

JULY 2018



THE UNDISCOVERED ENTREPRENEUR

DRIVING BUSINESS SKILLS IN UK SCHOOLS



INTRODUCTION

One of the most fulfilling elements to my job is the ability to meet and work with young people who are starting out on their entrepreneurial journey. Often, they are nervous about their abilities, lacking in confidence and fearful that their ideas will not be successful.

These are completely natural concerns for anyone starting a business, whether you are aged 16 or 65; the fear of failure haunts us all. Yet with risk comes reward and I have repeatedly seen entrepreneurial experiences bring out the best in young people, helping shape their character and develop their confidence.

Our economy is built on the bright business ideas of men and women who took a chance. Last year there was a record 5.7 million private sector businesses at the start of 2017. According to the Federation of Small Businesses, this is an increase of 197,000 since 2016, and 2.2 million more than in 2000.

Whether it's a venture capital backed tech start-up or a new cupcake delivery service, businesses bring out the best in people. The hard work and personal investment drive job creation and make up a significant portion of the country's GDP.

Yet amidst all these success stories, we have to come to terms with the fact that not enough children in schools are getting the support they need to begin their entrepreneurial journey.

Despite high quality teaching standards and a strong school system, we need to be offering more to the next generation to help them reach their full potential.

Personally I believe that every pupil deserves a chance to improve their skills, confidence and business acumen. To achieve this we need to be offering access to new business experiences, increasing work experience and offering mentoring from role models.

At Young Enterprise, we believe in open and honest conversations about how to improve education experiences for young people.

That's why we've commissioned this report, which contains independent polling of parents and in-depth interviews with teachers about their views on how to spread entrepreneurialism and help the next generation reach their full potential.



Michael Mercieca, CEO,
Young Enterprise

METHODOLOGY

Young Enterprise commissioned independent polling company Censuswide to survey 1,004 parents with children under the age of 16 across the UK in June 2018.

Additionally, Young Enterprise conducted in-depth interviews with 10 teachers from across the country in May 2018 asking questions around how entrepreneurialism can be developed in schools and recording their attitudes to pupil performance and personal development.

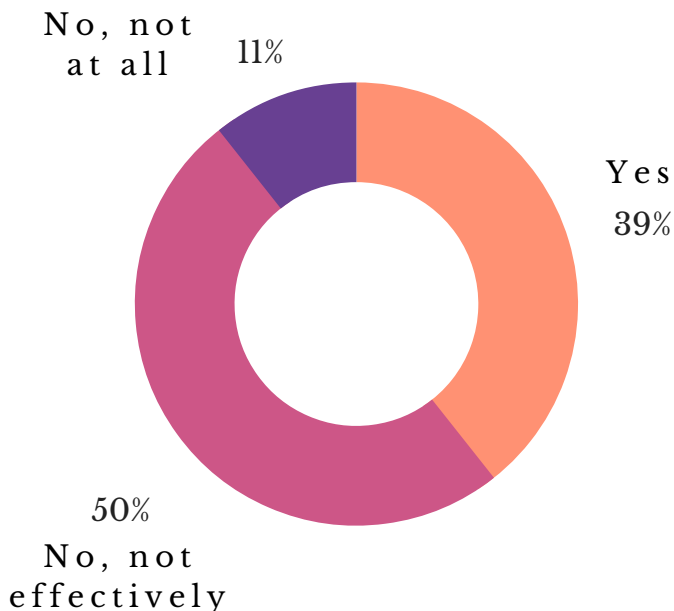
All teachers interviewed were involved in the Young Enterprise Tenner challenge, which is sponsored by Business Growth Fund (BGF).

As part of the challenge young people are pledged £10 from the Tenner Bank and use this start-up capital to get their enterprise off the ground. Participants have one month to make as much impact and profit as they can.



KEY FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

Do you feel that the education system is effectively preparing your child for the world of work?



26%

Want more financial education

17%

Want more work experience

14%

Want smaller classes

For this report, we wanted to bring together the views of both teachers and parents, to gain a real insight into how the education system is performing in terms of preparing young people for the world of work.

The first part of this was to interview 1,004 parents with children under the age of 16 in the UK via independent polling company Censuswide.

Our survey asked parents if they felt the education system is effectively preparing their child for the world of work, with over half (61%) giving a negative response. Responding to this question, 50% said no, not effectively and 11% said no, not at all. In contrast only 39% said yes.

We also asked parents what single thing they would most like to see change in the education system to better prepare their child for the world of work. 26% said more financial education around loans and credit cards, 17% said more work experience and 14% asked for smaller classes.

The findings make it clear that the majority of parents have genuine concerns about the education system failing to properly prepare the next generation for the world of work. The data also suggests that parents have a very clear idea of how to improve the situation, with over a quarter requesting more financial education.

Additionally, a significant portion of parents want more work experience opportunities and small classes to improve learning.

DRIVING ENTREPRENEURIALISM ON THE CURRICULUM

"There is very little work on entrepreneurship in the new Business GCSE and if anything it has been watered down from previous years"

The national curriculum is designed to deliver set standards of learning in the UK and ensure that every child enjoys a fully rounded education. Nobody can doubt the commitment of teaching professionals in delivering this service, which helps prepare young people for many life challenges.

However, there have been concerns in recent years that the race to deliver academic achievements is turning our schools into exam factories. Whilst nobody is saying that good results are a bad thing, it is vital that we also equip pupils with the necessary soft skills they need to thrive in the modern, digital economy.

To explore this topic further, we asked teaching professionals to give us their personal opinions about whether the current national curriculum does enough to encourage entrepreneurialism in schools. The vast majority of responses to this question were negative, one teacher told us, "I'm not sure that it does, as things move increasingly towards meeting targets in government schemes."

Another was more critical with their feedback, "Not at all! There is very little work on entrepreneurship in the new Business GCSE and if anything it has been watered down from previous years. The school delivers very little on entrepreneurship. There is some work on finance and running a budget but that is it. One teacher pointed out that entrepreneurial awareness was largely promoted outside of the classroom."

He said, "Students do some work in Wellbeing (PHSE) on work related learning and we offer Business Studies as a GCSE. Other than that entrepreneurialism is dealt with outside the classroom via Young Enterprise, and careers events."

The teachers we spoke to also had clear ideas about how to improve the curriculum. One told us, "There is scope to incorporate this theme into younger year curriculums, to really build interest and provide early exposure to creativity and entrepreneurship."

Another teacher said, "There should be an enterprise section in every subject. Students should have to complete 5 days on enterprise activities over the course of a year. There is very little compulsory enterprise that takes place in schools."



CONFIDENCE AND ROLE MODELS

"An obvious role model would be Sir James Dyson. He's British, supports UK manufacturing and businesses."

In the social media age, role models play a much larger part in shaping the way young people develop and make life choices. It is clear that access to inspirational business figures and mentoring can have a positive impact on the career prospects of young people.

We asked teachers which role models they felt had the most influence over pupils in schools. One said, "An obvious one would be Sir James Dyson. He's British, supports UK manufacturing and businesses and is a great campaigner for the need in the UK for more designers, entrepreneurs and inventors. Another high profile individual would be Elon Musk or Richard Branson."

Another suggested that video sharing sites were having a big impact. They elaborated, "YouTube role models seem to be on the increase but sports people are the most common. Particularly people like David Beckham who have ventured into business/celebrity status."

Teachers we interviewed felt that pupils currently have strong levels of personal confidence. One said, "They amaze me at Young Enterprise events and I think a lot of them are waiting for the opportunity to express themselves."

Another emphasised a programme to ensure pupils experienced scenarios dealing with public issues.

She told us, "Pupils are regularly exposed to visitors to the school, through giving school tours, performing in plays and concerts, and our meet and greets where pupils sit with visitors and guests at school, these provide good examples of having the confidence to speak with others and hold conversations about real world issues.

"We also have a good culture of regularly entering into external competitions, and encouraging pupils to participate, alongside careers fairs and guest speakers."

Another teacher stated, "I think public speaking should be tackled across the curriculum. Using examinations can motivate students to do well. All areas of the curriculum deal with self-confidence in some way. Assemblies would be a good place to look at entrepreneurship."



SOCIAL MEDIA AND SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

"We'd like to see a coordinated national scheme, with written resources, posters, presentations and videos would be great."

We also explored attitudes to social media and whether teachers believe it is having a positive or negative impact on pupils.

One told us, "More education is needed around how to get the best from social media professionally, and how to use it responsibly, this is needed in order to navigate the negative aspects and pitfalls of this media outlet."

As a teacher I use Twitter and Instagram an enormous amount to promote and showcase work, and to tweet links to websites and videos that might be useful to their studies."

Another said, "Negative! Completely negative! Social media creates anxiety and students feel more pressure."

We also asked teachers to tell us what resources they felt they would need to improve entrepreneurialism on the national curriculum. One replied, "More money."

Others called for more online resources for sharing of opportunities and materials. They said, "Group work experience opportunities can also be useful where a number of students attend and are given a task to perform. If these run in the school holidays it does not affect curriculum time which is very pressurised."

They added, "I think a one-stop shop website showing a range of opportunities would be useful. I like Student Ladder but think it could be expanded, particularly the work experience section."

One told us, "We'd like to see a coordinated national scheme, with written resources, posters, presentations and videos, that would be great."



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

OUR FINAL THOUGHTS

This report is only snapshot of some of the concerns UK teachers have around the need for increasing entrepreneurialism on the national curriculum. Yet in our interviews we have found a consensus on the key issue of the education system failing to prepare the next generation for employment and entrepreneurship.

We have also discovered that many parents have concerns around how the education system is failing to prepare the next generation for the world of work.

Below are our suggested recommendations based on the insights we gained during the discussions with teachers.

1.) Promote entrepreneurialism as part of the national curriculum through mandatory PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, Economic) education

Teachers should be given increased resources to experiment and offer access to mentoring, public speaking and confidence building exercises

2.) Increase work experience programmes

Organising group work experience programmes outside of school time to bring pupils together and explore how companies operate.

3.) Frame entrepreneurial development around role models

Young people are repeatedly exposed to business and celebrity role models via social media channels. Lessons and projects could be explained through using these examples to illustrate how businesses are designed, built and developed.

