

# The Successful Lives Curriculum: Enabling Students to be Highly Successful in Life



Successful Lives

## Using the Successful Lives Curriculum

Successful Lives was developed and launched in 2013 to give teachers the resources needed to inspire students to reach their goals and dreams.

Students expressed positive outcomes from the curriculum - *"How to be more resilient," "How to overcome fears,"* and *"That you can overcome anything life throws at you."* But probably most touching comment was, *"That they learned a new word, and how to ignore people (bullies)."*

## Executive Summary

Hartsdown Academy is an inclusive co-educational college for students of all abilities, aged from 11-18, supporting a diverse range of students.

- Over 25% of its students do not have English as their first language.
- Many of the remaining students are classed as white working class.
- These students are now doing less well across England.

In spite of this, the School achieved a good Ofsted report in its last inspection in 2014 and has just delivered its best GCSE and A level results (2014/15).

41% of students achieved 5 A\* - C GCSEs, including English and Maths.

*The curriculum helped with literacy – reading and writing skills and punctuation. – Rachel (English Teacher)*



Successful Lives\*

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## Challenges

Hartsdown Academy is located within Thanet, in one of the most deprived areas within Kent and in an area ranked in the top 2% of all deprived areas within England.

A number of Thanet schools are involved in a Headstart programme, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, which is looking to build emotional wellbeing and other factors that will help students be better prepared to meet adversity and show resilience when needed.

As part of this project, the school used a number of lessons from the Successful Lives curriculum to help achieve these goals.

## How the Curriculum Helped

Lessons about resilience, with objectives designed to teach students to understand what makes a resilient person and how to build skills to overcome adversity were the main focus. They were delivered to the whole of year 10, using up to 15 lessons from the curriculum.

Six lessons related to understanding what others did to be more successful and overcome adversity and how students could adopt these for themselves. Nine lessons related to building protective factors and better managing risk.

Each lesson has a worksheet and they were delivered as part of a weekly literacy lesson. Using curriculum exercises also helped to build skills in this important area too.

*The success stories were a favourite. They were very explicit and encouraged students to go research and find their own. - Teacher*

## Results

This case study sets out the early results for Hartsdown Academy. Data is limited due to late involvement in the project. Results rely on student and teacher anecdotal feedback.

Although the curriculum was implemented in Spring Term 2015 with short preparation time, positive results are noted by both teachers and students.



*Common among students is their improved self awareness about 'resilience'. Many didn't know any (lesson) answers before starting.*

Teacher's comments:

- The lessons engaged the students as they had an interest in their own future careers, and they helped students think about the options they had, and how they were going to get there. Previously students had ideas but hadn't thought through the journey and the lessons helped.
- The lessons helped us move away from the idea that success = money. Students realised it was about being friendly, finding the right group, working hard and managing their moods.
- The resources had a real impact for many students. For example, one girl wants to get into films. She mapped out just what she would need to do and how she would overcome the obstacles she might face.
- Lessons helped students to believe, aspire and build their self-esteem. They realised the importance of finishing things.



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