

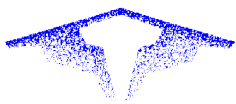
Ochil Tower School



Annual Report and Review of the Year 2013 - 2014

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Introduction:

As a Camphill Community our vision for Ochil Tower School is grounded in the ethos of the Camphill Movement where people can live, learn and work together in healthy social relationships based on mutual care and respect. Central to this is valuing each person as a unique being of intrinsic worth with potential for spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development and change.

In response to the pupils' high social and educational needs we have focused on creating imaginative and flexible approaches to developing self esteem, confidence and an interest in learning and achieving. This is facilitated by a flexible social pedagogical approach which combines care and education as mutually affecting arenas of lifelong learning.

We also live in challenging social and economic times and in common with our major stakeholders we will have to learn to be increasingly adaptable, creative and resilient if we are to continue to provide the highest level of care and education in a safe positive and enriching environment in which every pupil is encouraged to achieve their potential.





The purpose of this document is to describe the work which has been done over the current school year, to celebrate the successes and achievements, and to look to the future. It should be read in conjunction with the Integrated School Improvement Plan for 2014 and the accompanying Review of the Plan. All three documents can be found on our website.

Activities and Special Events:

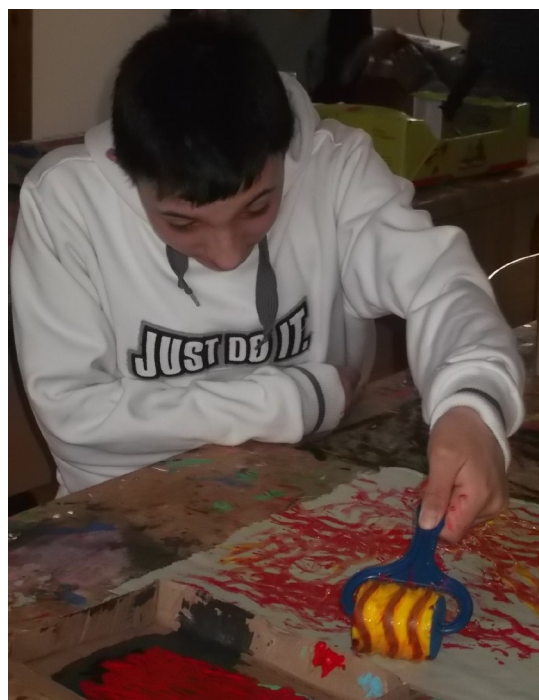
The themed Monday assemblies which have been entertaining, informative and interactive. Some themes explored this year have been:

Water: exploring this through learning about the water cycle, making experiments, measuring rainfall, visiting rivers and reservoirs.

Natural Scotland: looking at food, birds, trees, and animals native to Scotland.

Scottish Inventions and Sport. Learning about the many great Scottish inventions, and exploring sport: talking about the Commonwealth Games and the Ryder Cup and trying out lots of different sports.

The end of term school festivals: Dochart Class's wonderful production of The Lion King, followed by the sale of 90kg of Fairtrade Malawi rice, the dramatisation of Christmas Carols at Christmas, the wonderful class contributions at Easter, Gaur class's production of 'Frenemies' which explored the ups and downs of friendships being particularly noteworthy, and the farewell festival in the Summer with the beautiful





uplifting dance demonstration from all the pupils.

Celebrating Remembrance Day by exploring conflict. Why it happens and what can be done to avoid it.

The Advent Garden and Advent and Christmas celebrations.

Pancake Races and a

wonderful Carnival party on Shrove Tuesday.

Easter celebrations.

The co workers' play of The Golden Goose.

Family Day on 22nd June. Class displays, barbecue, ice cream and games.

Live Music Now Concerts. This year we had two concerts, one from the Erskine String Quartet and another from a pianist and soprano. Both were wonderful, but listening to the young soprano was an incredible experience for so many of the pupils. One youngster said that her voice “blew him away!” These concerts are completely free as they are sponsored by the Gannochy Trust, and although we of course always give a donation we are very grateful for their generosity.

Achievements:

The children and young people have continued to work very hard this year

on developing new skills and gaining new knowledge across a wide range of topics and activities. Altogether 130 SQA Access modules and 18 Asdan modules have been worked on and submitted for assessment.





Working towards becoming a Fairtrade school has been a central theme this year, and finally all the hard work and effort paid off and we became a Fairtrade School on 3rd March 2014.

Braan class worked very hard to earn the Green Tree Award for Ochil Tower, gaining bronze, silver and gold.

Braan class also held a Braan-athon on 18th June on the North Inch in Perth, and raised £460.00 for Mary's Meals which will feed 36 children in one of 12 countries around the world. Letters were also sent home to get support to fill backpacks with essential items for children in the developing world. All in all 21 backpacks were filled to be sent off.

Dochart Class made and sold candles to raise money for polio.

As part of Fairtrade Fortnight in March Gaur Class took part in making a display in the library to raise awareness for the 'Stick with Foncho' Campaign. Foncho is a banana farmer from Colombia who belongs to a fairtrade cooperative and is trying to persuade people around the world to only buy fairtrade bananas. If we do this he and other farmers are able to earn a decent living.





Matt Ogilvie raised £38.50 for the SSPCA by selling herbs which he had grown himself.

Keep Scotland Beautiful Campaign: Once again Ochil Tower pupils were at the forefront of this, cleaning up Stanley beach and also a massive clean up behind Auchterarder Recycling Point was achieved by Lochay class.

Sports Relief on 24th March: £500.00 was raised by our pupils and co workers who all took part in a variety of sports.

The Achievement Celebration for all pupils and the Leaving Presentations for the school leavers which both took place in June were valuable and memorable occasions, giving the pupils and co- workers a real sense of accomplishment.

We only had one Care inspection this year in November. Here are a few examples of the positive feedback we received.

The staff are very aware of the needs of the children. They are particularly good at recognising those in need of extra support, especially when separated from their parents.

The school is committed to inclusion at all levels. They actively encourage children, parents and staff to present their views and value their contributions.



The staff work very well as a team supporting each other and providing consistent care to the children.

The wide range of communication approaches which enable young people to access learning effectively, and to make their views known.

The school provides a wide variety of activities and learning experiences, both in the classroom and outdoors. The result is that all aspects of each pupil's development needs are taken into account, including healthy eating and healthy lifestyles, independent living skills and emotional resilience.



Comings and Goings:

We admitted seven new pupils in the course of the year and had to say goodbye to six who left school at the end of June. These young people had all been an integral part of the school for a number of years, so saying goodbye was not easy. We wish them every happiness and success as they move on into adult life.

After ten years in Ochil Tower Gerusa da Costa left to return to Brazil. Gerusa was a truly gifted and dynamic teacher with a real passion for the work, so will be much missed.

We are therefore very fortunate to have Mirjam Schell returning to us in August, to take on Dochart Class and to support Johanna in Elmtree.



Looking to the future and planning for Improvement:

The Integrated School Improvement Plan and the accompanying Review of the Plan give more detail on the areas for improvement, using Education Scotland quality indicators and Care Inspectorate quality statements, but our broad improvement plans are as follows:

We plan to further develop our understanding and implementation of the 24 hour curriculum, particularly looking at the Getting it Right for Every Child wellbeing indicators to ensure that the young people are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included. Children and their parents will be involved in assessing where we are and what needs to be improved.

A lot of work has been done in the past year on streamlining our documentation, resulting in the implementation of SMART aims and associated achievements. This will continue to be developed in the new school year, with a particular focus on classroom documentation.

The current work which the teachers are undertaking with an educational consultant, sharing best practice and developing a Professional Learning Policy will continue and gradually be extended to include all staff.



Conclusion.

This has proved to be another exciting, challenging and ultimately fulfilling year. Our pupils have gained in maturity and a sense of themselves as young people fully engaged in the business of learning, achieving and making a contribution to their school, to their local community and also globally. Although their needs and well being is the central focus of our life and work, we are also aware that rigorous self evaluation is essential to not only maintain a high quality of care and education, but also to ensure that we continue to develop and improve.

We want to thank all the parents for their continuing support, which is truly indispensable and much appreciated. We also want to thank our local community of Auchterarder for their friendship and interest and our Board of Trustees who provide us with continuing guidance, encouragement and support.

Hilary Ruprecht.

Joint Coordinator.

8th July 2014

