



# THE INEOS FORGOTTEN 40 PROJECT

YEAR TWO  
NEWSLETTER ISSUE SIX



# New year brings new hope of better days

**A**NOTHER year and another opportunity to make a difference to the lives of hundreds of children living in the most deprived parts of the UK.

We know that's what all our headteachers, who have come on this journey with INEOS, will be focused on as we begin 2024.

We also know that our headteachers continue to value INEOS' financial support in these challenging times.

"INEOS' funding has made such an incredible difference to the support we can offer our families and we appreciate it so much," said Tarah O'Brien, headteacher of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School in Birmingham.

Vanessa Carr, principal at Falla Park Community Primary School in Gateshead, described it as a lifeline.

As a team, we know that levels of deprivation in the UK are now increasing at an alarming rate, with more and more parents struggling to keep their children warm, dry, clean and fed, due to debt and the rising cost of basic essentials.

Teachers, involved in the Forgotten 40 initiative, know it too. They have seen the desperation among parents struggling to make ends meet.

But there is hope.

Our headteachers, who are using INEOS' money so wisely and in such creative ways, firmly believe that if they can help their children to see a brighter future, then they will start to reach for it themselves.

Once again, we thank you for sharing your stories. They never fail to inspire us and continue to show us all what can be done when we work together for the greater good.

*The Forgotten 40 team*



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For more details and ideas to help your school, please visit the Forgotten 40 website [www.ineosforgotten40.com](http://www.ineosforgotten40.com)



Change of thinking leads to a change in outlook among children

# Happy days as pupils lap up teachings

**C**HILDREN are being taught, not only how to be more positive and resilient in their own lives, but also to understand how their behaviour can affect others.

Headteacher Eleanor Daniels hopes the techniques will help her pupils in Birkenhead to develop a strong sense of self-worth, cope better with what life throws at them, improve their relationships with themselves and others and achieve their potential.

And so far, it seems to be working. "It is still very much a work in progress, but many of our pupils are now more resilient, have a more positive outlook and seem better equipped to deal with everyday life, whether that is a disagreement with a friend or grappling with a difficult maths question," she said.

Eleanor credits the change in attitude to The Happy at School Project, which was founded by educational consultant Christina Mitchell.

The two women met after Christina worked with a group of headteachers in a year-long project, Thriving Headteachers, Thriving Schools, organised by the Wirral School Improvement team last year.

"Her tips, tools and strategies were all so simple, but they had an immediate positive impact, not just on me, but on my own family

too," she said. When she returned to the classroom, she wanted her pupils at Well Lane Primary School to benefit from Christina's wisdom too.

Using Forgotten 40 funding, she invested in The Happy at School Project and invited Christina to run a series of workshops with staff, empowering them, so they, in turn, could empower their pupils.

"Our children are now seeing the benefits," said Eleanor. "This project is giving our children roots to feel secure and wings to fly." Christina developed the project over 30 years of personal and professional experience as a teacher, a trained leadership coach and a mother.

"Children who have the self-awareness and tools to be able to emotionally regulate, take personal responsibility and get on well with others, do better in life," said Christina.

"And it is parents and educators who create these 'sliding door moments' every day by how they interact with a child. So, we must empower them first."

Christina has always been passionate about helping to make homes happier and giving children what they need to thrive in life.

For when she was five, her parents split up and growing up, she did not have a relationship with her father.

"That had an impact on my life," she said. "I went through life with this limiting belief

that I didn't matter and that affected my friendships, my work relationships, in fact, every aspect of my life.

"I had low inner self confidence and found life challenging. I did not have the tools to cope."

Things changed when she became a mum herself and she started to research how best to 'immunise' her sons against similar mental health problems.

The result of her learnings and research is The Happy at School Project, which encourages every member of staff and every child to take personal responsibility over their own lives so that they can all thrive together.

By being asked questions such as 'what would your best self do?'; children at Well Lane Primary on the Wirral have begun to make good choices and resolve issues quickly, be they in the classroom or in the playground. To Eleanor, it all makes perfect sense and says it is what her children desperately needed, especially after COVID.

"COVID was traumatic because we were all living under a huge cloud of fear and uncertainty of circumstances that we could not control," she said. "Children know and understand what it feels like to feel helpless."

Thanks to Christina's simple strategies, though, they have learned that they don't have to wait to be rescued from a helpless situation. Instead, they have the power to

PICTURES: LUKE ALDRED



**'It is still very much a work in progress, but many of our pupils now seem better equipped to deal with everyday life'**  
- headteacher  
**ELEANOR DANIELS**

change how they view it, and staff are at hand to help them do that.

"Many are learning to let go of fear and limiting beliefs that have held them back," said Eleanor.

Christina also plans to work with parents whose children attend Well Lane.

"By sharing the insights, tools and strategies with parents, this commonality of language to empower not only the children, but also themselves, will have a massive ripple effect," she said. "We are all on the same journey walking alongside our children. This is where the power of the project lies. Empowerment of staff, pupil, and parent. Because we are stronger together."



School lines up 50+ experiences to help change pupils' view of world

# How a simple sunrise could signal start of a new dawn

**P**OETS and artists have always seen the beauty in a sunrise.

To them, it is more than just the start of a new day.

It's a chance to start anew. A promise of a brighter future. An inspirational gift from God.

Headteacher David Akers has made it his mission to ensure every single pupil at his school in Hartlepool, in the North East of England, sees the sun rise at least once before they go to high school.

"There's something magical about a rising sun," he said. "But about 95% of our children have never seen one."

To experience a sunrise, though, the children will have to rise long before the sun does, because the best place to watch it involves an hour's walk to the 1,049ft summit of Roseberry Topping, a distinctive National Trust-owned hill with fine views across North Yorkshire and Cleveland.

"I don't think parents will be keen to get up so early so we will have to arrange it alongside a sleepover in school," he said.

It is an experience that David hopes will leave a lasting impression on the children now – and encourage them to do things differently when they one day become mothers and fathers in the future.

The list of 50+ experiences, funded through INEOS' Forgotten 40 initiative, was drawn up with the help of pupils who attend Ward Jackson

Primary School. Many are simple, free and achievable pleasures – and have been chosen for exactly those reasons.

For the hope is that by exposing the children to what's possible, they will be tempted to do things with their own families.

"Often their own parents don't think to do these things because they were not exposed to them as children either," he said.

'Visiting another country' will involve a trip to either Wales or Scotland because most of the children don't own a passport.

David's favourite experience, though, will be gazing at the stars.

"There is no cost to it, but it is a chance for the children to reflect on their place in the universe, to see where they fit in," he said. "There is not only a spiritual element to it. There is a scientific one too."

Many of the children, who attend the school, have never been to the local beach even though it involves just a 10-minute walk.

"Often our children don't go anywhere in the school holidays," said David. "And some never even leave the house."

That's what makes the school's vision – love, learn and explore – so important.

"INEOS' money has really helped us to open doors to exploration," he said. "And although many of our experiences don't cost money, some of them do. The fact that we don't have to worry about paying for them means there are no barriers to the children achieving them."



## Dundee - a city waiting to be discovered

DUNDEE is nicknamed the City of Discovery.

So it makes sense for local children to understand exactly why their city deserves such a special title.

Sadly, the city's history and all that it has to offer remains a mystery to many of the pupils who attend Dens Road Primary School.

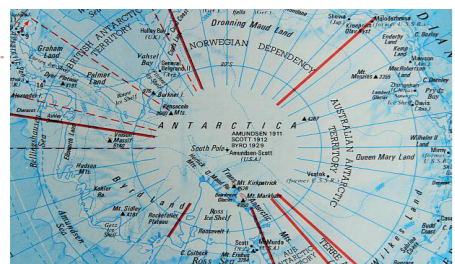
But headteacher Sam Bales plans to change all that next year by using Forgotten 40 funding to take children on magical, mystery tours of Dundee – a city which is

closer to Norway than London. "It will be good for them to take part in activities or visit places they haven't been to before," she said.

But there's another good reason. "By showing them all the different things that our city has to offer children, we are hoping it might give their parents ideas of what they too can do with them at the weekends," she said. The school plans to regularly provide parents with information about free or cheaper events that are being staged in the Dundee area.

Children left in awe as explorer tells how he survived in a place fraught with danger

# Al's adventures in wonderland inspire pupils



## **A** DVENTURER Al Sylvester has been to the ends of the earth.

Children from Barton Primary School on the Isle of Wight have barely ventured outside their own community.

But when their worlds collided, the pupils discovered that certain qualities are vital to succeed in life - whether you live on a small island, like they do, off the south coast of England, or are stranded in the coldest, driest, remotest and windiest place on the planet. And those qualities are resilience, stamina, determination, teamwork and leadership.

The only difference is that they mean the difference between life and death at the South Pole.

Al had been invited to the school by

headteacher Mark Snow who wanted to show his pupils the power of positivity in the face of adversity.

"Al Sylvester's story is not about success," said Mark. "It's about enduring, survival and setting yourself goals. He didn't make it to the South Pole on foot due to several unfortunate events but his teamwork kept his team alive."

Instead, the RAF's first unsupported expedition had to be abandoned - just 91 miles from their goal - after two members of the four-man team were injured.

Al, who had survived sub-zero temperatures in tents on Antarctica for over six weeks, returned home suffering from the effects of serious frostbite and nearly lost his life. But he fought back and set himself new challenges despite his new disabilities.

"Resilience and perseverance are attributes

that many of our pupils struggle with, so to meet someone so upbeat and optimistic, despite adversity, was essential for our children to see," said Mark.

For over an hour, Al transported the young children to an unforgiving place fraught with danger.

"They were in awe," said Mark. "Al managed to inspire them, and show them that anything is possible, with the right attitude, and that challenges are there to be overcome."

What also mattered to Mark was the chance to expose the children to the wonders of the world around them.

"Our children need to see that the world is bigger than their locality," he said. "Their estate is like a small island in the middle of the Isle of Wight and the community can be very insular. Many families are third and

fourth generation families from the same estate and the children need to see that there are no limits to what can be achieved."

During Al's visit - funded through INEOS' Forgotten 40 initiative - the children were shown the clothing he wore during his mammoth journey across Antarctica, and invited to try it on.

"It was so heavy and hard to walk in," said Erynn, a pupil in year 6.

Then after returning to the classroom, many children wrote letters, thanking him for inspiring them to never give up.

Laura Courtney, INEOS Group Communications Manager (charities), said Mark's initiative was a great example of how Forgotten 40 funding was showcasing what's possible for children from some of the UK's most deprived areas.



‘It is fuel for the body and the brain’



# Why schools are making a meal of breakfast time

**EVIDENCE** shows that children who skip breakfast are more likely to struggle at school.

They are often tired, cannot concentrate and struggle to remember what they have been taught in previous lessons.

It’s a widespread problem among families from deprived homes.

It’s also a problem that some of INEOS’ Forgotten 40 schools are keen to eradicate.

Breakfast – widely believed to be the most important meal of the day – is now being served at Mill Lane Primary in Stockton-on-Tees, St Vincent’s Catholic Primary School in Birmingham, St Joseph’s Primary School in Slate Street, Belfast, and Waterville Primary School in North Shields, Tyne & Wear.

“We suddenly realised that only a handful of our children were actually eating breakfast before they got to school,” said Sue Skillcorn, headteacher at Mill Lane Primary. “The rest had gone without.”

In Sue’s school, that meant about 27 in each class of 30 had not had anything to eat before they arrived at school.

No time was one reason, but in most cases it was because there was nothing to eat at home. “If parents can only afford to feed



**‘If parents can only afford to feed their children one meal a day, it is often breakfast that is skipped’**  
- headteacher SUE SKILLCORN



their children one meal a day, it is often breakfast that is skipped,” she said.

At Mill Lane, all children now enjoy a healthy start to the school day – for free, providing the body and brain with the fuel it needs to cope.

A breakfast manager – employed for two hours with Forgotten 40 funding – prepares the food and clears up afterwards.

The year 6 breakfast monitors come into school at 8.40am and carry trays of food to each classroom, where it is served by the teaching assistants.

Pupils have a choice of toast, bagels, crumpets or cereal.

“They not only enjoy the choice of food, but they also love sitting with their friends and having a chat, because some of our children never sit around a table together as a family at home,” said Sue.

Children, who are late for school, don’t miss out completely.

“They are offered their breakfast and just munch it at their desk while listening to the teacher or doing their work,” she said.

Teachers have noticed a difference in the children’s attitude to learning.

“They are now hungry to learn,” said Sue.

“They can also concentrate better and have more energy.” Forgotten 40 funding is also



**BREAKFAST IS SERVED:** Year 6 pupils, who come in early to help, carry trays of food to the classrooms where it is served by the teaching assistants

paying for milk and toast every morning at St Vincent’s Catholic School in Nechells, Birmingham.

“It has made a massive difference to our families,” said headteacher Janet Tibbits.

Mark Nugent is headteacher at Waterville Primary School, which runs a free breakfast club for all its pupils.

“We currently feed over 100 pupils on a daily basis, which is nearly half the school,” said Mark. “Ensuring our pupils are fed whilst here is crucial.”

St Joseph’s Primary School in Slate Street, Belfast, though, has gone one stage further. It is now running an early bird breakfast club so that working parents can also eat breakfast with their children in school.

Families can choose from toast, cereal, fresh fruit, smoothies, juice & yoghurt with weekly specials such as beans on toast, pancakes & fruit kebabs.

“Parents can either drop off their kids or stay and join us for a cup of tea and some breakfast,” said headteacher Mairead Weir.

Other parents volunteer to come into school to help provide the service.

“It has really helped to reduce the stress faced by parents every morning,” said Mairead.

INEOS-funded one-to-one counselling helps boy to deal with blaze trauma

# The six weeks that saved Frank's life

**I**NEOS funding has helped an eight-year-old boy to overcome an horrific trauma.

Roby Park Primary School in Liverpool used Forgotten 40 funding to enlist the help of a counsellor after teachers noticed Frank Mulrooney was struggling to cope after a fire destroyed his family home.

"It was awful to watch," said headteacher Kat Allen.

Frank, who had been eating breakfast when the fire broke out and had crawled up the stairs to wake his older brothers, began suffering nightmares, regularly wet the bed, and became distressed during forest school sessions when friends were toasting marshmallows over an open fire.

"He just couldn't cope," said Kat. "And he was suffering from separation anxiety."

He had been saved from the blaze by his older brothers, who had thrown him out of an upstairs window before jumping themselves.

His mum, who had managed to get out of the house with their 18-month-old sister, caught him. His dad was at work.

No one was injured in the fire, but the family's uninsured home was completely destroyed, along with all their belongings.

The family initially stayed in a hotel before temporarily moving in with another family.

When a furnished home became available,

they moved again, but the house was damp so alternative accommodation was found.

The school bought clothing and shoes for members of the family and set up an online Go Fund Me account, which raised about £3,000, thanks to the generosity of other parents and the local community.

Frequent donations of clothing and vouchers, so that they could buy food, also helped.

**'Thanks to counselling, these children are more able to cope with challenging situations'**

But it was the one-to-one counselling, paid for with Forgotten 40 funding, that helped Frank to deal with his anxiety and the flashbacks.

"In just six weeks, he became more like the little boy before the fire," said Kat. But he's not the only pupil from Roby Park to have benefited from one-to-one counselling.

Over the past two years, 31 children have received counselling thanks to INEOS' funding. Seven are currently receiving support, and eight are on the waiting list.

Many are suffering from anxiety. "The problems are getting worse," said Kat.

Domestic abuse is the biggest culprit with other children trying to cope because either their parents or siblings are in prison.

"Thanks to counselling, though, these children



## Children offered helping hand

CHILDREN in Runcorn are also getting the help they need, thanks to INEOS' funding.

Murdishaw West Primary School is using some of its £20,000 Forgotten 40 grant to pay for a one-to-one counsellor to help troubled pupils make sense of their lives.

And it's helping.

"The children are able to unpack their minds and talk openly about their worries," said headteacher Vanessa Edwards. "And we have started to work with some of their parents too."

In class, teachers have noticed a difference too.

After just six sessions, worry and anxiety have been replaced with a sense of calm.

"The counsellor gives the children strategies to help them cope," said Vanessa.

Currently, eight children are seen every week, but there is a waiting list.

"I feel more and more children are struggling with their mental health these days," she said. "But maybe it has always been a problem. Maybe it is just that we have not been as good at identifying it as we are nowadays. It's good to acknowledge mental health is a real thing and seek support for it."

Vanessa believes social media and online group chats are partly to blame for the rise in poor mental health, especially among pupils in years 5 and 6.

"We send regular updates out to support parents whose children use social media," she said.

**NEW BEGINNING: Frank Mulrooney desperately needed help after a fire destroyed the family home and all his family's belongings**

are more able to cope with these challenging situations and more able to talk about their feelings," she said. "And that is having a positive impact at home and in the classroom."

Roby Park, though, is not alone, though, in investing Forgotten 40 funding in counselling sessions for troubled pupils.

Black Mountain Primary School in Belfast, Dean Bank Primary and Nursery School in County Durham, Christ Church Primary in Birkenhead, Thomas Gray Primary in Bootle, and Murdishaw West Primary School, in Runcorn, all believe such sessions are vital.

"Without these sessions many children would be at risk of either not attending school or having severe emotional difficulties," said Jill Black, principal at Black Mountain Primary.



**'He just couldn't cope and was suffering from separation anxiety. But with help, he became more like the little boy before the fire'**  
- headteacher  
**KAT ALLEN**

School's initiative allows pupils to join the club

# Children launch into host of new adventures on land and at sea

**T**ODAY'S children are spoiled 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 one school in Bridlington, East Yorkshire, is opening doors to a range of activities, thanks to INEOS' Forgotten 40 funding.

**The school pays the club fees directly and buys the uniforms.**

Every child at New Pasture Lane Primary School, who is entitled to free school meals, can now choose from a range of activities from Brownies and Scouts to horse riding, swimming, karate, dance and boxing.

The school pays the club's fees directly, buys the uniform and covers the cost of outings.

"Many of our parents find it daunting to call strangers and fill in forms, but because we do all that for them, all they have to do is take their children along each week," said headteacher Alison Tadman. "And they are happy to do that." So far about 70 of the 128 children, who are eligible, have joined a club.

"In the past this was something we offered to

only a family in crisis, but thanks to INEOS' wonderful generosity, we are now able to offer it to so many more children," said Alison.

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."

Children are also encouraged to talk about those achievements in school assemblies.

Not only are the children learning new skills, which is working wonders for their self confidence, but they are also making friends from other schools.

"All this will help when they finally go to high school," said Alison.

One pupil from New Pasture Lane Primary joined the Bridlington Red Admirals, a dance, baton-twirling and pom pom majorette troupe.

"She was having such a lovely time that her mum decided to join as well," said Alison.

About four children have joined the Bridlington Sea Cadets and are now enjoying sailing, windsurfing, rock climbing and camping.

"You can see that they are so proud of what they are doing because of how they talk about it in school," said Alison.

There have been benefits too for the parents whose children attend the weekly clubs. "They are now talking to each other too," said Alison.



**'Many of our parents find it daunting to call strangers and fill in forms, but we do all that for them. They just have to take their children every week and they are doing'**  
- headteacher  
**ALISON TADMAN**





Former headteacher adopts lessons learned from Forgotten 40 initiative

# INEOS inspires Iain to change



**'I am overjoyed that Iain Parks (above) is going to be joining the team to lead in this work. He brings a rich faith in the Gospel, huge enthusiasm and a massive passion for justice' - the Rt Rev. Philip North Bishop of Blackburn**

**A FORMER headteacher is now using lessons learned from INEOS' Forgotten 40 team to improve the lives of thousands of pupils.**

Iain Parks wants to make a difference as director of education at the Diocese of Blackburn and says he has been inspired by the way INEOS seeks solutions to seemingly deep-seated, impossible problems.

"INEOS recognises that bureaucracy suffocates business," he said. "Instead the company allows people the freedom to explore ideas and be creative and solve their own problems."

"That's an approach that applies equally to education, as it does business."

Iain was exposed to INEOS' way of working when he was headteacher at St Mary and St Paul's Primary School in Prescot – one of the 100 schools chosen to benefit from INEOS' Forgotten 40 funding.

"At first I was quite sceptical about the Forgotten 40 initiative," he said. "I saw it as just papering over the cracks. But I was wrong. It did make a difference."

Thanks to INEOS' funding, pupils at his old school have started to look

**'Forgotten 40 has shown that if we can allow leaders to be creative, then we often get better and quicker responses' - Former headteacher IAIN PARKS**

at life differently. "Those from poor backgrounds started to see what was possible if they worked hard," he said.

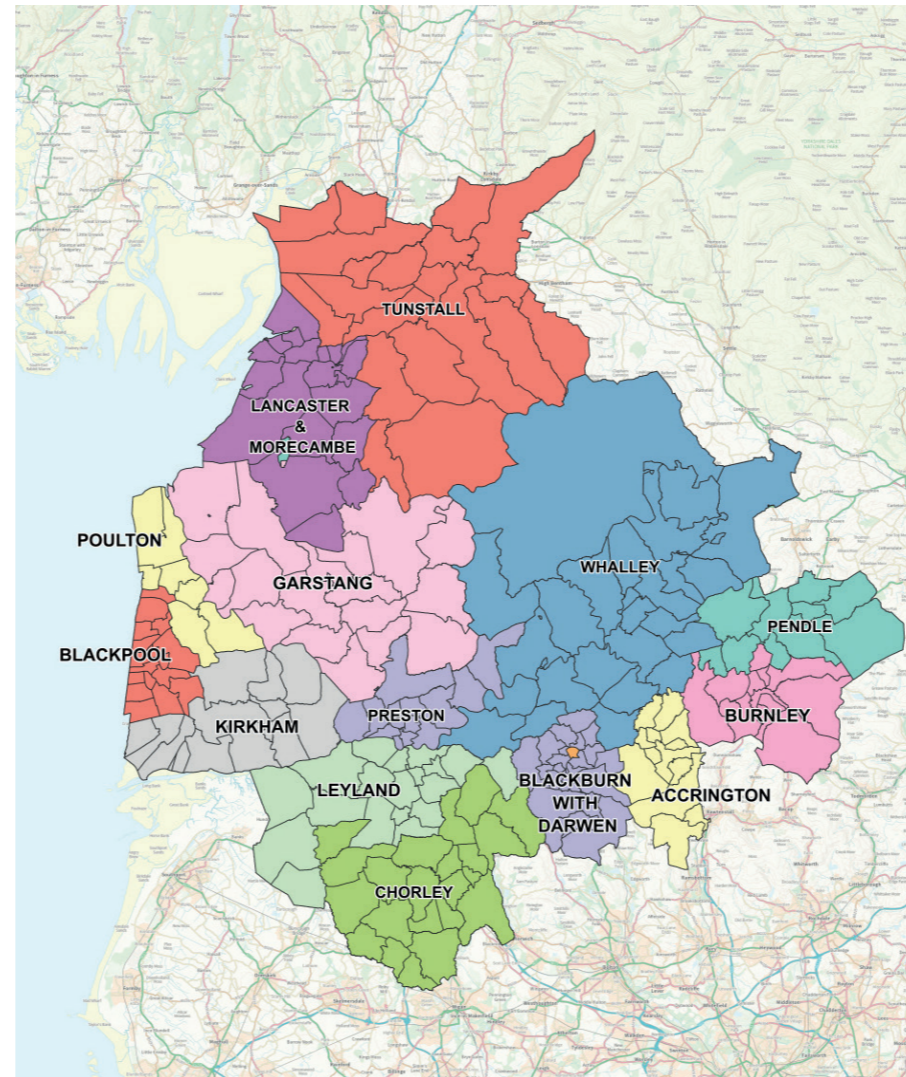
In September, Iain became director of education and now hopes to use his experience working with INEOS to enact change where it's needed.

"If headteachers currently want anything, they have to fill in reams of paperwork, but that often stops them from doing anything because it becomes too laborious and they haven't got time," he said.

"Forgotten 40 has shown that if we can keep this to a minimum and allow leaders to be creative, then we often get better and quicker responses."

He also wants headteachers to be given more powers to make their own decisions about how best to help their own pupils.

"They don't need someone from the outside telling them what has to be done," he said. "They know."



# Children parcel up their concerns in a letter

CHILDREN from a school in County Durham wrote a heartfelt letter to their pastoral manager amid concern for families struggling to pay for food and heating.

They penned their handwritten note to Tara Duncombe in the hope she might use Forgotten 40 funding to buy every family a food parcel.

"We hope that by meeting families' basic needs, we can support them to stay strong physically and emotionally," they wrote. "We would appreciate it so much."

The letter was signed by members of the Chatty Council at Seascape Primary School in Peterlee.

"Usually the children ask for my help to make playtime more fun, so I was quite shocked," said Tara. "They have never spoken about their worries for others in their local community, especially around being able to feed themselves. It just shows how very much they are aware that people are struggling."

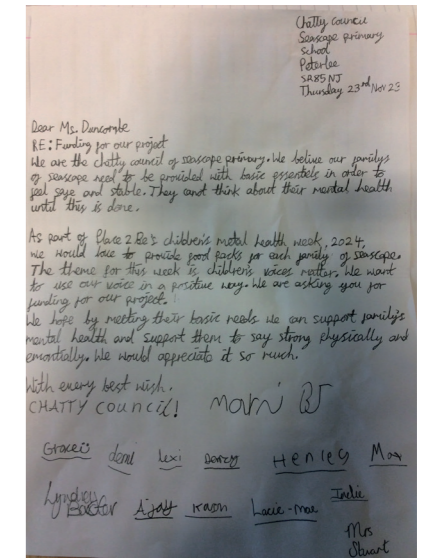
The children's letter coincided with an increase in the number of parents seeking the school's help to buy presents and food this Christmas.

"With INEOS' help we have been providing for those families in need at Christmas," said Tara, "but this year we had more than ever seeking our help."

The children had used Children's Voices Matter week in school to raise their concerns.

"We want to use our voice in a positive way," they wrote in their letter.

And their plea did not fall on deaf ears. The school decided to buy hampers, containing everything for a Christmas Day feast, for 34 families – and donated



food to the local food bank, which is used by many parents whose children attend Seascape.

"The children helped to shop for the food, made up hampers and delivered more food to the food bank," said Tara.

Seascape introduced its school council about 20 years ago.

Over the years, the children's voice has got louder with members now being involved in all sorts of decisions, including helping to recruit staff.

But this was the first time they had sought to take an active role in solving a crisis – and make a difference to the lives of others.

"In an ideal world, they would be shielded from this sort of thing, but by helping, they will grow into strong, caring adults who give back where they can," said Tara.





# Our parents are trying their best

## HEADTEACHER Sharon Cliff is calling on wealthier families not to judge those less fortunate.

She said many families, whose children attend West End Primary School in Morecambe, were simply struggling to cope with debt and the rising cost of living. "They don't need reporting to social care," she said.

"They are in severe deprivation. They are proud parents who love and want the best for their children, but circumstances have put them in a situation from which they cannot escape."

The problems, she said, had got worse over the past 18 months with three of her

families now living in hotels after being evicted.

"When a family gets moved into a one-room hotel with only a kettle, trying to budget for low-cost food is not easy," she said.

Two years ago Sharon spent the bulk of INEOS' £20,000 Forgotten 40 funding on activities designed to enrich, challenge and excite her pupils' lives.

There were visits to London, Liverpool, and the Lake District.

But over the past year, her priorities have changed.

"I have seen a changing need over time, but this is beyond anything I have experienced," she said.

"One experience to London is not going to have the same impact as what I could

possibly do by helping families." Initially, Sharon started buying uniforms for those children who were looking more and more unkempt.

But it was only after she began visiting children's rented homes to speak to their parents, that she realised the extent of the problem.

"I was shocked at the conditions they were living in," she said.

"We had children with no beds, quilts, or a change of sheets. We had a family with raw sewage seeping into the house."

Despite the appalling circumstances, many families were living in fear of being evicted if they complained.

The school is currently helping to support those families who have been made homeless – by providing lifts to and from



**'They are proud parents who love and want the best for their children, but circumstances have put them in a situation from which they cannot escape'**  
- headteacher SHARON CLIFF

## Poverty lies at the heart of problems

**EVERYONE** wants the best for their children. But the reality is that some parents simply cannot provide everything that children from more affluent homes take for granted.

And poverty is at the heart of it. Mark Nugent is headteacher at Waterville Primary School in North Shields, Tyne & Wear. More than 70% of his families live in Meadowell, one of the UK's most deprived communities.

Most of their houses are owned by the local council and are often in a state of disrepair, with no carpets, damaged walls and décor, and broken appliances.

"We often receive information from parents that their washing machines are broken and as a result pupils are still wearing dirty clothing," he said.

It's a common problem for headteachers whose schools try their best with limited budgets. Many of Mark's families receive Universal Credit but are often in rent arrears.

"An increasing number inform us that they cannot afford electricity and gas bills and struggle to top up their meters," he said. "As a result cooking and heating become incredibly difficult."

Children often arrive at school wearing poor clothing, which is not clean.

That's when teachers also learn that they have not eaten anything for breakfast or dinner, and are tired.

Some of the children are acutely aware that they are poor when they hear other pupils talking about holidays and trips out.

"What's interesting is that we don't experience jealousy or upset," he said. "They just accept that they have different home life circumstances. They understand that their family simply can't afford what other families can."

It is for that reason that Mark is so grateful to INEOS for its financial support because it has allowed the school to open the children's eyes to what lies beyond the Meadowell community.

"We often talk to children after a holiday and find out that they haven't been anywhere even though our closest beach is five minutes away," he said.

"Now our pupils get to experience things that they would never get the chance to do with their own families."

It makes chilling reading, says Forgotten 40 team

# The UK's poorest laid bare in shock report

**A**BOUT one million children in the UK learned the meaning of destitution last year.

They learned what it was like to regularly go without. To live in a house where the family income could not always stretch to pay for heating, lighting or food.

Those upsetting findings were detailed in a 121-page report published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

"It made chilling reading," said Brian Padgett, a retired headteacher and former HMI who now works for INEOS' Forgotten 40 project. "But we were not surprised by the findings."

Over the past year, he and other members of the Forgotten 40 team have noticed that more and more headteachers, who are involved in the project, are spending an increasing proportion of their £20,000 annual INEOS gift on basics.

"Many are now providing food and clothing for families and beds for the children to sleep in," said Sheila Loughlin, a retired headteacher and inspector, who is also part of the Forgotten 40 project

**'Many schools are now providing food and clothing for families and beds for children to sleep in'**

**- SHEILA LOUGHLIN  
Forgotten 40 team**



team. The report found that destitution in the UK had more than doubled over the past five years and record numbers were now regularly using food banks.

"Such high and increasing levels of destitution have no place in a country like ours," said Katie Schmuecker, principal policy advisor at the foundation.

Britain's very poorest, she said, were struggling to afford the essentials to stay warm, clean, dry and fed, due to debt and the rising cost of living.

"That all has a deep and profound impact on people's health, mental health and prospects," she said. "It also puts strain on already overstretched services."

The report, *Destitution in the UK 2023*, makes four recommendations. Three call

on the government to provide adequate funding through a reformed benefits' system; the fourth calls for closer working between local partners within deprived communities.

But there is no mention of the importance of schools.

Elaine Wyllie, a former headteacher who founded The Daily Mile and now works for Forgotten 40, says none of the recommendations are likely to be implemented in the current economic crisis.

"Currently, no one has a lot of room for financial manoeuvring, so the problem will remain a tough nut to crack regardless of the party in power," she said.

Her husband John is also a member of

the Forgotten 40 team. He, too, was a teacher.

He believes what can change is government thinking.

"Some changes to the rules around how pupil premium can be used would be helpful," he said.

Brian said most of the schools, involved in the INEOS-inspired project, would be receiving up to £200,000 in 'pupil premium' funding from the government.

"The problem is that government dictates that this money should be spent to close the attainment gap and Ofsted polices its use," he said.

He argued that the grant, introduced in April 2011, had not made any difference because it did not allow schools to tackle the root causes, namely poverty and its debilitating impact on families.

"New money would be best," he said. "But if the government allowed primary schools to spend just 10% to 20% of their pupil premium grant at the headteacher's discretion, the other 3,000 primary schools in very deprived areas would be able to do what the Forgotten 40 schools are doing. That would be a great start." John believes the government could

learn valuable lessons from the Forgotten 40 initiative, which has witnessed children from poorer backgrounds excel when they are given new, supportive opportunities and experiences.

In many areas, headteachers are also increasingly working with families, not just the children, to try to break the vicious cycle.

"INEOS has always felt that the project's approach could be more widely adopted," said Brian.



**'Such high and increasing levels of destitution have no place in a country like ours'**

**- KATIE SCHUECKER**



# Daily smiles

Simple initiative has given pupils a head start in the classroom

## As initiatives go, The Daily Mile has been a runaway success.

Today more than four million children from 90 countries now benefit from the simple initiative founded by Elaine Wyllie at her primary school in Stirling, Scotland.

"The sheer scale of it takes one's breath away," said Lord Sebastian Coe, a Daily Mile ambassador who won four Olympic medals in the 1980s.

Staff at Morgans Primary School in Hertfordshire in the UK say it has made a

huge difference to the children's health and well-being.

"They are now happier and we have seen improved self-esteem, concentration and focus in class," said a member of staff. "We have also noticed that children share things with teachers during the run that they may not have done otherwise."

INEOS had already launched children's running charity GO Run For Fun, when it heard about Elaine's vision for improving the fitness of her pupils.

INEOS Chairman Sir Jim Ratcliffe, who has always been a keen runner himself,

arranged to meet Elaine to see if INEOS could help financially to roll out her programme. Since then, things have snowballed.

"I can hardly believe it myself sometimes," said Elaine, who is also a member of INEOS' Forgotten 40 team.

The UK now leads the way with nearly half

of all primary schools signed up. The Daily Mile Foundation also works closely with INEOS Sport, using its bank of world-class athletes to help inspire children.

Recently, Eliud Kipchoge (pictured), a Daily Mile ambassador who became the first man to run a marathon in under two hours, visited Cubitt Town Primary, an inner-city Forgotten 40 school in Tower Hamlets, London.

He told pupils, who wanted to know why he could run so fast, that he used to run two miles to school each day.

"It was an unforgettable experience," said headteacher Robyn Bruce.

Research has shown that children who run The Daily Mile are fitter, leaner, healthier and happier and more eager to learn when they return to their desks.

**For more information about The Daily Mile, please log on to [www.thedailymile.co.uk](http://www.thedailymile.co.uk)**





# Children discover it's a wonderful life

Parents rally round to help raise money for cancer charity



**P**ARENTS dug deep to raise money for a cancer charity after three pupils at their children's school in Oldham were diagnosed with leukaemia.

They sponsored their children to run laps of Beever Primary School's Daily Mile track, and together they amassed £2,000 for Macmillan.

"We were absolutely overwhelmed," said headteacher Nicola Edwards. "Given the current cost of living crisis and the mounting pressures and struggles many of our families are facing, they gave so generously."

Especially touched were Hendrix, Taylor and Caylin.

All three pupils are currently recovering from Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia, a type of childhood cancer.

"It made me feel so happy because all this money will help people like me," said Hendrix, who is year 2.

The three children underwent intensive chemotherapy followed by 18 months of maintenance treatment, which involved

daily oral and weekly chemotherapy medication.

The children had either weekly or fortnightly hospital visits and suffered a range of side-effects including nausea, hair loss, sore mouths, sensitive skin, and tiredness.

"They have been so incredibly brave throughout all their treatment," said Nicola.

All three are now on the mend and were well enough to run with their classmates as they completed up to 10 laps of the track during the day.

Each class had completed the challenge at a set time so parents could come and cheer them on.

Caylin's dad, who had painted warrior stripes on his face, decided to take part too, and ran alongside his daughter.

When the year 6s finally came out to complete the challenge, the whole school was on the field to egg them on.

"It was an emotional end to such a fabulous day," said Nicola. "The whole school community had come together to support our incredibly courageous young people, their families and the charity that had helped them throughout their battles with cancer."

## Funding kept event on track

THE fund-raising exercise was made slightly easier for the children thanks to the school's decision to recently invest Forgotten 40 funding in an all-weather running track.

Previously children had run The Daily Mile on the school field, but it was often too muddy.

Now the children can complete the daily challenge all-year-round.

"The track not only helps to improve the children's fitness, but it also supports their mental health and well-being because they now have a pleasurable space to take a leisurely stroll," said headteacher Nicola Edwards.

School adopts novel approach to show value of reading



# That's the community spirit

**A SCHOOL'S decision to open a community library has ignited a passion for literacy among parents as well as children.**

Both are now regularly using the library at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School in Birkenhead – and staff are delighted. “Initially parents were not sure how to share a book with their child, but staff have shown them how to appreciate and value reading for pleasure,” said deputy head Paula Bras. In fact, the library has become so popular that the school has now introduced ‘Books and Breakfast’ to allow parents to come into school and read a book with their children while having breakfast together. The decision to open the community library followed the closure of a number of local libraries in the area. “For many of our parents, those libraries had been a form of community hub where they could meet others,” said Paula. “When they closed, parents felt like they had lost some of the support around them.” To help, the school used some of its INEOS Forgotten

40 funding to open its own community library and stock it with books. “We are really passionate about instilling a love of reading,” said Paula. “But it begins at home so opening up our library allows our parents to share this joy with their children.” Parents regularly come into school and borrow books to take home for their children, who are learning that the more they read, the more they know, and the more they know, the more they learn. Among the 500 books on offer are fiction and non-fiction titles. Children’s author David Walliams, who wrote *Gansta Granny* and *Mr Stink*, is a firm favourite, but the children also enjoy non-fiction books about the wonders of space and the prehistoric world inhabited by the dinosaurs. “To us, all reading matters because it opens a child’s mind to the endless possibilities of what they can go on to achieve,” said Paula. The library is currently only open during school hours, and although the books are primarily aimed at children, the school hopes to develop it so that there are more adult books for parents to enjoy.



PICTURES: LUKE ALDRED

# Positive signs all round

Families report happier homes after attending parenting classes

**A SCHOOL has been funding classes for parents who may be 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 are all explored during the 10-week course, run by charity Valleys Kids. So far Maerdy Community Primary in Ferndale, South Wales, has helped more than 20 families. One parent told headteacher Helen Gregory that the family home was now calmer and happier.

**‘Effective parenting has a bigger influence on a child’s life than wealth’**

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.

Next year, thanks to INEOS’ Forgotten 40 funding, a further 30 families will be invited to attend the two-hour workshops.

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.

Maerdy has also been running ‘cooking on a budget’ sessions at its Parents’ Hub – and plans to host a range of numeracy courses after Christmas.

“The impact of all of this has been improved attendance of pupils, a more positive relationship between parents and school, improved attendance of parents at parents’ evenings and improved behaviour at school,” said Helen.

# Upgrade Your Students' Future Today



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