

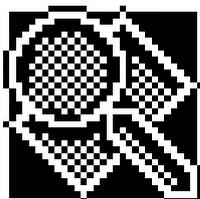
## Action on Ethos

*This case study describes how all staff, children and families in a small rural school have been involved in developing a positive ethos of achievement whereby **all** pupils have an on-going opportunity to achieve. While the school has had success in winning many awards, particularly in arts and music at the same time no other area of the curriculum has been sidelined: a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school has been sustained and enjoyed.*

*A positive ethos and enhanced achievement for all have gone hand-in-hand.*

Fulton Ps

I like my school because you learn.



### Achaleven Primary School

Connel  
Oban  
PA37 1PH  
Argyll & Bute  
Tel: 01631 710 529  
Contact: Fay Black, Headteacher

## 1 Background

Achaleven Primary School is a small rural school in the village of Connel, five miles from Oban. It has at present a roll of sixty two. The building which consists of two classrooms, a classroom/dining room, staffroom, office, storage areas and toilets is very inadequate for the present number of pupils. Classroom furniture has to be moved each morning to allow a small space for daily PE. Once a week we have the use of the village hall for PE lessons – this is a ten minute walk from the school. Teaching staff consists of Headteacher and three assistant teachers. A specialist PE teacher visits a half day each week.

## 2 School Aims

Our school aims, formulated by staff and approved by the school board, are:

- to establish and maintain a good classroom ethos in which all pupils are motivated to learn
- to set a good example and to foster good relationships with pupils
- to have high, but attainable, expectations of pupils in respect of academic performance and good behaviour
- to ensure that pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills, are encouraged to become independent, resourceful and responsible and are able to work purposefully on their own and with others
- to foster positive attitudes
- to provide equal opportunities for all pupils
- to communicate effectively with parents, school board and all interested parties
- to present a curriculum which is both broad and balanced and reflects the National Guidelines on the Structure and Balance of the Curriculum.
- to celebrate achievement.

## 3 Evaluation

To find out if we were meeting those aims we decided as far back as 1989 to carry out a whole school evaluation – parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils were involved. This was a very interesting exercise and for us a very positive experience. After the evaluation a public meeting was held to discuss matters raised. Plans were put in place to improve our playground and to make it more attractive. This was the first time the pupils were asked their opinion of the school – they were amazed that their opinion was valued; this was particularly so when they had the opportunity to say what made a good

## Notes

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teacher! Since 1989 a similar exercise has been carried out every three years. Providing such opportunities for the whole school community to become involved in evaluation has strengthened links between home and school in a way no other activity would have done.

I think school is cool, fun, experience, hard work, not boring at all.

Catriona Davies P6

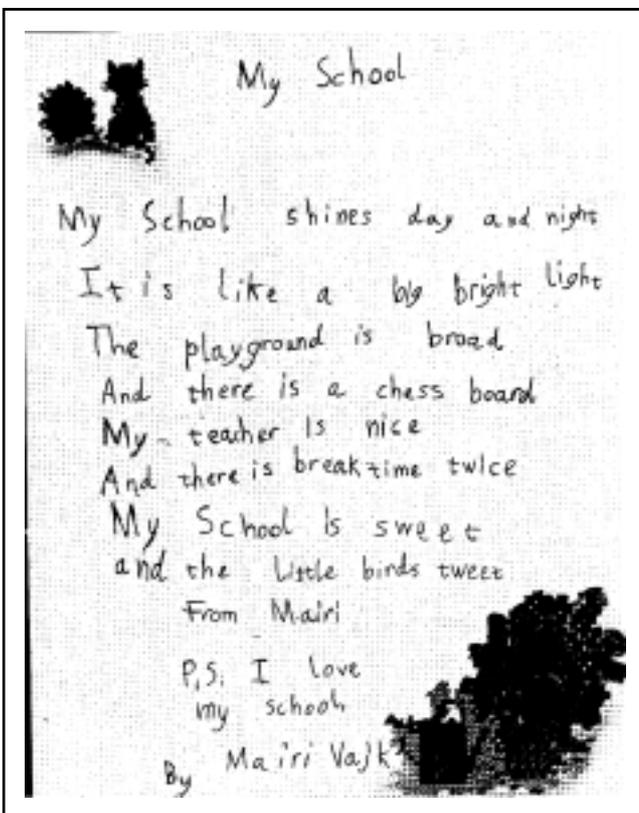
## 4 Esteem Building

We see ourselves as one large family supporting each other and caring for each other. Pupils are encouraged to build up one another and never to put down. Esteem building is a major part of our personal and social development studies. Our rules, which are positive, have been decided by the pupils. They are revised from time to time as the need arises. Pupils have designed pennants for the rules and they are displayed in each classroom.

## 5 Achievement

There is nothing like success to breed success and this has certainly been so in Achaleven. The successes in Art, Music, Science, Technology, the Schools Curriculum Award, being runner-up in Scottish Schools Ethos Network Award and achieving the Investors in People Award have all boosted the confidence of our pupils and staff and given the community reason to be proud of their achievements.

We believe firmly in celebrating achievement. Achievement does not only mean success in school but success also on the football pitch, at shinty, karate, swimming, dancing, cycling proficiency etc. Each session P2-7 have a ten week swimming block, P4-7 also have tennis instruction. When pupils leave at the end of Primary 7 they take with them a Primary Record of Achievement this contains samples of work chosen by them from P1-P7 as well as certificates, photographs of medals, photocopies of cuttings from local newspapers, Music Festival adjudications etc. All children have achievements at what are, for each individual, real challenges. All pupils take part in the annual Music Festival either playing an instrument or singing as part of a choir or folk group or singing solos. This Record of Achievement has been an outstanding success in the eyes of pupils, parents and staff.



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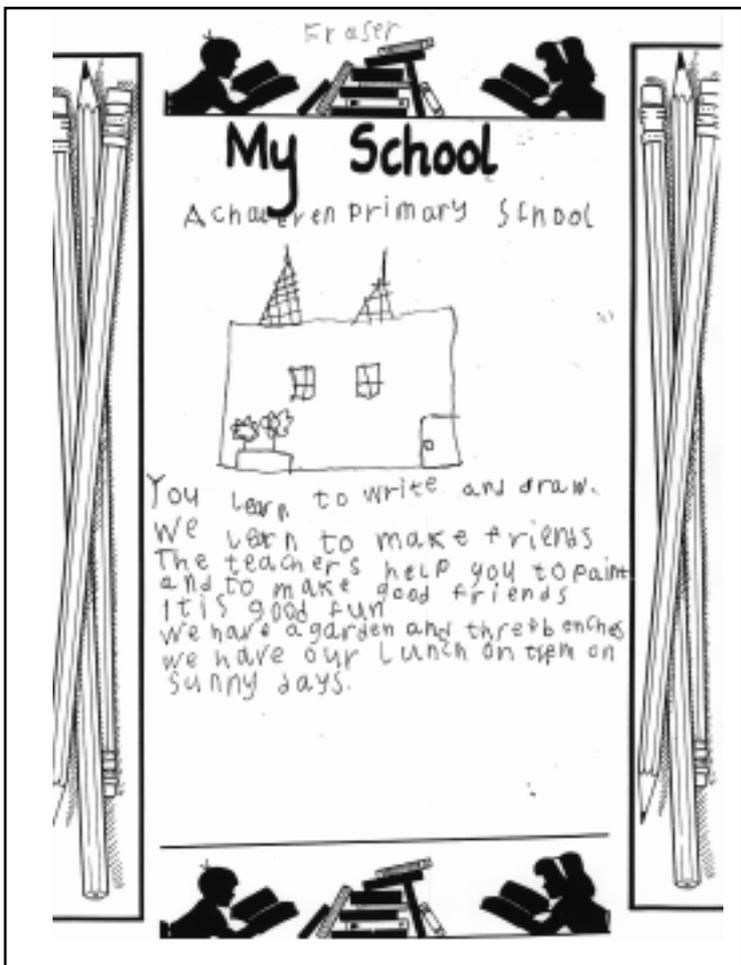
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The school I go to is small, but that means the teachers can focus on people falling behind which good for the people that need more attention.

Debbie Allan P6

## 6 Broad and Balanced Curriculum

In Achaleven we aim to present a curriculum which is both broad and balanced. We have followed the 5-14 Guidelines on the Structure and Balance of the Curriculum to draw up timetables for each classroom. Timetables are not adhered to exactly but ensure that each area of the curriculum is given its proper place. All decisions are made as a result of discussion by all staff and are presented to the School Board. Programmes of study have been drawn up for each area of the curriculum and resources are in place to teach those programmes. Parents and other adults are encouraged to come in to school and share their expertise with pupils.



I like my school because,  
We do many interesting things,  
We go on brilliant school trips,  
It has a good playground,  
I learn many things,  
It is good fun,  
Everyone is kind  
and it is the best school in the  
world ... ever.

Alan Lamb P7

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Just because my school is small does  
not mean it is not good. In fact  
it is much better because you know  
more people in it. And no one is  
too anyone else.

Iain P6



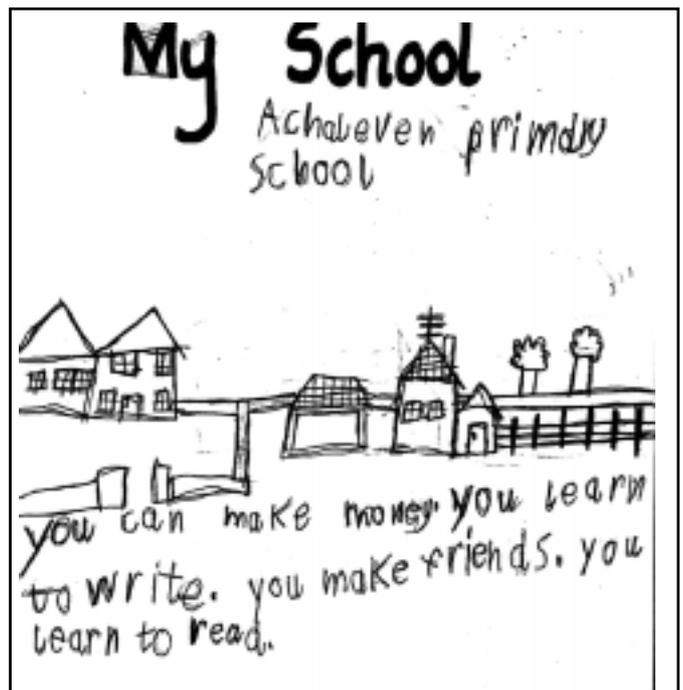
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or any queries please contact:  
Gina Reddie, Administrator,  
Scottish Schools Ethos Network  
Moray House Institute of Education  
Cramond Road North  
Edinburgh  
EH4 6JD  
Tel: 0131-312 8771

## Target Setting

Target setting for pupils has been in place for many years. It takes the form of tasks for P1-3 set for each day by their teacher while P4-7 pupils work from target jotters. In P4,5 the teacher sets the targets while in P6,7 pupils are responsible for setting their own targets – with teacher guidance. At the end of each term pupils write an evaluation of their work in the target jotter. At the P6,7 stage the teacher writes her evaluation before sending the jotter home for parents to write their comments. This form of target setting is very motivating for our pupils and is in our opinion an excellent means of raising standards across the curriculum. The parents are very appreciative of the target jotters as they see this as an ideal record of their children's work. At a glance they can identify areas where targets have not been met and where action requires to be taken.

As a school we enjoy tremendous support not only from parents who help with cycling proficiency training, knitting, music etc. but also from our wider community, the village of Connel. Being perceived as a successful school brings particular challenges to all of us, not to become complacent and not to neglect the attention to everyday matters and to the needs of all the individual children, parents and staff. We need to value all our children and all the varied aspects of their small and large achievements if they are to move on successfully into the larger world, not just of secondary education, but beyond that to further education and employment.



Case Study 18  
Achaleven Primary School