



Outreach Report 2018-19

Kathryn Singleton, Schools Liaison Officer

4500

students have connected with St Catharine's at events in schools

3500

students have connected with us at the College

101

schools supported by St Catharine's through the Area Links Scheme

9

Open Days and Taster Days

146

student helpers registered to help with outreach and recruitment

Area Links Scheme

Under the University's [Area Links Scheme](#), each Cambridge College is the first point of contact for specific regions, allowing schools and colleges to build sustained, effective relationships with Cambridge. St Catharine's College is linked with Suffolk, Rutland, North Yorkshire, as well as two local schools which we are paired with under the 'Connect to Cambridge' programme. In total, we are linked to 101 state schools and colleges. Through our mailing list, these schools are regularly invited to attend events organised by St Catharine's and Cambridge. By building relationships with these schools, teachers and advisers come to know that the St Catharine's Admissions Office are always happy to provide support and guidance.



As the Schools Liaison Officer, I regularly hosts students from our link areas for visits in Cambridge, as well as running sessions in schools. A typical visit to the College for 30 students costs around £250 and involves talks and workshops on Higher Education and Oxbridge, tours with our student helpers (Catz Ambassadors), and lunch in the dining hall. St Catharine's also offers financial support for schools traveling to the College, prioritising those who have had little engagement with Cambridge in the past and/or have higher proportions of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

“The work of the Schools Liaison Officer at St Catharine's College has been instrumental in raising our students' aspirations”

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For younger students (Year 6-8), the focus of visits is often to familiarise pupils with Higher Education: combining a visit to the College with a museum workshop or academic taster session can encourage them to consider university courses. My work with students in Year 9-11 usually focuses on breaking down misconceptions surrounding Higher Education, Oxbridge, and student finance, as well as helping students make informed post-16 choices. For Year 12 and 13 students, I work with Admissions Tutors to give detailed information and advice on all aspects of the application process. My work also involves ensuring teachers feel well-equipped to help their students choose post-16 options and make competitive applications to university.

“[The visit to St Catharine's] was an eye opening experience that has inspired me to aim high with my university application”¹

North Yorkshire Trips

In order to best support our linked schools in North Yorkshire, I took three extended trips to Yorkshire this year with the Schools Liaison Officer from their Oxford link College, accompanied by student ambassadors from both universities.



These trips ensure that we can speak to hundreds of students across the region at key decision-making stages: in Year 10, before making post-16 choices, and in Year 12/13, while making applications to Oxbridge. We

¹ News Article: [Sixth form college students enjoy 'extraordinary visit' to top university](#)

run back-to-back multi-school workshops and talks during our trips and invite current Oxbridge students from North Yorkshire to join us in their old schools. Contributions from Catz Ambassadors along with the North Yorkshire Oxbridge students are a key component of our presentations and particularly important to the success of these visits.

Subject Taster Days for Year 9s and 10s

This year, with the generous involvement of College Fellows, St Catharine's piloted subject-specific taster days for students in Year 9 and 10. Schools with higher numbers of students from backgrounds underrepresented at Cambridge² were prioritised in the allocation of places.



In November 2018, we hosted an English Day which involved a taster lecture by Dr Caroline Gonda, a creative writing session with author Simon Hall, and workshops and tours at the Faculty of English.

In June 2019, we held a Biology Day for female pupils. With the support of Dr Fátima Santos, Dr Mairi Kilkenny, and the Department of Biochemistry, the students ran experiments in the teaching laboratories, looking at their own DNA sequences. In St Catharine's, the pupils learned about Higher Education and had lunch and tours with undergraduate science students. I hope to run similar events in the coming academic year to raise aspirations and increase attainment in particular subjects.

² Only 4.6% of Cambridge's 2017 intake came from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (i.e. POLAR3 Quintile 1), up from 3.2% in 2016 (See the [Access and Participation Plan with the Office for Students 2019/20](#))

“It really changed my mind about where I want to go in the future”

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External Organisations

The Area Links Scheme does not prevent Cambridge Colleges from working with schools outside of their link areas. St Catharine's endeavours to work with school students across the UK who are most in need of support. One of the ways in which we do this is through our collaboration with [The Access Project](#) and [The Brilliant Club](#). These charities deliver long-term programmes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are underrepresented in highly-selective universities. The programmes involve tutoring, mentorship, and university trips to raise attainment and aspiration.

A typical visit to St Catharine's from The Brilliant Club or The Access Project costs the College approximately £2000. In addition to this, we donate £1000 to The Access Project for the transport costs of bringing hundreds of students from multiple schools to Cambridge. This money has a valuable and measurable impact on young people's lives: Access Project participants are twice as likely to go to a top university than other students with the same academic record and background³ and of Ever 6 FSM pupils,⁴ 52% of those on The Brilliant Club programme progressed to a highly-selective university, compared to a national progression rate of 10%.⁵ St

³ <https://www.theaccessproject.org.uk>

⁴ School students who have been in receipt of Free School Meals in the last 6 years and are therefore eligible for Pupil Premium

⁵ [The Brilliant Club Annual Impact Report 2017-18](#)

