



Inspirational mentors are working with hundreds of young people across Derby as part of a pioneering project in the city to reduce the number of Year 10 and 11 students moving schools.

Targeted Student Support works to provide innovative support packages aimed at helping teenagers who are considering a move to a new school and was launched last year.

TSS has joined forces with Think For The Future, an organisation which works to ensure that young people reach their full educational potential.

Mentors from Think For The Future are working in six schools in Derby including Landau Forte College, Bemrose, UTC, Kingsmead, Murray Park and West Park.

They often have real life experiences in topics that they teach and they deliver programmes designed to boost resilience and inspire young people to make positive changes.

Nathan is a mentor for Think For The Future and has been working with students at Derby UTC.

He said: "As a young person I was in and out of trouble and was involved in gangs and criminal activity, I moved schools a lot which made it difficult for me to find a positive role model.

"I then turned my life around and chose to build a career working with young people and children to deter them from the types of mistakes I made and help them to see the value of education and to be that positive role model."

David Sanderson, Assistant Headteacher at West Park School in Spondon, said that all of the pupils involved in TTF really enjoyed the sessions delivered by their mentor.

He said: "The pupils speak very highly of the advice and guidance that he provides. When I attend meetings with parents they also outline how much they value the input from TTF. It has certainly focussed the pupils to try to better themselves and value the opportunities that a good education can offer."

Mobility support worker Shaheen Parekh is leading the TSS programme.

She said: "Mentoring allows young people the support they need to discuss areas of their home and school lives in a structured way. The common consensus across all the schools we are working with is that these sessions are being extremely well received and we are delighted that they are having such an impact."

TSS is also rolling out a series of motivational workshops led by former professional footballer Alistair Patrick-Heselton, from the Youth Sport Trust, who suffered life-changing injuries in a car crash.

Other support packages that TSS has put in place for students include one-to-one help with English and maths, traditional counselling and anger management sessions.

In the academic year 2018/19, 120 students in Year 10 and 11 moved schools in Derby but this can mean that they make 20 per cent less progress than their peers, which ultimately impacts on their future education and careers.

Reasons students might want to move school include falling out with friends, wanting a fresh start, issues with bullying or thinking that another school will have a different set of rules.

The project is being funded by the Department for Education through the Derby Opportunities Area, which is already running several schemes to boost children's life chances and will run until September 2020.

**For more information contact Nicola Allen at Allen PR on 07896305059.**