RSA
Action and Research Centre

Schools Without Walls

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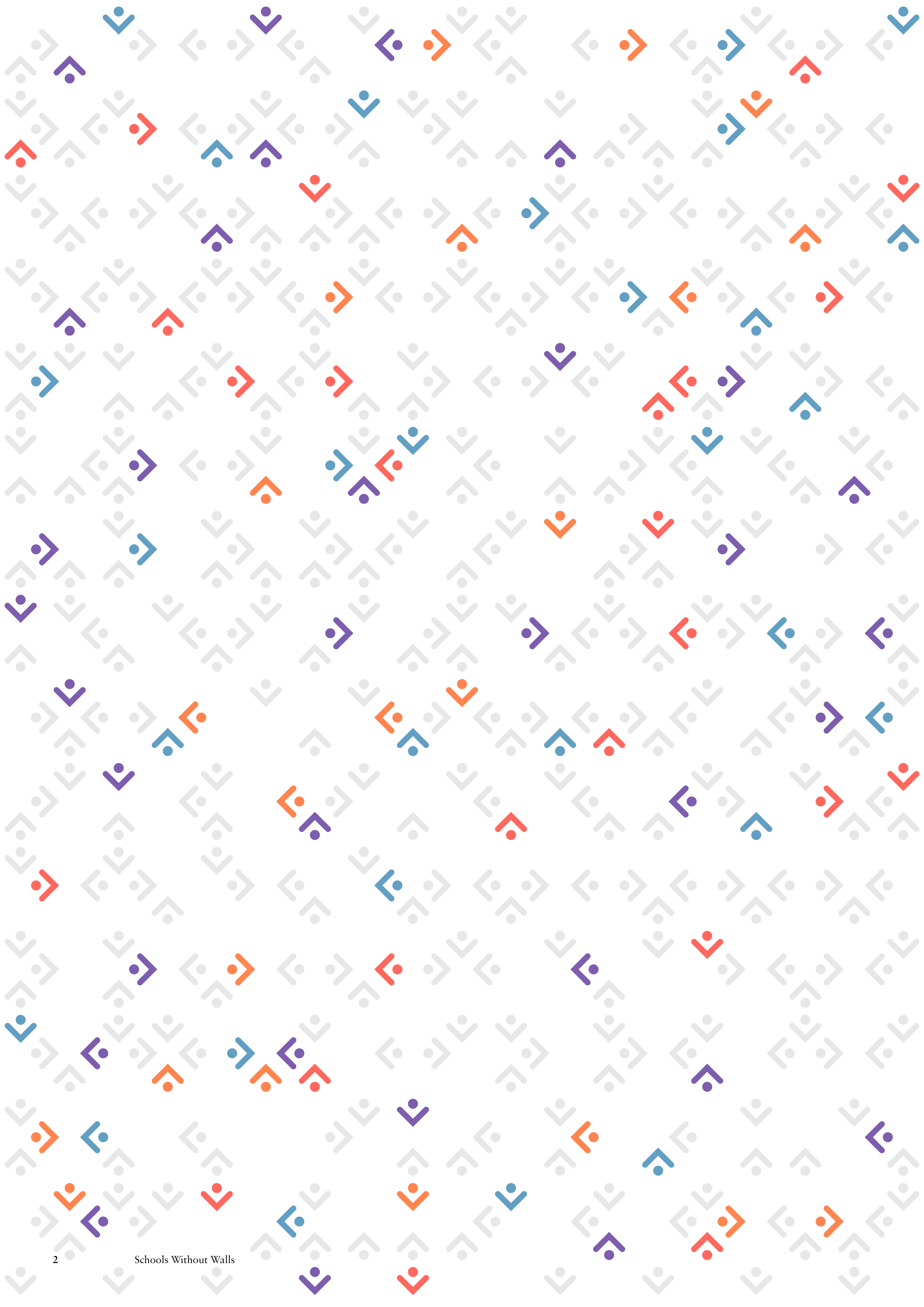
ecis



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About the RSA

The RSA (Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) believes that everyone should have the freedom and power to turn their ideas into reality. Supported by our 29,000 Fellows, we share powerful ideas, carry out cutting-edge research and build networks and opportunities for people to collaborate, helping to create fulfilling lives and a flourishing society.

This report forms part of a growing body of research on how we can ensure that everyone receives a complete and generous education. The learning society we are working towards is made up of:

- **Inquisitive, life-long learners who cherish independent thought**
- **Reflective educators who are fascinated by the science and art of teaching and determined to keep improving**
- **Mission-oriented educational institutions with a clear sense of their own identity, values and goals**
- **Communities that value education and provide learning opportunities for people of all backgrounds, abilities and ages.**

The theme at the heart of this report – how schools can work most effectively with partners beyond their gates to deliver their mission – is also relevant to the work of RSA Academies. Set up by the RSA in 2011 as a separate charity, RSA Academies acts in part as a partnerships broker between the eight schools in the RSA Family of Academies and a range of external partners that can help the schools deliver on their commitments to an arts and cultural education, preparing pupils for the world beyond school (including careers education and social action) and supporting wellbeing and mental health for pupils and staff.

About ECIS

Educational Collaborative for International Schools (ECIS) is a non-profit global membership organisation that provides professional learning, quality assurance, school services, research, advocacy, and grants and awards for the benefit of its members. Its mission is to transform lives through international education. ECIS generously supported this research, having previously supported RSA research on refugee education. That work culminated in a report entitled Cities of Reciprocity: Supporting refugee education in Athens.

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Introduction

A good education must develop children's curiosity, creativity and kindness. The measure of educational success cannot simply be students' exam results, but also the qualities of the people who come to collect their transcripts on results day; good citizens who are equipped to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives.

No school teacher or leader, however brilliant and passionate, can do this important work alone. They need the help of businesses, professional bodies, arts and cultural organisations, charities and voluntary organisations, colleges and universities, all of whom can give young people the sense of agency and creative possibility that come from realising just how many ways they can find meaning and create value in the world.

In turn, engagement with young people offers benefits to these many partners beyond the school gates. As the RSA has explored in recent work on adolescence, young people have much to offer to their communities and to local organisations today.[1]

Yet, we know that forging these relationships can be challenging. The idea for this project first came from conversations with The Educational Collaborative for International Schools (ECIS) about the challenges that international schools face in trying to build strong and sustained relationships with their local communities given that the pupil population they serve is not usually drawn from the immediate surroundings.[2,3]

Even though state-funded schools often serve the immediate local population, they too face challenges in building strong relations with families and the wider community. In the context of tough accountability measures and tight budgets, these schools are having to make difficult decisions about where to focus their money and efforts. It is all too predictable that the first things to go are non-teaching staff who provide 'extras' like family support, and partnerships with individuals and organisations in the local community and beyond.[4]

We believe that if schools lose these connections, they risk missing out on a whole range of opportunities to support the development of children and young people, and their communities. Indeed, research has shown that when schools build relationships with other schools and community partners, they can contribute to improving equality within the school system and society as a whole.[5]

With this in mind, we set out to find schools where community engagement and external partnerships are core to their mission to find out what they do, how they do it, and what the benefits are for students and the community.

1. Partridge, L., Astle, J., Landreth-Strong, F. and Grinsted, S. (2018). Teenagency: how young people can create a better world. thersa.org blog [online] 13 August. Available at: www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/teenagency-how-young-people-can-create-a-better-world [Accessed 9 April 2019].
2. Bunnell, T. (2005) Strategic marketing planning in international schools, International Journal of Educational Management, Volume 19, Issue: 1, pp.59-66.
3. We recognise that there has been continued growth of 'local' international schools in recent years. At these schools, a significant proportion of the student intake is from the local community. Time will tell how their commitment to community will compare with the schools explored in this report.
4. Kerr, K. and Ainscow, M. (2017). Responding to disadvantage within English schools: a collaborative future. The BERA blog. Available at: www.bera.ac.uk/blog/responding-to-disadvantage-within-english-schools-a-collaborative-future [Accessed 9 April 2019].
5. Ainscow, M., Dyson, A., Goldrick, S. and West, M. (2012). Making schools effective for all: rethinking the task. School Leadership & Management. Volume 32, Issue 3. pp. 1-17.

We visited eleven schools whose work with the world beyond the gates falls into four distinct themes:

- **Overcoming poverty through partnerships with families and communities (Surrey Square Primary School, Reach Academy Feltham and PS/MS 188 The Island School)**
  Three schools that serve deprived communities and work tirelessly with families, public services and the voluntary sector to eliminate every possible barrier to learning that their children face. In doing so, they have helped children thrive academically and socially, and contributed to solving persistent issues facing the communities in which they are based.
- **Building knowledge and skills through real-world learning (XP School Doncaster and Plymouth School of Creative Arts)**
  Two schools that create authentic learning experiences for students within their local communities, enabling students to develop and apply knowledge. These learning experiences have built civic pride in both students and the many local people they have had the opportunity to interact with.
- **Developing committed citizens through social action (Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School, The Blue School, EMIS and UWC Adriatic)**
  Four schools that develop socially active citizens by empowering students to respond to issues they identified in their local communities and beyond. Young people at these schools have been able to secure tangible, sometimes even legislative, changes to make their communities better places, and have developed valuable knowledge, skills and values in the process.
- **Preparing young people for future work and study through partnerships with universities and employers (University of Birmingham School and Cristo Rey New York High School)**
  Two schools that prepare students for a future they might otherwise not have dreamed of, through relationships with employers and universities. In cultivating these relationships, they are levelling the playing field for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and, over time, making the student and staff bodies of their partners more diverse.

We hope these examples will inspire school leaders across the world to break down the metaphorical walls between schools and the wider world, and deliberately engage with the myriad partners out there that can help them fulfil their educational mission.

Chief among these partners are the parents, carers and families of the school's pupils and we explore here the important contribution these individuals can make to a thriving school community. We also hope that those businesses, charities and community organisations, cultural institutions, public services, universities or colleges in a position to be a potential partner to schools will find inspiration in these pages for how to most effectively fulfil their civic duties.

Finally, we invite policymakers to consider as we look at these beacon schools the political support and resources that best enable these ways of working. We must ask ourselves what we want education to be and bring resources to bear to realise that vision.

Methodology

In autumn 2017, we set out to identify schools that deliberately build relationships with partners beyond the school gates to deliver their educational mission. We conducted a search of Google and Google Scholar using key terms relating to themes of community connection, including: cultural (arts, culture, artists, galleries, museums); employability (employers, work, corporates, internships, work experience); service (social action, volunteering, service learning); community development (social justice, poverty, regeneration). We also consulted advisors and put out an open call for nominations on the RSA's website. We were able to identify just under 100 schools that might fit our brief.

Following substantial desk research, we selected a shortlist of just over 30 schools that met our criteria. We conducted telephone interviews with the head teachers of each of these schools to find out more about how partnerships fit into their mission as a school, what this meant for the day-to-day experience of children at the school, and what the impact of this way of working was both on participating children and the wider community. After much deliberation, and consideration of what was logistically possible, we were able to select eleven schools to visit.

School visits lasted between one and three days. Each of our school visits included a tour of the school, semi-structured interviews with the school leader and key staff (e.g. service learning coordinators), focus groups with students, and observations of classroom and community activity. We undertook thematic analysis of our transcriptions and observational notes, and you will also find photographic evidence of our visits throughout the report.

Summary of findings

The schools visited in the process of preparing this report are united in having strong visions for the contribution that schools could make to young people's lives and believing that the pursuit of these missions requires consistent engagement with the world beyond the gates. The partners they have chosen and the ways they work together vary depending on the mission they are pursuing – from overcoming poverty in their local community to developing socially-active citizens.

However, there are some key takeaways for any educator looking to engage effectively with individuals, organisations and institutions beyond the school gates:

You might be pushing at an open door

Of course, many third-sector organisations are actively looking to engage with schools to fulfil their charitable missions, and employers, universities and colleges are also looking to make a civic contribution. Schools can capitalise on the motivations of these different types of partner to bring in additional support to deliver their missions.

The first step is to understand the potential partner's civic goals and identify the person accountable for delivering those aims. Engagement with schools can help employers to achieve their corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals or to improve the diversity of their teams, so CSR and HR teams are a good port of call. Similarly, universities have personnel dedicated to widening participation in higher education from underrepresented groups. In the UK and the US, this usually includes a central widening participation or educational opportunity team, and some departments or faculties may also have their own 'outreach' teams. See our case studies on Cristo Rey New York High School and the University of Birmingham Schools for more information.

One fantastic relationship could create a chain reaction

For busy school staff, the prospect of building lots of new partnerships could be daunting. However, our research shows that investing deeply in one new relationship could be the route to many more. For example, our case study on Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School in The Bronx, NY, demonstrates the efficacy of one strong partnership. The Children's Aid Society facilitates relationships with many other charities and community organisations on behalf of the school. Similarly, the NGO Reading Partners acts as a volunteering broker for The Island School, bringing in staff from local employers to volunteer with pupils.

Charity and corporate partners may also be able to offer capacity to a school's leadership around developing a strategy for community relationships. For example, the Rank Foundation were able to provide an intern to Reach Academy as they developed their Children's Hub. Similarly, a corporate partner could second a member of staff with relevant expertise.

You may benefit from dedicated staff

While some schools had a partner that brokered relationships for them, many of the schools we visited had found great benefit in hiring dedicated staff to manage partnerships with individuals and organisations beyond the school gates. For example, Surrey Square, Reach Academy and the Island School all have family support workers to facilitate their work with parents and carers. Meanwhile, the University of Birmingham School has a full-time partnership coordinator, and XP School has a part-time communications and partnerships manager.

In some cases, including at Reach Academy, these roles are part of the senior leadership team, ensuring the centrality of 'partnership working' in strategy discussions and enabling the team to operate externally with counterparts at all levels of seniority without the involvement of the head teacher.

Of course, having dedicated staff costs money. The value of this investment will be greatest if your partnerships with the world beyond the gates are mission critical, which is the case for the schools featured here. These schools have also found ways to attract funding through their partnerships. For example, XP School seeks grant funding from some partners and the many corporate partners of Cristo Rey New York School make a significant contribution to the school's running costs.

You need look no further than the local community

For a school looking to hire dedicated staff to manage relations with the world beyond the gates, you may find your greatest talent pool on your doorstep. Of the schools visited for this report, those with dedicated partnerships staff state that hiring from the local community is beneficial. Local staff are well-placed to build trust with families and other local partners because of their shared experiences. They also bring a rich understanding of local issues, which helps them to identify how they can make the greatest impact.

Schools also noted that these individuals can be more effective if they have a professional background that brings an existing network of contacts to the school, or if they have insider experience in the type of organisation that the school tends to partner with. For example, the partnerships lead at XP School brought experience and contacts from her previous media and public relations career and at Cristo Rey New York School, the work-based study programme is run by a former corporate lawyer.

If staff are offering support to families or running extra-curricular activities, they may work many evenings and weekends. Therefore, schools like Reach and Surrey Square operate forms of flexible working including job-sharing and days of 'flexi-time' in term time.

Partners may offer valuable support to staff as well as students

Schools exist to serve pupils, so the primary goal of relationships with the wider world will often be student-focussed. However, it is worth considering the support and training that partners could also offer to school staff.

For example, counsellors based at Reach Academy and Surrey Square Primary School also offer mental health support to staff members. Meanwhile, at University of Birmingham School, university lecturers provide regular presentations on educational research to school staff and sometimes work more closely with a specific subject teacher to develop their pedagogical practice.

Co-location may be mutually beneficial

Some schools featured in this report, including The Island School, Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School and Surrey Square Primary School, house a member of staff or team from a partner or charity service in a spare office or classroom space. They describe benefitting from having consistent access to the partner's support. They also note that the impact of the partner's work can be greater when they have opportunities to get to know pupils, families and school staff on a day-to-day basis. Housing a partner could also provide a revenue opportunity for a school if the partner agrees to pay rent, albeit at a subsidised rate.

There are also significant potential benefits for the partner organisation. Co-location makes it more likely that they can identify and reach their potential beneficiaries, and enables them to get to know beneficiaries' needs much more intimately. The arrangement is also likely to be more cost-effective than renting space from a private landlord.

You may consider registering a charity or community interest company

Three of our case study schools – UWC Adriatic, Reach Academy and Plymouth School of Creative Arts – have legally registered a separate charitable organisation. This enables them to offer services to the wider community and to access funding that might not be available to schools. At Reach Academy, existing school governors were appointed as trustees, and at UWC Adriatic, students and former students have joined the board.

However, before committing time to the process of registering a charity and appointing board members, it is worth doing some initial research on funders to see if the potential reward is worth the effort. There may be a workaround for schools that are part of an umbrella trust which can make funding applications and be the lead delivery partner for wider programmes of work, on your behalf. This is how RSA Academies – the RSA's sister charity which works with eight schools in the West Midlands – operates.

Fundraising can be a team effort

Some of the schools visited for this report, including Plymouth School of Creative Arts and UWC Adriatic, wrote joint funding proposals with their community partners. It is easy to see why a consortium of partners who together offer a comprehensive package of services to families in need could be appealing to a forward-thinking grant maker.

There is work involved in developing a shared vision and proposition, which you must do together, but the leg-work of writing proposals and developing budgets is something that the charity or community organisation may be able to do on the school's behalf.

Students and their families have much to offer

Across the schools that we visited, we found young people taking a lead in developing relationships with the wider world. From primary school students at Blue School to college students at EMIS, young people were designing their own activities in the world beyond the school gates, and engaging partners along the way.

Families were also a vital source of support at schools like the Island School, where parents and carers chip in to run after-school activities and at Surrey Square, where pupils' families help run a daily breakfast club. The experience is mutually beneficial, especially for adults looking to develop their skills to secure employment.

Schools and families cannot do this work alone

They require the contribution of forward-thinking businesses, third-sector organisations, public services, universities and colleges. In engaging with young people in our schools today, these partners will fulfil their civic duty and benefit from all that young people and educators have to offer them. While educators are the primary audience for this report, it also provides ideas for how all of these partners can most effectively engage with schools.

Last but not least, policymakers and charitable funders have much to contribute to the endeavour to create more schools without walls. The report features concrete examples, historic and current, of how political backing and dedicated funding have enabled schools to work effectively with their communities. This systemic support is critical if this way of working is to be commonplace, rather than the hallmark of beacon schools.

1

Overcoming poverty and disadvantage

"We're a safe haven and a home for many families; not just children – families."

Ms Ramos, principal, PS/MS 188 The Island School

"If something in your home life is affecting your ability to learn, we need to do something about it."

Fiona Carrick, family worker, Surrey Square Primary School

"A school alone cannot provide a transformation in life chances for all young people and families that come through its doors, we must be open to working with others."

Ed Vainker, executive principal, Reach Academy Feltham

In the US and the UK, children born to parents who are economically and educationally disadvantaged arrive at school behind their more advantaged peers in terms of developmental benchmarks, and the gap only widens during their school years.[6] In the UK, pupils poor enough to qualify for free school meals currently arrive at primary school an average of four months behind their peers and leave secondary school 18 months behind. The reasons for this gap are complex but include differences in the home learning environment: opportunities to read, hear more words and access activities outside the home.[7] Children from affluent backgrounds are also more likely to form the secure bonds with their parents that are crucial to their social and emotional development and, ultimately, their success later in life.[8]

Our research for this project uncovered three schools that were dedicated to closing these gaps through purposeful engagement with the world beyond the gates. They believe that school – the one universal service that all children access – is an ideal hub for the multitude of support that disadvantaged children and their families might need. This is not to say that maths teachers should become experts in mental health interventions, immigration reform and housing policy, but rather that the school grounds can become the meeting point for the many public and voluntary services that these families require. And school staff can build the meaningful, trusting relationships with families that are essential to them accessing this support.

In this chapter, we look at three schools that work with a multitude of partners beyond the school gate to support families to secure a bright future for their children: Surrey Square Primary School in Southwark, London; PS/MS 188 Island School on Manhattan's Lower East Side, New York; and Reach Academy in Feltham, Greater London. When we first talked about the concept of schools without walls, we meant it metaphorically: schools with an unusual level of openness to their wider communities. In these cases, the phrase has physical significance: there are literally no walls between the educational community and a range of public and voluntary services, which are co-located on the school grounds. These schools are open in other ways: they offer activities beyond the 8am-4pm timetable; they provide learning opportunities to parents as well as children; they don't just serve the pupils on roll, they serve a much wider community.

Surrey Square Primary School, London

When you walk through the gates of Surrey Square Primary School, adjacent to the infamously large Aylesbury Estate, one of the first things you notice is the three-storey high, brightly coloured banners adorning the Victorian brick of the school's facade (Fig. 1).

They signal to every visitor the school's values of responsibility, respect, enjoyment, community, perseverance and compassion, personified in cartoon characters that the children become familiar with during their time at school. Chief among them is 'Col Community' who is special because he shares stories about his community with others and listens intently when they share their own (Fig 2). But at this school, community is not just about this vital message of inter-cultural understanding.

Surrey Square is both a school and the heart of a community, meeting not just the educational needs of its pupils but also responding to a plethora of social issues facing local families.

6. Andrews, J., Robinson, D., and Hutchinson, J. (2017). Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage. [online] Education Policy Institute. Available at : www.epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/closing-gap-trends-educational-attainment-disadvantage/ [Accessed 9 April 2019]; Belfield, C. and Levine, H. The Education Gap: who's affected, by how much and why it matters. [online] Brookings Institute. Available at: www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/pricewepay_chapter.pdf [Accessed 9 April 2019].

7. Smees, R. and Sammons, P. (2017). What role does the home learning environment play in supporting good child development in the early years and positive outcomes in later life? [online] Action for Children. Available at: www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/9370/hle-think-piece.pdf [Accessed 9 April 2019].

8. Moullin, S., Waldfogel, J. and Washbrook, E. (2014). Baby Bonds: Parenting, attachment and a secure base for children. [online] Sutton Trust. Available at: www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/baby-bonds-final-1.pdf [Accessed 9 April 2019].

Figure 1

Figure 2

Surrey Square is a non-selective primary school for children aged 2-11 years. The numbers of pupils on free school meals and with special educational needs and disabilities is above average and the number of students with English as an additional language is well above average. When we visited the school, the headteacher had recently attended a council meeting at which she was told that in the London Borough of Southwark, where the school is based, over 11,800 families are on the housing register. There are currently, however, only 27 places available to house them, resulting in thousands of children living in temporary accommodation. Children at this school know the realities of temporary accommodation all too well, with an estimated 15 percent of them in temporary accommodation.

There is an additional challenge facing some families who are also victims of the UK government's hostile environment policy. The school knows of 30 pupils whose family's immigration status prevents them from accessing public funds, including homelessness support. As the school's Family Worker, Fiona Carrick-Davies, pointed out, finding yourself in these circumstances "isn't something you broadcast", so there may be more that the school is not yet aware of. These families only qualify for state support to meet their basic needs if they are considered 'destitute', i.e. do not have 'adequate accommodation' or the ability to 'meet essential living needs' (with the exception of asylum seekers whose support comes from the Home Office).

In these cases, UK local authorities have a duty to provide support under the Children's Act. However, growth in the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) caseload over the last few years has coincided with shrinking council budgets. What's more, there is an issue of distribution: there are very high concentrations of families with NRPF in certain local authorities. One local authority alone is home to 11 percent of the national total of families with no recourse to public funds.

With local authority resources stretched and demand rising, only 35 percent of families applying for emergency help receive it.[9] Beyond this figure, there are likely to be families who never come to be assessed owing to lack of information or a fear of adverse consequences if they make contact with the authorities.

Even those who do receive accommodation, clothing, food and/or a subsistence allowance may find that the support provided does not meet their needs. The accommodation offered is often in bed and breakfast lodgings, which local authorities admit being 'inappropriate, inadequate and expensive' but they are constrained by the availability of accommodation within their jurisdiction. Meanwhile, subsistence payments are very low: the Children's Rights Alliance for England reports that they are as low as £2 per person per day in some areas. This can leave families struggling to provide the essentials for their children.

This is where the role of services with which these families interact, including the National Health Service (NHS) and schools, become critical. Indeed, most referrals to local authorities come through these services:

> "As their situation deteriorated it was frequently these services that identified emerging welfare needs, for instance a teacher noticing that children were hungry at school or health visitor noticing that home circumstances were awry."[10]

9. Dexter, Z., Capron, L. and Gregg, L. (2016) Making Life Impossible How the needs of destitute migrant children are going unmet. [online] Children's Society. Available at: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/making-life-impossible.pdf [Accessed: 10 April 2019].

10. Price, J. and Spencer, S. (2015). Safeguarding Children from Destitution: local authority responses to families with 'no recourse to public funds'. COMPAS, University of Oxford. Available at: https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/PR-2015-No_Recourse_Public_Funds_LAs.pdf [Accessed 15th April 2019].

The duty for teachers in England to safeguard children's wellbeing is enshrined in the Teachers' Standards and reiterated in the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, which outlines responsibilities including making referrals for statutory assessments under the Children's Act 1989. What's more, as the quote above makes clear, teachers are well placed to notice changes in children's circumstances through their daily attendance, presentation and behaviour at school.

At Surrey Square, the actions of school staff to support children extend beyond any formal duty, often reaching a pupil's whole family. As we were warmly welcomed into the office of Fiona Carrick-Davies, the school's Family Worker, we couldn't help but notice a pile of airbeds and other basic household items in the corner of the room. She explained that "teachers bring in anything they can" to help pupils. School staff have been known to help families move from hostel to hostel, as they are often forced to move regularly while trapped in the cycle of temporary accommodation. The school has a clear rationale for going above and beyond for its families. As Fiona puts it:

> "If something in your home life is affecting your ability to learn then we need to do something about it."

As a Family Worker, Fiona is able to support families with problems that lie outside the classroom. She is always explicit with new families about what she can help them with. This is reflected in a leaflet she gives out, which details support that she can provide around parenting, housing, immigration, family relations and personal development. In addition, it explains that she can help them to access other services and agencies.

The success of Fiona's role depends on her ability to build trust with families who may fear being reported to the authorities. Many of them have suffered trauma in their past and have never found a safe space to seek support before. Others so strongly want to provide for their families that they experience a sense of shame at their current circumstances. Despite stigma, families continue to seek support. Fiona explains that families do so as they feel able to trust the staff of Surrey Square. One factor that engenders trust is that many staff are from the local community, including assistant head Chilo Graham who attended the school for a period as a child. Their shared experiences foster trust. Word-of-mouth also plays an important role in building trust: one parent shares their good experience with another parent, explaining that Fiona listened non-judgementally, she didn't report them to the authorities, and – most importantly – she had a solution or knew someone who did. A big part of Fiona's role is about building relationships with public services and charities who specialise in the issues that the school's families face, from legal advice charities to food banks.

The role of family worker may sound familiar to those who were working in education during the early 2000s. The number of support staff in schools grew by almost a quarter in response to the then government's work to remodel the school workforce to reduce the workload for teachers and headteachers,[11] including family support workers who were key to delivering Labour's extended schools programme.[12] This was inspired by models in the US, Scottish and Scandinavian education systems that saw schools deliver 'a range of services beyond their core function of the classroom education of children…[including] childcare outside basic school hours including school holidays, health services, adult learning and community activities.'[13] Funding to the value of £300 million was committed to support the ambition for schools to be open from 8am to 6pm and provide enrichment activities for pupils, family learning and parent support following an initial pilot in five areas.[14] By 2006, according to a large survey of schools, 68 percent offered parenting courses and 70 percent offered specialist support to parents as part of their extended school services.[15] The approach was found to be beneficial for improving the social, emotional and academic outcomes of children, and the programme was also credited with reducing the risk of child poverty by supporting parents both in developmental and practical ways: the extended hours schools enabled parents from deprived communities to work full-time jobs.[16]

By 2016, however, the number of schools offering family support seems to have reduced considerably. A survey of 1,088 head teachers found that less than half offered parenting support, counselling and/or English language classes.[17] It is thought that some of this funding came to be spent on other services after the ring-fence was removed in 2011 given the pressure on local authority budgets.[18] Yet, Surrey Square Primary School is one of those educational establishments that continues to be committed to supporting families, seeing that this investment is critical to the school's success. The school offers many other aspects of the extended schools programme including a daily breakfast club that is open to all children and their families. They also work in close partnership with food banks and with summer club providers who can ensure children have access to a hot meal every day and plenty of activities to keep them busy and support their continuing development during the holidays.

The current government has acknowledged the importance of these sorts of activities with announcements in 2018 of funding for the expansion of breakfast clubs[19] and the piloting of holiday activities and a food scheme for disadvantaged families.[20] These programmes have faced criticism for being underfunded, and there is scepticism about whether they are in fact creating new provision or supporting existing clubs.[21] However, an evaluation of Magic Breakfast – delivery partners for the programme – shows that, on average, children with access to breakfast clubs make two months' additional academic progress, compared to other similar children.[22]

At Surrey Square, these clubs also make a difference to the parents who attend alongside their children. They have a good meal to start their day and can take away bagels and fruit for lunchtime. The school also spotted an opportunity through the club to support parents to get 'on the employment ladder', giving them the opportunity to run the club alongside staff. This, alongside other volunteering and work experience opportunities at the school help parents to build a more stable and positive future for their families.

PS/MS 188 The Island School, New York

A focus on family is also omnipresent at the Island School in New York. When we visit on a chilly November morning, the principal and other senior leaders brace the cold to warmly greet families as they arrive to drop children off, coffee in hand. They know every parent, guardian and big brother by name, and ask them what the latest is on their eldest daughter's job hunt or their uncle's health. As Principal Ramos describes to us, "our school is a safe haven and a home for families; not just children, families".

11. Blatchford, P. et al. (2006) Deployment and Impact of Support Staff in Schools. [online] Institute of Education. Available at: dera.ioe.ac.uk/7904/1/DCSF-RR005.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
12. Tunstill. J., Tarr, J and Thoburn, J. (2007). Cross-sector scoping of family support workers in the children's workforce. [online] Institute of Education. Available at: dera.ioe.ac.uk/8336/1/Family_Support_Workers_Lit_Review_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
13. Diss, O. and Jarvie, M. (2016). Unfinished business: where next for extended schools. [online] Child Poverty Action Group. Available at: www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/file/2069/download?token=CFY_3NvW [Accessed 10 April 2019].
14. DfES. (2005?). Extended Schools providing opportunities and services for all. [online] Department for Education and Skills. Available at: www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/EXSG2.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
15. Tunstill. J., Tarr, J. and Thoburn, J. (2007). Op cit.
16. Diss, O. and Jarvie, M. (2016). Op cit.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. GOV.UK. (2019). Thousands more school children receiving a nutritious breakfast. [online] Available at: www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-school-children-receiving-a-nutritious-breakfast [Accessed 10 April 2019].
20. GOV.UK. (2019). Boost to support disadvantaged families during the holidays. [online] Available at: www.gov.uk/government/news/boost-to-support-disadvantaged-families-during-the-holidays [Accessed 10 April 2019].
21. Schools Week. (2019). DfE won't say how many new breakfast clubs it has created. [online] Available at: schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-wont-say-how-many-new-breakfast-clubs-it-has-created/ [Accessed 10 April 2019].
22. Education Endowment Foundation. (2019). Magic Breakfast – projects and evaluation. [online] Available at: educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/magic-breakfast/ [Accessed 10 April 2019].

Figure 3

The Island School has the second highest level of students in temporary accommodation in the country, with just under a half of children living in the shelter across the road. Ninety nine percent of students are on free school lunches and one third have disabilities. Principal Ramos tells us that there are often issues of drug and alcohol abuse in the children's families, and that parents often have not had good educational experiences, leaving school with few qualifications and limited career prospects. She explains that "we encourage parents to become better citizens to support their families" because this is vital to these children thriving in school and beyond.

Similar to Surrey Square, The Island School has a dedicated member of staff to support families: parent coordinator, Mirta Rosales. Ms Rosales' role bears many of the same hallmarks as that of Fiona Carrick-Davies at Surrey Square – referring families into local food pantries (the US equivalent of food banks) if they need food, helping connect them to charities and assisting them in responding to letters from the welfare department. She wants to help families overcome any stress in their lives, because she believes that this impacts on children and their ability to make the most of their school lives and their childhoods. She may hear directly from parents who seek out her advice, but she will also hear about families in need of support from her colleagues across the school. Every family is matched with one staff member at the school. This staff member is responsible for making contact with that family at least once a week by phone or email. If they pick up on a particular issue, they might call daily, and will bring in Ms Rosales to broker the additional support they might need.

In addition to her weekly caseload, Ms Rosales runs a packed programme of parent workshops, with at least one taking place every week. The workshops are based on the needs or interests that parents have themselves identified in an annual survey they receive. Some workshops are focussed on helping to engage parents in their children's learning by teaching them about how the curriculum is structured, how marking is done, or even teaching them some of the core maths or English content their children are covering so they can support with homework. Other workshops aim to help them develop broader practical and 'soft' skills, everything from cooking to listening. Each workshop attracts around 35 to 40 parents, and the school encourages those who attend to share what they've learned with those who cannot due to work or other obligations. Her work is impossible without the partnership of local community-based organisations who co-design and deliver the parent workshops, and to whom she refers families for specialist support needed.

Some of the charities and public services that support families of the school are, in fact, co-located on the school's premises. In an upstairs corridor, there is an office of the Education Alliance. Their staff help link the school to community-based organisations. Next door is the office of the Jewish Board who provide mental health counselling for students. Two social workers are based full-time at the school and see around 15 families each week. At the end of the corridor is a classroom that is permanently occupied by the charity Reading Partners, who engage young professionals from local businesses as volunteers to help pupils develop their basic literacy. The school has other corporate partners, with employees of Bank of America and Chase coming to help with the Saturday school and the local Home Depot gifting pots of paint and other practical resources as and when the school needs them. The school also has

strong partnerships with other educational institutions, including a local college, Borough of Manhattan Community College. Together, they support parents of pupils at the school to gain the high school diploma that is the passport to a career and a better life for their children.

As a New York Times article recently argued, the Island School is an exemplar of the Community Schools movement in the US, which has many similarities with the UK's 'extended schools' approach explored in the previous case study.[23] Both concepts were influenced by historic explorations of the relationship between school and community in the US. As early as 1902, John Dewey proposed that schools could provide education and social support to children and adults as 'settlements' such as Toynbee Hall in East London and Hull House in Chicago did. He noted that the concept of schools as the institution in which children learn created a false separation between educative and community life, and that in reconceptualising school as a 'social centre', believed that we could start to break down these imagined boundaries.[24] Building on this, in 1912, Charles Stewart Mott argued for school premises to be used for the community out of school hours, and the idea caught on: by 1914, 17 states had introduced legislation to this effect.[25]

The idea waned for a period but was resurrected by Leonard Covello in the Depression era at the Benjamin Franklin High School in Harlem. This school opened its gates from 8:30am to 10pm to serve the needs of the local community through a 'complete neighbourhood program'.[26] The school was closed in the early 1980s owing to performance issues, however its ideals are encapsulated in the latest wave of community schooling, marked by the founding of the Coalition for Community Schools in 1997 to 'advocate for community schools as the vehicle for strengthening schools, families and communities'.[27] The Island School is one of 247 such schools in New York city.[28]

Principal Ramos described the Island School as "more than a school: a hub for the community". It operates longer school days from 6am to 7pm, providing three hot meals per day for pupils and a whole host of extra-curricular and learning activities for children and their families. The school is home to a medical clinic from 8am to 4pm every day and hosts a dental practice on Wednesdays. It also opens on Saturdays and through the holidays to tackle a well-known challenge facing deprived communities:

> **"students like ours fall two grades below grade level in the summer because they don't get access to books."**

We are fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to meet one of the many parents who has benefitted from the school's wider community work. Nina has three children; two have graduated from the school and one is in their final year of elementary school. The family had been living in Brooklyn but didn't feel safe, so they'd moved back to Lower Manhattan where she grew up. At the point they moved, Nina was at breaking point with her son who displayed angry behaviour. She described feeling lost.

Then they arrived at The Island School. There, the principal greeted her son every morning with kindness. She wouldn't let him in without a smile, and she reciprocated with a small hug. The staff immediately identified the challenges in her mother-son relationship, and Nina burst into tears telling us of the difference that the school had made to her life:

> **"When you come here, you feel welcomed. It's not just the child. The family also needs that pat on the back to say: 'you're doing ok...your life is not over…your dreams can still come true."**

23. Kirp, D. (2019). 'The Community School Comes of Age. The model is expanding rapidly. Is it a fad, or the future?' New York Times. [online] January 10. Available at: www.nytimes.com/2019/01/10/opinion/community-school-new-york.html [Accessed 15 April 2019].
24. Dewey, J. (1902). The school as social centre. The Elementary School Teacher. Volume 3. Issue 2. pp. 73-86
25. Benson, L. et al. (2009). The enduring appeal of community schools. The American Educator. University of Pennsylvania. pp. 22-29.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Kirp, D. (2019). Op cit.

Nina felt this encouragement in abundance. It started with the school's support to get her relationship with her son back on track. Staff found time to listen and provide emotional support when she needed them to and helped her understand the underlying issues behind her son's behaviour. Working together, they were able to get their relationship back on track and he is now at high school, doing well. But the work of the school did not stop there. They wanted to help Nina get her life back on track. She hadn't graduated from high school, and without an equivalent qualification, her employment options were limited.

She described how the school initially 'pulled her in' to a range of voluntary roles – helping with the Parent and Teacher Association bake sale and doing lunchtime volunteering. Over time, the school discovered Nina's passion for basketball and capitalised on it, inviting her to start a girls' basketball team at the school. The idea quickly took off, and as the team went from strength to strength, the school got them kit and arranged for them to play matches at other schools.

Nina came along to many of the evening classes on offer to parents, including a presentation from the local college. The team at the Island School really pushed her to sign up to do her General Education Diploma (high-school equivalency certificate) and it turned out to be "just the nudge [she] needed". She would need a few more nudges along the way to keep going with it, but the school were on hand to encourage her. Subsequently, she secured a role as a crossing guard at a school around the corner from The Island School, and she started to discover her interest in working with children. A few years down the line, Nina is a para-professional (teaching assistant) at the Island School. Now, she loves her job. She has found that she's able to connect with the students and talk to them about anything:

> **"I'm in a better place in my life in general…that nudge was what I needed to get my life back on the right track".**

Nina is now president of the school's active Parent and Teacher Association and marvels at how many parents' lives the school has transformed. From parents who've learned to speak English at the school, to those who could finally get their children to a vital medical appointment. Overhearing her, Ms Ramos reminds her that she's part of that now; helping the dreams of other families come true.

The school's data puts flesh on the bones of the stories we heard. There has been a 6.5 percent decrease in chronic absenteeism at the school since 2014 and the percentage of children passing the state reading exam is close to the citywide average; no small achievement given how hard we know it is to close the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers.[29]

A national review of the effects of the community school approach in 2017, supports the idea that these benefits can be achieved across schools that extend their school day and intensify their work with families. It shows that deliberately designed after-school, weekend and summer activities for pupils 'are associated with improvements in attendance, behaviour, and academic achievement' and that deep engagement with families 'is associated with…reduced absenteeism, improved academic outcomes, and student reports of more positive school climate'.[30] Meanwhile, an interim report from a RAND evaluation of the impact of New York's community schools shows that chronic absenteeism has dropped 8.3 percent since 2014. Looking at the results for all New York schools over the same period, there has been no change.[31]

However, as Principal Ramos explained to us, the community school model can be a victim of its own success. The Island School had been in receipt of a major grant that enabled them to pay staff to work additional hours, and cover insurance costs associated with being open beyond normal school hours. As the school went from 'failing' to a 'school in good standing', this funding was taken away. It is crucial that statutory and grant funders commit to supporting educational activities that deliver positive results for families on a long-term basis, rather than pulling the rug from beneath them at the first signs of success.

With strong partnerships with local community-based organisations, the political support of New York Mayor Bill de Blasio for the community school model and dedicated grant funding, The Island School can continue its good work for now. However, this work increasingly requires entrepreneurialism on the part of the school's leadership. This includes spotting opportunities to engage parents and employees of corporate partners to volunteer and seeking gifts-in-kind from local businesses.

Businesses can do their bit by reaching out to schools to offer volunteers to staff extended or 'full service' school approaches, and community-based organisations and public services should seriously consider co-location. Parents can contribute by taking advantage of the opportunities that a school like this offers, and by offering what time and resources they have to help the model thrive. Schools might also consider where the services that they make available to pupils and parents could also benefit staff at the school. All three schools featured in this chapter offer professional mental health support to staff.

Reach Academy Feltham, Greater London

At Reach Academy Feltham, families are supported even before the baby arrives. The school works with expecting parents regardless of whether the child will end up attending Reach Academy. Much of this work is delivered through a recently-launched Children's Hub, based on the 'cradle to career' model at the heart of the internationally-renowned Harlem Children's Zone. This approach has already influenced the development of children's zones int the UK, such as the West London Zone and the Pembury Children's Community.

The Harlem Children's Zone began life in the 1970s as the Rheedlen Center for Children and Families, which ran an anti-truancy programme of activities for children and families in one Harlem block. The zone's remit expanded in the late 1990s, to provide education and support services to children and families across 24 Harlem blocks. In the early 2000s, this would come to be known as the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ).[32] Today, HCZ serves more than 10,000 young people and nearly 10,000 adults living in 97 blocks. Support begins with parenting classes for those with children aged 0-3 years and pre-school preparation classes.[33] Many children will go on to study at one of the zone's Promise Academies, but even for those who do not, there's a programme of after-school and holiday activities accessible to all young people within the zone. As they get older, there are college and work preparation programmes available including internships in industry. Throughout, there is family support provided such as counselling for those with drug and alcohol abuse issues.[34]

29. Ibid.
30. Maeir, A. et al. (2017). Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence. [online] Learning Policy Institute. Available at: learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community_Schools_Effective_REPORT.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
31. Johnston, W., Gomez, C., Sontag-Padilla, L., Xenakis, L., and Anderson, B. (2017). Developing Community Schools at Scale: Implementation of the New York City Community Schools Initiative. [online] Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Available at: www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2100.html [Accessed 10 April 2019].
32. Hanson, D. (2013). Assessing the Harlem Children's Zone. The Heritage Foundation. Available at: www.heritage.org/education/report/assessing-the-harlem-childrens-zone [Accessed 10 April 2019].
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.

There is some debate about whether the Harlem Children's Zone has been successful. While there is evidence that the schools in the zone have narrowed the race gap in academic achievement, they take significantly fewer students from low-income backgrounds than other local schools and have been accused of 'kicking out' underperforming students. [35 36 37] Meanwhile, there is limited evidence for the impact of the zone's other programmes apart from early indications of trends such as a decrease in teen pregnancies. Many of the programmes are still too young, and the data collected not yet comprehensive enough, to say with certainty what the impact has been.[38]

Though the outcomes of HCZ are, as yet, uncertain and the replicability of a model heavily reliant on philanthropic funding has been called into question, it has inspired experiments in other US cities and in the UK. The latest such pilot, at Reach Academy in Feltham, is distinct from its predecessors: it starts from a school, rather than a community organisation. Reach Academy's intake is disproportionately from low-income backgrounds – with the number eligible for free school meals over the last six months nearly double the national average – and it already has a track record in achieving outstanding academic results against the odds. The school's first cohort of GCSE students achieved the tenth best progress results in the country. School founder and leader, Ed Vainker, firmly believes that to get these outcomes in an area of high deprivation such as West Feltham, schools must work with families, and they must meet children's social and emotional, as well as their learning, needs. In many ways, the development of a Children's Hub at Reach Academy is a natural development of the mission and work that Reach has been doing since its establishment seven years ago.

Founded in 2012, Reach Academy aims to enable all children, regardless of background, to live lives of choice and opportunity. It is an all-through free school for children aged 2-18 years old. Its commitment to supporting families is manifest in its staff structure. The senior leadership team includes a member of non-teaching staff whose focus is safeguarding and supporting vulnerable children. Founding head teacher Ed Vainker explains that the role was created because he wanted Georgia Crew, who leads the family and pupil support team, to have the authority to operate externally. As well as being an acknowledgement of the important work of Georgia and her team, the creation of this new senior post also reduced the burden on Ed as a school leader to be the one to represent safeguarding externally; a burden that many headteachers will know all too well.

In her role as Assistant Head for Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children, Georgia is responsible for supporting children and their families to thrive. She is supported in this work by a family support worker and a pupil support worker. Every family receives a home visit from the Reach team before they begin at the school, which offers an opportunity to identify children and families who – whether known to social care or not – might need additional support. It also represents an opportunity to begin to build relationships with parents and to agree, formally, that school and family commit to supporting the child's success in school and life through a 'Whatever it takes' commitment form that is signed by pupil, parents and school staff. In it, parents agree: 'We believe our child is capable of academic success at school and beyond' and 'it is through hard work on the part of our child, with our support, that their potential will be realised'. It confirms that parents and school staff are partners in 'creating the best possible education' for children.

Based on this initial visit, and other information collected about children from previous schools or agencies that they have contact with, Georgia and team identify students in need of mentoring. This takes the form of 60 to 90-minute sessions scheduled between 8am and 6pm each day, unless a student needs specialist support, in which case they are signposted by the team to a charity or statutory partner who can provide that. Much of this is provided on-site by charities with whom the school has developed deep partnerships including Place2Be whose staff offer mental health counselling, and Family Links which exists to help schools build more nurturing relationships with families. Like Surrey Square and the Island School, the staff at Reach must be able to build trust quickly to encourage families to engage with their support offer. In addition to the home visit, they run various social events for families from the 'Get to know you' pot-luck dinner in the first term to summer barbecues, which are specifically designed to engage fathers.

One of Georgia's team members who works directly with families, Kay, grew up in the local area. Georgia believes that Kay's understanding of the the lived reality of many of the families helps her to build trust with them. This trust is the foundation for families to access many of the services they need. For example, one mother couldn't attend a mental health appointment with her husband because of her own social anxiety, so Kay accompanied him. Over time, the team have also built up a programme of parenting workshops and after-school activities for students including a girls' club for vulnerable girls.

> Success stories include a girl who was selectively mute, living with an alcoholic mum, who built her confidence through working with the other group members to organise an International Women's Day event. She went on to become one of the most vocal group members, writing blogs about issues affecting women and presenting at events the group organises. When we visited Reach, she had just been accepted to study at Newcastle University.

Over time, the team began to think about the resources they were bringing in for the students and families of Reach and whether the benefits of these could be maximised both for Reach pupils and for other Feltham families. Knowing that West Feltham features in the top 10 percent of most deprived areas in the UK for barriers to services according to the index of multiple deprivation, the Reach team had a vision that the school could become a hub for services that local families were struggling to access. It would not duplicate existing services, but rather coordinate them so that local families most in need could benefit from them.

Through the connection of a governor, they were lucky enough to be able to find support in the shape of a 'Time to Shine' intern. These internships are one of several programmes from The Rank Foundation that aims to develop leaders in the charity sector. Through this programme, Reach were able to employ an intern on London Living Wage for three days per week who could take on the research that they needed to refine their vision for a children's hub attached to Reach. Luke Billingham, now the Hub's head of strategy, came in through that internship programme. He undertook a local consultation with students, parents and 30 community organisations, which identified that members of the local community had many unmet needs. Among the most commonly cited were:

- **Antenatal and 0-5 support**
- **Careers and progression guidance**
- **Mental health support**
- **Adult education and employment support**

The school already had some programmes that could be expanded to the local community to meet these needs. For example, the school's career guidance offer could, with the right support, be extended to other members of the local community. In other cases, such as antenatal and 0 to 5 support, the school did not have existing provision, but was able to quickly identify partners who did. Luke's job became focussed on identifying the right funding partners to enable the extension of existing programmes to the local community, and the right delivery partners to provide new services from the 'hub' of the school. However, being a school presented barriers to both: although some trusts and foundations make grants to schools, others do not; and providing antenatal support does not fall within a school's remit. The registration of a charity, 'Reach Foundation' enabled them to overcome these hurdles.

35. Fryer R, Dobbie W. (2011). Are High-Quality Schools Enough to Increase Achievement Among the Poor? Evidence from the Harlem Children's Zone [Online] American Economic Journal: Applied Economics [online] Vol. 3 No. 3, p.158-187. Available at: http://www2.econ.iastate.edu/classes/econ321/orazem/Fryer_high_quality_schools.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
36. Zelon, H. (2010). Is the Promise Real: The Harlem Children's Zone Becomes a Template for National Change. [online] City Limits. Available at: www.citylimits.org/2010/02/09/is-the-promise-real/ [Accessed 10 April 2019].
37. Bruhn, M. et al. (2011). The Inconvenient truth behind waiting for superman. [video]. USA. Real Reform Studios.
38. Ibid.

In 2017, the hub began piloting programmes including a partnership with childbirth and parenting charity National Childbirth Trust (NCT) to train local mothers as peer mentors to new mums. The team also expanded the school's careers advice and guidance to young people at other local schools in the shape of the 'Feltham Futures' programme. In 2018, a new partnership with Save the Children took the work of the hub up a notch. Save the Children were looking to identify a number of Early Years Demonstration Sites piloting new approaches to supporting children and families growing up below the poverty line. The Reach Children's Hub is now running the Feltham Demonstration Site. This new partnership has enabled them to build a staff team with Ed and Luke in part-time roles as director and head of strategy respectively. They have a new head of early years with experience as a primary headteacher, managing a family support caseworker and an early learning caseworker whose role includes developing and delivering free CPD and training to local early years workers in both nursery and school settings. They also have a manager for the Feltham Futures project, supported by the Heathrow Community Fund.

Luke Billingham, head of strategy for the hub, acknowledges that there were many factors that enabled Reach Academy to embark on the ambitious endeavour of setting up a 'cradle to career' hub for the Feltham community. As a new free school, Reach Academy was established from the outset as a school with a wider role in the community, rather than being a 'standalone institution' with 'impermeable walls'. This has guided their approach and enabled them to build the capacity within their staff that was vital for piloting the hub's initial activities. In addition, the school was designed to be deliberately small, allowing them to get to know families well and build a picture of their needs over time. However, there are other aspects of the hub's development that are potentially replicable even for an existing school:

- **Finding support to do the necessary background research to develop a vision for working with the local community, through a charity such as that of the Rank Foundation or City Year**
- **Registering as a charity to access charitable funding that schools cannot usually apply for, and to deliver services that fall out of the ordinary purview of a school**
- **Inviting local partners who share the school's vision to run services out of the school's buildings.**

Yet, Luke notes that schools could better do this with a more supportive policy environment. The drive to achieve top results under the current accountability regime incentivises some schools to build the walls between the institution and the community higher and higher. He describes how some academies have tried to become "fortresses of good order", introducing strict behaviour regimes that attempt to "re-mould" their intake. Here, the emphasis is too often on the need for the individual to change, rather than looking at the systemic factors that influence the child's social and academic development. It is an idea based on a deficit model; viewing deprived communities as environments with little to contribute to a child's development and from which the child must be 'saved' to be reformed in school.

Reach, Surrey Square and The Island School, on the other hand, are school models based on a fundamental belief that schools alone cannot eliminate the effects of poverty on children. It is the partnership between schools and communities – with both having important contributions to make – that will slowly but surely eliminate the barriers that deprivation constructs.

2

Providing real-world learning opportunities

"We don't see school as a model of community, rather we are a school with the community – there's a completely permeable boundary around the school. We talk about connecting with the world, not connecting with the "real" world because school is part of that real world too."

Gwyn Ap Harri, XP School, Doncaster

"Lots of schools refer to themselves as communities, but many metaphorical walls go up and it comes to be seen as just a place that you go for lessons – a place you have to be. We are trying to change this…[by] embedding community-based approaches in a school."

Tim Tod, director of Red 22 at Plymouth School of Creative Arts

We know that children's educational outcomes are strongly predicted by the level of education of their parents, and that – in turn – low education outcomes predict poor employment and health outcomes.[39] Some argue that these inequalities are reflected in, and even exacerbated by, education systems that privilege some types of knowledge over others through centralised curricula.[40] Of course, education is designed to expose young people to ideas beyond what they learn in their homes and communities, knowledge that transcends their circumstances geographically and temporally. But we know that some children arrive at school better prepared to navigate this knowledge than others thanks to access to books, museum and gallery visits, and conversations with culturally-rich and highly-educated adults. Many children lack these advantages. In his review of the English education system, Paul Cappon suggests that for this group particularly, the lack of time usually allocated within the curriculum to explore local history and culture could represent a missed opportunity to understand where they come from and to experience pride in the contributions of their communities and ancestors to society.[41]

At XP School in Doncaster and the Plymouth School of Creative Arts, there is a commitment to doing things differently. Learning is rooted in the history, culture and environment of the local community. In both curriculum content and mode of delivery, the barriers that ordinarily exist between school and community are removed. Students build knowledge about local culture and history through experiences in their own communities or places that are deliberately designed to be engaging and to build their sense of pride in the place that they call home. Through this type of learning, the students also have opportunities to actively contribute to their communities. The approach reflects an idea at the centre of the RSA's 2009 review of place-based learning:

> **"A curriculum that tells tales of its local communities is not a neutral representation of that environment, but has the capacity to shape, influence and re-shape these communities in turn."[42]**

But their models are not only influenced by a desire to better reflect the history and culture of the communities that students hail from. They are also inspired by authentic learning models from the USA: 'project-based learning' and 'expeditionary learning'. Elements of both are present in the work of the two schools we will explore in this chapter, so we will begin by briefly explaining the key elements you might expect to see if you were to enter a project-based learning or expeditionary learning school.

The concept of project-based learning can be traced to John Dewey's student William H Kilpatrick who proposed a 'project method' that would see students pursuing a project such as constructing a machine by drawing on knowledge from across subject domains, driven by their own motivation and with limited guidance from their teacher.[43] His conceptualisation of the method received criticism from Dewey himself, who believed that for the approach to be successful, guidance and direction must be offered by the teacher. The models of project-based learning today borrow from Kilpatrick's original conceptualisation, with students working 'on a project over an extended period of time – from a week up to a semester' in response to a 'driving question'.[44] Best practice guidance also stresses the role of the teacher in generating project ideas, setting the driving question, planning the project and guiding students as they work towards the project's culmination in a public 'exhibition'.[45 46] In particular, there is a role for teachers in ensuring the project is an iterative process: students do not submit their first draft to be graded and set aside, but rather re-draft their work over and over, informed by structured critique from teacher and peers.[47]

Expeditionary learning grew out of the educational philosophy of Kurt Hahn, founder of the Outward Bound movement (and, later, the first United World College in Wales). The mention of Outward Bound usually invokes images of a group of teenagers laden with 15 kilo rucksacks departing on a multi-day trek and confronting challenges together along the way. While this sort of activity in the outdoors is a core component of Outward Bound, it is a broader educational model that highly values character development:

> **"Students and staff work together to become effective learners and ethical people who contribute to a better world."[48]**

Outwards Bound schools do this by focussing on the development of Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs), which include character traits such as responsibility and kindness. Students assess, together with school staff and peers, their progress towards developing these traits and have opportunities to share their journey with families and other community members at presentations of learning.[49]

Another distinctive element of expeditionary learning is the crew: a small group of students led by one member of school staff that meets every morning throughout a students' school life. As Kurt Hahn put it: "we are crew, not passengers" – while the member of school staff who is 'crew leader' guides the group, every member has responsibilities to the rest of the crew; supporting their emotional and academic development. The crew is an important organising structure of expeditionary learning schools because it facilitates deep relationships: by getting to know each other well, crew leader and members become equipped to effectively support each other. Last, but not least, expeditionary learning puts a strong emphasis on the importance of engaging with the world beyond the school gates through fieldwork experiences tied to the curriculum, opportunities to collaborate with experts who can expand students' understanding of curriculum topics, and "service learning".[50] This term, more commonly used in the US than the UK, refers to volunteering that is designed to support students' academic and personal development.

Guidance for developing successful project-based learning also promotes collaboration with adults with relevant experience who can support the design and assessment of project, and act as mentors or coaches to students.[51] However, a project could conceivably happen within the school walls with little to no connection with environments and experts beyond the school gates up until the point of exhibition to families and, potentially, other members of the community.

At XP and Plymouth School of Creative Arts, connection with community is crucial to the form of project-based learning they deliver, which aims to make learning authentic and enable students to make positive change in their communities.

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44. Buck Institute for Education (2019) What is Project-Based Learning? [online] Available at: www.bie.org/about/what_pbl [Accessed 10 April 2019].
45. Edge Future Learning (2019) Project Based Learning Toolkit. 8 February. London: Edge Foundation.
46. Patton, Alec (2012) Work that matters: the teacher's guide to project-based learning. [online] Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Available at: www.innovationunit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Work-That-Matters-Teachers-Guide-to-Project-based-Learning.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
47. Ibid.
48. EL Education (2018) Core Practices 2018 Overview: a new edition of our vision for improving schools. [online] Available at: www.eleducation.org/resources/core-practices-beta-version-2017 [Accessed 10 April 2019].
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Edge Future Learning (2019) Op cit.

XP School Doncaster

Situated on an industrial estate a few minutes' drive from Doncaster town centre, XP School draws students from across the metropolitan area through its lottery-based admissions system. The school is deliberately small, admitting 250 students in Key Stages 3 and 4, and there is an option for them to continue their studies at the sixth form at neighbouring XP East, the trust's second school.

Figure 4

A former coalfield town, and home to 18 collieries, Doncaster suffered the economic effects of mining closures from the late 1980s.[52,53] The town has been able to achieve important economic improvements over recent years against indicators such as job security, housing and health.[54] However, employment and educational opportunities are still below expected rates. For example, a lower proportion of the population gain level 3 qualifications (equivalent to an A-level) and progress through further and higher education than regional and national averages.[55] The team at XP School are determined that its students will gain an education that gives them a sense of pride in the history of their home town and equips them to contribute to Doncaster being a flourishing town today and in generations to come.

As you walk into the school's reception, the first thing you see is a huge, professionally-designed display board celebrating the mining heritage of Doncaster (see Fig. 4). On closer inspection, it's the result of a learning expedition undertaken by Year 7 students (aged 11-12), exploring the question: 'what does the community of Doncaster owe to the miners?'

The students behind the project, now in Year 9 at the school, explain the expedition. As well as reading about the town's mining history, they had interviewed around 20 to 30 'experts'; members of the local community who had worked in and around the mines about what they did, what the conditions were like, how they felt about the closure of the mines, and what the repercussions had been. They had visited the nearby National Coal Mining Museum for England and taken the rickety lift down the mine shaft to see the conditions miners experienced for themselves. They had also interviewed someone at the local cemetery about those who lost their lives mining.

Students vividly recalled the story of an expert called Aggie who had played a leading role in violent protests to the closing of the mines. She had spoken of her regrets at the tactics that her and fellow protesters employed, leading the students to have a debate – guided by their crew leader – about the ethics of civil disorder. The students were proud to report that they had produced a book as the final product of their expedition, which went on to be launched in Waterstone's at a celebration attended by their families, members of the local community, and with Laurence Edwards, the sculptor commissioned to create a tribute to Doncaster's mining history, in attendance. It went on to become the best-selling local history book – a title that another XP student publication is about to take.

52. Northern Mine Research Society (2019) Doncaster Coalfield. [online] Available at: www.nmrs.org.uk/mines-map/coal-mining-in-the-british-isles/yorkshire-coalfield/doncaster/ [Accessed 10 April 2019].
53. Gore, T (2014) The State of the Former Coalfields: Benchmarking Study. [online] University of Sheffield Hallam. Available at: www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/state-of-the-coalfields.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
54. PWC (2018) Good Growth for Cities. [online] Available at: www.pwc.co.uk/government-public-sector/good-growth/assets/pdf/good-growth-for-gities-2018.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
55. Doncaster Growing Together (2018) Doncaster Inclusive Growth Strategy 2018-2021. [online] Available at: dmbcpublicwebsite.blob.core.windows.net/media/Default/Council%20and%20Democracy/Documents/Doncaster%20Inclusive%20Growth%20Strategy%202018-2021-1.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].

Students explained how going out and speaking to local people, and presenting their findings, had improved their self-confidence. They had also gained a more critical perspective on the town's mining history because they had to weigh up the differing opinions they encountered during the project. As executive headteacher Gwyn Ap Harri later explained to me, the role of the experts isn't to simply deliver information to the students, but rather for students to share the knowledge they already have, impress the expert, and invite them to build on that foundation by sharing their lived experience. Just 13 and 14 years old, these students already believed they were better prepared for their futures because they were more used to speaking to people they don't know, which would prepare them for situations like job interviews. Leafing through a copy of the book, each few pages attributed to one or more student authors, it's striking how sophisticated the students' understanding of the topic and use of language is. As students went on to explain, this is the product of many redrafts, with editorial input from their crew leader Ms Robinson, fellow crew members (peers) and experts (members of the local community with lived experience of mining).

Approximately 80 percent of learning at the school happens through project-based learning. It's a model that many proponents argue is needed in the education system to develop the skills that young people will need to navigate uncertain futures: the ability to collaborate with peers, to take ownership and responsibility and, as Guy Claxton puts it, to "learn how to learn".[56] Critics, on the other hand, point out that there are inherent risks involved in project-based learning including the danger that students waste time on simple tasks that aren't productive to learning or that they become 'overwhelmed by multiple and complex tasks'.[57] Indeed, research from the EEF indicates that project-based learning has a negative effect on literacy for students on free school meals, while not having the positive effect on student engagement that proponents predict.[58] Similarly, a study in over 800 Danish schools found that "a student-centred instructional strategy has a negative impact on academic achievement in general, and for students with low parental education in particular".[59]

Cognisant of these risks, the XP team have created a model that is neither wholly student-led, teacher-led or knowledge-led, but rather a carefully curated blend of the three. A useful theoretical model for understanding the XP approach to curriculum design is proposed by Pountney and McPhail. Informed by a model developed by Young and Muller, they suggest that attempts – such as project-based learning – to make education more "inclusive, democratic, progressive and relevant" by focussing on developing generic skills through experiential forms of learning are a knee-jerk response to a conservative model of education that aims to induct children "into the dominant knowledge traditions to keep them dominant."[60] In the conservative model, teachers transmit to students an approved body of knowledge, which likely does not cater to all of their interests and needs, especially if they are not of the dominant social class.[61]

The XP School approach offers a third, more measured, way, which maintains the conservative model's preoccupation with deep subject knowledge while intentionally linking learning to real-world issues as per the progressive model.[62] Staff at XP teach across the humanities or STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths). They have deep knowledge of subjects and collaborate with colleagues to find meaningful links in the national curriculum and standards between their area of specialism and that of their colleagues. Together, they design an expedition that will develop the knowledge students need across the given subjects and link this

56. Claxton, G. (2008) What's the Point of School? Rediscovering the Heart of Education. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.
57. Astle, J. (2018) The Ideal School Exhibition. thersa.org blog [online] 16 November. Available at: www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/the-ideal-school-exhibition [Accessed 10 April 2019].
58. Menzies, V. et al. (2016) Project Based Learning Evaluation report and executive summary [online] EEF. Available at: dro.dur.ac.uk/20513/1/20513.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].
59. Andersen, I.G. and Andersen, S.C. (2015). Student-centred instruction and academic achievement: linking mechanisms of educational inequality to schools' instructional strategy. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 38(4) pp.533-550.
60. Pountney, R. and McPhail G. (2019) Crossing boundaries: exploring the theory, practice and possibility of a 'Future 3' curriculum. British Educational Research Journal [online] Available through: Wiley Online Library: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/berj.3508 [Accessed 10 April 2019].
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.

to the real world. For example, at the time of our visit to the school, students were working on the guiding question: 'what should we remember from World War 1?' There were clear and explicit connections to the national curriculum in humanities, for example WW1 history and wartime poetry in English literature. STEM teachers had also identified a link to the science curriculum, and students researched the causes and cures of diseases that were prevalent in the trenches. STEM learning was enhanced by connections with local medical professionals and museums, and students had also visited the local cemetery to learn about Doncaster citizens who lost their lives during the war. Pragmatism is key to the XP model. For this expedition, there was no clear link to the mathematics curriculum, so students were studying a separate case study in maths. Similarly, Gwyn explained that the engagement of experts and fieldwork are important aspects of the school's approach, but that they must be purposeful; offering opportunities for students to develop their knowledge and skills such as communication and collaboration.

The intended benefits of the XP approach reach far beyond the students, with a clear intention to create civic pride and positive perceptions of young people locally. As Gwyn put it:

> "We show the positive things that children can do…The impact of the miners' book on a place like this has been incredible. It's a place where there's nothing to celebrate our mining history, so imagine how people who worked in the mines or descended from miners feel when they see 11-year-olds writing about what the miners contributed in Doncaster."

There is also a longer-term aim for positive impact on the community. The school is trying to develop good and thoughtful citizens with a sense of pride in and shared responsibility for where they come from. Gwyn's hope is that they will not only pursue further studies at college and university, but also return to Doncaster and give back to the town and its people.

Other schools, inspired by the school's vision and model, might ask how it is possible. It seems that the fact of being a small school is a key to success, with students commenting that it's easier to get to know people as a result and it "feels like a proper community". While not all schools have the luxury of starting from scratch and deliberately designing a small school community, there is another aspect of the XP model that has been shown to build deeper relationships and is replicable in established schools: the crew.[63] For example at Carr Manor Community School in Leeds, which the RSA recently visited, the leadership team had been able to introduce the crew model to an existing school in place of traditional form groups. They did so by involving all school staff (not just teaching staff) in becoming mentors to students. Democratising pastoral care not only enables deeper relationships between students and staff but also offers the many support staff whose excellent relationship-building skills are key to their professional success an invaluable professional development experience.

The opportunity to develop deeper relationships with students is not the only thing that attracts staff to work at XP. Many people in the education profession have an academic background in one subject but interests in many. The XP model gives them a unique opportunity to teach across their interest areas. As one XP teacher explained to me, he used to "just teach D&T", but he now teaches across the whole STEM curriculum, which has offered him an opportunity to teach science – a subject he is passionate about. Furthermore, he is able to link the subjects for students in a way that gives meaning to what they are learning: his class aren't just making wooden toys to tick a box, they are making physical representations of their learning across the STEM curriculum. Students in his class, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are able to explain what they are making and why. They make explicit links with other areas of the curriculum as well as acknowledging the making skills they are developing. Nearly all mention opportunities that they have had to work with experts such as sculptors and to visit museums and galleries that have given them inspiration for their work.

63. Loe, R., Verbi, S. and Gibbs, B (2017) Building relationships through expeditionary experiences. [online] Cambridge: Relational Schools Foundation. Available at: relationalschools-org.stackstaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Building-relationships-through-expeditionary-experiences.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].

However, it must be noted that there is an intensive investment of time required to get staff ready to provide these rich learning experiences for students. Gwyn notes that teachers rarely arrive at the school saying, "we've got loads of experience teaching through projects and engaging with the community". They recruit teachers earlier than schools ordinarily would in order to give them two months of training. Training includes going on an Outward Bound expedition, which gives new staff the opportunity to experience what it is like to be part of a crew with the other new recruits, and face challenges that are outside of their ordinary experience, just as their students will do. During training, teachers also do an 'expedition slice' – they plan and carry out a mini-expedition as a team in response to a guiding question. The new recruits also learn about the school's learning protocols and undertake subject-specific training. Professional development doesn't stop there: teachers at XP are continuously learning, with a two-hour meeting each week dedicated to deepening staff knowledge in the domains they teach.

The model depends not only on highly-trained teachers, but also on a supporting team. Their communications manager, Mel Hewitt, came to the school with experience as a journalist and PR consultant and a vast network of contacts. Previously, teachers were finding that the types of support external partners were offering didn't necessarily align neatly with what they were trying to achieve through an expedition. The role Mel plays is to act as the conduit between the curriculum makers – teachers – and opportunities in the community. She is critical to the school delivering on its core principle of connecting with the world, and her name is on everyone's lips when they hear you've visited to explore the school's relationships with community. In the first class we visit, the teacher announces to students the opportunity to exhibit their work on World War I at Doncaster Museum as their final presentation of learning, thanks to a relationship Mel has meticulously brokered. Colleagues explain that she has a unique ability to identify the opportunity within an expedition where a partner can bring value to the students' learning, and that the school in turn can bring value to the partner.

But can there possibly be a Mel for every school? She believes so. There is a degree of modesty in her response, but it is counterbalanced by pragmatism: in every community there are well-networked individuals with great relationship-building skills. It is important for the post-holder to know the local community intimately, and to know how to build networks beyond that immediate community. She is also starting to develop training and peer support for other staff so that partnership-building capacity exists across the school, and this could – over time – be distilled into something to be shared with other schools. Already, the team are supporting a local primary school to develop expeditions that involve partners from the wider community.

With some of their partnerships coming with grant funding, XP School's connections with the community are increasingly paying for themselves. However, Gwyn's principled leadership and entrepreneurial background are also an asset when it comes to making the budget work. He takes a lower salary than his local counterparts, and his background in running tech start-ups means that he is skilled at finding value for money. He tells the story of how he found £70,000 of savings from the budget of a local primary school that XP are supporting by finding them cheaper providers for major budget items like insurance. In addition, XP's staffing model is cheaper to run:

> "We need fewer teachers because they teach across subjects."

Finally, by removing some of the hierarchy that exists in most schools, such as heads of department, they save staffing costs and the expense of departmental budgets. Instead, crew leaders for each year group have £5,000 per annum to cover the costs of expeditions, and Gwyn advises them on how to get value for money.

With the first cohort now in Year 11, the school will soon receive its first GCSE results. There is a sense of anticipation: will the school's thoughtful approach to project-based learning lead to good academic results that will open doors for students as they think of their next steps? Gwyn is cautiously optimistic. The school's rigorous mapping of expeditions to standards, recognised in its Ofsted 'Outstanding' judgement, gives cause for optimism, but there is not an expectation

of ground-breaking results in the first year. They recognise the model is still in development and continues to improve. What it has already achieved is a sense of permeability. XP undoubtedly is, as Gwyn describes, "a school with the community".

Plymouth School of Creative Arts, Plymouth

The Plymouth School of Creative Arts is similarly a school with the community, rather than just a school in a community. It has developed a similar – but not identical – project-based learning model with community connections at its heart. It has gone one step further, setting up a charitable arm so that the benefits of this way of working can be experienced by people across the local community.

Locally known as the 'Red House', we spot the Plymouth School of Creative Arts' distinctive building on the otherwise grey skyline of the Millbay docklands a good five minutes before we arrive at its gates. As we pass reception, we enter into an open space more reminiscent of the atrium of an art gallery or museum than a school. The artefacts hanging from the ceiling add to the ambiance: a full-size, bright red firefly boat floats in the air above us, alongside larger-than-life model fish whose transparent carapaces reveal litter; an unmistakeable representation of the effects of modern life on marine systems. Both are impressive examples of craftmanship and artistic flair. They are the final products of projects that students have undertaken in recent years to learn about the relationship between humans and the sea. This relationship is all the more meaningful and relevant to students given the school's location on the UK's South West coastline.

The atrium space is a lunch hall, learning space and meeting place all rolled into one. It is bustling with activity on this crisp winter morning. Year 3 students (aged 7 to 8) are lined up ready for a trip to a local university, which they regularly attend for sports activities. Not far behind them, a group of students are donning high-vis jackets donated to the school as part of the Big Lottery Fund Widening Horizons project, which gives students the opportunity to visit local businesses, universities and colleges, with the intention of opening their eyes to the variety of educational and employment avenues that they could pursue in the future. Today, they are going on a trip to the River Tamar, which is currently the focus of the project-based learning for which the school is famed. The school, which serves students aged 4 to 26 years has many partnerships with the world beyond the gates that enhance this work, but chief among them is their relationship with their founding partner, Plymouth College of Art. The college sponsored the school in response to concerns about the arts and creativity being under threat in English schools. However, founding headteacher Dave Strudwick also explains that the partnership between the school and the college is driven by a shared sense of social justice; a desire to make the city a better place to live.

As we tour the school, Dave stops at a viewing platform above the sports hall to point out that the view out of the window at one end of the hall is of an area of town where the average life expectancy is 11 years lower than the rest of the city. The school is specifically designed to be a hub for that community, offering its people opportunities that they would not ordinarily have. For example, it has become home to many start-ups that cannot afford commercial venues, including a local hip-hop dance company. The school's venue manager, Mick, describes the support they offer to these early-stage enterprises: from offering an affordable workspace while they establish themselves, to coaching them through the development of marketing plans. There's a quid-pro-quo: all partners are expected to give something back to the school's pupils and other local children. This could include running after-school or weekend clubs, volunteering as evening partners or offering children free tickets to performances. The school has some impressive facilities, including a recording studio on the first floor, which is home to a community radio station run by local people and inviting regular participation from students.

The school has developed a new vehicle to expand its activities with and for the local community. They have registered a community interest company: Red 22, which offers a range of enrichment activities for families based on regular consultation both with families from the school and the wider community. The idea for the new enterprise was originally sparked by a boat-building project that students were involved in as part of the school's project-based learning curriculum. Through discussions with students and their families, they realised that many had never been in a boat, despite growing up so close to the sea. The reasons given were the exclusivity of sailing, the perceived expenses involved and the very practical concern that many students and parents had never learned to swim. Tim Tod, director of Red 22, developed a joint proposal with a number of local organisations including the surfing club and was able to secure funding from the Sports England Families Fund. Activities range from one-to-one swimming lessons to surfing classes. They are coordinated by Red 22, who work with families to identify their needs, but are run by a range of partners. Sixty families are already engaged in the programme, and they aim to reach 200 in the next three years.

Plymouth School of Creative Arts employs a highly innovative approach to education. Education is organised in 'phases' rather than year groups. This means, for example, that a student aged 8 will be in a group with students aged 8 to 11. They study English and maths as distinct subjects, but other learning takes place through projects, responding to 'guiding questions', with much of the learning centred around local culture and environments. At the time of our visit, students aged 8 to 11 were studying the Tamar River and the settlements around it, and their project would culminate in an exhibition at the Southbank featuring models made by the students. As at XP, there is a strong focus on iteration built into the process of a project, but here that is done through physical prototypes rather than on the redrafting of written products. In doing so, children follow a design process that they described as having three key phases:

- **Research/innovation**
- **Planning/design**
- **Making**

They could talk confidently about the process that they were following and spoke passionately about the models they were planning to build – proudly showing us early stage designs. Students were glad to have met professionals, including a marine biologist, as part of the project as it offered a chance to learn about different jobs. There were many benefits to working with students in other year groups, for example, older students were learning to support younger group members. However, the older students spoke of frustrations at being distracted by younger students asking 'basic' questions in their maths classes. They saw this as a particular disadvantage when preparing for SATs, and their concerns are borne out in the school's first set of SATs results, with only a fifth of pupils reaching age-expected levels in reading, writing and maths, compared with a country-wide average of 64 percent.[64] The school, now under new leadership, is working hard to improve progress.[65] It will be interesting to see if the 'phase' model is retained and if curriculum design comes to more closely resemble that at XP; carefully mapped to the national curriculum.

64. GOV.UK (2019) Find and Compare Schools in England [online] www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/139923/plymouth-school-of-creative-arts?tab=primary [Accessed 10 April 2019].
65. Telford, W. (2019) 'Plymouth school head quits after poor SATs results' Plymouth Live. January 2019. Available at: www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/business/plymouth-school-head-quits-suddenly-2402268 [Accessed 10 April 2019].

3

Developing socially-active citizens

“Fannie Lou Hamer represented the hope for this nation… If our students could truly understand her struggle, they could understand more about their own. If they could understand her growing awareness, they could understand their need to understand. If they could understand her strength in the fight for a better society, they could understand their potential power to reshape their society.”

Peter Steinberg, founder of Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School [in a letter to the school]

“Developing a rich inner life required you to know about things beyond yourself…. We enable them to think beyond their own walls.”

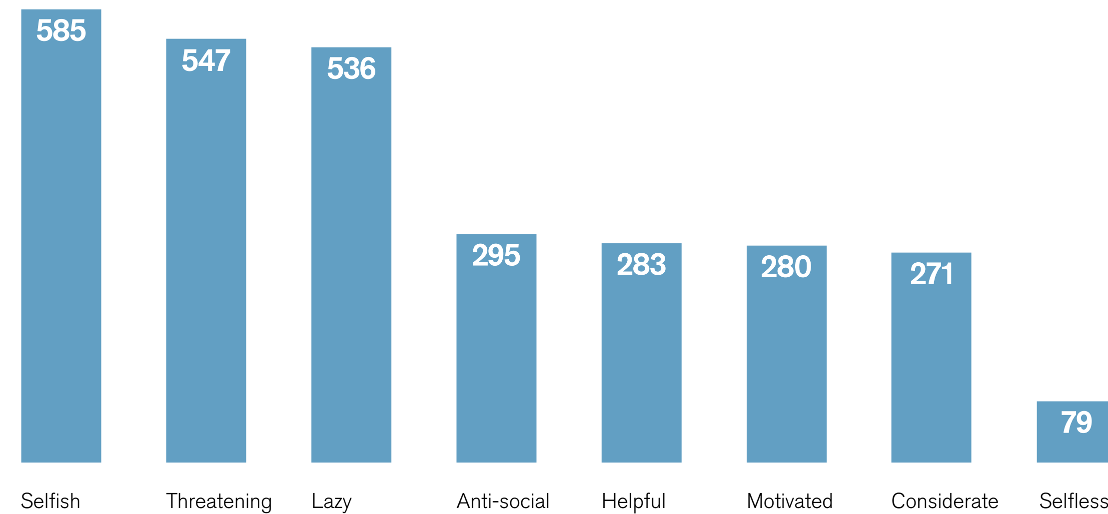
Gina Farrar, principal, Blue School

“We don’t have walls – we have school buildings all through the village, so we’re integrated with the community… it’s impossible to be here without mingling with the locals.”

Amanda de Felice, director of communications, UWC Adriatic

Young people are often characterised as apathetic, lacking commitment to and participation in their communities.[66] Recent RSA research highlights the negative perceptions that adults hold of teenagers today, with UK-wide polling demonstrating that adults are significantly more likely to describe young people as 'selfish', 'lazy' and 'anti-social' than 'helpful' or 'motivated' (Fig. 5).[67]

Terms adults selected to describe their impression of young people today
(number of respondents)



Total sample size: 2,013

Figure 5

If, as Tully argues, people 'become citizens only by virtue of actual participation in civic activities', the earliest possible engagement in such activities may present a form of 'apprenticeship' for young people to become not only a 'good' citizen, but an active one in future.[68] The RSA's research suggests that significantly more young people are already engaged in such an apprenticeship than adults assume, with 68 percent of 14- to 18-year-olds in the UK having already participated in volunteering or another form of social action, which, by our definition, includes activities such as campaigning.[69] An even greater number, 84 percent, are motivated to help other people, but may lack opportunities to do so or confidence that their actions can make the sort of difference they hope for.[70] We found that the encouragement of schools was the most important factor in motivating young people to participate in social action, especially for young people who do not receive encouragement from parents or their religious community.[71]

Across the world, there has been a recognition of the important contribution that schools can make towards developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be good citizens, with the formalisation of citizenship education in national curricula of many countries.[72] However, research indicates the tendency for citizenship education to focus on the transmission of knowledge about democratic institutions and processes, rather than creating "the conditions and opportunities [for young people] to exercise citizenship in daily life".[73] Even in New Zealand, where the national curriculum requires students to 'participate and take action as critical, informed and responsible citizens', the interpretation of this varies widely from school to school.[74]

66. Ribeiro, A. et al. (2012). 'Promoting "Active Citizens"? The Critical Vision of NGOs over Citizenship Education as an Educational Priority across Europe'. International Journal of Progressive Education. Volume 8. Issue 3.
67. Partridge, L., Astle, J., Landreth-Strong, F. and Grinsted, S. (2018). Op cit.
68. Tully, C (2008). Two meanings of global citizenship: Modern and diverse. In M. A. Peters, A. Britton & H. Blee (Eds.), Global citizenship education: Philosophy, theory and pedagogy. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
69. Partridge, L., Astle, J., Landreth-Strong, F. and Grinsted, S. (2018). Op cit.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ribeiro, A. et al. (2012). Op cit.
73. Ibid.

In this chapter, we look at four schools that actively buck the trend, delivering an educational model in partnership with community groups and charities beyond the school in ways that gives young people the chance to practice active citizenship in their communities today. They do not do so based on a deficit model – the idea that young people lack the knowledge, skills and attitude of good citizens and that schools must deliver these to them – but rather on a fundamental belief that we need not wait for tomorrow; young people have something important to contribute to society today. At Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School, Blue School, EMIS and UWC Adriatic, we met inspirational young people who had been able to secure tangible, sometimes even legislative, changes to make their communities better places, and who had built on their pre-existing knowledge, skills and values in the process.

Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School, New York

Located in the poorest congressional district in the USA, Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School (FLHFHS) serves an underprivileged, predominantly Hispanic community in the Bronx. In a letter to the school on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Fannie Lou Hamer, the civil rights activist after whom the school is named, the school's founder Peter Steinberg explains that:

> **"Fannie Lou Hamer represented the hope for this nation…she embodied the understanding, compassion and bravery which had to be the basis for our school and for the struggle to create a more just society. If our students could truly understand her struggle, they could understand more about their own… If they could understand her strength in the fight for a better society, they could understand their potential power to reshape their society."**

He also explains that the choice to include the word 'freedom' was inspired by the freedom schools that were created in Mississippi during the civil rights movement. Their mission was two-fold: to give young black people access to an education that public schools excluded them from and to equip them to participate in the historic social activism that was underway.[75] As Peter explains, during the Civil Rights Movement, freedom schools tried to teach students about black history; the politics, sociology and economics of their current oppression; and the skills that are needed to "fight back".

This vision was reflected in the values and aims of the Essential School Movement of which FLHFHS is a member. Its aims to contribute to creating an education system that 'equips all students with the emotional, intellectual and social habits to become powerful and informed citizens who contribute actively toward a democratic and equitable society'.[76] This commitment runs through everything that FLHFHS do. As part of the curriculum, students explore social issues deeply. Talking us through their 'portfolios' of work, students showed us essays that examined subjects like power dynamics in global conflicts and gender rights in US higher education. They explained that they are assessed on the evidence they amass, how they judge the quality and relevance of that evidence and how they make connections between different bodies of knowledge to form their viewpoint. Partnerships with the outside world are seen as crucial to

74. Ross, A. (2012). 'Education for Active Citizenship: Practices, Policies, Promises'. International Journal of Progressive Education. Vol 8: 3.
75. Perlstein, D. (1990). 'Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Freedom Schools'. History of Education Quarterly. Vol. 30: 3. pp. 297-324.
76. Hunt, T. et al. (2010). Encyclopedia of Educational Reform and Dissent. University of Dayton: SAGE Publications Inc. [Accessed 15 April 2019].

Figure 6

enhancing students' learning. For example, a relationship with New York University (NYU) had enabled a group of FLHFHS students to study social justice from a theoretical and historical perspective over the summer, and they now return monthly for lectures and seminars with university students.

But at Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School, students don't just learn about social justice in classrooms and lecture halls, they put their knowledge and critical thinking skills to practice to effect change. Much of this active citizenship happens through the school's 'Extended Learning Opportunities' programme. Students can search a database of hundreds of opportunities for additional learning that the school has curated in partnership with an NGO, Children's Aid Society (CAS), which has an office at the school. Together, they have identified over 70 partners in the local community that can offer students opportunities to give back to their communities whether volunteering to read with local students or setting up their own social enterprises. The Bronx Office for Student Startups (BOSS), located on an upper floor of the school, has been the launch-pad for a number of successful student initiatives, all with social motivations. For example, one female student who wanted to raise awareness of local gun crime made jewellery out of bullets, engraved with the names of young gun crime victims. The school was able to find an opportunity, through a partner, for her to pitch at a "shark tank" (otherwise known as "dragon's den") event at which she secured $2,500 in funding to scale up. The school is cognisant of the significant role that the Children's Aid Society has played in building the Extended Learning Opportunity programme. In order to share the partnership-building expertise that the CAS team bring across the staff body, they have developed a training programme for all school staff.

In addition to Extended Learning Opportunities, students have the chance to participate in the school's dynamic student government, which recently managed to effect change at policy level. For Advocacy Day 2018, eight representatives from the student government travelled to Albany to lobby policymakers for the restoration of funds for after-school activities for young people. Not only did they manage to secure agreement to restore the original funding commitment, but they were able to persuade policymakers to increase the figure significantly. They have plans to go back to advocate for more early childhood support in their local area – an issue they have become aware of through their community work.

Students often come to the school with ideas for social change initiatives. One particularly notable example is the Block Party for Peace. Around a decade ago, there was terrible community violence during Spring Break. Returning after the holidays, students wanted to do something about it. They decided to organise an event to bring together the local community and, moreover, promote a message of non-violence. Simple activities like playing basketball and sharing food together demonstrate the ability of the community to co-exist peacefully and offer students an opportunity to share their serious political messages. On the day we visit, the school has just received its latest state report, in which they have achieved the top grade for building ties and trust with families and the local community. The school also does well on standard measures of school performance including graduation rates, which are higher than the state-wide average. Jeff Palladino, school principal, explains to us that more than this, they are proud to have shown many students that they can be intellectuals and bring about real-world change.

> **"Sometimes our young people can't believe they're doing the things they're doing."**
> - Sue Schutt, deputy principal

As we were writing this report, news came in from the school's headteacher Jeff Palladino that students had successfully petitioned the New York City Parks Department to change the name of the street outside the school in honour of Fannie Lou Hamer in celebration of the 100th anniversary of her birth.

Blue School, Manhattan, New York

At Blue School in Seaport, Manhattan, children are encouraged to find their voice from the tender age of two years old. In many ways, it couldn't be more different from Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School: a private, fee-paying, elementary and middle school serving a significantly more affluent population. However, the school has a similarly strong commitment to developing student voice, albeit coming from a different starting point – an acknowledgement of the relative privilege of pupils.

> **"We try to build their sense of duty as a privileged child to give something back."**
> - Pat Lynch, primary director

Pupils at Blue School do this through 'big studies' that deliberately connect children with the outside world and help them to understand how they can make a positive impact in the world. The projects tend to have an organic genesis: if students become interested in something and the teacher spots an opportunity for learning, they capitalise on this. For example, during regular visits to a local playground, pupils aged 5- and 6-years-old spotted a lot of cigarette butts and wanted to clean them up. The teacher spotted an opportunity for a study and encouraged the pupils to ask questions about where the cigarettes had come from, what their effect was and what could be done to solve the situation. Through their research, students discovered that it was illegal to drop cigarettes there. With the teacher's guidance, they wrote a letter to the council to seek permission to put up signs reminding park users of this, which pupils designed themselves. When cigarettes continued to appear, the pupils investigated further, finding the cigarettes mostly came from employees at local offices where they were not permitted to smoke outside. They spoke to office management about this and drew a ring 25 feet around the area to remind locals that you cannot legally smoke within this distance of a playground.

Figure 7

The teacher had been able to weave in elements of maths (measuring out the boundary), persuasive writing (to the council) and graphic design (making the signs) to the study. Meanwhile, pupils realised the power of their voices, and it inspired future work visiting local parks and playgrounds to examine upkeep. In doing so, they have discovered the differences between provision available in different communities – correlated with socio-economic circumstances of the local population – and they are now lobbying for change on this front.

In other year groups, students have carried out book drives (where children encourage those in their community to donate books to be distributed to those who wouldn't normally have access to them), voter registration as part of the mid-term elections, and explorations of the impact of their community on sea life. In all these studies, teachers are committed to ensuring children can develop in all three dimensions of the school's 'balance model': academic mastery, self and social development and creative thinking. They recognise that to think creatively, students must first have knowledge of the issue they are responding to, and that they must collaborate with

others and demonstrate empathy to bring about the difference they wish to see in the world. They acknowledge that they are in a distinct position to be able to do the work they do. Sitting outside the public-school system, they have more freedom to pursue learning opportunities as they arise, and small class sizes enable teachers to be creative in their approach.

They also benefit from the networks of parents, who can link them in with interesting individuals and organisations who can enable visits, and from the resources that parents offer. For example, parents donated books as part of the book drive that students ran, and they donated coats as part of a homelessness drive.

Developing global citizens

Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High and the Blue School are generally focussed on issues that arise or manifest themselves in the community immediately surrounding their school. The next two schools in this chapter look to develop this locally-focussed active citizenship, while also having a desire to develop global citizens.

There is an increasing awareness that peoples across the world are not only interconnected by technology. We are currently witnessing the greatest levels of migration on record, and the global refugee population is the largest it has ever been.[77] Though the Western media might not always report conflicts in far-flung countries, it is no longer possible for us to ignore their effects. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to turn a blind eye to the contribution of our lifestyles to the displacement of families across the world, with 200 million people due to be displaced by climate change by 2050 according to current estimates.[78] It is becoming clear that we are not only interconnected but are also interdependent, with actions in one place affecting the wellbeing and prosperity of millions of people across the world, and with those living in privilege having a disproportionate social and environmental effect on the lives of their less advantaged counterparts.[79]

The International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum is pioneering in that it emphasises the importance of helping students to become responsible members of the global community that must come together if we are to tackle climate change and achieve peace, alongside being responsible members of their local and national communities.[80] In this section, we explore two schools – United World College Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean International School – that pursue these goals of the IB curriculum in a particularly ambitious way.

UWC Adriatic, Duino

When we first arrive in the beautiful village of Duino, which sits atop cliffs overlooking the Adriatic Sea, we struggle to distinguish the school buildings from the rest of the village, dotted as they are between local cafes, shops and houses. As communications director Amanda de Felice notes, "we don't have walls between us and the community, so it's easier for us to be integrated". The result of this physical integration is that students pass villagers regularly as they move from one class to the next, exchanging pleasantries at first, and getting to know the locals over time.

The college is home to around 200 students aged 16 to 19 years old from over 80 different countries, who board in residences throughout the village. It is part of a network of 17 United World Colleges, founded with a commitment to an education for peace and sustainability, and deliberating admitting students from a range of nationalities and backgrounds. Students follow the International Baccalaureate programme of study, which includes a formal service component that all students must complete as part of 'CAS': Creativity, Activity and Service. In total, students are expected to spend around 3 to 4 hours per week on such activities, which usually encompass an arts/cultural activity, a physical/sporting activity and a form of volunteering. Students document their engagement in CAS through a series of written reflections that they discuss and review with tutors.

As in other IB schools, at UWC Adriatic, time for these activities is integrated into the school timetable, allowing much more scope for students to engage in such activities than at a typical state school where service, for example, is not part of the curriculum. It is written into staff contracts that they must supervise at least one CAS activity, and the school covers insurance for all students to allow them to volunteer in the community even if under the age of 18. Staff also note that the fact of being a residential school affords them additional time to engage students in these activities during evenings and weekends that wouldn't ordinarily be available at day schools. Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that every UWC Adriatic student engages in service; however, the amount of service they commit to, the leadership that they display in designing their voluntary action, and the extent to which their work is in service to the needs of the local community is atypical.

The physical integration of the school with the local community means that students are able to discover needs that exist and propose responses to those needs. For example, on discovering from locals that the primary schools in and around the village offered no extra-curricular activities, students proposed running a programme of enrichment activities to plug that gap. Students bring a lot of themselves to their service activities. We had the opportunity to observe students volunteering at a church in nearby Monfalcone with Bangladeshi children whose families had come to Italy to work in the local factories. Students had started out providing homework help to the children, particularly supporting them with the Italian language, which all students at the college study. But over time, they realised they had something more to offer: an appreciation of what it means to come from one place and live in another. As the college's librarian, and supervisor for this activity, Jill Harkness described:

> "Our students realised they can help the children with that feeling that being of another culture is something to celebrate."

That afternoon, children crowded around to learn a traditional Japanese fisherman's dance from the UWC Adriatic students, led by a Japanese student who learned the dance in primary school. When she first put the music on, the children looked uncertain, but as she explained the moves in her newly acquired – but surprisingly proficient – Italian and demonstrated with her fellow students, more and more children start to join in. Soon, they were all casting imaginary nets in time to the music, grinning and giggling.

Figure 8

The students' commitment to serving the local community doesn't stop with the formal service component of the IB. In 2000, students of the college decided to form a charitable association to 'build a stronger bridge' between the college and the community: Mondo Due Mille (World 2000). Current and former students make up the board of the charity, which works with over 30 local charity and community partners and mobilises hundreds of young people from the local area to volunteer alongside UWC Adriatic students. The association encourages students from other local schools to participate through presentations in school assemblies and an annual volunteering fair that around 600 young

77. IOM (2017) World Migration Report 2018: Chapter 2. [online] Geneva: IOM. Available at: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en_chapter2.pdf [Accessed 9 April 2019].
78. Stern, N. (2006) Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change. London: HM Treasury.
79. UNESCO Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific (2018). Preparing teachers for global citizenship education: a template. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Available at: unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265452 [Accessed 9 April 2019].
80. International Baccalaureate Organization (2015) Education for a Better World [online] www.ibo.org/globalassets/digital-tookit/brochures/corporate-brochure-en.pdf [Accessed 9 April 2019].

locals attend. Recently, a group of young people who are members of the association have worked with the funding and support of the municipality to create a resource for the homeless population. Students have undertaken many hours of research to populate a regional map with details of the many services available locally to support those in need.

Furthermore, students have established a series of student councils to further their voice and action on key issues. The humanitarian aid council have volunteered in refugee camps and currently support new refugees arriving in Monfalcone by translating official documents for them and assisting them in finding and applying for jobs. The politics council have been involved in demonstrations and marches locally on issues that matter to the student population. The gratitude of the Duino community for all that the students contribute locally was evident in the Pocket Money Ceremony that we had the pleasure of attending while we were there. A foundation created in the memory of a villager who had been concerned about some of the college's students walking around in winter without coats gives 'pocket money' each year to the college's neediest students. This year, it was awarded to students from Lebanon, Syria, Nigeria, Pakistan and South Sudan. Locals also support refugee students, and others who cannot easily return home during the holidays, by acting as host families. This is part of the college's 'Addottami' (adopt me) programme, which also matches families with students who'd like to regularly share a Sunday lunch with them to practice their Italian and learn about the local culture. Students explain that the exchange goes both ways as families sometimes want to practice their English or learn about the various countries and cultures that students come from.

As well as having a firm focus on creating positive change in the local community, the school also aims to develop excellent global citizens; students with the values and competencies to take action on issues that affect people across the world. In 2018, students developed and ran a conference called Youth Inspiring Change for students across the region to attend. It aimed to spread the message that young people can bring about concrete, positive change in the world, and encourage local young people to join a movement for youth-led change. One workshop at the conference was about combatting some of the stereotypes that prevent people from different countries working together to bring about change. A panel of students contributed, including a Singaporean student speaking about the damaging effect of the stereotype of high-achieving Asian students, and a Nigerian student on what it means for him when people associate him with the Ebola crisis.

Another student-led initiative is an annual TEDx event. At the most recent of these, one student presented about the damaging effects of populism around the world and how young people who lead in the future must build a positive image of the way the world should look, rather than focussing on what the 'other side' have got wrong. Many student councils are also focussed on global issues. For example, on the evening that we arrived, the sustainability council were meeting for a presentation on the new IPPC report on global warming and to discuss actions that students can take to support its recommendations.

There is no denying that UWC Adriatic is at an advantage in being able to unleash this sort of leadership in its students: they are selected on the basis of their commitment to becoming leaders for peace and sustainability. Many of the students we spoke to reported that they were not confident in their ability to bring about change when they first arrived at the college. Thanks to the deliberately small student population, students are able to build strong relationships with their peers and with teachers. While this is not replicable in every school, there are elements of their approach that could be. Many school staff have interesting backgrounds that they bring to their work and share with students. More than one had worked in refugee camps, and several of them were trained as psychologists. There was also a consistent commitment across the staff we met, to encouraging and supporting students to run with their own initiatives, and a belief that developing students socially was as important as developing them academically.

These attitudes and values undoubtedly stemmed from the leadership style of school leader Dr Mike Price who speaks passionately about why high academic performance is not the be all and end all, and who believes in giving his staff the greatest degree of autonomy that he can to run their own initiatives and pursue their passions. He also practices what he preaches; taking on a 'tutor group' of students each year to whom he acts as a mentor and provides pastoral support. Over the monthly tutorial dinner that Mike and his wife Liz host at their apartment, it is clear that they formed meaningful relationships with these students and are therefore perfectly placed to encourage their nascent passions for making a positive change in the world.

Eastern Mediterranean International School, Ramat Hasharon

Eastern Mediterranean International School (EMIS) in the suburbs of Tel Aviv has much in common with UWC Adriatic, owing no doubt to the founder being inspired to start the school by his experiences as a student at a United World College. However, here the commitment to developing global citizens is even more evident.

The school's mission is to be a school that educates for peace and sustainability in the Middle East. Their approach to achieving this is underpinned by a unique admissions model. Using a proportional selection system, it admits 20 percent Israeli students, 20 percent Palestinian and Middle Eastern Arab students, and 60 percent international students each year.

EMIS provides 90 to 95 percent scholarships to Palestinian students, refugees and asylum seekers, and those from conflict zones. Some other schools aiming to bring together Palestinian and Israeli students have done so on a 50-50 basis, but EMIS deliberately chose to include students from other countries to create an environment in which peace in other global contexts could also be explored and to dilute potential tension.

It is not an easy admissions model to deliver, and it requires persistence from staff when it comes to obtaining visas and permits. For example, the school worked for months to secure a travel permit for a student coming from Gaza, meaning that the student joined the school late; six weeks into the academic year. The school noted that there can also be difficulties for some students with getting the permission and support of their families to attend the school. A Palestinian student from Bethlehem noted that families like his, living in urban areas, are more likely to be liberal and support the choice to travel to Israel to attend this school than families in rural Palestine. Such students would also have to consider that it might be difficult to visit their families at weekends and in holidays with the obstacles of checkpoints and permits.

Students live in dorms with peers from other nationalities. Maya Kogan-Elias, director of admissions, explained how this simple fact breaks down stereotypes that students may have previously held of one another. In the Global Politics element of the IB, students have the opportunity to examine important current affairs issues, their background and potential solutions. This includes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and teachers expertly facilitate debates, encouraging students to see things from other perspectives, asking for robust evidence to back up their arguments, and challenging them if they resort to stereotypes or clichés. Students are explicitly taught conflict resolution, and they have opportunities to put their knowledge into practice through EMIS initiatives such as the annual Peace Simulation, conducted by an academic from Tel Aviv University, Dr Sapir Handelman. Dr Handelman leads the 24-hour Peace Simulation, during which half the group are assigned as 'Israelis' and half are assigned as 'Palestinians' (usually engineered so that Israelis are given the role of Palestinians and vice versa to understand other perspectives) and students have to negotiate a peace settlement.

However, the school doesn't settle at educating its own students for peace. It has also established an annual conference called Youth Organized Collaboration of Peace and Sustainability (YOCOPAS) to spread its mission and encourage a movement globally. Schools from neighbouring countries and across the world are invited to attend. The number of schools participating in YOCOPAS have steadily increased each year. In October 2018, when we

Figure 9

attended the conference, delegations of teachers and students from 12 schools participated. The majority of these were from Palestine and Israel, and two were from Europe (Denmark and Bosnia). Over the course of the conference, students attend lectures and workshops conducted predominantly by external, international experts on conflict, post-conflict and conflict resolution. Alongside this, there is a programme of workshops for teachers, to support them to teach about these issues in their own schools. The intention is that participating schools return to their region or country and share the experiences and new perspectives they've learned at YOCOPAS. This spreads knowledge and understanding beyond the confines of the conference, creating a movement that is shared and spread. The conference is organised by a committee of EMIS students who invite speakers, develop the programme of activities and manage logistics during the conference. Students also run workshops and give talks to share what they have learned and experienced in their time at EMIS.

When students speak about EMIS, they often reference the annual project week as one of their most formative experiences. Each year, the students and staff select a theme to focus on and a series of excursions and activities are planned to explore that theme. Last year, the theme was borders, and the students visited the various borders of Israel including a medical centre at the border with Syria. They also visited the Gaza border where they heard bomb alerts signalling that there was 20 seconds to find shelter.

> **"These trips allow you to understand the conflict better and show you what the media doesn't."**
> – EMIS student

The theme for this academic year is Community; an idea proposed by a student and that the school are interpreting in a number of different ways. In the first half of Communities week, students will assemble in the morning and be split up onto eight different minibuses taking them to different communities all over Israel to understand cultural and social differences and contrasting ways of life. Following this, they will spend 2 to 3 days in Jerusalem to examine the variety of communities there in a densely-populated city. They will consider what constitutes a community, exploring themes such as geographical, religious and social communities. They will explore how tensions arise between different communities and think about different conceptualisations of community that could overcome tensions. There will also be training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for teachers, focussing on the community of teachers both within the school and beyond and how they can collaborate with each other.

EMIS founder and CEO Oded Rose explains that the impact of the school's focus on educating students to become global citizens is clear when you look at the alumni who have graduated from the school over the years. Many of them have become "social changemakers" in their native country, and some return to the school to share their experiences as part of the YOCOPAS conference or in talks that happen throughout the school year. The students we interviewed had certainly been inspired by their experiences at EMIS. One girl in her final year had decided to take a gap year before going to university to volunteer at a refugee camp in Palestine. The school also has an impact on the families of its students. Oded Rose and school principal Gili Roman told us of a recent EMIS graduation ceremony during which an Israeli mother and a Palestinian mother gave a joint presentation about peace and working together, provoking tears in the audience.

Gili and his leadership team are working hard to cultivate relationships with their Palestinian counterparts to deepen and widen the impact of the model. Their efforts have resulted in some tangible successes. EMIS has established a strong relationship with Dr Nedal Jayousi, director of the National Erasmus Office in Palestine. Dr Jayousi is vital to recruiting Palestinian students for admissions and for enrolling Palestinian schools in YOCOPAS. Furthermore, EMIS has been granted special permission from the Israeli and Palestinian Education Ministries to allow Palestinian students to study at Israeli universities, which is extremely rare. Over time, they are keen to pursue more opportunities for educational diplomacy between Israel and Palestine in addition to the direct impact that they have on students and their families.

4

Preparing students for further study and work

"We make sure that students have visited the university as much as possible by the time that they leave school because we know that there's a sense of entitlement to go to university in private schools that isn't present in mainstream schools."

Rebecca Tigue, head of school, University of Birmingham School

"78 percent of our alumni have either graduated from college or are on track to graduate, compared with a national average of 15 percent from similar backgrounds graduating from college. The work program is a key part of that: most of the students have never been downtown before and they don't think it's open to them. Then they go [on their work placement] and they realise that these people [working in corporates] are no smarter than they are."

Catalina Gutierrez, head of corporate work study programme, Cristo Rey New York High School

Young people from less advantaged backgrounds are significantly less likely to go on to the top-ranked universities and the most competitive and lucrative professions than their more advantaged peers. Research from the Sutton Trust shows that in England, children who have attended private (fee-paying) schools are seven times more likely to get a place at Oxford or Cambridge Universities than their peers who attended state schools (known as public schools in other parts of the world). There is also a North-South divide in Oxbridge access, with only 0.8 percent of state school students from the North or Midlands of England getting places, compared with 1.5 percent of students from the South of the country.[81] Similarly, in the USA, there are concerns about the low proportions of students at top ranked university on Pell Grants (for applicants from families with an income of less than $50,000).[82] One contributing factor to unequal college admissions in the States is a phenomenon called 'legacy admissions' whereby students with a family connection to the university are given preferential treatment within the admissions process. For example, it is reported that at Harvard, 33 percent of applicants with a family member who is a Harvard alumnus are admitted, compared with an average admission rate of less than six percent.[83]

Owing to the tendency of competitive employers to recruit from the highest-ranked universities, the disparity that we see in higher education is reflected in the workforce.[84] A 2016 Sutton Trust report shows that '78 percent of leading barristers, 74 percent of the judiciary, 54 percent of leading journalists, 51 percent of top civil servants and 40 percent of top medics' are Oxford and Cambridge University graduates.[85] Similarly, in the USA, Robert Putnam has described the 'opportunity gap' between kids from 'have' and those from 'have-not' backgrounds.[86] The gap can, in part, be explained by the endemic advantages of having highly-educated and economically secure parents, but Richard V Reeves has also explored the myriad ways in which the upper-middle class in the USA actively hoard opportunity including by "rigging internships" for their children and the sons and daughters of their friends.[87]

In this chapter, we explore the work of two future-focussed schools who have a goal of dismantling the odds stacked against their pupils; enabling them to access higher education and pursue careers on the same terms as their more privileged peers. At the University of Birmingham School, founded – as the name suggests – by the University of Birmingham, the work of the university and that of the school are closely intertwined to offer students from the poorest areas of the city exposure to a university environment that will be unfamiliar to many of their families. Meanwhile, at the Cristo Rey New York School, the entire school schedule has been overhauled to offer low-income students access to work experience opportunities with some of the city's most competitive employers. In both cases, deep partnership working – with the university and employers respectively – is crucial to successful delivery of the schools' vision for a fairer world.

81. Montacute, R. and Cullinane, C (2018). Access to advantage: The influence of schools and place on admissions to top universities [online] Sutton Trust. Available at: www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/AccesstoAdvantage-2018.pdf [Accessed 9 April 2019].
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87. Reeve, R. (2017). Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why That is a Problem, and What to Do About it. Washington: Brookings Institution.

University of Birmingham School, Birmingham

Nestled in the Selly Oak Campus of its university sponsor, the University of Birmingham School is a clear extension of the University of Birmingham's commitment to being a civic university, welcoming students of all backgrounds. As Head of School Rebecca Tigue explained when we visited, like the university, "the school also had to be a school for all of Birmingham".

This commitment has informed the school's "nodal" approach to admissions. Working with the council, they identified the four areas in Birmingham with the highest levels of deprivation and the fewest outstanding schools to be the areas from which they admit pupils – their four nodes. In the eyes of the founders, not only would this offer exposure to higher education to those least likely to come from university-going families, but it would also promote social cohesion. Birmingham is known as a city that welcomes people of many different ethnicities, faiths and cultures, but there are tensions between monocultural communities that have developed in parts of the city.[88]

It is not just the inclusive vision of the university that flows through to the school, but also the ideas from its research. The most ubiquitous example is the school's focus on character education, informed by the work of the Jubilee Centre at the University of Birmingham. The Jubilee Centre argue that given children's experiences at school are formative, schools should actively and explicitly deliver character education to support pupils to develop "positive personal strengths called virtues".[89] The Centre's thinking has influenced the school's vision and daily operations in important ways. Virtues are explicitly taught for 15 minutes each day, they are modelled by teachers, and extensive opportunities are provided for students to develop their character, including through social action.

Every week, Thursday afternoons are given over to activities with external partners, most of which are volunteering or campaigning. Students can search a database of activities in an online platform and opt into the ones that interest them the most, though a staff member may guide a student to sign up to an activity that they feel will be particularly beneficial.

It is not only the university's research on character education that influences the school. The close partnership between the two institutions helps bridge the gap that often exists between research on education and practice in the classroom.

> **"There is research about how students are learning but we're not a research-led profession very often."**
> – Rebecca Tigue, head of school

The University of Birmingham School hosts 'Rush Hour Lectures' on a Tuesday, where academics from the university are invited to speak about their research and how their findings could inform practice to teachers and other school staff. Staff from local schools are also invited and have the opportunity to hear about the latest research on everything from educational interventions for autistic children to race inequalities in education.

The university has also supported school staff in more practical ways. A number of teachers had studied classics or Latin but hadn't thought there would be opportunities to teach these subjects in a state school. The university's Classics Department offered some support to those teachers to build their knowledge and confidence, and they are now teaching some Latin once a fortnight. The relationship is entirely reciprocal. All new teacher trainees at the university spend their first week at the University of Birmingham School. Teachers lead a series of workshops for them and each trainee has the chance to shadow a staff member.

88. Birmingham Council (2018) Community Cohesion Strategy for Birmingham. Forward together to build a fair and inclusive city for everyone [online] Available at: https://bit.ly/2PjId4m [Accessed 10 April 2019].
89. Jubilee Centre (2017) A Framework for Character Education in Schools [online] University of Birmingham. Available at: www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework%20for%20Character%20Education.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2019].

Students benefit directly from the relationship with the university. A 14-year-old student who gave us a tour of the school explained that students regularly attend lectures at the university. They centre on academic research, but the content has been adapted for secondary school students. For example, he distinctly remembered a lecture on bacteria where students were shown how bacteria planted in the middle of a maze were able to find the most efficient route to food placed at the maze's exits, demonstrating that it has a sensory system despite not having a brain. The school is committed to making sure that every student visits the university as many times as possible during their time at school, as well as giving them opportunities to visit other universities. While staff acknowledge that university won't be the route every child will choose, they want them all to know it's a possibility that is open to them.

Of course, few schools were founded by a university. However, as head of school Rebecca Tigue points out, Widening Participation in higher education from underrepresented groups is a national priority, with much focus on those from low-income backgrounds, from families where no one has previously gone to university, and from certain ethnic minority backgrounds. In 2017/18 alone, universities in England spent over £830m on Widening Participation Activities.[90] Universities are held to account for the diversity of their campuses through data regularly released on the diversity of their intakes, which includes data on the proportion of students admitted from state schools.[91]

In this context, universities are often actively seeking to develop partnerships with state schools, especially those serving low-income neighbourhoods. Rebecca suggests that schools should take advantage of this opening, yet she also acknowledges that identifying the right person to reach out to within the university can be challenging and schools cannot always find time for this task among the plethora of priorities they juggle. A good starting point for schools looking to develop a relationship with a university would be to contact its access or widening participation team, but the University of Birmingham School has also built relationships with individual departments or faculties. Many departments will offer 'outreach' activities to schools, which you can find out about on their websites. Taking advantage of these is a first step to getting to know staff within that department and building longer-term relationships that could benefit teachers as well as students. One great enabler of this this relationship-building work is the existence of a staff post dedicated to supporting partnership-building with universities, businesses and charities beyond the school gates. The school doesn't view this as a cost, but rather as an investment in building the type of education they want to see.

Cristo Rey New York High School, New York

The Cristo Rey Network of 35 high schools across the USA takes a very distinctive approach to preparing young people for the future. From 9th Grade (age 14 to 15), students spend a day per week doing a work placement. The placement is part of the Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP), which intends to improve the access of students from low-income communities to college and jobs. As Catalina Gutierrez, head of the corporate work study programme at Cristo Rey New York High School (CRNY) puts it:

> **"If you read about social mobility, a lot of advantage comes down to networks. Our students don't have the chance to intern at their parents' businesses, but with the Corporate Work Study Program they go on placement with top corporate employers and they become so polished."**

90. Connell-Smith, A. and Hubble, S. (2018) Widening Participation Strategy in Higher Education [online] House of Commons Library. January 2018. Available at: researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8204 [Accessed 10 April 2019].
91. HESA (2019). Widening Participation: UK Performance Indicators 2017/18 [online] Available: www.hesa.ac.uk/news/07-02-2019/widening-participation-tables [Accessed 10 April 2019].

Students at Cristo Rey New York High School are from relatively low-income backgrounds and often start high school "academically behind". They are selected to join the school based on two key criteria: their families are not able to afford college prep schools, which are typically very expensive, and they are not the top academic performers. Most are gaining B or C grades in their middle school work and the average family income for a CRNY student is $30,000. In order to set these students up for success, Catalina explained to us, "they often have to make six years' progress in four years".

Given this, it is perhaps surprising that students spend a day per week out of the classroom on placement at law firms, banks, engineering firms, fashion houses and even educational technology companies. The Corporate Work Study Program begins every year with a three-week bootcamp in the summer before the new cohort of 9th Graders start high school in September. During these three weeks, they receive catch-up classes in maths and English to prepare them for the academic aspect of high school life. Alongside this, they receive a comprehensive induction into the soft and technical skills needed for their work placements. This includes classes on using Microsoft Office and making phone calls, and experiential learning. For example, volunteers from one of the school's corporate partners, Goldman Sachs, create a series of role play scenes that students participate in. One sees them going for lunch with a senior member of staff in which they have to consider both their dining manners and what constitutes appropriate conversation. Another requires them to choose – from a box of possible items – suitable decorations for their work station. Students also attend the company where they will do their internship for a day to do a mock filing project.

When school starts, students spend a day each week at their workplace. During our visit, we accompanied a first-year student to his placement at Satterlee Stephens LLP. He takes the subway with the other students going on placement that day, accompanied by school staff who drop him off at work. He explains that he was very scared and shy on his first day at work because he didn't know what to expect. However, he soon realised that everyone was kind – especially his supervisor – and he set himself the ambitious task of getting to know everyone's name in the business. This forced him to get out of his comfort zone and introduce himself, politely and professionally, to any staff he came across in the course of a day's work. He has only been there for two months, but he has already rotated around a number of different departments and has started to gain more responsibility. For example, he is proud to be entrusted with answering the phone in the service department.

The staff at the firm spoke fondly of the many CRNY students they have worked with over the years and they have kept in touch with more than a few. Some have gone on to pursue careers in law such as a recent intern who is now studying law at Columbia University. Others have gone on to pursue careers in different fields including engineering. The firm's staff explain that the variety of work that students are exposed to, as a result of the rotation they do around departments, means that they are set up for a range of possible future roles. The student tells us that he really wants to study politics at college, a career in which his nascent networking skills will no doubt prove fruitful. He is in a team with four other students who each do the Satterlee Stephens placement for one day per week, meaning that the corporate partner has the equivalent of a full-time staff member.

Alongside the placement, students also follow an ongoing Corporate Work Study Program curriculum during their four days in school each week. In the first year of high school, this mostly centres around basic IT and telephone skills for the workplace. Gradually, the content becomes more advanced so that by their final year, students are doing research on key opportunities and challenges in the workplace. They interview colleagues and prepare formal presentations to share their learning. The school's president Dan Dougherty explains that they are increasingly working to align the Corporate Work Study Program curriculum with the core curriculum. For example, in science, students are being encouraged to use the Excel skills acquired through CWSP to record and analyse data from their experiments as scientists do in their work.

Students speak effusively about their experience of placements. Whether they have ended up in a job in their dream industry or not, they reflect on the lessons they have learned that could apply in any workplace. Over lunch, a student explains that he has become more confident to speak to new people because he mixes with so many different people at work. Catalina notices how students become more proactive through their placements. They learn how to ask questions of adults in a professional environment and specifically, how to ask for help or for new tasks when they finish the thing they are working on. They bring these attitudes or ways of behaving back into the classroom, and their academic teachers comment on it. Students' progress in soft and technical skills is assessed three times per year, with their supervisor from work contributing to the assessment alongside the student and the school staff. Data collected demonstrates strong progress in students' communication skills and their ability to give and receive feedback. The school also monitor destinations of students after high school. The latest data shows that 64 percent of CRNY students go on to graduate college compared with an average of 11 percent of students from similar backgrounds.

The relationship between companies and the school is based on mutual benefit. Catalina describes the uphill battle that corporates in America face when trying to improve their diversity: they are recruiting from universities that themselves have not yet achieved a good level of representation of students from low-income and ethnic minority backgrounds. Therefore, corporates are very keen to engage with schools serving low-income communities to reach students early and encourage them to set their sights high for college. Many of them pay the salary for their work placement from diversity budgets, and others see the programme as a key facet of their social responsibility strategy. Corporates are happy to pay a wage because students fulfil roles that they need to be done, and the placement often offers an opportunity for staff development: many junior staff get their first experience of line management or coaching with the CRNY students they supervise. They receive training from the school before they embark on the role, so this represents another added benefit for the corporate partner. For this academic year, the school has well over 100 corporate partners across around 20 industries.[92]

This does not mean to say it is easy for the school to secure corporate partners. Catalina's Corporate Work Study Program team consists of four staff members (a combination of permanent staff and interns) who dedicate a significant amount of time to securing partnerships. They are well-placed to do so because they have prior experience in industry as well as experience in schools: Catalina used to be a corporate lawyer. This understanding of the needs of both sides of the partnership helps build robust and lasting relationships. For example, Satterlee Stephens LLP has been offering placements to CRNY students since 2006. The placements represent an important income stream for the school, covering 40 percent of the institution's running costs. Corporates often offer grants or donations to the school in addition to this by, for example, purchasing VIP tables at school fundraising events – one such event took place the night before we visited. The school still needs to make up the remainder of its budget. This means that all families contribute something, with fees ranging from $600-2,000 per year depending on the family's means. The charitable arm of the school (a registered 501(c)(3)), which houses the Corporate Work Study Program, runs payroll over the summer so that students wishing to do a summer placement with their corporate partner to earn additional money can do so. Some students use this money to pay their fees for the following year where they know that their family cannot afford this outlay.

The leadership of Cristo Rey New York School acknowledge that it could be more challenging to develop such a model in a state-funded school where externally-imposed standards limit the scope for innovation. They note that it would be easier to reimagine the school week in a brand-new school, especially under the charter school movement or in its UK equivalents: academies and free schools. The Cristo Rey Network offer support to schools looking to adopt its model in full, helping them to think through key aspects of feasibility including sourcing sufficient employer partners to make the provision of work placements for all students viable. Even for the many schools who wouldn't be in a position to rehaul their school model, the Cristo Rey story exemplifies the eagerness of employers to engage with schools – something that more schools could capitalise on. Indeed, at School 21 in East London, all Year 10 students (aged 14 to 15) are required to complete a 'Real World Learning' project. They spend half a day each week in a workplace and are tasked with solving a problem that faces the employer during their placement.[93] For example, students on placement at the Ministry of Justice are working on a project responding to the following question: with the continual restriction on legal aid, how can we ensure wide-ranging and fair access to justice? Employer partners range from national retailers to small community organisations. The experience gives students a much deeper understanding of workplaces than they would glean during the standard one-week work placement, and they make a meaningful contribution to the employer that hosts them.

92. Cristo Rey New York High School (2019) Our Corporate Partners [online] Available at: www.cristoreyny.org/our-corporate-partners [Accessed 10 April 2019].

93. School 21 (2019) Real-world learning project [online] Available at: www.school21.org.uk/rwlp [Accessed 10 April 2019].

Conclusion

The schools featured in this report demonstrate the wide range of contributions that connections with the world beyond the gates can make to a school's educational mission, furthering students' knowledge and skills, building their civic pride and cultural capital, developing good citizens and setting them up for success in their future studies and work. Partnerships with the world beyond the gate are especially effective when they contribute to a school fulfilling its core purpose, and are woven into the day-to-day life of the school, including curriculum delivery.

In turn, the connections that these schools have made with charities, public services, employers and individuals in their locality contribute to their communities. Their partnership work supports wider efforts to alleviate poverty, diversify the pool of young people entering higher education and competitive workforces, tackle local and global social issues and give local people a sense of pride in where they come from. What's more, they give all those who have opportunities to meet with students a deeper understanding of what young people can contribute to the world – slowly but surely combatting pernicious negative stereotypes about the youth of today.

We hope that those reading this report will come away with a strong sense of the benefits of school-community engagement. To all those working in schools, whether your school's intake is local or international, we hope you feel equipped with practical ideas about how best to build these connections. It isn't easy and requires both time and commitment. Therefore, there must be a clear sense of vision driving the partnerships you build and a strong understanding of how those partnerships will contribute your school's overall goals. However, as noted in the executive summary, there are steps that can be taken to make the route to becoming a school without walls as straightforward and impactful as possible.

We also hope that those of you in a position to be a potential partner to schools, whether working for businesses, charities and community organisations, cultural institutions, public services, universities or colleges, will find inspiration for how you can most effectively fulfil your civic duties. We hope that you also have a sense of the significant contribution that working with young people today could make to your organisation both now and in years to come.

To the parents and carers of young people attending school, we hope you have a sense from the stories herein of the important contribution you can make to enabling schools to thrive. Strong partnerships between parents and educators are the foundation for a successful school community.

There is also a critical role for policymakers and others with the power to make funding decisions to play. The political support and accompanying resources available to New York Community Schools for activity with families and the wider community were also available to UK schools during the early 2000s. Without such support, it is significantly more difficult to take the approaches of the beacon schools featured in this report. They do so thanks to the dedication of staff members, the support of charitable organisations and by making purposeful budgeting decisions that prioritise this work. We must ask ourselves what we want education to be and bring resources to bear to realise that vision.

We all have an important role to play in ensuring that every child has access to an education that develops their curiosity, creativity and kindness. We can all encourage in young people the sense of agency and creative possibility that come from realising just how many ways they can find meaning and create value in the world.

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