
Key Actions for Raising Achievement

Guidance for Teachers and Leaders



EUROPEAN AGENCY
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

KEY ACTIONS FOR RAISING ACHIEVEMENT

Guidance for Teachers and Leaders



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Editors: Verity Donnelly and Anthoula Kefallinou

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Secretariat
Østre Stationsvej 33
DK-5000 Odense C Denmark
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office
Rue Montoyer, 21
BE-1000 Brussels Belgium
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80
brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full version
Agency:	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
ASD:	Autism spectrum disorder
ASN:	Additional support needs
EU:	European Union
IC:	Istituto Comprensivo (Comprehensive School)
ICT:	Information and communication technology
ITA:	Istituto Tecnico Agrario (Agricultural Technical School)
LC:	Learning community
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA:	Programme for International Student Assessment
RA:	Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education
SEN:	Special educational needs
SWIFT:	Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation
UK:	United Kingdom
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations Children’s Fund
USA:	United States of America



Note on the guidance

This guidance consists of a mix of resources produced by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) and third-party organisations. The Agency has made every effort to make its own resources as accessible as possible. However, the Agency cannot guarantee the accessibility of third-party resources.

This guidance contains numerous hyperlinks, which lead both to other sections of the document and to online materials. An internet connection will be needed to access the online materials.

Icons used

The Guidance uses four different icons to indicate the type of resource. They are as follows:

Icon	Meaning
	Quotation
	Country case study
	Research findings
	Video



INTRODUCTION

The Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education (RA) project was conducted by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) between 2014 and 2017. It worked closely with three learning communities (LCs):

- [Istituto Tecnico Agrario Sereni](#) (ITA Sereni upper-secondary school) and [Istituto Comprensivo Antonio Rosmini](#) (IC Rosmini primary and lower-secondary school), Rome, Italy
- Primary and Lower-Secondary [Schools in Łajski](#), Commune of Wieliszew, Poland
- [Calderglen Learning Community](#) (Calderglen High School and Sanderson High Special School), East Kilbride, UK (Scotland).

This co-operation focused the project firmly on the challenges that teachers and leaders face as they support young people's learning on a daily basis – working closely with parents/carers, other professionals and members of the wider community.

The project studied these schools, in three different country contexts, to 'test' ideas and share practice within and among them. It also established an international learning community that – through school/LC visits and the use of an online discussion forum – facilitated discussions with school leaders and researchers from 29 participating countries.¹

In the early stages of the project, the Agency team carried out a review of recent research to ensure that LC developments were evidence-informed. Throughout the project, researchers and leaders shared research and practice examples on the forum in response to questions from LCs and participants.

This guidance complements other RA project outputs, which include:

- The international [literature review](#): This provides a summary of recent research, including contributions from 22 project countries. It highlights strategies that can support school improvement and raise achievement through collaborative approaches.
- *Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education: [Lessons from European Policy and Practice](#)*: This report outlines policy and practice around raising achievement in participating Agency member countries, with reference to project findings and research. It makes some policy recommendations to address key challenges.

¹ The Agency member countries involved in the RA project were: [Austria](#), Belgium ([Flemish](#) and [French](#) communities), [Croatia](#), [Cyprus](#), [Czech Republic](#), [Denmark](#), [Estonia](#), [Finland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Greece](#), [Hungary](#), [Iceland](#), [Ireland](#), [Italy](#), [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Malta](#), [Netherlands](#), [Norway](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Slovakia](#), [Slovenia](#), [Spain](#), [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#) and UK ([England](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)).



-
- *Raising the Achievement of All Learners: [A Resource to Support Self-Review](#)*: These materials were developed and trialled with the LCs during the project. They are designed to be used for school self-evaluation and to consider the support needed from the national policy context. [Section 6](#) of this document provides further information about these materials.

The RA project has tried to move debates on from a focus on inclusive education per se, to the moral imperative to address inequity and raise the achievement of all learners.

The project recognises that different approaches are needed to suit different national and local contexts – and that there are no simple solutions for the many complex issues discussed during the project. However, this guidance aims to synthesise the rich learning that took place in a way that helps to address the research-practice ‘gap’.



OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDANCE

What is the aim of the guidance?

This guidance shares practice from the RA project. In doing so, it aims to support schools/LCs to focus on equity and inclusion in order to provide a quality education and raise the achievement of all learners. It is organised according to key questions relevant to the day-to-day practice of school leaders and teachers in order to provide concrete guidance. It also has the potential to influence the thinking of decision-makers at all levels. Decision-makers should consider effective ways to support the implementation of such practice in their local/national policy context.

What does this guidance include?

This guidance proposes specific actions that are required individually and collectively to raise learner achievement, together with corresponding key messages.

RA actions	Key messages
1. Create a raising achievement culture	A culture of trust and openness enables all learners to succeed
2. Lift limits on learning	Raising achievement involves extending learning opportunities for all stakeholders
3. Develop a system of mutual support	Everyone needs support – and can provide support to others
4. Nurture all learners	Raising achievement practice is learner-centred
5. Share leadership	Raising achievement is everyone's responsibility
6. Focus on what matters	Raising achievement requires on-going monitoring and reflection on priorities
7. Achieve more together	A collaborative learning community is the key to raising achievement

Each section of this guidance relates to an action/key message and justifies this approach to raising achievement, with reference to research. These key actions and related messages link closely to the areas of the RA project [self-review materials](#), which were identified as playing an important role in both inclusive practice and raising achievement:

- **Pedagogy for all learners**



- **Support for learning**
- **Leadership roles and approaches**
- **Learner well-being and participation**
- **Curriculum development**
- **Partnerships and collaborative working**
- **Support systems.**

Throughout the guidance, practice examples have been selected from project LCs and participating countries to illustrate what each action looks like in a school/LC context. Through these practical examples, the guidance aims to show that it is possible to change practice and thus inspire other leaders and teachers to take action.

The questions used in sub-section headings can also serve to support self-review (see below).

The [Additional Resources](#) section at the end of the document includes further links.

How should this guidance be used?

This guidance recognises that there are no ‘quick fixes’ to address the challenges of raising the achievement of all learners. However, by sharing key research and practice examples, this guidance encourages leaders, teachers and other school-based professionals to read, reflect and collectively consider the potential of the project learning for their own situation.

The guidance and supporting resources can serve as a stimulus for dialogue and development that will reduce barriers to participation and increase schools’ capability to raise the achievement of all learners.

The guidance includes a ‘[Summary of Content to Guide Reflection](#)’ that sets out key questions and points for each RA action. There are also links to the relevant sections of the project [self-review materials](#).

Users can work through the whole document systematically. Alternatively, individual sections could be used to examine specific key actions, supplemented by further questions from the open-source self-review, depending on users’ interests and needs.

By reflecting on the key messages, it is hoped that education stakeholders will engage in a sustainable change process to increase equity and raise the achievement of all learners.



1. CREATE A RAISING ACHIEVEMENT CULTURE

A culture of trust and openness enables all learners to succeed. Creating such a culture will underpin all other suggested actions. To create an RA culture, schools should work to increase equity, trying innovative approaches to overcome the barriers experienced by some learners.

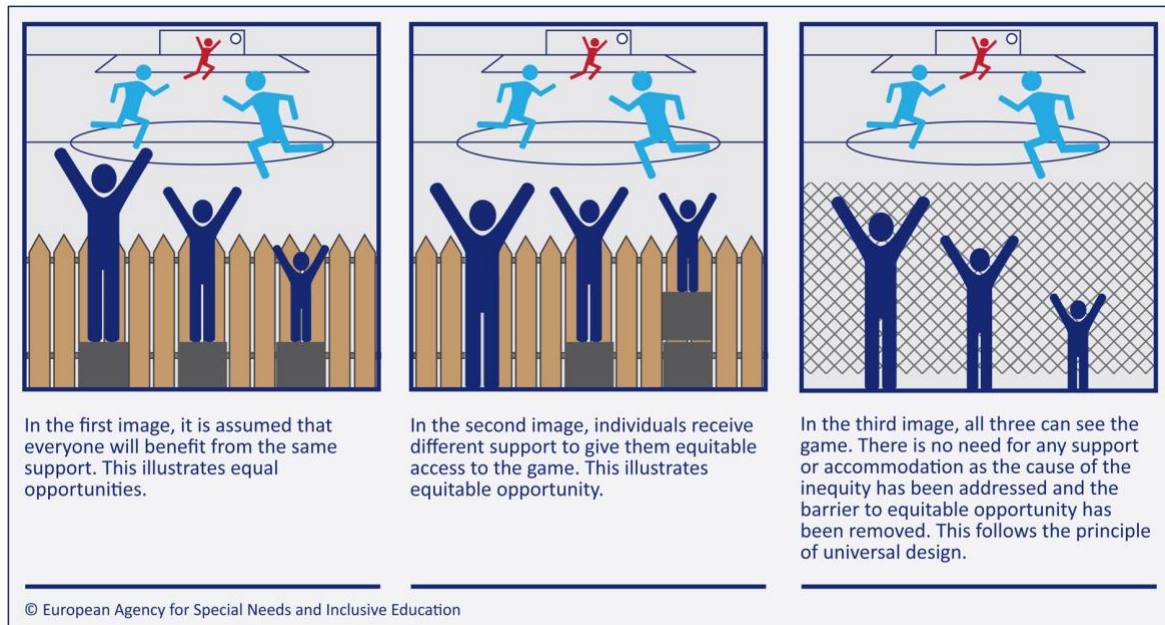


Figure 1. Equality, equity and universal design

The images in Figure 1 show the difference between equality and equity. The third image refers to the principle of universal design – a process of creating opportunities and environments that are accessible to all.

It should be kept in mind that such images are simplified and do not, for example, take account of the causes of inequity. They do not imply that the cause of inequity is within the learners involved, but that due to the context around them, there may be an ‘opportunity gap’.

To begin to address this gap, schools should listen to their learners and support high aspirations for all.

The RA work has shown that this can be achieved by **creating an inclusive ethos** and **engaging with research**. These areas are explored below.



“”

It is possible to change a school with the same politicians, school management and teaching staff. It is possible to connect inclusion with good achievement. It is possible to change a school with the resources available. It is possible to change the approach towards learners, parents, ourselves.

Head of Education and Social Services of Essunga Municipality, Sweden (European Agency, 2013a, p. 25)

1.1. How do we create an inclusive ethos?

An inclusive school ethos overcomes prejudice and discrimination and ensures that learners' rights are 'made real'. Teachers and leaders should take responsibility for and make a commitment to act for all learners – believing that everyone can learn and achieve. School staff should work to ensure that all learners are safe, well cared for and enjoy positive and supportive relationships.

The following example from Luxembourg illustrates such an approach in a school where all learners are accepted and valued:



Welcoming all learners in Eis Schoul, Luxembourg

Eis Schoul is an innovative school in Luxembourg which welcomes all learners aged 3–12. Among its pupils, at least 10% are considered to have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

The school is organised based on inclusive principles. All pupils participate fully in every aspect of school life. A multi-professional team, composed of teachers, graduate educators, a psychologist and a pedagogue, sets the psycho-pedagogical framework for all learners in the school.

The school constantly reflects on the objectives in the school development plan, which are adapted every year. It uses innovative evaluation methods that take account of both learners' individual learning processes and the social and interactive dimension of learning.

The RA project work suggests the following steps which can contribute to an inclusive school ethos.

1.1.1. Establish inclusive school principles

The first step in creating an inclusive ethos is to establish concrete principles which, when shared, will inspire all staff to accept responsibility for everybody.



The Polish LC summarises this approach in the example below:



Łajski LC's inclusive vision

We work together to create:

- Strong feelings of **belonging** to the school learning community
- Acceptance of the **idea of inclusive education** – a system of attitudes and values
- **Lifelong learning** – teachers'/assistants'/specialists' constant development
- Teams where '**everyone can substitute each other**'
- A place where every employee **is needed** and **feels needed**
- Daily co-operation by **sharing knowledge** and **experience**
- **Learner-centred practice** – each individual learner is important and is assessed flexibly to support their achievement

For more information, refer to the [presentation on Visionary Leadership](#) from the Polish LC.

The Italian LC provides a further example of such principles that were developed in school and used to guide the school's practice:



Principles to improve 'inclusive attitudes'

At IC Rosmini, the leadership team organises, manages, monitors and promotes a new pedagogical vision. It sets out the following principles to lead learning and improve the school's 'inclusive attitude':

Think globally – 'see' the inter-related systems, structures and processes that impact on your local situation.

Think locally – enlist the support of the local community and attend to the needs and concerns of all stakeholders, particularly pupils and parents.

Create networks – secure links with all agencies and professionals in the local area, with a clear agreement about roles, e.g. social and health services.

Act flexibly – encourage teachers to use a variety of learner-centred strategies and to personalise the curriculum and learning programmes, particularly for disadvantaged learners.

Give multiple choices at multiple levels with multiple supports.



1.1.2. Enable access and raise expectations

In promoting an RA culture, teachers are required to take account of all learners' identity and background. They must plan accessible and culturally-responsive opportunities, using appropriate resources. Inclusive teachers avoid choices that disadvantage some learners. They work for greater equity and maintain high expectations for all (refer to the section entitled '[Understand inclusive pedagogy in practice](#)').

1.1.3. Focus on well-being

In an RA culture, everyone in the LC feels valued. Leaders focus on the well-being and participation of all staff, as well as learners and their families. Learners who feel that they are part of the school community are more likely to perform better academically and be more motivated in school. This, in turn, can help to reduce feelings of isolation or rejection. The same principle applies to teachers and other stakeholders, who experience a sense of belonging.



Research suggests...

The more learners have a sense of belonging in their school, the less likely they are to engage in risky and anti-social behaviour ([OECD, 2017](#)).

Learner well-being refers to the 'psychological, cognitive, social and physical functioning and capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life' (ibid., p. 35). Well-being has been shown to increase learner motivation; increased motivation is a necessary condition for school success.

In an RA culture, school staff aim to reduce conflict and bullying incidents. Given the prevalence of all forms of bullying (OECD, 2017), specific programmes may also be needed to prevent and tackle such incidents in schools. Such a programme is implemented in Finland and is described below.



An anti-bullying programme in Finland

KiVa, an innovative school-based anti-bullying programme, has been developed using research on bullying at the University of Turku in Finland.

KiVa includes **universal actions**, focused on preventing bullying, and **indicated actions**, used to deal with bullying incidents. Each case is handled through individual and group discussions between the school KiVa team and the learners involved. Actions include providing peer support for victims.

This evidence-based programme's effectiveness in reducing bullying has been shown in large trials in several countries. In addition, positive effects on the popularity of school, academic motivation and achievement have been reported.

More information is available on the [KiVa website](#).

1.1.4. Build trusting relationships

Leaders should consult and empower stakeholders and build trusting relationships. This requires openness and a move away from a culture that seeks to blame others for mistakes or poor performance.

Teachers should take time to build strong, nurturing relationships both with and among learners. In particular, they should recognise that peers are an important factor in learning.



Research suggests...

Teachers need to take account of the '... power of peer relationships and status to determine what students do and how they evaluate their own and other students' involvement in classroom activities' (Nuthall, 2007, p. 104).

Learners report that the quality of relationships they develop with adults in their schools is what most helps them prosper (Taylor and Parsons, 2011).

The more educators give learners control, challenges and opportunities for collaboration, the more their motivation, engagement and achievement are likely to rise (Toshalis and Nakkula, 2012).

As learners progress through middle and secondary schools, their meaningful participation in school can become a more complex task. Home-school relationships tend to become harder to maintain. The work of the project LCs has shown that supporting learners in and out of school can contribute to learner personal development and achievement. For example, providing counselling and mentoring services can support learners' preparation for life after school.



An example of such support can be found in the work of the Polish LC, which is described below:



Mentoring support in Łajski Primary and Lower-Secondary Schools, Poland

The relationships with the learners in Łajski do not end after the learners leave the school. The school builds strong, trustful relationships with its pupils by providing guidance for options and choices after school and by keeping in close contact with its graduates.

The school works intensively on facilitating the transition between different education levels: from lower-secondary to upper-secondary school and from secondary school to the Commune of Wieliszew. The aim is to guarantee and provide all learners with continuity of learning.

This is done by:

- providing workshops with a careers advisor in regular primary school classes;
- supporting learners in the last class of *gimnazjum* (lower-secondary school);
- organising visits to all secondary schools in Legionowo county and to educational fairs in Warsaw;
- monitoring the choice of secondary school, class or vocational school;
- supporting assistants of learners with SEN and specialists to stay in touch with graduates and contact new schools to ensure a smooth transition and adaptation to the new school environment.

1.2. How do we engage with research?

Schools and teachers need to be research-informed and able to distinguish weak arguments from quality research that will help them to base practice on what is most likely to work in their situation.

“”

Research can never tell teachers what to do—classrooms are far too complex for any prescription to be possible, and variations in context make what is an effective course of action in one situation disastrous in another. Nevertheless, research can highlight for teachers what kinds of avenues are worth exploring and which are likely to be dead ends.

([William, 2013](#), p. 19)



The following actions, identified from project participants' experiences, may help schools to plan ways to ensure that dialogue and reflection on learning and teaching are based on relevant and accessible information:

1.2.1. Try out research-informed approaches

In an RA culture, leaders should support teachers (and other stakeholders) to keep up to date with research evidence and try out new approaches with colleagues in school. Teachers should not be afraid of failure; they should see it as an important part of their professional learning. Teachers in the project LCs expressed the view that teachers should 'dare to innovate' and should 'not be afraid to diverge from traditional routes'.



Research suggests...

Teachers may use evidence in a variety of ways, for example:

- to guide or inform specific decisions;
- to change how they view a problem or possible solution to a problem;
- to validate a decision already made (Penuel and Johnson, 2016).

If schools do not use research and engage with new ideas from other internal and external sources, little will change. To bring all colleagues on board with new ideas, evidence can be helpful in ensuring that developments towards school improvement are not seen as just another 'trend'.

In the RA project, the LCs were actively involved in various activities that were supported by research knowledge and evidence. They experimented with different methods that have proven to be effective and shared their experiences with other project participants through the online project forum.

Details about the use of this forum are provided below.



RAFORA: the RA project's online discussion forum

To support the exchange of ideas between the project participants, a non-public online forum was established. It contained information about the project, the three LCs and the visits, including presentations, videos, pictures and documents. Later in the project, country literature was added to the forum, including about 200 documents (academic research, investigations by national ministries and agencies, as well as other relevant material focusing on the project themes). The project [literature review](#) was also added to the forum to complement the expanding dialogue.

Discussions on this platform were established on two levels:

- Within the LCs: Each LC was supported to run discussions in their national language. The aim was to motivate and involve stakeholders who may not be fluent in English, but whose involvement was crucial to project activities. The Italian LC used this forum intensely for exchange, discussion and documentation of teaching plans among staff.
- Between the LCs and among members of the international learning community: This section dealt with cross-national topics around the priorities identified by the LCs. All project participants and LCs could ask questions and contribute to discussions.

Overall, the forum had 184 subscribers, including teachers, school leaders, researchers, policy-makers, administrative staff and learners.

1.2.2. Take part in action research

Action research in schools enables practitioners to investigate their own practice and use evidence to inform teaching and learning. Teachers should be supported by leaders to challenge the status quo and develop a culture of evidence-informed practice, as part of a wider RA culture.



Research suggests...

When teachers are trained to be action researchers in practice, they are able to work in ways that support all learners effectively (OECD, 2012). There are two ways in which research may both inform and emerge from practice and contribute to school improvement:

1. **Expert knowledge as an input from 'outside'**, for instance in the form of a higher education researcher or some other 'expert' provider. This may be necessary when there is no critical mass of quality teachers and the possibility of stimulating transformational processes or new research knowledge internally is not available.
2. **Expert knowledge emerging from 'inside'**, in classrooms or departments or in a wider professional learning community: here, the expert knowledge is internal, building on a critical mass of quality teachers and transformational processes (Mincu, 2015, p. 254).



An example which highlights the importance of action research comes from Croatia:



A research-engaged school in Croatia

Fran Krsto Frankopan Primary School is a public school, which educates learners from ages 7 to 14 from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The school was involved in action research to promote learner-centred teaching.

Action research was conducted as part of several research projects at the Faculty of Teacher Education (University of Zagreb), namely 'New Educational Technologies and Lifelong Learning', 'Learning by Discovery' and 'Research in Teaching Nature and Society'. The research was carried out under the authority of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, with the consent of parents.

Action research activities included:

- creating an environment that supports learning;
- developing one-to-one interaction between learners and teachers;
- allowing the flexible structure of the educational process and emphasising learner independence in decision-making;
- implementing elements of reform pedagogy through action research (Montessori, Waldorf, Step-by-step, Freinet pedagogy).

The following outcomes were visible:

- Teachers' individual practice – the development of teachers' knowledge and skills, their use of practices that progress pupils' learning, their use of appropriate teaching strategies and their responsiveness to individual learning needs.
- Teachers' collaborative practice – teachers' professional learning and collaboration, their co-operation to extend pupils' learning opportunities, their collective use of reliable assessment practices, the ways that they value and engage in professional learning and collaboration and contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their example and expertise.

For more information, refer to the [presentation on Action Research](#) from Croatia.



The following example shows how both ITA Sereni and IC Rosmini from the Italian LC used the expert knowledge from their local universities:



Embedding research methodology in the Italian LC

During the RA project, both schools in the Italian LC benefited from involvement with local universities.

With the support of La Sapienza University, Rome, ITA Sereni had the opportunity to engage with research methodology to examine aspects of inclusive education.

They piloted the method of co-operative learning with three classes in the school and measured change using quantitative tests at the beginning and at the end of the trial period. The tests focused on different aspects of the learning process and considered cognitive and emotional factors, the family context, the influence of peers and the level of self-esteem.

As a result of this work, co-operative learning is now used more widely. Staff members have benefited from their involvement, developing knowledge of research methodology which can inform their future work and understanding of research evidence. (For more information, refer to the example about [Co-operative learning](#) from the Italian LC.)

Similarly, IC Rosmini worked with the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Salesiana University, Rome, on applying the 'Understanding by Design' structure to guide curriculum, assessment and instruction. This work encouraged staff to engage with research evidence to develop a new teaching and assessment framework. This work also led to a more relevant and engaging curriculum to support deep understanding in learners. (For more information, refer to the example about [Understanding by Design](#) from the Italian LC).



2. LIFT LIMITS ON LEARNING

Raising achievement involves extending the learning opportunities available to every member of the LC. Any barriers to learning experienced by learners should not be seen as problems within the learners, but as a stimulus to encourage problem-solving, working collaboratively and learning from research.

It is vital that teachers have support to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to teach all the learners in every class, rather than seeking to pass on responsibility to others.

In the RA project, two important strategies were found to improve learning and teaching:

- developing an **inclusive pedagogy** to enable all teachers to increase the learning capacity of all learners;
- developing more **authentic approaches to curriculum and assessment**.

2.1. How can we make our pedagogy more inclusive?

Schools should focus on high-quality teaching for all. Inclusive pedagogy moves away from the use of additional or separate approaches, which can highlight the differences that they aim to address. Instead, effective leaders and teachers should focus on what learners have in common. These include, for example, the need to address motivational and personal factors and the need for an appropriate curriculum and learning support.

The following ideas draw on research and project examples:

2.1.1. Understand inclusive pedagogy in practice

Learners bring different resources, experiences, interests and expectations to their learning. They learn in different ways and may require different inputs, different ways of processing information and different means of expressing themselves. The time and pace of learning will also vary. Crucially, such differences cannot be seen as indicators of 'ability'.



Research suggests...

Inclusive pedagogy:

- is an approach to teaching and learning that aims to overcome differences between learners by extending the options that are available to everybody, rather than differentiating activities only for some learners (Spratt and Florian, 2014);
- seeks to move away from practices that involve comparison, ranking or labelling and beliefs about fixed abilities (Swann et al., 2012).



Teachers and leaders need to gain a clear understanding of the principles, concepts and challenges related to inclusive pedagogy. The table in [Annex 1](#) describes these and highlights what these ideas look like in practice.

Teachers should also keep in mind that personalised learning is not the same as individualised learning. **Individualisation and differentiation are primarily teacher-led**, with the teacher providing instruction and accommodating the learning needs of individuals or a group of learners, respectively. **Personalisation is learner-led**, with learners participating in planning and being responsible for connecting learning with their own interests. For a summary, refer to [Stages of Personalized Learning Environments](#).



Personalised approaches in Lithuania

At Romuvos Progymnasium in Šiauliai, Lithuania, learners can have consultations, social and psychological help, vocational guidance and healthcare. Educational content is personalised according to learners' experience, motivation, interests, aims and learning styles. All learners in years 5–8 have a choice of optional subjects and modules and fill in their own progress and self-evaluation papers.

Specifically, they keep special personal folders, which consist of:

- learner progress self-evaluation paper, which is filled in by the class tutor and includes parents' comments;
- self-evaluation of progress in general competences (i.e. learning to learn, communication, personal initiative and creativity, social and cognitive schedule);
- self-evaluation of learners' reflection on general competences, including class tutor and parents' comments;
- career education plan;
- self-evaluation of social civic activity, including class tutor and parents' comments.



The example which follows shows how IC Rosmini (Italian LC) has developed its own teaching principles which reflect the principles of inclusive pedagogy:



A 'decatalogue' for teaching in IC Rosmini, Italy

Staff at IC Rosmini used the RA project forum to share their lessons plans and practice ideas. This helped all teachers to reflect on inclusive teaching that supported high achievement for all learners. These conversations resulted in the following 'decatalogue' for teaching all learners:

1. Reconsider the role of teachers and learners: all learners have a role to play – teachers as facilitators can make this happen.
2. Appreciate that the unpredictability of teaching and learning can be an opportunity.
3. Consider differences as values.
4. Teach across disciplines, based on common themes – this has the power to break down barriers.
5. Provide access to learning experiences by making use of expressive language (art, poetry, music and creativity embedded in the general curriculum).
6. Support teachers: allow time for planning, sharing experiences and co-teaching in non-judgemental ways.
7. Create flexibility in space: the setting is important for learning.
8. Ensure openness and flexibility: provide challenging tasks and support as needed for all learners as individuals.
9. Involve learners in self-evaluation and teacher evaluation – provide feedback through non-numerical marking and opportunities for dialogue.
10. Build trusting relationships – balance competition with collaboration – focus on competence.

School leaders and teachers stress the importance of allowing **time** for teachers to discuss and reflect together to improve practice and develop the school's response to diversity.

For more information, refer to the [presentation on Pedagogy by IC Rosmini](#) (Italian LC).



2.1.2. Focus on learning

Teachers need to consider the connection between teaching and learning and how they can check if learning has taken place.



Research suggests...

For teachers, 'I have taught it' can become a proxy for 'they have learned it', without checking on what (if anything) pupils have actually learned. The following behaviours are easily observed, but do not necessarily indicate that any learning has taken place.

Poor proxies for learning:

1. Learners are busy: lots of work is done, especially written work.
2. Learners are engaged, interested and motivated.
3. Learners are getting attention, such as feedback and explanations.
4. The classroom is ordered, calm and under control.
5. The curriculum has been 'covered' (i.e. presented to learners in some form).
6. (At least some) learners have given correct answers (whether or not they really understood them or could reproduce them independently).

(Coe, 2013, p. xii)

The RA project activities highlight the need for teachers to focus on increasing learning capacity, rather than on performance and/or 'standards' of achievement. First and foremost, teachers should believe that the learning capacity of all learners can be increased. To do this, they need to be aware of the internal and the external forces that affect learning capacity, shown in Figure 2 (adapted from Swann et al., 2012).

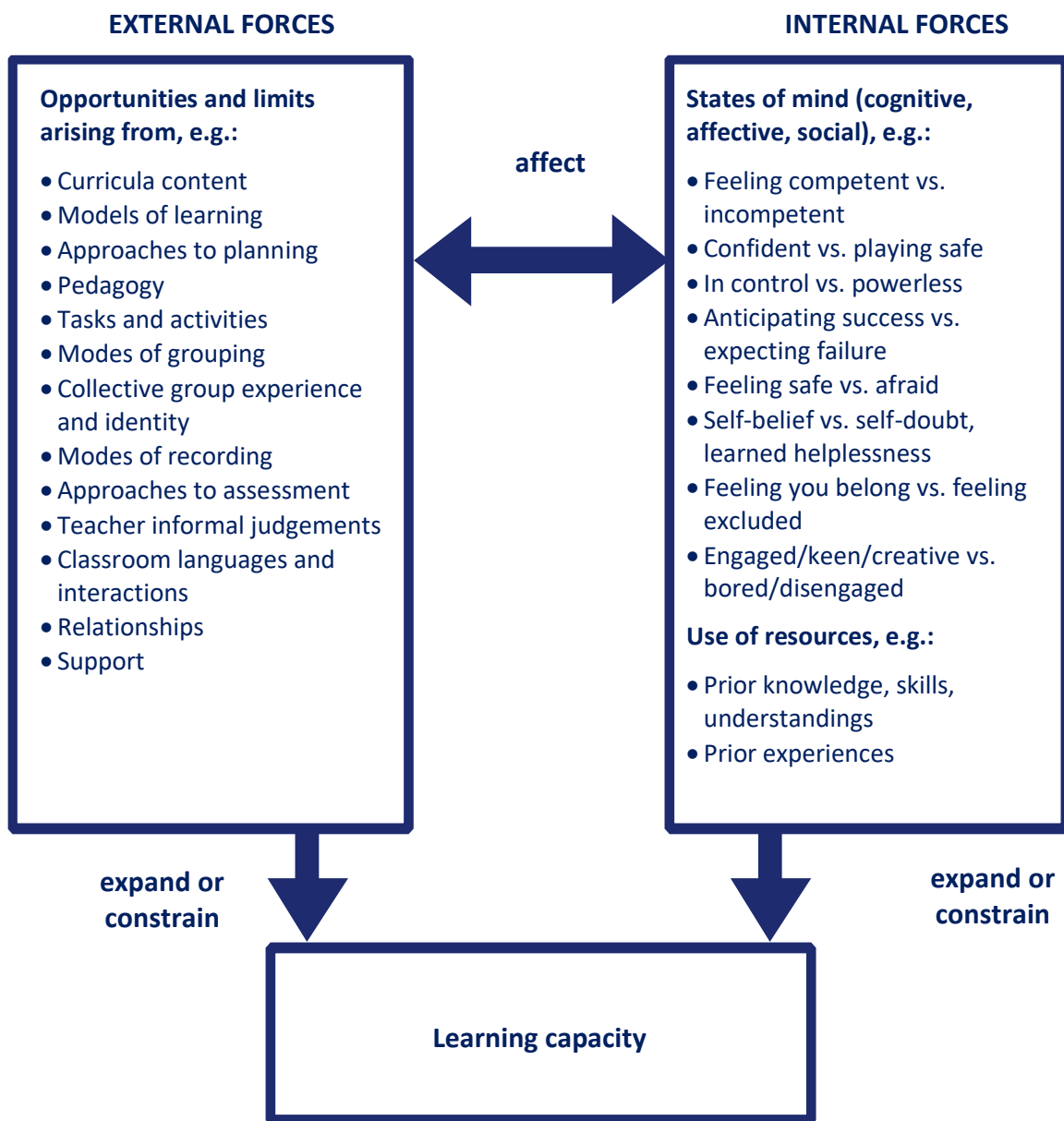


Figure 2. Forces affecting learning capacity



Research suggests...

The following **six steps to outstanding learning** are based on evidence from major studies of classroom and cognitive science:

Step 1: Prepare the learning context. Before teaching starts, it is important that teachers sort out the learning context by helping learners to develop a growth mindset and to understand the value of learning. They can also make way for learning by improving behaviour with clear rules.

Step 2: Assess prior knowledge. Here, teachers help learners to remember and connect with what they already know about a topic before starting to teach anything new.

Step 3: Present new material. This may be through a multi-sensory approach using:

- visual images and objects;
- visual words;
- verbal words;
- touch and action.

Teachers should give learners both the big picture and fine detail relating to their learning. They should present material in short chunks to help learners form long-term memories before providing any further new material.

Step 4: Set a challenging task. Here, teachers set goals and learning objectives (at an appropriate level of challenge) that help learners focus on what matters. Hypothesis testing and problem-solving can help learners to think and express their thoughts – ideally working with others. Note-making and summarising can also promote thinking.

Step 5: Provide feedback. Feedback is needed to check learning and ensure that the brain is making the right links. This therefore needs to take place during the learning process. Feedback can be verbal or written and may be given by the teacher, by peers or by the learners themselves using assessment criteria or mark schemes. For new learning to take place, the learner must act on the feedback.

Step 6: Plan for repetition. Repetition (three or four relevant encounters) is key to process information and form secure long-term memories. Approaches such as mastery learning, direct instruction and planned and focused homework can be useful here.

(Refer to the [Additional Resources](#) section for further information.)

Overall, using a variety of learning strategies across a range of activities may be helpful in enabling learners to consolidate knowledge and practice skills. In teaching diverse



learners, approaches such as Universal Design for Learning can help teachers to overcome barriers and personalise learning.

The example below describes the systematic strategy introduced by the Italian LC to improve learning:



Understanding by Design

At IC Rosmini (Italian LC), the staff, with support from a local university, used the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework by McTighe and Wiggins (2011). The key ideas behind the framework are:

- a focus on teaching and assessing for understanding and learning transfer;
- curriculum design that starts with the end in mind, emphasising engagement with learning and retention of skills, knowledge and understanding.

The model goes beyond content objectives to enable learners to process and use information to enhance understanding and transfer and develop deep understanding in response to essential questions.

Learners show increasing independence and make sense of and transfer their learning through authentic performance. The capacity to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathise and self-assess can indicate understanding.

Teachers become ‘coaches of understanding’, with a focus on learning. Rather than assuming that what was taught was learned, they check for successful meaning-making and transfer.

For more information, refer to the [presentation on Inclusive Teaching and Learning](#) from the Italian LC.

Please also refer to [Appendix A: UbD in a nutshell](#).



Co-operative learning at ITA Sereni

ITA Sereni aimed to increase co-operative learning through arts integration, with support from a local university. This active and experiential approach gives learners opportunities to collaborate and reflect to solve authentic problems. They may work together on shared tasks or perform tasks that contribute to a common outcome. Learners assess their own work and that of their peers and have a chance to revise and improve. The environment encourages risk-taking – with support – in a non-judgemental setting.



For more information, watch the [video 'Co-operative Learning'](#) from the Italian LC.

Evidence was collected to show that this approach has a positive impact on the acquisition of knowledge and on the development of social skills and co-operation. Taking account of feedback from learners, these approaches are now being used more widely.

More on ITA Sereni's approach to inclusive pedagogy is available in the '[Pedagogy \(Sereni\)](#)' and '[Teaching through art](#)' presentations.

Overall, teachers try out a range of pedagogic approaches that they can use flexibly in different situations. For further information evidence on different approaches, please refer to Section 5.2 '[Teaching strategies for diversity](#)' of the RA literature review. The [Additional Resources](#) section lists further resources.

2.2. How do we develop an authentic approach to curriculum and assessment?

“”

In 2017, during the Raising Achievement International Conference in Malta, the Maltese Minister for Education and Employment, Evarist Bartolo, pointed out:

I want young people to work. Yes, work, but as part of life. We need to prepare for life. And work is part of life, not the other way around.

(Bartolo, 2017)

What do we mean by 'authentic'? Here, it refers to the skills, knowledge, understanding and approaches to curriculum and assessment that will genuinely help learners to prepare for life and work. While the value of transversal skills and competences is clear, research



suggests that knowledge is important to build such skills. Knowledge also plays a key role in addressing inequality by enabling people to take a more active role in their own lives and in their local communities.



Research suggests...

Our ability to think, reason, problem-solve, create and collaborate are all entirely dependent on what we know. In order to think, we have to have something to both think with and about... (Didau and de Bruyckere, 2017, p. 179).

You'll find information on the internet while you'll need knowledge to know if the information is correct... (ibid., p. 180).



A Pupil Offer through the new curriculum in Wales

The new curriculum for Wales emphasises rich learning experiences as being integral to the curriculum and to deep learning. It comprises: expressive arts; health and well-being; humanities; languages, literacy and communication; mathematics and numeracy; science and technology; and cross-curriculum responsibilities – literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

At the heart of the new curriculum is the 'Pupil Offer'. This gives school leaders and teachers the flexibility needed to find successful ways to ignite interests, stimulate passions and increase confidence in learners in order to raise aspirations and ambitions. It also encourages schools to extend partnerships beyond the traditional boundaries to offer a wider range of engaging opportunities. A network of Pioneer Schools is working together with partner organisations to provide an enriching programme of activity for learners, helping them to access new experiences in the arts, science, sport, Welsh culture and heritage, further learning and work.

For more information, refer to: [A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life](#).

2.2.1. Develop a broader curriculum

As well as attention to the structure and type of knowledge and skills within the curriculum, teachers and leaders should keep in mind that strengthening emotional intelligence and improving social skills are all important in determining a learner's life prospects.



“”

... broader achievements are not additional to the raising of academic standards but are integral to them.

(Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse, 2017, p. 31)

Schools should ensure that the curriculum allows some **flexibility** to cater for the full range of learner diversity. They should organise courses that reflect the interests of and engage staff and learners alike. As far as possible, they should provide choice for learners so that programmes are seen as relevant to their future lives.



Increasing curriculum flexibility in Malta

The National Curriculum Framework in Malta aims to free schools and learners from centrally-imposed syllabi and give them the freedom to develop programmes that better address learners' needs. In addition, learning outcomes phrased as 'I can...' statements are designed to empower learners, moving to focus on what the learner has achieved rather than the teacher's intentions.

Teachers receive specific guidance on how to use these 'I can...' statements in their teaching. This is done through the 'Learning and Assessment Programme', which includes examples of how learning outcomes can be attained, as well as references to content which can help teachers locate particular learning experiences in their subject area.

The RA project noted the need to engage **all** learners through both explicit and 'hidden' aspects of the curriculum. Within the project, the LCs made efforts to develop a curriculum that both plans for and is organised around the participation of all learners.

Flexible curriculum options are a distinctive feature of Caldeglen school:



Increasing curriculum options at Calderglen

Leaders and teachers at Calderglen have developed a wide range of masterclasses and courses leading to national qualifications. These include some practical and vocational options to provide choice and meet a wide range of learner needs and interests. They include: painting and decorating, cosmetology, patisserie, electronics, songcraft (composition), Radio Calderglen, apps for good, design of computer games, fashion design, media, make-up, outdoor learning, art academy, photography and puppet theatre.

For more information, refer to the [presentation on Curriculum](#) from the Scottish LC.

These options can help to motivate learners, improve attendance, inform career choices, contribute to other subjects and allow them to gain qualifications needed to enter college. Masterclasses are often initiated by teachers who have a particular talent/interest, so this also provides motivation and engaging leadership opportunities for staff.



For more information, watch the video '[Meeting Learners' Needs through the Curriculum](#)'.

A range of vocational pathways in the senior curriculum supports the principle that learning is better in context – and that vocational courses provide a real and valued alternative to university. This practical approach engages learners who may otherwise be at risk of leaving school early and gives them a greater awareness of the realities of the future job market.

The Calderglen curriculum includes work placements and an introduction to work qualification for learners with additional support needs (ASN), as well as college link and taster programmes. The development of school/employer partnerships includes a Foundation Apprenticeship in Engineering in association with East Kilbride Group Training Association. This allows learners to attend a workplace/training provider for two days per week.



For more information, watch the video from the [East Kilbride Group Training Association](#).

More information about the many initiatives to develop the young workforce (an initiative in UK – Scotland) is available in the '[Developing Scotland's Young Workforce](#)' presentation and in the relevant Calderglen 'Developing Young Workforce' newsletters ([December issue](#) and [June issue](#)).



For ITA Sereni, work-related learning is a curriculum priority, as the following example shows:



Work-related learning at ITA Sereni

The Italian LC (ITA Sereni) promotes work-related learning which aims to help young people to develop professional skills and competences through direct, practical experiences both in school and in external companies. Learners must undertake 400 hours of work activity throughout the final three years of school to acquire work-related skills and knowledge. This is achieved in part through peer learning, which also develops social and interpersonal skills. The alternating pattern of school and work experience aims to integrate the necessary knowledge and practical experience.

Parents may also be involved in such activities. Work-related learning has helped to raise expectations, particularly of parents whose children have disabilities.



For more information, watch the video '[Work-related learning](#)' from the Italian LC.

Refer also to the [presentation on Collaboration](#) from the Italian LC.



The LC practical work also showed that using the **arts across the curriculum** can support learning and ensure that everyone can take part in a range of school activities – within the taught curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Examples of arts-based practice come from the Polish and the Italian LCs:



Supporting inclusive learning through the arts

In the Polish LC, every learner has the opportunity to learn to play a brass instrument and then to take part in the school band. As an alternative, the music teachers started Batucada, a drum group, accessible to all learners. Graduates participate in the orchestra meetings and teach younger learners to play the instruments.

For more information, refer to the presentation on [Pedagogy by the Polish LC](#).



Watch the videos of the Polish LC's [school orchestra](#) and [Batucada drums orchestra](#).

At IC Rosmini, music, dance, art and drama are used to enable expression and communication for every individual. This helps processing of information and transfer of cultural content. It also builds confidence and strengthens social and emotional development. Music and art activities focus on language. Learners learn that the body has its own language and every learner takes an active part through a 'jigsaw' of activities.



Watch the [IC Rosmini video](#), particularly [from 06:40](#) to 07:58.

2.2.2. Embed assessment for learning

To include all learners in the assessment process and provide a basis for more responsive teaching and personalisation of learning, formative assessment for learning should be embedded in day-to-day practice.

It is important to remember **why** we assess and **what** the information is used for. The primary purpose must be to support learning (on-going formative assessment).

The following example highlights such holistic practice:



Planning teaching and assessment at IC Rosmini

The staff of IC Rosmini in Rome considered the following questions:

- How are success criteria shared with learners?
- How are they involved in planning learning and do they understand what is needed for 'success'?

Following a study of relevant research, they outlined the following steps:

- Plan authentic performance: decide what knowledge, skills and attitudes and deep understanding you want the learner to achieve (in response to essential questions). Skills should be the same across subject content to achieve continuous practice of competence.
- Assess prior knowledge and experiences connected to the topic – vocabulary, interests, learner learning profile.
- Plan different learning experiences – including practical – keeping general and specific objectives in mind. Keep learners active and engaged in their own learning, working co-operatively in pairs/groups or alone.
- Use questioning, scaffolding, semantic mapping, summarising, small steps, paying attention to skills and attitudes as part of on-going formative assessment of different kinds of knowledge and thinking across disciplines.
- Use the same tasks for all – with scaffolding or other supports for those with difficulties.
- Assess recall of content and integration of knowledge, skills and deep understanding for transfer before looking at authentic performance.

Following the task/activity, all learners get a proforma, containing an analysis of the competences. Learners complete a self-evaluation grid to express their views and enable teachers to individualise learning.

Learners also get an exemplar task prepared by the teacher and compare their own performance with this. They reflect on strengths and weaknesses and ask, 'what do I have to do to achieve a better task?'

There is also a need to provide information to parents and to other schools (e.g. on transition) and for accreditation (for further/higher education and employers). This summative assessment usually gives an overview of learning over a period of time. Finally, information is needed at whole-school level for school improvement and for accountability. Here, information from summative assessment is usually collected on groups of learners and whole schools.

It is important for teachers to ensure a balance between on-going formative assessment and summative assessment (e.g. through tests and examinations). Care must be taken not to allocate more resources to the subjects and skills that are tested, reducing the time



given to formative feedback and the development of learners' vital personal competencies (Muskin, 2015).

“”

At its core, formative assessment stressed the need for assessment to be something that teachers and students respond to in order to reflect and adapt their practice but in all too many cases, the 'assessment' in assessment for learning became more about collecting data than improving learning outcomes. ... there is an extraordinary amount of energy expended by teachers on marking and often very little to show for it in the way of student benefit.

(William and Christodoulou, 2017, pp. 23–24)

Key strategies for assessment for learning include:

- involving learners in self- and peer assessment (monitored by the teacher);
- getting learners to talk about their learning – by asking questions planned as an integral part of the teaching process;
- giving feedback that requires learners to think and act – and then responding further to help learners to improve their approach to learning;
- explaining why feedback is being given.



Research suggests...

- 'Wise feedback' can reduce the risk of learners discounting the evaluative statement of teachers as being biased.
- The teacher structures written or verbal feedback to include these three elements:
 - Feedback description: The teacher describes the nature of the feedback being offered.
 - High standards: The teacher emphasises and explains the high standards used to evaluate the learner's work and generate the instructional feedback.
 - Assurance of learner ability: The teacher states explicitly that the learner has the skills necessary to successfully meet those standards (Yeager et al., 2013).

Refer to: ['Wise' Feedback](#).



For further information on feedback, refer to the section on [growth mindset](#).

For learners who experience barriers to learning, assessment plays a crucial role. Here, professionals from other disciplines may work together with school staff and families to ensure that barriers are overcome through clearly focused actions, used consistently by everyone involved.

The Netherlands example, below, presents an approach to assessment that is focused on improvement:



The 'assessment for improvement' model

In the Netherlands, the practice-based '**assessment for improvement**' model focuses on the 'plan-do-check-act' cycle. Assessment for Intervention or Improvement (AFI) contains guidelines for assessors, such as school and educational psychologists. This method also supports teachers, parents and learners when analysing and improving a problematic situation in a class. It involves:

- describing and analysing the situation around an individual learner, group of learners or a class;
- formulating and testing hypotheses about the learners, the group, the learning environment, the teacher's pedagogical-didactic strategy and parental support of learning;
- describing SMART (Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound) aims and effective interventions to achieve these aims;
- monitoring and evaluating the effects of the interventions and whether the aims are achieved;
- analysing the outcomes of the evaluation: what was the impact on the learner(s), the group, the learning environment, the teacher's pedagogical-didactic strategy and parental support of learning?
- planning a new cycle of teaching and learning.

The model enhances learner participation and helps professionals to respond to their learning needs, taking account of the classroom context. This can include the teacher's approach, relationships with peers and parental support. It also encourages positive communication between school leaders, teachers, parents and other professionals.

For more information, refer to the [presentation on Pedagogy and Assessment](#) from the Netherlands.

The International School Psychology Association (ISPA) website contains illustrations of the AFI model in practice:

[Assessment for Intervention: a practice-based model](#)

[AFI: what's new?](#)



3. DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF MUTUAL SUPPORT

Everyone, in every LC, needs support. Equally, everyone is also a source of support for others. Such a system of reciprocal support – where peers and colleagues help each other – is an important part of the RA culture.

This section includes examples from the project to show how the LCs supported learners, teachers and leaders as part of their efforts to raise achievement.

3.1. How do we support learners at risk of under-achievement?

3.1.1. Work in multi-professional teams

In any effort to raise achievement, well-targeted support for learners at risk is a key task. The project LCs found that support for learners is most effective when **all staff work together** – particularly when they share knowledge and skills among different stakeholder groups (for example, knowledge of individual learners, of SEN/disability and of subject content). The following examples show how all three LCs worked collaboratively to support learners with disabilities:



Multi-disciplinary work groups at ITA Sereni

To lead on the inclusion of learners with disabilities, ITA Sereni established multi-disciplinary work groups. The Working Groups for Inclusion, which are a statutory requirement in Italy, are educational teams. They comprise the head teacher, curriculum and support teachers, parents, psychologists and other professionals (e.g. from health and social services). The Working Group for Inclusion operates at a strategic level to promote inclusion throughout the school and at an operational level to provide practice support and to evaluate, monitor and develop the workforce's capacity. For each pupil with SEN or disabilities, the Operative Working Group on Disability draws up an individual education plan, which can be reviewed during the year whenever the group considers it necessary. Group members work together to set targets and verify the implementation and effectiveness of any interventions.

The [presentation from ITA Sereni](#) (Italian LC) contains more information about this approach.



Meeting learner needs at Calderglen

The Meeting Learners' Needs working group at Calderglen has a representative from every subject faculty in the school. This ensures that all staff in all faculties recognise their responsibility to meet the needs of all learners. The group, led by the school ASN Co-ordinator, meets approximately every six weeks. Group members share and discuss strategies for meeting the needs of pupils with ASN, such as dyslexia. The link person for each subject faculty also shares these strategies with subject colleagues to ensure that, over time, such approaches are embedded into practice in all subject teaching. This might include, for example, the use of visual strategies to make text and presentations more accessible. This clearly benefits learners with specific learning difficulties, but can also help many other learners.



The video '[Working Groups: Meeting Learners' Needs](#)' provides more information.



Learning support in Łajski

In the Polish LC, teachers and other specialists work together to develop an individual education plan for every learner with additional needs. The class teacher develops this plan, called the 'Individual Education and Pedagogical Therapy Programme', with the help and support of other teachers and specialists. It includes all information about the learner and their needs. For each learner, the team works together to make adjustments to subject classes (like Polish, Maths, Biology, etc.), organises input from other professionals (e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists) and involves learning support assistants where needed.

3.1.2. Make the best use of support staff

Learning support assistants are often provided to support learners with disabilities. Their role, qualifications and experience vary widely across countries and across schools within countries.



Research suggests...

[SWIFT \(2017\)](#) found that support staff (e.g. paraprofessionals, specialised staff) within general education classrooms can support all learners' development and help to build acceptance of diversity and difference.

However, other evidence suggests that learning support assistants generally have a low impact, while costs are high (for a summary of evidence, refer to [Higgins, Kokotsaki and Coe, 2012](#)).

The greatest benefits are seen when assistants are trained to deliver specific programmes/approaches. Some negative effects have been observed when assistants working with individual learners (often with learning difficulties and disabilities) become a barrier to inclusion and when the assistant's role becomes that of a substitute teacher.

The RA literature review provides more information (refer to [page 23](#)).



In Italy, qualified teachers work in a support role with subject teachers. The following example shows how school staff at ITA Sereni worked to use this resource more effectively:



Developing guidelines for support teachers at ITA Sereni

During the RA project, leaders and teachers at ITA Sereni recognised the importance of clear roles and responsibilities for support teachers to enable them to work effectively with subject colleagues. As part of the changes in leadership structure, the head teacher gradually ‘shared’ responsibility for support teachers with a group of experienced teachers. This ‘educational team for inclusion’ is composed of experienced teachers who can disseminate best practices, in both organisation and pedagogy.

In particular, with support from the school psychologist, this group developed training for new support teachers to share the common vision of inclusive practice with a focus on well-being and a positive climate.

In order to develop positive relationships between teaching and support staff – particularly in the context of high staff turnover – this group drafted guidelines for support teachers, drawing on a database of effective practices.

Importantly, these guidelines are designed especially for teachers without specific experience, to cover:

- references to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) as a conceptual framework;
- references to the regulatory framework on school inclusion in Italy;
- instructions on completing the documents for learners with disabilities: the Dynamic Functional Profile, the Individual Education Plan and the Personalised Didactic Plan. These must underline the learner’s strengths and potential in order to plan the best educational and didactic intervention for each individual;
- instructions on the management of the Operative Working Group;
- a list of best practices and a short bibliography.

3.2. How can we support teachers?

3.2.1. Provide on-going professional learning opportunities

Raising achievement is promoted when teachers have access to quality professional learning opportunities. It is clear that leaders should support staff professional development – while also taking an active role themselves.



“”

Most adults change their practices not simply from reading and observing others work, but from combining these passive activities with active collaboration and learning-by-doing.

(Jensen et al., 2016, p. 8)

For teacher learning to be effective, it must include activities connected to their classroom practice, while also taking account of school improvement priorities.



Research suggests...

The professional learning experiences of teachers which are most likely to improve learner outcomes include:

- **Collaborative enquiry and dialogue** – evidence-based learning activities with other stakeholders can provide opportunities to explore beliefs and assumptions. Pairs/groups should be encouraged to experiment with new approaches, give and receive structured feedback and consider evidence.
- **Coaching and mentoring** – coaching can support practitioners when trying out new things. Specialist coaches and mentors can offer and demonstrate new approaches in context.
- **Networks** – collaborations within and between schools can draw on internal and external expertise. They should be focused on learning outcomes for all learners.

(Cordingley and Bell, 2012)

The Agency developed a *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012) which sets out four core values and a set of related competences for inclusive teachers. These could form the basis of on-going professional learning activities. They have been used in training materials produced by the [Council of Europe](#) and [UNICEF](#).



Teachers' Values and Areas of Competence in the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*

Value: Valuing learner diversity: Learners' differences are seen as a resource and an asset to education.

Areas of competence: Conceptions of inclusive education, the teacher's view of learner differences.

Value: Supporting all learners: Teachers have high expectations for all learners' achievements.

Areas of competence: Promoting all learners' academic, social, practical and emotional learning; effective teaching approaches in heterogeneous classes.

Value: Working with others: Collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers.

Areas of competence: Working with parents and families; working with a range of other education professionals.

Value: Continuing personal professional development: Teaching is a learning activity and teachers must accept responsibility for their own lifelong learning.

Areas of competence: Teachers as reflective practitioners; initial teacher education as a foundation for on-going professional learning and development.

(Profile of Inclusive Teachers)

3.2.2. Engage in collaborative activities that focus on school priorities

Working with other teachers and professionals within and beyond school can extend knowledge and skills and equip teachers to develop their practice to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

The example below highlights the importance of collaborative professional learning programmes that focus on school priorities.



A School-Based Professional Learning Programme in Alambra, Cyprus

Alambra Primary School is a rural school in Cyprus with 93 pupils, which has been running a Professional Learning Programme, with the help of the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus.

After investigating pupils', parents' and teachers' needs in learning, the school set out its priorities. An action plan followed, which included:

- Setting goals for each class and for each learner
- Outlining in-service training for teachers within the school (group and personal training).

Training included:

- Classroom observations
- Teacher meetings
- Exchanging ideas on teaching and assessment strategies.

All actions were evaluated and goals were redefined.

This process has led to positive outcomes:

- Teachers are more satisfied with their teaching and with learner achievement.
- Learners are happier and enjoy lessons. They are more active in class and able to understand lessons.
- Parents are happy to see their children improve and find it easier to help them at home.

Finally, assessment has provided evidence of raised achievement.

For more information, refer to the presentation on [School-Based Teachers' Professional Learning](#) from Cyprus.



The following examples explain how teachers can be supported in different ways:



A support group for class teachers in Latvia

Valmiera Primary School (Latvia) has a support group for staff who work with learners who have learning difficulties. This group includes a speech therapist, a social pedagogue, a psychologist and the assistant head teacher. The group works closely with a school management group.

Within the school, classes of learners in the same grade are located together to encourage co-operation among teachers.

Teachers use ICT, among other approaches, to support diverse learning needs. Parents are also involved in their children's learning. Further specialist support is available from the regional centre for inclusive education, which is located on the school site.

School data shows that learning achievements, including academic results, reflect this investment.



School support from psychologists in Ireland

In Ireland, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) supports the development of all learners' academic, social and emotional competence. It prioritises learners at risk of educational disadvantage and those with SEN. NEPS uses a consultative service model that empowers teachers to intervene effectively with pupils with a range of support needs. Psychologists use a problem-solving and solution-focused consultative approach to achieve positive outcomes for pupils. NEPS encourages schools to take responsibility for initial assessment, educational planning and intervention for pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties.



Training opportunities in the Scottish LC

Staff training at Calderglen includes short placements with local employers to inform both teaching and curriculum development. Staff are also regularly provided with specific training in accordance with school needs.



In this [video on teacher training](#), the school was pro-active in arranging training for a teacher to increase her knowledge and understanding of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This increased the school's capacity and allowed practice to be put in place to improve support for learners with ASD, with a view to preventing potential challenges in the future.



Professional learning in Belgium (Flemish community)

With the support of the Department of Education and Training of the Flemish community, three institutions formed a team of professional trainers to develop more inclusive schools. This took place in close co-operation with all local partners (i.e. parents, pupils, pupil guidance centres, pedagogical counselling services, special education teachers and other experts). Between 2015 and 2017, 60 schools each took part in eight coaching sessions.

For each school, a core team was formed, consisting of 5–10 professionals. These were at least two class or subject teachers from different grades, one SEN co-ordinator, one head teacher and one 'critical friend' from their partnership. The core team decided on the specific priorities (e.g. Universal Design for Learning, collaborative teaming, co-operative learning strategies, etc.). Core team members also met members of other teams in a learning network between schools.

Overall, the professional learning experiences focused on collaborative team practice, coaching, appreciative inquiry and school development – all aiming to develop more inclusive school policy, removing barriers and investing in resources, good conditions and inclusive leadership.

For more information, refer to the presentation on [Professional Learning Communities](#) from Belgium (Flemish community).



3.3. How can we support leaders?

The RA project has highlighted the importance of the leader's role in increasing school effectiveness and improving outcomes for learners. The Agency's [Organisation of Provision project](#) stressed the need to support 'lonely principals' (European Agency, 2014, p. 11). This becomes more important because of recent changes, such as increases in school autonomy, more stringent accountability measures and frequent changes in policy, which raise both the profile and the demands of the school leader role.

“”

The European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) suggests that:

... there is no unique road to policy development on school leadership for equity and learning. There are different ways for EU Member States to achieve an advanced level of school leadership policy development for equity and learning.

EPNoSL has produced a range of resources to support school leaders, with a focus on equity and learning: the [School Leadership Toolkit](#).

3.3.1. Create leadership training opportunities

Leaders' capacity can be further strengthened by taking part in leadership development initiatives, as the following example from Estonia suggests:



Leadership training provided in Estonia

In 2015, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research launched the pilot project 'Inclusive school'. It aimed to enhance co-operation among the education officials of central and local authorities and schools, harmonise the concept of inclusive education and pilot the implementation of organisational measures to support the inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream schools.

Continuing training programmes are offered for teachers and school leaders, with the implementation of inclusive education as their cross-cutting priority. These programmes aim to improve the capacity of school leaders and staff and, in turn, enhance pupils' learning outcomes. The employed learning methods support:

- the individual development, creativity and enterprising and innovative spirit of learners;
- the implementation of principles of inclusive education;
- improved coping of learners with SEN across all levels and types of education.



3.3.2. Develop local school leadership teams

In addition to taking part in national leadership training, many school leaders find support from other school leaders in local networks. The following example from Iceland shows how leadership teams can support each other and share responsibility for school improvement:



Building a professional learning community in Iceland

Oddeyrarskóli is a public compulsory school for learners between 6 and 16 years old, located in Akureyri municipality (northern Iceland). All school leaders in the area meet every month to learn together and to build a strong professional learning community between schools. The municipality has a contract with the Centre of School Development at the University of Akureyri (UNAK) to provide professional development programmes for teachers in schools in the area who wish to enhance their skills by working with a teaching advisor from UNAK.

Leaders support teacher development and learning through regular meetings, teamwork and team teaching. They take account of learners' and parents' evaluations and make good use of social media to share ideas and good practices.

In West Belfast, one of Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged and deprived communities, nine head teachers meet regularly to discuss areas of common interest and concern and share ideas and expertise. More information is available in the presentation on leadership from [West Belfast Area Learning Community](#) (UK – Northern Ireland).



4. NURTURE ALL LEARNERS

The RA project work has shown the importance of learner-centred practice in raising achievement. As learner diversity increases and many countries express concern at the rising number of learners affected by adverse childhood experiences, the need to nurture all learners takes on increasing importance. Such work should aim to prevent social, emotional and mental health issues and to support learners who do experience these and other related barriers to learning. Schools generally recognise that learners are unlikely to learn if they are hungry, thirsty, tired or uncomfortable – or if they are anxious and do not feel safe and secure. Teachers need to build trusting relationships with learners and get to know them, so they can provide the support needed to enable them to succeed. During the project, a school in Finland shared an effective approach (refer to the [‘Versatile support for learning’ presentation](#)).



Prerequisites for the growth of all learners

Reflecting on its practical work throughout the project, the Łajski LC suggests that the following are needed to nurture all learners:

- Clear rules and values and a culture of positive behaviour
- Individualisation of education – finding abilities, strengths and gifts
- Learning by teaching others
- Freedom for self-realisation
- Help and support among peers
- Flexibility in the core curriculum of every subject.

For more information, refer to the [Presentation from the Polish LC](#) at the Raising Achievement International Conference.

Research and RA project work suggest that two elements are crucial:

- Listening to learners’ voices and getting to know them as individuals
- Developing each learner’s mindset to enable them to make the most of the opportunities presented to them.



4.1. How can we get to know our learners?

4.1.1. Listen to learners' voices

The capacity to listen to learners' voices is one of the main factors that promotes the change process in schools (European Agency, 2013b). Asking learners about their school and integrating their responses into school practice must be a crucial part of the school development process.



Research suggests...

Promoting learner voice has been linked to important educational outcomes, including:

- Raised achievement in marginalised learners
- Greater classroom participation
- Enhanced school reform efforts
- Better self-reflection
- Improvement in struggling learners
- Decreased behaviour problems.

(Toshalis and Nakkula, 2012)

The RA project highlighted the importance of 'seeing' learners and getting to know them as individuals, as well as building strong and nurturing relationships (refer to [Section 1](#)). Within a positive school climate, leaders and teachers should model positive relationships and influence academic achievement by helping learners to feel that they 'own' their learning and can influence future outcomes.

During the Raising Achievement International Conference, 10 learners from the LCs and Malta presented their views on achievement, using text, video, art, dialogue and interaction with the other delegates. The learners highlighted a focus on learning, rather than on performance and 'standards' of achievement. Maria, a learner from Malta, said:



“”

Achievements come in varying forms throughout the course of life. Some are considered great, outstanding accomplishments, perhaps even milestones. Others are given low significance, if even noticed at all. Yet each and every one, in its own way through our own individual experiences, shapes us bit by bit as we grow. They teach us, just as our mistakes teach us, and of those we all have many. Because no matter how far we trudge, or how long we stand for, at some point, we all stumble. Perhaps, that is the greatest achievement of all, the recovery from a stumble, the rise from a fall. The will to go on, to overcome, to conquer our past failures and self-doubts. We were all born for greatness. Maybe, in a strange, funny little way, the achievement lies in achievement itself. In the defiant standoff against our struggles in life, and in the will to succeed.

(Maria, Maltese learner)

Other learner contributions can be seen in the [Learners' Workshop presentation](#) and the video with their [views on achievement](#).

The example below illustrates how a school in Denmark systematically uses teacher-pupil conversations about learning to promote learners' academic progress and well-being.



Learning conversations with pupils in Hals school, Denmark

In Hals School (Aalborg Municipality, Denmark), teacher co-operation has clearly focused on what promotes pupils' learning. The pedagogical staff strengthen learners' self-worth with close contact and engagement. Staff teams inspire one another and discuss and reflect upon learning conversations with pupils. Diverse test results, combined with support, create the basis for the management's learning conversations with the teams. The goal of learning conversations is for pupils to become aware of and create their own development goals. This includes both social and academic goals. These conversations are systematic and take place individually and in groups. They are 'put into the system' and enhance general well-being and inclusion work in the school.

For more information, refer to [The Danish School System – A Case Study](#).

4.1.2. Increase learner-oriented activities

Toshalis and Nakkula (2012) have identified a range of experiences that make up a spectrum of learner-oriented activities in a school or classroom. Learner influence, responsibility and decision-making roles are seen along a continuum.

[Annex 2](#) presents the spectrum of learner voice-oriented activity. Please also refer to [Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice](#).



Often, learner voice activities in schools consist of expression, consultation and some participation. To ensure that learner involvement is not tokenistic, schools should aim to move along the continuum by working in real partnership with learners, increasing activism and providing leadership opportunities.

Further information about the [Spectrum of Voice](#) is available online.

During the RA project, the Scottish LC worked to increase learner voice-oriented activities in the school. The example below describes some of these.



Listening to learners at Calderglen

At Calderglen High School, learner voice is included in the school mission and is integral to creating and nurturing a community of learners. The school has a clear strategic plan for promoting learner health and well-being; it uses systematic evidence to analyse the extent to which learners are becoming more resilient, confident and increasing their leadership skills.

Through the student council, the LC aims to build a responsible and collaborative community of pro-active young people. Within the student council, teams across the year groups take responsibility for different areas, such as the display/notice boards and the school newsletter. There is also an opportunity to link council members to charities and fundraising teams. Meetings take place at least monthly, which gives learners the time to develop their ideas.

Interviews with learners confirm the importance of activities that build resilience to overcome challenges and enable learners to achieve success.



For more information, refer to the [video of the Calderglen learners](#) at the Raising Achievement International Conference.

4.2. How do we help learners to develop a growth mindset?

4.2.1. Focus on learner effort

The RA work has shown that it is possible to create conditions which encourage learners to value the effort put into the learning and development process, rather than focusing on 'performance' and demonstrating ability. Carol Dweck, a psychologist from the USA, refers to this as a 'growth mindset'.



Research suggests...

Research has shown that learners who have a growth mindset believe that their abilities can change with appropriately focused effort. They welcome feedback on how to improve and are more resilient when they encounter difficulties. If learners have a fixed mindset, they believe that their abilities cannot be changed and therefore tend to avoid challenge (Dweck, 2006).

Findings from the [Evidence Based Teachers Network](#) note that learners who have a growth mindset achieve, on average, one grade higher than those with a fixed mindset.

4.2.2. Develop a repertoire of learning approaches

The development of a growth mindset is not just about praising effort – learners must develop a repertoire of approaches to learning and connect them to success ([Dweck, 2015](#)). Dweck points out that nobody has a growth mindset in everything, all of the time. Even for those with a predominantly growth mindset, something outside their comfort zone can trigger a ‘fixed’ mindset. It is necessary to understand and manage these triggers.

Figure 3 summarises the key features of fixed and growth mindsets.

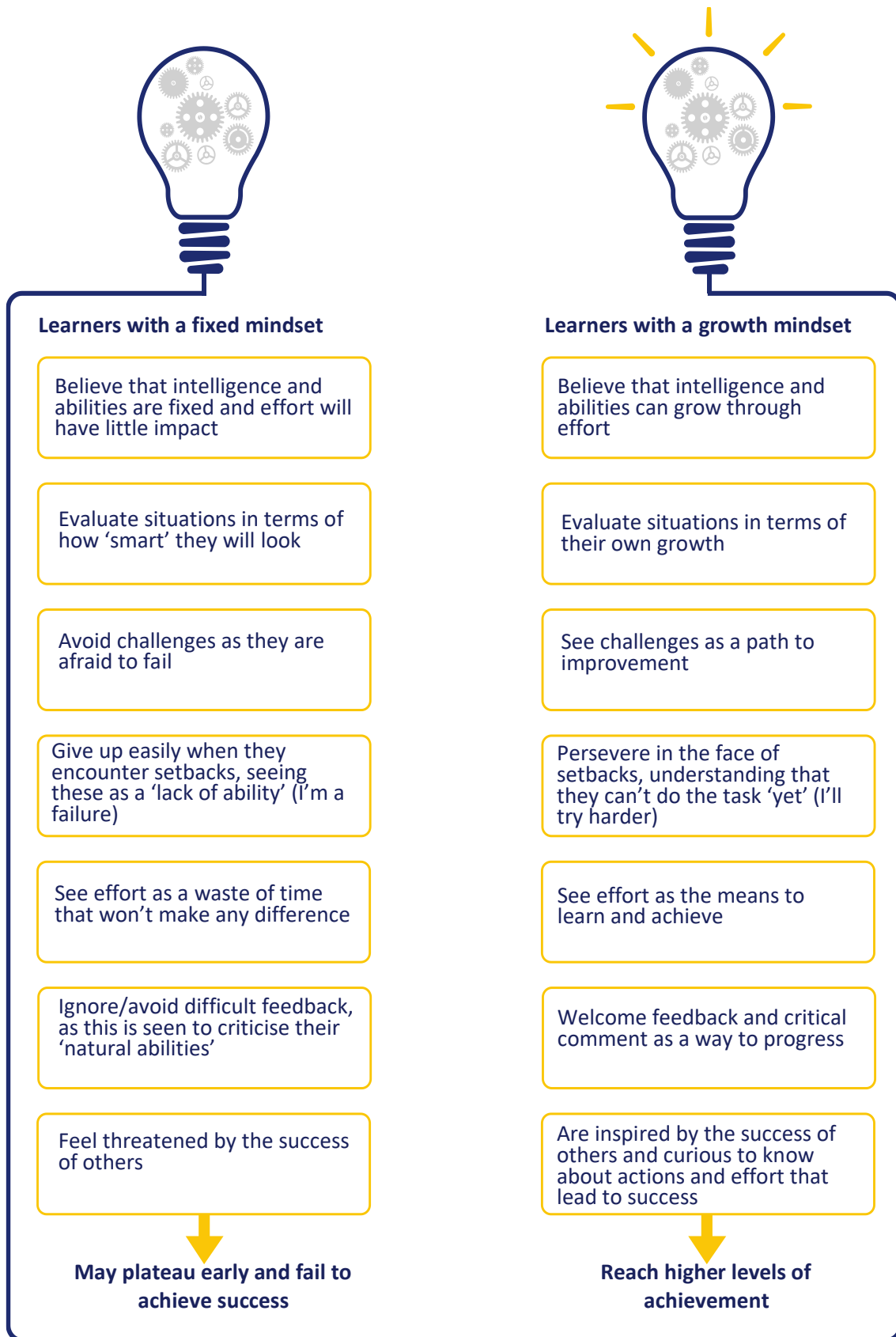


Figure 3. Key features of growth and fixed mindsets

Source: adapted from [graphic by N. Holmes](#)



The following example explains how this approach has raised achievement for learners at Calderglen.



Developing growth mindsets in Calderglen High School



Watch the video on '[Developing a Growth Mindset](#)' produced by Calderglen.

The work on growth mindset started with pilot work in two departments – Maths and Physical Education. Both departments nominated a teacher to lead this work and present ideas to colleagues in their department. Work was carried out within existing resources and included the use of a whole-school in-service day. The heads of the Maths and English faculties also integrated this work into literacy and numeracy development across the school.

Over a period of 12 months, both departments showed a large increase in attainment, increasing learners' pass rates in national examinations at all levels. These strategies were found to be particularly effective with pupils working at lower levels and those with social, emotional and behavioural needs. A particular focus was on how teachers (and parents) give feedback and help learners to deal with mistakes.

This work also had an impact on staff learning, as the video below shows.



Watch the video on '[Adopting a Growth Mindset](#)'.

You can find out more about these developments in the presentations – refer to the [Additional Resources](#) section.



5. SHARE LEADERSHIP

Raising achievement is everyone's responsibility and is most effective when leadership is shared. Shared leadership requires leaders to adjust their leadership style and give people within the school opportunities to lead each other.

“”

Leading system reform is not about mandating, driving or demanding better performance, it is about creating the conditions where professional knowledge and skills are enhanced, where effective leadership exists at all levels and, most importantly, where the success of every child in every setting is the main driver and ultimate goal of system improvement.

(Harris, 2012, pp. 400–401)

To develop strong, shared and inclusive leadership, the following processes are essential:

- Securing commitment to raising achievement for all
- Sharing leadership tasks with all stakeholders.

5.1. How do we secure commitment to the RA agenda?

5.1.1. Communicate an inclusive vision

Effective school leaders clearly communicate a vision that embeds inclusive values and principles. Over time, this can influence the whole community's beliefs and attitudes and bring about change.



The Calderglen strategic pyramid

In the Scottish LC, all development is viewed through an 'inclusive lens'. This extends from the top of the organisation and permeates through all levels. The leadership team believes that this is critical to enable policy to become a reality. Furthermore, it considers that its success is linked to seeing respect, inclusion and achievement as core values – a moral imperative. These, too, are woven through the very ethos and culture of the LC.

The strategic pyramid in Figure 4 shows Calderglen's vision, core values and approaches to learning. Senior leaders need to make sure that values are 'lived' in daily practice. Respect, inclusion and achievement only become a reality through modelling.



Figure 4. Caldergleng’s strategic pyramid (© Caldergleng High School)

To ensure that everyone in the LC is ‘on board’ with key messages, leaders must make sure that they bring about **conceptual clarity**. This involves dialogue between all stakeholders to reach a shared understanding of inclusion as high-quality education for all that places ‘every child on the agenda always’ (Barber et al., 2012, p. 59).



The following example describes the Polish LC's journey towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities:



Promoting inclusive mindsets in the Polish LC

In the Łajski LC in Poland, the school's inclusive development started with its acceptance of a learner with ASD who other local schools were reluctant to enrol. The school leaders were able to see and build on this learner's strengths and accept him – and others with ASN who followed – for who he was. They had a positive 'can-do' attitude to overcoming any difficulties they encountered. The challenges presented by diversity have served as a stimulus for professional development and collaboration – and the development of inclusive values and attitudes throughout the whole LC.

The school has built strong relationships between learners, staff and parents and developed a range of pedagogical approaches – particularly through the arts – which enable all learners to take part. By including an increasing diversity of learners, the school has developed effective links with other agencies and members of the local community to develop its capacity to include everyone and offer personalised learning opportunities.

The successful inclusion of the learner with ASD opened minds to the possibilities offered by such inclusive practice. This eventually led to the school provision being extended to cater for lower-secondary learners, when the young man was unable to find a placement at the end of his primary education. Over the project's lifetime, the number of learners increased from 148 in 2013 to 459 in 2017.

The video below gives more information.



[Łajski video](#)

5.1.2. Turn challenges into opportunities

Sometimes, commitment to the community's values and mission is prompted by a particular challenge, as described above. However, taking the opportunity to be proactive, leaders may want to start a development process with an **analysis of their own school context**.



Research suggests...

A complex change process may challenge many traditional school structures and processes. It therefore needs to go beyond the simple implementation of 'something new' or quick fixes (Skoglund and Stacker, 2016).

Change can best be achieved 'where people gradually take responsibilities as they develop' (Dorczak, 2013, p. 53).

Leaders need to challenge assumptions, values and previous thinking. Through reflection, they can bring about a new understanding of diversity as a basis for changing practice. The following example from the Polish LC illustrates how changes in the core leadership team brought about changes to the management of the whole school and made effective use of the staff's skills and knowledge.



Re-organising the leadership team in Łajski

As the number of learners in the Łajski LC grew, the school re-organised its leadership team. The head teacher appointed a special pedagogue as deputy head to reflect the inclusive ethos. The deputy led the induction of new staff to make clear the expectation that all staff would take responsibility for all learners – including those who may need additional support. Leadership of the school was further shared through the development of collaborative teams to maintain the positive ethos as the school expanded.

The example above shows how systematically sharing the school values and approaches can be beneficial, especially for new members of the school community. Overall, leaders should aim to move from reacting to issues and challenges, to establishing proactive/preventative approaches. If learners are failing, effective leaders see this as a fault in the system – not in the learner – and they organise provision in ways that avoid labelling or stereotyping learners. As part of their leadership role, stakeholders advocate for all learners and recognise the value of diversity in increasing the school's capability to include and nurture everyone.

Inclusive leaders **focus on equity** and ensure that all learners, particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, are taught by well-qualified and experienced staff. They refuse to accept low aspirations or poor performance.



A school transformation in Norway

A middle school in Telemark, Norway, was a traditional school with traditional special education provision – and poor learning outcomes. In recent years, it has become an innovative and inclusive school with good results.

The development process was guided by leaders who have worked to improve the teachers' attitudes and knowledge of pupils to further develop teaching and learning.

They jointly established a common understanding of what kind of school they wanted to be and developed a strong culture of co-operation within and across the stages of the school. The structures and processes for educational and administrative management are clear. Good co-operation on special needs education has been established with parents and with the local educational and psychological counselling service.

The school was re-organised with a fixed team of teachers for every school year who stayed with the same learners during the eighth, ninth and tenth grades, thus strengthening relationships. Teaching is not based on traditional use of textbooks; rather, each team of teachers creates its own teaching materials based on the curriculum. Teachers have 1.5 hours per week of collaborative work for educational development to support this innovation.

Refer to the presentation on '[Effective Inclusive Education](#)' from Norway.

The Organisation of Provision project [country visit reports](#) provide more examples of such school transformation.

5.2. How can we share leadership tasks?

Raising achievement involves all stakeholders in leadership activities. Inclusive leadership is a democratic process that empowers stakeholders to contribute to improving outcomes for all learners. Sharing leadership tasks and taking additional responsibility provide valuable professional development opportunities for teachers and help to ensure that school leaders are developed for the future.



Research suggests...

Top-down reforms have a long history of failure (Hargreaves and Ainscow, 2015).

Leadership is not 'the property of individuals, but is inherent' in policies, actions, decisions and practices throughout the school context (Óskarsdóttir, 2017, pp. 23–24).

Research on school improvement highlights the positive relationship between the increased distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities and improved learner outcomes and change in schools (Day et al., 2009; Harris, 2009).

For more information, please refer to pages 37–43 of the RA [literature review](#).

5.2.1. Develop a network of colleagues

The following example from Italy shows how the LC shared leadership to benefit both staff and learners:



Moving to a 'flatter' leadership structure in ITA Sereni

ITA Sereni is a large and complex organisation. During the RA project, the principal reviewed the school's approach to leadership, which was formerly a pyramid structure. This review provided the opportunity for the principal to develop a flatter structure, developing a network of colleagues who could provide support and share day-to-day tasks, such as leading the working group that oversees the inclusion of learners with disabilities. Here, a group of experienced teachers took responsibility for organising support teachers, including managing learning support assistants, timetable planning, peer tutoring, work-related learning for learners with SEN and support for sports and recreational areas.

Realising the complexity of working in a more inclusive way, the school leaders suggest that close attention to relationships is helpful. They note that shared leadership strengthens motivation and creates an atmosphere of positive interdependence in a context that applies democracy as a value and as a method.

For more information, refer to the presentation on [Leadership by ITA Sereni](#).

5.2.2. Involve the wider school community

The RA project findings support this approach to change, where school leaders develop strategies that are appropriate to their local situation. Delegating resources and authority and developing a sense of collective responsibility by engaging teachers, learners and



parents appear to have a positive impact on the wider school community. This was evident in the Scottish LC example below:



Stakeholder leadership opportunities

In Calderglen LC, leadership is defined as ‘the art of persuading people to work towards a common goal’ (Goleman, 1996, p. 149). The agreed goal is to view practice through an inclusive lens – with the aim of raising the attainment and achievement of all learners. Leaders, staff, pupils and parents are all considered to be learners – and leaders.

Within the LC, 39% of teachers have been offered the opportunity to take responsibility across the whole school involving, for example, literacy and developing growth mindset. In addition, 58% of staff are involved in leadership tasks and 42% engage with partners in learning (beyond the school). The additional responsibility has led to increased confidence and self-efficacy as new skills have developed. The involvement of teacher leaders in these initiatives has also increased the impact on other staff.

School leaders realised that, while support was provided for newly qualified teachers, there was no programme for teachers new to the school. They were particularly keen to pass on key messages about the school’s inclusive approaches and emphasis on raising achievement for all. A mentoring programme for all new teachers, delivered by experienced staff, provided further leadership opportunities. It meant the school values and approaches could be discussed so that they could influence day-to-day practice.

Importantly, learners are provided with leadership opportunities. In the ‘Developing the Young Workforce’ programme, learners take part in entrepreneur and business workshops. Learners are responsible for contacting partners, arranging and advertising meetings, etc.



For more information, watch the [‘Developing the Young Workforce’](#) video.

A small group of pupils has also been responsible for creating a school alumni group. They communicate with past pupils via social media and arrange meetings with current pupils to give advice on post-school options, careers, world of work, etc.



For more information, watch the [‘Alumni’](#) video.

Finally, parents have taken a lead in in-service training for school staff and in giving formal feedback about various aspects of the school.

For an overview of leadership at Calderglen, please refer to the [presentation on leadership strategies](#) from the Raising Achievement International Conference.



6. FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS

Raising achievement requires monitoring and reflection to ensure a focus on the LC's identified priorities. Leaders should work with stakeholders to develop a shared vision and mission which informs school development and makes explicit the things for which the school can be held accountable.

School stakeholders should work together to develop a clear plan which includes:

- the changes they wish to see;
- actions to be taken;
- the ways that these changes will be monitored and 'measured'.

This plan should include decisions about how the school can:

- use data to raise achievement;
- monitor participation (with a focus on learners 'at risk' of under-achievement);
- evaluate policy and practice.

6.1. How can we use data to raise achievement?

Schools can make good use of data for a range of purposes. These include:

- tracking learner progress, achievement and accreditation opportunities across the curriculum;
- assessing the effectiveness of approaches to learning and teaching;
- ensuring that school organisation, such as learner groupings, allocation of staff and resources and opportunities to participate in wider activities, support ALL learners.

However, while data is an important tool, best practice is driven by people!

As discussed in [Section 2](#), leaders and teachers should be clear about assessment practice and the use of assessment information – to improve learning and contribute to whole-school improvement with a focus on equity.



6.1.1. Monitor progress on an on-going basis

The monitoring of learners' progress is a task that involves all staff, with a key role for middle leaders such as faculty heads. The following example from the Scottish LC shows how the school tracks learner performance on an on-going basis and identifies potential problems as soon as they arise:



Using data to improve curriculum opportunities in Calderglen High School

In Calderglen High School, faculty heads track annual experiences and outcomes across the different curriculum areas (e.g. literacy, numeracy, etc.) to ensure that learners receive their entitlements at third and into the fourth level/school year. Following an analysis of performance data and teacher views, they adjust provision to ensure that entitlements are met for all and that courses allow for progression and coherence.

All staff monitor and track information for learners preparing for national qualifications and set targets within each curricular area. Teachers assess each learner's progress, identify issues and intervene as soon as possible, providing support as needed.

During the RA project's lifetime, data on passes in national examinations showed that a number of learners were not achieving well in science. The head teacher discussed this finding with teachers in the science faculty, who felt that the current syllabus lacked practical elements that would better engage some learners. This led to the introduction of a new science course in laboratory skills. This offered a more practical approach, but still provided learners with skills and knowledge in science and accreditation at national level.



The ['Lab skills' video](#) and the [presentation on Laboratory Science](#) provide more information.



Likewise, the following example from UK (England) shows how data tracking in a secondary school in London identified and acted upon learner issues:



Tracking data in Hampstead School, London, UK

Hampstead School is a secondary school in north London which began working with the Achievement for All programme to target the 20% of learners with the lowest attainment. The school's approach was characterised by a concerted focus on learner tracking data and ensuring that the attainment, behaviour and attendance of the target group was a priority. Tracking progress across the school was made more rigorous and there was a focus on ensuring that interventions were targeted at the right learners. A number of learners were identified as poor or late attenders and some also identified as at risk.

The school set up an Early Riser Club – a breakfast club – for up to 25 targeted learners. The club is open before school and is staffed by a higher level teaching assistant and another staff member. The club ensures that learners are in school on time and ready to learn. One learner who had to leave home before 07.00 every morning to take a long bus journey to school was waiting outside the locked school gates every morning. She says that the club gave her a 'safe haven' and played a major part in improving her attainment.

6.1.2. Use external reference points

Benchmarking with other schools can also be helpful – but it is important to raise questions and learn from others' practice in a climate of collaboration, not competition. In UK (Scotland), a national benchmarking tool (Insight) has been introduced to support the policy to reduce the attainment gap. Further information is available in the [plenary presentation from Calderglen](#) at the Raising Achievement International Conference. It is also helpful to have external reference points (e.g. working with other schools, universities, input from advisors) to raise awareness of wider issues and support transformation.



Such a collaborative approach comes from UK (Northern Ireland):



Data tracking in West Belfast, UK (Northern Ireland)

In the West Belfast Learning Community, all schools have a three-year strategic development plan and annual operational plans which include targets for specific years. Schools are making effective use of online data tracking systems which measure performance and inform improvement, leading to more positive outcomes. Performance data is collated across schools. This has enabled schools to take pride in the performance of the whole area, instead of focusing only on their own data.

6.2. How do we monitor learner participation and engagement in learning?

6.2.1. Identify barriers to participation and engagement

A first step to raising learner achievement is to ensure that any barriers to participation and engagement in learning are identified and addressed as early as possible. IC Rosmini considers that learners can be agents of change in the move towards inclusion – and that this involvement leads to empowerment and increased engagement.



Learners need to be helped to discover that they can be agents of change and transform from spectators to citizens. They should be:

- *active rather than passive;*
- *engaged rather than alienated;*
- *contributing rather than accepting.*

(IC Rosmini, presentation at Raising Achievement International Conference, April 2017)

For vulnerable learners at risk of under-achievement, and specifically learners with disabilities, removing restrictions to participation can be a challenging task. Given that participation can encompass many things, it is important to agree a focus before planning monitoring activities.



Using resources to increase capacity and nurture learners ‘at risk’ of under-achievement

In UK (Scotland), the Pupil Equity Fund aims to help schools to close the achievement gap. In response to this initiative, Calderglen LC has worked closely with local primary schools to identify learners believed to be ‘at risk’ of under-achievement/disengagement on transfer to secondary education. Monitoring focuses on attendance, behaviour, participation and engagement (using the [Leuven Scale](#) of well-being and involvement), as well as tracking attainment and achievement according to agreed criteria. Responses to increase engagement and participation include family learning, nurture and emotional support, as well as numeracy and literacy development and the ‘[Developing the Young Workforce](#)’ programme. This approach aims to use resources for capacity-building in the longer term, rather than short-term measures.



The example below sets out a model used in Sweden.



Increasing the participation of learners with disabilities

In Sweden, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools developed a model for understanding the prerequisites of participation, particularly for learners with disabilities. This raises teacher awareness and makes the idea of participation more visible in school activities.

This theoretical model is based on the work of Janson (2004; 2005). It sets out six aspects of participation. Three of these can be observed, while three require learner views, as follows:

Objective aspects (observable):

1. Belonging (formal belonging to/engagement in class/group)
2. Accessibility:
 - Physical (adapted materials, technology, accessible environment)
 - Communicative (access to communication/language, supportive/open climate)
3. Co-activity (involvement/engagement in same activity as peers)

Subjective aspects (learner views)

4. Recognition – feeling of acceptance by others
5. Involvement – feeling of belonging/emotional engagement
6. Autonomy (influence over own situation).

These aspects vary during the school day, depending on learner interactions (e.g. with peers, teachers, etc.). As such, the model entails three different cultures: the teaching culture, peer culture and care culture (parent-child). The learners move in and out of the three cultures within the school context several times throughout the school day (Söderqvist Dunkers and Winberg, 2015).

The model above can serve as a practical 'checklist' for educators when planning to increase learner participation. More information can be found in the ['Participation Model' paper](#).



Engagement is also multi-dimensional and can include behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement.

“”

‘Engagement’ refers to:

... the extent to which students identify with and value schooling outcomes, and participate in academic and non-academic school activities.

(OECD, 2003, p. 8)

6.2.2. Consider the causes of disengagement

Learners not committed to learning may be referred to as disaffected or disengaged. This disengagement may have multiple causes, some of which will be beyond the scope of the school. However, teachers and leaders should be able to identify learners who are ‘at risk’ of disengaging.



Research suggests...

The following Indicators, structured under six themes, can be used to identify disengagement:

Theme 1: Factors associated with structure/environment (i.e. learners from ethnic minority groups, with asylum seeker/refugee status, living in poverty, etc.)

Theme 2: Factors associated with level of attainment/educational needs (low attainment, poor attendance and/or exclusion, learners who are non-native language speakers, learners who have SEN/disabilities, etc.)

Theme 3: Factors associated with local education services (i.e. poor access to transport, lack of appropriate courses, careers information, advice and guidance)

Theme 4: Factors associated with personal/family circumstances (e.g. learners who are looked-after, young carers, those who have experienced adverse events such as family breakup, parents in prison, bereavement, frequent changes of school, being pregnant or being a young parent); learners who have offended or been involved in difficult social relationships (e.g. gang culture or peer pressure)

Theme 5: Factors associated with attitude/aspirations (e.g. learners who do not participate in lessons/other school activities; who have low confidence and self-esteem; are unhappy at school; lack mental resilience; have low, unrealistic or no aspirations and lack direction)

Theme 6: Factors associated with progression routes (e.g. learners who are unaware of their own strengths and weaknesses; who do not understand progression routes; and who are not satisfied with available progression routes)

(Southcott et al., 2013)

In particular, learners who have experienced adverse events during their childhood need strong, nurturing relationships, clear expectations, appropriate support and flexibility within LCs to provide relevant activities.

Throughout the project, the LCs provided examples of learners who were, for various reasons, disengaging from learning. Through personalised approaches and strong relationships, they managed to prevent these learners from disengaging from the learning opportunities offered or even from dropping out of school.



Here is one example from IC Rosmini:



Building confidence and participation in IC Rosmini, Italy

The IC Rosmini staff talk of special skills, not special needs. One learner facing emotional challenges would not participate in any regular classes. His interest in art was recognised and he was given the task of painting a mural in part of the school. Over time, as his self-confidence increased, school staff were able to engage him in a wider range of activities and other subject areas.



Figure 5. Learner working on a mural



Figure 6. Completed mural



6.3. How do we evaluate our school policy and practice?

School self-evaluation empowers a school community to confirm where practice is working well, and to identify and take action on areas that require improvement. School self-evaluation is primarily about schools taking responsibility for and ownership of their own development. Overall, leaders should work towards ‘inclusive accountability’, rather than being judged only on what can most easily be measured. Leaders, together with key stakeholders, should document their priorities with a clear rationale for decisions made in the context of the local community. They should welcome being held accountable for these areas that are valued by the whole school community.

6.3.1. Focus on fair access

All stakeholders must focus on equity and consider whether all learners have fair access to all structures and processes within the LC. In this task, answering the following questions might prove helpful:

- Does everyone have access to all areas of the curriculum and some choice to enable them to follow their interests?
- Are all learners provided with appropriate ICT/other equipment that can help them?
- Are learners placed in groups that make assumptions about their ‘ability’? Or are they given the chance to mix with a wide range of others in different peer groupings with the opportunity to support others and be supported?
- Do learners have the chance to use the latest resources and enjoy comfortable and well-equipped spaces for learning?
- Does everyone get a chance to take part in out of school and extra-curricular activities – with extra support if necessary?

If these issues are addressed for all learners, everyone will have the best opportunity to achieve success. In this way, school improvement efforts will not exacerbate the achievement gap.

6.3.2. Use a range of self-review materials

A range of more specific evaluation approaches and methods can be used to gather the evidence necessary for making judgements during the school self-evaluation process, including evidence collected from a range of stakeholders (teachers, learners and carers).



The RA self-review resource

In the RA project, school/LC self-evaluation was viewed as a dynamic process that supports on-going development to include and raise the achievement of all learners. Self-review materials were designed to assess harder-to-measure areas that recent research has identified as playing an important role in both inclusive practice and raising achievement. The survey covers two key areas identified for the project: pedagogy and leadership, as well as the overarching theme of networking and collaborative practice. It includes the following dimensions:

- 1. Pedagogy for all learners**
- 2. Support for learning**
- 3. Leadership roles and approaches**
- 4. Learner well-being and participation**
- 5. Curriculum development**
- 6. Partnerships and collaborative working**
- 7. Support systems.**

The self-review is available as an open educational resource (please refer to *Raising the Achievement of All Learners: [A Resource to Support Self-Review](#)*). It can be used in its current form or as a starting point to develop a similar survey appropriate to the local context. The dimensions and statements and rating scale can be changed or further items can be added to take account of local priorities.



As already mentioned, self-review tools can involve judgements about a school's overall quality of teaching and learning. Alternatively, they can be about the effectiveness of particular programmes and initiatives within the school, an example of which is provided below:



The 'combined education' programme in Spain

San Pío X is a public bilingual school (kindergarten and primary education) in Spain which has four special education classrooms. Since 2004, the school has been operating the 'combined education' programme, as a step to include all learners and to promote inclusive education. Every learner from a special education classroom belongs to a mainstream group according to their age. Together with specialised professionals (speech therapist, pedagogy therapist, physiotherapist), learners with SEN attend different subjects and participate in various activities in the school.

Assessment sessions are in place to evaluate the degree of satisfaction of the teachers who are involved in the pupils' learning process. A teacher questionnaire is used to capture teacher beliefs with regards to the quality of the combined education programme. The data is analysed to inform further improvements of the programme.

For more information, refer to the ['Inclusive Education Project'](#) presentation by San Pío X school.



It is also necessary to ensure that evidence is gathered from a range of sources and that the views of all those involved in the school community are sought. The following project example illustrates ITA Sereni's on-going engagement in self-evaluation.



ITA Sereni's monitoring tools

At ITA Sereni, monitoring tools include surveys, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires for learners, teachers and families that are analysed by the school evaluation committee.

The school uses the [QUADIS instrument](#). This observation and self-analysis kit helps schools to assess the quality of their inclusion of learners with disabilities. It provides a series of qualitative and quantitative tools.

Three areas are assessed through self-evaluation:

- Teaching and educational area – how the school develops the potential and monitors the learning process of all learners.
- Organisational area – how the school is organised to direct, manage and support the process of integration and inclusion.
- Cultural and professional – how to practice school integration and an inclusive culture internally and in the community.

Criteria include efficacy, relevance, efficiency, functionality, significance and fairness. Questionnaires are answered by the head teacher, teachers/support teachers, administrative staff, other school employees, as well as learners with disabilities and their parents.

The outcomes are fed back to the school to use in planning for improvement.

The use of the QUADIS tools, the implementation of co-operative learning and other activities throughout the lifetime of the RA project have helped to promote collaboration between support and curricular teachers, revealing their need to be involved in a lifelong learning process.

More information is available in the [QUADIS presentation](#).



Some areas considered valuable by stakeholders may be hard to measure. It may be necessary to develop creative ways to gather evidence – for example, through qualitative methods (e.g. stakeholder surveys, observations). As already mentioned, listening respectfully to the opinions and experiences of learners and families can facilitate the self-evaluation process in schools. One key strategy to gather feedback from learners is through the use of learner surveys. The RA [Resource to Support Self-Review](#) includes some examples of these. After gathering evidence from a range of sources, schools should be in a position to decide on what needs to be done to bring about improvement.



Research suggests...

School improvement plans should outline the following:

- What is the need for change?
- What are the potential benefits?
- What is the evidence base for it?
- What impact will it have on teacher workload?
- What effect will it have on pupil learning?
- Can a pilot be done before the initiative goes whole-school?
- Who needs to be consulted to ensure successful implementation?

(Hendrick and Macpherson, 2017)



The example from Portugal below provides information about a school improvement plan which focuses on improving learning experiences and outcomes for learners:



Ferreira de Castro's Schools Grouping, Portugal

A cluster of five schools, located in a suburban area close to Lisbon (Portugal), is recognised for its work on the inclusion of all learners. External evaluation reports note that the school group is run by a leadership team with strategic vision, which undertakes effective management practices. The school develops a Multi-Year Improvement Plan called 'Intervene to Achieve', which reveals self-regulation, capacity-building and improvement.

The plan covers the following areas:

- Improvement of learning.
- Prevention of drop-out, absenteeism and indiscipline.
- School-family-community partnerships.

The plan is prepared with the involvement of the entire school community. Goals and targets are set, as follows:

- General targets – monitored twice per year and evaluated annually.
- A set of strategic actions with specific objectives and success criteria. All success criteria are monitored every six months with consequent adjustments to interventions.
- Systematic internal decisions are made by a council in each school (made up of teachers, technicians and, in some cases, learners and carers). These ensure the implementation of strategies and adjustments to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This is also strengthened by teachers who observe their colleagues in other schools, share experiences and teach co-operatively.

For more information, refer to the [Ferreira de Castro presentation](#).



7. ACHIEVE MORE TOGETHER

A collaborative LC is the key to raising achievement. The RA project findings suggest that school improvement should be driven by the commitment of the whole school community to find better ways for everybody to live, work and learn together. It involves creating partnerships, collaborating and engaging in shared activities to bring about sustainable development.

During the RA project, LC leaders were involved in a range of initiatives to enhance learning opportunities. This included developing partnerships with:

- a range of professionals who offer additional support for learners and for teachers in school;
- parents/carers and families who support learning out of school;
- local employers, training providers and other colleges/schools that provide expertise and resources to enhance the curriculum;
- universities that support the introduction of new research and pedagogical knowledge;
- other schools/local authority/voluntary or third-sector organisations that share knowledge/skills through professional development.

Below you can find examples of partnerships and collaborative working within, between and beyond schools which have proved useful in the efforts to raise achievement.

7.1. How can we collaborate in school?

7.1.1. Build partnerships with specialists

For many learners, particularly those with ASN, support from professionals may be needed to help them overcome various barriers to learning. As well as supporting learners, these professionals can work closely with teachers to increase their understanding of and capacity to work with different learners.



This is how a school in Slovakia builds strong partnerships within the school context:



A multi-professional team in Slovakia

A school located in the centre of Bratislava (Slovakia) works towards building an inclusive family. The school's main strength is its inclusive team of experts. The experts take up specific roles, but also co-operate and share responsibilities. The inclusive team is comprised of class teachers, an art therapist, a psychologist, special educators and teaching assistants.

The art therapist provides services for learners with traumas and mental health issues, in the form of group therapy and individual therapy. She also leads the 'art philetic class', which is a preventive programme with art elements for all learners in the class. She works in close collaboration with the class teachers. She also provides training to the art teachers and the special educators.

The psychologist runs preventive programmes in classes, intervenes in learner work and addresses issues of bullying. The special educators help class teachers in their lessons by supporting all learners and not only learners with SEN. The school psychologist, together with the special educator and the class teacher, organise activities such as training, intergenerational networking (young and older people) and extra-curricular outdoor activities. Teachers also work together with a mentor to engage learners in a variety of creative projects.

7.1.2. Plan change collaboratively

Promoting collaboration motivates all stakeholders to engage fully in the life of the school. During the RA project, the staff of ITA Sereni (Italian LC) worked together in response to a reduction in support staff.

The example below explains this change in the school's practice:



Planning change at ITA Sereni

At the beginning of the RA project, ITA Sereni (from the Italian LC) posed the following important question:

How can we overcome the constant tension we experience every day between doing what is important for the future (the 'ideal' school) and managing the pressures of the present in a complex context (the 'real' school)?

The school realised that although there are no simple solutions, some answers could be found by building strong relationships and collaborative teams. This has resulted in changes in the school organisation. As the team noted:

The problem has always been the lack of time to reflect, to sit together and plan change. Since last year the situation is worse, but it is now controlled because there is more collaboration and sense of responsibility. The school has developed a three-year plan for organisation and management for all of the school.

7.2. How can we collaborate with other schools/support services?

7.2.1. Share common goals

School-to-school partnerships, when they share common goals, have the potential to improve the opportunities and support given to learners by increasing the staff's skills, knowledge and confidence.



Research suggests...

School leaders should not assume that practice can be transferred directly from one school to another. What works in one school may not be effective elsewhere. School partnerships are more likely to be effective when there is a shared goal to achieve excellence. All practitioners must be willing to take part and be convinced of the need for change through innovative practice (Smith, 2016).

School-to-school support appears to work best when participants experience mutually beneficial relationships that are 'equal, trusting, open and transparent' (Estyn report, 2015, p. 6).



In Italy, the territorial centres of support (CTSs) aim to share best practice for ICT for inclusion. The example below describes this:



Territorial centres of support: a network in Italy

ITA Sereni works with CTS Leonori in the Rome Lazio region. This network covers 106 public mainstream schools which include learners with disabilities. The aim is to foster the process of inclusion through new technologies.

CTSs collect and disseminate best practices and supply schools (loan) with technological devices (hardware and software) and assistive devices, such as braille printers, tactile image enhancers, specialist keyboards, etc. The CTSs support schools in purchasing and efficiently using them. They also undertake initiatives to promote the effective use of ICT among teachers, school managers, parents and learners themselves.

Teachers working in CTSs use a peer learning approach and support their colleagues working in other schools in managing diverse needs in their classrooms. CTSs also provide in-service training in special needs education for mainstream teachers and school leaders. Training activities focus on topics such as early risk identification, teaching strategies for the learner and the whole class, assessment procedures and guidance. Training activities may also involve universities, research institutes, scientific entities, associations and local health authorities.

7.2.2. Develop special schools as resources

Many countries are changing the role of former special schools to act as resources to support inclusion in mainstream schools.

Findings from the RA project have also shown that targeted collaboration between mainstream and special schools can empower learners, especially those who experience disadvantage and those with disabilities.



The Scottish LC provides examples of collaborative practice between a mainstream and a special school which particularly benefits 'at-risk' learners:



Working closely with a co-located special school in Calderglen

Throughout the RA project, the Scottish LC intensified its work with the co-located special school. Although the school inspection rated co-operation as excellent, the RA project raised questions about how this could be extended. In addition to learners from the special school attending – and sometimes transferring to – the mainstream school, learners from Calderglen volunteer within the special school. The schools hold joint training events and run frequent joint activities for learners. The schools have also developed joint student and parent councils.



For more information, watch the [video on volunteering](#) at Sanderson School.

In the following example from Hungary, the special school operates as a resource centre and provides support to mainstream schools:



A resource centre in Budapest (Hungary) supporting mainstream schools

The Mozgásjavító Institute provides education for approximately 200 pupils with physical disabilities, from kindergarten to secondary school. It is also a resource centre, supporting more than 30 mainstream schools to promote inclusive education. This is achieved through:

- co-ordinating the co-operation of schools in the LC;
- organising meetings, conferences and events to share best practices;
- supporting the families of learners with disabilities through different programmes (i.e. counselling, summer camps, presentations);
- enhancing the participation of stakeholders from different fields (social, medical and civil society);
- collaborating with higher education institutions (mainly in the field of special education).

By working collaboratively, learning together and sharing best practices, schools build their capacity to strengthen their own learning environment. This collaboration is also beneficial for the school leaders, as it promotes flexibility and an innovative and pro-active way of thinking.



7.3. How can we collaborate with the local community?

7.3.1. Involve families

The RA project has reinforced the idea that strengthening schools' relationships with families and other members of the local community is vital in the efforts to raise learner achievement.



Research suggests...

The SWIFT centre notes that trusting family partnerships contribute to positive learner outcomes when:

- *family members and school staff have respectful, mutually beneficial relationships with shared responsibility for student learning;*
- *family members have options for meaningful involvement in their children's education and in the life of the school;*
- *the school responds to family interests and involvement in a culturally responsive manner.*

[\(SWIFT, no date\)](#)

Trusting family partnerships can only be achieved by keeping frequent contact and engaging in honest discussions with parents/carers.



An example of a school's open dialogue with parents can be found in the Scottish LC work:



Meeting needs from a parents' perspective

Calderglen High School arranged a meeting where all school staff listened to parents' views on their child's support. This helped them to understand the difficulties experienced by learners.



Watch the video '[Meeting Needs from a Parent's Perspective](#)'.

The video shows the mother of a learner with ASN who discusses how the school met her son's needs. For the learner, knowing there were strategies in place to support him meant he could focus on his learning. The help available enabled him to develop independence and resilience to prepare him for the real world.

The work on growth mindset at Calderglen has also supported an increase in parents' involvement in their children's learning. The Maths faculty has produced a [Tips for Carers](#) booklet to help develop a consistent approach to learning between home and school.

The school also makes use of social media to keep in touch with parents and let them know about their children's success.

Schools need to provide clear information for all parents. To build relationships with parents who may be harder to reach, the school should provide flexible opportunities for them to become actively engaged in their child's learning process.

The following was a key message raised in the workshop discussions at the Raising Achievement International Conference in Malta:



Schools should try to find different ways to increase parental engagement and to keep close contact with parents who cannot always be present in school. This can be achieved by communicating through social media and by encouraging their participation in sporting activities or work placements.

(RA International Conference, workshop discussions)



A further example from IC Rosmini shows its success in engaging parents, providing mutual support and raising awareness of current issues.



Involving parents at IC Rosmini

The *Associazione Genitori Istituto Rosmini* – AGIR (IC Rosmini Parents' Association) sets out to develop parents' participation and commitment and supports the school in different aspects of school life. It also raises funds for specific projects and extra-curricular activities.

Activities include meeting with experts to discuss relevant topics (e.g. nutrition, bullying, SEN and inclusion), music events, book fairs and courses for parents and learners. The benefits noted include improving personal and other skills and developing knowledge and understanding of current issues in the school, for example an understanding of epilepsy.

For more information, refer to the presentation on the '[Role of Parents](#)' by IC Rosmini.

7.3.2. Create school-community partnerships



Research suggests...

Community partners, such as employers, can benefit from their relationships with schools, developing their own staff and influencing a future generation of potential employees. School-community activities may also challenge attitudes to inclusion and lead to the school's inclusive culture and practices influencing the wider community (Gross et al., 2015).

Community partnerships can contribute to positive learner outcomes when schools work with community members, agencies, organisations, businesses and industry around a common goal: to promote learner well-being and achievement.

Creating such change in the community requires commitment, knowledge and effective management. At the beginning of the RA project, all three LCs expressed a strong sense of commitment to local community activities and interests. They already had a variety of community partners, ranging from local businesses to universities. Throughout the project, they continued to increase their connections and to engage actively with their local communities.



Specific examples of the LCs' collaboration with external agencies are presented below.



The Polish LC partnerships

Participation in the Raising Achievement project allowed the Polish LC to learn directly from others who promote inclusive practice, nationally and across Europe. Thanks to the RA project networking activities, the school has initiated closer collaboration with the local university. As a result, internships were organised in the school. The deputy head teacher explained that this idea arose from conversations with the external RA project experts: 'We realised that we needed researchers to get knowledge into the school'.

The school has organised visits from international university professors and co-operates with the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also works in partnership with the Special Pedagogic Academy in Warsaw. Their common activities include:

- creating projects and developing a new curriculum for learners which takes account of labour market requirements;
- implementing findings from scientific research and projects, including those co-financed by the EU;
- creating common research teams;
- sharing teaching staff to carry out practical or theoretical classes;
- reviewing the curriculum and study plans;
- providing workshops in the school and mentoring the interns.

Also refer to the presentation on '[Developing Partnership with Universities](#)'.



Community links in Calderglen

Learners from Calderglen are offered courses in sports journalism, health and well-being, community sports leadership and a football studies masterclass with the local community football club. Such courses strengthen school-community partnership and provide valuable opportunities for developing relevant skills and knowledge in a highly motivating context. This has a positive effect on attendance and work in other areas of the curriculum, leading to improved literacy, communication skills, health and well-being.



For more information, watch the [‘Sports Journalism and Football Studies’](#) video.

Other community links include work with a group of local people with dementia, organised with the local health authority. Here, learners work in pairs with these adults helping them to document their life story. In addition to the mutual benefits gained from the weekly meetings, the learners type up the text, scan photographs and produce a book which the adults can use for regular conversations about their lives.



The [‘Global Citizenship’ video](#) gives more information about the school’s links with the local community and its work at international level to develop global citizenship.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources from Learning Communities

Work on Growth Mindset – Calderglen

[Developing a growth mindset for success](#)

This gives an outline of key ideas in developing a growth mindset (Physical Education faculty).

[Growth mindset: permeating our teaching](#)

This sets out the challenges of changing the mindset of learners in Maths and also discusses parental involvement (Maths faculty).

[Growing mindsets: growing a community](#) – *Affecting the mindsets of staff, pupils, parents and carers*

This provides information on staff training and developing the school's culture.

Flexible use of space – IC Rosmini

Practice at IC Rosmini emphasised the importance of space and flexibility and the impact that this has on learning. The following video includes this dimension.



[IC Rosmini video](#)

[From the why to the how](#)

IC Rosmini's focus on the identified priorities for the RA project.

Guidelines for support teachers – ITA Sereni

[Guidelines developed by ITA Sereni](#)

These guidelines (in Italian) focus on effective practice in collaborating to support learners with additional needs.

Materials from Raising Achievement International Conference in Malta

[Inclusive Education and Raising Achievement](#): *the project conceptual framework*

Presentation by V. Donnelly, European Agency

[Managing educational change](#) – *building learning communities*

Presentation by P. Skoglund, Project Consultant

[Education for All](#)

Presentation by D. Gauci, Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta



[Looking forward](#): *Emerging policy implications from the Raising Achievement project*

Presentation by V. Donnelly, European Agency

[Raising the Achievement of All Learners](#) – *Key Messages from the Conference*

Presentation by A. Morganti, University of Perugia, Italy

Evidence-Based Education: European Strategic Model for School Inclusion (EBE-EUSMOSI)

The [EBE-EUSMOSI project](#) has developed a tool focused on two dimensions of inclusion:

- Part A: 'The Inclusive Organization' (self-assessment relating to the school)
- Part B: 'Inclusive Didactics' (self-assessment relating to the class)

Also 'Objective Indicators for the Quality of Inclusion'

Also refer to the presentation [The Italian 'Algorithm' for Inclusion](#) by A. Morganti, Rome, 2016

Resources from project participants and Agency member countries

[Listening to Learners](#) video, UK (Scotland)

This video looks at the importance of learner voice.

Education Scotland, 2015. [How Good is our School?](#) 4th Edition

School self-review materials

[Achievement for All](#), UK (England)

Information about a programme that brings together leaders, teachers, parents and carers to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

Also refer to the [Engaging Parents](#) presentation

[Curriculum and assessment reform in Ireland](#)

A video about involving learners in curriculum reform.

Information on the [Leuven Well-being and Involvement Scales](#)

Information about scales to assess learner well-being and involvement (Laevers, 1994).

[Health and well-being questionnaire for learners](#), Finland

Information about monitoring learners' well-being, health and school work in Finland.

The support system in Finland: [Raising Achievement through Educational Equity](#)



[Listening to learners toolkit, UK \(Wales\)](#)

Materials developed to involve learners in curriculum review.

[Organisation of Provision country visit reports](#)

Reports from the Agency's Organisation of Provision project showing how schools in Austria, Germany, Malta, Slovenia and Sweden included all learners (please refer to the 'Transformation Strategies' section of the reports).

[NFER blog on school collaboration](#)

A discussion about enablers and barriers to effective school-to-school partnership working.

Resources from international organisations

UNESCO

[A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education](#) (2017)

This guide offers practical support to countries to review how well equity and inclusion feature in policies and decide what actions need to be taken to improve.

United Nations Human Rights

[General Comment no. 4 on Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education](#) (2016)

This comment sets out concerns of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities about the barriers that impede access to inclusive education for people with disabilities.

Council of Europe

[Tool to Upgrade Teacher Education Practices for Inclusive Education](#)

Materials to improve teacher competences and practice for inclusive education.

UNICEF

- [Identifying and Promoting Good Practice in Equity and Child-Friendly Education](#)

Support for an equity-focused approach to inclusive education.

- [Companion Technical Booklets](#) – webinar series

A series of booklets, available in several languages, that address key issues in inclusive education.



- Training-of-Trainers Modules on Inclusive Education

The main purpose of these training modules is to help participants to develop an ‘inner map’ to help guide them on the path towards inclusive education.

Introductory Module: [Linking Theory to Practice](#)

Module 1: [Inclusive Education: Vision, Theory and Concepts](#)

Module 2: [Working Together to Create Inclusive Schools](#)

Resources from other organisations

[Six Steps to Outstanding Learning](#)

The Evidence Based Teachers Network provides information on evidence-based teaching. It draws on five main sources of evidence in the field of educational attainment and combines these with findings from neuroscience to come up with the Six Steps to Outstanding Learning.

[Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation](#) project (USA)

[SWIFT Guide](#) provides a video, discussion guide and additional resources for each of the SWIFT domains:

- Multi-tiered systems of support (inclusive academic instruction; inclusive behaviour instruction)
- Administrative leadership (strong and engaged site leadership; strong educator support system)
- Integrated educational framework (full integrated organisational structure; strong and positive school culture)
- Community engagement (trusting family partnerships; trusting community partnerships)
- Inclusive policy structure and practice (strong local educational agency/school relationships; local educational agency policy framework).

Other resources, research to practice briefs and webinars are available in the [Resource Shelf](#) section of the SWIFT website.

Education Endowment Foundation [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#)

The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit is an accessible summary of educational research. It provides guidance for teachers and schools on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. The Toolkit aims to support teachers to make their own informed choices and adopt a more ‘evidence-based’ approach.

Summary of [evidence and information on cost-effectiveness](#) of approaches to teaching and learning



University of Cambridge: [Getting started with Assessment for Learning](#)

Resource for professional development on assessment for learning.

[Learning without Limits](#)

Information and resources from the Learning without Limits project.

[Indicators of Inclusive Schools: Continuing the Conversation \(Alberta, Canada\)](#)

This resource offers information and tools that school leaders can use to reflect on how their schools are demonstrating an inclusive approach. Indicators are organised around five dimensions:

1. Establishing Inclusive Values and Principles
2. Building Inclusive Learning Environments
3. Providing Supports for Success
4. Organising Learning and Instruction
5. Engaging with Parents and the Community.

[European Toolkit for Schools: Promoting inclusive education and tackling early school leaving](#)

The toolkit offers ideas for improving collaboration within, between and beyond schools with a view to enabling all children and young people to succeed. The resources are organised around five areas:

1. School governance
2. Teachers
3. Support to learners
4. Parental involvement
5. Stakeholders' involvement.

[Teacher Academy: a European response to teachers' professional development needs](#)

The European Commission launched Teacher Academy as a single point of access to professional development activities, including:

- a new service of online courses specifically made for School Education Gateway;
- on-site courses, which have already helped European teachers to meet their training needs;
- versatile teaching materials created by the EU institutions and EU-funded projects.

Resources for teaching growth mindset

- [Mindset Works](#)



- The [Mindset Kit](#) is a free set of online lessons and practices designed to help you teach and foster adaptive beliefs about learning.
- [Resources for Teaching Growth Mindset](#)

Further reading

Leadership Dialogues: Conversations and activities for leadership teams (2015), by John West-Burnham and Dave Harris

This supports conversations and activities for leadership teams and includes some self-review materials for use with different stakeholder groups.

Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools (2011), Third Edition, by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow

What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research (2011), by Robert Coe, Cesare Aloisi, Steve Higgins and Lee Elliot Major

Developing Great Teaching: Lessons from the international reviews into effective professional development (2011), by P. Cordingley, S. Higgins, T. Greany, N. Buckler, D. Coles-Jordan, B. Crisp, L. Saunders and R. Coe

The Science of Learning (2015), by Deans for Impact, Texas, USA

What Works in Classroom Instruction? (2000), by Robert J. Marzano, Barbara B. Gaddy and Ceri Dean

Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know (2012), by Barak Rosenshine



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ANNEX 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

Table 1. The framework of inclusive pedagogy

Principle/underlying assumption	Associated concepts/actions	Key challenges	What to look for in practice
Difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning	<p>Believing all pupils can learn and make progress – learning potential is open-ended</p> <p>Rejecting deterministic views of ability</p> <p>Ability grouping as organisation of support is rejected</p> <p>Using language that expresses the value of all pupils</p> <p>Employing social constructivist approaches</p>	<p>A comparison to the 'normal' pupil</p> <p>Notions of fixed ability</p>	<p>Teaching practices include all pupils</p> <p>Opportunities for pupils to participate in co-construction of knowledge are provided</p> <p>Creating rich learning environments by extending what is ordinarily available to all learners</p> <p>Differentiation achieved through choices of activities for everyone</p> <p>Teaching and learning is focused on what pupils can do rather than what they can not</p> <p>Formative assessment is used to support learning</p> <p>Pupils are grouped to support everybody's learning</p> <p>Interdependence between teachers and pupils to create new knowledge</p>



Principle/underlying assumption	Associated concepts/actions	Key challenges	What to look for in practice
<p>Teachers believe that they are qualified/capable of teaching all pupils</p>	<p>Demonstrating how the difficulties pupils experience in learning can be considered as dilemmas for teaching</p> <p>Commitment to the support of all learners – believing in own capability to promote the learning for all pupils</p>	<p>Teachers believing that some pupils are not their responsibility</p>	<p>Focus on what is to be taught rather than who is to learn it</p> <p>Opportunities are provided for pupils to choose the level at which they engage with learning</p> <p>Quality of relationship between teacher and pupil</p> <p>Difficulties in learning are viewed as professional challenges for the teacher rather than deficits in pupils</p> <p>Interest in the welfare of the pupil as a person, not just his/her learning</p> <p>Flexibility in teaching – driven by needs of pupils, not the coverage of subject matter</p>
<p>Teachers continually develop creative new ways of working with others</p>	<p>Willingness to work with and through others</p> <p>Modelling creative/new ways of working</p> <p>Focusing on pupils in relationship to each other rather than in isolation</p>	<p>Changing thinking about inclusion from most and some, to everybody</p>	<p>Interplay between professional stance and the stance of the school – creating spaces for inclusion wherever possible</p> <p>Trying out new or different ways of working to support the learning of all pupils</p>



Principle/underlying assumption	Associated concepts/actions	Key challenges	What to look for in practice
			<p>Working with and through other adults in ways that respect the dignity of learners as full members in the classroom community</p> <p>Being committed to continuing professional development as a way to develop more inclusive practice</p> <p>Collaborate and discuss with teachers and support staff to create inclusive learning spaces</p>

Source: Óskarsdóttir, 2017, pp. 121–122, adapted from Florian and Spratt, 2013; Florian, 2014; 2015



ANNEX 2. SPECTRUM OF LEARNER VOICE-ORIENTED ACTIVITY

The Spectrum of Learner Voice-Oriented Activity

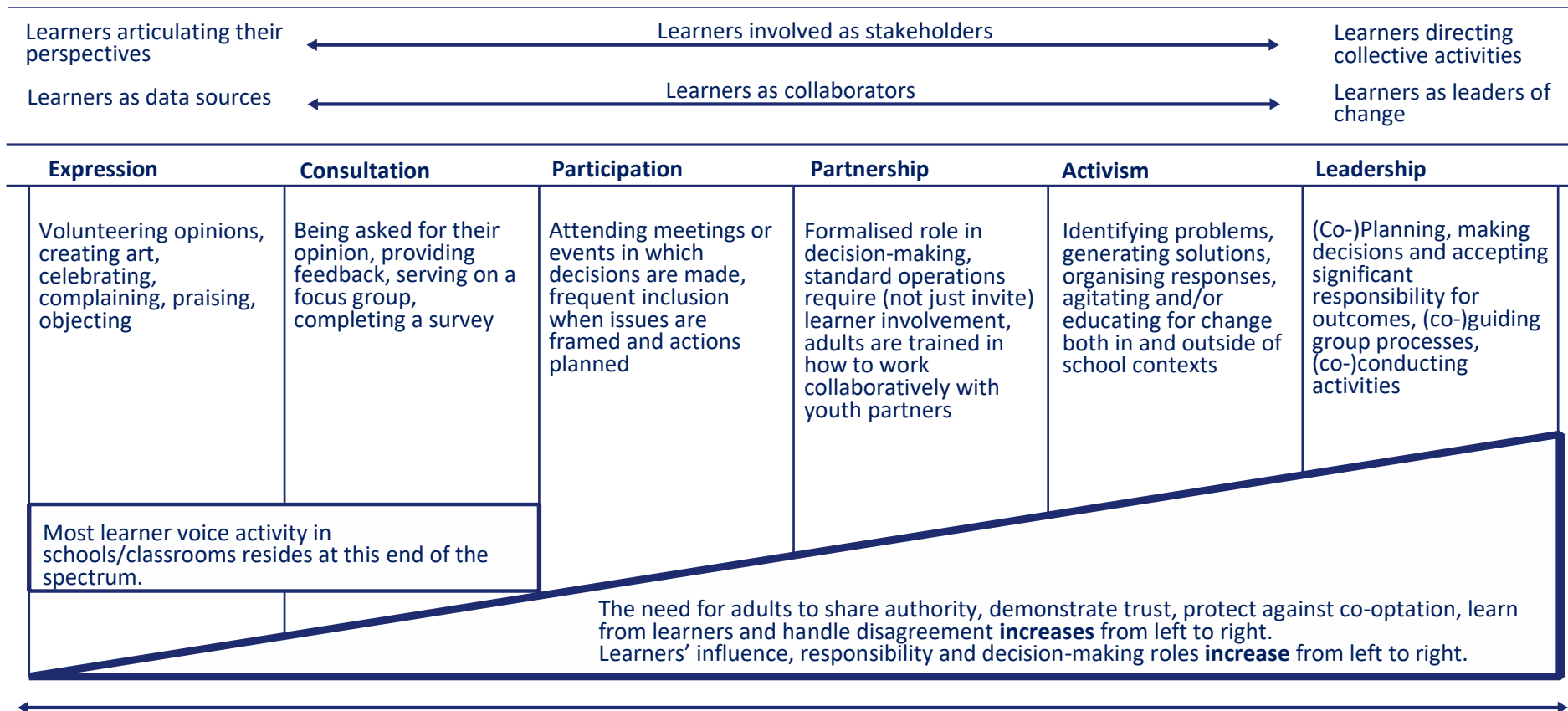


Figure 7. The spectrum of learner voice-oriented activity

Source: adapted from Toshalis and Nakkula, 2012



ANNEX 3. SUMMARY OF CONTENT TO GUIDE REFLECTION

This summary sets out the key questions and points for each RA action that this guidance presents. For each action, there are links to the relevant sections of the project [self-review resource](#).

Create a raising achievement culture

(Refer to self-review section: [Leadership roles and approaches](#))

How do we create an inclusive ethos?

- Establish inclusive school principles
- Enable access and raise expectations
- Focus on well-being
- Build trusting relationships

How do we engage with research?

- Try out research-informed approaches
- Take part in action research

Lift limits on learning

(Refer to self-review sections: [Pedagogy for all learners](#) and [Curriculum development](#))

How can we make our pedagogy more inclusive?

- Understand inclusive pedagogy in practice
- Focus on learning

How do we develop an authentic approach to curriculum and assessment?

- Develop a broader curriculum
- Embed assessment for learning



Develop a system of mutual support

(Refer to self-review section: [Support for learning](#))

How do we support learners at risk of under-achievement?

- Work in multi-professional teams
- Make the best use of support staff

How can we support teachers?

(Refer to self-review section: [Support systems for staff and leaders](#))

- Provide on-going professional learning opportunities
- Engage in collaborative activities that focus on school priorities

How can we support leaders?

- Create leadership training opportunities
- Develop local school leadership teams

Nurture all learners

(Refer to self-review section: [Learner well-being and participation](#))

How can we get to know our learners?

- Listen to learners' voices
- Increase learner-oriented activities

How do we help learners to develop a growth mindset?

- Focus on learner effort
- Develop a repertoire of learning approaches

Share leadership

(Refer to self-review section: [Leadership roles and approaches](#))

How do we secure commitment to the RA agenda?

- Communicate an inclusive vision
- Turn challenges into opportunities

How can we share leadership tasks?

- Develop a network of colleagues
- Involve the wider school community



Focus on what matters

(Refer to self-review section: [Leadership roles and approaches](#))

How can we use data to raise achievement?

- Monitor progress on an on-going basis
- Use external reference points

How do we monitor learner participation and engagement in learning?

- Identify barriers to participation and engagement
- Consider the causes of disengagement

How do we evaluate our school policy and practice?

- Focus on fair access
- Use a range of self-review materials

Achieve more together

(Refer to self-review section: [Partnerships and collaborative working](#))

How can we collaborate in school?

- Build partnerships with specialists
- Plan change collaboratively

How can we collaborate with other schools/support services?

- Share common goals
- Develop special schools as resources

How can we collaborate with the local community?

- Involve families
- Create school-community partnerships

Secretariat:

Østre Stationsvej 33
DK-5000
Odense C
Denmark
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office:

Rue Montoyer 21
BE-1000
Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80
brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org

