



... at Intack Primary School, Blackburn

Their Dimensions Story

"Standards were low and both teachers and pupils had lost motivation and interest in the curriculum being delivered. Staff questioned the relevance of the curriculum they taught (mainly QCA -based), the school had gone into special measures, teaching and learning was graded unsatisfactory in 90% of lessons observed. Teachers felt the curriculum they were delivering wasn't motivating the children and this was contributing to poor behaviour and classroom management issues. They also felt that the QCA units were not appropriate for the pupils and staff often questioned 'why' they were delivering these uninspiring lessons. So.... a change was needed and it came through the creative curriculum! Staff could see the value of adopting a thematic approach to teaching: pupils would be able to link and see the relevance of their learning, ultimately leading to enthusiastic, motivated children. Teachers felt the curriculum had been placed back into their hands and felt excited about tailoring a curriculum that met the needs of the children they were teaching.

The initial INSET delivered by our Dimensions consultant helped the staff question what was wrong with teaching and learning at our school - why were we in the position we were in? Teachers felt they already worked every hour they could and felt they needed a 'fresh start' to the planning of teaching and learning. Immediately, staff were enthused and motivated by what could be achieved. The INSET was inspiring, almost like a vision of what the future could look like at our school. A school under the 'cloud' of special measures had been given a life line and it really was an opportunity where all staff could have ownership of and a positive impact on school improvement.

The journey hasn't been all plain sailing! Staff have felt they have 'lost their creativity' at times or created very complex creative journeys! They have spent many hours planning and preparing without the aid of commercial schemes of work. They have pleaded for money from our tight budget to fund exciting, creative learning experiences for the children. They have battled on, though, because ultimately they have believed that the children deserved the very best, always.

Dimensions has helped guide us through this journey, offering structure, support and guidance in all areas - planning curriculum themes, linking skills, monitoring of planning, assessing learning - as well as supporting the curriculum coordinator in the darkest hours when threads of QCA began creeping back into planning!

Dimensions has enabled our school to develop and implement a curriculum where staff feel empowered to teach children in ways which are creative, motivating, inspiring and through skills-based learning experiences. We came out of Special Measures. Our Curriculum and Teaching and Learning was graded - Good. HMI Ofsted thought we had made a very brave (and dare I say it) 'risky' decision in changing our curriculum whilst we were under Special Measures, but the Management and Staff believed this was the way forward for our school.

We continue to work on developing our curriculum. It is an organic process and staff continue to hatch new plans and ideas with our Dimensions curriculum going from strength to strength. We are in the process of introducing the Creativity Wheel Assessment Tool at the moment which is encouraging our children to be more independent and critical of their own learning.

All this in a school where staff and pupils had become extremely disenchanted with learning merely two years ago!! We now have a school where pupils and staff are 'Proud to Belong' and the introduction of the Dimensions Creative Curriculum has contributed to this in a BIG way."

Deputy Headteacher
Intack Primary School, Blackburn

