



Salesian College – Wandsworth

‘The smiles on their faces and their excitement, just like mine, when I was learning; it’s good to see’.

Nathaniel talks about mentoring the younger boys.

Salesian College is now in its third year on the programme. They have performed twice at Step LIVE! and have been one of our most consistent boy groups. This year there is an almost entirely new group of boys in the class, mostly year sevens. However two of the older students from the group last year, Nathaniel and Mikey have remained involved as mentors to the younger boys. We talked to the boys and to their school teacher, Elaine Kennedy.

Elaine told us about Nathaniel and Mikey’s role in the class and the impact it has had on the younger boys.

‘Last year Nathaniel was always willing to support the other boys and to help out generally in the class, which their dance teacher Chantal always encouraged. This year Nathaniel took on the role of dance captain and decided to talk about Step into Dance in the year seven assembly to encourage the younger boys to come to the classes.

Then he and Mikey came in and took the class with a piece of choreography they had come up with themselves. The year sevens were of course in awe of the older boys, which is great! It’s really important that their older peers are acting as positive role models, as it reinforces the fact that the class is something good to be involved in’.

Nathaniel told us about their experience of mentoring the younger boys

'I'm showing them what Chantal taught me and giving them my kind of advice. So that if they do go through and dance at Step LIVE! then they are going to be confident and they will feel like they've achieved something. It will be good to think that I will have been the one to help them towards it'.

'When I was in the class there were never any older boys involved and we didn't have anyone to look up to. I can talk to them in the way that they talk and they will listen. If they're mucking around I can tell them to calm down and they will listen'.

Elaine believes Step into Dance has had an impact on Nathaniel and Mikey's school life more generally:

'I definitely think they feel more responsible and it has given them confidence that other people are interested in what they're doing and want to learn from them, it's really very positive'.

The boys also told us how dancing and their new status as role models have affected them:

'The dancing has helped a lot, in English when we have to stand up in front of the class and talk about something we wrote, I'm actually more confident now and I'm the first one to put my hand up and say , "Yes Miss I want to read out my poem to the class". Also now when I dance I can look someone in the eyes and project my moves'.

Nathaniel

'Normally I wouldn't do this type of thing and stand up in class but now I've grown more confident in myself. In school I can stand up and answer more questions'.

Mikey

Neither boy is planning on giving up dancing any time soon.

'Me and Nathaniel and two other boys are dancing together. It's going well; we have a part in the Christmas show and have performed at school...Yes I will definitely carry on; it's in me now to dance!'

Step into Dance is a partnership project between The Jack Petchey Foundation and the Royal Academy of Dance.

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