



Healthy Schools Plus
SOUTH WEST
DEVON
2011

CASE STUDY - REDUCING PERSISTENT ABSENCE THROUGH THE SETTING UP OF A FAMILY LEARNING GROUP FOR 'HARD TO REACH' PARENTS

NAME OF SCHOOL

DARTINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY SCHOOL

HEALTH THEME

IMPROVING EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING



SUMMARY OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS PLUS ACTIONS

- School identified target group of families with significant need [including domestic violence, special needs, alcoholism, drug abuse and the Gypsy Roma Traveller culture] but not engaged with school or other agencies
- Parents and their children were initially invited to join a 6-week creative felting workshop to design a hanging for the new school
- Members of the school's Pastoral Team were present at the workshops to support the parents and children and provide a 'safe environment' within which to explore parenting concerns
- Refreshments were provided at the sessions – which the parents and

children enjoyed

- The group went on to complete another creative project on creative writing
- The group wanted further engagement and this was offered through accessing CAF funding by the completion of a Common Assessment Framework form and opening up to wider intervention and support
- Future action includes establishing another Family Learning group to target another set of parents with need. To be based on art activities linked to story books with the Every Child Counts teacher working alongside to point out where the art work links to learning

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- Persistent absence reduced from 3% to 1.9% [although the original target was 1.7% the intervention was considered very successful given the chaotic and entrenched behaviours of the target families]
- The average attendance of pupils involved in the project has risen from 83.7% to 89.9%
- Gradually the parents began to build positive relationships with the staff and each other
- The parents increasingly engaged with the school and all went on to access support from the Pastoral Team
- Engagement became so strong that parents went on to join interview panels, represent the school at special occasions and planned their own 'wild challenges activities' to improve their parenting skills
- Staff saw a difference not only in the children's attendance but also in the children's learning and behaviour
- The parents found a strong voice – encouraged by the Pastoral Team

REFLECTIONS FROM THE SCHOOL

The project gained momentum with others joining it. From the initial six week course the group continued to develop opportunities and meetings to join together alongside the Pastoral Team, with a strong sense of ownership from the parents. The ultimate measure of success is that a number of the parents have now gone on to adult learning opportunities and parents are working in partnership with the school to the benefit of themselves and their children.

Other successful Interventions

- Emotional Health & Wellbeing – through actions to increase attendance [as a whole Learning Community]
- Emotional Health & Wellbeing – positive playtimes [known as 'Out N About' time]. Including a Citizenship Award

For further information regarding this intervention, please contact -

CONTACT NAME

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