The Croydon Supplementary Education Project (CSEP) was borne from the frustration of seeing pupils mainly from a BAME background being neglected or pushed aside in mainstream education in their pursuit of achieving academic success within the school state system in the late 70’s, as evident from a number of black teachers/academics at the time. This was a period where black pupils were perceived to be more troublesome to teach and many felt in the black community that their children were not being given the same opportunities with their white counterparts.

Mr D. Johnson along with Mrs C. Graham saw this as a blight on their community and decided action needed to be done.

With Mr Johnson’s and Mrs Graham tirelessly work of trying to strum up support from Croydon Council and the black community the first steps of creating a ‘school’ were being formed. This effort by the two mentioned and others eventually led to the creation of a Saturday school in 1980 in Dingwall Road, Croydon. The school received its first enrolment of five pupils in a large Edwardian house where two subjects were taught; Maths and English. This was then become the first step in the creation of the Croydon Supplementary Education Project (CSEP). Owing to the teachers themselves being in full-time work as well having families to attend to, the school opened on Saturday mornings only, which suited everyone.

Getting financial backing from Croydon Council to assist in the growth of the school continued to be an uphill struggle and with the persistence and determination of the founders (Mr D. Johnson and Mrs C. Graham) as well as others (Tessa Carter) and the support of parents, the school began to flourish with more pupils enrolling with improved results.

More importantly, many felt that the mentoring of black teachers to black pupils gave many pupils a better sense of themselves in their attitude towards education and themselves.

As the school was from the outset a charity, the importance of everyone pulling together under Mr Johnson’s leadership was central to the project’s success. This led to more subjects being taught with the result that the school had become a Saturday school and not just for mornings only. Along with core subjects being taught, the emergence of ‘homework’ clubs started to materialise during the weekday evenings.

Over the next couple of years, the school outgrew its premises at Dingwall Road, Croydon and moved to larger premises at Woodside Primary School, Croydon, offering better teaching facilities having more space for the increased number of pupils, though again Saturdays only.

The CSEP stay at Woodside Primary proved to be short-lived where the school was forced to relocate to even larger premises at Tamworth Road. As more pupils enrolled with more subjects being taught on the school’s curriculum, it became evident that more staff and resources were needed to meet the increased demand.

At this time many people felt that Mr Johnson’s unwavering commitment to the project’s early beginnings to its current success merited a tangible reward. This led to the nomination and acceptance of an MBE (Member of British Empire) being awarded in 1996 for his services towards Education.

The school became a beacon leading to several other Saturday schools’ wanting to emulate the school’s success elsewhere. As the school’s popularity grew the need for full-time governance as well as the injection of new ideas and stewardship were needed to the take the CSEP onto the next level of progression. This coincided with Mr Johnson’s decision to take early retirement from his full-time occupation of teaching Maths at Southwark College where his involvement with the CSEP was decreased over time and governance was handed to his successor.

Thereafter the school moved to its current location in Sydenham Road, East Croydon, still adhering to its original remit of providing supplementary education to pupil’s particularly from a BAME background though not exclusive to, on Saturdays.