

HEARING FROM FORMER
STUDENTS MADE ME ...
-think that, that could be me one
day.
-That anything is possible.

LA SAINTE UNION
#gobackgweback

Annual Review 2013-14



“I’ve been impressed by Future First’s potential to inspire and motivate young people in our schools and colleges, and their achievements in such a short space of time - signing up over 90,000 alumni across the country to support their old schools and colleges.

As Schools Minister, I know the challenge that schools and colleges face in inspiring young people who think that ‘people like me’ don’t go on to be successful in life. Future First’s valuable contribution shows them that they can.

Alumni networks are a key asset for schools, colleges and organisations which want to make sure that we break the link in this country between a young person’s achievements and their parents’ income.”

The Rt Hon David Laws MP, Schools Minister

Contents

Letter from the Managing Director	4
Where We Are	6
Our Programmes	8
The Change We Make	10
Case Study 1: Transforming Confidence – Building Motivation	12
Case Study 2: Work Experience with an MP	16
Case Study 3: Motivating Khalid	18
Best Practice	22
Our Volunteers	24
Employers Programme	25
What We’ve Learnt	26
Our Plans for the Future	28
Our Supporters	30

Letter from the Managing Director

More than 10 million people across the country would be willing to support young people at their old state school or college. Most of them are never asked. Future First is changing that.

The end of this academic year brings with it our fifth birthday and a chance to reflect on our progress, as well as everything we still have to do to fulfil our vision that every state school and college has a thriving, engaged alumni community.

We've now signed up over 90,000 people to stay part of their old school's community. More than 90% of our schools had kept no records of their former students before and had no easy way even to stay in touch with this year's leavers. Future First has worked with over 500 schools to make sure they never lose those connections again.

We've now signed up over 90,000 people to stay part of their old school's community

More than two thirds of our schools and colleges engaged their network of former students directly this year – using their Future First database to invite former students to return as careers speakers, providers of work experience, mentors and fundraisers. We're delighted to support students at that systemic level, but our in-school events programme has grown significantly too. Over the last year, we tripled the number of careers workshops and assemblies delivered, benefitting more than 24,000 young people across the country. Despite this increase in scale, we successfully maintained high levels of feedback from both students and teachers.

More than three quarters of young people left our sessions saying they wanted to work harder in their next lesson having heard from former students. Four out of five agreed that meeting former students shows that 'people like them' can be successful, which is especially crucial at a time when a quarter of students on free school meals nationwide say that 'people like them' are fundamentally not successful in life. 83% of

our teachers said that they thought our events were more useful than those of other external providers.

One of the other incredibly exciting things we've seen is how these communities become sustainable over the long term. Last year's annual review featured a Year 13 student called Serkan who'd been inspired by a series of alumni workshops. This year he returned as a volunteer himself to share his experiences of studying medicine at a top UK university with GCSE and A-level biology classes.

We aim to lead a national movement so that students in every state school and college across the country can benefit from this type of support. A big step towards that was taken this year when, for the first time ever, the idea of using alumni to support current students was showcased by the Department for Education as an example of best practice in careers education. We're incredibly proud to have seen the number of schools building alumni communities increase from 1% when we started to more than 20% this year. We were absolutely thrilled that the Department also decided to include a case study of our work at Kingsmead School in their recommendations to schools and colleges.

But there's a long way to go – not least because former private school students are still fourteen times as likely to be in touch with their old school compared to their state-educated peers. We're looking forward to changing that and we're massively excited to be able to do so with the support of a new Executive Chair from September. Christine Gilbert CBE is probably best known in her role as Chief Inspector of Ofsted; however, she's also been a Headteacher, Director of Education and Local Authority Chief Executive.

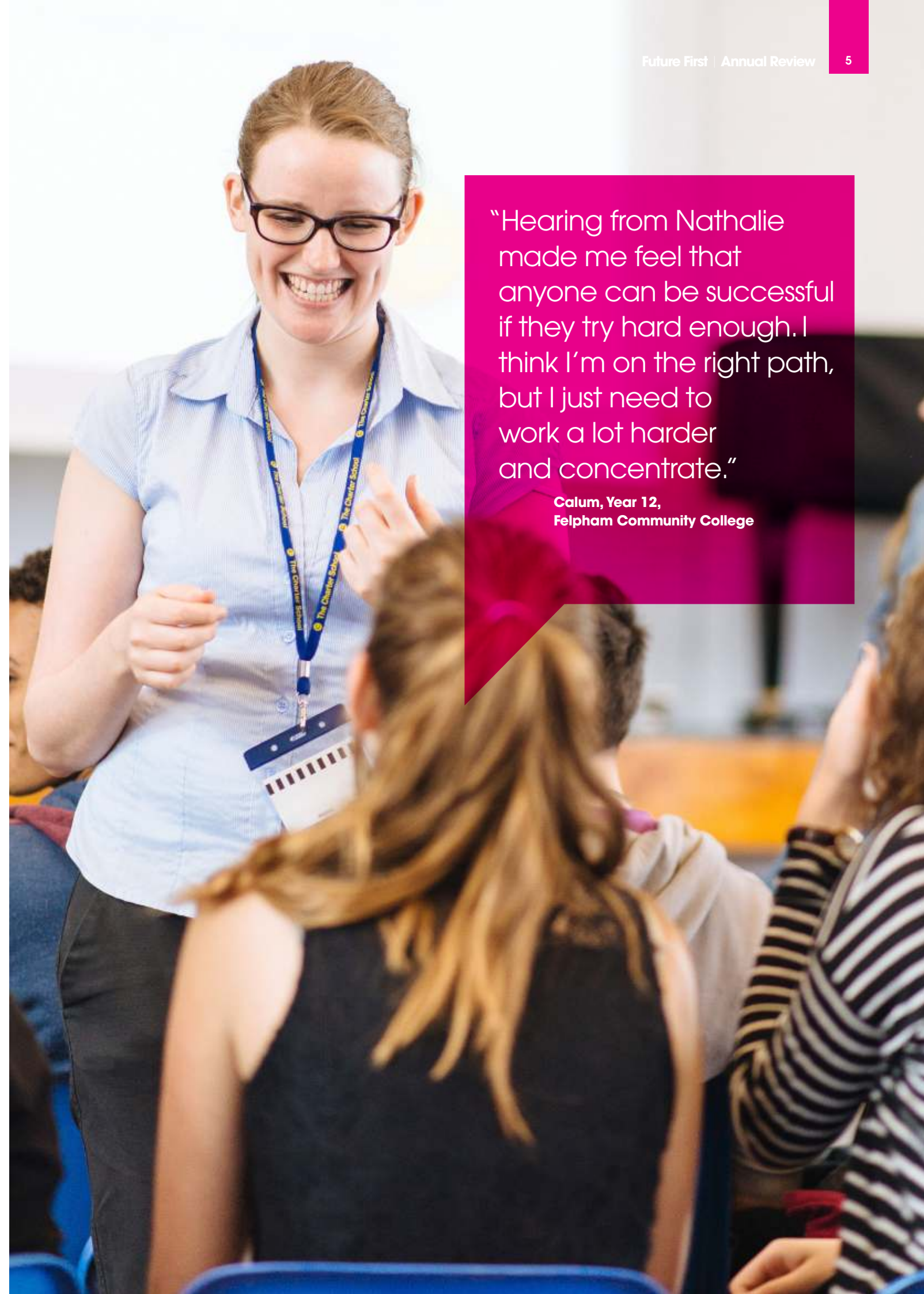
I hope you'll enjoy reading this review of our performance, progress and learnings over the last 12 months.



Alex Shapland-Howes
Managing Director

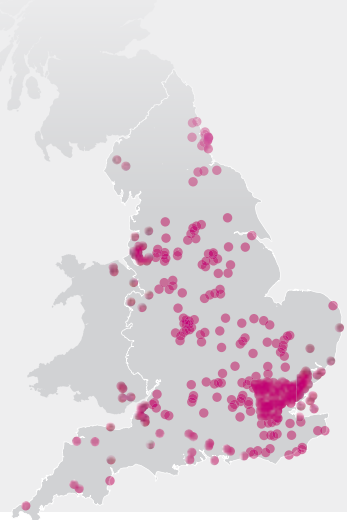
"Hearing from Nathalie made me feel that anyone can be successful if they try hard enough. I think I'm on the right path, but I just need to work a lot harder and concentrate."

Calum, Year 12,
Felpham Community College

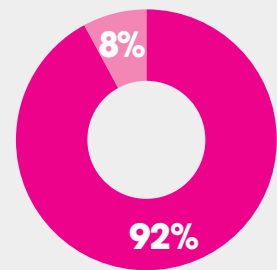


Where We Are

Future First



Reaching Sustainability

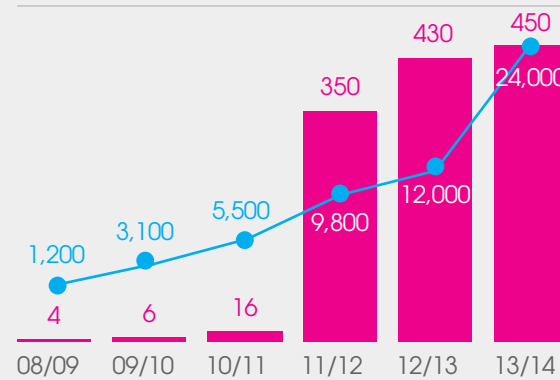


As we enter the academic year 2014/15, 92% of schools are contributing to the cost of the service we provide:

■ Paying
■ Sponsored

This Year

The schools and colleges that benefitted from Future First events had an average of 32% of students on free school meals, compared with a national average of 16%.

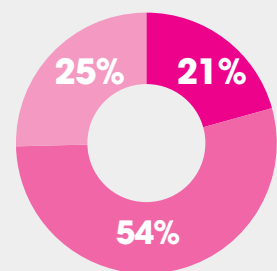


■ Number of schools worked with
■ Number of students worked with

Future First was founded in 2009, since then, we have:

- Worked with over **500** schools and colleges across England and Wales to help them engage their former students;
- Run inspiring alumni assemblies and workshops with nearly **50,000 current students**;
- Recruited over **90,000 alumni** to support their **old schools**.

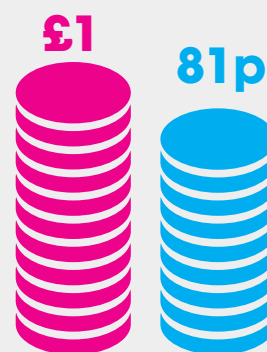
Our Income and Expenditure in 2013/14



■ Sales
■ Contracts and sponsored programming
■ Donations

Total Income: £813,334

For every £1 spent, £0.81 goes to programme delivery (£0.19 goes to fundraising, governance and overheads.)



Total Expenditure: £738,505

During 2013/14, we facilitated

388

alumni workshops in...

143

different schools and colleges with...

24,088

students

Our Programmes

What we do

Future First helps state schools and colleges to build thriving, engaged alumni communities. Former students can have a transformative effect on young people studying today, returning to act as inspirational career role models and mentors, or to offer valuable work experience placements or in-lesson support.

Former students can also support the wider school community to flourish by acting as governors, using their experience of the school and community to shape its future, or by raising funds to support the school to run additional activities and provide further resources.

"It's important that it's Dagenham people just like the kids. No airs and graces – just ordinary people who have done well. There could not be more powerful role models."

Ian, Lawyer and former student, Robert Clack School

For generations, private schools and universities have seen the value in keeping former students engaged after they graduate. These alumni have an affinity with the young people who follow in their footsteps – they are part of the same lasting community. Now, thanks to Future First, state schools and colleges can systematically engage with their former students both easily and affordably.

"The influence of former students has been invaluable. They have been able to inform and inspire current students - aspirations are without a doubt being raised."

Chris Eley, KS4 Attainment Manager, Lamas School and Sports College

Future First helps schools and colleges to keep in touch with every one of their leavers and reconnect with their former students who left in years gone by. We work together to harness their knowledge, skills and talents to inspire, advise and motivate current students.

How we do it



Step 1

Sign up all final year students to stay in touch with the school after they leave



Step 2

Encourage former students who left over the years and lost touch with the school to sign up via press, social media, partnerships with employers and universities, as well as our annual Back to School Week campaign



Step 3

Send communications over the course of the year to keep alumni engaged with their school or college



Step 4

Track progression routes and destinations of former students as their lives and careers progress



Step 5

Mobilise the alumni network to support current students by bringing them back into school as inspirational speakers or asking them to provide mentoring, work experience and much more to current students

Why we do it

Social mobility in the UK is lower than in any other OECD country, with the highest correlation between parental earnings and those of their children. This lack of social mobility is fundamentally unfair (OECD, 2010).

Nearly half of all state school students don't know anyone in a job they'd like to do and more than a quarter of young people from the poorest backgrounds believe that 'people like them' don't succeed in life, according to Prince's Trust research (2011). The Institute of Education's recent review shows that young people's perception of their ability, their expectations of future success, and the extent to which they value an activity influence their motivation. Increased motivation is shown to lead to improved educational outcomes (IoE, 2013).

This year, the DfE guidance to schools held up alumni networks as an example of best practice in careers education and inspiration. Relatable role models from the local community can help students studying at the UK's schools and colleges see that 'people like them' really do succeed in a huge range of ways.

How it makes a difference

Our 'enabling' approach means that schools can use Future First services in a variety of ways and to meet a range of needs, specific to their particular institutional context. For some, the greatest need is for a more

diverse range of work experience placements for current students, for others, workshops and mentoring for low-confidence students are the top priority and some schools and colleges are looking to raise funds for much needed extra-curricular activities. 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 – sustainability and relatability. 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. 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. They know and understand the local community and the school.

By changing young people's perception of what 'people like them' are capable of achieving, we help them to expect more from themselves. This reduces the impact of negative localised identities and stereotypes on educational attainment and self-perception, with the potential to increase both employability and life satisfaction.

Future First's definition of success is not limited to professional careers, but includes every former student who finds fulfilment in their job or further or higher education course.

The support that alumni offer:

Role Models



Work Experience



Mentors



Governors



Volunteers



Donors



The Change We Make

A 2009 study showed that there is a severe shortage of role models in state schools, leading to reduced engagement in the classroom.

National Centre for Social Research study, 2009

Over
90,000

adults have signed up to support students at their old state school through Future First, representing an incredible range of role models

According to the Institute of Education, increasing young people's perception of their ability, their expectations of future success, and the extent to which they value an activity influence their motivation, leading to improved academic outcomes.



Young adults who have 'four or more employer contacts' while at school are five times less likely to be NEET than those who have no involvement.

Education and Employers Taskforce, 2012

Over
25,000

young people benefitted from employer contacts due to Future First this year.



Nearly **70%** of students leave FF events more confident than they can succeed in the world of work. All Future First sessions emphasise the value of the skills young people are developing in and out of school.

The It's About Work report states that explaining the relevance of learning can increase student motivation.

The Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning, 2013

After hearing from alumni in Future First-facilitated events,

75% of students say that they want to work "harder" or "much harder" in school.



34% of teachers lack confidence in the current careers services provided by the schools in which they teach.

Paton, G., 2013

83% of teachers who had used external providers before thought our events were 'more useful' or 'much more useful' than those of other external providers (the remaining 17% said they were 'about the same').



A 2008 study found that schools in less advantaged communities lacked the employer links necessary to identify high quality work experience placements for their students.

Hatcher and Le Gallais, 2008

Over 1,000 students gained access to work insight or work experience placements through alumni links and Future First's Employers Programme this year. Over 90% of them said that they felt 'more confident' or 'much more confident' that they could work in similar places in the future thanks to the placement.



44% of state school alumni think that people from their school are successful, compared with 81% of private school alumni

Future First & You Gov Polling, 2014

After attending one of our in-school alumni events,

79% of students agree that, "meeting former students shows that people like me can be successful."

The Nothing in Common report compared the jobs that 11,000 teenagers aspire to do in the future with the projected list of 135 million new and replacement jobs predicted to emerge over the next decade. It found that the two have nothing in common.

Mann, Dr A., 2013

At Future First events this year,

1,133 former students have shared up to date information about the job market, leading to over 16,000 students saying that they feel more informed about potential future jobs and courses.



Case Study:

Transforming Confidence – Building Motivation

Background

Harris Academy Bermondsey is a secondary school in Southwark for girls aged 11-16. It is situated in an ethnically and culturally diverse community. More than two thirds of students receive free school meals. The school identified a group of female students who were 'middling' academically. They were lacking in confidence and did not have many positive messages about further study and university at home.

The Programme

Teachers observed a need to improve students' awareness of their future options and to continue to build their motivation to develop academically. Future First worked with the teachers to develop a three session intervention with two key objectives:

1. Build the students' knowledge of future pathways;
2. Increase students' motivation in school.

The Research

According to the Institute of Education, young people's perception of their ability, their expectations of future success, and the extent to which they value an activity influence their motivation. Increased motivation leads to improved academic outcomes.



1. People Like Us Assembly

Session Objectives:

- Students increase knowledge of range of possible future pathways.
- Students start to believe that 'people like them' succeed in a range of different careers.

Alumni

- Sephora - Business Development Assistant
- Dominique - Student at University College Birmingham
- Julie - Sales Team Leader
- Sophie - Finance Manager
- Antoinette - HR Advisor at BBC
- Petrina - IT Applications Specialist

Session Overview:

An interactive panel discussion where students heard about alumni jobs and their chosen pathway into these jobs. The panel discussion was followed by a short Q&A session where students were able to ask the alumni questions.

The session ended with students hearing the one piece of advice alumni would give their 15 year old self.

Student Journey

I believe that people like me can be successful in work.



2. Future Options Workshop

Session Objectives:

- Students start to consider which post-16 pathways might work for them.
- Students see they can determine their own future pathway by taking positive decisions, developing their skills and working hard in school.
- Students start to think that university is a viable option post 18.

Alumni

- Funmi - Mechanical Engineer
- Debbie - Compliance Director
- Halima - Student at Brunel University
- Antoinette - HR Advisor at the BBC

Session Overview:

A short panel discussion to introduce students to the different alumni jobs and courses. This was followed by a carousel, where students got to hear about the chosen pathway and how alumni made their decisions about which pathway, job or course was right for them, as well as advice about how they would do things differently if they had another chance. Alumni shared how not going or going to university had impacted their progress.

Student Journey

I understand more about the choices available to me and feel better equipped to make decisions about my future.



3. Skills Workshop

Session Objectives:

- Students learn about the idea of 'transferable' skills.
- Students identify the skills and talents they already have and others they can develop.

Alumni

- Antoinette - HR Advisor at the BBC
- Halima - Student at Brunel University
- Dominique - Student at University College Birmingham

Session Overview:

The session began with a group discussion on skills and strengths, identifying how students were developing these within education. This was followed by alumni sharing their job or course and the key duties and skills needed. The session ended with alumni acting as coaches, working with groups of students to identify their skills, hobbies and interests, as well as dreams and aspirations.

Student Journey

I believe that I already have many of the skills I'll need in my chosen future path and have identified ways to develop others.



The Change We Made

The girls spoke openly about how their confidence and motivation had changed as a result of meeting former students. Victoria, Year 10, said, "they motivated me and inspired me. They kind of gave me the confidence I never had and made me serious about my future."

This sense of increased motivation to work hard at school was reiterated by other students. Every single student said they would work harder as a result of the programme, with 74% saying they would work "much harder".

Laysani, Year 10, who didn't have a clear sense of what her future would look like before the programme, said that she's now thinking of doing Maths, Economics or Politics at university, with the hope of working in government or running a business in the future. She said that meeting former students "motivated me to work hard in school (and) it changed my opinion on education. It made me realise all the opportunities for the future".

Some students went further still, saying that this newfound positive attitude was actually starting to show through in their school grades. Jessica, Year 10, spoke about the programme changing her behaviour. Over the course of the sessions, she decided that she wants to go on to study Psychology at university. Meeting someone who had followed a similar path, who could tell her about what it was really like and what steps she could take to get there was key. She said that knowing what she needed to do to be successful in the future "has changed my behaviour because now I concentrate more to get good grades so that I can get the GCSEs to go to a good college and then university...I know that I can do it!"

"These sessions have played a critical part in the wider work that the Academy is doing to foster positive attitudes towards learning. The girls involved now have a real determination to do well in their GCSEs so that they can follow the many pathways open to them, including going to university. It was lovely to see the girls engaging so much during the Future First sessions as this does not always happen, particularly when they are put in unfamiliar settings."

Jessica Rasdell
Harris Academy Bermondsey



"There was a twinkle in their eye when they heard that we had gone to their school. The fact that the alumni were successful female role models from a similar ethnic background made us more relatable."

Antoinette Page, former student
now working in HR at the BBC

"Many of the girls did not know some of these jobs existed and it has definitely opened up their eyes to the possibilities."

Jessica Rasdell, Teacher,
Harris Academy Bermondsey

"There has been a change for me because I'm more serious and I've been revising more and getting better grades."

Victoria, GCSE student

Case Study:

Work Experience with an MP

Background

Darlington School of Maths and Science is a secondary school for students aged 11-16 in Darlington, County Durham. 44.4% of students receive free school meals. The school selected students on the 'C/D borderline' at GCSE level, who were less engaged with school, to benefit from a programme of workshops and work experience.

The Programme

Future First worked with Darlington School of Maths and Science to develop a structured programme, with JP Morgan funding, to support their GCSE students. The programme offered a cohort of GCSE students access to a series of alumni careers workshops and work experience placements with former students to give them the confidence and motivation to succeed in their GCSEs.

The Research

Hatcher and Le Gallais (2008) found that schools in less advantaged communities lacked the employer links necessary to identify high quality work experience placements for their students.

George and Liam

Liam and George benefitted from workshops and the offer of a week's work experience placement with former student Alex Cunningham MP during the summer of 2014.

Year 10 student, George, was thinking about a career in the army in the future, in a leadership position. He was looking forward to learning more about how to handle politics and develop leadership skills because he recognised that being in a senior position in the army was "a very political job". George had had one work experience placement before, but it was "just in an army shop."

Liam, Year 11, thought that he'd like to work in "politics, journalism or computers" but wasn't really sure which one yet. He had been involved in an anti-smoking campaign in the past, so was already exploring the idea of getting into politics or journalism, but didn't feel confident that it was something he could actually do.

The Work Experience

George and Liam spent the week shadowing Alex as he attended meetings and events, and learning how to communicate with constituents. They both felt that learning to communicate with different audiences, from CEOs to constituents, was a skill that they would take with them into any job they do in the future. Liam said, "Alex and his staff were really good at teaching us about how to write a formal letter. It's not something I'd learned properly, in a practical way, before."

"I didn't think that getting work experience with an MP was something that was open to me – it's not something I would have done without my school keeping in touch with Alex."

George, Year 10, DSMS

Liam particularly loved his experience of shadowing Alex on a visit to Teeside University. He said, "I loved that because I've never seen people who work in the media in action...I could ask them what it's like to do their jobs and how they got into them. I didn't think I'd ever get that close to a film crew."



"I was apprehensive before starting the work experience, but I'll definitely do this kind of thing again now."

Liam, Year 11

The Change We Made

Liam and George both recognised that they'd learnt new skills, and developed existing ones, that they would take with them no matter what they go on to do in the future. Liam said, "The main things I learnt were communication and people skills. Alex has to be so good with people...it will be really useful for my career."

Liam really enjoyed meeting the range of former DSMS students now doing "amazing things" through the programme of in-school workshops. The experience had given him added confidence: "You saw that you can basically do anything – I hadn't really thought about it. It was so interesting to see the variety of things that people were doing after leaving DSMS."

The placement also broke down some of their preconceptions about the world of politics. They both also felt that the idea of entering a career in politics

was much less intimidating following their experiences. George was surprised, "It wasn't about writing big speeches and telling people what to do. Alex works really hard to help constituents solve their problems and his staff are just normal people who want to help, not high-powered speech writers." He said that jobs in politics were much more appealing when you realise it isn't about knowing everything about politics but about wanting to help people.

Liam was pleased to discover that you didn't need to take a Politics degree and then go straight into a job in Westminster to become an MP. Alex told him that he had been a journalist first and told Liam lots about the different routes into being an MP over the course of the week.

Both students left confident they had built up a relationship with Alex that meant that they might be able to call on him for help in the future.

Case Study:

Case Study: Motivating Khalid

Background

Morpeth School is a large secondary in inner-city London. The majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 75% speak English as an additional language. 44% of students receive free school meals.

The Programme

The school selected a mixed-ability group of GCSE students, who had the potential to do well but who were showing lower levels of motivation than other students. Thanks to funding from the City of London Corporation, Future First was able to design and deliver a programme of four sessions that aimed to:

- Show students the value of working hard in school;
- Improve students' motivation to do so in their curriculum lessons;
- Offer practical tools to support students as they consider their next steps.

The Research

A National Centre for Social Research study (2009) showed that there is a severe shortage of role models in state schools, leading to reduced engagement in the classroom, and the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning stated that explaining the relevance of learning can increase student motivation.

Khalid

Khalid was one of the students chosen to participate. He described himself as, "a bit chatty, a bit cheeky" at school. Before the workshops, he said that he enjoyed history and law but he wasn't sure what he was going to do in the future. His teachers spoke about him fondly – he was a student who to them always had clear academic potential but needed to make more effort. His English teacher, Miss McNeill, described him as being cognitively strong, with good literacy skills. However, he had always been, "difficult to get homework out of."

1. Careers Carousel

Objectives:

- Students show increased knowledge of the range of possible future pathways
- Students start to believe that 'people like them' succeed in a range of different careers
- Students start to develop soft skills

Alumni

- Jasmine - Design Manager
- Naima - English Literature student

Session Overview:

A short panel discussion to introduce students to the different alumni jobs and courses. The panel was followed by a carousel, where students got to hear about how the alumni decided which pathway, job or course was right for them, along with anything they wish that they'd done differently during their study and career pathways. Students encouraged to shake alumni hands and introduce themselves as they rotated.

Student Journey

I feel confident about my future having heard that people like me go on to all types of success.



2. The Importance of Maths and English Workshop

Objectives:

- Students ascribe a higher value to Maths and English qualifications
- Students leave with an increased belief that they too can achieve in their Maths and English GCSEs

Alumni

- Shalina – MBA student
- Luke – Solicitor

Session Overview:

Extended structured discussion, where former students are encouraged to share their experience of Maths and English GCSEs, along with how both those qualifications have helped since school and any regrets they have surrounding the qualifications, for example not securing a pass mark the first time. This was followed by a whole group debate on the importance of GCSEs, with students and alumni inputting to discussion. Session finishes with each former student offering one piece of related advice.

Student Journey

I feel more motivated to work hard to get good GCSEs.



3. Next Steps Workshop

Objectives:

- Students develop self-reflection skills
- Students learn how to write an effective college application based on their personal strengths
- Students leave with plan for or completed personal statement

Alumni

- Jack – Product Manager

Session Overview:

Short presentation by alumnus on his career achievements, including the ways he's had to 'brand' (describe) himself and his skills to progress. Future First facilitator leads an exercise designed to help students to identify the skills they already have. Students then identify courses they're interested in from prospectuses, and create a collage of these surrounded by necessary skills and qualifications. Students are supported to link their skills to those identified in the prospectuses.

Student Journey

I started to identify my skills and how they relate to future education and work options.



4. Mentoring Carousel

Objectives:

- Students leave with a completed application for further education or training and a better understanding of how to perform successfully at interview
- Students leave equipped to make decisions about the next steps that lie ahead of them

Alumni

- Luke – Solicitor
- Joynul – SOAS student
- Mahmuda – Executive Assistant
- Abdul – Marketing Assistant
- Naima – English student
- Tajah – History student

Session Overview:

Former students set up at various 'surgery' stations around the room including: CV and personal statement writing, interview skills and college course identification. Current students split into groups based on pre-reported needs and join former students at a station for intense and targeted support. Current students given the opportunity to rotate, and former students compliment practical support with partial advice and stories.

Student Journey

I've written a great application and have started to plan my future beyond age 18.



"With the efforts of all the teaching staff at Morpeth combined with programmes like Future First's, we've been so pleased to see Khalid become more and more determined to do well in his exams. He's always been very academically capable, but we've seen him go up from a grade D last year to a B."

Grainne McNeill, Khalid's English Teacher

The Change We Made

As Khalid walked out of one workshop, he turned to Head of Careers, Jackie Hollidge, and said, "that's given me a kick up the bum. I really need to sort myself out."

Khalid really related to the alumni he met, with one in particular making a mark on him: "Luke worked in the law and it sounded like he acted pretty similar (to me) when he was at school and was interested in the same subjects." Khalid also enjoyed hearing from other alumni who spoke about how they'd studied something that they'd enjoyed at university and then moved onto seemingly unrelated careers, including one who had studied humanities and gone on to work at Lloyds TSB. Khalid hadn't realised that type of route existed. Khalid: "Hearing about the subjects they picked made it easier for me to think about what I want to do later on."

The sessions motivated Khalid to start thinking more concretely about the future. After the workshops, he went away and did more research using online resources and a booklet of information Future First staff had given out during the final workshop.

Khalid also received some clear guidance about the grades that he needed to pursue certain pathways and that had a clear impact on his thinking. During the summer term leading up to his GCSE exams, Khalid explained, "Luke said that if you want to do History at university, it really helps to get at least a B in English. I was on a C, so I'm now working really hard to get that B."

His teachers saw evidence of this change of attitude. Miss McNeill observed a change in his attainment that saw him move up a set in English. It also meant that he was entered for a higher level English GCSE paper. She said, "In terms of grades, he's definitely moved up from being on a D grade a year ago to getting Bs in his assessments most recently, so he definitely has progressed over the year and now he's in a group that's not a C/D group, but a higher group that does a higher paper."

She also saw him become more open to taking on board advice from teachers about what he needed to be doing to succeed in his controlled assessments and improving his organisation.

"If I hadn't gone to the sessions, I'd still be confused about what I want to do in the future"

Khalid, GCSE Student



Best Practice

Government recommendation

This year, and for the first time ever, using alumni to support current students has been held up by the DfE as an example of best practice in careers education:

“Alumni or other high achieving individuals can motivate pupils to think beyond their immediate experiences, encouraging them to consider a broader and more ambitious range of future education and career options.”

“Pupils can often relate to successful former students, who can help change their perceptions of what they are capable of achieving.”



Fundraising to increase social mobility

The students of Robert Clack School typically come from backgrounds where they often don't have access to the information and opportunities that they need to get ahead in life.

Ellen Monk, Development Officer at the school, noticed that there was a second challenge for these students as they thought about their futures: many of them couldn't afford the train tickets to look at universities outside of London and so would only apply to those close to where they currently live, if at all. Students were also put off applying to prestigious medicine and law course because they didn't have the support they needed to sit LNAT and BMAT tests.

With support from Future First staff, Robert Clack have so far secured £4,000 from their former students, in a combination of regular direct debits and one-off donations to fund university visits and LNAT and BMAT tests for students who couldn't otherwise afford them.

Alumni supporting teaching in class

Year 12 Business Studies students at Acland Burghley were about to start a six-month project designing and developing their own business idea. Johnny Andreas, Head of Business Studies, invited in Cynthia Akinsanya, a former student who now owns a thriving cupcake business to support the teaching of the unit about writing a business plan. Cynthia was able to draw on her own experiences to guide the students in their studies, consolidating their learning of key terminology and deepening their understanding of the start-up process.

Participating student, Cenk, commented that it helped him to understand “how the concept of business works in the real world as well as the theoretical world.”

Alumni supporting curriculum development

Nicki Phelps from Havering College invited alumni to participate in a huge off-timetable careers day, with a variety of talks, workshops and a careers fair. Many students found inspiration that day, including Kamren who decided to apply for an apprenticeship at PwC following a conversation with former student and PwC consultant, George.

But there was an additional, unexpected benefit of the day. One of the former students who came along to share his experiences, Liam, was studying computer game design at university. By coincidence, the college is launching a new gaming design course in September. They've invited him to come in to help launch the programme, talk to students about why he loves studying game design and to support students in lessons.

Showing students what they can achieve

“The number of Oxbridge students we've had has spiralled as more and more of them have gotten in. Not just Oxbridge, but in other areas as well, where the psychological barriers to getting in were bigger probably than the actual ability. As soon as they saw that a kid who had been at Ashcombe had done it, it spiralled up....alumni help to create a culture of possibility.”

Chris Panting, Deputy Head, The Ashcombe School

Daily inspiration

We provide our partner schools and colleges with inspirational posters of their alumni to showcase to their current students, as they walk the corridors to their next lesson, the amazing range of successes that their students go on to after they leave, helping them to believe that ‘people like them’ really do succeed.

Supporting schools to lead their own alumni engagement

In order to better equip schools and colleges to lead their mobilisation of alumni, we developed a series of webinars and roundtables that brought local teachers together to share new ideas and best practice. It was great to see our ‘champion’ schools and colleges come together with new joiners to discuss how to get the most out of our programme and the exciting ways that former students could best support (including ways even we hadn't thought of!). 100% of attendees said they would love to attend more roundtables across the year.

Our Volunteers

Back to School Week

Back to School Week is a Future First-led national campaign to ask adults from all walks of life to volunteer to support young people in state schools and colleges.

In October 2013, we piloted the campaign for the first time ever in partnership with the i newspaper and the National Union of Students.

We worked with a whole host of top employers and universities across the country to encourage as many of their employees and students to sign up to support their old school as possible.

The Campaign:

Over **5,000** former pupils signed up to reconnect with their old schools and colleges, vastly widening and strengthening the support available for today's students.

Over **3,000** current students benefitted from careers talks from former students of their school.

The NUS and student unions at leading UK universities backed the campaign, calling on their students to sign up through mailings and on-campus events.

Top employers also threw their support behind the campaign, including **the Wellcome Trust, Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Clifford Chance**, asking their staff to sign up to support their old schools and, in many cases, offering them the volunteering hours that would make it possible for them to #gobackgiveback.

Back to School Week's tweets reached over

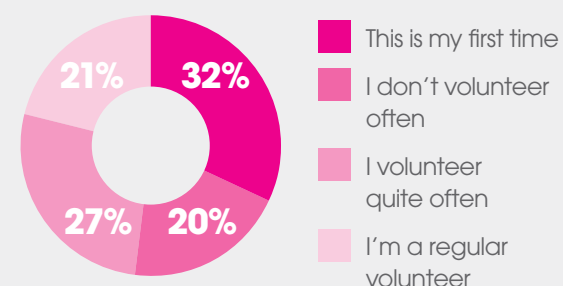
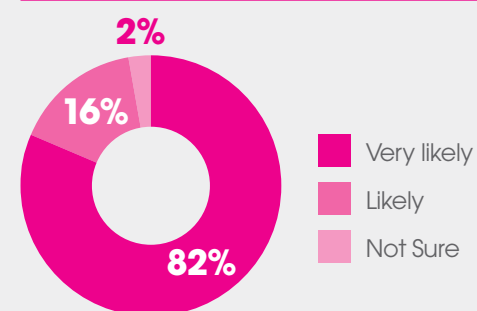
400,000 people.



Across our Programmes

We would like to say a huge thank you to all of the alumni volunteers who've given their time to support students at their old school this year.

One in three of our volunteers have never volunteered anywhere before. 98% of them would volunteer with Future First again.



Employers Programme

What we do

Through our Employers Programme, we link staff from leading UK firms with students from our schools. Our employer events programme provides inspiring opportunities for young people to develop their employability skills while offering meaningful volunteering opportunities for staff. In addition, the programme can provide employers with a diverse talent pipeline for apprenticeships, internships, school leaver positions and entry level jobs. Our employer partners include the law firm, Taylor Wessing, Kettle Foods, the global health research charity, The Wellcome Trust and the umbrella organisation for the food and grocery industry, IGD.

Why we do it

One in five young people are NEET. Furthermore, there are 2 million young people living in jobless households who have the lowest levels of access to work experience, but would benefit from it the most.

Opportunities to be gained through personal networks such as work experience placements organised by family contacts are traditionally less accessible to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. We are addressing these barriers directly through our Employers Programme by expanding these young people's networks of contacts in the working world, as well as giving them direct access to work experience and work shadowing opportunities.

"We rate Future First as one of the UK's leaders in tackling social mobility rather than just talking about it, which is essential to make sure that, together, we're making a real difference rather than just ticking boxes. Those who have engaged in the programme speak about it from the heart – they're proud to be part of something so professionally put together by Future First."

Simon Marshall, Osborne Clarke

Nearly 1,000 students attended our employer events during the academic year 2013/14, **meeting over 450 volunteers**, 98% of whom would volunteer with Future First again. **Over 90% of students** said that their **employability skills** had improved as a result of attending.

The difference we make

By providing young people with up-to-date information about employment through alumni networks, mentoring schemes and local employers, as well as offering opportunities for skills development, they are better placed to make decisions about and apply for further and higher education courses and future employment. Research by Dr Anthony Mann showed that young people who have four or more interactions with employers while at school are five times less likely to become NEET than those who do not.

Not only do our Employer Programmes offer essential support and insight to young people, our volunteers report improved self-confidence, team-building and communication skills as a result of their involvement. Better still, over 95% say it improved their empathy with young people and awareness of the issues facing them.



What We've Learnt

Where we need to improve...

1 Understanding outcomes

We've already been learning more about 'the how' of the difference we make to young people, but we've got more to do in this area. The evidence from young people, teachers and alumni about the impact of our work is overwhelmingly positive, but we need to keep exploring the mechanisms that underpin the outcomes we create so that they can be maximised across all our programmes. This will include tying the knowledge we've developed running these programme with the academic literature around, for example, expectancy-value theory, so that we can structure our programmes to make the biggest difference. We've started already, but there's still work to do.



2 Measuring long-term change

We also need to get better at measuring the change we make over the long term. Evidence from our teachers and students leave us in no doubt that our programmes work, but in order to hone their delivery, we need to better measure the change made as the students who've been through our programmes collect their exam results and take their first steps into higher education and work. Next year, the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education will publish the first ever external evaluation of the impact of our work.

3 Packaging our services

As we expanded our work across the country, we created a light-touch, low-price service with the aim of spreading alumni networks to as many schools as quickly as possible. We've found that many of our schools want more time from us than that original package could offer too. We've therefore had to evolve that original package so that each Alumni Officer has fewer schools and therefore more time to spend on each. This of course increases our cost of sale. Next year, we plan to have more conversations with our schools to make sure we're getting the balance right: Offering the level of support each one needs, whilst maintaining an appropriate price-point.

4 Influencing change

We've been thrilled to see more schools starting to build and engage an alumni network without us. Many have sought to follow our lead and we're delighted to see our work influencing schools beyond those with which we directly partner. Next year, we want to explore whether there's anything further we can do to support those schools to extend the reach of our work.

5 Adapting our service to colleges

Last year, we admitted to having been too school focused and not catering sufficiently for our colleges. We've made progress in this area, but we still need to adapt our tech platform further to support our partner colleges better.

We've also discovered...

6 Where we work

We worked with pro-bono consultants from Bain & Co to analyse whether schools in certain areas, or of certain types, were more likely to be making the most of working with us. We were pleased to find that there was no correlation between a school or college's location, size, student population, type (academy etc.) and the likelihood of them engaging with the full benefits of our programmes. That means the opportunity is there for us to make an impact in any school we choose, but we need to continue to develop our understanding of the steps we can take to drive school engagement. So far, we have identified a number of factors including securing the buy-in of the Head Teacher, having a motivated lead contact and raising awareness of the alumni community across the school's staff body as critical for the success of our programmes.

7 Curriculum enhancement

We spoke last year of our ambition to embed alumni engagement more widely in school and college life, taking alumni into core curriculum lessons as well as more general assemblies and workshops. We have now piloted this work across the country, taking a renal specialist into an A-level biology lesson to co-deliver a lesson about the kidneys, a crime scene investigator into a chemistry lesson to show students how simple experiments are applied in her daily work, and a journalist into an English lesson to teach students about persuasive writing.



Our Plans for the Future

Here are our five key ambitions for 2014/15 and beyond:

1 Deepen our impact

We want to make a bigger difference in each of our schools. That means firstly helping each one to mobilise their alumni more often for the benefit of current students. Then we need to make sure each one of those mobilisations is as impactful as possible. To do so we want to better measure the changes each mobilisation creates, then make sure to share the lessons learnt about what works best.

2 Grow our work

We aim to grow to working with a quarter of schools and colleges within three years. We'll do so by reaching over 500 schools this year, including even more in Wales, as well as piloting our work in our first school in Scotland.

3 Culture change

We aspire to see alumni communities making a difference to young people in every school in the UK, with or without the direct support of Future First. We'll be working to raise awareness of the benefits of building and engaging a community of former students and developing the ways in which we offer support to schools and colleges who choose to build their community without a structured package of support from us. We'll also launch our 'tech only' option for schools and colleges looking for cost-effective software tailored for building alumni communities.

4 Send the country back to school

While we're ambitious for the growth of our Back to School Week campaign, we don't just want to see more people sign up to support their old school in that one week. We want to build nationwide awareness of the support everyone can offer their old school throughout the year so that over 100,000 alumni are signed up by the time we write next year's annual review!

5 Sustainability

We will reach the target we set last year of 60%+ traded income by the end of the academic year 2014/15. We are incredibly grateful to the foundations, the government, the private sector and some wonderfully generous individuals for their support to help us grow alumni networks that benefit students across the UK, but we want to reduce our reliance on grant funding over the next three years to become more than 90% self-financing.

We aim to grow to working with a quarter of schools and colleges within three years.



Our Supporters

We would like to thank all of our schools and colleges, our volunteers, our employer partners, our trustees and our many supporters and advocates. We would also like to make particular thanks to the following organisations and individuals.



CET / COMMERCIAL
EDUCATION TRUST



THE DULVERTON TRUST



J.P.Morgan

THE MARK LEONARD TRUST

THE MONUMENT TRUST

Making change happen with
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- Rothschild
- Simmons & Simmons
- The Barbour Foundation
- The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust

- The Civil Service Faststream
- The Scurrah Wainwright Charity
- The Maud Elkington Charitable Trust
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Vanessa Wiseman CBE
Education Adviser and
Former Headteacher



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"I noticed a marked change in the attitude and maturity of the students involved. They were able to hold conversations and offer advice to their peers at a higher level based on what they'd learnt from the alumni. I have no doubt that there will also be a positive impact on their GCSE results".

**Mr Hassan, Head of Year 11 -
Harewood College, Bournemouth**
