

## **Richard Lander School; an introduction**

Richard Lander School is located on the outskirts of the city of Truro. We moved into new buildings in September 2006. The catchment includes part of the urban area of Truro but significantly also, rural communities to the north west and north east of the city and extending to the north Cornwall coast. The population of the city Truro is growing as are those of a number of our surrounding villages. This demand is being met largely by developments of mainly private sector housing. It is an area of approximately one hundred square miles in total.

The school's population reflects a broad socio-economic mix but there are some discernible pockets of deprivation within our communities.

The school is a community comprehensive school. Our aim is to enable all pupils to learn, to achieve and for them to become responsible and caring citizens who can contribute to the further development of a just global society. The ethos is one which values the purposes and practices of such endeavours. To this end, a recognition and commitment to the importance of international partnerships and the global dimension characterises our school. Four Learning Communities are now well established within the school and reflect the values of global responsibility and interdependence both conceptually and practically.

The school has been a Specialist Technology College since 1998 resulting in curricular enrichment, improved provision. Our specialist status is firmly embedded in our practice which has seen an increased emphasis on target setting and an increased focus on developing teaching and learning in the specialist subjects, in particular through the use of ICT, which now permeates the whole school.

The school operates a student support base to facilitate our commitment to inclusion. The curricular provision here is based on strong partnerships with a range of outside agencies and employers.

As a community school we remain committed to working with and for all members of our community. We are eagerly embracing an even broader remit as we develop our extended school provision and seek to work even more closely with a wide range of agencies/providers etc. to offer enhanced support to students, their families and other members of the community with regard to their personal and social well being, health, educational, sport and leisure requirements in order to meet their needs.

We have an Area Resource Base as part of our provision. This is a facility for students who have a wide range of complex needs that cannot be met in mainstream education.

As part of our increased flexibility provision we offer extended work experience and college opportunities to pupils in KS4 as well as a number of applied GCSEs linking to local employers through Specialist Schools' initiatives and Young Enterprise activities.

We are an Investor in Education Business Partnerships and also an Investor in People.

We are a Leading Edge school and work collaboratively with two other local secondary schools on curricular and professional development initiatives. We are a founder member of the Cornwall SCITT and remain committed to initial teacher training. .

Our commitment to networked learning communities is demonstrated by our membership of the Truro Roseland Learning Community which is a partnership of the three local secondary schools, their partner primary schools and the local Tertiary college.

These various partnerships serve as a forum for educational dialogue and facilitate continuing improvement in our schools. Our work as a former Enterprise Pathfinder School gained national commendation and our partnership with employers, particularly in this context remains strong.

The school is in receipt of a number of awards which include Health Schools, Sportsmark and Artsmark Gold and the International Schools Award.

The following six priorities and their constituent strands embody our school's development and improvement agenda from 2008-2010.

- 1) Teaching and Learning Curriculum Reform
- 2) The school as a Learning Community/ECM
- 3) Monitoring and Evaluation
- 4) Curriculum development
- 5) Community/Extended school
- 6) Specialist school priorities

These we believe, reflect the key development aspects of our work as a community of learners and also those areas that are most appropriate to address in our pursuit of excellence. They provide a structure for us in our commitment to be a school where for everyone, teaching and learning makes a difference.

The principles and practices of our work as a Technology College and Leading Edge school and one with an increasing extended/community provision.

In continuing to consider national initiatives, and, not least, to improve further our working practices, we are not complacent as we strive for excellence. There have been some significant achievements during the past year but the challenges to ensure that they are effective, make a significant and lasting impact on the raising of student achievement i.e. that they are, beneficial and sustainable. At the same time, our current school development priorities offer us again the exciting the opportunity to take this school forward and provide for our young people an even better school in the future.

Participation in extra curricular activities is very high. For example the Creative Arts curriculum area regularly provides dance, drama, music and arts events both in school and in the community.

Our students make good contributions to the local community in a variety of ways. Our school values and ethos serve to support these activities as does our curriculum. In particular the personal development programme has a major citizenship component within it and students are given many opportunities to participate in activities which support their growing understanding of responsibilities and rights of being a citizen/contributing member of society.

Active involvement of students with the Global Dimension and their commitment to it is evidenced by their membership of various clubs to promote this. Eg. Amnesty International Youth, U.N. Youth and Peace Child.

Linked to the above, our international dimension is a strength of the school. A flourishing partnership exists between Richard Lander and the Mechanicsburg Area School District in Pennsylvania, USA. Our aim is to extend further our international partnerships.

Our annual fire safety drama tour brings a valuable health and safety message to the community and is acclaimed by the Fire Service and local primary schools.

In addition, our students are regular recipients of the Truro Lions Club Community Service Award and also the Princess Diana Memorial Award.

There is a thriving Environment Club which is involved in practical activities on our school site and in the wider community. Outcomes of this work are evident within and beyond school.

Students were involved in our Travel Plan for our school. This is a “green” plan which is fully operative and is in fact, the basis of our travel procedures. As such, our students have made a major contribution to the future betterment of school and community.

There is a strong tradition in the school of charitable fund-raising concerned with local, national and global situations. Our students are known for showing high levels of care and compassion and have provided both monetary and moral support to many individuals and causes over the years.

There is widespread recognition in our school as to the crucial importance of helping students to achieve economic well being. Work related learning and careers education forms part of our curriculum provision for years 7 to 11, and a co-ordinator is responsible for this work. There is two week's work experience for all students in Year 10 and extended work experience for some. In addition, Applied GCSE courses (including Business Studies) assist students in developing their understanding of the workplace and the skills and qualities that will enable them to achieve future economic well being.

The essence of our school is perhaps summed up by the following: "If we see ourselves truly as educators then we must build/contribute to, in some small way, a better world future".

It starts with our community – a learning community which welcomes, inclusively, all young people on a journey which equips them with knowledge, skills, understanding, encourages their creativity and enriches them as unique human beings and encourages them to be caring, responsible members of this school community; our society and global society.

Our learning communities offer a valuable framework to achieve the purposes I have referred to. It needs us to work together; with a belief that every child does matter and alongside that, so does our world. For it is within that world we live and work and it is into that they, our students/young people, will enter as adults.

I invite you join us on our educational journey and hope that you wish to embrace this challenge with us.

Steve Mulcahy  
Headteacher  
(2009)