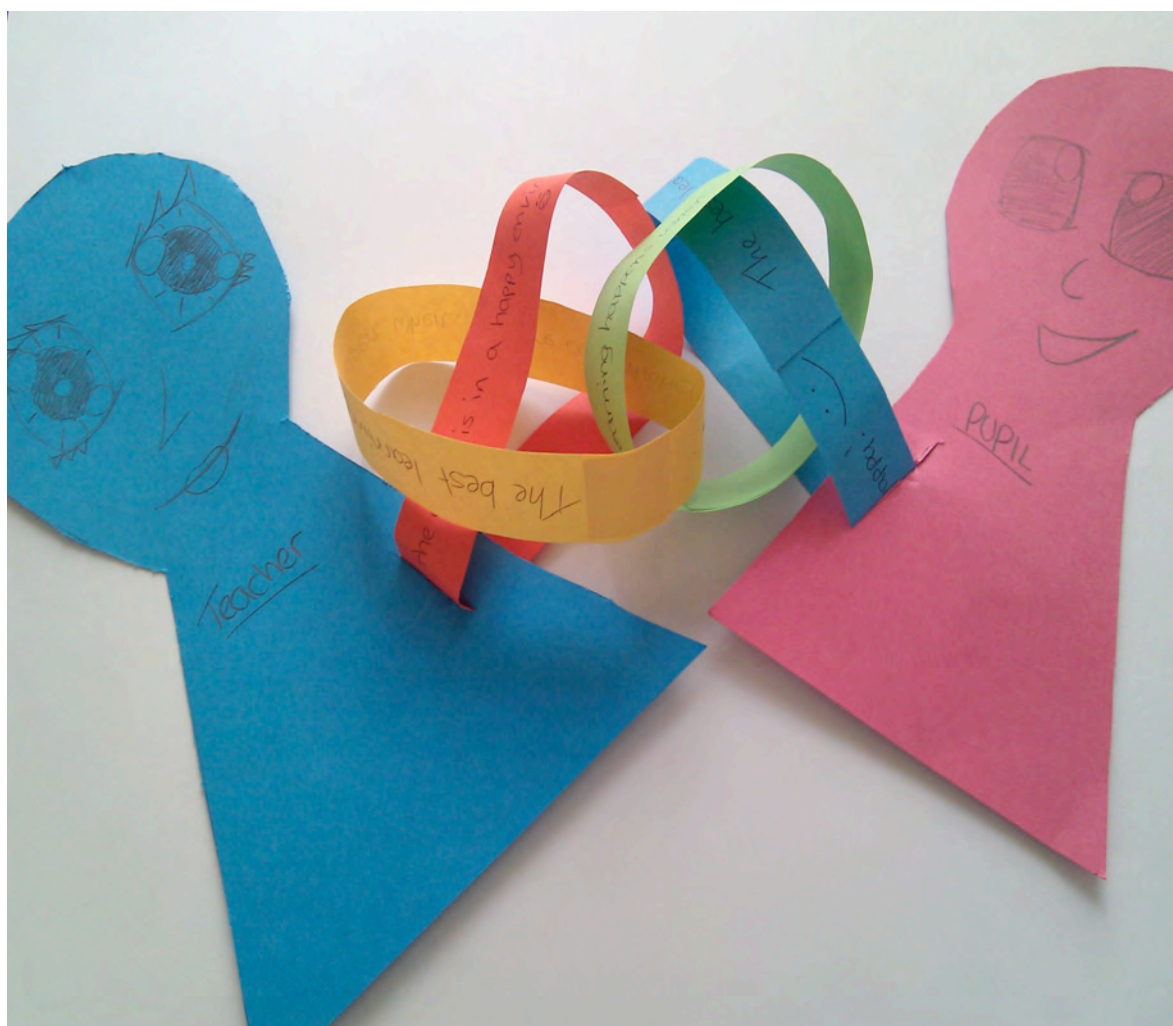


A TEACHING WORKFORCE FOR SCOTLAND'S CHILDREN

A SUBMISSION FROM THE CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT:
BRINGING CHILDREN'S VOICES DIRECTLY TO THE REVIEW OF
TEACHERS' EMPLOYMENT



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ABOUT THIS SUBMISSION

The Children's Parliament shares a commitment to securing improved educational outcomes for children and young people. The agreement by the Scottish Government and COSLA to review all aspects of the teachers' agreement 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' (known as the McCrone Agreement) is an opportune time to hear children and young people's voices.

The current Review chaired by Professor Gerry McCormac addresses a number of issues and areas. We have not considered all areas of interest – for example those that might be considered as focusing on contractual arrangements or issues more detached from the immediate experience of children and young people – instead we have engaged learners in reflection on (from the Review's remit) “the need for a flexible, creative, learner-centred teaching profession that supports Curriculum for Excellence and excellent education for the future”. We have done this by exploring experiences of learning and teaching and by identifying the characteristics and skills which teachers need; supporting the Review process to identify the kinds of “talented people” that need to be attracted to teaching as a profession and who in turn can recognise and encourage excellence.

The Review is committed to inclusivity, openness and developing the evidence base to shape recommendations. As learners, children and young people have much to offer in the context of this Review and in wider considerations concerning delivery of the transformational change which Curriculum for Excellence has promised.

PARTICIPANTS

Using small group work, drama, role play and research with peers, participating children and young people have reported experiences, insights and aspirations which we will report on in subsequent sections. There is more about the approach in appendix 1. In terms of the children and young people's characteristics there was a gender balance, 71 children took part in workshops; a further 160 in the peer research element.

School year:	Total number of participants in the workshops: 71	Total number of participants in the peer research: 160
P5 – P7	32	48
S1 – S2	20	80
S3 – S4	19	32

We would like to thank all the children and young people who took part. Participants attend schools in 3 Local Authority areas: Angus, City of Edinburgh, and Fife. We have not named participating schools in this submission to ensure anonymity. Thanks also to our colleagues from across schools who supported children's participation in the consultation.

AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Locating the consultation in the context of Curriculum for Excellence meant starting with some discussion about awareness of CfE and in particular with the 4 capacities central to CfE, namely that all children and young people become a *successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen* and *effective contributor*.

Children in the Primary School workshops were more aware of the term 'Curriculum for Excellence' than those in Secondary School although this understanding was limited largely to being able to tell facilitators what the 4 capacities are. Primary School children reported that CfE posters are located around their school; they related CfE to awards and rewards for learning and for good behaviour. These quotes from participants capture views:

"Curriculum for Excellence? It's the teacher's job to teach you it." Girl, P7

"Oh, boring! It's on all the walls at school and you get awards for it but I don't know what it means." Girl, P7

"It's a way teachers get you to behave in class better, but it just makes a fool of you because it tells you what you've not done." Boy, P7

"I'm not sure what responsible citizen would mean – that you are a good person?" Girl, P7

Some Secondary School young people said that they understood CfE was intended to change the ways young people learn in school but they were unsure how this would affect them. They talked about the importance currently placed on exams as the way to assess learning and with some knowledge of CfE they saw potential in placing more value on assessment across the courses they were taking.

"You hear teachers talking about it, there are posters, but I don't know anything about it." Boy, S3

"It's mentioned in school every day, I think it means subjects will be brought together and some classes have this "success criteria" and "target sheets" thing at the start of lessons, but I don't pay much attention – it's just something we are told to do – I don't think all the teachers are that keen on it so some of them drop it from the beginning of the class, I don't think they fully understand it." Girl, S4

"I think Curriculum for Excellence will be a good thing for the younger years in Secondary if it means changing the final exam structure and putting more weight on your work across the term, because if you have a bad day on the day of an exam, it can completely affect your marks" Girl, S4

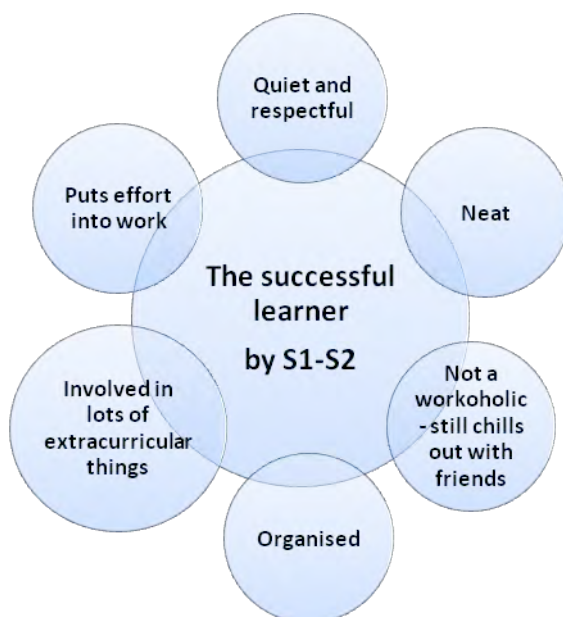
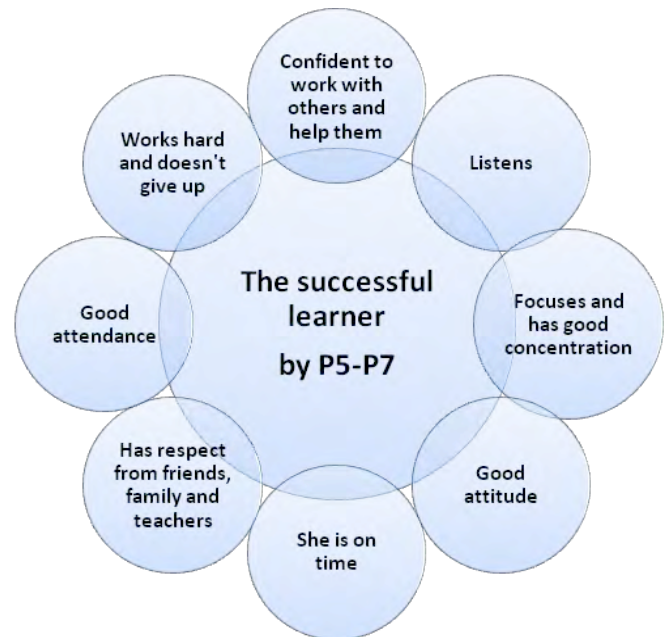
THE 4 CAPACITIES: WHAT DO THEY MEAN TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

In order to inform consideration of learning and teaching further (and so help describe what the flexible, creative, learner-centred teaching profession we aspire to might be like) children and young people were asked to consider what the 4 capacities mean to them; they were asked to identify the skills and characteristics that would be typical of a child or young person who was a *successful learner*, *confident individual*, *responsible citizen* and *effective contributor*. To permit open and child-led discussion participants were not shown CfE material which articulates what CfE itself states about the skills and characteristics associated with the capacities. The following pages present what the workshop participants understand each capacity to mean to children and young people.

The successful learner

Curriculum for Excellence proposes that the successful learner is characterised by: enthusiasm and motivation for learning; determination to reach high standards; openness to new thinking and ideas. The successful learner is able to: use literacy, communication and numeracy skills; use technology for learning; think creatively and independently; learn independently and as part of a group; make reasoned evaluations; link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations.

The children and young people said:



The confident individual

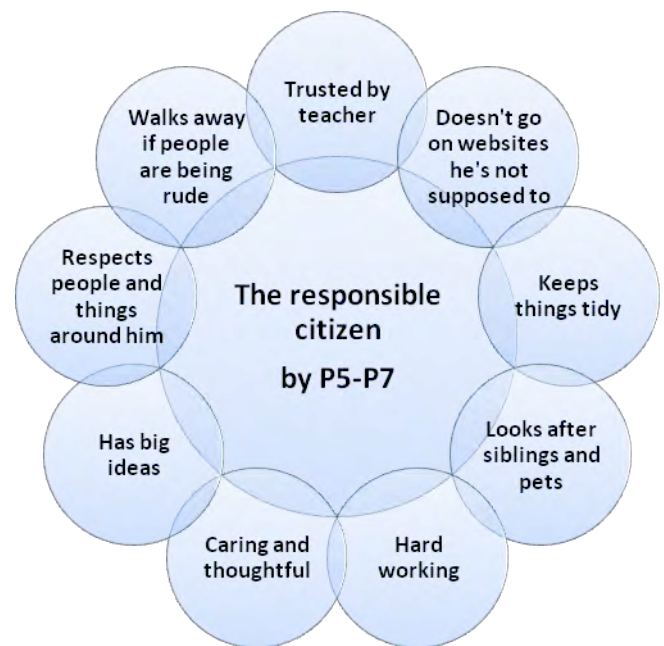
Curriculum for Excellence proposes that the confident individual is characterised by self-respect; a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being; secure values and beliefs; ambition. **The confident individual is able to:** relate to others and manage themselves; pursue an active and healthy lifestyle; be self-aware; develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world; live as independently as they can; assess risk and make informed decisions; achieve success in different areas of activity.

The children and young people said:



The responsible citizen

Curriculum for Excellence proposes that the responsible citizen is characterised by: respect for others; commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life. **The responsible citizen is able to:** develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it; understand different beliefs and cultures; make informed choices and decisions; evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues; develop informed, ethical views of complex issues.



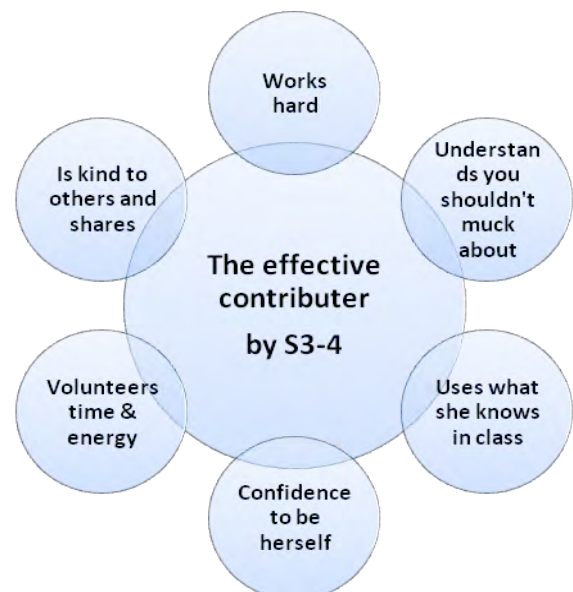
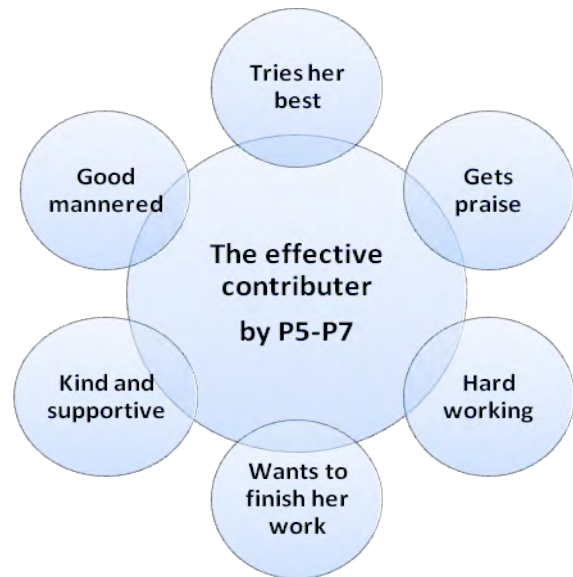
The children and young people said:



The effective contributor

Curriculum for Excellence proposes that the **effective contributor** is characterised by: an enterprising attitude; resilience; self-reliance. **The effective contributor is able to:** communicate in different ways and in different settings; work in partnership and in teams; take the initiative and lead; apply critical thinking in new contexts; create and develop; solve problems.

The children and young people said:



THE 4 CAPACITIES:

WHAT DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS TELL US ABOUT THE TEACHING WORKFORCE SCOTLAND NEEDS?

In their discussions the children and young people grasped the broad concept of the 4 capacities as presented by Curriculum for Excellence although for the most part they know little of what is meant by the 'headlines' they see and hear around school. Their discussions bring a fresh perspective to our understandings of how such notions can be fostered by learning and teaching in Scotland's schools.

When it comes to the idea of the **successful learner** children and young people saw particular value on listening, persistence, good organisation and effort. They see confidence as key. The successful learner is 'good' at things – whether that is reading, memorising or concentrating. There is a general issue here with CfE adjectives; for children and young people *successful*, *confident*, *responsible* or *effective* mean 'good'; this was reflected throughout discussion of CfE, with some participants stating explicitly that CfE is only about the 'successful' pupil and those who fall short fail.

Omissions from the children and young people's view of the successful learner – compared to those expressed within CfE – relate to the link between successful learning, creativity, independent learning and using learning in new situations. One question to consider is whether children and young people have not identified such characteristics or skills because they do not have opportunities for such learning, or whether this is just not yet explicit for them in their classroom experience; either way this points to an issue for learning and teaching in our schools.

Conversations about the idea of the **confident individual** saw children and young people focus on what they identified as examples of a person with evident confidence; the person who is good at speaking in front of others, who talks about themselves, who can ask for help, who isn't shy. Confidence is also interpreted as someone who can cope with criticism. Children and young people did not talk about the characteristics of the confident person within CfE that address what might be seen as a more reflective self-confidence, regarding matters of values and beliefs. Neither did children and young people relate this capacity to health and wellbeing as CfE does; nor did they talk about the confident individual in terms of assessing risk and making decisions. Again, this points to the need for Scotland's teaching workforce to go beyond the obvious interpretations of confidence – concerned with external demeanour – to see *individual confidence* necessitating work with every child, one by one, in the building of a state of self-awareness and intrinsic wellbeing.

When discussing the idea of the **responsible citizen** children and young people focused largely on responsibilities rather than ideas of citizenship; accordingly *being responsible* means respecting and looking after others, obeying rules, being trustworthy. With regard to citizenship and CfE ideas about developing ethical views

and participating in political, economic, social and cultural life children and young people did identify that the responsible citizen has their own ideas, knows what she wants to do and speaks out against bad things. It appears though that children and young people have had opportunities in the context of school to discuss *responsibilities* but not to have considered what *citizenship* means to them. This might mean that teachers need to focus on the broader meaning and experience of citizenship in the classroom; this leads us to pose the question: *what does it mean to teach in a participative, inclusive and democratic way?*

The **effective contributor** was understood by children and young people to be characterised by trying hard, doing your best, being determined and being kind to others. They also talked about volunteering and giving something back to others – ideas which would have also been relevant to discussion about citizenship. In these conversations children and young people's conversations more readily reflected the characteristics and skills already articulated within CfE; with a shared view that effective contributors help solve problems, get stuck in, take a leadership role. The discussions gave facilitators a sense that children and young people understood the relevance and meaning of these particular characteristics and skills to the learning environment more than others; suggesting that in many classrooms teachers already understand and practice the development of this capacity.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Across their workshop activities, and in the peer research element, children and young people identified a number of areas around the organisation and facilitation of learning which should influence our consideration of the role of the teaching profession in making learning flexible, creative and learning-centred. A message across the consultation was that learning happens best when:

"...everyone pays attention and concentrates." Girl, P7

"...you are relaxed and happy." Girl, S1

"...you are not annoyed and you can relax to be able to do your work." Boy, S1

For children and young people the importance of **the physical environment** was highlighted; the learning environment needs to be comfortable, light, spacious and airy. They reported that in open plan spaces it can be difficult to concentrate because of noise.

"It's difficult for us to get quiet at our school as we are in an open-plan class, we can hear the other two classes and it's annoying when you are trying to concentrate on a hard sum." Girl, P5

Learning outside and out with the classroom generally should happen more. Participants talked about using school grounds and going on visits to other places where they can explore and learn.

"It frees your mind." Boy, S3

"Learning at a museum is much better than school." Girl, S1

Children and young people identified the value of **project work that draws on different subjects** as a useful approach to learning.

"You could learn about history using art and drama; act out a piece of history. Make the props and costumes in art – that way you'd really be thinking about what life was like in those times – really understand it."
Boy, P6

Children and young people reported that too much learning takes place on your own, working from exercise sheets. They like to **work in groups** and they like it when teachers use **creative approaches**. Children and young people discussed teachers who use different approaches including playing cooperative games, undertaking research and doing experiments, using the smart board and accessing computers.

"It's good if you can chat; discuss the piece of work with people in your class – not just sitting copying stuff out of a book". Boy, S1

"In biology we made a cell out of string, cardboard and a balloon, it seemed silly at the time but I can remember all the parts of a cell now." Girl, S4

"We never get to work in groups, well in pairs sometimes. They don't trust us." Boy, S3

Participants talked about being **motivated to learn** by competitions and challenges with other schools.

"Our school was involved in the Young Engineers K'nex Challenge, we designed a robot and got to the semi-finals. It was a great opportunity, I learned loads." Boy, P7

"Our school won the 'Stock Market Challenge' – I was in that group so I get to wear the different tie now – the achievement tie, it's nice to get recognition" Boy, S3

Although **recognition** and **awards** were generally seen as a way of encouraging and motivating excellent performance not all children thought the formality of this was useful and some felt that current efforts could feel insincere or fall flat.

"We get points for our school house; the house with the most points at the end of the term gets rewards – end of term outings and that. I don't think it makes much difference though, nobody really tries to consciously get points for their house." Boy S3

"At our school you have award ceremonies – and the awards are not necessarily for the brainiest – but it's embarrassing – you have to go up in front of the whole school." Boy P7

A theme across workshop discussions was the interest in **freedom** and **individualisation** of learning. Freedom can literally mean being able to move around the learning space when you find it difficult to sit for a length of time. For others freedom meant the learner directing her learning, based on clear instructions and structure from the teacher.

"Just sitting writing in a dull, stuffy room makes you very sleepy." Girl, S1

"I learn best when I have freedom, for instance, the teacher gives me a set of instructions but I get to choose the order I do the work in." Girl, S1

"It helps me organise it in my head when we have structured topics for say French, I think 'oh, that was in the weather section or the shopping section'." Girl, S4

Older pupils talked about frustrations with **timetabling** and limitations on **choosing subjects at the end of S2**. These pupils also reflected positively on more broad-based learning opportunities in the Primary School.

"Like you can't do the three sciences together and you might need all three – say you wanted to be a doctor. And Art, PE, Drama, and Music are all in the one column and they should go together, if you want a career in performance; in Primary you did dance and drama as part of PE that makes sense." Girl, S3

"I think Curriculum for Excellence will be a good thing for the younger years in Secondary if it means changing the final exam structure and putting more weight on your work across the term, because if you have a bad day on the day of an exam, it can completely affect your marks" Girl, S4

Children in Primary School were very positive about the involvement of **adults other than their class teacher** in terms of their role in facilitating learning. They discussed learning assistants, specialist PE and Music teachers. In both Primary and Secondary settings participants valued the support they get from additional support staff in the classroom.

"It's really helpful having a native French or Spanish speaker – they tell you a lot about the culture and geography of the country too, it helps make the language real." Girl, S4

"What is good about the teaching assistants is getting the one to one support that the teacher doesn't have time to give. That really helps you get prepared for assessments." Girl, S4

Out of school activities were also mentioned as a place of learning and support for learning; these included breakfast clubs and after school activities. In discussion of these activities some participants highlighted that these activities were separate from school, although they might take place in the school, and that they wondered if teachers know they were taking place.

"A good breakfast sets you up for the day ahead." Boy, S3

"After-school activities can really help you learn." Girl, S3

Children and young people also talked about the importance of **personal support/guidance staff** within the school who could offer support on a range of school-based and personal issues.

“Knowing someone is always there for you to help you through difficult times could be the difference between you making good or bad choices.”
Girl, S1

The role of the **Headteacher** was also discussed. Children and young people thought the Headteacher could be too detached from their day to day classroom experience.

“They should take an interest in what is going on in the classes, find out who you are, call round the classes during the day. You shouldn’t just see them when you are in trouble.” Boy, S1

There was agreement across the workshops that **smaller classes** provide more opportunity to get the attention you want from the teacher or other adult supporting learning.

“You’re more likely to get the individual attention and help you might need.” Girl, S4

Across discussions children and young people raised the issue of **bullying** as a feature of the learning environment. Young people in S3/S4 reported that this was an issue that was largely confined to Primary School and S1/S2 but an issue nonetheless. Children reported that there are school based initiatives to tackle bullying and identified that you need to develop confidence and skills to handle ‘the bully’. There was a sense across discussion that where there is bullying the responsibility lies with children who need to cope with it as a part of school life.

“It was an issue in S1 and S2, it’s less of a problem in S3 – people think they have to be hard in S1 and S2 – bully before they get bullied – it’s for self-defence.” Boy, S3

“You need to be confident to just give a ‘cool’ answer like ‘by the way – you are wasting your breath’ not shout or cry or run to an adult.” Girl, P5

THE TEACHER

Discussions about teacher/learner interpersonal relationships were woven throughout the workshops and peer research elements. It cannot be overstated that for the learner it is the relationship with the adult who is charged with facilitating learning that is paramount. While earlier sections of this submission have addressed the teacher's role in creating the physical environment or in organising learning this section is more explicit in addressing the kind of person the teacher needs to be in the context of the transformational change anticipated by CfE.

Much of the conversation with children and young people was about **discipline**, **respect** and **listening**. While participants understood that the teacher/adult responsible for facilitating learning should have rules and boundaries and be able to manage behaviour (one participant said "they shouldn't allow us to muck about." Boy, S3) there was agreement that **mutually respectful relationships** did not involve being shouted at, feeling fearful or being ignored:

"You should be able to ask questions if you are stuck not be scared you are going to get 'Get on with it – you're in the top group' or 'You should have listened' roared at you." Boy, S3

"You learn better when you can have a laugh with a teacher, there's not many you can though. Some are like dictators, just strict for the sake of it" Boy S3

"Shouting doesn't help me learn." Girl, P7

"In first year I sat there terrified, you didn't want to say anything." Girl, S3

"A good teacher speaks to us quietly, listens to our ideas, and doesn't butt in when we are talking as we don't interrupt them. And they don't get hung up on the small stuff, like using a pencil when they want us to use a pen." Girl, S1

"They should make sure everyone has their say; give everyone a chance to speak. Some ask for your opinion but they don't really want it because they don't actually listen to it." Girl, S3

In their workshops children and young people created characters and imagined them in scenarios where learning was a positive experience. A typical scenario was one where learner and teacher had a relationship which felt **equal**, where learner and teacher were capable of **working together**. As an example, in one of the drama scenarios an S1 group worked on their character "Suzie", she was a successful learner, and on an educational visit out of school she eats lunch with her teachers;

"They are eating lunch together and chatting about what they have seen at the museum – that way Suzie takes in even more" (Girl, S1). Other groups talked about teachers who engage in a **dialogue** about their learning, for example:

"We have a great teacher for one subject – she varies the way we learn things and she asks us at the start of the lesson what would be the best way for her to give us the information." Girl, S4

Children and young people also spoke of the value of **trust** so that teachers start from a position of trusting learners to do their work, to be honest and to be given responsibilities. In their workshop one group of P6/7 pupils produced a drama where "Ryan" (a responsible citizen) was sent to get something from a storeroom where lots of valuable equipment was kept. However, it was also important that the teacher understands that sometimes you make mistakes.

"A good teacher will allow you to make mistakes but recognise you learn from it and come back and do well." Boy, P7

Reflecting earlier discussion of the value placed on the role of Guidance staff children and young people placed value on the teacher who is interested in and understands the learner's personal circumstances. They also wanted **equal value and worth to be given to all learners** including those who are less successful academically. Teachers are responsible for **supporting children** but they must not label them.

"They should understand what you are going through - if you are having problems at home or worried about exams." Girl, S4

"If teachers are prepared to stick by you, believe in you, it makes a huge difference, you can turn your whole life around." Boy, S4

"Some teachers label you as a trouble-maker and that's it, they're not interested." Boy, S3

"They should treat us equally because everyone's education is important – not just the brainy kids." Girl, S3

Across the workshops children and young people had a clear sense of **teachers who love to teach**, who love to be with children and young people; but they are also aware of those who are stressed or cynical.

"Some teachers give you the impression they are only doing what they get paid for – they don't go beyond the boundaries of their contract." Boy, S3

Older participants reported a loss of focus on them as **individual learners**, with increased pressure on teachers and subsequently on them regarding exam success.

They worried that when a teacher is focused on delivering a curriculum and not on the needs of the pupils the quality of their learning experience is undermined.

"It's wrong that the teachers' focus is about getting the majority through exams – that they just want passes – rather than focusing on me as an individual." Boy, S3

"Some teachers rush through lessons to stick to the timetable instead of making sure everyone understands what they're learning. It meant for one subject the whole class needed tutors to get them through the exam" Girl, S4

Children and young people highlighted the value in teachers/adults giving **praise** and **encouragement**. However, this should always be positive and should never become pressure to do something you simply do not want to do.

"It makes you want to be successful at school if the teacher is paying attention and compliments you on your good work." Girl, P7

"A good teacher is encouraging to you and you can ask them for feedback on how you are doing." Boy, P7

"A good teacher will see your talents, recognise when you are panicking and remind you that you're well capable." Boy, S3

"Some teachers think that confidence is forcing you to read something out." Boy, 3rd Year

Reflecting on what it means to be a *successful learner* or an *effective contributor* children and young people also discussed how a teacher can encourage success and participation but must do so in ways that recognise that, in the culture of some Scottish schools, being so can expose you to put downs from others.

"People will slag you for fun. If you're a nerd there a risk of bullying." Boy, S3

"It's important if you are talented that you get encouragement but also reassurance that is ok to do well and be good at stuff. Teachers need to understand that it is difficult to be different." Girl, S3

WHAT DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS TELL US ABOUT THE TEACHING WORKFORCE SCOTLAND NEEDS?

Children and young people recognise that learning needs to be more than the individual child, at a desk, completing a task/worksheet. Every space is potentially a space for learning and while they want the 'classroom' environment to be comfortable, light and airy they also want to be outdoors and in museums and galleries. They envisage learning 'in the round' and have described an interest in multi-disciplinary or cross curricular project based work that is creative in its approach. Learning can often be enhanced by 'doing' and by working together, co-operatively.

Children and young people also value feedback and recognition, whether that is through praise in the classroom or via external competitions or award schemes; these however need to feel 'real' and not feel patronising or easy. Learning needs to be organised around the needs of children and young people as individuals; this is not to underestimate the complexity of managing a class of 20 or 30 or more learners, but points to the need to know each child and understand, within whatever limitations there might be to resources, how to build intrinsic motivation to learn.

These insights from our participants seem particularly challenging in the Secondary School sector where young people have identified the sense of learning being restricted by timetables, limited choices and exams.

Children and young people also recognise and value the role which adults other than class or subject teachers play and they see out of school hours activities, which may often take place in the school, as part of their learning experience; although they recognise class teachers might not see them as such. Participants have also told us that they value the role of Guidance/Personal Support staff and want to know their Headteacher better.

No matter how the learning environment is organised and learning is facilitated if the learner's personal safety, self confidence and readiness for learning is impacted upon by bullying the best of intentions to facilitate flexible, creative, learner-centred experience is undermined; this insidious problem must be understood and addressed by the teaching profession.

Finally, relationships are at the heart of learning and teaching. For this reason the teacher needs to love to teach and want to be with children and young people. In their groups and research, learners have described relationships with teachers/adults which are nurturing, respectful and equal; children and young people have a strong sense of what we might describe as the intuitive idea of human dignity. When they feel this is present, learning is enhanced. On the contrary, learning stops where there is shouting, fear and isolation in the classroom. The successful, confident, responsible and effective *teacher* enters into a dialogue with the learner; they value all children and young people regardless of their academic ability and they

understand that children have a life outside school, a life which can sometimes be difficult and de-motivate the learner. Ultimately, children and young people want their teachers to care, to be positive, encouraging and to believe in them.

APPENDIX 1: Consultation format

Using small group work, drama and role play and consultation with peers children and young people participated in this staged process:

Part 1: A full day workshop

Participants engaged in activities which explored these key areas:

a) Curriculum for Excellence: thinking about the four capacities

The purpose of the curriculum is summed up in the four capacities – so that learning should enable each child or young person to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor. We asked participants to consider:

- What do the 4 capacities mean to us?
- What characteristics would a person have and what would they be able to do (now and in adulthood)?

Working in groups the participants created characters and discussed skills and characteristics associated with the capacities. Examples follow in Appendix 2.

b) Reflecting on our learning experiences and the adults involved

Having thought about what each of the capacities means to us participants then considered the following questions:

- What kinds of learning experiences equip children and young people to be a successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen and effective contributor?
- What do teachers do that helps deliver this kind of learning experience?
- What do other adults in the school/classroom do? This would include classroom assistants or in the Primary School specialist staff who work with a class when they are not with their class teacher.
- What kinds of relationships (between adults and children, between children) support the best kind of learning environment?
- What skills and personal qualities do teachers and other adults involved in children's learning in school need?

Part 2: The research task

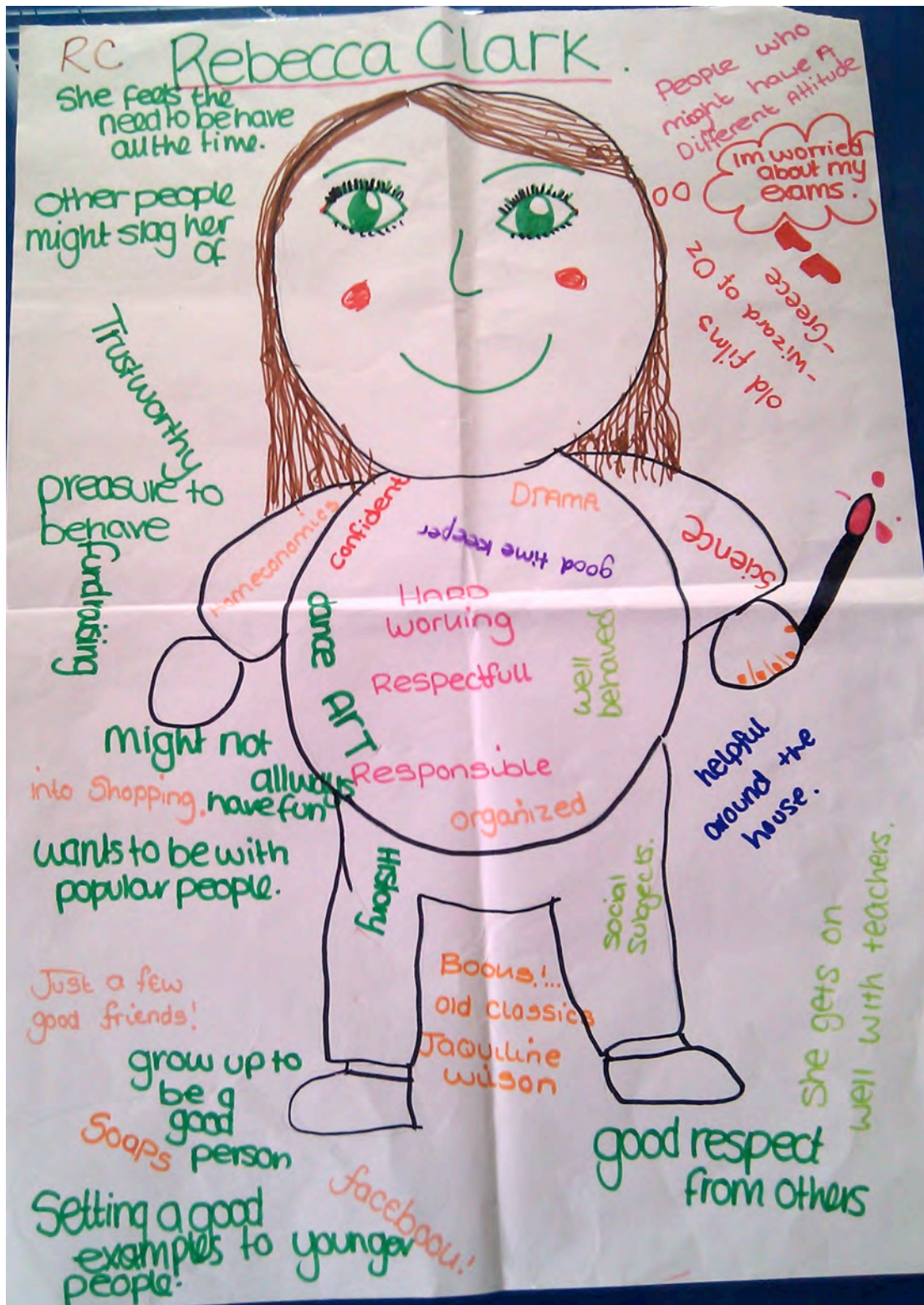
The initial workshop provided participants with the opportunity to hear about the research task which was now undertaken. Each participant consulted with peers on their views of: their best learning experiences; the nature of relationships that support learning; the skills and personal qualities which teachers (and other adults involved in children's learning) need. Each child from the workshops consulted with between 1 and 4 peers. Information from peers was recorded on a 'paper chain' prop – examples in Appendix 2.

Part 3: The follow-up workshop

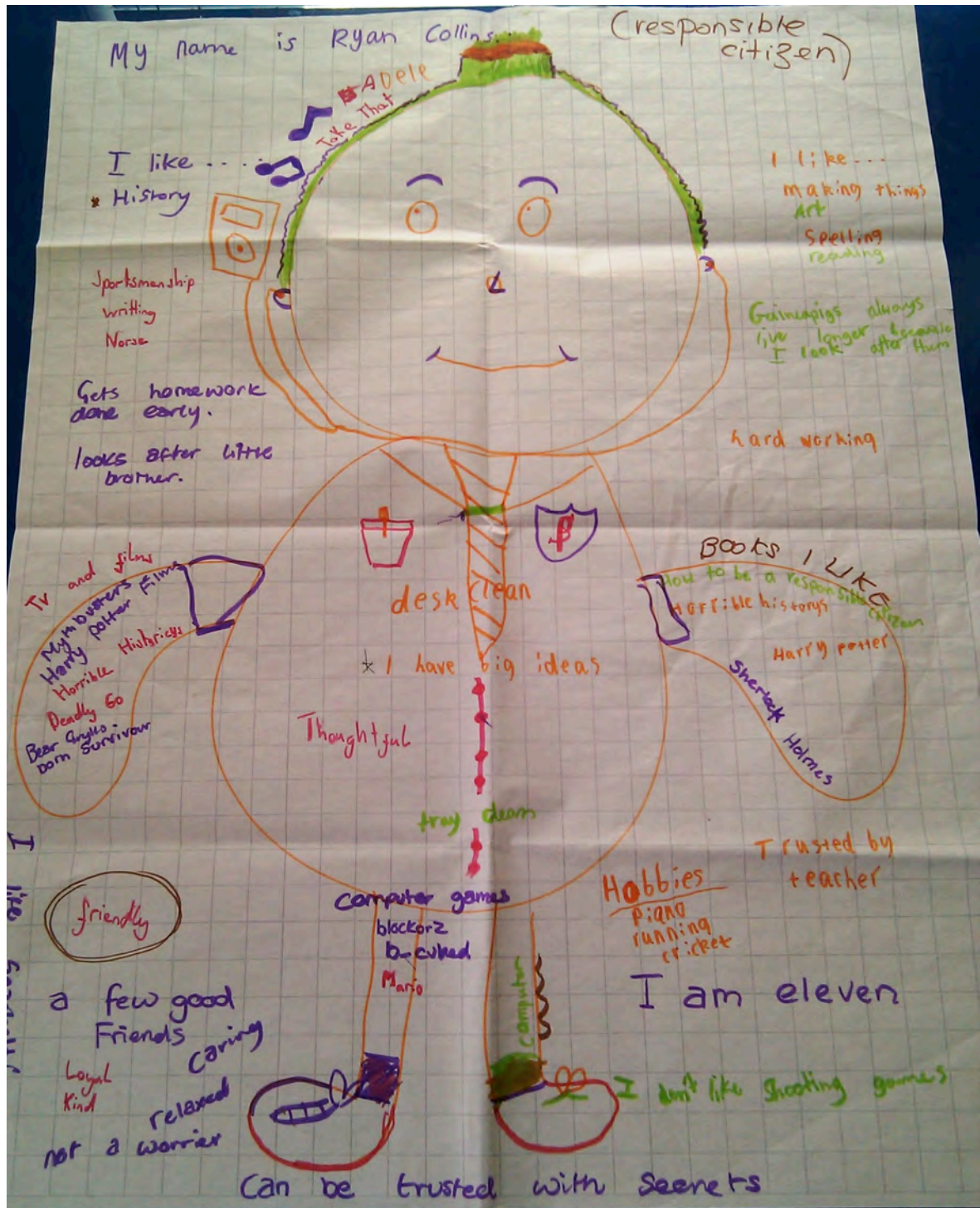
The core group returned to a follow up workshop to discuss and report on the research task they had undertaken with peers.

APPENDIX 2: Examples of the children and young people's work

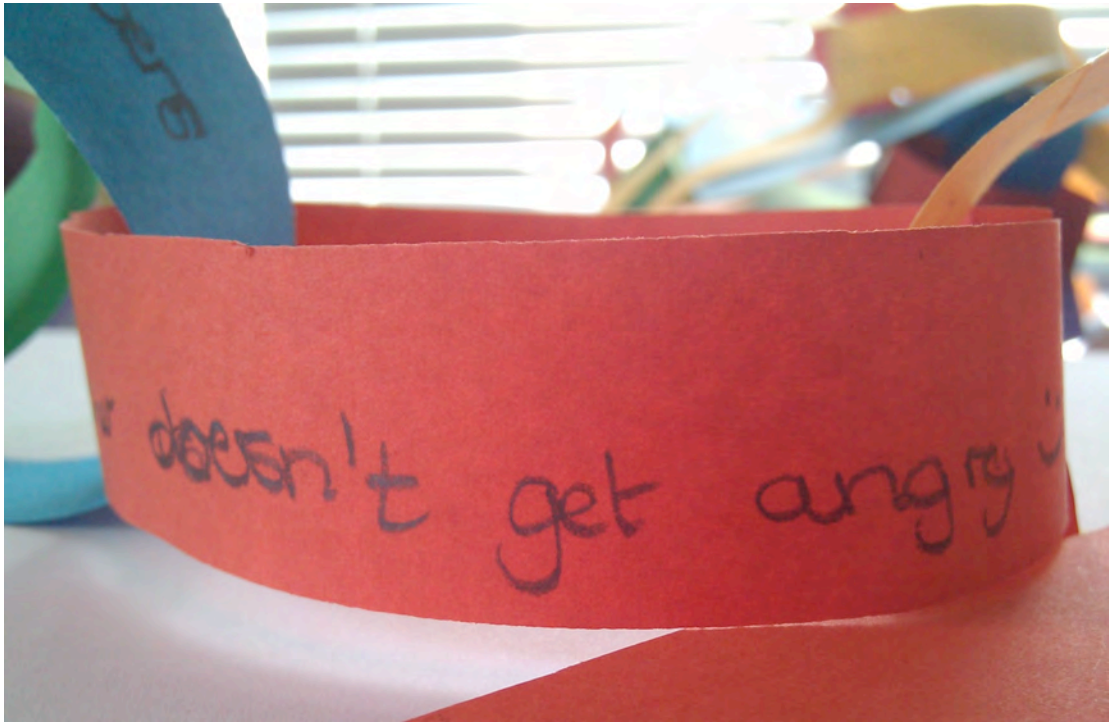
The children and young people created characters, their characters assumed names with the initials of their 'capacity'. This is Rebecca Clark: A responsible citizen



This is Ryan Collins: A responsible citizen



The peer research task: the 'paper chains' used to record views
Some examples:



APPENDIX 2: More about the Children's Parliament

The Children's Parliament works with children in the context of **family, school and community**. In our creative **projects, consultations and community programme** children learn about their human rights whilst acquiring **knowledge, skills, behaviours and values for citizenship**. Our work connects children with each other, with adults, with their communities, with policy and services. In terms of policy we want to be part of the transformational change which **Curriculum for Excellence** and **GIRFEC** offers.

The idea, and our name, came from children attending a European environmental education. Children spent a week together discussing, planning and building a model of their vision of an environmentally friendly city, within which the children placed a Children's Parliament. For the children the word parliament meant a place to talk and to listen. Meeting in the environment of a parliament signified the importance of what children had to say. The children's vision became our goal.

We work with the creative arts and have developed a thematic and holistic approach to our work. The Children's Parliament themes are:

- **Who we are**
- **Where we live**
- **Freedom**
- **Health and happiness**
- **Feeling safe and being cared for**
- **Having our say**

We develop open and honest relationships with children; valuing their worth and their views. We are commitment to creating a space within which children feel safe, challenged and trusted. The Children's Parliament helps children to learn and practice these values:

- **Honesty:** We are truthful and open to the views and experiences of others
- **Respect:** For ourselves, for the views of others and a belief that no-one should ever feel small or stupid
- **Diversity:** We are different and we are equal
- **Empathy:** We can understand others by putting ourselves in their shoes
- **Participation:** It is everyone's right to have their say and to take part
- **Social Justice:** We must do what we can to make the world a better place for ourselves and for others.
- **Action:** If something is wrong we should try to change it.

More information about our work at
www.childrensparliament.org.uk