

# The Prince's Teaching Institute Schools Programme

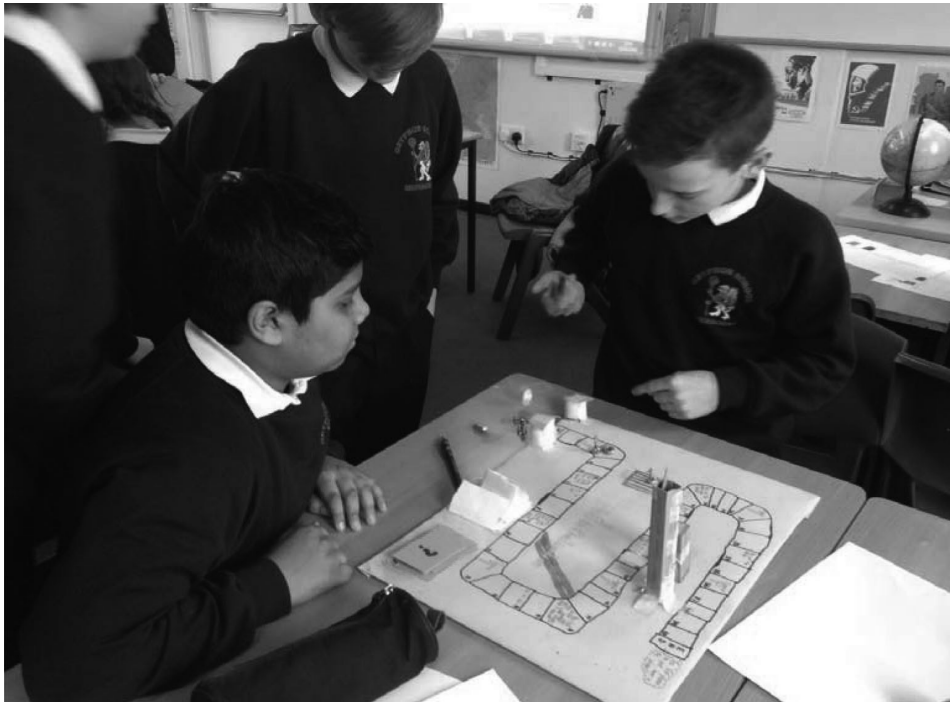


**An evaluation of its impact  
on students**

**HUGH STARKEY**

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First published in 2017 by the UCL Institute of Education Press, University College London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

[www.ucl-ioe-press.com](http://www.ucl-ioe-press.com)

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data:

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBNs

978-1-78277-196-8 (paperback)

978-1-78277-197-5 (PDF eBook)

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Typeset by Quadrant Infotech (India) Pvt Ltd

Printed by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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# What evidence is there that the Schools Programme's focus on developing passion and confidence within subjects contributes to students' enthusiasm, motivation, and success?

## Executive summary

This report aims to test the following hypothesis: 'The Prince's Teaching Institute Schools Programme develops passion and confidence within subjects at school, to enable pupils to become enthusiastic, motivated, and rounded individuals with the confidence, independence, and resilience to identify, seek, and attain their goals.' Its focus is on evidence of improved outcomes for students.

The consultant undertook a desk review of documentary evidence, including public documents available on the Prince's Teaching Institute (PTI) website ([www.princes-ti.org.uk](http://www.princes-ti.org.uk)); a sample of schools' annual objective-setting reports for 2015/16; and a sample of student work submitted by volunteer teachers illustrating the benefits of PTI membership. Teachers were invited to complete a short questionnaire with the heading 'Celebrating Stretch and Challenge' to accompany the samples of student work.

Although not all the reported outcomes are solely attributable to membership, heads of department across all subjects provide strong indications that PTI membership does contribute to benefits for students. Examples are given from Art, English, Geography, History, Modern Foreign Languages, Maths, Music, and Science.

Strategies used by departments to challenge and stretch their students include competitions, external collaborations, cross-curricular projects, and examinations. The report provides evidence of some outstanding achievements by students across all the subjects and year groups. Many departments have found ways of motivating minority and less academic students. A particularly effective motivating strategy is encouraging students to become teachers, whether of their peers or of younger students, which includes a number of outstanding projects with linked primary schools.



### *Sources of evidence*

The evaluation aims to test the stated hypothesis, with a focus on evidence of improved outcomes for pupils. It is based on a desk review of the following sources of documentary evidence:

- Public documents available on the PTI website, such as annual reviews, yearbooks, leadership reports, and reports of residential programmes.
- The Schools Programme evaluation of outcomes in 2016, based on 279 completed questionnaires circulated at the Schools Programme Days.
- A sample of schools' annual objective-setting reports for 2015/16. The consultant was given access to the online Staffroom and hence to schools' annual reports for the sole purpose of the evaluation and under conditions of confidentiality.
- A sample of student work submitted by volunteer teachers illustrative of the benefits of PTI membership. Teachers were invited to complete a short questionnaire ('Celebrating Stretch and Challenge') to accompany the samples of student work.

The consultant also attended one of the Schools Programme Days, namely the Music and History Day, held at Merchant Taylors' Hall in London on 4 July 2016.

### **Background**

The Prince's Teaching Institute (PTI), founded in 2006, is one of the Prince of Wales' charities which, as a group, form the largest multi-cause charitable enterprise in the UK. The PTI developed from the Prince of Wales Education Summer Schools for state school teachers of English and History, which were established in 2002. From the outset, the programme of summer schools and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities was intended to generate, in the Prince's words, 'a restored sense of subject depth and rigour together with renewed and continuing emphasis on knowledge'.

As the above quotation indicates, the PTI operates in the belief that teachers can be re-energized by providing opportunities to develop their subject knowledge through contact with leading academic experts.

Although, as its name indicates, the focus of PTI work is teachers, there is a clear understanding that the ultimate beneficiaries of the Institute are the learners. An official formulation of the aims of the PTI posted on its website maintains that:

All children, whatever their background or ability, are entitled to be taught by passionate teachers who are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. We re-engage teachers with their specialist subjects, inspiring them to bring renewed enthusiasm into their classrooms and raise the aspirations of their pupils.

This statement demonstrates an intention to avoid exclusivity by defining the intended beneficiaries as 'all children'. PTI activities are designed to develop enthusiastic teachers who can 'raise the aspirations of their pupils'.

The engagement with subjects is therefore a means to the end of enhancing the experiences and achievements of school-aged children.

Key to the ethos of the PTI is the principle of peer learning. Teachers from a wide variety of types of school and sixth form college (comprehensive, grammar, mixed, single sex, Catholic, Church of England, local authority, academy) and from across England come together on the basis of their commitment to subject teaching. They then share resources and experiences in a way that encourages them 'to bring the latest thinking into their classrooms' and supports them 'to make lasting improvements in what and how they teach'. The role of the PTI is to 'encourage them to make rigorous curriculum choices, to teach beyond the test and to forge links with like-minded schools and academic institutions'.

Subject departments are invited to join the PTI, and a number of schools have several departments in membership. Subjects currently include Art, English, Geography, History, Latin, Maths, Modern Foreign Languages, Music, and Science.

PTI events are broadly but not exclusively aimed at heads of department who are in a position to disseminate inspiration and involve their colleagues. The commitment to peer learning is embedded in the organization of the subject-based residential courses and Schools Programme Days. The three-day residential courses offer opportunities to meet and hear from extremely distinguished subject experts, and these are complemented by the sharing of good practice between heads of department and an opportunity to reflect and to formulate objectives, supported by the PTI's Teacher Leaders, who formally act as mentors. The annual Schools Programme Day also includes keynote lectures by high-profile specialists. Like the residential courses, the programme for the day is staffed by Teacher Leaders who guide discussions, give practical demonstrations, and offer one-to-one advice and evaluation interviews.

Where the PTI does make use of its foundation and connections is in being able to provide teachers with some exceptional venues for the activities and to attract outstanding and well-known academics and writers as guest speakers. Teachers may be attracted by the opportunity to meet their subject's top names, but this is not an aim in itself; rather, it is designed to draw them into a peer network of support and to challenge them to develop their professional practice.

The work of the PTI has expanded steadily over ten years so that more than 2,000 teachers now attend events with another 3,000 working alongside them in schools. While the PTI can claim to have reached over half a million learners, it ambitiously aims to double this number by 2020.

The PTI provides a unique form of CPD. In an educational landscape characterized by constant change, intrusive monitoring of performance, intense competition, and political and ideological controversy, the PTI appears as a neutral space that provides opportunities for teachers to step

out of their daily struggles and put them into perspective. As one respondent to the PTI's annual evaluation put it: 'Being [able] to network with other professionals, facing similar challenges, is invaluable during a period of such substantial change.' Or, according to another teacher, there is a 'focus on aspiration and inspiration and enjoyment of the subject instead of an obsession with data'.

The reconfiguration of the governance of schools has left a gap in the provision of CPD that was previously offered by local education authorities. Whereas there are offers from private providers, these tend to be focused on responding to examination and testing regimes. While subject associations may also provide conferences and some CPD opportunities, they are unable to provide the personalized support that is fundamental to the ethos and the operation of the PTI. In the words of one respondent, 'the PTI recognizes and appreciates teachers and respects them as professionals'.

Although the PTI focuses on subjects, the residential courses and Schools Programme Days bring teachers from different subjects together. The CPD opportunities enable discussions with colleagues from the same subject discipline from a range of different types and location of school. There is an organized sharing of understandings and best and innovative practices and resources. As one teacher put it, the opportunity 'to share practice with other heads of department [gives] positive affirmation and growth in confidence leading to taking on more challenging projects'. Additionally, the PTI format also enables and facilitates conversations across subjects.

### **Accountability and reporting**

PTI member departments are required annually to draft their own objectives and then to report on progress. This is a formal process using a standard questionnaire template. Support in the drafting process and in evaluating progress against the objectives is provided by peer mentors, known as Teacher Leaders, who are experienced PTI subject specialists and who offer written evaluative comments and a 20-minute one-to-one conversation. They are also empowered to make a judgement as to whether the department can be awarded the annual PTI Mark. This is a logo that the participating school can use on its website and other publicity material.

In 2016, around two-thirds of participating Schools Programme departments were awarded the PTI Mark. This is against a background of members reporting that their departmental development plans were more or much more challenging than in previous years and therefore harder to achieve. The symbolic value of the Mark is stressed by one teacher, who particularly values the 'empowerment that gaining the PTI mark gives me to encourage the department to work together to achieve common goals'.

The objectives drafted by subject departments should refer to the four Schools Programme aims, which are:

### *1. Coherence and quality of challenge within the curriculum*

In this section the participant heads of department are asked first to *reflect* by providing brief general characteristics of the department and contextual information. They are then encouraged to *celebrate* by demonstrating how the department provides a sense of coherence and quality of challenge in curriculum planning. They are also asked to identify possible areas for further development.

Guidance provided by the PTI suggests the following indicators of achievement of this aim: recruitment to GCSE and A-Level courses; evidence of coherence in schemes of work, including how pupils gain a sense of the Big Picture; explicit identification of challenging material in schemes of work; identifying how the department ensures that pupils have breadth and depth of study through schemes of work; a clear and shared departmental sense of why the subject matters, as evidenced in the department handbook, wall displays, and department meetings.

### *2. Extending and enthusing pupils through subject-based activities that are beyond the curriculum*

In this section the participant heads of department are asked first to *reflect* on the department's commitment to the subject beyond the curriculum, and then to *celebrate* how the department ensures that pupils are extended by access to subject-based activities beyond the curriculum. The heads of department also identify possible areas for further development.

Indicators of achieving this aim include: subject-based lunchtime and after-school activities; enrichment days, including evidence of how these engage and extend pupils; residential and day visits; masterclasses; invited guests, such as outside speakers and performances; school publications, assemblies, subject-specific prize-giving, and other in-school events; other evidence of developing breadth and depth, such as local history, local writers, and local science and industry; subject-specific gifted and talented provision including consideration, for example, of extension papers where available.

### *3. Encouraging teachers to explore, develop, and share their own specialist subject knowledge*

Having *reflected* on their department's commitment to subject-specific professional development and *celebrated* how the department's commitment to CPD helps students to develop as subject specialists, participants are asked to identify possible areas for further development.

Suggested indicators in this case include: analysis of subject-specific impact of further education or training on staff; analysis of the impact of the department's commitment to Initial Teacher Training; contributions of resources to the PTI Staffroom on the website; departmental staff contributing to or leading INSET; commitment to staff professional development, such as postgraduate study; having a curriculum budget for staff, including subscriptions to journals and access to publications; well-developed and ambitious support for non-specialist staff within the department.

#### *4. Raising the profile of your subject within education*

Heads of department *reflect* on their department's current subject-based links and partnerships with other schools and areas of the community. They *celebrate* how the links and partnerships contribute to raising the profile of the subject across the wide spectrum of society, and they again identify possible areas for further development.

The suggested indicators include: links with other secondary schools or work with primary schools in the area; evidence of sharing good practice and joint events; cross-curricular links within the school that strengthen the importance of the subject; participation in subject-specific events and awards, such as internal art exhibitions; links to universities and other forms of higher education; membership of any relevant national or local organizations and subject associations, such as local musical competitions.

At the Schools Programme Day, departments that have successfully reported against these criteria are awarded the PTI Mark for the year. This entitles them to use a special PTI logo. Departments that have spent three years in the Schools Programme may apply to the Associate Department Scheme. This entitles them to retain contact with the PTI and attend CPD courses while undertaking research and development activities that address one or two of the Schools Programme aims, rather than all four.

#### **References to impact on students in PTI member departments' annual objective-setting reports**

Since the focus of this evaluation is evidence of impact of the PTI Schools Programme on students, the consultant sought evidence from the most recent annual reports to the PTI, covering the 2015/16 academic year. This self-reporting provides examples of ways in which students benefit from their schools' participation in the PTI Schools Programme.

Not all the reported outcomes are solely attributable to membership, but heads of department across all subjects provide strong indications that PTI membership does contribute benefits for students, as the following examples show.

The anonymized comments below are reproduced verbatim and have the characteristics of an early draft, since they were completed online without expectation that there might be a readership beyond the peer mentor. They have not been edited, and thus retain the authenticity and spontaneity of the original.

#### **ART**

The PTI encourages collaborations and cross-curricular working. Students benefit from being introduced to social and political dimensions of subjects where the focus is often solely on the aesthetic:

Within the school we work closely with other subjects to enrich and cross-curricular to help students identify connections with other sources of inspiration. Using other subjects to help students think differently

about the way they research Art and Artists. ... [We] encourage students to think about how Art is made in relation to political issues to help them become more empathetic and analytical consumers of the world they live in.

Whereas some departmental activities involve a few select students, on other occasions it is possible for a whole year group to benefit:

All year 11 students took part in Art History lectures run by the National Portrait Gallery which informed their portrait project. These lectures entailed an exploration of historical portraiture and the relevance of contemporary photography. These studies helped students develop further ideas and concepts to improve their current and future studies.

In another example, three year groups were offered the opportunity to learn new skills:

The Photoshop clubs went ahead and were run for all 3 year groups with KS3. Students were taught some of the basics of Photoshop including image quality, use of the Magic Wand tool, layering and adding text. Students previous experience using Photoshop was varied and students were encouraged to work on projects which encapsulated their own personal interests in order to produce a poster.

PTI departments are encouraged to raise the profile of their subject in the school and beyond. A focus on publicizing the work of students can achieve this end while benefiting both the students and the school:

Students' work is published termly in the school newsletter along with photographs from inset courses and gallery visits. Students' work, from insets and courses, are displayed throughout the school and have become part of our summer exhibition as well as the year 6 and year 12 open evenings.

#### ENGLISH

The annual reports provide examples of PTI-inspired initiatives that have clearly impacted on large numbers of students. The PTI encourages external visits to performances, and one school reported that:

The department has taken students to see 'The Duchess of Malfi' ...  
The uptake of this trip was excellent with 80 AS Literature students opting to come.

Another school reported on the impact that reading logs made:

Reading logs have proven hugely successful; large numbers of pupils, especially reticent readers, have read in excess of thirty books this year.

Whereas reading logs may be quite widespread among English departments, this head of department clearly attributes the introduction and promotion of these logs to the support and shared experiences of the PTI.

Not all initiatives can be provided for large numbers of students, however, and sometimes the department decides on a focused intervention:

This year creative writing has been used as a focus for a year 9 literacy intervention group to focus on crafting writing, rather than thinking about isolated literacy techniques. Students have been given the freedom to use different formats (stories, diaries, descriptions, feature articles) and different writing styles to put their literacy skills into context ... students' enthusiasm for writing has definitely increased; students are proud of their writing and can explain how their writing has improved.

The reporting head of department attributes at least some of the impetus for this successful initiative to PTI membership.

One English department has adopted a Department Vision Statement. This includes specific focus on students:

We strive for a department in which students enjoy studying English, English Literature & Media. We want students to look forward to their lessons. We encourage our students to think and learn independently, we want to provide them with every opportunity to achieve and progress. Students should have high expectations of themselves and others in their lessons. Our students are our priority; we make our decisions with the students as our focus.

Our students are encouraged to seek knowledge beyond the class room, at home and through our provision of extracurricular activities. Our curriculum is culturally diverse and offers a range of stimuli.

Such a statement informs all teaching and learning activities provided by the department and consequently impacts on the experience of all students.

#### GEOGRAPHY

One initiative that had an impact on students across a year group involved a re-appraisal of the use of homework. PTI membership provided models, frameworks, and support for re-imagining homework in a way that increased completion and provided challenge and enjoyment:

The PTI schools programme made us think more creatively about the homework that we are setting, and we tried to set homework which is both engaging, and that would also allow collaboration at home with family members where appropriate. We also used the idea of 'take away' homework which gave pupils a choice. For example, they could choose between a model, written explanation or diagram to be annotated. This greatly increased the number of homeworks that were handed in on time, and they enjoyed being able to link to real life places in their neighbourhood. This links to the importance of putting things in real life context which again was influenced by the PTI sessions.

The PTI provides a catalyst and the department implements initiatives within the local framework of the school. One school responded to a



whole-school focus on literacy by devising activities based on creating games that were both enjoyable and stretching:

Our whole school target is to improve literacy; we have re-developed our KS3 curriculum to encourage great challenge for students' work. We aim to ensure to plan difficult work that the students can do – just. [We got year 7 students to] design a board game that contains push and pull factors for a migrant moving from the countryside to the city in Kenya. [The] students were engaged and discussing the issues of development and the role that the UK has had on the world and other countries. This had a cross-curricular impact upon History. Students were excited and happy to come to lessons and full of chat around the school about what they were doing in class.

Another school worked on a European-funded project, also for Year 7 students:

The aim of this task was a creative piece of work of a journey visiting local places of interest. This was a part of e-Twinning project, each partner school was creating part of the journey. Aladdin was the main character and he was on the mission to find his true love. The journey started in Berlin, followed by Adana (Turkey) then to Benalmadena (Spain) and then to [England]. This is where students picked up the story. The work submitted is a product of year 7 class collaboration; each place visited by Aladdin was completed by small group of students.

The resulting PowerPoint was submitted to the PTI as evidence of student engagement. The very positive evaluation is included in the next section.

#### HISTORY

Imaginative approaches to the GCSE unit on *The Russian Revolution and Stalinist Russia* include an end-of-module bake-off competition, featuring entries such as 'a stunning Fabergé egg to represent the old Tsarist rulers of Russia'; a cake coloured like the Russian flag; and a cake from which the image of Trotsky had been expunged.

This unit also provides the opportunity for dialogue with colleagues in Geography.

One of the PTI suggestions is to promote history in the local community. One school reports:

A History in the local area board has been created this is updated every term to show students what is on in their local areas. I have heard many students talking about places they have already visited, and have seen them getting excited about places they would like to visit.

Some schools report an increased take-up of their subject at post-16. One History department provides an analysis of the reasons behind this:

Our numbers have increased from 21 this year to (provisionally) 30 next year. We feel that this is down to meeting our internal departmental



objectives of engaging and challenging lessons as well as sharing our passion for the subject as well as ensuring that students understand a broader view of History with all of our classes.

This very much reflects the ethos of and the intentions behind the PTI Schools Programme. This head of department, reporting to the PTI, clearly articulates the value for the school of PTI membership. Meeting with other heads of History and sharing experiences and approaches encourages the head of department to set challenging objectives for colleagues and to share a 'passion for the subject' that translates into students opting for further study of History.

#### MATHS

One theme that emerges from the Maths reports is that of making maths relevant to everyday life and experience. Perhaps the most down-to-earth example is a challenge arising from a decorating task:

Year 10 also did a rich task by trying to provide a solution to my friend's decorating/picture hanging problem. They were asked to investigate how many photographs could be hung in an array using 110 'lomo-clips' and to make suggestions for the dimensions of the array. They came up with  $n$ th terms for sequences and some lovely designs. The best reports were posted off to my friend who is now deciding which to use.

One very imaginative promotional activity for Maths was the initiative of students designated as 'Maths Reps':

The Maths Reps ... fully planned and ran a Mathsquerade Ball instead. This event was a fantastic success in no small part down to the hard work and enthusiasm of the Reps who really put their heart and soul into it. ... There were nearly 80 students and 10 staff at the event and all enjoyed themselves. This was significantly up from the ... year before that had 30 including staff. There was a quiz, live music and prizes.

This high-profile event clearly associates Maths with fun and conviviality. This can also be found in an account of a whole-school event:

Numeracy week was a great success. Each department found ways to incorporate numeracy and maths into their lessons. The maths department provided each department with [suggestions] and explicit links to help facilitate ideas. Specifically for the pupils we ran maths workshops after school which included making lip balm and cooking cakes.

Maths also took the initiative for an exciting cross-curricular project in another school:

Mathematics Department proudly ran a cross-curricular Maths Scholar's trip on the use of Geometry in Islamic Art. The trip involved 60 Year 7 pupils exploring how Geometry has been used in Islamic Art as well as crafting and assessing their own pieces of Islamic Art. The event successfully made pupils become aware of the influence Mathematics has had on the Islamic culture and the relationship between Geometry, Art

and RE. The Victoria & Albert Museum holds two very special rooms filled with a variety of Islamic crafts, including pottery, tapestries, screens and other artefacts from Middle East. The entire room is complete with triangles, heptagons and tessellations. Year 7s were very excited to see Mathematics they had been learning about in context and took their activities in the museum very seriously.

This project combines cross-curricular working with engagement with museums and galleries. The stimulus provided by the visit impacts on students' motivation for the subject as well as providing them with insights into Islamic culture.

#### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (MFL)**

MFL departments have addressed the issue of providing appropriate levels of intellectual challenge. This may be through traditional approaches:

We are endeavouring to help pupils develop their intellectual curiosity and are encouraging extended independent learning wherever possible. High challenge activities are being built into all new schemes of work. An example of this would be high challenge grammar activities. This would be for example presenting the pupils with a text in the imperfect tense in German and they would then have to work out how to form the imperfect form of regular verbs.

In another example, the department switched the focus from input from the teachers to consideration of student outputs:

This year we have focused particularly on Stretch and Challenge within the classroom. ... We have created three levels of challenge for a number of tasks within the lessons to encourage students to try increasingly difficult tasks and take greater risks with their learning. ... The result has been a slight shift in the way that the faculty are thinking when planning lessons from one where they plan activities to one where they are considering the learning. The impact of this is that students are increasingly less fazed by lots of language that they don't know and are being equipped with the confidence and the skills to tackle tasks that they may have been put off before.

Authentic communication can be promoted by activities involving more than one class group. For example:

We added a unit of work to the Year 8 Spanish that was about reading fairy tales and writing a story in Spanish. At the end of the unit, students performed their own fairy tales to another class.

Departments also organize high-profile events to ensure the visibility of their subject in school. In 2015/16, baking was a popular approach, providing much scope for imagination and cultural inclusivity:

We decided to have an International bake off for charity. Students in year 7 were tasked with the job of producing cakes and pastries which represented different countries and communities. We chose this as we

felt that this better reflected the ethnicity and make-up of our diverse community. The bake-off was held at the end of the day and the year 7's advertised it to the rest of the school who came ... to buy the goodies. To extend the impact of this we also invited parents in to see the bakes ... An article was placed in our weekly bulletin, and in our termly newsletter. There are also some pictures displayed in the main entrance.

In another school, the MFL department organized cross-curricular work with the Art department on the theme of masks. This project shows how artistic understanding and creation can be a stimulus to language activities:

Students spent several lessons learning about eg pointillisme and then painting a quarter of their animal mask in that style, with 3 other styles making up the remainder of the mask. In their French lessons, students looked at some art and learned to give their opinions about it, before embarking on learning how to describe their animal and their masks. They wrote their descriptions in French and they have been displayed on the walls in the corridors and the new reception area of the school, as well as being tweeted on our two department Twitter accounts. Students also had to speak about their masks, describing their opinions of their work, as well as describing the colours and eyes etc.

While such activities raise the profile of the department, other initiatives raise the profile of the subject as an asset for careers and future life:

I feel that the profile of languages as future study at university was enormously impacted by the event we put on in November last year at school. We invited two other schools to come along to a day with a member of GCHQ, who gave a brilliant talk about how languages are used in all sorts of ways as a career in the field of 'spying'. We also had introductory workshops in 3 languages, Arabic, Hungarian and Italian, none of which are taught at our school or at the other two participating schools. The students were very much enthused by the keynote speaker, a young woman from GCHQ, and were keen to sign on the dotted line afterwards.

MFL departments now engage with a wide range of languages and encourage language awareness:

This year we decided to focus our efforts into supporting the Chinese Language and Culture Week in February. All the departments in school were involved providing all the students with activities linked to China and its culture.

In a move designed to be inclusive of the many languages and cultures in a school, some schools have recognized the opportunities provided by the Mother Tongue Other Tongue competition, which is free to enter and is open to pupils aged between 8 and 18:

Mother Tongue asks pupils, who do not have English as a first language, to write about what a lullaby, poem or song in their native language

means to them, while Other Tongue asks pupils to create an original poem in a second language they are learning at school (French, German, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Urdu and Mandarin).

Engaging with this competition potentially recognizes and values the language and cultural assets that many students bring to their education, but that are too rarely celebrated.

#### **MUSIC**

Schools cover a wide range of music styles and musical productions, resting not only on instruments, but also on computer-based applications. One school took the initiative to collaborate with feeder primary schools in a project that involved learning to use editing software:

A three week project on GarageBand [music editing software] was delivered to [a local] primary school in March. This was met with huge success and enjoyment. Students have asked if they can return before the end of the summer term. ... Medals and certificates were awarded and compositions shown at the Primary collaboration awards in April. This event was attended by over 500 primary school students.

This high-profile event benefited both the secondary students and the large number of primary school pupils attending the presentation.

Another school reports on the benefits of arranging visits to prestigious venues and concerts, including the Royal Opera House and Wigmore Hall:

These visits have had a profound impact on pupils' perceptions of music as an academic subject and on the role of music in the lives of a diverse range of people. Pupils have clearly expressed that these visits have changed their perception of the academic study of music and the role that music can play in a diverse range of sectors and careers. Uptake for A-level music has increased and two pupils have stated that these visits played a direct role in their decision to pursue music at KS5 level.

#### **SCIENCE**

A number of reports across all subjects mention special weeks and this is the case with Science:

A vast array of science activities were arranged for science week. These were well attended by all students across all key stages. We successfully used key stage 5 students to assist the organising and delivered of some sessions. Our pupil premium students took part in a project to look after chicken eggs. During the course of the week the chicks hatched and the students were tasked to look after and care for the chicks.

This project is notable for focusing some special attention on pupil premium students. This school also involves older students in providing activities for primary school children, and reports that 40 sessions were delivered in five schools:

Many of our sixth form students have organised and led science clubs in a number of local primary schools. The students were responsible for planning delivering sessions on a weekly basis. The feedback from primary schools was extremely positive and it was commented that the science club had a noticeable effect on the popularity of science.

Collaborations with primary schools have to be built and sustained. They do not happen without detailed planning and effort. One school reported that ‘every attempt to contact our feeder primary schools to provide this service has been unsuccessful. They never came back to us to accept the offer’.

Membership of the PTI Schools Programme has enabled one department to devise new pedagogical approaches that have met with success:

Our students did struggle in the past with independent learning skills but we can proudly say that they have improved drastically over the past one year. Students now take a lead role in understanding and communicating scientific ideas in front of peers and teachers confidently ... Top set groups were challenged to prepare presentations and help deliver lessons on some topics to their classes. [Other] groups work in small groups to devise a strategy for remembering scientific concepts and formulas in the form of music, drama, posters and news presentation. These strategies were then presented by the groups to their peers to help them remember things.

The department reports that students have developed a feeling of belonging and that this has helped them to mature and grow as learners and as students.

Making science relevant is recognized as important for increasing student motivation. As with the examples above, getting students to present their findings to their peers is a favoured pedagogical strategy:

Students have also been studying ‘Science in the News’. They are tasked with researching something topical and make a presentation to the rest of the class.

Working with news media and looking for references to science effectively creates opportunities for links to citizenship education.

### **Teacher perceptions of the impact of PTI membership on their students**

The PTI’s annual evaluation for 2016 is a source of quantitative and qualitative data on the perceptions of the Programme. There was an extremely high level of support (over 80% of respondents) for particular statements about membership of the PTI, such as:

- it has increased the coherence and quality of challenge within my department’s curriculum;
- it has provided my school’s students with a richer subject experience;
- it has helped my department raise the aspirations and expectations of my school’s students.

The effect of this on students is also recognized by at least two-thirds of respondents, who agreed or agreed strongly that membership:

- increased the level of subject-based links between my school, other schools, and subject associations.

Over two-thirds of respondents consider that there is a direct effect of membership, since they agree or agree strongly that:

- the students in my school enjoy my department's subject more since we joined the Schools Programme;
- the scheme has helped my students become more well-rounded people and has helped them to develop character traits that will help them succeed in later life, e.g. curiosity, confidence, optimism, resilience, and ambition.

Respondents also contributed statements in their own words about perceived benefits to students. These included:

- 'Increased pupil engagement, more enthused staff.'
- 'The Schools Programme gives encouragement and challenge to develop opportunities for young people to improve their aspirations due to teachers having higher expectations.'

In order to provide illustration for this report, teachers participating in the PTI Schools Programme were invited to submit examples of student work that they considered to have been inspired by PTI membership. Volunteers were invited to complete a brief questionnaire entitled 'Celebrating Stretch and Challenge'. This gave them the opportunity to contextualize and comment on the students' work.

Nineteen teachers responded to the invitation to provide 'pieces of pupil work that you feel have been inspired by your department's participation in the PTI Schools Programme. The examples could be in any format (e.g. essay, creative writing, poem, speech, PowerPoint presentation, poster, model, letter, video, music)'. Nearly half were teachers of English; Art, Geography, History, and Science were also represented. There were no examples from Maths, Music, or MFL.

The pupils' work took the form of essays, poems, creative writing, PowerPoint presentations, videos, photographs of art work, and research projects. Submitted examples covered Years 5 to 13. Schools were single-sex and mixed, selective and comprehensive. Students whose work was selected included those from 'challenging' classes as well as 'gifted and talented' and pre-university students.

Across subjects, heads of department reported on the positive impact on students of the approaches and strategies they had encountered and discussed at residential programmes and Schools Programme Days. The main drivers of innovative projects that stimulate student engagement were competitions, external partnerships, cross-curricular projects, and

examinations. All of these are also represented in the subject self-reports discussed above.

### *Competitions*

Some of the work selected had been submitted for competitions. Teachers were clear that membership of the PTI had encouraged them to look for such opportunities. For instance:

PTI encouraged me to further and strengthen my links with outside organisations and worked in an even more cross-curricular format, developing the excellent work already happening with The Big Draw, art schools and the primary school.

The competition is a stimulus that is made possible by the partnership links. The department in this case linked with a mental health charity to develop some very imaginative interdisciplinary work:

The Art department together with Child Protection and science teacher (a SANE ambassador) ran two competitions in the Spring term. We ran Art lessons on Mental Health awareness within an Art context and discussing the work of the charity SANE. The focus was on artists and their own struggles with anxiety and mental health issues and how it is shown through their artistic practice, Van Gogh and Francis Bacon being just two examples.

The outcomes of these competitions gave positive feedback to the students and the format provided a model for other schools:

The whole of KS3 had a one off art lesson about [artists and mental health issues] and entered a competition to design a coat for The Black Dog Campaign. KS3/4/5 were given the opportunity to enter a photography/film/animation competition relating to mental health awareness. There were 9 runners up in each KS3 year group and three winners overall ... A black dog sculpture was made with the art technician and students and will be displayed permanently within the school. The whole project will be rolled out nationally for other schools to use and develop.

Competitions provide external validation in recognizing exceptional and creative work. English departments are also aware of this opportunity for engaging with wider audiences. One school submitted:

[t]wo short stories written by year 12 English Literature AS level students for a national creative writing competition (First Story National Writing Competition). Both stories were long-listed out of 3000 entries.

Another English department said that since they had taken up membership of the PTI, and as a direct result of it, '[s]tudents have had involvement and entered their poems into several external poetry competitions (e.g. NACE and Foyle) promoted by our department and supported by the school'.

The encouragement of PTI membership and the structure provided, which includes setting specific targets, directly contributed to enabling the



students to hone their writing to competition level. The successful outcome both reflects well on the standing of the department within the school, and provides examples of what can be achieved that can be shared with younger learners to inspire and motivate them:

Some of our targets were about enrichment, getting students involved in English outside of the classroom and raising the profile of English across the school. These competition entries were completed as an optional, extra-curricular project and both students entered purely for their love of writing. We've used these, and many of the long-listed stories, as examples of high-quality writing for GCSE students to dissect and learn from.

Success in competitions also makes teachers proud and validates their efforts. This creates a virtuous spiral:

A huge portion of our students are EAL and therefore don't have the same grounding in the English language as many other students ... This means that we often struggle to get students to produce high quality writing, so these examples are something we're really proud of and are using to inspire other students as well.

The celebration of success in competitions in the wider school context was illustrated in another school that chose to focus on Year 7 students. The school explains that they took this opportunity in the context of their Associate Department project, which is to 'encourage students to be more ambitious in their reading, writing, and use of the English Language'.

First, the department promoted the BBC's '500 Words' challenge as a high-profile competition. This resulted in 250 entries from Key Stage 3, which is around 70 per cent of students. Following the announcement of the success of one of their students, teachers in the department made a video celebrating the achievement, and this was played to all students in assembly and sent home to parents. Another school reported that 'students who have won publication through the competition have their published work in the school library to inspire other students'.

What is significant about the examples of the use of competitions in the PTI context is not the development of competitiveness but, rather, the instrumental use of the incentive that a competition provides. First, competitions encourage students to produce high-quality work of which they and the department can be proud. Second, success is celebrated with other members of the school community and more widely. Moreover, the winning products are then used as examples of what can be achieved, and as inspiration for other students.

It may be that the creative subjects of Art and English, as well as Music, lend themselves more to competitions than the other subjects. However, the partnership element demonstrated above can be developed by any department.



### *External partnerships*

The encouragement to form partnerships is a core element of the PTI agenda. Partnerships can take many forms as responses to the ‘Celebrating Stretch and Challenge’ invitation illustrate.

One Art department sent their Year 12 and 13 students to life drawing sessions run by the local university:

This was an amazing opportunity that significantly impacted the student’s portfolios, experience and skills. This is particularly important as it is vital students have exposure to mature drawing experiences before they head forwards to their art foundations and degrees. All our students that applied to art school for Sept have received an unconditional place; this is due to their amazing art skills, but also the strength and variety in their portfolios and the relationship they are nurturing with London art schools. It is paramount that all students have the chance to visit and work alongside older degree level students and feel welcomed into further education forums. Life drawing is particularly challenging, the initial intimidation of a life model alongside the complex body proportions and observation – a real stretch activity in its purest sense.

There is also an instrumental dimension to this kind of partnership, since it provides opportunities that enable students to gain confidence that serves them in their university applications:

Giving students more opportunities to aim higher in our area is central to help build aspirations, confidence and a sense of belonging. Our 6<sup>th</sup> formers spoke confidently and with purpose in university interviews and had a wealth of experience to draw on.

An English department also stresses a link with the local university. Another notes the inspiration provided by a performance poet coming to the school, very likely with Arts Council funding. A third has a policy that all members of the department attend relevant CPD events provided by the British Library and British Museum over the course of the school year. One History department seized on the opportunity provided by the First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme. Although only a few students were able to participate directly, the experience was shared by the making and showing of a technically accomplished video report made by the students.

The PTI’s own evaluation suggests that partnerships with universities may possibly be becoming more difficult, as only just over a third of departments agreed that membership has ‘[i]mproved the relationship between my department and Higher Education establishments’. It may well be, however, that relationships with universities are already strong and it is asking a lot to further improve such partnerships. However, this is something that the PTI might well wish to explore further.

### *Cross-curricular projects*

Several departments have specifically developed interdisciplinary projects as their strategy for stretching their students and encouraging a broader

outlook. One complex but carefully managed Geography project was also the result of external partnerships – in this case, a European-funded Erasmus+ consortium involving a linked school in each of Germany, Turkey, and Spain. The Year 7 UK students developed a narrative PowerPoint presentation to share with their partners. A fictional character visits the school's local area and identifies and comments on places of historical and geographical interest. Students worked in groups to research their local area. The teacher comments that:

They had to collaborate in order to ensure that the journey between places made sense, imaginative but at the same time including some factual information about local places.

Membership of the PTI encouraged and influenced the planning of this international project with the intention that 'students could use their creative, ICT, and imaginative skills within a usually more factual subject'. This proved an extremely popular addition to the Year 7 scheme of work.

Another Geography department reviewed its programme for Year 7 in the light of the agreed objectives with the PTI. They set their students to create new games to explore relevant development indicators and push and pull factors related to rural-to-urban migration in Kenya. The intention was to challenge the students by setting a task that was only just within their capabilities. The strategy of allowing students to create games meant that the Year 7s were very engaged in the task, while also discussing issues of development. This required a perspective related to the role that the UK has had on the world and other countries, which is also highly relevant to their study of History. Teachers reported that students 'were excited and happy to come to lessons and full of chat around the school about what they were doing in class'.

In another school, Geography teachers credited the PTI Schools Programme with an encouragement to think more creatively about the homework that they were setting. They try to set homework that is engaging in itself and that would also allow collaboration at home with family members where appropriate. They reported that:

Year 7's were set a half term homework project to research the Burgess Model [of concentric zones of urban development]. Pupils were given examples of the model, and consequently produced both 2D and 3D versions which accompanied a written explanation of the model they had produced.

Producing these requires art and craft skills, including drawing and 3D modelling. Students 'enjoyed being able to link to real life places in their neighbourhood'. Teachers attributed their commitment to the importance of putting things in a real-life context to the direct influence of the PTI sessions they had attended.

Cross-curricular projects based on Art have the capacity to involve both creativity and political and historical understanding. The art project on

mental health has already been mentioned. Another school had an art project on the theme of political oppression. This theme was also explored through literature by another school, based on the novel *1984*.

Another Art project for Year 8s on the Pre-Raphaelites, directly inspired by a PTI Schools Programme weekend, combined historical, political, and creative elements. The teachers saw the project as a way of building on the students' existing interest in discussing politics and history. They proudly submitted examples of student work on this project as demonstrating stretch and challenge.

### *Examinations*

A number of schools reported that PTI involvement had led them to think more creatively about how to use the requirements of examinations to ensure greater benefit for the students.

One PTI Associate Programme school has contracted to a three-year project on increasing stretch and challenge in History. The department moved from A Level to the International Baccalaureate, which gives Year 12 students on the Global Politics course the opportunity to undertake cross-curricular research that requires them to demonstrate engagement with external agencies. Topics include the right to education, the 2015 EU migrant crisis, and the roles of the International Monetary Fund.

### **Conclusions**

Membership of the PTI Schools Programme is relatively onerous for busy heads of department. They are expected to attend residential and day events, and to complete a detailed annual review and planning exercise that includes specifying and reporting on often demanding objectives.

The benefits of membership appear to outweigh the costs, and heads of department clearly value the opportunities to engage as subject experts, both with other middle managers and with the academic experts who contribute to the Programme. The PTI ethos is supportive and challenging, and departments demonstrate, through the annual review process, the impact that membership has on the organization of teaching and learning and on the students, who are the intended ultimate beneficiaries.

Teacher self-reporting clearly has a significant measure of subjectivity, and heads of department naturally want to appear in the best light. That said, the annual reports demonstrate considerable honesty and willingness to learn from experience. The reports are not public documents, and the relative confidentiality enables a candid appraisal of successes and challenges.

In conclusion, this desk-based analysis of the available data provides convincing evidence that, across the country, students are benefiting from the stimulus provided to their teachers from participating in the PTI Schools Programme. Although examination issues drive much of the agenda of heads of department, the annual reports include considerable evidence that PTI membership provides the support required to engage in activities that

provide perspective on the processes of achieving exam successes, while also allowing space for curriculum development.

The Schools Programme is uniquely placed to offer, without motives of profit and on the basis of a humane and inclusive vision, exchanges of experience between schools. Crucially, the Programme provides a personalized and supportive framework. The Teacher Leaders, who have graduated from the Programme and who act as peer mentors, have a role perhaps analogous to a personal trainer. They encourage the teachers to set themselves and their departments challenging but achievable targets that, in turn, lead to a variety of exciting and innovative approaches to developing subject study. There is no threat or sanction for failure but, rather, a personal incentive to meet the commitments voluntarily entered into. On the contrary, teachers know that they can count on the support of their peers and of the whole institution that the PTI has become.

As one teacher wrote, the distinctive feature of the PTI is the 'ethos of building a love of the subject by all students both within the classroom and beyond the classroom'. It is indeed the ethos of belief in subject knowledge and the professionalism of teachers that drives all the activities of the PTI. While the focus of the PTI's Programme is the professional development of teachers, the effect, as reported by the participants, is an enhanced experience for their students.

