

Walk out:

Upbeat stories
from walking
with young people





Introduction

Paths for All is a national charity promoting walking for health and the development of multi-use path networks across Scotland. The Walking for Health programme was established in 2001 with the aim of reducing the number of inactive people in Scotland through the delivery of a national walking programme.

We began our national programme to encourage walking for health, originally known as Paths to Health, in 2002. To date we have trained more than 3,000 volunteer walk leaders in more than 300 local schemes in communities across Scotland.



A hand is visible in the bottom left corner, reaching out to touch a plant in a field of green grass and weeds. The background is a dense field of green vegetation.

Alloa Academy

Walk to London

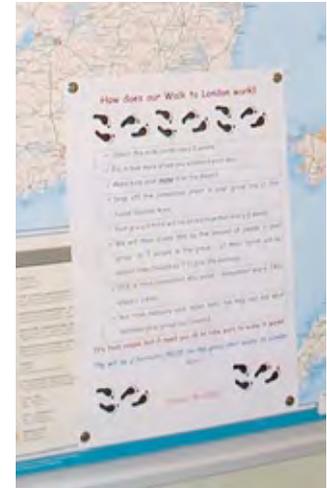
The school

In February 2009, the staff and students of Alloa Academy moved in to their new build school situated close to the river in the town of Alloa in Clackmannanshire. The school has around 800 pupils from a mixed catchment area and is a Health Promoting School (Level two).

In December 2008, a member of staff applied for grant funding from Paths for All to establish a six month walking project in school for S3 and S4 students. The primary aim of this project was to increase physical fitness, but the project also linked to a Social Studies faculty trip to London in June 2009.



“A daily walking target of 9600 steps per day (the equivalent of four miles).”



Project summary

73 S3 and S4 students applied to take part in the Social Studies trip to London in June. A full educational programme was planned, linking to the curricular areas within social studies, but the trip was also seen as an opportunity to enhance the life experiences of the students – raising social awareness and promoting citizenship.

The students taking part were split into 10 groups (each led by a member of staff) and the groups were named after landmarks in the capital, for example Buckingham Palace and Big Ben. Each group was challenged to ‘walk’ London using as little public transport as possible and keep a record of the number of steps walked each day. At the outset, each group made a guess at the distance they would cover as part of the project. At the end of the project, the total number of steps walked was converted into miles to see how far around the world the students had walked over the four days and a prize was given to the group with the most accurate guess.

Four members of staff from the Academy visited London for four days prior to the trip in June. This provided them with the opportunity to work out the logistics of moving 73 students and 10 staff around the capital safely and allowed them to

“Enhance the life experiences of the students – raising social awareness.”

plan varied walking routes (incorporating rivers, parks and urban landscapes).

To enhance physical fitness, promote the project in school and

prepare for the London trip, between January and June all the staff and students involved ‘walked’ the 425 miles to London from Alloa. Using pedometers, the students recorded the number of steps they walked every day and then submitted the total to group leaders every two weeks. The total number of steps walked by each group was then converted into miles and the equivalent distance was marked on a map of the UK displayed centrally in the school.

A daily walking target of 9600 steps per day (the equivalent of four miles) was set and the students were allowed to wear their pedometers at all times, both in and out of school. As further incentive, a prize was available to the group that walked the furthest each month and the students were encouraged to come up with inventive ideas to increase the number of steps they did, for example playing different types of sport.



Evaluation and impact

As in every secondary school, timetable restrictions had an impact on finding time to undertake the project. However, staff dedication and genuine pupil interest helped to overcome this to some extent.

As the project progressed, experience taught the staff to keep everything as relaxed as possible. Examples of the way in which this was achieved include the fact that the students knew 9600 steps per day was a target to aim for, not a requirement. In addition, fortnightly walking sheets were submitted anonymously into a folder as part of the wall display.

Discussions and questionnaires completed by the students allowed the staff to record how much the students were enjoying the project and whether they had walked more during the time they took part. The fortnightly sheets submitted by the students provided additional evidence of this positive progress.

Curriculum links

During the London trip the students visited relevant places of interest linked to their social studies classes e.g. Geography, History & Modern Studies. All students visited the Thames Barrier, HMS Belfast, the Imperial War Museum and the Houses of Parliament.

The whole walking project promoted links to several cross-cutting curricular themes, namely Health Promoting Schools (evidence of which will be used towards achieving Level three accreditation), Eco Schools, Citizenship and Educational for Sustainable Development.

The faculty trip was also of great benefit to the Social Studies staff, giving them the confidence, skills and experience to undertake their own fieldwork trips outwith the local area.

Staff - both those who took part in the trip and those who did not - noticed an overall improvement in behaviour in the students who had been flagged as challenging at the outset of the project. Open discussion with these students, giving them the opportunity to take on responsibility during the trip and the chance to develop a positive relationship with the staff away from school have all contributed to this change.

There were four students on the trip who wished to smoke. Discussions took place with these students about their safety and the need to know where they were at all times – sneaking out of the hotel grounds was not allowed! Discretion was used and pupils remained safe. This direct approach had a positive impact in that the pupils acted responsibly and understood the issues raised. It also provided staff with the opportunity to discuss the negative impact of smoking on health.

Photo and video diaries of the project and the students' experiences were shared with the rest of the school to encourage others to get involved. The students were responsible for the content of the diaries and the presentations and so had the opportunity to develop their skills in the use of digital media equipment. This presented a personal side of the project from the students' perspective.



“Staff noticed an overall improvement in behaviour.”



Costs and funding

The cost of the London trip was £350 per student, which was not subsidised by the school. The Academy was successful in receiving £860 from Paths for All, through their small grants scheme. Paths for All also provided 100 Silva pedometers.

A further £500 was received from Sustrans to support the initial visit to London by the four teachers and the overall project. Additionally, Sustrans provided ‘incentives’ for pupils including compact mirrors, slapbands, and cotton bags.

The future

The staff involved hope that the project will become an annual event.

More localised walking and incorporating field trips to places of interest in Scotland will help keep the cost of subsequent projects down and therefore give students who were unable to afford the London trip the chance to be involved.

Contacts

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Big Fit Walk Grangemouth

The challenge

To spread the message among the local community that there are many health benefits to walking and to encourage people of all ages to start walking on a regular basis.

The message

Current government guidelines indicate that adults should accumulate 30 minutes of moderate exercise on at least 5 days per week.

By comparison, children should exercise more often. Recommendations state that children should accumulate at least 1 hour of moderate activity every day.

The project

The Big Fit Walk was established in June 2004 through a partnership between the Integrated Learning Community and the Grangemouth Health Promotion Group. Planning and organisation was coordinated through the Grangemouth and Bo'ness Walking for Health Project, which promotes walking for health in local communities.

The project was based on the simple idea of encouraging the local community (including four primary schools, one high school and three nursery schools) to undertake thirty minutes of walking – anywhere and at any time.

By making the most of existing networks and good communication links in the area, the first organised event proved to be a great success. In its seventh year, the Big Fit Walk has built on its initial success and is now a Scotland-wide event. It involves more organisations and individuals than ever before, including adults who walk from their workplaces and over 60 groups. Walkers from the Borders, Glasgow and Clackmannanshire took part in the event on June 11 2010. A total of 12,443 walkers were involved in 2010!



The planning

“12,443 walkers were involved in 2010.”

Problem solving workshops were set up with primary schools in the Grangemouth area during the planning stages of the project. This consultation helped develop ideas as to how to encourage as many people as possible to walk more. The workshops led to greater ownership of the event and involvement of the schools.

There was no budget allocated to the project so it was very important to keep to a simple idea. All information about the project was computer based - therefore avoiding printing costs - and the community was made aware of the idea through details sent out from schools, word of mouth and information available on the Falkirk Council and the Forth Valley Health Promotion websites.

June 12 2004 was chosen as the date for the first Big Fit Walk, based on consultation with local schools as to when would fit best with school timings. The project organisers were keen to avoid the complicated, time consuming and costly aspects of procession licenses and community policing in relation to large group activities. They achieved this by promoting the idea of ‘finding a route that suits’ rather than asking everyone to walk the same route. Community organisations, schools and individuals were encouraged to sign up to the event and to undertake their thirty minutes of exercise anywhere and at the time of day best suited to their group.



“No budget meant keeping the idea simple.”

Project progress

In 2004, the first year of the project, all pupils at Grangemouth High School and the four local primary schools got involved in the Big Fit Walk, with each school adapting the walk to suit their needs. The High School PE Department had risk assessed local routes for students to use prior to the event. One primary school undertook a 'Fancy Hat and Wig' walk raising money for the local hospice, whilst another group of pupils simply walked around their playground.

In 2005, established communication links and relationships within the Falkirk area led to the promotion of the Big Fit Walk through local Active School Coordinators. As a result of this, the number of walkers increased, with some primary schools also involving parents.

2008 saw an increase in the number of enquiries and registration applications received. This highlighted the need for some administrative support. An administrator with the local Community Health Partnership took on the role of coordinator as part of her existing remit and is now the first point of contact for all those keen to register. Other exciting developments have included the creation of a certificate of participation (which schools can use as evidence within their Health Promoting Schools portfolio) and the distribution of fruit and vegetable character stickers, designed by local children, to every participant taking part (with funding support from the Health Promotion Department at Falkirk Council).

In 2009, the power of word of mouth resulted in interest from another Scottish local authority keen to take part in the event. The event has grown in numbers and reputation every year to become a firm fixture in the calendar, with people of all ages and abilities taking part.



The future

The Big Fit Walk is available to anyone and everyone. It is a free and easy way to stay active and healthy. The information pack containing all that is needed to organise your own walk - and register that you are taking part - is available online. Simply Google 'Big Fit Walk' or access the information through the Paths for All website.

"The whole point is that walking is free and simple and easy to get involved with. It promotes physical health and social interaction. You can get fit whilst you chat!"

Dr Jenny Lim (GP Specialist with Falkirk Community Health Partnership).

2011 will see the Big Fit Walk go international, with plans afoot to organise similar events in Poland.



Resources and contacts

'Spring Forward to Health' DVD – is a short, inspiring film based on the initiative developed by the local Community Health Partnership and the Integrated Learning Community.

'Big Fit Walk' DVD - now available

Joanne Baillie
Falkirk Community Health Partnership
Administrator (and the main point of contact to enquire about, or register for, the Big Fit Walk)
01324 614661

Joanne.baillie@nhs.net

Big Fit Walk information pack and registration details available to download for free by typing 'Big Fit Walk' into your internet browser or via the Paths for All website

www.pathsforall.org.uk

Big Fit Walk stickers and certificates of participation are available to all those who get involved with the event.



Castlebrae Community High School Edinburgh

Introduction

Castlebrae Community High is a small secondary school serving the Social Improvement Partnership areas of Niddrie and Craigmillar to the south of Edinburgh.

Over the last six years the school has put specific focus on helping students and parents recognise the importance of preparing for and sitting exams. To address this issue, the Community Programme Manager - with support from the Active Schools Coordinator and school staff - developed a programme of student involvement called 'Get Up and Get Motivated.' The programme sought to highlight the benefits of physical activity in relation to keeping fit and enhancing brain activity.





How does the programme work?

The students involved can be picked up by minibus at 6.45am if they need a lift to school. At school, a programme of physical activity takes place for approximately 45 minutes. The students are allowed to choose which physical activity they undertake: Indoor activities include circuit training, basketball and dance. Outdoor activities include walking and jogging (including stretching) either around the school grounds or on a set route within the local area.

Following a shower and change, the students meet in the school canteen for a healthy breakfast and a motivational workshop involving the programme staff and the course tutor for the exam they are about to sit.

On average, between 50 and 60 students sign up to the programme every year. Each student is given a free resource kit containing items such as a t-shirt, pen and water bottle and a different gift each year, for example a USB stick or a pedometer. At a cost of around £500 per year, the funding for the programme is provided by the school budget and the Community Team based in school. The Community Team is responsible for coordinating fundraising activities to raise necessary funds to purchase the resources required.

Alan Reid, the Active Schools Coordinator, is part of the team that runs the programme. *"We are using walking, jogging and other forms of physical activity as a vehicle for changing behaviour. This programme not only provides the students with additional support during exam time, but also an opportunity for them to develop their physical fitness in ways they may not have tried before."*

Walking and jogging outside have proved to be just as popular as the indoor activities on offer. Staff involved assess the physical ability of the students who have chosen to walk or jog. This, plus the staff ratio in relation to the student numbers involved, determines whether the activity takes place within the school grounds or within the local area. If the activity is to take place outwith the school grounds then the walkers and joggers set off together before splitting up to complete the circuit at their own pace.

Get Up and Get Motivated

The Get Up and Get Motivated programme runs annually in school during the May exam period and is open to all students in S4. During assembly, staff discuss the idea with students and highlight the benefits of being involved in the programme. Interested students are then required to complete a simple application form, giving details of why they wish to get involved. Once the application form has been accepted, the students are part of the programme for the duration of the exam period.

The programme has been running for the last six years and each year different exam subjects are targeted, with Maths and English most frequently chosen as all students are required to sit exams in these subjects.

Impact and evaluation

The Get Up and Get Motivated programme began at Castlebrae High School in 2003. As a result of the programme, exam attendance greatly improved. Last year, only one student failed to turn up to a standard grade English exam. Before the programme began, the number of students failing to turn up for this exam had been as high as 17.



At the end of each exam period, a written evaluation questionnaire is completed by both the students and staff involved. Feedback each year has been very positive.

"It's a great stress buster."

"I can relieve my stress through physical activity and I was wide awake and ready to do my exam."

Staff have noticed that not only has exam attendance increased, but there are some students getting involved who have previously shown no interest in physical activity (with the ratio of boys to girls being similar year on year).

There have been difficulties, for example students not making it to the 6.45am pickup. This has been addressed and now the students are contacted by phone each morning, if required.

The programme has been regularly featured in the school newsletter, 'Result' and a DVD featuring a variety of physical activity initiatives in school has been created by the students and shared widely.

"The programme creates a feel good factor amongst the students. It's a very positive experience."

Resources and contacts

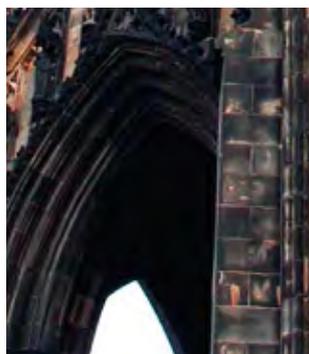
Alan Reid

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'What a result' –extra curricular sport and physical activity at Castlebrae Community High School DVD

Available to purchase from Castlebrae Community High School



"We are using walking, jogging and other forms of physical activity as a vehicle for changing behaviour."





Walk the Block Grangemouth

The challenge

There were two main challenges:

- 1 To increase awareness in the local community of the many and varied health benefits of walking.
- 2 To encourage people of all ages to start walking on a regular basis.

The message

All adults should aim to accumulate 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise (such as walking) on a daily basis. Children should exercise for at least 1 hour every day. Walking is an excellent form of exercise. Free and fun, it is accessible to most people of all ages from the doorstep of their home or workplace.



The planning

To help guide the project, a steering group was established, comprising of a range of professionals including Falkirk Community Health Partnership contacts and the Access Officer from the local authority along with education, voluntary sector and Active Schools representatives. Funding was provided by the local authority. Working together, this group worked out four different routes around Grangemouth, identifying safe crossings and places of interest along the way, for example the Jupiter Urban Wildlife Centre. Each of the routes was also designed to pass one of the four primary schools and the High School.

It was important to engage with and motivate the whole community from the outset, so pupils at the local schools were involved in the development and marketing of the four walks through the pupil cluster meetings, which incorporated pupil representation from all schools.

Together, the pupils helped design a leaflet to promote the walks and sticker signs to mark out each route. The pupils distributed the leaflet - with the tag line 'Walk a mile...and make your shoes smile!' – throughout the local community. The leaflet incorporates a map of each walk, as well as health advice in the form of a traffic light system:



STOP watching too much TV, playing video games and using the car.

GET READY. Check your map, wear comfy shoes and walk with a friend or a pet.

GO! Take a drink, enjoy the scenery and be road safe.

“It was important to engage with and motivate the whole community from the outset.”

The project

The aim of the project was to create a series of easily accessible, way-marked, local walks to encourage the community of

Grangemouth to walk more. The target audience included local residents, businesses and schools. Taking its inspiration from the enthusiasm generated through the annual Big Fit Walk, Walk the Block was launched in Spring 2009 and comprises of four designated walks around Grangemouth. Each circular walk - starting and finishing in Zetland Park in the centre of the town - takes about 30 minutes to complete and is accessible all year round. Each route has a designated colour code and is marked out using large sticker signs to make it easy to follow.



Project progress

“Walking is an excellent form of exercise. Free and fun, it is accessible to most people of all ages from the doorstep of their home or workplace.”

With the support of the local authority, a large permanent sign was erected in Zetland Park detailing the four walks and their individual colour coding. Corresponding sticker signs were displayed along each route to guide walkers. Pupil Council members and

members of the steering group were responsible for deciding where to locate the unobtrusive stickers, as well as physically sticking them around the town centre. The stickers were developed following a meeting with the local authority about signage legislation and were placed within view, but out of easy reach. The stickers are regularly checked to make sure they have not been vandalised or removed.

The signs are very visible and have caught the attention of people walking past. A spot survey carried out recently revealed that local people have noticed the signs and started to walk the routes for themselves. Another advantage is that the marked routes can be used for activities involving the whole family.

In further development of the project, some pupils involved in Walk the Block have gone on to become part of the ‘Helix Green Team’. The ‘Helix’ project is a major new green space development in the centre of Falkirk, covering 30 acres of land.

The Helix Green Team took part in the 2010 Big Fit Walk by walking with MSPs from outside the Scottish Parliament.

The future

The Walk the Block model was piloted in Grangemouth and could easily be replicated in another area or another local authority.

The Community Health Partnership has developed a short, inspirational DVD detailing the project journey. It is hoped that this DVD will help encourage other localities, both in the Falkirk area and beyond, to develop their own walking initiatives to encourage the communities they serve to raise their level of fitness and have fun – for free!

Resources and contacts

Step Forth

Step Forth is a local walking for health initiative that is funded by Paths for All. The aim of Step Forth is to get more people active within their own communities especially those who take little physical activity or live in areas of poor health. The project is aimed at all ages, abilities and is free and accessible for all.

Walk the Block information is available from –

Barbara McConnell
Step Forth Development Officer
Tel. 01324 504556

barbara.mcconnell@falkirk.gov.uk

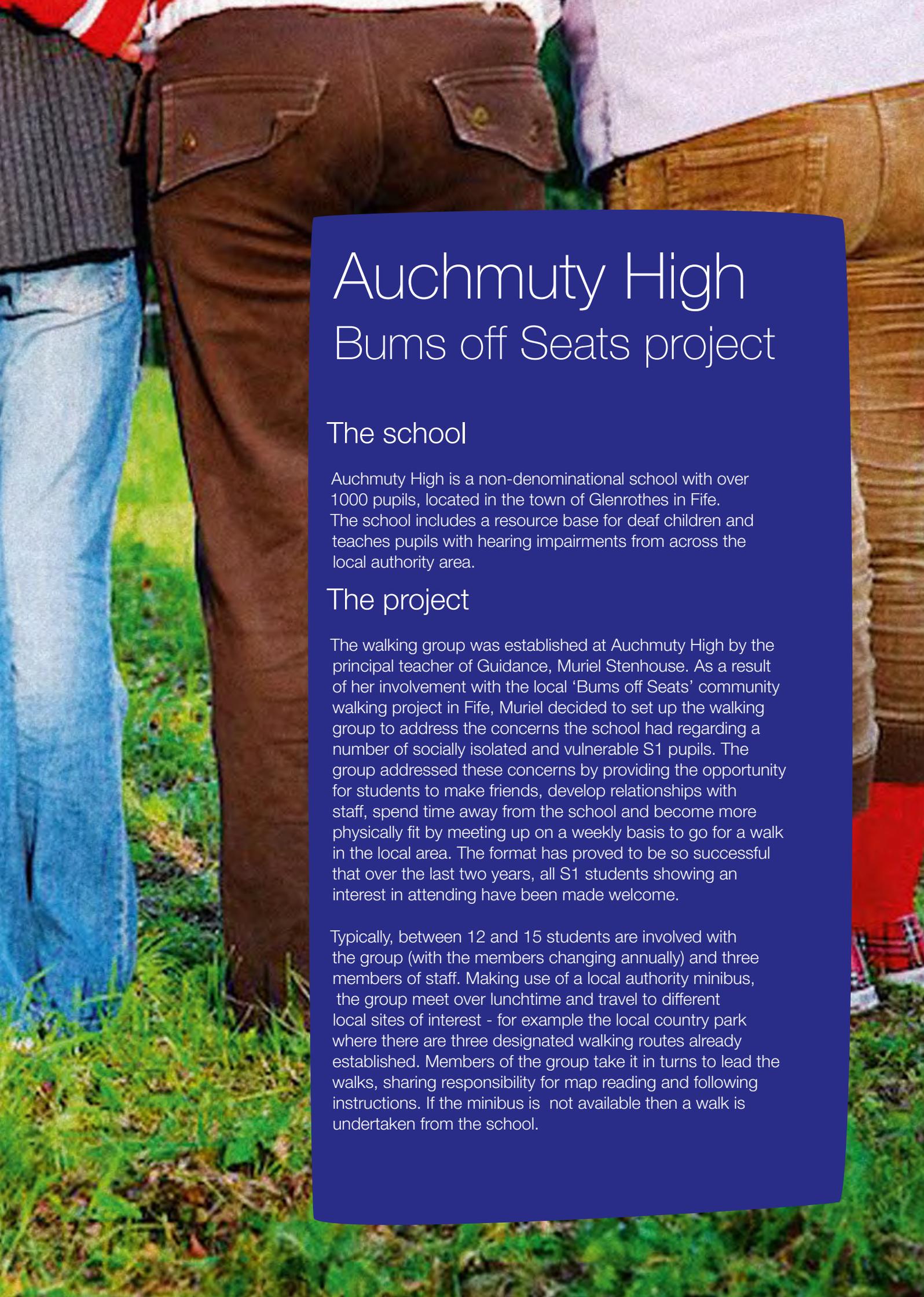
Dr Jenny Lim
GP Specialist with Falkirk
Community Health Partnership

Jeniality31@hotmail.co.uk

Walk the Block DVD now available.

Helix project: www.falkirkhelix.co.uk





Auchmuty High Bums off Seats project

The school

Auchmuty High is a non-denominational school with over 1000 pupils, located in the town of Glenrothes in Fife. The school includes a resource base for deaf children and teaches pupils with hearing impairments from across the local authority area.

The project

The walking group was established at Auchmuty High by the principal teacher of Guidance, Muriel Stenhouse. As a result of her involvement with the local 'Bums off Seats' community walking project in Fife, Muriel decided to set up the walking group to address the concerns the school had regarding a number of socially isolated and vulnerable S1 pupils. The group addressed these concerns by providing the opportunity for students to make friends, develop relationships with staff, spend time away from the school and become more physically fit by meeting up on a weekly basis to go for a walk in the local area. The format has proved to be so successful that over the last two years, all S1 students showing an interest in attending have been made welcome.

Typically, between 12 and 15 students are involved with the group (with the members changing annually) and three members of staff. Making use of a local authority minibus, the group meet over lunchtime and travel to different local sites of interest - for example the local country park where there are three designated walking routes already established. Members of the group take it in turns to lead the walks, sharing responsibility for map reading and following instructions. If the minibus is not available then a walk is undertaken from the school.

As well as varying the location of the walks, activities and competitions are also introduced to maintain student interest and motivation.

Examples include:

- 1 Taking photographs and creating a school display.
- 2 Taking part in a timed race.
- 3 Collecting objects that could be used in follow-up activities, such as environmental art.

“Developing friendships and enhancing physical fitness have been two of the main success stories of the group.”

Incentives are also made available to those involved. If the students complete six walks, they are presented with a certificate in assembly – 12 walks earn them a mug or a t-shirt. At the end of each term, special afternoon trips are

arranged to sites of interest further afield, such as the Fife coast. Students are allowed to wear their own clothes. As with the lunchtime walks, the only equipment needed is a coat (provided by the school with a Bums off Seats logo, through sponsorship by the Schools Enterprise Fund) and a packed lunch.

Developing friendships and enhancing physical fitness have been two of the main success stories of the group.

“It’s about walking and talking... building relationships and building bodies. The walks give the students the opportunity to get out into the fresh air, visit local places of interest, connect with each other and form a positive relationship with the members of staff involved. We’re out and about every week, unless it’s really raining hard then we meet up in school for an indoor session instead.”
(Muriel Stenhouse)

Two S2 students involved with the group last year enjoyed the experience so much that they returned this year to act as buddies to the new S1 group:

“I joined the Bums off Seats group because I wanted to make new friends and get away from the noise in school.”

“There were more boys than girls in the group last year, but it varies. It’s a great way to keep fit and healthy and it’s very sociable.”

Evaluation

In terms of evaluation – as well as an indication of the success of the group – staff note that the students involved tend to integrate into the school community much more easily. They report that there has also been a marked increase in the self esteem of the pupils who walk at school. A review is undertaken with the group at the end of each year and a display board has been established in school comprising of photographs taken by the students and quotations from all those involved.



Resources and contacts

www.fifedirect.org.uk/bumsoffseats
Bums off Seats Group – Fife

Muriel Stenhouse
Principal Teacher of Guidance
Auchmuty High School
Dovecot Road
Glenrothes KY7 5JL



Bannockburn High School Walking Project

The school

Bannockburn High School is a non-denominational secondary school serving East Stirling, including the villages of Cowie and Plean.



Project planning and overview

It was clear from the outset that in order to succeed, the walking project would need to take place within the local environment - but beyond the school gates. The activity was initially timetabled into a 6-8 week block but this did not allow time to transport the students further afield. Discussion with the girls took place regarding the length and location of the walks and the group took responsibility for planning and setting some ground rules. 12 S3 girls became involved with the walking group, with the challenge being to power walk to the local bakers, buy a healthy lunch and power walk back to school.

All walks were appropriately risk assessed and the students were given the responsibility of planning and varying the routes taken.

The activity took time to develop and did not go to plan at first. It quickly became clear that it was necessary to change the focus of the project. The main aim became successfully motivating the girls to take part in the walking activities – the power walking came later. The timetabled walks gave the girls the opportunity to walk and talk to each other and the member of staff from the PE department.

Over the course of the 6-8 week block, relationships were strengthened and Pamela was able to communicate with the students on a new and improved level. Through general discussion about likes and dislikes, Pamela carried out an informal consultation with the girls and learnt what interested and motivated them most. This in turn influenced the development of the walking group, as well as the girls' choices for the next timetabled block of physical activity.

As a result of the consultation, the girls were given the responsibility of identifying an incentive for taking part in the walking activities. They came up with the idea of a beautician visit to the school. A local beautician was duly invited to the school as a reward for the girls whose participation improved throughout the year.

“Walking is the ideal activity for all ages and abilities and for these girls it was about good exercise and keeping fit within a sociable context. Walking in their school uniform meant that no specialist kit was required and it gave the group the chance to discuss wider issues such as diet and nutrition in a relaxed atmosphere.” Pamela Jeffrie, PE teacher, Bannockburn High.

The challenge

While sport and physical activity are prescribed throughout S1 and S2, in S3 and S4 students are given a choice of activities. The challenge was to motivate a group of disinterested S3 and S4 girls to start taking more exercise.

“The timetabled walks gave the girls the opportunity to walk and talk to each other.”

The idea of a walking project at Bannockburn came about when Pamela Jeffrie, a member of the PE staff, encountered a group of S3 girls who were particularly disinterested in sport and the physical

activities on offer in the school. With the aim of offering the girls an engaging and motivating alternative to traditional PE activities, Pamela planned a series of healthy walks in the local environment outside the school grounds.



“Increased level of engagement between students and staff was very apparent to all staff.”

Impact

The change in student behaviour and increased level of engagement between pupils and teachers was very apparent to all

staff, although no formal evaluation of the walking activity took place. The simple activity of buying a healthy lunch, tied in with the informal discussions about diet, nutrition and lifestyle, broadened the impact of the students’ involvement in the group.

The project experienced some difficulties: a second walking group was quickly disbanded due to some behavioural issues with the students outside the school grounds. It was felt that the group dynamics between the students did not work, so an alternative activity in school was found in its place. The school walking group is not currently running as it did at the outset. However, staff feel they have gained in experience, have seen the impact made by the walking group and feel it is a good option for future students.

“The most rewarding part for me was finding an activity that really engaged the girls and through that, helped me develop a strong relationship with them”

(Pamela Jeffrie, Bannockburn High)

One girl who was part of the initial walking group has gone on to become more involved in sports and physical activity. She is now a Senior Sports Volunteer and makes visits to the feeder primary schools to promote the importance of maintaining good physical health and encouraging children to take part in different types of sport.



Costs and funding

The costs associated with developing this type of activity were minimal, although the school did secure £700 of funding from Sportscotland as part of the Fit for Girls programme.

Curriculum links

Educational aspects of the project included sustainable development, lifelong learning and PSE. These were linked to discussions about diet, nutrition, building and maintaining relationships, as well as developing an awareness and interest in the local environment.



What next?

Recent refurbishment of Bannockburn High by Stirling Council meant that use of the sports hall and swimming pool was temporarily lost. PE staff chose to focus on developing outdoor activities. The extensive school grounds were used for some of the activities, including the use of pedometers.

Resources and contacts

Bannockburn High School
Bannockburn Road
Stirling FK7 0HQ
T: 01786 831519

www.bannockburnhigh.org





Sense Scotland Walking project

Introduction

In 2006, Dr Joe Gibson became involved with the Carnbooth Special School in Glasgow to develop a walking project for students with dual sensory impairments. Joe is the Outdoor Activities Coordinator for Sense Scotland. He was involved in the project for six weeks and the impact of the project had a lasting effect on the students.

Carnbooth has now merged with another school to become Hazelwood School and moved into new premises in Glasgow. Hazelwood School is a co-educational, inter-denominational school for children and young people aged from 2-19 years. There are currently 46 pupils (including nursery children) on the school role. All the children and young people at Hazelwood have audio and visual sensory impairments.

“Students were able to express themselves individually.”

Project summary

Based in an old building in Glasgow, Carnbooth was a residential school surrounded by extensive grounds. The initial six-

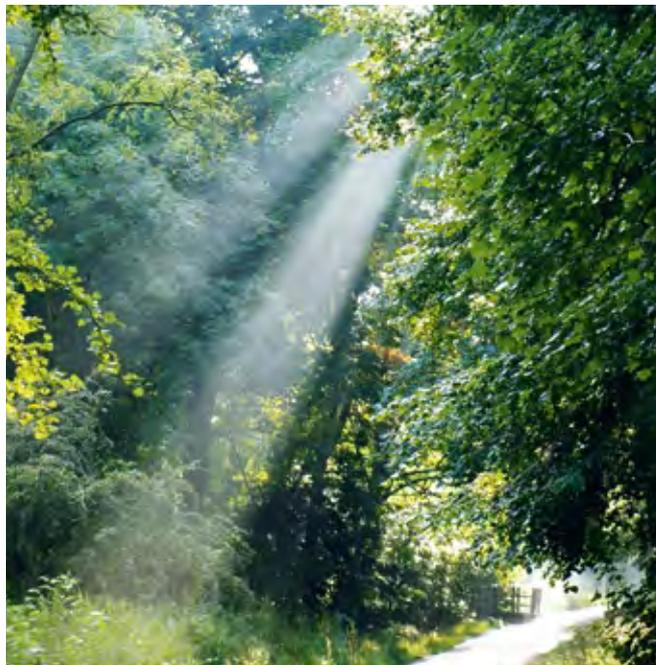
week walking project offered a group of seven 16 -17 year olds (including one wheelchair user) the opportunity to explore and experience the school grounds and the surrounding area individually and as part of a group. All students involved had dual sensory impairment. While enhancing physical fitness was part of the programme, the main aim was to build the students' confidence in their own abilities and allow them to enjoy the sensory and tactile experience of being outdoors.

Over six weeks, the students were supported as they walked varied distances over uneven surfaces and in different outdoor environments – for example through woods and open grass areas in different weather conditions. Once confidence developed, it was possible to take the students out of the familiarity of the school grounds to nearby Pollock Park. One member of staff recalls an evening walk in the park in the pouring rain:

“The smell in the air was different, everything we touched was wet and there was lots of mud. Sliding in mud presented a whole new experience for some of the students – and they loved it!”

As well as benefiting from the experience of the walk, the students were encouraged to take part in additional activities during and after the walks. Joe and the staff planned each route and the outdoor activities included: map making, crawling through bushes, collecting natural objects relating to the environment of the walk and walking over different terrain, for example up and down hills.

Back in school, the natural objects collected were used to create pieces of art and personal pieces of work related to the walk. In doing this, students were able to express themselves individually, as well as to develop language and communication skills. These activities also helped staff evaluate how much the students had enjoyed the walks and how much they had benefited from each experience.



The complex needs of each student meant that a close relationship with staff already existed, so students were more open, honest and relaxed in their communication with staff.

“There is a strong element of staff/student trust involved with these experiences. When we are outside, we chat with the students about the environment they are in and the potential hazards that arise, for example low-level branches. The staff know how to plan routes and they know the ability and skill levels of the students involved. By using this knowledge we can support the students to test themselves.” Pauline Duke, Officer in Charge of Extended Day Care

Staff observation of changes in behaviour revealed how students' confidence and ability developed over time. They also gained better understanding of which activities worked well and which did not. The artwork allowed the students to recall walking experiences through the tactile nature of the piece and a positive reaction, such as a smile, gave the staff an indication of enjoyment.

Prior to moving to the new Hazelwood School, several members of staff at Carnbooth undertook the Walk Leader training qualification with Paths for All. Following the school relocation, staff found the grounds at Hazelwood very different to those at Carnbooth and it has taken time to develop relationships with all the students before walking trips outside the grounds have been possible.

The school benefits from being in close proximity to Bellahouston Park, which already has a series of way-marked walks for public use.

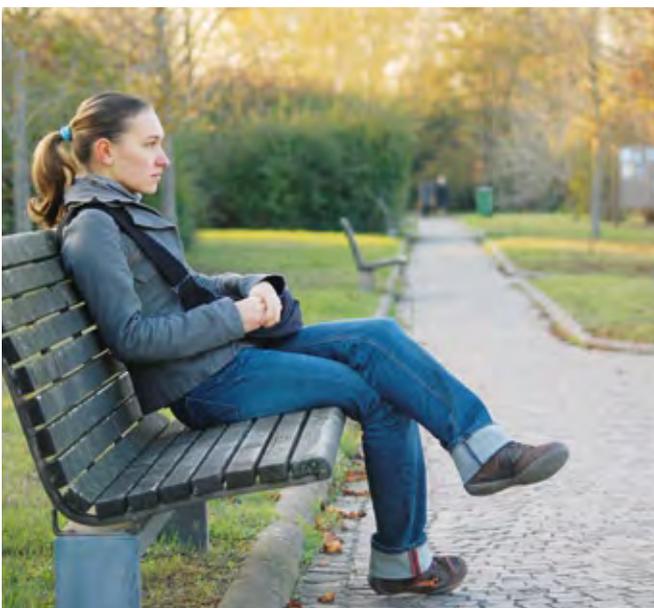


Sense Scotland

Joe Gibson has now been awarded funding from Scottish Natural Heritage and Paths for All to develop walking opportunities for adults with communication support needs resulting from deaf/blindness, sensory impairment and learning and physical disabilities. The aim of the walks will be to enhance their physical fitness and emotional health.

The project is taking place across the Inverness area and involves Sense Scotland service users, as in the Carnbooth example. Adults are supported to take walks, but also to build friendships and develop life skills, where appropriate, such as map reading. Tailored walks – for example, those suitable for wheelchair users, will also be developed.

Other areas of Scotland are now adopting this model of walking project to support Sense Scotland service users to walk more.



Planning and advice for others

Understandably, risk assessment for such activities is vital, but as Pauline points out:

“If you know your students well, then this is not a problem. Knowing your students well means that you can plan the walks accordingly – making sure, for example, that the hill you climb is suitable for wheelchair access too. It may be a group activity, but there will always be slower walkers and those that take much longer to walk the planned route. This has to be accounted for in the planning and there needs to be sufficient staff cover to enable this to happen.”

The students at Hazelwood do not require any specialist equipment, but the school does provide waterproof clothing when required. As Pauline commented:

“Walking is free! Getting outside in all weathers is really important in terms of stimulating the senses.”

Contacts

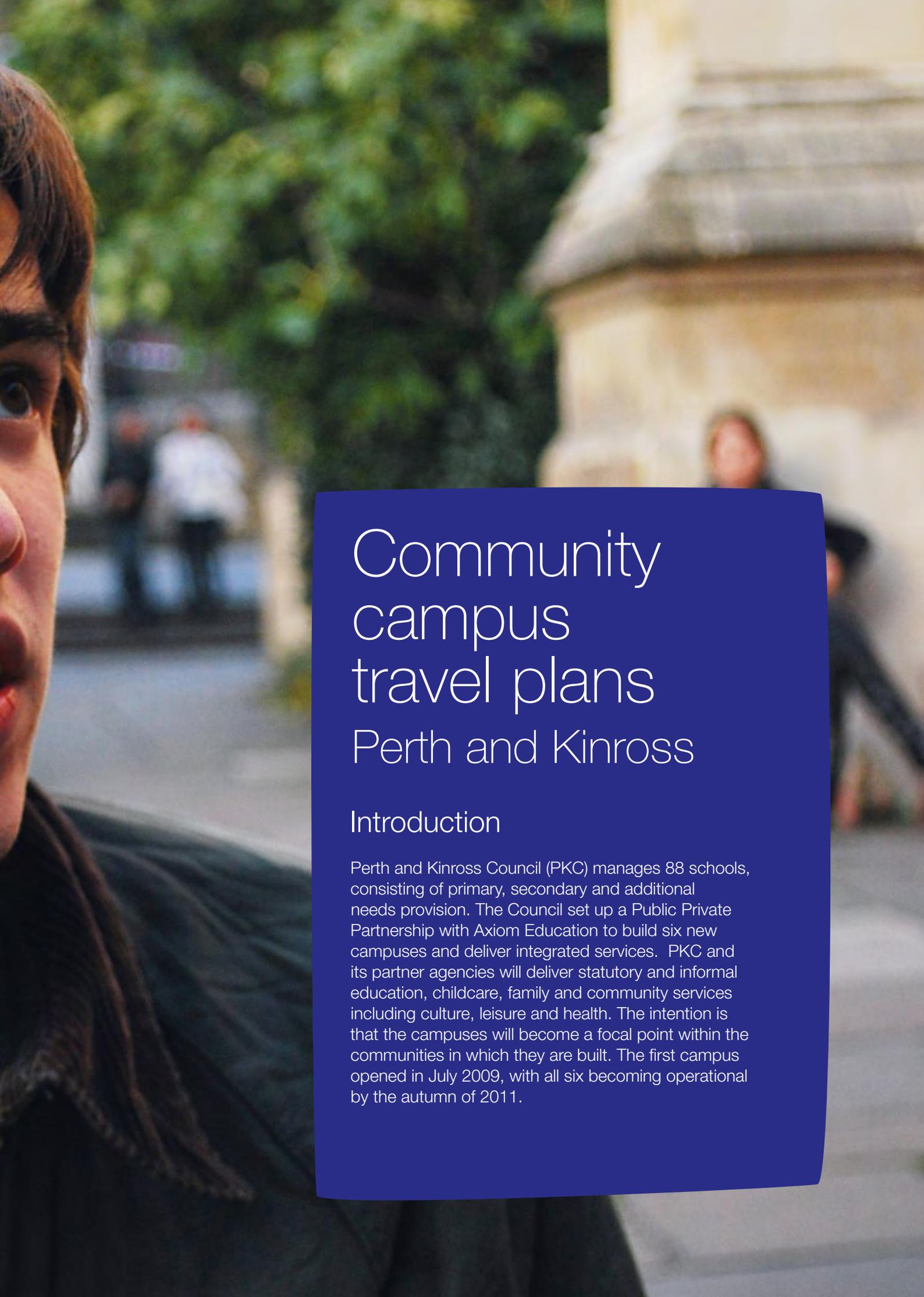
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Community campus travel plans Perth and Kinross

Introduction

Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) manages 88 schools, consisting of primary, secondary and additional needs provision. The Council set up a Public Private Partnership with Axiom Education to build six new campuses and deliver integrated services. PKC and its partner agencies will deliver statutory and informal education, childcare, family and community services including culture, leisure and health. The intention is that the campuses will become a focal point within the communities in which they are built. The first campus opened in July 2009, with all six becoming operational by the autumn of 2011.



The process

As part of the development of each travel plan, an independent site survey was carried out to review the area surrounding each campus and look at issues such as pedestrian access, cycling facilities and public transport.

The planning process involved joined-up working across Council departments and external organisations. PKC interests were represented through departments such as Planning, Roads, Sustainable Transport and Traffic and Road Safety, but also included the construction company and representatives from the schools involved.

Anne Marie Fraser is the Investment and Learning Campus Coordinator within the Council:

“My role is to liaise between the schools, the Council and the community to ensure that their views are considered and that each campus becomes central to the life of the community.”

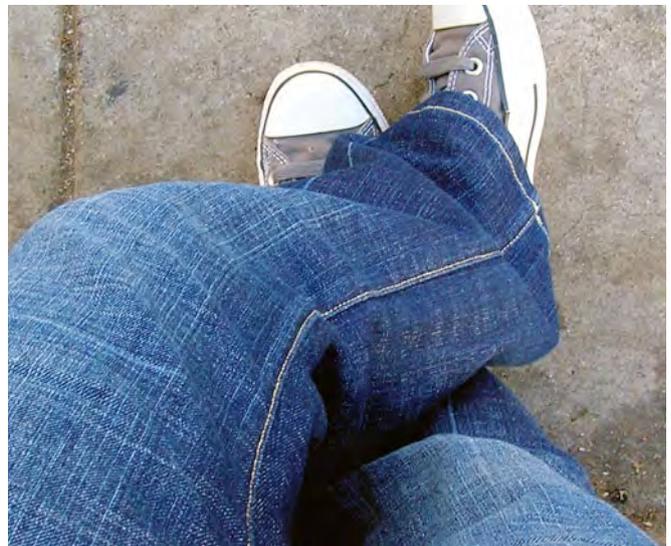
“The plans allow schools some flexibility to implement their plan according to their needs.”

The challenge

While the creation of these new campuses will bring clear benefits to the communities they serve, bringing together several facilities in one

location will also result in increased traffic around each campus. PKC felt it was important to look at ways to improve road safety, reduce congestion and highlight sustainable travel options for all users. As part of this challenge, the Council also wanted to promote ways in which children and young people could become more physically active. The result – whole community campus travel plans.

Areas of concern were highlighted during the planning process. These included specific road dangers and areas requiring improvement, such as speed and traffic monitoring and pedestrian walkways.



Travel plans – the benefits

A ‘travel plan’ is a tool for managing the journey to and from school and the travel generated by school activities.

Travel plans seek to:

- Encourage pupils, parents and staff to think about travel choices and opt for alternatives to car travel for trips to and from school.
- Encourage ‘active travel’ - like walking and cycling.
- Measure change and shifts in travel behaviour.
- Develop safer routes to school.



“A ‘travel plan’ is a tool for managing the journey to and from school and the travel generated by school activities.”



The travel plan also highlighted ways in which information about sustainable transport could be communicated and promoted to the school and wider community - for example, through newsletters, flyers, posters and the campus website. Large scale maps were produced to show how to access the campus by foot, bicycle and public transport - highlighting safer crossing areas and 'Park and Stride' locations. Park and Stride locations are designated areas created outside each campus where it is safe to park or drop off children. From these areas, children can follow a safer walking route to the entrance of the campus.

Cars dropping off and picking up pupils are not permitted to enter the new community campuses. Sustainable transport facilities implemented include: bus stops, controlled crossing points, school lollypop men/women, pedestrian access routes, the provision of bike racks and designated Park and Stride locations around the campus.

Useful contacts

Safe Routes to Schools

www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk

TravelWise schools programme, New Zealand

www.travelwise.org.nz

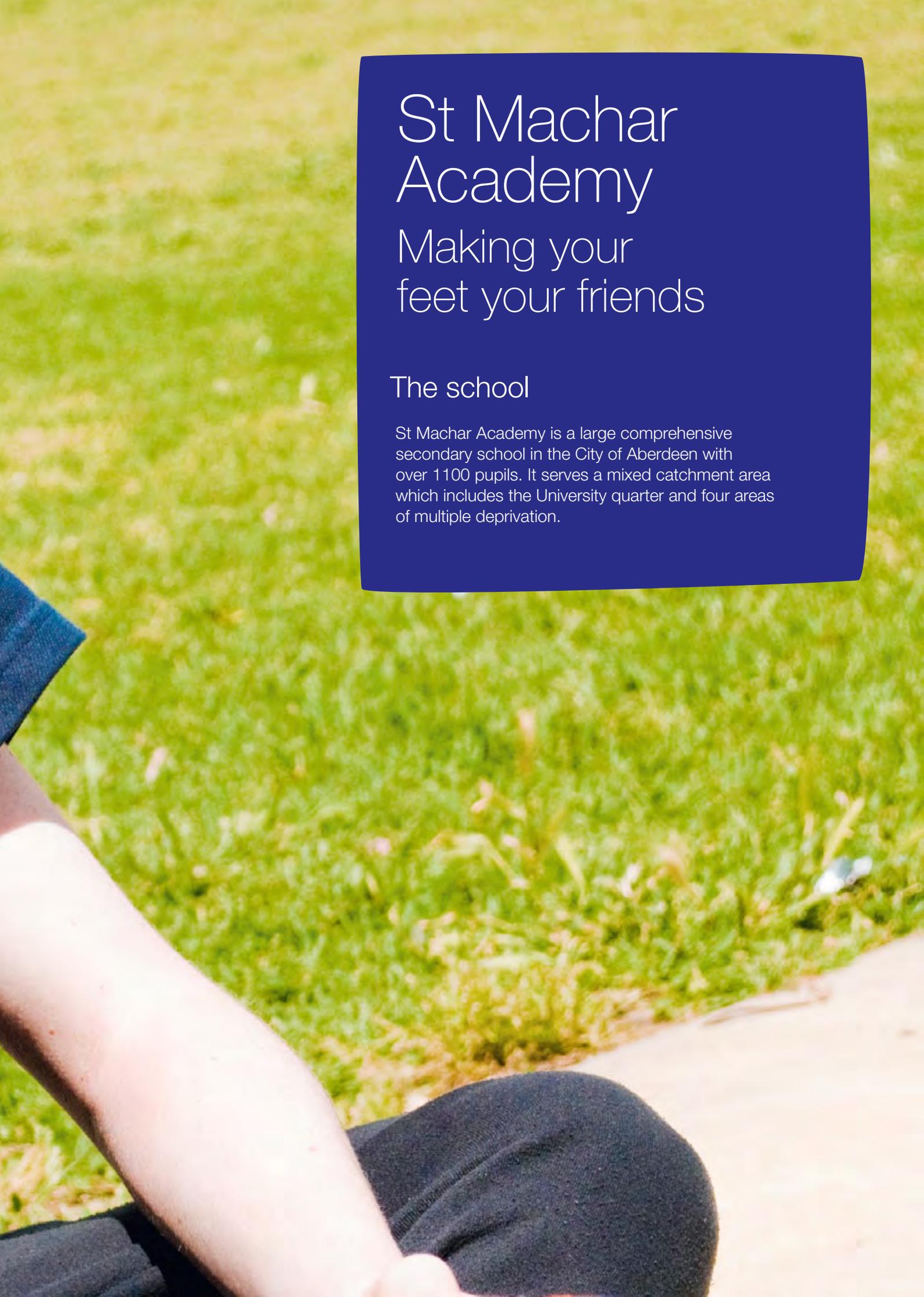
Click on the 'schools tab' for lots of generic ideas and activities to encourage walking to school.

An approved travel plan is required for each of the six new campuses being built across Perth and Kinross. Schools can adapt the travel plan to suit their needs. Schools can also choose the way in which they engage children and young people in walking and cycling activities. The travel plan is designed to be a working document which is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Travel Plan steering group at each campus. The steering group also addresses any transport and travel issues which arise. Continued pupil and community representation on this group is vital.

Communication and liaison with the school community and visitors is also recommended to help promote sustainable forms of transport, but the decision as to how this is undertaken is made by the schools involved. The School Travel Plan Coordinator within the local authority can also provide support. Many schools develop a slogan, create maps and use events to promote sustainable transport issues. It is also important to educate children and young people about travel and sustainable transport, including road safety education.







St Machar Academy

Making your
feet your friends

The school

St Machar Academy is a large comprehensive secondary school in the City of Aberdeen with over 1100 pupils. It serves a mixed catchment area which includes the University quarter and four areas of multiple deprivation.

Challenge

“What makes this project unique are the links made to the different strands in the school timetable.”

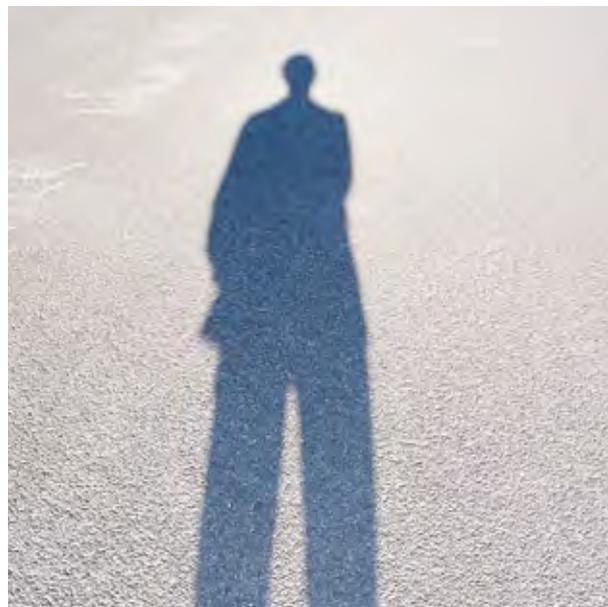
Already part of the Scottish Government funded ‘Schools of Ambition’ programme, St Machar’s was keen to improve the long-term health and fitness levels of all students and staff

beyond the three year funded period. Linked to this were the additional goals of improving pupils’ self confidence and motivation for learning, as well as increasing the involvement of the wider school community in future development planning.



As part of the project to increase physical activity levels at school, local P7 pupils from feeder primary schools were involved, along with Aberdeen City’s School Travel Coordinator, the Active Schools Coordinator and the Grampian Police Road Safety Adviser.

From this beginning, the idea of the project developed. The S3 Columba graduates began to put together ideas for a health project which included the P7 pupils. The S3 students worked with staff to identify who could help and how. The project proved to be so successful in its first year that the school has continued it with subsequent classes.



Project planning

The project began with 13 S3 pupils gaining places to attend a Columba 1400 Ambassadors Leadership Academy with several members of staff. The Columba 1400 programme is based on the belief that through discussion and close working with teachers and school management, students can play a key role in the development and planning of the future of their school. As part of the programme, students are required to complete a residential section which allows them to get to know staff better and gain confidence in expressing opinions. Through completion of this section, students feel more able to influence change in their lives, which leads to their becoming more actively involved with the governance of their school.

“Once you come back into your school community, you are determined to serve it better.”

(Dean Douglas, S3)

“The coordination was a great opportunity for some strong partnership working,”

(Neil Hendry, Depute Head)

Project overview

The project has three parts and covers a variety of health activities. The walking activities focus on P7 to S3 pupils:

1 P7 transition “Go for Gold” project: The main purpose of the project is to encourage as many young people as possible to walk either to or from school, or within the school grounds. The key message is that everyone needs to take one hour of moderate exercise every day.

The “Go for Gold” title was chosen in order to link in with future plans at St Machar Academy ahead of the 2012 Olympics. The project involves S3 pupils visiting feeder primary schools every week during the months of May and June to monitor the P7 children’s progress in walking to school.

During their visits, the older students also play games and lead walking activities with the children at lunchtimes to increase their levels of physical activity and to allow the P7 children to get to know them better.

The S3 pupils quickly recognise how to interact with the primary schools and organise themselves into groups to visit their designated primary school once or twice each week during the month of activities. The S3s also quickly understand the need to be an effective role model in order to motivate the Primary 7s and encourage them all to join in.

"We liked the S3s coming to work with us – they were fit and ran around with us," (P7 pupil)

When the P7 children visit the Academy for their transition days, a special "Go for Gold" assembly is held. The theme tune for the assembly is The Proclaimers' song "I would walk 500 miles". The project has the official backing of The Proclaimers. As part of the project, pupils receive a gold, silver or bronze badge depending on the number of days they have walked to school. Every pupil who takes part receives a project t-shirt printed with "The Proclaimers can walk 500 miles and I will walk 500 more."

2 Road safety conference for all P7 children:

A road safety presentation takes place during the week following the "Going for Gold" ceremony and links directly into the walking to school activities.

3 S1 Pedometer project:

The pedometer project takes place during autumn and summer terms. The students monitor and record the amount of walking they do, the food they consume and how they are feeling every day. Over the weeks of the pedometer project, a healthy breakfast is provided at school. The project culminates with a trip to Loch Muick at the end of May to walk around the loch and enjoy the beautiful scenery.

All staff become involved in the pedometer project to ensure that the related activities are covered in most subjects:

- In Maths, the children use the pedometer data for information handling purposes - creating graphs and interpreting the data collected in different ways.

- The PE department shows the pupils how to use the pedometers and organises practice sessions prior to the start of the project.
- The Home Economics staff back up the healthy breakfasts with a focus on nutritious, traditional meals.
- The Science teachers help students investigate the physiological benefits of the walking activities, such as raising pulse rates and increasing metabolic rates.

Curriculum links

The main health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes to date have been:

"Representing my school and wider community encourages my self-worth and confidence and allows me to contribute to and participate in society." (S3)

"I am encouraged and supported to travel actively and safely to and from my place of learning." (P7)



Key lessons

What makes this project unique are the links made to the different strands in the school timetable. The project allows the students to progress as they get older, thus ensuring continuity and developing experience within the health and wellbeing framework. Staff intend to use their experience of Columba 1400 to provide similar leadership training and development within the school.

Costs and funding

The project is low cost, which makes it sustainable. The start-up costs were mainly covered by 'School of Ambition' funding. In future, sponsorship will be sought from local companies to cover the costs of t-shirts and badges, in addition to the donations of food received for the healthy breakfasts.



"Last year, the project demonstrated great potential for further transition work with the Primary 7s."

What next?

The health and well-being of the pupils is a continuous focus for the school. Staff are keen to ensure that the walking programme becomes embedded into the

transition planning and S1 curriculum activities. The school has developed a new St Machar Leadership Academy, based on the Columba 1400 Leadership Ambassador Academy. This will use Dalguise Outdoor Centre as the base, but the project will be delivered by St Machar staff.

Impact

The 'Go for Gold' project is a huge success. It is enjoyed by the pupils who take part and enhances their transition experience from primary to secondary school. The feedback from the primary schools has been equally positive:

"Last year, the project demonstrated great potential for further transition work with the Primary 7s - such as incorporating the walking route to St Machar Academy," (Becky Lucas, P7 teacher)

The pedometer project ensures that there is an increased awareness of the importance of personal health and wellbeing among the pupils and staff. It provides an opportunity for meaningful cross curricular work and sharing of common goals among staff and students.

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Further details about the project can also be found on the Learning Teaching Scotland Curriculum for Excellence website

www.ltscotland.org.uk/

More information about Columba 1400 Leadership programme can be found on

www.columba1400.com

Resources

"Go for Gold" t-shirts for P7, S3 pupils and staff involved

"Go for Gold" badges for P7 pupils

In-house S3 Leadership Academy based at Dalguise Outdoor Centre

Pedometers for all S2 children and staff

Wallcharts for the "Go for Gold" initiative

Leaflets explaining the project to pupils, parents and staff.



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