



‘Without INEOS’ money, we could not have provided these activities for the children and the outstanding rating in our Ofsted report would not have been forthcoming’
- headteacher
HELEN WOODWARD

Together we have made a real difference

OVER the past five years - six for some of you - INEOS’ gift has enabled you to make a real difference to the lives of your children and their families.

You have given them hope and opened their eyes to the world around them. To us, your use of those resources has been inspirational.

It is also, though, what makes the decision to end funding for your school so difficult.

Circumstances outside INEOS’ control – spiralling energy costs, high carbon taxes, the economic impact of the war in Ukraine and cheap imports flooding the UK and European markets – have created a perfect storm within the chemical sector, and forced the company to make some painful decisions, including a significant reduction in the funds available for the Forgotten 40 project over the next three years.

For you, that means funding will end at the end of the 2025/2026 academic year.

INEOS, though, remains committed to this project, and as such we have chosen 20 new schools, in equally challenging communities, to receive a grant over the next three years.

We know you will all be disappointed to lose INEOS’ annual grant. We are too.

However, we felt it would have been unfair and impossible to choose 20 schools from the 99 who have received a grant over recent years.

We are grateful to Sir Jim Ratcliffe, John Reece and Andy Currie for continuing to believe in this project and hope you will all look back on our journey together and feel proud at what we have achieved by working together.

The Forgotten 40 team



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			website www.ineosforgotten40.com
			media enquiries gordon.banks@ineos.com
			general enquiries alexa.chilton@ineos.com
			the team Brian Padgett, Sheila Loughlin, Elaine Wyllie, John Wyllie, Elaine Crotty, Gordon Banks (INEOS), Alexa Chilton (INEOS)

'We do have government funding but it is tied up in red tape. Every penny has to be accounted for and it is linked to academic performance. The money we received from Forgotten 40 was a breath of fresh air. It was amazing to be trusted as a headteacher to know what was right for my children and their families'

- HEADTEACHER
Louise Hill

WHY THIS PROJECT MATTERS



CHILDREN are our greatest natural resource. One day, they will lead the way. They will shape the future. For all of us.

That's why Forgotten 40, INEOS' ground-breaking and radical approach to tackling child poverty in the UK – and in doing so improve the life chances of all children – mattered when it was set up, and matters now.

It was never about encouraging poorer children to excel in maths or perfect their punctuation, though.

Forgotten 40's aims were grander than that.

It's a cold, sad fact of life that children learn what they live. So Forgotten 40 focused on changing that narrative, building children's confidence, developing their resilience, exciting their curiosity about the world around them and inspiring them to do well.

In INEOS' view, a mind stretched by new

experiences would never go back to its old dimensions.

Although money for the initiative came from INEOS, the company put its faith in a team who really understood the challenges facing today's primary school headteachers.

Elaine and John Wyllie, Brian Padgett, Sheila Loughlin and Elaine Crotty all knew from experience that a child's home life could seriously hamper his or her ability to do well in school.

As former teachers themselves, they also knew that schools were often best placed to know what needed to be done in their own communities to help children from poorer homes.

"Child poverty is nothing new," said Brian. "It has been a priority for successive governments for about 70 years. But attempts to tackle the problem have focused on raising standards in schools.

"No one has tackled the root cause, which is what goes on beyond the school. Yet, the home underpins everything. If a parent is, for example, ill or worried about food or money, their child will be too, so they won't

be in the right place to learn." Following a successful pilot scheme in 2021, 99 of the most deprived schools in the UK were selected – and initially given £20,000 a year to spend it on what these children needed.

Headteachers were never short of ideas because they knew that not all learning took place in the classroom, and that valuable lessons could be learned on school trips, after school and at weekends.

The problem was children from poorer backgrounds were less likely to go on school trips, enjoy days out at the seaside, play a musical instrument or join a sports club because their families simply could not afford it.

With money in the bank, they took children to the Lake District, the theatre, the park and the beach. They invested in food banks, beds, and therapy dogs.

But what they also realised was that parents had an important role to play in changing the mindset of their children too, and if they were also helped, everyone would benefit.

Holy Cross RC Primary School in

Birkenhead began hosting weekly coffee afternoons and organised daytime and after-school workshops for parents while teachers cared for their children.

"These offered guidance on various aspects of parenting, such as the importance of developing sleep routines so their children get a good night's sleep," said headteacher Clare Higgins.

'INEOS gave school leaders the power to make a real difference'

The school also worked with the charity, Engage and Change, which ran parent workshops to help those struggling with their own mental health or drug addiction.

"Both were seen as barriers to the children attending school and reaching their potential," said Clare.

Other headteachers invited parents into school to show them how to cook healthier meals for their children.

Iain Parks, who was then headteacher of St Mary & St Paul's Primary in Prescot, Merseyside, said parents needed to be encouraged to lead the way. "Parents are

the best generator of desire to work," he said.

"If we want children to work in the future we need to start with the parents and instil this work ethic and desire to improve our country."

The Forgotten 40 team's approach has never been tried before.

But it has not only helped to change the mindset of children from some of the most deprived parts of the UK, it has inspired headteachers to do better too.

"What INEOS has to understand is the power it gave school leaders to make a real difference where it really matters," said Louise Hill, headteacher at Grimes Dyke Primary in Leeds.

"We do have government funding but it is tied up in red tape and every penny has to be accounted for, and it is linked to academic achievement.

"The money we received from Forgotten 40 was a breath of fresh air. It was amazing to be trusted as a headteacher to know what was right for my children and their families."

AN HOLISTIC APPROACH

The alchemy of INEOS

INEOS is a company that believes remarkable people coupled with big questions result in extraordinary outcomes.

It's a mantra that has taken it from one chemical site in Antwerp to become an industrial giant, employing 23,000 people at 148 sites in 26 countries.

Yet INEOS' owners – Sir Jim Ratcliffe, John Reece and Andy Currie – all came from humble beginnings.

Sir Jim grew up in a council house in Failsworth, Manchester. But his parents and teachers encouraged him to seize every opportunity and make the most of his God-given talents.

Over the past 25 years Sir Jim, John and Andy have seen opportunities where others didn't by thinking differently, trusting their instincts and doing their homework.

The three of them may be at the helm, but underneath them is an ocean of employees bursting with talent, passion and a sense of purpose.

That is the alchemy of INEOS and it is what inspired it to build a 4x4 to take on the world.

It is what enabled it to build a virtual pipeline without pipes.

It is what allowed it to turn unwanted assets into world leaders.

And it is what continues to push it to question the idea of limits.

Steph McGovern, a former BBC business reporter, once said: "Nothing much surprises me in the business world anymore, but INEOS does."

Children enjoy some of life's simple pleasures for the very first time

Forgotten 40 gives pupils a taste of the unknown

IN an age when it has never been easier to travel to the ends of the earth, it is hard to believe that some have never ventured further than the end of their street.

But Forgotten 40 exposed that reality for so many children and their families. Iain Parks, former headteacher at St Mary and St Paul's Primary in Prescot, remembers taking children on a trip – funded by INEOS – to Knowsley Safari Park just three miles away from their homes.

“Their estate is surrounded by motorways but when the coach got on to the M57, they asked what kind of road it was,” he said. “Their whole lives had revolved around home, the school and the local shop.”

Thanks to Forgotten 40 funding, headteachers in the UK have been able to expose children to things they have never seen, done or heard before.

For the first time in their lives, these children have tasted ice cream, felt the sand between their toes, toasted marshmallows over an open fire, cooked meals with their parents, watched the sun rise and swum in the sea.

Others have been blown away by trips to the theatre.

“My pupils could not believe it when real people came on stage,” said Louise Hill, headteacher at Grimes Dyke Primary in Leeds.

“They were expecting a screen.”

Other children had never slept in a tent, built a den, travelled on a train, seen a



mountain or had a fish and chip supper at the seaside.

“Most of our children had never travelled more than five miles from their home,” said Louise.

The reasons are two-fold. And the cost is only part of it.

“Often their own parents didn’t think to do these things because they were not exposed to them as children either,” said David Akers, former headteacher of Ward Jackson Primary School in Hartlepool.

When St George’s Primary School in Salford took 30 school leavers on a mini-break to London, only two of them knew what to expect.

The rest had never set foot in the capital.

“They couldn’t get over the size of London, the height of the buildings and how busy it was,” said head of school Lizzie Peters.

“The children kept talking about how they were walking in the footsteps of kings and queens from years gone by.”

When Tylorstown Primary School in the Welsh Rhondda Valley took a group of their year 5 and 6 pupils to London, one girl was lost for words.

“Can you pinch me?” she said. “I think I am dreaming.”

Headteacher Rob Taylor said without INEOS’ money, it would have remained the stuff of dreams.

“Thanks to INEOS, it was not just a day out,” he said. “It was an experience that set a fire within them that will continue to burn.”

Many schools have also used INEOS’ Forgotten 40 funding to introduce children to the joys of learning to play a musical instrument, be it the drums, electric guitar, keyboards or ukelele.

“Our children are not only working towards a music qualification, but they put on performances for their families each term,” said Kat Allen, headteacher at Roby Park Primary in Huyton, Liverpool.

‘The children had never heard of a motorway despite living under one. Their whole lives had revolved around the home, the local shop and school’

- Former Forgotten 40 head IAIN PARKS

It has truly been a pleasure to be part of such an amazing opportunity. From unforgettable educational trips to Rome and London, to the development of our community library, the impact of INEOS' funding can be seen and felt every day. These experiences have broadened horizons, sparked curiosity and created lasting memories for our children.

Paula Brás, Headteacher
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Birkenhead

We are so thankful for all that you have done for us over the past few years.

The money has made a life-changing difference to our children and families and has given them opportunities that could simply have never happened.

We are going to miss the team so much but we simply cannot thank you all enough.

Andrew Williams, Headteacher
Penrhys Primary School, Wales

INEOS' support has enabled us to make a genuine and lasting positive impact on our pupils and their families, providing experiences and opportunities that would otherwise not have been possible.

The difference it has made to outcomes for our disadvantaged children has been significant and deeply valued. And the impact will live on.

Nicola Hill, Headteacher
Meadowbank Primary School, Wigan

We have been so very grateful for INEOS' generous funding.

For the money has enabled us to help our vulnerable children and their families in so many ways.

The opportunities they have been given as a result of receiving the funding has made such a difference to them.

But as they say, all good things must come to an end.

Helen Gregory, Headteacher
Maerdy Primary School, Ferndale, Wales

Your support has made an enormous difference to our children and families. It has helped our children to get what they needed to grow, succeed, and believe in themselves, even during some very tough times. You didn't just fund a project, you helped children to thrive when they needed it most. That kind of impact can't be measured easily, but it can definitely be felt.

Rob Taylor, Headteacher
Tylorstown Primary School, Wales

With the cost of living crisis, INEOS' money has enabled me to give children opportunities that their families could never have afforded.

The joy it has brought to the children has been a key factor in me not quitting my job.

In these challenging times, the INEOS money has been a true act of real kindness and something I'll never forget.

Sue Pittendreigh, Headteacher
St Catharine's C.E. Primary School, Wigan

GREAT Expectations

How Forgotten 40 funding has made a difference to the lives of children from some of the most deprived parts of the UK

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'It is an approach that we hope prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'
- headteacher
DAVID TURNER



RIFT HOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL
HARTLEPOOL

SCHOOL GIVES CHILDREN THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE A DIFFERENT PATH

STAFF at a primary school in Hartlepool believe children should be seen, heard and, most importantly, encouraged to make their own choices.

It is a philosophy that runs deep at Rift House Primary and is used to show pupils that all choices have consequences. Some good; some not so good.

"We like to stress that there are many things we can do ourselves, that we are in control of, and that help us to feel good," said headteacher David Turner.

"If we are able to do the things that help us – and actually those around us – to feel good, we are then most definitely making the right choices."

At Rift House, children are encouraged to make a positive contribution to school life, manage their time, be creative, take risks and understand how their actions can affect others.

"It is an approach that we hope prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life," he said.

The school invested money – provided through

INEOS' Forgotten 40 initiative – to provide every child with a 'Choices' diary so they can reflect on their decisions throughout and at the end of the school day.

It can be everything from what they chose for lunch – and whether it was a healthy, balanced meal – to how respectful they have been, to how much exercise they have done.

"We try to provide as many opportunities as possible that can allow them to score their mental and physical well-being in their diaries," he said.

The Forgotten 40 team also provided money to install an all-weather running track around the perimeter of the school field, with additional money being used to buy every child a school bag, a PE kit, a stationery pack and digital watches for those in years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 so they could measure their steps.

Liz Bateman, a member of the school's support staff, said the diaries had helped to build on the positive ethos in the school.

"The children feel good about themselves and behaviour is excellent," she said.

"The children are also fitter and look healthier which was a real issue, especially after lockdown."



Experience becomes the teacher

‘Taking children out of their comfort zones is crucial in developing resilience, teamwork and positivity’ - headteacher MARK NUGENT

EXPERIENCE cannot be taught in the classroom. It has to be learned outside it. That’s why headteacher Mark Nugent has always been keen to open his pupils’ eyes to the world around them. “Our school is set in one of the most deprived communities in the UK so it’s incredibly important they see what lies outside it,” he said. He believes only by seeing and doing will they achieve their true potential. But he also knows that a shortage of money can make it difficult for many families to take their children on days out. “Very often

**WATERVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL
NORTH SHIELDS**

our children return from holidays not even having visited a local park or the beach,” he said. The school used to do what it could to plug the gap, but COVID and a lack of funding made it difficult. When INEOS selected Waterville Primary in Meadowell as one of the 100 schools to benefit from its Forgotten 40 funding, hope returned. “It suddenly meant we could do some of these things again and offer the children some invaluable experiences,” he said. And that’s what he and his team in North

Shields have been doing ever since. Over 200 pupils – from reception to year 6 – have now enjoyed a range of experiences – and still talk about them. “Learning new skills is so important for our children,” he said. “And taking them out of their comfort zone is crucial in developing resilience, teamwork and positivity.” The youngest pupils visited a farm in Northumberland where they handled animals and reptiles. The older children headed to several different locations. Some visited Beamish Museum, the world famous open air museum which brought the history of the North East to life. Others spent hours at The Centre for Life, Newcastle upon Tyne’s science museum where they explored a range of fantastic science exhibits. Another group took to the water, where they learned the art of paddleboarding and kayaking, and the final group enjoyed a

barbecue on the beach. “Our children are just like other children,” said Mark, who has been headteacher for 15 years. “They like exploring and being adventurous, but unfortunately their experiences beyond the school community are very limited.” Mark, who left school at 18, is no stranger to the area – and its problems. His mum grew up in Meadowell and he occasionally spent weekends there playing with his cousins. “When I became the headteacher of this school, it was very special because it’s a community that I have a close link with,” he said. Knowing that children see the school as a safe haven, he is determined to continue to give them the opportunity to try new skills, visit new places and see things they have never seen before. “As a school, we set no limits on what they can achieve and that includes the experiences they should receive while they are here,” he said.





ST GEORGE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
GAINSBOROUGH

Year 6s shown a
whole, new world

University challenges pupils to think differently



IT is an institution which has been educating young people in the heart of Lincoln's history city for more than 150 years.

But many of the children, who lived closest to Bishop Grosseteste University, had never heard of it.

What went on there was of no interest to them. Or so they thought.

But Katie Barry, then headteacher of St George's CE Primary School in Gainsborough, wanted to change that.

Using INEOS' Forgotten 40 funding, she decided it was time to educate them about what they could do with their lives – if they worked hard at primary and secondary school.

And it worked.

"When we got back on the bus to go back to school, all they could talk about was what jobs they wanted to do and what course they would need to do at university," she said.

The seeds were sown.

Since then, she has taken more year 6 children to meet the under graduates and tour the university campus and lecture halls, where Paralympian Jade Etherington studied education and geography.

"Before these visits, many of the children



'All they talked about was what job they wanted to do when they left school'
- former headteacher
KATIE BARRY



didn't even know what the word 'university' meant," she said. "None knew of a friend or family member who had ever been."

So far more than 60 year 6s have made the 34-mile round trip to Lincoln, each time returning to school ready to inspire the year 5s. "We give them a chance to talk to the year 5 children about what they saw, what they have learned and what their hopes for the future are," said Katie.

After the first visit, Katie said some of the parents questioned the relevance of it all - so she took them to the university too.

"It suddenly opened their eyes to what was possible for their children," she said.

The school's motto is 'reach for the stars' and it's a philosophy which is woven into the curriculum.

"Considering future employment options is a conversation we regularly have with the children," she said.

What Katie liked most about this initiative, though, was that it cost very little.

"All we have to do is pay for the bus so we can go every year," she said. "It is very cost effective but has an immediate impact."

She said the university was also sensitive to the fact that university life would not suit everyone.

"College is discussed as an alternative option, as are apprenticeships," she said.

NEW DELAVAL PRIMARY SCHOOL
BLYTH, NORTH EAST

Head invests time & energy
to lead educational bike rides

The road to discovery

CHILDREN from a school in the North East began taking a break from the classroom to enjoy bike rides with their headteacher.

The idea behind each of the seven afternoon rides was to show the group of 12, year 6s what lies beyond the school gates and help them to gain an insight into their local history.

“It is important they understand their industrial heritage,” said Paul Struthers, headteacher at New Delaval Primary in Blyth.

Destinations ticked off the list included Seaton Sluice, a small, picturesque harbour which used to export salt, coal and bottles, and Blyth Harbour, which is at the forefront of the UK’s drive for clean energy.

The children also stopped off at South Beach and Blyth Beach, both popular with holidaymakers visiting the Northumberland coast, and Bebside, a former mining village.

Paul said INEOS’ Forgotten 40 funding had helped to pay for sessions with Richard Rothwell, a bike enthusiast who had previously worked for a charity that encouraged pupils in Blyth to cycle to school.

Funds had also been used to buy waterproof and high vis jackets, and gloves for the children in the event of bad weather, along with backpacks.

“The backpacks came in handy when the children went on their final, full-day bike ride and needed somewhere to keep their picnic,” said Paul.

What’s been lovely for Paul is hearing how the children are using their new-found knowledge of their local area to encourage their own parents to venture out at weekends.

The 12 children are chosen each year from a long list of those wanting to join the bike ride.

Those lucky enough to go not only increase their fitness, but also learn the value of resilience – especially when it is windy or raining - friendship, teamwork and communication.

“These are all skills which will help them when they go to high school,” said Paul.



STANHOPE PRIMARY SCHOOL
SOUTH SHIELDS

Staff give up free time to take children on adventures

TEACHERS now often stay behind after school to take children on adventures.

Every fortnight a group of Stanhope Primary’s most disadvantaged pupils are chosen to experience what other children, who live in more affluent homes, take for granted.

One trip was to the seaside for a portion of fish and chips.

“One boy could not believe the view of the sea,” said headteacher Adam Rogers. “He was so emotional about it.”

For many, it was their first glimpse of the beach at South Shields, despite the fact that it is on their doorstep.

“They have just never been,” said Adam.

Stanhope Primary launched its Twilight Tours after realising that so many of their children had never ventured outside South Shields.

“We know our children have limited experiences by the quality of their imaginations, writing ideas, speech and vocabulary,” he said. “So these tours are about being ‘normal’ and like everyone else.”

The children are escorted on their regular outings in a minibus paid for by INEOS’ Forgotten 40 funding.

Future trips include a meal in a restaurant, a visit to an indoor surfing school, and an evening walk to the summit of Penshaw Hill to see the 70ft, grade I listed National Trust monument which dominates the skyline.

“I want the children to have the same experiences I did as a child,” said Adam.

What makes the outings more special is that – for one night only – the children are able to experience things that are not part of the school curriculum.

“The activities are not academic focused and they are not school-related,” he said. “They are just about providing a broader experience and a broader view.”

For staff, who freely give up their time, it’s also been an eye-opener.

“The children are so different when they are out,” said Adam. “They are amazingly behaved, they laugh, they loosen up and are just happy.”

TILERY PRIMARY SCHOOL
STOCKTON-ON-TEES

£2 meal bag gives families
the ingredients for success

Parents say hello to a fresh way of cooking

A SCHOOL took a leaf out of Hello Fresh's cookery book to make life easier for those struggling to buy healthy meals for their families.

Every three weeks, Tilery Primary in Stockton-on-Tees chose a class and then invited every family to take home an easy-to-follow recipe – and all the ingredients – to make a delicious meal.

“It was our own version of Hello Fresh,” said headteacher Judy Stanyard.

But while Hello Fresh, the global meal delivery service, charges about £40 for three meals, all the primary school asked for was a voluntary contribution of £2.

“It might seem like a small project, but it made a big difference,” said Judy.

The uncooked, bagged meals were delivered to children at the end of the school day.

And, thanks to some clever marketing by the school, the £2 Meal Bag scheme was viewed as an opportunity for the children to help prepare a meal at home rather than as a handout to poor families.

“There was no stigma attached to walking out with a bag of food,” said Judy. “The children saw it as exciting, and loved it when their class was chosen.”

The idea for Judy's meal bags came

from fellow headteacher Kerry Coe, who launched a similar scheme at her school in Stockton-on-Tees.

“We were very concerned about food poverty, but we were also aware that some of our parents would rather go without, than admit that they needed help,” said Judy. “Many of our families are very proud.”

The scheme was later extended to the school holidays after staff were concerned that poorly children never seemed to get better and were missing school.

They visited their homes and found many were living in damp, cold, cramped homes and lacking in essential vitamins and minerals due to a poor diet.

To help plug that gap, Judy invested further Forgotten 40 funding in providing recipe cards and ingredients so families could cook nutritious meals when the children were off school.

“Our attendance drastically improved after we introduced the scheme and children started to look much healthier in general,” she said.

Since the school launched its own version of Hello Fresh, it has built up a bank of recipe cards.

Some of the dishes are more popular than others, but what it has done is introduce families to the benefits of home cooking – and shown them how easy it can be.



“It's so lovely to spend time together making these meals,” said one parent, Vicky Henderson. “In the past I just wouldn't have known where to start making a meal because I have never really been shown. We would just eat either frozen meals or sandwiches for dinner.”

Another parent, Danielle Wood, mealtimes were dictated by whatever was on offer in the shops.

“Cost is always the main issue for not buying fresh ingredients,” she said. “But these meal kits are so helpful and reduce the stress of meal times.”

'It seems like a small project, but it is making a big difference'
- headteacher
JUDY STANYARD

PARKLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL
LEEDS

Pupils discover new horizons
in the Lake District

Call of the WILD

CHILDREN from a primary school in Leeds slipped and slid down one of the Lake District's most beautiful ghylls and had the time of their lives.

Not one of them moaned about the cold and wet as they navigated natural rock chutes and waterfalls before diving into the crystal clear mountain pools.

"They were fearless because they had never experienced anything like this before, and they just wanted to give everything a go," said then headteacher Chris Dyson.

It was, though, just one of the many activities laid on for the children during a three-day residential funded by the Forgotten Forty project.

For those three days, the children felt what it was like to be free.

"They also experienced for the first time ever what silence sounded like because there were no cars, no buses, no lorries and no screaming neighbours," said Chris.

Leeds is just 88 miles from Windermere but not one of the 60 year 4 pupils from Parklands Primary School had ever been to the Lake District.

When they glimpsed their first mountain, they were in awe of its beauty.

"When the children were told they were to climb one, they were so excited," said Chris.

In the end, the children climbed two small peaks – Gummars How and later Scout Scar,

near Kendal, where they watched the sun set. They also enjoyed a 40-minute ferry crossing, learned how to canoe, climbed trees and made fires in the wild so they could boil water for a hot chocolate.

And there was even time for games, films and a meal in a restaurant.

When the time came to board the coach for home, the children's earlier tears of joy turned to tears of sadness.

"Their parents also cried when they thanked us for organising the trip," said Chris.

The memories of that trip, though, will stay with those children forever.

"For three days, they experienced another world," said Chris. "And it's a world which will help them when they are writing. Just being submerged under water, albeit for a few seconds, will help them to describe fear."

Parklands normally waits until the children are in year 6 – their final year of primary school – before they are taken on a residential.

INEOS' money gave the children an additional, earlier formative experience, which will hopefully fire up their imaginations and fuel their learning for the years to come.

'The children were fearless because they had never experienced anything like this before'
- former headteacher
CHRIS DYSON



WILLOW WOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SUNDERLAND

Children discover silence is golden

A SCHOOL invested Forgiven 40 funds in creating a peaceful garden where children can appreciate silence.

Headteacher Lindsay Robertson, said silence was the one thing that so many children never experienced due to television, mobile phones, iPads, social media and video gaming.

“They are bombarded with noise from the moment they get up, to the moment they go to sleep,” she said.

“In the past, if you fell out with a friend, you could walk away and enjoy some peace at home. Now we are being more and more informed of squabbles going on all night via text messages, Snapchat, and on gaming consoles.

“Others then get involved and this results in the sanctuary of our homes being destroyed. Children are overstimulated and get no respite.”

Financial pressures on families are also leading to arguments in the home as stressed-out parents take out their frustrations on their children.

“It might become white noise to the children, but it can deeply affect their well-being,” she said.

Lindsay hopes the all-weather garden at Willow Wood Community Primary in Sunderland



‘I am delighted to read that a school in the UK has started to focus on the importance of silence for children. It’s so very important’ – Professor Eric Pfeifer

will allow children to relax, reflect and unwind before they go back into the classroom.

“The children just do not understand how calming it can be to listen to nature,” she said. “They do not realise that it can have a major, positive effect on their well-being and ability to cope.”

Lindsay decided to invest Forgiven 40 funding in a garden at her school after seeing more and more pupils struggling to cope in lessons and needing time out in the sensory room to ‘decompress’.

She said some could not sit still and others had developed neurological disorders, such as tics. “There is so much information out there that they find it difficult to sift through it all and work out what is relevant to them and what is not,” she said.

It is a problem for millions of children in the western world with experts now raising concerns about the effects of cognitive overload on children.

“This overload can hinder their ability to understand and retain information effectively, making it difficult to transfer knowledge to their long-term memory,” said Zoe Benjamin, director of teaching and learning at Heathfield School in Ascot, Berkshire.

“When the demands placed on learners’

thinking exceed the limitations of their working memory, it can lead to challenges in learning and reduced performance.”

Lindsay said she hoped the garden would allow children to daydream, and – by listening to the silence – relax, rid themselves of anger and make sense of the world around them.

Eric Pfeifer is a professor for aesthetics and communication at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Freiburg, Germany, and has researched the perception of silence and its potential therapeutic effect.

He said a child needed silence to stay sane and praised the UK school for its initiative.

“Silence is highly important to a child’s brain development,” he said.

“Just imagine an orchestra and all its musicians playing non-stop without a pause. It would be an unbearable cacophony.”

Experts believe that silence helps children to process information, relieves stress and boosts their brain power.

Lindsay’s garden has been purposely kept small with a few wooden benches and some comfy cushions.

“It would defeat the object if it were too big because it would not be a relaxing experience for the children if there were too many in it,” she said.

TIME FOR QUIET: Pupils now have a place to unwind before they go back to the classroom



‘Children are bombarded with noise from the moment they get up to the moment they go to sleep’ – headteacher LINDSAY ROBERTSON

MONTREAL PRIMARY SCHOOL
CLEATOR MOOR, CUMBRIA

Outside world comes into view

A SCHOOL in a once-thriving mining town helped to broaden the horizons of its pupils by using virtual reality.

Montreal Primary bought eight VR headsets with money donated to the school through INEOS’ Forgiven 40 initiative to expose their children to the wonders of the world around them.

Since then, teachers have been using them to bring geography, history, literature and science to life.

“We believe all children deserve the same experiences, regardless of where they live or how much money their families have,” said Laura Freestone, who was then acting headteacher. “And these headsets are helping us to do that.”

She said the children had come face-to-face with lions on safari, explored New York’s towering skyscrapers and hung out with monkeys in a jungle.

“And they have done it all without leaving the classroom,” she said.

The VR headsets have also provided unique experiences that are impossible in the real world such as travelling back in time.

Using the technology, the children have visited ancient Greece and experienced the 1666 Great Fire of London, which destroyed 13,200 houses, 87 parish churches, The Royal Exchange, Guildhall and St Paul’s Cathedral.

And aside from the thrill of landing a spacecraft on the Moon, the children have also gained an insight into what lies beyond the school gates.

“It’s really excited their imagination, which has helped enormously with their writing,” said Laura. “But they also now want to do these things and visit these places in real life.”



ST AUGUSTINE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
MANCHESTER

Sporting sessions helped to
alleviate SATs stress

Boxing blows away children's anxieties



A SCHOOL in Manchester found the perfect answer to SATs. Boxing.

St Augustine's C of E Primary School used Forgotten 40 funding to allow all 30 children in year 6 the chance to regularly let off steam in the school hall.

And those 45-minute sessions with qualified instructor Anthony Heaps worked.

"By the time the exams came round, no one was in tears and, unlike previous year 6s, they were not as worried or as worked up," said headteacher Razia Shah.

Many parents and teachers have complained for years about the statutory SATs tests, which year 6s sit at the end of primary school.

In 2023 Kerry Forrester, headteacher at Tarporley Primary School in Cheshire, penned an open letter to Tory MP Edward Timpson, calling for SATs to be abolished after witnessing some of her able pupils break down in tears after sitting one of the English exams.

"Pupils put themselves under immense pressure to perform well in these tests, which has a negative impact on their self-esteem, confidence and mental health," she said.

Razia said the boxing lessons, courtesy of Collyhurst & Moston Amateur Boxing Club,



'By the time the exams came round, no-one was in tears, and, unlike previous year 6s, they were not as worried'
- headteacher
RAZIA SHAH

not only helped her children to de-stress in the run-up to their SATs, but it also improved their fitness.

And parents reported happier children at home too.

Boxing is widely believed to develop a child's confidence, teach self-discipline and encourage healthy living.

Britain's Nicola Adams, two times Olympic boxing champion, took up boxing when she was 12.

Now retired from competitive sport, she recently launched a new course through The Prince's Trust for young people struggling to get their lives on track.

"I know what it's like to struggle," she said.

"Boxing has always been a safe space for me where I can be myself. But it has also given me the courage to go out and achieve my goals in life."

The latest children to benefit from boxing sessions at St Augustine's are those with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Many have either experienced trauma or are still suffering.

"They get very angry very quickly and 'want to hit' something," said Razia. "So boxing is giving them an outlet for their frustrations and emotions. It is also helping them to be more disciplined and focus."



Buddy becomes a friend indeed ..

A DOG has changed children's lives at St George's Primary School in Gainsborough.

Buddy is not only a friend to the 225 pupils, but he is also the one they turn to when they are upset, angry or simply don't want to be there.

The children also like to find a quiet corner where they can read him a story.

"He really helps because the pressure is off," said former headteacher Katie Barry, who made the decision to invest in a therapy dog.

"Buddy just sits or lies still while they concentrate on their reading."

Katie, who has now retired, used INEOS' Forgotten 40 funds to help buy him and doesn't regret it.

"He calms the children down, reassures them and gets them in through the gates in the morning," she said.

"As soon as he enters the room, they forget about being angry."

Staff are able to come and get him whenever they want – or need – him. Other times, Buddy is free to do as he pleases.

Every breaktime and lunchtime, he goes outside to play with the older children.

"He is also helping to make them so much fitter because they run around so much with him outside," she said. When it's time to go home, Buddy leaves with a member of staff.

The school has appointed a dog squad of 30 children, who were formally interviewed after applying to help train, walk and care for Buddy while he is in school.

Initially staff had to work hard to ensure he wasn't too much of a distraction in class if children were trying to concentrate on their lessons.

"We had to push through that phase so that the children didn't get too excited every time he was in their classroom," said Katie.

Buddy is in good company at St George's because there is a least one other pet in every classroom.

But what makes Buddy special is that he has free rein of the school, unlike the bearded dragon, the chickens, the fish and the guinea pigs.

Headteacher invests Forgotten 40
funding in creating magical playground



PUPILS GIVEN THE FREEDOM TO PLAY

MORE and more schools are focusing on life outside the classroom to help teach their pupils about risk, resilience and independence.

They realise that play is not only good for their mental and physical health, but it also helps them to experiment, make decisions and test boundaries.

“Many of our families feel there aren’t a lot of places for their children to play safely outside school, so when they are here, we want them to be outside in the fresh air as much as possible,” said Kat Allen, headteacher at Roby Park Primary.

Her school in Knowsley, near Liverpool, has been working with experts from Outdoor Play and Learning – thanks to INEOS’ Forgotten 40 funding – since September 2023 to create a children’s paradise in the grounds of the school.

“OPAL is an investment,” said Kat. “Due to restricted budgets, many schools could struggle to fund OPAL in the way in which we have invested, and we couldn’t do this without INEOS’ support.”

To OPAL, play is how children learn. It’s not messing about. Certainly not when 20% of a child’s time in primary school is playtime.

“When it amounts to 1.4 years of primary school, we want to make sure that this time is as good as possible,” said Kat.

At Roby Park, children can venture anywhere, whatever the weather.

“They all have wellies and waterproof clothing in school and if they get muddy, we have got spare uniforms,” she said.

The school now has, among other things, an allotment, climbing poles, a sensory garden, a giant sandpit, swings, rope ladders, a mud kitchen, a dipping pond, and hay bales where the children can climb.

But it’s got its sights set on adding so much more.

“The playground already has a really positive vibe,” she said.

The accreditation journey with OPAL can last up to two years.

Louise Hill, headteacher at another Forgotten



PICTURES:
NICK JONES



40 school – Grimes Dyke Primary in Leeds – has already been on that journey, thanks to INEOS.

“We could have done it ourselves, but OPAL gave us the research-based approach and support to ensure we were getting it right for the children,” she said.

Her school was recently awarded platinum status – the first school in Leeds to achieve that honour.

Every member of staff at both Grimes Dyke and Roby Park are trained in the importance of play.

They may be on duty in the playground but they watch from a distance. Rarely do they get involved in the child’s play.

Instead, if the children at Roby Park need anything, they will seek out the ‘play detectives’ – a group of their peers in blue hi-vis jackets.

“It has been lovely to watch friendships blossoming between different age groups and members of staff,” said Kat. “It’s also made a huge difference to the mood of the children. They are happier and ready to learn when they get back in the classroom.”

The school has also set up an after-school OPAL club so that the children – and their families – can spend time together in the school grounds rather than sitting at home on electronic devices.

“At its heart, what we offer is freedom,” she said.



PICTURES: REBECCA WOODS, Born and Bred 61

PROUD AS PUNCH: Edmilson Semedo with his daughter Nicole. 'I am so proud of her,' he said. 'The whole family is. I did not expect her work to be like this.'

ST GEORGE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
GREAT YARMOUTH

A DIFFERENT FOCUS

Photography and art classes didn't just capture the imagination of pupils at a school in Great Yarmouth. Those lessons opened their eyes to a world of opportunity and gave them a glimpse of a different future.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Joshua Childs was interviewed by a BBC reporter. 'It's the best thing I've ever done,' he said





WORK OF ART: Enzo Sausa Pontes Frota painted this image

A HEADTEACHER helped children from one of the poorest towns in Britain to picture a brighter future for themselves.

Sharron Mitchell used art and photography to teach them skills that could help to influence their future careers and was blown away when she saw what they had produced.

“I felt as though I had gold in my hands,” she said. “It was beyond all my expectations.”

Others thought so too when the children’s works of art were unveiled at an exhibition at The Priory 1101, a former monastery used by Oliver Cromwell to tether his horses during the Civil War.

“These are absolutely stunning,” said Henry Cator, the High Steward of Great Yarmouth. “It is remarkable that primary schoolchildren have achieved this.”

The Head of the Art Department at East Coast Sixth Form College agreed. “These would stand alongside our best sixth form photography work,” she said.

Sharron had used funds, provided by INEOS through its Forgotten 40 initiative, to invite photographer Rebecca Woods and artist Stephanie Nile to run photography and art sessions with her year 5 pupils at St George’s Primary in Great Yarmouth.



‘Residential are nice and give a nice memory, but this was about developing children’s hidden talents, which they could use then they finally leave school’
- headteacher SHARRON MITCHELL

Their brief? To treat the children as adults and have the highest expectations.

The end results? A collection of pictures that many deemed would not look out of place in The National Art Gallery.

“Every single person, who was at the exhibition, was astounded at the quality,” said Sharron. “And the pride of the parents was overwhelming.”

In fact, the school project has been so successful that the governing board has given Sharron permission to include photography as part of the Year 5 curriculum.

“Residential are nice and give a nice memory, but this was about developing children’s hidden talents which they could use when they finally leave school,” she said.

One Year 5 pupil, Djeyson Lopes, said he had now set his sights on becoming a TV cameraman.

“I’m starting to understand and think about the world around me,” he said. “I think about the endless possibilities. I didn’t used to think like that.”

Another, Joshua Childs, who was interviewed by the BBC, said it was the best thing he had ever done.

“I have never seen him so alive with enthusiasm and so confident to talk about his work,” said his mum Leanne.

After-school art tutoring was also opened up to

the talented children’s parents in Key Stage 2.

“We live in an area of high unemployment so it was an opportunity to help parents gain skills too,” said Sharron. “It also meant families could spend some time together.”

During the sessions, many parents rediscovered their own love of art – and produced paintings themselves.

“I used to do a lot of sketching when I was young because I was good at it,” said Martin Riley, whose daughter Maddison attends the school. “But I didn’t pursue art at all. Now I am drawing again at home.”

It has also changed his outlook.

“It’s made a real difference to the way I look at life,” he said.

“I now notice more things in nature. Things that I just didn’t see before.”

Eugenia Afonso said it had also taken her back to her own childhood – a time when she loved drawing.

Under Stephanie’s guiding hand, parents and children produced an impressive portfolio of images, which also went on public display at St George’s Theatre Café and the Marina Centre in Great Yarmouth and the Yare Gallery in Market Gates.

The children’s work is now on permanent display at the Time and Tide Museum until the end of the year.



How funds helped schools to buy bare necessities

FORGOTTEN 40 funding has also been used to buy clothing and bedding for pupils.

Bridge Hall Primary School in Stockport and Prince Bishops Community Primary in County Durham invested in winters coat for every pupil.

St George’s Primary in Salford ordered 235 sweatshirts for everyone after the school decided to update its logo while Roby Park Primary in Huyton, Merseyside, and St Thomas Primary in Stockport bought new PE kits for all.

“It really did support all our families,” said head-teacher Paul Sanchez. “In the past, the children wore an assortment of different outfits for PE and some just wore their uniform.”

Other schools said they had invested INEOS’ funding in beds and bedding to ensure children got a decent night’s sleep.

Sharon Cliff, headteacher at West End Primary School in Morecambe, bought beds for families in need after visiting some of their children’s homes.

Andrew Williams, headteacher at Penrhys Primary School in Wales, also bought beds and bedding for a family living in a cramped one-bedroomed flat.

The father had been sleeping on the floor, his daughter on the sofa and his two sons on a mattress in the bedroom.

“It was difficult for all of them,” he said. “The behaviour in school of one of the boys was deteriorating and the man’s daughter looked consistently tired.”

Desperate to help, Andrew used INEOS’ Forgotten 40 funding to buy a new fold-up bed for the living room, new bunk beds for the two boys and new bedding for them all.

The father said he couldn’t thank the school enough for everything it had done for his family.

Andrea Grace is a child sleep expert and a mother of four.

“It is utterly commendable that those headteachers chose to spend their grant from INEOS on beds for their pupils,” she said. “Making sure that a child gets enough sleep will keep them healthier, happier and give them a head start with their learning in school.”

The former nurse and health visitor, whose work is recognised by paediatricians and child psychologists, said children needed sleep for their growing bones and spinal and brain development.

“The symptoms of sleep deprivation and ADHD are virtually identical,” she said. “If a child can be helped to get enough sleep, these symptoms often very quickly disappear.”

Wealth of chances to show off their talents

TODAY children are spoilt for choice when it comes to after-school activities. They can learn to ride horses, master golf, indulge in private music lessons, take up ballet or tread the boards at stage school. But those paid-for activities are often the preserve of wealthier families only. Those from poorer homes simply miss out. But, thanks to INEOS' Forgotten 40 funding, many schools began to open doors to a range of activities.

Children at New Pasture Lane Primary School in Bridlington, East Yorkshire, have joined Brownies, Scouts, regularly go horse riding, swimming, and dancing. The school pays the club's fees directly, buys the uniform and covers the cost of outings. "Many of our parents found it daunting to call strangers and fill in forms, but because we did all that for them, all they had to do was take their children along each week," said headteacher Alison Tadman. "And they were happy to do that."

And the impact on the children's self-esteem has been immeasurable. "Sometimes interventions completely miss the children, but this is all about them as individuals. It's something just for them," said Alison. "And the parents value it as well because they can see the changes in their child and they are so proud of what they are achieving."

Meanwhile, after-school clubs at Rift House in Hartlepool now cover music, photography, drama, science, technology and engineering. "Extending the school day with a range of enriching activities was one of our biggest targets because if we wanted to find hidden talents in our amazing children, these enrichment opportunities were vital in helping us to do that," said headteacher David Turner.

But it's not just the children who have benefitted from after-school activities. Many schools now run after-school cookery clubs to encourage families to be more adventurous in the kitchen.

Among them is Bede Community Primary School in Gateshead. Headteacher Nick Anderson said many parents had been surprised at how easy it was to cook a healthy meal, be it a vegetable stirfry, a shepherd's pie or spaghetti bolognese.

GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL
PRESTON

Cheaper transport gives children the freedom to explore the area

Minibus opens doors to another world



'Everyone has benefitted from this minibus because it has significantly increased our access to activities'
- deputy headteacher JACK THACKWAY

ASCHOOL began clocking up the miles to expose pupils to what life has to offer.

Grange Primary School in Preston used Forgotten 40 funding to lease a 17-seater minibus and has covered more than 1,000 miles. "It has significantly increased our access to activities," said deputy headteacher Jack Thackway. "And that exposure to new experiences and places has helped the children to develop so they can confidently engage with the world, discuss local and national issues, and express themselves effectively."

Thanks to the funding, children have been able to attend sporting tournaments and swimming sessions, visited farms and the seaside, explored the Beacon Fell National Park and enjoyed field trips to Fleetwood, Blackpool and Cleveleys. Others have used it to visit butterfly farms and the James Hall & Co's distribution centre. "Everyone has benefitted from this minibus," said Jack.

Previously the school had relied on coach companies and private taxi firms. But the cost was proving astronomical with



one private taxi firm once poised to charge the school £160 to transport eight pupils on a 10-mile round trip. "We sometimes missed out on events because of the cost," he said.

But INEOS' generous funding opened doors. "It meant we could offer children opportunities we otherwise would not have been able to provide due to the high cost of transport," he said.

The school's year 6 pupils recently enjoyed a professional coaching session at a golf driving range. The children loved it so much that their parents agreed to take them again. "Sometimes our parents might lack ideas of where to take their children or haven't had much exposure to areas beyond their local community," said Jack. "So we want to support them in venturing outside their comfort zone."

But a shortage of ideas is only part of the problem. A lack of time and money is also a concern. "Working parents on low incomes often struggle the most," he said. "These parents don't qualify for government support and are often too proud to ask for help."

To try to address this, the school wants to ensure all parents also get to join their children on at least one outing per year – so they can open their eyes to the world beyond their own community. "We know we cannot shift attitudes by focusing purely on our children," he said. "They need to start to get a broader sense of the world through their families. That's why we need to engage and excite parents and show them what is out there, what they can afford and how to get there."



GRIMES DYKE PRIMARY SCHOOL
LEEDS

Headteacher spends weekend in the countryside with parents and pupils

Families given time to enjoy quality time

A HEADTEACHER decided the best way to improve relationships with some of her parents was to go on holiday with them.

So she did.

Louise Hill carefully selected 10 families and booked them all in for a two-night stay at Lineham Farm, a 17th century farmhouse surrounded by 120 acres of unspoilt countryside.

For two days, parents, their children and members of staff from Grimes Dyke Primary in Leeds built shelters, lit fires, went rock climbing, learned to shoot like Robin Hood, played board games and went for a night hike in the woods.

"I thought I would hate it," said Rose Salvidge, whose son George attends Grimes Dyke. "But I didn't. I was also shocked at what he was capable of because he doesn't like water or mud."

Bex Bland, who runs her own catering business, said it was lovely to spend so much time with her daughter.

"I am always so busy at home so it was lovely to do something as a family," she said.

By the time, they all left, Louise, who has been headteacher at Grimes Dyke for 14 years, said she had a better understanding of their lives – and parents started to see her staff as human.

"Parents just need to see that we are all people just like them," said Louise. Since they returned, relationships have improved and parents now text Louise directly rather than vent their anger on social media.

Those improved relationships have also rubbed off on their children.

One boy in particular, who had struggled to maintain friendships, had been on the verge of being permanently excluded.

But Louise said the family residential – funded by INEOS – had changed his outlook.

"He is so much happier and more relaxed now," she said. "We think it could be due to the improved relationship we now have with his mum. She's happy and is talking positively about the school, so he can relax and enjoy it too."

During the long weekend – described by Donna Johnson as her only holiday – the children were banned from bringing their mobile phones. All the families ate



together at set mealtimes and teachers expected the children to be in bed by 9pm.

"The idea is that parents see the benefits of having a routine and boundaries," said Louise.

Parents were expected to join in with all the activities – and they did, some overcoming their own fears of heights.

In the past, Louise said she had tried to entice parents into school by running, for example, phonics sessions so they could understand what their children were being taught in class.

But that hadn't worked.

"We did it once, but only two parents turned up and that was only because they didn't really know what it was," she said.

Parenting classes are also a no-no due to the stigma attached.

"In essence, we would be saying that they are not doing a good job," she said.

Instead, Louise has concentrated on running open days and picnics.

"We can always get parents in for the fun stuff," she said. "If we organise an open day or their kids are performing, they will be here."

The family residential has also been such a hit that she now has a waiting list of parents wanting to go to Lineham Farm.

"I know it's not for every headteacher, but I see it as just a weekend out of my life," she said.

Treats in store as schools open shops

SCHOOLS opened their own mini supermarkets to help families struggling to cope with the rising cost of living.

Bede Community Primary began selling food, toiletries and other essentials four times a week from a portable cabin in the school grounds.

And true to its name, the shop was open to the entire community, not just parents whose children attend the school in Gateshead.

"I just didn't have the heart to turn needy people away," said headteacher Nick Anderson, who invested £6,000 of its INEOS Forgotten 40 funding in the shop.

Cubitt Town Primary in London also set up a shop on school premises to ensure families could afford the basics.

Parent volunteers ran the stalls selling everything from fruit and vegetables to washing powder, sanitary products, razors and cleaning products.

Other schools began sourcing food for families struggling with the cost of living.

At St George's Primary in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, headteacher Katie Barry used Forgotten 40 funding to buy food parcels from the charity FareShare, and Eastcroft Park Primary near Liverpool set up a family hub to enable struggling parents to collect emergency food.

ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

Headteacher lays on holidays
by the sea for families

School breaks with tradition

A SCHOOL bought a static caravan in Whitley Bay so that families could go on holiday.

More than 100 have now enjoyed a short break in the six-berth caravan in the historic seaside resort where former BBC war reporter Kate Adie was born. "It is still going strong," said Tracey Caffrey, headteacher at St John's Primary School in Benwell. "We've lost count of the number of holidays enjoyed there by our families and for some, it's their first-ever family break."

The school is just a 25-minute drive from the coast, but many children in the school only ever visit the seaside on a school trip.

"A holiday has always been a luxury that is out of reach for many of our families," she said.

INEOS' decision to award the school a Forgotten 40 grant allowed the school to think creatively.

"We weren't allowed to spend the grant on capital purchases so we decided to spend it on things traditionally funded through the budget, like counselling

services," said Tracey. "That enabled us to release funds to buy the caravan."

She said it was one of the best things the school had ever done.

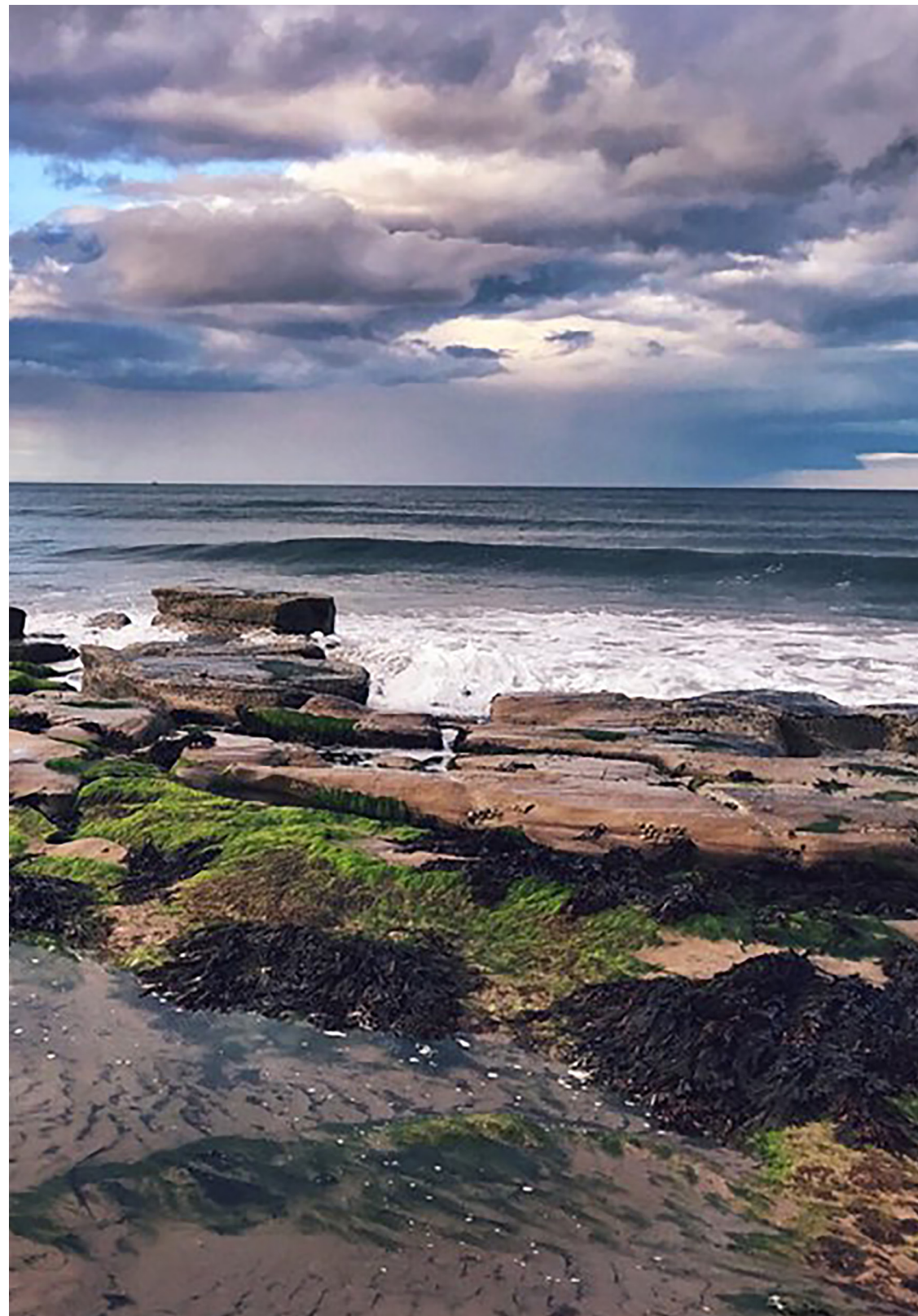
"Managing a holiday home is not without its challenges," she said. "But the joy on the children's faces as they recount seeing the seals at the lighthouse, building sandcastles on the beach and eating chips from a carton is priceless."

**'It is the best thing
we have ever done'**

Families, booking a short break through the school, find a welcome food parcel of milk, cereal, tea, coffee and biscuits in the caravan to keep costs down during the holiday.

Money from the Forgotten 40 scheme also provided an activity pack to encourage families to explore the beach, a fishing net for rock pooling, a bucket and spade and some indoor activities if it's raining.

Last year staff from the school joined a 12-mile walk from St John's to the caravan park and raised more than £4,000 towards the running costs.



**TIME FOR
A HOLIDAY:**
Families have
been enjoying
mini-breaks at
the seaside

ST MALACHY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
MANCHESTER

School makes a case for the
importance of learning to debate

Young ones discover their voices of reason

CP Scott, the long-time editor of **The Manchester Guardian**, believed that opinion was free, facts were sacred.

Pupils from St Malachy's Primary discovered the importance of both at a debating club, which had been set up in their school with funding from INEOS' Forgotten 40 initiative.

Over the weeks that followed, the children debated a whole host of potentially explosive issues. Should zoos be banned? Should all families be forced to house a homeless person? Should people be paid to recycle?

**'It gave them a depth of
understanding for people
unlike themselves'**

Sometimes the children argued for; sometimes against. Often, though, against their own beliefs.

In fact, they got so good at it that headteacher Janine Parker decided to pit them against children from other schools.

"They had grown so much in confidence," she said.

"They had learned how to share their opinions respectfully, how to speak persuasively, think quickly, and listen carefully in order to make points of rebuttal. It also gave them a depth of understanding for people unlike

themselves."

The 20 children from years 5 and 6 took on the great and good from 10 other schools in a local league and won.

That victory earned six of them a place in the national Primary Urban Debate League finals at the Houses of Parliament, where debates about government policy, proposed new laws and topical issues of the day are regularly discussed.

Although the children from St Malachy's didn't triumph in the fiercely-contested final – that honour went to Elmhurst Primary in London – the experience did open their eyes to what lies beyond school.

"They came home from London with raised aspirations," said Janine.

"They now know that anything is possible and that they can be politicians and lawyers, if they work hard."

In a world where social media very often reinforces one's own opinions, debate forces people to listen to the opposing viewpoints.

It is that ability to analyse and criticise one's own beliefs which is at the heart of critical thinking, a skill widely believed to help people make better, more informed decisions.

The Paris-based Reboot Foundation said research had shown that individuals with greater critical thinking skills led happier and more productive lives.

"Their ability to reason through various life situations reduces their chances of making bad or costly decisions, like racking up credit card debt," said foundation founder Helen Lee Bouygues.

PENRHYS PRIMARY SCHOOL
SOUTH WALES

Headteacher's initiative raises
attendance to an all-time high

School attends to an age-old problem - and wins over pupils

A Welsh school devised an ingenious way to raise attendance.

Each class at Penrhys Primary School in the Rhondda Valley now has a mini washing line in the school hall – and an attendance target for the week.

If they hit their target, they earn a letter for their class' washing line.

The first class to spell out the word ATTEND wins a free trip paid for by INEOS' Forgotten 40 fund.

And those prizes have included trips to a bowling alley, the cinema and a trampoline park.

"A trip to a bowling alley might be a typical outing for a child from a more affluent home," said headteacher Andrew Williams. "But to our children, it's like giving them the world."

At the start of the initiative, each class was set the same target of 90% attendance.

Today, two of the classes – Dosbarth Glas and Dosbarth Gwyrdd – regularly record 98% attendance.

"Both of those classes have won the prize twice, despite the fact that I raise the target every time they win," he said.

Even the lowest classes enjoy 93% attendance.

"The children and their families have absolutely loved doing this," he said.

Andrew realised very soon after joining

the school that he needed to find a way to entice children to attend lessons.

"Attendance was very poor and we were bottom of the cluster league table," he said. "The children had either no desire to be there or their parents were completely disinterested."

This initiative, though, has been so successful that Andrew was invited to talk about it to all attendance leads in the Rhondda Valley at a recent meeting at Llantrisant Leisure Centre.

"Due to increased attendance, we have also seen a definite improvement in the children's work," he said. "But it's not just been noticed by us. The local authority conducts termly book scrutiny and the progress made has been highlighted."

Researchers believe there is a clear link between school absence and academic achievement. And it is widely believed that pupils, who are eligible for free school meals, are most likely to skip school.

In the past, attendance at Penrhys Primary had been as low as 84%.

"There are usually many different reasons why children miss school," said Andrew.

But it's not the only initiative that is helping to engender a sense of pride among families living in this hilltop town.

To help tackle historically poor reading results, the school has used some of its Forgotten 40 funding to pay for phonics training for all staff – and a vending

machine full of books, packs of pens, pencils and glitter pens.

"For the first time, in a very long time, the children of Penrhys are now going home with their own weekly reading bag, reading record and reading book," said Andrew. "The parents are over the moon and the children look so proud taking their books home."

Each week, one child from each class is also named Reader of the Week and given a golden coin which they can use to 'buy' a book from the vending machine.

"They simply press the numbers of the reading book that they like and it drops down and is theirs to keep," said Andrew. "They absolutely love it."

For children, who may live in homes with no books or with parents who cannot read, Andrew believes it will help to open their eyes to the world that exists beyond their estate.

'A trip to a bowling alley might be a typical outing for a child from a more affluent home, but, to our children, it is like giving them the world'
- headteacher
ANDREW WILLIAMS



ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
NEWCASTLE

Headteacher records a real success story

MOST QR codes lead to websites But the codes, accessed by pupils at St John's Primary School in Newcastle, have been leading them to magical places where their imaginations can run wild.

Headteacher Tracey Caffrey introduced the idea of staff recording stories for the children a few years ago – and the long-term impact has been astounding.

"The biggest improvement we can measure is in their love of reading," she said. "Their vocabulary, oracy, sentence structure and creative writing have all improved."

The initiative was launched with INEOS' help.

INEOS' Forgotten 40 funding allowed the school to buy every child a new book every term.

"All of them now have a little collection of books that are perfect for bedtime," said Tracey. "They not only cherish their growing home library, but parents tell us that the books are well-read, again and again."

Inside the cover of each book is a QR code which the children can scan – if they want to – to hear a member of staff read the story to them. "They no longer want to just play video games before they go to bed," said one parent. "They want to listen to the stories."

Rahim Saqib is 5 and in reception at St John's.

His father, Haji, thinks it is a wonderful idea.

"Most of the time I will listen to the story with him," he said. "But he knows that if I am busy, he can just scan the code and listen himself."

Other parents say that it has helped to get their children to sleep.

"They definitely fall asleep earlier and are less crabby in the morning, as a result," said one.

The stories are recorded by school staff once the children have gone home.

"That's the only time it is quiet," said Tracey.

Children who have benefited most from the initiative are those whose families speak English as an additional language or who struggle with reading.

"Sending books home in the traditional way can cause stress to some families who want to support their child, but might find it hard," she said.

"Taking away that barrier means storytime can be a lovely family time."

MAERDY PRIMARY
FERNDALE, WALES

Parents offered helping hand ..

A SCHOOL began funding classes for parents struggling to cope with their children's behaviour at home.

Discipline, parenting styles, the importance of rules, self-esteem and the benefits of praise and empathy were all explored during the 10-week course, run by charity Valleys Kids.

Maerdy Community Primary in Ferndale, South Wales, helped dozens of families, using INEOS' Forgotten 40 funding.

One parent told headteacher Helen Gregory that the family home was now calmer and happier.

Others felt better about setting rules and boundaries for their children, which had led to improved behaviour at home and in school.

"Being able to up-skill parents and improve their confidence will ultimately benefit the family as a whole," said Helen.

The school had heard about the positive parenting classes from Amy Harrison, chairman of the school's governing body who is a family development worker at Valleys Kids.

"Initially, we targeted parents who had previously approached us to say that they were struggling with their child's behaviour at home," said Helen.

Those parents now understand why it is important to focus on the positive, rather than the negative, when disciplining their children.

In 2014, former Labour health secretary Alan Milburn, who was brought up by a single mother on a council estate in County Durham, spoke of the importance of good parenting.

"Effective parenting has a bigger influence on a child's life than their wealth, their class or even their education," he said.

While he accepted that most parents did a great job, he said some struggled, but there was a reluctance to support more parents to develop their parenting skills.

Harsh parenting, which can include yelling and hitting, often leads to emotional and behavioural issues.



Impact of F40 makes mark on schools' Ofsted reports

INEOS funding not only helped to enrich the lives of children from some of the poorest homes in the UK.

Headteachers said it also helped their schools fare better in the eyes of Ofsted who are looking for how they are developing children's character, confidence and resilience.

During a recent Ofsted inspection at St Martin's Primary, the inspector awarded the Oldham school 'outstanding' for personal development.

"This was a huge deal for the children and the school," said headteacher Helen Woodward.

"But without INEOS' money, we could not have provided these activities for the children and the outstanding rating would not have been forthcoming."

She said INEOS' money had paid for a multitude of specialised after-school activities.

"We looked at all areas where the children could discover their own unique talent, be that in sports, music, art, cooking or performing," said Helen.

Ofsted was blown away.

"The school has created a programme for personal development which goes beyond the expected," the inspector said. "Pupils learn how to become positive, responsible citizens. And their well-being is of extremely high importance."

St George's Community Primary School in Gainsborough – another school funded by INEOS – was inspected in December 2023.

Its overall rating was good, but the inspector said it excelled when it came to personal development,

"The provision for pupils' personal development is the golden thread that runs through school life," lead inspector

Matthew Fearn-Davies wrote in his report. "It is exceptional."

The school provides funding for parents to be included in school trips and pupils can take part in a range of activities related to their skills and interests, be it learning to sew, sing or grow food on the school's allotment.

Headteacher Katie Barry said INEOS were to thank for all of it.

"Forgotten 40 funding was openly discussed during our Ofsted inspection, and the impact it was having," she said.

Parklands Primary School in Leeds was also awarded outstanding for personal development.

Ofsted inspector Tracey Ralph noted the school's determination to ensure all children enjoyed every enrichment activity, including school residentials, by making sure they were completely free.

"They are not free of course," said headteacher Laura Darley. "INEOS pays for them."

Riverside Primary School in Merseyside also fared well in its most recent Ofsted report in April 2023, earning an outstanding rating for personal development. "Pupils enjoy the wealth of rich experiences that staff provide," said lead inspector Michelle Beard. "These encounters enhance their learning and widen their knowledge of the world. Pupils achieve well. They are particularly proud of their achievements in creative arts and sports."

In Leeds, Louise Hill, who is headteacher at Grimes Dyke Primary, said Ofsted recently commented on numerous positive changes at her school.

"Ofsted could see the impact on our children," she said. "But it is no accident that the many positive things that were described were funded by INEOS."

