

CRAWFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

GIPSY HILL FEDERATION



Crawford Primary School is a large two form entry inner city primary school located in the London Borough of Southwark. The large majority of pupils are from black African and black Caribbean backgrounds with a number of pupils at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is well above the National Average and the number of children on roll with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the National Average. The school is incredibly important to the local community and joined the Gipsy Hill Federation in September 2011 when the school was struggling significantly.

Prior to September 2011, Crawford Primary School had been in Special Measures for two years with Ofsted reporting:

“Children join the school with skills and understanding that are well below the expectations for their ages. They make insufficient progress during their time at the school. Consequently, the attainment of Year 6 pupils is well below national averages in English, Mathematics and Science.”



Historically, the attainment results at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 had been below the National Average and staff morale was low. The school was in danger of being closed if it failed the next HMI Monitoring visit and in November 2011 Southwark Local Authority and the school Governors asked the Gipsy Hill Federation to take over the management of the school.

When the school joined the Gipsy Hill Federation a new Leadership Team was employed and the first objective was to put the children at the heart of the school improvement. The aim was not to satisfy Ofsted but to create and provide relevant and engaging learning experiences for every child, enabling them to re-engage with learning and become enthusiastic learners which in turn would improve standards and Ofsted approval would then follow. It was important in the first year to get to know the school, the staff, the children, the parents and the community that the school serves, as well as robust monitoring of teaching and learning.



A focus was placed on the learning environments for every child with children’s work being displayed and valued. We introduced clear teaching sequences and practical, ‘hands on’ enriched learning experiences for every child. Alongside these exciting changes we introduced new core policies and procedures, including a new robust and concise Behaviour Policy. These core policies and procedures guarantee significantly improved pupil outcomes and uncompromising high expectations of every child. This approach was developed over time in each of the other Gipsy Hill Federation Primary schools and our core procedures were rigorously tested out in “hostile territory” ie each of the schools had previously been subject to a failing category but have undergone the journey through to outstanding. Therefore, this approach was not underpinned by a “quick fix” model, but was about sustained excellence over time and the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

These initial changes saw standards rise quickly and the school was moved to a Satisfactory grading in January 2012 (three months after the Federation arrived). On this visit Ofsted noted that:

“The new leadership team has been uncompromising in its high expectations for pupils’ learning. The team has made significant improvements to planning and teaching, the provision for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, to pupils’ underachievement and to the school environment.”



In July 2012 the teachers and pupils in the school achieved the highest Key Stage 2 results in the school’s history and were recognised as the ‘Most Improved School in London’. The challenge was not yet over as the results and success of the academic year 2011 – 2012 had to be built upon, ensuring that the educational outcomes for the pupils continued to rise. In the academic year 2012 -2013, two Deputy Head Teachers were placed in key year groups to sustain and build upon the previously high results; one was placed in Year 2 and one in Year 6. These teachers were expected to model the high quality learning environments, teaching, planning and outcomes for all students. The Deputies underwent the same level of scrutiny as all the other teaching staff. The Leadership Team really had a ‘lead by example’ ethos and it enabled underperformance to be challenged at all times. Basic Skills in Reading and Mathematics were still a focus and children were actively encouraged to become responsible for their learning.

In March 2013, Ofsted judged the school as Outstanding in every aspect (18 months after Federation arrived). Within just 18 months, Crawford had gone from almost certain closure to one that is first choice for parents in the area. Prior to becoming part

of Gipsy Hill Federation, Crawford’s KS2 results had been below national floor targets for six consecutive years, in addition to being subject to Special Measures. This was a significant transformation for the school, which Gipsy Hill Federation has replicated in all its schools.



This does not mean that the hard work is over; although Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results continue to be well above the National Average, there are still children who have gaps in their knowledge. The school will continue to address these through enriching and individual learning opportunities for all year groups. The hard work and dedication of the Senior Leadership Team and the teachers is clearly appreciated by the community and we are seeing more parents, carers and families engaged with the learning of the children. A real focus of our work is to build upon a baseline of outstanding and strive towards providing a platinum quality of learning for every pupil. We continue to provide highly significant investment in the continuing professional development of staff, actively engineer multiple opportunities for staff to share collegial intelligence and we talent spot forensically.

With children at the heart of the school’s journey and a child focused approach to school improvement, Crawford Primary will continue to grow and see the children and families of the local community flourish.

