

Case Study 01

armathwaite

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

Summary

Armathwaite, Cumbria, is a small rural school of 45 pupils, aged 4 - 8. It has developed a successful 'independent learning' curriculum co-designed by the school and local community. Together they have agreed the essential skills for life-long learning. Roles and skills have been developed to provide a responsive curriculum that extends beyond the school day. Through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), community expertise is used to complement formal learning provision.

"All our little brains light up and we make one big, humongous brain together."

Laura, 8

"You have taught Jim how to listen to others, from adults to the youngest members of school"

Cal, Parent

Project Highlights

- Staff research into personality/gender preferences for learning in collaboration with Prof. Sue Harrison (QCA) and Newcastle University
- Focus on development of ICT tool bank/strategies to support independent learning
- Community use of VLE. Instruction booklet produced by Y2/3 as refresher course for parents in use of VLE

Learning / Services

- VLE that incorporates the local community
- Community training in how to participate in VLE
- Wide range of parenting support offered by school
- Extensive programme of after-school learning and clubs
- Opportunities for family and adult learning
- Wide range of community activities

Impact

- Social capital generated by relationships of trust and development of listening and participative culture
- Genuine community partnership for learning, where participants share a vocabulary of learning
- Increased involvement of parents in isolated rural circumstances
- School empowers pupils to work creatively as a team and think independently
- Pupils engage in and demonstrate deep learning
- Pupils able to reflect, evaluate and identify their next steps of learning
- Culture of learning, inquiry and research throughout school and community that informs and transforms practice
- Pupils and staff able to solve problems think creatively and be resilient



Case Study 01

armathwaite

Personal Perspective

Quote from a letter received from a parent. Jim transferred to his next school last September:

“Jim has always relished child initiated independent learning and is very self motivated as a result. However, he tended to dominate and when working with others he prefers to lead and direct, often selecting younger children to work with who will fit in with his plans! After identifying this you were able to focus and develop Jim’s team working skills, making him aware of the importance of other people’s ideas and sharing tasks at all stages of the “plan, do, review” process.

Above all you taught him to listen to others from adults to the youngest members of the school. This has had many positive benefits, not least in developing different methods of learning, resulting in him leaving Armathwaite with a high level of achievement. Most important he is a much easier person to socialise with, as he can deal with and respond to ideas and criticism from his peers.”

Cal Pannone, October 2008



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Case Study 02

Greenfields

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

Summary

Greenfield School and Community Arts College in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham has developed a two-year programme designed to offer an alternative approach to education for young people at risk of failing in school. The ACTIVE programme has involved 18 Year 10 students in a wide range of challenging activities aimed at enhancing their sense of achievement and improving their school attendance. It uses Extended Services (ES) activities, making use of the school's links with community groups as an incentive to support learning in the classroom.

"I want to show people they were wrong about me, that I can be a success."

Rachel, 14

"I started at the bottom but, because I received praise and awards, I started to want to do well and so I worked really hard."

Jamie, 14

Personal Perspective - Student's Story

James is a pupil in Year 10 who has always had an interest in physical activities of all kinds. However, during the past few years James has been frequently excluded from school, seen leaving the school site on numerous occasions or decided not to attend at all. James found it difficult to concentrate on the formal curriculum for any period of time and he easily lost interest. This led to some disruptive behaviour which was unacceptable to staff and students which resulted in him being excluded from school.

A review of the curriculum for a group of vulnerable students and opportunities for students to express their own ideas on learning that would have meaning for them has led to the ACTIVE Programme. James is very keen to work with community experts who have skills in outdoor pursuits but he now understands that additional formal qualifications in core curriculum subjects are important to him if he is to progress further with his desire to become a qualified trainer.

The ACTIVE programme has helped to build James' self-esteem and confidence in his own abilities and he now has full attendance in school, no exclusions and has gained 4 accreditations in Outdoor Activities including his 'green card' enabling him to climb independently. James has now taken two vulnerable students in Year 7 climbing as a result of his qualification.



Case Study 02

Greenfields

Project Highlights

- The ACTIVE programme is a co-ordinated collaborative approach involving leaders from within school and the local community – utilising skills, expertise and enthusiasm
- Parents/carers involved from the onset fostering co-operative and positive partnerships. Parents/carers and the students provide written agreement prior to commencement of the programme – the school reports back to parents on behaviour, progress, punctuality, effort/commitment and working with others
- Authentic personalised learning programmes meet the needs of the students and prepare them for life-long learning

Learning / Services

- Participants work towards formal qualifications at school in the morning and undertake practical tasks with community partners in the afternoon. The school is seeking accreditation for students' work on the ACTIVE programme
- Sessions include sports activities, fishing, biking, first aid, dancing, gorge walking, knitting and working in an allotment. Some students have spent regular sessions helping at a nursery, a garage and a hairdressing salon
- The programme culminated in a three-week drama project with the Xpose theatre company, focussing on challenging issues including teenage pregnancy, binge drinking and domestic violence. The drama project culminated into a play performed for families and school staff

Impact

- Increased student confidence and motivation, supported by the school's praise and awards system: some students were thrilled to receive awards for the first time
- Student diaries provide convincing evidence that the programme was enjoyable giving them increased self-esteem and confidence
- Initial evaluation shows that attendance and participation are improving
- Improved behaviour has resulted in 23 exclusions this year, compared to 75 in the same period last year for this student cohort
- Renewed focus and building aspirations for participants – some now plan to sign up for further education/training after leaving school
- Development of student mentoring programme
- Higher levels of parental interest in students learning and positive contributions to evaluation of the first phase and suggestions for improvement for the second phase
- Significant evidence of the school and community using each other as a resource to support learning

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Case Study 03

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

halesowen partnership

Summary

The Halesowen Partnership of schools in Dudley sees the community very much as a resource on which they can draw to develop strong partnerships with parents and help raise aspirations and improve life opportunities for families and children. They are pioneering a new approach to engaging children and families, who find education difficult to access effectively.

Successfully piloted in three primary schools and one secondary school in 2007/2008, the approach involves appointing Community Learning Partners (CLPs), who are providing extended learning opportunities for whole families, focused on topics selected by and of particular interest to each family.

Lead by the Headteacher of Caslon Primary School and in conjunction with the Local Authority, the work has now been extended to cover most of the schools in the Halesowen Township, through the Extended Services Clusters.

Project Highlights

- Drawn from the local community, five CLPs have been appointed, one to each cluster of primary schools and one to the cluster of secondary schools – on flexible part-time contracts of 16 hours per week for 3 years. They started working with families in the spring term 2009
- Supervised by the Cluster Coordinators, the CLPs are engaging in a carefully planned induction programme, devised on the basis of the pilot experience in 2007/2008. This includes some of the TDA Parent Support Advisor materials and adapted versions of some tools from the TDA School Improvement Planning Framework
- As the CLP role is still evolving, the Cluster Coordinators are taking part in the same programme of induction, to ensure consistency and coherence and enable them to supervise the CLPs effectively, through weekly meetings
- The CLPs are also supported by fortnightly networking meetings run by the Learning Link Worker at Caslon Primary School, focused on sharing training needs, effective and emerging practices and issue resolution

Learning / Services

- All CLPs work with a link person in the school to prepare a learning plan for each pupil, ensuring that learning is linked effectively with the child's classroom experience. This arrangement is creating effective links between the work of the CLPs and the schools' pastoral systems
- The CLP role is proving complex, requiring considerable interpersonal skills to establish an appropriate rapport with the families and create the necessary high levels of trust
- To be effective the CLPs need to be seen by the families as 'neutral', maintaining a non-establishment position
- Although initially attached to clusters, it is envisaged that eventually CLPs will be deployed across the clusters facilitating the best possible match between pupil/family and CLP, regarding needs and skills



Case Study 03

halesowen partnership

Impact

- Higher levels of engagement of parents/carers with their children's education e.g. better understanding of the children's needs and ways in which their learning can be supported
- Improved levels of pupil attendance, behaviour in school and attitudes to learning
- Improved understanding in families about the purpose and value of education, raising aspirations and levels of commitment to attendance at school
- Better understanding by the school about some of the specific barriers to learning encountered by particular children and their families – facilitating more effective interventions
- Improvements in pupil attainment and achievement e.g. an improvement of 2.5 levels in one pupil's reading ability in less than two terms
- Better levels of engagement of families with the community and the opportunities offered by the school's outreach services e.g. "6 weeks later mum has gained confidence and speaks to other parents on playground and has joined the toddler group"
- Increased effectiveness of schools' pastoral teams/teams around the child e.g. one child was able to return to live with her own family – as opposed to being with grandparents
- Improved relationships within families

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"My family lived in a pub and found it difficult to find time to come into school...things turned out well with the child's attendance and attitude to school drastically improved."

Community Learning Partner

"It was a brilliant day and the children got so much out of it. We had a really fun session at school wrapping each other up as mummies."

Father

"I didn't think I had it in me. I'm so proud of what I've achieved."

Parent and adult learner

"Now I tell my grandchild even nannies go to school."

Grandparent, parent, and adult learner

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Case Study 04

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

E13 Learning Community

Summary

This project initially involved three schools, Lister Community School and two of its feeder primaries, Plaistow and Southern Road, which are located within 200 metres of each other in the London Borough of Newham. They are part of a soft federation of eight schools known as the E13 Learning Community.

To further develop their work on removing barriers to learning and creating effective partnerships with parents, these three schools decided to focus on developing ways of linking the delivery of ECM outcomes, provision of Extended Services and the work of the Children's Centre, to pupil attainment and achievement. They devised a diagnostic tool that facilitates the measuring and tracking of pupil well-being, which has been further developed by Plaistow Primary and Lister Community School.

Project Highlights

- The Plaistow Well-being Diagnostic ensures the voice of children and young people, across the full 5-16 age range, is fully expressed, heard and measured – both individually and as groups
- This flexible easy-to use tool enables pupils to quickly and confidentially record their thoughts and feeling about six core areas – learning; interactions; health; attributes; emotions and safety
- The data is presented clearly and visually on a star diagram
- The diagnostic has been trialled with some identified children on the provision map for targeted support, plus a range of year groups in Plaistow Primary, Southern Road and Lister Community School
- The diagnostic is also being trialled in a number of the other CfL Field Trial Sites

Learning / Services

- When used with an individual child or young person, a professional close to the pupil then completes the diagnostic recording his/her perceptions of the individual on the same star diagram
- If appropriate the data can be further triangulated by the completion of the same diagnostic by a parent/carer/social worker
- Analysis of data ascertained by using the diagnostic facilitates earlier and more effective prevention and intervention - for groups and individuals
- Analysis of data is also contributing to planning for transitions e.g. Reception to Year 1 in Southern Road and Y6 to Y7 in Plaistow Primary and Lister Community School



Case Study 04

e13 learning community

Impact

- Individual pupils and young people have access to a tool that enables them to better understand the nature and extent of their own well-being including their capacity to learn
- Pupils and young people's perceptions can be triangulated with those of school staff, professionals from other agencies and parents/ carers
- Use of the diagnostic gives groups of pupils and young people a voice in terms of their well-being and capacity to learn
- School staff have a way of gaining a more holistic view of each child's well-being and capacity to learn and develop, and therefore gain more insights into what might help individuals to move forward effectively, so that interventions can be more personalised and better matched to specific needs
- Curriculum content, teaching approaches and pastoral support can be better matched to local context and different groups' needs e.g. teaching strategies in Y6 at Plaistow Primary have been modified as a result of feedback from pupils that they would like more challenge and a programme of support regarding knife crime, has been introduced, in conjunction with the local Community Police Officer
- Schools are better able to assess the extent to which the ECM outcomes are being achieved for individuals and groups of pupils/ students

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Perspectives

“We were pleased to discover that the children in Y6 were so positive about their learning – but the data did indicate that they would like more challenge.”

Teacher

“This was quite an eye-opening and informative exercise – for example, we didn't realise quite how worried the children were about knife crime.”

Teacher

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Case Study 05

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

eastfeast

Summary

Eastfeast is a third sector organisation that brings experienced creative practitioners (freelance professional artists, gardeners and others) into schools, who work in partnership with teachers and other school staff, to exploit a variety of outdoor learning opportunities and develop the twin concepts of the open creative classroom and the creative curriculum.

By helping inspire the local community involved, a 'shared learning ethos' is developed, both inside and outside the formal school boundaries.

The Eastfeast CfL field trial involves three 'core' schools and 13 'associate' schools in East Anglia.

Project Highlights

- In this year's three core schools in Suffolk and Essex, Eastfeast community practitioners are working with the school workforce over a period of at least a year, to develop creativity through the arts and grow food for a number of seasonal celebrations, culminating in a final 'feast'.
- The Eastfeast team is building on the key learning from earlier projects to develop new approaches to the curriculum for Key Stages 1, 2 & 3. In each school their work is integrated into the School Improvement Plan and recorded on the School Self-evaluation form
- The curriculum is co-designed by the Eastfeast team and the school workforce, in consultation with the pupils.

Learning / Services

- Pupils deepen their understanding and appreciation of environmental issues, factors involved in healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle, as well as developing their capacity for creativity and self-expression through the arts. They also develop social skills such as team-working, negotiation and leadership skills
- Action research and CPD play an important support and challenge role. An innovative, professional development programme is running alongside the work with pupils. Accredited by Suffolk Anglia Ruskin University, it involves headteachers, teachers, community practitioners, school support staff, parents and volunteers
- In addition to the gardeners, the community practitioner team includes artists, a musician, a dancer, a ceramicist and an expert in street theatre
- Adults and children alike actively reflect on their learning and record it in learning journals
- Dr Jules Petty (Department of Biological Sciences, University of Essex) is going to track the physical and cognitive behaviours of children, as they engage in artistic/creative activities with the Eastfeast practitioners



Case Study 05

eastfeast

Impact

- More time spent learning outside the classroom, in the open air
- More time on task for pupils – teachers report different attitudes to learning and learning behaviours, as a result of higher levels of motivation arising from involvement in 'real/authentic' learning tasks.
- Evidence of a significant reduction in behaviour problems when the children are working outside.
- Improved performance of a number of individuals, who often struggle inside the classroom, who are able to engage with and learn more effectively while doing practical tasks outside the classroom
- Creation of an authentic culture of learning in the schools, resulting in deeper, more integrated learning – for pupils and teachers e.g. as evidenced in learning journals
- Opportunities for school staff to engage and succeed in accredited CPD work focused on reviewing their own and their pupils' learning – 17 people are successfully working on a Diploma in Education Studies with Suffolk Anglia Ruskin University
- The strengthening of the community around each school as a result of involvement with the celebrations and final 'feasts', which are seen as 'beginnings' quite as much as 'endings'.
- Five primary schools, a secondary school and a Pupil Referral Unit are reviewing/revising the curriculum and the way it is being taught

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"Our feast was really fun!... We made the bread, and the clay oven to bake the bread in! I was surprised that even though the food was mainly vegetables I liked it. I still use the plate I made with Caroline the potter."

Pupil

"I was unclear as to how the children would cope with the journals but they loved the concept of investigating, questioning, observing and recording in a variety of ways. They asked for extra time - so how good is that?"

Teacher

"I've had a wonderful career in teaching but this, without doubt, has been the most exciting thing I've ever done."

Headteacher

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Case Study 06

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

old ford primary school

Summary

Old Ford Primary School, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, is working with the community to raise standards and develop a culture that values learning, aspiration and achievement.

A major challenge has been low levels of language and social development of children entering the Foundation Stage. Parents have asked for help with developmental milestones, relationships with children and managing behaviour. The school is also developing a range of new roles to support hard to reach families and their children.

Project Highlights

- Framed around the outcomes of consultation with the community, a programme of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support for parents in the Foundation Stage has now been running for nearly two terms and is attended regularly by 39 mothers.
- The ESOL project provides a gateway for further engagement in parent support sessions focused on Art and Craft, Literacy, Reading, Speaking, Listening, Numeracy, Healthy Eating and Cooking – run in school time, some sessions have involved parents working with their children.
- Very successful intensive interventions, by the ESOL teacher, with four individual children with identified speech and language needs and their families
- Parents, who had never left the neighbourhood and have lacked confidence in using public transport, volunteer to join family days out, led by a Nursery Nurse from the school staff (e.g. Tower of London, Thames Week and the Natural History and Science Museums in South Kensington)
- A series of sessions entitled 'Strengthening family' have helped parents to manage their children's behaviour more effectively

Learning / Services

- ESOL and other parenting support for parents/carers, targeted principally for the Bangladeshi community, held on the school site and taught by members of the school staff, with whom the parents/carers are familiar – over the last two terms, the team has worked with about 60 parents from the Foundation Stage
- Building of a learning partnership based on trust, between parents, the school and the Extended Services team, (including learning mentors, support staff and nursery nurses) that facilitates more meaningful conversations about children's learning, achievement and attainment
- Design and delivery of interventions that increase parental knowledge and understanding of children's developmental and educational needs
- On successful completion of programmes parents/carers are awarded certificates in a school assembly, so that pupils can also engage with/value their parents' achievements
- The certificates awarded are being taken forward to other courses/ opportunities for parents/carers e.g. employment and qualification for British citizenship



Case Study 06

old ford primary school

Impact

- Learning for parents and adults is more accessible, helping them to more easily identify with their children as learners
- More secure relationships between some of the hard-to-reach parents and the school
- Improved parenting skills, evidenced by awareness of the importance of healthy life-styles, play, nutrition, healthy eating, exercise and regular sleep patterns for children.
- Improved social relationships and levels of social interaction between parents has reduced levels of social isolation across the community
- Improved KS1/2 results and improved attendance figures
- Anecdotal evidence indicates that children of parents who have been attending the ESOL classes regularly are making better progress than anticipated in the Reception Class
- Younger siblings are now entering nursery/school better equipped to learn
- The certificated ESOL provision has been so well received that plans are now being made to extend provision, beyond the Foundation Stage, so that it is available for all who request it
- Reflective journals of staff involved are recording positive impact - on their professional development, in addition to skill levels of parents and children's readiness

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Perspectives

“I now try to get all my housework done before the children get back from school. Then I’m able to help my children to do the activities suggested in the class.”

Parent

“It has given me great insight to the children’s family life, and how the children and adults were engaging with each other.”

Nursery Nurse

“I never thought I could teach adults – now I love working with them. I have become so much more confident.”

ESOL Teacher

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Case Study 07

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

Peases West primary school

Summary

Peases West is a designated “National School of Creativity” working with creative, cultural and local community partners supported in part by Creative Partnerships. They also have a close working partnership with a school in Japan. Community family learning and extended services is at the heart of the school’s drive to continuously raise standards. There is a strong aim to maximise outdoor learning whilst making links to the ECM agenda and knowledge gained from learning inside.

“I have really enjoyed spending quality time at family learning with my daughter. I feel that I have learned a lot as well!”

Parent and adult learner

“I like being here because we get to learn things in creative ways. I like the variety of after school clubs and I like the visitors sharing their different cultures”.

Pupil in Year 5



Personal Perspective - Parent

I have attended lots of different Family Learning courses and also gained my Level 2 national qualification in Literacy and Numeracy with some of the other parents in school. I try to come to all the events for parents like the “Bring Your Parent to School” days when I have the same lessons in class with my children.

I help out at other times, such as when we have artists in as I enjoy making things. Being in the school a lot as an adult has made me want to train at Bishop Auckland College to be a classroom assistant. I have passed my Level 2 and I am working on my Level 3 now. I wouldn’t have done that if I hadn’t been made welcome and felt comfortable being in school as a parent.

Mrs Carmen Parker



Case Study 07

peases west primary school

Project Highlights

- Trialling the school's newly designed flexible curriculum planning process and suitable recording and evaluation strategies that capture a wide range of outcomes linked to the ECM agenda
- New distributed leadership model: changing the role of the teacher to facilitator of learning plus leader across the school of one of the key areas of ECM
- Strong partnership working with parents and the local community highly commended by recent Ofsted inspection

Learning / Services

- Thematic approach to learning and teaching involving all staff, parents and community
- Personalised intervention learning programmes to help raise the achievement of an identified group of boys
- Leadership training focused on skills required for successful leadership and their role in building relationships for effective partnership working between school and community
- Extensive range of family learning courses
- Partnership learning and teaching with colleagues from Japan and Japanese students based at Teikyo University of Japan in Durham

Impact

- The new approach to curriculum delivery is meeting pupils needs academically, socially and culturally – clear evidence that they are becoming confident learners
- Strong evidence to illustrate that the use of the outdoor environment is supporting the learning both inside and outside the school – meeting the needs of the pupils (Ofsted November 2008)
- Family Learning courses attract increasing numbers of parents and community members e.g. mathematics, parenting classes, literacy, cookery
- Parental support linked to personalised intervention programmes is contributing to the raised attainment of an identified group of boys
- Extended services is embedded in the work of the school – Ofsted indicate this is having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment, attitudes to learning and the wider community
- Leadership training is helping to raise the confidence of staff to further explore innovative ideas such as those around Assessment for Learning (AfL), take ownership of their own learning and develop authentic learning opportunities for pupils, staff and community

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Case Study 08

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

ralph allen high school

Summary

Ralph Allen, Bath is an 11 - 18 Science Specialist School. The Leadership Team, working with the Nowhere Foundation, have been developing a culture for learning and innovation throughout the school. By creating a range of systemic methodologies, students and families have been encouraged to overcome deep-rooted social, emotional and academic barriers to learning.

The school has been involved in CfL for 18 months, with specific projects including a Year 7 nurture group for 'vulnerable' children; hosting 'Dissolving Barriers to Learning' workshops; and designing a whole school peer mentoring scheme.

"The group work helps you understand, clear your head and make the right choices."

Pupil

"The school has a reputation for accepting excluded pupils and does well with them."

Community member



Project Highlights

- Strong leadership at all levels drives the systemic way of working
- The school culture change initiative 'From Me to Us' prioritises building relationships and modelling behaviours with students, staff, families and community members
- Ralph Allen is developing a learning culture where coaching, mentoring and feedback underpin personalised learning

Learning / Services

- High level and sustained investment in building capacity through CPD that involves joint learning for staff and whole community
- Two day CPD event in October for staff and community on development of whole school coaching model
- Training in systemic methods for Phase 1 Catalysts (school staff) and Year 10 Mentors

Impact

- Relationships of trust supporting learning culture
- Vibrant learning community evidenced by closing gender gap in literacy
- Successful student applications to top UK universities
- Constellations Club being developed for 6th form students
- TimeOutMediation process being piloted is gathering positive feedback between staff and students
- Achievement of Trust status involving University of Bath
- The use of systemic methods and tools to engage vulnerable students in learning
- More parents involved in the life of the school
- More support staff successfully undertaking roles as facilitators of learning
- Their Ofsted report from September highlighted 'care and support for students' as outstanding

Case Study 08

ralph allen high school

Personal Perspective

During a group work session using systemic methods Rosie started to tell her story.

When she was about 8 years old and at Primary school, she remembers firstly that a teacher 'stabbed my finger with a pencil'. This was an accident but because of her reaction to the incident she had to sit on the 'isolation table'. The teacher told her she had been naughty and had disrupted the lesson and she was put on the table where there were no other pupils and made to face the wall for nearly a year. She recalls the feeling of loneliness. She remembers playing with the coloured pencils on the table, lining them up over and over again and the other pupils not being allowed to work with her.

She recalled a parents' evening at primary school and sitting with both her parents. The teacher told her parents that Rosie is getting on better on the isolation table and that their relationship is much better. She invited Rosie to agree, 'That's right isn't it?' Rosie explained to me her feeling of fear in saying anything that contradicted the teacher. She recalled just nodding (which she was doing as she told her story).

Others in the room were quiet and respectful as Rosie spoke and I asked her if she would like to try something to acknowledge the past. Rosie agreed, hesitantly.

Rosie and I sat opposite each other and I asked her to imagine that I am that very teacher from primary school. I invited her to say anything she felt that she needed to. At first neither of us said anything as we both sat and looked at each other, and then I said 'I was angry with you and needed to sit you away from the other children'. Rosie started to tell me how she felt. As the teacher's representative I was moved by Rosie's words. Eventually I responded: 'I'm sorry perhaps I made a mistake'. Rosie was visibly relieved.

I apologised again and also wished Rosie all the best for the future. At this point we sat in silence. The tension between us relaxed. We both breathed out.

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Case Study 09

Communities for Learning

unlocking potential and improving life chances of children and the wider community

wade deacon school

Summary

Wade Deacon has designed a collaborative, creative scheme of work for Year 7 students with a key focus on driving creativity in learning for students and community.

They are keen to help staff, students and community realise the importance of independent learning. A key aim is to encourage others to take responsibility for their own learning which the school believe are life-long skills required by all learners in the 21st century to achieve economic well-being.

“We had just started secondary school and were asked to form groups of four or five – nobody spoke to me at first and I felt left out. Now we have all learnt how to work well as a team – we want our team to be the best.”

Student, Year 7

“I think that this is a good thing for the community, I think this is vital, I think it is what our community needs.”

Parent, Year 5

Personal Perspective - Student

Louise is a Year 7 pupil who enjoys the challenge of solving problems.

However, she has major difficulties with accessing text. She is a pupil who

is on the School Action register as she needs targeted support with reading, writing and basic numeracy. Louise's current target for the end of Year 7 is to achieve a 2c. It was apparent at the beginning of the year that Louise did enjoy Maths, but struggled to achieve due to her difficulties with literacy which led to a lack of self-esteem and confidence in learning.

A review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum led to implementation of the New World project. The aim of the programme is to help pupils such as Louise apply skills such as creative thinking, effective team work and independent enquiry to solve problems. The shift to applying skills to challenges succeeded in breaking down Louise's barriers to learning. Not only did she feel that she was now achieving in Maths, but when examined within the context of 'The New World' she proved that she had the ability to answer Level 5 questions correctly.

Now, Louise is motivated, confident and engaged; she feels that she can contribute to the success of her "tribe" (team) and take a lead role within the team. Louise and the school are proud of her achievement. It is a wonderful example of successful inclusive and creative teaching and learning. It illustrates that pupils' of all abilities, given the right learning opportunities can achieve and progress.



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Project Highlights

- 'The New World' programme developing Year 7 critical independent life-long learning skills with linked assessment process identifying progress in Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)
- Strong partnership with Hope University offering continuing unique personal learning programmes for staff
- Collaborative working across three Children and Young People's Area Networks (CYPAN) providing learning opportunities for all the community

Learning / Services

- Transition learning programme between Year 6 and Year 7
- School CPD programme and learning through TLA's and development of leadership capability
- Wide range of services including weekend and holiday activities
- Parent involvement including those from local Nursery and Primary schools

Impact

- Year 7 students explain and demonstrate increased development of thinking skills, overall achievement and enjoyment of lessons focused on 'The New World programme'
- All staff, teaching and non-teaching have gained TLA Level 1 & 2 – some teaching staff are working towards TLA Level 3
- Increased number of staff taking on leadership responsibilities
- 85 families including adults, children and babies attended a trip organised by Extended Services CYPAN 2&3 for vulnerable and hard to reach families to Camelot theme park

For more information about other Case Studies and tools to help you create Communities for Learning e-mail communities@innovation-unit.co.uk

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