

## **All about Bosco**

### **Introduction**

The Bosco Centre, located at the eastern end of Jamaica Road, is home to a post 16 Vocational College, a nursery and youth club. At the heart of everything we do is our total commitment to improving the lives of local young people.

This passion and commitment has grown from the work of one person. A person who was born in the west of Scotland but who found her spiritual home in Bermondsey. Sister Cecily Dunn's arrival in Rotherhithe was not expected. She had to be hastily evacuated from Liverpool after her relentless desire to help young people had angered the local drug dealers who saw that her powerful message was stripping them of their customers. This ability to disrupt for the good of young people was to characterise her for the rest of her life.

Sister Cecily followed the teachings of St John Bosco, another charismatic disrupter who had fought for the rights of young people two centuries earlier. He worked in Turin where he saw first hand the effects of industrialisation and urbanisation on the uneducated street children and how so often these children ended up in prison. St John Bosco was one of the first people to properly recognise the power of a vocational education and developed an educational philosophy based on love rather than punishment. This was the principal that underwrote all of Sister Cecily's work and is still fundamental to everything we do today.

### **The Bosco Timeline**

The history of Bosco is the history of Sister Cecily refusing to accept no when developing her provision for young people.

Youth work is at the heart of Salesian philosophy and her first venture was to establish a youth club. Work that was funded by Sister Cecily collecting donations in the local pubs!

Soon afterwards she worked with local mums to establish a creche that has grown over the years to become a full day care nursery.

Sister Cecily realised that many of the young people she was working with had been let down by the education system and desperately wanted to learn skills that would allow them to find a job. She started teaching them basic skills in a small room off of the main hall during their evening youth club sessions. From these informal beginnings the college has developed into the thriving institution it is today.

About three years ago Bosco started working with Southwark Council to develop Supported Internships. These are programmes designed to help young people with complex needs into the work place. As part of this scheme we opened our café Boscoffee in the Docklands Settlement.

The most recent addition to the Bosco family is the Football Club that carries on the tradition of working with young people

## **College**

Bosco is a post 16 college that specialises in providing vocational and work based learning for young people. Ofsted graded us as “good” in all categories and said that ***“Learners thrive in this supportive and developmental education and community centre”***

We have been working with young people for over 30 years to help them into the world of work. We encourage and support our students to build a career plan, despite any personal challenges they may have previously experienced.

All of our courses are built around a vocational core with discreet delivery of functional skills. Additionally all students follow an extensive personal development programme that has been designed to hone their employability skills.

Most students will follow our version of a study programme called the “Diamond Programme”

For those students who are new to this country we offer a specialist English course that will help them develop the language skills they will need to access the curriculum here or at another college.

Young people who have additional needs can be enrolled onto our Supported Internship Programme. This involves being based in a work environment and learning through practical work based activities.

## **Boscofee and supported internships**

Supported Internships are designed to allow young adults with learning difficulties the opportunity to gain work and life skills. We create a safe and supported environment in which our young people can develop their potential. With support from Industry professionals and a job coach, our learners develop their work skills and benefit from emotional and practical support.

The aim of the program is to expand the reach of Bosco’s Salesian ethos across London. We aim to change the lives of the many London residents living with learning difficulties, who otherwise would not have access to opportunities in the job market.

The program works with an 80/20 split between vocational experience and academics – the emphasis being on practical working skills. The course runs on the academic timetable with the same holidays and Monday – Friday format, from September through to July. Throughout the year, benchmarks for success tailored to each individual are recorded and added to the learner’s CV’s. If at the end of the year they feel they are ready, learners are fully prepared and equip to enter the world of work, but if not, they have still developed their potential and CV to assist them in the future – not to mention the many life skills, such as independent travel and personal finance management, they will have gained.

We currently work with Sofitel Hotel in St James and run our own Coffee shop locally, aptly named Boscoffee. Learners enter their teams in September and incrementally take on more responsibility with the support of other team members and their Job Coach as the year progresses. The aim is that support from the job coach will decrease as the learner becomes more confident and skilled in each area of their work and more integrated into the working team without additional support.

### **Nursery**

Bosco Centre Day Nursery was established in 1985. It grew from a small crèche to help local mums into what we have now: a first rate day-care nursery for children from the age of 1 year to 5 years, offering full time and part time day sessions. We provide an environment that is safe, warm, caring, stimulating and welcoming for you and your child with fun, early education in a well-planned, child-friendly environment. Our nursery is a place where your child will enjoy and learn during their early developmental years. We aim to provide and adapt to your child's individual needs, with fully qualified staff where you, as a parent/carer, will feel confident about leaving your child.

The Bosco Nursery is one of the leading providers of childcare in the area and is consistently deemed a good provider by Ofsted. Our nursery caters for 34 children between the ages of 1 to 5 years and is open Monday – Thursday 8am-6pm and Fridays 8am-5pm so that parents have flexibility in dropping off and picking up their children. For our young people who want to consider childcare as a career, the nursery offers a chance to experience what it is like and help them decide on whether they would want to progress onto an apprenticeship.

Our nursery is also a teaching nursery providing training (through apprenticeships) with the Bosco College.

### **After School Provision and the Football Club.**

The latest addition to the Bosco family is our football club and academy. We pride ourselves on offering opportunities to young people within the local and wider community at affordable prices. We create fun football sessions for children - helping their holistic development and enabling them to thrive in a sport they enjoy.

We currently have five youth (U7, U9, U10 Saints, U10 Dons, U11) teams and a senior team playing in the Selkent league. We have managed to secure two pitches for training (Bacon's College & Millwall) this season for our teams to train in, this is a huge achievement as we have previously relied on using local parks to deliver training but often sessions would have to be cancelled due to weather conditions. Training is on Tuesdays and Fridays, Match days are Saturdays and Sundays.

We also run football training sessions for 2-4, 5-7, 8-9, 10-12 years old on Saturday mornings. This academy is more informal than the Tuesdays and Fridays as it is on offer to

anyone in the community who is not a player on the teams and would like to grow in their football capability or just have fun with it. These work as a drop in session, classes are signed up for on an app called Class4Kids

The COVID crisis has meant that we have made the difficult decision to suspend our after school provision. We will be bringing this back as soon as it is safe to do so.