

NEU and University College London Research-November 2020

Carried out before Covid
but relevant for the post Covid
period as we build back
communities and schools

Too many students with special
educational needs (SEN), Black
students and those from poorer families
were being excluded. We wanted to find
a better way of making those students
feel connected to school.

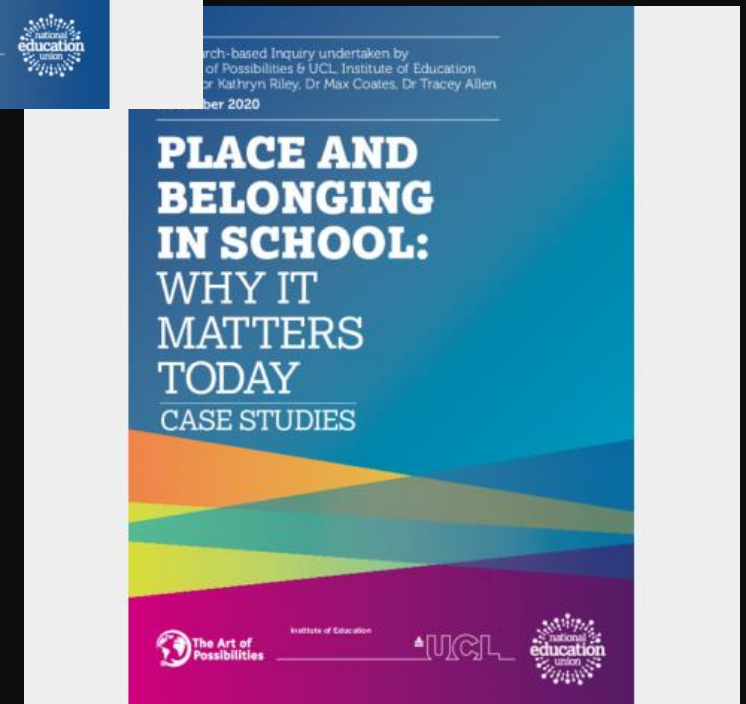


Table I: The Research Story

The Belonging Challenge

- 1 in 4 young people feel they do not belong in school: a figure which is rising.
- Children from disadvantaged communities are twice as likely as their more advantaged peers to feel they don't belong and four times more likely to be excluded.
- Black Caribbean and special educational needs children are more likely to be excluded than their peers.
- Young people who experience a sense of exclusion from school or society seek 'belongingness' elsewhere.

The Belonging Opportunity

A sense of belonging has been linked to:

- ✓ Increased student motivation.
- ✓ Increased staff well-being, motivation and retention.
- ✓ Reductions in student absenteeism.
- ✓ Other positive social outcomes e.g. health and well-being.
- ✓ Improved academic achievement.
- ✓ A growing sense of agency in students and staff: a belief that they can make a difference.

Interlocking elements in creating the conditions for belonging

I. Leadership: *shapes culture*

- Leaders shape the school culture
- Contextual leadership
- Authenticity "be who you are"

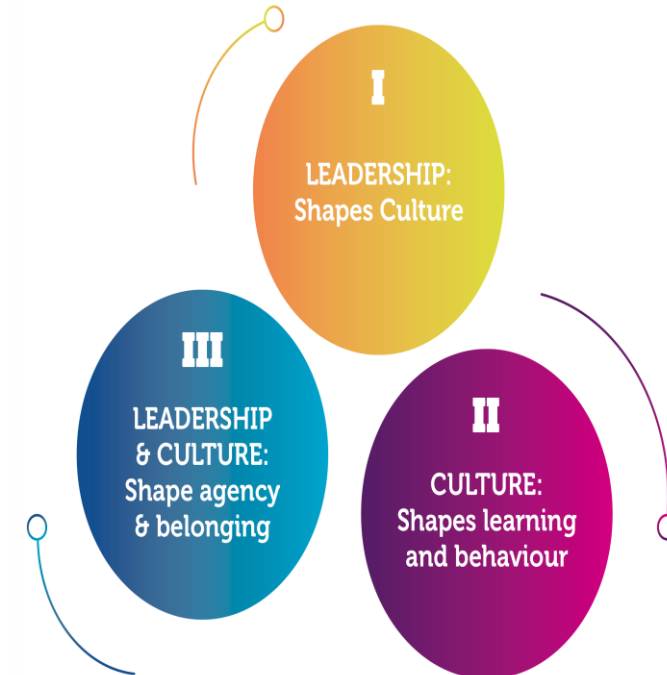
II. Culture: *shapes learning and behaviour*

- Behaviour agenda owned by staff and students
- common language and a shared set of practices

III. Leadership and Culture: *shape agency and belonging*

- belonging and behaviour are closely linked
- teachers are the key influencers for children

Interlocking elements in creating conditions for belonging



Theme 2: Culture Shapes Learning and Behaviour

- Children's learning and their independence are most important to the school.
- Staff and pupils share an understanding about the process
- The diagram shows what is happening in Hargrave school to create the climate for independent learners to flourish.
- The children at Hargrave school see it as a place of joy and excitement.

Student Learning and Independence



Theme III: Leadership and Culture

When you feel you belong...

You can be more creative, innovative and confident.

You feel respected and accepted.

You'll stay longer in an organisation and make more of a contribution.

You have a sense of well-being and agency;

You feel more involved and committed to your job.



Sense of Belonging

- The findings reinforce the centrality of schools in the lives of young people.
- 1 in 5 children in UK in July 2020 said they were unhappy with their lives during lockdown (Children's Society)
- Whether young people feel they belong in school influences how they think about themselves and their place in the world.