

Research Briefing N° 10

SkillForce – zero exclusion pilots: alternative provision for disaffected pupils

This research evaluates a pilot of alternative education provision for disaffected young people.

Key words: alternative education provision; disaffected young people



Key findings

Young people participating in the SkillForce programme:

- improved behaviour and attendance;
- improved school work, concentration and confidence;
- acquired important new skills including those relating to team work, communication, listening and social skills;
- experienced enhanced pupil/staff relationships;
- acquired qualifications which were valued, contributing to future career and educational aspirations;
- enjoyed the activities.

SkillForce staff:

- supported participants in ensuring positive future pathways;
- communicated regularly with parents resulting in improved home/ school relationships;
- were perceived as accessible, taking time to explain and treating participants as adults and with respect;
- adopted a 'can do' approach which helped in the pilot programme when difficulties arose.

Other findings:

- the support of the schools was important for the success of the programme;
- there were concerns about whether participants would be able to reintegrate back into school following completion of the programme;
- a balanced group of young people, particularly when participants moved in and out of the programme, was important for providing a critical mass of existing good behaviour; and

- programmes where students were drawn from different schools faced challenges including location, the quality of accommodation, transport and difficulties when one school acted as the home of the programme.
-

What we did

SkillForce is an education charity working with 10,000 young people in schools in Great Britain who are in danger of leaving school without the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life. Over the last ten years SkillForce has delivered qualifications and positive outcomes to over 35,000 young people with consistently outstanding results. The vision of SkillForce is that every young person, whatever their background or ability, is given the chance to fulfil their potential and become a valued member of their community.

The Zero Exclusions pilot, funded by the Department for Education (DfE) was made up of a series of initiatives implemented with different groups of young people around the country. The evaluation which formed part of the DfE project was conducted between January and July 2012, and aimed to inform future policy and practice in supporting young people and maintaining them in education.

Further information

Information about SkillForce can be found at www.skillforce.org/

How we did it

There were eight pilot projects. Visits were made to six of the projects. Data were collected in relation to exclusions, attendance, behaviour, attainment and progression:

- questionnaires to explore reactions to the programme, its perceived impact, its strengths and any weaknesses, were completed by participants and staff – a total of 7 SkillForce team leaders, 20 instructors, 1 link teacher, 4 members of school senior management teams and 96 young people;
- during visits interviews were undertaken with available school staff, SkillForce personnel, students and their parents – 10 instructors, 9 members of school staff, 28 students and 4 parents; and
- telephone or face-to-face interviews were undertaken with all of the SkillForce team leaders involved in the 8 pilot projects.

Contact

Principal Investigator: Professor Susan Hallam, Department of Lifelong and Comparative Education

Email : s.hallam@ioe.ac.uk

Phone: +44 (0)20 7612 6371

Other team members: Dr Lynne Rogers (Principal Investigator) and Dr Deborah Mainwaring (Research officer) (Institute of Education)