

# LEARNING Matters

News and information for staff in educational settings

17 May 2010

## Boys halt failure and bring on success!

**S**uccess comes in many shapes and sizes. For some the small, barely perceptible changes lead inevitably to significant success. For others success equals noticeable changes, change as dramatic as the unmasking at costume ball or the transformation a masquerader under goes when they don a carnival costume.

In January of this year Southwark council along with one of its partner organisation St Michael Associates (SMA) approached St Thomas the Apostle College with a view to working with some of its hardest to reach youngsters, many of whom in all possibility would become NEET. The brief was to work with year 9 pupils showing low motivation, poor attendance and 'challenging' behaviour. In other words, the type of behaviour that teachers with twenty odd other students to contend with would themselves find challenging to deal with.

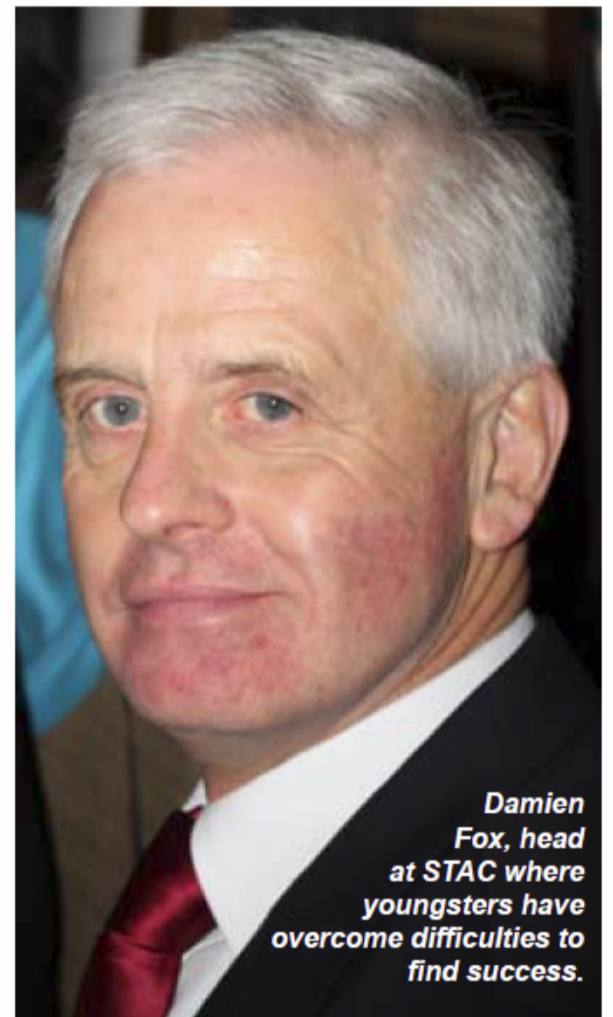
The modus operandi is simple. For two days a week the boys, 11 in all, would go to an offsite provision run by SMA aimed at challenging the boys to reflect and reform their own behaviour and begin to engage with the school curriculum. Activities have included small group tuition in Maths and English, a motivational speaker, and one to one sessions with a SEAL teacher. The going was initially tough; in the words of SMA project leader Benn Omotayo 'the boys were hard work and really tested our resolve.'

### Peter Chaste reports on another successful Southwark initiative

However with perseverance and strong support from STAC, who followed the boys' progress closely and have been supporting their reintegration into school life, change has come.

Hugh Stultz, Southwark's Out of School Study support manager and the officer responsible for putting the programme together said the success of the project is due to perseverance and hard work on both sides STAC and SMA and also shows what can be achieved via innovative partnerships and a commitment to the belief that every child does matter.

So significant has the been the change in the behaviour, learning attitude and academic work of the boys that one particular boy at risk of exclusion and significant under-performance was given an award by STAC as the best behaved boy in his year group. Some progress!



*Damien Fox, head at STAC where youngsters have overcome difficulties to find success.*

Congratulations to Benn Omotayo and his staff at SMA and to Simon Cowdry deputy head and STAC teachers who have supported their students through this journey.



### Deputy Director of Children's Services Terry Parkin writes...

**A**fter weeks of having to endure political debate, it's nice to turn attention to some core interests in this edition of Learning Matters as we focus on music, art, literature and religion.

Our lead story above proves that with innovation, hard work, patience and empathy, even the hardest to reach children and young people can be given a chance. Those at the heart of this project are to be congratulated, as is STAC for its foresight in helping to identify its 11 boys as pioneers.

Finally, the Michael Fullan seminar was hailed as a great success by those who came along to the Globe. Feedback from Michael Fullan's team was that our event was the best attended so far on Michael's tour.