


Influencing younger learners

Russell Group institutions work in partnership with schools to raise attainment and aspirations towards higher education. Increasingly these activities are focussed on younger learners, since evidence shows that perceptions about higher education are formed at a young age.

 <p>UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM</p>	<p>Forward Thinking is a progressive programme aimed at raising the aspirations of school students. Students are recruited in year 8 from the widening participation gifted and talented cohort. 10 schools in Birmingham each select 5 students to participate in the programme. 303 students across years 8, 9 and 10 are currently involved with the scheme.</p> <p>Through the programme, students are offered support with their academic work, and they and their parents are provided with guidance on progression in education after 16 including transitions to university. To familiarise participants with university, face-to-face mentoring by undergraduates is offered to year 10 students, alongside visits to the university. All students are being tracked, and are given a folder that enables them to record their activities and reflections on the programme.</p>
 <p>University of BRISTOL</p>	<p>The University of Bristol runs an innovative project with primary school children in South Bristol where progression to HE is amongst the lowest of any area of the UK. The University Big Book acquaints the young people with the concept of university by introducing them to current undergraduates. The programme involves members of the university visiting schools and pupils visiting the university. It culminates in a final 'graduation' ceremony where parents are invited to see their child receive a certificate in recognition of their achievements.</p>



The University of Cambridge's **Local Schools Scheme** is a new four year progressive programme, working with individual students between years 7 and 10 in targeted schools within Cambridge. Students come from non-traditional backgrounds and are identified by their school as showing academic potential. They participate in a series of structured extra-curricular, academic-related activities over a number of years. As they progress through the scheme, students take greater responsibility for selecting activities and are rewarded for participation and achievement by working towards structured awards. The scheme aims to develop academic skills, confidence and interests through exposure to a range of different subjects and to increase familiarity with university as a natural progression route.

The **Science Festival Schools Roadshow** run by the University of Cambridge takes science out to 4,500 pupils in 60 primary and secondary schools. In 2009, talks included 'Boomerangs, bouncing balls and other spinning things' and 'Gurgling guts – the disgusting story of what happens to your food'. 500 pupils from years 9, 10 and 11 from across the East of England visited the university for the Science Festival Masterclasses. In 2009, 85% of attendees stated that that the Masterclasses had increased their interest in applying to university.



The **Pimlico Connection** is a peer-tutoring scheme that has been running at Imperial since 1975. Current students volunteer as classroom assistants and mentors in state primary and secondary schools in boroughs within an easy travelling distance from Imperial, which is located in South Kensington. The emphasis is on inspiring the pupils in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects (STEM) whilst raising aspirations and providing positive role models in relation to science and higher education in general. Each year, over 100 students participate in the scheme, providing tutoring and mentoring to students in 6 primary schools and 9 secondary schools. An evaluation of the scheme in 2005 revealed that having a Pimlico tutor in the classroom increased the amount by which pupils were prepared to try.



King's **Year 9 days** introduce school students to life at university. In 2009, 98 Year 9 students from South East London attended five events on campus. The events incorporated workshops led by student ambassadors and campus tours, and each day culminated in a presentation session. Topics covered included the differences between school and university, the various clubs and societies, the courses available and the academic life.



The **Looked-After Children Project** is a scheme run by the University of Leeds in partnership with the Frank Buttle Trust (the UK's largest charity which provides grant aid to individual children and young people in need). Each strand of the project is designed to help young people in care engage in education, raising their aspirations and attainment. Sessions are supported by volunteer undergraduate mentors who work with the young people to support various elements of school and social life including coursework, revision and college applications. To date, the university has worked with over 100 young people in care (ages 13-16), from over 20 secondary schools to support their lives and educational achievement.

The **Professor Fluffy** project is targeted at school pupils aged between 9 and 11, aiming to raise their awareness of higher education. The programme introduces the concept of a learning journey and the vocabulary associated with this. The *Raising Aspirations* Teachers' Pack has recently been introduced to the programme. The pack provides five linked sessions and enables teachers to easily deliver a series of higher education raising activities within a school setting. The activities mesh with PSHE/Every Child Matters and primary IAG agendas.

In partnership with Aimhigher, the University of Liverpool delivers a core progression curriculum to learners in years 7 to 11 in twelve target secondary schools in Greater Merseyside. A whole year group approach is taken during the early stages of secondary education with all young people in Years 7 & 8 attending interactive drama performances that seek to raise awareness of higher education and increase understanding of the positive role that university can play in people's lives. Approximately 4000 learners are reached each year. The core curriculum becomes more targeted with a smaller number of individual learners when young people reach Years 9-11. The **Champions of Learning Programme** works intensively with 220 students each year who are capable of high achievement but are unlikely to progress to higher education. The three-year programme aims to build confidence, self-esteem and key skills, as well as raising aspirations and increasing awareness of higher education. Activities include spending time at the University of Liverpool, going on an overnight trip to another university, and receiving GCSE support and mentoring. Students can then progress onto the University of Liverpool Scholars Scheme.

The university also offers two specialist Year 11 mentoring programmes designed to meet the needs of particularly disadvantaged learners – one for Looked After Children and the other for young people for with English as an additional language.



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Around 200 LSE students volunteer in local primary and secondary schools in 7 London Boroughs as part of the **LSE Student Tutoring Scheme**. Student tutors work in the classroom, under the supervision of teachers, helping pupils with their work. The project aims to raise school pupils' achievement, raise their aspirations and encourage them to aim for higher education when they leave school. Student tutors are normally available in schools 3-4 hours per week for a 12 week period. Students tutor in a variety of subjects, many of which do not feature in LSE degrees, as well as helping out with lunchtime and after school activities.

The University
of Manchester



The university runs **The Children's University of Manchester**, which provides interactive online learning for primary schools. It provides learning materials for use on whiteboards or PCs, video clips, downloadable resources and educational games. Subjects covered include science, literacy and art and design. Content is aligned with, and designed to complement, existing Key Stage 2 web-based learning resources. It aims to raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities of higher education, particularly amongst students from traditionally under-represented groups, and to help young students achieve their future goals.

The university also runs a **Gateways** programme which is a key initiative for engaging with secondary school learners. It targets local young people from lower socio-economic groups in years 7-11, and involves their parents and teachers. The programme provides a coherent and progressive series of academic enrichment and HE awareness activities as well as information, advice and guidance (IAG) on course choices and careers. There are three academic enrichment strands: Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM); Medical, Human and Biological Sciences; and Humanities. Complementing and extending the Gateway programme are a range of additional higher intensity 'Gateways Plus' activities and opportunities that include: subject mentoring; non-residential summer schools; curriculum enrichment opportunities; awareness raising events with parents and teachers. During 2008-09, 2000 local learners took part in the programme and 84% agreed that 'following their visit, they had a better understanding of how university is different from school'.



The University of Newcastle organises **Apprentice Students on Campus** days to create opportunities for primary school pupils and their parents to visit the campus and find out what university is all about, and how it might help them when they grow up. The visiting students work closely with current undergraduates throughout the day, and take part in an academic-based, interactive session, as well as a number of sessions aimed at raising aspirations and awareness of higher education.



The University of Nottingham has 43 **partner secondary schools** to which it delivers over 150 activities for over 6000 pupils aged 11-16 each year. These partner schools are roughly within commuting distance of the university and include high proportions of learners from groups under-represented in HE. The activities are delivered both in the schools and on the university's campuses and cover topics such as options choice, study skills and interviews with current university students. This work is supplemented by academic taster and revision sessions delivered by various departments from across the university.



The **Oxford Young Ambassador Programme** is a four-year programme for pupils who have the potential to go on to study at the university and are from under-represented backgrounds at state schools selected using ACORN data. It starts with students in Year 10 and provides them with the opportunity to become an Ambassador for higher and further education. We equip the Ambassadors to go back to their schools and communities and directly share their Oxford experiences with their own peers. The programme passes on skills such as public speaking and debating, and knowledge regarding university in general, specific courses and budgeting, for example.

After the first graduation at least 9 former participants are now studying at universities around the country, and the impact of this programme is best illustrated by the testimony of one of these. One of our ambassadors is now studying Law with German Law at Brasenose College, Oxford. She says:

"I knew I wanted to be a lawyer but I'd never seriously thought about Oxford. I admit I believed all the myths, that the students were all rich and all stuck-up. Each workshop, residential and meeting chipped away at this opinion until I realised that the only thing stopping me applying was my own belief that I wouldn't fit in. Now I'm here, I wouldn't want to be anywhere else – nobody cares about your background, it's all about the work and the people you meet."



Widening Participation activities are delivered to targeted learners through a range of interventions which address real and perceived barriers to higher education; provide information, advice and guidance; promote role models and ambassadors; support learning and personal effectiveness and inspire personal achievement. For example, Queen's University Belfast is the sole provider of the National Primary Network **Professor Fluffy Programme** in Northern Ireland which, includes an initial school visit introducing university vocabulary followed by a campus visit, opening the doors of the University to over 300 upper primary pupils.

The Widening Participation Unit also delivers a range of tailored information events and practical workshop sessions as part of Insight Days and Taster Sessions for younger learners.



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

The **Early Outreach Scheme** is targeted at pupils in years 9 to 11 who ordinarily would be unlikely to consider aiming for higher education. The scheme aims to increase their awareness and perception of higher education and eventually to interest them in applying for a university place, although not necessarily at the University of Sheffield. Schools can participate in the scheme if they have low levels of attainment, a high proportion of pupils for whom English is a second language, and low levels of progression to higher education. The scheme is structured to run over two years, and includes a range of interactions with the university, including a university day visit; a parents' evening, a residential stay and a university conference. Students are tracked into their post-16 studies when they can access further support and guidance from the university through its compact scheme.

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Year 5 pupils from 20 junior and primary schools participate in visits to the University of Southampton for a **Science mini lecture** and related activities. The visits aim to create greater awareness of the educational opportunities open to primary school children and their families in the future and to encourage them to feel comfortable and confident in the university environment. In 2009 over 1,000 pupils participated, and 61% of respondents reported that the visit had altered the way they felt about university. In Year 6 over 1,000 pupils from 30 schools also took part in transition activities based in junior or primary schools which prepare them for secondary school.

Over 200 University of Southampton students work on the **Student Associates** or **Undergraduate Ambassadors** schemes, being placed in local schools and colleges to support pupils around a range of enrichment activities. The university students gain valuable employability skills and the programmes have contributed to improved retention, progression and attainment in participating schools and colleges.



UCL Museums & Collections run a dedicated **Schools Programme** for around 10,000 Primary and Secondary pupils each year. Curriculum-linked hands-on facilitated workshops are delivered almost daily either in the Grant Museum of Zoology, Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology or in school classrooms. The sessions use real museum objects to deliver parts of the History, Science, Art and Citizenship Curricula, mostly to a Key Stage 2 audience but also Key Stages 1, 3 and 4. The sessions introduce study at HE and designed to raise aspirations and confidence in learning. An evaluation study in 2009 into the impact of the outreach reported that these workshops were the first contact that 80% of the students could recall with a university. The report found that confidence and enthusiasm for learning were markedly improved.



Goal at Warwick is designed to target gifted and talented students, as identified by schools and local authorities, from families with no experience of higher education to provide four years of support from years 10-13. The programme provides residential days at the university, personal mentoring support, development opportunities with local businesses, access to Warwick's distance learning opportunities as well as guidance on applying to the university.

A survey conducted with students following one of the residential courses showed:

- 97% of respondents rated the quality of teaching as 'good' or 'very good'
- 93% of respondents declared that their overall confidence had increased
- 93% recorded an increase in their desire to attend a top university