



Say 'hello' to ... Samuel

A Pastoral Care Case Study

REGISTERED CHARITY 516184

Authored by: Schools Outreach

When Samuel first came to our attention he was displaying unacceptable behaviour in class and truanting. Samuel is now attending regularly, taking part positively in classes and is looking forward to the new school year. So what made the difference?

Say 'hello' to ... Samuel

A Pastoral Care Case Study

Samuel was identified as someone very difficult and in need of intensive support from me before he started at the school in late October 07. His brother has Autism and Samuel also displayed mild symptoms. His family situation is an odd one. I got the impression very early on that he was left to his own devices and not interacted with when at home because he was unable to interact with his peers.

In classes, and in particular English, Samuel would withdraw himself to the point where it would draw attention to himself, which he didn't like. He would refuse to take part in any of the work or activities that his teacher had prepared. When taken outside the classroom to be spoken to privately, he would refuse to answer, refuse to apologise and not see anything wrong with this odd and outright disobedient behaviour. On one occasion in English, he curled himself into a ball in the middle of the classroom and went to sleep on the floor. I decided to monitor him in lessons and in particular English, much to Mrs L's (his teacher's) delight. Samuel's attendance was sporadic and he would always truant lessons he didn't like, for example PE and lessons where he knew he had homework due.

I observed him in each subject at least once to get a full picture. His parents were asked to attend a meeting with the Head and Assistant Head of Year 7, myself and Samuel to discuss his behaviour and how we were going to address it.

His father came in late with Samuel and stormed into my office with a very aggressive attitude. It was clear from his father's attitude to the school and staff why Samuel was behaving as he was. I had to speak firmly to his father which he clearly respected me for because he changed his attitude and calmed down too. He sat down and became more ready to talk and hear what the school was doing for his son and how we needed their help in the home. By the end of the meeting, the father understood that he needed to be more positive towards the school and to interact more with Samuel when he is at home. He was very positive and said that he was willing to work with me on some of the issues that were raised in the meeting.

I worked fairly intensely with Samuel over this year and we have seen a huge improvement. It is hard to quantify just how much he has improved because there is no limit to what he can do. Academically he is very bright but needs help to realise that potential. Samuel has a reading age of 16 and an IQ of 120. Having said this, he doesn't really operate on the level we would expect from our special needs class. He also needs help to socialise better with his peers, however, if he can continue to improve at the same rate as last year, then the results will be very pleasing indeed.

I identified three lessons where I thought I could support him and address issues that were being manifested in school: English, Drama and PE. Most of the initial problems came in English. Some of the issues were with Samuel not liking the teacher and not wanting to be in school but I believe the major reason for the unacceptable behaviour was Samuel does not feel accepted by his father and has a very low self-worth and self-confidence. His father would say negative things about him to staff in school whilst Samuel was there and would not give any positive input at home. Spending the time I did with him enabled me to encourage him and that in turn helped him feel accepted, which gave him some confidence to be himself.

Due to the lack of interaction between Samuel and his father, he found it hard to interact with others and in particular working in groups. He would get very frustrated with his classmates and withdraw in a sulk. I attended drama and PE and that gave Samuel some confidence to take part without the fear of

people shouting or laughing at him. Samuel especially liked tennis.

In Drama, he would sit on the side and refuse to take part, but as I started to attend the lesson, he began to take part. He would only participate in some activities, even though I could tell he wanted to take part in the entire lesson. Interestingly, when the lesson came to the end and the class was waiting to leave, he would 'come alive' and take on different characters acting drunk or acting like a cowboy.

Samuel had an end of year assessment in Drama and I am pleased to say he took part and fulfilled a small role with his group. Samuel was very happy and felt confident to be that character. I also introduced my Positive Attainment Record this year and invited him to be on it. I set him some targets which included: attending all lessons, completing all homework, interacting fully in class activities, and working positively with others in group work.

He was a little reluctant to start with but I think over the year he has learned that he can trust me.

Just to try and equate how much progress has been made with Samuel, I can say that next year he will have his English teacher (Mrs L) as his form tutor. I told you that he didn't like Mrs L when I started working with him but he was very pleased to have her as his form tutor next year. I have worked very closely with Mrs L and she was very grateful of my presence in her class.

I am very proud of what Samuel has achieved this year and truly believe he will go on from here next year to progress even further still.

I will continue to work with him next year and will continue the case study also. I am very excited to see how far we can go this year.

Case Study Notes:

Samuel's story is true, just his name has been changed in accordance with our confidentiality policy. The case study was written by one of our pastoral care specialists.

The Pastoral Care Specialist:

The Pastoral Care Specialist at Samuel's school is based there full-time, offering one-to-one support and peer group sessions to those young people who are suffering abuse, neglect, bullying, are bereaved or have low self-esteem.

Schools Outreach:

Schools Outreach provides pastoral care specialists to UK schools as well as short training courses and a consultancy service.

Schools Outreach Ltd

c/o 109 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 7HN, UK

Telephone 0845 459 1673

Email info@schoolsoutreach.org

Website www.schoolsoutreach.org

Photographs provided by the Microsoft clipart website