

Sutton Coldfield Girls Grammar School

Stepping Up To The Challenge

With a Deputy Head Teacher that knows education is about more than just exam results, the Students of today, leaders of tomorrow programme was ideal for Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls

WHY THEY GOT INVOLVED:

The school, part of Birmingham LA, has just been designated a High Performing Specialist School following an outstanding OFSTED Inspection. It has also been designated a Leadership Partner School – one of just 65 in the country.

As part of this new specialism, the school is working to develop leadership opportunities for staff, students and the wider community.

"We spent several months researching leadership opportunities," says Deputy Head Trudi Young. "The UFA course we chose provided an excellent mix of practical exercises, support, fun, leadership and structure. The aims of the course were clear, and the pre-course training was excellent."



Funding

THE COURSE. AND THE FUNDING:

The course Trudi requested was the Key Stage 3, as it was applicable for the Year 9 groups, and lasted two days, which would be of minimum disruption to the normal curriculum.

Funding came from the school, with an additional £500 grant available for a project-management challenge which formed part of the course. This was to give the students a real opportunity to put in a proposal to be funded.

Young People's Leadership

The next steps

“We wanted to give an opportunity to those who hadn’t been engaged in leadership activity before.”
says Trudi.



WHO TOOK PART:

The students: Sixty students from year 9 attended in total. Fifty nine of them completed both days of the course. The young people selected completed a leadership audit beforehand. “We wanted to give an opportunity to those who hadn’t been engaged in leadership activity before,” says Trudi. “We’re aware that sometimes the quieter pupils tend to get overshadowed by more forward pupils. This allowed the quieter ones a chance to get really involved, and see their own potential.”

The staff: The course was planned and organised by the Trudi. Four staff members, including Trudi, attended the facilitator awareness training day held shortly beforehand.

“In recent years there has been a shift from teaching towards focusing on learning,” says Trudi. “Initially, some of the staff found it hard to step back and not jump in and assist the young people. However, the facilitation course enabled us to understand that the more room we gave the young people, the more they would be able to achieve. This was definitely borne out as the course went on.”

Training

ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING PROCESSES:

The activities of the course were worked through with the young people in four groups of 15. These groupings changed each day to allow more interaction. Having been told that it’s the kind of course where the more you put in, the more you get out, most of the activities were clearly enjoyed by the young people.

Favourite exercises included the role-plays, particularly the one where they had to feed back bad news to an unsuccessful candidate and then get feedback on their own performance. The mini-challenges and the energisers produced situations where the groups could develop both their individual skills and their ability to be part of and understand how to maximise team work.

“The games made things more fun,” says student Annia Rhodes. “It increased our skills, but it also made the learning more memorable. People were really able to let go, and absorb the learning. I’ll be able to use a lot of these ideas in the future.”

