

Cambridge

Issue 47, July 2026

Outlook

The magazine for Cambridge schools worldwide

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Inside:

-  Critical thinking
in a digital world
-  Global curriculum,
local context
-  Forging a path to
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Future ready. Present focused.



During my most recent visit to schools across Pakistan, Bangladesh and Vietnam, I was reminded yet again of why I love my role. In each country, I saw the same thing: educators and institutions that have built enduring education systems with Cambridge, that are navigating real and complex challenges today, and that

remain utterly committed to giving their students the best possible launchpad for the future. That combination of proud history, present resilience and future ambition runs through this issue of the magazine.

Cambridge began delivering international education more than 160 years ago. That legacy matters because it provides a foundation of trust at a time when education is changing rapidly. The world our students are preparing to enter looks very different from the one we imagined even five years ago.

Meeting that challenge means helping students navigate environments where misinformation can spread faster than fact, a new but essential part of what it means to be educated, as explored on page 4.

It also means making the most of the opportunities technology offers. In this issue, we share examples of our research into the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on teaching and learning. Our Futures Lab is exploring whether real-time AI support during assessment can help students make genuine progress; and we hear from teachers who have joined our new professional development course on AI in the classroom (page 12).

We also mark the start of our digital exam format rollout as an option alongside paper-based exams (page 13). This is one example of how assessment is evolving and the future will likely hold other changes too, not just in format, but in how we think about teaching and learning itself.

Yet while technology is reshaping how we learn, people remain at the centre of education. On page 10 we celebrate teachers who, in the most challenging circumstances, are providing some stability for learners.

Our Cambridge Schools Conferences provide an excellent forum to discuss these issues. Whether it's climate education, assessment, AI, or the many ways teachers support learners, we know that the future of education is not something we are waiting for; we are already building it together.

Rod Smith, Group Managing Director, International Education

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Any feedback on this issue?

What would you like to read about in the next issue? Contact us at:

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Thinking critically in a digital world

Why building resilience to online misinformation, conspiracy theories and fake news is essential preparation for the future.

Alongside the benefits they bring, the rapid expansion of technologies that underpin artificial intelligence (AI) and social media platforms has also accelerated the spread of misinformation and fake news.

At Cambridge we are seeing the impacts first-hand. Fake exam scams are becoming more frequent and more convincing during exam season in some countries. Some students under pressure during exams are exploited by scammers who spread misinformation rapidly across social media with accounts claiming to sell papers. These materials are usually completely fake, recycled from old exams with changed dates and text, nothing more.

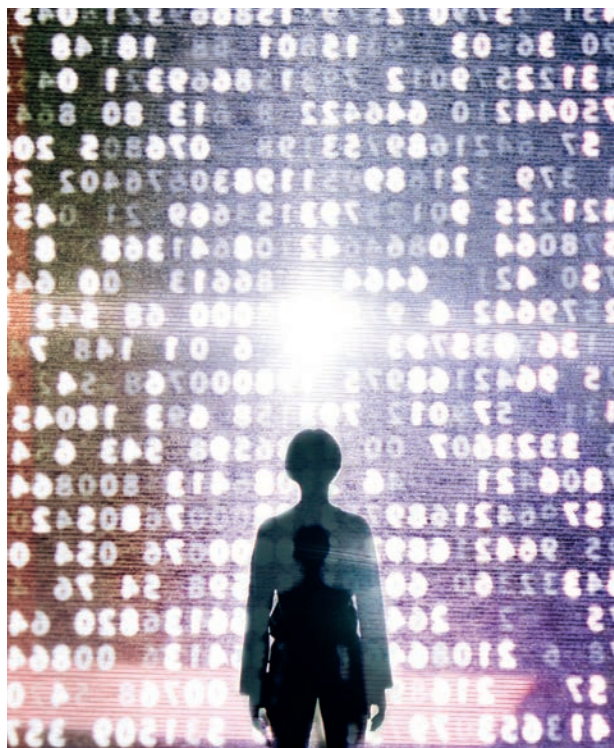
Students also encounter misinformation in the form of AI-generated images and news, and misleading statistics that can appear authoritative without careful scrutiny. Such examples underline why digital literacy must go beyond knowing how to use technology. As Beverly Clarke MBE, consultant and author of the revised Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Digital Literacy curricula, puts it: “It is essential that educators across all subject areas support young learners to think deeply and critically about AI and their relationship to it.”

Empowering learners with future-facing curricula

One of the ways Cambridge is responding to this challenge is by shifting the focus of the Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Digital Literacy curricula from one of mastering individual tools to one that builds adaptable, transferable skills that empower learners not only to navigate misinformation and online harms, but also to

actively shape the very technologies that influence their education and their futures.

The updated curricula support schools to engage learners with AI in a positive, proactive and informed way, while at the same time strengthening skills in media literacy and reinforcing students’ ownership and understanding of their work. They also include ideas on how to embed the curriculum into other subjects, such as English, mathematics and wellbeing, so that learners have many opportunities to develop these skills throughout the curriculum, not alongside it.





Building cognitive resistance to misinformation

This approach was echoed at a recent convocation we convened together with the University of Cambridge and Cambridge Zero, where invited experts exchanged knowledge on the future-ready skills students need.

During a panel discussion on citizenship skills, Sander van der Linden, Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Cambridge and Director of the Cambridge Social Decision-Making Lab, spoke about the urgent need to empower students to think critically about the information they receive online so they become, “citizens who can make decisions free from manipulation”.

Central to his argument is the concept of ‘prebunking’: equipping students with the skills to interrogate the messages they receive and the motivations behind them. Rather than waiting for students to encounter misinformation, prebunking exposes them in advance to the kinds of manipulation tactics they are likely to meet such as climate misinformation, vaccine misinformation and so on, and then challenges them to dismantle these falsehoods. The aim is to build resilience before it is needed.

One tool that does exactly this is the Misinformation Susceptibility Test, an app developed by the University of Cambridge to assess individual variation in how well students, and adults, can detect manipulation. “Hundreds of thousands of people have taken this test, and one of the things we find consistently in almost every country is that young people do the worst,” says Professor van der Linden.

“Populations that have grown up surrounded by technology are not doing well on discerning between manipulation and non-manipulation.”

Professor Sander van der Linden,
Professor of Social Psychology, University of Cambridge

When testing students in a school in Cambridge recently, Professor van der Linden says it was striking that most secondary students were getting their news from social media – TikTok or Instagram, rather than verified sources – increasing their vulnerability.

The misinformation test is often used in conjunction with ‘Bad News’, a free game for ages 14 and over that increases cognitive resistance against common forms of manipulation. Students are taken through a simulation and encouraged to experiment with propaganda tactics in a safe space. They are tested before and after the game to see if they are doing better at spotting misinformation. “It’s very much learning by doing, because we found that when you deliver a lecture on media literacy, most students tune out.”

The researchers also train teachers on how to use the tools and how to explain fake news techniques. “It’s important to develop materials to help teachers deal with conspiracy theories and misinformation in class, not just for the students, but also for the teachers themselves,” he says. “It’s really important that we prepare kids.”

Preparing young people to navigate online information critically and confidently is becoming a defining educational responsibility of our time.

More information

Scan to read our advice for students on online scams and fake papers at www.cambridgeinternational.org/advice-online-scams



Find the Misinformation Susceptibility Test at yourmist.streamlit.app and scan to find out about the Bad News game at www.getbadnews.com



The insights from neuroscience we need now

Does neuroscience hold the answers to helping students learn effectively in today's changing world?

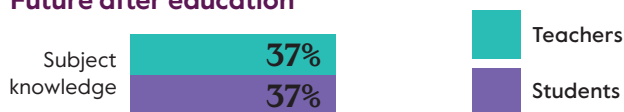
Findings from our Preparing Learners to Thrive in a Changing World research revealed that both students and teachers are navigating how best to learn in our information-rich world. As well as embracing the opportunities of technology, they raised concerns around shortening attention spans and increased distraction.

Our analysis also showed that the long-term value of knowledge is being questioned as AI use increases. When presented with a list of skills categories, knowledge and values, both teachers (81%) and students (73%) considered subject knowledge to be critical for students' next step in education, but it was the least selected option when considering what is important for life beyond education.

Next step in education



Future after education



At this year's UK Cambridge Schools Conference, Professor Barbara Oakley, Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan and Professor Sam Wass, a child psychologist and neuroscientist who leads the Institute for the Science of Early Years at the University of East London, will discuss how we can better support learners by aligning education with how our brains work. We have clear evidence from neuroscience, they argue, about how to make learning more effective and tackle some of the challenges facing schools and students today.



Building brains for the future

"A challenge with learning is that it is really hard," says Professor Barbara Oakley. "That is why teachers are so incredibly important." Generative AI makes

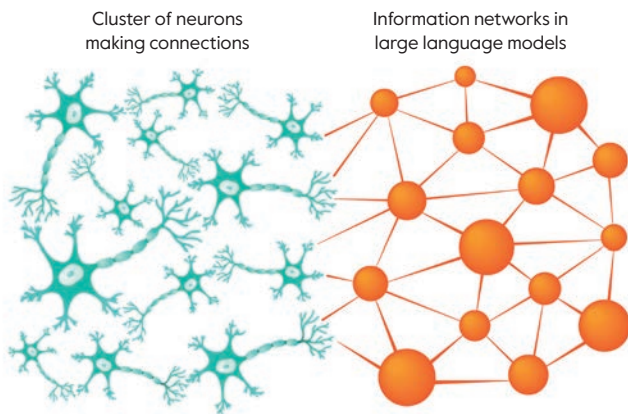
some aspects of learning easier, however at the Cambridge Schools Conference, Barbara will explain why we still need to develop deep subject knowledge.

"If you are always just looking things up on AI tools, you're not internalising the knowledge needed to put information together and see what the patterns are."

In many ways, the brain and large language models (LLMs) operate in the same way – building networks of information over time and making links between them. If we understand how the brain works, says Barbara, we can use generative AI more effectively as a companion to learning rather than a substitute.

Learning maths makes you smarter

Learning in the brain takes place through distinct structural systems, each with its own pathways, mechanisms, and relationship to conscious thought. Learning that goes through the basal ganglia region is automatic, meaning that we are not conscious of



Brains and large language models build knowledge by forming networks of connections and strengthening the links over time

the processes involved. It is how we learn to kick a football and recognise patterns – if we practise multiplication tables enough, the information becomes internalised within the basal ganglia.

“This learning system is really strong in young children,” explains Barbara. “They are learning experientially and picking things up unconsciously. However, as you get older and start to grow into adolescence, the basal ganglia system weakens and the hippocampal system of learning, which we’re conscious of, begins to strengthen.”

At school, students mostly use declarative learning – it’s how we learn maths and how we learn to read. Information is held temporarily in working memory and then flows through the hippocampus into long-term memory. We need both learning systems, because once we can do things unconsciously, we can start working on higher level material.

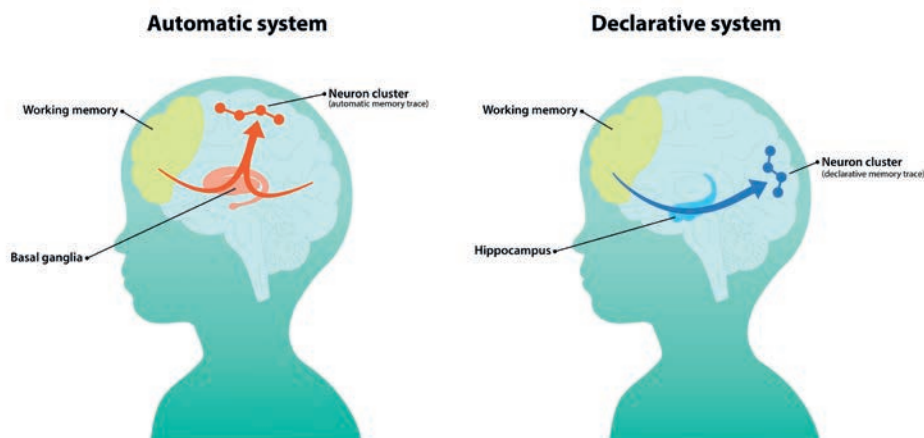
“Declarative learning is hard,” says Barbara, “but it keeps our mind in good cognitive shape. Lots of people will say only smart people learn maths. It turns out it goes the other way – learning maths makes you smarter.”

Crucial role of teachers

When learning is hard, the temptation to offload cognitive thinking to AI is strong. One of the education priorities that emerged from our **Preparing Learners to Thrive in a Changing World** research is to reframe subject knowledge so it is seen as a foundation for developing skills, and not as an equivalent to information. “To have the skill to think critically about AI outputs, we need to internalise knowledge over time and practise retrieving it,” says Barbara.

Well-scaffolded teaching is incredibly important, she explains, as it enables students to develop and embed their knowledge and understanding over time. She also says direct instruction and memorisation of facts should not be shunned completely in favour of active learning approaches.

“There are so many ways we can use AI wisely to help with learning,” says Barbara, who advocates its role as a co-creator to develop lessons and resources that motivate students and ignite their curiosity. “When you make a student curious, dopamine activity increases in the brain, which is critical for learning. The feeling of exhilaration you get when you solve a problem is associated with the dopamine that’s swirling around. As teachers, our job is to make learning a little more easy, a little more enticing.”



Two pathways to learning: the automatic system (basal ganglia) and the declarative system (hippocampus) work together to build knowledge in the brain



The distraction problem

At the Institute for the Science of Early Years and Youth at the University of East London, researchers have developed world-leading methods for studying

children's brain function while they play, interact and learn in everyday settings. It is a different approach to the tightly controlled, lab settings often used to study brain development.

Professor Sam Wass is Director of the Institute, and in his keynote at the Cambridge Schools Conference in July, he will explain how this research is giving important clues to how children learn optimally in different types of environments. Children's environments are changing – increased urbanisation, changing educational practices, exposure to screens – and understanding the impact of this change and how it is affecting learners differently is crucial for educators.

"I think the way we design early learning environments in 50 years' time is going to be very different to how we design environments today," Sam explained at the Cambridge Early Years Online Conference earlier this year.

Differences between adult and child brains were mapped in a ground-breaking study (Gogtay et al, 2004) which showed that while some parts of a five-year-old's brain have finished maturing, others are relatively immature. The part of the brain responsible for maintaining focus, the frontal cortex, is one of the last to mature, developing well into the late teenage years.

"A lot of early learning environments have been designed to be optimal for the adult brain to learn in, rather than children's."

"One of the things the frontal cortex does is help you keep a goal in mind," says Sam. "When I set myself a goal, I upload that goal to my frontal cortex and keep it in mind through a series of actions that I need to do to achieve the goal." However, young children's brains have not evolved enough to set their own goals and stay focused. "If something comes in front of them, they're more likely to have their attention pulled by it," says Sam.





In his book, **Take Action on Distraction**, Sam and co-author Dr Gemma Goldenberg refer to ‘attention capture’ and ‘attention control’. Attention capture is about things that automatically divert our attention – such as adverts popping up on a screen, sudden noises or movement. Attention control is being able to maintain your focus and resist distraction, and it is this ability that is slow to develop in children.

Evidence-based practical strategies

The implications for school leaders are clear. Noise levels, reverberation, visual displays, lighting – these are not just aesthetic considerations. They are variables that directly affect how well students can learn.

“We definitely don’t want to go back to making young children sit in absolute silence while a teacher talks,” says Sam. “We want them to be talking as that is part of learning. But we have a practical issue: their brains find filtering out background noise much harder than adult brains do, yet children spend time in the noisiest settings.”

Neurodivergent children can be especially affected by noise, says Sam: “When we think about

how environments affect children, we have to think about stress levels and giving children the sensory environment they need to do their best learning.” Lots of noise and clutter can lead to neurodivergent children becoming overstressed and shutting down, he says. “It’s important they get at least some time in a setting where there is complete silence because this is exactly what they need.”

By understanding how attention works and how to improve focus, teachers can create more effective learning environments for different purposes, not only in early years and primary settings, but also beyond.



Save the date!

Our next Cambridge Schools Conference will take place online in October 2026. Join us for for engaging sessions and practical insights into how we can prepare learners to thrive in a changing world.

Look out for more details soon.

Where education endures

Education provides a vital sense of routine and hope for young people living through conflict. Here we travel to Ukraine and Lebanon to highlight the importance of keeping learning going in the most challenging circumstances.

For young people forced to flee their homes, move across borders, or live with the constant threat of air raid sirens, the stability of full-time education is hard to come by and yet incredibly important. That stability could be a lesson starting at the same time each day, a timetable of subjects, a place – either physical or virtual – where facts and logic make sense even when the world outside doesn't.

Ensuring quality education continues as safely as possible is a complex challenge. It relies on the dedication and resilience of schools and teachers, and their belief in better times to come to keep learning going. Here, we look at two recent projects providing that hope for young learners.

Teachers are the only constant

In parts of Ukraine, the scale of disruption is hard to comprehend from the outside. Schools have been damaged or destroyed, students are dispersed across continents and entire communities live with constant uncertainty. Yet teaching continues.

Through its work, the Ukrainian nonprofit Osvitoria has helped keep education going in these most challenging circumstances. Cambridge recently partnered with them to train Ukrainian school leaders with a focus on the long-term planning for the prosperity of education in the country. During the training, Rod Smith, Managing Director of the International Education group at



Ms Svitlana sets up her laptop, ready to start lessons for the day in her makeshift classroom

Cambridge, spoke with Anna Sydoruk, CEO of Osvitoria, about its work since the outbreak of war. Scan to watch the discussion between Anna and Rod.



Anna describes an education system under immense pressure. “Every sixth school in Ukraine now is damaged or completely destroyed,” she says, and “almost every third Ukrainian student cannot have proper access to full-time, face-to-face learning.”

In some areas, the learning that does occur face-to-face takes place in underground schools and even metro stations. There were understood to be more than 185 underground schools at the end of 2025 growing to over 200 by the end of this year, targeting 100 000 students in frontline and border regions.

And yet education continues. Anna tells us about Ms Svitlana, one of many teachers whose schools have been destroyed, yet who continues to hold lessons in the ruins, creating stability for her students amid the chaos. Ms Svitlana reflected on how her role had changed: before the war, most of her time focused on delivering knowledge, whereas now more time is spent supporting students’ emotional wellbeing, with learning inserted where possible. The crucial thing, she believes, is providing routine to help students make sense of the world around them. “Some parents... told me that it was the only constant thing in their children’s lives,” says Anna.

Education and employment pathways for displaced learners

It is not only in Ukraine that young people seek the stability education can provide. Through its partnership with Alsama Project (Alsama) in Lebanon, Cambridge is supporting refugee and displaced teenagers forced to leave their homes and formal schooling behind.

Alsama is one of Lebanon’s only education providers to have maintained daily teaching throughout the 2024 and 2026 conflicts, operating centres in refugee camps serving more than 1150 displaced teenagers excluded from traditional schooling.

For these students, the challenge is both access and continuity. Their lives often span different countries, systems and languages, with frequent disruption. In this context, education cannot be rigid. It must be flexible but also provide consistency.



Alsama students in a moment of concentration

Alsama has developed the G12++, the world’s first qualification designed for displaced learners, in partnership with Cambridge. The G12++ unlocks academic and employment pathways for displaced youth while giving universities and employers access to untapped talent. With Cambridge, Alsama aims for the G12++ to become a mainstream qualification for those with disrupted, non-formal education.

It is this balance between flexibility and familiarity that allows education to endure. Systems may need to change, and delivery may look different, but the core of good teaching remains the same: human connection, trust and the belief that learning can continue.

Alsama aims to provide its students with the best possible education to create fair opportunities for a more peaceful world. The same aspirations underpin the Osvitoria work with teachers in Ukraine: while both sets of educators help their learners look to the future, they are also stabilising the ground beneath them in the present.

UNESCO estimates that in 2025, 117 million people were displaced globally due to armed conflict, disasters and other drivers, including 42.5 million refugees and 67.8 million internally displaced persons. Many of these individuals (41%) are school-aged children, who often face obstacles to accessing education due to displacement, language barriers, lack of documentation, overcrowded or damaged schools, and limited availability of trained teachers and learning materials. As a result, at least 5.7 million refugee children are estimated to be out of school.

Teachers and students put AI through its paces

AI at Cambridge is all about supporting, not replacing, good teaching and learning. Here's a look at some of the ways that's happening.

Researchers from Cambridge's Futures Lab are looking for schools to take part in a project exploring whether learners can benefit from structured support in real time during an assessment, a process known as **dynamic assessment**.

In a traditional formative assessment, a student reflects on their learning and progress, supported by a teacher. Dynamic assessment builds on this by using technology to observe and interpret behaviour during the learning and assessment. Prompts, hints, or guidance can be fed back to the learner during the process itself, observing how the learner responds.

The team is developing an AI tool that delivers this structured support to learners during dynamic assessment. A study of 80 secondary learners will examine whether this helps students make genuine progress and what the experience is like for both students and teachers. The study, focused on one maths topic, will include multiple sessions over four weeks. Data will be collected from September and results published in early 2027.

If your school would like to take part in this, or upcoming Futures Lab studies, contact futures.lab@cambridge.org

Understanding and applying AI

The first cohort of educators joining our new online professional development course, **Getting started with AI in the Classroom**, told us how the five-week programme is supporting them in the classroom.

"What has impressed me most is that the learning extends far beyond the course content itself," said Pooja Bhatia, Head of Primary School at The Ardee School, New Delhi, India. "Colleagues from around the world have shared an incredible range of ideas and practical applications. Most importantly, it has reinforced my belief that the future of education is



not about AI replacing educators; it is about educators learning how to harness AI thoughtfully to create richer learning experiences for students."

Freeha Sheikh from Lahore Grammar School, Pakistan, said: "I chose this course to explore the world of AI so I can ethically integrate it into my practice and encourage my students to use it responsibly too. The discussion forums are excellent for sharing insights and collaborating with a diverse group of peers."

To read more about Pooja's, Freeha's and other teachers' experience on the course, scan here:



Scan for more information on online professional development courses:



Screens at the ready

In the June series of exams, more than 2800 students sat our first live digital exams, marking a confident first step into the rollout of this new assessment option.

School leaders, exams officers and students have responded positively to Cambridge's first set of exams delivered and completed on-screen. One US school leader said he was "beyond impressed" with the experience. This marks a major milestone in Cambridge's journey to 85% of Cambridge IGCSE and International AS & A Level subjects being available as a digital option by 2033.

The first cohort of schools to take part in digital exams comprised 19 exam centres across 10 countries. Through digital mocks and with full training and support from Cambridge, teachers and students were well prepared for the 5700 live digital exams sat this series. Subjects included Cambridge IGCSE™ Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Economics and Physics, and Cambridge International AS Level English General Paper.



Commenting on her experience, one exams officer from Marion County District, Florida, said: "Things are more streamlined with the digital exam, and it really lightens the post-exam load." It was a similar experience in other centres. "The digital exams were hassle-free and convenient," said Hasan Malik, External Exam Coordinator/College Counsellor at Al Hussan International Academy, Saudi Arabia. "It boosted candidates' confidence as they opened the exam themselves, navigated freely on different questions in real time, completed and submitted as soon as they finished the exam."

Laying the groundwork

These first live digital exams are the result of a carefully planned and phased approach, shaped by extensive research, testing and real-world trialling. This has involved years of delivering digital mock exams globally, with more than 45 000 exams completed since the service began. The programme is already receiving global recognition, with Cambridge recently named Best Practitioner of the Year for Digital Assessment of Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science at the e-Assessment Association Awards.

Emily Cook, an exams officer with Forest High School in Florida, had advice for schools considering taking Cambridge digital exams: "Definitely do the [digital] mock so that children and the teachers know what it looks like. And get yourself a good support system within the school; don't reinvent the wheel, build it into what you already do."

Schools wanting to include a digital format in their exam series can move at a pace that works for them and are supported at every stage of the process. Scan here for more information:



Think local to act global

Cambridge curricula use local context to understand global issues, from fast fashion and food waste to football and the power of empires. Around the world, students are turning local experience into lessons with global implications.

A key difference between a Cambridge and a British curriculum lies in optionality: core subject content stays consistent with Cambridge, but the options built around each subject let schools teach within their own cultural context, bringing local relevance to create a genuinely international curriculum.

Cambridge Global Perspectives™ offers a perfect example. This transdisciplinary subject helps students aged 5 to 19 develop transferable skills including critical thinking, research and collaboration. They can then use those skills to explore solutions to significant issues, often from a starting point of what's happening on their own doorstep.

This concept was seen in action at a recent series of Global Perspectives Fairs in Italy and Latin America, which brought together more than 400 students to showcase and discuss their own responses to a huge variety of issues. While the topics they chose came from their own life experiences, some were common across both fairs.

With 'Your Trash, My Fash', Cambridge IGCSE students at Michael Ham Memorial College, Buenos Aires, Argentina aimed to reduce over-consumption and waste by fellow students by raising awareness of fast fashion. Materials produced included a video, poster and an upcycling workshop. "The outcome was successful, students were engaged in the workshop and enjoyed it," said the team.

Similarly, upper secondary students from Colégio Stocco, São Paulo, Brazil looked at 'Fast Fashion: Dress to Kill the World'. "The project takes a critical look at the fast fashion industry and its impact on our planet and society. It explores how our clothing choices are affecting the world around us," said the team. Activities included a clothing swap event.

Lower secondary students at Istituto di Cultura e di Lingue Marcelline, Foggia, Italy also focused on fast fashion: "Through research and practical activities, such as upcycling old clothes and objects, we wanted to show that students can take positive action and become part of the solution," said the team.



Students, teachers and panellists at the recent Global Perspectives Fair in Rome

Cambridge IGCSE students at Istituto Santa Maria, Rome, Italy raised awareness of food waste in their city, leading to 70% of students who saw the action saying they had learned something new about food waste. “Two local shops even asked to keep the posters up after the project ended, which felt like a small but meaningful success,” they said.

A project from lower secondary students at St. John’s International School, São Paulo, Brazil, looked at why 42% of food is wasted across the country while 61.3 million people remain food-insecure. “Food waste is a significant global issue and is influenced by many sectors and factors in our society,” said the team. They suggested improvements to transportation and infrastructure, better education, sustainable solutions, such as selling ‘ugly foods’, and better waste management.

“It’s important to recognise how differently topics are presented across cultures; the way you present psychology, sociology, or other subjects can be very culturally sensitive. That’s a fundamental principle, and it’s one of the big differences in the Cambridge curriculum.”

Rod Smith, Group Managing Director,
International Education

Teams also looked at the crucial role sport can play in society. In ‘Football: The Heartbeat of Brazil’, primary students from Colégio Anchieta Aquarius, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, used football as a way of engaging with an international audience and giving students the opportunity to learn about sportsmanship, history, gender equality and community in a meaningful and engaging way. “Football teaches us about teamwork, respect and dreaming big,” said the team. “It is something we are proud to share with the world.”

Cambridge International AS Level students at Liceo Attilio Bertolucci, Parma, Italy, asked ‘Is sport a positive force in today’s global society?’. “At its very



Students present their project at the Rome Global Perspectives Fair

core, sport possesses an incredible power to drive positive change in the world,” they said. “Sport should reflect values such as equality, respect, and integrity. If these issues are ignored, sport risks reinforcing injustice rather than promoting positive change.”

The online Latin America Fair brought together 56 schools, 78 projects and over 360 students to present their work. Cambridge’s Marcus Barroso, Senior Marketing and Communications Manager in the region and organiser of the Fair said, “What truly stood out was the dedication and commitment of the schools, and above all, the enthusiasm, engagement and pride of the students in presenting their projects. Their engagement with such relevant and important contemporary issues was amazing, inspiring them to take real action to make a positive difference in the world. This demonstrates how fundamental the Global Perspectives subject is within the Cambridge curriculum and how it helps develop well-rounded young learners.”

This sentiment was echoed by the participating schools. A team from Western International School, Honduras, said: “This experience felt like something greater than school work, it felt like a commitment to our country, as this was the first time we had the honour of participating in such an important event. The positive comments we received throughout the fair gave us tremendous joy and confidence. The entire experience was truly beautiful, enriching, and unforgettable for both our students and our staff.”

Humanities curriculum in action

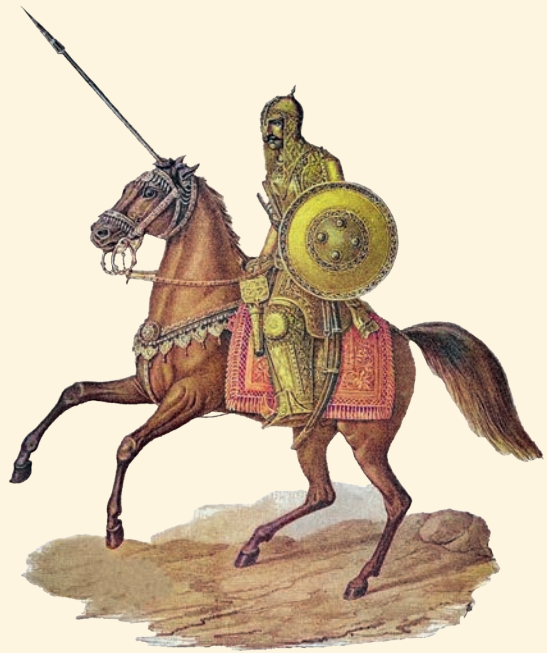
Cambridge's Primary and Lower Secondary Humanities curriculum also enables local thinking through global learning. "We want students to explore people, places and the past at local, national and global levels, while understanding diversity, interconnections and their own role in the world as informed individuals," says Cambridge Curriculum Programmes Manager, Aman Sidhu. "A key principle is the idea of the curriculum as both a 'window and a mirror'. This means enabling learners to see their own identities and experiences reflected in what they study, while also engaging with different perspectives and ways of life. A curriculum that connects to learners' lived experiences is more engaging, inclusive and ultimately more meaningful."

'Questioning' is a key skill within Cambridge's Primary and Lower Secondary Humanities because it channels the innate curiosity of our learners and teaches them to ask meaningful questions and plan an enquiry to answer them. The examples below demonstrate the use of questioning to explore global concepts locally so that they remain meaningful to the learner.

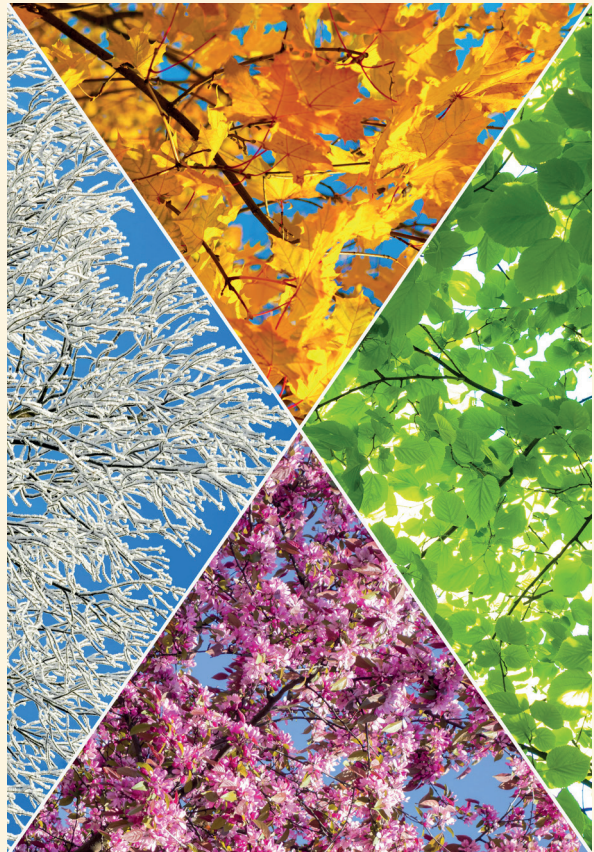
The **people** enquiry 'What are some of the ways that people make and spend money?' gets learners to investigate types of employment and how it contributes to both local and national economies. By 'walking in someone else's shoes', learners compare employment and trade in their own and in two other countries.

A **past** enquiry could ask 'What made the Mughal Empire so powerful?' but could be adapted to the Islamic, Mongol, Chinese or European Empires, with learners able to explore the concepts of 'power' and 'empire' in the same way.

Similarly, by answering the **places** enquiry question, 'How are the seasons different around the world?' learners explore how weather varies over the year and from place to place. Starting with seasons and different types of weather in their local area, learners can expand to comparisons with another part of the world that has different seasons and weather.



Enquiries in the Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Humanities curriculum could feature the Mughal Empire, above, or seasons, below



Making space for climate change conversations

Whatever the subject, the climate crisis is never far from the mind in the classroom for both teachers and students. Here we take a look at how some schools are tackling climate change education.



Soma Mandal, GD Goenka School Model Town, India
Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Award winner 2026

Soma Mandal's dedication to embedding climate education within her science lessons was instrumental in her winning this year's Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Award. A science teacher at GD Goenka Public School Model Town, India, Soma encourages her learners to investigate environmental issues and design practical solutions through collaborative and enquiry-based learning. Her latest project is 'Climate catalyst newsletter', a student-centred platform to encourage critical thinking, creativity and ownership, allowing students to see themselves as part of a larger global dialogue on sustainability. "When students are given the space to express themselves, and when their ideas are truly valued, they don't just learn about change, they begin to lead it," says Soma.

Where will the conversation take you?

Conversations about the climate can come up in lessons both planned and unplanned, and in most cases students appreciate the opportunity to talk

about it. To support teachers to have more meaningful climate change conversations with their students, Cambridge has launched a free discussion guide – *Caring for Emotions in Climate Change Education: A Guide for Educators*. Developed with the Climate Psychology Alliance, the guide gives teachers the practical tools to open these conversations with confidence and care. Hear Louise Edgington from the Climate Psychology Alliance and Judith Roberts from Cambridge discuss the issue on our latest Outlook podcast.

Scan this QR code to listen to the podcast and download the guide:



Empowering learners to take action

It's never too early to start climate education, and teachers have been empowering their learners to take action with age-appropriate content from the new Cambridge Climate Change Education Framework.

As Cambridge Curriculum Programmes Manager Judith Roberts explains: "Age-appropriate content ensures that learners are encouraged, not overwhelmed. In Cambridge Early Years, we start with learning about both the benefits and dangers of fire. By the end of Primary, learners know about the most important greenhouse gases. Older learners expand this further to include a wider range of greenhouse gases, their sources and effect on the Earth's energy balance."

The framework is based on a holistic approach across subjects, covering understanding, evaluating, caring and responding.

Scan this QR code to watch a video on the Cambridge Climate Change Education Framework:



Cambridge International A Levels strengthen foothold in Australian higher education

Cambridge International AS & A Levels were built with flexibility in mind. Australia is showing what that flexibility looks like in practice.

It was confirmed in mid-June that Australian students taking three Cambridge International A Levels can now be considered for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) outcome through the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC), opening a transparent and equitable route into universities across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Previously, A Level students sat outside the standard admissions process. The new approach gives students, families and institutions confidence that Cambridge qualifications are assessed on comparable terms.

Kevin Ebenezer, Director of University Pathways and Progression at Cambridge, said: "From the outset, our shared goal was to develop a fair and equitable fine-grading schedule that more accurately reflects student performance and achievement. This is an important step in ensuring greater fairness and opportunity for students pursuing international qualifications in Australia."

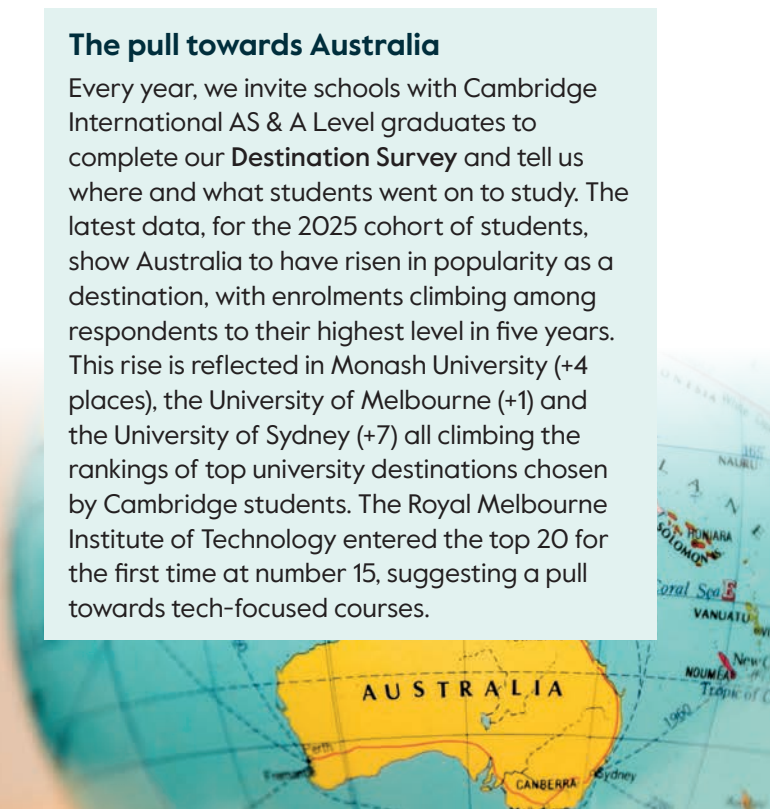
The ATAR development sits alongside a recent expansion of direct entry pathways. At the start of this year, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) launched Australia's first university-embedded Cambridge International AS & A Level programme, allowing Year 10 students to begin studying Cambridge qualifications on campus. This provides early exposure to university life before formal degree entry. The first cohort will sit their AS Level exams this November.

UTS already accepts Cambridge IGCSE students into its Foundation Studies programme and AS Level students into the first year of diploma programmes at UTS College, with progression into the second year of a degree programme subject to academic achievement. Monash College and UWA College offer comparable structures for their respective universities.

Taken together, the outcome is that students holding Cambridge qualifications have more choice. A domestic student may obtain an ATAR through UAC and gain entry to university alongside peers who have completed the Higher School Certificate. International students may use their Cambridge International A Levels for direct entry to university, their AS Levels for admission into a diploma programme, or their Cambridge IGCSE qualifications for entry into a foundation programme. Alternatively, students may complete our A Levels within a university campus setting before progressing to undergraduate degree study. Each of these routes is clearly defined and maintains academic standards, giving students more ways to reach the same destination.

The pull towards Australia

Every year, we invite schools with Cambridge International AS & A Level graduates to complete our **Destination Survey** and tell us where and what students went on to study. The latest data, for the 2025 cohort of students, show Australia to have risen in popularity as a destination, with enrolments climbing among respondents to their highest level in five years. This rise is reflected in Monash University (+4 places), the University of Melbourne (+1) and the University of Sydney (+7) all climbing the rankings of top university destinations chosen by Cambridge students. The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology entered the top 20 for the first time at number 15, suggesting a pull towards tech-focused courses.



Opening doors: the global work behind university recognition

Albania recognises Cambridge International AS & A Levels as equivalent to its State Matura – the latest milestone from the Global Recognitions team who continue to open doors for our learners worldwide.

Cambridge International AS & A Levels are now recognised as equivalent to Albania's State Matura exam, giving Albanian students a clearer route into higher education without the need to sit both qualifications. The milestone, agreed last month, is the result of years of work by Cambridge's Global Recognitions team, which collaborates with universities, governments and admissions authorities worldwide to ensure Cambridge qualifications are understood, valued and recognised by higher education institutions.

The Albanian development is the latest in a series of recognition successes secured through sustained engagement and evidence-based advocacy. Earlier this year, the team achieved a major milestone in Southeast Asia, with Cambodia formally recognising the completion of three Cambridge International AS Level subjects as equivalent to the Cambodian Grade 12 Senior High School Diploma. In Japan, engagement with MEXT (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) resulted in Cambridge International A Levels being recognised as an entrance qualification to Japanese universities, opening up exciting study opportunities for Cambridge learners worldwide.

While recognition is often viewed as a single announcement, the reality is that it takes considerable work to achieve.

Kevin Ebenezer, Director of University Pathways and Progression at Cambridge, said: "Recognition is often discussed as an outcome, but it is in fact a continuous process of engagement, advocacy and partnership building. Behind every recognition agreement lies months, and sometimes years, of evidence gathering, relationship management, policy discussions and strategic collaboration. It is work that often goes unseen, yet it directly influences the opportunities available to our students."

Today, Cambridge qualifications are currently recognised by over 2500 universities in more than 100 countries. The team's work focuses not only on securing new agreements but also on ensuring those agreements lead to practical progression opportunities such as advanced standing, credit, and admissions recognition. In the United States, for example, Cambridge has continued to strengthen recognition for its International AS & A Levels across a wide range of institutions on precisely this basis.

Cambridge's recognition work often paves the way for other awarding organisations to follow: "Time and again, Cambridge has established recognition pathways and progression frameworks that are subsequently adopted by other awarding organisations offering similar qualifications," says Kevin. "This reflects both the strength of our qualifications and the confidence that governments, universities and admissions bodies place in Cambridge."

Highest number of UK university offers

New data from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) reveals that around 12% of all international undergraduate students placed at a UK university in 2025 had one or more Cambridge International A Level qualifications. Read the full story at:



New podcast

Cambridge Outlook

Fresh perspectives on international education

From classroom ideas to the big picture in education, the **Outlook** podcast (formerly the **Brighter Thinking Pod**) invites you to listen to education experts, teachers and authors from around the world as they explore what's shaping the future of teaching and learning.

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