

Foreword

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After the shock of the “Pandemic Years” the educational news has shifted to grand movements in curriculum and assessment – system-level reviews in a substantial number of nations, assessment innovations driven by digital innovation and artificial intelligence (AI). It does feel as though tectonic plates are shifting. But innovation needs to continue at a micro as well as a macro level, driven by a commitment to accumulation of scientific knowledge about learning and measurement. The articles in this edition of *Research Matters* indeed show that research matters – meticulous scrutiny of how innovative approaches in awarding actually work; meticulous examination of pupil work. It may feel like “looking down” when everyone else is looking up, scanning the landscape for massive change, but the hard business of well-designed empirical research needs to continue – it provides the solid base both for innovation in assessment and for curriculum change. A standout feature of exam boards is that they sit on top of massive amounts of data about human performance – exam scripts and the responses to other assessments contain the evidence of what people think, what they know and what they can do. The articles include exemplary approaches to probing these data not just for curiosity-driven purposes but for a means of improving what we do in assessment and learning.