



Improving Our Classrooms (IOC) is a visionary Glasgow City Council Education Services initiative which responded to the needs of its teachers and to *Teaching: Scotland's Future*. In September 2011, Glasgow City Council Education Services, in conjunction with ASPECT took the lead in Scotland in piloting CLPL that provided an intensive course, which encouraged depth of learning over an extended period of time for Primary Class Teachers. Improving our Classrooms recognised that teacher quality is the key to meeting the needs of learners in the 21st Century and developing *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Two interrelated principles are that the key to teacher quality lies in **professional development** and that professional development needs to support the important **role of the class teacher in improving our classrooms** more effectively than in the past.

This ground breaking initiative was developed by Professor Christopher Mc Ilroy and to date approximately 350 teachers have been successful in undertaking Improving our Classrooms and either achieving Professional Recognition or Masters Level Accreditation from Glasgow Caledonia University. Improving Our Classrooms is presently on Cohort 14 and a Quality Improvement Officer has the Strategic Remit for leading Improving Our Classrooms supported by a Primary Headteacher who is seconded two days a week.

Improving Our Classrooms is an excellent opportunity for Primary Class Teachers to be part of a programme which aims to create reflective staff capable of very effectively teaching and improving outcomes for learners. Participation on the programme supports Class Teachers to appreciate that classroom self-evaluation is a vital tool in improving children's achievement and attainment. Teachers are expected to complete an Improvement Project and there is strong evidence to show the outstanding impact this has had in classrooms across the city.

The course is continually updated to take account of the most up to date priorities of the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council Priorities such as Raising Attainment for All, The Scottish Attainment Challenge, How Good is Our School 4 and in particular Glasgow's Improvement Challenge.

Improving Our Classrooms focuses explicitly on **improvement through self-evaluation at the classroom level** and it takes place over a four month period with course content being delivered over three days and five twilights covering The Curriculum, Learning and Teaching and Assessment. It coaches practising class teachers in developing their skills and understanding in order to identify priorities and raise attainment at classroom level. Sessions are designed explicitly to develop and apply the understanding that teachers need to identify the most important aspects which they can change to promote improvement in their class and to review their impact. Teachers form trios to encourage self and peer evaluation and partnership working, and there is a clear focus on improvements to the success and achievements of their learners. Teachers are expected to visit each other's classrooms, share judgements and provide constructive evidence-based comment to each other.

In order to further support teachers in their self-evaluation and improvement project and to ensure further partnership working and continual improvement, Senior Leaders across the city have now been offered opportunities to be involved in a newly devised mentoring role in partnership with Glasgow Caledonia University. Cohort 14 have all been matched with a Mentor who is guiding and supporting them through the improvement process. The majority of these mentors have successfully completed IOC in the past.

Teachers submit a five thousand word Improvement Project at the end of Improving Our Classrooms and if successful are awarded GTCS Accreditation and 30 Master Level Credits from Glasgow City Council which are validated by Caledonia University. This award is celebrated at an Awards Ceremony where a member of Education Directorate recognises the hard work and commitment of teachers to providing the highest possible quality of education and improving outcomes for our children and young people. Discussions are presently taking place with Glasgow Caledonia University make positive additions to Improving Our Classrooms to raise the accreditation to Post Graduate Certificate Level with 60 credits.

To strengthen leadership opportunities and have a more joined up city approach to leadership at classroom level, a partnership has been formed with Glasgow's Improvement Challenge to target Challenge Leaders of Learning and link the IOC Improvement Project with GIC 'How Good is Our Project' to ensure there is a streamlined approach where staff receive appropriate accreditation on their Masters Journey.

Plans are also in place to offer Improving Our Classrooms to other Local Authorities within the West Partnership. At present there is one teacher attending Cohort 14 from South Lanarkshire.