"Non-formal learning could help to build character and close the attainment gap…"

LEARNING BY DOING

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Executive summary

Educating for the development of character is back on the agenda and is likely to define Education Secretary Nicky Morgan's tenure. Yet the high-stakes accountability of Ofsted inspections and league tables has in recent years led to schools too often turning inward to focus on preparing students to pass exams. There are too few opportunities to take part in 'non-formal learning' activities in schools: activities that can help young people to build vital character attributes.

The evidence suggests that character attributes not only reinforce academic learning but also have a significant positive influence on various later life outcomes, including those relating to health, wellbeing and careers. It also indicates that participation in non-formal learning activities – semi-structured activities such as sport, drama and debating, which are primarily delivered outside the classroom – play a vital role in developing these attributes.

In this report we present our research into whether non-formal learning is sufficiently embedded into the British education system. Our research shows that large numbers of young people in the UK – particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds – do not have enough opportunity to take part in non-formal learning and are therefore at risk of not developing key skills important for success. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of teachers see non-formal learning as vital, and want to see it more strongly embedded into the education system.

Our research findings are based on new representative surveys of 14–18-year-olds (n=1,009) and teachers (n=800) in England, Wales and Scotland. These surveys provide a picture of non-formal learning provision across the education sector, and levels of appetite for more. In order to explore in further detail how non-formal learning can be embedded in schools, we also undertook a detailed case study of The Scout Association

based on surveys of adult Scouts volunteers (n=1,125) and young people in Scouting between the ages of 12 and 25 (n=1,172), a workshop with adult volunteers who were also teachers and head teachers, and ethnographic case studies of school and Scouting partnerships across the UK. Our case study reveals the attitudes towards partnership from the perspective of non-formal learning providers, different models such partnerships can take, and some of the challenges in forging these partnerships. The insights from our case study are thus highly applicable for education policy-makers, school leaders and the wider non-formal education sector.

Findings
We present a summary of the findings from all of our research below.

Young people and those involved in Scouting
Our surveys of 14–18-year-olds and young people in Scouting showed there are interesting and important differences in respondents' reporting of social and emotional skills, opportunities to take part in non-formal learning, and a desire for more opportunities.

There is a significant appetite for there to be more non-formal learning opportunities in school among British students, particularly uniformed activities, like those provided by The Scout Association, the Girl Guides and the Cadet Forces:

- Uniformed activities were most likely to be seen as under-provided by schools, followed by social action.

- Two out of five (43 per cent) young people said schools did not provide enough opportunities to take part in uniformed activities, and one in four said the same about opportunities to take part in volunteering for charity or social action activities (24 per cent).

- Approximately one in four students said that schools did not provide enough opportunities to take part in deliberative activities like debating societies, youth parliaments or a model UN (23 per cent), or outdoor activities like hiking, camping or Duke of Edinburgh (22 per cent).

However, our research revealed that there are substantial differences in the opportunities of students to take part in non-formal learning and their desire to have more opportunities between those on free school meals and those who ineligible for free school meals (FSM), and experiences of students who attended state schools and those who attend fee-paying schools.
Students on FSM were notably less likely to report taking part in sport, outdoor activities and social action:

- One in three (34 per cent) non-FSM students reported taking part in social action compared with one in four (26 per cent) FSM students.

- More than half (54 per cent) of FSM students reported taking part in sport activities, compared with 64 per cent of non-FSM students.

- One-third (33 per cent) of FSM students reported taking part in outdoor activities compared with 43 per cent of non-FSM students.

Students who attended state secondary schools were more likely than students who attended fee-paying schools to say that their school did not provide opportunities to take part in non-formal learning:

- Less than four in ten (39 per cent) of state school respondents agreed that their school provided enough opportunities for volunteering and social action compared with 70 per cent of fee-paying school respondents.

- There were similar differences for outdoor activities (49 per cent compared with 82 per cent), deliberative activities (40 per cent compared with 80 per cent) and uniformed activities (19 per cent compared with 42 per cent).

Students on FSM were more than twice as likely to report never experiencing non-formal learning pedagogies in the classroom, such as project-based learning, class presentations or school trips:

- One-sixth (16 per cent) of respondents on FSM reported 'none of the above' when asked if they had experienced non-formal classroom pedagogies compared with less than one-twelfth (7 per cent) of non-FSM students.

Approximately half of all students and 58 per cent of FSM students want to see non-formal learning count towards GCSEs or A-levels:

- FSM students were notably more likely to wish this than non-FSM students. For example, 58 per cent of FSM agreed that social action should count towards qualifications compared with 49 per cent of non-FSM.

- Half of FSM students agreed that uniformed activities should count towards qualifications, compared with approximately one in three non-FSM students.

- Across all non-formal learning activities, young people in Scouting were more likely than non-Scouts to want to see these activities count towards their GCSE and A-level qualifications.

Students on FSM were substantially more likely to want more opportunities to take part in Scouting through their schools:

- Just under half (45 per cent) of FSM students agreed that 'students should be able to take part in Scouting activities during school hours' compared with one in three (31 per cent) non-FSM students.

- More than one-third (39 per cent) of FSM students agreed that if they 'had the opportunity, they would like to be part of the Scouts' compared with less than one-quarter (23 per cent) of non-FSM students.

Our surveys also suggest that taking part in non-formal learning activities helps to boost self-reporting of strong social and emotional skills and positive attitudes towards school. For example, our survey of young people in Scouting showed that Scouts were more likely to report taking part in all non-formal learning activities than the respondents in our survey of 14–18-year-olds. While we cannot draw a causal link, our survey nonetheless revealed that young people in Scouting display more positive attitudes towards school than young people in general:

- Young people in Scouting were half as likely as young people in general to say that school was a waste of time.

Indeed, young people in Scouting were substantially more likely to report higher levels of character attributes than young people in general on every measure:

- On every character attribute measure we tested for, young people in Scouting scored at least 10 percentage points higher top marks than those not – and 20 percentage points higher in most other cases.

Teachers
Our survey of teachers – and our workshop with education experts – showed that they were highly supportive of embedding non-formal learning activities more consistently and permanently into the education system.

Most teachers agreed that non-formal learning activities would greatly benefit students:

- Nine out of ten teachers have favourable attitudes towards non-formal learning, while half of respondents (51 per cent) strongly agreed that their students would benefit from non-formal education opportunities.

  Teachers strongly reject the idea that schools should only adopt a formal approach to teaching and learning:

- More than two-thirds (68 per cent) disagreed that schools should only focus on 'formal learning', 29 per cent of whom strongly disagreed.

  A majority of teachers want non-formal education to be recognised in the national curriculum, and even compulsory for students:

- Three out of four teachers (72 per cent) agreed that non-formal education should be recognised in the national curriculum, and 68 per cent agreed that given the opportunity they would like to help deliver more non-formal education activities in their schools.

- Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of teacher respondents agreed that non-formal education activities should be compulsory for the students at their schools.

  Lack of time in the timetable and pressures from the inspectorate were cited as the biggest barriers to providing more non-formal learning activities:

- Nine out of ten teachers cited 'a lack of time in the timetable' as the biggest barrier.

- The next three most cited obstacles were 'other more important educational priorities' (51 per cent), 'the manner in which students' and schools' performance are assessed' (43 per cent), and 'a lack of teacher training in the delivery of non-formal education activities' (42 per cent).

Most teachers support greater partnerships between their schools and Scouting to provide non-formal learning activities:

· Most teachers responded positively when asked about various forms of collaboration: 58 per cent would welcome partnerships between their school and Scouts to provide students with other types of learning activities, 60 per cent thought that non-formal learning activities like Scouts should play a bigger role in the education system, and 60 per cent thought that every pupil in the UK should have the opportunity to take part in activities like Scouting as part of their school routine.

Adult volunteers in Scouting

Embedding non-formal learning into the education system requires commitment and support from non-formal education providers, and the volunteers and young people they work with. Non-formal education providers would operate differently, but our case study of The Scout Association provides important insights for organisations across the non-formal education sector. Our survey and workshops with adult volunteers showed the following:

· A majority of Scout volunteers support The Scout Association partnering with schools, seeing such partnerships as mutually beneficial and particularly important for students disengaged from the education system.

· Just over half (53 per cent) of adult volunteers supported the idea of Scouting being delivered in schools, while only 26 per cent disagreed.

· Many adult volunteers who were also teachers felt that volunteering with The Scout Association was beneficial to teachers, providing them with the opportunity to examine alternative pedagogies and interact with students in a different context to the classroom.

Adult volunteers felt that Scouting in schools should remain voluntary, and that there should not be a one-size-fits-all approach:

· Adult volunteers were particularly keen that the fundamentals of Scouting – elements like the Scout Promise, law and 'learning by doing' – should be actively protected.

· Examples from our case studies show a variety of approaches to Scouts partnering with schools.

Recommendations

In our recent report *Character Nation*, we made a series of recommendations that would help to increase opportunities for non-formal learning in the English education system.[1] These recommendations include:

· The expansion of Ofsted's remit to assess the developmental activities of students outside school and in the wider community should be explored, learning from the Scottish model.

· The Department for Education (DfE) should introduce a new National Baccalaureate for 14–19 education that would include achievement outside of the classroom.

· School performance tables should place more emphasis on good quality destination data, so that schools are judged on their real-world impact.

After our recent research we now make the additional recommendations:

· The Government should monitor participation in extra-curricular and enrichment activities through the School Census and include these data in the National Pupil Database, providing an accurate national picture of how participation correlates with various demographics.

- The Government should ensure that initial teacher training covers non-formal education pedagogies, including learning outside the classroom and character education.

- Through local authorities or regional schools commissioners, the Government should provide guidance on quality non-formal education provision to schools, to enable them to make informed decisions based on the evidence.

- Schools should take the lead in providing non-formal learning opportunities to their students through their everyday practice, in collaboration with expert organisations at a school, borough or academy chain level.

- A member of each school's leadership team should have a specific responsibility for interaction with local community groups.

- When recruiting teaching staff and allocating workloads, schools should take account of an individual's 'value-added', non-formal learning provision and not just their subject-specific contribution.

- Schools are diverse, and so any approach taken by providers should reflect this and not attempt to meet all needs.

- Non-formal learning providers should look at their existing processes and consider how best to adapt them to work more closely with schools.

- To demonstrate the value of their model, providers should attempt to evaluate its impact across both educational and 'character' outcomes, as well as accredit these outcomes for young members and adult volunteers.

1　Introduction

For too long there has been a false choice between academic standards and activities that build character and resilience. But the two should go hand in hand… As much as I want the next generation to be able to solve a quadratic equation, I also want them to be able to make a compelling pitch for a job, and to be able to bounce back if things don't work out. That's why we've invested in areas like music, sport and debating that help to shape and teach important values like hard work, discipline, teamwork.

Nicky Morgan[2]

Since Nicky Morgan became Education Secretary in July 2014, character education – education that develops capabilities like resilience and empathy – has shot up the agenda. The DfE has made character a distinct policy priority, highlighted best practice through its inaugural Character Awards and set aside a £5 million grant to support character-building approaches in schools.

This renewed interest in character education in part reflects concerns – from employers and the education sector itself – that the practice of education has become overly reductive, training students to pass written exams but not adequately preparing them for the twenty-first-century labour market and the bigger tests that they will face in life.

While character can be taught in the classroom – as Demos and the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues recently argued in the report *Character Nation* – it is also developed through participation in a range of activities and experiences outside the school setting.[3] Extra-curricular activities such as sport, music and social action are often seen as the best vehicles for developing these capabilities, with increasing amounts of evidence backing this up, as we explore in detail in the next chapter. The DfE's Character Grant priorities reflect this emphasis on extra-curricular activities.

However – as the name implies – the provision of extra-curricular activities can be seen as an extra: an important but nonetheless non-essential aspect of the education system. As a result, its provision can be patchy, with fee-paying, independent schools apparently offering a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, and students at state schools tending to have fewer opportunities. Furthermore, with the high-stakes accountability associated with school inspections and performance tables, it is tempting for schools to neglect extra-curricular opportunities in a single-minded focus on bolstering attainment.

On the other hand, the evidence – explored in the next chapter – suggests that participation in extra-curricular activities can boost attainment and positive attitudes towards school, particularly for young people who may have negative experiences of education.[4] Without these opportunities, these young people are also less likely to develop the character attributes that the Education Secretary identifies – rightly – as vital to success in the labour market and later in life.[5]

Policy is helping to encourage the take-up of non-formal learning: the proliferation of academies and free schools in England, and resultant school autonomy and freedom, has led schools to adopt and emphasise different forms of pedagogy that are akin to 'non-formal learning'. For example, schools from the Studio Schools to School21 in Newham focus on 'project-based learning', which aims to foster better team-working, communication, leadership and self-direction skills. In Scotland, the Curriculum for Excellence has focused on young people's broader outcomes, encouraging the use of non-formal learning activities to ensure young people are confident individuals and responsible citizens.[6] And in Wales, the new National Youth Work Strategy explicitly encourages collaboration between youth work provision and formal education.[7]

It is worth remembering that many organisations and awards have provided young people with opportunities for non-formal learning for decades; The Scout Association, the Girl Guides and the Duke of Edinburgh Award are the most

well-known. Additionally, there has recently been a significant increase in the number of organisations that work with young people providing opportunities for taking part in outdoor challenges and social action – encouraging young people to work together to tackle issues in their local area. With the launch of National Citizen Service in 2012, the Step Up To Serve #iwill Campaign, which aims to get 60 per cent of young people taking part in social action by 2020, and the Generation Change partnership of 18 youth social action organisations, there is now a strong emphasis on non-formal learning through social action for young people in the UK.

In this report, therefore, we investigate how non-formal learning activities can be expanded and provided to all young people in the UK. Through a review of the evidence on non-formal learning and attitudinal research among young people, teachers and youth sector practitioners and participants, the report analyses the appetite for more non-formal learning in schools, and how this might be structured to ensure proper engagement on all sides.

The Scout Association – the UK's biggest mixed youth organisation, with groups led by adult volunteers – is the non-formal education organisation that provides our case study in this report: we conducted surveys of adult volunteers and young members, and a workshop with volunteers. This report forms the first part of a wider project investigating the power of non-formal learning – with the support of the DfE's Character Grant, The Scout Association will pilot a non-formal learning approach in six schools in England, to be evaluated by Demos researchers for publication in March 2016.

In the next chapter, we define what we mean by non-formal learning, explore the concept of character, and review the evidence base on both to investigate the impact of non-formal learning. Chapter 3 lays out the findings of young people's attitudes to non-formal learning activities and greater integration with the education system, based on a representative survey of 14–18-year-olds. We also present the findings of our survey with young people involved in Scouting, and draw important comparisons

with young people more generally on their perceptions of social and emotional skills, and attitudes towards non-formal learning.

In Chapter 4 we explore the same questions with a representative sample of teachers, asking whether they already deliver non-formal learning, and if they think schools should be doing more to deliver such opportunities to students. Chapter 5 takes The Scout Association as a case study, investigating attitudes within the organisation and providing examples of how non-formal learning providers and schools are already working together. The report concludes by making recommendations to policy-makers, school leaders and non-formal education providers that wish to work more closely with schools.

2 Background: 'non-formal learning' and character

In this chapter we outline the definition of 'non-formal learning', the activities it might involve and in which contexts they take place. We also outline and analyse the existing evidence base on the positive impact it can have on young people taking part.

Defining 'non-formal learning'

The definition of 'non-formal learning' used in this report draws on recent work carried out by Unesco and the OECD in providing a clear and pragmatic three-part definition of learning contexts: formal, informal and non-formal.[8]

According to these definitions, 'formal learning' is characterised by a highly organised and structured environment, clear aims and learning outcomes, and the use of exams, validation and certification to test and signal that these learning outcomes have been met. In other words, 'formal learning' is the type of learning most commonly associated with schools: with teachers delivering lessons to students according to a curriculum, the students then being assessed through exams and awarded qualifications.

However, students learn more in a school environment than just what is formally taught in a classroom. According to the OECD, 'people, by virtue of their very experience, are constantly exposed to learning situations'.[9] This is classified as 'informal learning', which is defined as learning that is not organised or structured but rather that which occurs as a result of everyday activity. In the sociology of education, 'informal learning' draws on the idea of the 'hidden curriculum' in the daily life of pupils, looking at for example the learning that occurs through classroom interactions and children's games.[10]

In other words, informal learning does take place in school settings, through students learning important cultural norms and social skills, but it is not a clearly designed 'lesson' that is delivered by teachers in the classroom.

Between formal and informal learning lies 'non-formal learning'. This is less organised than formal learning, but still consists of planned activities and educational objectives. It is also seen as being more concerned with action, and learning by doing and from experience; and more holistic, with a particular focus on developing social and emotional skills.[11] However, the precise definition of 'non-formal learning' can be the subject of disagreement – for example, over whether the definition applies to the 'context' of the activity (where it takes place) or the activity itself (sport, creative activity or youth social action).

Table 1 **Types of learning based on context and activity**

	School contexts	Out-of-school contexts	Private contexts
Formalised activities	· school instruction · vocational training at school · remedial school work	· on-the-job vocational training · voluntary service · music lessons · athletic training	
Partially formalised activities	· school project work · school group work · school trips	· participation in a youth organisation · youth centre project work · youth parliament	· homework help from parents · cultural activity: museum visits; attending theatre and concerts
Non-formalised activities	· peer contacts and friendships in school · playing at school · informal contact between students and teachers	· peer contacts and friendships in youth clubs and associations	· talks with parents and relatives · hobbies · playing games

● Formal education　● Non-formal education　○ Informal education

Source: adapted from Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, 2013[13]

According to Unesco:

Non-formal education is an organized educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve an identifiable learning clientele with identifiable learning objectives. Non-formal education can be delivered by governments, UN agencies, trade unions, sports clubs and national institutions but the biggest provider of NFE [non-formal education] remain youth organizations, especially volunteer-led youth NGOs, which base their educational programmes on equality, diversity and responsible global citizenship.[12]

As table 1 outlines, activities can be described as 'non-formal learning' in a 'formal education' context if the activity is flexible or self-directed, such as project-based learning or the experience of a school trip. Equally, formalised and structured 'extra-curricular' activities taking place outside school such as sport, music lessons or social action programmes like National Citizen Service can also provide opportunities for non-formal learning.

Finally, activity which is only partially structured and takes place outside school is also considered to be non-formal learning – this includes youth parliaments, uniformed groups such as The Scout Association and the Girl Guides, community project work and involvement in flexible social action.

Moreover, according to Unesco,

The importance of non-formal education, as generally practiced by youth NGOs and other providers, results from the specific characteristics that are intrinsic to it and which are, to a large extent, not present in either formal or informal education.[14]

The following list of pedagogies show some of the types of 'non-formal learning' activities that can take place through teaching the curriculum and extra-curricular activity:

- group work
- student presentations
- competitive activity
- lessons designed by students
- school trip, or an overnight stay
- outdoor activities
- work in the community
- mentoring or support from an older student
- work according to written instructions (e.g. a worksheet)
- long-term project work
- hosting guests
- work experience[15]

The Government provides very little guidance on 'non-formal learning' extra-curricular activities outside school settings, not defining or monitoring them centrally and leaving provision up to schools and their surrounding communities. However, it does consider them an important part of the educational offer of a school, as former Education Secretary Michael Gove put it:

I have never visited a school that excelled academically, which didn't also excel in extra-curricular activities. As top heads and teachers already know, sports clubs, orchestras and choirs, school plays, cadets, debating competitions, all help to build character and instil grit, to give children's talents an opportunity to grow and to allow them to discover new talents they never knew they had.[16]

Drawing on statutory guidance on 'positive activities' issued under the last government, and a list of enrichment activities from a 2014 DfE research paper, the following broad categories of extra-curricular activity can be outlined:

- sports activities (like team or individual sports)
- creative activities (like art, drama and model-making)
- volunteering or social action (helping out your community or doing things for charity)
- outdoor activities (like hiking, camping and the Duke of Edinburgh Award)

- deliberative activities (like debating societies, a model UN, youth parliaments or school elections)
- uniformed activities (like The Scout Association, the Combined Cadet Force or Army Cadet Force, or similar organisations)[17]

The current extent of young people's participation in these activities is described in more detail in the chapters that follow. However, it is clear that there is a great deal of non-formal learning already taking place in schools today: most schools provide trips and outdoor learning experiences in delivering the curriculum. Sutton Trust polling from 2014 found that 76 per cent of parents reported that their child had taken part in regular extra-curricular activity over the last 12 months.[18] Moreover, extra-curricular activity is becoming increasingly important in university admissions: a survey of university admissions officers earlier this year found that 59 per cent believed that participation in extra-curricular activity had become more important in their decision-making.[19]

Non-formal learning activities – classroom pedagogies and out-of-classroom experiences – are receiving renewed attention because research shows that they can assist with academic and character development, and social and emotional skills.

Non-formal learning and character

Demos's previous research on character, published in *Building Character*, looked at three character 'capabilities':

- *application*, or 'the ability to concentrate, discipline and motivate oneself to persist with and complete a task'
- *self-regulation*, or 'emotional control and emotional resiliency – an ability to bounce back from disappointment, conflict and distress'
- *empathy*, or 'an ability to put yourself in another person's shoes – and to act in a way that is sensitive to other people's perspectives'[20]

More recently, a meta-review of the related concept 'non-cognitive skills' undertaken by Leslie Gutman and Ingrid Schoon of the Institute of Education on behalf of the Education Endowment Foundation provided a list of eight competencies which they considered to be modifiable, including some of the above: self-perception, social skills, motivation, perseverance, resilience, creativity and metacognition.[21] The recent review of social and emotional learning commissioned by the Early Intervention Foundation, Cabinet Office and the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission used a similar grouping of 'social and emotional skills' in their longitudinal work.[22]

In the US, two of the most prominent names associated with the recent revival of character are Paul Tough, author of *How Children Succeed*, and James Heckman. Paul Tough, drawing on the work of the KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools, has focused his research on the importance of 'grit' or resilience.[23] James Heckman and his various collaborators use what personality psychologists call the Big Five character skills, often referred to using the acronym OCEAN: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (or emotional stability).[24]

Much of this work focuses on what might be described as performance skills and attributes: things that make us more effective undertaking a task, managing stress or working in a team. Researchers tend to have focused less on the moral dimensions of character, such as honesty, integrity and dignity. The Jubilee Centre based at the University of Birmingham has been at the forefront of making the case for the importance of moral character virtues. Their Framework for Character Education in Schools includes four core dimensions of 'character':

- *moral virtues* such as courage, honesty, humility and gratitude
- *civic virtues* such as service and volunteering – the moral virtues acting in society at large
- *intellectual virtues* such as curiosity and critical thinking
- *performance virtues* such as resilience, application and self-regulation[25]

The importance of these various skills, attributes and virtues has recently been reflected in government policy, with the Cabinet Office prioritising them through its Skills for Life and Work agenda, and the DfE through the Character Awards and Character Grant. The DfE drew on this research to define character as including the following traits, attributes and behaviours:

- perseverance, resilience and grit
- confidence and optimism
- motivation, drive and ambition
- neighbourliness and community spirit
- tolerance and respect
- honesty, integrity and dignity
- conscientiousness, curiosity and focus[26]

Why does character matter?

The existing evidence base shows that possessing these character attributes matters for a range of later life outcomes, including educational attainment, employability, mental and physical health, life satisfaction and wellbeing. For the first report of the aforementioned review of social and emotional skills, researchers at the Institute of Education looked at the long-term impacts of social and emotional skills in childhood and adolescence. It was found that social and emotional skills at the age of 10 were more important than cognitive skills at that age when predicting mental health and life satisfaction in later life. The researchers also found that self-control and self-regulation in childhood were associated with better 'mental health, life satisfaction and wellbeing, income and labour market outcomes, measures of physical health, obesity, smoking, crime and mortality'.[27] They also found correlations between positive life outcomes and healthy self-perceptions, self-awareness, social skills and conscientiousness.

The evidence also suggests there is a correlation between character attributes and educational attainment.[28] Studies by Snyder et al and Durlak et al have shown that development

of social and emotional skills led to improved academic achievement as well as positive educational attitudes, behaviour and attendance.[29] This has also been highlighted by Heckman, who found that character traits can have a bigger impact on academic grades than measures of IQ (figure 1).

There is also evidence to suggest that character attributes are becoming even more important because of recent changes to the labour market. The Institute for Public Policy Research report *Freedom's Orphans* found that analysis of longitudinal studies in 1958 and 1970 showed that 'in just over a decade, personal and social skills became 33 times more important in determining relative life chances'.[31] This is reflected in the Confederation of British Industry's and other employers' consistent calls for schools to do more to build character.[32]

The moral and civic dimensions of character have also grown in significance recently, with concerns over radicalisation and integration leading the Education Secretary to encourage all schools to develop British Values by enshrining it as a separate criterion in the Ofsted inspection framework.[33] Recent research by the Jubilee Centre has provided unique insight into the moral reasoning and character of the current generation of young people, assessing the ability of a sample of 10,207 students through moral dilemma tests: finding that British students on average struggled both to choose the moral course of action and provide the correct justification.[34]

Non-formal learning: the evidence

Taking part in extra-curricular activities or non-formal learning activities like those provided by The Scout Association and the Girl Guides has always been seen as important for the development of young people. However, with a greater emphasis on demonstrating impact, there is now evidence showing a link between non-formal learning and positive outcomes including educational attainment and development of the character attributes mentioned above. The literature review of 'non-cognitive skills' published by the Education Endowment Foundation found that school-based mentoring programmes

Figure 1   **The variance in achievement tests and grades through
IQ and character at Stella Maris Secondary School,
Maastricht, the Netherlands**

■ IQ, Big 5 and Grit   ▢ IQ   ■ Big 5 and Grit
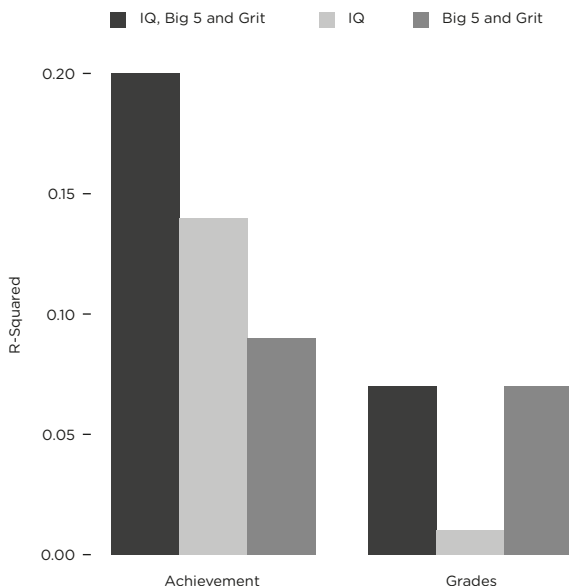
Source: Heckman and Kautz[30]

'can promote non-cognitive skills among young people' when
the mentor receives training and supervision, and that the
mentoring relationship is long-lasting.[35]

Heckman and Kautz also found that service learning
programmes – where students learn through a volunteering
programme taking place in the community – 'suggest
moderate effects for academic outcomes and small effects for
non-cognitive outcomes including social skills, self-perceptions,
and motivation' and that school-based social and emotional
learning programmes are 'effective at fostering positive
outcomes and preventing negative ones'.[36]

Heckman and Kautz also look at adolescent mentoring, residential and work experience programmes, finding them to be effective in improving outcomes, particularly in educational attainment and employment.[37]

The Demos report *Scouting for Skills* presents findings from a survey of 800 employers suggesting that employers view taking part in non-formal learning activities as highly valuable. Around 6 out of 10 employers thought that people they recruited who participated in Scouts 'showed confidence and leadership ability' and 'had strong team-working skills', and 41 per cent reported that participation in non-formal learning programmes like the Scouts 'would be a positive influence on their decision to hire new employees'.[38]

The evidence base on the effectiveness of non-formal learning interventions is still developing, as highlighted by strand 2 of the review of social and emotional learning, which emphasised the relatively low standards of evidence of out-of-school programmes.[39]

A Demos paper commissioned by the Cabinet Office to accompany the review examined this in closer detail, concluding that evaluation in the UK youth sector is currently undergoing a period of significant development, driven by the Step Up To Serve's #iwill Campaign and Generation Change, so standards of evidence are rapidly improving.[40] In any case, there is good evidence on the overall impact of the non-formal learning activities laid out above, as described below.

Sport

There is a strong evidence base that participation in sport activities can have positive impacts on character and educational development. According to a 2013 review of the evidence published by the DfE, sport participation both in school and as an extra-curricular activity has a range of positive outcomes, not just in physical health, but also in mental health, cognitive functioning, concentration and behaviour at school, with some studies suggesting this has a knock-on positive impact on attainment.[41]

Creative activity

Participation in creative activity such as art and drama has been shown to have a significant impact on educational outcomes, with positive effects on attainment and intermediate outcomes such as self-concept and social capital, according to a DCMS-supported study. This study found that arts participation had significant civic impacts, improving an individual's capacity for 'cultural citizenship' and increasing community cohesion and social inclusion.[42]

Volunteering and youth social action

Taking part in volunteering and youth social action can also have a significant impact on educational and character outcomes. The recent Behavioural Insights Team evaluation of three youth social action programmes operated by the Citizenship Foundation, Envision and Voluntary Action within Kent found significant evidence of impact on empathy, cooperation, grit, resilience, problem-solving skills, sense of community and educational attitudes. It further found that participation led to higher wellbeing and willingness to be involved in community-related activity in future.[43]

The Jubilee Centre has reported that youth social action can be an important means of young people developing their character, particularly with regard to the civic and moral virtues.[44] It also influences employability: an impact evaluation of the Institute for Volunteering Research found that volunteering could help develop vital job skills such as communication, teamwork and social skills.[45] The impact of youth social action programmes on educational attainment is currently being investigated by Durham University with the support of the Education Endowment Foundation, due to publish in late 2016.[46]

Outdoor activities

There has long been an evidence base on the power of learning outdoors: a meta-review by Hattie et al from 1997 found significant short and long-term impacts on self-concept, locus of control and leadership.[47] The manifesto *Learning Outside the*

Classroom published by the previous Department for Education and Skills led to Ofsted investigating the power of outdoor learning in a 2008 report. The authors concluded:

Learning outside the classroom can help to make subjects more vivid and interesting for pupils and enhance their understanding. It can also contribute significantly to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.[48]

They also argued that outdoor learning could help to overcome underachievement, and also that external agencies could play a key role in delivering this kind of learning. More recently, an Education Endowment Foundation evidence review found that outdoor adventure programmes had a 'small to medium effect' on social and emotional skills and academic achievement. The picture should become clearer later this year, as the Institute for Outdoor Learning is due to publish a comprehensive evidence review of its impact.[49]

Deliberative activity

Taking part in deliberative activity such as debating can have a significant positive impact on academic and character development. A comprehensive review of the evidence undertaken by the CfBT Education Trust and the English Speaking Union found significant impacts on attendance and attainment – with one study from the US finding that debaters in urban high schools were 25 per cent more likely to complete school, and African American males who took part in debate were 70 per cent more likely to complete. It also finds significant impacts on communication, confidence and critical thinking, with one meta-analysis arguing that participation in communication skills classes can increase critical thinking skills by as much as 44 per cent.[50]

Uniformed groups

Participation in uniformed groups can also be a significant source of non-formal learning. Perhaps uniquely, they include all of the types of non-formal learning activities described

above, and do so in a non-time bound and progressive way. The Scout Assocation's impact assessment report conducted by Public and Corporate Economic Consultants shows that 'the nature and scale of Scouting brings significant personal and professional development opportunities' to its members, with over 90 per cent of respondents improving their character skills such as relationship-building, leadership ability or team-working.[51]

Conclusion: what is non-formal learning and what should we call it?

Drawing from this discussion, we understand that non-formal learning:

· can take place either outside school, or in particular school settings
· involves particular activities, which are either relatively unstructured, or structured but not in a school setting
· achieves particular outcomes, often with a focus on character development

In the workshops held as part of this project, education experts and representatives from the youth sector were concerned that the treatment of this kind of learning as 'non-formal', 'extra-curricular' or 'enrichment' would somehow denigrate it, making it less integral to the curriculum and therefore less worthy of schools' time. Some preferred the term 'co-curricular', with the implicit suggestion that these activities help to achieve the curriculum's objectives.

However, the conceptual clarity of the terms 'non-formal learning' and 'extra-curricular activity' makes them suitable for the purpose of this report: once explained they are easy to grasp and are clearly distinct from formal school-based learning. In the chapters that follow, we present the findings from our research into attitudes towards integrating 'non-formal learning' more closely with the education system.

3 Findings – young people's attitudes towards non-formal learning

In order to understand the potential appetite for non-formal learning among students, we undertook a nationally representative survey of young people between the ages of 14 and 18 years in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We also conducted the same survey with 1,172 current participants aged 12–25 in Scouting across the UK, and draw comparisons where appropriate throughout this chapter. The findings from our young people in Scouting survey is presented in discrete boxes at the end of each section to provide easy identification and comparison.

In our surveys we asked young people including those in Scouting a range of questions about background, ethnicity, religion, the schools they attended in primary and secondary education, and whether they received free schools meals (FSM). The demographic breakdown of the surveys is included in the technical appendix at the end of this report.

Our results suggest that students have a strong desire for more non-formal learning activities to be linked in with the formal education system. They also highlight important differences between students from different socio-economic backgrounds – and whether they attend fee-paying or state schools – in social and emotional skills, the current provision of non-formal learning and the desire for more. In short, young people on FSM – and those who went to state schools – were less likely to take part in non-formal learning, and more likely to say that they would like their schools to provide more opportunities to take part. Moreover, young people in Scouting reported

higher levels of participation in non-formal learning activities, more positive attitudes towards school, and significantly higher levels of character attributes.

Social and emotional skills and attitudes to education

As noted above, there is good evidence that taking part in non-formal learning activities can facilitate the development of 'character' attributes and social and emotional skills, which are otherwise not developed in a more traditional, formal education setting. In both of our surveys we sought to test whether there was a link between self-reported character attributes and participation in 'non-formal learning'.

Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents who agreed most strongly (scores of 8–10) with various statements on social and emotional skills. About half or just under half of respondents strongly agreed with the statements – with the exception of the one on public speaking skills, where just over one in four felt that they were 'confident talking in front of large groups of people'.

Interestingly, there were only a few instances where respondents who received FSM were less likely than those who did not receive FSM to report strong agreement that they had these skills. However, there were more substantial gaps between respondents who attend or attended a fee-paying secondary school and those who attend or attended a state secondary school on almost all measures of social and emotional skills that we included in the survey. (The sample for fee-paying respondents was 70 people.)
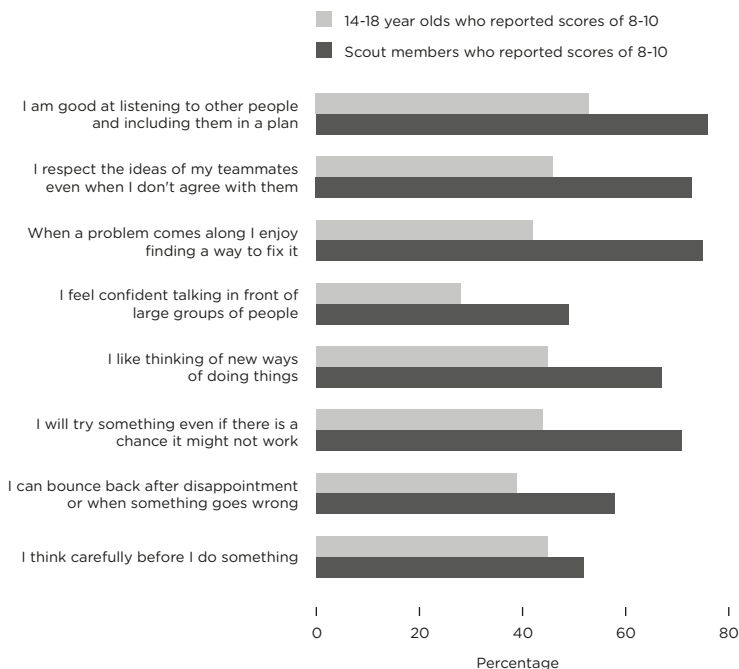
Most notable is the significant difference between the proportion of young people in Scouting who reported high levels of character attributes compared with those for young people in general.

Figure 2   **The proportion of 14–18-year-old and Scout respondents who scored 8–10 when considering various statements on their social and emotional skills**

■ 14-18 year olds who reported scores of 8-10

■ Scout members who reported scores of 8-10

I am good at listening to other people and including them in a plan

I respect the ideas of my teammates even when I don't agree with them

When a problem comes along I enjoy finding a way to fix it

I feel confident talking in front of large groups of people

I like thinking of new ways of doing things

I will try something even if there is a chance it might not work

I can bounce back after disappointment or when something goes wrong

I think carefully before I do something

Percentage

Box 1   **Young people in Scouting survey results**
Figure 2 shows that young people in Scouting consistently reported having significantly stronger character attributes and social and emotional skills than young people in general.

On every measure (except for 'I think carefully before I do something' – where there was still a +10 percentage point difference), there is at least a +20 percentage point difference between young people in Scouting and young people in general.

Young people in Scouting were also more positive about school:

- *Approximately nine out of ten said they received good marks in school compared with eight out of ten of young people not involved with Scouts.*

- *Less than 5 per cent agreed with the statement that 'school was a waste of time', compared with 9 per cent of young people in general.*

- *Only 13 per cent agreed that 'most of the time I don't/didn't want to go to school', compared with 25 per cent of young people in general.*

Figure 3 **The proportion of respondents who agreed with various statements on school**

All respondents Non-FSM respondents
FSM respondents Scout respondents

I get/got good marks for my work

School is/was a waste of time

People think/thought my school is a good school

Most of the time I don't/didn't want to go to school

0   20   40   60   80

Percentage
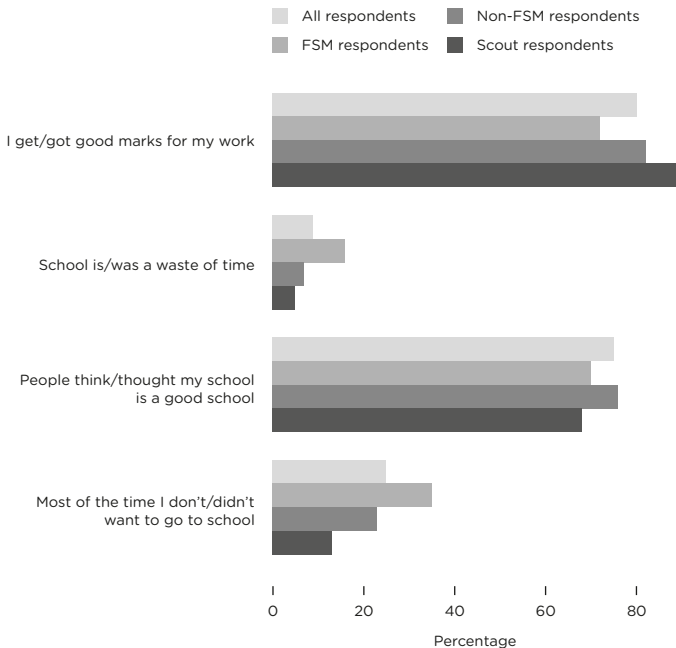
We also wanted to better understand young people's attitudes towards and experience of school. We asked respondents to state whether or not they agreed with a series of statements on school (figure 3). While on average young people were very positive about their experience of school, there were marked differences between the responses of FSM and non-FSM students, and between those of Scouts and non-Scouts. Non-FSM students were more positive than their counterparts about every statement, including most significantly, 'Most of the time I don't want to go to school', where there was a 12 point gap – FSM students also reported receiving worse grades and were more likely to consider school a waste of time.

While more work needs to be done on the contributing factors when comparing the demographic backgrounds for both groups, our surveys appear to demonstrate what many Scout volunteers and teachers believe about the benefits of taking part in non-formal learning activities such as Scouts. This should be a compelling rationale for investigating the scale of such partnerships to a much greater extent across the education system.

Taking part in non-formal learning activities

Drawing on the definitions of non-formal learning derived from the DfE which we outlined above, we asked young people whether they had taken part in extra-curricular activities and whether they did so in school or outside school. Overall, approximately nine out of ten (87 per cent) young people reported taking part in at least one of these activities in the past 12 months. Sport activities were most popular (two out of three reporting taking part), followed by creative activities (two out of five) and outdoor activities (two out of five). One-third of respondents reported that they had undertaken voluntary work (32 per cent).

Older respondents were less likely to report taking part in any non-formal learning activities with the exception of volunteering and social action (23 per cent of 14-year-olds compared with 43 per cent of 18-year-olds) and deliberative

activities (12 per cent of 14-year-olds compared with 21 per cent of 18-year-olds). As table 3 shows, there are notable differences between how much FSM and non-FSM respondents take part in volunteering or social action activities, sport and outdoor activities. Again, young people in Scouting were significantly more likely to report taking part in 'non-formal learning' activities – and not just those in the categories of 'uniformed' and 'outdoor' activities.

Table 3 **The proportion of respondents taking part in non-formal learning in any context and in schools**

	Taking part in any context			Taking part in schools	
	All	FSM/ non-FSM	Scout	All	FSM/ non-FSM
Sport activities (like team or individual sports)	62%	54%/64%	89%	54%	57%/53%
Creative activities (like art, drama, model-making)	41%	44%/41%	76%	36%	43%/34%
Outdoor activities (like hiking, camping, horse-riding, Duke of Edinburgh)	41%	33%/43%	98%	23%	19%/24%
Volunteering or social action (helping out your community or doing things for charity)	32%	26%/34%	94%	18%	13%/19%
Deliberative activities (like debating society, model UN, youth parliament or school elections)	13%	11%/14%	34%	13%	8%/14%
Uniformed activities like Scouts, the Combined Cadet Force or the Army Cadet Force, or similar organisations	13%	13%/13%	97%	4%	7%/3%

Young people in Scouting survey results

As was to be expected, young people in Scouting were significantly more likely to report taking part in uniformed activities and outdoor activities – with nearly 100 per cent reporting participation in each. Also highly significant, however, is that nearly all young people in Scouting (94 per cent) reported taking part in volunteering and social action. And indeed young people in Scouting were more likely to take part in all non-formal learning activities, including sport, creative and deliberative activities.

Are non-formal learning activities taking place in school?

Table 3 shows that outdoor activities and volunteering activities were most likely to take place outside schools (23 per cent in school compared with 41 per cent in any context for outdoor activities, and 18 per cent in school compared with 32 per cent in any context for volunteering activities). Uniformed activities were also more likely to take place outside school (7 per cent in school versus 13 per cent in any context). By contrast, 100 per cent of deliberative activities took place in school.

Respondents who receive or received FSM were slightly more likely to report taking part in non-formal activities like sport and creative activities inside school rather than in an outside school setting. Yet FSM respondents were less likely to take part in outdoor activities or volunteering activities outside schools.

These differences are difficult to interpret. On the one hand, the fact that FSM students are more likely to take part in sport and creative activities in school could suggest that they have less opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities outside school. On the other hand, it could be that the schools they are attending are not providing volunteering and outdoor activities.

Which non-formal learning activities do schools not provide enough of?

By a substantial margin, respondents thought that uniformed activities were most likely to be seen as under-provided by schools: 43 per cent of young people disagreed that schools provided enough opportunities to take part in uniformed activities, followed by 24 per cent who cited lack of volunteering opportunities, and just under one in four who wanted more opportunities to take part in deliberative and outdoor activities (23 per cent and 22 per cent respectively).

Bearing in mind the small sample, there are significant differences between respondents who attend or attended fee-paying secondary schools and those who attend or attended state secondary schools. For example, 39 per cent of state school respondents agreed that their school provided enough opportunities for volunteering and social action compared with 70 per cent of fee-paying school respondents, enough outdoor activities (49 per cent state school respondents agreed compared with 82 per cent fee-paying school respondents), enough deliberative activities (40 per cent state school respondents agreed compared with 80 per cent fee-paying school respondents) and enough uniformed activities (19 per cent state school respondents agreed compared with 42 per cent fee-paying school respondents).

Box 3   **Young people in Scouting survey results**
Similar to our findings with young people in general, when asked which activities their schools did not provide enough of, young people in Scouting were most likely to say that their schools did not provide enough opportunities to take part in uniformed activities (61 per cent). Volunteering came second, with 40 per cent disagreeing that their schools provided enough opportunities for social action. This was followed by outdoor activities (37 per cent), deliberative activities (32 per cent), creative activities (16 per cent) and sports activities (12 per cent). At the same time, young people in

Scouting were slightly more likely than young people in general to report that schools should provide more opportunities for all non-formal learning activities – reflecting a greater recognition for the importance of these activities given their higher levels of participation.
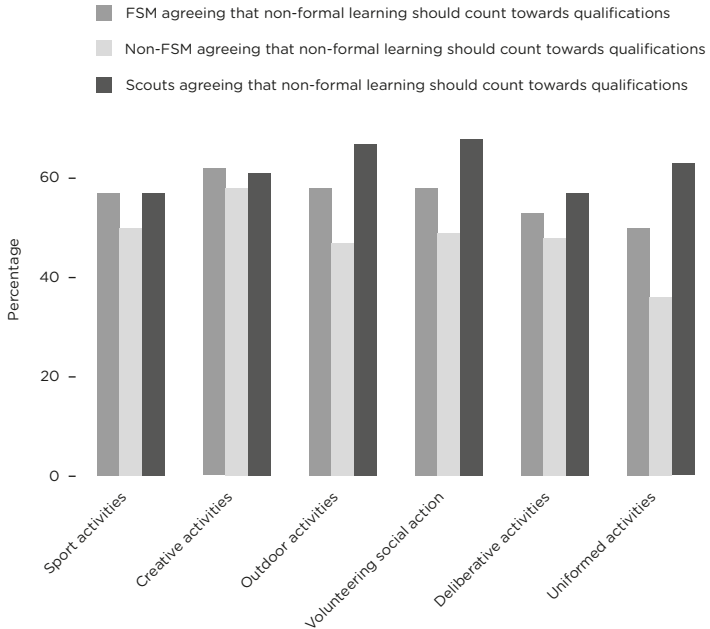
Should non-formal learning activities count towards qualifications?

Approximately half of all respondents wanted to see non-formal learning count towards GCSEs or A-levels or their equivalents – with the highest levels of support for creative activities (58 per cent) and lowest levels of support for uniformed activities (38 per cent). While there was little difference in support levels from students at fee-paying schools compared with those at state secondary schools, there were some notable differences between the views of FSM students and those of non-FSM students (figure 4).

For example, FSM students were some ten percentage points more likely than non-FSM students to want outdoor activities and volunteering or social action activities to count towards their qualifications. While the precise cause of this difference is unclear, it could be because FSM students have fewer opportunities to take part
in these activities outside school, or they are more likely to be disengaged in more academic subjects and formal learning activities, as the question addressing their attitudes towards school laid out above in figure 3 would indicate.

Again, young people in Scouting were more likely than those not in Scouting to support the integration of 'non-formal learning' activities into the education system.

Figure 4 **The proportion of respondents who agreed that various non-formal learning activities should count towards qualifications**

■ FSM agreeing that non-formal learning should count towards qualifications

■ Non-FSM agreeing that non-formal learning should count towards qualifications

■ Scouts agreeing that non-formal learning should count towards qualifications

Box 4 **Young people in Scouting survey**

Across all non-formal learning activities, young people in Scouting were more likely than those not in Scouting to want to see these activities count towards their GCSE and A-level qualifications. There was most support for seeing volunteering and social action count towards qualifications (68 per cent), followed by outdoor activities (67 per cent), uniformed activities (63 per cent), creative activities (61 per cent), deliberative activities (57 per cent) and sports activities (57 per cent).

Non-formal learning pedagogies

We asked respondents whether they undertook a range of other activities that could be classified as non-formal learning pedagogies, as outlined in the previous chapter, for example, group work, presentations to the class or school, trips or overnight stays, work experience placement, long-term projects, competitions, activities in the community, or lessons designed by students. Non-FSM students were more likely to have taken part than FSM students in all of these activities. Indeed, 16 per cent of FSM students said that they had never taken part in any of them, compared to just 7 per cent of non-FSM students.

Young people's perceptions of Scouting

We also asked respondents specific questions about Scouting, in order to determine if their support for more non-formal learning related to their support for a particular model. Among our sample, nine out of ten respondents said that they knew what the Scouts were (85 per cent FSM students compared with 91 per cent of non-FSM respondents). One in three respondents (33 per cent) agreed with the statement 'people like me do not take part in Scouts', while approximately the same number (30 per cent) disagreed. Similarly, approximately one in four agreed with the statement 'Scouting is cool', while just over one in four (28 per cent) disagreed. On these statements, there was no significant difference in responses by FSM eligibility or other demographics.

There were also mixed levels of support for delivering Scouting activities in school. While notable numbers of respondents were interested in having the opportunity to take part in schools, more students were against the idea than for it:

· One in three (33 per cent) agreed that 'students should be able to take part in Scouting activities during school hours' (34 per cent disagreed).
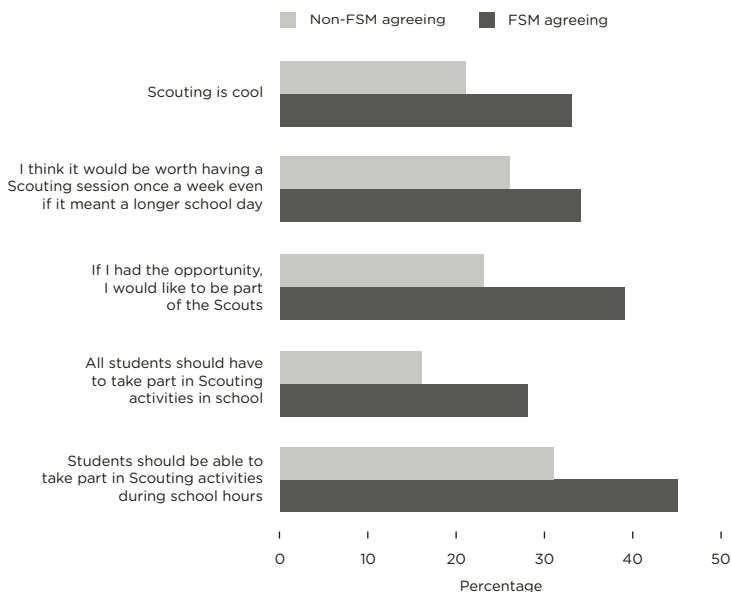
- One in four (27 per cent) agreed 'that it would be worth having a Scouting session once a week even if it meant a longer school day' (42 per cent disagreed).

- One in four (25 per cent) agreed that 'if I had the opportunity, I would like to be part of the Scouts' (45 per cent disagreed).

Table 4 **The proportion of respondents who agreed with various statements on Scouting, by whether on FSM**

	All	FSM	Non-FSM	Scout
Students should be able to take part in Scouting activities during school hours	33%	45%	31%	40%
All students should have to take part in Scouting activities in school	17%	28%	16%	19%
If I had the opportunity, I would like to be part of the Scouts	25%	39%	23%	N/A
I think it would be worth having a Scouting session once a week even if it meant a longer school day	27%	34%	26%	40%
Scouting is cool	23%	33%	21%	N/A

As might be expected, the majority (57 per cent) disagreed that 'all students should have to take part in Scouting activities in school', but just under one in five students (17 per cent) agreed that Scouting should be compulsory. Perhaps most importantly, FSM respondents were notably more likely to agree, with over one in four (28 per cent) agreeing with making Scouting compulsory in schools compared with 16 per cent of non-FSM students. Indeed, in general, students on FSM were more likely than those not on FSM to want to see Scouting activities delivered in schools (table 4 and figure 5).

Figure 5   **The proportion of respondents who agreed with various statements on Scouting**

Non-FSM agreeing   FSM agreeing

- Scouting is cool
- I think it would be worth having a Scouting session once a week even if it meant a longer school day
- If I had the opportunity, I would like to be part of the Scouts
- All students should have to take part in Scouting activities in school
- Students should be able to take part in Scouting activities during school hours

Percentage

Box 5   **Scouting members survey**

As may be expected, there were quite high levels of support among young people in Scouting for the provision of more activities in schools.

Approximately half (48 per cent) agreed that 'Scouting activities should take place in schools during one afternoon a week', while 40 per cent agree that 'people should be able to take part in Scouts during school hours'; 40 per cent also agreed that 'it would be worth having a Scouting session once a week even if it meant a longer school day'. There was particularly strong support for students having the opportunity to take part in Scout activity centres (87 per cent). As might be expected, 42 per cent agreed that 'badge and awards gained through Scouting should be a formal part of school assessments'.

However, young people in Scouting disagreed with making Scouting compulsory: only one in five (19 per cent) agreed that 'all students should have to take part in Scouting activities in school'. Similarly, one in five agreed that they did not 'think Scouts should work with schools at all'.

There was recognition that Scouts would have to change if it were to be delivered in schools among half of respondents. But young people in Scouting seemed comfortable with different models of Scouting. For example, 58 per cent agreed that Scouting activities could easily take place at the end of the school day with teachers as leaders, and 71 per cent said that they were 'confident that at least a few of my teachers at school could deliver Scouting activities'.

Conclusions

As the findings presented above show, there is significant appetite among British young people for more opportunities to take part in non-formal learning. But even more importantly, there were important differences in their opinions of existing provision and the desire for more 'non-formal learning' provision, socio-economic background and school type. While discrepancies were not necessarily consistent across all measures – and while small sample sizes (for young people attending fee-paying schools, for example) need to be taken into account – nonetheless there appear to be unequal opportunities for British young people.

It is particularly worrying that our research and pre-existing research suggests there is a link between taking part in these activities and having strong character attributes. Indeed, our survey with young people in Scouting showed they had substantially higher levels of social and emotional skills, a trend that is backed up by the evidence presented in the previous chapter.

When considering the greater inclusion of non-formal learning into the education system, the attitudes of students and young people is just one part of the puzzle. Another crucial consideration is whether teachers desire more opportunities for non-formal learning and are prepared to get involved.

4 Findings – teachers' attitudes towards non-formal learning

In order to understand if teachers desire more non-formal learning activities in schools, we designed and commissioned a representative survey of 800 teachers, heads of department, deputy heads and head teachers across the UK, which was undertaken by the polling company Schoolzone. The full breakdown of respondents' job roles, number of years teaching, and school type is included in the technical appendix of this report.
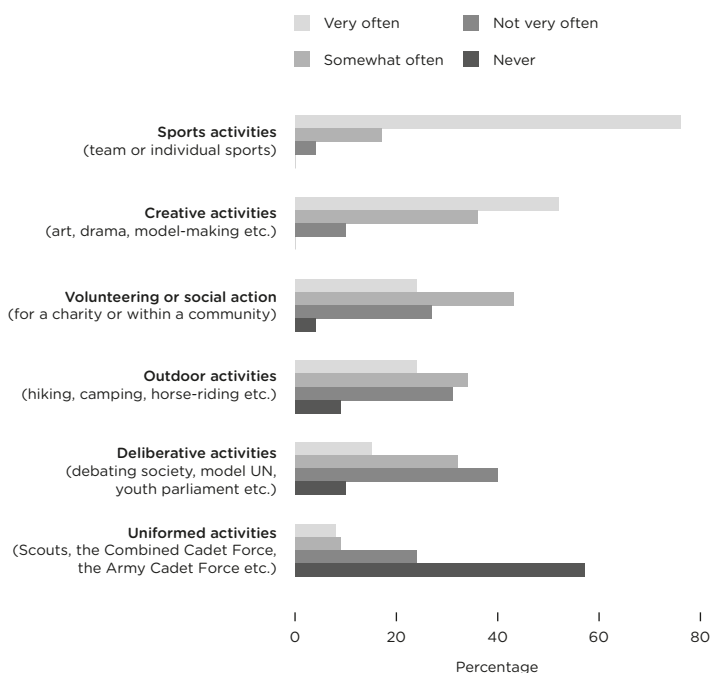
School provision of non-formal learning activities

Figure 6 shows the non-formal learning activities provided in the schools in which the teachers work. (These are the activities that we asked young people about in the previous chapter.) As with young people, teachers were most likely to report that their schools provided sport and creative activities, while uniformed activities were infrequently or never provided. The majority (58–73 per cent) of teachers reported that their school provided volunteering, deliberative activities and outdoor learning activities either 'somewhat often' or 'not very often'.

If we compare the accounts of non-formal activity provision by teachers and young people (the latter presented in the previous chapter), we can see that there are some disparities, with teachers being more likely than not to say that their school provided these opportunities. This disparity may be accounted for simply because the young people whom we surveyed did not attend the same schools as the teachers we surveyed. But more generally it could reflect the fact that we were asking teachers whether their school provides these opportunities, whereas young people were asked whether they participated in them; it may be the case that while a majority

of schools provide opportunities to participate, only a minority of young people take these up. Equally, young people might be unaware of the opportunities their school provides, or teachers might be over-optimistic and overestimate the opportunities available.

Figure 6   **Activities for students offered in schools of teacher respondents**

Very often   Not very often

Somewhat often   Never

Sports activities
(team or individual sports)

Creative activities
(art, drama, model-making etc.)

Volunteering or social action
(for a charity or within a community)

Outdoor activities
(hiking, camping, horse-riding etc.)

Deliberative activities
(debating society, model UN, youth parliament etc.)

Uniformed activities
(Scouts, the Combined Cadet Force, the Army Cadet Force etc.)

0   20   40   60   80

Percentage

Non-formal learning pedagogies

We asked a subsample of our teachers (including classroom teachers, subject coordinators and heads of department, year and key stage, n=500) whether through their work in the classroom they personally provided or were involved in

the same list of non-formal learning pedagogies that we asked students about. As seen in figure 7, group work was by far the most common form of learning strategy, followed by written instruction classwork, long-term project work and student presentations. Half (51 per cent) of teachers had never hosted guests or outside speakers, 46 per cent had never personally helped coordinate work experience visits, and 46 per cent had never worked in the community in the last 12 months. One in three teachers said that they had never taken part in lessons designed by students.

While this shows mixed levels of engagement when providing non-formal learning, our survey reveals there are very high levels of teacher support for more.

Appetite for non-formal learning activities

Three out of five teachers strongly agreed that non-formal education can help young people develop important social and emotional skills, as well as skills that are important for the workplace (figure 8). Over half (54 per cent) of respondents strongly agreed that their students would benefit from non-formal education opportunities. Combining the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' we see that over nine out of ten teachers have favourable attitudes towards providing non-formal education opportunities.

Teachers also supported greater efforts being made to embed non-formal education into schools and the national curriculum. Three out of four (72 per cent) agreed that non-formal education should be recognised in the national curriculum, and 68 per cent agreed that, given the opportunity, they would like to help deliver more non-formal education activities in their schools. Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) agreed that non-formal education activities should be compulsory for the students at their schools. This strong show of support for non-formal education is supplemented by a strong rejection of the idea that schools should only provide formal education: 78 per cent disagreed with this, 29 per cent of whom strongly disagreed.

Figure 7   **How often in the last 12 months teacher respondents
were able to take part in or were involved with activities
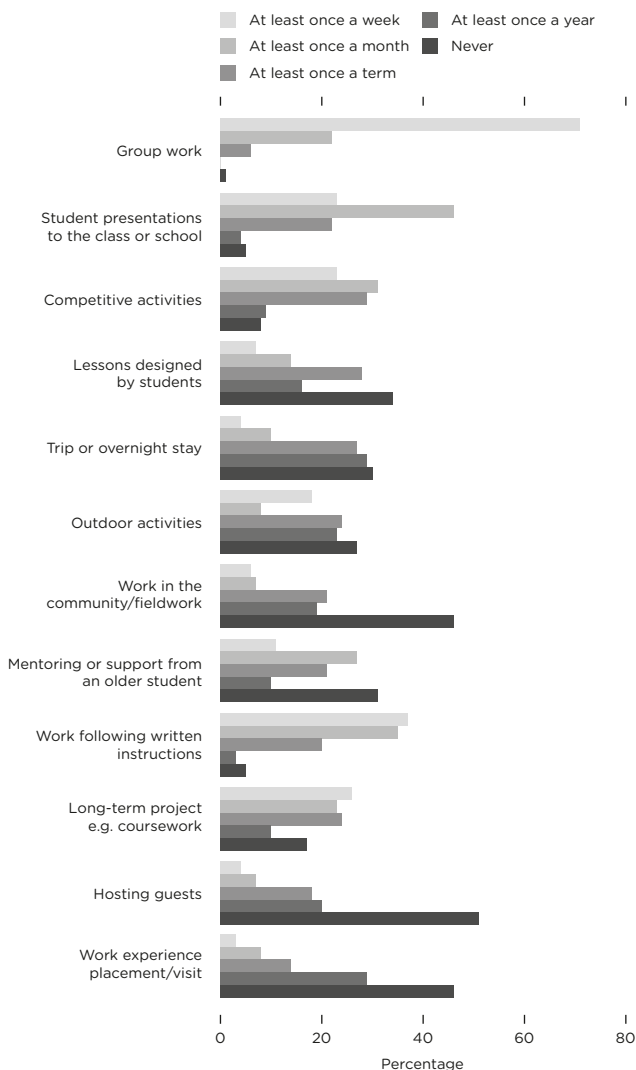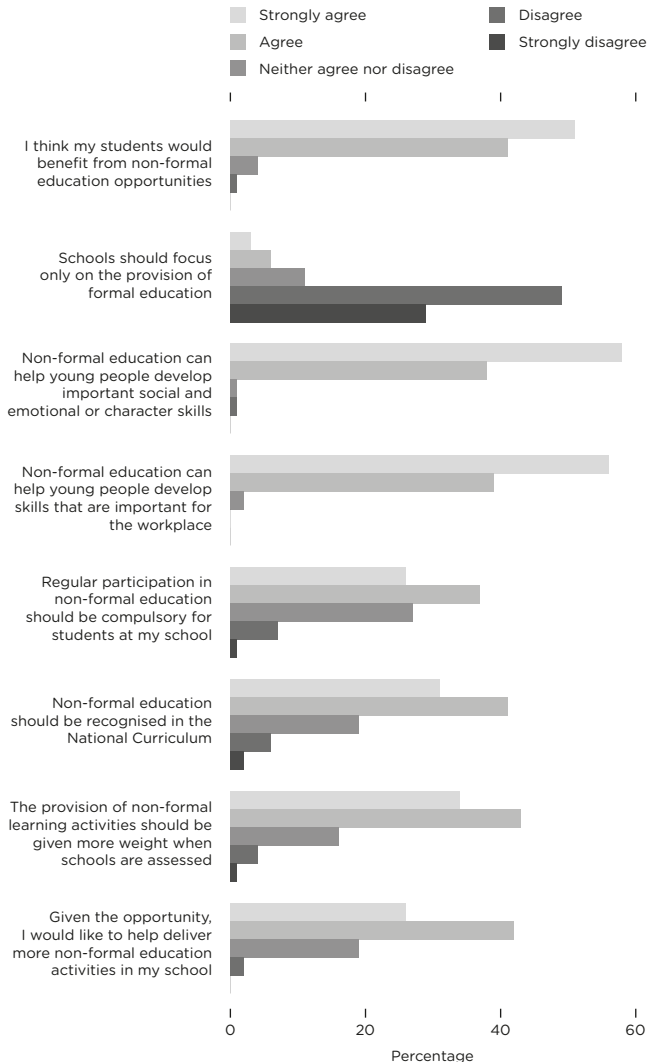as part of their work**

Figure 8 **The extent to which teacher respondents agree or disagree with statements about non-formal education**

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Statements:
- I think my students would benefit from non-formal education opportunities
- Schools should focus only on the provision of formal education
- Non-formal education can help young people develop important social and emotional or character skills
- Non-formal education can help young people develop skills that are important for the workplace
- Regular participation in non-formal education should be compulsory for students at my school
- Non-formal education should be recognised in the National Curriculum
- The provision of non-formal learning activities should be given more weight when schools are assessed
- Given the opportunity, I would like to help deliver more non-formal education activities in my school

Percentage

Barriers to providing non-formal education activities

Teacher respondents thought that by far the biggest barrier to providing non-formal learning activities was 'lack of time in the timetable', which nine out of ten teachers cited (figure 9). Over half (51 per cent) cited 'other more important educational priorities', while 43 per cent said that 'the manner in which students' and schools' performance are assessed' was a key obstacle. The fourth most commonly cited barrier (42 per cent) was 'a lack of teacher training in the delivery of non-formal education activities', demonstrating a need for these activities to be given more prominence in initial teacher training.

Teacher attitudes towards Scouting

Having asked them about non-formal learning generally, we also wanted to get a sense of teachers' attitudes towards the provision of Scouts in partnership with schools specifically (figure 10). First we asked them about their own involvement with Scouting. Two-thirds (66 per cent) reported having some level of involvement. A third of those with some involvement had themselves been in the Scouts, one in five had a son or daughter who used to be involved in Scouts and 11 per cent had a son or daughter currently involved in Scouting. Just over 10 per cent reported that they had been or were currently an adult volunteer in Scouting. If these high levels of involvement with Scouts found by our representative survey are indicative of teachers across the education system, this may account for the strong support our survey showed for non-formal learning and Scouting specifically in schools.

A majority (58 per cent) of teachers reported that they would welcome partnerships between their school and Scouts to provide students with other types of learning activities; 60 per cent thought that non-formal learning activities like Scouts should play a bigger role in the education system; and 60 per cent thought that every pupil in the UK should have the opportunity to take part in activities like Scouting as part of their school routine. More than half (57 per cent) of teachers

Figure 9 **What teacher respondents thought were barriers to the provision of non-formal learning activities in their school**
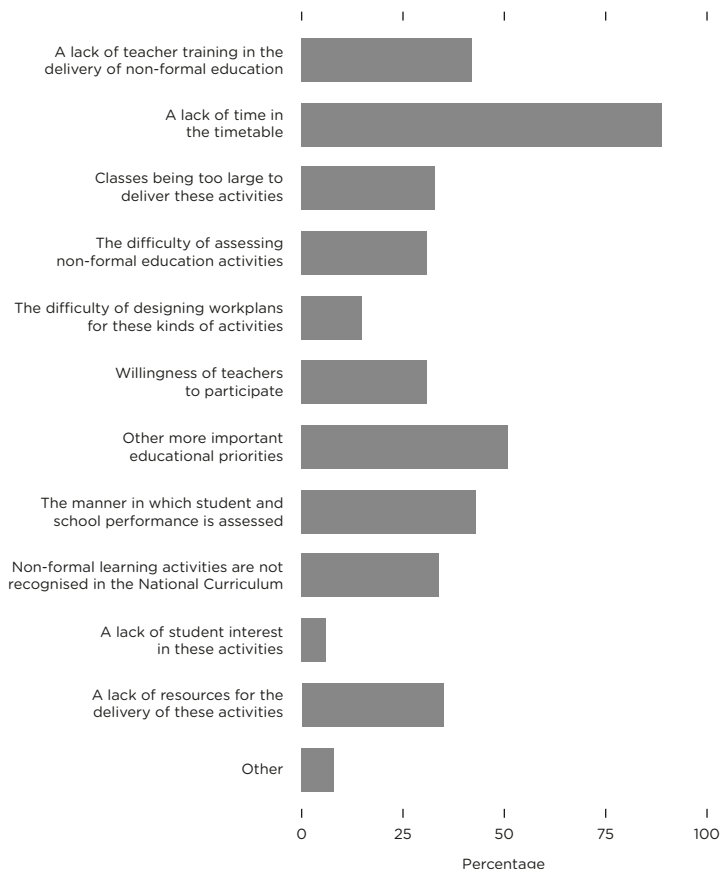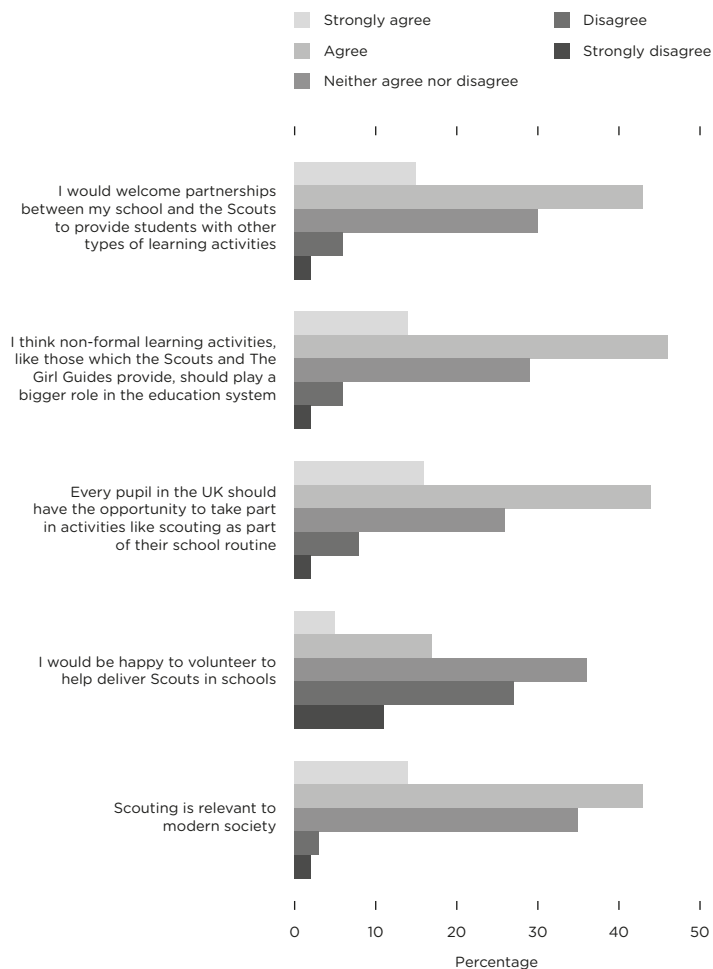

A lack of teacher training in the delivery of non-formal education

A lack of time in the timetable

Classes being too large to deliver these activities

The difficulty of assessing non-formal education activities

The difficulty of designing workplans for these kinds of activities

Willingness of teachers to participate

Other more important educational priorities

The manner in which student and school performance is assessed

Non-formal learning activities are not recognised in the National Curriculum

A lack of student interest in these activities

A lack of resources for the delivery of these activities

Other

0   25   50   75   100

Percentage

Figure 10 **The extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with statements on the provision of Scouts in partnership with schools**

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I would welcome partnerships between my school and the Scouts to provide students with other types of learning activities

I think non-formal learning activities, like those which the Scouts and The Girl Guides provide, should play a bigger role in the education system

Every pupil in the UK should have the opportunity to take part in activities like scouting as part of their school routine

I would be happy to volunteer to help deliver Scouts in schools

Scouting is relevant to modern society

Percentage

0   10   20   30   40   50

agreed that Scouting is relevant to modern society, an indicator of their belief in the value that non-formal activities can have in preparing young people for the challenges of contemporary life. There was less enthusiasm by teachers to volunteer to provide Scouting in schools (22 per cent agreed that they would be happy to do this), but this is likely because they lack time and training. Indeed, over one in three neither agreed nor disagreed that they would be happy to volunteer – suggesting a level of ambivalence among respondents about what would be required.

5　Case study: Scouting and schools

In addition to research with young people and teachers, Demos engaged with adult volunteers in Scouting from across the country in a quantitative survey and a workshop. Many of the adult volunteers who attended our workshop were also head teachers, deputy heads and teachers in primary and secondary schools, making their insights on how non-formal education might sit within the education system particularly valuable.

In this chapter we summarise the potential challenges and benefits of implementing partnerships between schools and non-formal education providers, from the point of view of the latter. We also highlight a number of examples of existing partnerships between The Scout Association and schools across the country, and the variety of different partnership models that are currently used.

General attitudes towards working with schools

Given the long history of Scouting, with strong traditions and ways of working, it is reasonable to expect a level of resistance from within the Scouting Movement to the idea of partnering with schools. Overall, however, we found quite a lot of support for the idea of there being more partnership working between schools and The Scout Association.

Our survey of adult volunteers (with a sample size of 1,125) showed that twice as many adult volunteers supported the idea of Scouts partnering with schools than were opposed to it. Just over half (53 per cent) of adult volunteers supported the idea of Scouts working with schools to deliver Scouting, while only 26 per cent disagreed. Most adult volunteers in our workshop were in favour of Scouts partnering with schools, many arguing that working more closely with schools could

be a game-changing opportunity to open up the benefits of Scouting to a much wider group of young people. As one volunteer put it:

Having Scouting delivered or promoted within schools will open Scouting up to some children that haven't considered it, where perhaps a parent's timetable doesn't allow them to support their children in Scouting. If Scouting is delivered in or close to school time it opens up more options.

Some thought that greater partnership with schools was necessary for the future of Scouting: 'In some areas it is imperative that Scouting works with schools to gain members and to continue to be current.'

Almost all of the volunteers who fed in to our research (and 94 per cent of our survey respondents) felt that the benefit of Scouts working in partnership with schools was that it helped to build character attributes in young people that school could not. Moreover, it was felt that this was particularly true for many students who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) – disengaged with formal education. This view was reflected in a 2009 report by the National Foundation for Educational Research called *Non-Formal Learning: Good practice in re-engaging young people who are NEET.*[52]

Some young people in Scouting observed that this was true in their own cases:

Scouts help a lot of people like me during tough times especially after trouble at school. I think that if Scouting was more involved with schoolchildren, young people would have fewer problems at school as well as improving attendance and concentration during school hours. Please make it possible.

Some adult volunteers highlighted that in the context of a school system increasingly driven by academic standards and qualifications, Scouting had unique value – while at the same time facing obstacles to integration:

Mutual support and understanding should be promoted. Scouting and schooling are complimentary… However, unless the government moves to a more rounded attitude to education, it's difficult to see how schools would choose to involve Scouting in their curriculum.

A number of adult volunteers reflected that their own participation in Scouting had been formative to their own skills development; some felt that Scouting compensated for a poor experience in their academic education.

Adult volunteers felt that partnerships with schools would be mutually beneficial. Apart from increasing developmental opportunities for students, 84 per cent of volunteers agreed that partnerships would also benefit the Scouting Movement, through giving them increased access to the important resources that schools could provide, such as equipment and spaces in which to conduct Scouting activities. One said:

There are many instances where schools can provide resources to Scout groups, but equally there are many examples of Scout groups supporting school activities. The school and Scout relationship should be and can be mutually beneficial but this partnership must be built on trust and understanding, not on compulsion and an added assessment burden.

Many adult volunteers who were also teachers felt that volunteering with the Scouts was beneficial to teachers, providing them with the opportunity to examine alternative pedagogies and interact with students in a different context to the classroom. The skills developed through adult volunteering with the Scouts have been the subject of previous Demos research.[53] The continuing professional development opportunities presented by adult volunteering with the Scouts could provide a selling point to teachers and heads, and is currently being trialled in the Australian state of Victoria, as described below.

However, half those we surveyed expressed a note of caution and concern over whether Scouting might lose something through partnering with schools. Adult volunteers thought that it was important that any recognition or measurement of Scouting activities within schools should not undermine the 'to do our best' principle encouraged in Scouting. As one Cub Scout leader put it:

It may work as a partnership, but Scouting does not suit every child. Additionally, there is a danger that some school teachers might end up approaching Scout activities in the same way they do the curriculum. Those children who are labelled as not good enough in school often thrive in the Scouting world, but if Scouting is delivered in school – these children will not want to be part of it.

There was some concern that 'instrumentalising' the Scout method and Scout structures in order to fit with the objectives of the education system could lead to the loss of important elements of the Scouting model. In our survey, 71 per cent of adult volunteers agreed with the statement 'Scouting should not be linked to the formal education process'. One Scout leader emphasised the importance of the delineation between Scouting and school:

We make certain that the separation between formal education and Scouting is clear, as often those who face challenges in school have the most to gain from Scouting and a different environment. Schools can be an excellent partner to provide meeting places and resources for groups but the clear separate identity of Scouting as 'not school' is vital and must be maintained.

Adult volunteers wanted to ensure that the fundamentals of Scouting – the Scout Promise, Scout Law and the method – should be actively protected, and were generally resistant to making Scouting compulsory in school partnerships. Adult volunteers were particularly keen to preserve an emphasis on personal commitment to Scouting. One Scout leader observed:

All pupils have the option of Scouting out of school anyway, but they are reliant on parents for this. If Scouting becomes a 'school curriculum subject' then it will lose its identity and poor behaviour due to children being compelled to do it would spoil the ethos.

In short, the majority of adult volunteers were supportive of partnerships with schools, but were resistant to the idea of making them compulsory, and questions remained over how far to go in structurally integrating Scouting with the formal education system. They were also keen to ensure core components were not lost in the school setting. The next four sections outline the potential challenges that volunteers highlighted.

Making time for partnerships

One of the biggest barriers highlighted by adult volunteers – and teachers alike – was a lack of time available in school hours, and the worry that partnerships would add another potential burden onto already stressed and time-short teachers.

Participants at our adult volunteer workshop provided cautionary tales and interesting examples of how school and Scout collaboration could work. In some cases, teachers became Scout leaders as an additional responsibility, in others, adult volunteers in Scouting were drawn from parents, and in others still, new school-based Scout groups were supported by a partner Scout group locally. In one case, a new model of flexible volunteering was developed, allowing four or more parents to share responsibility for the section (a specific age range within Scouting). Overall, there was a consensus that models that relied solely on teachers' time were bound to be unsustainable.

Funding

There was some concern among adult volunteers about where funding for partnerships would come from, and whether the funding model would be based on schools' budgets, central government subsidy, or the membership fees of the new Scouts themselves. Some schools pay directly into The Scout Association for the sections they operate, sometimes through pupil premium funding (as highlighted in the case study below).

Other partnerships have used schools as a means of recruiting Scouts into a more conventional out-of-school model. The exact model of funding used to support Scouting in schools could have a significant impact on the inclusivity and popularity of schemes, and influence whether Scouting reaches those who might benefit from it most. However, there was concern that the current model of membership fees could be disrupted by the provision of Scouting in schools if it was not based on the existing model.

Senior level buy-in

Support of a school's head and senior leadership team are vital components to integrating Scouting with schools. Indeed, partnerships are often initiated and driven by school heads who themselves are involved in Scouting. Two case studies undertaken for this report showed how changes in the senior leadership team could lead to declining support and an end to partnerships. This suggests that different types of partnerships may be more sustainable than others; in particular, those that require significant investments of time and resource appear to be especially vulnerable to personnel changes.

Cultural differences

The significant structural and cultural differences of The Scout Association and the formal education system were seen as a potentially significant barrier to greater integration. The structural differences between schools and Scout groups were highlighted as particular potential areas of difficulty. Participants in the workshops were divided over how these differences could be overcome, though they believed that it would be possible. Some suggested that The Scout Association's organisational structures should be adapted to suit schools, perhaps by creating 'affiliate' Scout groups, or Scout groups based on a flexible model of volunteering, to better suit parents' and teachers' requirements. Others were concerned that the creation of alternative structures for Scout groups could dilute Scouting and even reduce support for or detract from conventional out-of-school Scout groups.

Scouting and schools on the ground: types of partnership

The adult volunteers consulted in the workshops high-lighted a variety of different partnerships that already existed between schools and the Scouts. The two most popular forms of collaboration are, simply, the use of school facilities by Scout groups, or the use of a Scout activity centre by schools.

While our survey of volunteers found that 56 per cent thought schools are expensive places to hire for Scout meeting or event, they often remain the best option for urban Scout groups. Similarly, many schools use one of the nine UK Scout activity centres for school trips where students can take part in Scouting and outdoor activities. According to The Scout Association, in 2014, over 82,000 school children visited Scout activity centres in England.

There are also more integrated and innovative approaches that currently take place in the UK and other countries. These partnerships often look very different, varying according to local considerations such as age range, type of school, and whether they have rural or urban characteristics. Adult volunteers saw this flexibility as a strength and emphasised the importance of maintaining this rather than attempting to craft a one-size-fits-all partnership model.

To give a flavour of the different types of partnerships between Scout groups and schools, we conducted interviews and ethnographic fieldwork in four schools that partner with Scout groups, as well as nine Scout groups. The descriptions below are by no means exhaustive of the different types of models that exist, but rather indicative of certain partnership features.

Model 1 Compulsory Scouting (Stoneyholme Community Primary School, Burnley)

Stoneyholme Community Primary School, based in Burnley, Lancashire, has 420 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11, about 40 per cent of whom are eligible for the Pupil Premium.

Scouting has been compulsory at Stoneyholme as part of the school's enrichment programme since September 2014 with the explicit aim of developing students who are 'resilient', 'resourceful', 'responsible', 'positive', 'sociable', 'reflective' and 'skilled.'[54]

As part of the programme every pupil takes part once every half-term in a Scout method ceremony where they take the Scout Promise, learn about the Scout values, and gain badges. The activities are mostly delivered by teaching assistants and supported by teachers and the enrichment manager. The activities are then assessed on the pupil's report card, which includes scores for pupils on things like resilience, social skills and sense of leadership, using a 1–5 scale. Progress against these measures is then regularly tracked throughout the school year.

The model in Stoneyholme was one of the few where Scouting was compulsory for students, yet at the same time the Stoneyholme School Scouts are not officially recognised by The Scouting Association because the students do not pay a membership fee. This is an issue that the school is keen to resolve, as one member of the school staff told us:

It'd be very useful to have more support, to find a solution on the membership fee issue as parents don't see why they'd pay for this. Actually, we are unable to bring all the pupils to district events or to distribute badges easily, which weakens community feeling and group-belonging that are important feature of Scouting. Benefit from official recognition would bring every pupil to feel part of a real Scout group.

The Stoneyholme model demonstrates how schools can prioritise and integrate Scouting into school so that all pupils take part. The use of a report card that measures character attributes is also a valuable approach that other schools should seek to emulate. However, most volunteers were wary of the compulsory nature of the programme, although it seems to work well for Stoneyholme. This case study highlights some of the challenges of formally recognising Scouting programmes in schools based on whether or not – and how – students pay The Scout Association membership fee.

Model 2 Voluntary Scouting, led by the head teacher (Waveney Valley Partnership Federation of Schools, Norfolk and Suffolk)

St Edmund and Mendham primary schools in Norfolk and Suffolk present a different model of partnership between Scouts and schools, the key features of which are the voluntary participation of teachers and pupils, and the sharing of resources between the local Scout Association and the school.

St Edmund and Mendham community primary schools are local authority-maintained and host around 120 pupils between them. Pupils and teachers are encouraged to attend the local Scout group (which is facilitated by the head teacher), but their participation is entirely voluntary. As the head teacher describes it: 'Everyone should be able to try a bit of Scouting in school, without it being compulsory. We advertise Scouting as an option.'

The Scouts and the school share resources and facilities, including two minibuses, archery equipment, storage facilities and photocopying services. The Scouts use the school buildings for the delivery of certain activities and the teachers can use the Scout venue to take part in outdoor learning activities.

The schools also take a different approach to the issue of paying the membership fee. The school's pupil premium funding is used to pay the membership fee of pupils who qualify for FSM and want to attend the Scouts, while students who are not on FSM are required to pay.

The head teacher and other teachers at the school also act as Scout leaders. One student said of the head:

Skip is funny in Scouts, but we know that we can't be silly with him within school. They are different roles and we know how to respect them. But actually it's pretty cool to have a head teacher as a Scout leader!

The difference between the more formal role of the teacher and the less formal role of Scout leader was something that was highlighted as valuable by adult volunteers in our workshops

as a valuable by-product of linking schools and Scouting; anecdotally, many suggested that it could improve relationships between students and teachers, and improve the discipline of some pupils.

Model 3 Scouting after-school (Rose Bridge Academy, Wigan)

Rose Bridge Academy is a mixed 11–16 comprehensive school in Wigan. The defining features of its model is that Scouting is offered as an after-school, extra-curricular activity option for students, and the school thereby helps the local Scout group to recruit new members.

The partnership between Rose Academy and the Scouts started in July 2014. Using a small budget, The Scout Association's Regional Development Service (RDS) ran one-hour activity taster sessions at the school for a limited period of time on Tuesday afternoons. Open to all pupils, these taster sessions involved activities like pitching tents, tying knots and delivering information on Scouting in general.

As a result of the taster sessions, 15 pupils signed up for regular involvement in weekly sessions, which allowed the Scouts to establish a regular Scout troop. The Rose Bridge Academy highlights a partnership whereby all students have an opportunity to try out Scouting, but ultimately they pay for regular involvement. The Scout RDS hopes to increase the adult recruitment for this project:

It would be nice to have another volunteer to help out and not just rely on one teacher who [does] everything. Moreover, it would be great to bring the children out of the schools.

Thus, compared with the two models described above, Rose Bridge Academy appears to be driven more by local Scouts than by the school itself, and this appears to be because – in the schools where Scouting is more integrated into the school curriculum – the head teacher and other teachers are already involved in Scouting. As highlighted by the quotation above, partnerships in schools with less senior level buy-in can face more challenges recruiting volunteers.

Model 4 Scouting embedded in the Curriculum (Queen Anne High School, Scotland)

The partnership between the 83rd Cairneyhill Scout Group, the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) and Queen Anne High School is a good example of the integration of non-formal and formal education through the Curriculum for Excellence.

The Curriculum for Excellence – Scotland's national curriculum – focuses on the development of four main capacities in pupils, seeking to develop successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The curriculum's focus on character and non-formal aspects of education is reinforced by an inspection framework, used since 2008, which considers the education of students within and outside school.

This structure has led to a high level of cooperation between schools and non-formal learning providers, such as The Scout Association or the Cadets.[55] According to Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning at Education Scotland Phil Denning,

What we are starting to see happen at the moment is that organisations – like the Cadets – are presenting 'learning offers', which link the cadet syllabus much more explicitly with the Curriculum for Excellence.

The most striking feature of the partnership with Queen Anne High School is that pupils' achievements in Scouting are recognised through assessment and qualification: pupils from the Scout group who also attend Queen Anne High School have the opportunity to formally link their Scouting activities to qualifications through an SQA scheme. Through gathering evidence and conducting self-assessments, Scouts can translate their Scouting activities into a SQA Leadership Award, a level 6 qualification on the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, the equivalent level of a higher grade qualification.

One of the keys to implementing this approach was that the Scottish Government funded Scouts Scotland to map the Scouting methodology against the Curriculum for Excellence, which helped to enable its formal recognition. This approach is now being replicated by the UK Government through their Character Grants, in a project delivered by The Scout Association and Demos. The latest Education Scotland inspection of Queen Anne High School praised its partnership with the Scouts as a successful integration of formal and non-formal education.

Model 5 Scouts assisting with Initial Teacher Training (Victoria, Australia)

Our final case study model comes from abroad: the State of Victoria in Australia, where Scouts are piloting volunteering as a Scout leader as a form of teacher training. As highlighted in Demos' report *Scouting for Skills* – and echoed in the research we undertook for this report – many adult volunteers believe that taking part in Scouting helps to build valuable character skills. Moreover, our teacher survey showed that teachers saw a lack of training in delivery for non-formal learning as one of the biggest barriers to its integration into the education system.

In Victoria, the Quality Teacher Programme aims to address this with Scouts Victoria working with the state government and Monash University to improve teacher quality by including non-formal learning activities as part of initial teacher training.[56]

As part of the programme, student teachers become Scout leaders and help to deliver 'learning by doing' activities, including working in Scout camps and outdoor trips, as part of their training. Those working with Venture Scouts plan and deliver accredited Victorian Certificate of Education learning for at least 80 hours per year as part of the Scouting programme, in addition to their scheduled teaching rounds in schools.

The programme is currently in its first year, with 500 participants in the first cohort.[57] Chief Commissioner for Scouts Victoria Brendan J Watson described it as follows:

The program compliments the formal university studies required for teacher registration providing unique experiences to the pre-service teacher for the duration of their undergraduate course. The program also supports the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, enhancing pre-service teachers' professional knowledge, practice and engagement.

As we argue in the next chapter, similar partnerships should be explored in the UK between The Scout Association and teacher training colleges. The emphasis on character education – and the importance of non-formal learning pedagogies – requires significant changes to teacher training. If the Victoria Programme proves to be successful, then it will demonstrate the role that non-formal education providers could play in improving teacher training in this space.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

The evidence drawn together in this report demonstrates that non-formal learning – in its various forms – can have a significant impact on both educational and character outcomes, and the original attitudinal research undertaken for the report demonstrates that both teachers and young people recognise this. There is strong desire for more participation in non-formal learning throughout the education system, particularly by teacher respondents, and this is partly informed by respondents' understanding that these activities are enriching, by delivering the curriculum and enhancing the character of participants more generally.

We know that character attributes not only reinforce academic learning but also have a significant positive influence on various later life outcomes, including those relating to health, wellbeing and careers. However, too many young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do not have the opportunity to participate in these activities and develop the skills that are important for success. This leads us to conclude that policy-makers, school leaders and non-formal learning providers should seek to work more closely together to meet this demand and close this gap.

However, there are significant barriers in the way of ensuring that all have access to good quality non-formal education activities. The education system currently operates a data-driven and high-stakes system of accountability, so many head teachers do not prioritise the provision of that which is not assessed or formally measured. Equally, some teachers may be unfamiliar with or unsure of the value of non-formal learning and as a result not seek to engage with it.

There are cultural and practical barriers. One crucial consideration is how long-standing experts in non-formal education can adapt their model to work more closely with

schools, while not losing an important aspect of their approach. Also, schools are highly diverse and increasingly so – any approach taken by non-formal learning providers should recognise this and not attempt to satisfy all needs. Finally, the quality of non-formal education is not always robustly assessed, which could lead to understandable reticence on the behalf of school leaders to engage with it.

Below we make a number of recommendations to help overcome these barriers and satisfy the unmet demand for non-formal learning. These draw on the findings of the surveys and workshops conducted for this report and include recommendations to policy-makers, school leaders and non-formal learning providers.

Recommendations to policy-makers

Unless non-formal learning activities and the outcomes they can deliver are recognised within the education system by policy-makers nationally, they will fail to be fully integrated. This does not require a new government initiative but rather a realigning of incentives – providing a direction of travel to encourage schools to engage more with non-formal learning. Therefore we conclude that achievements within non-formal education should be encouraged and recognised by the education system in the way that both schools and students are assessed, through the following changes to policy.

In the recent Demos report *Character Nation*, we made a series of recommendations about how to embed character development into the education system. Given the relationship between non-formal learning and character made throughout this report, many of those recommendations are valid here. For example, in *Character Nation* we recommended that:

· *Ofsted's remit should be expanded to assess the developmental activities of students outside school and in the wider community.* In 2008, Education Scotland expanded the focus of its inspection process to include the quality of activities available to young people outside schools. This was driven

by the recognition that third sector non-formal learning and community organisations play an increasingly significant role in the development of young people. By developing a similar model in England, Ofsted could provide a clearer picture of the development of young people than that gained by a purely school-based inspection process and schools would be incentivised to develop partnerships with non-formal education providers.

· *The DfE should support a new National Baccalaureate for 14–19 education that would include volunteering components.* The structure of the curriculum and the qualification it leads towards can provide a powerful mechanism for acknowledging the importance of non-formal learning: this is the lesson of the International Baccalaureate, and the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, which has encouraged schools to embed non-formal learning activities in their everyday practice to achieve the outcomes they are expected to. In Scotland, the SQA accredits a Leadership Award to recognise participation and excellence in non-formal learning. In England, there is growing grassroots momentum behind the idea of a National Baccalaureate, which would include a personal skills development and a volunteering component, and incentivise schools to collaborate with non-formal education providers.[58] This approach has the interest of heads and teachers, policy-makers, examination bodies and academic experts – the Government should look closely at the NatBacc and consider how best to support it.

· *School performance tables should focus more on good quality destination data, so that schools are judged on their real-world impact.* Destination data as they currently stand show how many students in each school progress to further or higher education, or go into employment; these data are not yet detailed enough to evaluate school quality. However, through the linking of government datasets these data could be enriched to include detailed career outcomes and other longitudinal measures to develop a more rounded picture of the outcomes of pupils.

Given the evidence of the impact that non-formal learning can have, better destination data could help to determine whether these activities lead to better outcomes for students.

In order to encourage more non-formal learning we make the following additional recommendations:

- *The Government should monitor participation in extra-curricular and enrichment activities through the School Census and include these data in the National Pupil Database.*
  The lack of centrally held and published information on participation in extra-curricular activities is a particular loss considering the evidence of their value and the extent to which academic data are monitored. The Cabinet Office Community Life survey, while providing an overview of volunteering rates, does not include detail on a number of non-formal learning activities, is not carried out for each school and does not allow for the detailed analysis by demographic possible through the National Pupil Database.[59] This has particular significance given the opportunity gap identified in this report whereby FSM pupils simultaneously report a lack of opportunities to participate in non-formal learning activities in their school and ask for more opportunities to do so.

  Requiring schools to report on extra-curricular activities would begin to build up an evidence base of participation and how that correlates with other educational outcomes such as attainment and behaviour across the population, and across demographic measures like socio-economic status, region and ethnicity, enriching the evidence base and incentivising schools to take non-formal learning more seriously. Aggregates of these data could in turn be included in performance tables and Ofsted reports, allowing parents to take account of them when choosing a school for their child.

- *The Government should ensure that initial teacher training covers non-formal education pedagogies, including learning outside the classroom and character education.*

The strength of an initiative often depends on its implementation, so teachers' familiarity with non-formal education should be considered of the utmost importance. Indeed, just under half (44 per cent) of teachers cited lack of training as a key obstacle to delivering more 'non-formal learning' pedagogies. We therefore recommend that initial teacher training should be reformed to ensure that those entering the profession are familiar with non-formal learning activities and the educational benefits they can have. The importance of this kind of reform to initial teacher training was made clear by the Government's recent Carter Review, which recommends that initial teacher training should include a renewed focus on child and adolescent development, including supporting wellbeing, emotional and social development, and character education.[60] We echo these recommendations. The Government, The Scout Association and teacher training institutions should also seek to trial an initiative similar to the Victoria, Australia, Scout teacher training programme cited in the previous chapter.

- *The Government – through local authorities or regional schools commissioners – should provide guidance on quality non-formal education provision to schools, to enable school managers to make informed decisions based on the evidence.*
  The objective of this recommendation would be to make it as easy as possible for decision-makers in schools to find high quality non-formal programmes and engage with them. This advisory role would reassure schools that a given programme or organisation was of good quality and could be expected to achieve certain results. Some participants in our workshops went further to recommend the development of a register of approved organisations. Within the youth social action sector, Generation Change is leading work to develop a sector-led quality mark, an initiative the Government might lend its support to.

Recommendations to school leaders

Despite the continuing significance of Government policy on the structure and priorities of our education system, it is important also to recognise the growing autonomy of schools. The proliferation of academies and free schools has led some to hail a 'school-led' system – where more often than not change can be achieved in schools without the need for a new government initiative. Therefore we make recommendations to school leaders themselves, with a view to encouraging grassroots take-up of non-formal learning.

· *Education providers should take the lead in providing non-formal learning opportunities to their students through their everyday practice or in collaboration with expert providers either on a school, borough or academy chain level.*
The benefits of non-formal learning activities –in enriching the curriculum and developing skills that the conventional curriculum might miss – should encourage schools to integrate these approaches into their practice. This would not only give the students in their care a more rounded educational experience but, as the evidence indicates, also help to achieve the results on which they are assessed. Schools should explore the scope for local partnership in this, but need not adopt a particular model. During our workshops, participants mentioned a range of different approaches that had been developed and have demonstrated varying degrees of success: they often worked best when they reflected the particular needs of the school and the local community.

· *A member of the school's leadership team should have a specific responsibility for interaction with local community groups.*
Schools have always been community hubs. However, in our workshops, volunteers and non-formal education providers described experiencing barriers in getting through to decision-makers about potential collaboration. In order to reap the benefits of non-formal learning, we suggest schools should make interaction with the local community a specific responsibility of a member of the senior leadership team,

who would explore opportunities for collaboration, whether simply providing premises, advertising opportunities, or developing a more integrated approach. This individual's contact details should be clearly displayed on school websites, with contactability included as a key measure of their performance.

- *School leaders should recognise the contribution teachers make to non-formal learning activities when recruiting and allocating workloads.* Our surveys consistently found that lack of time was the most significant barrier to schools delivering more non-formal education activities. Teachers who volunteer their time to deliver enrichment or extra-curricular activities often do so knowing of the benefit it will bring to the students, but in addition to their existing workload. Given the importance and appetite for these activities among teachers and young people, it is important that they are rewarded and taken seriously by school leadership. Therefore we propose that when timetabling for classroom teachers, school leaders take into account these teachers' contribution to the non-formal learning provision of the school, and also recruit and promote teachers with this in mind, giving due weight to teachers' participation in extra-curricular or co-curricular activities.

Recommendations to non-formal education providers

Many non-formal education providers already work closely with schools – and some are happy to continue to steer clear of them. However, the universality of the education system makes it unique, particularly as a way of getting to those most at risk of disengagement. Many non-formal learning providers are keen to take up the opportunity to provide those children with the non-formal learning opportunities that might prevent adverse later life outcomes. We have the following recommendations for them:

- *Schools are diverse, and so any approach taken by non-formal learning providers should respect this and not attempt to meet all needs, instead reflecting its unique features.*
Schools are unique in their intake, setting, staff body, leadership, values and approach to educating their students. Therefore, any off-the-shelf model will inevitably struggle unless it is sufficiently adapted to all of these criteria. As our case studies in the previous chapter demonstrate, a range of different models currently being practised have had varying degrees of success. We suggest that providers should learn from these models but not emphasise only one, so as to ensure the approach fits local community and school contexts. Providers should also be more entrepreneurial in reaching out to schools, attempting to move beyond their comfort zone, to engage with groups and communities who would benefit from their approach but are currently unfamiliar with it –benefitting from the universal nature of schooling.

- *Non-formal learning providers should look at their existing processes and consider how best to adapt them to work more closely with schools.*
The existing cultures and structures of non-formal learning providers might not be well suited to being integrated with schools – providers should investigate how to overcome these hurdles. In adapting themselves, providers should also take care to ensure they are not losing something that is vital about their approach, whether the programme is voluntary, relatively unstructured, youth-led, takes place outside a school setting, or is delivered by a volunteer. This would help prevent the benefits of non-formal learning being lost through its greater integration with the formal education system.

- *To demonstrate the value of their model, providers should attempt to evaluate its impact across educational and 'character' outcomes, and accredit these outcomes for young members and adult volunteers.*
In a competitive school funding environment, any model pursued by providers needs to demonstrate it has a positive impact on participants, therefore building up this evidence base should be a priority. This focus on evaluation comes with

some caveats – newer organisations should not be expected to have randomised control trials demonstrating their efficacy, for example, but they should be expected to work towards implementing more robust evaluations once they are at an appropriate scale. This impact should be measured not only by academic attainment, but also by looking at 'character' outcomes, such as those assessed by the youth social action trials. Accrediting the impact on students – perhaps through mapping a programme's methods to the curriculum (as has been attempted in Scotland) – and on adult volunteers will provide further incentives for schools and young people to engage with the approach.

Technical appendix

Our research into non-formal education and schools is based on a range of surveys, workshops, interviews and case study visits. We conducted four separate surveys (with adult volunteers within The Scout Association, young people in Scouting, teachers and young people aged 14–18) and undertook two workshops: one with education experts and one with Scout adult volunteers. We also conducted ethnographic fieldwork, with visits, observations and interviews at The Scout Association headquarters, in schools and at Scout groups in England and Scotland.

Our survey of adult Scout volunteers had a sample size of 1,125, and our survey of young people in Scouting had a sample size of 1,172; both were distributed by The Scout Association. The fieldwork for our survey of teachers was completed by Schoolzone; it had a sample size of 800. Our survey of young people in the UK was nationally representative of the 14–18 population, and had a sample size of 1,009; the fieldwork was completed by Populus Data Solutions.

There were 25 volunteers at our workshop with adult Scout volunteers, and 25 experts attended our workshop with education experts. Both workshops were conducted in central London; the Scout volunteer workshop included volunteers from across the country.

Young persons survey

Populus Data Solutions undertook the fieldwork for the young persons survey between 23 and 29 April 2015. The final weighted and unweighted sample size was 1,009. The results were weighted to be nationally representative for Great Britain, taking place in England, Wales and Scotland. The gender was approximately evenly split between male and female, and evenly split across

the age range, with 20 per cent of the sample for respondents of each age between 14 and 18 years old. Approximately 14 per cent of our sample reported receiving FSM either in primary school or secondary school. Table 5 shows what type of primary and secondary school respondents attended.

Table 5   **Types of school respondents to the Populus young persons survey had attended**

	Fee-paying	State (including academies, faith, grammar, and community schools)	Special needs	Other
Primary school	66 (6.5%)	918 (91%)	7	8
Secondary school	70 (6.9%)	914 (90%)	6	12

Most (93 per cent) of the respondents were still in full-time education. Of those who were no longer in full-time education, 55 per cent had left in the last 12 months.

The highest qualification that one or both of respondents' parents or guardians received was GCSEs or Level 2 qualifications (31 per cent), A-levels, highers or BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) (Level 3 qualifications) (26 per cent), undergraduate degree (21 per cent) and Masters degree (12 per cent).

Teacher survey

Schoolzone undertook the fieldwork for our teacher survey between the 20 and 28 May 2015. The final sample size was approximately 800 respondents and included respondents from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These were the demographic and background characteristics of the respondents:

- *Type of teacher*: 38 per cent of respondents were classroom teachers, 30 per cent were subject coordinators or heads of department, 13 per cent were deputy heads or assistant heads, 8 per cent were other, 5 per cent were heads of year or key stage, 4 per cent were head teachers.

- *Gender*: 67 per cent were female and 31 per cent were male.

- *Teaching experience*: 63 per cent of the teachers had taught for 11 years or more, 24 per cent had taught between 6 and 10 years, 6 per cent had taught for between 3 and 5 years, 3 per cent had taught for less than 12 months, and 2 per cent had taught for between 1 and 2 years.

  These were the characteristics of the schools where the respondents taught:

- *Category of school*: 56 per cent were secondary schools and 29 per cent were primary schools; 2 per cent were infant schools, 3 per cent junior schools, 1 per cent middle schools, 2 per cent sixth form colleges, 3 per all through schools and 2 per cent 'other'.

- *Type of school*: 45 per cent were based in a local-authority-controlled school, 27 per cent in a converter academy, 10 per cent in an independent or fee-paying school, 7 per cent in a sponsored academy, 4 per cent in a special educational needs (SEN) school, 2 per cent in an 'other' school and 1 per cent in a free school.

- *Make-up of school*: 17 per cent of teachers reported that their school had a very mixed ethnic make-up, 33 per cent reported it was somewhat mixed, 37 per cent said it was not very mixed and 11 cent said it was not mixed at all.

- *School results*: 16 per cent were 'well above average', 36 per cent were 'above average', 29 per cent were 'average', 13 per cent were 'below average' and 3 per cent were 'well below average'.

- *Pupil behaviour*: in 33 per cent of schools behaviour was 'very good', in 39 per cent it was 'good', in 20 per cent it was 'acceptable', in 6 per cent it was 'poor' and in 1 per cent it was 'very poor'.

Young people in Scouting survey

The survey of young people in Scouting was disseminated by The Scout Association and carried out in field between 27 April and 19 May 2015. We received 1,172 responses from respondents in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This was the demographic breakdown of respondents:

- *Gender*: 66 per cent were male and 33 per cent were female.

- *Age*: 34 per cent were aged 12–15, 40 per cent were aged 16–18, 14 per cent were aged 19–21 and 10 per cent were aged 22–25.

- *Country*: 9 per cent of the sample was from Scotland, 3 per cent Wales, 2 per cent from Northern Ireland and the remainder from England.

- *Type of education or employment*: 66 per cent were in full-time secondary education, 12 per cent were at university, 9 per cent were full-time employed, 4 per cent were part-time employed, 1.5 per cent were in an apprenticeship and 1.4 per cent were unemployed.

- *FSM*: 12 per cent of the sample reported receiving FSM, while 83 per cent said that they did not receive FSM.

- *Highest qualification of parent or carer*: 32 per cent had a degree, 23 per cent had a level 3 qualification, 15 per cent had a Masters or postgraduate degree, 12 per cent had a level 2 qualification, and 13 per cent did not know.

- *Type of school*: 91 per cent had attended a state school and 6.5 per cent had attended a fee-paying school.

Scout adult volunteers survey

The Scout adult volunteers survey was disseminated by
The Scout Association and in the field from 12 April to
19 May 2015. We received 1,125 responses in total and it
includes respondents from England, Wales, Scotland and
Northern Ireland. This was the demographic breakdown
of respondents:

- *Age*: 55 per cent were aged 35–55 (31 per cent 45–54, 24 per cent
  35–44); 17 per cent were under age 35; 24 per cent over age 55.

- *Gender*: split evenly, with 51 per cent female compared
  with 49 per cent male.

- *Country*: 7 per cent were from Scotland, 3 per cent from
  Wales and approximately 1 per cent from Northern Ireland;
  21 per cent were from the South East of England.

- *Religion*: 72 per cent were Christian, 17 per cent
  were 'non-religious'.

- *Employment*: half were in full-time employment, 16 per cent
  were in part-time employment, 7 per cent were self-employed,
  11 per cent were retired, 5 per cent were 'looking after home
  or family' and 3 per cent were at school or university.

- *Qualifications*: almost half had studied at undergraduate
  (31 per cent) or postgraduate (19 per cent) level; 27 per cent
  reported that their highest level of qualification was at level 3
  qualifications; 15 per cent had level 2 qualifications.

- *Whether employed in education profession*: 34 per cent of adult
  volunteers reported currently (24 per cent) or previously
  (10 per cent) being employed as an education profession.

- *Length of time volunteered with Scouts*: 58 per cent had
  volunteered with Scouts for more than 10 years, 21 per cent
  for 5–10 years, and 18 per cent for 1–5 years.

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Since Nicky Morgan became Education Secretary in July 2014, character education – that which develops capabilities like resilience and empathy – has shot up the agenda. This reflects concerns – from practitioners and employers – that the practice of education has become overly reductive, training students to pass exams but not adequately preparing them for the bigger tests that they will face in life. Simultaneously, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that participation in non-formal learning activities – such as sport, drama and debating, primarily delivered outside the classroom – can help to develop these character attributes.

In this report, Demos presents new attitudinal research that reveals a strong appetite among young people and teachers for more non-formal learning opportunities within the education system. Our research shows that large numbers of young people in the UK – particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds – do not have enough opportunity to take part in non-formal learning and are therefore at risk of not developing key skills important for success.

Learning by Doing concludes with a series of recommendations for how this opportunity gap can be addressed, through embedding non-formal learning into the education system. In particular, reforms to the curriculum, school accountability and teaching training could encourage schools to provide more opportunities for non-formal learning. It also calls on schools to take a lead in providing these activities, proactively forging partnerships to increase opportunities for young people and accounting for it when allocating workload. These measures will help to close the opportunity gap, and in turn, ensure all young people can develop the skills they need to succeed.

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