Destiny should not be determined by Demography

Building alignment between the classroom and the boardroom

New research on the impact of partnership between schools and businesses
“Direct contact with employers is vital to ensure young people build successful working lives. This research highlights that Business Class has made this possible, which is why we have been proud to support its growth and reach over the last three years.”

Michael Davis
CEO, UKCES

“Goldman Sachs recognises the importance of equipping young people with the tools they need to have successful future careers. We are very pleased to have established Business Class partnerships with schools in London and look forward to seeing the positive impact this long-term collaboration will have on students, teachers and Goldman Sachs people alike. This research provides further evidence of the benefits of Business Class and I encourage other firms to engage with schools to help young people develop the skills they need to succeed at work.”

Michelle Pinggera
Partner, Goldman Sachs

“Our business partner has provided a fresh approach to help us tackle some of the challenges we face as a school. As a school leader, I value their different perspective and the opportunity for support not only for my pupils, but for the whole school.”

Ruth Williamson
Head Teacher,
Foxford School & Community Arts College
Education is the most important long term strategic issue facing the UK today. We cannot have a productive UK economy when 3.7 million children live in poverty,¹ and in addition only 1 in 8 children from low income homes go on to achieve a high income as an adult.²

10 years ago Business in the Community took up the challenge to understand what approach had the greatest impact in partnerships between businesses and schools – this saw the birth of Business Class. To date over 470 partnerships have been established, engaging 1,000 businesses across 77 clusters and impacting on the lives of over 150,000 young people.

Initial evaluation of Business Class in the North West in 2010³ provided evidence of the power of the model to raise aspirations and transform performance for schools and their pupils. It was upon these excellent foundations that the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) supported BITC to roll out Business Class nationally, enabling us to build the reach and scale of these partnerships, especially in the harder to reach rural and coastal communities.

I am encouraged by the evidence within this research report that demonstrates the role that business has to play in ensuring that young people understand the behaviours and qualifications required to build successful working lives. Supporting young people to be better prepared for the labour market has a positive impact and reduces the likelihood of them being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).⁴ The Warwick research concludes that pupils participating in Business Class are 13% more likely to have alignment between their academic activities and their career aspirations. Which in turn improves the chances of these young people making a successful transition into the labour market.

The key finding that I would like businesses, schools and government to take away from this research is that it is possible through business and school partnerships to support young people to ensure their destiny is not determined by their demography. Our challenge is to enable and encourage businesses to enter into those geographies where there is no significant business provision.

Paul Drechsler
Chairman, Business in the Community’s Education Leadership Team

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¹ Data refers to children in relative poverty, where income is less than 60% of the median household income and is derived from: DWP, 2015, Households below Average Income, Pg 46: http://bit.ly/1dhKERZ
² Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2013, State of the Nation: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain, Pg10
⁴ Mann et al, It’s who you meet, 2013
⁵ Analysis reveals this is indicative evidence, backed up by other findings across the project, although there is more than a 1 in 10 chance that this correlation is due to chance.
The Context

In 2008, Business in the Community embraced the challenge to develop a methodology of collaboration between businesses and schools that drives tangible benefits for both – Business Class.

Pioneered in the North West, Business Class provided businesses and schools with a strategic framework, rooted in the needs of the school who alongside their business partner committed to work together for a minimum of three years.

In 2010, BITC contracted Cass to evaluate the impact that Business Class was beginning to have in North West. Cass provided evidence of the power of the Business Class model to raise aspirations and transform performance in schools and enabled BITC to begin to grow the model outside of the North West.

At the heart of Business Class is the aim to ensure that a young person’s success at school and beyond is not predicted by their social background. Leading research within the field, such as the 2011 work of Yates shows where young people’s career choices are poorly matched to their educational plans it can result in an increased risk of becoming NEET. Business in the Community are clear that responsible businesses have a role to play in levelling the playing field as well as addressing the skills gap.

In 2012 Anthony Mann’s research found that if a young person had four or more interactions with employers they were five times less likely to be NEET. It is through these interactions that they are able to build their understanding of the skills and competencies needed to build successful working lives.

Within this context, in 2013, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) enabled the national rollout of Business Class, raising the number of established partnerships from 215 to 476 across the UK in 3 years.

Through this partnership BITC commissioned Warwick to undertake a two year study into the impact that Business Class has on the alignment of young people to the labour market. Alongside this academic report, BITC decided to deepen their response with a piece of research focused on the underlying characteristics of successful collaboration between schools and businesses.

The combined findings of this latest research underpin BITC’s 2015 Education Symposium. They strongly confirm the impact captured in 2010, thus increasing BITC’s determination to build the bridge between classroom and boardroom, working together for the benefit of the 3.7 million children who live in poverty.

7 Mann et al, It’s who you meet, 2013

“If a young person had four or more interactions with employers they were five times less likely to be NEET.”
Anthony Mann
Building on this journey, Business in the Community commissioned the Institute for Employment Research at Warwick University to assess the impact of employer-engagement activities, the uplift of employability skills and added-value impact on pupils of the Business Class programme.

Additional research also assessed the impact of business education partnerships on the wider school and on business, evaluating the underpinning characteristics of successful partnerships.

Business Class fills an important gap. In fact, pupils are likely to experience two additional employability and enterprise activities where they participate in Business Class compared with pupils not participating. These additional activities are shown to reduce the likelihood of these teenagers becoming NEET by up to 20 percentage points.

Previous research has indicated that if the activities of young people at school and their post-school aspirations are aligned there is less chance of those young people becoming NEET. The Warwick research, conducted over two years, concludes that pupils participating in Business Class are 13% more likely to have alignment between their academic activities and their career aspirations, which in turn improves the chances of these young people making a successful transition into the labour market.

Aside from pupil alignment, attainment and employability, the research has identified three other areas of impact on schools: increased support for leadership and governance, enhanced management skills, and financial savings.

Given the research shows that the more activities with employers that pupils encounter, the greater the impact, the research concludes that by focusing on areas with little existing support, Business Class is instrumental in connecting those pupils most in need with employers and with activities designed to improve their employability.

The partnerships which appear most successful are those committed for the long-term, working with a single employer, to allow whole-school needs focussed relationships, and the ability to be flexible, enabling the programme to be tailored to local labour market conditions and the specific needs of pupils.

In particular, the cluster approach used within Business Class, appears to provide added benefits which other types of engagement between schools and employers might not bring about, such as the opportunity for schools and employers to share their experiences and learning from their involvement, and ensuring a shared commitment and a common agenda.

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8 Mann et al, It’s who you meet, 2013
10 Analysis reveals this is indicative evidence, backed up by other findings across the project, although there is more than a 1 in 10 chance that this correlation is due to chance.
Business Class demonstrates a substantial impact upon shaping pupils’ views about the skills and qualities that employers value when recruiting young people. And is seen to open up the career horizons of pupils and allowing better understanding of the skills and qualities employers are looking for.

Intensive activities (those that involved a degree of one-to-one engagement) have more impact on pupils mainly due to the feedback this enables. It is also clear that it is important for pupils to hear direct from employers. Both of these attributes underline the unique role that business can play in enabling a young person build the skills businesses recruit against.

There are five key business benefits identified through analysis of over 120 business partnerships with schools:

1. Engaging their current workforce
2. Creating a pipeline for future talent
3. Developing innovation and thinking differently
4. Raising profile in local communities and on key issues
5. Attracting new business.

82% of schools believe staff and pupils are better equipped for the future as a result of a partnership.
Partnerships

Schools are keen to partner with businesses to increase pupils’ and teachers’ understanding of the world of work and provide employability opportunities. With over half (54%) of employers facing difficulties filling vacancies, partnerships are crucial for all parties to address key local or employability-based skills gaps. **94% of businesses and 80% of schools involved feel a partnership is a key element of being successful.**

The key to successful partnerships

Our research\(^\text{11}\) centred on the characteristics of a strong and impactful partnership, and the findings are clear. We would encourage businesses to incorporate these factors in any engagement with schools.

- **Clarity**
  The top success factor cited by both businesses and schools is the need for **clarity of purpose** and clear outcomes, driven by the **needs** of the school and the business.

- **One-to-one**
  Warwick’s research noted that one of the key factors which drives Business Class to be most effective is schools **working with a single business**, developing a stronger relationship between the school and the employer ensuring the needs of all parties were satisfied.

- **Flexibility**
  Warwick concluded an allowance for **flexibility** is crucial as it can be tailored to meet local labour market conditions and the specific needs of the school.

- **Long-term**
  Research shows that **long-term commitment** to a partnership derives greater benefits for all concerned, encouraging more flexibility, addressing a wider range of issues and more intensive engagement with pupils, reaping greater impact.

- **Senior buy-in**
  There is also evidence that this drives **senior buy-in** from both the school and business involved, another crucial factor in a partnership’s success.

- **Communication**
  Two in three schools and businesses also cite **regular communication**, and reviews of progress as key to developing the partnership and ensuring continued **mutual benefit**.

- **Clusters**
  Support, and sharing knowledge and experience is evidenced as key. Warwick found that **local clusters** were a key factor in Business Class’ success, providing added benefits which other types of engagement might not bring about. These include the opportunity for schools and employers to share their experiences, learn from their involvement, and ensuring a shared commitment and a common agenda.

- **Location**
  While seen as twice as important to businesses than schools, **proximity** of the school and business is also crucial to enable more interventions, and a greater number of **employee volunteers**.

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\(^{11}\) This report draws from both of the research reports commissioned by Business in the Community. The Warwick research commissioned 2013-2015 focusses on the impact of employer-engagement activities upon the young people that participated in Business Class. The Bean Research commissioned in 2015 focusses on the impact of business education partnerships on both businesses and schools’ teachers and management, as well as evaluate the characteristics of success.
Developing partnerships

While the keys to successful partnerships opposite run through the course of a partnership, the research has also clarified that with a solid foundation of long-term commitment, the priorities of these characteristics of success evolve during the course of a partnership, as do the engagement activities.

School and businesses have told us that it is this development that allows greater mutual benefit, and continual impact for all stakeholders.

What are the characteristics of success?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-selection</th>
<th>Getting started</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Progression</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs assessment</td>
<td>Open and regular communication</td>
<td>Celebrate success</td>
<td>Link to talent pipeline e.g. apprenticeships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aligned values, approach &amp; pace</td>
<td>Dedicated contact relationship</td>
<td>Evaluate where you can</td>
<td>Share best practice across a national network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarity of purpose and understand unique contribution</td>
<td>Specific actions and quick wins</td>
<td>Extend across business and school</td>
<td>Repeat and replicate what works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Calendar and timetabling</td>
<td>Learn from others</td>
<td>Extend to community and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior buy-in</td>
<td>Mutual respect</td>
<td>Extend from pupils to management OR vice versa</td>
<td>Expand interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty and realism about capability and what can be achieved</td>
<td>Build interest and engagement with SLT and middle management</td>
<td>Ensure young people come to the workplace</td>
<td>Impact assessment</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen to the voices of young people</td>
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Embracing the challenge

One of the aspects most cited when evaluating the value and success behind partnerships is the fact that everyone involved in the Bean research\(^\text{12}\) (involving over 120 businesses and 85 schools) described building the relationship as challenging. We all know from experience that creating and developing successful partnerships is hard, but we are emboldened by our research which also tells us that when the factors stated are incorporated, the higher the chance of success, and when successful partnerships evolve there are significant positive impacts for schools, pupils and businesses.

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\(^{12}\) Research conducted by Bean Research in 2015, details in Methodology
Interventions

What’s happening?

Our new research has confirmed that partnerships involving a variety of interventions work most effectively, are more sustainable and have greater impact.

Research undertaken by Warwick shows that pupils are likely to experience two additional employability and enterprise activities where they participate in Business Class compared with pupils not participating. With Mann et al reporting that teenagers who experienced two or more employer engagement activities were up to 20 percentage points less likely to be NEET as young adults compared to teenagers who had not experienced any such activities.

Overall, the most frequent activities undertaken in education and business partnerships across the UK are careers education and advice and employability skills development.

While remaining crucial, our evaluation has shown that the focus on employability skills and career options reduce over time. It is due to the long-term partnerships that a broadening of interventions evolves over time to support school management, curriculum and entrepreneurship.

**Case Study**

Hogan Lovells is in the fourth year of a 6-year partnership with Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School working with students, so that they have a better understanding of choices when they leave school.

It also helps the school address issues around leadership and governance, employability, enterprise and the curriculum. Programmes include an after school debating class, middle leader training for staff and career days.

![Figure 1: Time-series trend in frequency in employability and enterprise activities](image-url)
Which interventions matter most?

Our research coupled with previous research from Mann et al shows the more activities the greater the impact. However, our evidence indicates that some activities have a greater benefit than others, these include:

**Intensive activities**
Crucially, intensive activities – those with a higher level of individual engagement – are more likely to have a greater impact on pupils. Through these more intensive activities, pupils felt they obtained the specific feedback that would assist them to obtain the job they wanted.

Employers are therefore encouraged to become involved in activities where pupils have greater, more focussed interaction.

**Specific skills development**
Specific skills development, such as STEM, are key to bridging the future skills gaps for employers.

**Broader view**
Across all types of activity, pupils appeared to welcome hearing from employee volunteers about their jobs and how they arrived at their current positions, to broaden their understanding of possible future roles.

**Presenting skillsets**
Business Class partnerships have had a substantial impact upon shaping pupils’ views about the skills and qualities that employers value when recruiting young people.

For example, 72% of participant pupils felt that Business Class had helped them to develop skills (such as writing a CV or how to present oneself at interview) that would assist them in finding a job in the future.

**Work experience**
Work experience is shown to have the greatest impact, with students feeling it informed their thinking about careers and gave them access to adults who function as credible information sources that they may not find elsewhere.

As a result of work experience, 90% of participant pupils agreed that they were going to work harder in their lessons and coursework at school, and 73% were clearer about what they wanted to do in their career.

**Case Study**
Esh Group’s Building My Skills gives young people understanding about the world of work directly from employers, through timetabled careers sessions delivered by over 100 businesses with 74 schools in 27 local authority areas in the north of England and Scotland over the academic year to almost 11,000 young people.

More than 80% of pupils themselves reported that their confidence or aspirations had been boosted.
Impact on Pupils

In the current labour market, businesses are looking for young people who are not only qualified but often more importantly deliver the generic skills needed to be successful in the workplace. Without business partnerships, young people are unlikely to have access to this information and often are unaware what these skills are.

Where Business Class is being delivered, our two-year research study with Warwick’s Institute of Employment Research clearly demonstrates that young people are accessing more opportunities, becoming more aligned with aspirations and are ultimately more employable.

Crucially, where pupils participate in Business Class, there is indicative evidence that their academic activities within school are likely to be 13% better aligned with their career aspirations. Based on previous research evidence from Yates et al, this indicates that alignment is likely to reduce the likelihood of becoming NEET.

And through Business Class, Warwick have shown that pupils are likely to experience two additional employability and enterprise activities where they participate in Business Class compared with pupils not participating. Given Mann et al found that teenagers who experienced two or more employer engagement activities were up to 20 percentage points less likely to be NEET as young adults, compared to teenagers who had not experienced any such activities, this reaffirms the impact on pupils and their long term employability.

In particular, Warwick concluded that after involvement, pupils were more attuned to the demands of the labour market, and the qualities that employers value when recruiting young people.

More than 80% of pupils themselves reported that their confidence or aspirations had been boosted, Warwick highlighted, while Bean demonstrated that 82% of schools believe staff and pupils are better equipped for the future as a result of a partnership.

While the analysis reiterates Mann et al’s findings that the more activities pupils are involved in with employers, the greater the impact, Warwick research also concludes that intensive activities – those with a greater level of individual engagement – are more likely to have a greater impact on pupils.

Case Study

Jaguar Land Rover’s (JLR) Inspiring Tomorrow’s Engineers programme, operating since 1999, promotes engineering careers and routes into employment to address future skills shortages and has involved more than two million young people. JLR also partner with seven Business Class schools engaging students with STEM and insights into modern manufacturing, for students and teachers.

In fact, at the Sidney Stringer Academy in Coventry, students qualifying with A*-C GCSEs improved from 41% to 59% during its two year partnership with JLR.

Case Study

UBS helped create The Bridge Academy, a mixed, non-denominational school for 11-19 year olds in Hackney. This partnership is focused on closing the attainment and destinations gap that exists between those from the poorest and wealthiest backgrounds.

In 2014/15, 65% of Bridge students were eligible for Pupil Premium, 45% spoke English as an additional language and 75% of Sixth Formers would be the first in their family to attend university.

In 2015, the attainment gap at GCSE for those eligible for Free School Meals and those who were not was 6% (compared to the national average of 27%) and 74% of Year 13 Bridge students went on to university. 13% of those on Free School Meals went to Russell Group universities, with the national average of 5%.
“I’ve learnt about different professions and been given skills and confidence. Linklaters has definitely opened doors and opportunities.”

Year 13 student who received tutoring, mentoring, work experience, and employability programmes.

As a result of work experience, 90% of participant pupils said they would work harder at school.
Impact on Schools

As well as impact on pupils involved, empirical research was conducted across over 100 schools assessing the key benefits on the wider school community.

The twelve benefits were then clustered and show the greatest impact on schools is derived through stronger leadership and governance, improved management and enhanced curriculum, as well as pupil attainment and employability. These are illustrated through a small selection of examples.

1 Improved leadership & governance
Over half the current partnerships focus on or include support for school leadership, through buddying, mentoring or school governorships. Our analysis indicates that schools in longer term partnerships or those focused on governance are more able to articulate and report its impact.

Case Study
Senior leaders at Witchford Village College in Ely identified a need to increase the capacity and effectiveness of their middle leaders. Lloyds Bank provided a mentoring partner for each Head of Department, which led to strategic action plans, linked to Personal Development Plans supporting the Performance Related Pay process. Each worked to integrate these within their department and the wider school development plan.

The school report improved confidence, focus and strategic leadership skills across the Head of Departments, alongside high quality 1, 3 and 5 year action plans.

Case Study
The University of Manchester’s School Governor initiative encourages staff and student alumni to fill governor vacancies where there is most need.

The university is now the largest workplace supplier of school governors in England with 371 governors, affecting 167,00 learners per year.

2 Teaching & Management skills
A third of schools involved in partnership with businesses report the impact on management and business skills.

Case Study
Linklaters provided professional development for 301 teachers at Clapton Girls Academy in Hackney, and funded 20 middle-leaders to take part in Teaching Leaders National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML).

This has in turn strengthened the Hackney Teaching Schools Alliance, retaining talent, and up-skilled colleagues in feeder primary schools.

This has also fed through to enhancing the curriculum and widening opportunities for pupils. For example, CGA represented England in debating competitions due to training teacher debate champions who then embedded debate across the curriculum.

88% of teachers of CGA reported increased attainment as a result of Linklaters support.
3 Financial savings
While financial savings are rarely motivations for partnerships, a number of schools can report a financial benefit as a result of partnerships.

Case Study
Haggerston School reported the partnership with Freshfields had improved management systems, including advising the school on setting up a foundation as a means of collecting funds raised for the school in one place in a tax efficient manner.

In addition, Freshfields employees raised £4,000 for the fund, and two of the partnership’s staff act as governors providing long-term strategic direction and leadership.

Case Study
The partnership between Okehampton College and EDF was originally focused on reducing the college’s energy costs, saving £100,000 which has been invested in additional school staffing and facilities.

The partnership evolved to address an educational need, the STEM skills gap, with 39% of employers struggling to recruit skilled workers in this area.

30% of students who showed no interest in a science-based career said they are more likely to pursue one now.
Business Benefits derived

Sustainable partnerships require benefits for all parties.

Analysis of more than 124 businesses engaged in partnerships reporting the benefits derived from education and business partnerships revealed eighteen benefits, which were then clustered into five key business case strands.

Further investigation alongside both qualitative and quantitative research has revealed the business case for developing education and business partnerships is more expansive as the partnership develops.

1 Engaging current workforce

It is clear from our research that engaging current workforce is both a driver and a derived benefit from partnering with schools.

Employee motivation is increasingly linked to the level of synergy between an individual and the organisation’s values, interaction with colleagues outside the normal work environment and development of skills to mutually benefit a supported programme. And employee engagement is profitable, with Towers Perrin’s Global Workforce study attributing an average improvement of 5% in operating margin among companies with high employee engagement.

Case Study

Business Class requires volunteers from across different departments. The resulting cross departmental collaboration and communication at Hogan Lovells has helped build stronger teams and networks. 81% of those involved say pride has risen.

Case Study

Manchester Airport has seen increased colleague engagement among volunteers in schools, now 17% above the general company wide engagement score.

Case Study

AF Blakemore’s Education Matters programme has supported 48,867 students in 265 schools through 597 projects since 2008.

Among its 1,199 employee volunteers, 99% said they were proud to work for a company that supports the community in this way. As a result of increased employee engagement through volunteering in schools benefits were derived through a decrease in staff turnover. Turnover of volunteers was a tenth of the overall company staff turnover (5% compared to 26%), it generated a potential recruitment saving of £556,960.
2 Creating a pipeline to future workforce

Identified by CIPD as the most important element in unlocking successful workforces, understanding and connecting with future talent can significantly benefit employers.

76% of businesses involved in education partnerships feel they better understand future workforce perspectives

Case Study

Siemens’ Females into Industry Challenge has resulted in an increase in the number of applications from females for the Advanced Apprenticeship programme with 20% of apprentices now recruited being female against the national average of 6% of technology roles being female.

3 Increased profile on key issues & in key communities

83% of business involved in education partnerships reported an improved profile and impact on the local communities in which their partnered schools are based.

24% report increased profile on key issues such as education or employability, as well as connections with key stakeholders as a result.

Case Study

L’Oreal’s education campaign has been crucial in improving its relationship with science journalists, demonstrating commitment to scientific investment.

As a result of increased awareness, L’Oreal was the only cosmetics company invited on to the UK All Party Parliamentary and Scientific Committee bringing together 120 Parliamentarians, 38 Universities, 122 scientific bodies and 29 companies.

Case Study

Maloney’s Retail Stores’ partnership with local schools has helped attract applicants of all ages from across the community who want to work at the stores, while current staff retention has improved.

Both schools regularly publicise their support to parents and children, which has helped Maloney’s retain loyal customers, despite increased local retail competition.
4 Thinking differently

1 in 5 businesses report that business & education partnerships have made the business think differently about the products and services they offer.

Case Study

Positioning Cambridge University Press as a publisher that is genuinely involved in local school communities, has recently helped to inform and develop their knowledge, understanding and awareness of the school communities they serve, the secondary benefits are realised through their new product development and campaign activity to schools across the UK.

Conducting user testing, engaging with staff and students on forums and workshops drives a deeper understanding of the needs of this customer group, tailoring services and products to their needs, particularly in digital development.
5 New customers & business

While generating new business is not a key driver for businesses getting involved in education partnerships, our research shows that the most effective and sustainable are those with mutual benefit, with many companies able to capitalise on new business and markets it may bring.

Case Study

The creation of Inspired Change’s school project opened up new channels of communication with local businesses, reducing the need for marketing services.

A significant majority of its annual turnover can be traced back to Enterprise Days organised with schools and local businesses.

In addition, through the growth in reputation of the project, Local Authorities and third sector groups are also now approaching the organisation to deliver student and employer engagement events across the region.

94% of businesses and 80% of schools involved feel a partnership is a key element of being successful organisations.
Building on success in the Future

Building on the characteristics of success highlighted in this new research will increase the scale of impact on pupils across the UK. There are clear asks of business, schools, Business in the Community, Government and Partners.

Asks of Business
1. Establish long term, needs led partnerships that are focused on intensive & regular interventions
2. Look beyond your immediate community to provide employer engagement to those young people who cannot access it

Asks of BITC
1. Broker and deliver employer-led content in ‘cold spots’ including rural and coastal areas
2. Ensure quality of resources for employers and schools and provide a vehicle to share best practice
3. Develop the framework for effective engagement between businesses and primary schools

Asks of Schools
1. Focus on intensive & regular interventions for pupils
2. Track activity for individual pupils that can link to destination data and demonstrate progress

Asks of Government
1. Make destination data relevant and available for all by connecting DFE and DWP data
2. Recognise and celebrate quality business/school partnerships and the breadth of support they bring

Asks of Partner Organisations
1. Work collaboratively to increase impact
2. Measure and share the impact school and business partnerships can bring
“I have thoroughly enjoyed work experience and feel it is a valuable experience in order to understand the ‘world of work’. I now have a better understanding of many different aspects of a business which I was not aware of before.”

Pupil, Business Class School

“It has given us a complete shift in emphasis in what we think is important. We think more deeply about how to embed employer engagement into the curriculum and build relationships with employers.”

Head Teacher, Business Class School
The University of Warwick

BITC commissioned Warwick University’s Institute for Employment Research between 2013 and 2015 to evaluate the impact of employer-engagement activities upon the young people that participated in Business Class; identify the added-value that it imparts on pupils, and schools, as well as employers involved and evaluate the uplift of employability skills and impact on likelihood to become NEET, capturing the formative lessons that will improve both the effectiveness and efficiency with which BC is delivered (in other words, identifying what works well and what needs to be improved).

A number of surveys were undertaken of pupils – alongside semi-structured interviews with employer volunteers, school champions, and pupils – that sought to record the types of activity in which pupils had participated and how this had affected pupils’ perceptions of the jobs market.

Encompassed within this approach were treatment (pupils participating in BC) and comparator groups (pupils not participating in BC or who were yet to participate in BC). As well as looking at impacts, the study also sought to identify the processes associated with relatively positive or negative outcomes.

A total of 3,949 pupils were interviewed through this research, conducted in 2014 and 2015.

Bean Research

In addition, Bean Research was commissioned to assess the impact of business education partnerships on both businesses and schools’ teachers and management, and evaluate the characteristics of success. Research was conducted between April and October 2015, exploring into what businesses and schools themselves are doing, saying and reporting in terms of benefits derived.

Using empirical data from 82 companies and over 100 schools, a list of 18 business and 10 school benefits were identified. Together with the later qualitative and quantitative research, these were clustered into five key benefits for business and four for schools and pupils.

These benefits are not mutually exclusive, and this report details each of these benefits, as well as identifying some examples where companies and schools have achieved such defined benefit.

In May and June 2015, qualitative one to one interviews and online quantitative research was conducted among 124 businesses and 89 schools involved in partnerships across the country. Case studies from both the primary and secondary research stages are included in this report.

Full reports from both research organisations are available at www.bitc.org.uk/education
Business in the Community’s (BITC) Education campaign focuses on preventing social background predicting a young person’s success at school and beyond. Business Class is BITC’s flagship delivery programme for education because it creates effective and mutually beneficial partnerships between schools and businesses. Over 470 schools have been involved in Business Class, supported by 1,000 businesses (33% of whom are SMEs), impacting on 150,000 young people across the UK.

Crucially, our focus is on the schools most in need of support. Of the schools participating in BITC’s Business Class programme: 80% of schools have an above average number of pupils eligible for free school meals; 57% are in the 30% most deprived areas of the country; and only 35% are achieving GCSE results above the national average. As the research highlights for many of these schools their only interaction with employers is through Business Class.

The relationships that are established are long-term and driven by the needs of the school and the priorities, resources and capacity of the business. BITC supports partnerships to identify mutual interests and collaborate to achieve shared goals. Partnerships undertake activities across four areas; leadership and governance, curriculum, enterprise and employability and wider issues.

Uniquely, Business Class partnerships come together to form clusters. Clusters are an effective and powerful network which collaborates to increase reach and impact, develops new ideas and shares best practice and resources. To date over 77 Clusters have been established across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

To find out more about Education and Business Class please contact Katy Neep, Head of Campaigning on katy.neep@bitc.org.uk or visit www.bitc.org.uk/issues/education

“The power of Business Class is its simplicity. It creates a framework that provides a long-term, targeted approach to providing support for schools and young people, while creating sustainable change in our communities. It also brings a new dimension to our business by empowering and challenging colleagues to share their skills and knowledge outside of the traditional workplace environment.”

Tulsi Naidu
Executive Director UK & Europe, Prudential UK & Europe