

Blocks

By [Salford Foundation](#), a registered charity

Blocks, delivered by Salford Foundation and commissioned by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, is a **1-to-1 mentoring programme designed to equip children aged 8 to 11 in North and East Manchester with the skills they need to transition to high school successfully**. By providing a safe, supportive, and engaging space, the programme empowers young people to build confidence, resilience, and key life skills for their future.

The Blocks programme pairs children with dedicated mentors based in local school communities. This allows mentors to provide consistent, tailored support both during structured sessions and in the children's daily school environment. These sessions run throughout the entire academic year, with additional support and activities offered during school holidays to help children apply their new skills in real-world settings.

The programme focuses on developing social, emotional, and personal skills through **targeted sessions covering key areas such as:**

- Confidence
- Self-esteem
- Managing difficult emotions
- Healthy relationships
- Coping strategies
- Planning for the transition to high school

Mentors work closely with children to foster trust, providing regular opportunities for them to learn, reflect, and grow in a safe and nurturing environment.

The Blocks curriculum is designed to help children explore four core areas of personal development:

My Identity:

- Focuses on self-awareness and understanding emotions.
- Builds self-esteem and teaches techniques for managing feelings effectively.
- Lays the foundation for understanding how external factors influence emotional health.

My Relationships:

- Helps children identify healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Covers topics such as power dynamics, coercion, and red flags in relationships.
- Encourages discussions about positive role models and safe ways to express concerns.

My Environment:

- Encourages children to apply lessons about identity and relationships to their everyday environments (school, home, and community).
- Identifies safe spaces and people within those environments.
- Reinforces emotional health strategies in real-world contexts.

My Future:

- Guides children to think about their aspirations and set achievable goals.
- Focuses on applying what they've learned in the programme to overcome future challenges.

An external evaluation highlighted the programme's **success in driving positive outcomes for children:**

- Positive changes were observed in 7 out of 8 evaluation areas.
- The programme has been fully embraced by schools and is now embedded in local school communities.
- Mentors have successfully engaged some of the most vulnerable children in schools.
- Participating children reported significant improvements in their everyday lives.

Blocks extends its reach beyond term time with sessions in local communities and positive activities during school holidays. These additional opportunities enable children to practise and reinforce the skills they've learned, supporting long-term growth and resilience.

While Blocks is primarily focused on North and East Manchester, a smaller cohort of young people in Salford also benefits from the programme, ensuring its impact is felt across Greater Manchester.

Blocks demonstrates the value of combining mentorship, tailored personal development, and community engagement to support young people. By embedding the programme within schools, it ensures children receive consistent, trusted guidance while addressing the unique challenges of the transition to high school.

The programme has shown how early, targeted interventions can create lasting positive change for children, equipping them with the tools to thrive both now and in the future.

See more: [Blocks](#)

