



**Building on success:
case studies of
Ethos Award winners
1997-2001**

Edited by Jean Murray

A project funded by the Scottish Executive

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Published by the Scottish Schools Ethos Network.
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First Published in May 2002.
ISBN: 0-9538660-1-7

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Acknowledgements

This publication would not have been possible without the unstinting efforts of many people. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to the schools themselves for providing the case studies and to Jean Murray for editing the collection. Gina Reddie designed the publication and with her usual flair and patience coped with the range of photographs and other material provided by schools. Alison Closs proof read the volume and helped with the content. The panel of judges played a key role for the award. Having chaired the panel myself, I know how much work is involved but also how uplifting an experience it is to read the entries. My thanks to Professor Mary Simpson who succeeded me as chair and to all who have been involved in judging over the years: Dr. Ian Findlay, David Hutchison (both from the Scottish School Board Association), Susan McColl (Scottish Parent Teacher Council), Joyce McMillan, Sandy Watson (Angus Council) and Stephanie Young (ASCETT). The collection of case studies would not have been possible without the financial support provided by the Scottish Executive Education Department. We are grateful for their continued funding of the work of the Scottish Schools Ethos Network which makes possible this publication and our other activities to promote the sharing of experience and ideas.

Professor Pamela Munn
University of Edinburgh
Director, Scottish Schools Ethos Network

Preface

The ethos of a school is a key factor in raising attainment, promoting positive behaviour and encouraging attendance. We know from research that schools with very similar pupils can vary in their effectiveness as measured by a whole range of indicators. Part of the explanation of this variation lies in the ethos of the school. Ethos is important for other reasons too. As one of the teachers in this volume says, 'I get up in the morning and look forward to going to work after 12 years. I care a lot about them and they care about me.' So ethos can make schools an enjoyable and stimulating place and give the whole school community a sense of pride, job satisfaction and self worth.

What is ethos? The dictionary defines ethos as, 'the guiding beliefs, standards or ideals that characterise or pervade a group, a community, a people... the spirit that motivates the ideas, customs or practices of a people.' This definition is helpful because it highlights first of all the *pervasive* nature of ethos. In a school, ethos touches on all aspects of its operation but its very pervasiveness means that it is hard to pin down. It can be part of the 'taken for granted' about school life. Secondly, the definition makes it clear that ethos affects our *practice*. It is not an abstract idea but something which affects what we do and how we do it. So it helps us to understand why we act in particular ways and why our actions can be different in different schools. Thirdly, the definition focuses on the idea of a group, a *collective understanding* of how things are done.

The Scottish Schools Ethos Network was established in 1994-95 to raise awareness about the idea of ethos and to share experience and ideas about how to develop a positive ethos. As schools demonstrated their interest in ethos and their enthusiasm for exploring the views of pupils, parents and teachers, the ethos award was created. The award signalled the importance of ethos and celebrated the excellent work that was taking place in schools throughout Scotland. The first award was made in 1997 to Castlebrae Community High School. In 2002 it seemed fitting to bring together the achievements of all the award winners and runners-up, providing an opportunity to reflect on what the award had meant to them and to describe further developments.

A perusal of the case studies reveals a number of things which throw light on that elusive concept of ethos. These are:

- A positive ethos does not happen by accident. It requires careful planning and takes time to develop.
- Active participation by pupils, parents and staff in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the school pays dividends if action is taken on the issues raised. This signals that all members of the school community are valued and that their views are taken seriously.
- Schools cannot sustain a positive ethos in isolation from their local community. All the case studies describe ways in which they connect with their communities.
- Ethos is not static. Even schools with a positive ethos can falter if they take their eye off the ball.

In essence, ethos is about our relationships with each other and the ways in which our practices convey that. The importance of respect and a shared sense of what the school is for pervade the book. The award winners and runners-up are modest about their achievements and do not want to be seen as special. It is true that many schools in Scotland are developing and sustaining a positive ethos. Yet the schools here have exposed their work to external scrutiny and systematically collected evidence about their ethos from a variety of sources. This takes courage as well as time and effort! We salute them and offer warm congratulations on what has been achieved and on the undoubted achievements still to come. We hope other schools will find the case studies of interest and be inspired by the developments the schools describe.

Professor Pamela Munn

Chapter 1

Castlebrae Community HS

School Facts



Castlebrae Community High School
2a Greendykes Road
Edinburgh
EH15 4DP
Tel: 0131 661 1282
Fax: 0131 661 4049

Headteacher

William Crosbie

Length of time in post

8 years

Type of school

Six year comprehensive

Number of pupils

370

Staff numbers (FTE)

42

Location/catchment area

Residential social housing estates in south east Edinburgh

Physical environment

The present building was constructed in the 1970s. It is to be rebuilt over the next few years

% of pupils entitled to free meals

52%



Background

Castlebrae Community High School serves the residential estates situated in the south east of Edinburgh. The school occupies a greenbelt site on the edge of Craigmillar and Niddrie – recognised as the most deprived community in the Lothians in terms of the usual social indicators. The area is the subject of a regeneration programme which has seen much of the old established estates demolished/refurbished. There is considerable rebuild at present, intended to attract a wider social mix to the community. In 1991, however, the school was threatened with closure: the roll had fallen below 300 and levels of attainment in SCE examinations were amongst the worst in Scotland. Although the threat of closure was eventually lifted, the problems which had beset the school remained and the new management team, which had been appointed temporarily to manage the closure, had to produce and implement a plan which would reverse the decline of the school. Some six years later, the school won the Ethos Network Award for 1996/97 and is now looking forward to a successful future in its new premises.

The Ethos Award

During the consultation period on closure a survey of parents of P6 and 7 pupils living in the catchment area was undertaken and the results were used to inform our first Development Plan. Parents wanted to see more school leavers going into employment, better SCE results and higher standards of behaviour.

Any attempt to achieve these outcomes had to involve boosting the self-esteem of staff and pupils. We had to create an ethos of achievement. We were fortunate in having the support of an IBM consultant, who helped us produce an effective School Development Plan. We first ensured that all staff, teaching and support, were involved in creating a shared vision for the school. We needed to have clear aims, objectives, tasks and success criteria, to measure those key processes which were to be prioritised. We consulted the Student Council, the School Board and an Advisory Group comprising business, community and primary school representatives. (This development planning process is repeated annually with the vision, success criteria and critical success factors remaining constant, though reviewed, within the lifetime of the first 5 year plan.) Three key issues were identified as Most Critical Processes.

1. Learning and Teaching

Raising levels of attainment was vital. We now have a Learning and Teaching Policy which is regularly reviewed and takes into account staff/student surveys. A cluster learning and teaching policy has now been agreed and is being implemented throughout the associated primary schools. We initiated a 'Learning to Think' programme in which S1 and S2 spend one hour a week planning ahead and reviewing current progress. Our Support for Learning has been extended to include residential study sessions, study mentors and review interviews. Where appropriate, students have Personal Learning Programmes and we also make use of reading and maths recovery programmes. We believe that this level of intensive personal support for pupils is a key feature in raising self-esteem and keeping pupils on track.

2. Managing Behaviour

Our work on improving pupil behaviour and attitudes led to the formulation of our Code of Conduct, an extensive S1 induction programme, an anti-bullying policy and a behaviour management handbook.

3. Creating a Positive Ethos

We celebrate success at rewards ceremonies (fig. 1) and have student success display boards in the entrance hall. Departments issue Positive Referrals to students, using agreed criteria, and these are logged monthly. The monthly collation is displayed in the school entrance hall and outside the Guidance area. Departments also have their own individual positive referral display areas.

A letter of congratulation is sent home to the parent of any student receiving three or more positive referrals per term. Staff are encouraged to display exemplars of good student work, both within their departments and in the school's public areas.



fig. 1

Education/Industry links

In areas of social disadvantage and high unemployment, it can be the case that pupils have little or no experience of the world of work. In tackling the challenge we had set ourselves of seeing more school leavers going into employment, we asked ourselves how we could begin to interest our young people in the world of work. How could we counter the negative views they held of their own academic and creative potential? From our desire to develop a quality experience which would both help us achieve our aims and be fun for those involved, we developed the Simmers Challenge (fig. 2). In the course of a day, S1 pupils are challenged to:

- Design and make a new biscuit
- Design the packaging
- Plan the marketing campaign
- Design the business flow charts and set a price.

A very prestigious group of judges visits each of the groups at the final Trade Fair to sample and assess the day's work. All the planning, both by teachers and by personnel from a number of local businesses, really made the project meaningful to our pupils. The general format of the event has remained constant throughout but every effort has been made to vary the range of subject departments participating.



fig. 2

Our efforts were all directed towards our three main aims, higher standards of behaviour, more school leavers going into employment and improved SQA results. Statistics showed that by 1996, we had improved on all three fronts. Winning the Ethos Award was an added bonus and a wonderful accolade for the school.

After the award – sustaining a positive ethos.

The staff programme

The school views the development of self-esteem as pivotal to the success of its attempt to raise attainment across the whole spectrum of school life. We believe that conventional ways of working and thinking can be challenged, that we can all, staff and students alike, adopt a 'can do' approach and an attitude of perseverance and resourcefulness.

"For a number of pupils in the past it was easier simply to give up rather than overcome the significant personal and social hurdles which many had to overtake. We wanted to change that and help them realise their ambitions and dreams" – PT Guidance.

We invested a great deal of resources in staff training, in particular a programme called 'Investment in Excellence' delivered by an organisation called the Pacific Institute. The headteacher, senior staff and all but a few of the teaching staff have undergone training with two of the staff now fully qualified as trainers. The principles underpinning the training involve staff in challenging their own ways of working and thinking with a view to developing strategies which can then help the staff and their pupils to change attitudes and improve attainment and creative thinking. The commitment of staff and the investment of school time and finance are significant and include a three day intensive session over a weekend, in-school practice and team-building sessions, with a further residential session and a rounding-off day to consolidate learning. We have now established our own training team in Castlebrae so that we can train people more easily and in greater numbers. We really feel that our work with 'Investment in Excellence' has been well worthwhile and has had tangible benefits in the classroom

Investors in People

In January 1999, the school was delighted to be granted Investors in People status. We felt that since the threat of closure in 1991, we had gone to considerable lengths to maintain employee involvement in all aspects of the running of the school, including training and development. We first decided to apply for Investors in People in 1997 and believe that the IIP framework fitted in well with our supportive, developmental approach

'Your achievement is a tribute to the sustained effort and determination of your team. By gaining recognition you have signalled your commitment to best practice on managing people towards your business goals.'

Robert RC Taylor, Chairman of IIP In Scotland.

Among our strengths, the report listed:

- The openness of communication between management and staff is a major strength, particularly given the numbers of part-time staff employed within the school
- The openness of the planning process and the willingness of the individuals to be involved throughout is a major strength. The level of understanding of planning at the organisational level is unusually high.
- The school operates an evaluation process which involves the individuals who have received training delivering presentations to the whole school and /or departments.

'The management of Castlebrae High School recognises the important contribution individuals make in the delivery of its service. The School has developed a system of identifying training for teaching and non-teaching staff and a training programme which combines the needs of the individual as a subject specialist with the demands of its Development Plan' – liP report.

The school has just been reassessed (April 02) to determine whether the standard had been maintained since the initial award and passed with flying colours.

The pupils' programme

Our current pupils' PSE programme was consolidated by our Principal Teacher of Guidance who was seconded for a term to put together a coherent programme based on our work on Thinking Skills, Investing in Excellence, The Learning Game, The Learning File and basic social education approaches. The course is tailored to respond to pupils' needs and matches the range of learning and teaching approaches that we are developing across the school. A pupils' version of Investment in Excellence, called Go For It! is now being offered to a range of senior students.

The rationale of our programme recognises our concern about the number of young people turning to negative and self-destructive behaviour, the need to develop confidence in young people and the fact that recent research shows that intelligence is not fixed but variable. The two main aims of the course are:

- to teach learners to believe in themselves and so make them want to learn and develop
- to teach learners methods to help them develop their potential.

The course builds on the recommendations of the 5-14 PSD guidelines and focuses on four main areas: self awareness, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships and independence and interdependence (fig. 3).

Pupils have responded very positively to the course –

'It really helps you in your classes. Mr.Young has showed us how not to get flustered and not to think things like 'I cannae dae it'. I now think to myself that I can do it. We have been taught different methods of how to use your mind and to plan out the steps to tackle a problem.'

S3 pupil



fig. 3

'I like this school. The relationships are good and you feel you are listened to. You can discuss problems with your work without it having to be a hassle.'

S3 pupil

The linking-up of a staff development strategy – building on positive thinking, personal creativity and development – with a PSE approach based on the same philosophy has helped pupils to take more control of their learning and be well placed to tap into their own creativity for personal advancement.

Behaviour Management

'We are a school with a quiet buzz of activity where people feel happy, purposeful and valued. We have pride in belonging to a calm, safe community with high expectations of all its members.'

Headteacher

Our behaviour management scheme is based on a Code of Conduct, a set of Key Principles and a range of Assertive Discipline Strategies.

The **Code of Conduct** is the basis for all interpersonal relationships within the school and lies at the core of the school's value system. As with all whole school discipline systems, implementation has to be constantly reviewed. For example, some teachers who had no discipline problems resented the imposition of a whole school approach, while other progressed too quickly through the sanctions, making overall consistency difficult.

As members of this learning organisation our **Key Principles** are that we all must:

- value and respect each other
- have high expectations of ourselves and others
- be made aware of what is expected of us
- determine what we do well, what we need to improve and how we are progressing
- seek and develop strategies to help us perform more effectively
- have short and long term achievable targets
- recognise achievements and celebrate success

Our strategies for **Assertive Discipline** comprise a set of Rights, including the teacher's right to teach, the student's right to learn, a simple set of Classroom Rules and a range of Classroom Sanctions including 'Stop Change' which will involve a change of activity within the

classroom e.g. moving seat, end of practical involvement, filling in a Think Sheet etc. at the discretion of the class teacher. Our policy also includes a set of Classroom Rewards, including the display of students' work and Positive Referrals.

Extending Our Behaviour Management Programme

When we first began to present certificates and awards as part of our positive behaviour management, pupils were often unwilling to come up and collect them, as they felt too shy and diffident about success in any form. Now some five years later, even older pupils in S4 are keen to receive their awards. We therefore decided to extend our system by giving every pupil a Privilege Card. This gives pupils access to school teams, trips, competitions and so on. They can also receive a Gold Card if, in any three month period, they have 99% attendance, good timekeeping, five positive referrals and no negative referrals – quite an achievement! If Privilege Cards are taken away as a result of lateness or bad behaviour, pupils have two weeks in which to improve and get their card back.

As part of our formal rewards system, covering areas such as attendance, timekeeping, behaviour, sporting and academic success, certificates are issued in December and June. There is a monthly draw for perfect attendance in which the prizewinner receives a Castlebrae watch, while the winner of the monthly draw for possession of the Privilege Card is rewarded by a bookshop token.

Extending our Education Industry Link activities

Our S3-S4 EIL programme was quite comprehensive and was an excellent preparation for the world of work. We felt that there was little in the programme for S2 pupils and so the **Schuh Challenge** was born. Our new PT Art had come from Fife where she had strong links with the Schuh company and so we developed the Schuh Challenge, which is now a one day event for our S2 pupils. Using the theme of footwear, in all its variations, the students design, cost, produce and market a type of footwear of their choice, supported by facilitators from the Schuh organisation.

The day's events are competitive and awards are made by the judging panel to the winners and runners-up. A range of other activities such as Get a Job Day and Job Skills Day ensures that Castlebrae students are exposed to a wide variety of commercial and business experiences which enhance their prospects of future employment. We were given a great deal of assistance by the Edinburgh Compact scheme.

Our Most Recent Project

In session 2001-2002 we received funding from the Scottish Executive to set up a behaviour support base, as part of our policy of social inclusion. We are now in the process of planning how the base will be staffed and in formulating the criteria for admitting pupils to the base. It is likely that the base will have up to three teachers, not all necessarily there at the same time. The teaching

staff will be supported by input from both statutory and voluntary agencies. Other staff will be asked to provide specific curricular input depending on the pupils' needs. Working with our associated primaries we have already identified six or seven pupils for whom mainstream classes would not be suitable, so it is likely that they will start S1 in the base, then join mainstream classes as appropriate. Parents will be asked to sign a home – school agreement and will be closely involved in their children's progress.

Measuring our success

Success in educating young people can mean many things – good interpersonal skills, academic achievement, entrepreneurial flair – different indicators across the whole spectrum of young people's experience. Over the past few years our students have gained success in many ways, including:

- Achieving or surpassing all national attainment targets at S-grade
- Work experience placements in Europe
- S4 boys winning the Lothian Cup for football

Our approaches to raising achievement have been the subject of national publications, we have been visited by educationalists from Northern Ireland and Hong Kong and our strategies for inclusion have been the subject of a number of official reports.

Our vision for the future is of a centre of excellence at the heart of the community. Plans are already well advanced for the creation of a new community school linking even more directly with other community agencies on site. This is at a time when the school has been facing challenging circumstances associated with the decanting of much of the local population during the current rebuild of the community and its regeneration. In serving the local area, Castlebrae has always, in a sense, been a community school and now this role has been extended to encompass the new Government initiative on community schools. We have regular formal meetings with our cluster, outside agencies and the voluntary sector. Although the programme is still being evaluated, we believe that the service we provide to the community can only be enhanced by working in partnership with so many people to provide a holistic approach to education from the earliest stages.

Key features

- a commitment to the professional development of all staff (teaching and support) and their involvement in all aspects of the school
- an open-management approach
- a compelling desire to improve the service provided to all our community

Chapter 2

Achaleven Primary School

School Facts



Achaleven Primary School
 Connel
 Oban
 PA37 1PH
 Argyll & Bute
 Tel: 01631 710529
 Fax: 01631 710885

Headteacher

Gillian Carnie

Length of time in post

Since January 2002

Type of school

Primary

Number of pupils

57

Staff numbers (FTE)

3.7

Location/catchment area

The village of Connel, Achnacloch in the east and as far as Dunstaffnage Mains in the west.

Physical environment

The school was built in the 1880s. It was refurbished in the 1970s, when an additional classroom, which doubles as the dining room, was added to the original building.

% of pupils entitled to free meals

4 %



Background

Achaleven Primary is a small rural school serving the village of Connel, five miles from Oban. Many pupils attend the school as a result of placing requests and the school is held in high regard in the area. We aim to maintain and improve standards of attainment for all pupils in the school, based on ethos building and communication with the local community, parents and pupils.

The school places a strong emphasis on celebrating achievement in activities within and outwith the school. Pupils from Achaleven take part in a wide range of artistic, musical, dramatic and outdoor activities, enjoying much success over the years.

The Ethos Award

For many years we have carried out regular surveys of parents and pupils and have used the information provided as the basis for much of our school development. Our HMI inspection in 1993 confirmed that these self-evaluation procedures were effective and that we delivered a quality educational experience. We now conduct a regular evaluation every three years and after each evaluation, we hold meetings with parents to discuss the results. For instance, a great deal of work has been done to improve our playground, and to make the front of the school safer, as it borders the busy main road to Oban. Providing opportunities for the whole school community to become involved in these surveys and the responses they elicit, has strengthened the links between home and school in a way no other activity would have done. Parents and other members of the community feel that they are an integral part of the school. Parents very much appreciate being informed about the curriculum and once a session we devote an evening to working with parents on an aspect of the curriculum. For example, parents and staff took part in an art workshop led by an art specialist and on another occasion, staff provided a baby sitting service to allow parents to take part in a workshop on drugs with members of Strathclyde Drugs Squad.

My school
My school shines day and night
It is like a big bright light
The playground is broad
And there is a chessboard
My teacher is nice
And there is brektime twice
My school is sweet
And the little birds tweet

From Mairi

Target setting in Achaleven

As well as consulting parents and the local community, we also encourage pupils to evaluate their own progress. Older pupils use special target or assignment jotters in which they have agreed with the teacher their work for the week ahead. At the end of each term, pupils from P4 upwards write an evaluation of their work. The teacher adds her comments and then the jotters go home for the parents to write their comments. One parent's view of the process included the following comments:

- The fact that children fill in their own target jotters increases their responsibility. They see what work they are expected to complete and they know themselves if they've completed it.
- They encourage the children to think about their strengths and weaknesses. I feel it is good for children's self-confidence to read positive remarks from the teacher regarding their work and extra curricular activities.

■ Because the target jotter is ongoing, the children can see if they've achieved their targets. If they haven't reached their targets, the child, the teacher and the parents will see this. So, if there happens to be any problems, they can be addressed sooner rather than later.

■ Parents may also learn things they hadn't realised about their child. For example, if a child is struggling in a certain area.

■ Looking to the future, I feel that target jotters in their own way go some way to preparing children for a target-driven world.

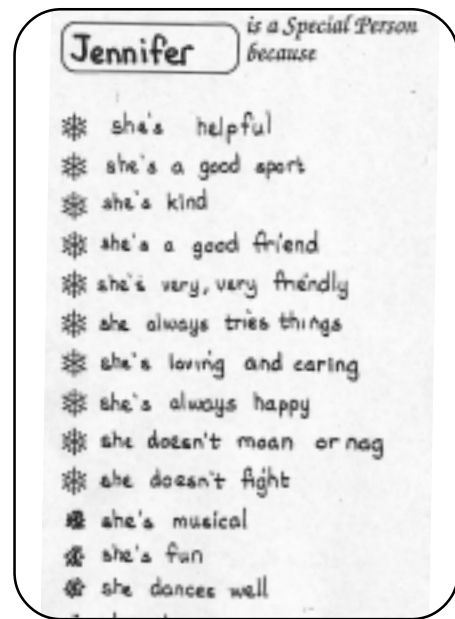


fig. 1

Raising pupils' self esteem

Every child in the school is special and every child has equal access to the curriculum. Differentiation plays a major part in the teaching programmes, as the pupils are all taught in composite classes. Emphasis is placed on the importance of not only caring for oneself but also the importance of sharing and caring for others. Topics such as 'I am unique, special, etc.' enable pupils to see themselves as both individuals and as part of a group and help them develop knowledge and understanding of themselves.

To enhance individual self-esteem, we have introduced 'I am Special' badges which are used in different ways in each class. In one class they are given to pupils to wear on their birthday. In another class a pupil who produces very good work wears the badge for the day, while in the other class, there is a special person ceremony each week. A child is chosen at random from names in a box and is presented with the badge to wear for the day. The child leaves the room, while a discussion takes place of all the nice things that can be said about him or her. The child is invited back in and listens to all the compliments, which the teacher records on a specially designed sheet, which is then pinned on the wall and later placed in a class record book (fig. 1). In every way possible, we seek to build up the self-esteem of pupils and make them feel good about themselves. Each member of the school community contributes to the creation of this ethos, which is one of caring, warmth and acceptance.

Each child leaves the school with a Record of Achievement folder in which are copies of awards received both in school and out of school and also photographs of events they have taken part in. From P1 upwards, pupils choose samples of their best work to place in a folder which is added to each year and continues with them into secondary school. At the end of P7, they are amazed at the progress they have made – they feel good about themselves.

The pupils have a very real sense of pride in their school as do the parents and indeed the whole community. In their desire to be identified with the school, adults in the village wear Achaleven School sweatshirts. While we have sent out letters to parents inviting them into school to work alongside the teachers, other members of the community have also come along and expressed their desire to share their expertise with the children

- a shop owner who has recently undertaken First Aid training has offered to come in regularly to work with the pupils
- a retired home economics teacher comes in one morning each week to teach machine sewing, etc.
- a grandfather came in to demonstrate new walking sticks and helped the pupils make crooks
- a local furniture maker brought in samples and explained about the life of a tree over hundreds of years
- pupils were taken on a site visit to see how buildings are constructed (fig. 2)



fig. 2

Several years ago a lady on holiday from Canada who had been a pupil here over sixty years ago, asked if she could visit – she was so impressed that she has maintained contact by writing and by sending beautiful calendars and has also made two further visits. Another former pupil who was passing through the village came in as the pupils were leaving one afternoon and was so taken by all he saw, that he rushed back to his car for his cheque book. He left a donation of £100!

We were thrilled to be runners-up in the Ethos Awards. While deciding what to spend the £1,000 on, the pupils lodged the money in a high-interest account to get the most out of it! They finally decided to buy special games and picnic tables for the playground, something they have really enjoyed (fig. 3)! When our pupils took part in the Edinburgh conference the following year, they sang most movingly in Gaelic and in English, before describing how the school had decided to spend the award. Staff were also delighted:

'We are here every day, trying our best. It's nice to have recognition.'

Class teacher



fig. 3

The Schools Curriculum Award

We were also delighted to win the Schools Curriculum Award in 1997. This award is intended to recognise schools which embody the qualities it wishes to encourage. They require the commitment of the whole school and reflect the school's involvement with the community, which enriches the life and work of the school. The Award does not invite school to compete against school but rather encourages each to measure itself against strong and overt criteria focused on its working relationship with its community. Thus, any number of participating schools may be commended in any one round, if they meet all the criteria. When news of the award reached Achaleven, we were overwhelmed by the local reaction. Many residents brought gifts to the school – we received free plane tickets to London and free use of a flat there when we went to receive the award!

Investing in Ethos – Raising Achievement

In March 1999, Achaleven Primary was asked to take part in the national Ethos Roadshow in Inveraray. Pupils and a parent gave an insight into the school's commitment to excellence. The children waved pennants showing the school rules they had devised and revised. They spoke about their target jotters. One of the pupils commented: *'Standing up to speak has given me more confidence. This will help me in the future'* while a pupil who had moved to Achaleven from another school talked about the difference between using his target jotter and his previous experience.

A Pleasant Surprise

On the day that the pupils and parent, with the headteacher, were participating in the Ethos Roadshow, the head was informed that the school had also been granted Investors in People status – the first school in Argyll and Bute to achieve this (fig. 4). The school had decided to



fig. 4

apply for the award after receiving the Schools Curriculum Award and being runners-up in the Ethos Awards. liP asks organisations to consider their submissions under 4 headings:

- ✓ Commitment
- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Action
- ✓ Evaluation

The Headteacher saw liP as an award for staff, giving them recognition for their efforts and boosting their confidence. It has helped them to think more of their own value and to reinforce their confidence at a time when teaching staff and school standards were under attack from many directions. The report noted that *'Achaleven Primary School has systems in place of a high standard and this has enabled them to achieve a level of quality in their school activities which has won them several awards. The staff are all well motivated and suitably trained, resulting in a school of which the local community is justly proud'*.

The school's submission to IIP was in the form of a storyboard based on the HMI Performance Indicators and their corresponding IIP equivalents, a School Development Plan with key objectives and measures, a training plan with costs indicated and several supporting documents as examples. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, were interviewed, as was the Chair of the School Board. The report identified the following as some of the strengths of the school:

- communications are a good blend of formal and informal processes and cover all staff, including those not directly employed by the school
- the planning process is strong and detailed, as is the appraisal process for teaching staff
- training activity is evident throughout the school community, covering School Board Members, teaching and non-teaching staff
- the focus of the school is clear and therefore the aims for training are correspondingly clear, giving a sound base for evaluating training after it has taken place

Investors in People status is granted for a period of three years, after which an organisation is re-assessed. For Achaleven, this re-assessment has been delayed until June 2002, as the present headteacher has only recently been appointed.

Widening our pupils' horizons

Achaleven is situated in a beautiful scenic village just a few miles from Oban. As a school, we are very aware that young people also need the stimulation of the wider world if they are to develop fully as citizens of modern Scotland. Many of our out of school activities are planned to give pupils experience of the world outside the village. For example:

We are now preparing for the Oban Music festival, where pupils from P1-3 will take part in an action song, while many older pupils will either sing in a choir, as soloists or in duets. We also have folk groups and recorder groups and we know from experience that taking part in such a prestigious festival is a wonderful boost to our pupils' self esteem. From discussion with parents, we realise that for some, watching their child perform in public has altered their own perception of their son or daughter (fig. 5).

Pupils from P6 and 7 go to Kilbowie outdoor centre where they spend time abseiling, canoeing and gorge walking with pupils from two other local primary schools.

Every year we enjoy a visit from Scottish opera – our P7 pupils work all morning with the cast and pupils from another local primary, then put on a performance in the afternoon, a wonderful opportunity for them to work with professional musicians. As our older pupils prepare to go to Oban High School, they take part in music workshops and design workshops with pupils from two

other associated primaries, which helps them to integrate well into their new, and much bigger secondary school.



fig. 5




All P7 pupils in Oban High School's associated primaries have been working with senior pupils from the High School to produce illustrated books in French and Gaelic. The High School pupils provide the text, while the younger pupils, having worked on the meaning of the text, then provide the illustrations.

Pupils take part in Strathclyde Police's 'Choices for Life' programme – going to Glasgow every two years as part of their drugs awareness project. They also attend a half day on safety, as part of the experiential learning programme, where personnel from a number of outside agencies enact scenarios, inviting pupils, for example, to go to the aid of a stranger, or ride a fast, jerky bus. Pupils' responses are discussed and they learn from these experiences how to keep themselves safe if a similar situation arises for real!

Looking to the Future

Change is endemic in schools and Achaleven is no exception. In the past three years there have been two changes of Headteacher and various part-time members of staff have come and gone. The new Headteacher is confident, however, that the school's well-established positive ethos has helped to absorb these changes with confidence. Now the school is looking forward to continuing to raise attainment for all in all areas of school life. The school already has a high profile in Music and we should now like to extend this to other areas of the Expressive Arts. We are also forging stronger links with our pre-school partners and have had a positive response to setting up a Parent Teachers Association.

Key features

-  Always looking ahead for what benefits the pupils
-  High attainable targets for all pupils
-  Exceptional community support

Chapter 3

Cramond Primary School

School Facts



Cramond Primary School
Cramond Crescent
Edinburgh
EH4 6PQ
Tel: 0131 312 6450
Fax: 0131 312 8710

Headteacher

Una Gillespie

Length of time in post

1 year

Type of school

Primary

Number of pupils

330 primary; 40 morning/40 afternoon nursery

Staff numbers (FTE)

14.4 teachers, 4 classroom assistants, 3 SEN auxiliaries

Location/catchment area

The western perimeter of Edinburgh

Physical environment

The original building has been refurbished and two new wings have been added.

% of pupils entitled to free meals

3%



Background

Cramond Primary serves an affluent area in the west of Edinburgh, where over 40% of children in the catchment area attend independent schools. The re-furbishment enabled the split sites to meet as one. Cramond itself is an interesting historical site. The parents are very supportive and are keen for the children to reach high levels of attainment and succeed at school. The school has a very good reputation in the community and has an active Parent Teacher Association, which strongly supports fundraising and the wide range of extra curricular activities in the school. Parents also take part in workshops on issues such as information technology, reading and homework, while open days allow them to observe their children at work in the classroom.

The Ethos Award

The First steps

For some years before the launch of our Cramond Project, we had been evaluating our school philosophy and looking closely at our development plans and our consultation processes. Early work on School Development Plans had resulted in an agreed Vision Statement for the school:

For pupils...

We will work towards making the children more aware of, tolerant of, and sensitive to, the needs of others.

For staff...

We will develop the sense of worth of individuals whilst encouraging the feeling of team spirit.

For all...

We will create a relaxed and visually stimulating environment within a happy 'family atmosphere'.

We then drew up a list of objectives to tackle what we came to view as the values of the school, directly related to our Vision Statement. At the same time, we issued questionnaires to pupils, parents and staff to add to the review process. We then used all the information we had gathered to draw up our first Development Plan and to agree on success criteria. For example:

Objective

To ensure each child develops at a pace appropriate to his/her own level

Success Criteria

1. To assess each child's level of competence
2. To provide work appropriate to each child
3. To review each child's work
4. To use the appropriate agencies as necessary

To complete this process for each objective took some time and there were some difficulties to overcome where certain emotional responses and behaviours – much more difficult to quantify – were involved. Throughout the course of the three-year plan, we reviewed our targets and success criteria and adapted them in the light of the previous year's experience. A local authority review and a headteacher's appraisal, carried out within the timescale of our first three year plan, assisted us in evaluating our progress. Most of the independent evidence from these reviews confirmed that we were on the right track, while pointing to a major area for development – the inclusion of non-teaching staff in our plans and in our consultation processes. As we updated our priorities, we took on board the feeling of isolation on the part of the non-teaching staff described in the review, and also the low self-esteem of some pupils, especially those with special educational needs.

The Cramond Project

In 1997, we decided to amalgamate all our work on values, self-esteem and school ethos into the Cramond Project. What we hoped to achieve was an environment where every member of the school community felt valued and had a positive self-image. We aimed to raise the self-esteem of every member of our community and make attending Cramond School an experience enriched by high achievement and enjoyment within a safe and supportive atmosphere. On this basis we drew up a set of aims and objectives. For example:

Aim

To raise the level of effective teaching and learning through an increase in the self-esteem of every member of the Cramond School community.

Objectives

Pupils

- To assist each pupil to have a positive self-image
- To plan for the different needs of every individual
- To assist each pupil to achieve his/her full potential
- To increase pupil involvement in the organisation and running of the school

Staff

- To assist every member of staff to have a positive self-image
- To allow all staff to be actively involved in the running of the school
- To monitor and support the professional development of every member of staff
- To provide staff with the opportunity for personal development

Parents

- To work in partnership with parents to maximise the educational opportunities for every child
- To further enhance communication between home and school
- To increase parental support within the school

To fulfil these objectives, we took action on the following issues:

For **pupils** we initiated a School Council, formulated new Health and PSD policies and introduced Circletime. We agreed a new set of positive school rules with the pupils and set up a system whereby pupils receive stickers for good work and behaviour. Pupils also complete a weekly journal of success, re-inforcing their self-confidence and reminding them of the targets they have met throughout the week.

We ensured that all **staff**, not just teachers, were involved in the development process and we provide both formal and informal feedback on performance on a regular basis. Lothian Health Promotion Department offers staff

workshops in areas such as stress management and effective communication.

We sent a leaflet to all **parents** explaining our new project and we have now regular workshops as well as traditional parents' evenings. We hold year group meetings at the start of each session to let parents know the kind of work they can expect their child to cover in the year ahead and a copy of each class's code of conduct is sent to parents.

We also involved a number of outside agencies:

- ✓ Lothian Health Promotion Department
- ✓ SNAP – Scottish Network for Able Pupils
- ✓ St. Andrew's College
- ✓ Advisors from Edinburgh City Council
- ✓ The 'Super Stickers' Company

We were delighted to win the Ethos Network Award and were proud of the success of our Cramond Project.

Building on our success

When we won the Award in 1998, Professor Pamela Munn commented '*Positive ethos is not just for deprived areas. It's something that all schools everywhere should be alert to*'. We won the award partly because of our work on ethos and partly because we were willing to tackle issues which arose from our self-evaluation, such as the need to include non-teaching staff in our consultations and questionnaires. When the school was inspected in 1999, it became clear that we should tackle another issue – challenging our more able pupils. Although our National Tests results for 1998 included

Maths	84% of pupils achieving expected level
Reading	82% of pupils achieving expected level
Writing	78% of pupils achieving expected level

we were keen to further challenge our more able pupils. Work on target setting and refining the 5-14 curriculum has meant that the percentage of pupils exceeding minimum levels was well above the national average and also exceeded the average for schools in our band, where the pupil free meal equivalent band is 0-9% (fig. 1). In 2001, we achieved 90% in Reading, Writing and Maths. Our target for 2002 remains at 90%.

Giving the pupils a voice

At Cramond, we are keen that pupils have a voice in the running of the school. Our first set of pupil-defined rules, published as part of our Cramond Project, was the subject of much press coverage.

'Innovative discipline at Scots school sets a country-wide trend.'

'What a joy it was to read in the Evening News about Cramond Primary giving children a say on how the school should be run.'

Target Setting Cramond Results 1999-2000 Comparisons Based on Free Meal Equivalent Band 0-9%						
Absence Rate	National	6%	Pupils with a Record of Needs	National	0.9%	
	Our Band	4%		Our Band	0.7%	
	Cramond	3.4%		Cramond	3.4%	
	National %	Our Band %	Top 10% Our Band	Top 1/3 Our Band	Cramond %	Target 2001
Reading	68	79	98	87	84	89
Writing	53	66	91	77	78	83
Mathematics	72	80	99	88	82	87
Overall Attainment	National 80%		Cramond 81%			
Pupils who exceed minimum levels						
	National %		Our Band %		Cramond %	
Reading	20		27		41	
Writing	11		16		18	
Mathematics	18		22		26	

fig. 1

'Pupils get top marks for own golden rules.'

Various local newspapers

Our Pupil Council has now been revamped, with formal elections held twice-yearly, and weekly meetings. Pupils from P7 take the minutes and chair the meeting, with each class allowed to bring up one issue. In the past, questions ranged from:

'How can we take better care of the crabs in the fish tank?' to *'Can we have a nine-hole golf course?'*

Now, if issues cannot be resolved at the Wednesday morning meeting, there is a surgery in the afternoon, where the head tries to deal with any difficult or unresolved issues. Recently, through the Pupil Council, the school has:

- sponsored an animal at the zoo
- had the toilets repainted
- adopted fleeces as well as sweatshirts as part of the school uniform
- constructed a wildlife garden

Pupils are aware of the budget and have to prioritise what can be done. Last session we were delighted to receive a grant of £1,500 from the Grounds for Awareness Awards scheme, to allow us to improve our garden and we are all looking forward to seeing the finished result.

Our school in the community

Cramond School is very fortunate in the support it enjoys from parents and the local community and in order to foster even closer links, we invite elderly people to visit us once a month on a Thursday afternoon. Parents come in to help with teas, while each class takes it in turn to organise the entertainment.

'We look forward to our visits to Cramond, the young ones always take such care of us!'

'The children are such entertainers, violins, cellos, singing, comedy, mime and dance. It's a grand variety show!'

Parents also help run our P6 and 7 netball clubs, taking pupils to competitions and helping staff with weekly training. Our football teams are also supported by parents, while our janitor helps with the administration.

Celebrating the Expressive Arts

Pupils at Cramond really enjoy putting what they learn into practice and never more so than in our Expressive Arts Extravaganza! Every two years, pupils from P6 and 7 spend six Thursday afternoons with outside experts, who come in to teach them new skills. These have included salsa dancing, cooking, creative writing and art work.

'I thought that Paul Roger (guitar teacher) (fig. 2) was just fab. He told us everything we would want to know about guitars. I liked his electric guitar the best because of all the cool sounds it could make. It was not just the guitars that sounded good: it was the guitars and his playing. He played the guitar as if it was as simple as it is to stamp your feet. (But I know it is not.) Me and all my friends enjoyed his talk about guitars and I hope he enjoyed it too. I would give him 10/10 for coming at a week's notice.'
P7 pupil.



fig. 2

'Expressive arts is great!!!!!! Dancing is the best so far. (fig. 3) We danced to 'mambo No 5' and then did some Merengue. It was dead exciting. Joel (the dancing teacher) taught us a bit about Latin American dancing. Another form of dance he told us about is Salsa. I really enjoyed all of the dancing. I volunteered to dance by myself, everybody clapped, it was embarrassing. I have the arts extravaganza again this afternoon and I hope it will be as good as the dancing.'
P7 pupil



fig. 3




A whole school Expressive Arts Day is held when every child participates in various activities encompassing all elements of this curricular area.

This year, our P6 choir is privileged to take part in a new show 'A Quest for Camelot', specially written for schools by a local musician Edward Harper. The pupils will join young people from other schools all over Edinburgh in a performance at the Usher Hall.

A word about the future

Following our HMI inspection, an Action Plan was drawn up and implemented. This Plan was well received by everyone concerned and we were pleased to have a favourable follow up report from HMI. We are now embarking on our next three year cycle when we will be consolidating current good practice and developing a whole school approach to the Quality Circle Time model. Within this we will be developing Circle Time strategies in order to progress skills through the stages. We will also be updating our Personal and Social Education Document in light of the national priority of Citizenship. We constantly revise our incentives in order to keep motivation going and freshness alive. Cramond Primary School is a lovely place to be but we all have to work together to keep it that way!

Key features

-  Circle time to build social skills
-  Development of the pupil voice
-  Expressive Arts to build self-esteem

Chapter 4

St. Ninian's High School

School Facts



St. Ninian's High School
Bellfield Road
Kirkintilloch
G66 1DT
East Dunbartonshire
Tel: 0141 776 1585
Fax: 0141 777 8123

Headteacher

Tony Conroy

Length of time in post

6 years

Type of school

11-18 Comprehensive

Number of pupils

710

Staff numbers (FTE)

54

Location/catchment area

Suburban village; mix of private and local authority housing

Physical environment

Two main buildings (built 1936 and 1971)

% of pupils entitled to free meals

11%



Background

St. Ninian's High School is a six year comprehensive school serving the town of Kirkintilloch and the surrounding area, including Lenzie and the villages of Lennoxton and Twechar. The school comprises two main buildings and two sets of huts. The original building was opened in 1936, the second in 1971. The catchment area includes a mixture of private and local authority housing. St. Ninian's is part of a cluster of schools within the East Dunbartonshire area included in the New Community Schools Initiative. We have four partner primary schools. The school enjoys considerable support from parents. The School Board and Parent Teacher Association are well established and are very much part of the school community. The school has a reputation for having a friendly welcoming atmosphere. We feel that an ethos which promotes the self-esteem of every individual also leads to improvements in quality of achievement.

The Ethos Award

In 1998, we were runners-up in the Ethos Network awards. We based our submission on our

- Reach for the Stars reward scheme, part of our strategy to raise standards.
- commitment to self evaluation
- work on Promoting Positive Behaviour
- strategies to promote Positive Relationships
- partnership with parents, primaries and the community

We were delighted to receive the award and we believe that our positive culture has resulted in improvements in behaviour and in the results of external examinations. The award helped to convince staff that our approach to behaviour management was integral to raising attainment. Since winning the award, we have gone on to develop and promote a wide range of strategies and policies which we believe reinforces the positive ethos we have built up over a number of years. We have also been fortunate in winning a number of other awards, which we feel validate our practice and reward staff and pupils for their continuing commitment to raising achievement.

External awards

We believe that external awards genuinely help maintain staff commitment and raise morale. It can be the case that good practice within schools goes unnoticed by all but the school community, whereas winning a national award can provide a great boost to a school and confirm its success in a wider arena. Since winning the Ethos Award, we have gone on to gain Investors in People status, we have been awarded the Chartermark and this session we won a Scottish Executive/Daily Record Award in the category 'Raising Basic Standards.'

Investors in People

The achievement of the Investors in People standard in 1997 highlighted our commitment to providing all staff with opportunities to develop their skills. In applying for IIP status, an organisation is judged on its commitment to the four principles of IIP:

- Commitment to developing its people
- Planning – people understand how they contribute to the aims of the organisation
- Action is taken to train and develop individuals
- Evaluation of the investment to assess the impact on performance

IIP is awarded for a three year period only, after which the organisation has to seek re-assessment. Our second application in 2000 was also successful and produced some interesting comments recorded during the interviews which took place as part of the evaluation procedure.

'Both pressure and support are necessary for success. We know that to get good teaching outcomes you need to be both passionate about what you do and positive with the children.'
Senior Teacher

'This school is different from others I've worked in. No 'aggro' in the corridors'
Teacher

'We feel part of one team.'
Various support staff

'I and other teachers chose to send our kids to this school.'
Teacher

Examples of staff development opportunities include placements in industry, Additional Teaching Qualifications, including an ATQ in Guidance, a study visit to Florida to look at raising attainment in US schools and working with Glasgow's Hunterian Museum. We see the achievement of Investors in People as evidence of our continuing commitment to reviewing and developing school ethos. It is a practical tool for continuous improvement.

The Charter Mark

The Charter Mark, part of the Modernising Government strategy, is an award scheme for encouraging and rewarding excellent customer service, public services that go the extra mile. It complements other quality schemes, such as Investors in People, and we were keen to see our policies and strategies benchmarked against a wider set of external criteria. The ten criteria for the award of the Charter Mark are:

1. Set standards
2. Be open and provide full information
3. Consult and involve
4. Encourage access and the promotion of choice
5. Treat all fairly
6. Put things right when they go wrong
7. Use resources effectively
8. Innovate and improve
9. Work with other providers
10. Provide user satisfaction.



fig. 1

The school made a written application, describing how we fulfilled each of the 10 criteria. Again, as with IIP, we found a close match between our school policies and strategies and those covered by the Charter Mark scheme. For example, the first criterion is 'Set standards', which allowed us to submit our academic targets, our attendance and exclusion rates and our individual pupil targets as exemplified by our IEPs. Under Criterion 3, 'Consult and involve', we described our mechanism for consulting pupils via PSE classes. We were delighted to be awarded the Charter Mark (fig. 1). We found the experience rewarding and the feedback most useful in helping us to achieve our aims. Our many strengths were recognised and commented upon, while the feedback provided us with practical suggestions which might help us further implement our aims.

The Scottish Executive/Daily Record Citizenship Values Award

We submitted an application for an award in the category of **raising basic attainment**. We highlighted the success of our Reach for the Stars scheme in keeping pupils on track and allowing us to monitor their performance. We also use spreadsheets, prelim results, regression equations and teacher judgments to assess each pupil's performance and agree strategies with them to ensure they maximise their achievement. To stress the importance of achievement at all levels we liaised closely with the parents of those pupils who were identified as unlikely to attend formal examinations and ensured a 99% completion rate in Standard Grade English and Maths. This led to a concomitant improvement in other subjects such that 99% of S4 pupils achieved 5 Standard Grade awards. For younger pupils we revised our S1/S2 curriculum to give more time to English and Maths and to reduce the number of teachers a pupil meets in a week. We were once again delighted to receive the award which was presented by Alex McLeod at the Scottish Education Awards ceremony in April 2002 (fig. 2).



fig. 2

Developing pupil participation

Reach for the Stars

Our scheme for promoting positive behaviour and raising achievement is now in its seventh year and has gone from strength to strength. We have refined and developed it, extending it to include monitoring of pupil achievement as well as behaviour. In S1, it is still called Reach for the Stars, for S2 we have All Stars and for S3 we have Success Makers. Every 6 weeks, success is celebrated publicly at award ceremonies, lively occasions with music and educational games as well as the distribution of awards. Letters are sent to parents every six weeks reporting on the total number of points gained in the four areas of behaviour and the points gained or lost since the last report.

'It's fun. It doesn't matter how clever you are. It improves grades. You get prizes for behaving well.'
S2 pupil

Pupil Consultation

In all schools with a positive ethos, pupil consultation is an integral part of the process of raising achievement and creating a sense of inclusion and ownership. We have consulted our pupils on a number of issues. They were asked to identify good things about the school and areas for improvement. They were asked about the school catering and about facilities for young people in the local community. Their views on local amenities were then passed to local councillors. Consultation was conducted through Social Education classes in order to ensure that all pupils had their opinions noted. Pupils considered the issues involved as individuals, then worked in pairs, then in groups. Prefects then visited the Social Education classes to receive the class report, which they then discussed with the Depute Head. This method ensures that every pupil has considered the matters under consultation and that their views are taken into account. We installed a payphone as a result of one consultation and when we asked pupils how we should spend the Ethos Award of £1000, they asked for a juke box in the dining room, which we happily supplied!

As a result of our latest consultation exercise we are having improvements made to the toilets and buying more lockers, although we are not building a swimming pool – the pupils have to accept we cannot do everything! We are now also considering setting up a pupil council.

Learning and teaching

From policy to practice

Over the past three years we have been working with staff, parents and pupils to produce a policy for Learning and Teaching, which would support our school aims of:

- providing conditions and experiences which promote the spiritual, moral, physical, social and intellectual development of pupils
- providing a curriculum characterised by the highest standards of teaching and learning, matched to the needs of all pupils and by a search for continual improvements

These aims are familiar to most schools, but like all aims and policies, it is what we do in the classroom and throughout the school that counts. We have worked hard to ensure that the whole school community has had an input into the policy and that the outcomes will be an improvement in Learning and Teaching for all pupils, whatever their needs.

The Rationale of the Learning and Teaching Policy

- Intelligence is not fixed
- We all have a greater potential for learning than is commonly recognised
- Teachers are important and make a difference
- The quality of teaching is a crucial factor in promoting effective learning in schools

Our policy was first issued to staff and parents in 1999. We are very aware, however, that issuing a policy statement is only a very small part of the process of making it happen in the classroom! Departmental learning and teaching policies were drawn up in 2001, in accordance with the overall school policy. The Learning & Teaching Team prepared a list of illustrative exemplars for each objective. The team also provides information for staff on the latest research into how people learn, different learning styles and the consequent need to look closely at teaching approaches.

Sharing good practice –

Witness Sessions

As in every school, a great deal of expertise exists in many departments and we were keen to share this by providing opportunities for staff to see and discuss how other departments used different methodologies and strategies to raise attainment. In 1999 we conducted a survey of good practice throughout the school. The Learning and Teaching team then organised a number of Witness Sessions each lasting half-an-hour, during an in-service day. The 'witnesses' explained briefly what they did, showed the material they used and led the discussion that followed. The topics offered were:

A. Paired activities Strategies in S1/S2 Prepared talks	History
B. Practical use of ICT	Computing
C. Pupil Centred Learning – projects, presentations, quizzes	Science
D. Use of ice-breakers Pupil led prayer Reflection exercises	Religious Education
E. Pupil self-evaluation Pupil evaluation of causes Individualised target setting	Science

Evaluation of the witness sessions was very positive. All the responses rated the sessions as very appropriate or satisfactory. Staff commented:

'Well presented by staff'

'Will be using many of the ideas presented'

'Good to listen to other ideas'

'I thought these sessions were very worthwhile and enjoyable'

In May this year we invited an expert on learning and teaching styles to assist us with the next stage, which is to lead discussion of the content of lessons, sharing good practice along the lines of the work on "Good Talk About Good Teaching".

S1/S2 Reading Programme

Working together, the members of the English Department and the Librarian have introduced a new personal reading programme for pupils in S1 and S2. Research has shown that efforts to improve reading ability will be reflected in progress across the board in other subjects. The reading programme operates on 3 levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Pupils progress through the levels, completing different tasks on each book as they go along. To reach the end of the Gold Award, pupils will have to read 25 books – no mean feat!

Evaluating our progress

Clearly, it is not a simple task to evaluate the effect, of a particular approach or staff development opportunity on pupil performance and in particular to evaluate the effect on teaching and learning. Very often enhancement of either teacher or pupil performance results from a combination of a number of variables, e.g., improved resources, staff-pupil ratios, additional support and so on, and it is difficult to separate the impact which different strategies may have had. Many of the improvements in ethos, relationships etc. that we seek in a school do not

yield valid or reliable variables in the accepted statistical sense. Quantitative statistical data, on the other hand, can be seen as one reliable measure of a school's performance. Our results for 2001 seem to indicate that our multi-faceted approach to raising attainment continues to provide our young people with the success for which they and their teachers have worked so hard.




In the diet of exams at Higher, 50% of the original intake in S4 achieved three Highers by the end of S6 and 33% of that same intake achieved five Highers by the end of S6, which is nearly double the results achieved by S6 in 1999.

What of the future?

The process of creating and maintaining a positive ethos and thereby raising attainment is dynamic, organic and constantly challenging. Change is endemic in modern society and we believe that by anticipating the effects of change on our school, we are then well placed to ensure that staff are fully trained and developed to meet the challenges it brings. In the coming years we will consider, among other issues, fresh approaches to alternatives to exclusion. Pupils at St. Ninian's are rarely excluded for classroom misbehaviour, but rather for misbehaviour relating to incidents outwith the school. For these pupils and for the few who have not responded to Reach for the Stars, we require to research and implement new approaches.



Key features

-  Continuous and appropriate staff development
-  An ethos of mutual respect embracing staff, pupils, parents and the wider school community
-  A willingness to explore new ideas and methodologies

Chapter 5

St. Columba's High School

School Facts



St. Columba's High School
Malvina Place
Perth
P1 5BD
Perth & Kinross
Tel: 01738 622994
Fax: 01738 630935

Headteacher

Daniel McGinty

Length of time in post

11 years

Type of school

Denominational 6 year comprehensive

Number of pupils

508

Staff numbers (FTE)

40.4

Location/catchment area

Perth, Scone, Auchterarder, Blairgowrie, Crieff, Dunkeld, Inchture, Kinross and surrounding areas.

Physical environment

The school was built in the late 1960s: it is well maintained, but the rising roll is putting pressure on accommodation

% of pupils entitled to free meals

17%



Background

St. Columba's is a 6 year Catholic secondary school, serving Perth and the surrounding areas. The school is located on the north edge of the city which was once Scotland's mediaeval capital and great monastic centre. Over the past years, the school population has risen from 336 in 1996, to its present size of 508 in 2002.

The school has an active School Board, which has been particularly supportive on such matters as improving school accommodation, while the Parents' Association, through its fundraising activities, has supplied sports kits for a wide range of activities. The Parents' Association also provides financial support for the annual Prizegiving.

The school aims to offer a positive and inclusive ethos to all its pupils, some of whom travel a considerable distance to attend St. Columba's.

The Ethos Award

In 1995, St. Columba's established an Ethos Advisory Group as part of the School Development Planning process and undertook an audit of the school's ethos, seeking the views of parents, pupils and staff. With assistance from the authority's advisory service, the school used the then Scottish Office guide to ethos indicators. From this audit several priority areas for action were identified. These included:

- Positive Behaviour Management including the use of praise to recognise good behaviour and high achievement, plus a buddy system and a determination to improve pupil relationships.
- The development of a Pupil Council which liaises with the School Board and parents' association as well as school staff
- Improving school accommodation including social areas and general refurbishment
- A 'Green Club Garden' project to improve the school's environment
- Study support to help raise standards of achievement
- A wide range of extra curricular activities

Some of these issues were easy to tackle – the toilets now have an air freshener system installed! Others, such as the behaviour management system, required a lead-in period and a great deal of preparatory work. Some, such as the Garden Club, have visible results (fig. 1), while the impact of others, such as the buddy system and extra curricular activities are more difficult to quantify, but are equally valuable in the life of the school.



fig. 1

Pupil comments on Supported Study:

'It was good to get use of materials that I needed. I couldn't have completed the work at home. I was also able to type up my English essays there.'

'It was very helpful because you were able to use the school's facilities and get help from teachers who were happy to be there. Everyone seemed very relaxed and there was a positive attitude from pupils and teachers.'

Over the next three years, staff and pupils worked hard to tackle the issues identified in the audit. They were delighted to then see a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils in S4 gaining five or more Standard Grades at Credit level, from 25% in 1995 to 41% in 1998, and similar improvements in S5 and S6 results. Pupils from the school also won prizes and awards for poetry, dance and music and took part in the 1999 SSEN conference in Perth.

Developing key features of the school

The school's Ethos Award submission demonstrated a continuing commitment to evaluating its own activities and taking action to further improve its ethos. The HMI report of June 2001 included, 'the school's very thorough evaluation of its own work' as one of its key strengths. However, it is not only in curricular areas that self-evaluation has become a familiar and successful process. All aspects of the school are regularly evaluated and the resulting data used to inform the development of key areas such as pupil-pupil relationships, the Student Council, induction of new staff and parents' satisfaction with the school as a whole.

School Ethos and Positive Behaviour Management re-visited

Behaviour management

Many schools, in common with St. Columba's, have set up positive behaviour schemes. The original PBM scheme was set up in 1997, following a period when staff morale had suffered due to the disruption caused by a small group of badly behaved pupils. The principal issue raised by responses to the original questionnaire mentioned above, was that teachers were not providing a consistent approach to discipline throughout the school. Standards and procedures varied from Department to Department, and from teacher to teacher.

In order to address this issue, a consistent behaviour management scheme was set up, through consultation with parents, pupils and staff, based on a set of Positive Rewards for good behaviour, a set of Classroom Rules and the Consequences of breaking those rules. Even after five years, pupils still seem keen to collect their reward stamps at the end of lessons, and the use of praise postcards to inform pupils of good work or behaviour is still popular. However, with the passing of time, many similar schemes fall into disuse, either because they have 'drowned in a sea of paper' or because pupils' or staff's perceptions of their motivational power has decreased. Staff at St. Columba's are aware of the need to revisit their Positive Behaviour Management scheme at least

once within a pupil's career. In the summer of 2002 a new audit questionnaire for all aspects of ethos will be issued. This is a revised edition of the original audit of 1996, modified to include new initiatives including Positive Behaviour Management, seeking the views of pupils and parents and staff as to whether the present system is working well or needs adjustment.

Improving Pupil Relationships – 'Better Friends'

The original Ethos Audit identified that pupil-pupil relationships required further investigation and development. During session 1998-99, the Ethos Advisory Group and the Student Council worked with the 'Values in Education' project based at Northern College, Dundee, in compiling a pupil relationship survey as part of an initiative to improve pupil-pupil relationships throughout the school. The survey was completed in 1999.

Those who responded to the questionnaire came up with lots of ideas about making St. Columba's a safer and friendlier school. Some were to do with how bullies are dealt with in the school; most of these wanted the school to take a firmer line. Others felt that the school could be made more secure – gates, security cameras and more supervision in the playground were mentioned. Some respondents had ideas as to how the amount of smoking around the school could be reduced. Many wanted to see the prefects having a different role – less policing, more supporting.

All of these ideas were considered in detail by the rector, the staff and the student council. The central issue which they felt merited sustained development was the area of pupil-pupil relationships and so the school's 'Better Friends' project was born. The first 'Better Friends' week, held in 1999, used PSE lessons to explore aspects of friendship and relationships between different year-groups. There were sports competitions, e.g., inter-year basketball with teams from S1 to S6, and quizzes, which, together with the PSE classes, helped pupils form more positive relationships with each other and offered new strategies for building bridges between different year-groups. The following session, 'Better Friends II' concentrated on dealing with confrontation. During the focus week, special PSE lessons were given, pitched at different levels for S1 and S2, S3 and S4 and S5 and S6. There was a variety of lunchtime activities; quiz competitions, a sports challenge and a disco. As part of the focus week the school planned to set up an 'anti-bullying' area on its website and asked pupils for their opinions on how to beat bullying. Younger pupils were asked to draw their hands and write inside the outline any qualities which made them a 'good' friend (fig. 2).



fig. 2

Pupils in S3 and S4 were asked to choose a topic from the following list:

- ? You and your friend decide to go out for the evening. You want to go to the cinema; your friend wants to go to a disco.
- ? Your friend has more money than you and suggests a holiday abroad; you can only afford to holiday in Scotland.
- ? You are at a disco, your friend wants to go on to another party, you have both made arrangements to get a lift home together.
- ? You and your friend both work part-time at the same firm, your friend is always late. Your friend has asked you to meet before work to go shopping.

Each group was then asked to split into two points of view and then decide on how they would compromise, so that they could continue to work as a group while still holding their own views.

Activities for older pupils included designing a web page highlighting how people in St. Columba's work together to make the school a friendlier place, where everyone is treated with respect.

Developing and involving the staff

Fresh approaches to Teaching and Learning

As part of their strategy for raising attainment, St. Columba's staff have been involved in looking at research into methodologies, based on what we now know of the working of the brain. Since most of what we know about the brain has been discovered in the past ten years or so, and since many teachers were initially trained over 20 years ago, it is essential they are brought up to date on the latest findings and, more importantly, their implications for classroom practice. Staff are now familiar with the concept of different learning styles, the value of mind mapping and the effect of low self-esteem on attainment. Over the past three years, the new S1 intake has been led by the support for learning department and a team of volunteer staff, through a very successful programme. Based on The Learning Game, it involves pupils in two half days off timetable, with the time devoted to a range of activities including art and drama, designed to teach pupils about the six Secrets of Success:

- ✓ Enthusiasm
- ✓ Energy
- ✓ Never limited by others' beliefs
- ✓ Positive attitude
- ✓ Confidence
- ✓ Stick with it ability

and the eight Confidences:

The Confidence to:

- ✓ Listen
- ✓ Fail
- ✓ Decide and be yourself
- ✓ Lead
- ✓ Change
- ✓ Dream and think big
- ✓ Take risks
- ✓ Love

At the end of the two sessions, pupils produced a set of banners, now on display throughout the school. They also benefited from the induction in a number of ways:

'It was fun. I enjoyed the drama best and would have liked more time to show our play.'

Allan S1

'It helped me to become more confident and I had a great time with my friends.'

Kym S1

'It really helped to raise my self esteem and I got to know more people from my class.'

Kay S2

'It gave me a chance to talk to other people who I did not know before and the confidence to be better in my subjects.'

Lottie S2

While the staff at St. Columba's are very forward looking and open to change, they are also aware that it takes time to integrate new theories into existing classroom practice. Senior staff are keen to invest time and resources in auditing existing practice, then using the results to inform new initiatives. The staff are therefore aware of the reason for change and are given time to 'buy in' to anything new and to feel confident before they introduce new ideas into the classroom. While the school values the input of outside 'experts', their work is always followed up by further staff training and development.

Probationer teachers and temporary staff

The school has a wide ranging induction programme for new staff. Probationer teachers meet regularly to discuss topics such as:

- The School Ethos and Structures
- Classroom management and organisation
- Positive behaviour management
- Parents' Evenings
- Training for Review meetings
- Updates on the 5-14 development programme

One rather unusual 'litmus test' of a school's ethos is the willingness of supply teachers to return to a school! Temporary teachers are happy to return to St. Columba's, where they are given a pack on arrival, explaining the behaviour management system among, other features of the school.

Raising attainment through Pupil Tracking

St Columba's has a sophisticated pupil tracking system, including a tracking calendar and tracking folder. The system is designed not only to track pupil progress in SQA courses but also to set targets for all pupils so that clear information is available, leading to focussed action on the part of staff, pupils and parents.

In summary the scheme :

- gathers information
- summarises in spreadsheets
- sets targets
- scrutinises/analyses data
- addresses apparent underachievement
- makes a difference

Pupils are tracked from S1, with targets becoming more defined as they progress through the school. For pupils in S5 who gained 5 or more Credit Awards at Standard Grade, the data available to school staff includes the pupils' prelim results, their Grade Point Averages and notification of whether the pupils are 'borderline' in terms of their probable SQA performance.

Principal Teachers use this data to target pupils who need additional assistance such as supported study or extra homework. Similar data is available for S5 pupils.




Our latest project

This year we launched SCOOSHI, Saint Columba's Out Of School Hours, financed by the New Opportunities Fund. SCOOSHI is designed for pupils in S1-S3, is based in school and takes place outwith the school day, usually between the hours of 3.30 and 5pm. Activities can include art, listening to music, playing games, helping with homework, visits to theatres and workshops on learning. The aim of the initiative is to provide stimulating activities in an atmosphere which is relaxed, secure and fun. It is hoped that those who participate will benefit from improved self-esteem and a positive approach to learning which will ultimately help them to achieve their potential.

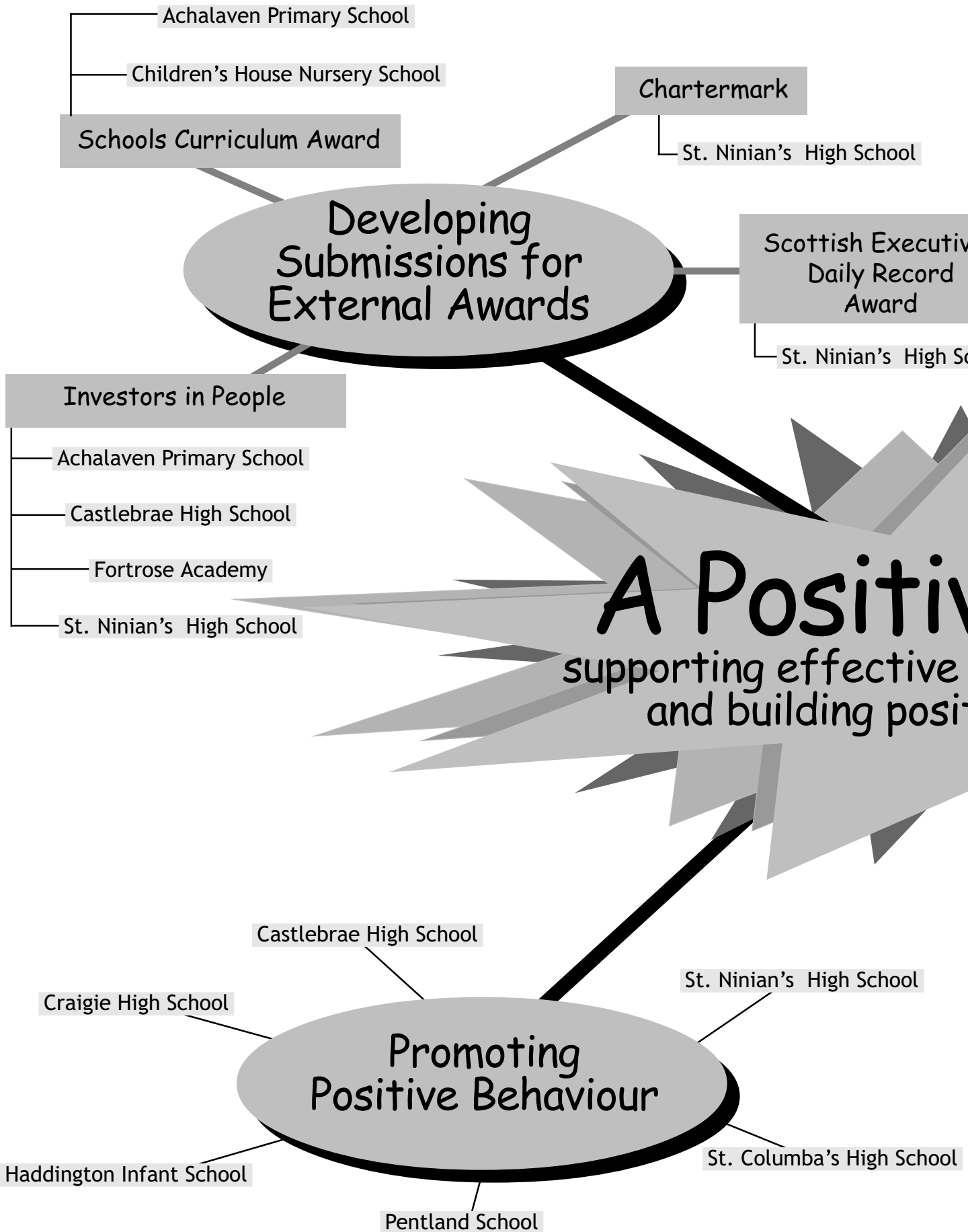
Future plans

Following an excellent 2001 HMI report, in which 96% of lessons were judged to be good or very good, St. Columba's will now widen its audit process to encompass the clergy and support services staff, so that their input can be added to that of parents, staff and pupils in future school development plans.

Key features

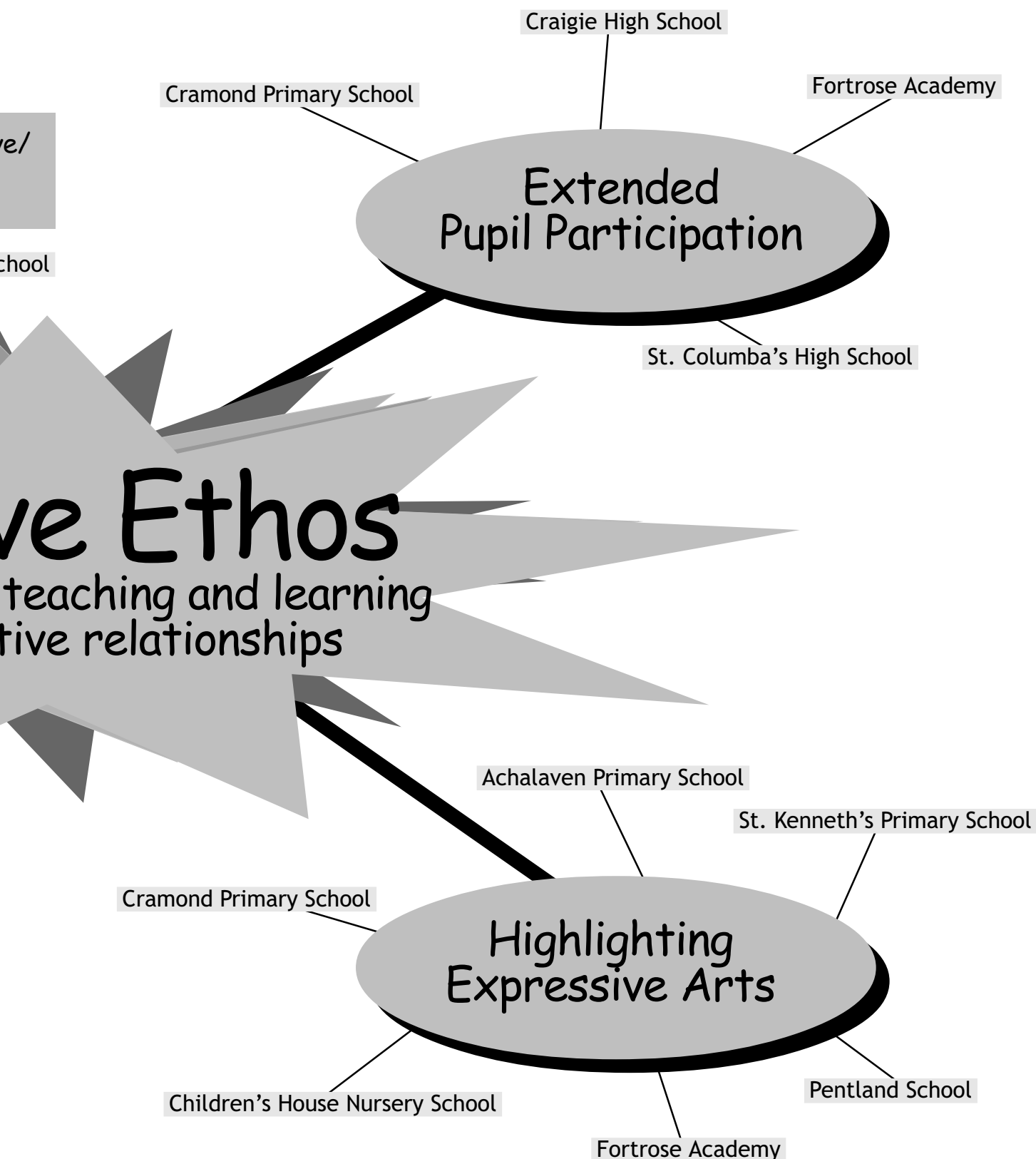
-  Sustained commitment to self evaluation
-  An open, forward-looking approach to change
-  Genuine pupil participation in decision making

Key Features of a Positive Ethos



s: examples of school strategies

Schools use a range of strategies and many of them are not unique to award winners. We highlight examples where particularly innovative and sustained approaches have been used.



Chapter 6

St. Kenneth's Primary School

School Facts



St. Kenneth's Primary School
Blairmore Road
Greenock
PA15 3JS
Inverclyde
Tel: 01475 715687
Fax: 01475 715688

Headteacher

Maureen McGarrity

Length of time in post

10 years

Type of school

5-12 denominational primary

Number of pupils

139

Staff numbers (FTE)

7.1

Location/catchment area

East end of Greenock, Inverclyde

Physical environment

Urban mid-sixties building with generous accommodation, including large assembly hall, dining room, gymnasium and computer suite.

% of pupils entitled to free meals

39%



Background

St. Kenneth's Primary School is located in the east end of Greenock, serving Strone and South Maukinhill areas. The school is small, with six classes and each teacher has a full time class commitment. The school has a mixed catchment area, parts of which have suffered from great deprivation, poor housing and serious unemployment, with the decline of shipbuilding and associated heavy industry. However, over the past four or five years, the area has improved. There are opportunities for employment in electronics and call centres. Parents and staff have recently formed a PTA to help the school raise funds for a variety of projects. Pupils have a newly formed pupil council.

The Ethos Award

When St Kenneth's Primary presented its submission for an Ethos Network Award in session 1998-99, the school based its application on a range of innovative and successful approaches to a number of areas of school life and work. Staff had been developing the classroom practice and methodologies that resulted from these approaches over a number of years. The most significant factors involved were:

- Involvement in the 'Improving School Effectiveness Project' (ISEP)
- Development Planning and Staff Development
- The development of a collaborative approach to change
- Development of an Ethos of Achievement

Involvement in ISEP from 1996-98 had afforded staff the opportunity to measure aspects of the school's performance against a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators. The results confirmed that the school was indeed successful in many areas, being one of only three schools which were judged to be significantly adding value across all bands in the Project. The Project also gave the staff the information they needed to identify key areas for development. The Staff Development programme at St Kenneth's encompasses an exceptionally wide range of curricular courses and has also included workshops which highlight up-to-the-minute research into how people learn. While many schools are now beginning to investigate this area, St. Kenneth's has several years of experience of actually basing good classroom practice on this research. In reality this means that staff are open and receptive to new ideas which they consider will be of benefit to their pupils.

Another important feature of the school is that it has over the past ten years developed a 'no blame' culture. As a result, teamwork is taken for granted and problems are identified and solved collaboratively, in an atmosphere of mutual support. Integrating new staff, such as classroom assistants, into this culture can present a challenge as all staff teach full-time and therefore have little additional time for supporting colleagues' training as much as all would like.

Building on success

Since 1999 the school has been involved in a number of initiatives to raise attainment. These include:

Thinking skills

P1 pupils are taking part in a pilot project, using the NFER Nelson publication, 'Let's Think!' – a programme designed to develop thinking skills in five to six year olds. This involves the class teacher working with the children in very small mixed ability groups on a weekly basis. The children are presented with a series of tasks and have to discuss their way of arriving at solutions.

Anne Kite visited the school for an in-service session on her recently published Thinking Skills Materials and now P6 and P7 are working on these materials and thoroughly enjoying them.

Improving the Learning Environment by responding to pupils' needs

What helps pupils to learn more effectively? Do boys need a different methodology from girls? How can pupils' feedback be used to promote learning?

Those were just a few of the questions Mrs. Isobel Delussey, the school's Assistant Head, set out to answer as part of her ongoing research into what makes an effective teacher. Mrs. Delussey had previously worked with the P7 teacher whose teaching strategies had significantly raised the achievements of the boys in her class. Using recent research material, Mrs. Delussey devised a questionnaire which sought pupils' opinions on their preferred learning environment. 13 boys and 10 girls from P6 were surveyed with the following results (fig. 1).

The questionnaire confirmed what staff had learned in a recent Myers Briggs workshop – that people have different learning styles. Some prefer to work collaboratively and others prefer to work alone. Some pupils will be less effective learners if asked to sit still for too long. Teachers in St Kenneth's put their knowledge into practice by creating opportunities for movement within the curriculum, and by varying the types of activities for their pupils. This ensures that pupils have opportunities to use their preferred learning styles as well as having the chance to develop other learning styles, bearing in mind the importance of creativity. The school uses the expressive arts to provide a vehicle for successful learning and thereby from the raising of attainment and self-esteem.

Viva España!

In June 2001 the school featured on a video which was used to Launch the Year of European Languages. The excellent teaching and learning in Spanish was again recognised when Miss McGuire and Mrs. Delussey were invited to contribute several lessons which now feature on the training CD for the teaching of Spanish in primary schools.

The school also held a Spanish Fiesta, supported by local business. The local Safeway donated all the food, including tapas; while the Playtex factory donated the coloured cloth for the costumes – made by teachers and classroom assistants. Posters were provided by the Spanish Embassy. The pupils had a wonderful time taking part in their 'Fiesta de Espana' (fig. 2).



fig. 2

Pupils' views on preferred learning environment

	Boys (13)	Girls (10)
I like a quiet classroom most of the time	7	6
I don't mind noise as long as I can get on with my work	6	4
I like everything well planned	11	6
I do my best work when ideas come out of the blue	2	4
I like to concentrate on one thing at a time	11	10
I prefer to be working around different groups doing different things	2	0
I like to stick to a timetable without interruptions	4	5
I like to do lots of different things at different times	9	5
I think I do better when I don't have too much to choose from	7	9
I believe I work harder when I have a choice of things to do	6	1
I work best when I work as part of a whole class	4	2
I work best in small groups or by myself	9	8
I prefer to have my classroom organised with everyone sitting in rows for most of the work	8	5
I like to sit in small groups and not always at tables or on chairs	5	5

fig 1

The Expressive Arts – a rewarding experience combining learning with fun!

St. Kenneth's offers its pupils a range of creative experiences, often working with authors, drama specialists, artists and dancers, to allow pupils to experience success in a number of curricular areas.

Staff know from experience that participating in a wide range of expressive arts and sport is a wonderful way to raise pupils' self esteem and consequently their level of attainment. Some recent activities include:

- Stable Manners – the school show produced in December 2001 (fig. 3)
- Scottish Country Dancing
- Ceilidhs
- Lessons at Bearsden Ski slope for P6 and P7 pupils as part of their Supported Study programme
- Sportshall Athletics – when pupils began this programme, many of them had no stamina and low fitness levels. However last year they came 6th in Inverclyde and hope to do even better this year!



fig. 3

The "Healthy Learning" Project

Pupils from P7 in St. Kenneth's have really benefited from this innovative health project. They were the only school in Inverclyde to take part in the ten-week scheme sponsored by Argyll & Clyde Health Board.

The school was chosen to show how a healthy lifestyle can boost a youngster's learning power and give them a positive and happy future. The programme was based on nutrition, hydration and an exercise programme, based on the Japanese martial art Aiki Taiso (similar to Tai Chi). It looked at how fruit, water and exercise can boost the learning process. The children loved the project and were proud to receive their certificates. The rap lyrics they produced really sum it up (fig. 4)!



fig. 4

St Kenneth's today

St. Kenneth's pupils already perform well by national standards (fig. 5).

But now the school sees a need to challenge its high-achieving pupils.

"Three years ago we were happy to have some high achieving pupils as this proved we were raising achievement. Now we have this new challenge and this is surely one which we should celebrate and enjoy!"

Staff are studying the latest educational research on the topic so that they are working from a solid base, using nationally known and respected texts to inform their own schemes of work. They are encouraged by the fact that in recent years more former pupils have gone on to Higher education, having benefited from the school's consistently forward looking approach to teaching and learning.

Two years ago the school had an HMI inspection and received a very good report. As a result of the inspection the school has developed a more rigorous approach to classroom monitoring and is currently working hard to improve the programmes of study in Science and Technology.

In the field of ICT, the staff are continuing to implement the 5-14 ICT guidelines. They have a state of the art computer suite with a multimedia projector and an interactive whiteboard. They have just taken delivery of thirteen new computers with the Inverclyde Primary Software Application package installed on each one. This package has been developed by Inverclyde Council and IBM, providing software which is closely linked to 5-14 and supports literacy, numeracy and the expressive arts. Staff hope that this exciting development will help to raise their pupils' attainments even higher.

Targets for Raising Attainment 5-14

	Target Measure % P3, P4, P6 and P7 attaining or exceeding min 5-14 levels for their stage	Starting Level of performance (June 98)	Level of performance (June 2001)	Target Level of performance (June 2001)
Reading	St. Kenneth's	70	79.5	75
	Inverclyde	71	79	79
	National	70	76 (2000)	77
Writing	St. Kenneth's	37	60.2	58
	Inverclyde	54	68.7	68
	National	56	66 (2000)	67
Mathematics	St. Kenneth's	76	79.5	81
	Inverclyde	74	79.9	82
	National	73	77 (2000)	81

fig. 5

Following their involvement in the Improving School Effectiveness Project in 1996 – 98, the school has since taken part in the National Pilot of Value Added Measures in Education. We await with interest the outcome of the research into this aspect of school effectiveness.




A word about the future

In addition to facing up to the possibility of closure and subsequent amalgamation with two other schools on a new site, St. Kenneth's staff have this year already successfully coped with a complete re-organisation of all classes when three new pupils enrolled early this session. The additional workload was taken on in the climate of 'Let's all pull together' which is a great strength of the school.

As we begin this new millennium we know that St. Kenneth's school faces an uncertain future. We are confident that we can meet future challenges because we have proved that we have the knowledge, skills and professionalism to embrace change. The ethos of our school, with its high staff and pupil morale, coupled with genuine team spirit, will be an asset no matter what the future holds.



Key features

-  Identification of pupils' needs and a curriculum tailored to meet the needs of every child
-  An atmosphere of genuine teamwork
-  Staff development activities are relevant, up to date and valued by the whole staff.

Chapter 7

Craigie High School

School Facts



Craigie High School
Garnet Terrace
Dundee
DD4 7QD
Tel: 01382 438740
Fax: 01382 438775

Headteacher

David May

Length of time in post

12 years

Type of school

Six year comprehensive

Number of pupils

785

Staff numbers (FTE)

63.8

Location/catchment area

Mixed catchment area in East Dundee

Physical environment

A 1970's building

% of pupils entitled to free meals

20%



Background

Until the early 1990s, Craigie High School was a typical city comprehensive, serving a good mix of owner occupier and council housing. The reputation of the school within its community was steadily growing with results in national examinations improving. Within the school was a well integrated Hearing and Visual Impaired Unit and a very small number of children with Records of Needs. The balance of the intake changed following the closure of a local secondary. Of the 100 pupils who came to Craigie, all in S3 and S4, many were largely attaining at Foundation/General level, and exhibited a pattern of non-attendance and school rejection. At this time, school catchment areas were also redrawn. Two primary schools serving predominantly disadvantaged areas were included in the Craigie High School zone and a primary school serving a predominantly owner-occupier area was removed. The school's profile changed drastically. We now have the highest number and proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs of any mainstream school in Dundee. We were concerned that all these changes had the potential to destabilise our school systems and policies, which had been set up with a very different intake in mind. We therefore postponed other development work for a term and from January to June, worked with our potential new pupils, staff and parents on their integration into the school community. Devoting time and resources to welcoming our new staff and pupils greatly reduced any anticipated settling-in problems and limited the potential for stress and tension in the school.

The Ethos Award

We recognise that the ethos within a school and its attitude towards its pupils have a significant impact on a pupil's attainment. As a school committed to promoting social inclusion, where all pupils have a chance to seize the opportunities open to them, we realise that we have a vital role to play in tackling some of the factors that can hinder learning.

In session 1993-94, as part of our annual review, we set up an Ethos and Values Group at the same time as the ethos network was being established. Discussions with staff had indicated that teachers were keen to look again at our values, not in a negative sense, but rather to articulate where we were going and to establish a common sense of purpose. Staff were asked to suggest items to be included in a set of questionnaires, which we issued to teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents. The Ethos and Values group, which was chaired by a PT subject, then used the feedback from the questionnaires to identify key issues for development and review. Staff then worked in cross curricular groups to identify quantifiable targets for the next few years. These included:

- working at an appropriate level
- developing a praise culture
- listening to pupils who have difficulty
- having a real say in planning
- staff feeling valued
- parents receiving regular information about their children's progress
- parents understanding their role in their children's education

A timescale was then drawn up so that over the next four years these issues would form the basis of much of the work outlined in the School Development Plan. At this time, we had not thought of entering for an Ethos Award, but we were encouraged to do so by our Educational Development Service. The school was delighted to win the award and, true to its guiding principles, set up a small group of two staff, two pupils and two parents to advise on how the money might be spent. As a result the school has bought benches for our three social areas, using additional funds from the Devolved School Management group (fig. 1). We have also given a small amount of funding to the Pupils-help-Pupils scheme and funded two new collages and public art to improve the internal appearance of the school.



fig. 1

Responding to the pupils' questionnaire

Our pupils had identified several priorities including the amount of homework and feedback on it, school trips, behaviour, bullying, praise, the reputation of the school and attainment.

All these issues were discussed and evaluated by staff. Homework was tackled via the School Development Plan and other issues by means of cross-curricular discussion groups. Among the most interesting results of our responses are:

- An Activities Day for S1-S3 pupils in May
- A leavers' ceremony at the end of May
- Our House System, which incorporates points awarded for sporting competitions, debates, wearing school uniform and punctuality
- Various induction sessions as pupils take up new courses in S3 and S5
- Participation in the University Access Summer School
- A Pupils-help-Pupils system where S6 pupils are trained to help junior pupils in areas such as mediation (fig. 2)

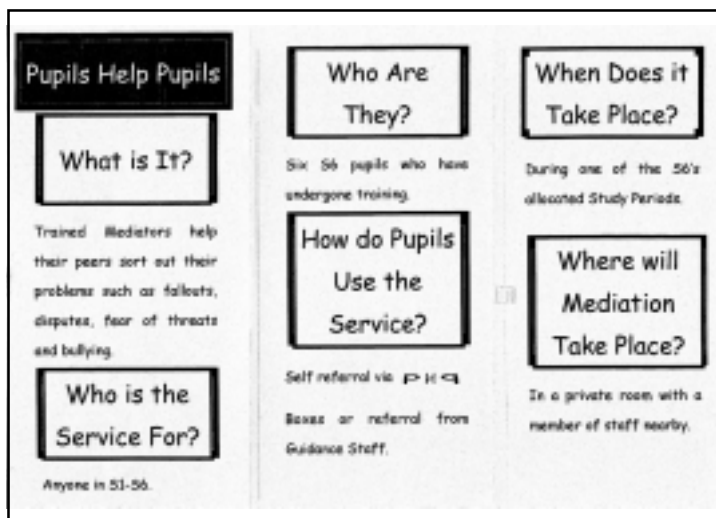


fig. 2

The following session, a new pupil questionnaire on ethos was issued. The results were discussed by the **Pupil Council** and now form the basis of the Ethos agenda for 2001-2002. The Pupil Council itself has been re-vamped, with Class Representatives now reporting during PSE time, so that pupils are much more aware of what is being discussed. The minutes of the meetings now show an improvement in pupil participation, with staff no longer needing to create the agendas! 85% of Class Reps attend meetings which are held every two months. As a result of the work of the Pupil Council, the following improvements have taken place or are scheduled:

- The boys' toilets will be refurbished this summer
- The girls' toilets have been painted and an auxiliary is present during lunch and intervals
- The Pupils' Council has been asked by the Head Teacher to suggest lists of pupils' rights and responsibilities.

Although our new Pupil Council is an improvement on our previous system, we still feel that further development is required to fully engage our pupils in genuine participation and consultation.

As well as responding to the questionnaires, we have also looked at ways of inspiring and extending our able pupils, as we felt they needed a more challenging environment. We were aware that building self-esteem should not be limited to underachievers and those from deprived backgrounds. In the classroom, the pupils involved can work on extension materials, prepare for competitions, undertake problem-solving activities etc. Pupils have also been offered the chance to take part in 'Proshare', an investment and business game sponsored by the Financial Times, to build a go-kart, sponsored by Rover, and to produce a school newspaper, among many other possibilities. Some of the pupils illustrated their activities in rap, words and movement.

'I felt that I had achieved something worthwhile when I won a trip to London for coming first in a mock United Nations Parliament debate.'

'I was in the team that reached the Top of the Bench chemistry finals for the last two years. They were great fun.'

'Swimming for Scotland was the biggest challenge of my life and a great experience.'

Responding to the parents' questionnaire – making parents welcome in our school

We have consciously tried to make our school as welcoming and as friendly as possible:

- **Reception area** – on entry to the school, visitors are shown to our recently completed reception area where they can browse through many appropriate leaflets and look at photographs and certificates showing our pupils' achievements. Plants enhance the area.
- **Parent interview room** – this has been refurbished with examples of pupil achievement and art work.
- **Signposts around the school** – these show people the way to various areas of the school. Depending on the event these signs may be in different languages.
- **Public art and examples of pupils' work** – the public art displays, designed and produced by our pupils, show aspects of life in Craigie. The pupils are keen to take responsibility for their upkeep. The examples of pupils' work are changed regularly and all departments now have displays of pupil work in their corridors.

■ For **Parents' Evenings**, we reviewed and made changes to the appointments system and produced guidelines for staff on how to prepare for parents' evenings. All parents also receive a leaflet which clarifies the role they can play in their children's education.

Our 1998 parents' survey noted an improvement in many key areas:

	Yes	1994	1998
My child enjoys being at school		77%	92%
I am satisfied with the homework my child receives		53%	84%
My child is treated fairly by her/his teachers		82%	94%
I get regular information about my child's progress		54%	75%
The school has explained to me the part I can play in my child's education		66%	84%
I am confident that if I complain about something I will get a sympathetic hearing		79%	96%

In 2001, we issued a similar questionnaire and were delighted that the results were even more positive.

Responding to staff

1. We have made progress in recognising and appreciating teachers' efforts.

Staff get formal and informal acknowledgment from the Senior Management Team. Staff who take part in extra curricular activities receive formal thanks once a year, while the Headteacher regularly sends thank you notes to staff who have been involved in additional activities such as outings, competitions and so on. We also have light-hearted bi-annual award ceremonies for staff.

2. A Positive Learning Policy

The aim of the policy is to help improve teacher-pupil relationships and pupil attainment in the classroom. Pupils are motivated to choose positive behaviour and thereby increase time for learning in class. It also aims to create a climate of praise in every classroom, while dealing clearly and consistently with behaviour that challenges these principles.

The policy is based on praise, both formal and informal, with a set of agreed rules which are displayed in every classroom and are taught to pupils at the start of each new session. There are sanctions, which start with a reminder from the teacher and go on to include formal

referrals to house heads. This policy grew from our working group on discipline, set up in 1998. It has taken a number of years to hold full consultations, then refine the policy into something workable and acceptable to parents, staff and pupils.

3. Dealing with disruptive pupils – the CHAT project



fig. 3

Although the positive learning policy has been shown to improve pupil attitudes with the majority of pupils, the most disruptive pupils were not being directly affected. In the past few years our work through our behaviour support staff in adapting the curriculum has helped to some extent. We therefore decided to pilot a scheme for twelve of our most challenging S2 pupils. CHAT (fig. 3) is a behaviour support project involving the class teachers of our most disruptive pupils who were in danger of being excluded from school on a regular basis. It aims to:

- Provide identified pupils with highly intensive behaviour support which will allow them to cope with mainstream education
- Provide and staff a 'place to go' when a child is having difficulty coping in the classroom
- Advise and help children manage their own behaviour
- Improve the relationship between the child and her/his classroom teachers
- Develop and maintain regular contact with parents/teachers to discuss the child's progress and any other related issues.

Staff involved observe the pupils in a number of classes and have regular daily contact times and weekly progress meetings with the pupils. They set targets, discuss coping strategies and collaborate with class teachers to improve the pupils' behaviour and performance. Parents and carers are involved from the beginning and have regular Wednesday/Thursday contact times with the staff involved. The success criteria are:

- Reduction in the number of exclusions
- Reduction in the number of referrals
- Improvement in attendance and punctuality
- Improvement in home/school contact
- Improvement in both individual and general attainment levels.

This innovative project involved the staff in very close contact with parents. All the class teachers were given in-service on strategies to deploy with these pupils. The project has been mainstreamed into the school and now that staffing has been confirmed, we have adapted it to involve more of our school population.

4. Classroom Observation

All members of the Senior Management Team are linked to four or five departments, and, as part of the school's on-going self-evaluation, they now visit classrooms and observe two lessons by each teacher. There is an agreed agenda for these visits and oral feedback is given later in the week. According to a survey of teachers involved, 85% of the staff are happy with the scheme and have asked for repeat visits. They are helpful on a practical basis, as, in the normal school week, staff are not usually able to watch each other teach. Now senior staff can observe the same lesson being taught by different teachers and use this to exemplify and spread best practice. The classroom visits have also proved helpful to probationer teachers as direct positive feedback and advice can be given, and can lead to changes in approaches used in the classroom.

5. A Buddy System for Staff

When new staff, especially probationers, arrive in a department, they are teamed with a more experienced teacher. Similarly, new Principal Teachers are linked to a Principal Teacher who has been in the school for a number of years and who can provide much informal help and advice.

Our future plans

■ School environment – we hope to introduce more public art around the school and to develop a permanent exhibit celebrating the achievements of pupils who have gained sporting awards at national level. Music in the dining hall is also on the menu, and we hope to be able to provide social areas at intervals for all year groups.

■ Praise culture – we would like to develop a colours system with an honours board for pupils who have been honoured nationally. We need to top-up in-service on Discipline for Learning, on which our positive learning policy is based. Our website and school handbook need to be revised.




■ Parents' Questionnaire – the collated results of our most recent questionnaire will be discussed and action taken on any issues arising.

■ Pupils – we will further develop our strategy for able pupils, build on our learning policy and deliver in-service to staff on learning styles and pupil motivation.

Are we on target?

The general aim of Craigie High School is to provide each of its pupils with courses which are challenging, enjoyable and useful and to ensure that pupils are happy and secure in the school environment. As we work towards achieving this, we are also delighted to have achieved increased success in SQA examination (fig. 4).

Key features

-  A genuinely inclusive ethos which responds to pupils' individual needs
-  Clear and consistent policies on learning and teaching with the emphasis on positive behaviour management
-  High expectation of all pupils and encouragement of achievement as well as celebration of success

Target Measure				
		Level of Performance Average of 97-99 % of S4 roll	Level of Performance Average of 99-01 % of S4 roll	Present Level of Performance 2001 % of S4 roll
S grade English	1-6	82	88	91
S grade Maths	1-6	85	94	97
5+ S grades	1-6	77	86	90
	1-4	49	60	72
	1-2	15	19	21
3+ H grades	A-C	9	11	11
5+ H grades	A-C	3	4	5

fig. 4

Chapter 8

Pentland School

School Facts



Pentland School
Tay Street
Coatbridge
ML5 2NA
North Lanarkshire
Tel: 01236 420471
Fax: 01236 434844

Headteacher

Iain Porteous

Length of time in post

5 years

Type of school

SEBD primary

Number of pupils

22

Staff numbers (FTE)

8

Location/catchment area

Pentland School serves the whole of North Lanarkshire

Physical environment

A compact building with most classrooms opening onto a central hall

% of pupils entitled to free meals

100%



Background

Pentland School is North Lanarkshire's primary age specialist provision for pupils experiencing significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is now situated in the Townhead area of Coatbridge, having recently been relocated to larger and more suitable premises. Pupils attend Pentland School when supports and strategies available within the mainstream context are unable to meet their needs fully and effectively. At Pentland they are offered a safe, non-judgmental but well structured environment, allowing them to develop that degree of self confidence and self-esteem from which good relationships with others can grow. All pupils are benchmarked on entry, so that their progress can be monitored and celebrated. A variety of strategies such as Circle Time helps to create a sense of community and identity within the school. Success for Pentland staff can be when a child leaves their school early to re-join their peer group in the normal school setting or when a child is more able to form meaningful relationships with others within their home and school communities.

Action on ethos

In October 1998, following an exceptionally difficult period in the life of the school, when the disruption caused by a fire was added to staffing difficulties, staff and pupil morale were at an all-time low. Using Performance Indicators from 'How good is our school?' we conducted a whole-school audit and, from the evidence gathered, drew up a three-year Development Plan. The section on improving our ethos was developed by all staff; we called it **Our School – Making it Better**.

We concentrated on:

Pupil behaviour and discipline
Care and welfare of pupils
Pupil and staff morale – identity and pride

Pupil behaviour and discipline

It is imperative that a school which caters for pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties has an appropriate behaviour management system in place. All of our staff have been trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and have the skills and knowledge which enable them to become the catalyst through which a child can change old habits, destructive responses and maladaptive behaviour patterns. We now also have a set of Golden Rules and each pupil also maintains agreed personalised behaviour targets. Pupils can track their progress towards improved behaviour on the 'Flying Higher' space race display in the main hall (fig. 1).



fig. 1

At the end of each day we hold a short 'achievements' meeting for all our pupils. Individual achievement for effort and behaviour are recorded and publicly celebrated by praise and laminated certificates are presented each Friday afternoon after Circle Time. Many of the certificates presented and displays around the school use alliterations from the school name. Some examples include:

Pentland Penguins	for swimming achievement
Pentland Professionals	for football achievement
Pentland Professor	for achievement in academic areas
Pentland Pioneer	for trying something new/difficult

Displays in the school have included:

Pentland Potters	examples of pottery work
Pentland Pilots	wooden planes made during expressive arts lessons
Pentland Patterns	designs made during art lessons

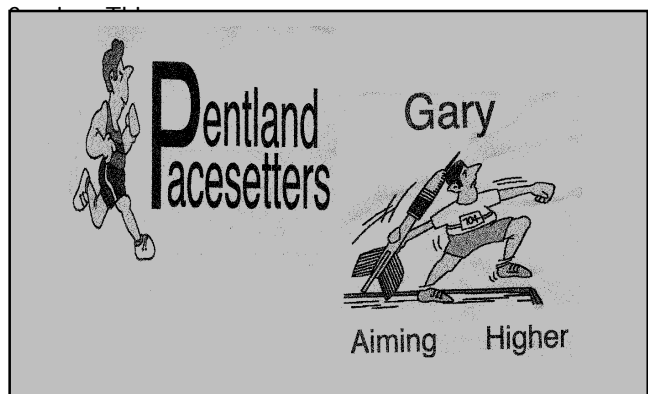


fig. 2

A school pen with the inscription, "I am a Pentland Performer – Go with the best" is given to both pupils and adults who have made a significant input or achievement in Pentland School.

Care and Welfare of Pupils

As our children are generally vulnerable and at risk, it is imperative that they attend a school which has an ethos of providing for the care and welfare of all its pupils. By establishing and implementing our positive behaviour and discipline policy we arrived at a situation where all pupils were beginning to follow, and benefit from, an agreed and understood whole school approach which promoted positive behaviour. Our behaviour policy alone, however, would not be enough to guarantee that our pupils were going to be safe, happy and protected. Over the last year we have introduced the following policies and strategies to ensure the care and welfare of our pupils:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Pupil Supervision
- Child Protection

In addition, as part of our care and welfare policy, we took part in a 12 week health and fitness programme that we initiated with our colleagues in the health and leisure services departments (fig.2). The aim of our **Pentland Pacesetters** project was to determine the effect that a fitness and healthy living programme can have on aspects of pupils' fitness and on whole school ethos. All pupils in the school took part in a daily 15 minute fitness programme provided by the Department of Leisure

delivered over a twelve-week period by all school staff during times allocated for Physical Education. A fitness instructor also led some fitness sessions to provide additional expertise, variety and help in maintaining high levels of motivation (fig.3).

Officers from the Department of Leisure Services conducted baseline testing of aspects of physical fitness before and after pupils had undertaken their twelve - week fitness programme.

All pupils who were tested at the start and at the end of the programme showed improvements in their levels of health and fitness. It was also noted that their enthusiasm for exercising and their general behaviour had improved.

Teachers also concentrated on the theme of **Healthy Living** as part of the school programme. Fruit was substituted for sugary sweets in the school tuckshop for two days a week. Pupils then became less negative towards fruit as a compulsory substitute for sweets and in the end, most pupils actually looked forward to their fruit-only intervals.

Towards the end of the project, questionnaires were provided for pupils, parents and teachers to complete. These questionnaires were designed to solicit their views on the improved ethos of the school as a result of the Pacesetters project and other Action on Ethos initiatives introduced since October 1998.

The responses from all groups of people were extremely positive, highlighting that pupils, parents and teachers considered that Pentland School was a place where all people felt safe, happy and cared for. Our recent HMI report identified the support for pupils' care and welfare as a key strength of the school.

The first 3 weeks of our 12 week fitness programme					
Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
One	aerobic circuit	circuit n° 1	football	flex & stretch	circuit n° 2
Two	mini-basketball	circuit n° 3	aerobic circuit	circuit n° 1	flex & stretch
Three	aerobic circuit	flex & stretch	fitness class	circuit n° 2	rounders

fig. 3



Pupil & Staff Morale – Identity & Pride

Two years ago we designed and produced our first ever School Logo (left) which appears on the front cover of all school documents and on our school uniform. This logo was done in-

house using our own expertise with ideas from both pupils and parents. We believe that our logo represents an open doorway towards new and meaningful opportunities for all our pupils. This is our promise to our pupils and to their parents. Our pupils all now wear their school uniform, helping to create a sense of community and belonging.

Target Setting & Personal Development Plans

All pupils now follow Personal Development Plans which track progress towards agreed targets both in curriculum areas and in behaviour. These expectations for improved performance are agreed, in the main, as appropriate and realistic by the pupil, parents and teacher. By introducing target setting, both the pupil and their parents have an opportunity for an increased stakeholding in their child's educational process and progress. Pupils and parents can have greater self-belief and commitment towards improved performance.

Increased Communication with Parents

We introduced our Parent Newsletter, The Pentland Postbag, in December 1998. Our parents enjoy and benefit from this additional avenue of communication. The pupils' Christmas Party was videoed. In January parents had the opportunity to watch the video at home or at school. One parent called relatives and stayed up all night watching her son enjoying his party! This was her son's first ever party and she was overwhelmed at seeing him mix well with his peer group. Not only do we need to raise the self-esteem of our pupils but of their parents too at times.

School relocation, a potential for crisis

Our original school in Chryston was on inconvenient split sites and was too small for comfort. In November 2000, we moved to our present site. We fully expected our pupils to be anxious and unsettled during the move and possibly cause themselves and others distress. We had the potential for a crisis and it was crucial that the staff were able to minimise the inevitable trauma associated with our school relocation. We believe that the school's well – established positive ethos provided a secure foundation from which to tackle this potentially traumatic change. We are fortunate that all members of our staff work as a team. Individually and collectively they are 'opportunity-orientated people'. While recognising the potential difficulties involved in the school's relocation they were

also able to appreciate the potential advantages. They have developed and demonstrated the necessary resilience and skills to deal with inevitable disruptions. This ability to cope with discomfort comes from knowing that they do not need to disguise or deny their feelings, but can rather share their worries by capitalising on the ethos of acceptance and support that is available from the team. Our staff were committed to the move. It was now imperative that both staff and pupils worked together to plan for the move so that all involved became aware of their individual and corporate responsibilities to enable a successful move to be made.

How we used Circletime to gear up for our move

Our strong ethos and community spirit is generated, maintained and enhanced using many and varied strategies. However, without doubt our weekly Circletime and celebrations of success play a key part in maintaining our positive community spirit. Circletime was the forum where we began to prepare our pupils for our impending move. At Circletime we asked pupils to raise any worries and ask any questions they had about the move. All concerns and questions were recorded in our Circletime log book. Writing children's comments down ensures that we don't forget but it also demonstrates respect. Here are some of the points mentioned:

- Will I still have my own desk and the same teacher?
- How close are we to Drumpellier playpark?
- Will the school dinners be as good?
- How much bigger is it?
- Will we have a nice playground?
- I don't want to leave Pentland – it's nice and small. I don't like big schools.
- Will we still do the same things together?

The staff were able to reassure pupils that they would have the same teacher, classmates, equipment and belongings. All class and school routines would continue. The head teacher would even make sure that the pupils' best work was displayed on his new 'best work wall' in advance, ready for them to see when they arrived at the new school! Unfortunately our school dinners would come from a new supplier and many pupils and some hungry and appreciative members of staff were upset at the prospect of not having Mrs. Brady's special curry! At the first Circletime after our visit to our new school pupils were asked what they thought of their new school.

'It's got two soft playgrounds. It's brilliant!'

'It's all joined up! We won't get wet going to our class now.'

All seemed set to go well, yet we courted disaster when we moved! We had promised our pupils that everything would continue as before. Unfortunately the key activity – Circletime – stopped for a month after our first week at our new school. Why was this allowed to happen at such a potentially vulnerable time? Just after our move, the staff member trained in Circletime departed to a promoted

post. Being under great pressure caused by the move, we just didn't realise that we were putting even more pressure on ourselves by not giving everyone their usual opportunity to voice concern and be reassured. Our positive ethos deteriorated markedly and yet this could have been avoided. Weekly Circletime was soon restored and Jenny Mosely has conducted demonstration Circletimes with our pupils. She and others were impressed at how well established and responsive our pupils were in this activity. Now that we have been settled in our new premises for over a year, we continue our normal routines and enjoy the benefits of our much improved accommodation.

Is our School Better?

Our Action on Ethos plan was called '**Our School – making it better.**' We began over three years ago and feel able now to look back and evaluate our efforts.

■ In October 1999 we sought the views of parents, pupils and staff on School Ethos using slightly revised Ethos Indicators. The findings from the questionnaires which were used indicate that all groups consider Pentland School now to enjoy a positive school ethos.

■ All incidents of misbehaviour which result in removal from class and/or involvement of senior staff are recorded. Since October 1998 there has been a gradual decline in the number of incidents recorded.

■ Our link adviser from the Authority makes regular visits. He has made very positive comments and has recommended that we should make application for recognition of our achievements by way of Investors in People and Charter Mark awards.

■ Our recent HMI Report indicated that '*the ethos of the school was very good*' and went on to state that '*staff had created a welcoming and caring atmosphere*' and that '*relationships among staff and pupils were very positive.*'

A positive ethos: the cornerstone of life at Pentland

Providing and maintaining a strong school ethos where pupils and staff respect each other and work hand in hand towards shared goals is the bedrock of our life at Pentland. We are proud of this while not pretending that it is always easy. It is crucial that our school, which aims to help children experiencing a range of achievement-inhibiting emotions, provides them with an environment and relationships that will help them begin to address and overcome feelings such as low self-esteem, hurt, anger, frustration and rejection.

Children who can be seriously out of control and lacking purpose in their lives find it difficult or impossible to stop their downward cycle of negative behaviour. They often cannot re-orientate themselves unless they receive specialist support within an alternative to the mainstream school environment. When new and more appropriate responses to their lives are learnt they feel safer and more in control. Only then can they begin to move towards more mature behaviour, better relationships and greater academic achievement.

Only when our pupils develop respect and esteem for themselves and then for others can they appreciate their interdependence with others. Then they begin to learn about and fulfil their duties and responsibilities within the school community and, as they progress, in society. This journey towards self control and achievement can take many forms.

On one occasion the school was asked to support a seven year old pupil who was unable to join class in the normal way. The school responded by 'building' a class around John. At first John came to school for just one hour a day, for one-to-one teaching. His self-esteem was so low, that, previously, any failure on his part upset him so much that he could not continue. The school worked hard to raise his self-esteem by creating a programme for him in which success was assured. He gradually came to realise that he would not be seen as a failure at Pentland, so that after a number of weeks he was able to accept another pupil in 'his' class, and eventually more pupils joined and the class was normalised.

As a result of his success in class, John was able to attend his first ever party – in the school! The party was filmed and his family were deeply moved when they watched the video, as John had never been able to participate in any family party or social event. These small successes are a great step forward for the individual pupil and a tribute to the professionalism and dedication of the staff on which we hope to build for the future.

What does the future hold?




Our local authority envisages that our staff could become involved in behaviour management initiatives throughout North Lanarkshire. Many of the strategies we use would also be of great benefit to teachers in mainstream schools and we look forward to planning for this wider involvement.

Subject to authority approval, a further extension of the school is planned for this calendar year. We will then need to plan for an increase in our school population, putting to good use the lessons learned in our relocation to our present site.

'The one constant is change. Where the difficulties can lie is in managing the speed of that change!'

Iain Porteous, Headteacher

Key features

-  The sense of community and the relationships between staff and pupils
-  The high level of staff commitment to the school
-  The pupils' positive attitude to classwork

Chapter 9

Haddington Infant School

School Facts



Haddington Infant School
Victoria Road
Haddington
EH41 4OJ
East Lothian
Tel: 01620 82 32 71
Fax: 01620 82 32 71

Headteacher

Lorna McLeod

Length of time in post

12 years

Type of school

Nursery, Primary 1-3

Number of pupils

368

Staff numbers (FTE)

44

Location/catchment area

The county town of Haddington

Physical environment

The original school was built in 1897 and modernised in 1982.

One annexe was added in the 1960s.

% of pupils entitled to free meals

9%



Background

Haddington Infant School provides education from Nursery to P3 for the county town of Haddington. This makes it unusual in the wider Scottish context but not within East Lothian where similar arrangements exist in Prestonpans and Tranent. An advantage is that the catchment area embraces the whole town and therefore represents the entire Haddington community.

In the last ten years the roll has increased sharply to 368 and the staff has increased from 21 to 44. As well as 12 infant classes, there are morning and afternoon nursery classes. Within the last four years, the school has welcomed the creation of the 'Rainbow Room', provision for infants with special educational needs (SEN) within the school. The school is truly an 'inclusive' school as all nursery children are totally included in mainstream nursery and all infant children with SEN are included in their mainstream classes as much as possible.

The Ethos Award

Building a positive ethos is a central part of daily life at Haddington Infant School. The headteacher had not considered entering the school for the Ethos Network Award until a HMI Inspection noted that the school had 'a strong ethos of giving'. This recognition from the Inspectorate gave particular pleasure to all involved in the creation and upkeep of Haddington Infant School's positive ethos.

The ethos promoted in Haddington Infant School is what any school would hope for. Work and the systematic assessment of work are central, together with the promotion of positive values and responsible attitudes. The happiness of the pupil is an aim, as is partnership between children, parents, staff and the community. These are not just words. Any visitor will recognise that this is a school full to bursting with colour, life, work and fun. As readers know, such results do not simply appear through paying lip service to what is generally seen as a good idea. The visible signs of a positive ethos at Haddington Infant School are the result of hard work by everyone, under a clear and purposeful direction. It is hard work which the Ethos Network Award recognises and celebrates, while acknowledging the pleasure and sheer fun so evidently had by pupils and by staff, and by the parents too, demonstrated by high levels of parent involvement and interest.

Haddington Infants in the local community

Children and staff become involved in many local activities, most notably Haddington Festival Week. Staff have participated in a variety of events from quizzes to a fancy dress raft race and are current holders of the Festival Challenge Cup.

The school maintains a high profile in the local press and ensures that the children's achievements are reported. This contributes to the children's sense of pride and self-esteem in what they do. They have been successful in a wide range of competitions that they have been encouraged to enter. The children's work, thoughts and achievements are displayed throughout the school, which provides a stimulating atmosphere. School assemblies are joyful occasions with opportunities to reward success and celebrate achievements together (fig. 1).



fig. 1

So that both locals and the school know what is happening in their communities, events are publicised on school notice boards and information is distributed to relevant local agencies. The staff have also produced a booklet on local facilities for under 5s for new parents in the community.

Strong links with a group of Bosnians in the community have been developed and the school has been able to purchase and supply bi-lingual books for these parents' use at home with their children. At Christmas the children celebrate with the Day Centre pensioners and other community groups.

After Hours Activities

The school hosts an after-school club, The Dolphin Club, run by a committee, offering after school care to their own pupils and their siblings. They run an after-school study support art club and computing club for P3.

Haddington Infants practice global inclusion

Haddington Infants has long standing links with Brazil and from this, strong commitment grew to build and staff a school for street children near the north-east Brazilian port of Recife. Pupils and staff, parents and the local community rallied together and raised £5,000 and the school was built. Now the school is fully operational and is seen as an educational project rather than a charity venture.

As well as boosting their religious and moral education, writing has also been given new, highly meaningful contexts. Environmental Studies also benefits from first-hand accounts and access to local experts via e-mail.

Now the school is complementing that work using dance. Several members of staff are now trained to teach Samba to Early Years pupils! Using ICT means they share their experiences in real time and they are currently using e-mail and video clips to exchange dance techniques and are working towards face-to-face discussion using webcams.



fig. 2

fig. 3

Pupil participation in the creation of positive ethos

The children improved their own playground by telling staff what they felt was needed. A giant octopus showing phonic sounds is one of the educational games painted by the PTA. The group has also created gardens, tended by the children (fig. 2).

A buddying scheme, initiated by a class teacher to give P3s greater social responsibility, has been introduced in the school. This is now up and running and P3s fill out a job application form (fig. 3) to become friends to P1s and P2s and teach them playground games. When asked to write a sentence about why they would make a good playground buddy, pupils have replied:

'I always liked helping P1 when I was in P2. I love to see people happy.'

'Because I have a lot of common sense!'

They also answer questionnaires about their buddying experience. All children fill out and illustrate lists of what makes a good/bad day in the playground. This helps the buddies (and staff) to ensure that play times continue to be happy time. The £2,000 cash prize that accompanies the Ethos Award silver quach has been used

- To build a buddying bus shelter
- To buy buddy hats and buddy benches

- To purchase games and materials for raising self-esteem
- To make a sensory garden which will benefit the whole school not just the pupils with SEN for which it is primarily intended
- To release staff to attend various conferences and courses on, for example, Promoting Positive Behaviour, Training for Circle Time, Music Therapy for SEN children

Active Learning and Responsive Teaching

Alongside the social and environmental experiences, professional concern to ensure effective attainment in conventional areas of the curriculum continues. National tests and school inspections show that the pupils perform well in relation to national standards. The 2000 HMI report says that in reading, 'A good number in P3 were attaining standards beyond those expected for their age' and in maths 'some pupils were attaining well beyond national targets.'

To raise attainment and boost self-esteem Circle Time was researched and introduced by a probationer teacher and now all classes have it in different guises. Class work is also highly praised and each class has a 'Special Person' award which is taken very seriously by the children. Staff members can also be a special person (fig. 4)!



fig. 4

The school's Perceptual Motor Programme helps children who have been identified as having motor and/or learning difficulties. The programme is based on mastering basic movements confidently, but it is called perceptual because moving well is a complex skill. It aims to improve skills including co-ordination, balance, spatial awareness, memory and vocabulary. A rhyme is the first activity which develops body awareness and listening skills, physical exercises include beam balancing which promotes poise, with the added difficulty of stepping over obstacles. Parents are also very involved with the programme. The children are videoed at regular intervals which helps parents and allows staff to observe and assess their movement in greater detail.

Each child at Haddington Infant School has an assessment folder which starts in the Nursery and follows them at the end of P3 when they move on to Primary 4 in their new school. The folder contains:

- Set pieces of work used for assessment
- Written comments by staff
- Self-assessment sheets for children to complete
- A personal achievement certificate
- A sheet for parents to record their annual summation of the work

Positive Behaviour and Discipline

The school has adopted a common set of rules for classroom, corridor and dining hall. This was discussed with all the children in their classes over a period of time and was the subject of several school assemblies.

■ Class suggestions were collated and were again presented to the children.

■ A final short list of rules was decided upon by the children.

■ For the playground these were put on a commercially produced board featuring the children's own drawings.

■ For other school areas the pupils produced their own!

Pupils are given daily opportunities to show responsibility and independence. Each classroom has a telephone, beside which a large prompt card encourages the pupils to answer the phone confidently (fig. 5). Each day, one child is charged with the responsibility of calling the school office with the dinner numbers.



fig. 5

Responsive Management

The result of a recent staffroom refurbishment is a bright and comfortable space for staff where parents are encouraged to drop in. A whiteboard dominates one wall and is used to communicate a variety of information from urgent matters, diary notes and social events. Each staff member from teachers to lollipop people has a pigeonhole for weekly newsletters and staff notes.

The staff management team keep to a series of measures to ensure the smooth running of the school

- A set agenda for meetings
- A strict timetable for meetings
- Regular feedback sessions
- Evaluation session at the end of the meeting

The teachers work closely with the management team so there is no trepidation surrounding classroom observation sessions. There are set criteria for measuring performance (using HMI Quality Indicators) and these become positive sessions with plenty of feedback. Work shadowing is also possible under the school's 'Sharing Expertise' policy when staff are released from class to observe their colleagues teaching. All staff, including non-teaching members, share in the implementation of the school development plan by having tasks assigned to them. Similarly, non-teaching staff often form part of the working groups auditing the previous year's plan.

Recently the school's annual audit revealed that the quality of links with the P4-P7 school was causing concern. An example of how the audit can lead to critical improvements, this revelation resulted in increased liaison and remedial measures:

- All school policies are now developed in consultation with staff in the next school ensuring curriculum continuity
- A sports day will be held at the next school in June
- Whole day visits to the next school by the children
- P3 and P4 dance afternoon at the next school

To ease their transition further, P3 pupils now create a passport which includes personal information and details about their educational journey so far. They can complete it in P4.

The Future




All of these changes have not been without problems. Over the four years, for months at a time, much of the school resembled a building site while added facilities and artwork was put in place. But the developments have transformed the school, and the cosy and secure feel characteristic of the smaller school has been retained (fig. 6). That was only possible by the continuing development of the positive ethos which runs throughout the school and makes Haddington Infants a centre of early years excellence.



fig. 6

The staff, children, parents and the entire school community know there will always be problems and challenges and they intend to meet them with the same commitment to inclusion, involvement and engagement with which previous changes have been managed. Projects in the pipeline include their new website, and an even bigger school for the street children of Recife.

Key features

-  Staff empower children by giving them ownership of the school environment
-  Children are encouraged to have high self-esteem
-  Strong links with the community

Chapter 10

Children's House Nursery School

School Facts



Children's House Nursery School
30 Wauchope Terrace
Edinburgh
EH16 4NU
Tel/Fax: 0131 661 1401

Headteacher

Maureen Baker

Length of time in post

14 years

Type of school

Nursery

Number of pupils

60 children; 3-5 years

Staff numbers (FTE)

2.3 Teachers, 6 Nursery Nurses, 1 SEN auxiliary

Location/catchment area

Residential social housing estates in the south east of Edinburgh, with some children travelling from outwith the area.

Physical environment

The school was purpose built in 1935 and upgraded in 1992.



Background

Children's House Nursery School is situated in the Niddrie/Craigmillar area in the south-east of the city of Edinburgh. The area is designated an area of multi-deprivation with high unemployment. At the present the area is undergoing a major regeneration programme with most of the housing being demolished. The nearby local primary school was closed in December 1999 and parents are aware of plans for another two primary school closures and the building of a new Community School. It is a time of uncertainty and lack of stability in the community. The nursery school gives support to many families in this time of change. Many of the parents are young and isolated and the recent regeneration has unsettled them. However, the regeneration is on the whole seen very positively, giving opportunities for training and job possibilities. A new hospital has been built close by and this is seen as a possible opportunity for local people to access employment. The nursery is aware of its role in supporting families when accessing training and returning to employment and has been part of a successful New Opportunities Fund Bid to introduce wraparound care (8am-9am and 3pm-6pm) for families in work or training. Children's House offers a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the recommendations in 'A Curriculum Framework for children 3-5 years: Scottish Guidelines' and measured against 'The Child at the Centre -Self Evaluation in the Early Years' performance indicators.

The Ethos Award

At Children's House, we work to ensure that parents/carers are valued and have a sense of belonging to the nursery. This begins when the parent/carer approaches the school for an application form to put their child's name on the waiting list. Time is made to speak with the parent/carer at this stage and the parent/carer is able to get a feeling for the nursery and the staff. Parents/carers are encouraged to visit with their child before admission and to spend time in the playrooms resulting in a smooth transition from home to nursery. Nursery staff feel very privileged in having daily informal contact with parents/carers and the power of this contact should not be underestimated. Having eye contact and greeting parents/carers every day can be very powerful – parents/carers have expressed how it makes them feel valued when asked 'How are you today?' – acknowledging them as people and not as 'Johnny's mum.'

Admission is gradual with the parent/carer having an option to stay with their child until they are both comfortable with parting. Staff are very sensitive at this stage to both parent/carer and child and take time to get to know the parent/carer and his/her expectations of the nursery while parents have the opportunity to observe staff with individuals and within groups of children. Our parents/carers are very much part of the daily life in the nursery in so many ways. For example:

- Parents, staff and children learn alongside each other in the playrooms/garden area.
- Parents, staff and children enjoy experiences in the wider environment – regular swimming sessions, outings to extend children's interests and short-term parents/toddler groups (when funding is available).
- Parents, staff and children work with other professionals, e.g., a home economics teacher for healthy budget cooking and cooking with tots. Some of these sessions have included a health visitor for part of the programme and a dental educationalist who promotes oral hygiene.
- Parents, staff and children work with local community experts, e.g., an arts worker on projects such as mosaic tiling the parents' notice board and making a sundial for the nursery garden, weaving, making shell/pebble mirrors, decorating a minibus for a local parade and many other art activities.
- Parents join groups specially requested and set up by the nursery, e.g., parenting, behaviour management, advice on headlice and many more.
- Parents, staff and children took part in dance sessions after school, working jointly with community education and a dance company.

We felt that winning the Ethos award gave recognition to the nurturing climate which fosters collaboration of staff, parents and children in learning in the nursery.

The Number Bags Project

'Parents can only be effective partners if professionals take notice of what they say and how they express their needs and treat their contributions as intrinsically important.'

Warnock Report 1978

At Children's House there has always been a recognition of the strengths of the parents/carers and the wider community. This is reflected in projects of mutual learning and also in the core curriculum delivered by trained staff on a daily basis.

Numeracy, an agreed priority in the nursery development plan, gave us the catalyst for a most successful joint parent/staff initiative. The nursery staff and parents enjoyed a numeracy evening, using a number quiz and other number resources, including 'Bingo with a difference' where we used Arabic numbers, so that the parents did not recognise the symbols and could appreciate how children feel when learning new things for the first time. Staff took part in a morning's in-service on number in the nursery and were also focusing on learning opportunities in play. Linking home/nursery learning more closely seemed to be the next step. A group of parents met for coffee and a chat to explore numeracy in the home. Three nursery staff and a family learning worker attended this group. The group was very lively and made various suggestions. The number bag idea grew. Weekly meetings were suggested and from day one the group became extremely committed to the project recognising each other's strengths. Discussions were focused on what the number bags should look like, what they should contain and who would do what.

Categories were suggested:

- ✓ Number rhymes
- ✓ Counting up
- ✓ Counting down
- ✓ Home activities

One main aim of the bags was that parents/children would enjoy the contents and that learning together should be fun. It also became clear that parents were already doing a vast amount of number work at home, sometimes not realising the value of what they were doing. Raising self-esteem in parents as educators became another aim. The project grew and it became evident that a quality resource was developing. The process the group was going through became an in-depth learning experience for all. We then held another staff in-service day to get staff's opinion on the bags and their contents. Bags were given out to parents and children to sample. Feedback was all very positive and taken on board by the working group. Weekly sessions continued – lots of work was carried on at home – the commitment from the group was astounding. The bags were shared with cluster head teachers who readily found the child in themselves and played with the contents, appreciating the learning opportunities while gaining an insight into how teaching and learning is approached at the nursery stage. The project lasted seven months and about 25 bags were

completed. In addition to the number bags, parents made records of number work in the home and the environment. Number bags are taken home regularly so that parents can enjoy helping their child learn in a new and stimulating way (fig. 1).



fig. 1

A genuine partnership

This project like other projects involving staff, parents and children illustrates working in true partnership – each contributing whilst recognising each other's roles and strengths and working in the best interest of the child. Although the child was at the centre of the project, the learning by staff and parents was equally important. Mutual respect developed and this had a direct effect on daily events in the nursery – the children saw parents and staff relaxed and at ease in each other's company and this in turn relaxed the children and gave them positive role modelling. Parents became more ready to discuss any issues as they arose such as behaviour management, eating/toileting anxieties and these could be quickly addressed and worked on in a supportive, non threatening way. Staff, parents and children felt equally supported knowing they were working together.

Food for Tot

This is an ongoing project funded by Surestart including two nursery schools, one family centre, two Children's Centres, the community dentist, health visitors, a home economics teacher and a community education worker. Parents are given opportunities to cook with their children, take part in healthy budget cookery classes, learn about weaning and other health issues. Input from the dentist is also valued.

This project links directly with the nursery curriculum – healthy snacks, tooth brushing after lunch, healthy bodies etc. A dental project box has been given to each setting to enhance existing resources and is used when an interest in the dentist arises.

Books for Babies

Children's House has been instrumental in setting up the Craigmillar Books for Babies Project. A member of staff is on the steering group. This project started in March 1997 and has been running very successfully since.

The under fives forum

The under fives forum in the area is made up of voluntary groups employing local people, professionals and anyone interested in working with under fives. The forum helps promote a strategic approach to the needs of under fives and their families. The nursery is committed to this working together approach and is very much part of the development of the New Community School philosophy. The nursery aims to create and develop links between itself and the children's homes and community. Each child is accepted in the context of his or her own family, whatever that may be. The influence of these early and continuing experiences is taken on board and form the basis of the nursery curriculum. Provision is planned to enable children to play out home experience.

Funding from the New Community School budget was given to this group to arrange joint in-service training for all pre-five workers with Professor Tina Bruce. This has proved invaluable and is ongoing. Each setting worked on a project (symbolic play) and these projects were placed on display for the community at a very successful celebration day. For example, when one of our children was due to go into hospital, we were able to help by simulating a hospital stay and all it involved (fig. 2), then by taking the children to visit the new hospital recently constructed nearby.



fig. 2

The nursery recognises the value of this type of play in personal development. Cultural awareness, gender and equal opportunities are also given careful consideration. A sense of belonging, that parents, staff and children have, underpins the ethos of the nursery, which is based on open communication, mutual trust and respect. This project became quite extensive and is being used as part of Children's House contribution to a cluster initiative with under fives settings and Professor Tina Bruce. A book on teaching and learning will be published by Professor Bruce in summer 2002.

As a result of the under fives forum meetings, gaps were identified and Craigmillar Childcare Partnership, a social firm, has evolved and has been able to fill an identified gap in provision for up to three year olds and their parents in work or training. Children's House works very closely with this group – many parents/ex parents are employees. When running parents' groups at Children's House,

crèche workers are able to be brought in from the local Childcare Partnership, giving opportunities for local people to gain employment while enabling parents with toddlers to attend groups.

The under fives forum agreed on the contents of a booklet for existing and new families to the area with children under five. Funding was sought from the New Community School budget and the result is a recently published booklet which has been widely distributed.

The nursery and expressive arts

Children's House works very closely with Craigmillar Festival Society, a local community group. Arts workers and students on community placements contribute to parents' groups and at the same time gain placement experience required for college courses. Activities are usually agreed by group participants.

■ Last year a group of parents decorated the nursery parents' notice board with mosaic tiles, which encouraged others to read notices displayed in a very attractive area.

■ The nursery entered a float in the local festival week. Parents decorated the float, made a banner and were delighted to be part of a local celebration while promoting the nursery at the same time.

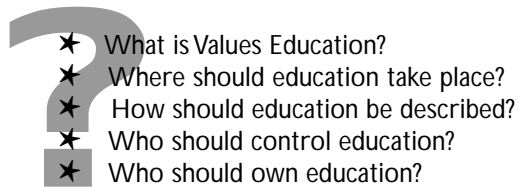
■ As part of our outdoor area, we now have a sensory garden, a wildlife strip, a square metre of oats (which we harvest) and a mosaic tiled sundial.

■ Children's House displayed a snapshot of dance in the nursery as part of the Cluster Celebration Day where projects worked on with Professor Bruce were displayed (fig. 3).



fig. 3

Learning values in the Nursery School



The five universal values: appreciation of learning, respect and caring for staff, respect and caring for others, a sense of belonging, and social responsibility, were taken from Scottish Executive Education Department publications. We took these so-called universals and broke them down and interpreted them as we saw fit. As staff discussed these questions, this led them to consider, perhaps for the first time, the origins of their own values. They shared them and talked about the origins of them as far as they were able. This said a lot for the closeness and good team relationship of our staff. We then considered how we might integrate our work on Values Education with our existing curriculum in the nursery.

At Children's House we use photographs as a method of recording and assessing our daily practice. In 1996 we produced a video and book, describing a wide selection of photographs which we had made from a bank built up over time to illustrate from true observation the values we have chosen to explore. Throughout the photographic study, we see children at play. Play is spontaneous, enjoyable and done for its own sake. The provision of sand play, for example demonstrates staff awareness of the child's need for this comforting play. Emotional balance is maintained through play as there is no right or wrong and success is not in question. The role of the teacher here is crucial, for as Vygotsky said (1962):

'In play, a child is always above his average age, above his daily behaviour. In play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all development tendencies in condensed form; in play it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of this normal behaviour.'

(cited in: A Curriculum for the Early Years)

The teacher observes unobtrusively, recording and assessing the child's interests and needs in order to plan additions and changes in the provision and to inform discussion with the children to ensure progression and continuity in learning. The video or photographs in the study can be used in a variety of ways. For example:

- The stills can be used as starters for discussion in group work
- Items can be selected to make relevant material to highlight priorities in school development plans, such as gender issues or cultural awareness
- When working with parents, individually or in small groups, the stills can be used to illustrate how children are learning in schools

Everybody is looking for an answer to the problems we face in the classroom and in society at large today. We were not confident we had any answers when we started and we are still searching and looking for answers like everyone else. Through this photographic study we have exposed a variety of deep-seated, heartfelt responses from within our small community of parents and school staff. By and large what we have come up with is a stronger sense that the respect for others, the caring, the partnership, the community responsibility, that is, the values that we as a staff agree on, are possible to provide and practise, given adequate resources, with staff trained and confident to promote these values. But there are dilemmas even within our small staff. Values Education is never-ending. People respond to situations according to their own upbringing and education. This is how multi-faceted Values Education can be. Although this piece of work was done in 1996 it is still valid today.




A final word

Ethos setting – you've got begin somewhere. To set the ethos for your school, there has to be some sort of agreement on aims, objectives and methods. To come to an agreement, there has to be open discussion without fear of censure. To have no fear of censure in discussion, there has to be a climate of mutual support and respect. We have highlighted some of the ways Children's House Nursery School engages with partners and the wider community. The ethos of mutual learning is at the heart of nursery philosophy and the skilled team of teachers and nursery nurses together with the parents and the wider community enjoy the continuous shared learning in this time of change in the community and in the approach to pre-five education.

So is there a conclusion we can draw? Only to reflect continuously on our practice and persistently evaluate it, respecting the diverse values that children, staff and parents bring.

Children's House Nursery School is recognised as a high quality educational resource in the Craigmillar area. As for the future, while we are all aware of the necessity to review existing provision and find the best way forward in a joint service provision, we hope that the quality of what is on offer at present and the importance of the education such provision offers to children, staff, parents and carers would continue to be of prime importance when considering any change in how the service should be delivered.

Key features

-  An ethos of mutual learning – children, staff and parents/carers learning together
-  Extensive use of local community resources
-  Bringing the community together through the expressive arts

Chapter 11

Fortrose Academy

School Facts



Fortrose Academy
Academy Street
Fortrose
IV10 8TW
Highlands
Tel: 01381 620310
Fax: 01381 621699

Headteacher

Douglas Simpson

Length of time in post

13 years

Type of school

Six year comprehensive

Number of pupils

630

Staff numbers (FTE)

50

Location/catchment area

The Black Isle Peninsula

Physical environment

A significant upgrade is in progress due for completion in Aug 2002

% of pupils entitled to free meals

20%



Background

In 1991 Fortrose Academy celebrated its centenary and its bicentenary! Two hundred years before, in 1791, our Academy was established, and 100 years later the school was rebuilt on its present site in Fortrose. Over the years the school has gained a very good reputation and has produced many pupils who have made valuable contributions to society. It is now a six year comprehensive school, serving the rural communities of the Black Isle, where fishing, farming and forestry have traditionally been the main industries. The school itself is one of the largest employers in the area. Accommodation has, over the years, been one of our most significant problems with portacabins making up half of our existing accommodation. A £5m extension now under way will make a huge difference to our learning environment.

Our other main concern has been the low expectations of a significant number of our pupils, especially boys. This has been the focus of much of our development work.

Establishing and maintaining a positive ethos

In seeking to raise attainment, each individual school may identify a range of factors which contribute to an ethos of achievement and inclusion. At Fortrose Academy, we believe that the one principle which underpins the process of building a positive ethos and a climate of success is the establishment and maintenance of good relationships throughout the whole school community. This process is not seen as finite, but rather as one to which time and resources should always be devoted. In this way, positive relationships become integral to the school ethos and not dependent on the presence or absence of particular individuals.

'The headteacher's philosophy and management style is very much people focused so that much time and thought goes into ensuring that staff and pupils feel valued in the school and feel that they can make a real commitment to the running of the school. This is evidenced in the degree of consultation across the school and the degree of involvement in a range of groups, for example, staff participation in the Senior Management Team Meetings. This focus on involvement of people extends well beyond the school into the PTA and School Board. A further strength is the open style of school management where decisions are openly debated and agreed.'
Headteacher S D Review January 2001.

'The relationship between teachers and pupils was exceptionally good.'
Most recent HMI Inspection report

Of course it is people, whether it be the headteacher, the school cleaner or a first year pupil, and their interactions that determine the ethos of a school, but a good ethos does not happen by accident. It has to be planned, evaluated and maintained in a clear and systematic manner. We have identified seven key features which contribute to the sort of positive environment which is characteristic of effective schools – these are our 'Seven Pillars of Ethos':

Seven Pillars of Ethos



Respect

➡ Unless an atmosphere of mutual respect pervades the organisation, a positive ethos will be unachievable.

We are known as a school where bullying is simply not acceptable. In addition to all the normal initiatives, our English department offers a special unit on this subject for S1 pupils, based on staff and pupil personal experiences. It culminates in a year group assembly where the staff describe personal experiences and the pupils produce their own sketches to emphasise key points. This has proved to be both popular and effective.

The fact that the school is largely graffiti-free (even our toilets!) and suffers virtually no vandalism of any sort is an indicator of a positive attitude amongst the pupils towards authority.

Our last school janitor served the school faithfully for 36 years. In recognition of our respect for his service to the school we nominated him for an honour. It was a great tonic for the whole school community when he was awarded the MBE (fig.1).



fig. 1

Support

➡ How do we ensure that all our pupils receive the support they need throughout their time at school?

The key pupil support departments of Guidance and Learning Support have been identified as a particular strength of the school.

'Learning Support staff were very effective. The quality of support was rightly held in high esteem in the school.'

Most recent HMI Inspection report

Recently, we launched an initiative to provide support for those most often disadvantaged youngsters who cause most difficulty in class. It was encouraging that despite the current grave concerns about workload, large numbers of

staff have volunteered to become involved as mentors on the programme. The staff meet at lunchtime to monitor the progress of the youngsters involved and to develop strategies for supporting them. The group produced an Individual Education Plan for each pupil to ensure that the approach to working with these youngsters was properly co-ordinated.

Money raised at school shows and certain other events goes into the school's own charitable organisation – the Fortrose Academy 200 Society. This money is used to provide support for pupils to participate in artistic and sporting activities where they would otherwise struggle financially.

Motivation

➡ How can we ensure that our young people are motivated to be the best that they can be?

Termly PE Awards ceremonies were introduced a year ago recognising the talents and the successes of our pupils during the term. These are illustrated by powerpoint images of our young people in action with musical backing – our pupils and staff love these celebrations, and they are very well received.

'By including activities or events that most, if not all, pupils have participated in, the ceremonies allow staff and pupils time to reflect positively on 'where they have come from.' It also means that we can recognise things pupils do outside school. The link between sport/physical activity and their life outside school is one that we would like them to maintain long after they have left us.'

PT Physical Education

We have introduced a new assembly programme for year groups 1-4 each morning where members of SMT pick up a particular motivational theme agreed at our extended SMT meeting the previous week. Among the topics we have covered are:

- The Importance of Design – PT Technology
- Child Labour – S3 English pupils
- Read, read, read! – Librarian and others
- New behaviour system – SMT

We hope that other members of staff and pupils will take opportunities to lead these in the coming months. (Our pupil council representatives have expressed a willingness to lead these for specific issues.) Much use has been made of the 'Learning Game' to tackle such issues as under-achievement and self-esteem. According to our pupil surveys these have been well received and arrangements are in hand to bring in speakers from the Learning Game to meet with pupils, parents and staff later this session.

'Action has also been taken to address gender issues, particularly where these are inhibiting the attainment of boys.'
QA Report 1999


Parents Survey June 1999					
	Excellent	Good	Average	Cause for Concern	Poor
Reputation	127	98	7	0	0
Quality of Teaching	55	154	15	0	0
Responsiveness to Parents	80	112	7	1	2
Behaviour	10	127	57	3	2
Welcoming atmosphere	70	116	24	1	0
Extra curricular	46	104	41	4	4

fig. 2

In order to address the issue of the under-attainment of boys, we have:

- raised awareness of the issue through discussion at assemblies, parents' evenings, and staff meetings, using SQA data
- introduced focussed class monitoring, using a pro-forma developed in the school to assess the impact of gender on pupil behaviour and progress
- adopted various practical strategies, relating to pupil seating arrangements and single sex classes

Communication

 How can we ensure that positive ethos messages are clearly transmitted within and outwith the school?


■ At the start of each month the headteacher is available to any parents at an evening drop-in session to ensure that working parents get the opportunity to discuss issues of concern.

■ For the past eleven and a half years parents have received a Parents' Newsletter at the start of each month (136 in total) giving a wide range of information and, importantly, reminding them that if they have any concerns we want to hear from them.

■ Parental opinion on key ethos indicators is taken by means of parental surveys. A total of 238 families responded to our last parental survey, the results of which were extremely encouraging to staff at the school (fig. 2).

■ A wide range of pupil surveys has been undertaken, on all aspects of school life. At the end of each year our school leavers complete a survey (based on the HMI Parents' Questionnaire) on key areas of our provision. The information gained informs the school development plan for the following session.

Responsibility

 How do we provide opportunities for our young people to take on responsibility?

As a preparation for life after school, students in S6 are

allowed to write their own absence notes and to negotiate an agreed number of discretionary periods which are under their control. The number of discretionary periods is related to their willingness to participate in a range of qualifying activities, e.g.


- Classroom assistants (around 20 take part each year)
- Helping with our Leisure Activities Programme every Friday afternoon
- The buddy system (offering support to new first year pupils)
- Organising the Christmas dances (15-20 involved)

Pupil 'journalists' write our weekly press reports for the local paper.

A pupil-made video on our accommodation problems was influential in persuading Highland Council to invest £5.1M in building a major extension to Fortrose Academy. Four of our senior pupils currently serve on our School Board on a rota basis and we have recently arranged for co-opted students to serve on the school's Senior Management Team. They go to all SMT meetings and bring a fresh perspective to many of the issues raised.

This session the junior and senior pupil councils have been re-established, following a period where they were perceived as ineffective. HMI noted that *'the pupil councils provided very effective lines of communication with staff.'*

Opportunities

 What opportunities do we provide to allow young people to develop their skills and boost their self-esteem?

Our Music Department runs an orchestra of about 55 pupils, a wind band of 15 pupils as well as four rock bands and a wide range of other musical activities. For many years we have run a programme of leisure activities every Friday afternoon. Every pupil in the school is involved and staff offer over 30 activities.

We have links with schools in France, South Africa, China, Japan and Malawi and run a variety of trips all over the world.

Improvement

How can we demonstrate an ethos of achievement in which we are constantly striving to do better?

Results in national examinations give some indication of the effectiveness of a school, the categories of three Highers and five Standard Grades being the most often quoted. While these are subject to fluctuations from year to year if, as HMI suggest, these are grouped in three year periods the various statistics indicate an encouraging progression during the last decade.

Our local MP wrote:

'I did just want to write and congratulate everyone involved with the school following the recent publication of the latest Sunday Times Good State Schools guide. This is a wonderful achievement which is greatly deserved and underscores the esteem in which the school is held locally. With every good wish for the future. Yours ever'

Charles Kennedy, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Party

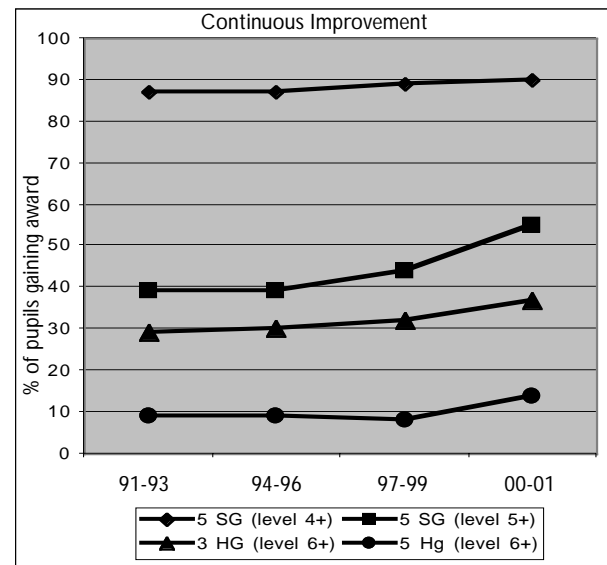


fig. 3

Scotlennium

How could we, as a school, celebrate a new Millennium and at the same time reinforce our seven Pillars of Ethos?

Scotlennium (fig. 4) was our Millennium school show, written by staff and pupils celebrating Scottish achievement through the centuries. Involving 80 pupils of all ages, from P2 (in our associated primary schools) to S6, as well as 20 staff and various 'friends' of the school. It played to full houses for three nights in the school and to a packed Eden Court theatre in Inverness later in the session. We believe that about 75% of our parents attended at least one of these performances. We were awarded grants of £2000 from the Lottery Commission and £400 from our local EBP and made an overall profit of £2000.

Scotlennium was a marvellous success, in terms of:

- developing mutual co-operation and respect amongst staff and pupils who were working in this project within a 'community of equals'
- providing young people with the opportunity to develop key skills and increase self confidence

- celebrating the talent and enthusiasm of the school community, and
- supporting and communicating the whole ethos of Fortrose Academy

It reinforced each of our seven Pillars of Ethos and epitomised what the school is trying to achieve. Sonia Rose, the Schools Liaison Officer for the Arts in Highland wrote:

'Congratulations to all at Fortrose for a spectacular 1st for Highland schools at Eden Court – we may have had a school production here before but never a totally original written and produced piece of theatre. You have set a great example that I hope others will follow, an excellent collaboration of staff and students, just the way it should be.'



fig. 4

After the Ethos Award

Our success in the Ethos Awards encouraged us to consider applying for further awards. In January 2002, the school was granted Investors in People status.

The report identified a number of examples of good practice within the school, including staff enthusiasm and support for the school ethos.

'This is the friendliest school I have ever taught in... staff are nice to one another... it is a happy place.' And 'I get up in the morning and look forward to going to work after 12 years. I care a lot about them and they care about me.'

The last word goes to a former pupil who left the school a couple of years ago. She sent an e-mail with various comments, including the following:

'One thing that will always remain with me is the friendly heart of the school.'

Key features

- Good relationships throughout the school community
- Genuine involvement of staff and pupils in the running of the school
- Consistently seeking improvement



Scottish Schools Ethos Network Award

Winners

1997

Castlebrae Community High School, Edinburgh

1998

Cramond Primary School, Edinburgh

1999

St. Columba's High School, Perth and Kinross

2000

Craigie High School, Dundee

2001

Haddington Infant School, East Lothian

Runners-up

1997

Achaleven Primary School, Argyle and Bute

1998

St. Ninian's High School, East Dunbartonshire

1999

St. Kenneth's Primary School, Inverclyde

2000

Pentland School, North Lanarkshire

2001 (Joint)

Children's House Nursery School, Edinburgh

2001 (Joint)

Fortrose Academy, Highlands