



St Mark's Church of England Academy – Merton

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St Mark’s has been on the programme for 3 years. Olivia Douse, teacher at the school told us how they have used the programme to enable and empower their students:

‘For the past year, we have been running a Dance Mentoring programme, using the Step into Dance project as a means to re-engage disaffected students with learning and school life. This has had an incredibly positive impact through developing the students’ self-esteem, teamwork skills, empathy, emotional intelligence, cultural tolerance, anger management and self-confidence through the creative outlet of Dance’.

Olivia explained how the classes have benefited the students:

‘The programme has empowered the participating students to be more successful in their education as a whole and improvements have been noted across all areas of the curriculum. Students who find it difficult to express themselves through words and language have found ways to express themselves much more effectively through Dance’.

One of the students in the class told us a little about her experience.

'I have benefited from all the weeks of Step into Dance. Vikki, my mentor has helped me to express my feelings positively through dance, instead of letting bad feelings affect me and my relationships. I have learnt to be more patient and to be more obedient for adults. I have also learnt to socialise better and to be part of a team. These are skills I would not have learnt by myself. I have enjoyed everything we have done with Step into Dance. I thank Vikki and my team of dancers for all they have done for me'.

Olivia told us about the students' positive response to the classes:

'Every week, students write their comments in a 'Comments Box' – these are always 100% positive and students always say how fun and enjoyable they find the classes. Step into Dance groups are always keen to participate in extra opportunities such as performing in events and helping out when local primary students come in for dance classes. This is evidence of their enjoyment of the sessions'.

Olivia credits their Step into Dance teacher, Vikki Bremner with the success of the programme at the school.

'Our Step into Dance tutor, Vikki Bremner has been outstanding! Vikki has built fantastic relationships with the students and they have commented that she is an excellent role model for them. She is always enthusiastic and bubbly in her approach and always deals with students in a positive and respectful way. We are delighted with the work she has done. She has really raised the profile of Dance at St Mark's'.

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

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