

CASE STUDY TEMPLATE

Name of Partnership: BEXLEY (Trinity)
Case Study Title: Using Adventure Based Learning (ABL) to impact on behaviour and social interaction.
Headteacher quote : <i>“The ABL programme was so fantastic that I’d like to have it for all of our pupils. It has excellent citizenship links and really got the pupils thinking about how they interact. When asked in an assembly to explain to the other pupils what they had been doing, they were able to explain clearly and fully, numerous different aspects that they had learnt about such as team building, turn taking and communication.”</i> Head Teacher of a Special School <i>“The improvement in behaviour of the majority of pupils involved in this programme has been very noticeable. They now seem to know how to deal with situations differently, and come up with strategies other than the confrontational ones they used to use. Quieter children that did not interact are now confident enough to speak up in class and stand up for themselves.”</i> Head Teacher of one of the primary schools
Partnership Context: e.g. inner-city/rural The Bexley (Trinity) School Sports Partnership is located in one of the Outer London Boroughs, specifically within an Area of Deprivation, where there are many issues around social problems and a lack of parental support in dealing with behavioural issues. Within the identified schools, (6 including Primary, Secondary and Special schools, both MLD and SLD) the level of SEN is 53% and Free School Meals are 24%. These are well above the Bexley averages of 39% SEN and 16% FSM. All of the mainstream schools are situated within the Bexley Excellence Cluster.
What was the rationale for your development? (<i>Why did you undertake this development work?</i>) In our initial SSP audit, it was identified that the secondary schools within this area of the SSP had higher than average rates of exclusion (6% compared to the Bexley average of 3.7%) and also had internal exclusion facilities in place which were rather well used! At the same time, the primary schools recognised that there were social and behaviour problems, which were preventing pupils from functioning normally and were affecting the learning of other pupils around them. How was the need identified? It was felt that there was a need for a programme that would assist with the development of these pupils, and address their specific needs. The PDM worked with a New Zealander, an Outdoor Education specialist, in one of the secondary schools, to develop a programme using task based activities and an experiential approach to address these issues. We applied for New Opportunities Funding to complete the planning and resource the programme and started running it in 2003. Subsequent to this planning, all of the mainstream schools became part of the local Excellence Cluster. This enabled us to adjust our planning slightly to get the Learning Mentors involved.

What was the starting point? (include information on the target group, including age range, profile (gender/ethnicity), prior educational achievement (in broad terms), numbers involved):

Although some Outdoor and Adventurous Activities were being used in the secondary schools, they were not being used as a behaviour management tool, solely as part of the PE National Curriculum teaching.

There were no teachers or external specialists that were trained to deliver this programme. 2 secondary schools were targeted as part of a 3-year programme, dealing with Years 9 and 10 each year. The SSCo's in each of these schools worked closely with their Heads of Year, the Senior Leadership team and the Learning Suite and its mentors to identify the tranche of pupils that they thought would benefit from a programme such as this.

In each primary school, the PDM worked closely with the Head Teacher, the PLT and the relevant learning and behavioural support personnel that were working with these children.

The ABL programme was designed to be delivered on site in each of the primary schools, using a six-session module, each session aiming to address a different aspect of social interaction.

For the secondary schools, the same principles were used, but delivered through a variety of different offsite activities and venues to engage the interest of these older students.

What were you trying to achieve? What did you do?

Key Objective 1: To get children to realise the impact that they have on others through the way they behave and interact.

- Actions:
- i) Design a course with a series of tasks in which students would experience failure as well as success, but have to learn to come to terms with why they have failed and address that in order to achieve the success.
 - ii) Train course tutors and school staff so that they are aware of how the course would be delivered.
 - iii) Select schools and students that would benefit most from this type of support.



Key Objective 2: To impact on whole school improvement through reduced behaviour issues from the target group.

- Actions:
- i) Use activities as a reward for good behaviour in secondary school situation
 - ii) Make sure these pupils are aware that they are being tracked
 - iii) Celebrate improved awareness in primary schools with ongoing certification
 - iv) Use further rewards to encourage pupils to continue to think about how they act, even after the course has finished.

What have been the impact and achievements to date?

In all 6 cases, the schools reported an improvement in attitude in the majority of the targeted children. This ranged from their ability to communicate better with both their peers and their elders, and being able to work more effectively in group situations and not cause conflict, to a changed attitude towards awkward situations and showing the ability to deal with conflict in a more positive way. Also, improved behaviour both in class and in the playground, with less disruption in both cases from the targeted pupils.

In one of the schools, the targeted pupils were those who used to use the services of the Learning Mentor in the school at least once every day (this happened because of their inability to deal with situations in the classroom). After a month on the course, this had reduced to only 1 of the students using this facility and from the end of the course until the end of the year (another 8 weeks), only 1 visit was made by any of these students for behavioural reasons.

In the MLD school that was involved, the school reported that the pupils were much better able to deal with potential conflict and also that their confidence levels had increased, together with an improved ability to communicate effectively. This group included youngsters with Autistic Spectrum Disorder as well as a variety of other needs.

In one of the secondary schools, one of the boys had been on report since the early part of Year 7, firstly to his form tutor, then his Head of Year and finally to the Head Teacher. He was halfway through Year 9 when he was identified to become part of this programme. After a couple of taster sessions which all of the targeted group were invited to attend, students were only allowed to attend future sessions if they had not had bad comments on their report card since the last session. The student mentioned above attended every session. Because of his improved behaviour, which was sustained over a period of 20 weeks, he was ultimately taken 'off report' for the first time in 3 years! This improvement was sustained throughout the rest of the year and the student was actually praised individually by the Head Teacher at an end of year assembly for his improvement. We have kept tabs on him, now that he is in Year 10, and the improvement has been sustained.

What do you feel is still to be achieved?

- ⇒ To widen the impact and target more schools. This will involve training more specialists in the delivery of the course. We have already targeted the behaviour support services, the PRU's, the Learning Mentors and some outdoor education specialists. We will be running an additional staff training course.
- ⇒ To be able to monitor students more effectively over the long term to assess long-term impact.
- ⇒ To enable schools to use this method of delivery amongst their own students through skilling their own staff support personnel.

What would you do differently?

- ⇒ Have more tutors.
- ⇒ Make greater use of the Learning Mentors in the identification and follow up of children.

How have you promoted and disseminated this good practice with others?

- ⇒ Local SSSCo newsletter showing some of the activities and results.
- ⇒ Rewards for children who made real and sustained improvements such as extended trips to Specialist outdoor Education venues, all expenses paid
- ⇒ ABL course delivered to all PLT's across partnership
- ⇒ Impact reported to Head Teachers across partnership and to LEA and SSSCo Steering Group members
- ⇒ ABL course demonstrated to local Police and Community groups who want to use it in the Community Safety Action Zones
- ⇒ Press releases to local newspapers
- ⇒ Application for National Development Award – Winner, and subsequent publicity.
- ⇒ Article on Bexley Council website

How have you ensured that the development work is sustainable and continues to improve standards?

- ⇒ Additional staff will be trained to deliver the course, both as outside specialists and within schools as part of their internal procedures
- ⇒ New Opportunities Funding has been used to provide the specialist resources that the course needs
- ⇒ Contacts have been made with local outdoor education providers and low-cost packages negotiated
- ⇒ Head Teacher support, which may then encourage them to use school funds for this type of programme in the future. This has already proved to be the case in one of the schools this year.
- ⇒ Developed relationship with Excellence Cluster to link with Learning Mentors
- ⇒ Relationship with School Improvement Plans, ensuring that Heads know that this is a tool that could be used.
- ⇒ Scheme passed on to Behaviour Support Consultant and Behaviour Support Service to become embedded in their menu of strategies to use with these types of children.

