



**Canterbury
Christ Church
University**

**7th Global Entrepreneurship and Innovation Conference:
Collaboration for Growth, 15-16 July 2024; CCCU**

The challenges of leading and managing Polish Saturday Schools in the United Kingdom.

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Session outline

- Context and supplementary school landscape
- Polish supplementary schools
- Entrepreneurial ecosystem and related challenges
- Areas of research interest
- Initial exploration of the pilot case studies
- Reflections and next steps

Context

- Significant number of supplementary schools in the UK (**estimated 3000-5000 in England**) with no government support or formal infrastructure/governance
- **2500 supplementary schools** registered with National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRCSE)
- Some **governments actively support** such ecosystem i.e. Australia or fully funded by government i.e. Sweden (Karnemo and Segerhammar, 2017)

What supplementary schools bring:

- Large contribution and substantial complementary learning
- Heritage language development and bilingual upbringing support
- Language, history and culture learning
- Yet barely acknowledged by mainstream schools and the government for wider benefit of the public.

Supplementary schools landscape in England

Supplementary schools contribute to:

- **Increased** language competency
- **Intercultural** awareness and inclusion
- **Improved pupil outcome** in mainstream schools (better results for EAL pupils) (2718 pupils from NE of England results surveyed).
 - KS1 – 3 of 7 areas pupils outperform in reading, writing and maths
 - KS2 – 4 of 7 areas – pupils outperform
 - KS4 – GCSE results exceeded the LA results in all seven areas (A*-C)
- **Contributing** the closing of the attainment gap (BAME) [Supplementary schools research report | Paul Hamlyn Foundation \(phf.org.uk\)](#)
- **Preparing** pupils for GCSE and A-level exams
- Supporting pupils to maintain high level of heritage language (return to Poland)

Supplementary schools landscape in England

- Majority of supplementary schools support children from one ethnic community (60%)
- Approximately half the schools supported children from Asian (Indian, Bangladeshi or Pakistani) and Black African communities
- 38% supported children from Black African communities
- 22% supported communities from Europe
- Other communities served include Middle Eastern (18% of schools) and South-East Asian (14%, including Chinese, Vietnamese and Japanese).

Source: Maylor, U., Rose, A., Minty, S., Ross, A., Issa, T., & Kuyok, K. A. (2013). Exploring the impact of supplementary schools on Black and minority ethnic pupils' mainstream attainment. *British Educational Research Journal*, 39(1), 107–125.

Poland's accession to the EU in 2004

546 000 declared Polish speakers ([2011 Census - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#))

Post-Brexit data:

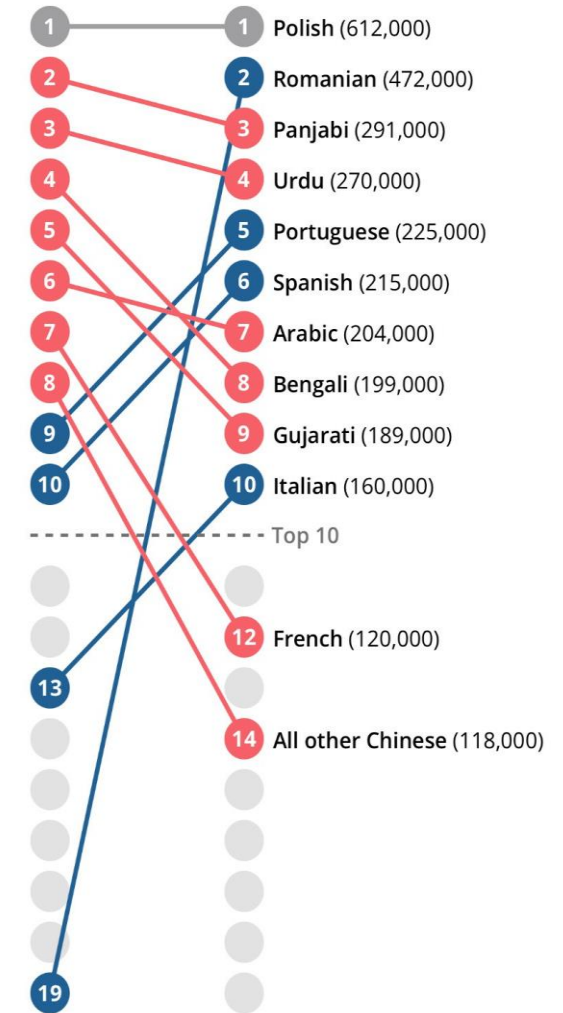
↑ **612 000** declared Polish speakers ([Census, 2021](#)) ([Language, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#))

↓ **145 659** children use Polish at home (School census, 2022¹)

↑6177 – GCSE exams– [Exam results statistics GCSE – June 2022 \(aqa.org.uk\)](#) - 28330 German, 284 Urdu

737– A –level exams [Exam results statistics A-level – June 2022 \(aqa.org.uk\)](#); 2015 German

1,159,740 Polish citizens applied for settlement status ([GOV, 2022](#))



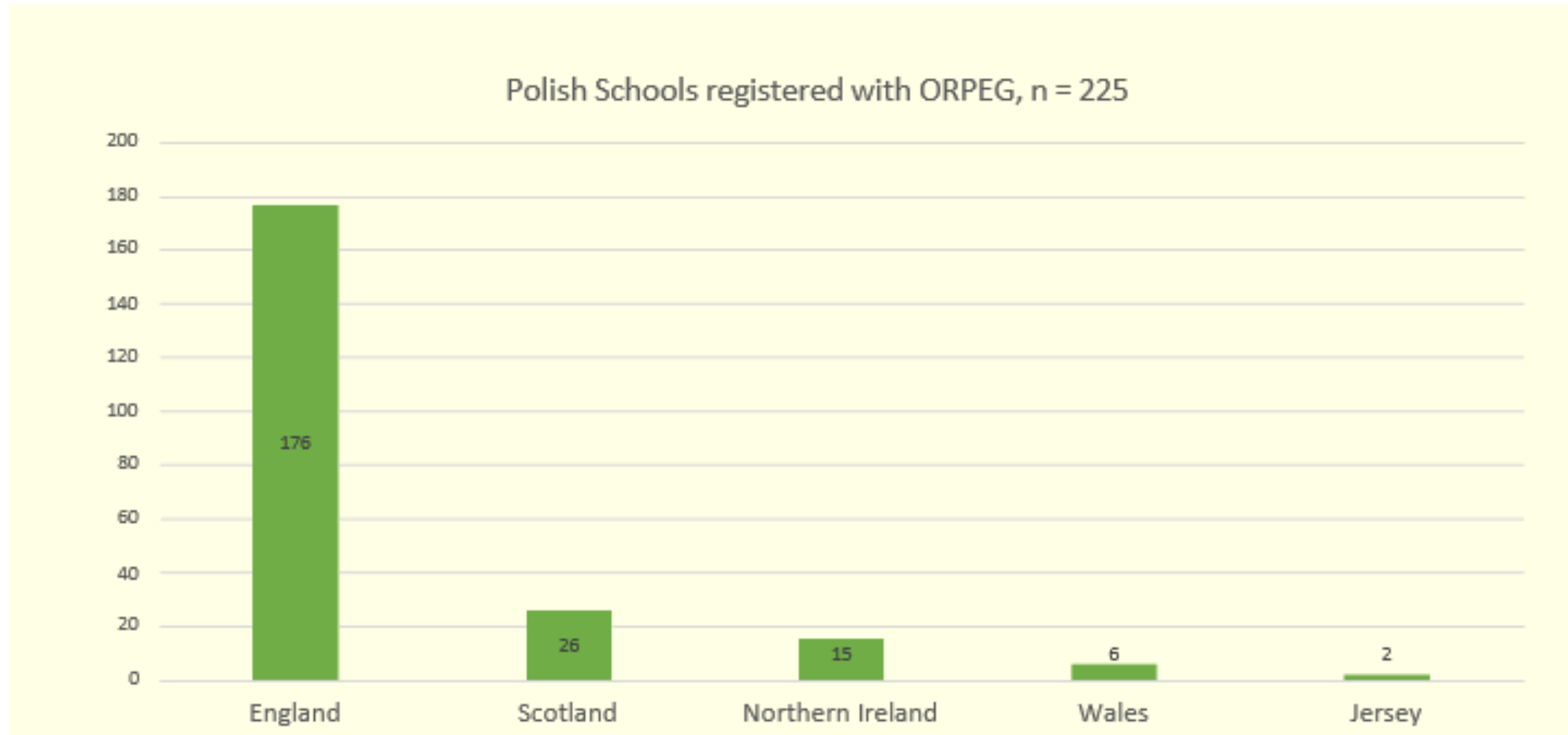
Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Polish supplementary schools in the UK

- Centre for Development of Polish Education Abroad [Baza danych szkół - Polska szkoła \(orpeg.pl\)](#)
 - 225 schools in the UK
- 22 599 students (66 schools did not declare)
- Language classes:
 - 3 - 4 hours weekly
 - up to 33 Saturdays
- Polish Educational Society – ca. **130** schools with almost **2 000** teachers and over **22 000** students ([PES, 2020](#))



Polish supplementary schools in the UK



Polish supplementary schools in the UK

All in **unregulated and unsupported** ecosystem

Types of governance

- Association
- Charitable organisation – CIO, registered charity
- Limited company (by shares, by guarantee)
- Community interest company

Variety of forms:

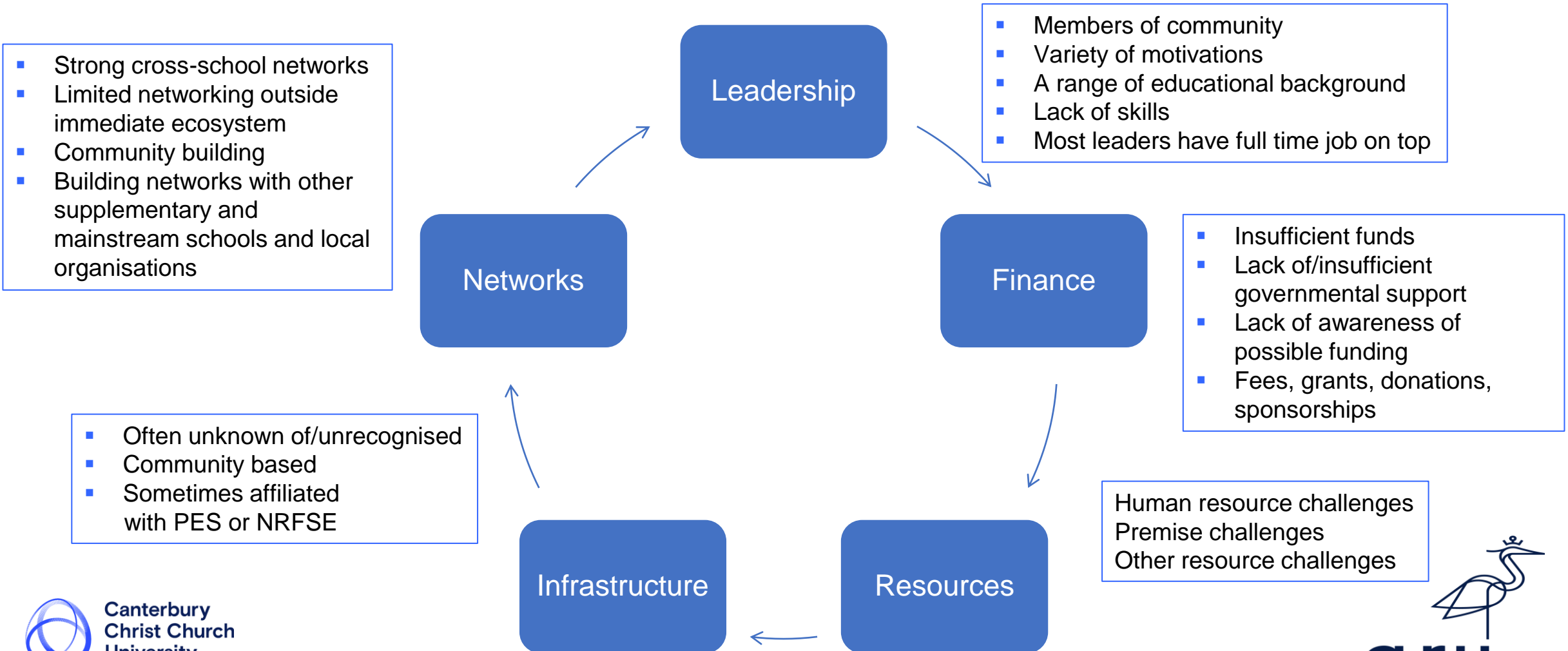
- Association committee
- Directors
- Board of Trustees
- Mixed/unstructured
- Self-employed ownership

Problems:

- Leadership lacks formal training
- Operating in isolation often from different culture
- Lack of funding/limited knowledge of existing support
- Lack of knowledge related to:
 - local governance requirements
 - appropriate legislation

Entrepreneurial ecosystem

Supplementary school leaders create value for themselves and the society at large



Initial exploration

- Based on own experience, knowledge of the sector and self- reflection/self-study
- Ethics approval in preparation
- Research methodology – mixed – interviews, survey and dedicated Facebook/whatsapp group

Two schools (pilot phase)

- Small (around 50 pupils, 9 members of staff), Community Interest Company (CIC); East Kent - **school 1**
- Large (over 500 pupils, 60 members of staff) Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO); one of the biggest and oldest in the UK, London, Ilford - **school 2**



Areas of research interest

Our research is **motivated by personal experiences** working within supplementary education for more than decade and a need to fill the **gap in research** carried out in this fascinating environment



We are interested in five areas:

Motivation for setting up/leading supplementary schools

Leadership and management of Polish supplementary schools

Social capital and networking

Forced innovation/adaptation to challenges

Opportunities for growth and professional development

Motivations

- Own children bilingual upbringing
- Passion for
- Wanti
ov

‘Why do I do this? I founded the school out of passion for bilingualism in general and out of love for my own children and the desire to provide them with the highest quality of teaching and development of the Polish language, learning about Polish history, traditions and culture. Out of passion to sharing and giving back and providing education to others and making the difference’

- Love for life-long learning – ‘As a headteacher, I feel a need to educate myself. I believe that it is important to gain knowledge, train yourself, and update the qualifications you have acquired’

atisfaction from developing others – ‘An important aspect in my work as a principal of the Polish school is sharing knowledge with the teaching staff and being a mentor’

opportunities to learn ins and outs of Polish education – ‘I became a school governor to learn best practice for my school’

opportunities to work closely with Polish government, Embassy and related agencies

Leadership and management

Structures:

- Sole proprietors
- Co-directors (i.e. CIC) and sometimes Board of Trustees/Parents
- Board of Trustees and sometimes appointed SLT (i.e. CIO, charity)
- Committee (i.e.) Association

Related education/experience:

- Business management/leadership education – rare
- Knowledge of governance - rare
- Experience of education management in Poland and/or UK – less rare

School 1 – 3 directors (CIC) 1 Headteacher and 1 Financial Director

- Director/Headteacher - business management education (MBA), experience of supplementary school management, post-graduate education leadership from Poland (one director); two other directors – 1 practical experience (financial side); 2nd no experience, learning from mentoring

School 2 - a committee of 4 and 10 coordinators; 60 teaching staff ; Headteacher and 4 assistant heads

- No formal business management qualification; leadership experience for some

Leadership role characteristics

'I can say that I am available to parents, teaching staff or the board seven days a week at any time, in short, 24/7. It is not unusual to answer very late calls or answer them early in the morning, when others are still asleep'.

'I respond to dozens of phone calls, hundreds of messages, and dozens of e-mails every month. I also meet in very urgent matters that require direct face-to-face intervention'

'I can only say that I exchanged correspondence with some schools over 40 times with only one student. If we multiply this by the number of 50 pupils taking GCSE and A-level exams, we get a picture of the scale of work related to this area'.

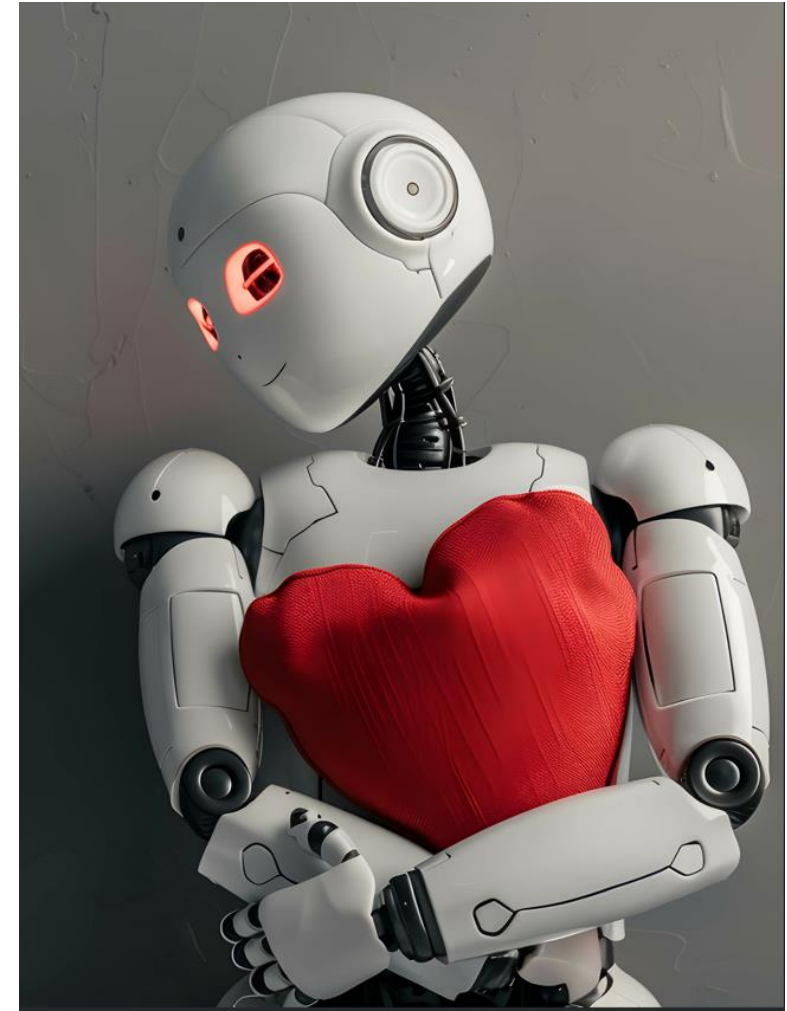
'As a director, like any director of a small business, do absolutely everything that is needed to make the school work, starting from strategic matters and ending with purchasing for the school and school events, and even cleaning up after classes'.



Leadership role characteristic

‘I would compare my role as a director to a multifunctional robot, but one that works with heart and soul. What must characterize a successful headmaster of the Polish Saturday School is, above all, a passion for cooperation with children, a passion for communication with other people’.

‘A candidate for the director of such specific educational institutions as Saturday schools should be comfortable to operate in difficult, crisis situations that require efficient action. There is a need to be a great strategist and a person who can on the spot and in an innovative way’.



Leadership role characteristics

- Many supplementary school leaders have **no formal leadership qualifications or related experience**, neither knowledge about **governance and related legislation** in the UK.
- We want to understand whether **intervention** such as masterclasses or short courses **would make an impact on school leadership** and its results on the **staff and student outcomes**.



COVID-19 challenge

- After initial panic and no support and guidance some school resumed through online teaching and some closed
- Teaching methods varied from sending materials via emails, through using Whatsapp and Facebook group to online sessions on Zoom, Teams or Google classroom
- Training – self training or prior knowledge and then training staff and parents
- Challenges around supplementary school recognition i.e. when mainstream schools were allowed to operate some of the Polish schools were not
- Setting Facebook and WhatsApp groups helped to get leadership together across the UK and mitigate these challenges
- Many Polish school leaders come together to work on best solutions and share their experiences
- Some schools did not survive due to lock down – too late to respond to crisis, drop in pupil numbers
- Innovative approaches and quick adaptation helped to overcome challenge successfully and develop everyone as result.

Reflections and next steps

- Supplementary education is an interesting and under-researched entrepreneurial ecosystem
- By reflecting on our experiences, we only touched the surface of this exciting area - further exploration through self-study is needed with mixed methods involving a group of Polish school leaders.
- Our plan is to carry out a systematic research and we would love colleagues to give us feedback and advice on possible direction and approaches.



thank you

