FROM THE EDITORS

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This edition of the *Scottish Educational Review* reflects the approach we have adopted in previous volumes where we seek to present work from across the education sectors and from different specialisms in the wider discipline of education. We begin with the SERA Lecture delivered by Lani Florian at the joint SERA/WERA Conference held in November 2014 in Edinburgh. We continue to enjoy a close professional relationship with SERA and are pleased to publish this important article. This article addresses a key concern in Scottish education as schools grapple with the task of realising fully inclusive education. The policy focus on inclusive education has raised many issues particularly around ‘accommodating’ diverse groups of learners within mainstream education without fundamentally changing teaching and learning. Lani Florian challenges us to consider this area anew, in this article she explores the concept and practice of ‘inclusive pedagogies’ as a means of challenging some of the assumptions that can impede efforts to include diverse groups of learners in mainstream education. The article draws from studies of those teachers who have been successfully in enabling diverse groups of learners achieve. This theme of inclusion is continued in the second article by Ewelina Rydzewska and Anne Pirrie, this time the focus is on inclusion from the perspective of a group of people with a diagnosis of Asperger’s syndrome as they reflect on the transition to adulthood. In this article the authors explore specifically the issue of risk behaviour with data presented based on the experiences of this group. These findings raise significant questions about the ways in which education and other services need to evolve in order to support young people with disabilities make the transition to adulthood. They propose the concept of ‘emerging adulthood’, a potentially process for some groups of people. This is a useful concept given current policy emphasises ‘positive destinations for all’ which emphasises shorter term destinations rather than the longer process of transition explored in this article.

These first two articles highlight the way in which research in Scottish education can contribute to the growing body of scholarship in the area of inclusive education each providing key concepts to be drawn on in future development and research. Leadership is another area where international exchanges are a significant part of the extensive body of research. Therefore we are pleased that in the third article we look beyond Scottish education. The third article draws from work in New
Zealand to consider the role of school leadership in ‘high-needs schools’. This article by Ross Notman draws from case studies conducted in New Zealand which are part of an international study on school leadership. The concept of ‘high needs’ can cover a wide variety of circumstances and Notman explores the way this concept could be developed in New Zealand but it is worth considering wider application of this idea in the development and research. The study highlights the range of skills and personal qualities school leaders need to be able to work successfully in such demanding environments. Scotland is also contributing to this research programme and we hope to publish material from the Scottish strand on social justice leadership in a future edition.

The influence of international developments is also evident in the fourth article by Carey Philpott and Catriona Oates and makes an important scholarly contribution to the practice of ‘learning rounds’. This is an idea that has captured the policy imagination in Scottish education. As the authors note versions of learning rounds are being implemented across schools in Scotland. This article presents the findings from a critical literature review and highlights the lack of conceptual clarity around the constructs of learning rounds and instructional rounds. It also reveals the limited empirical evidence to support the claims made about the efficacy of such practices. Importantly, the authors go back to the practice of ‘medical rounds’, often perceived as the inspiration for learning rounds, and reveal a number of significant tensions which are important considerations in the development of both policy and practice in the use of learning rounds.

We end this volume with another article from Walter Humes that explores the work of the radical educationalist AS Neill from a specifically Scottish perspective, an aspect where there has only been limited discussion previously. As Walter Humes points out, AS Neill was educated in Scotland and his first experiences as an educator were also in Scotland. Humes firstly, appraises Neill's writings on Scottish education which were often highly critical. Humes then examines the way in which Neill's work has influenced radical reformers in Scottish education. It is interesting to reflect on the work of these ‘radicals’ who were often criticized severely and marginalised and compare their ideas and reforms to what is now seen as effective practice in Scottish education.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to the call for papers for a themed edition of the Scottish Educational Review. Scottish education is a small system serving a population of approximately 5 million. However, as we have seen in the contributions to this volume as in previous volumes, the study of education in a small system has much to contribute to wider scholarship. As education policy and practice becomes increasingly globalised with supranational organisations exerting an influence on national systems, this seems an apposite time to explore education in a small system. For this special edition we are seeking contributions related to theoretical considerations, analysis of policy generation and policy critique and investigations into the development of practice across the educational sectors within small educational systems.