

Supporting Quotes: The Difference Growing2gether Makes



Teachers



"Many students come from dysfunctional homes. Their self-esteem and self-confidence are extremely low. They don't believe in themselves or aspire for more."

"Growing2gether has been a fantastic addition to the offering we can give to our pupils. It is quite unique in the way that it develops skills, encourages participation and grows self-respect and responsibility in our

young people. The opportunity for many of our pupils to develop a close relationship with a younger child is really quite an eye-opener. They learn what it is to be respected and, from that, follows the importance of resilience and reliability. The benefits for our pupils are huge – not just in terms of the importance placed on their work in the classroom but in the development of essential skills, including attendance and punctuality, that they will need for their future life and work whatever path they end up taking." John Rutter, Head Teacher, Inverness High School

"Growing2gether provides less engaged pupils with a fantastic opportunity to gain resilience, confidence, a greater motivation in their futures and enjoyment in service to their community. They also increase their employability by working towards an SCQF Level 4 qualification." Hannah Beagrie, Guidance, Lochside Academy, Aberdeen:

"Growing2gether has been an integral part of our strategic thinking to address the attainment gap through targeting pupils in our S3 cohort. We have worked very closely with the team at Growing2gether to ensure our pupils have a high-quality experience. We have achieved this through collaboration with Kingussie Primary School, which has allowed our S3 pupils to support Nursery and P1 classes. As a result, we have seen notable positive changes in our S3 pupils, which include the following: - improved attendance; more confident individuals; higher attainment; improved relationships with Kingussie High School staff; a positive outlook & improved self-worth." Gavin Murphy, Deputy Head, Kingussie High School

"Growing2gether provides opportunities for young people, particularly those who have struggled with self-confidence that has led to under-achievement and low attendance, to develop key skills for learning, life and work. It is impressive how these young people's sense of responsibility and duty have been enhanced. Recognising that they have achieved a qualification spurs them on to achieving more." Mark Evans, Head Teacher, Golspie High School.

"We have been very pleased with the results of the programme in school. Pupils who may have otherwise not engaged have really connected with the programme and talk with knowledge and enthusiasm about their involvement. I have no doubt that the programme is having a positive impact on other areas of their lives." Head Teacher, Dingwall Academy

"The programme is very successful at our school, we see positive changes in the young people who are participating, especially with the school 'non-attenders' and we notice a warm positive dynamic, with the young people looking out for one another". Head Teacher, Charleston Academy.

"A has been moving around the school with a spring in her step! She is really proud of her achievements through Growing2gether and is keen to continue via Growing2gether in the Community. A wee success story in my opinion." Guidance staff, Charleston

"The Growing2gether programme helped me to develop my active listening skills and allowed me to really 'be' with the young person in that moment. Valuing and listening to the young person allows them to grow and flourish and it is a privilege to see their confidence grow week by week."
Highland Council facilitator (trained by charity)

"Coming from a primary teaching background, I found the facilitator training incredibly valuable in helping me adjust my practice towards supporting older children in an environment I was familiar with. The Growing2gether team who have delivered the course have been incredibly resourceful and eager to answer any questions, especially regarding how the theory gets put into practice. In particular the session on coaching has been highly useful in delivering sessions with Growing2gether. The young people have benefited from coaching style questioning as they have been able to feel a powerful sense of agency as they find answers to their questions themselves! I'm now half way through co-delivering a successful programme and couldn't have done nearly as much without the facilitator training." School facilitator (trained by charity)

"It was a fantastic opportunity not only to develop skills/knowledge, but to network across Aberdeen with others working with traumatised young people."

Primary/Nursery staff

"The Growing2gether programme with Lochside Academy has been a very positive experience. The difference in young people's confidence is massive. On day one, the young people were reluctant to enter the nursery and, after only a few weeks, they were engaging with the children and we are seeing relationships blossom. We would be delighted to be involved in this project again in future." Amy Golding, Senior Early Years Practitioner, Loirston ELC, Aberdeen

"The young people are more engaged and show more initiative than some of the students we get on placement."

"I have learnt so much. These are not teenagers I would normally have chosen to engage with, and they have been absolutely fantastic."

"A positive development regarding speech in our quieter children who were not so keen to speak. Our children grew in confidence with the young people."



"Most of the young people threw themselves into the nursery environment and showed great interaction with the children."

"We can see that the children benefit from this 1-on-1 time. The young people are really staying focused with the children and support them well. They show initiative and also really importantly understand that the children need to do things for themselves." Cauldeen Primary School

Young People

Video link: Young people's voices: Fortrose Academy, 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV6NG7PLrh8>

"I don't like talking about it, but my mum is an alcoholic ... my dad too. I love them, but they could not look after me properly. A child needs to be given food and have a normal life. I live with a foster carer now."

"I finally feel like I am ok as a person, I always thought everyone else was better than me, but being in this group has helped me to try different things." Susan, who witnessed violence towards a sibling and lived in a woman's refuge when her mother fled an abusive relationship
"Being in Growing2gether has helped me because when I am in a difficult situation I can think back to this and find a way to solve it."

"Growing2gether was an inspirational experience. It gave me a lot of confidence and I can now speak to people better. It was nice to see my child grow - she really brought me on. For example, when I was reading a story, I thought that everyone was judging me, but actually they were just interested in what I had to say. Feedback about what I was doing and the thought of empathy really helped me. I realised it was not about myself, but about other people as well."

"Growing2gether gave me confidence and made me know for sure that I want to work in a nursery when I am older. I know I will have to work hard at school now if I want to get there. I am so thankful that I chose to do this course and that there was an opportunity like this. I know the others felt the same way. We were treated with respect and all the staff were friendly. Wish I could do it again."



"In the group, we have been listening to each other. The facilitators do not judge us ... they listen too. I didn't think I was going to like it as much as I do. We don't want it to end."

"There were good and bad times and I learnt a lot from the kids and I like to think they learnt a lot from me too. If I could go back and do it all over again, I would."

"I am tired, definitely, but a good kind of tired where I am happy and satisfied with what I've achieved. These are memories I will never forget."

"Everyone on Growing2gether has become my second family to me, they have taught me a lot about myself. I have loved every second of it."

"I love coming... it's my best day in the whole week 'cos I know that what I am doing is positive and the child I am working with runs up to me smiling when I arrive. I feel I am making a difference."

"I enjoy both the time with the children and the group time. I have learned I have to listen carefully to what children say. You can't pretend."

"I need to stay in school to get the job I want."

Parents

"It has made me feel proud seeing her confidence grow."

"My son really struggled to engage with the school programme. The Growing2gether group was different however and helped him to get organised and re-engage with his school work."

"The programme has given her an idea of future work ideas."

"I am very proud of him and what he has done. It has helped him make the first step in his future."

"J has more patience for his younger brothers and helps me with the responsibilities when I need it."

Highland Council

"Growing2gether works through various aspects of child development, building resilience and responsibility. Working with younger children enables the older pupils to consider their own vulnerabilities and behaviours and to be supported through changes by trained facilitators.

The programme has been shown to reduce anti-social behaviours, improve positive relationships, and reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies and to improve post-school destinations for young people. I have been really impressed by the level of training they provide to staff and the way they support the pupils. It has been well received by staff and students alike and it is a programme we are supporting to roll out wider across Highland.

Growing2gether is the most professional, ethical and open 3rd sector organisation I have ever worked with. Your openness to scrutiny and honest evaluation is second to none and, as a result, you make a significant impact on children and young people." Bernadette Cairns, Principal Educational Psychologist at Highland Council.



Discovering talents, Lara, 17.

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