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**Amber: Ambitions Evaluation
and Research
Programme
(Phase 1 and Phase 3): Final
Report, December 2017**



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Evaluation of the South Bristol Youth Ambitions Programme

**(Phase 1 and Phase 3): Final Report, December
2017**

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Evaluation of the South Bristol Youth Ambitions Programme (Phase 1 and Phase 3): Final Report, December 2017

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This report outlines findings from the evaluation of the South Bristol Youth Ambitions Programme, which took place over the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years. It builds on the interim report of the evaluation from 2016. We recognise that many of the recommendations from the interim report have been taken on board by the South Bristol Youth team either in the 2016/17 academic year, or in the planning of the HEFCE-funded Future Quest project which has superseded the Ambitions Programme. Those recommendations from the interim report that are still relevant are reiterated or built upon in this report. The recommendations here are intended to further inform the development of Future Quest.
2. The Ambitions Programme is a widening participation programme provided by South Bristol Youth, the University of the West of England, and the University of Bristol, to encourage pupils from six schools in South Bristol to consider participation in Higher Education (HE) as a possibility for the future. Selected pupils take part in a range of activities during Years 8, 9, 10 and 11, to help them find out more about university and consider possible careers. This evaluation focuses on provision for pupils in Year 8 and Year 10.
3. The six schools who form part of South Bristol Youth and whose pupils participate in the Ambitions Programme all have catchment areas with above-average numbers of pupils coming from areas of deprivation (in the lowest 20% on different deprivation indices). Two of the schools in particular have an overwhelming majority of pupils from areas of deprivation. This reinforces the need for additional support and resources in these areas to help raise educational achievement. It highlights the importance of the South Bristol Youth programmes in supporting students to achieve their potential in challenging circumstances.
4. The evaluation uses a wide range of methods to understand the outcomes of the Ambitions Programme. These include: analysis of data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency on trends in HE participation in South Bristol; analysis of pupil attainment, attendance and behaviour data; analysis of pupil and parent attendance at Ambitions Programme events; surveys with students and parents; and interviews and focus groups with Ambitions Programme stakeholders including those who deliver the programme, students, parents, and school staff.

The South Bristol context: Progression to Higher Education

5. Analysis of HESA data shows that the percentages of young people from South Bristol participating in HE was far below the national average (15.7% compared with 35.5%), and this gap is not closing. Participation rates varied considerably across the South Bristol wards. Although GCSE results in South Bristol are low in comparison to the national average, HE participation is still lower than would be expected when GCSE results are taken into account.
6. The University of the West of England is the most popular university for young people from South Bristol, attended by 24% of those who progressed to HE. Of the top ten most popular universities, nine were in Wales and the South West, highlighting that the majority of young people choose universities that are close to or easily accessible from home. Compared with the National Average, a higher proportion of young people from South Bristol who attended HE lived at home during term time (30% compared to 26% nationally).
7. The percentage of HE entrants from South Bristol wards going to a Russell Group (RG) university was 21% compared with a national average of 28%. This figure varies widely between wards.

8. The most popular subjects studied were creative arts and design, biological sciences, business and administration, and social studies.
9. A third (33%) of HE entrants from South Bristol had a parent or guardian with HE qualifications (compared with the national average of 43%), although this varied widely across wards.

Profiles of participating students according to academic progress, school attendance and behaviour

10. Analysis of student data on academic progress, school attendance, and behaviour focuses on students participating in Phases 1 and 3 of the Ambitions Programme during the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years. Data from students for whom we had consent were used, thus this represents only a partial sample of those participating. Further, the data provided by schools were incomplete, so it has not been possible to do a full comparative analysis on every indicator across all participating schools.

Phase 1 (Year 8 students)

11. Slightly more female than male Y8 students participated in the programme (53% female and 47% male across the two Phase 1 groups). Although there was some variation across schools, the percentage of BME students matched the school cohorts overall. Around a quarter of students were eligible for free school meals. This is slightly less than the school cohort, although again this varied across schools.
12. Across the two Phase1 groups, 60% of SBY students had achieved Level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 2 (compared with a whole school average of 30%). By the end of Year 7 over 80% of SBY students had achieved Level 5 or above in English and maths and were on course to achieve a GCSE grade 4 or above in these subjects if they continue to make expected progress.
13. Following the lifting of the requirement by the DFE in 2014, three of the participating schools had started to use alternatives to National Curriculum levels for tracking student progress in 2015/16 and by the end of 2016/17 all schools were using alternative measures. While it is not possible to compare attainment or progress precisely across all schools for this reason, the data suggest that most SBY students were meeting or exceeding expectations at the end of Y8, although around 10% remain below/behind what may have been expected.
14. Just three of the six schools provided data on Y9 attainment. Two schools based their assessment on the GCSE grade students are currently “working at” in Y9 and the other school used predicted final GCSE grades, based on students’ current progress. Using these criteria, most SBY students where data were available were on course to achieve a Grade 4 or above in GCSE English and maths. However, nearly half the students from School A had yet to access a GCSE grade level in maths, suggesting they may require additional support if they are to progress to a Grade 4 or above in their GCSE.
15. ***There are implications for the role of the Ambitions Programme in the partnership with schools, where some participating students have the potential but may struggle to achieve the GCSE grades necessary to progress to A-levels or equivalent. This could include individual reviews with participating students to assess if there is any additional support that could be offered.***
16. Participating students had lower school absence rates on average when compared with the whole school cohort in the school year prior to the start of the programme. Absence rates were slightly higher in Y8 and Y9 for participating students but remained below that of the whole school cohort.

17. Changes in the number of merits/demerits awarded to participating students across years 7, 8 and 9, varied between schools so it is not possible to say for sure if attendance on the Ambitions Programme has made a difference to student behaviour at school. Not all schools were able to provide equivalent statistics for the whole cohort. For those schools that did, participating students tended to have slightly more merits and fewer demerits than the cohort average

Phase 3 (Year 10 students)

18. A higher number of female compared with male Y10 students participated in the programme (60% female compared with 40% male across the two Phase 3 groups). Although there was some variation across schools, the percentage of black and minority ethnic (BME) students matched the school Y10 cohort overall. In the 2015/16 group 15% of SBY students were eligible for free school meals compared with 29% of the Y10 school cohort. For the 2016/17 group this increased to 30% compared with 35% for the school cohort, although again this varied across schools.

19. For both the 2015/16 and 2016/17 cohorts, around half achieved NC level 5 or above in English and in maths at the end of KS2. There was some variation between schools, with over three quarters of the participating students from one school in the higher attaining group compared with less than a quarter in two schools. There was just one participating student at Level 3 in the 2015/16 cohort and two at Level 3 in the 2016/17 cohort.

20. Schools had begun to use alternatives to NC levels in 2015/16 so it is not possible to compare schools' Y9 student attainment precisely. Where data were comparable, most participating students had achieved the equivalent of NC Level 5/6 or GCSE Grade 2 and above in English and maths by the end of Y9 so were on course to achieve a Grade 4 or above in their GCSEs.

21. ***In Y10 three schools were using GCSE “working at” grades to assess student progress and two schools were using predicted grades. One school was using progress descriptors rather than GCSE grades. Most participating students were working at GCSE grade 3/4 or above, with over half at grade 5 and above. However, there was evidence that a minority of students were making less progress than expected. Further investigation is needed to identify the reasons for this and the implications for supporting students to meet their target grades where there is a risk they may not achieve their potential.***

22. **The 2017 GCSE results for the 2015/16 Phase 3 Ambitions Programme students show that 69.5% achieved 5 or more A*-C grades including a Grade 4 or above in English and maths.** This is an indication of the proportion reaching the standard required to progress to A level or equivalent post-16 qualifications. 78% of students on the Ambitions Programme achieved a Grade 4 or above in English compared with 70% nationally, and 90% of students on the Ambitions Programme achieved a Grade 4 or above in maths compared with 71% nationally. 49% of participating students achieved a Grade 5 or above in English and maths compared with 42% nationally. 24% achieved a Grade 7 or above in English compared with 16% nationally and 30% achieved a Grade 7 or above in maths compared with 20% nationally. **This is a positive picture.** While the sample is selected from students who are expected to be able to go to university, and would therefore be expected to be achieving well at GCSE, the majority of this population comes from disadvantaged areas, which does not act in their favour when it comes to attainment.

23. ***While it is clear that most participating participants achieved the grades needed to move on to A levels or equivalent, there remains a minority that may have been expected to do better taking account of their KS2 results. Some of these students had begun to fall behind at an earlier stage and there are implications for how the***

Ambitions Programme can work in partnership with schools to identify these students and provide additional support.

24. Students on the Ambitions Programme had lower school absence rates on average when compared with the whole school cohort in the school year prior to the start of the programme. Absence rates were marginally higher in years 10 and 11 for participating students but have remained below that of the whole school cohort each year.
25. Changes in the number of merits/demerits awarded to participating students across years 9, 10 and 11 varied between schools and not all schools were able to provide statistics for the whole cohort. For those schools that did, participating students tended to have more merits and fewer demerits than the cohort average. In all but one school where data were provided, the number of merits awarded to participating students increased year-on-year, although it is not possible to say for sure if attendance on the Ambitions Programme has had an influence.

The aims and approaches of the Ambitions Programme

26. The Ambitions Programme is an intervention with an emphasis on informing and enthusing students about university life, providing experiences of what university can be like, and developing confidence to explore future options more generally. The programme aims to familiarise students with university so that it is a place they could potentially see themselves attending in the future.

Reactions of stakeholders to the Ambitions Programme

27. As a whole the programme was regarded highly by schools, parents, and students who participated. Given the expansion of the programme, however, there are areas that could be further strengthened.
28. Both Year 8 and Year 10 students commented that they found some aspects of the programme repetitive. This is more likely to be the case for Year 10 students who have been part of the programme since Year 8. ***Programme organisers should examine the overall coherence of the programme and specify aims and outcomes for each year of the programme. This will of course take time to feed through into the whole cohort: it may be worth reflecting on what the current older cohorts have already done in planning sessions as they will not have progressed through the programme in its current form.***
29. Students value activities and sessions that they can differentiate from 'normal school'. In some cases school-based sessions appear to be rolled out year after year without any critical reflection on behalf of the organising teams. Students want more interaction and less of what they call 'just sitting and listening'. ***Programme organisers in the universities should examine the effectiveness of each planned session against the specific aims and learning outcomes for the session and radically revamp if necessary.***
30. In general students were positive about group work that involved mixing students from different schools when it was done well. However they were critical of sessions in which the organisers had not paid enough attention to the organisation of group work, which included the organisation of space and seating. Programme and activity leaders need particular skills to organise successful group work for school students. ***Programme organisers/session facilitators in the universities should have specific training in the skills needed to organise effective group work with school students.***
31. University Student Ambassadors are clearly an important part of the programme, and it is good that their remit takes into account their skills, but there is not always enough time built into the activities for school students to engage with the Student Ambassadors. Further,

Student Ambassador training and briefing for sessions is often minimal, which limits their ability to support students as effectively as possible. ***The SBY team should consider if there could be more time for engagement and discussion between the Student Ambassadors and the Ambitions students built into the programme. Where possible, more substantial and focused training (appropriate to the age cohort and to the aims and approaches of the Ambitions Programme) and fuller briefing about the aims and approaches for specific sessions should be provided for Student Ambassadors.***

32. Parental participation in the programme is relatively limited. While parents who are able to attend appreciate the sessions, South Bristol Youth are still not reaching as many as they would like. Using schools as venues this year appears to have made a difference, although timing remains an issue: this is at the school's behest and parents' commitments are so varied that no single time would be appropriate for all. This points to the need for more creative ways to engage with parents and carers. ***The SBY team should consider documenting relevant information for parents/carers who cannot attend the sessions organised for them. An overview of programme activities, and the financial information about attending university (for example) could be made available in hard and electronic copies. Regular communication about the programme activities could be provided via email. The SBY team could assess whether there is any appetite for web-based interaction (via social media for example) for parents and carers who may want to ask questions but cannot attend the sessions.***
33. In the majority of schools the partnership process works well. However, staff responsible for partnership need the resource and capacity to make this happen. Where staff responsible have good relationships with the students on the programme, attendance is generally good and the schools' commitment to the programme is evident. It is not always clear, however, how embedded or important the programme is to the school, and whether other members of staff in the school are aware of the programme and which students participate. ***Schools and the SBY team should discuss how they make the programme work best for their students, in order to develop a partnership agreement or code of practice about participation. As recommended in the interim report, a network of school staff with responsibility for the Ambitions Programme would facilitate this kind of discussion. A simple overview sheet of activities, aims and participating students would promote awareness about the programme in all teachers within the school.***

Outcomes of the Ambitions Programme

34. **The Ambitions programme is valuable in changing young people's awareness of university and giving students general information about university and university life.**
35. Lack of know-how and not lack of aspirations is what is likely to be a barrier to participation in Higher Education. The majority of young people who have participated in the Ambitions programme have developed aspirations to study at university. However many of the young people and their parents lack the know-how that is needed to achieve their aims of studying at university – in particular, which specific pathways need to be followed to fulfil specific aspirations. In general the SBY team interviewed and the SLT members interviewed do not appear to be fully aware of this barrier to participation in Higher Education. ***The SBY team should work in partnership with schools to develop a strategy to ensure that young people can obtain the specific information about Higher Education related to either a particular career option (for example become a Lawyer) or to keeping their options open if they have not decided upon a career path (for example studying facilitating A-level subjects).***

The role of the Ambitions Programme in the wider context of provision

36. The Ambitions programme is effective at encouraging young people to consider university as a possibility. It does not, however, have the resource to provide young people with individualised advice on how to achieve ambitions they may develop before, during or after participating in the programme. It appears that students are not receiving individualised advice from schools about pathways needed to fulfil particular ambitions. ***South Bristol Youth should inform students of the importance of understanding pre-requisites for specific pathways, and suggest where they can access individualised advice about this. Schools should work with South Bristol Youth to understand students' ambitions and understanding, and ensure that tailored and informed advice can be offered to individual students about what pathways they need to take to fulfil specific ambitions. This would best be achieved through close partnership working between South Bristol Youth and schools. A school-based 'mentor' who takes responsibility for supporting this exploration and advice would be beneficial.***
37. Level 3 provision within easy access of South Bristol is limited. The two schools in South Bristol with Level 3 provision are currently only able to sustain a relatively limited offer, which does not meet the needs of all students. This is in contrast to what is on offer in other areas of the City. ***The Future Quest Programme should continue to develop an overview of the Level 3 provision that is available across Bristol in order to investigate the range of Post-16 options available to young people who live in areas where there is relatively little progression to Higher Education. Schools in South Bristol should work together to develop a) strategic information about the number of students from the area who need to study Level 3 qualifications in order to reduce the HE participation gap in South Bristol wards (See Table 3.1) and b) a strategic 10-year plan of the Level 3 provision that should become available to young people in South Bristol in order to increase HE participation rate.***
38. Collection of student-level data from schools has been a priority for this evaluation, and processes were agreed with the South Bristol Youth board. While some schools were prompt and clear with their communications about student-level data, others did not respond to repeated requests for data provision and/or clarification resulting in considerable demands on the resource of South Bristol Youth and the evaluation team. There are many gaps in the ongoing attendance, behaviour and attainment data so the opportunity to track progress in a detailed manner has been lost. ***The Future Quest evaluation will be relying heavily on student-level data, and it is important for schools to ensure that there is enough resource, and permission and expertise within that resource, to compile and provide the evaluation with the necessary data. A point of contact in each school who has capacity and is responsible for data provision would help schools to prioritise this within their systems.***

Chapter 1: Introduction

South Bristol Youth is a charity whose focus is providing opportunities to support the development and future lives of young people in South Bristol. The charity is a consortium of six secondary schools in South Bristol, Bristol City Football Club, The Park in Knowle West, the University of the West of England, and the University of Bristol. This report presents an evaluation of the Ambitions Programme, which was part of South Bristol Youth provision until September 2017. The Ambitions Programme was a widening participation for young people in Years 8 to 11 in the six member schools, and aimed support their thinking about their future trajectories through education, specifically informing and enthusing them to think about university as a possibility. It has recently been superseded by the HEFCE-funded Future Quest programme. Future Quest is based on the Ambitions programme, but with more intensive provision for young people in Years 9 to 13 in 26 schools and colleges around the city of Bristol.

This evaluation was commissioned at the start of 2015, and reports on the Ambitions Programme provision for Year 8 and Year 10 students as delivered by the University of West of England, and University of Bristol respectively. The evaluation uses a wide range of methods to understand how well the Ambitions Programme is meeting its aims. These include: In order to understand how the Ambitions Programme addresses its aims, the evaluation employs a range of methods. These include:

- Analysis of data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, to understand the South Bristol context in relation to participation in Higher Education and investigate trends in HE participation.
- Analysis of student attainment, attendance and behaviour data, to understand whether the progress of students participating in the Ambitions Programme differs from the progress of the whole year cohort.¹
- Interviews with Ambitions Programme providers and observing Ambitions Programme sessions, to understand the mechanisms through which outcomes are expected to be achieved.
- Analysis of data on student and parent attendance at Ambitions Programme events.
- Surveys, focus groups, and interviews with participating students, to understand their experiences of the ambitions programme, their thoughts and expectations about university, and how they view their learning and think about their future.
- Surveys and interviews with parents of participating students, to understand their attitudes to Higher Education, their experiences of the Ambitions Programme, and how they support their child to think about the future.
- Interviews with school senior leaders to understand how schools approach supporting progression to Higher Education, and how they engage with the Ambitions Programme.

The first year of the evaluation was reported in detail in the interim report (Rose et al, 2016), including methodological approaches and their rationale. In order to present a clear overview of the programme and the evaluation, some of the interim report will be reiterated and summarised in this final report. It was evident from the evaluation activities this year that many of the recommendations from the interim report have been acted on, either in the 2016/17 Ambitions Programme, or in the planning of Future Quest. This report will aim to make further strategic recommendations that can be taken forward into Future Quest planning and delivery.

The chapters of this report are as follows. Chapter 1 introduces the report. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the context of South Bristol, and is reproduced from the interim report. Chapter 3 reports on Higher Education destinations of young people from South Bristol, and is summarised from the interim report. Chapter 4 presents the profiles of the students who have participated in the Ambitions

¹ The data collection schedule and methods for this were agreed with all schools, however data collection for this part proved problematic. Some schools were able to provide all the data as agreed, others found this more challenging. As a result, this analysis is based on a partial sample.

Programme, including demographic information, and attendance, behaviour and attainment trajectories. Chapter 5 presents an overview of the aims and approaches of the Ambitions Programme and presents a description of the activities provided in the 2016/17 academic year. Chapter 6 presents the reaction of stakeholders to the programme, and discusses how it was experienced by stakeholders. Chapter 7 discusses the outcomes of the programme, in particular the ways in which young people were thought to have developed their thinking around university as a result of participating. Chapter 8 reflects on the role of the Ambitions Programme in the wider context of provision for young people in South Bristol.

Chapter 2: The South Bristol Context

To understand the context that South Bristol Youth operates within, we analysed local area deprivation indices based on the student intake of schools participating in the South Bristol Youth Ambitions Programme 2015/16, comparing relative levels of deprivation in the school catchment areas. Measures include an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and Education, Skills and Training Deprivation. For more information about these indices, please see Appendix 1. (Note: this chapter is reproduced from the interim report.)

To map the levels of relative deprivation in the SBY school catchment areas, an anonymised list of the neighbourhoods in which students live was obtained from Bristol City Council and this was then matched to the deprivation indices. The deprivation indices show which neighbourhoods are the most disadvantaged and which the least.

Deprivation Indices for SBY schools

Fig. 2.1 is a map showing the location of the six schools participating in the SBY Ambitions programme 2015/2016. As Fig. 2.1 shows, Ashton Park school is to the North of the South Bristol area (Southville ward) while Bedminster Down (Bedminster ward), Merchants' Academy and Bridge Learning Campus (Hartcliffe ward) are to the South and Oasis Academy John Williams (Hengrove ward) and Oasis Academy Brislington (Brislington West ward) to the South East.

Fig. 2.1: Location of Schools Participating in the South Bristol Youth Ambitions Programme 2015/16

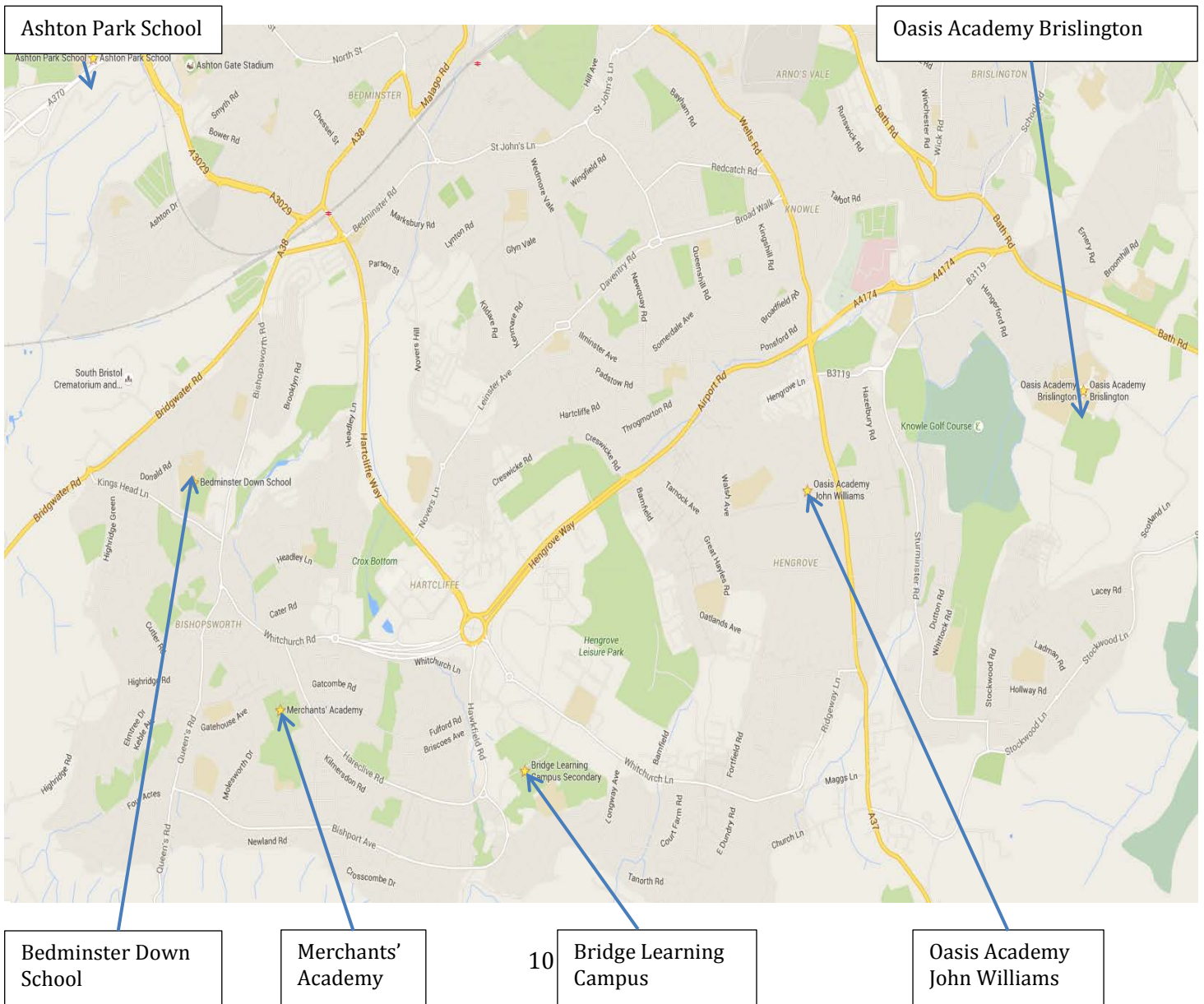
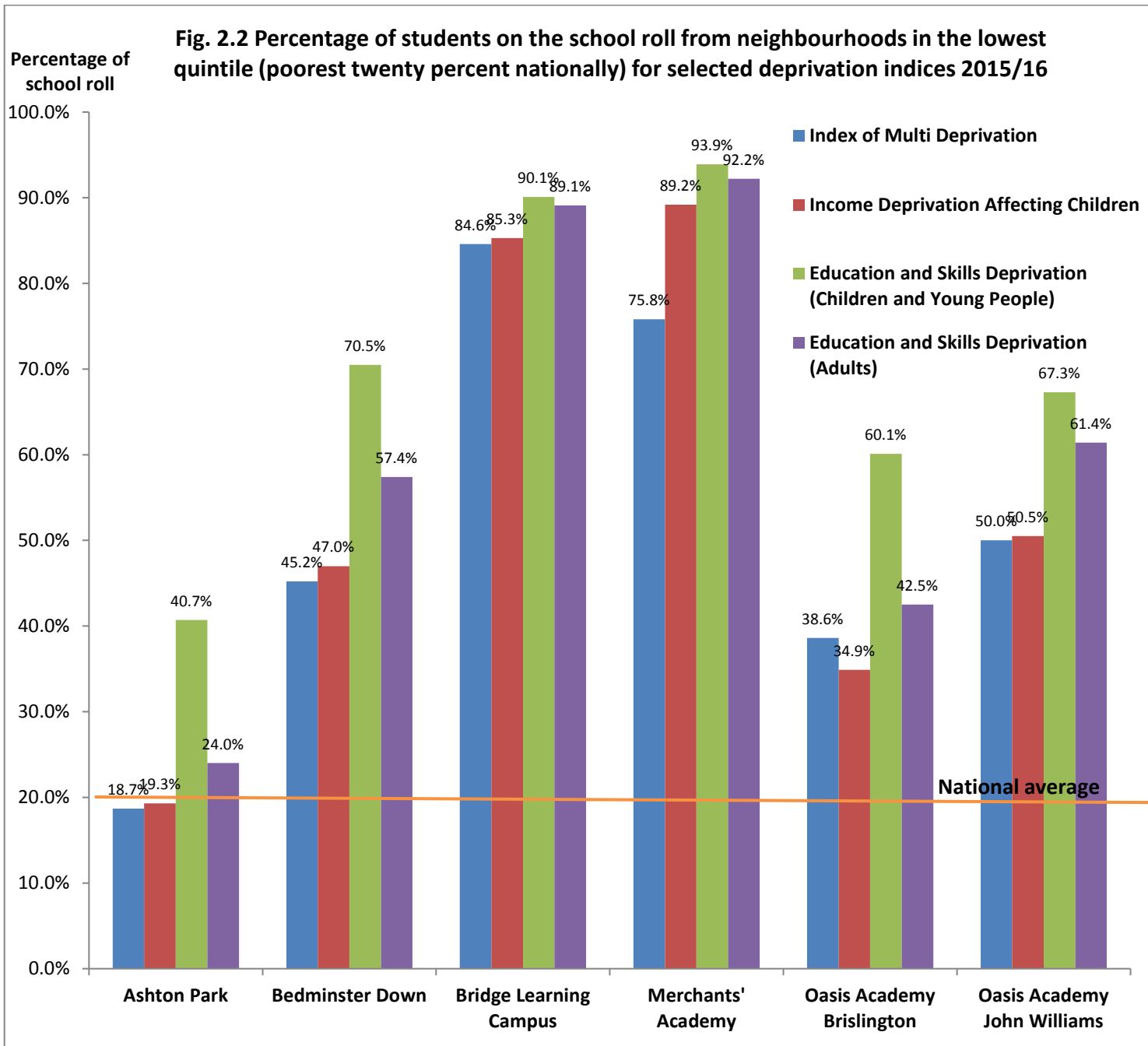


Fig.2.2 shows the proportion of students from each school living in neighbourhoods that are in the lowest 20% nationally for deprivation (Quintile 1) on selected indicators.



Nationally, 20% of the population are in the lowest quintile for each deprivation indices but as Fig. 2.2 shows, the percentage is much higher for students attending the South Bristol Youth schools. More than three quarters of the students attending Bridge Learning Campus and Merchants' Academy are from the most deprived neighbourhoods on each of four indicators. The percentages for Bedminster Down, Oasis Academy Brislington and Oasis Academy John Williams are around twice the national average rising to three times the national average for Education and Skills deprivation for Children and Young People. Ashton Park School is closer to the national average on IMD, IDACI and Education and Skills (Adult) deprivation but twice the national average for Education and Skills (Children and Young People) deprivation.

Further analysis of the deprivation indices show that for Bridge Learning Campus and Merchants' Academy the intake is heavily skewed towards students from the most deprived neighbourhoods, with very few students from the least deprived neighbourhoods. Bedminster Down, Oasis Academy

Brislington and Oasis Academy John Williams have a slightly more balanced intake but still heavily skewed towards students from the most deprived neighbourhoods. Of the six South Bristol Youth schools, Ashton Park has the most balanced intake, although the percentage of students from neighbourhoods with the lowest educational performance for children and young people is still twice the national average. Perhaps surprisingly there are more students (36.5%) from neighbourhoods which are the least deprived nationally for Adult Education and Skills. However, this is likely to be a result of the gentrification of parts of Southville and Windmill Hill with an increase in the number of young professional in these areas.

Summary and implications for the South Bristol Youth Ambitions Programme

The percentage of South Bristol Youth school students from the most deprived areas is significantly above the national average. In particular, most students are from the most deprived areas nationally for education and skills deprivation. For Merchants' Academy and Bridge Learning Campus over 90% of students are from these neighbourhoods, for Bedminster Down it is over 70%, Oasis Academy Brislington and John Williams over 60% and Ashton Park over 40%. This reinforces the need for additional support and resources in these areas to help raise educational achievement. It highlights the importance of the South Bristol Youth programmes in supporting students to achieve their potential in challenging circumstances.

Chapter 3: Summary of data analysis from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) statistics on Higher Education (HE) participation by young people from South Bristol

Using data from HESA, the purpose of this analysis was to:

- examine recent trends in HE participation by young people from South Bristol, including universities attended and subjects studied;
- compare HE participation in South Bristol with that for Bristol as a whole and nationally;
- highlight the implications for widening HE participation in south Bristol and for supporting young people to make informed choices.

A request was made to HESA² for data on HE participation by young people from South Bristol wards over the last six years (2009/10 – 2014/15), including A-level point scores, universities attended, subjects studied, term time residence (whether students were living at home) and parental education (whether students' parents/guardians have HE qualifications). The aim is to provide a context to the South Bristol Youth (SBY) programme evaluation by examining variations in HE participation at a local level and the university choices students have made. This chapter presents a summary of a section of the interim report.

The data are based on young people attending HE from the twelve wards covered by the SBY programme. This includes nine wards forming the South Bristol Parliamentary Constituency (Bedminster, Bishopsworth, Filwood, Hartcliffe, Hengrove, Knowle, Southville, Whitchurch Park, Windmill Hill) and three adjacent wards in the South East (Stockwood, Brislington East and Brislington West), which can be seen in Fig. 3.1.

Ten of the twelve wards are defined by HESA as “low participation neighbourhoods” i.e. wards that are in the lowest 20% nationally for HE participation (Quintile 1). The exceptions are the two wards to the north of the South Bristol Constituency, Windmill Hill (in the lowest 40% for HE participation) and Southville in the lowest 60%.

It is important to acknowledge that the south Bristol wards are not homogenous and socio-economic differentials are significant. A report by Raphael Reed et al (2007) on young participation in higher education in South Bristol identified three zones representing different economic profiles:

“a) Northern zone: Bedminster, Southville and Windmill Hill. Nearly all private sector housing, with traditionally affluent working class populations being recently supplemented by public sector professionals, with low unemployment and relatively high levels of qualification.

b) Eastern zone: Knowle and Hengrove. Mainly private housing including substantial ‘Right to Buy’, with mixed employment patterns and qualification levels, low unemployment and low benefit dependency.

c) Southern zone: Filwood, Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park. Mainly council built housing estates, with low skill and manual employment, poor qualification levels, above average unemployment and high benefit dependency.”³

However, even in the more affluent wards there are pockets of low educational achievement.

² The most up-to-date data on HE numbers at ward level from HESA is for the academic year 2014/15, however participation rates (as a percentage of young people living in each ward) comes from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the latest data on this are for 2011/12.

³ Young Participation in Higher Education: a sociocultural study of educational engagement in Bristol South parliamentary constituency. Lynn Raphael Reed, Chris Croudace, Neil Harrison, Arthur Baxter and Kathryn Last, University of the West of England, Bristol (2007)

Fig. 3.1: Parliamentary wards in Bristol



HE Participation

Table 3.1 shows the percentage of young people participating in higher education from each of the South Bristol wards and the gap between the actual participation rate and “expected” participation rate taking into account students’ GCSE attainment and ethnicity. The data are from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) based on the proportion of the 15 year old cohort at maintained schools who entered higher education at age 18 or 19 between 2007 and 2011.⁴

⁴ Gaps in young participation in HEFCE (April 2016 update)

Table 3.1 Young people participating in HE by south Bristol ward (between 2007 and 2011)

Ward	%Participation rate	Participation percentage gap from expected
Southville	27.5	-4.7
Windmill Hill	21.3	-2.6
Knowle	19.7	-4.5
Brislington West	18.8	-4.5
Stockwood	17.3	-6.0
Bedminster	16.6	-4.5
Brislington East	16.5	-5.1
Hengrove	14.2	-6.7
Bishopsworth	13.1	-6.1
Hartcliffe	8.6	-7.5
Whitchurch Park	8.0	-8.6
Filwood	6.6	-3.9
South Bristol ward average	15.7	-5.4
Bristol City average (all wards)	25.4	-3.5
National average	35.5	

As Table 3.1 shows HE participation for young people from south Bristol wards over this period is nearly 10 percentage points below the Bristol City average and nearly 20 percentage points below the national average. For three wards the participation rate is less than 10%. The end column in Table 3.1 shows the difference between the actual HE participation rate and the expected rate based on national trends when GCSE results and ethnicity are taken into account. Participation by young people from most of the south Bristol wards is around five percentage points lower than predicted by their academic attainment at 16. However, even if HE participation was as predicted it would still only be 21% so initiatives to increase HE participation need to focus on raising academic achievement as well as on students' aspirations.

Summary of analysis and implications for the SBY Ambitions Programme

Between 2007 and 2011 the percentage of young people from South Bristol wards participating in HE was 15.7% compared with a national average of 35.5%. Significant variations were evident across the South Bristol wards ranging from a participation rate of less than 10% in Hartcliffe (8.6%), Whitchurch Park (8.0%) and Filwood (6.6%) to over 20% in Windmill Hill (21.3%) and Southville (27.5%). Apart from Windmill Hill and Southville, all the other South Bristol wards are defined by HESA as "low participation neighbourhoods" i.e. wards that are in the lowest 20% nationally for HE participation (Quintile 1). This has implications for targeting widening participation initiatives to close the gaps.

In most wards HE participation was about five percentage points below what may have been expected given students' GCSE results. This shows that there were more students with the academic potential to go to university than actually went. If this gap was closed the participation rate would rise to around 21%. However, this still remains significantly below the national average of 35.5%. Because HE participation is dependent upon good academic performance at GCSE and post-16, initiatives to increase participation in South Bristol will have most impact if they help to raise academic performance as well as students' aspirations.

Although there have been some improvements in the percentage of South Bristol young people participating in HE (from 13% in 1999/2000 to 18% in 2011/12) the improvement rate is below the national average so the gap is not closing. The most up-to-date figures show a rise in numbers between 2009/10 and 2011/12 but since then numbers have remained fairly static at just under a 1000 per year (of which 55% are female and 45% are male).

Over the last six years (2009/10-2014/15), young people from South Bristol attended over 100 different universities. The University of the West of England (UWE) in Bristol was clearly the most

popular, attended by nearly one in four (24%) of the South Bristol entrants. In three wards, over a third of HE entries over this period were to UWE (Hartcliffe 36%, Whitchurch Park 35% and Hengrove 34%).

Of the top ten most popular universities, nine were in the South West and Wales, indicating that the majority of young people are choosing universities that are relatively close to, or easily accessible from home. Compared with the national average, university students from South Bristol are more likely to live at home (30% compared with 26% nationally) and this is particularly the case for students from those wards with the lowest HE participation rates such as Hengrove, Harcliffe, Whitchurch Park and Filwood. While experience of and familiarity with local universities may help increase participation and reduce costs this needs to be balanced against more course options and the broader life experiences of living away from home. There are implications for advising and supporting students in choosing a university, including information about courses available nationally and assistance with living away from home.

The percentage of HE entrants from South Bristol wards going to a Russell Group (RG) university between 2009/10-2014/15 was 21% compared with a national average of 28%. There is a wide variation across the South Bristol wards with 34% of students from Windmill Hill attending a RG university compared with just 8.3% from Hartcliffe. This is partly a reflection of differences in the proportion of students from each ward achieving the higher A-level grades asked for by RG universities.

Based on an A-level point score of 360 and above (equivalent to 3 A-level 'A' grades) there are more South Bristol students with good enough grades to meet RG entry requirements than actually went to a RG university. Overall, 37.6% of HE entrants from South Bristol between 2009/10 -2014/15 had RG potential based on their A-level point score. However, the data do not differentiate between subjects taken so it is quite likely that a proportion of those with the highest A-level point scores did not have the facilitating subjects required for some courses by RG universities. There are implications for advising high potential learners on their A-level subject choices and for providing information to these students on the RG courses available and support in making applications.

As a percentage of course entries between 2009/10-2014/15, creative arts and design was the most popular subject area chosen by students from South Bristol (14.4%) followed by biological sciences (11.1%), business and administration (8.6%) and social studies (8.0%). Compared with the national picture, the percentage of students studying medicine and dentistry was half the national average (1.7% compared with 3.4%) and in three wards no students studied medicine or dentistry over this period. The percentage of South Bristol students studying business and administration was also below the national average (8.6% compared with 11.9%) whereas subjects studied at above the national average rate include creative arts and design (14.4% compared with 10.9% nationally), education, including teacher training (6.1% compared with 4.1%) and mass communication which includes media studies (4.6% compared with 3.1%).

There are implications for helping potential HE students in choosing courses. For example, a recent study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies⁵ showed that a creative arts degree gives no advantage in terms of future earnings compared with the earnings achieved by non-graduates. While future earnings are not the only or even the main criterion for subject choice, it is a factor that young people need to be made aware of.

There were significant gender differences in the subject areas studied by HE entrants from South Bristol. A much higher percentage of females compared to males studied subjects allied to medicine e.g. nursing (10.5% of females compared with 2.6% of males), languages (10.5% compared with 3.5%) and education including teacher training (9.5% compared with 1.7%). Males were more likely than females to be studying physical sciences (6.8% compared with 3.5%), mathematical sciences (4.7% compared with 0.9%), computer science (9.9% compared with 0.8%) and engineering & technology (10.5% compared with 1.4%). Again there are implications for helping young people to

⁵ Britton, J. et al (2016) How English domiciled graduate earnings vary with gender, institution attended, subject and socioeconomic background, *Institute for Fiscal Studies Working Paper W16/06*

make informed subject choices at both A-level and university application, including challenging gender stereotypes and providing gender specific role models.

A third (33%) of HE entrants from South Bristol between 2009/10-2014/15 had a parent or guardian with HE qualifications (compared with the national average of 43%), although this varied across wards ranging from 17% for Whitchurch Park to 58% for Southville. As most parents/guardians from South Bristol will not have direct experience of HE there are implications for providing parents/guardians with advice on the HE opportunities available to their child, the cost/benefits of HE, information on the application process and how to support their child's learning.

Chapter 4: Tracking the Ambitions cohorts: profiles of students participating in Phase 1 and Phase 3 during 2015/16 and 2016/17

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a statistical profile of students participating in the South Bristol Youth (SBY) Ambitions programme during the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years. The profile includes:

- representation by gender, ethnic group and socio-economic status;
- attainment and progression prior to and during programme participation;
- school attendance prior to and during programme participation;
- behaviour as measured by merits/demerits awarded at school prior to and during programme participation.

The analysis is based on students participating in Phase 1 of the programme (Year 8) and in Phase 3 (Year 10) for whom student and parental consent was obtained to use their anonymised data. In 2015/16, this included 67% of Year 8 students who had signed up to the programme, and 58% of Year 10 students. In 2016/17, this included 78% of Year 8 students who had signed up to the programme, and 52% of Year 10 students. This sample is, therefore, a partial sample of the Ambitions Programme cohort.

Four cohorts of students have been tracked;

- Phase 1 students (Y8) starting in 2015/16
- Phase 1 students (Y8) starting in 2016/17
- Phase 3 students (Y10) starting in 2015/16
- Phase 3 students (Y10) starting in 2016/17

Students from six Bristol schools participated in the programme. The data on students from one school (F) were unavailable for 2015/16 so apart from the overall number, analysis is based on student data received from five schools for this year. Data were also incomplete from other schools for some indicators, shown as NA in the tables, this means that it has not been possible to do a full comparative analysis on every indicator across all participating schools.

Phase 1 (Year 8) student profiles

Tables 4.1 – 4.3 show the gender, ethnicity and free school meal eligibility of Phase 1 participants.

Table 4.1: Number of Y8 participants by gender

	2015/16 start		2016/17 start	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
School A	10	12	4	7
School B	8	5	3	6
School C	10	20	12	9
School D	10	6	6	5
School E	11	8	8	5
School F	15	9	7	1
Total	64 (52%)	60 (48%)	40 (55%)	33 (45%)

Table 4.2: Percentage of Y8 participants from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME) compared with all Y8 students at each school

	2015/16 start		2016/17 start	
	Percentage BME SBY Y8 students	Percentage BME All Y8 students	Percentage BME SBY Y8 students	Percentage BME All Y8 students
School A	4.5%	15.0%	18.2%	16%
School B	7.7%	15.0%	33.3%	16%
School C	33.3%	20.0%	4.8%	17%
School D	25.0%	11.0%	27.3%	14%
School E	10.5%	20.0%	7.7%	13%
School F	NA	NA	0%	11%
Total	16.0%	16.0%	15.0%	15.0%

Table 4.3: Percentage of Y8 participants eligible for free school meals (FSM) compared with all Y8 students at each school

	2015/16 start		2016/17 start	
	Percentage FSM eligibility SBY Y8 students	Percentage FSM eligibility All Y8 students	Percentage FSM eligibility SBY Y8 students	Percentage FSM eligibility All Y8 students
School A	0.0%	21.0%	9.1%	28%
School B	38.5%	28.0%	33.3%	38%
School C	26.7%	26.9%	4.8%	25%
School D	43.8%	45.7%	27.3%	40%
School E	15.8%	19.5%	76.9%	44%
School F	NA	NA	37.5%	49%
Total	23.0%	28.0%	28.8%	37%

As Tables 4.1 – 4.3 show, slightly more female than male Y8 students participated in the programme (53% female and 47% male across the two Phase 1 groups).

Although there was some variation across schools, the percentage of BME students matched the school cohort overall.

Around a quarter of students were eligible for free school meals. This is slightly less than the school cohort, although again this varied across schools. It is worth remembering that the main selection criteria for the programme are whether the child is first in family to go to university, and whether their grades indicate that they may be able to. This does not map exactly onto free school meals.

Attainment and progression

Phase 1 (2015/16 start)

Table 4.4 shows the end of KS2 attainment in English and mathematics for the students participating in the Ambitions Programme compared with their school cohort, Table 4.5 shows the proportion of participating students achieving Level 5 or above in these subjects at the end of Y7 (the term prior to their involvement in the 2015/16 SBY programme) and Tables 4.6 – 4.7 show attainment/progress at the end of Y8 and Y9 where available.

Table 4.4: End of KS2 attainment levels in English and maths by Phase 1 participants compared with the whole school cohort (2015/16 starts)

	End of KS2 level achieved in English by Year 8 SBY			Whole school cohort	End of KS2 level achieved in Maths by Year 8 SBY			Whole school cohort
	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 or 6	Level 5 or 6	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 or 6	Level 5 or 6
School A	0.0%	40.9%	59.1%	37%	9.1%	50.0%	40.9%	32%
School B	15.4%	84.6%	0.0%	31%	0.0%	92.3%	7.7%	14%
School C	0.0%	16.7%	83.3%	25%	0.0%	3.3%	96.7%	31%
School D	0.0%	62.5%	37.5%	39%	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	30%
School E	0.0%	47.4%	52.6%	26%	0.0%	42.1%	57.9%	27%
School F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	2.0%	44.0%	54.0%	31.6%	2.0%	35.0%	63.0%	26.8%

As Table 4.4 shows, proportionally more students participating in the programme achieved National Curriculum Level 5 or 6 at the end of KS2 when compared with the whole school cohort, although there was some variation between schools. For example, no participating students from School B achieved a Level 5/6 in English and a much lower proportion achieved a Level 5/6 in maths compared with the other schools.

The KS2 data is one indicator of academic potential and while this shows that most participating students should achieve high grade GCSEs if they make expected progress, a minority may struggle without additional support (those at Level 3 at the end of KS2).

Table 4.5: End of Year 7 attainment levels in English and maths by Phase 1 participants compared with the whole school cohort (2015/16 starts)

	Students achieving Level 5 or above in English at the end of Y7	Whole school cohort	Students achieving Level 5 or above in Maths at the end of Y7	Whole school cohort
	SBY students		SBY students	
School A	95.0%	67.0%	90.0%	74.0%
School B	61.5%	47.0%	30.8%	44.0%
School C	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
School D	62.5%	48.0%	93.7%	73.0%
School E	94.7%	83.0%	94.7%	75.0%
School F	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	80.9%	61.0%	80.9%	67.0%

Table 4.5 shows that over 80% of the participating students starting in 2015/16 had achieved a level 5 or above in English and in maths by the end of Year 7 and would be expected to achieve at least a GCSE Grade 4 if they continued to make expected progress through to Year 11⁶.

The end of Y7 data was not available for school C but the end of KS2 data for the school suggests that their participating students are high achievers with over 80% at level 5 or above at the end of KS2.

In comparison to the other schools, students at school B were less likely to have achieved Level 5 or above in maths prior to starting the Ambitions Programme.

⁶ RAISEonline Transition Matrices (2016)

Table 4.6: End of Year 8 attainment in English and maths by Phase 1 participants (2015/16 starts)

End of Y8 attainment in English				End of Y8 attainment in Maths		
	NC Level 4 or below	NC Level 5 or 6	NC Level 7 and above	NC Level 4 or below	NC Level 5 or 6	NC Level 7 and above
School A	0%	86%	14%	5%	68%	27%
School C	3%	38%	59%	0%	45%	55%
School B	Below age related expectation	Approaching age related expectation	Meeting or exceeding age-related expectation	Below age related expectation	Approaching age related expectation	Meeting or exceeding age-related expectation
	8%	69%	23%	15%	31%	54%
School D	GCSE 3 and below	GCSE 4/5	GCSE 6 and above	GCSE 3 and below	GCSE 4/5	GCSE 6 and above
	31%	44%	25%	19%	62%	19%
School E	Behind	On track		Behind	On track	
	11%	89%	-	37%	63%	-
Total	9	63	27	13	54	32
Percentage	9%	64%	27%	13%	55%	32%
School F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

By the end of Y8 three of the participating schools had started to use alternatives to National Curriculum levels for tracking student progress, following the lifting of this requirement by the DFE in 2014.⁷

Table 4.6 shows that two schools were using NC Levels to track progress during Year 8, one was using the new GCSE grading system (4 is equivalent to the Grade C boundary) and two schools were using descriptors based on expected progress taking account of age/prior attainment. While it is not possible to compare attainment or progress precisely using this mix of measures, the data suggest that most students were meeting or exceeding expectations, although around 10% remain below/behind what may have been expected.

There are implications for how South Bristol Youth works in partnership with schools to support academic development for those students that may struggle to achieve the GCSE grades necessary to progress to A levels or equivalent post-16.

⁷From September 2014 teachers were allowed greater flexibility in the way they assess students' learning as long as they included an assessment system to "check what pupils have learned and whether they are on track to meet expectations at the end of the key stage." DFE (2014) National curriculum and assessment from September 2014: information for schools.

Table 4.7: End of Year 9 attainment in English and maths by Phase 1 participants (2015/16 starts)

End of Y9 attainment in English				End of Y9 attainment in Maths		
	Working at Access Level	Working at Grade 1/2	Working at Grade 3 or above	Working at Access Level	Working at Grade 1/2	Working at Grade 3 or above
School A	0%	24%	76%	48%	43%	9%
School B	0%	31%	69%	0%	15%	85%
	Expected Grade 4 based on current progress	Expected Grade 5 or 6 based on current progress	Expected Grade 7 or above based on current progress	Expected Grade 4 based on current progress	Expected Grade 5 or 6 based on current progress	Expected Grade 7 or above based on current progress
School C	0%	45%	55%	6%	22%	72%
School D	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
School E	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
School F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Just three of the six schools provided data on Y9 attainment. Two schools based their assessment on the GCSE Grade students are currently “working at” in Y9 and the other school (C) used predicted final GCSE grades, based on students’ current progress.

Using these criteria, most participating students where data were available were on course to achieve a Grade 4 or above in GCSE English and maths. However, nearly half the students from School A had yet to access a GCSE grade level in maths, suggesting they may require additional support if they are to progress to a Grade 4 or above in their GCSE.

Phase 1 (2016/17 start)

Table 4.8 shows the end of KS2 attainment in English and mathematics for the participating students compared with their school cohort, Table 4.9 shows the proportion of participating students achieving Level 5 or above in these subjects at the end of Y7 (the term prior to their involvement in the 2016/17 Ambitions Programme) and Table 4.10 shows attainment/progress at the end of Y8 where available.

Table 4.8: End of KS2 attainment levels in English and maths by Phase 1 participants compared with the whole school cohort (2016/17 starts)

	End of KS2 level achieved in English by Year 8 SBY participants			Whole school cohort	End of KS2 level achieved in Maths by Year 8 SBY participants			Whole school cohort
	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 or 6		Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 or 6	
School A	0.0%	54.5%	45.5%	52%	9.1%	45.5%	45.5%	39%
School B	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	37%	0.0%	22.2%	77.8%	27%
School C	0.0%	9.1%	90.9%	NA	0.0%	9.1%	90.9%	NA
School D	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	40%	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	41%
School E	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	40%	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	32%
School F	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%	24%	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	10%
Total	1.7%	37.9%	60.3%	39%	3.4%	37.9%	58.6%	30%

Table 4.8 shows that over 95% of participating students had achieved Level 4 and above in English and maths at the end of KS2 and of these 60% had achieved a Level 5 or above. This suggests that 22

most students should achieve at least a Grade 4 or better in their GCSE if they make expected progress. Compared with the other schools, School F had fewer students achieving the higher KS2 levels so these students may need more support to achieve the higher grades.

Table 4.9: End of Year 7 attainment levels in English and maths by Phase 1 participants compared with the whole school cohort (2016/17 starts)

	Students achieving Level 5 or above in English at the end of Y7		Students achieving Level 5 or above in Maths at the end of Y7	
	SBY students	Whole school cohort	SBY students	Whole school cohort
School A	100.0%		73%	
School B	66% meeting or exceeding expectations		100% meeting or exceeding expectations	
School C	100.0%		100.0%	
School D	70.0%		70.0%	
School E	NA		NA	
School F	NA		NA	

The end of Y7 attainment for the 2016/17 Phase 1 starts is incomplete, partly because in the previous year some of the participating schools had started to use alternatives to National Curriculum levels for tracking student progress. This means that it is not possible to compare student progress for all schools on the same basis. For the four schools that provided data, the majority of participating students had achieved Level 5 or above or were making expected progress taking account of their KS2 results.

Table 4.10: End of Year 8 attainment in English and maths by Phase 1 participants (2016/17 starts)

	End of Y8 attainment in English			End of Y8 attainment in Maths		
	Working at Access Level	Working at Grade 1/2	Working at Grade 3 or above	Working at Access Level	Working at Grade 1/2	Working at Grade 3 or above
School A	0%	70%	30%	40%	40%	20%
			Meeting or exceeding expectations			Meeting or exceeding expectations
School B			30%			70%
	Expected Grade 4 based on current progress	Expected Grade 5 or 6 based on current progress	Expected Grade 7 or above based on current progress	Expected Grade 4 based on current progress	Expected Grade 5 or 6 based on current progress	Expected Grade 7 or above based on current progress
School C	0	62%	38%	10%	52%	38%
School D	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Novice	Developing	Secure	Novice	Developing	Secure
School E	1%	50%	49%	24%	57%	19%
School F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

For the 2016/17 academic year schools were measuring student progress using “working at” GCSE grades (School A), expected GCSE grades based on current progress (School C) or progress descriptors (School B and School E).

While it is not possible to compare schools on the same basis using these measures, it does appear from the above table that while most SBY students are making good progress, there may be a need for additional support in maths for those students working at Access Level /Novice in Schools A and E.

School absence rates

Table 4.11 shows school absence rates for participating students in Y7 (prior to programme participation), Y8 and Y9 as compared with the whole school cohort.

Table 4.11 School absence rates (percentage of half days missed) for Phase 1 participants compared with the whole school cohort.

Phase 1 2015/16 start	SBY students Y7	Whole school Y7	SBY students Y8	Whole school Y8	SBY students Y9	Whole school Y9
	2014/15	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	2.9%	6.3%	4.2%	9.2%	6.1%	7.3%
School B	2.8%	8.3%	3.8%	6.6%	5.7%	8.8%
School C	3.9%	8.0%	4.3%	8.2%	2.6%	7.7%
School D	4.3%	6.6%	4.5%	NA	NA	NA
School E	2.5%	5.5%	4.1%	NA	3.2%*	7.2%*
School F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	3.3%	7.0%	4.1%		4.4%	8.8%
*Based on Autumn/Spring Terms						
Phase 1 2016/17 start	SBY students Y7	Whole school Y7	SBY students Y8	Whole school Y8		
	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17		
School A	1.8%	4.7%	5.7%	7.4%		
School B	5.9%	9.8%	8.2%	12.6%		
School C	3.0%	6.1%	3.2%	6.1%		
School D	3.6%	3.8%	2.3%*	4.4%		
School E	6.3%**	6.1%	6.3%**	7.2%		
School F	NA	NA	4.5%	6.0%		
Total	4.1%	6.1%	5.0%	7.3%		

* Average based on one term

** One SBY student missed over a third of school time during 2016/17 so has been excluded from the analysis as this skewed the data

As Table 4.11 shows, participating students had lower school absence rates on average when compared with the whole school cohort in the school year prior to the start of the programme. Absence rates were slightly higher in Y8 and Y9 for participating students but remained below that of the whole school cohort.

From this evidence it is not possible to say if attendance on the Ambitions Programme has any effect on school attendance since participating students had below average absence rates in the first place. However, absence rates did remain below average during programme participation for most Ambitions Programme students.

Behaviour at school (merits/demerits)

Tables 4.12 and 4.13 show the number of merits/demerits received by participating students in Y7 (prior to programme participation), Y8 and Y9 as compared with the whole school cohort. Some caution is necessary when comparing schools on these measures as schools may use different awarding criteria.

Table 4.12 Number of merits/demerits received by participants compared with the whole school cohort (Phase 1 2015/16 start)

Phase 1 2015/16 start	Average number of merits received per student					
	SBY Students Y7	Whole School Y7	SBY Students Y8	Whole School Y8	SBY Students Y9	Whole School Y9
	2014/15	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	128	146	199		245	161
School B	212	173	187		74	61
School C	NA	NA	NA		105	15
School D	77	NA	69		NA	NA
School E	183	161	431		NA	NA
School F	NA		NA		NA	
Phase 1 2015/16 start	Average number of demerits received per student					
	SBY Students Y7	Whole School Y7	SBY Students Y8	Whole School Y8	SBY Students Y9	Whole School Y9
	2014/15	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	7	23	12		23	31
School B	8	9	29		22	10
School C	NA		9		2	9
School D	10	NA	21		NA	
School E	15	23	12		NA	
School F	NA		NA		NA	

Table 4.13: Number of merits/demerits received by participating participants compared with the whole school cohort (Phase 1 2016/17 start)

Phase 1 2016/17 start	Average number of merits received per student			
	SBY Students Y7	Whole School Y7	SBY Students Y8	Whole School Y8
	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	237	221	309	247
School B	200	174	301	NA
School C	77	NA	91	NA
School D	58	NA	99*	90
School E	NA	NA	NA	NA
School F	NA	NA	842	NA
*Extrapolated from one term				
Phase 1 2016/17 start	Average number of demerits received per student			
	SBY Students Y7	Whole School Y7	SBY Students Y8	Whole School Y8
	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	8	22	19	34
School B	14	19	13	17
School C	3	30	3	13
School D	8	NA	6*	14
School E	NA	NA	NA	NA
School F	NA	NA	103	NA

Not all schools were able to provide equivalent statistics for the whole cohort. For those schools that did, participating students tended to have slightly more merits and fewer demerits than the cohort average.

Changes in the number of merits/demerits awarded to participating students between Y7 and Y8/9 varied between schools. In all but one school where data were provided, the number of merits awarded to participating students increased year-on-year although it is not possible to say for sure if attendance on the Ambitions Programme has made a difference to student behaviour at school.

The number of merits awarded to participating students from School E increased significantly from an average of 183 in 2014/15 to 431 in 2015/16. This may be due to students working harder since attending the Ambitions Programme or to other factors including changes to awarding criteria.

Phase 3 (Year 10) student profiles

Tables 4.14 – 4.16 show the gender, ethnicity and free school meal eligibility of Phase 3 participants.

Table 4.14: Number of Y10 participants by gender

	2015/16		2016/17	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
School A	10	3	3	4
School B	2	6	4	4
School C	13	5	6	4
School D	7	3	6	5
School E	7	4	3	1
School F	10	8	4	2
Total	49 (63%)	29 (37%)	26 (57%)	20 (43%)

Table 4.15: Percentage of Y10 participants from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME) compared with all Y10 students at each school

	2015/16		2016/17	
	Percentage BME SBY Y10 students	Percentage BME All Y10 students	Percentage BME SBY Y10 students	Percentage BME All Y10 students
School A	15.4%	16.0%	28.6%	21%
School B	12.5%	8.0%	12.5%	13%
School C	16.7%	13.8%	0.0%	20%
School D	10.0%	11.3%	27.3%	18%
School E	0.0%	8.0%	0.0%	8%
School F	NA	NA	0.0%	5%
Total	11.1%	11.5%	13.0%	14%

Table 4.16 Percentage of Y10 participants eligible for free school meals (FSM) compared with all Y10 students at each school

	2015/16		2016/17	
	Percentage FSM eligibility SBY Y10 students	Percentage FSM eligibility All Y10 students	Percentage FSM eligibility SBY Y10 students	Percentage FSM eligibility All Y10 students
School A	0.0%	22.0%	0.0%	34.0%
School B	12.5%	41.0%	50.0%	44.0%
School C	22.2%	18.1%	30.0%	22.0%
School D	30.0%	54.3%	27.3%	42.0%
School E	9.1%	13.8%	25.0%	28.0%
School F	NA	N/A	50.0%	43.0%
Total	15.0%	29.0%	30.4%	35.0%

As Tables 14-16 show, a higher number of female compared with male Y10 students participated in the programme (60% female compared with 40% male across the two Phase 3 groups).

Although there was some variation across schools, the percentage of black and minority ethnic (BME) students matched the school Y10 cohort overall.

In the 2015/16 group 15% of participating students were eligible for free school meals compared with 29% of the Y10 school cohort. For the 2016/17 group this increased to 30% compared with 35% for the school cohort, although again this varied across schools.

Attainment and progression

Phase 3 (2015/16 start)

Table 4.17 shows the end of KS2 attainment of the Ambitions Programme students in English and mathematics compared with the school cohort.

Table 4.17: End of KS2 attainment levels in English and maths by Phase 3 participants compared with the whole school cohort.

End of KS2 level achieved in English by Y10 SBY participants				Whole School cohort	End of KS2 level achieved in Maths by Y10 SBY participants			Whole School cohort
	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 or 6	Level 5 or 6	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 or 6	Level 5 or 6
School A	0.0%	69.2%	30.8%	36.0%	0.0%	84.6%	15.4%	31.0%
School B	0.0%	62.5%	37.5%	17.0%	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	19.0%
School C	0.0%	16.7%	83.3%	28.3%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	28.3%
School D	10.0%	70.0%	20.0%	20.6%	0.0%	70.0%	30.0%	24.3%
School E	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	33.3%	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	32.5%
School F	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	1.9%	50.0%	48.1%	27.0%	0.0%	51.9%	48.1%	27.0%

Almost half (48%) of the participating students achieved NC level 5 or above in English and in maths at the end of KS2 compared with 27% of students in the whole school cohort. There was some variation between schools, with three quarters of the participating students from School C in the higher attaining group compared with less than a third from School A and School D.

All but one student achieved at least Level 4 at the end of KS2 so nearly all have the potential to achieve a GCSE Grade 4 or above if they make expected progress⁸.

At the end of Y9 (2014/15) two of the participating schools (A and E) were using NC levels for tracking student progress and two schools (B and D) were using GCSE grades. Data were unavailable for Schools C and F.

Table 4.18 shows that in the term prior to the start of the 2015/16 programme, most participating students had achieved the equivalent of NC Level 6 and above or GCSE Grade D/C and above in English and maths so were on course to achieve a Grade C (4) or above in their GCSEs at the end of Y11. The end of Y9 data was not available for school C although the end of KS2 data for this school (Table 4.17) suggests that their participating students are high achievers.

⁸ RAISEonline Transition Matrices (2016)

Table 4.18 End of Year 9 attainment levels in English and maths by Phase 3 participants

End of Y9 attainment in English by Y10 SBY participants				End of Y9 attainment in Maths by Y10 SBY participants		
	NC Level 5	NC Level 6	NC Level 7 or 8	NC Level 5	NC Level 6	NC Level 7 or 8
	GCSE Grade F/E (1/2)	GCSE Grade D/C (3/4)	GCSE Grade B/A (5/8)	GCSE Grade F/E (1/2)	GCSE Grade D/C (3/4)	GCSE Grade B/A (5/8)
School A	7.7%	30.8%	61.5%	23.1%	61.5%	15.4%
School E	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	0.0%	27.3%	72.7%
School B	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	0.0%	87.5%	12.5%
School D	10.0%	70.0%	20.0%	0.0%	70.0%	30.0%
School C	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
School F	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 4.19 shows the GCSE grade/progress achieved by participating students at the end of Y10 in English and maths.

Table 4.19 End of Y10 grade/progress achieved in English and maths by Phase 3 participants

End of Y10 grade achieved in English				End of Y10 grade achieved in Maths		
	GCSE Grade 1/2	GCSE Grade 3/4	GCSE Grade 5 and above	GCSE Grade 1/2	GCSE Grade 3/4	GCSE Grade 5 and above
School A	7.7%	46.2%	46.2%	0.0%	23.1%	76.9%
School B	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%
School C	0.0%	22.2%	77.8%	0.0%	16.7%	83.3%
School D	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%
Total	2.0%	36.7%	61.2%	0.0%	20.4%	79.6%
	Behind	On track		Behind	On track	
School E	54.5%	45.5%		45.5%	54.5%	
School F	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Four schools are using GCSE grades for tracking student progress during Y10. Nearly all the participating students from these schools were working at GCSE D/C (3-4) or above, with over 60% in English Language and nearly 80% in mathematics at Grades B/A* (5-9). Although there is some variation across schools, these figures suggest that participating students remain on course to achieve at least a Grade 4 or above in English and maths at GCSE with the majority forecast to achieve a Grade 5 or above.

School E is using progress descriptors rather than GCSE grades and this shows that around half their Ambitions Programme students were making less than expected progress at the end of Y10 in 2015/16. The data provided by the other schools on student progress across the school year also shows that there are some students who remain at the same level or fall back a grade between the start and the end of the year.

Further investigation is needed to identify the reasons for this and the implications for supporting students to meet their target grades where there is a risk they may not achieve their potential.

Table 4.20 shows the GCSE results achieved by Phase 3 students in 2017. (Note: From 2017 GCSE English Language, English Literature and maths were graded 1-9 while other GCSE subjects were graded G- A*.)

Table 4.20: GCSE results achieved by the 2015/16 Y10 Phase 3 participants

GCSE English Language				
	Grade 3 or below	Grade 4	Grade 5-6	Grade 7 and above
School A	23.1%	30.8%	30.8%	15.4%
School B	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%
School C	0.0%	0.0%	27.3%	72.7%
School D	40.0%	10.0%	40.0%	10.0%
School E	10.0%	20.0%	40.0%	30.0%
School F	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%
Total	22.0%	18.6%	35.6%	23.7%
GCSE Maths				
	Grade 3 or below	Grade 4	Grade 5-6	Grade 7 and above
School A	7.7%	61.5%	0.0%	7.7%
School B	25.0%	12.5%	50.0%	12.5%
School C	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	81.8%
School D	10.0%	30.0%	40.0%	20.0%
School E	10.0%	10.0%	60.0%	20.0%
School F	14.3%	42.9%	14.3%	28.6%
Total	10.2%	27.1%	28.8%	28.8%
	Grade 4 and above in English Language and maths	Grade 5 and above in English Language and maths	Grade 5 and above in English Language or Literature and maths*	5 or more GCSE Grade A*-C or equivalent including Grade 4 and above in English Language and maths
School A	61.5%	7.7%	7.7%	61.5%
School B	62.5%	25.0%	37.5%	50.0%
School C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
School D	60.0%	40.0%	40.0%	60.0%
School E	80.0%	60.0%	70.0%	80.0%
School F	57.1%	14.3%	42.9%	57.1%
Total	71.2%	42.4%	49.2%	69.5%

*This is one of the 2017 school performance table measures

Table 4.20 shows that 69.5% of participating students achieved 5 or more A*-C grades including a Grade 4 or above in English and maths. This is an indication of the proportion reaching the standard required to progress to A-level or equivalent post-16 qualifications.

Changes in the way GCSE results are reported means that a national comparison for this measure is no longer published. For the other measures with comparable national data:

- 78% of students on the Ambitions Programme achieved a Grade 4 or above in English compared with 70% nationally;
- 24% of students on the Ambitions Programme achieved a Grade 7 or above in English compared with 16% nationally;

- 90% of students on the Ambitions Programme achieved a Grade 4 or above in maths compared with 71% nationally;
- 30% of students on the Ambitions Programme achieved a Grade 7 or above in maths compared with 20% nationally;
- 49% of students on the Ambitions Programme achieved a Grade 5 or above in English and maths compared with 42% nationally.

While it is clear that most Phase 3 participants achieved the grades needed to move on to A levels or equivalent, there remains a minority that may have been expected to do better taking account of their KS2 results.

There are implications for how South Bristol Youth works in partnership with schools to support academic development for those students who may be at risk of falling behind at various stages.

Phase 3 (2016/17 start)

Table 4.21 shows the end of KS2 attainment of Phase 3 participants in English and maths compared with the school cohort and Table 22 shows end of Y9 attainment/progress (the school year prior to the commencement of Phase 3)

Table 4.21 End of KS2 attainment levels in English and maths by Phase 3 participants compared with the whole school cohort.

	End of KS2 level achieved in English by Y10 SBY participants			Whole School cohort	End of KS2 level achieved in maths by Y10 SBY participants			Whole School cohort
	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 or 6	Level 5 or 6	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 or 6	Level 5 or 6
School A	0.0%	57.1%	42.9%	33%	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	34%
School B	0.0%	85.7%	14.3%	16%	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%	28%
School C	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	67%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	73%
School D	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	33%	9.1%	45.5%	45.5%	37%
School E	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	37%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	43%
School F	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	0.0%	46.2%	53.8%	37.20%	5.1%	35.9%	59.0%	43.00%

Over half of the participating students achieved NC level 5 or above in English and in maths at the end of KS2 compared with 37% of students in English and 43% in maths for the whole school cohort. There was some variation between schools, with 80% of the participating students from School C in the higher attaining group compared with 14% in English from School B and 25% in maths from School E.

All participating students achieved at least Level 4 at the end of KS2 in English and all but 2 in maths. Over half achieved the higher levels with the potential to achieve GCSE grades 7-9 if they make expected progress⁹.

At the end of Y9 (2015/16) one of the participating schools (A) was using NC levels for tracking student progress, two schools (B and F) were using GCSE “working at” grades and two schools (C and D) were using GCSE predicted grades. No comparable data were available from School E.

As Table 4.22 shows, nearly all the participating students were on track to achieve at least a grade 4 in English and maths GCSE if they continued to make expected progress.

⁹ RAISEonline Transition Matrices (2016)

Table 4.22: End of Year 9 attainment in English and maths by Phase 3 participants

	Students achieving NC level 5 or above in English	Students achieving NC level 5 or above in maths
School A	100%	100%
	“Working at” GCSE Grade 2 and above in English	“Working at” GCSE Grade 2 and above in maths
School B	100%	100%
School F	100%	85%
	GCSE Grade 4 and above in English predicted	GCSE Grade 4 and above in maths predicted
School C	90%	100%
School D	100%	90%
School E	NA	NA

Table 4.23 shows Phase 3 student attainment at the end of Y10. At the end of Y10 most participating students were currently “working at” GCSE grade 3 or above (and would be expected to progress to a GCSE grade 4 or above at the end of Y11), or were predicted to achieve grade 4 and above.

A small number of Phase 3 students (4 in English and 3 in maths) were either still working at GCSE grade 1/2 or not predicted to achieve a grade 4 and may require additional support to achieve their potential.

Table 4.23: End of Year 10 attainment in English and maths by Y10 SBY participants

	“Working at” GCSE grade 1/2	“Working at” GCSE grade 3	“Working at” GCSE grade 4 and above		“Working at” GCSE grade 1/2	“Working at” GCSE grade 3	“Working at” GCSE grade 4 and above
School A	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%		28.6%	42.9%	28.6%
School B	37.5%	12.5%	50.0%		0.0%	37.5%	62.5%
School F	0.0%	16.7%	83.3%		0.0%	16.7%	83.3%
			GCSE Grade 4 and above in English predicted				GCSE Grade 4 and above in maths predicted
School C			100%				100%
School D			90%				90%
School E			NA				NA

School absence rates

Table 4.24 shows school absence rates for participating students in Y9 (prior to programme participation), Y10 and Y11 as compared with the whole school cohort.

Table 4.24: School absence rates (percentage of half days missed) for Phase 3 participants compared with the whole school cohort.

Phase 3 2015/16 start	SBY students Y9	Whole school Y9	SBY students Y10	Whole school Y10	SBY students Y11	Whole school Y11
	2014/15	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	2.4%	6.3%	4.2%	9.70%	2.7%	16.60%
School B	3.9%	8.3%	4.6%	13.0%	3.0%	11.00%
School C	2.3%	8.0%	2.3%	8.6%	3.4%	5.70%
School D	8.3%	6.6%	6.3%	NA	10%*	16.4%*
School E	2.8%	5.8%	4.1%	NA	4.2%	6.6%
School F	NA	NA	NA	NA	4.3%	16.60%
Total	3.8%	7.0%	4.2%	10.0%	4.6%	12.1%
*Includes study leave						
Phase 3 2016/17 start	SBY students Y9	Whole school Y9	SBY students Y10	Whole school Y10		
	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17		
School A	3.8%	7.3%	2.5%	9.5%		
School B	3.8%	NA	2.9%	NA		
School C	4.6%	10.0%	4.4%	7.0%		
School D	4.1%	7.1%	NA	NA		
School E	3.1%	5.3%	2.9%	5.6%		
School F	NA	NA	9.0%	NA		
Total	3.9%	7.4%	4.3%	7.4%		

As Table 4.24 shows, apart from one school participating students had lower school absence rates on average when compared with the whole school cohort in the school year prior to the start of the programme.

Absence rates were marginally higher in years 10 and 11 for participating students but have remained below that of the whole school cohort each year.

Although it is not possible to say for sure if attendance on the Ambitions Programme has any effect on school attendance, absence rates have remained below average.

Behaviour at school (merits/demerits)

Tables 4.25 and 4.26 show the number of merits/demerits received by participating students at each school in Y9 (prior to programme participation), Y10 and Y11 as compared with the whole school cohort. Some caution is necessary when comparing schools on these measures as schools may use different awarding criteria.

Not all schools were able to provide equivalent statistics for the whole cohort. For those schools that did, participating students tended to have more merits and fewer demerits than the cohort average. In all but one school where data were provided, the number of merits awarded to participating students increased year-on-year, although it is not possible to say for sure if attendance on the Ambitions Programme has had an influence.

Table 4.25: Number of merits/demerits received by Phase 3 participants compared with the whole school cohort (Phase 3 2015/16 start)

Phase 3 2015/16 start	Average number of merits received per student					
	SBY Students Y9	Whole School Y9	SBY Students Y10	Whole School Y10	SBY Students Y11	Whole School Y11
	2014/15	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	102	124	103	NA	113	40
School B	181	144	127	NA	38	36
School C	N/A	N/A	570	NA	77	11
School D	30	N/A	34	NA	10	NA
School E	175	137	436	NA	NA	NA
School F	N/A	N/A	N/A	NA	NA	NA
Phase 3 2015/16 start	Average number of demerits received per student					
	SBY Students Y9	Whole School Y9	SBY Students Y10	Whole School Y10	SBY Students Y11	Whole School Y11
	2014/15	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	15	25	14	NA	11	20
School B	13	22	14	NA	6	13
School C	N/A	N/A	5	NA	1	7
School D	23	N/A	25	NA	15	NA
School E	8	36	4	NA	NA	NA
School F	N/A	N/A	N/A	NA	NA	NA

Table 4.26: Number of merits/demerits received by Phase 3 participants compared with the whole school cohort (Phase 3 2016/17 start)

Phase 3 2016/17 start	Average number of merits received per student			
	SBY Students Y9	Whole School Y9	SBY Students Y10	Whole School Y10
	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	237	221	309	247
School B	200	174	301	NA
School C	77	NA	91	NA
School D	58	NA	99*	90
School E	NA	NA	NA	NA
School F	NA	NA	842	NA
*Extrapolated from one term				
Phase 3 2016/17 start	Average number of demerits received per student			
	SBY Students Y7	Whole School Y7	SBY Students Y8	Whole School Y8
	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17
School A	8	22	19	34
School B	14	19	13	17
School C	3	30	3	13
School D	8	NA	6*	14
School E	NA	NA	NA	NA
School F	NA	NA	103	NA

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a statistical profile of students participating in the South Bristol Youth (SBY) Ambitions Programme during the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years in terms of their academic progress, school attendance and behaviour as measured by the number of merits/demerits awarded at school.

Students from six Bristol schools participated in the programme. The data on students from one school (F) were unavailable for 2015/16 so apart from the overall number, analysis is based on student data received from five schools for this year. Data were also incomplete from other schools for some indicator and this means that it has not been possible to do a full comparative analysis on every indicator across all participating school.

Between the start of the data analysis in 2015/16 and 2016/17 there were national changes in student assessment requirements, curriculum content and the GCSE grading system. This means that it has not always been possible to compare schools on a like-by-like basis, necessitating the use of "best fit" comparators in some instances.

The analysis is based on students participating in Phase 1 of the programme (Year 8) and in Phase 3 (Year 10).

Four cohorts of students have been tracked:

- Phase 1 students (Y8) starting in 2015/16
- Phase 1 students (Y8) starting in 2016/17
- Phase 3 students (Y10) starting in 2015/16
- Phase 3 students (Y10) starting in 2016/17

Phase 1 (Year 8 students)

39. Slightly more female than male Y8 students participated in the programme (53% female and 47% male across the two Phase 1 groups). Although there was some variation across schools, the percentage of BME students matched the school cohorts overall. Around a quarter of students were eligible for free school meals. This is slightly less than the school cohort, although again this varied across schools.
40. Across the two Phase 1 groups, 60% of participating students had achieved Level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 2 (compared with a whole school average of 30%). By the end of Year 7 over 80% of participating students had achieved Level 5 or above in English and maths and were on course to achieve a GCSE grade 4 or above in these subjects if they continue to make expected progress.
41. Following the lifting of the requirement by the DFE in 2014, three of the participating schools had started to use alternatives to National Curriculum levels for tracking student progress in 2015/16 and by the end of 2016/17 all schools were using alternative measures. While it is not possible to compare attainment or progress precisely across all schools for this reason, the data suggest that most participating students were meeting or exceeding expectations at the end of Y8, although around 10% remain below/behind what may have been expected.
42. Just three of the six schools provided data on Y9 attainment. Two schools based their assessment on the GCSE grade students are currently "working at" in Y9 and the other school used predicted final GCSE grades, based on students' current progress. Using these criteria, most participating students where data were available were on course to achieve a Grade 4 or above in GCSE English and maths. However, nearly half the students from School A had yet to access a GCSE grade level in maths, suggesting they may require additional support if they are to progress to a Grade 4 or above in their GCSE.

43. There are implications for how the Ambitions Programme works in partnership with schools to support academic development for those students that have the potential but may struggle to achieve the GCSE grades necessary to progress to A levels or equivalent. This could include individual reviews with SBY students to assess if there is any additional support that could be offered.
44. Participating students had lower school absence rates on average when compared with the whole school cohort in the school year prior to the start of the programme. Absence rates were slightly higher in Y8 and Y9 for participating students but remained below that of the whole school cohort.
45. Changes in the number of merits/demerits awarded to participating students across years 7, 8 and 9, varied between schools so it is not possible to say for sure if attendance on the Ambitions Programme has made a difference to student behaviour at school. Not all schools were able to provide equivalent statistics for the whole cohort. For those schools that did, participating students tended to have slightly more merits and fewer demerits than the cohort average.

Phase 3 (Year 10 students)

- 1 A higher number of female compared with male Y10 students participated in the programme (60% female compared with 40% male across the two Phase 3 groups). Although there was some variation across schools, the percentage of black and minority ethnic (BME) students matched the school Y10 cohort overall. In the 2015/16 group 15% of participating students were eligible for free school meals compared with 29% of the Y10 school cohort. For the 2016/17 group this increased to 30% compared with 35% for the school cohort, although again this varied across schools.
- 2 For both the 2015/16 and 2016/17 cohorts, around half achieved NC level 5 or above in English and in maths at the end of KS2. There was some variation between schools, with over three quarters of participating students from one school in the higher-attaining group compared with less than a quarter in two schools. There was just one participating student at Level 3 in the 2015/16 cohort and two at Level 3 in the 2016/17 cohort.
- 3 Schools had begun to use alternatives to NC levels in 2015/16 so it is not possible to compare schools' Y9 student attainment precisely. Where data were comparable, most participating students had achieved the equivalent of NC Level 5/6 or GCSE Grade 2 and above in English and maths by the end of Y9 so were on course to achieve a Grade 4 or above in their GCSEs.
- 4 In Y10 three schools were using GCSE "working at" grades to assess student progress and two schools were using predicted grades. One school was using progress descriptors rather than GCSE grades. Most students were working at GCSE grade 3/4 or above, with over half at grade 5 and above. However, there was evidence that a minority of students were making less progress than expected. Further investigation is needed to identify the reasons for this and the implications for supporting students to meet their target grades where there is a risk they may not achieve their potential.
- 5 The 2017 GCSE results for the 2015/16 Phase 3 SBY students show that **69.5%** achieved 5 or more A*-C grades including a Grade 4 or above in English and maths. This is an indication of the proportion reaching the standard required to progress to A level or equivalent post-16 qualifications. 49% of participating students achieved a Grade 5 or above in English and maths compared with 42% nationally. 24% achieved a Grade 7 or above in English compared with 16% nationally and 30% achieved a Grade 7 or above in maths compared with 20% nationally.
- 6 While it is clear that most Phase 3 participants achieved the grades needed to move on to A-levels or equivalent, there remains a minority that may have been expected to do better taking account of their KS2 results. Some of these students had begun to fall behind at an earlier stage

and there are implications for how the SBY programme can work in partnership with schools to identify these students and provide additional support.

- 7 Participating students had lower school absence rates on average when compared with the whole school cohort in the school year prior to the start of the programme. Absence rates were marginally higher in years 10 and 11 for participating students but have remained below that of the whole school cohort each year.
- 8 Changes in the number of merits/demerits awarded to participating students across years 9, 10 and 11 varied between schools and not all schools were able to provide statistics for the whole cohort. For those schools that did, participating students tended to have more merits and fewer demerits than the cohort average. In all but one school where data were provided, the number of merits awarded to participating students increased year-on-year, although it is not possible to say for sure if attendance on the Ambitions Programme has had an influence.

Chapter 5: The aims and approaches of the Ambitions Programme

This chapter follows on from Chapter 1 of the interim report, in which the theory of change of the Ambitions Programme, as specified in Summer 2015, is detailed. The current chapter outlines the ways in which the Ambitions Programme worked with young people in 2016/17, the motivations behind this, and how the Ambitions Programme has informed the planning of Future Quest. It is based on interviews with the providers of the Ambitions Programme, and with senior leadership in participating schools.

The South Bristol Youth Ambitions Programme aimed to support young people from six secondary schools in South Bristol to develop understanding about university, and help them make informed decisions about their future educational pathways. Through this, South Bristol Youth ultimately hoped to improve the historically low HE participation rates that are characteristic of South Bristol. The programme was targeted at young people who are likely to achieve at least 5 A-Cs at GCSE, and therefore have the potential to go to university – specifically, South Bristol Youth was keen to work with young people who do not have a family history of HE participation and are therefore less likely to consider it as an option for the future.

For schools, the Ambitions Programme and wider SBY provision was a major part of their approach to supporting young people's trajectories through education:

South Bristol Youth really is imbibed throughout the whole school, so children who are in Year 11 started it in Year 9 ... annually, it rolls on and rolls on and rolls on, so it's become part of a ... well it's a major cog in the careers and enrichment wheel really (senior leader from participating school)

Schools selected appropriate students, for whom the Ambitions Programme provided a series of activities. The majority of these fell in the Spring term – though Year 10 started in the Autumn term and Year 8 finished in the Summer term. Some activities took place in the six separate individual schools, and were thus run six times. Other activities that took place out of school, such as at the universities or the outdoor activity centre, were usually attended by two or three schools together.

Phase 1 (Year 8) activities

In Year 8, there were seven main events over the school year. Student Ambassadors from the University of the West of England were present at all events.

The first of these was a **school-based Launch Event** where the Ambitions Programme was introduced to parents and young people, practical and financial information about studying at university was provided, and students decided whether to participate in the Ambitions Programme.

The second event was a half-day **Team-Building Event at UWE's Centre for Sport**. Students participated in a range of sporting activities (including the climbing wall, and competitions with inflatable equipment such as obstacle courses and "sumo wrestling"), and other less physical team-based activities such as building towers from straws.

The third event was the **school-based "What is University"** session, which took place over a lesson period. Students participated in a range of activities and discussions around what a university is, what kinds of subjects people study, who can attend, where people live and so on. This aimed to help students understand university as somewhere they might go in the future, and what it might be like.

The fourth event was a **Campus Visit to UWE**. Students were shown around the campus and experienced some seminar-style sessions, including making a video about their aspirations. This event aimed to show students what a university looks like and what learning there might be like: for many this was the first time they have visited a university, and the experience was designed to build on the previous session.

The fifth event was the **school-based “Future Choices”** session, which took place over a lesson period. This session aimed to increase students’ knowledge of the range of careers that are available to them, and possible pathways that they could take.

The sixth event was the **school-based “Where Am I Now?”** session, which took place over a lesson period. In this review session, students discussed what they have done over the programme and what they have learned. This acted as a plenary session for the year.

For the 2016/17 cohort, a **celebration event** was planned for September 2017 on a weekday afternoon. The previous year, the celebration event had taken place at the University of the West of England in the evening. Logistical problems around time and transport impacted on attendance, so the 2016/17 event was planned at the South Bristol Sports Centre, as a more accessible location with a free car park and several local bus routes nearby. As this event was after our data collection period, a commentary on it does not feature in this evaluation.

Phase 3 (Year 10) activities

In Year 10, as with Year 8, there were seven main activities that take place over the school year. Student Ambassadors from the University of Bristol were present at all sessions.

As with Year 8, the first of these was a **school-based Launch Event** where the Ambitions Programme was introduced to parents and young people, practical and financial information about studying at university was provided, and students decided whether to participate in the Ambitions Programme.

The second was **team building at the Goblin Combe outdoor activity centre**. In this session, students worked in groups with those from other schools in such activities as bridge-building, lighting fires, and completing an assault course. The session was run by trained facilitators at the centre. The aim of this session was to encourage students to mix with those from other schools, and with University Student Ambassadors, and to engage them in the programme.

The third was a **campus visit to the University of Bristol**. Students were given a guided tour of the central university precinct by University Student Ambassadors, and attended sessions around what it is like to study at university. This activity aimed to immerse students in the campus and the idea of university, without expecting them to engage in lectures. This was seen as the first step in the familiarisation process with university.

The fourth was an **evening session entitled “My Future”**, held in schools where staff from St Brendan’s Sixth Form College discussed post-16 opportunities, and University Student Ambassadors gave school students mock interviews. This session aimed to develop students’ confidence and skill sets in terms of preparation, self-presentation, and interview skills, as well as giving students the opportunity to find out more about post-16 study.

The fifth was a **Sports and Societies Afternoon, held in university residential halls**. Students learnt about extra-curricular provision that is available at university, and were shown round communal areas of a range of student accommodation. This session aimed to inform students that university is not all about academic work, and to continue familiarising them with the university campus. Accommodation is an issue highlighted by UCAS as being very important for university applicants, so this part of the session aimed to demystify this for students and show them the range of accommodation that is available even in one university. An activity where students worked in groups to design a society was selected by facilitators as a *“fun and engaging”* activity, that allowed students to discuss their own interests.

The sixth activity was an **Academic Taster Day, held in university lecture theatres and teaching spaces**. Students experienced lectures from university academics on a range of subjects. This aimed to show students what it is like to study at university, having become acclimatised to being on campus in previous sessions.

The seventh and final activity was the **Graduation Event, held at Goldney Hall** in the daytime. This was a celebration of the students' participation, and was similar in concept to a university degree congregation: parents were invited, and there were short keynote speeches from notable people, before students are presented with a certificate and congratulated on their achievement in completing the programme.

The Ambitions Programme as a whole

The emphasis from both the universities was around informing and enthusing students about university life, providing experiences of what university can be like, and developing confidence to explore future options more generally. The universities positioned the intervention as an overview of university, which gave students information to support decisions about whether they would like to go to university. They aimed to do this through a series of activities to familiarise young people with the idea of university, with the university campuses and the kinds of activities that take place there, and with pathways into and out of university. The programmes were described as taking a '*drip-feed*' approach:

I think it's that sustained engagement that if anything is going to improve transition to HE that will, because they become familiar. They become informed over time... I think it's the significant amounts of contact that they have with university and that culture and those staff members rather than any one session. (University provider)

Although South Bristol Youth aimed for students to develop an Ambitions cohort identity, the universities felt that this is hard to achieve in an intervention with relatively few sessions spaced out over several months. This sits in comparison to, for example, intensive residential summer schools run for sixth-form students, where a cohort identity is more explicit.

While South Bristol Youth would have liked the intervention to be more personalised, to support individual students' thinking and understanding about specific pathways they may be interested in, capacity and expertise is an issue: South Bristol Youth staff and those at the universities who provided the intervention did not have the expertise or time to work in-depth with individual students, and there is no capacity in the wider university for academic staff to provide one-to-one pathway-focused support for participating students. An important part of the intervention is the University Student Ambassadors. They were present at all the sessions, and provided school students with the opportunity to meet and talk with current university students. In 2016/17, following the Interim Evaluation Report, the role of the Student Ambassadors became much more clearly defined – they were asked to discuss their own experiences with school students, and to facilitate small groups – but not to provide '*official information*'. Getting a consistent group of ambassadors to work with Ambitions was difficult, as events did not always fit around their teaching timetables – however in each university there was a core group of Student Ambassadors who worked several sessions, meaning that they could get to know some of the students on the programme.

Chapter 6: Stakeholders' experiences of the Ambitions Programme

This chapter outlines stakeholders' views of the programme, and how they discuss the activities. The chapter draws on focus group interviews and questionnaires with school students, interviews and questionnaires with parents, interviews with senior leadership staff in schools, interviews with Ambitions Programme providers and Student Ambassadors, and observations of Ambitions Programme activities.

The programme as a whole

Analysis of the student questionnaires and focus group interviews has indicated that both Year 10 and Year 8 students from the 2016/2017 cohort were positive about the Ambitions Programme as a whole. For some students selection itself has been important and has had a positive impact on self-confidence. Many students feel privileged, grateful and honoured to be involved in the programme, and recognised that they had been picked because people thought they could go to university. Parents interviewed were also positive about the Ambitions Programme:

Well it has opened doors for her I think, because she has been able to go and see what is out there, I think it has got her really focused on what she wants for the future ... whether or not she would have chosen to do that if this hadn't have happened, I don't know. But the fact of the matter is that she wants to go to college and to uni.

*There has been a lot of clarity about things like funding, and things like location of the university ... it doesn't seem such a strange thing for Lucy to want to go to a local university now than it would have done before she went on the programme. Yes, it seems more a reality ... she is still a little bit early to be thinking about university particularly, so it seems like with the time we have got left, it is totally do-able, **whereas it seemed more like a mountain to climb before, if you know what I mean.***

Comments from parents suggest that the aim to familiarise students with university, so they see it as somewhere they can go in the future, is working:

*It is about visualising yourself somewhere sometimes I think, and it has let her see herself being maybe the person who is mentoring her today, that could be her in the future ... And definitely, everything she has done she has come back slightly more enthused about something, and **speaking about 'when' and not 'if'**.*

For schools, the "light-touch" approach of the intervention seemed to work well:

South Bristol Youth is our best provider. What they do is targeted to the market that they are aiming at ... So, everything is targeted to the fact that these children have certain social needs. They have certain confidence issues, and it supports and manages that, and you watch them grow. It doesn't do overkill on uni; you've got little bits here and there, but it gives them the confidence to believe that they can (School SLT)

Schools recognise that it is important for their students to spend time in a university environment and begin to imagine that being a university student is a possibility for them.

*I think the big thing is **getting them to walk through a door of a university.** Getting them to see **that it's not some big scary place.** That it is possible. That it's students like them that will go off and do exactly that sort of thing (School SLT).*

Activities within the programme

Whereas parents, students and schools are positive about the Ambitions Programme as a whole, it is the students themselves who experience the activities and are thus able to critically evaluate the events that constitute the programme.

The Year 10 students across all schools consistently rated the Goblin Coombe and the Academic Taster Lectures as their favourite activities. Students liked meeting and working with students from other schools at the Goblin Coombe day and being involved in teamwork, problem solving and competitive activity. They also enjoyed being outside and active. They found the Academic Taster Day lectures to be engaging and different from the way they are taught in school, and appreciated the opportunity to experience what it was really like to learn at university: *'The academic taster day helped me picture what classes there would be like'*.

By contrast the Sports and Societies afternoon at Wills Hall was seen as being less engaging by the Year 10 students. In particular students were critical of the organisation of the poster-making activity. The relatively cramped space made it difficult for students to work effectively in groups. They were critical of the time available and that for many the activity was not satisfactorily completed because of lack of time and the sense that the activity was not being taken seriously by the organisers. They reported that the walk around the Clifton Halls and the Student's Union was not engaging or useful: *'They kept showing us all these doors but we didn't go into any of them'*.

Year 10 students were thoughtful about the programme's approach to mixing students from different schools. Some contrasted the success of the Goblin Combe groupings with the more random approach for the university activities. Many students feel it is important that they learn to work with others, even though this is often uncomfortable and challenging.

The focus on interviewing skills in the My Future event was welcomed by Year 10 students. However many said that the information about post-16 provision from St Brendan's was repetitive: *'The St Brendan's session was what we have already heard before'*, and the timing of the event in the evening was not welcomed by many students. Parents were invited to this event although attendance of parents was low. The feedback from this session suggests that there is some conflict between the aspiration to inform parents and at the same time engage students – both logistically, in terms of time and venue, and conceptually, in terms of session content.

The awards ceremony for Year 10 students at the Orangery in Goldney Hall was very positively rated by several of the parents who were interviewed. In particular one parent welcomed meeting people who had been to University at this event:

It was really interesting to meet some people, all be it at the other end of their careers, who have been through university through different decades and what they got out of it, and I felt that they were very approachable and inclusive, which was something that personally I would have expected them to be a bit more standoffish, so the personalities that I met were very interesting. And the grounds are beautiful and it was lovely to see something which seems a little bit shrouded to somebody who lives in Bristol, you don't get a chance to look around the university buildings very often. So yes it was really rewarding, in all sorts of different ways.

Another parent was impressed by how well the Year 10 students behaved at the Awards Ceremony, attributing this to the fact that the students had been treated like adults:

*... this was such a beautiful building for them to be in and when they walked in, their eyes were just everywhere, you know? And you could see ... It was like, wow! And also, it was a lovely day; they were out on the grass. No-one was bothering them, it was a nice bit of time off. Jane came back with a book which she's read twice now, absolutely loves it. It was things like that ... they had cakes and refreshments for them and they were treated like adults ... And I know [my daughter] and her friend can be a bit of a handful, like any other 15-year-old, but I think they acted nicely because they were treated nicely. The whole setting was so different. **It took them***

out of school to, basically, a little hidden treasure, instead of taking them out of school and putting them in another school environment.

A strong message from some Year 10 students was concern about missing lessons to take part in Ambitions activities. This was seen as important in relation to GCSE examinations. Some students were questioning whether the value to them of the Ambitions Programme was sufficient to merit missing lessons: again this highlights a tension in that the programme is aiming to enthuse students about university, yet to take part means they miss learning that contributes to their grades.

In many respects the feedback on sessions from the Year 8 students was similar to the feedback from the Year 10 students. The team building event and the Campus visit at the University of the West of England were the most highly rated events by the majority of Year 8 students. The activities were liked as being: 'good fun', 'exciting', 'not boring', 'out of school', 'different', 'working with other students'. The Campus Visit enabled students to 'learn more' and 'see what university is like'. A minority of students who were not enthusiastic about physical activity did not enjoy the sports centre event, and a few felt pressured by the ambassadors into participating.

The less highly-rated sessions of the Year 8 programme were the three school-based activities. Of these three sessions, the Future Choices session had the more positive response. In general these school-based sessions were not valued because they were 'too like school' and 'too similar to each other', 'another poster', 'kind of boring'. Most significantly a large number of students felt the content was 'repetitive', they said they already knew the information that was being provided and they were learning nothing new. A member of the senior leadership team from one of the participating schools also commented on the quality of some of the school-based sessions.

Whether they're different enough for our students, which is always the challenge because on the one hand we say we don't want them off site all the time, because that's a logistical nightmare, but I think sometimes the quality of precisely what they're doing, in those sessions is a bit tricky ... So, coming into a classroom, working in teams of five to make a poster about higher education. They could have done with any teacher ... whereas as soon as you put them somewhere like a lecture hall, or offsite, or even with somebody else coming in and doing a workshop in school, it's so different.

Running sessions in schools is also complex in terms of planning delivery. The sessions tend to run over a single period, but the length of this period varies widely from school to school. In one school a session may be allocated 50 minutes, yet in another this may be 1 hour and 10 minutes. Being able to expand or contract activities according to time available and still maintain coherence and engagement is challenging for session leaders.

The Year 8 students' views about working with students from other schools varied. Many students valued and enjoyed this: they liked making new friends, seeing people they knew in other contexts such as primary school or out-of-school clubs, being involved in collaborative activity. Those who were more negative referred to students who resisted contact, didn't want to socialise or collaborate; they also spoke of tensions and issues between students in different schools, and, although rarely, unacceptable behaviour that was not sufficiently dealt with by supervisors. Some students themselves were resistant to working with anyone who was not known to them.

A theme emerging from the Year 8 and Year 10 focus group interviews was that the programme included a great deal that was repetitive. Information that had already been covered in the programme or from other sources was being presented again. Students wanted new information and new experiences.

The contribution of Student Ambassadors

The student ambassadors are potentially an important part of the Year 10 and Year 8 programmes. The responses of Year 10 students to the Ambassadors were varied. Most were seen as friendly, helpful, informative. Some were less favourably rated. Students would like more opportunities to engage with Ambassadors. This was currently limited because of time pressure and group size.

Year 8 students suggested that the Ambassadors' role was an important aspect of the success of school-based activities. In general Ambassadors were seen as: 'nice', 'helpful', 'friendly', 'funny' by the Year 8 students. They were valued as information providers, especially as they offered first hand authentic experiences of university. However students had varied views on individuals: some 'didn't interact' or encourage students to ask questions; some were poor at controlling the group work in school-based sessions, or managing time, for example posters were unfinished in the Where Am I Now? session. Training received by Student Ambassadors was generic Ambassador training provided by the university, and was not focused on South Bristol Youth in particular. This is important because the cohort is substantially different from many of the post-16 cohorts that Ambassadors often come into contact with. Briefing for each session can be limited, due to time constraints – and this means that Ambassadors may not be able to work as effectively as possible with the students.

In some school-based sessions the aim of having the same Ambassadors for more than one session had been achieved and was having an impact - students were keen to continue conversations with Ambassadors from session to session, and liked that they were getting to know university students. A drawback to this was that the range of subjects/courses Ambassadors were taking was limited, and seen by some students as too similar: 'they were all in computers'. This is in part at least due to the timetable requirements of different courses: some courses (at the University of Bristol, for example, this may include Social Sciences, and Arts/Humanities) have far fewer contact hours, making it possible for students to be employed as Ambassadors. Other courses, such as STEM courses for example, have far more contact hours so students may be less likely to act as Ambassadors.

Working with parents and carers

One of the aims of the Ambitions programme is working with parents and carers to support their children to make informed choices about their future. This year, the introductory session was combined with the session of finance and HE, to reduce demands on parents' time. Sessions for parents were also put on in schools rather than a central location, so parents did not have to travel so far. This meant that sessions were run repeatedly, although this was not seen as a problem in order to engage more parents. As one university provider said: 'The one thing I've said is I will happily go into six individual schools, or however many individual schools, with ambassadors and things like that, and we'll go and talk to parents, because I think actually that's key, any kind of parental engagement that we can get'. Provision in separate schools, though, meant that one university provider felt that there was little sense of 'being part of something bigger'. While parental attendance at events was still not high, it was thought to be higher than last year. Of the parents interviewed, not all had been able to attend the sessions organised for parents but the ones who had were positive about the experience. In particular they valued the introductory session that had informed them about the financial aspects of progressing to Higher Education.

A suggestion about a different approach to involving parents came from a member of the senior leadership team of one of the participating schools.

Whether there's some scope with all the students involved in the project having almost a family fun day kind of joint activity... something so that the first conversation isn't about now can you fill in 23 pieces of paperwork and hope that you're not boring [the parents] in a school hall (parent interview)

Attendance at the activities

In total, 123 Year 10 students were listed as being on the programme. Data on attendance at many events is incomplete, and data on parent attendance were not provided. As a result, summary data would not be informative. Table 6.1 shows the numbers and percentages of Year 10 students attending each event, according to data provided.

From the data available, it was evident that some schools prioritised students' attendance at Ambitions Programme events. Where the programme is prioritised within the school, pupils receive a more coherent experience through attending all activities.

Table 6.1: Numbers and percentages of students attending South Bristol Youth Ambitions Year 10 activities

Year 10 Activities			
Activity	Location	Number Attending	% of Cohort Attending
Launch	School	40	33%
Team Building Day	Goblin Combe Outdoor Education	68*	68%*
Campus Visit	UoB	91	74%
My Future	School	63	51%
Sports/Societies Taster Day	UoB	*	*
Academic Taster Lectures	UoB	*	*
Graduation	UoB	62	50%

*based on incomplete data

In total, 133 Year 8 students were listed as being on the programme. Data on attendance at many events is incomplete, and data on parent attendance were not provided. As a result, summary data would not be informative. Table 6.2 shows the numbers and percentages of Year 8 students attending each event, according to data provided.

Table 6.2: Numbers and percentages of students attending South Bristol Youth Ambitions Year 8 activities

Year 8 Activities			
Activity	Location	Number Attending	% of Cohort Attending
Launch	School	48*	71%*
Team Building Day	UWE	113	85%
What is University?	School	109	82%
Campus Visit	UWE	59*	63%
Future Choices	School	63*	75%*
Where am I now?	School	48*	57%*
Celebration Event	South Bristol Sports Centre	99	74%

* based on incomplete data

Summary and recommendations

Overall feedback on the programme. As a whole the programme was regarded highly by schools, parents, and students who participated. Given the expansion of the programme, however, there are areas that could be further strengthened.

Coherence and progression within the programme. Both Year 8 and Year 10 students commented that they found some aspects of the programme repetitive. This is more likely to be the case for Year 10 students who have been part of the programme since Year 8.

- *Programme organisers should examine the overall coherence of the programme and specify aims and outcomes for each year of the programme. This will of course take time to feed through into the whole cohort: it may be worth reflecting on what the current older cohorts have already done in planning sessions as they will not have progressed through the programme in its current form.*

The importance of sessions being different from normal school activities. Students value activities and sessions that they can differentiate from 'normal school'. In some cases school-based sessions appear to be rolled out year after year without any critical reflection on behalf of the organising teams. Students want more interaction and less of what they call '*just sitting and listening*'.

- *Programme organisers in the universities should examine the effectiveness of each planned session against the specific aims and learning outcomes for the session and radically revamp if necessary.*

Mixing students from different schools. In general students were positive about group work that involved mixing students from different schools when it was done well. However they were critical of sessions in which the organisers had not paid enough attention to the organisation of group work, which included the organisation of space and seating. Programme and activity leaders need particular skills to organise successful group work for school students.

- *Programme organisers/ session facilitators in the universities should have specific training in the skills needed to organise effective group work with school students.*

The role of University Student Ambassadors. University Student Ambassadors are clearly an important part of the programme, and it is good that their remit takes into account their skills, but there is not always enough time built into the activities for school students to engage with the Student Ambassadors. Further, Student Ambassador training and briefing for sessions is often minimal, which limits their ability to support students as effectively as possible.

- *The SBY team should consider if there could be more time for engagement and discussion between the Student Ambassadors and the Ambitions students built into the programme. Where possible, more substantial and focused training (appropriate to the age cohort) and briefing for specific sessions should be provided for Student Ambassadors.*

Parental participation in the programme. Parental participation in the programme is relatively limited. While parents who are able to attend appreciate the sessions, South Bristol Youth are still not reaching as many as they would like. Using schools as venues this year appears to have made a difference, although timing remains an issue: this is at the school's behest and parents' commitments are so varied that no single time would be appropriate for all. This points to the need for more creative ways to engage with parents and carers.

- *The SBY team should consider documenting relevant information for parents/carers who cannot attend the sessions organised for them. An overview of programme activities, and the financial information about attending university (for example) could be made available in hard and electronic copies. Regular communication about the programme activities could be provided via email. The SBY team could assess whether there is any appetite for web-based interaction (via social media for example) for parents and carers who may want to ask questions but cannot attend the sessions.*

Partnership within schools. In the majority of schools this works well. However, staff responsible for partnership need the resource and capacity to make this happen. Where staff responsible have good relationships with the students on the programme, attendance is generally good and the schools' commitment to the programme is evident. It is not always clear, however, how embedded or important the programme is to the school, and whether other members of staff in the school are aware of the programme and which students participate.

- *Schools and the SBY team should discuss how they make the programme work for their students, in order to develop a partnership agreement or code of practice about participation. As recommended in the interim report, a network of school staff with responsibility for the Ambitions Programme would facilitate this kind of discussion. A simple overview sheet of activities, aims and participating students would promote awareness about the programme in all teachers within the school.*

Chapter 7: The outcomes of the Ambitions Programme

This chapter discusses the ways in which young people were thought to have developed their thinking around university as a result of the Ambitions Programme. It draws on group interviews and questionnaires with students, and interviews with parents.

Most of the Year 10 students interviewed suggest that the Ambitions programme has changed their awareness about university *'It's like it lets us decide for ourselves.'* *'It was more of a hey, this is what you can do.'* They have become aware that there are many courses to study at university and it is *'not just subjects you do in school'*. They have also learned that university is an opportunity and that it is possible *'to take subjects that you like and want to study'*. Some students said that you don't need university to get a job but it would help you to *'get a like higher level kind of job'*, for example becoming a doctor or a lawyer.

In Year 10, with the imminence of GCSE examinations, many students were beginning to think ahead. Some recognised that the outcomes of GCSE would influence what kind of futures they would be able to consider: their results would tell them what was possible. Most students were aware of a range of possible post-16 routes, for example apprenticeships and A-Levels.

Many of the Year 10 students interviewed said that they need more specific information about particular university courses and university admission criteria. In general they are not well informed about which A-level courses they should take in order to pursue their particular career interests or do not know how to keep their options open if they are undecided about future careers. Some were confused about the difference between college (post-16 FE) and university (post-18 HE). For many students the links between university and jobs/careers is still unclear. Many students with ambition to progress to Higher Education had no clear idea about targets they might be setting themselves. The following vignettes illustrate this point:

Sophie wanted to be a pre-school teacher, and believed that she does not need to go to university.*

Archie was good at football and plays for a team outside school. He wanted to be a PE Teacher but did not know what he needs to do to become a PE teacher. He had not talked to PE teachers at school or anyone on the Ambitions Programme about this ambition.*

Will thought that university is fine for the right person but not for him. He wanted to become an accountant and knew there is a degree route but he wanted to get an apprenticeship which he thought was right for him. He said he tried to talk to his dad 'but he never listens.' He had talked to his Business teacher 'because he knows a lot about what I want to do for accountancy and what I should study to get there. He knows what he is talking about.'*

Sarah had always wanted to become a vet. She said she knew in Y8 that she had to get B to A* in Biology, Physics and Chemistry at GCSE. After that she would go to college and re-take if needed. In Y10 she was a little clearer about the path to success but still vague about A-level qualifications. She thought she would probably need Maths and Science A-Levels to get to university afterwards. She knew 'it can be difficult and takes a while'. Amy thought she is not doing that well in science and 'getting a higher level would be difficult.' She said that her family could get her a tutor. She had not chosen triple science because she wanted to do photography instead.*

*names are changed for anonymity

Year 8 students' recall of their thinking about Higher Education at the start of the programme falls into three groups: those who were already thinking about university; those who had thought about it a little but were not sure; and those who had never thought about it. The numbers of students who were already thinking about university varied between schools. By the end of the year most of the Year 8 students appeared to be more future-oriented, and it is clear that the programme has had an impact on many students' thinking about university. Many spoke of feeling better informed/knowing more about university. Some had been *'inspired'* to think more ambitiously about university in their future plans. Some had ceased to be ambivalent and now

saw a reason for thinking about university. Some of those already committed to the idea of gaining a degree had been able to move to more definite plans.

However, there was wide divergence in the level of knowledge and understanding about Higher Education within the Year 8 groups. Although students had some ideas about university life their knowledge about the routes into Higher Education via post-16 courses, and potentially useful or required subjects, was unclear and limited.

As discussed already the parents interviewed had noticed how their children had changed in terms of beginning to develop an ambition to progress to University, and become more confident that it would be possible. This was particularly striking in the case of one student who had been diagnosed as autistic:

[My daughter] was diagnosed with autism just a couple of years back, it's still quite new for her. I knew there was something, you know, slightly amiss ... at the time, she couldn't understand what was happening because she was bright, she was getting lots of top marks in school, but she couldn't spell things. And she would get words mixed up, although having a massive vocabulary, didn't really understand what the words meant ... she was always getting people calling her stupid, thinking that she wouldn't get anywhere. And then this [Ambitions Programme] came along and she really started to enjoy it. She started to meet other kids as well because she does battle socially as well ... and struggle talking to other children, but this was giving her confidence. It gave her a boost to see that she could go to university, you know? Don't write yourself off, and she absolutely loves it. And that's her plan. (Parent).

This parent also described how her daughter had met a student ambassador with autism and this had been a particularly positive experience:

And he was saying to her, "Well, look at me!" You know, "If I can do this, you do this." And it really just opened her eyes ... So, I don't know how exactly it came up, but she came back full of it, and it really thrilled us really to know that she wasn't ... because she was starting to write herself off, just because of what other kids were saying to her, but then when she could see that somebody else who was having the same struggles as her, could go to university and was planning on having this fabulous life, then it made her pick back up and realise that she could as well.

Summary and recommendations

Changing awareness of University The Ambitions programme is valuable in changing young people's awareness of university and giving students general information about university and university life.

Lack of know-how and not lack of aspirations is what is likely to be a barrier to participation in Higher Education. The majority of young people who have participated in the Ambitions programme have developed aspirations to study at university. However many of the young people and their parents lack the know-how that is needed to achieve their aims of studying at university – in particular, which specific pathways need to be followed to fulfil specific aspirations. In general the SBY team interviewed and the SLT members interviewed do not appear to be fully aware of this barrier to participation in Higher Education.

- *The SBY team should work in partnership with schools to develop a strategy to ensure that young people can obtain the specific information about Higher Education related to either a particular career option (for example become a Lawyer) or to keeping their options open if they have not decided upon a career path (for example studying facilitating A-level subjects).*

This issue is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: The Ambitions Programme in the wider context

In this chapter we consider how the Ambitions Programme contributes to the broader landscape of provision in developing young people's aspirations and educational trajectories. We discuss the limitations of the programme, in terms of capacity and structure, in particular with reference to individualised advice for students. We also discuss the opportunities for post-16 provision in South Bristol, and consider how this relates to students' understanding and decision making about their educational trajectories. This chapter draws on group interviews with students, interviews and questionnaires with parents, senior leadership in schools, and the South Bristol Youth team.

Individualised advice for students

Overall there is evidence that the Ambitions Programme changes students' awareness of University and through the programme many students develop the ambition of wanting to study at University. However as we highlighted in the previous chapter, each student will need particular advice that either relates to their career choice (for example becoming a PE teacher) or that relates to keeping their options open if they are undecided about which career they want to pursue (for example what to study at A-level).

It is important to remember that the vast majority of the students on the Ambitions programme would be the first in their family to progress to University. Of the 85 parents surveyed in Autumn 2016, a minority (16%) had been to university themselves, the majority of these attending as mature students over the age of 21. Only 4 parents went to university at age 18. A slightly higher proportion (25%) had someone in the household who had been to University. In this respect, although family members are important in supporting young people to realise their ambitions to study at University, they are very unlikely to be able to offer young people the personalised advice and guidance that they need. As one of the interviewed parents said:

Well, we are not a family that has got anybody who has gone to university for generations, so we really know nothing about it and it has just opened up different doors for my daughter really I think, because she never intended going to university (Parent interview)

Furthermore, the interviews with parents and members of the senior leadership teams from the participating schools suggest that schools are not providing Year 8 and Year 10 students with the particular information that each individual needs. Some parents believed that students will receive this information when they are in the sixth form. At this point, however, several choices which affect future directions will already have been made: not taking particular GCSEs will prevent students from studying particular A-levels, and not taking particular Level 3 courses, or indeed particular A-levels, will prevent students from pursuing particular routes in Higher Education. As discussed in the report on the High Potential Learners project¹⁰, access to facilitating subjects at A-level¹¹ is an important factor in degree choice. This means that offering advice on Higher Education and career pathways in the sixth form is far too late: this needs to be part of the discourse with students pre-GCSE.

Students and parents told us that they do search the internet for particular information. To make best use of the internet-based resources, however, it is important to know what you are looking for in the first place. With few families having been to university, it is likely that they are unaware of the wide range of subjects available to study – and if students are looking for particular courses that they are already aware of, they are unlikely to come across the wider diversity of available options and possibilities in Higher Education particularly before choosing whether and what to study at Level 3.

The young people on the Ambitions Programme told us that they would like to talk to University Student Ambassadors who are studying courses that they are thinking about choosing. Occasionally this happens by

¹⁰ *The High-Potential Learners Project: Increasing the participation in Russell Group universities of high-potential learners from low-performing institutions.* Tikly, L., Rose, J., and Washbrook, L. (2016)

¹¹ Facilitating subjects at A-level are those most often required for degree courses – and therefore enable students to keep their options open. They include: Biology; Chemistry; Physics; Maths and Further Maths; English Literature; Geography; History; Modern and Classical Languages.

chance but the Ambitions Programme is not set up to achieve such an aim. Overall we had the impression that many of the young people on the programme do not have the opportunity to communicate their developing ideas with a “friendly and critical adult”. It would appear that their school teachers are unlikely to be aware of their thinking about their futures: few of the young people we interviewed had spoken with their teachers about their specific ambitions, and it is likely that schools do not provide individualised guidance in this way at this stage. In choosing Higher Education young people are almost inevitably thinking about career choices that are outside the experience of their family members. The Ambitions Programme supports young people to broaden their horizons and see university as a possibility. It does not, however, have the capacity to provide individualised support to respond to questions that young people will inevitably have about their own personal pathways and ambitions, once they have learnt about the opportunities that university can provide. Furthermore, students do not seem to be aware of *how* they could find out answers to the kinds of questions about Higher Education that they are developing as a result of being on the Ambitions Programme. For such students a school-based “mentor” who takes responsibility for supporting their exploration of pathways needed to fulfil their ambitions would be beneficial.

Opportunities for progression to Level 3

Only two of the 6 South Bristol schools that participate in the Ambitions Programme offer Post-16 level 3 courses, and both of these provide a limited offer in no small part due to competition from other institutions within Bristol. Alongside the increasing HE Level 4 and 5 provision from FE institutions such as City of Bristol College, this is possibly why some of the students interviewed were confused about the difference between Post-16/FE Colleges and Higher Education. This highlights the need for careful and well-informed advice for young people about post-16 options and trajectories.

The report for Future Quest on post-16 progression data¹² demonstrated that in 2016, the most popular destination by far for students from the six South Bristol Youth partnership schools as a whole was the City of Bristol College, although Ashton Park being the most popular post-16 option for students already at school there. A notable minority of students (particularly those from South East Bristol) attended St Brendan’s Sixth Form College – for the majority of young people in South Bristol, a long bus journey is faced in order to attend this institution. The report suggests that there are clear geographical factors involved in post-16 choices, with students choosing to attend local providers – and alongside this, highlights that there are few opportunities related to level 3 provision locally situated in South Bristol.

A view was expressed by a member of the senior leadership from one of the partnership schools that there is not a strategic overview of the level 3 provision for students in South Bristol.

I think we don't have a strategic overview, and there is a lot of competition in between the providers. What it ends up is that School A [in another area of the City] can offer a very bespoke vision at Post 16 level. The sixth form college B also offers a bespoke vision and then you've got a lot of smaller organisations all trying to find their own little niche in order to be able to do it.I don't think we look enough at what's across the board, and say have we got the right number of places. Are they on the right sort of courses? We've got an obvious gap within catering. We've got an obvious gap between the healthcare professions. Nobody's really filling that gap properly.

A view was also expressed that the growth of the sixth forms at a couple of schools in other parts of the City ‘has decimated the sixth forms in the South’. Furthermore, there was a suggestion that several of these schools were over-recruiting: ‘They've just done blanket offers to everybody this year, and they'll decide on the actual result day who'll they accept’.

¹² *Where do they go? Analysing the post-16 destinations of pupils across Bristol.* Francis, J. (2017).

Summary and recommendations

The Ambitions programme is effective at encouraging young people to consider university as a possibility. It does not, however, have the resource to provide young people with individualised advice on how to achieve ambitions they may develop before, during or after participating in the programme. It appears that students are not receiving individualised advice from schools about pathways needed to fulfil particular ambitions.

- *South Bristol Youth should inform students of the importance of understanding pre-requisites for specific pathways, and suggest where they can access individualised advice about this.*
- *Schools should work with South Bristol Youth to understand students' ambitions and understanding, and ensure that tailored and informed advice can be offered to individual students about what pathways they need to take to fulfil specific ambitions. This would best be achieved through close partnership working between South Bristol Youth and schools.*
- *A school-based 'mentor' who takes responsibility for supporting this exploration and advice would be beneficial.*

Level 3 provision within easy access of South Bristol is limited. Two schools in South Bristol with Level 3 provision are currently only able to sustain a relatively limited offer, which does not meet the needs of all students. This is in contrast to what is on offer in other areas of the City. For example, St Mary Redcliffe and Temple Sixth Form offers just under 40 A-level courses and St Brendan's Sixth Form College offers a choice of 36 A-level courses. By comparison Ashton Park Sixth Form offers 18 A-level subjects and Merchants' Academy Sixth Form offers 15 A-level subjects.

- *Recommendation to programme: The Future Quest Programme should continue to develop an overview of the Level 3 provision that is available across Bristol in order to investigate the range of Post-16 options available to young people who live in areas where there is relatively little progression to Higher Education.*
- *Recommendation to schools: Schools in South Bristol should work together to develop a) strategic information about the number of students from the area who need to study Level 3 qualifications in order to reduce the HE participation gap in South Bristol wards (See Table 3.1) and b) a strategic 10-year plan of the Level 3 provision that should become available to young people in South Bristol in order to increase HE participation rate.*

Evaluation of the programme

During interviews with school senior leadership, the importance was raised of tracking students' progress as they move through programmes such as Ambitions:

Realistically, I think I would like to see a bigger data focus for South Bristol Youth because, actually, they're running all these brilliant projects, and the data they ask for is fine, but maybe, they could tighten up, so that you could measure impact more. And although we track our students, there's not always thinking ... So, I know what phase two students I've got, and I can say, "Do you know what? They're on this programme, and it was an English programme, and their grades have gone up". But cause I know those students. But does the Head of Department, in school, know that that could be a reason why? Does my counterpart in Head of Phase Three, who doesn't do partnerships, does he know that they've been on this programme, and that's the impact that it could've had? So, maybe, it needs to be a little bit more joined up like that. You know, kind of like, this child's on this programme; this is the impact that it has or hasn't had.

This has always been a key focus of this evaluation – however obtaining such data from schools has been challenging. The evaluation worked with schools from the start to ensure that what we were asking for was

realistic for schools, we were happy to work with data in the manner in which schools recorded it to reduce the work involved in providing the data, and processes were agreed with all schools. However, some schools did not prioritise provision of data, and the resource put in by the evaluation team and by South Bristol Youth's data manager to access the data far exceeded expectations. While some schools were prompt and clear with their communications about data, others did not respond to repeated requests for data provision and/or clarification. Within the last few weeks, schools have provided enough data on GCSE outcomes for us to do a basic analysis of one cohort. However, there are many gaps in the ongoing attendance, behaviour and attainment data so the opportunity to track progress in a detailed manner has been lost.

- *The Future Quest evaluation will be relying heavily on student-level data, and it is important for schools to ensure that there is enough resource, and permission and expertise within that resource, to compile and provide the evaluation with the necessary data. A point of contact in each school who has capacity and is responsible for data provision would help schools to prioritise this within their systems.*

Appendix 1: Calculation of English Indices of Deprivation

The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 are based on 37 separate indicators, organised across seven distinct domains of deprivation (Income; Employment; Education, Skills and Training; Health and Disability; Crime; and Barriers to Housing and Services). These indicators are combined, using appropriate weights, to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD 2015). This is an overall measure of multiple deprivations experienced by people living in an area and is calculated for every Lower layer Super Output Area (LSOA), or neighbourhood, in England.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.

The Education, Skills and Training deprivation domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: one relating to children and young people and one relating to adult skills. The Children and Young People sub-domain measures attainment and qualifications (KS2, KS4), school absences, staying –on rates and entry to HE, while the Adult Skills sub-domain measures the proportion of working age adults with no or low qualifications and the proportion who cannot speak English well.

Some domains of IMD – in particular IDACI and the education and income domains – correlate with educational disadvantage which in turn is linked to a reduced likelihood of applying to university (Crawford and Greaves 2013¹³). For this reason the Indices of Deprivation are often used to identify areas of educational need and to target resources. For example IDACI is used as part of the pupil premium element of the government’s current school funding formula.¹⁴ The voluntary and community sector also uses the Index, for example, to identify areas where people may benefit from the services they provide.

¹³ Crawford,C. and Greaves,E. (2013) A comparison of commonly used socio-economic indicators: their relationship to educational disadvantage and relevance to Teach First. Institute For Fiscal Studies IFS Report R79

¹⁴ Department for Education (2014) Fairer Schools Funding. Arrangements for 2015 to 2016

