

**Alva Academy
Alva
Clackmannanshire**



Quality Indicators Demonstrated

1.2

Curriculum

- Courses and Programmes

3.3

Learning and Teaching

- Pupils' Learning Experiences
- Meeting Pupils' Needs

3.4

4.8

Support for Pupils

- Links with local authority or other managing body, other schools, agencies and employers

5.1

Ethos

- Climate and Relationships
- Expectations and Promoting Achievement
- Equality and Fairness
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community

5.2

5.3

5.4

7.4

Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

- Leadership

Alva Academy, Alva, Clackmannanshire

Alva Academy, Alva, Clackmannanshire: Anti-territorialism project

Though this school did not engage directly with the issue of sectarianism, focussing instead on tribal/gang culture and territorialism, sectarianism issues did emerge from those themes. Schools in areas which may not have overt sectarian or religious intolerance issues may find a way of enabling pupils to think about sectarian issues would be to start examining local gang and tribal culture.

1.2: Courses and Programmes

Pupils undertook a project which they helped to plan from the outset. Pupil views helped shaped the progress and maintenance of this work. With competent teacher planning, this project hit targets in all five National Priorities but most particularly Priority 3 (Inclusion and Equality), Priority 4 (Values and Citizenship) and Priority 5 (Learning for Life)

The Project:

Pupils from a range of areas attended Alva Academy, their local high school however the school was aware of the territorial, tribal and gang culture that affected these areas.

The project was the initiative of staff in the Modern Studies department. The original plan was to do run parallel projects in Alva along with their partner schools in South Africa. However, due to the lack of ICT facilities in the South African schools, the project in South Africa started much later.

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The project involved pupils from S2 – S6 who took Modern Studies. They began by researching why gang territorialism existed within the area. S6 pupils mentored younger pupils. S3 pupils were strategic in identifying core elements of the project. S3 pupils identified the individuals / groups / agencies with whom pupils would liaise with and whose views they wanted to identify. S3 pupils also decided on the nature of the social research methods to be used.

The project took different approaches:

- pupils developed a questionnaire for a general survey of local residents of Alva and Tillicoultry to find out about local views on gang and territorialism issues
- interviews with gang members were conducted at night in drop-in centres with the assistance of the local community education worker. Pupils worked with a detached youth worker, who was an ex-pupil of the school to access members of the community and young people
- interviews were also conducted with other organisations like the Press and the Police

Through this piece of work, issues of sectarianism came up. Overall, it was discovered that territorialism was occurring mainly with 15 and 16 year old teenagers though gangs which often had older leaders. Though staff had not previously noticed any playground segregation, as a result of this project, staff became aware that territorialism did occur within the school gates.

3.3: Pupils' learning experiences

Many of the pupils who started on this project in S2 stayed on it as the project developed. The pupils shaped the planning and production processes of the video and developed a sense of ownership of the project. Different pupils had different roles and contributions to make throughout this process and each was allowed to take personal responsibility for active involvement and interaction with others.

Pupils worked collaboratively but purposefully. Pupils also learnt to engage and work with pupils from their partner schools in South Africa.

Some of the pupils had themselves been involved in tribalism and gang culture but have changed their perspectives as the work has progressed.

3.4: Meeting pupils' needs

A range of methods was used to assist pupils meet their learning needs. Pupils were provided opportunities to develop skills in social research methods through the development of questionnaires, interviewing techniques, analysing data to use of IT (video, video editing, computing), managing the content and processes involved in producing the end product of a video. Pupils were able to contribute to their own learning by having control and responsibility of the development of the product. Two of the S3 pupils who were at the start of this initiative are now in S6 and continue to be actively involved in the project.

4.8: Links with local authority or other managing body, other schools, agencies and employers

The school made good use of partnership working with other sections of education, namely community education. It also developed links locally with local residents and community groups as well as internationally with the schools in South Africa.

The local authority supported the initial establishment of the international link and provided encouragement at Adviser level throughout the project. The bulk of the funding was obtained through a bid submitted by the Modern Studies Department to the Overcoming Violence Project. Further additional funding was provided by LECT and the University of Edinburgh.

Many Scottish schools are involved with the Overcoming Violence Project. (For more information about this project contact David Mackenzie on 01259 752159 or e-mail on < davidmc@enterprise.net>

5.1: Climate and relationships

Teachers who took part in this project found they had gained from the work. They felt they had established valuable links with community education and with other agencies and individuals in the community. In particular, they felt it had a positive impact on relationships with pupils and on enhancing motivation and ethos.

Staff felt the work they were engaging in linked closely with a range of education initiatives, such as Education for Citizenship, Social Inclusion, and Equalities education

5.2: Expectations and promoting achievement

The continued interest of students including the length that pupils stayed with the project (starting from S2 and staying on till S6) indicated that pupils valued this project. Teacher encouragement assisted in ensuring pupils esteem, was and sense of achievement was high.

The end product of a video will be tangible proof of their achievements which can be shared with immediate relatives, friends and community Members.

5.3: Equality and fairness

The project enabled pupils to develop understanding of some issues like gang culture, territorialism within a local but also international context. Though sectarianism was not an obvious issue, the issue of sectarianism did arise from discussions around tribalism, gang culture and territorialism.

Pupils were asked to consider why they felt issues of territorialism (inter and intra-village) occurred and why negative gang culture occurred. Young people offered a range of explanations including-inter and intra village were due to issues of poverty with the collapse of local industries resulting in low morale / self-esteem within families and communities, school disaffection and the lack of provision for young people in the area.

The pupils found that the issue of tribal/gang culture appeared gendered. Boys were more likely to be involved with and engaged in tribal / territorial gang culture.

5.4: Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community

As mentioned earlier, the links between the school and community are evident. The video can be used as a useful educational resource to generate discussions among local communities and wider.

Parents have been very interested in the development of this piece of work. Feedback is provided about this project within Parent's evening with a draft copy of the video playing quietly in the background.

7.4: Leadership

The project received Senior Management Team backing. The school sought assistance for extra external funding and provided cover for staff who took the research and fieldwork aspects of this project outwith school times and gates.

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS FROM THIS PROJECT

- engaged with difficult issues and used educational methods to assist pupils address them (e.g. gang culture / violence)
- explicit about issues of prejudice, discrimination and power. Pupils were assisted to avoid a deficit analysis of why young people develop anti-social behaviour (pupils identified poverty, unemployment, lack of service provision as some of the contributory reasons for poor behaviour)
- provided opportunities for pupils to examine their own values and attitudes as well as developing knowledge and understanding of real issues
- assisted in breaking down barriers e.g. professional barriers (there was multi-agency working), age barriers (younger people hearing the views of older residents) and territorial barriers (‘their’ village and ‘our’ village)
- teachers worked in partnership with pupils to shape the project. Pupils were given the power to shape the content and to manage the processes. There were also links made to local and international communities. This initiative links not only with aspects of Education for Citizenship but to Enterprise Education.
- provided opportunities for all involved (teachers and pupils) to find ways to build a community that values all

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