



SOLIHULL

Partnerships, Public Benefit & Charitable Activity at Solihull School



AMBITION - OPPORTUNITY - COMMUNITY



SOLIHULL

Our Motto: Perseverantia

Our Aims: Ambition, Opportunity, Community

Our Key Strategic Vision:

- **To maintain and enhance our position as an ambitious academic day school**
- **To become increasingly confident and well-known for the success of our pupils**
- **To become increasingly a place of innovation and creativity**

Beyond the School Gates



It has been my great pleasure to serve as the Headmaster of Solihull School since January 2023. Solihull is the leading academic independent co-educational day school in the Midlands. This has been a seat of learning for nearly 500 years and Solihull is undoubtedly one of the great schools of England. The school has countless strengths, not least its dedicated staff, its impressive cohort of pupils and its committed parent body.

One area of focus over recent years, and one which is also of growing importance, has been the world beyond the school gates. That is to say, the world in which our pupils live and the world in which they will one day work, where they will have neighbours and communities of their own. I do not see this school as an examinations hothouse – this is a place of learning in the widest sense.

The purpose of this short booklet is to offer you a snapshot of the activity which is already underway in terms of partnerships outside of school and also to signpost some of the next steps which are planned or already in train.

Ours is a privileged learning environment and yet the pupils at Solihull School are aware of their privilege and that they have ample opportunity during their time here with us to repay some of that privilege in service of others. When Solihull was founded back in Elizabethan times, the principles of generosity and service were as important then as they are today. This school has long been a community which encompasses practical notions of service as well as a being a powerful seat of learning, knowledge and understanding.

In the twenty-first century, our values have been distilled down to three key nouns: Ambition, Opportunity and Community. Aspects of each of these three are evidenced in this booklet about our programme of engagement with our neighbours. It is our role to prepare young people for their future lives and it is important that our pupils learn how to be a force for good in the world. I am very proud of the pupils at Solihull and it is a delight to me that we have so very many partnerships across Great Britain and the world.

Charles Fillingham, Executive Headmaster



Volunteering



We have made a commitment that every pupil who passes through Solihull School will offer his or her time in voluntary work to the wider community. This is a vital life lesson and life-skill. To learn to give one's time to others brings benefits in both directions, because it strengthens bonds across society and brings together those who might normally live separate lives. Schools play a vital role in equipping young people to become thoughtful, generous adults who we hope will make up the leaders, organisers and servant-hearted citizens of the future.

At Solihull School, pupil volunteering begins in earnest in Year 9 through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and up to 50 pupils continue to volunteer until the completion of the Gold Award in Sixth Form. Many of our pupils support younger children in primary schools, youth groups or sports training camps and others work in charity shops or even pet rescue centres. Some volunteer at churches, mosques or synagogues, and others support the organisation of the school's charity fundraising initiatives. Students regularly volunteer at our link school Reynolds Cross supporting classroom learning and play. What is more, some of our musicians have offered their talents to provide entertainment at the Reynolds Cross summer fete.



"The opportunity to volunteer at Reynolds Cross special school is truly enriching. It empowers me and the other volunteers to make a meaningful impact on the lives of pupils, deepening our understanding of others. It has also honed our communication skills and fostered a strong sense of community."

Sixth Form student Daleen shares her experience of volunteering at Reynolds Cross.



Next steps for 2024 and 2025:

- To reintroduce volunteering as a Sixth Form weekly Enrichment option
- To formalise links with St Alphege Infant and Primary School, and other state primary schools, so that more of our Sixth Form students are able to act in support of teachers in the classroom with reading and play activities
- To expand the range of volunteering opportunities with Marie Curie Hospice – a most valued neighbour of Solihull School and one in which volunteering promises to be a life changing experience. We are already seeking Sixth Form volunteers for roles in catering, gardening and client club facilitation. Our Art Department and pupils are planning to set up the Christmas grotto for Marie Curie clients' children, and we will be undertaking supermarket collections on behalf of the hospice. We are in active contact with the hospice and are hopeful that this link can go from strength to strength
- To explore opportunities with the Jericho Foundation – a Midlands based charity and social enterprise which works to support those marginalised in society

Partnerships with other schools

Solihull School has a wide range of state school partnerships and the number is growing year-by-year. It is an important part of our mission that we share some of our time, our energy and our resources with our neighbours. The most significant areas of work are in academic matters, such as the Oxbridge Network, the Shakespeare Festival, engineering and AI events which link us to a total of 24 state schools. Also of some significance are opportunities which we have created to offer our facilities and venues to local schools at no charge – schools make good use of our swimming pool, our theatre and performance spaces, our pitches and our fields.

Case studies

- Solihull School has a teacher with responsibility for links to Tile Cross Academy. Over the last five years, the two schools have established curriculum links, pathways into our Sixth Form and joint educational activities, such as the Combined Cadet Force. This link includes weekly CCF activities and other camps, as well as a cadet trip to Boston, USA and time spent together on other cadet camps.
- Solihull School has considerable experience and success with applications to Oxford and Cambridge. Indeed, 20 or so pupils have made the leap from Solihull to these prestigious universities over the last couple of years. The Oxbridge Network is a dynamic group which shares this expertise. Our staff offer preparation sessions; thought-provoking lectures; mock interviews for applicants and training for the teachers who support them. The network also provides opportunities to visit Cambridge University annually, arranged through a link with Girton College.
- Solihull School is working in close collaboration with Reynolds Cross special school across a range of curriculum and co-curricular areas. Reynolds Cross caters for pupils with severe to profound learning difficulties and their students have visited Solihull School to use sport and music facilities. Solihull School pupils go to Reynolds Cross to assist in a variety of lessons and activities. Solihull pupils sometimes provide musical support and performances at key events at Reynolds Cross, such as Sports Day, and raise funds for projects such as for new playground equipment. Our grounds team have helped run the gardening club. We are actively looking for new ways to engage with and support our partner school.
- Solihull School is forging greater links with St Alphege Infant and Junior School, a little over 200 yards from our own school gates. This is a new partnership and one that we are really excited to develop. Use of our Prep School swimming pool each week has already been put in place, and groups of Year 8 pupils have been facilitating wellbeing lessons.
- Solihull Sings is a well-established collaboration with a number of local primary schools. One of our music teachers rehearses choirs across the borough and all the children come together for a spectacular performance in the Bushell Hall.



View our case studies on the
ISC Schools Together website
www.schoolstogether.org

Next steps for 2024 and 2025:

- To replicate the success and format of Solihull Sings through a new initiative called “Solihull Dances”
- To strengthen our links with our closest neighbours geographically
- To invite school leaders from across the region to a panel debate on the education policy hosted by Michael Buerk
- To offer up to 200 places at our Shakespeare, engineering and AI events to pupils from local state schools

Bursaries

The governors of Solihull School attach great importance to providing financial assistance to individuals of ability who cannot afford the fees. For this reason, the bulk of the school's income from its endowment funds is given over to bursary provision. In the last academic year, funding for bursaries exceeded £1,000,000 for the fifth year in succession. Pupils were supported with either fully-funded places or with part-bursaries according to need.

In addition to the long-established support, full bursaries have also been awarded to pupils who joined us unexpectedly from Ukraine in 2022 as a result of the war. The governors have made a commitment to these young people until they are able to return to their home country and the school community has been enriched by their presence in Solihull.

Many former pupils and many parents of current pupils support the Silhillian Fund which was established in 2018. Over the last five years, this fund has received donations in excess of £2,500,000. The motivation for donors is to offer a Solihull education to young people whose family circumstances mean that they could not possibly afford to pay the fees themselves and this work is coordinated through the Development and Alumni Relations Office at school.



Total value of bursaries
and scholarships*
£1,380,746



Number of pupils
supported with bursary
funding: 119



Number of donors from
the Solihull School
community: 148

For more information please contact: Lucy Lunt, Director of Development and Alumni Relations luntl@solsch.org.uk

**Naturally, the governors are aware of the requirements of Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 which requires them to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. Indeed, the strategic decision has been taken at Solihull to offer bursaries which go above and beyond the norm in terms of percentages of free places awarded.*



*Akirha Skeete-Simpson
(Pole 2019 - 2021)*

“Receiving a Silhillian Fund Bursary removed obstacles and provided me with experiences that I could never have dreamt of. Thanks to the help, encouragement and dedicated teaching I received at Solihull I went on to study Law at Durham University. My ambition is to become a barrister and, as soon as I can, I will become a donor to The Silhillian Fund. I want to pass on my good fortune to those who come after me. If you value your experience at Solihull, can there be a better gift than to help someone else attain the same opportunities whatever their background? To those who have already given, thank you, you’ve changed the course of my life.”

“Our boys really enjoyed their time at Solihull. As well as achieving academic results that enabled them to go to universities of their choice, they benefited hugely from a wide range of sporting and cultural activities. None of this would have been possible without significant financial support from the school, for which we continue to be extremely grateful. George went to Durham to read Mathematics and is now an actor; Arthur studied Art at Lancaster and is now working in production at the BBC; and Oscar graduated from Bath University with a Masters in Chemistry. We are proud of what they have achieved, but more importantly of who they have become. The school played an enormously significant role in both of these aspects.”

Stephen Haynes, father of George (Pole 2002 – 2009), Arthur (Pole 2004 – 2011) and Oscar (Pole 2008 - 2015)

Next steps for 2024 and 2025:

- To increase our bursary provision by a further £2.5 million by 2025
- To publish an impact report outlining the importance of The Silhillian Fund
- To strengthen our relationships with local primary schools in order to identify future bursary recipients
- To increase the number of sponsored places across the school by engaging with individuals, foundations and groups



*Michael Buerk
(Shenstone 1955 - 1965)*

“I was at Solihull from 1955 to 1965, and for most of that time I was on a bursary. Solihull School gave me the most marvellous start in life. Bursaries don’t just benefit children from less privileged backgrounds: they are in the best interest of the school and the wider community.”

“In 1972 if I hadn’t received a bursary I would have been unable to take up my place at Solihull. It was truly a life-changing experience, not just in terms of my education and subsequent career, but also for the lifelong friendships that I formed. The impact that a bursary can have cannot be underestimated.”

*Tim Farazmand
(Windsor 1972 – 1979)*

Charity

Charity fundraising is an important ongoing focus at Solihull School. It not only enables us to provide vital support to a range of organisations – locally, nationally and internationally – but has also brought our community together in common purpose. Members of staff, both teachers and non-teachers, are also heavily engaged with charitable fundraising and see this as an important part of the school's corporate social responsibility.

Each year in recent times, the total sums raised by Solihull School have exceeded £50,000 and, on occasion, £100,000. But our charitable support is not always monetary. We have organised countless collections of other items needed by the wider community. The school community rises to the occasion every time and pupils and staff mobilise to count, pack and dispatch. Huge highlights in the Prep School calendar are the annual Charity Week in October and their Megathalon event in May. All manner of sales and games take place and pupils have the opportunity to pitch ideas for specific charities that receive the monies raised.

Our school community gives with purpose and knowledge, and we invite representatives from our partner charities in to school assemblies to talk about their work, or for our pupils themselves to present to their peers about the various initiatives.

Projects include:

- A 50km sponsored walk in aid of medical projects - namely the carrying out of cataract surgeries - in Sri Lanka
- The collection of toiletries and period products for the Hygiene Bank
- A pupil-run Christmas Fair for The Latin American Foundation for the Future (LAFF)
- A Year 9 sponsored sleep-out with an educational focus on homelessness
- The collection of emergency relief items for Ukraine in co-ordination with other regional groups
- Marking World Book Day with the collection of books and stationery items to send to Malawi as part of a Birmingham Diocese partnership
- A variety of fundraising initiatives over several years, as well as Harvest collections, for regional homeless charities
- Weekly chapel collections in support of a range of organisations from Marie Curie to Macmillan, the DEC and The Children's Society





Next steps for 2024 and 2025:

- To empower the new Deputy Head of School who has special responsibility for charity and community in order to give greater ownership to the pupil body for decisions about charity partners and for them to gain more experience in leading projects
- To further embed a culture of giving and generosity by forming a charity committee amongst the pupil body
- To arrange for charitable bucket collections at the end of school concerts and plays whenever they take place
- To give greater prominence to the importance of charity work through regular updates at assemblies and through inviting speakers in from the sector



Economic Impact

It can sometimes be a stretch financially to pay for your child's place at Solihull School. As you may know, the school has been established as a charitable foundation for many years. This means that every penny of surplus is reinvested back into the Prep School and the Senior School, either into facilities or resourcing for the benefit of current pupils and also for generations to come.

Pupils who are educated at Solihull School come at no cost to the exchequer and therefore create a considerable saving to government.

In 2022, the Independent Schools' Council commissioned Oxford Economics, a leader in global forecasting and quantitative analysis, to evaluate the impact of independent schools on the UK economy. Their analysts calculated the impact for both the whole independent sector, and for ISC member schools in particular. The study found that independent schools contribute £13.7bn to UK GDP in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA). This is a greater contribution to GDP than the UK's largest defence, aerospace, and security company, BAE Systems.

It further calculated that 302,910 jobs were supported either directly or indirectly by independent schools, which is more than the total number of jobs in the city of Liverpool. In addition, the analysis concluded that independent schools contributed £3.5bn annually in tax revenue. This is equivalent to £129 per UK household or the annual pay of 108,000 NHS nurses.

In choosing to fund their children's education and not take up a state school place, independent school parents save British taxpayers an estimated £3.5bn each year. This takes into account both the recurrent and the capital costs that would occur were the 600,000 pupils currently attending independent schools to enter state education, and is the equivalent of funding the construction of more than 20,000 new affordable homes.

Oxford Economics has also evaluated the contribution to the economy made by the increased academic attainment levels of ISC pupils. Based on OECD analyses, if ISC schools had not existed for the past 70 years, it is estimated that UK GDP would be £62bn lower per annum.

Here are some headline figures for Solihull School:



Total contribution to UK
GDP £35,684,536



Total number of UK
jobs supported - 639



Total amount of UK
tax paid £4,541,747



Savings to the UK
taxpayer £10,825,191

Next steps for 2024 and 2025:

- To engage with political leaders nationally and locally in order to raise awareness of Solihull School's good contribution to society at large and to the economy in particular
- To support national leaders in understanding the impact of proposed tax hikes on independent schools. There are currently no countries in the world which impose VAT on education, for example
- To explain to national and local political leaders that school fees are paid by parents and grandparents out of taxed income

Solihull in Solihull

As the name suggests, Solihull School is squarely rooted in the town and it has been ever since its foundation in 1560. Elements of the school badge which was introduced in the 1880s, most notably the black greyhound of the Greswolde family, are represented on the current and former versions of the coat of arms of the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull which has itself been in use since 1974. Visitors to St Alphege Church will see the familiar crest of the school carved and painted onto one of the front pews in the nave. The Greswolde coat of arms can also be seen on the walls.

In the past, many governors of Solihull School have also served as councillors for the town and many alumni of the school have gone on to become councillors over the years. Most notably in recent times is Mr George Hill who served as Chairman of the Board of Governors at the school from 1966 to 1982 and who was also leader of the Council for many years.

In 2024 Solihull will celebrate 70 years of attaining the Mayoral Charter. The first Mayor was called Mr R D Cooper and, in 1954, he was, at the same time, Chairman of Governors at Solihull School.

Solihull School's town centre location enables it to be part of the 'Business Improvement District' and the school enjoys good relations with the BID. In the summer of 2023, the new Headmaster was featured in their magazine and asked about his educational vision as well as his journey to headship and his favourite book. The school had a stall at the Solihull BID Food Festival in September 2023 - cookies baked in our school kitchen were given out to passers-by with a friendly smile.





The Headmaster of Solihull School engages with civic leaders, politicians and dignitaries as a representative of schools and education. Recently, he has met councillors, the Mayor and local MPs, and also attended ceremonies and events at St Alphege Church and the Council House.

Solihull School has developed a strong reputation for Holocaust education and has hosted a number of plays, talks, visits and presentations. Naturally, school pupils from across the borough are invited to attend, and the invitation also extends to faith leaders, community groups and members of the public. We see educational leadership as an important act of service to our borough.



Next steps for 2024 and 2025:

- To work with Solihull BID to support the annual Solihull Jazz Festival and the Solihull Food Festival in 2024
- To offer a talk by Solihull School's archivist about the connection between Solihull School and the borough in the Library Theatre in March 2024
- To engage with the Leader of Solihull Council, the Mayor and other civic leaders as a way of playing our part more fully in the town that shares our name
- To develop a series of musical concerts and recitals offered to the town at local venues

