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Blackpool schools bring in high flyers to inspire pupils



Primary Futures event at Stanley Primary School. Bethany Rees, aged 10 with junior doctor Thomas Cassidy

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Teachers have launched a bold mission to galvanise Blackpool's young schoolchildren and improve the town's poor record in the classroom.

Less than half of Blackpool schools achieved five GCSE grades A*-C, well below the national average.

Now school leaders have enlisted the help of the resort's high-flyers to inspire youngsters into career paths they didn't dream were possible – and end the town's decades-old story of under-performance.

Volunteers – including academics, lawyers, firefighters and doctors – have gone into schools across the resort to speak to youngsters about their careers to help motivate the pupils to think big.

Primary Futures was launched in Blackpool last year with St Nicholas Primary School head Andy Mellor at the helm.

A pool of 56 volunteers has now grown to more than 600.

And Mr Mellor has seen first hand what their input can do.

He said: "At one school a member of staff made me aware of one pupil who had been very difficult to engage educationally, to get involved in learning.

"After meeting with the volunteers he was running around the playground telling everyone he was going to be a doctor.

"Now the key is keeping that motivation, that reason to keep learning."

Mr Mellor has been amazed not only by the growth of the programme in the last 12 months, attracting new schools and senior national figures.

He said: "It is testimony to the impact of this programme that we had Lord Lucas travelling up from London for the day as well as senior national officials from the NAHT including General Secretary Russell Hobby."

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comments



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Bispham Endowed CE Primary School, Hawes Side Academy, Stanley Primary, St John Vianney and Anchorsholme Academy all took part.

And Mr Mellor hopes the scheme will continue to grow.

He said: "We had five schools this year, from something which started at St Nicholas last year.

"But we have 20 primary schools this could be rolled out to.

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