

CASE STUDY

SALESFORCE: ENHANCING LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

This case study outlines the partnership between Salesforce and School 21, in Stratford, East London to integrate work-based learning into the curriculum.

Introduction

School 21 was founded in 2012. Salesforce was introduced to the school by existing partner [Futureversity](#), and became School 21's first corporate partner.

The partnership's inception coincided with the launch of the new Computer Science Curriculum in primary and secondary schools in 2014.¹ All schools were rethinking and up-skilling staff to meet the new requirements. School 21 was also rethinking the whole school experience and wanted all students to work from devices. Salesforce donated funding to enable all students to have their own device for learning.

School 21's ethos is to educate the 'whole child', providing a range of skills, knowledge and experiences. Salesforce seeks to enable and inspire employees to see the value they can add to the world and felt its values aligned with School 21. The project-based approach delivered by the school also aligned to the way the Salesforce business naturally works in 'sprints' and projects.



42.4%

of pupils at School 21 are eligible or have been eligible for free school meals within the last 6 years.

How does School 21 deliver the curriculum?

Project-based learning

At School 21, from reception to Year 9, students learn traditional subjects through a cross-curriculum project-based learning approach which integrates real world context, including business, into the learning of traditional subjects.

Real Work Learning

In Years 10 – 13, students take on a real-world learning project. Unlike the majority of schools, students study 8 GCSEs instead of 10 and for Year 12 students, they will usually study 3 A-levels rather than 4 to leave ample time for students to take on substantive projects with business and work experience.

What did Salesforce contribute?

The relationship has been long-term and multifaceted. Salesforce contributed to curriculum design in ICT and Computer Design as well as providing volunteers to support other subject areas such as Maths. Salesforce has also provided leadership coaching to School 21 senior leaders.

Project-based learning

Salesforce has been instrumental in developing the students' baseline knowledge in coding. Salesforce colleagues have designed and run projects with students, mentoring them and validating their work as they progress.

In Year 8, students conduct a project with Salesforce focused upon the UN Sustainable Development Goals, working to understand the goals and world issues. The students explore solutions to real-life problems like food waste or plastic pollution. Over 12 weeks, the project links to subjects using coding such as Geography, Design & Technology and Computer Science. During these projects, students use Microbits (pocket sized computers) and 3D printing to create prototypes to demonstrate their solutions.

In Year 9, students use Python (a coding language) to build their own adventure games over 12 weeks. Salesforce volunteers set the challenge and visit three times a term to work with the students (currently virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic). In between these visits, they correspond by e-mail and finally the students present their games to Salesforce, with volunteers then playtesting the games and providing feedback.

Real-world Learning

Salesforce and School 21 have created and delivered 13 real-world learning projects to date which are based upon real projects the business needs a solution for. In Year 12, students have worked with Tableau, the world's leading analytics platform which was acquired by Salesforce a number of years ago. One of the first projects in this space focused on helping Tableau customers to understand how easy it can be to train staff in becoming data literate. By testing the Tableau

data visualisation tool with students and having students take the lead in developing training materials, Tableau gained access to easy-to-understand accessible material they could use with their customers. At the final session students will present their findings to Tableau's customer.

In 2020, a group of Year 10s worked with Salesforce to look at their global volunteering programme and compare it to volunteering programmes in other companies. At the end of the project the students presented their conclusions regarding how they could grow their work with schools, what could be done differently and where they can improve. The final presentation was to Ebony Beckwith, Executive Vice-President & Chief Philanthropy Officer for Salesforce.

How has the relationship worked?

In the early stages of the relationship a formal agreement to describe the commitment and relationship between partners was in place. However, as the relationship has grown, and Salesforce has become more integrated into the everyday life of the school the relationship has become more fluid and flexible.

Benefits of investing time in planning and development

It has taken a significant amount of time and resources to create and deliver these projects. Once up and running the time investment to deliver it each year substantially reduces and becomes an ongoing volunteering activity for employees.

'What we do with students is not as much of an investment as the initial setting up of the relationship and the initial engagement of employees. Once this is in place and you have employee volunteers who understand the importance of what they are doing they will give it the commitment they would give a customer relationship. it runs itself and provides a range of benefits'

Alastair Higginbottom, Salesforce UK

Managing expectations on both sides

The School 21 programme manager holds strong relationships with teaching staff and will involve

subject leaders in the design of the project. If the proposed project by Salesforce is too advanced for students, it will either be simplified, or Salesforce will plan to commit the time of employee volunteers to ensure they can upskill the students.

“SOMETIMES IT IS REALLY USEFUL THAT I DON’T UNDERSTAND AND I ASK THEM TO REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE TALKING TO STUDENTS SO THEY ARE GOING TO NEED TO FLIP THIS AROUND AND MAKE SURE THEY ARE CHECKING UNDERSTANDING”

Cassie Cramer, School 21

STUDENT CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

Salesforce has worked with every year group since the school opened in 2012. The students Salesforce met in Year 7 are now in sixth form and have worked with the business each year through different projects.

Marika has undertaken all Salesforce projects from the UN Global Goals project in Year 7 through to the new Data Literacy project with Tableau; a Salesforce acquisition. As part of this work, Marika is currently being mentored by the Chief Technical Officer for Tableau. Salesforce employees are excited to follow and support Marika and others as they progress in their careers. Marika and two other students worked with the Salesforce Sales team to create a pitch on the value of CSR (corporate social responsibility) which they delivered to 2,500 Salesforce employees. The students also formed a panel alongside the Salesforce program manager on the value of CSR and took questions from delegates. Marika knows the company and feels confident to present on its behalf.

‘We have been impressed with her unwavering commitment to deliver what she says she will do and her growth in confidence and self-belief’
Alastair Higginbottom, Salesforce UK

The students are briefed by School 21 before meeting Salesforce volunteers, a practice described as ‘contracting’. At the first meeting with a student, Salesforce volunteers set out their expectations about the commitment required and the support they will give. They prepare the students for ongoing praise and constructive feedback regularly during the project. This process helps to set the expectations both for the students involved and the business volunteers.

Ongoing management

Once the project is underway, the students and their teacher use an online collaboration tool called Quip. Quip is also used for project management as it:

- enables the recording of agreed milestones
- allows for an open and transparent record of progress.
- helps to identify challenges and areas which are not progressing
- enables different volunteers to support in different weeks as they can catch up on project progress easily.

If there are issues, problems or a student is struggling, School 21 and Salesforce can intervene and either offer additional support, confidence boosting, training or have a frank conversation about making the most of the opportunity being provided. Using the system in this way prevents projects from falling behind. Google Docs is another tool which can be used to collaborate in this way.

Growing reach and scaling impact

Salesforce wanted to extend the scale and impact of the projects created with schools and have now created modules based upon these projects. The modules are delivered by Salesforce in the UK and internationally for schools and not-for-profit organisations. Salesforce even involved School 21’s Modern Foreign Language Year 12 students in translating material so it could be used in other countries. A similar collaboration between schools and Salesforce has taken place from its international bases, creating 26 modules in 12 different languages.

HOW BUSINESSES CAN ENHANCE CURRICULUM LEARNING

Through the creation of a new modular approach, Salesforce has been able to reach 13,000 participants in over 800 sessions through modules offered to people in schools or non-profit organisations.

Developing Salesforce employees

“VOLUNTEERING IN SCHOOLS OR WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN OUT OF WORK FOR A LONG TIME HAS ENABLED EMPLOYEES TO SEE JUST HOW VALUABLE THEIR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE ARE AND THE VALUE OF SHARING THEM WITH OTHERS”

Alastair Higginbottom, Salesforce UK

Salesforce employees get seven paid days of volunteer time (VTO) each year. By volunteering at a school, offering virtual mentoring, or supporting organisations with technical and professional expertise, employees are encouraged to use their VTO in ways that are relevant to their personal and professional experience.

“OUR VOLUNTEERING AND GIVING PROGRAMMES ENABLE OUR EMPLOYEES TO BECOME HIGH-IMPACT CITIZEN PHILANTHROPISTS WHO EMPOWER THE WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW, HARNESS PROFESSIONAL SKILLS FOR GOOD, AND STRENGTHEN THEIR COMMUNITIES”

Alastair Higginbottom, Salesforce UK

Outcomes and impact

Since 2012, Salesforce and School 21 have created:

- 20 project-based learning opportunities for more than 675 students.
- 14 real-world learning projects for 32 students

Overall, Salesforce’s involvement has generated greater interest in Computer Science and ICT among students and 13,000 Salesforce volunteers have been engaged with schools across the UK.

Students are surveyed before, during, and after projects. All students report a growth in confidence, improved speaking skills, and a greater understanding of the corporate world.

Students who participate in an elective project with Salesforce in Year 9 are more likely to choose GCSE Computer Science. Students also report and display a marked improvement in their communication, confidence, technology skills and teamwork.

“OUR BEST PROJECTS ARE THE ONES WHICH BENEFIT THE STUDENTS AND THE BUSINESS EQUALLY”

Cassie Cramer, School 21

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REFERENCES

¹ Centre for Universal Education (Brookings Institute), 2021, How England implemented its computer science education program [online], accessed here: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/How-England-implemented-its-computer-science-education-program.pdf>