



The Successful Lives Curriculum: Enabling Students to be Highly Successful in School and Life

Blackminster Middle School

Using the Successful Lives Curriculum

Successful Lives, a 63 lesson curriculum, was launched in 2013 to give teachers the resources needed to inspire students to be more independent and achieve their goals.

“My staff and I started to see the impact after just half a term of use - students presented more confidently, worked together more effectively in teams and diagnosed their own difficulties and tried strategies to sort them out for themselves.

All in all, we're impressed and delighted.”

Blackminster Middle School, located in Evesham, Worcestershire, is an inclusive co-educational school for pupils of all abilities, covering years 6, 7 and 8. There are 256 pupils on roll.

- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a below average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, while those from Traveller backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The school achieved an Ofsted rating of 2 in its last inspection in November 2013.

“I was quite surprised at just how practical and well focused the Successful Lives materials actually are.”



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SUCCESSFUL LIVES CURRICULUM CASE STUDY

Challenges

How many times do we as teachers set a task like "prepare a presentation on xyz" and then despair at what our students produce? In my own case, it's more often than I care to admit, but I've never been really sure about how to teach those skills.

We really wanted to develop these and other soft skills that schools don't generally teach well, and build confidence and ambition in our pupils.

Why Successful Lives?

We wanted to improve the performance of our pupils and knew skills, such as goal setting and presenting, were needed but didn't really know how to go about developing them effectively.

The Successful Lives resources came to my attention through an email I received, so I sent off for them, more in hope than expectation if I'm honest. I was hoping that they would address these needs and also be useful for some of the small-group withdrawal programmes that we run here, and perhaps I'd even get some assemblies out of them too.

How wrong could I have been? I was amazed at not only the sheer quantity of material in the packs, but also their quality. The materials cover a lot of the "soft skills" that are so essential for students and often so badly-covered by schools.

How were the resources used?

We've been so impressed with the materials that we are using units as part of our cross curricular work with Year 6 and 7 across the school, to develop team-working and other important skills that we know are so vital, but so hard to teach.

Staff have liked using them and the materials have given us a structure and extremely high-quality resources. Our students are Year 6, 7, and

8, so there is almost too much material here - I can imagine that it would be very beneficial for students right up to the end of Key Stage 4.

Results

The materials helped the seven teachers involved to become quickly engaged and they were able to get on with using the lessons and the framework provided. They know if they follow it, it works.

It's hard to measure the outcomes for a programme like this one, precisely because they are the 'soft skills', but my staff and I started to see the impact after just half a term of use. Students are presenting more confidently, working together more effectively in teams and diagnosing their own difficulties and trying strategies to sort them out.



The lessons have also helped those who are less able or confident to work out how to be good enough.

There have been some very noticeable differences, for example the way pupils go about planning and they have also applied the skills in other lessons too, e.g. science – to go away and research, teach it to other team members and come back and present. These sessions have gone so much better than previously, when using a different approach.

Using the lessons has been really enjoyable and effective and helped pupils realise they were often better than they thought, and reflecting on other people's work also helped improve their own. Using the resources they were more determined and worked harder to find their own answer.

Overall we were really surprised at how practical and focused the lessons are and we're impressed and delighted with them and are expanding how we will use them even further this year.



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