



## Case Study

# St Gerard's Catholic Primary - Rotherham

## The School

St. Gerard's Primary School is a Catholic, Voluntary Aided School for children aged 4 to 11. It has been part of Thrybergh Excellence in Cities Action Zone since September 2000. There are 136 pupils on the roll. The ward in which the school draws pupils has 17.5% unemployment.



The Challenge Club at St. Gerard's started in January 2003. It has a total membership of 82 with 40 regular members.

Challenges are about providing opportunities and motivation for all pupils to work to their full potential.

Challenges fit the following model:

## Challenge Club

Central to the Challenge Club framework is the intention to increase attainment, inclusion and develop increasingly positive attitudes to learning across and beyond the school curriculum.

**'Challenge Club will be part of what I do for the foreseeable future. I am deeply passionate about it.'** Craig Roberts, Challenge Club Leader

- An open-ended task
- A shared learning objective
- Work begins at any level relative to the child's abilities
- All children are able to work at the highest level of attainment they can for the duration of the task
- Progression within the task is always a partnership between teacher and pupil
- Pupils have ownership of the task and an inherent responsibility for its sound completion

## A typical session

A typical Challenge Club session begins with a change from school uniform into UFA t-shirts. Pupils also sign in which, along with the t-shirts, helps to develop a sense of belonging to the Challenge Club. The session begins with a Brain Break activity and a warm up such as listening and/or thinking skills. The main challenge for the session will then be introduced. Activities following the introduction of the main challenge will depend on the nature of the challenge itself. The group might be given quiet thinking time or work in random or self selected groups (very rarely as individuals).

When the challenge is complete the group celebrates their achievements and takes part in a 'cool down' exercise.



- Promote the UFA and develop the sense of 'belonging to two organisations'
- Provide an insight for parents into how their children learn and how they, too can become better learners
- Provide opportunities for parents to socialise with each other
- Provide opportunities for parents to work alongside their children in solving problems
- Give the pupils the chance to show their parents what fantastic learners they are

## Challenge nights

Each term a 'Challenge Night' event encourages parents, carers and relatives to visit the school. The first event was attended by 60 adults. The aims of these sessions are to:

- Develop links with home and community

// **'The challenges are like: how can you make things, what could this be? There's pictures and numbers to help you, everyone in class four loves challenges.'**  
A Year 6 Challenge Clubber //

## Attainment

Anecdotal and statistical data exists to support the claim that Challenge Club has been a success at the school.

A comparison of results for 2003-2004 reveals Challenge Clubbers at the school out perform non-Challenge Clubbers and in years 5 & 6 they achieve over one point higher than the national average.

The club meets the aims and core principles of the UFA and continues to provide all those involved with a high level of fun and learning satisfaction.

Millennium Point  
Curzon Street  
Digbeth  
Birmingham  
B4 7XG

**We're on the web,  
[www.ufa.org.uk](http://www.ufa.org.uk)**

Tel: 0121 202 2345  
Fax: 0121 202 2384

Email: [info@ufa.org.uk](mailto:info@ufa.org.uk)

