

## School Success Story

### Coombe Boys' School, Surrey

#### Giving pupils a healthy kick start

Deborah Walls, Senior Leader at Coombe Boys' School in Surrey, explains how introducing online vocational courses has helped a group of boys at the school to build their confidence and prepare for their GCSEs.

#### Why vision2learn for **schools**?

*"Like most schools across the country we are always seeking solutions for students who are disengaged from their education; those that lack confidence and feel that they cannot achieve as much as their peers. At Coombe Boys' School we recently had a small group of Key Stage 4 students who were at risk of low achievement and even potential exclusion. They did not believe they could do well in their GCSEs and were struggling to stay motivated in the classroom.*

We needed a way to re-engage this particular group of students and restore their faith in their own abilities. So, to boost their self-esteem and prepare them for their exams, we introduced vision2learn for **schools**' online vocational course in Nutrition and Health. We have been accredited with 'Healthy School' status on the Government's Healthy Schools programme and are keen to encourage students to appreciate the link between healthy eating and better school performance. A school theme we have adopted as part of the Healthy Schools programme is: 'Eat better, do better'.

#### Personalised approach to learning

Using vision2learn for **schools** to support our plans made perfect sense for us. In September 2008 our School became a Maths and Computing Specialist School which has provided enhanced facilities and opportunities for both pupils and staff. We are keen to use IT to personalise our students' education and to take a proactive approach to healthy eating education. The results have been astounding: the students have achieved a 100% pass rate studying for their Level 2 Certificate in Nutrition and Health, and consequently we have further students who are voluntarily signing up to the course.

[www.vision2learnforschools.com](http://www.vision2learnforschools.com)



Pupils at Coombe Boys' School

#### Getting to grips with e-learning

By introducing an online vocational qualification the students can learn at their own pace on computers, completing units and submitting work via the online environment.

The course includes units on diet, nutrition and food issues, including a wide range of healthy eating tips, resources and ideas. Sessions also include information on healthy eating for vegetarians and allergy sufferers, details on malnutrition and eating disorders such as anorexia, and questions on food labelling and food additives.

The students complete exercises, such as researching and creating their own healthy eating plans and menus to help them to eat a healthy balanced diet, while our teachers can track the students' progress as they go, receiving assignments and sending feedback via the internal email facility. Unlike classroom learning, where some pupils can lose concentration, the students don't have to listen to the teacher for long periods of time and can get on with their studies at their own pace.

Completing the qualification online allows the pupils to access the units 24/7, at home or at school, and communicate with teachers and peers via an internal message board. They particularly like learning on computers because it gives them a sense of independence, they are in control of their learning and it enhances their sense of achievement and self-esteem.



Pupils at Coombe Boys' School

## Exciting, interactive learning environment

The students like exploring the content of the course and testing their knowledge along the way with quick-fire questions and quizzes. The interactive environment makes learning more exciting for them.

At the end of each unit the students complete an assignment, submitting it to their teachers online and getting it marked and returned to them much more quickly than on traditional courses. It really motivates them when they can see the results of their efforts straight away. Once the students have received their marked assignments they can create an e-portfolio of work that can be used throughout their education and beyond.

## Positive results

When studying for their GCSEs in other lessons, they need to wait long periods of time before they see the results of their work and for some students this is discouraging and leaves them feeling less enthused for their lessons. Getting a more immediate outcome, and seeing that they have done well, helps them to believe in themselves as learners, which in turn gives them the confidence to try harder in their GCSEs.

Self-belief is incredibly important and for some students, when they struggle in a traditional environment or learn at a different pace to the rest of the class, this can be difficult to achieve. Often a student starts to believe that they are less able than their peers. But, of course, this is not the case, they just need to learn in a different way.

Once they see that they can do it, that they can learn and achieve good results, they start to believe in themselves and achieve more in other subjects. The positive effects of the Nutrition and Health course have extended to other areas of the boys' education and helped them to make connections with their other studies in food technology, PE and science. They can see that the subject matter has relevance to their everyday life and it really encourages them. Not only have the courses helped them academically but they have taken on board what they have learnt and apply it to their lifestyle as a whole, they are realising that having crisps for breakfast is not going to help them concentrate at school!

## Expanding e-learning options

Using this e-learning solution has proven so successful that we are opening up opportunities to other groups of learners. It not only offers our students flexibility and control over their education, but gives them a nationally recognised qualification with GCSE equivalent points. We are looking at other subjects that can complement the curriculum such as Coaching Sport, **WorkSkills** and Equality and Diversity. We want to offer our students the best opportunities to gain confidence and reach their full potential.

This particular group of students are now ready to tackle their GCSEs with the belief that they can do it and taking the course has made a noticeable difference to their lessons and homework. Not only have the teachers seen the benefits, but other students have too, they are approaching us asking if they too can take one of these courses alongside their GCSEs. It is great to see them recognising their own needs and making these decisions for themselves, taking control of their education and feeling that sense of achievement they all strive for.”

## Contact us

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