

Case Study

A Student Participation Project at a leading London Academy

Background

CPS approached a high-performing Academy secondary school to suggest developing a restorative project.

What we did

This project began with a collaborative discussion with a senior staff member who had an interest in restorative approaches. We quickly identified student voice as an area where the school would like to improve in order to match the extremely high academic standards they had established.

Student Voice

Given a brief to develop a pilot project for an innovative approach to student voice, CPS proposed to train students as facilitators, who could then run student 'circle' meetings to discuss proposals for positive change and contribute to decision making in the school. A positive focus and proposal generation were requirements of the brief, as the leadership at the school were clear that there was no place for a 'talking-shop'-style school council.

This proposal was approved and CPS delivered 2 days of training for a group of 6 key stage 4 students and 4 staff. This training was delivered on Saturdays, to accommodate the requirement that no curriculum time should be used for delivery. Over the course of the 2 days the students were trained in a CPS designed facilitation process, with the staff participating to be able to understand and support the project.

Student Circles

The student facilitators, with the support of CPS and the participating staff members, ran 3 'circle' meetings, and a subsequent 'hub' meeting at which the proposals were

presented and distilled through mediated dialogue into realistic and feasible submissions. Key staff members were able to take the proposals forward and report back on progress.

Outcomes

This process produced several tangible positive outcomes, from new seating in the playground to a consultation on running themed 'national cuisine' days in the canteen.

The senior management team were sufficiently impressed with the pilot to fund an expanded programme, training a further 16 student facilitators from key stage 3 and 4.

Another school has piloted the project.

"You have been a fantastic collaborator and facilitator, thank you for making it so easy!" – Senior Management Team Member

"It opened my mind to be more willing to listen" – Student Facilitator

"[The training] revealed that you can understand more and you don't need to lash out"

– Student Facilitator