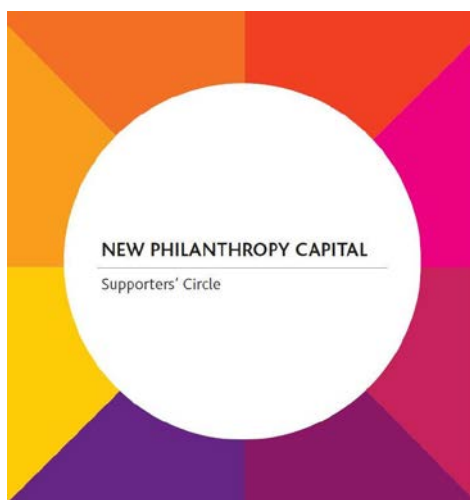


# **SCHOOL REPORT**

How can charities work best in the school system?  
A discussion paper

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Our Supporters' Circle is a group of individuals with an appetite for new ways of working, a shared passion for improving the charity sector and an interest in connecting with other innovative thinkers.

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# INTRODUCTION

Education gives people the grounding they need for life—knowledge they will never forget, skills they will use in work, or experiences and hobbies they will continue to enjoy for decades. Education helps people achieve positive things and can prevent many problems happening later in life.

It is therefore unsurprising that so many philanthropists and charities care passionately about giving children a good education. Because education is often seen as a ‘silver bullet’—something that can have a significant impact on a range of issues—charities and philanthropists are very involved in this area. For hundreds of years philanthropists have been helping to set up schools and provide a quality education. These days, however, education is a primary responsibility of government—and the Department for Education (DfE) in particular. Over the past decade there have been a number of changes to the school system which anyone working in this area needs to be aware of. These can make it difficult for an outsider to navigate, but they also present charities and funders with opportunities to get more involved.

## About this report

This paper examines the role of charities within the school system in England. The focus is on primary, secondary, and post-16 education. We do not look at charities working in early years or university education. When we talk about educational experience in this paper, we are not just referring to educational attainment—we mean the whole experience, which includes emotional and social experiences as well as grades.

In this paper we identify eight core areas where charities can improve educational, emotional and social outcomes for children and young people. Each chapter looks at a particular area, describing how schools work, the roles of charities, the benefits of charity involvement, and current challenges that charities and schools face. Examples are included throughout to demonstrate the type of work charities undertake and the range of organisations working in the education sector. At the end of the report we draw together the benefits and challenges identified into key areas that all those who work in the schools system need to address in order for the system to work more effectively. These themes are raised throughout the report and their recurrence serves to highlight their importance. It is only through considering these issues in collaboration with others, including children and young people, and producing solutions together, that systemic change in the school system is achievable.

This paper draws on NPC’s experience of working with charities and funders, our previous research and events around education and examples and observations shared through interviews and meetings held during the course of this and other research. It is the first consultative step in what we hope becomes a wider research process, and we look forward to engaging with charities, funders and schools on the issues it presents.

We would like to thank the following people for their contribution: Catherine Boulton, Head of Schools Business Development at National Literacy Trust; Paul Carbury, Chief Executive at SHINE; Anita Kerwin-Nye, Director of Partnerships at Whole Education and the Director of NotDeadFish; Anne Pinney, NPC Associate; Diana Sutton, Director at the Bell Foundation; Anthony Tomei, Trustee of the Bell Foundation; and Stephen Tall, Development Director at the Educational Endowment Foundation.

# CONTEXT: THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

## The school system

If the school system in England has ever been straightforward, it no longer is. Changes brought in over the past fifteen years, and accelerated under the coalition and Conservative governments, have made the system confusing to people—especially to those who do not work in it.

## Numbers and types of schools

One of the major tenets of the current government's education policy is to give schools more autonomy—which for them means freedom from central and local government control. This principle is behind the recent controversial announcement that all schools are to become academies by 2022. There are 3,381 state secondary schools and 16,766 state-funded primary schools in England,<sup>1</sup> plus around 2,600 schools in the independent sector,<sup>2</sup> so this autonomy can make the system difficult to navigate.

Within this, there are currently a number of different types of school in the state system. The most common are:

- Community schools, controlled by the local council and not influenced by business or religious groups.
- Foundation schools, with more freedom to change the way they do things than community schools.
- Academies, run by a governing body, independent from the local council—they can follow a different curriculum.
- Grammar schools, run by the council, a foundation body, or a trust—they select all or most of their pupils based on academic ability and there is often an entrance examination.<sup>3</sup> There are only 163 state grammar schools in England.

There can also be differences within these categories. For example, faith-based schools (such as Church of England schools) may take the form of an academy or a foundation school.<sup>4</sup>

The government announced in March 2016 that it wants all schools to become academies by 2022.<sup>5</sup> This move is controversial, partly because many people feel that academies have less local democratic oversight than community schools. At the moment nearly two thirds (61%) of state-funded secondary schools and 15% of primary schools are academies.<sup>6</sup> Academies have to follow the same rules on admissions and exclusions, and are subject to the same Ofsted inspections, but do not have to follow the national curriculum (although many do). Some academies are stand-alone schools, but more recently the government has been promoting multi-academy trusts that manage a number of academy schools.

In addition to mainstream schools, there are schools for people who need a different type of education. Special schools cater for those children who have special education needs and disabilities (SEND), and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) teach those children whose behavioural problems have resulted in them being excluded from mainstream schools.

Private schools (also known as 'independent schools' or sometimes 'public schools') are not funded by the government, and do not have to follow the national curriculum, but are inspected regularly by a number of bodies.

## Schools policy

At the start of the 21st century, the vast majority of schools were maintained by their local authority. They operated in a legislative framework, and control and oversight was devolved to the local level. In 1988, a new type of school emerged, the City Technology College (CTC), which was overseen by the Department for Education and Employment. These schools became the model for academies—now the model for how all schools should operate. The current government believes that the *'benefits of school autonomy have been proven without doubt'* and is moving towards a self-improving school system.<sup>7</sup> This emphasis on self-improvement and autonomy has resulted in an increased focus on school leadership.

The levers for changing how schools work are therefore increasingly less about diktats coming from central or local government, and more about the incentives that schools have. These incentives include Ofsted inspections, league tables, the threat of take-over, and the funding regime. For example, when the government wanted to encourage more academic qualifications, it did this through changing what the league tables would report. Ofsted is interested in questions around closing the achievement gap, particularly between those children who receive free school meals due to low parental income, and those that do not. At the moment there is an important change shifting the focus from absolute attainment (how many children achieve five A\*–C grades at GCSE) to a focus on progress. The government has brought in a new measure called Progress 8 that looks at the progress a child makes compared to what would normally be expected.<sup>8</sup> This measure will now be reported in league tables, and should provide schools with the incentive to make sure all pupils achieve their potential, rather than focussing on getting one group of pupils over a particular threshold. At the same time, the government is bringing in more challenging GCSEs, which may mean that the headline numbers passing English and Maths will fall.

As schools become academies the importance of the national curriculum diminishes, as academies and private schools do not have to follow it. Academies nevertheless have to teach a broad curriculum that includes English, Maths and Science.

## Schools funding

Schools funding is calculated on a per-pupil basis and takes into account a number of factors. These include the number of children in a school, as well as what proportion are disadvantaged, looked-after children, or children of service personnel. It also involves a local funding formula.<sup>9</sup> This method of funding is currently under review, with the aim of creating a national funding formula. If this national funding formula is introduced, it will almost certainly move money from inner-city London, which represents the best funded areas, to more rural areas.

In addition to the per-pupil funding, there are also separate grants available from the Education Funding Agency for capital work.<sup>10</sup> Most schools in the UK also raise some money themselves—either fundraising from parents, leasing out premises for commercial use, or through sponsorship from businesses.<sup>11</sup> For many schools, the parent-teacher association (PTA) is an important part of this fundraising.

Although the government has committed to keeping per-pupil funding the same in cash terms, there are cost pressures on schools, including rising wages and pension costs.<sup>12</sup> These cost pressures, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, mean that schools are facing a budget cut of 8% in real terms between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020<sup>13</sup>—and this does not even take into account pay rises that may be precipitated by teacher shortages. Overall, budgets are tightening and this funding situation means that schools' capacity to do non-core work will be more limited over the next five years.

# Focus issues for schools and the Department for Education

## Improvement of schools

There has been a marked improvement in the numbers of children getting good GCSE grades. Twenty five years ago, the majority of children did not achieve five A–C grades at GCSE<sup>13</sup>: the pass rate now across the UK is 69%.<sup>14</sup> The government is driving schools to improve, and poor results can trigger an Ofsted inspection.

## Achievement gap

Government focus for some time has been about achievement gaps—where groups of young people are not doing as well as the majority. Most of this is focused on children from poorer families who receive free school meals, and extra funding—known as pupil premium funding—is available to help schools close the achievement gap. This gap has proved difficult to narrow despite focused efforts. There are other important gaps: London, for example, is becoming a world-class education city and is the best performing region for attainment and progress in the country,<sup>15</sup> whereas other areas—particularly coastal towns and the north of England—are falling behind.<sup>16</sup>

## Teacher recruitment and retention crisis

A further problem is the availability of high quality teachers. It has been four years since the Department for Education's (DfE) target for recruiting trainee teachers has been met<sup>17</sup> and there are signs of shortages, especially within key subjects such as Maths and Science. As far as retention is concerned, workload is a common reason cited by teachers' unions behind the current crisis, and the government has recently held a review of teacher workload with guidelines on how to reduce it. These retention and recruitment issues are leading to capacity problems within schools, making it harder for schools to do things differently.

## The interaction between charities and schools

Charities have been working in education for a very long time and perform a variety of roles. However, the changes to the school system outlined are not only altering some of the roles charities play within our school system but are also changing how charities and schools interact. The two primary ways in which charities interact with schools are either by providing additional activities without cost, or by selling their services.

The current system means that there are a number of potential commissioners of services to schools. In most cases it is the school itself that buys in the service, either through the headteacher or a responsible teacher. Potentially also local education authorities (LEAs) or a multi-academy trust could commission services from charities for all the schools that they oversee. More likely they will share information about what has worked and buy services on a school-by-school basis. As we move towards a system entirely made up of academies, the routes for charities to go into schools will become more fragmented.

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<sup>13</sup> The A\* grade was introduced in 1994.

# ADDRESSING INEQUALITY IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Inequality—relating to both opportunity and access—is a recurring theme in this paper. Inequality exists across schools in different areas, between schools in the same area, and within schools. It can have serious effects on a child's quality of education and, consequently, life chances. The government supports social mobility, and its ongoing commitment to free school meals and pupil premium funding are two measures aiming to tackle some of the inequalities in the school system. Despite these measures, however, inequality is still entrenched.

## What is the role of charities in addressing inequalities in the school system?

Inequalities in the schools system are related to a variety of factors such as socio-economic background, ethnicity, geographic location, and gender. Charities work at both a practical level—with schools, pupils and families—and at a more systemic level, to address these inequalities. Many also work to tackle the structural inequalities that can affect a child's life chances even before he or she starts school. National charities such as [Barnardo's](#), for example, campaign against ongoing child poverty in the UK in line with the government's commitment to end child poverty by 2020. Barnardo's also provides families in need with emotional support and practical advice.

Charities working directly with pupils play a central role in levelling the playing field for all students. They are well placed to offer resources and services, such as tutoring or mentoring, to students who would otherwise be unable to access or afford them. [The Brilliant Club](#) works across England to improve the opportunities available to groups who are under-represented at highly selective universities. It recruits doctoral and post-doctoral researchers to teach university-style classes to small groups of students in Years 6 to 12, enabling pupils to develop the skills and knowledge that help them secure admission at selective universities. The programme also inspires and builds ambition in students who have not traditionally had equal access to the country's most prestigious universities.

Gender inequality in schools persists—largely in terms of the different subjects studied by girls and boys. Girls tend to drop Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at A-level, and men fill the vast majority of STEM jobs in the UK.<sup>18</sup> This reinforces gender stereotypes and inequalities. [Fearless Futures](#) is a charity that works with girls in schools to address some of the barriers preventing women from realising their full potential. It hosts workshops in schools targeted at female students aged 16–18. The workshops aim to help the girls understand and disrupt gender stereotypes as well as tackling individual and systemic barriers to advancement. The girls then design their own workshops to deliver to younger girls in their school.

Only a few charities are working at a systemic level to challenge the inequalities embedded within the schools system. This involves working to improve the social mobility of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and to close the attainment gap between vulnerable students and their peers. Ofsted, schools, and charities use a metric based around free school meals as a way to measure the difference between these two groups. In 2013, 35% of students on free school meals got five A\*–C GCSEs compared to 62% of other students.<sup>19</sup> [The Sutton Trust](#) promotes education as a mechanism for upward social mobility through its services, policy and research work. It funds programmes at each level of the education system, from primary through to university, working with the brightest students from disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their access to academic achievement.



Some charities, such as [Teach First](#), target leadership in schools as a means to end educational inequality. It recognises that a child's performance at school is largely determined by his or her socioeconomic background, and believes that no child should have limited opportunities as a result of where he or she comes from. Teach First trains and supports teachers who are placed in primary and secondary schools in low-income areas throughout the UK. It also trains teachers to build aspirations within schools—aiming to help disadvantaged children raise their ambitions.

## SHINE

[SHINE](#) (Support and Help in Education) is an education charity that funds and develops a range of programmes that are geared towards improving the academic opportunities of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and reducing the attainment gap. Its work is based on a recognition of the negative impact that a low family income can have on educational achievement.

SHINE facilitates diverse programmes, including the Hallé SHINE on Manchester projects. These projects are funded in equal parts by SHINE and the Education Endowment Foundation, and provide primary students from disadvantaged backgrounds in Manchester an opportunity to strengthen their performance in core academic subjects with the help of music and musical instruments. There are currently 38 schools enrolled in a programme that runs for 25 Saturdays of the year and uses practical and creative teaching techniques and external trips to improve the academic performance of students. The programme is being evaluated by Durham University, which is conducting a randomised control Trial to measure its impact. The results are expected in the spring of 2016.

## What are the benefits of charities working in this area?

Charities have important roles to play as campaigners and advocates, as well as directly supporting vulnerable children. This direct support, as well as campaigning on issues such as child poverty, helps to highlight and combat inequalities both in the school system and in wider society.

Given the entrenched, and often accepted, nature of such inequalities, there is great need for innovation and creativity. Many charities are adopting, or actively encouraging, innovative practice to explore new approaches to tackling inequality in schools. For example, [WHOLE Education](#)'s Development and Innovation Hub aims to find innovative solutions to the most pressing concerns of the education sector through collaboration and co-production. The relative flexibility of charities enables them to pursue fresh solutions to well-established problems.

## What are challenges for charities and schools in this area?

In the past ten years, London schools have enjoyed high levels of academic success relative to the rest of the country. This disparity presents charities working in this space with a challenge to bridge the geographical divide, focusing more energy and resources in disadvantaged regions. Currently there are many charities working in London and a large proportion of funding going into London schools. Charities and funders need to ensure they tackle regional inequalities in schools through more strategic and targeted interventions.

Charities have a tendency to focus on students from disadvantaged backgrounds who exhibit strong academic abilities. As a result, much less work is targeted at students who are similarly disadvantaged but have only average or less than average academic success. In order to create a more equal schools system, there is a need for interventions to encourage all students to progress, rather than just focusing on those who already excel academically.

A lack of parental voice within the school system can be a challenge for both children and parents. While the first step of a dissatisfied parent is often to complain to the teacher, headteacher, or school board, in some schools PTAs help by taking a strong mediating role, and parent governors can also be proactive in advocating on behalf of parents. Unfortunately, in other schools the parental voice is not always as strong and parents find it hard to advocate on their own behalf. If approaching the school directly does not resolve the problem, parents may resort to moving the child to another school, paying for extra educational provision, or even establishing their own school—one that reflects their values and permits them to teach their child in their own way. These are all quite drastic options that are only available to parents with certain means. For parents in rural areas and with low levels of economic and social capital, these options are not available and there is no way for them to express their dissatisfaction aside from a letter to the headteacher or board of governors. Analysis by Teach First shows that the poorest families are four times more likely to send their child to a primary school which requires improvement or is inadequate, compared to the wealthiest families.<sup>20</sup> Greater collective parental voice could help challenge inequalities in our school system by enabling those affected to speak out and challenge the system to do better, instead of opting out of the system altogether.

The type of school a child attends is often a good indication of his or her life chances. For example, even though only 7% of students in the UK attend private schools, they have disproportionately high representation in the country's leading universities and top jobs.<sup>21</sup> Schools, charities and the government should consider how private schools might play a larger role supporting schools in disadvantaged areas or those with a high proportion of children receiving free school meals. Ultimately, inequality in the schools system reflects inequalities in our society more broadly. This raises questions regarding the capacity and resources of charities to challenge the structural inequalities of the sector and effect meaningful and lasting change.

# DEVELOPING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Clearly the skills and professionalism of teaching staff—those who spend all day with children—are key to educational success. This is especially so for disadvantaged pupils.<sup>22</sup> However, the teaching sector is in some crisis: 43% of chairs of governing bodies report that it is difficult to recruit a headteacher,<sup>23</sup> and it is increasingly difficult to recruit good teachers, especially in key subjects. For example the proportion of Physics classes taught by a teacher without such qualifications rose from 21% to 28% between 2010 and 2014.<sup>24</sup>

## What is the role of charities in developing the teaching profession?

Although teacher training is the responsibility of the state, the DfE has stepped back from further developing the teaching profession, as have local authorities as fewer schools are directly under their control. New charities have therefore come in to help develop the profession after initial teacher training. There are now a number of charitable initiatives that are hoping to help teachers fulfil the ‘self-improving profession’ vision of the DfE. Among the highest profile of these is the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) (EEF), which was set up by the Sutton Trust, Impetus PEF and the DfE to look at what works in improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. It has a much higher threshold for good evidence than was previously the case in education, has funded a number of randomised controlled trials (RCTs), and published the evidence about what works in the Teaching and Learning Toolkit.

Talent development among teachers is one of the big issues facing schools, and as the school system becomes more fragmented schools themselves have to address this. A number of charities are contributing to quality improvements by providing and encouraging continuous professional development (CPD) in schools. [Teacher Development Trust](#) provides networks and access to research, as well as auditing the CPD practices of schools. Recent remarks by the Chief Inspector of Schools, Sir Michael Wilshaw, underline the importance of leadership to improving schools.<sup>25</sup> The academy model also demands a more complicated leadership role—part headteacher, part chief executive—which only strengthens the need for proper training. The [Prince’s Teaching Institute](#) for teachers and [Teaching Leaders](#) are among those charities that have stepped in to provide this support.

A less developed area is the role of boards—of schools, but also particularly those of multi-academy trusts, which are complicated multi-million pound organisations to run. [Academy Ambassadors](#) is a programme run by [New Schools Network](#) that aims to get business people onto the boards of multi-academy trusts and to help them be successful by setting up a network for them to learn from.

Perhaps more surprising is the role of charities in teacher training—an area that has previously been the responsibility of universities. Teach First is one well-known example of a charity providing an alternative route into teaching, and many multi-academy trusts are also setting up teacher training facilities—both for their schools and for others. Last year nearly 100% of Teach First’s teachers completing their first year achieved an ‘Outstanding’ or ‘Good’ rating in their qualified teacher status grade.

### The Harris Federation

The [Harris Federation](#) is a charity and academy chain that currently includes 37 primary and secondary schools across the country. In addition to managing the academies, the Federation provides a host of services that are geared towards the improved effectiveness of teaching and learning practices in the UK. In 2008, for example, the Harris Student Commission on Learning was established, providing an opportunity for students and teachers to work collaboratively towards a better understanding of what works in an educational setting. The Commission has released a number of publications, including [A New Design for Learning](#) which recommends best practice for teachers and students, and explores how learners can most effectively tailor the curriculum to suit their needs.

The Harris Federation is playing a significant role in developing the profession through the provision of diverse services, a commitment to information-sharing with other academies and the school system as a whole, and by using its extensive experience working in schools to inform its work. Over three quarters of all the Harris Academies that were inspected have been classified as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and there are plans to open or sponsor four new academies in the near future.

## What are the benefits of charities working in this area?

In some ways, the number of new charities that have started working in CPD in recent years supports the DfE's view that teaching can be a self-improving profession. Now there are more options for a school that is interested in developing its staff, leadership or governance, rather than having to rely on the support provided by its local authority.

One advantage of having charities fulfil this role instead of local authorities is that they are able to take more of an advocacy and championing role. Teacher Development Trust is one charity that uses [TED Talks](#) to encourage people to take CPD seriously. Many of these initiatives are teacher-led—[ResearchEd](#) is one of the most famous examples of teachers coming together to hear about the latest research and how it can be put into practice.

Improving teacher quality is one of the most effective ways to improve the educational outcomes of children.<sup>26</sup> Prior to the recent increase of charities in this sector, any philanthropist who wanted to use this path to make a difference to children would find it difficult—local authorities and schools are not well set up to receive money from philanthropists. Moving more of this work into the charitable sector has allowed those philanthropists who care deeply about education to take this promising path to improving outcomes.

In light of the difficulties surrounding teacher recruitment and retention, there is an opportunity to address the large number of inactive teachers who are leaving the profession and not returning. One figure claims there are 85,000 inactive teachers in the UK who are under the age of 45 and have taught within the last 13 years.<sup>27</sup> While the reasons for teachers permanently leaving the profession range from stress and workload to parenthood there is potential for charities to work in this area and provide the support that teachers need to re-enter the profession.

## What are the challenges that charities working in this area are facing?

While the growth of approaches in professional development is to be celebrated, it has created a complicated landscape for schools to navigate. As well as charities, other providers of CPD include the private sector, local authorities, and other schools. This influx of providers makes the market more competitive for charities, and many schools are unaware that charities provide CPD as they do not always market this as effectively as other organisations. In addition to this, there are no clear and consistent strategies in place for measuring and

evaluating the impact of CPD, neither is it well understood what good CPD involves. Few charities have strong evidence that their intervention is effective, so schools can find themselves making a decision on what services to buy using peer recommendations and word of mouth, instead of evidence of impact. Schools could find themselves paying out thousands of pounds for a service that does not work.

Many of the charities that are trying to improve educational outcomes through improving teacher quality are coming up against the problem of teacher workload and budget cuts. It is difficult to persuade people to go on courses if they already feel their workload is too high, and if they need to persuade their managers to pay for cover for them. In such situations shorter courses are often seen as preferable, despite the fact that these are likely to have less of an impact. Digital learning could play an important role here—allowing teachers to access CPD but reducing both cost and time. [WHOLE Education](#) runs virtual learning programmes for teachers using webinars, YouTube, and an online countrywide platform for teachers to connect with one another. Workload and budget problems are also more likely to be present in schools that are underperforming, leading to a cycle of good schools getting better and pulling away from the poorer-performing schools, deepening inequalities between schools.

Initiatives that focus on networks and learning from peers are more likely to be successful in those geographic areas where there are enough good schools. This further enhances the geographic differences in achievement that we are seeing—it is coastal towns and rural areas that are falling behind,<sup>28</sup> areas where peer intervention is that much harder simply because of the time it takes to travel between schools. Those interested in funding teacher's professional development need to look at underperforming schools across the country where teacher quality is low. Providing funding for CPD in these areas could have more of an impact than funding a school in London where teachers may already have plenty of access to CPD.

# IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND THE CURRICULUM

Good academic performance is one of the primary goals we expect young people to achieve at school, to support their future success. Many charities are involved in improving key academic outcomes, as well as influencing what those outcomes are. The national curriculum is an important way for charities to influence young people—both by campaigning for curriculum change, and by improving the quality of teaching around it. However, the importance of the national curriculum has changed as more schools are able to opt out of elements of it, and now, with the move towards academies, the future of the national curriculum is unclear.

## What is the role of charities in improving academic performance within schools?

The primary way charities support schools to improve academic performance is through tuition programmes focused on core subjects—English, Maths and Science—and there is good evidence that tutoring improves attainment. The EEF's [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) suggests that one-to-one tuition generates the equivalent of five months of progress on average, and that small-group tuition equates to four months.<sup>29</sup> The inequalities that exist in the school system regarding access to tutoring are therefore likely to widen the attainment gap. As Sutton Trust research shows, the proportion of pupils receiving private or home tuition has risen by over a third in the past decade, with those from more affluent backgrounds (and those in London) much more likely to receive support, especially in preparation for key exams or entry to selective secondary schools.<sup>30</sup> [The Tutor Trust](#) is a Manchester-based charity that aims to provide affordable small-group and one-to-one tuition to schools. The Trust predominantly aims to support schools in challenging communities and pupils who are looked-after or eligible for free school meals.

Charities are also involved in supporting schools with literacy and numeracy—key aspects of learning in primary school. Half of the children in some areas of social disadvantage start school with poor language skills, and there is a 19-month gap at the start of school between the most and least advantaged children.<sup>31</sup> Schools test the literacy and numeracy skills of children regularly, and with the government trialling new tests for primary school children, schools have become ever more focused on good marks in these areas. The [National Literacy Trust](#) is a charity that supports schools to develop better literacy programmes by providing new tools and resources. [Driver Youth Trust](#) is a charity working with [Ark](#) schools (a multi-academy trust) developing a literacy model—[Drive for Literacy](#). The model adopts a 'whole school' approach to upskilling and training teachers to identify and support those pupils who struggle with literacy.

Charities that are working to improve the national curriculum often focus on providing a more diverse and wide-ranging viewpoint than might otherwise be available in the classroom. The [UCL Centre for Holocaust Education](#) offers a free educational programme where Holocaust survivors tell their stories in schools as part of Holocaust remembrance and an anti hate-crime campaign. It also provides professional development programmes for teachers and creates educational resources. Charities that take on such roles provide specialist knowledge that teachers may not have, and provide resources that save teachers valuable time.

Many charities see influencing the curriculum as a way of changing the behaviour of the next generation. As well as lobbying the government for changes to the national curriculum, charities also develop resources for schools to

use to develop the behavioural change they want. [PfEG](#), part of [Young Enterprise](#), provides training for teachers and resources in order to help teachers educate young people in financial literacy and money matters.

Charities often support schools in core subjects, aiming to improve both attainment and enjoyment. The [Royal Shakespeare Company](#) (RSC) helps schools enthuse children with a love of Shakespeare by broadcasting RSC productions into classrooms, developing interactive resources and putting on events. The [British Science Association](#) (BSA) created an award scheme—CREST—to enhance Science in the curriculum by providing fun, creative and practical science activities for pupils. CREST provides a framework for teachers, and enables students to develop their skills and recognise success. The BSA recently partnered with Pro Bono Economics to evaluate the impact of the CREST Silver Award. With the help of statisticians from DfE, data collected by the BSA on students starting Silver CREST Awards between 2010 and 2013 was linked to data in the National Pupil Database (NPD). This enabled CREST participant data to be linked with NPD pupil characteristics, attainment and subject selection data. Researchers could then use Propensity Score Matching to create a control group of students who did not take part in CREST but had similar characteristics to those who did. The evaluation showed that young people achieving the Silver Award on the CREST scheme achieved half a grade higher on their best Science GCSE and were 21% more likely to take a STEM AS-level.<sup>32</sup>

### **William Morris Gallery**

With an increasing focus on ‘traditional’ subjects such as English and Maths in schools, charities can provide opportunities for students to interact with more creative topic areas. One way of doing this is by producing teaching resources for schools to use. The [William Morris Gallery](#) has created a series of resources that are largely inspired by William Morris’ work or by previous exhibitions at the gallery.

The resources can be used independently in the classroom, or in tandem with a visit to the gallery, giving students an opportunity to engage with the artwork first hand and to explore the gallery. These resources are made with the curriculum in mind, and aim to complement not only Art and Design content but also Maths, Citizenship, History and Literacy. There are also practical workshops available for primary and secondary pupils, giving them the chance to develop some of skills that William Morris applied in his work.

## **What are the benefits of charities working in this area?**

Charities bring diversity into the school system and provide resources to help students learn about topical and challenging topics. Charities can also help marginalised voices in the curriculum come to the fore and raise awareness of issues that teachers may not feel comfortable tackling in the classroom, like domestic violence or sex education.

The creation of specialist resources by charities helps teachers tackle unfamiliar topics. For example the [International Slavery Museum](#) in Liverpool provides resources on all aspects of slavery for teachers to use. This is particularly important as teacher shortages in key subjects make it more likely that subjects will be taught by a non-specialist. The resources and training that charities provide can help a novice teacher enthuse young people in a new interest area, helping them appreciate the wider subject.

## **What are the challenges for charities and schools working in this area?**

Influencing the national curriculum is one of the ways that charities aim to foster behavioural change in future generations, but this is also very difficult. There are already so many topics competing to be included that a charity is unlikely to be successful in its campaign unless it reflects the prevailing mood of government. The government's recent rejection of calls from MPs and charities to make sex and relationship education compulsory in schools is an example of this. Additionally, now that more than half of schools do not have to teach the national curriculum, there is no guarantee that even if something is on the national curriculum that it will be taught to students. The current climate means that Ofsted and league tables are the biggest influences on what, and how, schools teach.

Charities may need to consider whether they are providing a product that schools actually want. Many schools enjoy the freedom they have to tailor their own curriculum; often there is no perceived need for external influence, making it harder for charities to get involved. Charities providing extra support for core subjects will be more welcome: Science, for example, has to be taught, so an intervention that supports teachers and raises attainment will be a popular choice. In such situations it becomes ever more crucial for charities to evidence their impact. Charities with strong evidence of effectiveness can draw on that when approaching schools.

Competition from other providers, most commonly the private sector, is also a challenge that charities face. Unlike such providers, charities—often working in niche topic areas—cannot scale their products for the general educational market and are therefore less competitive. Those offering free resources, such as the RSC, clearly have an advantage.

Charities supplying teaching resources to today's schools must keep up to date with current technology as digital tools are increasingly commonplace: primary schools, for example, often use tablets for small-group work. The investment required to adapt to this—in terms of hardware and expertise—may be beyond most charities, leaving them vulnerable to competition from specialist private providers with larger research and development budgets.



# IMPROVING NON-ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Almost everyone would agree that as well as teaching young people academic skills and knowledge, non-academic development is also important. This includes sports, arts and music as well as emotional and social development. Providing and supporting children and young people with opportunities to develop in such areas is essential to providing a 'whole' educational experience and is becoming increasingly more visible as it is linked to better employment-readiness and future life chances.

## What is the role of charities in helping schools deliver non-academic work?

Children's and young people's well-being is becoming ever more important to schools and families as an expanding body of research shows how important it is for future life chances. High self-esteem, resilience, and strong personal networks are important for success in the job market.<sup>33</sup> Recent analysis by NPC has shown that resilience becomes more important for children's overall well-being as they grow older.<sup>34</sup> Character education is one way to help children develop characteristics such as grit, resilience and a higher sense of self-worth and self-esteem. [National Citizen Service](#) is a government-funded initiative aiming to develop some of these attributes by bringing young people from different backgrounds together to take part in a mixture of outward-bound activities, skills development, and community volunteering. Charities such as [Duke of Edinburgh](#) and [Outward Bound](#) work alongside schools and focus on providing children with opportunities outside of a classroom, aiming to develop certain characteristics and equip them better for adulthood. Youth groups, such as [Sea Cadets](#), [Scouts](#) and [Youth Moves](#), work with schools to give young people a chance to take part in structured, fun activities and community volunteering that they cannot participate in through school. 20,000 new places in uniformed youth groups were created recently through a £10m grant from the Cabinet Office.<sup>35</sup> These places were created in disadvantaged areas where children traditionally have less access to such opportunities.

Extra-curricular activities are important in terms of supporting learning and academic achievement, developing social capital and raising aspirations.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, they are an easy target for schools to cut when faced with funding shortages. Many charities work with schools to provide after-school activities. Physical activity, particularly sport, is seen as a way of building softer skills like leadership and teamwork, as well as promoting physical and mental well-being. A large body of academic evidence supports the claim that there are many benefits from participating in sport.<sup>37</sup> Charities working in this area assess their wider impact, beyond hard academic outcomes, by measuring the well-being of students through tracking changes in different aspects of well-being over the course of a programme or a student's time in school. [NPC's Well-being measure](#) helps schools to measure changes across eight dimensions of well-being, including overall life satisfaction, resilience and self-esteem. The [online tool](#) enables charities working with young people to compare the well-being of their students to a national baseline as well as tracking changes over time—helping them to understand if their cohort has experienced a statistically significant change in well-being over the course of the programme or academic year.

Being able to evidence impact is increasingly necessary for charities and schools. For example, the government has ring-fenced £150m for sports in primary schools, but requires headteachers to provide evidence that the money has had an impact on pupils' PE and sport participation, and that it is giving children opportunities to develop a healthy, active lifestyle.<sup>38</sup> This amount will be increased by the new 'sugar tax' which is expected to raise an estimated £520m each year to be spent on school sports.<sup>39</sup>

Charities can have an important role in tackling some of the inequalities in sport and arts. Access to specialist equipment, venues and instructors is generally much harder for schools in disadvantaged areas with less funding and availability. This is particularly evident when compared with the sports achievements of children from private schools.<sup>40</sup> Charities can also help keep young women engaged in sports. Drop-off in sport engagement occurs for both boys and girls during the transition from primary to secondary school, and girls' participation in extra-curricular sport drops significantly more than that of boys over secondary school. Charities run programmes that target girls and tackle the reasons why girls' participation in sport decreases. [Chance to Shine](#) is a charity that teaches cricket to children and young people, both inside and outside of school. It runs programmes to encourage girls to participate in the sport—and more than one million girls have played the game through Chance to Shine since 2005.<sup>41</sup>

Engagement with the arts in school can likewise aid children's learning across all subjects and there is evidence that arts can improve educational attainment.<sup>42</sup> Arts education also helps children's creativity, a skill that cannot be over-valued when the creative industries make up 6% of the UK's GDP, and employ over two million people.<sup>43</sup> Despite this, stretched budgets mean schools are faced with difficult decisions and may decide to drop subjects such as Art and Music. Research shows that between 2003 and 2013 there was a significant drop in the number of young people taking GCSEs in Design and Technology, Drama, and other creative subjects. Alongside this, since 2010, the number of arts teachers has fallen by up to 11% and there are 8% fewer drama teachers.<sup>44</sup> Charities can help schools by providing the expertise and capacity they are lacking. [NYMAZ](#) is a youth music development charity that aims to get all young people across North Yorkshire engaged in music. It runs a wide range of projects that includes music tuition, engaging young people with different musical genres, and providing opportunities for young musicians to explore careers in music. NYMAZ has also developed new ways to engage with teachers and schools in rural areas through digital resources. It is using existing digital technologies, like video-streaming and online communication tools, to offer music tuition, training for teachers, and give schools access to national and international music performances.

### **Greenhouse Sports**

[Greenhouse Sports](#) is a London-based charity that provides young people with the chance to engage in sport in their free time or during school hours, with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities. It currently operates in 36 mainstream secondary schools, 10 special educational needs (SEN) schools and four community clubs around London. In its work, Greenhouse Sports uses a framework that aims to build and evaluate the Social, Thinking, Emotional and Physical (STEP) skills of participants.

The relationship between absenteeism and underachievement is well recognised, and Greenhouse Sports uses sport as a tool for increasing the focus and commitment of students in the classroom to prevent non-attendance and low grades down the track. Greenhouse Sports found that around 60% of participants saw an improvement in behaviour after being involved with the programme for three years. It also reported higher levels of school attendance in Greenhouse students than other pupils.

## **What are the benefits of charities taking on this role?**

As schools focus on academic requirements, the number of specialist arts teachers can decline: charities can provide schools with the skills and capacity they need. This is particularly true for after-school activities that otherwise require teachers to extend their working day. Charities are also able to supply or fund sports equipment and musical instruments—an expensive investment—as well as helping by funding access to playing space—often an issue in built-up and deprived areas.

Reduction in school budgets can mean that schools cannot provide children and young people with experiences, such as trips to galleries and museums, which help to broaden their world view. Charities that subsidise these can help create a lifelong engagement with arts. For many schools, charities providing arts, music and sports programmes represent value for money while allowing young people to enjoy many different types of activity. Rather than employ a specialist teacher, for example, with skills in perhaps only one area, the same investment can be used to bring in charities on a daily basis, opening the door to a wide range of activities.

Such activities also provide children and young people with opportunities to form new, different relationships. The increasing demands made on teachers' time often detract from their ability to act as confidante, counsellor or advocate for pupils. This may result in an under-performing student feeling alienated and without a real relationship with his or her teacher. In such cases, another adult working in sport or the arts can provide a relational lifeline: a stable relationship fostering new skills, often leading to improved general performance. Children value relationships with adults or professionals who listen to their views, respect them, and have high ambitions for them.<sup>45</sup> Charities provide opportunities for these valuable relationships to develop outside children's usual structured pupil-teacher relationships.

## **What are the challenges faced by charities and schools in this area?**

School budgets are under significant pressure. The government has maintained the per-pupil funding that schools receive, but has agreed to increases in teacher pay, pension costs, and national insurance. Infrastructure budgets in schools have also been reduced. This means that schools have to budget carefully and make savings. Extra-curricular activities such as arts and music are easy targets for cuts. Art, for example, is a resource-intensive subject, and running an after-school art club not only requires the cost of a teacher being there but also the use of extra materials. Schools may decide that the money is better spent elsewhere. Those charities that work in these areas and charge schools for their services will find it harder to sell to schools. For charities to be successful at selling into schools they will have to understand the needs and worries of schools, as well as using tools like NPC's Well-being measure to gather evidence to show that projects have impact.

The financial burden of buying in extra-curricular 'character education' activities from charities leads to inequalities: schools in deprived areas with more constrained budgets have to make hard choices. Many schools rely on PTAs to raise money from parents and the local community: in less affluent areas this funding source is meagre. Furthermore, private funders may argue that such funding is the responsibility of government. In light of these constraints, evidence of effectiveness and impact should be used to show funders and schools how crucial non-academic outcomes are to a child's education and life chances.

Charities working in this area tend to focus on London, exacerbating regional inequalities. Funders could play a key role here in tackling regional differences by targeting disadvantaged areas outside of London where provision is poor. Rural areas are often hit by a lack of accessible provision and a lack of charities providing services. Charities and schools need to work together on innovative and creative solutions to tackle these problems. The bigger arts charities working in this area are investing in digital technologies that enable them to interact with more children, and with children from all over the country. This may mean that smaller, more regional charities miss out on opportunities, as teachers prefer to use technologies in the classroom rather than take children out of school.

# WORKING WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The majority of children in school do well and do not have any difficulties. However, there are vulnerable children in every school—for example, looked-after children, or children who have behavioural difficulties that mean they are in danger of falling out of education. Schools are often the first to notice when children need additional help and support, and early intervention is the best way to prevent any difficulties becoming too serious. Schools offer activities like breakfast clubs and provide teaching assistants to work one-to-one with vulnerable children. However, constrained budgets make it increasingly difficult for schools to afford these activities due to the numbers of children they work with. Schools also receive support from statutory services to help those children most in need and at risk, but with drastic cuts to local authority budgets this support has been reduced, and schools can find themselves isolated when trying to get help in a complicated system. Charities can play a vital role in providing capacity and expertise for schools in order to ensure they do not fail those most in need.

## What is the role of charities in working with vulnerable children?

Looked-after children are some of the most vulnerable children in our society, with low educational attainment and poor life chances. Latest figures show there are currently 69,540 looked-after children in England, and those aged between 10 and 15 make up the biggest group.<sup>46</sup> In 2014, only 31% of looked-after children obtained five GCSEs at grade A\* to C, compared with a national figure of 75%.<sup>47</sup> Research also shows that 67% of looked-after children have special educational needs, with the most common type of SEN being behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.<sup>48</sup> Early intervention is crucial to help prevent behavioural problems becoming more challenging, and emotional and social difficulties becoming more serious. [The Art Room](#) provides art therapy to children who are experiencing emotional difficulties. Such children might be disruptive or withdrawn because of issues at home or at school. The Art Room provides a caring and creative environment to help improve young people's self-esteem and confidence. Children show a significant improvement in their mood and behaviour following The Art Room's intervention.

Bullying at school is often the cause of behavioural problems, with serious negative impacts for all the children involved. Young people can become withdrawn, battle self-esteem issues, or even turn to violence or self-harm. Charities can help schools deal with bullying—for example, [Stonewall](#) provides advice and resources on how to deal with homophobic bullying. Charities also provide help to young people who might be worried about turning to school authorities. The [NSPCC](#) provides support to young people who are experiencing bullying through its [ChildLine](#) service, a website and phone line just for children where they can talk about issues anonymously.

Charities are also valuable in helping young people when problems become more serious, for example, if they have started to miss school or are excluded from school. [Positive Futures North Liverpool](#) works closely with young people through group work, mentoring and one-on-one support. It aims to equip young people with the skills and knowledge they need to make better life choices. Positive Futures engage young people in the areas they hang out, so this can be in schools, but it is also in parks and on the streets.

For some children, suspension from school can become more serious and result in permanent exclusion. In the 2013/2014 school year there were, on average, 26 permanent exclusions a day, and 1,420 fixed period exclusions across state primary, secondary and special schools in England.<sup>49</sup> Children who are excluded are already likely to be vulnerable and in need of support; exclusion can push them into further risky behaviour and

leave them without appropriate education for an extended period. Permanent exclusions also affect future life chances. Permanently excluded children are three times more likely than their peers to leave school with no qualifications and 37% more likely to be unemployed.<sup>50</sup> Permanent exclusion from school can be traumatic for pupils, but what happens next for these children is critical. Charities can help in this situation by providing alternative educational provision: giving young people a better chance to progress—an early intervention measure to avoid children having to go to a Pupil Referral Unit and preventing permanent exclusions. Typically, it involves young people being moved out of their traditional school setting to address the issues they were struggling with in mainstream education. [Re-Entry](#) is an alternative education provider in Wolverhampton working with 200 children and young people aged 5–17 across the city each year. Re-Entry aims to reintegrate children back into school by supporting them in small groups, and to improve their behaviour and attitudes, while keeping up with their studies. Of the 94 pupils who left in 2014/2015, 93% either returned to school, went into further education or training, or into paid apprenticeships.

## What are the benefits of charities working in this area?

Charities help young people by providing schools with the capacity to support the development of new, healthy relationships between adults and children. Charities often work outside of the classroom setting and build one-to-one relationships with young people that are consistent and stable, allowing them to feel safe enough to discuss problems. Charities also bring a different set of skills to this work. [Place 2 Be](#), a national charity working in primary and secondary schools, uses trained counsellors to deliver one-to-one intensive counselling sessions for children. Some charities provide long-term relationships for children and young people—particularly important during primary school when a child’s teacher might change every year. For looked-after children, this stability is vital, as other adult figures may also be moving in and out of their life. Continuity of relationships and support through both the good and the bad times is essential in helping children’s well-being, enabling them to build resilience and develop a sense of belonging.<sup>51</sup>

For many schools, charities working in this area bring choice and value for money. Due to the diversity of services, a school can choose to buy in a range of programmes from different charities to tackle a variety of problems. Paying for a school counsellor may cost as much, or more, but a counsellor would not be able to offer as many different interventions.

## What are challenges for charities and schools in this area?

Charities that are looking for funding from schools for this work will often be paid from the pupil premium budget—funding specifically targeted at poorer children and children in the care of the state. Ofsted monitors how this budget is spent, and asks for evidence that it is making an impact on the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils. Therefore, charities working in this area will come under pressure to demonstrate how they help schools close the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children. This will become more of a pressure as budgets tighten.

Early intervention and prevention is crucial for vulnerable children, but with cuts to school and local authority budgets, funding for this type of work will become harder to find—despite evidence of its effectiveness. Funders could take the lead in championing early intervention projects for vulnerable children and young people.

Support for vulnerable children outside of school—after school hours or during holidays—is an ongoing challenge for both charities and schools. Many problems relate to issues at home, and charities that offer such out-of-school support have a crucial role to play.

# SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

The introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014 is changing how children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) receive support in England. The [SEND Code of Practice: 0-25](#) has replaced statements of SEN with Educational, Health and Care (EHC) plans that consider educational needs alongside health and social care needs.<sup>52</sup> EHC plans are designed to encourage improved collaboration between the different agencies working with children and young people with SEND. EHC plans also aim to give young people and their families' greater control and independence by putting them in charge of the services, money and care they receive. This has the potential to change how both schools and charities support young people with special educational needs.

## What is the role of charities in supporting young people and children with special educational needs and disabilities in schools?

It is a school's duty to identify all children who have special educational needs or disabilities that either make it difficult for them to learn or make it harder for them to access education, and provide them with special educational needs (SEN) support. Learning difficulties or disabilities can include speech, language and communication impairments; impairment of cognition; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; or sensory impairment and physical impairment. Because the range of learning difficulties and disabilities is so diverse, support for children and young people with SEND can take a number of different forms—from additional support in the classroom to specialist full-time educational provision—and charities work across the full spectrum of SEND support.

All mainstream secondary schools are required to have a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to work with teachers to plan lessons, deliver support, and find specialist support services to provide further advice and support if necessary. Many charities, such as [The National Autistic Society](#) and [Dyslexia Action](#), work with teachers and schools, providing resources, knowledge and training on specific disability issues—helping teachers and SENCOs grow in confidence and strengthen their expertise.

Pupils with a learning disability attending mainstream schools can find it harder to access and receive the support they need. Many children are illegally excluded from school because the school does not have the right staff to support them.<sup>53</sup> This can have a serious negative impact on their education, social and emotional well-being, and overall life chances. Young people with SEND are six times more likely to be permanently excluded and twice as likely to be 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) than their peers without a learning disability.<sup>54</sup> One project that aims to combat the disadvantage young people with SEND face when they leave full-time education is [Capitalise](#)—a collaborative project run by Dyslexia Action, [3SC](#), and the [Education Development Trust](#). It provides young people aged 14 and upwards with literacy and behavioural support within a school setting in order to improve attendance and behaviour at school, as well as help them gain qualifications.

Despite the push for all children to be educated in a mainstream school, this is not always the most appropriate educational setting for such pupils. Special schools are needed to provide the level of care necessary for children with multiple and complex needs and these are funded in a mixture of ways: some are funded and overseen by the local authority, some are private, and some are charities. [PACE](#) is a charity that provides education for

children in Aylesbury with sensory motor disorders such as cerebral palsy. It offers education from nursery age through to secondary, provides services for babies, and runs outreach programmes for SEND children in mainstream schools, along with training.

For many families, getting the right SEND support from their child's school can be challenging and the statutory process of obtaining an EHC plan can be long and complicated. Schools do not generally provide support for families going through an EHC assessment, and families can feel isolated and confused over their rights and entitlements. Many charities aim to support families during this time by providing advocacy and advice. [Contact a Family](#) provides resources, research, and an advice line for families with disabled children, helping them to better understand and navigate the complex and multiple systems surrounding SEND. [IPSEA](#) (Independent Parental Special Education Advice) is another charity that provides resources and advice for families. IPSEA also has a tribunal support service that helps parents with the preparation and presentation of cases to an independent tribunal, and an independent witness panel, which provides a free second opinion on a child's needs. IPSEA's core strength lies in the individual, casework-based support it gives to parents to help them fight for their child's rights to appropriate and adequate SEND support.

## What are the benefits of charities working in this area?

The law says that schools must do everything they can to make sure children with SEND get the extra support they need to achieve as well as they can. Charities are crucial in helping schools achieve this. They provide specialist resources and the expertise needed to train, support and upskill teachers. The [Literacy and Dyslexia-SpLD Professional Development Framework](#) was commissioned by the DfE and developed by [The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust](#) in conjunction with [Patoss](#) and [Dyslexia Action](#). It is a free, web-based, self-assessment tool that helps teachers identify areas for CPD in relation to dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties.

Charities have taken on a successful campaigning and lobbying role on issues of disability and support for children with SEND. The [Council for Disabled Children](#) uses the voices of its members to engage with and influence national policy, as well as responding to consultations and calls to evidence. It is this access to beneficiary voice that makes the work of charities in this area distinctive, and crucial for maintaining the rights of SEND children. Whereas schools only work with small numbers of SEND pupils, making them less able to highlight difficulties in the system, charities working with children and young people with SEND have the time to listen to what children have to say and how they want things to be different.

The advocacy and advice role that charities provide on SEND issues is a hugely valuable service for families. It is especially important for children whose parents may need extra support to understand the system. With schools unable to provide this support, the need for charities to provide it is greater than ever before.

The government push for every child to receive an education within a mainstream setting would not be possible without charities. The support that charities provide for schools to help them adjust to SEND children enables this government policy to continue.

## What are challenges for charities and schools in this area?

Despite the new EHC plans, there is still a concern that schools—both mainstream and specialist—do not have enough funding to properly support children and young people with SEND, and that the school system is failing some of its most vulnerable children. Government data on the number of special schools in England shows a steady decrease in the number since 2006: in that year the total number of special schools was 1,105, falling to 1,040 by 2015.<sup>55</sup> Further cuts to local authority budgets will make the funding environment even more challenging for special schools and they may increasingly need to rely on private donations and fundraising.

Early intervention is crucial in supporting vulnerable children and those with SEND, and schools play a key role in identifying children who need support. Children and young people with complex or severe SEND will be identified early by schools, local authorities or health professionals; children with mild additional needs may not be identified as easily. This raises issues and questions around inequality both between and within schools. Are all vulnerable children getting the support they need? For charities to reach vulnerable children they need to work with schools where all children with additional needs are identified early and senior management brings in the support needed. A school rated 'poor' by Ofsted may not properly identify children who have mild additional needs, leading to a lack of appropriate support, whereas it may identify children with complex and multiple needs. Is this creating a class system within a class system? Vulnerable children are already disadvantaged, but if they are vulnerable and go to a poor school are they doubly disadvantaged? Charities, schools and the government need to give further thought as to how we can create a more equal system for those most in need.



# TRANSITIONS

Transitions occur at a number of stages during a child's journey through the school system. The major transitions occur in the early years: the move from nursery to primary, then at Key Stage 2, when children move into secondary school. After GCSEs, children may move into further education, and then, post-18, young people enter the job market or higher education. Transitions can be difficult for children, and vulnerable children in particular may struggle to adjust and therefore risk dropping out of education.

## What is the role of charities in supporting transitions?

Transitions can be a complicated and trying time for children, young people and their parents, and charities play an important role, alongside schools, at every transition stage. Much research in this area has been carried out by both universities and charities. Often children are anxious and underperform academically in the first few weeks of secondary school, but for most the anxiety passes and they settle into a new routine well. Many charities play a role in easing this transition period for children. [Music First](#) is a charity that helps children to navigate the primary to secondary transition through providing primary school children with music lessons in their new secondary school. This helps the children prepare for a new environment. The music lessons also provide continuity over the period for children—a familiar face every week when many other changes are occurring can be very reassuring for children at this age. Sports charities provide similar services for children, and some schools help with transition through language lessons—children begin learning a language in their final year of primary school to help them cope with new subjects when they enter secondary school.

However, not all primary to secondary transitions are successful: around 6-10% of children experience persistent problems.<sup>56</sup> While the work schools do to ease the immediate transition period for children is effective, schools are much less successful at maintaining student well-being over the short to medium term.<sup>57</sup> Charities play a vital role in providing these children who struggle to transition with ongoing support—seeing transition as an ongoing process that goes beyond the first term in a new secondary school. [Franklin Scholars](#) is a social enterprise that provides peer mentoring programmes for schools. It recruits and trains Year 10 students to work with Year 7 students on a year-round programme, providing tutoring, and mentoring support.

The next key transition period for young people occurs after Year 11 when they move into further education, which can be at college or sixth form for A-levels, or a vocational programme. Some young people may not move schools over this period but it is still an important transition toward adulthood. Research by NPC has shown a sharp fall in well-being for boys and girls between the ages of 16 and 17, suggesting that this transition can have significantly negative effects on levels of life satisfaction.<sup>58</sup> While schools tend to look after children continuing in an academic programme, charities are particularly important in offering vocational pathways for those who do not flourish in a traditional academic environment. [Barnardo's](#) and [Catch 22](#) are large national charities involved in supporting young people with work-based learning, apprenticeships and alternative educational opportunities at this transition stage.

The final transition stage is the move out of the 'school system' and into higher education, apprenticeships or employment. Failing to make the transition from education to the labour market, or struggling to find the right opportunities for further learning, not only negatively affects a young person's social and emotional well-being but can also seriously affect his or her long term life chances.<sup>59</sup> Despite the statutory duty placed on schools to provide independent careers guidance to all students from Year 8 to Year 13,<sup>60</sup> a lack of funding means that

many schools still provide inadequate advice.<sup>61</sup> Charities add value here as schools often lack both the expertise and resources to help young people with a move to work-based learning, apprenticeships or full employment.

Charities and funders run a number of different interventions designed to help young people with the transition into employment, education or training. [K10](#) is a small social enterprise that focuses on getting young people into apprenticeships in the construction industry. K10 supports its apprentices from the beginning by engaging with them before they leave school, helping them find placements, and providing mentoring and support with academic work. Taking on an apprentice can be challenging for an employer, as they require training and a larger time commitment than a qualified member of staff. K10's model identifies and removes the barriers that prevent employers from recruiting apprentices, enabling both the young person and the employer to benefit.

While many schools and parents are able to support young people with the move to university, disadvantaged or vulnerable young people often need more in-depth support. [IntoUniversity](#) is a charity that works with students from disadvantaged backgrounds to give them the same opportunities available to them as middle-class students. It offers a comprehensive programme of support, including after-school academic support, a programme to raise aspirations, and mentoring. IntoUniversity's impact report states that in 2014, 79% of the students it supported transitioned into higher education, compared with the national average of 34% for state schools.<sup>62</sup>

## What are the benefits of charities working in this area?

Transitions are a target area for many charities—poor transitions can have a profound effect on a child's educational attainment, social and emotional well-being, and future life chances. During the transition from primary to secondary school charities help to bridge the gap by providing continuity. This may be in terms of lesson content, for example through language tuition, or by providing consistent relationships through sports programmes where the same coach is working with the children in both Year 6 and Year 7—either side of the transition. Charities provide the extra resource and capacity that schools may struggle to find over this period.

Charities are particularly beneficial for young people on a vocational pathway rather than an academic one. Not all schools have the expertise or resources to help these young people to achieve their potential, and without specialist charities to help them many more people could end up not in education, employment or training.

## What are the challenges for charities and schools in this area?

While many charities and schools are willing to work together to enable students to more easily transition into work, it is currently unclear which is the most effective way for schools and charities to use the expertise of business. Local businesses could provide much-needed work experience for pupils, particularly for disadvantaged young people who may not have the networks and contacts to arrange it themselves. Work experience allows young people to develop new employability skills, strengthen their emotional capabilities, and gain a better understanding of career management—all necessary for a successful transition into adulthood.<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, work experience is resource-intensive, local employers with suitable roles are not always easy to find and even when available the process still takes a lot of organising. There is scope for much more collaboration and innovation in this area between schools, charities and the private sector, to offer young people appropriate opportunities.

The [Careers and Enterprise Company](#) is an example of how initiatives can plug gaps in provision. The company, which was announced by the government but exists independently of it, aims to build a network of schools and local employers so that students can more easily seek advice and understand their vocational options. As the company uses its influence to broker relationships between employers and schools, it will be a challenge for charities to work out where they fit in to the picture.

# CONCLUSION

## Key themes for charities, schools and philanthropists

### Resources, capacity and variety

The school system has changed significantly and charities now operate in a de-centralised environment where schools have to achieve more with less. This landscape makes it harder for charities to sell their services to schools and scale up successful interventions. Services are often bought on a school-by-school basis, rather than at a local authority level, and though many purchasing decisions are based on evidence and impact, others are still made on peer recommendation and word of mouth. Some schools are becoming smarter at buying in services—considering needs and looking at impact—however, other schools without this expertise struggle to get to grips with reduced budgets, a fragmented environment and a competitive market.

Schools need to consider the benefits of working with charities, instead of just the challenges. Many charities provide resources and interventions at no cost or at a subsidised rate, often making them significantly cheaper than private competitors. However, this is not just about price. Schools need to see the extra capacity a charity brings into the school. In some cases a teacher may need to be present to supervise activities or keep the building open, but for many interventions teachers are not needed. Charities also bring expertise and new skills into a school through professional counsellors, music teachers or sports coaches. Many charities include upskilling and training as a part of their intervention, and schools should see this as an opportunity for staff development. Finally, charities working in schools offer new experiences to pupils, from rock-climbing to exciting science experiments—a variety that schools simply cannot provide themselves. Ultimately, the benefits that charities can bring to children and young people by working in the school system far outweigh any challenges.

### Data and evidence

Many charities delivering programmes in schools can lack persuasive evidence about their effectiveness and impact. This is a challenge as schools become increasingly focused on data—it can appear that the quality of evidence that charities offer does not compare with that produced by the schools themselves. The EEF is driving schools to make evidence-based decisions about what improves academic outcomes: it collects evidence on what works through conducting randomised controlled trials, however the approach is expensive and many interventions delivered in schools are just too small for RCTs. Other measurement and evaluation methods can be used and many will be more appropriate for smaller charities, such as tracking changes over time using a before and after survey approach. Resources like NPC's [Journey to Employment \(JET\) framework](#) contain validated scales and measures that charities can use to track beneficiaries' progress over time and also provide academic evidence to support the case for interventions approaches.

Initiatives like NPC's [Education Impact Data Lab \(EIDL\)](#) aim to help charities and other organisations conduct impact evaluations using data which is already collected by schools and collated by the DfE. Essentially, it is a short-cut to the data that organisations need for measurement and evaluation. A charity using the EIDL provides details (such as name, date of birth, school) of the pupils that it works with, and it receives a report on the educational outcomes for that group compared to a matched control group of young people with similar characteristics. The difference between the two results indicates the impact of the organisation's service on the beneficiaries' educational outcomes. The EIDL allows charities to learn from the results generated and improve their services. It also helps them to present a stronger case to schools that interventions are effective. Initiatives like the EIDL help organisations learn 'what works' for different groups within the school system, ultimately helping

schools, charities, and government but, most importantly, children and young people. We developed the idea of the EIDL after the success of the [Justice Data Lab](#)—a Ministry of Justice service we proposed which enables organisations to get limited access to aggregate re-offending rates for their service users and to compare these results to a matched comparison group.

Evidence should be at the centre of decision-making when funding projects in schools. Funders should consider using—and funding—programmes that aim to improve the evidence base of ‘what works’ in education. Further research into the school system could help with this as there is often a disconnect between services offered to schools and the services they actually want.

## Innovation and digital technology

Interventions need to be driven by evidence and developed in collaboration with schools. However, interventions in the school system will have to become more creative as the system changes. There is a lack of research by charities into what schools really want, and at times it appears that charities and schools are speaking fundamentally different languages. The pressures that schools face—funding, teacher retention and workloads—are not always appreciated by charities. Schools see charities as trying to sell them a service that is not crucial, and charities see schools as unconcerned with well-being and extra-curricular activities. These different perspectives lead to poor conversations and a challenging environment to work in, where teachers can ultimately end up not wanting to work with charities at all. Charities should think about what a school needs and how their projects address those needs before offering it a service. Schools and charities need to decide together what they would like to change and then work out ways to solve the problem—collaboration with schools and co-production of interventions will support the development of creative and innovative solutions.

Schools are increasingly using technology and so charities need to invest in this if they are going to remain relevant, reduce costs, and encourage innovation. Charities can use digital technology as a way to engage children with new subjects through, for example online streaming of live performances. However, such technology requires expertise and investment. Small to medium-size charities may lose out to large charities and private providers if they are not able to upskill or find a partner to support them. Our [Digital Transformation programme](#) is supporting the charity sector with the challenges of adopting digital technologies through a collective approach.

## Further research

We believe it would be useful to have further research in a number of areas to help charities and schools work together more effectively. First, more research on where charities can add most value would help them sell their services to schools. Secondly, a better understanding of the commissioning environment would help charities approach schools. Thirdly, work on the best approaches to scale in this market would help charities provide solutions more effectively.

## Conclusion

This report shows that despite a changing school system, charities still play a vital role alongside schools in supporting children and young people across a wide range of areas. However, we have also highlighted some of the challenges a changing school system brings to charities, and how charities can tackle these. Working closely with schools and establishing positive relationships as the school system changes will help charities to continue to make a positive impact on the lives of children and young people.

Philanthropists, trusts, foundations and corporates all invest in education, often because it is seen as a silver bullet—intervening early through schools can have a significant impact on children’s lives. This makes charities working in education attractive to funders, but major changes to the school system make education a challenging area for charities. Funders need to better understand some of the recent changes to the schools system and how that affects schools, charities, and the children and young people they intend to help.

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## TRANSFORMING THE CHARITY SECTOR

NPC is a charity think tank and consultancy which occupies a unique position at the nexus between charities and funders, helping them achieve the greatest impact. We are driven by the values and mission of the charity sector, to which we bring the rigour, clarity and analysis needed to better achieve the outcomes we all seek. We also share the motivations and passion of funders, to which we bring our expertise, experience and track record of success.

**Increasing the impact of charities:** NPC exists to make charities and social enterprises more successful in achieving their missions. Through rigorous analysis, practical advice and innovative thinking, we make charities' money and energy go further, and help them to achieve the greatest impact.

**Increasing the impact of funders:** NPC's role is to make funders more successful too. We share the passion funders have for helping charities and changing people's lives. We understand their motivations and their objectives, and we know that giving is more rewarding if it achieves the greatest impact it can.

**Strengthening the partnership between charities and funders:** NPC's mission is also to bring the two sides of the funding equation together, improving understanding and enhancing their combined impact. We can help funders and those they fund to connect and transform the way they work together to achieve their vision.

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