

Insight driving innovation and impact

Set for Success Case Study: Bulwell Academy

Improving the behaviour and communication skills for young people at risk.

December 2021

Believing in every child's future

Introduction

Bulwell Academy is a secondary school located in Nottingham. Its mission is to discover and unleash the potential of every child.

In 2020, Bulwell Academy joined Set for Success, a two-year youth leadership initiative that aimed to provide young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with the opportunity to develop valuable life and leadership skills through mentoring sessions delivered by inspirational athletes. Set for Success is funded by the Wimbledon Foundation and delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST).

Background

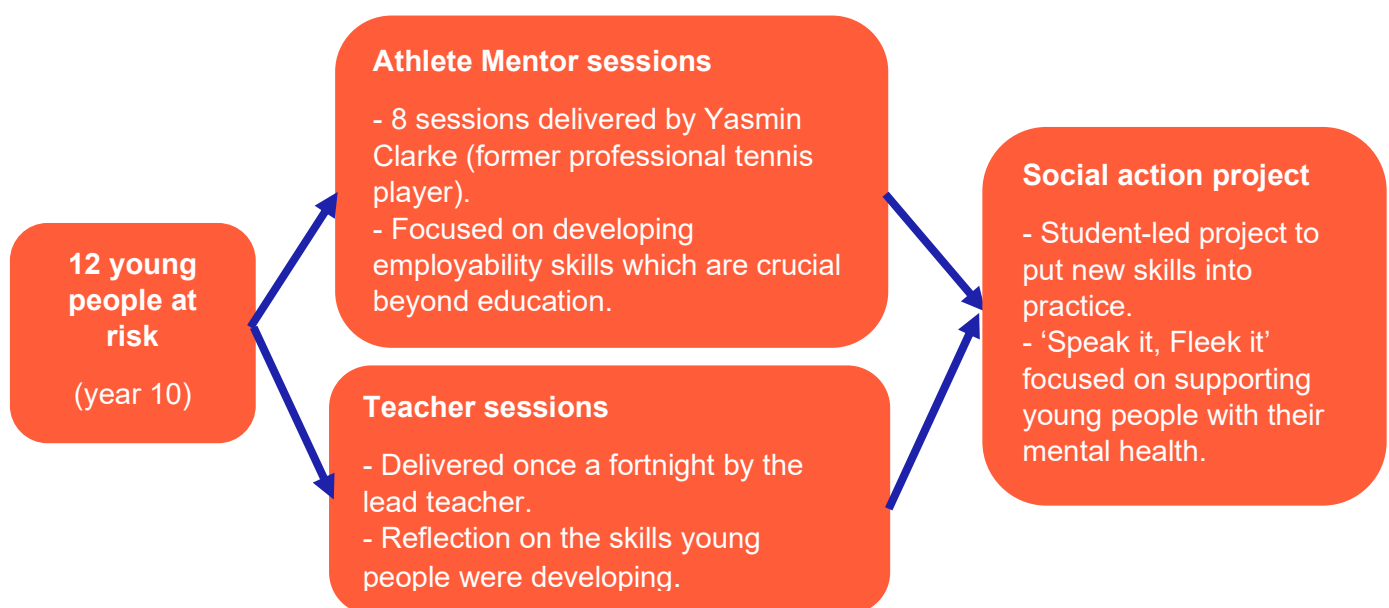
Set for Success offered a valuable opportunity for Bulwell Academy to offer extra support to young people at risk, notably those who were at risk of being not in employment education or training (NEETs) or those that would benefit from extra support to improve their behaviour. The Set for Success model also gave students the opportunity to 'belong' to something and to work with positive role models. Developing young people's life skills and their engagement in physical activity and sport were also important drivers for taking part.

"Our students are crying out for positive role models"

MR ELLAND, LEAD TEACHER, BULWELL ACADEMY

Activities

Covid-19 led to delays to delivery at the start, so the programme activities were extended into the 2021/22 academic year. The key activities that had been delivered at the time of writing this case study are highlighted in the diagram below.



Due to Covid-19, the first [Athlete Mentor session](#) was attended by some young people virtually, whilst others attended face to face at school. The remaining sessions were all delivered face to face; these were more effective at engaging the students. Importantly, having an Athlete Mentor as part of the programme supported buy-in from the students and provided a positive role model for them. It did, however, take time to build trust among the young people. One student highlighted that their favourite part of the programme was the practical Athlete Mentor sessions. The Athlete Mentor was perceived as helpful and informative, and they appreciated learning about new sports they had not tried before.

“My favourite thing about the programme was the practical sessions, it’s an eye opener to what other sports there are”

YEAR 11 STUDENT

Another key advantage of the programme was that it enabled a member of staff to dedicate time to supporting the young people on the programme. At Bulwell Academy, the students had a two-week timetable, so the group of students was split into two smaller groups that met with the [lead teacher](#) once a fortnight; the lead teacher highlighted that this had worked well.

Through their [social action project](#), the young people spoke at assemblies in primary schools, printed and distributed leaflets in the community, delivered open mic sessions in the playground to raise awareness of mental health, and interviewed a local boxer about his mental health and shared his story on social media. Without Set for Success, the lead teacher believes that this project would not have happened.

“It [the social action project] could be something that grows into something quite incredible.”

MR ELLAND, LEAD TEACHER, BULWELL ACADEMY

Benefits

Benefits to young people

The key benefits to the young people were as follows:



**Increased
communication skills
and confidence to
speak out**

The programme gave the young people a platform to speak out themselves about issues that are important to them, as well as their own struggles. One young person highlighted that the social action project had ignited a real passion for the topic among them. The lead teacher also emphasized that, over time, the young people have come out of their shells and their confidence to speak out has grown. Since being involved in Set for Success, one of the young people has also been put forward to become a teenage ambassador for mental health in the local area.

“I definitely developed my communication and confidence skills. I have been more confident talking about certain topics now.”

YEAR 11 STUDENT

Some of the young people used to have challenging behaviour but the programme has helped them to become more focused and increased their ability to set goals. One young person struggled with punctuality at school, which was linked to poor sleep patterns; Set for Success helped them to set new goals to tackle these challenges. Having a dedicated member of staff to support the young people on the programme has been very valuable, and the young people have become more willing to approach the staff member for support now.



**Improved
attendance and
behaviour**

“One of my challenges was fixing my sleep schedule and punctuality. Last year, I was a bit late to school, but I have been on time this year. And I sorted out my sleep schedule so I’m not tired for school and more energised.”

YEAR 11 STUDENT



Increased accountability and ownership

The social action project, in particular, has given the young people a real sense of ownership. Many young people involved in the programme lacked stability in their lives and the social action project gave them something that was all theirs. It also helped them to become more accountable; to recognize and take responsibility for issues that were important to them. One young person highlighted that the social action project had also encouraged them to consider a career in psychiatry or physical health.

Benefits to the school

The programme has given the school the opportunity to dedicate time to working with young people at risk. As a result, the lead teacher has reported improvements in attendance and behaviour among the young people at school. What is more, the programme has also raised the morale of the lead teacher himself.

Future

From the start of 2022, Bulwell Academy is delivering Set for Success with a new cohort of young people in year 10. The young people that have already been involved in the programme will play a mentoring role to the new cohort. The young people are also keen to develop their social action project further and would like to stay involved in the project when they leave school.

Top Tips

- ✓ Use the first Athlete Mentor session to inspire and engage young people in the programme; this is critical to the successful delivery of future activities.
- ✓ Follow the programme structure and guidance in the logbook to help facilitate valuable discussions with the young people.
- ✓ Ensure there is a dedicated member of staff to support the young people on the programme – *“the students mimic what you give them”*.
- ✓ Give the young people ownership of their social action project, but with advice, guidance, and support from the lead teacher.

“It’s been a fun ride, a bumpy one at the start, but it is definitely paying off now.”

MR ELLAND, LEAD TEACHER, BULWELL ACADEMY



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