

Downshall Intergenerational Provision



What is the Downshall Intergenerational Provision?

NELFT NHS Foundation Trust, Age UK Redbridge, Barking & Havering, Lions and Downshall Primary School are working in partnership to provide an Intergenerational provision that brings together older adults and young children to improve the quality of life and opportunities for both.

The provision was launched by Dr David Hinchcliffe, Consultant Psychiatrist at NELFT NHS Foundation Trust and is based at Downshall Primary School. The school and mental health team are working in partnership to provide an Intergenerational provision that brings together older adults and young children to improve the quality of life and opportunities for both.

An activity centre for older adults is based at Downshall Primary School. There is a designated social lounge for participants and they also spend three half hour sessions in the Reception classes. The activity centre runs on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 10am and 1pm. The participants may partake in as many activity sessions as they wish.

Each term a programme of activities is arranged with a team comprising of school teachers and mental health professionals. The programme design team look across the school curriculum at the creative arts, music, language and communication and other elements to design projects and activities that will reinforce the learning and development of both pupils and participants.

What are the aims of the provision?

The provision aims to improve the quality of life for participants and the social and academic development of pupils. The participants are referred to Downshall by Redbridge Older Adults Mental Health Team and AgeUK and may be suffering from



isolation, depression, loneliness or early dementia. They work alongside the pupils in the classroom.

We believe there to be several potential benefits for all participants in our Intergenerational programme. Some participants have early onset dementia. There was initial scepticism as to how participants with early dementia would manage in the school setting. However we have a number of individuals with dementia who appear to be gaining a great deal from this project.

Benefits for the older adults

- Increased social interaction
- Greater life satisfaction
- Physical activity and engagement
- Enhanced emotional well-being
- Decreased depression effect
- Opportunity for creative expression
- Positive impact on individual wellbeing

Benefits for the children

- The opportunity for individual one-on-one interactions with adults to enhance communication
- Support from the older adults with creative activities
- Exposure to models of language
- Listening to stories, forms of language e.g. Storytelling and sharing books to enhance early reading
- Enhanced social and communication development. We have had a number of pupils who would not talk in large groups or class settings but have started to talk and interact with the smaller, one to one interactions
- Opportunity for creative expression
- Encouraging and cultivating pupil confidence



Cross sector partnership working

A real strength of the provision is the cross sector partnership working in a time of reduced resources.

The provision is supported by a number of organisations, ranging from monetary contributions to voluntary staffing on the day. Varying sectors include Health, Education as well as the Charity Sector – Age UK and Lions. The London Borough of Redbridge provided support for the first two years to help set up the provision.

We believe our programme is the perfect example of partnership working across sectors that maximises resources and results in more effective outcomes for all involved.

What has been the impact of the provision?

Downshall now has two years' worth of data from our reception pupils. This demonstrates that the pupils make accelerated progress as a result of the support from the participants and volunteers. Progress is accelerated even further for our focus pupils.

Downshall has a mixed intake of reception pupils. 89% of pupils start the school with English as a second language and have limited spoken English. Approximately 12% of pupils have refugee status and another 6% have no resource to public funds. 33% of pupils are in the lowest deprivation indicator. The school is situated close to a number of temporary accommodation residences and therefore mobility is 30%.

Focus pupils had particular issues relating to:

- Communication and Language
- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy



FOCUS AREA YEAR 2 (2018-2019)	STEPS OF PROGRESS		
	DIG PUPILS	NATIONAL	GAP
Speaking	10.6	6	+3.4
Understanding	10.6	6	+4.6
Moving and Handling	9.3	6	+3.3
Self Confidence and Self Awareness	10.2	6	+4.2
Managing Feelings and Behaviour	10.5	6	+4.5
Making Relationships	10.3	6	+4.3
Reading	9.9	6	+3.9
The World	10.9	6	+4.9

Baseline on entry

- 60% of all pupils at Downshall started with significantly below Age Related Expectation
- 38% of all pupils at Downshall started with below Age Related Expectation

End of year outcomes 2018-2019

- Overall step progress is 10.3 (9.8 steps 2018) (National 6 steps)
- Boys made better progress than girls (Opposite to school and national data)
- 78% (59% 2018) achieved expected standards in Communication and Language
- 81% (69% 2018) of pupils achieved expected standards in Personal Social and Emotional Development
- 61% (33% 2018) pupils have reached expected standards in both Reading and Writing

What are the outcomes for the older adults?

Findings from the medical team leading the provision also demonstrate very positive quality of life improvement outcomes for the older participants.

“Mr D is an 85 year old gentleman with a several year history of Recurrent Depressive Disorder, since the loss of his wife. He’s become socially isolated due to his illness and started to attend the school once a week. His mood and activity levels have improved greatly over the last six months and he tells us that he loves attending the school and looks forward to it every week.



“Mrs P is a 74 year old lady who, like Mr D has suffered with recurrent depression for years.

Her mood has been stable since joining the provision and she greatly enjoys being a part of the school and attends every week. It has helped her become more independent in other aspects of her life and she is more active in general now.”

“Mrs B is a 75 year old lady with cognitive impairment and depression. Her quality of life is generally poor due to her illness and her husband struggles to engage her in any activities now. Staff at the school noticed that she is generally withdrawn but when interacting with the children she comes alive.”

For the older adults we measure the quality of life for new participants joining the programme and aim to compare this with established participants. The measure being used is the Older People's Quality of Life rating scale.

Media interest

The provision has generated much media interest. This level of attention firmly put the provision on the map as one of the first primary schools to launch such an initiative, a day centre within a school.

To view media links and articles please visit our school website:

<https://www.downshallprimary.co.uk/redbridge/primary/downshall>

Establishing a network

Having monitored the success of the provision for two years we have now established a North East London Intergenerational Strategic Alliance where schools can incorporate this type of intergenerational working supported by NELFT.



North East London Intergenerational Strategic Alliance (NELISA)

Our mission statement was formulated at the first strategic alliance meeting on the 4th June 2019.

The Strategic Alliance aims to support intergenerational working across the North East London boroughs and NELFT. Intergenerational is defined for the sake of this project as being the collaboration of school age children with older adults from 65 and upwards.

The collaboration would be through the referral of older adults from NELFT's Older Adults Mental Health Teams and Memory Services, as well as Age UK.

The strategic alliance would support intergenerational working through

- Referral to and collaboration with intergenerational projects
- Accessing funding
- Sharing and developing expertise and best practice
- Promoting cross sector working
- Promoting and developing a dementia and ageing friendly community
- Enriching the education of young children through participation with older adults
- Developing a shared benefit and empathy between the generations



- Giving older adults a sense of purpose and young people the support/friendship of an adult with time for them
- Reducing social isolation for older adults
- Capitalising on and developing the joint appreciation of the playfulness and mindfulness of the moment that both young and older adults experience

Vision for the future

Our aspiration as a school is that we continue to serve our community here in Redbridge via our provision, help shape the minds of our pupils so they feel empowered to continually serve and grow to become model citizens of their communities.

We hope our efforts will help motivate and encourage others to join with us.

Further Information

If you have any questions then please contact the relevant organisations below.



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