

Learning for Sustainable Futures: Project Summary

Who was involved?

P5-7 learners who are dual- or multi-lingual, Mrs Kirkmali (Principal Teacher leading on Equalities) and enrolments and families joining the school community.



The Learning Context

Previously, some Gracemount PS engaged with the Humari Pehchan storytelling group to work intergenerationally to capture stories about people's lives, culture and heritage. These stories were professionally published and form part of our school library for pupils to read at their leisure.

A lot of the data we gathered suggested that racism was an area that needed work as a school. Many pupils and families commented on feeling isolated or even targeted due to their racial or cultural identity.

When focus groups of pupils were consulted, they felt that there wasn't often the chance to share aspects of their identity or who they truly were as they were trying to 'fit in'.

A pupil expressed that "it's great to all be wearing school uniform, because you all look the same however you aren't all the same". For example, people who are good at football can show their talents in PE, or someone who excels in art will often have their work displayed, but for pupils who speak an additional language, there wasn't the platform for this to be celebrated.

PRIMARY PHASE: Gracemount PS

Learner Outcome Focus: Reducing Inequalities

I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all.

HWB 2-10a

Curriculum for Excellence:
HWB 2-07a; HWB 2-08a; LIT 2-09a; RME 2-02a; SOC 2016a

Related policy & initiatives: UNCRC Article 2

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

HGIOS: Learner Voice

Language of the week

Annual learning community

Eid celebration

Young Interpreters

Gracemount PS established the Young Interpreter scheme for pupils in P5-7 who are dual- or multi-lingual.

Pupils are trained in a range of skills to become a Young Interpreter, supporting pupils and families by providing translation services. Our pupils have helped to support new families to the school who don't have English as their first language.

This project provided a pivotal moment within our school community where individuals and their cultural identity was celebrated and shared with others. This empowered pupils to do more and engage a wider audience.

Evidence and Impacts

In school, the pupils involved in the project talked about feeling empowered and seen. Many had an increased feeling of belonging and engaged in their learning and school life in a deeper way.

Monolingual pupils talked positively about learning new languages and being taught by their peers.

Staff described having a more rounded understanding of pupils and the skills they have. Equality and diversity are now viewed through a more critical lens and our staff are actively working to challenge stereotypes and prejudice.

In the wider community, learners with additional languages and their families reported that they felt more respected and understood. They enjoyed the opportunity to share their life experiences with their peers and staff, and to have the value of their heritage and cultural identity being recognised through the scheme.

Members of a family who recently enrolled their Primary 3 pupil at the school shared their appreciation when a P7 Arabic speaker provided

support to their daughter in the first few days of starting. Her father shared the comfort his daughter took from hearing her home language being spoken in a new environment.

Next steps

In the next school session, our Young Interpreters group plans to work with the school nursery to deliver international storytelling sessions, in which they will read stories in their native languages to the children and their parents.

They have also expressed a desire to establish a lunchtime Language Club, in which they will offer language classes to pupils across the school.

Our Equalities priorities are written into the Gracemount PS Improvement Plan, with a staff working party ensuring progress in this area.

Our immediate next steps are the development of a whole school Equalities Policy.

Practitioner Reflections

The project highlighted the importance of using authentic pupil voice to drive forward improvements, as well as the inequalities that exist within our learning community and how we as practitioners play a key role in ensuring we are constantly working towards an anti-racist school.

The nature of our project doesn't equate to a tangible outcome, which has made it trickier to evaluate, but the real impact can be felt by the atmosphere and the nuances within relationships between our learners, staff and parents.

There are significant barriers around reducing inequalities – in particular societal views and influence from social media exposure. Our young people are constantly bombarded with negative stereotypes and ideologies which need to be challenged.

The Young Interpreter scheme provides pupils with an opportunity to break down those barriers, providing support for new families within the area and empowering our young people to be the ones to make a difference.

-Pamela Kirkmali