



Information Pack

www.go4itschools.org.uk



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W E L C O M E

Thank you for your interest in the national Go4it Award for schools. Go4it is awarded to schools who demonstrate that they are creating and constantly striving to develop and enhance a culture of creativity, positive risk taking, innovation, a can do attitude and above all, a real adventure for learning.

The award is open to all schools in the UK and aims to pull together and recognise much of the work that is already taking place in the majority of our schools.

The objective of this pack is to provide you with more information about the process around the Go4it Award and the investment you will need to make. However, if the pack does not provide you with all the answers, you will find my contact details at the end of the document – please do give me a call or drop me an email. I will be delighted to help.

HTI will also be alongside you and your school during the Go4it journey, providing a mentoring service to your Co-ordinator. If having conducted the audit you feel that facilitation, coaching or development work will help you meet the criteria for Go4it, HTI's Consultancy Service is available to help and support you.

I look forward to welcoming you in due course as a participating Go4it school.



Tracey Maude
Go4it Manager

'We became involved with Go4it, because we believe as educators that all young people can show qualities of leadership and develop the entrepreneurial approach to life that allows them to be self-determining. They need a wider experience in and beyond the classroom to enable them to develop self-belief, social awareness and an entrepreneurial instinct. It is our role to provide this environment and the stimuli to challenge pupil aspirations and Go4it helps us to achieve this.'

Caroline Parry, Deputy Head,
The Federation of Chalevedon and Barnstable Schools.

WHAT IS GO4IT?

Go4it is a national campaign and awards process for schools that demonstrate across the school, a continuously improving culture of creativity, innovation and adventure for learning, underpinned by a positive attitude towards risk.

The Go4it award aims to identify, support and give recognition to schools:

- who encourage through their approach and culture, an over riding self belief, free thinking and a 'can do' attitude, across the school community.
- where creativity, innovation and a positive attitude of risk permeates across all activities and thinking.
- who seek a true spirit of adventure for learning and have a passion for developing the full potential in every member of the school community.

To achieve the award a set of criteria will need to be met and evidenced through a written submission and a visit to the school by an assessor. However, this is not intended to be an onerous task on the school, but one which builds on and enhances the work already taking place within the school.

The uniqueness of the Go4it Award is that the Steering Committee needs to draw members from across the school community including students, who have a very active voice in the Go4it process. For many of the schools that have already been awarded Go4it status this was a very illuminating and positive experience. An approach, which will be continued across all the awarded schools for developing other activities.

'The structure of the Steering Group is a new, fun and unusual combination of people to lead innovation in our school'

Nicola Runcie, Deputy Head, New Heys School

The award is given for a period of three years and the school may use the appropriate logo to promote the awareness that they are a Go4it school.

'Working towards Go4it has been a journey that has pulled together all efforts from across the school, increasing staff and pupil morale and contributing to a great team spirit'

Carrie Marshall, Deputy Head,
North Chadderton School

'Being involved with Go4it has made a big difference. I am the most excited I have been for a very long time'

Julie Duckworth, Headteacher,
Ledbury Primary School.

BENEFITS OF GO4IT TO THE SCHOOL AND IT'S COMMUNITY

- Go4it is unique in that it provides a single over arching award, which recognises all the disparate areas of excellent practice undertaken by both staff and students.
- It will empower your teaching colleagues to be more innovative to expand pupils horizons.
- The school will experience a positive cultural change that will permeate the whole environment impacting on the attitudes and behaviours of students and staff alike.
- Students will gain important life skills that will make them more employable and fit for a competitive and increasingly global market place.
- Creativity, innovativeness, entrepreneurship and go-for-it attitudes will become second nature to all in the school community.
- The school community will be able to reflect and celebrate the achievements of the school, whilst also taking time to consider and develop areas for enhancement.
- Meeting the Go4it criteria will provide rigorous evidence of all five national outcomes stipulated in the 'Every Child Matters and the Children's Act 2004.
- The local community and businesses will recognise that students who have been educated in a Go4it school have had the opportunity to foster and develop the skills of innovation, creativity, judging risk, decision making and team working.
- The students will leave school with a sense of ambition, purpose, optimism, self belief and a real can do attitude.
- The leadership team within the school will become passionate in their determination to 'free' their pupils rather than 'trap' them inside a prescribed curriculum.
- The school community will develop a can-do attitude and begin to develop a real sense of team spirit.
- Achieving Go4it status will provide the school with a recognisable quality mark, that will have currency in terms of profile raising within the business and education, the local community and above all with the parents.
- The school will be gaining a national quality kite mark, a marketable brand that demonstrates an important facet of the school to the parents, the Local Authority, Ofsted, local employers, sponsors and the wider local community.

Go4it also complements the contents of:

- PSHE and Citizenship Curriculum
- physical education
- creative and performing arts
- enterprise education
- work-related curriculum
- learning outside the classroom.

THE PROCESS INVOLVED IN BECOMING A GO4IT SCHOOL

This is not meant to be an onerous task, but a celebration of the schools achievements.

The school will be asked to provide evidence that they have met all nine assessment criteria. This will be presented in the following format:

A written submission detailing per assessment criteria, a setting scene paragraph about the approach taken by the school in meeting the criteria. Evidenced by five of the best examples in the school illustrating the impact of the criteria. We require no more than one A4 sheet per criteria.

Criteria 6 needs to be written and evidenced by students within the school.

This will be followed by a half day assessment in the school, which will include the following:

A portfolio of evidence which must relate to each of the 9 criteria and the examples used in the written submission. This will be used to verify the written submission

A targeted tour of the school taking in up to 5 activities/areas in the school, which clearly demonstrate the ethos of the school and the approach to Go4it. These examples can be different from the ones illustrated in the written submission.

Three sets of interviews, which will involve the Go4it co-ordinator, up to 5 members of staff and up to 5 students.

On completion of the assessment the Assessor will take part in a review day, where all applications will be reviewed and a threshold agreed. Following this the school will be informed as to whether they have met the threshold or not.

On completion of the assessment schools are awarded gold, silver or bronze Go4it status depending on the level of their compliance with the assessment criteria.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

A Go4it school will demonstrate an over-riding self-belief, free-thinking and a 'can-do' attitude.

The school will also show evidence of how it:

1. creates a climate where the skills of enterprise, competitiveness, teamwork and innovation are delivered.
2. thrives on creative curriculum planning, flexible timetabling and can demonstrate how this has improved the learning experience; and helped to expand pupil's horizons.
3. discovers, celebrates and enhances the 'talents and abilities' of the whole school community.
4. shows a continuing commitment to positive risk-taking which demonstrates an understanding that risk is part of the culture of creativity and success.
5. engages the active involvement of parents, the community, and other stakeholders in the school vision of enterprise.
6. encourages young people to clearly recognise where challenges have been achieved, and can voice their successes and impact on their own, and others lives.
7. demonstrates a spirit of adventure in both the curriculum and it's challenging extra-curricular activities.
8. demonstrates that continuous improvement is based on self-reflection and other evaluative methods.
9. amply illustrates pupils' positive, can do attitude and behaviour as well as an appreciation of values.

'The mentoring and support provided by HTI has been excellent'

Cat Mangham, Deputy Headteacher, Wootton Bassett School

SUPPORT AND HELP IN GAINING GO4IT STATUS

On registering, you will be issued with a Go4it handbook which will take you step by step through the process of becoming a Go4it school. You will also receive case studies, examples of Go4it activities and an example of a submission.

HTI will provide a telephone and email mentoring service to the school.

This will complement an online information service, available through the Go4it website.

You will also be offered the occasional networking events where you will be able to meet with other Go4it schools (there might be a small additional charge for this meeting, depending on the venue).

You will be given access to a network of Go4it status schools, so that you can talk directly to schools that have already been through the process.

HTI's consultative services will also be able to provide coaching, facilitation and professional development opportunities, to support your endeavours towards becoming a Go4it school. (This will involve an additional cost).

BUSINESS INVESTMENT

Part of being a Go4it school is to involve your wider local community, including the local businesses. A possible way of achieving this would be to ask a local business to sponsor your registration to be a Go4it school. You can extend their involvement, by encouraging them to participate further in the activities of the school, strengthening the local networks.

The business could also be involved in development opportunities and activities within the school to promote the ethos of Go4it and to raise their own profile in the local community.

HTI would be prepared to help you broker these conversations with your business contacts and to work with you to gain maximum benefit from the relationship.

REGISTERING AND COST

Registering a school does attract a minimum fee which goes towards offsetting some of the costs in assessing the submissions and the award celebrations.

The charge is a one-off fee at the point of registration and covers all three years you are able to hold the award.

The registration fees are:

Less than 100 pupils on roll £450.00

101 to 750 pupils on roll £650.00

751 or more pupils on roll £850.00

To register, please complete the attached registration form. The form will be emailed to Tracey Maude who will process your registration and send you an invoice.

On receipt of payment you will be sent the Go4it Handbook.

HTI CONTACT DETAILS

Please feel free to ring us about any element of Go4it.

Tracey Maude, Go4it Manager - Email: t.maude@hti.org.uk

Danae Hamer, Go4it Administration Manager - Email: d.hamer@hti.org.uk

Address: HTI, Herald Court, University of Warwick Science Park, Coventry CV4 7EZ

Telephone: 024 7641 0104 Fax: 024 7641 5984 Web: www.go4itschools.org.uk



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

Chalvedon and Barstable Federation – Go4it

Enterprise is the watchword in a school that's pulling out the stops to produce confident independent learners. Engagement with employers is a key part of the process. The work at this two-school Federation clearly demonstrates that where a school shows serious intent in its work-related programmes, employers will respond in full measure. A strong feature of this commitment is the creation of a specialist team to handle employer links, led by a Vocational Engagement Manager.

The Federation

In 2006, Chalvedon School and Sixth Form College joined with the nearby Barstable School to form 'The Federation of Chalvedon School and Sixth Form College and Barstable School'. The Federation has an overall Principal and senior leadership team, and a single governing body. The Go4it application and award refer to the Federation. (In this study, the combined institution will be referred to as 'The Federation', the individual schools simply as 'Chalvedon' and 'Barstable'.) In 2009 the Federation will become two linked Academies on two sites, one for 11-14 year olds and the other for 14-19 year olds. In anticipation of this, integration of work and management across the two schools continues to grow.

The schools

Chalvedon is a large comprehensive, with 1800 students 11 – 16, and 200 in the Sixth Form. Barstable has 730 students aged 11 – 16. They both serve the socially deprived area of East Basildon, with a larger than average proportion of children taking free school meals. In 2004, Barstable was judged to have serious weaknesses, but since the formation of the Federation, it has shown considerable improvement, and a November 2006 Ofsted Inspection formally moved it out of serious weaknesses. Chalvedon was inspected last in February 2007 and was judged to be "A good school with many features of innovative practice."

Why is this a Go4it institution?

At one level this is a story of school improvement – in the case of Barstable, over a remarkably short period of time. The Federation's Go4it submission lists a large number of innovative and creative projects all centred on promoting the engagement of all students. (Determination to find a forward pathway for every student and not to give up on anyone, is a common feature of Go4it schools.)

At the core of the Federation's achievement, however, lie two complementary driving principles – firstly, engagement with the local community, particularly with local business, and secondly, curriculum innovation designed to match this engagement by helping students to become confident and independent learners who can see the point of what they're being asked to learn. For the purpose of this study, we've chosen to focus on one or two Go4it Snapshots that exemplify the characteristics of this interesting and exciting Federation.

Curriculum leadership

Alan Roach, the Federation Principal, engaged with Go4it partly because of a conviction that he and his colleagues, and those in other schools, are further ahead with the Go4it vision than those outside education often assume. Good schools, he believes are by nature risk taking and entrepreneurial. "You have to be, otherwise how can you teach children to be that way?" Along with that goes his conviction that the conventional curriculum, divided into subjects, isn't enough. "When my children were small we went up a mountain in Wales. My eldest son looked around and said, 'Dad, is this science or geography?' And I realised then what damage the subject-based curriculum was doing. You start to compartmentalise everything to the point where nothing makes sense." The result, after a great deal of thought and planning, has been what the Federation calls 'The Enterprise Curriculum'.

The Enterprise Curriculum

Instituted in Year Seven in the school year 2007 – 8, the Enterprise Curriculum, which currently takes up twenty percent of teaching time, comprises six enterprise areas – Personal (bringing together English and cultural studies); Financial (bringing together Maths and ICT); Commercial (Business studies and MFL); Environmental (Science and Geography) and Creative (Art and DT). The work is investigative and project based. There's emphasis on working beyond the classroom and on bringing in outside specialists to add their expertise. Caroline Pardy, Federation Trainee Head, says, "For example, in Financial Enterprise, they've been doing a lot of work on value for money – products, comparisons, brands, issues like packaging. It takes teachers out of their subject boxes – and out of their comfort zones" Caroline Pardy says, "Students are graded on subject knowledge and skills but also on decision making, team working, problem solving, presentation, communication, self confidence, self determination, their ability to challenge and innovate, and team leadership. And we do a lot of peer assessment too." In the school year 2008 –9, the Enterprise Curriculum will be introduced also in Year Eight, where some additional curriculum areas will come on board – music, for example, and PE. The timetable commitment will remain at twenty percent



for now, but it's clear that the innovative style of teaching and learning will have its effect on the whole curriculum, especially as the students are visibly enthusiastic. Caroline Parry says, "It's wonderful when I visit classes and talk to the young people about their Enterprise Curriculum work. I've not met anyone who's not engaged, or who can't tell me what they're doing and why. They're enjoying their learning and the staff are pleased with what's achieved."

The LAP project.

Always searching for ways to engage students in learning, the school has embraced LAP (the Low Attainers Project) Head of English Angela Benton describes it. "It's a project running in Year Seven for maths and English to help students learn in a different way to achieve Level Four. If they come to us with a low Level Three, they'll be on the Project. It's a different way of teaching, suited to individual learning styles – kinaesthetic learners for example.

We look at them individually to match their learning needs. We use drama – ideas to get them away from their desks. They use each other as a resource, too. I try to get them working in groups and independently." Much of it, she says, reflects primary school practice. "Circle time, taking the desks away, removing barriers so everyone's able to talk. And it does work. By the time they're in Year Eight they're more motivated, and I love to see that."

Work-related learning and engagement with employers

Engagement with the workplace is a strong feature of teaching and learning at the Federation right across the ability range. Unusually, every student has to choose a vocational subject at KS4 which means that every department offers either a BTEC course or, where one isn't available, an applied course with employer links. Post-sixteen, BTEC is also a popular route, sometimes as an alternative to A Level, sometimes in combination.

This in turn means that building relationships with employers is a high priority. Businesses need to know that schools take their work-related engagement seriously, and to this effect the school has appointed a Vocational Engagement Manager – Kerry Armstrong, who oversees all of the school's employer links. "We're asking a lot from employers," says Kerry. "So we can't rely on a small number. We have to look wider, both locally and far afield." It is not, she emphasises, just a matter of finding placements. "It's about engaging employers, providing them with opportunities to contribute to the students' learning. We want them involved in designing the learning package."

Kerry is leading an emerging structure of management and co-ordination that will greatly strengthen the school's already robust structure of support and organisation in the field of

vocational learning. She has a team of three, each looking after a different aspect of work-related learning.

- A Vocational Aspirations Advisor works mainly with students, building aspirations and providing programmes and activities to develop and recognise work and employability skills - supporting work experience for students across years 10-13 .
- A Vocational Placement Co-ordinator supporting post-sixteen options and organising work placements and links with employers that fit into the curriculum with the aim that all students' work experience will meet the vocational requirements of their courses.
- A Work-based Learning and Interventions Programmes Manager looks to find placements and ways forward for students who might otherwise, as it were, fall through the net, monitoring them and finding appropriate programmes and qualifications. (Another example of the Go4it philosophy of not giving up on any student)

The Federation's commitment to employer engagement already impresses employers and encourages them in forming a true partnership with the Federation. "They're incredibly receptive, concerned only to provide a meaningful experience," says Kerry. Now, the creation of this team led by Kerry Armstrong is a bold and innovative step – a strong and practical message that this is an institution with a real determination to make the kind of links that will benefit all of their students.

Typical of how well employers respond is demonstrated by retailers Curry's Electrical, as Caroline Parry explains. "When they were approached about taking business studies students they looked at the specification brief from the exam board and tailored the experience to fit. They sat down and went through all of that with the student, who then went into every area – IT, stock, finance, the shop floor, HR. They looked at the way the whole store worked."

All teachers who have contact with employers speak highly of their response. "Phenomenal!" says one business studies teacher. Once they're drawn in, and see the curriculum and examination requirements, they realise that they aren't just being used as a placement, but have a real opportunity to contribute to a young person's success. Caroline Parry describes this in action. "Last year I had a group of employers working with Year Nine on an Enterprise course. They gave up two hours



of their time every week for six weeks. There was reluctance at first but once they came in and saw that we were serious and were engaging the young people they thoroughly enjoyed the experience and said that they'd learned a great deal, and would be willing to come again."

Finding success in work-based learning

The key to their approach is set out by Caroline Pardy. "We don't just want it to be an experience of work. Employers prefer to know what the young person is in the workplace for, and for too long schools have placed challenging students with them and left them. We want it to be an educational experience, linked with the curriculum. And if it's not successful we want the employer to talk to us, and somebody from the team will be there to respond immediately."

At Barstable, the person in charge of work-based learning is Lorraine Wenn, who shows considerable ingenuity, understanding and persistence in keeping her charges on track. Lorraine reels off just a fraction of the multiple projects and initiatives in her domain. "We do take risks. We take the students out and about in the community. They do all the shopping, and we raise money for ourselves. We did a Valentine project to raise money, where we painted some glasses with Valentine messages and sold them to staff and pupils. That made a lot of money. With some of it we went down to an old people's home with chocolates. That made a link with them, and they loved our young people and they keep asking us to go back."

There's much more to projects of this kind than meets the eye. Lorraine showed a photograph of the old people's home visit and pointed out two boys. "He was terribly bullied. He was a bully. Put together on this project they worked together and became friends."

Impact and student voice

These two aspects of the Study seem to go together, because although the most obvious evidence of the impact of changes at the Federation is seen in the Ofsted judgments, the visitor is at least equally impressed by the way that the students talk about their school. In that sense, 'student voice' doesn't just refer to the formal structures – such as the very effective student council – but to a general and good humoured willingness to chat. Encounters with groups of students were a strong and very enjoyable feature of the visit I made for this study. I met (among many others):

Tom Whitehead (Year 9) who had worked on 'Firebreak' – a placement with the fire service during which he'd done breathing apparatus training and been praised for his intelligent approach. "It was pitch black. We had to find bodies (dummies). I found four out of seven."

Lewis Bliss (Yr 10) a student who had enjoyed his placement at Curry's Digital. "I managed to sell a fifty inch TV."

Aaron Cartey (Year 9) who joined in a disaster scenario in a nuclear bunker. "We learned what to do if there was a flood."

Demi Waugh and Adam Stone (Year 8) G and T students who organised Bingo in a retirement home. "The lady was partly deaf. She held my hand and thanked me for coming."

Christie Lee Reason, who climbed a mountain in Cumbria. "I used to be the girl standing quietly in the corner. I'm more confident now, I ask more questions."

Evelyn Harris (Year 9) who appreciates the LAP programme. "We do drama and acting and quizzes. The others do it the more boring way."

Michael Rowley (Year 12) who did stand up comedy at Pontins as part of his BTEC National Performing Arts course. "We took our variety show there, in front of five hundred people. We had a standing ovation."

Student council members who interviewed the candidate for the job of Principal of the forthcoming academy. "We had to give feedback to him. We students understand what the school needs."

Sheffield High School - Go4it

An academically successful independent school welcomes the recognition, by "Go4it" of its strong commitment to a wider spectrum of qualities and skills. One of the most striking aspects of the school is the way that the students not only share that commitment, but are enthusiastic and able leaders, ensuring that it's visible in every aspect of school life.

Sheffield High School is a GDST (Girls Day School Trust) independent school. There's just over a thousand on roll, over half in the Senior Department, about 289 in the Juniors and 180



in the sixth form. Founded in 1878 the school occupies a group of buildings, some Victorian, some modern, but all meticulously maintained and well equipped, on a site near to Sheffield University. Academic attainment is very high. The commonly used yardstick -- "Percentage of A star to C Grades" was 99.5 percent in 2008, and almost half of the cohort gained a full set of A and A star grades. A Level results are correspondingly striking. An inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) in February 2008 produced a report which recognises all of the school's academic and extra-curricular activities and achievements.

The ISI's remit, like that of Ofsted in the maintained sector, is to monitor standards and check that regulatory requirements are being met.

SHS, while appreciative of the quality of its inspection report felt that they'd also benefit from something which would reflect something of the school's many wider qualities and achievements, and this led them to the Go4it Award.

Why is this a Go4it School?

The school's Go4it submission, is supported by evidence from an extensive audit of staff and students. Together with the assessor's report it adds up to an impressive documentary record of a remarkable school.

This study, then, must be selective, and it's not at all difficult to decide what aspect of SHS most strikingly comes up to anyone's definition of a Go4it school. It is the positive attitude, overall capability, independence and sheer get up and go of the students.

Looking beyond exams.

In 2002, Tony Hubbard, Director of the Independent Schools Inspectorate, after reviewing a large number of inspection reports, spoke out against too heavy an emphasis on exam success.

"Spoon-feeding works," he wrote. "But it works at the risk of something British schools have always been good at -- turning out young people able to be inventive, creative, independent-minded, even awkward."

"Spoon fed" is the very last term you'd apply to SHS girls. "Inventive, creative, independent-minded," though, is tailor-made for them. And are they also "awkward"? They don't show that to a visitor of course, but it's a quality that's undoubtedly there to be deployed as necessary. Headmistress Valerie Dunsford puts it like this. "The word I use to describe them is 'feisty'. We breed that in them. If there's something they're not

happy about, we encourage them to speak up and tell us -- to have that 'go for it' attitude, to stand up and speak out."

It's worth noting in passing that parents, too, aren't as focussed on the academic as might be expected. Says Valerie Dunsford, "I rarely get a parent looking round and asking just about academic results. What they want is the whole package."

Where do you start? Maybe with the first thing that struck me after meeting a dozen or so of them -- the unselfish and enthusiastic way in which they support each other. There were about twelve of them at our meeting, drawn from across the school, members of the group that put the written submission together. They sat in semicircle, and after only the briefest of awkward beginnings, there was no holding back their eagerness to speak about their school, their staff, and their fellow students. The generosity of spirit came across in so many ways. A girl would start to speak, hesitate, look around and receive encouraging nods. Another girl, clearly a star in her own right, would constantly mention the achievements of others. Yet another would pay tribute to the help she'd received from an older student when she started out in a new sport.

This then leads on into a quality and understanding of teamwork that goes far beyond the "we know it's supposed to be a good thing" lip service that's so often paid to it.

Hannah Davies explains, "We're a tight community. When we go to tournament as a school if one team loses we all give support, encouraging them for the next time, telling them to try hard and train for it."

What that supportive spirit leads to is a willingness to have a go at new things -- because the reaction to the newcomer is going to be positive and helpful.

"I went down to athletics to see what was on, and I decided to try hurdles," says Tory Wensley, a diminutive Year Eight. "Hannah taught me to do it."

Then there's Maddie Proschka, who tells her story like this. After explaining that in her early years in school she wasn't a very confident person, she goes on,

"But I do like singing, so I entered a talent show. I was a bit scared because I hadn't sung in public before. I won it, and all my year group were really supportive."



Maddie went on from strength to strength, gaining in confidence and winning support to the extent where she's been elected Deputy Head Girl by her peers.

It's worth dwelling on Maddie's story because it demonstrates a much broader point about the extent to which the school is able to release talent and capture a student's emerging strengths. Maddie succeeded because –

- The ethos of the school meant she dared to sing in public.
- There was a student-run talent show available. (You get the impression there's actually always a student run talent show or event going on or in preparation.)
- Her offering was accepted and celebrated.
- The musical opportunities were there to provide her with a continuing outlet for her singing.

(How many Maddies are there in our schools? And are they all finding a path? Providing pathways to success is a feature of Go4it schools.)

Stories like this also show us what is a really impressive strength of the school – the amount of leadership shown by students in all aspects of school life.

This is particularly visible at lunchtime, from netball coaching to “play buddies” in action on the junior playground. It's very clear that any student, particularly in the senior years, who has a talent or a skill, will soon be using it to the benefit of others. There's also a mass of “self-generated” extra curricular groups – the ubiquitous talent shows, dance and gymnastics groups, drama groups, bands. In all of them, there are demands for teamwork skills and opportunities for leadership, and it all adds up to a distinct impression that these girls could quite well run the whole school unaided if all the staff failed to turn up one morning.

Jenny Utting speaks about the way the school celebrates success – and this, too, is a very strong feature of life at SHS. As well as the annual Prize giving, there are celebration assemblies, and the school makes full use of its website and the local media. Importantly though, as Jenny points out, it's not just a matter of celebrating what girls do in school. “It's outside successes too – if you get a grade in something, or are involved in charity work, then everybody knows about it and we celebrate it.”

Charity work is extremely strong at SHS. There's clearly a sense of “giving back” here, and using talent and opportunity to the benefit of others. One of the most remarkable stories – that of Emma McPhail, has, like so many of the others, resonances of deeper qualities within the school.

Emma, for the “Service” section of her Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, decided to work with the charity “Riding for the Disabled. “I could combine my passion for ponies with helping other young people to ride,” she explains in the school magazine.

She quickly discovered there was a need for funds for an all-weather surface – “serious money”. She hit on the idea of writing and selling a children's book, and so “Oliver, A very special pony” was written and – with the help of some generous sponsors – published and printed. With the help of media coverage, and, of course, Emma's determination, the book sold an astonishing 10,000 copies, raising £10,000.

Apart from illustrating the school's involvement in the D of E Award, so many personal and SHS qualities are on show here – awareness of the needs of others, the ability to capitalise on personal interest and talent, negotiating skill, the ability to talk to business people, determination to see a bit project through to success – you could go on.

Final points.

The value of the Go4it process itself. Helen Thorneloe, the senior teacher who co-ordinated the submission, writes, “I think actually pulling together all the different aspects has helped to rationalise and celebrate all that we're doing. It has been quite overwhelming to discover so much of about what we are doing and the wonderful abilities of the girls.”

Graiseley Primary - Go4it.

Wendy Briscoe, Graiseley's head, believes that it's never too early to begin developing the skills and attributes that children will need to succeed in today's world. She sets out her school's mission in these terms “In Britain today there are more Creative Industries than in the rest of Europe put together; employers are crying out for people with good communication skills, imagination and the ability to solve problems. The curriculum needs to be exciting and dynamic to engage the learner and to provide the lifelong learning skills of becoming an independent enquirer, creative thinker, reflective learner, a team worker, a self manager and an effective participator.”



This is an urban primary school then, that sets out to enrich its children's lives, and increase their life chances, by releasing their independence and spirit of enterprise. The school's leadership works towards this vision by building a range of partnerships beyond the school, pushing back the children's horizons and removing barriers to their aspirations. The school curriculum has been heavily modified so that it homes in on the essential skills of learning, at the same time encouraging children to be confident, self aware learners individually and in teams. Complementing this is a drive to encourage children to take responsibility for large areas of school life, acting as librarians, interviewing applicants for staff posts, organising their own projects and competitions.

The school

Graiseley Primary is in Wolverhampton authority in a mixed industrial area just off the City centre. With 192 pupils aged 3 to 11, it's smaller than most urban primaries. The school serves a highly disadvantaged community, one of the ten most deprived areas in the country. There's poverty and overcrowding, and because people move out when their lives improve, mobility is very high – only twenty three children have gone all the way through Graiseley Primary in the last twelve years. Eighty one percent of the children are from ethnic minority backgrounds, 64 percent have English as an additional language, a third have special learning needs. .

Why is this a Go4it school?

As the Go4it programme progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that the key characteristic of a Go4it school is its determination to ensure the best possible life chances for each individual child. While most – perhaps all – schools will claim a similar commitment, Go4it schools are distinguished by a willingness to take calculated risks in pursuing it. At Graiseley, such risk-taking is a strong feature of the Award submission. For example-

Curriculum change

It was evident to head Wendy Briscoe that the standard multi-subject National curriculum wasn't the right vehicle for success for her pupils. The answer was to create a creative, enquiry based curriculum which is based on cross curricular projects rather than subjects. "We have a bank of skills for each year group taken from the Level Descriptors They have been totally mixed up so there are no subject definitions. All the repetition has been taken out and they can be applied to any subject or combination of subjects. Progress is rigorously monitored and assessed with teachers meeting with Senior Management to set improvement steps each term; pupils are tracked in target groups and progress is analysed very carefully and productively in order to plan intervention and next steps." The theme for each project is a matter of free choice for teachers and children – what matters are the skills, which are carefully defined and assessed.

Learner-led learning

The skills themselves are approached through questions – "What are the things we want to know about this topic?" – and it's at the heart of the Graiseley approach to learning that these questions come from the children. Moving to that point – letting go of the didactic, "This is what we're going to learn and this is how we're going to do it", approach has been a learning journey in itself for the staff, requiring courage and a considerable degree of professional risk. Deputy Head Deena Moorey describes it like this.

"Instead of sitting at home and planning a unit of work I started to ask my children what they wanted to learn. I remember asking the children what they wanted to know about 'Noah's Ark', as this was part of an RE topic I was teaching with Year 1. One child asked what it was like inside the ark, another if it was dark inside. I had never considered looking at this. I knew the story and I knew how it can help us in our own lives. It's such an obvious question, but I'd never considered it. But how can you possibly learn about Noah's Ark without knowing that? I was hooked on children leading their own learning."

That, though, was just the beginning – planning what to learn. The next step was to involve the children in planning how to learn it.

"But when I introduced some activities, I would get "Do I have to do it like that? I wanted to do it like this." Their alternate ideas achieved the same results as mine and in some cases better because they were much more involved when they had chosen their own activities. I learned even more – the children could plan how they learned as well as what they learned."

For this teacher, and others at Graiseley, taking that step meant leaving behind what she calls, "solitary planning sessions". Instead, the planning of learning became a co-operative classroom activity.

The extent of children's freedom to choose the subject for enquiry is illustrated by a story that Wendy Briscoe tells about the Year Four children choosing their topic.

"The children planned to learn about the Tudors. They decided to focus on Henry and his six wives, using a 'Blind Date' competition to choose between the wives. Then in a literacy lesson they encountered the story "Goodnight Mister Tom", and the children were full of curiosity about World War Two. In the end the teacher asked if they wanted to change the topic, and so they did."



The children themselves well understand the way their curriculum works. Comments include, “You don’t worry about not knowing what to do, so you learn more.” And, “Later in the process you find out that you’ve learned more than you thought.”

Enterprise.

Graiseley has put enterprise at the heart of its drive to improve the life chances of the children. The term itself – ‘enterprise’ – is broadly defined. It goes beyond individual enterprise based projects and business links - though they are there in abundance - and permeates the whole of the Graiseley approach. It’s seen in the way that children organise their own projects and competitions, interview prospective staff, act as peer supporters in and out of class, and take full responsibility for running the library and their own lunchtime clubs.

Partnership

A key driver in developing the children’s enterprising, Go4it spirit is the wealth of partnerships that the school continually seeks. For Wendy Briscoe, having partners beyond the school gate is essential so that classroom learning becomes, in her words, “Part of a larger and broader strategy.” She believes that you make lots of partnerships, of many kinds, because each child has an individual need and learning style.

“To engage a wide range of partners is the trick; not just businesses but community groups, parents, artists and theatre groups, prominent community figures, ex pupils to act as role models, anyone to provide a wealth of different ways of learning enabling skills and behaviours. The more choices on offer, the wider number of learners are going to be reached, who all learn in different ways.”

The partnerships at Graiseley are with parents, health, business, other schools and higher education. Some, too, are made at a very individual level – Wendy Briscoe is adept at spotting people who have something to offer to the children, “I once met a student on the train. He told me he was studying media so I got him to come in and he helped the children to make some animated films. There are lots of examples like that.”

So, for example, employees from local businesses have painted murals, built a pond, and developed a truly creative sensory room for children with special learning needs.

Key examples

Picking out individual projects is difficult but three deserve special attention. One is the ‘Learning Lounge’. The children wanted a study space that wasn’t a classroom. They had the idea, and they brought it to fruition with the support of two A Level students from a local secondary school (who, of course, made their own learning gains along the way) It’s a very ‘adult’ space, with comfortable seating, some computer workstations and a kitchen area for making refreshments. It’s easy to see how valued it is among the children, whose ownership of it is very real. Wendy Briscoe, in her description of the opening ceremony of the Learning Lounge, writes, “The Graiseley children spoke to a room full of eminent people at the opening with pride, and an intensity which is rare in young children. The A level students were too shy. I hope that the confidence and passion is engrained enough in our children to last a lifetime.”

Then there is the enduring and valued link with the local Waitrose store which is separately dealt with in an appendix to this study. Briefly, the store and its people provide a valuable learning resource, and the store manager is a both a role model for the children and a valued professional friend to the head teacher.

Another important link is that with Wolverhampton University. This works at several levels – not only do the students and staff provide practical skills and ideas on their frequent visits to the school, but they are role models for the children, who also visit the university. Recently, for example, Nursery and Reception children went to the School of Art to design and print their own T Shirts. These had photographs of the children, and the logos of both the university and the school. Says Wendy Briscoe,

“They’ll go home and show their T shirts and tell their families that they’ve been to the University.”

University engineering students are also working with the children, and with a local artist, on ambitious project to design and make metal playground equipment that combines several themes - the engineering history of the area, a feel of the fairground, some links to numeracy and literacy, and just to make it really difficult, an ingenious ‘Transformers’ element. It’s a wonderful example of how the children’s limitless imagination is taking adult engineers and artists to the limit of their skills, and it’ll be wonderful to see when it’s finished.

What’s very important is that as far as possible these partnerships and links are negotiated and run by the children. When artists come in – as so many do, including, recently, a chainsaw artist – it’s the children who take the lead in working with them. This can lead to spectacular results, as with a recent project called ‘Ignite’ which was combined art and pyrotechnics, culminating in a fire-filled night-time display that by its very existence challenged any notion of ‘You can’t do that!’



And when the School Council wanted to paint a mural in the Senile Dementia section of a local care home, they hosted a visit by the Matron, showed her round the school and talked to her about what was needed. They then did the job, took pleasure in the patients' reaction and when there was a gift of money in return, decided how to spend it.

It all adds up

There's so much going on at Graiseley Primary that, says, Wendy Briscoe, there's a risk that someone will say there's just too much, that it's a distraction.

One answer to that is that for any individual child there simply isn't "too much going on". The variety of activities and links means that each child can find the one or two areas of creative engagement and learning that suits their style, inclinations and personality. That can only happen where the menu is broad. Another answer is that in fact there's really only one thing 'going on', and that's a concerted, school-wide determination to keep children looking outward and upward to where they want to be and can be if they try.

Impact

The effect of Graiseley's approach was well described in QCA's own Spring Newsletter. "The curriculum changes have had a significant impact on standards in national curriculum tests. In 2007 the first cohort of children to go all the way through the creative curriculum at Graiseley Primary improved on previous results by over 35 per cent in both key stages. The school's overall contextual value added score was also well above national expectations at 101. Achievement is deemed outstanding and attainment satisfactory with an upward trend: quite a feat for a school with a deprivation rating that is double the national average."

What's important about this improvement is that it's very stable and robust. Wendy Briscoe, who carefully tracks the school's performance, shows graphs which show very clearly that although there have been previous times of improvement, what's happening now, under the new curriculum regime, is a steadying of the progress so that it's sustained and embedded. Wendy says, "It's much more uniform now. There's a lot of evidence that if you just teach English maths and science the results will go up, but they can also go down just as quick. But if you build the children's understanding of how they learn, the results will take longer to climb, but progress will be steady and maintained."

Conclusion

Some high profile schools are so remarkable and idiosyncratic that it's really difficult to draw lessons from them that can be generally applied. That's decidedly not the case here. Graiseley's approach to the curriculum is increasingly common. And the links and

partnerships are readily available. Every primary school sits in a community. Every primary school is within reach of a secondary school and higher education institution. Every primary school is surrounded by businesses of one sort or another. The key is to reach out to them, and as Wendy Briscoe has found, once the approach is made, the enthusiasm is returned in full and generous measure.

That said, it's not easy to make it all work. It's very clear that much winning of hearts and minds had to be done at Graiseley. Wendy Briscoe herself says, "The vital point to make is that there are many facets to bring together to make the cohesive whole. It's taken seven years to get the whole mix right." (At the practical level, Wendy Briscoe says it's important that schools wanting to engage with business should make contact with the Chamber of Commerce and any other local umbrella organisations – Wolverhampton Economic Partnership and Business in the Community for example.)

Last word

One of the recent class curriculum themes was 'Freedom'. As part of it, the children visited the Liverpool Slavery Museum. On their return they engaged in a range of creative work – digital media, sculpture, music visual arts. The results are remarkable. Some of the paintings are collected together in a full-colour book. The description of one, by Dominic in Year Six, says,

"I wanted to use a gold nail as a representation of how freedom is a key to keeping the world together like a nail does wood. I also used abstract wings to show how your ideas can fly through your mind like a bird in the sky."

REGISTRATION FORM

School Details

Name of school:

Address:

Town & County:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email address:

School type:

Maintained

Church

Independent

Age range:

Number on Roll:

Contact Details

Headteacher:

Go4it Co-ordinator:

Job Title:

Telephone:

Extension:

Email:

Registration Fee

100 Pupils or less

£450.00

101-750 Pupils

£650.00

751 Pupils or more

£850.00

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Please print and complete this form and email your registration details to t.maude@hti.org.uk or print this form and post or fax to: Tracey Maude, 'Go4it' Manager, HTI, Herald Court, University of Warwick Science Park, Coventry, CV4 7EZ. Fax: 024 7641 5984

Further Information

Please provide a brief answer to the following questions.

How did your school first become aware of the *Go4it* Award?

- | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional flier/leaflet | <input type="checkbox"/> Business e-newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine/newspaper article | <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition/conference | <input type="checkbox"/> Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended by a colleague | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Advert | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify)</i> | | |

If applicable, by what other means did you find out further information?

What are your reasons for wanting your school to be part of the scheme?

What benefits do you think there might be for your school and school community?

How ready is your school to become a *Go4it* School?

Would you like support from HTI in working towards achieving the Award? If so, please describe the support you would welcome from HTI.

Signature:

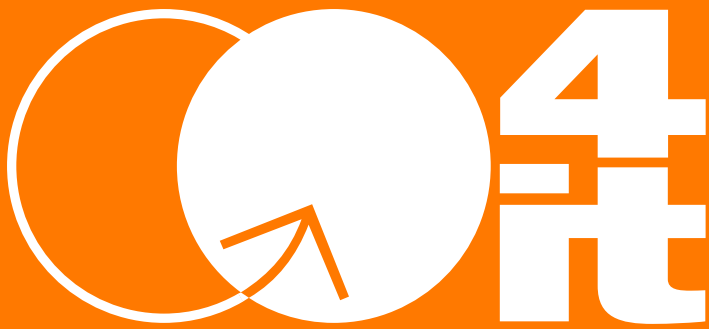
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