

Can inclusive schools be effective in raising attainment?

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SCHOOL



Goodlyburn New Community School, Perth & Kinross

FOCUS



The effectiveness of multi-agency working with children and parents when tackling the challenges of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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

The initiatives described relate to the theory that assessing and intervening in resilience of children and adults (as proposed by Daniels & Wassail 2002) has a long term impact on the achievement and ultimately the attainment of children. The natural place to carry out this work is in school using staff with a wide range of professional skills.

Initiatives in our New Community School generally involve the family, therefore a child may be in a small activity group after school or in the Seasons for Growth group (dealing with loss and separation) while the mother or father attend a drop in, Coping with Children's Behaviour group, one of the "Coffee" courses, adult learning or Family Technology Work. There is a focus on raising confidence and attainment with parents through literacy and numeracy work. Staff from Social Work, Health, Perth College, Community Learning and schools are all

involved. We believe school can be a "capacity builder, secure base from which to explore the self and the world, an integrator into community and culture, a gateway to adult opportunities and a resource for parents and communities" Gilligan (1998)

How these initiatives are being monitored and evaluated

All groups are monitored through early assessment of expressed needs. Most groups are run by 2 staff who critically evaluate against original aims. All groups produce evaluations (some mid course and others final). Questionnaires, focus groups, outside interviews are all used. Other statistics are monitored regularly, including exclusion and attendance rates.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mrs P Illsley
NCS Co-ordinator
New Community School
Goodlyburn Primary School
Crieff Road
Perth
PH1 2NT

Tel
01738 632841

e-mail
NCS@Goodlyburn.sch.gov.uk

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 challenges are about finding the time for staff from different agencies to meet to plan initiatives and to meet regularly during and after a course to monitor assessments, progress, review and evaluate. This is important with team working when children's needs require assessment in relation to sensitive issues, such as reaction to a bereavement. In terms of inclusion, all the practical aspects of involving parents need to be considered, such as cost for activities, transport, creche and the creation of a welcoming, friendly and accessible atmosphere.

What has worked well?

Involving parents in a wide variety of opportunities both with and without their children has been very positive. Parents are more positive and confident in parenting their children. Parents learning computing with their children and improving their literacy and numeracy in school has a particularly positive effect on their ability to understand and help their children learn. Children achieve more because they are supported in all ways both in school and by their families. With a multi-agency approach, children's resilience in terms of being able to enjoy the playground, making friends and staying in education has improved.

What did not work & lessons learned?

There are still families where change is slow and where child protection issues have been identified despite added support. There are always difficult situations to make progress with and workers have to be particularly careful to assess degrees of risk and the need for further intervention. We concentrate on early intervention and particular care is needed when communicating with families and what our roles, rights and therefore statutory responsibilities are.

Future plans?

We are a pilot area taking forward inter-agency assessments of children with additional support needs within Perth & Kinross. We intend using Brigid Daniel & Sally Wassail's assessment tools for measuring resilience in more detail and would like to research the impact of these. We are offering a support network for workers using Seasons for Growth materials in Perth & Kinross. We will continue to develop our drop ins and "Coffee" adult learning courses, Literacies and Family Technology work in partnership with Perth College and other agencies and hope to roll out this integrated approach to other Perth & Kinross Schools.

Any materials the school is willing to share?

More detailed information on any of the above initiatives can be provided on request (see contact details)

References

Daniels & Wassells (2002) *The School Years*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London & Philadelphia

Gilligan (1998) *The Input of Schools and Teachers in Child and Family Social Work*. Blackwell Science



0131 651 6100
www.antibullying.net

University of Edinburgh
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh
EH8 8AQ



0131 651 6551
www.ethosnet.co.uk