



Falkirk CLD youth work and Braes High School

improving positive destinations through shared purpose, joint planning and delivery

Braes High School partnership with youth work has continued to develop over a number of years. Pupil Equity Funding is used to part-fund a dedicated youth worker. Youth work is now embedded as part of the Pupil Support Team and contributes to improved positive destinations for young people impacted by poverty.

Head Teacher, Iain Livingstone explains; *"We have a shared sense of purpose, planning and delivery to get the best possible experiences and outcomes for pupils. By working in partnership towards a common purpose of ensuring that all young people fully realise their potential, we can provide pupils with rich, rewarding and relevant learning experiences, resulting in the best possible outcomes while supporting overall educational, social and personal development to enable young people to become well-informed citizens who make a positive and lasting contribution to the local community."*

Through this partnership approach young people are identified who need additional support or alternative learning experiences to get the most out of their school experience. Pupils are offered tailored opportunities to support attendance, engagement and skills development. This is raising attainment, achievement and progression into positive destinations.

Speaking about the impact of the youth worker Gordon Baxter, Kevin Deane, Key Teacher Pupil Support, said *"As a result of his expertise we have embedded a youth work approach within our faculty where young people are benefiting from a range of creative initiatives which has broadened their perspectives making them more resilient and confident individuals. We work collaboratively to develop, deliver and evaluate effective approaches to closing the poverty-related attainment gap."*

One example of the learning opportunities offered through the partnership is the Positive Transitions Programme. Positive Transitions is specifically aimed at young people who are at risk of not obtaining a positive destination after school, which could be for a variety of reasons, including disengagement, poor attendance, ill health or any other barrier to learning. Targeted S3-S5 pupils participate in a timetabled course which follows the Princes Trust Achieve National Qualification, building from the development of personal and social skills in S3, through to employability skills in S4 and S5. Pupils benefit from a tailored package which is targeted at their specific areas for development. They have opportunities to learn in school and in the wider community.

Iain said *"The Positive Transitions Programme has brought an effective dimension to planning pathways for young people at Braes High School. Planning and implementing a progressive programme for pupils, through S3 to S5, is needs-led and tailored to each individual group, and has contributed positively to both the levels of attainment for our young people and also their destinations on leaving school. Valuable links have been forged with a range of both local and national employers, with our young people taking advantage of their visits and interactions with these businesses.*

Consequently, we have been able to ensure our young people have experiences which have enhanced their skill development, developed their ability to take on new challenges and raised their self-esteem. This partnership with CLD youth work has focused very much on positive transitions for our young people, readying them for whatever lies ahead after school, and supporting a higher and more appropriate destination profile for the school. 100% of the young people who took part in the programme last session have progressed to, and maintained, positive destinations."

In addition, the partnership with CLD youth work has stretched out to the whole school community, working with staff in a range of areas across the school to support family learning and pupil voice. Through PEF and external funding from CLD, CLD also provides holiday programmes for young people who are referred through their 'onwards and upwards' programme. This directly combats social isolation, hardship, helps build relationships with staff and improve health and wellbeing. School staff volunteer their time over the holidays as they value the importance of building relationships and developing an understanding of each young person, enabling them to improve engagement and learning in class.

Gordon and the school work together to track individual progress and understand the impact of the partnership on attainment. This includes monitoring attendance and referrals. Young people are also supported to recognise and articulate their skills development and the difference youth work has made to their learning:

"I have learned lots of skills for employment/life skills." Young person 'JC'

"I used to skive a lot but now I enjoy coming to school". Young person 'RJ'

"From S1-S3, I had more than 300 referrals for bad behaviour; this year, I have had 1. It's very great being part of Aspire. The staff on the programme look out for me". Young person 'MR'.

