

News Release

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Wednesday, 5 July 2006

Pupils sail through at Saturday school

Model boat building, drama and science were among the activities at an event to celebrate the success of a Saturday school for local primary school pupils, which is run with the help of two independent schools.

The celebration event followed a ten-week programme for pupils from 16 state primary schools in Hammersmith & Fulham and one state primary school in Richmond.

The Saturday school classes, called Serious Fun on Saturdays, are run in partnership with two independent schools – Latymer Upper School, in Hammersmith, and St Paul's School, across Hammersmith Bridge, in Barnes. The project is funded by the educational charity SHINE: Support and Help in Education.

The independent schools supply their teachers and facilities and the sessions are organised by project co-ordinator Michelle Burke and Hammersmith & Fulham Council's Excellence in Cities team in partnership with Richmond Council.

Serious Fun on Saturdays alternates between Latymer Upper School and St Paul's School, allowing pupils to take advantage of the high quality facilities at both schools.

On Monday (3 July) St Paul's School hosted a day of activities for 90 pupils who have successfully completed the ten-week programme.

The children all received their certificates of achievement at a presentation ceremony and barbecue, attended by parents and representatives from both councils, the participating schools and SHINE. The next Serious Fun on Saturdays programme begins in January.

Michelle Burke, project co-ordinator for Serious Fun on Saturdays, said: "The Saturday school has been going amazingly well since it started in 2004. The pupil turnout has been brilliant and they have done some really incredible work, which has raised achievement levels and given year six primary school children some excellent additional preparation for the move up to secondary school."

Cllr Alexandra Robson, Hammersmith & Fulham Council's cabinet member for education, said: "This challenging and imaginative programme stretches our most able pupils and gives extra support to children who need to raise their levels of achievement.

The independent school teachers who lead these wonderfully engaging classes, with the help of student mentors, have shown fantastic commitment to the programme, which has given local children some really exciting educational experiences to help prepare them for the move to secondary school.

The SHINE charity and the council's Excellence in Cities programme are helping to raise the aspirations of children from a wide range of backgrounds."

Stephen Shields, SHINE chief executive, said: "SHINE is serious about raising the achievement levels of children and young people through programmes which seek to engage and motivate them. This project has become a benchmark for excellence in independent-state school partnerships. We are now funding a range of similar programmes throughout London and Manchester built on this model."

Notes to the editor:

- All the children who attend the Saturday school have been identified as needing extra challenges or help through the 'gifted & talented' and 'widening participation' schemes of Excellence in Cities (EiC), a government-funded education programme to raise achievement in inner city schools.
- Gifted & talented and widening participation activities also take place in the borough's schools and at other centres - including the Kingwood City Learning Centre, in Fulham, built by Hammersmith & Fulham Council with money from EiC.
- For more details about out-of-school classes and activities provided by the council visit:
http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/Directory/Education_and_Learning/Extra-curricular_activities/
- For more details about SHINE: Support and Help in Education visit:
<http://www.shinetrust.org.uk/index2.htm>