

Executive Summary

Ourfuture

Career-Related Learning in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Primary Schools

Year 3 Evaluation and Impact Report September 2022

Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE and Robert Hughes

“The main expected outcome was for us to improve in our Ofsted rating. We’d had an earlier Ofsted report ‘requires improvement’. The senior leadership team made a conscious decision to embed career-related learning (CRL) throughout the school to drive forward performance and children’s exposure to inspiring role models. Our Future has exceeded our expectations and helped us to achieve ‘Good’ in leadership. We now have a CRL Governor, we have more volunteers coming into the school, and we regularly communicate with and involve parents.”

(Headteacher, Landau Forte Academy)

To increase social mobility and improve the outcomes for children and young people living in areas of social and economic disadvantage, the Department for Education (DfE) established twelve ‘Opportunity Areas’. Their purpose was to focus local and national resources to help break the link between a child’s family background and where they get to in life. The Derby Opportunity Area Partnership Board were particularly keen to expand children’s horizons and challenge stereotypes that limited their ambitions.

This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of key research findings and recommendations from the ‘Our Future’ career-related learning (CRL) in primary schools’ project in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire (D2N2)¹ between 1st September 2021 – 31st July 2022. The project which began in 2019 was managed and delivered by the Education and Employers charity², working alongside Learn by Design (an education outreach company)³ with evaluation and research led by dmh associates⁴.

The project was underpinned by research from Education and Employers on the impact of giving children the chance to meet role models from the world of work - particularly in tackling the ingrained stereotypes that often limit their horizons. In September 2021, support was extended from 33 primary schools in seven of the most deprived wards in Derby city to 52 schools (including two Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) schools) and Multi-Academy Trusts across Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

‘Our Future’ focused on raising children’s aspirations, supporting primary teachers, embedding CRL into the curriculum, creating resources and sustainable approaches to CRL and increasing employer/volunteer activities. Additional funding was also provided by the Government Equalities Office (GEO) which further strengthened the emphasis on tackling gender stereotypes. This built upon key recommendations from the first two years.

The evaluation and impact assessment involved a selection of primary school pupils (1,600+), teachers/careers champions, headteachers, and senior leadership team members (35), employer volunteers (104) from 28 differing sectors and parents (239).

Aims and Objectives

- Raise aspirations of primary school pupils in the D2N2 region
- Stimulate pupils by developing their understanding of the link between school and the wider world of work, broadening their awareness of the range of jobs and breaking down stereotypes and challenging bias
- Inspire career champions and senior leadership teams (SLTs) within the nominated primary schools to take ‘a whole-school approach’ in embedding CRL now and in the future
- Encouragement and brokerage of CRL best practice and knowledge sharing among a wide range of schools in Derby and the wider D2N2 region.

Range of activities

- Engaged at least 9,328 children in CRL activities, of which 7,753 completed a unique ‘My Career Learning Log’ in all 52 schools.
- Supported 491 careers champions, teachers, teaching assistants and senior leadership team (SLT) representatives in CRL meetings, training sessions and face-to-face and virtual delivery activities. 17 out of 52 schools were actively involved in twinning partnership arrangements with other primary schools.
- Delivered bespoke CRL support for schools including teacher training, provided access to tens of thousands of volunteers through the unique Primary Futures portal⁵ and a produced a CRL resource bank of 58 new teaching and learning tools covering a wide range of sectors and thematic areas.
- Hosted virtual multi-school activities themed around tackling gender stereotypes, pre-recorded lesson plans and opportunities to engage in competitions. At least 13 project schools accessed Primary Futures pre-recorded resources for 19 CRL activities.
- Captured the views and experiences of 239 parents on their ideas and experience of CRL in primary schools.

¹ <https://d2n2lep.org/about/>

² <https://www.educationandemployers.org/about-the-charity/>

³ <https://www.learnbydesign.co.uk/>

⁴ <https://dmhassociates.org/>

⁵ <https://www.primaryfutures.org/>

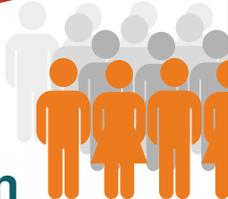


Findings show the positive impact that career-related learning makes to primary aged children, particularly those living in areas of economic and social challenge.

Our future

9,328

children
engaged through
the project



Our future

491

school
staff supported in
career-related learning

Our future

167 volunteers

/employers from
120 organisations
participated in activities



Our future

269 parents

shared their
career-related learning
ideas and viewpoints



Impact on Children

Raising aspirations and broadening horizons

Our future

75% of children

found out about jobs they
did not know about before.



Our future

76% of children

felt inspired and excited after
hearing adults talk about their jobs.



- An increase from 62% to 74% of pupils agreeing with the statement 'I can do any job I want when I grow up.'
- An increase from 71% to 83% of pupils agreeing with the statement 'There are lots of different jobs for me when I grow up.'
- 96% of parents think it is important for their children to understand the link between what they learn at school to the world of work.
- Increased role models and sectoral representation in schools and Multi Academy Trusts. At least 28 different sectors were represented by career volunteers supporting in-school activities.



“Our Future is building interpersonal skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication. Also, considering future careers that may have not otherwise been considered.”

(Deputy head, Southwold Primary School)

“Children can now name a wider variety of careers and know that stereotypes should not matter when thinking of a career.”

(Classroom teacher, Zaytouna Primary School)

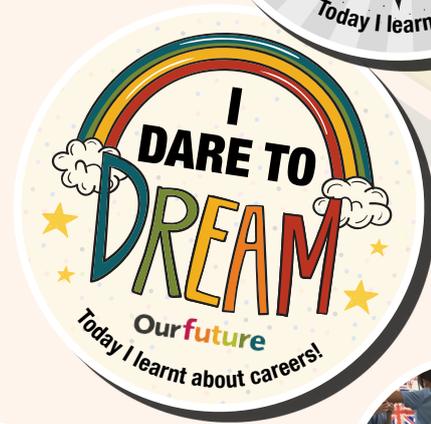
“We now understand that there is so much more to these jobs than we previously thought, and we are surprised that you don’t always need to go to university to begin these careers.”

(Teacher, Victoria Primary School)

“The resulting confidence he [a pupil with additional learning needs] gained from this is immeasurable, but we know from the way he presented his entrepreneurial ideas that one day he’ll find the right work environment for him and excel. And hopefully he’ll know this too and take this belief with him into his future and the pursuit of the perfect job”

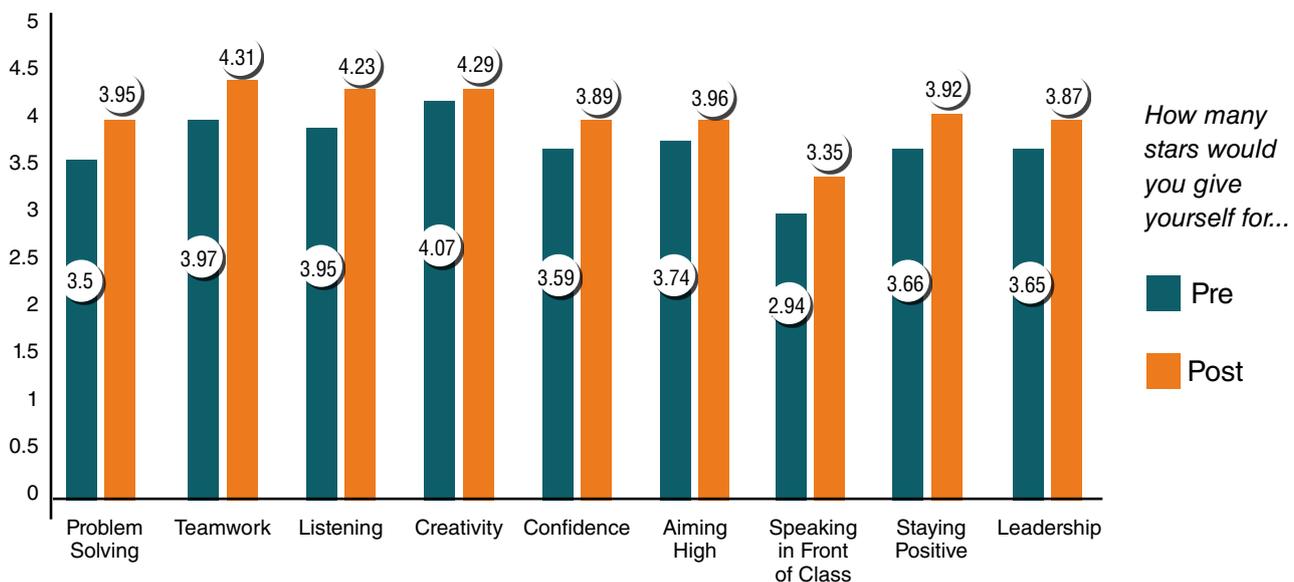
(Deputy Head, Tupton Primary and Nursery Academy)

This year, children’s ‘Can Do’ stickers were introduced. This idea came from parents who participated in webinars and was swiftly implemented by the delivery team.



Improvement in key skills

Children’s self- assessment of their skills pre-and post-CRL activity shows an increase across all key skills listed below. This was also confirmed through teacher and head teacher feedback.



Tackling gender stereotyping

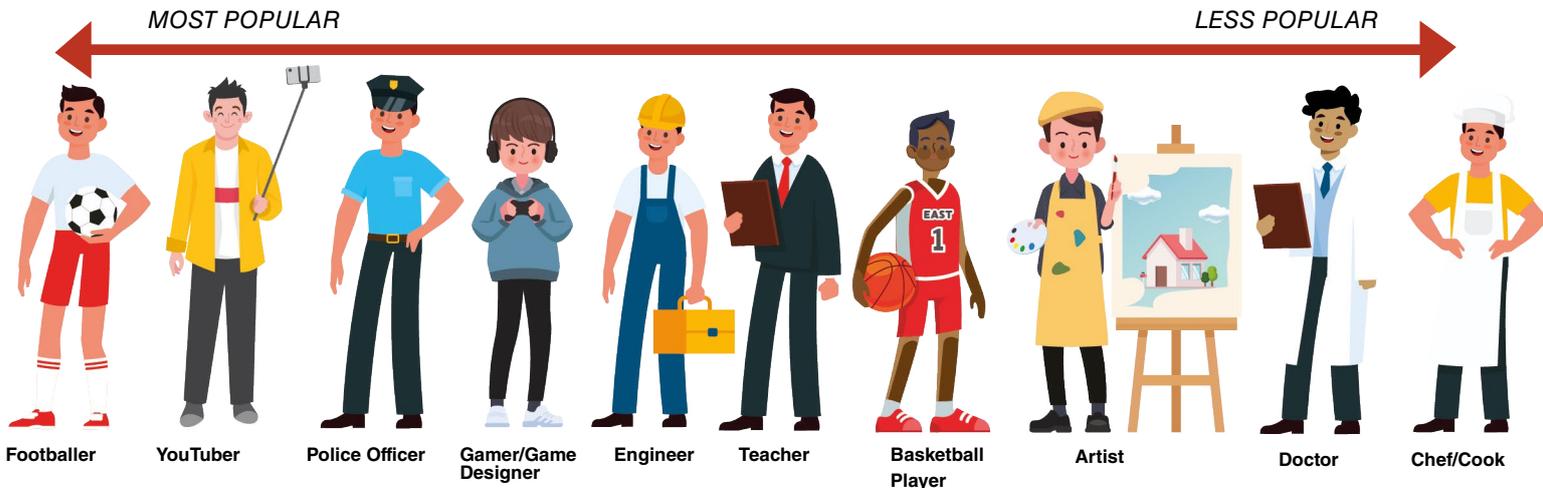
- 92% of pupils agree 'Girls and boys can do the same job.'
- 82% of parents agree that it is important to tackle gender stereotyping from an early age.



The above chart illustrates boys rated themselves slightly higher in Problem Solving, Teamwork and Leadership, while girls rated themselves much higher in being Creative and Listening. This may be a reflection on some of the jobs the two groups identified as illustrated below.

Top 10 jobs identified by boys

Figure 7



Top 10 jobs identified by girls



There is clear evidence of unconscious bias in how girls and boys think about the jobs people do and that children's career aspirations are narrow and misaligned with the labour market. This is illustrated as shown above in which the top ten jobs identified by girls and boys are compared. In person and virtual CRL sessions helped to tackle this.

“The children were all really engaged and were particularly impressed that the volunteer was a female pilot...I was really surprised by some of the questions that they asked which encouraged others to enquire further and the variety of questions asked was great. I think it was evident that even more discussion around gender stereotypes and inequality/discrimination need to take place frequently across school as I was surprised by how many children reverted back to ‘construction worker = male, nurse = female’ despite us spending a whole week exploring and challenging this not long ago as a whole school ‘diversity week.’”
(Year 3 teacher, Gunthorpe Primary School)

“Being one of a few girls on my graduate scheme I see how important it is to encourage children to challenge gender stereotypes at a young age. More girls are getting involved in STEM now but asking children to question these stereotypes encourages them to consider such careers.”
(Graduate Mechanical Engineer working in the Nuclear Industry)

Sue Redfern MBE, the first woman to play and umpire for the Cricket World Cup, joined Baroness Nicky Morgan and another volunteer to speak to children as young as six and seven years-old at Allenton Primary in Derby to bring to life the focused classroom topic ‘Significant People.’ Sue was gratified knowing her message - that everyone starts as an ordinary 7-year-old and can go on to achieve great things – landed well with the children. She reflected afterwards: “It was exciting to meet them [the children] and hear about their childhood and dreams.”

Impact on teachers

- 100% said that programme had a positive effect on the children
- 95% stated their expectations had been exceeded or met

Most of the teachers believe it is possible to embed CRL into their school curriculum, with some caveats. Twinning arrangements backed up by CRL resources worked well.

- 92% (n=33) of teachers agreed that the CRL activities delivered have addressed the issue of gender equality.



“It couldn't improve, it was great.”
(Classroom teacher, Wirksworth Junior School)

“We have been really glad to be a part of the project this year and we have felt that the experiences have been really positive and beneficial for the children. We would definitely want to take part in any future projects that arise. Thank you for your support this year, we hope to work with you again soon.”
(Teacher, Cherry Tree Hill Primary)



The most effective part of the Our Future project

- SLT 'buy in' to the concept and careers champion in school
- Easy access to employers/volunteers e.g. Primary Futures portal
- Volunteers help support children's confidence, aspirations and broaden their horizons
- Bespoke & flexible design tailored to the specific needs of the school
- Expert support and experience of the Our Future delivery team
- Practical content-rich high quality CRL resources that can be easily accessed and applied in practice
- Twinning partnerships including meeting with other teachers, building confidence and sharing best policies and practices
- Children practising different hands-on activities
- Bringing the outside world into the school
- Marketing activities to raise profile and encourage more teachers, parents and employers/volunteers to get involved.

The project has left a positive legacy. There is a great opportunity for schools to make good use of the high-quality content resources from the project that support sustainable approaches to teacher training and embedding CRL in the curriculum.

More needs to be done to tackle gender stereotyping at a young age and schools supported in this regard. SEND schools and other providers of SEND support need more CRL activities relevant to their pupils.

They need more volunteers to work with and inspire children and/or parents in 1:1 or group sessions. The Our Future project has demonstrated this can be impactful and rewarding for all involved.

Impact on volunteers

- Volunteers stated that projects such as Our Future make volunteering easy.
- All volunteers were impressed by the level of enthusiasm of the children and the types of questions they asked.
- Many volunteers highlighted they enjoyed the experience and gained satisfaction from inspiring children and working to support teachers in schools.

Selected examples of motivations:

"To inspire children to achieve their potential, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds or communities."

(Director/CEO of SME Digital/Tech company)

"An opportunity to give something back to local children through my experiences and to share the RR name to potential future employees."

(Rolls Royce volunteer)

"Young people are the future of all businesses. Without industry explaining how interesting and exciting a job in their business sector can be this will leave that industry short of qualified people in 20 -30 years' time. It is an investment today for our future tomorrow."

(CEO, International Manufacturing company)

Recommendations

Recommendations for central and local Government

1. Adopt a targeted CRL area-based approach focusing on areas of disadvantage.
2. Enable SEND schools and other providers of SEND support to harness volunteers from diverse backgrounds to engage in CRL activities and work with and inspire children and/or parents.
3. Commission research at a local, regional, and/or national level on the aspirations of children according to their ethnicity and where they live i.e., a rural location compared those living in urban conurbations, to assess the impact of online and offline delivery modes on attainment and achievement. This was outside the scope of this research.

Recommendations for senior leadership teams (SLTs), career champions and teachers

4. Provide support to senior leadership teams (SLTs) to better understand the benefits of CRL to their primary school pupils and parents.
5. Help embed CRL delivery activities in all primary schools to ensure that employers/volunteers can become more involved. For example, supporting real-life project-based learning and getting a good balance that allows for more practical 'hands-on' CRL activities.
6. Draw on the range of activities and free resources successfully delivered in primary schools and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) through this project. For example, the 'Yes I Can' activity and many others, multi-school virtual events, pre-recorded sessions, templates to follow, and the 58+ CRL bank of new and updated resources.
7. Recruit a wider selection of volunteers to address gender stereotyping, taking care not to overlook the need for male role models in under-represented occupational roles and sectors.
8. Help equip parents to discuss with children what they have learned in school and the changing world of work. Make use of the 'Spotlight in Careers' Newsletter template aimed at parents, the children's 'Dare to Dream' and 'Yes I Can' stickers, and supplement this approach with parent engagement webinars e.g., virtual coffee mornings and/or after school sessions.
9. Examine ways to capture children's skills online and brokerage arrangements between primary and post-primary feeder schools - to make effective use of aspirations and 'can do' skills provided by children in their 'My Career Log'. Further research is needed to assess the impact and effectiveness of the primary school's 'My Career Log' applied in post-primary settings.

Recommendations for professional associations and allied teaching profession bodies

10. Explore options available to further assist leadership teams, teachers and careers champions to embed CRL successfully within 'a whole school approach'. Exchange ideas and experiences through twinning partnerships to showcase good and interesting CRL policies and practices.
11. Find ways for schools to make greater use of the Primary Futures portal designed to connect schools to volunteers to help broaden horizons, challenge gender stereotypes and bring learning to life from an early age.
12. Help showcase the benefits of CRL activities and enable teachers to better understand how they can improve their pupils' motivation and aspirations. In particular, the importance of skills being captured in the curriculum from an early age.



The findings in this report can help inform ongoing work in new Education Investment Areas. This provides robust evidence of the impact of career-related learning (CRL) in primary schools - helping to raise aspirations, motivate and inspire, improve skills attainment, and show children what is possible beyond what they might be familiar with in their immediate surroundings – and in so doing help improve social mobility.

You may like to watch a video of Our Future project schools with first-hand experience of Career-Related Learning (CRL) from the Our Future project. Short Version:



Short Version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LXiVYIXIVo>



Full Version:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV_Zr-aX1uQ&t=2s

Contact: Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, Research Director
Email: deirdre.hughes3@btinternet.com

We are very grateful the Derby Opportunity Area Partnership Board for commissioning this Year 3 evaluation and impact assessment study. Also, our thanks to the Government Equalities Office (GEO) which further strengthened the emphasis on tackling gender stereotypes. To access the main report: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/our-future-impact/>

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051431/Education_Investment_Areas_selection_methodology.pdf

FUNDED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT FOR
EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY AREA PROGRAMME

Education
and Employers

LEARN
by design

dmh associates
policy | research | practice

