

# Bulwell Young Leaders: Students who really make a difference!

by Linda Abbott

Profile



## Background

Bulwell EAZ is a collaborative group of schools in North Nottingham working with partner organisations to raise standards and improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Based at Bulwell Academy, Bulwell EAZ is part of the City-wide EIP Strategy and benefits from working closely with a range of local, city-wide and national organisations. Originally formed as an Education Action Zone in 1999 the organisation retains its title as an EAZ as young people and their families recognise the title as a familiar organisation in the area. The management group consists of all the school heads who have signed a Partnership agreement to formalise this arrangement.

Fig 1 sets out the priorities for Bulwell EAZ. Learning Outside the Classroom is an emerging area of work to support curriculum development. Critical to the success of this programme is the partnership with Nottingham City Council Curriculum support, where a dedicated worker has helped to secure funding and works with the schools to embed residential and Learning Outside the Classroom (LoTC) across the curriculum.

Bulwell EAZ is one of the 13 Learning Away clusters that, with funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, are exploring the potential of residential experiences as part of a progressive and inclusive approach. Our programme focuses on support as young people make the transition from one learning phase to another. Ultimately we anticipate that the residential and the associated LoTC programme will make a significant contribution to wider community cohesion.

One of the core elements of the programme is training young leaders with the aim of these students becoming confident enough to design and lead activities both within local schools, at holiday clubs and on residential.



Marcus and Gabriel

## Case Study

This case study sets out the story of the development of two young leaders, Marcus and Gabriel, now in year 12, who have been involved with Bulwell EAZ for several years.



Marcus and Gabriel were from different primary schools. Both showed leadership skills early on, Marcus joined the EAZ Student council as a Year 4 and took part in an event to launch the trams in Nottingham City; Gabriel joined the student council when he was head boy at Bonington Junior School.

*"Marcus and Gabriel are fantastic role models within the academy. They demonstrate a maturity far beyond their years and are testament to the benefits of our leadership programmes. I believe they are the trailblazers and many other Bulwell Academy students will follow the same successful path to leadership which will result in them opening many doors for them in their future pathways."*

Graham Roberts, Principal – Bulwell Academy

# An interview with Marcus and Gabriel

## What did you get out of the residential to Hartington as a young leader?

*'It gave me a great experience to work with a wide range of children and adults with new activities. Working out of my comfort zone in new sports also gave me a boost in confidence and seeing the younger children enjoy those new activities is a achievement for myself and the project.'*

*'As a leader it allowed me to gain new skills and qualities that gave me confidence within this area. As an overall experience it allowed me to express my knowledge within different areas and develop further. On the whole the project was a great success.'*

## How have you used your experience as a platform to further leadership work?

*'Playing new activities and games gave me new ideas that I can use further within my role as a 'Community Sport Leader' and to share those experiences with other leaders and younger children.'*

*'Attaining these new qualities it has allowed me to express higher skills in my job role as a 'Community Sport Leader'. I have been able to take on board a whole range of practical opportunities that I use to drive my sessions to being successful.'*

## There is an opportunity to work with year 5 students and to mentor them through their first steps into leadership – how do you feel about this?

*'Working with Year 5 students is a great opportunity to pass on my knowledge and experiences to those leaders who in the future will be taking over our roles. For them to start leading as such an early age will be a great success for us all and a high achievement for themselves; taking what they will learn and applying it to their schools and hopefully even giving their teachers a few new ideas.'*

*'As a leader I feel as though I have a wider range of knowledge and experience that I wish to express to young up and coming leaders. As a person who is passionate about this industry I feel that I can become a role model for these people and we can all gain something out of these great opportunities.'*

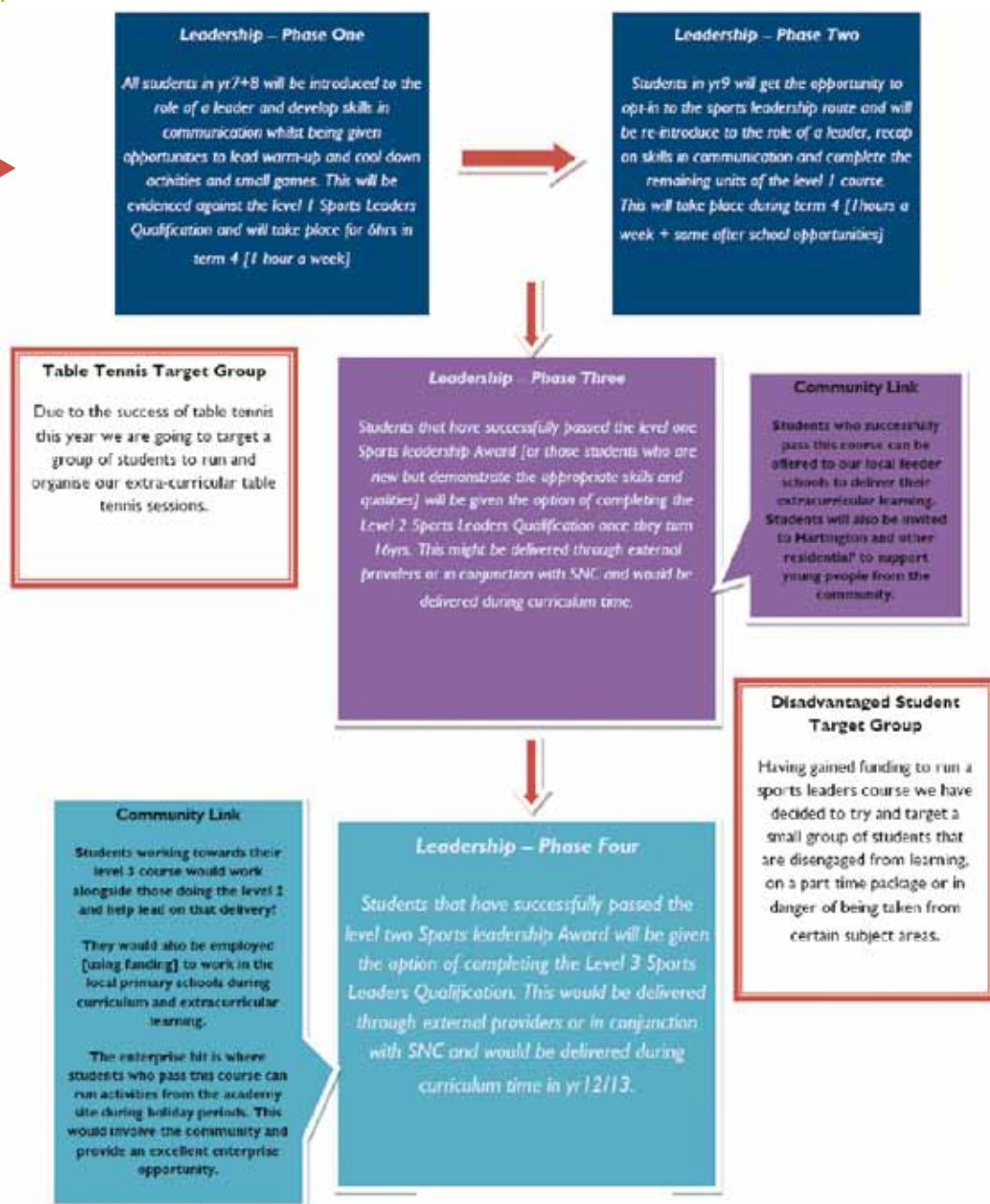
## Bulwell Academy Leadership Cycles

### Leadership pathway

When Bulwell Academy opened in September 2009 a Leadership Pathway was developed to create a structure for development of young leaders. This meant that from Year 7 students could choose to start leadership training, Marcus and Gabriel with ambitions already for a career in Sport quickly took up every training opportunity available.

### Developing Leadership within the PHF programme

When Bulwell was successful in becoming one of 13 clusters in the country to be part of the PHF Learning Away programme a real opportunity arose to increase the opportunities for young leaders to further develop their skills on residential.





## Residential Element

As Year 11 students Marcus and Gabriel helped design and deliver a range of team building activities over the course of a three day residential for 90 Year 5 and 7 pupils. Their delivery was praised by the supporting teachers who said they were excellent role models. The next year they returned as Year 12 leaders and each had a year 11 student training with them enabling them to pass on their skills and for the support to be sustained in future years.

## Bulwell Academy primary residential

As the Learning Away programme developed in Bulwell it became apparent that we needed to address the challenge of sustainability. Many of the residentials were heavily reliant on external funding and given the economic circumstances of our local community it was not viable to put additional financial pressure on families to pay large amounts for their children to attend residentials.

In September 2010 an idea of a local camp was born, inspired by another Learning away cluster experience. This became reality in April 2011 with three one-night camps on the Bulwell Academy site. Different Easter holiday patterns for our primary schools and the Academy meant that the camps could have sole occupancy of the site. This being a newly opened building with a large covered courtyard at its centre was an ideal venue. Marcus and Gabriel were very keen to become involved with the camps and being on 'their' site they were invaluable in the planning and delivery of the camps.

They were employed for the whole week and provided continuity as different primary schools came to the camp. They set up and ran a range of team building activities such as orienteering, den building, ball coasting, spiders web and sport activities. They also demonstrated camp procedures to the students setting out and putting away of tents, mats and sleeping bags. They were excellent at camp safety and ensured that the children enjoyed themselves in a safe, happy and carefree environment.

A range of staff from different primary schools attended the camps. The young leaders showed great maturity in gauging appropriate relationships with the various staff giving support and leading activities with enthusiasm.

The local camp experience was a great success and will be developed over future months. Young employees, like Marcus and Gabriel will be a key element to the success of these experiences.

## Primary sport festivals

Both Marcus and Gabriel regularly work with our SSCO (School Sports Co-ordinator) to organise sports festivals for the primary schools within our partnership. These are within curriculum time and students come onto the Bulwell Academy site to the festivals and are always warmly welcomed by our young leaders. This helps primary children feel comfortable within a secondary school environment. As Marcus and Gabriel have developed their leadership skills they support the SSCO in training young leaders in Year 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Marcus demonstrates a team building activity to primary students



The Young leaders at the end of the Hartington residential with Dave Brockhurst, Bulwell Academy Vice Principal for Community Cohesion, a big supporter of Leadership for young people



*'The young leaders were great, they encouraged our children to participate and made it a great fun experience for them - a big thank you to them.'*

Primary school teacher on the Hartington residential



Marcus and Gabriel, with Peter Mitchell (Chair of Bulwell Academy Governors), far left, Chris Fisher (Assistant Principal - Post 16), far right and three other post 16 students after a presentation to Academy governors.

## Community Sport partnership

The CS partnership, funded through Sport England: Marcus and Gabriel both have both become qualified Level 2 Sports Leaders. The increase in confidence this gave them quickly developed and enabled them to engage in a wide range of volunteering opportunities across the Academy, Bulwell community and Nottingham City. Developing positive relationships with managers of projects has opened up many new and exciting opportunities for them.

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**Extended school activities** - In partnership with a number of local organisations Bulwell EAZ organize a range of holiday clubs in the community. Marcus and Gabriel began volunteering at the clubs to give them valuable work experience whilst studying for their Level 2 sport leader qualification. It quickly became apparent they were very popular with the children attending the clubs, they both showed a natural ability to engage groups in a range of activities. They were sensitive to any children who had additional needs and were able to adapt and include all those in a group. They showed a great maturity but were also able to have fun with the children quickly building up a level of trust and respect in various holiday club settings.

Once qualified the necessary systems were set up for Marcus and Gabriel to be employed by Nottingham City Council to support extended school activities not just in Bulwell but across the city.

**Marcus Kiggins:** completed a Sports Leaders Level 2 course in 2007 aged 15. He went on to volunteer with My Community Sport and The Bulwell Academy and was involved in leading after school clubs, holiday activities and lunchtime provisions within 6 primary schools in Bulwell.

**Gabrial McDonald:** completed his Sports Leaders Course in 2008 and quickly committed his free time to developing sports programmes in his local area, for local young people.

Both young leaders are now involved in part time work with My Community Sport and are leading many activities, including Football sessions, holiday activities and circuit training for school staff!

*Emma Brown, My Community Sport project manager*

## Outcomes already being achieved:

- Primary students get to know Academy site, staff and students leading to Bulwell Academy being their school of choice in Year 7
- Improved perception of Academy students within the local schools and community
- Entry to University (in Marcus and Gabriel's case one year early)
- Enhanced outcomes for accredited courses and qualifications
- Students volunteering in extended school and community clubs
- Local employment for local students.

## Summary

There is often a preconception that it can be difficult to engage young people to participate in positive activities. Marcus and Gabriel are outstanding examples of what young people can achieve given the right support, guidance and opportunities. They are very ambitious for themselves, their school and the local community. They proactively seek out chances to get involved in activities and are looked up to by both younger students and peers.

Being well known and respected within the community parents and families trust them and welcome their involvement, hopefully also seeing future development for their own children. Given the employment and economic challenges that our community face we see young leaders becoming paid employees as a very positive outcome. ■

## Notes and Information

### Appendix:

Relevant qualifications  
 BTEC First Diploma in Sport Exercise and Fitness  
 NCFE Level 2 Improving Personal Exercise and Nutrition  
 NCFE Sports coaching  
 NCFE Sports leadership  
 NCFE Level 2 Equality and Diversity  
 BTEC National Diploma in Sport  
 Level 2 Community Sports Leadership Award  
 Level 3 Higher Sports Leaders Award  
 First aid  
 CRB checks

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 Bulwell EAZ is an Education Improvement Partnership  
 Nottingham City Council Children and Families



### Author's Notes

Linda Abbott is Manager of Bulwell EAZ, a collaborative group of schools in North Nottingham working together on many projects including Curriculum Development around Learning Outside the Classroom. Having a background in finance she joined the organisation in 2000 to manage finance and administration. In 2004, becoming EAZ Manager, she started working with Martin Smith, Nottingham

City outdoor education manager organising an annual family of schools residential. Linda is passionate about giving young people practical and enterprising opportunities to lead activities and gain experience on local projects and residential.