



**The North West Comino Consortium 2025**

THE NORTH WEST COMINO CONSORTIUM  
YEARBOOK 2025



COMINO

FOUNDATION



THE DERBY

HIGH SCHOOL



The East Manchester

Academy



FALINGE

PARK

HIGH SCHOOL



ST. GABRIEL'S

CATHOLIC

PRIMARY

SCHOOL



ST. JOHN

THE BAPTIST

CATHOLIC

PRIMARY

SCHOOL



PIONEER

HOUSE

HIGH SCHOOL





## ABOUT OUR NORTH WEST COMINO CONSORIUM

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.

The new enrichment entitlement includes Civic Life, Adventure and Wellbeing Skills, Art and Culture and are all at the heart of our Comino work.

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

Abraham Moss Community Primary School  
St Ethelbert's RC Primary School  
St Mary's RC Primary School  
Abraham Moss Community High School  
Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
Pioneer House High School  
St Gabriel's RC High School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The Derby High School  
The East Manchester Academy

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## PROJECT CASE STUDIES



**“THE PROJECT IS ESSENTIAL IN PROVIDING CHILDREN, WHO OTHERWISE MIGHT NOT HAVE AN INSIGHT INTO WHAT IT IS THAT THEY CAN ACHIEVE. IT PROVIDES THEM WITH ASPIRATIONS THAT PERHAPS THEY WOULDN’T HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT. THEY NOW HAVE A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD AROUND THEM, BOTH LOCALLY, SOCIALLY AND GLOBALLY.”**

**Devjani Bodepudi**

*Poet in Residence at Abraham Moss Community School 2025.*

## CASE STUDY: POET IN RESIDENCE

The annual Poet in Residence programme exemplifies NWCC's commitment to inspiring creativity and critical engagement with society and culture. It provides meaningful opportunities for pupils and teachers to explore poetry in collaborative and transformative ways. The initiative has fostered strong partnerships with cultural and creative organisations across Greater Manchester, engaging young people with the expressive potential of poetry. Central to its success is the partnership with the Manchester Poetry Library at Manchester Metropolitan University, whose expertise and guidance are invaluable. Each Comino Poet in Residence worked with a North West Comino school and regional cultural partner to deliver nine distinctive projects responding to the theme **“Our World, Our Future.”**

### A Sense of Being: Amy King, The Whitworth, St Gabriel's RC High School

At **St Gabriel's RC High**, Year 9 pupils explored themes of identity and representation through a series of workshops led by Poet **Amy King**. Drawing on Amy's poem 'Kate Nash Hates Seagulls,' students experimented with metaphor, word choice, and editing to enhance clarity and tone. During their visit to **The Whitworth**, they composed ekphrastic poems inspired by the 'Women in Revolt' and Jakkai Siributr exhibitions, responding to ideas of gender, identity, and social change. Sessions at the **Manchester Poetry Library** deepened their understanding of poetic form and collaboration. The project culminated in an open mic event, where pupils shared their work with confidence and pride.

### Participating Schools:

Abraham Moss Community School  
Falinge Park High School  
Hathershaw College  
Ladybridge High School  
Pioneer House High School  
St Gabriel's RC High School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The Derby High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### Comino Poets in Residence 2024/5:

Amy King  
Cherry Eckel  
Chloe Hall  
Devjani Bodepudi  
John Greenwood  
Kaz Abba  
Layla-Mae Lunn  
Rhiannon Giafield-Lane  
Sumithree Sripalan

### Cultural Partners:

Chetham's Library  
HOME  
Manchester Art Gallery  
Manchester Central Library  
Manchester Poetry Library  
RHS Bridgewater  
Science and Industry Museum  
The Royal Exchange  
The Whitworth



### Heritage and Change: Cherry Eckel, The Royal Exchange, The Derby High School

Led by Poet **Cherry Eckel**, this project invited Year 10 students at **The Derby High School** to explore personal and collective heritage through creative writing. Inspired by the school's motto 'Inspire to Make a Difference' and Keisha Thompson's 'Holding Space' at **The Royal Exchange Theatre**, students reflected on identity, belonging, and transformation. Through workshops, they analysed Warda Yassin's 'Victoria Street' and produced original writing on place and change. A visit to The Royal Exchange offered further inspiration, culminating in collaborative performances within the theatre's studio. The project strengthened students' confidence in their voices, fostering a belief that poetry can shape understanding and create change.

### Contemporary Identity: Chloe Hall, Central Library, Hathershaw College

At **Hathershaw College**, Year 7 pupils worked with Poet **Chloe Hall** to explore contemporary identity through the lens of Greek Mythology, crafting their own origin stories and modern myths. A visit to **Manchester Central Library** provided valuable historical context through Oldham's archives, including materials on immigration and cultural diversity. At the **Manchester Poetry Library**, pupils engaged with the creative campus environment and encountered the work of Benjamin Zephaniah and Tony Walsh, inspiring their own spoken word pieces drawn from 'Mother Tongue Other Tongue.' Through these experiences, students developed confidence, self-expression, and an appreciation of poetry as a living and inclusive art form.

### Come, Celebrate with Us: Devjani Bodepudi, HOME, Abraham Moss Community School

Working with Year 7 pupils at **Abraham Moss Community School**, Poet **Devjani Bodepudi** designed a project in partnership with **HOME** to explore identity, aspiration, and self-representation. A scavenger hunt at the **Manchester Poetry Library** introduced pupils to a range of poetic voices, featuring pamphlets by writers such as Moisés Alvi and Jason Allen-Paisant. Visits to **HOME** included exhibitions by Mikhael Karikis and Imran Perretta, which inspired discussion around identity, race, and representation. Drawing on Amy Sherald's portraits and Lucille Clifton's 'Won't You Celebrate with Me,' pupils created manifestos and poems later written onto flags. The residency culminated in confident, expressive poems celebrating personal voice and collective identity.

### Stories in Verse: Identity through Poetry, John Greenwood, Museum of Science & Industry, Pioneer House High School

At **Pioneer House High School**, Poet **John Greenwood** collaborated with KS3 pupils to explore storytelling through poetry. Introduced via a school assembly and competition, the project encouraged empathy and perspective-taking. During their visit to the **Museum of Science & Industry**, pupils developed word banks inspired by historical artefacts and exhibits. Back in class, they transformed these into collaborative poems, experimenting with form and voice, even creating rap performances. A visit to the **Manchester Poetry Library** showcased their work in an exhibition and a chance to edit their work. The project concluded with a celebration event at the school café, where students performed with pride, confidence, and care for one another.



**Poetry in a Digital World: Kaz Abbas, Manchester Art Gallery, The East Manchester Academy**

Poet **Kaz Abbas** partnered with Year 8 pupils at **The East Manchester Academy** and **Manchester Art Gallery** to explore the intersection between poetry and visual art in the digital age. Workshops encouraged playful engagement with erasure poetry and reflections on how poetry connects to photography, fine art, and film. During their gallery visit, pupils explored exhibitions using an activity zine and created ekphrastic poems inspired by the artwork. Discussions around resistance, identity, and creative expression deepened understanding of poetry's modern relevance. The project culminated in a multi-artform outcome—a collaboratively written poem and an original short film—showcasing students' ideas in both word and image.

“

IT WAS WONDERFUL TO SEE THE STUDENTS SO EXCITED AND ENTHUSED ABOUT WRITING - WITH THE MAJORITY OF OUR STUDENTS HAVING COME FROM MAINSTREAM SETTINGS THEY OFTEN HAVE QUITE A POOR ATTITUDE TO WRITING AND DAMAGED SELF IMAGE OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS. THIS PROJECT HAS GIVEN THE STUDENT SUCH A BUZZ ABOUT POETRY AND THEIR OWN CREATIVE WRITING POWERS TO SEE THEM CONQUER THEIR ANXIETY IN READING IN FRONT OF OTHERS, AND SUPPORTING EACH OTHER SO WELL WAS SUCH A PLEASURE TO SEE!



**Interlinked: Layla-Mae Lunn, Chetham's Library, St Monica's RC High School**

Exploring the idea of stewardship—of self, community, and the natural world—Poet **Layla-Mae Lunn** worked with Year 7 pupils at **St Monica's RC High School** to consider what “home” means and how it connects us all. Pupils created poems inspired by their own houses, rich in sensory detail and emotion, using techniques introduced through free writing and guided workshops. A visit to **Chetham's Library** deepened their understanding of care and preservation, as they explored its historic collections and architecture. Pupils recorded their reflections in personal zines, writing messages to their future selves. The poems were designed to be displayed across **Manchester Poetry Library**, Chetham's Library, and school—interlinking the three creative spaces.

**Michelle Wilkinson**  
Deputy Headteacher Pioneer House



**Close to Our Hearts: Rhiannon Garfield-Lane, The Whitworth, Ladybridge High School**

At **Ladybridge High School**, Poet **Rhiannon Garfield-Lane** worked with Year 8 pupils and **The Whitworth** to explore poetry as a tool for reflection and change. Beginning with Austin Kleon's blackout technique, pupils created and found poems tackling issues close to them, such as bullying and digital overload. During their visit to The Whitworth, they explored the 'Women in Revolt' exhibition, particularly the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, learning how art can inspire activism. Later, at Manchester Poetry Library, they created poems from chosen texts and acted as tour guides for each other. Their final pieces, designed as expressive posters, captured poetry and art as forms of individuality and resistance.

**Poetry Garden: Sumithreyi Sivapalan, RHS Bridgewater, Falinge Park High School**

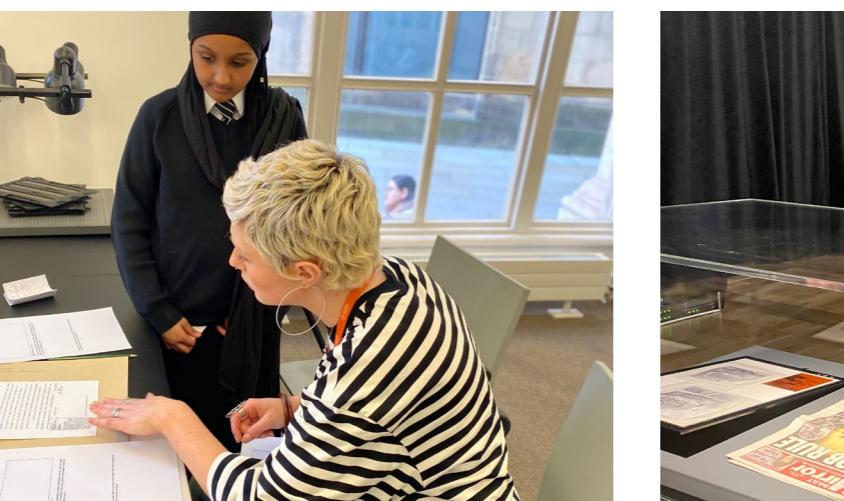
Poet **Sumithreyi Sivapalan** collaborated with Year 7 pupils from **Falinge Park High School** and **RHS Bridgewater** to explore imagination and renewal through the metaphor of a garden. Inspired by the idea of wandering without a map, pupils reflected on what lies buried and unseen before growth begins, linking these ideas to their study of Frankenstein. At RHS Bridgewater, they made clay beetles, completed a treasure hunt, and gathered sensory impressions for later writing. Back in school, workshops introduced poetic techniques to shape their discoveries into verse. Through this creative process, students gained confidence, insight, and a collection of poems celebrating curiosity and transformation. Students proudly performed their poems to parents and invited guests at the opening of Falinge Park's Art, Words and Wellbeing Garden.

“

WE HAVE ALL WITNESSED FIRSTHAND WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WHEN STUDENTS ARE GIVEN THE TOOLS TO EXPRESS THEIR THOUGHTS THROUGH POETRY. THE PROJECT HAS HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. IT HAS CONNECTED THE GROUP NOT ONLY WITH EACH OTHER, BUT ALSO WITH THEMSELVES, THEIR HERITAGE, AND THEIR VIEWS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST IN THEIR LIVES.

**Lynn Provoost**  
Assistant Headteacher *The Derby High School*





**“ FROM SCHOOL LIFE TO PUBLIC LIFE HAS MANY DIFFERENT EXCITING ASPECTS TO IT. OUR STUDENTS GOT TO WORK WITH INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE WHO GAVE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES TO OUR STUDENTS.**

**WE EXPLORED THE 7 NOLAN PRINCIPLES: HONESTY, INTEGRITY, OBJECTIVITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, SELFLESSNESS, OPENNESS, AND LEADERSHIP. DISCUSSING TRUST AND WHAT WORKING IN PUBLIC OFFICE MEANS. WE THEN GOT TO MEET PEOPLE WHO WORK IN GOVERNMENT, THIS IS SOMETHING OUR STUDENTS WILL NEVER FORGET. THEIR VOICES FELT VALUED AND THEY WERE LISTENED TO. OUR YOUNG PEOPLE USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS AND IMPORTANTLY ASK QUESTIONS. VISITING THE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT DEMONSTRATED THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT COULD BE AVAILABLE TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

**Louise Mills**

*Head of Faculty of Creative Arts, Hathershaw College*

## CASE STUDY: FROM SCHOOL LIFE TO PUBLIC LIFE

10 North West Comino Schools once again took part in our flagship 'From School Life to Public Life' project during the 2024.25 academic year. The aim of this project is simple: help young people understand the systems that shape their communities and give them the confidence to take part in them.

The North West Comino Consortium of schools tasked Comino Foundation to create this project to strengthen civic understanding at a time when many young people feel disconnected from decision making. By focusing on skills like critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, the program gives students tools that matter far beyond the classroom.

In each participating school, the project starts with a visit by a local councillor to meet up to 30 pupils selected by project staff in the school. The session focuses on the importance of values and standards in public life, by introducing young people to 'The Nolan Principles' and discussing their relevance and efficacy across the current landscape of local and national politics.

As with all Comino Foundation projects the focus is on engaging pupils actively in their own learning and the session ends with an invitation to all pupils to develop the materials for a small messaging campaign which makes a call to action on an issue that they feel strongly about.

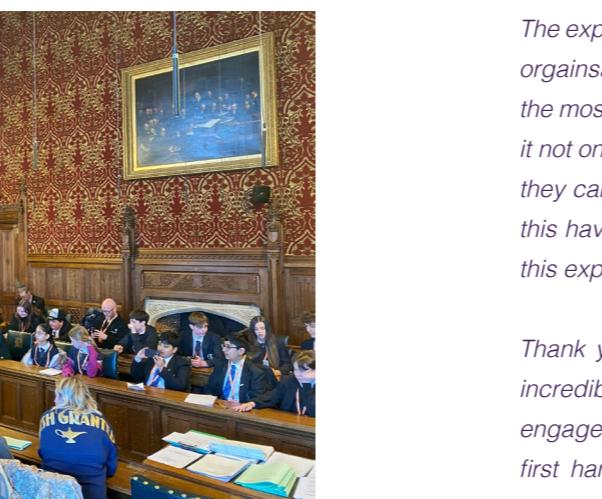
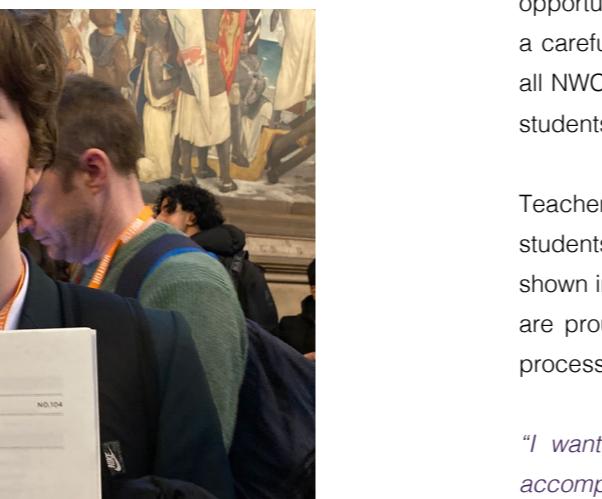
### **Participating Schools:**

St Mary's RC Primary School  
St Ethelbert's RC Primary School  
Abraham Moss Community High School  
Ladybridge High School  
St Gabriel RC High School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The Derby High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### **Partners:**

Comino Foundation  
Christian Walefor MP  
James Frith MP  
Matt Torbitt





The submitted work is then judged by staff in school to identify 3 of the most motivated students for an all-expenses-paid visit to UK Parliament. This trip is commissioned by the Comino team who work in close partnership with local MPs to create a fully bespoke opportunity for all pupils to develop a political question which they put direct to MPs in a carefully curated question and answer session in the Houses of Parliament. As with all NWCC projects the aim is to engage pupils in a real-world experience and to show students that their voices have weight.

Teachers involved say the project is tangibly building confidence and curiosity. Many students have said they did not expect politics to feel this accessible and several have shown interest in joining school councils or volunteering in local groups as a result. We are proud that the project is already proving that when students are invited into the process, they rise to the moment.

*"I wanted to extend my most sincere thanks to both of you for organizing and accompanying us on what was truly a fantastic trip."*

*The experience provided by Comino when we visited Westminster Hall was faultless. The organisation and ongoing communication made the trip run smoothly. The children had the most wonderful experience. By rooting their learning in such an inspirational context, it not only opened new doors of possibilities for them but also gave them real sense that they can be the drivers of change in our school and local community. Experiences like this have an essential part in education and I would like to thank Comino for providing this experience.*

*Thank you for the amazing opportunity to the Houses of Parliament. The event was incredible from the planning and coordination to the opportunities the students had to engage with other schools. The opportunity to witness the workings of the UK government first hand was invaluable. A fantastic enriching and educational experience for our students and myself!"*

**John Howarth**

*Deputy Head: St Mary's RC Primary School, Radcliffe*

“

**THE STUDENTS HAD WONDERFUL SPIRIT, GREAT QUESTIONS AND A GENUINE CURIOSITY INTO THE WORK OF A MP AND OUR PARLIAMENT. IT WAS AN ABSOLUTE PLEASURE TO HOST THEM.**

**OUR FUTURE GENERATION OF LEADERS KEEPING ME IN CHECK.**

**James Frith**  
MP Bury North



“ IT WAS AN ABSOLUTE PRIVILEGE TO SEE OUR PUPILS ENGAGE WITH SUCH ENTHUSIASM AND RESILIENCE IN THIS INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY. THE EXPERIENCE NOT ONLY DEEPENED THEIR UNDERSTANDING BUT ALSO EMPOWERED THEM TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR VOICES WITH CONFIDENCE. WE ARE IMMENSELY GRATEFUL FOR THE CHANCE TO BE PART OF SUCH AN INSPIRING INITIATIVE, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING THIS VALUABLE PARTNERSHIP.

**Lorna Woodcock**  
Teacher at St Ethelbert's RC Primary School





## CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENTALIST IN RESIDENCE

The **Environmentalist in Residence (EiR) program** was an innovative pilot project led by EcoVida Routes and the North West Comino Consortium (NWCC).

The primary goal was to address the gap in sustainability education by connecting industry expertise with secondary school curricula, building upon the excellent network established during the RSA Pupil Design Awards.

The program partnered lead Geography teachers with industry professionals (Environmentalists in Residence). Together, they co-developed an innovative curriculum model focused on sustainability and climate change with a real focus on what is relevant right now in industry.

Key components of the program included Authentic Learning Experiences, Curriculum Development and Career Guidance.

The initiative operates on a Community of Practice (CoP) model to foster the attitudes and problem-solving skills necessary for young people to engage with real-life challenges and develop aspirations for a successful future. The CoP initially undertook a full day of scoping together (held at Co-op Academy Belle Vue, a centre of excellence for Geography) in January 2025. Schools were partnered with their industry experts and began developing their curriculum ideas in collaboration.

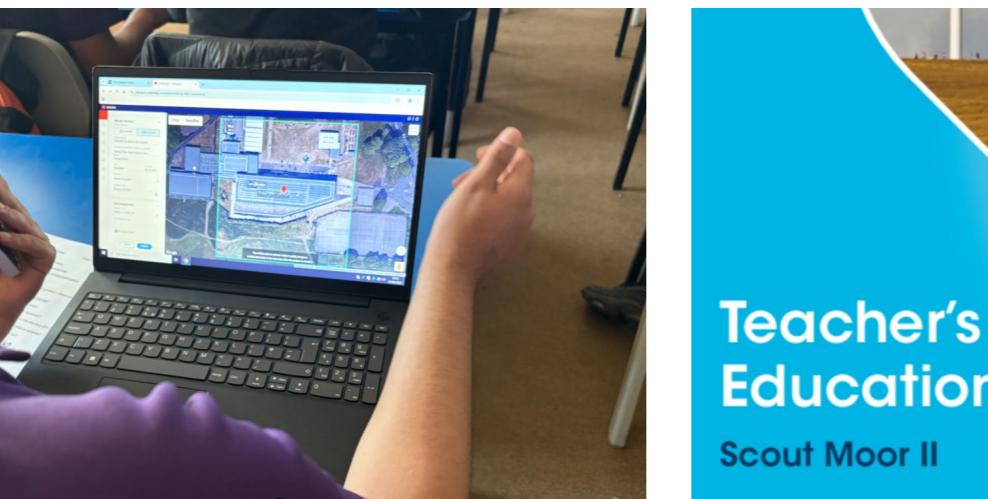
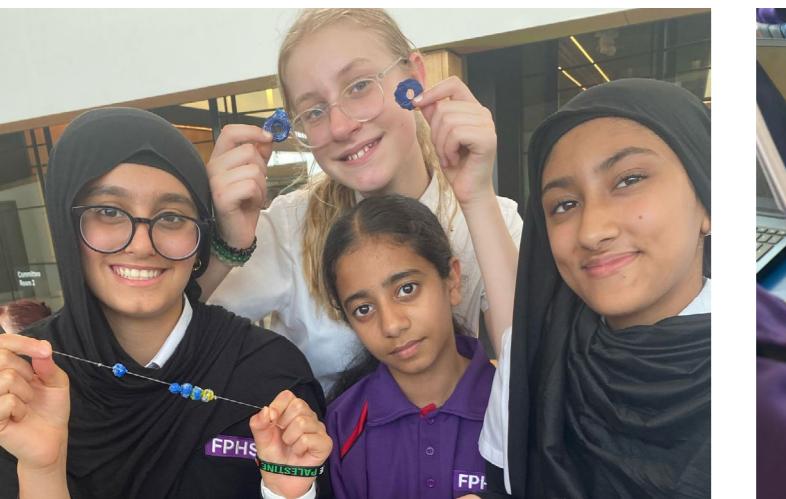
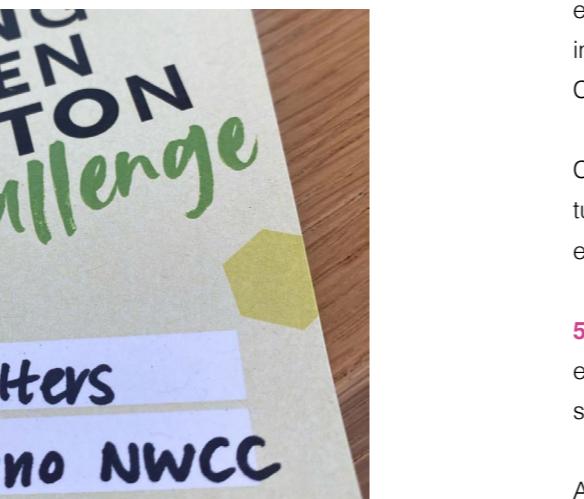
In the following months the teachers and industry experts collaborated to keep developing and delivering their project. These ranged from specific employer engagement projects with visits from the experts to schools to much wider reaching projects looking at curriculum opportunities right across schools.

### Participating Schools:

Falinge Park High School  
Ladybridge High School  
The East Manchester Academy

### Partners:

Cubico Sustainable Investments  
Carbon Zero Energy  
EcoVida Routes  
Young Green Briton



**Falinge Park High School** was a successful curriculum enhancement and student enrichment initiative focused on real-world sustainability, delivered in collaboration with industry experts **Duncan Whittaker** from Carbon Zero Energy and **Peter Rowe** from Cubico Sustainable Investments.

Curriculum materials were updated to include context on the carbon footprint of wind turbine production and transportation, using the local Scout Moor wind farm as an engaging example.

**55 pupils** engaged in a hands-on session where they learned how solar panels generate electricity and used a program to calculate the cost-effectiveness of adding them to the school's roof.

A dedicated session educated pupils on the ethical issues in solar panel manufacturing, specifically addressing modern slavery and the importance of responsible sourcing. More than 50 pupils participated in a workshop linked to hygiene in industry, using a luminometer to test for microbes (ATP) in the school environment.

#### Case Study 2: Scout Moor II - Education Pack and Youth Consultation

As a result of the contacts made through the Environmentalist in Residence programme, EcoVida Routes and Cubico Sustainable Developments were able to strike up an additional partnership project which was made available to the NWCC schools.

The proposed Scout Moor II wind farm, on the moors above Rochdale/Rossendale/Bury, could be the UK's biggest onshore windfarm of the past two decades since the previous governments moratorium on such projects was lifted by the current Labour government. The intention is for the project to add an additional 17 turbines, rising to 181m, next to the existing smaller wind farm.

At the time of the EiR first discussions, Cubico were in the early consultation phase in preparation for submitting their full planning application to Rochdale and Rossendale Borough Councils. We collectively suggested that there was an excellent and unique opportunity for Cubico to get the opinions of young people through a school-based decision making exercise, similar to the one in geography GCSE, using the EiR schools.

Over the next three months Martin from EcoVida Routes and Peter Rowe from Cubico collaborated to develop this as a teacher resource. This was tested in with the project website and its live information with the aim of informing teachers of the project and its impacts in an impartial way, allowing them to investigate all viewpoints of the proposal. The aim was for them to make an informed decision about whether the windfarm should go ahead.

In total the partnership was able to generate 23 responses from young people with 9 of these coming from Falinge Park and The Derby High School. All of these responses were included as an appendix to the actual planning permission, an approach which has never been done before and giving young people a voice on an issue which will have more impact in their lifetime than other issues/problems in the area.

To see all the detail of this project please download the summary report online.

## CASE STUDY: RHS GREEN SHOOTS TASTER DAY: INSPIRING CAREERS IN HORTICULTURE.

In Autumn 2024 students and staff from our partner schools took part in a careers-focused RHS Green Shoots Taster Day at RHS Bridgewater. Now in its third year, this popular offer continues to grow in demand, offering young people an inspiring opportunity to explore the many career paths available within horticulture and beyond.

**“PARTNERING WITH COMINO AND LOCAL SCHOOLS HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE FOR US AS AN ORGANISATION. THE STUDENTS WHO JOIN US ARRIVE EAGER TO LEARN, READY TO ENGAGE, AND FULL OF CURIOSITY. EVERY PROJECT BECOMES A SHARED JOURNEY—WHERE WE INSPIRE STUDENTS TO EXPLORE HORTICULTURAL CAREERS WHILE LEARNING FROM THEM IN RETURN.”**

**Emma Cleal**

*Horticultural Engagement Officer (Bridgewater) at Royal Horticultural Society*

The session welcomed year 10 students with a range of interests — from keen gardeners and plant enthusiasts to those simply curious to try something new. It provided a hands-on introduction to a professional working garden, allowing participants to experience the environment, meet industry professionals, and discover what a career in this sector might involve.

**Exploring Life Behind the Scenes**

Students enjoyed exclusive access to areas of RHS Bridgewater not normally open to the public, exploring the gardens, glasshouses, and production spaces that support its day-to-day operations. They observed horticulturalists at work, learned about plant care, design, and sustainability, and gained an appreciation of the skills needed to maintain such a vast and vibrant site.

Importantly, the day also highlighted the breadth of careers linked to horticulture. Alongside traditional gardening roles, students discovered opportunities in **visitor services, machinery maintenance, and arboricultural work**, as well as in education, events, and design. Meeting staff and apprentices from these teams gave students a clearer picture of how varied and rewarding a career in this sector can be.

**Participating Schools:**

Hathershaw College  
St Gabriel's RC High School  
St Monica's RC High School  
The Derby High School  
The East Manchester Academy

**Partners:**

RHS Bridgewater



### Inspiring Future Pathways

Throughout the day, participants heard from members of the RHS team who shared their own routes into the industry. From apprentices and garden managers to visitor experience staff and technical specialists, each story revealed a different pathway into horticulture and demonstrated how creativity, teamwork, and environmental awareness are valued across all roles.

Students were encouraged to ask questions, handle tools, and think about how their own interests and skills might fit into this growing industry. Many came away inspired by the range of opportunities that extend far beyond gardening alone — from practical outdoor work to science, sustainability, and customer engagement.

Now firmly established in the NWCC careers programme, the RHS Taster Day continues to open doors for young people, helping them see horticulture not only as a career but as a vibrant, innovative, and sustainable future.

“  
THIS TWO-WAY EXCHANGE ENRICHES OUR WORK AND STRENGTHENS OUR CONNECTION WITH THE COMMUNITY AROUND RHS BRIDGEWATER. TOGETHER, WE'RE NOT JUST GROWING PLANTS; WE'RE CULTIVATING IDEAS, CONFIDENCE, AND A SENSE OF BELONGING.

**Emma Cleal**

*Horticultural Engagement Officer (Bridgewater) at Royal Horticultural Society*



**“THROUGH THIS INITIATIVE WE HOPE TO INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION TO CHERISH AND UPHOLD THE TRADITIONS THAT HAVE SHAPED OUR COMMUNITIES.”**

**Daniel Carpenter**  
*Executive CEO of Heritage Crafts*

## CASE STUDY: ENDANGERED CRAFTS DAY

### Crafting a Future

From blacksmithing to basketry, from weaving to woodturning, the UK is host to an incredible range of heritage craft skills and have some of the best craftspeople in the world. However, the recent publication of Heritage Crafts' Red List of Endangered Crafts shows that many of these skills are in the hands of individuals who have been unable to make provision to pass them on.

At the same time we know that the contribution of the heritage sector to the UK's travel and tourism market and a rapidly growing online trade for the handmade and unique crafts, mean making a living as a craftsman is more viable now than it has ever been.

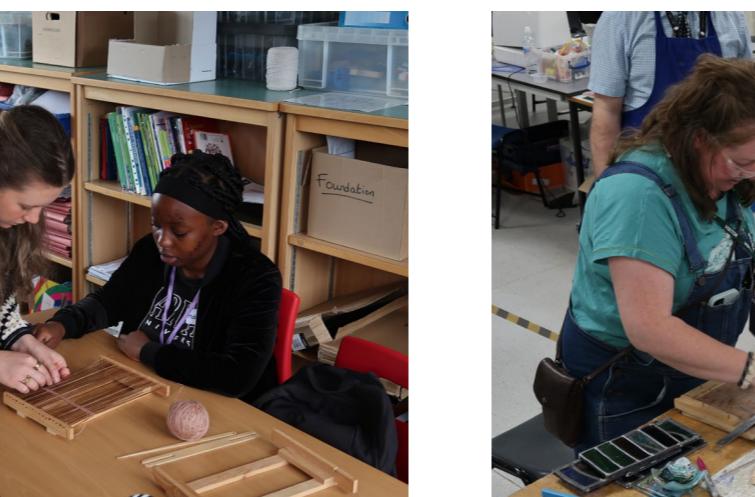
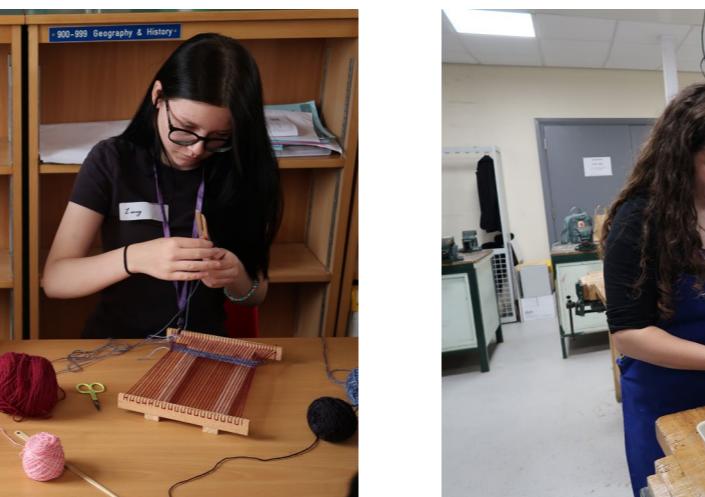
In this exciting initiative the Comino Foundation partnered with Heritage Crafts UK to provide an 'Endangered Crafts Day' to introduce young people from North West Comino Consortium schools to a range of these.

80 young people were able to get 'hands-on' in workshops with some of the North West's most inspiring craftspeople including Manchester Craft Centre jeweller; Ella McIntosh, Neon Workshop lighting designer, Richard Wheater and stained glass making with Halifax's Redcurrant Glass. The experiences not only provided them with insights into craft careers, but also a greater appreciation of the importance that craft skills make to the North West's heritage business sector.

One of the East Manchester Academy pupils said "It's amazing to know that I could make a living from something I feel very passionate about". Many pupils commented on how art and crafts can also help them feel in control and gain self-confidence. Another pupil said 'the skills I have learnt today have made me feel energised and positive, I've also enjoyed working at my own pace and feeling I am in control of my own work.' At the end of the day, all the Ladybridge teachers joined in the workshops, encouraging the well-being of the staff.

**Participating Schools:**  
Ladybridge High School  
The East Manchester Academy  
Abraham Moss Community High School  
The Derby High School  
Falinge Park High School  
Hathershaw College  
Pioneer House High School

**Partners:**  
Comino Foundation  
Heritage Crafts Partners





**“ IT’S BEEN AN ABSOLUTE HONOUR TO WORK WITH COMINO THIS YEAR ON THE SUMMER SCHOOL PROJECT. THE INCREDIBLE TALENT AND CREATIVITY SHOWN BY THE CHILDREN TRULY BLEW ME AWAY, THEIR IDEAS AND SKILLS LEFT ME INSPIRED AND EXCITED ABOUT WHAT THE FUTURE OF THE ADVERTISING INDUSTRY HOLDS.**

**Josie Campbell**  
Senior Business Lead, McCann

## CASE STUDY: McCANN MANCHESTER COMINO SUMMER SCHOOL

### OPENING DOORS TO CREATIVE CAREERS

For over a decade, our partnership with McCann has been giving young people across NWCC schools a unique insight into the fast-paced and exciting world of creative communications. In partnership with McCann Manchester—one of the North West's largest and most awarded advertising agencies—the programme has helped demystify an industry often perceived as exclusive or inaccessible.

The UK marketing and advertising sector is a global leader, offering a wealth of opportunities for talented and creative young people. Yet for many, it remains a world defined by connections rather than clear career pathways. By taking students directly into the heart of a working agency, it provides a genuine understanding of how campaigns are created and introduces participants to the wide range of roles and skills that make up the advertising industry.

#### An Inclusive Pathway into Advertising

McCann Manchester has long been a pioneer for inclusion and opportunity within the sector. As one of the few advertising agencies in the North of England to offer a dedicated apprenticeship programme, McCann is actively breaking down barriers for young people aspiring to enter the industry. This project offers our schools an inclusive, hands-on model of work experience that continues to inspire the next generation of creative thinkers.

#### A Real-World Creative Challenge

This year's Summer School welcomed 36 students from six NWCC schools to McCann's beautiful Bonis Hall campus in Prestbury, Cheshire. Over an immersive two-day experience, participants worked alongside agency professionals to respond to a live

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The Derby High School  
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Pioneer House High School

**Partners:**  
Comino Foundation  
McCann Manchester  
Matalan



brief from Matalan. Their challenge: to pitch ideas for a Christmas advertising campaign. Working in small teams, students brainstormed creative concepts, refined their storytelling, and presented their campaigns to McCann's leadership team and Matalan executives. The experience mirrored the realities of agency life—from initial client briefings and creative ideation to pitching and feedback sessions—giving students a tangible sense of how major campaigns are brought to life.

#### Behind the Scenes of a Creative Agency

Throughout the programme, students had the opportunity to meet specialists from across McCann's departments, gaining a full picture of the diverse career paths within advertising. They learned about strategy, copywriting, design, production, digital marketing, and client management—all while seeing how collaboration and creativity power successful campaigns.

A highlight for many was visiting Craft, McCann's in-house production studio, where they discovered how the agency produces fully integrated communications. Students explored the set-building workshops, photography studios, studio kitchen sets, and product storage areas that bring advertising concepts to life. For many, seeing what happens “behind the camera” was both inspiring and eye-opening.

#### Inspiring the Next Generation

The Comino Advertising Summer School continues to be a standout example of how schools, businesses, and creative professionals can work together to nurture future talent. By providing real-world experience, mentorship, and direct engagement with industry experts, the programme helps young people see that a career in advertising isn't reserved for the few—it's an achievable path for anyone with curiosity, creativity, and determination.

Through this partnership, students leave not only with newfound knowledge and confidence but also with the belief that they can play a part in shaping the creative industries of the future.

“

THE McCANN SUMMER SCHOOL WAS AN INCREDIBLE AND INSPIRING EXPERIENCE. IT WAS SO EXCITING TO GET AN INSIGHT INTO THE MARKETING AND ADVERTISING WORLD. IT HAS GIVEN ME AN INSIGHT INTO WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO DO IN THE FUTURE AND AT COLLEGE! THANK YOU TO McCANN FOR PROVIDING SUCH AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY!

Armando Jatoh

Student Abraham Moss Community School



“ THE ‘TALES TO INSPIRE’ PROJECT EXPLORED PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND STORIES THAT OFTEN GET OVERLOOKED IN A BUSY SCHOOL SETTING. GETTING STUDENTS TO RECALL AND REFLECT ON POWERFUL IDIOSYNCRATIC MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES FELT COURAGEOUS AND EMPOWERING; HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNISING THE COMPLEXITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE’S LIVES AND APPLAUDING THE WAY STUDENTS OFTEN DEAL WITH PIVOTAL MOMENTS IN INCREDIBLE WAYS. I FEEL PRIVILEGED TO HAVE BEEN PART OF A PROCESS THAT HAS ENABLED YOUNG PEOPLE TO DRAW STRENGTH AND MOTIVATION FROM ARTICULATING THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL ODYSSEY.

**Simon De Courcey**

*Director for Cultural Capital at Falinge Park High School*

## CASE STUDY: TALES TO INSPIRE

This year small groups of pupils from three NWCC schools have had the opportunity to work with ground-breaking Bolton charity ‘Tales to Inspire’ on their flagship ‘This is Us’ project. The idea behind ‘This is Us’ is a simple but powerful one; to give young people a space to be seen, heard and valued through the lens of their own experience.

The three schools involved in this project; Falinge Park High School, Pioneer House High School and The East Manchester Academy, are notable for their diverse pupil populations and their strongly pupil centred approach to learning and development.

Through intensive small group workshops drawn from their own experiences of personal growth and ambition, the young social leaders from Tales to Inspire have mentored each of the young people on the programme to connect with the power of their own stories, and to tell those stories within the pages of this book.

Through sharing their stories pupils on the project have begun to understand how life experience impacts on identity and sense of self, and to understand and to empathise with those from different cultures and backgrounds. The project has offered a platform for all pupils to feel proud of their own journey and for some to re-imagine how they can fit into a world which has not always seemed to have a space for them.

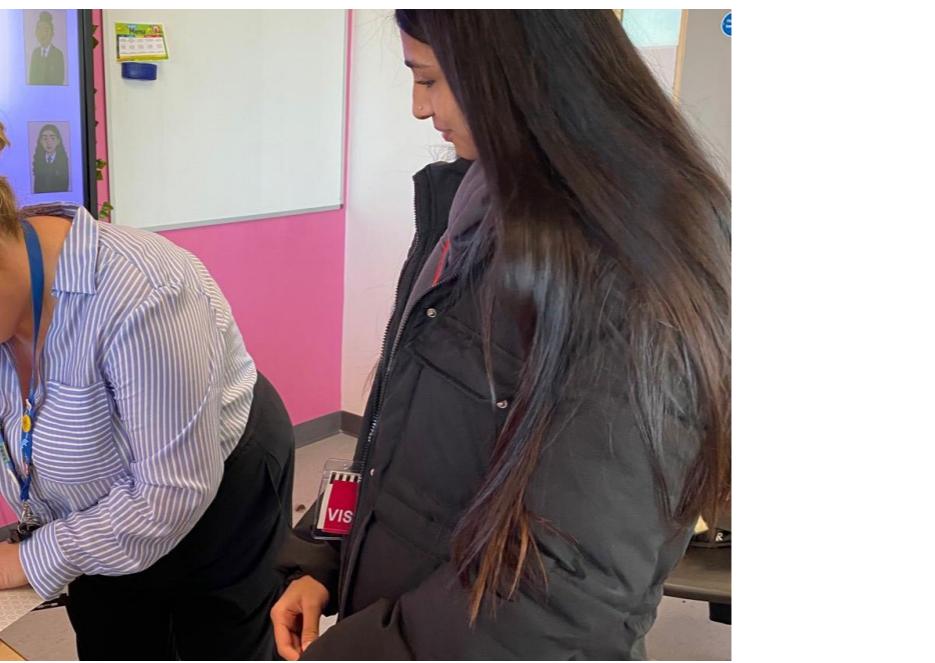
How wonderful that we are now able to hear those myriad voices, and celebrate their unique place in the world, through the power of personal storytelling.

### **Participating Schools:**

Pioneer House High School  
The East Manchester Academy  
Falinge Park High School

### **Partners:**

Tales to Inspire  
Comino Foundation



“  
THE PROJECT FELT ADVENTUROUS AND EXCITING. IT BROUGHT PEOPLE TOGETHER AND WAS EDUCATIONAL AT THE SAME TIME. I HOPE THAT PEOPLE CAN RELATE TO THE EXPERIENCES SHARED AND RECOGNISE THE POWER OF THEIR OWN GOOD AND BAD MEMORIES.

**Bethel**  
Tales to Inspire pupil at Fairlge Park High School



“ THE PROJECT HAS BEEN AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR STUDENTS. HAVING THE CHANCE TO TAKE PART IN THIS PROJECT HAS EMPOWERED OUR STUDENTS TO SHARE IMPORTANT STORIES THAT WE KNOW WILL INSPIRE OTHERS TO SHARE THEIR OWN STORIES, EMBRACE THEIR DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES. WE HOPE THAT THESE STORIES SHOW OTHERS THAT EVERYDAY CHALLENGES CAN BE OVERCOME WITH DETERMINATION AND EMPOWERMENT.

Fabian Ramos

Assistant Headteacher at Pioneer House High School

“ I WAS INCREDIBLY MOVED BY THE STUDENTS’ INSPIRATIONAL TESTIMONIES. WE ARE SO PROUD TO HAVE SUCH REMARKABLE AND INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE EAST MANCHESTER ACADEMY.

Hana Ingram

Assistant Headteacher for SEND at The East Manchester Academy



## CASE STUDY: STEM – INSPIRATION TRAIN CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF BRITISH RAIL (EUSTON, LONDON)

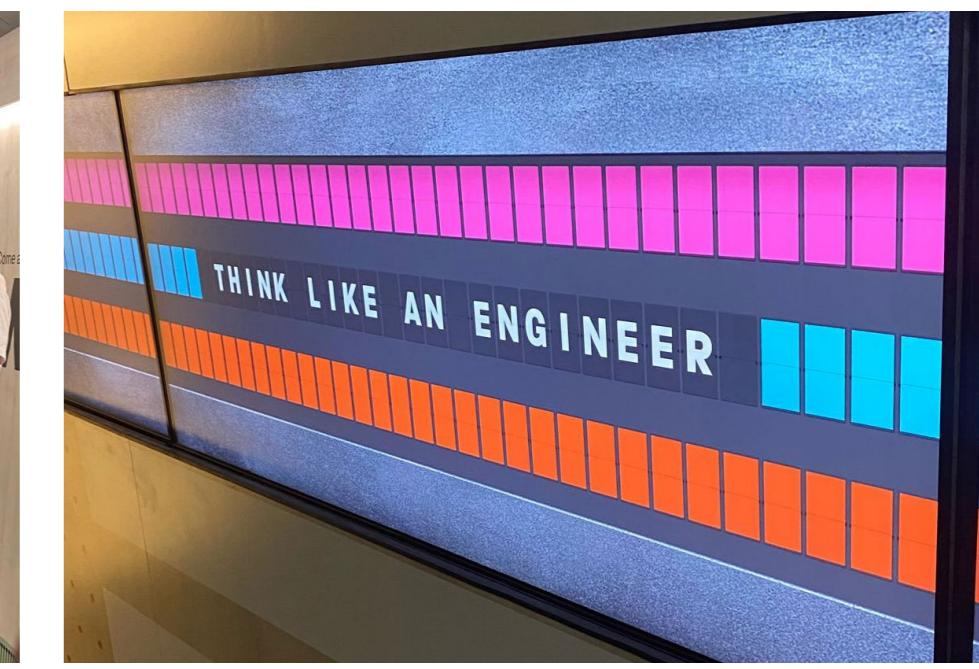
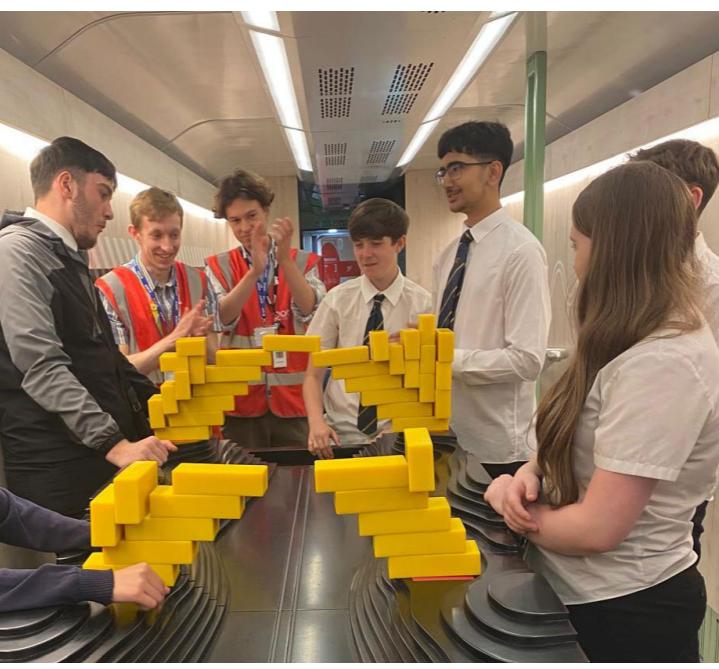
This is a train specially kitted out with four carriages dedicated to science, technology and engineering hands on activities. The students experience hands on displays in the wonder lab, learn about the history of rail and discuss future careers in the rail industry with young rail apprentices.

Students from St Gabrie's RC High School travelled from Bury to Euston to see the train and tour London's sites. This was made possible by the train tickets being provided by Northern Rail.

The train is due to travel around the country over the next year and hopefully many more of our Comino schools will have the same opportunity.

**Participating Schools:**  
St Gabrie's RC High School

**Partners:**  
Community Rail Lancashire  
Northern Rail  
Volunteers Network Rail





## CASE STUDY: ACCRINGTON ECO STATION

This station is one of the first sustainable UK stations using recycled materials, insulation and solar energy to reduce environmental impact. Partnering with Community Rail in this important initiative our Comino primary schools travelled by train to the site learning about rail safety, sustainability and careers in the rail industry.

The school groups travelled from their school to Accrington station planning their route. The sponsorship for the trips from Northern Trains enabled our schools to participate in the project as travel often limits out of school learning.

### Participating Schools:

Abraham Mosis Primary School  
St Ethelbert's RC Primary School  
St Mary's RC Primary School

### Partners:

Accrington Eco Station  
Community Rail Lancashire  
Northern Rail





## CASE STUDY: TERRI AND THE TIME MACHINE

Terri and the Time Machine is a project which has been developed as a collaboration between award winning theatre company One Tenth Human and Z-Arts, with funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. In 2024/2025 the project was delivered to thirteen primary schools across Greater Manchester. This has included Comino schools Abraham Moss, Alice Ingham RC, Our Lady St Pauls RC, St Gregory's RC, Sacred Heart RC and St Ethelbert's RC.

What makes Terri and the Time Machine unique compared to other arts-based projects, is its immersive nature and year long duration. The entire Year 3 science curriculum is delivered through a narrative in an integrated way. Terri and Gideon's adventures tie together the disparate science topics of forces, nutrition, rocks, light and plants with a story that motivates children to remember what they have learnt and find out more. The project provides a blueprint of good practice for primary science teaching and learning. We found the project has also raised aspirations about who can be a STEM\* professional and the work of scientists and engineers.

### **Participating Schools:**

Abraham Moss Community School  
Alice Ingham RC Primary School  
Our Lady St Pauls 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



**“ IT’S BEEN WONDERFUL WORKING WITH THE COMINO SCHOOLS THROUGH CREATIVE SUNSPACEART WORKSHOPS. THE PUPILS LEARN ABOUT THE SUN AND SPACE - INCLUDING THE LIGHT SPECTRUM, ECLIPSE, THE AURORA, SOLAR FLARES - AND THEY ALWAYS ASK BRILLIANT QUESTIONS. EXPRESSING EXCITEMENT ABOUT WHAT THEY’VE LEARNT INTO IMAGINATIVE, COLOURFUL ARTWORKS. WATCHING EACH CHILD DEVELOP THEIR INDIVIDUAL IDEAS, FEELINGS AND CURIOSITY, IS INSPIRING AND IT’S A JOY TO WATCH THEIR CONFIDENCE GROW AS THEY TALK ABOUT THEIR WORK DISPLAYED IN THEIR CLASSROOMS.**

**Clare Dudeney**  
Artist

## CASE STUDY: SUN, SPACE, ART

In July our NWCC Primary schools were visited by the SunSpaceArt team: 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 always grateful for their enthusiasm and dedication to our schools in delivering their science-filled and thought-provoking workshop, SunSpaceArt. Through an engaging, hands-on session that combined Art and Science, pupils explored how the Sun’s rays bring us light, heat, warmth, life, and happiness.

During the workshop, pupils discovered inspiring facts about the Sun—its age, temperature, and unique phenomena such as sunspots, solar flares, and eclipses. They also discovered inspiring figures in science, from Newton and Galileo to modern explorers like British astronauts Tim Peake and Helen Sharman. In addition, they explored the hidden parts of the light spectrum, including infrared and ultraviolet light.

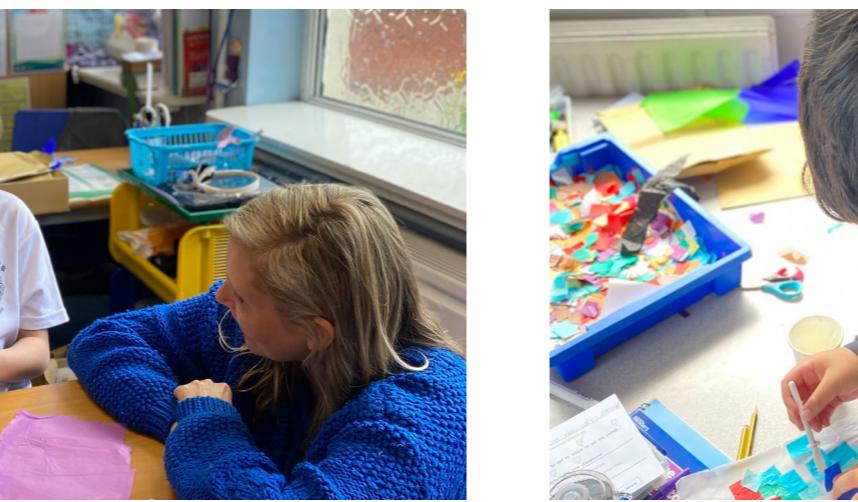
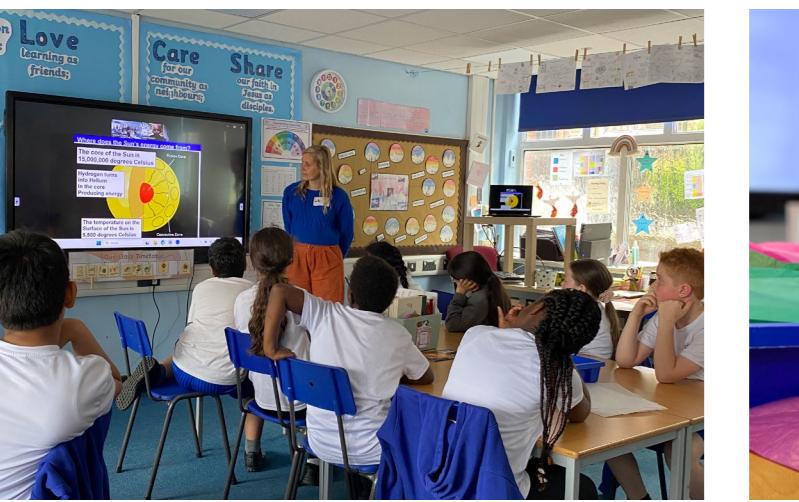
Building on their understanding of the science of light, pupils were introduced to the work of African-American artist Alma Thomas, whose paintings are often inspired by the Sun. In her piece The Eclipse, coloured squares radiate outward in a circle—an abstract composition created through dots, dashes, and rectangles of paint. Her work inspired pupils to create their own light-themed artworks in a similar style.

Using coloured tissue paper and translucent sheets, pupils crafted vibrant suncatchers that, when placed on classroom windows, transformed the sunlight into dazzling, stained-glass-like displays. The result was a joyful celebration of light, art, and each child’s creativity—an uplifting addition to the class gallery.

In September 2024 Prof Helen Mason was awarded the Ogden Trust Award for Sustained Contribution to Physics Outreach. This recognised a lifetime of solar outreach by Helen and in particular the recent achievements of the SunSpaceArt team.

**Participating Schools:**  
Abraham Mosis Primary School  
St Ethelbert's RC Primary School  
St Mary's RC Primary School

**Partners:**  
Comino Foundation  
Sun.Space Art



**“THROUGH TODAY'S WORKSHOPS WE WERE ABLE TO WITNESS HOW CULTURAL EDUCATION, WHEN INTEGRATED INTO SUBJECTS LIKE LITERATURE, ART, OR SCIENCE, BRINGS LEARNING TO LIFE. IT ENCOURAGES CURIOSITY, CRITICAL THINKING, AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL GROWTH, WHILST ALLOWING YOUNG PEOPLE TO REFLECT ON THEIR OWN IDENTITIES AND RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OTHERS. AS SCHOOLS AIM TO BUILD INCLUSIVE AND FUTURE-READY ENVIRONMENTS, CULTURAL EDUCATION MUST PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE. IT'S HOW WE TEACH STUDENTS NOT ONLY TO MAKE A LIVING—BUT ALSO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”**

**Deborah Davidson**  
*Comino Foundation Project Manager*

## CASE STUDY: CLIMATE STORIES - FLAGS

Within the North West Comino Consortium we strongly believe that cultural education has a pivotal role to play in helping young people to participate as active citizens in the world around them; helping them to respect and value diverse perspectives, to build a broader world view and to develop a deeper sense of connection to others. This year we were able to bring Ideas Foundation and their flagship Barclays Life Skills sponsored 'Climate Stories' campaign project to the East Manchester Academy and Falinge Park High School to help Year 7 learners to take a creative look at the impacts of climate change, and create a call to action to their peers and communities, through a powerful collaborative artwork.

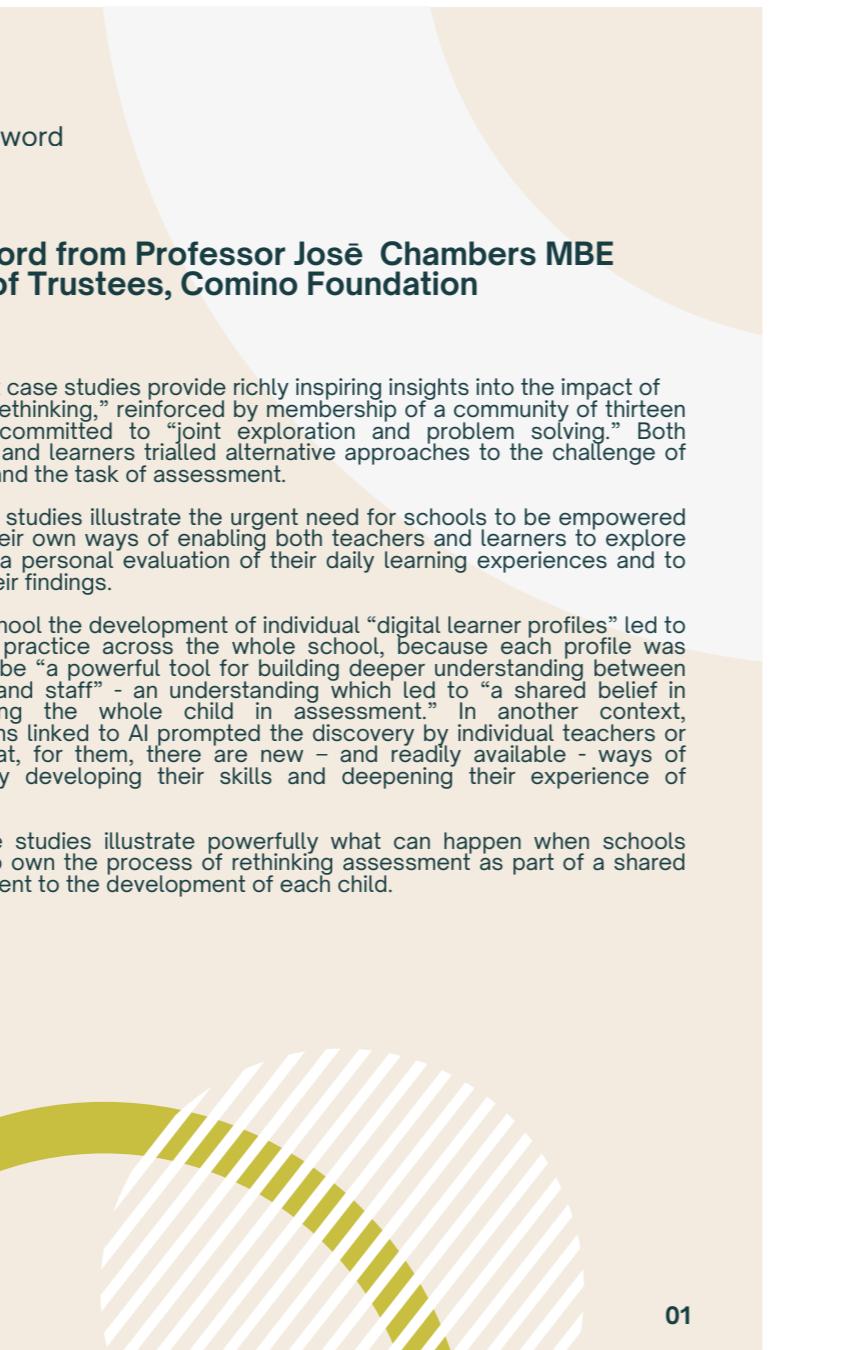
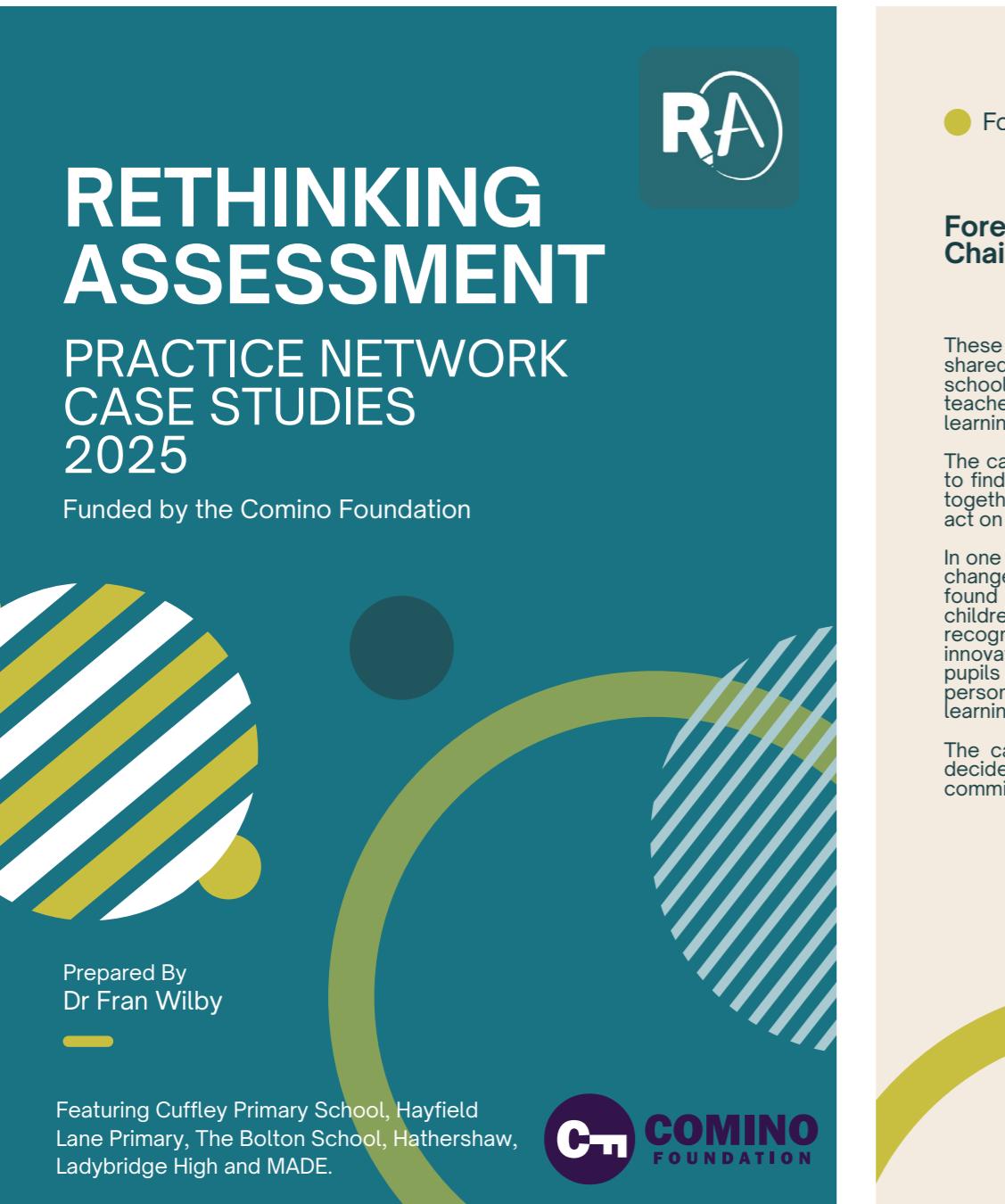
Lead by internationally recognised climate artist and activist Clare Dudeney, a group of Year 7 learners were challenged to consider, not just the science of climate change, but the values and cultural wisdom that support environmental stewardship. Through the activity pupils developed a tangible sense of how climate change affects them, their life choices and the choices for nature and communities across the world. Ideas inspired by these discussions were developed into 'Climate Change Flags' a group artwork building on ideas from research, personal stories and the testimony of others, to develop icons and symbols which gave meaning and message to the series of flags which made up the group artwork installation.

**Participating Schools:**  
The East Manchester Academy  
Falinge Park High School

**Partners:**  
Barclays Life Skills  
Ideas Foundation  
Comino Foundation







## CASE STUDY: RE-THINKING ASSESSMENT – EVIDENCE BASED RESEARCH PRACTICE IN NWCC SCHOOLS

The Comino Foundation’s teaching and learning ethos places equal value on social opportunity, personal agency, and practical skill. For policymakers, this frames education as a system that should cultivate the conditions for young people to participate confidently in society and the economy.

This ethos aligns closely with the research of Comino Foundation’s Strategic Advisor, Professor Bill Lucas, whose work has become influential in debates on assessment reform. Re-thinking Assessment, the initiative Professor Lucas has co-founded, sets out a policy case for a more balanced system. It calls for multiple forms of evidence, including portfolios, performances, project outcomes, and structured teacher judgments. This approach aims to keep academic standards high while broadening the definition of success. It also seeks to reduce the distortions that arise when exam results dominate school accountability.

Comino Foundation actively support teacher participation in research because we believe it is a powerful form of professional development that allows educators to improve their teaching practices, enhance student outcomes, and contribute to the broader knowledge base of the profession.

This year academic staff from two North West Comino Consortium schools and one Local Education Partnership have directly participated in action research case studies for Professor Lucas’ Re-Thinking Assessment Practice Network. This network of school leaders, researchers and other education professionals are working together to make the case for change through evidence informed practice. This year’s RA practice report provides granular enquiries by Ladybridge High School, Hathershaw College and MADE Manchester staff into emerging practice into AI for assessment; Skills Assessment for Music Mastery and Learner Profiles for young Cultural Leadership participants, respectively; reflecting the rich evidence based teaching and learning enquiries of the motivated and experienced teaching professionals within these organisations.

**Participating Schools:**  
Ladybridge High School  
Hathershaw College

**Partners:**  
Comino Foundation  
Dr Fran Wilby

## 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 2024/2025**

Kristina Nguyen	The East Manchester Academy
Ana Maria Guinea	Falinge Park High School
Mia Clarke	The Derby High School
Khadjah Sarpanch	Ladybridge High School
Syeda Zahra	Abraham Moss Community High School
Daniel Conchie	St Gabriel's RC High School
Victory Okoli	St Monica's RC High School
McKenzie Bell Shirley	Pioneer House High School



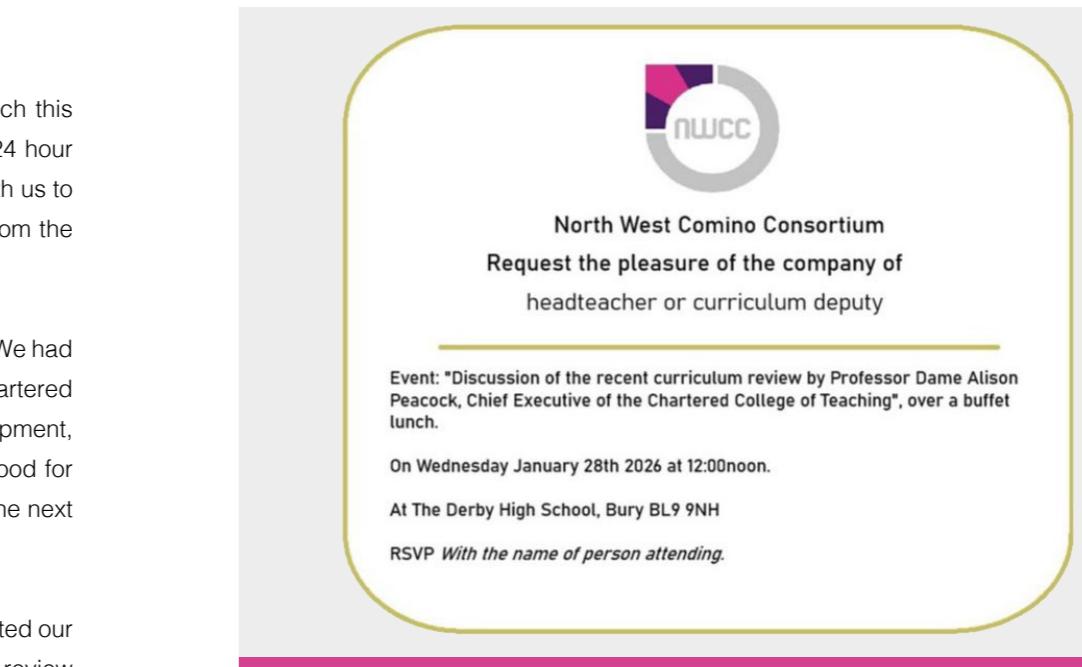


## COMINO FAMILY GATHERING

Each year the Comino trustees invite their grantees to an annual gathering which this year was held at the Marriot in Worsley to celebrate the Comino projects. The 24 hour conference was attended by our school lead coordinators who work tirelessly with us to engage their teachers in our projects. It gives space and valuable time away from the classroom to celebrate our achievements, sharing with the trustees.

Headteachers and partners are invited to join the gathering for the evening meal. We had valuable inputs from Michael England (Skills Builder) and Alison Peacock (Chartered College of Teaching) Other themes included key issues of sustainable development, and creating joy and belonging for young people. The gathering always gives food for thought with likeminded individuals and sets the scene for us to action plan for the next academic year.

As a result of spending time with Alison Peacock we are delighted she has accepted our invitation to visit some of our Comino schools and discuss the recent curriculum review with senior leadership teams.





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  
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



*Collaboration in action: Deborah planning with Haan Ingram from The East Manchester Academy - with a little help from Haan's daughter.*



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.

Accrington  
Eco Station

BARCLAYS  
LifeSkills

carbon  
zero  
energy



Christian  
Wakeford MP,  
Westminster

**CRL**  
Community Rail Lancashire

**Cubico**  
SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS

Dr Fran Wilby

ecoida  
routes

HERITAGE  
CRAFTS

**HOME**

**IF IDEAS**  
FOUNDATION

James Frith MP

Manchester  
Art Gallery

Manchester  
Central  
Library

Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University

Manchester  
Poetry  
Library

Matt Torbitt

**McCANN**  
MANCHESTER

National Rail

**NORTHERN**

One  
Tenth  
Human

Recycling  
Centre

ROYAL  
EXCHANGE  
THEATRE

**RHS**

SCIENCE +  
INDUSTRY  
MUSEUM

**SunSpaceArt**

**Tales  
to  
Inspire.**

the Whitworth

YOUNG  
GREEN  
BRITON  
challenge

**Z**  
arts

