

Action Research Project

As part of the CPD programme offered by Cygnet Schools I recently undertook an Action Research project. The title of the project was 'The Effective use of Pupil Premium for Children Looked After within a Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service'.

The aim was to look at how money secured from Virtual Schools is spent and how this impacts upon academic achievement and experiences of education. I focussed on the benefits of non-academic interventions in developing the underpinning skills needed to ensure students can access education and be in a place where they are able to learn.

The study looked at challenges faced by Designated Teachers in showing impact of non-academic targets when requesting funding from Virtual Schools. There was also some discussion around the difficulties faced in working with so many local education authorities, who each have their own way of working and their own priorities. It was acknowledged that measuring academic impact is easier than non-academic. The study highlighted ways in which impact for non-academic spends could be evaluated and impact measured.

Key findings

As national statistics could not be used as a comparative tool for Cygnet Schools due to the amount of variables, I suggested using internal measures such as case studies, attendance data and Mental Health Functioning in Education scores. Using all three together would ensure rich qualitative and quantitative data.

I looked at difficulties around seeing impact. Due to the short time we have students on roll we may not see the impact of non-academic interventions. An example is around improving resilience, it may be that impact is only evident once the young person has transitioned to college or successfully reintegrated to their home school. Tracking our students would help us evaluate impact and inform future practice and I suggested this as a topic warranting further research.

I thoroughly enjoyed undertaking this project, it prompted me to critically reflect upon my own practice and to consider personal bias. It reminded me about the importance of acknowledging the multiple levels that make up a person and to use an intersectional lens more in my practice.

Jayne Rowlands
School Manager, Education Officer
and Looked After Designated Person



Phoenix School (Sheffield), Excel & Exceed Centre (Bury) and The Summit (Coventry) are DfE registered special schools, providing education for young people admitted to their co-located hospital services.

Our schools are regulated by OFSTED and were all rated GOOD at their last inspection.

[Excel & Exceed Centre](#)
[Phoenix School](#)
[Summit School](#)



Staff News and Recognition

Following on from the success of our first ever Cygnet Staff Achievement Awards last year, which are a celebration of the talent, compassion and dedication of our staff, they are back again for 2023.

We are delighted that:-

- Katy Edmondson & Julie Flude—Phoenix School
 - Wendy Webster— Excel & Exceed
 - Aisling McClelland Nicky Jessop & Stacey Arnett— Summit School
- and Summit School were all nominated.

Congratulations to:-

Wendy Webster—Head Teacher at Excel & Exceed who is a finalist in the category Integrity; Hand on Heart and will be attending the awards ceremony on 21st November. Well done and good luck Wendy!

Lauren Hoarty & Charlie Dwyer— TA's at Excel & Exceed received a formal compliment from a Manager who they work with at WISH for their help and support.

Education staff at Summit School

as part of the Teacher Appreciation Day on 5th October they were gifted a hamper from the Hospital Director to say thank you for all their hard work.



SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

What we've been up to this month.....

Young people at Summit School have been celebrating and learning all about space during **World Space Week** (4-10th October 2023). World Space Week is celebrated across 95 nations and each year has a specific theme – this year it was Space and Entrepreneurship. Our young people had a fantastic day in designing and making their own planet biscuits, then ordering the planets from the sun. All designs were exceptional. Some also took part in enhancing their knowledge by researching into different moons for planets, completed the solar system crossword and then a space quiz in teams.



Work from the students at the Excel and Exceed Centre has recently been submitted and approved for printing in the **Young Writers 'Integer- Myths and Legends' writing competition**. Two students who wrote short stories were chosen to be published - the first focussed on Friday the 13th and the second centred on the second wife of Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn. All staff are incredibly proud of the effort that each student put into their work and the fact that they have been selected for printing is a testament to their talent.



October is **Black History Month!** To celebrate BHM 2023, there have been a number of events around the Sheffield hospital and Phoenix School with a view to involving as many staff and service users as possible.



The Phoenix School held an art session where young people explored various aspects of African art through colours, patterns, and African sunsets. Other activities were also on offer relating to influential black women, colouring sheets and a "top trumps" style game that compared the strengths of famous black women.

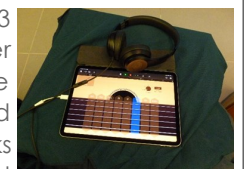
They also celebrated through their Reading for Pleasure scheme, promoting both fiction and non-fiction books that represent the Black community.



School staff worked with the Multi-Cultural Ambassadors to plan a day of activities to celebrate BHM across all four wards. Staff were invited to wear their traditional cultural dress on the day, showing off beautiful colours and patterns. School staff and the MCA's then went from ward to ward throughout the day demonstrating traditional dancing and having staff and service users join in. Black History Month themed activities were also provided.

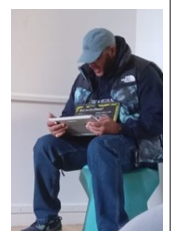


Excel and Exceed have begun to embark on **school trips** as of the 2023 academic year, the first of which took place on the Friday 13th October to the Arndale in Manchester. While here, students were invited to the **Apple store** to participate in a Garage Band workshop. Students utilised iPad's- similar to the ones donated to Excel and Exceed in recent weeks as part of a collaboration with The Prince's Trust- in which they created music tracks from scratch. Two workshops were attended by a number of students throughout the day.



The following Wednesday there was a trip to the **National Football Museum** with a specific focus on Black History Month. The trip explored racism on the pitch and also celebrated the successes in women's football in recent months closely related to the theme for this year's Black History Month, which was 'Celebrating Our Sisters.' The students who attended engaged extremely well with both the workshops on offer, in which they were able to handle replica objects and take part in the interactive part of the museum where they had the opportunity to partake in completing agility based tasks.

Anthony Olaseinde, the founder of charity '**Always an Alternative**', visited Phoenix School on Monday 16th October to speak to our young people on Griffin and Unicorn wards. Anthony spreads awareness of knife crime, gun crime, gang culture and anti-social behaviour, through talks to young people in different settings throughout South Yorkshire. Anthony also offered our young people some helpful conflict resolution tips. Everyone got a lot out of Anthony's visit, finding it interesting and, at times, enlightening.



At Summit, PSHE lessons are a great opportunity to celebrate world events such **Mental Health Day**. For Mental Health Day students were able to create their own 'Wellness Toolkit' recognising triggers and coming up with strategies to help themselves.

