

The  
Economist

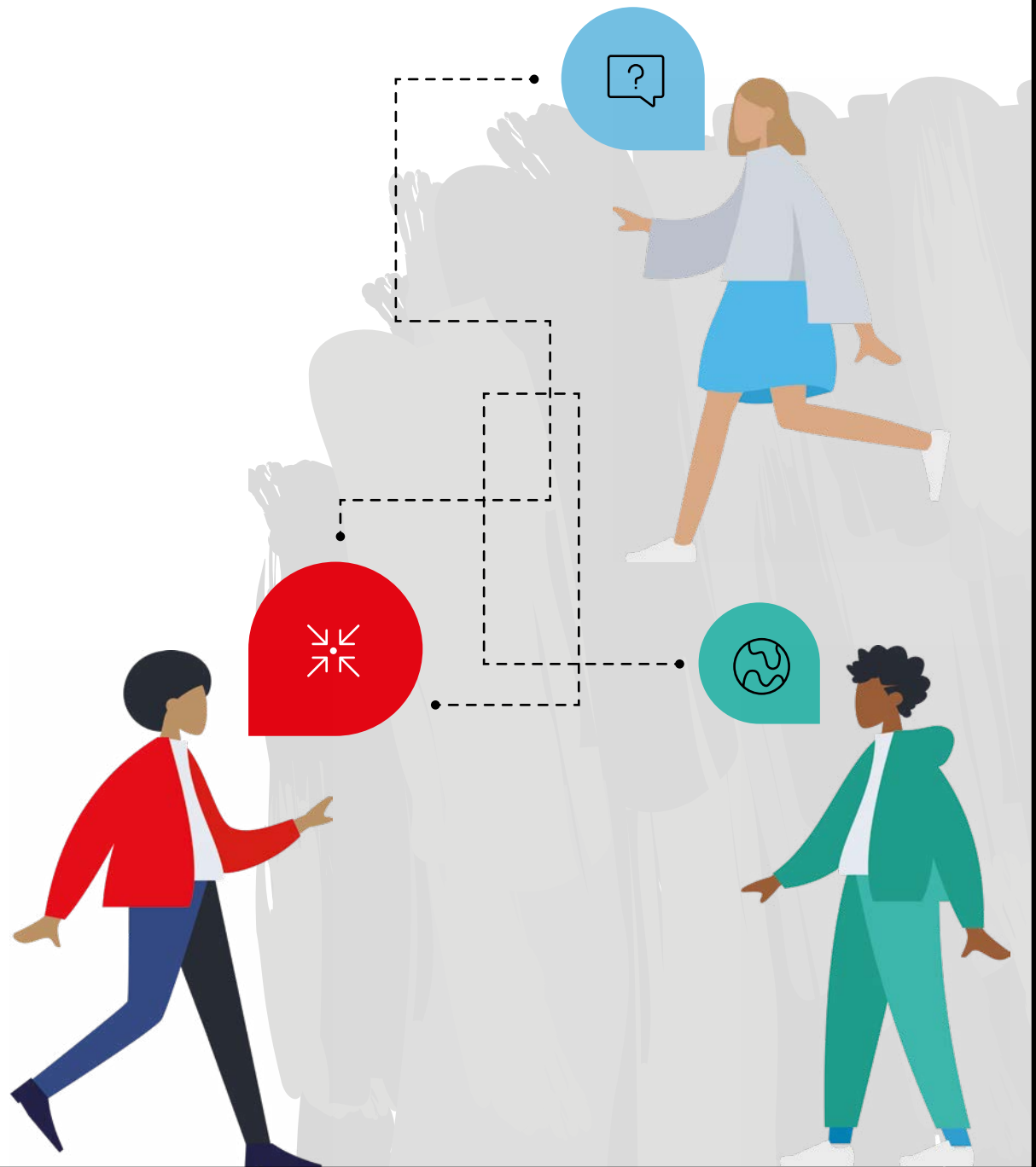
EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATION

# IMPACT REPORT 2019-20



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# INTRODUCTION



**Emily Evans**  
Chief Executive  
The Economist Educational Foundation

This year has highlighted challenges that will profoundly affect the next generation, from racism and inequality to climate change. Yet young people aren't developing the skills to understand and have their say about these issues. Misinformation is on the rise – in February the WHO declared an "infodemic" – but a third of UK teachers think the critical literacy skills taught in schools are not transferable to the real world<sup>1</sup>.



**TEACHER**  
**Portobello High School**

**Events of 2020 have emphasised the importance of developing a strong set of news literacy skills to be able to follow and make sense of a fast-moving story where a huge amount of alarming and often contradictory information is emerging.**

We give young people the skills not only to identify misinformation but to explore different perspectives, make up their own minds and have their say. This report shows that the young people we work with are learning to listen, creatively solve problems and communicate effectively about real-world issues. These are essential skills, not only for engaging with the news but for thriving at school and in the future workplace<sup>2</sup>.

That's hugely important, as we work with young people from low-income backgrounds who face deep-rooted disadvantages in education and beyond. Before covid-19, by the time they take their GCSEs they were 18 months behind their wealthier peers in their learning. They're three times more likely to be excluded from school and they have less access to extra-curricular education<sup>3</sup>. And they have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic. One study found that school closures widened the disadvantage gap by 46%<sup>4</sup>. In the first month of lockdown, private-school children were twice as likely to take part in daily online lessons as those in state school<sup>5</sup>.

So it's heartening to see that pupils taking part in our Burnet News Club programme continue to make real progress in critical thinking and communication skills that are shown to support improved life outcomes, from academic attainment to success at work. And they're building in-depth current affairs knowledge that will help them apply these skills to the issues shaping their lives and futures. Teachers and parents using our weekly educational resources tell us that they see their children building these skills and that they feel more confident supporting them to make progress.

Our priority has been to respond to the pandemic while keeping a firm focus on growing our reach in the long term. When schools closed, we adapted the Burnet News Club, enhancing the online elements and making more of the topic experts. We launched weekly educational

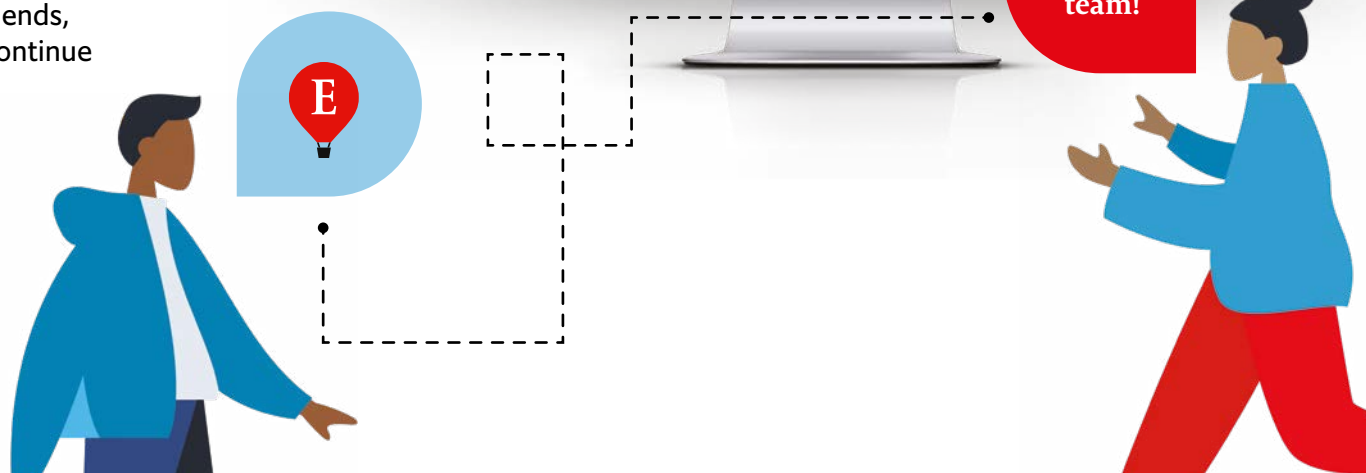
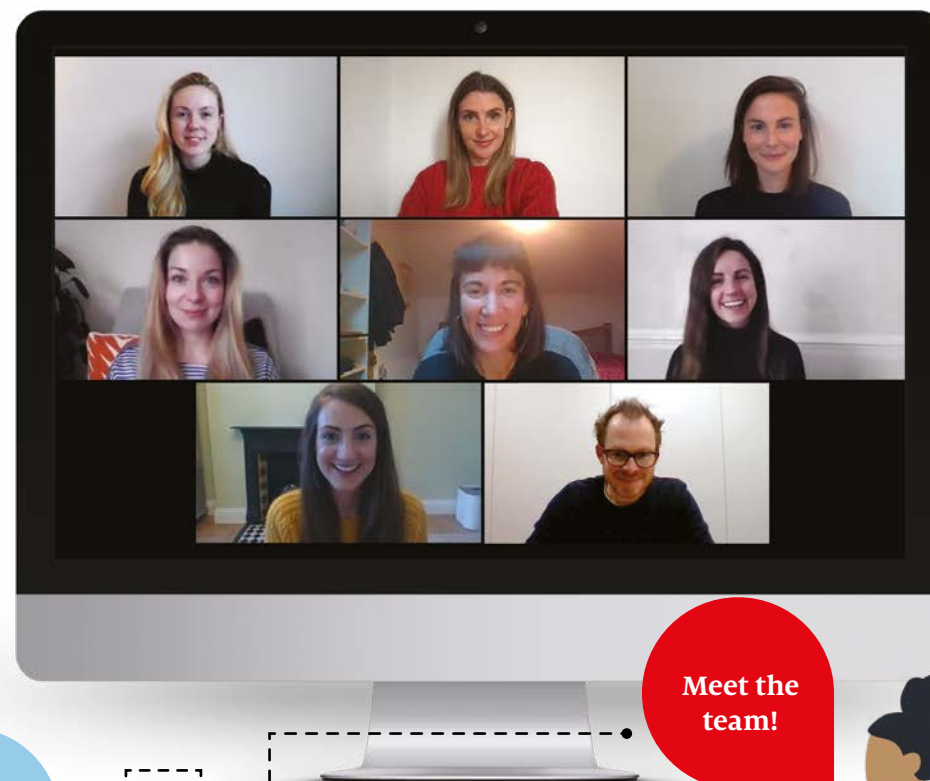
resources to support home learning, gaining over 13,000 subscribers and seeing 60,000 downloads in just five months. We also delivered a six-week international discussion between over 500 young people in 13 countries. Once schools re-opened, our programmes helped pupils who missed out on schooling to get thinking deeply again and have high-quality discussions with peers after months apart.

It's been a tough but hopeful year.

We've been inspired by the passionate and creative responses of the teachers we work with and the other organisations in our network that are tackling educational inequality and building young people's news literacy. We have faced down new challenges, and learned more about the importance of what we're doing and the potential for growing our reach.

There are now more Burnet News Club schools than ever and it's been so exciting to see teachers, parents and young people engaging with our programmes internationally. We're ending 2020 with ambitious plans to build on this momentum and significantly scale up our impact.

We are hugely grateful to all our supporters and friends, who have made our work possible so far and will continue to do so on the next stage of our journey.





# WHO ARE WE?

We are an independent charity that was established in 2012 by employees of *The Economist* newspaper.

Our founding Chief Executive realised that *The Economist's* journalistic expertise could be used in creative new ways to help tackle educational disadvantage.

Challenges from climate change to inequality will profoundly affect the next generation but young people aren't developing the skills to understand and have their say about these issues.

Misinformation poses real dangers, yet a third of UK teachers think the critical literacy skills taught in schools aren't transferable to the real world.

Our mission is to change young people's lives by giving them the skills to think and speak for themselves about current affairs.

## WHAT DO WE DO?

We give young people the skills not only to identify misinformation but to explore different perspectives, make up their minds and have their say.

We do this by enabling high-quality discussions about the news in classrooms and between schools in different communities, with input from global topic experts.

Young people learn to listen, creatively solve problems and communicate effectively about real-world issues. These are essential skills, not only for engaging with the news but for thriving at school and beyond.



# WHY DO WE DO IT?

We equip young people with critical thinking and communication skills and enable them to apply these skills to real-world issues



## WORK

- Employers consistently call for these skills across all educational and experience levels<sup>6</sup>
- Skills that cannot be automated support a long and prosperous life in the future<sup>7</sup>
- 74% of teachers say employability skills including critical thinking and communication are now the most important way to improve pupils' career prospects<sup>8</sup>



## EDUCATION

- Introducing interventions that target communication skills can lead to students making approximately five months additional academic progress over one year<sup>9</sup>
- High-quality conversations in primary school can significantly improve SATs scores, reading comprehension and writing and reasoning skills<sup>10</sup>



## DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

- Only 37% of young people currently feel political and social issues are relevant to them<sup>11</sup>
- Two-thirds of teachers believe fake news is harming children's well-being, increasing their anxiety levels<sup>12</sup>
- The Fake News and Critical Literacy report recommended regular exposure to and discussion of the news to help foster trust in journalism and democracy<sup>13</sup>

# THE DISADVANTAGE GAP

We prioritise working with young people from low-income backgrounds, who face deep-rooted disadvantages in education and beyond

**YOUNG PEOPLE FROM LOW-INCOME BACKGROUNDS ARE:**

On average, 18 months behind their peers academically by the time they sit their GCSEs<sup>14</sup>

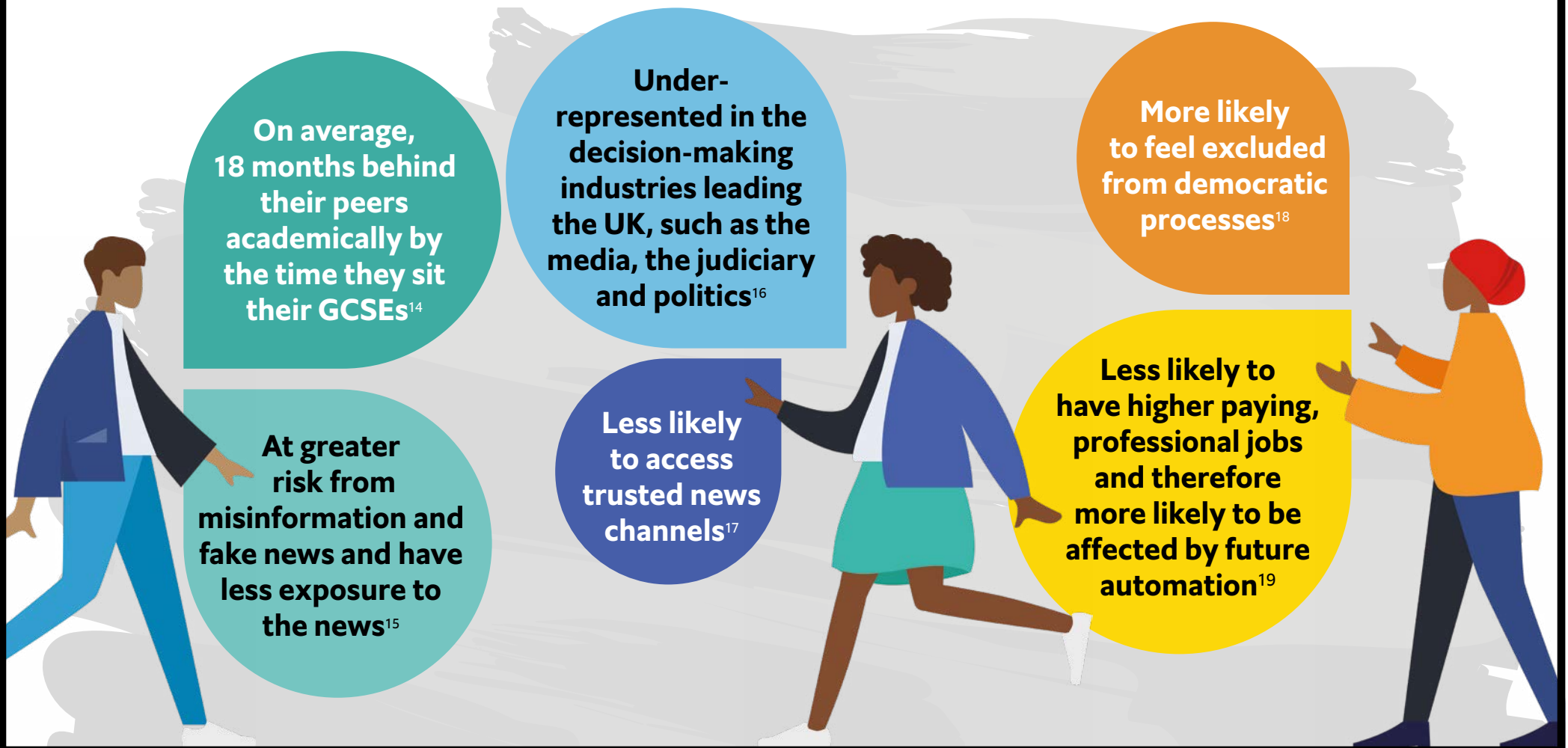
Under-represented in the decision-making industries leading the UK, such as the media, the judiciary and politics<sup>16</sup>

More likely to feel excluded from democratic processes<sup>18</sup>

At greater risk from misinformation and fake news and have less exposure to the news<sup>15</sup>

Less likely to access trusted news channels<sup>17</sup>

Less likely to have higher paying, professional jobs and therefore more likely to be affected by future automation<sup>19</sup>



# 2019-20 HEADLINES

# 500

## STUDENTS

across Africa, Europe, Asia  
and the Middle East took  
part in our Global  
Conversation about  
extreme weather.

# 2.8k

## STUDENTS

across 8 UK regions took  
part in our weekly school  
news club. That's a 44%  
increase on last year.

Our young  
person's online  
discussion platform saw

# 33k

## INTERACTIONS

about the news. That's 3x  
more than last year!

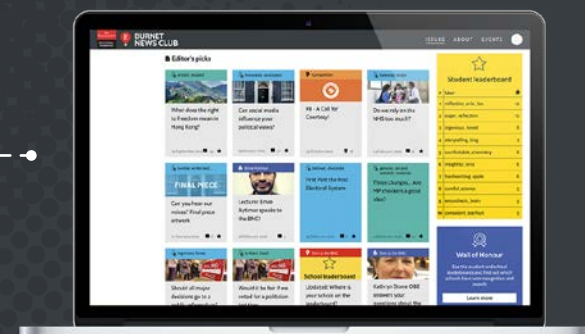


Our flagship  
programme made

# 90%

## OF TEACHERS

more confident to  
bring the news into  
their classroom.



We responded to the pandemic when schools closed in March.

Classroom sessions moved online and weekly home-learning resources were made available to all.

We launched weekly news resources and

**13k+**  
**PARENTS AND TEACHERS**  
subscribed.

Weekly news resources were downloaded

**60k**  
**TIMES**  
That's 10x more than last year.

#### BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

At the end of the day, women and girls are at the receiving end of the coronavirus. It will affect us more than anyone else. Why? Because in our homes, it's us who do the household chores all day long. We are the ones who have to go shopping for food, and it's us who have to go to the shops for people to put it in. We cannot do social distancing. We are the most at risk.

**29 million**

less than 1% improved the general impact of the epidemic. There has been very little improvement so far of the general impact of COVID-19.

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa affected everyone's income but men's income returned to what it was pre-outbreak faster than women's income.

**CORONAVIRUS AND WELLBEING**  
Child-led learning resource

**CORONAVIRUS AND GENDER**  
Child-led learning resource

**COVID-19**  
Child-led learning resource

**FREEDOM OF SPEECH**  
Child-led learning resource

**RACISM**  
**PART 2: BLACK LIVES MATTER**  
Child-led learning resource

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

**88%**  
**OF STUDENTS**  
say our flagship programme club helped them to deal with pandemic-related news.



# — behind the headlines THE BURNET NEWS CLUB

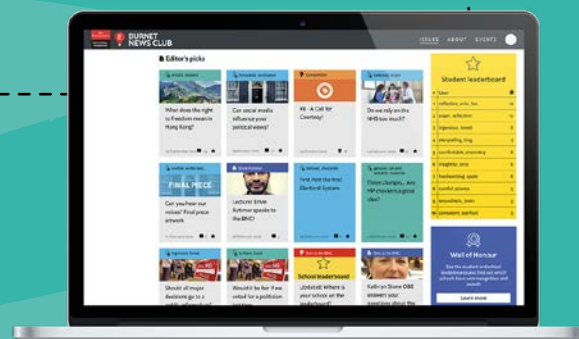
This section of the report covers the Burnet News Club (BNC), our flagship programme.

The Club enables young people to develop news literacy by being part of a unique kind of school news club, exploring mind-stretching topical issues.

THERE ARE TWO KEY ELEMENTS TO THE CLUB:

- We empower teachers to facilitate inspiring weekly discussions about the news in their classrooms
- Students use our innovative online platform to join discussions beyond the classroom

***BurnetNewsClub.com***



The BNC reached more young people than ever



**2,800+**  
STUDENTS  
TOOK PART



**44%**  
INCREASE FROM  
LAST YEAR



**8/11**  
UK REGIONS  
REACHED



**30%**  
OF STUDENTS  
taking part were  
pupil-premium eligible,  
rising to 40% where  
particular students were  
selected to take part rather  
than whole classes\*



**77%**  
OF BNC CLUBS  
returned for 2020-21,  
our highest retention  
rate ever

\*The national average of pupil-premium eligible pupils was 15.4% in 2019.



# We enabled teachers to facilitate regular discussions about the news

We give teachers everything they need to facilitate in-depth discussions between 8-15 year-olds about an issue in the news for six weeks. It takes eight weeks to create a six-session package of teaching materials and we follow the same rigorous editorial process as *The Economist* newspaper.



## The work doesn't stop there.

We provide live updates on the Issue which students can engage with on our online platform, the Burnet News Club Hub.



# 100%

## OF TEACHERS

- ✓ Felt supported by the BNC team
- ✓ Would recommend the BNC training
- ✓ Agreed resources were appropriate and accessible for students
- ✓ Said the BNC has had a positive impact on their teaching practice

We asked teachers how they rated the BNC programme overall



\*Up to March 2020



# 90%

## OF TEACHERS

are more confident bringing the news into the classroom since running the BNC



# 75%

## OF CLUBS RAN WEEKLY\*



# 26

## WEEKS OF CLASSROOM DISCUSSION\*



### TEACHER

Hammond Junior School

The entire programme engaged all of the children, including reluctant learners.



### TEACHER

Allerton High School

It is extremely well resourced and the support given by the team is excellent. The students also really enjoy the sessions.





# Conversations between students in different communities were better than ever

Outside of classroom sessions, students connect with peers all over the UK on our online platform, the Hub.



# 33k

**INTERACTIONS**  
occurred on the Hub  
over the year



# 6x

**INCREASE**  
in the number of  
comments per  
post from last year

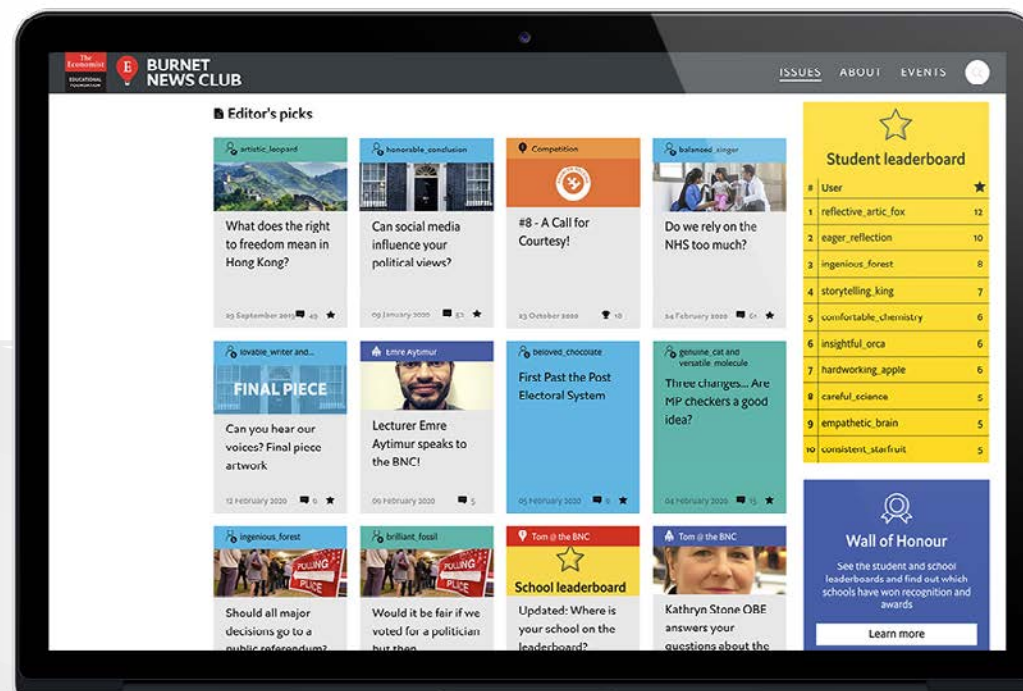
Students  
publish their  
ideas about  
the issues

Students of  
different ages  
engage with  
each other

Students enter  
weekly competitions  
to stretch thinking

Discussions  
occur between  
communities all  
over the UK

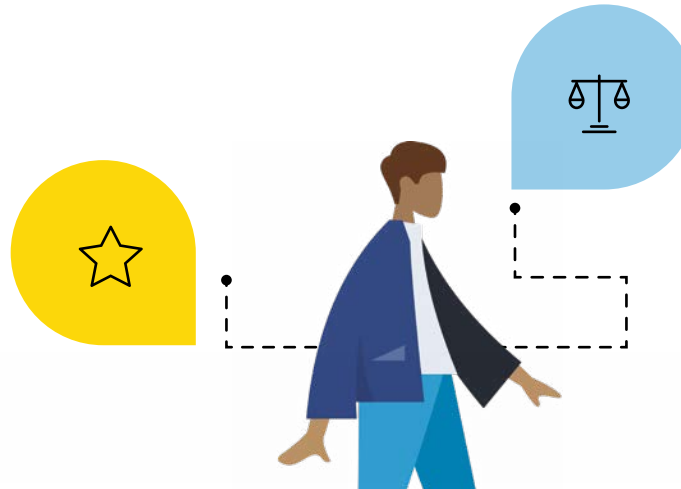
Students use  
pseudonyms to make  
online interactions  
safe – this also builds  
confidence to contribute





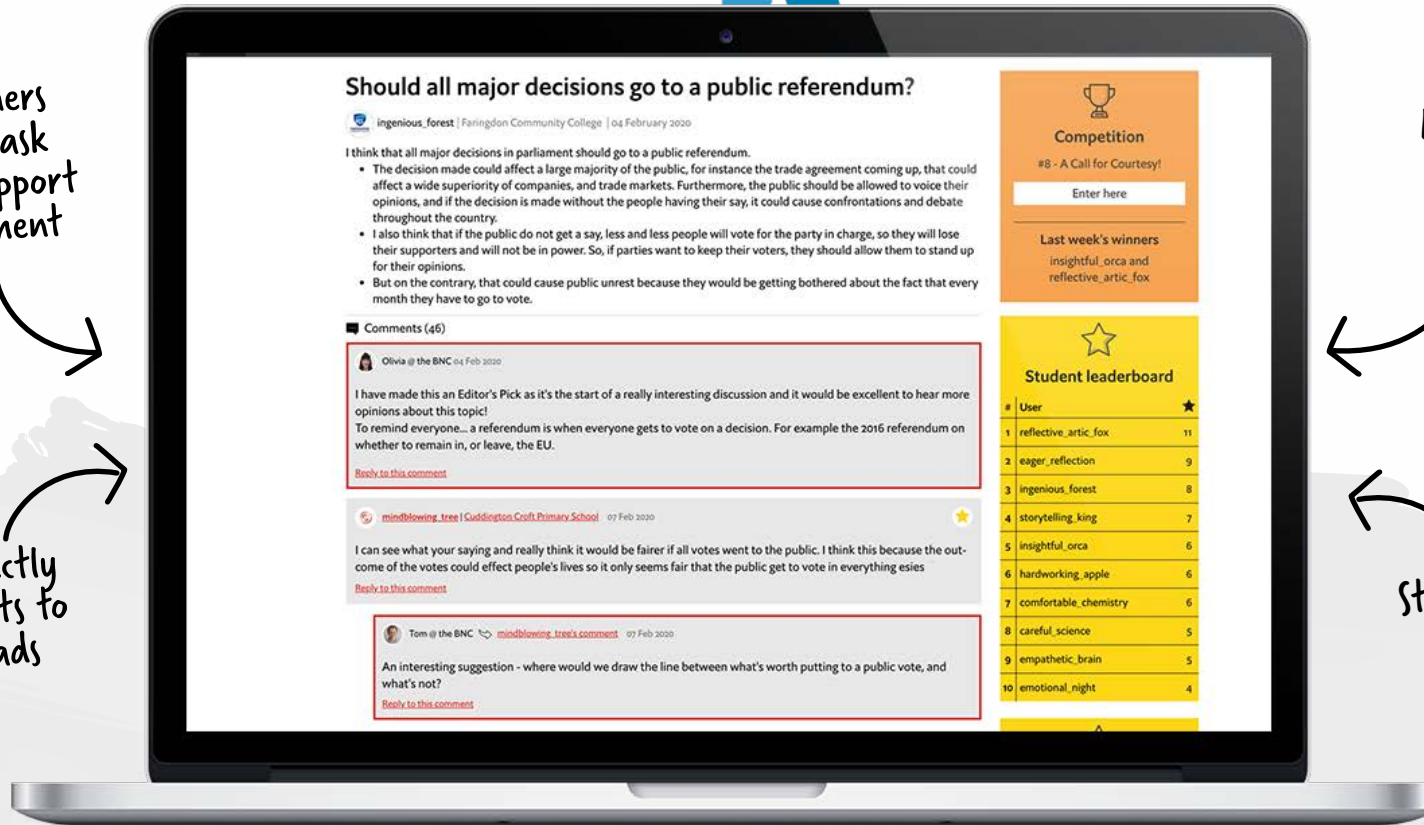


You can read more of the best bits from the Hub in the *2019-20 Annual* »



Trained teachers on the team ask questions to support skills development

You can reply directly to specific comments to create new threads of thinking



Leaderboards show the students and schools with the most skill stars

Stars are awarded when students evidence news-literacy skills

# Young people engaged with leading topic experts and professionals

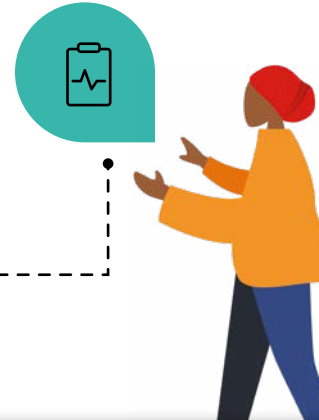


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## PROFESSIONALS FROM KPMG AND CLIFFORD CHANCE

provided a real audience for young people and supported their knowledge and skill development

We trained volunteers for the first time to join Hub discussions



### What is our future when working with the NHS?

Discussion starter 2 comments

giving\_twilight | Evelyn Street Primary School A | 07 March 2020

Recently, in class we have been talking about our future within the NHS and how we can improve it. One of my suggestions was to partner with other countries to make a worldwide NHS. Everybody deserves to have the same rights and the same healthcare. So, how can we improve this?

Since the outbreak of **COVID-19**, the NHS has been struggling when dealing with situations. The numbers of people in quarantine are escalating which means more pressure is being put on the National Health Service to withstand the pressures in the Hospitals around the UK.

There are currently **2300 NHS hospitals** in the UK, meaning more nurses need to be hired for them to all keep running to high expectations. Not only are our lives at risk because of this, the people who work there are at risk too. According to the NHS confederations, they deal with over **1 million patients every 36 hours**. Which is a lot of people in the UK. The number of patients waiting longer than a year for treatment declined from **20,097 in September 2011 to 2014 in November 2013**, before increasing again. In this case, the NHS is thought of to be a disgrace but many people have different opinions.

If these numbers are decreasing, soon, we will have no free healthcare and we will be like certain countries (like America). Our NHS originated in **1948** because of the war that ended 3 years prior. It was created to help anyone injured **for free** many people think it was a great idea that has kept going throughout the many years.

Comments (2)

**EXPERT: Alice Raine, Senior Associate @ Clifford Chance** 11 Mar 2020

It is interesting to consider whether a worldwide NHS system would work - can you see any difficulties with decision making when there are a number of different cultures and countries?

[Reply to this comment](#)

giving\_twilight | Evelyn Street Primary School A Alice Raine, Senior Associate @ Clifford Chance's comment 13 Mar 2020

Many different cultures and countries do not believe in the same network of working. Different cultures may have different ways of treating illnesses which could be tough to work around. Countries around the world do not have the same currency and income to spend as us therefore, it may be hard to get different countries to create a worldwide NHS.

[Reply to this comment](#)



## TEACHER

New Horizons Children's Academy

The Burnet News Club gives students cultural capital opportunities.

They get to talk to experts related to the current topic that they would never have spoken to otherwise.

Our school is in a highly deprived area and there would be almost no chance of talking to these kinds of professionals if it wasn't for the club.

The children know their voice can be heard and it motivates them to know an expert will respond to something they've said. This is an opportunity school cannot always do for them.

## A SELECTION OF TOPIC EXPERTS THIS YEAR



**Masato Kajimoto,**  
Professor of Journalism



**Sophia Yan,**  
China Correspondent, The Telegraph



**Chris Hadfield,**  
former astronaut



**Abbie Huty,**  
spacecraft engineer



**Emma Barnett,**  
BBC broadcaster and journalist



**Jeremy Paxman,**  
broadcaster and journalist



**Helen Buckingham,** Director of Strategy  
and Operations, Nuffield Trust



**Caroline Dove,**  
CEO, NHS Elect



**Gillian Burke,**  
wildlife presenter



**Helen Czerski,**  
oceanographer and broadcaster



**Stephen Fry,**  
actor, author, comedian and director



**Tamara Rojo,** Artistic Director,  
English National Ballet



# 30

## TOPIC EXPERTS

answered student questions on the Hub

VIBRANT\_TIGER FROM WOODHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL ASKED...

**How much of the Hong Kong crisis is being shown in China's news? Does it make Hong Kong look like the victim or the instigator?**

### SOPHIA YAN REPLIED:

That is a very thoughtful question and one I follow closely as a journalist [...]. When the protests first began a few months ago, there was no mention of them at all in China's news outlets, all of which are controlled by the government. On July 1, the anniversary of when Hong Kong was returned by the British to Beijing, that all changed...

[Read more here »](#)

LOVABLE\_WRITER FROM GRAVENEY SCHOOL ASKED:

**How do you think the arts can change the way that people look at the world?**

### STEPHEN FRY REPLIED:

That's a very interesting question. Oscar Wilde made the famous remark that "nature imitates art" – again it can seem like a trivial and facile inversion of the more common Victorian assumption that art imitates nature. But he meant this: once a painter like Turner for example had painted a sky or mist in a certain way it changed the way we all saw sunsets and mists.

[Read more here »](#)

## The BNC Hub took centre stage during lockdown

When school closed in March and BNC class sessions were made impossible, we responded to meet the needs of students.

Students already used the Hub to join discussions with peers around the UK but we made the Hub work harder.



### BARRIERS

Teachers told us the top three reasons students struggled to join online programmes were:

- 84%** Prioritising other work
- 84%** Lack of internet access for students
- 67%** An inability to hold classroom sessions

## Action 1

We moved all BNC session content to the Hub so that students could access activities directly and continue to have conversations about the news.

Students carried on uploading to the Hub, even from their doorstep!

A student's NHS manifesto piece.  
[bit.ly/NHSspeech](https://bit.ly/NHSspeech)



## Action 2

We increased Hub content including quizzes, thinking questions and competitions to offer a wide variety of ways to engage.





## Action 3

We included a dedicated covid-19 information area which was updated daily and provided a space for students to ask questions and clarify information.

To avoid overwhelming students, we kept the main Hub discussions focused on the three planned topics over this period: the NHS, extreme weather and the arts.



# 88%

**OF STUDENTS**  
said that the BNC  
helped them to deal with  
pandemic-related news.

**"It told true  
stuff about the  
situation that  
I could believe."**

STUDENT  
miraculous\_badger,  
Millbank Academy

**"It helped me  
to learn more about  
the outbreak and  
also listen to what  
others had to say."**

STUDENT  
fierce\_raccoon, Evelyn  
Street Primary School

**"It helped me  
process it and speak to  
other people about how  
I feel and whether I agree  
or disagree with the  
decisions being made."**

STUDENT  
excited\_pineapple,  
The Sherwood School



## Action 4

We held our annual BNC awards online and invited nominated teachers, students and parents to receive their awards and share some of their work together.



**From:** BNC Teacher  
**To:** burnetnewsclub@economist.com  
**Subject:** Burnet News Club

Dear Economist Foundation team

Thank you for all your work in supporting schools throughout the year, but especially during this pandemic. It has been amazing that you have kept providing interesting resources for the children, despite the situation we are in.



# Young people developed news literacy and are talking about the news more



# 100%

**OF TEACHERS**  
said BNC had positive impact on  
general literacy



# 88%

**OF TEACHERS**  
said students have more  
knowledge about the news  
because of the BNC



# 100%

**OF STUDENTS**  
said they now have better  
conversations about the news

## Teachers told us the BNC developed news-literacy skills

### REASONING

94%

### HEALTHY SCEPTICISM

82%

### OPEN-MINDEDNESS

82%

### SPEAKING UP

88%

## Students are having more conversations about the news at home and in school after taking part in the BNC

### WHERE DO YOU HAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE NEWS?



HOME

PRE-BNC 45%

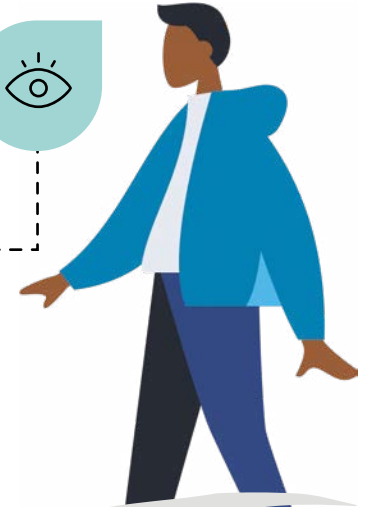
POST-BNC 70%



SCHOOL

PRE-BNC 50%

POST-BNC 90%



**TEACHER,**  
Allerton High School

The knowledge that  
students gained both  
in the sessions and  
through their own  
research gave them the  
confidence to discuss  
issues as well as sharing  
their own opinions.

## Students told us they improved their news-literacy skills in the BNC

### REASONING

94%

### HEALTHY SCEPTICISM

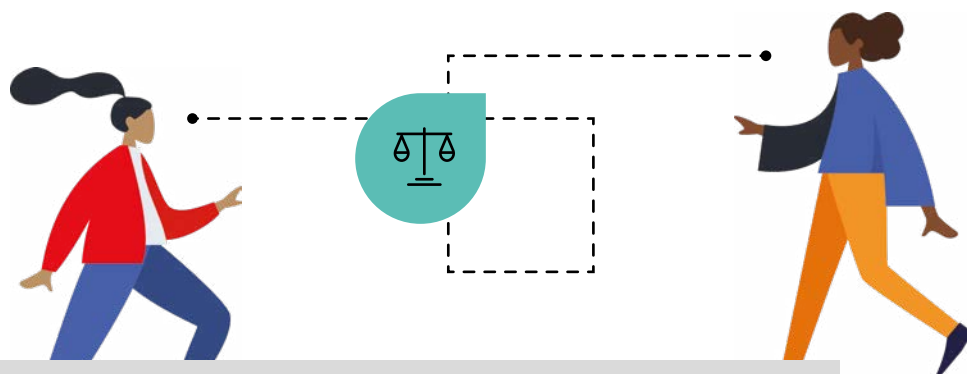
85%

### OPEN-MINDEDNESS

97%

### SPEAKING UP

88%



### BARRIER TO DATA COLLECTION

Due to disruption caused by the pandemic, we were unable to collect end-of-year teacher skills assessments for BNC students or a control-group. Instead, we have relied on self-reporting and qualitative data. Next year, we will return to collecting assessments.



### STUDENT

lovable\_writer, Graveney School

The BNC has helped me to see new ways of approaching a situation, be more critical of things and to voice my opinions more eloquently.



### TEACHER

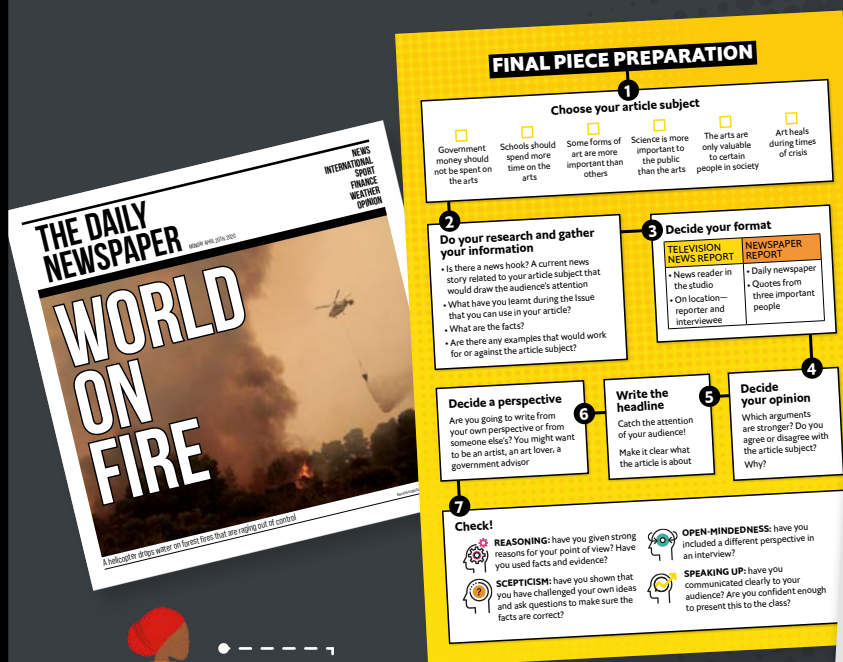
Streatham Wells Primary School

The kids know the skills fluently and often start sentences with “I see where you’re coming from but I want to be sceptical.” They love being able to develop skills they may have seen as appropriate only for adults. They love even more NAMING the skills!

I love how we are normalising open-mindedness and saying it’s okay to change our minds. It’s okay to allow an alternative of our viewpoint into a discussion. It’s what our world needs right now and we HAVE to begin by teaching our children these skills.

# A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER EXPLAINS HOW THE BNC SUPPORTS THE CURRICULUM



In the BNC, students are learning so much about the world around them and this is something we are really trying to get into our curriculum. For example, local **geography**, wider UK and learning more about where they live – the Burnet News Club links to this perfectly. For the more traditional subjects, they are doing a lot of reasoning and thinking through their answers and considering what they think. It also helps with their **writing** and **debating** because it gives them a whole new **vocabulary**. It helps their performance in **drama**, not to mention their **ICT** skills through their use of the Hub. They're doing **art** in the Burnet News Club through posters and cartoons. It has links throughout the curriculum.

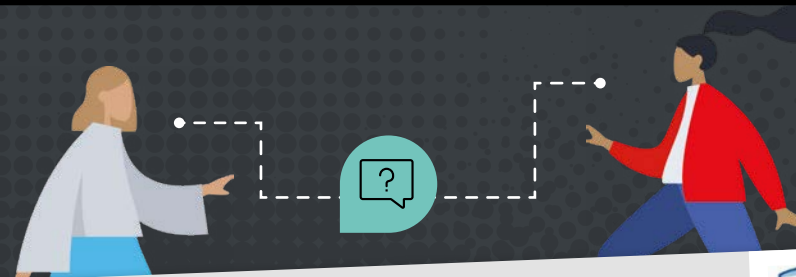
Children gain so much from it. They get a new passion for what's going around them and they learn so many new skills. They become so much more independent in their learning because they want to research the news and they have the motivation to go home and learn about it. Many of our students are Pupil Premium eligible and they would not have these opportunities otherwise. You can teach about the news without the Burnet News Club, but it has such high quality resources that for me, it is the best way to teach about the news. Resources are sensitive to the age of the children and they are always really engaging.

**ELLA**  
NEW HORIZONS CHILDREN'S ACADEMY



# A CEO'S PERSPECTIVE

A CEO OF A MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST EXPLAINS THE IMPACT OF THE BNC ACROSS THEIR SCHOOLS



**LOUISE SMITH**

CEO OF WARRINGTON PRIMARY ACADEMY TRUST



We use the Burnet News Club across our schools and we're delighted with it. The programme gives our children a real window on the world, helps them to consider a range of viewpoints and then develop their own balanced and thoughtful responses through discussion and writing.

The impact of the Burnet News Club is also being felt outside the classroom. We've had several parents contact us to ask about the programme because their child has been discussing topics with them at home. I think the programme may even have encouraged some parents to question their understanding of some current issues.

The lesson plans are topical and really well thought out, giving our teachers the confidence to approach often very controversial subjects. We're so impressed by Burnet News Club that we'll be including a pilot training programme on the delivery of the programme for our trainee teachers in spring 2021.



giving\_twilight

The future of the NHS

PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Evelyn Street Primary School

SINCE THE outbreak of COVID-19, the NHS is struggling when dealing with new situations. The numbers of people in quarantine are increasing which means more pressure is being put on the NHS to withstand the cost of the virus. More staff need to be recruited to run the NHS to high standards with over 1 million people in the country there is a lot of pressure. If things continue like this, the point of delivery for the NHS in countries like America and it was created to deliver. Many people think the NHS has kept going ever since. Recently in class we have been talking about the future of the NHS.



Pick of the points

entertaining\_strawberry

Birchwood C of E Primary School

If we make another agreement, either to keep Hong Kong or the law of the land, is going to restrict some of our freedoms as

sincere\_piccolo

Bruche Primary School

Britain put them into this mess by making for China and for Britain to do a one country two systems, which we thought was right for Hong Kong and it wasn't.



Evelyn Street Primary School @EvelynPrimary · Jun 5  
Huge congratulations to one of our Year 6 children on winning the latest @Econ\_Foundation weekly competition with this amazing piece about important art is!

#welldone #BurnetNewsClub #art

Economist Foundation @Econ\_Foundation · Jun 5

This week we challenged Burnet News Club Hub users to tell us what makes art important in just 100 words! Take a look at our two winning entries by students from @Halsneadschool and @EvelynPrimary. Well done!



Evelyn Street Primary School @EvelynPrimary · Apr 28  
A huge congratulations to Daniella in Yr 6 for her amazing article that has been published as part of the BNC's Hub Highlights! Thank you @Econ\_Foundation for choosing her piece! You can read it here: [evelynstreetschool.co.uk/learning-zone/...](https://evelynstreetschool.co.uk/learning-zone/)

#WellDone #BNC #WritingCommunity





# behind the headlines

## THE GLOBAL CONVERSATION

This section of the report covers The Global Conversation, a six-week international project which forms part of the Burnet News Club.

Despite school closures due to covid-19, young people were able to join the BNC for one global topic in 2020. Students covered the same sessions, had Hub conversations with peers from different countries and shared their varied perspectives and experiences of the issue.

This year we were supported by The British Council's Connecting Classrooms programme to find and support schools to take part.



### CASE STUDY

## HURRICANE

**HAITI**  
2016

Population  
11.4 million  
GDP per person  
(average amount of wealth)  
\$868  
People who live below the  
poverty line  
53%

Climate  
Often experiences  
tropical storms

#### WHAT HAPPENED?

In October, 2016 a hurricane hit Haiti that brought torrential rain and powerful winds. Many homes were destroyed and roads, bridges and communication lines were wiped out. Food crops that fed the local people and were exported for money were also obliterated.

#### WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE?

- In the days before the hurricane, the government ordered people on smaller islands to be evacuated (to leave)
- The government was not prepared
- International aid Programme (WFP)
- Individuals gave for emergency contributions
- In the days before the hurricane, the government ordered people on smaller islands to be evacuated (to leave)
- The government was not prepared
- International aid Programme (WFP)
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#### WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

- An estimated 27 million hectares of land were destroyed
- 2,500 homes were destroyed
- 29 people died
- Around 1.25 billion animals died
- Ecosystems will suffer long-term damage
- The economic damage is estimated to cost \$4

### CASE STUDY

## WILDFIRE

**AUSTRALIA**  
2019

Population  
25.5 million  
GDP per person  
(average amount of wealth)  
\$57,374  
People who live below the  
poverty line  
12%

Climate  
Frequent droughts  
and extreme heat

#### WHAT HAPPENED?

After record-breaking temperatures in 2019 and a long period of drought, fires raged throughout Australia from summer 2019 to early 2020. Torrential rain in January and February helped to extinguish some of the fires but also caused flash floods.

#### WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE?

- The government co-ordinated a response across the country to control the fires
- The National Bushfire Recovery Agency was formed to help provide money for the response
- People were told to evacuate (leave) the affected areas
- 5,700 firefighters tackled the fires at any one time
- Huge aircrafts dropped water onto affected areas
- Individuals around the world, including many celebrities, gave money to support relief efforts and help to protect wildlife
- The prime minister faced criticism for how he handled the crisis. People felt he didn't anticipate the fires and hadn't done enough to tackle climate change. He announced \$2 billion Australian dollars in aid to help the country recover and promised to do more about climate change

#### WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

- An estimated 27 million hectares of land were destroyed
- 2,500 homes were destroyed
- 29 people died
- Around 1.25 billion animals died
- Ecosystems will suffer long-term damage
- The economic damage is estimated to cost \$4



## THE GLOBAL CONVERSATION

Young people around the world shared their perspectives on a pressing global topic



# 13

**COUNTRIES  
TOOK PART**



# 9k

**INTERNATIONAL  
HUB INTERACTIONS**



# 500+

**GLOBAL STUDENTS**



# 94%

**OF TEACHERS**

say they now have a better understanding of news literacy



# 90%

**OF TEACHERS**

see news literacy as relevant to their students' lives





84%

**OF TEACHERS**

would recommend this project to a colleague



2/3

**OF STUDENTS**

interacted with peers from other countries on the Hub



**Students from outside of the UK shared what they learned from UK students**



**What's the most important thing you have learnt from someone else during the Global Conversation?**



**FANTASTIC\_DUSK**

WONDERKIDS MODEL SCHOOL | SIERRA LEONE

When researching information we should check for the credibility and accuracy of our sources. Thanks to the comments of versatile\_molecule, I have learned to understand, reason with and respect other people's views. I think it is very important because it makes our contributions on the Hub more meaningful and we learn valuable lessons from each other.



**DETERMINED\_WORLD**

SACRED HEART SCHOOL | GHANA

What trees can do to battle drought and its hazards.

I learned this from a comment made by decisive\_song. I have come to appreciate the saying "If the last tree dies, the last human also dies", which suggests the survival of humans depends on trees. Learning this has encouraged me to explore how to make tree planting more common in my community.




**Read the whole discussion here »**

## THE GLOBAL CONVERSATION

# Young people around the world developed knowledge about a global issue

It focused on different responses to extreme weather, with an emphasis on climate change and government responsibility.



  
**93%**

### STUDENTS

said they are able to have better conversations about this issue because of the project

  
**7**

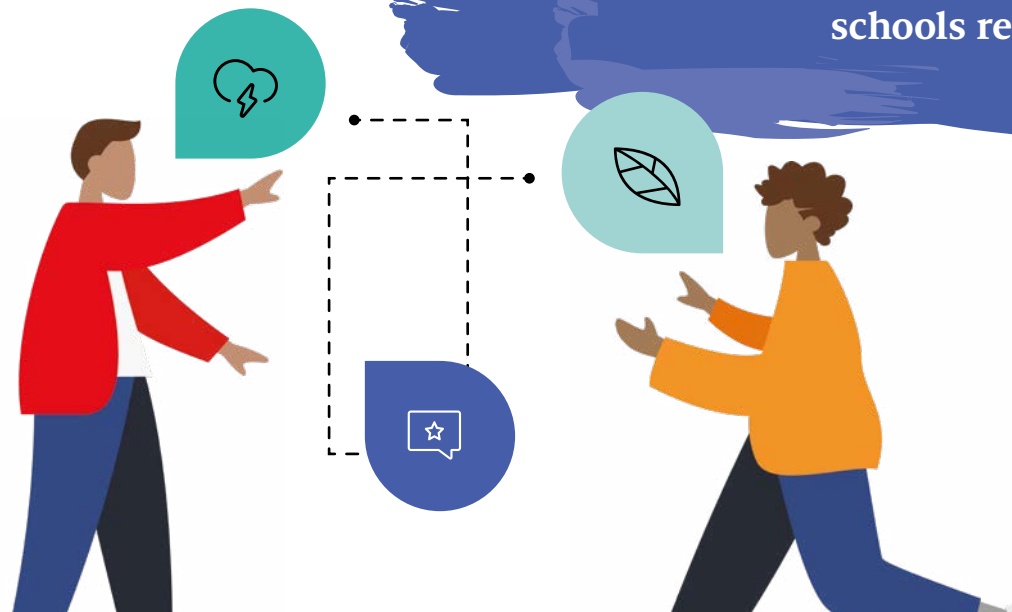
### TOPIC EXPERTS

helped to develop knowledge

  
**87%**

### OF ANSWERS

on the end-of-topic quiz were correct



### STUDENT

nice\_reindeer, St Paul's Primary School, Kenya

I have learnt a lot about conserving our environment, about other nations' experiences of extreme weather and I've learnt that, as Kenyans, we are not alone in this and that other countries are suffering the same problems as we are.

I now know how to prevent floods from happening. Starting with our village, I hope to extend my knowledge to other students once schools re-open.

## We developed news literacy globally



# 96%

### OF STUDENTS

taking part felt they developed their news-literacy skills

### Teachers said their students developed news-literacy skills during the project

#### REASONING

100%

#### HEALTHY SCEPTICISM

84%

#### OPEN-MINDEDNESS

58%

#### SPEAKING UP (CONFIDENCE)

63%



#### STUDENT

[helpful\\_cloudberry](#), School College Pilote Sousse, Tunisia

The Hub turned into a genuine source of information. I realised that those who manage this Hub valued my participation. This made me more motivated and helped me reason, question, justify my opinion and listen to others respectfully which shaped my way of thinking. I hope this type of learning will carry on.



#### TEACHER,

[Doonholm Primary School](#), Ghana

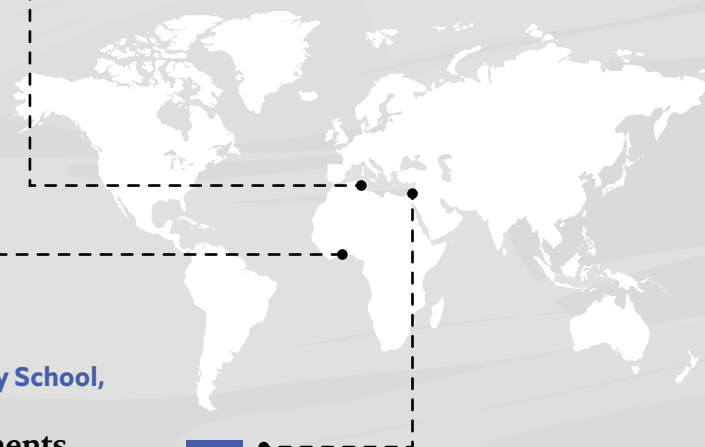
From the comments I was seeing from my students, their reasoning has really increased, they are more open-minded and have gained confidence in discussions.



#### STUDENT

[positive\\_lemon](#), Beit Hanoun Girl's School, Palestine

I have improved in speaking-up because I used to fear that maybe my points are wrong or maybe they don't make any sense, but seeing every student in this group contributing made me gain confidence and communicate my point of view in sessions.



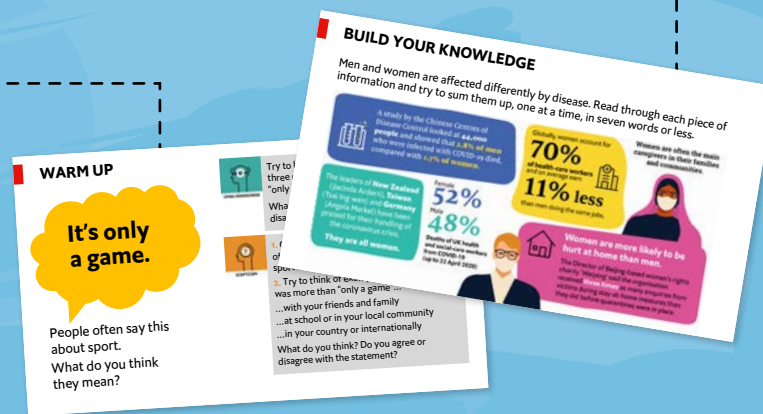
— behind the headlines

# WEEKLY NEWS RESOURCES

This section of the report covers our weekly news resources.

When schools closed in March and thousands of children were learning from home, we took the immediate step to produce weekly news resources for home-learning.

These were designed to be suitable for a broad age-range, and to be used by teachers, parents and individual students.





We provided high-quality home-learning resources to support news discussions

22  
RESOURCES  
CREATED

**60k**  
**DOWNLOADS**

13k+  
SUBSCRIBERS

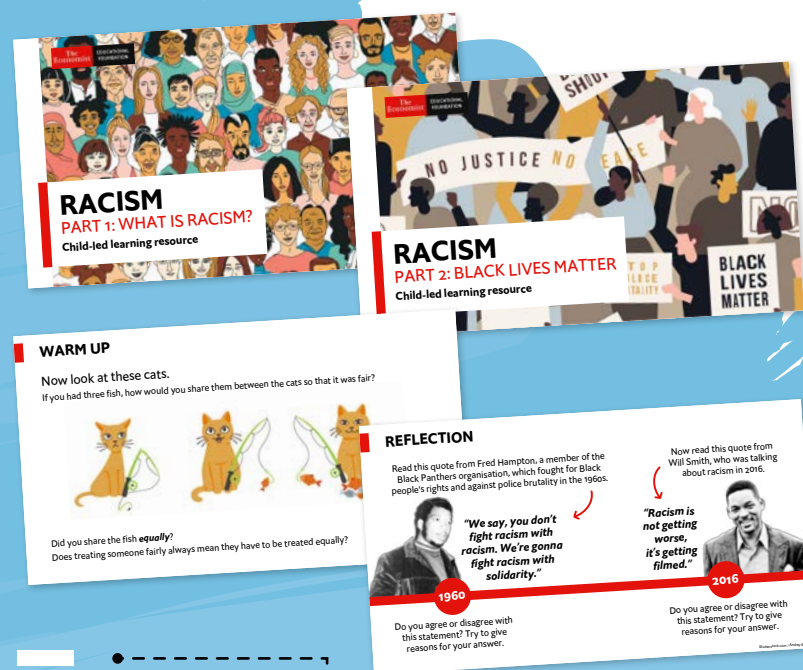
to our newly-launched  
weekly news resources



The international spread of topics, the critical thinking encouragement via the activities and the quality make your online home-school provision, by some distance, **the best online home-school resource I have used.**



## WEEKLY NEWS RESOURCES



### PARENT

The factual approach in the racism lesson, focusing on the experiences of people from different backgrounds, encouraged empathy in the children and helped move the discussion forward to what they can do to recognise and confront racism here and now.



### TEACHER

Having the materials carefully designed means teachers have more confidence to approach these topics in class. So not only benefits for students but for teachers too!



# 98%

OF SUBSCRIBERS  
rated our resources as  
excellent or very good

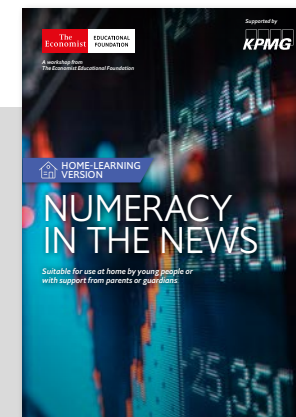
## REACHING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOCKDOWN

In partnership with KPMG, we created a full-day workshop for young people on numeracy in the news. These were to be delivered at KPMG offices across the UK in 2020.

When we were only able to deliver five of fifteen workshops before lockdown, we adapted the resources for at-home use and made them freely available on our website.

The online resource was downloaded **12,000 times**, a reach of over **30x** that of the in-person workshops.

An interactive virtual event on numeracy in the news was also delivered to ten schools across England and Scotland in 2020.



# Young people developed news literacy at home



## TEACHER

These resources encourage critical thinking unlike anything else we have seen.



50%

OF RESPONDENTS said they weren't aware of news literacy before receiving our resources



## TEACHER

The students now question the sources of news and try to look at the multiple perspectives.



2/3

## OF RESPONDENTS

saw a positive change in the news literacy skills of the children they use the resources with



92%

OF THOSE PEOPLE said news literacy is very important for young people



## PARENT

The resources initiated a habit of just stopping for a moment to think about news instead of just blindly believing it.

## Percentage of subscribers who saw their children practicing news-literacy skills because of the resources

### KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD AROUND THEM

74%

### CONFIDENCE TO DISCUSS THE NEWS

69%

### HEALTHY SCEPTICISM

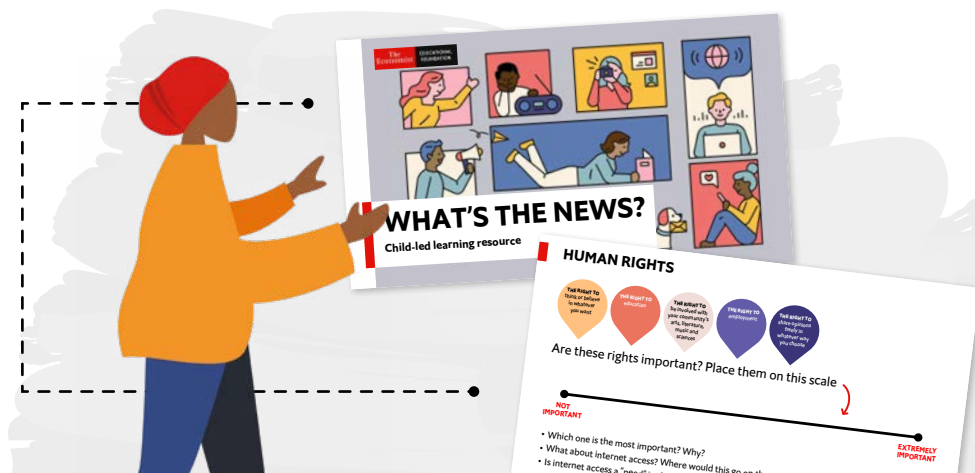
47%

### OPEN-MINDEDNESS

78%

### REASONING

74%



# WHAT'S NEW FOR 2020-21



## A REVISED NEWS-LITERACY MODEL

The Skills Builder Partnership launched the Universal Framework for Essential Skills in 2020. We have updated our news-literacy model to align with the critical-thinking and communications skills within this framework. This will allow us to even more rigorously measure the impact of news literacy on young people's lives. We've designed a News Curriculum to detail the knowledge required to engage with current affairs.



## SUPPORTING ACCESS TO THE BNC

We're adapting our support to meet the needs of the schools and students throughout the next academic year. This includes greater Hub provision, support to bring students onto the Hub and flexible classroom content options to fit with challenges arising from covid-19 measures.



## AN EVEN MORE ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED GLOBAL CONVERSATION

The Global Conversation 2021 will involve additional teaching materials to make the sessions as accessible as possible for global participants. We'll also work to enable more international connections between schools.



## WEEKLY NEWS RESOURCES

We've committed to continue providing weekly topical resources to our newsletter subscribers. As students have returned to school, our weekly news resources will adapt to be suitable for flexible use in school and at home. We'll continue to grow our subscriber list and seek feedback to ensure we're covering the issues that matter.



## TEACHER TRAINING PILOT

We're piloting a teacher training programme that will build teachers' confidence facilitating high-quality discussions about the news in their classrooms.

# TYPES OF DATA COLLECTED

## DATA SET 1

Feedback forms from 33 BNC teacher-training participants

## DATA SET 2

Foundation staff visits and phone calls to Burnet News Club schools

## DATA SET 3

Student online surveys at the beginning (226 respondents) and end (33 respondents) of the school year

## DATA SET 4

Feedback forms from 17 teachers at the end of the school year

## DATA SET 5

Quantitative online data. We collect data from the BNC Hub to track the number of posts and comments

## DATA SET 6

End-of-year student quiz completed by 37 students and six end-of-Issue quizzes (237 responses on average)

## DATA SET 7

End-of-project Global Conversation surveys from teachers (19) and students (186)

# SOURCES

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