



LONDON BOROUGH of BARKING and DAGENHAM

THE SYDNEY RUSSELL SCHOOL

Headteacher: **Roger Leighton, B.A.**
Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham, Essex RM9 5QT

July 20th 2011.

To whom it may concern,

The ARC Theatre Company and delivery of 'Boy X' play and workshops on Friday 15th July 2011.

On behalf of staff and senior management at the Sydney Russell School, I would like to express my gratitude and admiration for the hard work and stunning performances of the Boy X play and workshop sessions delivered to year 8 and 9 students at our school during Activities Fortnight. The expert advice provided by the administrators in the organisation and arrangement of this event helped to make it such a resounding success.

These moving performances struck a chord with our students and helped them to consider the consequences of gangs, drugs and knife crime in a way that would be difficult to replicate in an ordinary lesson (or series of lessons).

The issues raised by the play remain high on the agenda in our school catchment area. As staff working in a school where gangs and violent crime are part of reality for too many of our students, we feel that outside groups such as the ARC Theatre Company perform a vital function in educating young people about these issues. The actors and the narrative of this play are easy for them to relate to and, by addressing the issues in this way, we believe we are influencing our students to make positive choices about their actions and reconsider their attitudes towards those who are willing to use violence.

The ARC performances are, we believe, a major factor in our school's success in terms of delivering the citizenship curriculum. The most recent series of performances held at our school on the 15th July were particularly positive and have helped our "Activities Fortnight" become one of the most successful and anticipated events on our school calendar.

Year team leaders and tutors alike expressed their admiration for the quality of the acting and the workshops.

Finally, we recognise the challenge of staging shows such as this in schools at this financially demanding time. I can confidently claim that their efforts have energised these days and have obviously supported staff at our school in the delivery of this vital part of the school year.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Sullivan,

Director of Student Development, the Sydney Russell School