



North Birkenhead Cradle to Career

Annual Progress Report - Year 1

1 Sept 2020—31 August 2021



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Our year in numbers

8

schools worked with

27

partner organisations
worked with

1,966

beneficiaries

49

practitioners trained

24

families supported by
Family Connectors

750

residents surveyed

15

community initiatives
awarded funding

61%

increase in the number
of high-ability readers

+2.5

increase in reading Standard
Age Scores, above national
expected progress



Putting the people of North Birkenhead at the heart of education, services and local decision-making

Cradle to Career aims to significantly improve literacy standards among children, give families easy access to the support they need, improve the quality of life for all and create new opportunities for local children and young people.

Our Vision is that every child in North Birkenhead thrives, from cradle to career.

Our Mission is to support North Birkenhead to develop as a strong, thriving community where every child and young person has all the help and opportunity they will need to succeed.



“We are beginning to build a real culture of reading which is giving us a good grounding to work from post-Covid.”

**Danielle Daves, Assistant Headteacher,
Birkenhead Park School**

Education

Our aim: Schools becoming world class in identifying and meeting the needs of their learners

2020 BASELINE

6

points behind national reading average

Standard reading age score of pupils (years 5–8) in North Birkenhead, equivalent to **half a GCSE grade**.

1094

pupils in Y5–8 completed baseline literacy, reading and wellbeing assessments

475

pupils received targeted interventions

928

pupils completed end-of-year assessments in the summer term

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN READING SCORES IN YEAR 1

(above 3.0 signals a statistically significant improvement)

+3.0

Year 5

+4.5

Year 6

+2.7

Year 7

-0.3

Year 8

+2.5 overall, above national average progress

61% increase in the number of high-ability readers

Now working with schools to understand:



What works to improve literacy for children and young people across all schools, ability levels, and year groups in North Birkenhead

What we have done

Built a collective commitment to driving literacy improvements

Schools are working collectively in a new way to address literacy challenges.

Examples include:

- Improved relationships between primary and secondary schools and between primary schools and local charities, which have increased referral rates and support for individual pupils.
- A commitment from group members to work together locally to strengthen their joint approach in North Birkenhead.

Improved understanding of individual school contexts, successes and challenges

A significant part of Year 1 focused on implementing key assessments, building relationships and understanding the existing interventions and structures in schools to support pupils.

The data collected and the follow-up since have established a strong baseline and contextual understanding of schools' individual priorities and where there are common challenges across all schools.

Common challenges identified were:

- Early years language and literacy
- Transition from primary to secondary
- Support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Literacy training and CPD
- Attendance and engagement, driven by the impact of Covid

Implemented cross-school training and activities

Schools worked together to identify key areas of literacy and language development where their priorities are aligned.

From this, we were able to initiate the Early Language Project for pre-school children; organise further literacy training for school staff; and plan training for Year 2 to support schools to work together to address identified problems (Collaborative Enquiry training).

Why this matters

Children and young people with greater literacy capability are **better able to access the curriculum** and **more likely to be engaged** in lessons.

This means **they are at less risk of exclusion**, as persistently disruptive behaviour is the main cause of both fixed-term and permanent exclusion.

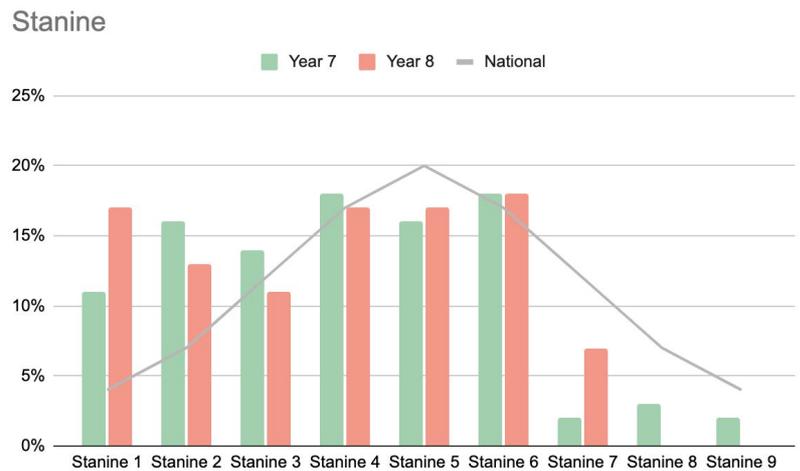
These children and young people are **more likely to leave school with key qualifications**, like GCSE English and maths, which **increases their chances of reaching a positive destination in education, employment or training** when they leave school.

Case study: Improving literacy at Birkenhead Park School

Birkenhead Park is the only non-selective secondary school in the area; 60% of pupils are eligible for free school meals (compared to 20% nationally) and one third have special educational needs.

The Year 7 and 8 pupils were assessed for reading at the start of the school year, revealing that a significant number of pupils, 40%, were well below national average.

The results showed that Birkenhead Park School had double the amount of pupils in the three lowest reading ability levels compared to pupils nationally.



Birkenhead Park School

The school introduced interventions to support their reading, and they made significant progress over the course of the school year (see page 11).

Interventions included:

- The Big Read: 30 minutes' reading 4x a week
- Word of the Week vocabulary introduced in every subject
- Frayer Model, a tool for building pupil vocabulary, in every subject
- Reading within the class
- Reading homework set

School closures due to Covid-19 meant there were gaps in delivering these interventions.

The impact

Improvements in staff confidence

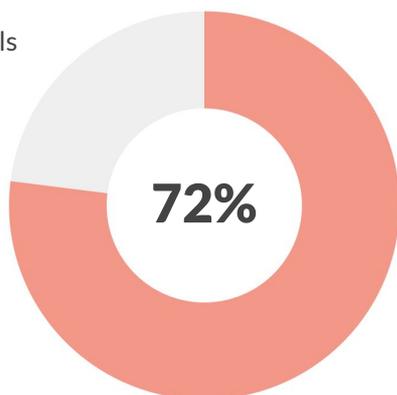
Year 7 and 8 form tutors all followed an instructional coaching programme to improve their own reading, and are now secure in modelling reading to a high standard to students.

Results from the staff literacy survey show that overall, confidence and understanding in delivering literacy have improved.

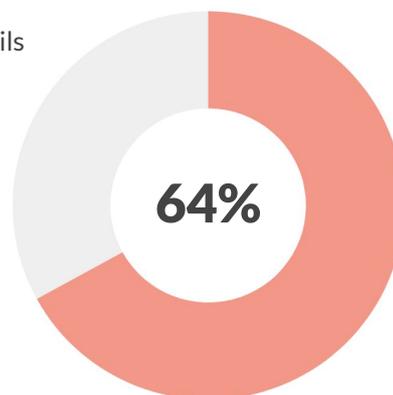
The Frayer Model has allowed staff to develop confidence in talking about key vocabulary, and means that they are making links and explaining vocabulary for students.

Improvements in Reading Scores (%)

Year 7 pupils



Year 8 pupils



Whole-school change

The school has now employed a specialist KS2 teacher to teach English to pupils in the lowest two brackets for reading ability.

“Staff are growing in confidence and understanding of vocabulary and the importance of literacy in their teaching. There is a recognition that reading and vocabulary are the key to academic success and that it is everyone's priority.”

Danielle Dawes, Assistant Headteacher,
Birkenhead Park School



Family & Services

Our aims: Improve the engagement and support of the most vulnerable families, and give them the opportunities they need to be healthy and happy. Completely redesign services in partnership with the local community, driving collaboration through the system.

Support is now tailored to need and families have avoided long wait times, during which situations can escalate.

24

Families signed up for support from Family Connectors in Year 1

The Multi-Disciplinary team have supported:

At the end of Year 1, the team was still supporting:

37

Children to step down from Child in Need Level 5 to Level 4 support

85

Children from Child Protection Plans Level 6 to Level 5 support

56

Children requiring specialist interventions (Level 4)

30

Families who require intensive interventions (Level 3)



Karen Costain, Family Connector

What we have done

Embedded the Community Support Team in the community

The Community Support Team is an innovative model, where C2C-funded Family Connectors work closely with Wirral Council's Multi-Disciplinary Team to provide an integrated support package for local families. The Team has been working together since November 2020, and operating out of a community centre at the heart of North Birkenhead since May 2020.

Through digital meetings and team-around-the family working, the new Community Support Team have been able to implement a new way of working with families.

Each school has been assigned a link worker from the team to provide support for specific pupils and ensure referral processes are smooth.

The feedback from the Team Leader is that the Family Connector roles have added significant value to how the Community Support Team is able to identify and meet vulnerable families' complex needs.

Improved support for families

The multi-disciplinary approach of Wirral Council's Community Support Team has had a positive impact on how quickly families access support. By assigning various roles to one team, support is tailored to need and families avoid long waiting lists when their situations can escalate.

The social work team leader has oversight of all the support in place for a family and is therefore able to gather the evidence required to step down families from Child Protection or Child in Need status more quickly. This has resulted in 85 stepdowns from Child in Need status and 37 stepdowns from Child Protection to Child in Need since October 2020.

Why this matters

By taking a **multi-disciplinary approach**, all of the available support within the community is joined together in an overall **early intervention offer across the local area**, meaning that more families and professionals are aware of what is available and how to access support.

It means team members can get to know local families and provide the **right support at the right time**.

This **holistic, family-centred approach** impacts positively on the families and the children and young people and leads to **long-term and sustainable change**.

Case studies: Aisha's story*

Aisha had been suffering in an abusive relationship after her ex-partner had come out of prison, and had briefly had her children taken away. When she met her Family Connector, she had her children back and wanted to take charge of her life.

Her Family Connector helped her get free baby items to keep her monthly costs down, a crisis food hamper until her next payday, and a working washing machine. Most important of all, the Family Connector got Aisha a laptop so she could access her emails easily and research how to set up her own business.

She was recommended a job coach and signposted to training about setting up a business. The Family Connector helped her find new accommodation that was still close to her son's school.

Aisha began to feel more confident, telling her Family Connector she had been "like a guardian angel" to her.

The impact

- More confidence
- Improved environment for the children and family
- Supporting Aisha to set up a business



St James Centre, North Birkenhead

Victoria's story*

Before working with Family Connectors, Victoria was going through a difficult time. She had low confidence in herself, was struggling to support her two children at home, and her ex-partner was out of work and not coming around to see the kids.

However, their Family Connector was able to get the family new toys and playing equipment for the children. They also sent them a 'Handyman' to fix the fridge and helped Victoria get special counselling she asked for to improve her self-confidence. Soon, the dad trusted the Family Connector more and he asked for help with applying for a new job and agreed on the times he wanted to spend with the children.

Next, Victoria would like to be a hairdresser again, a job she loves. Their story isn't finished yet, but Victoria has told her Family Connector she has been a "super star".

The impact

- Improved environment for the children and family
- Supporting Victoria to find a job
- Strengthening relationships between the children and their father

*Family Connector stories have been anonymised and details changed to protect people's identity.

Community

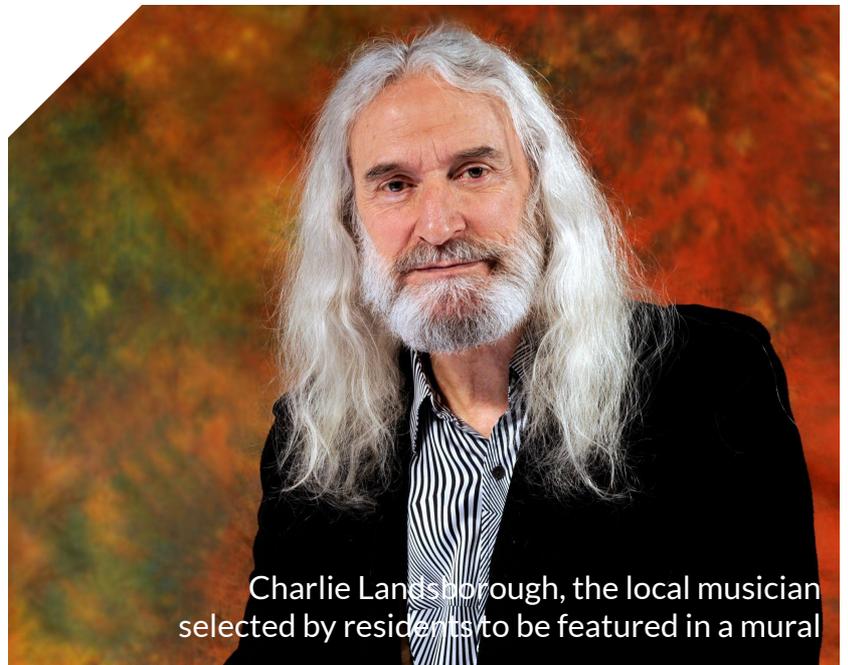
Our aim: The community owning the development of local culture and the local offer, addressing key issues affecting them.

Pride of Place Campaign

Local hero
Mural Competition

4,500
households

received a postcard raising awareness of the Cradle to Career programme and Pride of Place campaign, and inviting them to vote in a mural competition



Media coverage 23 pieces of press coverage 641.7k reach £131.8k PR value

Seed Fund 1.0 > £15,000 awarded to 15 community projects

What we have done

Pride of Place campaign

Partners have made good progress on activities that support the #OurNorthEnd pride-of-place campaign:

- Local history mural painted on the St James Centre and a launch event to celebrate North Birkenhead.
- The launch of the Community Seed Fund, which approved 15 activities from local groups/residents.
- Residents participating in a mural competition to celebrate a local hero of the North End.
- Additional support for summer holiday activities for children and families.

Residents' survey

A residents' survey was administered digitally and through partners in April to sense-check residents' priorities against those identified during Discovery following Covid-19.

Through our school partners we were able to reach 750 residents, including over 550 children and young people from the local area. The survey confirmed that antisocial behaviour, the appearance of the local area and the lack of a localised youth offer continued to be priority areas to address.

Positive press

As part of the press launch of Cradle to Career programme in May 2021 we:

- Produced a video filmed using unscripted interviews with young people, adult residents, professionals and donors.
- Obtained **39** pieces of television, radio, newspaper and digital press coverage featured on channels with a combined total audience of 25.8 million people.

Why this matters

Communities play a fundamental role in our sense of belonging, identity, pride and wellbeing.

This all **impacts the aspirations of children and young people.**

By harnessing the **desire of the community to participate in decision making** and develop initiatives to address the issues facing them, we're supporting them to **participate in building a positive future for North Birkenhead** and therefore helping to **raise the aspirations** of its children and young people.



Residents shared local history stories at the mural opening event



Mural launch at the St James' Centre





Community activities at St James' Centre



Learning for Year 2

Challenge

Learning

Moving forward to Year 2

1

Engagement during Covid - community and schools

The need to be responsive to schools and community organisations and invest time to rebuild relationships.

- Schools are reassessing their priorities around literacy, attendance and behaviour.
- We will appoint a Community organiser to engage residents.

2

Speed and clarity of decision making

The need to improve support for working and steering group members.

- Clear reporting to working groups.
- Clarity on funds available.
- New steering group chair to be appointed.

3

Expectations around outcomes

The need to clearly communicate what progress looks like towards sustainable change.

- Robust conversations with local partners about what progress looks like.
- Developing clearer communications to partners and donors.



Working collectively to effect change

Right to Succeed brings together residents, professionals and decision-makers to co-design a programme that is bespoke to the needs of the local community. We call this way of working “place-based change”.

The target beneficiaries are the children and young people living in the communities where we work.

Together with local residents, professionals and leaders, we:



The Collective Impact Conditions

We believe the following conditions are a prerequisite to effective collective working in communities, and we work to establish them. This is a way of working together that recognises we can achieve more together than we can individually.

- 01 A common agenda**

All the people involved in the project agree on what they want to achieve.
- 02 Shared measurement system**

Everyone agrees on what success will look like, and how progress is measured.
- 03 Mutually reinforcing activities**

Services and activities support and build on one another, making things run more efficiently.
- 04 Continuous communication**

Strong relationships are maintained through regular meetings and communications between programme stakeholders.
- 05 Backbone support**

One organisation keeps the project on track, coordinates the logistics, and makes sure everyone has the training, support and resources that they need.

John Kania & Mark Kramer, 2011, Collective Impact, Stanford Social Innovation Review

Thank you to our programme partners

Schools



Local partner organisations



Funders





RIGHT TO
SUCCEED