



# Ochil Tower School



## Annual Report and Review of the Year 2012 - 2013

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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 develop 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 2013-16 which is currently being updated and will appear on the school's website in the new school year.



## Activities and Special Events:



- The themed Monday assemblies which have been entertaining, informative and interactive. Some themes explored this year have been our place in the world, waste minimisation, sustaining our world, recycling, the cooperative society, and Fairtrade.
- The end of term school festivals: the Fairtrade play at Michaelmas, the dramatisation of Christmas Carols at Christmas, the medley of Fairtrade presentations from each class at Easter and the farewell festival in the Summer.
- The Advent Garden and Christmas festivities. All the candles for the Advent Garden were made by Dochart class.
- The visit from Annette Bruton, Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate in November. For this occasion Shane gave an excellent power point presentation which Annette was very impressed by.
- Scottish Parliament Reception: On 11<sup>th</sup> December four pupils and two teachers attended a reception at the Scottish Parliament. This was organised by Camphill Scotland in support of a motion in the parliament congratulating Camphill communities in Scotland on their work. Each of the Camphill communities in Scotland was represented at the reception, which was also attended by a number of MSPs.
- Pancake Races and a wonderful circus- themed Carnival party on Shrove Tuesday.





- Class Earn's three outstanding performances of Romeo and Juliet in March. One performance in particular was packed to the rafters and attended by representatives from local schools as well as the lead inspector from Education Scotland.
- The Fairtrade Fortnight celebration also in March, to which we invited pupils and staff from Seamab School. The programme included a short Fairtrade play written by Rachel, a presentation of a Fairtrade project by Earn class, Tastes of Africa food by Lochay Class, a whole school play, more tasting and selling of Fairtrade products by Dochart Class and displays of the many Fairtrade activities undertaken over the past 18 months. This was a really enjoyable and successful event.
- The co workers' play of 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.'
- Family Day on 16<sup>th</sup> June, barbecue, games, ice cream, dancing, art exhibition, open classrooms and the story of 'Molly Whuppie' beautifully narrated and acted.

Live Music Now Concerts; Flutes en Route and a Latin Jazz Quartet, both of which had us dancing in the aisles.

- St. John's midsummer celebration on 24<sup>th</sup> June; bonfire, singing and a picnic on the lawn.
- Camping weeks in May and June. All classes but one again went to the White House at Killin for 5 days each. Once again an opportunity for the pupils to enjoy the freedom of sleeping under canvas, gorge walking, hillwalking, canoeing and sitting around the campfire.





## 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 118 SQA Access modules and 38 Asdan modules have been worked on and submitted for assessment.



Working towards becoming a Fairtrade school has been a central theme this year. All the work has now been completed and is currently being compiled and submitted for approval. The pupils have also engaged in a range of fundraising events, mostly related to Fairtrade, all of which have been undertaken with enthusiasm and commitment and include the following:

**The Rob Roy Way:** This outstanding achievement and fundraising activity was undertaken by Dochart Class and two members of Gaur Class with the help of some family members. After a term spent building up their stamina and fitness levels they completed the 74 mile walk over a number of weeks and raised £641.00 for the Global Poverty Campaign.

Class Lochay made £37.60 with their 'Tastes of Africa' food sale.

Class Earn's entrepreneurial r-E-box business which has linked up with local businesses Cocoa Mountain and Jan de Vries Healthcare, has been raising money throughout the year for Fairtrade. One example would be in one month they sold 198 boxes, which earned them £9.90.

Rachel raised £87.85 for 'The Butterfly Conservation' by making and selling malteser ice cream, ice lollies and cupcakes.



Dayna raised £24.87 for Guide Dog puppies with a tattoo and nail bar.

Magnus and Josh raised £60.00 for charity through a cycling fundraiser.

Lochay Class organised a party for Children in Need, with dances, games and the first performance of the play, 'Princess Dayna and Pudsey Bear.' written by Dayna. £91.00 was raised.

As well as making the Advent candles mentioned above, Dochart class also made candles which they sold at the Christmas school festival. On this occasion they raised £104.00 for the End Polio Now campaign.

As a school we raised £60.00 for Red Nose Day.

Eco School activities have been ongoing. It is hard to believe that it will be two years in November since we received our first Green Flag, and to renew our registration and get our second flag we have had to show our continued commitment to our Eco School ethos and practice. To do this we have had to complete a pictorial survey to assess the school's strengths, which we feel are in the areas of litter, waste minimisation and sustaining our world. We were successful and received our second Green Flag in February. The assessors said that they were very impressed with Ochil Tower's website which features so many photographs and text about Fairtrade activities.



We had three inspections in this year; two unannounced care inspections in November and May and one joint inspection by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate in January. These were all very successful with evaluations of very good and excellent from the





Care Inspectorate and good and very good from the joint inspection. Our key strengths were described as:

- Happy relaxed young people who feel safe valued and respected.
- The dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and their sensitivity to the individual needs of young people.
- The wide range of communication approaches which enable young people to access learning effectively.
- Flexibility of the school's approach to developing the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners.
- Effective use of the school's grounds and local area to promote young people's wider achievements.

## Comings and Goings:



We admitted seven new pupils in the course of the year and had to say goodbye to four 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 as a much loved teacher, Mirjam Schell left to take up a teaching post in Switzerland. Mirjam was a truly gifted teacher with a passion for the work, and will be much missed. We have therefore been very fortunate to have Miriam Puccianti return to us in April. She has been working alongside Mirjam for the Summer term and will become the new class

teacher for Lochay class in August.





## Looking to the future and planning for Improvement:



The integrated school improvement plan will 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:

- Further development of quality assurance systems. This will focus on refining our use of the quality statements and indicators mentioned above to ensure an ongoing process of self assessment and improvement.
- Streamlining of record keeping to avoid duplication, and to ensure a more consistent approach, whilst taking account of the complex needs of the pupils. A particular focus will be the streamlining of the pupils' integrated care and education plans and learning portfolios.
- In addition to regular support and supervision which is already well established, further development of a newly established appraisal system for long term staff through personal development reviews, will be ongoing.
- A comprehensive programme of in house teacher training and mentoring, begun in June 2013, will be continued and further developed in the new school year. The aim of this programme is to develop, sustain and consolidate teaching practice and to support teachers in their role as practitioners and classroom managers.
- Following on from the Board Development Day held last year, and a Strategic Planning Meeting held in February 2013, the Board have



increasingly taken a more proactive approach to the school's governance. This has included an increased presence, the development of staff attending Board meetings, Board members attending Core Group meetings, and developing a shared understanding of the school's ethos. This will continue to evolve over the next few years, according to changing circumstances and needs.

## 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.

26<sup>th</sup> July 2013.





