

Action on Ethos

This Case Study describes how a small

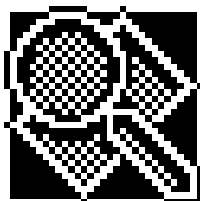
rural primary school investigated its ethos.

It made a point of involving pupils and parents in this.

The school lists a number of actions it took as a result of

the ethos enquiry and ends with a few

practical suggestions on investigating ethos



PLOCKTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Innes Street
Plockton
Ross-Shire IV52 8TW
tel 01599-544 346

Head teacher: Mr. John Finlayson

1 School Background

Small Village School – 73 pupils

Gaelic Medium – 2 classes

English Medium – 3 classes

5 full time members of staff + 0.7 Learning Support teacher

1 part time Special Needs auxiliary

Visiting teachers of Music, Art, P.E.

The school ethos since the arrival of the current Head Teacher (7 years) has been based on the following principles:

- (i) The school is a central part of village life and while it enjoys a great deal of support from the community, it must also give something back.
- (ii) The school takes account of parents' opinions either through formal bodies like the School Board and P.T.A. or just by talking to individual parents.
- (iii) The school informs the parents and the community about what is going on in school.
- (iv) The school tries to meet as far as possible the expectations of the community it serves.
- (v) The school takes account of the opinions of its pupils and tries to promote a happy yet industrious environment.

Although we have tried to develop our school ethos taking account of these principles, it was felt by staff that we had to review our ethos to see if we were doing what we had planned and if the community actually perceived us the way we hoped it did.

It was also felt that we should investigate how visiting teachers, parents and pupils viewed the school.

We hoped to establish a set of rules which should consolidate the right moral ethos as well as the right atmosphere in the school.

2 General Aims

- (i) To promote a happy school which pupils, parents and staff enjoy coming to.
- (ii) To have a school which meets the expectations of its parents and community.
- (iii) To have a school whose teaching is based on sound moral ground rules, which everyone is aware of.
- (iv) To have within the school a set of rules which give clear guidance on most areas of school life.
- (v) To have a school which works in harmony with the community and also gives something back to it.

- (vi) To have a school that delivers its curriculum within a friendly, caring and industrious atmosphere.
- (vii) To have a school that pupils, teachers, parents and the community are proud of.

3 Methods/Strategies

- (i) Questionnaires were sent to all families, asking their opinions on a variety of issues. A modified version of an S.O.E.D. exemplar was used.
- (ii) Questionnaires to pupils.
- (iii) Ongoing self assessment by pupils.
- (iv) Discussions at P.T.A. and School Board meetings.
- (v) The opinions of the Community Council were sought.
- (vi) Staff meetings.
- (vii) Feedback from Parents' Evenings

Perhaps a feature of special interest is pupil self-assessment. The pupils assessed their strengths and weaknesses, the progress they had made and how much they enjoyed school. We used arrange of methods, discussion and smiling faces in the early years and extended writing in the upper stages. For older pupils we asked them to imagine that they were the class teacher writing home. What would the class teacher say? A copy of the children's self-assessment goes home to parents.

4 Making Sense of the Findings

- How was the data processed?**
By hand, by staff members
- Who analysed?**
The staff and School Board
- How was feedback given?**
Orally and in terms of a written report
- To whom?**
To parents, School Board, Community Council and Divisional Education Office

5 Issues & Problems Identified

(i) Some parents were not participating fully in the life of school. It was always the same parents who supported the school or volunteered their services to help out.

