

School success story

Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School



New ways to raise achievement for 14-19 year-olds

Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School believes that online learning can be a ‘very effective intervention especially for vulnerable groups of learners’. Deputy Head Patricia Wainwright says *“learners become actively and productively engaged in an online environment that is safe and familiar to them.”*

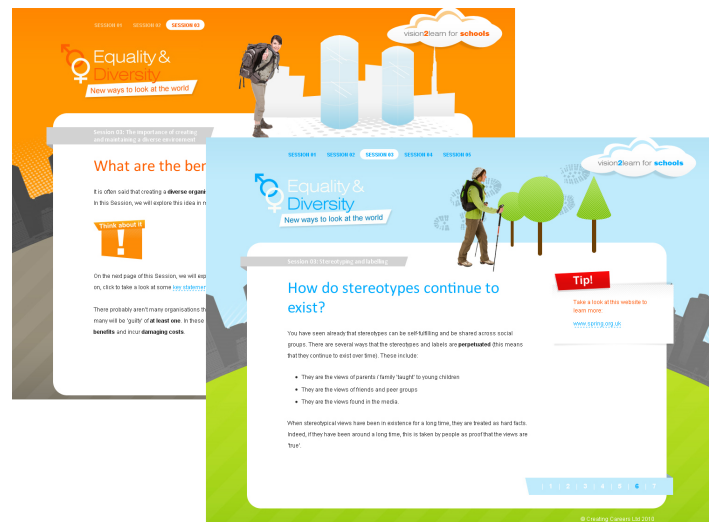
The Reading-based school has been using vision2learn for **schools** since 2008/9. It currently offers programmes in Nutrition and Health, Equality and Diversity and Enterprise Skills to a range of learners – from the most able pupils to those with extremely complex learning needs, including students with Asperger’s syndrome. It is also an excellent strategy for students whose projected totals of GCSE and equivalents, are not secure.

Boys with Asperger’s syndrome

The courses have been a great support for boys with Asperger’s syndrome. They all receive on-going help from a Support Assistant. Issues might include short-attention span, poor focus and a dislike of change, such as switching classroom or having a new teacher. Learners can return to the ‘Asperger Base’ where they can log on to the vision2learn environment. All have responded very positively to

the fact that the courses are online and that the sessions are relatively short. They can see very quickly that they are progressing and are therefore more motivated to move on. They know what to expect when they log on; their navigation of the site does not vary. Popular courses include Nutrition and Health and Equality and Diversity.

Patricia Wainwright explains: *“Online learning is predictable and stable, the method doesn’t change, the screen is consistent, the format of the tests is regular, there aren’t any ‘shocks’. This enables the boys to be actively and productively engaged in an online environment that is safe and familiar to them.*



“Studying Equality and Diversity has really enabled them to develop their communication and social skills. It was especially helpful for these boys because they were able to engage in a healthy debate about their own ‘tough reality’ and their experiences of prejudice and unfairness, all within the safe environment of Blessed Hugh. The level of discussions really kept support staff and teachers on their toes too!”

Learners have been able to progress onto appropriate college courses. One boy, who was predicted to leave with very little in terms of GCSEs, left with a *“breadth of practical qualifications including a BTEC in Science, a Diploma in Vocational Studies, as well as vision2learn’s Nutrition and Health and Equality and Diversity. He has gone on to secure a place at College,”* says Ms Wainwright.

Learners at risk of exclusion

Another group of boys who are finding it difficult to cope consistently with their GCSE studies are taking part in a mentoring scheme. The school is in the process of introducing the Enterprise Skills course to help engage them in practical school activities and projects that will also count towards achieving a qualification.

“This is designed to help them to perceive themselves as learners, to show them that they can be successful. The speed with which they can make progress is extremely helpful for learners who are disengaged from the mainstream curriculum for a range of complex reasons. If these young people try to follow a traditional and rigid GCSE curriculum, they remain unfulfilled, unhappy and fail to reach their potential,” concludes Ms Wainwright.



Headteacher John Casey and Deputy Head Patricia Wainwright accept their 'Outstanding Centre' award from vision2learn's Jonathan Ovenden (centre).

Reward scheme

The school is extending the range of learners who can benefit from its targeted use of vision2learn courses. They are experimenting with offering it as an optional extra enrichment activity for learners at the top end of the ability range who are already extremely independent learners. Says Patricia Wainwright, *“For these learners it will provide access to a wide range of new content and an opportunity to study independently online in a self-directed way.*

“We are firm believers in making education relevant to all of our pupils – when it comes to inclusive education, one size does not fit all.”

Jonathan Ovenden, Business Development Director at vision2learn for **schools** commented: *“Blessed Hugh Faringdon is a shining example of*

Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School, Reading

- 11-18 comprehensive school, with over 800 students
- Specialist performing arts college
- Specialist provision for students with Asperger's syndrome
- 'Highly inclusive school with [a] rich mix of cultures and educational needs, excellent pastoral care contributes to the creation of a harmonious and respectful community and to students' growth as confident and responsible citizens.' Ofsted 2009

how personalised online learning can help all pupils whatever their ability. Quite often, pupils who may have behavioural issues or who simply cannot engage with traditional education just need confidence and to be shown that they are bright and capable of achieving. We work with schools to provide courses that build this confidence in pupils and give them a nationally-recognised qualification at the same time.”

Courses – at a glance

- NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Nutrition and Health
- NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Equality and Diversity (QCF)
- NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Developing Enterprise Skills (QCF)

Contact us

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