

Early Interventions

'Going beyond challenging behaviour'



Pilot project
St Francis Primary School
Craigmillar
December 2006



In partnership with...



'YOU CANT STOP THE CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION'

Introduction

As T-Rex once sang revolutions go on in individuals minds on a daily basis, so there is a strong undercurrent to bring about new learning and subsequent change. Against this backdrop, the very concept of 'Going Beyond Challenging Behaviour' is underpinned by a commitment to personal, social and community development. Indeed, this report will attempt to navigate through the quagmire of different and diverse signals that children have to interpretate on a daily occurrence.

Children's years at school are among the most important of their lives. Growing and learning can be a fascinating experience; one which may cultivate a child into gaining a greater understanding of the world which they live in. Formal institutions such as schools and teachers are catalysts for new stimulating challenges and opportunities. Within the confines of these formal educational institutions, children through interaction with peers and others learn many different skills, whilst acquiring new knowledge and experiences along the way. Indeed, whilst recognising this valuable learning establishment and the vital role it plays in moulding a child's view, 'Going Beyond Challenging Behaviour' complimented the learning by exploring more in depth how behaviour within and out with schools can effect not only themselves but also other people.

Indeed, children cannot be viewed as empty vessels coming to the table with no previous experience or knowledge of issues. Arguably, children have a multitude of conflicting and confusing messages and experiences which shape their view of the world. Interactions with peers, family, friends, other adults and organisations can at times leave the child immersed in a mish mash of signals. Behaviours that may be seen as appropriate and relevant with their friends may be frowned upon by others with their home communities.



Fundamentally, the partners involved in implementing this innovative social educational programme incorporated an informal educational curriculum of the highest quality – an educational process that offered every one of the children who participated, opportunities to acquire new knowledge, have fun and more importantly learn whilst carrying out work outside the set curriculum.

Background

The need for this work became apparent through subsequent discussions with a wide variety of practitioners and community members all of which was backed up with statistical evidence. From the exchange of initial ideas, the Jack Kane Centre alongside Café K and the Services for Communities Youth Inclusion Worker identified a gap in early intervention work and the exploration of community issues and concerns. Indeed, backed with findings collated from the Community Safety Partnership 2006 who acknowledged 'that between the ages of 10-12 young people were more susceptible to become involved in experimenting with offending behaviour' these partner agencies sought to explore competing concepts. To this end, it was agreed to carry out a pilot project targeting a primary 6-7 class within the geographical location of the Greater Craigmillar area. Before making any decisions, meetings were held with the 4 primary schools in the area exploring the need for this project. During these subsequent meetings each school appeared more than keen and excited to embrace this experiential work which would compliment the existing social education curriculum.



In order to carry out the process it was agreed that the project would aim:

- To provide a safe, stimulating and friendly environment in which children can take part in fun educational opportunities.
- To enhance and increase children's personal, cultural and social development.
- To target 1 Primary 6-7 class within a primary school in the Greater Craigmillar catchment area.
- Implement and evaluate 2 sessions per week over a 3 week period.
- To increase young people's awareness of impact of behaviours.
- To prepare and disseminate a report of the project, with the intention of providing a model of good practice.

Enabling the project to achieve these aims, action research would have to set the foundations which other phases of the project would grow from. To this end, there was a wide range of research carried out, giving quantitative and qualitative data with hard and soft indicators taking in to account.

- ? Levels of exclusion
- ? Levels of absentees
- ? Levels of attainment
- ? Levels of interest
- ? School feedback
- ? History of offending behaviour
- ? Levels of vandalism (within or near schools)
- ? Community Concerns
- ? Relevant reports



Collating and disseminating the information allowed the project to make a clear and concise decision based on the relevant indicators acknowledged above. Further to this, the research based analysis enabled the project to evidence the need, thus assisting in the prioritisation of one target primary school, St Francis.

In this context, timescales reflected operational schooling matters as well as other internal and external factors.

	October	November	December	January
Tier 1 Initial Discussions	v			
Digging the Foundations	v	v		
Curriculum agreed		v		
Implementation of Curriculum		v	v	
Evaluation		v	v	
Report completed				v

Forever



Young

Throughout the process the children were asked to explore and become immersed in many different learning styles and techniques. Each method was aimed at stimulating, motivating and encouraging individuals and groups within the class to analyse situations and previous experiences. Methods such as action, procedural and experiential learning theories informed the process and the subsequent methods were developed as an application of such theories and methods which were then incorporated into practice. Utilising a variety of stimuli's, such as visual aids, multimedia methods and interactive quizzes the children were fully included in activities alongside being encouraged and supported to expose the contradictions which they face in life. Within this programme one of the sessions included an intergenerational sessions whereby an older local person explained perceptions of her early years. From these learning mechanisms the class then tapped in to their ability to be able to reflect on behaviours and act upon them.



Who lives there?

There have been new houses built in the area as part of the regeneration and you and your family have been offered one of the new houses there are 5 other flats in the stair free for new tenants to move into whom would you choose?

As the example above highlights how the children were asked to analyse and then make informed decisions. In this context of action and reflection, the project worked alongside on average 22 children each week, within this staff implemented and evaluated six 2 hour sessions, with follow up evaluative work. Noted below are weekly session plans:

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Ground rules	Word for this week 'Community'	Word for this week 'Stereotypes'	Word of the week 'Communication'	Word of the week – 'Negotiation'	
Rules and Laws	People in the community	Who lives there?	Who said what?	Scenarios	Brining it together
Design a person	Do you come here often?	They done what?!?	Code breaker?	Gimme your bag	What have we learnt
At what age can ya?	Meet a community member	Just like me	Chinese whispers	People knots	Christmas quiz
Ball games	Snake game and community	Draw me	Scrap heap challenge	Assault course	Celebration
Word for next week 'Community'	Word for the week 'Stereotypes'	Hall games	Can you draw this?		
		Word of this week 'Communication'	Word for next week 'Negotiation'		
Evaluation	Evaluation	Evaluation	Evaluation	Evaluation	Evaluation

From these sessions with St Francis Primary School 'Going Beyond Challenging Behaviour' collected many thoughts and views from participants, from this some of the comments are noted below

**'The project was excellent when addressing citizenship and children's PSHE'
'the class understood everything and enjoyed all the activities. They got to participate in all the tasks and it was very interactive and good fun'.**

When asked if they would take part again or advise other schools to take part it was stated 'that this was a very worthwhile project and that they certainly would encourage others to do so'. In fact,

'the class are now doing a project on the Scottish parliament and the class remember the laws and rules which were incorporated into the sessions we presented'



'some of the boys who took part have joined the U12 club which is a group open to under 12's at the Jack Kane Centre'.



Conclusion

There is no learning without action, to this end 'Going Beyond Challenging Behaviour' was to be a pilot project, a starting point to engage children in a more critical analysis of their communities and the behaviours that exist. However, in attempting to execute this process there seemed to be a clear commitment and need to evolve this project out to other primary schools whereby other children, teachers and classroom assistants can partake in the process. To this end, by working together and sharing not only knowledge but also resources the project proved to be effective, efficient and economically viable.

In the current climate of working in partnership, realigning services and collaborating with specialised agencies there has arguably never been a more relevant time for this complex coalition to take place.

Another crucial point to expand our knowledge was that the projects purpose and intended practices were utilised effectively and

incorporated at a targeted primary school within the Greater Craigmillar area.

In reaffirming the need for a strategic view that has the delivery and development of quality children's work within the community at its heart, this pro active educational work exposed how best practice can be implemented and how partnership working can be undertaken to enhance service delivery. Indeed, through driving this process forward local staff, organisations and children have benefited from this educational experience.

It is to that end, 'Going Beyond Challenging Behaviour' cleared the confusion and enabled, assisted and supported the children and others to gain a clearer and greater understanding of the different types of behaviour and the impact that these behaviours may have not only on themselves but that of other community members.

Lastly, a special thanks to all the pupils and staff at St Francis, alongside staff from the Jack Kane Centre who without their hard word work, motivation and endeavour none of this would have been possible.



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