

Our Future Derby: Case Study

An ambitious project reports significant findings when children are exposed to career-related learning (CRL) in primary schools.



Children investigate tech devices brought in by an Our Future Derby volunteer

The children across Derby are an inquisitive bunch, during an assembly where they had to guess volunteers' jobs they had lots of questions and as one teacher put it, *"It really got them thinking about people/peers and what they find good about them. It gave them a sense of worth and motivation to be what they want to be!"*. These children represent the future talent of Derby, the future engineers, key workers, digital designers and citizens of the city. Nurturing their natural ambitions, whilst broadening their horizons and tackling potentially held stereotypes about the jobs they could do in the area is crucial for Derby's future success.

Our Future Derby presents a unique approach to designing, delivering and embedding **innovative career-related learning into primary schools**. It focuses on 7 of the most deprived wards of Derby as part of the Opportunity Area's priority to enhance social mobility and offer primary age children a broader range of opportunities to learn about and experience the world of work.

The project builds on growing evidence that early employer encounters help raise aspirations and tackle the ingrained stereotypical views that children often have about the people who do jobs and the backgrounds they are from. Led by Education and Employers within a consortium including Learn by Design, dmh associates,

Forum Talent Potential and East Midlands Chamber this unique partnership brings deep local expertise and connections with the community combined with national reach and highly respected insights and programmes supporting primary age employer engagement.

Launched in partnership with Derby City Council, this exciting project is made possible with funding from the Department for Education's 'Opportunity Area Programme'. The programme aims to:

- *Open children's eyes to their future possibilities*
- *Enable teachers to link classroom learning for children with their future opportunities through bespoke CPD sessions*
- *Engage local employers to widen children's horizons*
- *Work with parents to raise their children's aspirations*
- *Develop children's employability skills*

The project takes a holistic approach where innovative activities are being delivered in Derby schools with a diverse range of volunteers from business alongside a community engagement programme to include communications to parents and carers. Career-Related Learning Champions in each school are being supported in developing their knowledge and expertise to sustain the project, post the funding period, including curriculum-focused CPD and access to the Primary Futures portal that enables them to develop employer engagement.

In a first, the project is also being closely evaluated to measure impact. The evaluation is being led by Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, Director of dmh associates, in conjunction with Education and Employers Research.

Evidence from the interim report indicates that the programme is already having an impact on increasing pupils' understanding of the link between education, qualifications and work opportunities with 94% of children agreeing that "English and Maths can be useful later in life" and 90% agreeing that "doing well in school can help me in the future".

The report also found evidence that the programme is helping to raise the aspirations of children and broadening their horizons, 70%

“found out about new jobs they didn’t know about before” after participating in a CRL activity within school and many children (78%) learning about 5 or more jobs through the activities. 85% agreed “there are lots of jobs available to me when I grow up”.

It is vital that all young people have early access to career-related learning and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds as research shows that employer engagement increases young people’s earning potential, reduces the likelihood of young people becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) and raises aspirations about the jobs they can do in the future.¹

Teachers were asked to assess the pupils and pupils were asked to self-assess on skills including teamwork, listening and problem solving before and after the CRL activities. In both cases an increase was recorded following the delivery of the activity which demonstrates the positive impact Our Future Derby has had on developing children’s employability skills. Over 70% of teachers were able to report that children’s skills in listening, teamwork and



Pupils take part in a STEM activity

problem-solving had developed as a result of CRL activities in their school.

Justyna Owen, a teacher at Allenton Primary School in Derby allowed the Our Future Derby Team to deliver CRL activities with her year 4 and 5 pupils and said “The children really enjoyed taking part in team-work promoting activities. The sessions gave our children a great insight to some STEM careers and an idea of what these could involve. They also emphasised the importance of education for any future career choices.”



“I want to be a scientist!” - Derby pupil draws a picture of their future ambition

The Our Future Derby project continued to support its schools during lockdown by creating an online portal where schools could access CRL activities and resources, case studies and videos to send to pupils and parents for home learning. In response to the Covid-19 restrictions, the Our Future Derby team have created a menu of in-school activities that can be delivered in person or live streamed virtually into the classroom, supported by live or virtual career volunteers.

A planned programme of CRL activities and CPD is continuing until December 2020 with a final report to be published in Jan 2021. The Our Future Derby programme will then continue with a further programme from Jan - July 2021.

#OurFutureDerby