



OCHIL TOWER SCHOOL

Annual Report and Review of the Year 2016 – 2017



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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 2017. Both documents will be on our information and communication 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 World Religions, Nature Art, Fairtrade and Transport.

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:

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.

Pancake Races and a wonderful Carnival party on Shrove Tuesday.

Image Theatre's performance of 'The Jungle Book'.

The Live Music Now workshops, sponsored by the Gannochy Trust, which ran for the summer term, have been a real highlight. The musicians 'Granny Green' were not only very talented musically, but also engaged with the young people with energy and enthusiasm, and their sessions were very much appreciated.

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

Fairtrade fortnight which started with a coffee morning attended by 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. 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. As a result of our Fairtrade work we received Fair Achiever School status in April 2017.



The Nativity Pageant at the end of the Christmas term and the variety concert in the Easter term, both of which raised money for Safe Passage, a charity which supports unaccompanied children and young people to travel to the UK legally and safely.

The father of one of our pupils, Martin McDonald, ran a sponsored marathon which raised £ 850, and his workplace, Hoyer Petrolog UK raised an additional £ 250. This money has gone towards our Life Skills Centre.

More fund-raising was also done at a very successful and enjoyable Red Nose Day in March. All in all £276 was raised.

Lochay Class walked 26 miles in stages around Lochleven and raised £880 for the Fairtrade Foundation.



We were also adopted by our local Coop as one of three local charities, and £3,500 was raised for us. In addition we also received £3,500 respective Gift Aid.

Our pupils were very busy during Litter Picking week in the beginning of June, out in all weathers, picking up numerous bags of litter in and around the local community.

Family Day on 18th June: barbecue, ice cream, scrumptious food cooked by our chef David and exquisite cakes baked by his wife Karen, games, dancing, singing,



relaxing on the lawn, chatting to friends and family, and all quite unexpectedly in glorious sunshine.

Camping Weeks: three 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. The two other classes spent some time at the White House and also enjoyed 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. There will possibly be more, but at the time of writing our pupils have achieved the following:

123 SQA National 1, 7 Dynamic Youth Awards, and one pupil gained SQA National 3 in Art and Design, National 4 in Numeracy, National 5 in Hospitality: Practical Cookery, and is also just completing a one year falconry apprenticeship at Phoenix Falconry. A wonderful achievement.

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.

In January we had a four day integrated inspection from Education Scotland and the





Care Inspectorate. This was a busy, engaging and very successful week. Education Scotland gave us a rating of very good for all areas inspected and the Care Inspectorate gave us excellent for Quality of Care and Support and very good for all other areas. Some of the positive comments were :

Staff across the school have created a nurturing environment based on shared values in which all children and young people are treated with respect.

All staff across the school community share a strong commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people.

Staff have developed an extremely supportive climate to enable children and young people to improve their confidence and

resilience and help prepare them to be ready and engaged in learning.

Staff are reflective in all aspects of their practice. They are responsive to the needs of learners and continually adapt their approaches to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Comings and Goings:

We have admitted three new pupils in the course of the year,





and two day pupils also became residential. The new pupils have all settled in well and are making good progress. We have also said goodbye to two pupils during the year, one in September and one at Christmas, and at the end of June another five pupils completed their schooling in Ochil Tower. 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 which was closed for this school year for a complete refurbishment, will reopen for the new school year in August, with space for four residential and two to three day pupils.

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. The detailed Summary of Inspection Findings has outlined agreed two areas for improvement. These are as follows:

1) We should continue with our work to develop and further improve the curriculum to ensure we are preparing young people for life after they leave the school. In taking this





forward we should consider how we can best include partners in developing the curriculum to maximise opportunities for learning.

2) It was felt that we have made a very good start in reviewing the progress that learners are making. We should continue with this and develop ways in which we can best track the progress of children and young people to help them build on their learning.

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 the most appropriate organisational structure.

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, with a special thanks of course to the Coop for their fund-raising initiative. Our Board of Trustees have been particularly supportive throughout this year in providing us with continuing guidance, assistance and encouragement, as we make our way through this period of transition.

Hilary Ruprecht.

Joint Coordinator.

30th June, 2017



