

Create an effective learning environment

Gheez Rite Saturday School

National Excellence Awards Commended 2008

Background

The Gheez Rite Saturday School teaches Tigrinya, English and Maths to children and young people from the Eritrean community in north Kensington. Gheez Rite has maintained excellent relationships with an extended school. They meet each Saturday for four hours in Sion-Manning RC Girls School, where they have the use of a suite of classrooms and access to playground and sports facilities. This has enabled them to provide age-appropriate lessons, space for creative play, and space to meet with parents on a one-to-one basis and for parents' workshops.

Create an effective learning environment

The rooms are well heated and ventilated with lots of natural light and fully stocked with ample supply of desks, chairs, white boards, overhead projectors, computers as well as a number of different books. Gheez Rite also brings in their own TV with DVD player on which they showed educational videos to assist the younger children to learn the language. Lessons are planned and delivered to a timetable, classes are extremely well-organised, and children and young people know exactly what they are doing and when.

There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils and their families. High expectations of behaviour are reinforced through a code of conduct which parents have been consulted on. The parents' committee meets on a regular basis to plan events and discuss issues that arise in the school, and some parents volunteer to help in the classroom. The school has a strong family atmosphere and this encourages the good behaviour of the children.

The school marks festivals by having huge parties. Events such as these provide a more informal context for learning and a place where the strong values of the school can be seen in practice. The staff in the school communicate values such as learning through enjoyment, how to appreciate themselves and others, to appreciate their own identity and to act with dignity. They help children and young people to understand their cultural background and support them with reading and writing in English so that they can adapt to the host community. They communicate the importance of giving as well as taking.