

Can inclusive schools be effective in raising attainment?

April 2003



SCHOOL →

Oban High School, Argyll & Bute

FOCUS →

A journey towards better behaviour better learning

Initiatives or projects in place that illustrate how an inclusive school can be effective in raising attainment

Our approach is holistic and the key themes in our Development Plan are improving ETHOS and raising ACHIEVEMENT. The main themes have been –

- ✓ Staff development on classroom management and especially “Assertive Discipline” (through three staff trained as trainers with Behaviour Management Ltd), whole staff and Department sessions and individual mentoring, two members of staff trained in the “Framework for Intervention” and mentoring teachers.
- ✓ A great deal of staff development on learning and teaching along the above model (with a particular emphasis on “boy-friendly” approaches).
- ✓ Introduction of a whole-school approach to recognition of achievement (our “Credit Points” system).
- ✓ Development of extended Support Team to work intensively with pupils experiencing difficulties.

- ✓ Working with other local agencies to enrich provision for pupils experiencing difficulties (eg residential experience).
- ✓ Working with parents through special workshops and individually.

How these initiatives are being monitored and evaluated

We monitor and evaluate using a variety of techniques:

- ✓ Through use of “How Good is our School” annually (all staff).
- ✓ Through analysis of 5-14 and SQA results.
- ✓ We use NFER-Nelson Cognitive Ability Testing as a benchmark for assessing progression.
- ✓ Through frequent meetings to assess the effectiveness of individual learning and behaviour plans.
- ✓ Through pupil councils (and this session the involvement of pupils in using HGIOS).
- ✓ Parent questionnaires and liaison with individual parents.
- ✓ Quality assurance (including classroom visits by Heads of Department and Senior Management Team).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

By far the greatest challenge was in attempting to change teachers' classroom practices and in some cases, teachers' attitudes (eg "why should children be rewarded for something they should be doing anyway?!"). Building in occasional 'reminder' sessions on classroom management and creating time for departments and individual teachers to develop their own classroom management plans certainly helped, and working individually with staff/difficult classes to develop better ethos has been very effective.

A second major challenge has been finding additional resources for pupils who need a great deal of enrichment in their school experience – we are working on this.

What has worked well?

Staff especially appreciate the 'duty Rector rota' whereby disruptive pupils are immediately removed to the Support Base so that learning and teaching is not disturbed. Support staff then work with the pupils removed temporarily.

All the above has worked well but in particular our systems for recognising achievement. Pupils find this very motivating and all pupils can achieve. Parents especially appreciate monthly feedback on progress.

What did not work & lessons learned?

Expecting staff to change overnight! This takes time and effort and Senior Managers have to listen carefully to what staff are saying and experiencing. They must be wholly involved in the process.

Future plans?

We will work out a second phase of training next session (using the same model) which will focus on working with highly disruptive pupils. If teachers are 'tooled up' to cope better with such pupils in the classroom, their education will be less disrupted by 'time-out'.

We will continue to develop teaching and learning strategies (using VAK) and literacy across the curriculum (with special focus on boys – we have a large gap between our boys' and girls' achievement).

Further development of appropriate curriculum and experience for groups of pupils.

Any materials the school is willing to share?

Our 'Credit points' system of recognising achievement.

This contact is useful for training and publications:

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