

# **Press release: Alun Cairns calls on Welsh schools to sign up to new UK aid backed programme to connect schools with African, Asian and Middle Eastern classrooms**

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns will visit Heronsbridge School in Bridgend later today (Monday 12 November) to encourage more schools in Wales to sign up to the UK aid backed [Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme](#), which launched in England in September.

The scheme, which is co-funded by The Department for International Development (DFID) and the British Council, unites pupils in the UK with school children around the world to build friendships and increase awareness and understanding of global issues.

The programme aims to connect more than three million primary and secondary school pupils in the UK with schools in countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East. It will also train 60,000 teachers and school leaders in the UK and developing countries to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to live and work in a global economy.

Heronsbridge is one of a growing number of Welsh schools already taking part in the programme, and has existing links to schools in Tanzania where teachers and pupils regularly take part in exchanges and share work on topics including culture, rights and responsibilities and the environment.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

The UK Government Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme is a valuable way for children here in Wales to gain a broader view of the world at an early age, learning more about the issues affecting countries in all corners of the globe. It is also an opportunity for schools around the world to benefit from the support and knowledge of British teachers.

I urge primary schools and secondary schools across Wales to sign up to take part in such a meaningful scheme operating in a vast global network.

The Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme is part of an initiative that introduces the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals to students and teachers in the UK and around the world. The Goals are designed to deliver a more sustainable future for all and include tackling hunger,

providing clean water and affordable clean energy. Research has shown that 'school linking' can increase the quality of teaching and learning in the schools involved, improving both pupil engagement and teacher motivation.

**International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:**

The Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme is a win for the UK and a win for the developing world.

The programme will build deep and meaningful partnerships between schools and communities in the UK and countries all over the world.

I have already heard heart-warming stories of how children taking part have come to realise just how much they have in common, and how much they have learned from each other, building lasting friendships.

**Director of British Council Wales, Jenny Scott, said:**

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning provides young people with an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to thrive in an increasingly global society. The partnership between Heronsbridge School and schools in Africa shows the huge impact these connections can have on pupils, teachers and the local community. We hope schools across Wales will sign up to take part.