

# Rambo to Romeo

**“Giving Shahid the chance was a very good decision as we knew Blue River Academy was the right place to make a difference in Shahid’s life.”**

*-Abdul Emdad, Mentor*

In the beginning there was aggression...



Not everyone gets off on their best foot first but in the case of Shahid, he had taken several missteps which had lead him astray before things changed. After being removed from a high school for repeated incidents of aggression, Shahid was referred to two other provisions but he did not last long at these facilities. They catered to SEN students statemented for special needs and with behavioural difficulties, however Shahid's real needs were not met. His Educational Psychologist suggested "...a setting that distances him from the social context that is fuelling his poor behavioural choices". Hunters Hill, who were Shahid's referral agency found these facilities 'unsuitable' after they failed to cope with Shahid's confrontational misdemeanours by "providing a distinct lack of positive role models. This meant there were 'significant and increasing concerns about Shahid's functioning in the community'.

*“He got thrown out because he threatened the owner.....he was like a little gang leader at that time, and he admitted it. They then transferred him to Blue River”.*

*Tony Maguire, 3D Education*

Through our doors...



The result of the disruption to Shahid's education meant that his academic ability, at the age of 15, in English and Maths were equivalent to that of an 11 year old. In spite of this he walked through our doors in February 2013 and began to find his feet. Although he would initially display confrontational behaviour to some staff, this would be the first provision not to remove him immediately. However his focus was still on his social standing and his studies. He was placed into our centre for functional skills and foundation learning, qualifications less rigorous than GCSE.

*“From our first meeting I realised that Shahid was a young man of principles and he deserved a chance.”*

*Abdul Emdad, Blue River Teaching Mentor*

A glimmer of hope...

In the beginning, Shahid was attending Blue River on a trial basis while his school was trying to finding him a place in another (alternative) provision. However Shahid's mum was so impressed with the difference Blue River made to her son in a few weeks she wanted him to stay. She had also noticed Shahid's academic ability and behaviour improve.

"SK has become a different person in a few weeks since joining BRA he comes home early, he does not hang out on the streets, when he goes out he tells me before he goes, offers to buy me things from the shop and returns within the time he gives, he makes me tea at home and his whole attitude has become better"

Shahid's Mother

Help was at hand...

Blue River and Shahid's parents put in a lot of hard work in mentoring and by being patient made a difference in his life. Basically the role models recommended by the doctor in his special needs report were around him at Blue River which made a real difference whether it was teachers, assisting teachers, mentor or other members of staff. During his time at Blue River Shahid did not get the usual negative reaction which he was used to but he rather found staff at Blue River forgiving, patient and most important of all the staff did not reject him and this was what made him realise we were really here to make a difference to his life.

The challenge of GCSE's...



With 3 months to go before exams, Blue River courageously made a decision to provide Shahid with the challenge of GCSE's. Blue River backed up his belief in himself and work began with Shahid to catch up the 75% of the year he had been away for. Shahid was now a determined student and his teachers more than matched this enthusiasm for work with extra care and attention. This was a recipe for something great to happen. With a tendency to lack focus Shahid found himself trying to climb up a steep wall blocking him from academic success. The staff persevered to usher him from hopelessness to hopefulness. His lessons took place predominantly after school but his teachers added Shahid to their timetable fitting him in 2 or 3 hours sessions.

From Rambo to Romeo...

With teachers working tirelessly to praise Shahid for the steady progress he was making, Shahid's will to succeed was being strengthened every day. Even when he didn't have lessons Shahid found solace in the Blue River one-to-one mentoring sessions. Before we knew it, 2 months had passed. Shahid had not only caught up on the majority of the work but was even ahead of the class in English.

*"I began teaching Shahid in March 2014, with only three months left to complete the English GCSE. He had missed five months of the syllabus and began studying for a qualification that students normally have a full academic year to prepare for. Despite this, he wished to complete his English, Maths and Science GCSEs in this very short space of time.*

*He showed a remarkable aptitude for learning and picked up on ideas quickly. Although, there were difficult moments where Shahid did struggle to concentrate or where he wanted to give up, most of the struggle came from a lack of self-esteem and confidence. His fear that he would not achieve a good grade was quickly overturned when he began to understand the topics more clearly. As well as topic knowledge, it was evident he was in need of praise and encouragement when he accomplished something well. As his confidence increased his aspirations rose from merely wanting to achieve a 'C' to a 'B' especially when he realized he had done better than expected on his coursework.*

*I believe with the right support and encouragement Shahid can easily fulfil his potential. I am very impressed with the courage he has demonstrated in attempting his GCSEs in such a short space of time. I wish him well for his exam results and hope he has done well."*

Selina Khan, English Tutor

A man of responsibility...

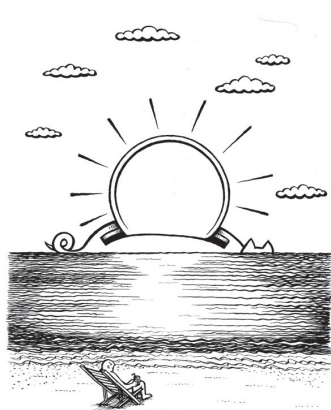
Towards the end of his academic year SK was selected as a student council leader following his big change and his truthfulness. By now rather than a trouble maker he had become a role model for other students. Shahid was achieving the impossible and staff were overjoyed to see the dedication and commitment he was showing for his education.

Quiet compassion...

On one occasion Shahid was late from break and after I went to investigate and I saw Shahid opening up a can of cat food for a local stray. Shahid has really developed into a mature young adult and definitely deserves a Blue River badge of honour.

...a bright future.

"I have seen Shahid go from an immature, violent and nonchalant individual who was easily influenced by peers, to someone who has his mind set on where he wants to be and what he needs to get there".  
*Ethan Samuels, Focus Tutor*



His mother was very grateful to hear Shahid's progress and said,

"Blue River was the best choice for my son as the school managed to elevate his misbehaviour and offer him support to develop his behaviour if he was elsewhere he would not have coped well"  
*Shahid's Mother*

Shahid has gained a place at Solihull College to study for a Level 2 Motor Vehicles Diploma. We hope this will lead to a job at Jaguar Land Rover, his dream job.

A new person...

Shahid has come a long way and it's clear he has become a new person.

## FRED COOPER - Hunter's Hill Academy

### How has Shahid Khattack improved since being at Blue River Academy?

Shahid has improved in becoming educationally motivated, particular reference [SIC] to good attendance and achieving results far beyond expectation.

### How has Blue River Academy helped in Shahid Khattack's improvements?

Shahid had a difficult start, with a period of absence; a re-integration meeting took place with positive outcomes resulting in Shahid's attendance and attitude greatly improving.

### How do you feel about the work Blue River Academy does?

Blue River has excellent potential and operates in a calm and meaningful way in order to best engage the young person's [SIC] they endeavour to provide education for, using a child centred approach in order to gain positive results through regular attendance, nurturing and setting achievable targets in a happy atmosphere.

### What is the best thing you can say about Blue River Academy?

Communication has been excellent, always positive, polite and professional, again putting the young person's needs always paramount when overcoming difficult situations.

"Well done Blue River and keep up the good work!"