

John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form Centre

Impact Statement – Every Child Matters

Engaging Parents to Raise Achievement

This project has been jointly lead by Mr Stephen Lester, Vice Chair of Governors and Mr Mark Croad Associate Head. The project was initiated in 2006 following a SSAT conference and subsequent granting of start up funding of £5,000.

The objective was initially to raise the GCSE attainment of a selected group of mid performing Year 11 students, although it has been subsequently expanded to include the whole Year 11 year group, and Year 9 Sat preparation.

A steering group comprising four governors and four senior members of staff defined the scope and organisation for the first years programme in 2006. We held a series of five evenings from September 2006 to the April 2007. We selected 44 students (approximately 25% of the year group) who had scored level 5s in their KS3 SATs. This level of performance score is reliably linked to giving C/D borderline at GCSE, hence our rationale was that by additional effort by the pupils and support from parents a significant proportion of the pupils should be able to achieve C grades or above, thus enhancing their opportunities for career or further education, as well as raising the schools GCSE performance.

We held a launch evening for parents only in a local public house; the objective being to attract as many of the potentially disengaged parents as possible. This approach was successful as we had over 80% attendance. We introduced the idea of the programme, and why their children had been selected, and we worked in small groups to identify the main issues which parents had concerns about, and that we would then incorporate into the evenings for the rest of the year. The parents also said how important they thought it was that their children should be involved, and therefore we all agreed that all future evenings would involve pupils, parents, staff and governors.

The rest of the evening meetings were held in the new sixth form/adult and community learning centre at the school. This provided a very good informal venue for the group. Refreshments were provided, and the atmosphere was very friendly.

At the following meeting the pupils also worked in similar small groups to identify their issues and concerns, and we then incorporated their ideas into the programme.

The sessions were lead or facilitated by members of the school staff and governors. We are very fortunate to have excellent experience within the school staff and governors of a range of relevant topics including

coaching, management and nutrition. These skills allowed us to run a wide range of interesting and applied approaches to the topics being covered.

Parents and pupils worked together, or in small groups discussing and agreeing their approach on the range of issues we had identified.

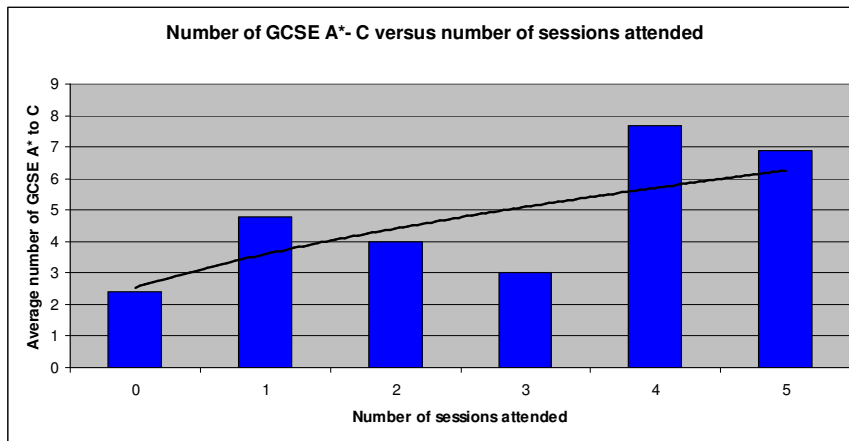
The topics covered included:-

- Revision techniques and tips
- Coursework planning
- Time management
- Diet and health
- Exam preparation
- Managing distractions
- How parents can help in supporting learning, revision and exam preparation

The topics covered at the evenings were linked to the work being done at school, hence we covered science module preparation just prior to the December tests, and Exam preparation topics in April just prior to the GCSEs in May and June.

Although numbers attending declined, there was a significant group which attended most or all the five evenings.

The benefit of attending the programme is clearly demonstrated in the following chart: The pupils who attended more of the evening sessions achieved a greater number of GCSEs at C or above.



The programme was run for the 2008 GCSE group, with the improvement, following feedback from parents of the first year group, of holding the first evening in July since they felt we had started the programme too late.

Since the first years programme had proved successful we adopted a similar approach to identifying issues in order to ensure that the programme was tailored to their concerns, and to gain their buy in to the programme.

We decided to open the final evening in April to all the year group, since numbers had been declining and the topics of pre exam preparation were relevant to the whole year group.

For the 2009 GCSE year group we made the decision to open up the evenings to the whole year group.

We will review this decision before deciding on the approach for the 2010 GCSE year group