



Transforming life chances through education



Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Our reach and impact | 3 |
| Our theory of change | 4 |
| Our vision: a fairer education system | 5 |
| Why we are needed | 6 |
| 1. What we do | 7 |
| Providing stability | 10 |
| Building trusting relationships | 11 |
| Improving educational outcomes | 12 |
| Advancing social mobility | 15 |
| Shaping policy | 16 |
| Promoting a ripple effect | 18 |
| 2. How we work | 19 |
| School partnerships | 20 |
| Community partnerships | 21 |
| Funding model | 22 |
| 3. How we learn and improve | 23 |
| You said... we did: 10 years of learning | 25 |
| 4. Looking forwards | 28 |
| 2013–2023 and beyond | 29 |
| Our ambition for the future | 30 |

Almost all independent schools run bursary schemes, as do state boarding schools.

The impact data set out in this report is the result of a decade of commitment from more than 150 boarding and independent schools, in a pioneering partnership with Royal National Children’s SpringBoard Foundation (RNCSF), to prioritise care-experienced and vulnerable children for those bursary places.

The report shows why this work is needed, how it works and – most importantly – the difference it makes to young people’s lives.

“ ”

This impact report demonstrates clearly the academic, pastoral and social gains that follow when young people living in challenging circumstances can access fully funded places in boarding or independent day schools.

HRH The Princess Royal



Our reach and impact

We work with the UK's state boarding and independent schools to widen access to fully funded bursary places for children who are vulnerable or who come from under-served communities.

In the past 10 years...

We have helped secure a fully funded school place at a state boarding or independent school for **more than 1,000 young people**, of whom:

66

children in care

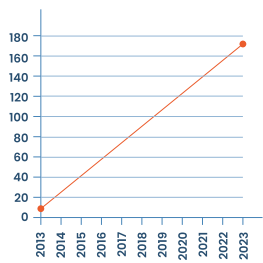


382

children who are classified as vulnerable, given social care intervention

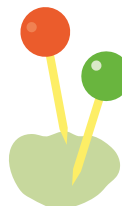
625

children identified through our partnerships in social mobility 'cold spot' areas



170

We have built a movement of 170 schools that work as part of our accredited schools network



26

We work in partnership with community organisations spanning 26 areas of socioeconomic deprivation

50

We have secured placements for young people who have experienced care from 50 local authorities



£85m

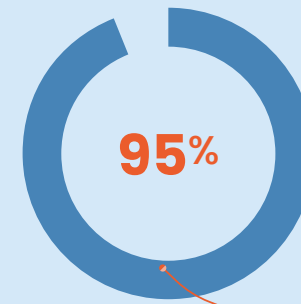
We have unlocked £85m of schools' funding commitments for fully funded places

The outcomes data in this report is of young people who we have supported to attend boarding school (outcomes data for young people who have attended day school placements is not yet available since that stream only began in 2021).

“ ”

All of a sudden, I was in an environment that encouraged hard work and success.

Michael, SpringBoarder
Glenalmond College, 2015–17



Our retention rate: **95% of SpringBoarders** complete their placement successfully¹



Our theory of change: how we evidence our impact on young lives



Our vision: a fairer education system

Our vision is of a fairer education system in which every child has the chance to thrive in an environment best suited to their needs.

When it comes to educational outcomes, the gap between young people from low-income families and those from more privileged backgrounds may seem insurmountable. But through our partnerships, we are finding ways to close that gap, one young person at a time.

In the past 10 years, Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation (RNCSF) has seeded important changes in the relationships among state boarding and independent schools and social care – offering new possibilities for social mobility.

We are so proud to lead this extraordinary charity and incredibly grateful to our generous donors and our partners, including nearly 200 schools, 50 local authorities and a host of community organisations.

Most of all, we are proud of the young people we work with – our SpringBoarders. Even with intensive support, it takes real courage to step into a different kind of environment. This report sets out the impact of this brave decision on SpringBoarders' aspirations, educational attainment and, ultimately, their futures.



Ali Henderson
Chief Executive



Nick Owen
Chair

“ ”

Witnessing the progress of so many Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation (RNCSF) award holders since I first became Patron of the Royal Wanstead Foundation 19 years ago has been a great privilege.

By enabling young people living in challenging circumstances to access fully funded places in boarding or independent day schools, RNCSF provides children with transformational opportunities. The charity's network of community partners ensures the critically important structure that is necessary for successful outcomes.

This impact report demonstrates clearly the academic, pastoral and social gains that children from vulnerable and marginalised groups can achieve from the opportunities presented by a fully funded place.

The report provides robust evidence showing our positive impact on the lives of the more than 1,000 remarkable young people who RNCSF has supported in the past decade.



HRH The Princess Royal
Patron





Why we are needed

Our UK education system is not fair. Some young people have outstanding opportunities to flourish, while others – especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds – are persistently left behind. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated this already stark situation. Today, the attainment gap between the most and least affluent young people is wider than ever.

A story of widening inequality



70% of disadvantaged pupils leave school without having achieved a 'strong' (grade 9–5) in maths and English²



The disadvantage gap at A level is the widest since it was introduced six years ago, with the gap in average point scores between disadvantaged and wealthier pupils sitting at 5.08³



4.5% gain places at the most selective universities⁴



Graduates from poorer backgrounds earn half as much as their more privileged peers in their first job after university⁵

Disadvantaged pupils are no less able than their peers, but many face multiple barriers – from overcrowded or insecure housing, to lower confidence and aspirations. All these factors make it harder for children to succeed at school. This is known as the disadvantage gap.

The disadvantage gap has an impact not just on education, training and employment, but on other long-term outcomes, including social, emotional and health factors.

We open up new opportunities to young people by helping them access state boarding and independent school places. For some, a fresh school environment, with new opportunities, is enough to make a difference. For others – especially those in contact with the care system – a boarding placement offers a holistic education alongside the security and stability they need.

“ ”

It has not only given my child opportunity, but our whole family a second chance.

SpringBoarder's parent



1

What we do

“ ”

Their lives have been changed, but so have the communities they come from.

Sue Yates
Trustee, Hope Opportunity Trust

Case study

Over the last 10 years, our partnership with the charity Hope Opportunity Trust, has enabled more than 100 young people from low-income families in under-served areas in Liverpool and Chester to attend a boarding school for their A-level studies.

Watch our film about the project at:
tinyurl.com/hope-film

We secure fully funded places at a state boarding or independent school through two programmes. Each serves a different cohort:

Programme 1

Children from low-income families in under-served areas

These areas have the highest scores in:

- Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Income Index Deprivation Affecting Children Index
- POLAR4 (low rates of university progression)

Our Place-Based Partnerships Programme



Programme 2

Children with significant experience of social care

These include children who have faced significant early years trauma and adverse childhood experiences. They include:

- young people in care
- young people with significant social care experience ('on the edge of' care)
- young carers

Our Looked After and Vulnerable Children Programme



▶ We work with community groups, local authorities and referring schools to identify children for whom a boarding or independent day school might provide the environment they most need.

▼ We work with children and their parents or carers to explore the young person's ambitions and needs, the options available, and which school might suit them best.

▼ We help secure a fully funded bursary place at a state boarding or independent school.

▼ We work with schools and community partners to support the young person's transition to the new school. Partners provide wraparound practical and emotional support, mentoring and peer groups with other SpringBoarders, to prepare the young person for their new environment.

▼ We provide ongoing support – for school, for young people and for their families – to give the placement the best chance of success.

▼ We ensure the young people remain connected – to our ongoing support, and to each other, through our growing community of alumni.



We assess the impact of our work through six measurable outcomes:



1 Providing stability



2 Building trusting relationships



3 Improving educational outcomes



4 Advancing social mobility



5 Shaping policy



6 Promoting a ripple effect

“ ”

The bursary place changed my life. The support I received from my teachers was amazing.

India, SpringBoarder
Cheltenham Ladies College, 2020–22



Outcome 1: Providing stability

Every child needs somewhere safe and predictable where they can develop and grow

A boarding school placement can offer respite from challenges children might face in their immediate environments – whether overcrowded homes, exposure to criminal activity, complex care arrangements.

Boarding and independent day school places have been shown to offer young people new opportunities while easing the pressure on families or carers, to help preserve and encourage stable care arrangements.

Preserving care arrangements

We are funded by the Department for Education to deliver their vision that many more children in and on the edge of care can access a state boarding or independent school place.

This, the Broadening Educational Pathways scheme, has proven to offer a route to ensuring better educational outcomes, stabilise care placements, and generate more models of kinship care arrangements and shared care, where children live part time with their families (see also pages 12 and 16).

Since 2020 this Department for Education-funded programme has secured new boarding or independent school places for 150 care-experienced children from 50 local authorities.

Ana was a young carer for her mother until the age of 15, when her mother died and Ana went into kinship care.



The programme was truly transformative. It gave me a chance to create an independent identity based on who I was, and who I wanted to be, and not determined by circumstances that were out of my control when I was a child.

Ana, SpringBoarder
Gordonstoun School, 2020–22

On leaving Gordonstoun, Ana went on to study law at the London School of Economics.

Watch Ana speaking at:
tinyurl.com/broaden-educational-pathways



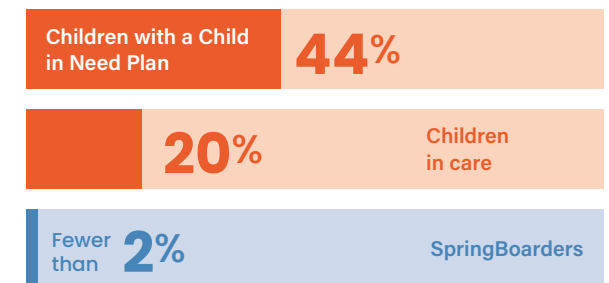
Local authority teenage placements that break down⁶



Teenagers on the edge of care* who enter care⁷



Children demonstrating persistent absenteeism⁸



* Children referred to and assessed by children's social services as being in need ('CIN')



Outcome 2:

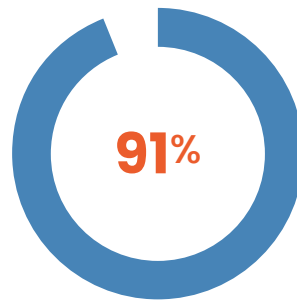
Building trusting relationships

A foundation of stable, nurturing and trusting relationships and inner self-belief goes a long way to help us overcome life's challenges and secure a happy, fulfilling future.

We focus our resources on young people who are lacking these relationships – including those who have experienced the care system.

We make sure every child we work with develops sustained, trusting relationships – through their time in their boarding or independent day schools, the wraparound support we link them up with, and the connections they develop with other SpringBoarders.

When we ask SpringBoarders to reflect on their school experiences, they describe their increasing self-confidence, as well as the opportunity to make strong friendships.⁹



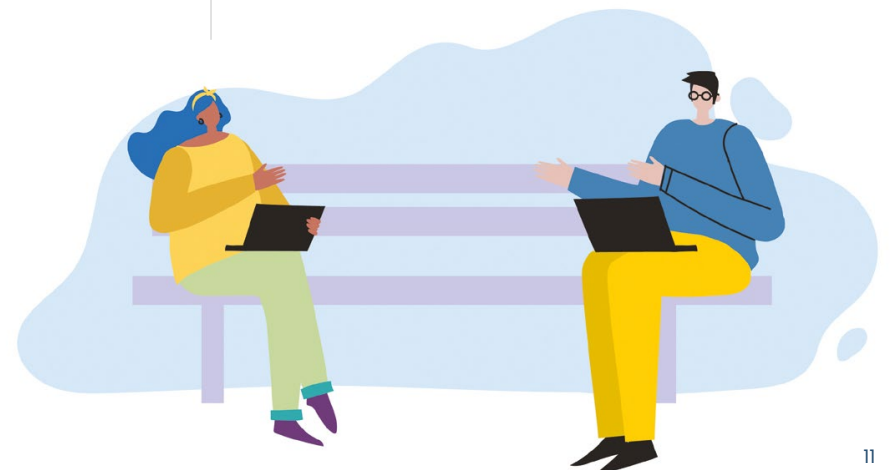
"I feel positive about myself"

● Agree

“ ”

Independent schools have on offer many of the things Virtual School headteachers are seeking for Children in care – a strengths-based curriculum, a flexible offer, enrichment opportunities and a focus on relationship building and building social networks whilst also providing challenge to meet demanding academic targets.

Calvin Kipling, Virtual School Headteacher for Darlington Council





Outcome 3: Improving educational outcomes

Academic progress is only one of many ways we evaluate impact, but it is a crucial catalyst for opening up new options and possibilities for young people’s lives.

There is clear evidence that fully funded places in state boarding and independent schools, can help secure better academic outcomes for young people.

We compare SpringBoarders’ GCSE and A-level outcomes with the national averages for others from their area, or those facing similar circumstances.

Key stage 4: GCSEs

In an independent evaluation of our work with children in and on the edge of care, the [University of Nottingham](#)¹⁰ found that:

- Children in care and vulnerable children in boarding-school placements gained the equivalent of **+5 months of progress** in the core 8 subjects (Attainment 8) +3 months in GCSE maths and +7 months in GCSE English – compared to pupils sharing similar characteristics.*
- **54% achieved five good GCSEs** including in English and maths, compared to just **13%** of a matched control group of pupils sharing similar characteristics.

* based on matched control group research verified by the Office for National Statistics

Outcomes achieved by the 212 SpringBoarders who took GCSEs in the period 2013–22

GCSEs % securing grades 9–5 in English and mathematics¹¹

For disadvantaged pupils



All pupils



For vulnerable pupils



GCSEs Attainment 8 scores (performance in 8 subjects, weighted on a scale of 0–90, where 90 would be the highest possible score)¹²

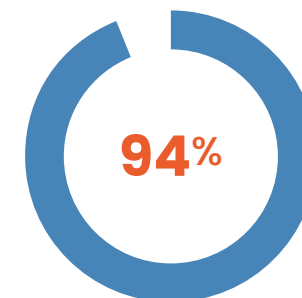
For disadvantaged pupils



All pupils



For vulnerable pupils



“My school has opened up opportunities I would not have had before”

● Agree

+5 months of progress

Children in care and vulnerable children in boarding school placements gained the equivalent of **+5 months of progress** in the core 8 GCSE subjects^{10 **}

** when the University of Nottingham compared vulnerable SpringBoarders’ progression in the 5 years of secondary school to that of pupils with similar characteristics

Figure 1 shows the performance of SpringBoarders who attended state boarding and independent schools through our Place-Based Partnerships programme, compared with the average for comparison pupils in their area.

Exceeding predicted grades

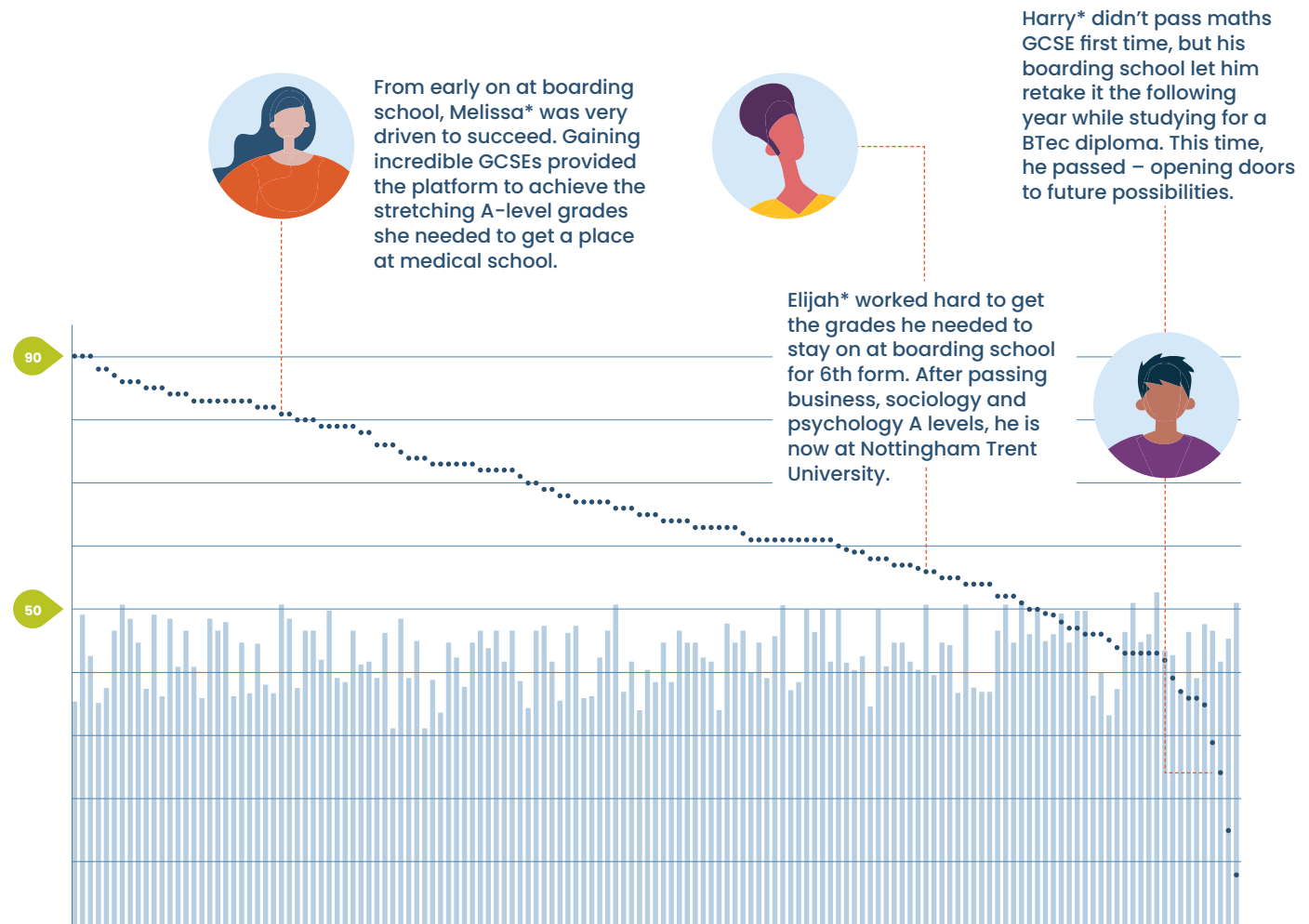
When a SpringBoarder first starts their placement, we measure their baseline cognitive abilities through a test called the CAT4.

For a sample of 50 SpringBoarders, we compared the GCSE performance suggested by these baseline scores against their actual GCSE grades. We found that **SpringBoarders achieved an average 1.4-grade improvement per GCSE**, compared with the predictions based on cognitive testing.

Among students in the sample who did three A levels, there was a **10.3-point improvement across all three grades compared with the predictions – the equivalent of one grade.**

Figure 1: GCSE Attainment 8 Scores achieved by young people supported through our Place-Based Partnerships programme

On this chart, each dot shows an individual SpringBoarder, while the blue bars show the average in that SpringBoarder's home postcode.



* Not their real names

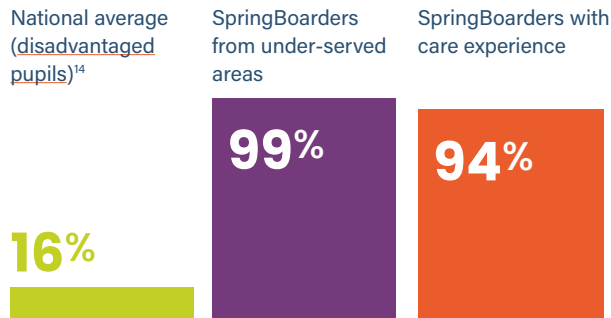
Outcomes achieved by the 457 SpringBoarders who took A levels in the period 2013–22

Key stage 5: A levels

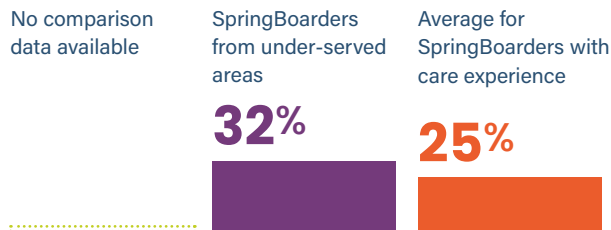
A levels (or equivalent KS5 qualifications)

Recent research by Pro Bono Economics¹³ into the performance at KS5 of SpringBoarders supported through our Place-Based Partnerships programme in the period 2013–2020 found that, on average, **SpringBoarders from under-served communities gain the equivalent of 12 months' educational progress compared to a matched controls group.**

Proportion % gaining 2 or more A levels

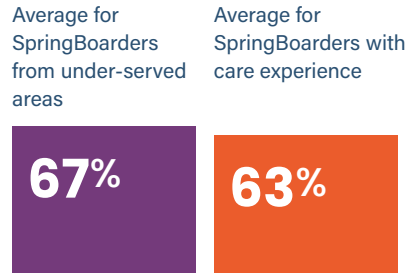


Proportion % gaining AAB or higher



Average point score

% of SpringBoarders achieving higher than the average for disadvantaged pupils (nationally) in the same exam year



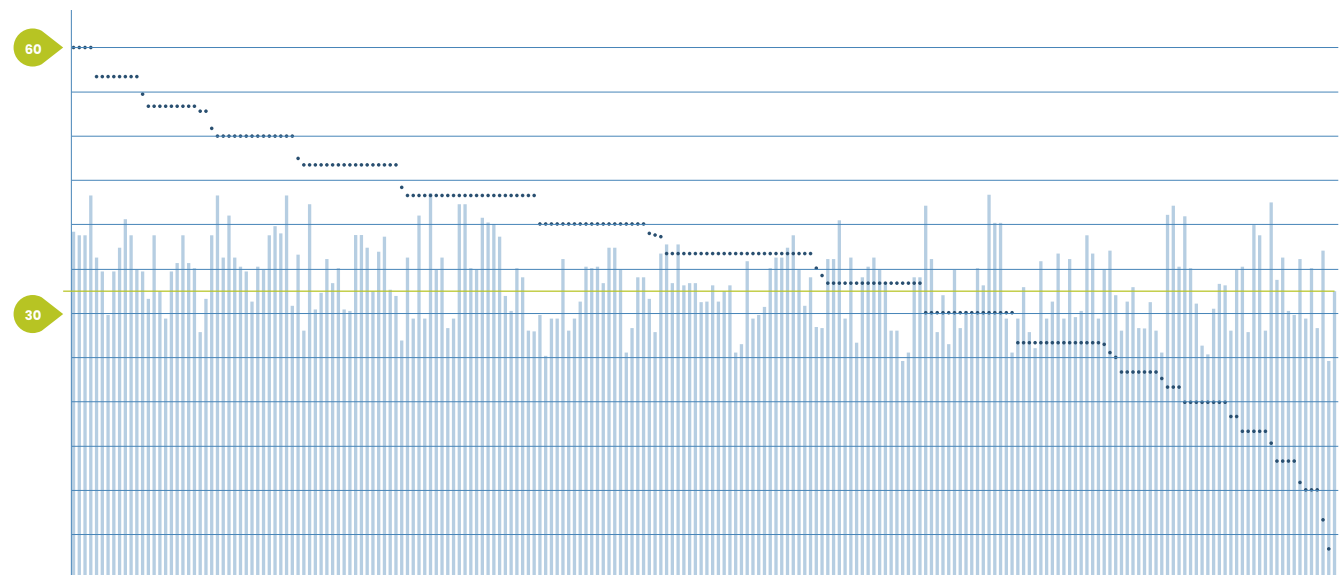
+12 months' progress

SpringBoarders from under-served communities gain the equivalent of **12 months'** educational progress compared to a matched controls group.*

*when Pro Bono Economics researchers compared SpringBoarders' progression in the 2 years of 6th form placements to that of pupils with similar characteristics

Figure 2: A-level Average Point Scores achieved by young people supported through our Place-Based Partnerships programme

On this chart, each dot shows an individual SpringBoarder, while the blue bars show the average in that SpringBoarder's home postcode.





Outcome 4: Advancing social mobility

Over the past decade, more than 450 SpringBoarders have completed their school placements and joined our growing community of alumni. As their numbers grow, we are building an ever-more compelling case for the role of bursary placements in enabling social mobility.

“ ”

It made me more independent – even using different forms of transport to get to school was a great way of preparing me for life at university. I am coping much better with being away from my family.

Jack, SpringBoarder
Sherborne School, 2020–22



Outcomes achieved by the 350+ SpringBoarder alumni with whom we are in active contact

Average % progressing directly to higher education^{15,16}

For disadvantaged pupils



For pupils with significant care experience

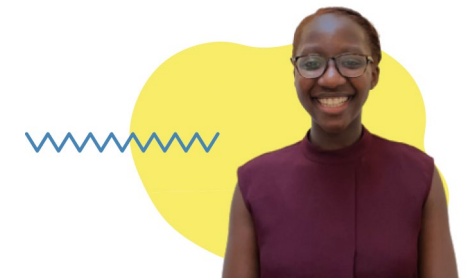


Average % securing places at a high-tariff university^{15,16}

For disadvantaged pupils



For pupils with significant care experience



“ ”

Boarding was one of the best experiences of my life. It set me up for my new job and career.

Nana, SpringBoarder
The Wellington Academy, 2017–19
now an occupational therapist for the NHS

Outcome 5: Shaping policy

Our work highlights:

- the value of state boarding and independent school placements for children at risk, as an intervention to support education and social care
- the difference that schools can make to society by targeting their fully funded places at young people who need them most

Alongside our work in preparation and transition planning to support young people to secure and sustain a place, we are driving systemic change through two areas of focus:

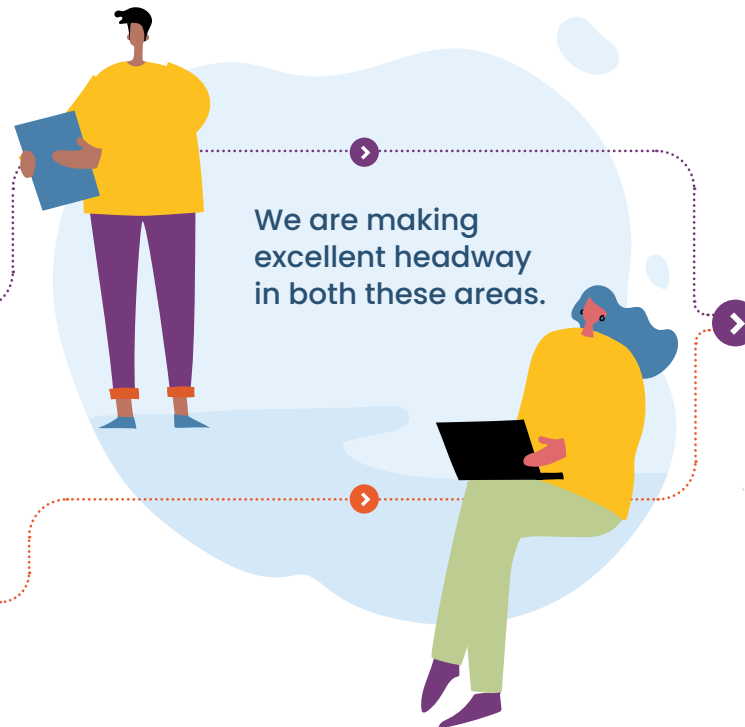
1

Making the case to local authorities and the government of the benefits of our approach for children in two situations:

- children from low-income families in under-served areas
- care-experienced children and the long-term value of commissioning these placements

2

Securing commitment from hundreds of schools to offer substantial funding subsidies – essential for building the conditions for significant expansion



We are making excellent headway in both these areas.

Government recognition

Noting the positive results of our work to date, the **2022 Independent Review into Children's Social Care**¹⁷ recommended that the Government should "increase the number of children in care benefiting from a place at a state boarding or independent school... and create a new wave of state boarding capacity led by the best existing schools".

In response, the Government agreed, stating in its **Social Care Reform strategy**¹⁸ an ambition "to extend the Broadening Educational Pathways programme to increase the number of children in care in independent and state boarding schools."

In its review of our work, the Independent Review Into Children's Social Care highlighted:

- the enthusiastic engagement and support of the independent sector
- the value of central coordination to support better identification, matching and placing of children into state boarding and independent schools
- a widening of the pool of children in care accessing these opportunities.

We are seeing a significant shift in the independent schools sector, too:

- In the past 10 years, the value of means-tested bursaries has grown by 50%.¹⁹
- In the same period, the number of pupils receiving fully funded bursary places has risen from 5,000 to 7,000 across the sector – that's 71%.¹⁹

How a placement can yield substantial returns

- 1 **By providing a better alternative to expensive residential care and preserving stability in foster care arrangements**

£200,000

Annual cost of a residential children's home placement

£5,000

Participating independent schools have committed to offering places to vulnerable children with significant fee remission. A £5,000 grant contribution unlocks a independent boarding school place with an average value of around £39,000.²⁰

£14,000

Annual cost of a state boarding school placement.²¹

“ ”

The UK's state boarding and independent schools sectors offer some of the highest quality education and pastoral support... if private education exists, then it should be equally accessed by those who face the greatest educational obstacles.

Independent Review into Children's Social Care, 2022

- 2 **By de-escalating the risk of a child entering into care arrangements**

Every rung of escalation into Children's Services carries disruption to the young person and high costs²², so reducing this risk is paramount.

Boarding and independent day school places can help form part of the solution. Longer school days, bespoke pastoral support and the ability to sleep at school, if appropriate, can help preserve kinship or stable foster care arrangements.

In so doing, bursary places can prevent at least £37,000 p/a cost incurred if the young person were to enter other children's social care provision pathways:

£37,000 p/a

The saving to HM Treasury when each child is able to be placed within a kinship care, rather than statutory care, arrangement.²³

- 3 **By preventing lifelong costs associated with experience of care**

Poor outcomes for children in care cost the government an average of £720,000 across over each young person's lifetime, with an annual bill of £23bn²⁴. Research has show significant savings can follow from bursary placements for children in care:

£2.35 mn

Projected saving to HM Treasury associated with reduced social care costs for 110 vulnerable children with a fully funded boarding school placement due to our work in the past 3 years.²⁵

£975,000

Projected net benefit to HM Treasury associated with likely gain in potential lifetime earnings (and savings on associated welfare payments and public services) of the 150 vulnerable children who have secured fully funded boarding and independent day-school placements.²⁶



Outcome 6: Promoting a ripple effect



Our approach has clear benefits for young people. But there are others who benefit from programmes, too: the schools that welcome SpringBoarders and the people around the SpringBoarder.

Schools value the way SpringBoarders bring a diversity of perspective, background and culture to their school communities.

SpringBoarders raise awareness of social, socioeconomic and ethnic diversity and strengthen schools' efforts to build an accepting and tolerant ethos.²⁷

This ripple effect also takes place in SpringBoarders' local communities, as their different experiences and new perspectives on life influence family members, friends, and the wider community. We encourage SpringBoarders to proactively raise aspirations and to inspire their peers at school and in the wider community.

“ ”

I am much more community minded now and realise that I can actually give back quite a lot. I see myself working in community action when I finish my bursary placement.

**Rachel, SpringBoarder
Royal Hospital School, 2018–20**

23

SpringBoarder alumni are active members in our governance committees and as campaigners in issues relating to our work.

Case study

Over more than a decade, Eastside Young Leaders Academy has been working to break cycles of poverty and build confidence and aspiration among young people from across East London. This has included enabling more than 200 young people to secure places at state boarding and independent schools across the UK.

See our video at tinyurl.com/eastside-video

“ ”

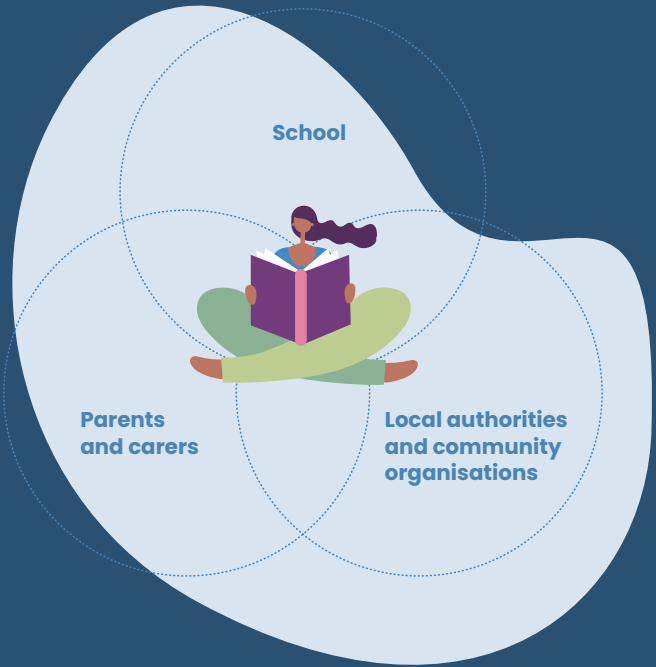
The partnership has not only created life-changing opportunities for the young people who have gone on to boarding school over the last few years, [it] is having a much broader impact on helping inspire the aspirations of many others across our community.

**Ray Lewis, founder
Eastside Young Leaders Academy, East London**



2

How we work



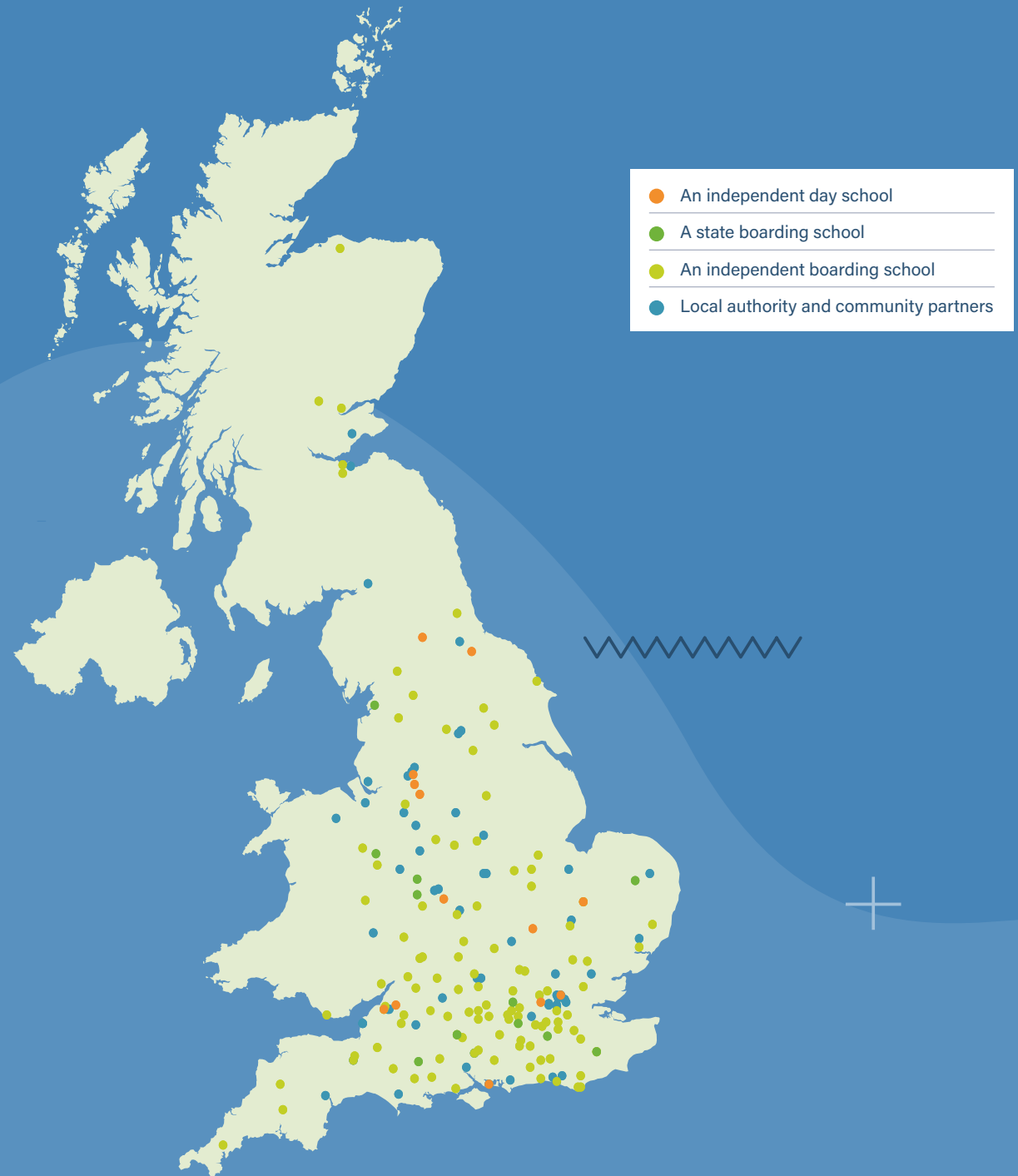
School partnerships

We have developed partnerships with a wide network of schools across England, Scotland and Wales. These reflect the breadth and strength of the nation's education system.

The variety of these schools is crucial, as it provides the best chance of finding the school that best suits each individual young person – from busy, urban independent day schools to cosy rural buildings for the youngest prep school boarders; from modern state comprehensives with boarding provision to traditional single-sex settings; from weekly and flexi-boarding to full-time boarding.

Regardless of physical, geographic or academic differences, these schools are united by their desire to welcome and support SpringBoarders to join their school communities. Each makes this commitment through our accreditation approach – a standard of excellence covering three vital areas:

- **Pastoral care** Supporting attachment- and trauma-informed practice
- **Building best practice** Sharing resources and guidance
- **Financial commitment** Providing all, or most, of the funding needed.



Community partnerships

We work in partnership with community organisations spanning 26 areas of socioeconomic deprivation and with more than 50 local authorities across England and Wales.

Our valued partners

Our work depends on a whole network of amazing community organisations and state school groupings that support hundreds of SpringBoarders to thrive:

- Birmingham Schools Partnership (led by Washwood Heath MAT)
- Clarion Education Foundation (Midlands)
- Eastside Young Leaders Academy (London)
- Hope Opportunity Trust (Liverpool and Chester)
- **Into**University (pupils supported by centres across the UK)
- Kelmscott School (London)
- North Cambridge Academy
- SieveMK Gateway (Milton Keynes)
- Southside Young Leaders Academy (London)
- Stoke Schools Partnership (led by Co-op Academy)
- Tottenham Schools Partnership (led by Gladesmore)
- Westside Young Leaders Academy (London)
- Young Carers Development Trust (London).

Supporting young people and their families

At the heart of our model sit the strong relationships with local authorities and community organisations that we have built together over time.

Our combined expertise enables us to recommend young people facing the greatest barriers, and to put in place wraparound support, both during and outside of term times, as they navigate the transitions between school and home.

We focus this partnership activity in areas identified as social mobility 'cold spots.'

Community partners provide a range of support – from busting myths to managing expectations; from tailored visits to parents' forums and holiday provision. The relationships they nurture are crucial in introducing prospective SpringBoarders to the subtle intensity of boarding school life. Each starter is enrolled on our Preparation for Boarding Programme, which targets the key themes that they might expect in their new school.

“ ”

The careful partnership working between local authorities, community groups, schools, and RNCSF staff was essential to securing the support that children on the edge of care need in boarding environments.²⁸



Funding model

The way we plan and allocate funds ensures that children’s placements are fully met, through a mix of school bursaries and charity funding.

When a SpringBoarder starts at their new school, it is essential that they can embrace every aspect of school life. For this reason, participating schools set aside enough budget to commit funding to cover all school fees as well as the extras, such as trips, sports, music, drama, arts and uniforms.

How schools meet the costs

Many independent boarding and day schools fund these places entirely.

Independent schools with tighter margins can apply to us for a grant of around £5,000 per pupil each year to subsidise some of the costs and unlock match funds to meet the overall need.

State boarding schools can apply to us for a higher proportion of the fee profile. This is because there are complexities around fundraising and funding in the state boarding sector.

Donations: the multiplier effect

As a charity, our operating costs are covered by government grants and the return on our investments. So when someone makes a donation to RNCSF, this sum directly supports a pupil placement – and it also acts as a multiplier.

Shared approaches to funding

When it comes to funding children in care, experience has shown that if the local authority provides the equivalent educational allowance and foster care allowance, there are hundreds of state boarding and independent schools that will commit to meeting the remaining costs (see the case study on page 27).

Our financial model

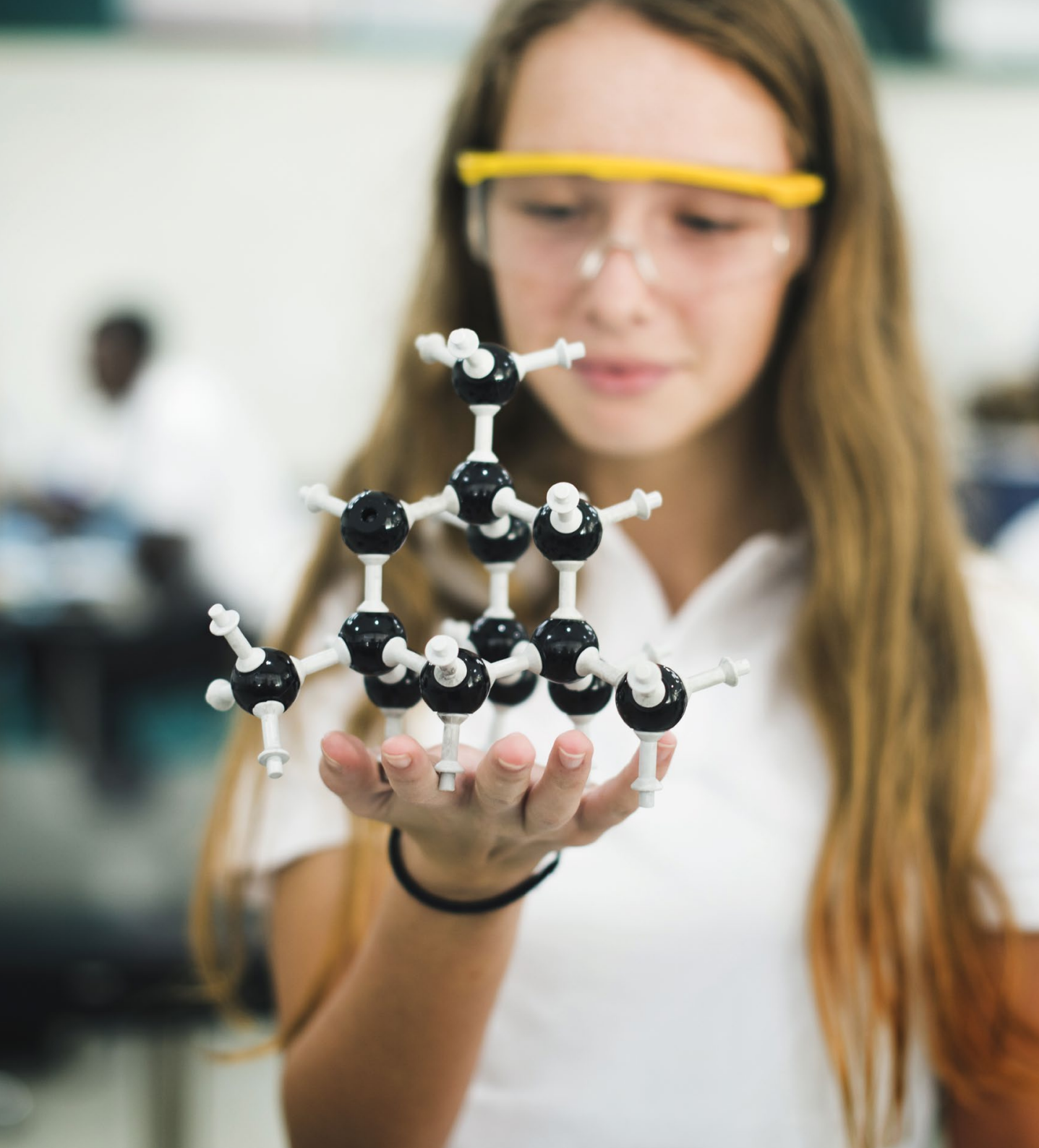
For every £1 a donor invests in RNCSF, our young people receive £9 from the independent schools in our network.



£85 million

Over the past 10 years, our participating schools have provided £85 million of support for the 1,070 SpringBoarders who have been through their placements.





3

How we learn and improve



We consistently strive to ensure that we provide the very best support to the children and young people we work with, so continuous learning is an integral aspect of how we work. That's why we systematically gather data and seek feedback – and we expect schools to do the same – to measure performance and find ways to innovate and improve.

We draw on multiple data sources:

Quantitative evidence includes:

- understanding social, emotional and mental health measures through the STEER platform (see above right)
- tracking records of educational attainment and participation in opportunities outside of the classroom that are often just as (if not more) influential on character development
- monitoring the impact on stability of care placement and other associated care risks alongside trajectory
- gathering insights from 500+ SpringBoarder alumni with whom we are in contact.

Qualitative evidence includes:

- conducting our annual schools' and pupils' surveys, which use a survey framework based on recommendations from the National Foundation for Educational Research²⁹ to understand the impact of bursary places on young people's trust, confidence and broader life skills
- running interviews and focus groups
- drawing on a recent independent external evaluation methodology run by a team at the University of Nottingham in 2021–23.

Tracking emotional wellbeing

Since 2017, we have used the STEER platform³⁰ to understand students' emotional states and whether they need any support or interventions. The data has revealed young people seeing a significant positive effect over time, with a growing sense of trust, independence, resilience, self-confidence and outlook on life.



You said... we did: 10 years of learning

| Issue | Context | Action taken | Improvement |
|--|---|--|---|
| Unsuccessful placements | <p>In 10 years, less than 10% of placements have fallen through. In recent years, that figure has fallen to less than 5%. Main reasons include behaviour breaches or not enjoying boarding. Others include changing needs, family illness or bereavement and school closure</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting transition to an alternative school • Convening multi-stakeholder reflection • Implementing scaffolding to prepare children for change • Supporting schools to understand trauma-informed approaches | <p>In recent years, 95% of SpringBoarders have settled. The figure is improving year on year</p> |
| Difficulty adjusting to behavioural expectations and boundaries | <p>Less than half of unsuccessful placements are due to young people being withdrawn or excluded from school. Where this does happen, reasons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty accepting boundaries (particularly prevalent in the periods immediately post Covid-19 lockdowns) • allegations of drug use • persistent disruptive behaviours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership with community groups who know the young people really well, and set up individual tailored support as they each prepare for what to expect • Launching our new Spring Into Boarding programme, which introduces common expectations of boarding school life to prospective students • Encouraging students to talk to mentors (trained alumni) if concerns come to light | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91% of SpringBoarders 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that their partner organisation prepared and supported them well • 80% of students with former SpringBoarder mentors said they felt comfortable with the school's expectations within 6 months of starting • 100% felt their mentor had built their confidence in deciding next steps |
| Homesickness | <p>Initial feelings of homesickness are common for all boarding pupils. This worsened in 2020–2022 – a time of heightened anxiety due to the Covid-19 pandemic</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing advice on homesickness • Offering overnight taster visits • Linking schools with community partners to spot and address problems • Advising pastoral staff on how to support families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many schools offer taster stays and transition days • We are piloting a new support group to help parents build resilience in their children |

| Issue | Context | Action taken | Improvement |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Challenges in achieving sense of belonging</p> | <p>Some SpringBoarders report challenges in achieving a sense of belonging in the new school culture – especially at first</p> <p>This is common in other students too, given high numbers of international boarders</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our community partners play a vital role in incorporating an understanding of authenticity and belonging in their preparation approaches • Flagging this as a potential issue with pastoral staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SpringBoarders note the crucial role that visits from their community partner organisation representatives can play in helping them to feel supported and able to discuss issues of concern |
| <p>Feelings of difference or discrimination</p> | <p>Through our anonymous reporting tool, annual pupil survey and school visits, we actively seek information about anything that can make Springboarders feel different or experience discrimination</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Leadership Council of 10 SpringBoarders, supported by an equality, diversity and inclusion specialist, has established our Anti-Racism Charter – a framework for high standards and collective progress, to improve the experience of all pupils • Our community partners provide scaffolding support and encourage young people to report concerns in their regular check-up communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We gather insights about experiences of discrimination and make sure participating schools reflect on these • Trained former SpringBoarders are available to speak at school training days • Our 'Let's start a conversation' scheme provides a safe space for pupils needing extra support to explore these issues |
| <p>Challenges accessing academic support</p> | <p>The jump between GCSEs and A levels can be particularly challenging for some</p> <p>SpringBoarders highlight that although more support is available in their new placements, identifying one's needs and asking for help is not always easy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights from pupils' STEER data (see page 24) to provide early-warning flags • Through our Schools Day and training, staff learn that SpringBoarders may be reluctant to share concerns or worries and may need prompting • Our community partners help students develop the confidence to ask for help, and to accept it when it is offered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For many SpringBoarders who join placements at A level (year 12), Keystone Tutors has generously provided pro-bono support to help them achieve academic uplift before they start • Some schools are replicating this approach themselves • The extraordinary academic achievements of so many SpringBoarders over the years is testament to the extra support available from participating schools |



Case study

For more than 10 years, Bede's School, an independent boarding and day school in Sussex, has been working in partnership with RNCSF, East Sussex County Council and foster carers, prioritising children in care for its bursary scheme.

Bede's sets aside three new places per year, in years 7, 9 and 12, so that young people can join at the stage that suits them best and commits to supporting them until the end of year 13.

Of 15 former SpringBoarders who have completed their time at Bede's, 14 gained three A levels or equivalent and went on to universities including Exeter, York and Sussex, while one gained 10 GCSEs and then moved to a local sixth-form college.

But the focus is as much on personal and social development, with access to a host of activities, from sports to rock climbing, all in an environment offering support and stability.

“ ”

All my life, I have been told my ambitions are crazy and they're not going to work.

The chance to go to boarding school was a once in a lifetime opportunity and although my friends were going elsewhere – I was never going to pass it up.

Kyle



4

Looking forwards

2013–2023 and beyond

In 10 years we have come a long way. But this is just the start. Now that SpringBoarders have shown us what is possible, we want to see these opportunities being scaled up across the country.

2013

10 accredited schools

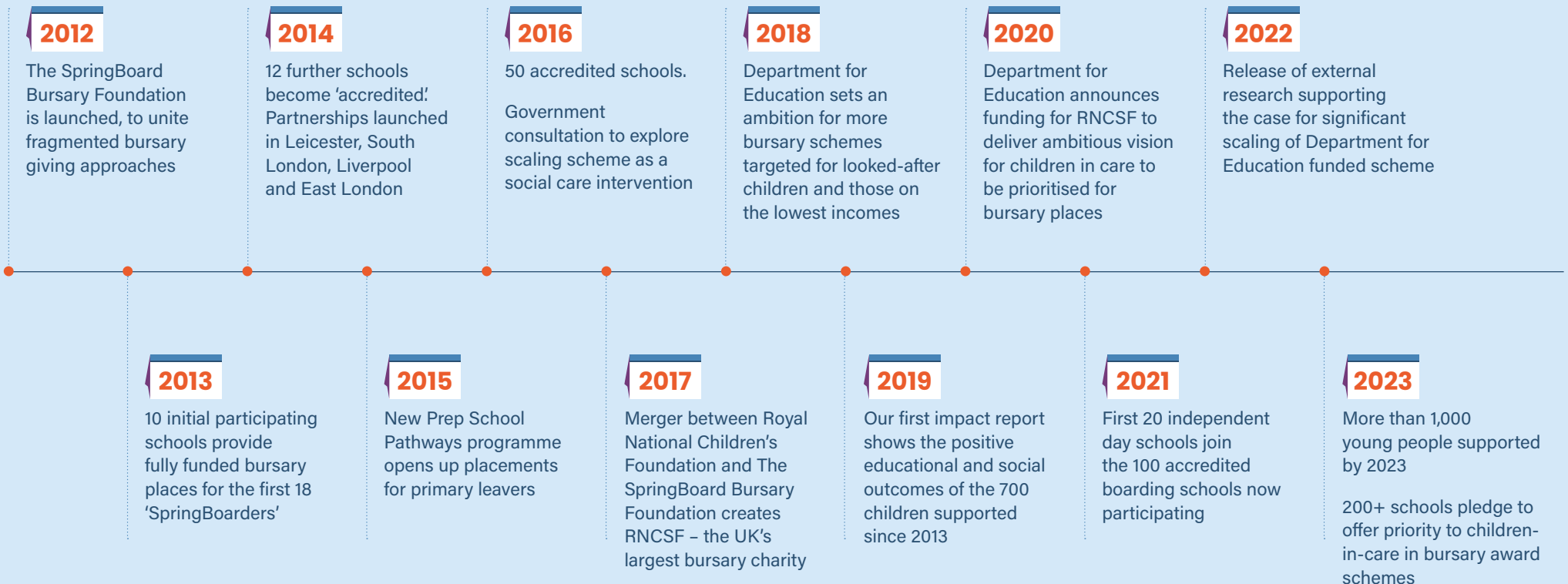
18 young people

2023

170 accredited schools

1,000 young people

Ten years of transformation



Our ambition for the future

Within the next five years, we want to see a step change for children living in challenging circumstances.

We want all professionals working with children on the edge of care to routinely consider a state boarding or independent school as a potential pathway at the natural school transition points, where this is in the best interests of the young person.

We want all state boarding and independent schools to increasingly target their bursary schemes for young people from very challenging home circumstances, whether care-experienced children or as a result of barriers to opportunity from their local area, as a priority

We will play our part too Building on the momentum, we will work as a catalyst for change. We have already achieved commitment from hundreds of state boarding and independent schools to work as a collective movement to improve the targeting of bursary places. We will continue to seek new partnerships with organisations working to improve outcomes for children from under-served areas, and secure the ongoing support of local authorities across England and Wales.

We will continue to need to support those placements through the use of donations to leverage schools' own commitments. We have a target to secure **£10 million in fundraised income to do so over the next 5 years.**



References

1. Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation. Annual Report and Accounts. London: RNCSE; 2023.
2. UK Government. 'Key stage 4 performance, academic year 2021/22' Web resource; October 2022.
3. UK Government. 'A level and other 16 to 18 results, academic year 2021/22' Web resource; March 2023.
4. UK Government. 'Widening participation in higher education' Web resource; July 2022.
5. TotalJobs.com/Social Mobility Foundation. 'Employer's guide to social mobility' Web resource; November 2021.
6. Children's Commissioner. Stability Index: Technical report. London: Children's Commissioner for England, 2020.
7. 'Children's Commissioner. 'Characteristics of children entering care for the first time as teenagers' Online blog; February 2021.
8. Ofsted. Securing Good Attendance and Tackling Persistent Absence. London: Ofsted; 2022.
9. University of Nottingham. An Independent Evaluation of the Outcomes For Looked After and Vulnerable Children Attending Boarding Schools. Nottingham: University of Nottingham; 2023.
10. Ibid.
11. UK Government. 'Key stage 4 performance, academic year 2021/22' Web resource; October 2022.
12. Ibid.
13. Pro Bono Economics. Exploring the Impact of Boarding School Bursary Places for Children From Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Backgrounds. London: Pro Bono Economics; 2021.
14. FFT Education Datalab. 'Do disadvantaged students choose different subjects from their peers at Key Stage 5?' Web resource; 2022.
15. UK Government. '16-18 destination measures' Web resource; 2022.
16. Office for Students. Consistency Needed: Care experienced students and higher education. London/Bristol; 2021.
17. MacAlister J. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care – Final report. London: Department for Education; 2022.
18. Department for Education. Children's Social Care: Stable homes, built on love. London: Department for Education; 2023.
19. Independent Schools Council. ISC Annual Census. London: ISC; 2023.
20. Ibid.
21. State Boarding Forum. Parents' Guide to State Boarding Schools. London: Boarding Schools' Association; 2021.
22. Stanford M, Lennon M. Estimating Children's Services Spending on Vulnerable Children. London: Children's Commissioner; 2019.
23. Ibid.
24. MacAlister J. Op. cit.
25. University of Nottingham. Op. cit.
26. Ibid.
27. Straw S. The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation Impact Assessment: Year 4. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research; 2018.
28. University of Nottingham. Op. cit.
29. Straw S. Op. cit.
30. Steer Education. 'Steer tracking' Web resource.



Find out more

To find out more about our work,
visit our website:

www.royalspringboard.org.uk

