

All Different: All Equal: All Creating Our Future

Introduction

At the GLC, our All Different: All Equal motto underpins everything we do. Our mission is to develop active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community. Our core values of aspiration, resilience, compassion and responsibility underpin this. We instil the belief that everybody can achieve something great and work hard to ensure that our young people realise the importance of 'improving upon our best'.

In Autumn 2023, Personal Development leads embarked upon five new projects, building upon the collaborative work undertaken by Eco-Warriors from across the trust in the previous academic year. We recognised that this was an area of personal development on the development plans of all of our academies that required further development. The overarching aim of these projects was to provide our young people with opportunities to develop the skills required to be active citizens, through pupil leadership opportunities. Each group was tasked with leading social action projects with particular foci. In leading these projects, they would be responsible for collecting pupil voice, leading change and providing new, inspiring opportunities within their own academies and across the GLC, whilst working in partnership with other stakeholders, groups and organisations within our community.



Our 'All Creating Our Future' pupil leadership project came about through a shared understanding that in order to encourage our children to be aspirational about their futures, we need to ensure that they are provided with opportunities to understand what they can accomplish if they aim high and work hard to achieve their goals. Therefore, it is vital that we provide opportunities for them to explore their interests and develop their individual talents. In our context, where unemployment is higher than average and a large proportion of our families are in receipt of free school meals and/or the pupil premium, career aspirations are generally low. Therefore, in order to break the cycle of low aspiration and unemployment, staff and leaders understand that it is our responsibility to ensure that we expose our pupils to the broad range of careers available to them. It is also our duty to ensure that children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to explore and develop their interests and individual talents through participation in clubs, performances, sporting events/fixtures, competitions, trips, workshops and other experiences that provide cultural capital.

The 'All Creating Our Future' is being led by Head Pupils from the GLC primary academies and student leaders from Gateway Academy. These pupils are role models for their peers and promote the importance of 'improving upon our best'. The overarching objectives of the project were:

- to improve outcomes across the GLC (academic, attendance);
- to promote high aspirations for all, now and in the future.

Their responsibilities were clearly set out at the start of the project:

- collect pupil voice about the interests and future aspirations of the young people in their academy.
- identify and plan opportunities and events that enable pupils to:
 - develop their interests, talents and skills
 - develop their knowledge of different career paths and professions so that pupils understand the routes to achieving their aspirations
- develop strategies to continue to improve attendance in our schools, so that all pupils have access to every opportunity available to help them achieve their best.



At the beginning of November 2023, pupil leaders, along with their parents, were invited to a launch event, where the projects were introduced to the pupil leaders and they had their first chance to briefly meet and generate ideas. This was then followed up by Zoom meetings that took place in January 2024 where children were introduced to their projects in more detail and began to generate ideas about what actions and events they could plan in order to meet the objectives set.



General themes identified at this event were:

- to get more visitors into school to talk about a range of careers
- opportunities to learn more about what comes after secondary school - college, universities, qualifications
- developing the range of clubs on offer after school to include specialist areas - pottery, computer coding - or linked to specific careers
- opportunities to visit galleries, offices, museums and learn about the jobs that take place there.

Following these meetings, the Personal Development Leads from all five schools met to plan an overview of how these projects would develop over the rest of the academic year and into the next. It was decided that the first event would take place in March and would build upon the work previously undertaken during 'National Careers Week', which included the primary schools taking part in the 'Big Me' day, where children are encouraged to share their aspirations for the future.

The next step was to design a pupil voice survey that allowed us to gain information from the wider student/pupil population. For pupils in Key Stage 2 and in the secondary school, these were completed online, whilst the Head Pupils in the primary schools gathered responses from their younger peers through hands up surveys in classes. The Head Pupils from all of the schools then met face to face at the end of January 2024 to analyse the data and plan next steps.

Pupil voice gathered through these surveys demonstrated that 34.9% of secondary students wanted more information about careers and the opportunities available to them after they complete their secondary education. In general, primary pupils had some ideas about the careers they might like to access when they grow up; however, they were keen to learn more about unfamiliar careers. The children also identified key careers that pupils wanted to learn more about and passed these on to school leaders.



The project lead then worked with the central GLC Team to research organisations who aim to develop children's understanding of different careers available to them (for example, [Primary Futures](#)) and generate volunteer forms which were shared with parents/carers and staff across the trust, as well as with local community groups with whom we already work. From this we were able to generate a list of volunteers from a wide range of sectors - from the various people working for the NHS to the Royal Opera House who offered their time to visit our schools or meet our pupils via Zoom calls during our 'All Creating Our Future' week.

Personal Development Leads from each primary school then identified which of the volunteers they would like to invite into their schools, informed by their pupil surveys, where possible. During our 'Big Me' week, these volunteers then visited/met with our schools to talk about their roles and answer the pupil's questions. Each year group also used pre-recorded interviews from 'Primary Futures', that explored a range of vocations and challenged stereotypes. Pupils in the Early Years had the opportunity to explore different jobs through role play with a visit from [Little City](#).

The student leadership team at The Gateway Academy worked with staff, particularly the Careers Coordinator, to organise a Careers Fair, where volunteers from the central list as well as other businesses, colleges and universities were invited into the school to talk to students about their future education and career plans. This event was then supported by the student leadership team, who welcomed visitors and made sure they were comfortable throughout

the day, as well as ensuring that the correct student groups attend at the right time and supporting students when talking to the different organisations during the event.

This project has enabled our schools to build upon the relationships with The GLC's existing partners - many of our volunteers who spoke to our pupils during 'Careers Week' work for organisations who have long standing relationships with us, including: One Community, Kinetica, the Port of Tilbury, Arts Outburst and Essex Police. It has also helped us establish new connections which will benefit our pupils in the future. The project leads also worked closely with the Careers Co-ordinator at The Gateway Academy, enabling us to share contacts and ensure that we maximise opportunities for our pupils. This work has continued, with contacts and resources being shared throughout the year.



Feedback from primary pupils through a follow up survey, demonstrates that the majority of pupils who completed the survey (81.9%) feel that their school is providing opportunities to work towards their aspirations for the future; those who felt that more could be done identified more unusual careers as being those they would like to find out more about. The project leads have continued to share resources and opportunities that arise with Personal Development leads from all of the schools in order to build on the successes of the careers week, for example Year 6 pupils at the Gateway Primary Free School will be joining a Primary Futures online event to learn more about careers in aviation in May 2024.

A follow up survey to gather pupil voice from secondary students showed a 7.1% increase in pupils knowing where to go for advice about careers and next steps. Student leaders at the Gateway Academy continue to work with the Careers Co-ordinator to promote different careers and education pathways around the school and through different events and opportunities.



Feedback from primary staff has been positive, with teachers reporting that the children engaged well with the visitors, asking questions which enabled them to learn as much as they could about the careers they were exposed to.

“Our Reception children thoroughly enjoyed the visit from Little City. It was wonderful seeing their excitement as they explored the different jobs and interacted with one another through role play.” - Early Years teacher at Tilbury Pioneer Academy.

“The children in Year 1 were very excited to meet Nurse Luke and learn about his role as a Recovery Nurse. He talked to them about how he cares for his patients and showed them some of the things he does as a Nurse - for example bandaging up one of the pupils' arms. The children asked him lots of questions and learnt lots about what nurses do.” - Year 1 teacher at GPFS.

Year 5 and 6 pupils at The Gateway Primary Free School were given the option to choose from a range of careers they could learn about, through our new partnership with 'Nurturing Your Needs' a local organisation run by volunteers who grew up in Tilbury and Grays and want to provide role models for young people and support them in achieving their aspirations for the future. Feedback from pupils was that they really appreciated the opportunity to follow their own interests:

"I really wanted to learn more about being a lawyer, it was great to speak to someone who has done this. I now know what I need to do to achieve my goal." Year 5 pupil.

"I love sports and it is really good to know that I can work towards different jobs that link to this." Year 6 pupil.

Teacher feedback on these sessions was also very positive:

"The children were excited to tell each other and staff about what they had found out during their different sessions. It is great to see them so excited about what is possible for them in the future." Year 5 teacher at GPFS.



Through this project, we have learnt many lessons that we can take forward. In future, we will utilise the use of our Central Team to support the administration tasks, including communicating with volunteers and coordinating visits to our schools. We will also plan for the children to be more involved in the administration and organisation of these events in the primary schools, writing letters and sharing our plans through social media, so that we can develop their skills set through 'on the job' experiences working with Personal Development Leads and the Central Team.

Our experiences with virtual meetings through third party organisations such as Primary Futures were not as successful as face-to-face visits in schools; therefore in future, we will endeavour for each school to have direct contact with the volunteers we establish in this way, rather than them being set up centrally. We will also ensure that there are contingency plans in place, should the meetings not be able to go ahead.

In future, we would also encourage staff/schools to be flexible in timetabling around volunteers' availability during 'Careers Week', in order to maximise opportunities for pupils to have as many different experiences as possible.

As we develop the project over the next academic year, we aim to broaden the list of contacts in order to more closely cater for the interests and aspirations expressed through pupils surveys and discussions with our pupils and students.

The next step for our Head Pupils is to use the pupil surveys previously completed to identify how we can provide a wider range of opportunities to explore and develop their own individual talents and interests through after school provision. We will be meeting again virtually to identify potential providers and bid for funding for specialist after school clubs.



We will also be looking to incorporate 'Careers Week' into the GLC calendar for the next academic year and developing a Scheme of Work/ long term plan to ensure that pupils are exposed to a range of careers of time, building on their experiences year on year. We are also hoping to explore how we can build careers links into the thematic curriculum we follow in the GLC primary schools.

