

CASE STUDY

Creating an inclusive curriculum

Located in an inner-city area of Birmingham, Hamstead Hall has used BTEC to develop a curriculum which truly meets the needs of their diverse, multicultural student base. Offering BTEC qualifications gives teachers the opportunity to support all their students with an inclusive curriculum, including many who have English as a second language or have Special Educational Needs.

 Centre name:
Hamstead Hall Academy

 Number of students:
1100

 Region:
Birmingham

 School type:
Academy

 Area type:
Inner-city

 Ofsted rating:
Good

Hamstead Hall Academy caters for approximately 1,100 students ranging from 11 – 18 years and reflecting the cultural diversity of the city. Over 60% of the students speak English as a second language, with over 23 different first languages spoken in the school. The Academy is one of only six schools in the city with a Special Educational Needs Resource Base and caters for 40 students who have statements for cognition and learning difficulties. Inclusivity is central to the curriculum, ensuring that every student is given the opportunity to progress and achieve.

“

Choice and opportunity sums up BTEC for us.

”

Sharon Wood, Head of BTEC and
Performing Arts teacher

BTEC qualifications are key to offering an inclusive curriculum at the Academy. They help support the differentiated learning needed to challenge such a diverse cohort as well as providing assessment methods which suit the learning styles and preferences of all students.

The introduction of BTEC courses at the Academy means teachers can experiment with an applied learning approach and students can develop essential career skills such as communication, co-operation and teamwork.

There has also been a marked improvement in social skills for pupils who have previously struggled in group situations.

“

You come into the classroom and they're actually smiling.

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Carla Tranter, Assistant Head Teacher

For example, in BTEC Performing Arts pupils have built up their confidence and self-esteem through the freedom and expression of movement in dance. Teachers can adapt the BTEC course so it supports pupils'

interests, abilities and cultural backgrounds by introducing dance styles like Bhangra, Street, Hip Hop and Contemporary dance.

Financial constraints are always a concern for educational establishments. However, Hamstead Hall Academy have found that BTECs are relatively easy to implement on a comparable if not lower budget than other exam-based courses. Accessible resources are also available. For example, in Performing Arts Hamstead Hall simply has floorspace and two mirrors. In the last 6 years of offering the BTEC, they have invested £800 in the course which was the total cost of two full length portable mirrors.

