

**Fox Covert RC and Fox Covert ND
Primary Schools**



Quality Indicators Demonstrated

- 3.3** Learning and Teaching
 - Pupils' Learning Experiences
- 4.1** Support for Pupils
 - Pastoral Care
- 4.2**
 - Personal and Social Development
- 5.1** Ethos
 - Climate and Relationships
 - Equality and fairness
- 5.3**
- 6.7** Resources
 - School management of finances
- 7.3** Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance
 - Planning for Improvement
- 7.4**
 - Leadership

Fox Covert RC and Fox Covert ND Primary Schools, Edinburgh

Background

Both schools, non-denominational and Catholic, have shared the same building since 1966. To find out more about the history of the schools, [read this article](#) written by Miss Barbara Service, the Headteacher for Fox Covert RC Primary which was published in *The Catholic Observer* (2003) as well as the Catholic Directory for the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh in 2004.

The catchment areas for both schools are varied in terms of social class and faith groups and their location means they fall into the catchment areas of two different secondary schools. Both schools have enjoyed a situation where issues of religious intolerance or sectarianism are not 'doorstep' issues. Both schools share one entrance for staff and visitors and the headteachers' offices are nearby, enabling both heads to offer peer support. Pupils have different entrances to ease access to the separate teaching blocks.

When asked why the experience of Fox Covert primary schools was a success, the key message that emerged was:

'Through negotiation, we could see we had all to gain and nothing to lose'.

This good practice example focuses on how the schools have built up an ethos of sharing and cooperation to maximise their shared campus feature. The paragraph numbering below relates to equivalent Quality Indicators.

3.3: Pupil’s learning experiences

Pupils are provided with a range of activities and opportunities to learn together. Pupils are encouraged to collaborate as part of their academic achievements, and to have joint sports teams and mixed house teams on sports days.

Activities like shared planning of events such as the Book Festival as well as projects such as the Millennium Cairn project (building of a cairn) enable pupils from both schools to take responsibility for their own learning, to plan and to be enterprising in the way they negotiate and work with each other, not just across age groups but between two schools.

4.1: Pastoral care

Both schools discuss the need for common values and ethos so that the needs of both pupil populations can be met. Having joint sessions on Drug Awareness, Keeping Safe and dealing with bullying all help with this aim.

4.2: Personal and social development

There are many planned approaches to promoting personal and social development (see 5.1), particularly in developing the pupils’ emotional intelligence on issues like justice and equality. Through shared activities pupils are provided with daily opportunities to break down any barriers of ‘them and us’, which are negative and hurtful. Self-esteem is a big issue for both schools and staff work hard to ensure a positive feel about the schools, which they see as key in ensuring progress in attaining and achieving.

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5.1: Climate and relationships

Both schools work hard to develop a separate yet common sense of identity and pride in their schools for both pupil populations. They do this by:

- having varied opportunities for collaborating on school projects, e.g. an enterprise project on school recycling undertaken by Fox Covert RC pupils to encourage pupils to consider environmentally friendly ways of living was extended to include both schools. Recycling bins were painted by the pupils and the same colours and designs are seen across both schools.
- working together in the Grounds Project to maximise space for pupils, e.g. having shared play areas for pupils with shared equipment and storage space for the infants' toys.
- creating shared home-school partnerships, e.g. the parents of both schools formed a Garden Committee
- sharing some aspects of their respective RME curriculum e.g. shared hymn practice sessions, shared Golden Time and discussions about world religions
- having joint trips for pupils, e.g. to a theatre performance, or in-school theatre visit
- having joint parties for pupils, e.g. joint Primary 7 Leavers' Event
- having a shared after-school club
- parents organising social events to which pupils from both schools are invited, e.g. Valentine and Mardi Gras discos
- holding joint assemblies on themes of mutual interest
- inviting each other to be audiences for dress rehearsals for shows
- having joint sports days and joint sports teams for football, netball, athletics and inter-scholastic sports
- having shared staff development sessions for staff from both schools, e.g. a joint in-service on Mental Maths, Writing, Formative Assessment, Brain Gym, Drumming
- having joint education evenings for parents of both schools, e.g. Drug Awareness, Use of Library and Literacy

5.3: Equality and fairness

Values and equalities underpin the work of both schools. The corridors and classrooms are covered with posters that give out messages of respect, cooperation and peace with clear notices about challenging bullying, racism and prejudice. The schools draw much of their poster material from the Incentive Plus catalogue: <http://www.incentiveplus.co.uk/> tel: 01908 526 120. The schools view their equality work as contributory to Education for Citizenship.

The issue of religious intolerance is addressed in the subjects of assemblies and within learning and teaching.

6.7: School management of finance

Both schools maximise funds by seeking opportunities for collaborative ventures, e.g. shared shed for housing play equipment, shared purchasing of play equipment, sharing the costs of building maintenance, sharing teaching and learning resources, sharing field trips. Where possible, both schools seek to provide best value in terms of managing their finances in relation to school administration (shared heating and lighting and building maintenance) and shared activities.

7.3: Planning for improvement

The close collaborative ethos that has been developed for both schools for nearly four decades has also enabled both headteachers and senior management teams to ensure that joint activities (both internal and external) are well organised and included within school development plans. With each joint planned activity, there is a shared sense of purpose to ensure common goals and aspirations. Pupils and parents are included through consultation as well as in planning committees and groups.

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Effective forward planning also means that both schools can accommodate each other's requirements. For example, Fox Covert RC Primary for Ascension Thursday requires the use of the big hall for mass and in negotiation with Fox Covert Primary ensures that the use of space is considered and there is no clash of demand on the hall. Negotiations are required for rehearsals for the many school shows put on by both schools.

7.4: Leadership

Shared collaboration, ethos, vision and goals are achieved through a close working relationship between the two headteachers. Jointly they provide a common purpose in what they hope to achieve. The headteachers liaise regularly over issues ranging from practical care of the school such as building maintenance, playground discipline, shared policy making and enrolment to providing one another with professional peer support.

For more information about a headteacher's perspective, [read this article by Miss Service](#).