

## Media Release

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### SCIS sets out its stall

#### Vision and Values – Independent Schools in Scotland

*[Note: As there are different legal and regulatory issues affecting independent schools north and south of the border, Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) publishes a separate review from ISC (Independent Schools Council), based London, whose “manifesto” is to be launched on 16 March.]*

SCIS, the foremost authority on independent schools in Scotland, is today (15 March 2010) issuing its annual review, **Activities and Achievements 2009, Vision and Values 2010** in which SCIS sets out its stall under the four headings of **Education, Regulation, Promotion** and **Collaboration** and shares its future plans. A PDF of the document can also be viewed at

[www.scis.org.uk/assets/files/SCIS\\_Achievements\\_Activities\\_2009\\_Vision\\_Values\\_2010.pdf](http://www.scis.org.uk/assets/files/SCIS_Achievements_Activities_2009_Vision_Values_2010.pdf)

Summary extracts are below:

#### **Education**

SCIS is represented on the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board, the Scottish Qualifications Authority Advisory Council, the General Teaching Council for Scotland and many national committees and working groups. This gives the independent sector access to the key participants in Scottish education, a voice at the negotiating table and a direct channel through which concerns can be communicated. ***Through SCIS’s work with Ministers and Scottish Government Departments, the sector has become more widely recognised and has strengthened its position as a respected partner in the development of education in Scotland.*** SCIS has created a permanent position in Scottish education for the 32,000 children and 7,000 staff in the independent sector. The wide-ranging SCIS CPD programme is recognised for its high quality and helps to bring together knowledge, talent and expertise, to facilitate professional dialogue and to showcase good practice from different schools.

## Regulation

SCIS has developed positive working relationships with the regulatory bodies – HM Inspectorate of Education, Care Commission, Scottish Social Services Council, Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator – to ensure not only that the sector is compliant but also to be able to work in partnership to raise standards, exemplify good practice and effect improvements. ***In all cases the regulatory bodies have responded positively by listening to SCIS, by working with SCIS as colleagues and jointly managing the complexities of the regulatory burden on schools.*** SCIS has been instrumental in influencing discussions with Scottish Government, lobbying MSPs on key issues and representing the views of the sector.

## Promotion

Through its marketing, communications and research strategies, SCIS has raised the profile of the independent sector, consolidated its reputation, enhanced the material on the website and made the advice to parents more user-friendly. ***SCIS has helped to widen access to independent schools by encouraging interested parents to make the initial approach, by reaching out to wider catchment areas and by offering guidance on applying for financial assistance.*** Linking and promoting SCIS's activities through common themes has created a more corporate approach and strengthened the position of the sector.

## Collaboration

Working together as a sector and with colleagues from different sectors has proved that there is strength in pooling resources, in sharing ideas, in stimulating debate, and in learning from each other. ***Working collaboratively with the Government, with partners in education, with the Regulator, the press and the media similarly produces positive results. It opens doorways, facilitates discussion and develops partnerships of mutual benefit.*** Working with parents and the wider public opens our minds to new ideas, to perceptions and misconceptions that the sector will seriously consider.

## Future Plans

SCIS is a responsive organisation, focused on meeting the needs of its member schools, and a proactive, representative body, ensuring that the voice of the sector is heard. Given the economic climate, the pressures on parents, the charity reviews, the complexities of regulation and the importance of providing a sound education to 32,000 children, SCIS's Governing Board has identified priorities for 2010 including:

- consolidating and strengthening the sector
- supporting parents and schools during the recession
- guiding schools on meeting the charity test
- enhancing the reputation of and respect for the sector
- encouraging the sharing of good practice
- making information transparent and accessible
- promoting the excellence of education provided to a diverse range of young people across Scotland

Judith Sischy OBE, Director of SCIS said, ***“Our annual review gives us an opportunity to share with a wider audience our aims and achievements of the past year and our values and our vision for the future. We have continued our efforts to support schools, to promote the independent sector and to engage with the wider educational community in Scotland. There will be undoubted challenges in the years ahead when our efforts will continue to be focused on doing our best for the 32,000 children and 7,000 staff in our schools.”***

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact Judith Sischy or Sarah Randell on 0131 220 2106.**

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Mission:**

Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) is an independent, non-political educational charity (Scottish Charity SCO18033) representing over 70 member schools in Scotland.

Mainstream, Special and Specialist schools in membership of SCIS educate more than 32,000 children of mixed abilities from diverse backgrounds. SCIS promotes choice, diversity and excellence in Scottish education.

### **Objectives:**

SCIS’s strategic objectives are to provide a professional service to member schools that is supportive, relevant and of high quality; to represent and promote the interests of the independent schools; and to enable the sector to make a worthwhile contribution to the development of education in Scotland.