

Making a Difference | At a Glance

Building Lasting Partnerships: How the 'Adopt' a Cluster model connects schools with businesses and strengthens communities

The 'Adopt' a Cluster model, developed by the Primary Business Partnership (PBP), brings together groups of primary schools with a dedicated business partner to create a sustained, targeted programme of career-related learning. This approach ensures that activities are tailored to the specific needs of the schools while allowing businesses to focus their resources for maximum impact.

Companies such as **William Hare** and **Severfield**, who previously had no physical presence in Cumbria, have embraced this model as a way to connect meaningfully with local communities. By adopting clusters in the region, they have been able to build strong relationships, deliver regular, high-quality sessions, and make a lasting difference.

Making an Impact

- Model: 'Adopt' a Cluster links schools with dedicated business partners.
- Pupils: Build confidence, teamwork, and career awareness.
- Businesses: Structured outreach, stronger school links.
- Community: Long-term partnerships strengthen local ties.



**BUILDING LASTING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND
INDUSTRY**

Impact on Pupils

The cluster approach has allowed pupils to benefit from repeated, meaningful engagement with the same organisations, helping to reinforce learning and build familiarity with different career pathways.

One teacher commented:

“Having the same people come back means the children build a real connection. They remember what they’ve learned and can go deeper each time.”

Pupils have reported increased confidence, improved teamwork, and greater awareness of careers in industries such as engineering, manufacturing, and construction, fields they previously knew little about.

Impact on Businesses

For businesses, adopting a cluster has provided a clear, structured way to focus their outreach. It enables them to understand the schools’ priorities, co-create activities that align with the curriculum, and measure their impact more effectively.

A representative from Severfield noted:

“We’ve been able to design activities that really matter to the schools, rather than guessing what might be useful. It’s made our engagement so much more impactful.”



Impact on the Community

By creating long-term partnerships, the ‘Adopt’ a Cluster approach strengthens the link between education and the local communities. It enables young people the opportunity to meet positive role models from a variety of sectors and shows them that there are exciting opportunities within their own communities.

As one teacher summed up:

“Without PBP and this approach, our children simply wouldn’t have these opportunities. It’s not just one workshop - it’s an ongoing relationship that builds skills, confidence, and aspirations.”

Lasting Value

The ‘Adopt’ a Cluster model creates lasting, mutually beneficial partnerships - pupils gain knowledge, confidence, and insight into careers, while businesses strengthen community ties and leave a meaningful legacy in the region.

