

Visit to Beckmead Trust Sites Using TeachRock Curriculum, July 7, 2023.

The Beckmead Trust is the largest Multi Academy Trust of special schools in the UK. Beckmead delivers state funded education, residence and care to approximately one thousand disadvantaged children and young people. In 2022 TeachRock was approached by representatives from the Trust who requested permission to run a TeachRock pilot.

We were excited by the idea, but were also honest about our limited ability to allocate staff time to several schools in London. Beckmead's reps assured us that they had strong internal staff prepared to modify the material as necessary, and that they would manage the pilot.

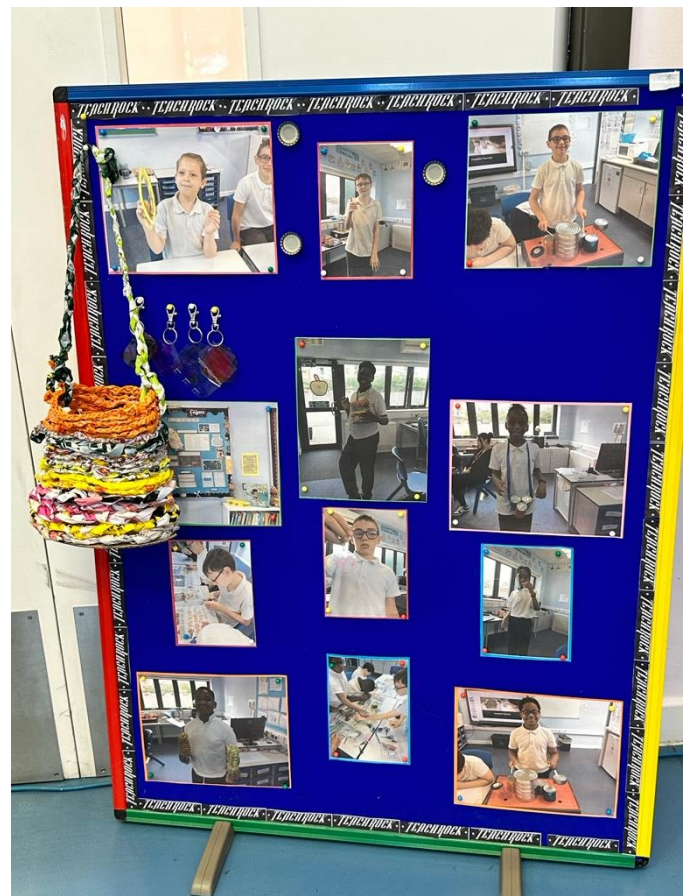
On July 7, Vagn Sørensen and I joined Beckmead CEO Jonty Clark and Director of People & Communications Lauren Quinn on a tour of the three sites associated with [The Beckmead Trust in East Croydon, London](#). We were astonished by how deeply integrated and impactful the TeachRock curriculum was at the sites.

The schools are in low-income areas of London, and serve a population whose special needs often go unmet. Clark shared that in addition to their official diagnoses, most of the children we met have comorbidities such as fetal alcohol / crack syndrome, learning difficulties, communication issues, experience of domestic violence, extreme poverty, attachment disorders, exposure to gangs, criminalized families, sexual abuse and neglect.

We visited three sites:

- Chaffinch Brook Lower. A site for children aged 5 -11 identified as having autism and challenging behavior.
- Chaffinch Brook Upper. A site for children aged 11 - 16 identified as having autism and challenging behavior.
- Beckmead Park. A site for children aged 11 - 16 who are diagnosed with 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health' needs.

At each site we visited multiple classrooms in which TeachRock lesson plans were in progress. We also saw TeachRock projects displayed throughout the buildings.



At Chaffinch Brook Upper and Beckmead Park we observed:

- A math class engaged in a project featuring Beyonce & Rihanna as part of the [Using Ratios to Identify Social Media Engagement](#) lesson plan
- A social studies class engaged in a lively discussion about segregation and migration [vis-a-vis a clip of J.B. Lenoir](#)
- A classroom of students in a therapeutic setting partaking in an exercise from a TeachRock lesson that asks students to name a song that they feel represents them, and then talk about it with the class.

We then drove several miles to the Chaffinch Brook Lower site, which hosts younger students, many of whom suffer from more acute issues.

The school hosted an assembly for our visit in which a group of students presented their findings from our [Cleaning Up the Plastic Beach lesson](#).

Inspired by one of the lesson's extension activities, the students also created instruments from recycled materials, and composed a song about the environment, which they then performed in front of the entire school. Several of these students had been nonverbal when they arrived a few years earlier.



The assembly was a major accomplishment for the students and the staff.



Vagn and I then visited each classroom, spoke with and took questions from the students. Many of them wanted to ask about TeachRock and the evidence of the TeachRock lesson plans they'd been using was hanging all over the walls.

Finally, we met with the Beckmead Trust's head of curriculum, who shared a curriculum map and her plan to incorporate TeachRock in all of Beckmead's programs at each site.

We will now assign a staff member with knowledge of content and special education as a liaison between Beckmead and TeachRock. Beckmead has received a modest grant to continue the project and is seeking further funding to expand it as well. Ultimately, we intend to evaluate the project in partnership with a school in the US, and publish the results.