

The Accompanying Project

Introduction: Bath Youth for Christ is a Christian faith based youth organisation that has worked in Bath for over 30 years. We work in schools and local communities with local partners who include local churches, local schools, the Police and the Local Authority.

Context: Over the last few years of Bath YFC staff working in secondary schools it has become clear through our one to one work that several of the young people we work with would have benefitted from support at an earlier age. This initial thinking has been backed up by conversations with school staff who have offered similar conclusions and also assessing the current mentoring support available, which is for the most part focused on the secondary school sector. Furthermore, our ongoing work with young people where they have been able to develop positive and meaningful relationships with youth workers and connected them with a local community group. E.g. youth club, has been shown to make a significant difference in the lives of the young people involved. This is backed up by Department of Education research about transition and The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services research into positive activities.

The Accompanying Project works with vulnerable children in KS2 with a particular focus on those in year 6 making the transition to secondary school. The project puts the child and their needs at the heart of the intervention and supports the personal, social and emotional development of children who face difficulties and disadvantages in life. Accompanying uses a combination of mentoring, group based activities and transition support. The project is registered with ASDAN, which means that each child can gain nationally recognised accreditation for what they achieve. We work with each child for at least a year providing support to prepare and settle the child at secondary school. Rooted in a positive and supportive relationship with a trained project worker, Accompanying builds the confidence, self worth and resilience of each child we work with, giving them greater equality of opportunity in life. The project has been developed in partnership with primary schools in Bath and its delivery is rooted in practice based research. Our pilot year report will be published in early 2012.

The vision: To see children and young people be all they can be

The Aims

- To build positive and meaningful relationships with children and young people that make a difference
- To help children and young people connect with their local community
- To provide consistent support to the child through times of transition and challenge in childhood

The Outcomes

- To build the sense of self-worth of the child
- To build the confidence of the child
- To help create greater equality of opportunity for the child
- To help children have opportunities to socialise and build relationships with peers and the local community
- To support the child during the transition from primary to secondary school
- To build the resilience of the child

Indicators of Success

- Expanded friendships – increased confidence in existing and new friendships
- Increased self esteem and self confidence
- The child having less concerns about life in and outside school
- The child causing less concern to parents and teachers
- The child showing a greater interest in school
- If they have done through the primary/secondary transition; that they are adapting well to new routines

How it works in practice: In consultation with the local school and parents/carers a worker a child is referred to the project. A worker is then appointed to work with the child. The delivery of the Accompanying Project involves a one to one session each week in school time. We assess involvement in group activities outside school and if appropriate support the child in linking with a local community activity such an after school club. Finally, the worker supports the transition process to secondary school. The commitment made to the child is for one year which takes the child into secondary school. The support is then reviewed at this point between involving the school, the worker and the child to decide whether to continue the intervention and if so what that looks like.