

24 March 2026

**Education and Employers awarded a £500,000 partnership grant from the Westminster Foundation to raise future aspirations for primary school children.**



**Education and Employers' *Primary Futures* project will bring inspirational volunteers from the world of work into schools to talk to children about their jobs - raising their aspirations and motivating them in core subjects: English, maths and science.**

The programme will target children from schools in the least socio-economically advantaged areas in Sutherland, Chester, Westminster and rural Lancashire, the geographies where the Westminster Foundation directs its grant giving.

Education and Employers' research has revealed that many children form life-limiting gender, race, and class-based stereotypes about who can do what job before the age of seven. This is because children and young people's aspirations are chiefly shaped by what they see immediately around them and by TV or social media. Less than 1% of children get to be inspired by somebody new coming into their school to talk about jobs.

This often leads to less advantaged children growing up with blinkered horizons compared to their more advantaged peers. Consequently, many children narrow their aspirations around what they want to do for a job when they grow up. As Marian Wright-Edelman put it: “*you can’t be what you can’t see.*”

*Primary Futures* will ensure all children see a wide range of role models ‘like them’ from the world of work visiting their school. Our unwavering aim through this project is to ensure less advantaged children believe **‘they can be what they can see’**.



This funding will enable the *Primary Futures* project to deliver repeat sessions with targeted schools across the Westminster Foundation’s core geographies, offering at least three interventions to pupils across the school year.

As part of the project, Education and Employers’ experienced staff will provide training and support for primary teachers themselves, helping them to build career-related learning into their daily lessons, and facilitating the exchange of best practice across the Westminster Foundation’s grant-giving areas, over the length of the 5-year project.

The project will be delivered working in close partnership with local and national employers and volunteers - from app designers to zoologists, from CEOs to apprentices - so that children understand that there are multiple careers and multiple routes to achieving successful futures. Volunteers will be provided with resources and expert advice that help make their input age appropriate.

**The project will deliver a variety of interventions, including:**

- **whole school assemblies** involving volunteers from a range of jobs;
- **'showcase' events** featuring careers of the future in a particular industry/ sector;
- **classroom-based activities** where pupils can interact closely with volunteers through discussions, workshops and Q&A;
- and **themed stereotype busting events** like showing a range of women from sectors where they are currently under-represented.

Schools will receive an engagement pack, and parents will be encouraged and given resources to talk about careers with their children as we know this is an important factor in jointly raising aspirations.

The project will be evaluated over the 5-year cycle, and Education and Employers will seek feedback from teachers and pupils every year to ensure their voices are heard and that year-on-year delivery can be refined and improved. Past research studies involving over 60,000 children show 4 out of 5 are more motivated to learn English and maths after our interventions, and that the most socio-economically disadvantaged children benefit the most from these activities.



[The Westminster Foundation](#) is the independent grant making trust and registered charity, representing the charitable interests of The Duke of Westminster and Grosvenor businesses. This partnership grant provides an opportunity to expand on a very successful pilot programme delivered last year with support from the Foundation's Community Grants programme.

**Caroline Da Cunha, Cheshire Grants Manager said:**

*“We are delighted to provide long-term support through this partnership grant. It harnesses the power of brilliant volunteers from a wide range of local and national employers, to talk to children and young people about the jobs they do. This is going to inspire primary aged children to think big about their futures.*

*‘I’ve seen first-hand how Education and Employers’ innovative approach broadens the horizons and raises the aspirations of those from underserved backgrounds. It especially helps them to understand the importance of what they are learning at school. This partnership represents an opportunity to drive positive change and improve the lives of children and young people in our communities.’*

**Dominic Judge, Deputy CEO of Education and Employers added:**

*“We are incredibly grateful to the Westminster Foundation for this opportunity to make a meaningful difference to the lives of children, and for the supportive and intelligent way they’ve engaged with us to date as a funder”.*

*“We clearly hold a strong and shared sense of mission around early intervention and education and career readiness, and the Westminster Foundation’s commitment to supporting children and young people in their geographies is palpably genuine. It’s clear that we both resolutely want every child from a less advantaged background to know what jobs are out there, see people like them being successful, to be able to dream big for their future, and most importantly, to fulfil their individual potential by being motivated to achieve at school”.*

**Lisa Clifford-James, leading delivery of the project for Education and Employers said:**

*“We can’t wait to get started. We worked with some brilliant schools and volunteers across Westminster, Chester, Lancashire and Sutherland last year in a true community effort to make a difference for young people. Thanks to this partnership funding from the Westminster Foundation, we have a rare opportunity to achieve life-changing impact for the children and young people in those areas over the next five years. Thank you!”*



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The Westminster Foundation: [www.westminsterfoundation.org.uk](http://www.westminsterfoundation.org.uk)

**Alternative images:**

