

Registered Charity Number: 1151220

Rowdown Primary School, Calley Down Crescent, New Addington, Croydon CR0 0EG

Chair of Trustees: Gary Coy

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www.rowdownfoundation.org.uk

contact@rowdownfoundation.org.uk



The Rowdown Inspire to Aspire Foundation

A Case Study for Improving Social Mobility in Education

November 2017

Background to the Rowdown Foundation and Tuition Programme

- The Rowdown Foundation was set up in 2013 to support gifted and talented children at one school (Rowdown Primary School) in New Addington to pursue their talent where their parents cannot afford to, initially supporting a young pianist, a dancer and a gymnast. The Foundation also organises the annual school awards, aimed at inspiring all pupils to want to achieve.
- In 2014, we set up a “Tuition Programme”, providing a private tutor for small groups of 4 or 5 pupils in each of Years 3, 4 and 5 (and into Year 6). Initially one hour of tuition was provided per week in small groups of 4-5 children, increasing to two hours per week for the Year 5 group to ramp up the benefits as the 11+ exams approached.
- New Addington is an area of high deprivation where between 25% and 50% of children (c.2-3,000) live in poverty: <http://www.croydonobservatory.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Child-poverty-in-Croydon-2006-14.pdf>. The vast majority of the population are disadvantaged or “just about managing”. With high special needs (SEN) and growing English as additional language (EAL) percentages in the schools and a low starting point in Early Years, primary school teachers in the area do well to ensure the majority of pupils reach the required standard on leaving. However, many academically able students do not receive the additional challenges required to stimulate them and for them to reach their true academic potential. To exacerbate this, there is no outstanding state secondary school that children from New Addington have comprehensive access to <http://www.rowdownfoundation.org.uk/education-in-the-new-addington-area-update/>
- The Tuition Programme was established to help the most academically able pupils at the school prepare for 11+ entrance exams for private, grammar or semi-selective state schools in order to maximise parental choice and access the best possible secondary school education. This recognises that children from New Addington are competing for places against those from more affluent backgrounds where parents can better support their child through private preparatory school, tutoring or helping the child to learn at home because they are better educated.
- In the first two years (2015/16 and 2016/17), 8 out of 9 pupils made it to selective or semi-selective schools through entrance exams including one each to prestigious private schools Old Palace, Trinity and Whitgift, with significant bursaries and/or scholarships, and one each to grammar schools Wilson’s and Wallington County Grammar.



Tuition Programme in 2017

- For 2017/18, the Foundation arranged for Trinity School, a local, prestigious independent secondary school, to provide 2 hours of lessons (Maths and English) on a Saturday morning to 15 pupils from New Addington. Three other primary schools (Fairchildes, Castle Hill, Applegarth) plus Rowdown nominated their most academically able pupils.
- These extension lessons are specifically designed to further the children's understanding and enjoyment of the subject as well as preparing them for the entrance exams for selective schools.
- The group have a mix of ethnicity, half are EAL pupils and around half are officially disadvantaged with the vast majority of parents being in low income jobs.
- Through engagement with the Rowdown Foundation, Wallington Country Grammar School has also provided additional lessons for the group ahead of their 11+ entrance exam. Old Palace School (an independent girls' school) has given free access to revision courses to girls on the Tuition Programme, and also offered some tuition going forward. Croydon High School (another independent girls' school) is offering an exam preparation session. Most grammar and private schools have actively engaged with the Foundation through group visits and/or waiving or reducing registration fees. A couple of schools have been more resistant to getting involved, believing that children sitting their entrance exams do not require any additional tutoring.
- 7 of the 15 pupils sat the Sutton-based grammar schools' eligibility test, the remainder citing travel distance as the key issue for not sitting the exam (the schools are c.1 hour or more by public transport) evidencing that children in New Addington are educationally disadvantaged by the lack of a commutable outstanding selective school. 2 of the 7 have passed the second stage test for Wallington Girls School or Wilson's School with actual places awarded in March 2018.
- 14 of the 15 children will be put forward for at least one independent school entrance exam in December 2017 / January 2018.
- Parents of all the children involved are supportive of their child and aspirational for their education but were generally unaware of any chance of a secondary education beyond their local comprehensive offering.
- Trinity School has used their involvement with the Rowdown Foundation's Tuition Programme as an introduction to several New Addington primary schools to work on a Sports Enhancement plan, helping these schools to improve their sports provision and aid access to better teaching, coaching and facilities. Old Palace School has also offered these primary schools access to Dance Workshops through the Rowdown Foundation.



Tuition Programme in 2018

- Trinity School have confirmed that they will continue to provide extension lessons in Maths and English on a Saturday morning for a new group of 15-20 Year 5 (into Year 6) pupils from New Addington schools during 2018.
- Royal Russell School have confirmed that they will provide “masterclasses” in Maths and English one day a week after school for 15-20 Year 4 (into Year 5) pupils from New Addington schools during 2018.
- All four of the New Addington primary schools currently involved have again signed up to identifying and encouraging their most academic pupils to attend these lessons.
- Hence up to 40 children from New Addington will be receiving additional tuition organised by the Rowdown Foundation and provided by independent schools free of charge to parents, the primary schools and the Foundation.
- The Year 4 group will then move onto the Trinity Extended Lessons in 2019 thereby having two years of additional tuition towards the 11+ exams.
- Given the track record so far, we believe the majority of these children will gain access to an academically selective secondary education better than that provided by the local comprehensive offering. Such an education will open up life-enhancing opportunities whether through academic achievement leading to the top universities or through co-curricular activities building skills, talents and character.
- We will continue to encourage the successful pupils under the Tuition Programme to give back, most simply by returning to their primary school and acting as a role model and inspiration to their friends, family and neighbours.
- The Rowdown Foundation will continue to liaise with local independent and grammar schools and New Addington – and perhaps further around Croydon – state primary schools to increase the level of co-operation giving children from deprived areas better access to some of the best sporting, artistic and technological facilities available in the education sector.



The Way Forward

- We recognise that we are helping a small number of disadvantaged (wider definition) pupils but giving them a life-changing opportunity to attend some of the best grammar or independent schools in the country.
- With the support of more independent (and grammar) schools, this simple scheme could be expanded into other disadvantaged areas of Croydon (e.g. Broad Green, Waddon, Old Coulsdon) and much wider around the country thereby promoting social mobility on a national scale.
- Once the relationships have been established, the Rowdown Foundation will encourage a broader partnership between independent and grammar secondary schools and state primary schools in their local deprived areas. These partnerships can grow in terms of number of children supported academically or broader in terms of the areas within the relationship (academic, sports, arts etc)?
- What is the best method of roll-out for the Tuition Programme? Options:
 - An independent schools promoted project: working with the collective bodies within the independent school sector (Independent Schools Council, Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference etc) to disseminate the idea and gain support from their members who then approach the state primary schools in disadvantaged communities close to them.
 - A DfE-sponsored project: is the DfE in the best position to put pressure on independent schools around the country to find resources to participate in such a scheme, to identify the areas of deprivation where social mobility is worst and broker a relationship between independent secondary and state primary schools?
 - A larger-charity sponsored project: there are many education-based charities that could be involved in a roll-out and some have good contacts in both independent secondary and state primary schools therefore being able to broker such schemes. However, most already organise some interaction between them but this is often focused on helping a large number of disadvantaged pupils a little (rather than helping a small number a lot).
 - A slow roll-out by the Rowdown Foundation although as we do not have the resources or contacts required to open the right doors, it would be a very slow process.



Contacts and Testimonials

Gary Coy
Chair, The Rowdown Inspire to Aspire Foundation
07768 170562
gary.coy@rowdownfoundation.org.uk

“This is just a simple scheme to help level the playing field for academically able children from disadvantaged or ‘just about managing’ backgrounds to access the best secondary education available in their area, something that is regularly denied them just because of their family’s financial situation. Having received so much support from both independent and grammar schools in the area and having achieved great success with the handful of children we have been able to support so far, it would be a dream come true if this sort of support can be rolled out to economically disadvantaged yet academically able children all over the country and thereby promote social mobility on a national scale.”

Carol Jewell
Headmistress, Old Palace of John Whitgift School
020 8688 2027
cjewell@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk

“At Old Palace we are all delighted to work with children taking part in the work of the Rowdown Foundation. With our emphasis on a broader values-based education, some Rowdown participants have already enjoyed our annual four day Palace Plus course, our recent dance workshop and our masterclass programme. At Old Palace we embrace an excellent academic experience combined with a broader education where students experience fulfilment through our four pillars: service, courage, emotional intelligence and a love of learning.

We look forward to developing our offering in years to come with the input of the children of the Rowdown Foundation.’

Chris Hutchinson
Headmaster, Royal Russell School
020 8657 4433
chutchinson@royalrussell.co.uk

“Royal Russell believes in giving the opportunity of success to all of its pupils and is delighted to be supporting local children and the Rowdown Foundation in this inspired initiative.”

Alasdair Kennedy
Headmaster, Trinity School
020 8656 9541
ajk@trinity.croydon.sch.uk

“At Trinity, we want to partner with local schools and other organisations to support education across our area. We are looking for a range of ways in which we can help develop the talents of local young people. We are delighted therefore to be working with Gary Coy and the Rowdown Foundation, as they are connecting us to children whose potential we can help realise. There are many able boys and girls in our area who will thrive at an academically selective school, and we want to engender the belief in parents of any means that a place at Trinity can be for them. We firmly believe that establishing these partnerships locally and widening access will make our school a better school for all our pupils.”

Jonathan Wilden
Executive Headteacher, Folio Education Trust
020 8647 2235
jwilden1@suttonmail.org

“Folio Education Trust and Wallington County Grammar School, Sutton are delighted to work with the Rowdown Foundation to ensure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the life changing opportunity of attending their local Grammar School. Selective education should be something that all families consider, giving their child the opportunity to unleash their aspirations, discover and reach their personal best... We will do as much as possible to support [the Foundation] to ensure young people and local families have the choice of selective education.”

Emma Pattison
Headmistress, Croydon High School
020 8260 7502
e.pattison@croydonhigh.gdst.net

“We are extremely proud to be supporting the Rowdown Foundation in their efforts to widen educational opportunity in Croydon. Since our foundation in 1874 we have shared this commitment, assisting generations of girls to experience the many benefits a top class education can deliver. I lead a dedicated teaching staff who are able and willing to offer their time and expertise and to work with the Rowdown Foundation to achieve their goals.”



Katy Doe
Acting Head of School, Rowdown Primary School
01689 843367
Kdoe.306@lgflmail.org

"Through the [Rowdown] Foundation, some of our KS2 pupils have been offered the opportunity of extra tuition, which was not feasible for them prior to this initiative...this has resulted in a number of our pupils being offered places at selective grammar and independent schools. In receiving tuition at Trinity and, in the future, Royal Russell, our children are not simply benefitting from intellectual stimulation. Their cultural and social awareness has been broadened which hopefully will give them the confidence to apply to and succeed at university in the future and to realise that these opportunities are open to them and not the exclusive right of more affluent families."

Parent of a current Year 6 pupil attending Maths and English Extension Lessons at Trinity School

"We are so grateful for the support and opportunity the Foundation has given to our son, it has been a massive opportunity. The tutoring has helped him so much with his confidence as well as furthering his education and putting him in a position that he can apply to better schools including private and grammar, which we are very grateful for as the choices for local secondary schools are not great! This could be life changing for him and we could not have done it if wasn't for the tutoring and support provided by the Foundation."

Parent of a current Year 7 pupil attending Wallington County Grammar School after receiving tuition support through the Foundation

"That's a really successful group [one each to Old Palace, Wilson's and WCGS] and it's sent 3 kids on to wonderful education that they wouldn't have achieved without the Foundation. I would never have thought about going in this direction and didn't even know it's was something we could even contemplate until the Foundation started."

Jo Hussey
Head of School, Fairchildes Primary School
01689 842268
head@fairchildes.croydon.sch.uk

"Our school is in an area with a high deprivation index, but...children at Fairchildes achieve highly. Many of our pupils come from families where a private tutor is out of the question and so, despite a good education and natural talent, our pupils are often at a disadvantage when it comes to sitting [11+] tests. During the last academic year, several pupils attended additional tuition sessions at two top secondary schools, one grammar and one private, to ensure that they were as prepared for entry examinations as any child with a private tutor or at a private prep school would be. In addition to the tuition, the Foundation has forged links between our school and Trinity School, a high achieving private school in Croydon with a PE coach from Trinity School attending Fairchildes on a weekly basis."

Parent of a current Year 6 pupil attending Maths and English Extension Lessons at Trinity School

"Our son is working brilliantly [at Trinity] and when he has finished his homework, every week I plan some extra lessons for him. Thank you so much for organising the Tuition Programme. This has helped him to know and appreciate the value of good education and how important it is to everything he is doing. For me, this has opened my mind what my son can achieve and do better when he is supported."

Parent of a current Year 8 Pupil attending Trinity School after receiving tuition support through the Foundation

"It was our dream come true for our son to get such opportunity to attend a great prestige school like Trinity. As for [our son], his dream was to get the best school in the borough. Since he was admitted into Trinity his life has been changing dramatically, all his teachers and peers like him he has been doing well with all his subjects and sports activities in the school."