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English – The Key to Integration in London

Project Lead: Main Lead - Camden School for Girls (Suhela Bari)
Partner School - Torriano Junior School (Maria Panayi)

Project Title: Camden Project

Grant Awarded: Mayor of London - London Schools Excellence Fund

Introductory paragraph

The Key to Integration in London project was introduced at Torriano Junior School in January 2015. Since then there have been a number of classes for mothers in the school including ESOL, parenting support & fitness classes. Recruitment was the largest obstacle faced, with many mothers showing an initial interest in the project but opting out nearer the time. I feel that the timing of the project at Torriano Junior School was partly responsible for the reduced interest in participation. From November 2014 the school had also been running the Parent Academy programme. This programme provides weekly classes for parents and carers throughout the school year, encouraging them to support their child's learning at home. It also provides a crèche and breakfast/lunch for all those attending, in addition to an incentive of £30 Sainsbury's vouchers for each attendee every week. During the recruitment for the Mayor of London project there was also a big recruitment push from Parent Academy. As a result, many parents had already committed their time to the one project and it was not possible to take on a second.

Key points

- Overall progress – The project has gone well at Torriano Junior School, the mothers involved have enjoyed the classes they have attended and have asked for many to continue.
- Recruitment – The initial target was 15 mothers for the ESOL class, unfortunately due to the timing and other courses running alongside it in the school the final number for the ESOL class was 6. There were also lower numbers than hoped for the parenting course. However, the fitness class was well attended and the target was reached for the 2 day mentoring course. The number attending the fitness class appeared to increase as some of the ESOL mothers were encouraged to attend it. Many of the mothers in the school who are not a part of the project also attend our fitness sessions as they run throughout the year.
- Data collection – Initially I booked interviews with each of the mothers to complete the data collection however, this took longer than planned therefore I amended the data collection process by creating a user friendly questionnaire that mothers could complete either at home with support or with me. Adapting this was a good idea as the mothers also found it clearer to understand and made the process quicker.

Impact on mothers' English

The mothers have been enjoying the classes, they expressed that they had been asking about ESOL classes at the school for a while so were pleased that it had become available as a result of this project. A number of them had asked for the classes to continue after the completion of the project, therefore I have since been in contact with the Working Men's College and we are working together to be able to continue the classes into the next academic year. As the classes will no longer be a part of the project, we will now be able to encourage parents from Torriano Infant School to also attend.

The overall impact on the mothers' English is assessed by the ESOL teacher who carried out assessments at the start and end of the course, and also by the feedback from both the mothers and the staff at the school. The mothers were also asked about their confidence levels in the initial questionnaire and then again in the follow up in order to see if there had been an increase in their confidence in speaking English. Each teacher involved with the children of the mothers was also asked about how confident they perceive the mothers to be when engaging with them; this too was asked at the start and end of the project.

Impact on mothers' involvement with the school

I have personally noticed an increase in communication from some of the mothers who would not have had any contact with me prior to the project beginning. One mother in particular who would avoid looking and speaking to members of staff due to her lack of understanding of the English language is now saying good morning, asking how I am and occasionally trying to have a conversation with me. In addition, some of the mothers from the ESOL class have taken part in the parenting course and the fitness classes, therefore becoming more involved in the different events the school has for parents and carers. As a whole, the mothers appear more confident when speaking to me about any questions or concerns they may have about their child or the school. Their desire to continue their learning with additional ESOL classes at the school is due to the success of the project.

Project delivery

ESOL Class: 6 mothers (this class is likely to continue after the completion of the project as a partnership with the Working Men's College and will include mothers from Torriano Infant School)

Parenting Class: 4 mothers

Parent Mentoring: 3 mothers

Fitness: Average 8 mothers (this class will continue to run for mothers from both Torriano Junior & Infant School)

Further details

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