



Achievement for All

by **Mike Donovan**, Deputy Regional Lead

Walkwood's approach to encouraging, developing and empowering staff (of all types) was a pleasure to see; all have the opportunities to lead and showcase powerful interventions that support pupils' improvement. The staff as a WHOLE know and understand pupils' issues and strive to overcome them.

The way in which the school provides & contributes to: In Service Training and Masterclasses for other schools is testimony to a school that knows its strengths and has the staff with the skills to share them.

Walkwood's commitment to mapping and tracking pupil experiences and engagement demonstrates a thorough understanding that young people thrive when they are active and happy. The development of the "residential experience for all" philosophy is underpinned by sound management and exhaustive fund raising. This enables pupils to dramatically increase their life experiences and broaden their horizons; ultimately leading to improved pupil performance and achievement.

The work the school does to enhance pupil self esteem is worthy of high praise. Pupils are encouraged to work WITH staff in carefully controlled environments and activities that expose them to elements of risk and risk taking in order to develop all-important problem-solving and coping skills. Of equal importance is the way that staff enable pupils to support each other via the vertical tutor groups and peer mentoring opportunities; developing leadership and self-esteem. The use of learning approaches that encourage mutual pupil support in the development of: independent and group learning as well as ensuring ALL pupils get the chance to be a leader shows that the school is prepared to explore and deploy proven aids to raising pupils' levels of achievement.

Walkwood's decision to move away from 'information for parents' to 'real conversations with parents' is yet another sign that the school has; looked at the evidence about what improves pupils' performance, embraced it, made it its own and delivered it successfully. The positive relationships with parents and the range of holiday and online activities available for parents is an innovative way of keeping them involved and provides them with opportunities to work with their children. First class!

Finally, congratulations on gaining the Achievement for All; Quality Mark...thoroughly deserved.

