# Professor Stephen Conway, Leader of Wokingham Borough Council

# Programme

8.45 – 9.05: Opening address – Professor Stephen Conway, Leader of Wokingham Borough Council

9.05 – 9.20: Introduction – WBEP NtG working group

9.20 – 10.50: Tom Shaw, Carr Manor Community School

10.50 – 11.05 COFFEE

11.05 – 11.25: Reflections

11.30 – 11.50: Bridget Reynolds, Whiteknights Primary School

11.55 – 12.15: Steve Jump, Maiden Erlegh School

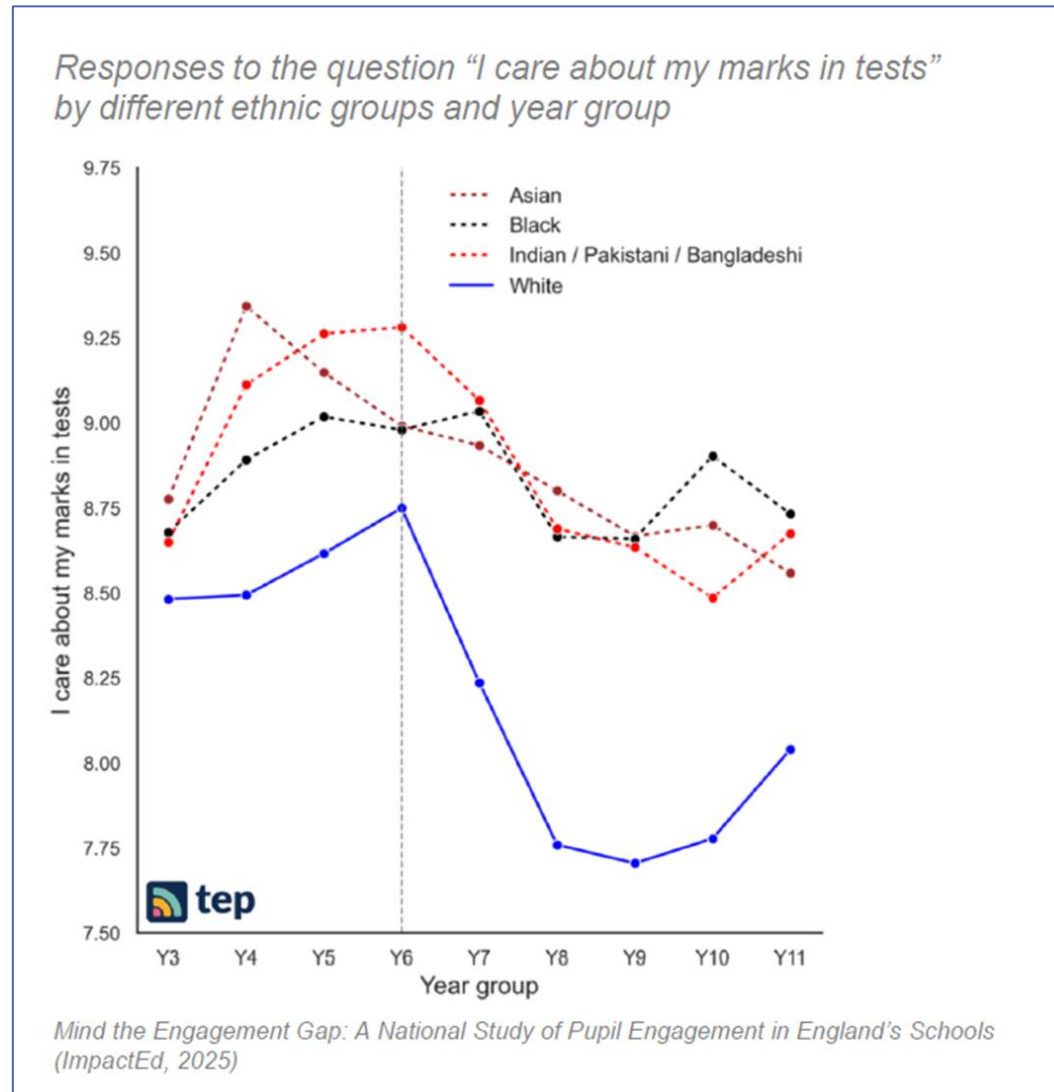12.20 – 12.25: Video-Foundry College students

12.30 – 12.45: Reflections

12.45 – 1.00: Next steps

# Introduction

- ▶ Why belonging?
- ▶ Who are our 'vulnerable' children?
- ▶ WBEP Narrowing the Gap Working Group
- ▶ Conference aims

# White Working-Class children and belonging



Responses to the question "I care about my marks in tests" by different ethnic groups and year group

Legend:
- Asian
- Black
- Indian / Pakistani / Bangladeshi
- White

Y-axis: I care about my marks in tests (7.50 to 9.75)
X-axis: Year group (Y3 to Y11)

Mind the Engagement Gap: A National Study of Pupil Engagement in England's Schools (ImpactEd, 2025)

Shared by Schools and Pupils Analysis Division, Department for Education

# Secretary of State

Through our schools white paper, together we will build a school **system that works for each and every child...** One that **breaks the link between background and success**, once and for all.

**White working-class children are less likely to enjoy school. Less likely to feel successful at school. Less likely to feel that they belong at school.**

And the links between belonging and achievement are profound – and they run both ways.

But let us be absolutely clear: they are not alternative choices. It's not a question of one or the other. The only real choice, quite frankly, is both, or neither.

For that we must give them [white working class children] **an education that is academically challenging. Strong on standards.  Rich in opportunity. Rooted in strong relationships.  Filled with purpose and belonging. Enrichment too.** Because we know that children with access to enrichment at school, tend to be the children who do well in their exams.

**That's the recipe for children who enjoy school, who feel they belong in school, and who succeed at school.**

Education Secretary speech at RISE attainment conference - GOV.UK

# Secretary of State

**How many young people in England today truly feel that they are part of something?**

**Something that looks out for them. To which they can contribute. To which they can belong.**

**Something to which they want to come back, day in and day out.** Because it is exciting to feel part of something.

I fear that not enough of our young people feel that way about school.

Instead of their ambition to do their best, just the suspicion somehow that school isn't for them.


Education Secretary speech at CST Conference - GOV.UK

# Sir Martyn Oliver

**When I talk about inclusion, I mean it in the widest possible sense…**

**What we're really talking about is belonging.** Do all children feel they belong? Are there children with barriers that make it harder to belong and to thrive in school? And do we understand what can be done to remove those barriers?

And what I know to be true – what I've seen throughout my entire career – is that **inclusive schools – schools where every child feels like they belong – are high-achieving schools.** These two things are not in tension with each other. In fact, **being truly inclusive means setting high standards.**

**It means saying to all children: you too can achieve.**

It's present in the staff who understand that high expectations and deep compassion aren't opposing forces – they're two sides of the same coin.

Good outcomes matter. Let me be absolutely clear about that. Qualifications open doors. Exam results create opportunities. I am not diminishing that for one moment.

But **achievement is measured in more than statutory outcomes and qualifications. It's about realising potential and helping pupils to thrive.**

It's about the young person who struggled to see a positive future, and discovers a passion that changes the trajectory of their life.

Achievement is unique to every child. And driving up standards to help them get there should be all of our north star…

- Sir Martyn Oliver, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, speech on 20th November 2025

# Ofsted inspection toolkit

**Overall inspection focus**

Inspectors work with leaders to build an accurate and typical view of the quality of the school. This includes knowing and understanding how well pupils:

► achieve – academically and personally

► **belong – feel that they belong to, and are valued as part of, the school community, so that they attend, behave and contribute positively to what the school offers**

► **thrive** – benefit from the right systems, processes and levels of oversight, so that they are kept safe and **are able to flourish, whatever their background or individual needs**

# Ofsted inspection toolkit

**<u>Inclusion</u>**

This evaluation area considers how leaders and staff identify and support:

- **socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils** (those eligible for the pupil premium)

- **pupils with SEND;** this means pupils receiving special educational needs (SEN) support, and those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

- **pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care**, such as children in need and looked-after children

- **pupils who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being**, which may include pupils who share a protected characteristic

Exceptional
Leaders' actions have a transformational impact on how well these pupils achieve and thrive across all areas of school life and have ensured that they feel they belong within the school community.

# Who are our 'vulnerable' children?

**research in practice** | **NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU** Part of the family

**From trait to state:
how Ofsted might consider conceptualising vulnerability for inspection and regulation**

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**A proposed definition of vulnerability**

Vulnerability is about how likely someone is to experience negative outcomes.

It is a state not a trait.

Many things contribute to vulnerability, including:

- big systems and structures (like government or services, poverty, prejudice and discrimination)
- things about a local area like how safe it is, how easy it is to get a good job, or whether a person has a sense of belonging to the community
- relationships with family and friends, and professionals
- individual circumstances (age, income, health, home, and identity).

People experience vulnerability in different ways. This can change over time, even if an issue causing vulnerability is a permanent part of our lives. Experiencing vulnerability may lead to more negative experiences. Lots of things can help to avoid this happening.

The things that help us are called 'protective factors', and just like the things that can make us vulnerable, these protective factors can happen at different levels, from individual things within us and around us (like feeling confident and cared for) through to things that society and government can do to make life easier (like tackling discrimination and ensuring our neighbourhoods and homes are enjoyable to live in).

While everyone can experience vulnerability, it's important that the needs of children and young people experiencing the greatest vulnerability continue to be prioritised by settings and services.

# 'From trait to state'

Many focus group participants advocated for **a whole-setting approach that foregrounds nurture and belonging,** rather than discrete interventions.

This ensures no child is overlooked simply because they do not fit predefined categories of vulnerability.
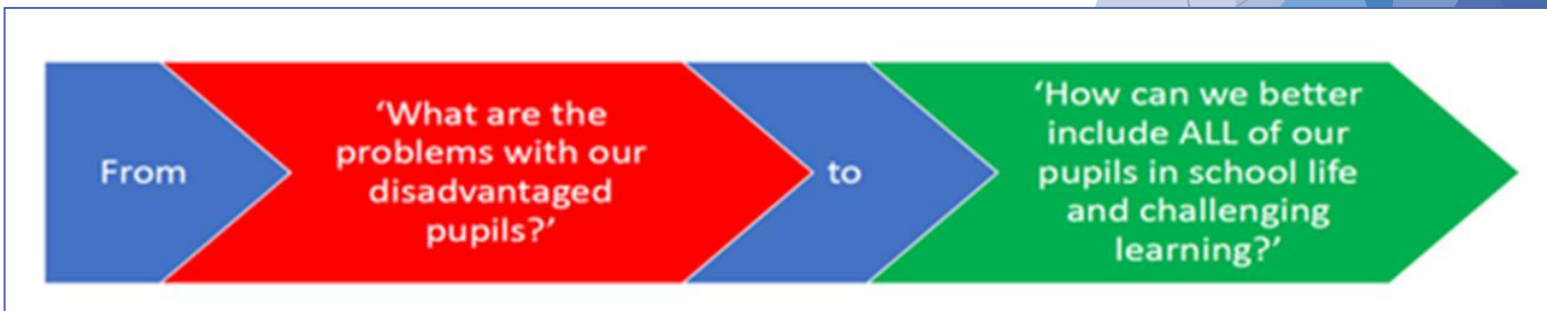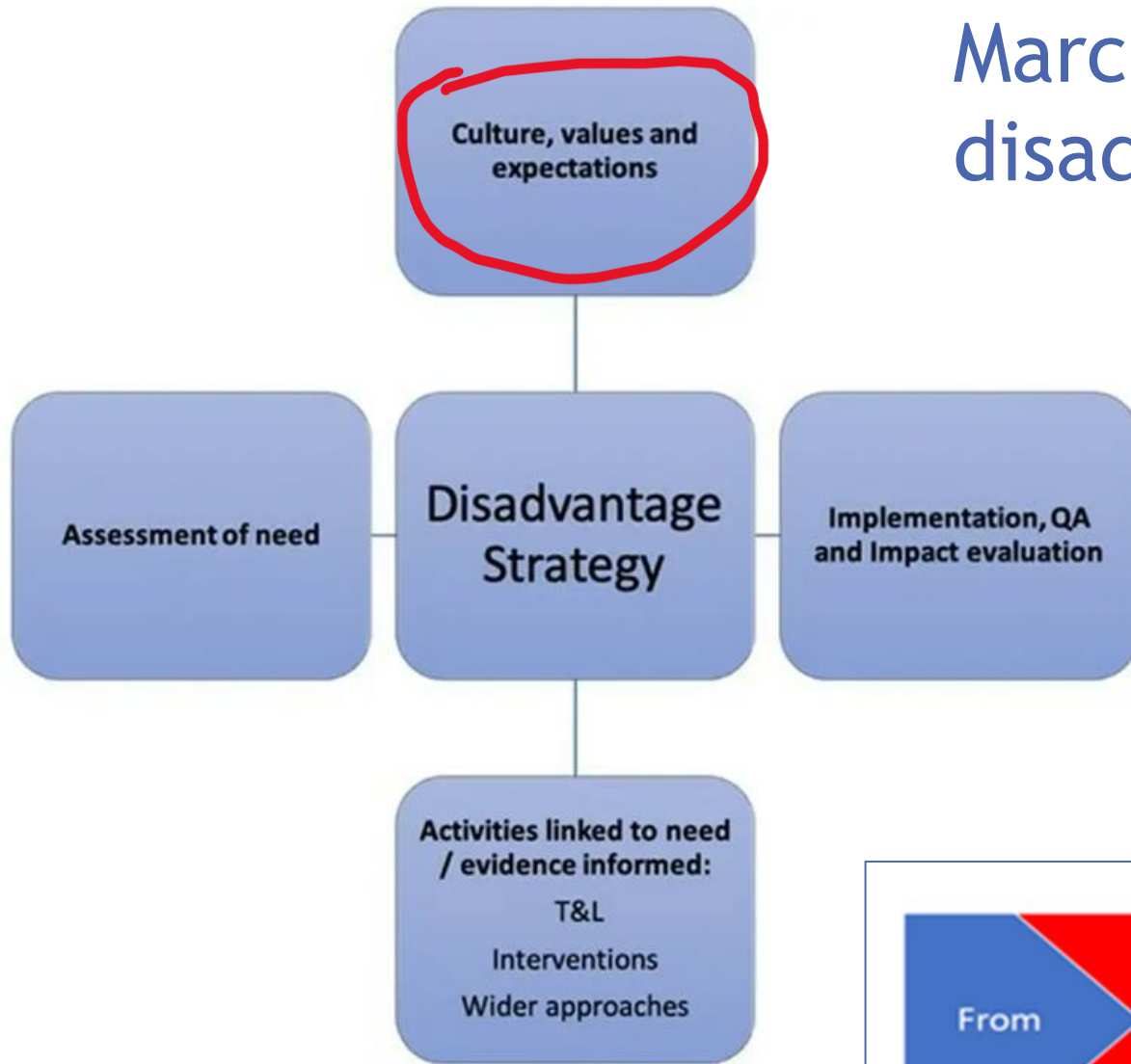
A universal approach could help to avoid stigma, and reflects the principle of proportionate universalism:

> *Focusing solely on the most disadvantaged will not reduce … inequalities sufficiently…*

> *Actions must be universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage.*

> *We call this proportionate universalism.*

# Marc Rowland: Tackling disadvantage

**Culture, values and expectations**

**Assessment of need** — **Disadvantage Strategy** — **Implementation, QA and Impact evaluation**

**Activities linked to need / evidence informed:**

T&L

Interventions

Wider approaches

From → 'What are the problems with our disadvantaged pupils?' to → 'How can we better include ALL of our pupils in school life and challenging learning?'

# WBEP NtG Working Group

# Provisional Title:
# Equity *(or Belonging)* in Practice: Provision and Strategies for Supporting Vulnerable Learners in Mainstream Schools

# Subtitle: Guidance for Wokingham Primary and Secondary Schools

**A document to support schools in their work to ensure strong inclusive practice and good outcomes for vulnerable pupils.**

Foreword

Introduction

Section 1: Universal Strategies and Provision for All Vulnerable Learners
Section 2: Targeted Support for Key Vulnerability Areas
Section 3: Directory of Services
Section 4: References and Research Base

# Foreword

This document aims to complement the existing Ordinarily Available Provision for SEND by focusing on non-SEND vulnerabilities such as disadvantage, social care involvement, emotional needs, and contextual safeguarding.

It reflects the values and findings of the Belonging Schools report (2023), the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) research on disadvantage and inclusion, and wider evidence from Ofsted and best practice nationally.

**Introduction**

Inclusion is about more than access; it is about belonging. Vulnerable pupils are disproportionately at risk of poor outcomes. This document helps schools embed practical and sustainable approaches to improve belonging, equity, and success for all learners.

This guidance emphasises:

► Whole-school approaches grounded in relationships and restorative practice.

► Leadership that champions inclusion and equitable outcomes.

► A focus on attendance, wellbeing, and engagement as precursors to learning.

► Multi-agency collaboration and community connection.

This document could be used by schools to support self-evaluation and development.

# Section 1: Universal Strategies and Provision for All Vulnerable Learners

1. Leadership and Culture
2. Inclusive Teaching and Learning
3. Assessment and Feedback
4. Pastoral Support and Attendance
5. Family and Community Engagement
6. Transition
7. Inclusive Physical, Sensory and Social Environments

# Example – Section 1

Section 1: Universal Strategies and Provision for All Vulnerable Learners

1. Leadership and Culture

Strong, inclusive leadership is the foundation of effective provision for vulnerable learners. Leaders at all levels must model inclusive values, ensure high expectations for all pupils, and create a culture of belonging.

| Key Principle | Example Strategies |
|---|---|
| Embed a values-driven ethos where every pupil is "seen, known, and valued." (Greany et al., 2023) | Weekly celebration assemblies; staff briefing moments focused on individual pupil successes; visible SLT presence at key times. |
| Understand inclusion as "equity" not uniformity (EEF, 2020) | Staff training on equity vs equality; differentiated behaviour policy applications with pupil voice explanations. |
| Align vision and school policies to inclusion | Audit school policies (behaviour, curriculum, safeguarding) for equity language and reference to vulnerable learners. |
| Designate a senior leader for inclusion and attendance | Create an SLT role overseeing Pupil Premium, attendance, LAC/PLAC and SEMH strategy. |
| Ensure all middle leaders and staff understand vulnerable groups | CPD on pupil premium, EBSA, safeguarding; regular briefings on vulnerable pupil data. |
| Use CPD to embed relational and trauma-informed practice | Whole-staff RP training; coaching model for difficult conversations; trauma-informed walkthroughs. |

# Section 2: Targeted Support for Key Vulnerability Areas

1. Disadvantaged and Pupil Premium
2. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and EBSA
3. Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (LAC/PLAC)
4. Children with a Social Worker
5. Young Carers
6. Persistent Absence and Attendance Risk
7. Pupils at Risk of Exclusion

# Example – Section 2

Young carers may experience significant responsibilities at home that affect their wellbeing, attendance, engagement, and ability to fully participate in school life. Schools should ensure proactive identification, flexible support, and a nurturing environment that recognises and reduces the pressures these pupils face while promoting equity and belonging.

| Key Principle | Example Strategies |
|---|---|
| Identify young carers early through clear and proactive systems | Staff training on common indicators (tiredness, lateness, reduced concentration); discreet pastoral data flags; wellbeing surveys including caring-responsibility prompts. |
| Reduce learning barriers through flexible academic support | Flexible deadlines; access to a quiet space before/after school; structured check-ins with a known adult; support with organisation and planning. |
| Strengthen attendance and engagement through relational approaches | Non-punitive attendance conversations; personalised attendance plans; temporary timetable adjustments during family illness or crisis periods. |
| Build collaborative, trusting relationships with families | Regular strengths-based communication; signposting to local Young Carers services; multi-agency meetings where appropriate, ensuring pupil voice is central. |
| Support emotional wellbeing and self-regulation | Access to ELSA/MHST; regulated spaces or "pause passes"; explicit teaching of coping and resilience strategies in tutor/PSHE sessions. |

# Conference aims

▶ To learn from Carr Manor Community School and Wokingham schools about belonging, in order to further develop practice in the borough.

▶ To share and capture existing local good practice in relation to belonging.

▶ To gather headteachers' thoughts about how they would like to continue to share practice, and to build on and develop existing practice in relation to belonging.

▶ To gather information from headteachers about practice they would like to share in the document to be created by the NtG working group, and their ideas about the nature of this document.

# Tom Shaw, Carr Manor Community School

Tom Shaw
Director of Research and Development

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Twitter @CarrManorRP

# Bridget Reynolds, Whiteknights Primary School

# WELCOME

## Whiteknights
### Growing Greatness

WHITEKNIGHTS

# Whiteknights Primary School – School Context

19% Pupil premium (21%)
17% SEND (18%)
48% EAL (19.5%)

- Staffing Structure
- English Hub
- Structure and routines
- Reading drives curriculum –first lesson of the day, high quality texts in every subject
- Building cultural capital through a variety of experiences
- Mastery approach
- Consistency/cognitive load
- High expectations in teaching, learning and behaviour – no excuses, no time wasted
- Growth mindset (e.g. no erasers used in books, purple pen to edit
- EOKS2 – Results are way above National year on year

GROWING GREATNESS
By embracing challenge, nurturing wonder and aspiring to new heights, we *Grow in Greatness.*

CHALLENGE RISE ABOVE

WONDER IGNITE CURIOSITY

ASPIRE AIM HIGH

# Pedagogical Approach is based around Cognitive Load Theory

# "STICKY LEARNING"

"The purpose of instruction is to increase  the store of knowledge in long-term  memory. If nothing has changed in long-  term memory, nothing has been learned"

- Sweller -

# Extraneous Load
# Intrinsic Load
# Germane Load

## Extraneous Load

- Mental effort – way new information is presented rather than the difficulty of the material.
- It consumes valuable working memory – distractions, confusing layouts, poorly designed instructional material or unnecessary information

## Intrinsic Load

- Inherent difficulty or complexity of the information or task
- Breaking a complex task into small steps and practising each logical steps reduces intrinsic load
- Small steps allows pupils to move from a Novice to expert over time

# Germane Load

- The mental effort and working memory resources dedicated to processing information and integrating it into existing knowledge to build mental schemas, or frameworks for understanding.
- It's the constructive and desirable form of cognitive effort that leads to deep learning and long-term retention by connecting new information to prior understanding

# Reducing Extraneous load involves:

## EXTRANEOUS LOAD

- Clutter Free Environments
- Presenting only information related to the LO
- Routines and structures routines and structures at school significantly reduce cognitive load by creating predictability and freeing up working memory for learning eg master readers, structure of maths lessons
- Effective phonics teaching, maths fluency, recapping and reviewing prior learning
- Reducing teacher talk

## Reducing Intrinsic load involves:

- Curriculum is well sequenced so that each lesson builds on prior knowledge – referred back to
- Recap of learning is at different time lapses
- Small steps teaching sequences within lessons ensures keep up
- Stick to the information being taught and is linked to LO
- Vocabulary is taught in every lesson – pupils need to know and understand 40 000 words by Year 6
- WW up to date – in classrooms – like an extra TA
- Talk Partners
- Questioning 50% aimed at 1st 20% and disadvantaged - no hands up
- Marking and feedback next steps

in ti n unt ensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

# Increasing Germane Load includes::

GERMANE LOAD
- All of the approaches in Intrinsic and Extraneous
- Over – learning techniques eg phonics taught daily with regular practise of new sounds
- Multiplication practise daily
- Maths fluency
- Daily Reading/ priority reading
- Daily spelling practise

All of the above make reading words, times tables, spellings automatic – limited space used

# Steve Jump, Maiden Erlegh School

# Building belonging through enrichment

Steve Jump – Headteacher

Aim High    Be Inclusive    Work Together

# Maiden Erlegh School

- Comprehensive Secondary School
- 1840 students including 440 in the sixth form
- 231 staff

- SLT – Headteacher, 2x Deputy Headteachers and 7x Assistant Headteachers (two part time)

GCSE results
- P8 between 0.70 and 1.1
- A8 between 56 and 59

A Level Results
L3 VA between 0.40 and 0.75
A* - A is 32%+
A* - B is 61%+

- Pupil Premium 7.2%
- SEND 20%
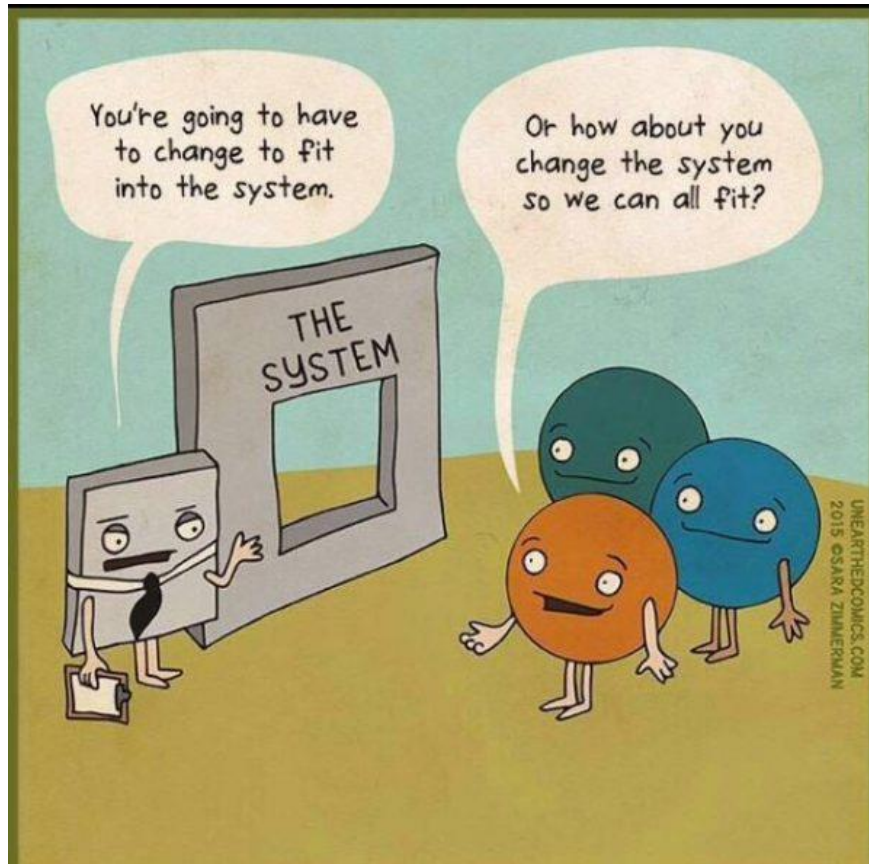
# The Why

# Our Culture

Enrichment → Belonging → Attendance → Engagement → Success
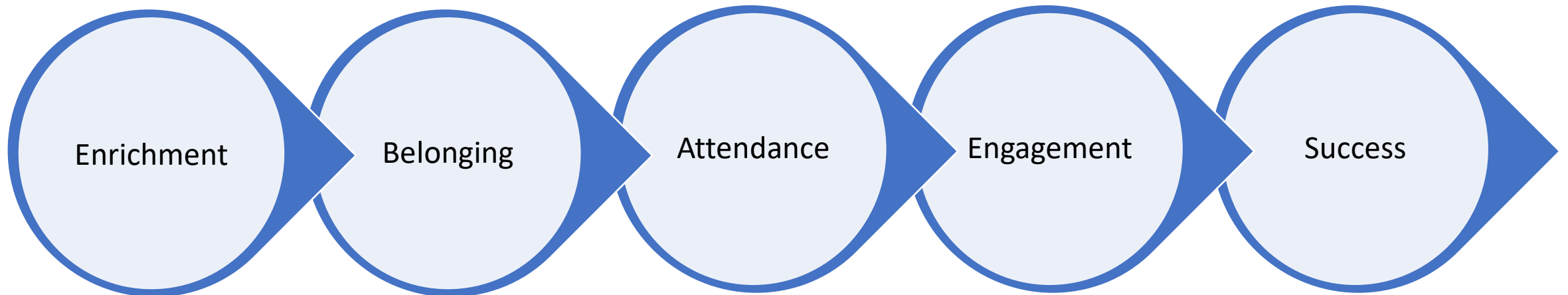
# What we offer:

## Extra-Curricular Timetable Autumn 2025

### Monday

| Club | Year Group | Time | Room | Staff Member |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Badminton | 7 | 7:45-8:30am | PE | PE Staff |
| KS3 Drama Club | 7 and 8 | 8-8:25am | D1 | J Whorriskey |
| Christian Explore Club | All | 3-3:45/4pm | L1 | A Finlason |
| Rugby | 9 (boys) | 3-4pm | PE | Mr Bryant |
| Basketball | 10 and above (boys) | 3-4pm (after Oct half term) | PE | Mr Mackie |
| Rugby | All (girls) | 3-4pm | PE | Mr Flynn |

### Tuesday

| Club | Year Group | Time | Room | Staff Member |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Badminton | 8 and 9 | 7:45-8:30am | PE | PE Staff |
| Brass Band | All | 8-8:25am | D3 | M Bell |
| String Group | All | 8-8:25am | D4 | J Pitman |
| Eco-Committee | All | 3-4pm | H6 | R Teale |
| Senior Band | Grade 3+ | 3-3:45pm | D4 | M Bell |
| Hockey | All (mixed) | 3-4pm | PE | Mr Perkins |
| Multi-skills | Invite only | 3-4pm | PE | Mrs Blake |
| Rugby | 8 (boys) | 3-4pm | PE | Mr Crockford |
| Rugby | 10 (boys) | 3-4pm | PE | Mr Flynn |
| Basketball | 7 and 8 (boys) | 3-4pm | PE | Mr Stringer |
| Netball | 10 (mixed) | 3-4pm | PE | Mrs Whiteman |
| Netball | 11 (mixed) | 3-4pm | PE | Mrs Blake |
| DofE Bronze | 9 | 3-4pm (letter home in Nov) | M5 | M Longdon |
| Chess Club | All | 3:05-3:45pm | L8 | Mr Raso |
| Coding Club | All | 3-4pm | C20 | S Blight |
| Creative Writing Club | All | 3-4pm | F1 | G Cato |
| Art Club | 7 | 3-4pm | C8 | C Candler |
| KS3 Book Club | 7 and 8 | 3-4pm (first Tues every month) | N3 | Mrs Collins |

### Wednesday

| Club | Year Group | Time | Room | Staff Member |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Actor's Studio | 9 and above | 8-8:25am | D1 | J Ratcliffe |
| Basketball | 7-9 (boys) | 3-4pm (until Oct half term) | PE | S Pringle |
| Basketball | 9-11 (girls) | 3-4pm (after Oct half term) | PE | S Pringle |
| Netball | 7 (mixed) | 3-4pm | PE | Miss Avery |
| KS5 Drama Society | 12 and 13 | 3-3:45pm | D1 | J Pitman |
| Maths Drop-in | All | 3-4pm | M1 | Dr Dearman |
| Club Inc | All | 3-3:45pm | D7 | Mrs Collins and Miss Jemmott |

### Thursday

| Club | Year Group | Time | Room | Staff Member |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Choir | All | 3-3:45pm | D4 | J Pitman |
| Rugby | 7 (boys) | 3-4pm | PE | Mr Pringle and Mr Smith |
| Netball | 9 (mixed) | 3-4pm | PE | Miss Young |
| Netball | 8 (mixed) | 3-4pm (before half term) | PE | 6th Formers |
| DofE Silver | 10 | 3-4pm (letter home in Nov) | M5 | M Longdon |
| KS5 and Staff Book Club | 12, 13 and staff | 3:10-4pm (dates on GC) | F10 | Miss Shepherd |

### Friday

| Club | Year Group | Time | Room | Staff Member |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Badminton | 10 and 11 | 7:45-8:30am | PE | PE Staff |
| Junior Band | 7 and 8 | 8-8:25am | D4 | M Bell |
| Football | All (girls) | 3-4pm | PE | Mr Pringle and Mrs Blake |
| KS3 Science Club | 7 and 8 | 3-4pm (not every week - check GC) | P3 | C Barbu |

### Everyday

| Club | Year Group | Time | Room | Staff Member |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homework club | All | 3-4pm | G1 | Ms Mash and Ms Breadmoore |
| KS4 Art Drop-in | 9, 10 and 11 | 3-4pm | Art | Art Staff |

| Key | Before School | After School |
|---|---|---|

# What we offer:

## PRAISE – HOUSE SYSTEM

6:1 House Points
Awards Evenings
Celebration calendar
Sports' Day
House events
House competitions
( Eg) Photography, MfL bakes, Eco Club, PE)

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR

Music lessons
Clubs / PE programme
Sports' Personality
Trips
D of E
(Bronze, Silver and Gold)
Intra-trust competitions
MEPA productions

## CULTURE

Mentoring
Promotion of 6 school values
Culture Day
Community Service (Y12)
Work Experience (Y10)
Prefects
Year 7 welcome events
(Chessington; Disco; PGL)
Student voice
(senior team; student council)

## CURRICULUM

Silver, Gold and Platinum programmes
Enrichment signposts in SoL
HWK club
Careers
AP – The Bridge
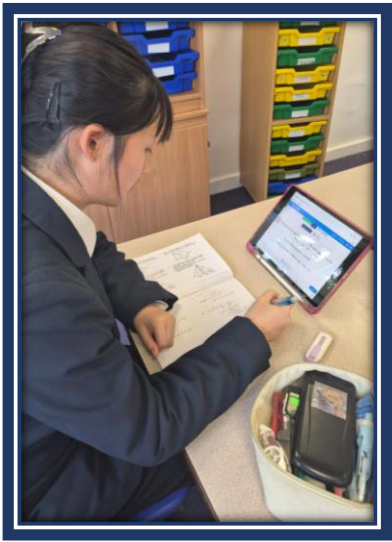Dept. drop-ins
Homework: 4 Rs
SEN resource base trips

# Enrichment - the action of improving or enhancing the quality or value of something / someone

WELCOME TO
THE BRIDGE

MAIDEN ERLEGH
SCHOOL

# The evidence

**Case Study X – PP, EHCP (CN)**
**Hair and beauty L1 course in the Bridge**

| Data | Up to 15.11.2024 | Up to 14.11.2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Attendance | 68% | 76% |
| Positive behaviour | 20% | 43% |
| Number of suspensions | 7 days | 0 days |

**Case Study Y – PP, EHCP (TG)**
**Support in attending XC / enrichment clubs and activities**

| Data | Up to 15.11.2024 | Up to 14.11.2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Attendance | 79% | 98% |
| Positive behaviour | 50% | 45% |
| Number of suspensions | 0 days | 0 days |

**Case Study Z - (HA)**
**AQA short course units in The Bridge and mentoring**

| Data | Up to 15.11.2024 | Up to 14.11.2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Attendance | 76% | 77% |
| Positive behaviour | 40% | 70% |
| Number of suspensions | 1 day | 0 days |

# Our ambition:

| Aim | How |
|---|---|
| **No DA gaps in extra-curricular participation** <br> Why? So DA students have a reason to attend school, feel valued and are proud to represent their school | • Monitoring extra-curricular participation (Evolve) and intervene where necessary <br> • Attendance and enrichment teams work together on shared strategies <br> • Parents' coffee mornings for low attenders with enrichment staff present <br> • Ensure adequate breakfast, break and lunch provision <br> • Personal invites for DA students to trips, clubs and activities <br> • Funding for students as needed to support in attendance of clubs and trips – kit, transport, contribution to costs |
| **There is a culture of holistic praise in school** <br> Why? So all students are praised regularly and recognised for more than just academic achievement | • Aim for 6:1 praise ratio (house points) <br> • House points issued for those who get it right (3 R's) <br> • Monitoring of praise data given to students <u>and</u> from staff <br> • The culture of praise becomes an integral part of CPD <br> • Holistic celebration calendar embedded (to include attendance, participation, house points, attainment <u>and</u> wider achievement) <br> • Ensure greater optics around praise – eg) social media, bulletins |

Aim High    Be Inclusive    Work Together

MAIDEN ERLEGH
SCHOOL

# Our ambition:

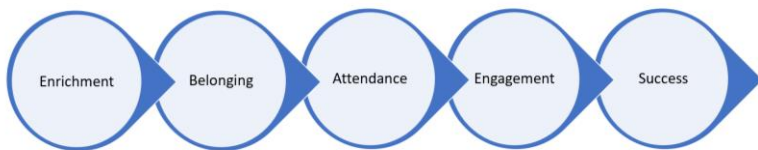| Aim | How |
|---|---|
| **Embedding effective AP provision for improving attainment outcomes** Why? So those who are harder to reach can 'Aim High', achieve and feel a sense of belonging  | • 'The Bridge' fully operational and offering a suite of <u>onsite</u> AP provision for MES students – which utilises our in-Trust talent and upholds therapeutic approaches<br>• Collaborate with cross-Trust schools to develop further AP offerings<br>• Embed use of AQA unit award qualifications to increase attainment outcomes<br>• Develop opportunities for students to 'own' The Bridge's space and other spaces around the school<br>• Investment in two spaces on the school site to develop a construction and horticulture pathway for our students<br>• Opportunities to experience external activities too |
| **Enrichment strategies remain a school priority** Why? So Enrichment can be driven for all, to benefit all  Enrichment → Belonging → Attendance → Engagement → Success | • Leadership roles given to enrichment and AP – an outward sign to all stakeholders<br>• Standards processes (including data monitoring and interventions) to be carried out regularly<br>• SIP priority for the next three years – long term commitment<br>• Area of investment in financial planning for the next two years |

# Iain Thomas and Foundry College students

[Belonging in School.mp4](Belonging in School.mp4)
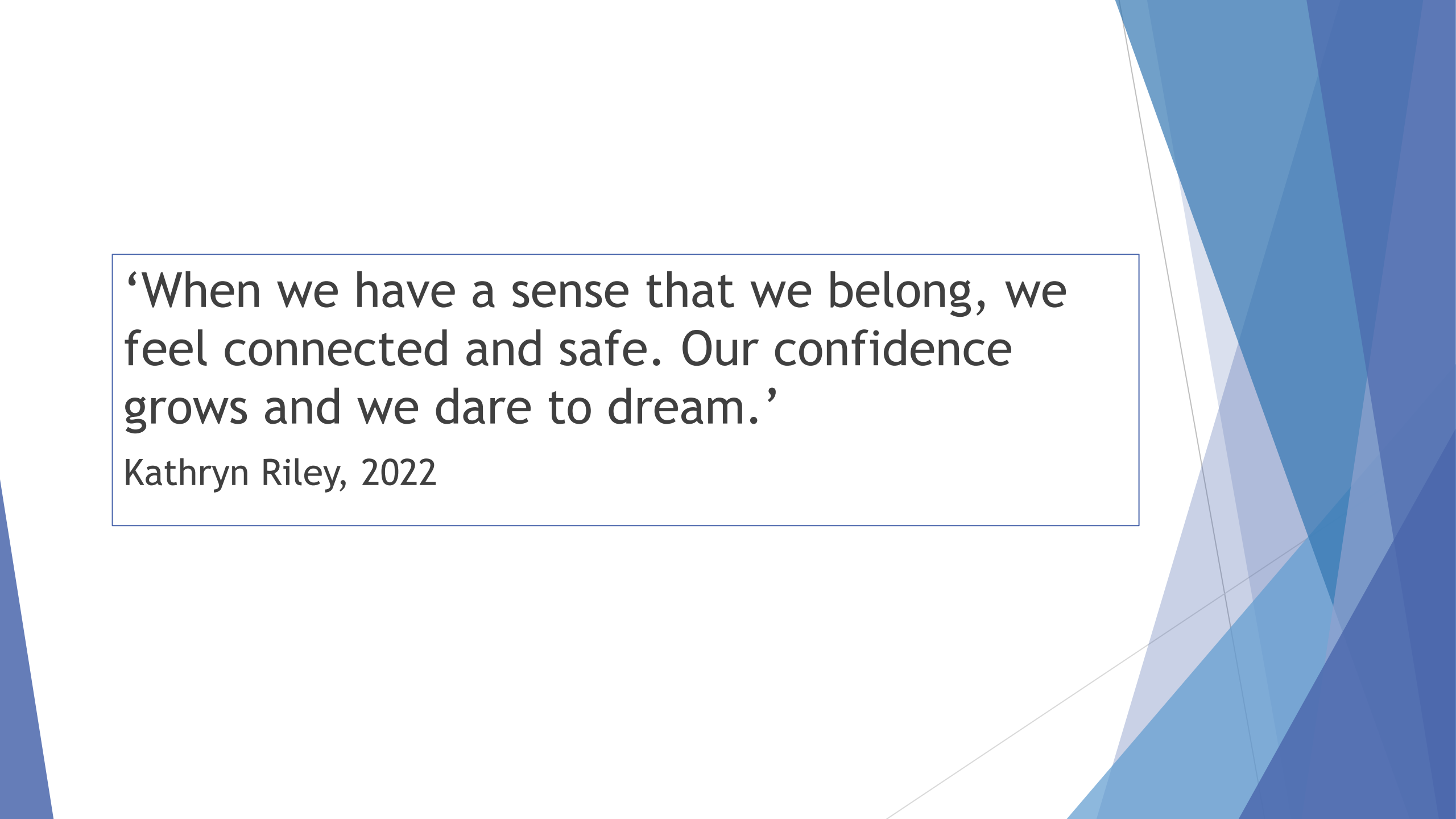
# Next steps…

- For you?

- For your organisation?

- For us as a partnership?

'When we have a sense that we belong, we feel connected and safe. Our confidence grows and we dare to dream.'

Kathryn Riley, 2022