



THE CLEMENT JAMES CENTRE

CREATING A UNIQUE AND SUSTAINABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH EXTENSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

May 2009

For case studies linked to QiSS recognition please indicate at which level:

Advanced

And related to which theme(s) of the Code of Practice

Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11, 3.14, 3.15

Summary

This case study illustrates how The ClementJames Centre has been able to offer a unique and sustainable learning environment through extensive partnerships.

Target Group / Key Stage:

The ClementJames Centre is in an area of urban deprivation. There are significant levels of unemployment. The Department of Work and Pensions has identified Golborne, Notting Barns and St Charles as having acute problems requiring specific action to improve employment rates. There is overcrowding within the social rented housing and there is a shortage of large family accommodation. 53% of pupils in maintained schools are BME populations and 50% of primary and 44% of secondary school pupils speak English as a second language.

FSM /SEN/ EAL:

We work with children and young people from local primary and secondary schools in deprived areas. On average, 43% of our students are entitled to free school meals, which is more than double the national average at 20%. Approximately 80% of our beneficiaries are EAL and less than 10% are SEN.

Local Authority:

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

School /Centre:

The Clement James Centre

What was it like before?

Context

The ClementJames Centre is a grass-roots Community Project providing a range of direct services to local people. The objectives of our organisation are:

- To advance the education of local people
- To relieve poverty among local people
- To provide and assist in the provision of facilities for the recreation and social welfare of local people in need

Within these objectives, our principal priorities are the advancement of education and the relief of poverty. We aim to achieve these objectives through the provision of carefully-researched, high quality and innovative services sustained over the long term.

Describe why this particular programme was set up

Over the past 13 years, phenomenal changes have shaped Study Support to become the centre we know today. In 1996, we started the centre in direct response to children 'hanging out' on the streets. Local schools and social services approached us and asked us to set up a 'homework club.' We provided one classroom one night a week for four primary students. Before we knew it, we had over 50 young people attending our centre each night. We decided to conduct research nationally to see what other community organisations offered. We found that the majority offered either pastoral or academic support – but not both. So, we decided to put together a package of long-term pastoral and academic support so that we could offer students a 'home from home' environment. We called this package 'IntoUniversity' and developed the programme, in 2002, into three strands – study support, mentoring and FOCUS (a series of themed activities taking place during and after school).

What was planned?

In 1996, we provided one classroom one night a week for four primary students. In 1998, we gained one computer (not online) and various resources and in 2000 the centre expanded to two purpose-built classrooms running three sessions a week. In 2001 we expanded into a bigger learning space to accommodate the increase in attendance and sessions ran four nights a week with both primary and secondary students using the same space. In 2005, the year we achieved QiSS Emerging, classrooms moved upstairs to further cater for the number of students in attendance, a Student Council was set up and further resources and internet were secured through funding. In 2006 and 2007 we designed and built an aspirational learning centre (LC2) fully equip with interactive whiteboard, laptops, internet and learning materials, possible with over £100,000 of funding secured, and 200+ students attended Study Support. In 2007 we achieved QiSS Established and a separate charity, **IntoUniversity**, was set up to launch a network of centres across London. Volunteers from top London universities were introduced to the centres. In 2008 **IntoUniversity** set up centres in Lambeth, Brent and Bow and The ClementJames Centre became the beacon centre for training and development with over 225 students in attendance at Study Support. We have established partnerships with top London universities such as SOAS, UCL and LSE who provide invaluable resources, including volunteers, free of charge. In 2008 we won the London Education Partnership Award for Voluntary Sector Organisation of the Year and were runner up for Organisational Impact.

Did you involve partners?

Key to our success and sustainability was our involvement with partners. In order for The ClementJames Centre to inspire children from disadvantaged backgrounds it was essential we partner with both schools and universities. Our unique learning environment is created as a result of our partnerships with Corporate and student volunteers and we regularly run workshops at study support. A couple of recent activities with partners involved a Finance workshop with MyBank and a Safer Neighbourhoods workshop with the Police Community Support Officers.

Since we started the process of gaining AQISS, we have shared best practice with other partner organisations and are being commissioned to share best practice at Local Authority Seminars and at individual organisations currently evaluating their services.

What were the planned outcomes?

- To provide a safe and stimulating educational environment in a primary school classroom in which children can do their homework
- To provide children with termly targets and to help them reach them through worksheets, educational computer games and homework set by their school
- To provide a fresh start at the end of the school day
- To provide a home-from-home, with a high staff/volunteer : child ratio, to offer the kind of help most middle-class children receive as a matter of course
- To provide a user-led service giving children a say in their learning environment
- To enable children to raise their confidence and achieve their goals
- To break negative cycles of behaviour and to promote good self-esteem
- To enrich the national curriculum and add-value to school work through worksheets and educational software
- To introduce primary school children to key words about university through worksheets and activities
- Opportunity for children to develop positive relationships with new adults
- Opportunity for children who may display challenging behaviour at school to take pride in their achievements

What Happened?

Site Development

The classrooms have each undergone a makeover, and staff review our learning environment at termly Study Support Breakfast Meetings to ensure that each space is used most effectively and presented in the most appealing way to students. After visits to two primary schools, the primary classroom was painted and re-decorated with bright, new display boards and colourful, interactive displays that incorporate students' work. The 'reading corner' has been made more comfortable and inviting with the addition of beanbags, and appealing laptop computers have been introduced so as to enable computer work to take

place at tables under closer supervision. An 'independent learning corner' was recently included as an alternative for students who need to work without distractions.

The lower secondary classroom has been decorated with new displays featuring the students' work and promoting other opportunities offered at the centre. The classroom has also been re-arranged to create a quieter working environment in which students can work independently or in small groups.

The Learning Centre has been developed as a quiet, spacious working environment with laptop computers, a 'what's on' display, a careers board and university resources including prospectuses and UCAS information. The space enables students to work independently or in small groups, and provides a place for students to meet with their mentors or to chat with staff.

Environment

Our staff, volunteers and Student Leaders have had high quality training to ensure they lead by example to promote a love for learning, respect for ourselves and others, and a desire to improve and achieve. Students now sign a 'student agreement' each term to indicate that they understand and agree to upholding our Study Support rules.

Training

Training and induction of new staff and volunteers has been developed into a highly-structured programme to ensure that all tutors are equipped and empowered to provide the highest level of support to students. New staff take part in classroom observation at partner schools to develop skills in managing behaviour and coordinating large groups of children, and are assigned an established member of staff as a buddy to provide ongoing support and guidance. Training and selection of volunteers has been formalised, with cross-centre Study Support Training and Selection Days at our partner universities introduced in Autumn 2008. Volunteers receive in-depth training in our aims and ethos, and how these are reflected in the way we work with young people. The Study Support Coordinator managed this pilot, and will continue to develop the volunteer recruitment process in the coming year.

Resources

We have sought creative solutions to develop our Study Support resources. We now have a fabulous extra learning space (LC2), made possible with over £100,000 of secured funding, fully equipped with a Promethean whiteboard and laptops. Through the generous support of Barclay's we have freshly painted interactive classrooms with working walls, display boards and 'Top Tips' learning displays, developed by the delivery team since Established. Research trips to local schools have enabled us to learn from different and appealing classroom displays.

Assessments

A new more child-friendly online assessment package ('Education City') was bought in September 2008 for the Study Support students and replaces the previous outdated package. This system links in with students' individual targets and gives us a permanent record of their educational improvements. Since gaining AQISS we have followed through our plans to secure funding from the Local Authority for the introduction of an on-line attitudinal software package called PASS (Pupils Attitudes to Self and School)

Pastoral care

Study Support continues to welcome children and young people who motivate themselves to attend, rather than being brought to the centre by their parents. The 'drop-in' nature of our service relies on students' own commitment to regular attendance, and we continue to target young people from our partner schools as the priority group for recruitment. We start young with children aged seven, and encourage students to stay for the long-term. In this way we are able to provide wholesome, individualised support. We reward children and young people who show dedication and commitment to the centre with a volunteer mentor from one of our partner universities. We have developed our Advice and Guidance Sessions and are currently going for the Matrix Standard for IAG in May 2010.

Partnerships

Our partnerships are an integral part of our development as a charity. We have been formally recognised by LEPA (London Education Partnership Awards) as Voluntary Sector Organisation of the Year and runner up for Organisational Impact (June 2008) for our effective links with supporting bodies and are nominated for four more categories at the LEPA in June 2010. We have targeted top London universities such as LSE, UCL, Imperial College and SOAS in order to maximise our profile and provide the highest quality of support to our young people: it is from these universities that we have gained university students, professors and lecturers as invaluable Study Support volunteers and mentors for our service users. We continue to develop our partnership base as we expand our services and we are now approached by independent companies, willing to offer their services to support our beneficiaries and staff. The diverse backgrounds of our Study Support volunteers allow us to provide a unique learning experience and we now have a standardised training programme for new volunteers to ensure that all are trained to the same high standard. We have made particularly strong links with The Charles Darwin Trust and Historic Royal Palaces since Established and thrive on the mutual benefit these partnerships provide. It is through these partnerships that we are able to support the expansion of their outreach programmes. We provide our service users with opportunities to participate in joint activities, involving trips to partner organisations to expand students' educational horizons.

We ensure that we maintain a high reputation for our services and have joined various forums, boards and steering groups in the Borough in order to maximise our profile and share best practice. Our Study Support Co-ordinator has gained funding to participate in a Power of Parents course, courtesy of our partnership with Westway Development Trust. Our local links have been key to maintaining a steady funding stream as well as allowing us to forge new links with potential funders. We have piloted new activities as a direct result of our partnership with Family Services.

By involving a host of different partners – from high profile educational institutions to dynamic organisations such as Sky Television and The Guardian, we have been able to create unique learning opportunities for our children and young people who struggle to learn the traditional way. As a result of our partnership with organisations such as these, some of our students have gone on to work experience at their head offices and gained an enormous amount of confidence from the experience.

In order to maximise resources and ensure Study Support is a cost-effective service we now induct and train our volunteers to such a high standard that we no longer need paid tutors.

We have plans to build stronger relations with neighbouring Independent schools, one of which continues to donate Christmas presents to the students each year, so that they may be able to start donating revision guides and learning tools.

Funding

We continue to receive coverage in the national press, which attracts funding and support from individuals and corporate sponsors. Our students are frequently interviewed by journalists and potential funders to give their own impressions of the service. A fully funded DVD featuring students was produced as an aid to publicising our charity. We have not had problems with funding during the AQISS process and since gaining the accreditation we have developed relationships with our funders.

What has been the impact and how was it verified?

Kieran Bryans, post **Into**University student, currently studying Japanese at Sheffield University.

Kieran came to us when he was at secondary school, did FOCUS, study support, Easter revision and had a mentor. In 2007 he came to us in a panic, having got kicked out of college for poor attendance and grades. We helped him to apply for another college, where he did really well and achieved 3 As and 1 C. These grades got him into Sheffield University, the best university to study Japanese in the U.K.

'The ClementJames Centre changed me as a person; I'm different now. I've gained maturity and now make more personal choices. I've realised that there is always another way to do something. If ClementJames hadn't got involved then I'd probably be a street cleaner – I wouldn't have gone to college and then uni – I don't want to think about it.'

Kevin McGuigan, Yr 6 Teacher, St Mary of the Angels Primary School

'It's an enriching experience for them. It backs up what we do in school but it does it in a very fun and interesting and dynamic way... It does it in a much more hands-on way.

We focus on maths... we feed their knowledge... But it's also to get them

to think about what they want to do when they're older, what they want to aspire to be as they grow up and to start thinking about it now.

How important this programme actually is. It is becoming firmly embedded now in our year six programme.

The people from The ClementJames Centre are really incredible people. They're all really highly-skilled, highly-qualified people... They're putting their heart and soul into it. They work with (the children) really closely. It's a really enriching experience.

A huge success.'

Parent of Ayub Ullah, study support student

'Ayub has changed a lot, a lot of homeworks are completed, his attitude to his work has changed his life.'

We do evaluation forms after every activity and hold regular FOCUS groups with the students and parents to ask what they want to see at Study Support.

Since AQISS, we have developed a system for measuring the difference/impact Study Support has on our children and young people. We now do a baseline evaluation as well as an exit evaluation so that we can see the development each child/young person has made at Study Support.

What have you learnt since developing the Study Support?

The importance of sharing information and best practice

Since developing Study Support, we have developed a culture of learning and evaluation. We view learning as a process through which young people and volunteers can contribute to, and benefit from, a shared experience. We acknowledge the individual needs of our students, and offer a range of activities that enable students to learn in different ways. Students are encouraged to demonstrate concepts to tutors ('teach the teacher') and staff and volunteers are trained in current techniques for teaching key literacy and numeracy skills. Our upper secondary students are trained in learning styles and revision techniques. Students reflect on their learning through termly evaluations, and recently, through interviews with parents and staff at the end-of-term Parent Evenings.

The importance of partnerships

Our extensive partnerships enable us to offer learning opportunities beyond the classroom, an idea developed since QISS. A range of workshops, concerts and off-site visits have encouraged our young people to discover their own skills and develop new interests. Our partnerships with volunteers and external organisations expose our students to a widely varied range of career options. We share best practice with partner organisations and work in collaboration with RBKC and our other partners to develop specialised workshops such as parent support packages and SEN/EAL learning materials.

The diverse backgrounds of our Study Support volunteers allow us to provide a unique learning experience and we now have a standardised training programme for new volunteers to ensure that all are trained to the same high standard.

Recruitment and retention of high quality staff and volunteers

One of the keys to our success is our dedicated and talented staff team. The tight management structure allows a culture of self-reflection which has been invaluable to the development of Study Support. We have created the role of Deputy Chief Executive since Established to support the CEO who works part-time. She supports the Study Support Co-ordinator who is also the delivery staff's Team Leader. All delivery staff are appointed 'Study Support Representatives' and share responsibility for Study Support with the children and young people, parents, teachers and other supporting bodies. All stakeholders share ownership of Study Support.

Volunteer Tutors develop their own skills as they work with young people, beginning in a shadowing role and progressing to working more independently. They receive training on effective coaching and gain valuable skills in working with young people. Volunteer Tutors are asked initially to reflect on what they will bring to the role and are placed according to their knowledge, expertise and goals for skills development. They reflect on their learning through informal feedback, termly evaluations and review meetings with the Study Support Coordinator.

A culture of evaluation

We have developed a strong emphasis on self-reflection and evaluation since QISS: not only do we hold regular meetings internally but we analyse each session with volunteers after the children and young people have left, hold 'Study Support Breakfast Meetings' once a term and attend regular Professional Network Meetings off-site. Externally, we hold bi-monthly staff meetings with **Into**University, our partner charity, at which issues such as the training and the delivery of key strands of our service programme are analysed. The cross-centre leadership team meets once a month to consolidate these ideas.

Improved training and induction of staff and volunteers

Since undergoing the process of QISS, we have developed our training and induction programme for new staff. New staff are asked to review the training at the end of each week in order that their ideas and suggestions can become part of the training in the future. All new staff are required to undergo the Pacific Institute 'Investors in Excellence' Course, which is a five-day organisational and personal motivational course which aids staff cohesion and facilitates an invaluable sharing of values. Existing staff are actively encouraged to attend training sessions on areas of interest and areas for development. Although all staff receive appraisals annually, we have an 'open door' policy which enables us to benefit from open communication within the organisation on a daily basis. Our partners at the Local Authority provide regular training sessions for staff and volunteers. We have built up strong links with the Extended Services network based at the Local Authority and at local schools. We now regularly present at Professional Network Meetings and training seminars.

Site development

We have sought creative solutions to develop our Study Support resources since QISS. We now have a fabulous extra learning space (LC2) fully equipped with a Promethean whiteboard and laptops. Through the generous support of Barclay's we have freshly painted interactive classrooms with working walls, display boards and 'Top Tips' learning displays, developed by the delivery team since

Established. Research trips to local schools have enabled us to learn from different and appealing classroom displays.

Study Support has increased in size to meet the need of our service users and is now separated into three learning spaces: Primary for years 2-6, Middle for years 7 & 8 and Upper for years 9-13. The introduction of LC2 since Established has allowed us to provide a separate learning space for Upper secondary school students providing aspirations for Primary and Middle Students who can look ahead to learning in this space used by 'older' students.

What tips could you offer others if they were to take up this project?

We have learnt so much from QISS and been supported in the process. The main tips I would offer would be:

- **Research**

Research into the local area to look at gaps in current provision. Visit other schools and Study Support centres to get fresh ideas and share best practice.

- **Partnerships**

Build partnerships with local and national institutions. Partnerships are vital if Study Support is to be a unique and sustainable learning environment.

- **Ownership**

Ask the students what they want! There is nothing more empowering for a young person than 'being listened to' and seeing their ideas come into fruition. This needs to be carefully managed in structured Student Forums or Focus Groups so that ideas can be followed through constructively and correct expectations set.

- **Behaviour Management**

The students need consistency and clear boundaries set if they are going to respect the centre and attend regularly. I'd recommend having a clear Behaviour Management Strategy/Policy so that all staff and volunteers can be 'singing from the same hymn sheet'.

What are the next steps for development? Roll out to other schools centres?

Our **IntoUniversity** programme became so successful at The ClementJames Centre that we decided, in 2006, to run a symposium to see whether we should expand the work we were doing at The ClementJames Centre to other parts of London.

In February 2006 the Sutton Trust and The ClementJames Centre jointly held a one-day Symposium to consider taking our education model and applying it in other areas. We were aware and open to the fact that a potential outcome of the day was a recommendation that our model works effectively locally but should not be expanded to other areas. With this in mind, those attending were drawn from the educational, business and government sectors. We kept two issues in focus during the day. First, the role the third sector can play in addressing educational underachievement; second whether our model pioneered at The ClementJames Centre can and should be used regionally or nationally to raise the achievement of young people in deprived areas. The outcome was that we should expand nationally on one condition – that we get an external evaluation from the National Foundation for Educational Research. A report was thus commissioned by the Sutton Trust and, on recommendations from this Evaluation, it was agreed that we should expand to other parts of London using the same model as originated at The ClementJames Centre.

Since the Evaluation was published in 2007, we helped to launch **IntoUniversity**, as a separate charity, based on The ClementJames Centre model. **IntoUniversity** Central has since gone on to launch a further 5 other centres in Lambeth, Brent,

Bow, Haringey and Hackney in the past three years. Post 2010, they plan to set up a further 6 centres by 2016.

How will you build on the outcomes on what you have learnt?

We plan to continue in the same way, evaluating our services, partnering with other organisations and keeping in touch with local developments so that The ClementJames Centre can keep addressing the needs of the local people.

Case Study Reference:

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