

# THE PIE PROGRAMME: PURSUING INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE

An Evaluation of the Programme's First Year



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## Introduction

PIE: Pursuing Individual Excellence is a social enterprise set up by former secondary school teacher Beth Nunn, which is currently being piloted in two schools in the North West. Its aims are to improve the employability skills and life aspirations of young people from economically deprived backgrounds by providing them with experiences they may not necessarily have access to through home life or school teaching (PIE: website).

This report aims to evaluate the PIE Future Ready programme, an initiative aimed at improving the social mobility of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the UK, pupils from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have significant barriers when competing with those from more affluent backgrounds for jobs despite their education level (Boston Consulting Group & Sutton Trust, 2017). These barriers are thought to be the soft skills such as teamwork, confidence, and organisational skills, all of which are vital for social mobility (Gatsby, 2013). Indeed, such soft skills are deemed just as important as degrees and other qualifications by many employers (AMLE, 2016). The core aim of the PIE programme is therefore to enhance these soft skills in an attempt to overcome these barriers to social mobility that young people from lower socio-economic families and communities experience.

The programme works with students for a duration of six months, which is completed as an extra-curricular activity. The activities are designed to support the development of a number of key soft skills which programme participants will be able to utilise in future applications for post-16 education and careers, including:

- Communication
- Digital skills
- Project management
- Community cohesion
- Cultural capital

These skills are developed in a range of ways; for example, through the organisation of fundraising events, completion of the Duke of York iDEA award, and engagement with the local area. Workshops and presentations from different companies are also included to enhance the students' knowledge of opportunities available to them, which they may not necessarily have had knowledge of or access to. One of the ways the PIE Programme aims to do this is by introducing pupils to different employers and academics from higher education. The ideas underpinning the above is premised on the work of Bourdieu, whereby increasing students' social and cultural capital has the potential to enhance their social mobility (Ingram et al 2015). Another strategy the PIE Programme used is to have students go on trips where they learn about the local area, experience different workplace environments, and take part in fund-raising activities. Such activities have the potential to develop cultural capital by increasing the understanding of cultures other than their own.

The following report will evaluate the first year of the PIE Future Ready programme, which is in its pilot year. It focuses on two schools within Greater Manchester to see whether the programme has had any impact on the students' soft skill development and future aspirations. The schools were selected to take part in this programme as they have some quite different features. The specific make-up of the schools are as follows:

School A is within the Manchester area with a 5.6% unemployment rate, 11.1% of people with no qualifications, and an above average of people with an NQ4 level equivalent or above at 39.9% compared with 38.6% for the rest of Great Britain. 37% of school A's pupils are eligible for pupil

premium. Their attainment in literacy and numeracy skills are in line with the national average. 41.7% of students on pupil premium achieve 5 A\*-C at GCSE level. According to their Ofsted reports 2016, school A's governors are highly committed and take a strong interest in the progress of disadvantaged pupils and know what needs to be done to close the gaps between these pupils and the rest of the nation. Pupils are also confident when speaking with adults they are unfamiliar with and have a strong understanding of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic country (Ofsted 2016).

School B is within the Salford area with a 4.6% unemployment rate, 10.4% with no qualifications, and a below average of people with an NVQ4 level equivalent or above at 30.9%. 74% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium, which is above the national average of 27% (Carpenter et al, 2013). According to school B's latest Ofsted report 2013, literacy and numeracy skills are below the national average which prevents them from making progress in school. Those on pupil premium are not making their expected progress in maths, with only 23.1% of those pupils achieving 5 A\*-C at GCSE level. There is a lack of engagement from parents and carers across the school. However, the school does support those students who are at risk of falling behind by providing one-to-one tuition and small group work to narrow the attainment gap. This extra care and support is helping to narrow the gap as the Year 11 grades for English are on par with those not on pupil premium, but Mathematics still remains lower (Ofsted 2013).

	<b>Eligibility of pupil premium</b>	<b>premium % 5 GCSE A* - C (pupil premium)</b>	<b>Unemployment rate (area of school)</b>	<b>No qualifications (area of school)</b>	<b>NVQ4 or above</b>
<b>School A</b>	37%	41.7%	5.6%	11.1%	39.9%
<b>School B</b>	74%	23.1%	4.6%	10.4%	30.9%

This report is set out as follows. Section 2 examines the literature linked to the development of the PIE programme and why the PIE programme is important within society. Section 3 focuses on the methodology of the research and how the data was gathered. Section 4 concentrates on the quantitative analysis of the data, what was found and any comparisons or differences between the two schools. Section 5 focuses on the qualitative analysis of the interviews, concentrating on common themes, differences and any feedback. Section 6 discusses the quantitative and qualitative data findings and compares this to previous literature outlined in the literature review. And finally, section 7 discusses recommendations for future improvements to the PIE programme, and any amendments which are already being done to improve the effectiveness of the programme.

## Literature Review

The PIE programme is built upon the recommendations made by The Gatsby 'Good Career Guidance' Report (2013) and reports from The Sutton Trust (for example 'Advancing Ambitions: The role of career guidance in supporting social mobility' 2014, and 'Class Ceiling' 2017) to try to improve the career aspirations and opportunities of secondary school pupils from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The need for such a programme is explored in this section.

Evidence from the Sutton Trust demonstrates that students from disadvantaged backgrounds face significant barriers to accessing some of the leading professions such as teaching, the medical profession and managerial positions. Interestingly, whilst this can also affect those who attend 'top' rated schools (Boston Consulting Group & Sutton Trust, 2017), it is far more prevalent for those from a socio-economically disadvantaged background as they do not necessarily have the background knowledge and support from their parents, to guide them on how to access these 'higher class' opportunities which they have not been socialised around. In order to address this, Gatsby (2013) state that pupils and their parents should have access to good quality future study options, and multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This information is more likely to show those from disadvantaged backgrounds what careers they can aim for and increase their career aspirations to go to university. Conversely, those with highly educated parents had higher educational attainment and a lower probability of being unemployed (Ermisch and Francesconi 2001). This suggests that those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and those whose parents did not go to university are also less likely to go to university (Sosu et al 2016). This prevents those pupils from accessing the higher leading professions, especially if they do not attend university as they will not have the training and qualifications to get the jobs within leading professions. This indicates the importance of good career guidance that includes encounters with business and universities in order for those from disadvantaged backgrounds to gain this knowledge and skills to compete with the other classes for jobs in the future, and give them chance to increase their social mobility. The PIE programme aims to address this by giving pupils' the opportunity to interact with businesses and those from higher education. The hope is that doing so will provide those from a disadvantaged background a different worldview and enhance their career aspirations.

One government-backed initiative that attempts to redress some negative consequences of being from disadvantaged backgrounds is the pupil premium. Pupil premium is funding from the government to schools, to support those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to perform better, and close the gap between them and their peers (Department for Education, 2014). Statistics from the Department of Education show that those pupils eligible for pupil premium achieve 20-30% lower at GCSE than those not eligible for pupil premium (Carpenter et al, 2013). As those on pupil premium are from those families on a low income, they do not necessarily have the home support and knowledge to close this attainment gap. This is likely because their families have also not received career opportunities through their education or personal experience, therefore if a child's family do not know about the career opportunities, school is the only other way the child is going to get this knowledge (Gatsby, 2013). It is important to consider Bourdieu's (1979, in Straw, 2015) concept of cultural capital here, which considers the way in which social classes are socialised differently, which results in people from middle class backgrounds having more cultural capital and as a result a greater ability to get ahead. This is partly due to this group having more encounters with those who are highly educated and those in higher positions within the workplace, allowing them to gain more communication skills and knowledge of how to be successful, and socialised to aim for the higher jobs. This is where the PIE programme tries to diminish these *distinctions* between the classes by providing the skills and experiences to those from socio-economically disadvantaged

backgrounds, which the middle class has easier access to. By doing so, participants from working class backgrounds should have greater opportunity to compete for the higher positioned careers and be successful.

One issue however, is how there is little space and time within the school curriculum to help build the skills to get students career ready, therefore, help is needed outside of the core curriculum to provide this information and make sure everyone has access to it. The Gatsby 'Good Career Guidance' Report (2013) makes recommendations to reduce this attainment gap including a stable careers programme, learning from career and labour market information, encounters with employees and employers, encounters with higher education, and work experience. This should then increase the knowledge of careers that are available to pupils, increase their knowledge of their pathway to achieve such careers and overall increase the career aspirations of those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The aims of the PIE Programme is to address many of these issues raised above and expand the horizons of those students from disadvantaged backgrounds. By doing this, it can provide opportunities where pupils encounter employers from industry as well as staff and students from higher education.

It now seems that attaining good GCSE grades is not enough, and supporting young people with 'soft' career ready skills can improve their chances of employment and higher earnings potential. Soft skills include 'people skills', the way you relate to and interact with other people such as communication, leadership, and motivation; whereas 'hard' skills are those skills which are teachable, such as qualifications and machine operations (Doyle 2014). Importantly, employers desire these 'soft' skills such as communication, teamwork and responsibility, with 77% stating that they are just as important as 'hard' skills (AMLE, 2016). In a study by Watts et al (2014), good career guidance and soft skill development increased the number of pupils receiving 5 GCSEs grades A\* - C, including English and Maths, and there was a significant reduction in persistent absences.

Recent cuts in school funding have led to reductions in staff (NUT, no date). Schools are struggling to find time to support those students on pupil premium. The NUT estimate that funding will reduce a further 8%, putting even more strain on the resources such as career guidance that schools can offer students (NUT, no date). Due to resourcing issues, schools are currently unable to fulfil the recommendations of a stable careers programme, encounters with employers and higher educators, and work experience, with less than 1% of school funding going towards career development (Gatsby, 2013). However, at the time of publishing, figures show that the cost of implementing these recommendations within a medium-sized school outside of London is £54 per pupil, which is less than 1% of the school's budget (Gatsby, 2013). It is important to invest in soft skill development beyond the core curriculum because, as stated earlier, these are the skills sought after from employers (APPG 2017). Within school, soft skill development can also improve grades, lower the attainment gap and increase attendance amongst pupils (Watts et al, 2014). As such, the work advocated by the PIE programme is ideally located as it aims to take that pressure off schools by providing pupils with the career guidance, encounters, and experiences with employers and builds their soft skills which can benefit all staff, school, and students. As it also takes part as an after-school extra-curricular activity, it does not affect the valuable curriculum time.

## Methodology

### Approach

The research is an evaluation of the PIE Future Ready programme that adopted a mixed methods approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. The benefits of using a mixed methods approach arise from being able to triangulate findings from the different types of data. The data came from a range of sources, which are discussed in detail below.

### Quantitative Data Collection and analysis

In order to collect quantitative data for the PIE programme, an Outcomes Star was designed by the programme founder, with each element of the star representing a different aim of the PIE programme. To complete the Outcomes Star, students gave themselves a score of 0-10 for each of the 10 pre-determined skills, which included confidence, teamwork and communication. A blank version of the Outcome Star used can be found in Appendix 1. Students participating in the programme at each school were asked to complete the Outcomes Star at the beginning and end of the programme. The data was cleaned, and transferred to SPSS for analysis.

### Qualitative Data Collection

Once the initial Outcomes Star had been completed, an anonymised version was sent to the research team. From this, the team used purposive sampling to identify a small number of students (6) that they would like to speak to based on their Outcomes Star results. Students were interviewed during the early stages of the PIE programme, and then again at the end, in order to help understand the young people's experiences of the programme in greater detail. Interviews took place in school, within the school day, and were conducted by two members of the research team. In addition, expert interviews took place with a key member of staff at each school. Finally, an expert interview was held with the founder of the PIE programme. The interview transcripts were analysed in NVivo using thematic analysis.

### Ethics

Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee at MMU, and follows the BSA ethical protocol. Participants' names have been changed to ensure anonymity, and the data has been password-protected and stored in accordance with data protection legislation, on the University's staff computer system. This means that only those involved in the project can access the data. All participants consented to take part in the study and were made aware of how their data would be used. They were also told they could withdraw their data from the study up to the date when the report was published.

## Quantitative Analysis

This section discusses the quantitative analysis of the data collected through the students' completion of an Outcome Star at the beginning and end of the PIE Future Ready programme. To complete the Outcomes Star, students gave themselves a score of 0-10 for each of the 10 pre-determined skills.

The following two tables summarise the data collected from the Outcomes Star data. The key findings from the data are then explored below.

**Table 1:** Skill averages and difference before and after PIE

	School A		Actual Difference	School B		Actual Difference	Actual Difference between school A and B final scores
	Before PIE	After PIE		Before PIE	After PIE		
<b>Communication</b>	6.73	8.80	+2.07	5.66	8.16	+2.50	0.64
<b>Digital</b>	6.66	8.00	+1.34	6.71	7.59	+0.88	0.01
<b>Project Management</b>	6.60	8.30	+1.80	5.66	7.92	+2.26	0.38
<b>Community</b>	5.73	7.20	+1.47	4.64	7.42	+2.78	0.22
<b>Cultural Capital</b>	5.93	7.70	+1.97	5.07	7.33	+2.26	0.37
<b>Motivation</b>	6.07	8.10	+2.03	6.50	8.72	+2.22	0.62
<b>Resilience</b>	7.53	8.20	+0.67	6.86	8.33	+1.47	0.13
<b>Confidence</b>	7.13	8.50	+1.37	4.92	8.25	+3.33	0.25
<b>Teamwork</b>	6.66	8.60	+1.94	5.42	8.50	+3.08	0.10
<b>Organisation</b>	7.07	9.10	+2.03	6.14	8.25	+2.08	0.84
<b>Total</b>	65.40	82.50	+17.1	57.50	79.75	+22.25	2.75

**Table 2:** Gender average score differences between skills before and after PIE (school A and B combined)

	Before PIE	After PIE	Before PIE	After PIE
	Male		Female	
<b>Communication</b>	6.45	8.75	5.83	8.23
<b>Digital</b>	7.555	8.50	6.17	7.54
<b>Project Management</b>	6.36	8.25	6.17	8.14
<b>Community</b>	5.36	8.13	5.11	6.85
<b>Cultural Capital</b>	5.45	7.98	5.66	7.48
<b>Motivation</b>	6.27	8.63	6.28	8.41
<b>Resilience</b>	7.73	8.48	6.89	8.31
<b>Confidence</b>	7.18	9.13	5.39	8.00
<b>Teamwork</b>	5.45	9.13	6.44	8.23
<b>Organisation</b>	7.45	9.38	6.11	8.08
<b>Total</b>	65.27	86.13	59.33	78.54



## Confidence

Analysis of this data found that the average score for each pre-determined skill increased in both schools. What was most interesting was that in school B, students' self-reported levels of confidence saw the biggest increase, almost doubling from 4.92 before the programme to 8.25 after the programme (see Table 1). On average, combining the scores of both schools, females initially scored themselves 2 points lower than males for confidence, whereas after the programme they scored themselves 1 point lower. For females, confidence scores increased from an average score of 5 to 8 out of 10, whilst for males, confidence scores increased from 7 to 9 out of 10 (see Table 2). Despite the different school demographics, at the end of the programme both schools were on a par with confidence, with an average score of 8.80 for School A and 8.17 for School B (as compared to 6.73 and 5.36 for the respective schools at the start of the programme) (see Table 1).

## Teamwork

The PIE programme also seemed to have a big impact on the pupils' teamwork skills with a 2 point increase for this area on the Outcomes Star from school A pupils, and a 3 point increase in school B. At the end of the programme, again, both schools were on par with an overall average Outcomes Star score of 8.6 (School A) and 8.5 (School B) (see Table 1). Due to the difference in demographics between the two schools and the percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium, these results indicate that despite the background of the students, the programme can help to increase these skills. Furthermore, males' teamwork skills increased the most from an average score of 5 at the beginning of the programme, to an average score of 9 once they had completed the programme. Females also had an average two point increase from an average of 6 before the programme to 8 after the programme (see Table 2). What is interesting is that males also scored themselves higher for confidence, as previously discussed, suggesting a link between an increase in confidence and an increase in other skills. This may be due to having the confidence to then become more involved in tasks which can enhance their skills. Of course, this increase in confidence may also make pupils believe in themselves, and that they are good at the outlined skills, which could suggest an alternative reason for the increase in scores of other skills.

## Communication

The increase in communication skills was also a significant finding. Overall, female participants' communication skills increased the most by an average of 2 points each (see Table 2). School A increased their average score by 2 points on the Outcomes Star, whereas school B increased theirs by an average of 3 points. School B had more encounters with the community and businesses through the PIE programme, which could indicate the importance of these experiences. Although this may not seem significant, the lack of opportunities may have affected school A's community score (average 1 point increase) and teamwork skills (average 2 point increase) (see Table 1) as they had less opportunities to communicate with a variety of different people from different backgrounds. However, participants from both schools reported improvements in their communication skills, with an average score of 8.75 for School A (increased from 6.45) and 8.23 for School B (increased from 5.83). This suggests that had pupils school A had more exposure to these experiences on the programme, this score could be even higher, making them more future ready.

On average, all students in both schools increased in all 10 skills areas by 2 points each. The school which had more encounters with the community, businesses and experiences outside of the PIE sessions had a bigger increase in their before and after PIE average score in their community, communication and teamwork skills by an average of 3 points, compared with the other school (school A) which only increased by an average of 2 points. Overall, despite the difference in demographics from both schools and the level of pupil premium amongst the student cohort, both

schools ended the programme with very similar average scores for most of the pre-determined skills on the Outcome Star. What is interesting is that before the programme, School B started with a lower reported rating for their community skills on the Outcomes Star (4.64 compared with school A 5.73), but ended with a higher Outcomes Star score than school A in this area (7.43 compared with 7.20 for School A). The three skills that differed the most between the schools, (communication, motivation and organisation) only differed by a maximum of 0.84 points. This indicates how close the differences in the average scores are, compared with the starting scores of participants from each school, and by the impact of the PIE Future Ready programme, participants from these schools have ended up on par with each other.

## Qualitative Analysis

This section discusses the qualitative analysis of the initial and final interviews with pupils, the expert interviews with staff who worked alongside programme founder Beth Nunn at both schools, and an interview with Beth conducted at the end of the programme. This analysis uses NVivo to produce common themes between the interviews. This section discusses the key themes, specifically what respondents felt worked well with the programme, what skills the pupils gained from the programme, and any recommendations made within any of the interviews to help improve the programme for future users.

From the initial interviews with the pupils from school A, they seemed to lack digital skills. Several pupils discussed a lack of confidence when working with computers and that they found them confusing. This could be a barrier to the pupils' school grades as a lot of classes use computers to do classwork and homework, therefore with an increased knowledge in digital skills, this could help them to do more work and improve in other subjects throughout the school. After the PIE programme, pupils from both schools mentioned how they used computers a lot more when making posters, researching for fundraising events, and took part in the iDEA award which improved their digital skills. Pupil 1 mentioned "We do posters and everything to advertise what we're doing on that day, I've learnt different websites to make posters and that and it is quite easy", with Pupil 6 saying "I've improved digitally. We done the iDEA award which goes through digital sectors. I have definitely improved from last time".

When asked 'why do you want to do PIE?', many pupils from both schools mentioned that school did not offer the opportunities that PIE was offering, and they wanted more experiences and knowledge of what careers were out there. Many did not have any career aspirations as they did not know what jobs were available. However, after the PIE project, pupils mentioned how they were now motivated to go to college open days and look for careers in subjects they were interested in. Pupil 1 (School A) mentioned, "I went to college and learnt more about what I want to be, there's so much more than just applying. Get yourself involved in so many things linked to it, so that's why I go air cadets". This suggests that through the PIE programme, this respondent has been given the motivation to get involved in after-school clubs, in an activity specifically related to their future career plans. The encounters with different educators and companies opened the pupils' minds to new opportunities that are available in Manchester. Otherwise, the pupils would not have got this opportunity, as the staff interviewed noted that they do not have the time to take pupils out of school during the school day, an advantage of the PIE programme being an after-school activity.

In the initial interviews, pupils at both schools mentioned that they would like to improve their confidence. Similarly, within the pupils' responses, their confidence seemed quite low as they compared themselves with others and were easily influenced by others' ideas. After the programme, many mentioned that they felt their confidence had increased and this was shown in the increase of scores they gave themselves compared with their score on the initial Outcome Star. For one pupil, referring to a recent school trip: "I don't think I would have been able to talk to anyone whilst I was there [before the PIE programme]", but having completed the PIE programme: "I've got more confidence, I've got more motivated to come into school" (Pupil 2). Another pupil mentioned, due to working in a team a lot of the time in PIE sessions, having to get involved in different tasks and putting her ideas forward, when visiting a business in Manchester, she was able to ask lots of questions. She also mentioned how in class she was able to ask questions in front of other pupils and get involved a lot more, which she could not have done before the programme (Pupil 3, School B). Furthermore, she was asked 'Is there anything else going on which could have increased your

confidence? She replied with 'no'. This does suggest that it was the PIE programme that contributed to this boost in confidence, allowing her to participate in more activities in the classroom.

What is interesting is that before the PIE programme, most pupils did not understand some of the concepts listed on the Outcomes Star, particularly 'cultural capital' and 'community' and, perhaps as a result, most gave themselves a low score. However, what is interesting is that having completed the PIE programme, in the final interviews respondents still stated that they weren't sure what these two terms meant, but when scoring themselves they gave themselves a higher score for both areas. When told the meaning, pupils were then able to give examples of experiences they had and how that had increased their scores, however without knowing the definition, they still scored themselves higher. This suggests that the boost in their confidence had a positive effect on other areas of their Outcome Star and their perception of themselves.

When conducting the final interviews, some of the respondents' Outcomes Star scores went down by one or two points. When asked about the reasons for this, the pupils in School B in particular were very reflective in their answers and provided much more detail when compared to their initial interviews. Some pupils mentioned that they had a lot going on with exams so it was hard to keep organised, or they had more tasks to juggle than was the case when their previous interview was held. In addition, some mentioned that because they had little experience of many of the skills outlined on the Outcome Star before they started the PIE programme, they made an estimation of where they thought their skill level might be. When the pupils began to build these skills more in the PIE sessions, they realised how difficult the skills actually were, and as a result, in the final Outcome Star, they gave themselves a lower score for these areas. It is important to note however, that these respondents recognised that they gained the skills of, for example, working as part of a team, listening to others' ideas, and keeping motivated. Again, this suggests a link back to the increase in their confidence in that respondents could recognise they were not as good in certain areas as they had initially believed themselves to be, and identified areas that they still needed to work on.

Throughout the final interviews, it was evident that where the pupils had more opportunities to go on trips and had more encounters with businesses, they enjoyed the programme more. Where pupils did not have as many of these opportunities, interview respondents spoke of how they would like to have had more trips. When speaking with Expert Interview 1 and through interviewing Beth Nunn, the programme founder, it was evident that some of these trips fell through due to lack of support from staff, indicating that this support and relationship between the school and the programme is crucial for the programme to thrive.

Pupils from both schools enjoyed the more practical side of the programme such as going on trips, organising fundraising events and meeting representatives from different businesses. They got fulfilment from making the events happen, which made them feel like an adult as they had responsibilities to get tasks done, without being told what to do by adults. Staff working alongside Beth in both schools also recognised this enjoyment from the practical element of the programme, as it enhanced pupils' organisational skills and noticed the pupils' excitement when they had these events. All pupils described the programme as fun and that they would definitely recommend it to their friends as it was a chance to gain new skills. Pupil 4 mentioned "a lot of my friends lack confidence and organisation skills, and because it helped me I think it'll be able to help them as well". Pupil 5 mentioned "I would recommend it. The last two weeks I brought my best friend and she enjoyed it".

In addressing ways in which the PIE programme could be developed, firstly, Beth Nunn (programme founder) and Expert Interview 1 agreed that from the beginning there has to be a clarification of the

school's roles and responsibilities and Beth's roles and responsibilities in sorting attendance of pupils, support at fundraising events, resources and organising dates for trips. Beth suggested that at the start of future programmes, dates will be 'locked in' straight away in conjunction with the school's calendar, herself and businesses to ensure the trips happen, as she feels this is crucial for the pupils to enhance their experiences and career aspirations. It would also be advisable for a specific member of staff from each school to be responsible for supporting the coordination of the programme. Beth suggested that a newly qualified teacher (NQT) would be best placed to do this, or a teacher who is looking to enhance their own skills. This is to ensure they have the time and are able to offer the support to get the pupils to attend the sessions and keep them motivated throughout the week. As the core aim of the programme is to build people's skills and get them ready for future employment, this would be a perfect opportunity for the school, the programme and the member of staff involved.

Another recommendation noted by both Beth and Expert Interview 1 was the timing of the programme. Some of the events went into the summer term, which is a very busy time for pupils with exams, therefore fundraising events were hard to organise, and it proved hard for message to reach other pupils, as there was a lot of other information being disseminated at the same time. Therefore, Beth has suggested that next year the programme will work as a 15-week programme, with one programme running from September to Christmas with three 5-week blocks, and another January to Easter, again in three 5-week blocks. Here, schools can then keep up to date with the tasks happening in each block and it is more structured. However, schools will have the option to pick from different strands, according to what they would like to get from the programme, as Beth recognises that every school is different.

From the programme, Beth believes the pupils have got a lot of skills to put on their CV and college applications, and the schools involved with the pilot programme now have motivated young pupils better prepared for their final year of high school. The pupils also have increased aspirations, which has made them think more about what they can do from meeting such prestigious groups, and a better idea of the pathways they can take for different careers. For example, pupil 8 from school B mentioned "We went to [name of organisation] in their building to see how they work. They organise companies' social media by doing posts for them. I didn't know anything about that and I didn't know somebody actually organised every company's social media". This suggest that the PIE programme has introduced the pupils to different careers they would have previously not known about. Expert Interview 1 noted that from PIE, the schools have got a career programme for the pupils that they do not have time to organise themselves. They believe that the programme has shown many benefits to the school such as an increased in confidence and motivation in the pupils that has been noticed by staff within the school. This increase in confidence and motivation has the potential to increase pupils attainment as they are more willing to get involved, as pupil 2 mentioned, she is now "more motivated to come into school".

## Discussion

The aim of this report has been to examine the PIE programme, and to evaluate whether the programme meets its aims of helping to improve pupils' soft skill development and career aspirations. The following section will look at the key discussion points emerging from the quantitative and qualitative data analysed in previous sections.

The quantitative analysis found that in both schools, all averages for each soft skill increased; some more drastically than others. The programme had the biggest impact on confidence for school B in particular. In school B, the average score before the programme was 4.93 out of 10. After taking part in the programme, the figure almost doubled to 8.25. This then suggests a sizable increase in the pupils' confidence as a result of attending the programme. This was echoed in the interviews with many mentioning how they felt that they had more overall confidence in other 'soft-skill' areas. These included being able to communicate more effectively with others while also widening their social networks and taking in new experiences. This then resulted in them having the confidence to look at college open days, speak about their options, participate more in class discussions, and ask questions when they didn't understand something. As such, this report has highlighted the importance of confidence as a key soft skill in that it gives pupils the motivation to go out of their comfort zone and communicate with those from prestigious groups to aid their career development.

Communication skills of pupils also seemed to increase over the time of the PIE programme. Quantitative analysis found that on average, school A increased their skills by 2 points, where school B increased theirs by 3 points, showing a significant increase. The PIE programme included a lot of teamwork activities. These included the pupils organising fundraising events, attending workshops from and Q&A sessions from companies such as Barclays. It suggests that these activities and opportunities gave increased opportunity for students to communicate with different people and ask questions. This finding was echoed by research by AMLE (2016) that found soft skills such as communication were just as important as hard skills as previously mentioned. Increasing pupils' scores in this area could well result in them being better equipped to compete for jobs that were previously not considered. Similarly, orchestrating encounters with those from higher education institutions could have the potential to increase information about such academic type jobs. What is interesting is that pupil 2 mentioned that before the PIE programme she was unable to speak to people she did not know, whereas after it she was able to ask questions in class and take part in a practice interview. She had gained the skills from the PIE programme to know how to communicate formally and had the confidence to speak to someone she did not know. Again, this suggests that the PIE programme supported this change. These examples link directly to Bourdieu's (1979, in Straw, 2015) notion of habitus and cultural capital via exposure to those from different cultural backgrounds which can have a positive aspirational effect on those taking part in the programme.

Teamwork skills also seemed to have a significant improvement. On average, school A's score increased by 2 points, and school B's again increased by 3 points. Students spoke of how they all worked as a team throughout the project by organising fundraising events, making posters to advertise the events, having group discussions and working together on a finance workshop with Barclays. This fed into their organisational skills which also increased by 2 points at each school. It was pupils themselves that led on the fundraising events where they had to think of ideas of how to raise the funds, deciding on the time and location of the event and getting the resources together to make it successful. Gatsby (2013) found that soft skill development and good career guidance led to higher skills and employment. It also improved motivation and attainment in class, indicating how the development of one soft skill can affect others, and how they are important for future employment.

With reference to the recommendations made by Gatsby (2013), Ofsted recommended that an appropriate career programme be offered by every school from January 2018 (Harford, 2018). The PIE Programme fulfils this recommendations. The findings from this report suggest that PIE is a successful careers programme that has the potential to help improve the much desired soft skills in disadvantaged young people. While it cannot be known as yet, it does seem plausible that these young people can now explore opportunities and careers that they would previously not consider. It does this by increasing the young people's cultural capital by exposing them to new ideas and activities. In essence, this expands their horizon to ideas of subjects that they could study for, or develop an interest in careers they can now aim for. The hope is that by enabling them to build skills and confidence they are more likely to compete for specialised jobs resulting in increased social mobility. There is also a benefit in the short term in that students with increased confidence, better organisational skills and aspirations to achieve are also motivated to perform well while at school. As expert interview 1 commented about those who had been involved with the PIE Programme not only have improved confidence but also seem to take ownership of their work and are more motivated to do well.

### Recommendations

The main recommendation of the report is that the PIE programme runs again and where possible, recruits more schools that can take part. It would be useful if the students who have taken part in this study were followed for several more years to explore what future career path was taken.

- An outline of roles and responsibilities for all parties should be provided to the school prior to the start of the PIE programme. This could include points such as supporting PIE programme attendance, organising trips, and support with fundraising events within the school. This will ensure there are clearly delineated roles, and the school role in supporting PIE programme activities can then be appropriately resourced.
- Participating schools should identify a coordinator to work alongside Beth Nunn, whose role it is to help support the PIE programme.
- A weekly programme of the PIE objectives and activities should be developed, and shared with the school. This will help the school to more effectively support PIE, which in turn will support the administrative elements of the PIE programme.
- Students should be encouraged to continue adding to, and updating, their digital CV throughout the PIE programme

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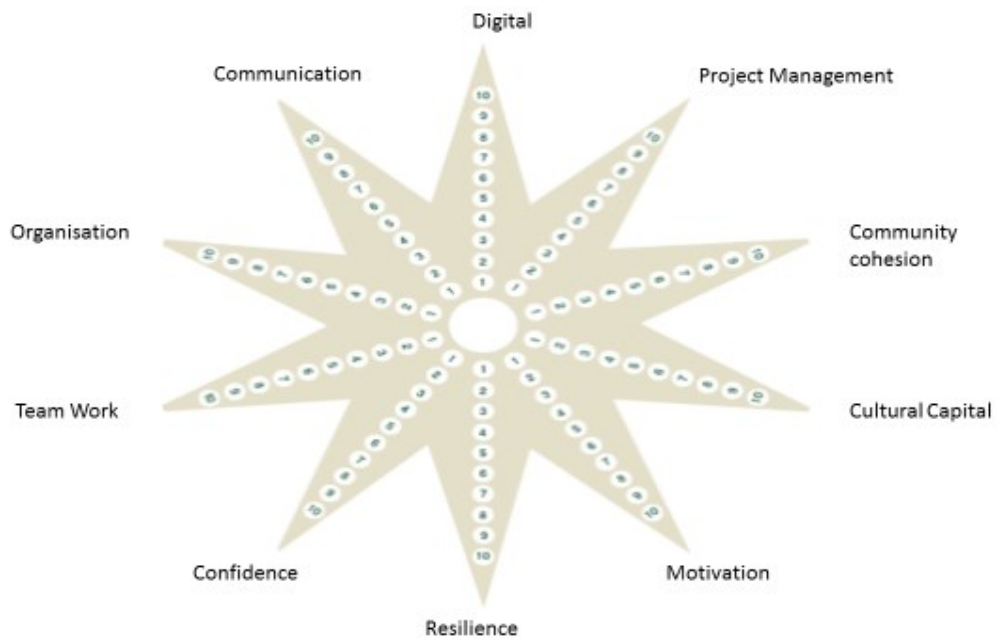
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# Appendix One: Outcome Star

Name:  
Date:



## Appendix Two: Semi-Structured interview guide for PIE students

### Initial interview

- 1) Questions relating to students' responses on the Outcomes Star, relating to the following points. You rated yourself as \*\* out of 10 on the Outcomes Star for:
  - Confidence
  - Current motivation
  - Aspirations
  - Engagement
  - Self-belief
  - Ambition
  - Engagement in your future plans
  - Feelings about your education
- 2) Can you give us a little more information as to why you gave yourself that score.
- 3) How do you hope being on the PIE programme will affect you on these areas above?

### Post programme interview

- 1) Go through Outcomes Star again – discuss changes (go back to transcripts/Outcomes Star – need to know what they gave themselves last time)
- 2) When we first started you said that you hoped that PIE would .... Has this been the case?
- 3) Have you got anything out of being on the PIE programme that you did not expect?
- 4) Is there anything you would have liked to get out to the PIE programme that you have not?
- 5) What was the best thing about the PIE programme?
- 6) How do you think the PIE programme could be improved for others in the future?
- 7) Any other comments?

## Appendix 3: Expert Interview questions

- 1) Why did your school want to be involved with the PIE programme?
- 2) What is your understanding of the programme and how it has been working with your school?
- 3) Have you had any feedback from students about how the programme has been going? (Not looking to name names here, but to get a sense of students' perception of what they are/are not enjoying)
- 4) What do you feel the school has got out of the PIE programme?
- 5) What do you feel the participating students have got out of the PIE programme?
  - a. Have you seen a change in any of the students who have participated? (e.g. more confident to engage with new activities, etc?)
- 6) Is this programme suitable for all students? i.e. Are there students that you feel would benefit more/less from taking part in the programme?
- 7) Are there any ways you feel the PIE programme could be developed/enhanced?
- 8) Will you run the PIE programme next year?
  - a. If so, will you use the same selection process as this year?
  - b. If not, what are the reasons for this?
- 9) Any other comments you'd like to make?

## Appendix 4: Expert interview with Beth Nunn

- 1) Why did you initially set up the PIE programme: what did you hope to achieve with it?
- 2) Has the reality matched your expectations?
- 3) Have you had any feedback from students about how the programme has been going? (Not looking to name names here, but to get a sense of students' perception of what they are/are not enjoying)
- 4) What do you feel the schools have got out of the PIE programme?
- 5) What do you feel the participating students have got out of the PIE programme?
  - a. Have you seen a change in any of the students who have participated? (e.g. more confident to engage with new activities, etc?)
- 6) Is this programme suitable for all students? i.e. Are there students that you feel would benefit more/less from taking part in the programme?
- 7) Are there any ways you feel the PIE programme could be developed/enhanced?
- 8) What are your plans for PIE for the next year?
  - a. If so, will you use the same selection process as this year?
  - b. If not, what are the reasons for this?
- 9) Any other comments you'd like to make?