

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS GETS TOP MARKS

FUNDED BY: Greets Green Partnership match-funded the four Pastoral Manager posts with George Salter Collegiate Academy for three years from September 2005. Partnership funding ended in September 2008 and the posts are now entirely funded by the school.

PROJECT BACKGROUND: In 2003, George Salter High School (now George Salter Collegiate Academy) was a poorly performing school. Less than half the children who were leaving local primary schools were going to the school which was the only high school in Greets Green.

It was only achieving a 15% pass rate at GCSE level which meant the school had to either raise its standards or close. The Department for Education & Skills invested £¼ million over three years to transform the school. Greets Green Partnership also provided £¼ million in the first year to install all the ICT systems that were needed. With the right systems in place, good quality teachers were then attracted to the school. The Partnership invested a further £¼ million in a variety of initiatives to turn the school

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The four Pastoral Managers at George Salter Collegiate Academy are (l to r) Natalie Sheldon, Tracey Cottam, Paul Tomlinson and Amanda Hayes.

around, including the match-funding of four Pastoral Manager posts. The money provided by Greets Green Partnership was entirely aimed at raising standards at the school and giving young people a better future.

PROJECT DETAILS: The Pastoral Managers' role is to improve the pastoral support offered to all students. While the teachers concentrate on teaching, the Pastoral Managers deal with all the non-teaching issues which affect students learning, such as attendance, behaviour and parental support.

With the appointment of the Pastoral Managers in September 2005 came the total reorganisation of George Salter into a house system. This was one of a number of interventions to change the pastoral support and make fundamental changes to the school. The Academy is now divided into four houses – Brunswick, Rowley, Farley and Kenrick. Each house has its own special identity and students are very protective of their house. There is a healthy air of competition by both staff and students in all inter-house activities.

Each house has a Zone Director (Assistant Principal), Head of House and a Pastoral Manager - a non-teaching member of staff who is always available to support students, parents and staff. In effect four mini schools have been created, each with a strong identity, a positive, caring ethos and a determination to ensure that every student achieves their very best.

The Academy feels that the appointment of the Pastoral Managers has allowed it to strengthen its relationships with families and offer all students, particularly those who may be vulnerable, a level of support that far exceeds what it was previously able to offer.

Ofsted 2005 said: "at George Salter High School it is obvious that every child really does matter." The appointment of the Pastoral Managers has allowed the Academy to build on this and has been instrumental in helping it reach its present high level of achievement.

ACHIEVEMENTS: John Nicholson, Zone Director of Brunswick House, says that the Pastoral Managers system is only as good as the Pastoral Managers themselves and that those at George Salter are excellent. There have been numerous cases of students disengaged from school life who have been helped back into school by the Pastoral Managers and are now achieving their full potential.

If a student is not in school, they can't learn. The Pastoral Managers are responsible for monitoring the attendance of students in their house and then carrying out house visits, helping to educate parents and liaising with external agencies such as the Police or Social Services if required. Attendance at the school has risen from 88% in 2005 to 91.2% in 2007/08.



Thanks to the support provided by the Pastoral Managers, the number of fixed term exclusions ie students being excluded for three to five days, has been dramatically reduced. During the first year of the project there were more than 350 exclusions. During 2007/08 this had dropped to just 51.

The School's new Centre of Inclusion, supported by the Pastoral Managers, has also helped. Students are referred to this rather than simply being excluded. They have a different timetable and complete lessons in relevant subjects such as anger management, self-esteem and self-confidence.

When the Pastoral Managers had been in place for just one year, the pass rate at GCSE level rose from 56% in 2005 to 64% in 2006. The Sandwell average score of pupils achieving five or more A* - C grades in 2006 was 47%. This was the year George Salter became the second highest achieving school in Sandwell.

In 2007 it became a Collegiate Academy, becoming the 'community school of choice' and GSCE results rose once again to 85% achieving five or more A* - C grades. In 2008 GCSE results hit 89% and the school continues to not only exceed the Sandwell average (which was the primary aim originally), but also the national average.

PROJECT IN ACTION: There are many examples of students at George Salter receiving support from the Pastoral Managers and then being able to go on and achieve their potential.

Amanda Hayes, one of the original Home/School Liaison Officers, has been a Pastoral Manager of Kenrick since the project was launched. "The aim of the Home School Liaison Officers was to get the communication going between a child's family and the school," Amanda explains.

"The Pastoral Managers continued this. The impact of home life on school life is huge. We get to know the families and pick up on family issues. We look at students whose attendance or attainment has fallen and look into the reasons. There may be a family break up, domestic violence or it may be something like the family has experienced a burglary.

"The success of the Pastoral Managers is based on trust. We know the families very well and they know and trust us. We have students who were non-attenders at other schools, maybe due to bullying or other issues, who have come to George Salter and now have excellent attendance. Families feel happier talking to someone they know and having one person they can trust.

"It can take a long time to get some parents' trust and support, but they often say 'it's good to be able to contact the school and feel that there is always somebody



available to help resolve issues’.” Once the trust has been built between the school and a family it can help other siblings as there is a system in place. The Pastoral Managers ensure that they enter the same house at George Salter as their older brothers and sisters when they move from primary school.

The school may need to involve other agencies to provide external support. In some cases, the school contacts Children’s Services who set up a ‘Team Around the Child’ meeting. Any agencies which may be able to help are invited to the meeting.

“The work of the Pastoral Managers means that parents now understand why the school involves other agencies,” adds Amanda. “We pick up where there are problems immediately so that things don’t escalate. We’re proactive rather than reactive. We try to pre-empt issues and react before they get out of hand.”

CONTACT: If you would like to know more about the Pastoral Managers project, contact John Nicholson at George Salter Collegiate Academy on 0121 553 4665.

FACT FILE:

- Over 1400 students have benefitted from the Pastoral Managers project.
- Attendance levels have increased from 87.5% in 2003/04 before the project began to 90% in 2005/06, 91% in 2006/07 and 91.2% in 2007/08.
- The number of fixed term exclusions ie students being excluded for three to five days, has been reduced from 350 in 2003/04 before the project began to 168 in 2005/06, 89 in 2006/07 and 51 in 2007/08.
- The number of permanent exclusions has been reduced from 6 in 2005/06 to 0 in 2007/08.

Greets Green Partnership was awarded £56 million in 2000 to deliver a 10 year regeneration programme under the Government’s New Deal for Communities (NDC) initiative. It has funded over 340 projects throughout the area, covering community services, crime & community safety, health, housing & urban form and jobs & skills. The Partnership area, which is adjacent to West Bromwich Town Centre, is home to just over 12,400 residents living in 4,900 households.

For permission to publish this case study and to request photographs, please call Brian McKinstrie, Greets Green Partnership’s Communications & PR Manager on freephone 0800 953 0215 or email brian_mckinstrie@sandwell.gov.uk

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