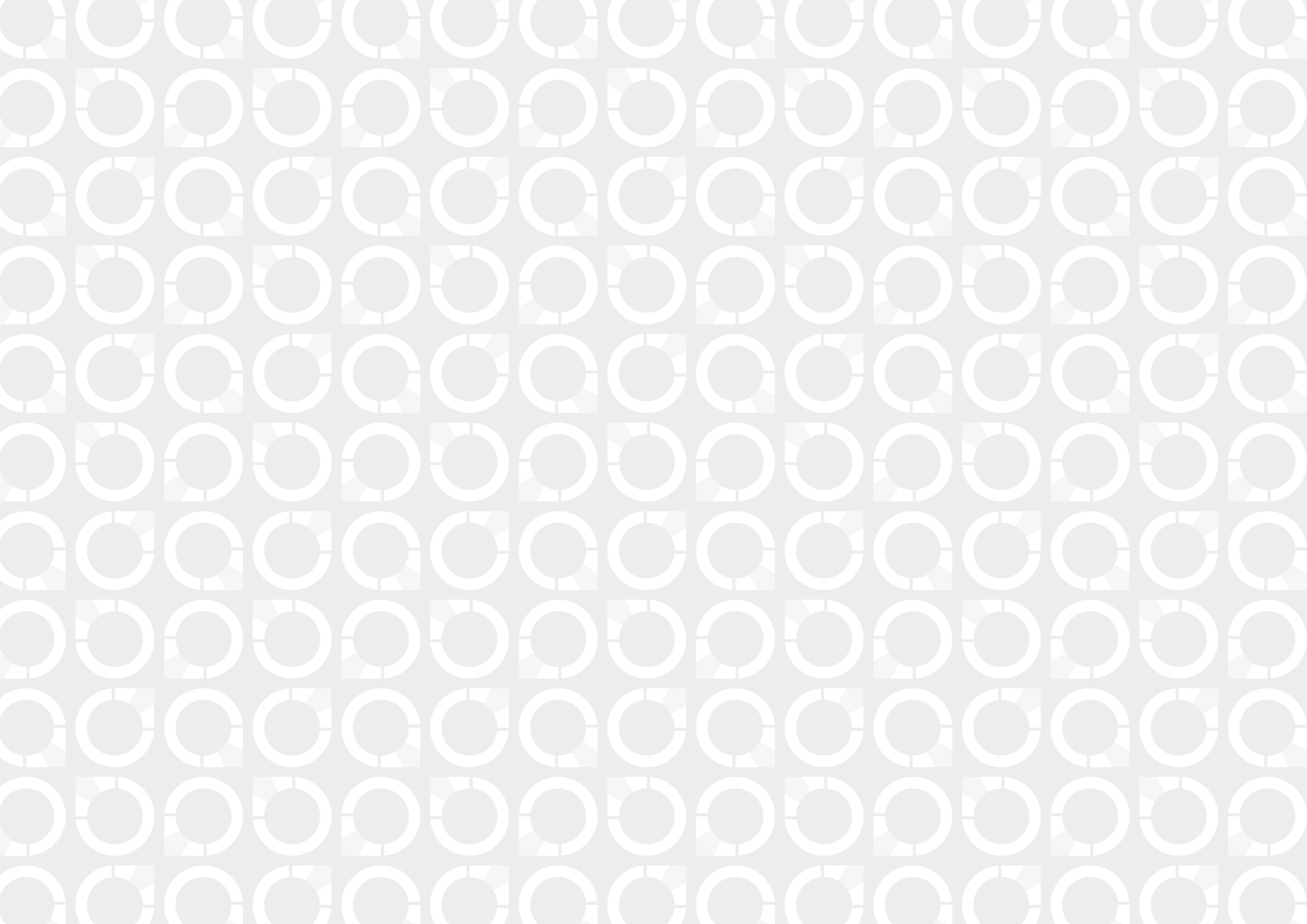




**The North West Comino Consortium 2024**



THE NORTH WEST COMINO CONSORTIUM  
YEARBOOK 2024





## REFLECTIONS

As I reflect on the Comino 2024 year I am reminded of so many of our projects which have been instrumental in the jigsaw of success in our schools. Some of these highlights for me include the prestigious invite to the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) in London where Falinge Park students were highly commended for their work on “Earth Matters” in the Pupil Design Awards. Their winning project used nature as a springboard for developing solutions to air pollution. To witness them on stage amongst the independent sector schools (mainly southern schools) was very special and spoke volumes to our work in Greater Manchester. I was able to pop into the Royal Opera House on the same day to watch our students perform with the professionals from the Royal Ballet and Orchestra streamed back into our Create day at Z Arts in Manchester. This event was followed by 132 students travelling to London to watch the performance of the “Alice in Wonderland” ballet at the Royal Opera House. Bernie Furey picked up her award during the interval for the work she carries out on the behalf of the ROH and now sits on their national leadership group. Giving teachers and students this wonderful opportunity of cultural capital is the “bread and butter” of our Comino work.

James Frith regained his MP status in the election and has been appointed to the Cultural, Media, and Sport select committee. James delivered our project “School life to public life” and visited all our schools with his presentation on standards for public life through the Nolan principles. Students then visited him in Westminster with a lively debate followed by a tour of the Houses of Parliament. We look forward to keeping close to him as he steps into his new role.

Another celebrity we introduced to our schools was Patrick Grant from the TV programme the Sewing Bee. He certainly enthralled the audience with his stories at our “Endangered Heritage Craft “day at Ladybridge High School, where students engaged in four of their practical hands-on activities.

I spent an emotional evening listening to the stories of students involved in the project “Tales to Inspire” Carefully selected students had their own platform to share and celebrate their own personal stories which were professionally written up and shared with the local community and families in a published book.

Congratulations to the Derby High School who were silver winners in the Pearson National teaching awards - Making a Difference - Secondary school of the year and for reaching the finals of the National Goldsmiths Award for community engagement. To Falinge Park for their achievement in the Educate Awards and to Sacred Heart primary school maintaining their outstanding Ofsted rating. Also a special mention to our friend and colleague Lynne Bianchi on becoming a Professor and celebrating 10 years of primary science work (SEERIH) at Manchester University.

We are continually on the outlook for new partners to further our cultural /industrial project work and we welcomed the following into the consortium this year – Royal Horticultural Society RHS at Bridgewater, Community Rail Lancashire, Arriva Trains, Eco Vida Routes, Endangered Heritage Crafts and Z Arts.

We are hopeful that the educational scene will be changing with the curriculum review headed up by Becky Francis. Our Comino projects focused on capital culture and creativity continue to be valued by our schools giving both teachers and students opportunities which normally don’t come their way.

Enjoy the Comino 2024 Year Book - it is full of fun and enjoyment entwined with teaching and learning in the spirit of Comino.

**Pat Walters**



## ABOUT OUR NORTH WEST COMINO CONSORTIUM

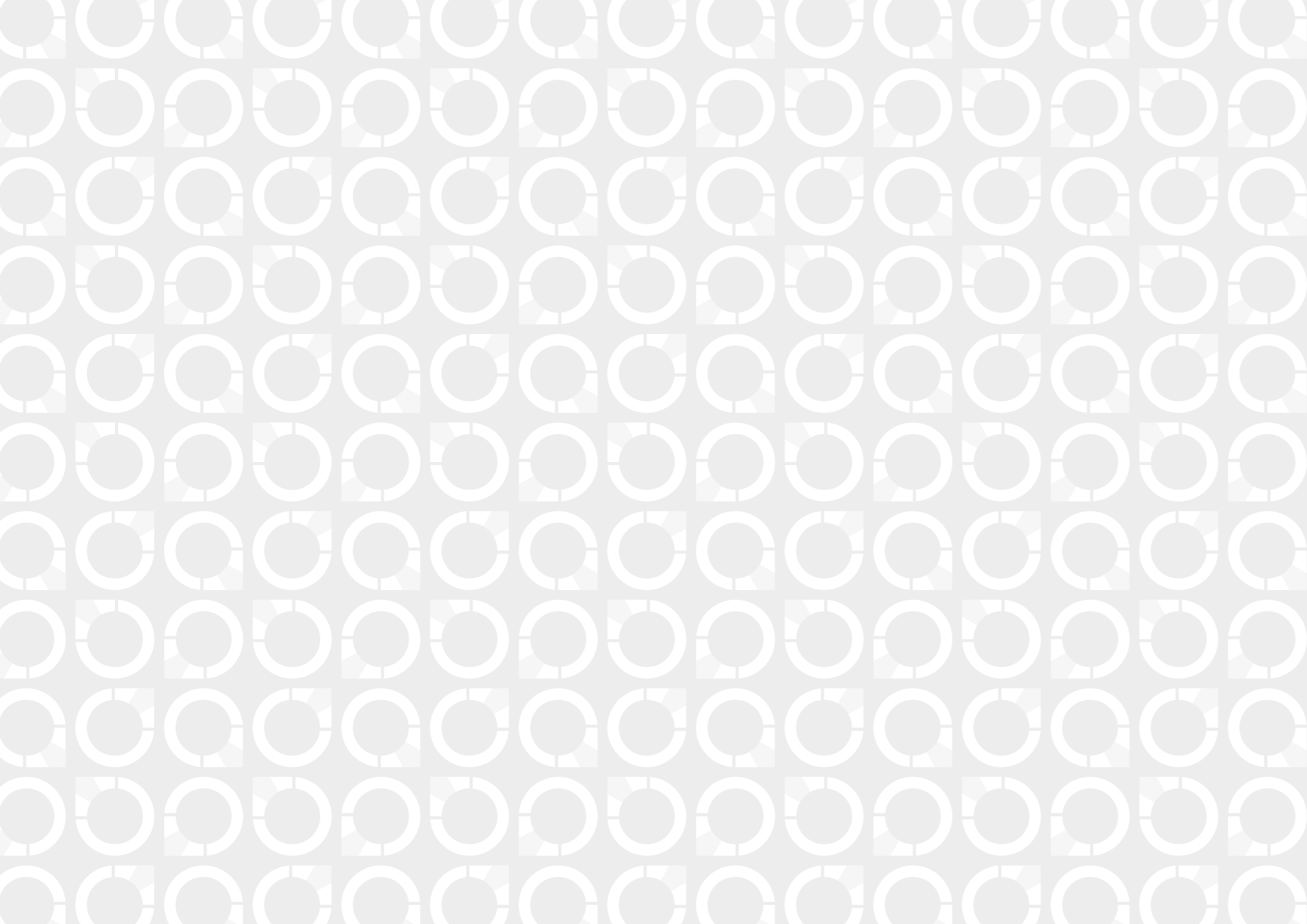
At the heart of the education work of the Comino Foundation is the Socratic belief that 'education should be the lighting of a flame; not the filling of a vessel'. The North West Comino Consortium is a Community of Practice funded and managed by the Foundation to work with partner schools across Greater Manchester who share our ethos and aspiration for a broad, balanced and pupil centred education.

The consortium partners work together to pilot projects, programmes and pedagogies that help young people experience learning in settings that link the curriculum to real life practice. We believe that real-life learning, developed through partnerships with people and places in worlds beyond school can motivate young people to discover their passion for education and for a positive future.

One of the defining pillars of the work across NWCC schools within the past decade has been the development of pioneering work in the area of youth leadership programmes. Post Covid, and in the light of civic and climate crises, the UK is waking to the fact that the drive for positive change is coming from young people in the UK and across the world, and we are proud that many of our longest standing schools, are recognized locally, regionally and nationally for their transformational pupil leadership programmes. This year's menu of opportunities continues to develop models of practice which put young leaders at their heart, with transparent signposting to where and how they meet Gatsby benchmarks and nurture cultural, social and career capital.

NWCC Schools include both primary and secondary phases. They are:

- Abraham Moss Community High School
- Abraham Moss Community Primary School
- Alice Ingham RC Primary School
- Falinge Park High School
- Ladybridge High School
- Sacred Heart RC Primary School
- St Gabriels RC High School
- St Gregory's RC Primary School
- St Monica's RC High School
- The Derby High School
- The East Manchester Academy



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# PROJECT CASE STUDIES





## CASE STUDY: COLLABORATION WITH THE ROYAL BALLET AND OPERA

Over the past year, Sacred Heart School and the NWCC schools have had the privilege of collaborating with the Royal Ballet and Opera on a series of transformative professional development (CPD) sessions in dance and music. Creatives from both prestigious institutions delivered these sessions, providing teachers with inspiring, high-quality training that has enriched their practice and brought fresh energy and creativity into their classrooms.

In addition to the CPD sessions, pupils from Year 1 to Year 11 participated in the **Create and Dance** Project during the summer term, culminating in a spectacular showcase at **Z-arts in Manchester**. The Create and Dance project aims to develop children's understanding of sing and dance while unlocking their imagination and creativity. It offers an inclusive approach to leading dance and storytelling, helping pupils build creative collaboration, physical learning, spatial awareness, and overall health and well-being.

The showcase brought together pupils from both primary and secondary schools, performing side by side in a celebration of creativity and collaboration. It was inspiring to see secondary pupils acting as role models and mentors for their younger peers, demonstrating the power of cross-phase working. The experience had a profound impact on all involved, fostering confidence, teamwork, and a deep appreciation for the arts.

In October, 132 pupils from across the NWCC schools visited the Royal Ballet and Opera to watch a performance of *Alice in Wonderland*. For many, it was their first experience of professional ballet, and they were captivated by the beauty, skill, and storytelling on display. The visit left pupils in awe and sparked a new level of inspiration, with some expressing a desire to pursue further involvement in the arts. This collaboration with the Royal Ballet and Opera has not only enriched the cultural experiences of our pupils but also ignited their imaginations and aspirations, creating memories that will stay with them for years to come.

### Participating Schools:

Abraham Moss Community Primary School  
Ladybridge High School  
Sacred Heart RC Primary School  
St Gabriels RC High School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The Derby High School

### Partners:

The Royal Ballet and Opera House  
Z Arts







“**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL THE PUPILS HAS BEEN LOVELY, BUT I FOUND IT ESPECIALLY REWARDING SPENDING TIME WITH SOME OF THE SHYER CHILDREN AND SEEING THEIR CONFIDENCE/ABILITIES GROW OVER THE SESSIONS. THIS EXPERIENCE HAS ALSO CEMENTED MY DESIRE TO BE A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER, WHICH IS LOVELY (AS IT COULD HAVE GONE EITHER WAY!) I CAN REALLY SEE HOW THE POEMS ALLOW THE CHILDREN TO FLOURISH WITHIN THEMSELVES. EACH ONE OF THEIR POEMS BRINGS OUT THEIR PERSONALITY. I COULD ALMOST HEAR THE CHILDREN AS I READ THE WORDS, FOR SOME OF THEM I EVEN HAD A GUESS AT WHO HAD WRITTEN IT! THIS PROJECT HAS ALLOWED ALL CHILDREN FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, STRENGTHS AND UNDERSTANDING OF POETRY TO SUCCEED.**

**Javi Fedrick**

*Poet*

## CASE STUDY: POET IN RESIDENCE

Our annual Poet in Residence programme seeks to connect pupils and teachers to passion and potential through a learning program that extends beyond traditional curriculum content and delivery. Growing from the highly successful Digital Designer in Residence, Poet in Residence has developed lasting partnerships with cultural and creative organisations across Greater Manchester and engaged 100s of young people in the potential of poetry and language. Central to this initiative is the foundation's partnership with the Manchester Poetry Library, which plays a pivotal role in supporting our emerging poets and encouraging pupils to engage with poetry. Without the support of The Poetry Library, and specifically the amazing Kaye Tew, this programme would not have the depth and reach it has.

Poet in Residence is inspired by the belief that children are naturally playful with language. Interacting with emerging poets allows them to express their ideas, develop their language skills, explore creativity, and build confidence in writing, performing, and creating. Through the Poets in Residence programme, poetry students from Manchester Metropolitan University, are matched with NWCC schools and regional cultural partners. Together with NWCC and Manchester Poetry Library colleagues, NWCC teachers co create a bespoke project, each poet receiving a foundation bursary to support their work. Celebrating a sense of achievement is key, with pupils' work showcased in an anthology of poetry, in schools and at the Manchester Poetry Library, however, it is the magic that happens during the project that creates lasting memories for the participants. As one pupil said 'I wish poetry was our every lesson'.

This year, for the first time, we chose to offer a title, "Rewilding Words", to inspire our partnerships. Each of the 7 partnerships developed this in their own way identifying where collections, performances, passions and curriculum come together to interpret the theme.

### Participating Schools:

Abraham Moss Community High School  
Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
Sacred Heart RC Primary School  
St Gabriels RC High School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### Partners:

The Poetry Library  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
The Portico Library  
The Whitworth  
Manchester Art Gallery  
Central Library  
Museum of Science and Industry  
RHS Bridgewater



The “Myths & Monsters” project involved Year 7 pupils at **TEMA** working with poet **Becky May** to explore themes from Beowulf and Greek myths. Through workshops, students wrote poems from different perspectives, reflecting on the power of storytelling and voice. They were encouraged to perform their poetry, enhancing their confidence and presentation skills. Visits to **Central Library** and **The Poetry Library** encouraged students to explore historical texts, illustrations of monsters and engage with diverse poetic styles. The project fostered creativity, self-expression, and a deeper connection to storytelling traditions.

The “Rewilding Words” project, led by poet **Rachael Hill**, involved Year 7 pupils from **St Monica's RC High School** in a creative exploration of nature and poetry at **RHS Bridgewater**. The project aimed to foster a connection with the environment and build confidence in language, encouraging pupils to break traditional poetic forms and explore human-nature interactions. Students built dens, explored ruins, and wrote nature-inspired poems outdoors. As their writing improved, they grew in confidence sharing their work. The project's poems, influenced by their experiences, will be displayed in a new nature garden being developed at St Monica's.



Poet **Fauzia Agbonhin** collaborated with Year 9 pupils at **St Gabriel's RC High School** and **The Portico Library** to explore the cultural significance and decolonisation of names. Students researched name etymology and wrote poems that encapsulated their identities. They studied identity-focused books and works by female authors who adopted male pseudonyms in the 1800s. At the Poetry Library, students engaged with poetry through a scavenger hunt. In school, Fauzia shared her poetry on imposter syndrome and diaspora, inspiring students to create and perform their own poems.



Poet **Javi Fedrick** worked with Year 5 pupils at **Sacred Heart Primary School**, inspired by the Whitworth's batik collection and themes of play, collaboration, and purpose. The project combined collaborative games, poetry, artwork, and film-making to address pupils' thoughts on climate change and the natural world. During visits to **The Whitworth**, pupils created artwork and poetry based on gallery pieces. Classroom sessions featured nature-themed poems by Louise Greig and Matt Goodfellow, inspiring students' own writing. The project boosted pupils' confidence and creativity, resulting in poetry, artwork, and a film where they starred in and shared their poetry.

Year 8 students from **Ladybridge High School** worked with poet **Anita Ngai** and the **Science & Industry Museum** by "Rewild the Everyday with Hope". After studying "Narratives of War & Hope," students explored the concept of hope, writing poems about its role in daily life. They selected everyday objects from the museum collection, using them as grounding symbols of hope. A visit to The Poetry Library included a scavenger hunt and poetry performances, encouraging students to experiment with poetic forms and express their creativity.

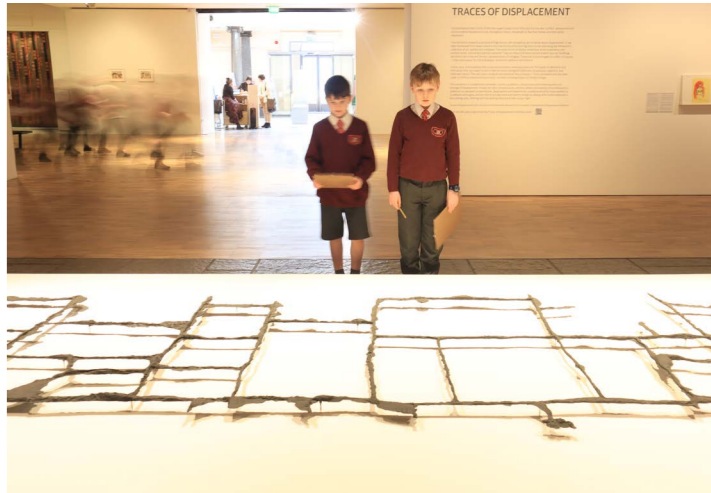
Year 7 Drama students from **Falinge Park High School** collaborated with **M6 Theatre Company** and poet **Abhijeet Singh** on "Refuge, Remedy, Reunite", inspired by the play Nest. The project explored environmental themes using drama and poetry, with each session starting with a drama workshop followed by poetry writing. Students created original Haiku poetry, which they showcased to parents and peers. The project fostered personal growth and a newfound enjoyment of poetry, with their work to be featured in the school's Art, Words, and Wellbeing Garden.

The project was inspired by Noah's Ark and the concept of rewilding, with two animals of each species thriving in a new habitat. Year 7 pupils at **Abraham Moss Community School** worked with poet **Lebonetse Khubamang** to write poems about different animals, exploring themes of perseverance, adaptation, and cooperation in nature. Visits to **Manchester Art Gallery** and **The Poetry Library** provided visual and literary inspiration, helping students develop confidence and creativity through poetry writing, scavenger hunts, and art activities. The project encouraged students to reflect on how animals survive and thrive in changing environments.

“

THE PART THAT WILL **STAY IN MY MIND** THE LONGEST IS THE LAST SESSION, WHERE STUDENTS PERFORMED THEIR POEMS IN FRONT OF EACH OTHER. NOT ALL OF THEM HAD THE CONFIDENCE TO READ THEIR WORK. ONE STUDENT, WHO HAD BEEN **ADAMANT HE WOULDN'T READ HIS POEM AS HE WAS DYSLEXIC AND SOMETIMES STUTTERED,** CHANGED HIS MIND WHEN HE REALISED WHAT A **SAFE AND CELEBRATORY PLACE HIS CLASSROOM WAS.**

Becky May, Poet



“ THE SCHOOL LIFE TO PUBLIC LIFE PROJECT PROVIDED OUR STUDENTS WITH A **FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT WESTMINSTER. STUDENTS ENJOYED THE HISTORY OF WESTMINSTER HALL AND WERE THRILLED TO BE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE THE WORKINGS OF PARLIAMENT FIRST HAND BY WATCHING A PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE IN THE GALLERY.**

**Catherine Nelson**

*Head of Teaching and Learning, St Gabriel's RC High School*

## CASE STUDY: FROM SCHOOL LIFE TO PUBLIC LIFE

A core strength of many NWCC schools are their young leadership/action for change programmes which sit at the heart of these schools' social and personal development provision. To build on the passion and motivation schools had witnessed in their emerging young leaders our From School Life to Public programme was conceived to nurture this passion for leadership on the national stage

We have been delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with local MP James Frith, who has been our lead partner for the project. Formerly the very active Labour party parliamentary candidate for Bury North, in each NWCC school James has lead a presentation on his personal experiences of life as a politician; his own motivation for leadership, and the standards of behaviour that he expected to live by, set for parliamentarians through the 'Nolan Principles for Public Life'. Lively question and answers sessions during each of these visits allowed as many as 60 pupils from each school to bring their own opinions and questions around topics that were important to them.

James also talked about the importance of campaigning for change, and challenged his audiences with a 'live' competition brief to plan a short action for change campaign to promote an issue they felt passionate about.

### Participating Schools:

Abraham Moss Community High School  
Abraham Moss Community Primary School  
Alice Ingham RC Primary School  
Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
Sacred Heart RC Primary School  
St Gabriels RC High School  
St Gregory's RC Primary School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The Derby High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### Partners:

Comino Foundation  
Christian Wakeford MP  
James Frith MP  
Matt Torbitt







Three winning pupils from each school were thrilled to be given the opportunity to participate in a Comino Foundation funded trip to the UK Houses of Parliament on the basis of the strength of their campaign work. Leaving from Manchester by train to London was, in itself, a new experience for many of these young people, whilst the opportunity to visit Westminster provided a transformational experience that would last a lifetime in the memory of all pupils and staff. The visit began with a personally guided tour of Westminster Hall and the iconic 'lobby' where so many of the pupils had seen the news being made, on a daily basis, on their own television or ipad from home. Our tour guide was Matt Torbitt; Christian Wakeford's Senior Parliamentary Advisor, and pupils were enthralled to hear his own story of progression from Stockport schoolboy to aspiring Member of Parliament. We were able to watch the Houses of Commons in full session, and to see at first hand some of the ancient traditions, figures and costumes, which brought to life much of the spectacle and theatre of parliament that James had talked of in his school visits.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the visit, however, was a private reception with James and his colleague, MP Christian Wakeford, where pupils were each able to pose a question and discuss with the politicians issues that they themselves were most passionate about.

“

**OUR TRIP TO WESTMINSTER WAS AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE. IT WAS SURREAL TO SEE WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WITHIN THE PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS. I REALLY ENJOYED ENGAGING WITH MP CHRISTIAN WAKEFORD AND POSING QUESTIONS TO HIM ABOUT POLITICAL ISSUES. MY MIND HAS NOW BEEN OPEN TO THE WORLD OF POLITICS AND I HOPE TO PURSUE THIS IN THE FUTURE.**

**Alfie Livingstone**  
*Pupil from St Gabriel's RC High School*



“**TAKING PART IN THE RSA EARTH SMART PROJECT TRANSFORMED THE WAY OUR PUPILS APPROACHED SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE. THE SUPPORT FROM COMINO WAS COMPLETELY INVALUABLE AND ALLOWED US TO ENSURE THAT AS THE PUPILS WERE ON THE RIGHT TRACK AS THEIR RESEARCH AND PROTOTYPING HELPED TO FORMULATE THEIR FINAL IDEAS. USING NATURE AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS TO OUR ISSUE OF AIR POLLUTION CAPTURED THEIR IMAGINATION AND FUELLED THE DESIGN PROCESS. EVERY PUPIL WHO TOOK PART BECAME A MORE CONFIDENT COMMUNICATOR AND INNOVATOR AND HAS DEVELOPED THEIR APPROACH TO PROBLEM SOLVING AND ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS. WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR THE OPPORTUNITY!**”

**Rose Edmondson**

*Teacher of Science and Geography, Falinge Park High School*

## CASE STUDY: RSA PUPIL DESIGN AWARD

The RSA's full name is the Royal Society for Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce – and it is , “where world-changing leading ideas are turned into world changing actions”. The RSA has been at the forefront of significant social impact for 270 years. Their research and innovation work has changed the hearts and minds of generations of people. Central to this work are their “mission-aligned Fellows” - a global network of innovators and changemakers, with whom the RSA seeks to work collectively to enable people, places and the planet to flourish.

The Comino Foundation was established in 1971 during Dimitri Comino's celebrated role as an RSA fellow. In their long-standing shared history, the Foundation and the RSA have collaborated on ventures designed to develop young people's individual and collective capabilities so that they are better equipped to live purposeful and fulfilling lives for the benefit of themselves and wider society.

A significant recent project that the two organisations created together was the RSA Pupil Design Award, a national challenge-based programme for secondary and sixth form pupils aged 11-17. This Award encouraged pupils to use their creativity and imagination to tackle real-world challenges designed to enable, people, places and the planet to flourish. This year we celebrated a decade since the awards were established by the RSA and the Comino Foundation.

In this celebration year North West Comino Consortium took the decision to harness the PDA programme to elevate and bring together pioneering work, already going on in many NWCC schools, focused on environmentalism and sustainability. Working in partnership with Eco Vida Routes, a small local eco education charity; we aimed to develop a peer group of highly motivated geography and science students across the North West Comino Consortium who could become sustainability champions within their institution and potentially build hubs of excellent practice from there.

### Participating Schools:

Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
Sacred Heart RC Primary School  
St Gabriels RC High School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### Partners:

Royal Society of Arts  
EcoVida Routes



### A Nature-Inspired Approach to Sustainability in Schools

The RSA's 2024 Earth Smart brief challenged young designers to harness the power of biomimicry to address pressing sustainability and climate change issues. We asked teachers and pupils to approach the brief at a meaningful local action level by finding a sustainability issue within their own school that pupils could directly impact with the application of biomimicry.

Our core group of teachers were invited to start the process by attending a dedicated training day which introduced the PDA process and included:

- **Subject Knowledge:** Deepening teachers understanding of biomimicry concepts and their real-world applications.
- **Practical Guides and Solutions:** Access to resources and tools to facilitate project implementation.
- **Idea Generation:** Time for teachers to brainstorm and develop innovative project ideas.

Following this day, they were asked to develop a scheme of work that would allow them to guide pupils through exploring the sustainability problem in school, then using 'design thinking' along with biomimicry principles to solve it. They would then need to create a prototype and test its efficacy through measurable data and feedback.

Throughout this process Eco Vida Routes provided mentorship and support including:

- **Project Implementation:** Practical advice on overcoming challenges and refining project plans.
- **Resource Access:** Connecting schools to relevant resources and expertise.
- **Problem-Solving:** Assisting with troubleshooting and finding solutions to obstacles.
- **Inspiring Student-Led Initiatives**

### Problems Tackled and Solutions Created

The impact of this collaborative effort was evident in the diverse range of projects undertaken by the six participating schools, including a primary school. Pupils totally embraced the real world nature of the challenge and the satisfaction of experiencing how they could directly make a difference in the world.

Pupils from Falinge Park High School's committed lunch-time and after-school Science Club, worked with teacher Rose Edmondson to create a prototype for an in-classroom air filtration device which harnessed the power of plants – moss in particular - to capture carbon from classroom air. Efficacy was evidenced in the data they collected when testing.

A hand-picked group of pupils from the East Manchester Academy worked with geography teacher Jess Lloyd, to develop a hugely inspiring media campaign 'Switch Off Day' which grabbed both hearts and minds across the school. The team identified a series of 'hacks' through investigation, which could have real impact on school energy usage if introduced.They tested these hacks on a whole school 'Switch Off Day' and were able to show measurable reductions of up to 40% in school energy usage on that day.

Pupils from Ladybridge High took the challenge of creating well-being spaces for peers in a playground area on the school site which was unloved and dreary. Taking inspiration from visits to sites of re-naturalised spaces in Manchester such as the Castlefield National Trust railway walk and the new Mayfield Park, in a former bus depot, the team created plans for a series of 'Pocket Parks' including flowering plants, naturally created seating areas and produced beds and a plan for a lunch time horticulture group to maintain them were produced. Pupils surveyed 100 peers to get feedback which they submitted with their project entry for the award.

### Recognition and Impact

The quality of all submissions was recognised at national level by the RSA judging team, with each school group receiving detailed and positive feedback on their work.

The 6 NWCC schools who submitted were 60% of all state school submissions to the awards this year, and 100% of all FSM pupils submitting.

The Falinge Park High School group went on to take the top award for the Earth Smart brief in their age category at the prestigious RSA Pupil Design Awards Ceremony in London.

Rose Edmondson, the talented teacher who led this group to success, has recently been awarded the Rochdale Educate 'Commitment to the Environment Award' for the work with her pupils, beating all other Rochdale schools at a prestigious ceremony at Rochdale Town Hall.

NWCC have now commissioned Eco Vida Routes to continue the growth of sustainability hubs and champions in schools in 2024.25. These talented staff are now working closely together and with Martin Faulkes to pilot a new Environmentalist in Residence project, which takes forward the success of the Poet in Residence model.



“THE PUPIL DESIGN AWARDS EXEMPLIFY THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION, PROVIDING ALL PUPILS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO TACKLE REAL-WORLD CHALLENGES THROUGH INNOVATIVE THINKING. OVER THE PAST DECADE, OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMINO FOUNDATION HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE’S INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CAPABILITIES, SO THAT THEY ARE BETTER EQUIPPED TO LIVE FULFILLING AND PURPOSEFUL LIVES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THEMSELVES AND WIDER SOCIETY. THE REMARKABLE ENGAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH-WEST (REPRESENTING 43% OF SUBMISSIONS) WITH THE SUPPORT OF EXPERT PRACTITIONERS, HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF NURTURING CREATIVITY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM, INCLUDING PARTICIPATION IN NON-TRADITIONAL CREATIVE SUBJECT AREAS, SUCH AS GEOGRAPHY AND COMPUTER SCIENCE. AS WE TRANSITION TO RSA SPARK WITH FURTHER FUNDING SUPPORT FROM THE COMINO FOUNDATION, WE ARE PROUD TO CELEBRATE A SHARED COMMITMENT TO EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE THROUGH DESIGN AND IMAGINATION.

Mario Washington-Ihieme  
Project Coordinator, The RSA

“IT WAS MY FIRST VISIT TO RHS BRIDGEWATER AND I WAS **OVERWHELMED** BY THE WHOLE SITE AND EXPERIENCE. THE TASTER DAY FOR OUR KS4 LEARNERS ALLOWED ME TO **EXPLORE** HOW WE CAN **UTILISE THE IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES** OF SUSTAINABLE HORTICULTURE AND APPLY IT TO OUR **CURRICULUM** AT LADYBRIDGE. THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM AT RHS DID A **WONDERFUL JOB** OF EXPLORING THE SITE WITH IN DEPTH LEARNING ABOUT HORTICULTURE AND MECHANISATION IN PRACTICE AND WORKSHOPS ABOUT PLANTING AND SEEDING. I CAN SEE ME PLANNING **FUTURE EDUCATIONAL VISITS** TO RHS TO SUPPORT LEARNING AT LADYBRIDGE.

John Knowles,

Head of Humanities, Ladybridge High School

## CASE STUDY: THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY TASTER DAY

In February, 23 students and staff from our partner schools took part in a careers focussed taster day with our new partner RHS Bridgewater.

The session was for interested students, whether they were already a keen gardener, or simply had a love for plants, or were unsure whether horticulture was for them and just wanted to try something new.

The session offered our students the opportunity to experience a working garden and see behind the scenes to get a taste of what working in horticulture would be like.

As well as gaining a fantastic insight into the environment at the RHS and the work they do, they were introduced to a clearer understanding of the various career paths in horticulture.

### Participating Schools:

Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
St Gabriels RC High School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The Derby High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### Partners:

RHS Bridgewater

“

IT WAS MY THIRD VISIT TO RHS AND IT WAS GREAT TO SEE TOWARDS THE END OF WINTER. I ENJOYED THE **OUTDOOR LEARNING** EXPERIENCES AND I AM KEEN ON HORTICULTURE. I ENJOYED THE TOUR OF THE SITE AND THE PLANTING WORKSHOP. I ALSO FOUND OUT SO MUCH ABOUT **CAREERS IN HORTICULTURE** AND WOULD LIKE TO DO MY **WORK EXPERIENCE** AT RHS NEXT YEAR. **THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO ATTEND THE DAY.**

**Student**

*Ladybridge High School.*



“ I ENJOYED LEARNING OUTDOORS. I COULDN’T BELIEVE HOW VAST AND ELEGANT THE RHS WAS. I LEARNED THAT IN A WORLD WHERE LOTS OF JOBS ARE DYING OUT THAT THERE ARE A GROWING NUMBER OF JOBS IN HORTICULTURE.

Student  
The Derby High School

“ THE ENDANGERED CRAFTS DAY WAS A **VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE** FOR ALL. WHO KNEW THAT THE **FIRST TRAINERS WERE MADE IN BOLTON** AND THAT **ROGER BANNISTER WORE BOLTON TRAINERS WHEN HE RAN HIS 4 MINUTE MILE?!**

IT WAS A **PRIVILEGE** TO LISTEN TO PATRICK GRANT TALKING ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY IN TERMS OF CLOTHING. HE CERTAINLY GAVE US LOTS TO THINK ABOUT. THE ENDANGERED CRAFTS THAT LEARNERS WERE ABLE TO **EXPERIENCE** ON THE DAY WERE REALLY **INTERESTING**. IT WAS **AMAZING** TO SEE OUR LEARNERS **FULLY ENGAGED** WITH THE VARIOUS EXPERTS AND THEIR CRAFTS. THESE WERE EXPERIENCES THAT WE COULD NOT HAVE POSSIBLY GIVEN OUR LEARNERS **WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF COMINO...**

**Ann Zammit**

*Deputy Head; Ladybridge High School*

## CASE STUDY: **ENDANGERED CRAFTS DAY**

The Comino Foundation's annual family gatherings draw together partners from schools, universities, charities and other social enterprises to facilitate new thinking and new partnerships which explore the power of practical problem-solving and the Head, Hand, Heart (3H) models for learning which sit at the heart of Dmitri Comino's vision for education. Within NWCC we relish the opportunities this bring us to share ideas and build new practice with some hugely inspiring and exciting new national partners. At the Winchester Gathering our North West team met Daniel Carpenter and quickly decided we needed to engage Heritage Crafts to partner with our schools.

In 2024 we have been privileged to work with 'Heritage Crafts' the national charity for traditional heritage crafts who are currently involved in a high profile campaign to save 'The Red List' of critically endangered crafts in the UK. Crafts careers are experiencing a renewed vigour due to the rise of individualised online retail, market places such as Etsy, and the move away from the unsustainable, globalised production models which have lead to climate change. Meanwhile TV programmes like 'The Repair Shop' and 'Sewing Bee' have raised an appetite from some young people to consider careers in Britain's highly regarded craft industries.

### **Participating Schools:**

Abraham Moss Community High School  
Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
St Gabriels RC High School  
The Derby High School

### **Partners:**

Comino Foundation  
Heritage Crafts Partners





Through our collaboration NWCC and Heritage Crafts were able to bring together young people from Ladybridge High School, Falinge Park High School, The Derby High School, St Gabriel's RC High School and St Monica's RC High School for a hands-on day of craft making including neon bending, pewter casting, willow weaving and hat making with some of the North West's leading makers in their fields. This 'festival of making' was hosted by Ladybridge High School from the inspirational setting of their on-site farm. The day started with a superbly placed keynote speech by the 'Sewing Bee's' Patrick Grant, who is one of the UK's highest profile advocates for craft and sustainable fashion. Patrick was able to wow local pupils with the knowledge that the first ever trainer was invented in Bolton, and that he produced most of the garments for fashion first Collective Clothing ranges in mills across Lancashire and the North West. The young people participating in the day were visibly inspired by his passion for sustainability, which was clearly shared by the audience; and it was clear that his messaging that to choose longer wearing and UK produced clothes, is in the interests of helping the Earth's recovery, had enormous impact.

“

I FEEL THAT THE ENDANGERED CRAFTS ACTIVITY OPENED MY EYES TO THE EXPANSIVE RANGE OF DIFFERENT PRACTICAL JOBS. THE NEON SIGN MAKING WAS ESPECIALLY GOOD BECAUSE IT REQUIRES A WIDE RANGE OF SKILLS TO MAKE A BEAUTIFUL PRODUCT.

**Student**  
*Ladybridge High School.*



“...OUR LEARNERS CAST PEWTER BROOCHES, MADE SWALLOWS OUT OF WILLOW, EMBELLISHED FELT HATS AND TRIED THEIR HANDS AT NEON GLASS BENDING - EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES ON AN ORDINARY SCHOOL DAY. THEIR MINDS HAVE BEEN OPENED TO NEW POSSIBILITIES AND AN APPRECIATION OF THE SKILLS INVOLVED IN THESE ENDANGERED CRAFTS.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR MAKING THIS HAPPEN FOR OUR LEARNERS.

Ann Zammit

Deputy Head; Ladybridge High School

“**HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE SOME OF OUR YEAR 9 PUPILS TO McCANN STUDIOS TO TAKE PART IN THE JAMMIE DODGER MARKETING CAMPAIGN WAS SIMPLY AMAZING! THE PUPILS WORKED COLLECTIVELY AS A TEAM AND DEMONSTRATED GREAT COMMUNICATION SKILLS WHEN THEY PITCHED THEIR CAMPAIGN! I LOVED THE FACT I GOT TO HAVE MY PHOTO TAKEN WITH KEVIN THE CARROT! WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!**”

**Paula Walsh**

*Ladybridge High School*

## CASE STUDY: McCANN MANCHESTER COMINO SUMMER SCHOOL

### LEARNERS EXPERIENCE THE REALITY OF WORKING IN A TOP ADVERTISING AGENCY

This exemplary project set within the prestigious Bonis Hall, Prestbury complete with its own swimming pool continues to WOW our schools. The time, energy and enthusiasm which McCann staff give to this project is second to none. This year's creative advertising project centred around the famous Jammie Dodger biscuit. This product has had no advertising for the last 10 years so for our students to be given this real live brief was challenging. It needed to appeal to both young and older audiences.

The students were introduced to the McCann team with their roles and responsibilities– Social (tik tok), Creative - coming up with the ideas) Strategy (interrogating briefs, research, solving business problems) Business leadership (relationship building) The young McCann team consisted of a business director, an art director, a copywriter, a strategist and an account director. These terminologies and processes were new to the students, and they found themselves immersed in the cliches of real-world advertising over the two days.

They spent time at the McCann studio – Craft, where they style, shoot and distribute images and videos. They met the people who worked there- 3D, 2D specialists, character designers, riggers for animation and photographers. They saw the facilities the studio offers including kitchen sets, and daylight studios, a set-built workshop, a model changing room and a huge product storage area.

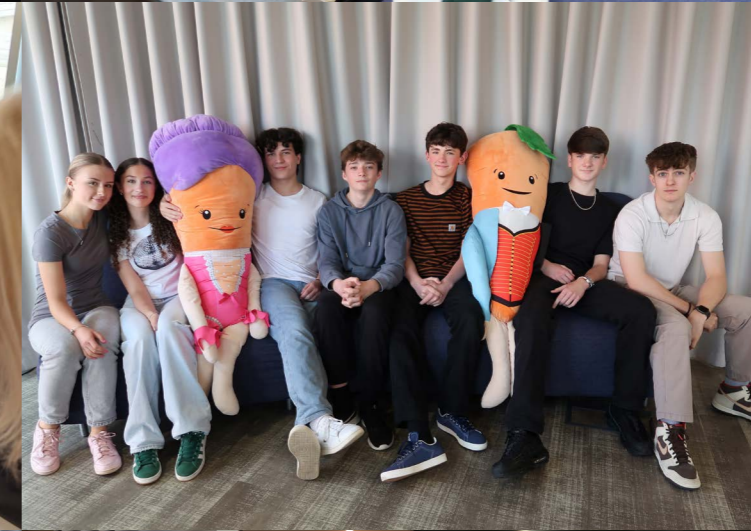
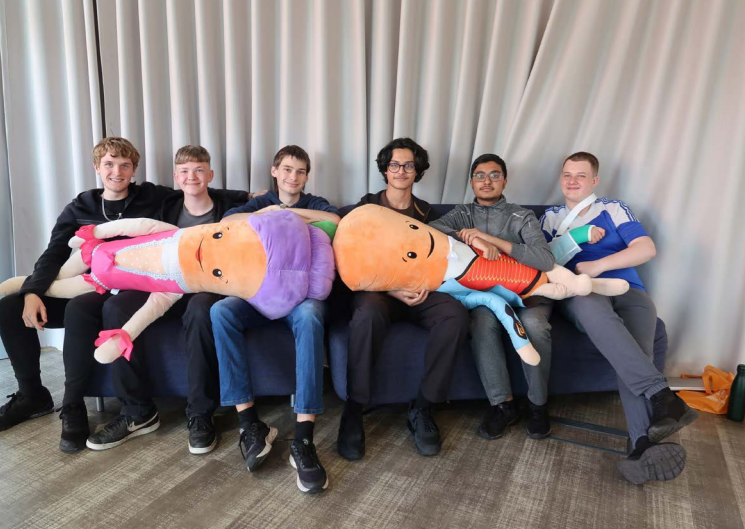
With all this new knowledge they then formed identical teams and set about designing their own adverts to pitch to the McCann directors. The team that won the Jammie Dodgers advert was a Tik Tok version of a heart shaped game performed by its members. The McCann directors were blown away with the ideas and we await the real TV advert.

#### Participating Schools:

Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
Sacred Heart RC Primary School  
St Gabriels RC High School  
The Derby High School

#### Partners:

Comino Foundation  
Craft  
McCann Manchester





“**ESPAÑA SIN PASAPORTE WAS A WONDERFUL AND ENRICHING OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH MYSELF AND OUR LEARNERS. I GAINED SO MUCH FROM WORKING WITH MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES STAFF FROM THE OTHER SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF PERSPECTIVE, SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS, AND BUILDING A WIDER NETWORK WITH SCHOOLS WITH A SIMILAR APPROACH. OUR LEARNERS GOT SO MUCH ENJOYMENT FROM THE PROJECT. IT FELT LIKE A LITTLE BIT OF SPAIN WAS BROUGHT TO THEM FOR THE DAY AND IT GAVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT, ENGAGE IN AND ENJOY SPANISH CULTURE WHICH THEY OTHERWISE WOULD NOT HAVE EXPERIENCED. THE PROJECT ALSO ENABLED THEM TO PRACTISE THEIR SPANISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN A MEANINGFUL CONTEXT AND HAS DEVELOPED THEIR COMMUNICATION, TEAMWORK AND CONFIDENCE.**

**Katherine Reynolds**

*Teacher of Modern Foreign Languages, Ladybridge High School*

## CASE STUDY: ESPANA SIN PASAPORTE

‘Espana Sin Pasaporte’, Spain without a Passport is our first NWCC project to work directly with Modern Foreign Languages teachers; and the vision for the project comes directly from their own insights and experience.

Teachers were concerned that many of them had experienced a drop off in Year 9 applications to Modern Foreign Languages GCSEs since Covid. It had been increasingly difficult to arrange wider cultural experiences outside school for learners. Furthermore, with many NWCC schools sitting in areas where parents are unable to afford languages trips abroad for their children, teachers feel their pupils miss out on the excitement of the cultural exploration that the lived experience of being in another country brings. Our motivated and inspiring group of teachers developed their vision for a ‘simulated’ trip to a Spanish village through an away day which celebrated the country’s culture whilst giving pupils the chance through some brilliantly executed role play activity, to play both the roles of both tourists and tourism hosts in shops or ‘tiendas’ within the village.

The event provided a hugely inspirational, fun-filled and immersive learning experience for pupils, where they were encouraged to speak in Spanish and supported by teachers to do this. Each pupil also received a bespoke visitor pack which included carefully chosen phrases and articles on cultural aspects of the village.

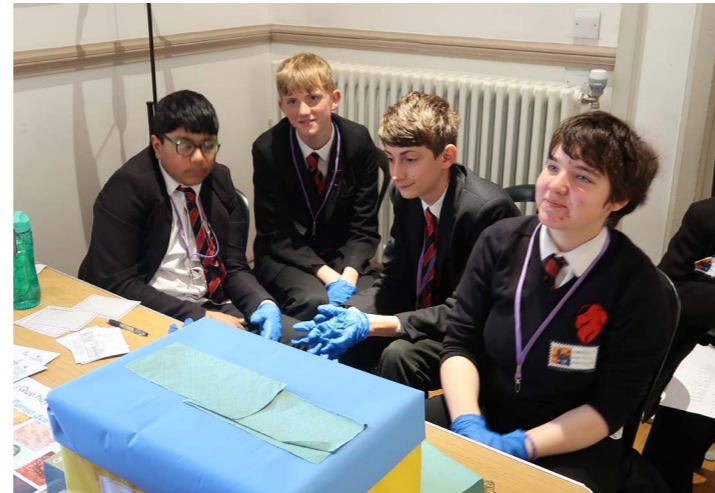
On entering the village learners were directed to El Banco, provided by Falinge Park High School pupils, where they collected 40 ‘ESP euros’, that they could spend on the range of activities and goods on offer in the village.

### Participating Schools:

Abraham Moss Community High School  
Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
St Gabriels RC High School  
St Monica’s RC High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### Partners:

Manchester Instituto Cervantes  
Bury Met





A carefully planned rota meant that throughout half the day each group of pupils were free to visit stalls and shops as tourists, whilst they spent the other half the day 'working' in the role of tourism host, facilitating the engagement of their peers in the activities on offer.

The centre of village life focussed on the amazing 'cafeteria' where lunch was served by an incredibly able and hard working team of St Monica's High School pupils. Customer groups of four friends were invited to take tables, spread with red and white chequered tablecloths and order from a delicious menu of Spanish 'platos'. For many pupils, this was the first time they had tasted tapas and the gourmet selection of meats, cheeses, patatas bravas and salsas whet their appetite for the future. Perhaps most popular with all comers was the 'postre'; few could resist the chocolate churros and non-alcoholic Sangria cocktail, which finished the meal.

Meanwhile in the village 'gymnasium' visitors could participate in a 45 minute 'flamenco' class lead by dancers and musicians from Manchester's Instituto Cervantes to warm up, ably supported by a welcoming group of Abraham Moss Community High pupils, before attending Spanish poetry readings in the village 'Biblioteca', with talented East Manchester Academy pupils, or, buying and writing postcards in 'La Oficina de Correos' served with with charm and charisma by Ladybridge High pupils.

“

**I LOVED THE FLAMENCO DANCE, I NEVER KNEW HOW TO DO IT BEFORE AND I ENJOYED IT. I LOVE SPANISH CULTURE, FOOD AND DANCE AND I HAD LOTS OF FUN. THE STALLS AND WORKSHOPS WERE REALLY INCLUSIVE. THE THING I LIKED THE MOST WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SOCIALISE WITH THE OTHER SCHOOLS AS WE VISITED THE STALLS.**

**Student**

*Ladybridge High School*

“WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR SUCH AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY TO LONDON YESTERDAY. OUR STUDENTS LOVED THE EXPERIENCE FROM START TO FINISH. OVER 50% OF THE GROUP HAD NEVER BEEN TO LONDON BEFORE AND SOME HAD NEVER EVEN BEEN ON A TRAIN. THEY THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THE STUDIO TOUR AND LEARNING HOW TO RECORD VOCALS. THEY WERE EXCITED TO LISTEN TO THEIR RECORDING AND THE STUDENTS WERE MOST DEFINITELY INSPIRED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THEY LEARNT FROM SOHO SONIC SOUNDS WILL NOW PREPARE THEM FOR FUTURE EXPRESSIVE ARTS EVENTS.

Millie Hall

*Expressive Arts Teacher: The Derby High School*

## CASE STUDY: AVANTI ‘FEEL GOOD FIELD TRIPS’

Anyone who works intensively with young people, is aware that popular music often dominates the lifestyle choices adolescents make, providing powerful positive role models and a safe often, critically peer approved means of expression. Particularly for boys music is the channel through which they share and manage emotions, make powerful and lasting social connections and develop a sense of identity. However, music teachers often tell us that due to a lack of resources and curriculum time, playing and producing music is increasingly out of reach for them and their pupils.

No surprises then, that our partnership with Avanti trains, and their inspirational ‘Feel Good Field Trips’ programme to electronic production studios; Soho Sonic has been welcomed by music specialists in so many of our High School providers. Furthermore, whilst traditional musical instrument playing often requires the 10,000 hours practice cited by professionals, producing music electronically is accessible enough to provide non-formal musicians with the means by which to create something they can feel proud of.

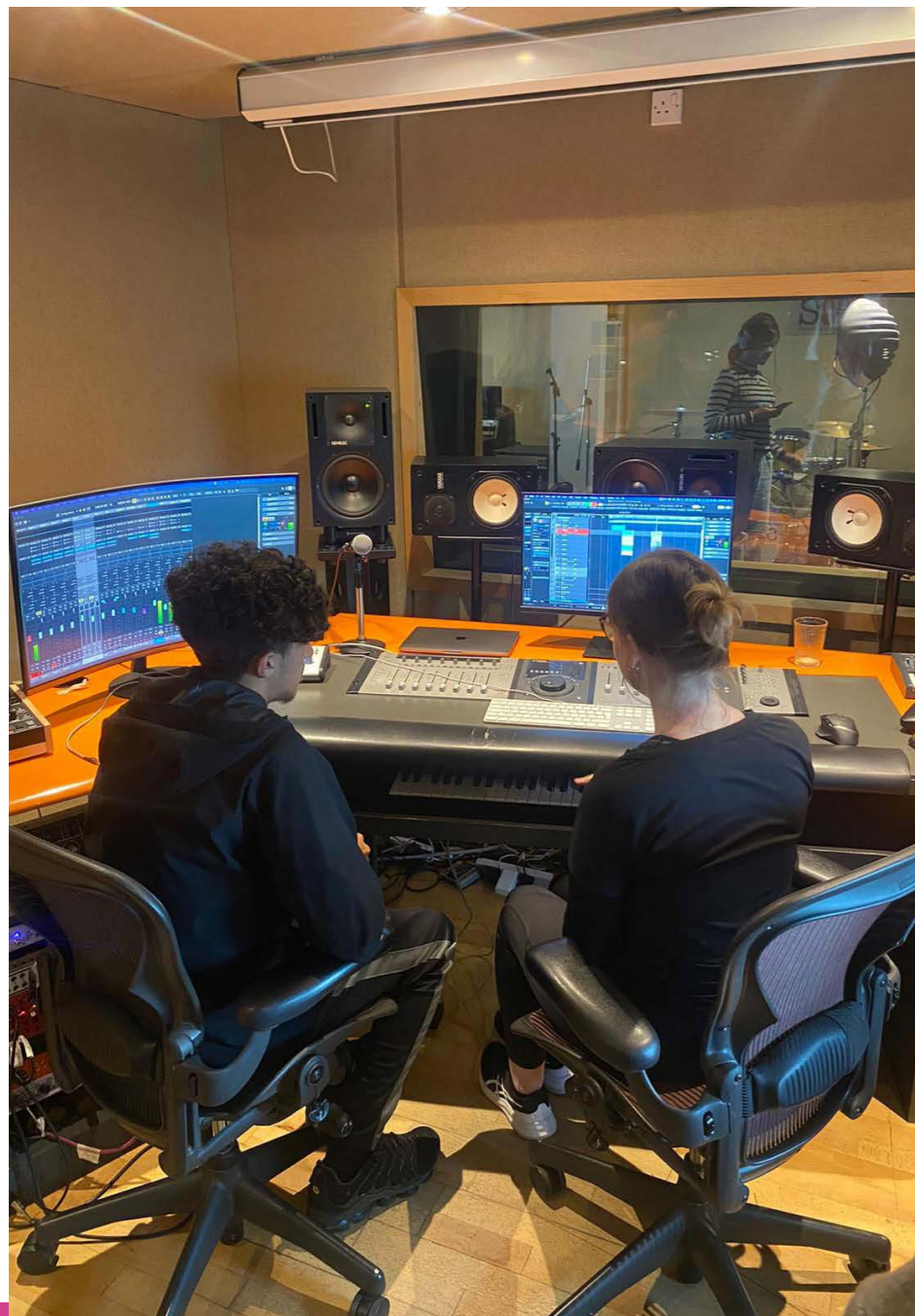
Around 150 Year 10 music pupils from schools including The Derby High School, Ladybridge High School, Falinge Park High School, The East Manchester Academy and Abraham Moss High School were each invited to a full expenses paid trip to London, travelling from Piccadilly Station in Manchester to Euston on an early train and returning on the same day. Once in London, pupils travelled on the underground, to the professional studios in Camden Town, where workshops in writing and producing music were lead by Soho Sonic industry professionals. The opportunity to work with professional role models, many close in age to the young people, and to see at first hand how the industry works, proved to be a landmark experience for all pupils involved.

### Participating Schools:

Abraham Moss Community High School  
Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
The Derby High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### Partners:

Avanti Trains  
Lancashire Community Rail  
Soho Sonic Studios, London



“WHAT A FANTASTIC DAY AT SOHO STUDIOS WITH STUDENTS FROM ABRAHAM MOSS COMMUNITY SCHOOL. BROADENING THE HORIZONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE OPPORTUNITY OF RECORDING LIVE MUSIC IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING! AS A RESULT THERE IS RECORD UPTAKE FOR GCSE MUSIC AT SCHOOL, THIS YEAR THANKS FOR MAKING THIS SUCH A REWARDING AND ENRICHING EXPERIENCE!”

**Richard Taylor**

*Head of Performing Arts – Abraham Moss Community School*



## CASE STUDY: TERRI AND THE TIME MACHINE

This is a full year 3 primary science curriculum resourced and delivered through Terri and her Time Machine. It sets out to be a creative, ambitious arts- based project enhancing enquiry skills developed by Z arts and one Tenth Human and funded by the Paul Hamlyn foundation.

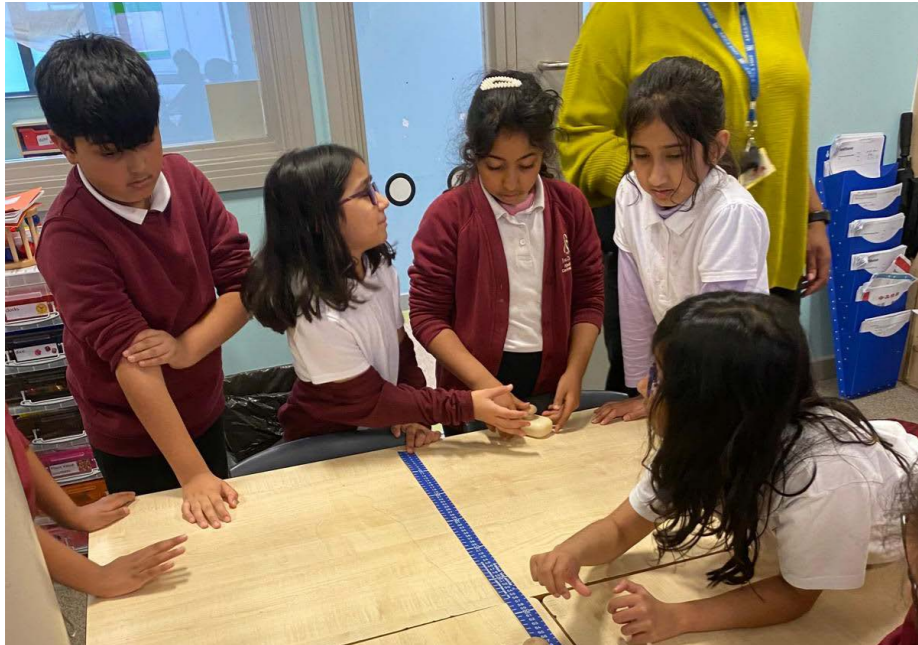
Our primary Comino schools were delighted to pilot this science curriculum with Professor Dr Lynne Bianchi advising on the project.

A training session kicked off the project for 6 of our schools in the summer term, followed by the delivery of time machines into the classrooms. The teachers have full control of the time machines through technical devices hidden from view of the children! Terri, the female scientist finds herself trapped when the malfunctioning machine starts to rocket around in space and time. In a year long narrative of peril and adventure the children work out how to help her succeed. The topics covered include magnetism, friction, fossils and soil investigation. The children are introduced to many characters including scientists and engineers and visit a recycling centre.

The project delivers memorable experiences via the power of vivid storytelling and hands on practical challenges increasing engagement and enjoyment in science. It builds on science capital as they begin to see themselves as scientists and how science relates to their everyday lives.

- Participating Schools:**
- Abraham Moss Community Primary School
  - Alice Ingham RC Primary School
  - Our Lady and St Paul's RC Primary School
  - Sacred Heart RC Primary School
  - St Ethelbert's RC Primary School
  - St Gregory's RC Primary School

- Partners:**
- Comino Foundation
  - One Tenth Human
  - Recycling Centre
  - Z Arts



## CASE STUDY: PANTENE

Comino Foundation are always excited to partner with Ideas Foundation as we know that young people in NWCC schools are excited and inspired by the authenticity and relevance of IF’s creative communication challenges. With the largest digital and creative sector outside Greater London, and more than 70,000 jobs within the sector on offer to talented young people from the region, we know that the experiences that Ideas Foundation bring, can provide a valuable first step on the career ladder whilst introducing a sector that is often overlooked in mainstream education.

This year we have worked with our Ideas Foundation colleagues and their partners, hair brand, Pantene, to raise awareness of hair discrimination and to promote hair confidence through a programme of creative poetry workshops. Pupils from St Monica’s RC High School, the East Manchester Academy, St Gregory’s RC Primary School and Our Lady’s and St Pauls RC Primary schools were able to share thoughts and personal experiences with poets, then celebrate their ideas through spoken word pieces and performances. These inspirational interactive sessions have sparked young people’s creativity alongside promoting well-being through celebrating identity, culture and personal expression in poetry and spoken word performance linked to these themes.

**Participating Schools:**

- Our Lady and St Pauls RC Primary School
- St Gregory’s RC Primary School
- St Monica’s RC High School
- The East Manchester Academy

**Partners:**

- Ideas Foundation
- Pantene

## CASE STUDY: FACTORY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP STATUS 2023-2024

At Falinge Park High School, Rochdale, we made the strategic decision to engage in several partnerships for the following academic year with consideration about staffing and resourcing capacity before undertaking application. After submitting a written application and undertaking a short online interview, we were delighted to be selected as one of five schools to participate in the pilot year of the initiative. The project was multi-faceted with regular theatre visits (approximately one every half term), a weekly full day Artist-in-Residence workshop (incorporated into timetabling and resourcing for the whole year), Student Leadership Zoom Meetings, Staff CPD opportunities and holiday activities for students and families.

Benefits included staff development, student engagement and personal development, especially as many students targeted for the Artist-In-Residence cohorts were withdrawn and lacked more formal social skills. Pupils benefited from the exposure of seeing how a large-scale cultural organisation operates and the artistic decisions made on a daily basis. They built up meaningful relationships with several Factory International staff and artists. The partnership culminated in a single day Student Take-Over of the venue in which 45 Year 8 and Year 10 students took over Aviva Studios and Factory International in the centre of Manchester for a day in July 2024. Students planned and curated a series of performances, workshops and discussions. The daylong event featured performances by Manchester Camerata, Company Chameleon Dance Company, group performances by our students, art installations and screen-printing sessions.

Students were also able to see their photographic work exhibited in the space after a month-long high-profile exhibition. Visitors were blown away by the commitment and enthusiasm of our young people and the high quality of work that they produced and there were many legacy booklets, videos and testimonials generated.

Whilst we cannot maintain the full financial partnership for a second year, it is our intention to reengage the same cohort of students with Factory International later this year with a more overt but intensive careers related programme of work.

**Simon De Courcey**

*Comino Lead Practitioner*  
*Director for Cultural Capital at Falinge Park High School*

“**I LOVE ART AND I LOVE SCIENCE. THIS WAS MY FAVOURITE LESSON BECAUSE I GOT TO DO BOTH. I WANT TO BE AN ARTIST AND LEARNING FROM A REAL ARTIST WAS SPECIAL FOR ME. IT INPSIRED ME. I LIKED WHEN WE GOT TO TEST HOW THE SPECIAL BRACELETS LOOKED WITH THE BEADS ON IT AND HOW THEY REACTED TO SUNLIGHT. I LEARNED ABOUT THE SUN’S ATMOSPHERE... SOMETIMES THERE ARE EXPLOSIONS!**

**Year 5 Pupil**

*Abraham Moss Community School.*

## CASE STUDY: SUN, SPACE, ART

In July our NWCC Primary schools were visited by Helen Mason, Emeritus Professor OBE in Solar Physics at The Department of Applied Maths & Theoretical Physics at The University of Cambridge, Geraldine Cox (artist, & physicist), and Clare Dudeney (artist).

We are very grateful to have their enthusiasm and commitment to our schools in delivering their science packed and thought provoking workshop SunSpaceArt. Through a practical session combining Art and Science pupils explored how the Sun’s rays bring us light, heat, warmth, life and happiness.

Pupils learned about the Sun, its age, temperature, and phenomena like sunspots, solar flares, and eclipses. They were introduced to famous scientists, such as Newton and Galileo, space travel, and notable British astronauts like Tim Peake and Helen Sharman. They also learned about the types of light we can’t see such as infrared and ultraviolet.

With a strong grounding in the science of light pupils were then introduced to the work of African- American artist Alma Thomas whose work includes artworks inspired by the Sun. In her work ‘The Eclipse’, coloured squares radiate out in a circle. Abstract in style, the work is created using a series of dots, dashes and rectangles of paint. These images provided inspiration for pupils to create their own work inspired by Alma Thomas and light.

Pupils created suncatcher artworks using cut-out coloured tissue paper glued onto translucent paper. Attaching the finished artwork to the classroom windows gave the effect of stained class as the light shone through creating colourful patterns in the room. A visual celebration of light, art and each child’s contribution to the class gallery.

Pupils commented that learning from specialists brought something extra to their classroom. ‘*we did activities that we haven’t done before and it made me think about how light moves*’. Year 5 Pupil Alice Ingham RC Primary School.



### Participating Schools:

Abraham Moss Community Primary School

Alice Ingham RC Primary School

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

St Gregory’s RC Primary School

### Partners:

Comino Foundation

Sun.Space.Art

“THE CINDERELLA PRODUCTION WAS A DELIGHTFUL SPECTACLE, CAPTIVATING THE CHILDREN WITH ITS BLEND OF SLAPSTICK COMEDY AND CLEVER WORD PLAY, ELICITING LAUGHTER THROUGHOUT. THE ACTORS EXHIBITED REMARKABLE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE YOUNG AUDIENCE, DRAWING THEM IN TO THE ENCHANTING WORLD OF THE STORY. FOLLOWING THE SHOW, WE WERE FORTUNATE TO ENCOUNTER SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CAST WHO GENEROUSLY SPENT TIME WITH THE CHILDREN, MAKING THE EXPERIENCE EVEN MORE MEMORABLE.

**Class Teacher**  
*Sacred Heart RC Primary school*

CASE STUDY: CINDERELLA

In December, 130 of our NWCC Primary school children were invited to the Contact Theatre to see Cinderella get her Prince and go to the ball. The tickets were sponsored by the Contact Theatre.

Performed at The Contact Theatre and devised by Eight Freestyle and Contact Young Company this wildly popular panto was delivered with a girl-power spin on the traditional rags-to-riches tale of Cinderella!

A fantastic twist on the traditional was performed as students followed Cinders’ fight for freedom from her cruel Stepsisters and their terrible fashion choices, marvelled at the crazy inventions of Lord Stoneybroke, laughed along with Buttons and helped the Prince find true love! All this was set to an upbeat modern soundtrack delivered by DJ Dandini!

A fantastic pre Christmas treat to celebrate the end of a long autumn term.



**Participating Schools:**  
Abraham Moss Community Primary School  
Alice Ingham RC Primary School  
Sacred Heart RC Primary School  
St Gregory’s RC Primary School

**Partners:**  
The Contact Theatre

**OTHER MOMENTS TO CELEBRATE**





# COMINO STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARDS

We work with hundreds of young people across the Comino consortium and like to celebrate those students who have excelled in achievement in a particular creative project. The following students have been nominated by their schools to receive the prestigious Comino glass award inscribed with their name and to take home as a keepsake.

## Congratulations to all Creative scholars from 2023/2024

Alexa Groapa	The East Manchester Academy
Niamh Cummins	Falinge Park High School
Sophia Willis	The Derby High School
Joanna Maria	Ladybridge High School
Kelvin Cao	Abraham Moss Community High School
Nieve Gartland	St Gabriel's RC High School
Ghonwan Abdulmajid	Abraham Moss Community Primary School
Pupil Parliament	Sacred Heart RC Primary School
Narges Firoozabard	St Monica's RC High School

◀ A very special moment Narges telephoning her mum (who doesn't speak English) in the headteachers office, and translating her congratulations at the same time.



## PIONEERS OF COMINO

### WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT COMINO?

We are increasingly asked for advice, expertise and knowledge for informing thinking in new educational agendas. This year we were approached from the Chartered College of Teaching to join a group of schools in a research project on transition from primary to secondary. We asked our schools if they would provide time from their senior leaders to become involved to which we had a positive response. NASEN have also asked if we can provide advice for their research into special needs provision. The Comino schools and their teachers have also played a prominent role in the RSA pupil design awards informing their organisation of the way forward for the new Sparks award. We are currently involved by invitation to join the rethinking assessment group of schools and have many of our senior leaders have signed up.

We presented a creative fun way of expressing our values at the annual Comino gathering which brings together in a 24 hour consultation of Comino grantees, the trustees and NWCC schools. We titled the presentation "Are we bothered?" We used the letters of BOTHERED to denote our values and reason why we are special and successful. We have schools who have been part of the Comino family now for many years and asked our elders if they would write about their successes – here goes:



## LYNN PROVOOST

Comino Lead Practitioner and Assistant Headteacher at The Derby High School

I have been a teacher at The Derby High School for 25 years.

My first experience with Comino was in 2001, during our campaign to become the country's first Specialist Science and Arts College. Though some questioned the combination, we had a strong, clear vision.

To achieve specialist status, we needed to show the strength of our partnerships. Supported by Comino and other key partners like Professor Lynne Bianchi, Vice Dean of Manchester University and Director of SEERIH, we set out on an ambitious path to innovate.

In 2009, I met Pat Walters, strategic north west manager and Deborah Davidson, project manager becoming a founding member of the North West Comino Creative Consortium. By 2013, The Derby High School had earned two TES Awards for Science and Creativity, celebrated for our "outstanding partnerships" that enabled us to offer experiences usually exclusive to private schools.

Earlier this year, we were awarded silver status in the Pearson Teaching Awards in the Secondary School of the Year - Making a Difference category and are one of only six schools moving on to the National finals.

Our partnerships have been crucial to our success. Through NWCC, my students and I have participated in transformative experiences, such as:

- Working with an international advertising agency
- Participating in photography workshops with world-renowned photographer Clive Booth
- Producing animations alongside professional animators

- Creating a film that premiered in the Triangle, Manchester
- Visiting Downing Street to advocate for arts education
- Publishing students' stories
- Performing or exhibiting work at regional and national venues.

Through NWCC, I've worked with professionals worldwide. We've explored the ocean depths with adventurer Richard Garrett and journeyed to space through a live link-up with astronaut Major Tim Peake on the International Space Station.

### Lead Practitioners

I have always known that the Comino Partnership would offer us experiences we could have only dreamed of as a comprehensive school within one of the country's lowest funded LEAs.

When we first arrived at some of the venues, working alongside the biggest names in the industry, we were starstruck—and I still feel that way today. However, we quickly realised that our own expertise was one of our greatest strengths.

We began collaborating with industry partners to co-develop projects, ensuring each experience was integrated with high-quality teaching. This approach also allowed us to shape each project to align with our school's priorities.

Attending Lead Practitioner meetings is always a highlight for me. We thrive on the time dedicated to dreaming up the most ambitious projects imaginable.

The hardest part of my role is often deciding who to select for each opportunity, which is why I have worked with my team at The Derby to ensure each experience leaves a legacy. We strive to create experiences that reach all students.

### The Derby Diploma

With this vision in mind, we established The Derby Diploma. At The Derby, every student, parent, and staff member understand that a child's personal development is equally, if not more, important than academic achievement.

The Derby Diploma encourages all students to engage in and track their enrichment activities across four main strands:

- Community and Volunteering
- Careers and Next Steps
- Curriculum Enrichment
- Out-of-hours Enrichment

Our work with the North West Comino Creative Consortium serves as the golden thread running through these opportunities. We monitor students' aspirations, providing experiences tailored to help them succeed in their chosen fields.

### The Derby and North West Comino Consortium Alumni

There are countless success stories to share, but I'll highlight two notable alumni—one from my first Comino cohort and another from the Class of 2024.

### Liam Roughley

Liam joined our first Comino cohort in 2010, enthusiastically engaging in many exciting projects. His work experience with McCann, where Neil Lancaster called his work "unsettlingly good," was the standout experience. McCann invited Liam back every

school holiday, and after graduating from The Derby, he began a career with McCann as a Creative Design Apprentice. Today, Liam is a Creative Designer at McCann.

Areeba Malik, Class of 2024

Areeba has been involved with Comino projects since Year 7. Although she always aimed to become a cardiologist, she soon realised she didn't have to choose between science and creativity. Despite participating in numerous projects that took her out of the classroom, Areeba earned 8 Grade 9s and a Grade 8 (just one mark shy of another Grade 9). She was Head Student at The Derby, serves as Youth Mayor of Bury, and represented the UK on Ashoka's Global Youth Panel. Areeba's dedication inspired her peers, leading to the formation of the International Changemakers Programme.

International Changemakers Programme

The pandemic was one of the most challenging times in my career, yet it also opened new opportunities. One of the most impactful projects to emerge was The Changemakers' Project, which took shape during a Zoom session with Professor Lynne Bianchi as we explored ways for Derby students to continue to participate in The Great Science Share for Schools despite the lockdown.

The project we developed enabled me to work with 'We Go Forth Education,' led by the immensely talented Daniel Charny and Dee Halligan, as well as colleagues across Europe. Together, we collaborated to produce 'Open Schooling' resources that use real world challenges to widen a young person's horizons, giving them agency in their learning.

Last year, drawing on 20 years of purposeful partnerships within the Comino family, we raised the £21,500 we needed to send our students to Thailand on our first International

Changemakers' project. Comino and friends supported us by offering platforms to share our mission to take our students to Thailand to teach Burmese migrant children scientific investigations as part of GSSfS at FED (Foundation for Education and Development) school in Khao Lak. Students also learnt about coastal erosion, sea turtles and how a community can return from complete devastation following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. They visited an elephant sanctuary, temples and spent the night in the rainforest.

This year, our ambitions are even greater. Following a successful application to the DfE Turning Scheme, we will take fifteen students to Thailand. We are now focused on sharing our story to raise awareness of this unique educational model.

Our International Changemakers' Programme is a source of immense pride, and we are excited to inspire other schools across the UK to adopt our model and launch their own Changemakers' initiatives.

Without the invaluable network we access through the Comino Foundation, none of this would have been possible. I truly believe that, together, we have made a real and lasting impact. Our work has changed lives—and will continue to do so.

Experiences for All

From day one, our relationship with the consortium has been rooted in openness. We've never hesitated to involve some of our most challenging students in projects, and they are often the ones who go on to achieve the top accolades because someone believed in them enough to give them a world-class experience.

Over the last five years, I have worked to ensure that every student, in every year group, has access to experiences that build on or stem from our North West Comino Creative Consortium Offer.

My colleagues and I collaborate to design our curriculum around this extraordinary programme of experiences. It has been an absolute privilege to pioneer this work with an exceptional team of creatives, delivering awe and wonder to inspire our young people and to show them beyond any doubt that they can and do make a difference.

If I were to pinpoint the key to the success of our ever-growing partnership, it would undoubtedly be a profound sense of belonging. Joining Comino means becoming part of an extraordinary family. Unlike any other organisation, the trustees and strategic leaders within our partnership actively seek opportunities to connect directly with our schools, children, and families, enriching the experience for everyone involved.

Despite being engaged in numerous global initiatives, the trustees consistently prioritise the needs of Lead Practitioners, responding promptly to requests and offering support for bespoke projects and initiatives aligned with their expertise.

Anna Comino James has been a source of inspiration for both staff and students through her passion for dance. She has personally led dance workshops at the school and introduced us to countless opportunities in the Arts, fostering creativity and engagement.

Jose has been a steadfast mentor, guiding us through challenges and opportunities alike. Her exceptional talent as a poet has captivated our students, who have been inspired by her unique perspective and artistic voice.

John Slater's expertise played a crucial role in shaping the foundation of our leadership programme. Through coaching sessions with both students and the leadership team, he has instilled the qualities of effective leadership, leaving a lasting impact.

David Perry opened doors for our students to attend a prestigious Makers event in London at the iconic Somerset House. The experience was unforgettable and spurred the development of innovative projects. David has been an invaluable advisor, offering guidance on design challenges and serving as a judge for competitions.

Our Year 9 students were captivated by Amrit Singh's story, transitioning from Finance Director at Deutsche Bank to his role as Finance & Commercial Director at NASAN. During a Comino Gathering, Amrit enthusiastically supported our ambitious 'Power of Six' project, committing to visit each of our schools to ensure its success.

The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the most challenging periods in my teaching career, but Mumtaz Bashir MBE worked tirelessly alongside us to create a social hub that continues to thrive today. Friends of The Derby has built a strong online community, connecting parents, partners, and alumni. This collaboration has opened doors to industry opportunities, work placements, and employer visits, while also providing vital insights into parents' perspectives, which have been instrumental in shaping our school's development.

The unwavering support of Pat Walters and Deborah Davidson has been integral to the success of every engagement. Their resilience, meticulous planning, and dedication ensure that funding is secured, deadlines are met, and projects are showcased in the most spectacular ways.

In recent years, we have been privileged to work closely with internationally renowned Professor Bill Lucas, who co-chaired the strategic advisory group for the 2021 PISA Test of Creative Thinking and serves as Chair of the advisory board at the Global Institute of Creative Thinking. As we move into a new era that embraces creativity as a core component of the National Curriculum, we are filled with excitement and optimism for the future.



## BERNIE FUREY

Comino Lead Practitioner and Strategic Director of Teach Heart Alliance

### Reflections on a 14-Year Partnership with the Comino Foundation

As I reflect on my 14-year partnership with the Comino Foundation, I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the profound and lasting impact this collaboration has had on both myself and the schools I serve. It has been an inspiring and transformative journey—one that has enriched the educational experience of pupils from EYFS to Sixth Form and developed countless teachers and trainee teachers through a range of innovative projects.

### Transformative Impact on Pupils

The Comino Foundation projects have significantly enhanced the learning journeys of our pupils across all key stages. From Early Years to Sixth Form, pupils have engaged with initiatives that have not only broadened their horizons but also nurtured critical thinking, creativity, and confidence. Projects like the **Poet-in-Residence** have fostered a love of language and self-expression, while the **Digital Designer-in-Residence** has equipped pupils with vital skills in digital literacy, problem-solving, and design thinking—skills essential for thriving in the modern world.

These projects have given our pupils the opportunity to connect with industry professionals, and university students exposing them to real-world applications of their learning and helping them envision future career pathways. The creative, hands-on approach has empowered them to see themselves as capable innovators, artists, designers and leaders.

### Professional Development for Teachers and Trainee Teachers

The impact of the Comino Foundation extends beyond the pupils, playing a vital role in the professional development of our teachers and trainee teachers. Many teachers have grown through their involvement in various projects, as well as by developing their own action research projects through **Eed.net (Expansive Education Network)**. This experience has equipped them with new skills, fresh perspectives, and a renewed enthusiasm for embedding creativity into their teaching and learning practices.

Trainee teachers, in particular, have benefited immensely from engaging with these initiatives early in their careers. They have had the unique opportunity to work alongside industry experts, co-create projects, and witness first-hand the transformative power of creativity in the classroom. This early exposure has shaped their teaching philosophy and given them a strong foundation for fostering creativity in their own future classrooms.

### A Community of Collaboration and Shared Vision

One of the most enriching aspects of this partnership has been the opportunity to collaborate with other schools, like-minded teachers and industry leaders who share a passion for creative education. The annual gatherings hosted by the Comino Foundation have been a highlight of each year. These events offer a rare and invaluable space to engage in thought-provoking discussions, exchange ideas, and recharge our collective passion for education—often at a time when the school year has left us feeling drained.

Talking with fellow advocates for creativity during these gatherings always reaffirms my belief in its transformative power when embedded in teaching and learning. The sense of community and shared purpose that the Comino Foundation fosters is a continual source of inspiration and motivation.

### A Beacon of Hope in Challenging Times

This partnership has been more than just professional; it has been central to my personal and professional growth. During challenging times—especially under a previous government that sought to diminish creativity within the curriculum—the unwavering support and encouragement from the Comino family gave me the courage to stand firm in my convictions. Their belief in the importance of fostering creativity in young people aligned deeply with my own values, serving as a beacon of hope and a reminder of why this work is so essential.

### A Lasting Legacy

Through this partnership, I have found the strength to persevere and continue advocating for what I know is right for the next generation. The Comino Foundation's support has been a source of resilience, reminding me that creativity is not just important but essential for equipping young people to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

With their guidance and encouragement, I remain committed to championing creativity in education. Together, we are making a lasting difference in the lives of pupils, inspiring them to dream bigger, think differently, and embrace the challenges of the future with confidence and imagination.



## SIMON DE COURCEY

**Comino Lead Practitioner and Director for Cultural Capital  
at Falinge Park High School**

### A Strong Relationship with the Comino Foundation

Unlike some of my contemporaries, my personal relationship with the Comino Foundation began at a different juncture. Established in a Rochdale school with longstanding Specialist Arts College status, two Artsmark Gold accreditations and with an extensive cultural partnership offer, including the Liverpool Playhouse and Everyman Theatre, The Royal Exchange and The Oldham Coliseum, I firmly understood the potential and impact of experiential learning and the impact of local, regional and national partnerships. During this phase of the school's development, we enjoyed presenting an original contemporary dance piece to Sir Paul McCartney and his family at the Royal Albert Hall and I led and coordinated a visit to the Conway Centre, Anglesey, Wales for ten Rochdale schools, where just under a thousand students participated in an Arts Engagement Weekend with six cultural and arts organisations and a convoy of coaches. We also planned and delivered a yearly cycle of a large-scale inter-school thematic learning day sited in high profile establishments around the North West, including Carnforth Railway Station, The Imperial War Museum North, the Museum of Science and Industry and the People's History Museum, Manchester. My expectations were high.

The Comino Foundation I entered was a strong community of practice with closely aligned values about the importance of a vital and vibrant cultural offer beyond the classroom for disadvantaged young people. It recognised the importance of a co-created, bespoke offer of cultural and vocational engagement that could be adapted for and by schools to render them meaningful and powerful in their own local contexts. That overarching and vital purpose exists today, in keeping with Dimitri Comino's initial vision for the dynamic partnership between industry and education.

Over the eleven years, I have enjoyed a robust and creative relationship with the Foundation and the other North West Comino Lead Practitioners. Each practitioner brings a wealth of experience and a unique perspective to our meeting table and we value curiosity, proactivity and a 'can-do' mindset. That environment and enabling dialogue is infectious. We have benefitted from many projects and experiences including:

- Visits to Parliament
- Visits to The Royal Society of the Arts
- Summer Schools with BJL Manchester and McCann's Digital Agency
- In-School Workshops with a WWII Enigma Encoding Machine
- Astrological Science Workshops
- Engagement with Maker, Oracy and Skills Building Organisations
- Social Inclusion Projects and Experiences
- Game Design and Digital Engagement Projects
- Cross Media Experiences
- Community Cohesion and Oracy Projects
- Zoom conversations with internationally recognised figures
- Designer In Residence and Poet In Residence Projects
- Opportunities to co-create with local and regional organisations
- Co-joined applications for funding and the sharing of staff CPD and best practice

The Foundation's offer has helped me realise a vision of school wide engagement for a wide range of staff across many departments, providing them with high quality and specialised continuing professional development. Staff have benefitted from bespoke planning across establishments and the ownership of projects. Project success can be celebrated on so many levels in this way and staff have taken pride in enabling themselves, their students and even their wider communities to engage in activities that are highly original or even pioneering.

Over the years of collaboration, I have appreciated the knowledge and experience of my peers as a Lead Practitioner. It has been gratifying to have our work recognised in so many different ways; through publication of action-research pieces on the nationally recognised Expansive Education website, winning the Royal Society of the Arts National Pupil Design Awards three times and helping us achieve further validation as finalists in the 'Raising Rochdale' Educate Awards 2024 and the ASL North West Educate Awards 2024 for the provision of outstanding Arts education. We have also enjoyed and celebrated engagement with Curious Minds, BeeWell and Arts Council, England, showcasing good practice through national articles on Arts and Creative Health Engagement. This work helped establish us as one of five Greater Manchester partner schools with Factory International and Aviva Studios, Manchester in 2023-2024.

If the quality of our ongoing work with organisations such as the Comino Foundation spotlights the individual successes and career routes of our young people, then it should be recognised that at Falinge Park High School our historical alumni have taken up opportunities and positions with RADA, LIPA, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts in London, Bristol Old Vic, The Bristol Shakespeare Schools Festival, Sony/EMI, The Royal Fusiliers Band, Sheffield Music Hub, BBC Radio 2 Folk, the British Music Institute, regional dance and theatre companies and established award-winning music bands.

The prospect of continued shared strategic planning, implementation and delivery with the Comino Foundation is always an exciting one each year.



## MARTIN AINSCOUGH

Comino Lead Practitioner and Deputy Headteacher of Ladybridge High School

I began working at Ladybridge High School as Assistant Headteacher in 2020, beginning my current role as Deputy Head in 2023. I met the previous chair of Comino, John Slater, after I'd presented at a conference about the loss of expressive arts subjects following the introduction of the EBacc. He agreed to speak in a short film I made called 'Where Did All The Art Go' which was funded by Arts Council England. It was great to meet the Comino team and find people who believed in providing young people with opportunities beyond the school walls just as much as I did.

I feel very lucky to be part of the Comino Foundation and to work in a school that genuinely values the importance of developing the whole child. At Ladybridge High School, we articulate this belief through our 'Trivium' philosophy of education which is rooted in three pillars - knowledge, exploration and communication. This model takes us away from the age-old debate of whether knowledge is more important than skills, or vice versa and recognises that they are all important. We want learners to leave Ladybridge being able to know things, think critically, debate ideas, seek opinions and advice from a diverse range of people, and communicate their thoughts effectively. The communication skills they develop should be diverse - whether that's presenting verbally to an audience, creating a short film/animation or through the written word.

Few teachers in the education system have knowledge and experience of what is often labelled as a more 'progressive' approach to pedagogy. Teacher education over the past decade, at least, has focused primarily on the technical aspects of education - the 'science of learning' (by which we mean remembering facts). The Comino Foundation projects have provided opportunities for our teaching staff to connect with like-minded

staff from other schools, industry professionals and academics. Over the years, the number of staff leading these projects has grown which has helped to develop an increased knowledge of just how much our young people are capable of, given the opportunity. The experience of leading the Comino projects has played an essential role in developing their knowledge and skills around 'progressive' pedagogy.

Our work with Comino not only provide opportunities for the long-term development of our staff, they of course provide life changing opportunities for our learners. We are a truly comprehensive school and serve a diverse community. Many of our young people have little experience of life beyond their own town. It has been wonderful over the years to see students inspired by visits to a huge range of visits from professional advertising agencies, to the Houses of Parliament, Universities and RHS gardens.

At the heart of Comino is people - amazing, talented and creative professionals brought together through the legacy of Dimitri Comino. Each and every one of us share his commitment to ensuring young people live fulfilled lives and make a positive contribution to society. Our community of practitioners provides opportunities to discuss, learn, share and collaborate - It is this that inspires the ideas that flow through the foundation and helps us all to remain optimistic that change in our education system is possible. I feel that we are certainly well on our way to proving that at Ladybridge!



Thank you to Comino trustees for their generous practical support and advice. Not only do our trustees make decisions about the Comino Foundation they are always on hand to support our projects and take an active interest with their specific skills when they are able.

**Comino Trustees**

Professor Jose Chambers MBE (Chair)

Anna Comino James FRSA

David Perry MA (RCA) FRSA

Mumtaz Bashir-Hanid JP DL BSc

Amrit Singh BSc ACMA

Dee Halligan

Professor Bill Lucas (Strategic Development Advisor)

And not forgetting the headteachers, lead practitioners, teachers and cultural business partners - of which none of this magic would happen without their commitment.

**Strategic Manager** - Pat Walters

**Development Leads** - Deborah Davidson and Jo Sliwa



Our work is only possible with the support of all the incredible volunteers who have given their time and enthusiasm so freely this year and over many years. The young people in our schools will remember the experiences you have created for them for many years to come.

