



March 2015

6 month report to the British and Foreign School Society

Purpose of grant: Delivery of two Teens and Toddlers youth development programmes

Summary of the grant so far

The first of the BFSS funded projects began in October 2014 and ended early March 2015. Eight young people (aged 13-14) took part from the Charter School and were paired with eight children from Coburg Primary School, all based in Southwark. Although we have not completed data analysis (including pre/post young people surveys), we do have feedback from the two schools on participants which I have reported on below (full report will follow once analysis is complete).

As mentioned in email discussion there was a delay on the second BFSS project due to school recruitment for September. There were issues with school timetables meaning releasing students for an afternoon each week was difficult. For this reason the project began during our second cohort of the year, beginning February 2015 and it will run until July 2015. For this project eight young people from Notre Dame RC Secondary Girls' School are taking part with eight children from Charles Dickens Primary School.

Projected project outcomes

1. 90% of participants to achieve the Level 1 National Award in Interpersonal Skills.
2. 94% will understand that good education gives you more choices in life.
3. 89% will have the aspiration to reach their goals and get a good job.
4. 96% will remain in Education, Employment or Training.
5. The mentored children will show progress in key developmental areas, especially with regard to communication and language

We do not have results for the Award or data analysis to fully report on these outcomes however the narrative below will support them.

Young People

The young people were selected on the basis of risk of exclusion or teen pregnancy, educational disengagement and disadvantage. Most were not attaining the grades the teachers believed they were capable of achieving and many had received repeated warnings for behaviour.

Attendance by the young people has been good at 80% (due to truanting, disengaged young people often have much lower attendance at school activities). The facilitator has given good feedback on their portfolios to indicate confidence at achieving the National Award. The school has reported engagement has improved by all participants. In terms of attainment, at least 50% of this group began at Level 4 in most subjects (Level 4 is expected by year 6 – these students are in year 9). All of these low-attainers have moved at least one level upwards across subjects including maths and English, some have moved two levels. 100% of this group improved attainment levels across subjects overall and the school confirm that 100% have shown increased engagement with school.



Several of these students who were at significant risk of exclusion have improved their behaviour, as well as others who showed lower risk; none of these participants have received an official warning for behaviour during this period which the school have reported is a great improvement and impacts their education as well as other students. The school also reported that they are much less likely to get excluded in the future. One participant has expressed an interest in child care as a career as a result of their experience and is following this up with further research.

Once our research team have analysed all results we will be able to report on improvements in aspiration, decision-making, and self-reported engagement with education and more. We will also track these participants, as we do with all who take part on a programme, up to age 20 through our annual retrospective study to measure the longer term impact of the programme.

Children:

We visited the nursery post project to get feedback on the children who were mentored. The reasons across the group included social/relationship building issues, specific emotional events at school or home and specific educational needs. The nursery gave two case studies of children they felt made significant progress, although they said all who had taken part had benefitted.

Child A

This child had problems settling into the nursery and forming relationships with other children and staff. He was an elective mute, not speaking to any staff or other children, and cried for his parents at regular intervals. Nursery staff noted that his mentor gave him all their attention, standing by at first as they got to know each other, and then playing with him and encouraging him to take part in activities. The nursery said they had seen little improvements over the course of the programme and by the end of the project he had begun to talk to certain staff and children which was a huge improvement in his social and communication skills.

Child B

This child was disruptive in class and fought with other children, often for attention. The nursery specifically requested he receive social support in regard to interacting with others and was paired with a young person who has no role models at home. The mentor let child B lead in play activities and they formed a close bond during the sessions. The nursery reported that the child knew he had a "special friend". He now fights less, has learned to share toys/materials instead of grabbing from others and his language skills have improved; he now asks questions and shows a greater understanding of working with others. This child also takes part in more arts activities, increasing development in expression and design. The nursery also reported that other children complain about child B less, and so the improvements have a wider benefit.

Overall the nursery noted that they could see both the toddlers and the young people enjoyed their time immensely and that the young people were particularly good at very engaging the small children in play and reading stories. The nursery also noted that the young people were very responsible and professional, helping with all tasks as staff would, e.g. tidying up areas after the mentoring time was over. Our facilitator has noted that this is a very lively group in the curriculum time but very caring, calm and kind when in the nursery.



Lessons learned

As noted we had some problems with school timetables this academic year, and so we do not have as many projects running in Southwark as we have previously and this impacted the initial project set up. Some of the Project 1 sessions were cancelled due to other school events which creates disruption for both the young people and the children and this was identified by both schools. To mitigate the effect on the young people our facilitators have arranged additional catch up sessions to cover any relevant issues and make sure all work for the National Award is complete. We have also arranged with the primary to ensure they are notified well in advance so that the children are prepared.

We would usually find schools that are within walking distance of each other to make travel as easy as possible for facilitators/young people. These schools were slightly further apart which impacted the timings of the first few sessions however this was quickly worked out within the first few weeks.

Despite these set-backs, both the Charter School and Coburg Primary are so impressed with the outcomes for their pupils they are currently running another project with different pupils and toddlers during the current cohort (February-July 2015). Our link contact at Charter School has said "*Teens and Toddlers is such a wonderful project that has a significant impact on our students*".

Future work

As noted, both the Charter school and Coburg Primary are very positive about the programme and we hope to continue to work with them in September after the current project ends. We hope that Notre Dame and Charles Dickens will be equally pleased with the outcomes for their young people and children. During interactions with other schools in regard to BFSS funding pre-project we are also confident that we have engaged new schools to work with including City of London Academy. Southwark remains a key target borough for Teens and Toddlers because of the high child poverty and low attainment, and we have recently met with the educational team at Southwark council and hope to attend the next Alternative Education Providers meeting.

Sustainability

We are very pleased that the Charter School nominated a member of staff to be trained as a Teens and Toddlers facilitator. The BFSS project was their first as an assistant facilitator, and they are now taking part on their second project. They have also completed training days at the charity. Once they have completed their second project and all of the required training days they will qualify and the cost of running projects at the Charter school will decrease, making the programme more sustainable for future projects.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the British and Foreign School Society for funding these projects and supporting these young people and children in Southwark. We look forward to reporting on both projects in a full grant report later this year.