



Olive School



# CASE STUDY

## THE OLIVE SCHOOL, BLACKBURN PART OF STAR ACADEMIES



### BACKGROUND

Star Academies and GP Strategies have worked in partnership since May 2019 to promote and deliver apprenticeship training to new and existing staff. The Trust currently has over 30 apprentices in learning undertaking various training programmes that are all being delivered flexibly and tailored to the individual learner as well as the Academy.

One of the first Academies to engage with recruiting apprentices was The Olive School, Blackburn. GP Strategies worked closely with the school through the approved recruitment process to successfully recruit two teaching assistant apprentices.

### THE TEACHING ASSISTANT LEVEL 3 APPRENTICESHIP

This programme is suitable for new and existing staff members working within a teaching assistant role supporting within the classroom. It takes 14 months to complete and is delivered mainly remotely through phone, email and online platforms.

### CHALLENGE

Hajrah Zafar and Armena Hussain joined The Olive School, Blackburn in November 2019 and, alongside their new role, commenced their Teaching Assistant Level 3 Apprenticeship. Several months into their programme, the coronavirus pandemic and the various measures introduced to slow its spread led to a shift towards online learning and assessment.



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### OUTCOME

Despite the pandemic, the apprentices have all remained on programme and have developed their knowledge extensively throughout the qualification.

The apprentices have been supported remotely by Julie Phillips, one of GP Strategies' experienced Childcare Skills Coaches, who works with learners across Star Academies.

The research they have done has been linked directly to their day to day work activities, and they have a stronger understanding of how children learn and also why they are implementing these everyday practices. Through gathering evidence for their portfolios, Hajrah and Armena can show how pupils have progressed in their learning and how they have supported them with this.

### BENEFITS

The overall benefits of recruiting apprentices are already being seen by the Academy, and as such, they enrolled another apprentice soon after. The training for all the apprentices has been fully funded through Star Academies' Apprenticeship Levy so there has been no additional cost to The Olive School, Blackburn and no cost to learners. Star Academies fully endorses apprenticeship training through its Star Apprenticeships Programme.

"I am extremely impressed with not only the commitment shown from Hajrah and Armena but the support they have received from the school's senior leaders. I have clear communication with the school's Assistant Principal and after every learner meeting I let her know how they are progressing and she always provides feedback."

**Julie Phillips, Childcare & Teaching Assistant Skills Coach,  
GP Strategies**

"Employing a blank canvas enables you to shape and mould that person into excellence. Hajrah and Armena came to us with very little experience yet, are two of the most hardworking people I have met. Their passion and eagerness to complete their qualification is admirable and I am sure they continue to flourish into amazing professionals."

**Hayley Walsh, Assistant Principal,  
The Olive School, Blackburn**

For further information about apprenticeships please contact Sharon Howard  
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