



BRILL

From the Editors

Welcome to the summer 2022 edition of *Scottish Educational Review*. The Journal was founded in 1968 and retains a unique place in the Scottish educational landscape while today serving an international audience. This edition is distinguished by being the very first to be published online and open access with the publishing house Brill. This new location and mode of publishing opens a new chapter in its story. As editors, we are excited by the possibilities of this new partnership which broadens our reach to a truly worldwide community of researchers and educational professionals. It is our earnest hope and expectation that this new accessibility and extended international influence will encourage and continue to support research collaboration within Scotland and beyond.

Recent editorials have understandably focused on the pandemic context and its implications for education and educational research. As we emerge from the pandemic with varying degrees of trepidation, its longer-term impacts are becoming more apparent. Three of the papers raise issues pertinent to the building of a socially just post-pandemic education system. We open with a contribution from Stephen **Edgar** which explores how ‘the tricky concept of equity’ has been recontextualised and reframed in recent Scottish policy discourse. Arguing that the ‘concept’ is used carelessly in policy, he identifies five various definitions of which only one – responsiveness to individual needs – reflects the accepted social scientific definition of the term. He argues that this narrower definition has more transformative potential than the more data-driven or equality-oriented conceptions proliferating within contemporary policy. Taking a more equality-oriented approach, **Shanks** and **McKinney** undertake a detailed analysis of the school uniform policies of Scottish high schools and the significant hidden costs associated with these. They argue that both that costs should be lowered – by making affordability a statutory consideration in uniform policy – and that direct financial support to poorer families should be increased.

Increasingly, educational professionals must navigate these questions of equity and individual support in relation to the mental wellbeing of young people. While it is probably too early to assess the impact of COVID-19 and associated lockdowns, there is emerging evidence that this problem is becoming more acute: in February 2022 more than 400,000 young people were referred

to the UK NHS for mental health support. Christine **McKee** and Mark **Breslin** explore the range of ways in which teachers in a single Scottish school understood their responsibilities with respect to the mental wellbeing of young people. Their research suggests that the 'given responsibility' distribution in policy discourse and documentation is interpreted in different ways, leading to a large variation in teachers' 'felt responsibility.'

In many educational systems, these questions of equity, access and wellbeing are intended to be addressed through curriculum design. **Hizli-Alkan's** paper compares the curriculum making practices in Wales and Scotland and suggests that practices in the two countries differ markedly, despite the superficial similarity of their curriculum policies. In Wales, she identifies stronger curriculum-making support at regional level which offers more potential to unlock teachers' creativity than has been seen in Scotland. In an engagement with both curriculum and pedagogy, **Adil's** paper on the use of critical literacy pedagogies in religious education within a Pakistani school offers an object lesson in the power of co-constructed curricula in unlocking transformative learning experiences.

As we develop our exciting partnership with Brill, it is important that the journal retains its traditions and unique place in the landscape of Scottish educational research. With this in mind, the journal closes, as always with our two regular features. **Redford** offers her usual Report on Education in the Scottish Parliament which shows policymakers dealing with the continuing effects of Covid alongside the critical conclusions of the 2021 OECD Report, '*Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future*'. In our book reviews section, **Robertson** reviews '*Visions of Education*', a retrospective of the work of the late Tom Conlon. A Scottish scholar with a global reputation, Conlon was a great loss to the educational community, but also an inspiration to us as editors, and to the future direction of journal.

Our partnership with Brill is an opportunity to showcase the best that Scottish educational research has to offer. We are enormously grateful to colleagues who have acted as reviewers for this edition, and we continue to invite submissions on any and all educational issues.

Joe Smith and Robert Doherty
Editors