



OCHIL TOWER SCHOOL

Annual Report and Review of the Year 2017 – 2018



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Introduction:

This year has been a year of transition and change with the appointment of a new management team to replace the four joint coordinators who will retire at the end of June, and the planning of the new 18-21 programme, which will begin in July. In the midst of all these changes the pupils have continued to work hard, develop and grow, and this report will describe the work which has been done over the past school year, celebrate the many successes and achievements, and also look ahead to the future.

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 Equality and Difference, Rights and Responsibilities and Sex Education.

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 the termly themes, 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.

Other special events have been:

Priory House reopened in August to admit four residential pupils and three day pupils.

We had the laying of the foundation stone for our new Life Skills Centre in September, and since then we have watched the

gradual construction with great interest and anticipation. It will contain a food processing area, two classrooms, a covered outdoor workspace and a maintenance workshop. Hopefully it will be completely ready for use in August.

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 Advent Garden and Advent and Christmas celebrations.

Image Theatre's performance of 'The Wind in the Willows'.

The Live Music Now workshops, sponsored by the Gannochy Trust, have again been a real highlight. During the Easter term three young musicians, the Dohnanyi String Trio,





were not only very talented musically, but also engaged with the young people with energy and enthusiasm, and their weekly sessions were very much looked forward to and appreciated.

The Opening of the Sensory Garden: On 3rd May Dochart Class held the Grand Opening of the Sensory Garden. Following a generous donation from our local Coop a lot of hard work was put in by Allysia, Richard Mirjam and Kieran Hynds to create a beautiful garden which will be enjoyed by so many for years to come. On the day itself Roisin and Conner both liked the drums, Kieran McD the drums and the hammock, and Harvey the xylophone, drums and the funny looking mirror.

Camping Weeks were again a real highlight during the summer term. Two classes went to the White House in Killin for the the full four nights, one class for two nights and one for one night, sleeping in tents, canoeing, orienteering, going for long walks and sitting around the camp-fire.

Family Day on 17th June: barbecue, ice cream, scrumptious food cooked by our chef David and his wife Karen, barbecue, games, and relaxing on the lawn chatting to friends and family. A



wonderful part of this day was the beautiful send off for the four joint coordinators, with many unexpected guests invited specially for the occasion; former pupils and their families and former co-workers.

Fund Raising:

Many fund-raising events also took place this year. These were:

A Fairtrade Cafe in the Hall at the beginning of March which was attended by the whole school, one board member, former pupils, some parents and people from our local community of Auchterarder. The hall was beautifully decorated for this occasion and most of the delicious food was prepared by the classes, using Fairtrade ingredients. As well as an incredible range of food, we were treated to musical performances by Lochay and Dochart classes and the Action Team. So much hard work and effort went into making this a really special occasion, and we raised £182.82 for the Fairtrade Foundation.

James Lorimer's sister Catherine raised £1,000 for us as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award. She achieved this through a number of events such as Cake Friday, a charity cycle and an online dress sale. With this generous donation we were able to hire a band for our Carnival





Party on Shrove Tuesday.

Sport Relief: Our target was walking to London. However on 2 legs and 4 legs we danced, skipped, ran, walked and trundled our way from Auchterarder to London and back, walking 2,279,967 steps which converted into 1079.53 miles.



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. There will possibly be more, but at the time of writing our pupils have achieved the following:

22 ASDAN: 12 Towards Independence, 5 New Horizon, and 5 Transition Challenge.

4 Dynamic Youth Award, 58 National 1 and 1 National 2.

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.

After two years of hard work as an Eco School we received our 3rd Green Flag.

Comings and Goings:



We admitted seven new pupils, four residential and three day, and all have settled in well and are making good progress.

Seven pupils will graduate from the school this summer; and will be moving on to our 18-21 programme. Three other pupils will be leaving and moving on to new destinations. We wish them well for the future.

A number of key people left the school during the course of this year. Morna, our exceptionally efficient and unflappable school secretary and administrator, who has been with us for 17 years, retired in October, and Imke and Malte with their two children, Lasse and Lily also left; Malte in October, followed by Imke and the children at Christmas. They had been such significant people for so many pupils and their families, and therefore have been

much missed.

Ian Ross who has worked in Ochil Tower for over 20 years also had to leave in January due to ill health. Ian has also been such an important person for so many people.

Nicola Hart joined in October as our Senior administrator and Jackie Ramsay joined us in March as our administrator.

In December we appointed our new CEO Stuart Provan, in January Miriam Puccianti was appointed as Head of Education, and in February Jim Alexander joined us as Head of Care. So the new management team is now well established and ready to lead our





school into the future.

Alison McGregor, a former pupil of Camphill School Aberdeen, has lived and worked in Ochil Tower since 1976. She has been such an integral part of the school, making her own unique contribution throughout this time, and will be much missed. She is moving to Dunblane to enjoy a well deserved retirement, but no doubt will visit often.

Some others will also be leaving this summer; Katherine Ruprecht, Priory's House Coordinator and her little daughter, Isabella, and Mirjam Schell, Dochart's class teacher will be taking a career break.

We have a number of new staff who have joined us over the year as we prepare to deliver the new 43 week programme. We have just undertaken a recruitment campaign and are confident that we have identified staff who will fit into the ethos of Ochil Tower School.



Hilary Ruprecht



Looking to the future and planning for Improvement:

Thanks to Hilary for capturing the events of the year as she has done for so many years. It has been a pleasure to be asked to take on the role of Chief Executive Officer at Ochil Tower School and to have the opportunity to develop the new Senior Management Team and work alongside Miriam Puccianti and Jim Alexander as Heads of Education and Care respectively.

I am new to the school as is Jim. We are particularly grateful to have Miriam's knowledge and experience and in particular, her passion for Ochil Tower so that we continue to maintain the high standards established across care and education. We are very much in agreement that the school achieves a great deal by viewing care and education as a whole. By adopting this ethos we believe that children, young people and now our young adults can strive in achieving the very best outcomes and goals.

We had our Care Inspection in January of this year and our grades were classed as being "good." This equates to 4's across the four



capacities: Care and Support, Leadership & Management, Environment and Staffing.

Whilst it was disappointing to drop in grades from the year before it has provided us with very clear aims in where we can make changes that will improve us as a school.

The level of care at Ochil Tower has always been the driving force of our work. It was clear to me very quickly when I came to the school that the staff team and co-workers worked in quite a special way in caring for the individual needs of children and young people. It is important going forward that we amend and improve particular systems and processes so that we can evidence this with greater clarity.

Hilary has outlined in detail the variety and richness of the school environment such as the access to the White House in Killin, camping and outdoor activities and our wider engagement with community.

The 18-21 year old project operating from our new Life Skills



Centre that will open in August this year will enhance our offering further. This initiative will afford young people the chance for a more structured transition from school into young adulthood, and a pathway to greater independence.

The take up for the new service,



alongside the 43 week programme more generally, has been very encouraging. This natural evolution of change will help a great deal to meet the emerging needs for families, commissioners and young people.

On behalf of the new Senior Management team and all of the staff at Ochil Tower, we look forward to continuing to build and enjoy trusting relationships with all of our partners in the coming years.

Stuart Provan (CEO)

