Contents

3 Introduction
4 Primary School Engagement and Masterclasses
5 University Experience Days
6 Residential Summer Schools
7 Working with Teachers
8 Collaborations
10 Impact
Introduction

Last year the University of Leicester was the only university in the *Times Top 20 universities* to meet its targets for the recruitment of students from state education and lower socio-economic groups.

Our focused work with schools and other stakeholders helps people from disadvantaged backgrounds come to a research-intensive university. We welcome children, young people, parents, carers and teachers onto campus for activities designed to promote higher education and its potential benefits. We proactively visit local schools and colleges in areas of disadvantage to help teachers raise aspirations of young children and prepare older pupils for applying to universities in the near future.

Much of this work is led by our School and College Services. Based within Student Recruitment it works directly with specially targeted schools and colleges, and coordinates widening participation activities across the university. The team also represents the university on regional and national widening participation partnerships.

This report summarises the outreach work of the University of Leicester during the 2011/12 academic year. It celebrates our achievements over the past twelve months, outlining the outreach activities delivered by the university and the positive impact we have all had on the lives of children from widening participation backgrounds.

---

**Professor Mark Thompson**
(Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Widening Participation)

**Jean Baxter**
(Head of School and College Services)
Primary School Engagement

Working with Primary Schools allows the University of Leicester to intervene early to raise the aspirations of young children.

432 primary school pupils were welcomed onto campus for specially organised visit days. Each visit day introduced pupils to higher education through activities such as campus tours and interacting with current undergraduates. The children worked in groups to discover which degrees could match their skills. They also completed an activity to challenge stereotypes and reinforce the idea that anyone with potential can go to university.

6903 children visited the Botanic Gardens last year through 168 specially organised primary school trips designed to bring a global perspective to the National Curriculum, especially in environmental and development issues. Teaching takes place through visits to the Botanic Garden and Arboretum and associated activities in schools, all taught by qualified teachers.

Masterclasses

Masterclasses give young people the chance to be taught by university academics on a subject they’re passionate about.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAST YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Masterclass gives participants the opportunity to be taught by leading academics on topics they’re passionate about with subjects including the solar system and the current popularity of comic book movies. Where possible, Masterclasses are designed with the school curriculum in mind so allowing learners to experience university education while also helping them in their current studies.

What teachers thought

“It was useful for the children to consider what they like to do, what they’re good at and how this can link to future courses and careers”

“This was a very positive experience for our children. It was the first time we have visited the university and we would love to bring other students in the future”

“Thank you for another wonderful visit that has built on the children’s learning”

What students thought

“I enjoyed spending time with other young people from other parts of Leicestershire with a similar passion for French”

“Not only did it help my economics A-Level, it also painted a good picture of Leicester University”

“I found the ‘Reading against the Text’ lecture really fascinating and I am sure that it will help me at school”

“I liked that we got shown different aspects of engineering and it gave an insight into the whole topic and sub topics”
University Experience Days

University Experience Days give secondary schools pupils the chance to visit our campus and find out what studying at university is really like.

Finding Out About University

Working in groups, young people learn more about university through fast-paced interactive activities. These include a true or false quiz designed to dispel common myths about higher education, and a ‘Price is Right’ finance game that explores the cost of common student household items.

Student Feedback

“I found the money quiz useful because I was thinking about maybe going to university when I am older and it helped ease possible worries.”

Meeting Current Students

Current Leicester undergraduates work at every University Experience Day as Leicester Ambassadors, and are on hand throughout the day to not only help young people with their tasks but also to talk to them about what student life is really like. This included informal conversations as well as a timetabled Question Time session.

Student Feedback

“I liked talking to the students about life at university and it has really helped me to understand it better.”

Expressing Themselves

Introducing the concept of independent learning is an important part of the day, with each group being given a topic to research. Together they present what they learn in creative ways including designing posters, delivering presentations and acting out dramas.

Student Feedback

“I think watching the presentations and learning from them was useful because I learnt valuable information about the different topics.”

Exploring Campus

All young people were taken on a campus tour by a current Leicester undergraduate where they visited different academic departments and key facilities such as the Students’ Union and Main Library. They learn about the differences between school and university.

Student Feedback

“I liked the tour around the campus because I had a chance to see what everyday life looks like and how campuses work.”
Residential Summer Schools

Ninety-one pupils from local schools attended University of Leicester Residential Summer Schools.

**Experiencing Student Life**

School and College Services organised three residential summer schools from the 22nd to the 25th April, supported by academic colleagues and Student Mentors, providing pupils from East Midlands’ schools a taste of university education. Pupils were also given time in specially tailored sessions to reflect on their future goals and what they would need to do to achieve them.

A key part of the summer schools is about allowing pupils to experience some of the independence that university life offers by staying away from their family in university halls of residence for three nights. They are encouraged to mix with pupils from outside their own school through group work during the day and social activities such as a sports night, karaoke and a disco in the evening.

**Log on to Languages**

As part of the East Midlands Routes into Languages Scheme, Year 8 and 9 pupils were shown the importance of and enjoyment offered by studying by modern languages. Children took part in taster sessions in Russian, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese and also stretched their existing language skills by using French to write and perform rap songs, and take part in a laboratory session.

**Awesome Archaeology**

Year 10 pupils were given a glimpse of the tools of the archaeologist’s trade as they visited the University’s Archaeology laboratory to discover how items such as pottery and animal bones are handled. They also looked at the ethical dilemmas archaeologists face and discovered how the subject has had a surprisingly large impact on the latest video games.

**Rockets and Robots**

Year 10 pupils were given hands on experience of science and engineering as they built their very own rockets and robots. Staff members from the Physics and Engineering departments took participants through the design and build process step by step, with pupils getting to launch their rockets on the university playing fields and test their robots in university test stations, including the ‘Star Car’.

**What students thought**

“[Seeing what university was like] just proved to me that if you work hard it does come to something and it does make a difference”

“[The summer school has] made me think about where I want to go and how to get there”
School and College Engagement

Talks to Students

63 non-selective state schools were visited by Student Recruitment staff members who delivered talks to prospective students. These talks focused on empowering students to apply to universities in general, rather than solely promoting the University of Leicester. Talk topics include how to develop a personal statement and choosing which subject to apply for. Schools or Colleges based within areas of low participation in higher education are prioritised with 37% of last year’s talks taking place in such institutions. For more information on what talks are on offer please visit http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/scs/activities/talks

In addition to delivering talks in schools, at all Open Days multiple talks on Student Finance and UCAS Procedures are delivered to audiences of up to two hundred people. The talks give prospective students practical advice about university life but also dispel negative myths that surround higher education. For example, the Student Finance talk contains not only advice on student budgeting but also information on how young people are investing in their future by attending university.

Working with Teachers

700 people have signed up to receive the monthly Teacher e-zine that provides schools with up to date information on higher education issues and news about the University. Over the past year this has included advice for those supporting students writing their personal statements and information on issues pupils should consider when choosing their A-Levels. To sign up for the e-zine please visit http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/scs/resources/e-zine

116 participants from local schools and educational services attended last year’s Teacher and Adviser Conference. Those in attendance were able to question Admissions Tutors as well as attend training on topics including ‘writing UCAS references’ and ‘explaining university to younger children’. Teachers and advisers also had the chance to discuss best practice with each other and university staff members, as well as hearing from current Leicester undergraduates on issues such as employability and the UCAS system. To view resources from the event please visit http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/scs/resources/tac-conference

Students in Classrooms

71 students were placed in local schools through two schemes coordinated by School and College Services. Tomorrow’s Teachers gives all students the opportunity to apply to spend a week volunteering in a school towards the end of the Summer term. The University Ambassador Scheme allows students in participating academic departments to spend three hours a week in a school throughout the Spring Term as part of a community engagement degree module.

2476 hours were spent in schools by students who had volunteered through these schemes in 2011/12. Both schemes provide schools with knowledgeable and enthusiastic students who offer practical assistance in the classroom. It allowed for pupils to get individual attention in the classroom from young people who are passionate about their subject and who are good role models for pursuing study beyond school. Schools in disadvantaged areas were prioritised when determining where students would be placed, ensuring that children from widening participation backgrounds were more likely to receive the benefits of the program. For more information on Students in Classrooms please visit http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/scs/activities/classrooms

In addition to these two schemes, School and College Services, the School of Education and the Careers Service are currently working together to improve the information provided to those potentially interested in becoming teachers and providing opportunities to gain important experience for those applying to initial teacher training.
Collaborations

The University of Leicester works collaboratively to further its widening participation agenda.

After Aimhigher

In 2010 the Government announced that it would no longer directly fund widening participation initiatives through Aimhigher, which ended during 2011. This year the University of Leicester worked with other local universities to ensure that this decision did not leave a gap in local provision.

Together with Loughborough University and De Montfort University the Widening Participation Partnership for Leicester and Leicestershire was established to bring together staff members from the three universities and other stakeholders in schools and local authorities to ensure the continuation of Aimhigher’s work to facilitate the joint coordination and promotion of widening participation activities in the city and county.

Additionally the University of Leicester and five other universities in the region founded the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership to continue the work of Aimhigher to help target, monitor and evaluate widening participation activities. Belonging to this partnership allows School and College Services to work with academic departments and state schools to maximise the effectiveness of their widening participation work by ensuring that those who attend outreach activities are those who will benefit from them the most. The partnership has already secured the agreement of Leicester City and County Local Authorities to provide each school and college with data identifying individual pupils by widening participation background.

Working with University Colleges

In 2012/13 College Widening Participation and Outreach Plans were successfully developed with the College of Social Sciences and the College of Arts, Humanities and Law School. These build on the earlier partnership forged with the College of Science and Engineering to widen participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, with a staff member working within both School and College Services and the College to support and coordinate STEM outreach activities. These have included welcoming approximately five hundred local school pupils onto campus for twelve National Science and Engineering Week events and organising the University of Leicester’s G-STEM Annual Conference for one hundred and forty one children.

Working with the Medical School, School and College Services has recruited 150 student volunteers with the creation of Medreach. The students will be working in classrooms to help prepare medical school applicants from widening participation backgrounds, as well as raising aspirations amongst younger children. Already they have supported sixty-six children through a new e-mentoring scheme.
Colleges University of Leicester Network (CULN)

CULN is a collaborative network of 22 further and higher education institutions across the Midlands. The Network is focused on student progression and staff development. It provides opportunities for students and their teachers to engage in a range of projects involving curriculum innovation, development and progression. School and College Services works closely with CULN to promote widening participating activities to its members.

Realising Opportunities

The University of Leicester is part of a unique collaboration of 12 leading research intensive universities, working together to promote fair access and social mobility of students from under-represented (WP) groups.

Students are supported through an 18 month structured programme of activities designed to raise their aspirations, and develop their skills and ability to progress to research intensive universities. Successful completion of the programme leads to participants receiving additional recognition, at the point of application to one of the 12 Partners, in the form of an alternative offer through UCAS from many of Partner universities.

This year we have directly supported the engagement of 65 local sixth students across two year groups, providing individually tailored academic support for the compulsory academic element of the programme and delivering several on campus events, including Masterclasses, study skills workshops and IAG talks/interactive workshops. In July 2012, our 4 day residential summer school saw 40 of our local and national RO students compete in our ‘Equipped 2 Succeed’ team challenge, engaging them in a programme of interactive study skills and personal development activities.

We were also pleased to host the partnership’s national student conference in February 2012 that was attended by 467 students, parents and teaching staff.

Looked After Children and Care Leavers

The University of Leicester works closely with colleagues at Loughborough and De Montfort Universities to support young people with experience of living in care to enter higher education. The three universities host a two-day Summer School which gives Looked After Children and Care Leavers the opportunity to visit all three campuses and sample higher education. They also organise a Training Day for Care Professionals that provide those working with Looked After Children advice on how to help young people navigate higher education processes and the opportunity to question educational specialists.

The University of Leicester has also worked closely with Leicester City Council and other local stakeholders to support the YMCA’s successful lottery bid to form Y-POD, a new service dedicated to enhancing Care Leavers life prospects by improving their access to housing, health and education, employment and training.

Children’s University

Five Hundred and Fourteen children, parents and carers visited campus as part of two events hosted in conjunction with the Children’s University. The Children’s University helps children develop new skills by providing them with voluntary educational activities, celebrating their learning with graduation evenings at universities across the country. The University of Leicester is proud to host these graduation evenings and give those present the chance to learn more about higher education by asking questions to current undergraduates.

Embrace Arts

Embrace Arts has recently secured funding from the Arts Council for a new Education and Outreach programme of work that will allow children from widening participation backgrounds to participate in the arts with a particular focus on children with disabilities.
Impact

We are proud of our record on widening participation and outreach. We believe that we are a national leader in recruiting students from widening participation backgrounds and promoting the benefits of higher education in widening participation areas. And we have the numbers to prove it.

**89%**

of new University of Leicester undergraduates* came from state education

**25%**

of new University of Leicester undergraduates came from lower socio-economic groups

**89%**

of Summer School participants agreed that it “has encouraged me to progress onto further study when I leave school/college”

**85%**

of Masterclass participants agreed that “today’s activity will encourage me to do well in my education”

**86%**

of University Experience Day Participants agreed that “today’s activity will help me think about what I want to do in the future”

**100%**

of teachers from primary schools that took part in a University Visit Day agreed that their “students have learnt new things that will help them at school”

Find Out More

If you want to find out more about School and College Services then visit our website at

**w:** www.le.ac.uk/offices/scs

If you’re interested in working with us then email us at

**e:** outreach@le.ac.uk

*According to the 2010-11 intake
Testimonials

“It was a great opportunity for our children to find out more about university and what is involved. Just visiting the campus buildings was an eye opener for them as many of our children will be the first in their family to go to university.”

Teacher on why visiting the University of Leicester was so important for their pupils

“It made me want my dream more and made me more ambitious.”

Pupil on the impact on them of a University of Leicester led in-school activity

“The personal approach showed that the university staff have a strong passion for what they do. Their enthusiasm makes the subject interesting.”

Sixth Form Student on what impressed them about a Masterclass

“They are stand out students with exceptional abilities in the classroom, inspirational for both pupils and teacher.”

Deputy Head Teacher on students placed in their school through ‘Students in Classrooms’

“Don’t miss out on a once in a lifetime opportunity.”

Participant on why someone should attend a Summer School
Contact Details

School and College Services
Fielding Johnson Building South Wing
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
UK

t: +44 (0) 116 252 3931
f: +44 (0) 116 252 7650
e: outreach@le.ac.uk
w: www.le.ac.uk/offices/scs

All information in this report was correct at the time of going to press. However, changes and developments are part of the life of the University, and alterations may occur to the programmes and services described in this brochure.