



St Thomas the Apostle College

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Acting Head: Simon Cowdry BSc NPQH | Executive Head: Serge E Cefai MA NPQH

22nd February 2012

To whom it may concern:

Re: St Michael Associates work with students at St Thomas the Apostle College

I write in support of the above organisation who has worked with my school, St Thomas the Apostle College. We were initially approached by Southwark Children's services who had received funding from GOL with a proposal to work with a cohort of our year 9 boys in 2009 who were at risk of disengaging from school due to a variety of reasons including behaviour.

The proposal was for a two year intervention project which commenced in October of 2009 running initially for twenty weeks to April 2010. The agreed format was that a group of 12 boys would spend two days a week at St Michael's offsite provision closely monitored and supported by our Head of Year 9 and 3 teachers. The boys would return to school as usual for the remainder of the week and at the end of the first year, April 2010 we would evaluate their progress.

At the end of the 20 weeks we were extremely encouraged by the improvements of some of our boys. Whereas we realistically hoped for changes in 2 - 3 boys given their track record of poor performance and challenging behaviour we saw significant change in 7 - 8 of the boys. We saw significant changes in behaviour, self-control, relationships with other boys and teachers and improved attitude to work. These boys are now about to sit their GCSE exams and 11 of the 12 boys remain in education here and 9 of them have really improved their educational chances with 3 having moved into the 5A* to C grade category from almost nowhere. 1 of the 12 got himself into serious difficulties with the Police and was only able, in my view to get himself through that trauma due to the skills he had learnt from St Michael's scheme.

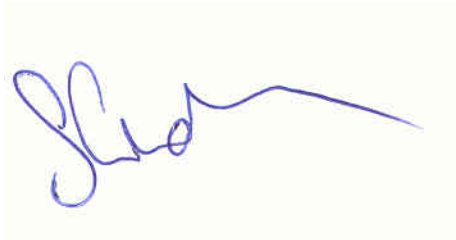
When approached by Southwark Children services and St Michael Associates to continue the project into year two, October 2010 - March 2011 we had no hesitation in recommending a continuation of this pilot project. A new cohort of students was selected and St Michael Associates worked with this new group which we now call the Monday, Tuesday group. The transformation in this second group of students was equally impressive. They are now largely a much more engaged and better behaved group of boys to work with. Our tracking of the boy's academic performance also showed they had made marked improvements. These boys are now 2 terms into their GCSE courses and already 3 of the group are being eyed up to be future College prefects!

We are keen to extend our partnership with St Michael Associates to continue their work with our boys at risk of disengaging, and would therefore lend our support to any funding application to continue this work with St Thomas the Apostle College.

Funding for this sort of venture is clearly tight but in my view any costs associated with continuing these ventures will pail into insignificance compared to the future savings to be made by, for instance, the Criminal Justice system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this letter or the proposed project to which this letter refers.

Yours truly



S. COWDRY
Acting Headmaster