

Plan and develop your organisation

Pepys Supplementary School

Background

Pepys Supplementary School is located in the Pepys Estate in Lewisham, which houses a very diverse community. 13 years ago, residents on the estate set up a supplementary school to offer additional help on Saturdays in English, Maths and Science. Housed in a community centre in the heart of the estate, they work with up to 100 students every week.

Ibrahim Kamara has lived on the Pepys Estate in South East London for 16 years. As we walk through the estate, everyone greets him cheerfully, he is on first name terms with everyone, and stops to hear all their news and views, and aid them with any concerns. He is brimming with community spirit, and it is this positive attitude he brings to the Pepys Supplementary School.

The school has been running since 1993, providing extra Maths and English tuition to 100 students every Saturday. The school has grown from strength to strength, despite lack of support from mainstream schools, and serves the community of the estate as a whole, rather than any particular faith, denomination or background.

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Pepys Supplementary School strives for excellence. They have set their sights on a gold award for the Quality Framework, and continually try to fulfil all requirements to show parents, mainstream schools and their stakeholders evidence of good practice, whether this is through engaging children to find out what they want, and taking them on trips to Arsenal's football ground, or doing out-of-hours tuition. Funders can see their good work; parents are happy because their children are in good hands; it is good for the school's general portfolio; and can set the scene for potential long-term funding, which is the school's ultimate goal.

Challenges and solutions

It has not always been plain sailing for Pepys Supplementary School. One of the first challenges they met with was where they could have premises. Eventually, they settled in the estate's community centre, and are trying to extend their hours there.

In the beginning, the school was also only running for black children. After initial feedback from parents, they decided to open up the school to everyone. This led to Ibrahim showing off the extent of his networking skills, and his general warm personality when dealing with people. He met with parents at school gates to sing the school's praises and attended steering groups and meetings to promote the new scope of the school. Now the population is very diverse, with children ranging from Afro-Caribbean to Asian to Eastern European to British Caucasian.

Top Tips

- Listen to the parents and children - they are your bosses. Funders want to know who the school is serving. These are the parents and children.
- Listen to stakeholders as they can offer you invaluable advice.

- Don't work in isolation- be positive and be prepared to learn from others