



Case Study: Richmond Primary School, Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey

The Stour Academy Trust

Richmond Primary School is one of 9 schools in the Stour Academy Trust. All 9 schools are primary schools and all are located in the northern part of Kent.

The Multi-Academy Trust has adopted a distinctive rationale, succinctly encompassed in its vision statement: *“We have a vision for education that gives children the necessary skills to thrive in our modern, 21st century world.”* In its own words *“The Stour Academy Trust recognises that our education system needs to quickly and radically shift to close equity gaps and better prepare our young people for the 21st century.”*

What is unusual, perhaps unique, for a Trust comprised entirely of primary schools, is that it has developed its overarching philosophy based on economic parameters of the future. Specifically, it has developed its philosophy, strategies and teaching methodologies based on 3 keystone documents: *“The Class of 2030 and Life Ready Learning”*, published by Microsoft; *“The Future of Jobs Report”*, published by the World Economic Forum; and *“Schools of the Future - Defining New Models of Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution”*, also published by the World Economic Forum.

This radical approach to primary school responsibilities is based on a recognition that:

“The world around us is changing. When our children leave the education system, it is very likely they will have jobs that do not even exist now. We need to ensure that our students have the digital and social-emotional skills to thrive in this new world.”

This underpins everything in the Trust.

It dictates what schools in the Trust deliver and how they deliver it.

The School Environment

Richmond Primary School is located in the town of Sheerness, a port town on the north-west corner of the Isle of Sheppey in north Kent.

The Isle of Sheppey contains some of England's most deprived and poorest communities, marked by severe child poverty rates, low educational attainment, and high long-term unemployment.

Parts of the island, particularly Sheerness East, have experienced child poverty rates as high as 44%, vastly exceeding national and regional averages. Specific pockets of Sheerness rank within the top 1.5% most deprived areas in England. Higher education qualifications on the island sit at roughly 16.8%—half the national average—with some local areas reporting up to 40% of adults holding no formal qualifications.

In summary, the Isle of Sheppey and Sheerness in particular, are amongst the most economically deprived parts of the country. Richmond Primary School is at the centre of this geographic, social and economic environment. This is reflected in the school's own statistics. The school has a cohort of 240 pupils of whom around 7.5% have an Education and Health Care Plan; 67% of the cohort receive some level of special needs support and 81% of the cohort is eligible for free school meals.

The School Vision and Values

The school's overarching goal is:

"To inspire children to dream big, explore the world of work and develop the skills they need to thrive in an ever-changing future. Through meaningful learning experiences, encounters with employers and community members, and opportunities to connect classroom learning with real-life careers, we help our pupils understand the many possibilities available to them."

The school's values are *Happiness, Engagement, Ambition, Respect and Togetherness* (HEART).

"These values shape our nurturing community, inspire a love of learning, and encourage every child to thrive, achieve and belong."

All five are inter-linked and on the school website each has a short descriptor. The most relevant to careers education and guidance is *"Ambition"* whose descriptor is:

"Ambition is nurtured by setting high expectations. We inspire our pupils to dream big and embrace challenges as opportunities for growth. By instilling a sense of ambition, we empower our pupils to set goals, persevere in the face of obstacles, and strive for excellence in all aspects of their lives."

The Curriculum

The school curriculum is based on the 'Cornerstone' topic-based learning model. This model has 10 'big ideas', defined as follows:

1. **Humankind:** Understanding what it means to be human and how human behaviour has shaped the world;

2. **Nature:** Understanding the complexities of the plant and animal species that inhabit the world;
3. **Processes:** Understanding the many dynamic and physical processes that shape the world;
4. **Place and Space:** Understanding the visual, cultural, social and environmental aspects of places around the world;
5. **Creativity:** Understanding the creative process and how everyday and exceptional creativity can shape the world;
6. **Comparison:** Understanding how and why things are the same or different;
7. **Investigation:** Understanding the importance of investigation and how this has led to significant change in the world;
8. **Significance:** Understanding why significant people, places, events and inventions matter and how they have shaped the world;
9. **Materials:** Understanding the properties of all matter, living and non-living;
10. **Change:** Understanding why and how things have changed over time.

There is an obvious correlation between these 10 **big ideas**, the six **Career Development Institute Learning Areas** and any of the many models of career competency core characteristics.

It was through this, and the Trust's core requirement that children should be equipped for a successful 21st Century working life, that the school decided that external assessment for its careers programme was needed in order to provide confidence that it was making the right judgements.

Rationale for CEIAG in meeting the vision

The school started its "**Career Mark Primary**" journey in 2025. As the school explains on its website:

*"At Richmond Primary School, we are proud to be working towards **the Career Mark Primary Award**, a nationally recognised accreditation that celebrates excellence in careers-related learning and future readiness in primary education.*

By working towards the award, we are ensuring that every child at Richmond Primary School is equipped with the confidence, skills and aspirations needed to become successful citizens of the future, with our HEART values guiding them every step of the way."

The Career Mark Primary award is nationally endorsed by the Quality in Careers Consortium

- The school achieved the Career Mark Primary award in July 2026.

CEIAG in the curriculum

The aim of the CEIAG programme is that pupils leave Richmond Primary with high aspirations, a sense of possibility and an understanding of how to achieve their ambitions. The careers programme is carefully sequenced, fully progressive and explicitly mapped to the **CDI**

Framework, ensuring that all pupils develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required across Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2.

The use of **CDI mapping tools** ensures that coverage is comprehensive, progressive and continuously reviewed to maintain high standards.

The Scheme of Work is designed to ensure clear progression in career-related learning, with learning outcomes that build cumulatively year on year. Each phase introduces increasingly complex concepts, moving from early exploration of jobs and roles in EYFS to deeper understanding of pathways, qualifications and employability skills in KS2.

Pupils are introduced to a broad range of post-primary pathways, achieved through structured lessons linked to **CDI Learning Areas**, real-world encounters with employers and professionals and thematic curriculum links that demonstrate how curriculum subjects connect to future pathways.

Pupils engage with STEM careers through robotics and aviation workshops, gaining insight into engineering and technical professions and have exposure to roles such as medical professionals, emergency services and environmental careers which help pupils to understand diverse progression routes beyond primary school.

Throughout the programme pupils build essential transition skills such as independence, teamwork and resilience, communication and teamwork, problem-solving and critical thinking and creativity and innovation. The curriculum actively challenges stereotypes by providing access to diverse role models across gender, background and career sector and highlighting non-traditional pathways and emerging careers.

Delivery Methods

The school makes use of a wide and carefully curated range of resources which ensures that careers education is engaging, practical and connected to real-world contexts. These include external speakers and employer encounters, hands-on experiential learning, including forest school and practical investigations, STEM workshops, virtual sessions with a wide range of employers and cross-curricular curriculum links, embedding careers across subjects. These are delivered through structured lessons within the core curriculum, digital and video resources and real-life case studies, role models and experiential learning through collapsed curriculum days

The school has developed a strong and growing network of partners, who provide pupils with first-hand insight into career pathways, opportunities to ask questions and engage directly with professionals and a real-world context that enhances classroom learning. These strong partnerships ensure that CEIAG provision is relevant, current and aspirational, giving pupils meaningful insight into the world of work.

Pupil Perspective

Pupils are universally positive about their career learning and about the importance of different elements of their learning to their future success. They comment enthusiastically about activities which take place in the Forest School setting, about the opportunity for

collapsed curriculum activities led by outside specialists such as robotics in the RAF and the work of the RNLI. They are aware that their working lives will be different from those of their parents and that the working environment when they leave school will be different to that of today as shown by the following 2 quotes from Year 5 pupils:

- ***“Technology and AI will change things so I will have to learn new things.”***
- ***“I need to explore jobs which have been created because of advances in technology.”***

Many pupils come from family environments where there are no role models in work. They describe not only being motivated by the careers learning activities in school to think positively about work but to have developed high aspirations for a working life. This starts in the nursery and EYFS environment, where children learn to see work as a normal lifestyle activity, through to Key Stage 2 where pupils are exposed to a wide range of generic work areas beyond those which can be seen on the Isle of Sheppey.

Comments from pupils include:

- ***“You never stop learning.”***
- ***“When you go to work you learn new things all the time.”***
- ***“I recognise how my skills and abilities might help me to achieve success in the working world.”***

Pupils also understand that life patterns and career patterns are not set for life, as these 2 observations from Year 6 pupils demonstrate:

- ***“Everybody has a career journey and people can have multiple careers in their life.”***
- ***“I understand that plans often need adapting or changing.”***

Pupils understand why people go to work. There is universal understanding that people go to work to earn money, as one pupil observed: ***“You go to work to get money to buy food and pay bills.”***

But there is a much wider understanding of the importance of work beyond just earning money, as the following comments demonstrate:

- ***“Because you like the job and it makes you happy.”***
- ***“To make a difference.”***
- ***“To help others.”***
- ***“To have a better life.”***
- ***“To learn more skills”.***
- ***“To be happy and make a difference.”***
- ***“To have more responsibility.”***
- ***“For enjoyment.”***
- ***“To do important things.”***
- ***“To have a steady life, to have a balanced life to have an enjoyable life.”***
- ***“To make new friends.”***

Impact

Gauging the impact of a primary school programme which will not reach fruition for ten, fifteen, perhaps twenty years, is not easy but the school has made a positive start.

Firstly, it is measuring the short-term impact of its programme by regularly asking for feedback from pupils, staff and visitors. It is taking steps to ensure that all pupils have access to high quality employer encounters and that all learning is linked directly to future possibilities and aspiration raising.

A perfect example is of one pupil, who the school describe as a previous serial non-attender, who had attended one session about science and space technology. In his words ***“I want to work in space science, work my way up and hopefully go into space myself.”*** The school reports that since attending this session he always attends school and is fully engaged in his learning. The boy is a very active participant in group discussions and has valid observations to make on all topics.

The school has just embarked on a much more ambitious project designed to provide longitudinal tracking data. By linking with feeder Secondaries, the school will have access to their post 16 and post 18 destination data and through this will be able to examine the impact of its programme on pupils post school education and employment. This should also help the school to expand its alumni programme.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Rachael Howell – Stour Academy Trust Chief Executive:

rachael.howell@stouracademytrust.org.uk

Lesley Conway – Headteacher:

lesley.conway@stouracademytrust.org.uk

Gary Longden – Career Mark Primary Assessor:

garylonden53@gmail.com

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