

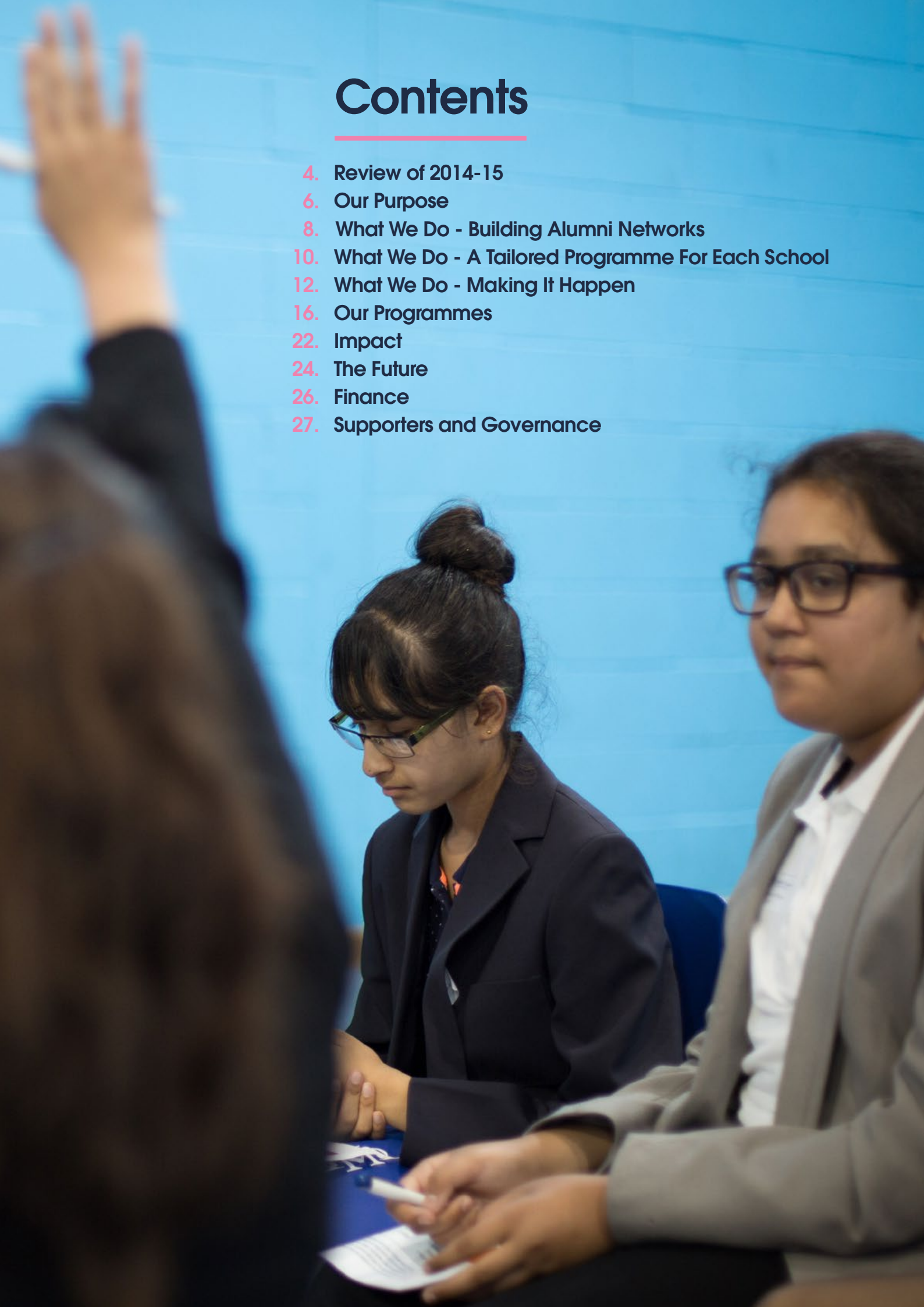


Annual Review 2014-15



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Review of 2014-15

Future First aims to create a national culture of alumni engagement in state schools and colleges. This year we worked with over 10% of schools nationwide to help them start engaging their former students for the first time. The alumni are responding. We have over 140,000 former students registered so far. They're not only signing up, but actively volunteering more often and in more ways. We've seen a 25% increase in the proportion of our schools engaging those volunteers to support today's students.

We've continued to extend our reach into new schools. We now have schools from Cornwall to Carlisle in England and we've started a pilot programme in Glasgow. We were also commissioned by the Welsh Government to research how they could roll out alumni programming across Wales. We've also taken key steps on the path to reducing our reliance on fundraising. We enter the 2015-16 academic year with 98 per cent of Future First schools now paying to work with us - up from less than a third 18 months ago.

It is good to see the growing recognition of the value of alumni programmes not only for motivating and inspiring students but also increasing their understanding and confidence about the world of work. The government revised its best practice guide for schools on careers guidance and we're delighted that alumni engagement remains one of the core recommendations and that the document contains a case study of our partnership with Kingsmead School. We're pleased too that the government's new Careers and Enterprise Company is supportive of our work.

We also ran our biggest ever Back to School Week - our national campaign run in partnership with the 'i' newspaper as a means of promoting a culture of alumni engagement in state schools and fixing the notion in the national consciousness. Leading the charge to #gobackgiveback was BBC newsreader Fiona Bruce who returned to her old school in south London. The campaign resulted in over 1500 people signing up to volunteer at their old schools and we enjoyed support from major employers, including PwC, The Wellcome Trust and Enterprise Rent-a-Car.

We're proud of the first external evaluation of our work, which was published this year. The Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE) reviewed the impact of our Building Motivation programme that aims to maximise GCSE students' engagement with their studies. There is encouraging evidence that, on average, students who participated in the programme did better in their Maths and English GCSEs than students in the same schools with the same starting points.

It's been an exciting year for some of our targeted interventions too. Our e-mentoring services developed significantly and this was recognised at the National E-Mentoring Awards, at which Future First programmes scooped two prizes. We've also extended the pilot of our Alumni in the Curriculum project that sees former students return to co-teach parts of the curriculum relevant to their jobs. It was fascinating to watch an advertising executive helping to teach persuasive writing in an English lesson.

Though we've made good progress, there's a long way to go before every school and college has a thriving alumni community. We want to create a truly national culture of alumni engagement. We believe every student should expect to meet inspirational but relatable role models from their communities throughout their time in school.

Finally, we'd like to say an enormous thank you to our teachers and staff in schools, alumni, students, employer partners, funders, trustees, advocates and staff team - without whom our progress would not have been possible.



Christine Gilbert
Executive Chair



Alex Shapland-Howes
Managing Director

2011
14
schools & colleges

2011

2015
453
schools & colleges

2015

Our purpose

The Problem

Social mobility is woefully low in the UK compared to other OECD countries. We have the highest correlation between parents' earnings and those of their children.¹ This is fundamentally unfair and limits the contribution that individuals can make to society and the economy.

Things do not have to be this way. Progress is being made in ensuring young people from all backgrounds have access to the high quality teaching that we know improves their life chances. However, even where outstanding teaching and learning are the norm, there remain multiple barriers to overcome if a young person's background is not to determine their future.

It is a basic injustice that young people's experience and opportunities are so closely correlated to the status

of the parents. There is a wealth of evidence showing a serious deficit in the state sector in students' confidence, knowledge about career pathways and access to role models compared to their private school peers. The Prince's Trust showed that more than a quarter of young people from the poorest backgrounds believe that 'people like me' don't succeed in life and our own polling shows that nearly half of students on free school meals don't know anyone in a job they'd like to do.²

We know that this affects young people's perception of their own ability, their expectations of future success, and the extent to which they value their school work. We know those in turn can change students' motivation and performance in school, as well as their success in life beyond it.³

Future First's Role in the Solution

Future First helps state schools and colleges to build alumni communities. Former students can have a transformative effect on young people's confidence, motivation and skills.

Schools use their networks in a variety of ways and to meet a variety of needs. For some, the greatest need is for a more diverse range of work placements for current students, whilst for others, workshops and mentoring for low-confidence students are the top priority. Future First works with schools to plan and deliver the most effective interventions to meet their students' needs.

All the communities we build have two key things in common - relatability and sustainability. These are the distinctive strengths of an alumni community. Having

grown up in the same area and perhaps having had some of the same teachers, former students can be ideal career role models as they are instantly relatable. Alumni can prove to students that 'someone like me' can succeed and prosper. Schools and colleges have a lasting pool of support available because as new students leave the school each year, they join the growing community of volunteers.

We are passionate about the value that alumni networks can bring to schools and to students - and their role in levelling the playing field and supporting greater social mobility.

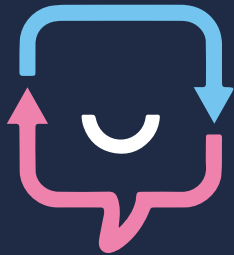
Every school should benefit from a thriving alumni network.

¹A Family Affair: Intergenerational. Social Mobility - OECD (2010)

²Broke not broken - The Prince's Trust (2011) and Social Mobility, Careers Advice & Alumni Networks - Future First (2011)

³The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people - Institute of Education (2013) and Non-Educational Barriers to the Elite Professions - Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2015)

An outstanding alumni network...



Engages former students continuously and throughout their lives



Provides relatable role models for current students



Engages alumni in enriching the curriculum, motivating students and exemplifying career paths



Provides mentors for students



Creates a community of volunteers for activities from school governors to fundraising



Supports the school in raising aspirations and achievements

What we do

Building Alumni Networks



STEP ONE

Sign up leavers

Our first step is to sign up all final year students to enable their school or college to stay in touch with them from the day they leave. Future First provides a secure online platform that helps schools to collect and update students' contact details, send out communications and search easily for alumni to meet specific requirements.



STEP TWO

Reach out to former students

We then reach out to former students using press, social media, employer and university partnerships, and our Back to School Week campaign to encourage them to sign up.



STEP THREE

Engage the network

There is regular contact with alumni to keep them engaged with their school or college.



STEP FOUR

Track their journeys

We track progression routes and destinations of former students via our tracking survey and online platform.



STEP FIVE

Invite them back

We invite alumni to support current students by bringing them back as inspiring speakers or asking them to provide mentoring, work experience and more - according to the needs of each school and college.

Future First has developed a robust process for building sustainable alumni communities – engaging both this year’s leavers and former students who had lost touch – using a secure online platform to support that connection

What we do

A tailored programme for each school

Once we have helped schools and colleges build their network, they can use their alumni in a variety of ways to meet their own requirements. Our goal is to support each school and college to deliver the most effective interventions to address the needs of their students.

This is just a small number of the many examples from schools and colleges across the country. Some of the activities are simple, but in each case, the alumni are not only a new community of committed volunteers, but role models whose impact is significantly magnified because of their relatability.

CASE STUDIES

Role models

Washwood Heath Academy in Birmingham has invited alumni with exciting jobs back to motivate students about their futures. Islam Afzal, a vascular surgeon who now heads up a medical school, answered questions about his journey since leaving Washwood Heath and gave students advice about working hard. Bilal Ahmad, a global oil and gas engineer, spoke to students about his career path and provided practical tips.

The **Bridge Academy** in Hackney ran an 'Alternative Pathways' workshop with their year 10 students. Jay, a higher level apprentice at UBS, and Cleo, a supervisor for a large retailer, talked about their pathways. Ninety per cent of students involved fed back that the session had improved their knowledge about the courses and jobs available to them and would help them to make more informed decisions about their future. One student noted afterwards, "I need to get my head down... there is more than one way to get in to where you want to go".

CASE STUDIES

Career and life skills

One of **Warden Park Academy's** biggest alumni successes this year was the return of architect and former student Jake. Jake struggled with dyslexia at school, but is now a director in his architectural firm. He returned to speak to a group of students with special educational needs about the strategies he has used to help turn his dyslexia into a positive.

Regent High School in Camden wanted to increase the proportion of students studying modern languages at GCSE, so they invited former students, Jamie and Sultana, to talk about how studying Spanish at school had helped them subsequently. Sultana talked about how learning languages had helped develop her communication skills, and Jamie talked about how speaking a foreign language allowed him to study abroad at university. Mr Baines, Deputy Headteacher, has said that the school's interventions led to the proportion of students choosing GCSE language courses to increase by 68% in one year.

CASE STUDIES

Enriching the curriculum

King Edward VI School in Morpeth brought back National Grid engineer Phil Dixon and renewable energy specialist Jonathan Hughes to support students with their Physics unit on energy. Students were able to debate the pros and cons of this controversial topic with genuine experts in the field.

Chace Community School in Enfield welcomed back alumnus Richard Moon, a UN diplomat, to provide a unique lesson for their Year 13 politics students. Speaking to students who had just started their Global Politics module, Richard shared his experiences from 32 years in the Diplomatic service involving postings in Jakarta, Rome, Paris, and, New York. Their teacher told us afterwards, "They were especially excited to hear Richard talk about his UN role in Africa, from where he had just arrived. That work is directly relevant to their A level course, and they were busily taking notes".

CASE STUDIES

Fundraising

Robert Clack School in Barking and Dagenham has raised over £3000 in alumni donations over the past year. Across the country, students from lower income backgrounds are more likely to apply to local universities. This is partly because of the sizeable travel costs involved in going to visit universities further afield. Robert Clack has a strong record of ensuring their students are not disadvantaged in this way. Their Alumni Association is now playing a key role in helping the school fund students' travel to universities across the country, including trips to Liverpool, St Andrews, York and Oxford.

CASE STUDIES

Career Insight

Highworth is a large secondary school in Kent. Teachers had previously tried to arrange careers sessions but struggled to find suitable professionals. Now, thanks to their alumni network, not only are they able to draw on a community of professionals, those volunteers are also instantly relatable to current students. As part of their Future First programme, students are now able to sign up to hear from alumni on a weekly basis.

Brampton Manor Academy in Newham has more than double the national average proportion of students on free school meals and many will be the first from their families to go to university. Last year, they used their alumni network to welcome back recent alumni for a UCAS advice session. The seven volunteers shared practical advice about the reality of student life, the differences between campus and city universities and the things they wish they'd known when they were still in school.

Woodford County High School held a 'World of Work Day'. This included alumni providing workplace scenarios for students, with tasks including creating and pitching an advertisement, designing a new building as an architect, and negotiating deals as a food buyer. 86 per cent of students left committed to working harder at school. One of the students told us afterwards, "I learned that no matter how unusual or unique the job is, it is possible for us to get it".

What We Do

Making it happen

The work of Future First is a true collaboration between our expert team, school staff, students, alumni, employers and partners.

Our team

Future First has a team of dedicated Alumni Officers who work with schools and colleges to build and manage their communities of former students. Last year, we worked closely with over 400 schools and colleges to create tailored programmes, which enabled alumni to return to give support in a range of ways. Alumni Officers are experts in their field and offer consultancy, advice and practical support to school staff.

School and college staff

School staff are critical to Future First's work. We take an 'enabling' approach – supporting schools to use their network to meet a range of needs, depending on the local context. Our school contacts lead on embedding alumni engagement across the school, raising its profile and promoting its benefits amongst colleagues.

Alumni

Future First would not exist without alumni volunteers. By the end of this year over 140,000 former students had signed up to support their old school. Alumni support in various ways:



Role Models – Having grown up in the same place and attended the same school, alumni are immediately relatable to current students. This makes them ideal role models. Alumni can talk about their educational or career experiences and inspire current students to achieve their potential.



In Curriculum – Former students can play a key role in the delivery of the core curriculum. Returning to their old classrooms, alumni enrich the curriculum by co-delivering lessons related to their careers, helping build students' understanding of the real world application of their learning and boosting their motivation.



Work Experience – Work experience is an invaluable opportunity for students to gain an insight into working life. Alumni can provide shadowing opportunities and placements, helping students gain not only more awareness of work, but also the skills they need to succeed when they get there.



Mentors – Alumni can act as mentors either online or in person, providing advice, support and guidance to students. Mentoring is tailored to the individual with specific goals in mind, offering students a purposeful new relationship to help overcome a range of challenges.



Governors – Former students can help the school or college community to flourish by acting as governors. Alumni are perfectly placed for this, combining knowledge of the local community with experiences and skills they've gained since leaving school.



Volunteering – Former students often have specific expertise to offer: from coaching a football team, to running after school clubs or designing a new garden. The possibilities are endless.



Fundraisers – Alumni can support their old school or college by raising money or donating to specific causes. This could be books for the library, music equipment or to fund educational visits for current students.

Employers

Our employer programme complements the core work we undertake to build and develop communities of former students. Alumni volunteers boost students' confidence, motivation and knowledge of career pathways. Our employer partners build on this work by providing role models from specific industries and disciplines that may not be represented in the alumni network, as well as opportunities to visit real workplaces.

We work with a range of employers, providing invaluable opportunities for students to talk to professionals, including in the workplace itself. This enables students to access the real experience, advice and motivation of people from a range of sectors.



CASE STUDY

IGD helps students at St Mary's College, Blackburn to meet executives and apprentices from the food and consumer goods sector.

The Institute for Grocery Distribution (IGD) is a research and training charity that helps the food and grocery industry meet the needs of the public. We worked with them to introduce over five thousand students across the country to hundreds of employees from across the sector as part of their Feeding Britain's Future campaign.

In June this year, we facilitated two-hour workshops at St Mary's College on "The Hidden Job Market" for students in the first year of their level three study. Studies have shown that as many as 70% of jobs are found through informal routes and the session was designed to help prepare them to access those opportunities.

Working directly with employees from IGD's partner organisations, including Steve Murrells, CEO of the Co-operative Group, students were introduced to the idea of networking and heard about the sorts of things they could do to stand out to potential employers. The students also had the chance to hear about a huge range of jobs and quiz the volunteers on the journeys they took to reach them. 95% of the students taking part felt that they were better prepared for the world of work as a result of the session.

The wider initiative has included a brilliant range of volunteers, from high profile CEOs such as Andy Clarke of Asda, Mike Coupe of Sainsbury's and Ranjit Singh of 2 Sisters Food Group, to young engineering and IT apprentices from Unilever, McVities and Premier Foods.

CASE STUDY

The Wellcome Trust hosts students in the workplace to understand roles in the science sector and build confidence

The Wellcome Trust and Future First partner to deliver Career Insight Days for young people at state schools in Camden.

Staff from across the Trust participated, including people from communications, research, grants and investments. The event was able to support students with a range of needs – for one school, it focused on students predicted to do well in the sciences, whereas another school selected students whom they believed would benefit from confidence building by interacting with professional adults more broadly. Underlining the importance of promoting careers in STEM subjects to young women, 75 per cent of students were female

The event aimed to increase students' knowledge of the range of roles available in the sector, build their confidence and develop their employability skills. First, students took part in a careers carousel, where professionals described their career pathways.

Students then enjoyed a tour of the workplace. In the afternoon, students participated in a work based challenge to design a science magazine. Members of staff from the Wellcome Trust coached and supported students in a creative activity designed to build confidence and help them to identify their strengths.

95%

of students said that the event made them more confident about working somewhere like the Wellcome Trust in the future – and 100% said that it made them more confident about succeeding in the world of work more generally

95%

agreed that the event improved their knowledge of courses and/or jobs they could do in the future

86%

said that they had developed employability skills that would help them to get a job in the future

CASE STUDY

Inspiring City Role Models

2014/15 was the first year of a two year partnership with the City of London Corporation. The project took City workers back to their old schools in the City's neighbouring boroughs to bring the curriculum to life, running 13 sessions for over 500 students. The programme also signed up 511 City workers to support their old schools across the UK. In 2015/16, we will step up the programme, with 38 sessions planned.

In 2008, Vanessa Vallely founded the business networking site www.wearethecity.com as a vehicle to help city women to connect. She is also a sought-after motivational speaker.

After connecting with Future First, Vanessa attended her first event at Haggerston School in Hackney. She has since been back to her old school twice. First, she participated in a Year 8 assembly, where she spoke to students about starting to build their future now and enhancing their skills and opportunities. The second session was in a Year 11 lesson, feeding her practical experience into the teaching of the Business Studies curriculum. The lesson addressed how to set up a business and start marketing – helping students to prepare for their GCSE exam.



Our Programmes

Future First's Programmes in 2014/15

Our core offer to schools and colleges helps build active, engaged and sustainable alumni communities. To maximise the benefits of these networks, we also design and implement structured programmes to target a range of objectives depending on students' specific needs – from boosting the motivation of struggling students to stretching the most academically gifted.

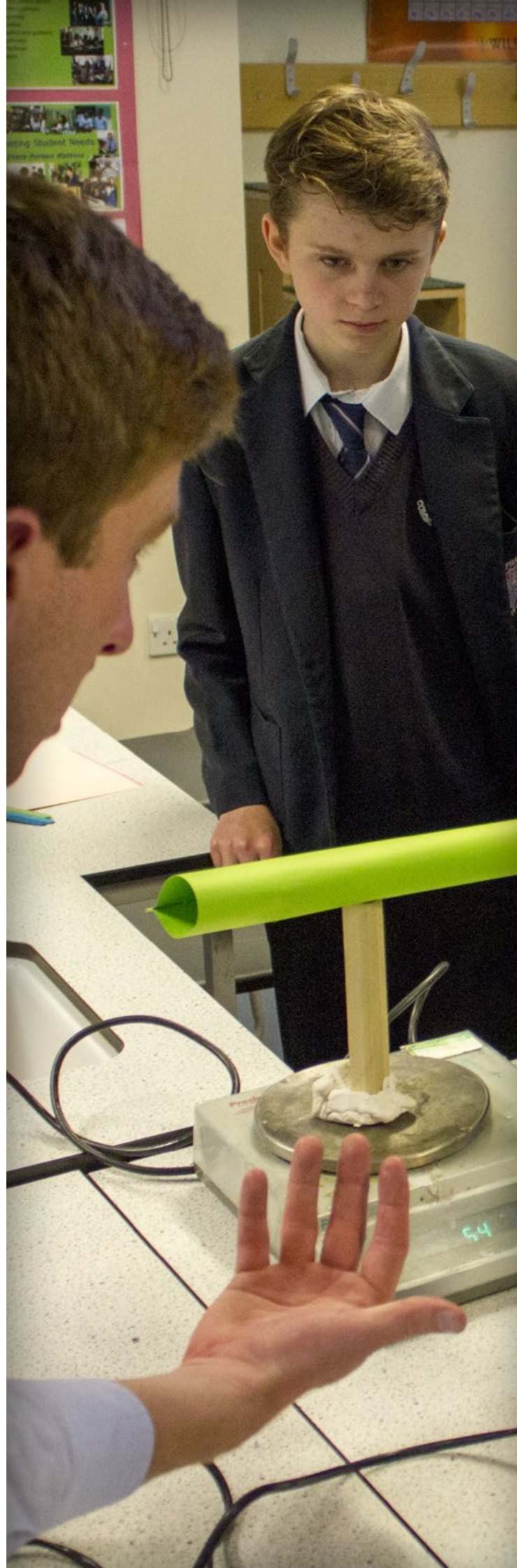
We share these innovations across our network through support from alumni officers, good practice guides and events, or – where schools want us to – delivering the programmes ourselves.

Alumni in the Curriculum

We're particularly excited about the growth of our new 'Alumni in the Curriculum' programme, which was launched this year. This sees former students return to their old classrooms to 'co-teach' elements of the curriculum related to their jobs. Over the last year, we've supported a BBC journalist to teach an English lesson on bias in reporting, an aeronautical engineer to deliver a session on 'thrust' in Physics and a UN diplomat to deliver part of the international relations unit of an A-Level Politics class, all at their old schools.

This strand has been developed so that alumni can support teachers to bring the curriculum to life and engage students by showing the practical application of learning. We have commissioned a full evaluation of the impact of this programme conducted by the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby. We're grateful to the Commercial Education Trust who funded this work. Due to be published early in 2016, the report notes that

**“...there is evidence of
impact in all key areas”**





CASE STUDY

Alumni in the Curriculum at Felpham Community College, West Sussex

Since 2013, Felpham has been working with Future First to expand its alumni network and invite former students in to share their knowledge and experience. Felpham wished to boost the engagement of Year 9 students in their science lessons by involving alumni with real, practical experience of applying scientific learning in their careers. This focus on science through alumni engagement also chimes with growing calls from businesses and government to upskill students in STEM subjects.

The first week saw a visit from Victoria, an interior trim planner at Rolls Royce. During the session, students looked at the materials science which Victoria uses in her job on a daily basis. The students had the opportunity to explore areas such as product testing by conducting 'elongation tests' on sample materials. Another example of an instantly relatable role model was Nick. He is currently studying Mechanical Engineering at university, and as such, was only a few years older than the students. He wasn't particularly confident in maths and physics at school, but when he realised he needed those subjects to be an engineer, it made him focus and he started working harder. Nick's lesson focused on energy transfers, and various stations were set up around the classroom, each with a different experiment. Nick brought in a model steam engine to show how energy transfers, demonstrating the practical application of scientific theory.

'I learned much more about engineering and what it had to offer'

Year 9 student, Felpham Community College

'The students loved him as he was similar in age...He demonstrated that science is used in a wide range of jobs and made the students think carefully about their future career paths'.

Chris, Physics teacher, Felpham Community College

E-mentoring

This year, we've created a more targeted e-mentoring programme than ever before. In combination with other interventions, e-mentoring uses alumni to boost the confidence, resilience, and skills of students. Schools select students who may benefit and identify specific areas for development. The programme then links them up with pre-screened and selected alumni who offer practical advice, coaching and support through a secure online platform.

E-mentoring allows alumni to play a regular, motivational and inspirational role in a student's life, even if they've moved away to another part of the country. We've found some students are also much more confident communicating via email. This is particularly important when trying to encourage less confident students to really engage with what the alumni have to offer.



Alli and Kaydie won awards for best industry mentor and mentee of the year respectively

CASE STUDY

E-Mentoring at St James School, Devon

St James is a growing 11-16 comprehensive in Devon, with approximately 695 students. After a highly successful year in 2014, they have continued to work with Future First to grow and gain value from their alumni network, which now numbers over 350 former students. Over the past year, St James embarked on an e-mentoring scheme targeting pupil premium students to motivate and inspire them about life at school and beyond, as well as providing study advice and revision tips.

In combination with other measures, e-mentoring has proved instrumental in giving Year 10 Kaydie the extra confidence and motivation to boost her grades. She has been more focused leading into exams. After talking through options with her mentor, Alli, Kaydie is now on track to go to college.

Alli and Kaydie were both nominated for Brightside Mentoring Awards. Brightside is the nationwide

charity whose technology underpins such mentoring relationships. Alli and Kaydie won awards for best industry mentor and mentee of the year respectively – a fantastic testament to the supportive relationship they developed over the year.

“It targets students where a couple of small interventions could really make a big difference”

Steve Farmer, teacher, St James School

“Before, I was not looking forward to college, I thought ‘I don’t really wanna go’, but Alli’s made me realise it will help a lot”

Kaydie, Year 10, St James School



Building Motivation

Building Motivation is one of the key strands of Future First's alumni events curriculum. During Spring 2015, Future First worked in five schools to pilot a new three-session intervention programme for Year 10 students. These were designed to help develop motivation by introducing students to a range of successful and relatable role models. Each session was designed to tackle a barrier that may have been holding individual students back.

CASE STUDY

Building Motivation at Wellfield High School, Lancashire

Wellfield High School is a secondary school in Leyland for 11-16 year olds and has been building an alumni network with the support of Future First since September 2014. Following a period in special measures, exam results have improved remarkably, but raising aspirations remains a key challenge for the school. The school leadership selected 30 Year 10 students who were lacking in confidence to take part in Future First's Building Motivation programme.

Through a structured programme of three workshops, students were exposed to a range of inspirational alumni. Co-designed with teachers in the school, the programme also responded to local needs. For example, the school wanted students to hear from alumni from BAE Systems – the largest local employer – as well as someone who had pursued psychology as a career path, as several of the students had expressed an interest in that field.

In the first of the three sessions, small groups of students participated in an interactive hour-long workshop in which they heard from alumni in a broad range of roles and from different sectors. In the second, students heard from alumni volunteers about how both good and bad grades can impact on

future education and employment opportunities. The last session saw small groups of students work with an alumni volunteer who helped them to create their own 'Picture of Me'. Working through a list of prompt questions, alumni volunteers guided the students into reflecting on the talents and achievements they already have and how they can continue to develop them in the future.

As a result of the sessions, 93 per cent of students committed to working harder in their lessons. Comparing pre- and post-programme data....

50%

Half of the students who'd stated that they didn't think Maths was relevant to their futures before the programme started had changed their mind by the end

100%

Every single student who'd said the same of English before they started had shifted their opinion by the end.

'I learnt that hard work pays off. I need to believe more in myself and to work harder'

Eve, Year 10 student

"I learnt that you have to take chances and it's good to come out of your comfort zone"

Tori, Year 10 Student

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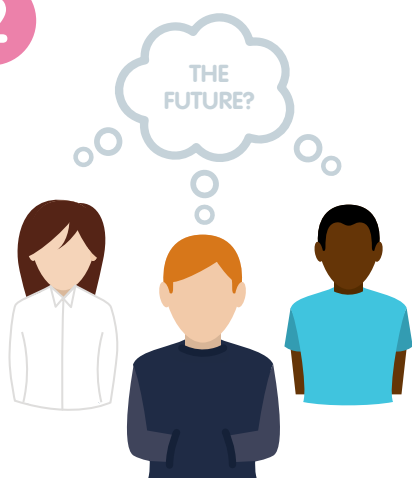


SESSION ONE

'People like me are successful'

In this session, students were introduced to highly successful former students for the first time, from the Head of Typhon Final Assembly at local employer BAE systems, to an asset manager at a consulting firm. The aim of this session was for students to leave secure in the knowledge that students from their school went on to be a great success.

2



SESSION TWO

'What I am doing in school today will help shape my tomorrow.'

This session built on the first by exploring the connection between school work and future success. Students heard from alumni about how the transferable skills they had developed at school were related to what they were doing now. The objective of this session was to deepen students' appreciation of the relevance and value of their school work in order to increase their motivation. Alumni taking part had taken very different routes since leaving Wellfield – one was currently studying psychotherapy at university, another had gone straight from school into employment, whilst a third studied for a degree at the Open University later in life - so they were able to speak about the importance of education from a range of different perspectives.

3



SESSION THREE

'I now know that I can be successful.'

The programme culminated in a session designed to grow students' confidence about their own wide range of talents and strengths, building on their understanding of transferable skills from session two. Volunteers, including a Managing Director and a returning volunteer from BAE, coached students through a reflective activity that helped to develop their self-efficacy and celebrate their successes.

Impact



83% of students leave alumni events more confident 'people like me' can be successful



For 78% of students, events increased their understanding of how school might help them to get jobs in the future



Alumni events improved confidence about succeeding in the world of work for three quarters of students



85% of students participating in a lesson involving alumni found it more or much more interesting than a regular lesson



88% of students felt that alumni lessons helped them to better understand how learning in school is connected to the real world



Students who attended the Future First sessions made better progress in the core subjects than their non-participating peers

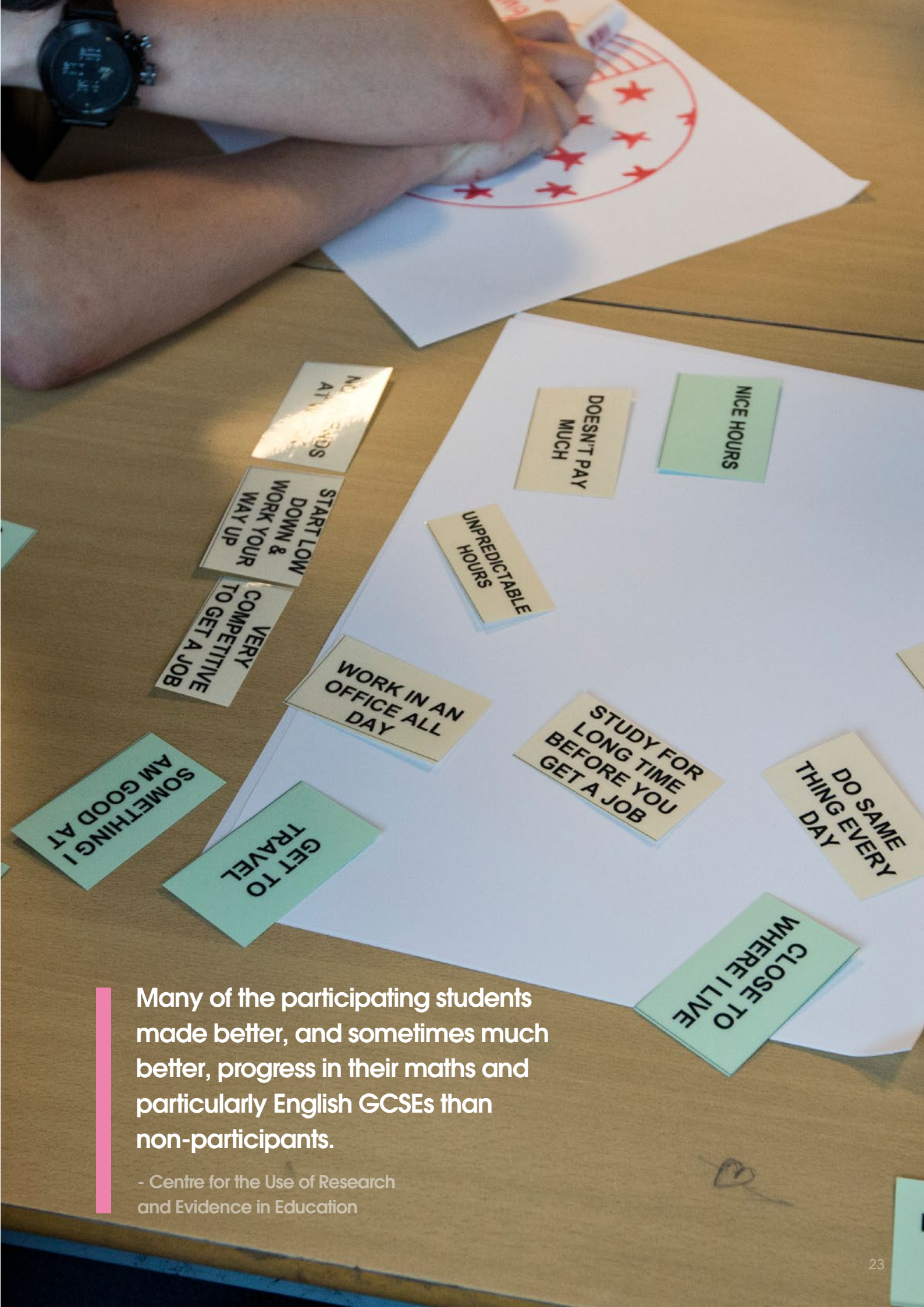
Academic research from across the world shows that increasing students' understanding of how their schoolwork links to their future and improving confidence in their own potential can have a key impact on their grades. Alumni help students to improve their motivation, confidence and achievements whilst at school, as well as the skills and opportunities to achieve more in the future. We evaluate our impact on this basis.

We work closely with schools to understand and test the impact of alumni interventions. We use feedback from students, school and college staff, alumni and employers, where appropriate, to measure perceptions and responses to programmes. We also work with schools to understand the effectiveness of interventions for individuals, tested against objectives set, for example in terms of confidence, motivation, skills development and achievement.

For the first time, we worked with an external evaluator this year to analyse the impact of our programmes. We commissioned the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE) to evaluate our 'Building Motivation' programme in 2013/14. The programme was focused on a target group of 25 schools in areas of great need, determined by entitlement to Free School Meals. The programme involved six alumni events in each of the schools, targeted at students currently studying for their GCSEs.

The evaluation was consistent with our own evidence and showed that:

- **"Participation in the programme was linked to improvements in confidence and motivation, better understanding of post -16 opportunities and enhanced aspirations**
- **Participating students were able to develop important skills, essential both for their studies (time-keeping and revision techniques) and their future life (CV writing and similar)**



Many of the participating students made better, and sometimes much better, progress in their maths and particularly English GCSEs than non-participants.

- Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education

The Future

This year has been successful in increasing our schools' engagement with their alumni, developing our organisational sustainability, and growing our understanding of what works. We are proud of what we have achieved so far, but we've also made time to reflect on the huge task remaining if we are to achieve our vision of a thriving, engaged alumni community in every state school and college. Over the coming year we will refresh our strategy to accelerate our achievements, addressing the themes and challenges set out here.

Growth

At a time when we have increased prices to better reflect our costs, we have achieved stability in the numbers of participating schools and colleges, cementing our viability as an organisation. With our simple objective comes a simple imperative - we need to grow the numbers of schools and colleges with an alumni network year on year. The challenge for our future strategy is therefore to accelerate the growth of alumni networks nationwide.

In order to increase the pace, we need a clear approach to growth within nations and regions, as well as considering new opportunities, such as the potential to exploit new and emerging models in the state sector, including groups and families of schools. We have already begun to do this, but are seeking to pick up the pace in 2015/16. We will look to collaborate more with others to achieve this.

Quality remains a core principle for Future First. In expanding our own network, we must ensure that our delivery and support models can adjust flexibly and effectively to that expansion whilst maintaining high quality.

Increasing depth and consistency

One of the key strengths of our model for building alumni networks with schools and colleges is the legacy approach. Ongoing recruitment of leavers is a core component, meaning that young people who have benefitted from alumni programmes whilst at school or college, then become the next generation of alumni to share their knowledge, skills and advice. Consistent engagement and mobilisation of recruited alumni, however, remain a challenge. This year engagement has strengthened, with 84 per cent of schools and colleges consistently communicating with their alumni, an increase of nine percent against last year. However, we need to increase the activity and mobilisation rates of some networks, and this will be a key focus for the year ahead.

Future First benefits from a range of strong partnerships, including with employers. These partnerships add depth, quality and choice to alumni networks. Over the coming year, we will consider how best to enhance, expand and derive even more value from employer relationships for the benefit of students.



Sustainability

In April 2014, 33 per cent of our schools paid to work with us and by the end of 2014/5, 98 per cent of our schools paid. As such, we've taken the first steps towards a much more sustainable model. In doing so, we've successfully more than doubled the proportion of our revenue from traded income and plan to do so again within the next two years so that we're no longer so reliant on grants and donations. By the end of 2017/18, we aim to raise at least 90 per cent of our income from traded services, with our fundraising function focusing on innovation from then on.

Evaluation and impact

We have a good track record of using feedback to refine, improve and expand our offer. This year, evaluation by CUREE has provided the first step in more rigorous evaluation of outcomes, focused on the difference we can make to the confidence, skills, attainment and destinations of students. Over the coming year, we will continue working with the International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby to evaluate our Alumni in the Curriculum programme and will extend our efforts to develop models for measuring impact on an ongoing basis throughout our network.

Innovation

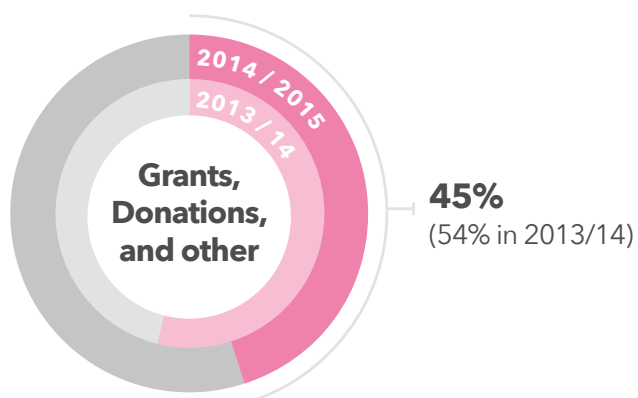
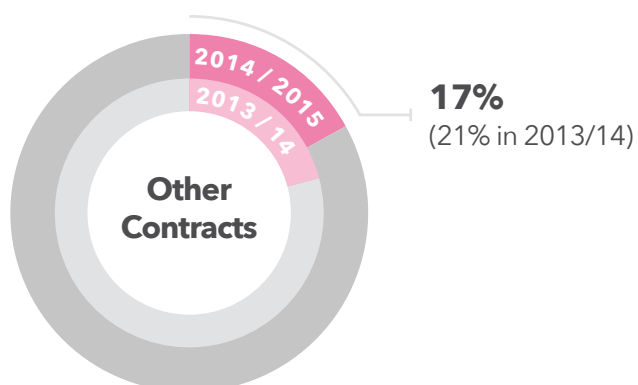
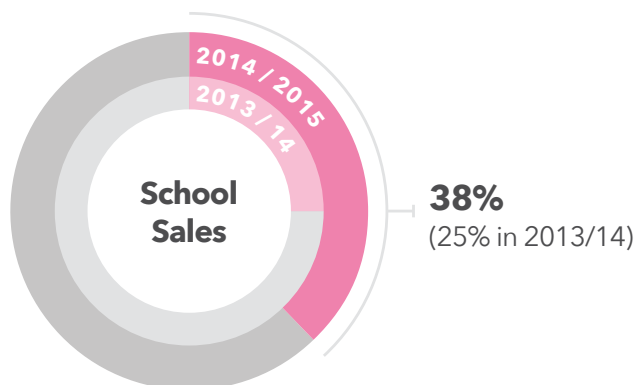
In addition to providing intensive commissioned interventions, our programmes continue to provide the opportunity to test and refine methods of motivating, skilling and connecting students to opportunities. At an organisational level, we will build on innovation over the past year, by using our upgraded online platform to help schools and colleges to utilise their networks effectively. Similarly, organisationally, we will build new engagement techniques to support alumni recruitment and expansion of membership.

The Movement

We aim to lead a national movement so that students in every state school and college across the country can benefit from alumni engagement. Our role in creating this change has and will continue to evolve over time. As we refine our organisational strategy over the next 12 months, we aim to put our mission first - not our organisation. We look forward to working with more groups of schools and more partners to build momentum towards our goal of a thriving, engaged alumni community in every school and college.



Finance



Income in 2014/15

For every £1 spent, approximately 85p goes to programme delivery. Approximately 15p goes to fundraising and governance .

Finances

Total income: £879,658

Total expenditure: £879,188*

*excludes the amortisation of intellectual property assets from recent merger into single charity

% of schools paying for membership (start of year):



Supporters and Governance



Ashurst LLP
Barclays Bank PLC
Citi Foundation
Kettle Foods
Rothschild
Simmons & Simmons

Sir James Knott Trust
The Key
UBS
Wellcome Trust
Wixamtree Trust
ZING

Advisory Council

Dr Sarabajaya Kumar
 Teaching Fellow at LSE

David Laws
 Former Minister for Schools

Fiona Millar
 Education Campaigner and Journalist

Estelle Morris, Baroness Morris of Yardley
 Former Secretary of State for Education

Chloe Smith
 Conservative MP for Norwich North

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