



## CfE Impact Project – Executive Summary

*“DofE does not just contribute to CfE, the DofE and this project is CfE in action. CfE can be developed using DofE programmes as a tool for recognising achievement.” DofE Leader - Dundee*

### Policy agenda and background – recognising achievements

A Curriculum for Excellence calls for young people’s vocational learning and achievements beyond the National Qualifications framework to be acknowledged valued and accredited to ensure that they can take a comprehensive record of their learning and achievements on to the next stage of their lives. The process of recognising achievements should continue cumulatively until a young person leaves school with achievements captured in a way that is valued by young people, their parents, employers, colleges and universities. The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (the DofE) recognises young people’s wider achievement through three progressive levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold – which demand an increasing degree of commitment and responsibility. The curriculum is now defined as ‘the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education, wherever they are being educated.’

Recognising the contribution the DofE could make towards Curriculum for Excellence, DofE Scotland developed a pilot project in partnership with three local authorities to use DofE programmes as a framework to implement Curriculum for Excellence, provide young people with more opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work and recognise young people’s learning and achievements.

### The project

The primary aim of the pilot project has been to increase the capacity of schools to offer and deliver DofE programmes to more young people. In order to achieve this we aimed to bring the co-ordination of the DofE into schools hours for DofE Leaders. We also took account of the broader definition for the curriculum and incorporate elements of participants’ DofE programmes within a more flexible school timetable.

*“People are at their most confident when they have experience and skills and know they can cope with real life challenges. This is exactly what the DofE is designed to offer young people.” (Dr Carol Craig)*

## Delivery models

Six schools in three local authorities across Scotland have been involved in the pilot project since September 2007 including:

- Gairloch High School, Ardnamurchan High School and Dornoch Academy in Highland,
- Preston Lodge High School in East Lothian, and
- Queen Margaret Academy and Carrick Academy in South Ayrshire.

In each of these schools a different model has been developed. Staff time has been redistributed, new and innovative support structures have been developed and flexible timetabling options introduced. Each school found a way to deliver DofE programmes utilising those who were based placed facilitate the administration, support and training of the participant's DofE programme. In addition several are now taking a 'whole school approach' to delivery. The school's DofE Co-ordinators have included classroom assistants, youth workers, subject teachers and deputy head teachers. Capacity for delivering DofE programmes is not the only thing that has increased. Through the project schools have built strong partnerships with other service providers (statutory and third sector), local business and parents.

## Key findings and statistics

During January and February 2009, one to one interviews were carried out with S4 pupils who enrolled during the 2007/2008 school session in each school. Focus groups were also conducted with groups of 8-10 S4 pupils in Preston Lodge High School, Gairloch High School and Queen Margaret Academy.

## Impact on young people

Participants spoke of **challenge** and **enjoyment** when describing their DofE experiences. Many enjoyed the challenge and independence offered by the Expedition section or the opportunity to try something totally new; beekeeping or Mountain Rescue Service training. Others enjoyed taking their learning outdoors and the immediate and practical application of the expedition training and theory: *"You take what you've learned in the lessons and get the chance to apply it which isn't something you can say about school in general."* The majority of participants enjoyed the Expedition section most in retrospect but also said

### Snapshot from Dornoch

S3 pupils enrolled in Bronze DofE programmes 2007/2008 – (100%) – **full completion rate of 87%**

Participants who have completed sections of their Bronze:

- **Volunteering** – (94%)
- **Physical** – (100%)
- **Skills** – (100%)
- **Expedition** – (87%)

S3 pupils enrolled for their Bronze DofE 2008/2009 – 54 (100%)

*"It just makes you think, if I did more then I could actually be really good at something."*

DofE participant

that aspects of the expedition were very challenging. Other challenges which they described included having the motivation to *'get out of the house'* and participate in activities, committing to continuing with activities, managing their own time and meeting deadlines.

Dr Carol Craig defines **confidence** as self-efficacy plus optimism (Creating Confidence, 2007). Young people develop feelings to competence by being able to overcome challenges. All four sections of the participants' programmes have contributed to an increase in confidence. This included presenting to large groups (expedition project), and being given the responsibility to organise games (volunteering). Being relied upon and taking on the role of a carer had also helped young people to cope with personal issues such as bullying. The young people explained that forming expedition teams and cooperating with people they didn't normally work or socialise with at school is now helping them to work in groups in the classroom. This has also led to join new teams and socialising with new and different people. *"I feel like I've developed in being more confident to talk to people and it's helping with getting work done in school."* It has also allowed them to communicate their views to others and better understand other people's feelings.

Many of the participants' attitudes towards school had changed considerably since starting their Bronze DofE programmes. They had realised that it is important to develop a broad range of skills in preparation for **work and life after school** as well as gaining formal qualifications. *"School's not always about achieving grades. You've got to do other things as well."* They had become more aware of the wide variety of activities and opportunities available to them through their schools. *"It's made me think that the school gives us a lot more opportunities than we actually realise."* Several admitted that school is now more important to them than it was before. Doing their DofE had encouraged young people to think ahead to positive destinations. The participants also commented on the active learning delivery of DofE programmes, *"Not just sitting listening to people telling us about things. We could get involved."*

One of the desired outcomes of the project was to realise the potential of the DofE to enrich young people's learning. In order to achieve this, the DofE was promoted, particularly the Expedition section, as a vehicle for interdisciplinary or **cross-curricular** work. DofE Co-ordinators encouraged participants to apply what they learned through their DofE programme activities to their formal curriculum and vice versa. Participants have been able to apply their learning in different situations and articulate this. Pupils' expedition training, planned activities during expeditions and expedition reporting are related to formal curriculum subjects including Biology and Geography. *"The purpose of the expedition was to look at wildlife and look at how humans are constraining it so it helped that we knew about ecosystems from biology."* *"Actually going out on*

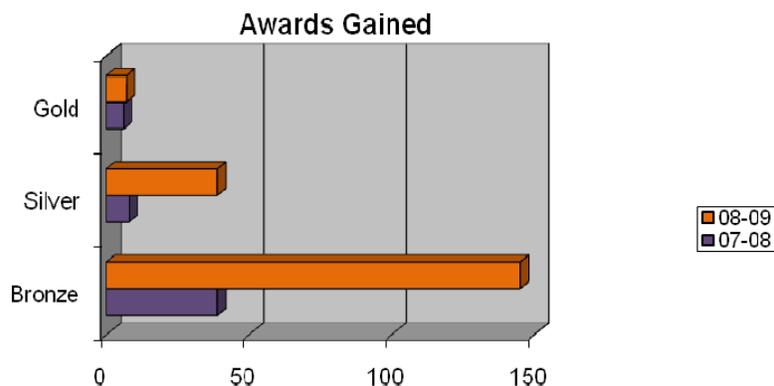
*"It just makes you think, if I did more then I could actually be really good at something."*

DofE participant

*expeditions and seeing the hills and how they've formed, that's helped a lot in geography."*

## Awards achieved

There are some dramatic figures from South Ayrshire. In one year they have increased new participants over the three levels by 51% between 2007/8 and 2008/9. More impressively the Bronze and Silver Awards achieved increased by 330% and their completion rate has increased by 20%.



## Key messages

The benefits of the DofE to young people are clear and well documented. This project has highlighted that young people are now articulating how and why their learning has benefited them and practical benefit to their futures in relation to personal development and employment. However, all partners have gained vast experience and knowledge from their involvement.

## CfE in action

Feedback from staff involved in the project confirms that the DofE is the perfect framework to implement CfE and that the ethos that the DofE brings to a community can be the catalyst for developing more flexible structures, cross curricular learning and building key partnerships. The DofE also provides clear and positive opportunities to enable young people to develop the four capacities and acquire practical skills through their experiences. It enables schools and local authorities to focus on capturing the totality of young people's learning. They use the structure and strengths of the DofE to enrich the Curriculum for Excellence while safeguarding the voluntary ethos.

## Strong leadership

This is an absolute necessity if the project is going to be successful and deliver positive outcomes and experiences for young people. Headteachers and senior management need to support and allocate time for teachers and other staff

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within the timetable to support the young people and the administration of DofE programmes. It has worked most effectively where schools have seen it has not just a bolt on but a mainstay of the school, its ethos and learning. In these cases staff are give adequate time and resources have been allocated.

## Building Links and Capacity

The introduction of this project has given schools the opportunity to re-engage with other statutory partners (CLD, leisure services), local businesses and parents. These links and partnerships have been invaluable in providing opportunities for young people and supporting the delivery of DofE programmes. Also capacity for delivery and knowledge has increased in all of the partners. These types of partnerships developed through the DofE have also been highlighted as good practice in a recent HMIe report of Dornoch. [www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=8519&type=3](http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=8519&type=3)

## Recognising achievement

The new HMIe inspection model and the agenda of looking at the totality of a young person learning, not just attainment, again highlights the benefit using the DofE as framework to create and capture opportunities and learning for young people. It ensures that all young people experience success and are recognised for it whether that be something undertaken with a partner organisation or something delivered within the school.

*“I learned that you can push yourself. I didn’t think that I’d be able to do it but after I completed it I thought I could complete anything.”*



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DofE participant