

Press release

26 January 2012

Liverpool's award winning pupils grill Government minister on how overseas aid is making countries safer

Pupils of Cardinal Heenan Catholic Sports College were today presented with the prestigious British Council International School Award by Minister for International Development, Alan Duncan.

The British Council's International School Award is the highest of three levels of recognition given to teachers and schools performing highly in delivering education on international issues.

Known for its expertise in sports training with Liverpool Football Club Captain Steven Gerrard a past pupil, Cardinal Heenan has fast been carving out a reputation as UK trail blazer in getting a global dimension into learning.

With links to schools around the world including Sierra Leone, pupils made the most of the opportunity to grill the Government Minister on how British aid is helping to create safer countries.

In 2002, British troops played a vital role in bringing peace to Sierra Leone after a decade long bloody civil war which claimed the lives of 50,000 people, and left the country financially crippled.

Thanks to support from British aid, the country will this year hold democratic elections for the second time since the war ended.

And British aid is now reaching the country's poorest with help to get over half a million more children into school and the landmark breakthrough of free healthcare for pregnant women.

Alan Duncan said:

"These young people are tremendously inspiring. They have a real grasp of the world around them. They understand that investing British aid on making fragile and conflict-affected countries safer is a smart move, delivering real results for the very poorest and protecting Britain from external threats. Without security, there is no development."

In September, the Department for International Development (DFID) announced that more British aid would be focused on fragile and conflict countries to boost the fight against extreme poverty and strengthen DFID's contribution to national security.

Notes to editors

1. The British Council gave Cardinal Heenan the International School Award in 2011. This award recognises excellence in schools who successfully 'instil a global dimension into the learning experience of children and young people'. There are three levels of awards foundation level, intermediate and the International School Award - highest level.
2. Cardinal Heenan is an all boys specialist sports college. The school's international work started in 2008 with an International Inspiration link to a school in Azerbaijan (now completed). The success of this led them to explore other opportunities and they now have links to schools in China, Sierra Leone, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Greece and Turkey.
3. International Inspiration delivers on the UK pledge in the Olympic bid to 'inspire the youth of the world to choose sport'. There are over 200 schools in the UK which are linked to partner schools in International Inspiration countries.
4. The Department for International Development is the part of the UK government that manages Britain's aid to help poor countries around the world. More information on how British aid is changing lives is available at www.dfid.gov.uk/changinglives
5. When International Development Secretary, Andrew Mitchell, took office he introduced a new focus on value for money which has resulted in a root and branch shift to results based aid. As a result new plans for UK aid that will help 50 million people work their way out of poverty were announced by the UK government in March.
6. On 3rd June 2011 Andrew Mitchell launched the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee which commits the government to publishing information on UK aid on the DFID website so that taxpayers can see where aid is going – and hold the government to account if it doesn't get there.

DFID - the Department for International Development

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