



**Inclusion
Ambassadors**



Inclusion Ambassadors

Success Looks Different Awards:
Sharing examples of supporting
inclusion in schools

*“If you don’t do anything about it, Inclusion
is just a word”*

November 2022

Summary



In 2022, the Inclusion Ambassadors presented three schools with the first ever Success Looks Different Awards in recognition of how they support, celebrate and include pupils with additional support needs.

This document brings together case studies from our winning schools as well as examples from other entries we received. It is intended to demonstrate good practice, highlight recurring themes, share observations and celebrate good practice. We hope this will in turn stimulate discussion and conversation within schools and other learning environments about inclusive practice.

Introduction



The Inclusion Ambassadors are a group of secondary-aged pupils who have a range of additional support needs and attend a variety of educational provision across Scotland. The group are encouraged to speak freely and openly, sharing their experiences of being a pupil with additional support needs in Scotland, including what works and what could make things better.

They are enabled to do so through meetings facilitated by professionals working within the children's sector and engaging directly with parliamentarians and other decision-makers. Discussions and activity of the group is also shared with peers, schools and those in positions of influence with the aim of reducing the stigma around additional support needs and additional support for learning.

Vision Statement



In 2021, as part of the response to Angela Morgan's Review of the Implementation of Additional Support for Learning, the Inclusion Ambassadors developed a vision statement. It details what they want from school and the staff who work with them.

'School should help me be the best I can be.'

'School is a place where children and young people learn, socialise and become prepared for life beyond school.'

'Success is different for everyone. But it is important that all the adults that children and young people come in to contact with in school get to know them as individuals. They should ask, listen and act on what the young people say about the support that works best for them.'



When the Inclusion Ambassadors created their vision statement, they also discussed how best to share their vision across Scotland. They suggested the creation of an award to recognise schools who are demonstrating good practice in including, supporting and celebrating pupils with additional support needs.

Success Looks Different 2022



In 2022, we worked with the Inclusion Ambassadors to make their idea a reality and bring the Success Looks Different Awards to life.

The awards were designed to encourage schools to share how they look beyond exam results and consider success in more than just attainment levels, in line with the recommendations made in the ASL Implementation Review and the subsequent Additional Support for Learning Action Plan.

More than 40 schools from different local authorities applied to the inaugural Success Looks Different Awards. The majority of applications came directly from schools. However, there were some submitted by parents, one from a local authority and entries which had been completed by and with pupils.

We were heartened by the number of responses we received across primary, secondary and special school provision, all demonstrating how schools are delivering meaningful inclusion.

Winners of the inaugural awards were chosen by the Inclusion Ambassadors based on how successfully they met the following criteria:

- Evidence of celebrating individual successes and positive relationships
- Evidence of creativity and doing something different
- Evidence of sharing success with the wider community
- Evidence of respecting and promoting children's rights
- Recognition through awards or certificates.

Due to the volume and high quality of entries, the Inclusion Ambassadors chose to award a winner and runner up for each of the three categories. These were announced on 1 September, 2022.

Primary and Early Years

Winner: Braehead Primary School, Stirling

Runner up: Whitecrook Primary School, West Dumbartonshire

Secondary Schools

Winner: Alva Academy, Clackmannanshire

Runner up: Hillpark Secondary School, Glasgow

Special School

Winner: Cedarbank School, West Lothian

Runner up: Harmeny Education Trust, Edinburgh



Key themes emerging



Across all entries we recognised some shared themes around individualisation, creativity and innovation, pupil-led activity and wider community engagement.

- **Individualising the celebration of success.** Good relationships are key, particularly for those pupils with additional support needs. Knowing pupils and involving them in how they want to celebrate their success can have a huge impact on self-esteem as well as school-based relationships.
- **Including pupils in celebrating success.** When pupils are given the chance and choice to participate and nominate their peers, the celebration can feel more meaningful. Being led by pupils and helping them celebrate both their differences and their achievements in a way that works for them can also lead to greater inclusion across the whole school.
- **Creativity and innovation.** Being creative and including the whole school in finding ways to celebrate different types of success can have the biggest impact. This was particularly evident when comparing the creativity and child-led celebrations in primary schools to more formalised recognition in secondary schools. There could be more crossover between the two.
- **Student leaders.** The positive impact on pupils when they're given the opportunity to lead or mentor other pupils was clear. Schools shared examples of how offering these opportunities to pupils brought benefits to both mentor and mentee.
- **Whole school celebrations.** Award celebrations at assemblies and presentations were a popular way to help pupils feel valued and respected whilst also creating an opportunity to celebrate success more widely.
- **Focus on the whole learner.** Opportunities to participate in schemes or courses relating to different learning opportunities, for example outdoor learning or practical activities, emphasised learning and growth outside of academia.
- **Community connection.** Sharing successes of pupils, year groups and the school through partnerships, social media, local press, newsletters and websites strengthened the wider school community and engagement.
- **Positive communication with parents, carers and families.** The impact of contacting home to celebrate a success, rather than to discuss something negative, was evidenced in a number of entries. It proved to be an effective way of communicating and celebrating the success of pupils.
- **Meaningful and inclusive awareness raising events.** Giving all pupils the time and space to learn about additional support needs can lead to a more inclusive learning environment for all.

Case Studies of the winning schools



Braehead Primary School – Primary and Early Years School Category



Braehead Primary School in Stirling currently caters to around 350 children from P1 – P7. The school has a nursery on-site. Braehead have made inclusion one of their core school values and in doing so has changed attitudes and understanding within the school.

Through the Success Looks Different award, Braehead shared a number of creative ways in which they are building an inclusive learning environment for all pupils. Their approach was clearly in line with the Inclusion Ambassadors' Vision Statement for additional support for learning.

In their application, Braehead showed they are firmly committed to supporting pupils to engage with their rights. There was also a clear focus on celebrating individual successes in creative ways. Their application also clearly demonstrated the valued relationships pupils had with the staff and the positive impact that had on pupils.



“We are very proud of all our learners and feel that the children with additional support needs are given excellent support and strategies from a dedicated staff. Inclusion is one of our core values and we have strived to celebrate the achievements of all in our school.”

Staff Member, Braehead Primary School

The Inclusion Ambassadors were particularly positive about the leadership opportunities that Braehead makes available to all pupils from P6. This included those who access additional support taking on roles as sports leaders and leading sessions for younger pupils. These roles are clearly valued by all and there is clear feeling of pride as young people get to share their abilities.

The school has a number of focussed groups for children who access additional support. As part of these groups the pupils have opportunities to learn, share with the wider community and to lead work in the school.

The Mission Dyslexia group, for children who have been assessed and identified as dyslexic aims to support children to learn about the dyslexic brain, learning styles and strategies to help them overcome barriers to their learning. It is based on a mentor style approach and helps build relationships. The school feel it has positively affected

how the children celebrate their differences. Through the group, pupils have created a short film raising awareness that has been shown throughout the school and shared externally. Subsequently, other schools in Stirling have shared the film with their schools and some of the group have written articles for the Dyslexia Voice magazine.

The Tech Team group is a similar group where children who have literacy difficulties meet weekly to develop computer literacy. They learn how best to use the accessibility tools on their Chromebook to create presentations, write stories and use Google Classroom with greater independence. The children who develop confidence with this become 'Tech Team Geniuses' and support children (and teachers) during lessons that involve digital learning.

Braehead has also celebrated Neurodiversity Celebration week with a wide range of activities, which included lessons looking at different types of brains, an assembly and a premiere of a film made by a school group. One of the pupils - who is autistic - also created and delivered a presentation to her class. This was identified as a major milestone for this child. Similar opportunities have been provided at other key school events such as a traditional Burns Performance.

It is clear that inclusion is a key focus at Braehead. Support staff receive regular training from the Support for Learning teacher in strategies and approaches to support learning and achievement. The school feel that focussing on inclusion and having a range of different opportunities for celebrating success has greatly increased self-esteem of children who have additional support needs.

Their work has shown how a range of creative approaches can be used to develop a more inclusive primary school environment that truly values the abilities of all children.





Alva Academy – Secondary School Category



Alva Academy is a secondary school in Clackmannanshire which currently has a school roll of approximately 900 pupils. It is a mainstream school, providing education for pupils in S1 – S6. It also has a specialist autism provision within the mainstream school.

Through their application to the Success Looks Different Award, Alva Academy demonstrated a wide range of ways in which they celebrate success within a secondary school context.

The Inclusion Ambassadors found the school's awareness raising programmes and the way the school has promoted inclusion to be particularly positive. They felt the Autism Acceptance Week, led by a pupil ambassador group, was particularly positive, giving children and young people with autism the chance to create resources for others and to lead on awareness raising activities.

Activities across the week included a lesson that was developed by the ambassador group and delivered to every pupil in the school across the week. One of the ambassadors also created a video for the school on the challenges of school life for an autistic learner. These opportunities were positively received across the school, both by staff and by peers, allowing people to learn about different learning styles and school experiences.



"I liked it because people with autism had their say in something about people with autism rather than people without autism deciding what is taught about autism."

Alva Academy pupil

Every year, Alva Academy celebrates Dyslexia Awareness Week to raise awareness of the strengths and support needs of dyslexic learners. This is also led by the Dyslexia Ambassador group. Similar to Autism Awareness week, there are opportunities to raise awareness of dyslexia including assemblies and videos made by pupils being shown. In a recent Dyslexia Awareness Week, all staff were invited by the young ambassadors to complete a training module on dyslexia as part of a whole staff competition. One of the pupils also presented at a whole school assembly on their experiences of attending school with dyslexia. This pupil has now been nominated for an award for bravery and determination at the school awards ceremony. Finally, there was support from senior leadership for these activities with the headteacher undertaking a series of dyslexia simulation activities and allowing themselves to be sponged with cold water if they ran

out of time. Although fun, this imitated the pressure those with dyslexia can often feel under in educational settings.

The school has also found a range of creative ways to celebrate success and achievement. Working in partnership with pupils, the autism spectrum department and the Home Economics Department delivered a three-course meal and event led entirely by the young people. This was attended by parents, carers and the wider community.

In addition, the school delivers a Wellbeing Award where pupils are recognised for participating in opportunities to promote wellbeing. This includes working on a school balcony garden, growing flowers, vegetables and herbs. The pupils held a plant sale to raise money for next year's planting and gave out plants to staff to help with their wellbeing. The school and participants in the group have won an award with Dobbies Garden Centre as part of the Helping Your Community Grow Initiative for this work.

It was evident that respecting and promoting children's rights was woven through all the opportunities offered by the school. Pupil voice is an active part of everyday practice with initiatives like the "You Said, We Did!" board displayed within the ASN department. Here, pupils can clearly see some of things the school have changed based on their views.

Staff at Alva Academy are clear that this celebration of success and achievement has clear positive benefits for all.



"The impact of celebrating successes aside from exam results is so powerful. At Alva Academy, we witness this impact each and every day. It is challenging to put this into words as so much is what we observe such as an improvement in confidence, wellbeing, communication skills, social skills, and acceptance from peers."

Staff Member, Alva Academy





Cedarbank School – Special School Category



Cedarbank School in Livingston is a special school that provides support to children and young people with a wide range of additional support needs. It has the capacity to work with 110 children and young people of secondary school age and serves all of West Lothian

The school has taken forward a range of activities to celebrate and share success outside of the traditional exam system. They are clearly taking forward work across all five of the Inclusion Ambassadors' success criteria.

The Inclusion Ambassadors were particularly impressed with the school's approach to pupils taking on leadership or ambassadorial roles. They liked how this was widely available to all young people in the school and commended the wide range of options for ambassadorial roles.

The Inclusion Ambassadors also particularly liked that there was a clear role for pupils to be involved in celebrating success and in identifying the sorts of things that the school should celebrate. One highlight of this is the praise postcards scheme.

The postcards are designed to celebrate examples of where pupils have taken steps towards demonstrating skills for learning, life and work. They focus on the school's five values and were designed by a pupil in the school.

Cedarbank also run a range of other activities to ensure an inclusive environment that celebrates a wide range of success. Their use of ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) short courses allows people to work on projects and courses that have achievable, person-led goals. This supports pupils to succeed at a level that works for them.

The school has created a range of options for publicly sharing the success of their pupils. This includes regular updates on social media and in their weekly bulletin which cover all different sorts of success, not just those in the formal curriculum.

In response to a pupil survey, the school has introduced a 'Wider Achievement Afternoon' which gives all S1-S3 classes the opportunity to work and learn outside. This initiative encourages pupils to engage with nature whilst working towards accredited awards. Having a regular opportunity for young people, parents and carers and teachers to come together to celebrate these achievements has been welcomed by the pupils.

Cedarbank's approach culminates with an annual Celebration of Success. This yearly event gives classes the chance to present a song, poem or piece of artwork that they

have been working on. Certificates are given out for achievements throughout the year and a wide range of successes highlighted.

The school has demonstrated a clear commitment to celebrating the achievements of children and young people outside of the traditional exam system, with pupils also sharing their experiences of feeling included and supported and the positive effect it has on them. This is in turn supported by pupils also discussing the roles they take on and their wider achievements, linking these to the skills they have developed with confidence, pride and enthusiasm.

By tailoring approaches to the needs and individuality of young people with additional support needs, Cedarbank have evidenced how to create inclusive environments that place person-centred success at the core. It is an approach fully in line with the Inclusion Ambassadors vision statement.



“Visitors to the school regularly comment on the confidence and resilience of our young people.”

Staff member, Cedarbank School



Other positive examples of initiatives to promote inclusion and celebrate that success looks different for every pupil

Whitecrook Primary School (runner up): Sharing experiences with the wider community



Whitecrook Primary School in Clydebank recognise that school is so much more than academic development. They have identified that for many of their pupils, improving or demonstrating progress in social and emotional skills is a priority. They encourage pupils to recognise the achievements of others and engage well in celebrating those achievements.



“We have a BSL user in our P7 who has been celebrated for his leadership of a whole school BSL project this year. In June of last year, the pupil wrote a letter to all teachers to tell them about his experiences coming to school without his implant. His letter outlines the difficulties he and the whole deaf community face and how he feels when he is unable to hear what is going on. He explained the benefits of BSL and how that can improve community relations between hearing and non-hearing people. He and I then had a discussion about how we could improve the school and he agreed to lead the development of BLS throughout this year. This has involved creating lists of signs to teach the whole school each week during our assemblies and preparing a Deaf Awareness presentation for the classes.”

Joanne Paton, Head Teacher

Poolewe Primary School: Supporting pupils to find new passions



Poolewe Primary School in the Scottish Highlands are aware that sharing success with peers and the wider community is incredibly valuable. They work creatively to help their pupils recognise that every person is an individual with different skills and attributes, and support these talents and skills as far as possible.



“Children have skills that they share and these enterprising ideas are supported to become realities wherever possible. An example would be a child who recently has been struggling with anxiety who found a new passion in drawing. One of their pictures was made into a postcard which will be sold at the local market.”

Natalie White, Head Teacher



Gartocharn Primary School: Celebrating failure, perseverance, challenge, effort, kindness and teamwork



Gartocharn Primary School in West Dunbartonshire, placed pupil voice at the centre of their application. The children of P6/7 created a jam board to share their answers to the question: How do you celebrate different kinds of success at your school? Their answers were typed up by some P6 students and included:



“There are six types of certificates: learn from mistakes monkey that you get when you make a mistake and improve, and a challenging cheetah that you get when you challenge yourself. There is an effort eagle that is similar to challenging cheetah, you get it when you put effort into something. Then there is a persevering penguin overcoming a difficult challenge. Teamwork turtle and kindness koala are very self explanatory but for teamwork turtle you need work well in a team and kindness koala you need to be kind to someone.”

Jade Phillips, Principal Teacher

Hillpark Secondary (runner up): Including the whole education community



Glasgow-based secondary school, Hillpark clearly demonstrated a commitment to including the whole school community in celebrating success through a pupil achievement initiative – from nominating any pupil from any class, to asking for input from across faculty and support staff. Parents and pupils were also consulted before the initiative was launched. Each month, successful pupils as well as their parents, are emailed a Certificate of Achievement.



“This year, I have developed an initiative within our school in which staff nominate pupil achievement each month. A spreadsheet of all pupils is posted on a whole school Teams page and staff select a minimum of three pupils across their teaching classes as well as any pupils who they wish to recognise for achievements outwith the classroom. To allow all achievements to be captured, members of the janitorial staff, the canteen staff, the classroom assistants and our campus police officer also feed into the monthly spreadsheet.”

Blair Haldane, Depute Headteacher



Peebles High School: Pupil mentoring schemes



Peebles High School believe it is crucial to offer their pupils opportunities to prepare for work and life, where they feel supported, but can also be empowered to thrive as independently as possible. Their adoption of pupil mentoring schemes has empowered pupils as both mentors and mentees.



“We offer young people who have been supported in our nurture base and wider school the opportunity to mentor other younger people coming through the nurture base or other areas of our school... they [the mentors] make a real difference to the progress of younger students, having lived experience of the hurdles they’ve had to jump over themselves.”

Staff Member, Peebles High School

Harmeny Education Trust (runner up): Recognising every achievement and involving pupils in how they want celebrate success.

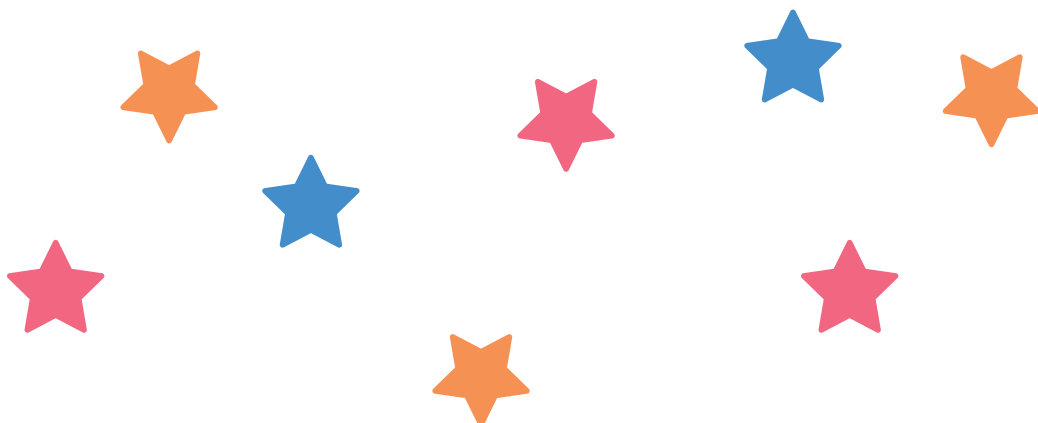


Harmeny Education Trust provides care and education to children and young people from all across Scotland. They recognise that because of the past experiences of their pupils, the school environment is extremely challenging for them. The school take pride in celebrating all the individual successes of pupils on a daily basis. This can range from being able to put pen to paper, trying a new food or staying within the classroom for a set amount of time.



“There is constant dialogue between our care and education teams who share the small success which happens in both our care cottages and classrooms on a daily basis. This dialogue often takes place with the children and young people present. If they are unable to share this dialogue with them we have a section on our school database which is headed ‘Reward and Recognition’ where all staff can make entries and share these comments with them at an appropriate time. We see the impact these small but important conversations. I like to call them our ‘High Heel’ moments as you physically see a change in the children and young people’s body language, akin to them walking higher.”

Mandy Sheil, Head of Education



Thank you



Thank you to everyone who took the time to apply this year. The evidence from all the schools that took the time to apply, highlights how we can celebrate the success of **all** pupils.

As one of the Inclusion Ambassadors highlighted: *“We need to create positive stories about pupils with additional support needs rather than focus on the negatives.”*

The Success Looks Different Awards are now a part of that story.

Want to find out more?



We hope to run the Success Looks Different Awards again in 2023-24. Until more details are announced, there are a number of Inclusion Ambassador resources that can support your practice:

- Attend our next Inclusion Ambassadors webinar on March 23rd 2023. You can sign up on Eventbrite [here](#).
- Access our other Inclusion Ambassadors resources via the [Children in Scotland website](#)
- Access the [Reach website](#) to find out directly from children and young people what they think about school and additional support for learning
- Follow Reach on twitter to find out the latest about the Inclusion Ambassadors: [@Reach_Scot](#)
- Get in touch with the team to find out more:



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