

To bridge the gap?

// I think that schools have to review their models of practice to ensure that fundraising and voluntary action becomes a role within the school. For lots of school's enrichment for all pupils is hard to achieve when budgets are so tight. //

// Schools should not have to rely on fundraised income. Schools should be adequately funded to provide everything that children need without relying on additional fund raising. A government that does not provide adequate funding is taking a risky and short-sighted view of the future. //

// Having volunteers in our school supports our philosophy of being at the heart of the community. We like to encourage support for the school and our volunteers bring a wealth of experience and talent to the school. Without their additional commitment, it would not be possible to achieve all that we wish to. //

Voluntary action in primary education

Alison Body • Kerry Holman • Eddy Hogg

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University for providing the funds to carry out this research and produce this practitioner report. Thank you to Professor Andrew Peterson for his support and guidance in carrying out this research. We are hugely grateful to all the primary schools in Kent which responded to the questionnaire and shared their views and experiences. Without them this research would not be possible. Finally we would like to extend specific thanks to the case study schools who gave that their time to help us gain specific insight into the how these voluntary activities can play out in practice.

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Foreword



This report is an example of our commitment in the Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University to carry out and report on research, that by providing better information about and probing analysis of an educational issue, can inform the decisions that are made to transform individual lives and society through education.

In England today, we appear to take it for granted that volunteering and fundraising should make a contribution to school education, and that its effects are beneficial. We know that just under one third of all those who have formally volunteered in some way in society at least once in the last 12 months have done so by giving unpaid help to schools. This equates to around 5 million volunteers across the country. Although there is a growing body of research about who volunteers and donates to children's education, far less is known about what this voluntary action consists of in practice and what impact it has on education and children's lives.

The context in which this voluntary action takes place includes some formidable challenges for schools. These include substantial growth in pupil numbers, curriculum and assessment changes, funding constraints and challenges in teacher recruitment and retention. As other public services experience ongoing cuts, the government is, increasingly, asking schools to redefine their core mission of educating children and to offer more early intervention support, providing for mental and physical wellbeing, preventing obesity and keeping children safe.

The research underpinning this report is vital because, in this demanding context, we cannot afford not to know what voluntary action is being undertaken and why, and what effect the well-intended tens of millions of hours of work a year actually have. In particular, the research investigates questions about how and why schools encourage particular forms of voluntary participation, the access that different kinds of schools have to this support, and, very significantly, whether or not volunteering contributes positively to the country's aspirations for overcoming social disadvantage. The report is challenging and thought-provoking: you will not be able to take voluntary action in schools for granted as straightforwardly beneficial when you read its conclusions.

Dr. John Moss,
Dean of the Faculty of Education,
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Executive summary

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Voluntary action has had a long history in the education of our children, bringing a wide range of positive benefits to schools, children, staff, the local community and volunteers alike. Voluntary action enables schools to draw upon a wide range of additional skills and resources, can strengthen a school community and engage children in philanthropic activity from an early age. Schools continuously highlight how much they value the commitment, passion, skills and expertise brought into their community by volunteers, and recognise the advantages of fundraising in terms of community engagement, fostering philanthropic activity in children and providing additional income for the school.

Unsurprisingly voluntary action in education tends to be viewed as a positive and good thing, and is increasingly encouraged within policy and practice. This research suggests that voluntary action in primary schools is indeed becoming progressively central to school activities, with many primary schools keenly seeking to strategically engage and grow this area of activity. Schools report purposefully fostering engagement of volunteers to help increase teacher capacity, support children through one-to-one activities and provide additional resources for both core and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, schools highlight increasing focus on their fundraising activities to help support depleting budgets and growing demands.

There is however very little research in the UK which explores voluntary action in education. The limited research that is available suggests significant disparities in how additional resources from voluntary action are dispersed within the UK context.¹ This is supported by research from across Europe and the United States.² Therefore this project sets out to be an exploratory study of this area to ascertain how actively schools engage with this voluntary action and what barriers they may face. The local authority of Kent was chosen as a focus for this study. Through analysis of financial data of over 600 primary schools, questionnaires completed by 114 of these and interviews with 4 case study schools this research presents initial findings and trends in activity under the separate headings of volunteering and philanthropic activity (fundraising).

MAIN FINDINGS

Volunteering

- Of all the schools engaged in the research, 100% engaged volunteers and 93% feel they form an important part of the school community.
- 73% of schools said they wished to increase the amount of volunteers they have and 52% would like to increase the number of hours current volunteers give.
- 58% of schools feel they struggle to attract volunteers. Schools in areas of higher economic deprivation were more likely to struggle than schools in less deprived areas.
- Parents are the most likely group of people to volunteer, followed by individuals from the local community and then grandparents or extended family of children at the school.
- Regular volunteers (those who volunteer at least once a month) are most likely to support in the classroom with educational activities, fundraising activities for the school and management and leadership. In contrast sporadic volunteers (those who volunteer less than once a month) are most likely to support events, trips and educational activities; fundraising activities for the school and general maintenance of the school.
- Taking school size into account, smaller schools with 99 children or less boasted on average 8 times more volunteer time per child in the school than larger schools with 500+ children.
- Schools in areas of lower deprivation are likely to have higher volunteer time/child ratios than schools in areas of higher deprivation.
- Schools identified four positive roles of volunteers within primary education; volunteers as additional support for teachers; volunteers as additional support for children; volunteers as links to the local community; and volunteers as a free resource.
- Schools identified three main barriers in terms of engaging volunteers; internal pressures in terms of managing, training and safeguarding issues; the skill and commitment of volunteers and; the struggle to ensure volunteers could keep up with ongoing policy and curriculum shifts.

¹ Morris, D. (2011) Building a big society: will charity's creeping reach generate a new paradigm for state schools?, *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 33 (3): 209-226.

² Reich, R. (2007) Philanthropy and its Uneasy Relation to Equality, in W. Damon and S. Verducci (Eds.) *Taking Philanthropy Seriously: Beyond Noble Intentions to Responsible Giving*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 26-49.

Executive summary continued

Philanthropic Activity

- 52% of the primary schools who engaged in this research state that they rely on fundraising to support school activities. Over half of these, 28% of the total sample, say that they rely on fundraising to support core educational activities.
- 66% of schools claim they are actively trying to increase their fundraising income, whilst 29% agree that fundraising forms a core part of their school business plan.
- Traditional fundraising activities, such as annual school fairs, non-school uniform days and competitions or raffles, still remain the most popular forms of fundraising activity. However, 40% of schools report asking parents for donations, over 30% seek support from local businesses and over 20% ask charitable trusts and the local community for donations. Over 10% of schools now have a facility for individuals to donate to them online.
- There is significant disparity in how much schools fundraise. The majority of schools raise between £5,000 and £10,000 per year, but totals range from no fundraised income at all to some schools securing over £100,000 per year.
- Academies on average raised double the amount of voluntary controlled and community schools, and were the most likely school 'type' to secure over £100,000.
- Though on average larger schools (those with 500+ children) received overall more than small schools (those with 99 children or less), when considered as amount of donated income per child, small schools secured on average £36 per child more per year than larger schools.
- Further disparities in distribution of philanthropic income existed based on free school meals (FSM). Schools which fall into the low FSM bracket secured three times more philanthropic income than those which fell into the high FSM bracket.
- 18% of schools collaborate formally with businesses and charities. These partnerships were seen as advantageous through provision of additional direct support for children (especially those considered to be more in need), direct provision of or support in attracting additional funds and provision of extra-curricular activities.
- Identified barriers to fundraising consisted of a lack of knowledge and awareness about fundraising; lack of confidence and the perception of a lack of skills; concerns about parents and communities willingness to give and; ideology concerning whether schools should fundraise to bolster income.

In conclusion we suggest that education is far from a level playing field when it comes to securing additional resources and that there are substantial differences in how voluntary action is distributed across areas of advantage versus those of disadvantage. The consequences of this uneven distribution mean that schools in wealthier, more affluent areas are more likely to have additional resources than those in poorer areas and we must therefore consider the impact this may have. Nevertheless, though a contributory factor to this uneven dispersal of voluntary action, socio-economic factors do not reveal the complete picture.

Other significant factors to take into account are school size, school type and the leadership ideology of the school. We therefore recommend further consideration of the role of voluntary action within primary education in light of the increasing pressure placed on schools to engage in this activity to counterbalance other pressures. As voluntary action becomes an increasing prominent feature in educational policy, this research raises the concern that instead of helping to disperse social inequalities, voluntary action may well contribute to social inequality amongst schools.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND TIPS

While we question the growing pressure on voluntary action in primary education, we also recognise the positive role it plays in primary education. In response to requests from schools we therefore suggest the following 'top tips', as summarised from schools experiences and wider research, in engaging in different forms of voluntary action.

Top tips from research and practice on successfully engaging volunteers

- Take a whole school approach. Though it is recommended one person be given the time and capacity to manage volunteers, the whole school team has to be on board to really maximise the benefits. Your governors, teachers and pupils are your best recruiters of volunteers so make sure they are aware of the value volunteers can add.
- Think about who is most likely to volunteer and actively seek to recruit these people. Most volunteers will volunteer because they have a vested or personal interest in the cause – often they will have a child at the school either currently or have had one in the past.
- Ask individuals in the right way – do not always wait for people to approach you, think about how you can proactively engage individuals and why they may want to help. Again, it can be anyone involved with the school that makes the ask.
- Be very clear about what your expectations are and clearly communicate these to your volunteers. Make sure you understand their expectations and support these as much as you can, but be clear when you cannot meet these expectations.
- Once you are clear about what you want volunteers to do, train them to do it. Ensure you provide ongoing support for them to do it and that volunteers know who to ask for help.
- Thank volunteers regularly and meaningfully. This does not need to be any more than a thank you, but could also include cards at Christmas, invitations to events or anything else you or your pupils can think of.

Top tips for entering into a collaboration

- Maximise the links you may already have in the school – speak to governors, staff and parents to see if there are any potential contacts they may have which would be beneficial to the school.
- Consider what success would look like. What do you want from the partnership, why are you seeking to go into a partnership and what do you consider the benefits to be for your school?
- Research local businesses and large employers in the area, or those who have strong links to the area. Identify key individuals and seek to build a relationship with them.
- Move the relationship beyond the transactional, the strongest partnerships work when both are committed to long term change.
- Consider what the partner may want out of the partnership and be very clear about your boundaries.
- Reflect on how the partnership may be viewed by other stakeholders. Would this be something that would be welcomed or could it cause any reputational damage?

Executive summary continued

Top tips to increase individual donated income

- Actively ask people for support, do not simply expect them to come to you with money.
- Take a holistic approach to fundraising by embedding it throughout school activities and throughout the year. People may not be able to give much in one go, but may be happy to give a little now and then.
- Invest time and resources in fundraising – it is not free and you will need to invest in order to generate a return.
- Think about what you want to raise money for and how best to appeal to individuals. When you ask for donations, tell people what their money will be spent on and the positive contribution their donation will make.
- Empower the school community and friends to fundraise on your behalf. Make sure they know why the school needs donations and how they can be made.
- Seize opportunities to raise your school causes' profile. The more people know why you need money, the more donations you will get.
- Make donating an easy process for people. Donation boxes at school and donation buttons on your website make donating straightforward.
- Thank all supporters promptly and sincerely. Donors who feel appreciated are far more likely to give to you again.
- Demonstrate and communicate impact of your fundraising efforts. If donations paid for a trip, tell donors how that trip went. If they paid for improvements to the school, invite donors to come and see them. Make donors feel part of something special.

Introduction

“Where state schools are concerned, however, community participation in service provision significantly pre-dates the Big Society. Ever since the influential Plowden report stressed the value of parental involvement in schools, interested parents have participated in parent teacher associations (PTAs) or their equivalents, in fundraising ventures or by helping as volunteers, either in the classroom or by becoming governors”³

(Morris, 2011)

Voluntary action has an important and recognised role in the education of our children. This report seeks to explore this role of voluntary action within modern education and in this report we unpack the complex array of happenings which take place under the broad heading of voluntary action. We identify three prominent areas of activity; the use of volunteers in schools; fundraising to support school activities and working in partnership with charities to co-deliver services and support children. We identify the broad trends which exist across these areas of work, the positive benefits of voluntary action in education, barriers faced by schools and how voluntary action can support wider challenges faced by primary school.

We begin by acknowledging the wide range of positive benefits voluntary activity can bring to schools, including drawing in additional resources, strengthening a school community and engaging children in philanthropic activity. Schools value the commitment, passion, skills and expertise brought into their community by volunteers, and recognise the advantages of additional funding.

Nevertheless, whilst we write this report, we must acknowledge the challenges currently facing education. Falling school spending per pupil,⁴ teacher recruitment and retention in crisis, chaos and confusion over exam and assessment systems has created a challenging time in education. The Department for Education (DfE) white paper in 2010 created a new policy

landscape in England; all schools are encouraged to become academies; new providers are promoted to set up 'free schools'; there is a reduction in guidance from central government and a funding premium to follow disadvantaged individuals. Such an approach has further shifted the responsibility for managing disadvantage from government onto head-teachers.

As schools attempt to journey through this rapidly changing terrain, voluntary action emerges as one of the mechanisms schools are turning to. Indeed, while voluntary action in schools has a long history, social and education policy which widely promotes the use of voluntary action to support schools and highlights the multiple benefits of it is a relatively new phenomena. However, we suggest that any level of reliance on voluntary action in primary education is problematic and contested. We identify significant disparities in the distribution of these additional resources across schools, by socio-economic factors, school size, school type and leadership ideology.

Such tensions raise significant questions regarding social equality in education and the wider use of volunteers and philanthropy in public services. In contrast however, increased freedom from government bounds also potentially creates a space within which some promising initiatives emerge, as highlighted by the case studies within this report.

³ Morris, D. (2011) Building a big society: will charity's creeping reach generate a new paradigm for state schools? *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 33 (3): 209-226.

⁴ Institute for Fiscal Studies (2015) School spending – IFS Briefing Note BN168, Nuffield Foundation.

Introduction continued

We do not attempt to provide the answers to these tensions in this report, instead we draw attention to the potential disparities, lessons learnt, and the views and experiences of primary schools in navigating this terrain. We recognise the potential for voluntary action to produce innovative and promising responses to tackling disadvantage and improving primary education, but seek to emphasise the increased barriers faced by some schools.

By doing this we hope to provide schools, practitioners and policy makers with a useful overview to consider and inform if, and how, they may move forwards with voluntary action.

STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

Chapter 1 of this report outlines the background and context for this research project. We summarise the limited amount of previous research from a UK context alongside wider international studies. Consistently studies suggest that voluntary action can produce significant benefits for primary schools, however there is considerable disparity in how these benefits are distributed.

Chapter 2 outlines the methodological approaches employed in this study, provides an overview of the geographical area of Kent used in this study and provides a breakdown of the schools which responded to the questionnaire.

Chapter 3 presents original research exploring the role volunteers play in our primary schools. Schools welcome and seek to actively engage volunteers in their work recognising a multitude of benefits including increased capacity, support for more vulnerable children, increasing community engagement and providing a wider range of skills and interests to support extra-curricular activities. This chapter highlights the breadth and amount of voluntary action which takes place in primary education, and draws upon the barriers schools face, and disparities between those schools which attract a lot of support versus those which attract less. This chapter includes examples from schools and the case study of St Peter's Primary School in Broadstairs, who have been recognised for the strength of their volunteer programme. This chapter concludes with top tips from research and practice for those schools wishing to pursue exploration of this area of activity.

Chapter 4 presents original research exploring the role and level of philanthropic support within primary schools. This chapter presents the wide range of fundraising mechanisms employed by schools including traditional forms such as school fairs and events, less traditional mechanisms such as actively asking parents and local community members for donations and newer forms of activities as encouraged by current public policy of collaborations with charities and philanthropic businesses. The chapter highlights the disparities in giving across schools and the barriers schools face in engaging in this activity including lack of confidence and skills, as well as significant ideological concerns. Byron Primary School, Gillingham, provides an innovative case study highlighting the positive impact that collaborative working can bring. This chapter concludes with top tips from research and practice for those schools wishing to pursue exploration of this area of activity.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter summarising the report and suggesting implications for policy and practice. These draw upon the central issue highlighted in this report, the tension between the positive benefits voluntary action can bring to education versus the disparities in a schools ability to engage or attract this activity based on a variety of barriers.

Chapter 1:

Background and context

Voluntary action has a long and established role in the education in the UK.⁵ A variety of policy initiatives – such as Big Society, localism – have placed voluntary action on the political agenda, alongside the ongoing reforms to the UK education policy. Driven by a neoliberal ideology,⁶ UK education policy has undergone a series of sweeping changes and disjointed reforms⁷ producing a particular version of a ‘good school’ which rewards children who perform well whilst potentially excluding those who do not.

This underlying ideology of public policy in England in recent years supports the notion that children will attain greater achievements if public schools face more competition and have greater autonomy.⁸ The DFE white paper in 2010 helped create this new policy landscape, with the encouragement for all schools to become academies; new providers expected to set up free schools; reduction in guidance from central government and funding premium to follow disadvantaged individuals. This approach shifted responsibility for ‘closing the gap’ between advantaged and disadvantaged children away from central government onto local schools.

The continued corporatisation and commodification of UK schools has attracted much criticism and debate as concerns about growing inequalities within the system increase. Research⁹ highlights the significant disadvantages that schools in areas of economic deprivation face in comparison to their counterparts in wealthier areas. There is a need to contextualise funding mechanisms to support these schools. Head-teachers report feeling constrained by reducing budgets and feel they struggle to provide a transformative educational experience. Resource distribution amongst rich and poor schools is unequal and as result education is not a level playing field.¹⁰

Though funding distribution from government seeks to evenly distribute resources and prioritise disadvantaged schools with schemes such as pupil premium, research suggests resources still differ significantly between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, largely due to the local context which they operate within. Furthermore, the funding premiums for disadvantaged pupils do not account for the complexity faced by schools in areas of disadvantage, including teacher retention, and increased risk of lack of parental engagement. The impact of cuts to other public and voluntary sector organisations place further pressure on these schools as support reduces in wider community support services⁷.

The Department for Education (DFE) encourages, through both literature and funding, voluntary action from the role of governors, teaching assistants, reading assistants, sport coaches and fundraisers; to engaging philanthropic support to fund additional activities and formal collaborations with voluntary sector partners. In March 2015, the DFE announced a £1m funding pot to help schools recruit ‘highly skilled, volunteers as governors’ and OFSTED promotes voluntary action as ‘good practice’, highlighting schools where governors are highly involved, volunteers actively support students learning, additional philanthropic funding is acquired and collaborative partnerships are formed with voluntary sector organisations to enhance children and young people’s learning opportunities.

Although primary education is firmly rooted within communities and is historically reliant on voluntary activity, voluntary action as a concept within primary education remains largely untouched by academics, especially within a UK context. Previous United States based research suggests the positive impact of voluntary action within education of children, highlighting the reduction of disruptive behaviour within the classroom and increasing teacher capacity.

5 Miller, S. et al (2009) A Randomised Controlled Trial Evaluation of Business in the Community’s Time to Read Pupil Mentoring Programme, Centre for Effective Education, School of Education, Queen’s University Belfast.

6 West, A. (2014) Academies in England and independent schools (fristående skolor) in Sweden: policy, privatisation, access and segregation, Research Papers in Education, Vol. 29, No. 3, 330–350.

7 Ball, S., Maguire, M., and Braun, A., (2012) How schools do policy: Policy enactments in secondary schools. London: Routledge.

8 Adonis, A. (2012) *Education, education, education: Reforming England’s schools* (London, Biteback).

9 Lupton, R. and Thrupp, M., (2013) Headteachers’ readings of and responses to disadvantaged contexts: evidence from English primary schools. British educational research journal, 39(4), pp. 769–788.

10 Poesen-Vandeputte, M. & Nicaise, I. (2015) Rich schools, poor schools. Hidden resource inequalities between primary schools. Educational Research Vol. 57, Iss. 1.

Chapter 1: Background and context continued

However, United States based research into the distribution of philanthropic support across schools highlights the increasing reliance of public policy on philanthropy and evidences increasing inequality between schools as a result.¹¹ Indeed in the USA, many schools or districts have professional fundraising functions which raise funds to support the school or schools. It is up to the school or district to decide whether these philanthropic donations can be spent on core academic activities or whether they can only be spent on extracurricular activities. Either way, this gives donors leverage over what the school is offering – if they do not like what the money is spent on, they can simply stop donating. The research also evidences that, parents and others who donate to schools do so because they want to do the best by their children and to support local public services. However, other research argues that there are clear consequences of the uneven distribution of philanthropic funding among different schools and districts. Schools and districts in more wealthy areas can raise substantially more than poorer areas. The result of this is that schools in more socio-economically advantaged areas will have more per head to spend on their pupils than schools in less socio-economically advantaged areas.¹²

The role of volunteers within a school is recognised as a positive feature which can aid development of both volunteers and the children they seek to support. Volunteers within school are most commonly parents of children attending the school. Research argues that school age children draw their parents into the wider communities in which they are embedded. Parents will commonly have a vested interest in both the school and the local community and thus schools will ask them to volunteer. For example, parents are more than twice as likely to volunteer for education and youth-oriented organisations as people with no children.¹³ Parents being involved in schools has a strong positive effect on pupil achievement. However, parents seem to reduce their effort when schools have increased resources, suggesting that school resources may ‘crowd out’ parental effort.¹⁴

Voluntary action therefore has a number of areas, including volunteering, philanthropic support and school partnerships with charities. School-community partnerships can be defined as ‘the connections between schools and community individuals, organizations, and businesses that are forged to promote students’ social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development’.¹⁵ In the UK, since the election of the Labour government in 1997 the private sector has played an increasing role in the education system in England, including provision of core educational services and policy. The New Labour government regarded schools attracting sponsorship from businesses, religious organisations and other sources as, ‘achieving, in addition to a financial contribution to the school budget, desired innovations in management and leadership and in pedagogy, together with fostering, in the case of business sponsorship, a business-friendly school ethos, exemplified by the choice of a business and enterprise specialism’.¹⁶ The focus on partnerships with businesses here are clear. As for why businesses get involved, they may have a number of motivations including philanthropy, demonstrating corporate social responsibility or a desire to shape the future workforce in one area or more broadly. Nevertheless, the Conservatives ‘Big Society’ agenda encouraged state schools to further engage businesses and also work more with charities. However, this engagement has been mainly at the leadership level, with academies and free schools often partnering with independent (and thus charitable, in legal terms) schools.

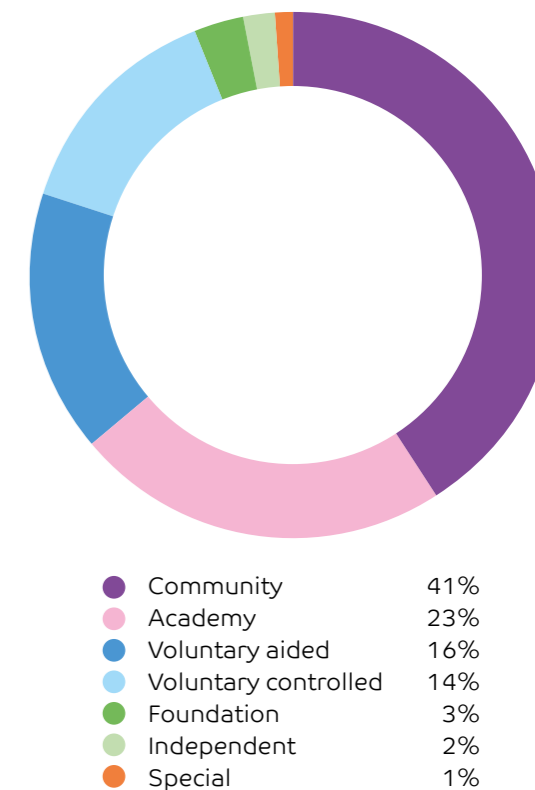
Chapter 2: Methodology

This research sought to explore the following research question: Does voluntary action support social equality within primary schools? To explore this concept of volunteering and philanthropic activity in primary schools, we therefore looked at a range of data from a variety of sources to gain both breadth and depth of understanding. Adopting a mixed methods approach, the findings draw upon data from the following primary and secondary sources which were quantitative and qualitative in nature:

- The financial data for 2013/14 from over 600 primary schools in the Kent County Council area (all of Kent except Medway, which is a unitary authority) was used to explore any potential disparities in the recorded donated income for primary schools in Kent. With this data, we were able also to consider free school meal allocations, to ascertain whether or not disparities could be linked to social inequality data, such as the index of deprivation data. This provided us with purely quantifiable data to analyse.
- Questionnaires were sent to all schools in Kent via email, for the attention of the leadership team or head teacher. The questionnaire explored three key areas of activity relevant to the research:
 - The role of volunteers within the school
 - Philanthropic activity, and how schools raise funds to contribute to children’s learning and development
 - Relationships between schools and other organisations which support school activity.

Questionnaires provided quantitative data, and offered the opportunity to include qualitative comments from schools. This helped to bring numerical data to life, and allowed schools the chance to share their voices about volunteering and fundraising in a powerful way. 19% of all schools responded which was considered a good response rate. It is interesting to consider the types of schools which responded to the questionnaire. The chart opposite shows the breakdown of school responses by type.

Questionnaire responses by school type



11 Ingram M, et al (2007) The Role of Parents in High-Achieving Schools Serving Low-Income, At-Risk Populations, *Education and Urban Society* 39 (4) 479-497.

12 Reich, R. (2007) Philanthropy and its Uneasy Relation to Equality, in W. Damon and S. Verducci (Eds.) *Taking Philanthropy Seriously: Beyond Noble Intentions to Responsible Giving*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 26-49.

13 Musick, M. & Wilson, J. (2008) *Volunteers: A Social Profile*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

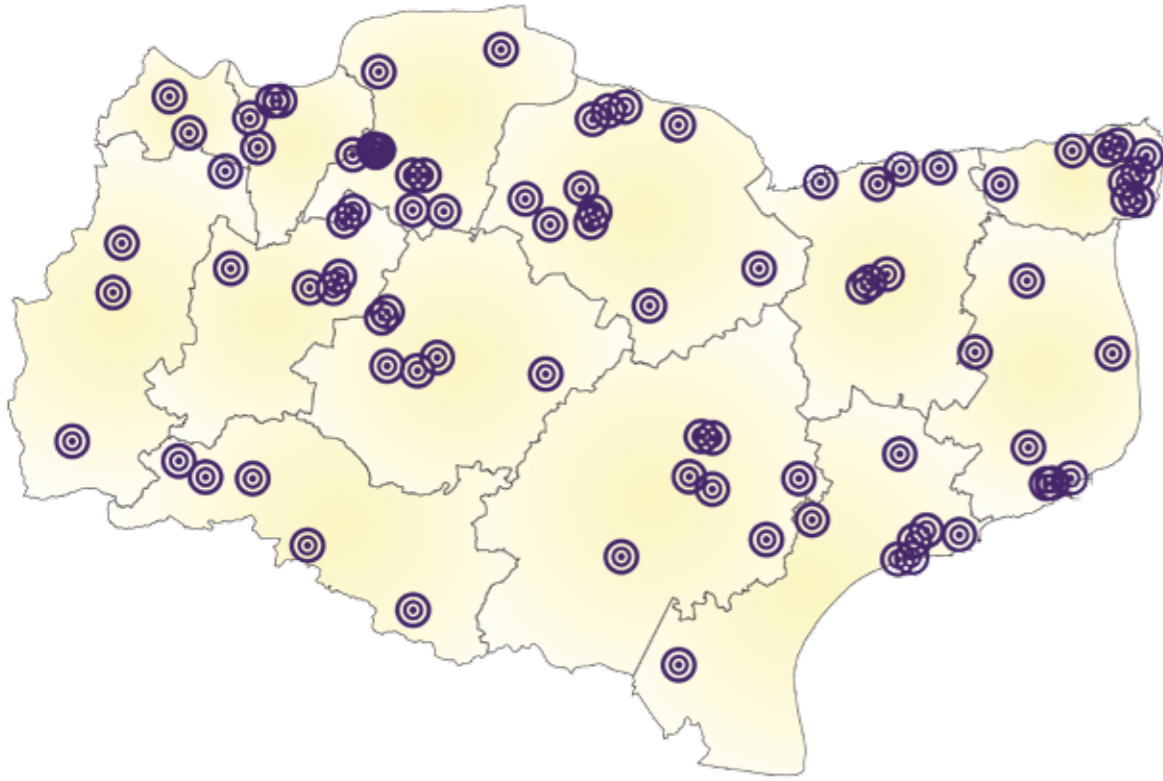
14 Houtenville, A. J., & Conway, K. S. (2008). Parental effort, school resources, and student achievement. *Journal of Human resources*, 43(2), 437-453.

15 Sanders, M. (2001) The Role of ‘Community’ in Comprehensive School, Family, and Community Partnership Programs, *The Elementary School Journal*, 102 (1): 19-34.

16 Hatcher, R. (2006) Privatization and sponsorship: the re-agenting of the school system in England, *Journal of Education Policy*, 21 (5): 599-619.

Chapter 2: Methodology continued

Location of schools who responded to the questionnaire



In total 114 schools responded to the questionnaire. Their locations are shown in the map above, showing a fairly even geographical spread across the county, with clusters evident in more built up areas.

- Case study schools were identified where particularly high levels of activity were taking place. Of course, each primary school has its own story to share around fundraising and volunteering, some of which are shared within this report. With research aims in mind, interviews were conducted at selected schools with members of the senior leadership teams, parents, teaching staff and administration staff as well as volunteers. These interviews have been developed into case studies, designed to give insight to areas of specific activity relating to volunteering and fundraising in primary schools.

Each of these methods provided a unique insight into the value of volunteers and fundraising within Kent primary schools. Individually, each method gave detailed data which could be used as a standalone data source. When combined however, the data set became a rich and highly valuable collection of varied information, which has provided the project with many fascinating avenues of exploration.

Chapter 3: Volunteering

Volunteers play an important role in primary education. In this study, 100% of schools engaged in the research involve volunteers in their work. They are valued by schools and seen as an important and central component within the school workforce – 93% of the schools said volunteers form an important part of their school community. Indeed, 73% of the schools reported that they would like to increase the number of volunteers they have, and 52% stated that they would also like to increase the number of hours their current volunteers give.

Just over 30% of schools identified staff as volunteers, doing activities which were outside of their working hours and contractual obligations. Furthermore, 25% of schools engaged family and friends of staff as volunteers. There was a much smaller proportion of schools who engaged with parents who had formerly had children at the school, suggesting that once a child moves on from a school so does the parents commitment as a volunteer to that school.

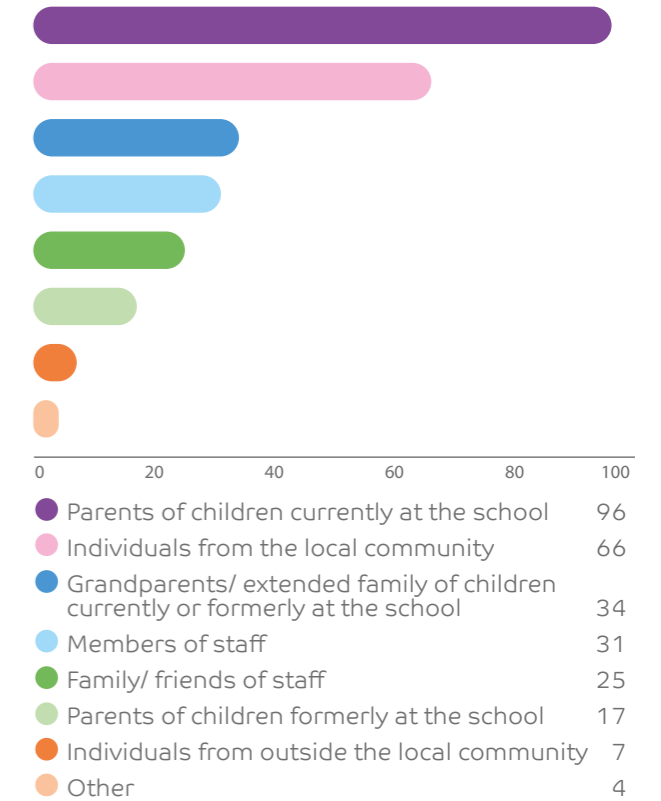
“Volunteers help to develop a sense of community beyond the school gates”

“Volunteers bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience which enriches the lives of our students”

“Volunteers bring a wealth of experience and talent to the school”

However, attracting volunteers is more complex, with only 42% of schools finding it easy to draw in volunteers, leaving 58% of schools struggling to attract to volunteer amount support they would ideally like. Schools in areas of higher economic deprivation were more likely to report struggling to engage volunteers.

Who volunteers? (%)



WHO VOLUNTEERS?

Research shows¹⁷ that over five million individuals are involved in voluntary activity within schools in the UK. The table opposite shows which groups of people schools, from our respondents, are most likely to engage in volunteering. Unsurprisingly the schools report parents of children currently at the school as the most likely group to volunteer, with 96% of schools of engaging this group of volunteers. Almost two thirds of schools report engaging the individuals from the local community, whilst approximately one third of schools engage grandparents and extended family of current pupils. Members of staff also make up an interesting group of potential volunteers.

¹⁷ NCVO 2016 Almanac <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac16/volunteer-activities-2/>

Chapter 3: Volunteering continued

WHAT DO VOLUNTEERS DO?

Volunteers engage in a wide range of activities to support primary schools, from educational provision to general maintenance of the school. Furthermore, different categories of activities attract different types of volunteers, with some volunteers giving time on a regular basis (once a month or more) and others supporting the school more sporadically with specific tasks or activities.

Regular volunteers in the school, that is those who volunteered at least once a month, were distributed across a range of activities within the school. The vast majority of schools (96%), reported having voluntary support in the classroom with educational activities, whilst just under 5% reported having regular voluntary support with general maintenance of the premises. Interestingly, considering the role of school governors, just over two thirds of school reported regular support around management and leadership; whereas 17% reported sporadic support (i.e. less than once a month) support with leadership and management.

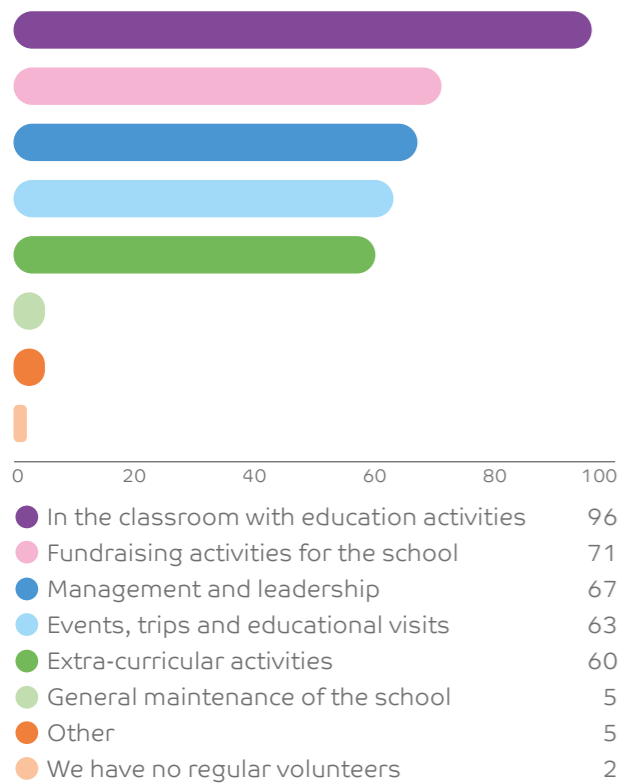
In contrast sporadic volunteers, perhaps unsurprisingly, were more likely to support with fundraising activities for the school; events, trips and educational visits and general maintenance of the school. These are all activities which may occur once a term or annually and are therefore more attractive to those only able or willing to make a smaller and potentially less formal commitment.

HOW MUCH TIME DO VOLUNTEERS GIVE?

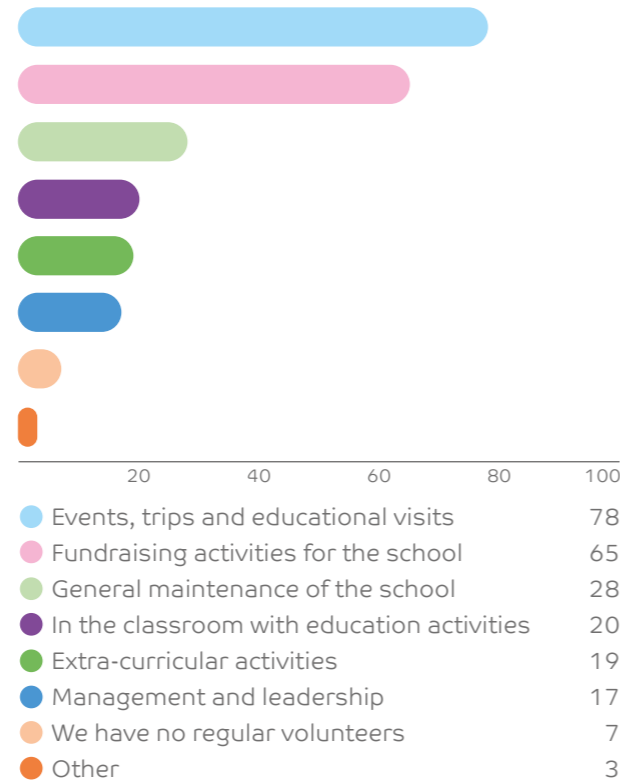
There is considerable disparity across schools in terms of how much volunteering time is given to schools. The data suggests that some schools receive up to 227 hours of voluntary contribution each week, whereas other schools at the lower end of the scale receive just three hours of voluntary support each week.

In terms of analysis it is useful to understand this in terms of the school size and therefore we have converted this into a figure which equates to the amount of volunteer time per child within

Percentage of schools with regular volunteers by category (%)



Percentage of schools with sporadic volunteers by activity (%)

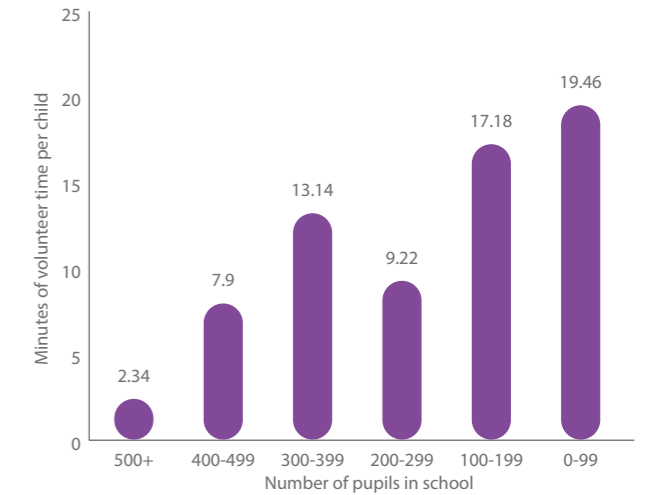


the school per week. In terms of size of school, this equated to approximately 72 minutes of additional support per pupil at one school, versus less than a minute of voluntary support for several others. On average, schools reported approximately 12.5 minutes of volunteer time per child per week in the school. It should be noted that not all this voluntary support would be directly working with children, rather this is the amount of volunteer time dedicated to the school overall. Interestingly there was little correlation between size of school and the amount of volunteer support, with some smaller schools often attracting as much, if not more, volunteer time in total than larger schools.

However, the larger the school the further this resource has to be dispersed. Therefore, the smaller the school, on average, the higher the ratio of volunteer to each individual child is.

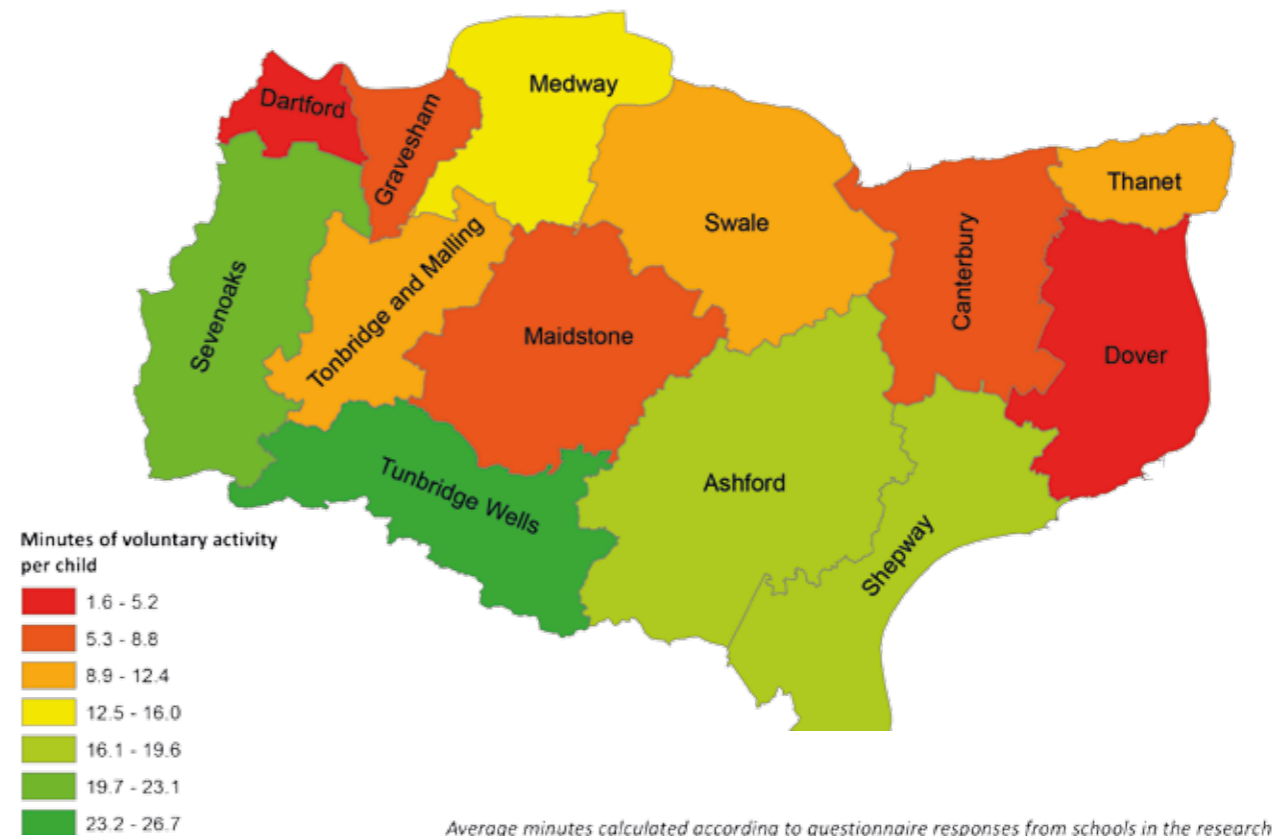
Furthermore, when considering the amount of volunteer support a school receives based on the size of the school, schools in areas of lower deprivation are likely to have a higher volunteer/child ratio than those in higher areas of deprivation. This map below shows the average

Minutes of volunteer support, per child, per week



minutes of volunteering time weekly, per child in each of the Kent districts. A large difference can be noted between districts. Primary schools in Dartford and Dover report the lowest amount of volunteering time per child on average, with no more than 5 minutes per child a week. Primary

Average minutes of voluntary activity per child per district



Average minutes calculated according to questionnaire responses from schools in the research

Chapter 3: Volunteering continued

schools within the district of Tunbridge Wells report the highest amount of volunteering time per child, averaging at 26.7 minutes per week. Dover and Dartford are two of the districts in Kent with the highest levels of deprivation, while Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells are two of the districts with the lowest levels of deprivation. This suggests a link not only between volunteered hours and size of school, but also between volunteered hours and deprivation.

STRENGTHS

Schools broadly identified four strengths to using volunteers:

Volunteers as support for teachers

The leading benefit identified by primary schools was the strength of volunteers as beneficial in allowing teachers more capacity to deliver their 'core' job. This viewed volunteers as providing a practical resource for the school. Broadly this view fell in to two categories. The first was schools which identified volunteers as reducing pressure on teachers by supporting educational activities within the classroom, such as art based activities and group work. The second was schools which identified volunteers as reducing pressure on teachers by delivering one to one support to children around a particular need, for example listening to reading or supporting writing development. Schools also recognised volunteers as having an array of different professional skills and expertise and welcomed the use of this to supplement and support teaching.

"They free up teaching staff to do their core jobs"

"Support for reading which staff do not have the time to provide"

"Improves the ratio of adult to child so that teachers can get on with teaching the curriculum"

Volunteers as role models and support for children:

The second largest benefit identified by schools, was the role of volunteers as role models and support for children. Within this volunteers were perceived more in terms of providing emotional support for children. This was seen as particularly

important for those children who were perceived as not having adequate support within their home environment. Schools saw this additional capacity as an opportunity to provide supplementary one on one support for more vulnerable children and provide children with positive role models.

"If volunteers are professional, committed and have high expectations for themselves and the children, they provide children with excellent role models"

"The use of volunteers gives children additional opportunities to practise skills that they find difficult or challenging"

"They bring additional skills and support to those children who don't get support at home"

Volunteers as links to the wider community:

The third strength that schools identified was volunteers as links to the wider community. This strength identified volunteers as both having an internal purpose and an external purpose in terms 'reaching out' to the local community. This benefit was seen as two fold; firstly, as strengthening the role of the school as a community hub, and secondly as acting as a conduit to attract more local support into the school.

"There is an increased community awareness of what happens at the school"

"It adds to the family and community feel in our school which with our school values of caring for one another"

"The school is the hub of the community, by using volunteers we strengthen these links"

Volunteers as 'free' resource:

The fourth and final benefit identified by the schools was the view of volunteers as free and additional resource for schools. This framing of volunteers as a financial benefit recognised the wider contribution volunteers make to the school community in light of the strain on school budgets. Volunteers are seen as a mechanism within which to increase capacity and resources at a minimal cost to the school. This of course links to all of the previous strengths identified, but in this case schools were very direct about volunteers having a financial benefit to the school.

"Cost – being able to deliver additional support activities without is putting strain on already stretched school budgets"

"They are a FREE resource and bring a wealth of skills to the school"

"It gives us the ability to organise and provide additional special events and fundraising at minimal cost"

BARRIERS AND CONCERNS

Schools identified a number of barriers in engaging volunteers. These exist on three levels:

Internal to the school

Schools identified a number of practical issues in terms of engaging volunteers within primary schools. There were significant difficulties expressed around finding the time to engage, train, coordinate and manage volunteers within the school. More often than not, volunteer recruitment and management appeared to be added on a member of staff's role who struggled to fit this activity into their day to day work. Schools commented on the amount of training and support required by some volunteers and whether or not on a cost benefit analysis it was worth engaging some volunteers. Furthermore, the bureaucratic aspects such as applying for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks was viewed as costly and time consuming.

Skills and commitment of volunteers

Schools recognised a number of issues around engaging the 'right type' of volunteer. Individuals' time constraints were seen as a limiting factor, alongside their ability to make regular commitments. Schools highlighted a desire for volunteers who would provide support at a regular time each week and develop relationships with specific staff and children. Where this was not the case, schools raised concerns about consistency of support. Schools acknowledge potential conflict of interests in parental motivations for volunteers and raised concerns around confidentiality and accountability.

"Good intentions are not enough in times of heightened accountability"

"Ensuring that the volunteers are correctly skilled for the role that we wish them to take"

"Many need some form of training to do what we want them to well enough to support the learning of the children"

"With challenging children there is a need for risk assessing the health and safety of volunteers"

Wider social issues, policy shifts and curriculum changes

Schools acknowledged a number of wider societal shifts and policy changes which contributed to the creation of barriers in engaging volunteers. Schools, particularly those in perceived areas of disadvantage, felt they faced particular challenges in engaging from cohorts of parents with 'their own negative experiences of school'. Furthermore, schools spoke of a perceived general apathy by parents towards the education of their children and general unwillingness to engage. Societal shifts in terms of increases in workloads for families and lack of available time to volunteer were also recognised. Furthermore, shifts in social policy concerning the school curriculum and education was considered to pose significant barriers in terms of volunteers training needs and skill development.

"Volunteers cannot keep up with curriculum changes"

"It is getting harder and harder to get parents to offer their help – even those that we know do not work or are able to help don't come forwards when we appeal"

"Some hard to reach parents are scared of school"

"We have success engaging retired people, mums and non-working people in the day. We struggle to engage working men"

Case study: St Peters Primary School, Broadstairs

St Peters Primary School in Broadstairs, is a larger than average school with just under 400 children. The school actively engages volunteers in their everyday work and has approximately 50 regular volunteers who each frequently give up to twenty hours of volunteering time per week.

Caroline da Costa, Volunteer Coordinator for the school, has led on developing the strategic approach to engaging volunteers in the school.

“Volunteers can feel undervalued in schools, and it happened here. For example volunteers would turn up to help and maybe the timetable had changed or someone had forgotten they were coming in, and then they would be sent away again or asked to do something they really hadn’t signed up for. We thought we have to stop this. And we thought hang on a minute, lets dig deeper into this, can we take a more sensible approach and we decided to do that, we decided we have to take a whole school approach”

Caroline da Costa

In 2008, the school decided to adopt a strategic approach to supporting volunteers. They formed a working party to assess the role and support of volunteers in the school.

“Our first port of call was to ask the volunteers what did they value about volunteering with us, what did they enjoy about it, what were the difficulties and what did they want out of it”

Caroline da Costa

Together with volunteers, staff and governors, they developed a full ‘supporting volunteers’ plan and Caroline was appointed as the person to coordinate this plan. The working party developed a series of policies and practices including formal application and induction processes, training plans, volunteering policies and mechanisms to thank and value volunteers. The focus of this process was to ensure that volunteers felt valued and that the school invested in them, with a strong emphasis on the volunteers feeling part of the school community.

In January 2010, St Peters were the first primary school in the country to be awarded the ‘Investing in Volunteers’ standard. However, the school did not feel their work had stopped there, they continued to grow and invest in volunteers developing training packages to support specific volunteers in particular roles such as phonics.

Furthermore, the process sought to develop a whole school approach. Staff received training about the volunteer policy and governors were involved in designing and supporting the policy development. The approach clearly defined the role of volunteers, the responsibilities of volunteers and the role and responsibilities that St Peters had to support volunteers.

Caroline highlights the importance of the whole school approach, ‘though I coordinate the volunteers it is important it is not just one person’s job to think about volunteers. Within a year of starting the approach we managed to really embed it within school culture. Now any new teachers are inducted so they understand the volunteer process, all classes have dedicated volunteer support that work with them.’



Volunteer Co-ordinator Caroline da Costa and Volunteer Jan Holden from St Peter-in-Thamet CE Junior School receiving the KM Kent Volunteers of the Year Award in 2015

“The inclusive, open and welcoming approach that everyone at St Peter’s has towards the volunteers was evident from many sources”

Investing in Volunteers Assessor, 2012

Volunteers are actively recruited from a variety of sources; parents of children attending the school, grandparents, the local universities, colleges and schools, people from the local community, friends or family of staff, working with charitable organisations such as Beanstalk and the Dame Kelly Holme Trust, and advertising on the local church and town notice boards.

Volunteers range from 15 to 85 years old and come from all walks of life, including students, members of the community and retired professionals. They contribute to a wide range of activities at the school including listening to children, helping with classroom activities, assisting clubs, storytelling, art and cooking, swimming, displays, costume making, events, fundraising and gardening.

In 2016 the Volunteer Team were awarded a Pearson Teaching Awards Certificate of Excellence. Alongside this external recognition, St Peter’s seek to award volunteers through a variety of mechanisms including celebration events, nominations for awards, gifts, volunteer celebration week and certificates of acknowledgement to name but a few.

“We cannot thank our volunteers enough, they are such an important and valued part of the school. It’s important they know that”

Caroline da Costa

Chapter 3: Volunteering continued

TOP TIPS FROM RESEARCH AND PRACTICE ON SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

- Take a whole school approach. Though it is recommended one person be given the time and capacity to manage volunteers, the whole school team has to be on board to really maximise the benefits. Your governors, teachers and pupils are your best recruiters of volunteers so make sure they are aware of the value volunteers can add.
- Think about who is most likely to volunteer and actively seek to recruit these people. Most volunteers will volunteer because they have a vested or personal interest in the cause – often they will have a child at the school either currently or have had one in the past.
- Ask individuals in the right way – do not always wait for people to approach you, think about how you can proactively engage individuals and why they may want to help. Again, it can be anyone involved with the school that makes ‘the ask’.
- Be very clear about what your expectations are and clearly communicate these to your volunteers. Make sure you understand their expectations and support these as much as you can, but be clear when you cannot meet these expectations.
- Once you are clear about what you want volunteers to do, train them to do it. Ensure you provide ongoing support for them to do it and that volunteers know who to ask for help.
- Thank volunteers regularly and meaningfully. This does not need to be any more than a thank you, but could also include cards at Christmas, invitations to events or anything else you or your pupils can think of.

Chapter 4: Philanthropic activity in schools

This section focuses on philanthropic activity within schools. By this we mean fundraising and donated income which is raised and used to directly contribute towards school activities and support for the school community. This activity also includes philanthropic partnerships and collaborations the school forms with third sector and corporate partners.

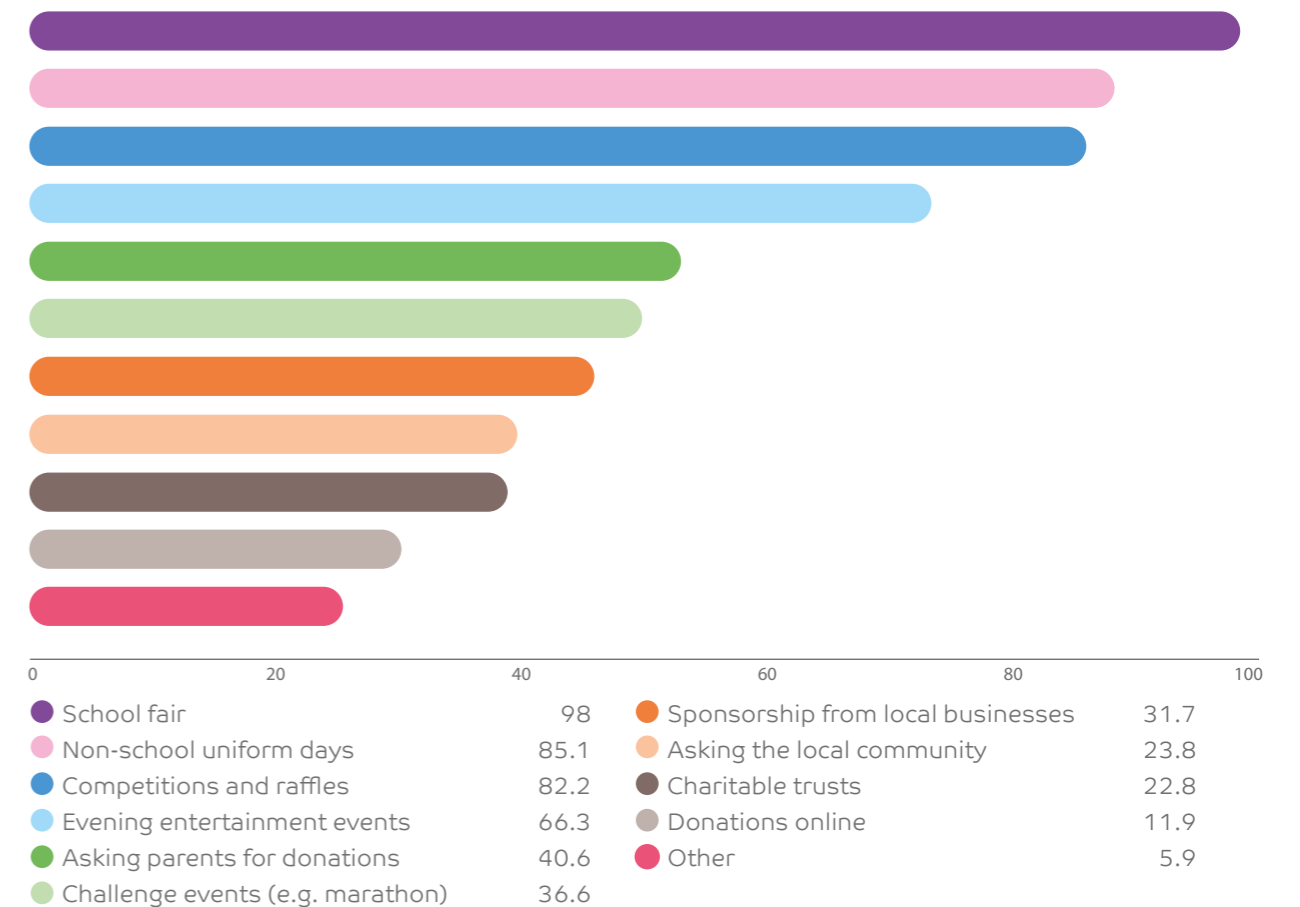
Unlike volunteering, schools approaches to fundraising were slightly more erratic in nature, however fundraising appears to be increasingly more central to schools activities. As one head-teacher commented, ‘unfortunately, in this financial climate, it is now necessary to fundraise in order to enhance provision for children’. However, less than one third of the participant schools (29%) agreed that a fundraising formed a core part of their school business plan. In contrast 66% of the schools said they were actively trying to increase their annual fundraising income. Furthermore 53% of schools said they relied of fundraising income to support school activities,

with 28% of schools claiming fundraised income was used to support core educational activities. The majority of schools used fundraising income to either wholly or additionally support extra-curricular activities within the school.

HOW DO PRIMARY SCHOOLS FUNDRAISE?

Primary schools report using a range of methods to raise funds, including traditional methods such as school fairs, raffles and non-uniform days. School fairs, non-school uniform days, competitions and raffles remain as the most popular fundraising choices for schools. Increasingly, more schools are relying on asking for donations directly from parents, the local community and businesses. Interestingly, over 10% of schools report having a mechanism for individuals to donate to their school online.

Percentage of schools engaging in fundraising activities (%)



Chapter 4: Philanthropic activity in schools continued

WHY SCHOOLS FUNDRAISE?

This research identifies that schools raise funds primarily to support the educational experiences of their children. However, schools recognised how their fundraising supports and benefits the local community in which they are situated. Schools also frequently acknowledged the power of good relationships with the whole community and use fundraising events as a way to foster such relationships.

“It teaches the children key skills about giving”

“It’s good for parental involvement”

“I would prefer our fundraising activities to be for charity, to raise awareness among children of the importance of supporting others”

“The school fundraising events can sometimes be time consuming however they foster good school-community relationships, in addition the money they make is a bonus”

“These events do bring the community together which is essential to developing many aspects of schools in deprived areas”

It is unsurprising that 77% of schools agreed that they fundraise to support extra-curricular activities (those outside of the core curriculum requirements) for the children in their school. More significantly, schools reported that in the current climate, fundraising is becoming increasingly important to support school activities, not limited to extra-curricular activity. 53% of schools agreed that they fundraise to broadly support the schools general and overall educational activities.

The research suggests that although many primary schools do not feel that fundraising should form a core part of a school business plan, in the current climate, it must. 66% of primary schools reported that they are actively trying to increase their annual fundraising income. Schools reported some powerful reasons for this, ranging from the need to support extra-curricular activity, to making up for stretched budgets.

We must also acknowledge however, that not all schools feel that fundraising is appropriate to support core educational activity. 45% of schools disagreed that fundraised monies support their core curriculum delivery, instead using funds to support the enhancement provision for children, or for additional activity.

The concept of fundraising in schools raised significant ideological contention between schools. Accepted as historical part of school life, school fairs, events and Parent Teacher Fundraising Association activities were considered to be appropriate and community engaging. However, many schools reflected on the growing necessity to seek to increase funds beyond these activities.

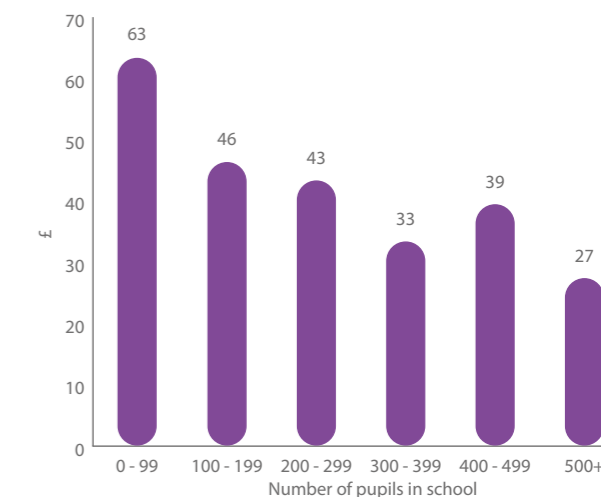
HOW MUCH DO SCHOOLS FUNDRAISE?

Schools fundraised income varies considerably and is related to a number of factors including school leadership, geographic location, the size of the school and even the type of school. Fundraised income includes all funding which has been donated to the school either through fundraising events and activities, gifts or philanthropic grants. To understand this data, we have looked at the financial income based on both the total amount of donated income and the amount of donated income per child in the school per year. In doing so we have uncovered a number of disparities in donated income. Donated income for primary schools in Kent ranged from nothing to over £100,000 in 2013/14. We now explore those figures in more detail.

When we look at the overall financial data for schools, foundation schools and academies tended to attract the largest amount of donated income, averaging around £16,000 per year. Whereas, voluntary controlled schools and community schools had lower amounts, attracting around £8,000 per year. Interestingly, academies appear to show the greatest range in fundraised income with some individual academies securing over £100,000 and more of donated income.

Furthermore, the size of the school has an impact on not just how much donated income is raised but also the amount of donated income per child. The data available suggested that donated income per child in a school ranged from £0 per child to £250 per child per annum. On average the larger the school, the more donated income they secured. Schools with 500 or more children raised just over £15,500 per year, whereas schools with less than 100 children raised on average just over £5,000 per year. However, when this is considered in terms of the amount fundraised per child in the school, smaller schools fare better, raising on average £36 per child more per year than the largest schools.

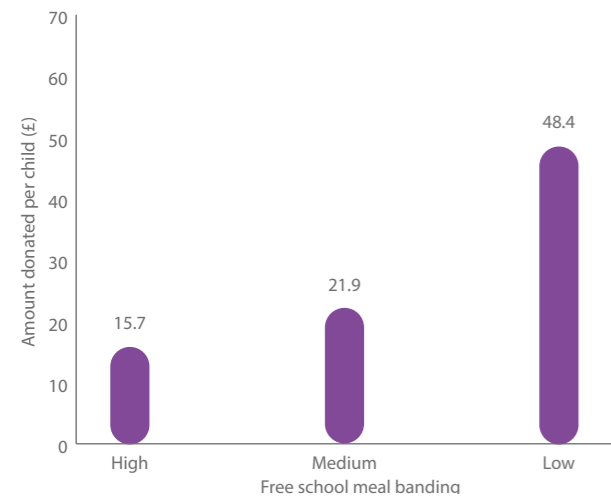
Average donated income per child per year



Chapter 4: Philanthropic activity in schools continued

So whilst we now know that the size of a school can affect the amount a school receives in donated income, there are other factors which impact on fundraised income. Looking at free school meal (FSM) data as an indication of economically disadvantaged children within a school, suggests some association between the social-economic position of families within schools and the amount fundraised income. On average schools which fell into the high FSM bracket (that is over 35% of the children are eligible for free school meals) achieved £3,591 of donated income, compared to schools in the medium FSM bracket (that is between 20% and 35% of the children eligible for free school meals) which had an average of £5,901 of donated income. Schools which fell into the low FSM bracket (under 20% of the children eligible for free school meals) achieved on average £11,208 of donated income yearly. These disparities are equally as stark when calculated as an average amount of donated income per child attending schools within each of these FSM brackets.

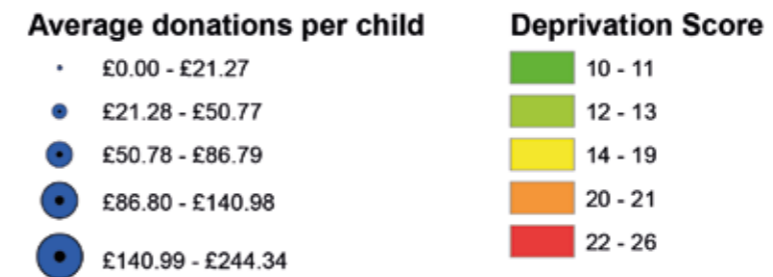
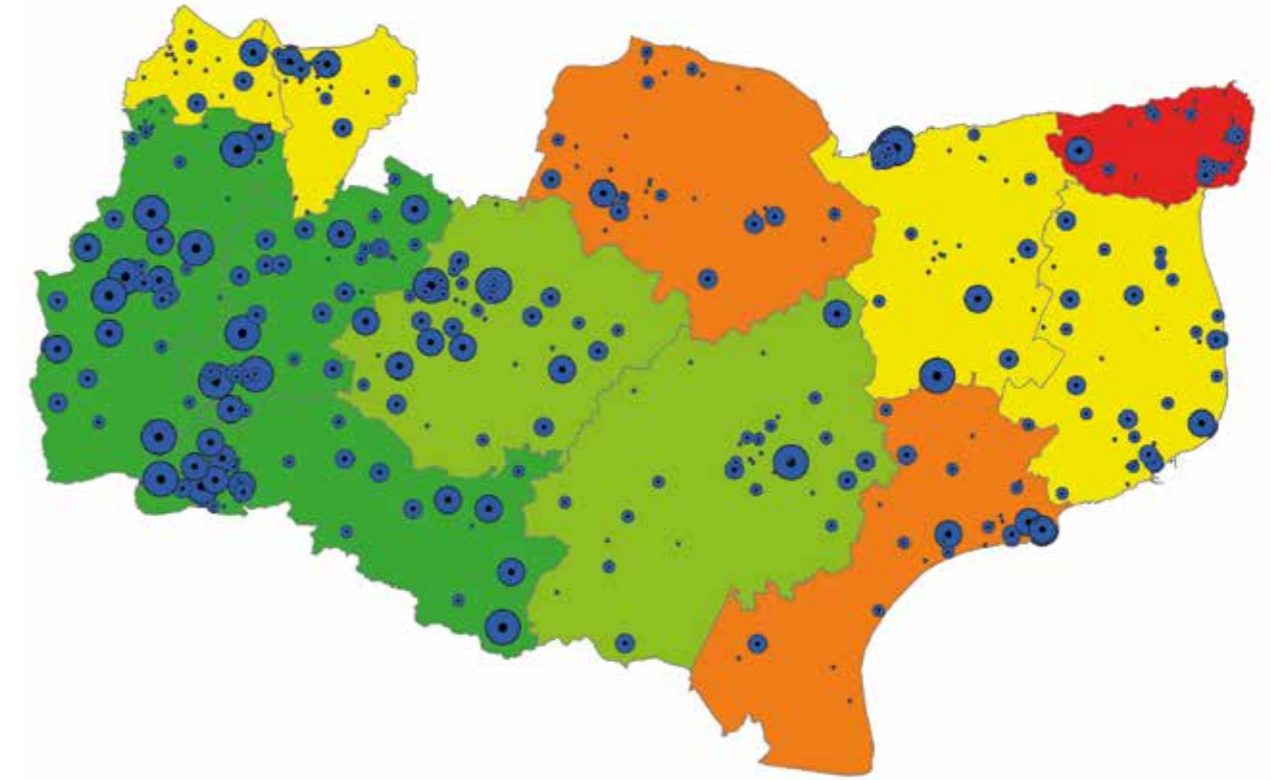
Average donated income per child per year, compared to free school meal banding



Disparities in donated income were apparent geographically across Kent as well. There is a dominant trend that suggests schools located in the more affluent areas in the west of the county are more likely to receive a higher amount of donated income per child than schools in the east. The map opposite shows the average amount of donated income generated per child in the last year, in each school. This is mapped over deprivation data, where the lowest scores indicate lower levels of deprivation.

We can see a broad trend here between deprivation and the amount of fundraised income per child. Larger donations per child have been recorded in the west of Kent, noticeably in the districts of Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and parts of Tonbridge and Malling. There are many variables which may account for this. Some schools reported that the economic environment in which they are situated plays a role in how much they can fundraise, with the demographics of the population also a powerful deciding factor for some. However, with this in mind, we must recognise that there are some schools in areas of higher economic deprivation that also raise significant funds per child. It is also unknown how these fundraised monies are spent. Although generally, schools in the west of Kent raise more income than those elsewhere, it cannot be assumed that they use it in a particular way.

Average donations per child in each primary school



Donations data as reported by financial data 2013/14. Deprivation scores calculated from Index of Deprivation data from 2012/13 (Department for Communities and Local Government)

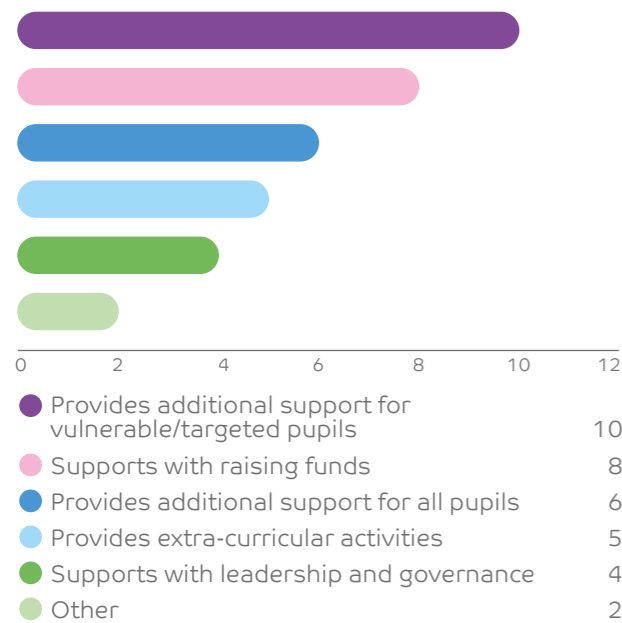
Chapter 4: Philanthropic activity in schools continued

SCHOOLS AND CHARITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

Relationships between schools, charities and philanthropic businesses can be beneficial not only for children within the school, but also the wider community and beyond. There are a variety of different relationships held by schools which can impact on both their philanthropic income and volunteers; these include corporate partners, individual philanthropists and third sector organisations.

The most common type of partnership existed between schools and charitable organisations. Of the participating schools, 21% reported having active partnerships with other charitable or voluntary sector organisations. Schools were asked how these partnerships primarily support them, to provide an insight into the types of partnerships which are apparent within the county. The table below shows a summary of the support that schools stated they receive from partnerships with charitable or voluntary sector organisations.

How do partnerships support schools? (Number of schools stating support)



Partnerships were viewed as advantageous for schools for the following reasons

Providing direct support for children

It is perhaps unsurprising that the most popular support given by charitable partnerships relates to providing support for vulnerable pupils. This corresponds with the information schools gave about how volunteers largely support classroom activity and children directly.

“They have provided 1:1 reading support for vulnerable children”

“This is a club which gives support, moral encouragement and fun to the children”

“The charitable organisation delivers assemblies”

Financial support

Schools were asked whether charitable partnerships provided financial support. 38% of the schools reported that these partnerships provide financial support in some form. This support varied greatly across the examples given by schools, ranging from providing refreshments for events where the financial costs are likely to be minimal, to subsidising residential trips where financial benefits are likely to be far higher.

“[The partnership] supported the school and paid for a teacher when there were budget cuts”

“The trust donates money every year for extra resources”

“[The partnership] enabled school to provide activities without making a loss”

“[The partnership] enables less well off students to take part in residential trips and supports school with books/transport costs”

The differences in financial benefit from charitable partnerships between schools who stated it mirror earlier findings related to the amount a school raises in funds. Geographical location, the population demographic, or the size of the school may all impact on this figure, although more research would be necessary to understand this.

Providing extra-curricular support

Previously we learnt that without voluntary support or fundraising, some schools can struggle to offer high levels of extra-curricular activity. Five of the schools communicated that charitable partnerships specifically allow children to experience extra-curricular activity (that is additional activity to the compulsory schooling hours). Schools reported charitable relationships providing clubs to support personal development of children, funding breakfast clubs and also financing additional staff to support activities.

Ideological and moral concerns

The concept of fundraising in schools raised significant ideological contention between schools. Accepted as historical part of school life, school fairs, events and Parent Teacher Fundraising Association activities were considered to be appropriate and community engaging. However, many schools reflected on the growing necessity to seek to increase funds beyond these activities. Participant views on this additional fundraising activity fall into four overarching groupings; the ideologically opposed, survival, nicety, and the ideologically for.

Schools who fell into the ideologically opposed shared significant concerns about reliance upon fundraising to support core activities. Viewing fundraising as a mechanism in which to ‘bolster inadequate funding’, some felt that seeking to increase funding through philanthropic income generation ‘supports the corporatisation of education’ which they were ideologically opposed to. There was a strong feeling within this that funding should predominantly come from government and as such leadership in the school did not support growing this area of activity. Equally schools who saw fundraising as an added ‘nicety’ sought to use fundraising as a community engagement activity and did not wish to pursue this further.

Schools also expressed concern over fundraising from parents; raising worries about the socio-economic position of families, lack of community support and fear of alienating parents and the local community.

“Some schools do not have the parental/ community support for fundraising. By engaging in this raising our own funds to bridge budgets we are giving the green light to the government agenda to corporatise education. I think we should be mindful of how much money we are asking parents for, especially if in an area of economic deprivation”

BARRIERS AND CONCERNS

Knowledge and Awareness

Though most schools engaged in more traditional fundraising activities such as school fetes, fewer actively sought to fundraise from other sources such as philanthropists, charitable trusts or crowd-funding. Some felt these were inappropriate activities for schools to engage in, whilst others felt that they ‘didn’t know where to start or even what’s out there’. Indeed, where fundraising activity existed within schools, it tended to be around a particular person’s personal experience rather than a strategic approach.

“We’re lucky we have a fundraiser as a governor who has done loads for us, we wouldn’t have done anything without her”

Skills

Schools highlighted concerns about lacking the skills to actively fundraise and/or form charitable collaborative partnerships. This was particularly apparent for fundraising mechanisms such as bid-writing, approaching charitable trusts and engaging local business support. In the case studies explored, there was a significant trend that voluntary action had grown from a grass roots perspective based upon the skills and/or interests of one or two individuals in the school. These individuals had then sought to upskill themselves in response to this growing activity.

“I would be completely out of my depth writing a bid. I daren’t even try. I’m a teacher not a fundraiser”

Chapter 4: Philanthropic activity in schools continued

Case study: Byron Primary School, Gillingham

Byron Primary School, in Gillingham, Kent, secured over £117,500 of philanthropic income over a period of 18 months. This included approximately £2,500 through fundraising events but predominantly consisted of £115,000 donated income from corporate partners, majority of which came from an advantageous partnership with a bank.

Rated as 'inadequate' by Ofsted in 2014 the large school of over 500 children began a journey to turnaround and improve their school environment. In January 2016, they converted to an academy and became part of the Westbrook Trust. Head-teacher, Jon Carthy, took over leadership of the school in 2014. Faced with ongoing budget reductions, the school leadership team sought to explore additional income from other sources. Though the school had a smaller historic relationship with the bank (they part funded an annual year six residential trip), Jon focused on developing this relationship further:

"We wanted to move it from a transactional relationship to something more, so I invited them to visit... they saw the school life, saw the challenges we faced and they got where we'd come from and how it'd got into the pickle it was in. We set out what we were going to do about it and what a difference that would make – and they just said, we want to help."

Since then the bank has fully funded the development of a new of a new foundation stage playground; purchased SEN resources; it has brought laptops for all the children and purchased trolleys for them; it has renewed our library books; and it has continued to fund and support the year six residential."

**Jon Carthy, Head-teacher,
Byron Primary School**

Over the last 18 months, the bank has donated £87,000 to Byron Primary School. The relationship with the bank developed beyond monetary support; the school council were invited to visit the firm's headquarters where they met the managing director and were given lunch, they offered the school advice when it converted to an academy, signposted them to appropriate trustees, gave advice and helped run a 'learning about money' project with the children.

It is important to note that both partners, the school and the bank, recognised the reciprocity of the relationship. The banks staff contracts enable staff to get involved in community projects and therefore the relationship not only benefits the community long-term within which the bank is invested, but also supports the banks staff development programme.

Furthermore, the bank introduced the school to the Outward Bound Trust, with whom the school then organised a five-day residential trip to Wales. In addition, the bank introduced Byron Primary to other funders from which the school was then able to secure an additional £28,000 to support their year six residential trip. As a result in November of this year (2016) 75 year six children will go to Snowdonia – something the school acknowledge not many of their parents could have afforded to fund.



Part of the fully funded new foundation stage playground at Byron Primary School

TOP TIPS TO HIT FUNDRAISING SUCCESS:

Top tips for entering into a collaboration:

- Maximise on the links you may already have in the school – speak to governors, staff, and parents. Are there any potential contacts they may have which would be beneficial to the school?
- Consider what success would look like. What do you want from the partnership, why are you seeking to go into a partnership and what do you consider the benefits to be for your school?
- Audit local businesses and large employers in the area, or those who have strong links to the area. Identify key individuals and seek to build a relationship with them.
- Move the relationship beyond the transactional, the strongest partnerships work when both are committed to long term change.
- Consider what the partner may want out of the partnership and be very clear about your boundaries.
- Reflect on how the partnership may be viewed by other stakeholders. Would this be something that would be welcomed or could it cause any reputational damage?

Whilst this report recognises that ideologically schools have very different approaches to fundraising, we also acknowledge the wide range of benefits, monetary and beyond, that fundraising activities can bring. Therefore here we briefly summarise some research¹⁸ into the motivations behind charitable giving which reveals that giving is primarily driven by a combination of individual donor preferences and the 'ask effect'. This means that people are more likely to give to causes as a result of being directly and appropriately asked, feeling connected to the cause, feeling appreciated and having confidence their donation can make a difference. Therefore schools need to take this into account when approaching any donors or groups for support.

Research also suggests 'top ten tips'¹⁹ that can help uplift donated income:

- Actively ask people for support.
- Take a holistic approach to fundraising by embedding it throughout the school activities.
- Invest time and resources in fundraising.
- Think about what you want to raise money for and how best to appeal to individuals.
- Empower the school community and friends to fundraise on your behalf.
- Seize opportunities to raise your school causes profile.
- Make donating an easy process for people as possible.
- Thank all supporters promptly and sincerely.
- Demonstrate and communicate impact of your fundraising efforts to the wider school community.
- Make donors feel part of something special by inviting them to an open day for example.

¹⁸ R. Bekkers & P. Wiepking (2007) Generosity and Philanthropy: A Literature Review. Amsterdam: Vrije University/ Science of Generosity. http://generosityresearch.nd.edu/assets/17632/generosity_and_philanthropy_final.pdf.

¹⁹ These are adapted from Body, A., & Breeze, B. (2016). What are 'unpopular causes' and how can they achieve fundraising success?. International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, 21(1), 57-70.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Primary schools value voluntary action. Both volunteering and philanthropic support positively contribute to a schools capacity to deliver core and extra-curricular activity. Voluntary action in whichever form supports the breadth of delivery and contributes to positive relationships with parents and the wider community. However, the increasing blurring of the roles of the private, public and voluntary sector, alongside the drive for commodification of education raises significant questions about the reliance on voluntary action as a mechanism to support primary schools.

The majority of schools involved in this research highlighted an awareness of the need and pressure to increase the role of voluntary action within their schools to help address budget short-falls, teacher capacity and the desire to continue to deliver extra-curricular activities. This research does not seek to undermine the huge array of positive benefits voluntary action can bring to education, however it does question this growing pressure on schools.

As schools increasingly turn towards alternative sources of funding and support, to continue to deliver high quality education, disparities in the dispersal of these additional resources become apparent. Areas of low deprivation averaged 20 minutes more of volunteer time per child per week than schools in areas of high economic deprivation. In addition, schools in the low FSM band achieved three times as much donated income per year than those schools in the high FSM band. Such findings suggest that education is far from a level playing field and that there are substantial differences in how voluntary action is distributed across areas of advantage versus those of disadvantage. The consequences of this uneven distribution mean that schools in wealthier, more affluent areas are more likely to have additional resources than those in poorer areas and we must therefore consider the impact this may have.

Nevertheless, though a contributory factor to this uneven dispersal of voluntary action, socio-economic factors do not reveal the complete picture. For example, smaller schools tended to fare better proportionally to larger ones. The

smallest schools in the cohort had on average 17 minutes of additional volunteer time and £36 more donated income per child than the larger schools. This trend may be explained by parents perceiving the school as well-resourced due to size and effectively they are 'crowded out'.²⁰ Furthermore, this disparity is likely to be partly absorbed by scales of economy meaning that the larger schools may not notably feel this difference. In addition to this, the ideological standpoint of leadership within the school plays a significant role in facilitating or inhibiting the engagement in voluntary action, with some head-teachers ideologically opposed to increasing voluntary action, whereas others embrace the concept. This perhaps reflects wider contention within education and the underpinning ideologies, however without leadership support schools are very unlikely to positively engage voluntary action within their community.

Finally, it must be noted that school 'type' is also a contributory factor. Academies, on average secured almost double the donated income than all other primary school types (excluding independent private primary schools). Academies were the most likely 'type' of school to actively seek significantly more donated income, with a number of examples attracting over £100,000. Such findings are perhaps unsurprising given that academy schools have 'opted in' to a neoliberal driven discourse supporting the commodification and to some extent marketisation of education and embracing of this philanthropic support. However, there are lessons to be learnt from US colleagues²¹ which suggest that this philanthropy increases social inequality in education and gives donors leverage over the school.

We recommend further consideration of the role of voluntary action within primary education in light of the increasing pressure placed on schools to engage in this activity to counterbalance other pressures. As voluntary action becomes an increasing prominent feature in the political ideology of the country this research raises the concern that instead of helping to bridge the gap in social inequalities, voluntary action may well contribute to social inequality amongst schools.

²⁰ Houtenville, A. J., & Conway, K. S. (2008). Parental effort, school resources, and student achievement. *Journal of Human resources*, 43(2), 437-453.

²¹ Reich, R. (2007) *Philanthropy and its Uneasy Relation to Equality*, in W. Damon and S. Verducci (Eds.) *Taking Philanthropy Seriously: Beyond Noble Intentions to Responsible Giving*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 26-49.