



TONY MAGUIRE ON JAMAL AHMED:

# PROGRESS AT BLUE RIVER

**Q: How has Jamal improved since being at Blue River?**

Tony: Jamal was referred to Blue River because he was struggling to cope in mainstream education – his problems centred around an inability to control his behaviour in the classroom, which meant that he disrupted the learning of others, never fulfilled his own potential and had difficulty forming positive relationships with teachers. In fairness he knew this was the case and came to the conclusion himself that he needed a fresh start in a different environment.

Since coming to Blue River there have been considerable changes in his behaviour – he now behaves in a much more responsible manner, is well focussed on his studies and often displays the qualities of a positive role model for others. Most importantly I would say that he is much happier within himself. He is also aware of the concern that he has caused his family and is doing his best to show them that he has positive qualities and can still achieve despite his past problems. When

you motivate a child you can change family life for the better in so many ways.

**Q: How has Blue River achieved this?**

Tony: Blue River has provided the kind of learning environment in which young people like Jamal can flourish. The groups are smaller, with more one to one attention and a cohesiveness that means all students are more focussed. The relationships between students and teachers and mentors are close and they have demonstrated to Jamal that they are prepared to go that extra mile for him. He has the awareness to understand this and wants to do well for them. As with all young people no longer in mainstream Jamal has been faced with an opportunity to demonstrate what his true abilities are and he has taken it.

**Q: What do you think of Blue River and their past students?**

Tony: Over the past four or five years I have referred a number of students to Blue River with



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-Jamal Ahmed

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a variety of different problems ranging from poor attendance to extremely disruptive behaviour – these referrals have included statemented students. In every case I have noted an improvement in their diagnosed behaviour conditions and a successful progression into a post 16 programme of their choice. This is not to say that they have ended up as perfect human beings but there has definitely been measurable improvements giving these young people a better chance of fitting into the adult world and becoming more responsible citizens.

**Q: What are your feelings about the work of Blue River?**

Tony: Obviously, given what I have said already, I find Blue River an excellent opportunity for some of the young people with whom I work. Their communication with me about individual students is excellent and their willingness to adopt a team approach where expertise and resources can be pooled to help a young person in difficulty is refreshing. They also push students to fulfil their potential but in a user friendly way which the

young people they work with require. Their work with families is also positive but unobtrusive. The best thing that I can say about Blue River is that it is relentless in its pursuit of all round improvement and achievement in the lives of its cohort of young people.

**Q: Tell me about your experience at Blue River and your plans for the future.**

Jamal: My experience in Blue River has been excellent I have learnt what the value of education in my life is, I also, made a dramatic improvement in the most important subjects such as Maths, English, Science which will support my future career as well, as my common life also Blue River made me more disciplined which will help my boxing career in terms of controlling my anger.

\*Tony Maguire from 3D education referred Jamal to Blue River.