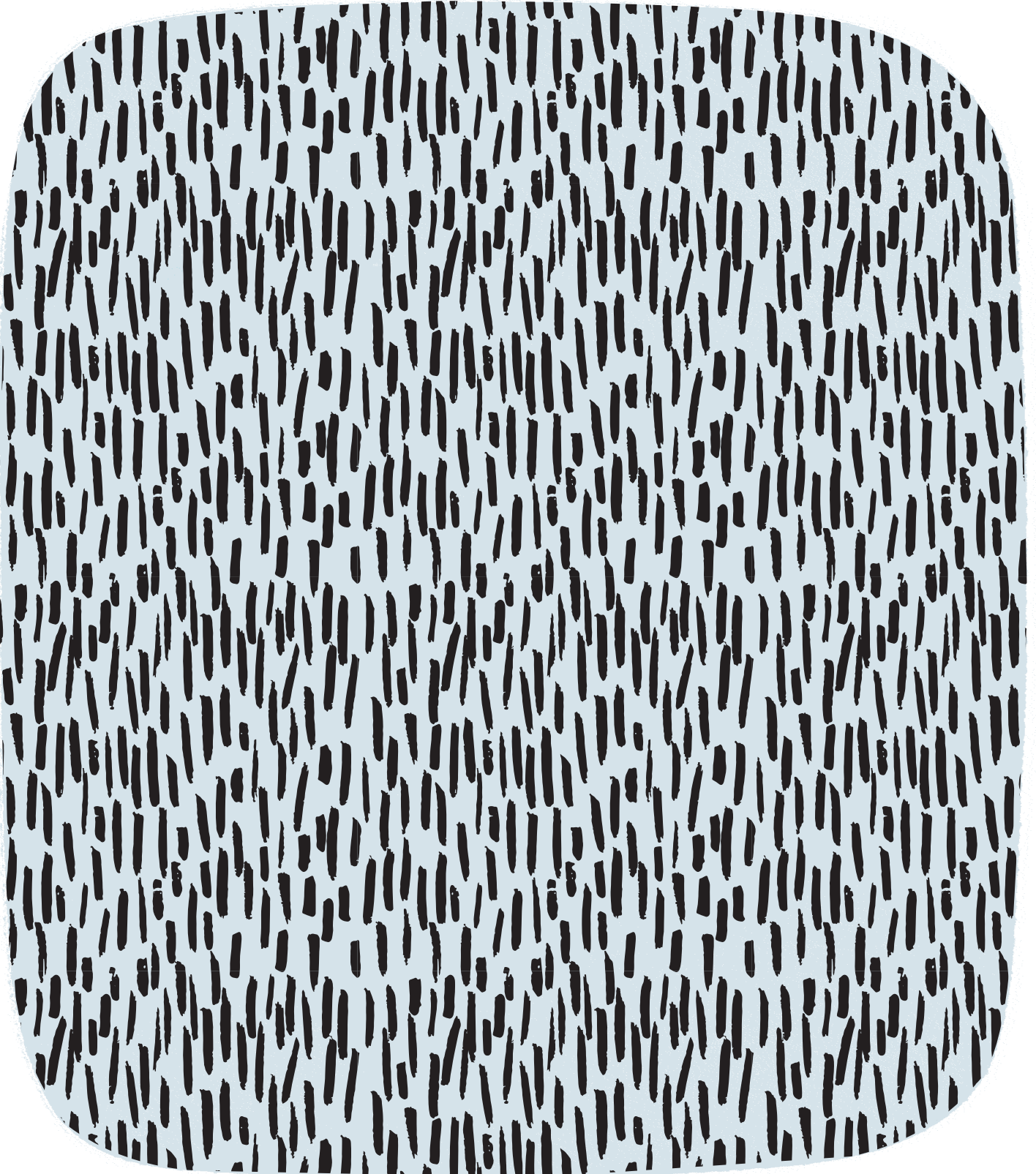




**tutor  
doctor**  
How learning hits home.

# Case Study: Working with Schools

## CHESTERTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE



# OVERVIEW

Receiving the Secondary School of the Year Award in the previous year from the inaugural Cambridge Evening News Education Awards, Chesterton Community College is evidently a progressive school in very good shape.

Tutor Doctor Cambridge was delighted to be approached by the school in January 2015 to help provide additional support to a selection of Year 11 students, who the school felt had the capacity to achieve the all-important C-grade but were tracking just off at the time. The individuals selected all benefitted from additional funding through the government's Pupil Premium grant, which the school looks to deploy as productively as they can.

Chesterton was the fifth school Tutor Doctor Cambridge has worked with, and with each school we gather specific learnings about how best to deliver against the requirements outlined. This assignment was trickier than past partnerships, due to the suggested timetable: tutoring pairs of students twice a week at 8:30am for 30 minutes.

The process was instigated by the Head Teacher, Mrs Lucy Scott, who met the Tutor Doctor team on the 21st of January 2015, just a couple of days after having been approached by her secretary, who found Tutor Doctor online and wondered if we may be able to help. Mrs Scott was aware that it was a challenging brief, outlining that this was the school's first time engaging with an organisation like Tutor Doctor.

Learning from some other schools we'd worked with previously, Mrs Scott agreed that it would indeed be beneficial for the Education Consultant to meet with the Assistant Head and Head of Maths, Mrs Clare Hargraves to ensure that we had a good grasp of the specific requirements. Mrs Hargraves met with the Education Consultant the following day and together they were able to determine the necessary details of the student's requirements. Mrs Hargraves was issued with the brief that would be circulating to our tutors to ensure it is met with her approval and that we had reflected the requirements exactly.

Upon finalising the programme and closing the review meeting, Mrs Hargraves did concede that she was "quite nervous" about the programme at the outset and that it was not an insignificant financial outlay for the school. Looking back now, she feels that Tutor Doctor "really exceeded expectations".

Mrs Hargraves explained that she could see that the children were indeed strengthening their Maths because of the tuition. She was pleased to see the students had changed their demeanour towards their learning - because the students were making progress and engaging well with the tutoring programme, they were feeling more confident and positive about their academics.

# EARLY CHALLENGES

Although attracting the right calibre of tutors to commute into a city centre school for a half-hour session posed an initial challenge for the Tutor Doctor office, this is the kind of initiative that excites so many of our tutors. We had nine different tutors working at Chesterton this year, all who enjoy being in a school environment and working with a team.

Punctuality is of course vital in all instances, but it was especially important here and, in a positive and rational way, we did need to make a couple of changes at first if the tutors were struggling to “definitely, definitely” get to the school and ready for the students arriving at 8:30am. Having someone else to resolve any such issues is something that is inevitably attractive to the school.

The first day of the programme, on 3rd February 2015, less than 2 weeks after the original meeting with Mrs Scott, was our only day of proper snow this year. Not great news at all and whilst you can't control the weather, one thing we have done ever since and will do going forward is having myself or one of the Management team on-site for day one. Possibly having someone in situ to hurry people along and get the tutors into the right places to make the right first impression would have helped. As I say, we've done that ever since (and it's not snowed since!).

## EVOLVING PROGRAMME



The school did a great job in ensuring the children were in good attendance, while the tutors also worked with the Tutor Doctor team to flag any attendance or behaviour issues in their session reports. As time went on, as a few students from the initial group did not continue with their tuition, others were added to the programme based on whether they could benefit from the extra support.

Over time, students were added to the programme to work with during lunchtime or study periods on a one-to-one basis. We also worked with some students at their homes over the school holidays if that was the right solution. The flexibility that Tutor Doctor offered was something the school and the students enjoyed.

Although some tutors were unable to complete the full programme due to unforeseen circumstances, Tutor Doctor was able to reorganise the team and slot in replacements without any breaks in the students' proceedings. Since session reports were issued by the tutors after each session, the replacement tutor was able to review what had been covered to date and how the students had responded, aiding in a smooth and efficient handover.

# KEY LEARNINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The regular reporting from the tutors was well-received, providing the right level of detail and proving the team to be very dependable. Moving forward, our team aims to increase contact with the parents of the students to help ensure there is support and engagement at home, further reinforcing their learning. Attendance was good overall, but there is the opportunity for improvement. The school believes that full appreciation of the programme's benefits may be a better driving factor in the future, rather than the threat of detention.

Having sight of the students' mock papers and their projected grades also proved to be beneficial and will be something that we recommend to all schools we work with in the future. Another opportunity would be adjusting the work environment, with considerations being made about switching more students to have their tutoring at home or in the library, depending on the situation.

## IN SUMMARY

This was an exciting and challenging opportunity for Tutor Doctor Cambridge, and we are very grateful to Mrs Scott and Mrs Hargraves for entrusting us with their programme. Mrs Hargraves has confirmed that the school would like to conduct something similar for next year's Year 11's, implementing some of the aforementioned learnings for both the school and Tutor Doctor, continuing our blossoming partnership.

**“ This was the first time that we have been involved with an external tutoring company. I was really pleased with how it worked out; Tutor Doctor was able to deal with the complexities of tricky timings, nine different tutors, managing communications between the school and the tutors and keeping track of attendance. I am especially impressed with the clear ambition of Tutor Doctor to always improve; I am given the strong sense that they will never settle for being good enough. I look forward to the GCSE results and am already planning the next stage of work. ”**

**- MRS HARGRAVES**

