

Future First Case Studies

Developing a Network of Alumni to Support Current Students, Kingsmead School, Enfield

Kingsmead School identified a need to provide career and education role models to its students, many of whom came from backgrounds where role models were not prevalent at home. They partnered with the charity Future First to build a network of former students in a range of careers from doctors and engineers to entrepreneurs and policemen. They re-engaged students who had left over the years and committed to never losing touch with a student again.

These alumni provided inspiration and career insights through assemblies and workshops and have since gone on to enhance core curriculum lessons and offer work experience placements.

Students met alumni working in everything from TV production to nursing and heard about how people who used to come to the school, and had some of the same teachers, got into the jobs they do today. They gave both boys and girls tangible guidance about the steps they could take to pursue a wide range of careers and inspiration that people like them can achieve amazing things, including non-traditional career options. Kingsmead also arranged career-specific workshops that any student could attend. These have included, for example, "So you want to be an Engineer" and "So you want to be a Writer".

The school experienced increased belief among students that "people like them" can be successful and rising confidence that they will succeed in the world of work. Students also stated in evaluations that they want to work harder in school now as a result of hearing from alumni that worked hard at school and went on to be successful. The school has also experienced a widening range of post-16 destinations among its school leavers.

Kingsmead School is now using alumni to enhance the core curriculum by bringing alumni into lessons to show how subjects relate to the world of work, integrating careers guidance and inspiration into the school day. The school has also already seen how this community will be sustainable over the next 10-15 years. A former student, who was himself inspired by an alumni workshop just last year when he was in Year 13, is about to return to share his experiences of studying medicine at a top UK university with GCSE and A-Level biology classes.

"The alumni events show the students that if other Kingsmead pupils can go on to achieve incredible things, they can too and better still, they have someone available to ask what they need to do to get one step closer to their dream career."

Maroulla Richardson, G&T Coordinator, Kingsmead School

As featured in Department of Education, *Careers Guidance and Inspiration in schools*, April 2004:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357597/Careers_guidance_-_advice_for_schools_Sept_2014.pdf

Building Motivation at Wellfield High School, Lancashire

Wellfield High School in Leyland, Lancashire has been building an alumni network with the support of Future First since September 2014. Raising aspirations is a key objective for the school, so the leadership team selected 30 Year 10 students who needed a boost in confidence to take part in a Building Motivation programme.

Through a structured programme of three workshops, students were exposed to a range of inspirational alumni. The school wanted students to hear from alumni from BAE Systems- the largest local employer- as well as someone who had pursued psychology as a career path, as several of the students had expressed an interest in that field.

In the first of the three sessions, small groups of students participated in an interactive hour-long workshop in which they heard from alumni in a broad range of roles and from different sectors. In the second, students heard from alumni volunteers about how both good and bad grades can impact future education and employment opportunities. The last session saw small groups of students work with an alumni volunteer who helped them to create their own 'Picture of Me'. Working through a list of prompt questions, alumni volunteers guided the students into reflecting on the talents and achievements they already have and how they can continue to develop them in the future.

As a result of the sessions, 93 per cent of students committed to working hard in their lessons. Comparing pre- and post-programme data, 50 per cent of the students who'd stated that they didn't think Maths was relevant to their futures before the programme started had changed their mind by the end. Every single student who'd said the same of English before they started had shifted their opinion by the end. Eve, a participating Year 10 student, said, 'I learnt that hard work pays off. I need to believe more in myself and to work harder'.

Teacher Testimonials

"Keeping in touch with past pupils is very important to us. They can be a real inspiration to our current students, and we find their interest in the 'old school' and their willingness to help and support us far exceeds what we had thought before we got properly organised with a network. Future First has proved to be invaluable in moving us from a school which was interested in its alumni to one which is proactive in really engaging with them to our mutual advantage"

John Kendall, Risca Community Comprehensive School, Newport, Wales

"One of our biggest successes achieved through our Future First network was a dyslexic former student who is now a successful local architect speaking to our SEN cohort about overcoming adversity, which generated lots of positive feedback from the students involved. "We have also brought two former students back as ambassadors at Open Evenings, a further four as speakers in Year 11 assemblies about the benefits of signing up to the network and most recently are appointing E-mentors to allow current students to ask questions of people in the jobs they'd like to do."

Jonathan Morris, Headteacher, Warden Park Academy, Sussex

"The influence of former students has been invaluable. They have been able to inform and inspire current students - aspirations are, without a doubt, being raised."

Chris Eley, Head of Sixth Form, Lammis School and Sports College