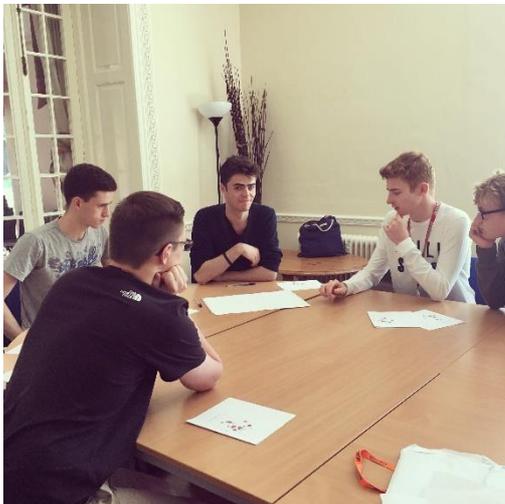




**Outreach Work at St
Catharine's College**

2016-17

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Schools Liaison
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This year in numbers

£26,966

spent on Access and Outreach work since July 2016

101

target schools in our Link Areas of North Yorkshire, Suffolk and Rutland

6000

students have connected with St Catharine's on school visits in the last 12 months

8

Open Days focusing on subject specific content, recruitment and Widening Participation

17

average age of visitors to the College

£200

cost of a typical school visit to the college

Why do we do outreach work?

Simple answer: there is profound education inequality between students from high-income backgrounds and students from low-income backgrounds. Across the UK, 96% of privately educated children go on to study at university, while only 16% of FSM children do so. When it comes to highly selective universities such as Cambridge, our numbers are strikingly poor: only 3.2% of Cambridge's 2016 intake came from the lowest POLAR group in the UK.¹ There are many target groups underrepresented at Cambridge, the largest being low-income background students, white working class males and Black or Ethnic Minority (BME) students.

What do we currently do?

Each Cambridge College is part of the Area Links Scheme, which enables us to build effective, coherent relationships with schools and colleges across the UK and gives schools and colleges a direct way of staying in touch with the University by providing specific contact points. St Catharine's is currently linked with Suffolk, Rutland and North Yorkshire, totalling 101 state schools. Priority schools are those that have low OFSTED ratings, high numbers of pupils on Free School Meals, and various other criteria such as first-generation students or BME students.

For Suffolk and Rutland schools, day visits to the college average 3 per week, costing approximately £200 for 30 people. We also offer to pay 50% of travel costs for each school, to avoid restrictions on visits due to schools' budgetary constraints. A typical day visit includes a talk about Higher Education and the Oxbridge applications process, a tour of the college with one of our current undergraduates, a museum visit or a taster lecture from a fellow, and a debate session using mock interview questions. I adjust the timetables for each school, tailoring them according to their needs and interests. These visits work best with Years 9-13, but our primary school visits have been very successful as well.

“This school trip was everything I needed to decide to try and get in to Cambridge” – student from *The Access Project*

Given the distance from Cambridge to North Yorkshire, our contact is usually focused on my week-long trips to the region three times a year. At present, these trips are co-ordinated with Brasenose College, Oxford, to avoid duplication of work and to provide students in Years 10-13 with information

¹ POLAR refers to classification groups areas across the UK based on the proportion of

the young population that participates in higher education (HE).



on both universities without competing. On these trips, we visit approximately 20 schools in a week, and bring student ambassadors with us to do the hard work! These trips cost around £1000 each, including payment for the student ambassadors, food, accommodation and travel expenses.

New projects

I introduced new projects and ideas this year into my school visits – some worked well, while others could do with an overhaul (but all worth a try!). With a selected group of our Suffolk schools, I ran an Independent Research Project, where the students chose an academic topic and researched it to produce 2-3 pages discussing the topic and their ideas about it. This worked well, although the difference in support in schools was clear. I'd like to run this again next year, but with more schools and potentially in a competitive setting. Students have also participated in a 'mock interview' session during their visits to the college, where we debate interview-style questions as a group. In addition, I ordered 15 prospectuses from other universities to run sessions with Year 10s introducing them to their Higher Education options, with a specific focus on A Level choices.

How do we know that what we do has any impact?

The University as a whole will be starting to use the Higher Education Activity Tracker (HEAT) system over the next few years, to track and record student data. By tracking student engagement in outreach activities, we can then assess the impact of our work and target students more specifically.²

Currently we cross-reference our applicants with those who have visited the college for any event, and I also gather feedback from Open Days and school visits through questionnaires and surveys. I plan to focus more on evaluating our impact this year.

Who else do we work with?

Beyond our target schools, I have also initiated partnerships with several third-sector groups, [The Brilliant Club](#), [The Access Project](#) and [Shakespeare Schools Festival](#). The Brilliant Club and The Access Project both mentor students over a number of years in subject specialisms, then provide in-depth help with choosing the right university course for them. These groups are very worthwhile, with the Brilliant Club in particular achieving impressive results.³ Shakespeare Schools Festival, led by Catz alumna Ruth Brock, works closely with schoolteachers, providing them with CPD days based at the University. These projects have allowed us to form closer links with some of our target schools, and to branch out to

² You can find out more about HEAT at heat.ac.uk

³ Should anyone wish to see The Brilliant Club's Impact Report, let us know and we can send you a copy.



reach schools in London boroughs as well. Our partnerships are among the biggest expenses to come out of the Access budget, as the programmes are expensive to run. For example, we give The Access Project £1000 towards their travel expenses, in addition to covering the cost of their visit to the college (room hire and catering, totalling approximately £2000).

“A lot of emphasis was placed on the friendly reputation of the college and it definitely lived up to this” – *Open Day survey feedback*

As we all know, our current students are by far the biggest advert for the college, and they have many new and innovative ideas to encourage applicants. I have been working with the JCR Access and BME Officers, alongside many of our student ambassadors, for website content, prospective student advice and school visit help.

What about larger events?

During July, we ran Subject Taster Days followed by the College and University Open Days. Both types of event allow students to meet academic fellows, chat to current students and give students a chance to go to taster lectures. The student ambassadors do a fantastic job on

these days, and are the highlight for many prospective students.

I sent Open Day attendees feedback surveys to complete, which came back with positive comments but highlighted a few areas to improve upon. In addition to the above Open Days, we also ran a Medieval History Day for teachers to assist them with the new A Level and GCSE syllabi, which was received with enthusiasm.

I have also attended UCAS Fairs in Cambridge, Suffolk and Leeds, to promote the University and answer questions about the applications process. These proved to be very worthwhile and reached a broader audience than our own Open Days, as the attendees.

What are the plans for next year?

For the upcoming academic year, I would like to set up an Access and Outreach Working Group, to meet twice a year. Ideally, this group would include the Senior Tutor, the Communications Officer, the JCR Access rep, the Admissions Tutors, a representative from the Development Office and two college fellows with enthusiasm for WP. This would provide a forum for me to feed back on the work I do with our target schools, and discuss new ideas for events and sessions.

Following on from this year's Taster Day success, I have designed two programmes for next year, which focus on the mock interviews and subject specific content. I would like to further increase our connection with our target schools. 42 of

our 101 target schools have either visited the college or been visited by me, so my focus now is on reaching those schools that have not responded to our outreach efforts this year. Most importantly, I plan to continue making outreach work a priority for St Catharine's, and focus on targeting and engaging those students most affected by educational inequality.

List of all schools

Suffolk schools

Alde Valley High School
Beccles Free School
Bungay High School
Bury St Edmunds County Upper School
Castle Manor Academy
Chantry Academy
Claydon High School
Copleston High School
Debenham CEVC High School
East Bergholt High School
East Point Academy
Farlingaye High School
Felixstowe Academy
Hadleigh High School
Hartismere High School
Holbrook Academy
IES UK Breckland: Brandon Free School
Ipswich Academy

Kesgrave High School
King Edward VI School
Lowestoft Sixth Form College
Mildenhall College of Technology
Newmarket Academy
Northgate High School
Ormiston Denes Academy
Ormiston Endeavour Academy
Ormiston Sudbury Academy
Pakefield High School & Learning Community
Samuel Ward Academy
Saxmundham Free School
Sir John Leman High School
St Albans Catholic High School
St Benedicts RC Upper School
Stoke High Ormiston Academy
Stour Valley Community School
Stowmarket High School
Stowupland High School
Stradbroke High School
Suffolk New College
Suffolk One
The Benjamin Britten High School
Thomas Gainsborough School
Thomas Mills High School
Thurston Community College
Westbourne Sports College



St Catharine's College Cambridge

North Yorkshire schools

Barlby High School
Bedale High School
Boroughbridge High School
Brayton High School
Caedmon College Whitby
Craven College
Craven College
Easingwold School
Ebor Filey School
Ermysted's Grammar School
Eskdale School
George Pindar School
Graham School
Harrogate College
Harrogate Grammar School
Harrogate High School
Holy Family Catholic High School, Carlton
Ilkley Grammar School
King James's School
Lady Lumley's School
Malton School
Nidderdale High School And Community College
Northallerton College
Norton College
Norton College
Outwood Academy Ripon
Read School
Richmond School

Ripon Grammar School
Risedale Sports And Community College
Rossett School
Ryedale School
Scalby School
Scarborough Sixth Form College
Selby High School Specialist School For The Arts And Science
Settle College
Skipton Girls' High School
South Craven School
St Aidans And St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form
St Augustine's Roman Catholic School, Scarborough
St Francis Xavier School
St John Fisher Catholic High School
Stokesley School
Tadcaster Grammar
The Skipton Academy
The Wensleydale School & Sixth Form
Thirsk School & Sixth Form College
Upper Wharfedale School

Rutland schools

Catmose College
Harington School

Connect to Cambridge schools

Sawston Village College
Impington Village College