



As a shortage of teachers struck, City of London School for Girls asked alumni to assist students

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Coronavirus: City of London School for Girls drafts in alumni to help teachers

Nicola Woolcock, Education Correspondent

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A leading school has drafted in alumni to help run lessons due to staffing shortages caused by coronavirus.

City of London School for Girls made a “call-out” to its network of old girls, asking for young graduates to help.

Jenny Brown, the head teacher, said: “We have a lovely supercrew of 12 recent graduates who have come in. What really matters here is for everyone to be equipped to continue learning and protecting what is fundamental.





Caoimhe Downing watches over a Year 9 Latin class being taught remotely
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“We’ve found a few ways in which we can manage. A few staff are self-isolating and one way we dealt with that was to put a call-out to recent graduates. A whole squad of those who have yet to find their forever job are coming back to be class supervisors.”

The helpers have all graduated within the past five years and Ms Brown said it helped that they knew the school so well.

“It frees up the teachers. If teachers have to be at home because they are self-isolating then they can take the lessons online, using video conferencing, while there is another adult in the room. It has been a challenge for how we all think.”

The school, based in central London, has used nearby empty buildings to its advantage.

Seeing the centre of the capital deserted has been strange for the pupils, who have single-handedly been keeping some coffee shops afloat, Ms Brown said.

She added: “Before lockdown we tried to find space to pioneer — suddenly in a city that has always been difficult it became different.”



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By using larger venues the school is managing to keep lessons going while adhering to the requirements for social distancing.

Drama takes place in the Barber-Surgeons' Hall, home of the Worshipful Company of Barbers, and lunch for some pupils is being served in the Guildhall canteen.

Ms Brown said: "This sort of thing should be happening in all sorts of municipal buildings and locations that aren't being used during the pandemic. This could solve problems across the whole of education. We have to be pioneering."

A similar plan has been proposed for state schools by the National Education Union, which has called for "Nightingale schools" to be set up in empty town halls and other municipal buildings.

City of London has also been keeping its debating team active, holding online debates against teams in Denmark and the US.

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