

"How Good is Our Ethos?"

The University of Edinburgh
Pollock Halls

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ORGANISATION

Nethermains Primary School

FOCUS

Positive Ethos Includes Looking After All Staff

Please give a brief description of your initiatives which illustrate ways in which ethos can be used as a connecting theme across a number of school activities, such as attainment, achievement, equity, inclusion, rights, health and personal safety.

Schools, quite rightly, focus on promoting pupils self-esteem/building confidence in order to impact on ethos. Our focus is on staff also:

- ✓ Ensuring that care and welfare issues are addressed, as and when required
- ✓ Knowing staff as individuals, making them feel genuinely valued
- ✓ Recognising their achievements and celebrating success publicly
- ✓ Ensuring that time is spent, each week, with every member of staff

School data shows declining figures in all key aspects between '02-'04. The challenge for staff is to raise attainment and promote achievement. This requires a strong ethos and good team spirit. The points mentioned, are closely linked to this. If staff are happy at work, then they are more likely to feel well and contribute to the life of the school (both in and out of school). They will know their strengths and contribute/volunteer, in positive ways, to new initiatives. Absence levels are likely to be lower when staff feel 'cared for'. Therefore, the knock-on effect is continuity of delivery of the service. Staff are more able to, positively, face the challenge of raising attainment.

How are these initiatives being monitored and evaluated?

- ✓ Qualitative comments from parents/ carers, visitors etc. re the atmosphere within school
- ✓ Qualitative comments from staff re ethos

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- ✓ The level of staff contribution to in and out of school activities
- ✓ Staff volunteering for coordinator's roles in new initiatives e.g. enterprise
- ✓ Staff absence data

What are some of the biggest challenges faced by teachers and young people or members of your organisation, in implementing the initiatives or projects?

The biggest issues and challenges include:

- ✓ Time: to be committed to staff welfare takes time
- ✓ Focussing, and celebrating, staff strengths
- ✓ Involving everyone in initiatives – pupils, parents/ carers, teaching and non-teaching staff
- ✓ Communicating with everyone so that everyone has appropriate information

What has worked well?

- ✓ Recognising, and celebrating, all staff achievements
- ✓ Staff social time – nights out, weekends away
- ✓ Golden Time for staff each Friday lunchtime
- ✓ Social Coordinator
- ✓ Involving all staff in initiatives e.g. raising attainment, relaunch of Learning to Achieve strategy
- ✓ Celebrating strengths via printed materials e.g. trifolds, media

What did not work & lessons learned?

- ✓ The level of communication with ancillary staff is not as good as it might be (if staff are not given the appropriate information timeously, then tensions can arise)

Future plans?

- ✓ Build in a weekly meeting with ancillary staff to the management timetable
- ✓ Examine ways to bring teaching and non-teaching staff together at break times