

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Burberry takes on education inequality in 5-year partnership

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Burberry February 2017 collection. Image credit: Burberry, photo by John Olins

By STAFF REPORTS

The Burberry Foundation is encouraging disadvantaged youth in Britain to consider careers in creative industries through a new grant program.

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The fashion house's philanthropic arm is providing grants to charity Teach First and the government supported Careers & Enterprise Company. Centered on Yorkshire and the Humber, this five-year initiative gives back to local communities integral to the Burberry business.

Inspiring aspirations

Burberry's trench coats are produced in Castleford in Yorkshire and it makes fabrics at a mill in Keighley in West Yorkshire. The Yorkshire and the Humber area therefore fits into the Burberry Foundation's pledge to support 1 million people in the communities that support its business and the overall luxury industry.

Teach First will be using the grant to support its partner schools in the area, while the Careers & Enterprise Company will put the funds toward expanding its network, giving about 40 schools their own enterprise advisor and enterprise coordinator.

The grants will also back the development of a "creative industry toolkit" curriculum that schools can take advantage of. This will teach students about careers opportunities available in creative fields.

Teach First's platform centers on the idea that a student's socio-economic background should not prevent them from achieving in school and beyond. The organization, which works with more than 100 schools in the area, brings in guests to teach and help inspire students to aim high, whether it is higher education or a career.

Kicking off this grant partnership, Burberry's chief creative officer Christopher Bailey, who himself grew up in Yorkshire, met with teenage students at Dixons Trinity Academy in Bradford. In addition to speaking with the teens about his experiences earlier in life, he also met with the school's principal Luke Sparkes, who shared how Teach First has helped to overcome challenges faced by students.



Christopher Bailey speaking with students at Dixons Trinity Academy. Image courtesy of Burberry

"I am very proud that The Burberry Foundation is involved in this five-year project to support the professional development of teachers in Yorkshire and inspire, motivate and guide more students to consider a career in the creative industries," said Mr. Bailey in a statement. "It was my art teacher who suggested I send my work to art schools, which was the start of my journey into fashion and ultimately design.

"It was a real pleasure and a privilege meeting with the pupils and teachers of Dixons Trinity Academy and hearing their aspirations for the future," he said.

Burberry's foundation has made other educational contributions in recent months. For instance, the house has established a materials research group as part of its new five-year responsibility agenda.

The Burberry Material Futures Research Group came to be thanks to a 3 million pound, or \$3.8 million at current exchange rates, grant from The Burberry Foundation to London's Royal College of Art. Burberry's grant will also work to expand the Burberry Design Scholarship Fund ([see story](#)).

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