

*Most of the focus on children's education since the pandemic began has been on the disruption caused to academic progress; but young people have missed out on more than time in the classroom. They have missed out on the extracurricular activities, field trips and cultural experiences that make up a holistic education. However, it seems that the value of cultural capital to children is starting to be noticed.*

*Wes Streeting MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Child Poverty launched the Labour Party's new ambition "Ten by ten" – ten life-changing extracurricular experiences by the age of 10. This followed analysis by the Labour Party showing that participation in extracurricular activities such as, sport, music and drama has been in decline over the last decade, especially for primary school aged children. Then, Sir Michael Barber, an advisor to the Prime Minister, proposed that children take days out of the school year to work through a "bucket list" of cultural outings. Sir Barber posits that children benefit from visiting museums, theatres and concerts and that doing so will help them become well rounded individuals.*

*As the CEO of The Pioneer Academy, multi academy trust I'm glad conversations about cultural capital are becoming mainstream. Ensuring that our pupils are exposed to a range of experiences during their time with us has been a key focus at our trust for some years now following the introduction of our Pioneer Pupil Passports. We developed the Pioneer Pupil Passport programme three years ago following extensive consultation with children, staff, and senior leaders in all our schools.*

*The Key Stage One passport outlines seven activities to be completed by the age of seven (Seven by Seven), including visiting a farm, observing life cycles, creating a piece of art for exhibition, building a den in a forest, and making a boat and floating it on a river. The Key Stage Two passport, which is eleven activities to be accomplished by the age of eleven (Eleven by Eleven), includes visiting a beach, castle, and art gallery, cooking a healthy meal, performing Shakespeare, learning a non-curriculum sport, such as horse riding and visiting famous London landmarks.*

*We endeavour to provide these activities at no cost to pupils, where that is not viable, we ensure that only a nominal fee is charged. Our trust board has released a minimum of £55k to reduce the costs of trips to parents across our schools, and more money will be found if needed. We want every child to have the chance to get a taste of the world around them, to see and do things that they wouldn't usually or go to places they wouldn't normally go.*

*We want our pupils to become lifelong learners. As a trust we have put the determination to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional, and physical development of our pupils at the centre of everything we do. We truly believe that by doing this we can properly prepare pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of later life.*

*Enjoyable visits and inspiring visitors are an entitlement of every child within our schools, and we actively encourage creativity and innovation. I have seen how curiosity is sparked in children when they are given the chance to experience new things. Engaging in cultural pursuits not only enriches the lives of children it also gives them confidence to engage in unfamiliar settings later in life. I am glad that politicians are starting to talk about everything that can be gained outside of the classroom, and I hope that all children have access to something like the Pioneer Pupil Passport soon.*