

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS THROUGH GLOBAL LEARNING

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR CLUSTER GRANT APPLICANTS

This document is intended as a guide for the UK-based Cluster Coordinators. It may also be useful information for schools within each cluster, both in the UK and overseas.

Overview

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning is intended to:

- Improve teachers' pedagogical skills, especially their ability to incorporate transferable skills into their curriculum teaching.
- Give young people in both the UK and overseas countries an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to live and work in a global economy.
- Raise awareness of global issues amongst young people by supporting their collaboration with their international peers.





Connecting Classrooms offers grants to support clusters of schools to develop the skills necessary to incorporate Development Education and Global Learning (DEGL) skills and competencies into the curriculum; thus to support young people in taking action on global issues. These clusters can include partnership projects between schools in the UK and schools in other participating countries.

In order to support the design and implementation of effective partnerships, training is being made available to teachers in the UK and other participating countries. This includes the teaching of development education and transferable skills within the curriculum.

In order for schools to derive maximum impact, schools are encouraged and supported to form school clusters, and to co-design creative activities with their pupils that enable students' participation on global issues within school and the community.

Through a flexible menu (summarised below), schools can apply for funding to support: teacher training; communities of practice within their networks; reciprocal visits; collaborative projects between schools in the UK; and classroom cover.

1. Definition of a School Cluster

A cluster is a group of UK schools and schools from participating countries working together. As a minimum there must be two schools from a participating country outside the UK in the cluster. The cluster's collaboration can focus on a variety of themes, one of which has to be common to the whole cluster.

A cluster could be constituted of schools with the following characteristics:

Lead school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be in the UK • Receives and manages the grant funds • Has strong experience of development education and working with international partner schools • Has a role in co-ordinating whole cluster activities
Partner school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normally has already had some experience of development education and/or international working, either face-to-face or virtually
Network school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might be relatively new to international working and development education, and is keen to learn from the experience of lead and partner schools and benefit from their existing overseas partnerships to further development education in their school

A cluster can include a mix of primary and secondary schools, with no limit to the upper number of schools taking part, as long as it is manageable for the lead school to coordinate.

A cluster must be facilitated and managed by an identified, experienced, UK Cluster Co-ordinator. It is expected that this role will be filled by a teacher at the lead UK school. However suitable parts of the role could be delegated, under supervision by the UK Cluster Coordinator, for example to a school administrator or other professionals using the contribution intended for supply cover. See section 8.5.1 below for further details of the co-ordinator role and responsibilities.



Benefits of working in school clusters

Clusters of schools working together can provide a firm foundation for collaborative growth, enabling peer support and learning from each other, all through the support of a Cluster Co-ordinator. A successful school cluster can:

- Increase the quality of teaching and learning in the participating schools and lead to the adoption of practices such as inclusion and positive discipline.
- Improve pupil engagement
- Provide an opportunity for teachers to compare approaches and build confidence in their ability to increase the quality of teaching and learning, and to help pupils gain the skills (e.g. entrepreneurship), knowledge and values necessary for participation in both their local labour market and the global economy.
- Achieve positive community impact.



2. Cluster Grant Application

Schools are invited to submit applications based on a coherent plan of action built on a flexible menu of activities:

Activity	Description
Reciprocal school visits	Schools in clusters that have a partner in a participating country outside the UK can apply for a travel grant of £1,500 per teacher in each paired school (£3,000 in total to cover one UK teacher and one teacher from outside the UK). The grant is used to cover the cost of one teacher travelling to the UK from overseas and one teacher travelling from the UK to the other country.
Virtual Partnerships	Resources and interactive challenges connected to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which schools can complete together online, sharing outcomes on social media.
Collaborative Pupil Projects	Schools in receipt of a travel grant are required to implement a collaborative pupil project on an SDG-related theme. Other schools not travelling may also wish to wish to implement a collaborative pupil project too.
Professional Development	A broad range of training and continuous professional development for teachers and school leaders, on working in partnership, development education and global learning, transferable skills, and inclusive education.
Cluster Network CPD activities and meetings	Clusters are expected to work together in a variety of settings, including face-to-face CPD events, cluster meetings and project activities, with each school contributing to one or more projects. Working as a cluster strengthens working relationships between schools in the same locality, creating a strong Community of Practice.
Community Activities/Celebration Events	The cluster's chosen projects are expected to culminate in a community activity or celebration event



More detailed information on each of these parts of the menu, including funding available, is set out further below. As part of the assessment of their grant application by the British Council, schools will also be considered for the corresponding level of the International School Award (foundation, intermediate or full award), based upon the activities set out in their grant application. Upon completion of their activities and fulfilment of reporting requirements, schools will receive their International School Award.

Self-Assessment

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL) includes self-assessment tools to support schools to plan the development of their global learning work. The self-assessments will help practitioners to identify and qualify the breadth and depth of global learning taking place in their working environment. The results are then intended to assist practitioners to plan the actions to be taken to further develop and embed global learning. Specific parts of the CCGL programme will be highlighted to match the needs of each school or cluster.

The self-assessment can be carried out at any time and we suggest its completion at least annually so progress can be monitored and celebrated.

One tool is designed for individual schools; and the other is designed for schools working in clusters:

- We encourage all individual schools to carry out the self-assessment and its completion is a prerequisite for any school applying for grant funding under CCGL.
- We also encourage all cluster coordinators to carry out the self-assessment on behalf of their cluster and its completion is a prerequisite for any cluster applying for a cluster grant under CCGL.
- Schools' individual situations should inform the cluster self-assessment, but it is not a prerequisite for all schools to have completed an individual self-assessment before the cluster self-assessment is carried out.

After clearly identifying the CPD needs of the cluster, the cluster co-ordinator should submit an application for grant funding that encompasses all their planned Connecting Classrooms engagement. The application form includes sections for your cluster to give details of Professional Development and other Connecting Classrooms activities each school in the cluster will engage with.

While led on by the UK Cluster Coordinator, applications must be completed as a joint endeavour between UK and overseas participating schools. We expect to see strong evidence of collaboration and joint working. Failure to achieve this will result in a low assessment score. While a cluster application must be initiated by a UK school, other schools in the cluster are encouraged to contribute to the application form.



Menu of Connecting Classrooms collaborative activities:

If you would like to apply for a grant you should plan your activity around some or all of the following elements depending on your cluster needs:

2.1 Reciprocal Visits

We are offering funding to enable teachers from the cluster partnership to travel to the country of overseas partner school(s).

For each participating school, the visit must consist as a minimum of the following:

- An agreed programme with their partner school of three to four days in school comparing practice and experience of global learning and implementing transferable skills in the classroom/school
- At least one day in school designing the detail of, or implementing while together, aspects of the collaborative project (see below).

Depending on the timing and location of the visit, there may be an opportunity to participate in a local British Council-arranged event bringing UK teachers and overseas teachers together to share experiences and good practice, to engage the wider community in which the cluster is located, or to explore in detail a theme of particular significance to the cluster or to the country/region in which the event is taking place e.g., inclusion.

Visits can take place at any time during the period the partnership is under contract, though there are advantages in visits taking place sooner rather than later e.g., greater opportunities to expand the cluster, more time for project work and community engagement, and more time to overcome visa challenges if they emerge unexpectedly. It does not matter which of the reciprocal visits takes place first – we equally welcome applications which specify a visit **to** the UK taking place first, and applications which specify a visit **from** the UK taking place first.

Cluster co-ordinators need to ensure that schools in their cluster wishing to travel to visit their partner school complete the self-assessment to determine if they are ready to participate in an international school visit, or if they need to attend relevant professional development first. Schools that are identified as needing training can still apply for visit funding, but need to complete the training before participating in the visit. **Please note that this step involving the self-assessment tool will be introduced in early 2019.**

2.2 Virtual Partnerships

Online collaboration is an increasingly popular way for schools to work together. Connecting Classrooms Virtual Partnerships offer teachers and pupils a unique opportunity to work and learn with a school from another country and culture using different forms of technology and communication tools.

Virtual Partnerships resources are designed around themes connected to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and include interactive challenges which schools can complete together, sharing thoughts and outcomes on social media. These challenges will include a competitive element, with prizes available for the highest quality work.



Virtual Partnerships resources are available online to all schools, and might be of particular value to:

- Schools that are new to International Collaboration and want to get started with some simple activities based around getting to know their partner.
- Schools that are not in a position to commit to the full range of Connecting Classrooms activities, but would like to collaborate internationally on a smaller scale, at their own pace.
- Schools that are unable to travel internationally to visit their partner.
- Schools with a strong social media presence that want to showcase their international activities via social media platforms.

2.3 Collaborative Pupil Project

We have created a series of collaborative project templates themed around the Sustainable Development Goals - these templates are reasonably flexible to allow teachers to integrate them into a range of subject areas or activities e.g., school debates, opportunities for after-school clubs. They are accompanied by resources to help practitioners embed learning within their classrooms. Instructions on how to use these resources, according to context, are also provided, through which we expect improved learning outcomes for pupils. These projects are demand-led and we will create new topical resources to respond to demand in accordance with regional/country context.

We are also happy for schools to make use of other high quality resources that exist via other 3rd parties, and thereby meet the aims and objectives of Connecting Classrooms, which we will make reference to on our website. To find out more, please see [website link](#)

2.4 Professional Development

The self-assessment process will determine whether any schools in the partnership require training to incorporate DEGL skills and competencies into the curriculum and support young people to take action on global issues.

Training courses related to the following areas will be on offer from November onwards:

- Getting started on your global learning journey
- Setting up and maintaining equitable and sustainable partnerships
- Transferable/core skills for life and work in a global world
- Embedding global learning in specific subject disciplines, e.g. English, maths, sciences, humanities (subjects TBC), as well as cross-curricular areas such as SMSC (England) and Learning for Sustainability (Scotland).

Courses will be available at three levels of intensity, depending on how far teachers want to take their learning:

Level 1	Introductory: approximately 2-3 hours. Teachers engage with and learn about DEGL themes in relation to their teaching practice and students' learning.
Level 2	Intermediate: approximately 6 hours plus implementation time. In addition to Level 1, teachers implement changes to their practice or curriculum, and discuss this with peers.
Level 3	In-depth: approximately 12 hours plus implementation and evaluation time over an 8-12 week period. In addition to level 2, teachers evaluate the effects of what they implement, in terms of student learning, and prepare a brief report or presentation for peer review.

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Training will also be available in a number of flexible formats:

- Teachers will be able to sign-up to courses being run by carefully selected providers across the UK.
- Cluster coordinators will have access to training materials to use themselves to train teachers within their cluster.
- Individual schools or clusters will also be able to book an external trainer to visit their school and deliver a course.
- As well as face-to-face, some courses will also be offered via a trainer-led, distance learning format, and some through online self-access.

Further information on the training available will added to [our website](#) over the coming months.

2.5 Cluster Network CPD events and Meetings

Local clusters of schools working together will benefit from face-to-face CPD events and meetings. Clusters are expected to work together on project activities with each partnership contributing to one or more projects. Sharing work within a cluster brings an added dimension to learning, and strengthens working relationships between schools in the same locality. School Co-ordinators in both countries take responsibility for ensuring cohesion within their clusters.

2.6 Celebration Events

The community can contribute to a sustainable school partnership by getting involved with a cluster of schools working in partnership. Celebration events can be a good way of sharing and spreading impact and finding resources to further sustain international partnerships. For example:

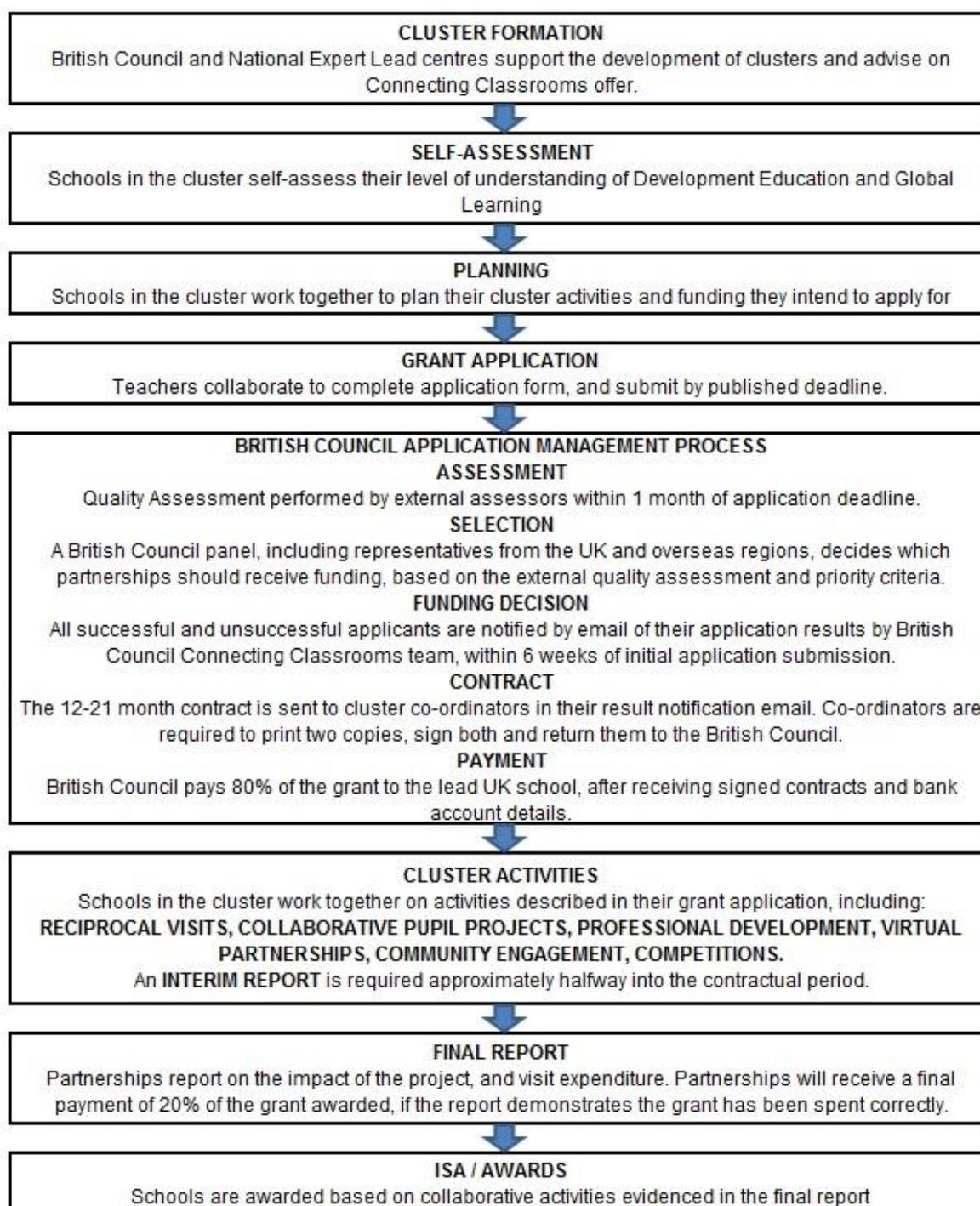
- Local businesses may be interested in supporting the partnership.
- If the local community already has connections with the partner country, they might be able to provide support with communications, practical advice about culture, or identify in-country support for overseas partner school. It is helpful to find and involve individuals, groups and communities with origins in the school's partner country (diaspora communities).
- Local press and media interest is increased if there are specific linkages made between the work going on in a cluster of schools and its direct impact upon the wider community.

2.7 1-1 Partnerships

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning is designed to support schools to get the maximum impact from their international work by working in clusters. We encourage all schools to work together in clusters where possible, and offer support to schools to identify and join clusters in their locality. However, we recognise that for some schools this is not realistic, and for others this is not the preferred way of working towards achieving objectives. These schools may find a 1-1 Partnership more appropriate to the needs. For more information please see our [Practical Guide for 1-1 Partnerships](#)

3. Cluster Journey

Please note that the National Expert Lead Centre, the Partner-Finding tool and the Self-Assessment tools will not be in place until early 2019. In 2018, we strongly encourage applications from experienced schools already involved in clusters with international partners. We therefore expect these schools to proceed straight to the “Planning” stage below. Support for less experienced schools, including cluster formation and self-assessment, will be available from the Jan 2019 round onwards. For Partner-Finding support, please visit [our website](#)



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4. Application and Reporting Timetable

Time	Activity
Pre-application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools wishing to apply for a cluster grant should already have partner schools identified outside the UK at the point of applying, - Schools wishing to apply for a School Partnership must complete a self-assessment form (not applicable to Round 1 applicants) to identify any training needs. The self-assessment must be completed before an application is submitted, and the identified training must be completed before participating in a funded international school visit.
Application deadline	Opportunities to apply will be available on a quarterly basis, from October 2018 to October 2020
+6 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applications are assessed by external assessors. - British Council reviews the assessments and informs all applicants of the outcomes. - British Council provides successful applicants with a contract and further guidance.
+2-3 months	Within one month of receiving two signed contracts and UK school bank account details back from the cluster lead school, the British Council pays 80% of the grant to the lead UK school.
+6-9 months	The cluster must submit an interim report describing the activities that have taken place and the impact achieved, and advising of any changes in the cluster plan (e.g., new schools joining the cluster). The interim report is also an opportunity for partnerships to unlock additional funding, if not already unlocked in the initial application.
+12-21 months	Final Report. If satisfactory, British Council pays remaining 20% of the grant to the cluster co-ordinator / lead UK school.



5. Funding

We offer a menu of funding available for clusters to apply for between £5,000 up to a maximum of £35,000 per application, depending on the number of schools involved and the type and scale of activities. Schools have the flexibility to use these funds in a way that they believe will achieve their priorities and best impact for their projects.

Available to all participants:

Funding	Value	Description
Travel grants (to support reciprocal school visits)	Up to £1,500 per school with a teacher travelling to visit their partner school.	Travel grant designed to cover the costs of one teacher per school to visit their partner. As a minimum the grant should cover: flights, transfers to and from the airport, accommodation, subsistence, visa costs, essential vaccinations, travel insurance
Top-up travel grants (to support reciprocal school visits)	Up to £250 per school with a teacher travelling to visit their partner school.	Discretionary top-up travel grant for teachers that need extra support to enable their participation in the programme – to cover extra costs relating to security, location or disability.



Available to clusters only

Training/support for Partner schools	Up to £50 per teacher trained, up to 2 teachers per school	To cover planning and delivery of Partnerships training, identified via self-assessment, for schools that are applying for a travel grant. Money to be managed by the cluster grant co-ordinator, and spent as they see fit in order to bring the schools' understanding of international school partnership work to the appropriate level.
Training/support for Network schools	Up to £250 per network school	To cover Network Schools CPD identification, arrangement of training and delivery and support throughout the training. Money to be managed by the cluster grant co-ordinator, and spent as they see fit in order to bring the schools' understanding of international school partnership work to the appropriate level.
Training/support for Overseas & UK schools during visits	Up to £100	To cover costs of resources including printing/photocopying.
Collaborative Pupil Project activities	Up to £500 per project (1-2 projects per cluster)	To cover collaborative project design, management and delivery. Money to be administered by the cluster grant co-ordinator
Community activities / celebration events	Up to £250 per event (1-2 events per cluster)	To support project celebrations including media coverage. Money to be administered by the cluster grant co-ordinator.
Supply cover (to support cluster co-ordinators)	Up to £200 per day, for between 3-7 days depending on the number of schools in the cluster and the range of activities, visits etc.	To cover the cluster co-ordinator's time away from his/her school role to support, co-ordinate and manage the cluster and more specifically, the partnership visits.



6. Eligibility Criteria

6.1 Previous Funding

Schools that have not submitted satisfactory final reports or not reconciled funds relating to previous British Council projects will not be considered eligible for further funding.

6.2 Institution type

We accept grant applications from schools and comparable institutions providing full-time general, vocational, technical and special-needs education.

In the UK, only state schools are eligible (i.e. not fee-paying schools). Other criteria may apply in other participating countries, please see [our website](#) for further details.

6.3 Location

We accept grant applications from clusters that include UK schools partnering with schools from:

Region	Country
Sub-Saharan Africa	Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
South Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan
MENA	Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, Yemen
East Asia	Burma

Applications that include schools in the following countries will also be considered, however do note that:

- The application must include at least one school from a country listed above
- No funding is available to support travel to/from these countries or to support community activities in these countries. Instead, these countries may wish to make use of Virtual Partnerships to aid their collaboration with their partners

Region	Country
Sub-Saharan Africa	Democratic Republic of Congo, The Gambia, Liberia, Senegal
South Asia	India, Sri Lanka
MENA	Algeria

Please contact the British Council if you require further advice on these criteria.

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7. Priority Criteria

If we receive more applications than funding available, the following priority guidelines will apply:

7.1 Clusters

Priority will be given to clusters over one-to-one school partnerships. If your school is in a one-to-one partnership, it would be advantageous to form a cluster with like-minded schools in your geographical area, and encourage your partner to work with you on this. If you are interested in forming a cluster, or joining an already existing cluster, and you are unsure how to start, the British Council will support you. For further details please see the [Connecting Classrooms website](#).

7.2 Special Educational Needs & Disability

Applications from teachers working in schools where a majority of the pupils have special educational needs will be given priority.

8. After the application is submitted

Assessment will take place immediately after each application deadline. If successful, a contract of up to 21 months duration will be issued.

All communication following application submission will be via email with the UK partnership co-ordinator.

8.1 Assessment

In the grant application, applicants will need to demonstrate:

- Ability of the UK cluster Co-ordinator to manage the grant and support the cluster of schools.
- How the partnership will achieve improvements in pupils' global learning.
- How pupils will be better equipped to take action to tackle global issues.
- How teachers' pedagogy will be improved
- How partnership visits will be beneficial for all schools in the partnership
- How the collaborative project will help schools achieve desired learning outcomes
- The wider impact achieved by the partnership, in terms of whole school and wider community engagement.

If your application meets the basic eligibility criteria, two independent assessors will review your partnership activity and project plans against the objectives. A final decision taking into account priority criteria will be taken by the British Council. We aim to notify you whether you have been successful within 6 weeks of the application deadline.

8.2 Contract

A grant agreement of up to 21 months duration will be issued to the UK lead school, two signed copies of which must be returned within one month of notification. The UK partnership co-ordinator will also be required to submit bank details in order to transfer the grant funding by BACS. If the



grant agreements and bank details are not returned within the specified time period, the funding offer will be withdrawn.

8.3 Grant dispersal

All grant funding is paid in the UK and will be transferred to the bank account of the lead UK school when the signed grant agreements are returned. 80% of the grant will be paid in advance with the remaining 20% balance paid at the end of the contract and upon receipt of a satisfactory report on partnership activity.

8.4 International Collaboration

Schools work together on the activities described in the application:

- Reciprocal visits
- Collaborative Pupil Project
- Professional Development
- Virtual Partnerships
- Community engagement
- Celebration events
- Competitions

8.5 Responsibilities

While applications for School Partnership grants should be made in collaboration between teachers from all partner schools, there are some key roles that need to be identified and fulfilled:

8.5.1 UK Cluster Co-ordinator

It is expected that this role will be filled by a teacher at the lead UK school. Part of the role could be delegated to a British Council Schools Ambassador, an NGO or Diocese.

They are expected to take responsibility for:

- Recruitment and support of schools in the cluster
- Direct liaison with overseas counterpart and the British Council
- Submission of the application
- Financial management and expenditure of the grant
- Co-ordination of the visits
- Submission of the interim report, and the final report by the deadline stipulated in the contract.

8.5.2 Overseas partnership co-ordinator

It is expected that this role will be taken by a teacher in a lead overseas school, possibly in consultation with a Local Authority lead, or by the British Council Schools Project Manager.

They will take responsibility for:

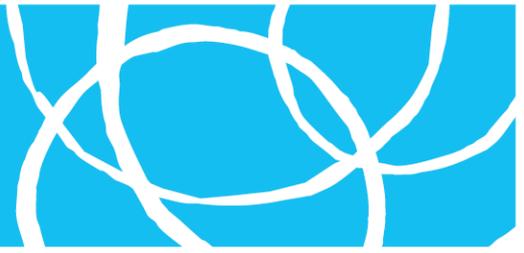
- Direct liaison with UK counterpart and the British Council
- Leading on the overseas school(s) contribution to the application and reporting.

8.5.3 Participating teachers in all partner schools will take responsibility for:

- Collaborative project planning and implementation.
- Making the necessary commitments to ensure the visits are successful.

Activities during the visit must include:

- An agreed programme with the partner school of three to four days in school comparing practice and experience of implementing transferable skills in the classroom/school
- At least one day in school designing the detail of, or implementing while together, aspects of the collaborative project.



8.6 Interim Report

The UK cluster co-ordinator is responsible for the mandatory submission of an interim report approximately half-way through the contract period. The partnership will report on activities undertaken and grant expenditure to date, and also indicate any changes made to the partnership's plans and new schools added to the cluster.

8.7 Final Report

The UK co-ordinator is responsible for the mandatory submission of a satisfactory report and completed customer survey at the end of the contract period. The partnership should make a record of activities and learning outcomes from the outset. The report could include quotes and feedback from pupils, staff and parents. A link to the report forms can be found on the Connecting Classrooms website.

8.8 Audit

10% of partnerships will be randomly selected for audit at each reporting deadline and asked to submit full receipts of all grant expenditure. Partnerships should make a permanent record of all items of expenditure as soon as they start spending the grant. If partnerships are unable to provide evidence of expenditure on request, the grant recipient will be liable to pay back funding to the British Council. Full details of this are explained in the grant agreement (contract).