Case study from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation ‘Learning Away’ programme: transition, sport and performing arts residentials at the Calderglen cluster

Brief description of the Learning Away (LA) programme being evaluated

The nine partner schools share a common vision: to build on the principles of a Curriculum for Excellence. What was mean by this is a curriculum which is designed to make young people creative, resourceful, flexible, confident and responsible to succeed. The LA programme has been developed in the context of the local authority plans for hosting the International Children’s Games in 2011 and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow 2014.

Four different kinds of residentials were planned for the year: a sport residential, a performing arts residential, a leadership residential (all three taking place as parallel activities at the same venue) and a transition residential. The residentials were designed to focus on the skills, abilities and talents of the students by offering them opportunities to participate in activities while focusing on leadership skills for the older students. Students may have an interest in these areas but may not have previously been able to experience any of them in depth. Thus for many, the residentials will open up new opportunities and new areas of learning.

The aims of the Learning Away programme

The transition residential aimed to:
- develop teamwork skills;
- improve pupils’ health and wellbeing;
- promote problem-solving and analysis, creativity and enterprise; and
- enable relationship building between pupils and between staff and pupils.

The sport residential aimed to:
- develop a culture of participation in sport and physical activity;
- improve the health and wellbeing of students;
- improve students’ level of performance within identified sports; and
- develop leadership opportunities for students.

The performing arts residential aimed to:
- enhance performance, progression and take-up; and
- address the wellbeing, arts and enterprise element of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Scale and scope

The following residentials took place this year:
- S1 Transition residential which took place over three days and two nights (October 2010) involving 167 pupils from S1, 5 pupils from S6, 6 pupils from S3 and 18 staff. Five of the pupils were fully funded by Calderglen School Fund;
- S3/4 Sports residential (June 2011) involving 48 pupils from S3/4, 13 staff and 4 outside coaches;
- S3 Drama/music residential (June 2011) involving 10 pupils and 4 staff; and
- S6 Leadership residential (June 2011) involving 4 pupils and 2 staff.

Altogether, 240 pupils and 37 staff were involved in the residentials.

**Background and context**

In 2007, there were two separate high schools which merged to form Calderglen High. Calderglen High is on the same site as Sanderson High School, which caters for students with Additional Support Needs from S1-S6. All seven primary schools in the cluster are within a one to two mile radius. The schools draw from a mixed socio-economic community. East Kilbride has suffered from many job losses recently. When tracking leavers’ destinations, it became clear that fewer students are going to university and fewer apprenticeships are available for students to apply for than in the past. All the schools in the cluster have between 8% and 20% of free school meals (FSM) except for Sanderson High, which has 100% of FSM.

Calderglen High School is one of the lucky schools to be taking part in the Microsoft Innovative Schools Program. There are only 30 Pathfinder Schools and 12 mentor schools that take part in the world. Calderglen High demonstrates a strong collective vision for how they would like to transform their learning environment and are enthusiastic about collaborating with other educators from around the world to make the curriculum innovative. The residentials have been designed to support the curriculum innovation and thus link directly to this program also.

The Community Sport Hub initiative (which was launched nationally at Calderglen High) offers local sports clubs access to their facilities, which include pitches, a games hall and three gym halls. It is one of eight hubs to be developed across Scotland as part of the 2014 Commonwealth Games Legacy Plan. This hub will link to existing networks including Active Schools and Regional Sporting Partnerships.

**Processes**

**Transition residential**

The transition residential aimed to support pupils during the transition from primary to secondary school. It took place early in the academic year (October) to help pupils to build relationships between each other and staff, and develop a number of key skills that will help them through their school career, including the beginning of the Curriculum for Excellence, The Scottish National Curriculum. It was timed to coincide with a work experience week to enable more staff to be available.

The residential was staffed by 12 teaching staff, a senior technician, a chaplaincy team member, a schools worker and three student PE teachers. The staff volunteered to take part in the residential following a meeting regarding Learning Away, held at the first in-service day in August. The pupils’ parents were given a short PowerPoint presentation on the evening of parents’ night before their
children started at the secondary school) which included photos from the previous year and information regarding the place of Learning Away within the Curriculum for Excellence. Parents could sign up on the night. Pupils were also given a letter to take home explaining the LA experience and had the opportunity to sign up to the residential during the first two weeks of the autumn term.

The 167 pupils were split into two groups, with half the group attending Monday to Wednesday and the remaining half attending Wednesday to Friday. Pupils worked in groups matched where possible with their tutor class to enable the pupils to build relationships with classmates who they may not be familiar with from primary school. Teaching staff were allocated working groups where they had a teaching link with the pupils where possible. The senior pupils took on a buddying role. Group tasks included erecting a tent. Staff observed each group’s ability to work together. Pupils who remained in school were given an alternative timetable. They also experienced a number of leadership/teambuilding challenges over the three days delivered by school staff and the chaplaincy team.

**Sports residential**

This took place at the Inverclyde National Sports Centre and built on the previous year’s successful sport residential. The sporting activities covered were basketball, badminton, hockey and volleyball – the basis of the Standard Grade and Higher Certificated Physical Education courses. Outside coaches were used to deliver these activities, enabling staff to observe the students. Pupils were issued with letters during Standard Grade PE classes and the residential was promoted during the year assembly. The slow start to this process resulted in numbers being low, so the residential was opened up to pupils in other classes (who had been part of the residential in the first year).

**Music and drama residential**

Our aim was to involve pupils in producing and creating music, drama and dance for the Calderglen Games, with pupils working together to choreograph, compose and create performances that could be used as part of the school’s learning theme. Due to initial apathy and low take up originally, the pupils in the Intermediate Band were targeted for this weekend residential. The focus of the music element was individual performance. The two days allowed the pupils to gain rehearsal time on their instrument and input from one lead music teacher over the weekend supported by visiting music staff on one of the days. The drama staff aimed to maintain some of the momentum from last year when a very successful camp had been organised for senior pupils.

**Leadership residential**

S5 pupils were asked by their year group head to apply for this residential. It was explained to them that it would enable them to develop skills that would them in their application for university and employment in the long term, and for applying for prefect and school captain positions within the school the following year. The students were involved in the planning process before the residential. During the residential the group was taken through various leadership/communication/lateral thinking tasks.

**Findings/outcomes**

- Having a mix of staff with a range of backgrounds at the transition residential had the benefit of providing the pupils with access to other staff they saw around the school. Including student
teachers enabled them to see how the Learning Away programme was working and give them experience of what can be achieved which they can use in their future careers.

- Promoting the transition Learning Away experience directly to parents appeared to boost numbers.
- The leadership camp achieved some momentum in driving working groups forward (e.g. charities) and enhanced the standing of the Sixth year in the school community.
- A sport leadership group has now been established to enable pupils to develop sport and physical activity in Calderglen High and Mount View High School (our partner school in South Africa) Two pupils were selected to attend the international Children’s Games Conference held in August 2011. We also supported two pupils and a teacher from Mount View High School in attending the event.
- There has been a significant school focus on changing the curricular experience for our pupils. This includes focusing on a more active approach to learning, developing skills for the 21st Century and improving how we connect subjects together through exploring themes. An integral part of the development has been how we incorporate learning away.
- Following the S1 Learning Away residential, we have set out to work on developing our pupils’ team working skills. A pilot took place involving a number of classes, who were taken off timetable to work on various team challenges and activities. All subject areas are also adapting their courses to include how they develop teamwork skills in the classroom. Our Learning Away programme for S1 is helping us to systematically develop the way in which pupils work together.

**Evaluation methods**

- Flip cameras were used to record pupils’ views, thoughts and experiences
- Learning logs completed by the pupils
- Staff completed a short statement regarding pupils in their groups
- Staff took part in an informal debriefing discussion after the residential

This case study report was carried out by the Calderglen cluster, as part of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation ‘Learning Away’ programme.