

Foreword

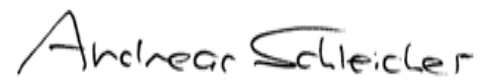
Scotland (United Kingdom) was among the first education systems to embrace the 21st century learning movement, when it reformed its curriculum policy in the early 2000s. Following a large-scale public debate, *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) was published in 2004 and would be developed over the subsequent years, before being phased into schools from 2010/2011 onwards. CfE aims for students to grow into successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Based on this common philosophy, primary and secondary schools develop their own curriculum to help students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to thrive in the 21st century.

Systems worldwide are coming together with help from international organisations such as the OECD, to design and implement future-oriented curricula that aspire to the highest international standards of quality in education, while also responding to national and local challenges. Students, educators and policy makers internationally face the challenge of determining both what one needs to learn today in order to thrive into tomorrow, and how to organise and operate school systems to enable this learning. As a pioneer, Scotland has been tackling these issues, testing solutions and exchanging with peers for over a decade. The current report provides one more opportunity for countries to learn from Scotland's inspiring experience.

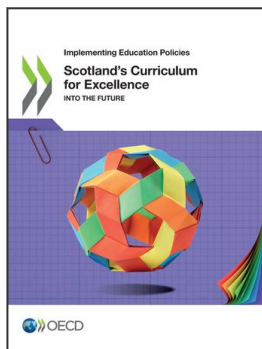
In 2020, Scotland invited the OECD to assess the implementation of CfE in primary and secondary schools to understand how school curricula have been designed and implemented in recent years. This was undertaken by the OECD Implementing Education Policies team, which conducts comparative analysis of education policy implementation and offers tailored support to help countries in the design and effective implementation of their education policies. This report builds on the analysis of documentation, academic literature and experiences from other OECD countries; and on group interviews, school visits and events conducted online with stakeholders from across Scotland.

The report assesses the progress made with CfE since 2015, and proposes recommendations aimed to support Scotland as it further enhances CfE to achieve its potential for learners. The OECD team finds that CfE continues to offer a vision and a philosophy of education widely supported and worth pursuing. Its design offers the flexibility needed for a few adjustments to further improve the learners' journey, if schools and teachers receive adequate support from the system. Engagement lies at the heart of CfE and offers the possibility, with better structure, for stakeholders to take shared responsibility for the policy while guaranteeing its effective leadership. The report also acknowledges the efforts made to enhance the coherence of the policy environment with CfE, and proposes ways to strengthen this coherence. Overall, this report suggests CfE still offers great potential for learners, which Scotland can fulfil by adopting a more structured and strategic approach to curriculum review and implementation. Just as Scotland's Curriculum

for Excellence was among the pioneers of 21st century learning, its most recent developments hold valuable lessons for other education systems and their own curriculum policies.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andreas Schleicher". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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Director for Education and Skills



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