

"How Good is Our Ethos?"

The University of Edinburgh
Pollock Halls

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ORGANISATION

Letham Primary School/North Perth Community School

FOCUS

"A Healthy Ethos": How a school has engaged with its community through health"

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.

Health promotion is a vehicle through which the ethos of the school within the community is continually developing. Initiatives linked to Citizenship, Eco Schools, Determined to Succeed and health are seen as connected and pull parents, staff and children and the community together in a very inclusive and positive way.

Initiatives include:-

- Work of the Eco Committee (parents, staff & children)
 - playground improvements, school ground improvements, spring cleans, energy control, bird boxes and recycling
- Healthy Playpieces

- Girls Dance Group (pupils, parent coach and Active Schools Co-ordinator)
- Peacemakers and Playground trainers
- Out of Africa – Community Health Day
- Parent Drop In
- Free legal advice, Personal Finance Advice and counselling for Parents at Drop Ins
- Zest for Life – Healthy Lifestyles Group (parents)
- Letham Primary Fete (School Board)

One example of the power of the school and the community working together has been in the preparation for the "Out of Africa" celebration. This involved receiving a grant from Awards for All which allowed a Community School worker to consult with parents on aspects of health. This led to a regular healthy lifestyles group, with crèche, meeting in the school. A health day was organised at the school with an African Theme. The local Community Planning Partnership consulting with the community, parents and children about future community needs. This was also used as a consultation for an Area Based Initiative. At the day there were alternative therapies, belly dancing,

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drumming, an assault course, veil making, North African cooking, yoga, displays by local schools and a performance by the Girls Dance Group. In addition, parents and children attended a residential with a health focus. The school has been the context and a welcoming support for very positive community involvement.

How are these initiatives being monitored and evaluated?

- School Audit of ethos
- Annual Report
- Green Flag -Plan and Evidence
- Self Esteem Index
- ASDAN Awards (Parents)
- Community School Evaluations and LEAP (Parents Conference)
- Active Schools Evaluations (LEAP)
- Parent Questionnaire

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

- A danger of overloading staff. Initiatives must be written into the curriculum and have to hit more than one target e.g. Eco Schools, Determined to Succeed and Citizenship
- Not expecting children to take responsibility without giving them support
- Needing to have high expectations of success and expecting things to work
- Ensuring parents are involved
- A small group of pupils do not have parental support and this is being tackled gradually

What has worked well?

- Children and parents have taken responsibility for their

own health and environment

- There has been a growing pride in the school and in themselves
- Parents are more relaxed and confident through increased contact and opportunities for involvement
- Parents and children are achieving success
- Staff morale has increased through achievement of the school. Staff and parents are valued.
- The school is much more involved in its community
- Pupils are being offered a more flexible curriculum
- Discipline referrals have decreased as pupil involvement in the initiatives has increased
- Complaints about bullying have decreased
- Achievements through health and eco schools etc are particularly relevant in schools with high level of disadvantage and will have a long term impact on attainment

What did not work & lessons learned?

Everything has worked so far. But:

- Ensure continuity as much as possible
- Be open to the skills and talents of members of the community
- Be welcoming in as many ways as possible to parents (crèche provision, notes, personal, home reaching out)
- Keep up standards
- Welcome all agencies

Future plans?

- Achieve the Green Flag (Eco Schools)
- Continue to increase parent and grandparent involvement
- As managers, see the whole picture and tie the initiatives together

Any materials the school/organisation is willing to share or relevant publications that are for sale?

Leaflets and Evaluations