



**United Communities**  
® The best in everyone™

# United Communities

Annual Report 2024



# Welcome to the United Communities Annual Report





As we reflect on the past year, we're thrilled to celebrate the remarkable strides made in embedding community development across our schools. 2023 / 2024 has been a transformative year, with schools embracing their roles as community anchors and harnessing local strengths to drive positive change.

This year, we have witnessed inspiring progress, including the emergence of several community-led groups that are redefining local support systems. A standout achievement is the creation of a community pantry and allotment at Marlborough Road Academy, spearheaded by Year 5 pupils, demonstrating the power of children contributing to their community.

We've loved having more opportunities to visit local communities where this work is emerging. Our community listening campaigns – and the stories that emerge from them – have been among the highlights of the year, from 'sofa selfies' to taking camping chairs and flasks of tea out into the local neighborhood. We also hosted our first in-person gathering of community hub leads, deepening connections and sharing learning.

This annual report highlights the stories and achievements across our hubs and reflects our collective commitment to asset-based community development, where schools, local people and groups work together to build stronger and more connected communities.

Warm regards,

The Community Development Team

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# Who we are

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United Communities is part of United Learning, a national group of over 100 local schools, which together educate around 70,000 children and young people. At United Learning, we are committed to bringing out the best in everyone. This ambition extends far beyond our pupils and staff, to our pupils' families and the communities in which they live.

We know that schools working in genuine partnerships with their communities have a significant impact on the educational, social, mental, physical and economic wellbeing of children, young people, their families, and the wider community. United Communities supports schools to be good neighbours. We believe that schools can play a key role in fostering strong, supportive, and connected communities. We support schools to do this through advocating for an asset based approach to community development, equipping schools to discover what is already strong in communities, connect with others, and work together to take positive action.

As part of this work, we are supporting the development of 26 community hubs by 2026. The development of a community hub engages schools aiming to strengthen their role in community development and grow into prominent community anchor organisations. As community anchor organisations, they foster connections, empower local residents, and use their assets (resources, buildings and people) for the good of the community. Community hubs offer their facilities for community use, and many have dedicated community spaces where residents can come together, share skills and resources, and build stronger, more connected communities.

We believe in simplicity, the power of people and the art of the possible. Our work involves developing an infrastructure that enables schools to truly work with their communities for the common good, amplifying the work of our community hubs, and being curious about the impact.

**“*This is the only time I will see someone at Christmas, this has given me a new purpose, something for me.*”**

Local resident at a community meal in Paulsgrove

## Charlie Chan, Head of Community Development

With 18 years of experience in youth and community development, I have found that my passion lies in making the invisible, visible. I am driven in my role by the transformative power of schools truly working with their communities. I believe in the endless possibilities that emerge from these connections and am committed to supporting schools to be really good neighbours. I have yet to think of anything that community can't make better and am inspired every day by the community I am lucky enough to live in.



## Martina Montecchiarini, Senior Community Development Lead

As a Senior Community Development Lead, I'm deeply passionate about fostering strong, resilient communities where everyone can thrive. I work closely with schools to harness and amplify local strengths, ensuring they become vibrant community hubs. My responsibilities include leading fundraising efforts, designing impactful training programs, and conducting thorough evaluations to drive continuous improvement within the United Communities team.



## Sally Hodgson, Community Hub Development Lead

I am excited to be part of the community team at United Learning. I passionately believe that it takes a village to raise a child and that our schools have a key role to play within our communities. Our positive wider relationships will strengthen and extend opportunities for our children and families. By pairing this role one day a week with my position as Principal at Beacon View Primary Academy in Paulsgrove, I have the privilege of working directly with our wider school family to build on our collective strengths and support others in doing the same.



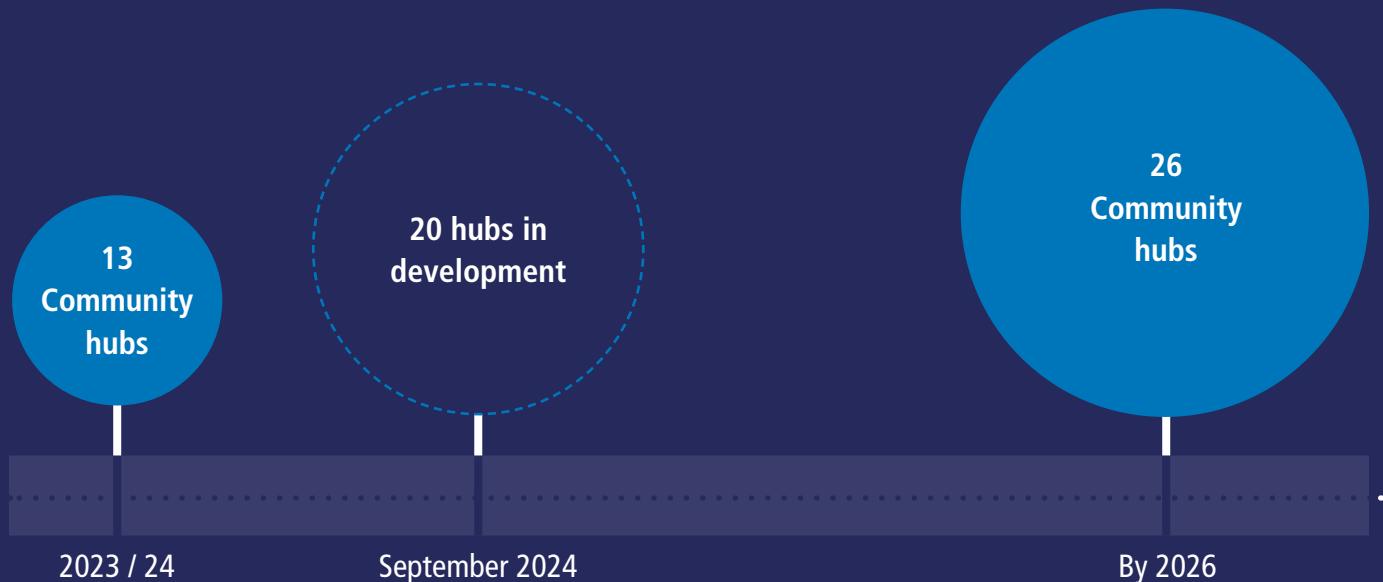


# Our journey

Each of our 13 established community hubs is as unique as the community they are part of. Those hubs are spread across England, in cities, towns, coastal and rural areas, reflecting a wide range of cultures and demographics.

This year saw Hunningley Primary in Barnsley, William Hulme's Grammar School in Manchester and Dukesgate Academy in Salford join the United Communities Network and begin the exciting journey of community hub development. From September 2024, we will have 20 community hubs in development, including a new cohort of schools joining our first bespoke Cradle to Career partnership with Reach Foundation.

As we look ahead, we are on track to establish twenty-six hubs by 2026. This growth is not just about numbers; it's about the impact we are making in communities across England. We are excited to see how our latest schools will contribute to this vibrant network.





**“It was particularly interesting to join you for a sofa session to see how you make these work. There is something quite special about offering people a chance to take time to reflect on their community with someone who cares and has scope to make change. You did this with real authenticity which is of course vital. ”**

Paulsgrove, Portsmouth





# Our hubs



Community hubs are inclusive spaces where residents can gather, share skills and resources, and foster stronger, more connected communities. Each hub is uniquely tailored to harness the strengths and assets of its local community, driving positive change at the neighbourhood level.

Although the appearance and structure of each hub differ, they often feature a range of common activities and services, delivered directly, through partnerships, or by local people themselves. These may include youth provision, early years groups, interest groups, adult education, sports and leisure activities, cost-of-living support, employment support, parent groups and courses, community gardens, and community action initiatives.



## Youthworks, Brierfield, Lancashire

### Mashuq Hussain OBE / Jenefa Begum

Our strength lies in our experienced staff who have created and continue to create supportive relationships with young people. Our hub operates on a voluntary participation basis and the number of young people who engage with hub activities shows our effectiveness.



## Woodlands, Sheffield

### Hawa Fazlanie

Our community hub thrives thanks to the unique connection our hub leads have with the community. Living in the same area and sharing cultural backgrounds with many of our families, they offer an authentic understanding that fosters trust and engagement. By translating school communications and actively participating in community life, they embody an ABCD approach, working collaboratively with families rather than merely for them.



## Paulsgrove, Portsmouth

### Vikki Gidney

Our hub thrives on a shared vision and ethos among our dedicated staff. We believe that being a good school isn't enough – it's about being an active and engaged part of the community. Our three schools have united under a common strategy, committing to the community by employing a dedicated community hub developer to drive this work forward. The leadership is passionate about bringing everyone on board and fostering a collaborative environment. This extends to the development of strong partnerships, both professional and personal, within the community. As we actively work with local residents, we have seen our partnerships grow and flourish. By identifying and connecting the strengths and assets within the community, we're building a network that supports and enhances the lives of everyone involved.





# Our hubs

## William Hulme's Grammar School, Manchester Akeim Mundell

Our community hubs successes are down to a whole school effort, consisting of staff from different teams, working and supporting one another. We look forward to developing our community work further this year by joining the Cradle to Career programme.



## Hill View, Oxfordshire Sally Shepley

We have a school leadership team with an ethos of putting the school's arms around the community. Our SLT appreciate that doing good in the community is worth doing and our dedicated hub lead has their support, alongside her own time, energy and resources to do this work. Additionally, from September 2024, we will be part of the Cradle to Career programme.



## Dukesgate, Salford Amanda Eldridge / Judith Richens

We have a dedicated community space committed to nurturing local talent, ideas, and connections. Our vision is strengthened by our Headteacher's active participation in an Asset-Based Community Development course, bringing a strengths-focused approach to community engagement.

We have focused on child-led initiatives, such as clothes swaps, empowering young people to take the lead in creating positive change. With a new Hub Lead set to join in September, we are looking forward to expanding our impact, continuing to serve as a vibrant, collaborative space for all.



## Phoenix Centre, Bognor Regis

Sean O'Connor

Our community hub is dedicated to creating a cradle to career experience with local citizens. Our plans include offering essential services from a central location and connecting community assets, ensuring that residents have everything they need to achieve highly ambitious lives. By fostering partnerships with local organisations, associations and residents, we plan to share learning and resource, working together in truly collaborative way for the greater good.



**“Wow, thank you all so much for doing this, this will make such a difference. ”**

Pantry member, Marlborough Road & Dukesgate



## Hunningley, Barnsley

Rachel Keightley

Although our hub is in early days, it has already made a significant impact. The recent positive response from our parents during Mother's and Father's Day events marks a notable shift in engagement, showing the community's enthusiasm for our efforts. This early success has energised us for the new year, and we are excited about continuing to build strong connections with families.





# Our hubs

## Grange, Northampton

Gemma Harvey

Our community hub is a community resource designed in collaboration with local residents, children, associations, and organisations, the hub has become a vital part of the Grange community. Grange Primary Academy provided dedicated space within the school, transforming it into a valuable community asset, run by local people. Some of the first community hub activities were created by children on our community committee who developed their own project proposals and secured funding for them from the local authority.



## Marlborough Road, Salford

Judith Richens

We are a community hub fostering student involvement and connection. While our dedicated space is temporarily unavailable due to a fire, activities will relocate to the main school building. Pupils actively contribute, gaining character education through service and work experience. Set to launch in September 2024, the hub will be led by Marlborough Road's retiring Principal, embracing an asset-based community development approach to maximise local strengths.



**“ This hub is so different. It's really ours. ”**

Local resident, Grange estate



**“ This can be  
a job? How can  
I do that? ”**

Year 5 community  
committee member,  
Marlborough Road

**“ We [run the local pantry], because we were here  
chatting anyway...doing this we can help others and  
chat to even more people. ”**

Local resident, Marlborough Road

**“ We are like  
a family here. ”**

Local Resident,  
Hill View



# Insights from independent evaluation

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As part of our commitment to embedding asset-based community development (ABCD) within our community hubs, we commissioned Curating Connections, who specialise in ABCD with over 30 years of experience working with young people and communities, to conduct an independent evaluation of our current approach.



## Creating Safe, Welcoming Spaces

There is a clear emphasis on developing accessible, hospitable spaces that encourage community engagement, in every setting.



## Building Trusting Relationships

Effective hubs focus on building strong, trusting relationships and fostering a participatory culture. Our hub leaders are seen as connectors and facilitators rather than service providers.



## Strengthening Community Partnerships

Our hubs benefit from meaningful partnerships with local organisations, which extend opportunities for community members and support community-led initiatives.



## Knowing the Community

The hub leaders are well-acquainted with their local community, either through experience or active engagement as a result, they are more successful in fostering trust and participation.

# Our data

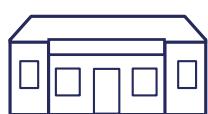
This academic year our hubs have recorded over **24,000 attendances**, showcasing strong engagement in our hubs' activities and their broad reach. Here's the breakdown of participation by group:

				
Infants (Pre-school age)	Children (Primary age)	Young People (Secondary age)	Parents	Community Members
<b>4.8%</b> <b>(1,160)</b>	<b>26.3%</b> <b>(6,323)</b>	<b>36.3%</b> <b>(9,014)</b>	<b>19.5%</b> <b>(4,693)</b>	<b>14.5%</b> <b>(3,491)</b>

Our hubs facilitated over **2,000** hours of community activities, bringing together a diverse range of local strengths and resources. Here's how these hours were distributed among our most established hubs:



Hill View  
**238 hours**



Marsden Heights (Youthworks)  
**275 hours**



Portsmouth  
**480 hours**



Bognor Campus  
**175 hours**

**There were 160**  
partnerships forged significantly expanding  
our resources and amplifying our efforts

**We saw a 52%**  
increase in overall engagement in 2023-2024

**and a 200%**  
average increase in school and community  
partnerships.

Volunteers – young people, parents and community members – continued to play a crucial role this year, generously contributing **1,000** hours of their time to our hubs.





# Our outcomes: stories

Our community hub framework is built on a co-produced theory of change that remains flexible and adaptable. The outcome areas have evolved organically from the activities within each hub, serving as a common language and enabling us to measure impact. Currently, the work of our hubs aligns with six key areas, forming the foundation for capturing the positive effects on school families and the wider community. We also track changes in proxy indicators such as attendance and school-parent relationships. The following pages feature testimonials and stories that demonstrate how our community hubs contribute to these outcomes.



## Sustainable Futures

The school, families and local community connect with nature, make ethical and green choices, and take action to improve the local environment and community.

## Healthy Lives

The school, families and local community have access to mental, social, and economic support. They participate in activities to develop their physical, mental, and spiritual health and well-being.

## Choice & Opportunity

The school, families and local community can easily access information, advice, and guidance. There is a variety of opportunities to participate in positive activities, develop new skills, and realise aspirations.

## Strong Connections

The school, families and local community can access safe, shared spaces and take part in activities which build socio-emotional skills, stronger positive social connections and new relationships.

## Financial Stability

The school, families and local community have the support and resources they need to deal with the financial crisis.

## Community Cohesion

The school and local community participate in activities to build community cohesion and work together to build capacity to affect positive change on a local level.



## Sustainable Futures

The school, families and local community connect with nature, make ethical and green choices, and take action to improve the local environment and community.

**“Youthworks efforts have not only enriched the lives of the young people they work with but have also significantly contributed to the broader fabric. ”**

Dana Olărescu

## Youthworks at Marsden Heights Community College

As a socially engaged artist, I have had the privilege of collaborating with Mash and Jenny and different groups of young people they coordinate. Since 2023, when I was as an artist in residence at In-Situ working on the This is Nelson project, I have become aware of the impactful work they conduct.

This year, I am an artist in residence with Super Slow Way, focusing on a food justice project. These experiences have given me a firsthand view of the significant positive changes they have fostered in the lives of the young people they work with. With over fifteen years of experience working with children and young people in various educational settings, including in London, Gainsborough, and Felixstowe, I am in awe of the innovation, passion, and creative methodologies employed by Youthworks. As part of the Taste of Transformation: Artistic Explorations on Food Justice project, I am working with Marsden Heights Community College students interested in learning about and exploring food justice. Our gatherings take place bi-monthly at the pop-up creative space in Lomeshaye Park; Youthworks have been instrumental in engaging large groups of young people. The students will present their creative work at a final public gathering titled Slow Feast in Lomeshaye Park. Over 30 young people have already participated in these sessions.

Since 2023, I have observed the profound impact of Youthworks on young people. The team understands the unique challenges the young people face and inspire them to pursue their passions and interests. The skills and confidence they gain through the various programs extend beyond creative activities, positively influencing their academic performance, social interactions, and overall outlook on life. These young people are actively encouraged to find and use their voices, which is crucial for their growth and self-confidence. Youthworks efforts have not only enriched the lives of the young people they work with but have also significantly contributed to the broader social fabric.

Dana Olărescu ([www.danaolarescu.com](http://www.danaolarescu.com))



## Marlborough Community Hub at Marlborough Road Academy

Emma\*, a Year 5 student, was nominated as a pupil leader and became part of a group focused on exploring the Rights of the Child, the cost of living crisis, and the increasing demand for food support at Marlborough Road school. This initiative sparked a community-driven project that bridged the gap between students and parents.

Emma's mum who was recently appointed as a parent governor, embraced the opportunity to support the school's efforts. Inspired by the pupil group's decision to address food hardship, she took on the role of pantry champion, leading the charge to establish a school-based community pantry. She recruited a dedicated group of volunteers and completed training in food hygiene, allergy awareness, stock rotation, and pantry management. Her leadership not only strengthened the community but also empowered volunteers to take an active role in this vital project.

Through this initiative, Emma developed remarkable confidence, honing her public speaking skills by delivering presentations and engaging with experts to inform the pantry's development. Her writing skills also flourished as she crafted persuasive letters to supermarkets, successfully securing food donations for the pantry.

At the soft launch of the pantry, both mum and daughter played crucial roles, translating for community members. Their efforts led to 33 members expressing interest in joining the pantry, with 14 signing up on the spot. Despite a fire in the proposed pantry location in July 2024, the family remains committed, volunteering to collect surplus food from supermarkets over the summer to replenish stock.

\*Name has been changed

## Choice & Opportunity

The school, families and local community can easily access information, advice, and guidance. There is a variety of opportunities to participate in positive activities, develop new skills, and realise aspirations, including partnerships with local businesses.



33

members expressing their interest in joining the pantry, with 14 signing up on the spot, following the efforts of Emma\* and her mum.

## Healthy Lives

The school, families and local community have access to mental, social, and economic support. They participate in activities to develop their physical, mental, and spiritual health and well-being.



## William Hulme's Grammar School

Building Connections Through Our School Pantry.

For quite some time, we had difficulty trying to engage with one of our families. Sarah\* has ten children; many of them are students at our school. Although we had knowledge of the challenges the family experience (inadequate space within the family home, access to technology – which is affecting the young people's education, and poverty more generally), our attempts to offer support had always been unsuccessful. Since launching the school pantry, Sarah now frequently visits school to collect items. This 'bumping point' has created an opportunity for us to check in and see how the family are doing, build relationships and connect her with others for support where appropriate.

\*Name has been changed

**“ *The bumping point has created an opportunity for us to check in and see how the family are doing.* ”**





## Paulsgrove / Portsmouth cluster

At all three schools in Paulsgrove, we aimed to build positive relationships with families, particularly those we had previously viewed as difficult to reach. Rather than relying on traditional methods that often felt imposed on the community, we adopted a new approach – creating open, non-judgmental conversations in neutral spaces to gain a deeper understanding of life in the community and foster more meaningful connections.

Initially, we invited parents with lower attendance rates to drop-in sessions at a local church, but engagement was still low. To address this, we identified a group of parents who were well-connected within the community and formed a co-production group. This group helped organize informal gatherings, such as tea and toast sessions. While these efforts sparked some ideas, the focus remained on addressing challenges rather than tapping into the community's strengths.

The real shift occurred when we brought on a community development worker and participated in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) training with Nurture Development. With this asset-focused mindset, we introduced a new initiative – bringing a sofa out into the community as a way to spark informal conversations and create natural “bumping points” for connections. Through open-ended questions, we engaged residents in discussions about their experiences, passions, skills, and roles within the community. This approach helped us uncover hidden assets and strengthen our relationships with families. By also using the sofa at school events and during drop-off times, we became more visible and approachable, enhancing engagement and building stronger connections.

We also involved community partners in some of these sessions, which enabled us to form deeper ties with residents and gain a richer understanding of community life. Although we faced initial challenges, such as bad weather and overly formal materials, the sofa became an informal, friendly tool that facilitated more meaningful conversations. These community discussions and “sofa selfies” led to increased participation in school activities, inspired new initiatives, and fostered wider connections. Over time, we realized that keeping these dialogues open and building on existing relationships were key to sustaining strong connections. The success of the sofa initiative underscored the importance of being proactive, visible, and rooted in the community – going beyond the school gates to where people naturally gather. This approach taught us that by listening, engaging, and building on the assets already present, we can make a real difference.

## Community Cohesion

The school and local community participate in activities to build community cohesion and work together to build capacity to affect positive change on a local level.



**“ It’s really good to connect with other young mums in the area. ”**



## Financial Stability

The school, families and local community have the support and resources they need to deal with the financial crisis.

**“ Our next stop was the Grange Primary Community Hub, where we introduced him to the various services available. We discussed the future visions of the hub, and Fred\* expressed a willingness to contribute when needed, which further reinforced his sense of purpose and community. ”**

## Grange

I first met Fred\*, a 59-year-old resident of Kettering, while he was wandering the town centre, visibly distressed about his mounting rent arrears and the threats of eviction from his landlord. He was struggling with mental health issues that made it difficult for him to work, leading to a depressive state that left him feeling stuck in a repetitive, purposeless routine. Recognising the urgency of his situation, we arranged a time to meet and chat. During our meeting, Fred spoke candidly about his mental health struggles and how his daily routine felt like a downward spiral, devoid of any sense of purpose. In an effort to find a meaningful way to support him, we explored his interests and passions and discovered that he enjoyed woodworking and gardening.

With this in mind, I connected Fred with the Green Patch, a community allotment space where woodworking and gardening are key activities. There, he met the friendly workers and volunteers, and his excitement about the possibility of volunteering was palpable. The supportive environment at the Green Patch seemed like a perfect fit for him, and he felt a sense of calm and belonging. While we were there, Fred was also introduced to the Green Patch's food bank and gratefully accepted the offer of support. Our next stop was the Grange Primary Community Hub, where we introduced him to the various services available. We discussed the future visions of the hub, and Fred expressed a willingness to contribute when needed, which further reinforced his sense of purpose and community. In addition to these engagements, Fred mentioned he was in dire need of proper footwear and clothing. Together, we visited "Cornerstone," an organisation that offers free clothing services, and placed an order for the items he required. To tackle his rent arrears, we made adjustments to his benefits to ensure direct payments to his landlord and established a payment plan to help him manage his arrears more effectively.

We have arranged to meet again soon to see how things are going. The initial involvement with the Green Patch and the supportive community there is expected to significantly benefit Fred's mental health and overall well-being.

\*Name has been changed



# Our approach

## Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)

We began working with Nurture Development to offer all our hub leads the opportunity to complete their foundational training for practitioners working in citizen space. ABCD focuses on discovering, connecting and mobilising the often hidden strengths and assets within communities. By prioritising the talents, skills, and resources of our communities, we built a more sustainable and empowering model of engagement.

## The universal offer on our intranet – the hub

To support all our schools with community engagement, we launched a dedicated page on our internal intranet. This offers startup guides, fundraising resources, evaluation tools, templates, and past reports to help schools kickstart their community work making it easier for schools to begin their community work.

## Ignite funding

We launched the Ignite Communities Grant, providing seed-funding for schools engaged in community development projects. This grant supported schools that had already initiated their community engagement efforts, encouraging community driven innovation and amplifying existing hub activities. Successful applicants committed to sharing their progress through case studies, photos, and videos, and engaged in monitoring and evaluation activities to showcase their impact.

**“We’re now known as the school that takes in old baths and boats! Local residents call us up asking if we can make use of their old bathtubs – we usually can of course! ”**

Hub Lead, Portsmouth



## Structured evaluation

We commissioned Curating Connections to provide an external lens on the embedding of our community development approach across our community hubs and the Group more widely.

## Our first network away day

In response to our hub leads connecting through our Communities Network, we hosted our first Network Away Day, a culmination of a year-long investment in our network. This event included industry experts who shared valuable insights, fostering collaboration, learning, and knowledge exchange. Building on this success, we planned to hold two in-person Network Away Days next year, in addition to our half-termly online community meetings.

## Cradle to Career partnership:

This year, our first cohort of schools successfully graduated from the Reach Foundation's Cradle to Career two-year partnership, having developed their own place-based models of 'cradle to career' support rooted in the unique strengths and assets of their communities. Building on the success of this partnership, we collaborated with the team at Reach Foundation to offer a new cohort of United Learning schools a tailored version of the programme. This started in July with a welcome webinar and saw schools engaging in community asset mapping and deep dives into school and community data over the summer.

The new cohort is made up of 11 schools from across the country who will journey together over the next two years. The partnership is divided into two parts:

- Part 1: A six-month deep dive into Cradle to Career Leadership, designed to equip leaders with the knowledge and skills to develop a comprehensive cradle to career model.
- Part 2: A 14-month implementation phase where leaders embed their cradle to career models through key areas:
  - a) Core Elements: Focused on leadership development, community listening, creating a theory of change, and building partnerships to extend support beyond the school gates.
  - b) Optional Modules: Addressing areas such as enhancing school-family relationships, creating coherence in curriculum delivery, and developing long-term, trust-based connections with families.

## Fundraising CPD with Altair

This year we collaborated with Altair (formerly Oaks Fundraising Consultancy) to bolster our fundraising strategy. Since September 2023, Altair has worked closely with the United Communities central team to refine our approach and provide tailored support to our hubs. In the summer term, Altair delivered fundraising CPD for our Schools Community Network, sharing customised grant pipelines, and supporting major fundraising initiatives alongside our team.



# The Phoenix Centre

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This year saw the completion of a community asset transfer of The Phoenix Centre to United Learning. This state-of-the-art, two-storey youth and community centre, which had been closed for several years, is now being prepared to become a hub of activity and support for local residents, with an official launch event scheduled for October.

The revitalisation of this popular community asset has been a collaborative effort, with local residents, young people, associations, businesses and organisations coming together to breathe new life into the facility. The planned provisions, developed with young people, community groups, and residents, reflect a diverse range of activities, including youth work, sports and fitness, music sessions, parent and toddler groups, and sensory sessions.

The centre boasts impressive amenities, including a full-size sports hall, commercial kitchen, youth zone, café area, sensory room, two recording studios, and a changing spaces facility. In August, a taster week offered a preview of the exciting activities to come, setting the stage for the centre's full-scale operations. The Phoenix Centre is set to be a vibrant and invaluable resource for the community.

**“ It was so great to have this relaxed environment for my child to watch a film in this kind of setting, with his needs I can't take him to the cinema. ”**

Local parent, Bognor Regis.



# Scaling up and next steps

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We are set to establish 26 community hubs by 2026.

Our adaptable framework has consistently shown its capacity to create meaningful, positive change in each of our communities.

This approach effectively builds robust local connections and serves to make visible the often invisible strengths of community.

Our vision is to support as many schools as possible to be good neighbours. We aim to develop the infrastructure and resource to help schools create their own youth and community-led hubs.

This involves creating opportunities for learning and sharing, but also offering operational support to ensure that each new hub can thrive, effectively serve its unique community and remain flexible.

We believe that schools have the potential to be more than just educational institutions; they can become community anchor institutions deeply rooted in their local areas. By integrating schools more fully into the fabric of their communities, we aim to enhance the support available to young people and their families, creating a more cohesive and supportive environment.

To achieve this vision, we are eager to collaborate with individuals and organisations that share our commitment. We welcome partnerships with those who are passionate about seeing schools become integral parts of their communities and who are ready to contribute to this transformative work. By working together, we can expand the reach and impact of our community hubs, ensuring that they continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those they serve.

Our efforts are driven by the belief that a strong, community-focused approach can address many of the challenges faced by schools and their surrounding neighbourhoods. We look forward to seeing more schools consider community solutions to school challenges, and develop connections to create lasting, positive change.

## Acknowledgements

Our community development efforts are made possible through the generosity, dedication, and talents of numerous local residents, young people, as well as our central and school-based colleagues. We are also grateful for the invaluable support and expertise of several outstanding organisations.

Special thanks go to:

- Reach Foundation
- Nurture Development
- Locality
- Curating Connections
- Altair
- The Centre for Emotional Health
- Active Partnerships
- InKind Direct
- Oasis Community Partnerships
- University of Central Lancashire
- Rotary
- Jewsons
- Coop
- Fareshare
- Your Local Pantry
- NPC
- The Baby Bank Alliance

We extend our sincere gratitude to Saffron Sadiq for her contributions to the development of this report and her support in shaping our evaluation methodology over the past year. We wish Saffron all the best during her career break, where she will be pursuing a master's degree focused on social impact.

**“ Look at how many people are joining us! We did it! ”**

Year 5 pupil

**“ As an SEMH specialist teacher, I found that the most significant barriers to learning were young people’s unmet social needs. Working with the team at Marsden Heights is refreshing and exciting because the young people I meet have strong connections with the staff who support them. They feel heard and valued and this enables them to thrive or access the support they need to thrive! ”**

Phil Wade, Founder Breaking Cycles CIC, Youthworks / Marsden Heights

**“ I know someone who can do that, I’ll see if they want to get involved too. ”**

Local resident, Grange

We hope this report has provided valuable insights into the impact of our work and the progress of our community hubs.

Together, we can continue to drive positive change – please share this report with three people who you think would find it valuable.



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