



# Directory 2023-24

## Winner

**Project Title:** WGSB Student Enrichment/WGSB Careers Education Programme/WGSB MINDS

**School:** Wirral Grammar School for Boys

**Project Lead:** Keita Byrne, Adrienne Smith, Simone Wilson

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**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

Keita Byrne – Student Enrichment Lead

Developing students beyond the classroom is something we believe is integral to the values and ethos of WGSB; we strive to empower and equip students to enable them to be competent and capable citizens, prepared for life beyond education. In 2022, Student Enrichment was reviewed and enhanced to emphasize the value of wider education, employability and soft skills, accessed through a range of optional activities and opportunities beyond academic pursuits and outcomes. The work undertaken to develop the processes and activities on offer aimed to build resilience and confidence beyond the classroom and allow students to develop transferable skills, support and contribute to the community in which they are integral, and to experience different educational opportunities.

Enrichment provision prior to 2022 had provided a basic platform from which to build a more comprehensive and rigorous enrichment programme. The previous model was ambiguous in its overall purpose and value, leaving colleagues, students and parents unsure of the tangible and comprehensive benefits of Enrichment. When relaunching the provision in 2022, we began by reviewing the intent and purpose of our offering which involved planning discussions with colleagues, our Headteacher and Head of Sixth Form. From this, we were able to clarify the ethos at the centre of our provision as well as the practical framework from which to offer a breadth and variety of opportunities and experiences to all students. This complemented our school values as our provision strove to help students aspire to enhance their personal best whilst it also created opportunities to demonstrate care and compassion in the community. Elements of the programme developed existing relationships enjoyed by the school, whilst we also looked for new opportunities to develop a core offering of activities to meet student needs and interests. As a new curriculum development and being new in post, it was important to address the need for longevity in our procedures and practices before securing and embedding a more comprehensive and broader range of activities within our programme.

In 2023, to ensure that our provision continued to be student centric, we conducted a review using our school's Independent Student Voice (ISV) mechanism. Reviewing student feedback offered, it was evident that the provision of Enrichment is highly valued by students. The sample cohort stated that it gave them a 'break from learning, helped them to de-stress, provided them with opportunities during

school hours to develop their personal skills and to build the skills they would go on to discuss in their UCAS applications/ interviews.' In addition, students felt that 'enrichment at WGSB set their Sixth Form experience apart from people that they know in other schools and this opportunity to develop personal and professional skills has helped to set them apart from other candidates with relation to applications.' However, our ISV model also highlighted areas for future development and we were keen to build this into our planning; ideas included; the logging of activities on skills tracking platforms (Unifrog) and a more proactive method of supporting all students to access a range of activities throughout their time in the sixth form. Our ISV also supported the importance of increased communication to promote forthcoming opportunities and their associated skill areas to help all students select a varied programme which will best help their personal development over the course of the provision.

Simone Wilson – Careers & Progression Manager

Heads of Department were asked to conduct a Curriculum Careers Audit in 2021. There was a distinct lack of knowledge in several areas and each subject was able to identify areas for improvement both within their own departments and across the whole school. Overall, curriculum teams rated themselves at an average of 2.58 out of 5. They also felt that experiences were few and far between for students to engage with professionals from a variety of sectors.

However, there were also many positives and elements of Careers provision that were taking place, but teachers were finding it difficult to classify this within their work. Therefore, the Careers programme set out to design a structured programme which was explicit in what constituted a careers activity and what purpose the activity would serve.

A survey was also carried out amongst students to gain their perceptions of the Careers provision in school. Whilst many students had an idea about what they aspired to achieve, there was limited insight into the other opportunities that were available to them. Sixth Form students were mixed in their reviews of the Careers provision with some stating that the information provided was too basic and that they were conducting their own research. They also felt that the Careers Adviser was located too far out of the way in school and topics such as interview preparation, finance and alternatives to university should be covered in more depth.

The focus of the survey with younger students was to find out about their interests and to ensure that we cater for them as best as possible moving forwards through the breadth of activities planned within the programme.

The main needs identified were:

- To improve student knowledge and understanding of a wider variety of sectors
- To increase confidence amongst staff in the delivery of careers activities

We set out to achieve this by:

- Re-writing and implementing an aspirational programme which would incorporate more large-scale events and externally delivered sessions

Adrienne Smith – Learning Mentor

The student centric mental health (MH) support we offer at WGSB is embedded within our school aims, namely the commitment to creating a culture of care and compassion that has at its centre the wellbeing of all within the community; this is led by our student MINDS Team.

Identifying the increasing mental strain some students experience due to academic pressures, formal examinations and aspects of their personal development and private lives led to a review of our mental health and welfare provision. Acutely aware of high suicide rates among young men and conscious of the reticence of some males to share their experiences and mental health concerns, we were keen to improve our provision to increase student resilience and to provide active coping mechanisms for our community: MINDS was created by our student body to provide invaluable support and has subsequently gone from strength to strength.

The MINDS Team aims to break stigmas, provide resources and spread awareness about mental health to students within and outside of the WGSB student body: it aims to ensure students are more able to cope with the demands of daily life and support their own mental health and that of others. MINDS exists to make it easier for students to identify mental health issues and specific needs and to signpost and build connections to the most appropriate support agencies. MINDS has created opportunities to access mental health training for students who are then able to offer peer to peer support, thus avoiding the potential barrier that some students may face if they can only speak to an adult support figure. The student focus embedded in the MINDS initiative at WGSB is critical to its successful evolution and it continues to evolve in response to the needs and priorities of its members and the school community it serves.

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change. Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

Keita Byrne – Student Enrichment Lead

Termly student assemblies highlight the enrichment opportunities available to students and activity information was shared with students via TEAMS and via form tutor promotion; experiential anecdotes from students are also helpful to share details and encourage others to try new opportunities. Completed activities and skill mapping was reviewed against the Skills Builder Essential Skills, and this has helped students make informed and personalised decisions regarding their developmental needs. We have also looked at supporting a wider range of activities to ensure students have a set of core activities linked to particular seasons, termly or placement specific activities to access, and to ensure an interesting variety throughout the year. These activities include; Bar Mock Trial, Basketball & Senior

Debate (Winter Term); UCAS/Apprenticeship Application Support, Golf & Silent Supervised Study (Spring Term); Tennis, LOVE Bebington Community Support & Professionals Programme (Summer Term).

Whilst student centric, buy in and support from colleagues has been key to the successful development of Enrichment. When we relaunched Enrichment, we began by presenting identified aims and desired outcomes to the School Leadership Group, our curriculum and pastoral middle management team. To ensure whole school buy-in, we then conducted staff audits on skills, qualifications and interests which could potentially be used to support a range of opportunities for students. Repeating this process annually has allowed us to offer new activities including Basketball training, completion of Mental Health Awareness and Support Training and the chance to enhance our school's communal spaces alongside our grounds team. We have enjoyed participating in competitions and activities offered by external providers as this has also allowed colleagues a chance to expand their skill set alongside offering students a chance to utilise their skills in a more formal manner. Examples of such activities include; Bar Mock Trial, Rotary Youth Speaks Competition and an Inter Schools Bouldering Competition. Empowering a range of colleagues, beyond those historically committed to activity provision, was integral to ensuring that Enrichment provision becomes part of the DNA of our school's personal development programme. This has been achieved through strengthening our pastoral leads, for example encouraging form tutors to discuss enrichment options with students on an individual basis. Discussing individual student needs in relation to post 18 destination choices, and how these opportunities complement or challenge existing student experiences and skills, has created a valuable opportunity for form tutors to positively impact students' personal development beyond their academic success and has in turn encouraged greater colleague buy-in and support for Enrichment provision.

Developing a network of external providers, able to offer opportunities for our students to volunteer and experience a range of experiences which schools itself could not offer, has been critical to our capacity to offer a diverse and exciting enrichment offer. We began by reaching out to our feeder primary schools and quickly built strong relationships with local schools willing to offer opportunities for student mentors and classroom assistants. We then expanded our outreach to local care homes, hospices, businesses and sports facilities; all of which we now have long standing relationships with and support on a regular basis. Our students have gained invaluable experiences from their volunteering in a range of local environments and the positive feedback received from our community partners suggest that these are mutually beneficial arrangements which continue to prosper and allow for further development.

Social media has also played a part in bringing the wider community on our enrichment journey with us, whether it is celebrating student successes in their placements or helping us secure additional providers for further opportunities. Sharing and promoting our networks in the local community is a fantastic way to showcase our students' good work and we value the enhanced means by which we can develop positive relationships with a range of providers. We are now in a fortunate position of schools and care homes contacting us to see if they can join our outreach programmes, further securing our school's value in the community and helping us build relationships between generations at both ends of the age spectrum.

We appreciate and maximise the value of direct communications with students' families to encourage further commitment to our enrichment provision. Parental support is key to securing regular student attendance and commitment; it also opens invaluable conversations between parents and students regarding skills needed for post-18 aspirations. Each September, we take the opportunity to meet with parents of all sixth form students to explain and promote our enrichment offering, making transparent our aims and sharing details of the opportunities on offer within the academic year. We are pleased to note that parents of students joining our sixth form from other schools have expressed the view that our enrichment provision has been a major pull factor for recruitment, helping to distinguish us from similar academic sixth forms unable to offer such comprehensive personal development offering. We gain parental permissions for student involvement in all activities, sharing details of any potential risks associated, and we maintain parental communication lines to ensure parents are aware of and involved in all stages of our provision; this has also helped to facilitate additional opportunities through parental networking.

Simone Wilson – Careers & Progression Manager

'Encouraging students to develop their skills, have the confidence to succeed and make informed decisions about the future' is the vision we created to address the gaps in our Careers provision. These aims could only be achieved if our school provided ample opportunities for students to practice, network and receive up-to-date information.

Underpinning all our careers activities are the Gatsby Benchmarks, which have helped us to design our programme and supported us in raising the profile of careers at WGSB. We consistently achieve above the national average and will secure 100% in all benchmarks by the end of this academic year. We have been endorsed as an example of good practice within the Liverpool City Region Careers Hub for Gatsby Benchmark 1: A Stable Careers Programme and won a North West Educate Award for Careers and Enterprise in November 2022. Many local schools reach out to us for support with their planning and provision.

The Careers Team has an established social media presence across several platforms which has enhanced our communications strategy. Through this medium we have secured support from parents, alumni and local businesses. Our team has been relentless in the pursuit to onboard as many quality services as possible to enhance the experiences of our students. Through networking events, webinars and forums we have conducted extensive research into innovative ways to improve our Careers provision. The outcome of this is that we have been able to provide a greater variety of opportunities for ALL year groups. Through these activities students can engage with many professionals, educational providers and industry experts helping them to decide on their next best steps at various key stages within their journey with us.

We regularly communicate opportunities with our staff, students, parents and carers via weekly Careers Planners. Every year group also has a dedicated Microsoft Teams page which is updated with work experience, apprenticeship and careers opportunities. We have devised our own Careers Information

Platform where a plethora of resources are accessible through our school website:  
<https://sites.google.com/view/wgsbcareers/>

Introductions of a Y7 Careers Day, Y10 and Y13 Mock Interviews, Y12 Next Steps: Your Future event and the whole-school celebration of National Green, Apprenticeships and Careers Weeks have connected many stakeholders within our school community, bringing about educational change as a product of our Careers programme. All events are placed on the school calendar and part of the wider strategy to engage all students, staff and parents.

Following Careers Team presentations to Senior Leaders, all curriculum areas delivered activities within lessons for National Careers Week 2024. Staff are on board with organising their own activities as they can see the benefits that Careers learning brings to their students in terms of bringing their subject 'to life'. More specific examples include: our Food department working closely with Holiday Inn Chefs who ran in-school workshops, the Physics Team invited an ex-student to talk about his journey from WGSB into a Nuclear Engineering Degree Apprenticeship and Modern Languages busted myths with students that languages can only lead to teaching and translating! The Geology department also ran their own Earth Sciences Week earlier in the year bringing in university lecturers, organising online talks with volcanologists and running practical workshops with a national company.

In person communication with students is also imperative and the Careers Team regularly delivers assemblies to all year groups outlining the purpose of the Careers programme, sharing information relevant to the year group and preparing them for forthcoming events. All students are aware of where to go should they have any queries or concerns about their future options. The Careers Team run an open-door policy and students frequently use the service which has been strategically placed on a main footfall corridor within school.

Adrienne Smith – Learning Mentor

The MINDS Team began in 2017 when we identified what we believed was a limitation in our student mental health support provision and we became focused on how best to make it more student centric; not only would students be empowered by being upskilled in identifying and supporting their own mental health needs but they would also be the best to empathise and support the needs of their peers. There was also a realisation that supporting mental health first aid development was just as critical as physical health; the latter had long been a priority and it was time to redress this balance.

Undertaking impactful and successful change in this sensitive and challenging area has not been easy and the evolution of MINDS has needed to respond to ever changing pressures on our school community, the pandemic and its mental health fallout being just one example. In the early stages, we applied to become an accelerator school for mental health, a local education authority initiative which involved a number of primary and secondary schools who met on a regular basis to discuss student mental health issues and potential strategies to support positive mental health and wellbeing.

The realisation of the benefits of collaboration with other schools and the subsequent sharing of good practice led to a close relationship with our neighbouring grammar school and ten students from Wirral Boys began to work with ten counterparts from Wirral Grammar School for Girls; the first MINDS team was born and began to work hard to improve student mental health support across the two schools, sharing resources and good practice whilst allowing school specific adaptations.

The profile of the WGSB MINDS team is promoted through regular student-led assemblies, in school displays and regular communication with students through weekly form time PowerPoint presentations; we aim to spread awareness of our support offering to all students as well as encouraging students to consider becoming involved as members. The MINDS team made tangible progress between 2017 – 2020 and raised awareness of a range of mental health issues, possible support routes available and most importantly it broke down barriers and stopped mental health challenges being a taboo topic for a boys' grammar school: then Covid-19 hit.

A return to school post lockdown brought a whole new challenge for our MINDS team and support from SLT was critical to ensure our members were supported and empowered to continue to provide support to peers in what seemed like a time of unprecedented challenge.

The national media focus on the Covid-19 mental health crisis only echoed our own school community's needs and we were determined to raise the profile and activism of our MINDS team to new heights. We were keen to maximise the opportunity to secure a student leadership / senior prefecture position to lead the MINDS team and senior students already active within MINDS were keen to take on this role. A senior prefect now leads the MINDS team, under the guidance of our Learning Mentor, and coordinates the team's work to ensure student-led and student focused strategies to support mental health. The MINDS senior prefect heads up an extended and active team which offers a range of MINDS activities and this role is now an embedded and highly valued element within our student leadership model and the school community.

Each academic year brings new members to the MINDS team and different members may approach their roles in a slightly different manner, putting their own spin on the work they do and how it is delivered to ensure maximum engagement with students in other years; what stays consistent is the commitment to supporting our students.

Some of the activities and strategies that our MINDS Team have completed and developed post 2020 include:

- MINDS Team activism during Wednesday Enrichment: this has afforded an opportunity for the MINDS team to develop and sustain a close working relationship as well as providing valuable planning time. It has also enabled Y13 MINDS members to train Y12 MINDS members for succession planning. These sessions have also been used for students to engage with outreach workshops at local primary schools, delivering sessions on how to identify and support mental health within the KS2 student body; presentations have been delivered to primary colleagues



and our MINDS teams have helped primary students to prepare mental health display boards for the schools to utilise in the future.

- Assemblies: these have been delivered at key times such as on Mental Health Awareness Day, during Mental Health Awareness Week, and during times of increased pressure for students, such as during examination periods. Ensuring assemblies are planned and delivered by students is at the heart of the spirit of MINDS and boosts a sense of shared experience and understanding; it also ensures whole-school engagement.
- Specific MINDS Team Initiatives, including; Walk & Talk, The Big Lunch Club, Y7 Wellbeing Day and Y7 Hub: These aim to support students in a variety of ways, and hopefully there is something to appeal to students of all ages. A commonality is the desire to offer an informal and relaxed approach to sharing experiences and to open up discussions about mental health. Walk & Talk is aimed at sixth form students; this is a recent student devised initiative in the form of a wellbeing walk at lunchtimes. Support offered to Y7 through the Y7 Hub aims at encouraging discussion and breaking down stigmas early.
- Martin Gallier Project (MGP) Initiative: MGP is a local charity supporting mental health initiatives and suicide prevention. We have supported this organisation for several years and our close association has resulted in us becoming the first Suicide Safe School within the UK. We have also been awarded two Special Recognition Awards for money raised by the school for the charity and by the work individuals from the school have undertaken to support MGP's work in their wider community. MGP have also supported our MINDS Team by offering its members MH Training, complementing the Mental Health First Aid training all MINDS Team members receive to support them in their role.
- MGP Conference & 3 Dads Walking: to increase awareness of mental health awareness and suicide prevention in our wider community, and to highlight the importance of mental health support within schools, our MINDS Team have presented at the first MGP Conference in 2023 and have been interviewed for on ITV News, in conjunction with MGP & 3 Dads Walking, to showcase their work.

Our MINDS Team continues to evolve and impress us, something of a challenge with an ever-changing composition, but their dedication and commitment is a constant. Their enthusiasm and desire to respond to the needs of the student body continue apace and members continue to be innovative, dynamic, and determined to make our school a safe space to discuss mental health matters, both within and beyond our school community. We hope to build on already strong relationships with local partners as MINDS takes on new initiatives.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

Keita Byrne – Student Enrichment Lead

Developing the student enrichment offering into its current position, and committing to its future evolution, has allowed us to best support the current and emerging needs of our students to help support their personal development as they move towards their chosen post-18 destination.

Enrichment opportunities have had a varied impact on students; whilst we believe they have all been positive, they have also been different and personal to each student pertinent to the options they have selected. The fact that students can select and navigate a bespoke enrichment pathway is one of the aspects of our enrichment provision of which we are most proud.

Feedback from students gained through our ISV programme highlighted that 90% of students were able to use their enrichment experiences in their UCAS and Apprenticeship applications, noting that they believed it would make them stand out in a pool of applicants, 30% of students had changed their post 18 options as a result of their chosen activities/placements and 100% of students agreed that Enrichment has enhanced the experience of their time in sixth form.

Y13 students, who had been through a full two-year cycle of enrichment provision, offered the following commentary on the activities and opportunities offered:

- We like that there are options for differing sporting levels, e.g. those who are on school teams and those who are not.
- The school/business/local community opportunities are opportunities it would be difficult to do outside of school. Some mentioned that the experiences they had had outside of school had changed their view on what they wanted to study/ pursue in the future.
- The activities offered are a good time to make friends, and build relationships with those outside normal friendship groups, which was of notable importance to students who were new to the school when they were in Year 12.

Students were also asked for feedback on their chosen activities:

- Primary School Outreach – I have enjoyed learning how to interact with younger students and it's a fun place to be. My career prospects now include primary teaching.
- Local Hospice – I would not have this opportunity without it being formally arranged through Enrichment
- Local Hospice – Speaking with people receiving end of life care has altered my perception on life
- Local Care Home – taught me how to interact with people a different age to me
- Bar Mock Trial Competition – Changed my career prospects to include Law

Simone Wilson – Careers & Progression Manager

Through our revised Careers programme we have been able to successfully address the needs and gaps that were identified in previous provision. The impact that our programme has had on all stakeholders has been one of increased knowledge, excitement and motivation.

We asked for electronic feedback from providers and students following our recent Careers Fair (March 2024). Our providers rated our fair 5 out of 5 and stated how engaged our students were and that it was

a pleasure to attend the event. Nearly 96% of students strongly agreed that it was good to learn from people who work in different industries/sectors and 90% actively found out information about careers that they had not considered before. Feedback is also sought from students following other events and individual 1:1 careers meetings. Students comment that they have gained a better understanding of the path they are hoping to take and also feel more confident in the use of the resources that are available to them, thus developing their career management skills moving forwards and beyond WGSB.

The following quote also really captures the impact that we hoped the Careers programme would have on members of staff: 'Reflecting on last week's Careers Week and after seeing pupils benefit so much from the week of activities I'm left feeling more determined to include more careers information into my lessons'. The increase in staff organising their own careers-related activities also demonstrates the impact of our whole-school approach to Careers Education and the Personal Development of our young people.

The publication of our Careers Gazette every half term, evidences and showcases the careers-related learning of our students. Please see all issues since its creation in 2021 here: <https://sites.google.com/view/wgsbcareers/careers-gazette> The evolution of the Careers programme is marked through these publications and it is pleasing to see what the school has been able to achieve and how students have positively benefited from Careers events in recent years.

A particular jewel in the Careers Crown is that of our student leadership team, the Careers Ambassadors. This is a group of students representing a cross section of the school who help to provide student voice, plan and prepare for forthcoming events and serve as representatives of the school during large-scale activities. The team has gone from strength to strength and we now invite students to interview for positions as the interest is so high. We recently met with the Director of National Careers Week who was blown away with the professionalism of the team and their desire to promote careers-related learning within our school. To find out more about our Careers Ambassador team please see their journey here: <https://sites.google.com/view/wgsbcareers/careers-ambassadors>

We are exceptionally proud of the Careers programme which we offer and believe our students are being well prepared for life beyond school. They are developing into enquiring, entrepreneurial, critical thinkers equipped with the skills and tenacity required to face the challenges of their future ventures.

Adrienne Smith – Learning Mentor

Not only have MINDS members improved their transferable skills through planning, executing and reviewing their activities, but they have benefited from increased confidence levels. Some students have openly spoken of their own significant mental health struggles in front of whole year group assemblies, smaller discussion formats and even in the public forum of the 2023 Martin Gallier Project Suicide Prevention Conference. These were emotive sessions to witness and were no doubt powerful and cathartic experiences to those delivering; without our open, informed and supportive environment,

receptive to sharing mental health experiences, this type of shared lived experience would not have been possible.

Individual members of the MINDS Team bring a variety of skills, experiences and ideas regarding how best to further develop mental health support at WGSB and they are all invested in the work they do. Students are determined to ensure younger generations are not hindered by stigmas associated with male mental health. Comments from MINDS members on the work they do are below;

- 'The influence we will have on younger students will hopefully be astronomical, as we can show them how to approach the topic of mental health from a younger age, preventing any negative connotations or associations forming.'
- 'The MINDS team is a fantastic opportunity to learn how to support those around me, but also to help provide support to students who may need it throughout the entire school. For this reason, I believe it's an invaluable aspect of our school community and I'm proud to be a part of it'
- 'MINDS has had an undeniably positive impact on every single member of it as well as many students school wide. It's helped provide an environment that allows for progressive and successful discussions of mental health.'
- 'Through MINDS I have learnt many ways to help manage and deal with my own day to day mental health issues from worry to stress. This knowledge has allowed me to stay happy even during tough times and keep my head high and push through'
- 'MINDS and the work we do has enabled the creation of a safer and more positive environment for students to be able to comfortably open up about and discuss their wellbeing, which is usually a quite challenging and sensitive conversation to have, helping to break down the stigmas around mental health.'

Our MINDS team has impacted positively on its members, our student body but also on the wider community. Testimonials from local primary schools in response to our MINDS' outreach events illustrate the positive impact MINDS Team have had on their community: 'Our students absolutely loved the content of the workshops, the programme as a whole and most importantly the positive interactions with the boys,' and 'In the last three years only 2 of our pupils have attended a selective secondary school and visits like this are not only supporting them now but are raising the aspirations of some of the most disadvantaged children in the borough,' and 'As a boy heavy-year group, the class gained a great deal from having the boys come in as role models and talk openly about mental health and wellbeing. The boys were respectful of the subjects that were discussed and very knowledgeable.'

Student testimonials show how our MINDS Team's work positively supports our school community: 'They talked about well-being - it was great - we did fun activities around mental health - we had a character that we had to devise - they were fun ways to help with our mental health,' 'We also did a display, which influenced the whole school as they passed by the classroom. We are having Mental Health Week, and we are going to introduce Toasty McToasty to all the children in school,' and 'They talked to us about writing down our feelings. I tried this at home when I felt sad - I wrote it down and it helped me feel better. I sit on my bed and do this a lot now.'

The impact that MINDS and their activities have had on our school community, the Martin Gallier Project, local primary schools and other local stakeholders is considerable. From informal chats, formal mental health training, fund-raising for mental health charities and outreach events to whole school initiatives and the relentless commitment to keeping a focus on positive mental health initiatives, our MINDS team will continue to play its part in boosting men's mental health.

## Runner Up

**Project Title:** Creating an accessible and inclusive library

**School:** King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys

**Project Lead:** Áine Garvey

**Contact Email:** a.garvey@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk

**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

I wanted to create a space for students, where they would feel welcome and safe and could access resources to support them academically and emotionally. I felt there was a need to promote the library and reading for pleasure to our KS3 students who no longer engage in the activity or feel that the resources on offer do not reflect their lived experience. I also wanted to encourage our students to consider the possibilities and opportunities available to them outside of school by inviting inspirational speakers and authors, from a range of cultural backgrounds.

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change.**

**Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

The work to break down potential barriers to access begins with students in KS2. Working closely with the Head of Year 7, our Widening Access SLT, local book sellers and literary publishers, I have been able to produce events for local primary schools, free of charge. This has encouraged schools, with high intake of pupils from low income families, to take part in an event which may not have been possible for them to provide and for pupils to feel welcome and at ease in a highly selective school.

Taking steps towards decolonising the curriculum and providing texts and resources that reflect a broad range of cultural and economic backgrounds was also essential to the project. I worked with the English Department to put together a list of five books written by a range of authors covering a wide breadth of genres and experiences. We wanted to make sure that the year 7s had the time and opportunity to read, at a minimum, three excellent works of fiction they may not have come across before. During their timetabled library lessons, the students read in groups which meant we could generate excellent discussions around particular titles. While there was no competitive element to this initiative, the students wanted to complete the challenge of reading all five books. For students who finished their book early, I recommended a book from the library that dealt with a similar theme or topic to encourage their continued engagement.

As a follow-up, I arranged a visit from one of the selected authors, Catherine Johnson, to run a creative writing session with a selected group of year 7 students. The group consisted of Pupil Premium students and/or students who had amassed good behaviour points. The author's upbringing and life experience mirrored that of many of our students. Her honesty about the life of a writer and the publishing industry was insightful and refreshing and demystified the whole process.

Inviting Rt. Hon. Stuart Lawrence to speak to our KS3 students was the highlight of the project. He spoke passionately about his life and the trauma he faced due to racism. His honesty and ability to relate to our students and encourage them towards empathy and academic success was truly invaluable.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

I have gathered feedback via evaluation forms, discussions with staff and students and analysing borrowing data. Local schools attending the author events reported a high percentage of Pupil Premium students, up to 70% in some cases. They also fed back that interest in the specific author has carried on long after the event, with their library statistics reflecting this. All schools wish to take part in future events.

Borrowing for students in Year 7 can often focus on 5-10 most popular authors. The issue statistics from the last twelve months reflect a greater spread of authors being borrowed. The top 10 remain similar, as they often have a greater output of titles, but work by authors dealing with issues around diversity and inclusion are growing in popularity and can be attributed to the work done to decolonise the curriculum. Staff and student feedback after the event with Dr. Stuart Lawrence was overwhelmingly positive. His discussion with the Afro-Caribbean Society was incredibly productive and he has kept in contact with the Society's founder to support the group with their work.

Our school's most recent inspection recognised the work being done to make the library a welcoming and safe space and to support our students with their academic aspirations; 'Pupils learn research skills and engage with increasingly complex academic texts. The school's vibrant library ensures all pupils can access a range of books that represent the diversity of modern society.'

## Runner Up

**Project Title:** The Legacy Project

**School:** Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School

**Project Lead:** Mercedes Davis

**Contact Email:** mercedes.davis@twggs.kent.sch.uk

**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

This project is aimed at Sixth Form pupils at Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School and the boys' school opposite us, addressing issues around sexual consent, sexism and gender-politics. The catalyst for this project dates back to 2021 after our pupils reported feeling unsafe, harassed and, in some cases, demoralised by students at the boys' school. Working in collaboration from the Head Girl and Boy teams, this project was designed to create a positive and proactive environment to address these issues in a safe manner.

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change.**

**Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

In my role as Head of Sixth Form, I have worked with three consecutive prefect teams to facilitate pupil-led workshops with the aim of improving communication between the schools. The goal is to engage all students, regardless of gender, in order to educate them on issues that affect them now and in the future. The prefect teams nominate other workshop facilitators to help them develop workshops (currently, two per year) that actively engage up to 60 pupils from both schools in each interactive, discussion based forum.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

What is special about this project is the fact it has a legacy: the wider "ripple effect" of the workshops has a long-lasting impact that reaches beyond school, where our young people know how to call out inappropriate behaviour, keep themselves/others safe and recognise when they are being a bystander in the wider world, be that at university, on a gap year or in the workplace. The original Head Girl and Boy teams who founded the project are still invested in the work we do, giving guidance to current teams at our annual AGM where all stakeholders meet in the summer term to share good practice, reflect on the work we have done and look at how we can expand the project in the future.

**Outcomes that have been achieved:**

- > An active discourse between the two schools, creating confident communicators in the senior prefect teams.
- > Changes to our PSHE schedule, where consent, harassment and sexism are talked about with confidence across the whole cohort. We are also seeing these conversations filter down to the lower years.



- > A greater awareness of what behaviour is acceptable and unacceptable, empowering our pupils to speak out against inappropriate behaviours.
- > A high level of interest in taking part; for our first workshop this year we had 80 applications to take part in a workshop with 30 spaces from TWGGS.
- > Above all, this project is highly successful in giving our pupils the autonomy to address these challenging issues themselves.

Previous and current members of the project speak very highly on its success, its aims and how it has benefitted them personally:

“Taking part in the legacy project allowed me to hear new viewpoints and consider alternative perspectives. In addition, being able to come together with like minded individuals was extremely important in enabling a comfortable atmosphere for open discussion”. (Deputy Head Girl, 2022)

“Taking part in the legacy project felt like I was finally voicing my opinion in a room where it mattered and that together we could make a difference.” (Head Girl 2022)

'Personally, before I took part in a workshop, I thought it would be TWGGS pupils talking together in isolation - I didn't realise we would actually engage in a joint discussion with an even amount of both TWGGS and Skinners' pupils actively engaging with different points-of-view, and lots of shared ideas and beliefs. (Participant, 2023)

Bailey is right, the curriculum does not always address these issues in a way that feels relevant to us, which is why we want to talk about sexism, harassment and gender politics so that we can enter the world of work, university or enjoy a gap year with a deep sense of what is acceptable for our generation. (Current Deputy Head Girl, 2024)

Being honest, we would appreciate your support - without your participation nothing changes. We aren't aiming to “fix” massive societal problems, but we do need to be part of the conversation for anything to shift and we need to have a joint understanding of what is going wrong and how we can fix it together. (Current Head Boy, 2024)

To summarise, this is about being able to support others, knowing your rights and how to protect yourself now and in the future.' (Current Deputy Head Girl, 2024)

It is a pleasure and a privilege to be part of this exciting and critical project.

## Runner Up

**Project Title:** Pupil Premium Strategy

**School:** Calday Grange Grammar School

**Project Lead:** Rob Kavanagh

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**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

A growing PP cohort who were deemed to be disengaged and making significantly less academic progress than their peers.

Only a small proportion were involved within extra curricular activities whilst P8 scores were concerningly lower than the whole school cohort.

A demographic of the School's intake who were focused on less than their peers.

An underlying cultural issue regarding PP students at a Grammar School. Staff needed to be appropriately challenged, informed and trained.

In recent weeks, I have been approached by the Head of 6th Form to expand my role to look at the KS5 disadvantaged cohort.

Teaching staff have had INSET and training.

I also work with support staff to ensure LSAs and 1-1s are used to support the learning of PP.

Close contact with the SENDCO in bi-weekly progress meetings.

Attendance and Family Liaison officer consulted to track home barriers to learning.

Lead in English and English staff benefitted with whole school literacy project to drive up standards using external specialists.

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change. Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

This was a new role so I initially completed a staff awareness audit to gauge understanding of the PP cohort. This was on an individual and subject basis to understand what we already did well and where there were gaps in our offering. From this I arranged meetings with PP leads in other schools to learn of best practice and understand the success and challenges of this role. I developed a student voice of the cohort to understand their academic/social barriers as well as the cultural issues the School faced with the students.

I delivered a training session in INSET using the EEF and Marc Rowland helping staff improve their practice with the PP cohort. This was the beginning of a cultural shift within the teaching staff community of the cohort and something that continues to this day. The "drip drip" effect as I have coined it, never letting the PP students fall off the radar of the staff. ALL staff are now fully aware of the cohort and have teaching strategies to help them better support the cohort. Seating plans and succinct verbal/written feedback have been written into School policies for instance. Time has been built into the

meeting/directed time dedicated to PP awareness where staff share best practice within subject/faculty areas as well as track progress. An accurate year to year database of the PP students is readily available for staff to consult to help at the start of each year and any new staff starting mid year.

I delivered my 2nd presentation to staff on the differences between PP/FSM/SEND and why/how students qualify for PP and their barriers to learning. This was to better inform them about the barriers these students face as well as feeding into the cultural appreciation of this cohort. Staff are also now fully aware of how we can spend the funding through extra curricular/academic/personal belongings. I receive multiple requests for PP spend to provide resources and pay for trips (Cultural Capital).

In terms of the students I identified literacy as a key area to focus on and set about designing and managing a whole school PP literacy strategy. We now have Bedrock Literacy (an online literacy curriculum) employed and enjoyed by Y7 and Y8 students at home and in lessons/form time. The end of year 1 review showed fantastic take up by PP students and marked improvement within literacy scores. The roll out for Year 3 is planned for next year so all KS3 students will have access to it. An external literacy provider now works with small groups of PP students at risk of failing English Language GCSE. This has been running for two years offering bespoke support to smaller groups. Students are chosen based on their end of year 9 and 10 exam scores although the groups have flexibility to enable us to review which students need the support. Those who are graded as 3/4 in English Language are the focus for this.

Extra library lessons now run within the PSHE curriculum to promote the love of reading. Through this each Year 8 student has 2 more hours a year in the Library being introduced to different literary genres and authors.

Through my role, I am a member of the Literacy Research and Development group. I am currently focusing on developing literacy with the Sciences to enable KS4 PP students to use their disciplinary literacy with fluency and confidence. I have also been involved with the rewriting of the School's Literacy Policy to ensure there is a focused presence for the PP students within it.

In collaboration with the School's attendance officer, I have designed an attendance tracker which runs bi weekly incremental reporting on PP attendance. From this I can identify trends of absenteeism within the PP cohort. This has also been adapted for our SEND cohort. This data is then presented and discussed with our SENDCo and relayed to Pastoral staff and the Family Liaison Officer.

On going close work is being done with the School's Enrichment Office to develop PP uptake in extra curricular activities. There has been a successful drive to engage all KS3 PP students with at least one extra curricular activity and we now have 97.5% of PP students engaged with extra curricular throughout KS3-4. There is also a big presence of the student's Cultural Capital in and out of the classroom with PP students attending overseas trips, site visits and after school clubs.

Communication with the Governing body is key to the role and I meet twice a year with a Governor to review and develop the PP offering. Last year I was invited to present to the FGB reviewing our end of year 2 PP strategy as well as introducing plans for Year 3 and 4. This was met with great enthusiasm by all attendees.

Parental engagement is a big priority for Year 3 and requires careful planning, notably with communication. I am keen to establish an understanding of the home life work behaviour/culture before addressing any barriers as well as identifying areas for potential help. This is a long term plan and will be difficult to get all on board initially but will run throughout my 3rd year in the role.

Supporting staff has been key and in doing so, training them on the needs of PP students. PP foci have been built into exam analysis and last year I ran a Research and Development group with staff from a wide range of subjects to help implement teaching and learning strategies. I remain receptive to new ideas and problems are dealt with swiftly. I am glad to say that most staff now share my passion for the PP cohort.

I have recently been approached by the Assistant Head in charge of 6th form to expand my role to oversee the KS5 disadvantaged cohort and am discussing the practicalities of this with the him and the Headteacher. Having held a preliminary meeting with the two Heads of Year I have identified two main areas of concern; passive learning as well as a lack of staff training in how to deal/manage disadvantaged students. Discussions are ongoing between myself and the Head in how we may be able to provide me with the time to further explore and develop this work next year.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

PP attendance is 93.04% for KS3/4 as of 27.3.24. We have seen a year on year improvement since I have been in post. Comparison with last year for instance shows improvement of 1.79% for PP cohort. In line with National averages, a huge success.

GCSE P8 has improved year on year as well. Last year's was -0.23 (compared with 2021/22 -0.54). Driving up standards of PP cohort with high quality teaching, careful tracking and appropriate intervention. Staff training has also been instrumental in this as well.

Y8 literacy assessment levels for PP students show clear improvement year on year since the use of Bedrock Literacy.

2021/22 KS4 English Language PP intervention; 100% of participants showed positive end of year progress in English Language. All Y11 students who took part in the support programme scored >4 in GCSE English Language.

Extra curricular 100% engagement from PP in KS3 and 95% of PP in KS3 - 4.

PP student voice shows pride in students wanting to be at the School and clear of what is expected of them as well as how to benefit from help/extra support.

Staff better equipped to support the cohort.

Cultural awareness is key and genuine care for these students now. Not always there sadly.

Wide range of requests for purchasing of resources/trips for PP students.

## Runner Up

**Project Title:** Science of Learning Curriculum

**School:** Lawrence Sheriff School

**Project Lead:** Katrina Parkin

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**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

When students leave school they should not only have developed their capacity as successful learners, but also be confident, independent, responsible citizens and have the ambition to make a positive contribution to society. The Electives programme was introduced to provide students with additional opportunities to develop these skills in a range of activities outside of the normal curriculum.

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change.**

**Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

Using both student and staff voice, I put forward a proposal that was agreed by SLT on how to develop the Electives programme further, with the introduction of new skills and activities (including a careers module, creative units, an environment module and students working with a local primary school) and to offer them vertically, so that students from different year groups got the opportunity to work together (Results from the latest survey showed that 61% of students enjoyed working with students from different year groups). Originally the Electives programme ran from years 7 to 11 but following its success it has now been expanded to include year 12 students as well.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

Feedback from students has been extremely positive (Results from the latest survey showed that the majority of electives offered had an enjoyment score of over 60%). Students very much appreciate the ability to have an element of choice and they have commented that Electives give them a balance to their academic courses, thus providing an important support to their wellbeing. Staff have also appreciated the opportunity to deliver electives based on their own interests to the students. This has also aided our recruitment process where candidates are often excited by the prospect of offering a new Elective option, including Japanese and Muay Thai most recently) and non teaching staff and volunteers have also been willing to contribute and commit time every week to deliver sessions, including BSL, Journalism and Mandarin.

## Runner Up

**Project Title:** Developing and expanding the STEM provision at CCHS

**School:** Chelmsford County High School for Girls

**Project Lead:** Preena Kurian

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**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

There is a growing recognition of the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive STEM workforce; however, there is still a significant gender imbalance in the STEM industry in the UK. We recognise the need therefore for our students to be aware of the wide range of career opportunities available within the STEM subjects, extending beyond the field of medicine.

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change.**

**Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

Events such as Industrial Gold Project and Bronze Project were reestablished with the support of local companies. Collaboration with the regional Institute of Physics committee resulted in CCHS hosting many of their public lectures. This encouraged more students from CCHS and nearby schools to attend science related lectures and explore a wider range of career options. Students from various year groups are encouraged to take part in both regional and national competitions such as Secondary Engineers Leaders Competition.

CCHS was one of the pilot schools in England to embark on the STEM Leadership programme, aimed at developing essential skills to lead and deliver STEM activities to their peers. Recently, CCHS received a bursary from the Chelmsford Science and Engineering Society to run an engineering club for Year 10. In addition to these opportunities, all Years 7-9 students have the opportunity to engage in activities run by external organisations, e.g. STEM discovery day, run by BAE systems, and STEM Roadshow.

Sharing my vision for our students with colleagues resulted in a number of staff volunteering to help with the running of clubs and various events beyond school hours. Use of prefects to organise and run events, such as British Science Week, created a culture of peer mentoring which encouraged younger years to get involved. Students are often encouraged to share their experiences to the wider school community through weekly bulletins and end of term newsletters.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

There has been a significant increase in the uptake of Further Maths, Physics and Computer Science at A Level. We are delighted with this as they are often perceived as the hardest A level subjects. It is promising to note that over 70% students are continuing with their interest in a STEM subject beyond A Level. There has also been a notable rise in the number of STEM clubs managed by both staff and

students. The comments in the most recent Ofsted report is a testimony of the STEM work that takes place at CCHS: “From designing eco-friendly wrapping paper to creating mini vehicles which send medical supplies into war zones, the pupils turn their imaginative ideas into reality....The breadth of the offer for scientific, technological and mathematical study (STEM) is impressive.”

## Runner Up

**Project Title:** A complete overhaul of the curriculum to ensure an outstanding curriculum, a variety of pedagogy and rigorous and meaningful assessment is in place across the college in all subjects leading to improved learning experiences for students and improved outcomes. It was achieved by developing staff and changing a culture over time.

**School:** St Ambrose College

**Project Lead:** Rachel Wheelan

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**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

It was aimed at teaching staff and was necessary for the learning experiences and outcomes of all students as well as for the development of the staff. Heads of department were crucial; and I regularly refer to them as the “engine workers” of the school. When I was appointed, I realised there was huge inconsistency across the school with many departments having no curriculum in place and teachers following the exam specification in their own way. I also noticed a lack of active learning in the classroom. Students were often passive with many lessons consisting of copying information and listening to teachers talking for much of the time. There was a misconception amongst several staff that this way of teaching appealed more to students in a grammar school and that they “did not need to focus on pedagogy with grammar school students”. However, in some areas of school, teaching was outstanding with pace, challenge and a variety of activities for the students.

Written feedback was inconsistent with a policy that stated work must be marked every two weeks but no targets to move learning forward or system for students to respond and act on feedback.

There was little quality assurance (none in many areas) and appraisal was not rigorous.

It became clear that I needed to implement many changes including improving pedagogy, an assessment policy, a quality assurance strategy and calendar, basic expectations for lessons, curriculum plans that ensured the curriculum was ambitious, engaging and well sequenced. I have implemented and developed these over the last few years but realised early on that to do this I had to develop middle leadership and grow leadership capacity throughout the school.

Students at my school now benefit from receiving and outstanding quality of education and staff benefit from being successful in their roles: internal promotion has increased significantly, and we have a number of staff who are now SLEs and support colleagues in other schools

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change.**

**Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

As explained in the previous question, my work has been exceptionally broad so I will just summarise in bullet points the main strategy and actions.

- Changing culture and mindset was always going to take time; I knew the best way was to start by identifying the pockets of outstanding practice that existed and empowering those staff to help



lead. I created unpaid roles named “teaching and learning champions” and worked with these staff to plan and deliver high quality, effective CPD. Over the last five years we have focused on areas such as active learning, retrieval, flipped learning and questioning. This group of “champions” has evolved and involves staff from different subjects across the school.

- I wrote and implemented an assessment policy that required focused targets and students responding so the focus is on feeding forward. Staff are on board with this policy because I focused on reducing workload of marking whilst ensuring it is more effective, for example highlighting of success criteria and targets rather than written comments, more focus on quality and less frequent. More recently this has evolved as we are trialling the use of AI to reduce workload when marking.
- I have worked closely with heads of departments to write their curriculum intent statement and ensure that schemes of work and knowledge organisers are in place, delivered training on an outstanding curriculum and enlisted external subject specialist support for heads of department that required it.
- I have empowered middle leaders by supporting them and guiding them to lead the other members of their team by having robust development plans in place and providing training to middle leaders on effective quality assurance and appraisal.
- Developing leadership capacity – with recruitment being an issue, it is essential that we can grow our own leaders internally. Previously internal promotion rarely occurred. I created and led a voluntary middle leaders programme in addition to supporting staff to complete the NPQs. I lead a series of session on topics such as challenging conversations, setting effective appraisal targets, quality assurance. Over half the staff who completed this programme have been promoted either within the school or have left for promoted leadership posts in other schools.
- Appraisal is now thorough and incentivises staff who are keen to develop and holds underperforming staff to account. I gave training to middle leaders on setting effective appraisal targets and having effective appraisal conversations. Again, with the recruitment and retention crisis, we cannot afford to lose staff; we need to develop the staff we have. I have worked with middle leaders and empowered them to challenge and support underperforming staff in their department and we have staff who are now flourishing due to being on informal support plans.
- Quality assurance has evolved over time and now includes curriculum conversations with middle leaders, meetings with the SLT line manager of that department so we hold each other as SLT to account, as well as learning works, work sampling and student voice. I have developed this to involve middle leaders so they are part of the process, I have enlisted external support from other senior leaders in Trafford and from ofsted inspectors to benchmark our internal quality assurance.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

There has been an impact on our outcomes. Although progress was good with a P8 score of 0.51, it is now above 0.9 and we have no particular issues with sub-groups. Our A-level outcomes are higher in key measures than in 2019. Other impact is that several of our middle leaders have been appointed internally and we have a number of teaching staff who support as SLEs in other schools as well as being confident in inviting staff in from other schools to observe good practice in some departments.

Curriculum plans that were non-existent are now being shared with other schools. Student voice regularly shows that students enjoy their learning and a variety of tasks in their lessons, which is a development from previous years where students described "receiving information to learn". External reviews from other headteacher in Trafford and an ofsted inspector comment on active learning, retrieval and flipped learning being embedded and the teaching and learning being excellent in many areas. One of the external reviewers led a review during my first term (which I arranged as a benchmark and it highlighted many weaknesses across the school) and commented during our most recent review on the difference in teaching and the improvement in the attitude to learning of the students as a result. This is not a project that will ever be "complete" as there is always room for development and I am enjoying developing it further.

## Runner Up

**Project Title:** The Truly Inclusive Grammar School

**School:** Calday Grange Grammar School

**Project Lead:** Vicki Storey

**Contact Email:** vicki.storey@calday.co.uk

**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

Inclusion, attendance challenges, meeting the equality duty, supporting academically able students with SEND- particularly SEMH, dealing with behaviour demands and empowering our colleagues to meet these needs without adding to their workload.

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change. Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

- Reinvigorating and upskilling teams
- Developing strong relationships with local schools with very different settings- a local special school- and working together to provide meaningful CPD and training opportunities for colleagues from both schools
- Creative approaches to behaviour and attendance management post COVID- working closely with LA
- Gaining external verification of progress to keep staff motivated
- Achieving the Rainbow Flag in a boys Grammar School and promoting and nurturing diversity through LGBTQ student group and a student lead Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group
- Ensuring that all developments and opportunities were shared with the staff community so that we have involvement from all areas of the school community
- Expanded the Learning Support Team- Family Liaison Officer employed to support struggling families and work in conjunction with the Learning mentor to run parenting support sessions
- Increase the number of Peer Education Projects- Mentors in Violence Prevention- Year 10 educate Year 8

Essentially we required a complete 'reboot' after the pandemic and have had to learn to approach the pastoral, learning support and mental health needs of our community in a more creative and flexible way.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

Rainbow Flag Award

Improvement in PP and SEND progress 8

Excellent attendance 360 inspection- attendance, punctuality has improved, since last year- particularly amongst PP students

Mobile phone policy has had a major impact on incidents of misuse of phones during the school day

Bullying incidents have reduced

FLO has had a major impact on school refusers and low attenders - we have several case studies to support this.

Exclusions and internal isolations are down

Curriculum has changed to meet the needs of our students

## Runner Up

**Project Title:** D&T Entrepreneur Scheme

**School:** Poole Grammar School

**Project Lead:** Nick Brady

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**Please describe the student/staff needs your work aimed to address:**

The D&T Entrepreneur Scheme brings together enterprise education and the Design & Technology Department for the mutual benefit of both. Year 10 students participate each year in a high profile, in-school competition that provides opportunities for students to run a business and sell their products to fellow students, parents and staff. Led by the D&T Department and their students, all Year 10's have the opportunity to participate in roles such as project planning, marketing, budgeting, etc. Students taking Design & Technology take the lead in designing products from their chosen D&T option subjects (Food & Nutrition, Product Design, Electronics, Graphics). Across the year they design, prototype and manufacture their innovative products and at the end of the year, up to about 8 teams sell to students, parents & staff on designated sales days.

The aim is to promote Design & Technology as an exciting career choice in the modern workplace and to embed enterprise education into the curriculum in a sustained and meaningful way. Local businesses have sponsored prizes for the scheme and it has helped forge links with industry for the benefit of all students at the school. Business leaders have been invited in to advise and inspire the teams and some students have taken their businesses beyond the school setting, selling at festivals and local fetes. Profits from the scheme go to charities nominated by the students and have also paid for the entry of teams into the National Young Enterprise Scheme.

Another aspect of this scheme is building links with a local school for children with special educational needs and give them access to the facilities at Poole Grammar for their own enterprise scheme. A 6th Form student in Design & Technology ran a project that enabled Poole Grammar to help students from Montacute School design and manufacture Christmas decorations to sell at their Christmas fair. A team of 6th Formers from Montacute School were also invited to Poole Grammar school to watch our laser cutter cut out their designs in quantity. We are hoping to make this a regular feature for the D&T Entrepreneur scheme, giving students at Montacute access to the facilities at our school and help them make high quality products they can be proud of too.

Overall, the scheme provides opportunities for leadership, financial management, real life design and manufacturing issues, problem solving skills, confidence building and personal development. Taking pride in the products they have worked so hard to produce, students get a real thrill from sales days and

a sense of what can really be achieved if they try. For one month in the summer term, there is a buzz about the school created by the scheme and a spotlight on the Design & Technology Department.

**Please describe the work you undertook to meet these needs and undertake educational change.**

**Please also make reference to your communications strategy (i.e. how you brought people with you?):**

Staff in the department clearly see the benefit of the scheme, both in promoting those 'soft skills' it delivers, and to promote their own subject areas to the lower years (who are the main customer base for the sales days). They are happy to help out with teams that fall within their area of expertise and are a vital part of the running of the scheme with so many participating teams. Setting up and running the scheme has involved placing adverts with the local Chambers of Commerce and meeting with potential business leaders to find sponsors and visiting speakers. There is a great deal of work coordinating the many teams that participate each year. It takes many months of design meetings, lunchtime prototyping and manufacturing sessions to get the team ready for the sales days with products that are of a high enough quality that will mean fellow students parting with their money. Communication is key, both with the teams, through regular lunchtime meetings and after school sessions, but with staff and parents to ensure that sales days are well attended.

Communication is also key to keeping sponsors on board and coordinating regular visits to advise the teams, help choose the winners and hand over the prizes in end of year assemblies. It's also part of the scheme that each team promotes their products using posters and presentations to the school in assemblies. I also promote the scheme through assemblies, poster campaigns and emails to parents.

**Please describe the impact this has had on students and staff including evidence of this:**

Whilst difficult to quantify, students choosing Design & Technology at Poole Grammar School remains high and it is broadly agreed that the D&T Entrepreneur scheme plays a big part in this.

For students participating in the scheme, they gain so much in taking pride in a project they have worked hard and taken ownership of. In addition to things such as leadership, project management and interpersonal skills, I have seen students grow from being too shy to speak to most of their peers to confident sales people in the space of a few weeks. I have seen students with special educational needs gain a real sense of pride and self-worth over a project that has won them both praise from their fellow students and winning first prize one year.

The wider staffing body are also active participants in the scheme and occasionally help promote products by lending their names and faces to appear on everything from mugs and badges, to packs of playing cards where they appeared as the King of Clubs and the Queen of Hearts! On a more practical level, many more staff members from across the school help with the smooth running of the scheme, particularly on sales days, as they see the immense benefits for students and the thrill they get from participating. This might involve helping out on a stand trying to serve 150 gourmet milkshakes in a 20 minute breaktime, crowd control or lending their expertise with a particular aspect of manufacture. One year the Head Teacher helped launch the scheme in assembly by throwing one of the student made frisbees into the audience!

Staff, Governors and outside visitors to the school all agree that the scheme shows off the best of our students, encourages a 'can do' attitude in the school as a whole and perhaps will foster the business leaders, industrialists and designers of the future.