

## **Working with other organisations**

### **Russian Saturday School National Excellence Awards Commended 2008**

#### **Background**

The Russian Saturday School was nominated for an award because it shows innovation and work that contributes to community cohesion – a small organisation teaching Russian, music and dance to children of Russian families has opened its doors to the wider community by adding art and music to its repertoire, and advertising its services widely so that children from all nationalities can work together, and families come together to attend performances.

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The Russian Saturday School teaches Russian, music and art. It works in partnership with Westwood college which has a number of Russian pupils and refers pupils and provides information on the protocols of the examination process.. The local supplementary school co-ordinator matched the two schools for a much more cohesive approach towards the learning process for the pupils.

Standards of Russian language learning are high, with pupils gaining A grades at GCSE and A level. Thanks to the support from the college, there is much more synergy for the pupils with regards to their studying of the languages and the examination process. Pupils are much more confident when sitting papers as they have been given guidance as to exam techniques. Pupils build confidence and trust with the teachers and are therefore much open to the support provided, having an informal setting also allows students to open up to seeking support in other areas of their curriculum work from their mainstream school.

Art and music lessons are open to the local community, and are made accessible to all through support from the Youth Music Foundation and through scholarships from Trinity College. Three pupils have gained scholarships from Trinity College to pay for their lessons and instruments can be borrowed or rented. In adding these classes to the curriculum, the organisation provides work for trained music teachers from their own community. They attract a diverse range of children to music and art classes, and information is circulated by all schools in the area.

The pupils have taken part in performances every year at the Russian community centre attended by parents and the local Mayor. The pupil population has become very diverse, from Asian and African descent specifically for music lessons, and this has made community performances much more enjoyable and the pupils share their musical backgrounds. Performances consist of Russian music to music from the mainstream and other cultural backgrounds catering for all parents and people from the community who attend their event.