

Schools Curriculum Award

1982-2002



Learning with the community

This is both an account of the seventh round of Awards and a celebration of the Schools Curriculum Award from its inception in the early eighties, a time of profound change in the education systems of the United Kingdom.

Into the future

The Trustees are delighted that the involvement of schools in the community has become a mainstream activity whose contribution to students' achievements is recognised. School-community relationships are a necessary part of successful specialist schools in England and this is enshrined in the 2002 Education Act. New community schools have been introduced across Scotland. In Northern Ireland, the communities in Schools project is an essential aspect of relationship building. Schools in Wales are at the heart of their community.

The Schools Curriculum Award has achieved what its founder, Professor John Tomlinson, hoped it would. Now is the time to move on.

The 2002 Awards will be the last. However, the work continues. Information about new developments will be posted on the CEDC website – www.cedc.org.uk – in due course.

Further enquiries should be directed to John Grainger, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning at CEDC (johnng@cedc.org.uk).



'The popularity of the Award shows how highly schools value the opportunity it provides to involve the community in a process from which everyone benefits.'

Sir Trevor McDonald, OBE



The school at the heart of the community

Since the Award began in 1982, more than 1700 schools have taken part in the scheme. Behind that statistic lies a much fuller meaning: that many schools of all types and from all parts of the United Kingdom have purposely – and purposefully – focused their professional efforts and skills on their relationships with their communities. In addition, in applying for national recognition of their achievement, they have opened up their planning and practice to the challenge of independent scrutiny. It is a challenge they have undertaken voluntarily.

The sharing of experience of schools that have won Schools Curriculum Awards is intended to encourage other schools. As the Princess Royal pointed out at the Awards Ceremony in April 1997, it is a means of bringing successful practice in the community to light and of providing examples 'for all to see and others to follow'.

We wish to celebrate with you the many achievements promoted by the Award and our satisfaction that in so many schools a sense of community has become embedded within the curriculum.

Achievements

Schools which have received Schools Curriculum Awards have worked in many different ways to build productive relationships with their communities, and this has had an impact on many aspects of school life, including:

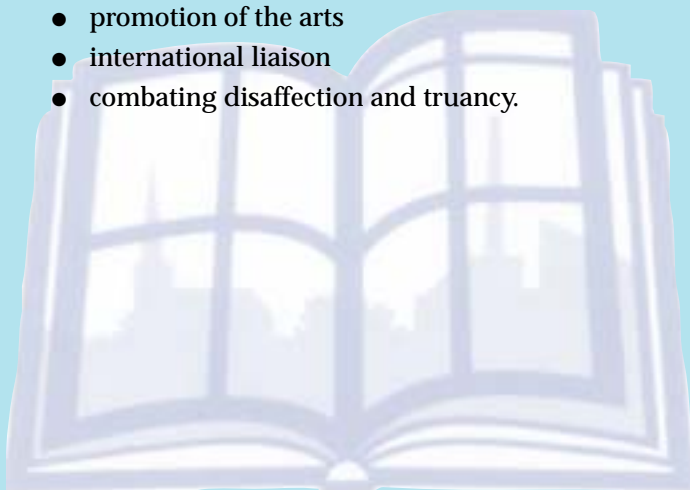
- integration
- community links
- parental involvement
- staff development
- inter-agency co-operation
- raising standards
- literacy and numeracy
- creation of neighbourhood resources
- improvement of the natural environment
- support for good causes
- new links with business and industry
- citizenship work
- learning opportunities for adults
- acknowledging the contribution of elderly people
- care for others
- primary/secondary liaison
- the growth of ICT
- personal and social education
- promotion of the arts
- international liaison
- combating disaffection and truancy.



Criteria for the Award

In order to qualify for an Award, schools need to show evidence of the achievement of each of the following criteria:

- 1 The school's involvement with its community is expressed in a broad and balanced curriculum and in the ethos, development and planning to which the school as a whole is committed.
- 2 The school's involvement with its community enhances the quality of teaching, learning, attainment and progress.
- 3 The interaction between the school and its community is two way, with each influencing and contributing to the other. Interaction is characterised by high quality relationships and mutual respect, both within the school and between the school and community. The horizons of both will be widened and greater mutual understanding generated.



On this page and the next are descriptions and photos of activities taking place in schools that have recently received Awards.

Richmond Park Special School, Glasgow

Members of a local church group of lay people, called Bridging the Gap, visit and work with the pupils who collect items of clothing to give to local asylum seekers. The asylum seekers provide the audience for the school's enthusiastic wheelchair dancers.

The school has developed a Community Cybercafe which provides facilities for parents to increase their awareness of ICT in after-school classes. The pupils use their expertise in a Scottish Enterprise project which involves helping pupils in the nearby primary school to develop their ICT skills. In exchange for music classes, the pupils trade ICT training with the workers of Bridging the Gap.

The latest and most exciting development is the school's link with a special school in Finland and one in Spain. A professional network has been established and there is regular video conferencing between the partner schools.

The Grange School, Oldham

The school's Annual Review Day is publicised three weeks in advance through multilingual appointment leaflets sent to all families. Local mosques also support and publicise the event.

On the day all students are given time off from their timetable to bring their families in to talk to their form tutors about their work. Each family is offered a translation service made up of senior students, past students and volunteers from the mosques. Parental turnout has risen from 30% to 70% as a result.

In the words of an Imam: 'This school sets out to help our children and through them, society at large. We are pleased to help it in return.'

Dunbeg Primary School

To demonstrate the working out of the three SCA criteria in action, the headteacher, with the co-operation of the PTA, organised an event in the school hall to which they invited representatives of the entire community and of all the bodies, agencies and individuals who worked with the school in its varied activities. Half of the hall was occupied by parents and members of the public. Led by their own piper, the pupils, all in school uniform, took their places under an enormous poster proclaiming: 'Dunbeg Primary – At the heart of the community'. The headteacher led this celebration of the work of the school and its relationship with its community.

The photograph below shows the piper, having led the troops, preparing to come to the end with a final skirl.



Belfast Model School for Girls, Northern Ireland

This school is involved in several projects to support and develop community learning and understanding. These include the Greater Shankhill Education Partnership, aimed at supporting people of all ages through a summer school in conjunction with the Boys' Schools and Mount Gilbert College.

The Globe programme enabled pupils from the school and Dunclug School to participate in an exchange visit with Dakota Ridge School in Denver, USA.

The geography department received an award from BT Future Talk enabling electronic links to be made with a school in Islington. The aim of the scheme is to learn about and share information about their respective capital cities.

Croftmalloch Primary School, Whitburn, Scotland

The school has a strong leaning towards music; the mining tradition of the brass band is supported by a visiting instructor. Scottish Opera ran a workshop, which in turn has sparked fresh interest in choral work, resulting in pupils joining a harmony group which performs for the community.

The school's three annual concerts generate a community buzz and residents of nearby sheltered housing and victims of depression and stroke are invited.

Primary 7 volunteers visit the old people on a weekly rota, to chat, play carpet bowls and serve tea. Similar arrangements apply to a link with an organisation dealing with depressive illness and a group of stroke victims. The children look forward to these contacts and are aware of the benefits they derive in terms of self-confidence, responsibility and empathy.



Mellow Lane Secondary School, Hillingdon

Recently the school has developed its work-related learning programme, linked with four local schools and twenty five local businesses.

There is a developing programme of European links, especially through the British Airways Flag Scheme, which enhances the school's provision for language learning. The flag scheme has been extended to endorse the learning of community languages.

The local college praised the school's energy and commitment to strengthening links in order to extend pathways into education and training for 14 to 19 year old students.

Raising awareness of environmental issues

Children in Year 4 recently took part in a Noise Awareness Day in Cardiff.



The last word comes from a senior pupil at a secondary school: 'The school is absolutely brilliant. All these activities have meant that things have just got better and better for me as the years went on.'

The Schools Curriculum Award is registered charity number 290047.