

ISA Awards 2021 Case Study: Providing Wider Curriculum Opportunities: Friday Afternoon Activities



MOON HALL SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2022



Background to the School

Moon Hall School opened its doors in 1985 when the founder, Mrs Berry Baker, recognised that mainstream schooling was not equipped to understand her son's learning style, as he was not responding well to their teaching methods or provision. As a qualified teacher she established the school in her own home, Moon Hall. The student numbers soon outgrew her home and the school moved to Holmbury St. Mary in the grounds of Belmont School. Mrs Baker and her husband donated the assets and goodwill of the school to a registered charity established under the same name, now known as the Moon Hall Schools Educational Trust. In 2005, Moon Hall School moved to its now permanent home in Reigate where it extended the age range to cover GCSEs.

Since the first lessons on the kitchen table, the ethos and values of Moon Hall School has remained the same. They provide an environment and the support needed to equip the students in their care with the confidence and ability to overcome the barriers they face. Moon Hall School is now under the expert leadership of Michelle Catterson, Executive Head, who continues to take the school forward with the support of a highly committed, professional staff.

A Specialist school

Moon Hall School is a specialist school that has successfully balanced the provision of a nurturing, supportive environment for dyslexic children alongside essential academic rigour and is very proud of the benefits this provides for its students. The students are happy, independent, motivated and supported to take on future challenges. They are encouraged to embrace their wonderful and often creative way of thinking and celebrate – not fear – their dyslexia. The challenge that school can be for some is understood and specialist support is provided to help all the students have the chance to reach their potential. There is continued investment in staff training and a real focus on ensuring that the school remains up to date with its teaching of dyslexic and dyscalculic students.

Moon Hall School were winners of the ISA Award for Excellence in Pupil Personal Development in the ISA Awards 2021.



www.moonhallschoolreigate.co.uk



AIMS

- To give all our students the opportunity to be involved in activities beyond the normal school day and chances to demonstrate talents, be adventurous, be challenged and learn new skills.
- To actively support student-directed interests.
- To address the lack of focus and lower attendance associated with Friday afternoons in school.

ACTIONS

On Friday afternoons, we chose not to teach academic lessons, putting in place a program of afternoon activities. This was started two years ago and has developed into a full timetable of activities that the students can sign up to and take part in during the school day. The activities provide wider curriculum choices and are often instigated from the interests of the students themselves. They have included chess club, drama club, choir, debating, go kart racing, gardening, cross fit, first aid, forest school, swimming and film club. The list is ever growing and often directed by the pupils but delivered by our staff or by visiting teachers. Exploring these new interests builds each student's confidence, gives them opportunities to develop supportive relationships, deepen existing expertise in an area of interest and promotes their emotional wellbeing as well as enhancing their positive attitude towards school.

The environment at Moon Hall radiates opportunity, something that wasn't always on offer to our students at previous schools.



OUTCOMES

- Pupils are fully engaged and excited about the Friday afternoon activities program.
- Older pupils have gained leadership opportunities that have not only benefitted them personally but also contributed to their coursework.
- Absence from school on a Friday has reduced.

NEXT STEPS

- To continue to develop the Friday afternoon activities program and provide further leadership opportunities for older students in line with the development of a sixth form.
- To look at how the activities program can be enhanced to incorporate future boarders at Moon Hall School.

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