



# OCHIL TOWER SCHOOL

## Annual Report and Review of the Year 2015 – 2016



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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.

The purpose of this document is to describe the work which has been done over the past 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 2016. Both documents will be on our website from August onwards.

## **Activities and Special Events:**

As always the pupils have been very engaged in our interactive school assemblies. A number of themes have been explored throughout the year and this was done through a range of topic related activities during the assemblies and in the classes. The main topics have been improving the school grounds, sustaining our world, cultures and living spaces.

Activities have included tidying the oak area, building bird boxes and flower boxes, making leaf mould and compost, harvesting, preserving soft fruit, making apple juice, and visiting a wide range of different living spaces from castles to tepees.







The eco school team have been very active litter picking as well as reducing, reusing and recycling, and conducting an environmental review. xxx from Gaur class made a beautiful wooden sign for the school Eco code. To make this xxx reused the top of an old table, sanded the wood and burned the letters and decoration into the wood using a pyrographic pen. It was then varnished and put up next to our Green Flag. The sign, which is a real work of art, was revealed at one of the assemblies.

The end of term festivals have again provided a wonderful opportunity for the pupils and teachers to show their parents and friends how hard they have worked and how much they have learned. These have included class performances related to termly themes such as Improving the School Grounds and Cultures, a whole school Nativity pageant at Christmas and the end of year festival where we had to say goodbye to so many people and wish them well for the future.

The Michaelmas celebration, harvesting, creating a beautiful altar in the Hall and celebrating with our common Michaelmas meal.

The Hallowe'en party and St Martin's celebration.

The Hindu workshop.

The Advent Garden and Advent and Christmas celebrations.

The Nativity Pageant at the end of the Christmas term and the variety concert in the Easter term, both of which raised money for the Scottish Refugee Council.





Pancake Races and a wonderful Carnival party on Shrove Tuesday.

Five beautiful performances of Peter and the Wolf from Earn class at the end of the Easter term and throughout the summer term. These were seen and appreciated by hundreds of people from the local community.

Image Theatre's performance of 'The Sword in the Stone'.

Fairtrade fortnight which culminated in a Fairtrade breakfast on 10<sup>th</sup> March. The hall was beautifully decorated for this occasion and most of the delicious food was prepared by the classes, using Fairtrade ingredients. We had strawberry jam, chocolate spread, fruit salad, smoothies, pancakes, muffins, bircher muesli and freshly baked bread. So much hard work and effort went into making this a really special occasion.

Easter celebrations: special assemblies each morning of Easter week with music and singing.

The co-workers' play of The Giant with the Three Golden Hairs.

Family Day on 5th June: barbecue, ice cream, scrumptious food cooked by our chef David and exquisite cakes baked by his wife Karen, games, a fairy tale,







relaxing on the lawn, and chatting to friends and family.

Camping Weeks: two of our five classes enjoyed the annual trip to the White House at Killin, sleeping in tents, canoeing, orienteering, visiting the Crannog Centre, going for long walks and sitting around the camp-fire. One class went for one night and two others enjoyed outdoor weeks going for day trips.

## **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. This year pupils have achieved the following:

17 pupils have worked towards ASDAN qualifications: New Horizons, Transition Challenge and Towards Independence, 27 pupils have worked towards SQA National qualifications; 192 National 1 courses, 10 National 2, 4 National 3 and 10 National 4.

1 pupil gained his Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society's Grow and Learn Award, and as a result was invited to give gardening and bee keeping demonstrations at the Gardening Scotland event in Edinburgh in June.



The Achievement Celebration for all pupils and the Leaving Presentations for the school leavers which all took place at the end of June were valuable and memorable



occasions, giving the pupils and co-workers a real sense of accomplishment.

We had one Care inspection this year in March. We were delighted to be graded as excellent for the quality of our care and support, excellent for the quality of environment, and very good for the quality of our staffing,

management and leadership. Here are a few examples of the very positive feedback we received.

*The school continues to provide a wide range of opportunities for young people, parents and relatives to make comment on the quality of the service. This enhances the ethos of mutual respect and active engagement.*

*Activities are planned to suit everyone's interests and the young people were engaged in a range of community activities and events.*

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

*Young people and parents views were supported by a strong commitment within the school to ensure participation was embedded in all areas of service delivery.*







*During the inspection, we saw evidence of staff listening to and observing pupils and acting on their comments and suggestions.*

*Overall, the involvement of pupils, parents and relatives continues to be an integral part of the day-to-day operation of the school. Participation within Ochil Tower School is embedded in daily life.*



## **Comings and Goings:**

We admitted eight new pupils in the course of the year, and had to say goodbye to one at Christmas, one at Easter and eight at the end of the school year. The new pupils have all settled in well and are making good progress. The young people who have left have 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.

## **Looking to the future and planning for Improvement:**

The Integrated School Improvement Plan gives 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:



Priory House will be closed for most of the next school year for a complete refurbishment, followed by the building of a Life Skills Centre. Plans for development of the Coach House area will





be more long term.

We will continue to work in partnership with Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to reflect on what we have done to date, and look at what we need to do now and in the future to improve and develop the care and education we offer to children and young people.

With the planned retirement of the joint coordinators in 2019 we are currently actively engaged in securing the school's future by working with our Board and other stakeholders on creating an organisational structure which will possibly have some new components, but also continue to be inspired by the ethos which has served the pupils so well to date.



## **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.

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 special thanks to our Board of Trustees who provide us with continuing guidance, assistance and encouragement.

Hilary Ruprecht.

Joint Coordinator.

8<sup>th</sup> July, 2016







