications which focus on the poverty-related attainment gap. This is not intended to be a definitive list of publications, however you may find this a useful starting point in getting to grips with the evidence base about how poverty affects educational attainment, and what schools and others can do to tackle this.

If you are aware of any freely-available research publications which you think could be added to this section, please email AnalyticalServices@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Poverty and schooling: Where mindset meets practice

Research Monograph 57
A short research summary from Ontario which explores what poverty looks like and which discusses a range of strategies to address the inequities often associated with poverty and schooling. Recommended strategies include enhancing teacher awareness of poverty, building school culture and enhancing professional practice in the classroom. From Ciuffetelli Parker, D. (2015) Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education: Student Achievement Division.
National Improvement Hub

- self-evaluation and improvement tools
- access to research evidence
- teaching and assessment resources
- exemplars and CLPL resources
- online collaboration and networking
What have we achieved so far?

What are our priorities for change in the future?

How will we achieve these changes?
Transforming lives through learning

Thank you
Good afternoon

Without wishing to big ourselves up in a thoroughly un-Scottish way, I think it’s fair to say that Scotland has established a pretty strong international reputation for being a pioneer in the development of self-evaluation in education.

The widespread interest in How Good is our School?, first published in the mid-90s and now well embedded in the practice of virtually every school in the land, has been a clear manifestation of that reputation – even in the last month I have had the latest in a long line of requests from foreign lands to translate and adapt HGIOS for use in their own countries.
But today I want to propose that, as a result of all the work we have collectively put into modernising and reforming the foundations of Scottish education system, we now have a clear opportunity to make a decisive step beyond embedding self-evaluation to show how we can drive consistent and sustained improvement on one the most challenging issues which most modern education systems face today.

But first let me set out an outline structure for what I want to say over the next 50 minutes or so.

I want to set out my case by addressing three key questions:

- Where are we now what have we achieved so far?
- What are our priorities for change in the future?
And thirdly – and I plan to spend most of the time on this…
- How will we go about achieving these changes?

But let me start by briefly taking stock of what we have achieved so far…
Since the Scottish Parliament came into being and took over responsibility for Scottish education, there is no question that we have embarked on a massive journey of reform, which, most people in this room will have lived through in various ways. It is a journey that is certainly not yet finished – and I’m certainly not advocating, by the way, that we ‘declare victory’ too early in terms of full and successful implementation, but we are now well past the stage of early phase design and development and it certainly doesn’t seem unreasonable to now be looking to see evidence of the benefits beginning to flow for learners.

A key part of this reform programme has, of course, has been a fundamental reform of the curriculum through the development and implementation of Curriculum for Excellence – and to call it curriculum reform is to undersell it dramatically – as you know it is about so much more than just the curriculum per se, but even more so about reform of pedagogy, promoting broader, richer
and deeper learning, and assessment practice with a sustained focus on promoting assessment for learning.

And equally important, if we are to realise the benefits of a more open, flexible approach to curriculum and pedagogy has been the programme of workforce reform set out by Teaching Scotland’s Future – a comprehensive re-design of how teachers are prepared and supported to enter the workforce and a substantial raising of the bar in terms of support and expectations of all teachers to engage in high quality continuous professional learning throughout their careers, and indeed how leadership is promoted and developed at every level.

So reform has been taken forward to give educators more autonomy in designing learning experiences, within the framework of a new clarity and consensus about the broad aims and purposes of education, and major reform has been
put in place to ensure we have the highest quality of professional workforce equipped to capitalise on this freedom.

But there is also a third strand of reform that I think is also worth highlighting albeit perhaps less conspicuous at times. That is the gradual re-alignment of the national framework of support and accountability that has taken place in parallel with curriculum and workforce reform.

Over the last decade or more, inspection arrangements have moved decisively towards being more improvement-focused and capacity-building, more responsive to self-evaluation and more targeted on risk. This direction of travel is continuing through our current inspection review.

And beyond inspection, the way we provide data on school performance to schools and authorities has been transformed through Insight, and the way we report it to parents and the public has similarly evolved through the new Parentzone. And
of course, in 2011, we saw a major structural change with the creation of Education Scotland as a new style of improvement agency, designed to exploit better new synergies between development and evaluation functions - thereby providing more integrated support for practitioners at the front line.

So what impact, you might reasonably ask, has all this investment of time, resource and effort in reform had on generating better outcomes for Scotland’s learners?

You could be forgiven for being very confused about this is if you had to rely on often very polarised messages coming from the media and political debate, but let me roll back the timeline and take a longer-term view of the progress made since we started on this reform journey.

Curriculum for excellence was pretty clear about the purposes of education 3-18 in the form of the four capacities – especially if you read the full descriptors underpinning them.
So are we creating more successful learners?

Well if you look at attainment by the end of S6, there is clear evidence of a real step change.

- 5 or more qualifications at Level 4 or above up 8% to 82%
- 5 or more at Level 5 even more substantially up – 14% increase to 53%
- 3 or more Highers or equivalent up 9% to 39%.
- And 5 or more Highers or equivalent up 7% to 26%.

These are very substantial improvements, which, when you bring it down to real learners rather than numbers, represent large numbers of young people whose opportunities to realise their ambitions have been substantially improved.

And this is reflected, not surprisingly, in positive destinations after school, which have risen significantly over the same period, including most recently another 1.3% increase last year and now stand at an all-time high of 91.7%.
But of course one of the defining characteristics of Curriculum for Excellence is that it looks well beyond just creating successful learners, vitally important though that is.

So are we creating confident, healthy individuals, who are effective contributors in the workplace and the community and who engage in society as responsible young citizens?

Well again I think there is much we can be encouraged as we a look across a range of relevant indicators.

This slide for example shows the results of a MORI poll commissioned by the UK Cabinet Office looking at the proportion of teenagers involved in ‘positive social action’ that is community service, youth organisations, volunteering and the like. As you can see it shows very significantly higher engagement in Scotland than any of the other parts of the UK – a fact that generated much interest from South of the Border in
certain quarters. This fits with our experience as we know schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh and John Muir Trust awards are growing rapidly and the fact that the number of broader achievement awards certificated by the SQA has increased tenfold in the last few years.

Then if you look at offending behaviour amongst 16 to 19 year olds then we see a very encouraging steady decline – not solely accountable to what is happening in education of course, but nonetheless what is happening in education does play a part. Substantially fewer young people are offending now than was the case ten years ago.

Another encouraging downward trend is clear if you look at data on 13 and 15 year olds use of alcohol. (don’t know what was happening in 2001? Suggestions on a postcard please)

And similarly drugs – again a very encouraging downward trend.
And closer to the direct control of schools, one of the unsung successes of Scottish education in recent times is this steady downward trend in exclusions – both temporary...... and ‘removal from register’ now at a very low level indeed. I say unsung, but some of you may have noticed a data on exclusions in the UK in TESS a few weeks ago which showed Scottish exclusions running roughly ten times lower than those South of the Border, even after adjusting for population.

So let’s be clear - we have made and are making a lot of positive progress in Scottish education, which is playing its part in securing better outcomes for young people across the broad agenda which CfE so clearly espouses.

We are by no means an education system in crisis, but that doesn’t mean we don’t have an urgent need for change, targeted on key priorities for improvement.
So what are our priorities for change in the future?

Well of course, you would be astonished if I put anything else up on the screen at this point – Developing our system so it delivers ‘excellence with equity’ is very clearly our national ambition, and it is through focusing relentlessly on the equity part of that equation that we need to make progress. And by achieving equity I mean breaking the link between social background and educational outcomes, so that young people from the most socially and economically disadvantaged families in our society achieve the same levels of success as they progress through the system as those from the most advantaged sections of our society.

I say it is urgent, but as I hope I have established already, that’s not because I think we have a system which is in crisis or declining in performance – far from it.
John Kotter, the great Harvard Guru of organisational change argues strongly that highly successful organisations, in the private or public sector, always have a sense of urgency about their drive for improvement, but that people often mistakenly conflate the need for urgency with the presence of a crisis.

Here’s a direct quote from him – positive urgency is not panic or anxiety, but the absence of complacency. That’s the kind of urgency we should embrace and act on.

We are certainly not alone in seeing the equity issue as our key priority – far from it – countries all over the world are having similar discussions and national initiatives as we speak. Nor are we the worst in so far as you can make meaningful comparisons, on PISA data for example, although we are also far from being the best. And indeed there is some evidence that we are making some positive progress in reducing the gap in some respects.
But the need for change is undoubtedly urgent. We have had this issue clearly on the radar screen for a long time – it was highlighted, for example, in the OECD’s last review of Scottish education in 2007 and I came across in my office a Scottish Education Department report from 1975 exploring exactly the same issues - but the limited progress that it’s been possible to make so far is frustrating for all concerned. I’ve no doubt that complacency in this room, and I’m sure in the education profession as a whole, is virtually absent, not least because we know the driving force behind job satisfaction for most members of this profession is fundamentally all about helping young people flourish and achieve their dreams, and the equity gap reflects too many individuals for whom that isn’t happening as it should.

And how big is that gap now? Well let me take a quick run through the learning journey with some data to illustrate its prevalence and persistence.
I’ve used this slide based on data from the ‘Growing Up in Scotland’ study for a few years now, but unfortunately the data from the latest analysis of GUS data this year suggests this gap hasn’t changed much. That clearly represents a substantial disadvantage before children even start the formal school years.

Then the next run of slides I’ll quickly run you through all show you data for young people from households in the lowest three deciles in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – on the left in blue – against data for the middle four deciles – in orange – and for the top three deciles, the most advantaged and affluent households, in green.

Here is reading, from the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy at P4 – 72% versus 84%

Here’s reading at P7 – with the gap pretty much unchanged – 81% versus 93%
And by S2 again from the SSLN the gap now shows at 22% also in reading for the sake of comparison.

Then if we look at qualifications, summarised by looking at the total ‘tariff score’ of qualifications achieved by school leaving date you see a very steep gradient, not far off being double for the most advantaged group relative to the most disadvantaged group.

And of course this unsurprisingly then follows through to destinations post-school.

We see an 11% gap in sustained positive destinations overall – 84% versus 95%...

And tellingly, if you drill down to Higher Education as a destination, it is very substantially larger with 53% for the most
advantaged being two and a half times the rate of the blue bar at 21%.

I appreciate you will all have seen some data like this before, and apologies if you think you knew all that already, but I think it is instructive to see and reflect on how the gap starts, develops and grows throughout the learning journey.

It is a systematic and engrained challenge we are facing and won’t we be easy to change it quickly.

So if this is our urgent priority, how will we achieve the changes we want to see?

Well I want to look at the strategy being developed through the lense of the ‘Scottish Approach to improvement’ — so called because it represents a deliberate attempt to define clearly what we in Scotland, across the whole public sector, from justice to health to education and beyond, believe are the key
generic principles we should all be applying to drive improvement in any area and on any issue where there is a need for deep and sustained change.

The Scottish Approach poses six key questions which should be asked of every change programme – I want to take each of them one by one, because by showing how we are addressing these questions in tackling our urgent priority of improving equity in Scottish education, I want to show how I believe we can cement that transition to an education system that is not just good at evaluating itself, but is excellent at driving change and improvement, and through collective, nationwide effort can tackle successfully an issue which countries around the world are struggling with.

First off – are we clear about our aim? In this case the aim of closing the equity gap – do we all understand exactly what we mean here?
The draft National Improvement Framework, just launched for consultation earlier this month, puts achieving equity, alongside excellence for all, firmly in centre stage, as you would expect. It expresses one of its priorities in this way- ‘closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children’ and it is very clear the aim is to do that by achieving disproportionate increases in the attainment of more disadvantaged children to bring them into line with continuously improving high levels of attainment of the least disadvantaged.

That’s pretty straightforward and clear I think, although there is one note of caution. In my experience the issue is sometimes confused by slipping over to focus on the ‘lowest attaining 20%’ of pupils as if the issue was all about that group and only that group of learners. Of course the most disadvantaged pupils may well be disproportionately represented amongst the lowest attaining pupils in any school, but there also be plenty pupils who are above that threshold who are also underachieving as a consequence of their social background and need help to
achieve their potential. Schools need to understand how social background is impacting on all of their pupils and be acting to support them at all levels.

Then we need to ask ‘are we using our full knowledge to identify the right changes we need to make, prioritising those with the greatest impact?’

This is where we need to acknowledge and understand the implications of knowing that in trying to break the link between social background and educational outcomes, we are addressing an issue which goes well beyond anything which schools and other education services can solve on their own. With that in mind let me ‘zoom out’ to encompass a wider landscape for a few moments before I zoom back in to focus on what we are doing in the school education years specifically.

I think we are fortunate, in Scotland, that we see that understanding very well reflected in a much wider government
strategy stretching widely across all arms of public service and public policy.

Whilst the role of education in tackling inequity is being given high prominence as one of the key levers at our command to drive positive change, it is very clearly seen in the context of much broader, multi-dimensional strategy. Education is not being expected to solve the problem on its own.

That includes an Economic Strategy which now puts achieving equity at its heart in an equal and mutually supportive relationship with promoting competitiveness and economic growth. Anyone who has read the ‘Spirit Level’ by Wilkinson and Pickett – a fascinating analysis of the relationship between income inequality and social outcomes in countries across the world will need no convincing that one of the most important things the government can do to help educators improve equity in education outcomes is to reduce income inequality and poverty amongst the population, cutting off much of the
pressure that leads to inequity at source. So progress here will be a crucial factor.

Then there is the government’s early years strategy, which of course reflects a clear recognition that the more we can do to close the gap before children even enter formal schooling – that 18 month gap in vocabulary at age 5 we saw earlier for example, the better our prospects of equalising outcomes at later ages. Alongside the commitment to expanding the provision of early years learning and childcare provision, we have seen substantial investment in the early intervention fund and the Early Years Collaborative through which every Community Planning Partnership has been driving multi-agency interventions designed to improve developmental and learning outcomes for more vulnerable children. We know that improvements even at or before birth will have knock-on consequences for later learning as improvements in maternal health and healthy births will reduce the presence of adverse pressures later on in children’s development.
And if we move to the other end of the school years, there is also substantial government focus on improving equity in the Senior Phase and post-school pathways into Further Education, Higher Education and into employment. That’s particularly evident in the Developing the Young Workforce programme, for example where we are working with government and with key partners such as Skills Development Scotland and the Funding Council to promote new more coherent pathways through the Senior Phase into training and employment and greater levels of more personalised advice and support for young people to raise their expectations and develop their career management skills. Our work with SDS to develop new work experience standards and review the innovative ‘My World of Work’ resource all has a focus on improving support and outcomes for more disadvantaged young people as a key strand.
And of course more broadly there are many other elements of government policy aiming to address the equity issue, from the provision of the Education Maintenance Allowance, Access to Higher Education support and the broader commitment to free tuition in Universities.

And then, fitting coherently into this broad and wide-ranging government strategy, there is the new Schools Attainment Challenge announced by the First Minister in February and developed with pace and priority in the months following. A major new initiative with a strong commitment to substantial funding - £100m - over a sustained period. It is clearly targeted on directing the greatest resource to where the concentration of disadvantage is greatest but it’s equally designed – and I’ll come back to this in more detail – to provide a source of support for any school addressing the consequences of disadvantage amongst its pupils.
Drawing on evidence and analysis of where best to target efforts to drive changes, the Challenge is deliberately focusing on addressing the gap earlier in the school journey, in the early primary stages, and on the core skills of literacy and numeracy, which are so important for giving access to the full broad and rich curricular experiences we want all young people to experience.

And it is this strand of the overall strategy for tackling inequity, focused on education in the school years, that I now want to follow through in more depth.

So what about the change method? – what are the sort of practical skills and techniques which we believe are best suited to ensure improvements to existing practice are developed effectively at the ‘front line’, evaluated and adapted, and where successful, fully embedded.
I think we have an increasingly clear consensus about the core characteristics of the change method – a core method which I think we should now move towards expecting all educators to be routinely applying in their practice- and I think it can be best captured in the now pretty commonly used phrase ‘Collaborative Professional Enquiry’.

Of course there is a risk that we all use such phrases meaning different things – we need a clear common definition understood across the profession.

Let me unpack what I think I mean by Collaborative Professional Enquiry by taking each of its constituent concepts in turn.

Firstly ‘collaborative’ – it is absolutely clear to me, on the basis of evidence from analysis of change programmes in education worldwide, that improvement happens best when practitioners collaborate. That can be collaboration amongst teachers or
teachers and other professionals within a school and it is also clear that collaboration between schools, on a mutual partnership basis, can have powerful benefits. The recent evaluation of the School Improvement Partnership programme, which we set up to explore the potential of collaborative practice within and across authority boundaries provides strong endorsement of this view.

Here is Anne Anderson from St Michael’s Primary in Dunbarton talking about the benefits she and her school experienced from the collaborative work they undertook supported by this programme.

(VIDEO ONE)

So if that’s collaboration then let me unpack ‘professional’ a little. For me the essence of a professional approach is the ability to apply a constantly evolving body of specialist knowledge and skills to the application of your own practice.
That involves a responsibility to be constantly curious about the latest evidence of effective practice in your particular field, and engagement with the body of research, analysis and other evidence relevant to it.

This video clip illustrates how George Gilchrist, Headteacher of Parkside Primary, Jedburgh has cultivated that professional engagement with research and evidence as part of the enquiry-based approach he has developed in his school – and it cuts into Sarah Henderson and Laura Robinson, two of the school’s teachers, discussing exactly how they put that into practice.

(VIDEO TWO)

….and then there is enquiry – which for me reflects what we sometimes call the ‘reflective practitioner’ approach, whereby educators, drawing on the professional evidence base they can access, try out and adapt changes to their practice, and as they do so systematically collect evidence of impact, and further
adapt or change tack as a result. That means being comfortable with generating, gathering and using data as a natural part of seeking continuous improvements in practice.

My third and final clip shows Sacha Oates, Aileen Mellor and Jackie Mackay from Bannockburn Primary, talking about how they have developed more systematic ‘enquiry-based’ approaches to improvement through their involvement in the Raising Attainment for All programme and the ‘application of improvement science’.

(VIDEO THREE)

I love the reference to the inspiration they took from the 2012 Olympics and the ‘aggregation of marginal gains’ because, as any of my staff in the room will know, I’m very prone to using the British cycling team and their coach Dave Brailsford, as an exemplar – it he was he and his team who made that phrase famous, alongside a focus on encouraging ‘thinking out the box’
to generate transformational new ideas to complement the marginal gains made in more well-established practices.

So if we have a method, what about measurement? How will we know what progress we are making towards achieving our aim of raising attainment, to a disproportionate extent, for learners from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

It is vital we do ensure that practitioners, and indeed local and national policy makers, do have access to good quality data and analysis so we can learn what is working and where, and to what extent - and use this intelligence to share learning and inform the next steps in our collective improvement efforts across the system.

We should embrace well designed approaches to measuring learner outcomes, and the intelligent use of the resulting data to drive improvement.
There is a phrase you sometimes hear which goes along the lines of ‘weighing the pig doesn’t make it any fatter’ – and of course we know this to be self-evident, the simple act of measuring anything does not, in itself, result in change or improvement. I am pretty sure that it is equally true however, that if we were to gather together a group of agricultural professionals who were tasked with improving weight yields in pig farming, a significant amount of weighing would be involved and would indeed be crucial to the process. Improvement-focused use of data to establish which approach is working best in which circumstances, is essential.

In terms of promoting intelligent use of data to address the equity gap, we have seen a major step forward in the design of Insight, the Senior Phase benchmarking tool, as it now, for the first time, gives schools access to clear analysis of how they are doing, relative to virtual comparators, with respect to pupils from each SIMD decile – so it is clear for a school to see how well their more disadvantaged learners are doing. The slide
shows an insight chart with each circle representing one SIMD decile – a school that appears to be doing well for its more disadvantaged learners.

With the development of the new National Improvement Framework, launched as a draft for consultation by the First Minister earlier this month, we have a tremendous opportunity to develop similarly intelligent forms of data analysis to support improvement and collective learning at primary and early secondary stages, where currently consistent data are not readily available. Practitioners need evidence that helps them understand what the gap looks like in their own context relative to others in similar contexts and they need access to well-founded evidence of what seems to be working elsewhere, and in what circumstances, to inform their own improvement planning.

In Education Scotland we are certainly looking forward to working intensively with government colleagues and
stakeholders intensively over the next few months to develop this approach and indeed to take forward development of all the complementary dimensions of the framework, of which pupil attainment data is but one amongst six supporting the priorities.

And then, back to the sic questions from the Scottish Approach to public service improvement, we should be clear that people and other resources are being developed and deployed appropriately – in this instance, in ways which are likely to close the equity gap across Scotland.

I believe the way the Attainment Challenge is being used to boost capacity and capability, in a manner which quite directly puts the greatest resources to those schools and communities facing the greatest level and scale of challenge, provides a positive response to this question.

Proportionate rather than uniform resource distribution makes sense given the highly variable patterns of concentration across
Scotland, with the authorities with the greatest concentration of deprivation developing programmes ranging across a sub-set of their schools, and a range of other individual schools with high concentrations being directly engaged beyond the seven challenge authorities.

But equally there is a clear determination to ensure that every authority, and potentially every school can benefit from the Challenge programme through the universal support package. Every authority will have an Attainment Adviser before the end of the year – These advisers will provide access to the expertise and the wide range of targeted resources that the programme will develop and engage directly with local schools and their staff to help them access it.

And that takes me to the sixth question, and in many ways one of the hardest. Too many times in the past well-intentioned centrally funded initiatives have stimulated exciting, innovative practice, which had impact in a patchwork of specific locations
whilst the initiative lasted, but which failed to spread out across the country and therefore failed to produce a sustained legacy.

We need to change that with this determined, collective national effort to close the attainment gap. We need to ensure the learning we generate through the Attainment Challenge is captured and spread across the education system in ways which drive a virtuous cycle of improvement, sharing learning about what works on a nationwide basis.

And with that in mind I want in the last part of this presentation to expand on a new commitment we have made to support that national spread – the development of an online National Improvement Hub specifically designed to support the work of the Attainment challenge and help all educators engage and benefit from it.

The concept of the Hub will, I am sure, grow and diversify to provide similar support across a whole range of topics in due
course, but we are pioneering its development with a specific focus on the Attainment Challenge. We will grow and develop it in response to engagement and feedback with front-line users and I hope in close partnership with a range of other local and national partners, so we can provide the most comprehensive and accessible ‘portal’ to support education improvers at the front line of delivery.

Let me set out the sort of dimensions we are aiming to build into the Hub as it starts to take shape.

Firstly there will be an area containing self-evaluation and improvement tools and resources.

That will take you to our family of self-evaluation frameworks for relevant sectors, including of course, to the new updated How Good is our School version 4 – which we are pleased to be launching here at SLF today and which is the subject of a separate seminar.
HGIOS4 has been re-designed, in wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders, to produce a substantially new set of quality indicators and supporting toolkit. The structure has been simplified whilst retaining a familiar overall shape.

There are many specific areas of refinement, updating and improvement but one key theme throughout the re-design has been to strengthen the focus on our national ambition of achieving excellence with equity, and in particular the progress being made in improving outcomes for more disadvantaged pupils. That means a strengthened focus on evaluating how well learners of all backgrounds are achieving literacy and numeracy skills and how effectively wellbeing and skills for learning, life and work are being developed amongst all pupils, including the more vulnerable.

Due to popular demand, we are publishing and distributing HGIOS4 in hard copy, but we are also now developing a
digitally published version which will present the potential for even more flexible customisation and adaptation by users. We want this edition of HGIOS to be even more widely used, by class teachers as well as school leadership teams and in collaboration with learners, parents and partners across the school community.

As well as taking you to HGIOS and its siblings such as the quality frameworks for early years and community learning and development, the Hub will also be developed to include what we might call strategic visioning and planning tools. Work is underway to develop new tools building on our experience with some of the approaches we have supported schools and services to use in the past, like the three horizons approach. The aim is to assist schools and other providers in undertaking long-term strategic planning and plan their way through the change journey they need to make to achieve transformational change whilst continuing to deliver, and improve, high quality provision.
Then we will be developing access to advice and resources on improvement methods and how to apply them in your local context, drawing on the experience gained from initiatives like the Raising Attainment for All and School Improvement Partnership Programme, and more generally signposting guidance and sector leading practice in applying the principles of Collaborative Professional Enquiry methods in various forms and circumstances.

And there should also be direct links through to benchmarking data, a key support for self-evaluation and targeting improvement. That includes Insight, other national data sources, and, as I mentioned earlier, the prospect of expanding this support substantially as the National Improvement Framework develops. We will also be developing a programme of professional development support for practitioners designed to improve teachers’ confidence in using data for improvement,
which will also generate content for this area of the National Hub.

A second area of the Hub takes you to research and evidence, to help your thinking around how best to raise the attainment of more disadvantaged learners in your context. This is a screenshot showing how it looks now. We see it building up to contain links to research, like these on the screenshot with short user-friendly summaries to help guide users quickly to what might be useful for them. The intention is also to include links to commonly used research databases and web-sites with content relevant to the Attainment Challenge and we will bring in evidence and evaluations from our own inspection and review activities where appropriate. The aim is to help speed the process of turning knowledge into practical action which benefits learners, through feeding the process of collaborative professional enquiry amongst practitioners as effectively as possible.
A third area of the Hub will contain relevant teaching and assessment resources. We already have resources such as POLAR – the Primary One Literacy Assessment Resource in place and this will expand significantly as we take forward plans to produce further new resources on literacy and numeracy, incorporating best evidence on effective strategies in ensuring progress these areas.

And then a fourth dimension of the Hub, beyond the provision of resources themselves, will contain practical illustrations of relevant practice in schools and learning communities across Scotland, and associated resources to support professional learning amongst practitioners who want to explore alternative approaches and new or different practices which they might adapt or adopt. As well as drawing on what we see in inspection activities and other engagements with front-line practice, I see the Attainment Adviser’s network as being a key source of material for this part of the Hub as they share and cross-fertilise the practice they are seeing in their own areas.
And finally, using the tremendous potential of the new re-designed GLOW and our broader on-line services, the Hub will promote the creation and development of user-led collaboration and networking. Again the Attainment Advisers will potentially have a role here, as will other specialist teams within Education Scotland, as they help foster and support online communities around specific themes or topics, addressing rural deprivation for example, or promoting family learning. But equally I see the initiative for establishing and developing many on-line communities lying with individual schools or local authorities, with the Hub simply providing a context in which they can thrive.

Collaboration is a key element of the methodology we are seeking to spread and we will use the potential of on-line networks and communication to the full in seeking to promote it. We can create closed communities to share thinking in a safe place, and open networking to encourage maximum
engagement and interaction. We will use all our digital channels, including social media, blogs and online news feeds to promote awareness, communication and feedback.

So that’s the vision for the National Improvement Hub – it’s in its infancy and will grow and develop as the Attainment Challenge evolves and develop, but it will be a consistent focus for collaboration and spread of the learning which everyone involved in the initiative generates.

CONCLUSION

So finally, in drawing to a conclusion, I come back to the conviction that we have a strong and improving education system, and whilst we have an urgent priority to attend to, in closing the equity gap, we should approach that challenge with confidence, albeit in the knowledge that success will be hard won and will certainly not come overnight.
We should approach it with confidence because we can now capitalise on the major reforms around curriculum, pedagogy and the enhanced professionalism and leadership in the education workforce that we have all worked to secure in recent times, and because we have a well-embedded commitment to self-evaluation across the system and now increasingly sophisticated understanding of how to ensure that self-evaluation translates more consistently into sustained self-improvement.

We know political commitment and focus on this issue has never been stronger and it is clearly located within a broad strategy that recognises that education cannot solve social equity on its own but that education does have a key part to play as part of a multi-disciplinary public-service wide effort.

So let’s grasp that collective challenge - if we pool our collective energy and expertise in the right way and ensure we apply self-evaluation and improvement methods systematically to the
task, we can make a decisive difference over the next few years, so as we come together again for future Learning Festivals we can reflect on how we achieved a step change in addressing the gap and enhancing the life chances of generations of young people as a result.

Thank you for listening

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