

IMPACT REPORT 2015

The Economist Educational Foundation

Burnet News Club Programme

16



WHO ARE WE?

We are a small, fast-growing charity that was set up from inside *The Economist* in 2012.

OUR VISION

Our vision is that all young people have the opportunity to understand and have their say on current affairs, so they can make informed choices and give sound input on issues affecting their lives.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to enable disadvantaged young people to develop an informed view of the world, the thinking skills to form sound opinions and ideas about it, and the confidence to have their say. We do this through inquisitive conversations about current affairs.

THE BURNET NEWS CLUB

The Burnet News Club (BNC) is our core programme. It's a network of school news clubs run by teachers with support from us. It is open to non-fee paying, non-academically selective primary and secondary schools in the UK.

It works by bringing 8 to 16 year-olds into inspiring conversations about the world around them, which include three key inputs from us:

1. Current affairs content for young people that covers the real issues and doesn't dumb them down.
2. Facilitation of conversations about the news that actively develops young peoples' critical thinking skills.
3. An authentic audience including senior people in business, politics, academia and the arts.

We train teachers to facilitate club sessions at school. These take place once a week for a full school year either with a select group of students in an extracurricular club or with a whole class in curriculum time.

In between classroom sessions, students share their opinions and ideas on the news on the Burnet News Club online platform, also called the blog. There they engage in discussions with other club members from around the country, expert contributors in relevant fields and our own Content Editors.

**THE BEST WAY TO GET A FEEL FOR THE BNC IS
TO HEAR FROM OUR TEACHERS AND CLUB MEMBERS!**



**WATCH OUR
CASE STUDY
VIDEO**

<https://youtu.be/3wKe8ITWRL8>

“ *The club has had a profound impact in the lives of the pupils we serve; in terms of confidence, self-esteem, criticality and engagement with current affairs. It has also set them on a course toward being engaged and questioning citizens.*

– TEACHER

THIS REPORT

This is our first impact report for the Burnet News Club. We measured impact based on our main goals in 2015 – 2016:

1. Enable young people to build knowledge of current affairs
2. Enable young people to build thinking and communication skills
3. Give young people an authentic audience

We collected qualitative and quantitative data. A breakdown of what data we collected is provided at the end of the report.





THE BURNET NEWS CLUB 2015-16

59

TEACHERS TRAINED

100%

OF TEACHERS WOULD
RECOMMEND TRAINING

48

TOTAL SCHOOLS

32

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

16

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

27

BOROUGHES (16 in London)

77%

CLUBS THAT RUN WEEKLY

Here's what the BNC looked like this year:

Secondary schools were invited to join for the first time this year and the cohort doubled in size. Over **300 students** became club members and took part in conversations during club sessions and online. More than **half** of these students were eligible for Free School Meals. Most of our clubs ran **40 sessions** over the year and over **2,700 hours** were spent on the online blog.

MAP OF SCHOOLS



TEACHER TRAINING



**WATCH OUR TEACHER
TRAINING VIDEO**

<https://youtu.be/By4AdZipQv4>



GOAL ONE

ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

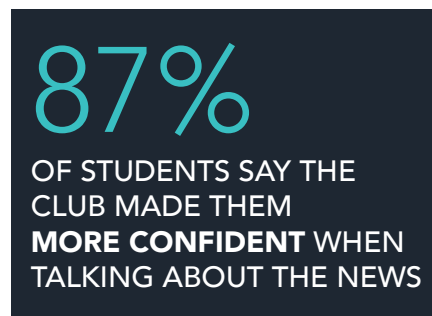
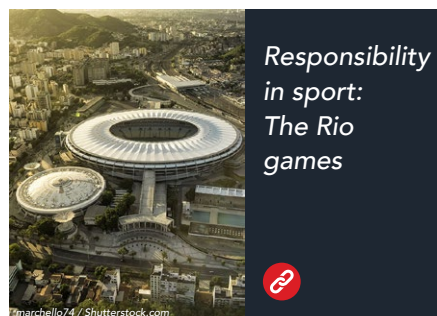
GOAL ONE

ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

Young people are interested in the world around them. We want them to build their knowledge about current affairs so that they can engage with conversations about important issues confidently and knowledgeably. To do this, we need to provide accessible, exciting content.

We strongly believe that young people are able to engage with important, often complex, current affairs and we aim to create content that allows them to access these issues.

WE COVERED FIVE DIFFERENT ISSUES OVER THE ACADEMIC YEAR



“ They know a lot more content. They know what they’re talking about whereas before they weren’t really sure of what their opinion is because they didn’t have anything to back it up. Now you hear them all the time banging on about needing to get evidence for everything, needing to check it as well.

– KS3 TEACHER

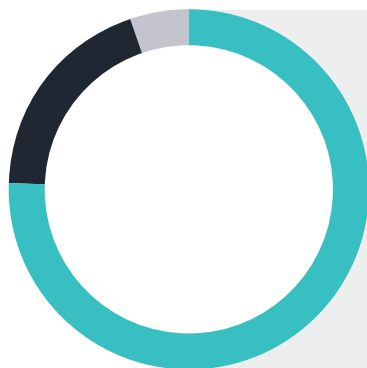
“ I thought that the news was boring and rubbish, but you showed me a new dimension. I LOVE the news now and watch it nearly every day.

– YEAR 5 STUDENT

“ When I watch Newsround and stuff they dumb it down too much and tell me stuff I don't want to know. But when I read BBC news and the Guardian, they use over-complicated words and I don't really understand it.

The Burnet News Club uses appropriate vocabulary we can understand and tells us what is actually going on in the world. That makes it feel more mature. I don't feel childish.

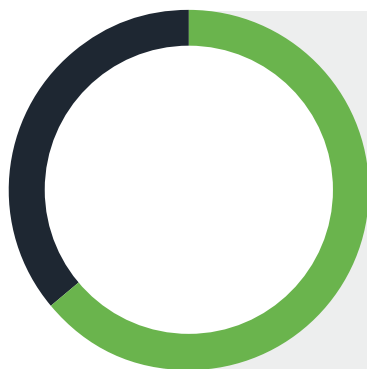
– YEAR 7 STUDENT



STUDENT RESPONSES

Fill in the blank: I _____ than when I wasn't in the club.

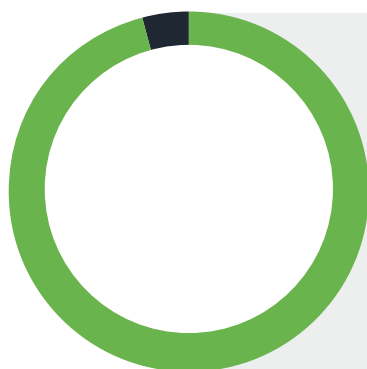
- 76% Know much more about the news
- 19% Know a bit more about the news
- 5% Don't know much more about the news



TEACHER RESPONSES

Has there been a change in student engagement with current affairs?

- 64% Significant increased engagement
- 36% Increased engagement
- 0% No change
- 0% Less engagement

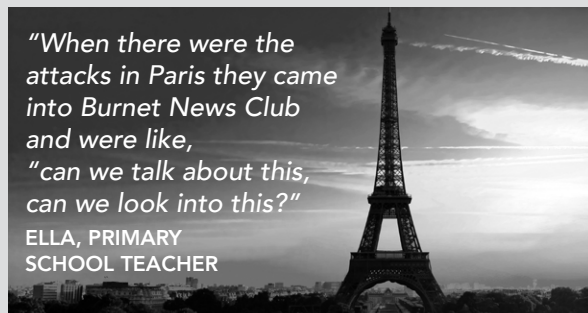


TEACHER RESPONSES

How does our young peoples' news content compare with other news content for young people?

- 96% Better than
- 4% As good as
- 0% Worse than

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT NEWS STORIES: THE PARIS ATTACKS



The Burnet News Club creates a safe space for young people to learn about what is going on in the world around them.

MAKING THE WORLD LESS SCARY:

We give young people the skills to be less afraid of what they see in the news. They learn to be sceptical of sensational headlines, logical about risks, and curious rather than afraid of what they don't understand.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFELY EXPLORE DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW:

We give club members opportunities to explore different perspectives on important issues, armed with the facts. They learn the skills to understand different points of view and draw logical conclusions about what to believe for themselves.

When the Paris attacks occurred in November 2015, BNC club members took to the blog to talk about what was happening. We created a video blog post which encouraged them to use scepticism when interpreting responses to what had happened.

"When there was the attacks in Paris they came into Burnet News Club and were like, 'Can we talk about this, can we look into this?'" and a few of them were a little bit scared and a few of them had heard stuff in the playground. It gave them that opportunity and that time to really talk about it and debate it.

We went through the blog and went through all the information and it kind of put it into perspective for them and reassured them and it also made them think about it a bit more sceptically.

One article we looked at was a headline about a certain percentage of Muslims sympathising with ISIS, and one of the students had seen it on the way to school. The kids said, "Most of the people are going to look at this and they're not going to be sceptical and they're not going to [question] this". Some of them wrote letters to the paper and they were just really angry that that had been allowed to happen.

– KS2 TEACHER

"I think young people should have a say on public issues because they are aware of what's going on in the world and shouldn't be scared about it.

The Burnet News Club helped me not to be scared. During the Paris attack the newspaper was saying how scary it was that we're going to get bombed but Burnet News Club helped by reassuring us.

– YEAR 6 STUDENT

THE ROLE OF THE BLOG

Students used the blog to question the media narrative about Islam in the wake of the attacks. The blog gave them a chance to think critically about this narrative, in dialogue with others.

arkhamassin8796:

Personally I think that it doesn't matter about religion, a person is a person and I say people should be respected equally, different religion or not. And that is a fact.

Peace Bringer:

I agree with you as there are many Muslims in the world who have done nothing wrong and are very good people so I think that if they are in trouble and ask for asylum you should not leave them due to religion.

Responsible Swede 2004:

Also Muslim aren't bad and IS aren't Muslims. Muslims shouldn't be prosecuted because the apparently are to blame for the terrorist attacks. I'm not a Muslim but I think they shouldn't be prosecuted unfairly.

Star.Girl.Amazing.2003;):

I am not sure with what u are saying because some people are muslims and they are involved in the IS. Even if this is the situation i do not be rude to any Muslims because they have not done anything to me so i do not see the point to hate them. If the people involved in the IS are Muslims this does not give me the right to be rude to everyone i see who is a muslim. Even though this is happening with other people i think we should be equal with each other and help one another with our personal needs.

KeyBoardGeek:

We should not blame any Muslims or refugees for IS's crimes. Destroying stereotypes, racism and misunderstanding is a way to help stop the wars, since some conflicts are caused by these.



GOAL TWO

ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD THINKING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD THINKING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Specific thinking and communication skills are needed to interpret current affairs, to form reasoned opinions and to have these opinions heard. We aim to help develop and embed these skills in young people so that they can enter into conversations shaping their society.

EXAMPLES



For our EU referendum issue, we asked students to write and perform poems that expressed their opinions so that they could explore different ways of storytelling.
www.bit.ly/22vIVy9



Students from Barnhill school visited London Live television studios and learnt about how to ask good questions.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ8hPK81tU4



The Blog Highlights section of the BNC blog showcases good examples of our club members using the skills.
www.bit.ly/BNC-highlights

CORE SKILLS

We have five core skills in the BNC.

Our content, activities and online blog facilitation are designed to develop these skills. They are:



CURIOSITY

Being determined to explore the unknown



LOGIC

The ability to make sense



SCEPTICISM

Being hard to deceive



STORYTELLING

The power to persuade



NEGOTIATION

The ability to find common ground

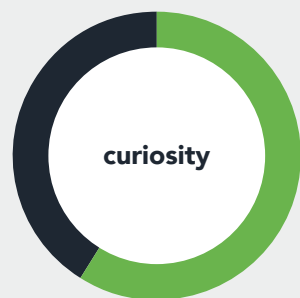
“ I have been so impressed by the impact it has had: the children have loved being part of it, their skills and aspirations have shot up.

– SCHOOL GOVERNOR

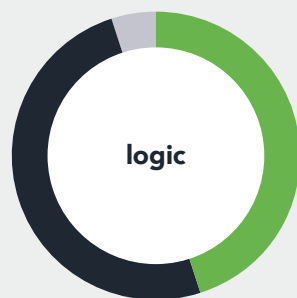


TEACHER RESPONSES

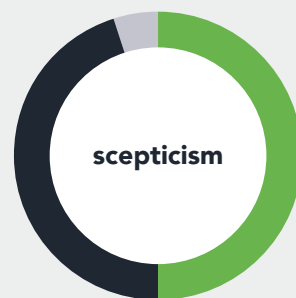
Teacher perception of skill development over a year in the club



59% Strong development
41% Some development
0% No development



45% Strong development
50% Some development
5% No development



50% Strong development
45% Some development
5% No development



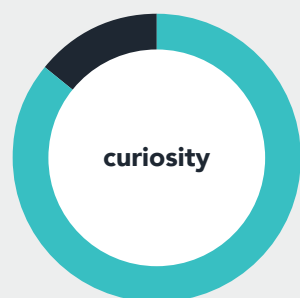
32% Strong development
68% Some development
0% No development



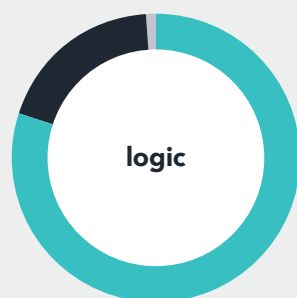
23% Strong development
68% Some development
9% No development

STUDENT RESPONSES

Student perception of skill development over a year in the club



86% I'm more curious now
14% I've stayed the same
0% I'm less curious now



80% I'm more logical now
19% I've stayed the same
1% I'm less logical now



80% I'm more sceptical now
20% I've stayed the same
0% I'm less sceptical now



69% I'm a better storyteller now
29% I've stayed the same
2% I'm a worse storyteller now



76% I'm better at negotiating now
23% I've stayed the same
1% I'm worse at negotiating now

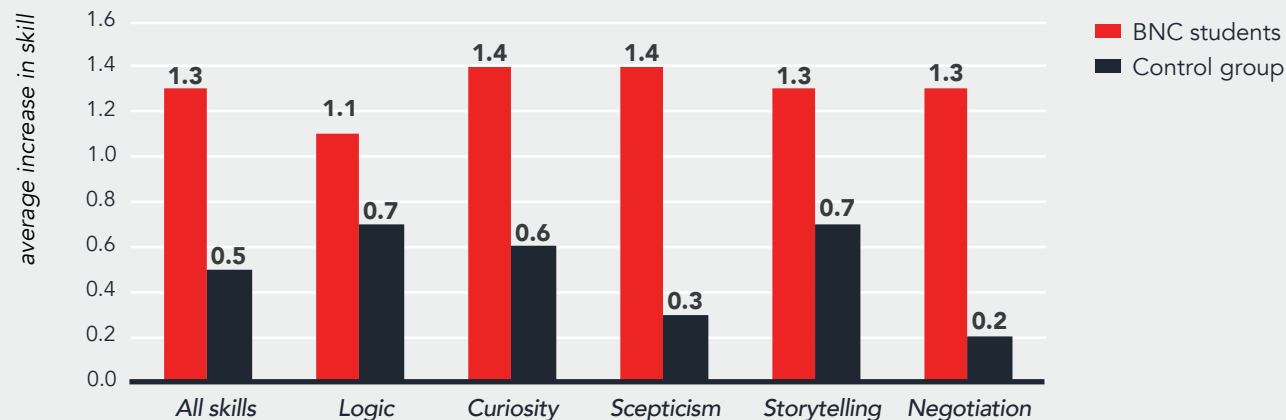
DATA ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS

We provide teachers with clear descriptions of what different levels of student ability look like for each skill, on a scale from 'beginning' to 'leading'.

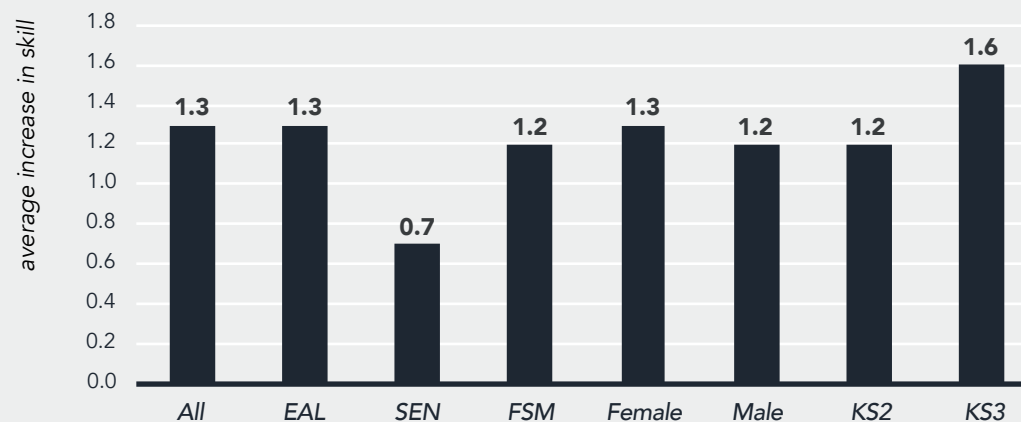
We asked teachers to use these level descriptions to assess the ability of their BNC students, and a control group, in each skill at the beginning and end of the year. When we received this data back we converted each level to a number and looked at the change over the year.

We found that BNC students made significantly more progress in each of the skills than a control group of non-BNC students.

SKILL PROGRESS OVER THE YEAR



SKILLS PROGRESS FOR SPECIFIC STUDENT GROUPS



HOW WE HELP YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOP THE BNC SKILLS: TAKING SCEPTICISM AS AN EXAMPLE

One of our skills is scepticism.

95% of teachers said there was strong or some development in this skill.

80% of students think they are more sceptical now.

HOW WE HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP THIS SKILL

Our news content and the classroom activities that we design for teachers to deliver both encourage students to spot assumptions.

Our Content Editors give feedback and guidance to students on the blog about how to be more sceptical. Students tell us this feedback helps them develop their skills.

Here is an example of our content editor encouraging the use of scepticism.

burnetnewsclub.com/lets-join-everyone-table



Lucy, from the Economist Educational Foundation

24 May 2016 at 2:41 pm

Hello Acton High Burnet News Club members!

We all really enjoyed watching your films about staying in the EU.

By drawing your own pictures to illustrate your opinions you have made it clear that you understand how important and powerful storytelling is- well done!

I'm interested to find out more. If someone were to challenge what you have said in this film, what assumptions might they spot?



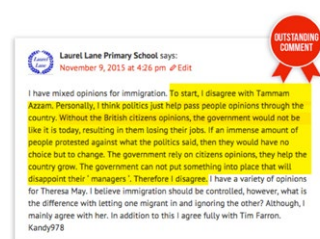
Acton High School

25 May 2016 at 4:18 pm · Edit

In the video, we had assumed that during our 40 years in the EU, nothing bad had happened. Although this may not be exactly true, but to be fair, the EU has gave us much more advantages than disadvantages. As mention in the videos, being in the EU gains us a lot of powerful alliances such as France, Germany, etc. We are not useless on our own, but that doesn't mean we should refuse a chance to become stronger!
KeyBoardGeek

When we saw students using this skill particularly well, we acknowledged this in our 'Blog Highlights' section on the blog.

We did this to motivate other students to demonstrate the skill, and to give them good examples of what sceptical arguments look like.



Why this comment is outstanding

Kandy978 has used logic to build a strong argument using reasons and opinions. They have shown scepticism by challenging Tammam Azzam's opinion rather than simply accepting it.

“ Scepticism has seen great development - children now think it's OK to question those who initially they would have just taken as knowing more.

– KS2 TEACHER

“ Lucy's feedback on the blog helped me dig deeper and spot my assumptions.

– STUDENT

“ It revealed the more questionable points I made that weren't so clear before.

– STUDENT

ACADEMIC IMPACT

The club has a positive impact on students' academic development.

82% of teachers say the club has had a positive or very positive effect on student literacy.

87% of students say the club has helped with their classwork.

STUDENT RESPONSES

43% MY WRITING HAS GOT BETTER

74% I CAN SAY MORE IN CLASS

73% I ASK BETTER QUESTIONS

43% MY READING HAS GOT BETTER

19% OTHER

“ At the beginning I didn't write as much as I could have done but now I can write a lot more detail and explain fully about what I'm saying. I think it helped me to do it because it helped me give reasons for my own opinions and give evidence to support what I'm saying.

– YEAR 6 STUDENT

TEACHER RESPONSES

Here's what a teacher and student from a Medway primary school had to say when asked about the BNC's impact on literacy:

“ They're about to do their SATs reading paper and in the reading test you have to give evidence and give facts and refer back to the text. The Burnet News Club means that they're used to this. Everything they say, they say well because of this and are finding evidence. In their reading and their literacy I'm finding it's definitely having an impact.

– KS2 TEACHER



GOAL THREE GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE AN AUTHENTIC AUDIENCE




GOAL THREE

GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE AN AUTHENTIC AUDIENCE

We aim to achieve this goal by giving young people authentic audiences for their views via the club online platform. In this section of the report we will show how club members use the platform to express their opinions to hundreds of other students, the expert contributors that we invite to read and respond to club members, and the wider audience that we drive to this public site. We also share young people's posts and comments on our social media channels.

ENGAGING WITH THE ISSUES

We've had some incredible posts from students this year which showcase their ability to engage with the issues.

-  **1. Immigration and refugee crisis**
by feebee, Hornsey School for Girls
bit.ly/BNC-refugee
-  **2. Housing crisis**
by SUPER LISS!, Napier Community Primary School
bit.ly/BNC-housing
-  **3. Poetry Slam: EU referendum**
by Maddoodie, Graveney School
bit.ly/BNC-slampoem

ACTIVE CONTRIBUTORS

The blog has been used consistently over the year as a way of discussing current affairs.

4

AVERAGE NUMBER OF
POSTS
PER DAY

5

AVERAGE NUMBER OF
COMMENTS
PER POST

19

AVERAGE NUMBER OF
COMMENTS
PER DAY

13,000+

UNIQUE VISITORS

110,000+

PAGE VISITS

EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS

Over the school year, 21 expert contributors from a range of industries read and responded to BNC members' online discussions. **87%** of teachers said the expert contributors had a positive or very positive effect on students.

SOME OF OUR EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS



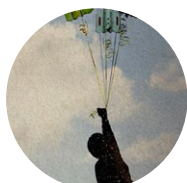
NICOLE SAPSTEAD
CEO of UK Anti-Doping (ukad)
Contributed to the *Responsibility in Sport* issue



JONATHAN BAGGALEY
Head of Education for CEOP
(Child Exploitation & Online Protection)
Contributed to the *Rights in the Modern World* issue



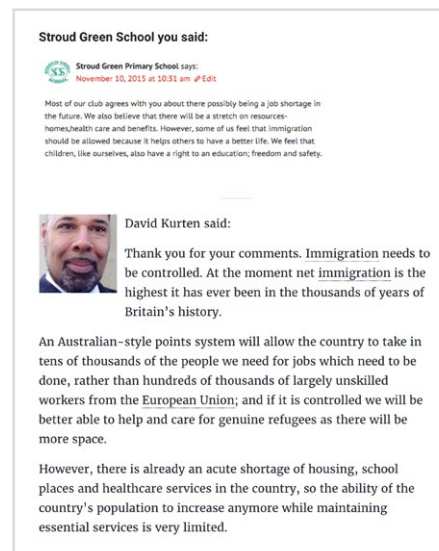
RICHARD ROGERS
World renowned architect
Contributed to the *Housing and Communities* issue



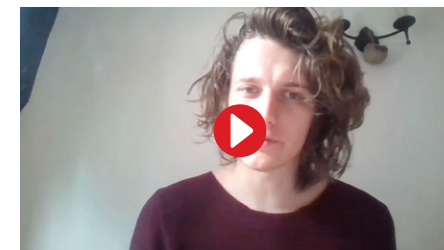
TAMMAM AZZAM
Syrian artist
Contributed to the *Migration and the Refugee Crisis* issue

EXAMPLES OF EXPERT CONTRIBUTOR POSTS

DAVID KURTEN
UKIP assembly member



ANTOSH WOJCIK
Spoken word poet



burnetnewsclub.com/16078-2

"Thank you for writing into the world with your hearts and for being fearless. Writing is hard, especially when you are writing about something so important to all of us. I'm inspired by your courage and I'm writing back to you to tell you what I think about the ideas you have put forward."

Club members have opportunities to exchange ideas with people who have **different perspectives**

“ They can go on the blog and comment on other people’s ideas which is exciting, because particularly at an all girls school, a lot of the girls might be from this kind of area so they might not be aware of some of the views of other people in different parts of the country or public schools or all boy schools.

You know, they don’t always talk to those sort of people as peers in the classroom so it’s nice they can do that on the blog.

– KS3 TEACHER FROM ALL GIRLS’ SCHOOL

Discussion has helped develop **critical thinking skills**

“ Some of the schools I’ve never even heard of and I get to hear their opinions. Sometimes I debate on it and sometimes I just agree and add more to their comment which means that they can learn more and I can learn more.

– KS3 STUDENT

Expert contributors provided a **valued influential audience**

“ The members enjoy reading opinions of expert contributors and discussing whether they agree/disagree. It allows the children to understand that the issue being studied is being talked about by important people!

– TEACHER

Cross-phase discussion has **developed confidence and ability** in younger students

“ Some of the comments I had were from secondary schools and it made me feel that I had really good work. From their comments I knew how to extend my work further and I could answer back and say, well this is what I think. It felt like I was actually in the room talking to them.

– YEAR 6 STUDENT

OUR AWARDS

At the end of each year, we hold an awards ceremony where we recognise outstanding contributions from individual students and announce a BNC winning club. This year, the event was held at Buckingham Palace. The awards provide motivation for our clubs throughout the year and act as proof to our young people that their voices have been heard.



WATCH THE AWARDS VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/3Op-Sh44fq0>



Our winning school won a trip to The Economist Tower and spent the day producing an article.



DOWNLOAD THE ARTICLE

<http://bit.ly/napier-article>

“ You know, when we started back in late September, she was a nervous, anxious student. Now look at her. Being a member of The BNC has contributed so much to her development into a confident, articulate and sociable young person. Another great benefit of being a member of The BNC. Thanks to you and your team for everything and for a truly special evening last Tuesday.

– TEACHER OF AWARD WINNING STUDENT.



NEXT STEPS

1. Reach more students and new communities

We're committed to growing the Burnet News Club to allow more students to take part and to give each club member a wider and broader audience with which to discuss their views.

2. Give more support to teachers and students in developing the BNC skills

To help teachers develop their students' skills we will give them more teaching resources and show them how they can make the most of the online platform.



OUR DATA EXPLAINED

We used a mix of qualitative and quantitative data in this report.

DATA SET 1

Teacher training feedback forms

59 respondents (100% of trained teachers).

DATA SET 2

Student online surveys at the beginning and end of the school year

135 respondents (estimated at 38% of cohort).

DATA SET 3

Teacher online feedback forms at the end of the year

22 respondents (73% of active teachers at year end).

DATA SET 4

Skills tracking excel sheets completed by teachers

13 schools and 166 students (estimated 46% of cohort). We also tracked a control group of 18 students from BNC schools who did not take part in BNC programme. Teachers were sent individual excel sheets to track their students' development with data input required at the beginning and end of the academic year.

DATA SET 5

School club visits by our staff throughout the year

34 club visits by TEEF staff.

DATA SET 6

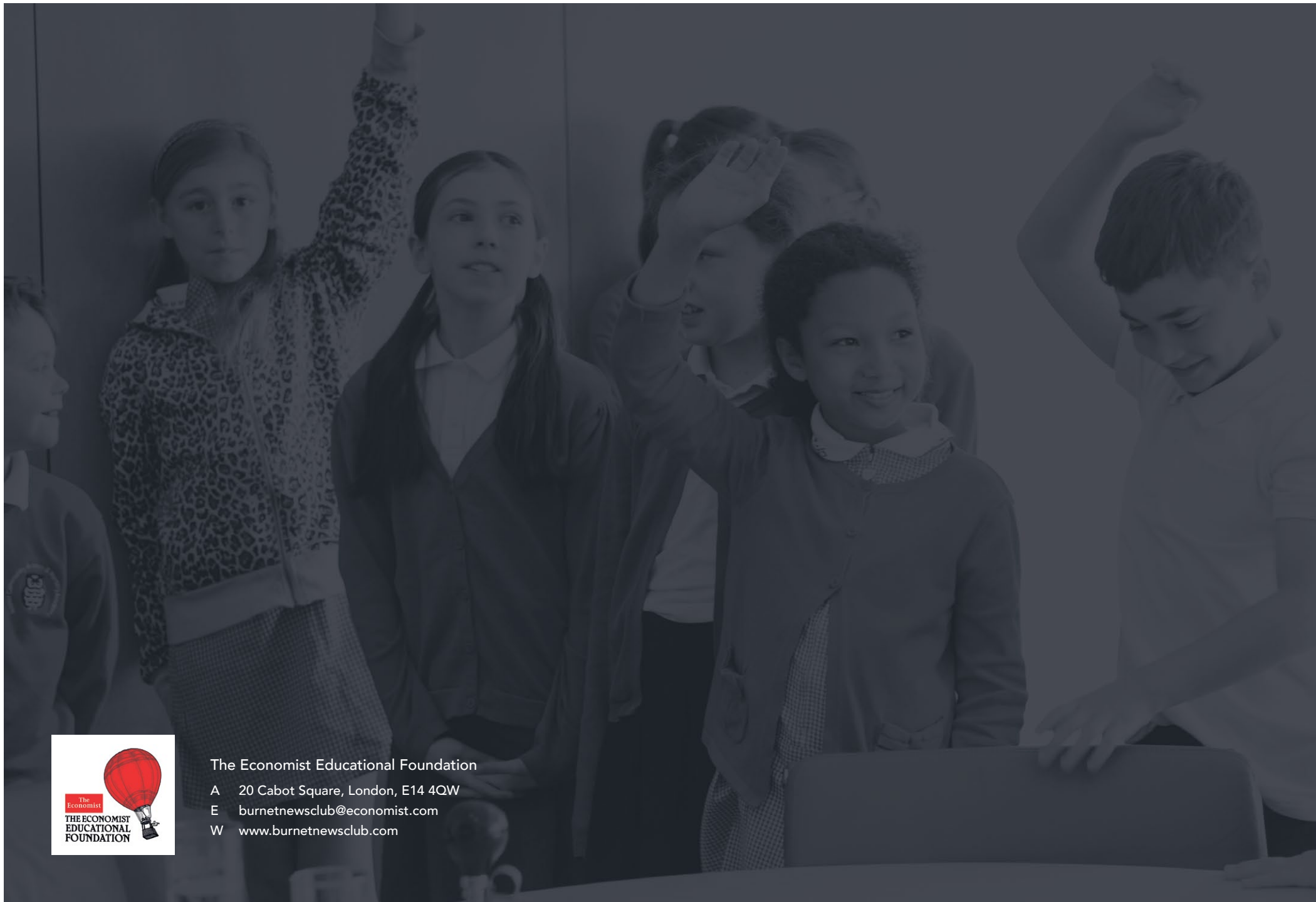
Video interviews with students and teachers

3 clubs visited. 2 primary and 1 secondary school.

DATA SET 7

Quantitative online data

N.B All data has been rounded to nearest whole number where appropriate.



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