

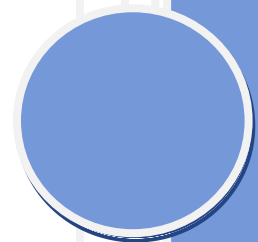


AQOON SCHOOL-HOME SUPPORT SERVICES



The Duke of Kent met Aqoon staff, volunteers and

Annual Review
2010



Chair's Statement



I am delighted, on behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers, to present the Aqoon School-Home Support Service's Annual Report for 2009/2010 as a summary of the achievements of the past year.

Aqoon has been proactive in addressing some of the key issues

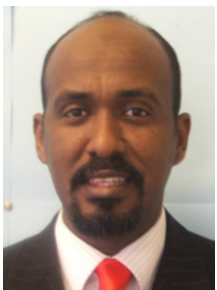
relating to local communities with regard to children's education. With the strong links we have with local schools, educational support agencies and parents groups, Aqoon has delivered a number of successful projects including the School-Home Support Services, Complementary education programme for primary and secondary school ages, parents support services.

Another remarkable success was the development of a model of Effective Project - School Link; this model helped us to improve our working relationship with our partners; mainstream schools.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to our successes, including pupils, parents, volunteers and our partners such as schools and support agencies, including Leicester City Psychology Services, Learning and Autism Support, Early Years, Disabled Children Services. May I also thank those who provided financial and technical support including Leicester City Council - Children and Young Peoples Services, Esmèè Fairbairn Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Yasmin Surti
Chair

Manager's Vision



As our philosophy is "Far kaliya fool ma dhaqdo" – a Somali phrase which means "A single finger cannot wash a face", we have an excellent, mutual understanding and spirit of partnership with local schools (primary, secondary and special schools), educational support agencies, higher and further education institutions and other community organisations. Some of our successes would have been realistically difficult and might have been unobtainable without the partnership of our dedicated partners and we are grateful for their contribution and commitment over the last year.

Abdishakur Tarah
Senior Project Manager

Aqoon School-Home Support Services

Aqoon School-Home Support Services provides support, advice and information to parents, carers, schools/agencies and children and young people with schooling or educational matters. The aim of the project was to provide a bridge of communication between schools, families and educational support agencies. Aqoon School Home Support project has provided a range of services such as specialised mediation and liaising, interpreting and translation, learning mentoring support for young people and children at risk of exclusion, parents support workshops and training for schools and staff on how to meet the needs of newly-arrived communities. The service has enabled many staff from schools and agencies to work more closely with Somali families. Aqoon's specialist knowledge around education, special needs and Somali culture was the key to the success of the services. Since it was initiated in 2008, the service has received more and more referrals for mediation, liaison, learning mentoring, translation and interpreting and in some cases home visit, on behalf of schools and agencies, for those children with challenging behavior. The service has supported more than 70 parents in the last year alone, often with complex cases. Please see case studies below.

Aqoon Complementary Schools

Complementary Education classes were run as usual last year in three different locations in Highfields (Children and Parents Centre), Taylor Road Primary School and Coleman Primary School. All the settings accommodated a total of 80 children in Year 5 and 6. Pupils were enrolled through referrals from their class teachers/schools. Additional help was given to those identified as having "learning difficulties". The teachers of Aqoon Complementary School have made use of different strategies to help pupils understand new or the useful concept of how to improve their work. The different strategies include: One to one help, group work, mental arithmetic, times-tables, written work, comprehension, spelling, and word-building grammar. The focus of the complementary school was not only teaching and supporting with national curriculum subjects, but also to help with building confidence, self-esteem, social skills and improving other skills such as friendship, teamwork etc.

Alongside study support, the complementary school project has offered mentoring support to those who have been identified with challenging behaviour. Please see case studies section of the Annual Review.

Parent, Pupil and Teacher Testimonies



Said Yusuf

Parent

Aqoon School-Home Support service is an opener of minds for many children in Leicester. As a father of Faisa and Firdowsa whom have been supported by Aqoon Complementary School since 2007, I am undoubtedly convinced that my two daughters would not be where they are today without Aqoon. Despite the fact they have been in the UK for less than 5 years and English is not their first language Aqoon has built the capacity of my children satisfactorily. I regularly check their lesson notes and have a discussion with my daughters about teaching at Aqoon and the teachers' method. I have established that because of the combination of teachers' quality and good management of the Aqoon Complementary School my daughters have produced fantastic results.



Firdowsa

Pupil

Being one of many students of Aqoon Complementary School since 2007, the way I learn has changed dramatically. Despite the fact that I have been in the UK for less than 5 years, Aqoon has helped me all the way through. As well as learning a lot, Aqoon increased my ability to learn. It also boosted my confidence. Aqoon Complementary School has always had an effect on me; always work hard and never give up. It has been a pleasure to be apart of Aqoon. My English language is stronger than many expected, because of the support I received from Aqoon.



Nelista Cuffy

Teacher

On Coleman Complementary School: The Saturday morning sessions consisted of an hour of numeracy followed by an hour of literacy. On average twelve students attended. They were always very enthusiastic about their learning and liked the motivational 'star' stamp. All the students demonstrated progress in writing a persuasive text. Most had great success with manipulating fractions and overcoming previous fraction blockages. I have enjoyed seeing the 'aha' glint in their eyes as they realised their achievement. I am sure that if they maintained their effort each will excel in their SATS and beyond. Thanks to Coleman for their resources, support and the great partnership work with AQOON. Thanks also to the parents for prioritising their child's learning.

Partners & Other Organisations



Coun. Vi Dempster

Deputy Leader and
Cabinet Lead Member
for Children's Services
Leicester City Council

Aqoon has made a big difference to the life chances of young people in this city through the range of projects which they deliver successfully in a caring yet highly professional manner. High quality partnerships have been developed across the city to bring together parents, young people and education professionals with the prime aim of improving the provision and outcomes for young people. I admire their tenacity in seeking out appropriate funding from a variety of sources which enables them to tackle the issues which they have identified as high on the agenda of the Somali and wider community. I wish them every success in their continuing endeavours and look forward to our continuing partnership.



Sandra Holyoake

Services Manager for
Disabled Children &
Young People.
Leicester City Council

Leicester City Council, Disabled Children's Services has developed a professional relationship with Aqoon through working together on projects that support Somali and other BME communities to become involved in participation. Somali and other BME communities are often isolated and have had no say in how services that relevant to them are designed, developed and monitored. We have supported Aqoon to produce an interactive DVD aimed at giving information on SEN and disability. This DVD promotes support services to disabled children and those with additional needs in a positive way and encourages take up. Together we have supported Somali parents to become involved in key groups. We work on an ongoing project aimed at developing a good practice model that can be used with other BME communities.



Nigel Bruen

Headteacher
Coleman Primary School

For the last two years Coleman Primary School has been operating a joint Aqoon – Coleman Complementary School. This is held at the school on Saturday mornings and provides an opportunity for targeted children to receive additional support with their English and Maths work. Tuition is organised by Aqoon, but the tutor liaises with the school to provide tuition which meets the needs of those pupils targeted by the school. The complementary school is a really effective example of community cohesion in working with a local community group to provide additional support for the school's own community of pupils.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: LO, boy in year 11 in local mainstream secondary school

With the help of the school, LO's mum referred herself and asked us to involve in her son's schooling. LO is currently in year 11 and has been in England since he was year 2. He has been in and out of England and his family took him back to Somalia when he became unmanageable. This is a belief held by many Somali parents that their child may change as a result of seeing or knowing more about the Somali culture and customs.

At present, LO lives with his mother, stepfather and four siblings. He has some difficulties getting on with his stepfather. LO has never seen his biological father and his mum got married to her current husband when LO was at age of 2. He is the oldest child in the house.

The purpose of the referral was to help mum manage LO's behaviour in school and try to support him with his school work. LO was excluded from school twice before the referral. He was at risk of permanent exclusion with a likelihood of being referred to APEX.

Since the referral, Aqoon became part of the process and attended LO's PSP meetings. At the meetings, it was felt that Aqoon could help LO to solve most of the aforementioned problems. Aqoon set an individual support plan between LO and our senior project manager, who has known LO since his primary education. LO's Aqoon support plan includes;

- LO to receive weekly (every Wednesday) learning mentoring (1.5 hr)
- 1:1 support for his coursework (English and Maths)
- Aspiration talks with our senior project manager (to discuss issues such as truancy, poor timekeeping and issues regarding distraction).

At Aqoon Centre, LO received all the support requested for him by his school and successfully completed and handed in his coursework. Less truancy, less distraction in the classroom and better timekeeping have all been reported. LO is no longer at risk. The school, mum and LO are all very grateful to the support and input received from Aqoon.

Case Study 2: SH, girl in year 9

SH's mum referred herself mid-April 2010 with the help of an ex-service user. SH is in year 9, but currently doesn't attend school. The school that she is enrolled in referred her to the Newry Learning Centre, who felt that she didn't need to spend the full period (12 weeks). Mum became very frustrated when the Principle of her enrolled/excluded school rejected her to return to school.

SH was excluded from school after a number of incidents including fight, rude to the teacher, defiant and not following instruction, disruption in the classroom.

Since SH completed her short stay, she was left without school for four months and this has been very frustrating for not only mum, but for SH as well. During that period SH was at home and no study work was sent to her.

Aqoon's Input

Action 1

Aqoon translated the behaviour log for mum for the first. She said she was not given any opportunity to understand what was going on and school had never informed her of the sequence of events. She also felt that the school overreacted to SH's action of calling the police.

Action 2

Aqoon has liaised with her previous school, mum and other departments within the council including Education Improvement Partnership which is responsible for children who are not in education and managed move protocols. Aqoon had played a very constructive role and tried to repair the communication breakdown between the school and the parent. It became apparent that to get a parental preference school for SH has been difficult and Aqoon has acknowledged that there is a need for alternative programme of activity for SH and offered her the chance to come and support our nursery education programme for pre-school children until a school place was found for her.

What can Aqoon School-Home Support offer?

- Complementary education classes
- Family learning activities
- Interpreting and translation
- Home-school liaison and mediation
- Voluntary and placement opportunities for unemployed or active citizens(only for schools and education based settings)
- Personalised learning and academic coaching for 12-19 years old
- School-based bilingual learning mentoring
- Support for jobs, education and training for 19+



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Who Supported Us?

