



CATERHAM SCHOOL

Caterham School's unique Student Lead Learner Programme

Rationale

Caterham School is the only independent school in the top 40 nationally for both raw results and Value-Added*. It would therefore be obvious to assume that our sole focus is on exam results. However, our passion is for making sure that our students leave with the ability to think for themselves, a deep understanding of how they learn, the ability to explain this to others, and therefore to coach other students to help their own studies. Caterham is also a school with a very strong sense of community, where students and staff alike support and encourage each other to achieve their very best.

**Source : Financial Times A Level league tables 2010; Government value-added performance tables 2011*

Early days

To further this vision Kim Wells, Director of Learning & Teaching, introduced the Student Lead Learner programme in 2009 (affectionately known as "Study Buddy") where 28 Sixth Form students volunteered, were trained in coaching and mentoring skills, and then paired with younger students to assist in all matters academic.

Growth of the scheme

The following year numbers grew to 58 pairings, and in 2011 the scheme now involves an astounding 242 students (this represents nearly a third of the school, or half of the Sixth Form, with every student being involved on an entirely voluntary basis). The scheme covers every year group and the full ability range, from those who need stretch and challenge to those who need more academic support.

To underline the positive impact of the scheme and Caterham's thriving community spirit, all 34 of the Fifth Year (Year 11) students who had been "buddied" in their GCSE year of 2010 then volunteered to become buddies themselves on entering our Sixth Form.

How the scheme works

These students meet formally once every week for 20 minutes to discuss everything from how to memorise vocabulary to managing long term projects, from making choices for GCSE subjects to adopting study skills that match their preferred styles of learning. Most study buddies also meet informally over lunch or in the Library to develop their bond yet further.

The 2011 scheme has extended to encompass Gifted and Talented students; for example a First Year doing A-Level Maths questions with a Sixth Form Mathematician, or a Second Year doing Spanish with a Sixth Form Hispanist to complement the two existing languages in her normal curriculum time.

Next steps

This year Sixth Form students have taken on further Lead Learner roles through the pilot "Study Champion" scheme, where trained students participate as assistants to teachers in lessons with younger students.

"My study buddy and I interact and chat easily and a sense of trust has built up. He is now the first person I turn to for help" Fourth Year (Year 10) student at Caterham School