

Raising standards, improving attainment

Supporting Supplementary Schools

‘Supplementary schools embody the Big Society vision of community-led initiatives, which are run in part by volunteers, and driven by the needs of local communities. With continued support, and greater recognition, this network can be harnessed and built on, supporting the development of a Big Society in some of the UK’s most challenging communities.’

(Pascale Vassie, NRC)

The National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRC) is the only specialist organisation working to support supplementary schools in the UK. It was established in 2006 and is hosted and managed by the learning charity ContinYou.

The NRC, which currently has 850 member schools, provides:

- ▶ a National Quality Framework to ensure that supplementary schools meet minimum standards
- ▶ a wide range of online resources
- ▶ training programmes for community volunteers, local authorities and other agencies that support the supplementary schools sector
- ▶ help and advice on developing partnerships with mainstream schools and local communities
- ▶ advice and support to local and central government, and support for specific regional projects.



To find out more:

▶ Email: nrc@continyou.org.uk

▶ Tel: 020 7587 5080

▶ Write to: NRC, ContinYou, 31–33 Bondway,
London SW8 1SJ

continyou
National Resource Centre for
Supplementary Education

Background

There are an estimated 5,000 supplementary schools currently operating in England alone. The majority are located in multi-ethnic and/or faith communities, many of which are disadvantaged and 'hard to reach'.

Research published by the DCSF (now DfE) in 2010 estimated that between 18 and 28 per cent of all pupils aged 5 to 16 from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds in England attend supplementary schools.

Schooling takes place in addition to mainstream education, and is often unrecognised by local authorities and the mainstream education sector. However, when properly supported, supplementary schools can:

- ▶ improve attainment of children from BME backgrounds in mainstream education
- ▶ develop understanding and good partnerships between mainstream schools and the communities they serve
- ▶ help to engage local authorities with 'hard-to-reach' communities
- ▶ support good community relations and integrate recently settled communities into society and the education system.



Raising standards

NRC aims

- ▶ To open up NRC membership to any supplementary school that wishes to join. *We estimate that 250 new schools will become NRC members each year.*
- ▶ To open up the Quality Framework for Supplementary Education to local authorities, and to guarantee that every supplementary school in England wanting to achieve the Bronze level award is able to access support to do so. *We estimate this will result in 200 schools achieving the Bronze award each year.*
- ▶ To provide training programmes for suitably qualified people wishing to mentor supplementary schools through the higher levels of the Quality Framework. *We estimate that this will result in twenty Silver, twenty Gold and ten Special Distinction awards being achieved each year.*
- ▶ To deliver training sessions (free of charge to supplementary schools) on: starting up supplementary schools; safeguarding in supplementary schools; and fundraising for supplementary schools. *We estimate that we will provide 21 courses per year, covering every region of England.*
- ▶ To offer a comprehensive range of bespoke training in teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation, and effective management skills, which supplementary schools, partnerships and consortia, local authorities and CVSs can purchase.
- ▶ To raise the profile of the supplementary schools sector. *This will include organising a quarterly national forum on policy development and advocacy within the sector.*

Why is the NRC needed?

- 1 Lack of recognition:** There are only minimum duties on local authorities to support, train and monitor supplementary schools within their area, and many schools have no contact whatsoever with their local authority. With few exceptions, there is little recognition of the positive impact of supplementary education on children's education and community cohesion.
- 2 Funding:** At least 75 per cent of supplementary schools have to function on an annual income of less than £50,000, and struggle to secure support and funding.
- 3 Skills and expertise:** There is a lack of appropriate skills in the sector, and teachers vary widely in their experience and qualifications. While most have taught before, many have no experience of the British curriculum and there is a huge demand for training and support. In 2009–10, the NRC delivered 67 training courses to 752 teachers, covering areas as diverse as fundraising, classroom management, special educational needs and safeguarding.
- 4 Managing volunteers:** 40 per cent of those schools affiliated to the NRC are entirely dependent on volunteers. Some pay sessional fees to their teachers, but still depend on volunteers to function effectively.
- 5 Child safety:** Basic oversight of the supplementary schools sector relating to standards of safety and teaching needs strengthening. To date, 190 supplementary schools have achieved Bronze level awards through the NRC's voluntary quality assurance scheme.
- 6 Links with mainstream schools:** There is little policy integration between mainstream and supplementary schools. The majority of supplementary schools aim to strengthen pupils' cultural identity, self-esteem and academic achievement. While links with mainstream schools are sought, they often prove difficult to achieve.



Improving attainment

Impact of supplementary education

In a survey of 772 pupils attending 63 supplementary schools in **Birmingham, Bristol, London and Manchester** 84 per cent of respondents stated that supplementary schools had helped them with their mainstream school work. This was deemed to be due to more concentrated teacher–pupil time, the ethos of supplementary schools, and having teachers and pupils with shared backgrounds. (Strand, 2007)

In 2005, **Bristol City Council** developed a model linking mainstream and supplementary schools. The project showed a significant impact on pupil attainment, notably improved GCSE grades for those attending supplementary schools; 41.7 per cent surpassed their expected grade, compared to 19.1 per cent of the control group. (Cousins, 2005)

FAQs

How is the NRC staffed?

The NRC is staffed by a lead manager and a highly experienced team of Regional Strategic Advisors (RSAs), covering the whole of England.

They are supported by a Quality Framework Training Manager, Membership Officer, and a team of locally recruited mentors, who support supplementary schools through the Quality Framework process.

How much does the NRC cost?

It costs £430,000 per year to run the NRC – exceptional value, given the scale and importance of the work the NRC does to train and support supplementary schools to raise standards and ensure the safety of children.

The NRC is currently funded by an annual grant from central government and a grant-making trust, combined with individual subscriptions from some supplementary schools and local authorities for additional support services.

Further core funding is needed to sustain the NRC into the future and to extend its reach to many more schools across the UK.

This is an excellent opportunity for a trust or foundation to partner us and to help us achieve our vision of a thriving supplementary schools sector, which is supporting some of the most disadvantaged children in the UK.

About ContinYou



ContinYou is a national learning charity that aims to open up learning opportunities that are accessible to everyone.

Our vision is of a world where everyone has the chance to transform their lives through learning, so that they can be confident, achieve and help build supportive families and strong communities.

www.continyou.org.uk