

Gavin Egan, a music teacher from Springs Academy, also heads up Enterprise at a school that has been part of the BiG Challenge since it first started.



'Performing Arts and Enterprise, together, formed the specialism at this school. There still remains a commitment to ensure young people get some big opportunities to develop their enterprising skills through this academy. We want to make sure that, when a student comes to Sheffield Springs Academy, apart from developing the academic skills, they also develop the life skills to flourish and thrive in the modern economy and workplace.'

'Giving young people the idea that, while getting a job in the traditional sense is important, there are other possibilities out there. It is possible to create your own business and give yourself a bright future in that way. So, it's about opening new avenues and doorways to children and giving them the strong skills that will help them to become independent and take control of their own lives – to search out opportunities, rather than waiting for them to come to them.'

'For us, the BiG Challenge has been an important event in the year. We launch it to the whole of the school, so everyone gets the opportunity to develop the skills we're trying to develop. Initially, all the year groups work on putting together some sort of business ideas. From that, we take some of the ideas forward so they become actual micro-businesses within the school and the local community. It's grown to the extent that, once we get past the initial stage, we'll have up to 100 students actually working on developing a business – which is quite a large proportion of the school population.'



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‘We took a group of students down to a local primary school to share their business experience and encourage the younger children to develop their own business ideas. When they were telling the children how much money they made and the prizes they won, the little ones were absolutely aghast. They told their story, which they remembered in great detail and they did it with a smile on their faces because they remembered that journey with fondness, even with all its ups and downs.’

‘When it comes to the business of putting on a school production, the children take charge of the ticket sales and promotion – everything from the box office and refreshments to photography and the website. They do everything you would expect to see in the business side of performing arts. Another example is the AMP Awards, which gives young people a chance to see how the music industry operates. It’s not just about what’s happening on the stage.’

‘The current challenge is to find ways of embedding this kind of activity within curriculum teaching. Teachers need to be aware when their classroom teaching is hitting a number of enterprise skills and students need to know that as well, so they can use examples when they are in an interview situation. Over the next couple of years, we need more people to become aware that the enterprise skills are available within the curriculum and that we’re doing something to track and chart those skills over a period of time.’

