



independent
schools
council

Celebrating Partnerships

2023



Annual report of
cross-sector partnership
work between
independent
and state schools



Contents

Introduction	1
Why partnerships matter	2
Department for Education celebrates school partnerships	3
Changing lives through bursaries and partnerships	4
Academic partnerships	6
STEM partnerships	8
Careers advice and higher education support	11
Language learning programmes	15
Supporting refugees and pupils with EAL	19
Supporting pupils with SEND	23
Breakfast clubs and holiday provision	28
Helping children facing disadvantage to thrive	30
Mental health and wellbeing support	33
Supporting music and the arts	36
Sporting partnerships	40
Community support programmes	44
Supporting teacher development	47
Regional partnership groups	50
Improving education through governance	54
Widening access through life-transforming bursaries	58

Editors - Emily Roberts, Alex Beynon and Sarah Cunnane

Celebrating Partnerships is published annually by the Independent Schools Council (ISC).

The Independent Schools Council brings together seven associations and four affiliate associations to represent over 1,400 independent schools. These schools are amongst the best in the world and educate more than half-a-million children. Around half of UK independent schools are ISC schools and these educate around 80% of all independent school children.

Independent schools save the taxpayer £4.4 billion a year from students not taking up places in the state sector and contribute £16.5 billion to the economy.



Introduction

Cross-sector partnerships between independent and state schools play a central role in widening access to educational opportunities, filling gaps in provision, and supporting the overall development of students and staff. This bumper edition of the *Celebrating Partnerships* booklet demonstrates the breadth and depth of the collaborative programmes taking place.

You will find in these pages some truly inspiring, uplifting examples of schools stepping up to support their wider communities. It is particularly heartening to learn about the ways in which schools are helping vulnerable members of society; children with special educational needs and disabilities, pupils facing disadvantage, refugees, and the elderly, to name a few. Many schools are forging links with charities and local organisations. Pupils and teachers are volunteering their time for a variety of good causes.

Most independent schools are small, with just a few hundred pupils, but the collective impact they have on their local communities is extraordinary. By sharing

resources, facilities and expertise, schools create transformative opportunities for children and young people.

The ISC publishes this annual report in accordance with our Joint Understanding with the Department for Education, who continue to promote state-independent school partnerships. With a general election on the horizon, it is more important than ever to highlight this invaluable work.

We want to thank schools for their dedication to supporting their wider communities. Teachers, school leaders, pupils and their families should be proud of all they have achieved. After all, none of this would be possible without them.

We hope these mutually beneficial partnerships continue to thrive, and we look forward to discovering some new ones in 2024!



Julie Robinson
Chief executive,
Independent Schools Council



Why partnerships matter

The School Partnerships Alliance (S.P.A.) was founded to help enable cross-sector partnerships to flourish and develop. We are a membership organisation and our role is to connect schools, celebrate partnership work, share good practice, undertake research, and offer professional development for all those working in partnerships.

Our vision for partnerships is that they are mutual, sustainable, impactful and serve the public good. Of course, many partnerships are operating at different stages of development, and going through these stages is essential to a maturing partnership, but the centrality of a clear vision and a shared purpose is what really marks an effective partnership at every level.

The strongest partnerships are those that have shared goals and serve a defined local need. These enable different organisations to work together with high levels of trust and understanding in a genuinely mutual and collaborative way, and with a clear sense of their civic duty.

School partnerships can make an important contribution at all levels, but at their most profound, they help drive system change. Many cross-sector partnerships we work with are already operating at this level, helping shape the future educational landscape by increasing opportunity, improving educational quality and working towards greater parity in ways that are transformative and sustainable.

We warmly congratulate all the partnership work represented by this booklet, and all those who are collectively working beyond their own organisations to advance education for the benefit of future generations.

This is why partnerships matter – because they can make such a difference, and in the current post-pandemic and increasingly complex world, it is important to review and redefine our role as educators, particularly with regard to the ways we work together.

Schools vary in many ways, serving diverse communities in different circumstances, but these differences should not imply separation. While schools clearly differ in many operational and functional aspects, what truly matters is the profound way in which schools share a commonality of purpose.

Partnerships matter, and by coming together we can learn from each other and become even stronger. We invite all schools to join the S.P.A., and join the discussion. If you want to find out more, or want to join while membership is free, please visit schoolpartnershipsalliance.org.uk or email us at info@schoolpartnershipsalliance.org.uk

Oliver Blond
Chief executive,
School Partnerships Alliance



Department
for Education

Department for Education celebrates school partnerships

I'd firstly like to thank those schools involved in partnerships for their continuing hard work. The passion and determination of staff and school leaders across the independent and state-funded school sectors continues to build meaningful partnerships that can deliver impactful change. Where a pair or group of schools collaborate and build a rich, mutually beneficial relationship, they can positively change the lives of many children.

We know that partnership working can improve the education system as a whole and is a powerful conduit to learn from one another through sharing experiences, expertise and best practice. For this reason, I'd like to see us go even further to promote the great work that we know is happening across the sector by evaluating and sharing how partnerships can bring about positive and impactful change. I would also encourage even more schools to get involved and take the opportunity to see how the benefits of working collaboratively with schools across the state-funded and independent sectors can really make a difference.

I am delighted to see that levels of cross-sector partnership activity have continued to grow over the last year, despite the challenges that many schools had faced whilst recovering from the pandemic. The 2023 ISC census reports an increase of 26% from the previous year with 8,793 partnerships across 1,043 ISC schools; this is a

testament to the commitment and aspirations of all those involved.

We know that school partnerships that grow and develop from strong relationships, trust and mutual respect are those that stand the test of time and there are many examples of such relationships within the partnerships we see today. Working collaboratively for mutual benefit can bring about significant change and equip schools across both sectors with invaluable tools to meet the challenges faced by the education sector as a whole.

In the coming year, I'd like to continue to encourage partnerships that focus on reaching pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, wherever they are educated. We remain committed to our Joint Understanding and together we can work towards breaking down barriers between the independent and state school sectors to widen opportunities for all and raise educational standards across the whole of the school system.

Baroness Barran MBE
Parliamentary under secretary of state for
the school system and student finance





Changing lives through bursaries and partnerships

Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation (RNCSF) is the UK's largest bursary charity. Since 2013, the charity has developed partnerships with nearly **200 schools** to ensure that **1,200 children and young people** who face significant vulnerabilities in their home lives have accessed the life-transforming opportunities of fully-funded bursary places in an independent day or boarding school.

RNCSF helps ensure that bursary schemes are targeted for children facing the greatest barriers:

- Children in care – through a network of partnerships with local authorities across England and Wales, the charity has ensured that “looked-after children” (a group that has faced the most persistent educational disadvantage) are prioritised in schools’ bursary award schemes
- Children on the “edge of” care – by working with charities and social workers, RNCSF helps to support the use of bursary places as a route to prevent the breakdown of family relationships, including in particular to preserve and retain kinship care arrangements
- Those in the lowest income brackets and who are from areas where there are fewer opportunities to access outstanding sixth form provision

In other words, children for whom the opportunity to attend an independent school will make a transformative difference.

“Bursary placements can play a significant role in advancing social mobility. With the opportunity of a great education, young people facing disadvantage and vulnerability can develop into confident, independent, and resourceful young people with the grades and aspirations needed to thrive at university, in apprenticeships and in the workplace beyond. Our work shows that bursaries can have a broad ripple effect on the wider communities where pupils come from. None of us can, on our own, eradicate educational inequality and improve social mobility in this country, but we do know that a bursary opportunity can make a real difference.”

Ali Henderson,
chief executive of
Royal National Children's
SpringBoard Foundation

RNCSF also works with independent schools to support their efforts to target broader partnership work for children in care. To tackle the saddening reality that fewer than 6% of children in care typically progress to university, RNCSF supports local authorities seeking university preparation support for looked-after children.

Looking forward, RNCSF has ambitious plans to have helped to transform 2,000 lives through its work by 2025. RNCSF's ability to assess the evidence of bursary award holders' outcomes across such a large group has been crucial to demonstrating the benefits of independent and boarding (including state boarding) education in dramatically shifting the life chances of so many children and young people facing challenging circumstances. This impact evidence includes recently published research demonstrating that children in care are:

- Four times more likely to achieve “good” passes in English and mathematics at GCSE as a result of attending an independent school
- Five times more likely to take and secure A-levels, and thereafter to progress to higher education...
- ...and, moreover, to selective universities - 25% of those who have completed placements through RNCSF's work have gone on to secure high-tariff university places

“Working in partnership with RNCSF has had a much broader impact on our school than just on the pupils who were awarded the bursaries. The ripple effect is palpable and we have used it to build a sense of pride, expectation and self-belief across our whole school.”

Sue Yates, headteacher at Blacon High, Cheshire and trustee of Hope Opportunity Trust, one of RNCSF's community partnerships

“My bursary place taught me how to think for myself and gave me the opportunity to break away from the circumstances of my background. It enabled me to see my nerves as just a signal to make me more aware... I am more adaptable now than ever before to change. The most amazing thing about my seven years at school was to have people around me with whom I could talk freely... the community was so important.”

Luci, an undergraduate student at the University of Birmingham who attended King Edward's School in Witley

Academic partnerships

Academic partnerships come in all shapes and sizes, and they work to broaden the horizons of all involved. These cross-sector initiatives help to improve attainment, boost pupils' self-confidence, and introduce young people to new learning experiences.

Partnership work at **South Hampstead High School GDST (SHHS)** includes a focus on oracy: the ability to express oneself through spoken language. The school has been working to increase debating and public speaking provision in primary and secondary partner schools, and has partnered with over **50 schools** this year.

One way they do this is through debating competitions. These have attracted a range of entrants – their Year 5 competition welcomed over a dozen state schools and **200 state school students**. The scale is impressively large: two of the competitions had over **500 speeches** each. SHHS students have also been involved, with young people from the senior school working as judges, chairs and hosts.

Beyond the competitions, the partnership has also delivered teacher training; working with a dozen schools and more than **50 teachers** on how to improve the quality of discussion and debate in their classrooms. This training, along with the workshops and entry to competitions, is free to state schools.

The partnership work has proved popular; the average workshop rating is 9.25 out of 10 and 100% of respondents said that they would like to attend another of SHHS' debating competitions in the future.

“
Our students thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the competition at your school. And even those who attended as audience members were inspired by what they saw and are excited to get involved next time. Thanks once again for welcoming us into your school.

An English teacher
at Ark Greenwich Free School

”
“Thank you very much for an excellent evening. I particularly liked all the South Hampstead girls giving the feedback and managing the judging. All our children thoroughly enjoyed all elements of the event and left very inspired.”

A parent at
St Stephen's

“
The children have all absolutely loved their time doing Go Cook! The experience they've had is something that we, as a primary school, are simply unable to provide on our own and we strongly feel that the experience has been an invaluable one! We would love the opportunity to take part again next year!

Jordan Matthews,
a teaching assistant at
King Charles School

”
“Thank you so much for an INCREDIBLE experience. All children made fantastic progress and loved their day.”

Alicia Stratton,
a teacher at
King Charles School

Truro High School for Girls (THS) has partnered with four local primary schools over the course of the academic year to introduce their pupils to the joy of cooking nutritious meals from scratch in hands-on cookery sessions.

The sessions incorporate vital advice regarding healthy eating and food hygiene, and impart crucial culinary skills such as the safe and efficient use of kitchen knives, ovens and other equipment. The school uses its own minibuses to collect and return the pupils to their schools and, in addition to providing the ingredients and tuition, donates a goody bag with wipe-clean recipe cards and wooden utensils to each child so that they can recreate the dishes at home for their families.

Pupils have loved the experience: 95% of the pupils from **Devoran Primary School** and 100% of the pupils from **King Charles Primary School, Falmouth**, said that they would cook more at home after their day at THS and all testified to having gained new knowledge, skills and confidence. Many pupils wrote of cooking the meals at home with their parents and one teacher recorded that a child in receipt of free school meals was so inspired that he saved for his own wok in order to cook at home.



STEM partnerships

State and independent schools are coming together to widen access to educational opportunities within science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). These partnerships are vital in raising the aspirations and involvement of pupils, particularly those underrepresented in these fields.

Getting more girls to feel confident in studying and actively participating in science, technology, engineering and maths is the aim of the Bright Girls Bright Futures (BGBF) partnership, run by **Nottingham Girls' High School (NGHS)**. The school decided to run the mentorship-based project after finding that their STEM events for partner schools were consistently oversubscribed.

The initiative aims to foster confidence in two ways. The first is by giving mentoring opportunities to girls in Year 8 who

"Women can do anything."

A Dunkirk Primary School pupil

"The best thing has been connecting with my partner."

A Jesse Gray Primary School pupil

are either on a bursary or who could benefit from connecting with younger girls outside of the immediate school community, as a means to foster inclusion and nurture empowering all-female connections. The second is the work those mentors do with pupils from **Dunkirk Primary School** and **Jesse Gray Primary School**.

Over the course of three years, students from NGHS work closely with Year 4 pupils at the partner schools to learn something new about STEM and women in STEM, and to complete follow-on challenges in pairs. The partnership is focused on peer-on-peer mentoring and support, with girls at all levels contributing valuable skills, knowledge, and approaches to completing tasks.

In its first year, BGBF was dedicated to ensuring that pairings of all the pupils were just right, taking lots of time

for game-playing, sharing stories, and discussion. Care was taken to make sure each pairing could bring out the girls' individual strengths, drawing from the abundance of social and cultural experience within the wider group.

The current cohort – from the first year of the partnership – is made up of 13 pairs. Time has been split equally between fostering relationships and completing STEM-related tasks and codebreaking challenges inspired by the women of Bletchley Park during the Second World War. At the end of this first year, girls have learned how to create their own codebreakers and developed their digital literacy when researching and site mapping their own online interactive story. BGBF has shown positive impact with pupils at both primary schools showing a wider range in their view of people in STEM as role models

“

We have been very careful to ensure that communities are represented so that girls can see themselves taking up these important spaces and the value that has in inspiring and empowering others just like them.

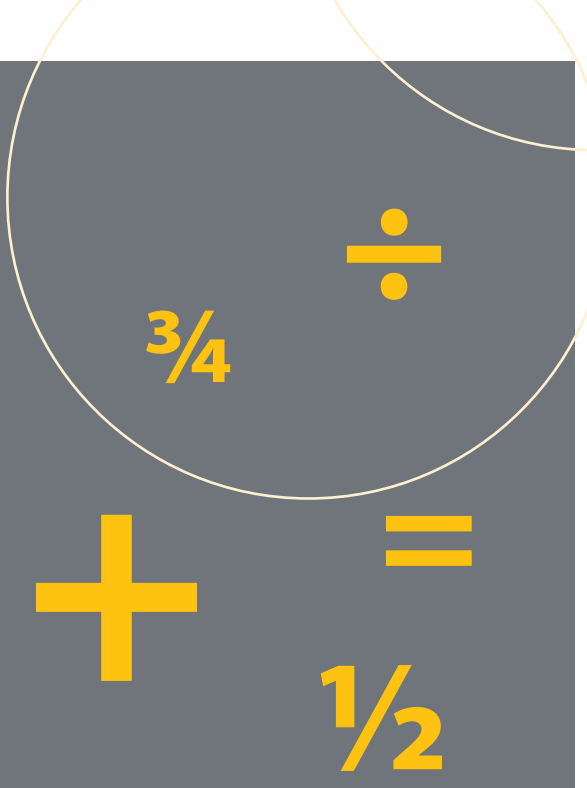
**Susie Edebali,
partnership coordinator
at Nottingham Girls'
High School**

”

from the first to last session. When broken down further, there was a 44% increase in the most disadvantaged pupils' response to the statement "I can see myself working in STEM".

The second partner primary school saw a 9% increase in growth mindset from the start to the end of the programme, while the social and emotional outcomes for NGHS pupils acting as mentors saw a 5% increase in grit from the beginning to the end of the first year. These initial results show a promising trajectory for the programme as it embarks on its second year. The future of the project will see wider resources being allocated across all partner schools, including the introduction of parent-led STEM events, NGHS alumnae case studies, a STEM festival, and a cross-sector partnership field trip.





University College School, Hampstead (UCS) has added together maths mentoring and university preparation support to provide STEM partnerships across local primary and secondary schools.

Their maths mentoring programme with **Richard Cobden Primary School** is now in its second year – and has been extended to include a focus on literacy.

Students from UCS in Years 9-11 support their mentees every Thursday and Friday morning. In maths, they have been helping Year 4 with numbers and rounding, and Year 5 with fractions. As the sessions have gone on, more mentors have been looking to stretch their mentees, using challenge questions typically pitched at secondary school students.

Both sets of pupils have benefited from this partnership, which UCS says is central to its success. UCS students have developed their communication and interpersonal skills, while Richard Cobden pupils have gained greater confidence in the all-important areas of maths and English literacy.

At secondary level, UCS has hosted two interview evenings supporting students with their university applications. These events welcomed both UCS students and pupils from partner schools across London. The first event was a panel interview for prospective medics and the second a practice interview for those applying for science, technology, engineering and maths subjects at either Oxford or Cambridge.

Nearly **80 pupils** from UCS, the **London Academy of Excellence Stratford, Michaela Community School, UCL Academy** and **Westminster Academy** were hosted for the medics interview evening. They each received a 30-minute interview from two expert professionals on topics ranging from their desires to pursue the career, to questions on patient care, through to tackling some of the NHS hot topics. A few weeks later, the STEM Oxbridge evening welcomed **59 students** across the same schools. Throughout the evening, each student was offered a similar half-hour interview focusing on their chosen subject.



Careers advice and higher education support

Many schools work in partnership to help prepare students for their next steps in life. These initiatives often involve other organisations within the community, and encompass everything from support with university applications to workshops on entrepreneurship.

The Social Enterprise Hub programme is a collaboration between **The Abbey School, Reading School, Henley Centre for Entrepreneurship** and the **University of Reading**. Its aim is to empower young people to develop social enterprise businesses of the future, based around the principles of the Triple Bottom Line – People, Planet and Profit – with the ultimate goal of having a greater positive impact on the world.

The idea was to help Year 12 students expand their world view by encouraging them to engage with other schools and their wider communities to deliver projects with positive, tangible and sustainable benefits for local people. This programme has brought significant opportunities for the students to learn about themselves, to learn from each other and to experience more of the world beyond their school gates.

To develop their understanding of the principles of social enterprise, students attended a bespoke programme of lectures from experts at Henley Centre for Entrepreneurship,

in addition to workshops involving specialist guest speakers and mentors from the University of Reading's Entrepreneurs Society. Over the course of two terms, small groups of students worked together to develop their ideas into fledgling projects. The year ended with the teams pitching detailed business plans to a panel of judges, who decided on the night to award up to £4,500 of funding for these projects to get off the ground.

"My social enterprise, Bright Pink Bins, aims to eliminate loneliness in the homeless community by providing a means of companionship and communication. The Social Enterprise Hub has allowed me to make something of my own creation that will continue to develop to actively help my local community."

Savia, a pupil at The Abbey School

The Abbey School hopes to extend the project, which is in its first year, to other schools in the Reading area. The second iteration of the programme is just launching and has proved to be very popular, with lots of students wanting to take part. It is an exciting time, with one of the projects looking to launch into the local community in the coming year.





The Kent Academies Network (KAN) is a four-year university access initiative run by **Sevenoaks School** that aims to remove barriers to higher education by developing pupils' confidence, knowledge and agency, so they can set ambitious goals and ultimately achieve them. The programme is open to students from Years 9-13 at **Knole Academy, The John Wallis Academy, Skinners Kent Academy, Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey** and **The Marsh Academy**.

KAN's Core programme has been running since 2013, while the Aspire programme began in 2021. Each year, teachers identify Year 9 students to begin the application and interview process. 15 students are selected for the Core cohort and up to 15 for the Aspire cohort. Students must meet

certain eligibility criteria that are nationally recognised as barriers to higher education. Every academic year the programmes entail:

- Termly online mentoring sessions
- Two meet-up days at Sevenoaks School
- An alumni and mentor networking dinner at Sevenoaks School
- A summer research project

In addition to this, students on the Core programme attend two residential events per year; a weekend at Sevenoaks School in the spring, and a week at the school, or a Cambridge college, in the summer.

This year, KAN's spring residential took place in March, with 39 students attending Sevenoaks School. This was

no different to KAN's other residential in featuring a trip to several universities. The timetable included a print-making project to celebrate KAN's tenth anniversary, mental wellbeing sessions and afternoon activities such as archery, swimming and yoga. Mentors and volunteer teachers from Sevenoaks School and **Benenden School** also taught a variety of lessons on topics including the LGBTQ+ Pride movement, film narrative and climate change.

Mentors report that the KAN students themselves are highly inspirational and, within the current cohort, they have a variety of diverse and far-reaching aspirations that include astrophysics, neurosurgery, law, palaeontology, mechanical engineering, history and medicine.



Key statistics for June 2023:

- **64 students** in the current cohorts who **entered the programme between 2019 and 2022**
- **72%** are **first-generation university students**
- **64%** are in **low-income households**
- **51 students** from the previous six cohorts (2013-18) have **completed the programme**
- Of the known destinations for 46 of these alumni, **45 received places for university degrees or high-level apprenticeships**

KAN's current mentors believe it:

- Equips students with **leadership skills**
- **Improves confidence**
- **Provides opportunities** to develop professionally

“

The residential proved especially useful to me, as it was a visit to the University of Sussex that was instrumental in my decision to study English there. Without this opportunity, I would have found it more difficult to make that decision. As the end of school approached, I was given a lot of support with university applications and my personal statement. I received further support as I decided to apply for Cambridge. As the first person from my school to apply to Oxbridge, my mentors worked tirelessly to prepare me for a difficult application process. Though I wasn't accepted, I do not regret applying. My interviews were a chance to talk to leading experts in my favourite subject and it was an experience I wouldn't have had the courage to pursue if not for KAN.

A student reflecting on their experience with KAN

”

“

The students I worked with this week can only be described by a list of superlatives. They are some of the most driven, ambitious, independent, courteous, and intelligent students I have had the pleasure of meeting in five years of teaching.

A KAN teacher volunteer at Sevenoaks School

”

“

I can say with certainty I would not be who I am today if it were not for KAN. I am so grateful that people cared enough about me and other students like me, that they were willing to give the time and resources I needed to expand my horizons.

A KAN alumna and current mentor

”

Careers provision at **Yarm School** in North Yorkshire is continuously adapting to the demands of both the education and training sectors, and the employment market. Along with regular career cluster events, focusing on specific careers and professions, the school recently held its biennial Career Convention – the largest such offering in the region. The event was attended by over **1,000 visitors**, including pupils from schools from across the Tees Valley. Around **160 external delegates** from various universities, businesses and careers also came along and more than **60 professions** were covered across the event.

Yarm recently developed and piloted a work experience programme based around the Treasury and other government departments at the Darlington Economic Campus, working in conjunction with the civil service. This was the first time such a collaboration had taken place in this country, and it was subsequently opened up to **Egglecliffe School and Sixth Form College**, a local state school. The four-day programme, which took place in the Easter holidays, saw 20 students from each school taking part in a range of activities designed to prepare them for

the workplace. These included interview workshops, information sessions on recruitment processes, critical thinking seminars and presentations in which students were able to deliver policy ideas to senior civil servants. The students gained a valuable insight into working across several government departments and the various routes into the civil service.

Mindful that many UK medical schools are now using multiple mini interviews (MMIs) to assess candidates applying to study medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, Yarm has started offering mock MMI interviews - both to its own pupils and those from local state schools. These are invaluable in helping to prepare students and have shown to be an effective way to test multiple skills, traits and insights. In the school's ultimate MMI guide, which is shared with state partners, pupils are taken through what MMIs are, the types of scenarios that are used and how to prepare for them. The training helps pupils get ready for the rigorous university application process and supports aspiring medics from across the region.



Language learning programmes

In an effort to improve the uptake of modern foreign languages, many schools are forming meaningful partnerships designed to inspire a generation of linguists. These initiatives enable pupils to discover new cultures and experiences, meet new people and grow in confidence.

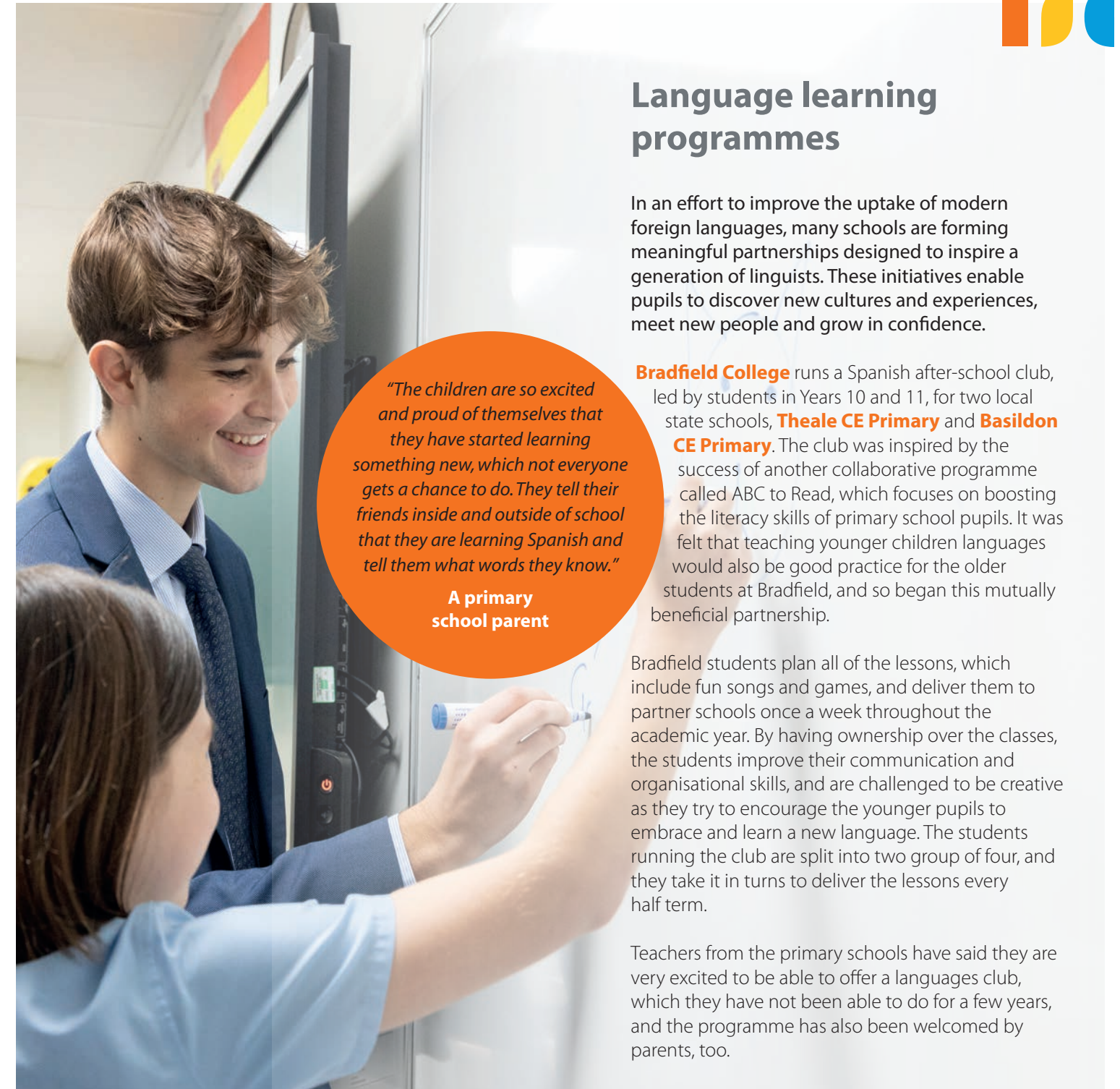
Bradfield College runs a Spanish after-school club, led by students in Years 10 and 11, for two local state schools, **Theale CE Primary** and **Basildon CE Primary**. The club was inspired by the success of another collaborative programme called ABC to Read, which focuses on boosting the literacy skills of primary school pupils. It was felt that teaching younger children languages would also be good practice for the older students at Bradfield, and so began this mutually beneficial partnership.

"The children are so excited and proud of themselves that they have started learning something new, which not everyone gets a chance to do. They tell their friends inside and outside of school that they are learning Spanish and tell them what words they know."

A primary school parent

Bradfield students plan all of the lessons, which include fun songs and games, and deliver them to partner schools once a week throughout the academic year. By having ownership over the classes, the students improve their communication and organisational skills, and are challenged to be creative as they try to encourage the younger pupils to embrace and learn a new language. The students running the club are split into two groups of four, and they take it in turns to deliver the lessons every half term.

Teachers from the primary schools have said they are very excited to be able to offer a languages club, which they have not been able to do for a few years, and the programme has also been welcomed by parents, too.



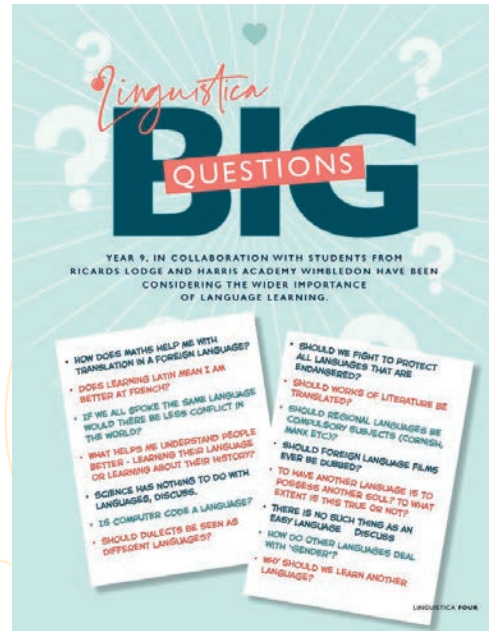
One of the many partnership programmes taking place at **Wimbledon High School GDST (WHS)** focuses on promoting modern foreign languages. The initiative aims to improve social mobility, academic achievement, and student wellbeing; inspire more pupils to study languages beyond Key Stage 3; and create opportunities for student and staff collaboration.

Harris Academy Wimbledon does not currently have French on its curriculum, though many of its students are keen to learn the language. Alex Treseder, a French teacher at WHS, works in close collaboration with a member of staff from Harris to deliver weekly French lessons for these students from Years 7, 8 and 9 as part of the French Teach Together programme. She is also supported by Year 11 and 12 WHS students, who plan and deliver the activities.

The positive impact of these lessons is felt by all. Staff have greatly appreciated the support and opportunity to share ideas and expertise. WHS students have enriched their own understanding of the language through the teaching of others, with the girls involved in the partnership opting for A-level French next year. Participating in the club has helped Harris students to feel more motivated towards language learning in general.



Linguistica is a student-led magazine and blog featuring articles from WHS students across Years 7-13. In May 2023, the school held its inaugural *Linguistica* Conference for Year 10 and 12 WHS students and Year 10 gifted and talented students from Harris. The event, which featured a keynote speech from journalist and author Alex Bellos, encouraged students from both schools to think collaboratively about language beyond the confines of their exam board specifications. Pupils also took part in a series of workshops: create your Hanzhi, the art of translation, sign language, invented languages, poems in translation and Linguistics Olympiad-style language puzzles.



Alongside 20 gifted and talented students from Harris Academy Wimbledon and **Ricards Lodge High School**, Year 9 WHS pupils took part in an MFL Partnerships Day. There, they completed a series of workshops designed to build their confidence and develop their oracy in the target language, as well as introduce them to new languages they had not experienced before.

The day began with a code-breaking task, where students used clues to decipher a poem written in Dutch. They then took part in a language speaking activity, working with a partner from another school to produce model answers to GCSE-style questions in French, German and Spanish. This was followed by an introduction to a new language – these included Norwegian,

Finnish and Chinese (delivered by teachers at WHS who speak these languages) and Korean, Croatian, Italian, Hindi and Russian (delivered by Year 9 WHS students who speak these languages at home). In the afternoon, all the students discussed the wider importance of language learning as part of a question-and-answer exercise, and their work will be

"I loved the partnership with Harris as it allowed me to use my existing love for French and apply it to teaching the students that came each time we visited. Seeing the progress the students made over the course of each session was very rewarding and made me want to return each week."

A WHS student

published in the next issue of the *Linguistica* magazine.

By stepping outside of their comfort zone – using unfamiliar languages, interacting with new people – students had the opportunity to look beyond their own experiences, learn from one another, and take part in fun, confidence-boosting activities.

Azbuka Russian-English Bilingual School is a founding member of the **Bilingual Education Alliance (BEA)**, a voluntary network of leaders of bilingual schools, academics, and policymakers. The alliance supports all types of schools with bilingual or multilingual curricula, in any combination of languages. Those involved come together to share best practices around bilingual education.

BEA also promotes and disseminates insights to families, communities, and education professionals on the benefits of bilingual education; and engages with government and other relevant bodies on bilingual and multilingual education in England. It supports the broader advancement of foreign language teaching and learning, and advocates for education underpinned by the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of families and communities.

For leaders of bilingual schools, the alliance offers joint training, masterclasses, networking and support with curriculum matters, administration, and liaising with parents.

Parents and families have access to a database of schools with bilingual/multilingual curricula in England, research findings relating to child development, and insights into the operations of bilingual schools.

BEA offers collaboration with academics, research institutions, teacher training colleges and other organisations working in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. The network also provides cultural immersion opportunities and work experience for students from non-bilingual schools, the sharing of foreign language teachers, and resources in foreign language teaching and learning.

“By starting bilingual education early, our pupils have grasped language nuances and pronunciations more naturally, setting a solid foundation for advanced language proficiency in the future. Additionally, we are confident that our bilingual immersion model will equip our pupils with a competitive edge in an increasingly interconnected world, providing broader opportunities for personal and professional growth.”

Bunmi Richards, headteacher at Shaftesbury Park School

“For children to thrive in our global, multicultural world built on understanding and tolerance, we need to be open to new models of education built around bi- and multilingualism. In the UK, true bilingual schools struggle within the state system, and discussions around fresh restrictions or taxes on independent schools risk further restricting innovation. We helped catalyse the creation of the Bilingual Education Alliance (BEA) to bring together the best ideas within bilingual education pedagogy and practice, leaders of the bilingual schools, educators, academics and parents regardless of their background or type of school. To succeed for our children, we need to foster these types of educational community.”

Maria Gavrilova, head of Azbuka and founding member of BEA

Supporting refugees and pupils with EAL

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, schools have amplified their efforts to uplift refugees and those with English as an additional language (EAL), ensuring they have access to the academic, emotional, and social support they need to thrive.

Emanuel School has launched its own Coffee and Conversation Hub, where Ukrainian adults and children can meet with parent and pupil volunteers, including Ukrainian speakers, to network and hone their English skills. The Hub runs bi-monthly on Saturday mornings and is open to everyone in the Wandsworth community.

The school has organised a number of activities including a tour of the Houses of Parliament, free places for 20 children to attend an **Activ Camp** over the summer, and day visits to the Wetlands Centre. Last December Emanuel hosted a Christmas celebration, where those involved decorated shortbread cookies and enjoyed traditional Ukrainian Christmas treats. Some attendees also joined the Emanuel School parent choir, where they sang a traditional Ukrainian carol a cappella, along with *Silent Night* and other Christmas songs.

Emanuel has also offered two fully-funded school places for Ukrainian children, as well as employment opportunities for some participant families.



“

I am a Ukrainian refugee. I was forced to leave my country with my daughter in April 2022 due to the Russian invasion. We were granted visas to enter the UK with sponsorship from a wonderful Emanuel family.

At this time, the school launched the Ukrainian Coffee and Conversation Hub. Advertised through the Emanuel School network, the Hub was very busy from the outset with many Ukrainians arriving alone, or with small children, speaking little or no English, along with their host families. Cookies, arts and crafts and games helped the children to feel a sense of normality, while women connected over a cup of coffee. Over the weeks, we have had specialists in differing fields give short talks on helpful topics like employment and local government support and learning English as a foreign language.

This experience has been life-changing for me and my daughter, Sofiia. Sofiia has been with me most weeks at the Hub. It has helped her to feel like she belongs in this new reality – she has a place and is respected and loved. She is proud to be a representative of Emanuel School and this has made her more resilient and willing to succeed. For this, I will be forever thankful.

Thanks to Emanuel School, we have been able to create a community that supports, helps and gives solace to anyone who needs a friendly face.

Iryna Hlotova, Hub organiser, translator and Emanuel School parent

”

Lichfield Cathedral School (LCS), in collaboration with **Lichfield Cathedral** and the **Ukrainian Friends of Lichfield** organisation, launched an initiative to create an open community of shared practice focusing on effective support for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The aim of the partnership is to encourage the sharing of good practice by bringing schools and educators together to help create a homogenous approach, ensuring students with EAL – and those with refugee status – receive the help they need.

The initiative stemmed from a meeting between Audrey Davies, an MFL and EAL teacher at LCS, and Lynette Ranson, coordinator of the Ukrainian Friends of Lichfield community support group. Lynette expressed concerns about a lack of uniformity in the approaches taken to teaching and supporting students with EAL, and the potentially negative impacts this could have on learners' academic achievements and wellbeing. The partnership has enabled LCS to reach schools in Lichfield as well as in the diocese – **106 primary, secondary and middle schools** in total.

The collaboration involves a series of partnership events, during which time is allocated to discussions around two main areas: academic development and emotional support. Educators are invited to talk about their use of a particularly helpful resource or activity; what effective pastoral support is in place within their setting; as well as unforeseen obstacles and how to overcome these. Group discussions are then followed by a collaborative effort to select the most relevant advice. The programme also includes guest speakers, such as EAL teachers and charity workers, who share their insights regarding best practice.

"By equipping teachers and others working with children with the knowledge and understanding of how to support EAL students, we can create an environment where they feel seen and valued. At the heart of this project is the children and I think that is evident by the care that goes into educating others about what it is like for students with EAL."

Louisa Smith,
MEd student at the
University of Derby



"When a child joins a class from a completely different culture or language, it's expected that the child will learn new skills and broaden their knowledge and experience. What sometimes comes as a surprise is just how much the other children learn as well, and how much they benefit from practical, hands-on exposure to diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. Learning how to solve problems together, create a new dialogue and value each other's cultures strengthens social cohesion in classrooms and beyond, as these skills are carried into higher education and the workplace. The foundations of this project are in the classroom, but its impact will be felt far wider."

Sue Hannam,
headteacher at LCS

Next steps include the creation of a platform participants can use to add useful resources and activities, share top tips, and outline how they successfully responded to unexpected challenges. LCS is keen to gather educators, experienced and novice alike, to create a growing community that acknowledges the value of shared practice to improve the learning experience of all students with EAL. This has become especially important as schools across the country are welcoming an increasing number of refugees.

Future events will focus on how teachers can plan for effective teaching assistant support in classrooms; tips and challenges when adapting on-the-go; how to develop good language learning approaches and practice for EAL teaching; and key insights from EAL learners themselves.

By harnessing best practice across the region, this initiative has created an effective and robust support network to help schools cater to pupils whose language barriers – and often traumatic background stories – make life in school, and in general, challenging. EAL delivery and managing the needs of pupils who have refugee status are both areas where schools often lack individual expertise. As such, this partnership provides an essential support network to enable these youngsters to flourish and feel like they belong.

EAL TWILIGHT EVENT



DISCUSSION & INSIGHTS

ACADEMIC RESOURCES
Meet other educators to share useful resources and classroom tips to support EAL teaching and learning.



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
Explore what emotional support is available to students with EAL and discuss how you and others have managed to overcome unforeseen challenges.



OPEN COMMUNITY
Become part of a growing open community to: **share and access** a wide range of free teaching and learning resources; **exchange** classroom and pastoral tips; and **explore** further topics of interest around EAL teaching and learning.



"We will never know the lost opportunities of closed approaches, so we should highlight the benefits of open ones."

Pr. Martin Weller



“
The whole programme is simply wonderful! It has such a fantastic feel about it. All the children look relaxed and happy. There are all sorts of activities going on from homework, chess and card games, garden boules outside, and plenty of talking, smiles and laughter.
 ”

A support worker at the Refugee Network

City of London Freeman’s School has launched a Refugee Buddy Club in conjunction with the local **Refugee Network**. The after-school club aims to provide friendship, support with learning English, and help with homework. The school welcomes approximately 25 refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria on a weekly basis, who are then “buddied up” with students of a similar age from Freeman’s. Parents are also partnered with teachers from the school to help improve their spoken English skills. The club typically involves students aged between 14 and 18 years old, however towards the end of the summer term families brought along their younger children as well, from age 7 upwards.

Reflecting on their involvement with the programme, one refugee said they learned how to speak better English and be more creative, while another added that they received a lot of help with their homework and enjoyed talking to other pupils. Freeman’s students were also surveyed in January and July to measure the impact of their participation in the club. Whilst the scores improved across every single area being measured, the biggest change could be seen in the following: “feeling confident about yourself”, “ability to think creatively” and “ability to solve problems”. The club has become a much-loved feature of Freeman’s co-curricular programme, and will continue to grow and evolve over the coming years.



Supporting pupils with SEND

Many independent schools have formed partnerships designed to provide valuable support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These important initiatives are often holistic, offering opportunities for academic, social, and emotional development.

Wellington College and **Carwarden House Community School** are celebrating ten years of a partnership that spans friendship, enrichment, joint projects, fundraising and even work experience.

A cohort of up to 15 pupils from Carwarden House (aged 16 to 19 with complex learning and additional needs) and a group drawn from Wellington’s fifth form (Year 11) come together every Wednesday. The programme launches with an induction for the Wellington pupils on how different learning needs manifest, seeing potential and managing challenges. The group then unites for teamwork and bonding.

The routine settles into a series of weekly activities held at Wellington for one half term, and at Carwarden for the next. Switching locations allows both sets of pupils to lead on the programme planning and delivery. It also allows pupils in different year groups that are no longer involved in the partnership to bump into their old friends.

Sports and games, arts and crafts, music and outdoor adventure activities underpin the programme, but of particular note are the joint projects and work experience that tend to take a half term each. The group tackles challenges together such as clearing and upgrading a garden area; or refurbishing a classroom at Carwarden House. The funds required for the materials for these projects are often raised independently by Wellington pupils. The group also volunteers together on a local hospital ward, benefiting the patients there whilst providing all the pupils with essential work experience.

“Our Carwarden students develop their social and interactive skills, they make lifelong friendships... The transformation of the students at the beginning of the year compared to at the end is truly an amazing thing to see!”

A member of staff at Carwarden House

St Edward's School, Oxford (also known as Teddies) has partnered with its neighbour **Northern House Academy**, a specialist primary school for pupils from across Oxfordshire with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties, for many years. This year, however, saw that partnership strengthened with the launch of its Teddies Collaborates volunteering programme.

Through Teddies Collaborates, over a quarter of Lower Sixth pupils deliver structured weekly extra-curricular and educational activities with Northern House staff – ranging from crafts sessions to workshops in science, technology, engineering and maths – on site at both schools throughout the school year, giving around **1,500 volunteer hours** in total.

Teddies students undertook a 6-week training programme before starting their volunteering placements at Northern House Academy, which covered topics such as safeguarding and first aid. Senior staff from Northern House joined the sessions to deliver some of the training to the students. Each pupil went on to volunteer at the school for 21 weeks, and they have reported their communications skills, patience and understanding have all increased greatly.

Northern House pupils also came over to visit St Edward's, where they participated in a variety of crafts, games and activities. This year, the school partnered with **House of Fun**,

"I think this experience has given me a different outlook on the world which will definitely stick with me going forwards."

Layla, a Teddies sixth former

"The mixture of technical learning, step-by-step following of instructions and creativity in every session was fantastic for the children. They really look forward to every session."

A teacher from Northern House



an organisation that offers STEM workshops. In the sessions, the children created five models from Lego-style bricks that introduced the concept of energy transfer using a transmission, in an interactive and engaging way that linked to real-world mechanical engineering. The children built, tested and innovated their own toothed gears, belt drives and dual transmissions. Models included a wind turbine, race car with gears, dragster car, search and rescue vehicle, and a tank.

In addition to the partnership project, Northern House uses the facilities at St Edward's on a regular basis. Astro turf pitches and the sports hall are used every week, and their school end-of-term prize giving assembly is held in the Olivier Hall at St Edward's School,

"The pupils at Northern House have benefited greatly from having the students from St Edward's with them and we look forward to welcoming a new cohort next year."

Bex Holmes, head of school at Northern House Academy

with the parents and guardians of Northern House partaking in tea and cake before the main event. This has been transformational for Northern House, the pupils and their parents as the school does not have a space suitable to host the assembly themselves. Towards the end of the school year, St Edward's provided the space for Northern House to host their first ever Sports Day. In addition, a garden space in the school's Health Centre has been opened for Northern House pupils to use. This provides a place for pupils to garden safely, learn about nature and wildlife and sketch in the outside space. St Edward's has provided storage, tools and equipment in this gardening area in the hope the partnership continues to bloom over the coming years.



"We learnt about belt drives and how one axle moves to turn another."

A Northern House Academy pupil

A fifteen-year partnership between **Watling View School** and **St Albans School** has seen nearly 100 St Albans School sixth formers volunteer at the maintained special school. The relationship between the two schools was fostered as part of St Albans School's Partnership and Community Link Programme, which 70 of its Lower Sixth pupils currently assist with.

"I signed up thinking it would be a great experience, but I underestimated the profound impact working at Watling View would have on me... I do miss my Friday afternoons at Watling View; I felt as though in a very small way I was doing some good; I was helping and I was making a small difference."

Ali, a St Albans School student

"The partnership established between St Albans School and Watling View is mutually beneficial and offers rich opportunities to students at both schools. Our pupils strongly value the weekly presence of placement students from St Albans School and over time they form secure and trusting relationships with positive young role models and peers. Students from St Albans School consistently demonstrate responsibility and professionalism beyond their years, and we are very grateful for their enthusiasm and efforts each week. Their contributions make a real difference."

Benjy Aarons-Richardson, deputy head at Watling View School

Every Friday, students from St Albans School visit Watling View and help with activities for their children and young people, who are aged between 2 and 19. This includes reading, sports, gardening and soft play. St Albans School students also accompany groups on field trips to go bowling and play tennis. The meaningful relationships that have been built with children and staff at Watling View have

provided huge support to the school. And the St Albans School students benefit, too: as well as the valuable work experience from these weekly visits, students gain self-confidence and develop their communication skills through discovering different means of non-verbal communication and adapting to each child's individual learning need.



The Hacking Neurodiversity initiative is a collaborative effort aimed at promoting neurodiversity awareness and understanding in schools. This video-based project has fostered successful school partnerships and positively impacted the educational landscape.

The initiative was developed by **ACS International Schools** in collaboration with **Inrehearsal**, a professional production team. Its primary goal is to support teachers, students, and parents through a series of 10 powerful videos featuring real-life stories shared by speakers from diverse backgrounds and age groups.

The videos themselves are a gateway to a community, and are aimed at building partnerships with other schools, both locally and internationally. ACS shares the videos freely on YouTube, making them accessible to schools worldwide. The initiative's playlist provides comprehensive details about the project, its objectives, and resources available for educators.

To promote the initiative, ACS utilises various channels, including social media platforms and participation in conferences and workshops. Regular updates and engaging content are

"As an autistic adult with an autistic son – and being a teacher of design and technology, which attracts neurodiverse students – this was a passion project for me, which has gone further than I could have ever imagined."

Graeme Lawrie MBE, ACS International's director of partnerships

shared on Twitter (@ACSPartnerships) and LinkedIn, showcasing the impact and importance of neurodiversity awareness in education.

The programme has garnered an overwhelmingly positive response from stakeholders, with over



70,000 views to date. Feedback from teachers, parents, and students has highlighted the impact of the videos in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Testimonials, captured in the video series, reflect the transformative experiences of individuals who have connected with the initiative.

Hacking Neurodiversity exemplifies the power of collaboration and partnership in promoting neurodiversity acceptance and understanding in schools. Through open access resources, engaging videos, and active promotion, ACS has paved the way for other schools to embrace similar initiatives and create inclusive educational environments that celebrate the strengths and abilities of all students.

Breakfast clubs and holiday provision

Recognising the scarcity of affordable childcare options across the country, independent schools have stepped up to provide breakfast and holiday clubs for local families. By sharing their resources and facilities in this way these schools are filling a gap in provision, offering invaluable support to parents and their young children.

The **Warwick Schools Foundation (WSF)** Evergreen Holiday Club was born out of the desire to support the local community by providing a safe, joyous environment for students with multiple learning difficulties (MLD) and profound multiple learning difficulties (PLMD) to build their confidence and independence during the long summer holiday. Whilst a nominal contribution was asked of the parents to support this initiative, the return, for all, was priceless.

Activities at the club, which commenced in August 2023, ranged from indoor pursuits such as arts and crafts, cooking, soft play and junk modelling to outdoor ventures that included

"She was so happy to go and having days of activity meant that she was fulfilled. It meant we had time to catch up on everyday things; I wish it could run for longer."

A parent reflecting on their daughter's experience with the holiday club

”

"I have learnt the importance of having trust in letting the children determine their own activities so that they learn independence in a safe environment."

A King's High student

forest school and games in the fresh air. Seventeen students from **King's High School** and **Warwick School** (both within the Warwick Schools Foundation) joined together with staff from **Evergreen School** to deliver the activities. The most precious times identified by the King's students were the opportunities to talk one-to-one with the Evergreen youngsters about their interests and dreams. These conversations ranged from debates concerning Lord of the Rings and the Star Wars franchise to the pure joy of wanting to bounce all day on a trampoline and see if they could outrun the WSF students in "duck, duck, goose".

The provision of the holiday club was not only appreciated by the Evergreen parents but also by King's High students, some of whom are now considering study and work in fields supporting those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.



"We started Ducklings after noticing the impact that the pandemic was having on children, with many missing out on the chance to play and interact with each other as babies and toddlers without the usual playgroups. As a result, parents and carers also lacked support with fewer opportunities to meet each other. Over the last nine months, Ducklings has become a really lovely safe space for young families to ask our teachers questions, set up playdates, or for us to recommend activities in the area. It's been a huge success and we are really excited to meet more families in the coming months!"

**Jane O'Brien,
head of nursery**

Held in Richmond at **King's House School's** nursery, Ducklings parent and toddler group sessions are free of charge and open to all families in the local community. The toddler group runs from 1.30 – 2.30pm once a week during term time in the Caterpillar classroom and is aimed at children aged 18 months to three years. Led and planned by nursery staff, sessions include a range of free flow activities and end with a music circle time. **36 local families** attended Ducklings between January and September 2023.

Established this year, the group provides another settling-in opportunity for children who go on to join King's House nursery, helping them to become more familiar with the classroom and staff beforehand. Many childcare providers have unfortunately been impacted by Covid and the cost-of-living crisis, with some even having to close, and by offering an accessible toddler group King's House is providing invaluable support for local families.





"In 15 years of teaching, these are the most impactful lessons that I have done. I have now tutored many different students and all have made extraordinary progress – three of my students went from failing maths GCSE to passing and being allowed to go to the college of their choice."

A Lumina tutor



Helping children facing disadvantage to thrive

Schools across the country are devising initiatives to support pupils facing disadvantage. By working in partnership schools can maximise this important work, ensuring more young people have the tools and resources they need to succeed.

Lumina Tutoring was created with the aim of supporting children in care to fulfil their potential. Launched by **Harrow School** at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is now a flourishing consortium of schools including **Bradfield College, Caldicott School, City of London School, City of London School for Girls, Dulwich College, Exeter School, Homefield Preparatory School, Ibstock Place School, John Lyon School, Knightsbridge School, Notting Hill and Ealing High School, Oundle School, Radley College, Sedbergh School, St Albans High School for Girls** and **Wells Cathedral School**, all of which are committed to improving the life chances of children in care.

Lumina Tutoring provides online, subject-specific one-to-one tutorial sessions for children who are looked after (CLA).

The initiative aims to improve the attainment and future outcomes of these children, who face significant educational disadvantage and have been disproportionately affected by the loss of learning during the pandemic.

The programme harnesses the expertise of inspirational teachers from across the education sector, who typically provide students with one 45-minute lesson per week, predominantly in term time. The initiative is currently running with around 50 teachers from 16 different schools, in conjunction with **Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Sutton** and **Wandsworth Virtual Schools**. Teachers deliver lessons across the full school age range and across all subjects, though Lumina Tutoring currently has an overwhelming demand for specialists in English, maths and science. Teachers will work with the same student through a complete academic cycle (usually up to a public exam).

The Lumina platform is fully funded, providing extensive administrative support for participating schools.



"For some, it has not been an easy journey, living away from home. Working with kind and nurturing mentors has improved confidence, raised aspirations and provided a wonderful platform to connect with others in similar life situations. They are optimistic, feel supported and look forward to the journey ahead."

Sue Tarry, Ealing Virtual School

"Just thought you'd like to know I got a 9 in chemistry. Thank you so much for tutoring me."

A CLA tutee

A comprehensive safeguarding structure is in place, as is training and support for Lumina Fellows (teachers) joining the Lumina Tutoring programme. Software, training and support are also provided free of charge to partner institutions.

Over the past couple of years, Lumina has helped generate some extraordinary results. Students who were predicted 6/7s at GCSE have gone on to receive 9s, while numerous pupils who had been failing English and maths have achieved 4s and moved onto courses that were previously inaccessible. Other students involved in the scheme have been offered a place to study at their first-choice university, including Royal Veterinary College and Goldsmiths, University of London.

Another aspect of this programme is the Lumina Summer School, an online course for Year 12 students attending state schools in London and across England. Over three days, students learn more about Oxbridge, its admissions process, and how to choose the right course and college. Students also have the opportunity to develop their

subject knowledge, refine their personal statement, and practise their interview technique.

Looking ahead, Lumina is looking to bring more experienced teachers and tutors onboard – across all subjects and school age ranges – so the programme can be scaled up to support CLA all over the UK.





Hulme Grammar School (HGS) has a proud tradition of supporting primary schools from across the borough through a range of enriching initiatives. As part of its active programme of literacy, numeracy and science events, the school has forged links with schools from some of the most deprived areas of the UK.

Students are taught by subject specialists from HGS in maths, biology, physics and chemistry, and undertake a series of challenges designed to develop higher-order thinking skills. Within each session, Year 6 pupils are also supported by sixth form students, creating a dynamic learning environment.

HGS has run a maths-focused partnership programme – “Mastering Maths” – for many years. Through this initiative, hundreds of primary school children have been welcomed to the school for a series of twilight

“Enquiring Young Minds helped me to understand what I might become. It made me want to study the STEM subjects in more detail. It was so different to my primary school lessons as it went into areas beyond the national curriculum, helping me to learn more about many things.”

Razia, a pupil at Broadfield Community Primary School

sessions designed to boost pupils’ love for numeracy. The success of these sessions and feedback from local primary schools – including **Briscoe Lane Academy** and those within the **Harmony Trust Group of Schools** – led to a change in format for the 2022-2023 academic year. HGS expanded the programme, which is now called Enquiring Young Minds, to include eight STEM workshops. These focus on the development of investigative skills in biology, chemistry and physics. This work has been rolled out further, with full classes of local primary school pupils (in Years 5 and 6) being invited to HGS on a Wednesday afternoon in the summer term to complete practicals.

The feedback from parents and students alike has been resoundingly positive, and HGS looks forward to welcoming a new cohort of students to the scheme in the next academic year.

Mental health and wellbeing support

The health and wellbeing of pupils is of utmost importance, and schools are continuing to adapt their pastoral provision to address the challenges children are facing in an ever-changing world. Through forging links within their local communities, schools can ensure more people have access to this valuable support.

Sancton Wood School joined with **Cambridge United Football Club (CUFC)** two years ago to launch the Sancton Wood Supporters’ Club, a pastoral support group for boys and fathers. In partnership, they have developed a comprehensive programme of talks and events designed to help parents support their teenage children, with a focus on those in Years 7, 8 and 9.

The Supporters’ Club includes a PSHE programme for boys delivered by CUFC, a series of parent talks open to everyone in Cambridge, and some match day events for fathers and sons. A “lads and dads” residential took place in the summer term last year.

The PSHE lessons – which explore topics such as banter and bullying, social media and self-image, the benefits of opening up, and non-violent communication – are

delivered by CUFC at Sancton Wood as part of their collaborative Mind Your Head programme.

Talks for parents are hosted by Sancton Wood, delivered by trained family therapists. These talks cover several important subjects, including the changing teenage mind and body, sex and relationships, setting boundaries, and teenage friendships.

The Match Day Series offers several match day experiences for senior boys and their parents at CUFC. As part of the Supporters’ Club programme, each event includes a pre-match lunch, a talk on parenting from a positive male role model within the Sancton Wood community, followed by tickets to the match for all.

“We have always believed that our responsibility to our pupils doesn’t end at the school gates and have developed an initiative for the whole family that will really support parents, and fathers in particular, as they raise their teenage boys.”

Richard Settle, principal of Sancton Wood School



Abingdon School works with partner schools and the local community for the benefit of young people and teachers across the town. The school is also a founding member of the **OX14 Learning Partnership**, a group of six state and independent schools working together to raise educational aspirations across Oxfordshire. The partnership places emphasis on a core aim of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and parents using a whole-school approach.

With the increasing demands on schools to meet the mental health needs of young people, against the backdrop of major sociopolitical challenges and the post-Covid environment, this work has evolved significantly to develop a proactive and practical relationship with other local schools. This has included regular early intervention work with students showing low-level signs of anxiety, stress and/or low mood, enabling schools to “triage” their support and identify those at crisis point more easily.

Abingdon School’s mental health and wellbeing coordinator, Natalie Hunt, offers weekly group sessions for students in Years 7-13 at three partner secondary schools on topics including managing stress, anxiety and low mood; staying motivated; developing habits for good mental health and building self-esteem. Workshops and assemblies have also been delivered on key areas in relationships and sex education, including communicating consent, healthy vs unhealthy relationships, and menstrual wellbeing.

In response to national reports on the prevalence of poor mental health and bullying amongst LGBTQ+ youth, Abingdon School has established a working group across the OX14 Learning Partnership to develop best practice for supporting vulnerable students, strategies for tackling homophobic and transphobic language, exploring ways for LGBTQ+ students to connect socially across the schools, and offering parent webinars with organisations such as **FFLAG**.

“I have really enjoyed my work as a PSL, it has helped a massive amount with my communication skills. I now feel as though I can offer genuinely helpful advice to those who need it.”

Angus, a U6 student at Abingdon School



As part of a peer support lead (PSL) programme, which is now entering its fifth year, students from across the OX14 Learning Partnership take part in training sessions and workshops to develop their listening and counselling skills. These cover the notion of safeguarding, understanding the importance of being non-judgemental and empathetic, and talking through scenarios with pupils who are likely to have had very different life experiences and outlooks. Following the training, students then use their skills to support peers in their own schools who are experiencing personal difficulties. Since the start of the programme, over **150 sixth formers** across six schools have completed this training.

Staff have also been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid, enabling them to support their young people with confidence. For senior and middle managers and governing bodies, Abingdon offers Adult Mental Health First Aid training, and has delivered CPD on monitoring,

“My daughter has frequently mentioned that she feels able to speak more freely and ask more sensitive questions because it isn’t her class teacher (who she will see all the time) leading the class... My daughter looks forward to the sessions and asking and answering questions. I feel it has been a real success.”

A Year 5 parent

Furthermore, Natalie has worked extensively with several primary schools locally and across Oxfordshire to develop a relationships, sex and health education programme, Preparing for Puberty, for Years 5 and 6. These involve three termly workshops that age-appropriately teach children the physical and emotional changes that occur in puberty, the basics of human reproduction and how babies develop, and how they can look after themselves during this period of their lives.





"It is a privilege for us to contribute to this in any way that we can and share our passion for music with our wider community."

Pupils from Stafford's concert band

Supporting music and the arts

There has been increasing concern over the vulnerability of creative subjects in recent years amid a decline in GCSE entries for some subjects, notably in the state sector. Independent schools across the UK are working with state school colleagues to widen access to music and the arts, ensuring more children have the opportunity to explore their creativity.

Stafford Grammar School's Choral Day is a large-scale event which sees pupils from 10 local primaries welcomed into the school to share an inspirational day of music education. The school helps to transport pupils to the event through the use of its minibus, bringing them together for a series of music workshops. After an afternoon of singing and learning songs, run by staff from Stafford, a concert of all the day's music is presented to over a thousand parents. For many of the pupils, this is the first time they have had the opportunity to be a part of a choir and the concert is an event that brings the whole

community together, uniting everyone in a shared enjoyment of music.

As part of the school's wider programme, members of Stafford's concert band go out on a roadshow to share their passion for music with schools across South Staffordshire. The band performs for the pupils at each school, providing opportunities for children from further afield to learn more about instruments they may not have seen or heard before and to see what it is to be part of a group of young people playing music.

The central aim of this initiative is to encourage young children to explore a passion for music whilst also enabling them to participate in choirs. The hope is that they may even consider taking up an instrument and joining a band or orchestra, inspired by their involvement with Stafford's music activities.



“

The club has been a pleasure to be involved with. It has helped me develop patience and an ability to calmly deal with situations involving young children. I also feel I have improved my communication skills when having to explain something in a different way and engage the children.

A sixth form volunteer at Caterham

”

"The confidence of a number of pupils has significantly improved. This is evident not only in the sessions themselves but also when we are back at school."

A teacher from St John's

A drama club run by 20 Lower Sixth students from **Caterham School** takes place each week and involves pupils from local **St John's Primary School**. Children from Years 5 and 6 come along to take part, with the aim of developing expression, self-confidence and learning more about theatre production.

Now in its seventh year, the drama sessions are held at Caterham School with Caterham and St John's teachers present to provide support and encouragement. The cycles, of which there are two per year, culminate in the performance of a scripted play to which parents and carers are invited.

Asked for their feedback on the experience, Caterham's sixth form volunteers reported an increased confidence in leading activities, a greater feeling of pride in the impact their work is having on others and awareness of how their actions and responses affect other people.

Pupils from St John's said they felt more confident in sharing ideas, both within the whole group and also smaller teams. They spoke of the workshops boosting their knowledge of theatre and drama techniques, and enhancing their ability to negotiate and interact with older pupils. Some pupils also said they have felt a greater sense of pride in their ability to perform in front of an audience.



The King's School, Canterbury launched Sounding Out, a revolutionary programme to provide lessons in orchestral instruments without the barrier of cost, to children at all the city primary schools in Canterbury. Sounding Out puts instruments in children's hands for the first time, in an effort to reverse the decline in classical tuition amongst young people in the UK.

Set up in September 2019 by the school's director of music, Will Bersey, and the then head of partnerships, Christina Astin, the programme serves to redress the decline in cultural capital and generational unfamiliarity with classical music, which is particularly stark for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Supported by King's and a wide network of benefactors, the goal is simple: to break down barriers and widen access to music opportunities for as many children as possible.

For the pilot year, staff worked with four city centre schools whose Year 5 pupils had previously experienced some whole-class music teaching. The project leader worked

closely with their music coordinators and class teachers to invite children who might not otherwise have had access to instrumental tuition. Through regular visits to the schools – often accompanied by King's music scholars, who gave instrumental demonstrations to the children – pupils were invited to take up places on Sounding Out and given the opportunity to learn the violin or trumpet.

Following the launch – and relaunch three years later, after pausing the initiative during the Covid pandemic – the project is now thriving, running every Saturday morning during term time in the Edred Wright Music School at King's. A typical morning will include an instrumental lesson on either of the two instruments (with expansion to others planned soon) and a group musicianship session, affectionately named Saturday Jam. Each beginner is given their own instrument to take home and practise on, as well as a music case and tutorial books. King's funds Sounding Out with assistance from generous donors, and families are asked to contribute just £2 per week.



Over the course of the last academic year the children have given two concerts, including a Christmas event and, at the end of the year, an impressive concert during The King's School Arts Festival, which included a specially commissioned orchestral piece. This event represented a huge milestone for Sounding Out, a concept that had been many years in the planning but is now real and happening every week in Canterbury, with lessons, rehearsals and concerts. Local young singers who show exceptional talent are invited to join one of King's choirs and gain practical choral singing expertise and support with applying for choral scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge.

Learning a musical instrument brings benefits for both mental health and brain development, improving motor skills, memory and even mathematical ability. The new Ofsted framework encourages learners "to develop and discover their interests and talents, developing their resilience, confidence and independence", and music offers the perfect vehicle for this. As Sounding Out expands in numbers, instruments and reach in years to come, the

school will continue to encourage young people to be creators as well as consumers, while broadening the availability of music-making. To that end, an important part of King's work has been sharing the success of Sounding Out and seeking to inspire others to replicate the model in their own settings. Staff are delighted to report that this is already beginning to happen.



Sporting partnerships

More than **890 ISC schools** are involved in sporting partnerships, all of which create opportunities for children and young people to be active, make new friends and learn important skills. These joint initiatives vary in nature and size, from sharing facilities and coaching sessions to hosting joint sporting events.

Girls United is a non-profit organisation providing girls in disadvantaged communities with the opportunity to play football and gain life skills that can help them succeed on and off the pitch. **Alley's School** joined forces with **Girls United** because of a shared desire to promote football amongst girls in south London and give them access to training and facilities, which can be hard to find in urban areas.

Since the partnership began in 2019, the two organisations have shared **200 hours of activity** as well as **83 training sessions and fixtures**. They have also worked with the



"Using the space that Alley's have offered us has been hugely beneficial for our delivery of the programme. The option to have classroom-based activities with enough space for 30 people and the use of the interactive TV has been so helpful. The close proximity to, along with the size of, the pitches next to the classroom has also enabled us to run a hybrid mix of classroom and practical training."

**Ryan Dempsey,
London coach
development lead**

"Thank you for your generosity and for this exciting and needed partnership and support this year. We couldn't have done it without you!"

**Abigail Ingram,
Girls United**

Alley's Sports Academy for joint training sessions and matches, which have reached a total of **157 girls**.

The partnership has led to the creation of a local hub for female football and has certainly helped to fuel the growth and popularity of the sport amongst girls locally. There have been several events within the community, including a club signing-on night for girls looking to join Girls United, held at Alley's sports pavilion. Girls United and Alley's pupils also recently visited St George's Park to see the Lionesses in training, which proved to be a memorable and inspiring experience for all involved.

"Running is very much in the DNA of the school and so it is a delight to kick off the academic and calendar years with such well-attended and competitive events."

**Richard Gorst,
master in charge of
running at Casterton**



"May I take the opportunity to thank you for yesterday's cross country. Yet another event brilliantly planned for and seamlessly delivered... In addition to this, I must mention the warm spirit and camaraderie of your children, particularly those Year 7 and Year 8 pupils who were providing support. Their kind words were from the heart and will have been appreciated more than we'll ever know. I overheard their gentle, encouraging words and was very impressed by their grace and generosity."

**A message of appreciation from
a participating school**

Casterton, Sedbergh Preparatory School, located in rural Cumbria, hosts an annual cross country event for schools across the region. Pupils in Years 3-8 from around 15 local state schools attend the event, which sees over **600 pupils** from across the state and independent sectors taking to the school's undulating fields. It is a well-established and much anticipated event with both individual and team prizes available.

Casterton also hosts the South Lakes District Cross Country Trials each January. Between 550 to 600 runners from up to 35 state schools take part, with those crossing the finish line in the top 16 going on to secure a place at the County Championships, also hosted regularly at the school. At this county level event, 450 runners descend on Casterton

from across Cumbria, with runners attending from around 50 state schools. The top runners from these races are then offered the opportunity to represent Cumbria at the National Cross Country Championships.

Casterton is delighted to be at the forefront of cross country running in Cumbria, offering race opportunities to children, both those new to the sport and the more experienced runners looking for County honours. The school is proud to share its land, facilities, and staff expertise, and is supported by its older pupils who help guide and encourage the competitors.

A swimming partnership between **Bromley High School GDST (BHS)** and **Marjorie McClure School** is helping pupils gain confidence in and out of the water, bringing positive outcomes for all involved.

As part of Bromley High's sixth form elective programme, students can volunteer for a period of time in one of several community programmes. One of these is a partnership between Bromley High and Marjorie McClure, a foundation special school for students aged four to 19 with complex medical needs and physical disabilities, all with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) in place.

Every term, around 12 students from Bromley High visit Marjorie McClure and support younger swimmers in their hydrotherapy pool. These children may need support from at least two helpers – for example, children with cerebral palsy may need to be held by a qualified teacher – but the Bromley students play an important role in communicating with the younger pupils. Secondary-aged children from Marjorie McClure have the opportunity to visit the pool at Bromley, which gives them access to deeper and colder water – essential for developing water safety skills and swimming longer distances.

The Marjorie McClure children gain hugely from this experience. Having access to deeper water enables them to enhance their abilities, and they can achieve Swim England badges by swimming widths with the support of the Bromley students. Charlie Rollinson, swimming teacher at Marjorie McClure, described how one of her students – who loves to swim underwater and could often be found exploring the bottom of the pool – was so excited to have

“
I cannot get out of my head that their teacher said that these kids largely get ignored out in public because people don't know what to say, so say nothing at all. I think I have definitely been guilty of that in the past, but now, honestly, I feel so differently. It has also made me appreciate the wonderful job their staff do.
 ”

A BHS teacher

the opportunity to swim in a deeper pool. Her teachers have also reported that she is more engaged in the classroom following her swimming sessions. Michael, who was a non-swimmer a few years ago and still lacks confidence in the water, was able to jump into the deep end for the first time with two Bromley High students holding his hands and jumping with him. The children, who report often feeling left out in social situations with other children, benefit considerably from spending time with the teenagers at Bromley High; these interactions are invaluable for their personal development.

This partnership has also been an overwhelmingly positive experience for the Bromley High students. They have loved working with the Marjorie McClure children, and they have boosted their confidence and leadership skills. Some of the sixth formers have gone on to gain swimming instructor qualifications and found part-time work with AquaKids, a local swimming club also based at Bromley High. One of the students has since learned sign language, inspired by her time supporting a hearing-impaired child.

The partnership between the two schools continues to flourish; there is now an additional group visiting Marjorie McClure each week to assist in the classroom. These students support the children with one-to-one support, depending on the needs of each individual. Getting to know the children on a personal level has given the students new insights into relationship building, and has also pushed the Bromley High students beyond their everyday academic challenges and familiarities.



“
I loved seeing the smiles on the children's faces after each session and how their confidence grew with swimming each week.
 ”

A Year 13 BHS student



Community support programmes

Independent schools recognise their social responsibility and are committed to supporting their communities. Staff and pupils place great emphasis on building links and strengthening relationships with members of the wider community, actively volunteering and offering their time and resources to help others. In the process, everyone involved has the chance to learn new skills and benefit from sharing in a variety of experiences together.

Brighton College pupils and staff dedicate a substantial amount of time to volunteering as part of community-orientated activities. In this calendar year, pupils and staff spent almost **7,000 hours volunteering** on projects that provided benefit to community groups in Brighton and Hove.

Homelessness and social isolation of the street community are issues in the city of Brighton and Hove that pupils and staff are keen to help tackle. Drawing from the school's existing links with **St Peter's Church**, this partnership was formalised to create a regular volunteering opportunity for students and staff, with teams attending the church's **Safehaven** each week to help prepare and serve a hot evening meal for those who come along. As a result of the involvement of Brighton College's staff and pupils, Safehaven has been able to depend on a constant presence of reliable contributors, making a real difference to the lives of individuals across the city.

Time to Talk Befriending in Brighton is a charity providing friendship and social support for isolated and lonely people aged 65 and over. Over 30 of its 300 volunteers are now from Brighton College, and they visit elderly members of the local community on a weekly basis.

"Before I met you, I didn't used to care if I lived or died. Now I want to live forever! I never thought I could make such trusted friends at my age."

Charlotte, an 89-year-old member of the Time to Talk Befriending scheme, reflecting on the difference it has made to her life

"I feel like I am in the world again, I am not invisible... I hope lots of other people get to hear about it and benefit from the service as I have."

Muriel, an elderly resident who attends the weekly tea parties

"I just absolutely love meeting the lady I befriend every week. She improves my day if anything else and it is such a pleasure being able to spend time with her."

A Brighton College pupil volunteering with Time to Talk Befriending



A group of 20 sixth form pupils and one staff member host a weekly tea party for isolated and lonely elderly residents in a local church, with transport, cakes and refreshments provided by the college. In addition, they support three large-scale events during the year, which help the older community to keep active and socialise.

With support from the college chaplain, five years ago a team of pupils installed a regular food bank inside the college chapel, and have continued to deliver to the three major food banks in the area each half term.

As part of the school's Make a Difference Day, lessons are suspended for one day at the start of each year to enable pupils to volunteer in the local community. Each house organises a variety of activities with community organisations and charities and students set about helping them with their valuable work. This year, some pupils

helped clean a local park while others completed a sponsored beach clean and volunteered with a local charity working with mothers with alcohol and other addictions.

Eight Lower Sixth pupils studying for their design and technology A-levels have helped with the Men in Sheds initiative and have provided **1,500 hours of contact time** for **164 individuals** to date. The projects, which pupils complete each week during term time, are either personal or commissioned by local businesses, for example building shelving and repairing furniture for elderly residents at local care homes.

Brighton College prides itself on encouraging all pupils to fundraise for charities close to their own hearts, and to advocate for the issues they care passionately about. Last year members of the school raised **£300,000** for its nominated charities.





Throughout the cold winter months, **Exeter School** reaches out to the wider community and runs a “warm space” on Friday afternoons. The initiative is partly in response to the national Warm Welcome campaign, which aims to tackle isolation and poverty in the UK by bringing communities together - connecting thousands of warm and welcoming spaces to help local residents, particularly in light of rising fuel costs. Working in collaboration with **Acorn Community Support**, a small local charity supporting the elderly, Exeter School’s warm space aims to provide older residents with some entertainment in a warm and comfortable environment. Tea and cake is served by a friendly team of sixth form pupils who spend time in conversation with the visitors, sharing stories and forming strong bonds as the weeks progress.

Each week a different activity is prepared by pupils from across the school, and these have included a sing-along session led by the junior school choir as well as board games – and even a rather competitive game of bingo run by the school’s board game club members. Arts and crafts sessions are also delivered by volunteers from the senior school’s Young Artists Collective. Members of the editorial team for the school’s magazine, *The Exonian*, have come along to interview volunteers and visitors



who enjoy sharing some of their memories and experiences. Some of the more tech-savvy students have also taken part to offer digital technology support, helping visitors who have been eager to find out more and learn new skills.

Exeter School’s elderly friends have also been treated to guest performances by the school’s swing and funk band. Pupils and staff have been delighted to see many of them joining in with the performances and on one memorable occasion even bringing musical instruments of their own! Overseeing everything is the school’s chaplain, who organises the programme each week and fosters support amongst pupils, staff and the wider community.



Supporting teacher development

Teachers from state and independent schools are collaborating to share their skills, resources and expertise for the benefit of their pupils. These partnerships create valuable professional development opportunities for school staff, and inspire new, innovative approaches to classroom learning.

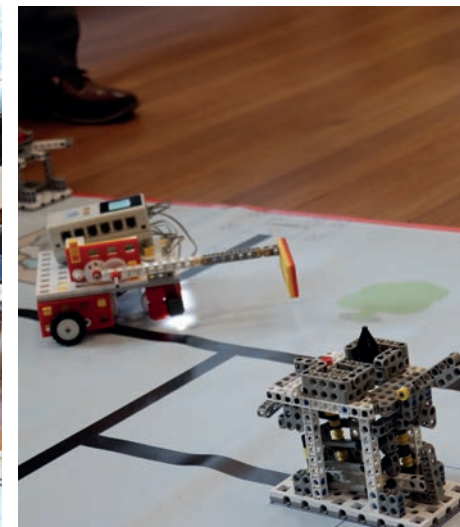
Sheffield Girls’ Junior School was selected to become the first National Robotics Hub in England for World Educational Robotics (WER). Since then, through a connection with Dr Melissa Butts at the **University of Sheffield**, the school has introduced robotics and robotic programming into their bespoke Fusion Curriculum, and as an extra-curricular club. The school regularly hosts local robotic competitions, and pupils have also taken part in the annual WER Challenge, with the finals being held globally online. As a result of this, an exciting partnership has flourished – the teachers leading

“Thank you so much for the training today. I had no idea where to start with the robots and now I feel confident, using your amazing lesson resources, to begin this journey with my Y5 class.”

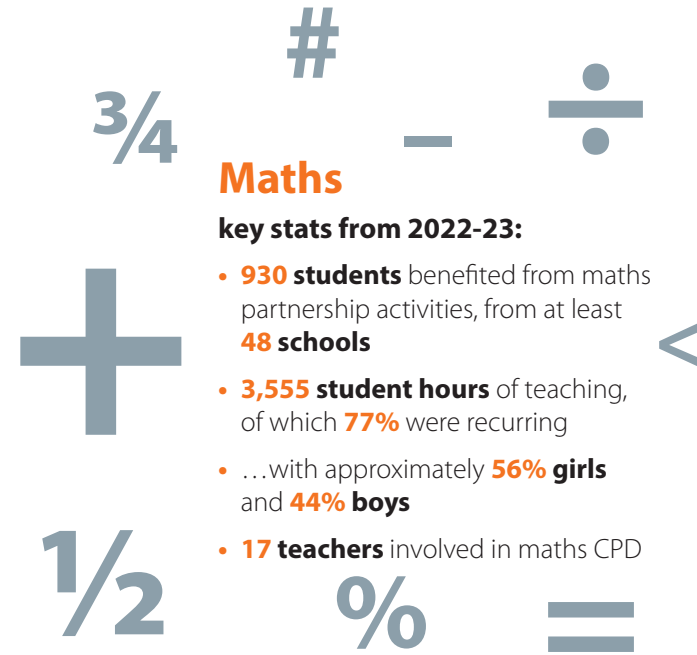
Emily Loveridge,
a teacher at **St Joseph’s Catholic Academy**

the robotics have created a wide-reaching teacher training programme with local schools. Junior school teachers Lucy Williams and Dawn Pooley have designed a series of lessons – including video content, planning and resources – for local teachers, which can be adapted to a variety of curriculum-based topics. Teachers are invited to Sheffield Girls’ to learn about the fundamentals of robotics and how to use the kit, which is loaned to partner schools in 6-week blocks.

Children from around the city are then able to explore and investigate using the robots, which are equipped with light and motion sensors and can generate sound. The robots are programmed using block coding and do not come with instructions, inspiring pupils to experiment with their use. This fosters the development of several important skills, from creative thinking and resilience to teamwork and communication.



Royal Grammar School, Newcastle (RGS) has employed two dedicated RGS Partnerships Teachers with the help of generous funding from the **Reece Foundation**. These teachers aim to raise attainment and aspiration amongst students of all ages in the North East who have potential for further study in STEM. Recruited specifically for these roles, Sarah Sharp (maths) and Tom Williams (physics) spend most of their time in partner state schools, and the remainder teaching at RGS. They provide direct teaching within partner schools' timetables, support after-school clubs, and work with their fellow teachers on curriculum development and delivery. They also upskill teachers who are moving into subjects that are less familiar (for example, a general science teacher who may be required to deliver specialist physics lessons), enabling them to gain new skills and grow in confidence. Last autumn, Tom received a national Teacher of Physics Award from the **Institute of Physics** for his work both in RGS and in the community: the first time a North East teacher has achieved this accolade in the past decade.



Physics

key stats from 2022-23:

- **3,903.5 student hours** delivered
- **52 teacher hours** of CPD, curriculum development and joint planning
- **5 secondary schools** involved on a weekly/fortnightly basis
- **4 secondaries** involved on an irregular/ad hoc basis, and **8 primaries**

Following these successful appointments, RGS hired another Partnerships Teacher, with funding from **British Engines**. Dr Steve Bunce joined the school in 2022, specialising in robotics, and has since reached approximately **1,500 students** from **33 schools**. RGS has also recently secured funding from **TSG Foundation** to recruit a Partnerships Teacher for computer science, as part of an overarching ambition to roll out the model across all subjects. In tandem with this, the school has entered the recruitment phase of efforts to open a North East branch of the **National Maths and Physics School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)** scheme, to help address the severe local shortage of maths and physics teachers.

Within the past year, over **10,000 students** have benefited from RGS Partnership work, from **105 schools** across the region. RGS has also reached around **750 teachers** through professional development activities.



Regional partnership groups

Many schools are building bridges across larger areas to form city or region-wide partnerships. These groups, which bring together several different schools, share knowledge and experience to enhance educational opportunities for pupils and staff involved.

For the past nine years, the **Coastal Schools Partnership (CSP)** has worked on the basis that creative and collaborative working is the way forward in breaking down barriers in our society.

The partnership – a group of **12 schools and colleges** in Eastbourne and the surrounding area – links resources, expertise, enthusiasm and commitment to develop projects and ideas that inspire, excite and offer creative opportunities for children and young people. In so doing, they enable pupils to work together for mutual benefit and the benefit of others within their local community.

The CSP undertakes many academic, artistic and environmental initiatives. Amongst other activities, students have produced new artwork for Eastbourne Station; annual dance residencies and creative festivals have been held; and schools have run homework clubs focusing on English and maths, regular MFL support sessions and inspirational hubs for experimental and creative thinkers.



The group has a developing pupil premium programme and in 2023 piloted the BOBS (Being Our Best Selves) secondary school programme in two of its schools, with an ambition to roll this out further across the CSP. Saturday morning basketball clubs are also held with accommodation and lunch provided to partner schools.

An ongoing project – “Your Town, Your Ideas, Your Future” – works with professionals to explore ideas about how to make Eastbourne and its surrounding areas a more vibrant place to live in and visit. The group is presently working in partnership with the **Environment Agency** to raise awareness of coastal erosion and to seek proactive solutions.

The CSP was a key partner in the bid for the wraparound project for the Turner Prize, which arrived in Eastbourne this September. As part of this, funding has been secured so that every Year 9 child in the CSP will have access to the Turner along with a bank of resources looking at contemporary art engagement and the value of creativity. Teachers will also benefit from a focused CPD offer including a Level One certificate for Year 9 art teachers in Philosophy for Children, Colleges and Communities (P4C), steps to carbon neutrality and training in Pupil Voice. **Public Health England** will be evaluating the benefits of creativity on wellbeing, with a focus on vulnerable young people and the impact that the arts can have on their aspirations and self-esteem.



For the best part of two decades, over **a dozen schools** in the York area have worked together as part of the **York Independent-State School Partnership (ISSP)**.

The ISSP runs a number of activities, clubs and talks for students in primary and secondary schools.

For primary students, teachers at **St Peter's School** deliver talks in local schools on a variety of subjects, including languages, classics and support for drama productions.

At secondary level, the Maths Excellence Club $y=mx+c$, aimed at the most able young mathematicians from Years 8 and 9 in schools across the city, is run in partnership with the **University of York**. University students have supported the sessions, in which the children learned new concepts and solved all sorts of mathematical challenges. This culminated in a poster project challenge held at the university.

The group's newest endeavour is its Business and Enterprise Project. Run in partnership with the **York Merchant Adventurers**, Year 10 pupils from across York schools spent six weeks learning about business, enterprise and commerce, delivered through the expertise of ISSP teachers, with mentoring from local business leaders. The initiative gave the young people involved the opportunity to learn about business start-ups, problem solving, idea development, branding and marketing and pitching ideas. In teams, the students pitched a new business idea to friends, family and local business leaders at the Merchant Adventurers' Hall in York. The winners pitched Porta-Charge, an innovative charger to make life easier for wearers of hearing aids.

"I really cannot thank you both enough for giving him this chance and for believing in him even when he was at his low point. It's thanks to ISSP that he will have more opportunities with his education. It really is an amazing and outstanding programme and [my son] has been so fortunate to take part."

A parent whose child benefited from York ISSP projects



Bristol Education Partnership (BEP) is a collaboration between **14 secondary schools**, the **University of Bristol**, **University of West England** and **Bristol City Council**.

The partnership started in 2019 with the aim of tackling disadvantage, raising aspirations and broadening the experience of education for students in partner schools. BEP also supports and inspires school staff across the partnership and encourages teachers to learn with and from each other in working towards the partnership's aims.

Every year, BEP runs a CPD festival for Bristol teachers – "Teacherfest" – and this year, the event took place across the city in a series of live events hosted by partner schools. Keynote talks were held online to make Teacherfest as accessible as possible. The majority of sessions were arranged in subject clusters, with specialised events for pastoral leads, special educational needs colleagues and careers staff.

Sustainability is important to the partnership, and its flagship programme in this area, the BEP Climate Challenge Project, runs a conference each year to report on the commitments schools have made towards reaching net zero carbon emissions. As part of this, BEP is working on climate change education across the curriculum, to support schools in integrating climate change education holistically into teaching and learning, as well as careers events.

Another strand of the partnership's work focuses on oracy, and the BEP Oracy Project was set up to improve the communication skills and confidence of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This work currently involves training students to be oracy mentors to their younger peers, supporting staff oracy champions at partner state schools to participate in expert training – provided by the charity **Voice 21** – in order to promote oracy at their own schools, and building oracy as a whole-school priority in partner schools.



One of the newer independent-state school partnership groups is the **Wealden Partnership**. Hosted by **The Dulwich School Cranbrook**, the group was formed in September 2022 out of a desire to formalise the relationships that had grown during local partnership events through the years.

From an initial membership of eight schools, the partnership has already grown over its first year to **17 schools**: two independent and 15 state-maintained primary schools.

The aim of the partnership is to bring as many local schools together as possible, as many times as feasible, to provide a range of opportunities for pupils from all schools and to foster positive, collaborative relationships between staff at different schools. In addition, the group provides a hub and point of contact for schools to be able to reach out to each other, one central location where schools can come together for various events, and opportunities for older pupils to learn about what it means to do something for your community – and the benefits of doing so.

The Wealden Partnership hosts between two and four events per term at present, and has quickly become known in the local area as the one-stop shop to reach a variety of schools and invite them to events en masse. Activities hosted by the school have included sporting, academic and music events for children in Years 2-6.

The Dulwich School Cranbrook has expanded to introduce a senior school this academic year and the partnership, too, has grown to involve secondary-aged students. This has included support for work experience placements and a Combined Cadet Force partnership.

"The children and staff from Goudhurst & Kilndown and Benenden Primary schools have really enjoyed the opportunities given to them by becoming part of the Wealden Sports Partnership. They regularly arrange and officiate competitions and festivals in many different sports and for a variety of age groups. They are very inclusive in their provision including events for all abilities of children. The facilities, staff and organisation are outstanding and it has meant that local Wealden schools have been able to increase their provision of extra-curricular opportunities."

Maria Mileham,
PE lead for
10:10 Federation

Improving education through governance

Governance partnerships can take many forms. Some involve staff members serving as governors at partner schools, while others entail the large-scale sponsorship of a local academy, for example. These initiatives are invaluable as they enable governors and trustees to come together to share best practice, improving outcomes for children and young people within their communities.

Harris Westminster Sixth Form (HWSF) was created to offer an outstanding education to pupils from all backgrounds in London. The free school sixth form officially opened in August 2014, and represented the cumulative efforts over a two-year period of the governing body, senior management and teaching staff of **Westminster School** and key representatives of the **Harris Federation**, a not-for-profit organisation. The collaboration originated from a discussion between Lord Harris and Dr Stephen Spurr, then headmaster of Westminster School, who had been looking for an opportunity to sponsor an inner-city London academy for several years.

The sixth form is selective, designed to support students with high academic potential, and preference is given to those who have been in receipt of free school meals during their secondary schooling. The strength of the school's academic offer is reflected in the outcomes of its pupils – this year, 43 HWSF students secured a place at the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge.



"The partnership with Westminster School is not simply a list of shared activities (although there are a lot of those), nor is it an attempt to make one school in the image of another (although we do have many shared fundamentals) – it's two organisations working together to support young people, to share scholarship, to look outwards, to value and appreciate different experiences and ideas. Ten years is simply not enough time to have spent together – let's go for the next hundred!"

James Handscombe,
executive principal
at Harris Westminster
Sixth Form

"The relationship we have enjoyed with Harris Westminster since its inception in 2014 is one we deeply cherish. We are two schools with a shared vision for a deeply academic education in the service of bright, talented children who learn with and from one another inside and outside the classroom. Shared teaching, trips and lessons help to embed the relationship and the ethos, building friendships based on mutual respect and shared success. Here's to the next decade!"

Dr Gary Savage, headmaster
at Westminster School

The HWSF curriculum is based on Westminster's, and places emphasis on the value of learning beyond examinations. Almost ten years on, the two schools continue to enjoy a close and mutually beneficial relationship.

Every year, an average of 15 pupils from HWSF, along with students from the local **Greycoat**

Hospital School, attend Westminster to take A-level courses that are not available at their schools; these include Latin, Greek, German, Russian, art history, and music and theatre studies. Staff from Westminster also teach classes on site at HWSF. In addition, pupils are invited to attend specialised talks with expert speakers to supplement their studies.

HWSF is located a short walk away from Westminster School, which enables staff and pupils from both schools to interact with each other on a regular basis. Recently, students from both schools have attended a series of journalism and media masterclasses hosted by HWSF and are now working together to produce a professional magazine under the guidance of Darius Sanai, editor-in-chief at Condé Nast International. This has been a fantastic opportunity for inspiring young journalists, with several participants having since been offered internships.

Canford School, an independent senior boarding school, is a proud sponsor of **The Bourne Academy**. Following assessment by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2007, it was agreed that Canford would sponsor a school in Bournemouth that had been struggling with falling pupil numbers and examination results for a number of years. In September 2010 The Bourne Academy opened its doors, with many new staff, a new principal and a distinctive black, white and pink uniform, as voted for by the students themselves. Members of Canford's staff sit on the academy board, offering their time and expertise, and four members of staff also serve on the academy's governing board.

Completion of The Bourne Academy involved a £10 million investment programme, which included major building and refurbishment works along with the installation of state-of-the-art IT. The building works were completed in September 2013 and coincided with the opening of a new sixth form and sixth form block. This has enabled The Bourne Academy to continue to offer a quality education for boys and girls up to the age of 18. Canford played a key role in helping to shape the DNA of the academy and this shared chemistry has been a crucial feature of the flourishing partnership between the two schools. The structure of school life is modelled on that of independent schools, including the house system which is central to the ethos of The Bourne Academy.



The Bourne Academy's vision is clearly articulated through the mnemonic ASPIRE; to develop citizens who are ambitious, self-confident, physically (and emotionally) literate, resilient and able to learn independently. In 2015, former staff and students came together to celebrate the launch of The Bourne Academy Alumni Association. Guests commemorated over 100 years of education alongside **East Howe**, **Kingsleigh** and **Kings High** schools, the schools previously on the site of the academy.

The Bourne Scholars Programme, which was launched in 2021, is an initiative that offers a high-level scholastic experience for particularly gifted and talented pupils at the academy. This is run in partnership with Canford School, **Southampton University** and **Winchester College**, and with its varied academic and extra-curricular opportunities, aims to put academy scholars on the path to some of the world's best universities.

The weekly activities include joint book and debating clubs, residential stays, tennis lessons, Combined Cadet Force (CCF), horse-riding, rowing, shooting, archery, golf, sailing trips and sports coaching. The academic curriculum provides learners with other opportunities, too, such as studying two languages, in-house mentoring, bespoke tutoring, free musical instrument tuition and further stretch and challenge activities.



“

As we recently passed our ten-year anniversary milestone, it is evident that the close partnership between Canford School and The Bourne Academy has continued to go from strength to strength. Furthermore, we are delighted that the DfE views the highly successful relationship as one of its greatest beacons of success in the country. Every year group is full and has a waiting list, and we remain focused on striving for academic excellence in all areas. Our recently launched Bourne Scholars Programme, for students across all age groups, runs in conjunction with Canford School and reminds us all of our determination to change lives and encourage the maximum potential from every student. We are indebted to Canford for enabling our joint collaboration on this inspirational programme.

Mark Avoth,
principal of The Bourne Academy

”

Widening access through life-transforming bursaries

The independent sector is committed to providing valuable educational opportunities to greater numbers of children and young people. Over the last year, independent schools provided **£494 million** of means-tested fee assistance – the highest amount on record.

Next year marks the 400th anniversary of the founding of the **Latymer Foundation**, a charity that today runs **Latymer Upper School** in Hammersmith. The foundation was a bequest by English lawyer Edward Latymer, who left part of his wealth to clothe and educate “eight poore boyes” in the local area.

When thinking about how to celebrate Latymer’s quatercentenary, it is perhaps unsurprising that the foundation a decade ago looked back to its roots and embarked on an ambitious bursary programme that comes to fruition in 2024.

The Latymer Foundation aims to provide a first-class education to young people irrespective of their financial background, and has strived for talent, potential and ability to be the only criteria for entry.

The ultimate ambition of the foundation is to achieve a “needs-blind” admissions process, allowing any child with academic potential to attend their school.

Latymer’s Inspiring Minds campaign was initiated in 2014 as a means to achieve the first major milestone on that journey; allowing the school to fund bursaries for as many as **1 in 4 students** at the school in perpetuity. The foundation set itself an ambitious target: **£40 million by 2024**. Since then, over 5,000 donors have contributed to the total – with over 200 people joining Edward Latymer in using their will to bequeath money to the school.

The school runs regular events to help fundraise for its total, with activities last year including a festive wreath-making masterclass, a guided tour of the Imperial War Museum and a swimathon, where Latymer’s prep school students banded together to swim an impressive 151 miles in the school’s swimming pool.

Ahead of time and heading into its anniversary, the foundation hasn’t just raised the £40 million it had hoped... it has already gone beyond that total: **£45 million** has been raised by the Inspiring Minds campaign to date, with donations of under £100 contributing £1 million to that total. And the spirit of giving is a lifelong endeavour for Latymerians: their youngest donor last year was just seven years old, while the oldest was 99.

As a result, in 2023 the school was able to give bursary support to 1 in 4 new Year 7s and just under 40% of new sixth form students. The numbers show the impressive increase in bursaries Latymer can offer: from 96 a decade ago to over 280 this year.



“I will be eternally grateful for being able to attend Latymer. I always feel like I was very privileged and lucky to be able to go. Fortunately, I now have a career (and further career progression) thanks to what Latymer made possible. I want to be able to fund a pupil with a similar background to my own so that they too can attend Latymer in the future. I would never want a bright child to be unable to access the education that they deserve because of financial hardship.”

A full bursary alumna, class of 2015

“I know the power that education can have in helping those unable to afford the quality of education that is on offer. If I can do a small amount to help the school toward its objective of needs-blind admission, then it is a privilege to do so.”

Marwan Mikdadi, a former pupil

£45m
has been raised by the Inspiring Minds campaign to date

“I’d like to give a massive thank you to the people who made my time at Latymer possible. I know I’m only going to realise the true benefits of this in 20-30 years’ time, but even now I know what it’s given me, and it’s incredible. I do appreciate it and so does my mum!”

A Latymer bursary recipient



Reigate Grammar School (RGS) is looking ahead to its 350th anniversary in 2025 and is working with its charitable arm, the **RGS Foundation**, towards some ambitious goals to mark the event.

RGS was founded in 1675 through a single act of generosity, when Henry Smith bequeathed £1,000 in his will to educate local “poor boys” in Reigate. This act of philanthropy ignited a chain of events akin to a butterfly effect, which continues to have an impact on Reigate and the surrounding area.

“I’m an advocate and supporter of the Changing Lives, Building Futures campaign because I’m excited by the direction that RGS is heading over this next decade. As a former student and member of the Reigatian family, I truly believe that RGS provides a brilliant platform for adult life, opening doors of opportunity for all students.”

**James Reader
(RGS 1987-92)**

“This campaign provides the opportunity to celebrate all that has gone before, to look ahead and cement a legacy that the Reigatian community can be proud of for the next 350 years. Through collaborative partnerships and a decade of philanthropy, we are asking our community to find their fit with our important work and be part of something special.”

**Andrew Sullivan,
a former
RGS student**

At the heart of their plans is their new campaign – “Changing Lives, Building Futures” – which launches a decade of philanthropic celebration, providing the opportunity to look ahead to the next 350 years. Similar to the metamorphosis of a butterfly, the campaign embodies growth and transformation.

They have committed to offering more bursary places than ever before. Over the next ten years, their goal is to double the number of bursary places, raising the percentage from 15% to 30% with a target fund of **£20 million**. In conjunction with this, there is a £10 million campus project that will align the facilities on site with the educational experience and benefit the wider community.

RGS will also be working collaboratively with a number of local charity partners to amplify the impact of their work, engaging in volunteer efforts and educating RGS students about the significance of philanthropy and the act of helping others.



Schools Together showcases more than **6,900** cross-sector partnerships.

Tens of thousands of pupils benefit from partnerships between independent schools and state schools every year.

Partnerships include careers advice and higher education support, reading with younger pupils, subject specialist teaching, sharing facilities and seconding teaching staff.

Through partnerships, schools work together to unlock new educational experiences for pupils and teachers.

www.schoolstogether.org



Constituent Associations

Girls' Schools Association, The Heads' Conference
Independent Association of Prep Schools, Independent Schools Association
The Society of Heads, Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools
Independent Schools' Bursars Association

Affiliated Associations

Boarding Schools' Association, Council of British International Schools
Scottish Council of Independent Schools, Welsh Independent Schools Council

Independent Schools Council
First Floor, 27 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9BU
020 7766 7070

www.isc.co.uk



Schools Together

www.schoolstogether.org

Celebrating and encouraging partnership projects

Schools have been engaged in partnerships for many years. The main motivation is a desire to collaborate with other schools in the local community for mutual benefit.

The Schools Together website demonstrates the excellent work that is already going on and helps and inspires more schools to get involved.

web@isc.co.uk