

St Bernadettes

SATS The Way I Like It

UFA clubs replace traditional SATS booster clubs – with amazing results

“Finding an alternative to SATS booster clubs has completely changed how things are done at St. Bernadettes.” These are the words of Imelda Agar, Deputy Head at St. Bernadettes in North Tyneside.

Originally, the school would run the Government-initiated booster clubs between 3pm to 4.45pm, to help Year 6 pupils study for their SATS. “However,” says Imelda, “teachers would be exhausted from the normal day and still have all the marking and planning to do, after these clubs. The children had often had enough too so it wasn’t stimulating or fun for anyone.”



Application

Change was necessary, so Imelda drew on her training as a UFA Fellow and decided to launch a UFA Challenge club instead. Still dealing with curriculum work, the club ran during the same hours, but by making use of icebreaker and energiser games they helped re-energise the young people, and stimulated learning through a different approach.



Young People's Activities

The next steps

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“We informed the parents prior to this, to get them involved,” says Imelda. “This really set up good home/school links, as the children were so enthusiastic. Staff then discussed a strategy for learning, and we came up with an Open University style programme. Homework in its official form was dropped and in its place the young people had a text book and an exercise book and a set number of pages to have completed by a certain time. If they needed support there were drop in sessions freely available, but the time planning and organisation was left up to the young people.

“It encouraged them to take responsibility,” says Imelda. “It worked remarkably well, and we had a 100% attendance rate at the club from the 48 children involved. Even more remarkably, the staff were still lively and engaged at 4.45pm!”

Responsibility

After the SATS exams, Year 6 took over the school to put on a Super Learning Day (SLD). “It was truly remarkable,” says Imelda. “They took classes, organised the timetables and were responsible for everything. The theme was emotions – looking at music, mood and how a happy, content state is the best for learning.

“It was a really successful day. Our next step is to move on to how we can make a wider community and put on other after-school clubs. We are on our way to ensuring that parents see after-school as a learning experience rather than free childcare.” says Imelda

