

United Kingdom: Primary Futures

Empowering young people to begin career thinking early, and actively seeking to broaden career-related knowledge and interests.

Launched in 2015, [Primary Futures](#) is a programme of [Education and Employers](#), an independent UK-based charity, developed with the National Association for Head Teachers, the professional body that represents school leaders working in primary. The programme provides primary-aged children with an opportunity to meet and interact with professionals from a wide and diverse range of careers and backgrounds. With young people developing assumptions and sometimes unspoken expectations about work from an early age, the goal of Primary Futures is to broaden their horizons, help challenge stereotypes, and show them what is possible at an early age before they can begin to rule out certain career aspirations.

Primary Futures began as an initiative built around volunteers reading to children, but over time, has evolved to focus primarily on making it easy for schools to connect with role models from the world of work. Primary Futures connects UK primary schools for free to people from a wide range of jobs and backgrounds via a secure online database of volunteers – ‘from apprentices to CEOs, archaeologists to zoologists’. The programme has now been adopted by one quarter of all UK primary schools.

One Primary Futures event that is particularly popular is ‘[What’s My Line?](#)’. In this event, a group of 4-6 volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds and professions assemble in a panel and answer ‘yes or no’ questions from an audience of schoolchildren who attempt to guess the panellists’ professions. Towards the end of the event, after many wrong guesses from the audience, the volunteers reveal their professions – which are often very different from what the children had imagined. This exercise helps challenge assumptions as well as enables primary schoolchildren to begin career thinking early.

To find out more about Primary Futures, please visit primaryfutures.org.