

BUCKING THE TREND and creating BETTER OPPORTUNITIES

ACCORDING TO ST VINCENT'S SCHOOL FOR SENSORY IMPAIRMENT IN LIVERPOOL, OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED (VI) YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP THEIR STRENGTHS INTO ADULTHOOD AND EMPLOYMENT ARE NOT ENCOURAGING. THE SCHOOL BELIEVES THAT, WITH UNEMPLOYMENT FOR VI NOT FALLING MUCH BELOW 85% OVER THE LAST FIFTY YEARS, SOMETHING IS CLEARLY NOT WORKING

However, a curriculum at the school that is described as 'creative and enriched' is aiming to challenge this statistic by investing in the strengths of VI young people; celebrating those strengths and highlighting their employability.

Dr John A Patterson, Principal of St Vincent's explained more about the work of the school and how creativity is implemented. "Wednesdays at St. Vincent's are used to develop individual teaching and learning opportunities in support of the National Curriculum while simultaneously providing wider opportunities, experiences and alternative qualifications such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award."

"This means" Dr Patterson added, "encouraging and nurturing those strengths and skills demonstrated by pupils in key creative areas such as music, art, dance and movement, drama, sports, ICT and environmental projects and attaching those strengths into leadership



roles where St Vincent's pupils lead their sighted peers as the trainers of the trainers."

According to Dr Patterson, this has been successful. Examples include St Vincent's pupils teaching others their ceramic making skills and presenting their work at the Palace of Westminster, teaching others how to make comics and sharing those skills with university teacher training students, teaching sports specialists 'boccia' and 'goalball' or indeed 'free running'.

"It doesn't end here however" he explained. "The focus on strengths connects with a flourishing of self-belief and confidence which is then channelled into entrepreneurial learning and STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths). Here, pupils are encouraged to design new ideas to support their learning which are then included in the international 'Sightbox'."

The Sightbox is a 'toolbox' for the visually impaired enabling access to sports and education. Sightboxes funded by Rotary Clubs internationally have been sent to VI schools in 18 Countries including Pakistan, India, Rwanda, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Indonesia, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, Virgin Islands, Peru, Tanzania.

So, what is the impact?

"Apart from the increased confidence and employable skills" Dr Patterson says, "the creative 'reverse inclusion' curriculum has facilitated wider opportunities for our pupils such as playing for the British VI Football squad and recognition awards for individuals and groups including from the RNIB, the British Horticultural Society and the 'I Believe' Awards 'Shackleton Crew'."

You can find out more about St Vincent's at www.stvin.com

It's showtime!

SAVE THE DATES FOR OUR FUTURE EVENTS...

MIDDLE

Wednesday 4th March 2020
Ricoh Arena, Coventry

NEW DAY, NEW DATE!

SOUTH

Thursday 7th May 2020
Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre, Farnborough

WALES & WEST

Thursday 2nd July 2020
The International Conference Centre (ICC), Newport

NEW VENUE! (WE'RE MOVING!)

SCOTLAND

Thursday 10th September 2020
Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

NORTH

Thursday 12th November 2020
EventCity, Manchester

kidz
& ADULTZ
EVENTS