

Meaningful Learning Experiences

Strategic Commitment	✓	Part of a pilot supported by a large academy trust
Curriculum Provision	✓	A 'dry' topic in year 8 History
Employer Partnerships	\checkmark	Input and feedback from the local MP
Reflective Young People	\checkmark	Helping to develop a range of skills
Informed Career Choices	✓	Giving an insight into the world and work of politics

Member of Parliament helps year 8 students put a historic issue into a modern context

Year 8 students at Four Dwellings Academy in Birmingham follow a scheme of work about 'The Stuarts' in their History studies. The teacher's brief for this project stated that, 'Of all topics we cover, this is probably the one that the kids struggle with most. It can be dry at times and this can cause a slight dip in engagement.' He also hoped that, 'Their interest in history would be deepened and I'm always keen to promote an enthusiasm for the subject in KS3.'

The final topic covered in the scheme of work was 'The importance of the Acts of Union' and an outline plan for the project suggested, 'The recent election result and Brexit raise fresh questions about whether it's the end-of-the-line for the 'Union' in Great Britain. Based on their knowledge of C17th History and current affairs, students will present a balanced conclusion about the right way forward.'

Local Member of Parliament, Preet Kaur Gill, was invited to visit the school and hear the students' presentations and respond, explaining her role and her views on the topical issue. Delivery of the topic was planned, with a date fixed for the visit ... but then Covid-19 closed the school to the majority of students.

In spite this setback, the MP wrote a letter to the students, saying, 'I remain interested in your views about if and how the union that was agreed in 17th Century is still relevant in 21st Century, post-coronavirus Britain.' A selection of the students' work was sent to her, to which she recorded a short video message of congratulation and encouragement.

Benefits for the Students

- 'I've included a good sample of the work we received there are more submissions to possibly be sent over, but I didn't want to take up Preet's entire day! The kids generally really enjoyed engaging with something a bit different and having the opportunity to share their ideas with a Member of Parliament.'
- 'The students involved were incredibly engaged with a topic which has been a struggle to grasp in previous years.'

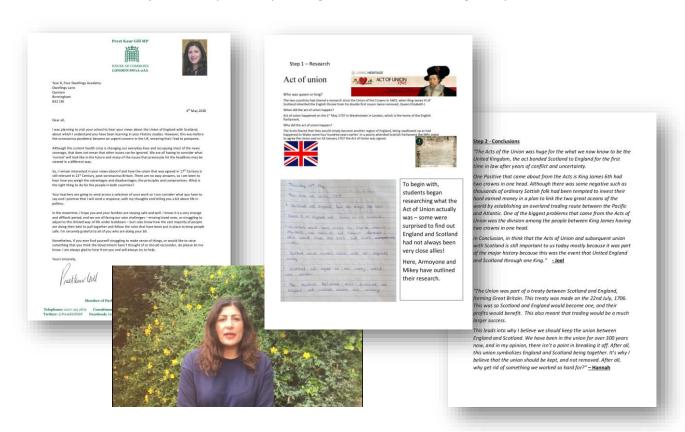


Benefits for the School

- 'Framing a tricky historical issue in a context of what is happening in the world right now has allowed the kids to probe deeper into debates and improve their understanding of complex issues. They are now much more comfortable articulating their ideas on this topic too.'
- 'I'd love to do the same again next year, and possibly expand our work into other areas of the History curriculum!'

Benefits for the Employer

- 'There are no easy answers, so I am keen to hear how you weigh the advantages and disadvantages, the principles and compromises. What is the right thing to do for the people in both countries?'
- '... another project for you to think about is what does devolution giving more power to people where they live look like?'
- 'I have to say, the level of your work was absolutely outstanding, it was wonderful to read, and I look forward to personally coming into school and meeting with you.'



A letter from the local MP encouraged year 8 students to learn about 'The importance of the Acts of Union', as part of History studies about The Stuarts. Preet Kaur Gill MP sent a short video message of congratulation after seeing their work, which was completed during the Covid-19 lock-down.

