

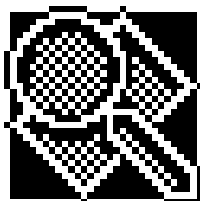
Action on Ethos

"Reach for the Stars"

This case study outlines one strategy

St. Ninian's High School used to raise standards.

In the aims of the school we highlight the importance of the individual which is in keeping with the Catholic ethos we promote. We aim to encourage all children to achieve as much as they are capable of academically and at the same time to develop as confident, well rounded citizens.



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1 Background

St. Ninian's High School has a roll of 740 pupils and serves the town of Kirkintilloch and the surrounding area including Lenzie and the villages of Lennoxton, Milton of Campsie and Twechar.

We achieved "Investors In People" in January 1997. This underlined the importance we place on the contribution of every individual member of staff, pupil and parent to the pursuit of quality. We aim to provide the conditions for continual improvement while respecting the dignity, individuality and worth of every member of our community. We want to motivate pupils by recognising and rewarding their efforts and by encouraging them to value themselves.

In May 1995 an audit of all types of motivators used in classes/departments indicated that there were many different types of reward system operating in the school. At the same time the Discipline Team produced a school code of conduct, a set of simple expectations. All staff expressed a need for a whole school reward system in order to formalise ways of recognising pupils who followed the code.

After investigating different ways of recording information about pupils and after much heart searching it was agreed to run a pilot in S1. "Reach for the Stars" was born!

2 Pilot Scheme

The scheme ran in eight week blocks with a mid-block update.

At the end of 4 weeks S1 pupils were given 'appropriate' star points by their teachers for being Caring, Responsible, Positive and Prepared. (These are the headings in our Code of Conduct.)

These were collated for each pupil and class. Points were taken off pupils for recorded bad behaviour.

At the Mid-block Assembly the pupils were given parental letters indicating their Star total together with the Star totals required for Distinction and Merit Awards. The year group average was also included. The class attaining the highest star average became Class of the Month and held the 'Class of the Month



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on a spreadsheet in order to produce the letters for parents and there is a lot of work involved in deciding on the various awards, Distinction, Merit, Near Miss, Improvement etc. as well as in preparing the ceremonies. The members of the team do have to do some chasing up of returns but certainly not as much as they had to do at the beginning.

7 Conclusion

Although we would not claim to have solved every discipline problem, we do feel that "Reach for the Stars" has had a substantial impact on the behaviour of our pupils. We believe that it contributes to the positive atmosphere we are trying to create. Many staff now use a range of strategies to praise and motivate pupils. We still issue punishment exercises, cards etc. but not as many. Positive aspects are highlighted and recognition is given to the vast majority of our pupils who do attend, who do their homework, who do try their best. It is heartening to see the number of departments who are nominating pupils for individual awards, often pupils who would never have received any recognition in the past. The Principal Teachers come along to the ceremonies to present the rewards in person.

The summary of the data is now being used as the basis of all planned one-to-one interviews by guidance staff to ensure that the focus of the interview is on pupil progress and raising achievement.

We are grateful to local businesses for providing many of the most tangible rewards. A few months ago two of our pupils had a helicopter trip and recently two were entertained to dinner in a local hotel!

Our award ceremonies are becoming social occasions not to be missed - our sixth year who help at them demand to know why they never got any of the fun when they were in the Lower School. We have had a large number of visitors from other schools and have appeared in the local press on several occasions.

None of it would be possible without the commitment of our Rewards Team, in particular, the team leader who has taken the original idea and developed it into an amazing scheme which impresses everyone who comes into contact with it. The members of the team, teaching and non-teaching, are a dedicated and enthusiastic group who give a lot of time and thought to the project. They exemplify what St. Ninian's is about, building a community where the contribution of every individual is recognised and valued.



Case Study 10
ST. NINIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL