

OCHIL TOWER SCHOOL



Annual Report and Review of the Year 2014 - 2015

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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 2015 and the accompanying Review of the Plan. All three 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. The overall theme for the year was Food and the Environment, which also led into looking at Food and Geography, the Human Body and Healthy Living. This was done through a range of topic related activities during the assemblies and in the classes.

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 presentations were



all linked to the termly topics and included videos, a presentation on the senses, a Frankenstein creation of a man, a body parts rap, a potato song, a common dance and many others. A highlight was the Christmas pageant, where the Christmas story was told through each class enacting and singing a Christmas carol.

Harvesting at the end of September, creating a beautiful altar in the Hall and celebrating with our common Michaelmas meal.

A beautiful concert, also in September, from harpist Luc Walpot.

Who can forget the other special event which took place in September?

Of course, the Independence Referendum. The pupils were very engaged in learning about this, a mock referendum was held, and some of our 16 year old pupils also went to the Aytoun Hall in the town to cast their vote on the day. Although Scotland as a whole said 'No' to independence, Ochil Tower voted 'Yes' by a big majority.

Hallowe'en party.

Hindu workshop.

The Advent Garden and Advent and Christmas celebrations.

The Nativity and Shepherds' Play.

Pancake Races and a wonderful Carnival party on Shrove Tuesday.





Celebration of Fairtrade Fortnight which started on 24th February and culminated in our Fairtrade Fair held on 3rd March, where there were stalls selling home made soap, cookies and ice cream, as well as a trade-in stall where ordinary goods could be exchanged for Fairtrade.

Comic Relief: cakes for sale, a selfie competition and Reuben allowing us to throw wet sponges at him for charity. What a star!

Estate week: although our estate always looks beautiful all the classes were out and about, engaged in special clearing and tidying projects.

Easter celebrations.

The co workers' play of The Three Brothers.

Family Day on 21st June. barbecue, ice cream, games, relaxing on the lawn, chatting to friends and family and although it seemed to be raining everywhere else, we only saw a few clouds. Otherwise the sun shone.

Camping Weeks: four of our five classes enjoyed the annual trip to the White House at Killin, sleeping in tents, canoeing, orienteering, going for long walks and sitting around the camp-fire.

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:

7 ASDAN Towards Independence, 3 ASDAN Transition Challenge, and 216 National Qualifications 1-3. This is the first year that Ochil Tower has



delivered the new National Courses and we are very proud of how hard the pupils have worked at these.

One pupil was the first in the school to complete the Personal Achievement Award to Gold Standard, and another has successfully passed 4 National 3 courses.

As already mentioned under special events and activities, work as both a Fairtrade and an Eco-School has been ongoing and developing further.

Activities have included recycling, litter picking, harvesting, cooking, baking and preserving. Braan class made apple juice from our own apples and a range of delicious preserves. During Fairtrade fortnight pupils



learned about how cocoa, sugar and tea are produced and what we can do to help Fairtrade farmers. A Fairtrade collage and poster were made and Chloe wrote a poem.

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 had two Care inspections this year, one in September, the other in March. We were delighted to be graded as excellent for the quality of our care and support, environment, and management and leadership, and very good for staffing. Here are a few examples of the very positive feedback we received.



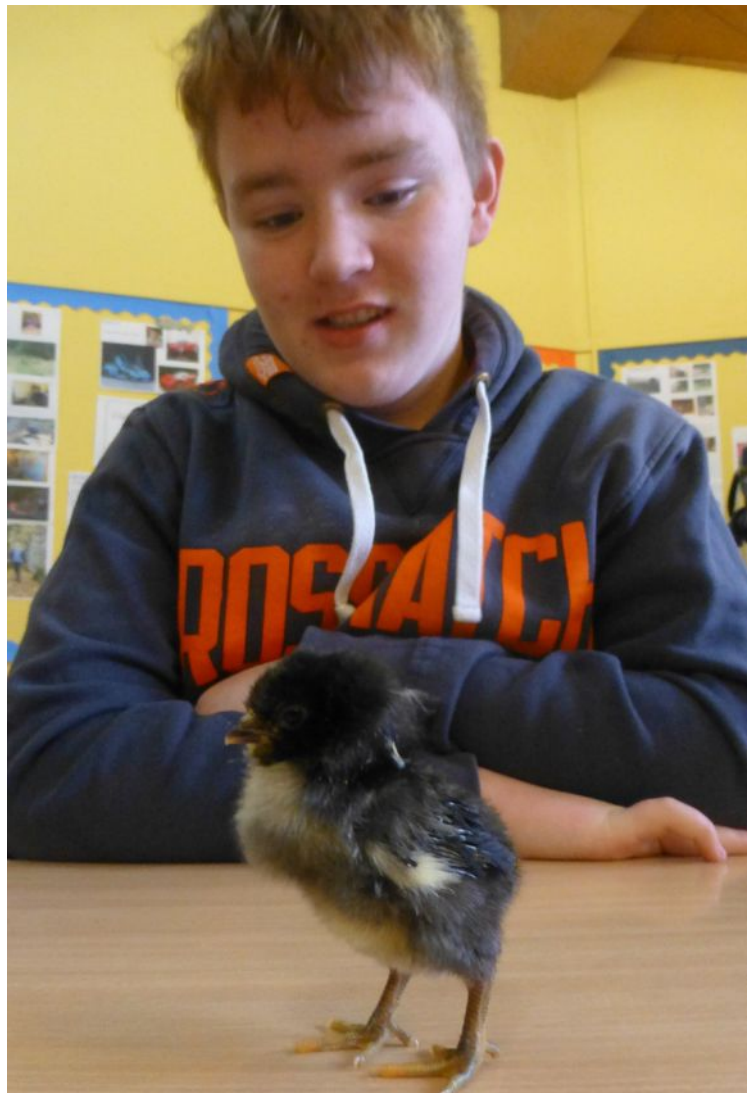
Parents told us they felt extremely welcome within the school and had regular communication with all the staff and Joint Coordinators. They said they had been supported exceptionally well, particularly in the early stages when their child moved in, but also through ongoing support and advocacy.

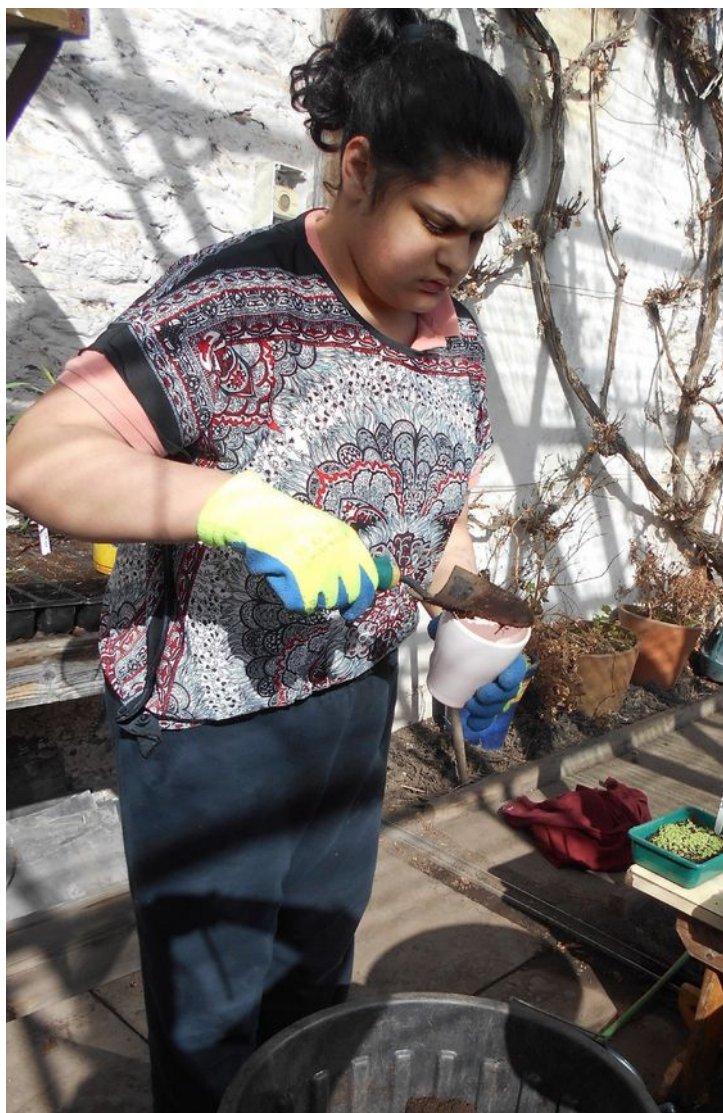
We found sensitive and knowledgeable staff who were able to respond to health issues that affected young people using the service. The young people we spoke with were all extremely happy about the care and support they got and parents supported this view. We found that everyone felt safe and that staff worked well to ensure the young people's health and well being needs were met.

We saw that the Joint Coordinators were involved in working in different ways with young people. This included attending meetings, reviews and working directly with the pupils. This allowed them to have a clear understanding of the support young people required and how the staff team worked to meet their overall needs. This also provided opportunities for young people to express opinions and make comments about their care and support directly to them.

Comings and Goings:

We admitted five new pupils in the course of the year, and had to say goodbye to one at Christmas, and three at the end of June. 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 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:

A lot of work has been done in the past year on streamlining our documentation. The implementation of SMART aims and associated achievements has been very helpful in focusing on specific goals, and a further development this year has

been the incorporation of the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators into the Achievement model, the addition of an achievement section in the weekly reports, and a new Care and Education Plan format which has been devised to give a clear and at a glance picture of where a child is at, with clear aims for the future.

In the new school year the teachers and house coordinators will continue to work with external mentors to help support succession planning, and the teachers will track and implement their professional learning by using General Teaching Council standards.

Work will be ongoing in the implementation of National 4 courses and the Dynamic Youth Award Scheme.

The Curriculum Rationale to be developed further, in particular developing a clear rationale for and implementation of the Senior phase.



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 special thanks to our Board of Trustees who have been particularly supportive this year and who provide us with continuing guidance, assistance and encouragement.

Hilary Ruprecht.

Joint Coordinator.

1st July, 2015



